



SOUL: The Songs of Wild

狩 SOUL：荒魂曲

Comic Artist: Chiyou **Scriptwriter:** Kuzuha **Publisher:** Gaea Books

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BFT2.0 Translator: Catherine Yu

In a realm transformed by a cataclysm a thousand years ago, humanity survives by harnessing curses and magic. After death, human spirits do not dissipate but instead wander, corrupting into monstrous entities that wreak havoc on all living things.

A girl engulfed in flames plummets to the earth. Her arrival banishes the monstrous entities responsible for human diseases and briefly reveals a miracle of blue sky. This event fulfills an ancient prophecy, making her a symbol of hope for the world's revival.

Yet, on this war-torn earth, she faces not only those yearning for a savior but also various mutated monsters and fierce battles of sorcery. Confronted with the mystery of her own origins and the weight of the prophecy, how will she navigate this chaotic world filled with vengeful spirits?

Featuring nearly a hundred breathtaking full-color illustrations, this epic fantasy is a collaboration between renowned illustrator Chiyou and fantasy writer Kuzuha. The book constructs a deeply captivating fantasy universe with a grand worldview. Blending Eastern traditional folklore with Western fantasy, this album-like volume features full-color printing and is finely bound, each page a meticulously crafted visual feast.



Comic Artist and Original Concept Chiyou

Renowned for his exquisite and unique brushwork, Chiyou creates graceful and powerful depictions of female figures. Since 2010, Chiyou has regularly published illustrations in CCC Creative Collection. His first commercial illustration album, *Collection of Taiwan High School Girl Uniforms* (2014), has been licensed in Japanese and Korean editions. Other notable works include *Oh, my Goddess!*, *Bunny Bunny Bang!*, and the graphic novel series *Soul*. In 2013, Chiyou's personal illustration collection *We Stay, We Live* was exhibited at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France. *Bunny Bunny Bang!* was featured in a solo exhibition in Tokyo and licensed for a Korean edition.



Scriptwriter Kuzuha

A writer with a passion for fantasy and diverse subcultures, Kuzuha's works include the urban fantasy novel *Soul Plants* (2016), selected for the Ministry of Culture's recommended reading list for elementary and middle school students, and the fantasy novel *Vali: The Lost Story of Taiwan* (2020), inspired by the Beinan Site of National Museum of Prehistory. *Soul Plants* was also a finalist for the 6th Taiwan Historical Fiction Award.

Soul: A Visually Sumptuous Epic Fantasy and Coming-of-Age Story

by Hsieh Yi-An

What would a post-apocalyptic world look like if civilization were destroyed and everything had to start over? Many games, comics, and novels have explored this question. In *Soul* Chiyou offers a unique vision, a colorful world brimming with guns, sorcery, and noble clans. Blending elements of Chinese fantasy with Japanese aesthetics, *Soul* creates a visually stunning realm that feels both strange and familiar.

Inherent to the apocalypse is the beauty of desolation: What will a newly reborn civilization look like? It cannot emerge from nothingness; it will inevitably bear the shadows of the old world yet be profoundly different. *Soul* is filled with an array of appealing elements: apocalypse, wasteland, sorcery, girls' academies, uniforms, guns, and characters with intricate backgrounds. The girls' uniforms

radiate youthful vitality, while the teachers exude elegance, enhanced by their striking combat attire. Chiyou's vivid, sensuous art makes each page a feast for the eyes.

Soul tells the coming-of-age story of the protagonist, Chenbi. A sorcery academy teacher named Liu Shun takes her in and raises her with care. At the academy, Chenbi is favored by upperclassmen like Dazhe and Baihou, but she is also bound by a rule: she cannot leave the academy. In a bid to escape, she makes a deal with a mysterious man, releases him, and triggers chaos, leading her to the desolate wasteland known as "the ground." During this process, she is separated from Liu Shun. The first two volumes of *Soul* take place mostly within the sorcery academy, with concise text paired with vivid imagery, creating a

streamlined narrative.

Ambitious in its world-building, *Soul* creates a vast and elaborate setting that can be hard to keep track of at times, but certain concepts and characters stand out—such as the "Mine Slaves," low-level workers who do physically deforming work. During the annual blessing festival, sorcerers purify them, temporarily restoring their original, "better-looking" forms.

