

# FOUR CLEAR DAYS IN EARLY SUMMER

## 四個初夏的藍天：虎尾眷村 今生

*In Huwei, central Taiwan, a military family settlement sees successive waves of residents arrive, hoping to find a place to call home. What none suspect is that their dreams are intimately tied to the ghosts of WWII and martial law that still haunt the area.*

Constructed on the site of a former Japanese air force base, the Huwei military family settlement housed Nationalist soldiers and their dependents who retreated to Taiwan in 1949. The four tales in this graphic novel move through various periods of time, weaving together the lives of the residents of Huwei with the voices of ghosts from the past, thereby addressing the complex history of the Americans, Japanese, mainland Chinese, and local Taiwanese who have all left their mark there.

A young mainland soldier forced to live at the abandoned Japanese air base encounters the ghost of an American pilot who refuses to depart until he can thank the one person who showed him kindness while he was a prisoner of war. The final diary entry of a Japanese pilot records the simple pleasures of tasting local foods while stationed at Huwei. In the post-war period of martial law, a drowning incident in a pool formed from an old bomb crater reveals the reasons a mute boy refuses to speak. Many years and many disappointments later, a couple that originally fled to Taiwan in the panic of wartime finally learns to see the Huwei settlement as home.

Over the ten years that this project was fermenting in her mind, comic book artist Chen Xiao-Ya visited the Huwei settlement multiple times in the company of local historical scholars. The product of her labors is this moving graphic novel based on true



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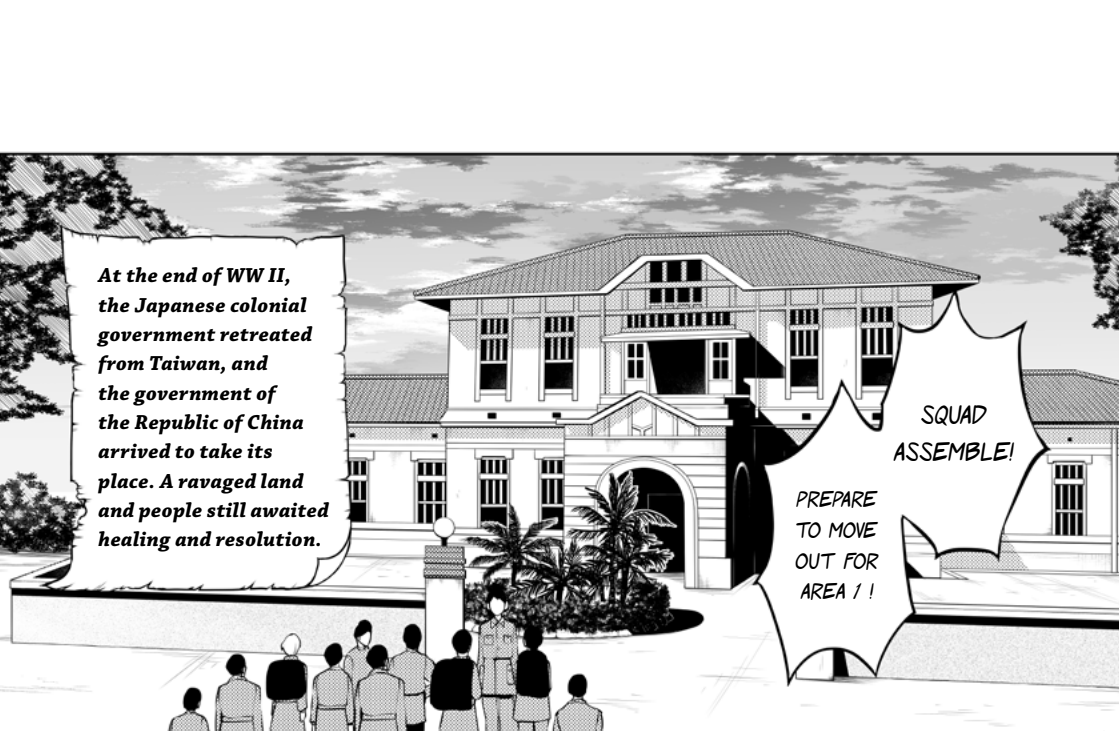
**Volume:** 1 (END)

incidents and accounts, which sheds a hopeful light on Taiwan's conflicted multi-ethnic past.

## Chen Xiao-Ya 陳小雅

A native of Huwei, comic book artist Chen Xiao-Ya brings refreshingly crisp art and a humanist sensibility to her stories. Her most representative works include *KANO* and *Black Nightshade on the Wind*.






*At the end of WW II, the Japanese colonial government retreated from Taiwan, and the government of the Republic of China arrived to take its place. A ravaged land and people still awaited healing and resolution.*

**SQUAD ASSEMBLE!**

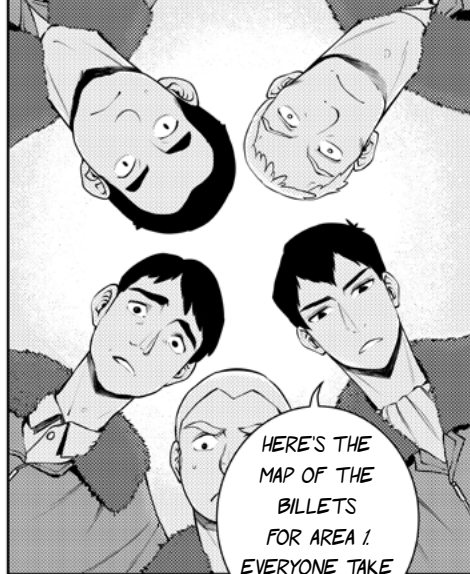
PREPARE TO MOVE OUT FOR AREA 1 !



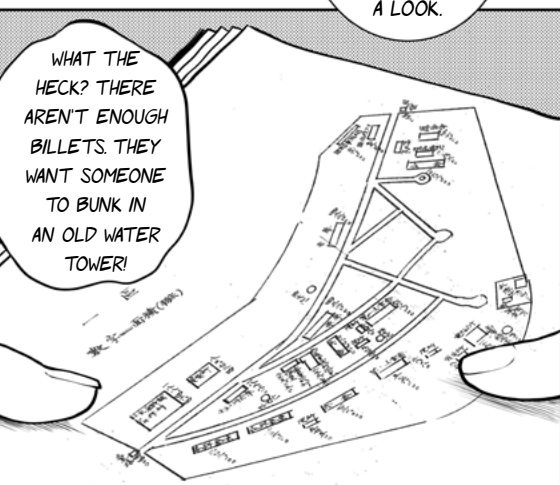
*But this island that has already embraced so many different races isn't finished telling its story.*

TODAY, WE'RE HERE TO DIVVY UP OUR ALLOTTED BILLETS.





