

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

LET'S PRETEND WE'RE FISH MY FRIEND LIVES IN THE NEIGHBORING VILLAGE PENGUINS' CONCERT GRANDMA AND HER GHOSTS: SUMMER TIME OF DOU-DOU MAMA BEAR IS ADDICTED TO HER PHONE SAMISHI'S FRUSTRATION MR. WANG ON THE STREET WHO WILL READ WITH ME? THE CATS' HOUSE I LOST IT! ONCE UPON A TIME, A TRAIN CAME TO THE ISLAND PFFT!!! WHILE WAITING FOR MAMA MY CLASSMATE IS A BEAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN THE MOUNTAIN

TAIWAN

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

Children's BOOKS | 2024

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

2024

ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

The Ministry of Culture of Taiwan (Republic of China) was established on May 20, 2012. As a member of the Executive Yuan, the Ministry oversees and cultivates Taiwan's soft power in the areas of arts and humanities, community development, crafts industry, cultural exchanges, international cultural participation, heritage, literature and publishing, living aesthetics, TV, cinema, and pop music. The logo of the Ministry is an indigo dyed morning glory. The indigenous flower symbolizes a trumpet heralding the coming of a new renaissance, in which cultural resources and aesthetics permeate all corners of the nation. The morning glory also represents the grassroots tenacity of Taiwan's diverse culture, a yearning for the positivity, simplicity, and warmth of earlier days, and a return to collective roots and values.

ABOUT BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

Books from Taiwan is an initiative funded by Ministry of Culture 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. 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.

CHILDREN'S

BOOKS

**BOOKS
FROM
TAIWAN**


Published by Ministry of Culture (MOC)
Minister of Culture | Yuan Li

Deputy Minister | Ching-Hwi Lee

Director | Ting-Chen Yang

Deputy Director | Yu-Ying Chu

Organizers | Wen-Ting Chen, Yu-Lin Chen, Shi-Ze Weng, Lun-Hui Lin

Address | No. 439 Zhongping Road, 14 Floor (South Building), Xinzhuang District, New Taipei City,
Taiwan

Website | <https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/>
Telephone | +886-2-8512-6000

Email | bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw
Editorial Team of Books from Taiwan
Managing Director | Rex How

Editor-in-Chief | Michelle Kuo

Production Manager | Nancy Wu

Editorial Assistant | Junye Chen, Wen-Chien Hsu

Editorial Consultants | Yong-Yi Wang, Qian-Hua Ke, Wei-Zhong Liu, Xin Su, Yi-Zhen Su, Xin-Zhi Wu,
Ming-Mei Gao, Mao-Yun Zhang, Jia-Ling Lai, Meng-Ying Xie, Ting-Chen Yang,
Yu-Ying Chu

Cover Design | Ting Sheng Chien

Design and Layout | Ting Sheng Chien, Ping Ping Ho, Shih-yung Chang

Issue | Children's Books, 2024

Publication Date | October 30, 2024

ISSN | 2410-0781

© Books from Taiwan 2.0, Autumn 2024

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior permission in writing of Books from Taiwan, or as expressly permitted by the law. Enquiries concerning reproduction should be sent to the Ministry of Culture.


Children's Books

- 008 **Let's Pretend We're Fish**
by Bei Lynn • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by SiLoo Story
- 018 **My Friend Lives in the Neighboring Village**
text by Yu-Ling Chu • illustrated by Chia-Hui Chu • translated by Helen Wang • published by Linking
- 028 **Penguins' Concert**
by Chen Yen-Ling • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by Hsin Yi
- 038 **Grandma and Her Ghosts: Summer Time of Dou-Dou**
text by Shau-Di Wang • illustrated by Miss Charlie • translated by Anne Lee • published by Dyna Books
- 048 **Mama Bear is Addicted to Her Phone**
by Wang Ching • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by Hsin Yi
- 058 **Samishi's Frustration**
by Yu-Lin Chen • translated by Leona Chen • published by Commonwealth Education
- 068 **Mr. Wang on the Street**
by Jun-Peng Chen • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by SiLoo Story
- 078 **Who Will Read With Me?**
by Jhih-Wei Hsu • translated by Lya Shaffer • published by Children's Publications
- 088 **The Cats' House**
text by Chih-Hao Yen • illustrated by Hui-Yin Hsueh • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by NAN I BOOK ENTERPRISE CO., LTD.
- 098 **I Lost It!**
by Li Man-Yin • translated by Rachel Wang Yung-Hsin • published by Hsin Yi
- 108 **Once Upon a Time, A Train Came to the Island**
by Huang Yi-Wen • translated by Kirsten Han • published by Taiwan Interinds
- 118 **PFFT!!!**
by Lai Shin Hau • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by Yuan-Liou
- 128 **While Waiting for Mama**
by Hsiao-chi Chang • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by The Eastern Publishing

Text Children's Books

- 138 **My Classmate Is A Bear**
text by Yeou-yu Chang • illustrated by Chiang Meng-Yun • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by Commonwealth Education
- 150 **Elementary School in the Mountain**
text by Xinyu • illustrated by Cola Chen • translated by Iris Lee • published by Little Soldier



Foreword

Taiwan is a beautiful island in the Pacific Ocean, a place where citizens cherish freedom of expression. Our country is rich in diverse, creative forms. From work to technology and even our philosophy of life, imagination plays a central role in how we live. We take particular pride in our children's authors and illustrators, whose empathy, sensitivity, and imagination are nurtured by a free and democratic society.

In recent years, Taiwanese picture book creators have excelled at the Bologna Illustration Exhibition and the Ragazzi Awards, achieving significant success in rights sales across various regions. In this year's recommended children's booklets, you'll find many creators who stand out for their distinctive artistic styles and

original themes. Whether you're newly exploring or already familiar with Asian works, I hope the content of this booklet offers valuable insights.

It's an honor to share these works with you. Surrounded on all sides by the sea, Taiwanese people have a deep desire to connect with the world. We're grateful that you are reading our books and joining us in this journey. We hope that the diverse styles and passions of these artists offer you a glimpse into the openness and expansiveness of life in Taiwan.



Rex How, Managing Director
Books from Taiwan

“Is there still magic in the world? Are we even still looking for it?” asks Samira Kentrić, a Slovenian children’s illustrator and author. Besides Ouija boards and spaces of religious worship, children’s books might be one of the last places where we actively seek—and trust in—magic. On these pages animals talk and mountains move.

In real life, of course, the earth is burning. Children’s book authors must retain footing in the world we know, even as they press toward a distant horizon of imagination. Giving children hope without denying reality becomes their blessed, delicate, often underappreciated task.

One marvelous quality of Taiwanese authors is the grace with which they bear such contradictions. A girl and her dog discover a baby whale stranded on land. A child reaches out to connect with a man living on the street. A bear teaches students about the forest where he’s from. A colony of penguins in Antarctica puzzles over the presence of a human visitor. In

these books—*Let’s Pretend We’re Fish*, *Mr. Wang on the Street*, *My Classmate is a Bear*, and *Penguins’ Concert*—the authors wisely sidestep the misery and weight of contemporary crises, instead preserving the core stakes: the soulful act of forming unlikely friendships across species and social classes, and imagining coexistence between humans and the earth.

Authors also connect young readers to the past. *Once Upon a Time, A Train Came to the Island* is a resonant parable about authoritarian regimes: in it, a man tells his granddaughter of a train that took people away based on arbitrary rules. In *My Friend Lives in a Neighboring Village*, written in Taiwanese—a language suppressed under martial law—a QR code invites young readers to read along, with phrases like, “Take home a cabbage!” Meanwhile, in *Grandma and her Ghosts*, a young girl accompanies her grandma to buy fruits and release lanterns—scenes inspired, as the author puts it, by “profound nostalgia for a generation

you’ll never really know.”

Other books shed light on the importance of family communication. In *Mama Bear is Addicted to Her Phone*, a cub fights to reconnect with a mother distracted by her device. *Who Will Read With Me?* tells the story of a boy whose parents are too busy to read with him, and so he creates his own storytime party. In *Elementary School on the Mountain*, a middle-grade novel, a boy runs away from home and finds a mysterious school where he learns to recognize his negative emotions.

These books also acknowledge anxiety and grief, imagining playful or soulful ways out. *I Lost It!* follows a child who is constantly losing things, while *While Waiting for Mama* shows creative ways to cope with an extremely late pick-up. In *Samishi’s Frustration*, a girl feels as though her heart is weighed down by a hundred stones but discovers her own agency when she goes searching for ways to feel better. *The Cats’ House* tells the

story of a grandma grieving her husband and finding solace in his favorite animal, the cat. And then there’s *PFFT!*, in which a child farts his way through Taipei—transforming an often anxiety-inducing bodily function into a hilarious adventure.

These books counter various negative features of modern life, among them decadence, individualism, distraction, and apathy towards the earth. Instead, they overflow with values to live by: courage, solidarity, healing, cross-generational exchange, and interspecies friendship. These are the lessons that Taiwanese children’s literature offers to the world.



Michelle Kuo, Editor-in-chief
Books from Taiwan



Let's Pretend We're Fish

假裝是魚

Author: Bei Lynn **Illustrator:** Bei Lynn **Publisher:** SiLoo Story

Date: 9/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

44 pages | 16 x 23 cm **Volume:** 1 **Rights Sold:** French, Korean

Award: 2023 The 47th Golden Tripod Awards, Picture Book Category

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

A baby whale sneaks onto land to play but becomes trapped in a patch of grass. When a child and her dog discover the whale, they help him find his way back home.

A baby whale trapped on land is eager to go home. With the help of a child and her dog, he sends a message to his mother, who arrives and tells him to wait for the wind. Sure enough, the wind comes, and the grassy field transforms into waves. "Don't be nervous," the mother whale says to the child and her dog, as they head into the sea. "Just pretend that you're a fish."

This award-winning book beautifully captures the essence of children's imaginative play and explores coexistence across different environments and species. It fosters an early awareness of environmental protection and the relationship between land and sea.



Bei Lynn

Bei Lynn is a picture book creator who writes and illustrates with a passion for storytelling aimed at children. She has collaborated with the NSO National Symphony Orchestra on picture book concerts and with the National Theater on the picture book project *Playing Theater*. Her works include the series *Practicing Goodbye*, *Let's Pretend We're Fish*, *GRANNY'S FAVOURITE TOY*, *Mother Cloud* and *Leilong's Too Long!*

Bei Lynn's awards include the Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award, the Nami Concours Illustration Award in Korea, the Good Books for Everyone Annual Book Award, the OPENBOOK Annual Book Award, the German White Ravens Award, the Japanese Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Prize, the Taipei International Book Exhibition Grand Prize in 2023, and the Bologna Book Fair Ragazzi Award for The BRAW Amazing Bookshelf in 2023 and 2024. She is also the recipient of the Golden Tripod Award for Illustration. In 2021, she founded the independent publisher SiLoo Story.

“The Magic Hidden in the Ordinary” — Discussing *Let's Pretend We're Fish* with Author Bei Lynn

by Higo Wu
(originally published at Okapi)

“Pretending” is the core of almost all games. Someone pretends to be an eagle, so others pretend to be hens and chicks. Pretend police catch pretend thieves.

Let's Pretend We're Fish immerses readers in a world where pretending takes center stage. A girl and her dog join a mother and baby whale in the sea. The mother advises, “Just pretend you're a fish.” Without missing a beat, the girl responds, “I'm a mermaid,” and the dog replies, “Then I'm a merdog.” They master underwater breathing and swim joyfully.

The scene of a prairie turning into the sea, with the characters carried by the wind, is inspired by childhood memories. As Bei Lynn puts it, “I grew up in the

Taipei metropolitan area but spent part of my childhood sitting on the balcony overlooking rice fields. The rice would grow tall, and each time the wind blew, the whole field would wave like the sea. This sight fascinated me.” In this book, she sought to transform her memory into a story.

Before releasing this new edition of *Let's Pretend We're Fish*, Bei Lynn drew a picture of a girl and dog lying on a whale's back, diving into the deep sea, looking relaxed and serene. Bei Lynn loved this drawing so much that she hung it on the wall in front of her work desk, frequently gazing at it.

Having previously collaborated with

Bei Lynn on *Mommy is a Cloud*, I had the chance to observe how she refines her work. Despite receiving accolades for *Clack-Clack-Clack* and *The Tooth Fell from the Universe*, she never stopped perfecting her methods. Years later, Bei Lynn made a remarkable new attempt with *Practicing Goodbye*—her first book not aimed primarily at children—and spent over a year revising *Let's Pretend We're Fish*, viewing it as a gift for children.

Bei Lynn is fond of saying, “I believe in the real magic hidden in ordinary things, like a flower blooming or a chick hatching from its egg.” This new edition reflects that philosophy, making the movement of the wind so tangible it feels almost

I grew up in the Taipei metropolitan area but spent part of my childhood sitting on the balcony overlooking rice fields. The rice would grow tall, and each time the wind blew, the whole field would wave like the sea. This sight fascinated me.

magical. When the wind arrives, the prairie transforms into the sea.

I asked Bei Lynn if there was a special message she wanted to convey to readers of *Let's Pretend We're Fish*. She paused, then said mysteriously, “It's real!”

This has been condensed and edited for this booklet.

*Higo Wu is a picture book critic, translator, and writer. He also hosts 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*.*

The little whale wants to go home soon.
"Mama, why haven't we left yet?"
"We're waiting for the wind! When the wind comes, we'll leave."







The wind has come.
The grassland turns into the sea.



My Friend Lives in the Neighboring Village

我的朋友躑佇隔壁庄

Author: ThíGiòk-lîng **Illustrator:** Thí Ka-huē **Publisher:** Linking

Date: 12/2023

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

44 pages | 14.5 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Helen Wang

A short visit to a friend's house becomes a carefree journey, filled with playful moments reminiscent of childhood.

Created by sister duo ThíGiòk-lîng and Thí Ka-huē, *My Friend Lives in the Neighboring Village* is their third Taiwanese-language picture book. Rich with scenes of daily rural life, the story captures the joy of visiting a friend in a neighboring village, evoking the freedom and wonder of childhood.

From shrimp ponds to cabbage fields, wild wax apples to the kindly greetings of an elderly neighbor, the book offers a soulful tour of the Taiwanese countryside, highlighting the warmth of human connections and friendships. The gentle, colorful illustrations take a whimsical approach, portraying a child and her dog on an unforgettable journey.

Written in Taiwanese, the book includes an audio recording of the text and a version in full Taiwanese romanization, offering an immersive experience of the language.



ThíGiòk-lîng

Originally from Pingtung, ThíGiòk-lîng, a former high school teacher, embarked on her journey into illustration and picture book creation in 2000. Although her pursuits were interrupted for several years, she reignited her passion in 2018 when invited to participate in the "Handmade Picture Book Exhibition" at a bookstore. Currently residing in Pingtung with her family and four dogs, Yu-Ling Chu enjoys extensive reading and works as a picture book author and Soulcollage® facilitator.



Thí Ka-huē

Thí Ka-huē, the illustrator, specializes in painting and handmade artistic creations, with a keen interest in experimenting with various materials. Her daily life includes gardening, weaving, and caring for her dogs. Her illustrations feature in works such as *Black Wings*, *Story Sixty-eight*, *Love of Light*, *Myth of Badaiwan*, *Seaside Gaze Welcoming the Return*, *Orchid Island*, *Flying Fish*, *Giants and Stories*, *Summer Has Passed*, and *My Grandfather the Hunter: Confronting the Fearsome Black Bear*.

