Copyright © 2023 Wong, Wai Yee Louisa Women Who Chase Butterflies

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored, or introduced into a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means (including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise), without the prior permission of the publisher.

This book is a memoir and reflects the author's recollection of past events. The stories shared are intended as a narrative to support the author's experiences through life and wisdom gained along the way. Some events have been compressed and related dialogues have been recreated. Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Published by Wong, Wai Yee Louisa Edited by Ryan Maniago Book Design by Futura Extra Bold (FXB) Design Printed by Asia One Printing Limited

First paperback edition May 2023 ISBN 978-988-76987-9-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Historical Timeline	viii
Introduction	xii
Chapter 1 (Year: 2015) Dim Sum Means to 'Touch Hearts' Having dim sum with mom was a routine dear to my heart, and on one auspicious lunch together, the events leading to that day caused me to question my life and all the decisions I'd made that led me to that moment.	3
Chapter 2 (1957) Growing Up in the City of Darkness At the height of the Chinese Civil War, my parents fled from the mainland to start a new life in Hong Kong. I was born in the slums of the Kowloon Walled City.	17
Chapter 3 (late 2015) What Do You Find at the End of the World? On a Russian ice-cutter boat bound for Antarctica, I met a man who inspired me to imagine a past I had lost and a future that could still be had.	33
Chapter 4 (the early 1960s to 1981) When You Chase Butterflies Even having grown up quickly amidst harsh circumstances, my nerdy, socially awkward self was raised in a loving family. I never lost the childlike curiosity that shaped my character and brought me to the hallowed halls of the Harvard Business School.	53

Chapter 5 (2016 to 2017) Into the Fire With my spontaneous nature, I jumped into the fire and embarked on a whirlwind of romance and travel.	81
Chapter 6 (1981 to 1995) Control Life, or Life Controls You From Walled City to Wall Street, I got a taste of the fast life in New York and an illusion of control, until a series of unforeseen events brought me back to my roots in Hong Kong.	103
Chapter 7 (2017 to 2018) Death Valley: Identity vs. Destiny In my efforts to revive a relationship, I discovered that no matter how hard I tried to steer the course of destiny, like a rock, my authenticity ultimately decides the outcome.	145
Chapter 8 (1996 to 2009) Ah Mah and the Journey of a Thousand Steps Angry at the unfair rewards, treatment, and glass ceiling in a male-dominated industry, I decided to start my headhunting firm despite being a top biller, not knowing that it would lay the foundations for pioneering a new industry in China.	159
Chapter 9 (2018 to 2019) Hitting Rock Bottom Just when you thought you had hit rock bottom, life hands you a shovel. Devastated by my mother's death, my anchor, and my reason for living- I go on a downward spiral and question my very existence.	239

Chapter 10 (2009 to 2015) 271 The Dark Side of Success When you reach the peak, you feel invincible and could do no wrong. Blinded by my success, I made a hasty business decision that would later shatter the confidence I had dedicated my whole life to building. It was then, at my highest point, that my demons came for me. Chapter 11 (2019 to 2021) 333 Life Finds a Way from the Ashes Learning to accept the cycles of life and death and life again has enabled me to rise from the pits and face life with renewed hope and vigour. Chapter 12 (2021 to 2022) 359 Chiang Mai Dinner for One As I ponder on a future on my own, and the future of the city I call home, I set out to see the world anew, this time with a new pair of eyes, and with the courage to continue the journey ahead even without

a clear destiny in mind.