

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

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Comic BOOKS II 2024

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

2024

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2024

OKEN: CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF A TAIWANESE POET THE SUN BETWEEN THE FINGERS SOUL TALE OF HYSTERIA SUNSET TOWN WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE TIME?

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.



**BOOKS
FROM
TAIWAN**



Published by Ministry of Culture (MOC)

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Issue | Comic Books, 2024

Publication Date | October 30, 2024

ISSN | 2410-0781

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Foreword

In Taiwan, comics hold a unique and vital place in our hearts. Our artists explore subversive topics, challenge traditional hierarchies, and envision new futures. They have a special ability to connect with people from all walks of life. Comics both reflect and propel the spirit of Taiwan, a country where people believe in democracy, practice freedom, and embrace an open society.

In recent years, Taiwanese comic creators have increasingly showcased diverse styles, gaining growing recognition on the international stage. In this year's latest booklet of recommended comic works, you'll find not only many pieces that have won prestigious international awards or secured multi-language rights sales, but also a wealth of creators with their own distinctive styles. Whether you're

just beginning to explore Asian comics or are already familiar with them, I hope this booklet provides you with 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

From feminist themes to historical narratives, this collection of Taiwanese comics showcases the rich diversity and creativity of the country's artists. Just a couple of generations ago, under martial law, the idea that these stories could be told, published, and widely read would have been unimaginable.

It has become almost a cliché for international observers to describe Taiwan's democracy as "vibrant." But what does that word really mean? These books bring that description to life. *Oken*, with its full-page ink-wash paintings, portrays the spiritual awakening of Yang Mu—a celebrated poet and scholar who came of age during World War II in Hualien, on Taiwan's eastern coast. *Windchaser*, set during the same era, depicts the bond between two young men

passionate about running.

Other books reflect the ways in which art shapes our relationships. In *Bla Bla Song*, the author collaborated with Japanese and Taiwanese musicians to create four songs, each tailored to one of the book's interwoven stories. *Rosetta*, filled with vivid depictions of life in Taiwan, follows an actress as she grapples with her pursuit of perfection. *The Lion in the Manga Shop* portrays two Go players who find a way to overcome their shared sense of loss. In *Sea You There and Us*, the art of making comics forges a deep friendship between two girls.

These works also explore subversive, feminist themes. *Hysteria* delves into the concept of menstruation, offering alternative visions of freedom and liberation. *Adventures in Sexland*

challenges conventional notions of beauty and sexuality, while *The Sun Between the Fingers* confronts the sexual and physical abuse of boys and the stigma that surrounds it—an often overlooked issue both in Taiwan and globally.

Other books venture into post-apocalyptic worlds with striking creativity. *Mayfly Island* imagines a future shaped by climate change, where independent island city-states arise in a resource-scarce world. *Sunset Town* captures scenes of isolation and solidarity in Taipei, while *Soul* blends Eastern folklore with Western fantasy to explore themes such as class oppression. *Baby*, a five-volume series, follows the heroines who bear the weight of continuing humanity's existence.

And finally, two stories offer pure, unadulterated delight. *Mobu's Diary*

features a determined cat who starts to work at a cat cafe. For younger readers, *Have You Found the Time?* introduces a fox with a leisurely sense of time that will resonate with children and parents alike as they read together.

Thank you so much for taking an interest in Books from Taiwan and reading our marvelous books.



Michelle Kuo, Editor-in-chief
Books from Taiwan



OKEN: Childhood Memories of a Taiwanese Poet

OKEN：詩的端倪

Author: Yang Mu **Illustrator:** Wu Shih-hung **Publisher:** Fisfisa Media

Date: 8/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

208 pages | 19.7 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights sold: French, German

Award: 2021 The Raymond LeBlanc Prize at the Brussels Comic Festival

2024 The 15th Golden Comic Awards, Best New Talent

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Fahey

Oken: Childhood Memories of a Taiwanese Poet is adapted from *Mountain Wind, Sea Rain*, a classic autobiography of Yang Mu, one of Taiwan's most influential poets. In this work, Yang reflects on the spiritual events of his childhood and the enlightenment that inspired his pursuit of art. Oken is Yang's childhood name. As a young boy, he is considerate and sensitive. When he encounters a master wood craftsman who creates deity statues, he undergoes a transformative journey.

Oken delves deep into the inner world of this literary master. Amidst the backdrop of bombing raids during World War II, the Chinese Nationalist government's occupation, the Hualien earthquake, and the authoritarian White Terror period, Yang Mu revisits his childhood through the lens of his forties.

Oken has garnered acclaim, winning the Newcomer Award at the Brussels Comic Strip Festival, and has been highly praised by European judges. This project marks a significant step for Taiwanese literature onto the international stage, showcasing a cross-border collaboration between Taiwan and France.

In *Oken*, illustrator Wu Shih-hung displays his profound talents in both Eastern and Western traditional painting. His dynamic imagery impressively captures movement and emotion. This comic, Wu's first foray into the medium, conveys a poetic essence that harmonizes with Yang Mu's text, reflecting a search for the enchantment and mystery within his landscape and world.



Wu Shih-Hung

Wu Shih-Hung is a visual artist skilled in both traditional Chinese and Western painting, as well as dynamic image creation. He has been involved in the production of numerous documentaries, animated series, and commercial films, earning acclaim at both domestic and international film festivals. A father of two, he fondly considers this book his third child and feels incredibly fortunate.

Wu Shih-Hung is the recipient of the 2021 Brussels Comic Festival Newcomer Award and has showcased his work at various prestigious film festivals, including the Manchester Lift-Off Film Festival, REDCAT Children's Film Festival (USA), NHK Animation Grand Prize (Japan), Singapore Children's Film Festival, and several others across the globe, including Taiwan. His work has also received recognition at the Golden Bell Awards and the Taichung International Animation Festival. The book was awarded the 2022 Ministry of Culture Manga Creation and Publishing Marketing Award and has been licensed in French.



Yang Mu

Yang Mu, born in 1940 in Hualien, Taiwan, is a prominent literary figure, poet, essayist, critic, translator, and scholar. His works span Taiwan's post-war literary generation, with a career shaped by Taiwan's history from the end of Japanese rule through the Pacific War and Taiwan's restoration.

A Lushly Illustrated Life: The Story of Yang Mu, One of Taiwan's Most Celebrated Poet- Scholars

by Michael Fahey

Lushly illustrated by Wu Shih-hung, *Oken* is an autobiographical account of the origins of Yang Mu's poetic sensibility. Born in 1940, Yang Mu is widely considered one of Taiwan's most prominent 20th-century poets. The graphic novel uses his childhood name, *Oken*, until the final pages, where his identity as Yang Mu is revealed. "*Oken*" is the Japanese version of his childhood name, which in his native Taiwanese is pronounced A-Hiàn. In classical Chinese, the name means "sacrificial offering to the gods," a meaning Yang Mu, a deeply erudite poet, would have understood.

This interplay between Taiwanese and Japanese encapsulates one of *Oken's* virtues: its fidelity to Taiwan's complex

linguistic environment. When American bombs fell on Hualien, the eastern Taiwan city where the poet was born, Taiwan had been a Japanese colony for nearly 50 years. *Oken's* family flees into the mountains through the magical rift valley. There his educated parents trade and converse with indigenous Austronesian Taiwanese in Japanese. Later, his mother struggles with the new rulers' language—Mandarin Chinese brought by the defeated Nationalists from China. Her children are frustrated by her inability to pronounce it correctly, but she remains amused.

At first, it seems that *Oken's* poetic inspiration lies in Taiwan's magnificent mist-wreathed mountains. Wu's full-page

ink-wash illustration of Chilai Mountain masterfully conveys the sense of awe and mystery that Taiwan's wilderness has produced in the souls of visitors for centuries.

After the war ends, the family returns to Hualien. With the Japanese expelled, the Taiwanese think they will resume the old ways, worship their own gods again, and speak their own tongue free from interference of fastidious colonial authorities.

But their new rulers have different ideas. A stultifying educational system forces Oken and his friends to speak Mandarin. Despite this, Oken doesn't reject the new language. Indeed, he delights in the sounds of the

new language especially when spoken by a shy girl from China named Goldfish, whose passion is embroidery.

Some teachers from China, however, are traumatized refugees who harbor a deep hatred for both the Japanese and,

by extension, Taiwanese like Oken. A series of calamities soon befalls Oken, his friends, and his family.

First, rough soldiers from China kill and eat a dog beloved by the family of one of Oken's impoverished

classmates. Oken witnesses the butchering and the tears falling from the loyal dog's eye. As he later says, a part of him died forever that day. The government also confiscates a samurai

Although Yang Mu was an erudite scholar as well as a poet, we do not see him reading as a boy. His artistic model is a Taiwanese temple craftsman, fiercely dedicated to carving gods from Taiwan's precious cypress wood. This fusion of nature, art, and healing lies at the heart of Yang Mu's poetics.

sword gifted to Oken's father by a Japanese client, and later, Oken's father is arrested. Though he returns, a senior employee from their printing company does not, leaving his fate unknown. After this encounter with the secret police, who enforced martial law during Taiwan's 37-year White Terror, Oken's father becomes withdrawn and depressed.

Worst of all, Goldfish is killed in an earthquake. Her death jolts and unmoors Oken's soul. In this section, the sparse text fades into the background, allowing Wu's slightly psychedelic illustrations to convey Oken's mystical and traumatic experience.

Although Yang Mu was an erudite scholar as well as a poet, we do not see him reading as a boy. His artistic model is a Taiwanese temple craftsman, fiercely dedicated to carving gods from Taiwan's precious cypress wood. This fusion of nature, art, and healing lies at the heart of Yang Mu's poetics.

The novel ends with our narrator in Seattle, three decades later. Taiwan has

just emerged from the darkness of state terror and democratized. He is heading to a literary event with his son. His books, in English, are on display in the window of the shop. He shares his values with his son—freedom, the importance of artistic expression, the beauty of nature. Yet we sense that the story he has told—of trauma, a specific time and place at the western edge of the Pacific—is a story that only he can tell. There is a gulf between an immigrant father and his son, born into a new world. And yet, in the novel's final image, the famous poet looks at his son and sees not the child of a new world, but Oken—the boy he once was.

An American lawyer who has lived in Taiwan since 1988, Michael Fahey studied English and Chinese literature at the University of Chicago and Princeton. He lives in Taipei but would like to live south of the Zhuoshui River.



December 7, 1941
A Japanese naval armada suddenly attacks Pearl Harbor.
This causes the United States to enter World War II.

Spring 1945
General MacArthur takes Japanese-occupied Manila.
His next target is Iwo Jima.
He also launches intense air raids against the small city of
Hualien on the east coast of Taiwan. My native place.

Japan had ruled Taiwan for nearly 50 years.
Many young Taiwanese only spoke Japanese.



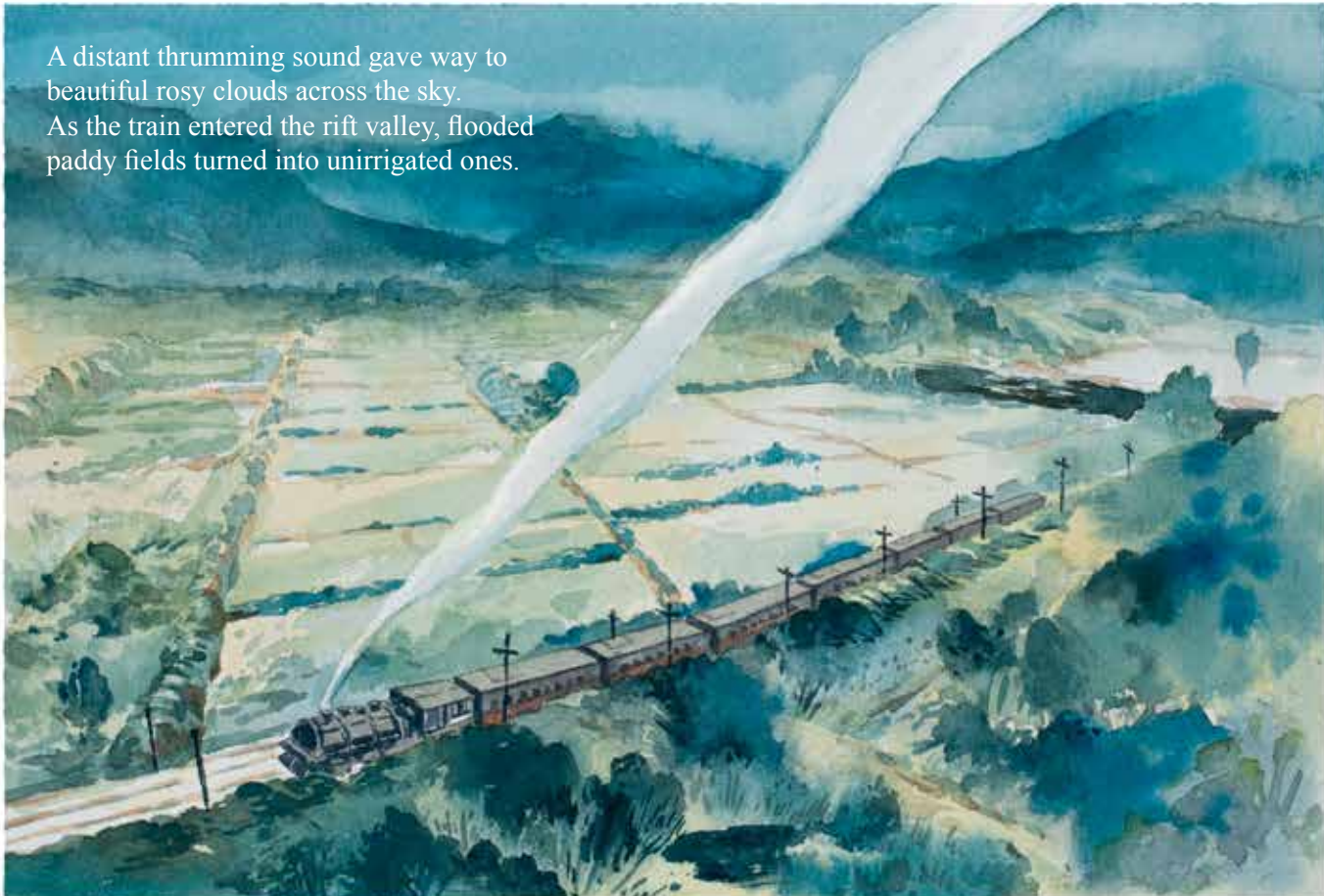
A few especially far-sighted people
began to feel anxious.



What if the American planes bombed
the railway going south from Hualien?



That was the first time I ever took a long-distance train.



A distant thrumming sound gave way to beautiful rosy clouds across the sky. As the train entered the rift valley, flooded paddy fields turned into unirrigated ones.



I thought that planes must have never flown through the skies over these fields. It all seemed so peaceful. It was all so new. So wonderful.



How much longer before we get there?



I hope our employees were able to get away without any problems. They've been with us so long.



I'm just praying that the air raids don't hit the building with the printing presses inside.



The Sun Between the Fingers

指縫中的太陽

Author: Cory Ko **Illustrator:** Cory Ko **Publisher:** Fisfisa Media

Date: 12/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

168 pages | 15 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Jacqueline Leung

A person with magical powers offers a girl three chances to return to the past and reconnect with a childhood friend she cannot forget. However, she must sacrifice what is most precious to a comic artist: her energy for imagination and dreaming.

Award-winning comic artist Cory Ko transforms pressing social issues surrounding violence against boys into a magical journey that attempts to transcend pain. As she puts it, "I hope my comics can also give others the strength to support themselves."

In particular, this book takes a close look at the sexual abuse of boys, a topic that has been overlooked and trivialized in the media landscape. For the characters in this book, it is selfless empathy, companionship, and love that can heal scars and evoke miracles.



Cory Ko

With a clear and transparent art style, Cory Ko is a manga artist renowned for telling stories about human nature. Since debuting, Ko has won six Golden Comic Awards and received recognition twice at the Japan International Manga Awards. Notable works include *Love is Everywhere* (3 volumes), *Make a Wish, Dashi!* (5 volumes), *Why Not* (volumes 1-4 ongoing), *Cliniclowns: Last Goodbye* (1 volume), and *Seeing the Wings of God* (1 volume). In 2022, Cory Ko received the Ministry of Culture Comic Creation and Publishing Marketing Award.

Seeing His Trauma: The Urgent Message of This Book

by Zhang Shuhui

In my experience with social work, I have encountered many traumatized children and adolescents. Some victims move toward recovery, some continue to cry in the dark, and some are so afraid that they do not even dare to cry.

Yet the most silent among them are boys who have been sexually assaulted. Due to the abuse of power, societal cultural contexts, gender stereotypes, stigmatization of sexual assault, and victim-blaming rhetoric, these boys often remain voiceless in their cries for justice.

When Fisfisa Media approached me, I envisioned their helpless eyes. If only the pain could cease at this moment, if the wounded could find hope, and if reading could prevent the next tragedy, then this concern would bring light to their lives. I am grateful to the Fisfisa team for their commitment to using comics—a medium familiar to teenagers—to illustrate the possibility of change. If we could all show a bit more concern, perhaps these

children would experience a little less heartache.

When it comes to sexual assault, many people imagine female victims. However, sexual assault is not limited to women; the number of male child victims is gradually rising. Some people believe that boys and men should be able to resist—that they should be brave and strong. There's a harmful notion that boys are not as severely affected as girls, or even that male victims might change their sexual orientation or become future perpetrators. These are all misconceptions that perpetuate prejudice against male survivors.

Sexual assault often manifests as a form of power and control. For boys, it can result in a lifelong social murder, gradually eroding their hearts. It's not that they are unwilling to resist; rather, they often feel unable or afraid to do so, constrained by gender roles and societal expectations that stifle their emotional expression. They

perceive this harm as an indelible stain on both their bodies and souls. Speaking out becomes daunting, as they fear ridicule for not conforming to traditional notions of masculinity and worry about losing family and friendships.

These fears, combined with feelings of shame, helplessness, and self-loathing, lead them to believe they are unworthy of love. They isolate themselves and become alienated from society, becoming at risk of depression, loss of confidence, and diminished interpersonal relationships.

The Sun Between the Fingers begins with regret, confronts hidden pain with compassion, and courageously embraces every opportunity for companionship and healing. This book serves as a reminder to friends and family of sexual assault survivors to cultivate trust and patience. While expressions of sadness may evolve, the trauma endures, and the recovery process demands time. Healing is not a single event; it requires listening, empathy,

care, and acceptance through meaningful companionship. When a child's trauma is acknowledged and their scars are tended to with support, hope can flourish.

In reality, life does not allow for a do-over. Self-harm cannot solve the problem. We must encourage children

to learn from the protagonist of the book and bravely seek resources—whether it's the time manager in the comic, a real-life teacher, or a social worker from the county or city's family protection center. Survivors of sexual assault, along with their friends, family, and professionals, must work together to

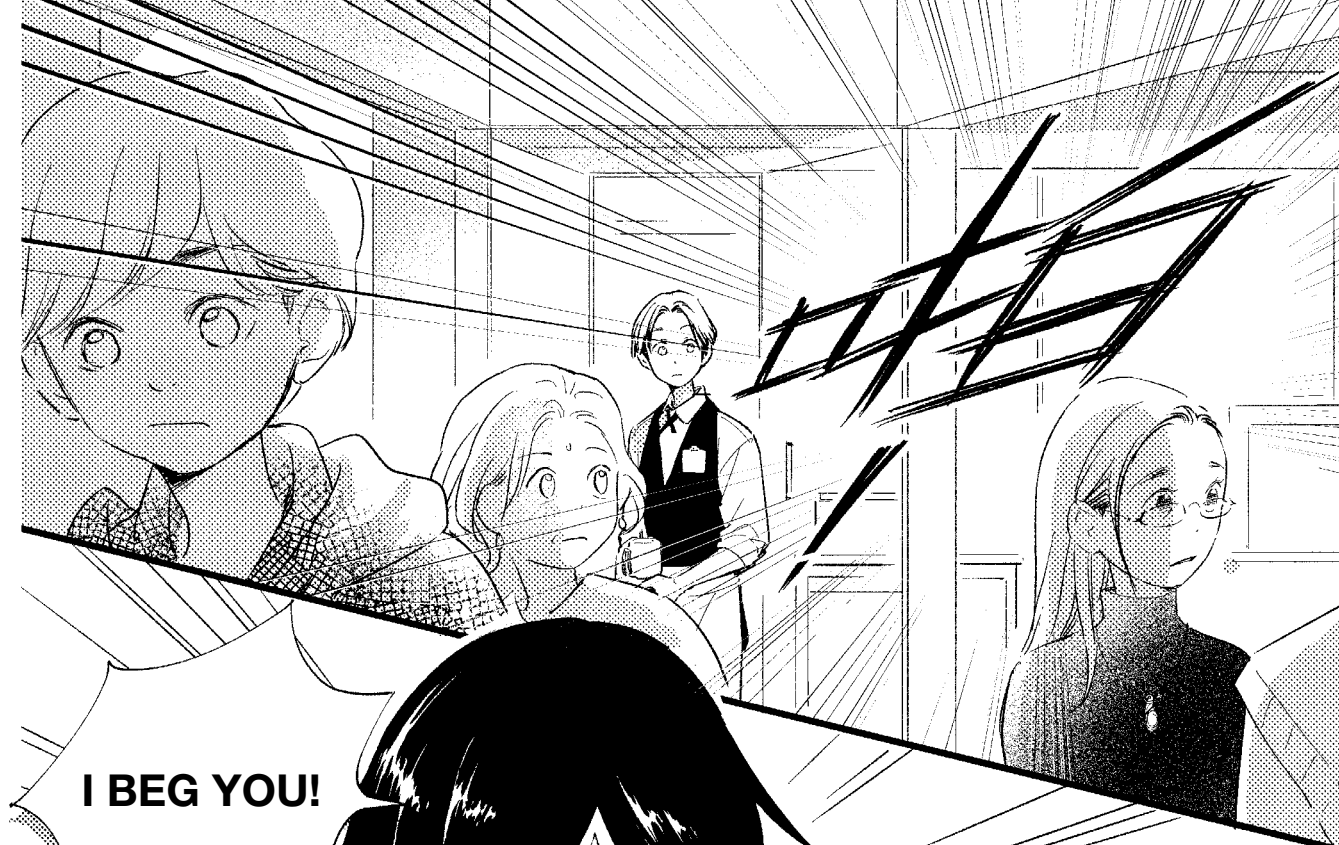
cultivate the courage to face themselves, help heal the wounded heart, reduce fear and helplessness, and provide the strength to face challenges.

Zhang Shuhui is chairperson of the Taiwan Association of Care Management.

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

When it comes to sexual assault, many people imagine female victims. However, the number of male child victims is gradually rising. There's a harmful notion that boys are not as severely affected as girls, or even that male victims might change their sexual orientation or become future perpetrators. These are all misconceptions that perpetuate prejudice against male survivors.

CHAPTER 1
THE GENTLE BOY WHO LOVES TO SMILE



I BEG YOU!

PLEASE
SAVE ME!

LIU YU-FEI (27)

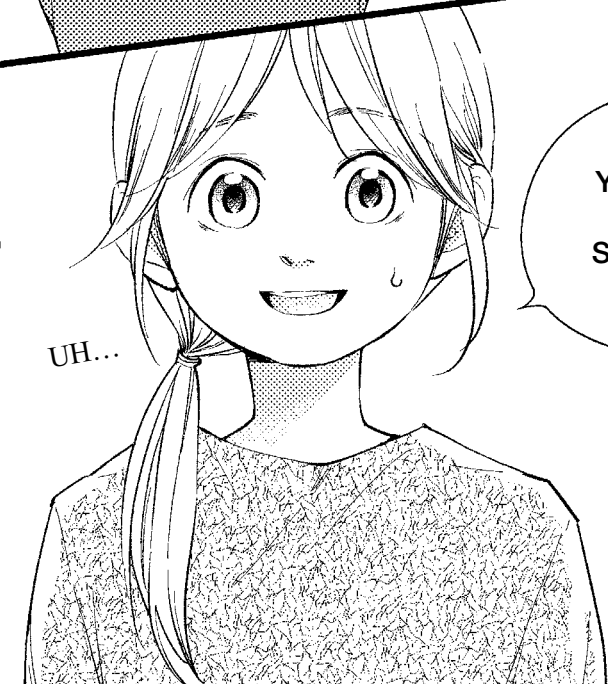
.....

UH...

YOU'RE A COMIC
ARTIST, I'M A
SOCIAL WORKER.

HOW CAN I
SAVE YOU?

YU HSIAO-HSIEN
(27)

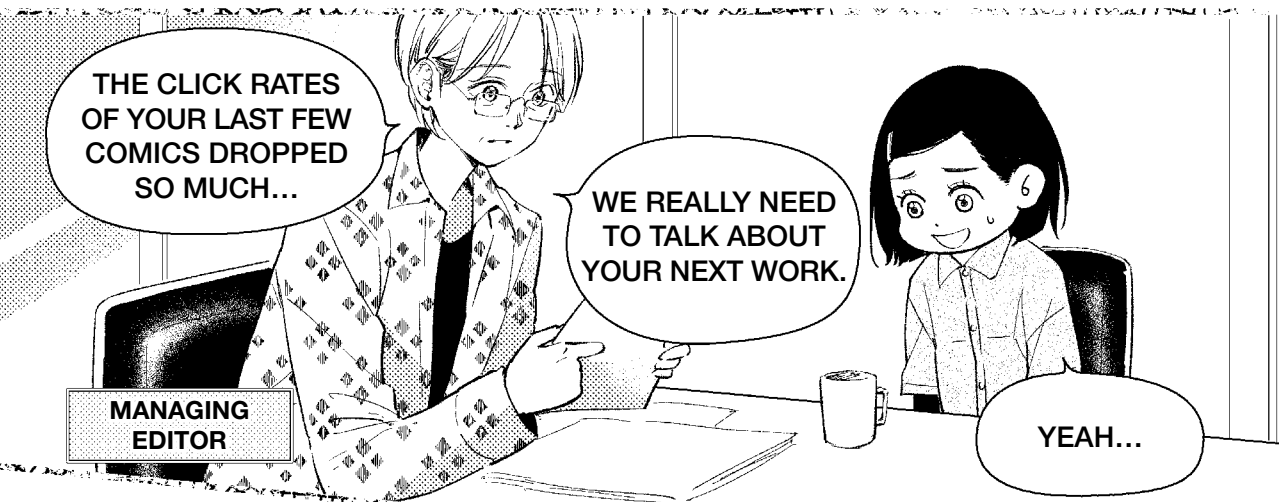




I'M GOING TO LOSE MY JOB~

EH?

— TWO WEEKS AGO —

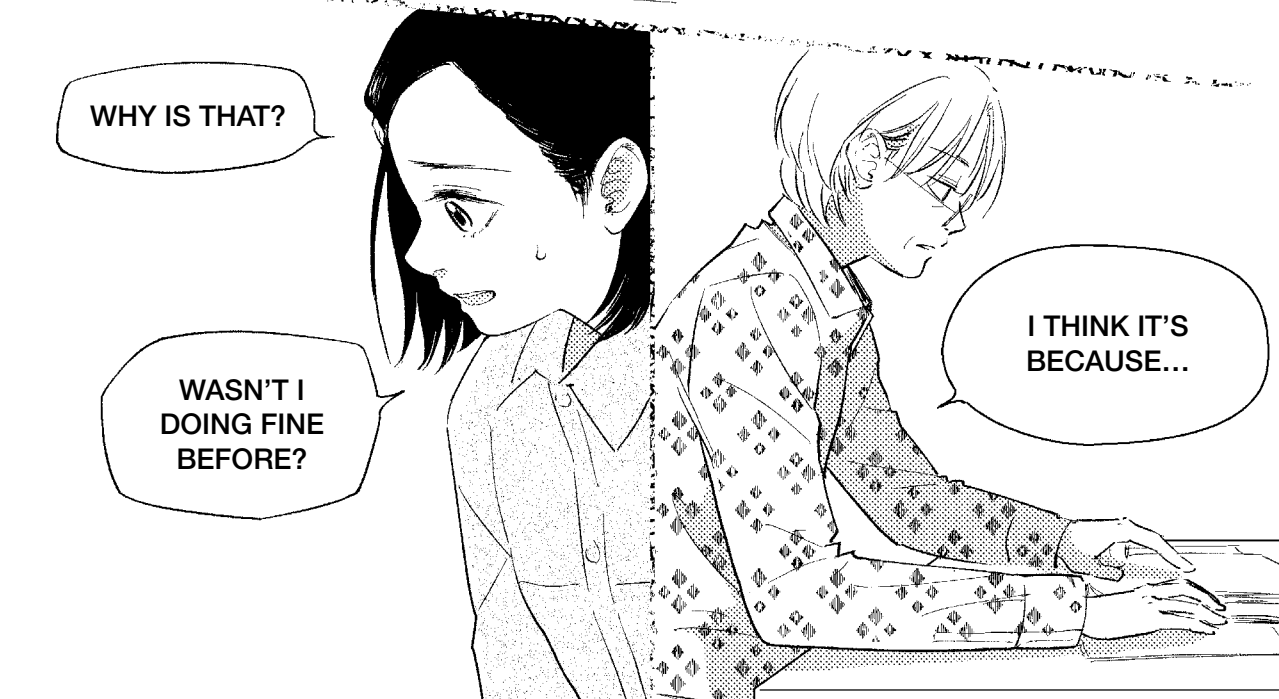


THE CLICK RATES OF YOUR LAST FEW COMICS DROPPED SO MUCH...

WE REALLY NEED TO TALK ABOUT YOUR NEXT WORK.

YEAH...

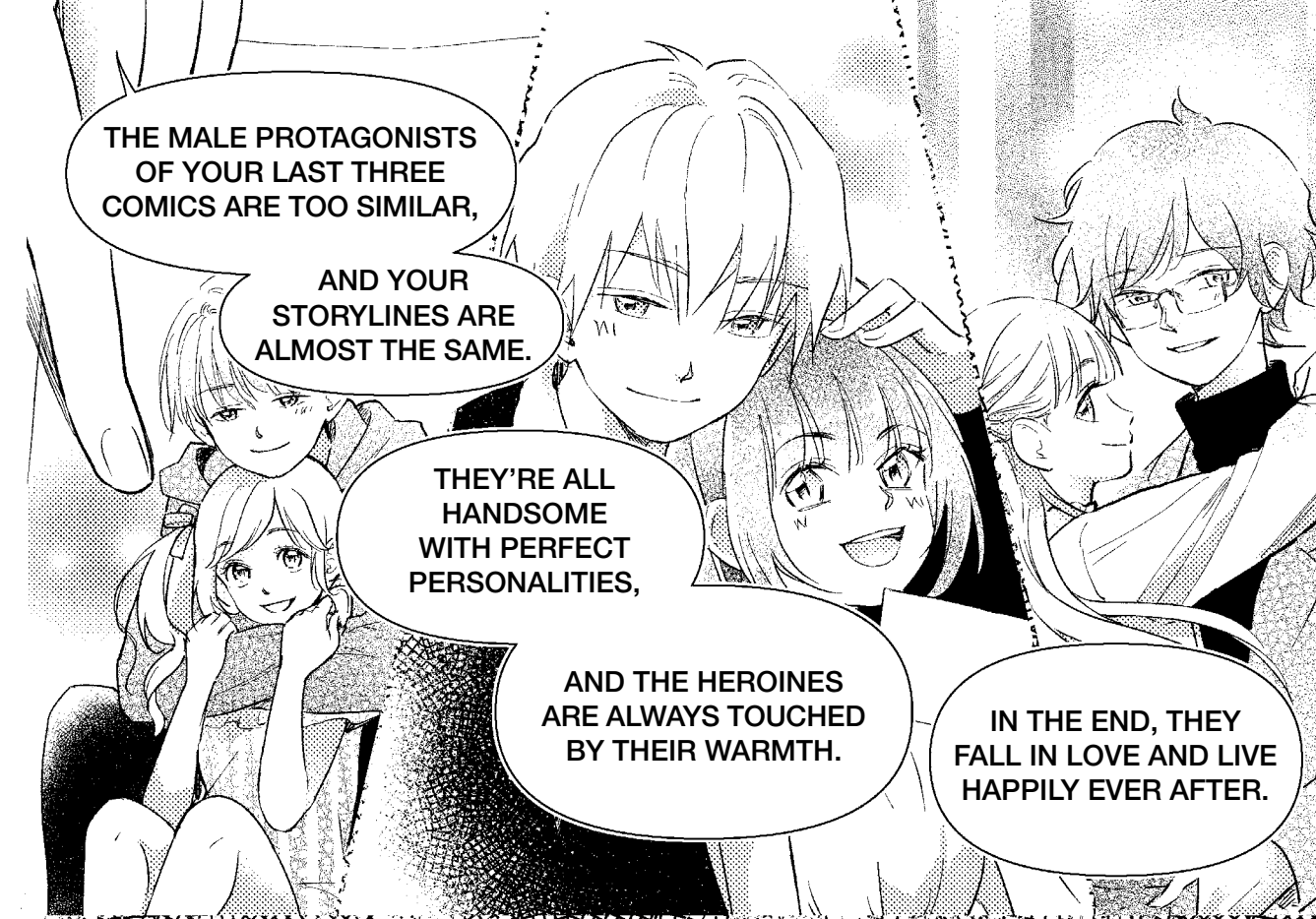
MANAGING EDITOR



WHY IS THAT?

WASN'T I DOING FINE BEFORE?

I THINK IT'S BECAUSE...



