



## The Eye of the Beholder

*Elizabeth Darcy*

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## The Eye of the Beholder Elizabeth Darcy

I am a prisoner.

Born to power, the world was my playground. My every wish was a kingdom's command, my displeasure every man's worst fear. But then, at the whim of a merciless enchantress, all was stolen from me. My once lavish castle became my dungeon. My once-handsome form became that of a beast. There is no hope of release from the prison of my own body, for the only way to break this curse is to earn the love of another. I, who have never felt a drop of compassion, must hope to inspire devotion. I, who am hideous beyond compare, must hope to inspire passion. After hundreds of years, I have come to accept the truth: I will never know love. There is no escape for me.

I am a prisoner.

Born to two loving parents and a happy home, I was grateful for my good fortune. Though I was plain and prone to living in my head, forced to live in the shadow of my beautiful sisters, I had everything my heart desired. Then tragedy struck, and I lost my mother and my home. Papa was all I had left in the world, and I was utterly devoted to him. When his thoughtful gesture earned him the wrath of a horrible monster, I sacrificed myself for the sake of the one person I love. Now I am a prisoner in a decaying castle with only a terrifying beast for companionship. But I am determined not to give in to the beast's wrath, to prove to him that he can never truly ensnare me.

## The Eye of the Beholder Details

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# From Reader Review The Eye of the Beholder for online ebook

## Lucina says

5.0 stars

I really liked this "Beauty and The Beast" retelling and it was definitely not an adaption. The story basically follows the traditional fairytale without modifications (there were only a few interesting new ideas), but it wasn't the story that made this retelling so good. It was the focus on Mira and Lysander (Mira's name for the beast) emotions that made this story so interesting. Their POV's alternate from chapter to chapter and each chapter is mainly about their feelings and thoughts and those became interesting after Mira and Lysander meet for the first time. Therefore the beginning of the story was VERY slow until Mira came to Lysander's castle. Even after that little action happens. The chapters are dominated by the thoughts and dialogues of the characters and this is something that not every reader might like. Nevertheless I loved it, the emotions felt so real, especially Lysander's chapters were so great! Mira's POV was less interesting as was her character. She was likeable but the typical "Beauty and The Beast" heroine, nice, intelligent and naive.

Overall I really liked this "Beauty and the Beast" retelling, it's not for everyone but good in its own way.

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## Minni Mouse says

DNF at 43% because if you're on the hunt for an intelligent, fantasy-rich Beauty and the Beast retelling with maturity and depth, go for *Heart's Blood*. Heck, if you want a period piece version with steam, pick up *Beauty of the Beast* ... or even *Hunted* for a version of the tale that's more darkly dreamlike. But this version? Meh. Opt for the Juliet Marillier version and you'll probably find it a richer and more alluring experience than this one.

### THE GOOD

This is the first version I've read where we begin like we do: devoting slightly more attention to the prince before he became a beast. The castle attendees were also unique...and a bit creepy. Props for the originality there.

### THE BAD

Like other reviewers say, the back and forth monologues between the Beast and Mirabella quickly become tediously overdone. Too much internalization of their thoughts and not enough plot progression.

Oh, and without the animated Disney version...all other retellings with the Beast depicted as a literal beast starts to creep me out...because what's up, bestiality.

### THE VERDICT

Seriously, just read *Heart's Blood* by Juliet Marillier. It's not perfect but it's the closest and best comparison with the mature and realistic tones that this book is going for...and no one writes character-driven old-school-feel fantasy like Juliet Marillier.

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## **HJ says**

reread 9/2014

What a lovely, lovely book.

This is a wonderful retelling of the Beauty and the Beast fairytale. No, the story/plot is not original, how could it be? But the way it is told, and the insight into both Beauty (Mira) and the Beast (whom she calls Lysander) makes the tale infinitely more engaging.

