



Letters from the Battlefield

A Full English translation is available.

戰場通信

Author: Chien Chia-Cheng **Illustrator:** Chien Chia-Cheng **Publisher:** Dyna Books

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BFT 2.0 Translator: Christina Ng

A tender exchange of letters unfolds between an elementary school child and an officer on the battlefield. One handwritten letter after another gives each of them the courage to keep moving forward.

Benny Bronte is a quiet, slender boy who is often the target of pranks and bullying at school. On the front lines is Corporal Thomas, a calm and composed officer, leads his soldiers with stoic resolve. Benny is withdrawn and unhappy; Corporal Thomas, meanwhile, bears a weathered appearance and a gentle heart.

When Benny's class is selected to join a Letters of Care correspondence program, he begins writing to the battlefield and is paired with Thomas. Through their exchange of letters, the two—separated by age, experience, and distance—become sources of strength and support for one another. But as the war grows ever more brutal, how will this unseen friendship between two people who have never met, yet rely so deeply on each other, begin to change?



Author **Chien Chia-Cheng**

Chien Chia-Cheng is an independent comic artist and visual storyteller renowned for blending meticulous historical research with cinematic visuals. His body of work explores a diverse range of themes, spanning from railway and film history to the complexities of war and collective social memory. His books include *Wind Chaser Under the Blue Sky*, *Memories of an Actress*, *The Movie Painter*, and *Beyond the Reach of Light*. He is a multiple Golden Comic Awards winner, with works recognized by Taiwan's Ministry of Culture. His *Wind Chaser Under the Blue Sky* won the Grand Prize at the 17th Japan International Manga Award in 2023.

Letters Between a Child and a Soldier: Nourishing One Another Across Distance

by Shan-Chung Yang

Pain is everywhere. It saturates the battlefield, where soldiers face violence and death, and it lingers in school corridors, where children endure bullying in silence. Though these two spaces may seem worlds apart, both can become arenas of suffering, fear, and isolation for those caught within them.

Benny's class initiates a letter-writing program with soldiers stationed on the front lines, a project intended to foster empathy and understanding. In contrast to the battlefield, a school campus is commonly imagined as a place of safety, order, and joy. Yet for Benny, whose daily life is consumed by relentless bullying, school is anything but peaceful. Signing his letters as "A Suffering Me," he expresses an unsettling longing for the battlefield—a place he believes may offer clarity,

meaning, or even escape from his own pain.

On the receiving end is Thomas, a soldier who has experienced life and death firsthand. Having learned that emotional attachment can deepen loss, Thomas has developed a habit of concealing both his name and his feelings. On a battlefield where comrades may fall without warning, forming close bonds often means inviting unbearable grief. In this way, both protagonists are wounded—one physically, the other psychologically—and both struggle against the gradual erosion of their inner lives.

The interweaving of life and death forms the central axis of this graphic novel. Though Benny and Thomas inhabit entirely different worlds, they are confined within parallel "battlefields" from which

neither can easily escape. As letters are exchanged, Thomas—surrounded by gunfire and explosions—begins to grasp that what Benny describes as a "game" is, in truth, a euphemism for cruel and sustained bullying. Through this realization, Thomas paradoxically reconnects with a world beyond violence, rediscovering a sense of vitality and human warmth even in a landscape defined by death. At the same time, Benny, overwhelmed by the suffocating dynamics of school relationships, gradually becomes aware of a world far larger than his immediate suffering. This expanding perspective allows him to momentarily step outside his pain and, eventually, to summon the courage to resist.

