

RHODOPIS AND HER ROSE-GILDED SANDALS

An Egyptian fairy tale which is probably the oldest known version of the Cinderella story

Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: A house and field by the River Nile; The Pharaoh's Temple

Characters:

Narrator

Rhodopis, a Greek slave Rhodopis means "rosy-cheeked". (ra – doh – pes)

Emu, a Greek slave Emu means "cat."

Kanika, a Greek slave Kanika means "black."

Odjit, a Greek slave Odjit means "wicked."

Ako, the Egyptian Master Ako means "tired, weary."

Pharaoh Ahmose Ahmose means "Son of the Moon."

Horus, the falcon Sky god

Narrator: Once upon a time, Rhodopis, a lovely Greek girl was kidnapped by pirates and taken to work as a slave in the house of Ako, an Egyptian Master. Since Ako slept most of the day, he was unaware of the way the other slave girls treated Rhodopis.

Emu: (like a cat) Oh, Rhodopis! Looook at yourself. Your clothes are raaaags!

Kanika: (angrily) YOU embarrass us! Your skin is so fair, it's UGLY!

Odjit: (wicked laugh) She's from Greece! Yuck! I won't be seen with her when we go to the Pharaoh's Celebration! In fact, there is so much work to be done, she'll have to stay home. (laughs)

Emu: Thaaaaat's right! We'll make a list soooo long she won't be able to stop working – day and night! And you knooooow how the Master gets when the work is not done! (All laugh.)

Narrator: One evening, Ako, the Master, noticed Rhodopis dancing alone in the moon light behind the servants' quarters.

Ako: Rhodopis certainly can dance! She glides across the meadow like a gazelle! That pleases me. I must reward her not only for her dancing but for all of her hard work.

Narrator: Ako entered his house, took a pair of rose-gilded shoes from his closet, then stood at the front door.

Ako: (calling loudly) Rhodopis! Come to me.

Rhodopis: (frightened) You called, Master Ako? What do you wish of me?

Ako: I have something for you.

Narrator: Ako handed Rhodopis the pair of beautiful rose-gilded shoes.

Rhodopis: Oh! These are too beautiful for me. I cannot take them, Master Ako.

Ako: But you must! You have pleased me with your dancing. And, you have worked harder than any other slave in my household. I am most grateful.

Rhodopis: (bowed low) Thank you *very, very* much, Master Ako.

Narrator: Rhodopis put the rose-gilded shoes on her tiny feet and returned to work in the field with the other slave girls.

Emu: (like a cat) Nooooo! What have we here? Neeeeew shoes?

Kanika: (slapping her hands together) We'll teach her not to accept favors.

Odjit: (crouching down and waving her hands) Yes, let's pull her hair and scratch her arms!

Emu: (like a cat) Noooo! We'll just give her mooore and more work to doooo.
(All laugh)

Narrator: The next day, the Grand Celebration was to be held at the Temple court. The slave girls spent all night preparing their clothes and hair styles. That is, everyone except Rhodopis.

Rhodopis: Oh, how I wish I could go to the Grand Celebration but I have so much work to do. It's getting late and I must get this laundry washed and hung up to dry.

Narrator: So Rhodopis skipped down to the water's edge and began washing the clothes. Her rose-gilded shoes became wet, so she took them off and placed them in the sun to dry. Suddenly, a large shadow crossed over her head.

Horus: (loud voice) I am Horus, the Sky God! What is that bright rose-gilded thing below me? I shall take it to the Pharaoh to please him.

Narrator: Horus swooped down, snatched one shoe and flew away. Rhodopis screamed when she saw what was happening.

Rhodopis: No, no! Wait! Stop! Stop! (crying) Please come back... please.

Narrator: Rhodopis picked up her remaining shoe, returned to her room and buried it in her closet. Meanwhile, Pharaoh Ahmose sat proudly at the center of the Temple square. Suddenly, Horus flew overhead and dropped the rose-gilded shoe.

Pharaoh: How strange of the falcon to drop this rose-gilded shoe in my lap. (thinking) Ahhh, now I remember. All Pharaohs know that the gods give us something so we know who will be the perfect bride. This shoe tells me how to find my bride. Thank you, Horus, God of the Sky! Messenger, quick! Have all young maidens try on this shoe. Tell them I will marry the maiden whose foot it fits.

Narrator: The Pharaoh's men tried the shoe on every young maiden at the Temple Celebration. No foot was a perfect match. On the way back to the Palace, they came to the house of Ako. All of the slave girls were excited to try on the shoe.

Emu: (catlike) Give me that shoe! I shall be the one whose foot will fit that shoe!

Kanika: (angrily) No! No one's foot is as small and perfect as mine! I'M THE ONE!

Odjit: (witchlike) I'll MAKE my foot fit that shoe even if I have to play tricks!

Narrator: One by one, the slave girls tried on the shoe and each one failed to make it fit. Suddenly, the Pharaoh saw Rhodopis in the field cutting crops.

Pharaoh: Bring her to me.

Narrator: With fear and trembling, Rhodopis stood before the Pharaoh. His messenger helped slip the shoe onto her foot.

Pharaoh: It is a perfect fit! But why is she running away?

Narrator: Rhodopis fled into the house and took the matching shoe from the closet. With a brave smile, she returned to the Pharaoh and presented the second rose-gilded shoe.

Pharaoh: This proves you are the one who shall be my bride.

Narrator: Of course, Rhodopis accepted the Pharaoh's marriage proposal. A grand wedding was held in the Temple and they lived happily ever after.