

Cinderella

Once there was a girl who was very kind and patient. Her wicked stepmother called her Cinderella because she often sat by the fireplace close to the cinders.

Her stepmother made her work all day long. She had to light the fire, prepare the meals, wash the dishes, clean the house, and make beautiful gowns for her two stepsisters, who were very ugly and very mean.

Cinderella was always dressed in rags, but she was more beautiful in her rags than her stepsisters in their beautiful gowns.

One day the King and Queen gave a ball. Cinderella helped her stepmother and her stepsisters to get ready. Then the three of them went to the ball.

Cinderella was all alone. She began to cry. Suddenly her Fairy Godmother appeared. "Why are you crying?" she asked Cinderella.

"I, too, would have liked to go to the ball," Cinderella replied.

"Then you shall go," said her Fairy Godmother. "Bring me a pumpkin from the garden."

With one touch of her magic wand, Cinderella's Fairy Godmother turned the pumpkin into a beautiful carriage. Then she took six mice from a trap. A touch of the magic wand turned them into six prancing horses. In the cellar Cinderella's Fairy Godmother found a large rat. She turned him into a large coachman with a great mustache.

Another touch of the magic wand and Cinderella's rags turned into a beautiful silver gown covered with diamonds. On her feet were a pair of little glass slippers.

As she stepped into the carriage, her Fairy Godmother said, "Have a good time, but remember this. You must leave the ball before midnight. When the clock strikes twelve, your carriage will turn into a pumpkin, your horses into mice, your coachman into a rat, and your gown into rags."

Cinderella promised to leave the ball before midnight. Then they drove away.

Cinderella was so beautiful that the prince danced with her all night. She forgot about her Fairy Godmother's warning. The clock began to strike twelve. Cinderella ran out of the palace and down the stairs. In her hurry she lost one of her glass slippers.

The prince ran after Cinderella, But it was too late. By the time he reached the bottom of the stairs, her beautiful carriage was gone. The prince found only her little glass slipper.

The prince had fallen in love with Cinderella. He wanted to find her, but he didn't even know her name or where she lived. He sent a page to every house in the kingdom. In each house the page asked every girl to try on the slipper. But their feet were much too big for the tiny slipper.

At last the page came to the house where Cinderella lived. Her two stepsisters hurried to try on the little slipper. But their feet were much too big. No matter how hard they tried, they could not get the slipper on.

Then it was Cinderella's turn. The slipper fit her perfectly. At that moment her Fairy Godmother appeared and dressed Cinderella in a gown of shimmering gold.

Cinderella and the prince were married. Because she was so kind, Cinderella forgave her wicked stepmother and stepsisters, and they all lived happily ever after.