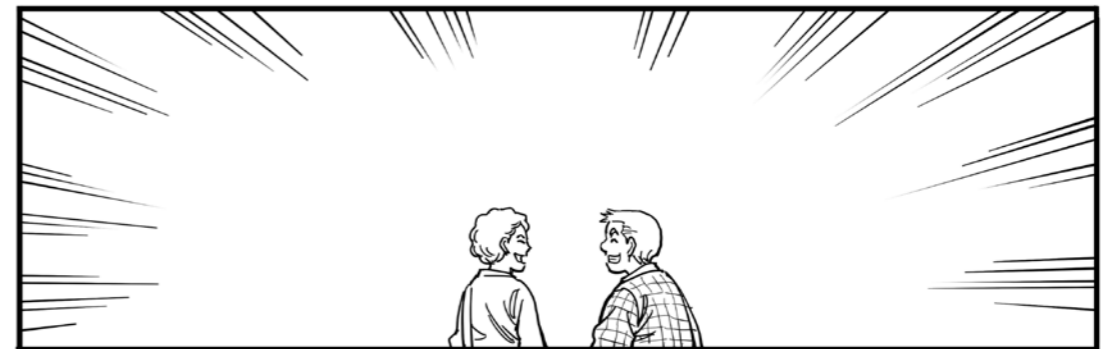
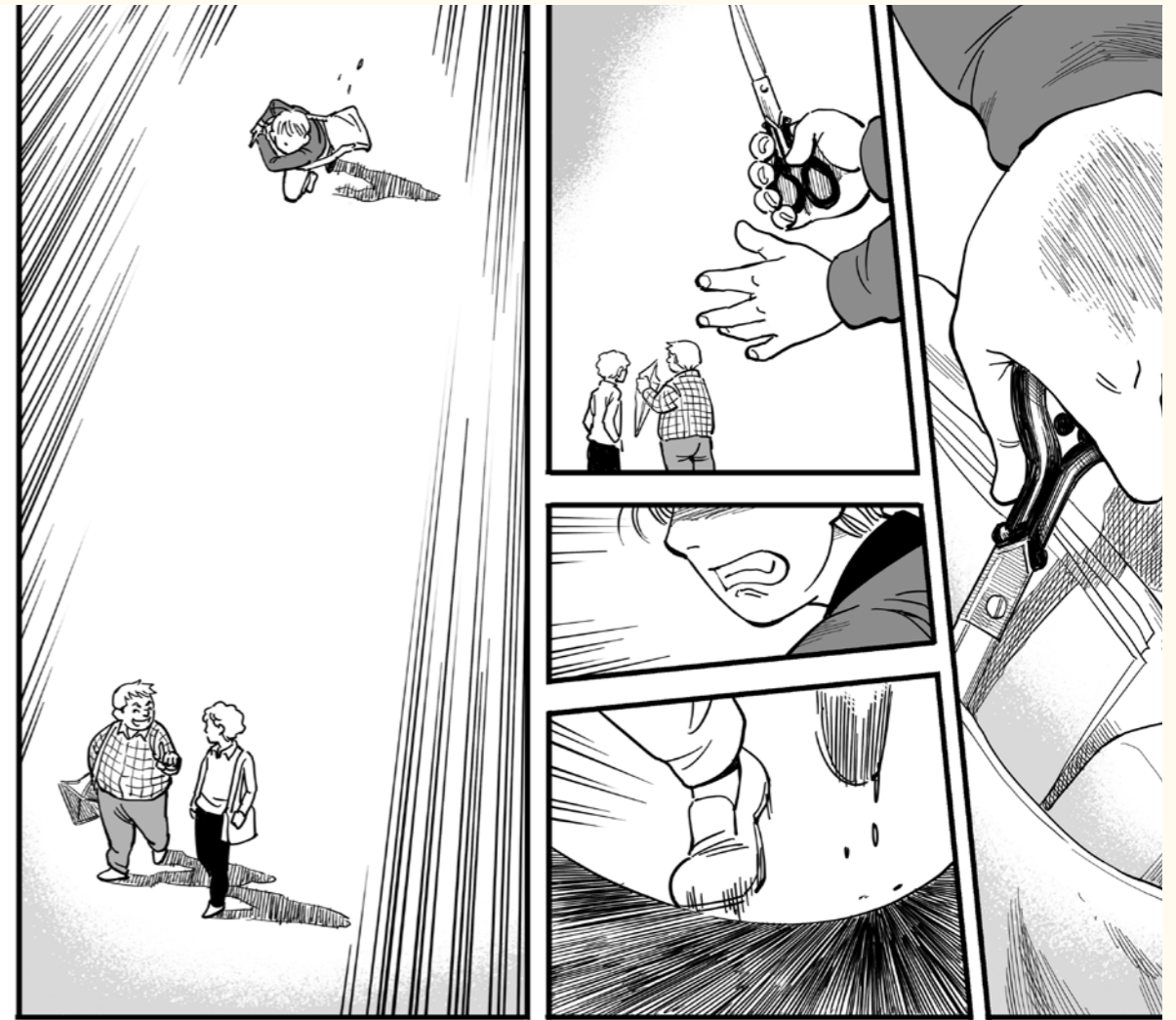
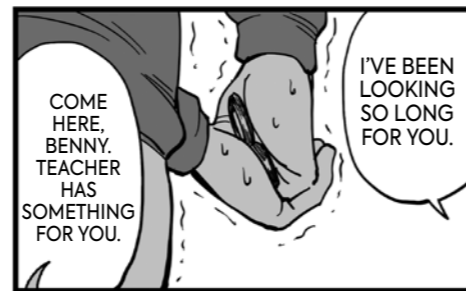
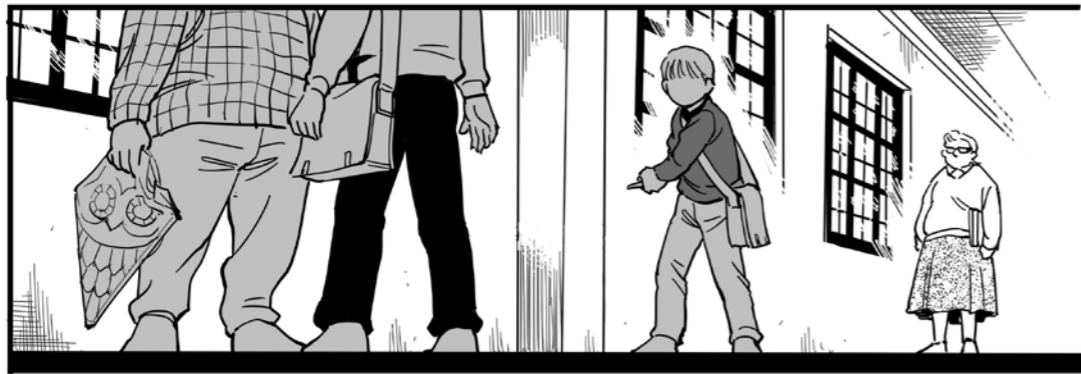
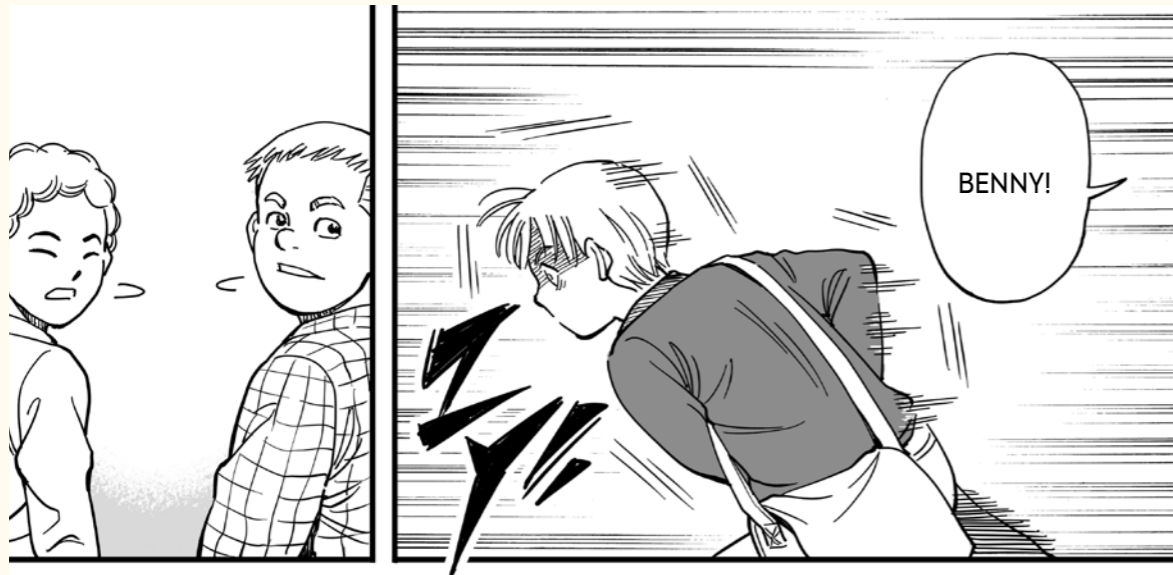
Through the exchange between a veteran and a child—figures often assumed to embody "experience" and "innocence," yet whose realities evade such simple labels—the two characters come to nourish and sustain one another. Their correspondence becomes a fragile yet vital space where empathy takes root, allowing both to cultivate the strength to face the present and to continue living. As one letter puts it, "No one can easily understand another person. If we had not continued writing to each other, we would never have truly come to understand one another." It continues: "This is why war is so foolish—because people give

