

# Cinderella

(A Retelling from Grimm's version)

The wife of a rich man became sick, and as she felt that her end was drawing near, she called her only daughter to her bedside. "Dear child," she said, "be good and dutiful and kind. Plant a little tree on my grave, and when you want something, just shake the tree, and you shall get what you want. I will help you in time of need. I will always protect you, and be near you." Thereupon she closed her eyes and died. Every day the maiden went out to her mother's grave and wept. When winter came, the snow spread a white sheet over the grave, and when the spring sun had drawn it off again, the man had taken another wife.

The woman had brought two daughters into the house with her, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. A bad time began for the poor stepchild. "Is the stupid goose to sit in the parlor with us?" asked the sisters. "He who wants to eat bread must earn it. Out with the kitchen wench!"

They took her pretty clothes away from her, put an old grey nightgown on her, and gave her wooden shoes. "Just look at the proud princess, how fancy out she is!" they laughed.

She was forced to do hard work from morning until night. She rose before daybreak, carried water, lit fires, cooked food, and washed clothes. The sisters mocked her and dumped their peas and lentils into the ashes, so that she was forced to sit and pick them out again. In the evening after she had worked till she was weary, she had no bed to go to, but had to sleep by the fireside in the ashes. Because she always looked dusty and dirty, they called her Cinderella.

One day her father was going to the fair, and he asked his two stepdaughters what he should bring back for them.

"Beautiful dresses," said one.

"Pearls and jewels," said the second.

"And you, Cinderella," he asked, "what would you like?"

"Father, break off for me the first branch which knocks against your hat on your way home."

So he bought beautiful dresses, pearls and jewels for his two stepdaughters, and on his way home, as he was riding through a green thicket, a hazel twig brushed against him and knocked off his hat. When he reached home he gave his stepdaughters the things they had wished for, and to Cinderella he gave the branch from the hazel bush. Cinderella thanked him, went to her mother's grave and planted the branch on it. She wept so much that the tears watered the branch, and it grew to become a handsome tree. Three times a day Cinderella went and sat beneath it and wept and prayed. A little white bird always came to the tree, and if Cinderella expressed a wish, the bird threw down to her what she had wished for.

It happened, however, that the king announced a festival so that his son may choose a bride. When the two stepsisters heard that they were invited, they were delighted. "Cinderella!" they cried. "Comb our hair for us, brush our shoes and fasten our buckles, for we are going to the festival at the King's palace."

Cinderella obeyed but wept, because she, too, would have liked to go with them to the dance. She begged her stepmother to allow her to go, but she exclaimed, "*You* go, Cinderella? You are dusty and dirty and have no clothes and shoes."

Cinderella, however, kept asking and so the stepmother at last said, "I have emptied a dish of lentils into the ashes for you. If you have picked them out again in two hours, you may go with us." The maiden went through the backdoor into the garden, and called to her bird friends:

*The good into the pot,  
The bad into the crop.*

Two white pigeons came in by the kitchen window, followed by the turtle doves, and at last all the birds beneath the sky came whirring and crowding in, and darted into the ashes. The pigeons nodded with their heads and began to pick, pick, pick, pick, and the rest began also to pick, pick, pick, pick, and gathered all the good grains into the dish. Hardly had one hour passed before they had finished, and all flew out again. Then the girl happily took the dish to her stepmother and believed that now she would be allowed to attend the festival.

But the stepmother said, "No, Cinderella, you have no clothes and you cannot dance. You would only be laughed at." And as Cinderella wept, the stepmother said, "If you can pick two dishes of lentils out of the ashes for me in one hour, you shall go with us." And she thought to herself, "*That* she most certainly cannot do." When the stepmother had emptied the two dishes of lentils amongst the ashes, the maiden went through the backdoor into the garden and cried, "You tame pigeons, you turtledoves, and all you birds under heaven, come and help me to pick:

*The good into the pot,  
The bad into the crop.*

Again all the birds came whirring and crowding in, and darted into the ashes. And the doves nodded with their heads and began pick, pick, pick, pick, and the others began also pick, pick, pick, pick, and gathered all the good seeds into the dishes, and before a half an hour was over they had already finished, and all flew out again.

Then the maiden carried the dishes to the stepmother and was delighted, and believed that she might now go with them to the festival. But the stepmother said, "All this will not help you. You will not go with us, for you have no clothes and cannot dance. We will be ashamed of you!" And with that she turned her back on Cinderella and hurried away with her two proud daughters.

As no one was now at home, Cinderella went to her mother's grave beneath the hazeltree, and cried,

*Shiver and quiver, little tree,  
Silver and gold throw down over me.*

Then the bird threw a gold and silver dress down to her, and slippers embroidered with silk and silver. She quickly put on the dress and dashed to the festival. Her stepsisters and the stepmother did not know her and thought she must be a foreign princess for she looked so beautiful. They never once thought of Cinderella. They believed she was sitting at home in the dirt, picking lentils out of the ashes.

The prince went to meet her, took her by the hand and danced with her. He would dance with no other maiden and never dropped her hand. If anyone else tried to cut in, he said, "This is *my* partner."

