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Cinderella

Charles Perrault

Long ago, once upon a time there was a beautiful and sweet little girl. When she was very small, her mother fell ill. On her deathbed, the mother called her daughter to her. She said, "Always live well and truthful and the world will be good to you too. Right after those words, she closed her eyes forever. The girl's father was a wealthy businessman who often traveled. Not long after the death of his wife, he married again.

With his new wife, the businessman had two more daughters. They were beautiful on the outside but bad on the inside and were very mean to their half-sister. They took away her beautiful clothes and made her do all the chores around the house. At night she was not allowed to sleep in a nice soft bed, but had to lie in front of the fireplace. As a result, her clothes were always covered in ashes and she was called Cinderella. Cinderella constantly thought about her mother's words and never complained about anything she had to do.

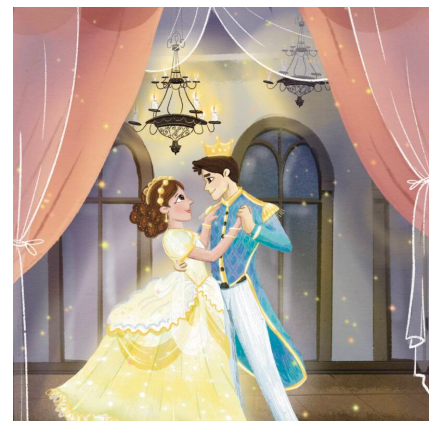


When Cinderella's father went on another trip, he asked his daughters what they wanted. The youngest daughters asked for the most expensive clothes and most beautiful jewelry. Cinderella only wanted the first twig that would bump into her father's hat on the return trip. On the way back, Cinderella's father drove under a hazel tree. A twig brushed past his head and he remembered the promise to his eldest daughter. At home, Cinderella was overjoyed with the twig. She plants it on her mother's grave and starts to cry. Through her tears, the twig grew into a beautiful hazel. Every day Cinderella visited the grave and every day there was a little white bird in the tree. Whenever Cinderella wished for something, the little bird would fulfill her wish.

When all three girls were old enough to be married, the king happened to throw a party that would last three days. All the beautiful girls in the country were invited. After all, the prince was looking for a bride. The sisters were also invited, but her stepmother wouldn't let Cinderella go. 'You don't have any nice clothes to wear to the ball anyway,' Cinderella was told. Cinderella listened, but as she helped her sisters comb their hair and put on dresses she cried softly. Once everyone was off to the ball, Cinderella sat down under the hazel tree and begged the little bird for gold and silver. Immediately a magnificent dress and matching shoes fell down. Cinderella quickly changed her clothes and went to the ball.



At the ball, the prince couldn't take his eyes off Cinderella and danced with her all evening. No one recognized the girl. When the prince wanted to take her home, Cinderella quickly escapes. The next evening the exact same thing happened. In an even more beautiful dress, Cinderella arrives at the party and dances with the prince all evening. And again, she is gone before the prince knew who she is.

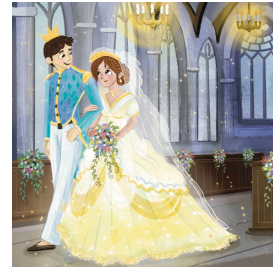


And on the third night of the party as well, Cinderella went to the hazel. This time she got the most beautiful dress she has ever seen and all-gold shoes. Again, Cinderella and the prince danced the night away. This time the prince was determined not to let Cinderella escape and had made the stairs sticky. As a result, Cinderella lost her left shoe as she fled home.

The prince grabs the shoe from the stairs and decides to go in search of the girl. 'The one who fits this shoe will be my wife.' Many girls tried to put on the shoe, but it didn't fit anyone. The mean sisters tried, but both have feet that are way too big. 'Could I also try it on?' asked Cinderella shyly.



She was allowed to, and to everyone's surprise, the shoe fitted perfectly. Then the prince recognized her and took her to his castle. Cinderella and the prince get married and live happily ever after.



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