

Teacher Guide

BEAUTY & THE BEAST

One of the most popular romantic stories, it really is a tale as old as time. But do we want our love to look like theirs?

by Megan Maas, PhD.

1

DOES BELLE HAVE POWER?

Belle is trapped in Beast's castle, which takes away her power.

She's not allowed to make her own decisions, even when to eat.

2

DOES BEAST HAVE POWER?

He has power over his castle. You can tell because everyone is afraid of him.

3

DO BEAST AND BELLE SHARE THEIR POWER?

No.

They do not share decision-making around eating, when to come and go, etc.

Beast: "If she doesn't eat with me, then she doesn't eat at all!"

4

DOES BEAST USE HIS POWER TO CONTROL BELLE?

Beast: "You will join me for dinner. This is not a request."

He then threatens to break down the door if Belle does not come out of her room.

Although Beast releases Belle to be with her father, the very act of releasing her from captivity demonstrates his control over her.

Although presented as a thoughtful gesture because Belle loves books, Beast manipulates Belle by showing her his library because this is a strategy purposefully used to keep Belle close to him.



This resource is adapted from: Bonomi, A.E., Eaton, A.A., Nemeth, J.M., Gillum, T.A. (2017). The Abuse Litmus Test: A Classroom Tool to Assess Power and Control in On-Screen Relationships. *Family Relations*, 66, 154-165.

6

IS BELLE SCARED OF BEAST?

Belle is depicted as constantly scared of beast.

She cares for his wounds when he is attacked by wolves. This seems kind, and is. But in abusive relationships, the abused will often rescue the abuser if he is in harm (financially, physically, etc.). So this could be an example of that.

In an attempt to teach him manners (tame the beast), she drinks out of a bowl when he does to make sure he does not get embarrassed or upset.

7

DOES BELLE EXPERIENCE HARM BECAUSE OF BEAST?

Belle is consistently depicted as crying in fear.

She is isolated from friends and family.

Her father is harmed by Beast.

She conveys her lost identity to Mrs. Teapot (one of Beast's servants), "I've lost all my dreams...my family, everything."