A Child's Light-hearted and Joyful Journey: The Story Behind a Taiwanese-Language Picture Book

by ThiGiòk-lîng

Over twenty years ago, while living in Taipei, my sister and I met A-Lan, a fellow native from our hometown in Pingtung, a rural county at the southernmost tip of Taiwan. As it turned out, A-Lan had lived just four kilometers away in a neighboring village. Although we didn't know each other as children, we eventually crossed paths as adults, hundreds of kilometers away in Taipei.

During the holidays, when we returned home, we would occasionally visit her in the

neighboring village. Later, my sister drew a series of illustrations titled "My Friend Lives in the Neighboring Village," featuring a child walking a small dog along the paths between fields and fish ponds, quietly making her way to the neighboring village to visit a friend.

In 2021, my sister mentioned this set of illustrations again and expressed her desire to turn it into a picture book. During our discussions, myriad images and story details emerged. Through this book, I

Through this book, I hope to express in Taiwanese the feelings and emotions of my childhood. When we'd encounter something exciting, we'd say tsin sim-sik, which means "so much fun," and when swinging, we would say ū-kàu sin-sóng, which means "so satisfying."

hope to express in Taiwanese the feelings and emotions of my childhood. When we'd encounter something exciting, we'd say *tsin sim-sik*, which means "so much fun," and when swinging, we would say *ū-kàu sin-sóng*, which means "so satisfying." We would say it while riding a bike. Thus, our originally quiet story transformed into a light-hearted and joyful journey. We even took a bus to the neighboring village to visit friends, where we ate wax apples (*lián-bū*) and tomatoes (*kam-á-bit*). It was truly marvelous.

In the story, the scenery along the way as the little girl visits her friend in the neighboring village reflects the daily life in our rural area—shrimp ponds, cabbage fields, fallow land overgrown with grass, and freshly plowed fields. Over the decades, the rural landscape has changed

significantly. My sister captured the childhood scenery in the story, including her favorite wildflowers and native wax apples, as well as horsetail tree, black nightshade, white rice trees, and cattails. She recreated the fields of that time and the carefree childhood moments.

What hasn't changed is the familiar elderly folks we would meet in the fields, who always greeted us warmly: *Libehtsia h hue-kue-á bô?* (Do you want to eat some cucumbers?) or *Tsitliap ko-lê-tshàimoohtng—khitsiah!* (Take this cabbage home to eat!)

But how do you carry such a big cabbage? That's quite the dilemma!

This excerpt from the book's afterword has been edited for this booklet.

It was wax apples!





Shall we go now? Are you ready?

Hurray!
This is such fun!





Penguins' Concert

企鵝演奏會

Author: Chen Yen-Ling **Illustrator:** Chen Yen-Ling **Publisher:** Hsin Yi

Date: 4/2021

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

48 pages | 25 x 25 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights sold: Korean

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

In this charming picture book, a caretaker arrives by red helicopter to meet over a hundred lively and playful penguins.

At first, the penguins and caretaker misunderstand each other, treating each other warily. But once the caretaker starts to play a melodica, they begin to connect. As the melody fills the air, their friendship gradually blossoms.

One day, out of childlike curiosity, the penguins steal the melodica and take it into the ocean. Without the melodica, both the penguins and the caretaker grow anxious, worried that they have hurt each other's feelings. Yet, they find a way to transcend language barriers and discover new ways to communicate love and care.

This playful, exuberantly illustrated book has international appeal, celebrating the bonds of connection across species and showing that friendship can thrive even without words.



Chen Yen-Ling

Chen Yen-Ling holds a Master's degree in Visual Communication Design from Pratt Institute in New York, USA. She is an enthusiast of mice, books, and leisurely afternoons. She is a recipient of the Children's Literature Pied Piper Award and the Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award. Chen is the author of *100 Questions About Weather*, which has been recommended as excellent reading material by the Golden Tripod Award. Chen's works have received numerous accolades, including a recommendation for the Picture Book Creation Award at the 32nd Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award, a recommendation for Excellent Publishing at the Golden Tripod Award for Children's and Youth Books, and nominations for the Taipei International Book Exhibition Grand Prize in 2022 and the 2021 Openbook Annual Best Books.

A Playful, Whimsical Story in Antarctica: *Penguins' Concert*

By Wu Xingling
translated by Michelle Kuo

Penguins' Concert tells the story of a caretaker gradually forming a bond with a group of penguins. When he first arrives in Antarctica, he struggles to connect with the penguins due to his lack of familiarity with their habits. Lonely and isolated, he plays his melodica, and to his surprise, the music piques the penguins' curiosity, leading to their first positive interactions.

The evolving relationship between the caretaker and the penguins mirrors the way human interactions often begin. At first, both sides are reserved; both undergo a process of mutual observation and adjustment. The caretaker first tries to blend in by mimicking the penguins' movements and offering them krill and small fish, but these attempts prove unsuccessful. Frustrated, he plays his melodica alone. Unexpectedly, this sparks the penguins' interest and brings them closer. The sound of the melodica delights the penguins, fostering an emotional

connection.

One day, the penguins playfully take the melodica. They pat, feed it, and even take it swimming in the sea. Like curious children, they treat the object as their friend. Eventually, the melodica breaks, with its pieces floating on the surface of the sea. The penguins, again like children, realize they've done something wrong. They worry that the caretaker might be upset and distance himself from them. Similarly, the caretaker wonders if the penguins will still engage with him without the melodica. Thus, caretaker and penguin—each sensitive to each other's feelings—began to see things from the other's perspective, deepening their bond.

As the time for separation approaches, the caretaker, looking down from a helicopter, sees the penguins lined up in a long row, resembling the keys of a melodica, as if they are playing a concert for him. This imaginative imagery

suggests the possibility that their beautiful relationship will continue to grow in different ways.

The illustrations in *Penguins' Concert* are outstanding, using just four simple colors—black, white, blue, and red—to capture the serene atmosphere of Antarctica. The appearance, posture, and expressions of the caretaker and penguins are both charming and expressive. A little penguin with a heart-shaped spot on its tail frequently appears next to the caretaker, and their evolving interaction, from initial curiosity to affection, subtly connects the emotions throughout the story. Appreciating the

illustrations adds to the joy of visual discovery. The author's choice of the melodica as a medium, with its black and white keys mirroring the penguins' colors, adds a delightful touch of whimsy.

A little penguin with a heart-shaped spot on its tail frequently appears next to the caretaker, and their evolving interaction, from initial curiosity to affection, subtly connects the emotions throughout the story.

Wu Xingling is an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Social Welfare at the Chinese Culture University and the Department of Children and Family Studies at Fu Jen Catholic University.

This excerpt from the book's afterword has been condensed for this booklet.

Every day he documented the penguins' behavior with care.



One day, when he was busy, the penguins were so curious about his instrument that they stole it.





But no matter how hard the penguins hit its belly,
the instrument remained silent.

The penguins thought, "It must be because he's hungry!"





The penguins stuffed small fish and krill into its mouth,
but it still wouldn't talk.

The penguins thought, "Maybe he's unhappy."



Grandma and Her Ghosts: Summer Time of Dou-Dou

魔法阿媽：豆豆的夏天

Author: Shau-Di Wang **Illustrator:** Miss Charlie **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 1/2022

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

36 pages | 23.5 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Anne Lee

The first picture book inspired by Shau-di Wang's classic animated film *Grandma and Her Ghosts* introduces a brand-new story. Written in a simple, childlike style, the story comes to life by Miss Charlie's exquisite and lively illustrations. Together, they capture the joy and charm of Dou Dou and Grandma's summer adventures.

During the hot summer vacation, little Dou Dou returns to his grandma's house, excited to take part in the annual grand celebration. Each day at Grandma's is filled with activities: playing with Kuro and Shiro, picking vegetables, doing housework, going shopping, visiting the lantern festival, releasing water lanterns, and participating in Pu Tu, a traditional festival ritual. At night, Dou Dou falls asleep holding her grandma's ear.

Shau-di Wang's playful text, paired with Miss Charlie's beautiful illustrations, fills Dou Dou and his grandma's summer with warmth and joy. Along with their daily interactions, the book paints vivid scenes of traditional Taiwanese life, inviting readers to experience the summer atmosphere and the warm bond between grandmother and grandson.



Shau-Di Wang

Shau-Di Wang is a charismatic director known for his passionate humor and emphasis on social communication through television. Over the past forty years, he has continuously created imaginative and vibrant films, television shows, documentaries, and stage plays. In 1998, he directed *Grandma and Her Ghosts*, a classic Taiwanese animated film, which won the Taipei Film Festival's Best Film of the Year and the Chicago International Children's Film Festival Award of Excellence. He is set to release the sequel animated film *Grandma and Her Ghosts 2: Magic Little Bean Sprout* in 2024.



Miss Charlie

Miss Charlie, originally from Tainan, graduated from the Department of Fine Arts at National Kaohsiung Normal University and holds a master's degree in Animation from Tainan University of the Arts. She currently works as a freelance illustrator and animation director. She was shortlisted for the film festival with the solo game *Me and Me*. *Grandma and Her Ghosts: Summer Time of Dou-Dou* was selected for the Taiwan Pavilion at the 2023 Bologna Children's Book Fair, and won the Jury Special Award at the 2004 Taipei Film Festival for her personal animation *Rainy Noon*.

“A Profound Nostalgia for a Generation You’ll Never Really Know”: The Story Behind a Classic Film Adapted into a Children’s Book

By Shau-di Wang

Translated by Michelle Kuo

People of my generation, like Li-ming Huang, the screenwriter of *Grandma and Her Ghosts*, often grew up in families that were quite poor. This was during a time when Taiwan, much like the character of the grandma in the movie, was struggling with limited resources.

Despite these hardships, there was still a prevailing belief in having large families. Most families had four or five children, and with three meals a day, 365 days a year, even in cramped living conditions, they managed to have one or two large beds. But where could you fit four or five desks? Having even a single bathroom

with a shower for six or seven people was sometimes considered a luxury.

They wore hand-me-down uniforms with their older siblings’ names still stitched on them, received homegrown vegetables and fruits from neighborly aunts and uncles, listened to ghost stories by candlelight during power outages, and drifted to sleep under mosquito nets gently swayed by the hands of adults. These memories fostered a deep sense of being nurtured with reverence and peaceful coexistence.

I recall Li-ming sharing that, as a child, when she returned to Tainan during the

summers, she would see her grandmother sitting peacefully in a rattan chair during the afternoons. Dressed in a simple cotton vest typically worn by men, her

Her grandma was truly remarkable. Everything about her carried a distinct warmth. As soon as you made contact, you were transported to that magical boundary, where you encountered a profound nostalgia for a generation you’ll never really know.

grandmother would slowly comb her hair under the warm sunlight, adjusting her chair as the sun shifted. Li-ming said her grandmother didn’t wash her hair, only combed it. This image of her grandmother combing her hair beneath the sun

became a defining moment in her life’s vision.

Her grandma was truly remarkable. Everything about her—the outdated treasures she kept, the way she looked at you, her deliberate pace, and the hands she extended toward you—carried a distinct warmth. As soon as you made contact, you were transported to that magical boundary, where you encountered a profound nostalgia for a generation you’ll never really know. Miss Charlie’s illustrations evoke that magical warmth for me.

This excerpt from the book’s afterword has been condensed for this booklet.



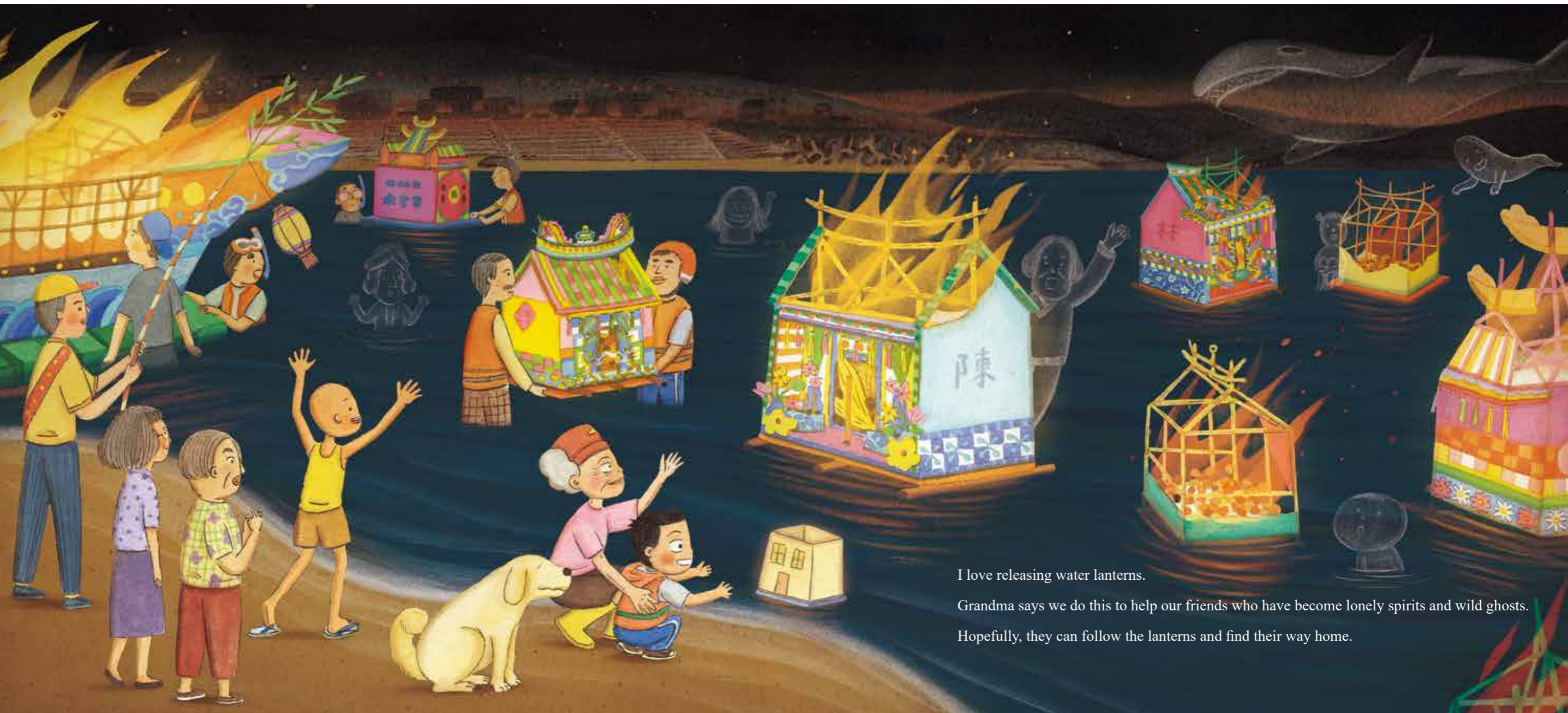
耶一

Yeah!



This morning, after I wake up,
Grandma tells me we'll worship at the temple tonight.
"It's Ghost Festival!"

哇!
WOW!



