



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

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Published by Taiwan Creative Content Agency (TAICCA)

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Cover Illustration | © Chen Pei-Hsiu (Published originally under the title *Still Young, Still New* by Viking International Co., Ltd., 2022)

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Issue | Children's Books, 2022

Publication Date | December 31, 2022

ISSN | 2410-0781

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About Taiwan Creative Content Agency

With a diverse, open-minded culture, and freedom of speech, Taiwan encourages and inspires creators to develop innovative content. Taiwan also possesses an all-embracing culture, boasting a uniquely diverse history and a multicultural heritage, fostering a liberal, progressive, and stable society. As a global leader in the semiconductor industry, Taiwan has a mature, government-supported technological ecosystem that incubates innovative future content and allows local businesses to better connect with the globe. Balancing distinct cultural traditions and cutting-edge technology, Taiwan is ideal for innovators seeking to unleash their creativity.

Established in 2019 by the Ministry of Culture, the Taiwan Creative Content Agency (TAICCA) supports the development of Taiwan's creative content industry (CCI) such as film and television, future content, publishing, pop music, animation, gaming, performing arts, and visual arts by engaging in production, distribution, overseas market expansion, branding, talent cultivation, industrial research, and more. We promote innovative growth in the creative content economy.

About Books from Taiwan

Books from Taiwan is an initiative funded by TAICCA (Taiwan Creative Content Agency) to introduce a select list of Taiwan publishing titles, ranging from fiction, non-fiction, children's books, and comic books, to foreign publishers and readers alike.

You can find information about authors and books, along with who to contact in order to license translation rights, and the related resources about the Grant for the Publication of Taiwanese Works in Translation (GPT), sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of Taiwan.

Grant for the Publication of Taiwanese Works in Translation (GPT)

Ministry of Culture,
Republic of China
[Taiwan]

GPT is set up by The Ministry of Culture to encourage the publication of Taiwanese works in translation overseas, to raise the international visibility of Taiwanese cultural content, and to help Taiwan's publishing industry expand into non-Chinese international markets.

- Applicant Eligibility: Foreign publishing houses (legal persons) legally registered in accordance with the laws and regulations of their respective countries.
- Conditions:
 1. The so-called Taiwanese works must meet the following requirements:
 - A. Use traditional characters;
 - B. Written by a natural person holding an R.O.C. identity card;
 - C. Has been assigned an ISBN in Taiwan.

i.e., the author is a native of Taiwan, and the first 6 digits of the book's ISBN are 978-957-XXX-XXX-X, 978-986-XXX-XXX-X, or 978-626-XXX-XXX-X.

2. Applications must include documents certifying that the copyright holder of the Taiwanese works consents to its translation and foreign publication (no restriction on its format).
3. A translation sample of the Taiwanese work is required (no restriction on its format and length).
4. The translated work must be published within two years, after the first day of the relevant application period.

- Grant Items:

1. The maximum grant available for each project is NT\$600,000, which covers:
 - A. Licensing fees (going to the copyright holder of the Taiwanese works);
 - B. Translation fees;
 - C. Marketing and promotion fees (limited to economy class air tickets for the R.O.C. writer to participate in overseas promotional activities related to the project);
 - D. Book production-oriented fees;
 - E. Tax (20% of the total award amount);
 - F. Remittance-related handling fees.
 2. Priority consideration is given to books that have received the Golden Tripod Award, the Golden Comic Award, or the Taiwan Literature Award.
- Application Period: Twice every year, from April 1 to April 30, and from October 1 to October 31. The MOC reserves the right to change the application periods, and will announce said changes separately.
 - Announcement of successful applications: Winners will be announced within three months of the end of the application period.
 - Application Method: Please visit the Ministry's official website (https://grants.moc.gov.tw/Web_ENG/), and use the online application system.

For full details, please visit: https://grants.moc.gov.tw/Web_ENG/

Or contact: books@moc.gov.tw

HIDE AND SEEK: THE SEARCH FOR 捉迷藏

*** Illustrations from this picture book were featured in the 2022 Bologna Illustrators Exhibition**

Two naturalists over a hundred years apart both scoured the deep forests of Taiwan in search of a mysterious creature: the Formosan clouded leopard.

The Formosan clouded leopard is considered a sacred animal by some indigenous Taiwanese cultures. However, the leopards are rarely seen and little trace of them remains. In 1856, a British diplomat and naturalist called Robert Swinhoe arrived in Taiwan, but he left without seeing a live clouded leopard despite years of searching. Over a hundred years later, ecological researcher Chiang Po-jen was intrigued by the Formosan clouded leopard and has devoted his life to finding one. Are the leopards still out there, hidden deep in the Taiwanese mountains?

Working with the National Taiwan Museum, Page Tsou brings his artistic vision to the nature findings and the once prominent but now extinct Formosan clouded leopard. Open this picture book and join the naturalists on a journey spanning more than a century as they search for the legendary clouded leopard.



Page Tsou 鄒駿昇

Born and raised in Taichung, Page Tsou is a picture book illustrator, visual artist, and art curator. He graduated from the Royal College of Art in London and is currently the art director of Auspicious Studio. He is also the curator of Visual Taipei and the Taiwan Pavilion at the Bologna Children's Book Fair and Frankfurt Book Fair.

His artwork has been featured in the Bologna Illustrators Exhibition five times, and he has won many prizes including the International Award for Illustration (awarded by Fundación SM, part of Spanish publisher Grupo SM), as well as a special mention for the Bologna Ragazzi Award and best of show at the 3x3 International Illustration Awards.

THE FORMOSAN CLOUDED LEOPARD



- **Category:** Picture book
- **Publisher:** National Taiwan Museum
- **Date:** 3/2022
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 36
- **Size:** 25 x 28 cm
- **Age:** 4+
- **Material:** Full English translation

A Long, Unrequited Search

Written by Ping Chang

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

A lot of stories begin with some kind of pursuit, whether it's trying to find a lost manuscript, a missing person, or a lingering memory. If there's any single place where the most numerous, meaningful, and profound pursuits are all collected, it's undoubtedly a museum.

Page Tsou is an artist who frequently wins international awards and whose work has been selected five times for the Bologna Illustrators Exhibition. He is also a huge fan of museums. The mechanical factory in his hometown made him particularly fond of the precision and rationality behind machinery, and he believes that museums are similarly specialized, conscientious places. However, when he received an invitation from the National Taiwan Museum to create a picture book on the theme of Formosan clouded leopards, Tsou was faced with a stack of cryptic, stilted historical documents that gave him a huge headache.

"My works tend to be quite different from those of other illustrators, as I often branch out into different fields and draw on other art forms as well," says Tsou. Living as a graphic designer, illustrator, curator, and even an interior designer, he's extremely familiar with business language and knows exactly what the market likes, but picture books are different. He sees creating picture books as a kind of fate, so he only wants to work on projects that he finds interesting and feels strongly about.

"You can easily find information about Formosan clouded leopards on the internet. What I wanted to do was give the reader something

that sparked their interest."

Just as Tsou was getting worried, a member of staff at the museum introduced him to a painting of the leopard and uttered a sentence which touched him deeply. In that moment, Tsou immediately knew: "This is the story I want to draw."

"Although the Formosan clouded leopard hasn't been found, it still lives on in paintings."

The Formosan clouded leopard, which belonged to the same big-cat family as tigers and lions, was Taiwan's largest and most ferocious wild animal but it typically stayed hidden in the forest, and its image as a brave, mysterious animal has made it a sacred symbol in some indigenous cultures.

A staff member at the museum showed Tsou a scientific illustration of the leopard by Robert Swinhoe, a British diplomat who was stationed in Taiwan during the nineteenth century. Swinhoe was a naturalist as well as a diplomat, and during his tenure he discovered and recorded a large number of local Taiwanese species. He longed to find a Formosan clouded leopard but it continued to elude him, so he had no choice but to entrust someone to draw this illustration according to the fur he collected.

More than a hundred years later, an employee at a technology company called Chiang Po-jen happened to see an adventive leopard at the zoo and joined the ranks of those who were actively looking for the animal in the wild. Even with the help of his modern

technology, humans still haven't been able to see the leopards with their own eyes.

The two men might have been from different eras, but it was the same pursuit and the same failure. However, in Tsou's eyes none of it was in vain. Instead, it created a dramatic "needle in a haystack" search that spanned multiple time periods which added a romantic sense of destiny to the serious subject matter. Tsou took the Formosan clouded leopard as the main basis of the book and then used the two failed pursuits as parallel stories, which was how he managed to pull an emotional core out of the cold historical data.

Although the Formosan clouded leopard hasn't revealed itself in real life or in the picture book, Tsou transformed the sense of regret into hope by using an absent protagonist to create space for imagination and bring a stagnant period of history to life, sparking the reader's curiosity and getting them to contemplate it in a way that may even spur them into action.

Tsou's Rationality for Planting Easter Eggs

In addition to his unique perspectives, the main thing that makes international brands like Gucci, Disney, Michelin Guides, etc. line up to work with Tsou is his meticulous and undeniably exquisite illustration style.

In this book, the game of hide and seek doesn't just relate to the concept of finding the leopard but is also part of the reading process itself. From the black and white photos of the restored museum exhibits and the feathers of the bird specimens inside, to the design of the locks on the windows and the structure of the buildings and vehicles, his paintings are almost like precision scanners where every detail is so realistic that you feel like you're in the scene, while the nostalgic tones and brushstrokes add an enchanting sense of mystery.

"I like to include Easter Eggs in my work where I hide messages in the picture that can be understood without being explained," says Tsou.

It is hard for readers to look at his books and

illustrations only once. He uses so many details to build such vivid worlds in each of his illustrations that readers keep coming back to the same images again and again because they want to play detective by comparing the different pages and worlds to try and decipher the hidden clues in the pictures.

Tsou was in constant contact with the team at the museum during the revision process to ensure that the information in the book was still accurate when he changed certain details for plot purposes. For example, it would actually be impossible to have a transmission tower on the mountain where the camera is installed, but it was important for visual flow to have these man-made constructions gradually appear in the lush mountain forests. Meticulous design like this allows the reader to discover the real reason that the leopard disappeared for themselves without explicitly stating it: mankind.

Using Hide-and-Seek to Convey a Larger Message

Although the book tells the story of a species losing its habitat due to human exploitation, Tsou didn't want it to be too on the nose. Instead, he chose a game that people of all ages and nationalities could understand so the story's universal message could be conveyed in a way that children could genuinely enjoy.

"It's a local issue, but really it's a global problem," says Tsou.

The moment when the staff member at the museum told him that the leopard "lives on in paintings" was a creative spark for Tsou. In turn, Tsou might not have expected that his picture book would come to play the same role as the original scientific illustration: that by using a paint brush to capture the legend and elegance of the Formosan clouded leopard, he has inspired people to keep searching.

Maybe one day, this endless game of hide-and-seek will eventually end in a surprising grand finale. After all, what could be more haunting than unfinished business?



As well as being a diplomat, Swinhoe was also a naturalist. He had a keen interest in the natural world and human activity in Taiwan.



He frequently observed this land silently from a distance looking for interesting things.



1/2 1/16 fall



my dear Sir,
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THE IBIS, MAGAZINE OF GENERAL ORNITHOLOGY.

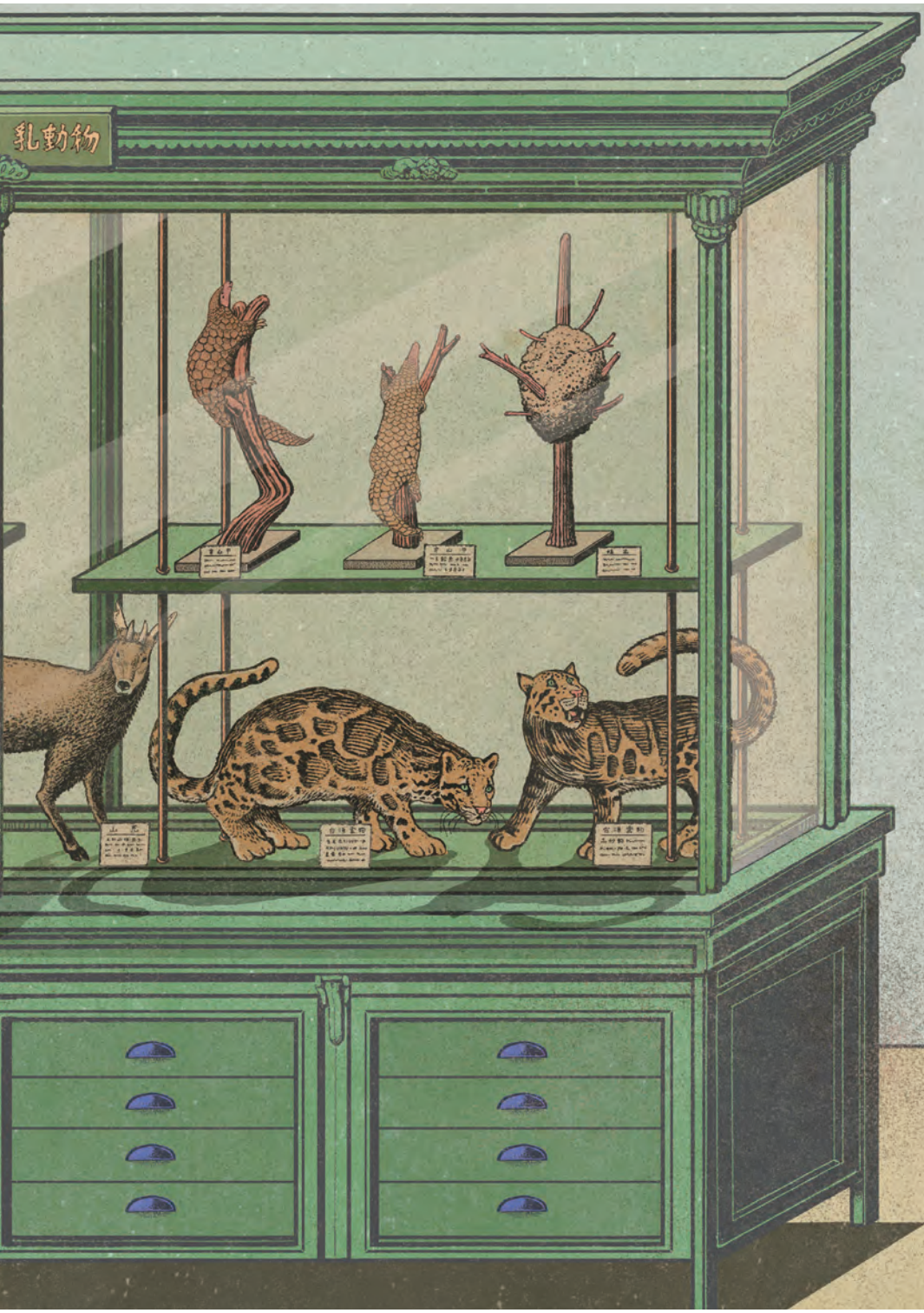
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 HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON;
 FELLOW OF THE LINNEAN SOCIETY; HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL
 SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA, OF THE LYCEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY OF NEW YORK,



Several decades later, the Japanese prepared beautiful specimens of the animals that Swinhoe had seen, and some he had not seen, in the mountain forests, and these later became a precious collection of the National Taiwan Museum.



動物標本







From then on, searching for a Formosan clouded leopard became his mission in life, and going in and out of the mountain forests became his daily routine.

STILL YOUNG, STILL NEW

他們的眼睛

Children are born with fresh eyes. Their vision is sharper, their perspectives are clearer, and everything is brand new. When you explore the world through their eyes, even the oldest thing in the universe can seem like it's brand new.

What does it mean to be old or young? Children might seem young to adults, but to a 150-year-old sea turtle even the oldest humans seem young. And when you think about the mountains, the ocean, the planet, and the universe, then you add a whole new dimension to the idea of old and young.

With Higo Wu's poetic text and Chen Pei-Hsiu's inspired illustrations, *Still Young, Still New* encourages the reader to rediscover the world with fresh eyes. It captures the joy of being alive and learning through experience, as well as the importance of staying curious about the world no matter how old you are.



Text by Higo Wu 海狗房東

A picture book critic, translator, and writer, Higo Wu also runs a popular podcast about picture books. Many of his works have been recommended by the Taipei Public Library's Award-Winning Children's Books campaign, including his picture book *The Blooming Jizo* which won the 2018 Children's Book of the Year.



Illustrated by Chen Pei-Hsiu 陳沛琄

Chen Pei-Hsiu was previously an archaeological illustrator at the Academia Sinica before going freelance, and her illustrations have been published in magazines, newspapers, and picture books. She has been shortlisted twice for the Prize for Young Talent at the Angoulême International Comics Festival, as well as twice at 3x3 International Illustration Awards. Her graphic novel *For the Time Being* has been published in French.



