

*Cinderella*  
**Conflict and  
Resolution**

By Terri Elders, Co-creator  
*Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Travel*



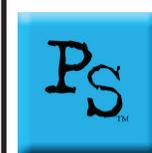
Publishing Syndicate bills the *Not Your Mother's Book* series as “the new anthology for a new century.” But even ultra-modernists can't go wrong by looking at old classics to see what constitutes a good story.

For example, let's look at *Cinderella*, first published in 1697 in Paris by Charles Perrault. Though its origins date back to the mid-ninth century, Perrault's version is the one that most of us grew up with. He introduced us to an unforgettable child, kicked to the curb—or hearthstone—by her heartless stepfamily.

Perrault had some options here with this basic premise. He didn't choose to provide us with a polemic about how society should remedy Cindy's plight. He didn't rant and rave about how somebody should do something about her situation. He didn't ruminate on what would be fitting punishments for her tormentors. And he didn't shed tears, throw up his hands, and simply conclude that life can be unfair.

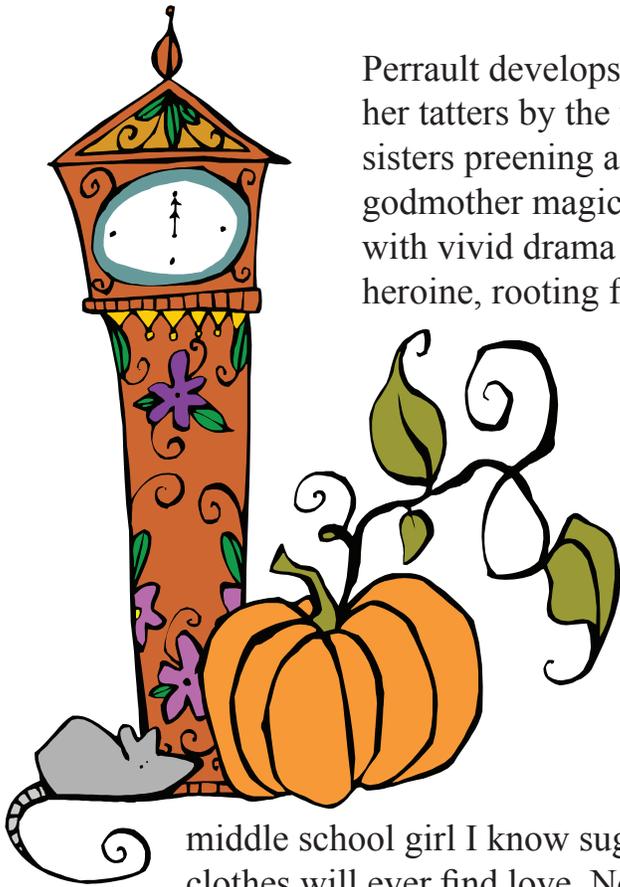
No. Instead he gave us a *story* with setting, characters, a sequence, conflict, climax and a resolution. He told it economically. *Cinderella* unfolds chronologically, as do most fairy tales. It's easy to follow. He begins at the beginning, gives us a meaty middle, and comes up with a fulfilling resolution.

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## Cinderella: Conflict and Resolution

*Continued from page one*



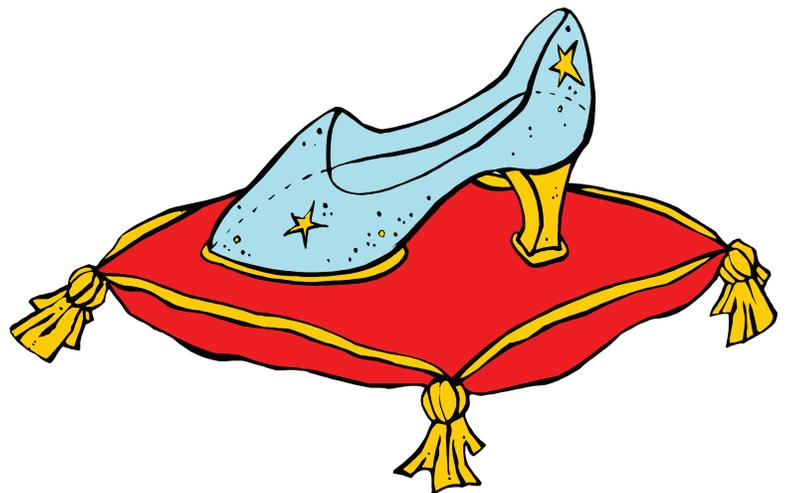
Perrault develops the story in scenes. We can sympathize with Cindy in her tatters by the fireside. We can shake our heads as we watch her stepsisters preening as they prepare for the ball. We're dazzled when her fairy godmother magically appears. The writer plunges us right into the action with vivid drama and dialogue. We're there, breathless with hope for our heroine, rooting for her triumph.

As a *NYMB* co-creator, when I screen stories in our database, I'm seeking similar elements. Can I envision the setting? Does anything appeal to my senses? Does the main character—and in nonfiction narratives, this should be the narrator—reveal personal feelings, fears or fantasies?

It's the revelation of the latter, your personal beliefs, that will give your story a theme. Cinderella herself wouldn't agree that the theme of her story is, as one

middle school girl I know suggested, that only beautiful girls who own fashionable clothes will ever find love. No . . . that's not quite it. Universally, *Cinderella* has been understood to celebrate how good triumphs over evil. In this case, Cindy wins out, with a lot of help from an unusually gifted friend and her own willingness to take some risks.

