



Scarecrow

A Full English translation is available.

孤村草人

Original Author: Zuiliuli **Comic Artist:** Xuan Lee **Publisher:** Dyna Books

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Adaptation: Original novel

BFT 2.0 Translator: Alan Chiu

A legend haunts Fenghe Village: whenever two deaths occur, a third will follow. To break this fatal cycle, the villagers perform an ancient rite known as the Straw Man Ritual. When Yan-Yu arrives in search of her missing sister, what she finds unsettles her—red coffins displayed outside every home, straw figures mysteriously shifting positions, and a strict curfew that forbids anyone from going out after 10 p.m.

As her investigation deepens, the village's unspeakable secrets begin to surface. From the moment one sets foot in Fenghe Village, escape is no longer possible. With suspicious villagers and knife-wielding scarecrows, what was once a sightseeing spot becomes a chilling hunting ground.

Rendered in a dark, richly detailed realist style, artist Xuan Lee adapts *Scarecrow* from Zuiliuli's horror series *Whispers in the Night*. Drawing on traditional Chinese customs and beliefs, the story leads readers into a world of cult ritual, occult practices, and human sacrifice—a place where the boundary between the living and the dead grows terrifyingly thin.



Comic Artist **Xuan Lee**

An animation and comics creator primarily active online, Xuan Lee believes in mysterious phenomena and delights in imagining strange, unconventional stories.



Original Author **Zuiliuli**

Zuiliuli is a best-selling author of light novels that often incorporate elements of Eastern myths and legends. A gifted writer of supernatural thrillers, she writes in a broad range of styles, including lighthearted, humorous fantasy-adventure stories set on school campuses. Her representative works include the popular series *Agents to the Gods*, *Night Whispers*, and *I, the Elf King, Need Cash!*

Zuiliuli is also a Virgo. When work gets overwhelming, she copes by cleaning her room to escape reality. She loves watching horror movies, yet always covers her eyes with her fingers. Her greatest wish each day is to sleep until she wakes up naturally.

Cult Rituals, Occult Motifs, and Human Sacrifice: A Chilling Horror Comic That Asks What Makes Us Human

by **HORRORLOFT**

(originally published on OKAPI.BOOKS.COM.TW)

The story opens with the assault and throat-slashing of a young girl—a declaration that this work will use bloody, brutal imagery to expose the cruelty and darkness of reality. As a Taiwanese comic, *Scarecrow* draws on the folk ritual of “Straw Man Substitution”—a practice meant to ward off misfortune—to explore death, while also taking inspiration from Japan’s famous “Scarecrow Village” in Tokushima.

Thus, Fenghe Village is set as the stage for “the hunt”: a place where living humans and inanimate straw figures coexist, and where faith in the scarecrow’s power to avert disaster sustains a twisted belief system. Despair (the throat-slashing murder) and hope (the villagers’ devotion to the scarecrow) form a stark visual and

thematic contrast, immediately enticing readers to peer into the village’s hidden ugliness.

The intertwined stories of three women reveal the secrets of this haunting village. Yan-Yu searches for her missing sister. Ching-Ching Liu embodies both good and evil. And last, Xiu-Lin Yan’s fate hovers between life and death.

Yan-Yu, the protagonist, reflects the archetypal “final girl”—the lone female survivor of 1970s–80s slasher films—sharply contrasted with the other female tourists and victims who come only to sightsee. Driven by her determination to find her sister, she symbolizes courage, resilience, and independence, and becomes the emotional core of the story.

Ching-Ching Liu, who works in the

funeral trade, carries a dual burden: on one hand, the guilt of murdering innocent travelers to secure immortality for her loved ones; on the other, the remnants of conscience that ultimately drive her to betray the village and help Yan-Yu.

Xiu-Lin Yan, whose life and death are uncertain, represents what Steven Arthur Pinker calls “instrumental violence”—a victim killed as a means to an end, sacrificed so that the villagers may attain eternal life. She is both the human offering in this exchange of lives and the catalyst that propels Yan-Yu into the role of the Final Girl. Yet in the end, Xiu-Lin herself takes revenge, killing her murderer and transforming from a passive victim of instrumental violence into an agent of retributive violence. She embodies a form of ancient morality that holds blood must be repaid with blood.

As a work steeped in cult imagery and occult motifs, *Scarecrow* inevitably centers on sacrifice. Fenghe Village’s practices evolve over time. At first, villagers use straw figures to ward off misfortune. They perform the “Straw Man Ritual,” placing a scarecrow made of thirty-six stalks of rice in a red coffin and burying it with the dead to prevent consecutive deaths. Eventually, straw is no longer enough. The village replaces the effigies with living humans. What begins as symbolic substitution becomes a literal exchange of life for life.