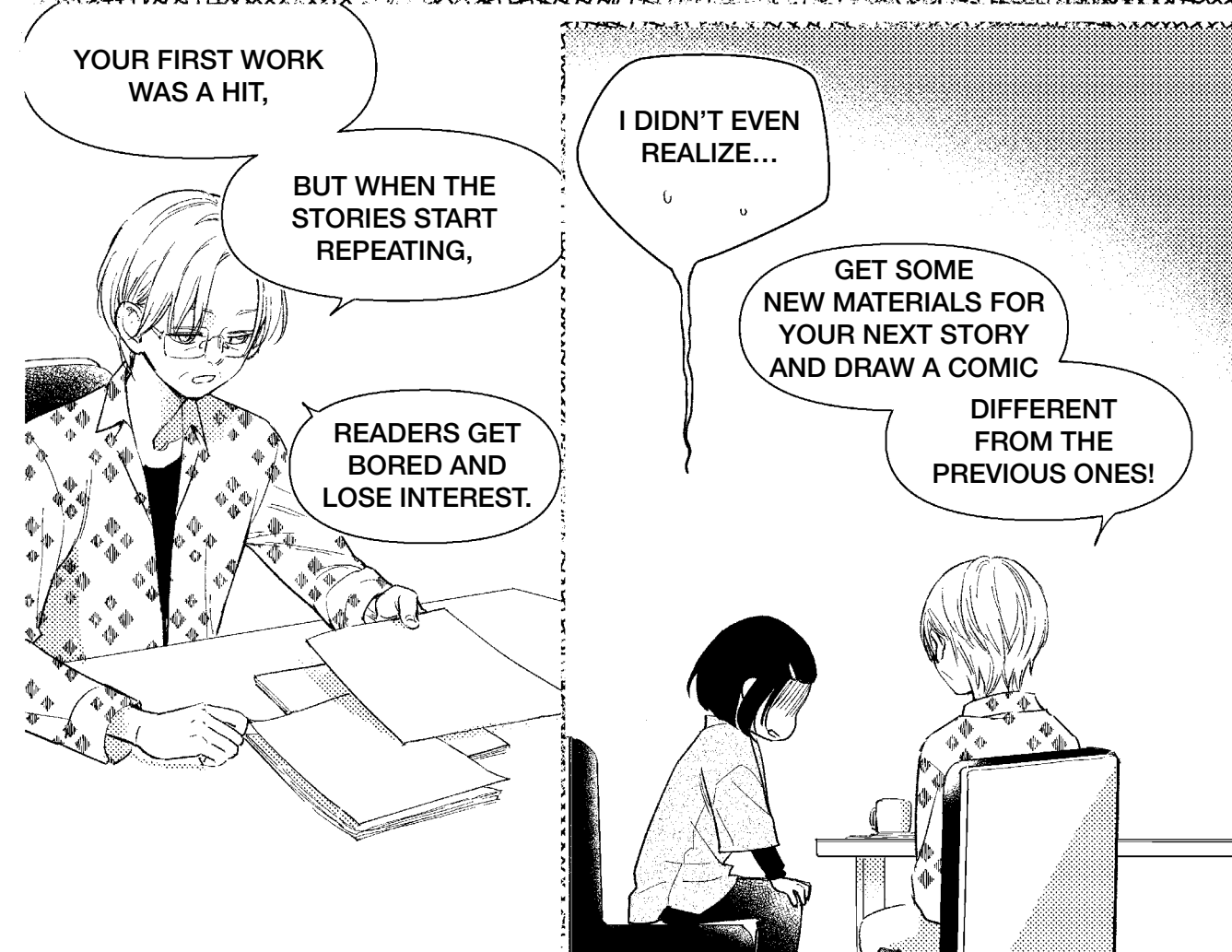
THE MALE PROTAGONISTS OF YOUR LAST THREE COMICS ARE TOO SIMILAR,

AND YOUR STORYLINES ARE ALMOST THE SAME.

THEY'RE ALL HANDSOME WITH PERFECT PERSONALITIES,

AND THE HEROINES ARE ALWAYS TOUCHED BY THEIR WARMTH.

IN THE END, THEY FALL IN LOVE AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER.



YOUR FIRST WORK WAS A HIT,

BUT WHEN THE STORIES START REPEATING,

READERS GET BORED AND LOSE INTEREST.

I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE...

GET SOME NEW MATERIALS FOR YOUR NEXT STORY AND DRAW A COMIC

DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES!



IF THIS GOES ON,

IT'LL BE HARD FOR YOU TO PLACE ANOTHER SERIAL...



AFTER THAT,

I SPENT A LOT OF TIME PROPOSING STORIES, BUT THEY WERE ALL SHOT DOWN,

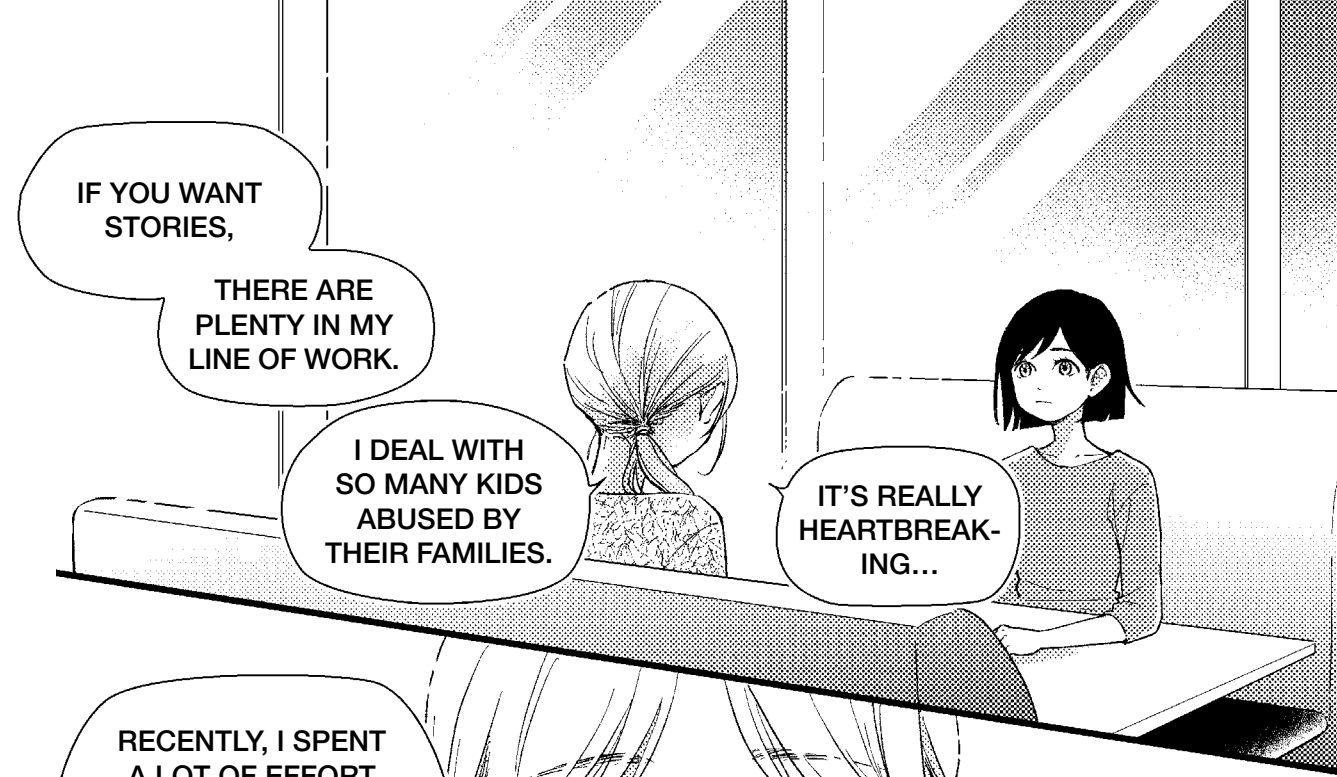
SO MY EDITOR SUGGESTED I MEET WITH A FRIEND TO CHEER UP...



WHICH IS WHY I'M ASKING YOU, AS A SOCIAL WORKER,

DO YOU HAVE ANY STORIES I CAN USE AS MATERIAL?

SO THAT'S WHY...



IF YOU WANT STORIES,

THERE ARE PLENTY IN MY LINE OF WORK.

I DEAL WITH SO MANY KIDS ABUSED BY THEIR FAMILIES.

IT'S REALLY HEARTBREAKING...

RECENTLY, I SPENT A LOT OF EFFORT STOPPING A CHILD FROM ENDING IT ALL.

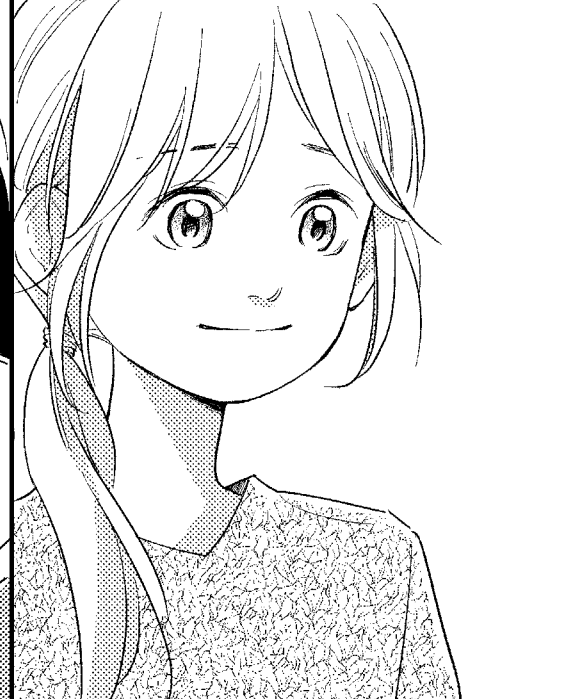
TO PULL HER BACK FROM THE EDGE,

I'VE BEEN WITH HER FOR OVER A YEAR...



OVER A YEAR?

THAT'S SUCH A LONG TIME...





SOUL: The Songs of Wild

狩 SOUL：荒魂曲

Comic Artist: Chiyou **Scriptwriter:** Kuzuha **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 1/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

192 pages | 19 x 26 cm **Volume:** 2 (ongoing)

BFT2.0 Translator: Catherine Yu

In a realm transformed by a cataclysm a thousand years ago, humanity survives by harnessing curses and magic. After death, human spirits do not dissipate but instead wander, corrupting into monstrous entities that wreak havoc on all living things.

A girl engulfed in flames plummets to the earth. Her arrival banishes the monstrous entities responsible for human diseases and briefly reveals a miracle of blue sky. This event fulfills an ancient prophecy, making her a symbol of hope for the world's revival.

Yet, on this war-torn earth, she faces not only those yearning for a savior but also various mutated monsters and fierce battles of sorcery. Confronted with the mystery of her own origins and the weight of the prophecy, how will she navigate this chaotic world filled with vengeful spirits?

Featuring nearly a hundred breathtaking full-color illustrations, this epic fantasy is a collaboration between renowned illustrator Chiyou and fantasy writer Kuzuha. The book constructs a deeply captivating fantasy universe with a grand worldview. Blending Eastern traditional folklore with Western fantasy, this album-like volume features full-color printing and is finely bound, each page a meticulously crafted visual feast.



Comic Artist and Original Concept **Chiyou**

Renowned for his exquisite and unique brushwork, Chiyou creates graceful and powerful depictions of female figures. Since 2010, Chiyou has regularly published illustrations in CCC Creative Collection. His first commercial illustration album, *Collection of Taiwan High School Girl Uniforms* (2014), has been licensed in Japanese and Korean editions. Other notable works include *Oh, my Goddess!*, *Bunny Bunny Bang!*, and the graphic novel series *Soul*. In 2013, Chiyou's personal illustration collection *We Stay, We Live* was exhibited at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France. *Bunny Bunny Bang!* was featured in a solo exhibition in Tokyo and licensed for a Korean edition.



Scriptwriter **Kuzuha**

A writer with a passion for fantasy and diverse subcultures, Kuzuha's works include the urban fantasy novel *Soul Plants* (2016), selected for the Ministry of Culture's recommended reading list for elementary and middle school students, and the fantasy novel *Vali: The Lost Story of Taiwan* (2020), inspired by the Beinan Site of National Museum of Prehistory. *Soul Plants* was also a finalist for the 6th Taiwan Historical Fiction Award.

Soul: A Visually Sumptuous Epic Fantasy and Coming-of-Age Story

by Hsieh Yi-An

What would a post-apocalyptic world look like if civilization were destroyed and everything had to start over? Many games, comics, and novels have explored this question. In *Soul* Chiyou offers a unique vision, a colorful world brimming with guns, sorcery, and noble clans. Blending elements of Chinese fantasy with Japanese aesthetics, *Soul* creates a visually stunning realm that feels both strange and familiar.

Inherent to the apocalypse is the beauty of desolation: What will a newly reborn civilization look like? It cannot emerge from nothingness; it will inevitably bear the shadows of the old world yet be profoundly different. *Soul* is filled with an array of appealing elements: apocalypse, wasteland, sorcery, girls' academies, uniforms, guns, and characters with intricate backgrounds. The girls' uniforms

radiate youthful vitality, while the teachers exude elegance, enhanced by their striking combat attire. Chiyou's vivid, sensuous art makes each page a feast for the eyes.

Soul tells the coming-of-age story of the protagonist, Chenbi. A sorcery academy teacher named Liu Shun takes her in and raises her with care. At the academy, Chenbi is favored by upperclassmen like Dazhe and Baihou, but she is also bound by a rule: she cannot leave the academy. In a bid to escape, she makes a deal with a mysterious man, releases him, and triggers chaos, leading her to the desolate wasteland known as "the ground." During this process, she is separated from Liu Shun. The first two volumes of *Soul* take place mostly within the sorcery academy, with concise text paired with vivid imagery, creating a

streamlined narrative.

Ambitious in its world-building, *Soul* creates a vast and elaborate setting that can be hard to keep track of at times, but certain concepts and characters stand out—such as the "Mine Slaves," low-level workers who do physically deforming work. During the annual blessing festival, sorcerers purify them, temporarily restoring their original, "better-looking" forms.

This dynamic, in which the upper class oppresses while also granting temporary relief, is an original take on class oppression, exploring it through the lens of "ugliness." Even in their downtrodden state, the Mine Slaves engage in self-deprecating humor—one hesitates to say goodbye to their crooked nose, while another jokes, "It'll just go crooked again in six months."

Soul exists in a unique space between picture books and comics. Its text and images are often separate, not adhering strictly to comic formats, though it occasionally employs comic-style paneling. Most of the time, the

illustrations are designed to tell a story, with compositions that vividly express the relationships and tensions between characters.

Each illustration in *Soul* feels like a standalone work of art. The composition techniques are particularly remarkable, with valuable lessons for aspiring artists.

Each illustration in this book feels like a standalone work of art.

Soul not only features exquisitely detailed characters and vibrant colors but also succeeds in conveying a sense of dynamic tension and time through still images.

The greatest pleasure in reading the *Soul* series lies in watching how these intricate stories translate into compelling visual narratives.

Born in Lukang, Hsieh Yi-An now resides in Taipei, where she graduated from National Taiwan University. A member of the Taipei Legend Studio, Hsieh is dedicated to researching and promoting local legends of monsters and mysterious happenings. She has contributed writing to the Daemon Tales series of books.

C H A P T E R 1

Chapter One

Earth

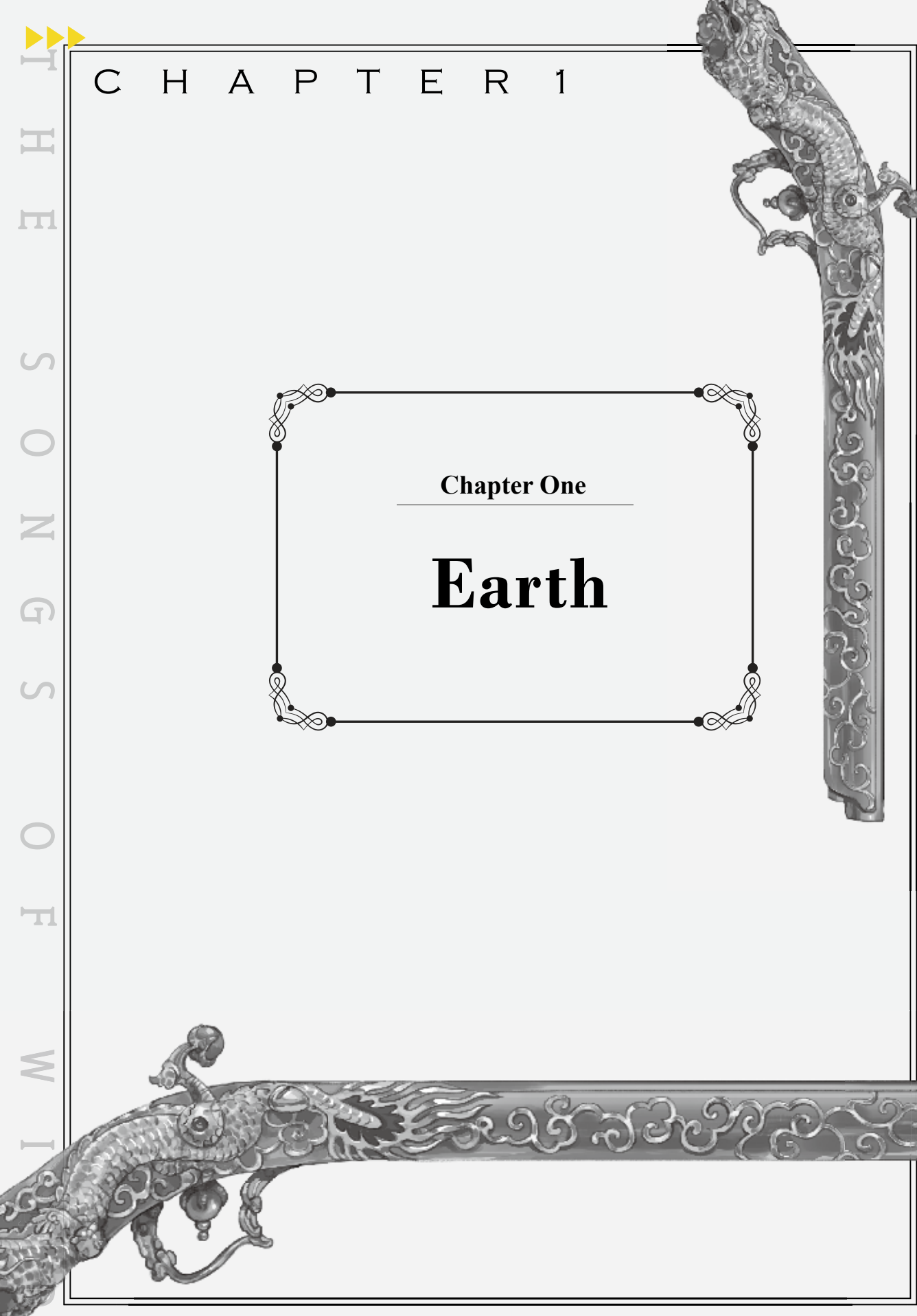
Miasmanimas

Miasmanimas exist in myriad shapes and are extremely dangerous. Though they appear all over the world, they are significantly more numerous and active in the depths of the Wild. It is rumored that they amass in certain seasons in such large numbers as to create mutations, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Uncharmed traditional weapons seem to have no effect whatsoever on miasmanimas, while charmed weapons and gear can provide some repulsion and defense against them. Nonetheless, even fully armed sorcerers rarely dare to venture deep into miasmanima-infested territory.



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“**Earth**” is entirely different from the utopian place Polaris once imagined.

There are neither lush meadows nor flowers in profusion. All she can see is a reeking marshland and the scattered remains of the Ark, which seem like they will soon be swallowed up by the mud.

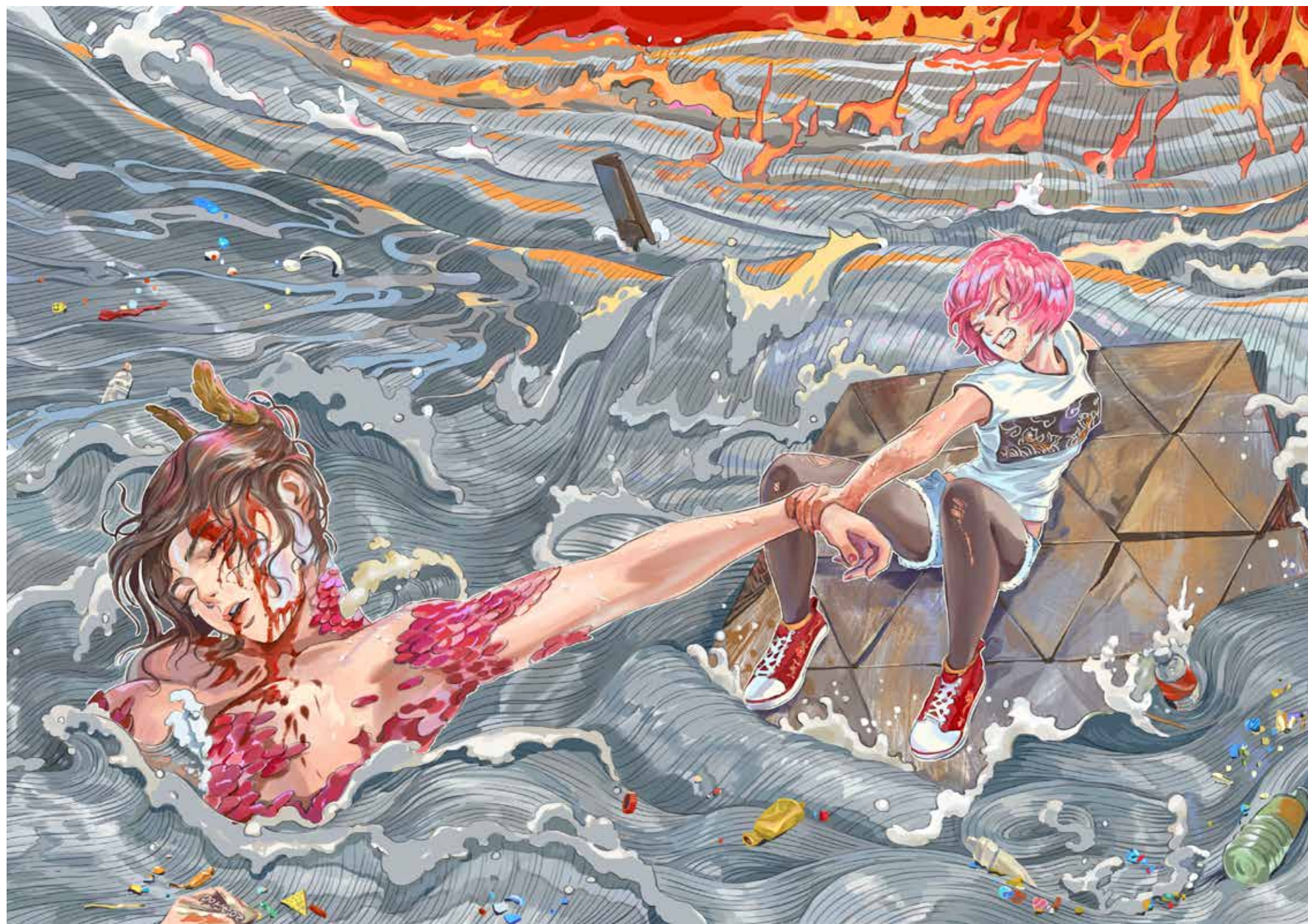
But Polaris pays no mind to this desolate scene. Eyes wide open, she desperately searches for Saliksana in the deluge.

Saliksana is sprawled on the ground, her incantosuit in tatters and her skin exposed. The rain keeps washing away the blood oozing from her wounds, but the water never runs clear.

As Polaris darts toward Saliksana, a white flash suddenly fills her sight with dizzying light, followed by several loud bangs. She feels herself swept up by shockwaves and then smashed against the ground, which knocks her out. Something inside the Ark has exploded, unleashing flames that turn the sky red.

“When one pours all their feelings, thoughts, and longings into someone or something, the latter becomes a curse. I’ve put all my love and thoughts on you, aren’t you my curse then?”

Like the rain, memories of bygone days seep into Polaris’s head. By the time she startles awake, she finds herself surrounded by an ocean. Waves of rainwater are swelling and crashing violently, but flames are still blazing above the billows. Polaris clings to a broken door from the Academy and holds on to Saliksana’s hand with all her might.



Regaining consciousness means the sharp pain from the earlier collision returns too. With her arms shaking uncontrollably, Polaris clenches her teeth to endure the pain ripping through her joints. At long last, just as she is about to reach her limit, she hears a faint moan from Saliksana, who has finally woken up from her coma.

Saliksana tilts her head, gazes at Polaris tenderly, and squeezes out a smile like she always does.

Tears brim in Polaris's eyes.

All is not lost yet.

Polaris draws a deep breath and prepares to use her last bit of energy to pull Saliksana up on the door slab.

For a moment, Polaris thinks she has managed. But the extra weight immediately tips the balance, and one end of the door juts out of the water. Busy heaving Saliksana up, Polaris loses her hold on the door because of the sudden mishap. Saliksana slips into the waves again, dragging Polaris with her.

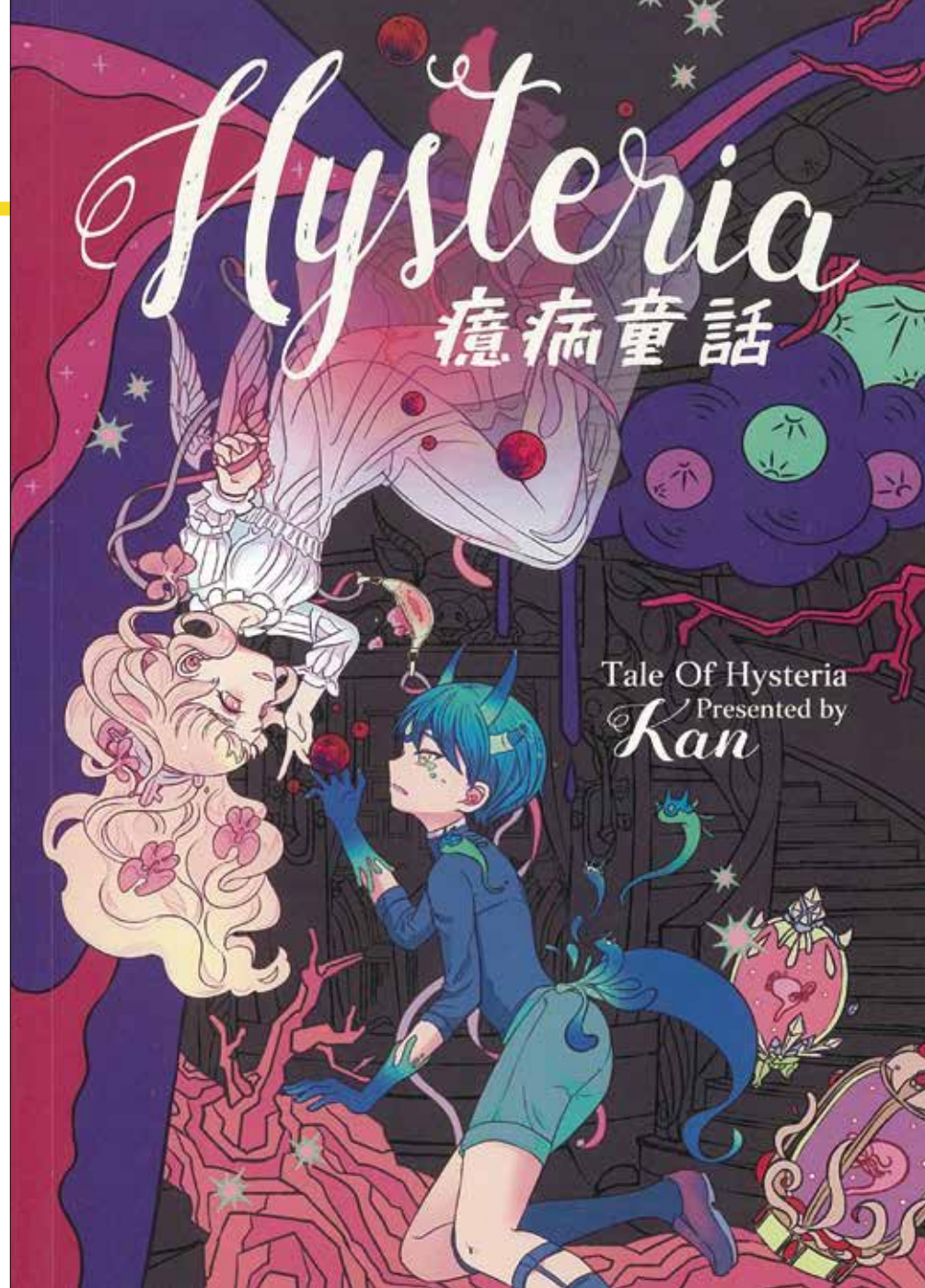
Flustered, Polaris thrashes her arms to stay afloat, but it's all in vain.

Until her tightly clasped hand is flung away by Saliksana.

The tiled door drops down on the surface with a loud whop. Polaris is still on top.

She stretches her hand out again, desperate to grab Saliksana. But all she can see is that the filthy torrent has swallowed up Saliksana's slender wrist, now nowhere to be found.





Tale Of Hysteria

癡病童話

Author: Kan **Illustrator:** Kan **Publisher:** Kiwi Cultural and Creative

Date: 7/2021 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

152 pages | 15 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Kevin Wang and Lin King

Tale Of Hysteria explores love, sexuality, and gender identity. Fascinating and subversive, it delves into the concept of menstruation while offering feminist visions for freedom and liberation. Its striking visual style and inventive storytelling illustrate how the power of femininity clashes with patriarchal norms.



Kan

Kan is a freelance illustrator and aspiring comic artist who delights in vibrant colors and seeks to capture the whispers of everyday life and the secrets of dreams through her art. She has contributed to various projects, including character design for the board game *Whisper*, illustrations for a unique edition of Chinese language textbooks, cover art for the novel *Golden Demon Murder Magic*, and the main visual for the Forestry Bureau's Forest Conservation Month. Kan has also self-published illustrated collections and comic anthologies such as *Daydream Logic* and *Arcade Labyrinth*.

Fascinating and Subversive, *Hysteria* Prompts Readers to Rethink Menstruation

by Rex How

The first page of *Tale Of Hysteria* opens with a definition:

hysteria [noun]: hysteria; uncontrolled emotional outburst; madness.

For nearly two thousand years, this condition was believed to be unique to women, attributed to a disturbance of the uterus within the body. This definition sets the stage for a story centered around women and the uterus.

The narrative begins with a boy named Limes waking up in the morning, his body oozing green slime. Several small animals around him chatter noisily, reminding him of what's happening again. The shapes of these creatures suggest that Limes's name is not just a label but also closely tied to them.

Limes has lived in a place governed by a witch since birth—an expansive house built by the witch using sprawling moonlight as its foundation. His daily

tasks primarily involve cleaning various jars that contain the witches' uteruses. Whenever a new witch makes a contract with the moon god, she undergoes a ritual to remove her uterus and store it in a container. By absorbing the moon's essence, the uterus becomes the source of the witch's power, but the ebb and flow of gravitational tides require regular maintenance.

Limes is responsible for these maintenance tasks, but his troubles don't end there; he faces even bigger issues. He is trapped in a dark world that is paradoxically the only place he belongs. Although his room has a window through which he can see the bright world inhabited by humans, that place remains an unattainable dream.

One day, he discovers a girl collapsed on the ground—an angel who has fallen from the sky.

Kan, the creator of *Hysteria*, is known for her love of vibrant colors and her commitment to using drawing and ink to depict the wonders hidden in everyday life and the whispered secrets of dreams. This work is one of Kan's most iconic creations. By creating imagery of the uterus, menstruation, and various woman-centric symbols, the story encourages readers to reflect on the concept of feminine energy—an energy that transcends gender. The character design, panel composition, artistic style, and use of color are all uniquely distinctive.

Kan reimagines the complex

relationship between the human body and the world with a sympathetic and compassionate perspective.

By creating imagery of the uterus, menstruation, and various woman-centric symbols, the story encourages readers to reflect on the concept of feminine energy—an energy that transcends gender.

Comic critic Wang Pei-Di offers insightful commentary on this book, writing, "This fairy-tale style comic is both fascinating and subversive. It reimagines the long-stigmatized concept of menstrual blood, illustrating the bondage and liberation of the female body through a metaphorical

narrative and bold, straightforward illustrations."

Rex How is the managing director of Books from Taiwan.



HEY!



HEY!
WAKE UP!



LOOK AT
YOURSELF

SO CARELESS

YOU'VE LEAKED
AGAIN!

ANOTHER LOUSY DAY,
THOUGHT LIMES.



HAVING TO CLEAN
EVERY DAY BEFORE
WORK IS EXHAUSTING.



ESPECIALLY THIS
ANNOYING STICKY
LIQUID THAT GETS
EVERYWHERE.
IT'S BEEN MORE
FREQUENT.

