



Beyond the Page

A Full English translation is available.

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BFT 2.0 Translator: Rachel Yung-Hsin Wang

Beyond the Page introduces readers to a world in which reading itself is a crime. Rendered in a magical-realist tone, it depicts a book being literally locked: only the correct key can unlock its keyhole and thus “open” it. This poetic introduction to Taiwan’s authoritarian history tells a story about dictatorship and martial law, depicting a past in which books were censored, voices suppressed, and knowledge tightly controlled.

Delicate yet emotionally powerful, this book reflects on censorship, freedom, and the weight of silence. Rather than focusing on historical judgment, it highlights something deeper: the shared emotional memory carried through stories. This picture book, which received recognition at a workshop organized by Taiwan’s National Human Rights Museum, invites readers of all ages to turn the page, confront the past, and discover that freedom cannot be taken for granted.



Author **Fang Yin & Fang An**

Fang Yin and Fang An are two sisters from Taichung, Taiwan. They currently work as illustrators and live in Taichung with their two cats. Blending everyday experiences with imagination, their work is known for warm, lively scenes and gentle, bright brushstrokes. They create books with the hope of healing both themselves and others.

A Locked Book as Metaphor: Silence in Taiwan's Martial Law Years

by Shan-Chung Yang

Written and illustrated with lyrical restraint, *Beyond the Page* is a picture book that invites readers to reflect on the relationship between reading, memory, and freedom. Recognized at a workshop organized by Taiwan's National Human Rights Museum, the book operates on two parallel levels. Within the story, the narrator enters an authoritarian past through reading; outside it, readers are drawn backward in time, page by page, into a shared historical journey.

Books are often described as portals—thresholds that let readers travel freely across time and space. Through them, we can encounter distant lands, unfamiliar lives, and dangerous adventures. Yet this freedom is also a safe

one: no matter how thrilling, frightening, or violent a story becomes, readers remain protected. The world inside a book cannot truly harm those who read it. This quiet assumption is profoundly unsettled in *Beyond the Page*, when the narrator encounters something unexpected: a locked book.

Why must a book be locked? Who locked it, and for what purpose? What might happen if such a book were opened? These questions lie at the heart of the story. Creators Fang Yin and Fang An situate the narrative within the historical context of Taiwan's period of martial law (1949–1987), during which freedoms of speech, assembly, and publication were subject to severe