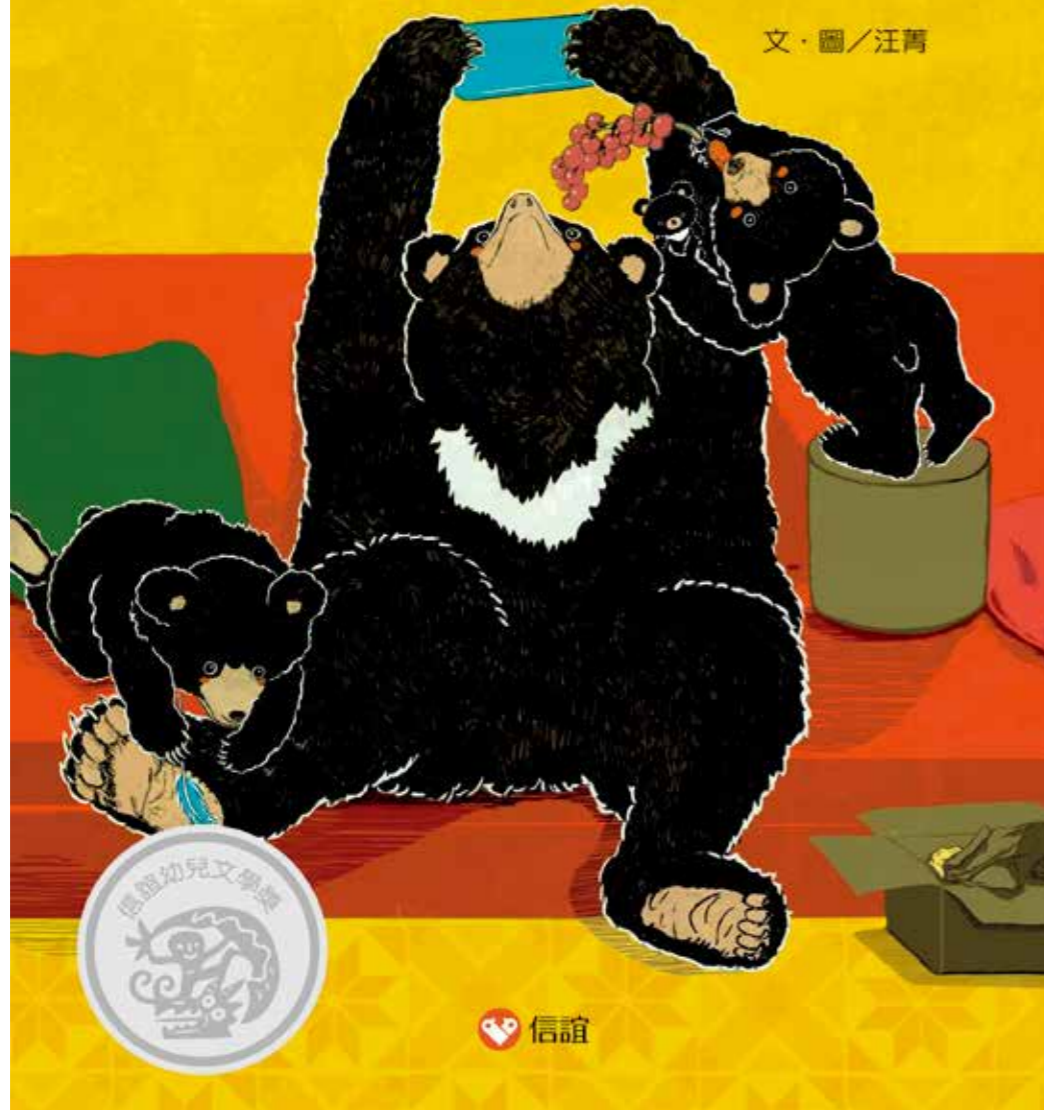
I love releasing water lanterns.

Grandma says we do this to help our friends who have become lonely spirits and wild ghosts.

Hopefully, they can follow the lanterns and find their way home.

熊媽媽愛上了手機

文·圖／汪菁



048 | 049

BOOKS
FROM
TAIWAN

熊媽媽愛上了手機

Author: Wang Ching | Illustrator: Wang Ching | Publisher: Hsin Yi

Date: 4/2022

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

40 pages | 19 x 26 cm

Volume: 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

"Mama, Mama! Read us a story," the cubs say.

"Okay! Just wait a second," Mama replies, but she keeps looking at her phone.

Mama Bear can't stop looking at her phone, and her cubs are getting frustrated. How can they get her to play with them? The younger cub decides to take matters into his own hands. He takes Mama Bear to all the places they've been, reminding her of the things they've done together. Then one day, while they're outside, something happens that brings them back together.

The message of this timely book will feel uncomfortably familiar to many parents. This playful and hopeful story encourages families to reflect on how technology affects their relationships and how to nurture fulfilling parent-child interactions.



Wang Ching

A graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts, Wang Ching teaches, creates art, and leads parent-child activities. Her life and work often revolve around children, whom she enjoys as much as stories and drawing. She has published numerous picture books, among them *Earth Star Lord* and *His Twelve Sons and Earth is Running a Fever*. She has earned an Honorable Mention in the 32nd Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award for Picture Book Creation and a recommendation in the 45th List of Excellent Extracurricular Reading Materials for Primary and Secondary School Students.

Mama Bear is Addicted to Her Phone

The Great Battle for Love Amidst Phone Addiction: A Note from the Author

by Wang Ching
translated by Michelle Kuo

Amidst today's epidemic of phone addiction, this book tells the story of a bear family that once shared loving memories. But

now, Mama Bear can't stop looking at her phone, and her cubs feel neglected, sensing they must compete with the device for their mother's attention. In their quest to reclaim her affection, the cubs devise many innocent and endearing strategies.

Despite Mama Bear's phone addiction, she genuinely cares about her children. For instance, when the older cub risks falling from a tower of chairs that he's built, she prioritizes his safety. Similarly, when she and the younger cub fall into the

When Mama Bear can't stop looking at her phone, her cubs feel neglected. In their quest to reclaim their mother's affection, the cubs devise many innocent and endearing strategies.

water, she rushes to save him. These moments reflect Mama Bear's deep, inherent love for her children.

In the digital age, the use of electronic devices is unavoidable. As obvious as it may seem, we each need to be mindful of balancing our time between "picking up" and "putting down" technology. This story shares the hope that everyone will use technology wisely, for genuine human emotional connections remain irreplaceable.

This excerpt from the book's afterword has been condensed for this booklet.

Parent-Child Interaction in the Swipe Generation

by Kuo-Neng Hsu

In this book, a phone steals Mama Bear away from her cubs, who must find a way to bring their mother back from the digital world. Through their adventurous journey, Mama Bear eventually returns to reality, allowing the cubs to experience her love and care. It turns out that Mama's love was always present; she just needed a little nudge.

When adults are glued to their phones, children can feel neglected. They may mimic their parents' behavior and become absorbed in the digital world. It's crucial for adults to periodically put down their phones and engage in direct, genuine interactions with their children. This story teaches urgent lessons, among them the need to find simple joys in nature and build relationships based on mutual care.

When reading this book with children, it's helpful to discuss how the internet offers many conveniences, and that parents often need to use phones for various tasks. Children can learn to empathize with their parents' struggles

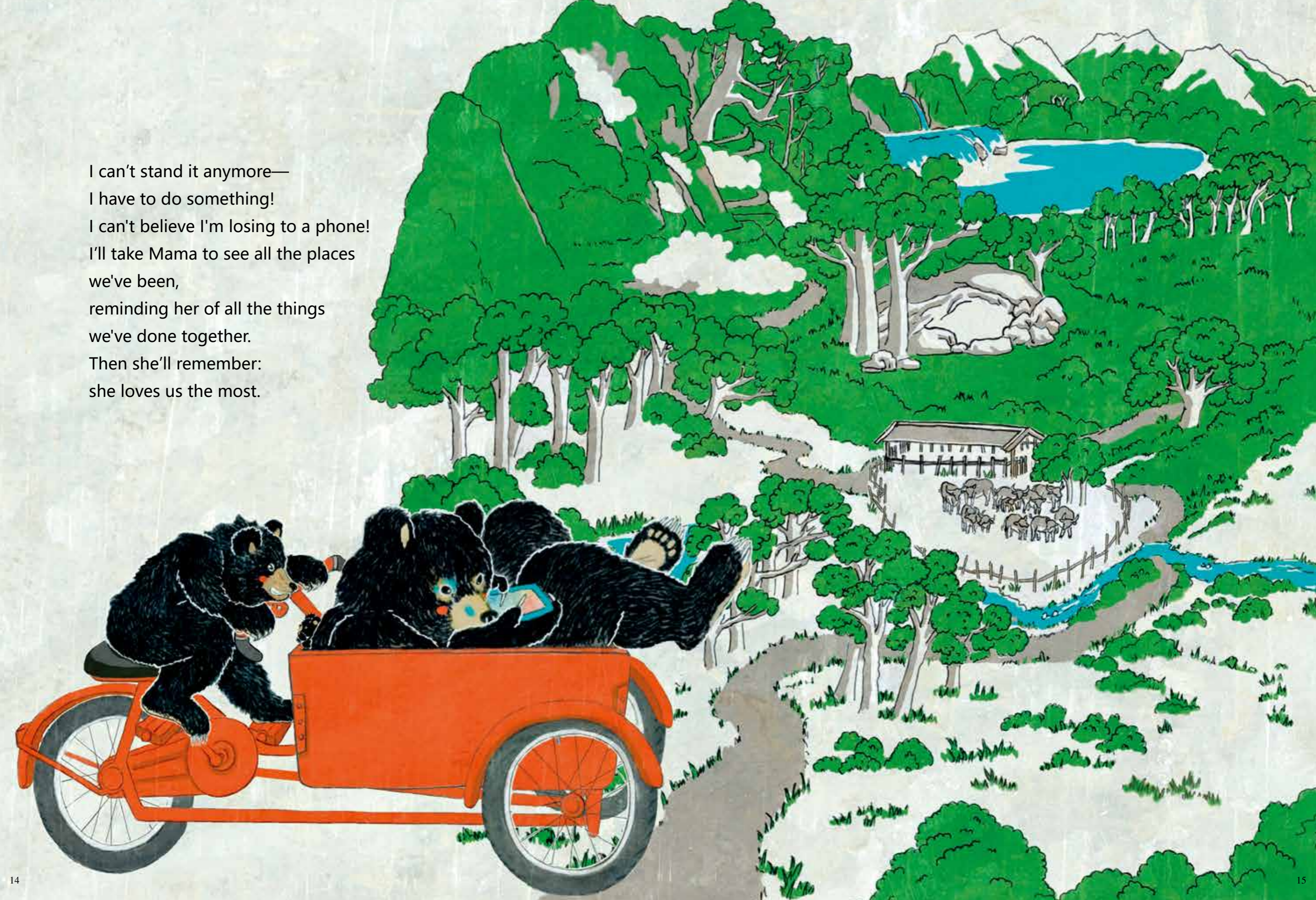
and also take care of themselves.

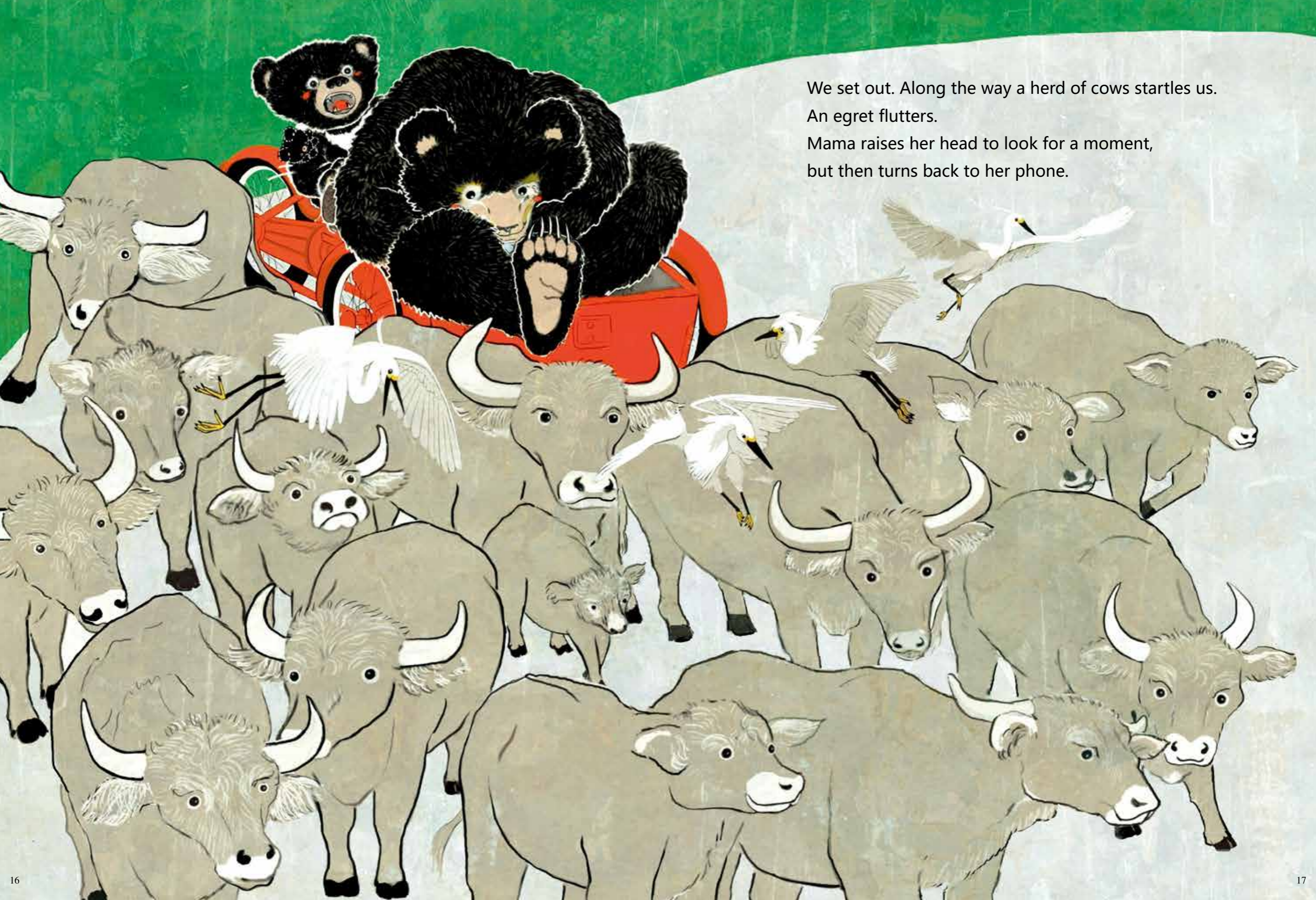
A charming, vividly illustrated, and thought-provoking book, *Mama Bear Is Addicted to Her Phone* not only reminds us to balance our time between the real and virtual worlds but also teaches messages of respect and understanding. It encourages children to appreciate that everyone needs their own time and that "love" is not only about constant presence but also care. This book prompts us to reflect on how to enrich parent-child interactions in the modern age. As members of the Swipe Generation, we often find ourselves absorbed in our phones, sacrificing sleep and sometimes neglecting the more valuable aspects of real life.

Kuo-Neng Hsu is a professor in the Department of Chinese, National Taiwan Normal University

This excerpt from the book's afterword has been condensed for this booklet.

I can't stand it anymore—
I have to do something!
I can't believe I'm losing to a phone!
I'll take Mama to see all the places
we've been,
reminding her of all the things
we've done together.
Then she'll remember:
she loves us the most.





We set out. Along the way a herd of cows startles us.
An egret flutters.
Mama raises her head to look for a moment,
but then turns back to her phone.



The forest animals are no better than Mama!
They are looking at their phones, too.
They say they're waiting to catch a Pokémon.
Mama wants to catch one, too. I push Mama to leave.



Samishi's Frustration

賽米希的煩惱

Author: Yu-Lin Chen **Illustrator:** Yu-Lin Chen **Publisher:** Commonwealth Education

Date: 2/2024

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

44 pages | 19 x 26 cm

Volume: 2-3 books planned for publication

Rights sold: Korean

BFT2.0 Translator: Leona Chen

For Samishi, it feels as if a hundred stones are weighing on her heart. Frustrated, she decides to go out and ask everyone, "How can I get rid of my frustration?"

