



COMIC BOOKS

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FROM
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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

Taiwan Comics: Narrative Energy from the Island of Freedom

Contemporary Taiwan is alive with a surge of narrative energy. The twenty books in this catalogue highlight the island's inventive reflections on history, society, and human nature, inviting readers into the multifaceted universe of Taiwanese comics.

Taiwanese comic artists excel at giving voice to the margins within vast historical fractures, transforming cold archival records into living stories rich with warmth, tension, and complexity.

This journey into history begins in the 17th century, during the Age of Great Navigation. In *Formosa X*, a maritime merchant leader risks everything on a high-stakes trade, navigating the Ming dynasty's maritime ban, the Dutch East India Company, and Japanese forces, thrusting Taiwan into the center of a global storm. Next, *Koxinga Z* turns to the battlefield of the Siege of Fort Zeelandia. With bold, hard-edged lines, it depicts Koxinga

through the eyes of the Dutch defenders: a ghostlike, godlike figure commanding tens of thousands of troops in a life-and-death struggle. Meanwhile, in the 20th century, *The Free China Junk* recounts a real-life, extreme feat from 1955: six adventurers sailed a battered, engineless wooden junk across the Pacific Ocean, relying solely on the wind to reach San Francisco. This voyage stood as a testament to an island people's fervent love for freedom.

Comics also serve a powerful medium for confronting political trauma and uncovering truth. *No Criminal Facts*, inspired by the shocking death of Chen Wen-chen in 1981, follows detective Zheng Yi-Cheng as he probes a fatal fall ruled a "suicide," uncovering mysterious ligature marks and a Swiss knife—clues that point to a sinister state conspiracy. In *The Unseen Train*, a boy's longing for his grandfather leads to a spectral train unseen on any

timetable. This train carries the remaining lives of White Terror victims, guiding readers back to those silenced years. *Back Street Dusk* follows a film restoration technician delicately working on moldy, abandoned reels to recover the splendor of local language films, which had been suppressed under martial law.

Taiwanese comic artists also give vivid form to a deep care for ecosystems and ecology. In *The Mystery of Alishan Forest Railway*, train driver Chih-Hsu encounters a mysterious girl on a midnight run through the forest railway. When the train plunges into an abandoned tunnel, he witnesses the brutal confrontation between early twentieth-century logging development and the spiritual force of nature. Also set in the mountains, *The Mountain Seeker* follows forest rangers as they move through thick fog and evade illegal loggers, documenting the hardships

of protecting primeval forests.

This gaze upon the land extends into everyday cultural life. *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*, told from the perspective of a veteran fan, recreates the passion and emotions of the professional baseball stadium. *Naked in Taiwan! Rabbit's Hot Spring Expedition: North Chapter* meticulously recreates the hidden bathing spots of northern Taiwan's mountain regions while explaining hot spring etiquette. Playful, with its charming illustrations of bathing animal characters, it is also richly practical.

When social systems collapse, comic artists probe unsettling truths through fresh perspectives. In *Toby King*, an orange cat secret agent named Toby uncovers a horrifying secret in a city where gatherings are banned: a powerful rabbit clan has been processing and selling its own kind as canned goods to maintain order.

Meanwhile, in the sweetly melancholy *The Projected Girl from the Underground Street*, with its cyber-infused aesthetic, a boy meets a digital projection of a deceased high school love. Having lost all memory of their time together, they embark on a journey to reclaim those memories.

Humans caught between state objectives and their own multi-dimensional, complex desires are a theme in two notable books. In *Secret Whispers*, a robot boy, the nation's most powerful weapon, can slay colossal monsters but is powerless against school bullying, rendering justice bitterly ironic. In *Where Have the Giantdogs Gone?* pets suddenly grow gigantic, prompting human military hunts. The story serves as both an allegory of persecution and a testament to the deep bonds between humans and the animals they care for.

The Invisibles addresses female

body anxiety through Maimo, a woman whose cosmetic surgery goes disastrously wrong. She gains the ability to become “invisible” in moments of shame and chooses to use this power to strike back against medical aesthetics fraud. *The Incense Burner of Lust*, adapted from the renowned Taiwanese writer Li Ang, pushes even further, depicting how a woman wields her own body within centers of power as a bargaining tool. She defiantly challenges gender norms and morality, ultimately claiming political authority.

Amid ever-shifting urban landscapes, Taiwanese comics offer some of the most honest spaces for emotional repair. In its exploration of adult relationships, the BL book *Love Confession at Age 35: Before and After* follows two men learning to love again as they wander the narrow, rain-soaked lanes of Keelung.

The northern port town becomes a romantic backdrop, opening a landscape of diverse emotional possibilities. *Remnants of Love* reflects with subtle artistry on intimate relationships, the struggle to let go of the past, and the fleeting moments of everyday life. Last, *How to Make Our World* speaks to any teen who has struggled, following three teenagers as they navigate family collapse, psychological turmoil, and the process of rebuilding themselves through friendship and resilience.

Finally, *Take Me Home* is a soulful book that takes the perspective of plush toys in a consignment shop to reflect on the universal dimensions of human relationships. Each person who takes a toy home reveals a quiet longing to love and to be loved.

These twenty works testify to the remarkable breadth of Taiwanese comics.

They resist any single label, but “freedom” characterizes their defining spirit. Whether one seeks historical depth, artistic originality, or emotional resonance, these works offer countless ways to engage in dialogue with the world. We warmly invite publishing partners and readers worldwide to open these pages and witness how stories from this island chart a shared map of human experience.

Sincerely,
Books from Taiwan



Naked in Taiwan! Rabbit's Hot Spring Expedition: North Chapter

A Full English translation is available.

捲兔的台灣裸湯：北部篇

Author: Tpcat **Illustrator:** Tpcat **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 01/2022 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

144 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1 (Ongoing series; each book is interlinked but can also stand alone.)

Rights sold: Japanese

BFT2.0 Translator: Jacqueline Leung

Taiwan is home to one of the highest densities of hot springs in the world, and there's no better way to experience them than at outdoor naked hot springs. What's the most authentic way to soak? What's the difference between sentō, super sentō, and onsen?

Join a rabbit as your guide on a hot spring adventure across northern Taiwan. Joyful, comprehensive, and meticulously researched, this book is the ultimate guide to the hot springs of northern Taiwan. From Wulai to Beitou, from Jinshan to Shamaoshan, no distance is too far when a hot spring awaits. Explore the astonishing variety of hot springs, learn proper etiquette, and understand the rules each establishment follows. And don't miss the delicious dishes that many bathhouses have to offer.

Featuring 11 carefully selected nude hot spring destinations in northern Taiwan, this book provides practical venue information, illustrated bathhouse interiors, entertaining anecdotes, hot spring insights, and inventive bathing accessories. Illustrator Tpcat personally visits each hot spring, capturing its unique atmosphere through charming, detailed illustrations.



Author **Tpcat**

Tpcat is an illustrator and comic artist who loves creating mischievous, politically incorrect fluffy animals. Passionate about budget travel and hot spring adventures, Tpcat seeks to capture fleeting memories through images and share them with the world. Her representative works include the *Naked in Taiwan! Rabbit's Hot Spring Expedition* series.

Soak It In: A Joyful and Meticulous Guide to the Magic of Hot Springs

by Shiuian Chiang

Located along the Pacific Ring of Fire, Taiwan is rich in natural hot springs. While its bathing traditions have been deeply influenced by Japanese onsen culture, they have also evolved into a uniquely Taiwanese form shaped by local conditions. *Naked in Taiwan! Rabbit's Hot Spring Expedition: North Chapter* takes readers on a comic-style tour of hot springs in northern Taiwan, guiding them not only through the act of bathing itself but also through the people and stories that gather around the pools.

Generally speaking, hot spring facilities in Taiwan operate in two main ways: bathing in swimwear, and the Japanese-style naked hot springs. For privacy reasons, photography is usually prohibited in nude baths, making visual

records of these spaces extremely rare. In this book, the author Tpcat transforms bathers into animal characters and, through richly detailed depictions of bathhouse interiors, reveals the hidden world of the hot spring pools.

Naked in Taiwan! Rabbit's Hot Spring Expedition: North Chapter introduces myriad hot spring venues of various sizes located in and around greater Taipei. These range from free public baths to upscale private bathhouses offering shuttle services. The book carefully documents every step of the experience, from transportation and ticket purchase to the layout of the bathing areas. Using bird's-eye-view illustrations, Tpcat meticulously records information normally only discovered

on site, including facility arrangements, pool sizes, and bathing routes. Details such as water temperature variations, rare massage installations, herbal baths, shower areas, resting lounges, and even the placement of toilets and lockers are all captured through drawings. Even the men's baths, which the author could not enter, are illustrated with the help of friends. In short, this book is a truly comprehensive visual catalogue of hot springs.

Beyond the spaces and facilities, Tpcat takes an ethnographic, observational approach, portraying the bathers themselves and the distinct cultures that emerge within each bathhouse. From analyses of bathing behaviors to snippets of gossip, readers can sense the atmosphere of each venue even before stepping inside.

Tpcat hopes this book will

encourage readers unfamiliar with nude hot springs to give them a try. Through its vivid, immersive documentation, *Naked in Taiwan! Rabbit's Hot Spring Expedition: North Chapter* effectively eases the anxiety surrounding these seemingly mysterious spaces. Interwoven with nearby travel suggestions and historical trivia, the book enriches the hot spring journey even further. Whether used as a practical guide or as a cultural observation, it offers a rewarding experience for hot spring enthusiasts alike.

Shiuian Chiang was born and raised in Taipei, with time spent in Hsinchu, Tainan, and London. With a background in anthropology and art history, Shiuian has spent much of her time reading and writing descriptions of museum exhibitions and artifacts.



Naked in Taiwan! Rabbit's Hot Spring Expedition

North Chapter

A Historic Public Bathhouse with Green Sulfuric Pools

龍乃湯浴室

Comic by Tpcat

Long Nice Hot Spring



Today's companions

Ms Monk Parakeet

Ms Owl

Yeah! Hi!

It's a bit hot!

Please remove your clothes to enter!

The space isn't huge!

Did you bring a towel?

The bird duo that loves going to the hot springs after a hike.

This hot spring has been here since the Japanese occupation! It's really old. Should we go?

Oh yes!

That was how the trip was formed.

Long Nice Hot Spring has a rich history and is popular among first-time visitors to nude hot springs. The owner explains everything clearly.



Shower Area

Bathroom

The two pools switch temperatures in the summer.

Hot pool

Warm pool

Lockers

Hairdryers

Shoe rack

Lessons from an Auntie Regular

Before going to Long Nice, I hear the regulars are a bit strict . . .



Scary . . .



The Passionate 46°C Green Sulfur Spring



Interesting Trivia

1

I'm going to cool myself down with a shower.

I wanna go too!

Ah...

Only three faucets.

2

A choir would rather be off-key than have only a few singers in tune. That would be too obvious!

For some reason, I think it reflects something about life.

Loves to sing...

It's amazing to see everyone sitting naked in a row on plastic stools in such a small space.

3

That spider tattoo looks so cool!

Later...

The spider tattoo lady has been in the changing room for a while. Could you ask the owner to check on her?

Huh? OK!

Oh no!

Know your limits in a hot spring.

You can't go into a Japanese onsen with that.

4

Slap slap slap

Whump whump

Thumpa thumpa

Bam Bam Bam

Smack

Whack

Welcome to the Long Nice Percussion Orchestra.

5

An-Imagining-of-Friday-Nights

Kid, come in, 48°C is perfect!

Outsider!

How long can you stand it? Ha!

Ah... O Mighty Regulars...

P-pardon my intrusion...

Imagining? Why don't you just go?

I-I don't think I can handle 48°C.

And what kind of scenario is that? Uh...



The Incense Burner of Lust

A Full English translation is available.

北港香爐 人插

Original Author: Li Ang **Illustrator:** Lau Kwong Shing

Project Planner: Department of Taiwanese Literature, Providence University **Publisher:** Dala Publishing

Date: 10/2022 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

224 pages | 17 x 23 cm **Volume:** 1

Adaptation: Original novel

BFT2.0 Translator: David Knight

This graphic novel adapts Li Ang’s classic Taiwanese political erotic work, reimagining a woman’s rise through a male-dominated political arena. The protagonist Lin Li-Tzu wields her body as a tool of power, successfully becoming a legislator. And yet she remains the target of men’s idle gossip and a source of discomfort for women and feminist groups.

How should society judge a woman who subverts patriarchy through sexuality? If “sexiness” is a performance, are chastity and sorrow not performances as well? Through its bold depiction of Lin’s ascent, downfall, and defiance, this work exposes the uncomfortable truths of society, politics, and human nature—ultimately confronting a provocative question: Can a woman use her body to claim power?



Original Author **Li Ang**

Born in Lukang, Li Ang is a renowned Taiwanese writer and longtime professor at Chinese Culture University. Known for her bold exploration of taboo subjects, sexuality, and power, she has earned international acclaim, with coverage in *The New York Times*, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and *Le Monde*. Her works, including *The Butcher’s Wife*, *Mysterious Garden*, and *Visible Ghosts*, have been published worldwide. Recent fictional projects explore the world of gastronomy. Li Ang’s honors include France’s Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, and Nobel laureate Kenzaburō Ōe hailed her as a leading Chinese woman writer of her era.



Illustrator **Lau Kwong Shing**

Lau Kwong Shing, raised in Kyoto and influenced by local manga culture, studied Fine Arts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He collaborated with Dutch game studio Rusty Lake on *Cube Escape: Paradox*. During the 2019 Hong Kong protests, he created one-page comics for *Ming Pao* and social media, later compiled as *Vanished Hong Kong* (also in French). His silent graphic novel *Fantaisie Ordinaire* uses sheet music instead of text, blending visuals and sound in a unique storytelling style.

A Bold, Taboo-Breaking Adaptation of Li Ang's Classic Novel on Sexuality, Gender, and Politics

by Wen-Cheng Huang

In the years surrounding the lifting of martial law in Taiwan, the literary world was swept by a wave of groundbreaking works that captured the spirit of the era. It was arguably Taiwan's most open period, and Li Ang's *The Incense Burner of Lust* (1997) arrived right on cue. As literary scholar David Der-wei Wang once described, Li Ang was like a "little witch" who cast spells on both the political and literary scenes, ushering in what came to be known as the "Li Ang Phenomenon." Her novel challenged taboos and opened up public discussions around politics, gender, and sexuality—topics rarely addressed with such frankness in Taiwanese literature.

Although written more than 25 years ago, *The Incense Burner of Lust*

remains highly relevant, with its themes still carrying significant power today. Li Ang has continuously pushed boundaries across different eras. Her works often provoke or resist dominant systems, creating waves of cultural impact. She is also open to new interpretations of her writing, welcoming adaptations across different mediums.

This graphic adaptation of *The Incense Burner of Lust* was born out of such openness. It's the result of a cross-generational collaboration between Li Ang and Lau Kwong Shing, a young artist with no direct background in Taiwan's political or literary history. At 32, Lau brings with him a multicultural background shaped by life in Hong Kong, Japan, and China. Often on the margins

of the societies he's lived in, Lau found in manga a space where his fears and dreams could coexist.

His artistic style blends traditional Japanese manga with a profound sense of solitude and introspection—an emotional depth that may arise from his own fragmented upbringing. After immigrating to Japan, Lau gravitated toward hand-drawn comics as a way to explore his inner world and express what words could not. In this manga version of *The Incense Burner of Lust*, his pencil sketches evoke a deeply introspective, often somber visual tone that lingers in the reader's experience.

Lau gained broader recognition with his illustration "An Eye Patch," inspired by the Hong Kong protests, which freshly made him a Hong Kong exile. His art reflects both a micro-level sensitivity and a macro-level vision. Even though he did not live through 1980s Taiwan, Lau captures the essence of Li Ang's novel with striking fluency. His reinterpretation not only offers a new perspective but also mirrors his own worldview shaped by displacement and cultural hybridity.

Through his drawings, the

emotional lives and outer worlds of the characters in *The Incense Burner of Lust* take on new dimensions. His adaptation resonates across generations, while also embedding itself in the broader political and cultural landscape of the Chinese-speaking world.

Now, more than a quarter-century after its original publication, *The Incense Burner of Lust* has been reborn as a manga, reaffirming its place in Taiwanese literary history. Thanks to Lau Kwong Shing's unique lens, this adaptation is likely to introduce a new generation of readers to Taiwanese literature.

At Providence University's Department of Taiwanese Literature, an essential goal has been to broaden readership across generations. Literary adaptations—particularly through visual forms like manga—offer a promising path to achieve this.

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

Wen-Cheng Huang is the department chair of the Department of Taiwanese Literature, Providence University.



TO DANCE LIKE THIS,
SO SEDUCTIVELY—



WHAT KIND OF
DECORUM IS THIS?

GROAN...



IT REALLY IS MORALLY
REPUGNANT.

DON'T FORGET...

SHE WAS PUTTING ON
THIS SEXY DISPLAY.



!!



CLICK!

CLICK!

CLICK!

CLICK!

CLICK!

CLICK!



CLICK!

All alone this lonely night, sheltered by the lamp,
A light breeze touches my face,



Seventeen, eighteen years old, but not yet married,
Dreaming of making a new home.

"Awaiting Spring's Breeze," lyrics by Li Lin-ch'iu and music by Teng Yü-hsien, was released in the 1930s. It had long before been a popular Taiwanese folk song. During the Japanese colonial period, it had been reworked as a military song, and later, due to government policies regarding the Taiwanese language, fallen out of popularity.

All the while she incongruously doing the dance steps from "Awaiting Spring's Breeze."



THIS GROUP OF REPORTERS...

UHH...

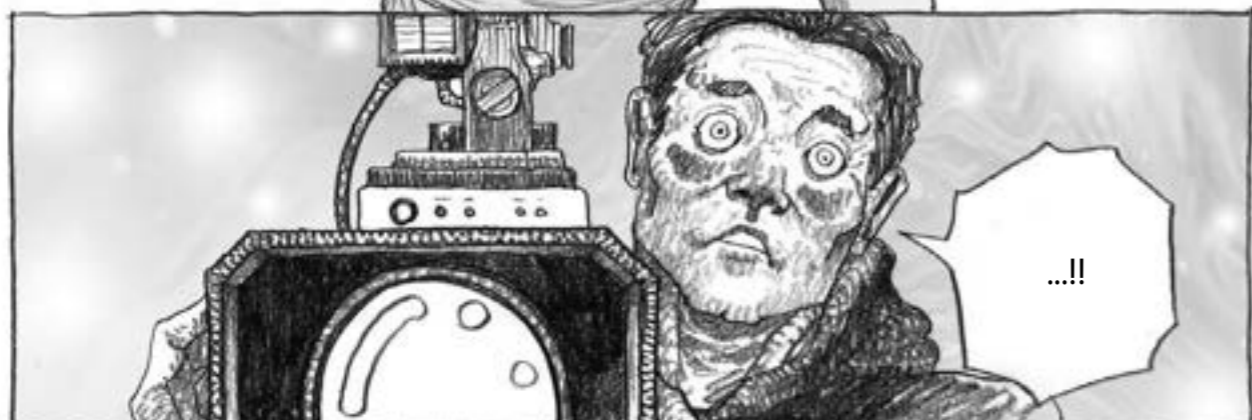
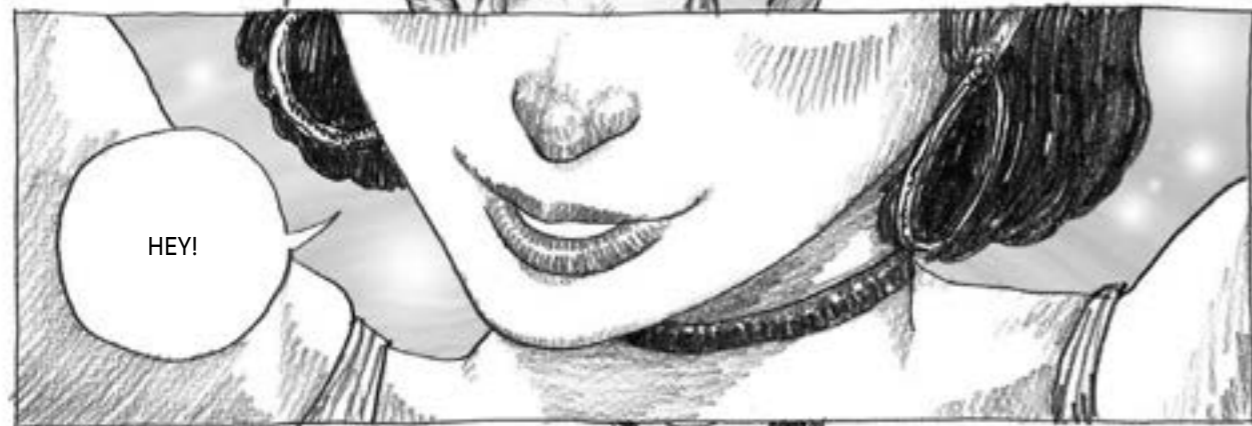


IT HAS TO BE SAID...

THIS IS THE KIND OF SCOOP THAT IS NEWSWORTHY. IT CERTAINLY IS "THE BIG PICTURE."

REPORTERS ALWAYS HAVE A KEEN SENSE TO SMELL OUT WHAT WILL BRING THE RATINGS UP.







Toby King

A Full English translation is available.

Toby King 托比王

Author: NANO HERO **Illustrator:** NANO HERO **Script Consultant:** Wolf Hsu

Publisher: Locus Publishing

Date: 12/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

112 pages | 21 x 28.3 cm **Volume:** 1 (Three-book series, already published one)

Awards: 2025 The 16th Golden Comics Awards, Comic of the Year

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

Toby King is an orange cat—cynical, restless, and fiercely committed to freedom and equality. A singer with a cult following, he draws crowds with his street performances despite the country’s ban on public gatherings. Reminiscent of Nirvana’s Kurt Cobain, Toby is raw and disheveled, singing from the heart about the sorrows of ordinary people.

Toby works as an agent of T.T.L.P.—The Three Little Pigs—always staying one step ahead of the authorities. One day, he is tasked with solving the mystery of Duke Hare’s disappearance. The Duke, leader of the rabbit clan and member of one of the nation’s four founding families, has vanished without a trace, leaving behind a single clue: a bloodstained rabbit’s foot.

Teaming up with his buddy Dave, a pig and gifted inventor, Toby is pulled into a dangerous underworld of strange creatures and a vast conspiracy linking the government to powerful families. With novelist Wolf Hsu serving as script consultant, *Toby King* delivers a tightly paced narrative, an expansive world, and bold, high-impact action. Its dazzling pop aesthetic and incisive social satire define NANO HERO’s distinctive style.



Author **NANO HERO**

NANO HERO, whose real name is Zhihao Huang, was born in 1983 in New Taipei City and now lives in Kaohsiung. At the age of 30, he left his career in the electronics industry to pursue his passion for drawing. His book *Toby King* was six years in the making. Currently, he runs an art store and studio at the Kaohsiung Pier-2 Art Center.



Script Consultant **Wolf Hsu**

Wolf Hsu, a Taiwanese novelist and poet, studied biomedical engineering and now works in publishing. His representative work, *FIX*, was adapted into a television series in 2022. He works long hours, harbors many ambitions despite a thin wallet, and finds bookstores, record shops, and movie theaters intimidating. While he loves telling stories, he is not fond of introducing himself.

The Singular Pop Aesthetic of *Toby King*, a Taiwanese Original

by Heero Chiao

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

At the end of 2024, a boundary-breaking work emerged: *Toby King*. Its creator, NANO HERO, did not come from a formal art background. After turning thirty, he left his job in the electronics industry to pursue drawing full-time. Rather than debuting through conventional comic competitions, he founded his own brand, “NANO HERO,” and began selling illustrated T-shirts. Although he initially had no plan to create comics, he spent six years gradually developing what would become the striking graphic novel *Toby King*. As he once explained, illustrations disappear once sold, but comics allow characters and worlds to endure.

All characters in *Toby King* are animals. The protagonist, Toby, is an

orange cat who opposes an authoritarian regime. As an agent of the privileged organization T.T.L.P. (The Three Little Pigs), he and his partner Dave are assigned to investigate the disappearance of Grand Duke Hare, leader of the rabbit clan—one of the nation’s four great families. Their mission soon spirals into encounters with bizarre creatures, violent conflicts between government and aristocratic families, and the gradual awakening of Toby’s unknown powers.

When evaluating a work, I tend to consider its broader historical and genre context. What sets *Toby King* apart is how it infuses contemporary pop aesthetics into the graphic novel form, resulting in a distinctly Taiwanese original that recalls George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. Like

Orwell’s fable—where pigs overthrow human masters only to become tyrants themselves—stories casting animals as protagonists often serve as incisive satires of humanity. *Toby King* follows this tradition. Toby is a cynical, world-weary antihero, while the power struggles among King Gill, the noble Houses, and The Three Little Pigs deliver pointed political and social critique.

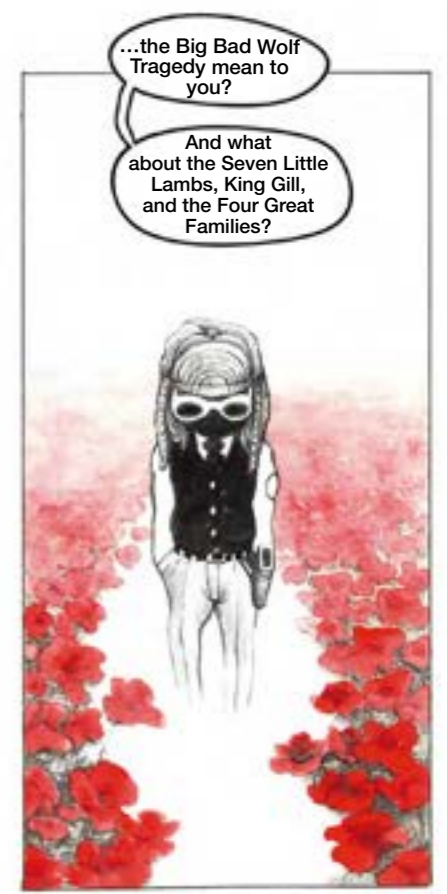
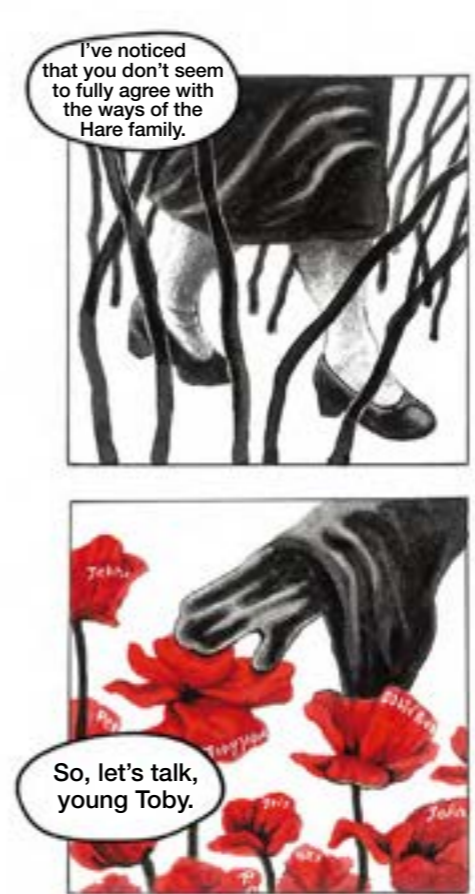
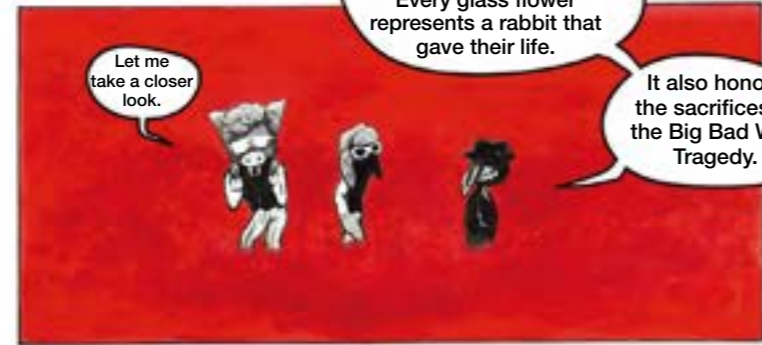
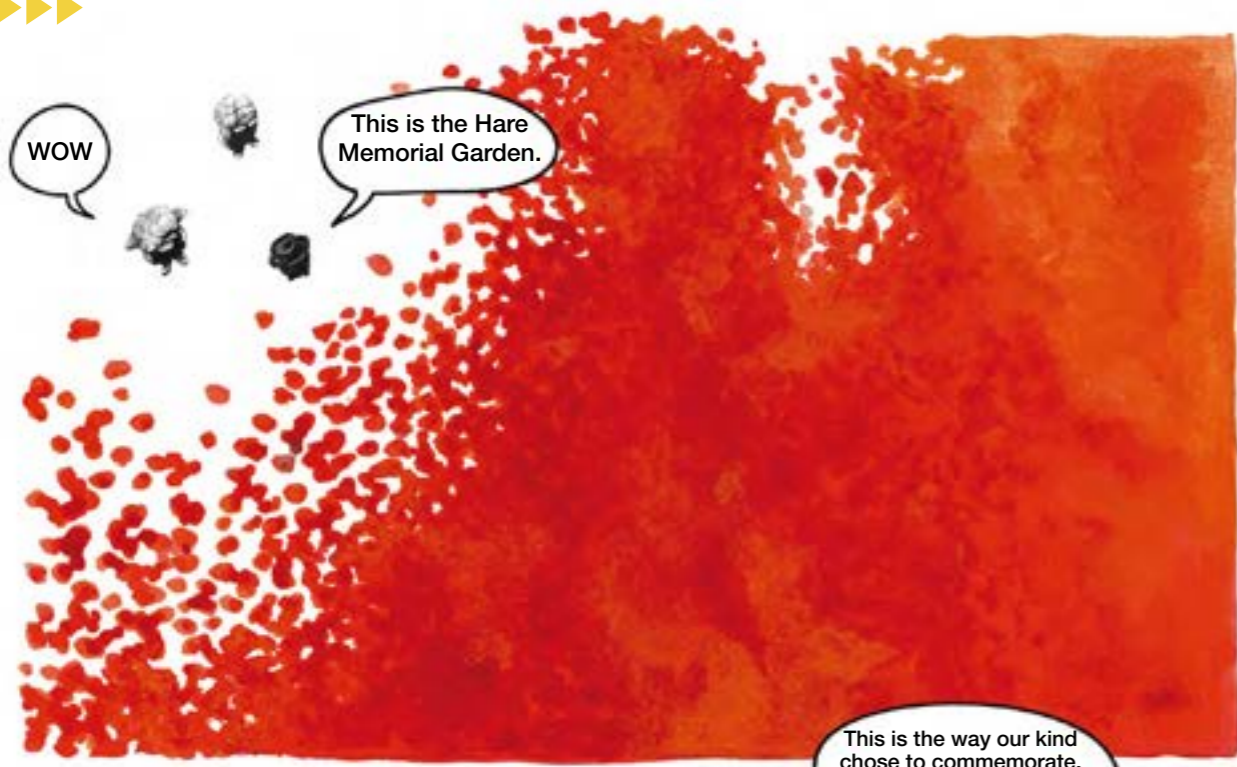
The most memorable part of the first volume is its ruthless portrayal of the rabbit clan’s House Hare. Hare Enterprise controls the nation’s economy, yet its wealth comes from selling cheap canned rabbit meat made from its own kind. News reports describe how the Hare Enterprise funds subsidies to incentivize reproduction. One family produces eighty offspring and trades them for eighty cans of meat. The Hare family claims it sacrificed an entire species to feed the nation, framing it as an act of honor, but the true victims are always the lower-class rabbits. Later, Madame Hare reveals a hidden truth to Toby that swiftly overturns the reader’s moral assumptions. This reversal embodies one of the work’s defining traits: characters initially cast as villains may be profoundly reshaped

