



Nothing Grocery Store : Adventures in the Dark Night

This book does not have a full English translation.

什麼都沒有雜貨店套書：1 暗夜奇遇

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BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

The young hero of this middle-grade novel always eats his meals at a bright, bustling convenience store. One night, however, he stumbles upon a seemingly empty and mysterious grocery shop. Intrigued by its strangeness, he finds himself returning again and again. What kind of magic could this grocery shop hold?

This book captures an emotional journey of transformation, delving into societal issues such as living alone, extramarital affairs, domestic violence, and single parenthood. Through Yu-Qing Wang's warm and engaging narrative, children are gently introduced to real yet often overlooked aspects of life, all presented within lighthearted and humorous storylines.



Author **Yu-Qing Wang**

Yu-Qing Wang likes to say that he appears human but is actually a yokai. Besides writing stories, he enjoys collecting musical instruments. He takes pleasure in creating sounds that have a touch of beauty.

Wang has received numerous accolades, including the Chiu Ko Annual Fairy Tale Award, Chiu Ko Modern Children's Literature Award, Guoyu Daily Flute Award, Good Books Everyone Reads Annual Best Reading Award, and the Ministry of Education Literary Creation Award. Wang's published works include *The Daemon Times* series (three volumes), *Animal Planet Detective Case Files 1-2* (co-authored), *The Wishing Mailman*, *Buffalo Yutail's Troubles*, *Air Rock*, and more. Contributions have appeared in publications such as *Asteroid Kindergarten Magazine*, *Puzzle Monthly*, *Mandarin Daily News*, and *Mandarin Daily Weekly*.



Illustrator **Lian En Lin**

Lian En Lin was born and raised in Taiwan. After graduating from university, she worked as a character and art designer at an animation company for over a year before leaving to focus on drawing. She specializes in creating with acrylics, watercolor crayons, and collage. Her works often center around current emotions or life experiences. She enjoys children's illustrations, cats and dogs, and ancient things. She has won the 2014 3x3 International Illustration Show Award, the 2015 and 2018 Bologna Children's Book Fair Illustrators Award, the 2021 BolognaRagazzi Fiction Award, the Taipei International Book Fair Award in the Children's and Youth category, and the Golden Tripod Awards.

Convenience Stores, Grocery Shops, and My Childhood: A Note from the Author

by Yu-Qing Wang

What memories do readers have of traditional grocery shops, or “gam-á-tiàm”? During my childhood, I watched traditional grocery stores gradually decline, replaced by the rise and growing popularity of convenience stores.

I still vividly remember living in a southern town where convenience stores were, at first, only found in northern cities and seen by us only on television. The first time I stepped into a chain convenience store—with its all-day air conditioning, bright and spacious interior, and endless shelves of items—I was awestruck. It felt magical, almost otherworldly. Was this a store run by angels?

As I listened to advertisements announcing new branch openings—first their 100th, then their 500th—I found myself impatiently waiting and hoping for one to open near me, ideally right next door.

As a grade schooler, just imagining it filled me with a dazzling light, as radiant as the convenience stores themselves, almost bursting out through my eyes and mouth. At the time, it never occurred to me that the rise of convenience stores might lead to the disappearance of traditional grocery shops. In my naïveté, I even wished for all traditional grocery shops to be replaced by convenience stores.

As convenience stores rapidly expanded, traditional grocery shops struggled to compete and became less common. Today, more often than being actual shops, “grocery stores” and “gam-á-tiàm” have become cultural symbols of nostalgia and retro trends in creative spaces. Many children and younger generations may never have truly experienced a life closely tied to such shops. Yet, due to their simplicity

and natural hospitality, these stores left unforgettable impressions in many people’s lives. Over time, they have come to symbolize Taiwan’s warmth and humanity, enduring through societal changes and the passage of time.

When I was young, my grandmother was the primary caregiver for my brother and me. Every afternoon after naptime, she would take us to a nearby gam-á-tiàm, allowing us to pick one snack—no more, no less. Usually, it was a pack of *Kuai Kuai* snacks or a bottle of *Yakult*. Despite being just one item, it became the happiest moment of our day. Grandmother, with her small purse in hand, quietly walked ahead of us, paid for our treats, and returned—a precious, loving image etched in my childhood memories.

This particular gam-á-tiàm was likely the store with the fewest items I had ever seen, yet it was the one I visited most often and that left the deepest imprint on me. Besides the usual snacks, we would occasionally go there to buy rice, rice wine, salt, MSG, or soy sauce. Every family in the neighborhood did the same. And of course, the cigarettes for the local uncles were always bought there too.

The fictional grocery store in *Nothing Grocery Store* largely drew from my childhood memories of that gam-á-tiàm. Its refrigerator for cold and

frozen goods was the owner’s household fridge. Whenever we grabbed a *Yakult* or popsicle, we’d catch a glimpse of their family’s food stored alongside, which often gave me a slight pang of awkwardness, as if I were intruding on their privacy. But the shopkeeper never seemed to mind—a reflection of Taiwan’s casual, unpretentious, and home-like warmth.

I believe the warmth of human interactions isn’t necessarily tied to whether one is at a modern convenience store or a traditional gam-á-tiàm. Convenience stores also have warmhearted clerks and countless acts of kindness and support. Yet, the current social environment, especially for children, feels more distant and detached than before. Every time I feel this, I wish for more “human warmth” in the world so that no child feels isolated, neglected, helpless, or alone.

I believe that the key to bringing salvation and warmth to the world lies in extending genuine care to others. Whether it’s a convenience store or a traditional grocery shop, as long as we have compassion, we can support one another and find strength together.

This afterword has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.



The Cannibal's Corner Store

Today's the last day of school before summer vacation, so I'm incredibly happy.

In the past six months my life has had dramatic changes. I've moved to a new city, settled into a "new" home (it looks old), and switched to a new school.

New home, new school, new class—I haven't gotten used to any of it. But I've survived and made it to summer vacation. I don't know what my classmates say about me, the new student. Who cares what they think?

My mother has also started a new chapter in her life. She's busy visiting clients every day, attending one meeting after another.



“Mom’s working hard to earn money so that you can study abroad in the future,” she says to me. “Boys need to be independent, then you can handle things on your own in the future!” Every day, my mom gives me a ten-dollar bill to pay for three meals.

Mom used to be very strict, but now she’s busy with her “direct sales business” (Who knows what that really is!). I’ve got a lot more time to do my own thing. It’s actually great!

Since I hardly have any friends and spend a lot of time at the convenience store, I’ve developed a habit of buying comics and novels there. I find the horror stories especially addictive.

I don’t know whether I’m made of fear or courage,

because I both love and hate horror stories. I can’t stop myself from reading. My nightstand overflows with them.

After school today, I follow my usual routine, buying a bento box and a Coke from the convenience store. Mom won’t be home until late. I plan to take the afternoon slow, enjoying it in its full glory.

Not hurrying at all, I finish my bento box then lay down for a nap. The air conditioning at the store is especially refreshing, and I fall asleep almost instantly.

When I wake up, I started browsing through the magazines and shelves for lift up my spirit.

Looking around, I notice a book that looks incredibly