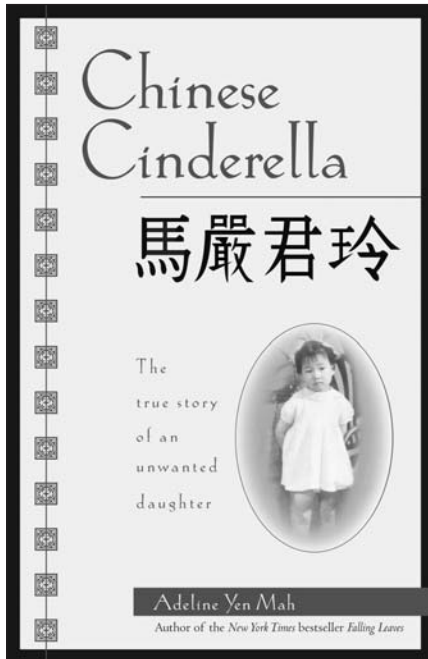
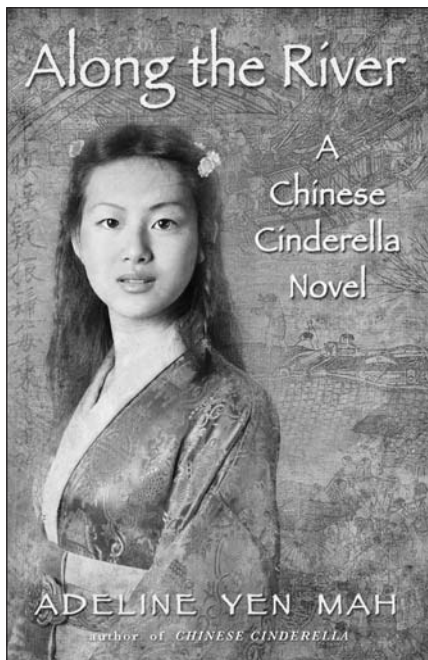


BOOKNOTES

educators guide



Delacorte Press PB: 978-0-385-74007-4
Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-440-22865-3
ebook: 978-0-307-48280-8



Delacorte Press HC: 978-0-385-73895-8
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ebook: 978-0-375-89669-9

ABOUT THE BOOKS

Two stories, one real and the other fictional, relate the lives of two girls who make a courageous and bold decision to escape a dismal life of abuse at the hands of a wicked stepmother.

Adeline Yen Mah is born into an affluent and powerful family in China, but her life is made miserable from the moment she is born. After her mother dies giving birth to her, Adeline's family labels her "bad luck," causing her to grow up with the guilt that she alone is responsible for her mother's death. Things get worse at home when her father remarries. Like Cinderella, her stepmother mistreats her, but Adeline lives with hope that her father might one day be proud of her academic achievement. *Chinese Cinderella* is her story.

In *Along the River: A Chinese Cinderella Novel*, CC suffers a bad head injury and drifts in and out of consciousness. There is a reoccurring dream that haunts her, and under hypnosis, she makes an emotional journey 800 years back to the Song dynasty. Mei-Lan, the girl in her dream, is the daughter of a wealthy and influential man in China, and like Adeline, she is the defiant stepchild who suffers at the hand of a mean stepmother. In Mei-Lan's story, her prince is an illiterate orphan whose art speaks to the power of beauty, friendship, and love.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Family & Relationships • Courage
Abandonment/Loneliness
Self-Esteem • Freedom

GRADES 7 UP

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PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Have the class explore the following Web site: library.thinkquest.org/20443/culture.html. Then divide them into seven small groups and assign each group one of the following topics to research on China: old and new; living and values; design arts; performing arts; visual arts; Chinese music; learning and literature. Ask them to prepare a brief PowerPoint presentation that highlights their topic.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Discuss how Adeline is treated like a stepchild even before Niang marries her father in *Chinese Cinderella*. What is Adeline's relationship with her siblings? When do they begin to change their attitude toward her? Discuss Mei-Lan's relationship with Gege in *Along the River*. Ah Li is an orphan slave boy who lives in a shack on Baba's property. Describe the moment that Mei-Lan and Gege accept him into their family.

COURAGE

Ask students to define *courage*. At what point in *Chinese Cinderella* does Adeline Mah display the most courage? Compare and contrast her courage with that of Mei-Lan in *Along the River*. How does it take courage for Ah Zhao to turn down the offer to work as one of the Emperor's artists-in-residence at the palace? Who is the least courageous character in *Along the River*?

ABANDONMENT/LONELINESS

In the preface of *Chinese Cinderella*, there is a statement from Mother Teresa, "Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted are the greatest poverty." Discuss whether Adeline feels lonelier at home or when she is abandoned and sent away. How does she use her studies and her writing to cope? Explain the loneliness that comes over Ah Zhao at the Qing Ming Festival. Discuss how his art helps him cope with his feelings.

SELF-ESTEEM

How is success related to self-esteem? In *Chinese Cinderella*, Adeline finally convinces her father to send her to England to study. Debate whether Adeline wins the approval from her father that she wants. In *Along the River*, Ah Zhao and Mei-Lan have issues with self-concept. What do they confess to one another about their self-concept that ultimately draws them closer together?

FREEDOM

In *Along the River*, Ah Zhao buys two pigeons from a street vendor and releases them. He says, "Lack of freedom is a fate worse than death." (p. 72) What does freedom have to do with Ah Zhao's decision to run away rather than accept the Emperor's offer to work at the palace? Compare and contrast Adeline and Mei-Lan's concept of freedom.