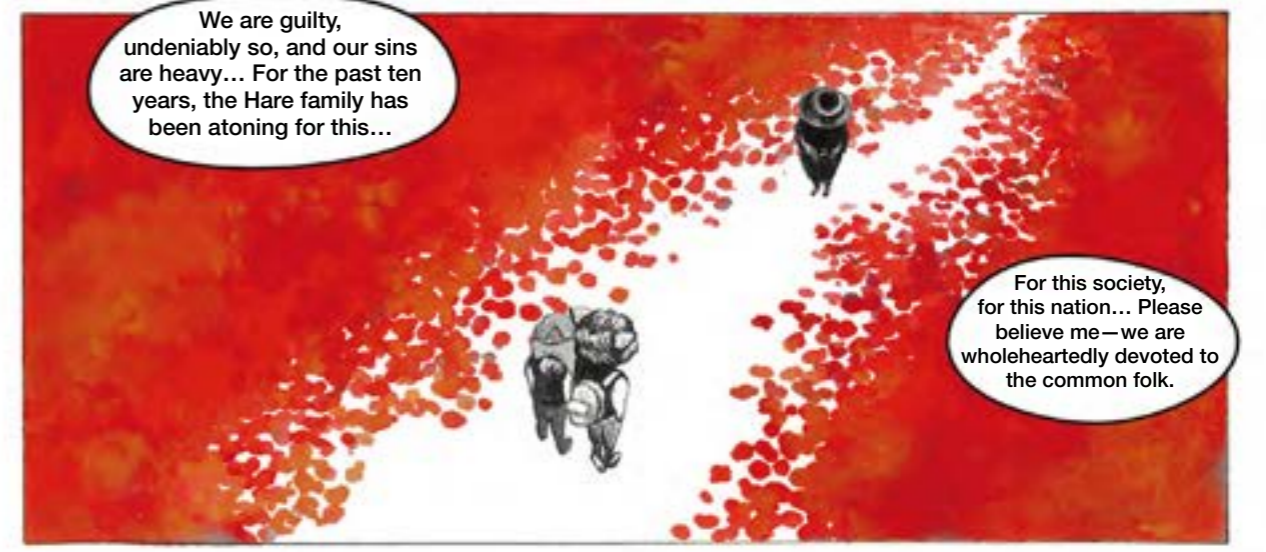
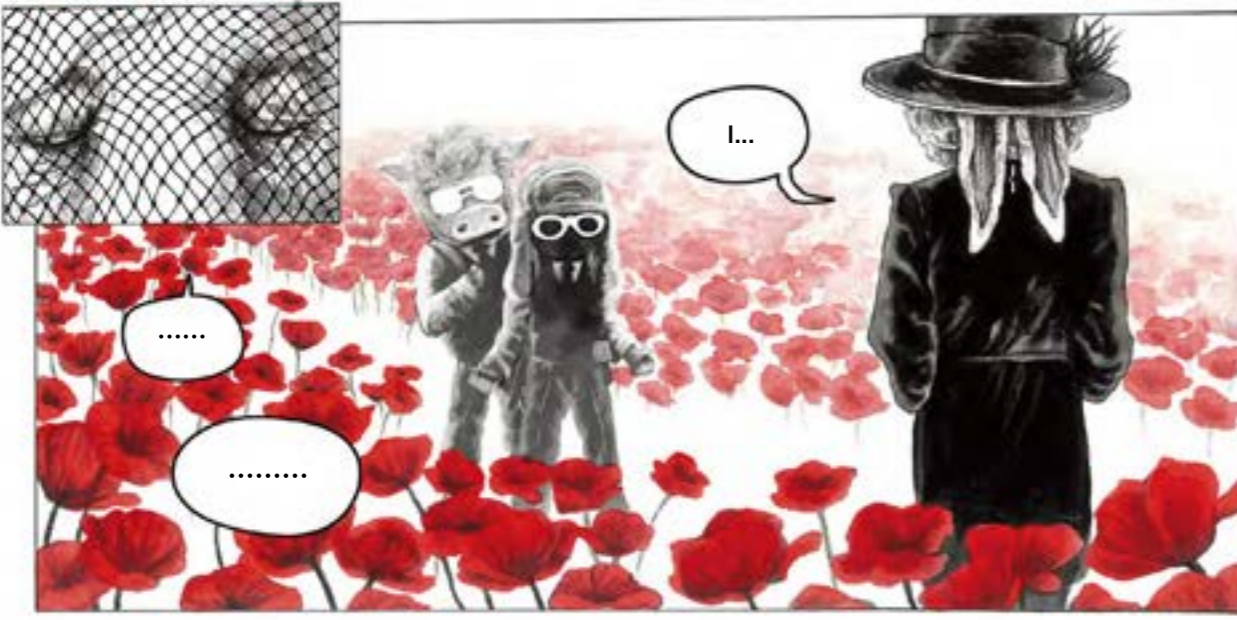
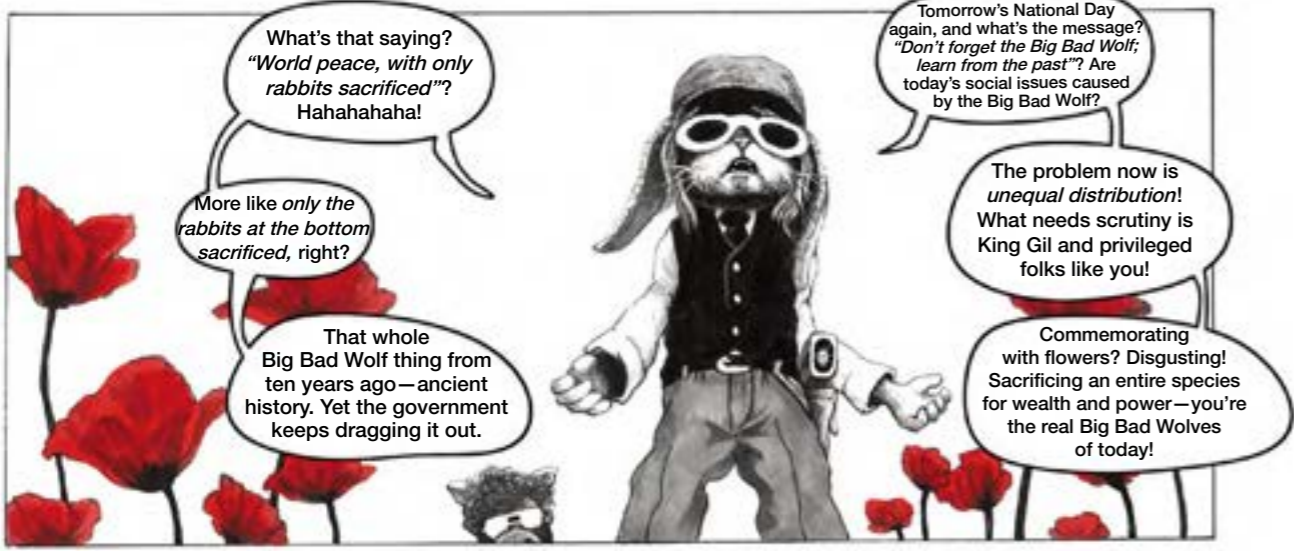
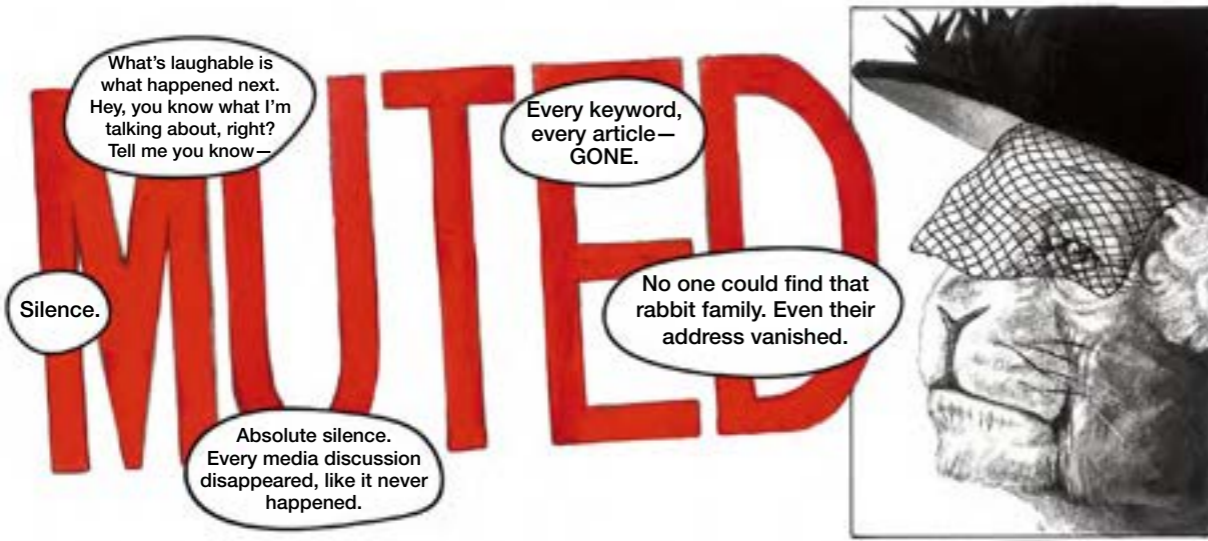
through alternative perspectives.

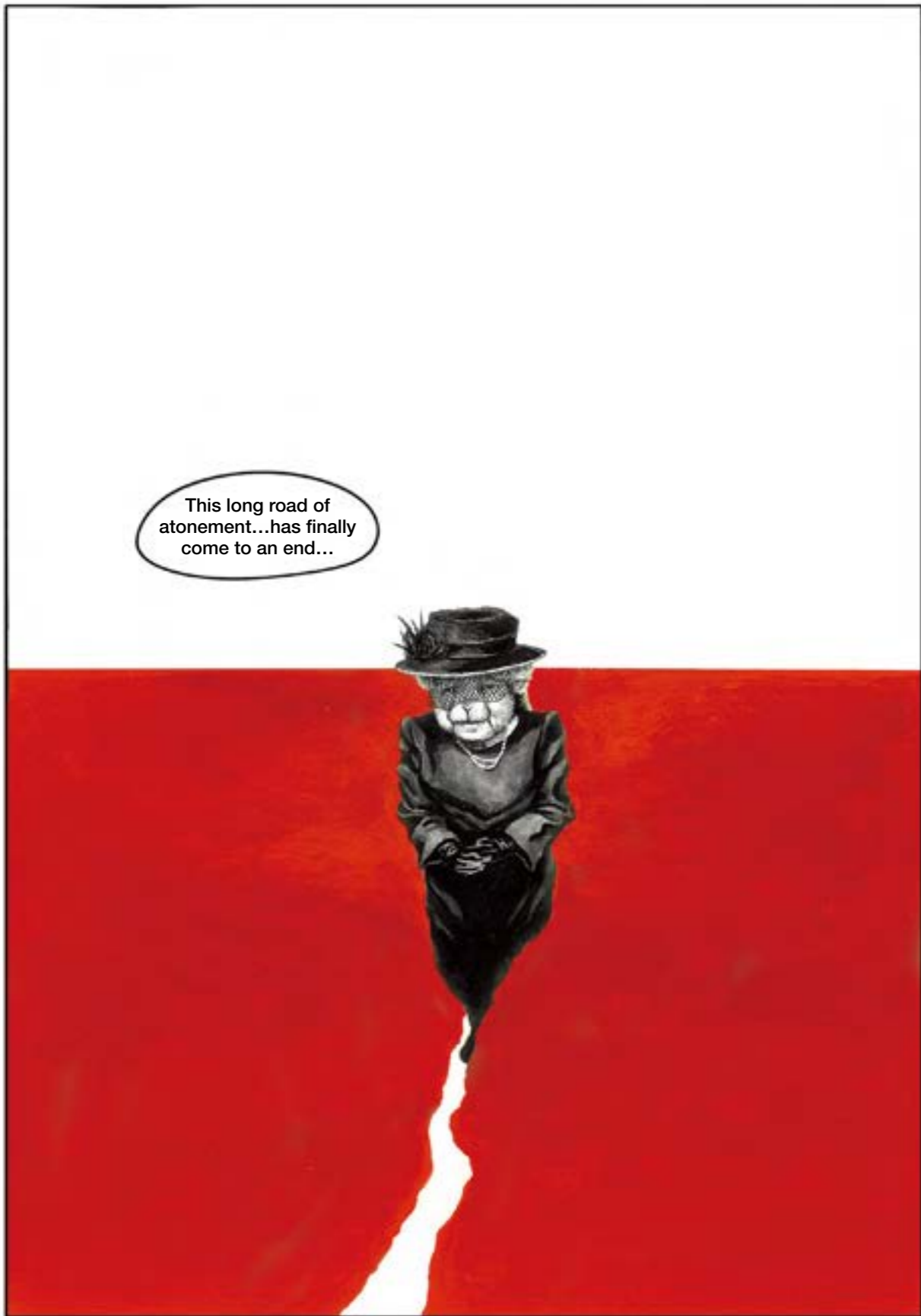
The narrative also repeatedly references the Big Bad Wolf Tragedy, a devastating era caused by a monstrous dictator. Although National Day celebrates liberation from that past, the current regime under King Gill continues to label dissenters as remnants of the Big Bad Wolf. In so doing, the regime manufactures a false peace. While the story does not explicitly use Taiwanese cultural symbols, Taiwanese readers will undoubtedly sense its resonance. Perhaps the shared thread running through today’s diverse Taiwanese comics lies here: creators strive to balance compelling storytelling and entertainment while remaining attentive to our land’s past, present, and future—charting a path uniquely their own amid the dominance of Japanese and Korean styles.

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

Heero Chiao is a member of the association Crime Writers of Taiwan, a columnist on Japanese and Korean dramas, films, and football, and an editor specializing in Taiwanese fiction.







This long road of atonement...has finally come to an end...



I hope T.T.L.P. can witness the Hare family's final chapter. I'm sorry for all the trouble I've caused...

I'm sorry.

So sorry...

The conversation ended with Lady Hare repeatedly apologizing, but I felt her apologies weren't directed at us...



Secret Whispers

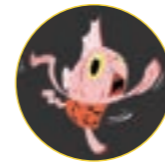
A Full English translation is available.

秘密耳語

Author: Fish Wang **Illustrator:** Chimney Elves (Yu-sheng Lin, Hsuan-ting Wang, Kai-ting Yang, Hiho Lin, Shuwei, FallinTa) **Publisher:** Locus Publishing
Date: 12/2020 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw
 112 pages | 19 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1 (Three-book series, already published two)
BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

An android boy named Secret must hide his true identity: he's a superweapon created by the state to fight terrifying monsters. But when he's not on the battlefield defeating enemies, he lives undercover as an ordinary elementary school student. Bullied by classmates and shunned by teachers for being different, this boy assumes life will always be this lonely. But one day, a newcomer just as unusual joins his class. At first, Secret believes he has finally found a friend—but the truth proves far more complicated.

Set against a richly imaginative sci-fi backdrop, this story is an exploration of a boy's budding self-consciousness. The painful and awkward journey of coming of age unfolds alongside extraordinary adventures.



Author Fish Wang

Born in 1971 in Taipei, Taiwan, Fish Wang has worked in animation since 1987. A multidisciplinary artist, he also creates picture books, short stories, and three-dimensional sculptures. He has served as planner and editor for comic magazines *TAIWAN COMIX (TX)* and *Graphic Fiction (GF)*.

Wang's works span comics, fiction, illustrated books, and animation. Notable comics include *Goldfish LOVE Dream Road*, *Jack & The Beanstalk*, and *Secret Whispers*. His illustrated books include *Scenery of the Dim Path* and *The Traveler Cat's Carry-on Luggage*. In animation, his short films *Goldfish* and *Red Tail* have won top awards, and *The Ghosts of the Dim Path* qualified for Academy Award submission.



Illustrator Chimney Elves

Chimney Elves are creators based at Chimney Animation, which was established in 2018. It aims to produce high-quality Taiwanese animated works and develop cultural and creative merchandise. The company's founder, Fish Wang, possesses over 30 years of industry experience. With a distinctive style, he strives to differentiate the company by developing unique story content and innovative projects.

A Rogue Beast in Disguise as a Classic Hero: Reflections on *Secret Whispers*

by Zhi-Xiang You

One of the greatest pitfalls in storytelling is when an author imposes a black-and-white view on their work, attempting to persuade or influence the reader. The true power of a narrative lies in its ability to present complex, conflicting, and multifaceted situations, inviting the audience to think deeply, reflect, and empathize. *Secret Whispers* exemplifies this mastery of layered storytelling.

In *Secret Whispers 1*, the protagonist is a robot named Secret. On the surface, he looks like an ordinary elementary school student, innocent and unassuming. Yet, in reality, he is the nation's ultimate weapon, repeatedly facing and defeating terrifying monsters sent by enemy nations. Despite being armed with world-ending weaponry,

Secret's personal life is filled with uncertainty and doubt. Bullied by classmates and often misunderstood or ignored by teachers, he wrestles with self-doubt. Though capable of annihilating monsters in a single strike, he worries that, aside from his combat skills, he possesses no other talents, and fears growing up to become useless in society.

The story takes an unexpected turn in *Secret Whispers 2*. Secret's encounter with the transfer student Chialin. At first, it appears to be a moment of friendship or even redemption. Yet with shifting perspectives, the narrative reveals Chialin comes from an enemy nation. Her internal struggles and motivations point to the irony and contradictions in Secret's very existence. What seems like a

classic robot-versus-monster in a classic Japanese live-action special effects style becomes a dark, politically charged story, where moral ambiguity, conflict, and ethical dilemmas are intertwined, building tension after tension.

Indeed, who defines what is "justice" or who is truly "evil"? The story challenges simplistic notions of good and bad. Both nations may have reasons to fight. The narrative captures not only the conflict between countries but also the tensions within schools, governments, and communities. Loyalty is demanded from all, and any dissent is labeled as enemy brainwashing. When the pursuit of war outweighs the genuine welfare of a nation, who, in truth, is the enemy? Secret's creators believe "as long as we keep winning, the war will never end," while Chialin's homeland pours resources into crafting flashy monsters, waging continuous attacks, yet losing sight of the original purpose of their struggle. The escalating conflict leads Secret to question himself, his country, and even

his enemies, creating a web of moral ambiguity and layered dilemmas.

Through its portrayal of internal and external conflicts, moral contradictions, and the blurred lines between friend and foe, *Secret Whispers* captivates readers with its intricate plotting and deeply thought-provoking themes. It is a story that challenges readers to question not only the characters' actions but also their own assumptions about loyalty, justice, and the true nature of conflict.

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

Zhi-Xiang You is a literary industry professional and avid reader who draws inspiration from both text and imagery. He believes that reading can foster meaningful connections and serves as a community editor for image3: a Visual Language Space. Currently, You is the Image Community Project Editor at Locus Publishing.



Curse you, monsters! I'll make you pay!

Ahh...



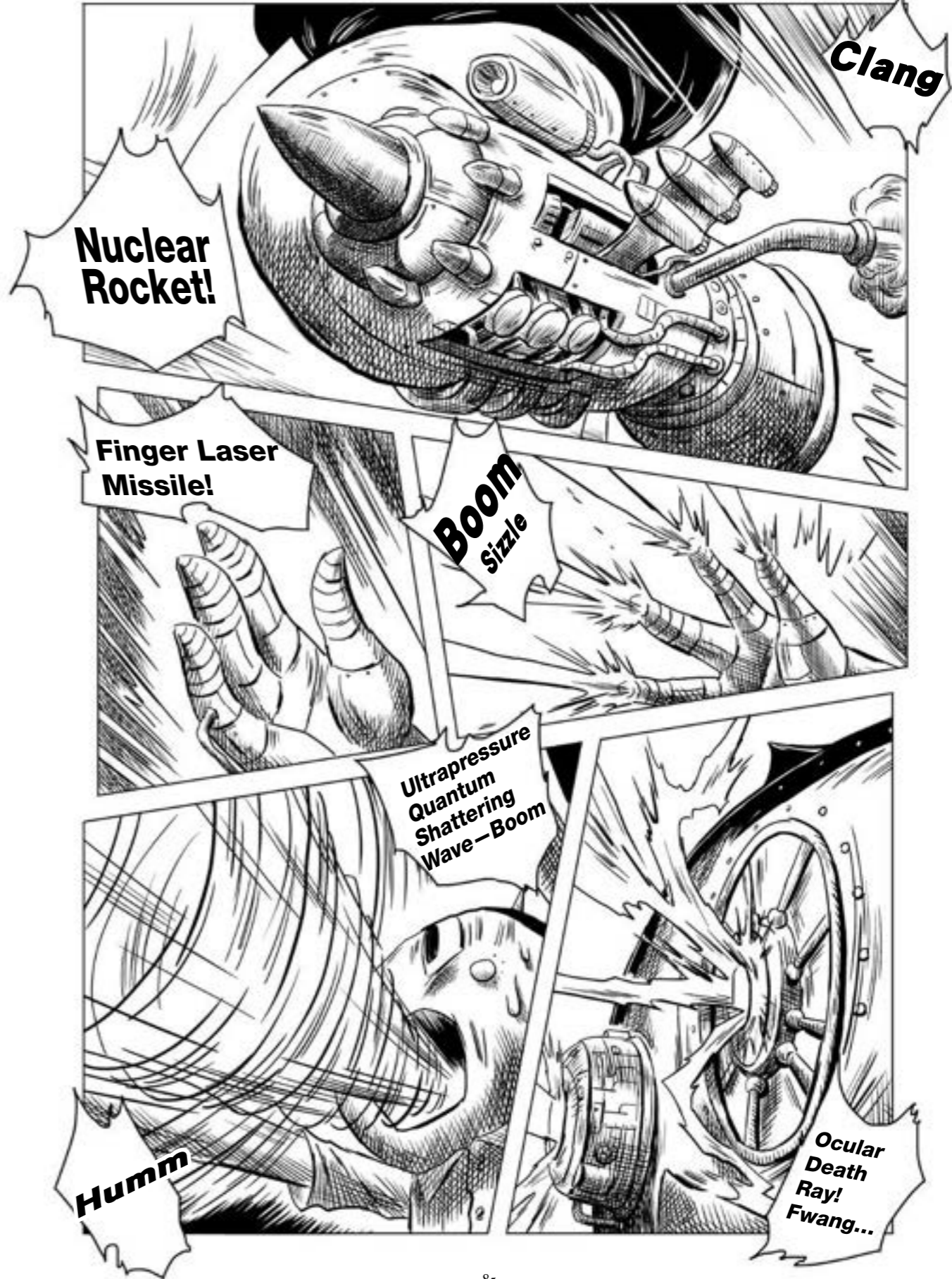
Swish—
swoosh



Hypersonic Machine Gun!

Spark Bomb!
Clack clack clack!

Electric Hyperalloy Saw—
whirr!



Nuclear Rocket!

Clang

Finger Laser Missile!

Boom
Sizzle

Ultrapressure Quantum Shattering Wave—Boom

Humm

Ocular Death Ray!
Fwang...



**This is
payback!
Supersonic!
Mach
Hellspin!**

Sizzle

**Photon
Death
Punch!**

**Sizzle
Whoosh**

Maybe they all hate me because they don't understand me... but they are all people that I protect! Maybe... maybe one day, when they all understand, they'll stop hating me so much.



Wow...
so much meat!



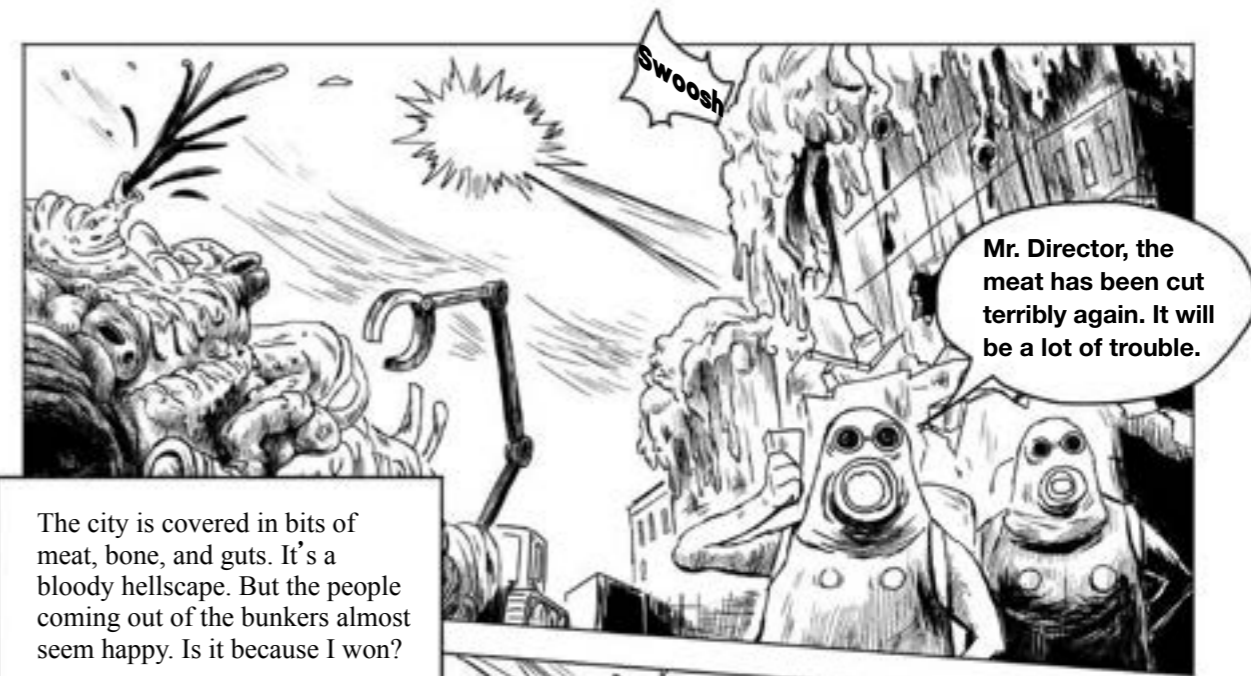
Looks
delicious.

Tender
and juicy!



It's our lucky day!
Get ready to go
to the store!

Fantastic!
Get it while
it's fresh!



Mr. Director, the
meat has been cut
terribly again. It will
be a lot of trouble.

The city is covered in bits of
meat, bone, and guts. It's a
bloody hellscape. But the people
coming out of the bunkers almost
seem happy. Is it because I won?



I got one big
piece right on my
balcony. I should
just take it.

Don't do that. It could
give you food poisoning
if you don't have the guild
inspect it.

I wave to everyone in the air,
but everybody ignores me.
No need to thank me for
avenging us.



Chirp
chirp—

Screech—



The Unseen Train

A Full English translation is available.

神秘列車

Original Author: Yao-ming Kan **Comic Scriptwriter:** Seal Hsieh **Comic Artist:** Sen

Publisher: Fisfisa Media

Date: 01/2025 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

Adaptation: Original novel

BFT2.0 Translator: Will Buckingham

Grandpa told me a story from when he was young: he rode a train that didn't appear on any schedule. This "unseen train" takes you to the lands of your dreams. Years ago, while deep in the mountains producing camphor, this impossible train stopped at a tiny, forgotten station to bring him home to his gravely ill wife.

But then Grandpa vanished for over twenty years. No one in our family spoke of his journey, and the unseen train never returned. Driven by the mystery, I searched tirelessly at that station, determined to find the train that cannot be found.

The Unseen Train is a graphic novel adaptation of Yao-ming Kan's short story by the same name. Danger, suspense, and a sense of the surreal intertwine in this tale of a man's search for a man's lost youth. Clues reveal themselves layer by layer, as Kan brings us into contact with the tragic shadows of Taiwan's White Terror period.



Original Author **Yao-ming Kan**

Yao-ming Kan is a novelist who was born in Miaoli County, Taiwan in 1972. His novels and collections of short stories include *The Unseen Train*, *The School of Water Sprites*, *Otter that Lost its Mother*, *Killing Ghosts*, *A Funeral Story*, *Pangcah Girl*, and *General Winter's Summer*.



Comic Scriptwriter **Seal Hsieh**

A full-time scriptwriter of comics, Seal Hsieh loves suspenseful thrillers and romcoms. Hsieh's representative works include *Seven Days to Live*, *BLOODY MAN* comic series and *Good Morning, How About Some Positivity?*



Comic Artist **Sen**

Sen has a passion for illustration, design, and theater. Driven by a love of experimentation, Sen explores a variety of storytelling forms and styles, continually pushing the boundaries of comic creation. Her representative works include *No Criminal Facts*, *Playing in a Dream*, *Waking from a Dream*, and *Insomnia Diary*.

The White Terror: An Introduction to Taiwan's Era of Suppression, Fear, and Collective Anxiety

by Jui-Chiang Su

The term “White Terror” is believed to have originated during the French Revolution, referring to violent reprisals carried out by supporters of the conservative Bourbon monarchy—whose emblematic color was white—against the revolutionary Jacobins. In postwar Taiwan, the White Terror referred to the suppression of leftist and communist elements by the right-wing Kuomintang (KMT) authorities. Yet the KMT’s targets extended beyond communists to include Taiwanese independence advocates, pro-democracy activists, and anyone deemed unacceptable by the authorities due to their speech or political stance.

Taiwan’s martial law period began in May 1949, when the KMT declared martial law, and lasted until its lifting in 1987. The laws associated with martial law were formally repealed by the Legislative Yuan in 1991. Only after these changes did the White Terror truly come to an end, and people no longer were prosecuted for speech-related “rebellion” by the authorities.

During the White Terror, numerous injustices and violations occurred,

including unlawful arrests, torture, and illegal confiscation of property. Even after release from detention, individuals could remain under surveillance by intelligence authorities.

The White Terror inflicted direct harm not only on political prisoners but also on their families, who became another form of victim. For the general populace, the constant fear of punishment created collective anxiety. To protect themselves, people often acted out of self-interest and were reluctant to engage in public affairs. This collective mindset inevitably had a long-term negative impact on society’s development.

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

Jui-Chiang Su currently teaches at the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Culture at the National Taipei University of Education. Su’s research focuses on postwar Taiwanese history, with expertise in state violence, democratic movements, and liberal thought.

