



Cinderella

Description

Original tale by Charles Perrault modernized in 1902 by Pierre Féron, retouched by contesdefees.com. Illustrations by Gustave Doré, 1902.

Once upon a time, there was a gentleman who married, in second marriage, a woman, the most haughty and proud one had ever seen. She had two daughters of her own, who resembled her in every way. The husband had, on his side, a young girl, but of a sweetness and a kindness without example: she had that of her mother, who was the best person of the world.

The wedding was not sooner done than the mother-in-law burst her bad mood: she could not suffer the good qualities of this young child, which made her daughters even more hateful. She put her in charge of the vilest occupations in the house: it was she who cleaned the dishes and the furniture, who scrubbed the room of Madame and those of her daughters; she slept at the very top of the house, in an attic, on a nasty straw mattress, while her sisters were in rooms with parquet floors where they had fashionable beds, and mirrors where they could see themselves from head to foot. The poor girl suffered patiently and did not dare to complain to her father, who would have scolded her, because his wife ruled him entirely.

When she had done her work, she would go to the corner of the fireplace and sit in the ashes, which is why she was commonly called Cinderella in the house. However, Cinderella, with her wicked clothes, was a hundred times more dignified than her sisters, although they were dressed very beautifully.

One day the king's son gave a ball to which he invited all the good people of the kingdom. Our two damsels were also invited, for they were a great figure in the country. They were very busy choosing the clothes and hairstyles that would suit them best. Cinderella had to iron her sisters' clothes and fold their cuffs. All they talked about was how they would dress. – I, » said the older sister, « will wear my red velvet suit and my English trim. – Me, said the youngest, I will have only my ordinary skirt; but, in reward, I will put my coat with gold flowers and my barrier of diamonds, which is not of most indifferent. – The maid was sent for to dress the two-row horns, and the maid's flies were bought.

They called Cinderella to ask her advice, for she had good taste. Cinderella gave them the best advice

in the world, and even offered to do their hair, which they did. As they did their hair, they said to her, « Cinderella, would you be glad to go to the ball? – Alas, my ladies, you are making fun of me; that is not what I need. – You're right, we'd laugh if we saw a Cinderella going to the ball. – Any other Cinderella would have done their hair wrong, but she was good, and she did it perfectly well.

They went nearly two days without eating, so much were they transported with joy. They broke more than a dozen laces, by dint of tightening them to make their waist more slender, and they were in front of the mirror all day. At last the happy day arrived; they left, and Cinderella followed them with her eyes as long as she could.

When she saw them no more, she began to cry. Her godmother, who saw her crying, asked her what she had, « I wish... I wish... » She cried so hard that she could not finish. Her godmother, who was a fairy, said to her: « You would like to go to the ball, wouldn't you? – Alas, yes, » said Cinderella, sighing. – Well, will you be a good girl? » said her godmother, « I will make you go. – She led her to her room, and said, « Go into the garden and bring me a pumpkin. – Cinderella immediately went and picked the most beautiful pumpkin she could find, and brought it to her godmother, not knowing how this pumpkin could get her to the ball. Her godmother dug it out, and, having left only the bark, struck it with her wand, and the pumpkin was immediately changed into a beautiful carriage all gilded.

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Then she went to look in the mousetrap, where she found six mice all alive. She told Cinderella to raise the trap door a little, and, as each mouse came out, she gave it a blow with her wand, and the mouse was at once changed into a beautiful horse: which made a fine team of six horses, of a beautiful dappled mouse gray.

As she was at a loss as to what to make a coachman of: « I will see, » said Cinderella, « if there is not some rat in the dooby, we will make a coachman of him. – You are right, » said her godmother, « go and see. – Cinderella brought her the dooby, where there were three large rats. The fairy took one of the three, because of his master's beard, and, having touched him, he was changed into a fat coachman, who had one of the most beautiful whiskers that has ever been seen.

Then she said to him, « Go into the garden, and there you will find six lizards behind the watering can; bring them to me. » – And no sooner had she brought them, than her godmother changed them into six lackeys, who went up at once behind the carriage, with their colourful clothes, and stood attached to it as if they had done nothing else in their lives.

Then the fairy said to Cinderella, « Well, here's something to go to the ball with: aren't you glad? – Yes, but will I go like this, with my ugly clothes? – Her godmother only touched her with her wand, and at the same time her clothes were changed into gold and silver ones, all embellished with jewels; she then gave her a pair of glass slippers, the prettiest in the world. When she was thus adorned, she got into the carriage; but her godmother advised her, on all things, not to pass midnight, warning her that, if she remained at the ball a moment longer, her carriage would turn into a pumpkin, her horses into mice, her lackeys into lizards, and that her beautiful clothes would return to their first form.

