

Book 2

MOUNT  
E·M·I·L·Y

REVISITED



LOW YING PING

Mount Emily  
Revisited



·MOUNT EMILY·  
**REVISITED**

*a novel*



LOW YING PING



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*For my husband,  
Kien Hui—my rock, my haven*



## chapter one

“Oh no, Mum, you’re not doing this to me again,” Patsy Goh protested.

“I’m really sorry, dear, but it’s not my choice,” Mabel said. She stood at the doorway of Patsy’s room, giving her daughter a helpless and apologetic look.

“It’s just so unfair!” Patsy cried. “You just went with Uncle Pat to New York last year and now you two are off to New Zealand! When will it ever be my turn to go anywhere?” She knew she was being petulant and that her mother expected more mature behaviour from someone who had proclaimed many times that “Fourteen is not that young anymore,” but the injustice of

the current situation was too much for her to keep her emotions in check.

When Patrick Seng had decided to take his sister with him to New York to accept a book prize last year, he had said it was to repay her for providing him with the first line of a Chinese poem that had launched his poetry career when he was seventeen. What he and Mabel did not know was that it was actually Patsy who had provided him with that first line, not Mabel, when Patsy's consciousness had time travelled twenty-eight years into the past and entered her mother's body. It took all of Patsy's willpower not to blurt out the truth.

"You know that your Uncle Pat sees me as his closest family, since he's not married, and he really wants me to be with him when they announce the winner of the New Zealand Poetry-in-Translation prize," Mabel said.

"He sounds as if he thinks he's going to win," Patsy sulked.

"Not true. It's precisely because he doesn't know if he's going to win, that's why he wants me there for support," Mabel corrected her. Her voice was still calm but Patsy could tell from the stiffening of her lips that her mother was starting to lose patience.

"Please, Mum," Patsy begged, hating the plaintive way she sounded yet not able to help herself. "The New Zealand trip falls during the December school holidays so it's just perfect for me to go. Please..."

Mabel clicked her tongue in annoyance. "Enough, all right? This is not your decision or mine. The award ceremony organiser is only sponsoring two tickets, and your uncle has already submitted my name. You're only fourteen and have many more years to travel the world if you wish. Stop being so spoilt and go to sleep. It's late."

With that, Mabel shook her head and left Patsy to wallow in self-pity in her bedroom. It had been about a year since she returned from her adventure in 1987, and already she was starting to feel as if all that had only been a dream. Back in 1987, she had played a central role in averting a time crisis, yet now, in October 2016, she was just an average teenager again. An average teenager with no accomplishments to speak of, who could be ignored and put aside whenever it pleased the adults.

It was fortunate that she could still talk about what had happened with Elena Tan, her best friend who had time travelled with her, or she really would wonder if she had imagined the whole thing. Several times, she had been tempted to tell her mother or her Uncle Pat about it, but she resisted the temptation. Firstly, they would think she was crazy or making up stories. Secondly and more importantly, she had promised Maggie Lim—one of the last Keepers of Time—back in 1987, that she would keep the secret of time magic safe. And after Maggie had died to protect the time stream, the least Patsy could do was to honour her promise to her dead friend.

At the thought of Maggie, Patsy's mind turned to the other two remaining descendants of the fast-dwindling sect of the Keepers of Time—Maggie's cousin, Charlotte Pang, and Charlotte's mother, Lee Min Ling. When Patsy and Elena had left them in 1987, Charlotte had been thirteen and Min Ling in her late thirties. Were they still alive now? Charlotte would be in her early forties and Min Ling in her sixties. Would they still recognise each other if they met?

Patsy sent Elena a long WhatsApp message detailing her latest quarrel with her mother and lay down in bed to wait for the reply. But although Elena was an avid user of WhatsApp, her messages often flooding Patsy's mobile phone, she herself was often not very prompt in responding to Patsy's messages. It was with a heavy feeling of discontent that Patsy at last drifted off into sleep.



She awoke with a start, her eyes snapping wide open. It was still dark. Her bedroom curtains moved slightly, touched by a gentle breeze, but otherwise all was still. She had no idea what time it was. What was it that had awakened her?

Then she heard it again—a double tap near the foot of her bed, as if someone was rapping his knuckles on the glass pane of her window. Patsy's bedroom was the only

one in the flat that overlooked the apartment block's long corridor on the sixth floor. Her parents' room was at the back of the flat.

Patsy shrank back into her blanket, too frightened to move or call out. The curtains stirred again, and this time she saw it was not caused by the wind. It was a hand.

