



# Cinderella

Kindness, Perseverance

In one of the most famous classic fairy tales of all time, we learn about modest Cinderella, who has to stand the heartless behaviour of her stepmother and half-sisters. However, thanks to the help of a magic fairy, she will finally have a happy ending.



🕒 28 min

😊 5+

**A long, long time ago**, in a beautiful kingdom with a big, majestic castle, there lived an old widower who had a very beautiful daughter named Ella. He loved her above all else, trying to raise as well as he could being a single dad. She had a very kind heart, just like her mother had, and she was very hardworking and always loved to help.

After many long years of loneliness, Ella's father met another woman. He decided he was going to marry her. She seemed to be a kind, loving person at first. He thought she would make a wonderful mother for Ella, but the truth was that his wife-to-be was spiteful, selfish, self-centred, and as vain as a peacock.

She revealed her truly **arrogant** and hateful nature right after the wedding, when it was too late for him to change his mind. Unfortunately, the woman's two daughters, Nina and Lena, weren't any better.

They were lazy and mean, and as vain as their mother. Most of their time was spent in front of a mirror, where they would stare at themselves for hours. They particularly loved brushing their brittle hair, putting on green eyeshadow and soaking their big feet in a large tub of water.

Since the very first day she moved in, Ella's new stepmother started treating her terribly. She was cruel and unkind, because she couldn't accept that her husband's daughter was far sweeter, more beautiful and more skilled at almost anything than her own two daughters.

Ella's father travelled a lot for work and wasn't often home, and whenever he was away the three arrogant women would force the poor girl to be **their personal handmaiden**. She had to serve them, comb their brittle hair and attend to their every whim, as if they were queens.

Every day, they would give her the worst and dirtiest jobs. Sometimes they would make her work so hard that she wouldn't be able to leave the house for several days in a row. She would have to wash piles and piles of dirty, smelly dishes; wipe the floors covered in muck; cook their favorite food (spinach, ew!); sew their stinky socks with holes; and sweep the hearth of what they'd burned of hers that day.

What made her stepmother and sisters even angrier was the fact that even though her face was always smeared with ash, it didn't take away from her beauty in the slightest. Somehow, Ella was even prettier when she was dirty! Her evil stepmother, however, didn't want her to know this.

"Look at yourself, you filthy girl! Even your dress is black with soot from all that crawling through the ash and cinder in the fireplaces. From now on, **I'll call you Cinderella!**" her stepmother said, mockingly, and after that she and her terrible daughters would only ever call her Cinder-ella.

As time passed, Cinderella's father stayed away longer and longer. When he came home, her stepmother had him wrapped around her finger, and he was so bewitched by her that he never noticed that his daughter was being kept away from him.

Soon, her stepsisters stole all her pretty clothes, leaving her with only two old, ragged dresses. They even kicked her out of her own room and forced her to sleep in the attic while they both enjoyed the comfort of their new, fancy bedrooms. As they slept under soft, downy blankets, Cinderella was left only with an old raggedy blanket from her childhood.

Poor Cinderella had to put up with their cruelty every single day, not knowing how to escape. When her father came home, she never seemed to be able to find him. Sometimes she hid in a corner and **wept in silence**. She didn't dare to complain - who would listen to her anyway?

Then one day, the family was invited to a three-day ball at the royal palace. It had been announced that the handsome young prince was going to pick a bride there.

Cinderella's stepmother and sisters were practically **jumping with joy** as they read the invitation, and Nina and Lena immediately started shrieking about the gowns and jewellery with which they would surely enchant the prince.

They argued and argued about whose hat or necklace was more beautiful, all while Cinderella mopped the dirty floors and listened. They compared beaded gowns and satin shoes to match their golden necklaces, completely ignoring Ella. To make the drudgery a bit more bearable, she would often sing songs while working, and **all the birds on the trees outside usually joined in.**

Cinderella was, of course, also excited about the ball, hoping she could go as well. She wanted very badly to see the prince with her own eyes, but when she asked her stepmother for permission to attend, she just laughed.

