

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Gannon	School:	Hyatts
Book Title:	Chinese Cinderella	Genre:	nonfiction memoir
Author:	Adeline Yen Mah	Pages:	205
Publisher:	Random House	Copyright:	1999

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

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.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)
CCS - Nonfiction - Standards # 1 - 10

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Amazon.com Review

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 heartbreaking 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.

Review #2

From Publishers Weekly

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 aunt. Her one champion and 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.)

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What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

<u>Title:</u> Red Scarf Girl	<u>Author:</u> Ji Li Jiang
<u>Title:</u> Bound	<u>Author:</u> Donna Jo Napoli
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

Document any potentially controversial content:

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): Ages 12 and up

Date Submitted to Department Chair:

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults