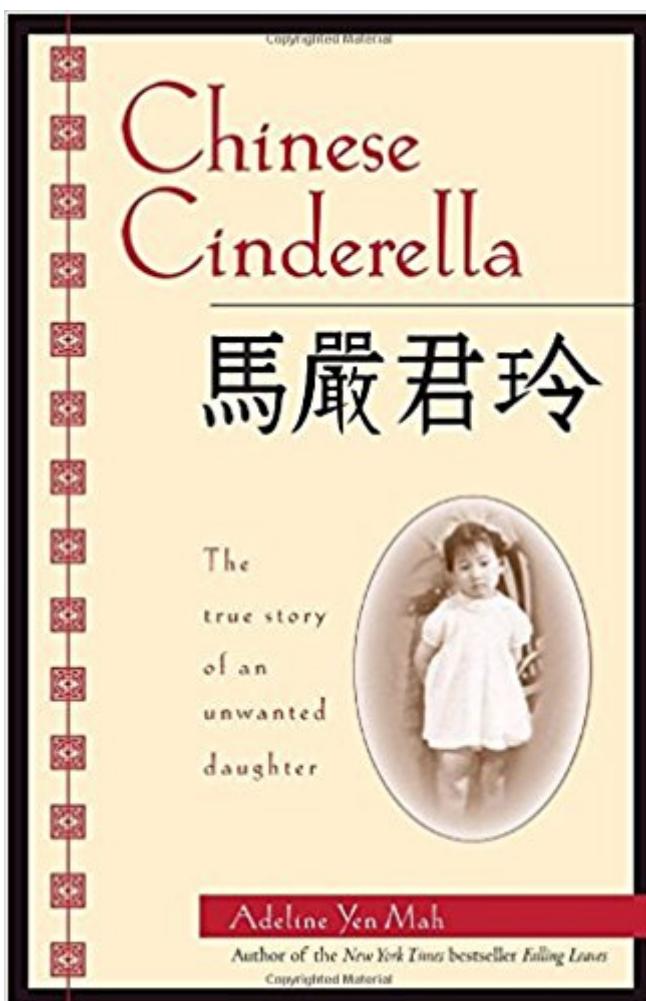


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# Chinese Cinderella: The True Story Of An Unwanted Daughter



## **Synopsis**

A riveting memoir of a girl's painful coming-of-age in a wealthy Chinese family during the 1940s. A Chinese proverb says, "Falling leaves return to their roots." In Chinese Cinderella, Adeline Yen Mah returns to her roots to tell the story of her painful childhood and her ultimate triumph and courage in the face of despair. Adeline's affluent, powerful family considers her bad luck after her mother dies giving birth to her. Life does not get any easier when her father remarries. She and her siblings are subjected to the disdain of her stepmother, while her stepbrother and stepsister are spoiled. Although Adeline wins prizes at school, they are not enough to compensate for what she really yearns for -- the love and understanding of her family. Following the success of the critically acclaimed adult bestseller Falling Leaves, this memoir is a moving telling of the classic Cinderella story, with Adeline Yen Mah providing her own courageous voice. Includes 6-page photo insert. From the Paperback edition.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 0960 (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 454 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #8,506 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Stepfamilies #3 in Books > Teens > Social Issues > Family #3 in Books > Teens > Biographies > Cultural Heritage

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Chinese Cinderella is the perfect title for Adeline Yen Mah's compelling autobiography in which, like the fairy-tale maiden, her childhood was ruled by a cruel stepmother. "Fifth Younger Sister" or "Wu Mei," as Yen Mah was called, is only an infant when her father remarries after her mother's death. As the youngest of her five siblings, Wu Mei suffers the worst at the hands of her stepmother Niang.

She is denied carfare, frequently forgotten at school at the end of the day, and whipped for daring to attend a classmate's birthday party against Niang's wishes. Her father even forgets the spelling of her name when filling out her school enrollment record. In her loneliness, Wu Mei turns to books for company: "I was alone with my beloved books. What bliss! To be left in peace with Cordelia, Regan, Gonoril, and Lear himself--characters more real than my family... What happiness! What comfort!" Even though Wu Mei is repeatedly moved up to grades above those of her peers, it is only when she wins an international play-writing contest in high school that her father finally takes notice and grants her wish to attend college in England. Despite her parent's heartbreakin neglect, she eventually becomes a doctor and realizes her dream of being a writer. Teens, with their passionate convictions and strong sense of fair play, will be immediately enveloped in the gross injustice of Adeline Yen Mah's story. A complete glossary, historical notes on the state of Chinese society and politics during Yen Mah's childhood, and the legend of the original Chinese Cinderella round out this stirring testimony to the strength of human character and the power of education. (Ages 10 to 15)

