



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA EDUCATION

CINDERELLA

SOURCE MATERIAL

CHARLES PERRAULT'S "CINDERELLA OR THE GLASS SLIPPER"



Charles Perrault (January 12, 1628 – May 16, 1703) was a French author and member of the Académie française. He laid the foundations for a new literary genre, the fairy tale, with his works derived from pre-existing folk tales. *Cendrillon* (*Cinderella*) is among the best known of his tales, which also include the well-loved stories of *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* (*Little Red Riding Hood*), *Le Chat Botté* (*Puss in Boots*), *La Belle au bois dormant* (*The Sleeping Beauty*) and *La Barbe bleue* (*Bluebeard*).

Cinderella, or The Little Glass Slipper was included among Perrault's collection of stories, *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, which was first published in 1697. His version of the story of a kind, earnest, but neglected daughter, who is mistreated by her family after her mother dies is among the most recognized stories ever written. There are hundreds of variations of the story. Although both the story's title and the character's name change with each tale's language of origin (*French: Cendrillon, ou La petite Pantoufle de Verre, Italian: Cenerentola, German: Aschenputtel* appears in the 1812 folk tale collection *Grimms' Fairy Tales*), "Cinderella" is the name used in the many English-language books and stage and film versions. The Perrault fairy tale is the version that most recognize, but thanks

to a significant number of adaptations in opera, ballet, theatre, and film, the "Cinderella" story still speaks to audiences today. Cinderella is, at heart, a romantic underdog story that invites audiences everywhere to root for the overlooked good soul to beat the odds.

Rossini & Ferretti's opera, *La Cenerentola, ossia La bontà in trionfo* (*Cinderella, or Goodness Triumphant*) was first performed in Rome's Teatro Valle on January 25, 1817. Ferretti's libretto for *La Cenerentola* makes a few small changes to Perrault's fairy tale. In his variation of the story, the wicked stepmother is replaced by a callous stepfather, Don Magnifico. In the opera, her wish to go to the Ball is not granted by a Fairy Godmother. Instead, Cinderella is brought to the Ball by the Prince's philosopher/tutor, Alidoro. The prince confirms Cinderella's true identity with a matching bracelet, rather than a glass slipper. In spite of these changes to the characters and the details of the plot, the familiar happy ending awaits the audience. The worthy young heroine is finally matched with her handsome young Prince, and everyone lives happily ever after. Thank goodness for, no matter her guise, *Cinderella* continues to enchant audiences the world over.

Source: University of Pittsburg <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html>,

Scholastic Myths, Folktales and Fairy Tales <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/>

Internet Archive <https://archive.org/details/fairytalesofchar00perr>