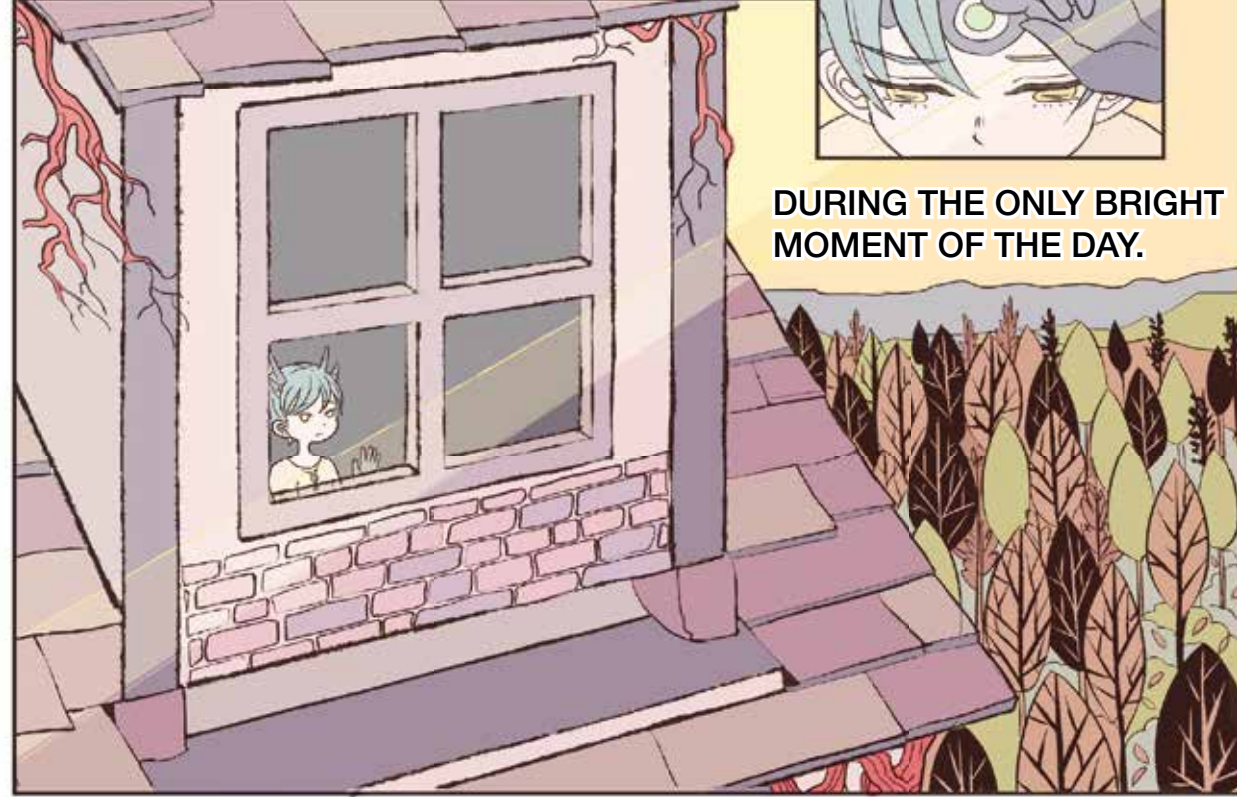
UGH



BUT THERE'S NO WAY
LIMES COULD LEAVE
BEHIND THIS MESS.



BECAUSE HE
HOPES THE ROOM
WILL BE CLEAN
AND TIDY...



DURING THE ONLY BRIGHT
MOMENT OF THE DAY.

THIS WAY, THE DAZZLING
WORLD IN THE DISTANCE
WOULDN'T SEEM SO OUT
OF REACH.

AT LEAST, HE
COULD DREAM
OF BEING PART
OF THAT TOWN.



STILL, HE WANTS TO
CLING TO THIS **IMPOSSIBLE!** LITTLE HOPE.

BECAUSE OUTSIDE
THIS ROOM, HIS
WORLD IS FILLED

**ONLY WITH
DARKNESS.**



... EVEN THOUGH HE ISN'T TODAY,

AFTER ALL, TODAY IS
ALREADY TAINTED!

AND WON'T BE
TOMORROW,

AND THE NEXT
DAY WILL BE
NO DIFFERENT.





LIMES HAS NO
OTHER CHOICE.

HE MUST WORK FOR THE MASTER
OF THIS DARKNESS, YEAR-ROUND,
WITHOUT REST OR COMPLAINT;

BECAUSE THIS IS WHERE
HE WAS BORN —

AND IT'S THE ONLY PLACE
WHERE HE BELONGS.



Sunset Town

日落城

Author: Jellybug **Illustrator:** Jellybug **Publisher:** Jellybug

Date: 4/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

BFT2.0 Translator: William Serrano

An imaginative and visually striking book with a subtle handmade quality, *Sunset Town* depicts the streets of Taiwan, employing symbolism and metaphor to link the cityscape with the inner lives of its characters. It tells a story of acceptance, tolerance, and love while leaving space for readers to connect with and envision their own experiences.



Jellybug

Jellybug is known for her work in digital comics. In 2020, her work *The Silhouette* was selected for the Draw Me Comics Award at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France. In 2021, Jellybug contributed to the Boeing Comics Magazine Special Issue, where creators drew short pieces inspired by a single photograph. Her short story *Wrinkled Fingers* combined text and images, experimenting with materials and painting techniques. Following her participation in the Ministry of Culture's subsidized project Bao Hao Fan, Jellybug independently produced and printed *Pomi Comics*. Jellybug experiments with text, comics, and animation, blending these approaches and exploring new artistic styles. She strives to create art with a touch of rebellious spirit.

A Wholly Unique Work: the Mysterious Allure of Sunset Town

by Junye Chen

In its visual presentation, narrative style, and emotional depth, *Sunset Town* stands as a wholly unique work. Its lightweight, compact format, striking red and yellow hues, and subtle handmade quality create the impression of an elegant yet simple zine.

At first glance, *Sunset Town* appears to tell a typical post-apocalyptic tale, yet there are no descriptions of catastrophic events or wartime struggles, nor any

At first glance, Sunset Town appears to tell a typical post-apocalyptic tale, yet there are no descriptions of catastrophic events or wartime struggles, nor any desperate fight for survival.

desperate fight for survival. Even its portrayal of characters and scenes is remarkably sparse. Upon first reading, one is left puzzled—and therein lies its allure.

Characters are nameless, and dialogue is nearly absent. Protagonists wander through a city where daylight is vanishing, and darkness spreads as they search for light.

The origins of the city remain unclear—whether it belongs to the real world or exists solely in the mind is left to the

reader's interpretation. Readers will brim with questions. Why does the city's sunlight fade? What does the bittersweet scent signify? Is the girl with the ponytail and cigarette a remnant of the past or an idealized version of the self?

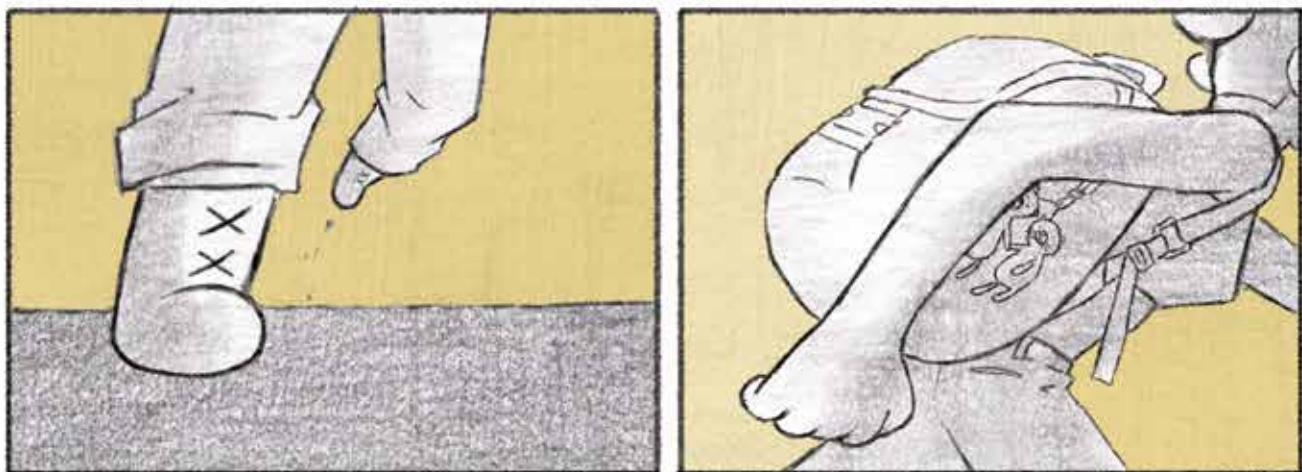
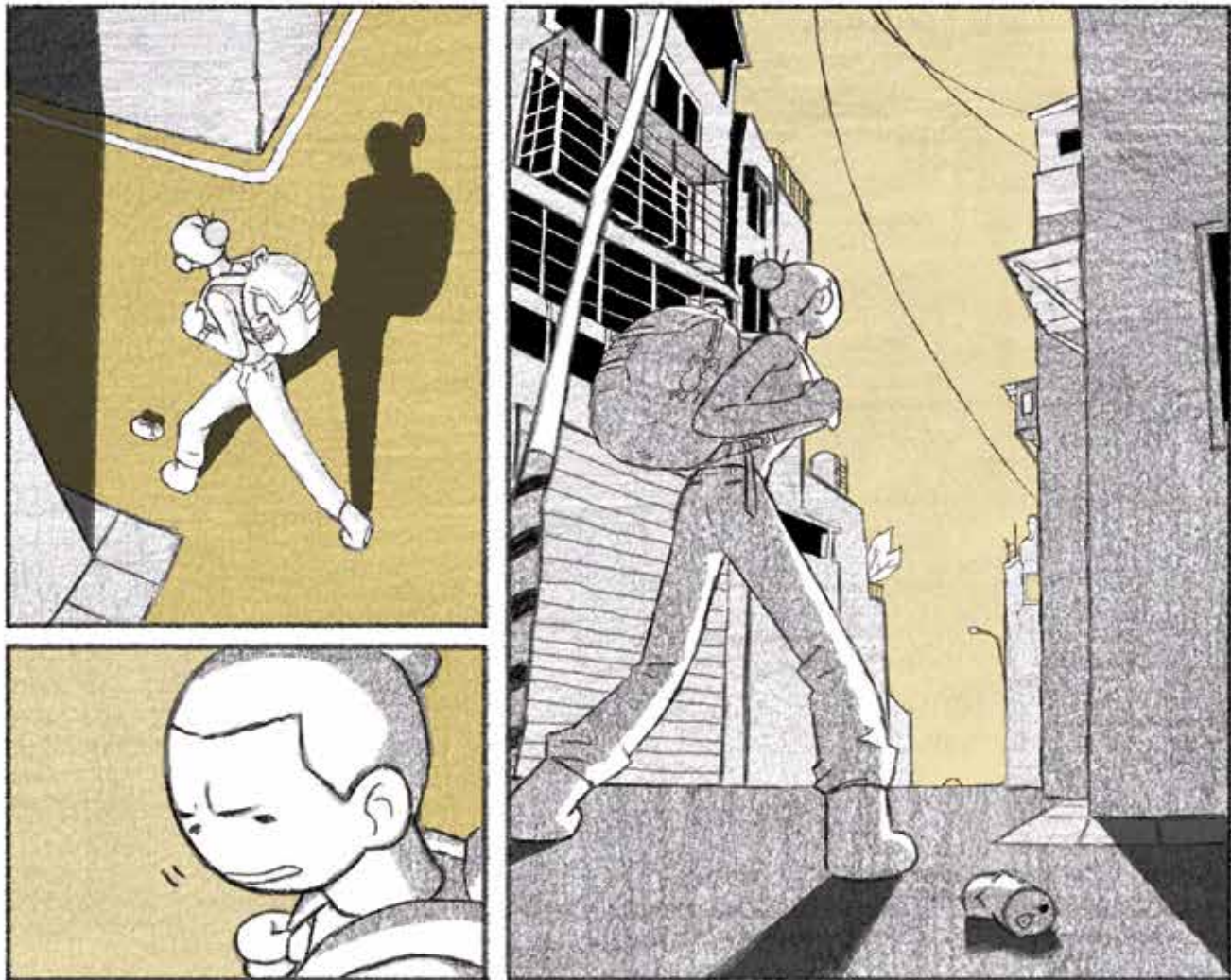
Rather than using a conventional narrative structure, *Sunset Town* employs color, symbols, and vivid imagery to evoke a space both ambiguous and deeply felt—the realm of the heart. The work feels like a quiet whisper, a courageous journey to reclaim light.

The fading daylight in the city seems to reflect the inner self—when the heart shuts down under the weight of disappointment and suppressed

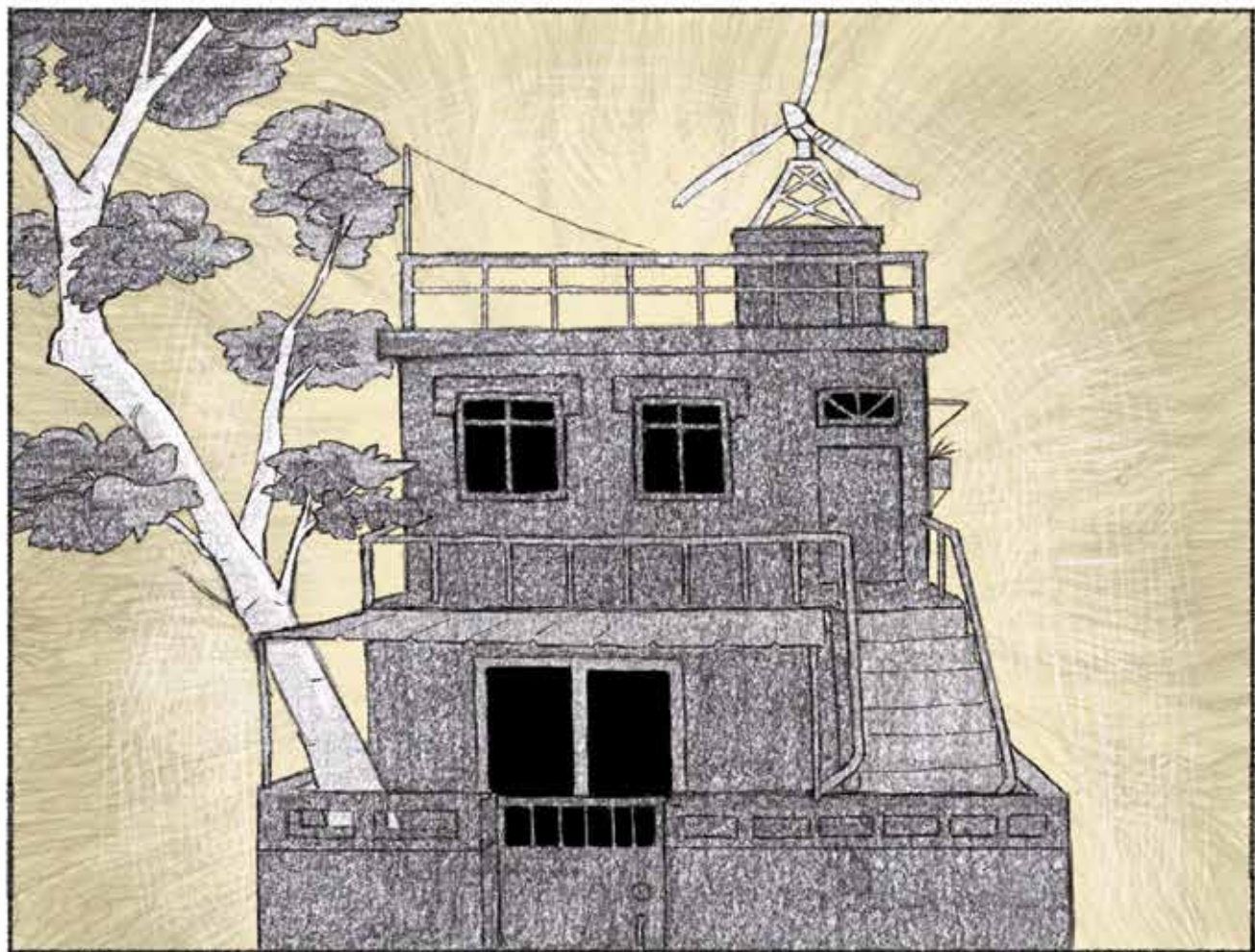
emotions. Though free from the wounds of love and affection, light and hope gradually disappear, leaving behind only darkness and solitude. As the light, color, and scent slowly fade away, the nights lengthen until the protagonist is left alone, wandering through shadowed streets.

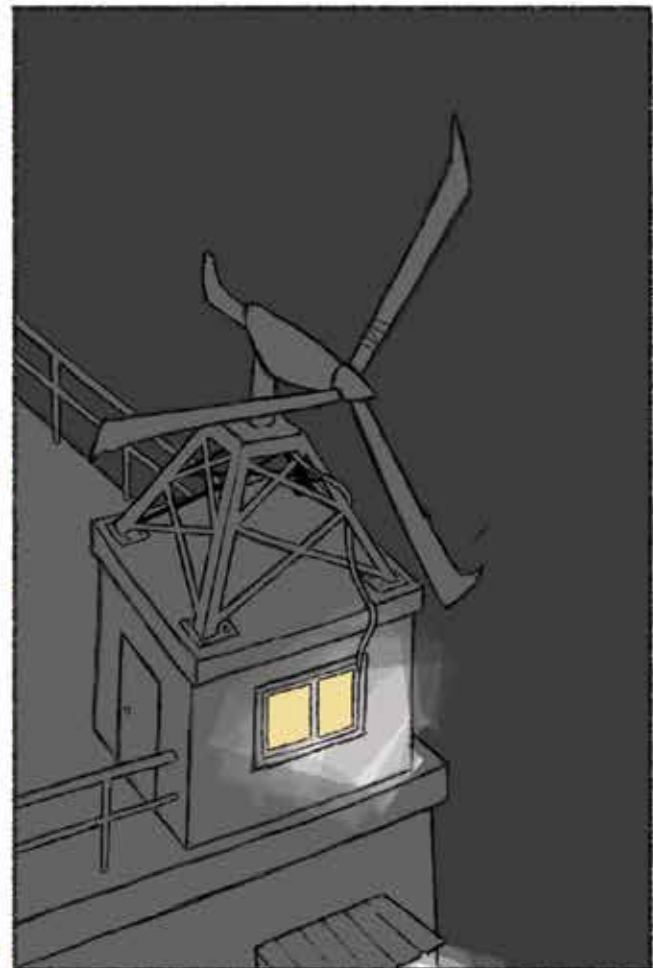
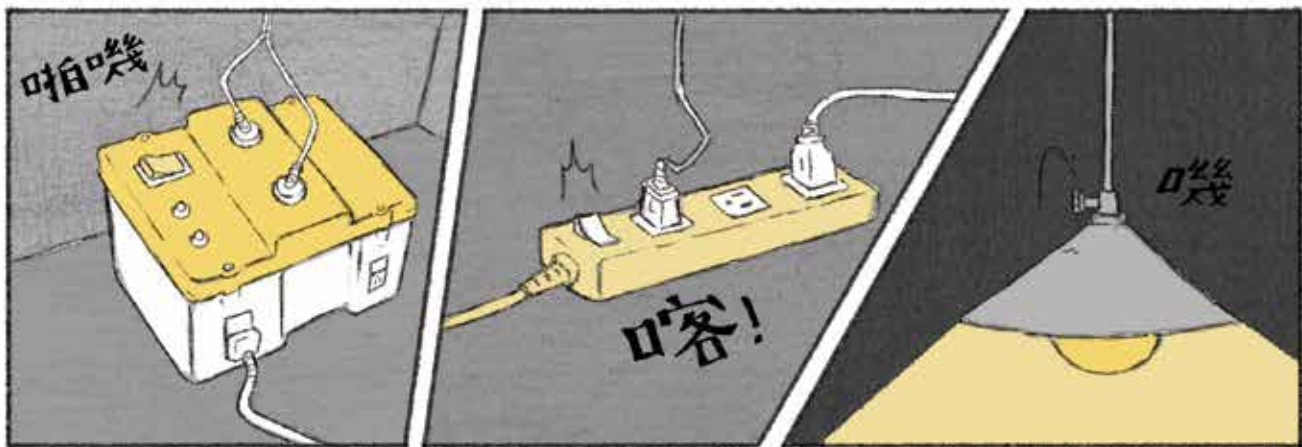
Sunset Town suggests that it is only when we, like the protagonist, set down our burdens, accept ourselves, embrace our emotions, and learn to love, that we can open our hearts after sunset and welcome the dawn that is truly ours.

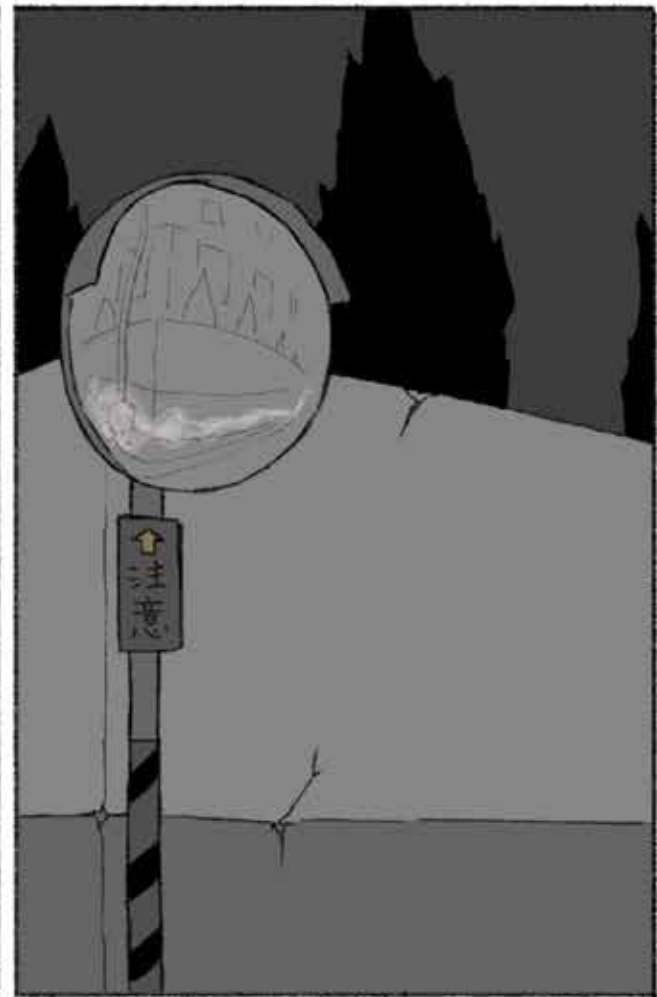
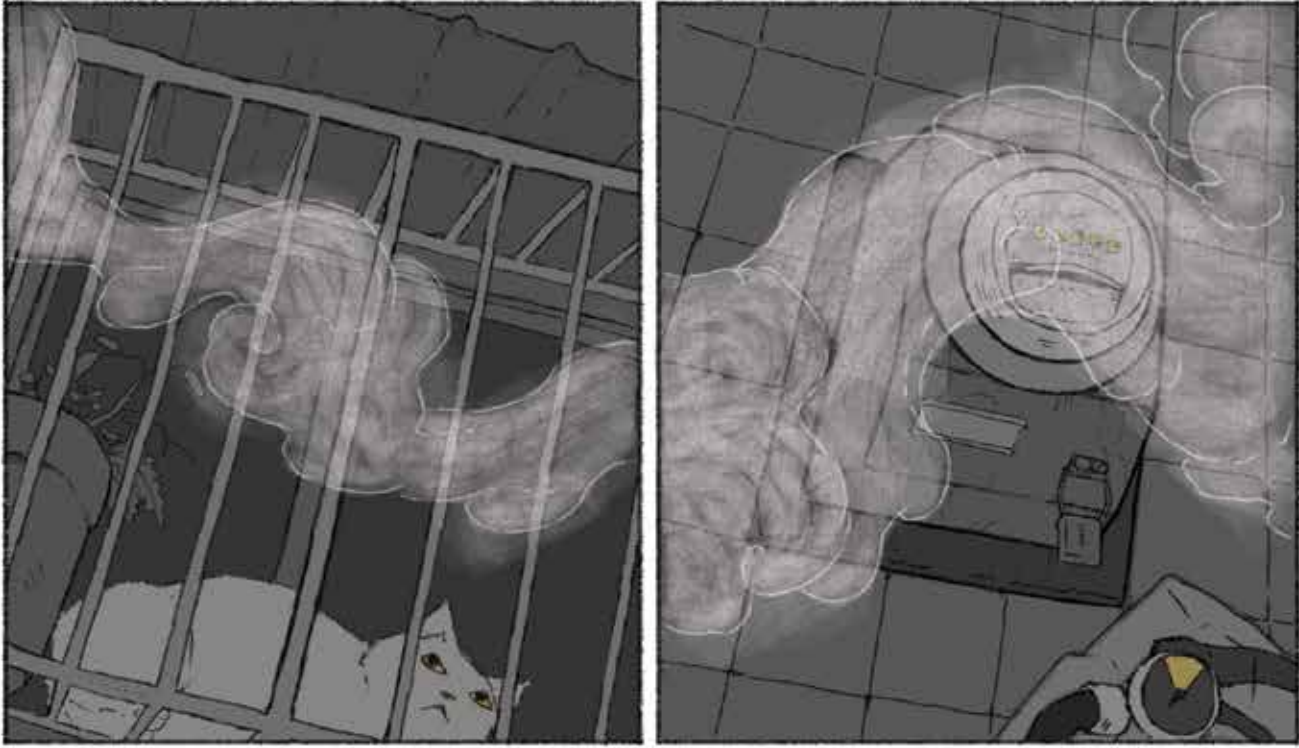
Junye Chen is an editorial assistant of Books from Taiwan and an interpreter specializing in Italian to Mandarin.



BACK TO MY SOLITARY BASE.









What's Wrong with the Time?

慢吞吞手錶

Author: Tung Hsiao-Hu **Illustrator:** Rumin Wu **Publisher:** Papa Publishing

Date: 3/2024 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

80 pages | 17 x 23 cm **Volume:** 3

BFT2.0 Translator: William Serrano

Little Fox moves at his own slow pace, earning him the nickname "Slowpoke." One day, he discovers a magical watch that has the ability to vanquish time. How will Slowpoke protect time for the entire world?

This book focuses on the common challenges and frustrations children face during their growth, particularly "moving slowly." It incorporates fantastical elements to help children grasp the concept of time. Reflecting a modern parenting approach, it recognizes that each child operates in their own unique time zone—and offers both children and adults a fresh perspective on how to navigate differences.



Author **Tung Hsiao-Hu**

Tung Hsiao-Hu graduated from the Graduate Institute of Children's Literature at National Taitung University. She works as a composition teacher and shares her life with a beloved pet cat. With a background in Chinese studies and design, she has taught language and art classes, led various reading-related camps, and guided children through their unique learning journeys. Known affectionately as "Teacher Hsiao-Hu" by both young and old, Tung is passionate about collecting and telling stories.



Illustrator **Rumin Wu**

Based in London, Rumin Wu is an illustrator and graphic designer with years of experience designing brands, greeting cards, and packaging across Taiwan, China, and the U.K.

Coexisting with Your Child's Time Zone

by Ke Guanling

While reading *What's Wrong with Time?*, many images of children immediately came to mind. Parents often express frustration about their child's slow movements, delayed reactions, or lack of time awareness. When discussing this with children, they often share how adults are always rushing them, causing anxiety and fear. The hurried parents and the leisurely children seem to live in completely different time zones. How might we bridge this significant time difference? I suggest a few strategies and show how *What's Wrong With Time?* points us towards them.

Respect Individual Differences. Our

This book teaches us that every child has their own unique rhythm.

hero Slowpoke notices small flowers by the roadside, the clouds in the sky, and the cars on the way to school. Some children like to greet everyone they meet.

Under time pressure, it's important not to change children to be like us, but rather to adjust to a pace that is comfortable for both sides. Before urging children to speed up, try seeing the world from their perspective. Get

down to their height and walk around the house—you'll notice the view is very different from what we usually see.

Empathize with Their Thoughts and Emotions. For children, some tasks require them to move slowly. You can discuss with your child the boundaries of taking their

time. For example, Slowpoke likes to think carefully when making choices. Let the child reflect and express why they prefer a slower pace and what they care about. Once you understand their thoughts and empathize with their emotions, you can discuss solutions together.

Establish a Routine. Slowpoke moves slowly, having a consistent routine helps him manage what needs to be done. When children have a routine, they feel more in control of their time. Parents can suggest general guidelines while letting the child decide how to carry them out. For example, after school, the goal might be to finish homework before dinner. The child can decide how to organize tasks like unpacking, washing hands, and starting homework, adjusting as needed. Posting a visual schedule in the room can

also remind them of what comes next.

Give Each Other Breathing Space. Adapting to each other's pace can be tiring. After a day filled with time pressure, remember to praise your child's efforts and acknowledge your own. Before bed, allow for personal time, where each of you can unwind and enjoy being in your own "time zones."

This book teaches us that every child has their own unique rhythm. With time and patience, you'll develop a mutual rhythm that works for both of you.

Ke Guanling is an occupational therapist. This essay appeared in the book's afterword.

噠噠噠噠噠噠……



Oh, hello Slowpoke!

Heading to school?



Morning Ms. Flowers!



噠噠噠噠噠噠……



Morning lil' blossoms!

Morning blue sky!

Morning white clouds!

Oh no, I'm almost late! Go, go, go!

噠噠噠噠噠噠……



呸

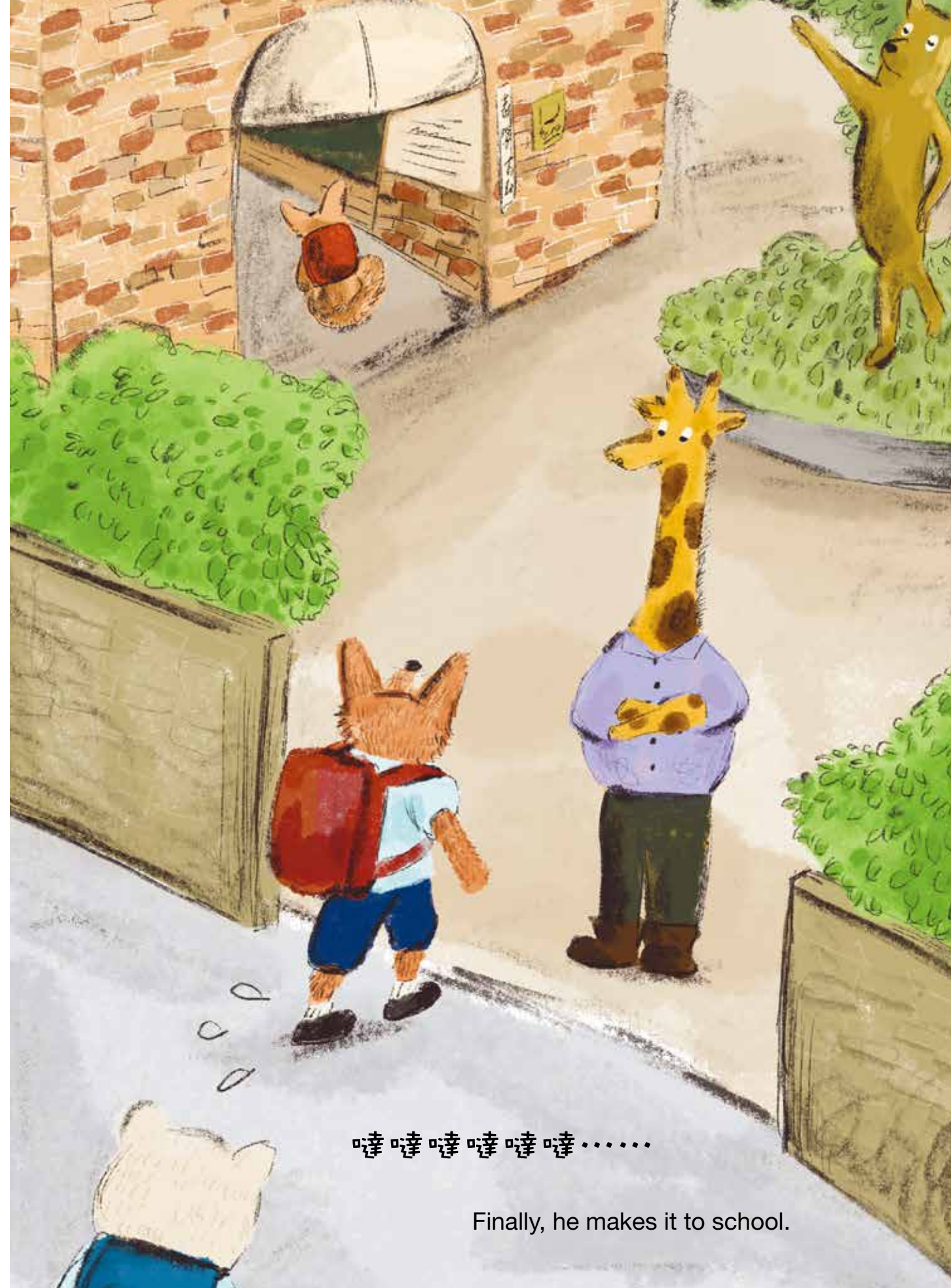
Slowpoke doesn't stop to count the cars today. Whoosh! He darts across the street.