King Edward, cold, heartless and pitiless, is cursed by an enchantress to be a beast for 300 years. The only way to break the curse is to fall in love, and to be loved in return (sound familiar?). Any servants who'd been inside the castle with him when the spell was cast are stuck with him, mute and blind, unable to express themselves, and only to serve.

Mirabelle (Mira) is the youngest daughter of a failed merchant who stumbles across the enchanted castle of the Beast on his way back from a successful sales expedition. The merchant is given hospitality (food and shelter) within the castle (though he never sees anyone), and upon his departure he spies a lovely rose garden and is inspired to bring a rose home to the one daughter who asks for nothing but his safe return.

Of course, the Beast is enraged and insists that either the merchant agree to allow himself to be imprisoned in the Beast's castle, or to send his youngest daughter to take his place.

Okay, we all pretty much know how the story goes, so no more synopsis is required.

What I loved so much about this book was the 1st person POV, from both Mira and Lysander, alternating every chapter.

Mira was intelligent, compassionate, and strong, able to admit that she was afraid of the Beast, but unwilling to let that fear overwhelm her.

Let's not forget Lysander. It was wonderful to see such a despicable character's gradual change as he fell in love. By the end, I wanted to weep myself at his self-realization of how terrible he'd been and how much he loved Mira. Sigh.

Did I say that I liked this story? If you like fairytales, you will, too. :)

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## **Sarah says**

This book I would have to say is among the top of my favorite of Beauty and the Beast retelling, and I have read quite a number of them. It was beautiful and different in a written sense that most versions don't have.

There was one part (maybe around 80%) that I found my attention drifting if only for the fact that I wanted interactions between the characters and it was a few chapters of heavy internal processing for the characters.

I could definitely feel that when I was reading this it felt longer. There wasn't much going on between the characters until about 40% of the way through, I mean there was good plot and there were events but for a retelling of this story I guess I expected more on the whole romance factor.

Also it bothered me how it was thought that what Edward did towards Mira's father was cruel and barbaric. Sure, Edward over reacted about the rose but I mean Edward feed and sheltered her dad when he was hungry and lost. All Edward did was yell and threaten. There were worse things that could have happened, say I don't know maybe being thrown into prison right there, being attacked or killed. I was fine with Mira being angry about it at the beginning because it's her dad and he was shaken up over it but even after they get along it's thought of and she even throws it at him. Okay, Edward did a lot of cruel things but that wasn't terrible and it shouldn't be one of the things she or he thinks of first to remember his cruelty. With his past he could have done worse. I guess it bothered me because it was mentioned several times and seemed to be the focus of Edwards self loathing sometimes (mixed with keeping Mira prisoner - which I understand).

Even so, besides the romance and the constant reminding of how Edward and Mira's father met I enjoyed this book. It's a version of the story that focuses on true redemption and the power of love to transform more strongly than other versions I've come across (versions of acceptance, belief in oneself, or more towards romance ect). I loved the multiple perspectives and was glad that as a reader I wasn't only stuck within the heroines head. I think this made it easier to love Edward and I really felt his pain. Even before he started to change and Mira came to the castle you can start to connect even if he told himself over and over that Mira was a pawn. I feel like if Mira could see his conflict like we did (besides the whole starting to love her bit) it wouldn't have taken her so long to realize her feelings. I was glad that they called each other's faults to and that Edward wasn't afraid to call Mira a hypocrite, which she was sometimes.

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### **Kari Kaz says**

This is a beautiful retelling of Beauty and the Beast, with a complete fairy-tale feel.

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### **Leonor (Ner) says**

Also published in "A Cup of Coffee and a Book"

*Oh my...* this has to be my favourite re-telling of **Beauty and the Beast**.

This is, perhaps, one of the most solid versions of my favourite fairy-tale I've ever read. It has all the basis we all know of the tale so it's not that an original story. However, what makes this story so wonderful is the way Elizabeth Darcy (pen name for Nicole Ciacchella) tells it by blending two distinct perspective into one narrative.