HERE'S THE  
MAP OF THE  
BILLETS  
FOR AREA 1.  
EVERYONE TAKE  
A LOOK.



WHAT THE  
HECK? THERE  
AREN'T ENOUGH  
BILLETS. THEY  
WANT SOMEONE  
TO BUNK IN  
AN OLD WATER  
TOWER!



I DON'T  
WANT TO  
LIVE IN AN  
ENEMY CAMP!

ISN'T  
THIS AN  
ABANDONED  
JAPANESE  
BASE?

Isn't this sleeping  
with the enemy?

BETTER  
SOMETHING  
THAN NOTHING  
IT'S JUST  
TEMPORARY,  
ANYHOW, SO QUIT  
GRIPING.



IT'S FINE,  
I'LL TAKE  
THE WATER  
TOWER.



THAT WATER  
TOWER OVER  
THERE?  
I'LL GO TAKE  
A LOOK.

徐宗良



WE'LL  
SEND YOUR  
RATIONS IN  
A MINUTE!

NO HURRY



HSU  
TSUNG-  
LIANG?!

IT'S  
GOING TO  
BE COLD  
AND DAMP  
IN THERE.

YOU GUYS ALL  
HAVE FAMILIES  
WITH YOU.

I'M ON MY  
OWN. I'LL  
BE FINE.



う

う

PLEASE  
DON'T  
LOOK AT  
ME.  
PLEASE  
DON'T  
LOOK AT  
ME.

...IS FILLED  
WITH THE  
GHOSTS  
OF WAR.

EVERY  
CORNER OF  
AREA 1...

IT DOESN'T  
MATTER  
WHERE I  
STAY. IT'S ALL  
THE SAME.



HERE IT  
IS, THE  
MIDDLE OF  
NOWHERE.

I JUST WANT TO GO HOME...

轟轟轟轟

AIR RAID!  
AIR RAID!  
EVERYONE  
FALL BACK!

AHHHHH!

GRAB  
THOSE  
AMMO  
BOXES AND  
GET OUT  
OF HERE!





JUST A  
LITTLE  
FURTHER



KEEP  
MOVING!  
THERE'S  
SHELTER  
JUST  
AHEAD!




Tsung-  
liang...

Help  
me...

呼呼!





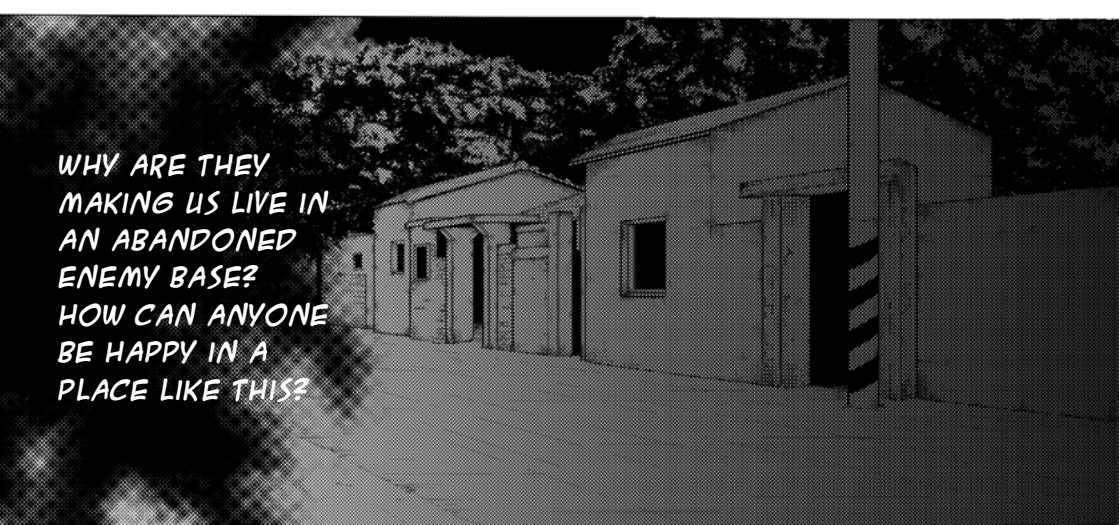


IT'S OK...  
IT WAS THAT  
DREAM AGAIN.



I CAN'T  
STAND  
LIVING IN  
THIS OLD  
JAPANESE  
MILITARY  
BASE.

I'M IN  
TAIWAN.  
HOW LONG  
HAS IT BEEN  
SINCE WE  
RETRATED  
HERE?



WHY ARE THEY  
MAKING US LIVE IN  
AN ABANDONED  
ENEMY BASE?  
HOW CAN ANYONE  
BE HAPPY IN A  
PLACE LIKE THIS?



I CAN'T  
TAKE IT...



I'VE GOT TO  
WAKE UP AND  
GET TO WORK.



THE SPIRITS  
OF MY  
BROTHERS  
IN ARMS  
HAVE ALL  
DEPARTED.



... NEVER  
SEEM TO  
LEAVE.

BUT THE  
SPRITS  
HERE...



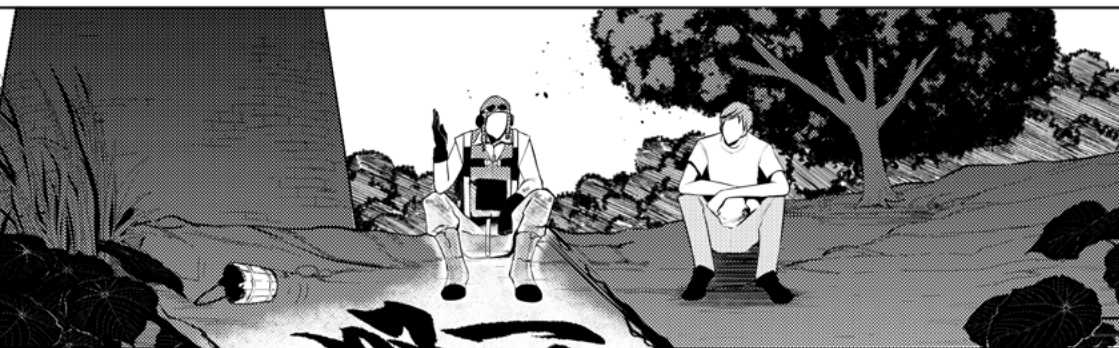






ME TOO, KID







HOLD UP, KID!