- **Category:** Picture book
- **Publisher:** Viking
- **Date:** 4/2022
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 40
- **Size:** 23 x 16.4 cm
- **Age:** 4+
- **Material:** Full English translation

Recreating a Child's Perspective

Written by Rena Tsung (Editor of *Still Young, Still New*)

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

We tend to forget a lot of things as we grow up. We forget how something sugary was often all it took to make us happy, or how overjoyed we felt when we found a four-leaf clover. Our eyes no longer have that pure way of looking at the world, instead we see things through a veil of maturity and the weight of everything we've seen. While children might have limited life experience, the clarity with which they see things and their observational approach to life mean that their eyes can shine with genuine excitement. For those of us adults who have long since lost that childlike innocence and forgotten to hold onto our old passions and aspirations, we envy their untainted happiness and yearn for that fearless simplicity. It reminds us to "live like a child" and how learning from that childhood innocence could lead us to different choices and life experiences.

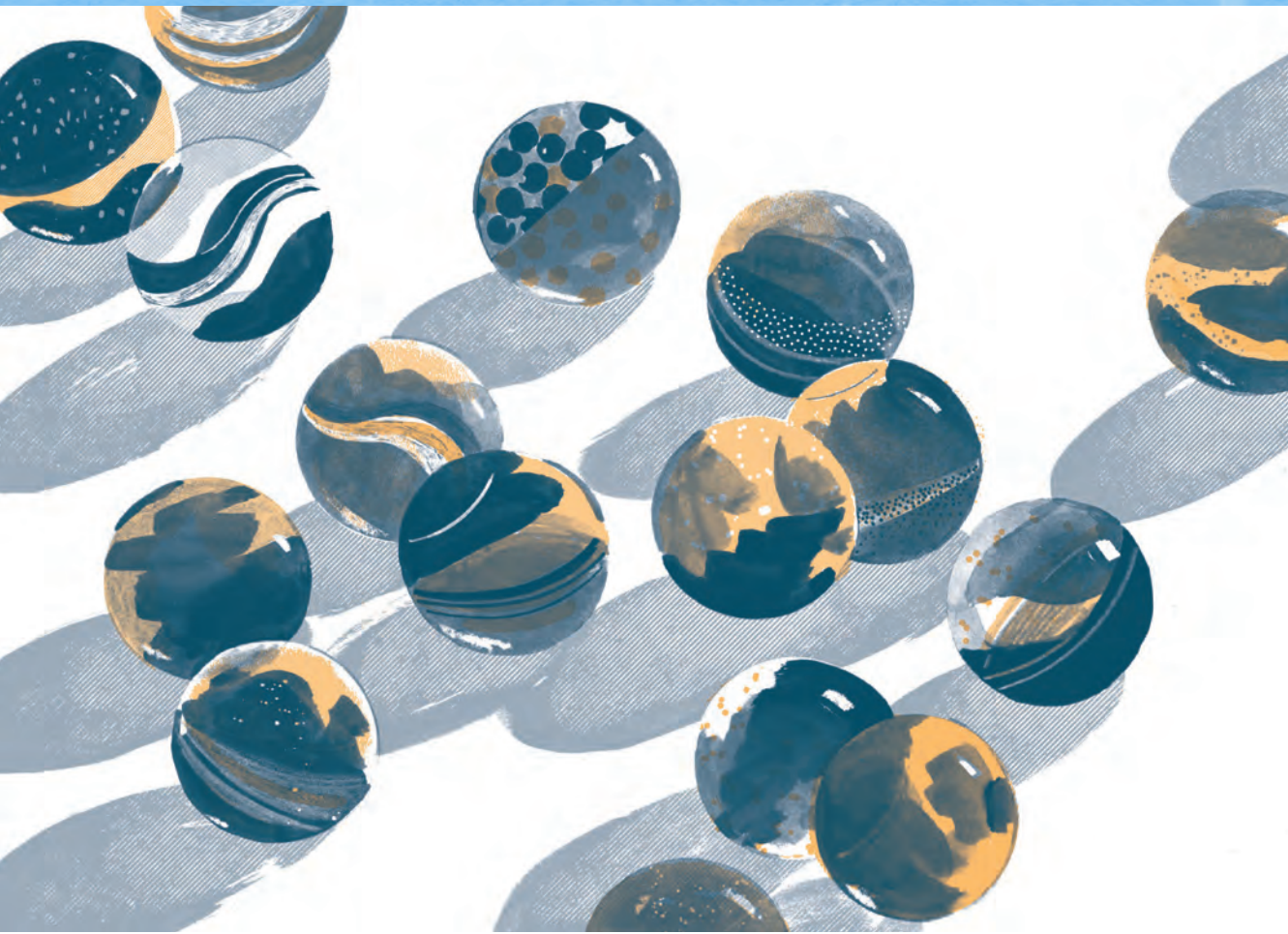
Higo Wu and Chen Pei-Hsiu are two creators from very different fields who came together to collaborate on *Still Young, Still New*, a picture book that lets readers contemplate different points of view on a deeper level.

Wu's words give us a sense of how we can view ourselves and others so that rather than just drawing blind comparisons, we know that the way we see the world and the way we face ourselves are far more important. Not being

easily satisfied is human nature and perhaps that's what urges us to strive towards progress, but we can't ignore the significance of grasping the moment and cherishing every second of life. Even within the same job, different people achieve different results and a lot of it comes down to our behavior and the mindset we bring to the table. If we let ourselves hold onto a learning-based mentality filled with curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, then the person we are today can be even better than the person we were yesterday, and we'll stay on the path to eternal youth rather than being shackled to the numbers on our identity cards.

Chen's illustrations lead us into a virtual world that blends imagination with reality. The world she creates through her pictures captures different life stages and learning experiences, showing us common items from childhood and scenes from various phases of life, so that as we work our way through them, we rediscover the beautiful memories we've forgotten and each of us can reawaken our own inner child.

The journey of life has never been an easy topic in the same way that life itself isn't easy. The book uses a method that imitates silk screen printing, a traditional Chinese folk art which uses one light and one dark color,



here yellow is overlaid onto a specific shade of blue. The illustrator uses this blue in an intuitive way that makes large parts of the pictures seem slightly impenetrable, as though the reader is a child coming across something new for the first time, while the yellow lines and brush strokes help give a sense of liberation and hope. If Chen had only used blue then the scenes would all have been too dark and heavy, or if she had only used yellow then the images would have felt vague and superficial, but together I think she captures the feeling of what it's like to be alive and learn through experience.

Life is packed with all kinds of highs and

lows, it's a journey filled with uncertainties but that's also what makes it an adventure. It won't be plain sailing, but the most important thing is to stay childlike at heart and hold onto our curiosity to explore new things. We need this kind of courage and ambition to allow ourselves to keep our childlike mindset as we face life's various difficulties and challenges, giving ourselves the freedom to reflect on our setbacks and accept our own shortcomings so that we can appreciate the joy and importance of staying curious about the world.

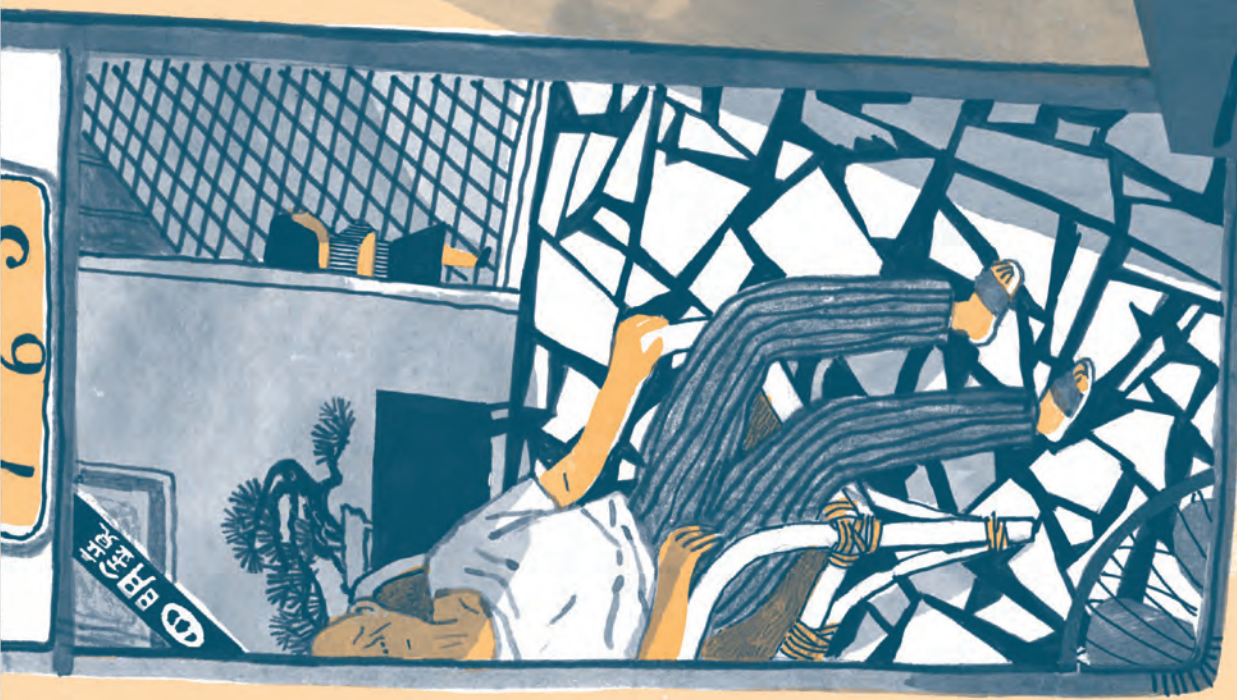
**To adults
children are young.**



**To the elderly
adults are young.**



**To turtles
the elderly are young.**



SECRETS AT THE ZOO

動物園的祕密

One of the wolves is missing! And now one of the birds has gone too! Is there a monster hiding somewhere inside the zoo? A little boy's trip to the zoo becomes even more exciting than he could possibly have imagined.

Hong Hsiao-mao is very excited about his trip to the zoo, and his first stop is the wolf enclosure. He counts one, two, three, four wolves inside the fence. But in the blink of an eye, there are only three left! Where did the other one go? Hsiao-mao can't help feeling like there's someone following him. Things get scarier still when he counts and recounts the birds in the aviary and finds one missing, and then he sees a paw print on the ground. Could there be an animal-eating monster at the zoo?

Huang Yi-Wen's vibrant story captures an exciting adventure at the zoo. With an open mind and a vivid imagination, the mystery could even be the start of a new friendship.



Huang Yi-Wen 黃一文

Huang Yi-Wen is a freelance illustrator and author of picture books. She has devoted herself to the craft of storytelling since attending a picture book workshop by Liu Hsu-Kung in 2018. With a knack for mixed media, Yi-Wen creates books she hopes will appeal to children and adults alike.

She is the recipient of a Golden Tripod Award as well as the 2022 Openbook Book in the children's book category. Her works were selected for display at the 2021 and 2022 Bologna Illustrators Exhibition. Her publications include *Secrets at the Zoo*, and *Once Upon a Time a Train Came to the Island*.



- **Category:** Picture book
- **Publisher:** Yuan-Liou
- **Date:** 11/2021
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 40
- **Size:** 30 x 21 cm
- **Age:** 3+
- **Material:** Full English translation
- **Rights sold:** Korean (Little Starfield)

Sketching Animals from Life

Written by Huang Yi-Wen

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

When I go to the zoo to sketch, my eyes and hands are focused on watching and drawing the animals, but my ears often pick up on the conversations of the tourists around me. Something I find interesting is that parents who are there with their children often ask, "how many animals are there?" and the child looks around and counts at the same time. Is that an animal hiding in a cave or climbing up a tree? Is that a tail swaying in the shadows or just some undergrowth that's caught in the wind?

Once, I was sat in front of the flamingo area for a long time and heard several families play the "count the animals" game, but in the end no two families came up with the same number. Why? In reality, there might have been some animals hidden among the others, but in the world of storytelling I thought maybe it could be magic, so I imagined an animal who secretly darted in and out, sneaking up on the crowd and watching their every move. Wouldn't that be a lot of fun? The tourists at the zoo are all so focused on the animals in the enclosures even though there's actually an animal much closer to them on their side of the fence.

Although it would be faster and more convenient to take photos, I prefer to go to the zoo with my paintbrush to capture the scenes in front of me. Painting might not be as realistic as a photograph, but I feel it's better

at conveying the subjective way we perceive things. It's that moment when we see an object and it stirs something within us that makes us want to paint. The pure happiness of that feeling reminds me of the joy I experienced as a child when I saw animals for the first time. For children, the rich diversity of the animal kingdom can spark all kinds of questions and curiosity. It can also stop children in their tracks and make them observe things with care, so in the story I had the child embark on a fantastical journey to discover the animal behind him.

There is a quote from *The Little Prince* which says: "It is only in the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." This line reminds me of how I selfishly hope that people never get tired of visiting the zoo and that it's a place where they can keep discovering new things.

Creating picture books can be like running a marathon but I never felt lonely because even though the road was long, I had help from lots of people along the way. I'm grateful to my creative illustration teacher and mentor Liu Hsu-Kung for his guidance in the early days that helped my fragment of an idea gradually become a finished book. In 2020, my story was fortunate enough to receive a Picture Book Sprouting Award from the Kaohsiung Public Library, and with the help and support from the team I was able to work freely on it. At



the same time, I would also like to thank my guidance professor on the Sprouting program, Shih Ching-ting, whose words I would often think of whenever I was struggling with a draft: "Don't worry if your painting isn't very good, just get it down on paper, and we can talk about it afterwards." Those words gave me the confidence to keep trying. Finally, a special thank you to the editorial team at Yuan-

Liou Publishing Co. Ltd. who ensured that the publication process went smoothly. I am grateful for their perseverance and professional input on the words and illustrations, as well as for their patience in our many conversations which helped ensure that readers would get to enjoy the best possible version of *Secrets at the Zoo*.

**“Hurray! Tomorrow I’ll see the elephants!”
Hong Hsiao-mao was too excited to sleep.**



**The next day, he put on his red cap,
and went to the zoo with his parents.**

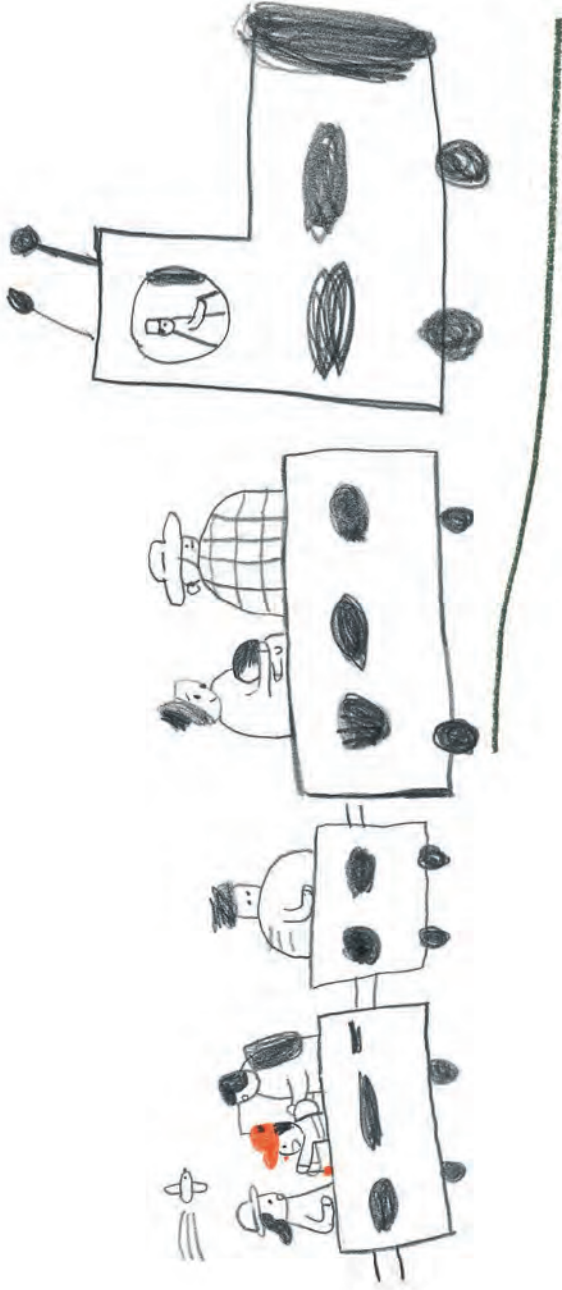


The zoo was busy.

Mum said:







Hong Hsiao-mao was keen to see the elephants.
But, to avoid the crowd,
they took the visitor train to a quieter part of the zoo.

First stop: the family of grey wolves.



How many
can you see?

1, 2, 3, 4

DANGER

WHO'S IN THE FRIDGE? 是誰在冰箱啊

It's midnight. A little boy sneaks out of bed to find something to eat but when he gets to the kitchen, he finds an unexpected friend sitting inside the fridge. Will he get his snack? Or will he get caught?

A little boy sneaks to the kitchen for a late-night snack. When he opens the fridge, there's a huge polar bear sitting there holding an apple! Is it a dream or maybe he's sleepwalking? What's the polar bear doing there? And what's it doing with the apple? Welcome to the little boy's midnight adventure to the fridge.

Severus Lian uses bright colors and the characters' animated facial expressions to tell a fun, imaginative story. A giant fridge has plenty of room for food, so who knows maybe someone could be hiding in there too?