up communication. They stop listening to one another. What could have avoided bloodshed instead leads to the worst possible outcome."

To attribute the origins of conflict solely to mutual misunderstanding may be an oversimplification. Yet for those who have never dared to speak, and who have long been trapped within pain, listening and dialogue can still offer a thread of hope. They provide a means of connection, and perhaps a path toward escape from seemingly inescapable circumstances.

And yet, communication does not guarantee resolution or redemption. Benny's act of resistance provokes harsher bullying, and Thomas, upon returning to civilian life, faces profound and unresolved challenges. Still, within this fictional narrative of *Letters from the Battlefield*, a quiet yet persistent light remains visible—a reminder that even amid suffering, the act of reaching out can sustain the will to live.

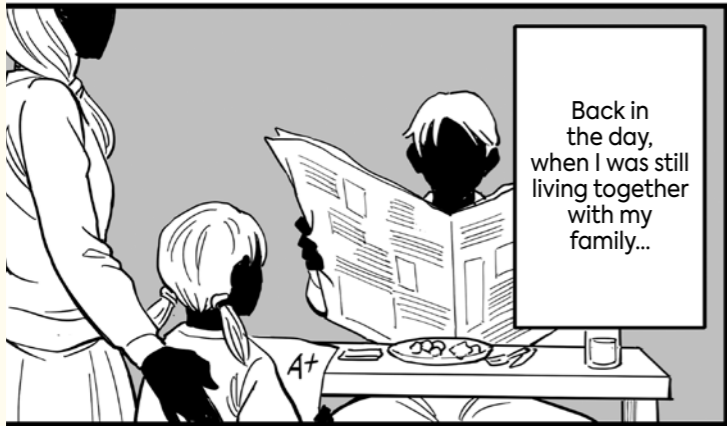
Shan-Chung Yang graduated from the Department of History at National Taiwan University and has worked as a teacher and a literary event programmer. Born in the subtropical winter of a humid island, she loves the trees and climate of the temperate zone. She is a devoted bear enthusiast, and her life idol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





I've encountered a similar situation before.

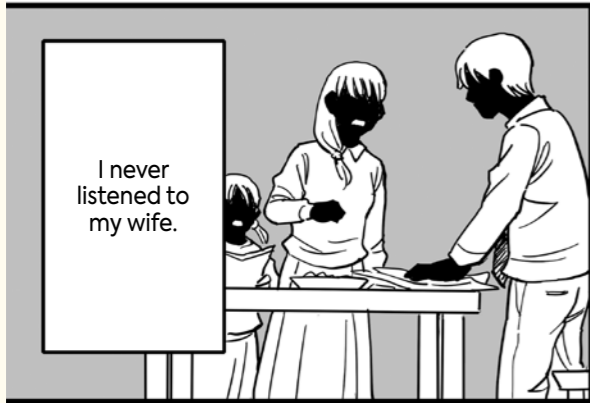
I can understand your pain.



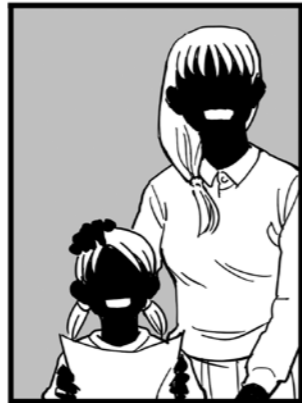
Back in the day, when I was still living together with my family...



But I was the "perpetrator" then.



