



The Lion in the Manga Library

獅子藏匿的書屋

Author: Xiaodao **Illustrator:** Xiaodao **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 1/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

188 pages | 14.8. x 21 cm **Volume:** 3 (ongoing)

Rights sold: Ukrainian, French

Awards: 2021 The 12th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the year & GCA Grand Prize

BFT2.0 Translator: Brian Hioe

A young woman who liquidates the stock of defunct manga rental shops harbors a secret past. Once a child prodigy, she began her career as a professional Go player at just twelve years old but quit the circuit under mysterious circumstances.

One evening, a stranger arrives at her door seeking a room to rent. He claims to be a former Go professional, and it quickly becomes clear that he is indeed an exceptionally talented player. As they adjust to life together as roommates, they unexpectedly begin to heal from the burnout they both experienced as elite competitors—though a far more surprising outcome still awaits them.

In preparation for this work, artist Xiaodao conducted extensive interviews with competitive Go players. The result is a refreshingly original graphic novel that blends a realistic portrayal of the professional Go community with a tension-filled plot, all while evoking nostalgia for an era when manga rental shops were at the heart of Taiwanese youth culture. Even those unfamiliar with Go will be captivated by this story about self-discovery and the power of companionship.



Xiaodao

Xiaodao is fond of saying that creating manga is a challenging endeavor, and the title of “mangaka” feels premature at this stage. She is still seeking guidance on her journey to becoming a manga artist. In 2021, *The Lion in the Manga Library* Vol. 1 won the Annual Comic Award and the Annual Grand Prize at the 12th Golden Comic Awards. It was also selected as an Excellent Extra-Curricular Reading for Elementary and Secondary Students at the 43rd Recommendation and recommended by the ACBD (Association des Critiques et journalistes de Bande Dessinée) for the 2023 Asian Comic Critique Awards. Xiaodao’s work has been supported by the Cultural Content Fund’s “Comic Creation and Publication Marketing Reward Points” for the 111th Gaea “Taiwanese Original Comic” Production Plan. The overseas rights for *The Lion in the Manga Library* have been sold in Ukrainian and French.

The Lion in the Manga Library is a Powerful Comic Driven By Complex Characters

By Brian Hioe

The Lion in the Manga Library is a powerful and arresting narrative that distinguishes itself with its metatextual storytelling and genuine concern for contemporary mental health issues.

The story follows Xiao-dong, a young woman in her early twenties who works as a manga collector. She assists manga rental shops on the verge of closing by helping them dispose of their remaining stock and pack up their storefronts. Once flourishing across Taiwan, these shops are now facing decline in the age of online piracy and e-books.

Xiao-dong inherited her business from

her grandmother, who previously ran a manga rental shop. However, she didn't always work in this industry. Once a child prodigy at Go and a national champion in Taiwan, Xiao-dong retired for reasons that are revealed as the story unfolds.

The strength of The Lion in the Manga Library lies in its character development. Both Xiao-dong and Xia-sheng are vividly drawn, complex characters with hidden depths.

Her life changes when Xia-sheng, a high schooler who attended the Go school her grandmother ran during the summers, unexpectedly shows up at her doorstep late at night, asking to rent the empty room in her house. Although he initially claims to be a college student, it soon becomes clear that Xia-sheng is a runaway hiding his true identity. He challenges Xiao-dong to a game of Go,

proposing that if he wins, he can stay with her.

The Lion in the Manga Library is keenly aware of other comics about Go, with references ranging from Hikaru no Go to Gekka no Kishi. As a former Go champion and avid manga reader, Xiao-dong frequently alludes to these works, and while not directly mentioned, there are strong echoes of the shogi manga March Comes in Like a Lion.

However, it is more than their shared love of Go that connects Xia-sheng and Xiao-dong; both share similar histories of trauma. This bond draws them together, despite their age difference and contrasting personalities. Xiao-dong is outgoing and generally cheerful, while Xia-sheng is quiet and introverted. Yet Xiao-dong occasionally reveals a philosophical and cynical side, while Xia-sheng displays a biting sense of humor.