The turning point lies in the appearance of the White Immortal Maiden, who transforms the traditional,

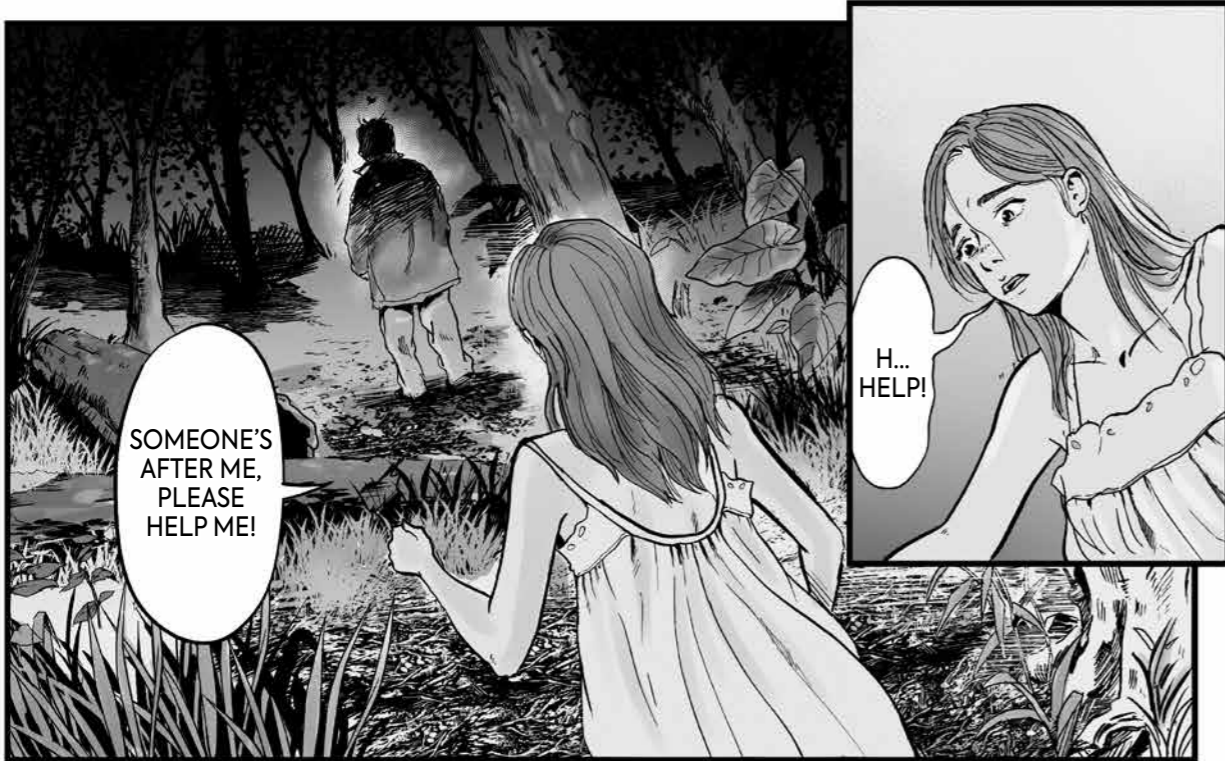
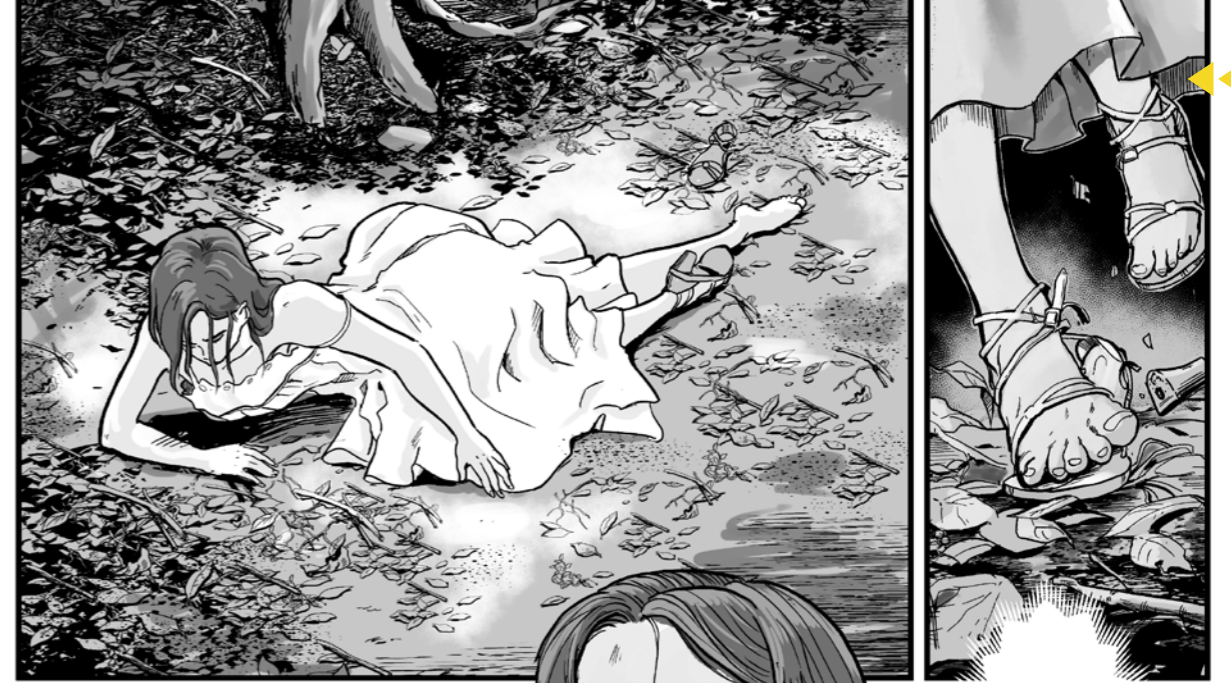
one-way offering of sacrifice to the gods into a transactional system. By trading lives, villagers receive tangible “returns” in the form of immortality. The villagers abandon their original faith in Master Hu and the straw men, turning instead to the White Immortal Maiden and the doctrine of human sacrifice. In doing so, they become a community that collectively commits crime.

