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Beauty and the Beast

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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

I disliked children, even as a child—
those vexing, nattering, excluding things.
Animals, on the other hand, were mild
and tractable. I loved the tapered wings

of birds, the softness of the household cat,
the slender flanks and melting eyes of deer.
Animals need our tenderness. And that
is why imprisonment is pleasant here,

where the rough beast attends my every need
and only asks to see me twice a day.
I brush his coat and warm his bed and feed
him chocolate drops, and I'm content to stay.

He's kindly natured, though his face is grim.
He won't risk children who might look like him.