

On one of those nights when the two of us were alone in our cottage, she said to me, "I named my little girl 'Wan Mei'. You know why?"

I looked into her eyes, where the pain came through. In Chinese, "Wan Mei" means complete, beautiful. I nodded.

She continued, "They tell me she has been adopted by an Australian couple. She will have an English name." She paused. "Not Wan Mei anymore."

"But she will still have a normal life. A better life. Complete and beautiful," I said.

From Singapore Literature Prize-winner Danielle Lim comes a powerful meditation on love, grief, redemption and awe at the resilience of the human spirit.

Ward sister Grace Hwang battles alongside fellow healthcare workers in Singapore when the SARS virus—invisible, relentless and deadly—strikes in 2003. In the thick of it, she looks back at her teenage years in Trafalgar Home, a leper colony where Alice, her best friend, was forced to give her newborn up for adoption. With Alice now in the last stages of cancer, Grace attempts to reunite mother with long-lost daughter before time runs out. Along the way, she seeks to discover the person who found the cure to leprosy.

Elegant, thoughtful and richly portrayed, *Trafalgar Sunrise* is a double helix of a novel that intertwines the gripping drama of the present with the haunting anguish of the past, pitting human against microbial, choice against consequence, and deed against redemption.

visit our website at:
www.marshallcavendish.com/genref

 **Marshall Cavendish**
Editions



Danielle Lim

TRAFALGAR
Sunrise

Marshall Cavendish
Editions


'Touching and heartfelt... The characters come alive and stay with the reader'
— Meira Chand, author of *Sacred Waters*

Danielle Lim

Winner of the Singapore Literature Prize

TRAFALGAR *Sunrise*



For Review Only

Danielle has written a riveting story of human resilience and the gift of human kindness. She has captured with great tenderness and sensitivity the interwoven lives of two teenage survivors of Trafalgar Home. This is a wonderful book which I really enjoyed.

Prof Lee Seng Teik,
Emeritus Consultant and surgeon

A very moving story that gives a human touch to the struggle against infectious diseases. I could imagine scenes from Trafalgar Home, from hospitals and from old times in Singapore. A very good book!

A/Prof Maciej Piotr Chlebicki,
Senior Consultant in infectious diseases

A touching and heartfelt book, well written and illuminating about both the SARS epidemic and long ago leprosy. The characters come alive and stay with the reader when the book is finished.

Meira Chand,
author of *Sacred Waters*

Full praise to Danielle for writing such a moving book. This is an amazing story with remarkable descriptions of the people affected by devastating viruses and bacteria in the course of history.

Pansy Yew Seok Pang,
recipient of the 2002 President's Award for Nurses

For Review Only

Gripping ... tense ... excellent! *Trafalgar Sunrise* evokes the atmosphere of palpable fear during the deadly reign of SARS. I was moved by Danielle's portrayal of the courage to persevere in the face of personal peril.

Dr Delvin Ng,
family physician

Set during a tumultuous time in Singapore's history, *Trafalgar Sunrise* opens a window to the dark days of the SARS crisis, as well as historical leprosy. By contextualising the narrative in actual historical events, this work is a tribute to these healthcare heroes.

Dr Clement Liew,
historian

Danielle captures so wonderfully the stories of love, duty and resilience during the SARS period. She has depicted with great accuracy the atmosphere at medical facilities and the thoughts of healthcare professionals as they fought this hitherto unknown virus. Now their sacrifices will not be forgotten.

Jessie Lim,
former nurse

A very interesting and touching story which I couldn't stop reading. My heart broke towards the end.

Jonavon Yeo,
student

For Review Only

TRAFALGAR *Sunrise*

Danielle Lim

For Review Only

© 2018 Marshall Cavendish International (Asia) Private Limited
Text © Danielle Lim

Published by Marshall Cavendish Editions
An imprint of Marshall Cavendish International



All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Requests for permission should be addressed to the Publisher, Marshall Cavendish International (Asia) Private Limited, 1 New Industrial Road, Singapore 536196. Tel: (65) 6213 9300.
E-mail: genrefsales@sg.marshallcavendish.com.
Website: www.marshallcavendish.com/genref

The publisher makes no representation or warranties with respect to the contents of this book, and specifically disclaims any implied warranties or merchantability or fitness for any particular purpose, and shall in no event be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damage, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

Other Marshall Cavendish Offices:
Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 99 White Plains Road, Tarrytown NY 10591-9001, USA •
Marshall Cavendish International (Thailand) Co Ltd, 253 Asoke, 12th Floor, Sukhumvit 21 Road, Klongtoey Nua, Wattana, Bangkok 10110, Thailand • Marshall Cavendish (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Times Subang, Lot 46, Subang Hi-Tech Industrial Park, Batu Tiga, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Marshall Cavendish is a registered trademark of Times Publishing Limited.