Severus Lian 里恩太太

Severus Lian graduated from Cambridge School of Art in 2020 and currently works as a freelance illustrator in Taipei. She likes to convey a sense of humor by using vibrant colors and lively line drawings. Her work was shortlisted for the 2020 World Illustration Award and was highly commended by both the Macmillan Prize and the 3x3 Illustration Award. She is also the winner of the 2019 Batsford Prize.

是誰在冰箱啊？

圖·文 里思太太



- **Category:** Picture book
- **Publisher:** KIDO Family Time
- **Date:** 4/2022
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 28
- **Size:** 21 x 26 cm
- **Age:** 3+
- **Material:** Full English translation

A Fun-Filled Story Packed with Surprises

Written by Wu Jia-Lian

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

What's in your fridge? By phrasing the title as a question, *Who's in the Fridge?* tells the reader right from the get-go that there isn't just food in this refrigerator! Who could possibly be hiding in there? Readers who have picked up the book are probably just as confused as the little boy on the cover. However, as soon as they turn the page, the midnight adventure of opening the fridge starts to unfold!

A Story Written from a Child's Perspective

The earliest version of the story for *Who's in the Fridge?* started to take shape around the time that author-illustrator Severus Lian was in high school, but the concept was based on her real childhood experience of sneaking to the fridge in the middle of the night. Could she make it to the fridge without being discovered? Who would she meet along the way? And what magical creatures would be waiting for her in the fridge? *Who's in the Fridge?* combines the thrill of not knowing if you'll be discovered and the anticipation of not knowing what's waiting for you in the fridge, which creates a story that the reader can participate in wholeheartedly from start to finish.

Lian has always loved to draw and was inspired to study illustration by Gaston Klein who was her art teacher while she was on

exchange at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. From there, she set foot on the path to creating picture books and has never looked back. When it comes to material for her illustrations, Lian likes to combine different themes and try a range of artistic mediums. She is an expert in zany humor and taps into the little details and fun of everyday life. While she was creating *Who's in the Fridge?*, Lian held onto the childish innocence of her original concept and deliberately set up lots of scenes that young children could interact with so that they don't just enjoy the story but also open each page and find it filled with fun surprises.

Paying Attention to the Humor in Everything

Who's in the Fridge? tells the magical story of a little boy who sneaks out in the middle of the night to steal pudding but when he opens the fridge, he's shocked to find that it contains a seal and a polar bear. The story begins by announcing one rule: you shouldn't go to the fridge after 10 pm. However, the protagonist has already broken that rule on the title page by tiptoeing to open the kitchen door and starting the chain of events. The text uses different colors to distinguish between the characters which makes things



clear on first glance and also lets the reader naturally immerse themselves in the plot and illustrations without being distracted by the narration.

At first glance, *Who's in the Fridge?* is a happy, light-hearted story but it cleverly changes tone into a narrative about protecting the environment and caring for animals. The seal and polar bear eventually escape without a hitch but the happy ending also leaves the reader with a sense of suspense. We might ask young readers: why are the animals hiding in the fridge? Since the earth's environment is becoming more extreme and the animals don't have a home or enough to eat, where will they go when they leave the fridge? The author takes the fun, humorous story and ingeniously weaves this mindset of caring for living things in amongst the pages.

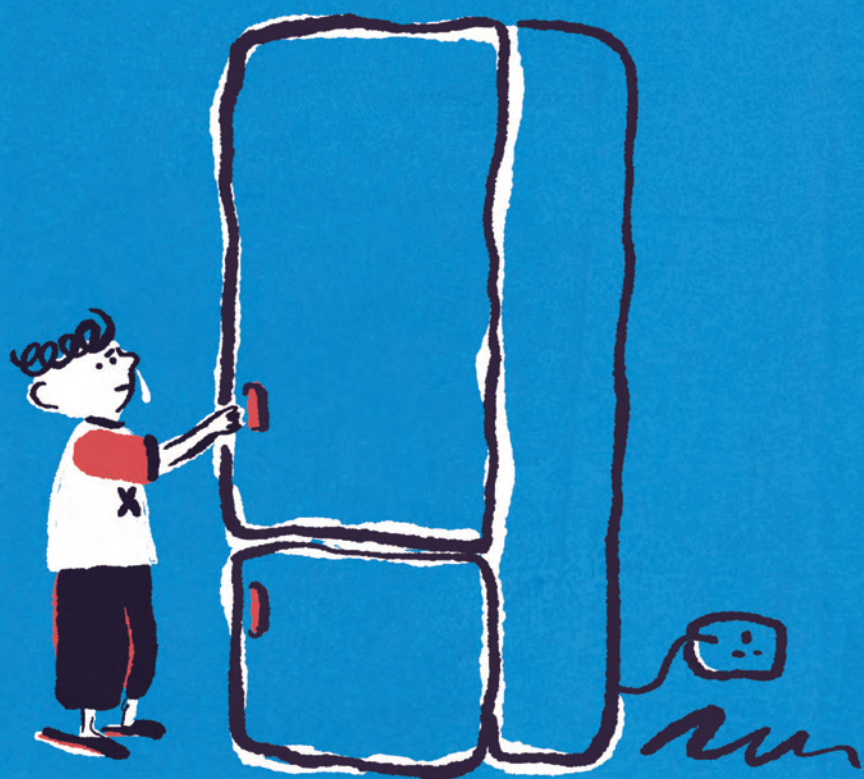
Spreading Laughter Across the World Through a Picture Book

Lian has created a vivid and hilarious story by combining a simple concept with freeform line drawings and snapshots that feel as though they're brimming with rhythm. Although *Who's in the Fridge?* is written by a Taiwanese author-illustrator, the subject matter isn't hindered by national boundaries as most households across the world have a refrigerator and the story closely corresponds with children's mindsets. Lian believes that the book can successfully cross language and cultural barriers to be a hit with readers around the world.



Aagh! There's a polar bear in my fridge!

Aagh! A boy just found me in his fridge!



It can't be! I must be dreaming.

It can't be! I must be dreaming.



It's true! You really are in the fridge!

It's true! I am in the fridge!

THE MOON WANTS TO SLEEP

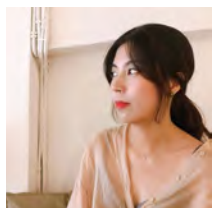
月亮想睡覺

* Winner of the 2018 Hsin-Yi Picture Book Award

The moon gets sleepy at night, but everywhere it goes, the others feel that it's too bright. Where can it find a place to sleep?

Every night, the moon lights up the sky. It guides life on earth into a deep sleep. *Yawn!* When the moon itself starts to get sleepy, it asks "May I sleep here too?" But its light is too bright, and the moon keeps getting rejected. What can the sleepy moon do? Can it find a place for a good night's sleep?

The Moon Wants to Sleep is a bedtime story about what the guardian of night gets up to between sunset and sunrise. Using only a pencil, Lin Ssu-Chen's black and white illustrations capture the gentle light of the moon in contrast with the darkness of the night. Join the moon on its sleepy nighttime journey to try and find the perfect spot for sweet dreams.



Lin Ssu-Chen 林思辰

A graduate of the Crafts and Design Department at National Taiwan University of Arts, Lin Ssu-Chen works as a freelance illustrator and children's art teacher. She has published several picture books, including *The Moon Wants to Sleep*, which won the Hsin-Yi Picture Book Award.



- **Category:** Picture book
- **Publisher:** Hsin-Yi
- **Date:** 4/2018
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 40
- **Size:** 16.5 x 22 cm
- **Age:** 3+
- **Material:** Full English translation

Granting a Midnight Wish

Written by Lin Ssu-Chen, Lesley Liu

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

Author-Illustrator Lin Ssu-Chen: Creating Beauty and Loneliness

I actually came up with the story for *The Moon Wants to Sleep* by chance after seeing a photograph. It was a picture of the moon looking big and round on a dark night, shining very brightly but in a way that seemed lonely and stirred something within me, so since then I'd wanted to write a story based on that image. Then, one night I was out walking my puppy beside the river when I saw the moon and suddenly thought, what if the moon was like a person and wanted to go to sleep at night in the same way everyone else does? That was how naturally the story came up.

The moon in the story is always hanging alone in the dark night sky, it wants to fall fast asleep at night like everyone else but that won't work because its light is just too bright against the darkness, in the same way that anyone who has ever experienced loneliness knows how it feels to look on enviously at the beauty and warmth of everyday life around them. By trying to be like everyone else, the moon ends up forgetting its own beauty and how even though sometimes the silence can be lonely, there's also a lot of beauty in that silence.

I chose to use charcoal and graphite pencils to create illustrations that were a blend of black, white, and gray. Since there were

no other colors, the possibilities between black and white felt endless and there was a gentleness to the shading which was perfect for portraying the soft halo of light around the moon.

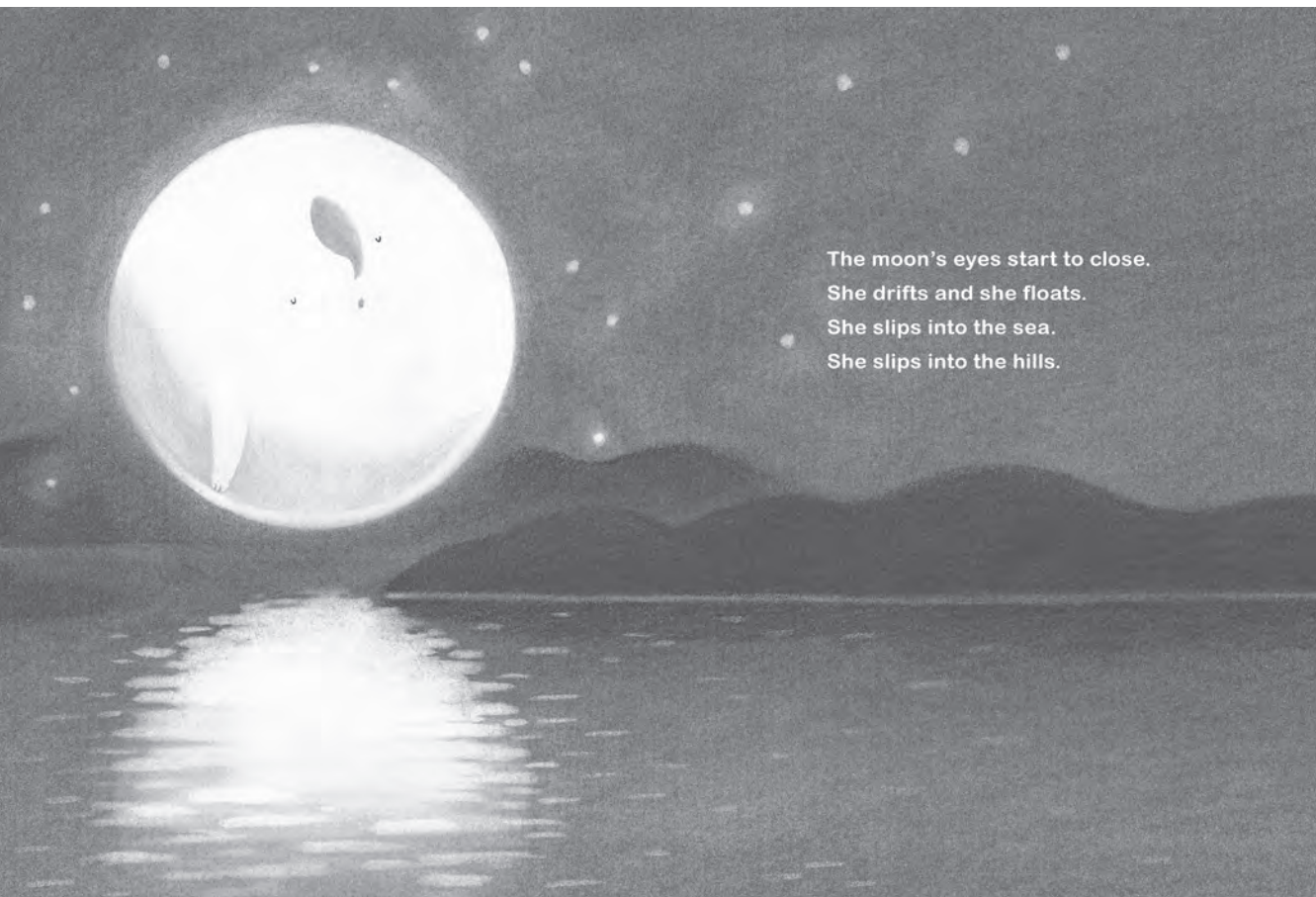
Judge and Author-Illustrator Lesley Liu: The Moon's Midnight Wish

"Moon, what's the matter with you? Isn't it time for you to go to work? Why do you want to sleep?"

Doesn't seeing these questions make you want to ask: "What's the moon doing out in broad daylight?"

When the sun is out during the day, the moon is in pitch darkness. Given that the moon's only friends are the millions of planets and stars who stay fast asleep all year round, what can the moon do during the day besides sleep? Could you imagine if you had to sleep until it was time for work, only to roll out of bed and look down on a cloud-filled sky to see that everyone else was already asleep? It makes total sense for the moon to want to sleep at night! It would even sleep better in the cold, solitary night sky bathed in a soft halo of light! The moon coming out can also symbolize being awake at night when you're tired and want to sleep, which could make this a good book for people suffering with insomnia.

For the book's illustrations, the image



The moon's eyes start to close.
She drifts and she floats.
She slips into the sea.
She slips into the hills.

design and composition are all well thought out and skillfully drawn. Although Lin Ssu-Chen only uses variations of black and white, the images still feel warm and the full moon is a soft, plump sphere which feels so cozy that the reader can imagine it snuggling in bed. Lin gives it just the right amount of expressiveness and has added a pair of hands which work well for dramatic purposes. Even better still, when we see the moon from behind as it scuttles between buildings in the city, we discover it has butt cheeks! Never underestimate the power of a single brushstroke! Children really love this kind of humor and it can leave them feeling happier and more relaxed. Believe me, that single brushstroke might just have

an influence on how they see the world. I'm someone who absolutely loved funny drawings as a child and that humor ended up shaping my personality to a certain extent.

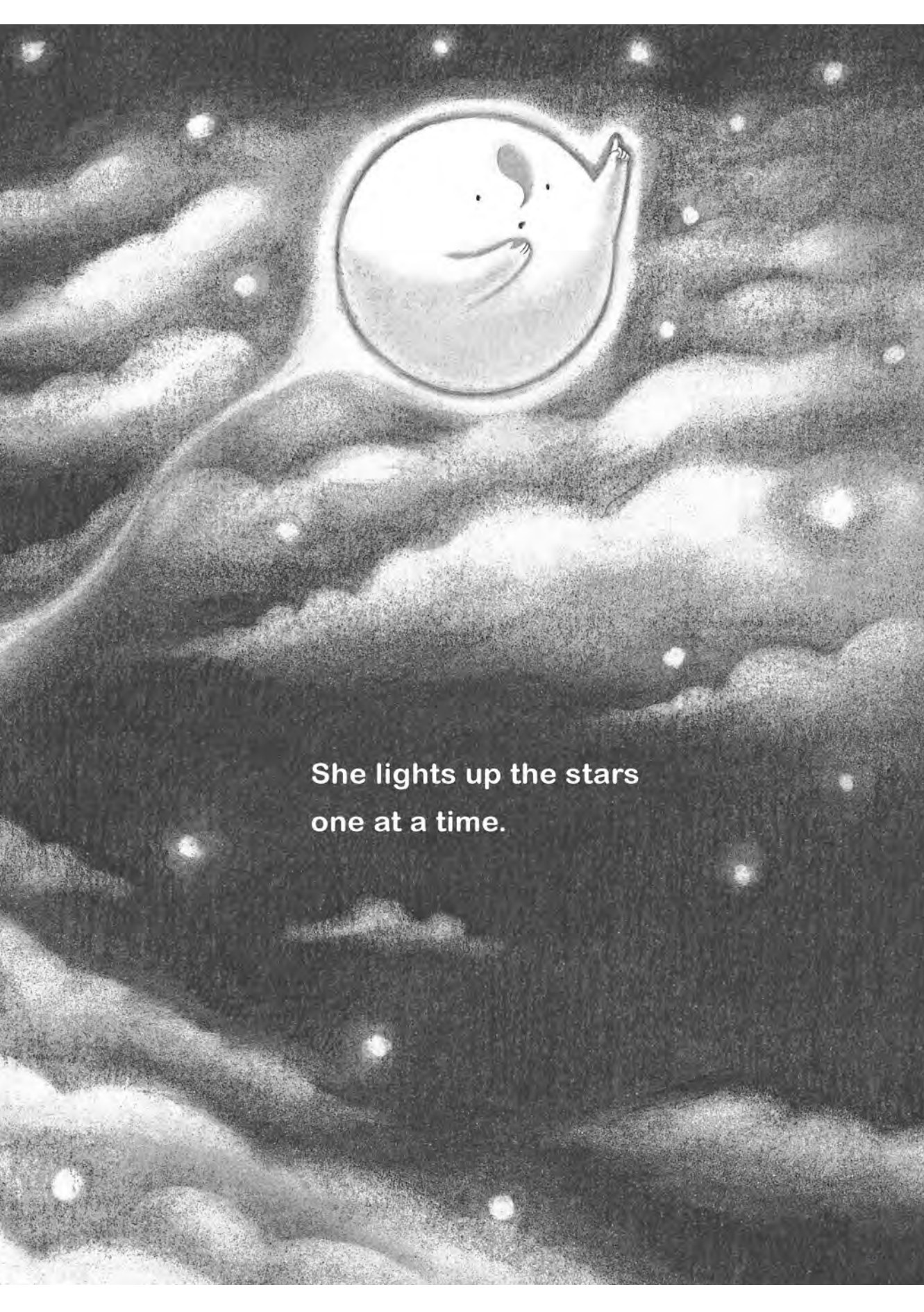
Doesn't the moon always seem aloof in a way that makes you want to approach but you don't want to disturb it? Lin's book captures this feeling too. Between the moonlight in the starry sky, the reflections in the water, the shadows and brilliant rays of light rendered solely in black and white, this is a rich picture book filled with a sense of anticipation that makes it a truly enchanting read.



