**A Cinderella Story**

**Word count: 1321**

You know, my name wasn’t always Cinderella. Last week, after our school's Homecoming bonfire, my stepsisters threw my phone into the smoldering ashes, and I had to go digging through them to find it. While I was digging, trying not to burn my hands or melt my shoes, my stepsisters secretly filmed me, and then the horrible video went viral! Now everyone is calling me “Cinderella.” To make matters worse, only one person stopped to help me, this cute boy named Peter. But that's when I saw Drizella laughing from behind her phone, and I suddenly realized that they had set me up. I couldn't help it - I panicked and ran away. So, now I am without a phone, the entire school has seen the video, and Peter thinks I hate him. Also, my stepsisters, who want to be famous influencers, shared the video with my stepmother, who got so angry she grounded me for a month - talk about unfair!

The evening of the Homecoming dance, my step-sisters decided to film a Get-Ready-With-Me vlog as they got dressed.

“Bring me my curling iron!” Drizella screamed.

“No, bring me my pack of fake eyelashes first!” Anna shouted.

I tried not to giggle as I watched my stepmother dash around, grabbing whatever they needed. The whole thing was insane. With their makeup and scarves and capes, they looked like fancy ducks going out to the opera. After much more moaning, groaning and selfies, they all waddled out the door.

Finally, alone in the house, I slumped down on the stairs with my chin in my hands. I didn’t think I’d care about missing the dance, but a tear slid down my cheek.

*Knock, knock, knock*. I jumped up. When I opened the door, I was surprised to see my neighbor, Maryellen. I babysit for her kids whenever she needs help.

“Hi, Maryellen! What can I do for you?” I asked, suddenly feeling better.

“Hi, darling, I was actually wondering if I could do something for *you*.”

“What do you mean?” I asked curiously.

“Well, I saw that terrible video, and then Drizella bragged that you were grounded. I hate to see you miss out on such a special night! So, I decided to take matters into my own hands.”

“What do you mean?” I asked again.

“I mean, I’ll do you up - hair, makeup, and of course I brought a dress,” she said, pulling a package from her bag.

“Wow, really? Thank you so much!” I said breathlessly. But then my heart sank. “I really can't go. Everyone will just make fun of me.”

“Nonsense. You’ll look so pretty, no one will even think about the video!”

Maryellen had gone to so much trouble, how could I refuse?

Maryellen sat me down and started to curl my hair into a French twist, leaving my bangs out in front. Then she pulled out eyeliner, blush, and mascara - all things that were new, uncharted territory to me. I was entranced. Is this how all girls feel getting ready with their moms? The dress was soft and silky, purple up to the sleeves where it faded into a dark blue. Rhinestones danced across the front, and the back was cut in a low crisscross. The shoes were shiny, silver stilettos that any girl would want.

When all of Maryellen’s magic was done, I stepped in front of the mirror.

“Wow!” I gasped in awe.

“Now go have a good time!” She said proudly. “Oh, and one last thing - you’ll need this.” Maryellen held out a new phone.

I couldn’t believe it! I just stared, andmy jaw dropped.

“Your family doesn’t need to know about this,” Maryellen spoke very quickly, pushing me out the door. “I’ll add minutes whenever you come over and take care of the kiddos. Go along now, I’ll clean up. You are special, and deserve a special night!”

And with that, she shut the door.

As I stepped through the doors into the gym, I heard someone say my name - my *real* name. I turned around.

“Hi Ella,” Peter said. He sounded nervous.

“Hey,” I said. “Listen, I’m really sorry I ran away the other night. It’s just that I realized they were filming me . . . and, well, you know the rest.”

“Oh. They were filming you?” Peter joked in mock surprise, “I thought it was some kind of science experiment.”

I laughed. “What, like how much fire can kill a phone?”

“No, more along the lines of, how many likes can two morons get by filming their obviously prettier sister?”

I didn’t know what to say to that.

Peter continued, “So I was wondering if maybe . . . you want to dance?”

“Yeah, okay.”

Peter grabbed my hand and led me to the middle of the floor. A bunch of people whispered and muttered not-so-nice things under their breath, but I hardly noticed, because then we were dancing. Dipping and swaying, we soared around the floor. I caught a glimpse of my stepsisters, and hurriedly turned away. They were not going to ruin this night! Song after song, we spun around the room. His arms were tight around me, and I was actually having fun, until . . .  my phone buzzed.

I broke away from Peter. “Hello?”

“Hi Ella, it’s Maryellen! Your family just got back from the dance - you need to head home *now*!”

I scanned the room. Yep, they were gone. My stomach dropped - my stepmother was going to kill me! “I have to go!” I cried, pulling away from Peter.

“Wait-” he started, but I was already gone. I pulled off my shoes, raced down the stairs, and out into the night. I had to get home!

When I snuck in the back door, my feet were scraped, my dress was torn, but I could hear my sisters noisily complaining in the living room. Thank goodness they hadn’t noticed I was gone! I quietly tip-toed up the stairs and escaped to my attic bedroom.

The next morning, I hummed as I made breakfast. I couldn’t stop thinking about the last dance I’d had with Peter.

“Have you seen our new video?” Drizella demanded loudly from behind me.

I whirled around. “Uh, no?” I replied, reaching for my new phone. But the phone wasn’t there! Come to think of it, I hadn’t used my phone all morning. Oh no!

“Peter was dancing with this girl who had the *most* beautiful dress, and we wanted to do a fit check with her for our vlog, but she just wouldn’t stop dancing. It was *so* unfair.”

I stood, rooted to the ground, unsure what to do.

Just then, there was a knock on the door. I prayed it wasn’t Maryellen - how was I going to explain losing her phone?

Anna raced past us and flung open the door. “Oh . . . what do *you* want?” she demanded.

I peered past Drizella. It was Peter - in my doorway!

“I have Ella’s phone. Is she here?”

Anna smirked. “You don’t have her phone. Her phone disintegrated. It got us lots of new followers.”

“Uh, I have her phone from last night. She dropped it at the dance?”

Both Anna and Drizella shrieked angrily, “She wasn’t at the dance!!!”

I pushed past them onto the porch. “Thank you. Thank you, Peter. I thought I lost this phone too! I can’t believe you saved it!”

Peter smiled, and as I reached for the phone, he grabbed my hand and spun me around. “We never did finish that dance,” he smiled.

“This is your fault!” Drizella screeched at Anna.

“No, it’s your fault!” Anna shouted back. “She lost her second phone, and we didn’t even get it on video?!”

The End