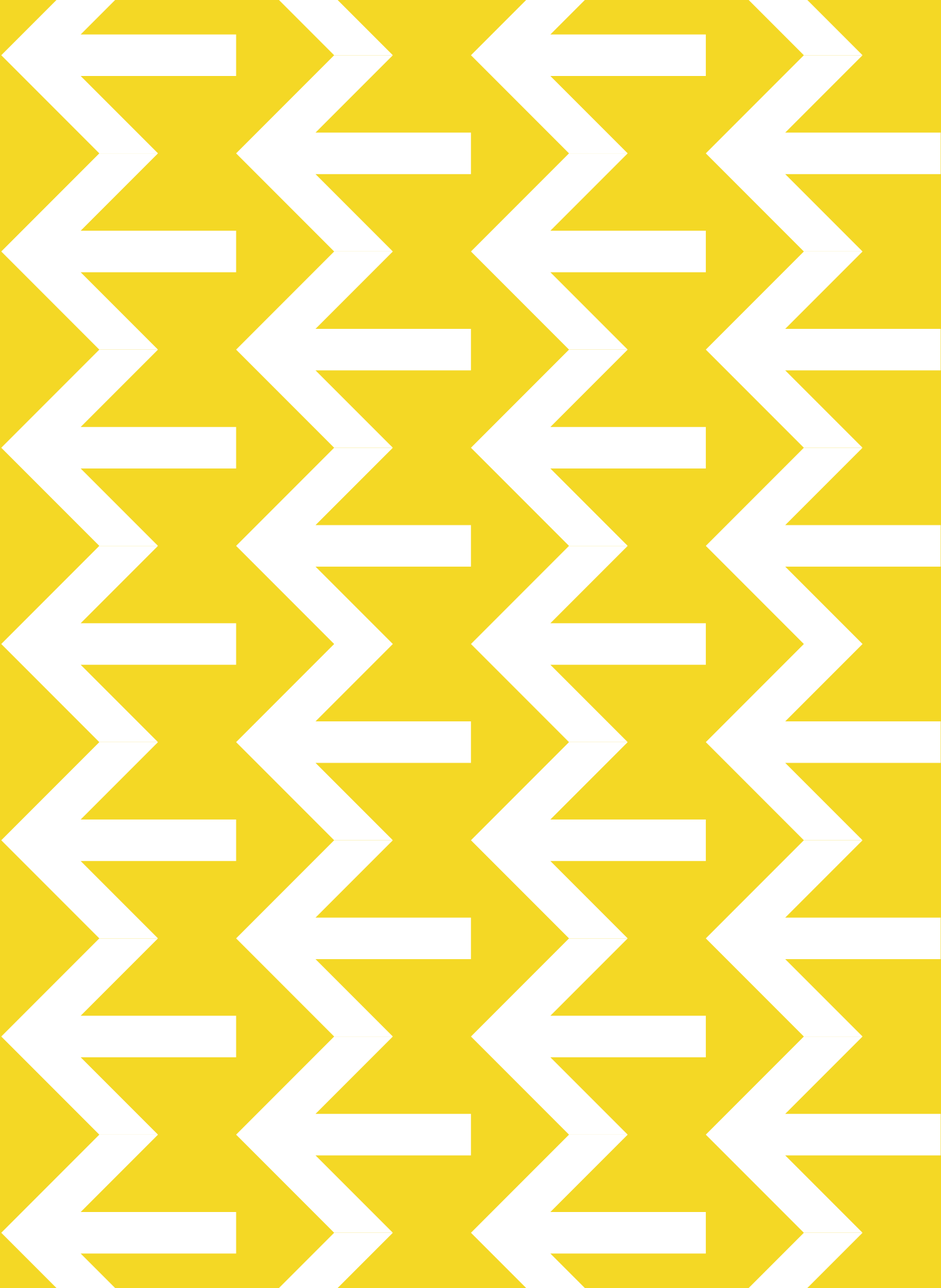
碰! No time to lose!



He picks up the watch and puts it inside his pocket.



Finally, he makes it to school.



**TO READ THE OTHER
ARTISTS' WORKS,
PLEASE GO TO PAGE 162
AND TURN PAGES
FROM RIGHT TO LEFT .**

(THIS IS HOW TAIWANESE COMICS ARE READ.)



FINALLY...



TRAINS ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN, BUT THERE ARE LOTS OF DELAYS.

IT'S SO HOT! HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE NEED TO WAIT?

AT THIS RATE, AN OX WAGON WOULD BE FASTER.



YOU STOMPED ON MY FOOT!

I WAS HERE FIRST!

DON'T PUSH! DON'T PUSH!



AH, I SEE IT COMING!



THE TRAIN TIMETABLE IS JUST WISHFUL THINKING.



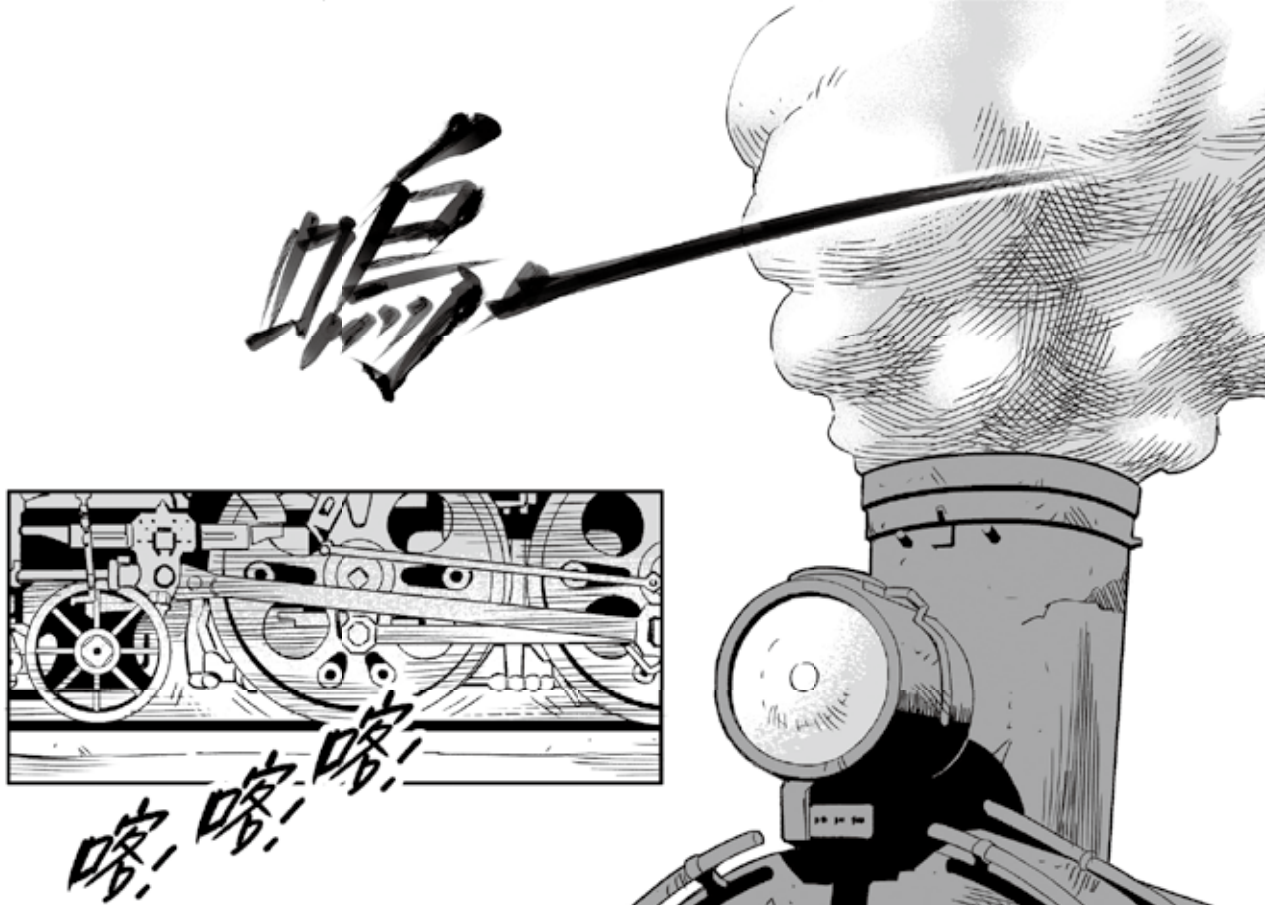
ISN'T THIS A FREIGHT CAR?

驚!!



HUH?

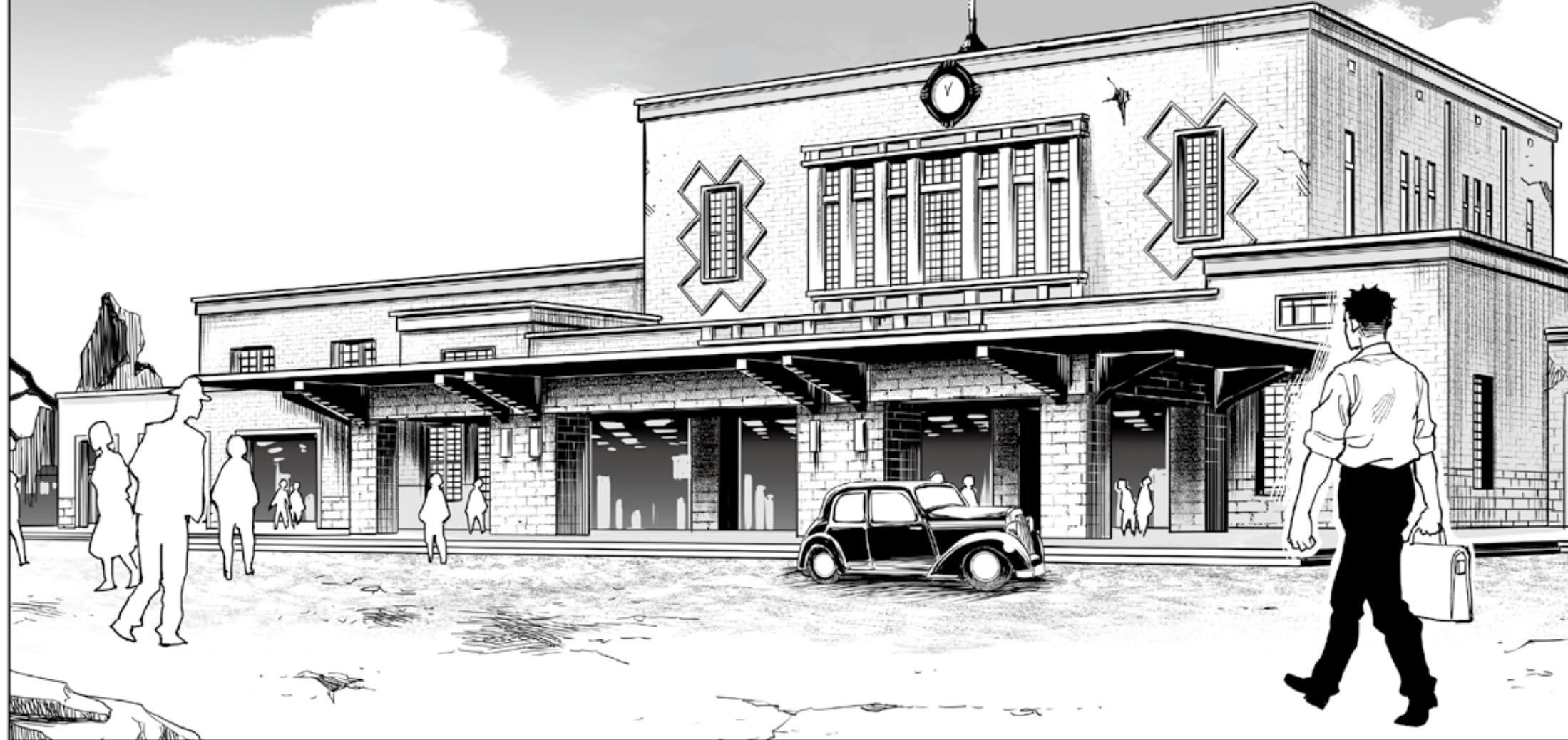
WHY AREN'T THERE ANY SEATS?



鳴



隆隆!



FORTUNATELY, TAIPEI STATION WASN'T BOMBED.

OTHERWISE, WE WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE A TRAIN TO RIDE.



WHAT A PITY.



I HAD HOPED TO STAY THERE FOR A NIGHT, ONCE I HAD ENOUGH MONEY.

THE BOMBINGS DESTROYED THE RAILWAY HOTEL.

THE WAR
FINALLY
ENDED,



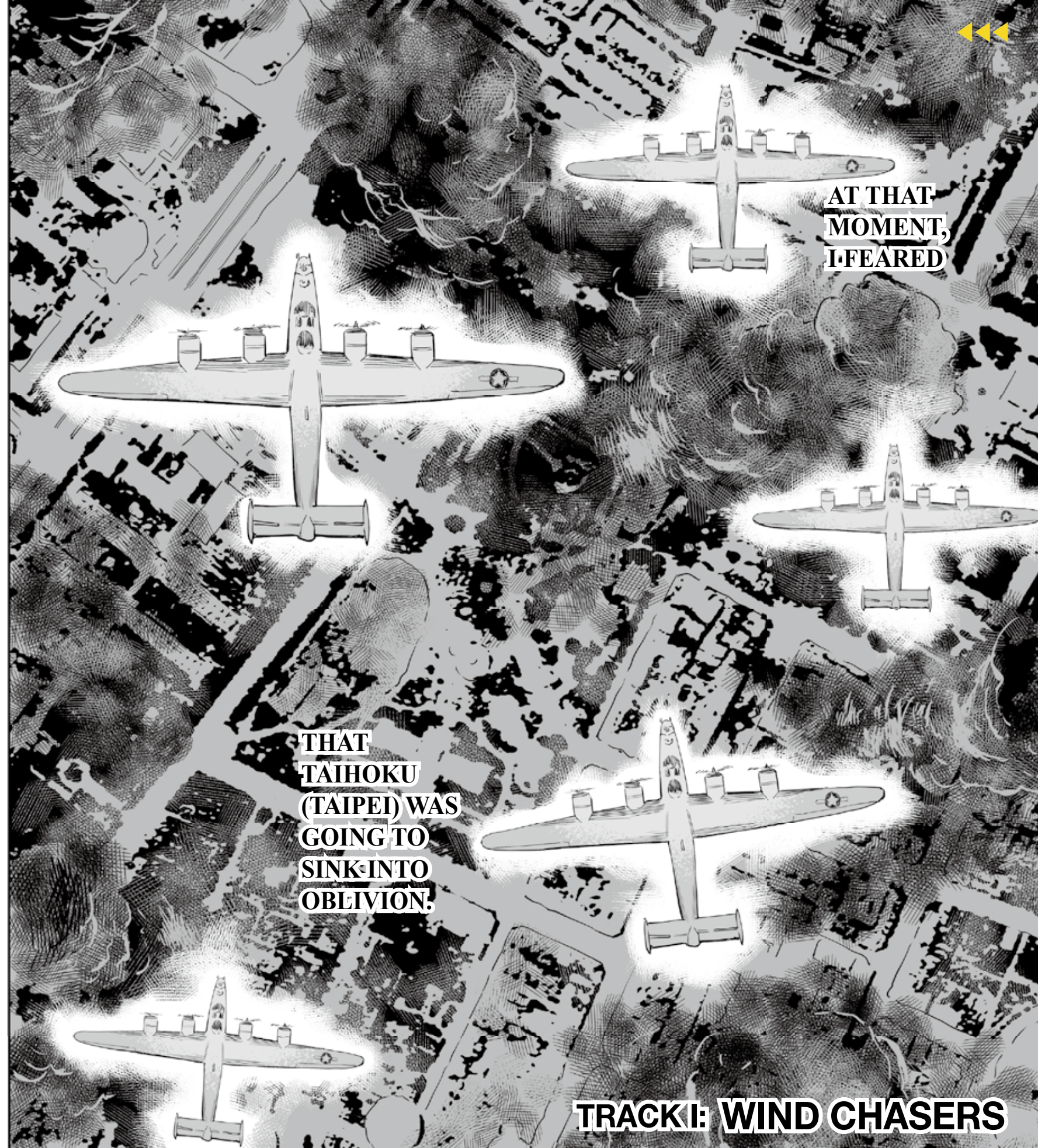
A FEW MONTHS
LATER, JAPAN
ANNOUNCED ITS
SURRENDER.



BUT
TAIPEI'S
PATH TO
RECOVERY
REMAINED
LONG.



AT THAT
MOMENT,
I FEARED



THAT
TAIHOKU
(TAIPEI) WAS
GOING TO
SINK INTO
OBLIVION.

TRACK 1: WIND CHASERS

A Tale Rich in Emotion and History: Two Athletes During World War II

by Sado no Kami
(Originally published on OpenBook)

In the 1940s, towards the end of World War II in Taiwan, the sky was filled with military planes, and the constant echo of explosions resounded through the air. The atmosphere was thick with smoke and gunpowder. Amidst this turmoil, two passionate young boys bonded over their love of running. Miyahara Ryo, a train enthusiast, shared his excitement with Yin Lisen. Driven by their shared love for speed, they became determined to make their mark in Japan's track and field history.

From racing against each other to pushing their limits, Miyahara and Yin grew to become not only each other's fiercest rivals but also closest confidants. Their youthful competition was brimming with dreams and pure ambition, but the war soon disrupted their lives. Would they be able to fulfill their aspirations despite the overwhelming challenges?

Windchaser beautifully captures the emotions of youth striving to find their place in history while grappling with the pain of separation and loss. It tells the deeply moving story of the long journey toward post-war recovery in Taipei, where people worked tirelessly to rebuild the railways and recover their memories.

Golden Comic Award-winning artist Jason Chien collaborated with the National Archives Administration, which provided crucial Taiwan Railway archives that served as the creative foundation for this project. Reflecting on this partnership, Chien commented, "I realized that these events actually happened in Taiwan." This history includes a pandemic that required mass vaccinations and severely damaged railways that led to the use of freight cars in place of passenger trains.

Chien also considered the emotional turmoil of the time, as Japanese residents

were repatriated and Taiwanese people faced the installation of a new government. While studying historical materials, he imagined the unique experiences of Taiwan in the early post-war period, which led to the creation of *Windchasers*. Amid a pile of administrative files, a tale rich in emotion and history emerged.

Only recently has the air raid on Taipei gained significant public attention. *Windchaser* delves into details that few might recognize, from the specific U.S. planes involved in the air raid to historical locomotives. Chien's meticulous research ensures these elements are depicted with accuracy, adding depth to the story.

The National Archives hopes that adapting its historical records into comic books will make Taiwan's preserved history more accessible to a wider audience. At the end of the book, readers can explore additional stories from the archives, including a diagram of the Taipei Railway

Station employee dormitory and the anthem of the Provincial Games, inviting them to reflect on the rich history of the railway.

"When I create a story, I want readers to connect with the characters' emotions,"

Chien explained. "For instance, in *Windchasers*, there's a railway worker who lived in the same place for over 40 years before being forced to leave. Anyone who has spent a long time in one place can relate to that feeling. I hope readers will connect with this emotion."

Windchaser beautifully captures the emotions of youth striving to find their place in history while grappling with the pain of separation and loss. It tells the deeply moving story of the long journey toward post-war recovery in Taipei, where people worked tirelessly to rebuild the railways and recover their memories.

Sado no Kami has previously worked in the media, advertising, and publishing industries, and is now dedicated to social work involving children, migrant workers, and animal protection.

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



Wind Chaser Under the Blue Sky

青空下的追風少年

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

Date: 2/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

Awards: 2023 The 17th Japan International Manga Awards, Gold Award

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Kearney

In the latter part of World War II, the skies over Taiwan were dominated by military aircraft, explosions echoing one after another, and the air thick with the smell of gunpowder. Amid this chaos, two passionate teenagers meet through their shared love of running.

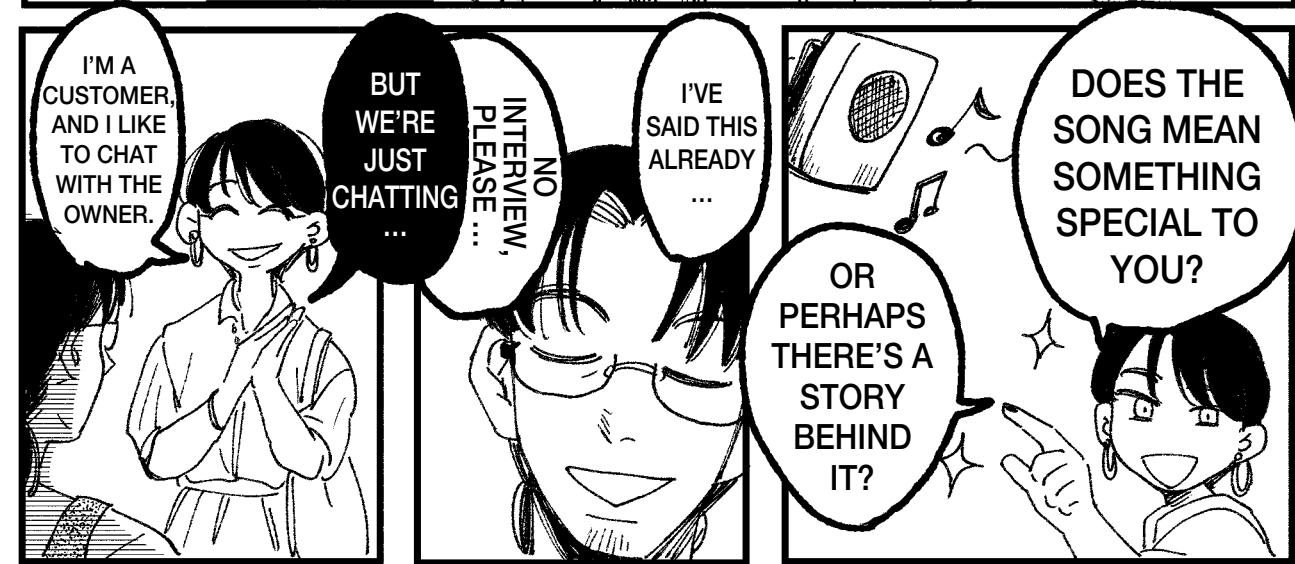
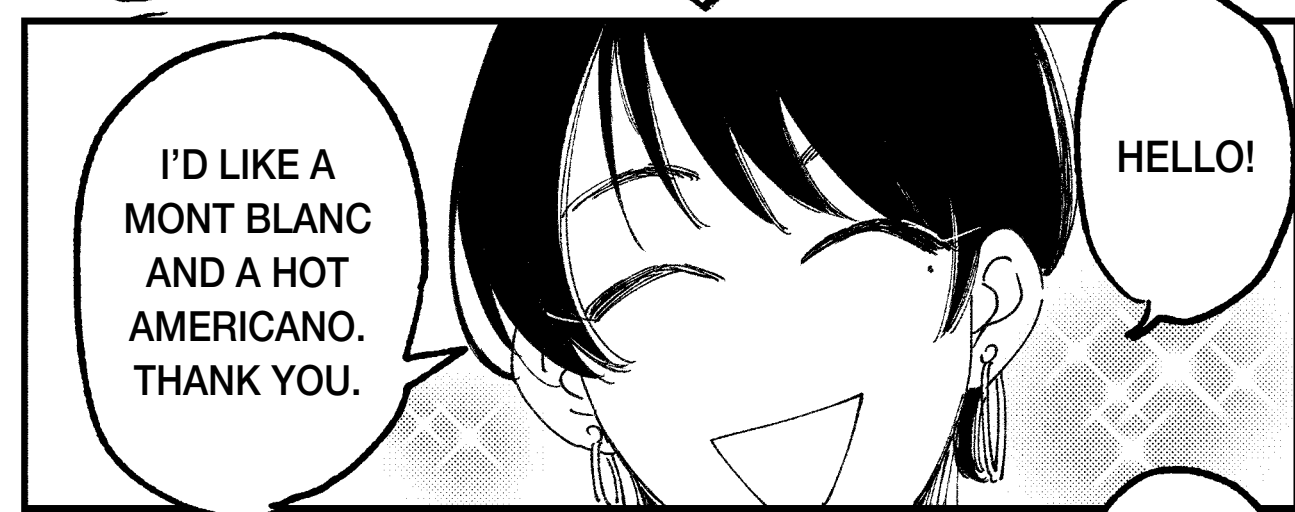
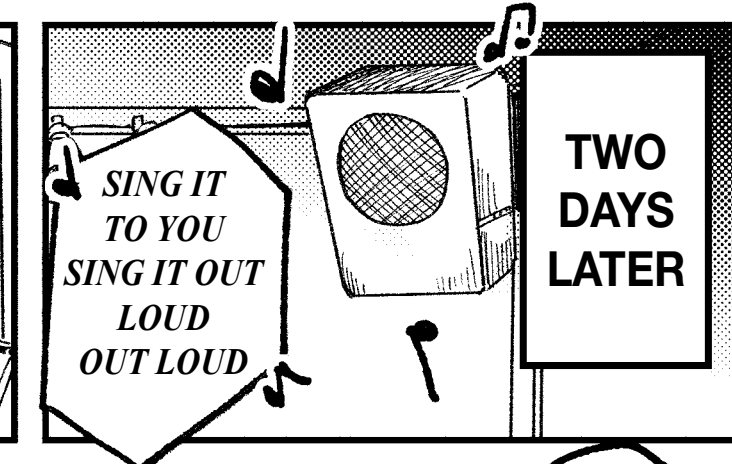
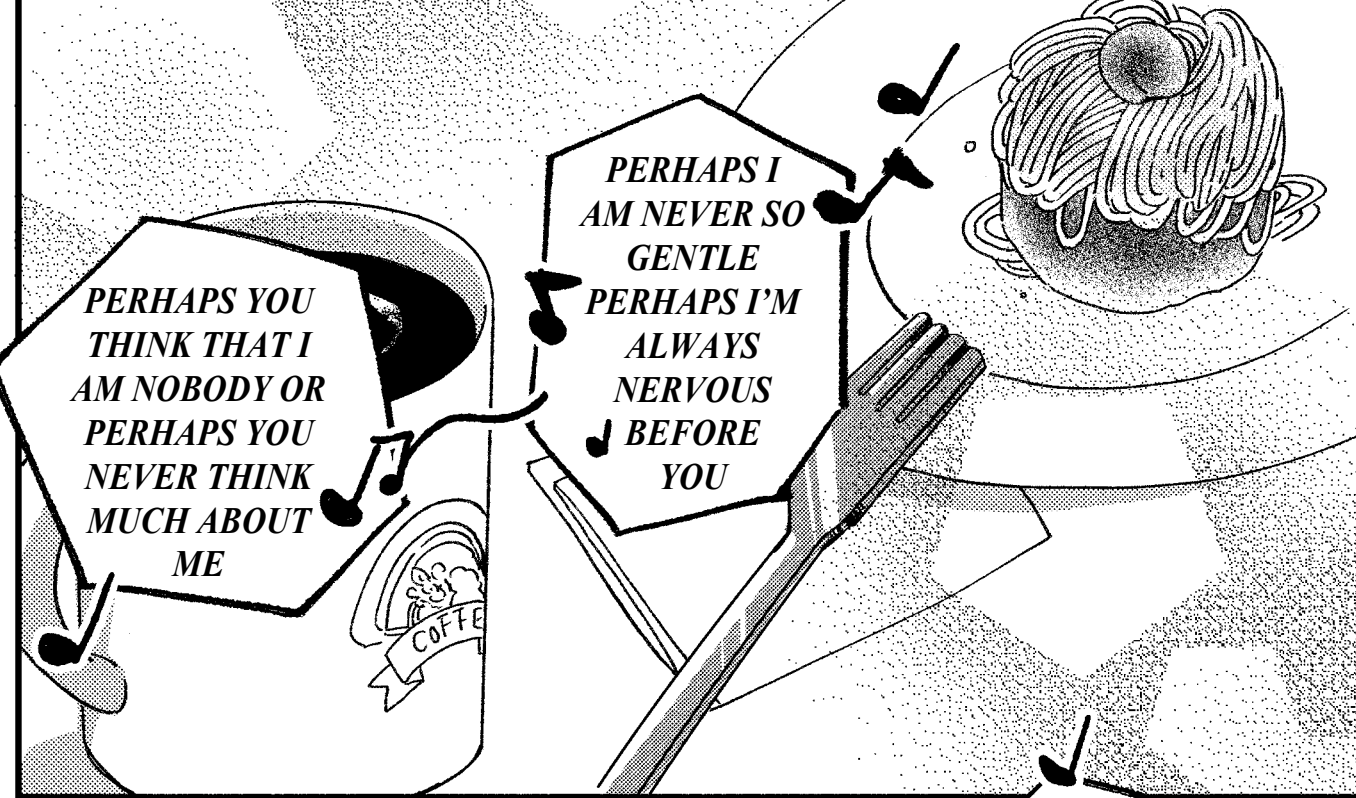
Miyahara Ryo, an avid train enthusiast, passes on his passion to Yin Li-Sen. United by their awe of speeding trains, they are filled with a fighting spirit, dreaming of leaving their mark in Japan's track and field history. In this period of youthful rivalry, they agree to compete on the track.

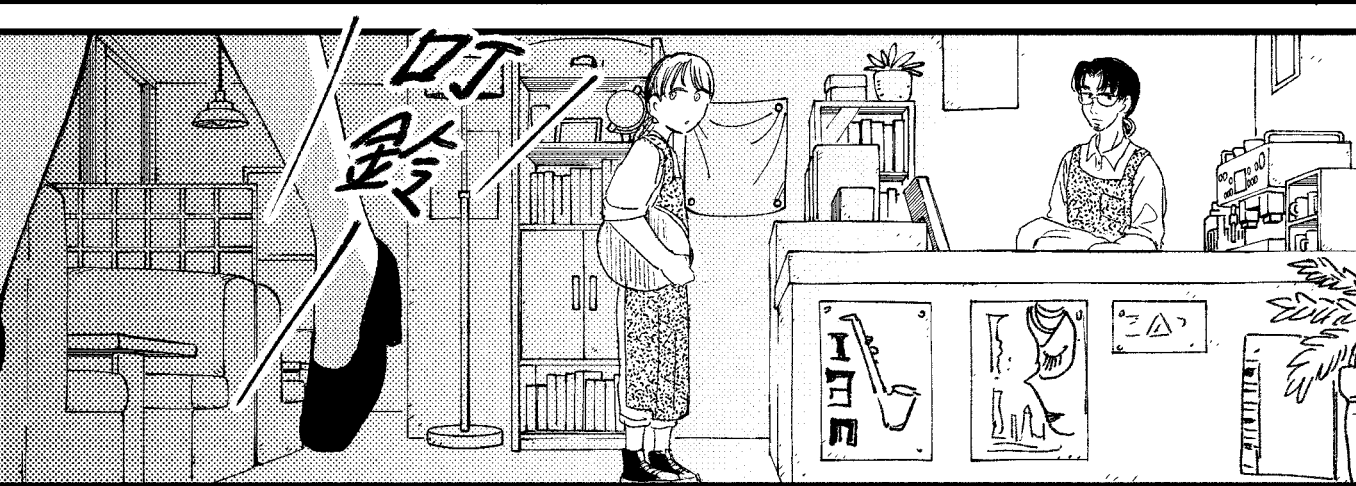
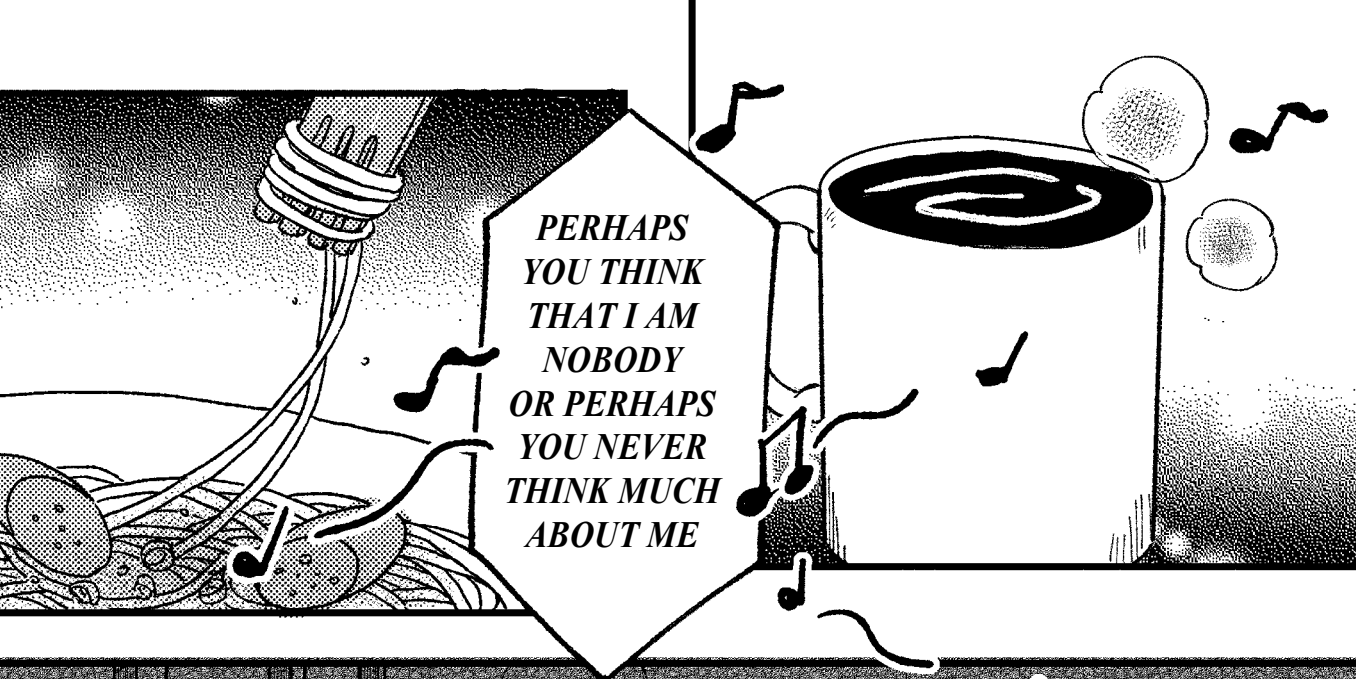
But as war looms, the future grows increasingly uncertain. Will they be able to fulfill each other's wishes? As dreams and promises are shattered by the bombs, how will those left behind cope with the aftermath?



