

Cinderella...After the Happily Ever After

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*“Then she was taken to the palace, where the prince met her, with great joy, and married her.”*

After Cinderella said “I do”, her life took another dreadful turn filled with heartbreak. She thought she had found Prince Charming when the glass slipper fit and she was whisked away to a beautiful castle to become a princess. Unfortunately for Cinderella, her shotgun wedding to Prince Albert didn’t leave her much time to learn about the dear prince and his true feelings towards her and their marriage.

The prince’s overbearing mother and father had forced him into marriage so that there would be an heir to the throne. He really had no interest in marriage but found a random girl at a party to please his parents and insure his place in the kingdom and heir to their millions. Cinderella was unknowingly going to be caught in a web of lies and unfaithfulness.

After the wedding, the naive princess moved into the palace and began living her life in the lap of luxury. She was never forced to do any chores and had servants waiting on her hand and foot. She spent her days relaxing by the pool and her nights out at the hottest clubs with her step sisters Ashley and Brittany.

She wore the latest fashions from the hottest designers. Her fingers were draped in diamonds and she was free to buy anything she wanted. Expensive cars were parked in the driveway and furs hung in her closet. She had every material object she had ever dreamed of but it wasn’t enough to fill the gaping hole in heart.

After a few months, she realized what was wrong. She was lonely. The prince never spent anytime with her. He was always out shopping for new clothes or trying out the latest restaurants without her. He would leave the castle late at night, without so much as a word, and

disappear on a regular basis. They slept in separate rooms and she never felt a connection with him.

She started to wonder what was wrong. She thought back to when they had first met and how charming he had been. That night at the party, their eyes had met from across a crowded room. They had danced the night away and when she had to escape for fear of her secret being discovered, he came looking for her. He rode into town on his white steed with her glass slipper and rescued her from a miserable existence of slavery. She did not want to go back to her horrible stepmother and her lonely life of drudgery, so she never asked him about his comings and goings for risk of losing everything.

One night, Cinderella's curiosity got the best of her and she decided to follow the prince after he went out. Dressed in all black, with a scarf over her head she jumped into her Jaguar to see where the prince was spending his nights. The prince headed out of the kingdom into the next village and twenty minutes later she was traveling through a part of town she had never seen before.

The prince's Porsche slowly pulled into a parking lot behind an establishment named the "Rainbow Room". He got out of the car, looked around and headed toward the building. Within a few seconds, he had slipped through the door and was inside. Cinderella sat in her car for a minute, contemplating her next move. Should she follow him in or just turn around and go home? Did she really want to know what was going on? Was she better off not knowing?

She had already come this far. She finally decided she needed to know what her husband was doing behind her back. With a deep sigh, she slowly stepped out of the car and closed the door behind her. She clicked the lock button to her Jag and slowly trudged to the building.

She opened the door and her nostrils were immediately hit with the smell of stale smoke and aftershave. The room was very dark and she scanned the room, looking for the prince. The music was very loud and at first glance, looked like any other bar she had been in.

Then, she started to notice that this was not just a typical bar. She was definitely outnumbered by men and she really needed to look hard to find any women in the bar. *Where were the women?* She thought to herself. As she looked around the room again, she started to notice the men were in couples. Some were holding hands, some were dancing, and some were even kissing. It finally dawned on her. She was in a gay bar!!

*Why would Albert be in a gay bar?* She thought to herself. Just at that moment, she felt someone bump into her from behind.

“Oh, I am sooooo sorry sweetie!” The handsome boy said to her. “Are you looking for someone?” he said quizzically with his head cocked to one side.

Cinderella looked at his clean shaven face. His snug T-shirt did little to hide the tight abs underneath and she wondered if he was able to breathe in the skin tight jeans he was wearing.

“Yyyes, I am, actually...” she stuttered. “His name is Albert.” She was able to get out.

After a minimal description, the handsome boy knew exactly who she was talking about.

“Oh, you mean Al!!!” He exclaimed. “He’s a regular! I’ll take you over to his table. Just follow me.”

He started winding his way through the crowded bar and she bobbed and weaved and ducked and squeezed between couples trying to keep up with her new gay friend. Finally, they stopped and Cinderella came face to face with her, apparently very gay, husband.

Prince Albert stood up and moved away from the man he was sitting with, releasing his hand in one smooth movement.

“Cinderella, what are you doing here?” He asked, backing away.

“I’m not sure...” she replied hesitantly. “I don’t know” she trailed off. She could feel the tears welling up in her eyes as she turned to leave the table.

“Wait! Let me explain!” He started. He tried to reach for her, but it was too late. She was already out the door and into the cold night, stumbling back to her car.

Cinderella went back to the castle, packed a small bag and headed out of town. As the details of what had just happened rattled through her mind, one thing was clear: she was never going back. The kingdom apparently already had two queens at the moment and she wasn’t about to compete. She checked into a psychiatric institution one hundred miles away where she was able to get the help she needed to cope with the tragic sequence of events that had been her life up to this point.

For the next three months she talked to counselors and psychiatrists about the death of her mother, the impoverished conditions and constant verbal abuse she suffered at the hands of her stepmother, and her short-lived sham of a marriage. They adjusted her medications, and soon enough she was back on her feet working as a waitress in a local diner.

She filed for divorce and found a small one bedroom apartment at the edge of the kingdom which she shares with her cat. She lives alone, takes care of herself and her cat and looks forwards to Desperate Housewives on Sunday nights. She is responsible for no one but herself and feels that she has truly found happiness and knows she will live happily ever after on her own.