The horse says you can shake it off by running. The lion suggests roaring loudly to make it disappear. The rabbit says that if you speak your worries out loud, they'll vanish.

But none of these methods work for Samishi. How can she solve her frustration?

Yu-Lin Chen uses stunning illustrations to explore the concept of frustration, guiding children to understand worries from different perspectives and offering ways to address them. This is part of a social and emotional learning series designed to foster self-awareness, empathy, and confidence in children and young adults.



Yu-Lin Chen

Yu-Lin Chen, a two-time finalist for the Bologna Illustrators' Award and recipient of the Golden Tripod Award, holds a Master's degree from Utrecht School of the Arts in the Netherlands. She enjoys walking, nature, and talking to cats. *Samishi's Frustration* is part of a social and emotional learning picture book series that will continue next year, with two to three books planned for publication.

To Support Children Through Frustration, Allow Them to Make Their Own Choices

by Ashley Chen

(originally appeared in Books.com.tw)

Have you ever been so troubled by a decision that it consumed your thoughts for days, leaving you torn between options? One day you lean toward one choice, and the next, you're convinced of another. Even though you know there may not be a single "correct" answer, the weight of the decision feels overwhelming, especially knowing it could shape your future.

At first, the people around you are supportive, offering advice and giving you time to think. But as your indecision lingers, their patience wanes. They start pushing for a quick resolution, as if a decision will solve the problem. Or they

might give you advice: "If you're stressed, just scream it out or talk to someone." But sometimes screaming doesn't help, and talking to people who don't understand

only deepens the frustration. Suddenly, they add a new layer to your worries: not only the original decision but also how to stop others from becoming anxious about your indecision.

When faced with major life decisions and

uncertainty, sometimes the best thing to do is set the worry aside. Do something that brings you joy or calm, allowing yourself space to breathe. Surprisingly, moments of clarity often arise when we're not actively searching for them. And when

This wise book reminds caregivers to accompany children through their frustration without trying to solve it.

that moment comes, the answer will feel right, and the doubt will vanish.

That's why I love the picture book *Samishi's Frustration*. The pivotal moment comes when the worry-filled protagonist receives some valuable advice: "Sometimes, when you're frustrated, you can't fix the problem. But you can change how you feel about it!"

Worries are temporary. What we need to practice is enduring uncertainty without letting our emotions take control.

Samishi's Frustration teaches children to:

1. Recognize what frustration feels like,
2. Know what to do when they feel overwhelmed, and
3. Understand that even when nothing seems to help, our attitude can make all the difference.

More importantly, this wise book reminds caregivers to accompany children through their frustration without trying to solve it. By showing empathy and helping them find joy in small moments, we don't have to fully understand their struggles. Instead, we can practice patience and learn to observe without intervening—and so doing, allow children to make their own choices in life.

Ashley Chen is a counselor, psychologist, lecturer, and author.

This article has been condensed for the purposes of this booklet.



She decides to go for a walk.
Maybe this will help her feel less frustrated.

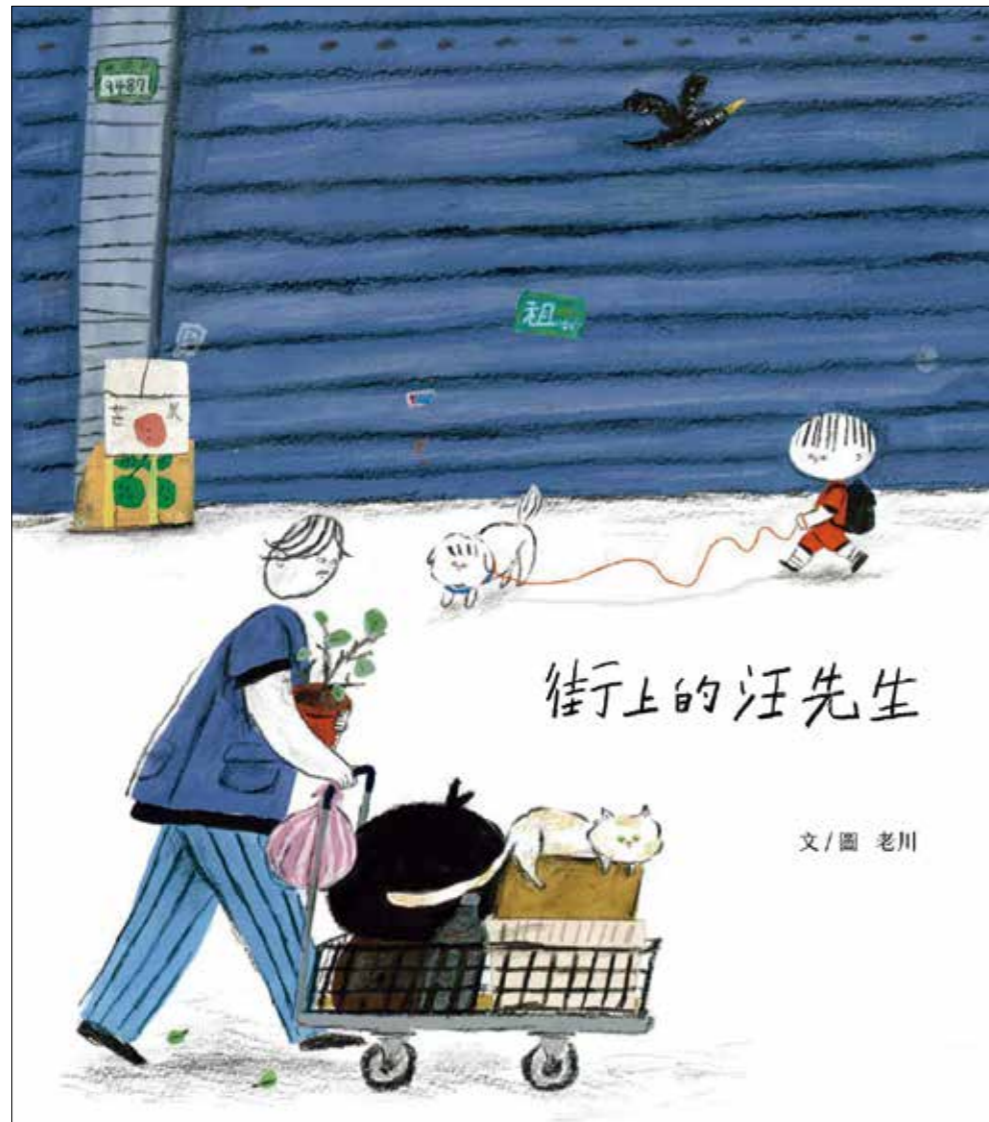


On her walk, Samishi meets a horse.
She asks the horse, "Have you ever been frustrated? I am frustrated now."

"What is a frustration?" the horse asks.
"A frustration is like having a hundred stones on your chest,
making you feel like you can't breathe."



“Then I would run and run,” says the horse,
“until I shake off that feeling.”



Mr. Wang on the Street

街上的汪先生

Author: Jun-Peng Chen **Illustrator:** Jun-Peng Chen **Publisher:** SiLoo Story

Date: 2/2024

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

48 pages | 23 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1

Awards: 2022 Kaohsiung Library "KPL Picture Books Sprouting Awards"

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

This picture book is rare in its exploration of homelessness. With gentle subtlety, it tells the story of Mr. Wang, a man living on the street, and a little boy who reaches out to connect with him.

This book tells the story of a child who encounters Mr. Wang, a man living on the street who works in the park. Mr. Wang waters the plants, tends to kumquat trees, and pushes a cart that holds all his belongings. Every night, he searches for a safe place to sleep, knowing that once he closes his eyes, he can't protect himself. Author and illustrator Jun-Peng Chen approaches this difficult and urgent subject with a subtle, imaginative touch.



Jun-Peng Chen

Jun-Peng Chen is an illustrator fond of humor and horror stories. A dog lover, she has a Maltese and is inspired by the happiness offered by her pet. Chen's works often feature dogs and other animals. Her other published works include *Crossing the Road*, which won the Green Picture Book. *Mr. Wang on the Street* received and the 2022 Kaohsiung Library "KPL Picture Books Sprouting Awards" Award. Chen donated the royalties from the first print of *Mr. Wang on the Street* to the Taiwan Homeless Association.

“Does Everybody Have a Home?”: This Children’s Book Is For People Without Homes

by Wenjun Wu
translated by Michelle Kuo
(originally published at Okapi)

Creating a picture book that explores the theme of homelessness is no easy task. “This story has been in my heart for seven years,” says author and illustrator Jun-Peng Chen. “I told myself to keep writing, even if I didn’t have ideas,” she said. “I ended up writing many versions, each different, and finally arrived at the version that became the book.”

Her inspiration for this story began during her daily walks with her dog, when she noticed a man frequently loitering around the community park. One day she saw him watering the flowers beside an overpass. “He actually shares the same interest as my mother,” Chen thought. This curiosity led her to want to understand his life on the streets better. She began to immerse herself in research and reached

out to the Taiwan Homeless Association to learn more about the stories of the homeless.

Her delicate observations of life, accumulated over many years, give *Mr. Wang on the Street* a layered quality. The text and illustrations repeatedly explore the concept of home. From the starling’s nest to the turtle’s log, everyone’s home looks different. Yet the inner longing for stability remains universal. “For Mr. Wang, all of his possessions are on a little cart,” she writes. “Wherever he goes, that’s his home, but it’s also not his home.”

Bei Lynn, a children’s book illustrator and artist, founded the independent publisher SiLoo Story. She edited *Mr. Wang on the Street*, praising it. “The staff at the Taiwan Homeless Association read

Mr. Wang on the Street and said that every sentence hits the heart. I think this book can explain a complex situation with just one sentence.”

At the beginning of the story, a boy walking his dog quietly sees Mr. Wang from a distance, feeling curious about the stranger. When Mr. Wang bathes at the sink outside the public restroom, Chen illustrates the boy noticing through a mirror. Gradually, the boy approaches him. Later, they chat together on a bench in the street.

Even though the topic is heavy, Chen manages to bring an imaginative and hopeful perspective to readers. The

*Does everybody have a home?
A place where if your stomach hurts,
you can rush to the toilet immediately,
A place where if you’re sleepy, you can
fall asleep without thinking.
Does everybody have a home like this?
Mr. Wang doesn’t.*

story’s text ends with the start of a new, sunny day. But the illustrations continue beyond the text, showing a windy and rainy night,

with Mr. Wang sleeping alone under a bridge—still a homeless person living in the cold. Repeated readings of this book can change a reader’s perception of the challenges facing those who live on the street.

Wenju Wu is a writer, contributor to Reading on a Swing, picture book translator, and editor.

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



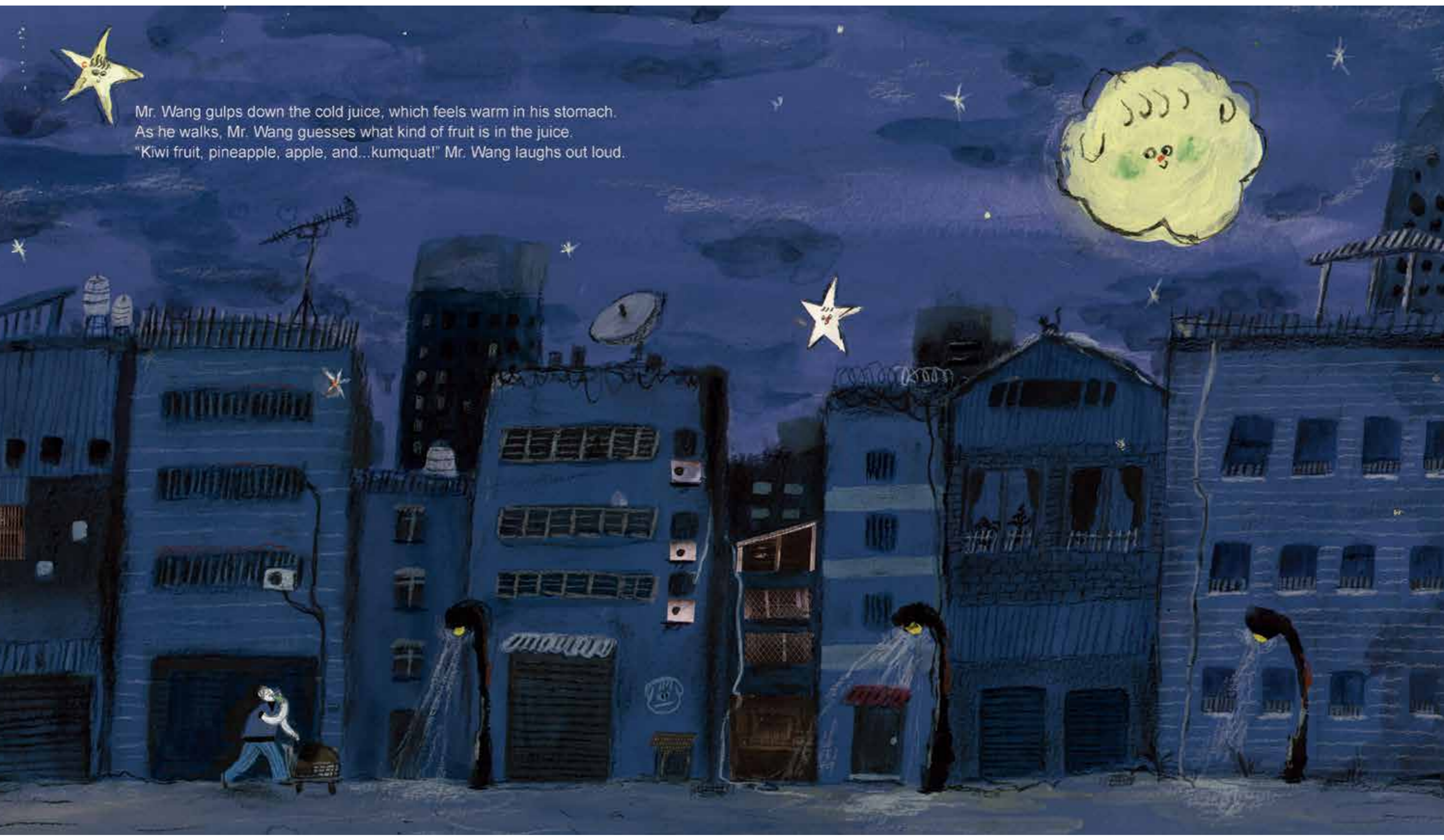
"So, I need to get going! Otherwise I won't get a good spot to sleep."

As Mr. Wang rises to leave, the owner of the juice shop runs out and hands him a cup of the summer special juice, saying, "Good night! Be careful on your way."





Mr. Wang gulps down the cold juice, which feels warm in his stomach.
As he walks, Mr. Wang guesses what kind of fruit is in the juice.
"Kiwi fruit, pineapple, apple, and...kumquat!" Mr. Wang laughs out loud.





Who Will Read With Me?

誰來陪我唸故事書？

Author: Jhih-Wei Hsu **Illustrator:** Jhih-Wei Hsu **Publisher:** Children's Publications

Date: 8/2023

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

40 pages | 21 x 28 cm **Volume:** 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Lya Shaffer

A young boy teams up with classic fairy tale characters to host a storytelling party.

Holding a copy of *Peter Pan*, the boy asks his parents to read with him, but they're too busy. Left on his own, he's surprised when Peter Pan shows up and suggests throwing a story party. However, Little Red Riding Hood, the Three Little Pigs, and Rapunzel are all too busy to join. Who will read with him?