“He Seemed to Have Become an Outsider In This World”: Reflections from the Artist On The Heartbreak of Creating This Book

by Sen

Creating this book has been a remarkable journey that I will not forget. When I first saw the passages about the grandson and grandfather often taking the train together, it reminded me of my own childhood. I spent many weekends in kindergarten riding the train back and forth between Yilan and Taipei with my mother. Along the way, we would look at the sea and tell stories. The landscapes from those memories have quietly found their way into this book.

What moved me most during the drawing process was portraying the grandfather, a political prisoner during the White Terror. When he finally returned home, he discovered that his wife and the friends who had known his life best had already passed away. Watching his children start families of their own, he seemed to have become an

outsider in this world. Everything felt so unfamiliar. I found such a situation deeply heartbreaking.

While researching, I often found it unbearable to look directly at the old photographs and the records of inhumane punishments. It truly caused me pain. Yet it is precisely because of this work that we can document, in story form, the fragments of life experienced by political prisoners during the White Terror. As descendants, we must learn to listen to and record these stories—not to dwell on the cruelty and hatred of the past, but to remain vigilant, face mistakes, let go of the hurt, and confront the future.

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



The image has stayed with me.



Back then, your Grandma's hairstyle was short and stylish. With all her strength, she pulled open the window.



And the wind wrapped her...



...In a flurry of ginger lily blossom.







When Dad left, I was still small, so I didn't really remember him.



Only after that did I understand...



This was the only way that Dad, hiding out in the mountains distilling camphor, could get to see his family.



Remnants of Love

A Full English translation is available.

愛過的廢物

Author: Pei-Hsiu Chen **Illustrator:** Pei-Hsiu Chen **Publisher:** Faces Publishing

Date: 01/2025 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

BFT2.0 Translator: Evian Pan

Renowned artist Pei-Hsiu Chen peels back the layers of city life to reveal the subtle shifts in our intimate relationships, attachments to old possessions, and everyday encounters. An intimate archive of the modern soul, *Remnants of Love* bridges the gap between the visible world and our deepest, unspoken feelings.

With a masterly touch and distinct gaze, Chen transforms the passage of time in urban settings into a visual narrative of repair and reflection. In a world defined by change, this book serves as a distinct anchor. A work of startling honesty, this book invites every reader to see their own life reflected in its pages. In a life of impermanence, the smallest memories still hold immense weight.



Author **Pei-Hsiu Chen**

Pei-Hsiu Chen served as an archaeological illustrator at Academia Sinica, Taiwan's premier research institute, before transitioning to a full-time freelance career. Her work has appeared across magazines, newspapers, and picture books. A decorated artist, she has been shortlisted twice for the Prize for Young Talent at the Angoulême International Comics Festival and twice for the 3x3 International Illustration Awards. Her graphic novel, *For the Time Being*, is also available in French.

Tracing Time in Ordinary Life: A Consummate Artist on Relationships, Memory, and Everyday Intimacy

by Ali Ginger
translated by Evian Pan

Remnants of Love's quiet maturity lends each seemingly ordinary story a subtle depth and resonance. Whether it is the tangled relationships of urban life, the emotional attachment to old possessions, or the fleeting moments that slowly fade with time, Chen records these inner shifts with a distinct point of view and true honesty. Through her drawings, we glimpse both the visible world and the unseen layers shaped by time and feeling. Each page seems to remind us that even in a life filled with impermanence and change, the smallest memories, feelings, and moments still hold immense meaning. When I read her work, I can't help but smile and think, "I've felt the same way."

In the city, every interaction

between people carries both anticipation and distance. Changes in tangible objects trace the passage of time and mirror emotional conflict and repair; once-treasured things may fade in importance, yet at times still carry the weight of memory. In these seemingly insignificant details of daily life, there are endless layers of meaning waiting to be uncovered. To me, Chen's work offers a deeply personal reflection on everyday life, emotional connection, and reality itself. It is not only a feast for the eyes but also a quiet resonance of the soul. As a fellow artist, I have full respect for her work.

In *Remnants of Love*, perhaps the chapters "A Nice Day" and "Outsider" left the deepest impression on me. The

former captures fleeting yet beautiful moments of weather, objects, memory, and emotion. With a light touch and quiet depth, it reflects on how we locate ourselves within these passing scenes—like sunlight revealing the tender interplay of shadow and radiance, tinged with gentle melancholy.

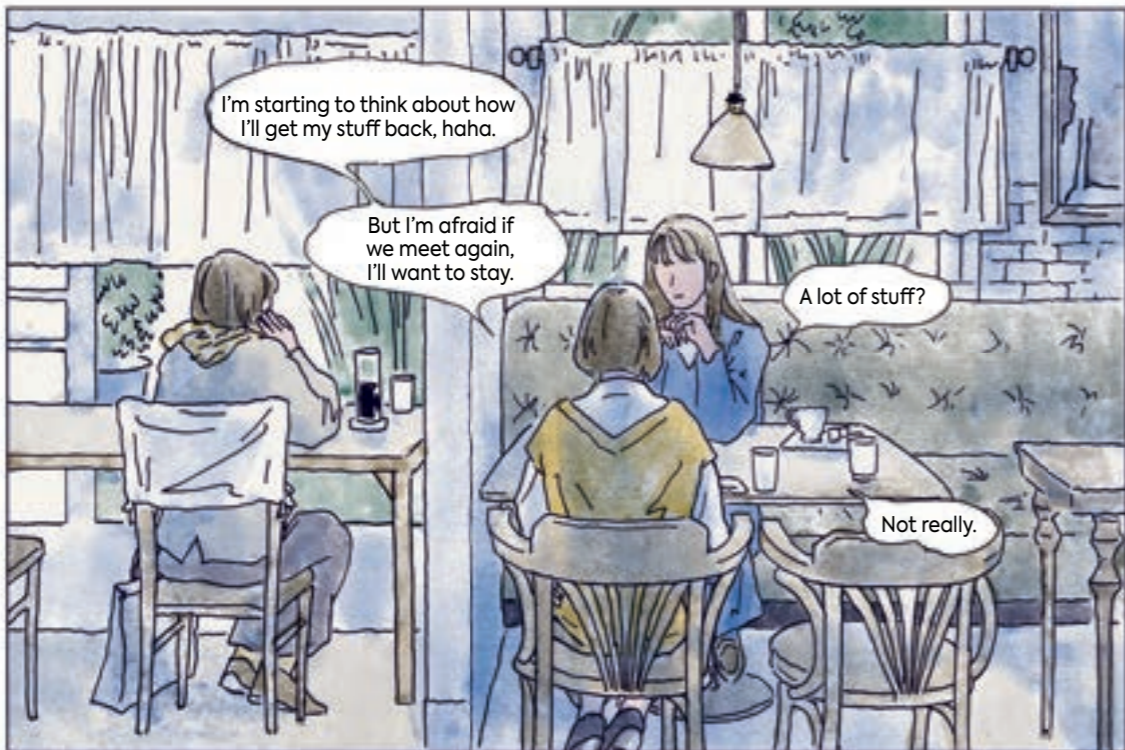
"Outsider," in contrast, opens with news of global conflict and humanitarian crisis, headlines that quietly weigh on the heart. As the story shifts to casual conversation and grocery errands, it exposes a quiet contradiction of modern life: even amid turmoil, we find solace in the ordinary, using small routines to soothe the weight of a restless world. This subdued current of feeling runs through our days, a faint but defining trace of our times.

The remaining stories, whether through close attention to everyday detail or quiet insight into emotion, reveal the characters' genuine inner struggles. Chen captures the subtleties of daily life with honesty, prompting us to reflect on how we seek balance and comfort in a shifting world. Her work reminds me to return to my surroundings, to act with

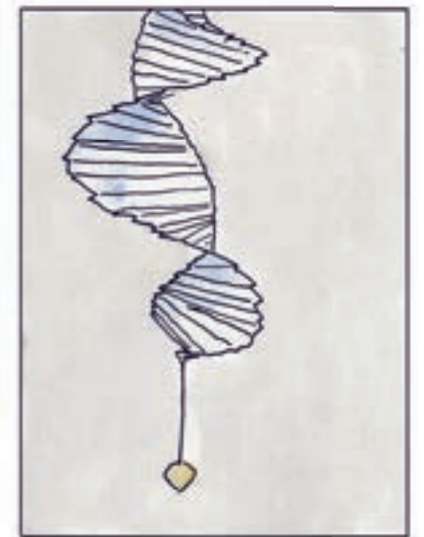
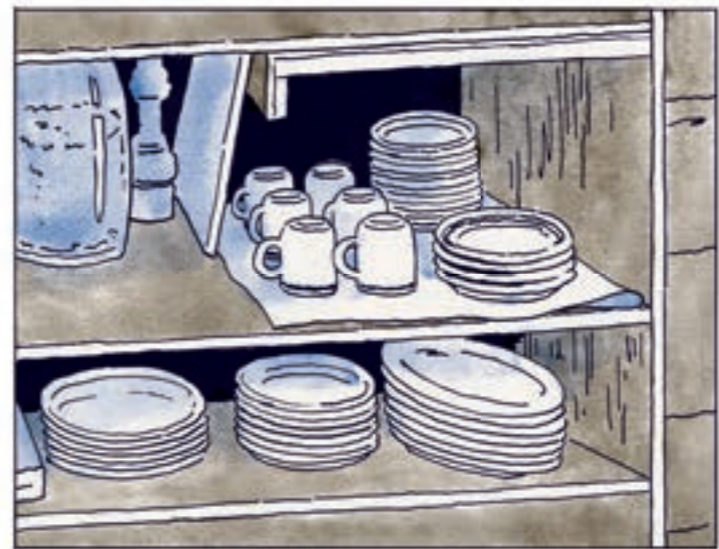
empathy and restraint, observing from the right distance, where understanding and release become possible. These struggles are familiar to many: a quiet dissatisfaction with the present that creates a subtle disconnection from others. Yet that very distance, like the chill of cold seasons, can also lead us inward, guiding us toward a steadier sense of self.

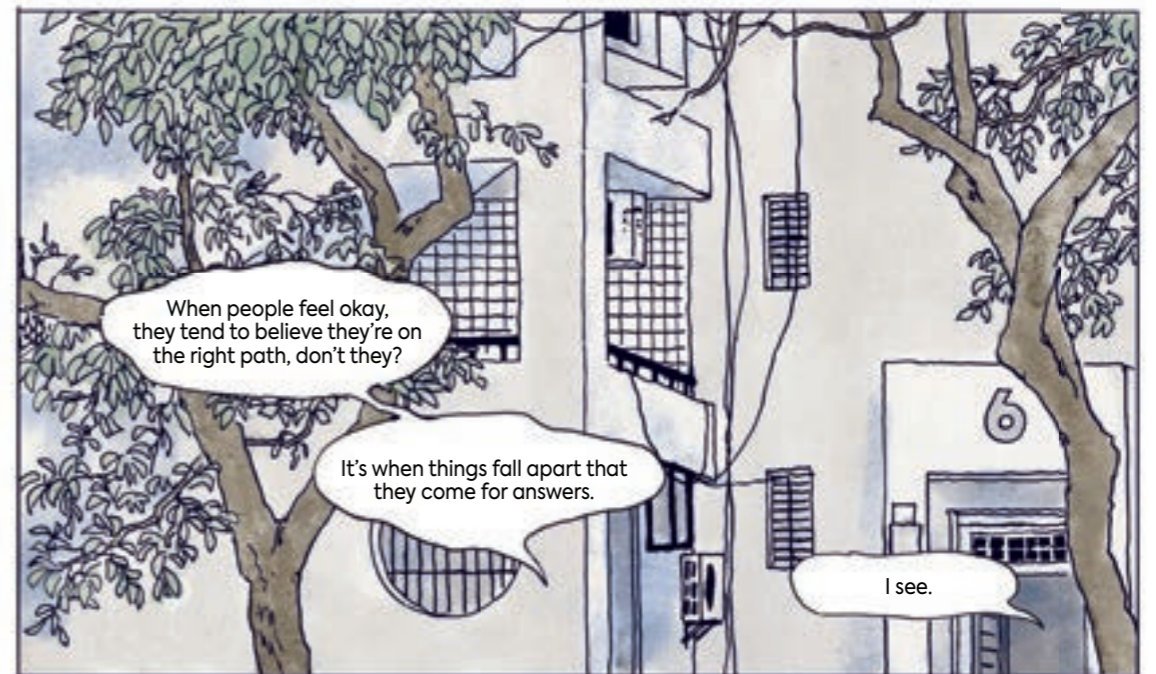
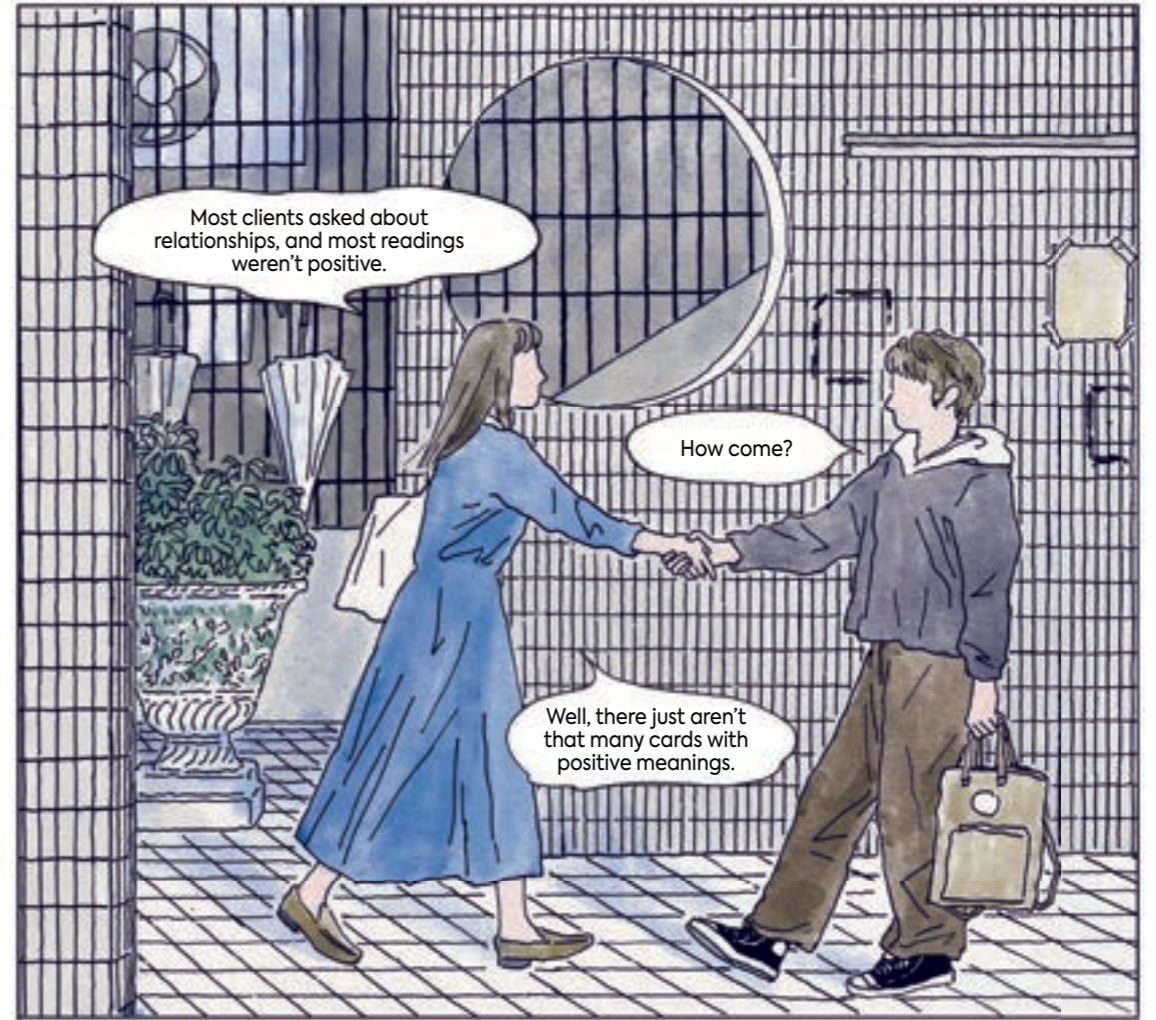
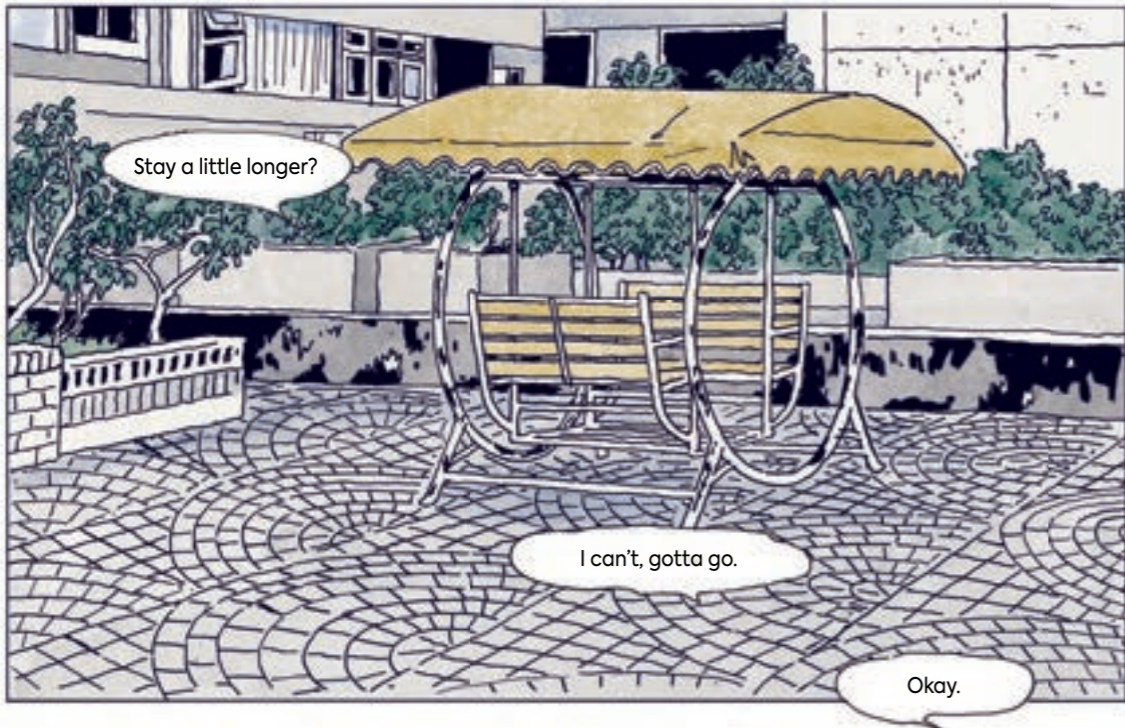
Whether you are drawn to the intricacies of human relationships or the deeper exploration of emotional state, *Remnants of Love* offers a tender, contemplative journey of the heart. With her delicate precision and sensitivity, Chen captures both the sweetness and the sorrow of everyday life, finding a quiet warmth within the everyday moments we all share.

Ali Ginger is a freelance illustrator who, as a child, loved drawing more than practicing the piano. She is an Arsenal F.C. football fan and lives just five minutes from the Pacific coast. Her work has received international acclaim, including awards from the U.S. 3x3 International Illustration Show and selection for the Bologna Children's Book Fair.



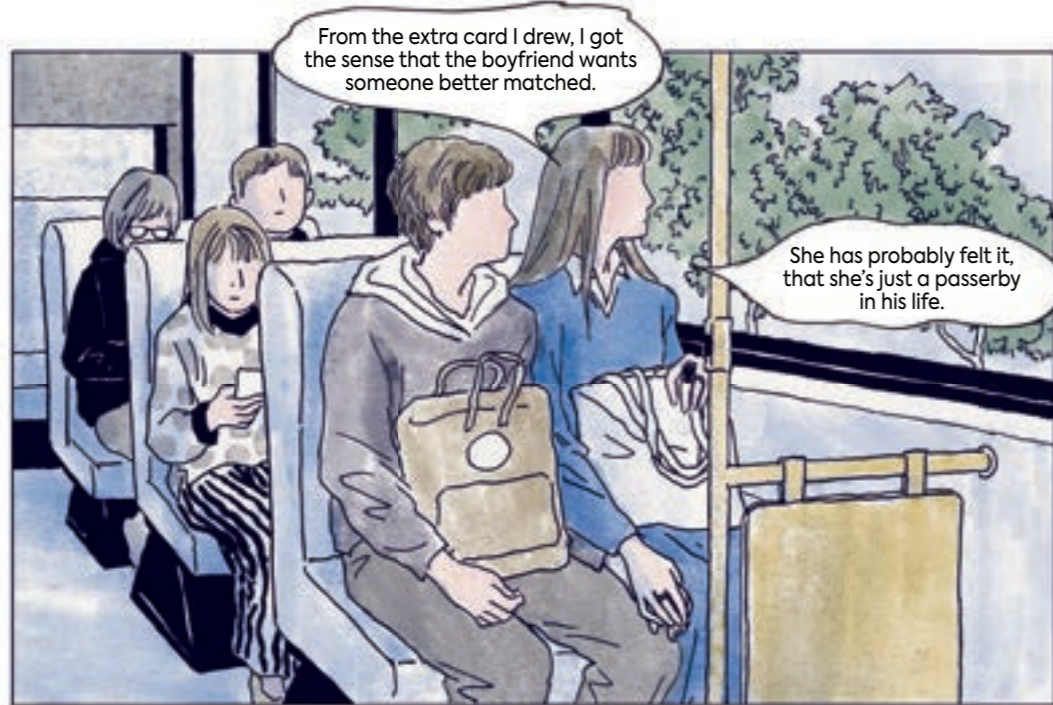
Sure.







Some don't hear what they want, so they keep asking. But that makes the process meaningless.



From the extra card I drew, I got the sense that the boyfriend wants someone better matched.

She has probably felt it, that she's just a passerby in his life.



Cruel, but that's how it is. Adults, weighing what fits.



Am I a passerby, too?

You're a fly.

Next time you'll read the cards for me. I'm getting off.

Bye.





Where Have the Giantdogs Gone?

A Full English translation is available.

大犬呢？還剩多少

Author: AAA-Bao (Lin Ying Ying) **Illustrator:** AAA-Bao (Lin Ying Ying)

Publisher: AAA-Bao (Lin Ying Ying)

Date: 09/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

144 pages | 14.8 x 20.3 cm **Volume:** 1 (Ongoing, Four-book series)

BFT2.0 Translator: Lin King

After a cataclysmic radiation event, all animals undergo a startling transformation: they grow to a massive scale and gain the power of speech. For pet-loving humans, this change is deeply personal: their beloved dogs and cats are now giants who can talk.

Humans split into two groups: those who want to protect the now-giant animals, and those who want to eliminate them. Social upheaval ensues. While some heart-stricken humans fight to protect their animals, a government-sanctioned army begins a campaign of extermination.

Created by renowned independent artist and publisher AAA-Bao, this companion to *Between Islands* and *Goodbye, Big Cats* follows the dogs' perilous journey to find new homes and rebuild their lives. Told in part from the nonhuman animals' perspectives, this lushly illustrated story explores the fragile bond between humans and non-human animals and the process of rebuilding an identity due to persecution and forced emigration.



Author **AAA-Bao** (Lin Ying Ying)

Artist and independent publisher AAA-Bao combines her background in animation with a passion for storytelling and a deep love for animals. Since dedicating herself to comics in 2021, she has built a following for her poignant, animal-led stories. Her work has been featured on the Creative Comic Collection's manga channel. She is currently working on *Searching for Dogs* and *After the Stone Bridge*, the latest books in the shared universe as her other published graphic novels, *Goodbye Big Cats*, *Between Islands*, and *Where Have the Giantdogs Gone?*

When the Calendar Stopped and We Said Goodbye: AAA-Bao's Dazzling and Inventive World of Giant Creatures

by Wen-Chien Hsu

The stunning premise of creator AAA-Bao's world is this: after a strange flash of light, all animals grow in size and acquire human-like intelligence, plunging humanity into fear and chaos.

Where Have the Giantdogs Gone? expands upon AAA-Bao's inventive world of *Goodbye Big Cats*, in which hunted cats flee in mass exodus. But unlike the cats, who now live in the wilderness, the dogs are reluctant to leave. Anchored by a sense of dependence and loyalty, they try to stay with their humans. This story is not only about survival after catastrophe, but about companionship and the pain of letting go.

The protagonist Chuo Ching and her two dogs Heihei and Hamidew rely on each other in an increasingly hostile

world, striving to preserve fragments of everyday life—walks, meals, embraces. Throughout the comic, the recurring motif of a calendar marked with daily checklists—walk the dog? feed the dog?—serves as both a testament to their love and a somber record of time slipping away.

When danger draws near, they finally receive help: a crested serpent eagle arrives to carry the dogs toward safety. But at the last moment, the Indigenous community that had promised them refuge refuses to let humans accompany their animals. To ensure that Heihei and Hamidew can escape, humans stay behind. As the eagle spreads its wings, the dogs look back one last time. The dogs disappear into the sky. In the

comic, the calendar ends on the day that the dogs part from the humans.

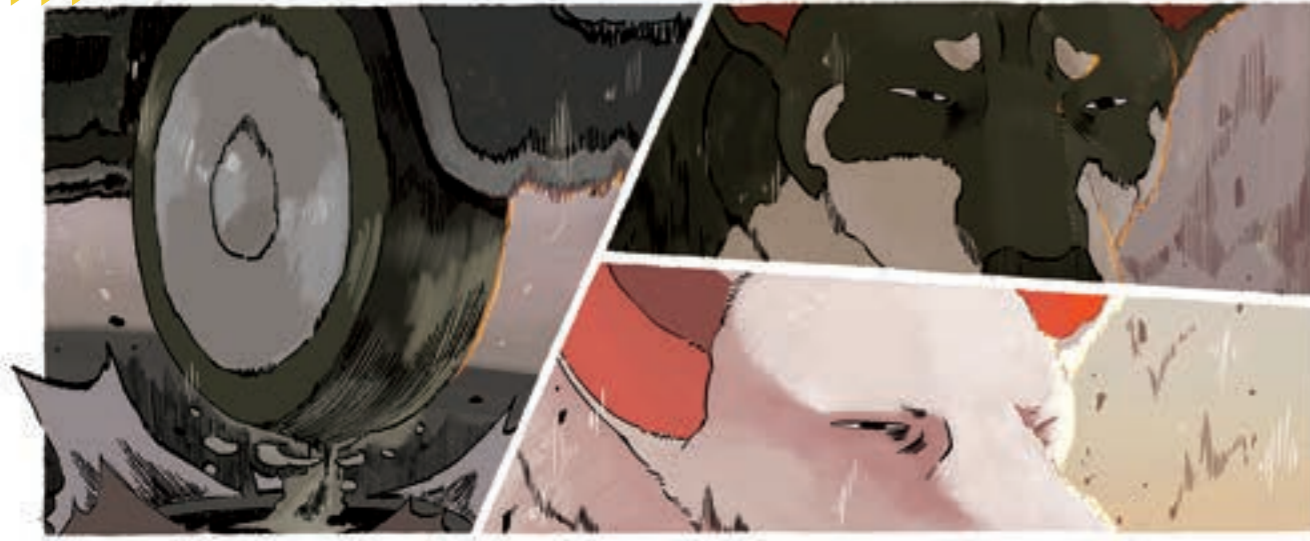
From that moment on, humans are no longer the caretakers of their animal companions. The Giantdogs must learn to live on their own.

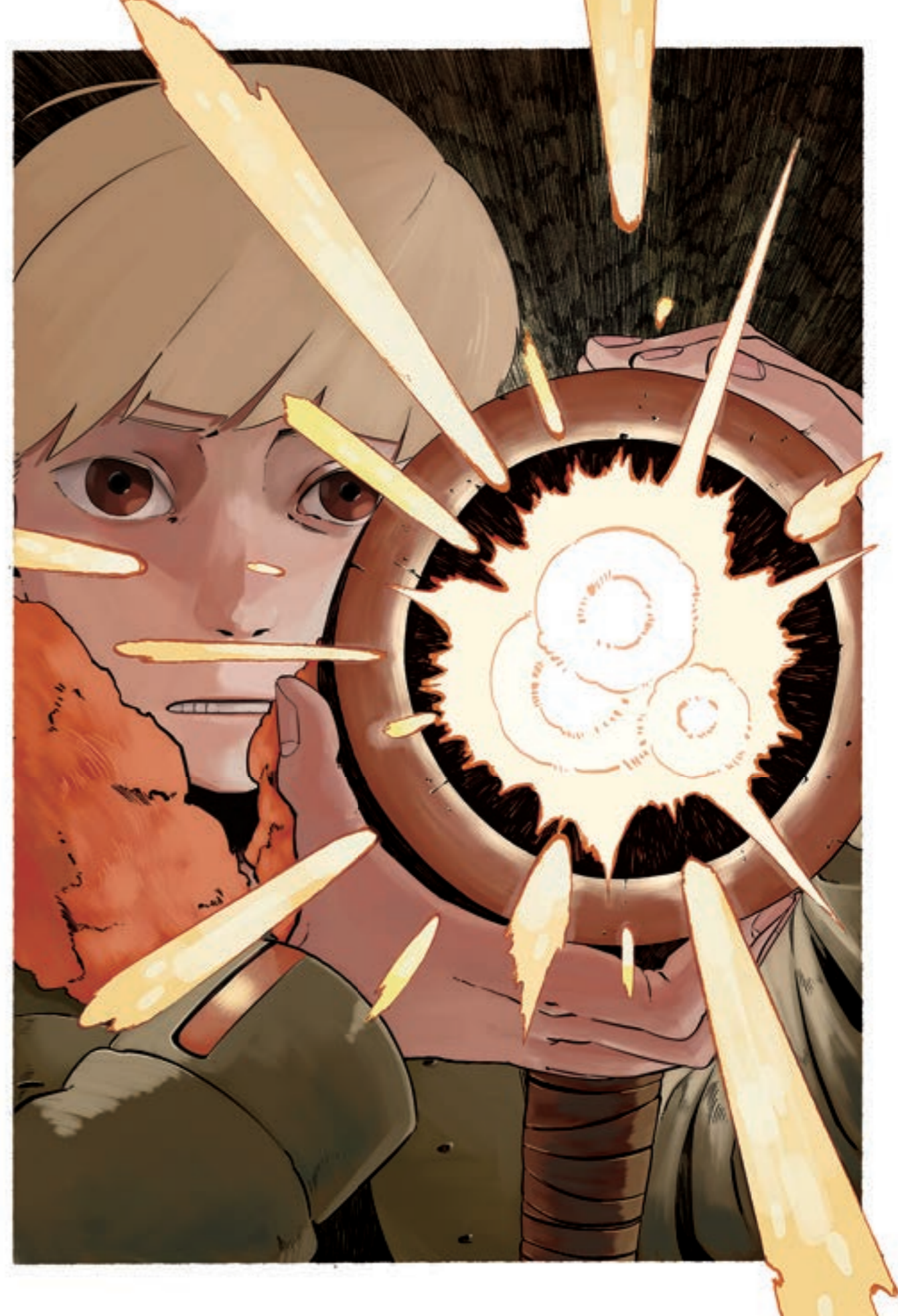
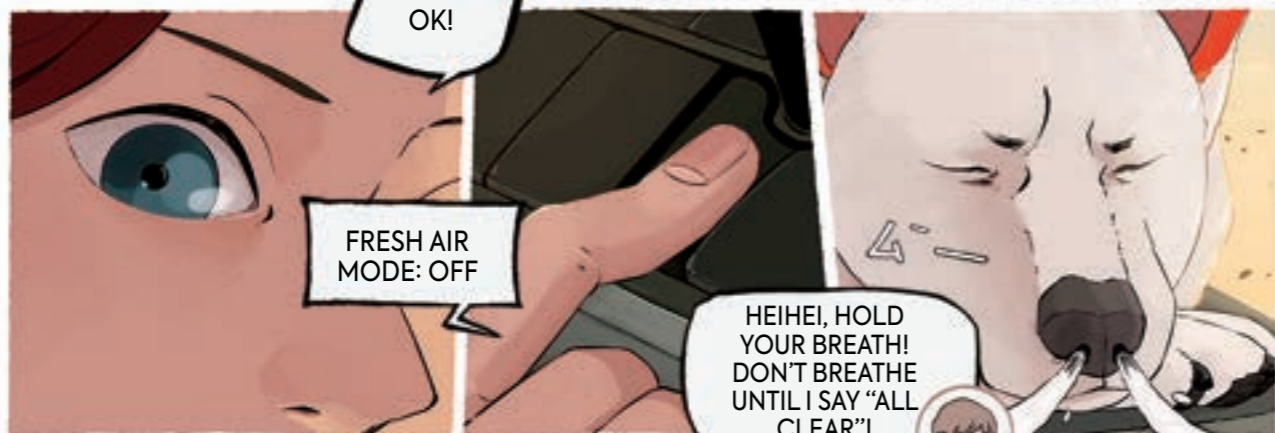
This parting reminds me of when children grow up and leave home. Some go willingly; others are forced to mature too soon. Parents, in turn, must learn to let go. Though reason tells us our children have their own worlds, our hearts resist the separation. In this world, the simple act of "going home" is no longer measured in miles, but in years. In the English translation provided by Books from Taiwan, translated by National Book Award-winning Lin King, Chuo Ching quietly confides to a friend: "It took us three years to be able to freely enter the coastal hills of the Wasteland borders... How many three-year chunks will it take

to get there?"

