

Standing Out

A Cross-Cultural Journey of Self-Discovery

Angela Lee Chen

Blue Peony Publishing

MYRTLE BEACH, SC

ANGELA LEE CHEN

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You may also sign up for updates regarding this book
and Angela's other projects.

Introduction

THIS IS A BOOK about my experiences growing up Chinese in Kenya. It also traces my family's lives beyond Africa: international travel during our time there, our lives after leaving the continent, and elements from the past that shaped a move so dramatically unusual.

I initially set out to write the definitive answer to the question, "Where are you from?" If someone asked me, I could point to the book and nonchalantly inquire, "Well, how much do you want to know?"

Along the way, however, I discovered a more universal question about belonging. How do I fit in and still be myself? How do I define myself when my own family keeps shifting, when the truth about my parents is still a work in progress—even after they are gone?

Parallel to my trying not to stand out, a different track was developing, a track of choosing to stand out—where skills I learned were bringing me attention and recognition.

Even so, that is not the whole of me. I don't live solely to earn money, to be admired, to gain popularity, or to somehow be a lifesaver. Attention and wealth are welcome, to be sure—I am not that saintly. But on their own, these attainments cannot fulfill me.

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I am more than my appearance, my past, or my own story. I am even more than my skills, attainments, and usefulness to those around me. My self-worth and my humanity are defined from within. When I tap into creativity, enthusiasm, and kindness, these attributes percolate outward, infusing joy and purpose into the activities of living with passion.

STANDING OUT

Advance Praise

“It held my interest from cover to cover.” – Qat Wanders, editor and bestselling author.

Alternately laugh-out-loud funny and poignantly touching, *Standing Out* is, at heart, a profoundly human story that explores the nature of belonging.

Angela was born in New York City to Chinese parents. The loss of a brother when only seven, and her parents going on to adopt two more, made for an ever-changing family dynamic.

Decisions her parents made played out across three continents. At the age of three, the family relocated to Kenya in East Africa for her father’s UN job, where she grew up surrounded by international expats’ children and traveled with her parents on home leave to China every two years.

With a quiet, authoritarian father and a distant mother, she learned early to find affirmation outside the home. She flourished academically, graduating with a biology degree from Yale and a doctorate in acupuncture and Chinese medicine. The sudden death of her father caused a major shift in her life as she inherited the care of her mother’s Alzheimer’s.

Through life's inevitable turns, Angela's resilience and love of people show through.

“The author has led a fascinating life, but this book brings it all back to what really matters amidst all the glamour and exoticism. Her introversion, the last years of her parents, imperfect families with oh-so-different siblings - it all rings so very true to life.” – Stephen Brightman, professional editor.

“I love her writing voice, which definitely makes me want to read more.” –Kendra Crossen Burroughs, professional editor and author.

“A clear style, unforced, natural, with excellent descriptive words that bring the reader to the moment.” –Jeff Wolverton

“You did an amazing job! This is an intricately beautiful story, structured unusually but effectively. I don't think I made something clear to you. Your writing isn't just good. It is freaking fantastic. The fact that you aren't a published author already is an absolute crime. Just wanted to make sure you knew.” –Qat Wanders, professional editor and bestselling author.

This is a significant book, by a significant person.
It will appeal to the intelligent, and hard to imagine

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it not helping unfurl their wings around whatever they might most need and want to touch. You did wonderful here, Angela Lee Chen. Wonderful.

—Daniel Ladinsky

International bestselling PenguinRandomHouse author

ANGELA LEE CHEN

About the Author



Angela Lee Chen is primarily a doctor of Chinese medicine, but she is also joyfully writing, singing and creating among a diverse community of transplants. She lives in Myrtle Beach, SC. You can reach her by visiting her website, angelaleechen.com.

STANDING OUT

Other Works

Color in Meditation: an Adult Coloring Book
Color-in Meher Baba Mandalas: an Adult Coloring Book
Taichi Standing Meditation, Audio CD

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