**Tonight, as usual, the moon has to work.
As the sun goes down and the sky gets dark,
the moon slowly starts to rise.**







**She lights up the stars
one at a time.**





The night is long.

The moon starts to yawn.
She feels a little sleepy.

PRACTICING GOODBYE

再見的練習

- * The White Ravens 2022
- * 2022 Openbook Award
- * 2023 Taipei Book Fair Award

Bibi the dog has been missing for two years, leaving his owner with nothing but memories and regret. However, when he comes back, there's another farewell waiting on the horizon. Does experiencing it a second time help ease the pain of goodbye?

When Bibi goes missing on a windy day, his owner is desperate to find him at first but gradually gets used to days without him. For the owner, Bibi's smell and the old habit of going out for a walk fade away, but the memories and regrets remain. Is Bibi doing okay?

Two years later, Bibi comes back but something about him has changed. He gets tired easily and doesn't struggle in the bath in the same way he did before. It seems like another goodbye may be waiting ahead.

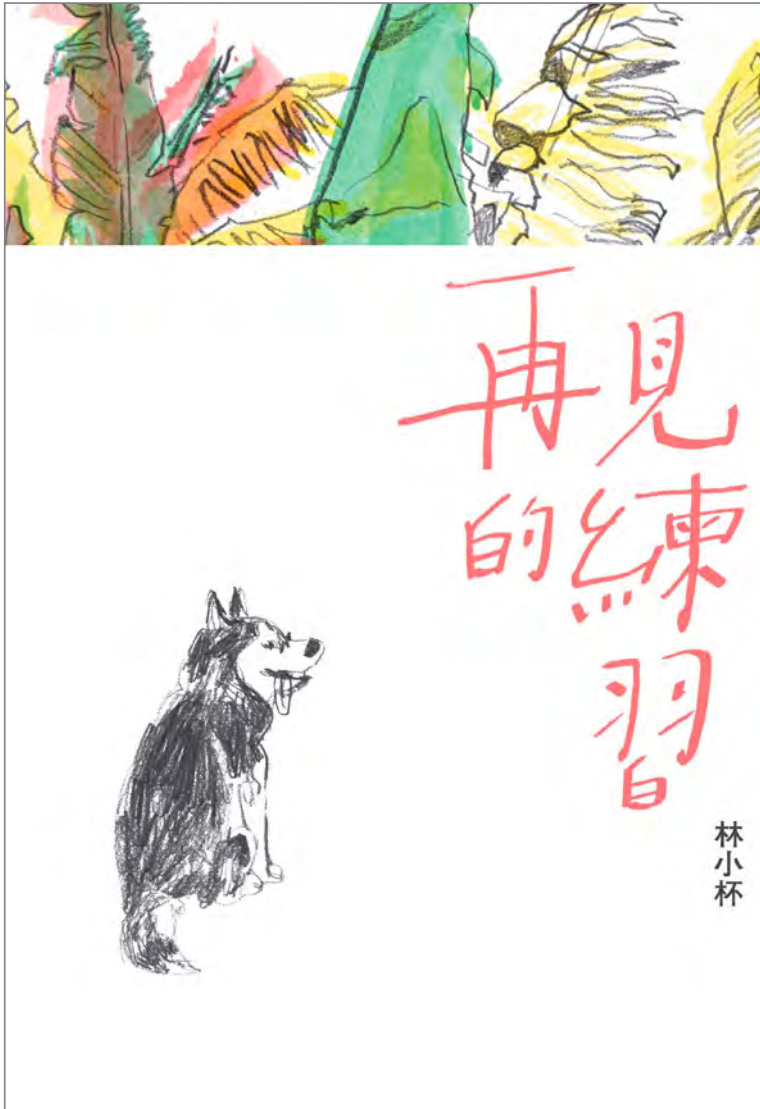
Saying goodbye, experiencing loss, and coming to terms with the resulting emotions are an unavoidable part of life. With tenderness, Bei Lynn tells a realistic story of loss and how practice can help build resilience. For both children and adults, *Practicing Goodbye* reminds the reader just how important a proper farewell can be.



Bei Lynn 林小杯

Bei Lynn is an award-winning author-illustrator who has created over 20 picture books, as well as short stories, magazines, and comics. Her works have received various honors and prizes, including the Hsin-Yi Picture Book Award, China Times Open Book Award, Taipei Public Library Best Children's Book, the Best Picture Book of Feng Zikai Award, Nami Concours Distinction (Korea), and Sankei Children's Book Award (Japan).

Bei Lynn loves to create stories that combine fantasy with real life, and her illustration style is joyous and eclectic. She also enjoys hosting storytelling sessions for children in all sorts of locations, whether it's at a theater or on a small bridge. Her works have been published in French, English, Korean, and Japanese, including *Nous, on va à l'école en dinosaures!* (French), *Bibbit Jumps* (English) and many more.



- **Category:** Graphic Novel
- **Publisher:** SiLóo
- **Date:** 12/2021
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 156
- **Size:** 16 x 23 cm
- **Age:** 10+
- **Material:** Full English translation
- **Rights sold:** Korean

The Art of Saying Farewell

Written by Bei Lynn

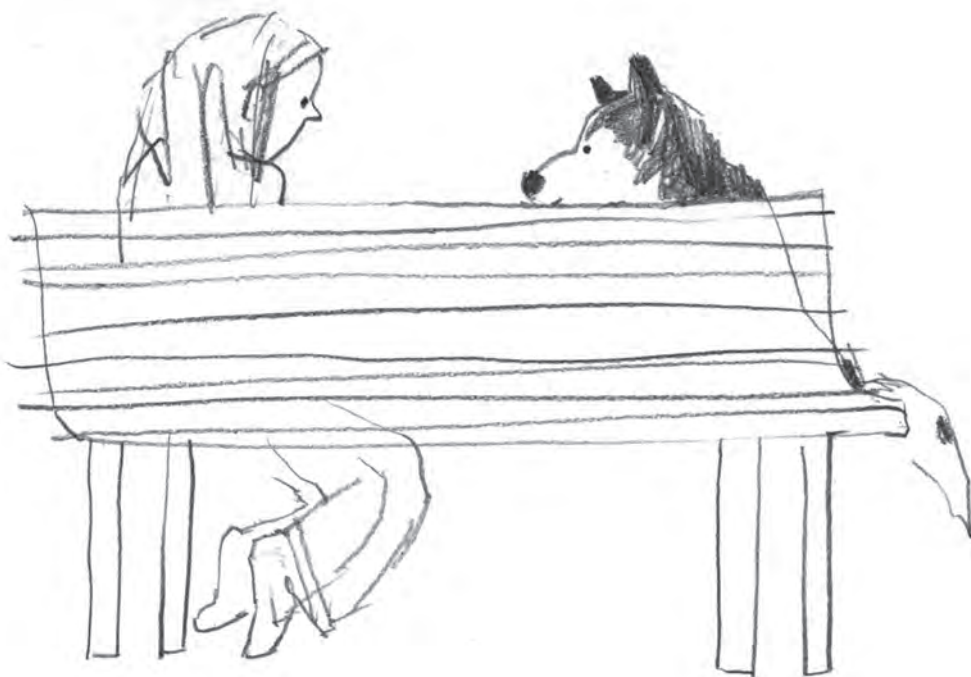
Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

There are so many different aspects and feelings involved in final farewells, so in *Practicing Goodbye* I wanted to tell the story of two experiences: one where there was no chance to say goodbye, and one where it was possible to say a proper farewell.

If separation is inevitable but there's no chance to say goodbye, even though over time we reframe our emotions and get used to the changes in our lives until eventually we just

hope that the other party is doing well, it can still weigh heavily on our hearts if we were the one left behind.

This is a story about a person and a dog called Bibi who are separated then reunited, as well as all the various feelings they experience along the way. Why do we feel such regret and how does it fade with time? And if you're lucky enough to be given a second chance to meet again and say a proper goodbye, you can turn



that regret into a journey and move forward with your life.

Often when I've got an idea and I'm creating a new story for it, I'll be immersed enough in it that I'll have a eureka moment with the characters where I suddenly realize something. In this story's case, I had a few scattered thoughts while I was writing and illustrating, but when everything came together I realized that the first time the characters separate would feel like a practice run. After they're reunited, if they had the chance to say a proper goodbye before separating again, it would still feel like a heavy blow but that cathartic moment when the rain clears to reveal a blue sky would come a little bit earlier.

Practicing Goodbye is a story based on a real experience. The second section is different from the other parts of the book with its own tones and color palate to represent how I imagine Bibi's life was during the time he was lost. When Bibi crosses the physical centerline of the book, he reaches a parallel world where he stays until a voice calls out to him, and he has to cross the line back to his previous owner's world (where the book continues into the third section). I portrayed it this way because I wanted to give Bibi some initiative in the decision to leave rather than just depicting him as lost. For all we know, it's a possibility that's out there.

The idea that "disappearing is its own

kind of existence" was something that I came to realize over the course of illustrating this book. I planned to use basic pencil sketches to illustrate the story because I thought there was a certain purity to it, like they were the handwritten notes of someone who'd actually been through this experience. Erasers are useful for removing mistakes and redrawing lines, but this story helped me realize that an eraser can also be like a white brush that varies the depth of pencil drawings depending on how tightly you grasp it. As a result, on the book cover we can see Bibi disappearing in a way that makes his existence even more prominent.

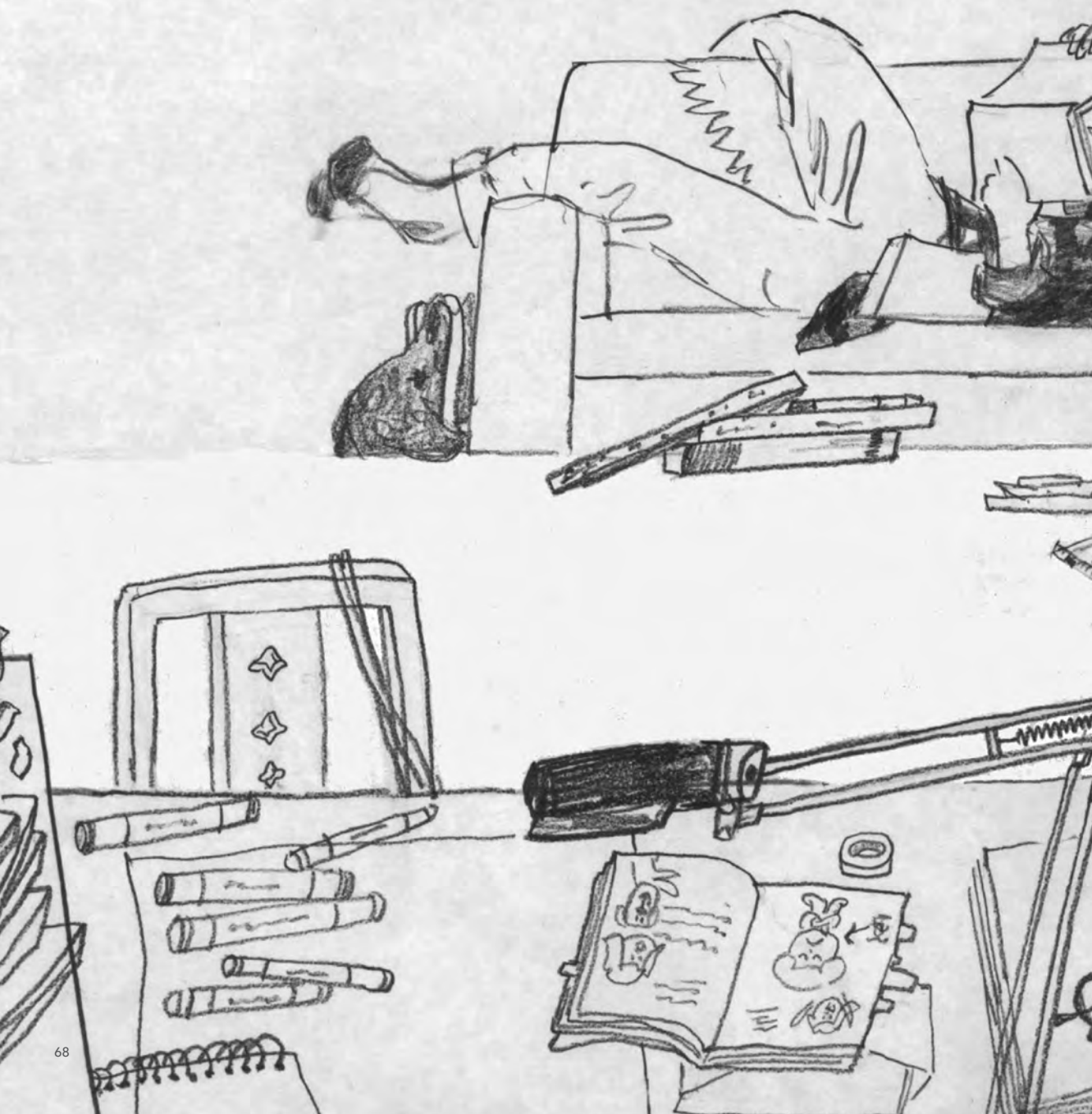
Just as the protagonist is lucky to have a second chance to say goodbye to Bibi, I also feel extremely fortunate to have had the chance to tell this story about a "proper goodbye".





A typhoon is coming.

“It’s pouring with rain. Well, I wouldn’t have been able to walk the dog anyway.....”





The broth is bubbling.

“It’s almost perfect now I’ve added the wine. Oh, but the smell of dog has gone.”





GUARDIAN OF THE EVERLASTING

長生石的守護者

* Over 15,000 copies sold within a year

* Top selling children's author with over 12 weeks on the Eslite Bookstore and Books.com bestseller list

An ocean-loving girl finds a piece of shimmering jade calling to her while she's diving. After she carries it home, a sheep spirit comes out and warns that an evil warlock from ancient times is returning as part of his quest for immense power.

Hsi-yang loves to go diving with her brother. One day, she's accidentally pulled adrift by the current and sees a stone shimmering in the ocean. She can't help but bring it home. When she gets back to shore, she discovers that it's a piece of jade in the shape of a sheep. Suddenly, it glimmers then a sheep spirit appears and tells her the story of an evil warlock called Wukuei who lived over three thousand years ago. The spirit warns her that a devilish power is going to bring Wukuei back, and it's up to them to stop him.

With the help of a golden owl and a dragon, Hsi-yang uncovers the magical power hidden in ancient artifacts. But she needs more than just courage and wisdom to save the world from Wukuei's clutches. When her deceased mother appears, Hsi-yang is forced to confront her own regrets, otherwise Wukuei will take advantage of her and secure the immense power he has always craved.

Combining fantasy with real historical artifacts, Chen Yu-Ju tells a story of adventure, friendship, and family bonds. A page-turning bestseller which has sold over 15,000 copies in Taiwan, *Guardian of the Everlasting Stone* is the best fiction for children to get interested in the ancient world of the artifacts and discover the joy of reading.



Chen Yu-Ju 陳郁如

Born in an artistic family, Chen Yu-Ju studied arts in the US and started writing children's books at the age of 40. Her first book *Cultivation* was an instant hit on publication and made her the most popular children's fantasy writer in Taiwan. Often described as the "Taiwanese JK Rowling", Chen Yu-Ju uses elements of East Asian culture as a gateway to her fantasy worlds. She now lives in Los Angeles.

STONE



- **Category:** Fiction
- **Publisher:** Rye Field
- **Date:** 1/2022
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 304
- **Length:** 85,000 characters (approx. 55,000 words in English)
- **Age:** 10+
- **Material:** English sample

A Landmark for Sinophone Children's Fantasy Fiction

Written by Duh Ming-Cheng

(Retired Professor of Children's Literature at National Taitung University)

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

Ever since *Harry Potter* first took the book world by storm, there's been a huge surge in Western fantasy novels which have been able to further dominate children's literature and popular fiction through screen adaptations. First, we saw a spectacular resurgence of the classics such as J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and Ursula K. Le Guin's *Earthsea* series, then a dizzying array of new works like *His Dark Materials* by Philip Pullman, *The Giver Quartet* by Lois Lowry, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan, and so on.

We've had wave after wave of these tomes, but the subject keeps shifting. We've had books set in imaginary versions of the Middle Ages, or in the kingdom of Christ, or on distant islands, or in dystopian futures, as well as others that draw on traditional lore involving vampires, while others turned to Greek gods and Ancient Egypt.