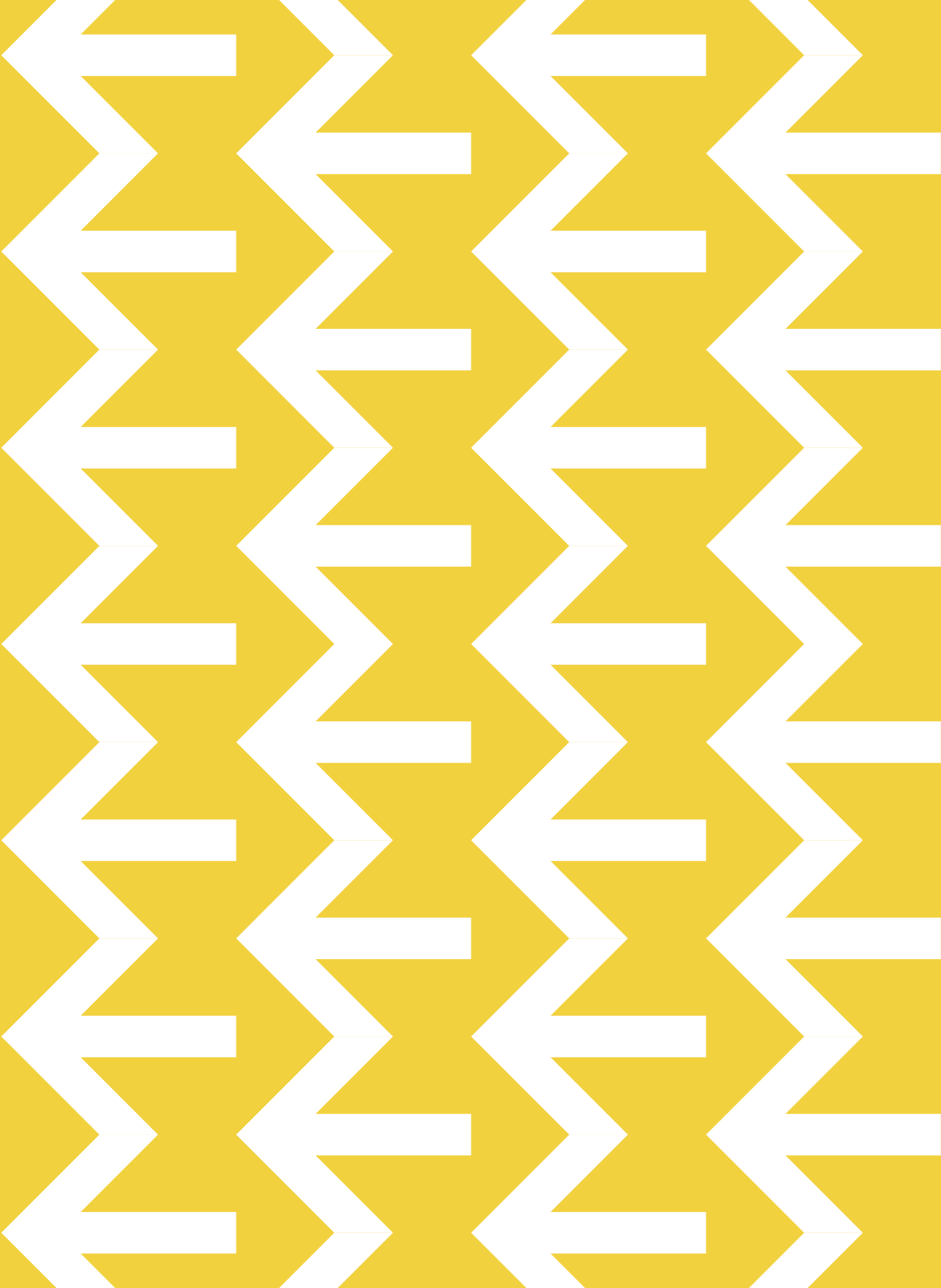
Where Have the Giantdogs Gone? remains an unfolding story. As humans search for a way to reunite with their lost companions, animals embark on an uncertain journey—learning to survive without "owners" by finding food and taking themselves for walks. As a standalone entry within a shared universe that includes *Goodbye, Big Cats*, *Between Islands*, *After the Stone Bridge*, and the forthcoming *Searching for Dogs*, this book is a moving expansion of AAA-Bao's grand worldbuilding. We eagerly anticipate our next encounter with her imaginative world.

Wen-Chien Hsu possesses a free-spirited soul. She has worked at a LGBTQ+ organization, the 113 Domestic Violence Hotline, and now works as an editor of Books from Taiwan 2.0.





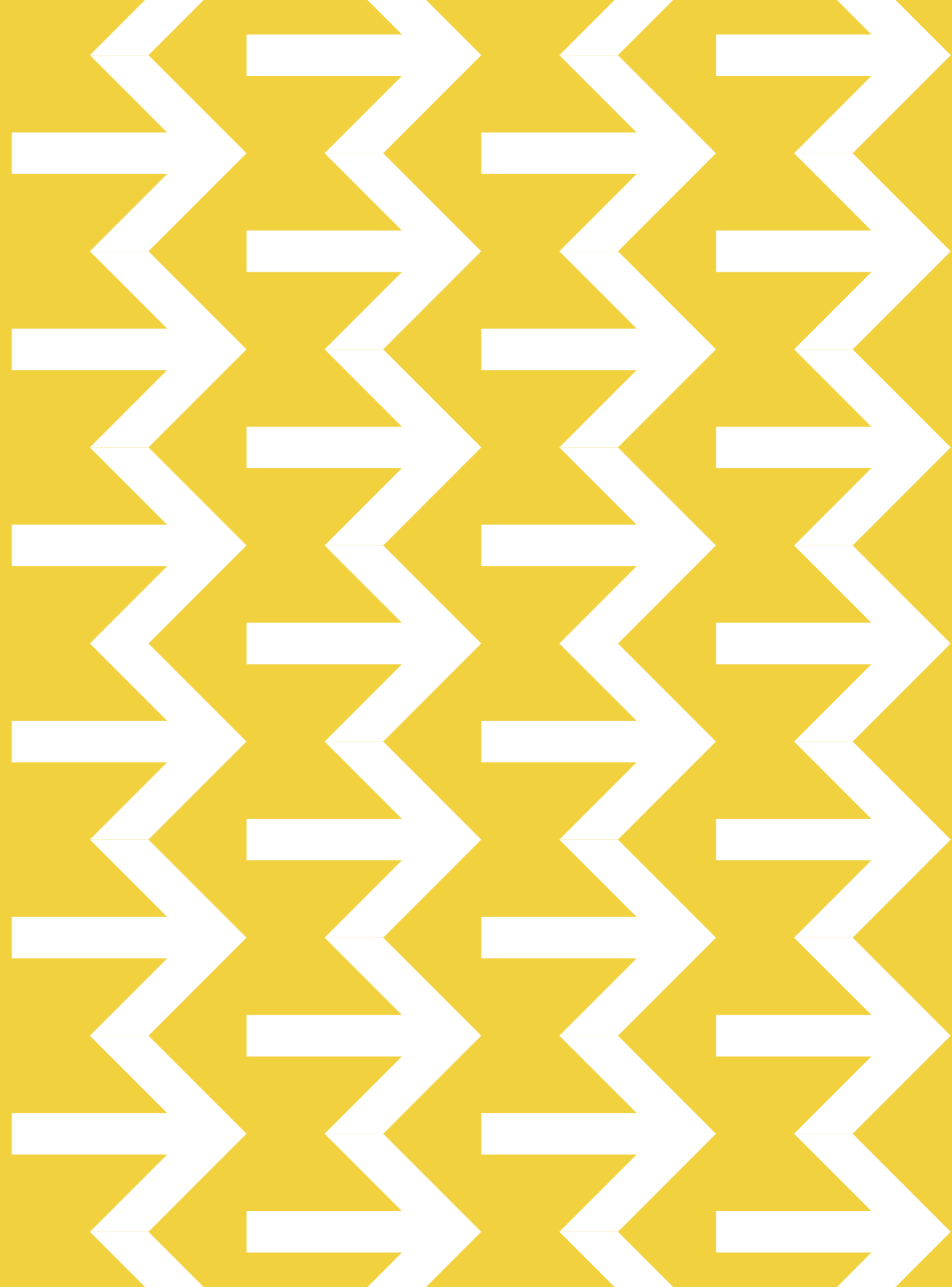




**TO READ THE OTHER
ARTISTS' WORKS,
PLEASE GO TO PAGE 212
AND TURN PAGES
FROM RIGHT TO LEFT.**

(THIS IS HOW TAIWANESE COMICS ARE READ.)

**TO READ THE OTHER
ARTISTS' WORKS,
PLEASE GO TO PAGE 10
AND TURN PAGES
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT.**









Riding the Alishan Forest Railway Through a Century: The Eternal Struggle Between Humans and Nature

by Shan-Chung Yang

In Hayao Miyazaki's prescient *Princess Mononoke*, the forest and the earth revolt in anger against human greed. The ancient boar god Lord Okkoto transforms into a demon to destroy his enemies. Meanwhile, the heroine San—a human raised by wolves—wages a relentless war against Lady Eboshi, the industrial leader whose ironworks threaten to destroy the forest.

Similarly, Ryusuke Hamaguchi's *Evil Does Not Exist* depicts a tranquil Japanese village whose quiet existence is threatened by a corporate proposal to develop a "glamping" site. The villagers, acutely aware of the risk to their land and water, rise in a collective protest against the intrusion. The film suggests

that the tension between environmental preservation and human development has no perfect resolution; instead, it remains an intractable, endless struggle.

Chien Chia-Cheng's *The Mystery of Alishan Forest Railway* evokes these two classic works. Its protagonist Seedlings, the girl of the forest, is like San in her fierce devotion; she's willing to expend her life force to protect the forest she loves. Meanwhile, much like the villagers in *Evil Does Not Exist*, Alishan residents resist corporate attempts to bypass Environmental Impact Assessments to build a large-scale resort.

Yet Chien's story goes beyond familiar tropes. The comic cleverly uses the historical development of the Alishan

Forest Railway as a narrative backbone, blending fictional and fantastical elements. The resistance of the Seedlings, and more broadly of the residents, reflects a defense of Taiwan's indigenous culture and longstanding local traditions against encroaching external corporate interests. Through the eyes of Chih-Hsu, a passionate Alishan train driver, and Seedlings, readers are transported through bamboo groves, thick mountain mist, and ancient trees. The journey unfolds the complex history of Alishan and the many transformations of its storied railway.

From Japanese colonial development to government deficits, landslides, typhoon damage, and local resistance, the century-long history of the Alishan Forest Railway is condensed into fewer than 200 pages. Two additional essays and a timeline help readers understand the controversies behind the project and trace the long-term effects

of development and natural disasters, deepening their understanding of Seedlings's anger.

In the end, with the resort contract canceled and power restored, the story seems to offer a relatively happy resolution. Yet the author leaves subtle foreshadowing: Seedlings disappears from the hospital, suggesting that as long as humans exist, the struggle between nature and civilization will remain eternal and unresolved.

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



The Mystery of Alishan Forest Railway

A Full English translation is available.

阿里山林鐵奇事

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

Date: 08/2016 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

Chih-Hsu has finally fulfilled his lifelong dream: driving a train on the Alishan Forest Railway through lush mountain forests. One day, during a passengerless run, he makes an exception and stops for a mysterious girl named Seedlings. Before he realizes it, the train enters the long-abandoned Tunnel No. 21—and beyond it, Chih-Hsu glimpses the forest's memories spanning a century.

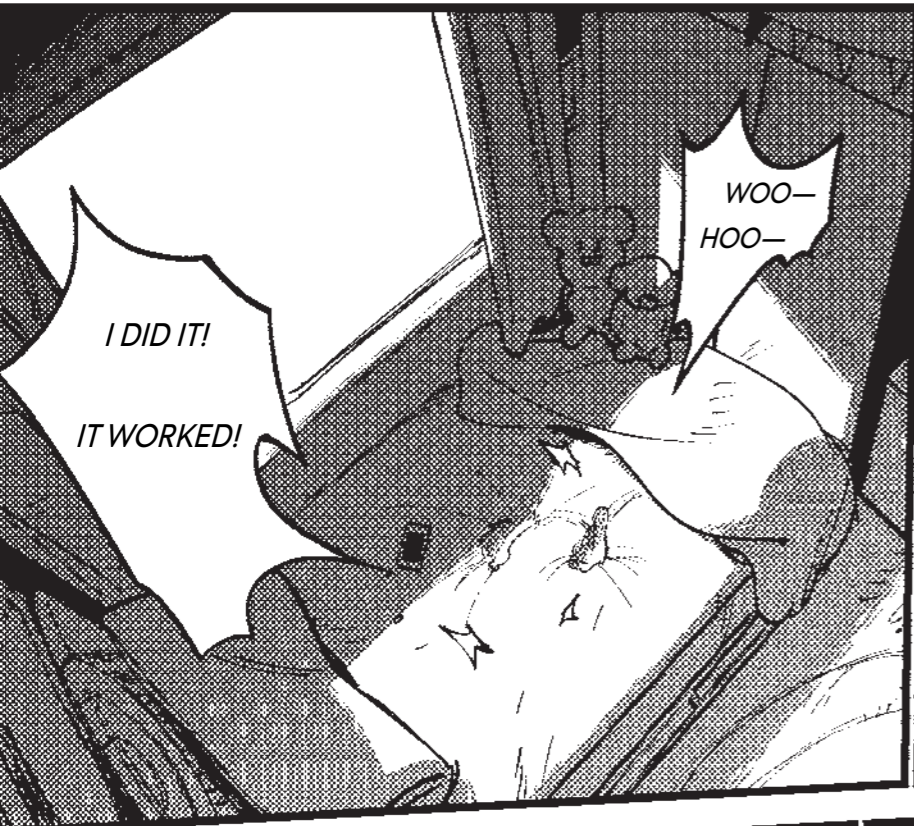
Using the history of the Alishan Forest Railway as its narrative backbone, this book guides readers through the evolving relationship between humans and nature, environmental conservation and modern development. Alongside its thought-provoking themes, it vividly portrays Alishan's breathtaking landscapes and rich local culture. Through the eyes of Chih-Hsu and the enigmatic Seedlings, readers are transported through bamboo groves, thick mountain mist, and ancient trees.

Meanwhile, Seedlings' fierce resistance—and that of the mountain residents—succeed in protecting Taiwan's indigenous culture and longstanding traditions against rapacious corporate interests.



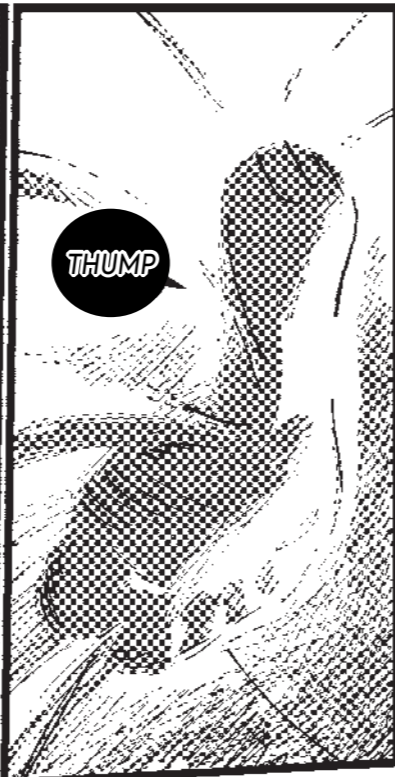
Author **Chien Chia-Cheng**

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

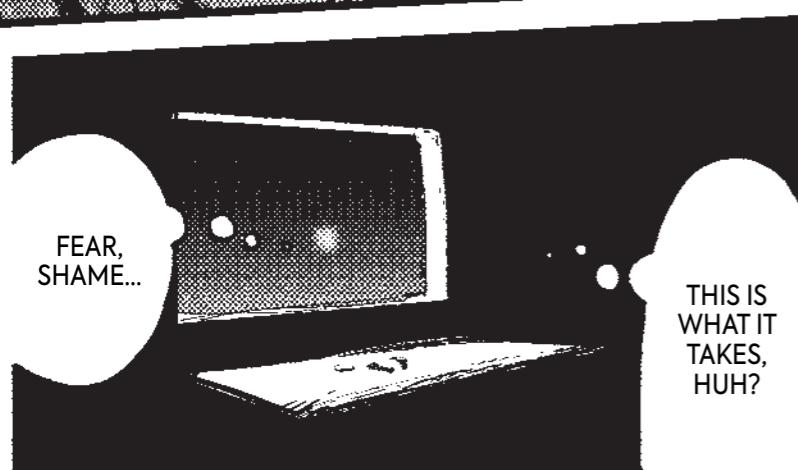


I DID IT!
IT WORKED!

WOO—
HOO—



THUMP



FEAR,
SHAME...

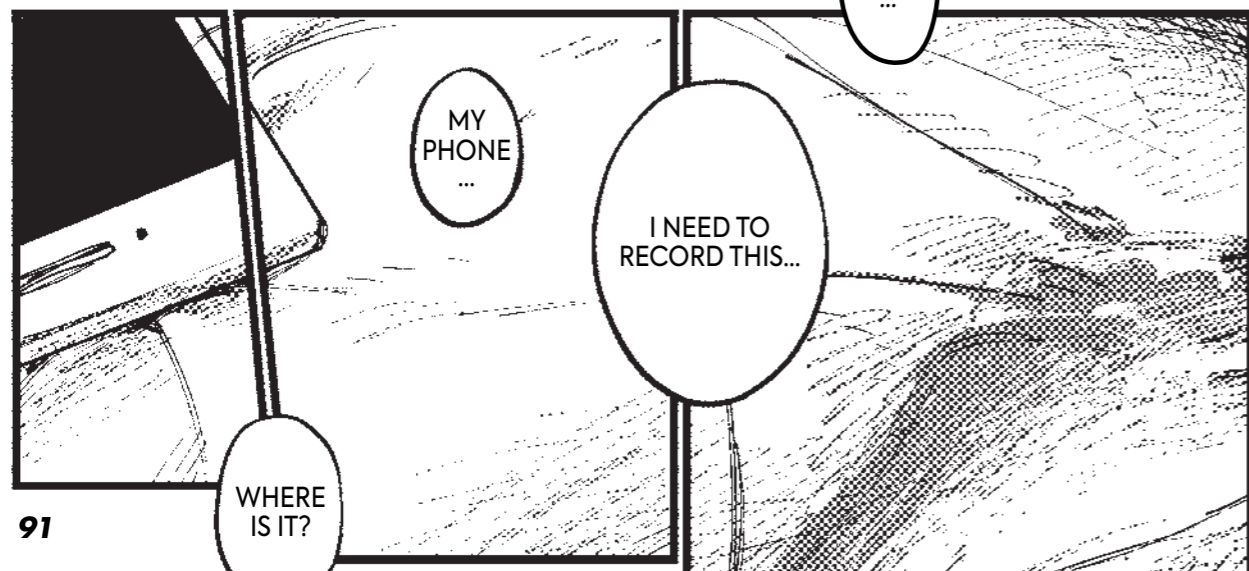
THIS IS
WHAT IT
TAKES,
HUH?



PANT



PANT
...



MY
PHONE
...

I NEED TO
RECORD THIS...

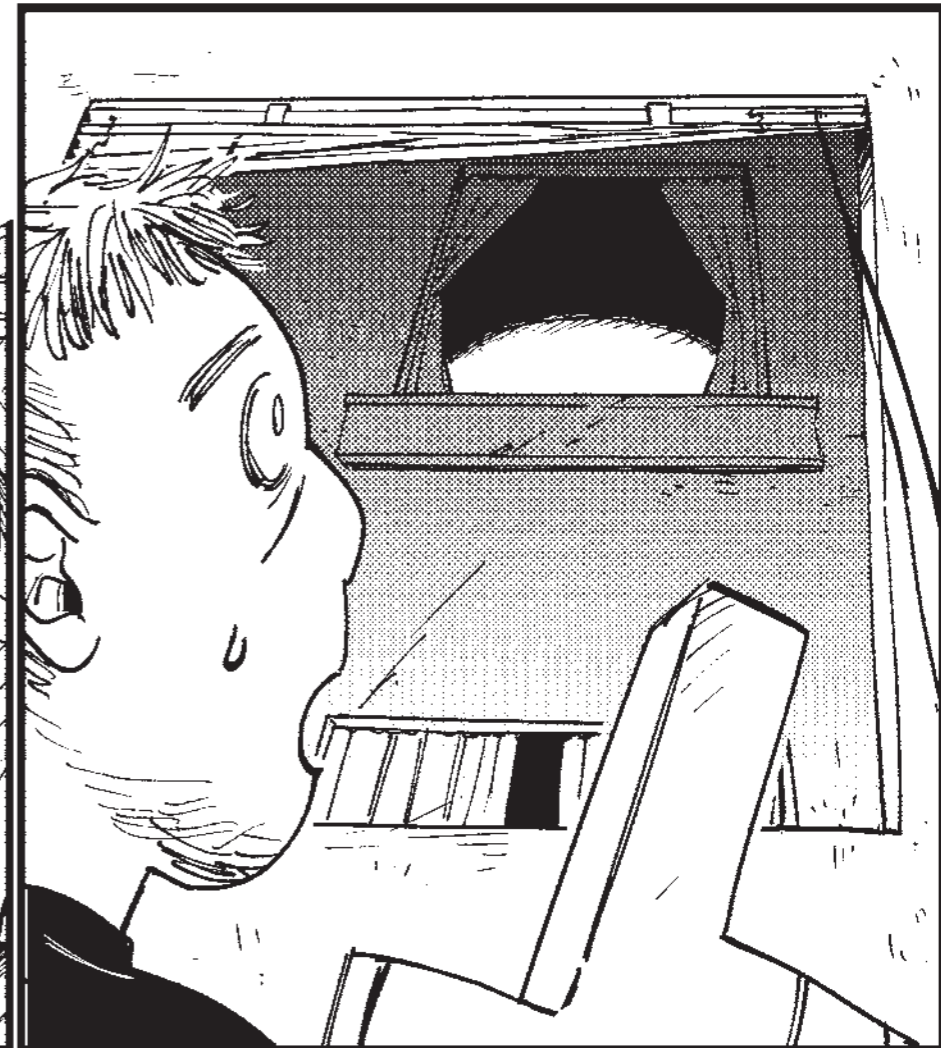
WHERE
IS IT?



YOU
BIG
PERV!

ARE YOU
SEEING
THINGS?

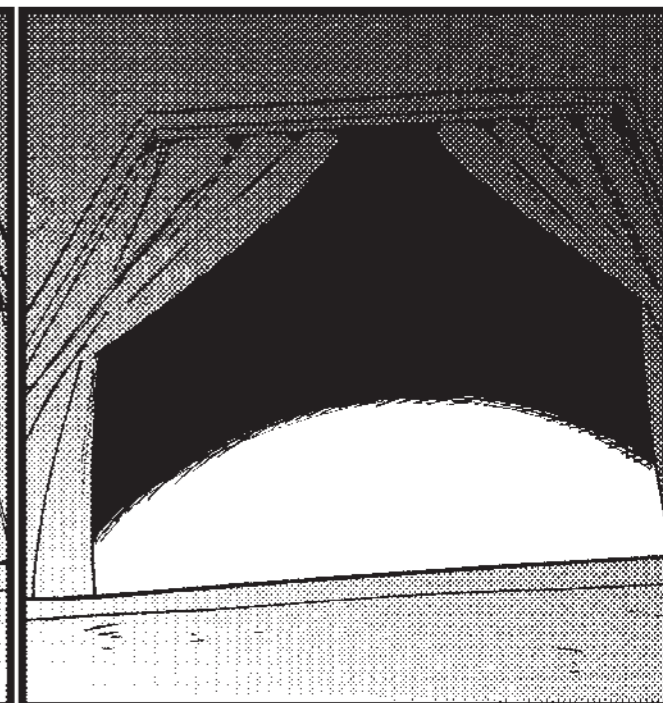
MAYBE...

