

World of Tales

Stories for children, folktales, fairy tales and fables from around the world

Cinderella

Cinderella is a European folktale about a girl, her evil step-sisters and step-mother and a precious slipper.

One of the most famous bedtime stories in the world, Cinderella has different versions written by some of the most notable fairy tale authors: Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Giambattista Basile. Pick your favorite and start reading!

The wife of a rich man fell sick: and when she felt that her end drew nigh, she called her only daughter to her bedside, and said, "Always be a good girl, and I will look down from heaven and watch over you." Soon afterwards she shut her eyes and died, and was buried in the garden; and

World of Tales

"Good-for-nothing thing want in the parlor?" said they; and they took away her clothes, and gave her an old frock to put on, and laughed at her and turned her into the kitchen.

Then she was forced to do hard work; to rise early, before daylight, to bring the water, to make the fire, to cook and to wash. She had no bed to lie down on, but was made to lie by the hearth among the ashes, and they called her Cinderella.

It happened once that her father was going to the fair, and asked his wife's daughters what he should bring to them. "Fine clothes," said the first. "Pearls and diamonds," said the second. "Now, child," said he to his own daughter, "what will you have?" "The first sprig, dear father, that rubs against your hat on your way home," said she. Then he bought for the two first the fine clothes and pearls and diamonds they had asked for: and on his way home, as he rode through a green copse, a sprig of hazel brushed against him, so he broke it off and when he got home he gave it to his daughter. Then she took it, and went to her mother's grave and planted it there, and cried so much that it was watered with her tears; and there it grew and became a fine tree, and soon a little bird came and built its nest upon the tree, and talked with her and watched over her, and brought her whatever she wished for.

Now it happened that the king of the land held a feast which was to last three days, and out of those who came to it his son was to choose a bride for himself; and Cinderella's two sisters were asked to come. So they called Cinderella, and said, "Now, comb our hair, brush our shoes, and tie our sashes for us, for we are going to dance at the king's feast." Then she did as she was told, but when all was done she could not help crying, for she thought to herself, she would have liked to go to the dance too, and at last she begged her mother very hard to let her go, "You! Cinderella?" said she; "you who have nothing to wear, no clothes at all, and who cannot even dance—you want to go to the ball?" And when she kept on begging, to get rid of her, she said at last, "I will throw this basinful of peas into the ash heap, and if you have picked them all out in two hours' time you shall go to the feast too." Then she threw the peas into the ashes; but the little maiden ran out at the back door into the garden, and cried out—

"Hither, thither, through the sky, turtle-doves and linnets, fly!

Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay, hither, thither, haste away!

One and all, come, help me quick! haste ye, haste ye—pick, pick, pick!"

Then first came two white doves; and next two turtle-doves; and after them all the little birds under heaven came, and the little doves stooped their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began to pick, pick, pick, and picked out all the good grain and put it into a dish, and left the ashes. At the end of one hour the work was done, and all flew out again at the windows. Then she brought the dish to her mother. But the mother said, "No, no! indeed, you have no clothes and cannot dance; you shall not go." And when Cinderella begged very hard to go, she said, "If you can in one hour's time pick two of these dishes of pease out of the ashes, you shall go too." So she shook two dishes of peas into the ashes; but the little maiden went out into the garden at the back of the house, and called as before and all the birds came flying, and in half an hour's time all was done, and out they flew again. And then Cinderella took the dishes to her mother, rejoicing to think that she should now go to the ball. But her mother said, "It is all of no use, you cannot go; you have no clothes, and cannot dance; and you would only put us to shame;" and off she went with her two daughters to the feast.

Now when all were gone, and nobody left at home, Cinderella went sorrowfully and sat down under the hazel-tree, and cried out—

World of Tales

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The king's son soon came up to her, and took her by the hand and danced with her and no one else; and he never left her hand, but when any one else came to ask her to dance, he said, "This lady is dancing with me." Thus they danced till a late hour of the night, and then she wanted to go home; and the king's son said, "I shall go and take care of you to your home," for he wanted to see where the beautiful maid lived. But she slipped away from him unawares, and ran off towards home, and the prince followed her; then she jumped up into the pigeon-house and shut the door. So he waited till her father came home, and told him that the unknown maiden who had been at the feast had hidden herself in the pigeon-house. But when they had broken open the door they found no one within; and as they came back into the house, Cinderella lay, as she always did, in her dirty frock by the ashes; for she had run as quickly as she could through the pigeon-house and on to the hazel-tree, and had there taken off her beautiful clothes, and laid them beneath the tree, that the bird might carry them away; and had seated herself amid the ashes again in her little old frock.

The next day, when the feast was again held, and her father, mother and sisters were gone, Cinderella went to the hazel-tree, and all happened as the evening before.

The king's son, who was waiting for her, took her by the hand and danced with her; and, when any one asked her to dance, he said as before, "This lady is dancing with me." When night came she wanted to go home; and the king's son went with her, but she sprang away from him all at once into the garden behind her father's house. In this garden stood a fine large pear-tree; and Cinderella jumped up into it without being seen. Then the king's son waited till her father came home, and said to him, "The unknown lady has slipped away, and I think she must have sprung into the pear-tree." The father ordered an axe to be brought, and they cut down the tree, but found no one upon it. And when they came back into the kitchen, there lay Cinderella in the ashes as usual; for she had slipped down on the other side of the tree, and carried her beautiful clothes back to the bird at the hazel-tree, and then put on her little old frock.

The third day, when her father and mother and sisters were gone, she went again into the garden, and said—

"Shake, shake, hazel-tree, gold and silver over me!"

Then her kind friend the bird brought a dress still finer than the former one, and slippers which were all of gold; and the king's son danced with her alone, and when any one else asked her to dance, he said, "This lady is my partner." Now when night came she wanted to go home; and the king's son would go with her, but she managed to slip away from him, though in such a hurry that she dropped her left golden slipper upon the stairs.

So the prince took the shoe, and went the next day to the king, his father, and said, "I will take for my wife the lady that this golden shoe fits."

Then both the sisters were overjoyed to hear this; for they had beautiful feet, and had no doubt that they could wear the golden slipper. The eldest went first into the room where the slipper was, and wanted to try it on, and the mother stood by. But her big toe could not go into it, and the shoe was altogether much too small for her. Then the mother said, "Never mind, cut it off. When you are queen you will not care about toes; you will not want to go on foot." So the silly girl cut her big toe off, and squeezed the shoe on, and went to the king's son. Then he took her for his bride, and rode away with her.

World of Tales

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The shoe is too small, and not made for you!

Prince! prince! look again for thy bride,

For she's not the true one that sits by thy side."

Then the prince looked at her foot, and saw by the blood that streamed from it what a trick she had played him. So he brought the false bride back to her home, and said, "This is not the right bride; let the other sister try and put on the slipper." Then she went into the room and got her foot into the shoe, all but the heel, which was too large. But her mother squeezed it in till the blood came, and took her to the king's son; and he rode away with her. But when they came to the hazel-tree, the little dove sat there still, and sang as before. Then the king's son looked down, and saw that the blood streamed from the shoe. So he brought her back again also. "This is not the true bride," said he to the father; "have you no other daughters?"

Then Cinderella came and she took her clumsy shoe off, and put on the golden slipper, and it fitted as if it had been made for her. And when he drew near and looked at her face the prince knew her, and said, "This is the right bride."

Then he took Cinderella on his horse and rode away. And when they came to the hazel-tree the white dove sang—

"Prince! prince! take home thy bride,

For she is the true one that sits by thy side!"

Grimm's Fairy Stories



Notes: This book contains 25 fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm.

Author: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

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These are the links for other translations or different authors - The Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault and Giambattista Basile!

[Cinderella, Or The Little Glass Slipper by Charles Perrault](#)

[Ashputtel by the Brothers Grimm](#)

[Aschenputtel by the Brothers Grimm](#)

[Cinderella by the Brothers Grimm](#)

[Cenerentola by Giambattista Basile](#)

World of Tales

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