"Don't be stupid, Cinderella. I'm sure the prince wouldn't want to look at a ragged little creature like you. Look at yourself! You're all dirty again."

"Have you heard her, Nina?" Lena screamed out. "Cinderella wants to go to the royal ball!" Nina came into the room with a sneer on her face.

"Cinderella wants to go to the ball? Our Cinderella, caked with dirt all over her face and under her fingernails? What could she possibly wear to meet the prince, her rags? Or maybe she's got a potato sack she can go in!" Both girls **started cackling.**

"Well, she could take a broom with her to sweep all the cobwebs from the golden ceilings," snickered Lena.

Cinderella was super upset and tried very hard not to cry. She wished her father was home to hear this, but then - what would he do? That made her more sad, so she just thought of happy things.

"Stop dreaming, you fool. Now go and see that you've finished all your work," said her stepmother sternly, and she **marched out of the room**, followed by her two snickering daughters.

For the next few days, everything in the house revolved around the ball and Cinderella's stepsisters, who spent all their time preening, trying on dresses and jewels, completely unable to make up their minds about what to wear to attract the prince's attention.

Before they knew it, **the big day arrived**. The house was bustling with last-minute preparations for their departure, and everyone was full of joy and excited to finally meet the royal family. Everyone, of course, except Cinderella, who had been walking around the house like a ghost all morning. When her stepmother and stepsisters finally climbed in the carriage, she had **tears in her eyes**.

"You had better get to work, Cinderella, if you want to finish before we get home!" her stepmother yelled from the carriage. "And stop crying! You know that you would be a laughingstock in the palace! We're just saving you from embarrassment!"

**The horses neighed** as if to say goodbye and we love you, then trotted towards the palace.

Cinderella ran back inside. Feeling completely blue and miserable, she sat down in a corner filled with cobwebs and wept.

"If only I could meet the prince," she muttered through her tears. "If only I could go to the beautiful ball and be beautiful!" Her sobbing echoed **through the whole house**.

Suddenly, she heard a familiar voice. She looked up and saw a beautiful, magical fairy. The fairy was wearing clothes that sparkled different colors as she flew close to Cinderella. Pinks and greens and blues, by the time she landed next to her.

This must be her fairy godmother, she thought. She hoped. She wished.

"I am your fairy godmother, sweetheart." Then she sneezed. Her cheeks turned red. "Sorry, allergies, you know." It made Cinderella laugh.

“Don’t be sad, my dear child,” the fairy said. “If you truly want to go to the ball, I can get you there. Now go to the vegetable garden and fetch me a big, fat pumpkin, please.”

Cinderella had no idea what a pumpkin had to do with the ball, but she ran to the garden straight away. She picked up the biggest pumpkin she could find, and as soon as she put it on the ground in front of the fairy, it turned into a **beautiful golden carriage!**

Then the fairy spoke again: “Wonderful, my dear. Now find me four mice, if you please. I’m sure there are a few running around the pantry.” Cinderella thought about it and worried. She’d been feeding a family of mice secretly. Would they be in danger?

Cinderella hurried to the pantry and quickly returned with four grey mice **squeaking in a basket**. As soon as she put them on the ground, they turned into **four gorgeous grey horses!** They looked at her and snorted, pawing and almost smiling at her.

The girl had never seen such miracles in her life. She couldn’t believe her eyes and just stood there staring at the horses and the carriage, not uttering a sound. Pumpkins and mice, unbelievable!

“This carriage is going to take you to the royal palace, my darling girl,” the fairy said gently. “There’s just one thing left to do. After all, it wouldn’t be wise to appear in front of the prince in a dress like this, would it?” And, just like that, Cinderella’s old, ragged dress, smeared black with ash and soot, suddenly turned into a **breath-taking ball gown**. When she looked at her feet, she was wearing the loveliest little slippers she’d ever seen.

Her gown was white with silver teensy bells and blue satin around the edges, the shoes were pure blue satin with white bows.