DID THAT  
GHOST JUST SAY  
SOMETHING?  
WAS HE TALKING  
TO ME?

What can I do?

STOP  
FOLLOWING  
ME! YOU'VE  
GOT THE  
WRONG GUY!

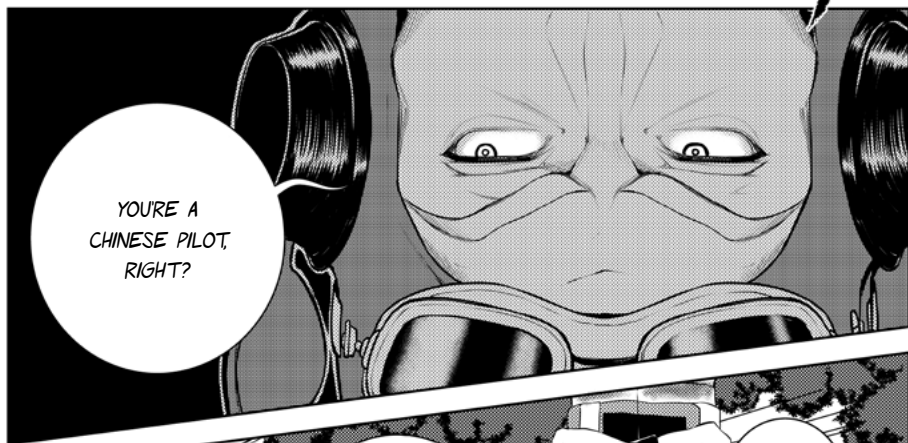
WHO THE  
HELL IS HE?  
SOME KIND OF  
FOREIGNER?  
FROM OUR SIDE  
OR THE OTHER  
SIDE?

I'M USED  
TO SEEING  
GHOSTS, BUT THIS  
ONE IS YELLING  
AT ME! WHAT  
THE HECK IS  
HAPPENING?!

WHAT AM I  
GONNA DO?  
I'M A DEAD  
MAN!



HEY!  
LISTEN  
TO ME!



YOU'RE A  
CHINESE PILOT,  
RIGHT?



HE'S QUICK  
ON HIS FEET.  
GOTTA  
ADMIRE THAT.

...



半



THERE'S THAT  
BIBLE BY MY  
BED. MAYBE IT  
CAN PROTECT  
ME FROM THIS  
GHOST!

DON'T  
LOOK  
BACK!  
DON'T  
SAY A  
WORD!



EH...  
AH...



咣  
咚



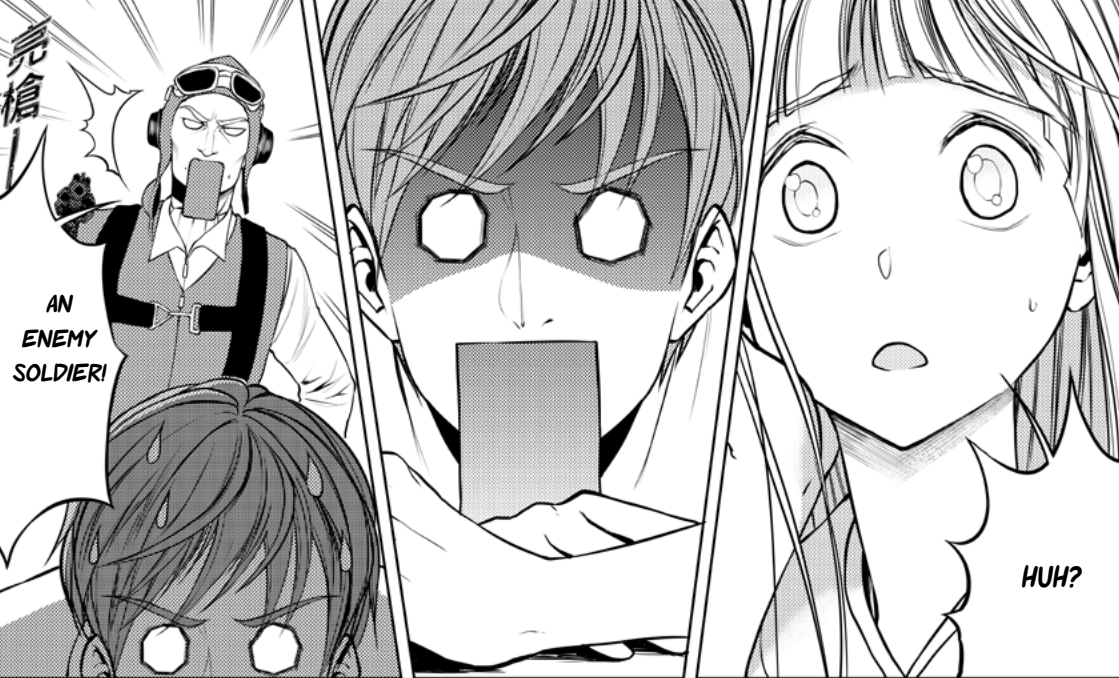


MY HEAD  
HURTS...

IT HURTS...

SO MUCH  
PAIN...


HUH?






OLD HABITS  
DIE HARD  
ANYHOW,  
THIS GUN ONLY  
FIRES BLANKS.  
HA HA!

SCARED ME  
TO DEATH!



OH! I'M SORRY.  
I DIDN'T SEE  
YOU CLEARLY

DAVID, IT'S ME!



PLEASE, DON'T  
CALL ME THAT.  
WE HAVE NAMES,  
YOU KNOW.

DO THEY  
KNOW EACH  
OTHER?

HUH?



WHY ARE  
YOU CRYING  
AGAIN,  
JAPANESE  
WOMAN?



IT'S HARD TO  
REMEMBER!  
AND WE'RE ALL  
DEAD ANYWAYS!

I'M BONG-  
CHEE-YA.  
PLEASE TRY  
TO REMEMBER  
NEXT TIME,  
DAVID

...TO SNEAK  
AWAY...

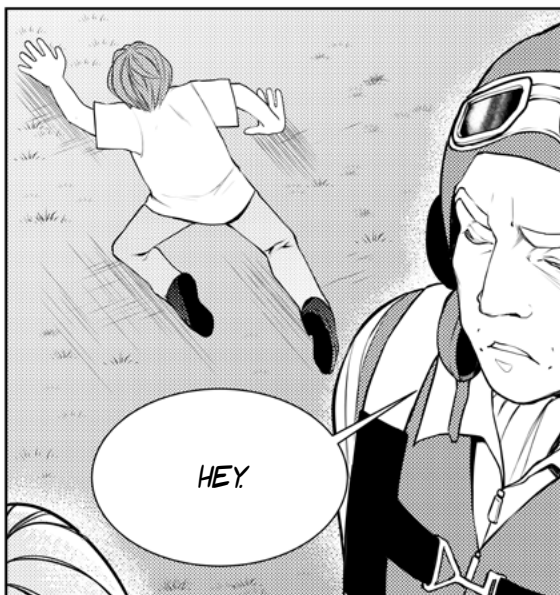
THIS IS MY  
CHANCE...



