



Billy Beast A seriously silly story

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Betty and Benjamin Beast were very proud of their castle. They thought it was the most wonderful building for miles around. It had taken them years to get it just right with lovely green mouldy walls and black puddles in the corridors. There were damp, dark bedrooms with snails on the pillows, and smelly cellars too. At weekends, you would always find Benjamin up a stepladder whistling happily as he hung new cobwebs in corners or painted fresh mud on the ceilings.

There was only one thing that Betty and Benjamin were more proud of than their home, and that was their fine young son, Billy Beast. They loved Billy more than words can say.

By the time he was sixteen Billy had grown into a fine-looking beast. He was tall and strong with plenty of fleas in his hair and the sharpest brown teeth a beast could wish for. There wasn't a girl beast around who wasn't in love with young Billy. But as far as Benjamin and Betty were concerned, it would have to be a very special girl beast who could be disgusting enough to marry their son.

Then one morning, Benjamin and Betty went out gathering frog spawn for lunch, leaving young Billy playing quietly with his toad in his bedroom. Billy heard a noise outside, and when he looked out of the window he saw an old man wandering about in their beautiful weedy garden. The man had tied his horse to the tree and was busy *stealing* some of Betty's prize-winning roses!

'Hoi! What do you think you're doing?' shouted Billy. 'This is a private castle, you know. My mum will eat you if she catches you here.'



When the man looked up at the castle and saw young Billy Beast all hairy and horrid with a big toad sitting on his head he was *absolutely terrified!* 'Oh, p-please don't eat me, Mr Beast,' he stammered. 'I got lost and ... and I promised my beautiful daughter I would bring her a red rose and ...'

'Well, not from our garden, pal!' snorted Billy.

The man was so frightened that he promised that he would send his daughter, Beauty, to marry Billy if he was
40 allowed to go free.

'All right,' Billy agreed, 'but she'd better come soon or my dad will be after you too.'

'I ... I'll send her straight away,' said the poor man, jumping on to his horse.

'And she'd better be as beautiful as you say,' Billy called after him.

'Oh yes, oh yes, she is!' shouted the man, riding away as fast as he could. 'There's nothing in the world more beautiful than my daughter.'

50 'What? More beautiful than my toad?' called Billy. But the man was already out of sight.

When Betty and Benjamin came home, Billy told them the whole story.

'I'm going to be married,' he grunted happily, 'to the most beautiful girl in the world - the man said there's nothing in the world more beautiful than Beauty.'

Betty and Benjamin were very pleased to think of their son married to the most beautiful girl in the world, although they found it hard to believe that anyone could be
60 quite as good-looking as their Billy.

Early next morning, Beauty arrived. Billy saw her horse coming up the hill towards the castle. He ran to the mirror to make sure his teeth were nice and black and he checked that his breath was good and smelly. He splashed a little skunk juice under his arms, then he ran to the door to meet his bride.



Billy was very excited. As the doorbell rang, he twisted his face into the most beautifully disgusting shape that he could manage, then pulled open the door.

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She was hardly hairy at all, except on her head. And her *teeth* – they were all sort of white and shiny! She had a horrid pink *nose* where her snout should be, and little *fingers* instead of nice claws! UGH! It was *disgusting*! ‘I bet she hasn’t even got a hairy chest,’ thought Billy in dismay.



When Beauty saw Billy, she almost fainted on the spot. Billy could understand that, because his handsome looks often made girls feel weak at the knees. What he couldn’t understand was that Beauty wasn’t beautiful! In fact she looked just like an ordinary *girl*!

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Betty and Benjamin were also disappointed, but they tried not to show it. The poor girl had come a long way to marry their son and she seemed upset too.

‘I’m sure she will look better once we get rid of that nasty white dress and pop her into a nice sloppy mud bath,’ said Betty kindly.

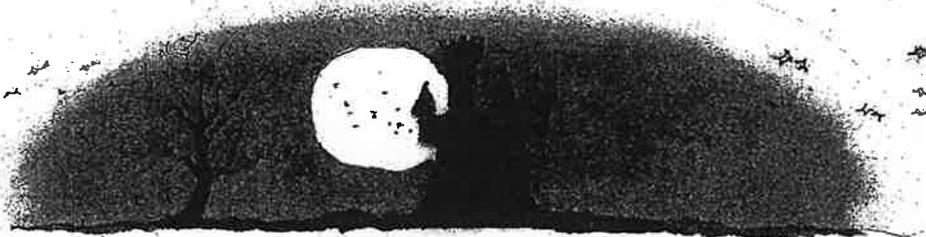
‘And she’ll probably get hairier as she gets older,’ suggested Benjamin. ‘Perhaps she hasn’t been eating a healthy diet – I expect she’s hungry now after that long journey. Let’s start her off with a lovely bowl of warm earwax and slug juice.’

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So Betty and Benjamin set about trying to make Beauty a little more beastly, and Billy went into the garden with his toad and sulked.

After a few days, Beauty began to get used to living with the Beasts, and Billy had to admit that she was looking a little better; at least she was getting more smelly.

But then Beauty would go and spoil it all by doing something revolting like washing her hands before a meal, or combing her hair and everyone realised that no matter how they tried, Beauty would never be truly disgusting.



Billy promised his parents that he would try to get along with her, although he swore he would never marry her. He patiently taught her to burp nicely and to dribble, but she was slow to learn.

Then one morning in the garden, something horrid happened. Billy had just allowed Beauty to play with his toad when she turned around and tried to *kiss* him! He wiped his mouth and jumped away.

110 Beauty began to cry. 'I can't help it!' she wailed, 'I can't help looking like this. Of course I would like to be hairy and horrid like you. But couldn't you try to love me for what I am instead of the way I look?'

Now Billy was really a kind-hearted beast. He began to feel sorry for Beauty. He saw that she was right. It doesn't really matter what you look like, it's the person inside that counts. Before he knew what he was doing, Billy had put down his toad and taken Beauty into his hairy arms, he put his snout close to her little head and ... SMACK! He kissed her tiny snubby nose.

120 Right before Billy's yellow eyes, Beauty began to change! She grew hairier and hairier. Her teeth grew brown and longer. Her fingers turned into beautiful claws! At last she stood before him – a truly wonderful beastie girl, with the most gorgeous damp snout Billy had ever seen, and a delightful smell of old socks and kangaroo sweat.

130 Beauty explained that the man who had stolen the roses was not her father, but a wicked wizard who had cast a spell on her. She would lose her beastly looks until the day someone like Billy was kind enough to kiss her and break the spell.

Billy was so happy, he didn't know what to say, so he just dribbled a little. The beastly couple skipped happily up the steps of the castle, claw in claw, burping excitedly to each other.

And they were all disgustingly happy for the rest of their beastly lives.

Illustrated by Arthur Robbins

