



I Work at a Scam Company

A Full English translation is available.

我在詐騙公司上班

Author: Tung Lin Hsieh **Illustrator:** Tung Lin Hsieh **Publisher:** Mirror Fiction

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BFT 2.0 Translator: Kevin Wang

A hapless young man at the end of his luck unexpectedly lands a job at a shady scam company staffed by two people: a gangster-like boss and a gorgeous supervisor. Gentle by nature and fond of animals, this essentially kind person nonetheless finds himself carrying out dubious assignments. From fundraising for fake charities to scripted phone scams, he struggles to reconcile his conscience with his work.

Meanwhile, the dynamic between the nameless protagonist and his supervisor starts to change. When he learns that she was once a victim of a notorious scam, he responds with empathy. She, in turn, can't help but notice his unexpectedly solid physique. As a subtle attraction emerges, the two begin plotting an ultimate con against her former boss—hoping it will allow her to reclaim her dignity.

This humorous yet biting manga suggests that political and economic systems can create the conditions for scams to flourish. As the protagonist discovers, many so-called legitimate professions can be even more ruthless than an outright con.



Author **Tung Lin Hsieh**

Tung Lin Hsieh's works have frequently appeared on the Books.com.tw annual bestseller list and have been featured in the recommended selections for the Taiwan Pavilion at the Angoulême International Comics Festival. Formerly a novelist and advertising copywriter, Hsieh is now a full-time comic artist, known for notable works such as *The God's Convenience Store*, *Who's Afraid of Whom*, *Love Counseling for Assassins*, and *I Work at a Scam Company*. Additionally, he has been invited to teach scriptwriting at platforms such as LINE WEBTOON, Taiwan Comics Base, and Game Orange Comics Star. *The God's Convenience Store* has been licensed for adaptation into board games, video games, stage plays, and film and television. The series consists of two volumes, and overseas rights have been sold in Russian.

When Scamming Looks More Reasonable Than a “Real” Job: A Cutting Manga That Exposes Social Injustice

by Wen-Chien Hsu

It is hardly news that Taiwan is often labeled by its own media as the “Scam Kingdom.” Phones, text messages, social networks—everyone here has, in one way or another, brushed up against the shadow of a scam. Yet if we place the numbers in global perspective, Taiwan may be serious, but it is hardly the worst. In 2023, Taiwan’s financial fraud losses totaled about \$276 million (USD). Singapore’s figure in the same year reached \$820 million (USD), Sweden’s soared to \$2.75 billion (USD), and the United States topped the list at nearly \$16.6 billion (USD).

Still, in Taiwan, scams have become a shared national anxiety, with the media relentlessly repeating headlines that convey a sense of helplessness. Tung Lin

Hsieh’s comic *I Work at a Scam Company* was born out of this atmosphere. It is not just funny; it is a grotesque mirror that magnifies a reality we all recognize but rarely want to confront.

The protagonist is fresh out of college, saddled with family debt, and without any special skills. In the legitimate job market, he has no way forward. Ironically, when he stumbles into a scam syndicate, he immediately starts earning a salary higher than what most regular companies offer. Hsieh bluntly exposes this absurd reality: when society fails to provide decent working conditions, the scam company begins to look more like “real employment.” This is not a glorification of fraud, but rather a reminder that the

failure of the legitimate labor market allows illegal industries to thrive.

The comic is filled with scenes that poke directly at Taiwan’s social wounds. One unforgettable sequence involves the forced street-selling of “charity pens.” This is already a familiar con in Taiwan, but Hsieh makes it even more absurd: instead of successfully tricking anyone, the protagonist gets propositioned by an old man and nearly dragged into a sex transaction. The misunderstanding is hilarious on the surface, yet beneath it lies the bleak truth of Taiwan’s underclass survival—whether hawking, being duped, or trading sex, the same vulnerabilities and desperation are at play.

Another moment cuts even deeper. During a staged scheme involving a car accident, he unexpectedly bumps into an old classmate. He assumes the classmate is also struggling, only to learn the man has already launched his own business with \$160,000 (USD), an amount of cash that his father casually gifted him. Now he flaunts his “success” with ease. His encounter with his classmate is a gut punch that exposes the reality of class. No matter how hard they work, some people remain trapped by low wages and debt, while others, buoyed by family wealth, barely lift a finger yet still cross the finish line. Against this backdrop of such gaping inequality, any scam seems almost secondary.

Hsieh’s cast of characters is equally allegorical. The boss specializes in “scamming the upper class,” hinting at the gray zones that slip through the cracks

of the system. Meanwhile, his supervisor manipulates people with her irresistible charm, pointing to a more universal human weakness. The protagonist’s own mother, who keeps falling for scams despite repeated losses, represents the blind trust in authority that still runs deep in Taiwanese society. Together, they form a tableau that feels extreme yet instantly recognizable.

By the end, it becomes clear that *I Work at a Scam Company* is not simply about how scams work, but why our world allows scams to flourish. Legitimate companies drain labor without offering fair pay; young people are forced to oscillate between poverty and gray zones; meanwhile, the privileged skip ahead on the ladder of success thanks to family background. Fraud, in this sense, is not merely crime—it is the reflection of social and class injustice.

What makes this comic so brilliant is that it makes us laugh even as it exposes the cracks in our society. The seemingly absurd scenes hint that a scam job can appear more rational than a legitimate one. What truly demands scrutiny is not the tricks of fraudsters, but the system in which we all live.

Wen-Chien Hsu possesses a free-spirited soul. She has worked at LGBTQ+ organizations, the 113 Domestic Violence Hotline, and works as an editor of Books from Taiwan 2.0. She is dedicated to bringing Taiwanese comics and picture books to a global audience.





