



Between Islands

島嶼之間

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Publisher: AAA-Bao (Lin Ying Ying)

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180 pages | 14.8 x 20.3cm **Volume:** 1 (Ongoing)

BFT2.0 Translator: Lin King

For years, the Damiao Central District maintained a fragile peace with the desolate region across the sea. However, a sudden explosion at a border hospital shatters this uneasy peace. Could this be the spark that ignites war between the two sides? And will Oululu, a cat, ever have the chance to reunite with his human mother?

This lushly illustrated comic book is set in the same universe as *Goodbye Big Cats*. A 20-second animated short film related to this series went viral on social media, capturing widespread attention.



Author **AAA-Bao (Lin Ying Ying)**

Since 2021, Lin Ying Ying has been dedicated to comic creation, consistently producing at least one volume per year. She has been nominated for the Golden Comic Awards and has received multiple grants from the Ministry of Culture and Taichung City Government. Her works have been featured on CCC's Manhua Channel. Currently, all her books are independently published and promoted through social media, as well as participation in annual events like the Manga Festival and Taichung City's Taiwan Creation Festival. Recently, Lin Ying Ying has collaborated with Deep Design for the Taiwan Comic Exhibition at Pier-2 Art Center in Kaohsiung, and will hold a solo exhibition in Taichung this September.

Between Islands: A Bold Blend of Magic, Politics, and Art

by Lin King

Seeing the lushly colored, intricately detailed cover of AAA-Bao's graphic novel *Between Islands* (Vol. 1), one might assume that this is the most opulent image in the book—the way so much cover art is. The first few pages soon dispel this notion: the opening scene, featuring a fiery magical creature detonating a hospital, showcases AAA-Bao's penchant for vivid, jewel-toned colors and polished style that cleverly nods to both steampunk aesthetics and Taiwan's architecture. The reader is instantly immersed.

AAA-Bao's use of dense, rich, often dark colors, as well as the juxtaposition between the precision of detail and the whimsy of hand-drawn strokes, makes every panel look like a gouache painting worthy of display. The result looks stylistically less like manhua or manga and

more like animation with a million-dollar budget: think *Arcane*, Kon Satoshi's *Tokyo Godfathers*, Wes Anderson's *Isle of Dogs*. A cinematic approach to perspective and composition captures surprising angles and facial expressions, making even dialogue-heavy scenes feel rife with tension.

The story itself is all about tension—political, racial, familial. It follows two young women, Liang and Mao Ling, who are both physicians. Liang is an outcast of the politically powerful Qin family, leaders in a human government that has triumphed over the nonhuman inhabitants of the “Wastelands,” much of which is occupied by animals that became “Giant” due to mysterious forces years ago and banished from human society. Mao Ling, the other young doctor, is a human who was raised in the Wastelands by

“Giantlizards” and “Giantcats.”

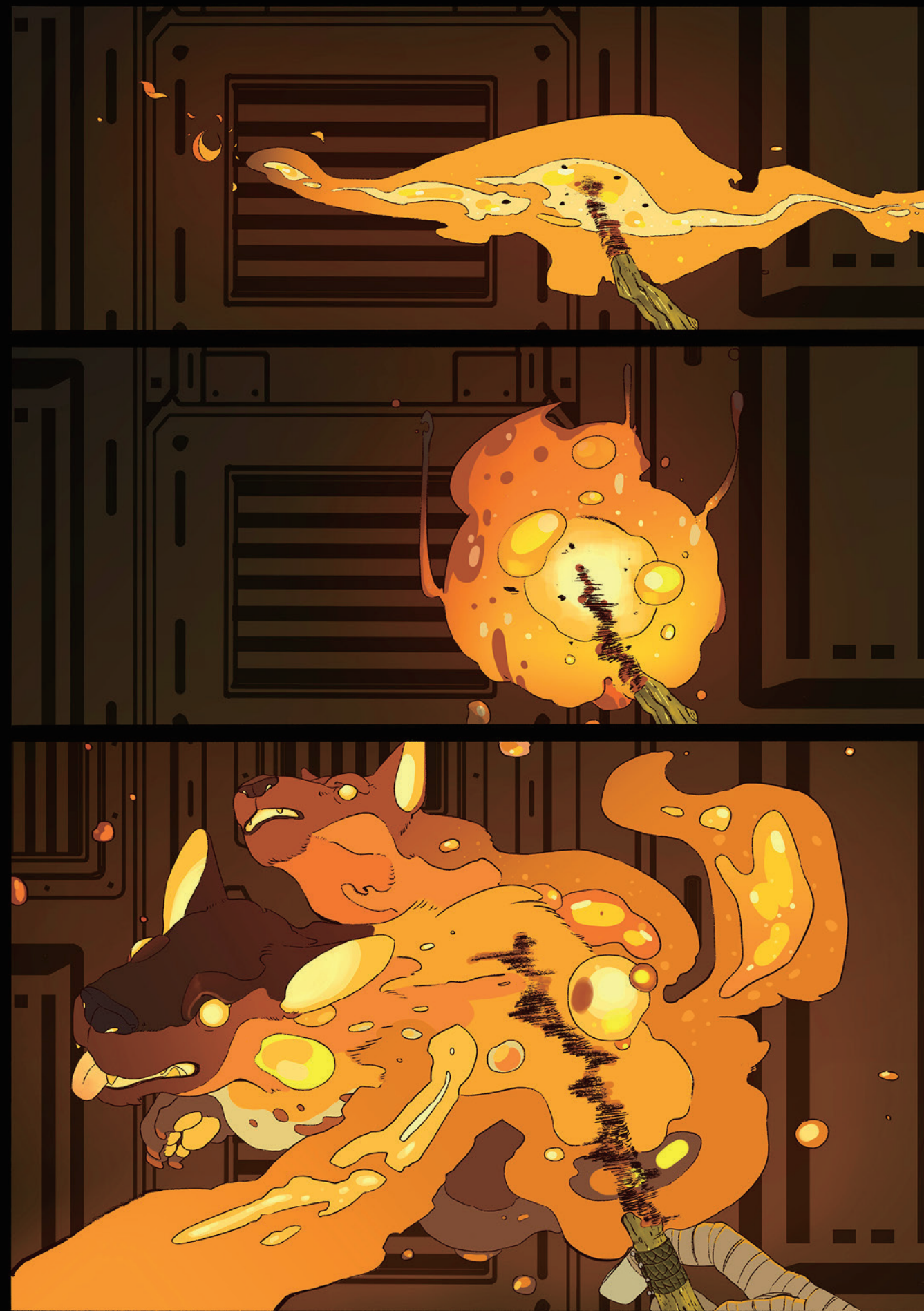
The opening act of terrorism destroys the hospital where Liang works, and Liang decides to sneak past the militarized border with Mao Ling to her hometown in the Wastelands despite rising tensions between the species. Meanwhile, rebellion brews among magical races who have been rendered all but extinct by humans.