Chien Chia-Cheng

Chien Chia-Cheng's *Windchaser* won the Grand Prize at the 17th Japan International Manga Award in 2023. Chien has worked as a lead artist on comics about railways, finance, and World War II, as well as storyboards for advertisements and animation, and novel illustrations. His comic works include *Time Train*, *Alishan Railway Mysteries*, *Ms. Jiang*, *Have You Ever Been in Love?*, *Battlefield Communications*, and *Seven Dreams of the Louvre*. His illustrations for novels include *Howl of the Wolf*, *Other Dreams*, *Fight Chess King: Winning Moves*, and *Fight Chess King: Ghost Moves*. *Time Train* and *Back Street Dusk* sold rights in Arabic, while *The Movie Painter* sold rights in Russian. In 2016, works from *Seven Dreams of the Louvre* were exhibited at the Beijing Normal University Art Museum. In 2013, *Time Train* won the Best General Comic Award at the 4th Golden Comic Awards from the Ministry of Culture.







EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
YOU WEN-TI

I'M IN CHARGE OF THE MAGAZINE'S MONTHLY FEATURE COLUMN, AND I'D LOVE TO WRITE ABOUT YOUR BEAUTIFUL CAFÉ FOR OUR NEXT STORY. WOULD YOU BE OPEN TO A QUICK INTERVIEW?

MY NAME IS YOU WEN-TI, AND I'M AN EDITOR AT BLA MAGAZINE.

OH HI!



MAY I SPEAK WITH THE OWNER?



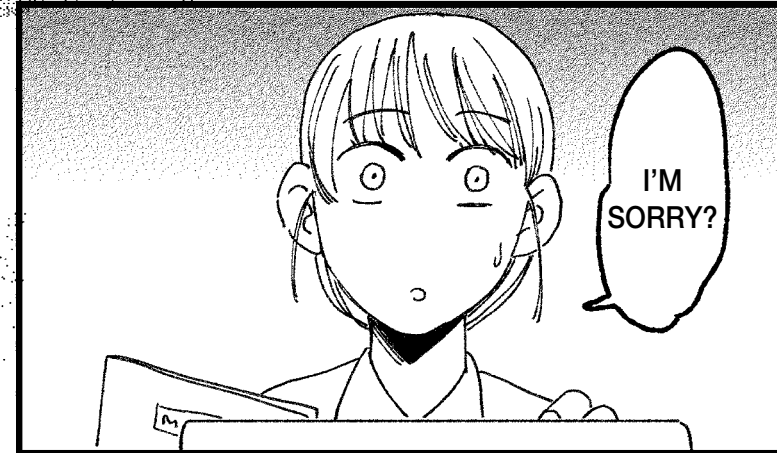
I THINK I'M GOOD, THANK YOU.



AND WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT MY PLACE THAT YOU WANT TO INTERVIEW ME?

NOT AGAIN...

OH NO...



I'M SORRY?

BUT SIR!



DO YOU NEED ME FOR SOMETHING?



THE OWNER ...

A Colorful Collision of Comics and Music: Peter Mann's *BLA BLA SONG*

(originally published on OpenBook)
by Hsieh Ming-hong

Peter Mann frequently collaborates with music festivals and bands, showcasing his work across various formats, including print, animation, and album design. Last summer, he released his first commercial *short* comic collection, *Bla Bla Song*, featuring four stories with diverse themes and a magical realism style. The narratives are intricately woven, creating a rich visual feast. Meanwhile, Mann partnered with Japanese musician Natsume Tomoyuki and DSPS lead singer Zeng Renwen to create four catchy songs tailored to the comics, intertwining visuals and music.

The chapter titled after the book features a girl who uploads her song online, instantly becoming a viral hit

and opening up numerous collaboration opportunities. However, the joy of singing becomes less pure as her creative value gets commercialized into profit-driven calculations. In another chapter, Peter Mann conveys the struggles of his protagonist, who is metaphorically pushed onto a billiards table. He explains, "Each collision and path aims to achieve a goal, completing something. Players calculate how to succeed." As Mann puts it, "I wanted to find a good balance between text and image, avoiding too much text that disrupts the equilibrium."

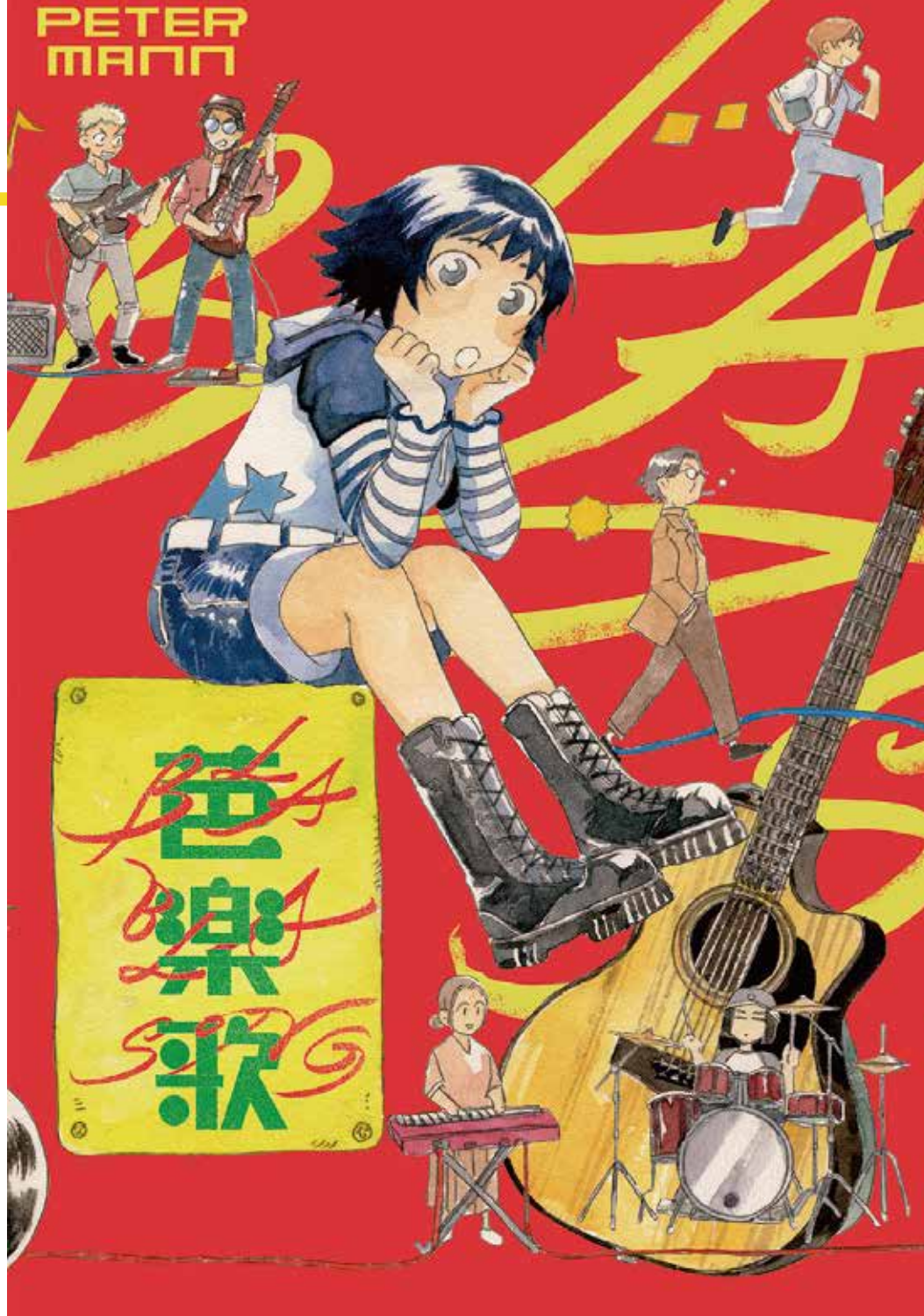
Heavily influenced by Japanese manga, Peter Mann believes comic works should not decline to entertain. During his personal exhibition GANNA in 2020,

he stated in an interview with Mangasick that his ideal work is Takashi Hashiguchi's *Baking King*: "The setup is utterly nonsensical, yet it remains a mass-appeal entertainment piece, and the author is an excellent artist."

Other influences on Mann are the Japanese "genius screenwriter" Kankuro Kudo, who excels in humor while depicting human nature. This quality shines through in the vibrant and dynamic narrative style of *BLA BLA SONG*, setting it apart in the Taiwanese manga landscape.

Hsieh Ming-hong, a native of Taoyuan, graduated from the Department of English at National Chengchi University. Currently, Hsieh is pursuing a graduate

degree in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language at National Taiwan University and has received a Fulbright grant to study in the United States. Hsieh enjoys reading, writing, traveling, making friends, playing soccer, and has a passion for dinosaurs.



Bla Bla Song

芭樂歌

Author: Peter Mann **Illustrator:** Peter Mann **Publisher:** Sharp Point

Date: 7/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

Awards: 2023 The 14th Golden Comic Awards, Best New Talent & Best Cross-media Application

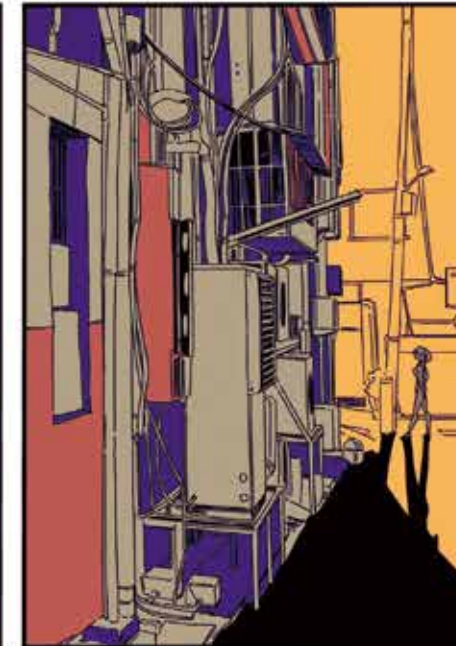
BFT2.0 Translator: Tong Hao

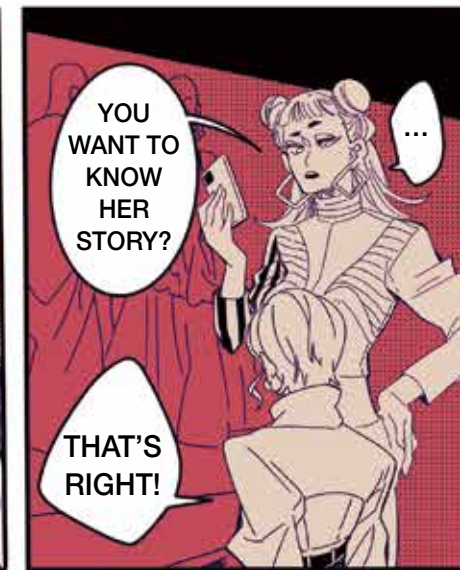
Bla Bla Song's four short stories, each paired with a different song, combine Peter Mann's bold brushstrokes with absurd plots. Moving fluidly between reality and fantasy, visual and auditory experiences, *Bla Bla Song* creates a captivating narrative. Collaborating with musicians from Japan and Taiwan, the book breaks free from the constraints of traditional text-based storytelling.



Peter Mann

Born in 1995 in Germany, Peter Mann is 100% Taiwanese. After working in animation and film production, she shifted focus to manga creation. Her illustration work frequently intersects with music, contributing visual art for music festivals and album cover designs. Her manga creations defy easy categorization, often blending dark humor with unexpected twists in seemingly logical narratives. Peter Mann won the Best New Talent and Cross-Disciplinary Application Awards at the 14th Golden Comic Awards. He She also produced cross-disciplinary music video animations and original art exhibitions showcased in Japan, Taiwan, and other locations.







PLEASE, NO!
IT'S SUCH A
HASSLE.

ㄱ



AREN'T YOU
SLOWLY ABLE
TO SEE AGAIN?
GO BUY STUFF
YOURSELF.



DESSERT!



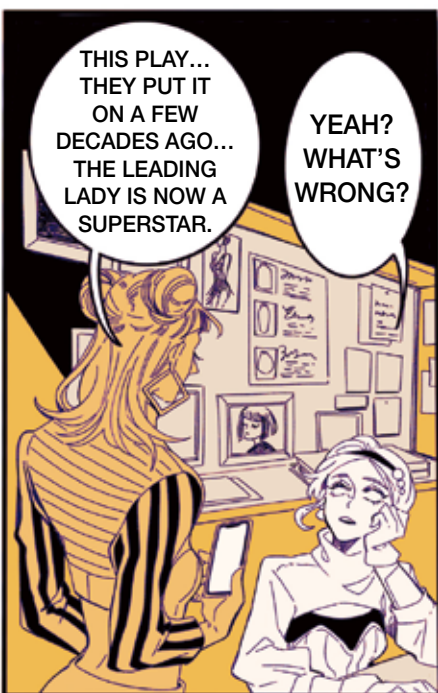
OH,
THIS...



WHAT'S
THAT?

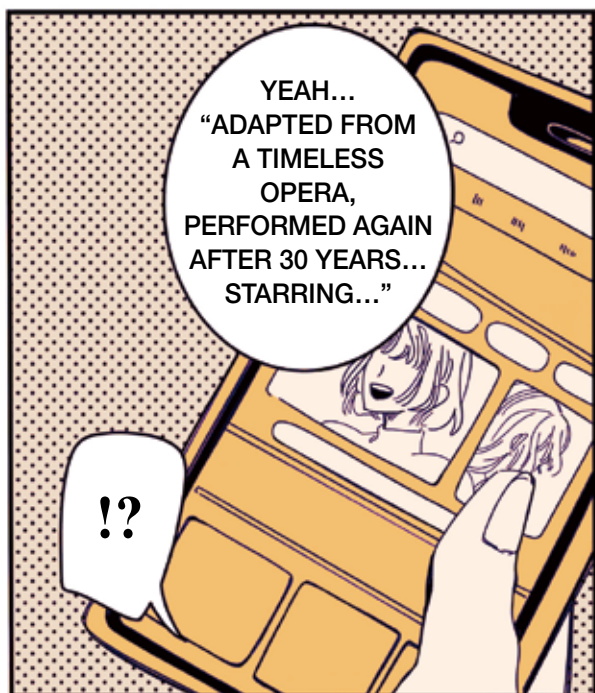


A FLYER
FOR A
PLAY.



THIS PLAY...
THEY PUT IT
ON A FEW
DECADES AGO...
THE LEADING
LADY IS NOW A
SUPERSTAR.

YEAH?
WHAT'S
WRONG?



YEAH...
"ADAPTED FROM
A TIMELESS
OPERA,
PERFORMED AGAIN
AFTER 30 YEARS...
STARRING..."

!?



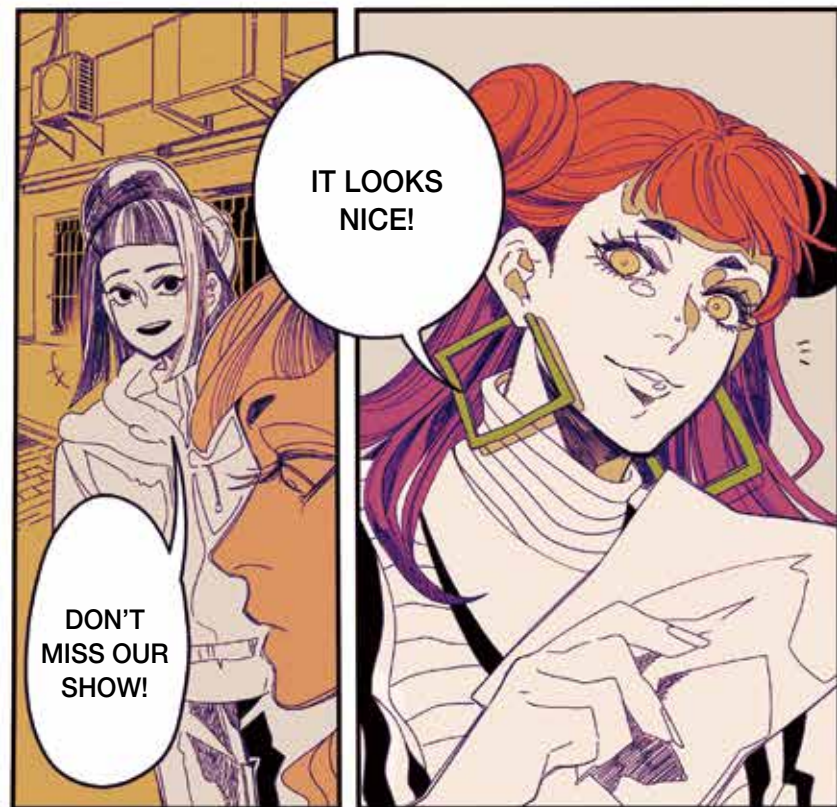
A PLAY?



YEAH,
THANKS
...



I'LL
LOOK
IT UP
LATER.



IT LOOKS
NICE!

DON'T
MISS OUR
SHOW!



SLOW
BUSINESS
THIS
WEEK.



WELCO—



OH,
IT'S
YOU.

BOUGHT
DESSERT.
THAT'S
ALL
YOU'VE
GOT?



A World of Contrasts: Beauty and Oddity in *Rosetta: Ashes of the Feast*

by Ho Hsiang Wei

Author and artist Eli Lin masterfully uses vibrant, stylish colors to create a comic that blends fantasy with dark psychological themes. The central storyline evokes films like *Black Swan*, portraying the mental unraveling of performers in their pursuit of perfection.

At the heart of the narrative is Rosetta, a mysterious woman with the ability to travel through time and space via objects. She listens to the owners of these objects recount their stories, observing with cold detachment as human obsessions—jealousy, repression, and desire—inevitably lead to their destruction.

Lin, who majored in fashion and

animation, comes from a family with deep roots in the custom clothing industry. This background is evident in her exceptional command of character costumes, styling, and color choices. She employs bright, distinctive tones that create unforgettable visual imagery. In this full-color comic, Lin strategically uses black-and-white lines or monochrome tones to prevent visual overload. Screen glitch effects reflect the characters' internal worlds collapsing, while bold, flat-tipped marker lines depict their psychological breakdown. These innovative techniques break away from conventional comic traditions.

One of the most striking aspects of Lin's work is her depiction of Taiwan.

Familiar street scenes, combined with vivid, eye-catching colors, create a world that feels both recognizable and surreal, giving Taiwanese comics a fresh and unique visual style.

If the story had solely focused on the obsessive pursuit of dreams by a performer, it might have fallen into familiar tropes. However, Lin introduces

One of the most striking aspects of Lin's work is her depiction of Taiwan. Familiar street scenes, combined with vivid, eye-catching colors, create a world that feels both recognizable and surreal.

the enigmatic Rosetta with her extraordinary powers to propel the narrative

forward. This adds a layer of intrigue that softens the harshness of human nature's darker side, leaving readers with a lingering, eerie aftertaste.

Ho Hsiang Wei is an artist and illustrator.



Rosetta: Ashes of the Feast

羅賽塔：盛宴餘燼

Author: Eli Lin Illustrator: Eli Lin Publisher: Gaea Books

Date: 11/2022 Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

168 pages | 18 x 24 cm Volume: 2

Rights sold: French BFT2.0 Translator: William Serrano

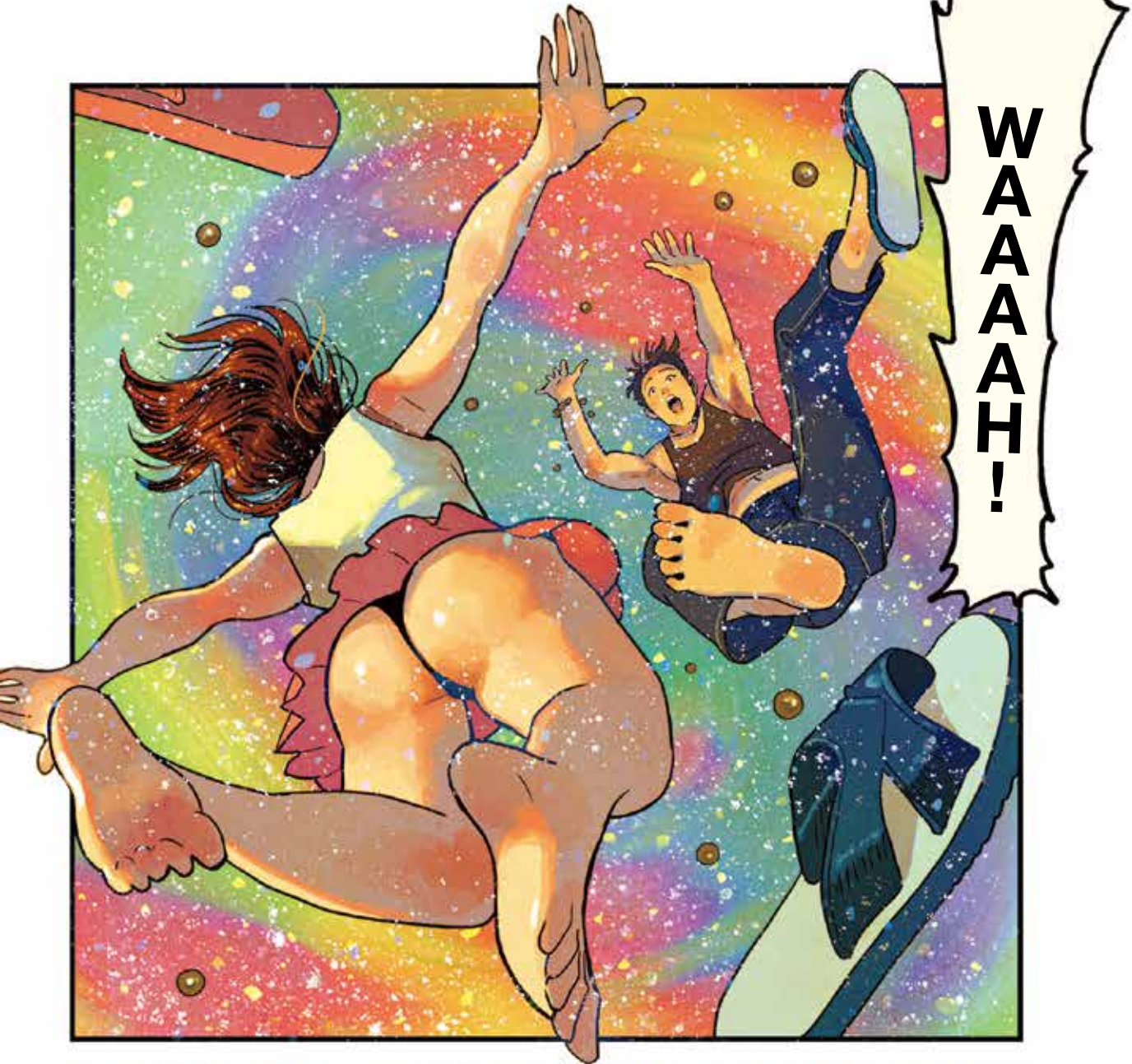
"Hand an item to Rosetta, and you can glimpse its soul and story." In the alleys of the old town, a mysterious antique shop is said to hold a special power: If you hand an item to the shopkeeper, Rosetta, you can glimpse its soul and story.

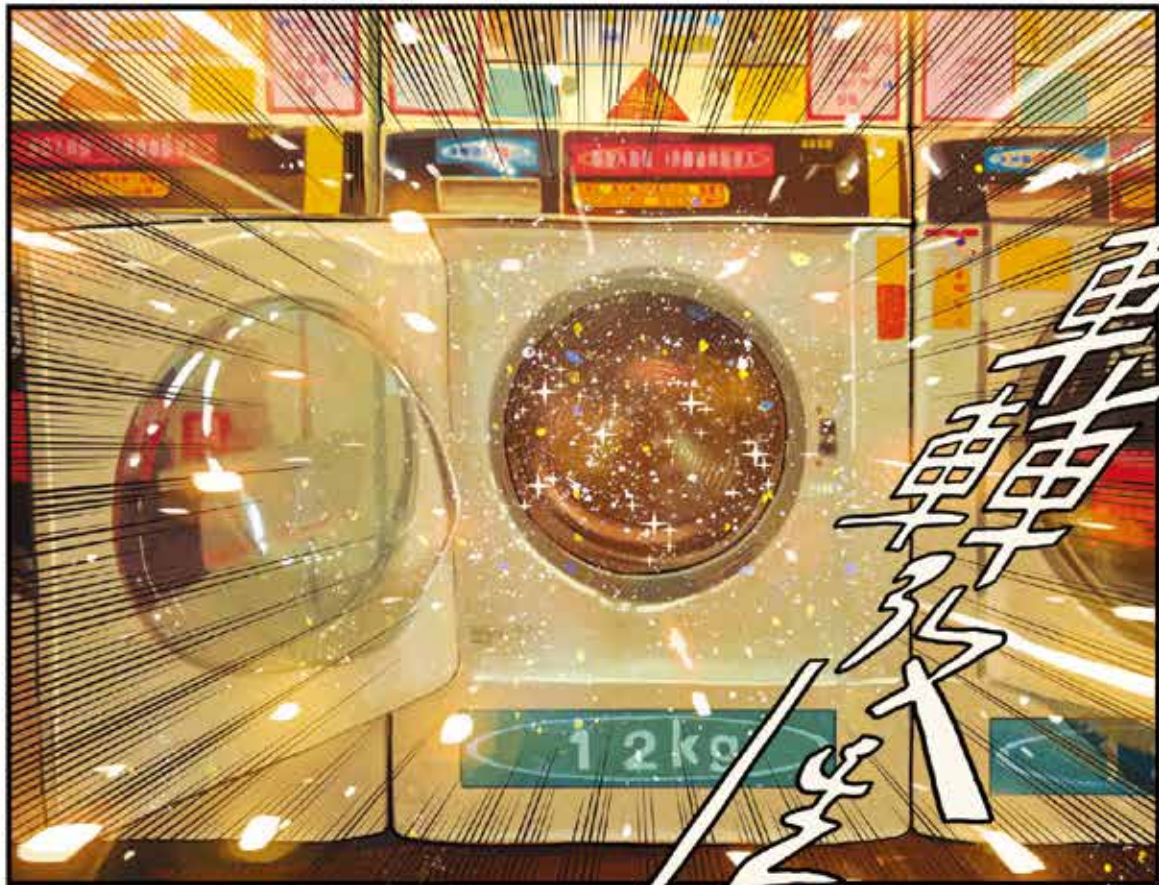
When a necklace in the shop's display case captivates Fang Meiling, a child star turned actress, it draws out her deepest passions and insecurities. After securing the lead role in a stage play based on Salome, Meiling struggles with the stagnation of her adult career and the pressures from her family and peers. Her love for acting gives way to anxiety about her talents, sending her spiraling into confusion, jealousy, and madness. Eli Lin's unique combination of familiar Taiwanese street scenes and vibrant, stylish colors brings a fresh chapter to the *Rosetta* series.



Eli Lin

Eli Lin is a manga artist and illustrator with an interest in animation. Lin is passionate about jazz, astronomy, fashion, and history. Lin's works have been exhibited at Artists in Taiwan 2022: Selected Art by Taiwanese Illustrators and Manga Artists, and Lin was a Merit Winner at the 2022 3x3 International Illustration Show. Lin has also contributed as a storyboard artist for the public television sci-fi animation series Future Express. Other notable achievements include exhibiting at the 2020 Angoulême International Comics Festival Taiwan Pavilion Retrospective and being nominated for the festival's Digital Comics Award in both 2018 and 2022, as well as for the New Talent Award in 2019. In 2020, Lin received the Special Selection Award at the Original Comics and Script Creation Competition for Page Comics.





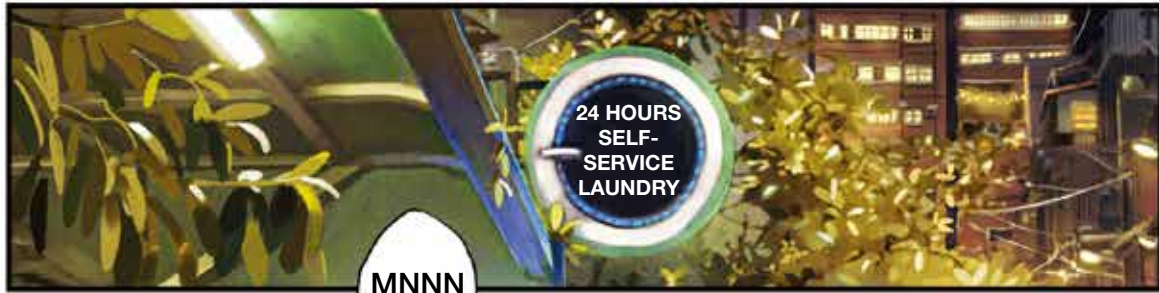
HEY, DID YOU HEAR ME?

DIRTY YOU! ARE YOU A DOG? YOUR HEAD'S FULL OF SEX!

UNH, TELL ME MORE!



MY BRAIN IS FULL OF YOUR TITS...LET ME TOUCH THEM!



MNNN

....



UNH

....



From Brazil to Taiwan, Modern-Day Fables on Gender, Beauty, and Love: On *Sexland Adventures*

by Ni Jui Hong

I first met Lucas, the author and illustrator of *Sexland Adventures*, in the scene portrayed in “Not So Simple Art Exchange,” one of the nine short stories in his book. Each scene feels steeped in a strange familiarity. His superb depictions recreate spaces with uncanny accuracy, though his portrayal of the art department building makes it seem even more enigmatic than I remember. Yet, the scent of oil paint and dust still lingers in my memory.

The mysterious and beautiful foreign exchange student in his story is, in a way, a reflection of himself. I remember how, in a

clay modeling class, Lucas once sculpted a life-sized figure that he then left behind—it now lies somewhere behind the art department, overgrown with moss.

Each story feels like a modern-day fable, weaving whimsical, almost childlike dialogue with the often harsh realities of the adult world.

What stays with me is his frequent conversations about gender, Brazil, and Taiwan, themes reflected in this book. “Orange Boy” features blue contact lenses as a premise, observing how, in both Brazil and Taiwan, people with blue eyes and fair skin are praised. Both countries prescribe an unattainable beauty standard that people feel obligated to pursue. “Cola Milk” started as a story he casually shared, one I found ridiculous at

first. It wasn’t until years later that I read the full version and was surprised by how much I liked it. The desperation of teenage girls trying to fit in—it’s a kind of panic we’ve all experienced. In contrast, “Still There” stands out for its quiet, understated storytelling. Despite its visual rhythm, it powerfully captures the sense of a woman completely powerless against life.

But my personal favorite remains “Picasso Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.” It’s a story about loving the person who hurts you most, and its ending still sends shivers down my spine. Lucas drew this back in Brazil. It blends erotic art with his passion for calligraphy. I encouraged him to continue creating in the way that felt most authentic to him, assuring him that comics, too, could be a form of contemporary art. Soon after, I became his first female model for his body painting comics.

In Professor Chen Kaihuang’s class,

Lucas often shared his anxieties, to which I related. Unlike most of our classmates, both of us had been freelancing as artists, juggling commercial projects to make ends meet. This practical experience set us apart in an academic world that prized pure, ambiguous expression.

What I admire most about Lucas is how effortlessly he turns everyday moments into entire comic storyboards. What I cherish most in Lucas’s work is its innocence. Each story feels like a modern-day fable, weaving whimsical, almost childlike dialogue with the often harsh realities of the adult world.

I hope Lucas never stops drawing, now and forever.

Ni Jui Hong is an artist and author of Fairy Daily Adventure.

This is an edited essay from the book’s forward.



Sexland Adventures

性星冒險記

Author: Lucas Paixão **Illustrator:** Lucas Paixão **Publisher:** Dala Publishing

Date: 11/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

432 pages | 12.8 x 18.05 cm **Volume:** 1 (END)

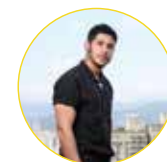
Award: 2024 The 15th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the year

BFT2.0 Translator: Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo

This comic book features nine short stories, each with a semi-autobiographical narrative. From his journey as a comic artist to his observations of Taiwan from a South American perspective, artist Lucas Paixão vividly portrays the desires of both sexes in a colorful and dynamic style.

In the titular story, “Sexland Adventures,” a couple accidentally stumbles into a surreal place called Sexland. In “Picasso Obsession,” the protagonist shares a name with the famous artist, allowing Lucas to present his unique interpretation of art. His youthful addiction to graffiti leads to misunderstandings and homelessness until he meets a kindred spirit named Lucy. In the tale “Have You Had Tea?”, passionate encounters unfold between the female protagonist, Qiu Qiu, and the Bubble Tea Man, inspired by Taiwan’s beloved bubble tea.

Lucas, a Brazilian comic artist who embraces Taiwanese culture, infuses his work with the passionate and uninhibited spirit of his home country. The proportions of the human body and the dynamic depictions of male and female figures reflect the tropical charm of growing up in South America. His refined drawing skills, particularly in clothing design, showcase his distinctive personal aesthetic.

