

Interstellar Cinderella

By Deborah Underwood

Illustrated by Meg Hunt

A futuristic retelling of a classic tale with a strong female character and a science fiction twist.

Audience:

- K-5

Synopsis:

Told in rhyming four-line stanzas, *Interstellar Cinderella* is a futuristic retelling of the classic tale with a strong female character and a few twists. Instead of housekeeping, this Cinderella has serious mechanical skills. With the help of her robotic fairy godmother, Cinderella takes off in a special spacesuit and ends up fixing the Prince's broken down starship, leaving only her dropped socket wrench behind as a clue to her identity. Her skill using tools leads her not to marriage, but to a job as the prince's chief mechanic-- her dream come true!

Author Website:

- <http://deborahunderwoodbooks.com/index.html>

Illustrator Website:

- <http://meghunt.com/index>

Curricular Connections:

- Rhyming text
- Figurative language
- Folklore retelling
- Genre twist on a literary classic
- Vocabulary building/ rich language
- Determination/Perseverance
- using hands-on/kinesthetic modalities

Lesson Ideas:

- Cinderella is a folktale, but putting it in this outer-space setting crosses over into Science Fiction. Discuss Science Fiction as a genre and have students pick out where in the story the elements of science fiction can be found.
- Pair this new Cinderella story with a more traditional telling like that of Charles Perrault, Marcia Brown, Paul Galdone, or Amy Erlich. Focus on how the changing of the setting, in both TIME and PLACE changes the details of the story in several ways.
- Compare and contrast *Interstellar Cinderella* with a traditional Cinderella story using a two column chart or Venn Diagram.
- For older students, have them rewrite another traditional folktale using a futuristic setting.
 - Option: use the Fractured Fairytale generator at <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/fairytales/>
- Illustrations Analysis
 - Though set in the future, the illustration technique used in *Interstellar Cinderella* is reminiscent of illustration styles from the 1950's and 1960's. If available, compare some period books or advertising to see how this style may have influenced Meg Hunt in her limited color and stylistic choices for this book.

Discussion ideas:

- How is present and future technology used in the story?
- Which minor characters are robots instead of animals?
- How is the identity test to find the real Cinderella different from fitting into a glass slipper?
- What elements of the traditional story are still present and help make the story feel familiar?
- How are gender roles different?
- Talk about Cinderella being a stronger female character in this story.
- The ancient Cinderella folktales are thousands of years old and therefore in the public domain. Discuss copyright and intellectual property in relation to this author using someone else's story as the basis for her own.
- Vocabulary – rich language -- examine the use of words and phrases that may not be familiar to students-- (space and technology terms, tool names, etc)

Online Resources:

- Matthew Winner's *Let's Get Busy Podcast* with the author:
<http://www.busylibrarian.com/2015/05/deborah-underwood-lgbpodcast-ep-148.html>
- Author/Illustrator Online Interview
<http://mrschureads.blogspot.ca/2015/05/the-interstellar-cinderella-trifecta.html>
- <http://www.womenyoushouldknow.net/interstellar-cinderella-a-sonic-socket-wrench-toting-spaceship-fixing-heroine-who-rescues-the-prince/>
- <http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/cinderella-folk-tales-variations-plot-and-setting>
- http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/spring_2008/

Common Core Anchor Standards:

- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.4
Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.9
Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Suggested Companion Titles:

- A list of Cinderella retellings can be found here:
 - <http://www.ala.org/offices/resources/multicultural>
 - https://dpl.bibliocommons.com/list/share/362500057_dplbooklists_kids/369411977_dpl_cinderella_stories
- Other Books by Deborah Underwood
 - The Quiet Book
 - The Loud Book
 - Here Comes the Easter Cat
 - Here Comes Santa Cat
 - Here Comes Valentine Cat
 - Sugar Plum Ballerinas series co-written with Whoopi Goldberg
 - 28 nonfiction titles about people, places, animals and science topics.