A more cautious waif might have declined the invitation to ride in a chariot converted from a pumpkin. So far as Cindy knew, it hadn't been road-tested. She might have shied from trusting steeds that just seconds before roamed as rodents . . . she'd heard about three blind mice. Nobody could criticize her for gingerly stepping into slippers that might shatter and fill her feet with shards. But Cindy took her chances.



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## *Cinderella*: Conflict and Resolution

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Every engaging protagonist has to have a goal. What did Cinderella want? *She wanted to go to the ball.* It's not enough to merely paint a portrait—you can do that in a poem, essay or blog. But like in fairy tales, in a nonfiction narrative there's got to be some action. *Cinderella* presents conflict, climax and resolution.

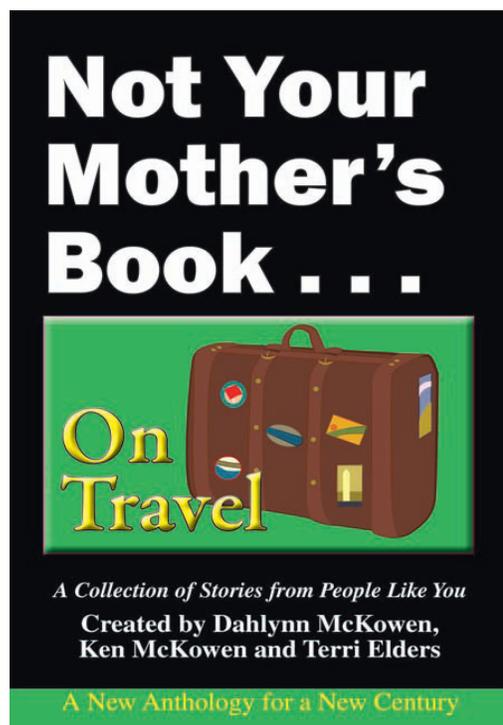


In looking through the submissions I'm working on editing for *Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Travel*, I'm drawn to stories that address issues of perspective. I like stories that answer the general question of why we long to see faraway places with strange sounding names. But

I'm also drawn to tales that tell about unexpected outcomes, of adjusted perspectives, of finding wonder in surrendering to new experiences as they unfold, be it facing off against a pending tropical storm, an intrusive skunk or manatee, or emergency room personnel who don't quite speak your language.

Travelers and writers share some qualities with Cinderella. They wait for opportunities to transform what might be just another drab day into a wondrous adventure. When I board a jet plane or a bus or even a motorcycle, I remember that I'm taking a journey. When I later write about that trek, I want the reader to take that journey with me and learn with me if good triumphed over adversity, if I were able to make lemonade from lemons, and if my dream somehow came true.

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*Terri's new book, due out this November!*

## *Cinderella*: Conflict and Resolution

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Quick tips on writing your real-life story for NYMB:

1. Come out swinging. Grab ‘em at the get-go. Start with the precipitating incident right away, not five paragraphs into your story. Time’s a wasting in such a short form as a true-life narrative, which for *NYMB* is between 500 and 2500 words.
2. Don’t lull us with uncertainty. Avoid phrases such as “I don’t really remember all the details of what happened next, but . . .” or “I won’t bore you with everything that happened after that, but I think . . .” and my pet peeve, “If memory serves me right . . .”.
3. Funny stories are favored. *NYMB* loves a light touch. But we don’t seek snarky, snide snippets meant to injure others. It’s OK to poke fun at somebody, preferably ourselves, but a nasty barb’s not our thing. If it’s mean-spirited, it’s not likely to be selected. If it’s libelous, it’s certain not to make the book.
4. Be specific in time, place and person. Don’t tackle too many incidents or feature a cast of thousands. And keep the focus on the narrator! You’re the star of your story.
5. Conclude with a bit of “so what.” Why does what happened to you matter? Why should we care? Did you learn something surprising, something memorable? Will your reader want to read this story again? Children plead to hear or see *Cinderella* one more time to witness the transformation of the ragamuffin into a princess and to get to the “happily ever after.” Avoid preachy moralizing, but give us a zinger, a riveting summation of the impact that the incident you’ve told us about had on you.

Whether you’re Cinderella or Cinderfella, celebrate the magic in your life and share your story with the world. Now is the time to get published in *Not Your Mother’s Book!*

Even though the deadline for Terri’s book has passed, we welcome you to submit stories for our other wonderful *NYMB* titles. Visit our website for more info and submission guidelines. Thanks! ~ *Dahlynn and Ken*



**HURRY! STORIES NEEDED!**

Updated 9/17/12

*Not Your Mother's Book . . .*

**A new anthology for a new century!**

Nearly 40 titles in the NYMB series need stories! Stories must be written by people age 18 and up. Details on the PS website.

**DEADLINES, DEADLINES!**

*On Family*: October 1, 2012

*On Being a Mom*: October 1 2012

More deadline announcements will be made next month, but don't wait! Send your stories in NOW to avoid getting stuck in the piles of last-minute submissions.

**OMG! My Reality Youth Series**

**Time to get published!**

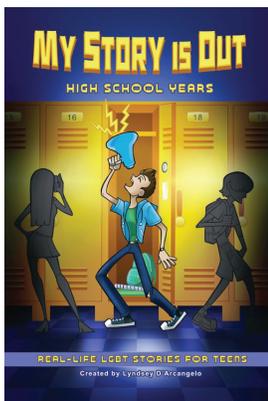
Accepting stories for four *OMG! My Reality!* titles: *Kids; Preteens; Teens* and *Stand Up!* Stories must be written by those age 25 and younger. Please share this information. Thanks!



**DEADLINE for OMG! books**

*Stand Up!*: November 1, 2012

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