Summary

Belle gets a rather unexpected look into Adam's past when she finds some letters hidden in the library of a very explicit nature.

30 DAYS OF BEAUTY AND THE BEAST CHALLENGE

DAY 2 - JEALOUSY

The library was beautifully cool in the heat of the day and Belle hummed quietly to herself as she dusted shelves of books. The decade or so of the curse had definitely taken its toll on the cavernous room and dust sat thick on most surfaces. She had yet to examine this area of the library, like many others and periodically she would stop to peruse the titles hidden back here.

Most of them appeared to be historical volumes, some in different languages, including Greek, she thought with a chuckle, fitting considering that most of them dealt with Classical History. Several seemed quite interesting and she pulled them forward to go back for later. Continuing to hum belle ran her fingers over the rich leather spines lovingly, the sheer scope of this library never ceasing to amaze her.

On a shelf up high by a balcony brought to light a whole different subject matter. The humming
stopped as her fingers traced the titles, her cheeks flushing at the intimate nature of those words. Adam had told her, in broad terms, of the nature of his character and lifestyle before the curse. Growing up in the country, Belle was not ignorant of the baser aspects of nature, the mechanics so to speak. She had not misunderstood Adam’s meaning when he told her that he had been a libertine of the worst sort.

This particular section of the library was apparently a leftover from those days.

It was hard to think of him that way, as a seducer and a cad, when he was so sweet and caring with her. Plumette had whispered to her of dazzling balls, dozens of the most beautiful women vying for his favor, of velvet and diamond, powdered wigs and shining eyes. All things that Belle had no experience with.

Still, that was the past and Belle loved him, loved who he was now, which was as much because of his past as his underlying good nature. The breaking of the curse had ensured everyone a clean slate. A new beginning.

Curious, Belle pulled a book from the shelf, a black volume, the spine blank. It was conspicuous against the rich colors of the books surrounding it. Upon examination it seemed that it was a box rather than a book and it only took moments for her nimble fingers to pry open the tiny latch.

Letters spilled out, yellowed with age, fluttering to her feet. Swiftly she scooped them up, looking around. She was still alone, Adam wasn’t due back for hours. Taking the box, Belle moved to the window seat, telling herself that if the letters proved to be from Adam’s mother, as she hoped they were, she would put them away immediately and pry no further.

Considering where she had found them, she should have known better. From the handwriting she could see they were all written by one person. An elegant, feminine hand, much lovelier than her own scrawl, which Adam had teased her about several times.

Pushing that thought aside, Belle picked up a letter at random and began to read.

**My Darling Boy,**

How naughty it was of you to touch me the way you did at dinner, and beside my husband no less. You most certainly have been paying attention to my lessons and I come to believe that you may have surpassed your teacher in the art of seduction. Never have I felt so alive as I did in that moment, your fingers inside me beneath the table while you laughed, your every look a promise of so much more.

Tell me, my Prince, how many of those tittering young innocents did you take to your bed after I was spent? I can imagine with pleasure your hands on them as I have felt them on me. I close my eyes and I can see you, that talented tongue drawing such ecstatic cries. I wonder when the time will come that these stupid, virginal girls will experience the full force of your ardor - I know you my love, your distaste for virgin tears will never be more powerful that your lust and I wonder who’s daughter will be the first to be deflowered. Perhaps that pretty blonde chit from Brittany who so entranced you this evening. Perhaps you even take her as I pen this, or the event could already be over and the silly girl sent on her way with a heavy purse to ease her….discomfort.

I have taught you well then, these past years. Take your pleasure where you will my gilded prince, as nothing else matters. Tomorrow night when my husband leaves I will seek your bed, a real woman to take you inside and submit to your every dark desire. Until then I wait, and dream, and want.
Shocked to her core at the woman’s words, Belle read through the rest of the letters. All were the same, or worse. Whoever she was, the ‘affair’ appeared to have gone on for years. And always the mention of whichever young woman had caught Adam’s fancy at one event or another and found herself in his bed, sometimes alone and sometimes not.

