

COVER NOT
FINAL


Charles Perrault

Cinderella


With six
enchancing
pop-ups

Illustrated by Meghann Rader






Once, in a far-away kingdom, nestled among snow-capped mountains, there lived a girl called Ella who was gentle, kind and good. She spent most of her time in her garden, where starflowers, narcissi and wild roses nodded in the breeze. In the evenings, she danced as gracefully as a ballerina, or read to her beloved father beside the crackling fire. One day, she and her father walked through the dappled woods around their house, sharing stories and memories. Her wise, tender-hearted mother had died long ago, and now they had only each other.



Then, one fateful day, her father met a widow who had two daughters of her own. The lady charmed him, and he thought that Ella would be happy to have a stepmother and two sisters. After a short time, they got married. His new wife and daughters cared more for his money than for him, but he did not have long to regret his choice. One unhappy day a few weeks later, he died.

Ella felt as if her heart had broken into tiny pieces. She longed to love her stepmother and step-sisters, but they met her kindness with spiteful words and scornful looks, hating her goodness and envying her beauty. Ella's pretty bedroom was given to her older step-sister, and she was sent to sleep in the shadowy, cobweb-filled attic. "Keep yourself out of my thoughts and out of my sight," her stepmother hissed.

Ella's days, weeks and months passed slowly. Her home lost all its laughter, and seemed as dark and gloomy as the deepest ocean trench. From sunrise till sunset, she did the filthiest work in the house. She scrubbed floors until her hands were red raw. She washed dirty dishes and emptied chamber pots. Each long, lonely evening, she kept warm beside the kitchen fire. The cinders smudged her clothes, and her step-sisters made fun of her. "Every speck of you is dirty," mocked the older girl. "What a cinder-bottom you are!" "Cinder-Ella," suggested the younger sister. "That should be your name."



BONNIER

One spring morning, an envelope arrived, embossed with a golden crown of shimmering gold. The Prince was hosting a two-day ball, and the whole family was invited. Cinderella's stepisters at once flung open their wardrobes, strewing their rooms with brightly coloured satins and silks, ruffled cloaks, jewel-studded shoes and frilly petticoats.

"My red-velvet gold-trimmed gown will impress the Prince," said the elder sister.

"My diamonds will dazzle him," said the younger girl, smirking.

Cinderella laced their embroidered corsets and braided pearls and ribbons into their hair. Her fingers ached and their sickly perfume, but she did not complain.

"Don't you wish you were going to the ball, Cinderella?" asked her older stepsister, peering herself in the looking glass.

Cinderella gazed from her smudged face and ragged clothes to the elegant palace spires in the distance.

"I don't belong there," she said quietly.

"True," her stepsister replied, curling her lip.

"Imagine taking a cinder-bottom to a palace!"

After her stepmother and stepsisters had left, poor Cinderella sank to the floor and wept. She had never felt more friendless.

"Why are you crying?" asked a soft voice.

Cinderella looked up in surprise. A beautiful lady had appeared in front of the flickering kitchen fire. She had hair like corn silk, and a shimmering gown as wispy as a cobweb, sprinkled with flecks like tiny stars. Kindness shone in her eyes.

"I'm being silly," said Cinderella through her sobs.

"I was just wishing..."

"... That you could go to the ball?" the lady asked. Cinderella sighed and nodded. "Wishing isn't silly," said the lady, drawing a sparkling wand from the folds of her dress. "I am your fairy godmother. Do as I say, and you shall go to the ball. Now, run into the garden and bring me a pumpkin."