

# BLOSSOM

## 百花百色

*A young girl explores her gender identity, with a close-up look at her internal struggles and a realistic view of the tradition and social context she lives in. Published just as Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize gay marriage, this is a timely read.*

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The flowers of the legendary Hundred Flowers Bridge represent children soon to be born: white flowers for boys, red flowers for girls. Lady Linshui, who looks over the bridge, can decide whether a boy or a girl will be born – but if you wish for boys, there is a Daoist ritual that will ensure your wish is granted.

Grown-ups have always told Yu-Fan that a girl should act like a girl: learn the piano; be quiet and dignified rather than noisy and rough; and wear skirts. Under pressure from her mother and grandmother, Yu-Fan has no choice but to hide who she really is and dress up as the girl they want her to be.

One day, she learns her mother carried out that Daoist ritual while she was pregnant, in order to ensure a boy. And as she reaches puberty, she realizes she is not developing in the same way as the other girls and becomes even more confused. Then a cousin she has always looked up to invites her to an LGBT event, helps her learn about herself, and takes her to a gay wedding. Things start to become clearer for Yu-Fan.

This graphic novel was published shortly before Taiwan legalized gay marriage. It takes a close look at the main character's exploration of her gender as she grows, and the family traditions and religious beliefs that stand in her way. It is an accurate reflection of progress in gender issues in Taiwan.

D.S.

From Keelung, Taiwan. Has published *The Boxes* on the Sun Comics platform. Particularly good at expressing the intricate emotions of young women.



**Publisher:** Gaea Books

**Date:** 12/2018

**Rights contact:**

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**Pages:** 210

**Volume:** 1 (END)

A black and white manga panel showing a young boy with short dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a dark tie. He is holding a dark-colored pleated skirt in front of him with both hands. He has a slightly nervous or determined expression.

So, before  
I even  
knew what  
it meant  
to be a  
woman,

I had  
to start  
pretending  
to be  
one.

A black and white manga panel showing a close-up of a girl with long dark hair, wearing a sailor-style shirt. She is looking towards a boy whose face is mostly obscured by a large speech bubble. She has a slightly teasing or questioning expression.

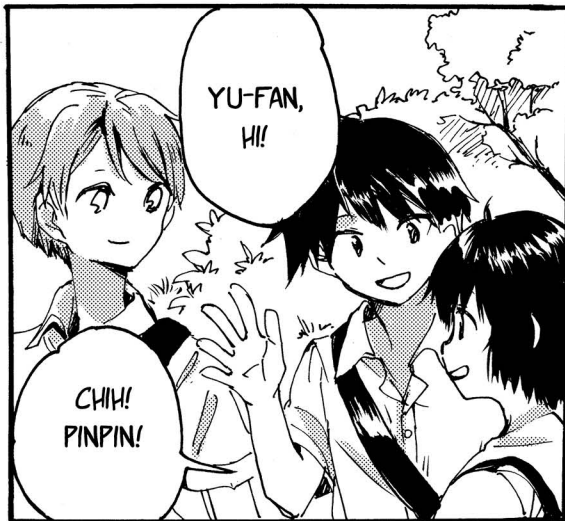
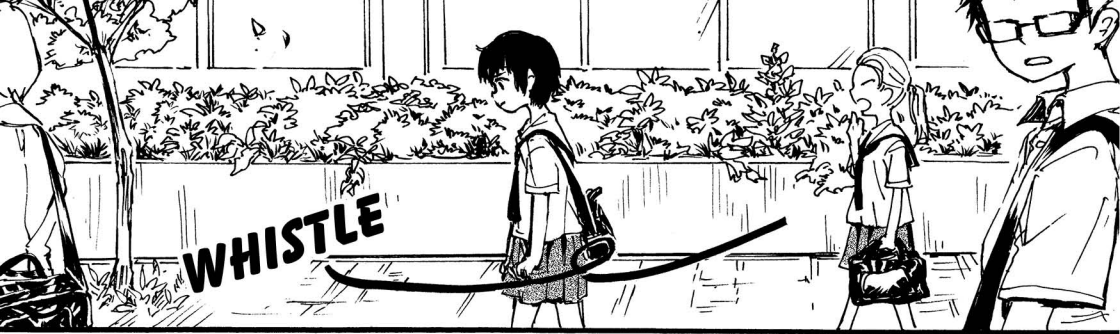
BECAUSE  
BOYS AND  
GIRLS ARE  
DIFFERENT,  
AND GIRLS  
LOOK NICE  
IN A SKIRT.