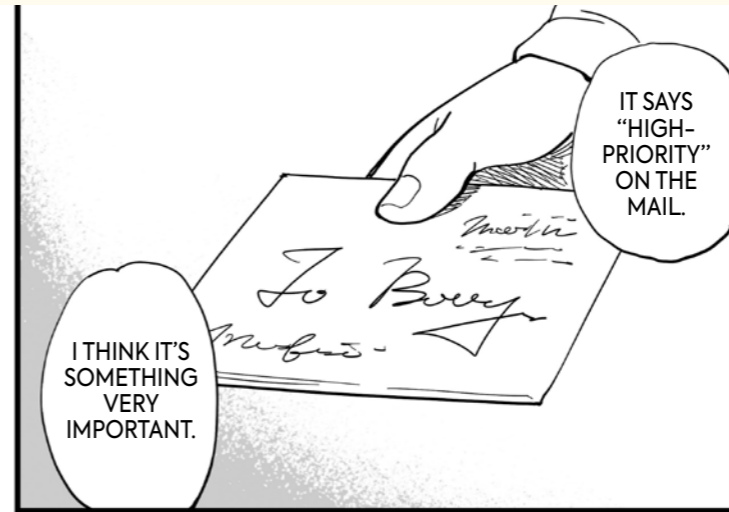
I never listened to my wife.



My wife had never lost her temper with me.



I only cared about my own life.



I THINK IT'S SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT.

IT SAYS "HIGH-PRIORITY" ON THE MAIL.



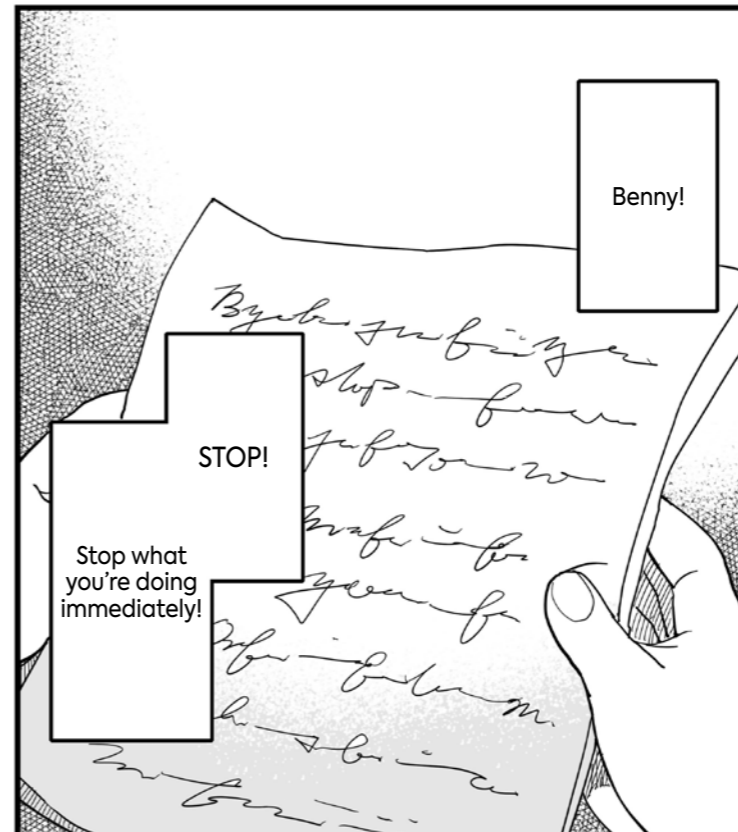
TAKE THIS.

IN ANY CASE, IT'S GOOD THAT I FOUND YOU.



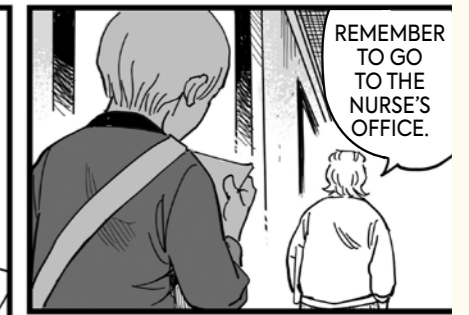
THE TWO OF YOU ARE STILL WRITING TO EACH OTHER.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, MANY STUDENTS STOPPED AFTER ONE OR TWO LETTERS.