To Belle it would seem that Adam’s declaration of being a libertine had been putting things very lightly. His only goal at that time had appeared to be the pursuit of sensual pleasure at the expense of everyone but himself. It also seemed as though no act of a base nature had been overlooked as the letters openly described many acts that had Belle both horrified and embarrassingly aroused. Her heart twisted in her chest as her imagination went wild, picturing the man she loved in every intimate situation the letters spoke of.

Sick to her stomach, she closed the box on the letters and, legs trembling, replaced the box on the shelf before running from the library. In the privacy of her room she sat in the window dwelling on what she had read and how it made her feel. A hard knot of jealousy warred with logic as she tried to tell herself that this wasn’t Adam anymore, that this woman was his past. That man didn’t exist anymore, her Adam wasn’t a seducer or a predator, he was kind and loving, respectful and gentle.

But still, this woman knew him ways that she didn’t, she had held him in the night and kissed his skin, she had felt his caress, had experienced his passion, the ultimate intimacy while Belle had experienced none of it. Half of the acts described with such relish she had never even heard of. Compared to Adam and this woman Belle was an ignorant child, one of the virgins that had been such a joke to them both, but one not even worthy of the partial seductions he had partaken in with them.

Her jealousy rose like bile in her throat as she realized that, in the weeks since the curse had been broken, Adam had never touched her with even half the passion described by his former lover. His kisses were long and sultry, but never hard or out of control. She had never found herself pushed against a wall, his mouth on her lips, her jaw, her neck. His hands had never strayed and while every stroke of his fingers spoke of love and affection, they had never slipped beneath the fabric of her clothes or brushed over any part of her that ached for his touch. He had been nothing short of a gentleman and she couldn’t help but compare his behaviours. Could anyone really change that much? To Belle’s mind he did love her, but he didn’t appear to want her. The other woman he had wanted, but there was no love in those letters. Shouldn’t there be an intersection of love and desire? That she wanted him was not in doubt, she accepted and revelled in the deep and passionate desire she had for Adam. Her fingers itched to touch him and alone at night she ached for him. She was jealous of the passion and the intimacy of those letters, that this woman was in no doubt that he wanted her, that he openly and ardently sought her pleasure and her bed. That she had experienced a side of him that Belle never had, the part of him that slipped his partner off the dance floor during a ball and took her in an alcove because his desire couldn’t wait or be denied.

How she wished she had never read those damn letters.

Hours passed, knocks on the door went unnoticed as her teeth bit her lip bloody, her mind in turmoil. Darkness had long fallen by the time her door opened and Adam stepped inside.

“Belle? Are you well, everyone is concerned.”

She turned and noticed she stood some distance away, his bright eyes showing worry and affection. Turning her head away she looked out the window again. He moved no closer and she closed her eyes against the warring emotions in her heart.

Anger and jealousy won out.
“Leave me alone Adam.” she snapped. “We both know you have an aversion the company of virgins.”

She didn’t hear him move instead his form was suddenly beside her, looming over her.

“What did you just say to me?” his voice was dangerously low, Beastlike and she dared a glance at his face to see an expression of confusion, hurt and anger.

Still, her darker emotions won.

“MC.” she snarled, enjoying the way the blood drained from his face in shock.

“The library.” he sighed, running a hand over his face. “I should have burned those stupid letters years ago, I had quite forgotten they even existed.”

With a loud sigh he sat down hard on the seat beside her.

“I was 14 and my father asked his mistress to seduce me,” he murmured, looking at the floor. “The most beautiful woman at court and I was starved for affection. My father thought I needed a lesson in being a man. He got more than he bargained for in the results.”

Belle turned a little to see his mouth twist in self-loathing.

“There’s a reason I was cursed, Belle and I deserved it utterly. I confess I never wanted you to know how awful I truly was.”

“All I see in my head is you….and her.”

“I’m sorry Belle, I never meant for any of that to see the light of day again, and I never wanted you hurt by it. What were you even doing in that part of the library?”