A black and white manga panel showing a boy from behind, wearing a sailor-style shirt. He is looking at a girl who is holding a skirt. The girl is wearing a sailor-style shirt and a skirt. The boy has a questioning expression.

WHY DO  
I HAVE TO  
WEAR A  
SKIRT TO GO  
TO JUNIOR  
HIGH?

A black and white manga panel showing a boy in a sailor-style shirt and skirt standing in a room with bunk beds. A girl is sitting on a chair in the background. The boy has a slightly awkward or nervous expression.

DO WE?  
IT FEELS LIKE  
HAVING AN  
OLD TOWEL  
WRAPPED  
AROUND ME.





NOTHING  
DIDN'T THINK  
YOU'D MIND  
YOUR SKIRT  
BEING LIFTED.

WHAT  
ARE  
YOU  
DOING!

MAYBE YOU  
ARE A GIRL  
AFTER ALL!

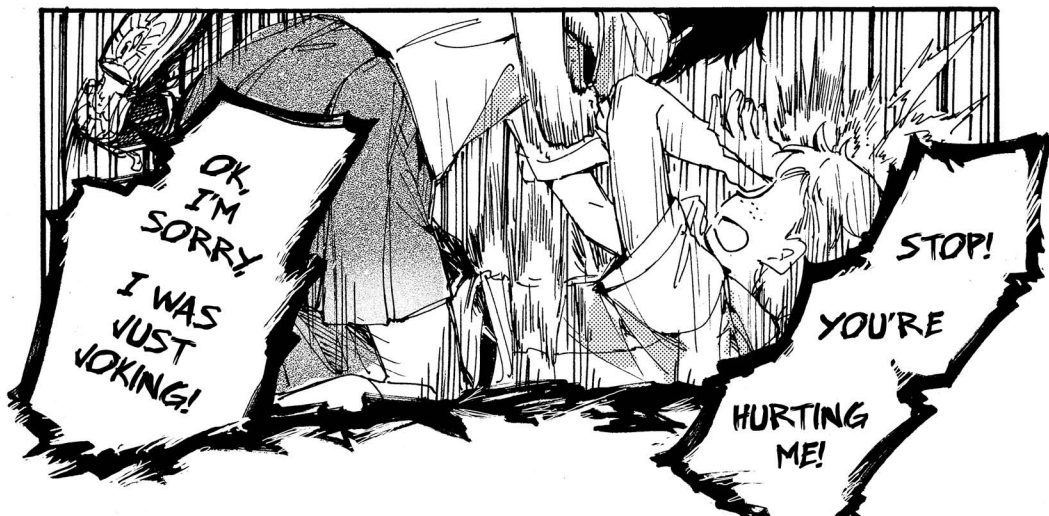


PUT SOME  
SHORTS ON  
UNDERNEATH  
IF YOU  
DON'T WANT  
US TO SEE.



OH, SO  
IT'S FINE  
TO DO  
THAT TO  
GIRLS?

YOU DON'T EVEN  
KNOW HOW TO  
PROTECT YOURSELF.





CHIH, GET HER  
OTHER ARM,  
PULL HER OFF.

YU-FAN!  
STOP THAT!

YOU  
THINK I  
WANTED  
TO  
WEAR  
THIS?



So this  
is what  
getting  
older  
is  
about.



I SAID  
SORRY,

YOU  
CAN'T  
KEEP  
HITTING  
ME.

Putting  
kids into  
little  
boxes:  
boys,  
girls.

JUST YOU WAIT!  
I'M GOING TO TELL  
MY MOM TO COME IN!

Obeying  
rules  
made  
up who  
knows  
who.



I'M  
SO  
SORRY,

OUR  
YU-FAN  
CAN BE  
TOO  
ROUGH...

HOW  
ARE YOU  
RAISING  
THE CHILD?  
SHE'S  
GOT NO  
MANNERS  
AT ALL.

YOU GOT  
HIS NEW  
UNIFORM  
DIRTY ON THE  
FIRST DAY.  
YOU'LL NEED  
TO PAY FOR  
A NEW ONE.



SO MUCH  
FOR MOM  
SPEAKING UP  
FOR ME...