A Wide-Open Creative Landscape

Given all the above, we couldn't help but wonder whether our own literary and cultural traditions might have a similar wealth of fantasy novels brewing somewhere beneath the

surface. First, *Attack of the Sinograph Army* by Chang Chih-lu garnered a lot of attention, then readers were even more enthusiastic about *Record of the Tomb Pen* by Ma Boyong, but both books seemed to be anomalies among those writers' other works. It wasn't until Chen Yu-Ju came along that we finally got a taste of fantasy novels that were built on Chinese cultural traditions, it was as if she'd woven various patchwork pieces together into an ornate dress.

Chen's works have emerged to really satisfy the inner demands of Sinophone readers who found that no matter how great Western fantasy novels might be, there was always a slight language barrier, whereas books about distant, ancient China like *Record of Heretofore Lost Works* and *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* still always felt familiar.

Chen is extremely good at drawing on different materials, as can be seen in her young adult series *Cultivation* which is visibly influenced by Western fantasy novels but expertly blends Chinese cultural elements in a way that quickly drew in readers and immediately became a sensation among people of all ages. It was followed by the *Legend of the Immortals* series where you can see the full breadth and depth of Chen's creative landscape across the four books:

The Soul of Poetry, The Guardian of Poems, The Immortal Painter and The Demon Among Pottery. Her works feel so familiar and don't go out of their way to seem highbrow, making them fun and engaging for children. She's constantly innovating when it comes to the subject matters for her books, and it seems like she has an endless supply of creative inspiration.

Continuously Evolving Artistic Expression

Chen doesn't just set the tone for the fantasy genre but is also a pioneer, demonstrating how artistic expression can continuously evolve.

Guardian of the Everlasting Stone undoubtedly surpasses all of Chen's previous works and is far more elaborate but natural in terms of plot. Her imagination leads us through a collection of Bronze Age relics in the National Palace Museum from the Shang Dynasty, shuttling between past and present without feeling the slightest bit far-fetched. One moment we're searching for things on Google, the next we're in a mythical era of dueling sorcerers. As readers solve the antiques' various riddles, they are drawn layer by layer into the core of the story in a way that's like an engrossing mystery novel. The foreshadowing leaves even less of a trace here than it did in

her previous novels. It is clear when reading Chen's books that she does extensive research before putting pen to paper. The historical knowledge enriches the plot in the reader's imagination, which is a reflection of how Chen's writing is entertaining and educational at the same time.

In my opinion, *Guardian of the Everlasting Stone* is a new milestone for Chen's work, and it has left me eagerly anticipating what she does next as an author, I am convinced that further stages of artistic evolution are in the works. Who knows, perhaps her book series will become a catalyst and spark a literary sensation of fantasy novels rooted in Chinese culture.

GUARDIAN OF THE EVERLASTING STONE

By Chen Yu-Ju

Translated by Helen Wang

Part 1 – Sheep with Special Powers

1: Hsi-yang

Hsi-yang glanced at the dive pressure gauge. Everything was going to plan. Hsi-hai was leading the way. He looked back at his little sister, the two of them hand-signaled okay, and continued swimming. Hsi-yang kicked her flippers up and down, took long slow breaths, and followed her brother at a steady pace, enjoying the coral reef and the tropical fish as she swam.

Hsi-yang was fifteen now, and had been diving for a year. Hsi-hai was three years older than her, and had more diving experience. Three years earlier their mother had died, and Dad had moved to this small town by the sea to open a diving shop, and be a diving instructor. He had taught them both to dive, and now they both had their licenses. Hsi-yang loved this new activity: she loved going out in the sea, she loved the sea creatures. She loved slipping into the embrace of the sea, surrounded by sunshine, and she loved exploring the dark, mysterious ocean in the quiet of night.

Hsi-hai swam past a jutting-out reef, and turned right towards a canyon-like formation. Just as Hsi-yang was about to turn, she felt something catch her foot. She looked down and saw a large plastic bag wrapped around her flipper.

Hsi-yang pulled a face. She hated seeing rubbish in the sea, and it was horrible to have it catch on her! She stopped, reached back to remove the plastic bag, scrunched it up, and put it in the pocket of her BCD (Buoyancy Control Device). By the time she looked up again, there was a gap between her and her brother. As she started to hurry after him, a strong current from the right pushed her sideways, further away from Hsi-hai.

Sea currents are unpredictable, but Hsi-

yang had some experience of them, and wasn't afraid. The current swept her some distance, but she managed to hook her fingers round a rocky outcrop and steady herself. The next time she looked up, she saw that her brother's attention was focused inside the rock-cave. He was peering in deeper with the light of his torch. He hadn't noticed she'd fallen behind.

Hsi-yang knew the current was too strong for her to swim over to him, and that he was too preoccupied to check on her. She cursed him under her breath a few times, knowing that she had to think of a way of catching his attention.

She held on to the reef with one hand, and pulled out her pocket-knife with the other. She couldn't shout to him underwater, but the sound of the knife hitting the metal air canister would be louder in the water. The jutting-out part of the reef wasn't strong enough to take the force of the current and her hand, and it broke, catching her off-guard and thrusting her forward on the current.

After a while the current slowed, and she was able to stabilize. She added some air to the BCD, got a better buoyancy, and was able to slow her breathing. She looked around for her brother and realized that she had dropped the pocket knife at some point.

When you lose something at sea, that's it, you can't go back for it. She felt sorry about losing the knife: it was Hsi-hai's and he would be cross. But he should have been looking out for her!

They had dived together many times, and had been separated before, so Hsi-yang wasn't worried. They knew to spend no longer than a minute looking for each other, but to rise to the surface and rejoin above water. Hsi-yang looked around for a minute, in case the current had swept him this way as well.

The reef was higher here, and seemed to block the strong current and slow it down. As

she swam past a few rocks, something caught her eye. She glanced at the pressure gauge. She had time to check it out. If it was rubbish, she remove it and take it with her.

She swam over and found that something small and shiny was caught in the reef. She pulled out a hard, knobby thing and tried to work out what it was. It felt like stone, but was scored on the top, and glowed with a pale white pearly light. She thought it was interesting and slipped it into her BCD pocket.

Hsi-yang couldn't see her brother, so decided to rise to the surface. She made a three-minute safety stop five meters below the surface. She knew that the deeper you dive, the greater the pressure, and more nitrogen gets into your bloodstream. The purpose of the three-minute stop at five meters was to expel that nitrogen, to make it safe to return to the surface. When Hsi-yang surfaced her BCD was full of air.

"Hsi-yang! Where were you?" her brother asked impatiently.

Hsi-yang spat out the mouthpiece and couldn't help shouting, "Oh, I got caught in the undercurrent, only you were too busy to notice."

"You had my knife, didn't you? You could have clanged it on the canister to call me!" Hsi-hai grumbled as he swam over.

"I didn't have time." It was strange how he shifted the blame on to her.

Hsi-hai glanced at her. "Where is my knife?"

"Er...it got swept away..." Hsi-yang said quietly.

"What! That was my favorite knife!" Hsi-hai's sea-soaked face was already a bit distorted, and when he frowned, it looked even worse. Luckily, no one ever said she looked like him.

"Hey! I'm your sister. My life's more important than a knife, isn't it?" Hsi-yang shot

back.

"You look fine to me. You don't look as though your life was in danger. Anyway, let's head back to shore." Hsi-hai said impatiently.

Hsi-yang and her brother weren't particularly close, or particularly distant. They argued and squabbled like siblings do, then went out to sea together, ate together, and watched TV together. But she didn't like her brother's attitude. It wasn't a nice experience being separated from her diving buddy, and not following the plan could be dangerous. Hsi-hai was her big brother and was supposed to look after her. He was out of order arguing with her over a knife.

Back on shore, Hsi-hai didn't say anything, and Hsi-yang couldn't be bothered to think about him any more. They walked back to Dad's shop with their heavy gear on their backs. Then they offloaded it and put everything back in its place, rinsed what needed to be rinsed, and soaked what needed to be soaked. Hsi-yang took everything out of her BCD pocket, and threw the scrunched up plastic bag that had caught on her leg into the bin. She held the creamy white stone in her hand, but couldn't think what it was doing in her pocket. It took her a while to remember that it was the shiny thing that caught her attention. As she held it in her hand now, it looked like an ordinary stone, and didn't glow at all. Had she been seeing things? Had the sea bent the light? It was just a stone. She was a bit disappointed, but she put the stone in her bag to take home.

She slung her bag on her back and walked home. It was only half a block from the diving shop. Dad had bought an old three-story house in town at the same time as he bought the diving shop by the sea. The main street was two blocks away, their school five blocks. Everywhere was within walking distance, which made life simple and convenient.

Hsi-yang didn't see her brother and assumed he had gone to work. In any case, she didn't want to think about him. She went up the two flights of stairs to her bedroom and lay down wearily on the bed. For some reason, she suddenly thought about the stone, got up, opened her bag, and held the stone in the palm of her hand.

It was about 10 cm long, 5 cm wide, and was mostly a translucent creamy white color, with a few pale yellow spots. She examined it carefully and discovered that the knobbly stone actually was the shape of a sheep. It was sitting down with its head turned to the left, which gave it a calm, serene appearance. Hsi-yang had always liked sheep. She remembered arguing with her parents when she was little that she didn't want to be born in the year of the rooster, she wanted to be a sheep. They'd shaken their heads and smiled. But they had always bought her a soft-toy sheep for her birthday. Lots of little girls like dolls, but Hsi-yang liked sheep.

Hsi-yang held the stone sheep in her hand, and took an instant liking to it. It had an old, rustic charm to it. As she played with it and turned it over in her hands, she discovered traces of damage to its right hind leg.

She ran her fingers over the damaged part and felt a sudden pang in her heart. She felt sorry for the sheep, and couldn't stop thinking about its injured leg. At the same time, she was surprised to feel so upset about a stone.

Just then, the cold stone suddenly became warm - not a burning heat, but a gentle warmth. The creamy translucence started to change, becoming paler and paler as though it might disappear before her eyes.

Hsi-yang stared, wide-eyed, at the stone, and was even more surprised when the stone started to glow with the same soft pearly light that she had seen in the crack in the reef.

The circle of light started to move. It swayed gently, as though it might break away from the stone. Then it did break away, and hung above the stone before starting to rise.

It was incredible. Hsi-yang's eyes were almost popping out of her head, and her mouth was wide open. The floating light reminded her of the translucent little jellyfish in the sea.

She wanted to touch it. As she moved her finger towards the pearly circle of light, it began to change shape, as though an invisible hand was molding it into the shape of a sheep. She put her hand out to catch it on her palm.

She looked closely at the light-sheep. It was about the same size as the stone sheep, but was like a real sheep, with a pearly glowing fleece. It was so pretty! The sheep gazed at Hsi-yang with gentle eyes, its mouth slightly open, slightly moving.

It was speaking! Hsi-yang looked closer. She could see its mouth moving, and its face was lively and expressive. The light-sheep was talking to her, but she couldn't hear what it was saying.

"Are you trying to tell me something?" Hsi-yang asked, "I know you are talking, but I can't hear you."

The sheep seemed to understand. It stopped talking and nodded at Hsi-yang.

"Can you hear me?" Hsi-yang asked. She was excited to be having a conversation with a light-sheep that had come out of a stone!

The sheep nodded again.

"What do you want to tell me?" Hsi-yang asked, immediately realizing that it was useless question as the sheep could only answer with a yes or a no.

The sheep tilted its head, as though thinking, then looked directly at Hsi-yang. She felt awkward, and was just trying to think of a yes / no question to ask the sheep, when she

caught a glimpse of something in the sheep's soft gaze.

It's not quite right to say she saw it, because she didn't see it with her eyes, but in her mind, as if she was dreaming. Even so, it was crystal clear.

2: Long Ago in the Shang dynasty

Long ago in the Shang dynasty, a seven- or eight-year-old girl was walking with an old woman on a dark mountain road. They were both frightened.

"I can't walk any more, Huir. Run back to the village and ask Father to come and help." Huir's mother was out of breath, and could barely put one foot in front of the other.

"I'm not going to leave you. I'll help you. We're nearly there!" Huir said anxiously as she took her mother's arm. But they managed only a couple of steps before Huir's mother collapsed at the side of the road.

"Hurry back to the village!" Huir's mother urged.

"No, Mother, please get up!"

As Huir tried to pull her mother up, they heard a wolf's howl. They had wanted to get home before the wolves could attack, but now that Huir's mother had fallen, they were circling boldly. Three pairs of dusky yellow eyes were on the road behind them, on the approach, preparing to attack.

All of a sudden, something white flashed in front of Huir and her mother.

"That's Big White, isn't it?" Mother whispered. The family's big and completely white ewe was walking towards them.

"Big White, what are you doing here? Go home." Huir tried to push the big white sheep back, but it ignored her, and walked past them towards the wolves.

"Big White, come back! They'll eat you!" Huir shouted.

But Big White was determined and with its eyes gleaming, ran straight towards the wolves, bleating loudly. Strangely, the wolves started to whimper and whine, as if they were frightened, and as it approached, they stepped back. Then they turned around and ran away.

Huir and her mother were stunned. Big White bleated a few times to make sure the wolves had gone, and came back to Huir and her mother. Big White stood close to Huir's mother, and gradually the warmth from the sheep's body revived Huir's mother. She stood up, and with Huir's support and Big White to protect them, the three of them walked home slowly and safely.

Then the scene changed: Hsi-yang no longer saw a little girl, but a teenager, about fifteen or sixteen, on a farm with six sheep. Hsi-yang somehow knew that they were Big White's offspring, and that Big White had died soon after they were born. And that those sheep were very dear to Huir.

Hsi-yang saw six identical sheep whose white fleeces had a faint glow with an almost pearly lustre. The sheep that had come from the stone was one of these six sheep.

Huir sat on the grass with the sheep. The sheep grazed peacefully but Huir looked worried. A few days earlier a group of people had come to the house. They were all guards of the Great Shang king. They had filled the rooms and asked her parents to prepare food and drink, but had given nothing in return and had turned their lives upside down. Earlier that day, they said they had been informed that Huir's family had six rare pearly sheep which had special powers, and that they had been ordered to take them back to Yindu, the Shang capital, where they would be sacrificed to the ancestors and dedicated to the gods and

spirits. The guards said this would bring honor to the sheep and the family, that the family should thank the king for his kindness and that they would set out with the sheep on the road to Yindu in the morning.

As Huir watched the sun slip slowly into the mountains, and as twilight darkened around her, the thought of the six sheep being taken away was too much for her to bear, and she decided to set them free that night.

A bright moon shone over the earth that night. When the king's guards had eaten their fill and were fast asleep, Huir crept out of the house and opened the farm gate.

"Go now! Quickly! It's not safe for you here!" Hui quietly urged the sheep.

Usually when she opened the fence, the sheep ran out happily. But that night they refused to move. No matter how hard she tried, they would not go. Huir had to drag them out two at a time. She led the first two out of the village, then went back for the next pair. But the first pair stubbornly followed her back. Huir sighed, then dragged them up the mountain, taking them far enough so they wouldn't follow her when she turned back. It took Huir a long time to do this, and when she finally hurried home she discovered she was too late.

All the animals in the pen were lying dead on the ground. There was no sign of the four sheep. With a huge sense of dread, and legs like jelly, Huir went towards the house.

Inside, by the light of the moon shining in through the window, she saw two people lying on the floor - her parents were covered in blood, and there was no sign of life.

It turned out that some of the king's guards had got up in the night. When they discovered that two of the sheep they were to take for the king had gone, and that the owner's daughter had gone too, they were so angry that they killed all the people and animals at the farm.

Then, fearing they might bring disaster on themselves if they did not complete their mission, they took the other four sheep and left for Yindu that night.

With their special powers, the two sheep had sensed difficult times ahead for the family. They knew that Huir would be killed too, as soon as she got home, which was why they had refused to move. They wanted to wait until the killing at the house was over and the guards had left before letting Huir go back.

Huir was terribly upset. She knelt on the floor beside her parents. She couldn't bear to see the stab wounds and fetched a quilt to place over them. Quiet, sad, and helpless, she stayed with them in that dark room.

When she finally came out of her daze, she knew she had to bury her parents. She moved them carefully, and as she did so, she noticed some scratches on the floor by her mother. She looked at them closely and saw that her mother had used her last breath and her bloodied hand to write 巫比 (Wubi) on the floor beside her.

Huir remembered that her mother had talked about Wubi when she was little. Wubi was a wizard. He could drive away evil spirits and bring good luck. He had been the palace wizard, but had offended a prince and been banished to the south, where he'd wandered about and helped many people. Huir's mother wanted her daughter to go and find him.

Huir knew she was on her own now, and that she was not safe at the house. The king's guards needed those two sheep, and would come looking for her. If they couldn't find the two sheep, she would pay with her life. She needed to get out of there fast. Huir rubbed the tears from her eyes, buried her parents, and scrubbed out the writing on the floor. She decided to follow her mother's wish, and go to find Wubi. But before she did that, she had to go up the mountain and find the two sheep.

The two sheep seemed to know that Huir would return, and were grazing where she had left them. She was so happy to see them, but also felt sad for them as their siblings had been taken away. Huir hugged them and wept, and they snuggled up and whimpered. Huir didn't dare to stay long, and led the sheep away from the village, heading south in search of Wubi.

