

Cinderella

Adapted from *My Book of Favorite Fairy Tales*

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Based on "Aschenputtel" from the Brothers Grimm

THE wife of a rich man fell sick, and when she felt that her end was near, 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. The little girl went every day to her grave and wept, and was always good and kind to all about her. And the snow spread a beautiful white covering over the grave, but by the time the sun had melted it away again, her father had married another wife. This new wife had two daughters of her own, that she brought home with her. They were fair in face but foul at heart, and it was now a sorry time for the poor little girl.

"What does the good-for-nothing thing want in the parlour?" they said. "She who would eat bread should earn it first. Away with the kitchen maid!" Then they took away her fine clothes, and gave her an old frock to put on, and laughed at her and put her into the kitchen.

There 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. Besides that, the sisters plagued her in all sorts of ways and laughed at her. In the evening, when she was tired, she had no bed to lie down on, but was made to sleep by the hearth among the ashes. And since she was, of course, always dusty and dirty, they called her Cinderella.

It happened once that the father was going to the fair, and asked his wife's daughters what he should bring 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.

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, and almost pushed off his hat. So he broke it off and brought it away, and when he got home, he gave it to his daughter. 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. There it grew and became a fine tree. Three times every day she went to it and wept, 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 himself a bride. Of course Cinderella's two sisters were asked to come. So they called Cinderella up 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." 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. 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?"

Cinderella kept on begging, and so to get rid of her, the mother 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.

The little maiden ran out at the back door into the garden, and cried out—

"Hither, hither, through the sky.
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all, come help me quick,
Haste ye, haste ye—pick, pick, pick!"

Before long two white doves came flying in at the kitchen window, and next came two turtle-doves. And after them all the little birds under heaven came chirping and fluttering in, and flew down into the ashes. The little doves stooped their heads down and set to work— pick, pick, pick. And then the others began to pick, pick, pick. They picked out all the good grain and put it in a dish, and left the ashes. At the end of one hour, when the work was done, they all flew out of the windows.

Cinderella brought the dish to her mother, overjoyed at the thought that now she should go to the feast. But the mother said, "No, no! Girl, you have no clothes and cannot dance! You shall not go."

Again Cinderella begged very hard to go, so the mother said, "If you can in one hour's time pick two of these dishes of peas out of the ashes, you shall go too." And thus she thought she should at last get rid of her.

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 cried as before—

"Hither, hither, through the sky.
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all, come help me quick,
Haste ye, haste ye—pick, pick, pick!"

Once again two white doves flew into the kitchen window, followed by the turtle-doves. And after them all the little birds under heaven came chirping and hopping about, and flew down about the ashes. The little doves put their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick. Then the others began to pick, pick, pick. And once again they put all the good grain into the dishes, and left all the ashes. Before half-an-hour's time all was done, and out they flew again.

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." Then off she went with her two daughters to the feast.

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

"Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!"

Then her friend the bird flew out of the tree and brought a gold and silver dress for her, and slippers of spangled silk; and she put them on, and followed her sisters to the feast. But they did not know her, and thought it

must be some strange princess because she looked so fine and beautiful in her rich clothes. They never once thought of Cinderella, but took for granted that she was safe at home in the dirt.

The king's son soon came up to her, and took her by the hand and danced with her and no one else. He never left her hand, and 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.

The king's son said, "I shall go and see you to your home," for he wanted to know where the beautiful maid lived. But she slipped away from him unawares, and ran off towards home.

The prince followed her, but she jumped up into the pigeon-house and shut the door. 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, and her dim little lamp burnt in the chimney. 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. Then she 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 said—

"Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!"

The bird came and brought a still finer dress than the one she had worn the day before. When she arrived at the ball, every one wondered at her beauty. 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 followed her as before, that he might see into what house she went into. 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 full of ripe fruit. Cinderella, not knowing where to hide herself, jumped up into it without being seen. When the king's son could not find her, he, again waited till her father came home.

"The unknown lady who danced with me has slipped away, and I think she must have sprung into the pear tree."

The father thought to himself, "Can it be Cinderella?"

So he ordered an axe to be brought, and they cut down the tree, but found no one upon it. 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, 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 ones, and slippers which were all of gold, so that when she came to the feast no one knew what to say for wonder at her beauty. Once more 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 and she wanted to go home, the king's son said to himself, "I will not lose her this time." However, she managed to slip away from him, though she was 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."

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 great toe could not go into it, and the shoe was altogether much too small for her. So the mother gave her a knife, and 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 great toe off, and squeezed the shoe on, and went to the king's son. He took her for his bride, and set her beside him on his horse and rode away with her.

But on their way home they had to pass by the hazel tree that Cinderella had planted and there sat a little dove on the branch singing—

"Back again! Back again! Look to the shoe!

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."

The prince got down and looked at the girl's foot, and saw by the blood that streamed from it what a trick she had played him. So he turned his horse round and brought the false bride back to her home.

"This is not the right bride," he said. "Let the other sister try and put on the slipper."

So the sister 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. He set her as his bride beside him on his horse, and rode away with her.

But when they came to the hazel tree the little dove sat there still, and sang—

"Back again! Back again! Look to the shoe!
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 he looked down and saw that the blood streamed so from the shoe that her white stockings were quite red. So he turned his horse and brought her back again also.

"This is not the true bride," said he to the father. "Have you no other daughters?"

"No," said he. "There is only a little dirty Cinderella here, the child of my first wife. I am sure she cannot be the bride." However, the prince told him to send for her.

"No, no, she is much too dirty," said the mother. "She will not dare to show herself."

Still the prince requested that she appear before him.

Cinderella washed her face and hands, and then went in and curtsied to him, and he handed to her the golden slipper.

She took her clumsy shoe off her left foot and put on the golden slipper, and it fitted her as if it had been made for her. When the Prince drew near and looked at her face he knew her, and said, "This is the right bride."

The mother and both the sisters were frightened and turned pale with anger as he took Cinderella on his horse, and rode away with her. And when they came to the hazel tree, the white dove sang—

"Home! Home! Look at the shoe!
Princess! The shoe was made for you!
Prince! Prince! Take home thy bride.
For she is the true one that sits by thy side!"

And when the dove had done its song, it came flying and perched upon her shoulder, and so went home with her.