



CINDERELLA

*Based on the fairy tale by Charles Perrault
Adapted for the stage by Gayle Cornelison*

A California Theatre Center Study Guide for Teachers and Students

SYNOPSIS

The bold and adventurous Prince Roland, disguised as a beggar, has sneaked away from his castle to explore the kingdom that will soon be his. Along for the journey is his foolish and reluctant cousin, Egbert. The Prince happens upon the cottage of Cinderella, a lovely, high-spirited young lady who lives with her loathsome stepmother and two rude stepsisters, who have forced Cinderella to be their slave. The Beggar-Prince and Cinderella converse and become smitten with each other, but before he can even learn Cinderella's name, her stepmother and stepsisters throw him from the house. Cinderella watches as her stepsisters prepare for the Royal Ball, only to be told that she is too plain to attend. Cinderella wants to go to the ball not intending to win the heart of the Prince, but to enjoy the laughter and festivities. Cinderella's wishes are answered when her wacky but helpful Fairy Godmother appears, and transforms Cinderella's dowdy frock into an elegant gown. At the ball, Cinderella and the Prince dance and fall in love again, not fully aware that they have met before, while the scheming Royal Regent and Egbert try to learn Cinderella's identity, and the stepsisters try in vain to win over the Prince. As the clock strikes midnight, Cinderella flees the palace. The Prince finds her tiny slipper, but does not know her name. The Prince must find the maiden whose foot fits the golden slipper. He and Egbert try the slipper on many maidens until they finally find Cinderella.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the reasons that the stepmother forbids Cinderella to attend the ball? Is it fair for Cinderella to be excluded from the ball? Why or why not?
2. Why does Prince Roland wear a disguise while going to meet the people of the kingdom? Why not just go as himself? Do you think that Roland looks forward to becoming king, or does he dread it?
3. Consider Cinderella's relationship with her stepsisters and stepmother.
 - a. If the stepsisters are so convinced that Prince Roland will fall in love with either one of *them*, why are they so persistent that Cinderella stay home? How is Cinderella a threat to them?
 - b. Why do you think Cinderella's stepmother began mistreating her in the first place? What may have motivated her cruelty?
4. Cinderella has an enchanted friend in the form of her Fairy Godmother. What is the purpose of having an enchanted character in a story like this? What are some other stories that feature helpful enchanted beings?
5. Discuss the character of Egbert. He was born into nobility, but he is not as powerful as his cousin, Prince Roland. He is also, lazy, spoiled, and whiny—why do think he is this way? Does he want to be as powerful as the Prince? If he were ruling the kingdom, would he be a good ruler? How do you think he would use his power, compared to Prince Roland?

LITERATURE/CREATIVE WRITING

1. *Cinderella* is a "universal" story--it can be set in virtually any place and time but the basic story remains the same. In fact, the first written-down version of the Cinderella story is from China, and dates to the 9th century A.D.
 - a. As a class, discuss other versions of *Cinderella* from a variety of cultures. The website www.surlalunefairytales.com is a good resource. Where else has it been set, and what do these versions teach us about those cultures? What are some other times & places where it should be set?
 - b. Write your own version of *Cinderella* set in the time and place of your choosing. Be creative--it could be set in outer space, ancient Egypt, the North Pole—anywhere!
 - c. Think of some other stories that are "universal." Why have these stories remained so popular over the years?

2. *Cinderella* is commonly recognized as a love story. However, it can be interpreted in many different ways. Write a short critique of our production of *Cinderella*, examining it from one of the following perspectives: comedy, fantasy, coming-of-age story, family drama.
3. What happens after Cinderella marries the Prince? Does she enjoy her new and powerful station in life? Do they get along, or do their personalities clash? Write a sequel to *Cinderella*. It can be set any time after the play ends. You can include characters from the original story, and/or use your imagination to create new ones!

DRAMATIC AND VISUAL ARTS

1. Discuss the scenery for Cinderella's house and the Prince's palace. Although we do not see the entire building, the scenery gives us a good idea of what each home may look like from the outside. Based on what you saw in the play, draw two pictures: one of Cinderella's house, and another of the Prince's house.
2. Discuss the costume designs in the play, focusing particularly on Cinderella's ball gown, the Fairy Godmother, and the outfits worn by the gentleman characters. Did you find them effective and appropriate? If you were a designer, how would you make them? Imagine that you are either Cinderella, the Fairy Godmother, Prince Roland, or Egbert, and draw an outfit for yourself of your own design. Be creative with the color of the fabric, texture, and line.
3. When performing onstage, actors wear special stage makeup designed specifically for their characters. Some characters require more complicated makeup than others. What is the purpose of stage makeup? Compare and contrast the makeup in *Cinderella*, focusing specifically on the differences and similarities between the male and female stage makeup used in the production.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. The land in which Cinderella lives is governed by a king. A government that is headed by a king or queen is called a monarchy. Study monarchy as a class. What are some real-world countries that are monarchies? How long have those monarchies been in place? How does a monarchy operate?
2. In the play, there is a character called the Regent, who is Egbert's father and Prince Roland's uncle. What does the title of Regent mean? A similar title is Duke. Compare and contrast the titles of Regent and Duke in real-world governments. Under what circumstances does a Regent or Duke serve as head of state? What responsibilities do they hold? Is one more powerful than the other?

3. The Royal Ball plays a very important part in the story of *Cinderella*. How are royal balls significant in history? What different types of balls are there? What purposes do they serve? Have students plan their own ball. They should be creative in deciding the theme for the ball, the time, location, dances, and dress code, as well as the design for the invitation, and any other aspects of planning that they want to include, such as food and beverage, musicians, and decorations.
4. Although Cinderella is noble by birth, her stepmother has forced her to be a servant. In real life, most servants are not treated so poorly by their employers. There are several different types, such as butlers and maids.
 - a. What is a servant's job? What do you think the day-to-day life of a servant is like? How have their jobs changed over time?
 - b. Plan a schedule for a typical day in Cinderella's life as a servant, including the times she wakes up and goes to bed, mealtimes, cleaning, cooking, laundry, waiting on her stepsisters and stepmother.

WRITE TO CTC!

After watching the play, write us a letter about it. Tell what you liked or disliked about the story, the characters, costumes, set, or anything else you observed. Support your thoughts with examples and reasons. (*Teachers' comments are also appreciated!*)

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