Benny!

STOP!
Stop what you're doing immediately!

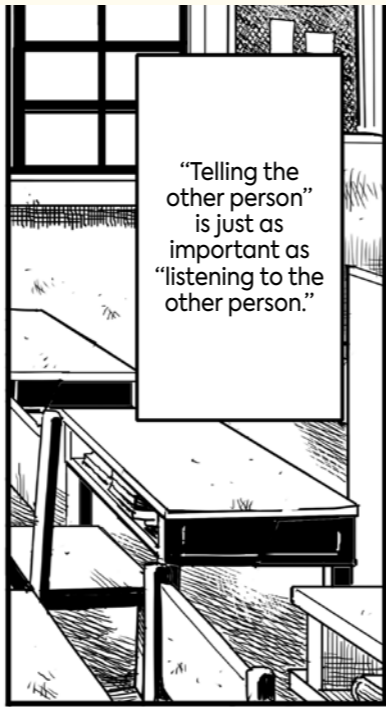


REMEMBER TO GO TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE.

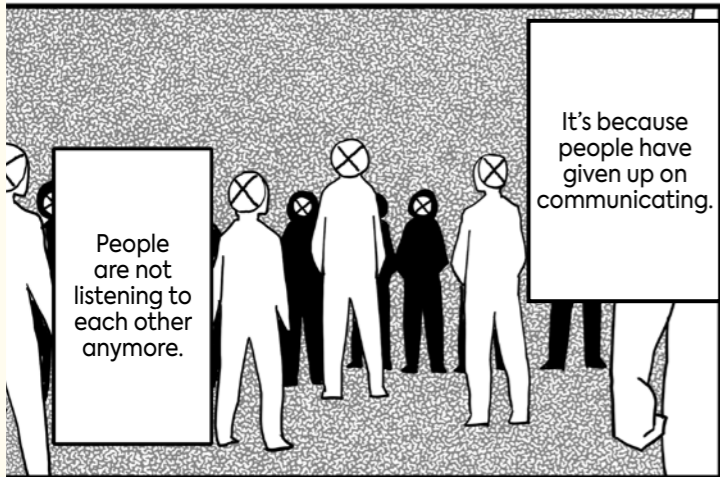




This is what so-called "communication" means.



"Telling the other person" is just as important as "listening to the other person."

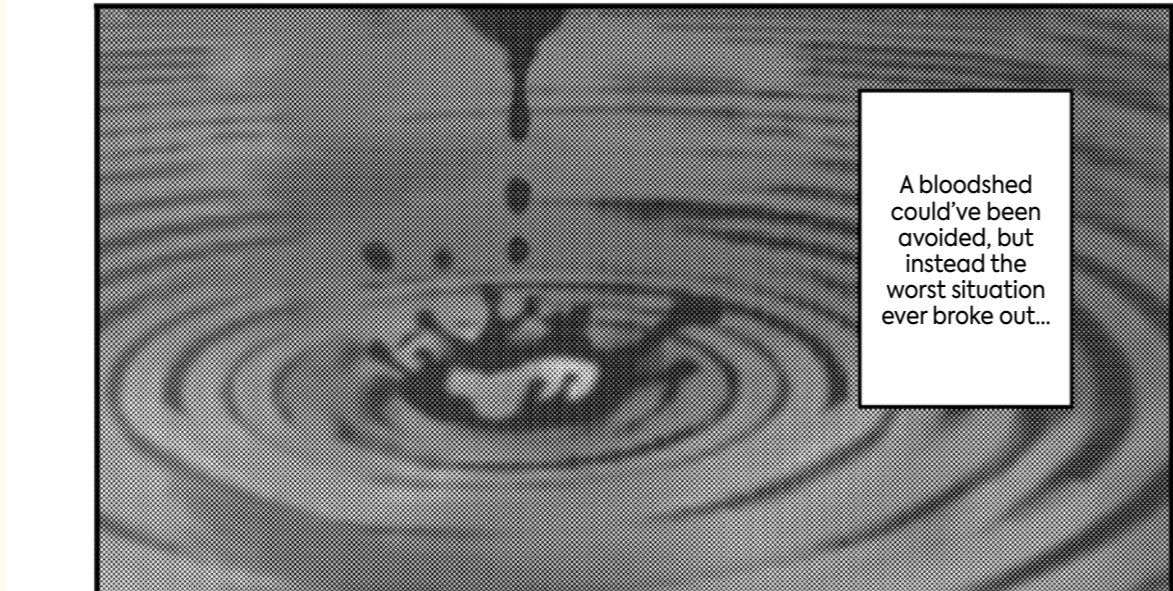


People are not listening to each other anymore.