OH NO...

YOU,  
CHINAMAN.

YES?

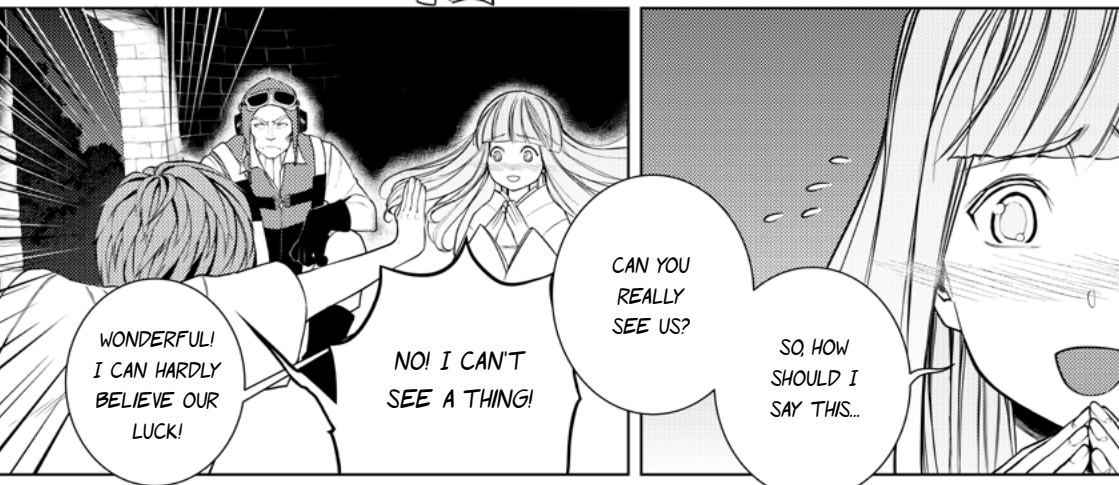


HEY



IT MUST BE  
UNCOMFORTABLE.

I DIDN'T  
REALIZE  
CHINAMEN  
LIVED IN WATER  
TOWERS. HOW  
STRANGE.

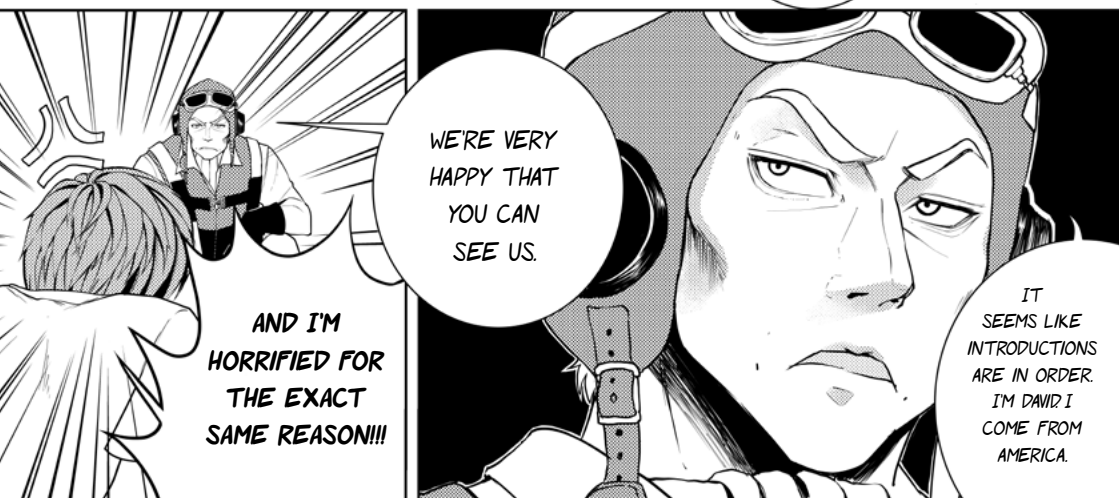


WONDERFUL!  
I CAN HARDLY  
BELIEVE OUR  
LUCK!

NO! I CAN'T  
SEE A THING!

CAN YOU  
REALLY  
SEE US?

SO, HOW  
SHOULD I  
SAY THIS...



AND I'M  
HORRIFIED FOR  
THE EXACT  
SAME REASON!!!

WE'RE VERY  
HAPPY THAT  
YOU CAN  
SEE US.

IT  
SEEMS LIKE  
INTRODUCTIONS  
ARE IN ORDER.  
I'M DAVID. I  
COME FROM  
AMERICA.



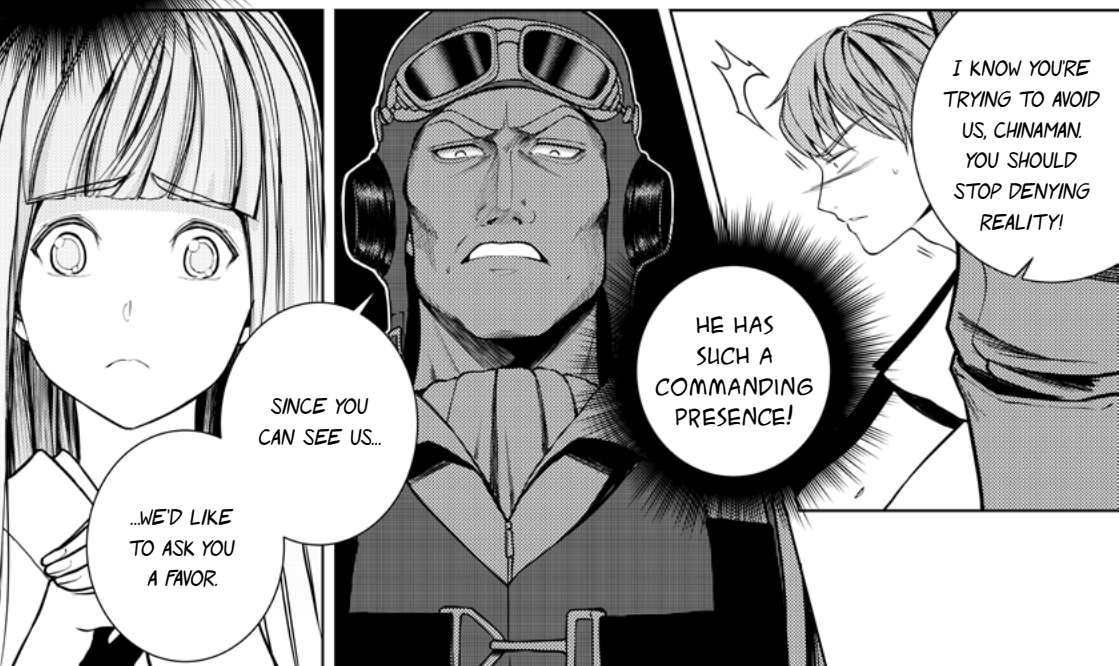


I told you,  
didn't I?