--Jennifer Hubert --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Mah revisits the territory she covered in her adult bestseller, *Falling Leaves*, for this painful and poignant memoir aimed at younger readers. Blamed for the loss of her mother, who died shortly after giving birth to her, Mah is an outcast in her own family. When her father remarries and moves the family to Shanghai to evade the Japanese during WWII, Mah and her siblings are relegated to second-class status by their stepmother. They are given attic rooms in their big Shanghai home, they have nothing to wear but school uniforms, and they subsist on a bare-bones diet while their stepmother's children dine sumptuously. Mah finds escape from this emotionally barren landscape at school, but the academic awards she wins only enrage her jealous siblings and stepmother, and she is eventually torn from her auntAher one championAand shipped off to boarding school. That Mah eventually soars above her circumstances is proof of her strength of character. The author recreates moments of cruelty and victory so convincingly that readers will feel almost as if they're in the room with her. She never veers from a child's sensibility; the child in these pages rarely judges the actions of those around her, she's simply bent on surviving. Mah easily weaves details of her family's life alongside the traditions of China (e.g., her grandmother's bound feet) and the changes throughout the war years and subsequent Communist takeover. This memoir is hard to put down. Ages 12-up. (Sept.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Totally captivating, simply written. A study in bravery and strength of character of a sort unknown to me as a child. Despite the wealth of her Shanghai family Dr Mah vividly describes a life of being ignored, routinely ill-treated almost constantly between the ages of four and fourteen. I kept asking how parents with any heart at all could treat a courageous small child so cruelly. (Forgetting to pick her up from school on her first day in first grade? Beating her until her nose bled because school friends came to her home? Not attending any of her school prize days?) I bought this book at Hong Kong airport last Monday and read it three times through between there and New York. I kept turning back to the haunting face of the eight year old Adeline on the paperback cover. I repeatedly found tears rolling down my cheeks not just out of pity but in appreciation of her strength and resilience. Many adult Americans would still be spending time with a psychotherapist and blaming their failures on this type of childhood. In Adeline Mah's case it gave her a strength and determination I must say I envy. She may still be suffering but I found this book inspirational.

My kids had to read this for summer reading and because they hate to read I read the books so I know they have and aren't telling me a bunch of you know what! This was such a great book. Just goes to show kids that no matter where you come from or what life deals you, you can prevail. What strength this young women has! Will be reading her other book too.

It is a nice book to read. I bought this book for my daughter for her AR reading. My daughter heard about this book from her friend and she decided to read it too. My daughter started talking about the story and characters in the book. This got me start reading it as well. There were some historical facts and interesting Chinese traditions in the book. This book sparked a lot of conversation between us. The result of reading this book, my daughter and I did some research about foot binding and we learnt more about that. It is interesting book, although it is predictable at times but it is enjoyable enough. My daughter said her other friend borrowed the book to read as well.

A very tragic but powerful story. I bought this book because I'm a speaker and my signature talk is on the Cinderella fairy tale. I wanted to read this book as a resource for my talk and my two Cinderella books at . This is an amazing book. Your heart goes out to her, especially when her poor little duck dies and she is so rejected and unloved by her stepmother, and even her father and siblings. It ends on a positive note. Adversity often is the springboard for our greatness to come forth. Inspiring read.

A very well-written poignant, dolorous true story about a young girl looking to be loved and treated equitably by her nuclear family only to find coldness and rejection by her father and hostile stepmother in a China in transition from feudalism and British imperialism to Maoist communism. In the end, however, things begin to change for the young Adeline. Where is she now, I don't know.

Poignant memoir of a woman growing up in WWII era transitional China. With a cruel and narcissistic Stepmother and an almost equally cruel, clueless and uncaring father she was destined to be a hapless victim. By hard work, persistence, some timely encouragement from other family members and kindly nuns she turned despair into triumph. A close look into traditional Chinese culture and family values makes this book educational as well as touching. Read it and learn what can be overcome and survived by determination and willpower!

Amazing story of how Adeline survived under the horrific step-mother's treatment of her and how so many in her family were oblivious to it. Luckily she had some help from her aunt, grand father and her step mother's sister. Finally her own father was able to see how special she was and gave her the opportunity to further her education away in England which gave Adeline her freedom too.

This is the best book I've ever read! I loved it so much I read it in a day! Trust me, I am a book NERD and I've never read anything more literary, emotionally attaching, or sad in my whole life. I cried out loud! The book is amazing, and I hope other people get to read it  
too.

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