Everywhere she went, Huir enquired after Wubi, and every time she learned that he'd moved a little further south.

GRANNIES IN BIKINIS

奶奶們的比基尼

Four grandmothers in their seventies decide to embark on the journey of a lifetime. Away from the domestic burdens of family life and the haunting fear of a breast cancer diagnosis, the four women are finally able to experience true freedom and reinforce their strong bonds of friendship.

On the first day of summer vacation, eleven-year-old Kai-ting finds her grandma sneaking out first thing in the morning. Is she running away from home? Afraid of being caught, Grandma grabs Kai-ting and the two of them immediately leave the house. Soon, they are joined by three other grandmothers on a trip to Taitung.

The four women are all in their seventies. There's one who always acts as the leader of their group, one who was just diagnosed with breast cancer, one who puts family first at the expense of her own needs, and one whose outwardly glamorous appearance belies a hollow inner life. Together with granddaughter Kai-ting, each woman sets out on a journey of her own. Along the way, the grandmothers start to speak up for themselves and learn to accept the losses that life brings. One of the women rekindles an old romance, and all four of them build an even stronger friendship together.

Narrated through the eyes of the granddaughter, *Grannies in Bikinis* explores issues such as female empowerment and body positivity. With its warmth and the protagonist's engaging voice, the novel is a coming-of-age story not just for children, but for grandmothers too. After all, it's never too late to keep growing as a person.



Peng Su-Hua 彭素華

Peng Su-Hua graduated from National Taitung University's Graduate Institute of Children's Literature and has won numerous children's book awards in Taiwan, including the Chiu Ko Young Adult Literature Award and the Taoyuan Children's Literature Award among others. Her fantasy novels such as *The Red-Eyed Giant* and *Meeting Mona Rudo* incorporate Indigenous culture and childhood experiences, while in her more recent works like *The Soul That Travels Through Time* and *Grannies in Bikinis* she has shifted her focus towards the care of elderly people.



- **Category:** Fiction
- **Publisher:** Little Soldier
- **Date:** 10/2021
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 240
- **Length:** 60,000 characters (approx.40,000 words in English)
- **Age:** 10+
- **Material:** English sample
- **Rights sold:** Korean (Woongjin Thinkbig)

A Journey Towards Self-Discovery

Written by Huang Yachun

(Associate Professor of Children's Literature at National Taitung University)

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

This is a book where the author has consciously made it her mission to write a children's novel that also serves as a form of feminist literature. The story begins with the disappearance of a group of grandmothers and is narrated by eleven-year-old Kai-ting (granddaughter of Su-ying) who accompanies them on their journey towards self-discovery. We see the whole thing unfold through Kai-ting's precocious but childish perspective and her witty, eccentric descriptions.

Let's Hit the Road!

For Eastern women, the process of individualization is extremely challenging because a lot of women absorb the cultural values recognized by their families and societies as they grow up, so their appearance and sense of self is built on the idea of being a "good woman". Once a woman begins to listen to her inner voice, she starts to face resistance from her family and society, experiencing a mixture of inner conflict and self-doubt. In this book, the author draws on female consciousness and considerations about life to create a story about a group of grandmothers who run away for nine days, and I personally see it as a journey of self-discovery with Su-ying's transformation at its core.

While each of the four grandmothers might

have their own reasons for joining the secret plan to visit Taitung, the main cause is that Achu has discovered something bad in her breasts. This news shocks the group of elderly female friends and the leader, Granny Ten Yuan, thinks to herself that she's turning seventy and isn't sure if she'll live another decade, so she decides to put her innermost thoughts into action. Achu's life-threatening news is what gives the whole group the chance to change.

Breasts: Thank You and Farewell

From a narrative standpoint, the story involving Achu's suspected breast cancer isn't just the catalyst for the plot development but also serves as the core function of the text. How women perceive their breasts can hold a lot of psychological meaning in terms of how they perceive their own value. The characters in the novel range from a young girl going through puberty to a group of elderly married women, which the author deliberately uses to explore the physical experience of being a woman.

At the end of the book, the grandmothers are all wearing bikinis as they perform a "Thank You and Farewell Ceremony" for Achu's breasts on the beach in Taitung and the ritual symbolizes how the women have freed themselves from their inner prejudices. Kai-ting helps Achu write a letter to her breasts

thanking them for a lifetime together. In the letter, Achu expresses how her breasts once represented love and her ability to nurture, but now that they're sick it's time to say goodbye. Then they burn the letter in a fire on the beach.

While Achu is melancholy on the eve of her mastectomy and there's a sense of regret at the loss of her female body, from here on she can let go of the attachment she feels towards the "beautiful, God-given gifts" of her breasts. The ceremony marks the women's rediscovery of their own inner strength as it allows them let go of their identities as mothers and wives.

The bikinis in the title of the novel are also an important symbol in the book. Different clothes can often represent different identities, and we can use them to decorate or hide ourselves. Fearless under the gaze of others, they no longer hide their bodies which have become stout over the years, instead they wear the most revealing item of clothing possible: bikinis. This can be seen as a brave declaration that they have peeled away their outer selves and faced their true selves.

The group of women relinquish their attachment to the idea of a perfect female body and let go of their old roles and identities as they run wildly towards the vast ocean together, brimming with the joy of rebirth and also symbolizing the freedom of spiritual liberation. That moment shows the grandmothers becoming the people they didn't get to be and that they now finally get to become themselves.

We Are Not Alone on the Road to Growth

The main characters in the book all have certain traits that we might see reflected in our own personalities. Maybe we're like the young girl Kai-ting who's embarrassed about her round figure and well-developed breasts; or her grandmother Su-ying who is always making

sure that her husband and family are satisfied but suppressing her own true inner voice in the process; or Achu who has to play the role of mother and wife to find the central core of her life; or the elegant grandma Shu-nu who places too much value on her image and physique, hiding her lonely, hollow heart behind a veil of bravado; or maybe we're like the seemingly confident, decisive and sharp-tongued Granny Ten Yuan who's actually holding onto some complicated unresolved issues. In this way, these women's stories become our stories, as different readers apply the characters' insights and realizations to their own life experiences.

Through these characters, I can see that we're all still just stumbling along the road crying, laughing, feeling frightened but continuing to grow. We make mistakes and constantly doubt ourselves or feel useless or occasionally even hurt other people. While these might not be traits that we are fond of, they are part of our true selves and I am willing to cherish and accept them. Even if we grieve and blame ourselves, we still need to be willing to welcome life's challenges and let our wounded souls choose to live a second life.

The real, three-dimensional female characters in books like this make us see that we are not alone, that we have so many sisters with us as we embark on the journey towards becoming ourselves.

GRANNIES IN BIKINIS

By Peng Su-Hua

Translated by Helen Wang

Preface

This is a story about four grandmothers who used to meet at the school gate when taking their grandchildren to and from school. But before I tell you their story, I must first apologize, because they speak a mixture of Mandarin and Taiwanese. I will try and explain as I go along, so that you won't have to keep chopping and changing languages, and wondering what on earth's going on.

One year, in late June, for various reasons, they started planning a secret excursion, and on the first day of the summer holidays, the four grannies went missing!

Missing Person No. 1

Name: Liu Shu-yuan (nickname: Ten Yuan)

Gender: Female

Age: 70

Family situation: Widowed, with two daughters and a son, currently living with her son, daughter-in-law and grandson.

The Shu-yuan in Liu Shu-yuan's name sounded like "shi yuan" (ten yuan), hence her nickname. Like everyone else, I called Granny Ten Yuan.

Granny Ten Yuan was Hsu Shu-wei's grandma. Hsu Shu-wei was my brother's classmate. Every time Granny Ten Yuan saw me, she'd say "Kai-ting, you're so cute!" and pinch my cheeks. Why did she have to do that? Succulent plants have naturally fleshy leaves, and I wished there was a word like succulent for people with chubby cheeks. I hated it when she pinched my cheeks, and said, "As soft and plump as a steamed bun!" Had she seen her own face? It was as round and oily as a Changhua-style bah-uan! (it's a special kind of Taiwanese snack, like a wet, squidgy dumpling with a savory filling). But Granny Ten Yuan was all right really, as long as I could hide behind my granny before she could get her "monster

paws" on me.

There was something unusual about Granny Ten Yuan. I'm not exaggerating when I say her whole face was usually covered in droplets of sweat, like a glass window on a rainy day. They started as little beads that swelled and swelled until they started to roll. They rolled from her forehead into her eyes, which made her blink a lot as she spoke. Sometimes she'd close one eye, then the other in rapid succession as though she was tapping a secret code.

Me and my brother used to bet on the droplets, and count them as they rolled down. I won a lot of ice lollies that way. Actually, I saw her more often than him, and though I say so myself, he wasn't nearly as observant as me. The most annoying thing was that Granny Ten Yuan always had a handkerchief in her hand, and at critical moments, when a droplet of sweat was just about to roll, she'd wipe her face. When that happened, we'd pound our chests in disappointment, and granny would say: "You two are *khi-siau!*" (that's Taiwanese for "crazy").

Then there was that time when me and my brother had been staring at her face so long that she suddenly pushed her nose in front of mine: "Why are you two looking at me like that? Is there some food stuck to my face or something?" Her movements were so big and so fast that the sweat from her face would spray on to me. I was too embarrassed to wipe it away, and would feel disgusting for ages.

Granny Ten Yuan was the leader. When she said something, the other three usually agreed.

It was Granny Ten Yuan's idea for them all to go missing. But I can't really blame her alone, because it all started when Granny Achu discovered "something bad" in her breast. The news shook the four of them, and stirred Granny Ten Yuan into action. It was her seventieth birthday that year, and she wasn't sure if she'd last another decade, so she decided to put her innermost thoughts into action.

Missing Person No.2

Name: Li Hsiu-chu, aka Achu

Gender: Female

Age: 68

Family situation: Husband Chao Kuo-hsiung, three sons and two daughters, currently living with her son, daughter-in-law and two grand-daughters.

About a month before the excursion, Granny Achu went for a routine mammogram at the clinic, and an 1 cm dark shadow on her right breast showed up.

She hadn't been for a check-up for decades, and wasn't intending to attend this one, but the woman at the clinic had been persistent and phoned her several times. Granny Achu was embarrassed, and reluctantly agreed to go, never expecting this bolt from the blue. The clinic told her she needed to go to the hospital for further tests, and possibly a biopsy to see if it was cancerous. As she had a family history of cancer, the doctor advised her to have a preventive excision, whether the tumor was malignant or not. In other words, the doctor suggested she have her breasts cut off.

After that, every time I saw Granny Achu, she was either crying or sighing:

"If I'd known, I would never have gone to the check-up!"

"Life would be so much better if I didn't know. But know that I know, life's awful, and it's all thanks to that woman at the clinic!"

I didn't think it was the woman at the clinic's fault, or that it was fair to blame her.

What happened next was even weirder. The other grannies tried to reassure Granny Achu. "If it's 'something bad', you can have it cut off, and still live a long time. For lots of people, that's the end of the matter!" But Granny Achu wailed, "Is a woman who's had her breasts cut off still a woman? And I heard that chemotherapy is

horrible. I should just die!" Then she started bawling.

I was so confused. If you weren't afraid of dying, why would you be scared of a treatment? And why would you be afraid of not having breasts?

Why would not having breasts mean not being a woman? I hated my breasts! You could see that unlike other girls, I had two small bumps on my chest. I didn't want anyone to notice them, so I hunched my shoulders on purpose. Some vile boys went and got me the nickname "Bubble Tea". And every time we lined up, the nasty teacher shouted at me: "Lin Kai-ting, shoulders back, chest out!" It was so embarrassing. Even worse, my breasts sometimes felt swollen and itchy, and scratching them didn't make any difference. I wished I didn't have breasts, or that I could turn into a boy.

But this story isn't about me. To cut a long story short, Granny Achu had become very bad-tempered. She kept complaining that she'd worked hard for her children, then helped them with their children, and now that she'd reached the age when she should be enjoying herself, if "something bad" did turn out to be cancer, she'd have spent her entire life doing things for other people.

The other grannies were shocked to hear this. Then Granny Ten Yuan said, "Every three years there's an intercalary moon (it's like an extra month in the traditional Chinese calendar), when good and bad swap places. And just in case it's really bad luck for any of us, I've got a plan."

Missing Person No. 3

Name: Chen Su-ying (my granny)

Gender: Female

Age: 70

Family situation: Husband Lin Chih-ming,

two sons and two daughters, lives with her older son, daughter-in-law, grandson and me.

My granny had a very small ego. On the one hand that meant she was good-natured; on the other hand, it meant she was weak and had no opinions. Her standard response was to say she'd heard about something. So when Granny Achu told them about the shadow on her breast, my granny came up with ten or more remedies: she'd heard that X took this medicine and got better; and that Y took that medicine and the tumor disappeared. The most outrageous remedy she'd heard was that you had to grind a centipede into a powder and eat it, so you could fight poison with poison. Oh God, just thinking about a 10 cm long centipede did my head in, never mind eating it!

There was another problem with my granny: she was an overly devout Buddhist. Of course, being religious isn't a bad thing, but she didn't just do the beads and recite sutras. Whenever I said anything she didn't like, she'd say, "Amitabha Buddha! Amitabha Buddha! Don't say bad things!" as though it was bad karma and I'd end up in hell.

Apart from that, my granny was really nice, and she was a good cook. So you can see how I became "succulent"! When she went to the trouble of making a delicious meal, the best way of saying thank you was to eat it all up.

I should also mention my grandad's "contribution" to making me "succulent".

He was the opposite of Granny: a domineering, headstrong man who never listened to anyone. He had a very loud voice, and his most common response was "That's a load of hot air!" (it's a bit ruder in Mandarin: "I heard you fart"). Once, when we were watching TV, he did a very loud fart, and I said "That's a load of hot air!" He went ballistic and told me

not to be rude. It was weird how he could be rude to people all day long, but couldn't take it when I was rude back. What was I supposed to say? "That's a beautiful song"?

There was something else he said that was even more annoying: "Farmers want fat pigs, not fat dogs. You should have been a boy!" He wasn't talking about the size of my body, but about my brain. It was his way of complaining that I was more intelligent than my brother. As if girls couldn't be smarter than boys! Why could only boys bring honor to the ancestors? Where did he think I'd come from? A crack in a rock?

Despite what Granny called his "Lei Gong attitude" (Lei Gong is the god of thunder), Grandad did love me. Every time he shouted at me, he'd regret it, but be too embarrassed to apologize, so he'd quietly buy me something nice to eat and put it on my desk. So, you see, he also contributed to my being "succulent".

I often wondered why my grandparents got married in the first place. Did Grandad marry her because she was soft? Or did she turn soft after marrying him? Anyway, they were complete opposites.

The other grannies didn't talk about their family life, but I insisted on talking about Grandad, the reason being that as the other grannies had gone away with their family's blessing, strictly speaking, my granny was the only "missing person". There was another granny, but she hadn't told her family, so she wasn't considered missing. I'll tell you about her in a moment.

At the beginning, my granny wasn't going to join in this plan, not because she didn't want to, but because she didn't want to be shouted at by Grandad. But Granny Ten Yuan kept whispering things in her ear, and eventually my granny did the bravest thing in her entire life – she ran away from home.

Actually, I really admire the way she did it.

A few days before she left, she washed the dishes after dinner as usual, and sat down with us to watch the serial on TV. She ummed and ahed for ages, then finally spat it out: "I'd like to go on a trip with my friends."

We were all watching TV, and no one took her seriously.

"Where are you going, Granny? Can I go with you!" I asked.

"Why would you want to be with a group of old grannies?"

"I don't mind, I just want to go!"

"Oh, pull the other one!"

Ten minutes later, there was a commercial break.

"What did you just say?" Dad asked, his eyes still glued to the screen.

"I said..."

But before she could finish speaking, Dad interrupted, "Wife! The adverts are on, could you get us some fruit?"

"I was saying...I want..."

Mum opened the fridge door. "Ma," she said, "we're low on fruit, could you buy some more tomorrow? Get some watermelon, it's Kai-yen's favorite!"

"OK," said Granny.

The program started again, and Mum hurried back to the sofa, "That was a short break! I'll go back and cut it later."

Granny silently got up and went into the kitchen. She came out with a plate of dragon fruit, placed it on the living room table, and went back to her room.

"Aaagh..." On the TV a woman was hit by a car and tossed into the air. She spun round a couple of times in the air and landed in the middle of the road.

"Serves her right," said Grandad, slapping his thigh, "she's a bad'un, stealing from others."

"Well, you would say that!" said Mum, her eyes burning with rage.

"Stop arguing!" said my brother.

It had never occurred to me before, but that day I felt bad for Granny.

The next day, while we were eating, Granny said it again.

Grandad had a piece of chicken in his chopsticks. His hand stopped in mid-air. "You want to go away for a few days? How will we manage here? Who'll do the school run?"

"After the summer holiday, I'll be in sixth grade. I won't need to be picked up any more!" said my brother.

"Yes, you will! There are a lot of bad people around these days..." said Mum.

Before Mum could finish speaking, my brother cut in, "Oh, come on! There'll be loads of us all coming out of school at the same time. No one's going to do anything to us! I'm not a little kid anymore. I don't need picking up from school."