You're right, David.  
One must always  
hold fast to hope!

WAIT A SECOND.  
I'M ACTUALLY  
HAVING  
CONVERSATIONS  
WITH THEM. THIS  
IS INSANE.

I MUST'VE  
ATTRACTED  
THESE GHOSTS  
WITH ALL OF  
MY NEGATIVE  
THOUGHTS.  
HEAVEN  
SAVE ME!



SINCE YOU  
CAN SEE US...

...WE'D LIKE  
TO ASK YOU  
A FAVOR.

HE HAS  
SUCH A  
COMMANDING  
PRESENCE!

I KNOW YOU'RE  
TRYING TO AVOID  
US, CHINAMAN.  
YOU SHOULD  
STOP DENYING  
REALITY!



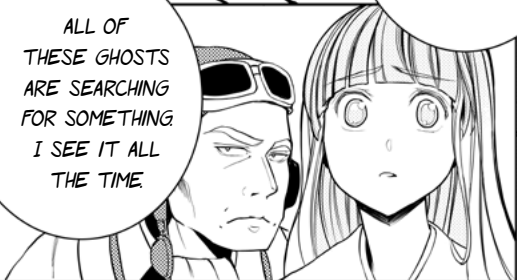
PLEASE,  
HELP US  
FIND A BOY





WHY CAN'T  
YOU JUST GO  
AND FIND HIM  
YOURSELVES?

ALL OF  
THESE GHOSTS  
ARE SEARCHING  
FOR SOMETHING  
I SEE IT ALL  
THE TIME



OUR SOULS  
CAN'T EASILY  
LEAVE THIS  
BASE

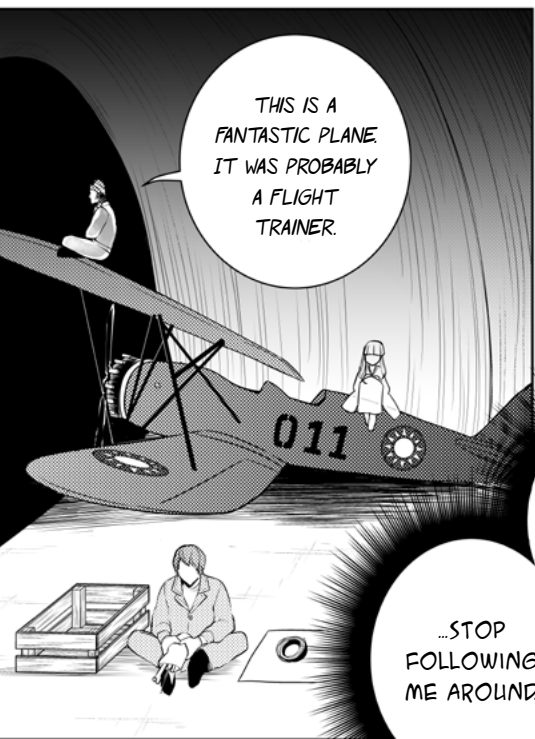
SO, WE HOPE  
YOU CAN GO  
OUTSIDE AND  
FIND HIM FOR US.

I'M SORRY,  
I CAN'T  
HELP YOU.

?!

SHOULDN'T  
THE DEAD LEARN  
TO LET GO OF  
THE PAST AND  
MOVE ON?





THIS IS A  
FANTASTIC PLANE.  
IT WAS PROBABLY  
A FLIGHT  
TRAINER.

...STOP  
FOLLOWING  
ME AROUND.



I TOLD  
YOU GUYS  
ALREADY...



I WAS  
SHOT DOWN  
BY THE  
JAPANESE.



OH,  
FORGET IT.  
AS LONG  
AS I DON'T  
ENGAGE  
THEM I'LL  
BE FINE.

I REALLY MISS  
THE FEELING  
OF SITTING IN  
A PLANE.



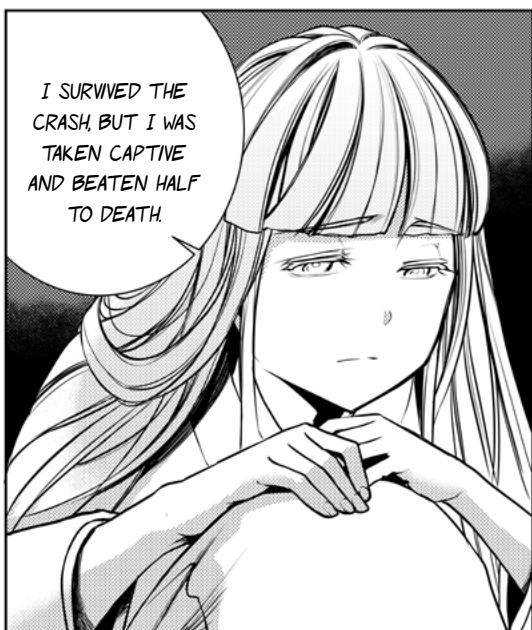


LIKE YOU, I  
WAS A PILOT. THE  
SITUATION IN THE  
ASIAN THEATER WAS  
URGENT. WE WERE  
SENT TO PERFORM  
A MISSION OVER  
TAIWAN.

BUT I DIDN'T  
MAKE IT.



I NEVER  
SAW ANYONE  
FROM MY CREW  
EVER AGAIN. I  
HAVE NO IDEA  
WHAT HAPPENED  
TO THEM.