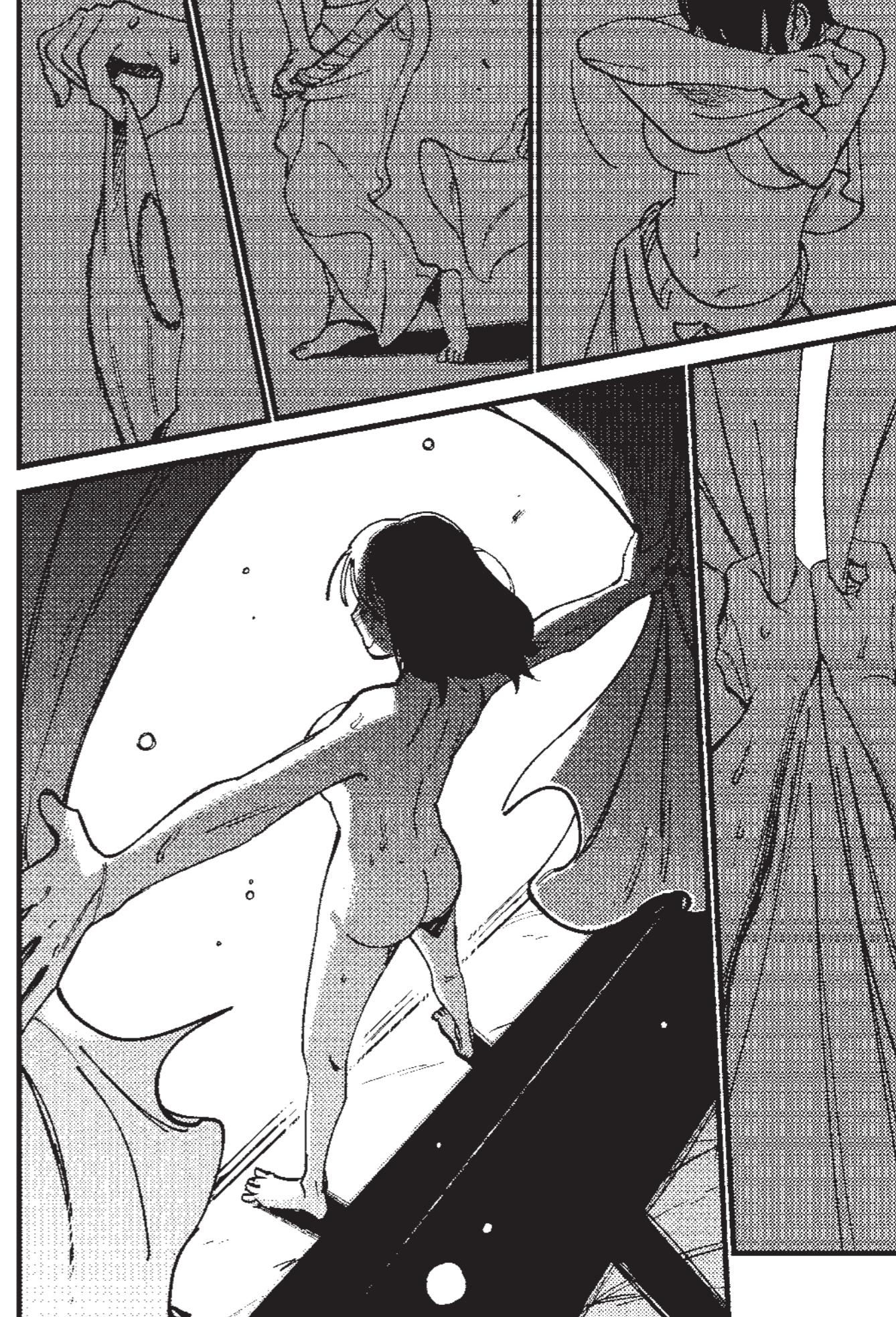
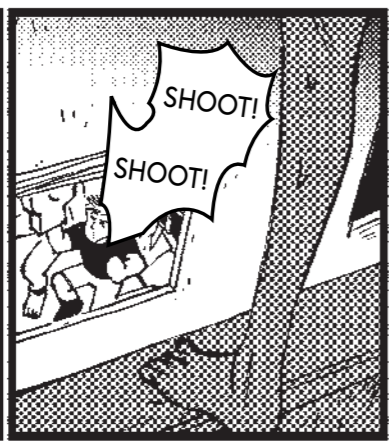
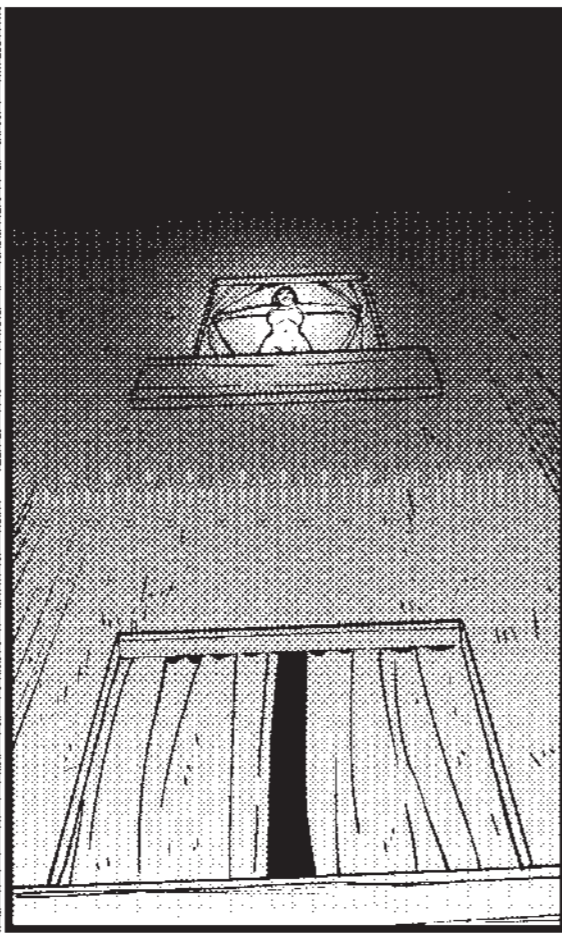
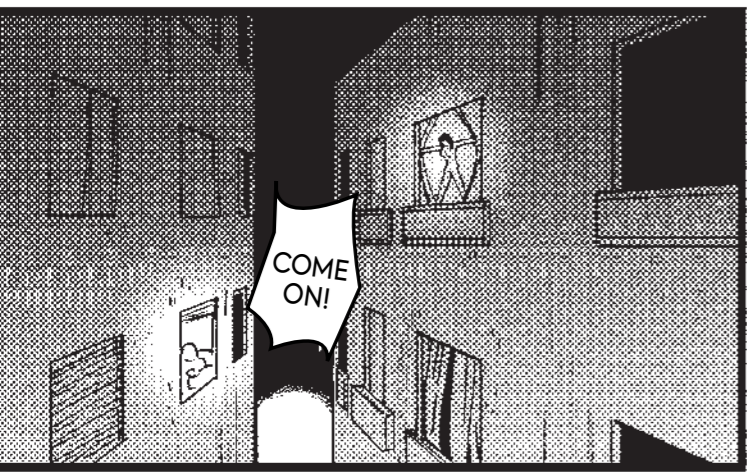
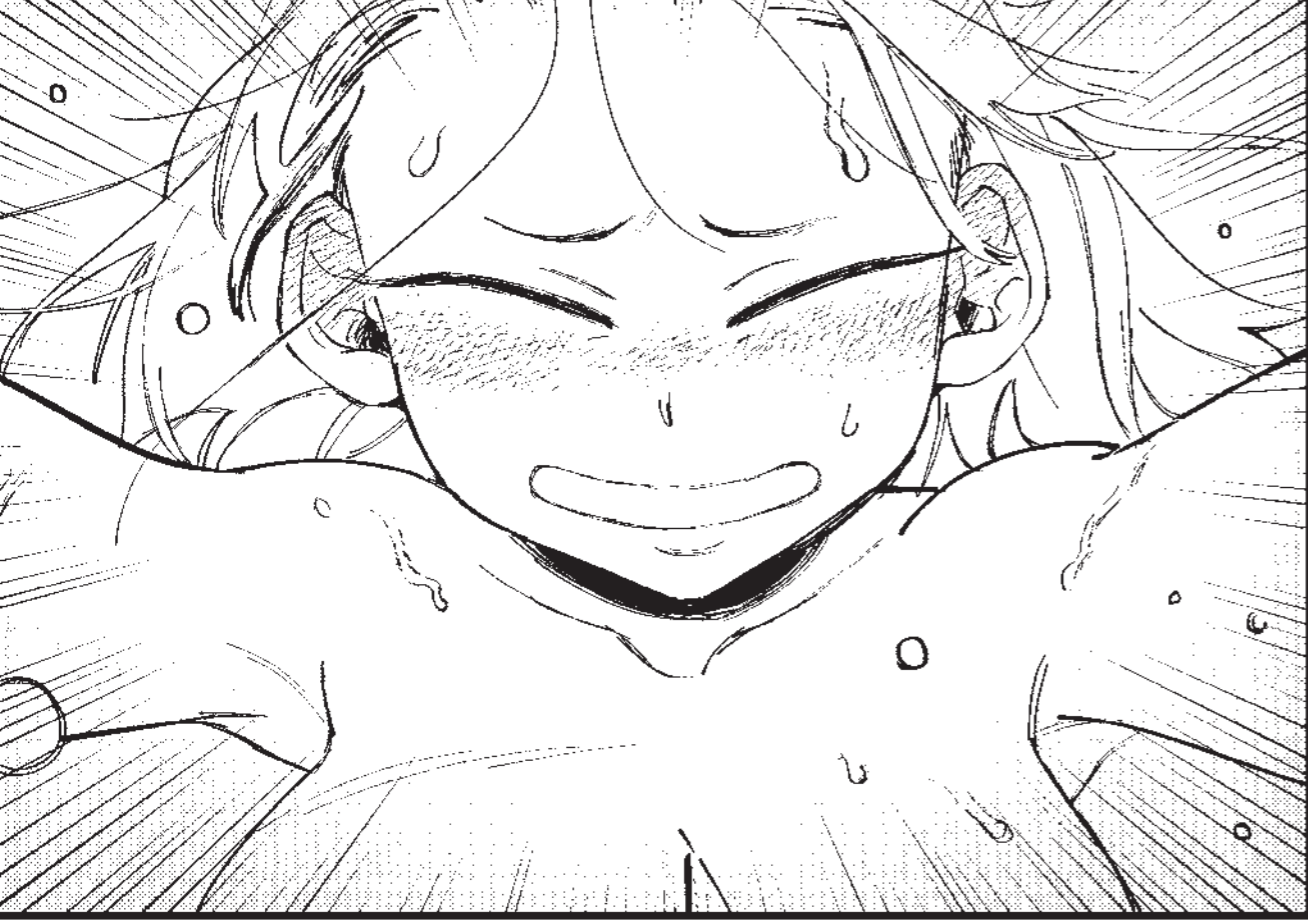


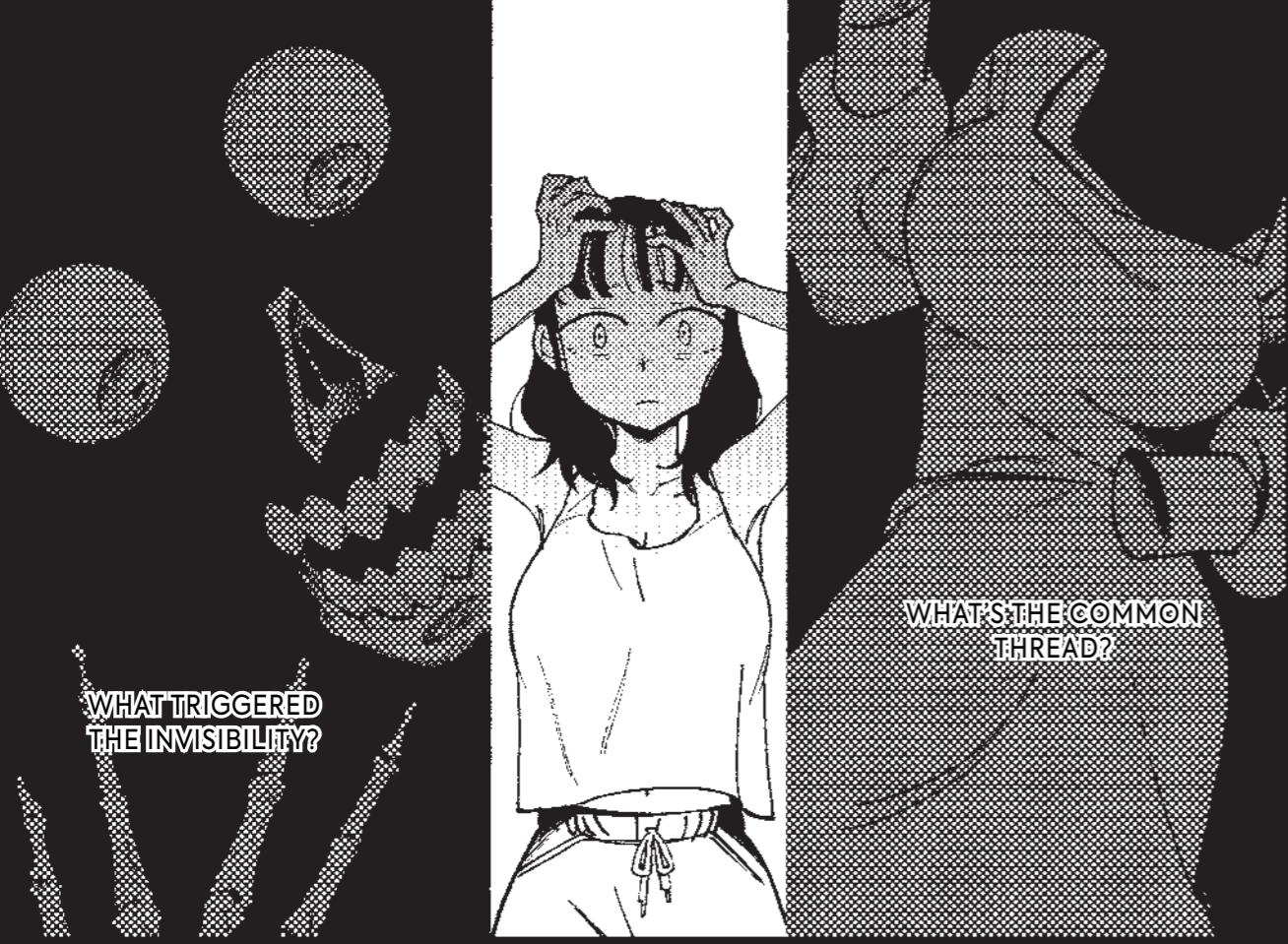
WAS
THERE...
A BUSTY
GIRL...
NAKED?



PIPI
SWOOSH

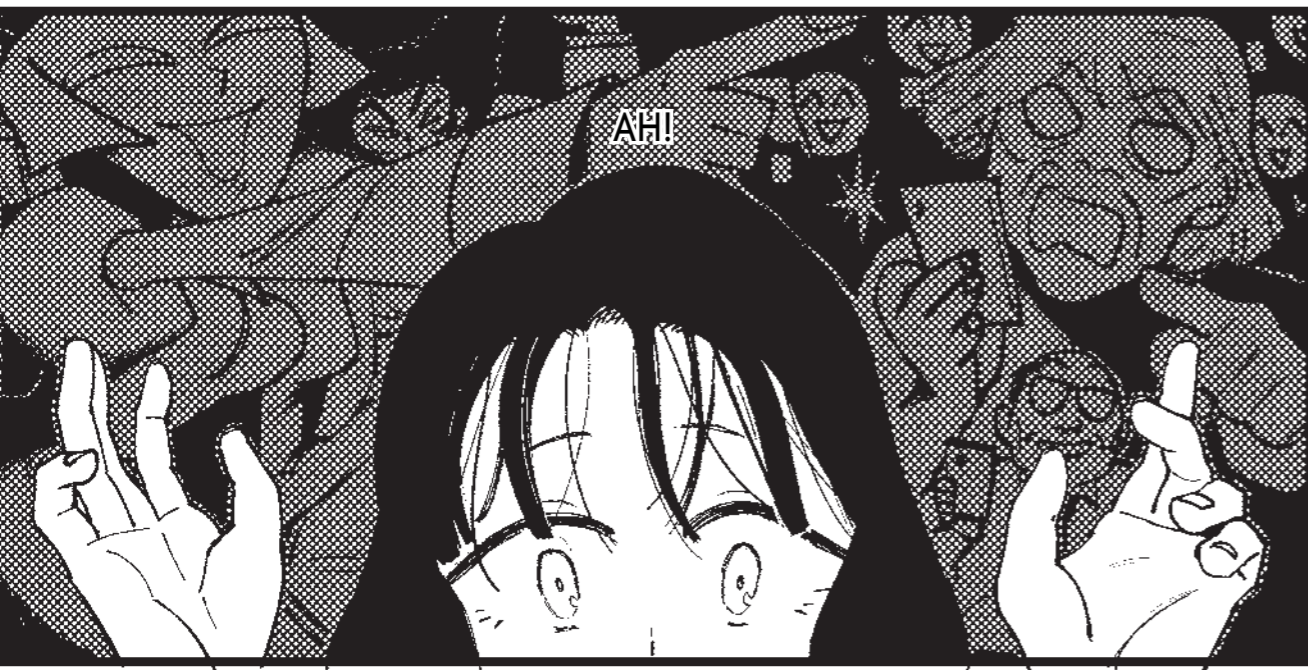




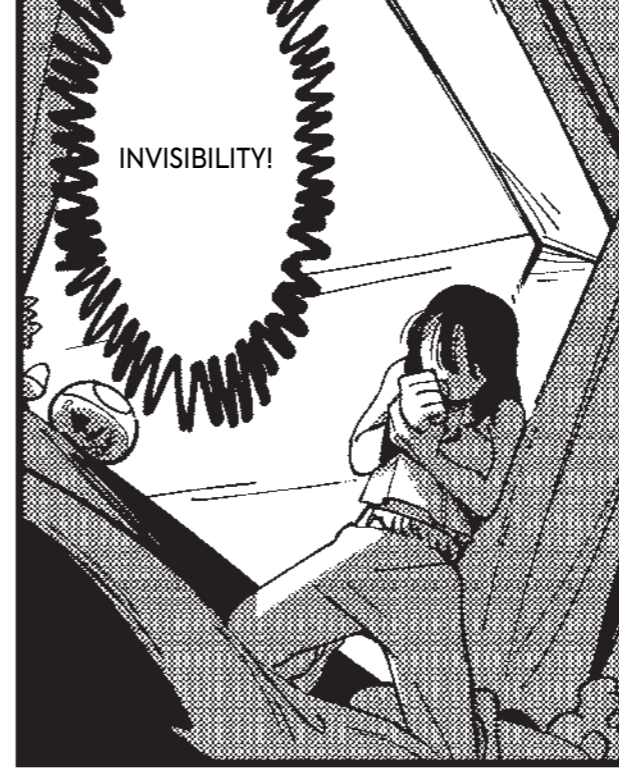
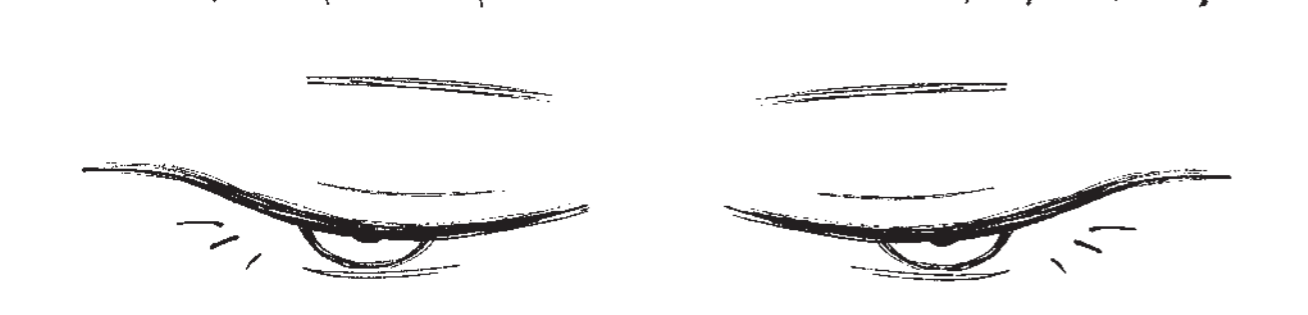


WHAT TRIGGERED THE INVISIBILITY?

WHAT'S THE COMMON THREAD?



AH!



INVISIBILITY!



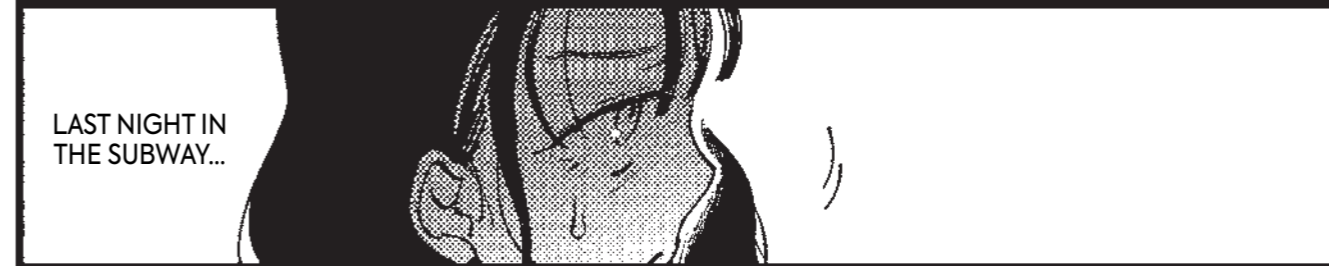
INV-SIGH...

...

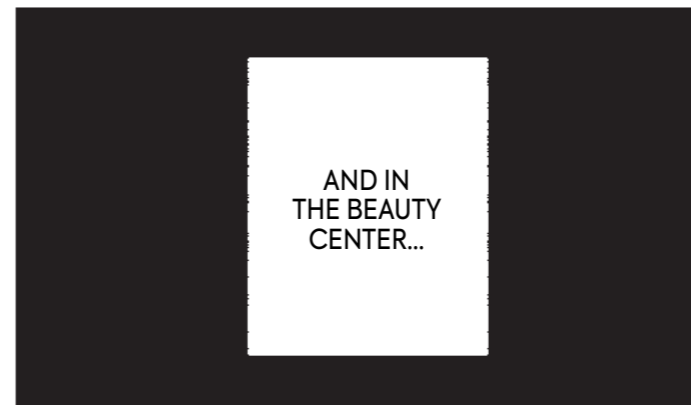


INVISIBILITY!

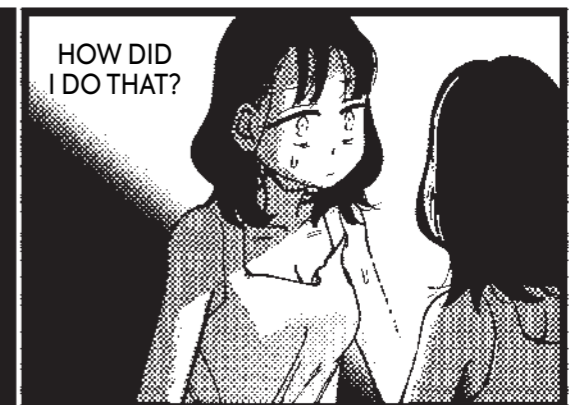
INVISIBILITY!



LAST NIGHT IN THE SUBWAY...



AND IN THE BEAUTY CENTER...



HOW DID I DO THAT?



Fresh and Suspenseful, This Comic Book Uses Invisibility to Explore Shame, Freedom, and the Female Experience

by Wen-Chien Hsu

In popular culture, “invisibility” is both dangerous and seductive. *Hollow Man* (2000) opens like a classic mad scientist parable: researcher Sebastian Caine develops a serum that renders the human body invisible and becomes his own test subject. As the serum takes effect and his veins gradually vanish, the audience witnesses not only a technological miracle but the onset of a moral collapse. At first, he behaves like a child at play, indulging in seemingly harmless acts of spying on colleagues and neighbors. But once he realizes that “no one can see him,” restraint evaporates: desire and violence surge unchecked, leading him to assault, kill, and ultimately endanger his entire research team.

Twenty years later, *The Invisible Man* (2020) shifts perspective. Cecilia, controlled and humiliated by her wealthy boyfriend Adrian, escapes from his high-security mansion. Believing him to be dead, she soon experiences a series of inexplicable disturbances—unexplained sounds, moving objects, and devices that activate on their own—revealing that Adrian, aided by an optical invisibility suit, continues to stalk and manipulate her. Both films expose the same pattern: men remain unseen while exerting power over women.

The Invisibles, however, overturns this familiar narrative. Its protagonist is neither a genius scientist nor a victim in a horror thriller, but an ordinary woman

routinely diminished through everyday social interactions. On what should be a simple date, she is criticized for her appearance and subjected to subtle ridicule. Struggling with shame and self-doubt, she accepts an invitation for cosmetic surgery that promises transformation but proves to be a trap. When the procedure goes wrong, her body does not improve; instead, in moments of extreme embarrassment, shame, or pain, she quite literally becomes invisible.

This premise, though seemingly absurd, is sharply critical. Her invisibility is not a technological marvel but a product of social violence. The constant pressures of being watched, judged, and expected to be “beautiful” culminate in a single thought: *I’d rather not be seen at all*. At home, she experiments with controlling this power—tracking emotional shifts, testing breathing rhythms, and seeking a way to vanish and reappear at will. The first time she deliberately turns invisible, she cannot return, forcing her to layer clothes and step outside. Passersby stare, and a police officer stops her. When he orders her to lift her clothing for inspection, fear triggers her body’s sudden reappearance—but his gaze lands on her chest, underscoring that women remain objects of scrutiny whether visible or not.

In *The Invisibles*, invisibility becomes a meditation on shame, agency, and the female experience. Maimo acquires the unprecedented power to decide whether she appears in the eyes of others, yet this choice carries a heavy burden: she must continually negotiate the line between visibility and concealment. The power protects her even as it confines her. Through repeated cycles of disappearance and reappearance, she is forced to confront the ethical and intimate meanings of being unseen.

If invisibility in *Hollow Man* embodies male arrogance and indulgence, and in *The Invisible Man* the ghost of domestic abuse, then in *The Invisibles*, it signifies a woman coming to terms with her own body. The story transforms the traditional “invisible man” narrative into a feminist allegory: in a world that constantly demands women’s beauty, true invisibility is not an escape, but a refusal to be defined by others.

Wen-Chien Hsu possesses a free-spirited soul. She has worked at LGBTQ+ organizations, the 113 Domestic Violence Hotline, and works as an editor of Books from Taiwan 2.0. She is dedicated to bringing Taiwanese comics and picture books to a global audience.



The Invisibles

A Full English translation is available.

棄形記

Original Author: Toe Yuen Kin-To **Comic Artist:** Shin Yan **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 10/2021 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

188 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 2 (Two-Book series)

BFT2.0 Translator: Jenna Tang

On what should be a simple date, Maimo, a mild-mannered kindergarten teacher, is ridiculed for her appearance. Embarrassed, she soon after accepts an offer for cosmetic surgery that promises transformation—but goes horribly wrong. In moments of extreme embarrassment and pain, she literally becomes invisible. Maimo embarks on an unconventional revenge plan, taking on a corrupt cosmetic clinic and exposing its scams.

Blending humor, imagination, and sharp social critique, *The Invisibles* turns invisibility into a meditation on shame, agency, the beauty industry, and the experience of women. Through repeated cycles of disappearance and reappearance, she confronts the ethical and intimate meanings of being unseen.



Original Author **Toe Yuen Kin-To**

A Hong Kong native, Toe Yuen Kin-To has worked across television, film, stunts, and comics, all the while nurturing a dream of writing a novel. He eventually became an animation director, and his debut feature, *My Life as McDull*, won the Golden Horse Award and the Cristal for a Feature Film at the Festival International du Film d'Animation d'Annecy.



Comic Artist **Shin Yan**

Based in Taipei and formerly in California, Shin Yan has worked in animation, games, and comics. Known for a versatile, seemingly boundless style, the author delights in absurd stories, ghost tales, storytelling, crowds, food, alternate worlds, and the joyful creation of chaos. Shin Yan's works include *Nine Lives: Hangry Girls Club*, *Tumulus*, *The Invisibles*, and *When Sun Rises in The Starlit Vale*. In 2021, Shin Yan was nominated for the 12th Golden Comic Awards for *The Invisibles*.





DO YOU HAVE AN EXPLANATION?



FORTUNATELY, I WAS ABLE TO DODGE QUICKLY ASIDE OR I WOULD HAVE BEEN TOAST. HA-HA.

I JUST WENT OUT TO INVESTIGATE A DRUG-SMUGGLING CASE. BUT A BLACK DOG UNEXPECTEDLY CAME RUNNING OUT AND TRIED TO BITE ME.

HA-HA. YOU MUST BE VERY LUCKY, RIGHT?



TAITUNG POLICE STATION

CAPTAIN CHANG TZU-YI CRIMINAL AFFAIRS, CAPTAIN



I NEED TO TAKE A PISS.

FUCK!



I MIGHT NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT I'M ACTUALLY A CRIMINAL DETECTIVE.

MY NAME IS ZHENG YI-CHENG. I TURNED 39 THIS YEAR.



A Detective Thriller That Blends Suspense and Social Realism

by Jeffrey Wu

No Criminal Facts is inspired by a real unsolved case in Taiwan—the murder of Dr. Chen Wen-chen. During the White Terror period, a renowned scholar returned to Taiwan from the United States to visit his family. On the eve of his return to the U.S., he was summoned by the Kuomintang's Taiwan Garrison Command and never seen again. His body was later found on a lawn. Although the police claimed that he died in a traffic accident, the circumstances were riddled with inconsistencies. Given Chen's involvement in democratic reform, it is widely suspected that he became a victim of the White Terror. To this day, however, the truth remains unknown.

The narrative of *No Criminal Facts* unfolds through this unresolved case while incorporating the perspectives of both its male and female leads. The protagonist,

Zheng Yi-Cheng, is a detective whose childhood was marked by tragedy. He witnessed his father's suicide at a young age and was abandoned by his biological mother. Even his adoptive father, once a figure of trust and care, proves less sincere than he had believed. These early hardships fuel his strong sense of justice and deep empathy for the struggles of ordinary people. However, lacking influential family and social connections, he repeatedly finds himself unable to fully realize that justice. This leaves him disillusioned, frustrated, and emotionally burdened.

By contrast, the prosecutor Jiang Yi-Hua moves through a very different world. The daughter of a renowned judge, she appears born into privilege. Her striking appearance and illustrious family name

lead others to dismiss her achievements as inheritance rather than earned success. Her career unfolds smoothly, yet her diligence and intelligence remain overlooked.

The two leads, detective and prosecutor, are former lovers who stand at opposite ends of the social spectrum: one armed with status, resources, and a future that seems assured; the other burdened by loss, hardship, and closed doors. And yet, they share a relentless pursuit of justice. Through their parallel paths, the story offers a layered portrait of how people from vastly different backgrounds perceive and confront social dilemmas.

The story also evokes George Orwell's *1984*, a dystopian novel centered on government surveillance, authoritarian control, and the manipulation of citizens. Taiwan's own history echoes these themes through events such as the February 28 Incident and the subsequent White Terror. More recently, the death of soldier Hung Chung-chiu in 2013, caused by abuse during military service, became a rallying cry for justice and transparency. Against this backdrop, *No Criminal Facts* approaches these heavy themes, offering

readers a lens to consider transitional justice and how contemporary Taiwanese society grapples with past injustices. At the same time, the narrative captures the stark reality of pursuing truth as an ordinary individual confronting institutions and figures wielding overwhelming power.

The comic unfolds through an interwoven narrative, shifting between the detective's past and the investigation of a mysterious case. As these two timelines gradually converge, repetition and ambiguity create a layered reading experience that mirrors the complexities of truth and justice. There is no easy resolution, reflecting the reality of unresolved cases and the ongoing struggle for fairness. Readers are drawn into the world of *No Criminal Facts*, following the protagonists as they navigate moral uncertainty, personal trauma, and systemic barriers in their pursuit of justice.

Jeffrey Wu works in the field of education and is an avid reader. With a background in English literature, he also is passionate about postmodern philosophy and post-structuralism.



No Criminal Facts

A Full English translation is available.

查無犯罪事實

Scriptwriter: Hsin-Mei Cheng **Comic Artist:** Sen **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 11/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

216 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1 (Two-book series)

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Fahey

A rope mark on the wrist. A belt tied across the chest. A blood-stained Swiss knife left in the grass—but no other visible injuries.

Detective Zheng Yi-Cheng, usually laid-back and indifferent toward his cases, finds himself unusually invested in this murder investigation. But as the evidence mounts, he becomes the prime suspect in the very case he is trying to solve. Meanwhile, his former lover, prosecutor Jiang Yi-Hua, joins the investigation and gradually uncovers a tangled web connecting past and present.

Blending social realism with elements of detective fiction, this book draws inspiration from the famous Dr. Chen Wen-Chen case in Taiwan. The result is a gripping, suspense-filled thriller, and it won the Shohei Potential Original IP Award at the 2024 Taiwan Creative Content Fest.



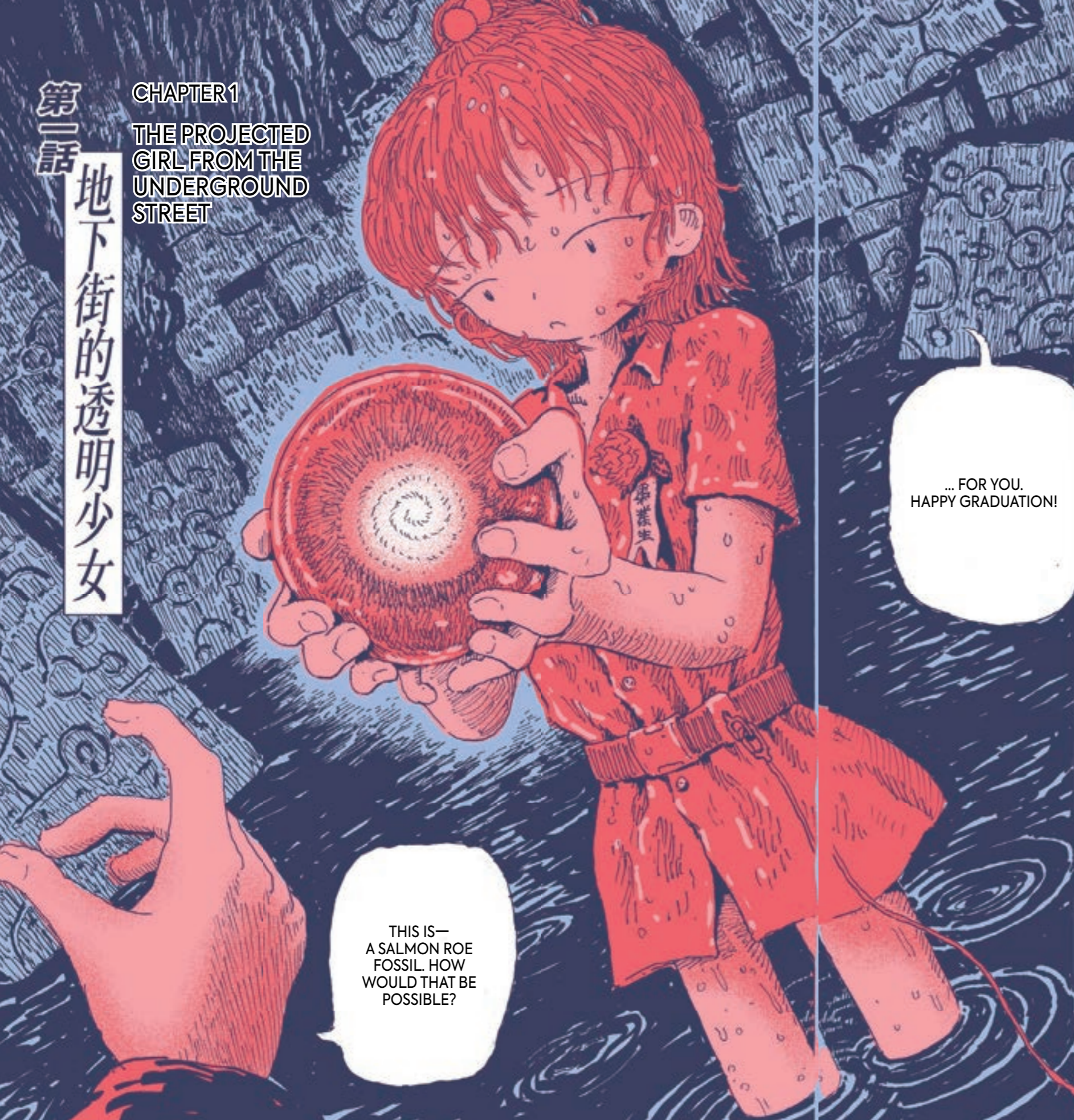
Scriptwriter **Hsin-Mei Cheng**

Born in 1976, Hsin-Mei Cheng began her career as a journalist before transitioning to full-time scriptwriting. Known for her keen insight in social and political themes, she is dedicated to uncovering stories rooted in Taiwan and crafting emotionally powerful narratives that resonate with its people.