In the final act, however, Master Hu’s compassion for all beings erupts. Unable to bear the sight of villagers murdering others, he exhausts his divine power to resurrect the victims buried in red coffins throughout Fenghe Village.

From the author’s perspective, *Scarecrow* places humanity at the center, with divinity as a supporting force. Its central question—when are humans no longer human?—carries multiple layers of meaning, Generating still more questions. For the villagers, who have lost their moral compass and turned to slaughter, can they still be considered human? For those who gain immortality through the White Immortal Maiden’s ritual, what remains of their humanity when only the body endures and the soul is gone?

This essay has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.

Dedicated to horror comics, HORRORLOFT explores non-mainstream dark and grotesque artistic creations while researching the global development and textual lineage of horror comics.



SOMEONE'S AFTER ME, PLEASE HELP ME!

H... HELP!

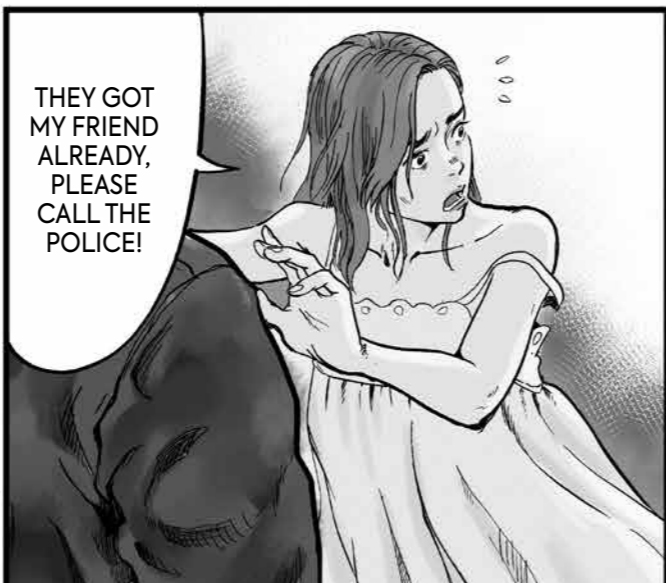


N-NO!

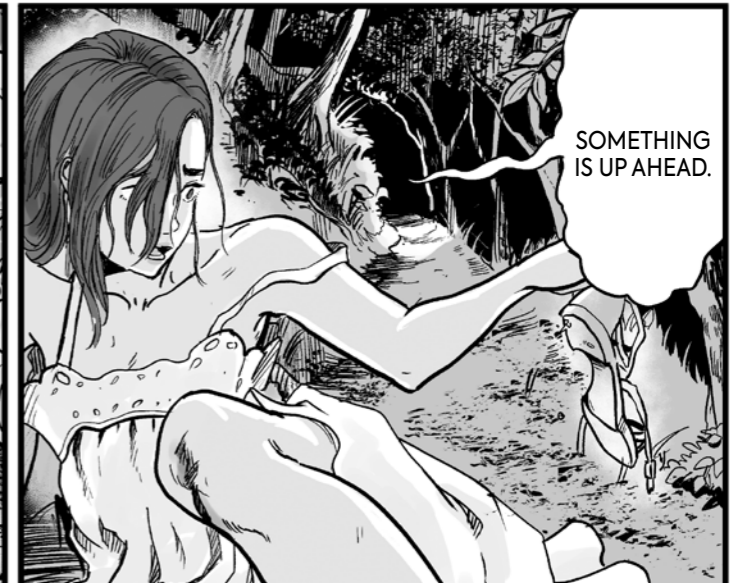
I DON'T WANT TO DIE HERE!