Undeterred, the boy hosts a playful and chaotic party with storybook characters, including a fire-breathing dragon, the Frog Prince, Dumbo, and Thumbelina. Though he doesn't get the storytime he initially hoped for with his parents, he creates his own adventure—and by the end, his parents join in after all.

This book gently reminds adults of the importance of spending quality time reading with their children. It encourages kids to express themselves, build reading habits, and create their own stories, while highlighting the power of imagination and independent reading.



Jhih-Wei Hsu

Jhih-Wei Hsu has many years of experience in advertising and design and has recently rediscovered the joy of drawing. Hsu's works have earned numerous accolades, including the 3x3 Illustration Award in the United States, the White Raven Award from the International Youth Library in Germany, Hsin-Yi Children Literature Award, the New Taipei City Literature Award, and the Good Books Everyone Reads Award for Best Children's Literature. Hsu's notable works include *Four Seasons*, *My Crayons*, and *Thank You, Good Night*. *Four Seasons* has also sold Korean translation rights. He has a deep passion for storytelling.

The Unique Time We Share When We Read Together: The Joy of *Who Will Read With Me?*

by Chen Yin-huei
(originally published at ARTouch)

Remember when children were little and would always be around, begging for stories? One reading, two readings—they always wanted to hear the story many, many times. Sometimes, even if you've already fallen asleep, they'd still be wide-eyed, insisting on hearing the story just one more time.

Who Will Read With Me? evokes such memories. The story starts with a boy holding Peter Pan, hoping his parents will read with him. But

they are too busy. The boy, left alone with the book, is surprised when Peter Pan appears and proposes a story party. But

Little Red Riding Hood, the Three Little Pigs, and Rapunzel are too busy to join. What will the boy do? Will anyone come to read the story with him?

So he asks to read with even more characters, among them Dumbo,

the Frog Prince, Thumbelina, and a fire-breathing dragon. An absurd party ensues.

At the end of the story, the child reads aloud, and it's the parents who become the listeners.

Despite efforts to promote parent-child shared reading for about fifteen years, shared reading remains a challenge for busy families. Filled with imaginative scenarios, this story transforms into a new adventure full of unexpected, whimsical events. Combining classic elements with fresh ideas, *Who Will Read With Me?* offers a unique experience for both adults and children. Illustrated with vibrant crayon drawings, it features bold and playful strokes that highlight the three-dimensionality of the characters.

At the end of the story, the child reads aloud, and it's the parents who become

the listeners. The book concludes with a warm parent-child embrace, and the boy receives the storytime he sought. This ending reinterprets what it means to read together. The boy who wanted to hear a story ends up not only missing out on the original story but also having an exciting adventure within it.

Chen Yin-huei is a children's book author, lecturer on shared reading between parent and children, and host of Story Life Care.



“Watch out!” cried Peter Pan, as the wooden nose nearly crashed into Xiaoxiao. Pinocchio clapped his hands over his mouth, not daring to speak another word nor move a muscle.



Next, the Frog Prince took in a deep breath and began to read.

“Ribbit— ribbit ribbit— ribbit ribbit ribbit ribbit—
ribbit ribbit— ribbit ribbit ribbit—ribbit ribbit ribbit—
ribbit—ribbit ribbit—”

“Oh dear. Nobody understands him, do they?”
Everyone giggled quietly.

It was Thumbelina’s turn.

She was so tiny, and her voice was even tinier!
With Sleeping Beauty’s snores droning in the background,
nobody could hear a word Thumbelina said,
let alone understand what she was reading.



The Fire-Breathing Dragon, growing impatient, stretched its wings wide and picked up a storybook. "Oh dear! What if all the books burn as soon as he opens his mouth?" worried Peter Pan. "The reading party will end early!"





The Cats' House

貓房子

Author: Chih-Hao Yen **Illustrator:** Hui-Yin Hsueh **Publisher:** NAN I BOOK ENTERPRISE CO., LTD.

Date: 2/2024

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

50 pages | 21 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights Sold: Korean **Rights sold:** Korean, Indonesian(contract pending)

Award: 2024 The 86th Good Books Everyone Reads Award, Best Children's and Youth Book Award

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

Grandma misses Grandpa and feels lonely without him. While he always loved cats—she never did—she slowly begins to open up to them.

This picture book delicately addresses themes of grief, dementia, stray cats, and the challenges of elderly people living alone. Despite its heavy subject matter, the story is filled with warmth, conveyed through loving language and imagery.

Upon its release, the book quickly topped the bestseller lists for children's books at both Books.com.tw and Eslite within its first week. It was selected as Eslite Recommends and received widespread acclaim from readers.



Chih-Hao Yen

Chih-Hao Yen holds a Ph.D. in Children's Literature and is known for his imaginative storytelling. He has received awards such as the Mudi Award, Chiu Ko Modern Children's Literature Award, Showwe Youth Literature Award, and the Ministry of Education's Literary Creation Award. His works span various formats, including novels, fairy tales, bridge books, children's songs, and picture books. Yen's works include *Plug Pig 1: The Power Outage Planet*, *Singing Children's Songs to Learn Zhuyin*, *A Fool Sells Fragrant Farts* and *Ghost Game*, *Sleepwalking*, and the *Shen Jump Wall* novel series.



Hui-Yin Hsueh

Hui-Yin Hsueh is an illustrator and occasional pottery artist who often draws inspiration from people, plants, and everyday landscapes. She is the author of *One Mom*, *Two Big Heads*, *It's Great to Live Here Together*, and *Big and Small: Everyday Battles Between Mothers and Children*. She has illustrated books such as *Mr. Alzheimer*, *Seven Ways to Eat Carrots*, *Sleepwalking*, and *Phonetic Practices*. Hsueh has received the 11th and 13th Book Design Golden Butterfly Award Honor Awards and was selected for the 2021 Bologna Children's Book Fair Illustration Exhibition.

If the One You Love Disappears, Does Your Love Disappear Too?

Written by MEET.eslite (<https://meet.eslite.com/tw/tc/article/202403120005>)

What happens when the person who once loved you deeply is no longer there? Would you be consumed by their absence or struggle to forget the memories of their departure? In the picture book *The Cat's House*, Chih-Hao Yen and Hui-Yin Hsueh gently remind us that even when our loved ones leave, love itself endures.

The story follows a grandmother who dislikes cats. Her late husband adored them and would often feed the strays, which is why she now lives in a house

perpetually surrounded by cats. Each day, she spends time shooing them away.

As she chases the cats off, she mutters, "But Grandpa wouldn't agree—he loved cats most of all." What sounds like a complaint also reveals her longing for her late husband.

As she chases the cats off, she mutters, "But Grandpa wouldn't agree—he loved cats most of all." What sounds like a complaint also reveals her longing for her late husband.

Subtle and expressive, *The Cat's House* speaks directly to the reader, using childlike descriptions and illustrations to craft an emotional world. Each passage, and the hidden longing within the dialogue, guides readers into the depths of memory.

As the grandmother's yearning for her husband grows, so does the emptiness inside her. No one wants to dwell in painful memories, but how can anyone truly accept the loss of a loved one? Even though she knows her anger toward the cats is misplaced, the grandmother can't find another way to cope with her overwhelming loneliness.

Watching her journey from appearing strong in her husband's absence to suddenly feeling the solitude of an empty home brings to mind the film "Goodbye Grandpa". In the face of loss, people often find themselves unable to express their grief.

Even though she has lost her memories of her husband's presence, love still

remains. The cats, left behind by the grandfather, reflect it. Caring for them, even if only for a moment, is worth experiencing with an open heart. If such love can be preserved, why not hold onto it?

This excerpt has been condensed and edited for this booklet.

While Grandma's watching television, she mutters to herself, "It's a good thing we don't have cats, or else it would be noisy and I wouldn't be able to relax and watch TV. But Grandpa wouldn't agree—he loved cats most of all."





Today, the weather is lovely,
and all the cats go out to soak in the sun.
Grandma's the only one left in the house.
Suddenly it feels so empty and so lonely.

掉了

文·圖／李慢



I Lost It!

掉了

Author: Li Man-Yin **Illustrator:** Li Man-Yin **Publisher:** Hsin Yi

Date: 4/2023

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

40 pages | 19 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Rachel Wang Yung-Hsin

Adorable and absent-minded Little Yu is always losing things. This charming and funny book about losing things is one with which elementary school children will relate.

Little Yu always manages to lose something by the time he gets home. Whether it's his socks or a water bottle, he constantly misplaces items, perplexing his family members. Then one day Little Yu loses a tooth, catching even his mother off guard. This vividly illustrated and whimsical book, featuring scenes from family life, is sure to delight young readers.



Li Man-Yin

Li Man-Yin grew up in a seaside town during her childhood. She studied fine arts and graphic design in school. Seeking harmony in daily life, Li finds joy in animals and the landscapes of mountains and seas, and replenishes her spirit through these activities. She currently resides in Taichung with her husband and son. She won the Honorable Mention in the 34th Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award for Picture Book Creation Recommended in the 84th Edition of "Good Books for All" for Picture Books and Early Childhood Reading.

“I Wanted to Reflect the Small, Familiar Moments of Family Life”: A Note from the Author

During the early years after my child was born, life felt chaotic, as if it was constantly moving forward without a clear direction. It wasn't until my son started school that a sense of balance slowly returned.

We began to have conversations about school and daily life, and soon they shifted from him listening to us to us listening to him. He started bringing things home from school and, of course, losing things there as well. We were all adjusting to this new stage of life together.

As many parents know, to lose things is an essential part of being a child. Something mysteriously disappears from your child's belongings and, no matter how thoroughly you investigate, all you get is a confused look and a child scratching their head.

This story grew out of these everyday

As many parents know, losing things is an essential part of being a child. Something mysteriously disappears from your child's belongings and, no matter how thoroughly you investigate, all you get is a confused look and a child scratching their head.

moments. The forgetful child, constantly losing things, took shape in my mind. Every day, he would begin our conversations by telling me about something else he had “lost.” After repeatedly losing various items, one

day, he finally lost something so surprising that even he was taken aback.

As I developed the story, I envisioned how I wanted to bring it to life on paper—with bold, textured strokes that felt a bit messy, a bit raw. I wanted to reflect the small, familiar moments of family life in a way that was warm, funny, and relatable. My hope is that both adults and children reading this book will enjoy a comforting, joyful experience together.

This excerpt from the book's afterword has been condensed for this booklet.

“A Picture Book That Closely Reflects Children's Life Experiences”

by Chien-Ju Chang

I Lost It! is a picture book that closely reflects children's life experiences. The protagonist, Xiao You, is a forgetful little boy who always seems to lose something by the time he gets home—whether it's socks, a hat, a water bottle, or an eraser, he's lost them all. Both kids and parents who read this story might smile and think, “Isn't this about me?” or “That's just like my little one!”—making it highly relatable for readers.

The story takes a surprising turn in the second half. One day, Xiao You comes home from school, and before he even steps through the door, he shouts, “Mom! I lost something!” Like his mom, readers might wonder, “What has he lost this time?” But then Xiao You, wide-eyed with excitement, points to the gap in his teeth and exclaims, “I lost my tooth!” It turns out Xiao You is losing his baby teeth—

he's growing up! His mom marks the first lost tooth with a “1,” showing her joy in his growth.

But the story doesn't end there. “Wait, where's my school bag?”—and the tale circles back to the forgetful Xiao You, staying true to its theme.

Children are easily distracted, and their attention spans are short. Warm and inviting, this book avoids being preachy and instead highlights the endearing side of a child's forgetfulness.

Chien-Ju Chang is a professor in the Department of Child and Family Science at National Taiwan Normal University.

This excerpt from the book's afterword has been condensed for this booklet.



Mama was very worried about this, and couldn't help complaining.
To her surprise, their neighbor replied with a wry smile:
"My second child lost a total of 10 erasers last term!"



Mama finished shopping and went home,
asking herself:
“I wonder what Mister Muddled will lose today?”

BANG!

The door crashed open,
and before Mama could see Little Yu,
she heard him shouting from the entrance:

媽媽媽媽! 掉了!

(MAMA! I LOST IT!)





Once Upon a Time, a Train Came to the Island

從前從前，火車來到小島

Author: Huang Yi-Wen **Illustrator:** Huang Yi-Wen **Publisher:** Taiwan Interminds

Date: 12/2021

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

48 pages | 20.5 x 30 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights sold: Korean

Award: 2024 The 46th Golden Tripod Awards, Children's and Youth Books Category

BFT2.0 Translator: Kirsten Han

Once upon a time, a train came to the island, seizing control of all life.

This train created its own rules, enforced them arbitrarily, and decided who would live and who would die. It carried away anyone who dared to resist, separating families and crushing dreams.

Then one day, the train suddenly vanished. Those left behind had to piece together their past.

In this award-winning book, a grandfather recounts the story of the train to his granddaughter. *Once Upon a Time, A Train Came to the Island* encourages young readers around the world to reflect on authoritarianism and state violence. Author and illustrator Huang Yiwen drew inspiration from Taiwan's history of martial law. Roughly three decades after martial law was lifted, Taiwan has become one of the most free and democratic societies in the world. As Huang put it, "In remembering our past, we ensure that those who disappeared do not vanish into thin air."



Huang Yi-Wen

Huang Yi-Wen is a freelance illustrator and the author of several award-winning picture books. She has devoted herself to the craft of storytelling after attending a picture book workshop by Liu Hsu-Kung since 2018. Using her gift for mixed media, Yi-Wen creates books that 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 Award in the children's book category. Her illustrations were selected for both the 2021 and 2022 Bologna Illustrators Exhibition. Her other works include *Secrets at the Zoo*.

“This is a Difficult History, But I Hope That People Will Carry On With Courage”: Author Huang Yi Wen Shares Her Inspiration For Her Book

Translated by Michelle Kuo

The initial idea of using a “train” as the theme for this book came from walking through the National Human Rights Museum in Taipei. As people in Taiwan know, this museum preserves a part of a prison that held political dissidents, some of whom were executed. Passing through a maze of iron gates, I looked at one narrow, empty cell after another. I had the sudden impression that the people imprisoned there were like passengers trapped in the carriages of a train.

In my book, the train does not move, yet it takes away countless people. This is a stationary train without a destination or meaning. Time slips away and disappears. Lives and dreams vanish like the unseen scenery outside the windows. This train

occupies the entire narrative universe, suddenly appearing, controlling people, and forcibly carrying them away. It dictates and restricts people, determining their lives through its rules, reasons, and preferences.

This is an absurd story, yet it is part of Taiwan’s history of authoritarianism. While reading *Undeliverable Letters*, a collection of letters that were never delivered to people imprisoned in Taiwan under martial law, the repeated use of the words “far away” left a deep impression on me. One letter from a father to a son reads, “Dear Jianguo, I send you millions of kisses from a very faraway place.”

Where exactly is that “faraway place”? It’s never stated, yet it is the last ray of

hope left for their families. In my book, a father is taken away from his son. To the child, that place is faraway— indescribable and unreachable. The child hopes constantly for his father’s return. When that return never comes, the child’s thoughts are perpetually directed towards the place where his father might be. “Faraway place” describes the chasm of enforced separation.

This is a difficult history, but I hope that people will carry on with courage. In remembering our past, we ensure that those who went far away do not vanish into thin air. That’s why the book begins with a grandfather telling his granddaughter a story.

I wanted the book to reflect the

continuous flow of time, as well as pay tribute to survivor Mr. Chen Qinsheng. Over the years, he has told his story countless times in front of countless people. Yet each time feels emotional.

“The more you tell the story, the more there is to tell—it never ends,” he says. But at the end of his lecture, he added mysteriously: “My story ends here.”