Photograph courtesy of Adeline Yen Mah

ALSO BY ADELINE YEN MAH



China: Land of Dragons & Empires

A nonfiction exploration of China over the last two millennia.

CONNECTING TO THE CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

Confucius says, “Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.” Ask students to pick something that they think is beautiful, and write an essay about its beauty.

In the Chinese Zodiac, each year is named after an animal. Ask student to find out his or her animal sign on the Chinese zodiac. The Chinese believe that the animal sign determines a person’s character and destiny. Instruct students to think about the qualities that their signs represent and write a short composition that relates them to their character.

SOCIAL STUDIES

In *Chinese Cinderella*, Ye Ye dies, and Adeline is taken to the Buddhist Temple for his funeral. Ask students to research Buddhist beliefs regarding death. Adeline describes the funeral as a very long ceremony. Have students find out the rituals that one would expect to see at a Chinese Buddhist funeral. Write a one-page encyclopedia entry called “Chinese Funeral Customs.”

For the most part, *Along the River* takes place during China’s Song dynasty, a culturally rich period in China’s history. As a follow-up to the pre-reading activity, ask each group to develop an annotated list of five Web sites on their topic now that they’ve learned additional information from reading the books. Share the sites in class and discuss the criteria used in reviewing and selecting the sites.

SCIENCE

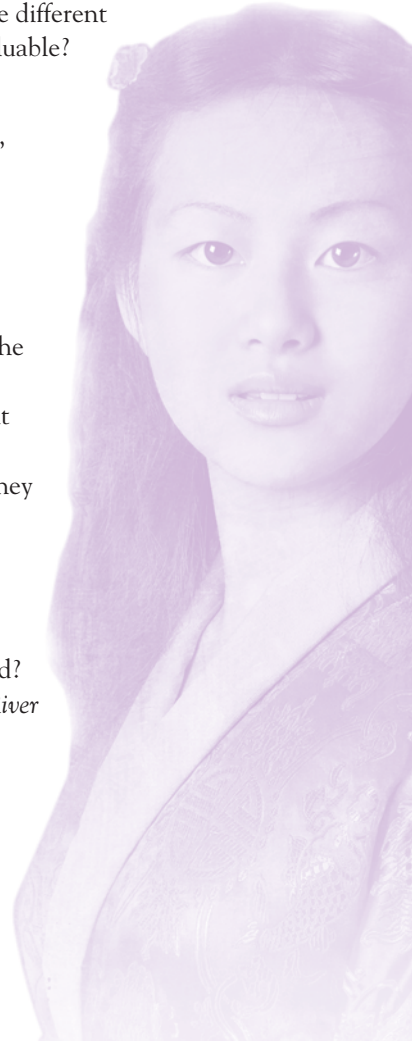
Jade is a semiprecious stone that the Chinese use in much of their jewelry and carvings. Ask students to research how and where jade is mined in the world. Have students find out the different colors of jade. Which is more valuable?

Have students prepare a brief PowerPoint presentation called “Jade: China’s Stone of Heaven.”

ART

A money tree, a symbol of prosperity, is traditionally decorated on the second day of the Chinese New Year. Find out the type of ornaments that one might expect to see on a money tree. Then have the class create a money tree in the Chinese tradition.

Read about the artwork “Along the River During the Qingming Festival.” Where is the work located? How often is it exhibited? Since the emperor in *Along the River* employed copy artists, find out about the reproductions of this painting. What happened to the artist? Have students cite their sources and share their findings in class.



Art © 2010 by Juliana Kolesova

VOCABULARY | USE OF LANGUAGE

In addition to the unfamiliar Chinese words that are defined in the glossary at the end of the books, there are numerous other words that students may want to try and define from the context of the sentence.

In *Chinese Cinderella*:

p. 27	<i>deigned</i>	p. 55	<i>errant</i>
p. 28	<i>proprietor</i>	p. 66	<i>akimbo</i>
p. 30	<i>melee</i>	p. 94	<i>insolence</i>
p. 33	<i>austerity</i>	p. 118	<i>atrium</i>
p. 40	<i>alacrity</i>	p. 123	<i>euphoric</i>
p. 40	<i>obsequious</i>	p. 151	<i>Spartan</i>
p. 41	<i>subterfuge</i>		

In *Along The River*:

p. 13	<i>evocative</i>	p. 54	<i>mandibles</i>
p. 14	<i>elusive</i>	p. 75	<i>queue</i>
p. 15	<i>aura</i>	p. 122	<i>auspicious</i>
p. 34	<i>unfilial</i>	p. 122	<i>inauspicious</i>
p. 36	<i>velocity</i>	p. 167	<i>juxtaposed</i>
p. 40	<i>dexterous</i>		
p. 49	<i>menagerie</i>		



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adeline Yen Mah was born in Tianjin, China, and trained to be a doctor in London. She has a distinguished career in medicine in the United States for many years. Her memoir for adults, *Falling Leaves*, was a worldwide bestseller and was translated into eighteen languages. *Chinese Cinderella* is her memoir for young adults. Adeline divides her time between Los Angeles, London, Shanghai, and Hong Kong.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Adeline Yen Mah

www.adelineyenmah.com

The author's official Web site.

China Bridge

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostempires/china

Companion Web site to Nova's series "Secret of Lost Empires."

Women in Traditional China

www.asiasociety.org/countries-history/traditions/women-traditional-china

This site discusses the traditional role of women in Chinese society and how it began to change in the Song dynasty.

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