

STELLA

by
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There once was young girl named Stella. Like many girls her age, she thought she was not pretty. She thought she was too fat, too ugly, and too dumb for anybody to love her. The fact that her mother had died and her father had remarried a woman who had nothing good to say about her did not help.

In reality, Stella was very pretty and very smart.

Stella tried and tried to please her stepmother, but it was impossible. She wondered why her father married this woman after her mother died six years before. She loved her mother and they were best friends. Everything Stella did her mother would praise her and tell her what a wonderful daughter she was.

Her stepmother was just the opposite. Over and over her mean step-mother told her no one would love her. She would never be pretty, she would never be smart, and she would never be successful at doing anything.

Unfortunately, Stella believed her.

Stella loved to be with her friends. She liked to go to the park and sit for hours talking about fun things. They would laugh and giggle when talking about boys. It was fun to talk about what boy liked which girl. Whenever the girls teased Stella, she would blush and get red in the face. She liked it. She wanted a boyfriend.

Her stepmother told her she was silly to talk like that. She told Stella sitting and

talking to her friends about boys was childish. She needed to grow up.

Stella did not want to go to the university. She wanted to be a hairdresser. She liked to have her friends over and they would comb each other's hair and put pretty bows and ribbons in their hair. Then dance around the room having fun.

Her stepmother told her she was never going to be good at anything, especially a hairdresser. She told Stella she had to study hard in order to go to the best university. Then with a good education, she could get a good job. Then when her parents were older, she would be able to take good care of them.

Stella loved to dress up. Sometimes she would put makeup on her face and put her hair up in different ways. She liked to stand in front the mirror, dream about going to a beautiful party and meeting many different people. She dreamed of being a princess.

Her stepmother would yell at her when she did this. She told her she should not dream about things like that. She was not pretty and a prince would never want to marry someone like her.

She would say, "That's only a dream! It'll never come true."

Stella liked to buy magazines and look at the pretty models. She would imagine herself walking on a red carpet and there would be many people taking her picture. She dreamed of being a famous movie star.

Her stepmother told he she should stop being so foolish. She would never be a famous movie star. She was too ordinary. She would only fail if she tried.

Stella loved to go the theater to watch movies. Her favorite movies were about romance. She loved to sit and dream about a handsome man who would come and carry her away to his home along the ocean. She would have many children and they would be happy together.

Her stepmother told her she would never find a handsome man and she should not dream about such things. She would just be disappointed in her life if she dreamed about that all of the time. It was never going to happen.

Stella liked to listen to pop music. She would have visions of being a famous

singer and many people would come to see her perform. They would all sing her songs and have her picture on the walls in their rooms.

Her stepmother told her to stop singing. She said her voice was terrible and she would never be good enough to be a famous singer.

Stella liked to play sports, especially soccer. She played on a team and she scored many goals. She enjoyed playing soccer and the other players liked her a lot. She had daydreams of playing for the national team. She would be a national hero!

Her stepmother told her she would never be on the national team.

She would say, "There are so many other girls better than you. Don't waste your time thinking about that. It'll never happen."

Stella liked to draw in her drawing book. She had pencils, paints, and colored chalk. When she was bored, she would sit on the floor in her room and draw pictures of dresses and fashions. She loved to make the clothes long and elegant. She saw herself displaying her clothes in a fashion show. Many models were wearing her outfits walking back and forth showing the most influential fashion buyers her designs and after the show, they stood up and cheered.

Her stepmother told her to throw her drawings away. They were terrible and no one would buy such ugly clothes. She told her being a famous fashion designer was never going to happen. She would never be good enough.

Stella played the violin in school. She was first chair in the orchestra. She practiced her violin every day. She loved the sound of the violin and she fantasized about being in the metropolitan orchestra and playing a solo in front of all the people in the audience. They would clap and ask for more.

Her stepmother told her to close the door to her room. She said the noise of the violin made her upset. She told Stella she played so badly, no one would want to listen to her play. She said the strings squeaked and the music did not sound like music at all. She told her it would be better if she stopped playing the violin.

Stella signed up to be a model in a fashion show at school. She picked out the

clothes she was going to wear very carefully. The kids at school liked the styles she chose. She showed the outfits to her stepmother.

Her stepmother said Stella looked funny. She said Stella did not look like a model. She was too short, too fat, and too ugly to be a fashion model. She said she would look terrible walking in front of everyone looking like that.

Stella liked to write. She liked to write stories about her friends, and of how they would go on great adventures. She had a big book of stories. Sometimes she would share her stories with her friends and they would always ask her for more.