The Eye of the Beholder is told by both the main characters - Lysander/Edward and Mira. Each chapter is told by one of them, bringing us close to their deep emotions and thoughts and allowing us to know them better. It might sound too complicated but the writing, the beautiful writing, made it all so much easier and profound I felt such a huge connection to both, it's hard to tell which one I like best - perhaps Lysander since I'm a Beast girl :)

The curse was cast due to Lysander's ruthless and heartless self. He was brought up without a mother's love and his father kept pushing him aside, not lingering around to see his son grow up and teach him what is love. Due to that, he becomes a cold king who rules by fear rather than by justice. One day a beggar is caught stealing bread for her starving children and is sentenced to death by Lysander/Edward. But what he doesn't know is that the beggar is a beautiful enchantress and she punishes him by transforming him into a beast. All his servants must suffer with their master, being turned into a ghostly like figure with blank eyes and pale expressions.

Lysander has three hundred years to fall in love and receive love in return. If that doesn't happen, he'll perish as will all his servants. The population of his once great kingdom, Organdy, will forget him until the spell is broken. Until then, he has a magical pool where he sees time pass by and the evolution of the world.

Yes, it sounds too familiar and I think I might have written this with Beauty and the Beast by Disney prologue in my head.

Almost three hundred years have passed and Mirabelle (Mira) and her family lost everything and moved to Everforest. They live in a cottage near the forest, their lives simple and hard. Mira is the youngest of three daughters who lost their mother when they were young. Her two sisters are cruel, wishing only to be married to some wealthy man in order to get all they want, ignoring the hard work of their father and sister.

In fact, I hated Mira's sisters so much I kind of wished they were turned into statues in the end. But, going a bit further now, I liked the fact that they had to see their sister marry a king and become queen and live with their jealousy.

Mira's father goes to Swan Hollow to do some business and in the journey back, he comes across this huge and abandoned-like castle. When he leaves the place, he steals a single rose from the beautiful rosebush for Mira - who, when asked what she wanted, only said she wanted he's safe return - and gets caught by Lysander. Mira's father has only two options left: or he returns himself in a fortnight or one of his daughters comes in his place. When he returns home and tells his fantastical tale, Mira feels so guilty she goes in his place without his knowing.

Yah, so I think I'm telling a tale we all know but this is when things begin to get too excited and extremely interesting.

Lysander and Mira find in each other a friendship they never had. At first, he uses her as a pawn in his plot to break the curse, believing he can make her fall in love with him. What he wasn't expecting was to fall in love with her and change his heart because of her. He begins seeing the world with different eyes, seeing that the world doesn't move around him and he's not its centre. On the contrary; for him, the centre of the world is Mira and Mira alone. He finally opens his eyes and heart and allows himself to feel the pain of love. He lets Mira go and accepts death with open arms.

His development was very well written as were his change of heart and mind. Nicole Ciacchella deepened his character and explored his feelings permitting us to see both his side: the beast underneath and the man trying to come forward.

As for Mira, her character was so smart, so strong and so human that each and every single feeling she showed was palpable. She has spent all of her life being "bullied" by her sisters, being pushed to the side and ignored. In the castle she found a friend and, though she had Lysander as a company, she found also a propose. Her restoration of the castle sounded, to me, a way for her to be part of it, to belong to the castle as

a whole. And when she saw it was bringing something she couldn't quite put a finger on, she had her first moment of true weakness and cowardice; she fled.

They were both very well written and developed. There was not a moment in which I wanted to shake them and yield at them. Their reactions and decisions were very human.

By the end of the book I was like this:

Sorry, I needed to use these two fellows here :)

This book is definitely a must read for all fairytale lovers. It's Beauty and the Beast in its highest form; compassionate, breathtaking, lovingly and extremely caring. It's smart, witty and beautifully written.

Since I loved it dearly, I asked Nicole when the book would be coming out in paperback - since she contacted me personally and sent me a digital copy of the book - and I was rewarded with 2013 as an answer. Now, whether it's late 2013 or beginning, I don't know but I'm glad it's next year.