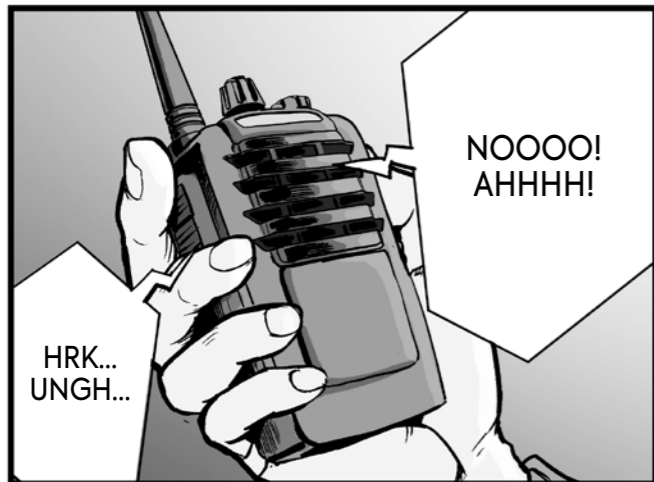
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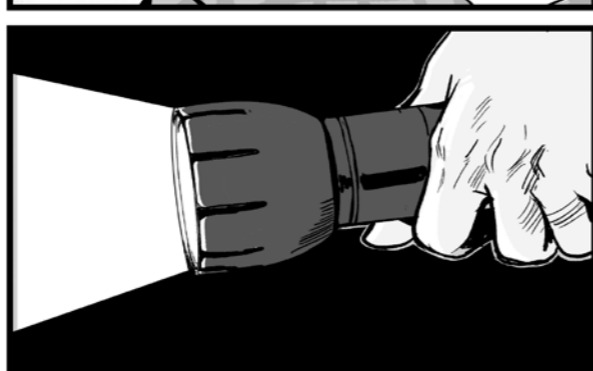
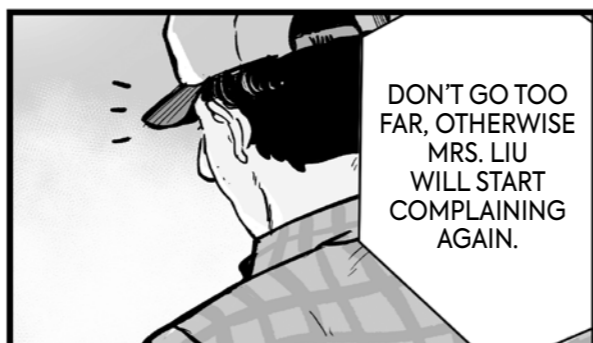
THEY GOT MY FRIEND ALREADY, PLEASE CALL THE POLICE!



SOMETHING IS UP AHEAD.



NOOOO!
AHHHH!





HUH?

NO. SOMETHING JUST FEELS OFF, THAT'S ALL.

DO YOU SEE HER?



AT LEAST WE CAN HAVE THIS ONE TO OURSELVES. THIS IS EXHAUSTING.

SHUT UP, I KNOW.



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THERE ARE TONS OF SCARECROWS AROUND HERE.

FOCUS, DAMMIT. WE NEED TO FIND HER.

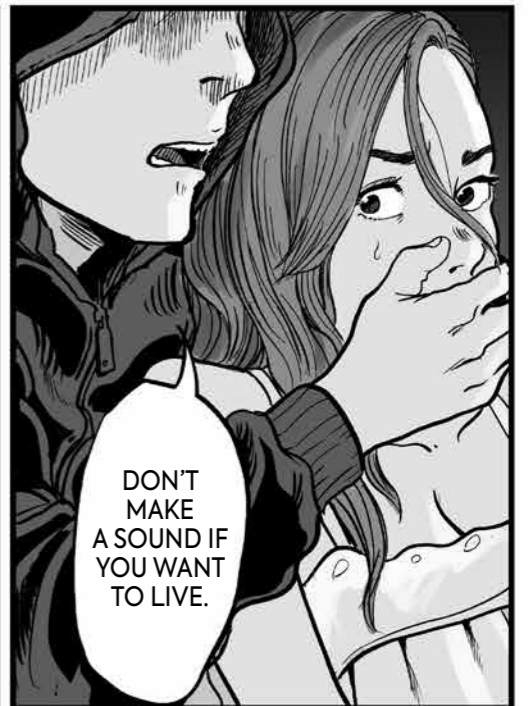
IS THERE ALWAYS A SCARECROW HERE?



C'MON!



WHAT IS IT?



DON'T MAKE A SOUND IF YOU WANT TO LIVE.