“Now remember, my dear, you must be back before midnight. This is very important, because that’s when my fairy spell will be broken!”

Eager and excited, Cinderella climbed into the carriage and **let it take her to the palace.**

When Cinderella entered the palace, the private guards sent a message to the prince to tell him that one more princess had arrived at the ball - and this one more beautiful than any of the other princesses yet!

No one had ever heard of her, though. The prince himself came to greet her. When he saw the beautiful, mysterious princess, he immediately fell in love. He gently took her hand and led her into a great hall full of honoured guests and **delightful violin melodies.**

The moment they stepped in, the whole room fell silent. All of the guests stopped dancing and even the musicians stopped playing. Everyone just stood there and stared in awe at the beautiful woman on the prince's arm!

A hum of excited voices soon filled the hall when the guests started asking one another:

"Such a striking girl! She's so pretty! Do you know her? Who is she? Where has she come from?"

And: "What a gorgeous girl! Have you seen or met her before? Wow!"

The king was charmed as well, and he turned to the queen and whispered in her ear that he had no idea who the girl was, but that she was incredibly beautiful and, more importantly, seemed to be making his son smile from ear to ear. They had never seen the **prince look so happy!**

All the ladies admired her stunning dress. They'd never in their lives seen such delicate fabrics! At a far table, Nina and Lena sat alone and ate grapes, full of envy and anger. They stared at the mysterious princess with their mouths open, completely dumbstruck and very jealous. The longer they gaped at her, the more familiar she looked, but they didn't even imagine that they might know her!

Then the prince asked Cinderella to dance. The musicians quickly collected themselves and **started playing again**. The prince was completely mesmerized by the girl, and she by him. The whole time they were dancing, he couldn't take his eyes off her. They danced and danced all night, never stopping even to have a drink of water. They just looked at each other happily and waltzed the night away.

Suddenly **the bells started ringing**, announcing fifteen minutes to midnight.

"Oh no, I have to go!" Cinderella cried.

"Wait! Will I see you again?" the prince exclaimed.

"I'll try," she said, and she curtsied quickly to the prince and **scuttled away in her slippers**, climbed into her carriage and headed back to her dreaded home. Cinderella spent the whole trip trying to think of a way to get to the palace the next day as well.

As soon as she arrived home, the clock struck midnight. Her carriage and horses once again became a pumpkin and her four favorite mice, and her dress shrunk back down into dirty, ugly rags.

In the morning, the door into the kitchen **swung open** and Cinderella's nasty stepsisters rushed eagerly inside. They couldn't wait to tell her about the magnificent ball and all the things she had missed. They even told her all about the mysterious princess in the beautiful dress, who had kept the prince to herself all night before running away very suddenly.

Cinderella, who was busy **putting clean pots and dishes** back into the cupboard, listened to their stories, and when they finished she asked them what the name of the princess was.

Of course, they couldn't answer her question. No one knew her name, not even the prince! He had absolutely no idea who the mysterious girl was, which is why he had asked every single person at the ball about who she was. He was desperate to find her!

“She must have been truly gorgeous,” Cinderella said, cautiously. “You’re so lucky that you saw her. I wish I could see her as well? Do you think perhaps I could borrow your yellow gown and go with you tonight, my dear sister?”

“You? Borrow my dress?” Nina burst into mocking laughter. “Are you crazy? I’d sooner lend it to the chimney sweep!” Still laughing, she left the kitchen, **slamming the door behind her.**

Cinderella didn’t expect anything else, of course, and was actually happy that her sister had said no!

The day flew by fast. The sisters spent it pushing each other away from the mirror so they could use it. They fought over which dress to wear to the ball and how to wear their hair. Cinderella was, of course, waiting on them hand and foot, while also doing all the other jobs around the house that needed doing.

She gathered the eggs from clucking hens, swept and mopped the floors, wiped down the tables after her sisters had used their beauty powders and finally sat to rest.

Before they knew it, Nina, Lena and their mother were back at the palace and having a **good time at the ball.** The great hall was full of guests, just like the day before. They were all dancing, feasting and enjoying themselves. They smiled and laughed, but mostly everyone was waiting to see if the beautiful princess returned!

