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Opening extract from

Cinderella

Written by

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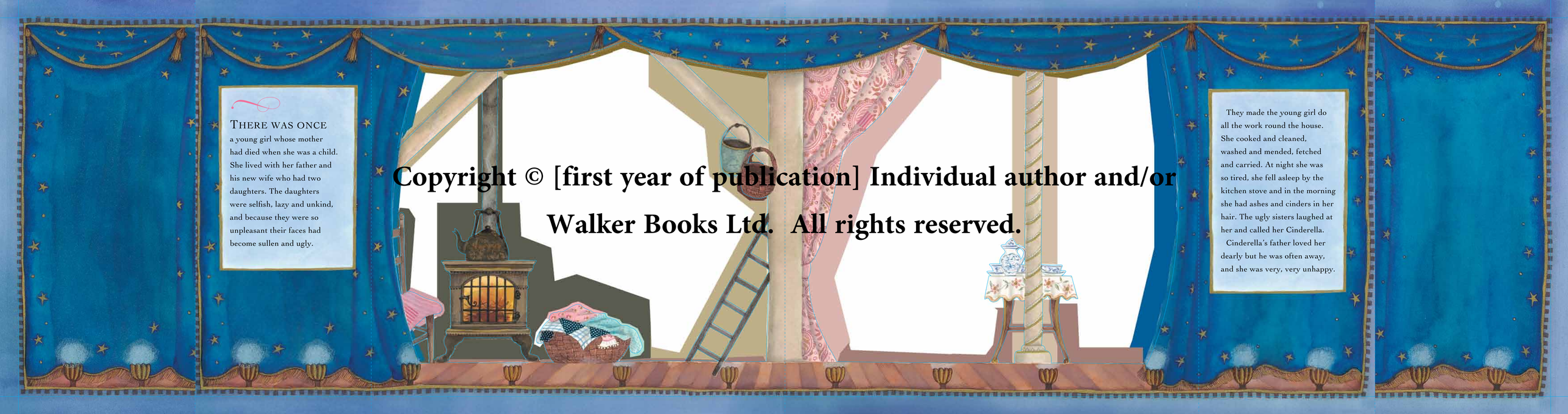
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CINDERELLA sat by the fire and she wept.

Suddenly an old woman appeared at her side. "Come along," she said. "We can't have this! I am your Fairy Godmother and I'm here to help you. Dry your eyes and you shall go to the ball."

Cinderella stopped crying and the old woman smiled. "That's better. Now run into the garden and fetch me the biggest pumpkin you can find. And six little mice, four lizards, and the old grey rat who lives behind the gate."

Cinderella did as she was told.



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With a wave of her magic wand, the Fairy Godmother turned the pumpkin into a golden coach.

Then she waved her wand again and Cinderella found she was wearing a beautiful silk dress and tiny slippers made of glass. Before her eyes, the mice were turned into six fine horses, the lizards became footmen and the rat was transformed into a coachman with gold buttons on his coat.

"Have a wonderful time, my dear," said the Fairy Godmother, "and dance to your heart's content. But there is one thing you have to remember – you must leave the ball when the clock strikes midnight."

ONE DAY a grand ball was announced at the Royal Palace. All the young girls in the kingdom were invited, because the king's son was looking for a wife.

"He will surely choose one of you, my darlings," the mother said to her daughters, who were beside themselves with excitement.

"Cinderella! Make us beautiful!" they ordered.



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So Cinderella helped them into dresses of silk and velvet, piled their hair high with feathers and ribbons, and hung glittering jewels round their necks.

When she had finished, she turned to her stepmother. "What shall *I* wear to the ball?" she asked quietly.

The sisters shrieked with laughter. "You? You're not going to the ball! Stay in the kitchen where you belong." And off they went, leaving poor Cinderella all alone.