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Yeh-Shen: A Chinese Cinderella Story

Grade 4, Story 1

Lexile®: 770L, 457 words



Yeh-Shen lived a happy life with her father, her stepmother, and her stepsister. However, when her father became ill and died, Yeh-Shen's life changed. Her stepmother became mean and unfeeling, and she forced Yeh-Shen to be a servant.

In spite of her heavy heart, Yeh-Shen tried to work hard. One day as she washed the clothes in the river, a beautiful fish appeared. It sparkled in the sunlight with scales like gems. Each day, the magical fish talked to Yeh-Shen, so she was happy again.

Yeh-Shen's stepmother did not like to see her happy, so she followed Yeh-Shen and found out about the fish. That night, she caught the fish, killed it, and cooked it. After dinner, Yeh-Shen came to take the dishes. She asked, "What are those bones on your plate?" Her stepmother laughed. "Your pretty fish was also a tasty fish!"

Yeh-Shen took the bones and put them in a little jar in her room because she loved the fish and wanted to remember it.

In the spring, the town had a party that Yeh-Shen wanted to attend, but her stepmother didn't want her to go. She made sure Yeh-Shen had nothing pretty to wear. Then she and her daughter left for the party without Yeh-Shen.

When she was alone, Yeh-Shen went to her room and looked at the little jar. Instead of fish bones, Yeh-Shen saw a beautiful tiny dress and a tiny pair of golden shoes. She opened the jar and took them out, and

Name: _____

suddenly they grew until they were the right size for her. Now she could go to the party!

At the festival, everyone thought Yeh-Shen was beautiful—especially the king, who did not look at anyone else. After the party, Yeh-Shen worried that her stepmother would find out who she was, so she ran all the way home. She ran so fast that one of her golden shoes fell off. When Yeh-Shen's stepmother came home, all she could talk about was the girl with the golden slipper and how the king was looking for her.

Before long, the king arrived at Yeh-Shen's home. "My daughter is the girl you want," said the stepmother. But when the king brought out the golden shoe, it would not fit the girl's large feet.

"Are you certain that this is your shoe?" the king asked. Yeh-Shen stepped forward, took out her golden shoe, and said, "I wore the golden shoes at the festival."

Her stepmother's face turned red, and she said, "That is not her shoe!"

But the king told her to be quiet as he put the slippers on Yeh-Shen's tiny feet. "You will be my wife," he said to her. He took Yeh-Shen away with him, and she was happy ever after.