Comic Artist **Sen**

Sen is a manga creator who graduated from the Department of Theater Design at Taipei National University of the Arts, specializing in design. Now focused on manga, illustration, and graphic design, Sen's works include the short story collection *Everyday Youth* and the independently published *Insomnia Diary* and *Black Cat*.



THIS IS—
A SALMON ROE
FOSSIL. HOW
WOULD THAT BE
POSSIBLE?

... FOR YOU.
HAPPY GRADUATION!



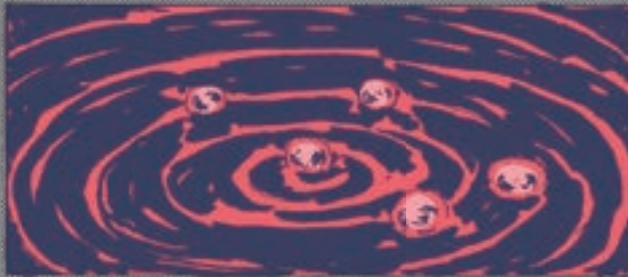
CHI MING-
CHI, THIS IS...



NO WAY?
OI, THIS IS...?



I'M OKAY. I...





Mirages and Memories: Exploring How Love Survives in *The Projected Girl from the Underground Street*

by Wen-Chien Hsu

Ding Pao-Yen's *The Projected Girl from the Underground Street* portrays a world that is both futuristic and melancholic. In this world, archaeology coexists with projection technology, and people chase after virtual light and shadow. From street signs to virtual lovers, everything can be projected and replicated. In this world, people are lonely and gradually lose the courage to face reality.

The story follows Ming-Chi, an ordinary part-time worker who once served as the president of his high school archaeology club. Back then, he shared a quiet affection with Li-Zhi, a fellow club member, though neither dared to confess.

On the eve of graduation, Li-Zhi discovered a rare "salmon roe fossil" and gave it to him as a farewell gift—a relic so precious that even professional archaeologists could hardly find one. Its rarity mirrored the secret bond between them.

Shortly after graduation, Li-Zhi boarded a spacecraft bound for another planet. Their parting was meant to be temporary; she was supposed to return. But as the ship ascended, it suddenly exploded. What should have been a bittersweet farewell became an irreversible tragedy. Unable to move on, Ming-Chi drifts through the neon haze of the city, clinging to the fragments of a love now lost to the void.

Years later, rumors spread that a girl resembling Li-Zhi has appeared in the city's underground arcade—a "projected girl." Ming-Chi discovers that the projection indeed carries her consciousness—but only as it existed during high school. She remembers nothing of their shared past.

Together, they embark on a journey that crosses the boundaries between the real and the virtual. Slowly, they rebuild their connection while uncovering the mystery surrounding her return. Why was she "revived"? Who is controlling her projection? And if this being made of light and data is not flesh and blood, can she still be the same Li-Zhi he once loved?

The first volume of *The Projected Girl from the Underground Street* intertwines tender emotion with suspense. Beneath its romantic surface lies an unsettling series of philosophical questions about existence and consciousness. When projections can replace people, how do we define what is truly real? The fossil

that Li-Zhi discovered may hold the key—an ancient trace of life hinting at the persistence of memory and its imprint of time.

Ding Pao-Yen's art carries a deliberate roughness. Unpolished lines, frayed edges, and textured strokes breathe with raw vitality. This distinctive visual style blends the nostalgic tone of classic manga with a metallic sense of futurism. Memory and projection flicker side by side on each page, as if the story itself were alive and unstable. The mystery remains unresolved, yet its light continues to project within the reader's mind long after the book is closed.

Wen-Chien Hsu possesses a free-spirited soul. She has worked at LGBTQ+ organizations, the 113 Domestic Violence Hotline, and works as an editor of Books from Taiwan 2.0. She is dedicated to bringing Taiwanese comics and picture books to a global audience.



The Projected Girl from the Underground Street

A Full English translation is available.

地下街的透明少女

Author: Ding Pao-Yen **Illustrator:** Ding Pao-Yen **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 11/2024

Rights contact: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

248 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1 (Ongoing)

Awards: 2025 The 16th Golden Comics Awards, Comic of the Year

BFT 2.0 Translator: Jenna Tang

In a world where technology can project dazzling illusions of anything—from street signs to people—Ming-Chi drifts through life, haunted by the loss of Li-Zhi, the girl he secretly loved. She was meant to leave Earth to start a new life, but her ship exploded during launch.

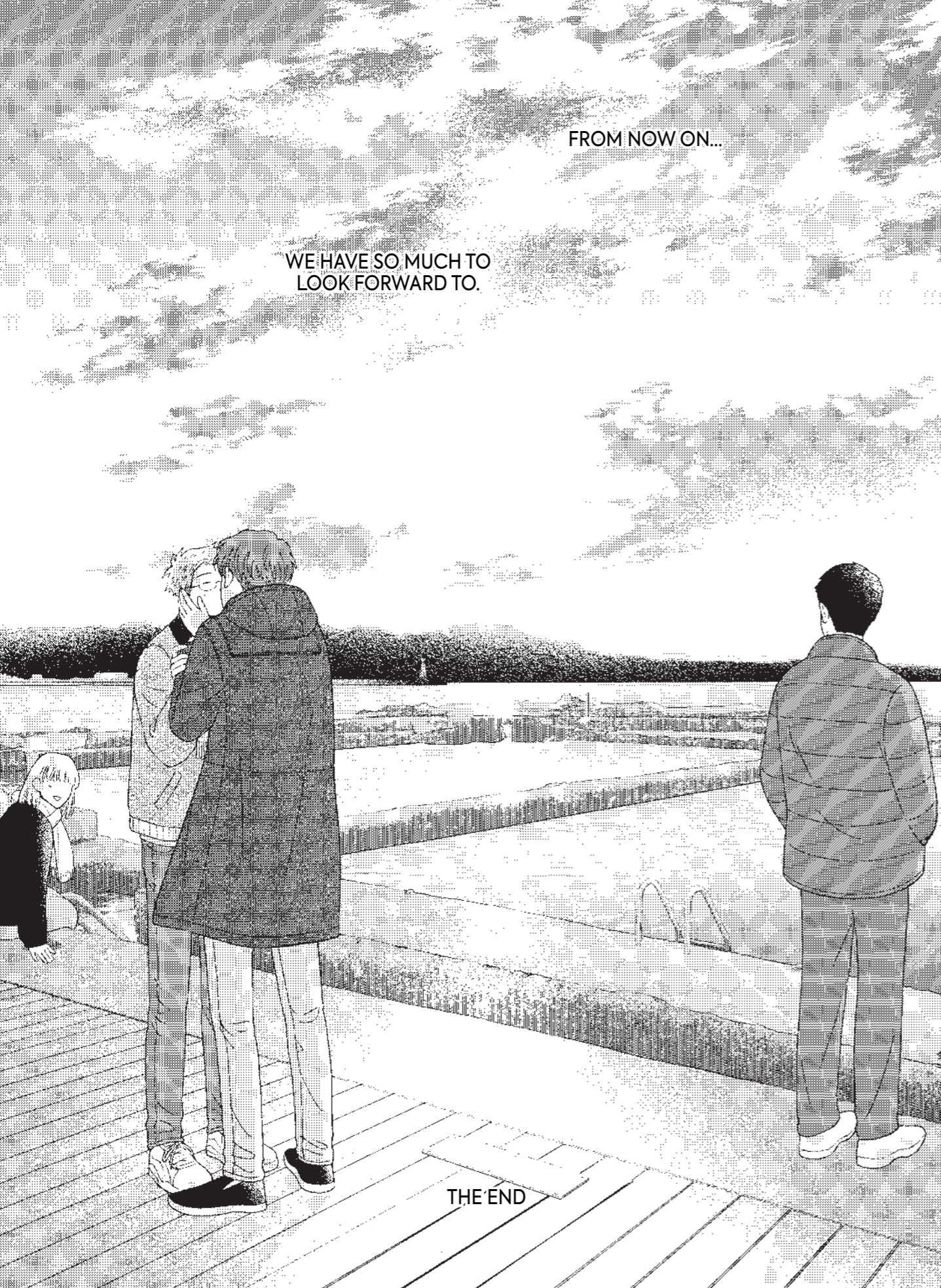
Rumors of a “projected girl” appearing in an underground arcade reignite his hope. The apparition resembles Li-Zhi and carries her high school consciousness, yet she has no memory of their shared past. As they reconnect, the two are drawn into a mystery that blurs the line between memory and simulation. Who revived her in this form? Who controls her projection? And if she exists only as light and data, is she still the same Li-Zhi he loved?

Blending melancholy with suspense, *The Projected Girl from the Underground Street* explores what it means to exist in a world where reality can be copied and emotions digitized. Ding Pao-Yen’s raw linework contrasts nostalgia with futurism, giving the story a fragile texture. This story asks whether love can survive when only a projection remains.



Author **Ding Pao-Yen**

Originally trained in painting, manga creator Ding Pao-Yen began producing manga primarily for print. Fascinated by science fiction and dreamlike themes, he explores the medium’s imaginative possibilities with a unique vision. His works have been translated into French, Italian, and Spanish.



FROM NOW ON...

WE HAVE SO MUCH TO
LOOK FORWARD TO.

THE END

THE TWO ARE EMBARKING UPON A JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN.

FULL OF HOPE, EVER CAUTIOUS ...

THAT WAS MY FIRST KISS!!

MY MIND JUST WENT TOTALLY BLANK.

I COULDN'T REMEMBER A THING!!

UM?!/

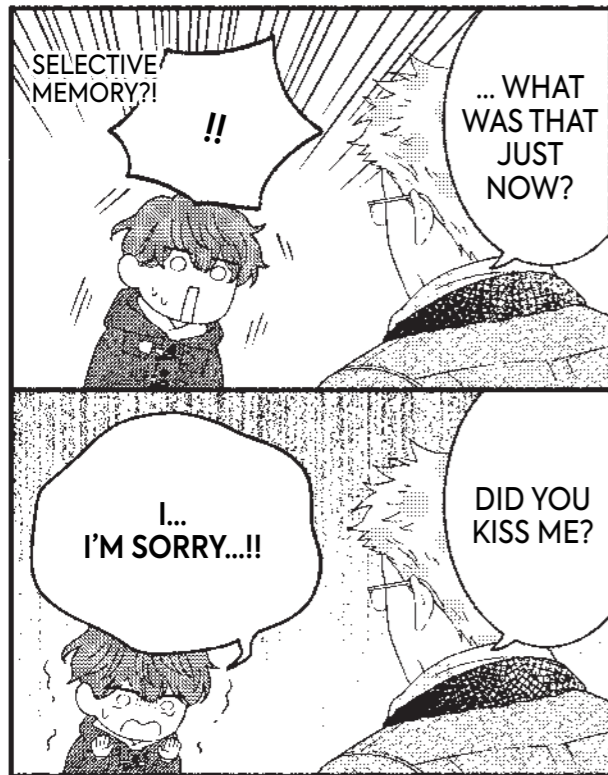
ONE... ONE MORE TIME!!

WHY THE PAUSE!

kiss

WAITING

?

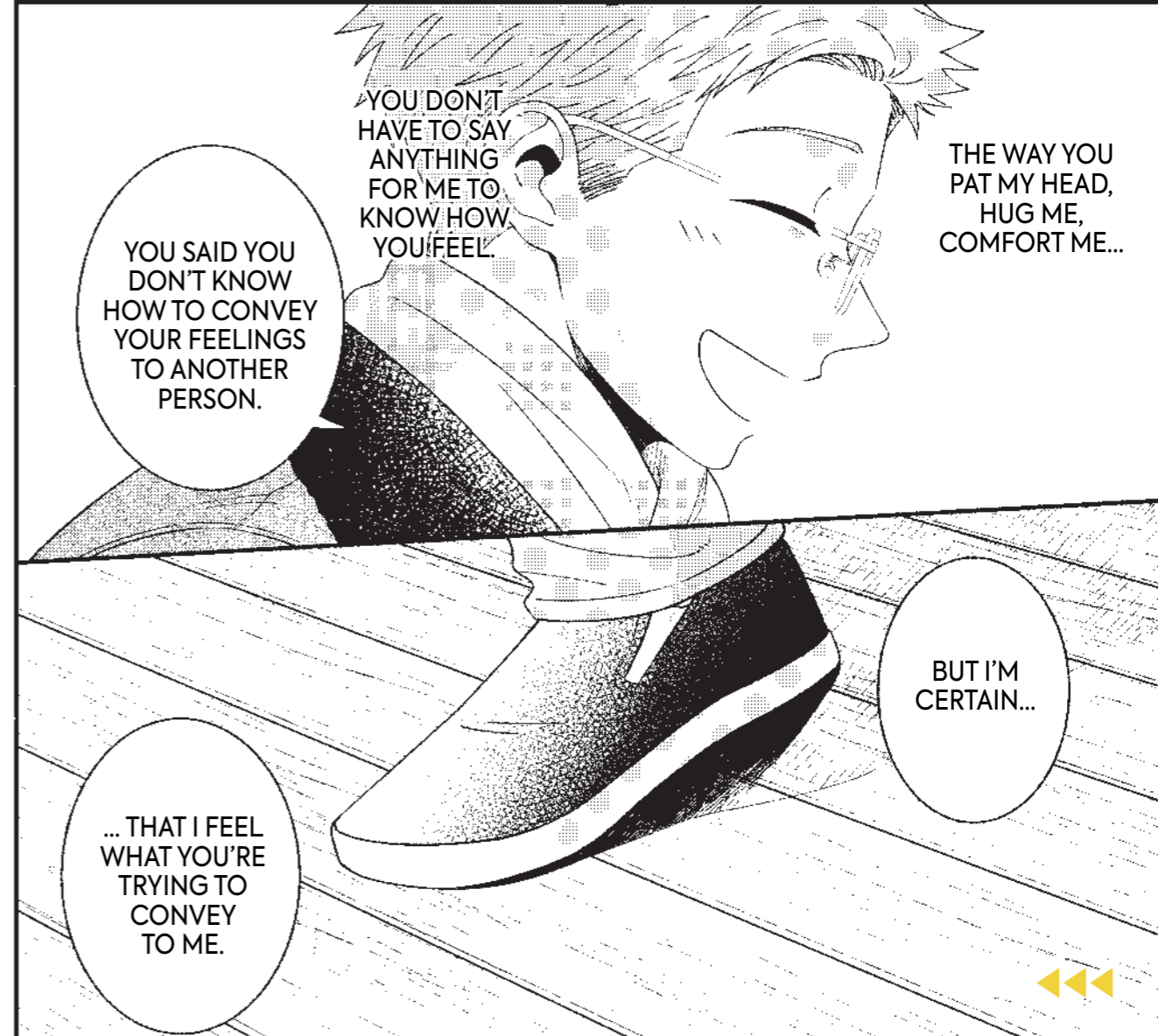




HAHA!

MAYBE THAT SOUNDS KIND OF PRESUMPTUOUS?

BUT I MEAN IT.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING FOR ME TO KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.

THE WAY YOU PAT MY HEAD, HUG ME, COMFORT ME...

YOU SAID YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO CONVEY YOUR FEELINGS TO ANOTHER PERSON.

BUT I'M CERTAIN...

... THAT I FEEL WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO CONVEY TO ME.



Risking the Heart Again: A Hopeful BL Story of Healing and Deepening Intimacy

by Shiuian Chiang

What is adult love like? Unlike the passionate romances of youth, adult relationships often carry quieter anxieties about how to love and be loved. *Love Confession at Age 35: Before and After* tells the story of adults just beginning a romantic journey, exploring the delicate, introspective emotions that come with it.

The story begins with Chien-Fan, a Taipei-based engineer who nervously confesses his feelings to his colleague, Chun-Jen, via text. When the message goes unanswered, he retreats to his family home in Keelung, weighed down by the scars of past disappointments. Though hesitant to risk his heart again, Chien-Fan finds perspective through small, unexpected encounters with his younger sister and a neighboring couple. Slowly, he

realizes that regardless of the outcome, expressing one's feelings with sincerity is the most essential step of all.

Encouraged, Chien-Fan bravely shares his heart with Chun-Jen, and the two begin dating. They travel to Chien-Fan's hometown for a two-day trip. Quiet nights together allow them to reveal their vulnerabilities, share personal thoughts, and gradually discover ways to express love beyond mere physical contact. In Keelung, at the northernmost edge of the island, they navigate the city's unique character on a scooter. They wind through scenic mountain passes, roam seaside streets, and explore the charm of the port town. Together they explore how to navigate intimacy and emotional closeness. These shared experiences,

both the profound and the playful, weave together to create a deeper, more resilient connection. Author TEI vividly depicts the couple's interactions against the backdrop of Keelung, contrasting it with the urban office setting of Taipei.

Unlike mainstream BL comics that focus on physical intimacy as the main expression of love, this story emphasizes emotional connection and honest communication. Chien-Fan's initial fear of unrequited feelings and Chun-Jen's uncertainty about expressing affection gradually give way as they develop a mutual understanding of their relationship, learning to value both words and gestures.

Adult love allows partners to grow through both giving and receiving

affection. Through the introspective, heartfelt experiences of Chien-Fan and Chun-Jen, enriched by Taiwanese cultural landscapes and subtle character nuances, this work offers a warm and touching tale of romance in Taipei and Keelung.

Shiuian Chiang was born and raised in Taipei, with time spent in Hsinchu, Tainan, and London. Fascinated by anything that brings an extraordinary atmosphere to everyday life, she finds inspiration in museums, idol groups, and literature. With a background in anthropology and art history, Shiuian has spent much of her time reading and writing descriptions of museum exhibitions and artifacts.



Love Confession at Age 35: Before and After

A Full English translation is available.

35 歲的告白—他們的之前與之後—

Author: TEI **Illustrator:** TEI **Publisher:** Ever Glory Publishing

Date: 04/2025 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

144 pages | 12.7 x 18.2 cm

Volume: 2 (Two-book series; each book is interlinked but can also stand alone.)

BFT 2.0 Translator: Mike Fu

At 28, Chien-Fan Yeh never imagined he could feel this way again. His roommate and older coworker, Chun-Jen Liu, is a man of quiet kindness and a gentle spirit. The more time they spend together, the more helplessly Chien-Fan is drawn to him. Still healing from the scars of past heartbreaks, he finds himself at a crossroads: should he stay safe in silence, or risk his heart once more?

With a courageous confession and a mutual spark, they begin a new chapter. This is a tender BL story of a deepening bond between two people who finally find their way to each other.

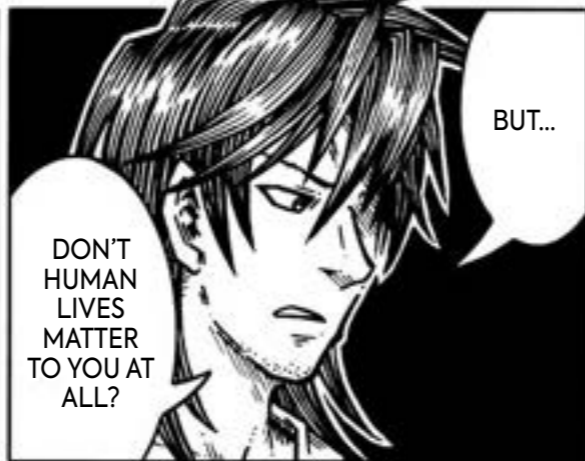


Author **TEI**

Born in Taipei in 1984, TEI studied Japanese literature at National Taiwan University. Her diverse background in the publishing world includes roles as a Japanese-language editor and an assistant to Japanese manga artists. Now a freelance manga creator, TEI brings a wealth of expertise to her work, ranging from comic illustration and novel cover design to Japanese translation and book layout.



WHAT I MEAN IS, I DON'T WANT YOU TANGLED INTO SITUATIONS THAT CANNOT BE REVERSED.



BUT...

DON'T HUMAN LIVES MATTER TO YOU AT ALL?



FIRST-RANK, WHAT ABOUT I TEACH YOU MARTIAL ARTS?

HEY

UGH

YES!



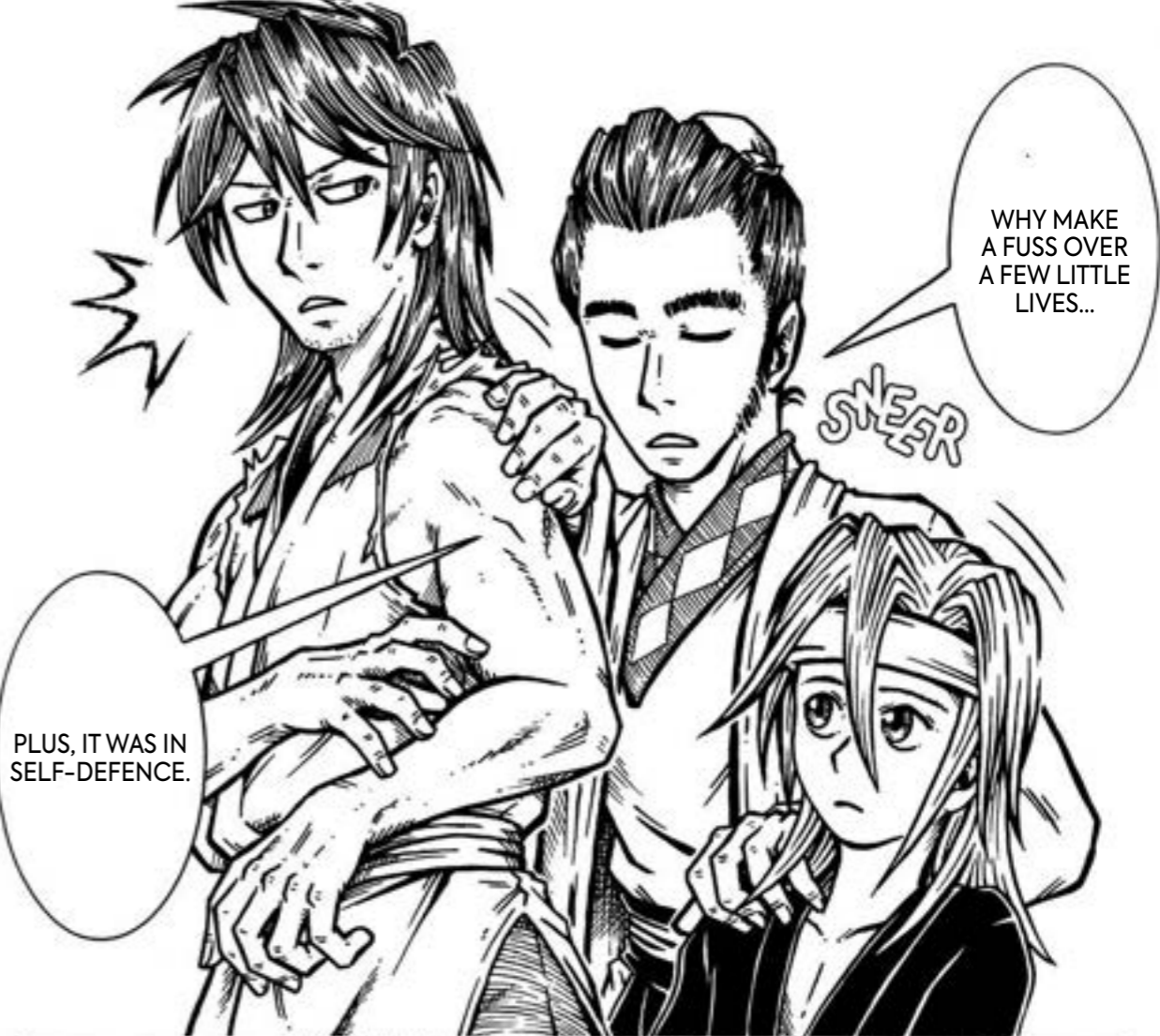
...



EVERYONE LOAD THE CARGO!

YOUR EXCELLENCY LEE!
8. VENERABLE HUA-YÜ'S SHIP HAS ARRIVED!

NO WAY, I'M SUPPOSED TO TEACH FIRST-RANK HOW TO DO BUSINESS...



PLUS, IT WAS IN SELF-DEFENCE.

SNEER

WHY MAKE A FUSS OVER A FEW LITTLE LIVES...



HOW COULD I, LEE TAN, CARRY ON WITH MY SAILING VENTURE?

UNLESS I LET GO OF POINTLESS REMORSE...

PEOPLE DON'T LIVE FOREVER, AND THIS ALSO HAPPENS IN SEAFARING.

EVERY TIME WE SET SAIL, I WILL LOSE SOME CREW MATES WHO SACRIFICE FOR ME...

NOTHING.

Whoop Whoop Whoop Whoop



WAS THIS THE FIRST TIME YOU KILLED SOMEONE?



...



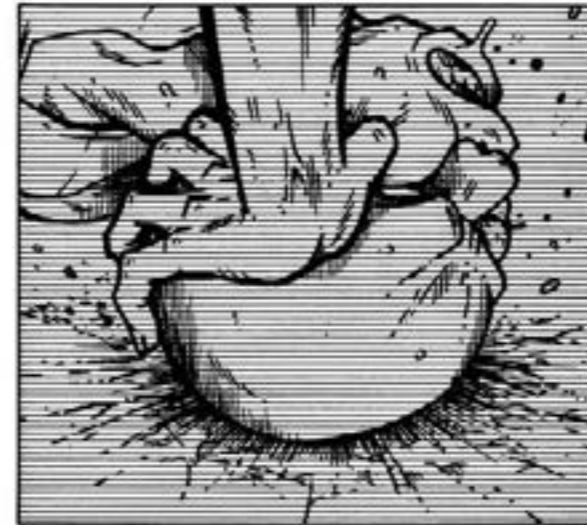
I JUST REMEMBERED...



THE BRAWL WITH THE EUNUCH THE OTHER DAY...

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?





Formosa X: An Epic, Adrenaline-Fueled Maritime Adventure

by Chi-Hsuan Wu

Just hearing the title *Formosa X* evokes a sense of romance—a romance belonging to the seafaring men of the 17th century. A historical manga rooted in real-world events, this acclaimed comic reads like a version of the Japanese classic *One Piece* dressed in historical garb. For fans of adventurous tales filled with courage, camaraderie, and daring exploits, this is a work not to be missed.

Set during the Age of Exploration in the 17th century, the story unfolds at a time when European powers aggressively expanded overseas. Nations raced to establish trading posts around the world, particularly in East Asia, where spices, silk, and porcelain promised immense profits. The region became a hotspot of international rivalry, intrigue, and conflict. It is within this turbulent moment that the ever-smiling protagonist, Lee Tan, makes his dramatic entrance.

Originally a wealthy merchant in Manila, Lee Tan escapes captivity by a Spanish fleet and reemerges under a new name. Defying the Ming Dynasty's strict maritime trade prohibitions, he bases his operations in Hirado, Japan, and aspires to become a maritime power capable of shaping global affairs. Like any great adventure hero, Lee Tan gathers a diverse and loyal crew along the way, including the shrewd, business-minded Hua-Yü and the brawler-turned-tailor Yen Ssu-chi. Together, they endure trials and triumphs, forging a cross-border maritime trade network spanning much of East Asia.

As Lee Tan's influence grows, regional governments and political powers are compelled to show him deference, honoring him with the title Captain China. Behind the scenes, his authority is reinforced by a covert armed fleet led by Yen Ssu-chi. Serving as the

shadow arm of Lee Tan's enterprise, this force enables him to expand his influence through a combination of diplomacy and naval strength.

Amid this rising tide of political and commercial maneuvering lies Taiwan: a small island situated at the crossroads of China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Thanks to its prime geographic location for trade, Taiwan catches the eye of all the competing powers. The saying, "Whoever controls Taiwan controls the world," begins to spread. As Lee Tan and his allies arrive, along with Japanese traders and the Dutch East India Company, Taiwan is thrust onto the stage of global history, beginning its role as a cultural and geopolitical melting pot.

Beyond its compelling narrative, Li Lung-Chieh's artistry shines through. His striking woodcut-style illustrations, rendered entirely in bold black lines, bring energy and drama to every action scene. The characters are equally vivid—each one drawn with exaggerated expressions and unique designs, making them easy to distinguish and memorable even among a large cast. Despite being a historical manga, the story flows with the momentum of a page-turning adventure, managing to be both educational and

entertaining. It strikes a rare balance between art, storytelling, and historical accuracy.

In many ways, this manga fills a gap left by traditional Taiwanese history textbooks. Readers may find themselves wondering: *Why have I never heard of Lee Tan before?* As the story progresses, it cleverly reveals this character's connection to Koxinga, one of Taiwan's most famous historical figures. This leads seamlessly into the author's companion work, *Koxinga Z*, which portrays the clash between the Dutch and Koxinga from the Dutch perspective.

Whether you're a history enthusiast, a manga fan, or someone seeking a fresh perspective on Taiwan's past, *Formosa X* offers a rich and rewarding experience full of adventure, insight, and inspiration.

Chi-Hsuan Wu hails from Taiwan, an island at the intersection of the Kuroshio Current and the Tropic of Cancer. A graduate of National Tsing Hua University, she has worked as an editor for online courses and audiobooks. She now seeks to remain in conversation with the world—through words, sounds, or whatever medium feels right.



Formosa X

A Full English translation is available.

1624 男人與島

Comic Artist: Li Lung-Chieh **Illustrator:** Li Lung-Chieh **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 11/2021 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

Awards: 2022 The 13th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the Year

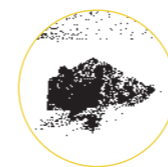
Rights sold: Arabic, French

BFT2.0 Translator: Adina Zemanek

In the 17th century, the Age of Exploration, rival powers are driven by the lure of trade and cross the seas in pursuit of wealth. Amid this struggle for maritime dominance rose Lee Tan, a man known for his ever-present smile. Defying the Ming dynasty's sea bans, he built an armed fleet and gathered formidable figures such as Yen Ssu-ch'i and Cheng Chih-lung, becoming a powerful maritime leader navigating between Eastern and Western forces. Europeans hailed him as "Captain China." His ambition: to create a free-trade haven for sea merchants, beyond the control of any authority.

At the edge of the world, a small island—Taiwan, known at the time as "Formosa"—came into view. The saying, "Whoever controls Formosa controls the world," began to spread. In 1624, Lee Tan, Yen Ssu-ch'i, Cheng Chih-lung, the Japanese adventurer Hamada Yahyōe, Dr. Sonck of the Dutch East India Company, Captain Elie Ripon, and others converged on Taiwan. Cooperation and conflict, ambition and dreams collided, propelling the island into a new chapter and setting the stage for Taiwan's turbulent history.

Whether you are a history enthusiast, a manga fan, or simply seeking a fresh perspective on Taiwan's past, this acclaimed and riveting book offers a journey filled with adventure, artistry, and inspiration.



Author **Li Lung-Chieh**

A hard-boiled comic artist devoted to traditional techniques, Li Lung-Chieh is known for bold lines and striking black-and-white crowd scenes. His work combines dark humor with raw, passionate energy, using a distinctive visual language to reinterpret Taiwanese history beyond conventional boundaries. His major works include *Ichthyophobia*, *Taiwan Determination: Legend of Beigang*, *Koxinga Z*, and *Formosa X*. *Ichthyophobia* won the Excellence Award at the 9th Japan International Manga Award and the Youth Comic Award at the Golden Comic Awards, while *Koxinga Z* received multiple honors, including Japan International Manga Award Bronze and the 9th Golden Comic Awards' Comic of the Year. *Formosa X* won Comic of the Year at the 13th Golden Comic Awards and was selected for national recommended reading lists.





WHISTLE HONK

BUT THE HOME PLATE BATTLE WAS ABSOLUTELY HIGHLIGHT-WORTHY.

YOU CAN'T BE THE KING OF LOB!

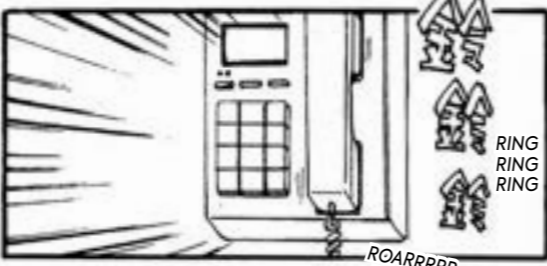
NEITHER TEAM SCORED.

...



CHIH!

FAN!



RING RING RING



SO NOISY, I CAN'T HEAR YOU.

CLICK HELLO?

OH! OKAY.

OH HI.



SOMEONE AT THE GAME ORDERED TWENTY RICE NOODLES.

REALLY?!



BASE HIT!

INTO THE LEFT FIELD -

THEY'RE WAVING BOTH RUNNERS HOME -

THE OUTFIELDER THROWS STRAIGHT HOME -

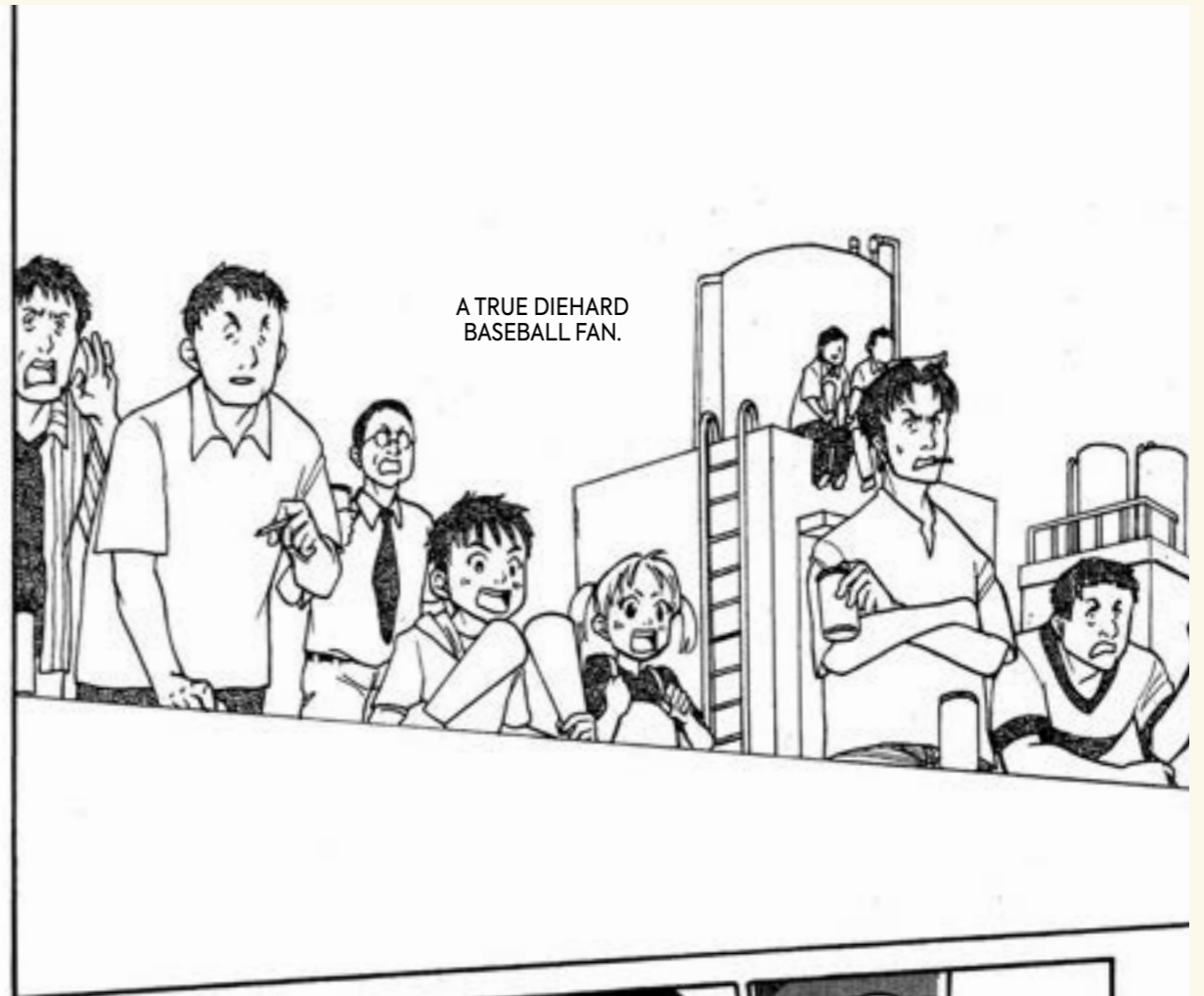
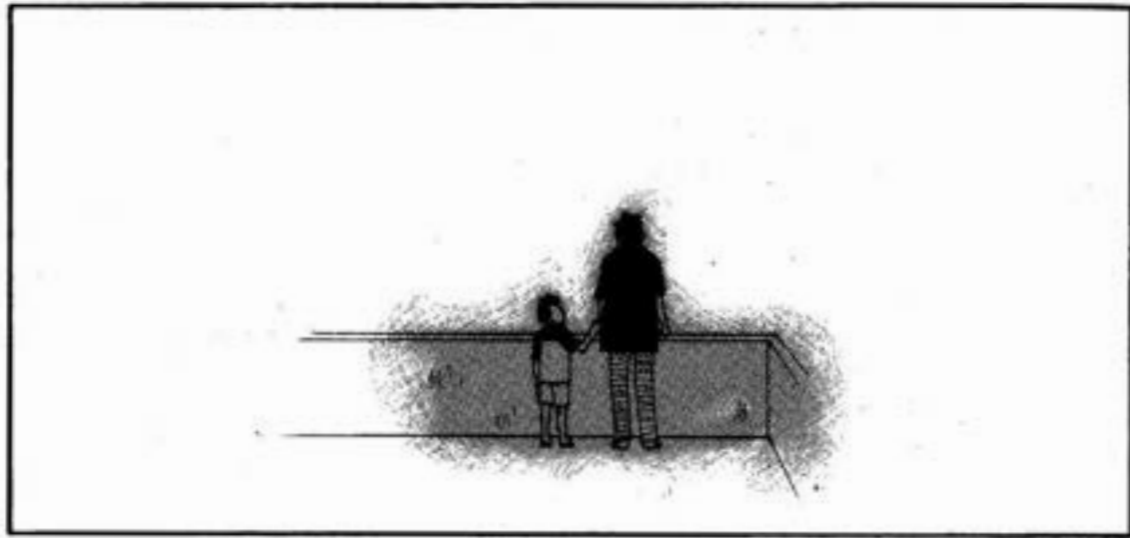
THUMP THUMP THUMP

ANYONE ORDERED RICE NOODLES?

OH GOSH!

OUT!

AND THE TAG -



A Rare and Intimate Look at Taiwanese Baseball: A Heartfelt Portrait of the People Who Love the Game

by Chin-Cheng Hsu

Kiya Chang's most representative work to date is undoubtedly *Formosa Oolong Tea*, a monumental graphic novel that took her ten years to complete. By comparison, *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* may appear more modest in scope and scale. However, this does not make it an immature early work. On the contrary, whether judged by its script, storyboarding, or artwork, the level of refinement is so high that it hardly resembles the work of a debut author.

In the history of Taiwanese baseball and comics, *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* holds profound significance. Its commitment to realism, in both narrative and art, serves as a vital preservation of

Taiwanese professional baseball history. The stories unfold across a diverse landscape of ballparks—including Douliu, Hualien, Hsinchu, Tainan, Taichung, and Taipei—each meticulously documented. Rather than relying on imagination, Chang personally visited every location to gather reference material. This faithful recreation of real-world settings reflects a core ethos among comic artists. They take pride when readers compare the original scenes with the illustrated frames and recognize the artist's dedicated craftsmanship.

Moreover, the book adopts a strictly realist narrative; it eschews exaggerated feats of athleticism and miraculous

comebacks in favor of an authentic, local Taiwanese flavor. The roots of Chang's later masterpiece, *Formosa Oolong Tea*—a work defined by careful research into the tea industry—are clearly visible here. Her steadfast commitment to factual accuracy and her patient, detail-oriented process are already fully realized in *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*.

Second, the narrative is told uniquely from the perspective of a fan. Many baseball comics focus on players and star athletes. Occasionally, they might depict someone working in the baseball industry, such as a scout. But even then, the narrative still centers on the game. Chang, however, chose to tell the baseball stories she loves most from the perspective she knows best—that of a fan. This shift in perspective is exceedingly rare, yet it proves to be the most fitting way to capture the soul of the sport.

Third, the book expresses an unwavering love for the game. This devotion is particularly poignant given both the era depicted and the period of its publication—a time when Taiwanese baseball fans were often dismissed as blind or foolish. When *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* was first published, over a decade had passed since the devastating match-fixing scandals of the mid-nineties, yet the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL) was still struggling to reclaim its former glory and public trust.

Chang's comics express a love for baseball that asks for nothing in return. At a time when countless fans chose to stay away from ballparks due to players fixing games, she steadfastly drew "Reasons to Stay." I was once a fan. When I first read it, I couldn't help feeling it was a bit overly sentimental. Rereading it now, I feel its emotional impact much more strongly. Because of this comic, I, too, have begun to miss the ballpark again.

Upon rereading Kiya Chang's *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*, I believe readers will discover even more layers of meaning within it. Its content has not aged a bit. Even though some of the locations depicted no longer exist, this only reinforces the unique pleasure and necessity of reading. Whether in the history of Taiwanese baseball comics or in Kiya Chang's own creative journey, this work is a joyful and profound accomplishment.

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

Chin-Cheng Hsu is a professor at National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology and the author of numerous works, including screenplays, bridge books, and picture books. His research focuses on modern Taiwanese literature, children's literature and culture, as well as sports literature and culture.



Take Me Out to the Ball Game

A Full English translation is available.

帶我去球場

Author: Kiya Chang **Illustrator:** Kiya Chang **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 02/2023 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

Adaptation: A spin-off project from the TV drama

BFT2.0 Translator: Tony Hao

Take Me Out to the Ball Game offers a rare, heartfelt portrait of Taiwanese baseball, capturing the sport's authentic local flavor. Creator Kiya Chang, celebrated for her meticulous research and attention to detail, brings this world vividly to life. While most baseball stories focus on players or industry insiders, Chang tells hers from the perspective she knows best—that of a devoted fan.

Spanning six stadiums across six cities, this book weaves personal, intimate stories. From a daughter's deepening appreciation for her father—a beloved baseball announcer who retired early to spend more time with his family—to the family that runs a small eatery outside a stadium, it captures the love ordinary people have for baseball and how the game brings them together.



Author **Kiya Chang**

Originally from a tea-farming family in Chiayi, Taiwan, Kiya Chang now lives in Taipei. Since 2010, she has been serializing stories that explore Taiwan's Formosa tea history through the perspectives of British merchant John Dodd and Chinese merchant Li Chunsheng. From 2013 to 2023, she published *Formosa Oolong Tea* and *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*. The fifth volume of *Formosa Oolong Tea* won the 14th Golden Comic Award for Best Comic. Her work has received numerous accolades, including the Bronze Award at the 2022 Japan International Manga Award. It has also been adapted into a mystery-solving app and board game, and showcased at major events such as Angoulême and Frankfurt.



DADDY WAS ONE OF THE PIONEERS OF THIS GREAT JOURNEY...

AND I AM HIS DAUGHTER.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, MOM! I'M OFF!

LING ...



IN 1955,

SIX YOUNG MEN SAILED AN OLD CHINESE JUNK.



LING'S STUBBORN STREAK REALLY TAKES AFTER HER DAD...



THERE ARE MANY OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE.

DIDN'T DAD ALWAYS SAY WHEN HE WAS ALIVE...

...THAT THE PACIFIC-CROSSING TRIP WAS THE MOST PRECIOUS MEMORY IN HIS LIFE—AND THE STARTING POINT OF OUR FAMILY.

WHY ARE YOU SO HUNG UP ON THAT BOAT?

I SAY, HSIAO LING, FORGET ABOUT IT.



BUT THAT BOAT IS NOTHING BUT AN OLD RELIC FROM THE LAST CENTURY. WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH IT EVEN WHEN YOU FIND IT?

I KNOW YOU MISS DAD A GREAT DEAL.



IF THERE HAS TO BE A REASON —

TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT SURE. THE ONLY THING I'M CERTAIN OF IS THAT I HAVE TO MEET THIS BOAT MYSELF.



NO
MATTER
HOW
MANY
TIMES
I HAVE TO
REPEAT
THIS—

WE WILL
STAND THE
WEATHER
WITH THE
BOAT!
WE WON'T
ABANDON IT!

IF YOU KEEP
STANDING
IN OUR WAY,
I'LL HIT YOU
ALL THE
SAME EVEN
THOUGH
YOU'RE A TEN-
THOUSAND-
TON
FREIGHTER!

Fifty-
Two
Years
Later

San
Francisco,
United
States
2007



IF WE ACCEPT
THEIR TERMS
OF CONDITIONS,
WE CAN NEVER
GET OUT!

THAT'S EASIER
SAID THAN DONE.
JUDGING FROM
THE BOAT'S
CURRENT
CONDITIONS—



HAVING
SEEN
THE
SEA,

YOU
WOULD
CRAVE FOR
WHAT'S ON
THE OTHER
END OF THE
HORIZON...



IN ANY
CASE, ALL
MEN ARE
MORTAL.
DOES IT
MATTER
WHICH
WAY WE
DIE?

BESIDES,
CALVIN
MEHLERT
IS HERE...

BUT IF WE DON'T
ACCEPT THIS ONE
LAST CHANCE—
NEVER MIND GOING
TO AMERICA—
WE MIGHT ALL DIE
AT SEA!



HSIAO
CHOW!



DO YOU
HAVE
A DEATH
WISH?

THIS IS
THE LAST
WARNING!

WE'LL NEVER
ABANDON
THE BOAT!

NO WAY!

WE'RE NOT
LEAVING
WITHOUT
THE BOAT
ALL!



The *Free China* Journey: A Father's Courage and a Daughter's Legacy

by Dione Chen

Growing up, my father would sometimes tell my two younger brothers and me stories about how he came to America. We took these stories for granted. I wish we'd been better listeners. Unfortunately, it was not until after my father died that I truly came to appreciate the lessons of resilience, generosity, and friendship that were so central to the success of the *Free China* journey.

It's hard for me to imagine the circumstances that led my father to leave his home in Shanghai to start a new life—not once but twice. First, he became a refugee in Taiwan and second, as a young man, he felt he had no option but to risk everything aboard a Chinese junk boat. My father didn't know how to sail or swim. He didn't have a job waiting for him in America, or savings or a single friend or relative, but he said there was never any doubt that he would make the trip if he could. His example taught me that sometimes you have to take risks to get where you need to go, and that when you do, you'll have to trust in yourself and the goodwill of others. You will figure things out

along the way.

I found these lessons to hold true when I decided to save the *Free China* junk more than 50 years after its voyage across the Pacific.

Today, the humble *Free China* boat and its crew continue to remind me that everyone has a story worth saving. I am grateful to the many people in America and Taiwan who supported our efforts to save the junk, and who shared with me why and how the story of the *Free China* boat touched them. This story reminded them of their family heritage, the challenges of immigrant life, the richness of maritime history, and the values of friendship, grit, and resilience.

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

Dione Chen, the daughter of Chia Lin Chen, a crew member aboard the Free China junk, is also the real-life inspiration for Hsiao Ling, the protagonist in this book who actively works to save the junk in memory of her father.

The Only Surviving Chinese Sailing Vessel to Have Crossed the Pacific Ocean

by the editors of *Free China Junk*

Free China is the only surviving Chinese-style sailing vessel known to have crossed the Pacific Ocean. Built entirely of wood, it belongs to the traditional system of Chinese junk ship design. The story of this vessel and the six young men who sailed her begins with the 125th Transatlantic "King of Sweden Cup," an international yacht race jointly organized by the Royal Swedish Yacht Club and the New York Yacht Club. The race was scheduled to open on June 11, 1955, in Rhode Island, USA.

On April 4, 1955, the boat was given a grand ceremony and set sail from the Keelung Harbor. But the voyage did not go smoothly. Soon after departure, the ship encountered strong winds that snapped the antenna of the radio transmitter and damaged the main mast's pulley, forcing a return to Keelung for repairs.

After setting out again, the vessel ran into a typhoon and suffered severe damage. It was eventually spotted by the U.S. military and towed to Okinawa.

Although authorities in Taiwan hoped the ship would return to Keelung after repairs, the crew remained steadfast in their resolve. Undeterred by wind and rain, they pressed on and reached Yokohama on May 13, 1955, only to confirm that they had missed the international sailing race.

They departed once more on June 17. Along the way, a violent storm destroyed the mast, which the crew managed to repair in time. They then battled dense fog for several days and were even chased by a pod of whales. After an arduous, winding journey of about 114 days, *Free China* finally arrived in San Francisco at 4:00 p.m. on August 8.

With only six crew members and relying solely on sail power, the successful crossing of some 6,000 nautical miles of the Pacific stands as a rare and moving chapter in the history of Chinese seafaring.

This essay originally appeared in the book's afterword.



The Free China Junk

A Full English translation is available.

湧與浪：自由中國號

Author: Lang-Chi **Script Collaborator:** Seal Hsieh **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 12/2021 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

Awards: 2022 The 13rd Golden Comics Awards, Comic of the Year

BFT2.0 Translator: Elizabeth Hsinyin Lee

Taiwan was under martial law in the 1950s, an era of strict surveillance and endless checkpoints. A single yacht race flyer from the United States sparks the dreams of six young men. Despite limited funding, accusations of espionage, an incoming typhoon, and political pressure from above, they hatch a daring plan: to sail an ancient wind-powered boat named Free China across the Pacific, from the rainy port of Keelung to the sunlit shores of San Francisco.

Over fifty years later, the descendants of the crew stand before the dilapidated remains of the once-majestic sailboat. Now, together with a team of Taiwanese experts, they embark on a new journey—a cross-national rescue mission and an immense restoration effort. And so, the frozen hands of time begin to move once again.



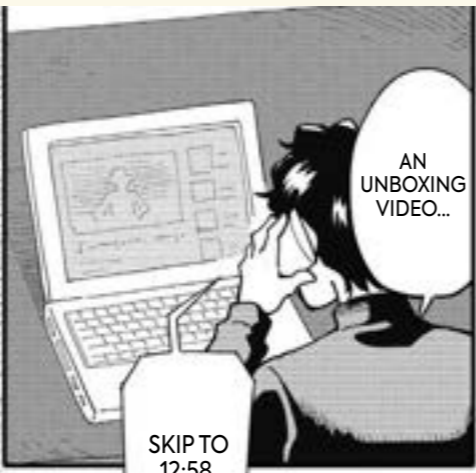
Author **Lang-Chi**

Lang-Chi is a comic writer and illustrator whose work explores the subtleties and ambiguities of everyday life. Through her art, she reinterprets familiar scenes and reveals the unexpected possibilities hidden within the ordinary. Her past works include *Moonlight Calling*, *The Free China Junk*, *The Echo Before Dawn*, for which she won the Grand Prize at the 16th Golden Comic Award, and 2025 Japan International Manga Award The Special Encouragement Award.



Script Collaborator **Seal Hsieh**

Seal Hsieh is a scriptwriter for comic books. Seeking to bridge his romantic right brain and a thriller-loving left brain, Hsieh aims to blend love stories with suspenseful intrigue. Hsieh's works include *Seven Days to Live*, *BLOODY MAN*, and *Good Morning, How About Some Positivity?*



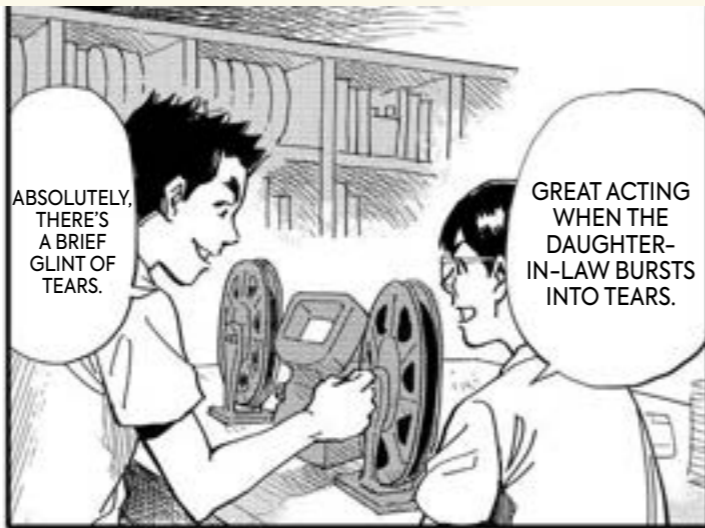


*Tokyo Story: a 1953 Japanese film directed by Yasujiro Ozu and one of the representative works that depict an ordinary family's breakdown.





HER FEELINGS ARE PERFECTLY CAPTURED.



ABSOLUTELY, THERE'S A BRIEF GLINT OF TEARS.

GREAT ACTING WHEN THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW BURSTS INTO TEARS.



IT PROBABLY MEANS TAKING A DIFFERENT DIRECTION IN LIFE!

BUT AT THE END, THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW RIDES A TRAIN THAT MOVES TOWARD THE LEFT.



AT THE BEGINNING, THE TRAIN MOVES TOWARD THE RIGHT.

YEP, THEY WERE HEADING TO TOKYO FULL OF HOPE.



YASUJIRŌ OZU* KEEPS USING TRAINS TO ALLUDE TO—

* Yasujiro Ozu (1903-1963): a Japanese film director known for works featuring ordinary families and everyday life.



DAMN, WE MUST RETURN THE FILM BEFORE THE CINEMA OPENS.

IT'S DAWN!



第一幕

SCENE 1

THE SCENES ARE SHOT FROM THE PARENTS' BACKS.

SO THE BACK SHOTS LAY OUT THEIR RELATIONSHIPS AND POSITIONS?

BEFORE MOVING TO A CLOSE-UP OF THEIR FACES.

Filmed in Local Languages, Beloved by Audiences: The Golden Age of Taiwanese-Language Cinema and the Art of Modern Film Restoration

by Chi-Hsuan Wu

In the digital age, do old black-and-white films without special effects still hold value? This question troubles the protagonist of *Back Street Dusk* and reflects a doubt shared by many today. Created by Golden Comic Award-winning artist Chien Chia-Cheng, this graphic novel responds through a journey to recover lost Taiwanese-language film reels, offering a meditation on cinema, memory, and time.

Taiwanese-language cinema, often called *taiyupian*, flourished from the 1950s to the 1970s. Shot in local languages and deeply loved by audiences, these films later declined due to political

factors and the industry's shift to color filmmaking. Like early cinema in many countries, Taiwanese-language films were overtaken by rapid social change. Film stock itself is fragile and prone to deterioration, a problem made worse by Taiwan's hot and humid climate. Once numbering around 1,200 titles, fewer than 200 Taiwanese-language films are known to survive today, leaving countless works permanently lost.

The story unfolds through two interwoven timelines. In the present day, Chung, a young YouTuber, discovers several large, round metal canisters in his home. When opened, they emit a sharp

acidic smell. On a whim, he uploads a video of the find, unexpectedly drawing the attention of A-le from the Taiwan Film and Audiovisual Institute. The canisters turn out to contain precious Taiwanese-language film reels.

Chung is shocked to learn that his grandfather, Chiang Cheng-Hsin, was once a renowned Taiwanese-language film director. Yet this past seems to be a family taboo, avoided even by Chung's mother. What secrets lie behind this silence?

Following clues among his grandfather's belongings, Chung seeks out Lee Chi-Ming, Chiang's former cinematographer, hoping to learn more. Instead, he encounters anger and refusal—Lee does not wish to revisit those years. Is there an unresolved misunderstanding between them? Perhaps the truth can only be revealed through Chiang's most celebrated work, *Backstreet Dwellers*. Determined to understand both the film and his family history, Chung sets out to find this lost masterpiece.

The second timeline returns readers to the 1960s, the golden age of Taiwanese-language cinema. Here, we witness the rise and decline of the industry alongside the passionate dreams of two young filmmakers. With limited resources but boundless creativity, they achieve remarkable effects in an era without computers or digital tools. Their dedication to their craft, their seamless

partnership, and the deep bond forged through years of shared struggle—even building a studio from scratch to save costs—make it difficult to understand how such a relationship could eventually collapse.

Chien distinguishes past and present through shifts in black-and-white tones, allowing readers to easily navigate the dual timelines. His skill is evident in scenes of every scale, from crowded film sets to intimate moments, rendered with dynamic, cinematic paneling. Touches of humor balance the technical aspects of film restoration, keeping the story engaging and fluid.

Ultimately, *Back Street Dusk* reminds us that some things, once lost, cannot be repaired—whether fragile film reels or broken human relationships. Yet it also shows that certain values endure across time. Bound together by love for cinema, friendship, and family, the story gently suggests that in an age obsessed with measurable outcomes, some things matter far more than visible returns.

Chi-Hsuan Wu hails from Taiwan, an island at the intersection of the Kuroshio Current and the Tropic of Cancer. A graduate of National Tsing Hua University, she has worked as an editor for online courses and audiobooks. Now, she seeks to remain in conversation with the world—through words, sounds, or whatever medium feels right.



Back Street Dusk

A Full English translation is available.

消逝的後街光影

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

Date: 01/2019 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

Rights sold: Arabic

BFT 2.0 Translator: Catherine Yu

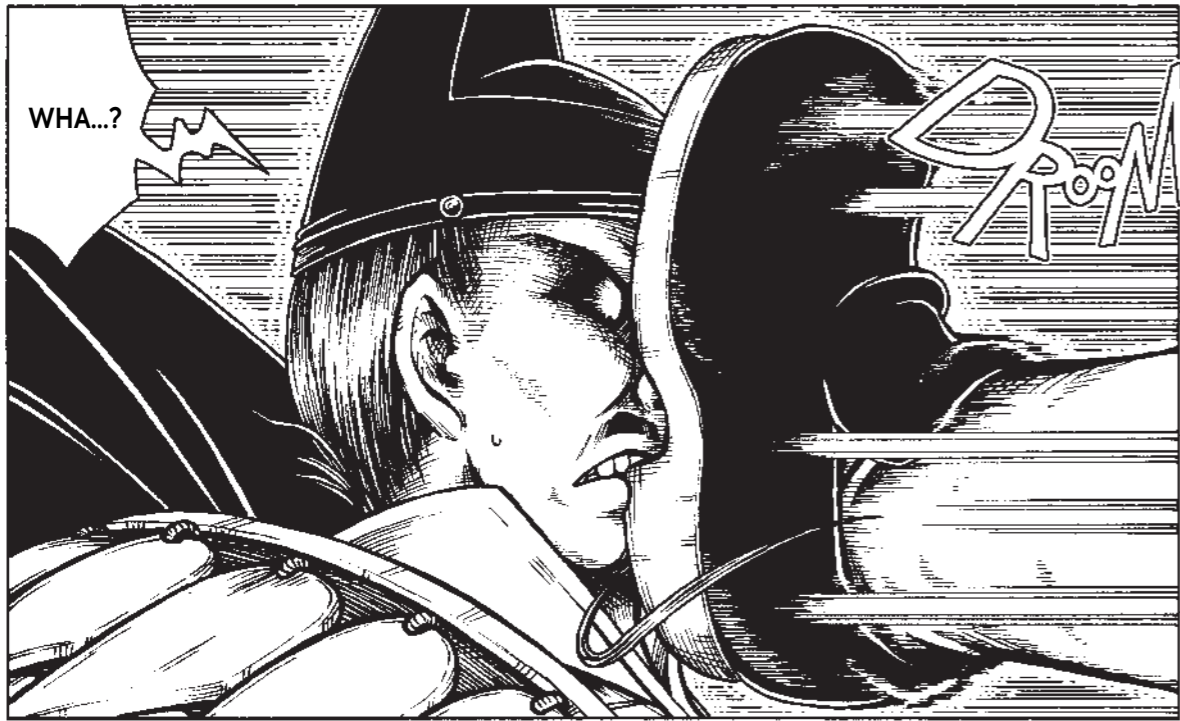
In the 1960s, as television broadcasting took hold in Taiwan, the government vigorously promoted Mandarin-language films while imposing strict censorship on Taiwanese-language cinema. This led to the gradual decline of a once-thriving industry. Fifty years later, Chung, a young YouTuber, discovers a box of his grandfather's belongings. He's shocked to discover that his grandpa was a famous and beloved Taiwanese-language director. Yet this past seems to be a family taboo, avoided even by Chung's mother.