Her stepmother found her book and read the stories. She told Stella the stories were boring and they did not have any imagination. She told her she was wasting her time writing. She should work harder to get better grades in school, not spend her time writing useless stories.

Even though her stepmother complained about her school work, Stella studied hard for her tests. She did all of her homework. She did very well in school and her teachers liked her. She was asked to be on the math team by her math teacher.

Her stepmother told her she needed to study harder. She told her that being on the math team was a waste of time. There were so many other children better in math than her. She would make the team fail if she was on it. It was better for Stella to stay home and study for school rather than to be on the math team.

Stella liked to go shopping for clothes. She knew how to find good clothes for low prices. She watched for sales and for when stores were giving out coupons. She liked to wear the latest fashions. She always wanted to look her best in school.

Her stepmother told her she looked goofy in the clothes she wore. She told Stella she was wasting her money. She told Stella she should wear the clothes she bought for her. They were more practical. Stella hated the clothes she got from her stepmother.

Stella began to believe all her stepmother was saying to her. She got discouraged and began to quit all of the things she used to do. She just went home, sat in her room, and locked the door.

She did not go to the park, she did not have her friends over, she stopped dressing up, she quit going to the movies, she stopped listening to music, she quit the soccer team, and she did not draw. She put her violin in its case and put it in the corner of her room, she did not go to the fashion show, she put her writing book under her bed, she told the teacher she could not be on the math team, and she began to wear the clothes her stepmother bought for her.

She just sat in her room reading her textbooks preparing for college. She believed that would please her stepmother.

After that, her stepmother left her alone. She never came into her room. She no longer told Stella what to do.

One day, her father went to her room after he arrived home from work.

He asked Stella why she had changed so much. He asked her why she was so't with her friends, why she was always alone in her room, why she stopped going to the movies, why she wasn't listening to music, and why she quit playing soccer. He wondered why she was not drawing anymore, why she stopped practicing the violin, why she was not on the math team, and why she was wearing such different clothes.

Stella told him everything her stepmother had said. She said that her stepmother was right. She was never going to succeed in anything unless she concentrated on her studies. Stella said she agreed with her stepmother and she would do what she said.

Her father took her into his arms. He held her close, and then he apologized.

"I'm so sorry Stella. I had no idea she was saying these things to you. Your mother was so proud of you, and so am I. We are going to make some big changes around here. First of all, I want you to have your life back. You are an amazing person. You are so beautiful and smart. I could not be prouder of you. Everything you do, you do the very best you can. I cannot expect any more of you. I love you and I want the best for you," her father said as tears ran down his face.

"Thank you daddy, I needed to hear that. I love you too," Stella said with a big smile and tears running down her cheeks.

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. giggle _____ | a. good looking boy |
| 2. famous _____ | b. bad sound on strings |
| 3. ordinary _____ | c. city, municipal |
| 4. handsome _____ | d. functional, plain |
| 5. influential _____ | e. cute little laugh |
| 6. fantasize _____ | f. say I'm sorry |
| 7. metropolitan _____ | g. dream, imagine |
| 8. squeak _____ | h. well known |
| 9. practical _____ | i. normal, not special |
| 10. apologize _____ | j. important, dominant |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Stella played the piano. | T / F |
| 2. Stella's mother was mean. | T / F |
| 3. Stella's mother had died. | T / F |
| 4. Stella's stepmother was kind. | T / F |
| 5. Stella liked music. | T / F |
| 6. Stella talked with her friends. | T / F |
| 7. Stella ran away. | T / F |
| 8. Stella wrote many stories. | T / F |
| 9. Stella drew pictures of animals and butterflies. | T / F |
| 10. Stella's father apologized. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What instrument did Stella play? _____

- a) trumpet
- b) piano
- c) drums
- d) violin

2. What sport did Stella play? _____

- a) golf
- b) basketball
- c) soccer
- d) baseball

3. What did Stella like to draw? _____

- a) clothes fashions
- b) birds
- c) butterflies
- d) her stepmother

4. What did Stella do in the park? _____

- a) played soccer
- b) talk with her friends
- c) have a picnic
- d) talk with her dad

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What happened to Stella's mother?

2. What chair did Stella sit in while in the orchestra?

3. What did Stella think about when she listened to music?

4. How many years ago did Stella's mother die?

5. When the girls teased Stella in the park, why did she blush?

6. What did Stella draw?

7. What did she dream about when she drew pictures of dresses?

8. What did she dream about when she watched movies?

9. What kind of clothes did her stepmother want her to wear?

10. Who apologized to Stella?