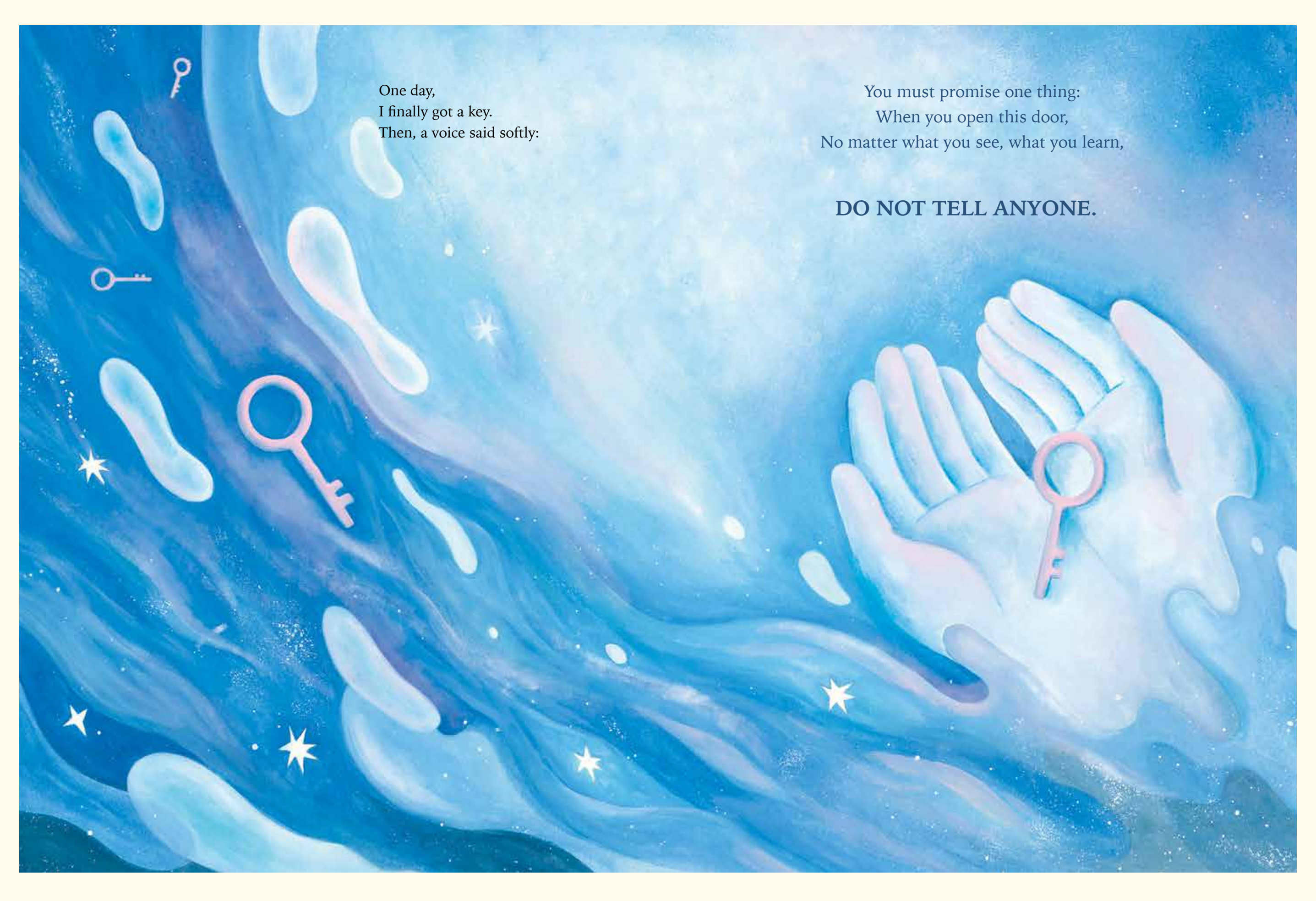
restriction. The image of the locked book functions as a powerful metaphor for censorship, surveillance, and the silencing of voices under authoritarian rule.

Echoing its title, *Beyond the Page* emphasizes the physical act of turning pages as a meaningful gesture. With each turn, readers move from an era of freedom into a time of enforced silence, and then, gradually, from darkness toward dawn. Beyond the page, history does not vanish. By experiencing the sense of absurdity and helplessness created by repression, readers may more deeply recognize the value of the freedoms they inhabit today.

Through a unique balance of restraint and imagination, *Beyond*

the Page opens up a space for remembrance, empathy, and the possibility of reconciliation. In so doing, it points toward futures still waiting to be imagined.

Shan-Chung Yang graduated from the Department of History at National Taiwan University and has worked as a teacher and a literary event programmer. Born in the subtropical winter of a humid island, she loves the trees and climate of the temperate zone. She is a devoted bear enthusiast, and her life idol is the Adélie penguin.

The background is a vibrant, textured blue with wavy, organic shapes. Several keys of various colors (pink, white, blue) are scattered across the scene. Small white stars are also visible. On the right side, a pair of hands is shown, one holding a pink key. The overall mood is ethereal and mysterious.

One day,
I finally got a key.
Then, a voice said softly:

You must promise one thing:
When you open this door,
No matter what you see, what you learn,

DO NOT TELL ANYONE.

Cautiously, I
Opened the book,
And walked inside.





There was a world unlike any I had seen before.

I remembered the promise, and

Kept this world a secret.