

# Finding their place

BY GAYATHRI NAIR



Children's author Adeline Foo hopes her books will inspire children to find their true selves.

## **Adeline Foo hopes to inspire children with her stories.**

CHILDREN who struggle to find acceptance have a special place in author Adeline Foo's heart. The plight of the underdog has moved her to create characters such as a misunderstood child who is different from everyone else and one going through growing pains.

Before venturing into the world of storytelling, Foo spent 15 years in corporate public relations and advertising. A Singaporean mother of three, she initially wanted to spend more time at home with her children.

"When I first started writing back in 2006, it was mainly for my first born Benjamin. He was struggling to learn to read at the age of six. So I thought, the best way to help him was to come up with a picture book.

As she became more involved in her kids' lives, she became privy to many of their antics. It inspired her to write books based on her children's real life experiences.

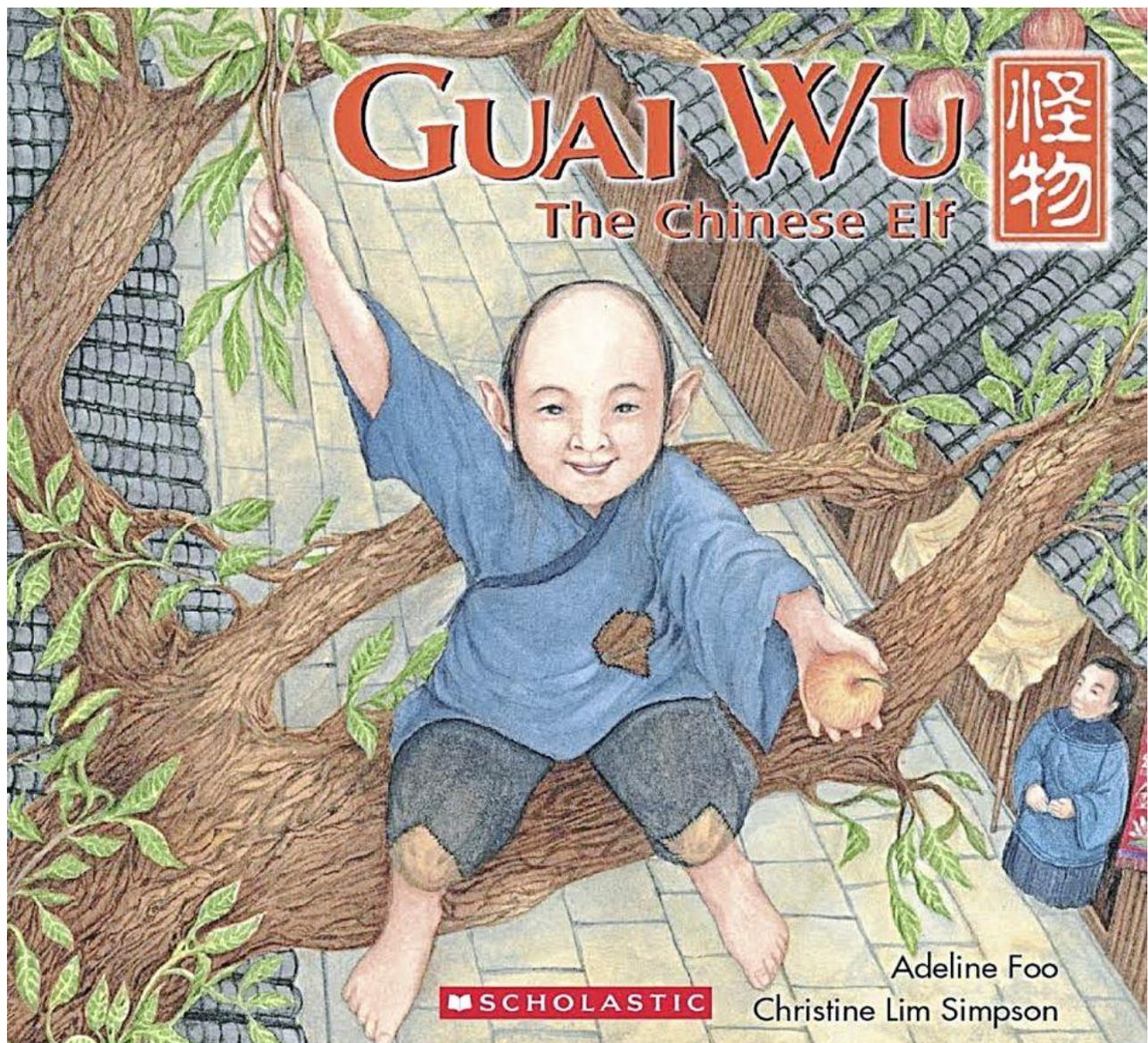
“Stories my children tell me from their experiences in school such as grossed-out toilets, little squabbles with friends and other antics, not only offered a lot of laughter, but provided good writing material for my books,” shares the bemused mother.

To date, Foo has written and published 24 books in Singapore for young readers between seven and 15 years old. Foo’s latest book called *Guai Wu*, is about a young boy who struggles to find acceptance. She was inspired by the old-time favourite fairytale by Jim LaMarche’s *The Elves and the Shoemaker*.

“The story of how a pair of elves repaid the kindness of the shoemaker who had given them shelter and food really touched me

“When I chanced upon Jim LaMarche’s book, I fell in love with the story all over again and I decided to write an Asian adaptation,” says Foo.

Foo chose to set her story in China as she wanted to feature the tradition of foot binding as well as tiny three-inch lotus shoes and the lushness of Chinese silk embroidery.



“It was weird to allow the setting to determine the choice of a Chinese boy being labelled as an elf, but I didn’t have much choice as there are no elves in Chinese history. But there are monsters called *guai wu* in Chinese. So, everything fell into place and the story kind of wrote itself,” explains Foo.

Three of her books have been adapted into animation shorts showcased on TV on the MediaCorp kids’ channel, Okto.

Foo hopes that her stories will inspire kids today to discover their true self in whatever life situations they may face.

“If my books help kids make sense of the confusing world they live in, it will make my life as a writer a meaningful one,” says Foo.

Want a copy of Adeline Foo’s latest book *Guai Wu*?

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