



nce upon a time, in a faraway land, there was a tiny, peaceful kingdom where a widowed father and his young daughter, Cinderella, lived.

Cinderella's father eventually remarried a woman with two daughters of her own, Anastasia and Drizella.

At first, the stepmother was kind to Cinderella. But then, Cinderella's father passed away, and the stepmother's true nature was revealed. Cold, cruel and bitterly jealous of her stepdaughter, she was determined to forward the interests of her own two daughters over Cinderella.

As time went by, Cinderella's beloved home fell into disrepair. All of the family money was spent on the selfish stepsisters, while Cinderella was forced to become a servant in her own house.



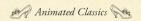
And yet, through it all, Cinderella remained gentle and kind. With each dawn she found new hope that someday her dreams of happiness would come true.

On a summer's morning, Cinderella lay dreaming in her attic room. Two bluebirds swooped in through her open widow. One lifted her golden plait, while the other tweeted into her ear. Cinderella rose up, laughing, while the birds fluttered to the windowsill, pointing to the dawn sky.

"Yes, I know it's a lovely morning," said Cinderella, "but it was a lovely dream, too."



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As she began her morning routine, Cinderella sang of wishes and dreams. Her bird and mice friends gathered in her room to hear her beautiful song.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

"Oh, that clock," said Cinderella, climbing out of bed.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

"I hear you," she said. "Come on, get up, you say. Time to start another day. Even he orders me around. Well there's one thing," she went on, addressing the mice, "they can't order me to stop dreaming."





Cinderella danced around her room, while the birds helped make her bed and plumped up her pillow, and the mice poured water into her washbasin.

While Cinderella washed, the bluebirds laid out her old, worn clothes. The mice dusted them with feathers and polished her shoes with little strips of cloth.

Then Cinderella slipped behind a screen and dressed. When she stepped out again, the bluebirds tied her apron in a bow around her back, and gave her a blue ribbon for her hair.

Then the mice scurried up her dressing table, squeaking and chattering.

"Wait a minute!" said Cinderella. "One at a time, please. Now, Jaq, what's all the fuss about?"

"New mouse in the house," said Jaq.

"Brand new. Never saw it before."

"Oh, a visitor," said Cinderella, pulling out a tiny little yellow top from her drawer. "He'll need a jacket and shoes..."



But Jaq began jumping up and down. "Gotta get him out!" he squeaked. "It's in a rat trap!"

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