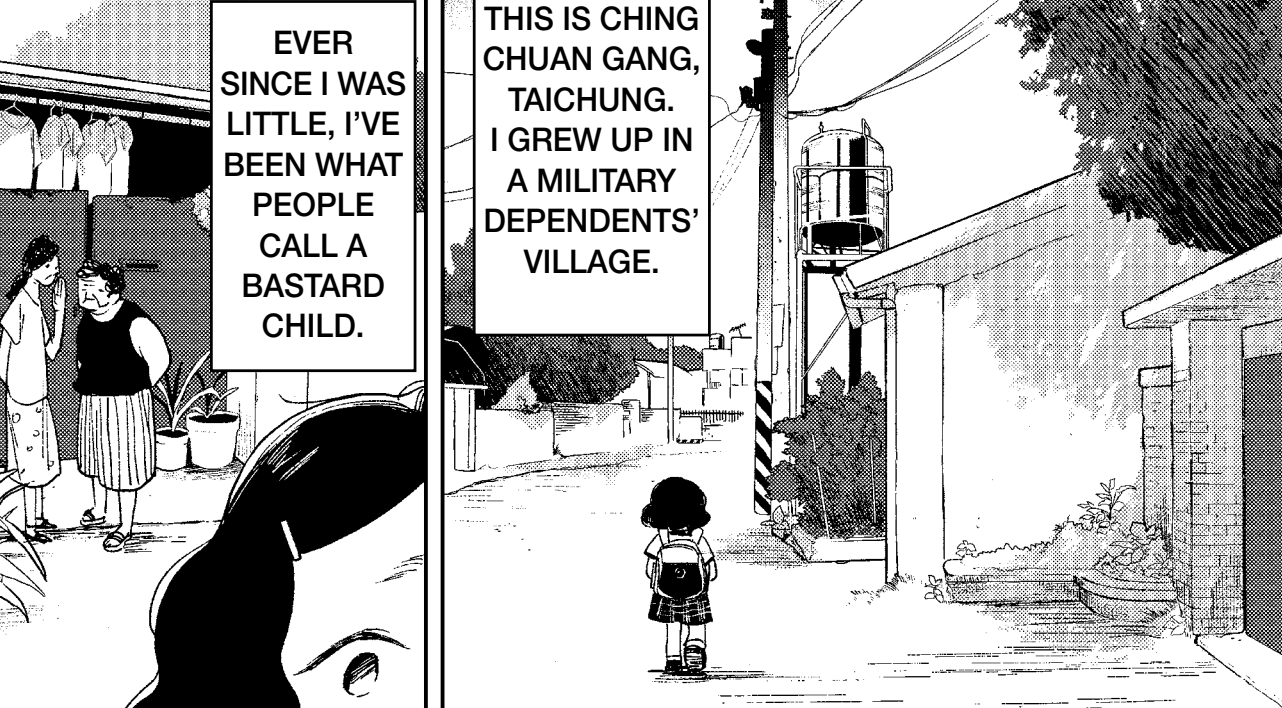


Lucas Paixão

Born in Salvador, Brazil, Lucas Paixão graduated from the Graphic Design program at Salvador University (Laureate International Universities). He worked as a graphic designer in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro before coming to Taiwan in 2014 to study at the Graduate Institute of Fine Arts at National Taipei University of the Arts. He earned a master’s degree in 2018 and held a solo exhibition titled *Body Talks* in the same year.

His comic works include *Binlang Beauty* (licensed in Brazil and Turkey), *CURTA! Short Comics*, and the anthology *Rainbow Apartment*.

In 2013, he won the Outstanding Prize at the 10th Biennial of Graphic Design, ADG Brasil. In 2016, he received the Bronze Award in the Original Competition of Eastern Publishing for *Magic Pen* and the Potential Award in the Second Original Comic Contest of Comico for *Binlang Beauty*. In 2022, he was nominated for the First Original IP Top Ranking for *TEA’s Me*, *The Rise of the Fancy Bubble Tea: The Taste of First Love Gives Me Trembling Pleasure!*



EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I'VE BEEN WHAT PEOPLE CALL A BASTARD CHILD.

THIS IS CHING CHUAN GANG, TAICHUNG. I GREW UP IN A MILITARY DEPENDENTS' VILLAGE.



I PUT UP WITH MY TATTLING NEIGHBORS, AND WAS BULLIED UP UNTIL SECOND GRADE BECAUSE I LOOKED UGLY.

I WASN'T GREAT AT STUDYING EITHER.



LIKE HSIAO-JUNG,

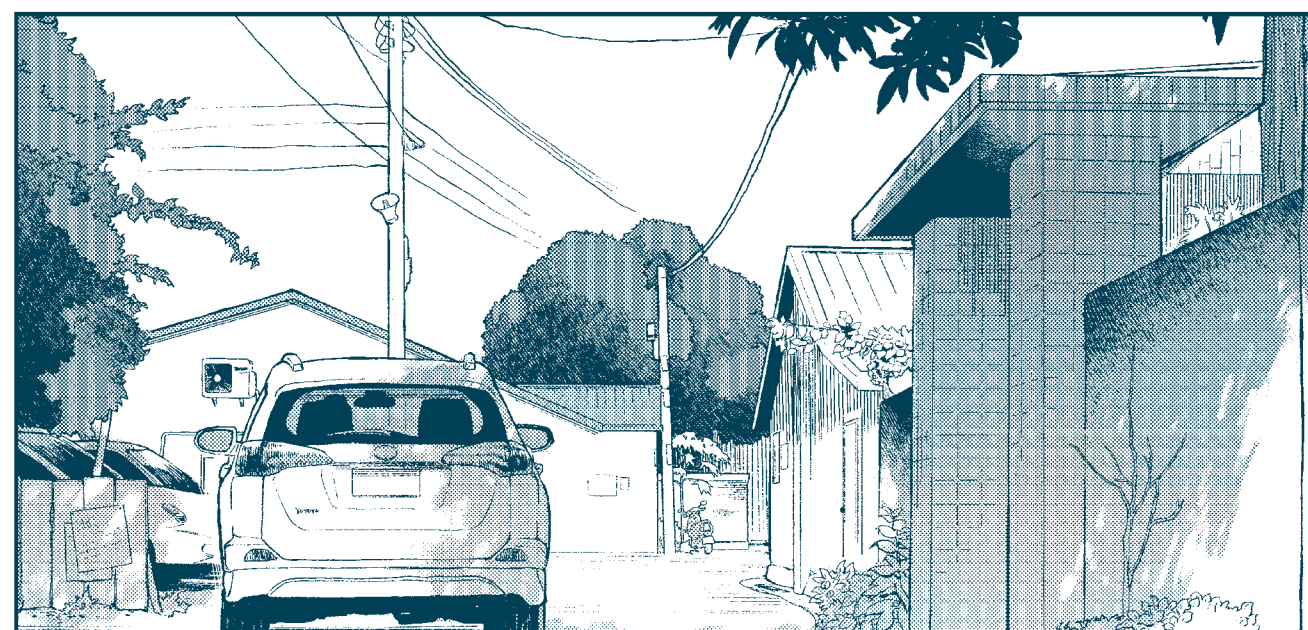
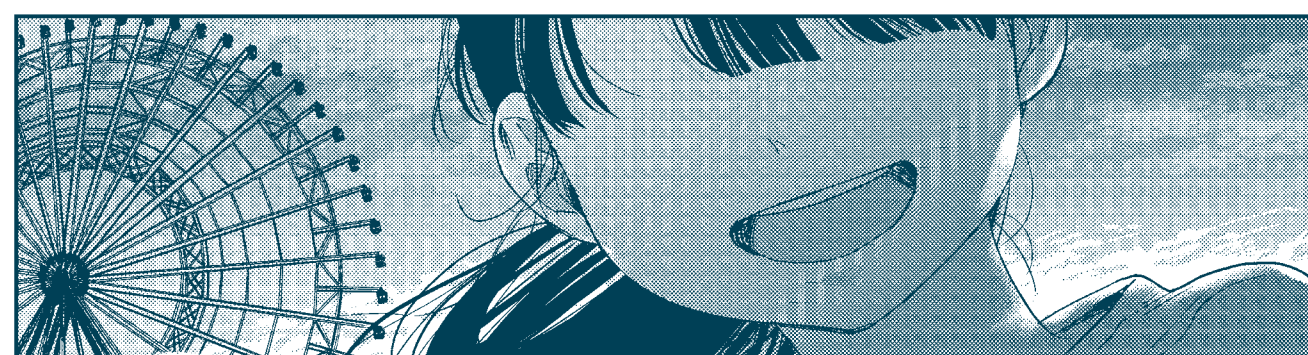
SHE DOESN'T HAVE A HIGH IQ, BUT SHE'S STILL VERY SERIOUS ABOUT HER STUDIES.



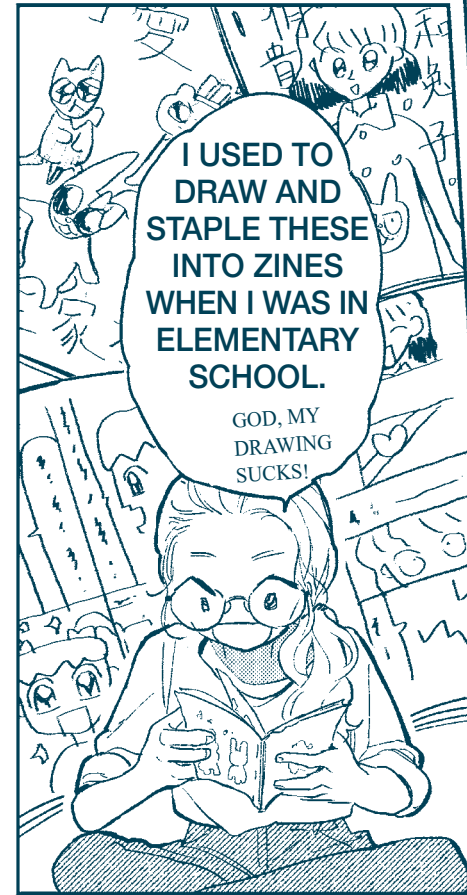
EVERYONE, YOU NEED TO STUDY HARD~

I NEVER FLIPPED IT OPEN.

THIS IS A SKETCH BOOK WITH THE TITLE SOUNDS OF THE SEA WRITTEN ON IT. COMPARED TO THE COMICS I DREW AND STAPLED, THIS PICTURE BOOK IS HEAVIER AND WAY MORE SOPHISTICATED.



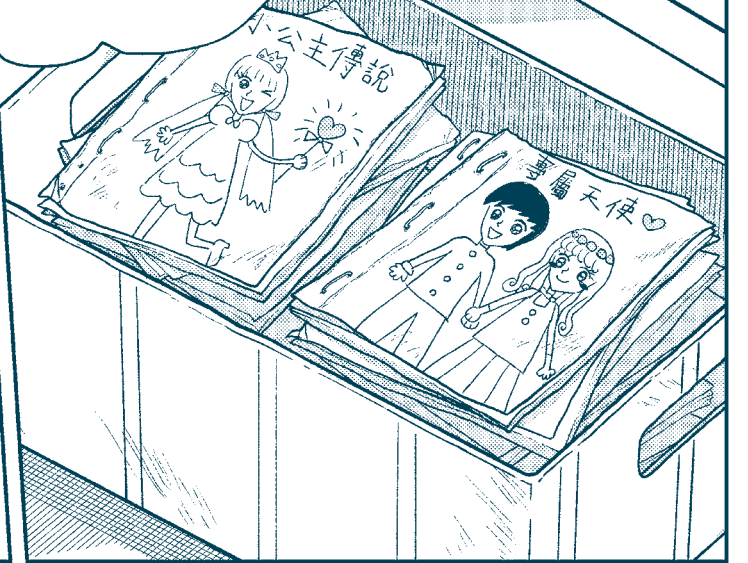




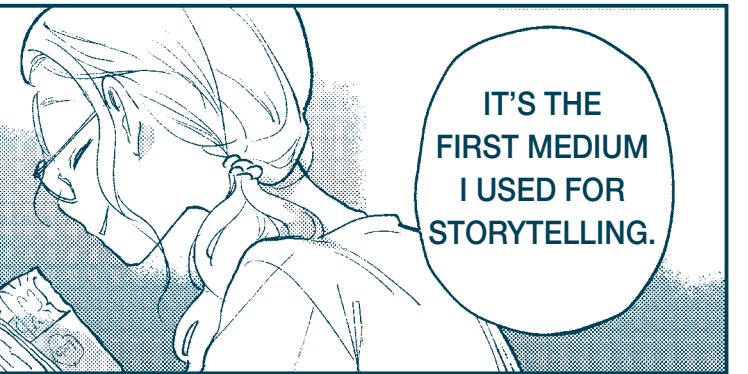
I USED TO DRAW AND STAPLE THESE INTO ZINES WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

GOD, MY DRAWING SUCKS!

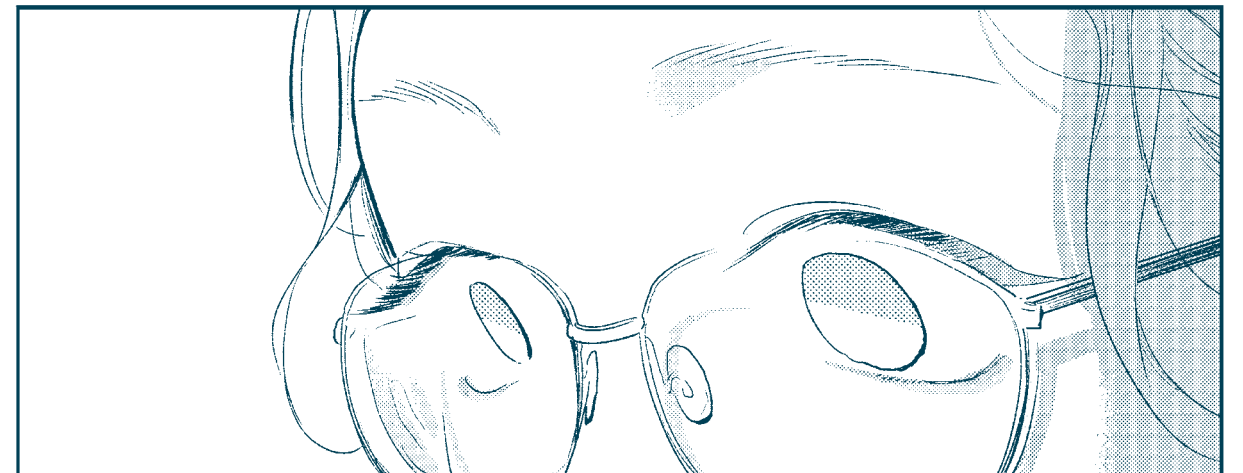
WHOA, I'VE STILL GOT THESE COMICS!



THIS IS SO LONG AGO! STILL,



IT'S THE FIRST MEDIUM I USED FOR STORYTELLING.



A Poignant Coming-of-Age Story of Friendship and Sorrow

by Yuni

Sea You There and Us tells a coming-of-age story about young girls. The original concept is by Chen Chiao-Rong and is illustrated by the award-winning manga artist Monday Recover, who has received accolades from the Japan International Manga Award and the Golden Comic Awards. Known for her flowing lines and brisk narrative pace, she captures the essence of youth in girls.

The protagonist, Hsiao-Rong, is a shy and introverted girl who lacks self-

confidence and often becomes a target for bullying in her neighborhood and at school. That is until she meets her classmate Ke Wei, a likable and outgoing girl with a good rapport with others, who gradually opens Hsiao-Rong's heart.

Driven by curiosity, Hsiao-Rong playfully tugs on Ke Wei's long ponytail. This casual act marks the

beginning of their friendship. Through delicate brushwork, Monday Recover conveys the charming interactions between the two girls—always together

Through delicate brushwork, the artist Monday Recover conveys the charming interactions between the two girls and their blossoming friendship.

at school and on the playground, secretly exchanging small illustrations in class, and even receiving unexpected praise from their teacher when they are discovered.

Hsiao-Rong and Ke Wei embark on creating comics together, serving as supportive partners for one another. "If there are words we can't say, let's speak in cat language!" This becomes their secret code, helping them navigate the complexities of childhood.

Tragically, one day, Ke Wei dies in a car accident, leaving Hsiao-Rong to face her loss alone. What kind of work will her dear friend's creation, *The Sound of the Sea*, become? This remains a mystery, and the past lingers in Hsiao-Rong's heart as a regret. In the illustrations, the surging

waves frequently appear, symbolizing Hsiao-Rong's inner turmoil and enhancing the tension between the visuals and text. Through creation, dreaming of her friend, and allowing time to heal her, Hsiao-Rong ultimately returns to a calm sea.

Sea You There and Us suggests that the bittersweet memories of childhood provide the courage to continue living, composing a poignant poem filled with love and sorrow.

Yuni loves photography, reading, and writing.



Sea You There and Us

貓與海的彼端

Comic Artist: Monday Recover **Author:** Chiao Meow **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 6/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

208 pages | 14.8. x 21 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights sold: France, Malayan, Vietnamese, Japanese, Russian

Awards: 2022 The 16th Japan International Manga Awards, Silver Award

BFT2.0 Translator: Jacqueline Leung

Wu Hsiao-Jung, a shy and introverted third grader, often finds herself on the fringes of her class. In her new classroom, she sits behind a girl with a beautiful ponytail named Ke Wei. Unable to resist, Hsiao-Jung gently tugs at Ke Wei's hair, and this simple action marks the beginning of a close friendship between two girls with completely different personalities. They bond over drawing comics together and use "cat language" to express the words they can't say aloud.

The two girls drift apart, leaving Ke Wei's personal comic creation, *The Sound of the Sea*, shrouded in mystery. As Hsiao-Jung searches for clues, she is left wondering where to find answers to the unresolved questions about their friendship. The story follows her journey through fragmented memories of *The Sound of the Sea*, silent dreams, and a deep desire to uncover the truth. As the tale intertwines a longing for stories with youthful emotions, the question remains: what will be the final outcome for these girls?

This beautifully crafted and emotionally resonant tale of growth and friendship among young girls is created by the award-winning comic artist Monday Recover and scriptwriter Chiao Meow. It delicately captures the bittersweet rhythm of childhood regrets.



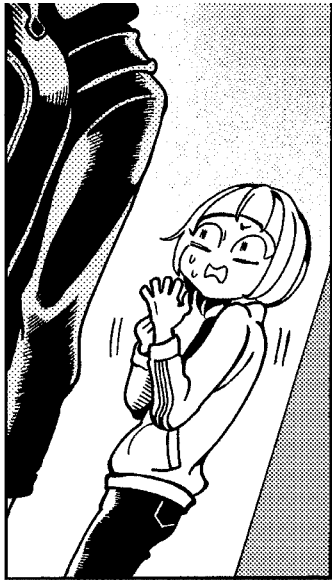
Monday Recover

A Tainan native with a love for dogs and rabbits, Monday Recover's notable achievements include winning the Silver Award at the 16th Japan International Manga Awards in 2023 for *Sea You There and Us*, which was also published as a novel that year. This work was selected as an Excellent Extra-Curricular Reading for Elementary and Secondary Students at the 45th recommendation (Comic category) and as a Star Selection. Additionally, in 2021, *Fantastic Tales of Splendid Blossoms* won the Golden Comic Award for Annual Manga. The overseas rights of *Sea You There and Us* have been sold to Vietnam, Malaysia, France, and Japan.



Chiao Meow

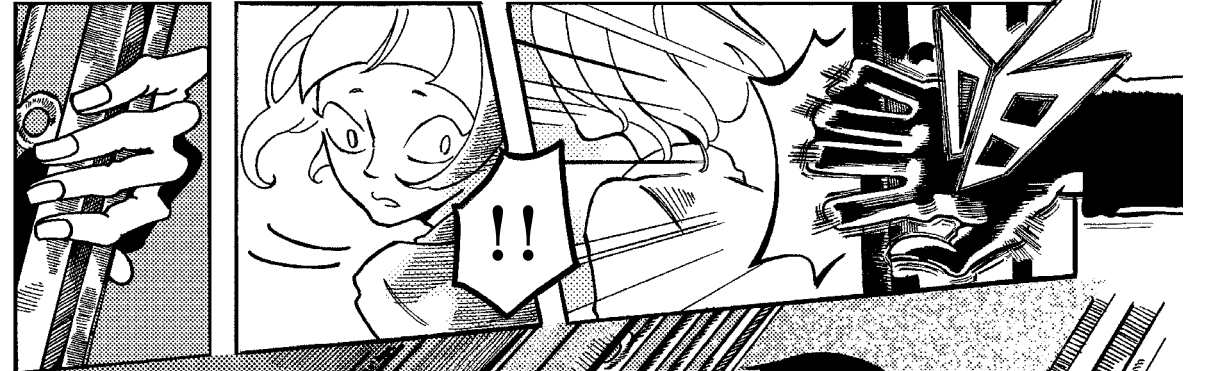
Chiao Meow is a playwright, musical theater writer, lyricist, and novelist.

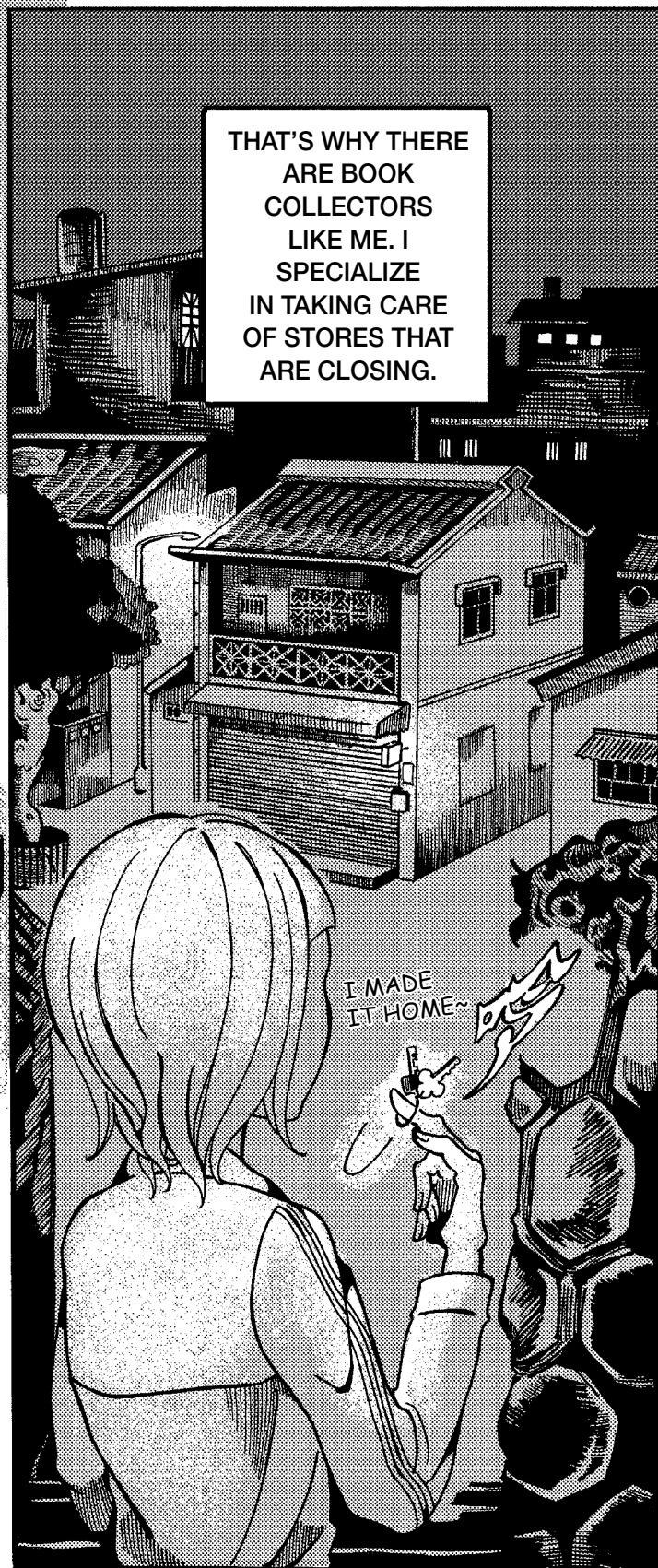


WHO IS THIS?
 A GANGSTER?
 A PERVERT?
 IS THIS SOME KIND
 OF SECRET CODE?
 WHY DID HE COME
 HERE SO LATE?
 WHO IS THIS?
 WHAT DOES HE WANT?



GOOD
 EVENING,
 TEACHER.
 PLEASE LET
 ME RENT
 A ROOM
 HERE.
 I HAVE
 MONEY.





MOST STORES RENTED OUT COMICS, BOOKS, CDS, AND, ON OCCASION, SNACKS.

AROUND THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM, THE BOOK RENTAL INDUSTRY REACHED ITS PEAK IN TAIWAN.

AMIDST COMPETITION FROM OTHER KINDS OF ENTERTAINMENT, THE BOOK RENTAL INDUSTRY DISAPPEARED. ONE BY ONE STORES WENT UNDER.

WITH THE RISE OF ONLINE PIRACY AND SMARTPHONES, PEOPLE TURNED TO OTHER FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT.

BUT IN RECENT YEARS, RENTAL AND LIVING EXPENSES HAVE RISEN, INCREASING THE COST OF RENTING BOOKS.



The Lion in the Manga Library **is a Powerful Comic Driven By** **Complex Characters**

By Brian Hioe

The Lion in the Manga Library is a powerful and arresting narrative that distinguishes itself with its metatextual storytelling and genuine concern for contemporary mental health issues.

The story follows Xiao-dong, a young woman in her early twenties who works as a manga collector. She assists manga rental shops on the verge of closing by helping them dispose of their remaining stock and pack up their storefronts. Once flourishing across Taiwan, these shops are now facing decline in the age of online piracy and e-books.

Xiao-dong inherited her business from

her grandmother, who previously ran a manga rental shop. However, she didn't always work in this industry. Once a child prodigy at Go and a national champion in Taiwan, Xiao-dong retired for reasons that are revealed as the story unfolds.

The strength of The Lion in the Manga Library lies in its character development. Both Xiao-dong and Xia-sheng are vividly drawn, complex characters with hidden depths.

Her life changes when Xia-sheng, a high schooler who attended the Go school her grandmother ran during the summers, unexpectedly shows up at her doorstep late at night, asking to rent the empty room in her house. Although he initially claims to be a college student, it soon becomes clear that Xia-sheng is a runaway hiding his true identity. He challenges Xiao-dong to a game of Go,

proposing that if he wins, he can stay with her.

The Lion in the Manga Library is keenly aware of other comics about Go, with references ranging from Hikaru no Go to Gekka no Kishi. As a former Go champion and avid manga reader, Xiao-dong frequently alludes to these works, and while not directly mentioned, there are strong echoes of the shogi manga March Comes in Like a Lion.

However, it is more than their shared love of Go that connects Xia-sheng and Xiao-dong; both share similar histories of trauma. This bond draws them together, despite their age difference and contrasting personalities. Xiao-dong is outgoing and generally cheerful, while Xia-sheng is quiet and introverted. Yet Xiao-dong occasionally reveals a philosophical and cynical side, while Xia-sheng displays a biting sense of humor.

The strength of *Lion in the Manga*

Library lies in its character development. Both Xiao-dong and Xia-sheng are vividly drawn, complex characters with hidden depths. Their dynamic is highly complementary, allowing them to change and grow throughout the story.

Though sometimes textually dense to match its narrative, the comic features an inventive visual language. Xiao-dong is often depicted with a cat behind her, reflecting her cat-like nature. The artwork transitions seamlessly from dialogue to metaphor, particularly during Go scenes, which are gracefully portrayed.

What truly sets *The Lion in the Manga Library* apart is its fearless approach to serious subject matter. It tackles issues such as abuse, PTSD, and trauma, drawing from social realities to address these topics.

Brian Hioe is a writer, translator, and co-founder of New Bloom Magazine.



The Lion in the Manga Library

獅子藏匿的書屋

Author: Xiaodao **Illustrator:** Xiaodao **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 1/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

188 pages | 14.8. x 21 cm **Volume:** 3 (ongoing)

Rights sold: Ukrainian, French

Awards: 2021 The 12th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the year & GCA Grand Prize

BFT2.0 Translator: Brian Hioe

A young woman who liquidates the stock of defunct manga rental shops harbors a secret past. Once a child prodigy, she began her career as a professional Go player at just twelve years old but quit the circuit under mysterious circumstances.

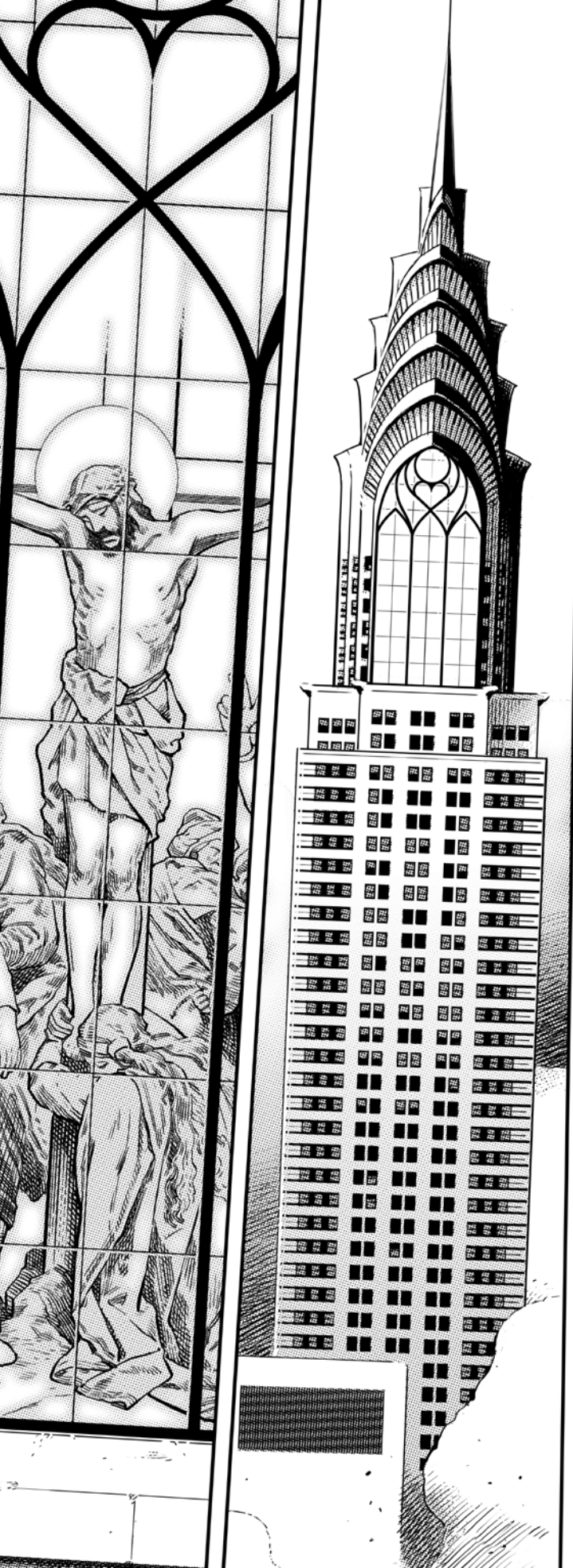
One evening, a stranger arrives at her door seeking a room to rent. He claims to be a former Go professional, and it quickly becomes clear that he is indeed an exceptionally talented player. As they adjust to life together as roommates, they unexpectedly begin to heal from the burnout they both experienced as elite competitors—though a far more surprising outcome still awaits them.

In preparation for this work, artist Xiaodao conducted extensive interviews with competitive Go players. The result is a refreshingly original graphic novel that blends a realistic portrayal of the professional Go community with a tension-filled plot, all while evoking nostalgia for an era when manga rental shops were at the heart of Taiwanese youth culture. Even those unfamiliar with Go will be captivated by this story about self-discovery and the power of companionship.

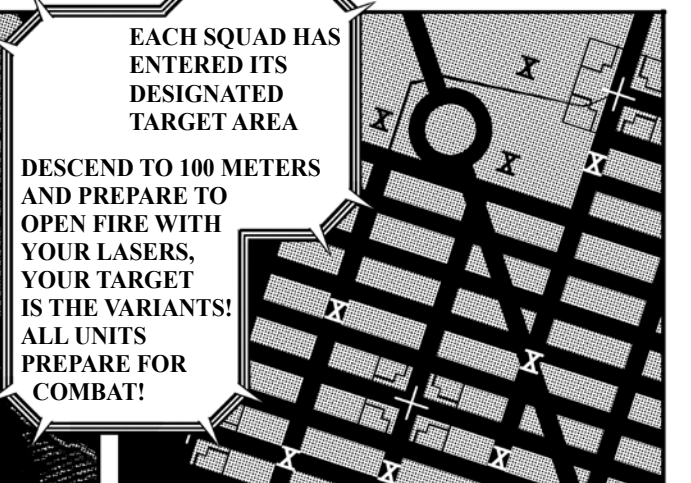


Xiaodao

Xiaodao is fond of saying that creating manga is a challenging endeavor, and the title of “mangaka” feels premature at this stage. She is still seeking guidance on her journey to becoming a manga artist. In 2021, *The Lion in the Manga Library* Vol. 1 won the Annual Comic Award and the Annual Grand Prize at the 12th Golden Comic Awards. It was also selected as an Excellent Extra-Curricular Reading for Elementary and Secondary Students at the 43rd Recommendation and recommended by the ACBD (Association des Critiques et journalistes de Bande Dessinée) for the 2023 Asian Comic Critique Awards. Xiaodao’s work has been supported by the Cultural Content Fund’s “Comic Creation and Publication Marketing Reward Points” for the 111th Gaea “Taiwanese Original Comic” Production Plan. The overseas rights for *The Lion in the Manga Library* have been sold in Ukrainian and French.