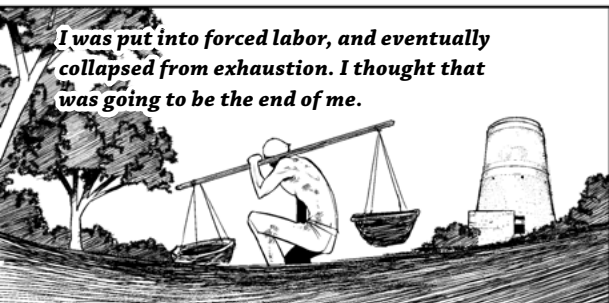
I SURVIVED THE  
CRASH, BUT I WAS  
TAKEN CAPTIVE  
AND BEATEN HALF  
TO DEATH.

*That's probably the worst  
thing I've had to face...*

*Between the fires of war and the  
hunger and cold, my memory dimmed.  
I could hardly remember the faces of  
my loved ones.*



*I was put into forced labor, and eventually  
collapsed from exhaustion. I thought that  
was going to be the end of me.*



*But just  
before I lost  
consciousness,  
I saw him.*

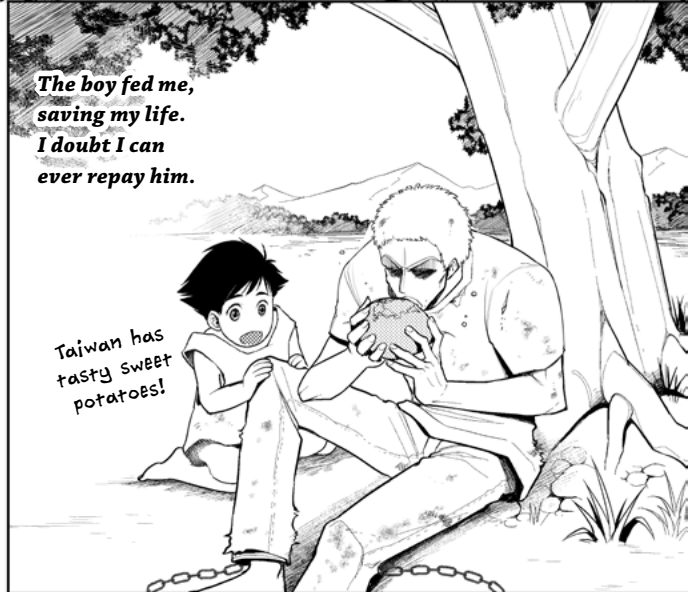


*And though my vision and  
memories blurred, the pain  
stayed with me, nauseating  
in its clarity.*





*He said things  
I couldn't  
understand, but  
I cherished every  
moment I was  
with him.*



*The boy fed me,  
saving my life.  
I doubt I can  
ever repay him.*

*Taiwan has  
tasty sweet  
potatoes!*



*When my  
consciousness  
returned, the  
boy was gone.  
I don't know  
if he survived  
or not.*

*In the end, the  
Japanese found us.  
The boy was  
terrified.  
He watched as they  
shot me dead.*



I HAD BEEN  
DEPLOYED OVERSEAS  
FOR SO LONG I  
HAD ALREADY LOST  
HOPE OF EVER  
RETURNING  
HOME.

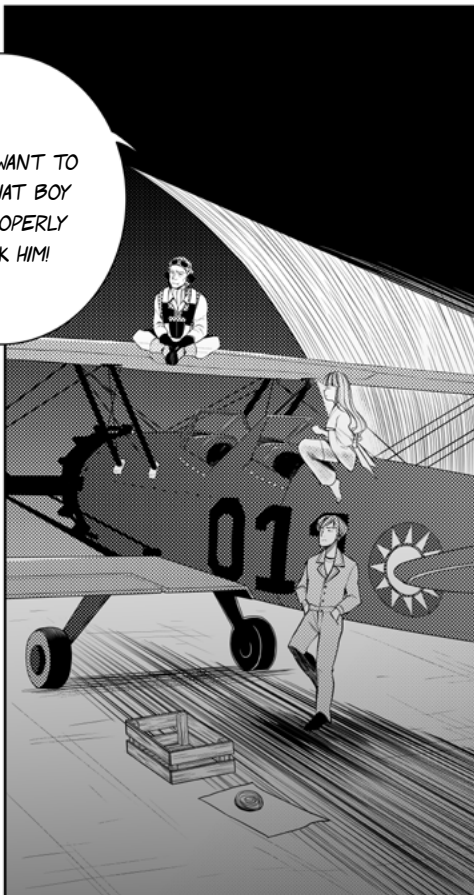
BUT IN TAIWAN  
I MET SOMEONE  
WHO SHOWED ME  
THAT KINDNESS AND  
LOVE WERE STILL  
POSSIBLE.



I JUST WANT TO  
FIND THAT BOY  
AND PROPERLY  
THANK HIM!



SIGH







I... I...

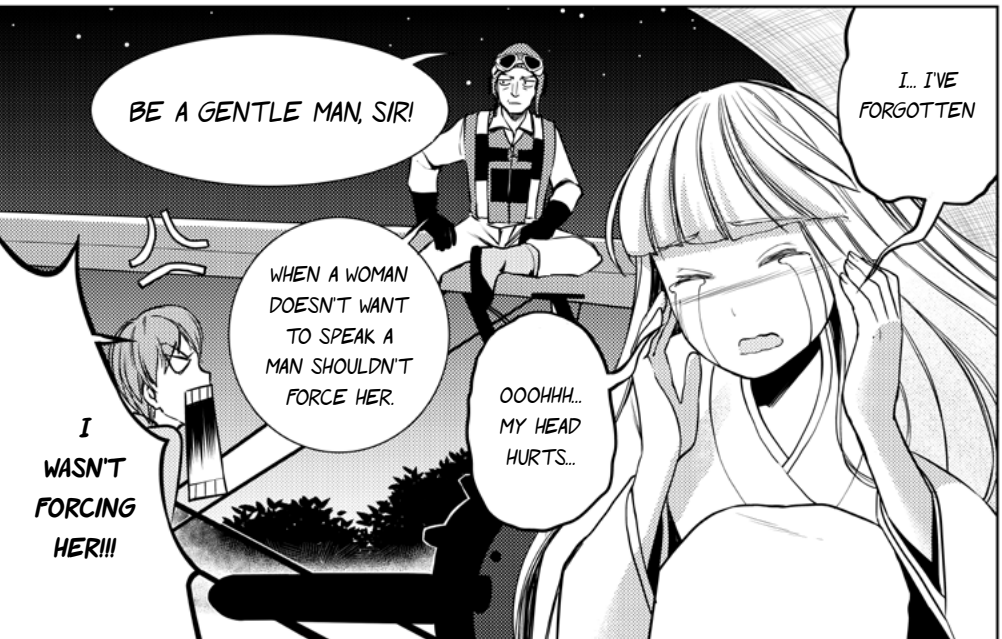


WHAT'S YOUR  
REASON FOR  
WANTING TO  
FIND THIS BOY?



