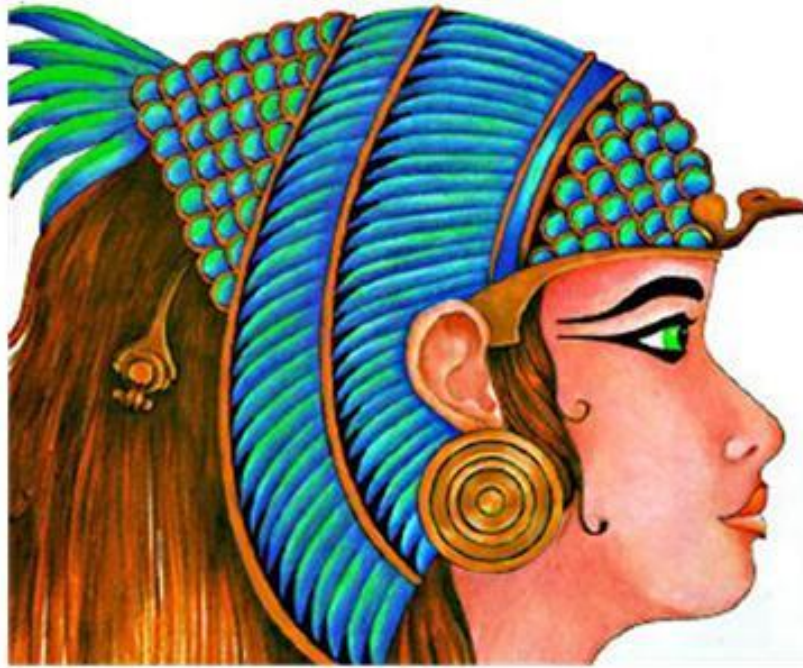




THE EGYPTIAN CINDERELLA



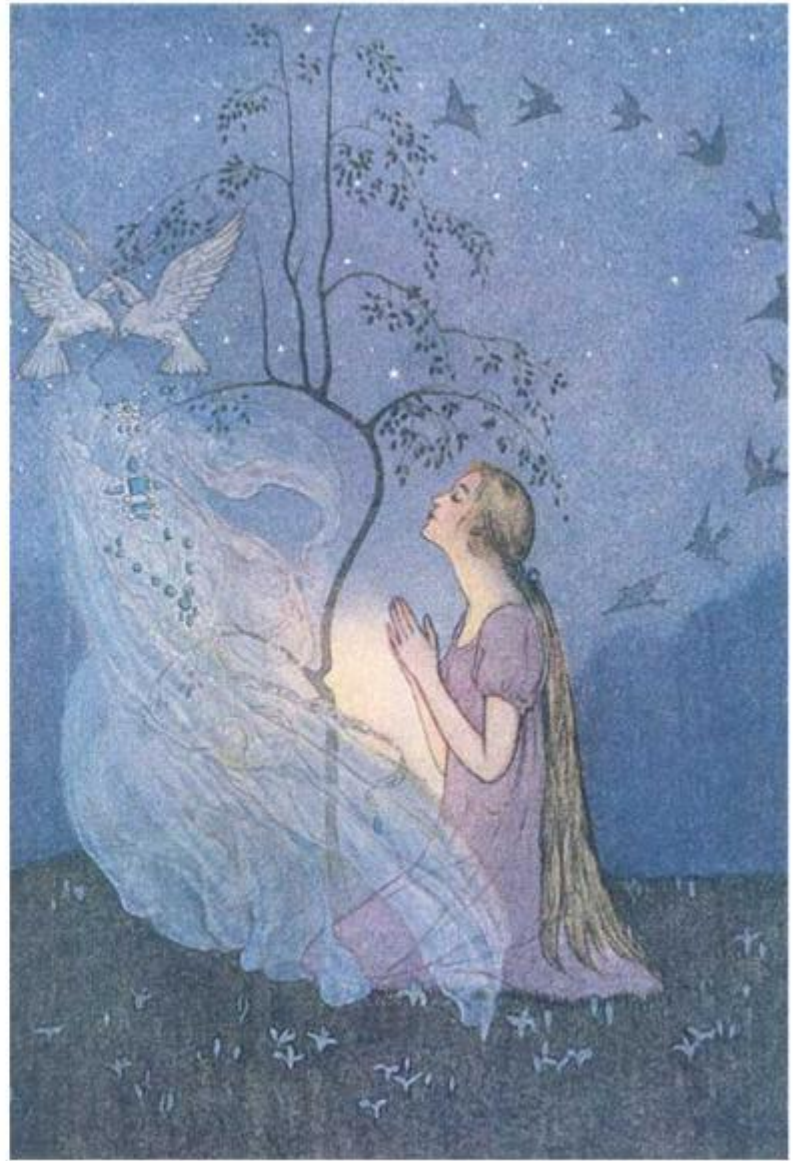
"Long ago in the land of Egypt where the green water of the Nile River flows into the blue water of the Mediterranean Sea lived a young maiden named Rhodopis." Rhodopis was born in Greece but was kidnapped by pirates and carried down into Egypt where she was sold into slavery. Her owner turned out to be a kind old man, called Charaxos, who spent most of his time under a tree sleeping. Because of this he never saw how the other girls in the house, all servant girls, taunted and teased Rhodopis.



