



2007

Before Midnight: A Retelling of "Cinderella"

Donna Cardon

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Dokey, Cameron. *Before Midnight: A Retelling of "Cinderella."* Simon & Schuster, 2007. ISBN 9781416934714. \$5.99. 194 p.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fairy Tales; Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Fantasy--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Will there ever be too many retellings of Cinderella? Not yet. In this latest, Cendrillon's mother dies soon after Cendrillon is born. Two weeks later, Cendrillon's father arrives with a small male infant. The father is heartbroken at his wife's death and leaves his baby daughter and the boy, Raoul, in the care of a kindly healer. The girl and boy grow up together both wishing for the family they have never had. When the two children are fifteen, a stepmother with two daughters shows up. The stepmother has her own secret wishes that at first keep Cendrillon and her apart, but eventually bring them together. In the end, it is the power of love, not a magic wand, which sends Cendrillon and Raoul to the royal ball to find their hearts' desires.

This is a very satisfying version of Cinderella. All the characters are sympathetic and complex. When there is "wickedness" it arises out of secret grief. No one is intrinsically evil and all the character's actions are well motivated and believable. The traditional elements of the Cinderella story are present, but are introduced in fresh and clever ways. This is probably the most "feel good" version of Cinderella to come along in many years. It is so upbeat that it probably will not receive the critical acclaim of more cynical versions like *Just Ella* (Aladdin, 1999). For teens who want a fun light read, it is a wish come true.