Now, I want to thank Elizabeth Darcy/Nicole Ciacchella for sending me a copy of the book and giving me the opportunity to read it first hand - meaning, reading it before it came out on paperback 'cause it's available for kindle. I truly loved it so a billion **thank you**.

[image error]

### **A random thing...**

Now, I don't know who created this wonderful picture but, why is that whenever I read a story based on Beauty and the Beast I always picture Belle (in this case Mira) as Emma Watson?!

Wait, I know, it's because of this picture:

Even though in this story my imagination of Mira is slightly older... but still, Emma, if you don't make a movie based on this fairytale, I'm going to be really upset, okay?!

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### **Sonia189 says**

This re-telling started pretty well, very engaging but from a certain point on, it started to become a bit boring and it dragged. The main characters are the narrators, using 1st person POV in alternate chapters but often it felt like they were having monologues so the plot felt a bit underdeveloped to me.

The end was sweet but not complex enough, considering the way it started (again, to me).

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### **Elisa says**

3.5 stars

Nice retelling of the Beauty & the Beast. It is quite a classical approach and I liked it for that.

I couldn't help, though, but finding something amiss.

The redemption of the 'Beast' was too sudden, especially since I was actually growing fond of the idea of him

being really evil. It was surprising finding the 'Beast' in one of these retellings still completely unredeemed...usually the 'Beauty' finds him already on the way to salvation; he already has understood his own mistakes and how he should have behaved better and in some of them he's actually never been evil at all, but was cursed even if blameless...**not here!** Edward was egocentric, arrogant, petty, merciless, narrowminded and downright bad and I really liked it! But he changed too fast and without much depth. It is like he woke up and suddenly realized he loved Mirabelle and that somehow changed everything..but how did he actually fall in love?

I'm a fan of slow building relationships and this book promised me one...but it seemed as if I lost it somewhere; the B. & the B. talk, that's true, but they fight and antagonize each other until the sudden revelation of Beast having fallen in love; there was no 'building'... it was like they barely started preparing the foundations and then in an eyeblink everything was already built and they were in love.

Another minor thing which didn't completely agree with me, were the two 'evil' sisters. They were annoying...so much so that they weren't very believable. They probably were there to highlight Mirabelle's good character and heart, but while in canon with the classic fairytale templates it was too flat a characterization for a novel and had for me the opposite effect of perceiving the heroine as too much of a "goody-two-shoes".

Even so. it was a good read. I liked it and while it still isn't this *perfect* Beauty and the Beast retelling I'm vainly trying to find, it was an enjoyable and well written one. Good work!

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## Christine says

This book did not grab me and I was in the mood for another great Beauty and the Beast story.

Too much detail about everything. I know it is to set up the mood for the story, but sometimes less is more. The characters do not even exchange their first words until 20%. Now I have read other Beauty and Beast series that take their time introducing the Beast, but other things happen that allow me to connect. In this story, it felt painful to read so much "stuff" without really getting anywhere. It was painful for me to read even after Mira and the Beast met. It had such a great set-up, but the execution was poor in my opinion.

This may work for you, but it did not work for me.

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## Gerrie says

This was a beautifully written, lyrical book. It's a story of true redemption and the power of love to transform. Lysander, the beast, is almost unredeemable. He's narcissistic in the extreme, cynical, incapable of love or compassion, and totally at the whim of his black rages. He's been a terrible king, and has squandered every chance to do any good for his country or his subjects. And even after he's turned into a beast, and confined to his castle for several hundred years, he still refuses to change. The heroine, Mirabelle, of course has numerous wonderful qualities, including a kind and loving heart. But she's no door mat. She's fiercely intelligent, and argues with and stands up to Lysander. She calls him on all his negative qualities. She has to have numerous good qualities to serve as the catalyst for Lysander's redemption, but they are believably drawn. She's totally engaging.