They teased her because she looked differently from them. Their hair was straight and black while hers was golden and curly. They had brown eyes and she had green.

Their skin had the glow of copper, but Rhodopis had pale skin that burned easily in the sun causing them to call her Rosy Rhodopis. They also made her work hard shouting at her all day, "Go to the river and wash the clothes," "Mend my robe," "Chase the geese from the garden,": "Bake the bread."

Now Rhodopis had no friends- only the animals. She had trained the birds to eat from her hand, a monkey to sit on her shoulder, and the old hippopotamus would slide up on the bank out of the mud to be closer to her. At the end of the day if she wasn't too tired she would go down to the river to be with her animal friends and if she had any energy left from the hard day's work she would dance and sing for them.





One evening as she was dancing, twirling around lighter than air with her feet barely touching the ground, the old man woke from his sleep and watched as she danced. He admired her dancing and felt that one so talented should not be without shoes. He ordered her a special pair of slippers. The shoes were gilded with rose-red gold and the soles were leather.

Now the servant girls really disliked her for they were jealous of her beautiful slippers. Word arrived that the Pharaoh was holding court in Memphis and all in the kingdom were invited. Oh how Rhodopis wanted to go with the servant girls. For she knew there would be dancing, singing, and lots of wonderful food. As the servant girls prepared to leave in their finest clothes they turned to Rhodopis and gave her more chores to do before they returned. They poled their raft away leaving a sad Rhodopis on the bank.



As she began to wash the clothes in the river she sang a sad little song--"wash the linen, weed the garden, grind the grain." The hippopotamus grew tired of this little song and splashed back into the river. The splashing of the water wet Rhodopis's slippers. She quickly grabbed them up, wiped it off and placed them in the sun to dry. As she was continuing with her chores the sky darkened and as she looked up she saw a falcon sweep down, snatch one of her slippers, and fly away.





Rhodopis was in awe for she knew it was the god Horus who had taken her shoe. Rhodopis now with only one slipper put it away in her tunic.