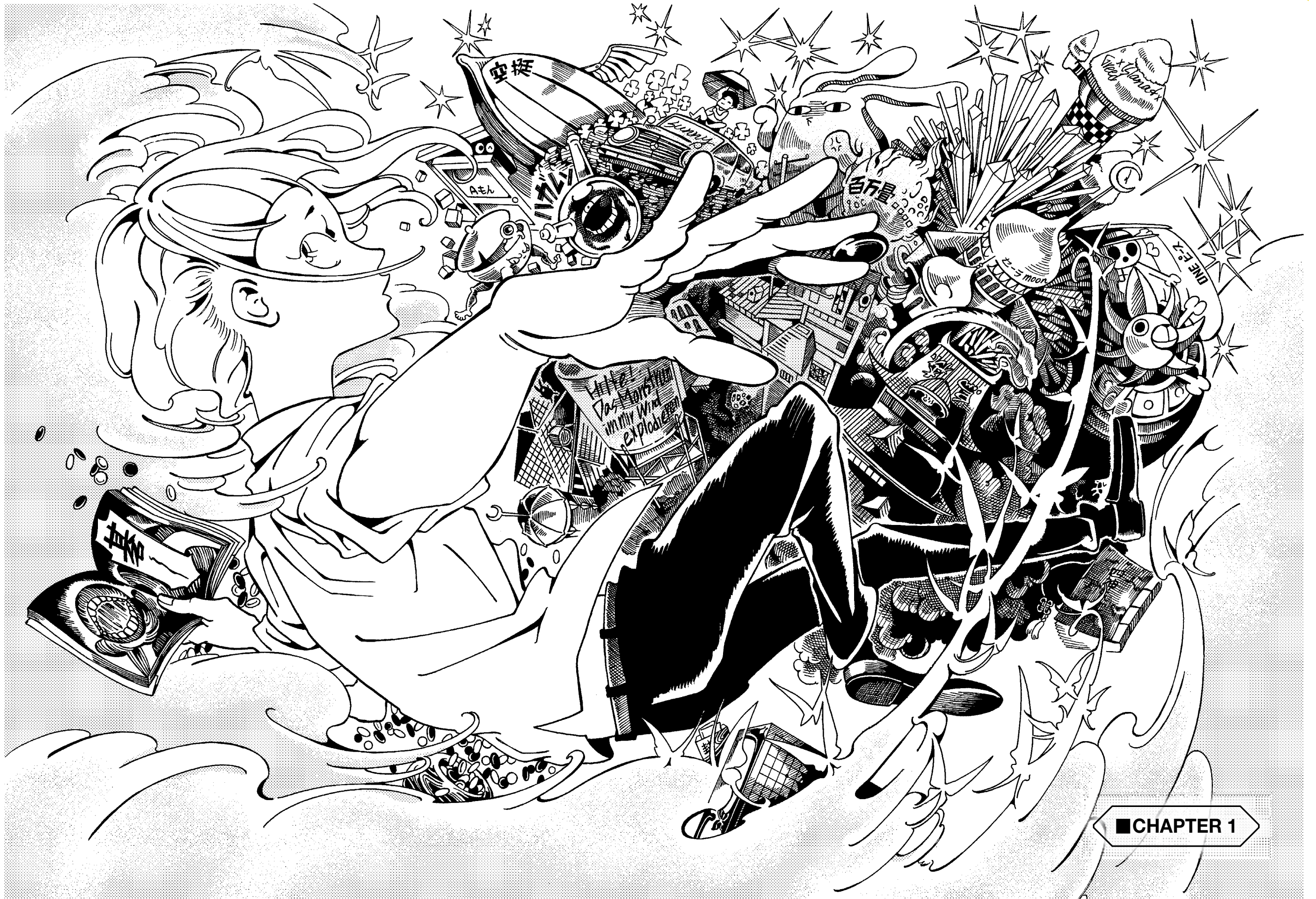
The strength of *Lion in the Manga*

Library lies in its character development. Both Xiao-dong and Xia-sheng are vividly drawn, complex characters with hidden depths. Their dynamic is highly complementary, allowing them to change and grow throughout the story.

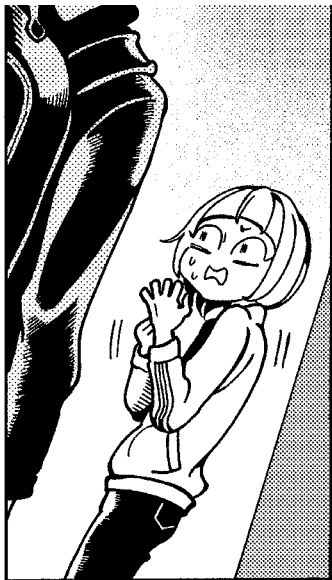
Though sometimes textually dense to match its narrative, the comic features an inventive visual language. Xiao-dong is often depicted with a cat behind her, reflecting her cat-like nature. The artwork transitions seamlessly from dialogue to metaphor, particularly during Go scenes, which are gracefully portrayed.

What truly sets *The Lion in the Manga Library* apart is its fearless approach to serious subject matter. It tackles issues such as abuse, PTSD, and trauma, drawing from social realities to address these topics.

Brian Hioe is a writer, translator, and co-founder of New Bloom Magazine.







WHO IS THIS?
A GANGSTER?
A PERVERT?
IS THIS SOME KIND
OF SECRET CODE?
WHY DID HE COME
HERE SO LATE?
WHO IS THIS?
WHAT DOES HE WANT?



GOOD
EVENING,
TEACHER.
PLEASE LET
ME RENT
A ROOM
HERE.
I HAVE
MONEY.