I was deeply moved and, over time, felt the pain and inspiration to

create this story. Through it, I remember what this island has gone through.


This originally appeared on the author’s social media and has been edited and published with her permission.

“The more you tell the story, the more there is to tell—it never ends,” says one survivor of martial law.



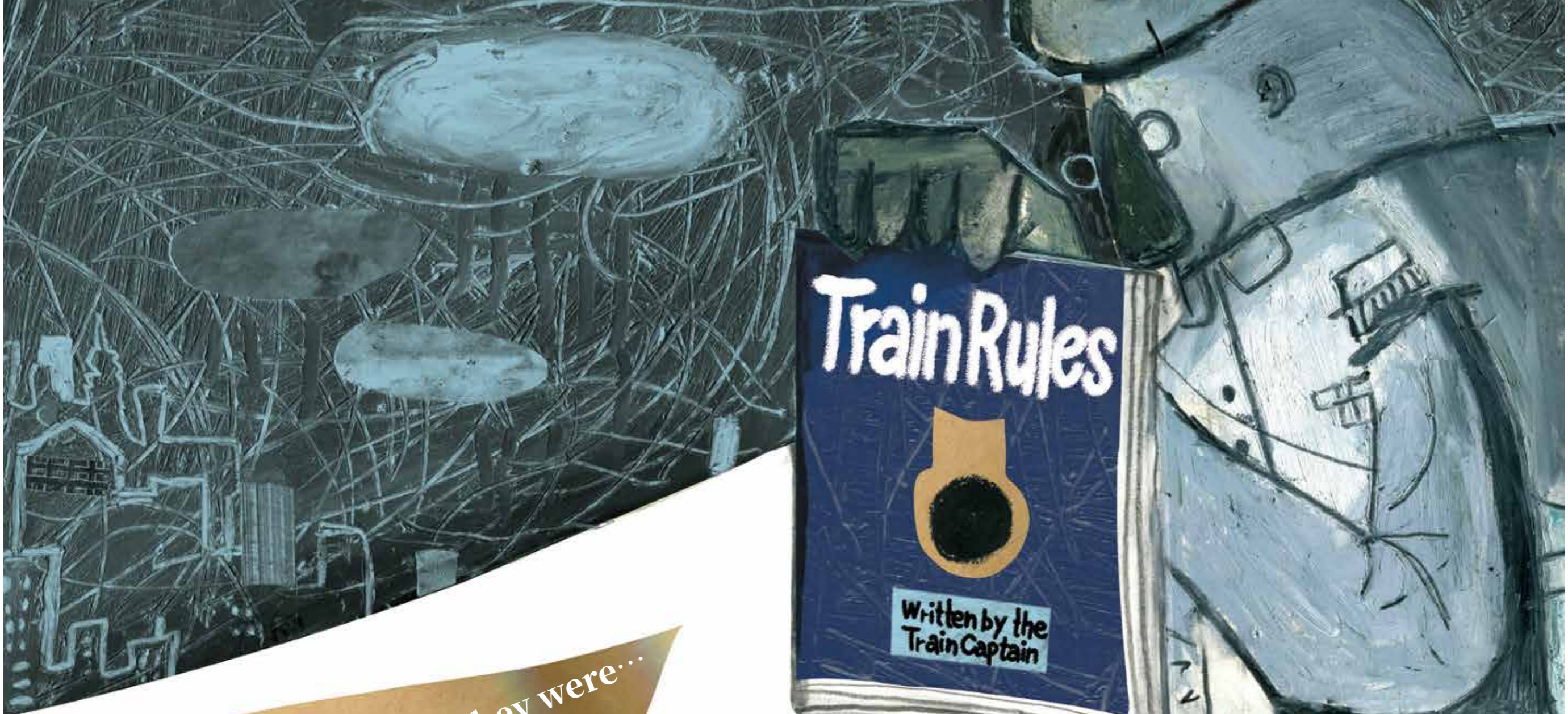
Where did the Great Train take them?

More and more and more
people were taken away by the Great Train.

The illustration is a dark, textured composition. In the upper right, a child's face with dark hair and a white complexion looks out from a window. The background is filled with dense, dark, cross-hatched lines. In the lower left, a large, stylized figure is depicted in a bright yellow-green hue. This figure has a large black shape on its head, a white face with a red dot, and a white arm. A brown hat is visible on the left side of the figure. The overall mood is somber and evocative.

My father once stood out bravely.
The Great Train took him away.

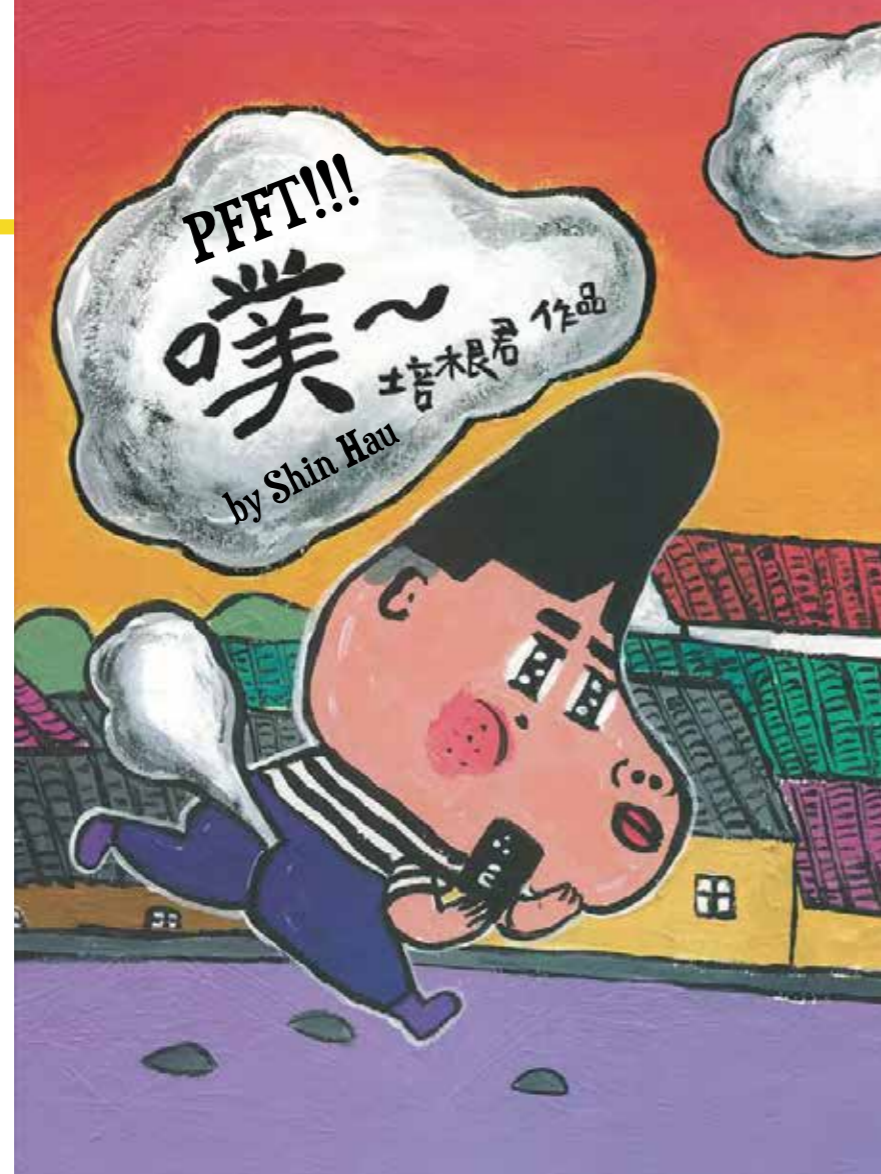
He never came home again.



They were....

The people, terrified, were desperate to know:
"What exactly are the Great Train's rules?"





PFFT!!!

噗~

Author: Lai Shin Hau **Illustrator:** Lai Shin Hau **Publisher:** Yuan-Liou

Date: 7/2023

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

72 pages | 19 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights sold: Korean

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

This nearly wordless picture book features just one word: PFFT, capturing the sound of a fart. The gorgeous, distinctive illustrations reflect Taiwanese culture while also conveying the universal embarrassment—and humor—of passing gas.

Today is a beautiful day, and Little Spring is heading to the zoo. But shortly after boarding the bus, he can't help but let out a PFFT, causing the surrounding passengers to cover their noses.

After getting off the bus, on a whim, he steps into an art gallery. But once again, he can't control himself and lets out a few more PFFTs and PFFBTTTs. This time, not only do the museum visitors flee, but even the plants wither, and the characters in the famous paintings shed tears or scream in horror.

Before even reaching the zoo, the protagonist continues PFFT-ing his way through a traditional grocery store, a barbershop, an ice shop, and a conveyor belt sushi restaurant. Even at the zoo, where he hopes to relax in a hot spring with the capybaras, his PFFT-ing drives them all out of the pool.

Back home, he tells his mother about his day. As he enjoys steamed sweet potatoes with her, he suddenly hears a PFFT—and it's not from him. At the story's end, he feels a warm sense of acceptance and love from his family.

This marvelous picture book, filled with sound, smell, and humor, revolves around a single word. With its surprising twist highlighting the warmth of family bonds, this story is sure to delight readers from all over the world.



Lai Shin Hau

Shin Hau draws inspiration from everyday life and has a deep love for Taiwanese culture. His art aims to create a warm and inclusive atmosphere through a bold visual style, whimsical characters, and humor. His work often features elements of Taiwanese life, including flower tiles, roof tiles, nostalgia-inducing toys, street food, night markets, betel nut stands, traditional stores, and shaved ice shops. Shin Hau enjoys creating paper puppets, unbaked ceramics, and fabric dolls. At exhibitions, he encourages people to make themed paper puppet masks.

A graduate of the Department of Fine Arts at Tung Hai University, Shin Hau's works won the Silver Award at the 2019 Taoyuan International Illustration Competition. He served as the art designer of the animated short film *Dark River*, which was selected for the 2016 Taichung International Animation Festival's Outstanding Selection and won the Grand Prize at the Southern Film Festival. His online series *The Night Left the North Pole*, featuring polar bears, received enthusiastic feedback. In January 2023, Shin Hau published his first picture book, *Where Did the Sun Go?*, followed by his second picture book, *PFFT!!!*

“Passing Gas is Completely Natural”: A Note from the Author

By Shin Lau
Translated by Michelle Kuo

When I was a child, my mother often used a rice cooker to steam sweet potatoes for me. Every time I ate sweet potatoes, I couldn't help but pass gas. While walking down the street, people would give me strange looks, leaving me embarrassed, as if I had done something wrong. Looking back now, I find this rather amusing. There's no reason to be embarrassed; passing gas is a completely natural physiological reaction.

In the story, Little Spring leaves home and takes a bus to the zoo. Along the way, he passes gas in an art gallery, a barbershop, an ice shop, and a conveyor belt sushi restaurant. A single word ties the story together: PFFT, the onomatopoeic

word that captures both the sound and smell of passing gas.

Throughout his journey, our young protagonist feels anxious about the odd looks he receives from people due to his constant farting.

Throughout his journey, our young protagonist feels anxious about the odd looks he receives from people due to his constant farting. When he returns home and shares the day's events with his mother, he discovers that the rice cooker is steaming, and his favorite sweet potatoes are ready. As they enjoy the sweet potatoes together, he lets out several more PFFT! Then they both laugh. To me, this is the taste of happiness.

I enjoy using observations from daily life in my work and have a deep appreciation for Taiwanese culture. My works frequently feature elements such as Taiwanese

flower tiles, roof tiles, nostalgia-inducing toys, role-playing, street food, night markets, betel nut stands, traditional stores, fruit, and shaved ice shops.

This has been lightly edited from the author's afterword for the purposes of this booklet.

What Word Describes a Fart Sound?: A Note from the Translator

by Michelle Kuo

This delightful book, in which a kid farts his way through Taiwan—on a bus, in an art museum, and at a dessert shop—contains just one word: the sound of farting. You'd think translating it would be easy, but there are countless onomatopoeic options in English. (In Mandarin, the sound is simply *pu!*). Is it TOOT? POOT? FRAPP? PFTTT FRTTT? THPTHTPHTH?

After consulting two literary critic friends—who graciously humored the question—I decided to stick to one stem,

PFFT, expanding it based on the size or style of the author's drawing of the Chinese character: PFFFBTBTT!!! PFTBHBB! This approach captured the diverse ways gas can be passed—some windy, some discreet, but all undeniably funny to a child, or anyone with a childlike spirit.

Michelle Kuo is the editor of Books from Taiwan.



冰

菓

室

噗

PFFTT!!!



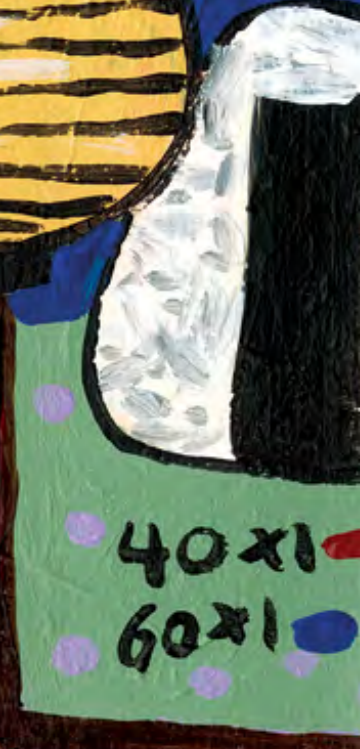
回転寿司

回転寿司

200
↑

40x1
60x1

司壽轉



嘖
PFETT!!!



While Waiting for Mama

等媽媽來的時候

Author: Hsiao-chi Chang **Illustrator:** Hsiao-chi Chang **Publisher:** The Eastern Publishing

Date: 3/2020

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

24 pages | 20 x 20 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights sold: Korean

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

*While waiting for Mama to come,
I walked through the most dangerous crocodile pond,
helping Brother Postman to deliver a package on time.*

Why hasn't Mama arrived yet? Little Blue Elephant finds creative ways to make the waiting time fulfilling. Our playful hero evades crocodiles, directs traffic, discovers an island, befriends a chameleon, and makes parachutes out of leaves.

Many parents today often have no choice but to pick up their children after work. Reflecting on her own childhood, during which she often found herself waiting, author Hsiao-chi Chang says, "Although I often felt powerless, I somehow kept learning how to survive by finding fun ways to cope. The more I played, the more I forgot why I was frustrated."

Chang's whimsical illustrations and inventive storytelling suggest that a child's greatest superpower is their imagination.



Hsiao-chi Chang

Hsiao-chi Chang graduated from the Fine Arts Department at National Kaohsiung Normal University and the Illustration Program at the Academy of Art University in the U.S., where she majored in children's book illustration. She enjoys stars, fish, and drinking milk tea, spending much of her time observing people, events, stories, and the sky. When seeking solitude, she explores new places and hides in corners to draw, often finding great joy in talking to herself.

Chang has been selected for the 2020 Bologna Illustrators Exhibition, won the 78th "Good Books for Everyone" Reading Award as an Excellent Children's and Young Adult Book, and received the award for Excellent Publication in the Children's and Young Adult Book Category at the Golden Comic Awards. She has been a finalist in the 3x3 International Illustration Awards for picture books and has exhibited her works in San Francisco, New York, and Tokyo.

“As a Child, I Spent a Lot of Time Waiting for My Parents to Pick Me Up”: A Word from the Author

by Hsiao-chi Chang
(originally published on books.com.tw)

As a child, I spent a lot of time waiting for my parents to pick me up, always being the last one at the after-school care center. I often waited in the small area in front of the after-school care building, watching as my classmates were picked up one by one. I waited and waited until I was the only one left, often keeping the teachers from closing up and going home.

