

THE MANY FACES OF CINDERELLA

Throughout the world there are about 1,500 versions of this popular story making it the MOST popular story ever written. The oldest version came from Egypt, written between 570 and 526 BC. The girl was Greek and her name was Rhodopis. Walking along a shallow stream she removed her rabbit fur slippers and stepped into the stream to feel its coolness as she walked a bit. A falcon, spotting the two rabbit slippers, swooped down and picked one up. After eventually realizing that it was not a live animal he dropped it, almost hitting the Pharaoh Amasis who had stopped upstream. Taking this as a sign from the gods, he sent soldiers to find her so he could make her his wife. The soldier's found her looking under bushes for the slipper that matched the one in her hand. This showed the men that she was the woman they were seeking. She was brought before Pharaoh and they were married with her becoming Queen.

Yeh-Shen dates back to between 618 and 907 AD and was the first written version of Cinderella. She befriends and shares a handful of rice with a magical fish. Her evil stepmother kills and eats the fish but is able to return to life with the help of Yeh-Shen. At a festival the young girl loses her golden slipper. The king finds it and seeks her. When found the two are married and the evil stepmother and sister are stoned to death..

CHINA - Yeh-Shen



KOREA - Kongji & Patzzi

This version goes back to 1392 or later. Kongji grew up with a father who remarried a cruel widow who had an ugly daughter named Patzzi. The father died and Kongji was relegated to a servant-slave. The story line goes on with a fairy who dressed Kongji in a beautiful gown and giving her a palaquin so she could go to the Prince's ball. The story varies after Kongji and the Prince are married. Kongji is drowned by her stepsister and became a ghost. She tells the Prince what happened and he goes to the river, finds and kisses a lotus which returns Kongji to life. The evil stepsister is put to death.



RUSSIA - Vasilisa



THAILAND - The Fish Mother

VIỆT NAM



VIET NAM - Tam & Cam



GERMANY - Aschenputtel



CZECH - Cinderella



FRANCE - Cendrillon

But, what about the GLASS slipper? A funny thing happened when the tale was being told in French to several people including an English correspondent. He confused the French word "VERRE" meaning "fur" for "VAIRE" meaning "GLASS" and thus the version that our culture has learned. Disney secured that for history with his movie.