AND WHAT  
ABOUT THAT  
JAPANESE  
WOMAN?

WHA?!



BE A GENTLE MAN, SIR!

I... I'VE  
FORGOTTEN

WHEN A WOMAN  
DOESN'T WANT  
TO SPEAK A  
MAN SHOULDN'T  
FORCE HER.

OOOHHH...  
MY HEAD  
HURTS...

I  
WASN'T  
FORCING  
HER!!!



UNTIL OUR  
FINAL WISHES HAVE  
BEEN FULFILLED  
WE HAVE NO WAY TO  
DEPART THIS WORLD,  
NOR CAN WE LEAVE  
THIS BASE.



WE'VE BEEN  
DRIFTING FOR  
TOO LONG.

PLEASE, HELP  
US, YOUNG MAN.



I PROMISE YOU,  
IF YOU FIND  
THE BOY WE  
WILL LEAVE.



LIFE IS FULL  
OF PAIN. WHY  
IS THAT SO  
HARD TO LEAVE  
BEHIND?



YOU HAVEN'T  
EXPERIENCED DEATH,  
SO YOU DON'T KNOW  
THE SUFFERING OF  
HAVING NO PHYSICAL  
BODY.

SO, ALL I  
CAN SAY  
IS...



THE  
THING  
IS...

HUWEI IS A  
BIG PLACE. HOW  
AM I SUPPOSED  
TO KNOW WHICH  
BOY IS THE ONE  
YOU'RE LOOKING  
FOR?

YOU DON'T  
NEED TO  
WORRY  
ABOUT  
THAT!

PLEASE!!!  
PLEASE!!!

PLEASE!  
I'M  
BEGGING  
YOU!!!

FINE! I'LL  
DO IT! I'LL  
HELP YOU!

Just let me  
do my work!

THAT'S  
AWFUL!!!

I'VE  
ALREADY  
DRAWN A  
PORTRAIT  
OF THE BOY  
TO HELP YOU  
FIND HIM.

I'VE BEEN  
PREPARING  
FOR THIS  
DAY FOR A  
LONG  
TIME.



...I HAVE  
SOMETHING  
THAT MIGHT  
BE USEFUL.

EXCUSE  
ME, IF YOU  
DON'T MIND.

AND YOU'RE  
A PAIN-IN-  
THE-ASS,  
AMERICAN!

Ha! You're quite  
rude, Chinaman!

CAN'T  
YOU  
GIVE ME  
SOME-  
THING  
USEFUL  
TO WORK  
WITH?

咄!





TSUNG-  
LIANG!

TSUNG-  
LIANG!



IF YOU WEAR  
THIS I THINK  
YOU WILL HAVE  
NO TROUBLE  
FINDING HIM.



I HAVEN'T  
SEEN HIM  
SLEEP THAT  
WELL SINCE  
WE ARRIVED  
IN TAIWAN.



JUST LET HIM  
REST UNTIL  
HE'S ON DUTY.



ALL THE  
EXCAVATOR  
PARTS SEEMS  
TO BE IN  
ORDER.

STRANGE.  
HE'S STILL  
SLEEPING.

HUWEI IS A  
BIG PLACE.



I WONDER IF  
THIS CHARM  
WILL REALLY  
HELP ME FIND  
THE BOY.



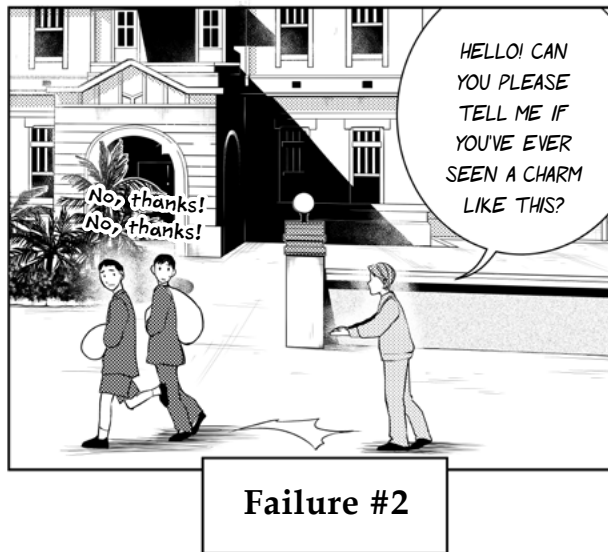
I HAVE NO IDEA  
WHERE TO  
START. I DON'T  
KNOW A SINGLE  
SOUL HERE.

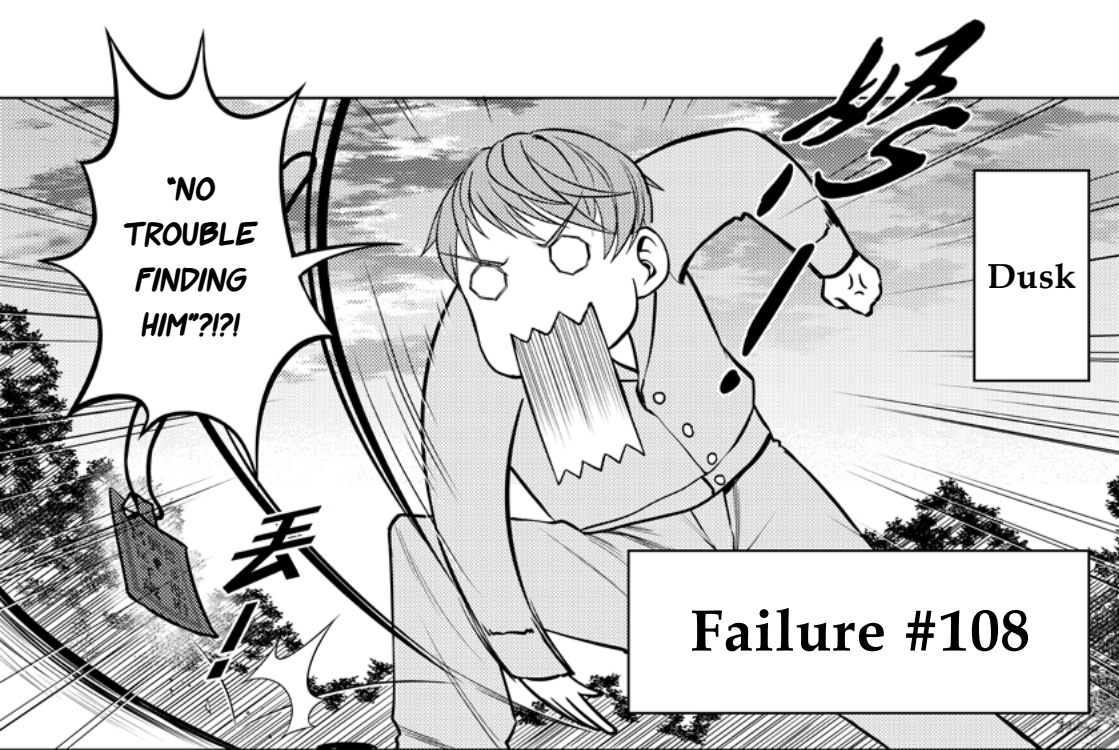


I GUESS  
I'LL JUST  
ASK A  
STRANGER.