This dynamic, in which the upper class oppresses while also granting temporary relief, is an original take on class oppression, exploring it through the lens of "ugliness." Even in their downtrodden state, the Mine Slaves engage in self-deprecating humor—one hesitates to say goodbye to their crooked nose, while another jokes, "It'll just go crooked again in six months."

Soul exists in a unique space between picture books and comics. Its text and images are often separate, not adhering strictly to comic formats, though it occasionally employs comic-style paneling. Most of the time, the

illustrations are designed to tell a story, with compositions that vividly express the relationships and tensions between characters.

Each illustration in *Soul* feels like a standalone work of art. The composition techniques are particularly remarkable, with valuable lessons for aspiring artists.

Each illustration in this book feels like a standalone work of art.

Soul not only features exquisitely detailed characters and vibrant colors but also succeeds in conveying a sense of dynamic tension and time through still images.

The greatest pleasure in reading the *Soul* series lies in watching how these intricate stories translate into compelling visual narratives.

Born in Lukang, Hsieh Yi-An now resides in Taipei, where she graduated from National Taiwan University. A member of the Taipei Legend Studio, Hsieh is dedicated to researching and promoting local legends of monsters and mysterious happenings. She has contributed writing to the Daemon Tales series of books.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter One

Earth

Miasmanimas

Miasmanimas exist in myriad shapes and are extremely dangerous. Though they appear all over the world, they are significantly more numerous and active in the depths of the Wild. It is rumored that they amass in certain seasons in such large numbers as to create mutations, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Uncharmed traditional weapons seem to have no effect whatsoever on miasmanimas, while charmed weapons and gear can provide some repelling and defense against them. Nonetheless, even fully armed sorcerers rarely dare to venture deep into miasmanima-infested territory.



“**Earth**” is entirely different from the utopian place Polaris once imagined.

There are neither lush meadows nor flowers in profusion. All she can see is a reeking marshland and the scattered remains of the Ark, which seem like they will soon be swallowed up by the mud.

But Polaris pays no mind to this desolate scene. Eyes wide open, she desperately searches for Saliksana in the deluge.

Saliksana is sprawled on the ground, her incantosuit in tatters and her skin exposed. The rain keeps washing away the blood oozing from her wounds, but the water never runs clear.

As Polaris darts toward Saliksana, a white flash suddenly fills her sight with dizzying light, followed by several loud bangs. She feels herself swept up by shockwaves and then smashed against the ground, which knocks her out. Something inside the Ark has exploded, unleashing flames that turn the sky red.

“When one pours all their feelings, thoughts, and longings into someone or something, the latter becomes a curse. I’ve put all my love and thoughts on you, aren’t you my curse then?”

Like the rain, memories of bygone days seep into Polaris’s head. By the time she startles awake, she finds herself surrounded by an ocean. Waves of rainwater are swelling and crashing violently, but flames are still blazing above the billows. Polaris clings to a broken door from the Academy and holds on to Saliksana’s hand with all her might.



Regaining consciousness means the sharp pain from the earlier collision returns too. With her arms shaking uncontrollably, Polaris clenches her teeth to endure the pain ripping through her joints. At long last, just as she is about to reach her limit, she hears a faint moan from Saliksana, who has finally woken up from her coma.

Saliksana tilts her head, gazes at Polaris tenderly, and squeezes out a smile like she always does.

Tears brim in Polaris’s eyes.

All is not lost yet.

Polaris draws a deep breath and prepares to use her last bit of energy to pull Saliksana up on the door slab.

For a moment, Polaris thinks she has managed. But the extra weight immediately tips the balance, and one end of the door juts out of the water. Busy heaving Saliksana up, Polaris loses her hold on the door because of the sudden mishap. Saliksana slips into the waves again, dragging Polaris with her.

Flustered, Polaris thrashes her arms to stay afloat, but it’s all in vain.

Until her tightly clasped hand is flung away by Saliksana.

The tiled door drops down on the surface with a loud whop. Polaris is still on top.

She stretches her hand out again, desperate to grab Saliksana. But all she can see is that the filthy torrent has swallowed up Saliksana’s slender wrist, now nowhere to be found.