“Cleaning.” she retorted tartly, twin spots of color appearing on her cheeks as she remembered her interest in the nature of the books there.

“I haven’t thought about any of those women in many years, Belle. That man is not who I am anymore.”
“So you don’t have those feelings or desires since the curse?”

He looked up sharply.

“Of course to some extent I do. I’m a man, still feel desire.” his eyes had soften, his voice low and deep.

“Just not for me.” Belle whispered, her heart hurting.

“What on Earth would make you think that?” he exclaimed in confusion.

She couldn’t look at him.

“Those things, that she wrote in those letters...you barely touch me Adam. I know I’m not experienced but…”

Her words broke off as his growl reverberated through the room and she found herself lifted up and flung onto her bed before she could take a breath. Adam crawled up, resting over her, his hands holding her wrists at her sides as his body lowered to cover hers. There was a dangerous glint in his eyes as his mouth lowered to her ear and her heart hammed wildly in her chest.
“You think I don’t want you?” he growled. “I want you more than anything or anyone I have ever wanted.”

“Even her?” Belle gasped as he ground his hips hard against her. There was no doubt of the extent of his arousal.

“Especially her. You’re jealous.” he stated, looking down at her with a smile. “It’s not my former lifestyle that has you so upset, its that I’ve bedded her and not you.”

While it was true, Belle stubbornly refused to give him the satisfaction of admitting it. Instead she tried to twist away, only causing him to groan as her body slid against his. The sound set her toes curling.

“Don’t tease me Adam, I have a right to be upset.”

“You do, my love, I freely admit it. I don’t think about her, or any of them, I was a lust-crazed dilettante, none of it ever meant anything. I never felt any emotion but emptiness. You, Belle, you fill me up. I feel so much for you that I could spend my life saying it and it still wouldn't be enough. Don’t be jealous.”

“But….why then?”

“Why haven’t I thrown you over the nearest table, lifted your skirts and taken you like a rutting bull?”

The harshness in his tone couldn’t detract from the hot flood of need that his coarse words invoked. She could see it, she wanted it.

“Belle, you deserve better than to be used like that, at least the first time.” he smiled wryly. “When it is time I want what we share to be special, not just a physical act. I desire you, Belle, so much that I’m afraid to touch you for fear I might close control. I’m so sorry if I made you feel anything less than wanted.”

“But in the letters, you wouldn’t….?”

“Take a virgin into my bed? Trust me Belle, I ruined many an innocent in varying ways but I was a selfish monster. I didn’t want a constant experience of tears from the pain of that first time, or the leaving after. I simply wanted to take my pleasure and be done. There are many different ways to do that, my sweet and I took great delight in their willingness to submit to all of them.”

He pressed a gentle kiss to her neck, sighing loudly.

“God Belle, if you only knew how much I want that moment, that knowledge that as I sink inside you I am the only man to have ever claimed you, that you will have given me something that can only be given once. That moment can’t be given in a haze of lust, no matter how many times I’ve wanted to tear off your clothing and have you.”

His mouth captured hers in a kiss that knocked the breath out of her. Her hands were released and her fingers tangled in his hair, pulling it loose from its ribbon as his own fingers explored, touching in ways she had wanted for so long.

Breaking away, she looked into his eyes, filled with love and finally she could see the restrained passion there.

“I’m sorry Adam, I overreacted.”

He smiled, one palm sliding down the front of her body, his hand grasping her skirts.
“And I’m sorry I failed to see your needs. I should have known that passion would run strong with you being so brave and loving. But I can remedy that.”

Belle moaned as his palm slid up her leg, fingers tracing patterns along her inner thigh.

“Some things will have to wait until our wedding night, but let me do my absolute best to drive away any jealous thought you might have, and maybe teach you a thing or two.” He smirked as his fingers slid higher and Belle surrendered to wherever he wanted to take her, the women of his past soon forgotten as showed her again and again exactly how much he wanted her.

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