

## 1 A Hong Kong Superstar

# *Brilliant Bruce Lee Siu-lung*

*(1940–1973)*

**B**ruce was born in the Year of the Dragon and grew up on Nathan Road in Kowloon. As a boy he was very playful. He would dress in his father's Cantonese opera costumes and play practical jokes on his brothers and sisters.

By the age of five Bruce was already a famous child actor. He skipped a lot of school due to the demands of filming. No one worried about his education because he loved reading books and learned a lot from them.

When a teenager, Bruce was rather

naughty. His secondary school reports were poor and he often fought boys who bullied him or his friends. His father sent him to learn *kung fu*. But he was furious when Bruce beat up the son of a famous gang leader. His father kicked Bruce out of home and told him to make his own living.

Bruce, aged only eighteen, arrived in America alone. He had fifty dollars in his pocket and a sister's address. He achieved independence by finding work which paid for his own food and accommodation. He even paid for his own university education with money he earned from running *kung fu* schools.

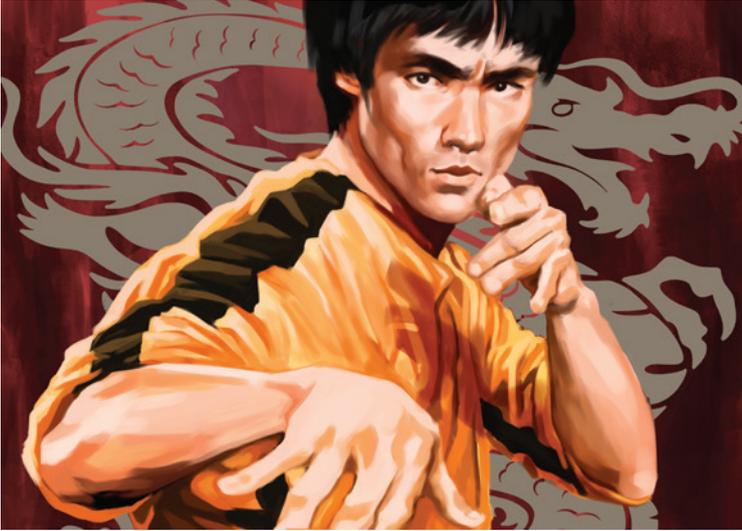
Famous American movie actors heard about Bruce and signed up for his classes in martial arts. Some gave him opportunities to start acting again. But Bruce wasn't satisfied. He was only offered secondary roles! Bruce

wanted to be the star! After all, he'd already written his own movie scripts.

So Bruce came back to Hong Kong to produce, direct and star in his own movies. *The Big Boss*, *Fists of Fury* and *Enter the Dragon* were instant hits which broke box-office records and made Bruce a superstar.

Brilliant Bruce's star shone brightly, too brightly, perhaps. One night, exhausted from long hours of filming and strenuous exercise, he collapsed and died. He was only thirty-two.

Bruce Lee dead? Impossible! The whole world mourned. On the day of his funeral, Hong Kong was brought to a standstill. Long may we all revere Bruce's brilliance!



## QUICK FACTS

**NAME**

Bruce Lee Siu-lung

**GENDER**

Male

**BIRTH**

1940

**DEATH**

1973

**CLAIM TO FAME**

*Kung fu* artist, actor

## 2 A World-famous Author

### *Enigmatic Eileen*

### *Chang Ai-ling*

*(1920–1995)*

If you were walking along Stanley Street in the 1940s you might have spotted a pretty young lady sitting with a pen in her hand. Eileen Chang used to write in Hong Kong tea houses. She was a master of telling stories about suffering in times of war.

Eileen was a brilliant Hong Kong student who wrote well in both Chinese and English. She wanted to go to university in England but the Second World War broke out so she studied at the University of Hong Kong instead. For

three years she deliberately didn't write anything in Chinese in order to improve her English language skills.

Eileen wrote many stories set in Hong Kong and China. Her stories are beautifully written but rather sad. For example, she wrote about her unhappy childhood in her native city of Shanghai. Her father was a drug addict and her parents divorced when she was very young. She also wrote about the soldiers and locals she met during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong while nursing part-time at a makeshift hospital at Hong Kong University. If you want to know more about this period of history, you may like to read her short stories, or the novel *Love in a Fallen City* (filmed in 1984).

During her lifetime Enigmatic Eileen wrote fictional stories and screenplays from her imagination, as well as translations of popular

English novels. Her writing made her very famous. Some of her books have been made into movies.

In 1956 Eileen married an American screenwriter and they moved to the United States. After he died she chose to live alone again. Some Shanghainese friends who lived nearby kept an eye on her but Enigmatic Eileen was a very private person who preferred her own company, even though many people wanted to meet her. She continued to write right up to her death in 1995.



## QUICK FACTS

**NAME**

Eileen Chang Ai-ling

**GENDER**

Female

**BIRTH**

1920

**DEATH**

1995

**CLAIM TO FAME**

Writer