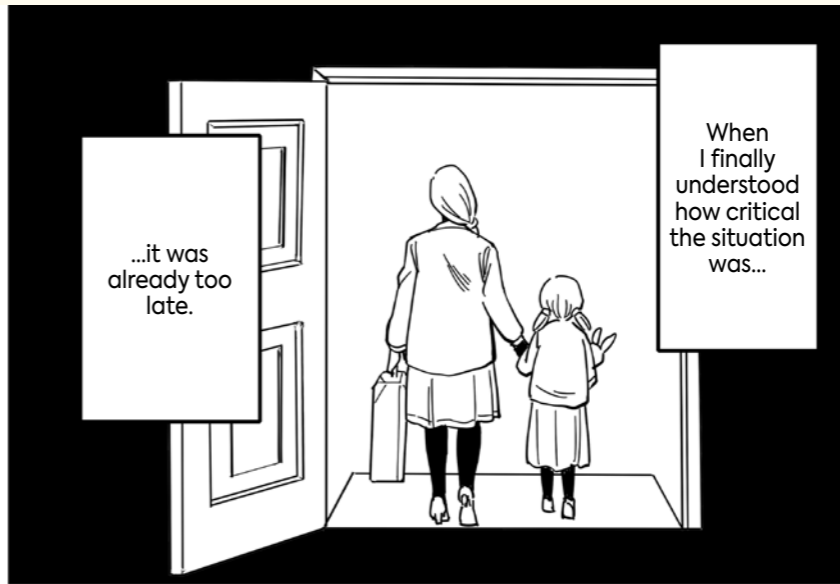
It's because people have given up on communicating.



Why is this war silly?



A bloodshed could've been avoided, but instead the worst situation ever broke out...



...it was already too late.

When I finally understood how critical the situation was...



I realized later that my wife had been repressing her emotions.

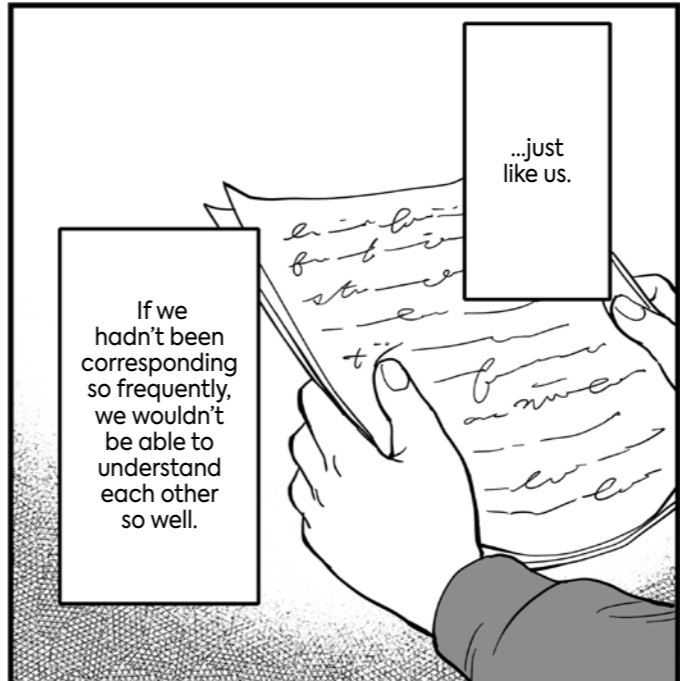


Would things turn out differently?

If she'd expressed her discontent...

If I had known her feelings earlier...

I kept asking myself after that...



If we hadn't been corresponding so frequently, we wouldn't be able to understand each other so well.

...just like us.



It's not easy to understand why the other person does the things they do...