Synopsis for Cinderella

Cinderella, a kind and thoughtful girl, lives with her cruel stepsisters, Clorinda and Tisbe. They make her clean the house, cook their meals, and sleep by the fireplace in the cinders – which is why they call her “Cinderella.” One day, while Cinderella works and her sisters tease her, a beggar comes to the door asking for food. The stepsisters turn him away in disgust, but Cinderella offers him something to eat and drink. The beggar promises her good fortune in return for her kindness, and soon, an invitation arrives – the lonely Prince is throwing a ball in order to find a wife. The excited stepsisters take the invitation, prepare for the ball, and leave Cinderella alone at home to continue her work, laughing when she asks to come along.

Tired and sad, Cinderella falls asleep by the fire. Her Fairy Godmother appears, and with the help of a few spirits, transforms the sleeping Cinderella into a beautiful Princess. When she wakes up, Cinderella is delighted, but is afraid her stepsisters will recognize her at the ball. The Fairy Godmother gives her magic slippers, which will make her unrecognizable, but warns her to be home by midnight, or the spell will be broken.

Meanwhile, worried the ladies only want his power and money, the Prince does not want to attend his own ball. He and his page hatch a plan – they will trade clothing, and disguised as a servant, the Prince will see who might love him for himself. When the stepsisters arrive, they fight over the page, who they think is the Prince, and ridicule the Prince, who they think is a page. When Cinderella arrives, the real Prince falls in love with her instantly, and they dance and sing together. Soon, the clock strikes midnight, and Cinderella remembers she must leave. As she rushes out, one of her slippers falls off. The Prince sees it, and decides to find Cinderella by searching for the owner of the shoe.

When they return home, the stepsisters make fun of the beautiful girl from the ball, pretending they humiliated her. Soon, the Prince and the servant, still disguised as one another, arrive in search of the owner of the shoe. The stepsisters insist it is theirs, but of course it does not fit them. Cinderella tries the shoe, and it fits her perfectly. The Prince removes his disguise, revealing his true identity, and declares his love for her. They agree to get married. The kind Cinderella forgives her sisters’ cruelty.

By Miriam Greenblatt, former OISE intern with the COC’s Education and Outreach department

The 2009/10 Cinderella Study Guide is produced by the COC’s Education and Outreach Department.