Waiting alone was really boring and often made me angry. But being bored and angry is rarely helpful, so I started to come up with games to play by myself. That was when I began to enjoy people-watching, stargazing, and looking at

the sky. When someone ran across the courtyard, I would imagine what had just happened to them or what they were hurrying off to do. This kept me so busy that, before I knew it, my parents would arrive.

This picture book is my first attempt to write a story from my own perspective and experience. Before writing it, several images kept popping into my mind. Among them were a giant leaf parachute and a peaceful mountain. While I was drawing, a few sentences popped into my mind. I'd think, Maybe I'm more suited to be a quiet mountain with a nose. But at the time, I had no idea what to

do with these images and sentences. Then one day, while riding my bike and worrying about what kind of story to draw, I stopped at a red light. The phrase “while waiting for Mama to come” suddenly came to me. And so, a story was formed.

Since my understanding of picture book creation came mainly from the U.S., I wanted to see what people were doing in Taiwan. I eagerly enrolled in a picture book course led by Tao Ledi and Huang Yuqin. As the course was ending, we had to complete a picture book project. The initial version of *While Waiting for Mama* was created with the help of teachers and classmates who supported me through confusion, obstacles, and uncertainties.

As a child, I often found myself in

situations that I didn't like. Although I often felt powerless, I somehow kept learning how to survive. I found fun ways to cope. The more I played, the more I

forgot why I was frustrated. This became a way of life that, even now, I'm still learning how to do.

In creating this book, I hope to offer readers a way to find joy when faced with feelings of helplessness. They can look around for a recycled egg carton, a small tree, a bucket, a leaf, a sofa, or a blanket. If they play with those things for just a little while, they might find themselves smiling again.

In creating this picture book, I hope to offer young readers a way to find joy

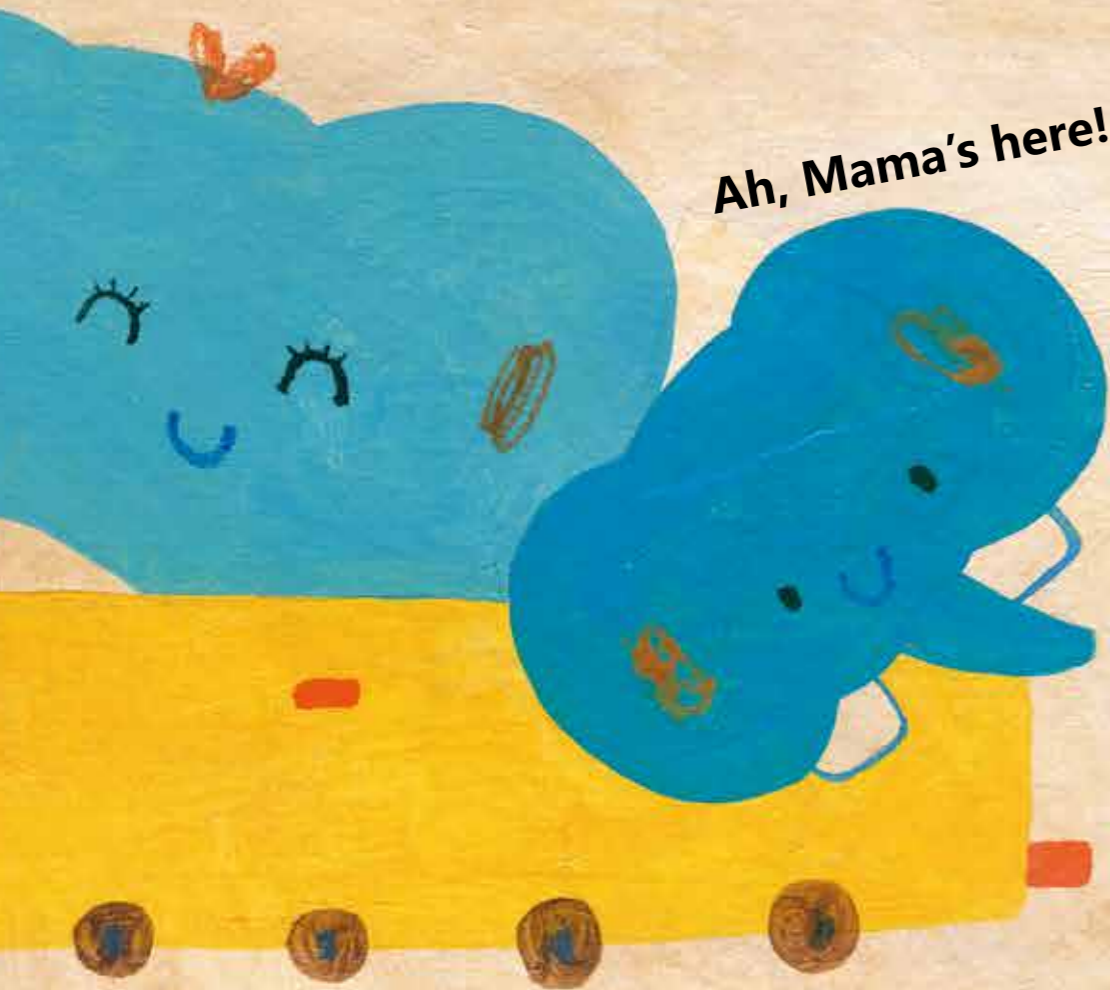
when faced with feelings of helplessness. They can look around for a recycled egg carton, a small tree, a bucket, a leaf, a sofa, or a blanket. If they play with those things for just a little while, they might find themselves smiling again.

This essay has been condensed for this booklet.

While waiting for Mama to come,
I learned to be peaceful,
like a beautiful, quiet mountain.



Ah, Mama's here!



拜拜!

再見!

再見!

再見!

拜拜!

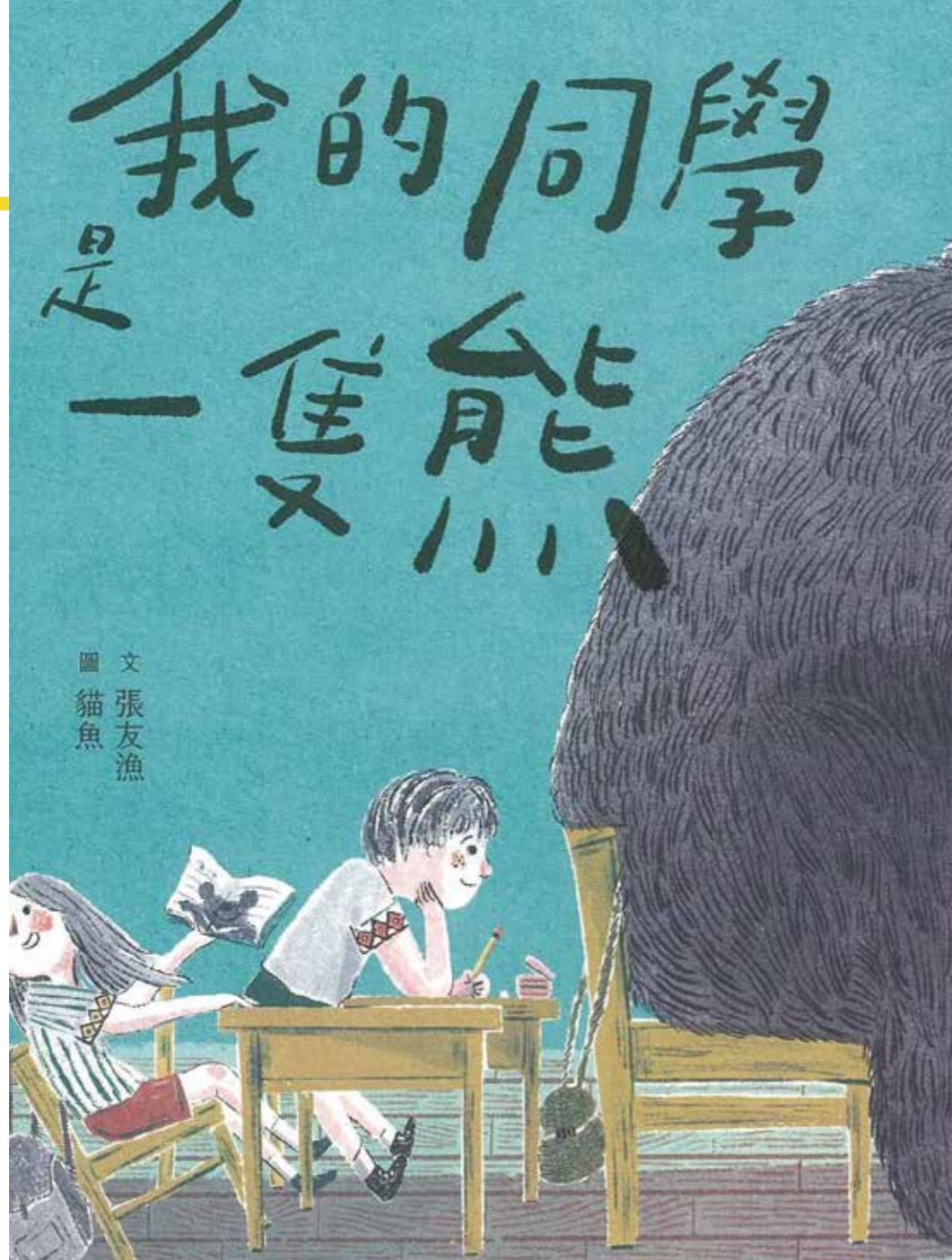
Bye!

Bye!

再見!

再見!

再見!



My Classmate Is A Bear

我的同學是一隻熊

Author: Yeou-yu Chang **Illustrator:** Chiang Meng-Yun **Publisher:** Commonwealth Education

Date: 8/2021 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

232 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1 (plans for future sequels) **Rights sold:** Korean

Awards: 2022 The 15th Taipei International Book Exhibition Award, Children's and Young Adult Category,

First Prize

2021 The 81th Good Books Everyone Reads Award, Best Children's and Youth Book Award

2022 The 46th Golden Tripod Awards, Children's and Youth Books Category

2022 Ministry of Culture's 44th Selection of Books for Primary and Secondary School

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

On a distant mountain, a school sits next to a forest where villagers have always lived in harmony with nature. But one day, a black bear appears at the classroom door and says, "I—want—to—go—to—school. Can—I?"

Students in the rural village are startled at first, but soon they realize this black bear is gentle, curious, and eager to learn about the human world.

From that day on, the black bear joins the class, becoming a classmate and friend. He writes poems, paints pictures, and plays games in the forest. The children grow so fond of the bear that they decide to keep him a secret from the rest of the village. But will they succeed? What will happen if the villagers find out?

This award-winning and beautifully written book invites children to experience the beauty of Taiwan's mountains and forests while addressing important environmental issues. It awakens a timely and deep connection between humans and nature, telling a story of hope and coexistence.



Writer **Yeou-yu Chang**

Yeou-yu Chang is a Taiwanese children's literature writer from Yuli Township, Hualien. Her works include *The Senior*, *Boring Egg Town*, *How Are You Today, Princess?*, *A Guo Cycling on Suhua Highway*, *Child of Saigon*, *My Dad the Hoodlum*, *Hey*, *The One in a Skirt*, *Goodbye! Olive Tree*, *Orchid Island*, *Flying Fish*, *Giants*, *Stories*, *I Heard the Moon Has a Study Room*, *Let's Paint a Magical Tree*, *The Little Chef Yuma series*, and the *Little Disciple Tu-Bao's Creative Lessons series*, including *Seven Ways to Eat Carrots*, *What Happens After Three Monsters?*, *Praise for the Sea*, and *Forest's Oddballs*.

Yeou-yu Chang has received numerous accolades. She won the 46th Golden Tripod Awards in the Children's and Youth Books Category, and First Prize at the 2022 Taipei International Book Exhibition Award in the Children's and Young Adult Category. Her works were selected for the 2021 Commonwealth Magazine Foundation SDGs Children's Sustainable Book List and recognized with the 2021 Good Books Everyone Reads Best Children's and Youth Book Award and received recognition in the Ministry of Culture's selection of books for primary and secondary school students.



Illustrator **Chiang Meng-Yun**

Catfish is an illustrator who specializes in picture books and enjoys experimenting with various materials in her artwork. She is particularly fond of a cat's belly and a dog's nose, which often serve as inspiration in her work. Her art reflects her deep contemplation of the plight of animals, life's attitudes, and the meaning of existence. In addition to her picture books, Catfish occasionally holds solo and group exhibitions. She is dedicated to creating warm, powerful works that offer reflections on life. Her recent projects include the *Mission of Western Civilization at Possible Elementary School series*, graphic novels *Secret Bunny* and *Monster Mom*, and the picture books *What to Do Without a Rooster* and *Hitchhiking*.

“In the Thick Fog, Four Bears Are Dancing”: A Word from the Author

By **Yeou-yu Chang**
Translated by **Michelle Kuo**

Growing up in the mountains, I found that I got along better with plants than with people.

While many visit Taiwan's famous Alishan Forest for sightseeing, I like to say that I go to visit friends. The giant tree number “17” in Taiwan's Alishan Forests is one such friend. At 1,700 years old, this olive tree has witnessed more than most people ever will. In the mountainous area of Yuli, Hualien, where I am from, this ancient tree has been a friend and family member for about a hundred years. Quiet, generous, and always willing to listen, it shares the stories of a forest that lies between heaven and earth.

From a young age, I learned to be alone. Perhaps because I lived in the

mountains with neighbors scattered far apart, I would climb trees, pick flowers, and read beneath trees. As I grew older and moved to the city, I sought solace in escaping to the mountains whenever I could, wanting to see the trees, the mountains, the mist, and the wildflowers. A walk through the mountains always managed to calm my restless heart.

Once, while walking the ancient cypress trail in Taiping Mountain, I reached a lookout, expecting a beautiful view. Instead, a mischievous mist enveloped the area, spreading its arms and saying, “You can't see anything.” Through the thick fog, I glimpsed four bears dancing in the mist. The misty mountains and forests seemed like a fairyland; the world within the fog

felt like a fairy tale.

Perhaps the story began there, or maybe it started when I visited a school to give a lecture. The teacher guided me through the hallways, and as I glanced into each classroom, I noticed how focused every student was. “Every day, the kids are in the same classroom, with the same classmates, and the same teachers,” I thought. “It must be so boring!” Just then, as we passed the third-grade classroom,

“Every day, the kids are in the same classroom, with the same classmates, and the same teachers. It must be so boring!” I thought. Just then, as we passed the third-grade classroom, I saw a strong, tall Formosan black bear sitting in the last row. I stared in amazement.

I saw a strong, tall Formosan black bear sitting in the last row. It had a giant desk, an oversized chair, and a large pencil. I stared in amazement. “Oh my gosh, a bear is in class!” The bear turned to look at me, its huge head showing a surprised expression: “Wow, that person can see me!” Then, the bear and I exchanged smiles.

Writers often write about what they see. Since others can’t see it, they put it in

words so everyone else can.

When I decided to write *My Classmate is a Bear*, a particular bear began to occupy my consciousness. Whether I was walking, traveling, or reading, he was always with me. When I saw a beautiful beech tree, he’d whisper in my ear, “Hey, this could go into Chapter Four.” That’s how I work: I take the characters from my stories on walks, train rides, and coffee outings, and we chat together. Gradually, the story unfolds.

After finishing this story, I feel immense gratitude. I’m grateful for writing, which allows my reclusive self to experience a vast sky, a rich forest, and endless fields. I’m also thankful for this bear, who has made the long writing journey less lonely.