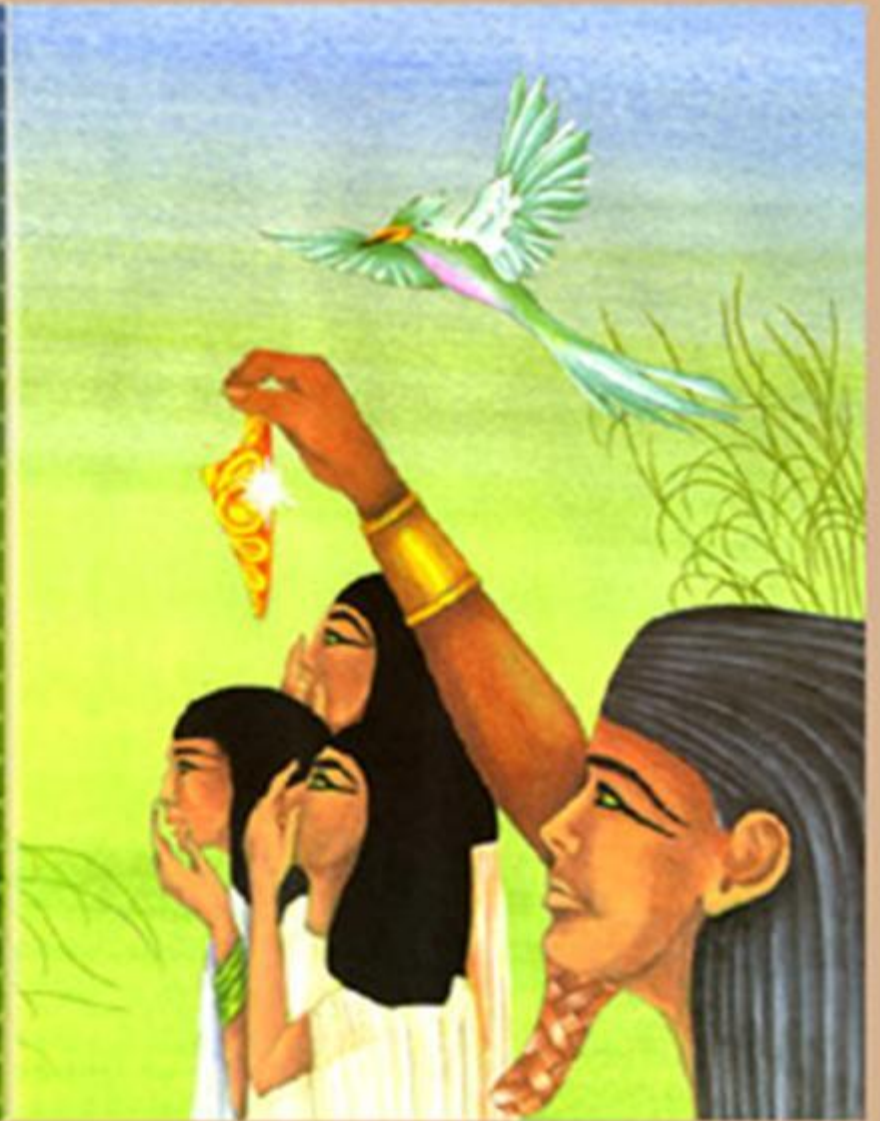
Now the Pharaoh, Amasis, Pharaoh of upper and lower Egypt was sitting on his throne looking out over the people and feeling very bored. He much preferred to be riding across the desert in his chariot. Suddenly the falcon swooped down and dropped the rose-red golden slipper in his lap. Surprised but knowing this was a sign from the god Horus he sent out a decree that all maidens in Egypt must try on the slipper, and the owner of the slipper would be his queen.

By the time the servant girls arrived the celebrations had ended and the Pharaoh had left by chariot in search of the owner of the golden slipper. After searching on land and not finding the owner he called for his barge and began to travel the Nile pulling into every landing so maidens could try on the slipper.

As the barge rounded the bend in front of the home of Rhodopis all heard the sounds of the gong, the trumpets blaring, and saw the purple silk sails.



The servant girls ran to the landing to try on the shoe while Rhodopis hid in the rushes. When the servant girls saw the shoe they recognized it as Rhodopis's slipper but they said nothing and still tried to force their feet into the slipper. The Pharaoh spied Rhodopis hiding in the rushes and asked her to try on the slipper. She slid her tiny foot into the slipper and then pulled the other from her tunic.



The Pharaoh pronounced that she would be his queen. The servant girls cried out that she was a slave and not even Egyptian. The Pharaoh responded with "She is the most Egyptian of all...for her eyes are as green as the Nile, her fair as feathery as papyrus, and her skin the pink of a lotus flower."

