



The Other Cinderella Story

By Cara Bafile

NARRATOR:

A door opens. The sound of flash bulbs is heard -- pop, pop, pop. Three women follow a gentleman to a long table at the front of the conference room and sit down behind it. The man steps up to a podium and speaks to reporters who have gathered in the room.

ATTORNEY:

Thank you all for coming. My name is Hyde Pryce Shark. I am here today on behalf of Princess Cinderella's stepmother, Charity Abounds, and her daughters, Patience and Harmony. I'm sure you all know the Princess's story of her childhood. She tells of a mean and nasty stepmother who made her sleep in ashes. She talks of sisters who made her do their work.

Today, I ask you to forget what you think you know. Please, listen to the words of Cinderella's loving stepmother. You will hear the true story of Cinderella's life before she became a princess. It is the story told in the new unauthorized biography, *Cinderella: Behind the Glass Slipper*, written by these women. First, Charity will make a statement. Then, we will take a few questions.

STEPMOTHER:

Thank you, Hyde. I know what all of you might think of me, but I am not the person Cinderella describes. I can no longer be silent. We were good to Cinderella, but she was an impossible girl. I am here to announce that I will spend all my time and my money to clear our good name. Read our book and you will know the real girl behind the slipper.

STEPSISTER 1 (Patience):

That's right!

STEPSISTER 2 (Harmony):

She was terrible! It was unbearable!

ATTORNEY:

Now the ladies will answer questions.

REPORTERS (ALL): (Shouting)

Charity! What is...?

ATTORNEY:

A question from the *Fairy Tale Times*?

REPORTER 1:

You say Cinderella was impossible as a child. Can you explain?

STEPMOTHER:

I'm happy to explain. Our little "Cindy" was a dear girl, but when she no longer had her father to keep her in line, she was nothing but trouble. Even then, she dreamed of being important. She wanted to be queen at sixteen! It was Cindy who gave herself the name "Cinderella" because it sounded more *royal*. She is the one who refused to sleep in her room because the décor didn't suit. That is how she ended up sleeping in front of the fireplace. I bought her beautiful dresses, but they weren't *hip* enough. She wanted gowns. She wore a work dress covered with ashes to embarrass me!

REPORTER 2:

Patience and Harmony, what was it like to be Cinderella's sisters?

HARMONY:

It was horrible. She was deplorable!

PATIENCE:

Cinderella pretended to help us get ready for the ball, but she sabotaged our gowns. She took our necklaces, ribbons, and beads! Later we found out she had pawned our jewelry to pay for a coach ride to the ball. Her friends were animals, too.

REPORTER 3:

What about the ball, Charity? Is it true you didn't let her go?

STEPMOTHER:

I'm afraid that is true. I was just so concerned about Cinderella's behavior. I knew she would hatch a scheme to win the prince's heart and steal his crown. I gave her a midnight curfew to keep her out of trouble, but even that wasn't enough.

REPORTERS (ALL):

Another question...

ATTORNEY:

Next will be the *Tribune*.

REPORTER 4:

Can't Cinderella's fairy godmother back up her story?

HARMONY:

Let *me* tell you, fella, about the *godmother* of Cinderella. She was just a nice old lady who lived in the lane. She wasn't a fairy; she walked with a cane. But Cinderella befriended her, and that was to be the end of her.

STEPMOTHER:

It wasn't magic that gave Cinderella that fancy gown and glass slippers for the ball. It was an old lady's bank account that paid the bills!

REPORTER 4:

Can you prove these charges?

NARRATOR:

The attorney whispers into the ear of the stepmother, who nods.

STEPMOTHER:

My lawyer advises me not to go into detail here. However, I can prove -- and you can read more about this in my book -- that Cinderella is not the girl she claims to be.

We all know that Cinderella is not my real daughter. Now, with the help of DNA, I have evidence that she is the daughter of none other than the Wicked Queen. While the queen is still in prison for her attack on Snow White, her daughter is free and poised to take the throne.

NARRATOR:

A gasp can be heard from one reporter whose face is hidden beneath the hood of a cloak.

ATTORNEY:

Is there a question from the *Royal Record*?

REPORTER 5:

I think so, yes. Do you still love your daughter, Cinderella?

STEPMOTHER:

Of course, I still love Cinderella. But when she used her slipper to set up our prince, she lost my *loyalty*. She is a troubled girl who needs help, not a crown. She should not be our queen. Now I have to speak out, not just for me and my daughters, but for our land.

NARRATOR:

The reporter from the *Royal Record* dashes out of the room, leaving a shoe at the doorway.

REPORTERS (ALL):

One more question...

ATTORNEY:

Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes our press conference. Charity Abounds would like to make a closing statement.

STEPMOTHER:

Please read our book and help us save our reputations. It is just \$19.95 at Barns and Nobility Books.

PATIENCE: (To Stepmother and Sister)

You have them hooked, Mother. Now reel them in, Sis!

HARMONY:

Cinderella's reign must stop before her other shoe does drop!

