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Opening extract from

Beauty and the Beast

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For Kitty – M.M.
For Pam and Dave with love – L.S.



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RARE SPICE Co.

For Marco and his wife and three daughters, life was sweet. They lived in a grand house in the city with all the comforts they could possibly wish for. They were healthy, wealthy and happy. He was a respected merchant of fine silks and tapestries and spices from the East. The future looked golden for all of them.

But then one spring Marco's wife died suddenly. So now Marco had to bring up his daughters all on his own. He did his very best to keep his daughters happy. He gave them everything they asked for, presents every time he came home. The two older sisters soon became very spoilt.





Only the youngest, Belle, remained loving and kind-hearted. She always hated it when her father went away on business. Whenever he wasn't there her sisters were always horrible to her. She cried herself to sleep every night, and longed every day for her father to come home.

So Belle was overjoyed to look out of her window one morning and see him come riding home sooner than she had expected. "Presents!" cried her sisters, and they all ran downstairs to greet him. But there were no presents.