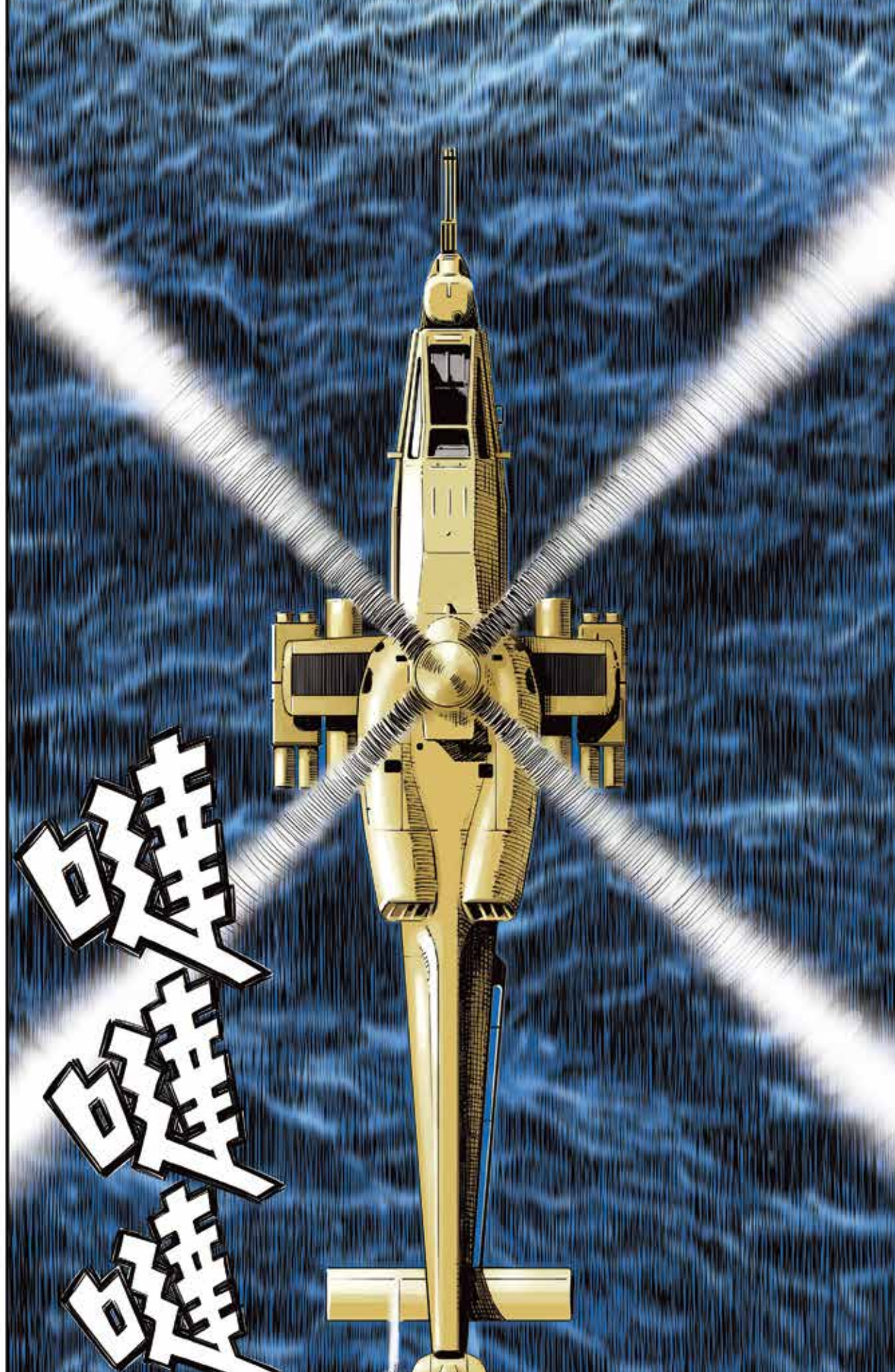
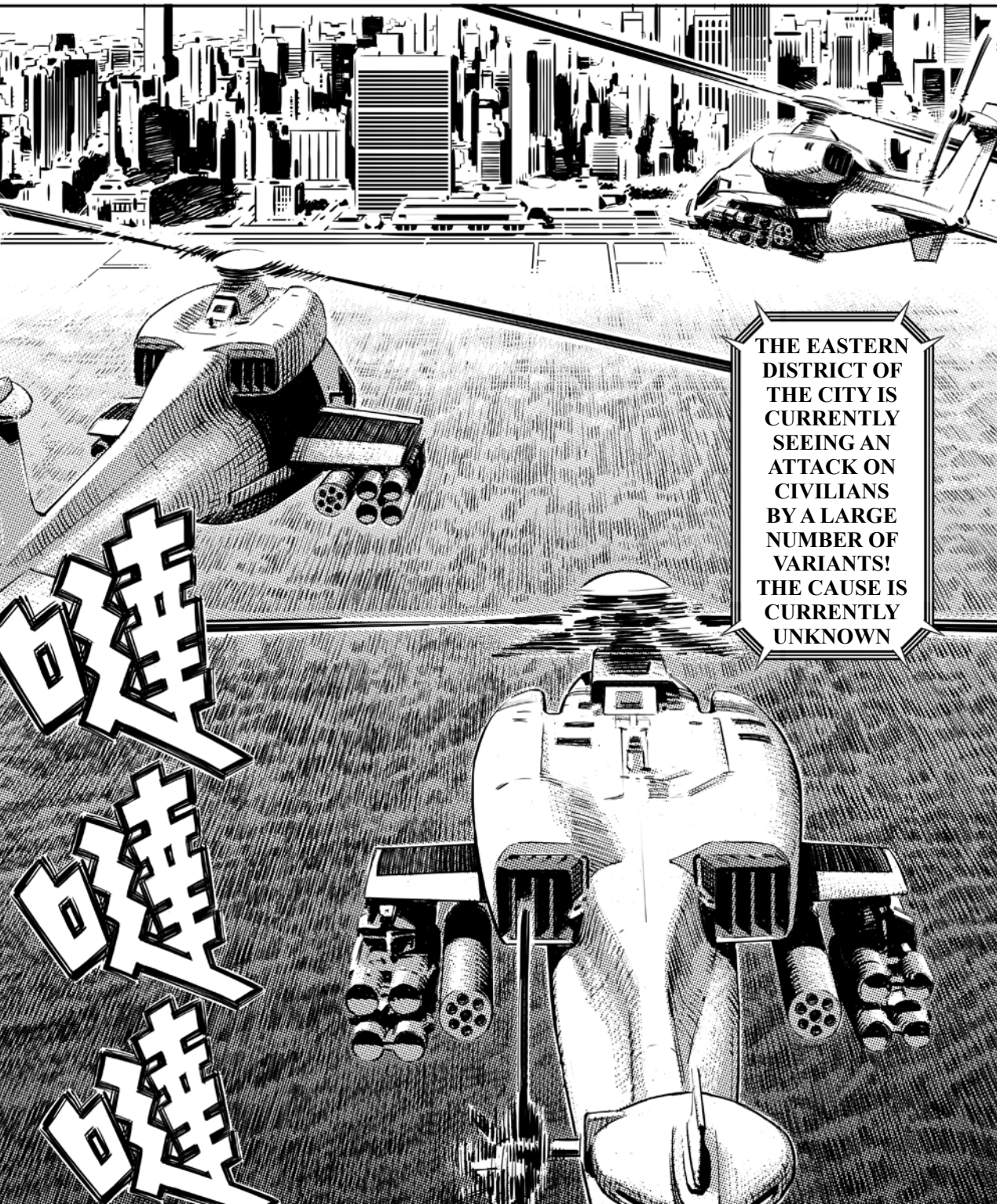
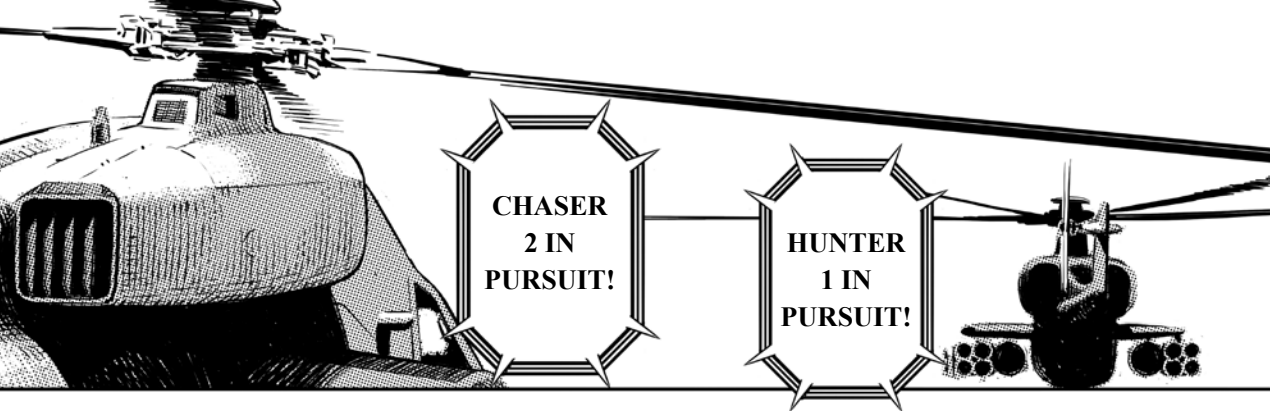


SQUAD 1
HAS BEEN
DISPATCHED
TO DISTRICT D,
SQUADS 2 AND
3 ARE EN
ROUTE TO
DISTRICT F!
PROVIDE LOW-
ALTITUDE AIR
SUPPORT!



EACH SQUAD HAS
ENTERED ITS
DESIGNATED
TARGET AREA

DESCEND TO 100 METERS
AND PREPARE TO
OPEN FIRE WITH
YOUR LASERS,
YOUR TARGET
IS THE VARIANTS!
ALL UNITS
PREPARE FOR
COMBAT!



#01 INFECTION



Chang Sheng's Visually Striking Post-Apocalyptic World

by Brian Hioe

Set in the near future, *Baby* follows former police officer Eliza in the aftermath of the “Day of Destruction,” a catastrophic event that nearly wipes out humanity. Following the emergence of parasitic bio-mechanical lifeforms known as “Baby,” most of the population is eradicated. Those who survive are either preyed upon by Baby or assimilated, transforming into bio-mechanical creatures themselves.

Eliza is one of the few who survived that fateful day, living in isolation ever since. Her only companion is DR-34, an outdated medical robot equipped with an advanced learning AI. Despite her survival, Eliza is haunted by loneliness and the fear of becoming one of the very things she dreads—Baby. During the initial outbreak, her hand was infected, yet her body hasn't transformed in the year since. This uncertainty leaves her trapped in a cycle of nightmares, self-loathing, and mistrust of the world around her.

Running parallel to Eliza's story is that of a group of government soldiers who believe they hold the key to humanity's salvation. Led by the resolute and compassionate Ryan, they undertake a dangerous mission behind enemy lines, deep into an abandoned military base. There, they discover a mysterious young girl named Alice. To their surprise, she's not alone; a small group of survivors has gathered around her, complicating the mission as they now face the daunting task of evacuating a larger group of refugees. As these two narratives edge closer to one another, the question looms: What is the connection between Eliza and Alice? And what will happen when their paths finally cross?

Baby, a five-volume series running from 2007 to 2012, draws heavily from the sci-fi influences of its time, including classics like *Ghost in the Shell* and *Ergo Proxy*, as well as survival horror games such as *Resident Evil*. Eliza, with her caustic wit

and hardened exterior, is reminiscent of iconic female protagonists like Motoko Kusanagi from *Ghost in the Shell*.

One of *Baby's* greatest strengths lies in its artwork, which masterfully blends hand-drawn and digital techniques. The intricate designs of the bio-mechanical Baby lifeforms and the detailed character art make it visually striking. Even two decades later, in an age of advanced CGI and digital art, *Baby's* aesthetic still holds up.

While the first volume only hints at the complex plot to come, it firmly establishes the core characters and the bleak, post-apocalyptic world they inhabit. Though not entirely hopeless, *Baby's* setting is decidedly grim, and its tension-filled action scenes are where the story

shines brightest. Author Chang Sheng is particularly adept at conveying dynamic movement and escalating tension, making the action sequences some of the most compelling parts of the narrative.

The brisk pacing also keeps readers engaged, driving the plot forward at a steady clip.

Although *Baby* is primarily a plot-driven series, Chang Sheng skillfully sets the emotional tone and stakes for his

characters, particularly in the first volume. It provides just a glimpse of the journey ahead—one that promises to challenge both its characters and its readers.

Brian Hioe is a writer, activist, and co-founder of New Bloom.

Author Chang Sheng is particularly adept at conveying dynamic movement and escalating tension, making the action sequences some of the most compelling parts of the narrative.



Baby.

Author: Chang Sheng **Illustrator:** Chang Sheng **Publisher:** Dala Publishing

Date: 5/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

320 pages | 16.5 x 23 cm **Volume:** 2 (END)

Rights sold: France, English

Awards: 2011 The 2nd Golden Comic Awards, Best Youth Comic & Comic of the year

BFT2.0 Translator: Brian Hioe

“If there truly is a God, then He must have left this place...”

December 1, 2043, marks the “Day of Extinction.” An influx of unknown life forms known as “Baby” begins to parasitize humans, transforming them into monstrous robots, leading to mass slaughter and pushing humanity to the brink of extinction. Eliza, who survived an attack by these mutated beings but had her left hand invaded by Baby, miraculously does not turn into a robot.

A year later, in search of answers, Eliza decides to leave the city. Meanwhile, a three-person rescue team, on a covert mission to bring the mysterious girl Alice back to the human shelter, unexpectedly discovers other survivors. To return safely, they venture underground, where they encounter the severely injured Eliza. As robots begin to gather around them, they must confront their dire situation. What is the origin of “Baby”? The truth behind it all—and the identity of the girl Alice—will soon be revealed.

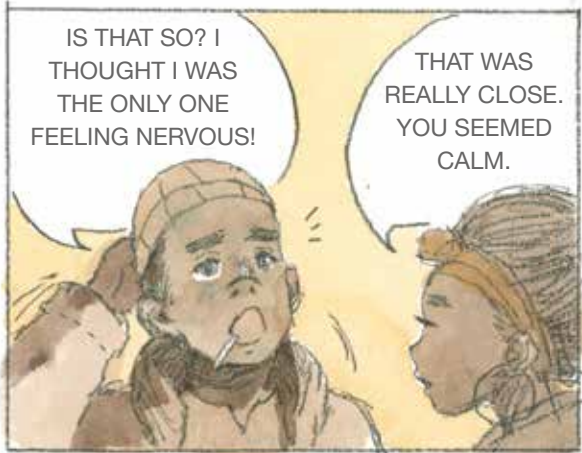
As acclaimed sci-fi writer Isaac Hsu writes, “Blending elements from *I Am Legend*, *Ghost in the Shell*, and *Parasyte*, this story weaves a compelling post-apocalyptic sci-fi world.”



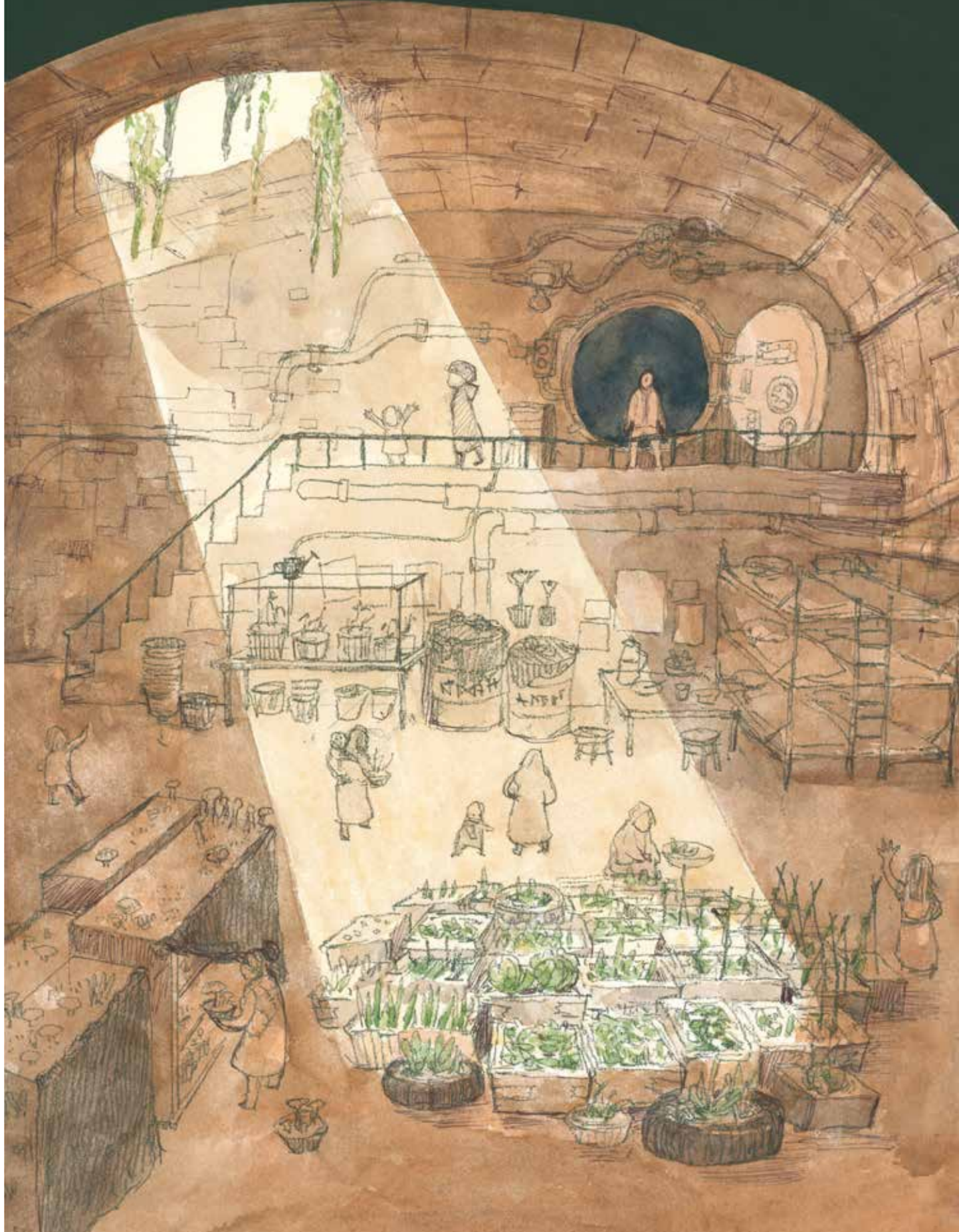
Chang Sheng

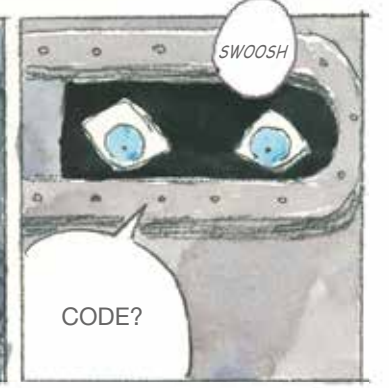
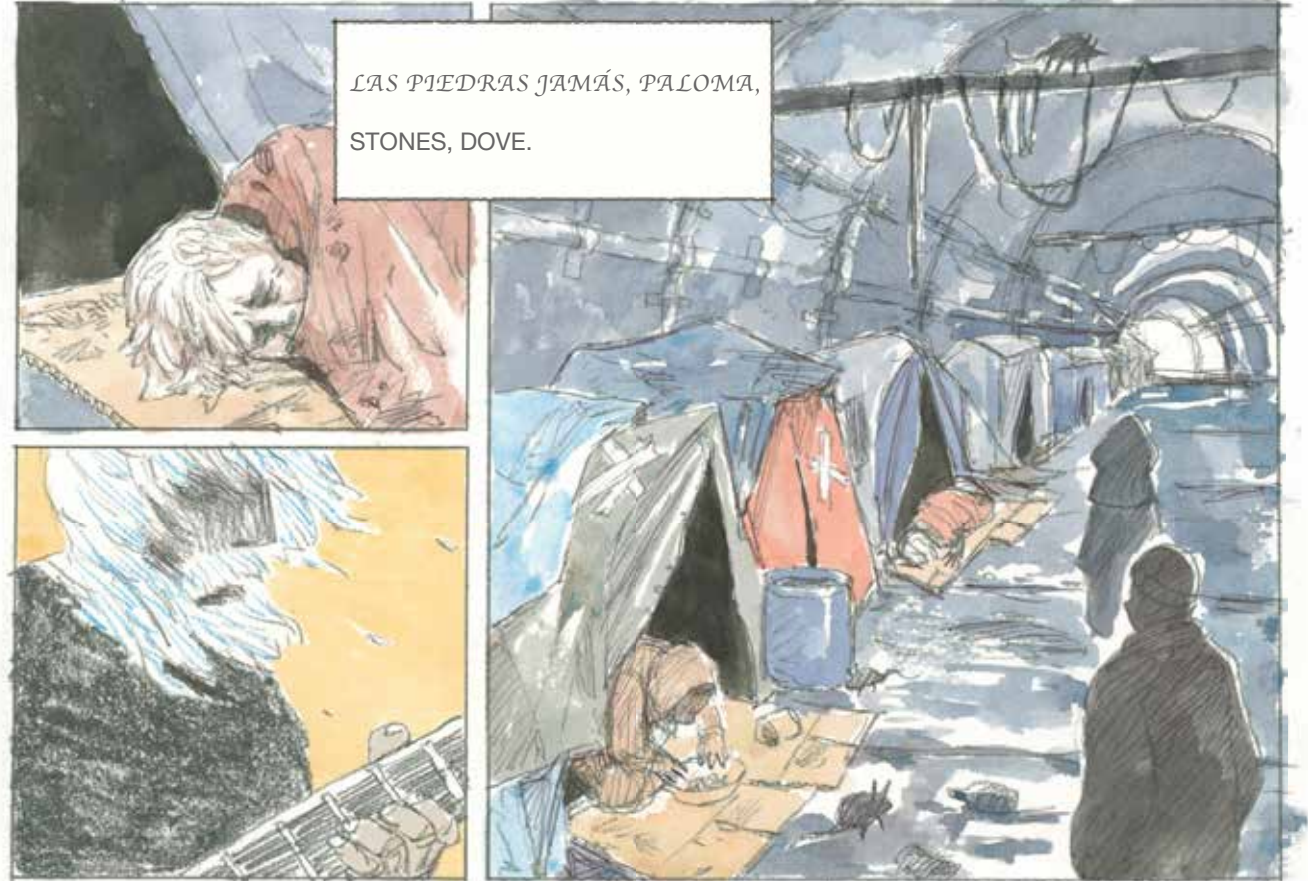
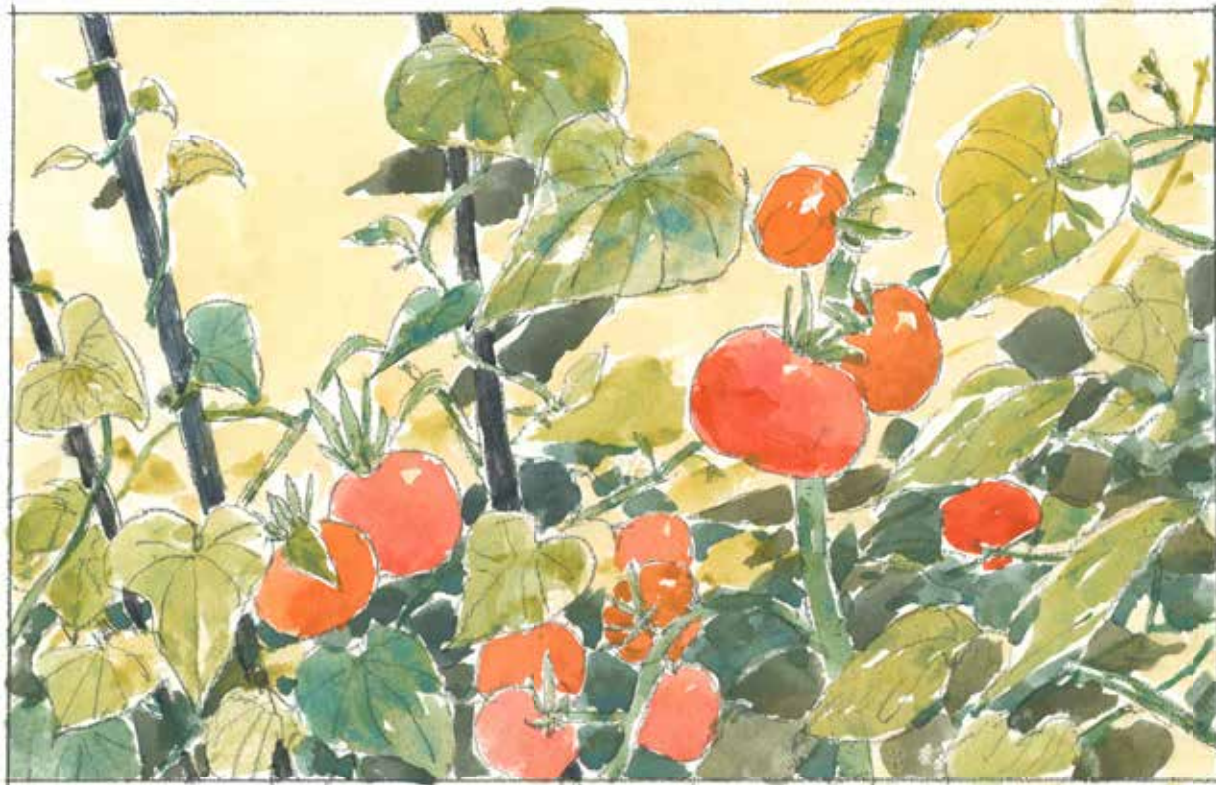
Born in Taipei, Taiwan in 1968, Chang Sheng graduated from the Western Painting Department of Fuxing Commercial High School. After 15 years in advertising, he transitioned to comic creation in 2002. Notable works include *Dream Hotel*, *Baby*, *OLDMAN*, *The Hidden Level*, *Nine Lives Man: Time's Wheel*, and *Yan*. Chang Sheng was part of the Louvre Comics Project and contributed to Seven Dreams of the Louvre: Fantastic Journey of Taiwanese Comic Artists. His works have been licensed in Japanese, French, Korean, English, Italian, Turkish, and other languages.

In 2004, Stanley won the Best Comic Drama Award from the Government Information Office. The short story *Dream Hotel* received recognition from the National Academy for Educational Research in Taiwan. *OLDMAN* received an Honorable Mention at the 6th Japan International Manga Awards in 2013 and was licensed in French, Korean, English, and Turkish. It also won Best Youth Comic at the 5th Golden Comic Awards in 2014. *The Hidden Level* won the Gold Award at the 3rd Kyoto International Manga Awards and Best Youth Comic at the Golden Comic Awards in 2017. *Nine Lives Man: Time's Wheel* was nominated for Comic of the Year at the 11th Golden Comic Awards in 2020 and was licensed in French. *Yan* Vol. 1 was nominated for Comic of the Year at the 12th Golden Comic Awards in 2021, and *Yan* Vol. 2 was nominated at the Golden Comic Awards in 2022 and was licensed in Italian. He also won the 1st Original IP Top IP Award in the Comics category. *Yan* Vol. 3, the concluding volume of the series, was published in December 2022. In 2011, *Baby* won Best Youth Comic and Comic of the Year at the 2nd Golden Comic Awards and was licensed in Japanese e-book format.



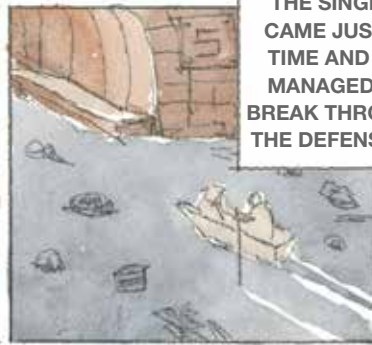
THAT WAS REALLY CLOSE. YOU SEEMED CALM.



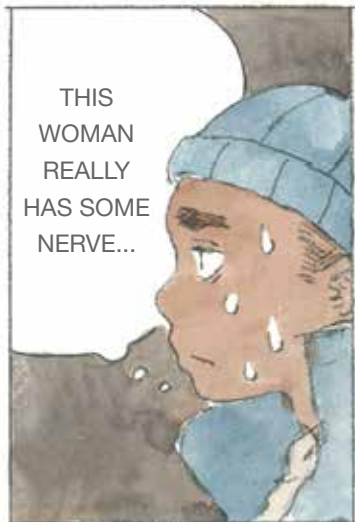




WATCH OUT AHEAD.



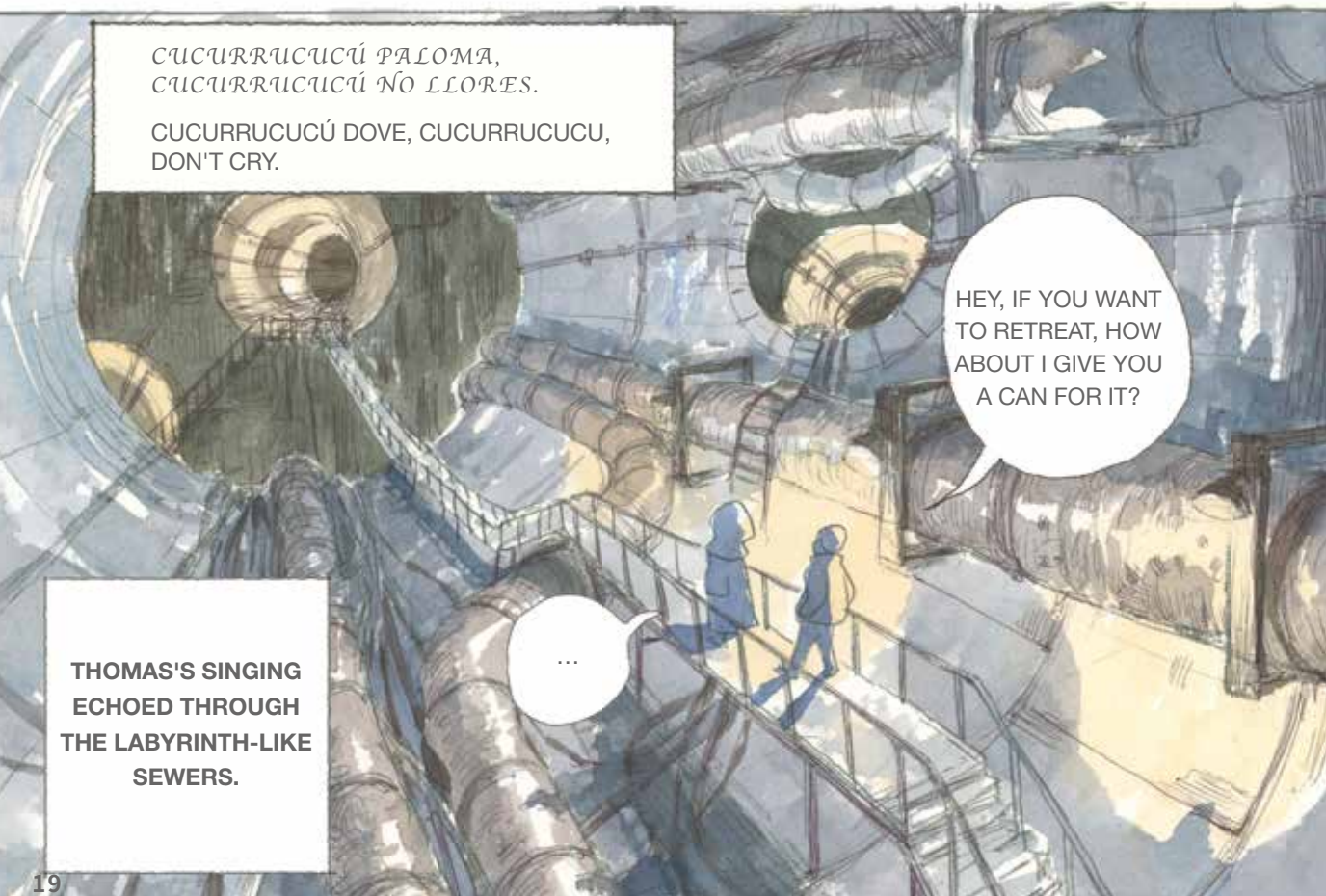
THE SINGING CAME JUST IN TIME AND WE MANAGED TO BREAK THROUGH THE DEFENSES...



THIS WOMAN REALLY HAS SOME NERVE...



WHOA!