Not daring to look away from the window, Patsy groped about in the dark until her hand connected with the shaft of the badminton racquet that she knew leaned against her bedside table. Just as her fingers curled around the racquet's handle, the hand at the window managed to get a firm grasp of the curtain and yanked it aside. Patsy raised her racquet, then let it fall with a gasp when she saw the pale face peering in at her through the window grilles.

"Elena!" she cried in a loud whisper, crawling over to the end of the bed and kneeling on the mattress to face her friend. "What are you doing here?"

Elena Tan whispered back, "Come on out. Let's go downstairs to talk."

"What time is it?" Patsy asked, still feeling rather dazed at the turn of events. She squinted at her bedside clock and managed to make out the hands in the semi-darkness. "It's 2am! Elena, are you crazy?"

Elena did not reply but gestured again to Patsy to join her outside.

"I can't," Patsy said, throwing a despairing glance at

her door to check that it was closed. “My parents will throw a fit if I sneak out in the middle of the night! What happened?” Now that she was close enough to Elena, she could see that her friend’s eyes were puffy from crying and her usually immaculate shoulder-length bob was in a mess.

“My parents are fighting again and I couldn’t stand it anymore so I climbed out of my window,” Elena said, her voice shaky but defiant.

“You what?” Patsy exclaimed. She knew Elena would want her to focus on the first part of her sentence but the second part was so shocking she could not help reacting to that instead. “You sneaked out? You have to go back now! Your parents will be so worried if they discover you are missing!”

“They won’t,” Elena said. “After they’re done fighting, Dad will stomp out of the house and Mum will lock herself in her bedroom to cry. Nobody will remember my existence as long as I turn up for school tomorrow so the teachers don’t call my parents. Come on out. Just for an hour or so.”

Patsy felt her insides twist. She wanted very much to be with Elena in her hour of need, but she was afraid to leave her flat in the middle of the night without her parents’ permission. *Where has my adventurous spirit gone?* she wondered. How was it that those days of solving mysteries and saving the world were still so vivid in her

memories, yet seemed a lifetime away? She had tried, but failed, to bring those days back, and her sense of adventure seemed to have died as well.

“I can’t,” Patsy said, feeling utterly miserable. “Can’t you try to understand? You should go home too. We’ll talk on the phone, all right? Call me when you get back?”

Elena stared at her sullenly, then her face began retreating from the window.

“Wait!” Patsy called in a desperate half-whisper, but Elena had disappeared.





## chapter two

**P**atsy sat motionless by her window for several seconds, stunned by what had just happened. Then she leapt to her bedside table and picked up her mobile phone, intending to send Elena a message. When she looked at the screen, her heart sank. There were five unread messages from Elena. She quickly unlocked the phone and scrolled through the messages:

“World War X broke out at my house. Call me when free.”

“Think I’m going to run away.”

“Sorry about your uncle’s trip. Talk now?”

“Call me soon?”

“Call me?”

Looking at the time stamps, Patsy saw that they had all come in between 11.30pm and midnight. That explained why Patsy had missed the messages. Her mobile phone was set to mute all messages that came in between 10.30pm and 7am to avoid disturbing her parents. She had been asleep when the messages had come in. She began typing:

“Just saw your SMS. Let me know when you’re home?”

Patsy sent the message and lay down in bed to wait. It was impossible to sleep, and she kept picking up her phone to check if there was any reply. After an hour, Patsy sent another message:

“Where r you? Home?”

No reply came, though when Patsy checked her phone several minutes later, she could see from WhatsApp that her messages had been read and that Elena had last been online only several minutes ago. Was Elena deliberately ignoring her? Was she offended that Patsy had not gone out with her into the night? She called Elena and waited till the ring tone shut off automatically when no one picked up.

Close to 4am, Patsy dozed off. When her alarm clock rang at 6am, she jolted awake and groped for her mobile phone. Still no messages. Groggy, she lay back in bed for half a minute, then forced herself to go through the motions of washing up and dressing for school.

Both Patsy and Elena attended Mount Emily Girls’

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## *About the Author*



Low Ying Ping practically grew up in CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School, which she attended from pre-primary to Secondary Four. She has always been fascinated by the dynamics of friendship between girls, and the fact that many of these become lifelong bonds. She holds a Master's degree in English Literature from the University of Warwick, UK. Her poems have appeared in *Singa*, the journal of the National University of Singapore Centre for the Arts and *QLRS (Quarterly Literary Review Singapore)*. *Mount Emily Revisited* is her second novel.

Patsy Goh's journey of self-discovery  
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*"This second book made me feel that I was back in the first book's adventure. I can't wait to read more of the Mount Emily series."*

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