

Murphy,
See How You
SHINE!



To my nephews, Bryan and Jayden, who love books.
And my sister Wei Fong, who nurtures their love for books.

– **Wei Teng**

To Pa and Ma. Thank you for letting me do what I like.

– **Hong Shin**

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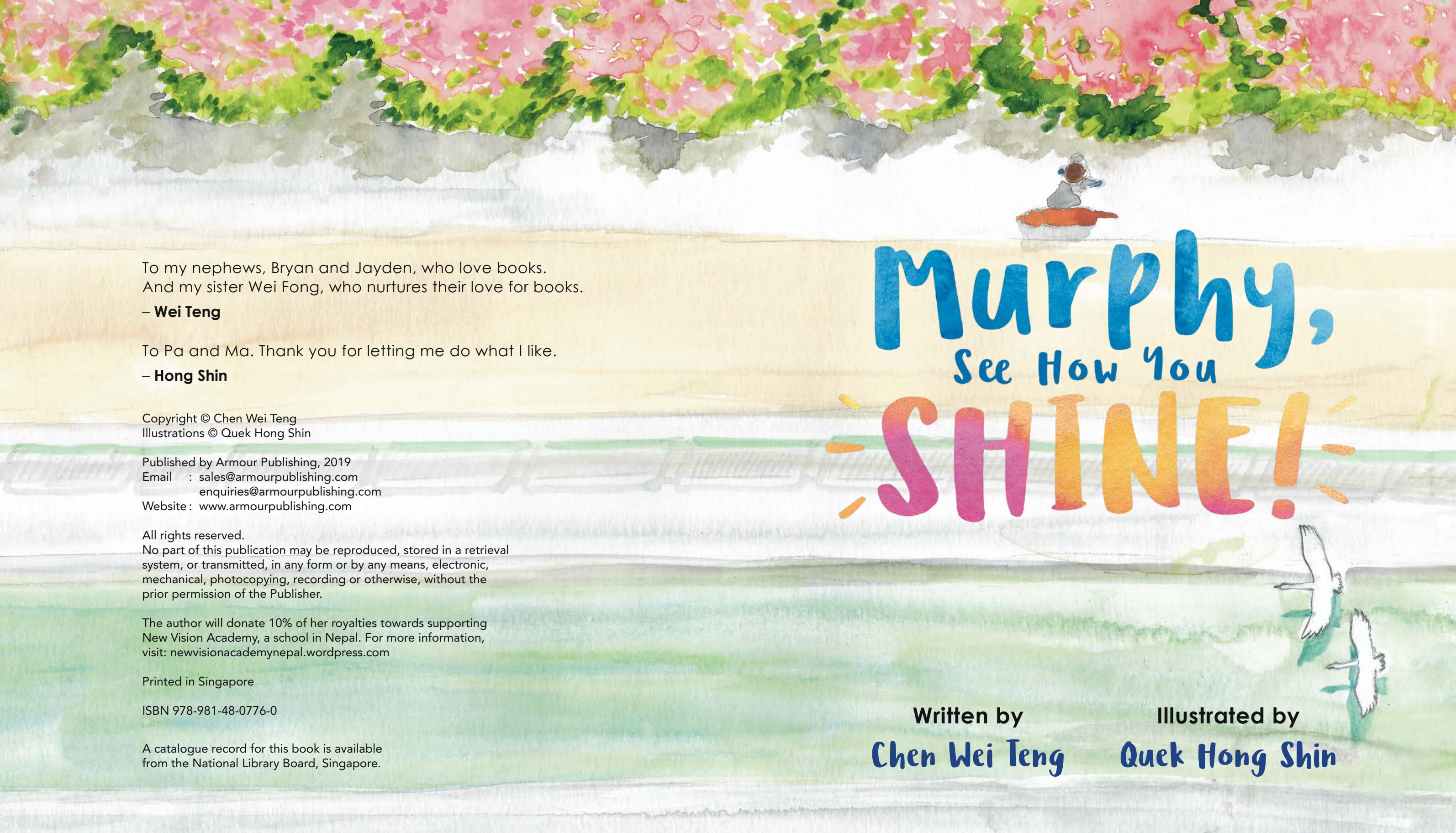
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Written by
Chen Wei Teng

Illustrated by
Quek Hong Shin

Foreword

I first got to know Wei Teng when she was working as an educational therapist with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) back in 2005. Wei Teng has been working with children and youths with learning difficulties for more than a decade and has been with NorthLight School since 2012, where she works closely with students who have difficulties reading and writing. It did not take me long to realise that Wei Teng is a passionate and reflective educator who would constantly think of new ways to help her students learn and share her educational insights and perspectives with fellow colleagues.

This book is inspired by her work with the NorthLight students who face difficulties in their learning and in life. Like many NorthLight students, the emotional struggles experienced by children and youths who seem different from their peers are very real. They often carry lots of emotional baggage with them and many suffer from low self-esteem. It is thus not surprising that giving hope to the students is a mission shared by the teachers in NorthLight. Experience tells us that the students need to know that there are people who believe in them. This often comes in the form of a teacher who encourages and inspires the student to never give up. The stories of student transformation in NorthLight have reinforced this belief in giving hope to the students.

Wei Teng's story that touches on the theme of making meaning in one's life amidst life's imperfections and challenges, has an inspiring message to children who need a little more help than others. Let's all do our part to help every child discover his interest, strength and passion so that he can feel a sense of hope and confidence in the future. May her story also encourage all of us to recognise the beautiful gifts within and around us.

I wish Wei Teng many more successes in her literary adventures. A big thank you to her for her effort, and for sharing this story with us.



Martin Tan
Fellow Educator

Preface

This book is written in part to celebrate the lives of the students in NorthLight School where I teach.

NorthLight School is not one that typical twelve-year-old Singaporean children will choose to go if they have a choice. Students enter this vocational school when they fail their Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE).

Many struggle with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Others are in a constant tussle to make meaning for themselves because of their disadvantaged family backgrounds. Some believe they are slated to fail in life.

Yet, within many of our students are souls that long to be recognised for who they are. They want to live a life of purpose, but do not know how or if they can ever do so.

Hence, teachers rejoice when we hear stories of kindness. Stories such as that of our quiet youth who saved the life of a child who almost got knocked down by a bus on Chinese New Year's Eve, and of our students who helped an elderly taxi driver change his tyre, moved us.

Even more are our spirits lifted when members of the public join forces with us to affirm our youths. From the lady who wrote in to give thanks to our heavily-tattooed student who gave up his seat on the train, to the grateful father who was touched by how our bespectacled gem got down on his knees to help his boy pick up coins from the drain — our hopes and our students' beliefs in themselves soared with each beautiful act of goodness celebrated.

One of my students sums it up well — "I am happiest when I get to help someone for the day."

This book is dedicated to the young people amongst us who have, at one time or another in their lives, felt different from their peers. May they come to know that they have precious gifts within them, just like Murphy.

To our students who are lingering by the stage curtain waiting for their turn to shine, show the world what you are made of*.

Chen Wei Teng

**as what our discipline master likes to say during the morning assembly*



Murphy loves his after-dinner strolls with Candy. He enjoys walking down the park connector with her.



Nearby, Murphy hears the dry, croaking sounds of the birds. He knows they are darting into the canal to get a drink.

He hears the bicycle bells ringing; the joggers are out for their evening run.

His ears stiffen, however, when he hears other dogs barking and playing together excitedly.

