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The Other Side Of Paradise: A Memoir



Synopsis

Staceyann Chin has appeared on television and radio, including The Oprah Winfrey Show , CNN, and PBS, discussing issues of race and sexuality. But it is her extraordinary voice that launched her career as a performer, poet, and activist. Here, she shares her unforgettable story of triumph against all odds in this brave and fiercely candid memoir..No one knew Staceyannâ™s mother was pregnant until a dangerously small baby was born on the floor of her grandmotherâ™s house in Jamaica, on Christmas Day. Staceyannâ™s mother did not want her, and her father was not present. No one, except her grandmother, thought Staceyann would survive. It was her grandmother who nurtured and protected and provided for Staceyann and her older brother in the early years. But when the three were separated, Staceyann was thrust, alone, into an unfamiliar and dysfunctional home in Paradise, Jamaica. .Told with grace, humor, and courage, Chin plumbs tender and unsettling memories as she writes about drifting from one home to the next, coming out as a lesbian, finding the man she believes to be her father, and ultimately, discovering her voice. .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To say The Other Side of Paradise: A Memoir is an inspirational story is putting it mildly. Ms. Stacyann Chin was born into a life of poverty in Jamaica to a mother who did not want to take any responsibility for her and to a father who denied her very existence. Her and her older half-brother were raised partly by an elderly but loving grandmother. Her mother made a brief but disappointing appearance back into their lives but left them again. Before her mother left, she separated the two siblings and sent Ms. Chin to live with another relative which became a nightmarish experience.

Through all of this she was still able to excel in school. Much of her tuition was paid for by the man who claimed not to be her father. While in college she faces confusion about her sexuality. She takes a faithful trip to New York City to visit a relative and she figures out who she really is. She comes to terms with her lesbianism and goes back to Jamaica. She is tired of living her whole life trying to please people and be something she's not so she is "out" to all of her supposed friends and classmates. Everyone shuns her and she is almost sexually assaulted by a group of her classmates but was saved by a closeted student at her school. By the end of the book she decides the only way to live openly and be who she was is to live in New York City. The title of this book is fitting because while many people think Jamaica is all about reggae, fun, sun and sand, there are some serious issues that plague the Jamaican people, particularly the poor. Ms. Chin does a great job of illustrating how ignorance plagues this society. There is ignorance in terms of race, gender roles and sexuality.

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