National Library Board, Singapore Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Name(s): Lim, Danielle.
Title: Trafalgar Sunrise / Danielle Lim.
Description: Singapore : Marshall Cavendish Editions, [2018]
Identifier(s): OCN 1036979555 | ISBN 978-981-47-9492-3 (paperback)
Subject(s): LCSH: SARS (Disease)--Singapore--Fiction. | Leprosy--Singapore--Fiction.
Classification: DDC S823--dc23

Printed in Singapore

Cover image of Trafalgar Home courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

For Review Only

To those whose paths met in Trafalgar Home
Who were again given life
At an incredible moment in human history
When leprosy became curable

To those who came before
Imprisoned by the world's fear of leprosy
Since time as far back
As history can remember

To those who lost their lives
Or lost loved ones
When the world had to fight
An unknown virus called SARS

To the doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals
Who had to put on their masks each day
Walking into the frontline
Not knowing if they would walk out

To my mum, dad and sis
My husband and children
And all who are searching for hope
This book is for you

For Review Only

Stumbling forward
History and I
Listen backwards
For sunrise
Flowing in the breath
of the human heart and mind
Rhythms
of redemption

1

My father used to say that the most powerful stirrings are the rhythms we cannot see.

When, decades ago, I stood looking at him, the only family I had ever known and whom I would soon no longer see, he raised his eyes from behind the small wooden table, the one his patients would place their hands on for pulse-taking. There was a terrible sadness in his eyes—such moments we do not easily forget—as he nodded to me. The only powerful stirring I had felt then, if it could even be called a stirring, was the urge to run away; somewhere, anywhere, except where I was going.

It would become my home for the next seven years, the first days of which I spent fighting the urge to run away. This yearning peaked, then eased, the morning I walked to school with Alice for the first time. She had a wound on her foot like many around us, so that morning we queued up in the female infirmary, just below our dormitory, for a change of dressing. The sight of the older women with their wounds and deformities, and the smell of antiseptic masking the reek of diseased flesh, made me want to retch. After that, we headed towards our school in our blue and white school uniforms, she holding on to my hand as she limped forward, tightening her grip when her weight was on the wounded foot, as we walked the half kilometre. There was

something reassuring in the way my footsteps had to echo hers, to step in rhythm. Or perhaps what soothed the knotted distress inside me was simply that someone was holding my hand. It had been a long time since anyone has done this.

Why these memories from such a long time ago come back to me now, as I walk up the slope to the hospital at the break of dawn, I do not know. On this morning decades later, I am the one limping forward, not from a wound on my foot, but a joint stiffness in my knee.

An urgent meeting has been called this morning. Hospitals here have just been alerted to an outbreak of atypical pneumonia. A new microbe could be headed our way, an animalcule as yet unknown, and as always, invisible to the human eye.

The birds have begun their revelry in a new day, gifting the still air with their lucid flow of song. I hear the splash of the puddles as I walk on. This early March morning has brought with it rain that has lingered on in the patches of grass surrounding the buildings, in the angšana trees, in the rain trees with branches stretching out into the air which, even after the rain, is thick with humidity. The scent of the morning dew touches my breath with its crispness.

I stop for a moment, breathing deeply.

The clouds tumble over one another as they try to catch the darting waves of illumination reaching this side of life.

On those occasional quiet night shifts when I was a staff nurse years ago, I would glance out the window from the corner of my eye in the middle of a task—replacing an empty IV bag with a new one, monitoring blood pressure, or helping a patient with a bedpan—and wait for those first drifts of light, thankful for an uneventful night, and most of all, just happy that I would soon be able to crawl into bed.

Walking on, I see an ambulance turning out onto Medical Avenue. The ambulance driver sticks his hand out of the window and waves at me. After thirty years as a nurse, I suppose one cannot help but become a familiar face around the hospital. I squint in his direction and raise my hand in response. Turning on the siren, he picks up speed.

The hospital is quiet at this time of day. As I walk towards the lift lobby, the telelifts—those rectangular little boxes that travel along in their own inverted universe above us—hum along overhead, oblivious to the possibility of a new virus that would soon scourge the landscape.

About the Author

Danielle Lim is the author of *The Sound of SCH — A Mental Breakdown, A Life Journey*, which won the Singapore Literature Prize 2016 in the non-fiction category. Based in Singapore, Danielle is a lecturer at Nanyang and Republic Polytechnics. She is an alumna of the University of Oxford.

Trafalgar Sunrise is her first work of fiction.