She danced until it was evening, and then she wanted to go home. But the King's son said, "I will go with you," for he wished to see to whom the beautiful maiden belonged. She escaped from him, however, and sprang into the pigeon-house. The King's son waited until her father came, and then he told him that the stranger maiden had leapt into the pigeon-house. The old man thought, "Can it be Cinderella?" With an axe and a pickaxe that they broke the pigeon-house to pieces, but no one was inside it.

By the time her stepmother and stepsisters got home, Cinderella lay in her dirty clothes among the ashes, and a dim little oil-lamp was burning on the mantelpiece. Cinderella had jumped quickly down from the back of the pigeon-house and had run to the little hazeltree.

There she had taken off her beautiful clothes and laid them on the grave, and the bird had taken them away again. She then placed herself in the kitchen amongst the ashes in her grey gown.

The next day when the festival began afresh, and her parents and the stepsisters had gone once more, Cinderella went to the hazel-tree and said—

*Shiver and quiver, my little tree,  
Silver and gold throw down over me.*

Then the bird threw down a much more beautiful dress than on the day before. When Cinderella appeared at the festival in this dress, everyone was astonished at her beauty. The King's son had waited until she came, and instantly took her by the hand and danced with no one but her. When others came and invited her, he said, "She is *my* partner."

When evening came she wished to leave, and the King's son followed her to see into which house she went. Again, she sprang away from him and into the garden behind the house. There stood a beautiful, tall tree on which hung the most magnificent pears. She climbed so nimbly between the branches like a squirrel that the King's son did not know where she was gone. He waited until her father came, and said to him, "The maiden has again escaped from me, and I believe she has climbed up the pear-tree."

The father thought, "Can it be Cinderella?" and had an axe brought and cut the tree down, but no one was on it.

By the time her stepmother and stepsisters returned, Cinderella lay there amongst the ashes, as usual, for she had jumped down on the other side of the tree, taken the beautiful dress to the bird on the little hazeltree, and put on her grey gown.

On the third day, when the parents and sisters had gone away, Cinderella went once more to her mother's grave and said to the little tree—

*Shiver and quiver, my little tree,  
Silver and gold throw down over me.*

And now the bird threw down to her a dress that was more splendid and magnificent than any she had yet had, and the slippers were golden. When she went to the festival in the dress, no one knew how to speak for astonishment. The King's son danced with her only, and if any one invited her to dance, he said, "She is *my* partner."

When evening came, Cinderella wished to leave, and the King's son was anxious to go with her, but she escaped from him so quickly that he could not follow her. The King's son had, however, planned for her escape and had caused the whole staircase to be smeared with tar. When Cinderella ran down the stairs, her left slipper remained sticking. The prince picked it up. It was small and dainty and golden.

The next morning he told his father, "No one shall be my wife but she whose foot this golden slipper fits." He took the shoes to all the maidens in the kingdom. The two sisters were glad for they had pretty feet. When the prince visited the sisters, the eldest took the shoe into her room and wanted to try it on. She could not get her big toe into it, for the shoe was too small for her. Her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut off your toe! When you are Queen, you will have no more need to go on foot." So the maiden cut her toe off, forced her foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's son.

The prince took the sister on his horse as his bride and rode away with her. On the way to the castle, they had to pass the graveyard, and there, on the hazel-tree, sat the two pigeons and cried,

*Turn and peep, turn and peep,  
There's blood within the shoe,*

*The shoe it is too small for her,  
The true bride waits for you!*

The prince looked at her foot and saw how the blood was streaming from it. He turned his horse around and took the false bride home again, and said she was not the true one, and that the other sister was to put the shoe on. The other sister went into her chamber and got her toes safely into the shoe, but her heel was too large. So her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut a bit off thy heel; when you are Queen you will have no more need to go on foot." The maiden cut a bit off her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's son. He took her on his horse as his bride, and rode away with her, but they, too, passed by the graveyard, and the two little cried,

*Turn and peep, turn and peep,  
There's blood within the shoe  
The shoe it is too small for her,  
The true bride waits for you.*

He looked down at her foot and saw how the blood was running out of her shoe, and how it had stained her white stocking. Then he turned his horse and took the false bride home again. "This also is not the right one," he said. "Have you no other daughter?"

"No," said the man, "There is still a little stunted kitchen-wench who my late wife left behind her, but she cannot possibly be the bride." The prince ordered him to call her, but the mother answered, "Oh, no, she is much too dirty, she cannot show herself!"

The prince insisted, and Cinderella had to be called. She first washed her hands and face clean, and then went and bowed down before the prince, who gave her the golden shoe. Then she seated herself on a stool, drew her foot out of the heavy wooden shoe, and put it into the slipper, which fit like a glove. When she rose up and the prince looked at her face, he recognized the beautiful maiden who had danced with him and cried, "That is the true bride!"

The stepmother and the two sisters were horrified and became pale with rage. The prince took Cinderella on his horse and rode away with her. As they passed by the hazel-tree, the two white doves cried—

*Turn and peep, turn and peep,  
No blood is in the shoe,  
The shoe is not too small for her,  
The true bride rides with you.*

The two came flying down and placed themselves on Cinderella's shoulders, one on the right, the other on the left, and remained sitting there. When the wedding had to be celebrated, the two false sisters came and wanted to get into favor with Cinderella and share her good fortune. Before they could go into church, the pigeons pecked out their eyes. Thus, for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived.