Cinderella

Once upon a time, there was a widower who married a proud and haughty woman as his second wife. She had two [daughters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_hero), who were equally vain and selfish. By his first wife, he'd had a beautiful young daughter, a girl of unparalleled goodness and sweet temper. The [stepmother](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stepmother) and her daughters forced the first daughter into servitude, where she was made to work day and night in menial chores. After the girl's chores were done for the day, she would retire to the barren and cold room given to her, and would curl up near the fireplace in an effort to stay warm. She would often arise covered in cinders, giving rise to the mocking nickname "Cinderella". Cinderella bore the abuse patiently and dared not tell her father, since his wife controlled him entirely.

One day, the Prince invited all the young ladies in the land to a [ball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball_%28dance%29), planning to choose a wife from amongst them. The two [stepsisters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Step_family) gleefully planned their wardrobes for the ball, and taunted Cinderella by telling her that maids were not invited to the ball.

As the sisters departed to the ball, Cinderella cried in despair. Her [Fairy Godmother](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairy_Godmother) magically appeared and immediately began to transform Cinderella from house servant to the young lady she was by birth, all in the effort to get Cinderella to the ball. She turned a [pumpkin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pumpkin) into a golden carriage, mice into horses, a rat into a coachman, and lizards into [footmen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Footman). She then turned Cinderella's rags into a beautiful jewelled gown, complete with a delicate pair of glass slippers. The Godmother told her to enjoy the ball, but warned that she had to return before midnight, when the [spells](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_%28paranormal%29) would be broken.

At the ball, the entire [court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noble_court) was entranced by Cinderella, especially the Prince. At this first ball, Cinderella remembers to leave before midnight. Back home, Cinderella graciously thanked her Godmother. She then greeted the stepsisters, who had not recognized her earlier and talked of nothing but the beautiful girl at the ball.

Another ball was held the next evening, and Cinderella again attended with her Godmother's help. The Prince had become even more infatuated, and Cinderella in turn became so enchanted by him she lost track of time and left only at the final stroke of midnight, losing one of her glass slippers on the steps of the palace in her haste. The Prince chased her, but outside the palace, the guards saw only a simple country girl leave. The Prince pocketed the slipper and vows to find and marry the girl to whom it belonged. Meanwhile, Cinderella kept the other slipper, which did not disappear when the spell was broken.

The Prince tried the slipper on all the women in the kingdom. When the Prince arrives at Cinderella's villa, the stepsisters tried in vain to win over the prince. Cinderella asked if she might try, while the stepsisters taunted her. Naturally, the slipper fitted perfectly, and Cinderella produced the other slipper for good measure. The stepsisters both pleaded for forgiveness, and Cinderella agreed to let bygones be bygones.

Cinderella married the Prince, and the stepsisters also married two lords.

The first moral of the story is that beauty is a treasure, but graciousness is priceless. Without it, nothing is possible; with it, one can do anything.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinderella#cite_note-pitt.edu-7)

However, the second moral of the story mitigates the first one and reveals the criticism that Perrault is aiming at: "Another moral: Without doubt it is a great advantage to have intelligence, courage, good breeding, and common sense. These, and similar talents come only from heaven, and it is good to have them. However, even these may fail to bring you success, without the blessing of a godfather or a godmother."[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinderella#cite_note-pitt.edu-7)