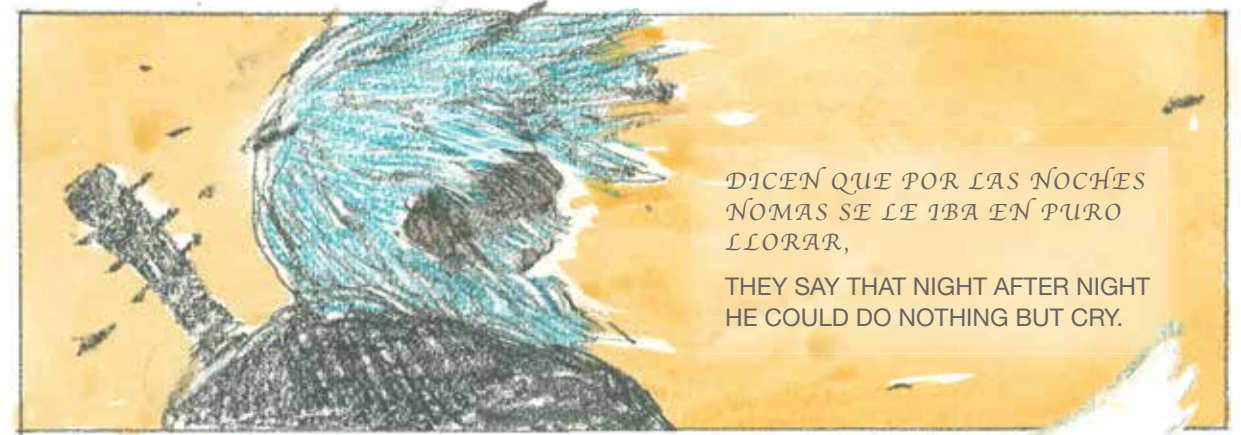
CUCURRUCUCÚ PALOMA,
CUCURRUCUCÚ NO LLORES.

CUCURRUCUCÚ DOVE, CUCURRUCUCU,
DON'T CRY.

HEY, IF YOU WANT TO RETREAT, HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU A CAN FOR IT?

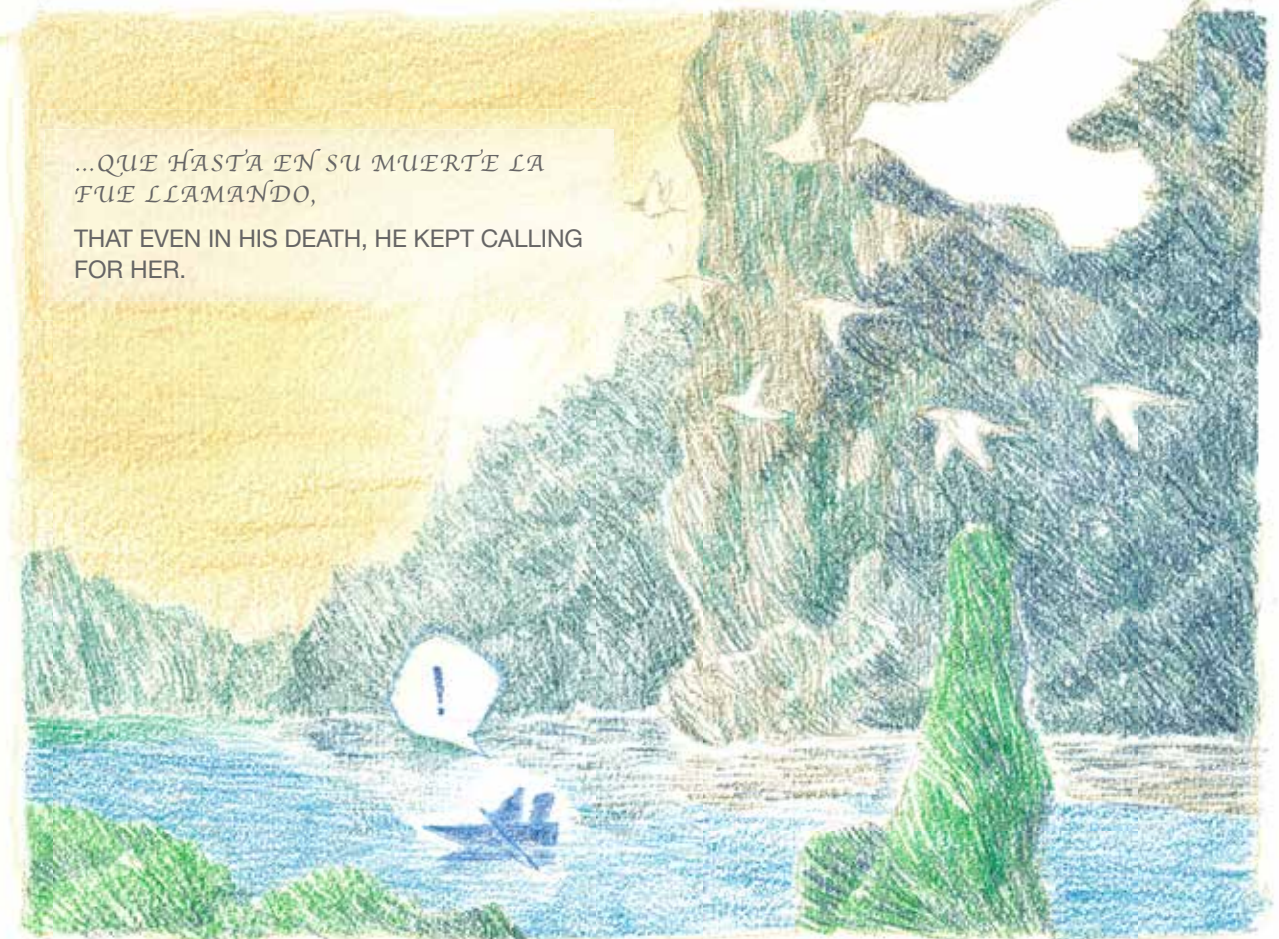
THOMAS'S SINGING ECHOED THROUGH THE LABYRINTH-LIKE SEWERS.

...



DICEN QUE POR LAS NOCHES NÓMAS SE LE IBA EN PURO LLORAR,

THEY SAY THAT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT HE COULD DO NOTHING BUT CRY.



...QUE HASTA EN SU MUERTE LA FUE LLAMANDO,

THAT EVEN IN HIS DEATH, HE KEPT CALLING FOR HER.



FORGET IT, LET'S GO LISTEN TO THOMAS SING.

LIGHT'S OFF.



Taiwanese Comics at the End of Civilization: Reading *Mayfly Island*

by Lin Yunhong

As a long-time fan of anime, comics, and games and a self-proclaimed otaku, I felt both excitement and a little trepidation after finishing *Mayfly Island*, illustrated by Evergreen Yeh and written by Li Shang-Chiao. Could it be that our long-cherished hope of seeing local Taiwanese comics flourish, mature, and go global is finally becoming a reality?

In recent years, despite the obstacles facing the broader industry, Taiwanese comics have excelled, showcasing remarkable talent from both veteran and emerging creators. *Mayfly Island*, published by Slowork—a company focused on documentary-style comics with a reputation for quality—is their first venture into apocalyptic sci-fi. The reading experience is exceptional, combining top-notch art and deeply layered storytelling while still preserving Slowork's alternative, experimental style.

Mayfly Island embarks on a grand mission: telling a sci-fi allegory about all of humanity. The story is set in a near-future world surrounded by polluted oceans, where the few remaining survivors try to rebuild a collapsed civilization. The comic also serves

as the “prequel” for an upcoming animated film of the same name.

The book consists of several short, interconnected stories. These fragments, floating in a vast ocean, hint at much more beneath the surface—harrowing events that have befallen human civilization and the devastation of our blue planet at the hands of industrial development.

The narrative takes place in a not-too-distant future where climate change has melted the polar ice caps, raising sea levels and submerging traditional land nations. The remaining humans are scattered across small islands, forming numerous city-states. In the world of *Mayfly Island*, humanity is trapped by the “Inner Ocean,” which hides many secrets beneath its turbulent waters. In the final story, readers glimpse the seabed, where a vast ship graveyard and industrial debris block the paths of *Mayfly Island*. Amid these oppressive scenes, there is a cold, eerie beauty.

Visually, *Mayfly Island* is exceptional. Readers will share my delight in feeling “cheated” by the publisher; I thought I was buying a plot-driven comic only to discover that the money I spent was an

incredible bargain. It abandons the typical dip pens of Japanese comics, boldly mixing charcoal, crayon, watercolor, and colored pencils. The use of expressive art techniques—from the indigo-tinted, rain-soaked tin cities to the giant waves painted in stark, bold strokes—makes the book feel more like a deluxe art collection.

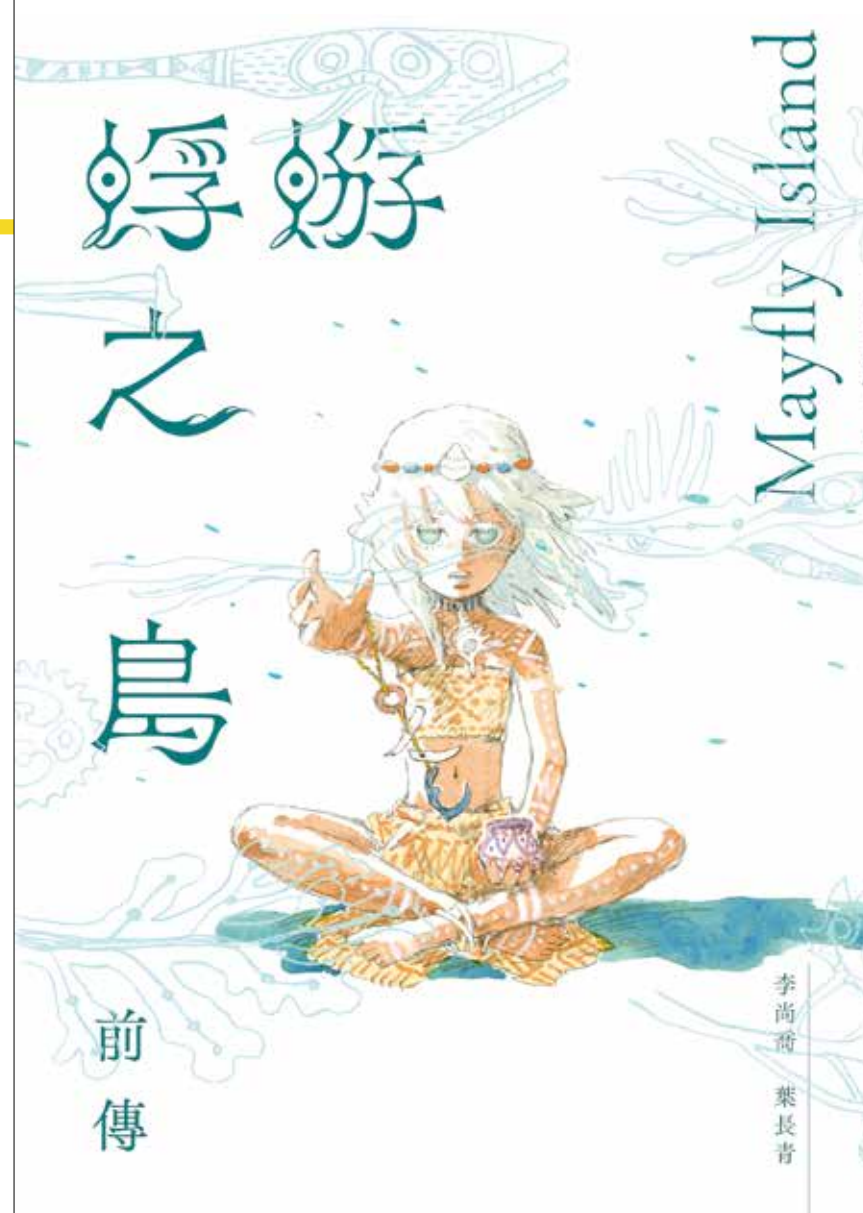
Given its limited page count, the prequel story in *Mayfly Island* unfolds across just a few islands. Yet many details reflect the writer's thorough world-building. For example, regarding politics, the main character's hometown, “Red Soil City,” has the slogan “Increase Production, Serve the Nation” written on its fortress walls. With modern nation-states collapsing due to natural disasters, the scattered city-states likely operate as semi-dictatorial, semi-feudal oligarchies. The diverse skin tones, multilingual names, and Spanish folk songs sung by the residents suggest that this city has become a refuge for global climate refugees—perhaps a medieval-like merchant city with arms and a treasury. Meanwhile, in terms of ecological world-building, Red Soil City has greenhouse farming that relies on renting bees for pollination. The rising sea levels likely destroyed most animal habitats, making it

Mayfly Island reflects on whether human civilization can continue expanding without end. Just as profoundly, it draws readers back to the deep oceans surrounding the island and the cultural heritage of Taiwan's Austronesian Indigenous peoples.

impossible for crops to rely on natural bird or insect dispersal. In a specimen room, readers also see extinct species like the Sabre Orchid, Formosan Clouded Leopard, and Ornithoptera beetles on display.

Since the new millennium, scientists concerned about rapid environmental changes have proposed the developing geological concept of the Anthropocene. Human activities have irreversibly altered the environment, leaving behind carbon footprints, radiation, and indestructible waste, which will remain in the soil and atmosphere. *Mayfly Island* reflects on whether human civilization can continue expanding without end. Just as profoundly, this skillfully crafted Taiwanese comic also draws readers back to the deep oceans surrounding the island and the cultural heritage of Taiwan's Austronesian Indigenous peoples. Ironically, in searching for our roots, we connect to a more “universal” imagination that joins Taiwan to the world.

Lin Yunhong is a passionate enthusiast of contemporary literature and popular culture. As he puts it, “Someone once told me, ‘You need to have your own opinions.’ I nodded vigorously, thinking I had never heard anything more reasonable!”



Mayfly Island (Prequel)

蜉蝣之島

Scriptwriter: Li Shang-Chiao **Comic Artist:** Evergreen Yeh **Publisher:** Slowwork Publishing Ltd.

Date: 9/2020 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

160 pages | 17 x 23 cm **Volume:** 1 (Planned publication of other works within the same universe)

Rights sold: Italian, French, Spanish in Spain

Awards: 2021 The 15th Japan International Manga Awards, Bronze Award

BFT2.0 Translator: Yunching Ko and Michelle Kuo

In the near future, climate change has led to the emergence of independent island city-states. The drifting island Mayfly stands as one of the last remaining pure lands. In this devastated and resource-scarce world, the protagonists gently and bravely seek their paths to sustain life. This acclaimed collection features three interconnected short stories and explores environmental and women's issues in a post-apocalyptic setting, as well as the shamanic culture of the Austronesian.



Li Shang-Chiao

A director and scriptwriter for both film and comics, Li served as the scriptwriter for the animated film and comic *Mayfly Island*, which was nominated for Best Original Screenplay and the Golden Horse Film Project Promotion.



Evergreen Yeh

Evergreen Yeh graduated from the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Art and is a full-time illustrator and comic artist. Since 2019, he has been fully dedicated to comic creation. When not racing against deadlines, one can find him sketching, writing, or spending time with his children in the mountains. Evergreen Yeh is also the recipient of the Bronze Award at the 15th Japan International Manga Award, with the rights to his works sold for publication in both French and Italian.



I'VE BEEN
HERE
ENOUGH
TIMES

TO KNOW THE
HOUSE REALLY WELL.



HEY,
JACK'S
HERE.
COME IN!

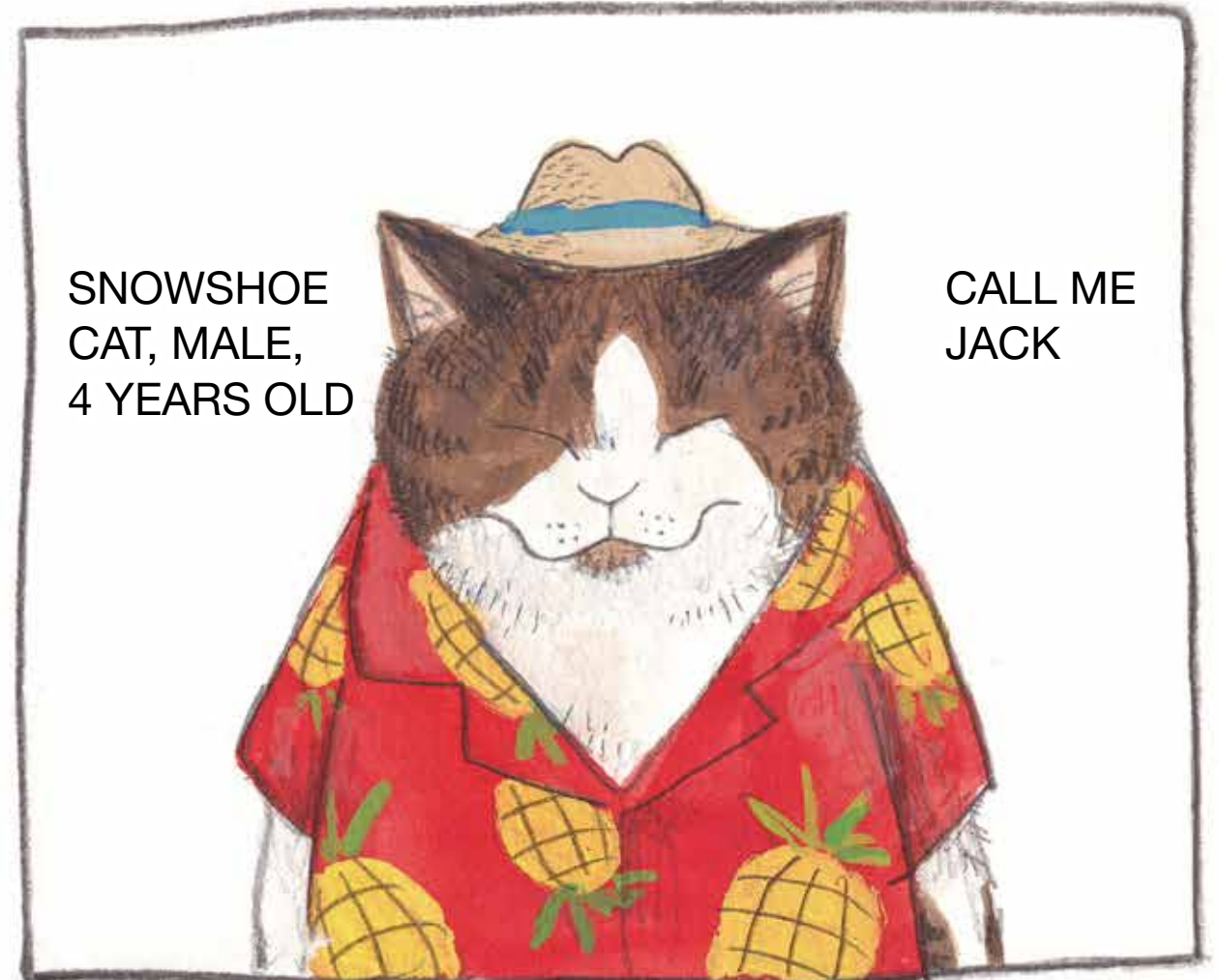


I CAN GET
HUMAN
ATTENTION
AND BE A
LITTLE
SPOILED.

THIS IS MY
RESORT.



MY HUMAN
DOESN'T GIVE
ME SNACKS,
BUT HERE, I
GET A LOT OF
DRIED FISH
TREATS.

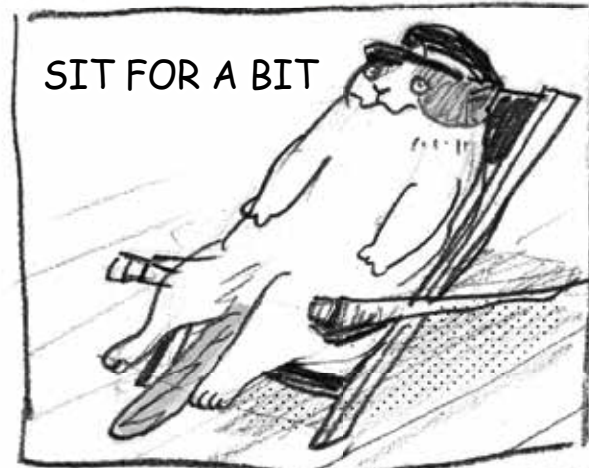
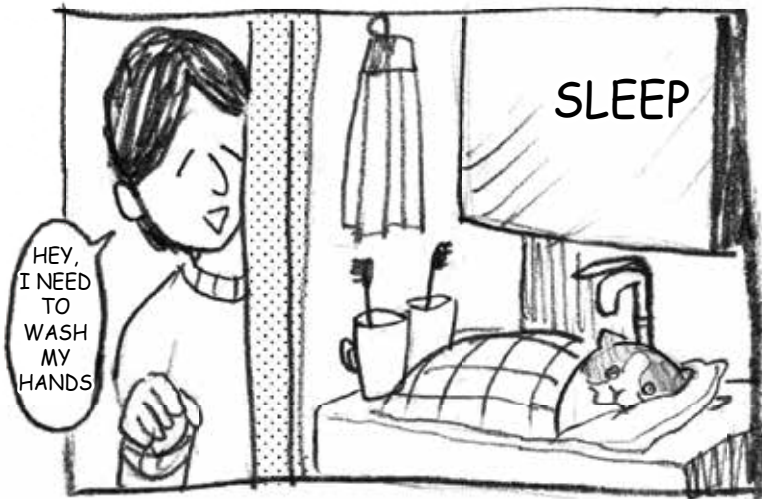


SNOWSHOE
CAT, MALE,
4 YEARS OLD

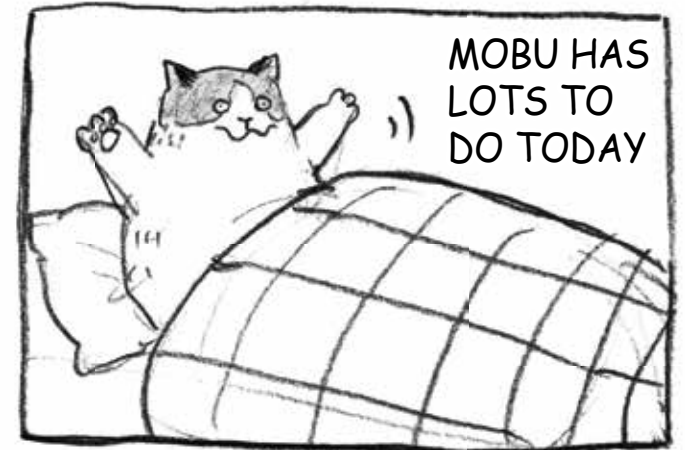
CALL ME
JACK



MY HUMAN'S
AWAY, SO I'LL
STAY WITH MY
NEIGHBOR, MOBU,
FOR A BIT



A DAY IN MOBU'S LIFE





I GET SPOOKED EASILY.



I DON'T LIKE TO BE TOUCHED.



I'M THREE YEARS OLD.

MY NAME IS MOBU,



I LIKE BLUE THINGS.



SOMETIMES, I CAN BE BRAVE.

WOW!



I'M HOME!! MOBU!!

ACTING CUTE ISN'T MY THING.



CALICO CAT, FEMALE, FAVORITE FOOD: SHREDDED CHICKEN.

END



In This Whimsical Tale, A House Cat Takes a Job at a Cat Café

by Kevin Wang

The genre of anthropomorphic cat art predates even ancient Egypt, where divine beings were often depicted in feline form. In *Mobu's Diary*, the debut comic by illustrator Kathy Lam, we encounter a delightful take on this enduring fascination.

Mobu, a house cat, decides she's had enough of her pampered life. Determined to earn her own cans of food, she ventures into the world of part-time work at a cat café. More earnest than the lazy, cynical Garfield, Mobu is aware of her limitations and conscious even of her naivete. From the outset, Mobu declares: "Acting cute isn't my thing." She stretches the truth on her résumé, dons a tempura shrimp hat to impress her interviewer, and, after landing the job, seeks guidance from a colleague—a Maine Coon cat who effortlessly reads body language and persuades customers to buy more cookies. Little by little, Mobu steps out of

her comfort zone and even achieves small feats of heroism, from soothing a student who fails a test to thwarting a predatory insurance salesman.

What truly sets *Mobu's Diary* apart is its artistic style. Endearing without being overly cutesy, dozens of panels in the book could easily adorn the walls of an office. In fact, Kathy Lam's prints frequently sell out soon after being announced to her large following. Human eyes are simplified into the Chinese character for eight (八), while motion lines, dialogue bubbles, and panel borders all appear hand-drawn. Straight lines remain fluid, and errant pencil marks, watercolor bleeds, and coarse graphite textures lend an organic, playful feel to the illustrations.

In an afterword, Lam mentions her formative years of studying illustration in the UK, where she learned to let go of trying to draw perfectly. A professor praised a doodle she made during an

anxious moment. It was a revelation: "They don't worry about the completeness... I never thought that something I made casually could be considered finished work." This loose, sketch-like style captures Mobu's personality—her anxiety, stubbornness, and conscientiousness—with an immediacy that a more polished portrait could never achieve. The unpredictable gradients in Lam's watercolor washes are like a cat that resists over-control.

Lam, who lives between Hong Kong and Taiwan, subtly weaves in elements of both locales. In the café, visitors are required to change into house slippers. One character wears a sailor-style uniform, still common in Japan, while minor characters have Western names like George and Emma. The European architecture of the city creates a setting that feels both familiar and otherworldly.

Many readers have described *Mobu's Diary* as (liao)yu, or "healing." Perhaps it's because we often look to cats for comfort. In cat cafés—especially in Taiwan and Japan—these animals offer gentle therapy. Lam turns this idea on

its head, asking what it's like for a cat to work in a café. Mobu saunters around the house on two feet, bikes to work, and dashes along the wall like a superhero to escape a zealous fan. We find satisfaction in seeing personas projected onto cats, whose thoughts are not easily deciphered. Their logic often eludes us, and they are

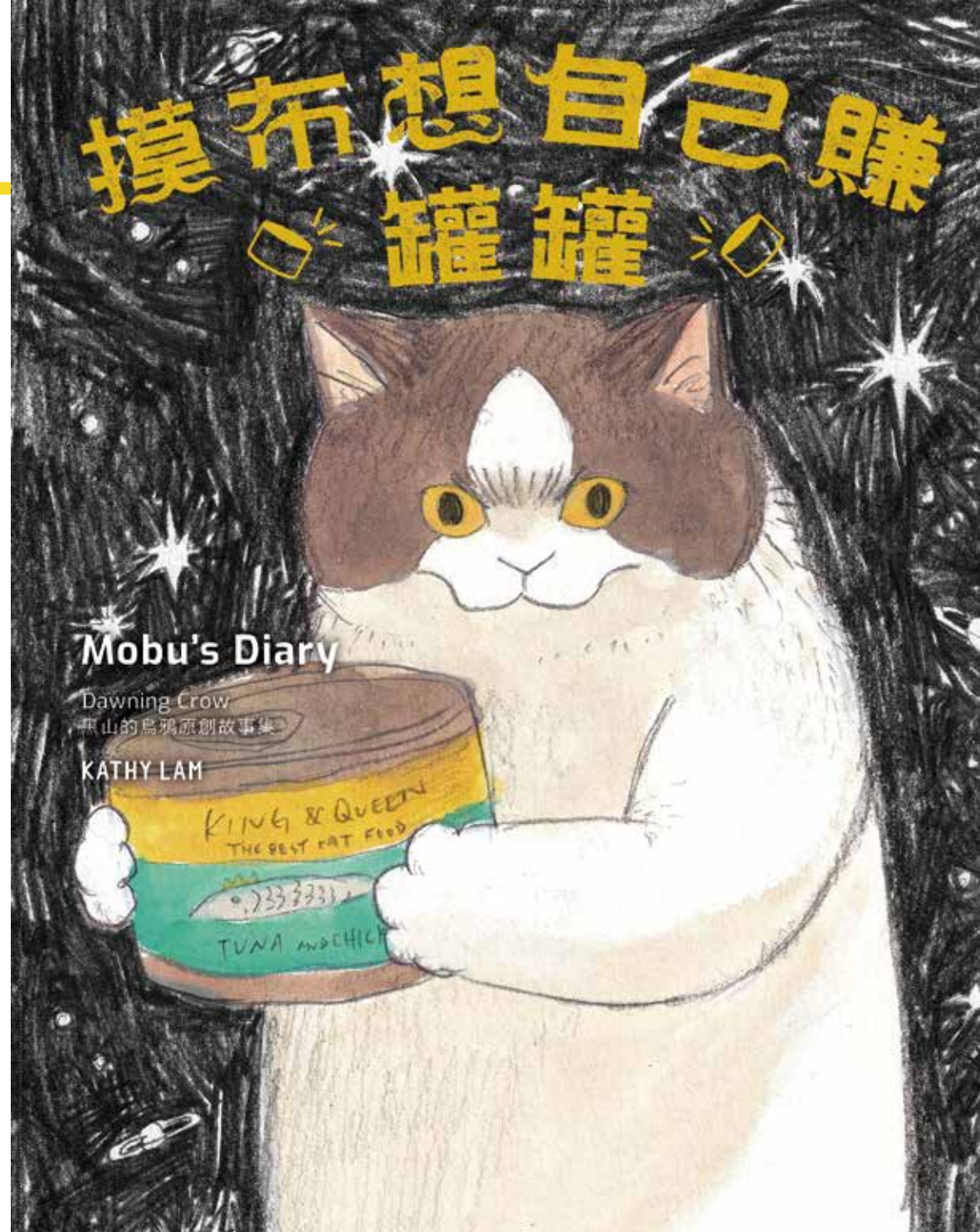
comically apathetic to human concerns (Mobu prefers to sleep on things her human needs to use).

At the heart of the book is a protagonist who, despite her love of napping and fear of strangers, believes there's more to life than lounging around. Created during the pandemic,

when Lam was separated from her own cat, the drawings of Mobu express a deep yearning for connection. Through whimsical characters and soft tones of ochre and sienna, *Mobu's Diary* finds its way into our hearts and invites us to revisit its pages again and again.

Kevin Wang is a writer based in Taipei, currently co-translating Mobu's Diary with Cindy Ko.

At the heart of the book is a protagonist who, despite her love of napping and fear of strangers, believes there's more to life than lounging around.



Mobu's Diary

摸布想自己賺罐罐：黑山的烏鴉原創故事集

Author: Kathy Lam **Illustrator:** Kathy Lam **Publisher:** Star East Press

Date: 5/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

160 pages | 14.8 x 19 cm **Volume:** 2

Rights sold: Japanese, Korean, Thai

BFT2.0 Translator: Kevin Wang and Michelle Kuo

“Every day is the same, and I’m tired of it. I want to become a self-sufficient cat. I want to earn my own cat food!”

This is Mobu, a three-year-old female calico cat with white fur, gray-brown spots, an adorable face, and pink paws. Mobu no longer wants to be a pampered house cat. Determined to earn her keep, she sets her sights on working at a cat café to pay for her own meals. Introverted and not fond of being petted, Mobu writes a deceptive résumé, claiming she “enjoys interacting with humans.” Despite her fear of strangers and her desire to slack off, she bravely takes the first step toward independence.

Kathy Lam’s popular and delightfully funny tale is perfect for animal lovers of all ages. Bursting with charm, laughter, and tender moments, this story invites readers to follow Mobu wherever she goes.



Kathy Lam

Born in Hong Kong, Kathy Lam graduated from the Illustration Department of the University of Brighton in the United Kingdom. Her works often feature animals and are known for their bold yet intricate style. Kathy has collaborated with the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, N.I.P. Anonymous Distillery, and Hang Seng Bank. She enjoys using pencils and opaque watercolors for her artwork, and when not drawing, she engages in model-making or playing games. In 2023, she was a finalist for the 14th Golden Comic Awards and was selected as an exhibiting artist for the 2024 Taiwan Pavilion at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France. The overseas rights of *Mobu's Diary* have been sold in Japanese, Korean, and Thai.

Right to Left

- 160 **Mobu's Diary**
by Kathy Lam • translated by Kevin Wang and Michelle Kuo • published by Star East Press
- 150 **Mayfly Island**
text by Li Shang-Chiao • illustrated by Evergreen Yeh • translated by Yunching Ko and Michelle Kuo • published by Slowwork Publishing Ltd.
- 140 **Baby.**
by Chang Sheng • translated by Brian Hioe • published by Dala Publishing
- 130 **The Lion in the Manga Library**
by Xiaodao • translated by Brian Hioe • published by Dyna Books
- 120 **Sea You There and Us**
text by Chiao Meow • illustrated by Monday Recover • translated by Jacqueline Leung • published by Gaea Books
- 110 **Sexland Adventures**
by Lucas Paixão • translated by Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo • published by Dala Publishing
- 100 **Rosetta: Ashes of the Feast**
by Eli Lin • translated by William Serrano • published by Gaea Books
- 090 **Bla Bla Song**
by Peter Mann • translated by Tony Hao • published by Sharp Point
- 080 **Wind Chaser Under the Blue Sky**
by Jason Chien • translated by Michael Kearney • published by Gaea Books

Left to Right

- 060 **What's Wrong with the Time?**
by Tung Hsiao-Hu • illustrated by Rumin Wu • translated by William Serrano • published by Papa Publishing
- 050 **Sunset Town**
by Jellybug • translated by William Serrano • published by Jellybug
- 040 **Hysteria**
by Kan • translated by Kevin Wang and Lin King • published by Kiwi Cultural and Creative
- 030 **Soul**
text by Kuzuha • illustrated by Chiyou • translated by Catherine Yu • published by Gaea Books
- 020 **The Sun Between the Fingers**
by Cory Ko • translated by Jacqueline Leung • published by Fisfisa Media
- 008 **OKEN: Childhood Memories of a Taiwanese Poet**
text by Yang Mu • illustrated by Wu Shih-hung • translated by Michael Fahey • published by Fisfisa Media

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