"We're not going until the school holidays," said Granny.

"Mum, the arthritis in your knees is playing up again, it'll hurt when you walk. Why don't you wait till I take my leave, then we can go somewhere together?" said Dad.

"Since I had the hyaluronic acid injections, it doesn't hurt when I walk anymore! And we won't be going on long walks, so it won't be a problem!"

"A group of *tsa-boo-lang* (women) who don't know *siann-mih* (anything) going on a trip? You think it's that easy?" Grandad's piece of chicken was still hovering in the air.

"But Ten Yuan says..." said Granny.

"That's a load of hot air! You spend too much time with that woman." The piece of chicken landed on the table, rolled over a couple of times then fell on the floor. As I watched that crispy fried chicken, I couldn't help thinking of the TV serial the night before.

The chicken hadn't stolen anything, yet had still come a cropper just like the bad woman.

Granny didn't mention it again, but I was smart enough to know that wasn't the end of the matter.

Missing Person No. 4

Name: Chuang Shu-nu (my brother's classmate Chang Ya-chu's grandma)

Gender: Female

Age: 67

Family situation: Husband Chang Te-sheng, one son, one daughter, lives with her son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter.

Granny Shu-nu is the one I mentioned earlier. She was sort of missing, but not missing. Because she turned up at the last minute.

Granny Shu-nu lived in the next compound to ours. Her husband worked in mainland China, and she lived with her son and daughter-in-law, but they didn't get on very well. According to my granny, the two women lived under the same roof and barely said a word to each other all day.

When Granny Shu-nu went to school to pick up her grand-daughter, she was really looking for someone to talk to. Sometimes she and Ya-chu's mum would both turn up at the school gate. They'd both say, "Oh, you've come too!" then look around for their own friends. When Ya-chu's mum looked around, Granny Shu-nu would roll her eyes. Sometimes neither of them would appear, and Ya-chu would cheer "Hooray" and we'd have fun going home together.

Granny Shu-nu was always moaning to my granny that her son and daughter-in-law didn't look after her properly, and that they wouldn't miss her if she disappeared. So, I can't say for sure whether Granny Shu-nu was actually missing or not. I suppose if you're wondering

where someone is and you can't find them, then you can say they're missing?

How to describe Granny Shu-nu? Well, you couldn't say she was beautiful, but then you couldn't say she was ugly. What do I mean? Perhaps it's best to say that her face kept changing! Her eyebrows were different every day - they could be thick, thin, arched, or look as though they were flying. They weren't always the same color either, that seemed to change every day, like clothes. Then there was her hair, I'd seen it dyed black, and light brown. One time her scalp reacted to a bad product, and she couldn't dye her hair for a while, and it was white at the top and black at the bottom. One day when we were watching a puppet show on TV with Grandad, Granny suddenly pointed to the screen and said, "Shu-nu's just like the Black and White Long-kun!" (Long-kun means gentleman, and the Black and White Long-kun is a famous character whose clothes, hair and face are half-black half-white.)

Granny Shu-nu's face reminded me of a glove puppet's head! She was almost seventy, but had incredibly smooth skin - a mosquito would slip off before it had chance to bite. But, sometimes it was a stiff and wooden as a glove puppet's head. To be honest, it was a bit scary, because she always had the same expression whether she was happy or not. Or rather she didn't have any expression. The worst thing was that her features seemed to move mechanically. When she smiled, the corners of her eyes went up, which pulled the corners of her mouth up too. It was horrible.

She once bragged to my granny that she'd had Botox. When my granny reacted with sympathy, "Oh, you poor thing, you've poisoned your face," Granny Shu-nu rolled her eyes in rage. "You're so ignorant! It costs five thousand per treatment!" Granny Shu-nu put her hand up and shook her five fingers. But my granny didn't

think it was worth it: "Five thousand? You'd be better off buying ten chickens."

Perhaps it was because her face was so tight that Granny Shu-nu couldn't express her emotions on her face. Her eyes darted about a lot, and she often put her fingers to her temples when she talked because she was worried about crow's feet. She only pressed three fingers on her temples, which meant her little finger was always raised. She painted her nails scarlet, so you could basically read her emotions by following the red dots.

Now, I'll tell you what Granny Shu-nu was like as a person.

Whenever Granny Ten Yuan talked about Granny Shu-nu, she used a lot of Taiwanese expressions, like "she's got a chicken's guts and a bird's stomach", and "she's an old pear pretending to be an apple". I didn't really understand what she meant, but I could tell that they irritated each other, because when a group of grannies were gossiping, those two barely spoke to each other. And when they did, you'd hear them spitting, and could almost smell gunpowder in the air.

It wasn't just Granny Ten Yuan who didn't like Granny Shu-nu, I didn't like Granny Shu-nu either. Every time she saw me, she'd either say I'd put on weight "again", or ask me about my school grades - what I scored in a test, if I was top of the class, etc. If I said "Yes, I'm top of the class", she'd raise her eyebrows and suck her teeth, then squeeze out a comment as if she was squeezing toothpaste from the tube: "Well done, Kai-ting! As long as you're doing well, it's okay to be fat!"

THE CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO EPIDEMIOLOGY AND HEALTHCARE

小大人的公衛素養課： 科學脈絡 X 人文歷史，流行病學 X 預防醫學 ——後疫情時代的必備圖文知識書

COVID-19 has had a huge influence on our lives over the last few years. When fighting a pandemic like this, an understanding of epidemiology is essential. From the history of pandemics to basic scientific concepts and prevention methods, this book includes everything you need to know about public health.

Epidemics have influenced human lives for thousands of years, whether it be smallpox, the Black Death, cholera, malaria, or indeed our most recent epidemic: COVID-19. They require society to work together as a whole to get them under control, which is why public health literacy is so important, especially in a globalized world.

In this book, a renowned epidemiologist joins forces with a popular children's science writer to present the public health knowledge that's essential for young people to know today. The first chapter starts with the history of epidemics, from ancient Egypt to modern times. Readers can see how diseases have been a threat to human life for millennia, and how scientific developments have gradually changed the way people treat epidemics.

The second chapter talks about the basic concepts of influenza, including the different categories of the virus, how the infection progresses in the body over time, and how to prevent catching it. Chapter three shifts the focus to society as a whole, using graphics and examples to explain: vaccines, social distancing, widespread testing, community spread, and other common terms we see in news. Finally, the last chapter looks to the future to see how cutting-edge technology like AI, big data, and robots have helped fight epidemics, and how we can adjust to a "new normal" after our current pandemic.

With lively illustrations and detailed explanations which feature examples and infographics, *The Children's Illustrated Guide to Epidemiology and Healthcare* is an essential book for children who have grown up during the pandemic, so that they don't just understand our current situation but can also take measures to prevent future challenges.



- **Category:** Non-Fiction
- **Publisher:** CommonWealth Education
- **Date:** 9/2021
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 104
- **Size:** 21.5 x 25.4 cm
- **Age:** 10+
- **Material:** English sample



Text by Chen Chien-Jen 陳建仁

Chen Chien-Jen is a Taiwanese epidemiologist who is known for his work on Blackfoot disease and liver cancer. He received his doctorate degree in human genetics and epidemiology from Johns Hopkins University and served as Minister of Health during the SARS crisis in Taiwan in 2003. He has served as the Vice President of Taiwan from 2016 to 2020 and was the vice president of Academia Sinica from 2011 to 2015.



Text by Ami Hu 胡妙芬

Ami Hu is a freelance children's science educator and writer. When she's not teaching or writing, she can be found curating science exhibitions, hosting radio shows, and translating. Her books include children's non-fiction titles such as *The Funnest Chemistry Class in Science History*, as well as the comic book *Duckbill the Animal Detective* and the picture book *T-Rex Time Machine*, among others.

Illustrated by Hui

Hui graduated from National Taiwan University of Arts, and now works as a freelance illustrator. Her work can be found in children's magazines, textbooks, and lifestyle publications.

A True Team Effort

Written by Chang Yu-Jung

(Editor of *The Children's Illustrated Guide to Epidemiology and Healthcare*)

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

During the period at the end of 2019 when people still weren't sure what was happening, COVID-19 quietly entered our lives before violently spreading to every corner of the world. What followed was panic, derision, and anxiety for a lot of people, while at the same time each country's government and public health organizations started working together to put epidemic prevention measures in place.

Our lives completely changed. Suddenly, everyone was paying attention to their own hygiene habits, and health-related information about disease prevention was repeated constantly across the news, adverts, and online videos. For example, there were stories about wearing a mask to protect yourself and others, or how to wash your hands to make sure they were clean, or what concentration of alcohol to use to disinfect your surroundings and so on. We also discovered that even though the necessary actions were very simple and easy, there were still a lot of people who fundamentally questioned why we were taking these measures. At the same time, there was also a lot of disinformation flooding the internet, with people spreading fake news on social media because they were worried that their friends and relatives would miss out on important information.

This was all happening in the adult world, and surely if we grown-ups couldn't understand it, then children would have

absolutely no idea what was going on. Those of us in book publishing quietly continued working but we also wondered whether there was anything we could do. We wanted children to know that countries all over the world were changing, and now everyone needed to follow compulsory regulations which were based on science and were there to protect everyone's lives. We wanted children to know why we needed to wear masks and stay socially distanced from other people, why we needed to isolate if we caught the disease, and why we definitely needed to get vaccinated even if we felt uncomfortable. Furthermore, we also hoped that in this era of information overload, children would slowly develop the ability to interpret evidence.

We started by looking to see if any other countries had written suitable books that we could publish. We discovered a lot of single-issue books that introduced subjects such as what a virus was, what bacteria were; or other books that were basic introductions to understanding health or discussed the history of how humans have fought pandemics in the past. There weren't any children's titles we could find that were a comprehensive overview of the past, present, and future, so we decided to publish the book ourselves. We approached internationally renowned epidemiologist Chen Chien-Jen (who was also Vice President of Taiwan between 2016 and 2020) and the

extremely popular children's science writer Ami Hu, to collaborate on what we believed would be an excellent book for children to read.

In terms of division of labor, Chen Chien-Jen provided the knowledge, content, and framework, then Ami Hu "translated" it into a writing style that would be fun for children to read. Inevitably, there was a lot of back and forth between the authors and the editor, whether it was about drafting the outline or writing the text for each page: How can we present this point in a way that's easier for children to understand? This concept is important but is it something children need to know at this stage? This point needs to be written in short, simple text but have we lost some of the accuracy? There were a lot of details that we needed to consider so we took the reader as the starting point and ensured that they would be able to fully absorb the information.

Of course, there was another vital contributor to the book: our exceptional illustrator, Hui. After the authors had agreed on the final text and sent it to the editor, it was then down to the editor to finalize the text and communicate the image brief and initial ideas to the illustrator, which is a moment that is seared into Hui's brain! An illustrator needs to be like a preliminary reader and absorb the author's text and before reading around on the topic to get a comprehensive understanding

of it. Then, she needs to examine the image brief from the authors and the editor, consider the scope of the text and illustrations, check the accuracy of the scientific images, etc. Even within these various limitations, Hui used her creativity to draw beautiful, entertaining images that could be understood by adults and children alike. The authors' warm words and the artist's rich, varied illustrations come together to convey the ideas to reader in a way that is multi-faceted and three-dimensional.

Over the last ten years, there has been a lot of progress in children's non-fiction both at home and abroad, but due to the pandemic, creativity seems to have stalled in the last couple of years which is something that the publishing industry needs to be aware of. I hope that as an industry we will all continue to strive and that I can be a small linchpin as we continue to provide children with high-quality non-fiction books.

Curse of the Pharaohs?

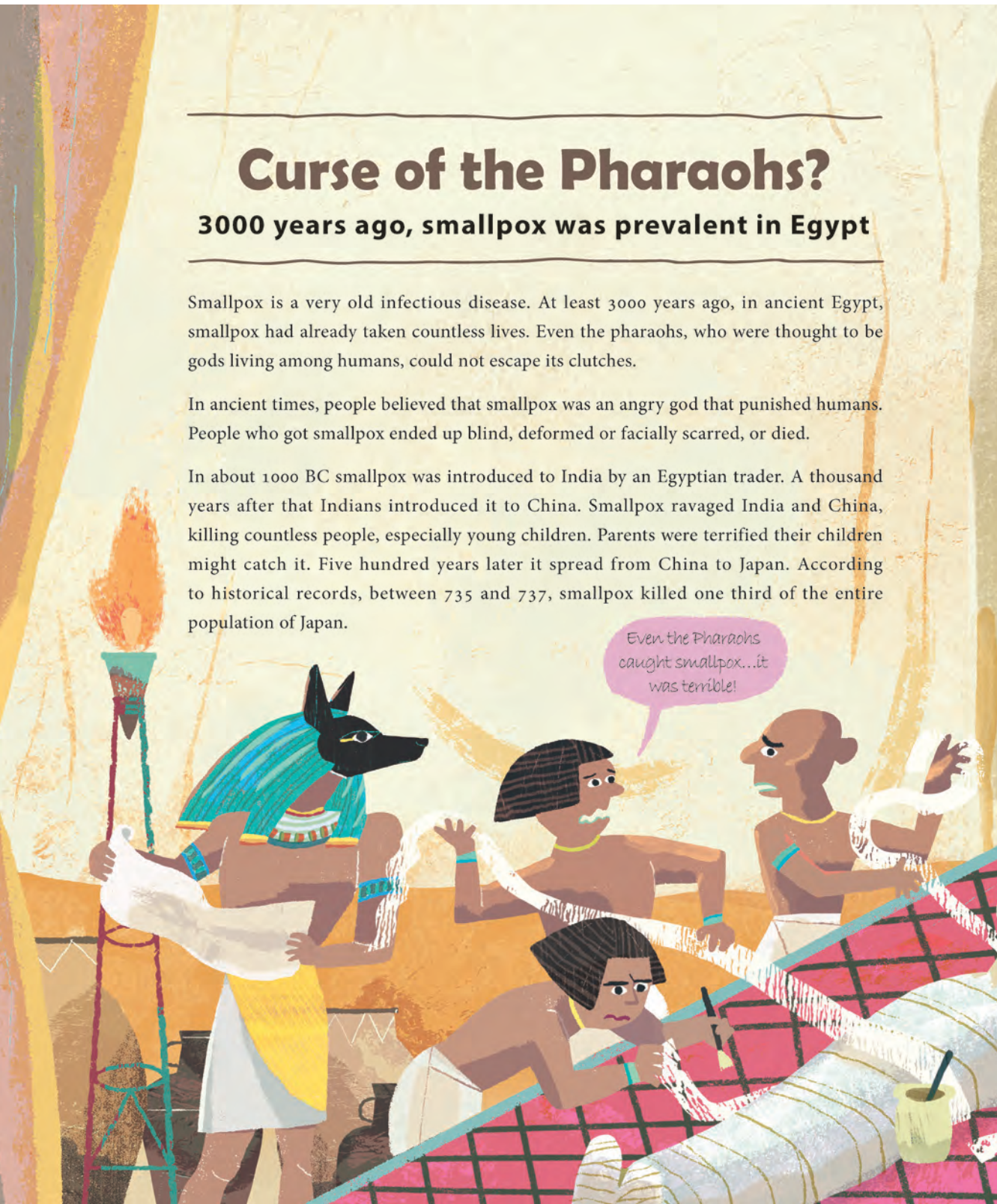
3000 years ago, smallpox was prevalent in Egypt

Smallpox is a very old infectious disease. At least 3000 years ago, in ancient Egypt, smallpox had already taken countless lives. Even the pharaohs, who were thought to be gods living among humans, could not escape its clutches.

In ancient times, people believed that smallpox was an angry god that punished humans. People who got smallpox ended up blind, deformed or facially scarred, or died.

In about 1000 BC smallpox was introduced to India by an Egyptian trader. A thousand years after that Indians introduced it to China. Smallpox ravaged India and China, killing countless people, especially young children. Parents were terrified their children might catch it. Five hundred years later it spread from China to Japan. According to historical records, between 735 and 737, smallpox killed one third of the entire population of Japan.

Even the Pharaohs
caught smallpox...it
was terrible!





In ancient India, people believed that smallpox was brought by the god, Shitala. Shitala carried a broom in one hand and a bottle of holy water in the other. The broom was to spread smallpox, and the holy water to soothe the sufferers. People prepared food and water for Shitala and worshipped her. In China, people believed that the Pox Lady brought smallpox, while in Japan and Africa people called it the Smallpox Demon.

Oh, God, please don't let me get smallpox!



Throughout human history, kings as well as commoners died of smallpox: for example, the 16th-century Inca ruler Huayna Capac. In the 18th century, Peter II of Russia and Louis XV of France both died of smallpox. The mummy of the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Rameses V was found to be covered in pustules and pox scars, suggestive of smallpox. He is the earliest known sufferer of smallpox in the world.



The milkmaid didn't get smallpox

Beating smallpox with cowpox

Smallpox raged around the world for 4000-5000 years, and mankind could not find a way to stop it. But for a long time, there was a saying in English villages that milkmaids did not catch smallpox. A doctor, Edward Jenner (1749-1823) investigated this claim, and established that milkmaids who had caught cowpox from cows, did not subsequently catch smallpox. In 1796, Jenner carried out a daring experiment. He infected an eight-year-old boy with cowpox, then half a year later, planted some scabs from a smallpox victim on the boy. The boy did not develop smallpox — he was immune to the terrible disease!