And why did I set the story in the third

grade? Because bears like third grade.

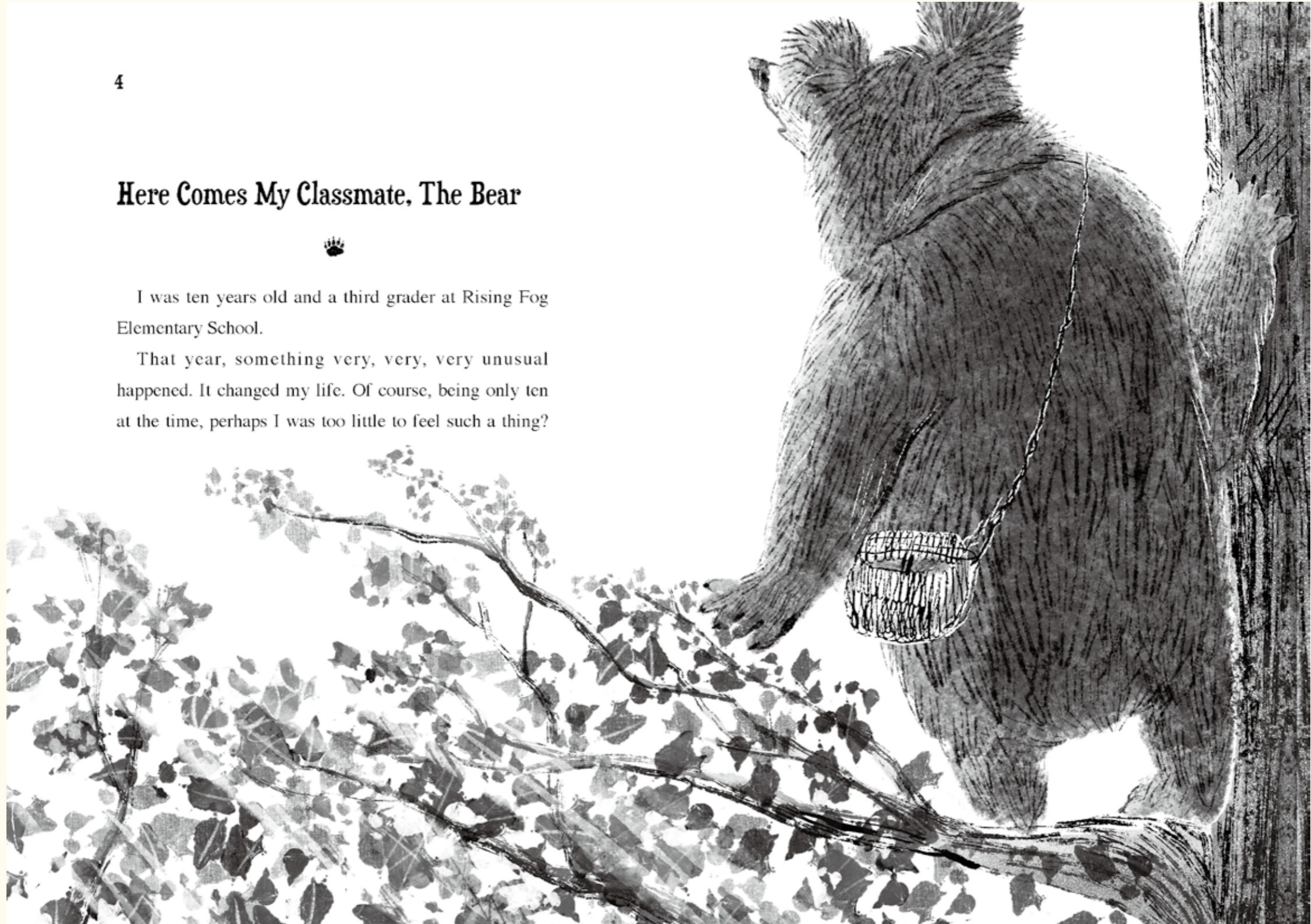
This essay from the preface has been condensed for the purposes of this booklet.

Here Comes My Classmate, The Bear



I was ten years old and a third grader at Rising Fog Elementary School.

That year, something very, very, very unusual happened. It changed my life. Of course, being only ten at the time, perhaps I was too little to feel such a thing?



How could I have known what life and a lifetime really meant? Still, I might not have known it *then*, but I'm sure *now*, at age 14, that what happened has determined both my present and my future.

Before I tell you about that very unusual event, I must first tell you about my village. It's called Rising Fog and sits at an altitude of 1,000 meters above sea level. To get here, you have to drive forty minutes from a small town at the foot of a mountain. At the end of that road is a gigantic, century-old camphor tree, whose broad canopy is free and wild, like an enormous broccoli growing however it pleases. Only typhoons can stop it, but our village chief and neighborhood helpers do sometimes climb and prune the tree, just so that its branches won't fall and hurt someone. On days when the sun is unrelenting, standing under the tree is incredibly refreshing. Over thirty villagers can gather there, enjoying

its shade, which should give you an idea of how large the tree is! Anyway, behind the camphor tree, several small paths lead to the homes of those who live in Rising Fog.

At its peak, the village had more than ninety households. Now, there are only twenty left; soon, there will be fewer than ten. After graduating from elementary school, the children must go down the mountain to attend middle school. And the elderly, no longer able to make a living from farming, must go down and rely on their children. If I wanted, I could live down there with my parents, who run a motorcycle shop. But compared to bustling streets, I prefer a forest filled with the lively sounds of insects.

At school, my classmates include Chen Xiaoguo, whose parents sell vegetables at a market; that kind of work starts early and ends late, so they have no choice but to leave her on the mountain. Xi Song's mother

passed away, and his father drives a large truck all over Taiwan. He lives with his grandparents and on holidays goes down to visit his other grandma. Lin Yuquan's parents are divorced, but fortunately his grandparents love him dearly. Yu Sufei had no choice but to stay on the mountain because her grandparents are her only support.

Don't think for a second that just because our families have some difficulties, we feel forced to stay on the mountain. We're lucky to go to school here. Rising Fog Elementary is unique. Our art classes take place in a dense forest, and we learn to recognize different types of flowers, grasses, and trees. We know which leaves turn red for winter. We know that when the sky changes color, rain will fall. We know many things about the forest that you don't know.

Our school, as I've mentioned, is Rising Fog Elementary. Across from it is a grassy field and the main

road. When you enter the village, the first building you see is our school. It's to the left of the old camphor tree.

Our name, "Rising Fog," says a lot about us. Fog loves to visit—and it visits often. When it arrives, school and village disappear, and you enter a world utterly of your own. Sometimes, during the daily flag raising, the fog comes and envelops us all. Nobody can see each other. We can only hear the band playing and must picture the flag climbing the pole. Many schools have abandoned this ritual, but we've preserved it.

We enjoy the fog. It makes us happy, and we play tricks when it comes. For instance, if you're the flag-raiser, you can hoist the flag quickly, not at all in time with the music; you listen as the anthem plays and giggle until it ends. The fog has even come during our sports day—everyone thought they'd won first place.

You could say that the fog is like a naughty child who



Elementary School in the Mountain

山間小學

Author: Xinyu **Illustrator:** Cola Chen **Publisher:** Little Soldier

Date: 6/2023

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

224 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Iris Lee

After a heated fight with his parents, a boy named Lijia runs away from home and stumbles upon a mysterious bus that takes him to a small school deep in the mountains.

At the mountain school, the teachers and students welcome Lijia, though he's still upset from his argument. But things feel odd to him. What are those strange shadows? And why does seeing them make his feelings fade, one by one?

Blending suspense and mystery, this young adult novel explores the struggles children face, from academic pressure to family conflicts and interpersonal relationships. It offers readers a way to confront and understand their negative emotions, reflect on past mistakes, and find the strength to move forward with courage and confidence.



Xinyu

Xinyu, a native of Taoyuan, enjoys rainy nights, the scent of rain, and the freshness of mornings after the rain. Passionate about reading and creating various types of stories, Hsin-Chih Weng hopes to turn many dreams and wishes into words.

Confronting Your Negative Emotions: A Profound Coming-of-Age Story for Young Adult Readers

By Lee Ming-Tzu

“Please, talk to my son Jun. He’ll listen to you. Whatever I say, he just talks back. I don’t know what else to do. I’m really just trying to do what’s best for him. You wouldn’t believe how well-behaved he was in elementary school. Also, please don’t tell him I called you, or he’ll be upset.”

Throughout my over twenty-year career as a high school teacher, I’ve received countless similar calls from parents. The concerns are often the same: poor grades, challenges related to school admissions, worries that their children’s friends are “bad influences,” excessive video game playing, and smoking.

Adolescents strive for peer acceptance and independence. They crave knowledge outside of academics and seek freedom from parental control to develop their

own identity. Under such intense pressure, they are more prone to anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and emotional instability.

Elementary School in the Mountain begins in a typical working-class family, with twelve-year-old Hu Lijia as the protagonist. After being unfairly blamed by his parents over a small misunderstanding, he runs away from home in anger. In his rage, Lijia boards a bus and, upon reaching the last stop, finds himself at a remote mountain school with only four students. Strangely, the teacher informs him that his parents have already transferred him to this school. Worse still, there’s no phone, no internet, and the bus only comes once a week.

Forced to wait for the next bus, Lijia has no choice but to stay at the school, integrating into this mixed-age class and

learning to get along with the teacher and other students. Throughout this experience, he gradually learns how to think independently, discuss problems with others, and help those around him. In time, former adversaries even become friends.

During this week of learning and waiting, Lijia and his classmate Yu Rui discover that the appearance of glowing light spheres is connected to the disappearance of their emotions. As they investigate, they realize that this mountain school exists at the boundary between the world of the living and the dead. When they lose all of their emotions, they can leave this world.

Elementary School in the Mountain explores the idea of negative emotions in a tangible, inspired way. Lijia’s anger, triggered by his classmate’s constant teasing, materializes as a red light sphere. Later, the teacher explains to Lijia: “The light spheres represent emotions. They are the embodiment of emotions. They can be anyone. They are shadows, born from the heart and

extinguished by the heart.”

In the story’s conclusion, much like the narrative in You Ming Lu’s classic medievalist fable *Records of the Hidden and Visible Realms*, we discover that a week in the mountains equates to just a single day in the real world. Will Lijia be able to return home as he hopes? Though brief, the ending gracefully weaves together the story’s surprises and twists.

The story poses a profound question: “If a person loses all their negative emotions, does that make them perfect?”

This poignant book is worth reading, as it unfolds like a play about a young person’s journey of self-discovery. It encourages you to confront your own negative emotions, picturing them as light spheres that illuminate your life.

The story poses a profound question: “If a person loses all their negative emotions, does that make them perfect?” This poignant book is worth reading, as it unfolds like a play about a young person’s journey of self-discovery and encourages you to confront your own negative emotions.

Li Ming-Tzu is a professor at Fo Guang University and has long been dedicated to children’s literature research, creation, and promotion.

This excerpt from the book’s afterword has been condensed for this booklet.



Prologue

Crash!

A white plate shattered into pieces on the floor.

“Why don’t you ever listen to what I say?” my mother yelled.

Tears welling in my eyes, I looked down at the floor.

“It was an accident,” I said.

My father, who’d heard the commotion, rushed in.

“What’s going on?” he asked .

“I told him to stay away from the stove, but he smashed the plate on the floor,” said my mother.

My father glared at me. “Your mom told you to stay away from the stove. Why are you upset? How can you throw a tantrum like this!”

I had only wanted to help by passing her the plate. But she’d bumped into me and knocked it out of my hand.

“I wasn’t—”

“Don’t talk back to me!”

My father slapped me hard across my face; it stung and burned.

How could they do this to me, I thought. Why don’t they ever listen? *Forget it, I give up—I’m done. I don’t want to stay in this house anymore!*

I left the house and ran through the streets alone.

The sun blazed and I could barely open my eyes. The tears on my face must have glittered under the sun. I wiped my tears before anyone could see them, but a few people still secretly looked at me.

I hated crying in public, but I wanted to leave that depressing house forever.

Wandering with no place to go, I noticed a green bus stop near the convenience store.

That’s weird, I thought. Has there always been a bus stop there?

I boarded the bus without even asking where it was headed. I just wanted it to take me far, far away.

I walked all the way to the back of the bus, took a window seat, and fastened my seat belt. Before long, I fell asleep...





New School

“Final stop, elementary school!”

The bus driver’s voice startled me. I got off the bus, groggy and half-asleep. The pure, fresh air caught me off-guard. Birds and insects chirped with glee.

By the time I’d awakened, the bus was gone. I found myself in the middle of a forest, surrounded by towering trees, walking along a dirt path. There were no buildings and not a person in sight.

I couldn’t help but ask myself: how did I end up here?

Noticing a bus stop sign covered in moss, I brushed it off. It revealed a schedule, but the print had faded. I tried to figure out when the next bus would arrive. It read: Eight o’clock every Monday morning.

Every Monday?! The bus only came once a week!

Today was Monday, which meant I had to wait seven days before I could leave this place.

How would I survive in the wild for a week?

Right—the bus driver said something about an elementary school. Was there a school around here? I

should be able to get some help!

I continued along the dirt path and kept going. In the dense forest, I saw a building that resembled a school. The area near the gate was empty. A stone wall to one side had three words embossed in gold: Forest Elementary School. Listening closely, I heard kids playing inside. Relieved, I walked toward the sounds of the children.

The building was dilapidated. Its paint peeled; its walls were cracked. On its left side lay a playground with slide shaped like an elephant and some wavy bars. Two boys, who looked around my age, played on the slide.

I wanted to ask them where we were. What city was this? What county? But I was too embarrassed to ask, so I stood in the shade and merely looked on.

Spotting me, one of the boys walked my way. “Who are you? What are you doing in our school?” he yelled.

Slightly freckled, he had bushy curly hair that suggested a mean temper.

“Say something,” he said. “Can’t you talk?” The aggressive way he spoke reminded me of headstrong classmates who got together to beat up whomever they





wanted to pick on.

I never got along with people like this. Stammering, I forced myself to speak. “I—I got on the wrong bus and ended up here. I saw there was a school and thought I could get some help.”

He frowned and stared at me. “Wrong bus? You look like you’re our age. You’re old enough—how did you get on the wrong bus?”

I just got on it, I thought. What else could I have done? Deep down, I was screaming. But I couldn’t utter a word.

The other boy cut in and said, “Let me bring you to our teacher. He should know what to do.” He wore a light blue hat and smiled at me warmly.

“Hung, why are you helping him? He got on the wrong bus and needs help, but he ignores people. What’s that about?” The boy with curly hair scowled further and continued to stare at me.

Ding, ding, ding! The school bell rang. Everyone hurried inside the school building. I had nothing to do but follow them.

When I reached the door, I saw that their classroom was very small, only a few paces wide. The white walls, much like the exterior, had turned yellow and were peeling away. At the back of the room, a board displayed a few student drawings. The old blackboard was covered in chalk stains that seemed impossible to erase.

Unlike the classroom, the wooden desks and chairs looked brand-new and even had the aroma of fresh paint.

There were five sets of desks and chairs, the most that could fit into the classroom.

Two of the seats were occupied; the other three were not. The boys took those two seats, and I wondered who would occupy the last one.

I asked the boy with curly hair, “What class is this? What year?”

He looked confused and said, “What class? There is only one class and everybody sits in the same classroom. You’re super weird.” He took a seat and left me standing by the door, flustered.



CHILDREN'S

BOOKS

**BOOKS
FROM
TAIWAN**