As the plot unfolds, it is clear that AAA-Bao has a thorough grasp on the full-fledged universe of her creation. Exposition—covering past traumas, webs of prejudice, political timelines, financial systems, supernatural logic, and interpersonal histories—is doled out in strategic pieces, keeping readers in suspense. It is rare to come across such authoritative worldbuilding within just the first volume of a promised series. It is also rare to come across a fictional world that doesn't map easily onto real-world politics but feels so unnervingly relevant and timely to the strife taking place across the world. On top of that, the images of the cats are also adorable. (There are big housecats; enough said.)

All of which makes it more impressive that *Between Islands* is truly a one-person production. The copyright page cites AAA-Bao as author, distributor, and publisher. She shares her expanding body of work—including several other stories set in the Giantcats universe—on the Taiwanese paywalled platform CCC Webcomics, later self-publishing and selling the collected volumes online. The fact that she can produce such luxurious and engrossing books alone is a testament to AAA-Bao's resourcefulness, artistry, and passion for storytelling; one can only imagine just how formidable she would be with access to more platforms and readers, both at home and abroad.

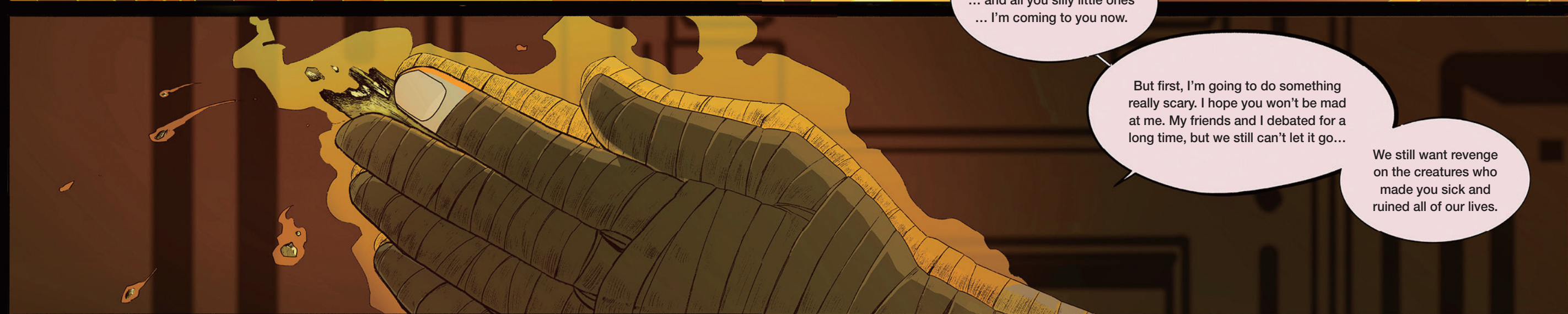
Lin King is a writer and translator based in Taipei and New York. Her translation of Yang Shuang-Zi's Taiwan Travelogue was awarded the 2024 National Book Award in Translated Literature. She also translated the Taiwanese graphic novel The Boy From Clearwater by Yu Pei-yun and Zhou Jian-xin.







Grandpa, Grandma, Pa, Ma
... and all you silly little ones
... I'm coming to you now.



But first, I'm going to do something
really scary. I hope you won't be mad
at me. My friends and I debated for a
long time, but we still can't let it go...

We still want revenge
on the creatures who
made you sick and
ruined all of our lives.