Suddenly, everyone fell silent. When they looked at the door, they once again saw the mysterious princess. She was wearing a gown that was even more beautiful than the one before. It was red this time, shining in the candlelight with sparkles and a dark purple waist. Her slippers seemed to be made of crystal glass.

Again the prince went to meet her at the door before gently taking her hand and leading her to the dance floor. They talked and laughed and danced, and Cinderella was so happy that she forgot to watch the clock. Unfortunately, this time the bells weren’t rung, so she had no warning!



She panicked when she realised it was just a few minutes to midnight!

“I’m so sorry!” she said to the prince, and before he knew what was happening, she was darting out of his arms and **rushing out of the hall**. The prince just stood there in shock. When he finally gathered his wits about him again, he followed after her, but she was already gone! The only thing she had left behind was one of her tiny glass slippers lying on the palace stairs.

When midnight came, Cinderella still hadn’t reached the last palace gate. All of a sudden, the **spell lost all its power**. The carriage disappeared, her mice ran in all different directions in fear, and she was in her old dress smeared with ash again. For some reason, she was still wearing one of her pretty little slippers! She took it off and held it close to her as she ran home as fast as she could **in her bare feet**.

The prince, too, had run toward the palace gates, and when he passed the last guards, he turned around and asked them if they had seen the princess leaving. But they hadn’t seen anyone except some poor girl in old dirty clothes.

Luckily, Cinderella still got home before her family. When she heard her stepmother and sisters **coming in their carriage**, she quickly ran out to greet them.

“How was the ball, my dear sisters? Did you have a good time? Did you see the mysterious princess again?”

Her sisters told her that the princess had indeed arrived, but that she had, again, quickly run off right before midnight.

“The prince was with her all night! He’s surely fallen in love with her,” Lena said, miserable.

“Perhaps he won’t find her, and he’ll fall in love with me instead,” Nina said, hopefully.

A few days later, the royal **trumpeters sounded their trumpets** and the prince announced that he had fallen in love with a mysterious princess. He didn't know who she was, but he had a slipper she had left behind, and he would only marry the girl whose foot would fit it perfectly.

All over the kingdom, girls and princesses tried to put the pretty glass slipper on, forcing their feet inside with all their might, but each and every time the shoe was either too small or too big. Even Nina and Lena tried to squeeze their giant toes inside the poor lost slipper, but nothing worked, no matter how hard they tried.

Cinderella watched the whole spectacle in silence. After a while she gathered all her courage and stepped a little closer.

"Please, may I try the slipper on," she asked.

Her sisters started **laughing at her**, but the prince's servant insisted that she try it on as well. After all, the prince had ordered him to have every girl he met try it on, no matter who she was! Cinderella sat down and easily slipped her foot into the slipper. It was a perfect fit.

Her stepsisters just stared at her, completely stunned.

"Clearly it's a mistake!" they shouted, angrily.

When Cinderella took out the second slipper, which she had been hiding in her pocket, and put it on as well, they got even angrier. "She's nothing!" they screamed. But the servant ignored them.

Then, would you believe it? Cinderella's old dress turned into **the most beautiful golden gown** in the whole world and the dirt slid right off her face, as if it had never been there.

Only then did Nina and Lena realise that their stepsister was the gorgeous, mysterious princess who had enchanted everyone and who the prince wanted to marry. They immediately dropped down to their knees and begged Cinderella to forgive them for all the suffering they had put her through and

all their unkindness and cruelty.

Cinderella took her sisters by their hands and kindly spoke: "I forgive you for everything, dear sisters. I only wish we could have **loved one another earlier.**"

After that, the royal servant took Cinderella to the palace. As soon as the prince laid his eyes on her, he was beside himself with joy. Before long, there was a wedding, and it was the most marvellous wedding the kingdom **had ever seen.** Cinderella became a real princess, and for the rest of her life she was cherished and **loved by everyone** for her kindness and her good heart.