She promised her godmother that she would not fail to leave the ball before midnight. She left, not feeling happy. The king's son, who had been informed that a great princess had just arrived who was not known, ran to receive her. He gave her his hand as she got out of the coach, and led her into the room where the company was. There was then a great silence; one ceased to dance, and the violins did not play any more, so much one was attentive to contemplate this unknown person. The king even, as old as he was, did not let himself look at her, and to say softly to the queen that it was a long time that he had not seen such a pleasant person. All the ladies were attentive to consider her hairstyle and her clothes, to have, from the next day, similar ones, provided that there were fabrics beautiful enough, and workers skilled enough.



The king's son put her in the most honorable place, and then invited her to dance. She danced with such grace that she was admired even more. She went to sit with her sisters and did them a thousand kindnesses; she told them about the oranges and lemons that the prince had given her, which surprised them very much, for in reality they did not recognize her.

While they were talking in this way, Cinderella heard the bell ring at three-quarters past eleven; she immediately made a great bow to the company, and went away as fast as she could. As soon as she arrived, she went to her godmother, and after thanking her, she told her that she would like to go to the ball again the next day.

As she was busy telling her godmother everything that had happened at the ball, the two sisters knocked on the door; Cinderella went to open it. « She said to them, yawning, rubbing her eyes, and

lying down as if she had just woken up, but she had not felt like sleeping since they had parted. – If you had come to the ball, » said one of her sisters, « you would not have been bored; there came the kindest princess, the kindest that ever was seen; she did us a thousand courtesies; she gave us oranges and lemons. » – Cinderella did not feel happy; she asked them the name of this princess; but they answered that she was not known, that the king's son would give all things in the world to know who she was. Cinderella smiled and said to them, « Was she a good girl? My God, how happy you are! Could I not see her? Alas, Mademoiselle Javotte, lend me your yellow suit that you wear every day. – Really, says Mademoiselle Javotte, I am of this opinion! To lend my suit to a naughty Cinderella like that! I would have to be very crazy. Cinderella was expecting this refusal, and she was quite happy about it, because she would have been greatly embarrassed if her sister had been willing to lend her her costume.

The next day the two sisters returned to the ball, and so did Cinderella, but even more adorned than the first time.



The young maiden was not bored and forgot what her godmother had recommended to her; so she heard the first stroke of midnight, when she did not think it was yet eleven o'clock; she got up, and ran away as lightly as a deer would have done. The prince followed her. She dropped one of her glass slippers, which the prince carefully picked up. Cinderella arrived home, out of breath, without a carriage, without a lackey, and with her bad clothes; nothing having remained of her magnificence, but one of her little slippers, the same as the one she had dropped.

The guards at the palace gate were asked if they had seen a princess come out: they said they had seen no one come out but a young girl in very poor clothes, who looked more like a peasant than a maiden.

When the two sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked them if they had had any more fun, and if the beautiful lady had been there; they told her that she had, but that she had run away when midnight struck, and so quickly that she had dropped one of her little glass slippers, the prettiest in the world;

that the king's son had picked it up, and that he was certainly very anxious to know the person to whom the little slipper belonged.

They were right; for, a few days later, the king's son had it published, with the sound of a trumpet, that he would marry the one whose foot would fit the slipper. They began to try it on the princesses, then the duchesses and the whole court, but to no avail. They brought it to the two sisters, who did their best to fit their foot into the slipper, but they could not. Cinderella, looking at them, and recognizing her slipper, said with a laugh, « Let me see if it won't fit me! » Her sisters laughed and laughed at her. The gentleman who was trying on the slipper, having looked carefully at Cinderella, said that it was very fair, and that he had orders to try it on all the girls. He made Cinderella sit down, and, approaching the slipper to her little foot, he saw that it fit without difficulty, and that it was fitted like a glove. The astonishment of the two sisters was great, but even greater when Cinderella drew from her pocket the other little slipper, which she put on her foot. Thereupon came the godmother, who, having given a blow with her wand on Cinderella's clothes, made them even more magnificent than all the others.



Then her two sisters recognized her for the person they had seen at the ball. They threw themselves at her feet to ask forgiveness for all the ill treatment they had caused her. Cinderella lifted them up and told them, kissing them, that she forgave them wholeheartedly, and that she begged them to love her forever. They took her to the young prince, dressed as she was, and a few days later he married her. Cinderella, who was a good girl, had her two sisters lodged in the palace, and married them that very day to two great lords of the court.

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