德興宮  
虎池  
尾干歲





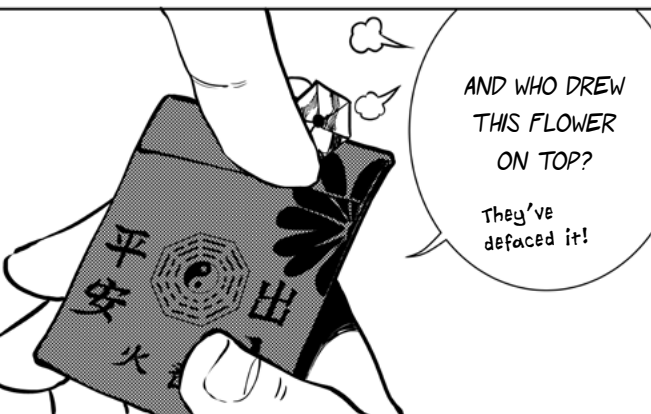




I CAN TAKE YOU THERE

THIS CHARM CAME FROM DESING TEMPLE





AND WHO DREW  
THIS FLOWER  
ON TOP?

They've  
defaced it!



HUH? THAT  
ISN'T PART OF  
THE ORIGINAL  
PATTERN?

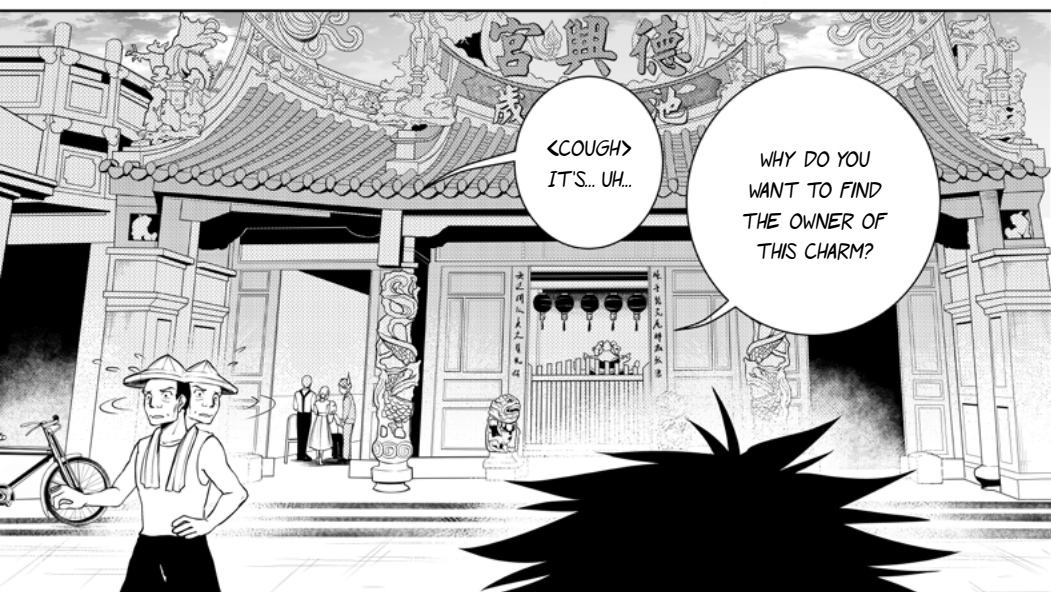
IT'S  
BEAUTI-  
FULLY  
DRAWN...



WE HAVEN'T  
USED THIS KIND OF  
INCENSE SATCHEL  
IN FIVE YEARS. THE  
ONES WE USE NOW  
ARE DIFFERENT.

OH?  
REALLY?

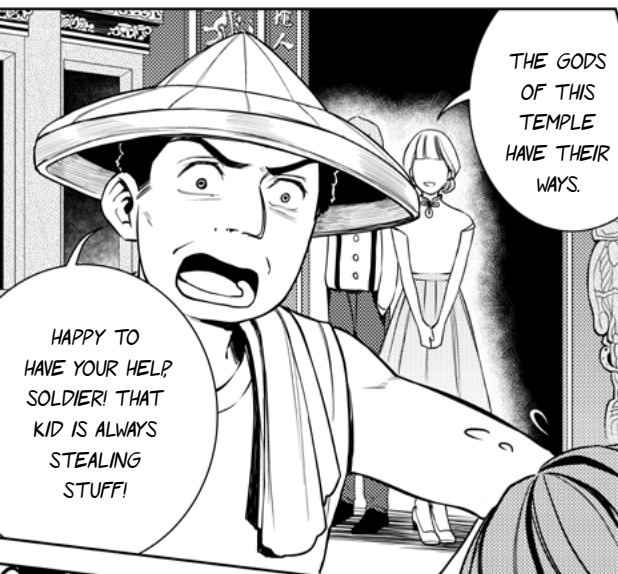
DURING THE WAR  
YEARS MANY PEOPLE  
CAME TO ASK FOR  
CHARMS LIKE THESE  
BUT SO MANY PEOPLE  
DIED DURING THE WAR.  
I WOULDN'T KNOW  
WHERE TO START.



<COUGH>  
IT'S... UH...

WHY DO YOU  
WANT TO FIND  
THE OWNER OF  
THIS CHARM?







ARE YOU THE  
BOY WHO FED  
THE AMERICAN  
PILOT?







I'M NOT TRYING  
TO CATCH YOU.  
I JUST SAW  
THAT YOU WERE  
CARRYING A  
LITTLE CHARM  
LIKE THIS ONE.

!!

DOES  
THIS LOOK  
FAMILIAR?

WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING  
WITH MY  
MOMMY'S  
CHARM?!

!?