News of the success spread and people all over the world tried to replicate Dr. Jenner's brilliant experiment.



The cowpox vaccination experiment



1 A milkmaid was infected with cowpox, and developed a pustule on her skin.



2 Dr. Jenner vaccinated the boy with some pus from the woman's pustules.



3 The little boy became slightly ill, and developed some cowpox pustules on his skin.



4 Six months later, Dr. Jenner removed some scabs from a smallpox sufferer.



5 Dr. Jenner placed the scabs on the boy.



6 The cowpox vaccine protected the boy and he didn't get sick!

At first, people weren't sure whether to trust Dr. Jenner's cowpox vaccination. Some people mocked him and joked that a cow might grow out of the wound! But Dr. Jenner was confident, and even vaccinated his own children to show that they wouldn't get smallpox. Within a few years, over 100,000 people were vaccinated in Britain, and thereafter in Europe, Canada and South America. In 1853, for the first time, a law was passed making it compulsory for all people to receive the

cowpox vaccination. As a result, smallpox was gradually eradicated from the UK.

But not everyone in the world was lucky enough to be vaccinated, and even in the 20th century, 10-15 million people were catching smallpox each year, and 2 million were dying of it. It was realized that smallpox could not be completely eradicated unless all the countries of the world united to contain it. In 1967, the WHO launched an aggressive campaign to isolate everyone infected with smallpox and vaccinate all those who had been in contact with them. By 1980, smallpox had been eradicated worldwide. It was the first time in history that mankind had defeated an epidemic.

Dancing with Death in the Middle Ages

The Black Death in Europe

In 1346, a mysterious disease reached Europe along trade routes from Asia and killed 60% of Europeans in just seven years. Eight out of ten people who caught this terrible disease died in agony. It was called the Black Death because black patches appeared on their skin, due to subcutaneous bleeding. Every day thousands of people died in agony from this disease in cities across Europe.

The Black Death caused fear and panic, the streets were piled with corpses, the air was filled with sadness, terror and grief. No one knew where this disease had come from, or how to prevent it. A few people pointed the finger at innocent people, suspecting beggars, lepers, pagans and other outsiders for bringing it in. Some places suspected that Jews had poisoned the water in wells and attacked them, and even burned innocent Jews alive.

In Europe, under the shadow of the Black Death, doctors started wearing a "beaked mask". To avoid being infected, they would examine their patients using long sticks, and wore protective gloves, long boots, a beaked mask and a waxed coat. But these outfits and masks were useless, and many doctors with beaked masks died of the Black Death.

Scenes of the Black Death appeared in paintings of the late Middle Ages, often with the title Dance of Death.



Map showing the spread of the Black Death



Between 1347 and 1353, the Black Death spread at an alarming rate throughout Europe, with only a few areas unaffected. (The spread of the Black Death is shown in purple.)

NUMERACY LAB: 12 REAL-LIFE MATH

賴爸爸的數學實驗：12 堂生活數感課

Math can sometimes seem abstract with all its numbers and formulas, but math is everywhere and touches so many parts of our lives. Let's see math concepts in the real world with these 12 fun experiments from Lai I-Wei, the experienced advocate behind Numeracy Lab.

Did you know pineapples grow according to the pattern of the Fibonacci series? Did you know that if you fold a piece of A4 paper in half, the ratio of the smaller rectangle would be the same as the bigger one? We can find math anywhere in our lives, it's not just a series of abstract formulas or a headache-inducing subject at school.

With fun comics and hands-on experiments, the lessons in *Numeracy Lab: 12 Real-Life Math Experiments* help children build a concept of math that relates to their own life experiences. The questions at the end of each lesson also encourage children to think further about the concepts. In this book, author Lai I-Wei shares his own experiences in learning math, hoping to inspire the readers to think more and obtain the numeracy skills that could help them to make better judgments when faced with statistical information.



Lai I-Wei 賴以威

Lai I-Wei is an assistant professor of computer science at National Taiwan Normal University, and a co-founder of the mathematics literacy platform Numeracy Lab. Alongside promoting math education, he is also an author of several novels. He believes that writing a love story is like constructing a beautiful math problem: human relationships are equations, probabilities lurk behind chance encounters, and conclusions are variables waiting to be solved.

EXPERIMENTS



- **Category:** Non-Fiction
- **Publisher:** Yuan-Liou
- **Date:** 7/2021
- **Rights contact:** booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 156
- **Size:** 17 x 23 cm
- **Age:** 9+
- **Material:** English sample
- **Rights sold:** Korean (Davincihouse), Simplified Chinese (Beijing Daily)

The Key to Making Math Fun

Written by Anting Lu

Translated by Sarah-Jayne Carver

When most people think about math, the first thing that comes to mind tends to be the complicated problems that are difficult to solve, as well as the painful memories of studying math without really knowing why. However, according to Lai I-Wei, author of *Numeracy Lab: 12 Real-Life Math Experiments*, it doesn't need to be this way! Lai has been promoting math education for over ten years and in 2016 he co-founded "Numeracy Lab" with his wife Liao Pei-yu which is all about turning math into something fun, whether it be by putting on camps or making interesting videos, and, of course, by publishing books.

Why Make Math Fun? Because That's How You Learn It!

Numeracy Lab: 12 Real-Life Math Experiments consists of 12 mathematical experiments to get children to work closely with math in a practical, hands-on way. The biggest difference between this style of teaching and traditional lessons, books, and math problems is that children can actively participate in the process.

Lai notes that the issue has been particularly exacerbated by remote classes during the pandemic when children lost the spatial boundary of the classroom and the sense of routine that came with the start and end of lessons, meaning that they were even more distracted and would often do other things while they were listening in class. For a

new generation of teachers, their competitors aren't just other teachers at their schools but also famous YouTubers and popular online games etc., so the most important thing is to hold the attention of their students by making class fun.

He firmly believes: "We want to nurture an interest in math and motivate children to learn so that they're willing to take the initiative and master those lessons, then when they come across harder math in the future, they're more likely to persevere with it."

We've Made It Fun, Now What? Practical Uses for Math in Everyday Life

In addition to helping motivate children to study and making it fun, there's another benefit of keeping children exposed to math: it helps them develop numeracy skills. We shouldn't underestimate the importance of numeracy in ordinary life. Lai cited popular astrology as an example. He saw a news report which revealed that among the nearly 200 heads of state across the world, Scorpios were the most represented star sign. Meanwhile, a different news source revealed that in Taiwan over the years, Scorpios had been defrauded more than any other star sign. The average person might laugh and guess that this somehow makes Scorpios too clever for their own good. However, someone with strong numeracy skills would immediately think: "The population isn't

evenly distributed across the 12 astrological signs!” and from there they would explore whether these statistics are the result of Scorpios being the largest portion of the population.

“Modern news includes more and more statistics, but we need to be careful about how we interpret this data. Numeracy can help us grasp the actual meaning behind data,” says Lai, adding: “If you have an acute understanding of numbers, you’ll be better at distinguishing whether information is true or not.”

How Do We Make Math Fun? Share Real First-Hand Examples

For *Numeracy Lab: 12 Real-Life Math Experiments*, Lai actually had children do each of the math experiments in the book for themselves. During our interview, he shared some of the interesting anecdotes that occurred along the way.

One of the experiments illustrates the math behind the golden ratio and how it applies to flower arranging, since artistic works that use the ratio are more likely to appeal to popular tastes. Lai found some flowers and got the students to arrange them, some used the golden ratio while others didn’t. Although some of the arrangements that didn’t use the golden ratio were quite eye-catching, a lot of them were creative in a way that wouldn’t be considered conventionally attractive. By contrast, the arrangements that did use the ratio felt more like they’d been made in a factory as they were all equally attractive and shared a sense of consistency.

Through this experiment, Lai didn’t just share with the children what the golden ratio was but also let them feel the difference between using mathematical thinking and using creativity or intuition, which also allowed

them to experience the different beauty of each.

Lai also encourages parents to let their children experience the math experiments for themselves. In addition to the flower arranging example above, other experiments such as calculating the ratio of different colors in a packet of chocolate M&Ms and examining the mathematical pattern on the outer skin of a pineapple, are very easy for parents to do with their children.

No Matter Where You’re From, You’ll Have a Reason to Enjoy This Book

When asked how *Numeracy Lab: 12 Real-Life Math Experiments* could grow internationally, Lai says he believes that mathematics is like a language that is spoken all over the world. People from different countries all study the same subject from a young age, we all use the same Arabic numerals and basic functions of arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) to express mathematical concepts. Given the lack of cultural differences, Lai hopes that everyone can experience the interesting mathematical content in this book for themselves.

There are also some surprising Eastern elements in book, such as the probability question about a traditional Chinese divination method used in temples and the auspicious number phrases that Taiwanese people use when celebrating Lunar New Year. These elements simultaneously make math even more fun to study and let overseas readers gain new cultural knowledge as part of their reading experience.



When maths teachers are asked “what use is maths?”, they usually say:

“Maths can help us discover the patterns behind things.”

You might think of a pattern as being decorative. For example, if your mother has a dress with a simple pattern on it, say of checks, or flowers or hearts. From a distance, the pattern looks quite complex, but close up, it’s the same thing repeated many times.

The pattern on the dress is repeated in a certain way, and this is what we call a law. Nature is full of things that are made in a certain way: for example, a honeycomb is made of regular hexagonal cells, and a pineapple is covered with a scale-like skin. Each of those scales on the pineapple is a fruitlet, and the fruitlets are arranged in lines that spiral across the body of the pineapple. Each of those lines will have 8, 13 or 21 fruitlets. In other words, the way the fruitlets are arranged on the pineapple is a question of mathematics!

► We think of a pineapple as a single fruit. In fact, a pineapple is made of many smaller fruits that have grown together. First, a cluster of flowers bloom. Then, small fruits grow where the flowers were, but instead of growing as individual fruits, they merge together.



The fruitlets tell us about the growth pattern of the pineapple. We can see the same growth pattern in other plants and animals. What's really amazing is that the mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci found a mathematical formula to describe this pattern, which we now call "the Fibonacci sequence". A sequence is a series of numbers that follow a particular pattern, and make a law.

**The rules of the Fibonacci sequence are simple:
the first two numbers are 1, and after that,
the next number is the sum of the previous two numbers.**

With those two rules, you can write down the rest of the sequence: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233...

Back then, Fibonacci used rabbits to explain the relationship between this sequence and growth patterns.

In his rabbit example, Fibonacci asked people to think of one pair of rabbits producing one pair of baby rabbits at regular



Fibonacci's Rabbits

If a pair of newborn baby rabbits grow up and have one pair of baby rabbits, and those baby rabbits grow up and have one pair of baby rabbits, and all the pairs of rabbits continue to produce one pair of baby rabbits at the same regular intervals, how will the number of rabbits increase?

1

1 pair
of baby
rabbits



1

They
grow up.



2

They produce 1 pair
of baby rabbits. Now
there are $1+1 = 2$
pairs of rabbits.





intervals. When the baby rabbits matured, they also started producing one pair of baby rabbits at the same regular intervals. That's a lot of pairs of rabbits! In the chart below, you can see how the number of rabbits would increase. (This isn't how rabbits actually breed, but it was Fibonacci's way of showing how the sequence works.)

The fruitlets on the pineapple have exactly the same growth pattern. If you're wondering how, don't worry, just turn the page and we'll do an experiment.

8

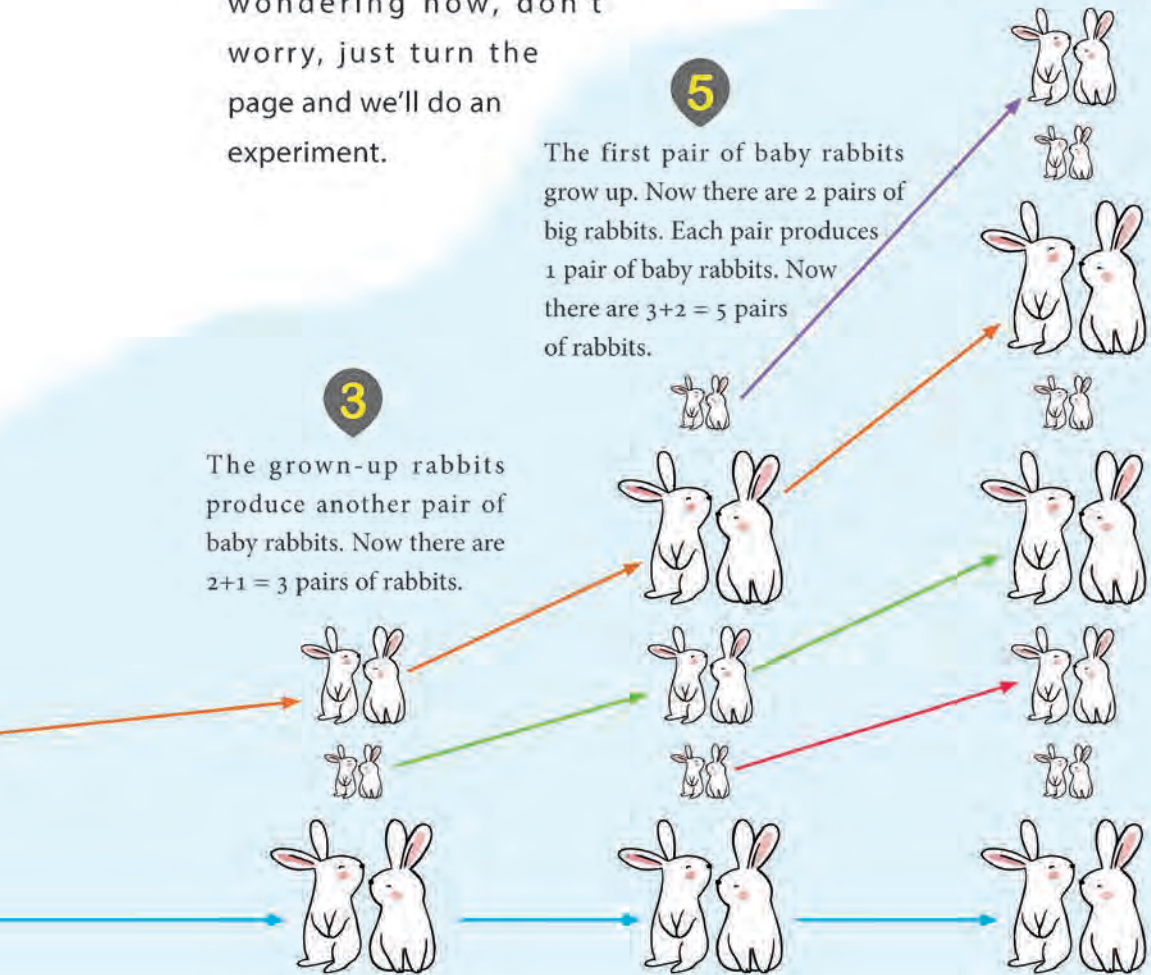
The second pair of baby rabbits grows up. Now there are 3 pairs of big rabbits. Each pair of big rabbits produces 1 pair of baby rabbits. Now there are $5+3 = 8$ pairs of rabbits. And so it continues...

5

The first pair of baby rabbits grow up. Now there are 2 pairs of big rabbits. Each pair produces 1 pair of baby rabbits. Now there are $3+2 = 5$ pairs of rabbits.

3

The grown-up rabbits produce another pair of baby rabbits. Now there are $2+1 = 3$ pairs of rabbits.



Mathematical experiment

1. You will need a pineapple and two different color sticky tapes.



2. On the pineapple find a line of fruitlets that spirals from top left to bottom right of the pineapple, and mark the line with a piece of sticky tape.



3. Using the same color sticky tape, cover all the spirals going from top left to bottom right of the pineapple. When you have marked them all, count how many spirals you marked.



4. Then take the other color of sticky tape, and mark all the spirals going from top right to bottom left of the pineapple. When you have marked them all, count how many spirals you marked.



Not only rabbits and pineapples

When you have marked and counted the spirals on the pineapple, you should find that there are 8 or 13 spirals. If the fruitlets are very close together, you might be able to count 21 spirals.

These three numbers are the 6th, 7th and 8th numbers in the Fibonacci sequence (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34...). If you didn't know this, you might wonder why there are always 8, 13 or 21 spirals on a pineapple. Well, pineapples can't count, and it isn't a coincidence. It's because living things naturally grow according to a particular pattern: they need time to grow and then to produce the next generation.

Note! In this case, "next generation" does not only mean the parent-child relationship. It can also refer to the order in which petals grow on a flower or branches grow on a tree.

Mathematics is just a way of describing laws like this one. You can find the Fibonacci sequence everywhere in nature, not just in pineapples and rabbits.

Let me give you another example. When I was a child, and had to paint a tree in art class, I would start with the trunk, then paint two branches, which then branched into two smaller branches. My brushstrokes would get thinner and thinner as I went from 1 to 2, 4, 8, 16 and so on. But I was never happy with the trees I painted. At the time, I concluded that I had no artistic talent, but later I realized there was another reason. Back then, I hadn't looked closely enough — I hadn't seen that the growth pattern for trees follows the Fibonacci sequence.



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN