



Here are some variants of the Cinderella story. These are just a handful – there are hundreds more all over the world!

French Cinderella

The version of Cinderella we are probably most familiar with in the West is Charles Perrault's 1697 version, *Cendrillon*. This was the first version to introduce what are now recognisable elements of the story – the pumpkin, the fairy godmother, and the iconic glass slipper.

German Cinderella

The Grimm brothers' 19th-century version of the tale, *Aschenputtel*, is more gruesome. The stepsisters even cut off part of their feet to make them fit the slipper! There is no Fairy Godmother, but Cinderella is helped by a tree that grants her wishes. At the end of the story, birds pluck out the stepsisters' eyes to punish them for their evil deeds.

Ancient Greek Cinderella

One possible origin story of Cinderella comes from the Ancient Greek geographer Strabo, in 7BC. In this version, an eagle steals the shoe of the Greek courtesan Rhodopis and takes it to the King of Egypt, who launches a search for the shoe's owner. He finds Rhodopis and marries her.

Caribbean Cinderella

Robert D. San Souci's *Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella* is a Creole version of the story. In this, the carriage is made from a breadfruit, rather than a pumpkin, and Cendrillon's slippers are bright pink and embroidered with roses.

Nigerian Cinderella

Obi Onyefulu's *Chinye: A West African Folktale* shares some similarities with Cinderella, but the main character in this story, Chinye, is not motivated by a wish to marry a prince. Sent by her stepmother to fetch water, Chinye is protected from the forest by animals. An old woman asks her to enter a hut where there are gourds on the ground, and pick up the smallest gourd. Chinye does this and finds the gourd is full of jewels. Her jealous stepsister tries to do the same but chooses the biggest gourd, which causes a terrible storm to break. Chinye's stepsister and stepmother lose their possessions in the storm and flee. Chinye uses her new wealth to help her village.



Korean Cinderella

The Korean Cinderella is named Pear Blossom, after a pear tree her father plants when she is born. Her stepmother tries to get rid of her by setting her impossible tasks, such as filling a jar with water even though the jar has a hole in it. Pear Blossom is helped by some animals: a frog, some sparrows, and an ox. Pear Blossom accidentally drops her sandal into a stream, and it is found by a magistrate who decides to marry Pear Blossom.

Cambodian Cinderella

The Cambodian Cinderella is called Angkat. The magical creature in this version is a fish Angkat is kind to, which her stepsister kills. The spirit of Virtue tells Angkat to put the fishbones under her mat at night. When she wakes up, golden slippers have appeared in their place. A bird steals one of the slippers and takes it to a prince, who decides the slipper's owner will be his bride. He marries Angkat, but her jealous family scheme to make her come home, and they kill her. Later, a red-leafed banana plant grows up in the very spot where Angkat was killed. Angkat's father chops down the plant and spreads pieces of it around the forest. In every place a piece lands, a bamboo shoot grows. One day, the prince is on a hunting trip in the forest and decides to sleep in the bamboo grove. There, he hears Angkat's voice whispering that she is still with him. Angkat returns to him and her family are banished.

Different Cinderellas

Consider the different ways the Cinderella story has been told in lots of countries around the world. Why do you think this story appeals to so many diverse cultures?

Each version of Cinderella adds new details.

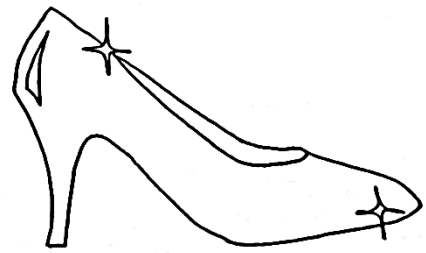
- Why do you think the Caribbean Cinderella's carriage is made from a breadfruit? Why are her slippers pink and not made of glass?
- Why do animals appear in lots of versions?
- What do you think is the significance of the fish in the Korean Cinderella? Or the eagle in the Ancient Greek Cinderella?
- Do you think it is important that the West African Cinderella is not looking for a prince? Is she more of a feminist than the other Cinderellas?

If you had to write a twenty-first-century Cinderella, what changes would you make to modernise the story? Do you think the Cinderella story will still exist in one hundred years? Or one thousand? How might it have changed?

Which ordinary everyday objects could the Fairy Godmother use to make...

- the carriage
- the horses
- the coachmen

Would the Fairy Godmother herself even be a fairy, or could it be some other kind of magical creature?



Cinderella and mistranslation

There is an urban legend that the famous glass slipper in Perrault's French version of the story was a result of a mistranslation.

In French, the word for glass is 'verre', while the old French word for 'fur' was 'vair'. Since the two words sound similar, some people assumed that Perrault meant to refer to a fur slipper, but that this was misheard or wrongly translated. In fact, this assumption is wrong, and the original version by Perrault does mean to refer to a slipper of glass or 'verre' – which adds an extra touch of magic!



Draw an outfit for a twenty-first-century Cinderella to wear to a dance. Your Cinderella can be from any country and can be any gender.

Explain why you have chosen that outfit.

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