The author used alternating first person viewpoints between Lysander and Mirabelle to tell the story. This device was the perfect vehicle to convey the development of Lysander's very credible change and growing



love for Mirabelle. This really is a beautiful book, and I highly recommend it.

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### **Ana Perkins says**

This book leaves me with very mixed feelings. I am a huge fan of the Beauty and the beast scenario and over all this book in my opinion was good. The problem I have is mostly the ending which left me a little bitter due to fact I felt like something could have been different and made the book a five star for me. As for the Beauty and Beast, I found their relationship together to be great and maybe one of the best I have read so far which is why the ending disappointed me. The back story was great on the beast and I love how it goes back and forth between the Beauty telling the story to the beast. I go on about all the things that I love about this book but I want you to make your own opinion.

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### **Stories & Verse says**

*"It was true that he was hideous, but he was also growing familiar to me and even the ugliest of objects can grow pleasant to the eyes of one to whom they are familiar."*

The romance started out as a matter of convenience and developed into a longing for companionship. Ultimately, this retelling of "Beauty and the Beast" goes deeper into thought patterns. It develops the metaphor of inner beauty as the path to true love.

Beauty (Mira) knows no other love than that of her father, is at first devastated to be prisoned inside the castle with a hideous beast; she misses her former life in the cottage with her father and sisters. The Beast has only the intention to use Mira to reverse the enchantment that was cast upon him. However, as the two converse and become more familiar, an undying need to be with each other develops.

The story is written in first person, switching between Beauty and the Beast. It is fluent and almost poetic.

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### **Elizabeth Darcy says**

*The Eye of the Beholder* has done so well that it inspired me to continue on with the fairytale theme. My second book in the Fairytale Collection, *Asleep*, is available on Amazon, and I have plans for a Cinderella reboot, which will come out in the second half of 2014.

Have I told you, my readers, that I love you lately? Well, I do! Thanks to you, I'm this close to making it into the Goodreads recommendation engine. Though the number is shrouded in mystery, apparently I need "a couple hundred" ratings before the engine picks up the book and starts recommending it to other readers. So, I'm asking all of you to help me make that happen! If you read the book, please leave a star rating and, better yet, an honest review. I can't tell you how much it means to my little indie operation when readers take the time to do those things. Believe me, I appreciate every last review!

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## Laura says

Compré este libro en una oferta de Amazon, así que mis expectativas no eran demasiado altas, pero al mismo tiempo amo la historia de la Bella y la Bestia, así que tenía cierta emoción.

Por suerte, la novela cumple. Está bien escrita y los personajes, dentro de todo están bien, Mira se vuelve un poco pesada juzgando todo el tiempo las acciones de Lysander hasta el más mínimo detalle, pero eso es más que nada al comienzo por suerte. Y Lysander es una bestia cruel bastante amable, todo el tiempo recalcan lo malo que es, pero sus acciones no lo reflejan xD

Los dos protagonistas se intercalan en los capítulos, por lo que sabemos lo que los dos piensan a todo momento y a veces eso se torna repetitivo, cuando ya leímos una escena en manos de Mira y al capítulo siguiente la volvemos a revivir desde el punto de vista de Lysander.

Quizás hubiera estado bueno que se jugara un poco más la autora y no siguiera la famosa historia tan al pie de la letra, para mi le faltó acción y sorpresas. De todas formas voy a admitir que al final se me escaparon un par de lágrimas a pesar de saber de memoria como iba a terminar.

Voy a buscar el retelling que esta autora también hizo de la Bella Durmiente n\_\_n

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## Gia says

2.25 stars

This was okay-ish...

The ending was sweet, yes but otherwise the story was not that amazing for me. Starting consisted of a conversation that was funny, leading me to believe that this book had great promise. However eventually side characters lost their charm and became useless. Story merely revolved around Mira and Lysander and it eventually got too much. Furthermore, there were lot of repetitive thoughts/dialogues that I found myself skimming through.

P.S: I felt Beast was greatly obsessed with how beautiful she is.... It got annoying, really.

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