Chien Chia-Cheng's comic reminds us that once the chance to restore old films is lost, they may vanish forever. Through meticulous research and deeply moving storytelling, Chien explores the meaning of film restoration while vividly bringing the streets of 1960s Taiwan back to life. Do unspoken regrets simply fade with a life, or can they be confronted and preserved through memory and art?



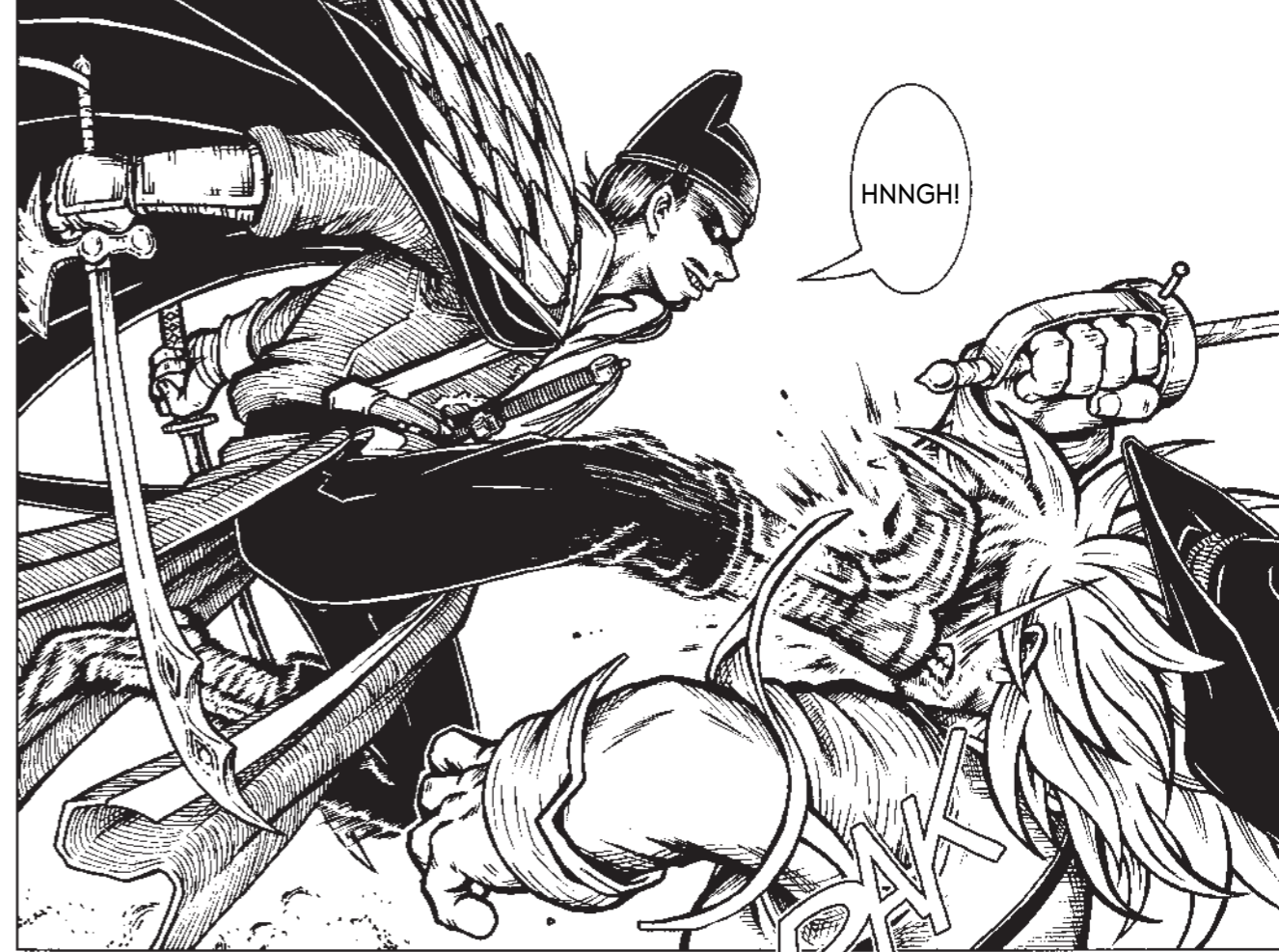
Author **Chien Chia-Cheng**

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



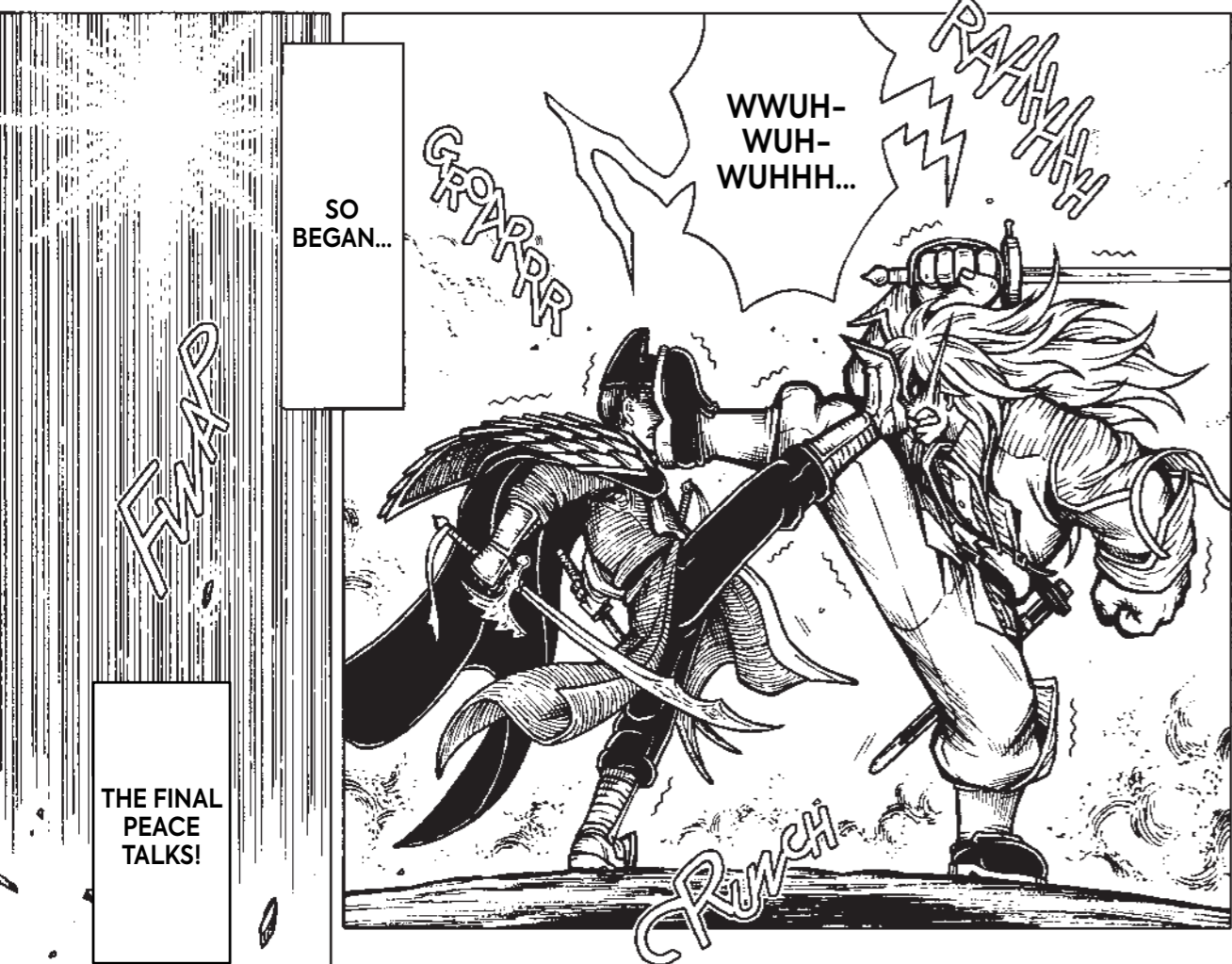
WHA...?

POOM



HNNGH!

BRAT



SO BEGAN...

WUWU-
WUWU-
WUHHH...

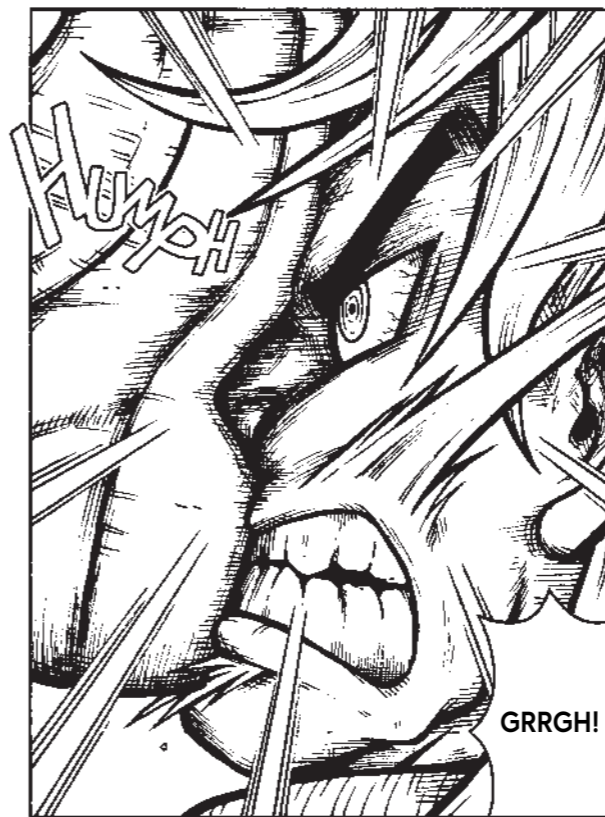
RAHHHH

CRAPRR

FWAP

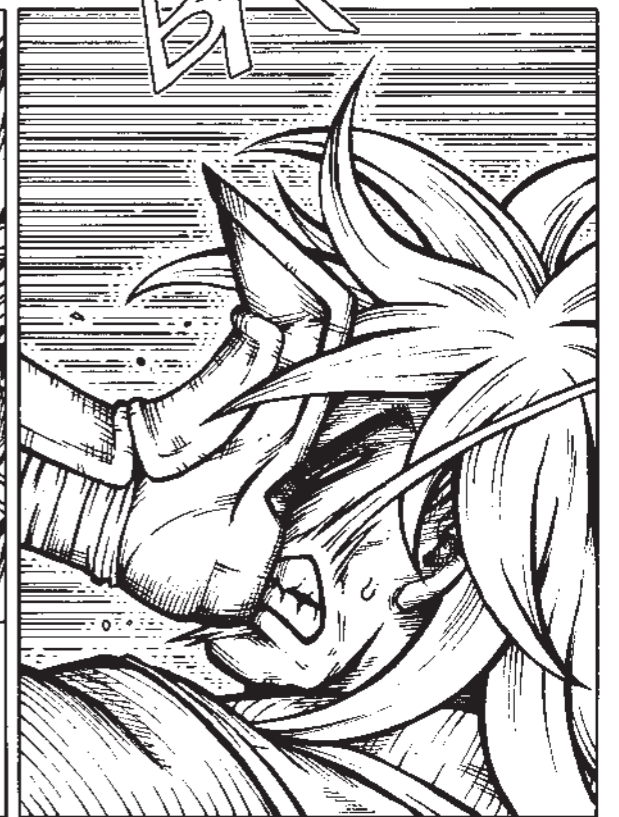
THE FINAL
PEACE
TALKS!

CRUNCH

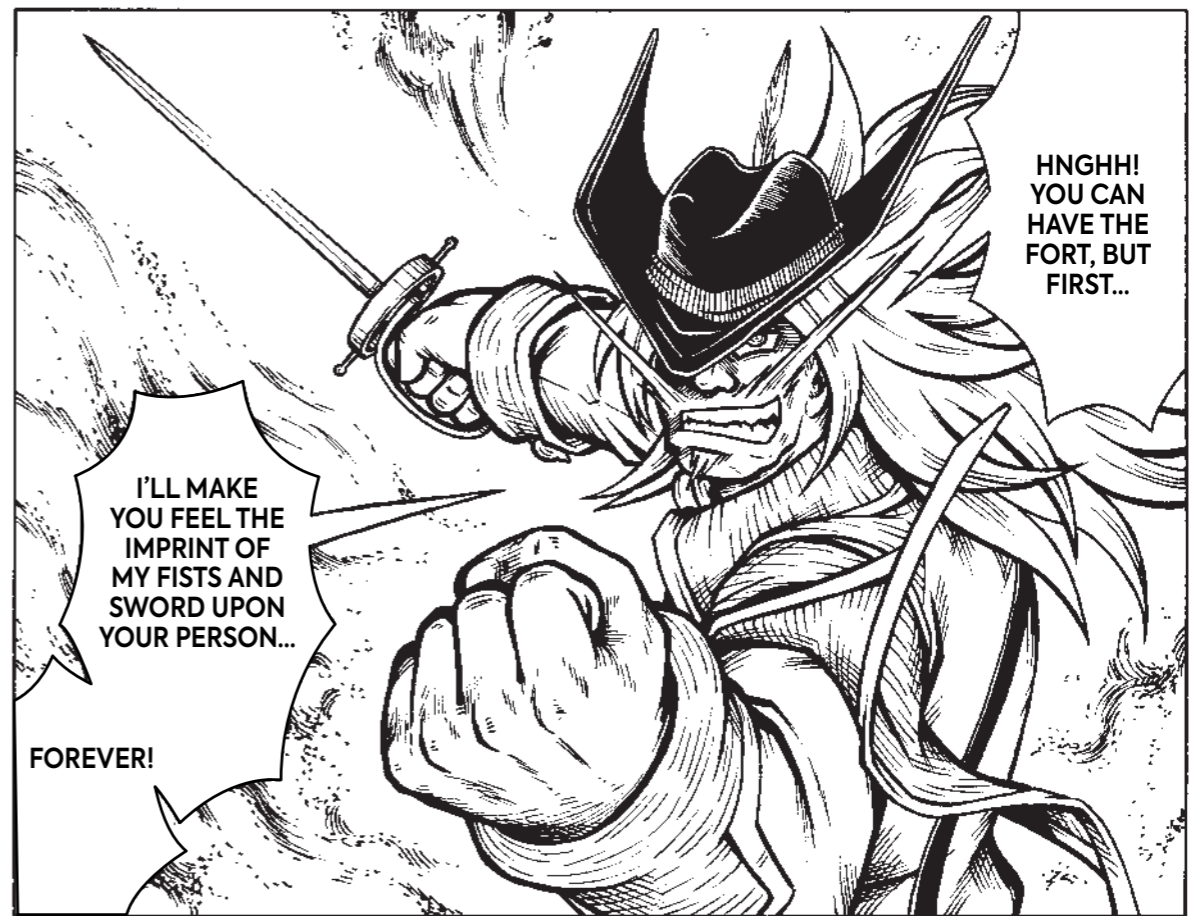
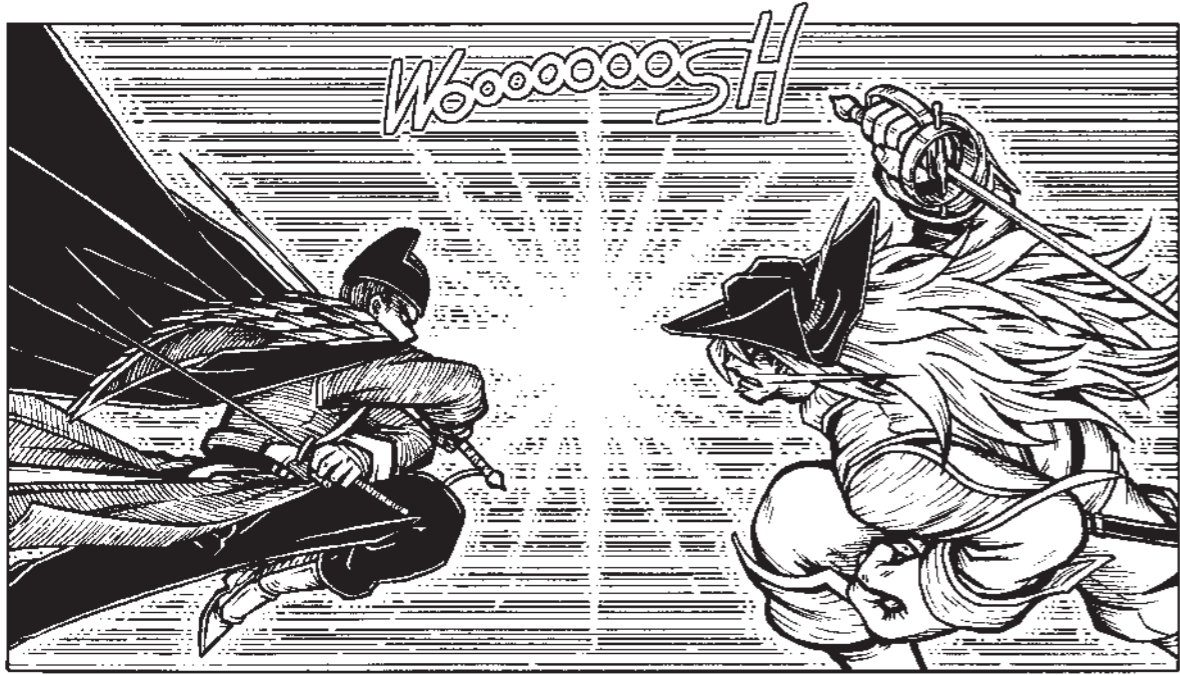


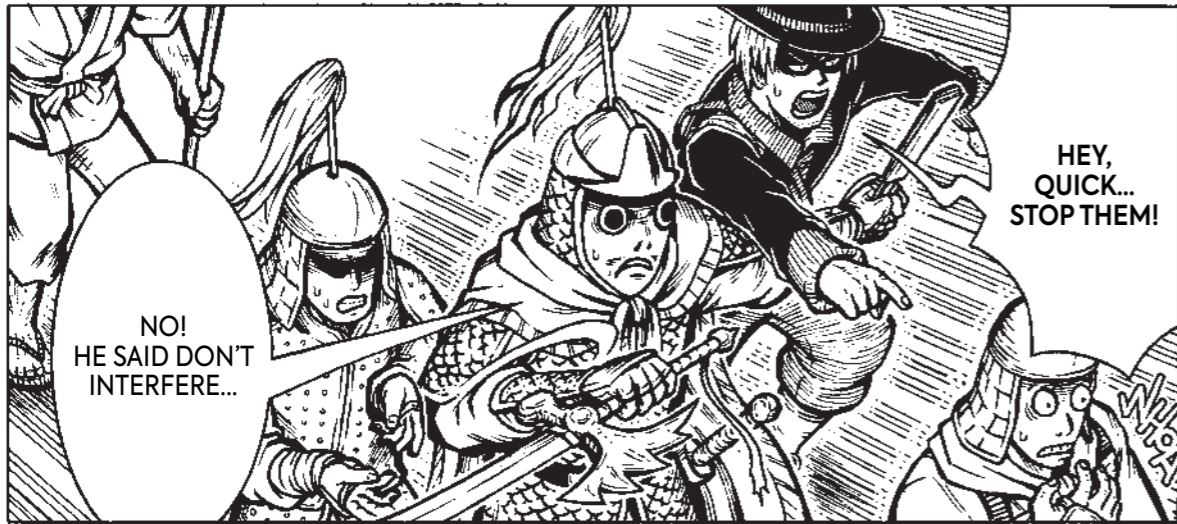
KUUPH

GRRGH!



BRAT





NO!
HE SAID DON'T
INTERFERE...

HEY,
QUICK...
STOP THEM!



THAT'S
ENOUGH...

SIRE!

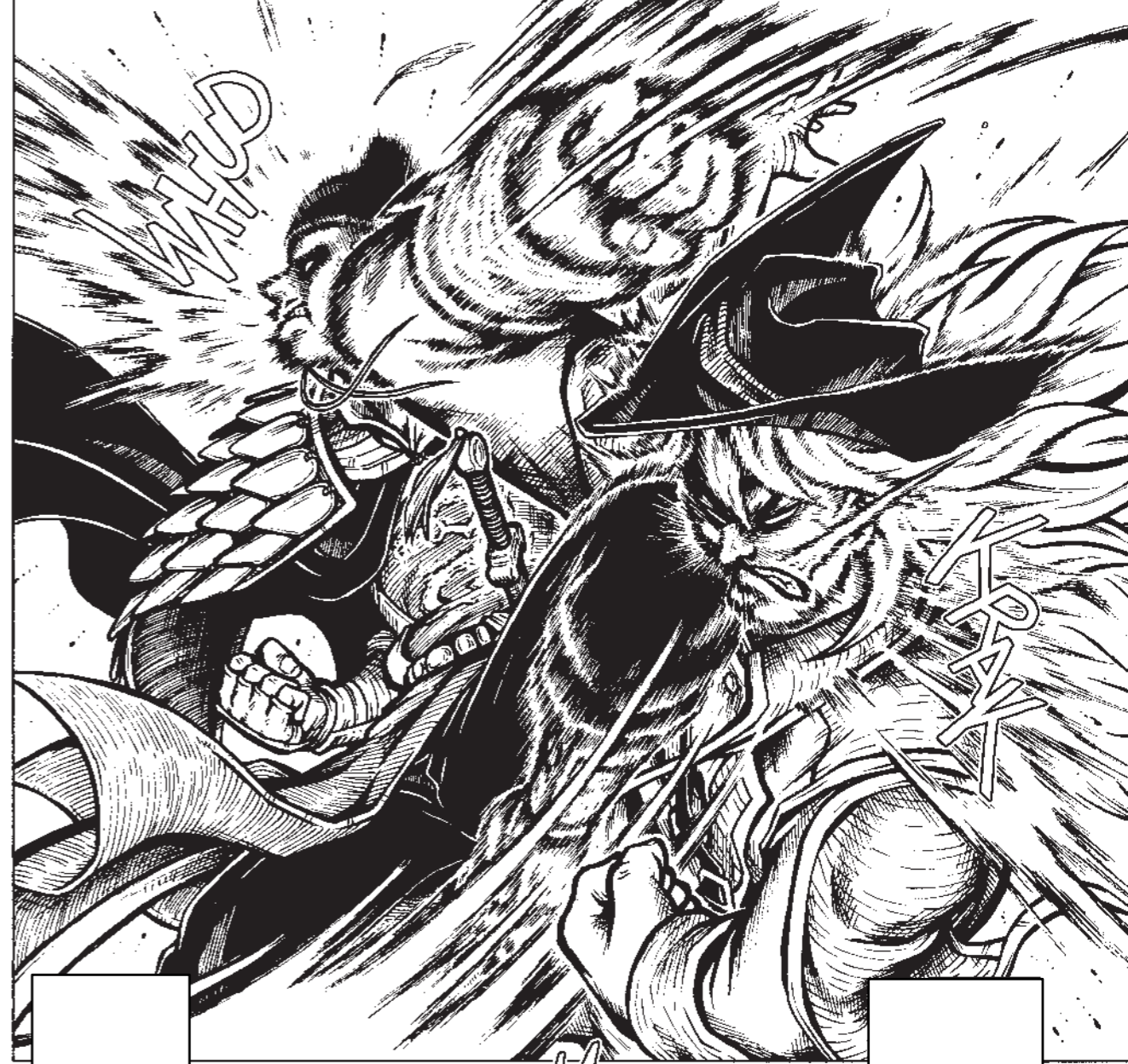


SHANG

FWING

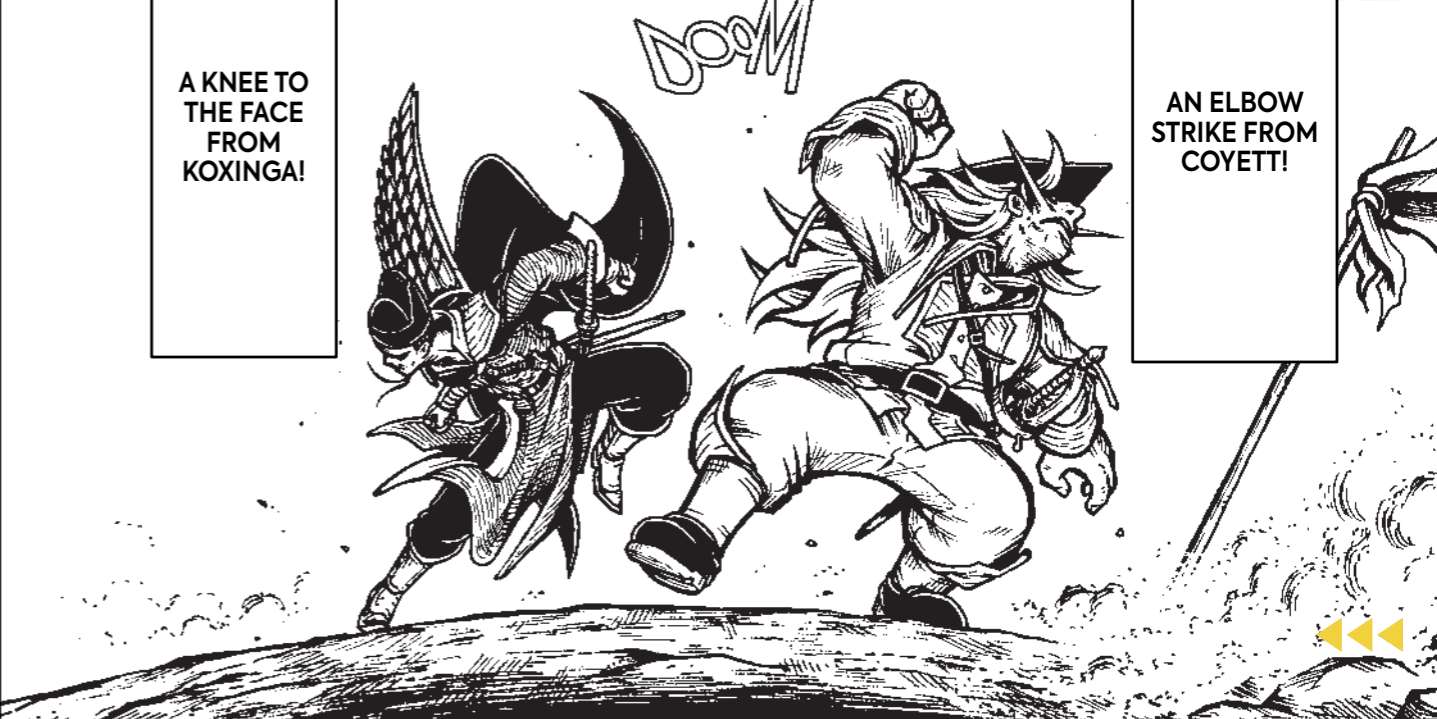
KRYK

KOH!



A KNEE TO
THE FACE
FROM
KOXINGAI!

AN ELBOW
STRIKE FROM
COYETT!



DOOM

KRYK



This Riveting Historical Manga Reframes the Han Heroic Epic Through a Dutch Lens

by Chih-Chi Weng
(originally published on OKAPI.BOOKS.COM.TW)

“Paragon of virtue,” “embodiment of loyalty,” even “peerless handsome hero”—these are the images of Koxinga we inherit from history textbooks and popular discourse. Yet *Koxinga Z* by Li Lung-Chieh presents a radically different portrayal. In this comic, Koxinga is perpetually hidden behind a mysterious mask: somewhat lecherous, intensely brutal, and narrow-minded. Despite this stark reimagining, all key historical events adhere closely to documented facts. In this sense, Li directly challenges centuries of Han-centered heroic narratives through a rigorously researched, image-driven storytelling approach.

Stylistically, when depicting warfare or scenes charged with intense

emotional impact, Li establishes a distinctive language of full-spread compositions. He uses screentones sparingly, favoring perspective and visual golden ratios in his drawing. Across the ten full-page spreads in *Koxinga Z*, meticulous attention is paid to shifts in viewpoint, spatial choreography, and the interplay between the real and the imagined. Most importantly, he tells a compelling story—one that is both engaging to read and striking to behold—through the medium of comics.

Koxinga Z draws on the perspective found in *Neglected Formosa*, narrated by Frederick Coyett, the last Dutch governor of Taiwan during the Dutch colonial period. The story centers on the outbreak

of the Sino-Dutch War. In the spring of 1661, Koxinga launched a surprise attack on Tayouan, deploying iron-armored troops and rattan-shield soldiers against Dutch musketeers. He swiftly captured Fort Provintia (now Chihkan Tower), and in May laid siege to Fort Zeelandia (now Anping Fort), where Coyett was stationed, beginning a prolonged standoff that lasted more than nine months.

A war without allies or international support must eventually come to an end. In January 1662, Coyett raised the white flag on the hill behind Fort Zeelandia. Koxinga went alone to negotiate. During the talks, the two men engage in a visceral, hand-to-hand combat. Coyett declared, “Before I surrender the city, I will make sure your body remembers my fists and my sword forever!” After the fierce clash, both sides signed a peace treaty and agreed to include one additional clause: “Both sides must forget all hatred. For on Formosa, there is no hatred that cannot be laid to rest.” On February 9, the Dutch withdrew from Fort Zeelandia, ending 38 years of rule over Formosa.

On Formosa, is there truly no

hatred that cannot be put aside? In *Koxinga Z*, Li Lung-Chieh indeed offers a freeze-frame conclusion characteristic of classic comic storytelling. Yet he also “schemes” deliberately, guiding readers swiftly through Formosa’s subsequent history: the Kingdom of Tungning, Qing rule, the Japanese colonial period, and finally the post-World War II moment when a man steps off an airplane to be received by Taiwan’s Chief Executive Chen Yi. This man—the only unnamed figure in the comic—carries numerous clues pointing unmistakably to Chiang Kai-shek, and he wears the same mysterious mask as Koxinga.

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

Chih-Chi Weng, a native of Nanzi, Nantou, he is a doctoral candidate in the Graduate Institute of Taiwanese Literature at National Chengchi University and has previously served as a visiting scholar at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris.



Koxinga Z

A Full English translation is available.

1661 國姓來襲

Scriptwriter: Li Lung-Chieh **Comic Artist:** Li Lung-Chieh **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 05/2017 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

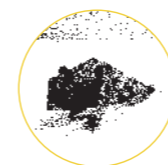
Awards: 2018 the 9th Golden Comics Awards Best Comic for Young Adults & Comic of the Year

Rights sold: French

BFT2.0 Translator: Chris MacDonald

April 30, 1661. Koxinga launched a surprise attack, aiming to seize control of Taiwan. The Dutch strongholds of Fort Provintia and Fort Zeelandia teetered on the brink of disaster. Frederick Coyett, the 12th and final Governor of Formosa under the Dutch East India Company, faced the daunting task of defending the colony with only 1,000 troops against Koxinga's 25,000-strong army. Will he uphold his convictions and protect the territory entrusted to him?

Based on the memoirs of Coyett, this riveting work portrays key historical figures and the decisive turning point in Taiwan's history—from Dutch rule to the Kingdom of Tungning under Koxinga. The long-buried showdown between the Dutch and Zheng forces, as documented in historical records, now comes vividly to life.

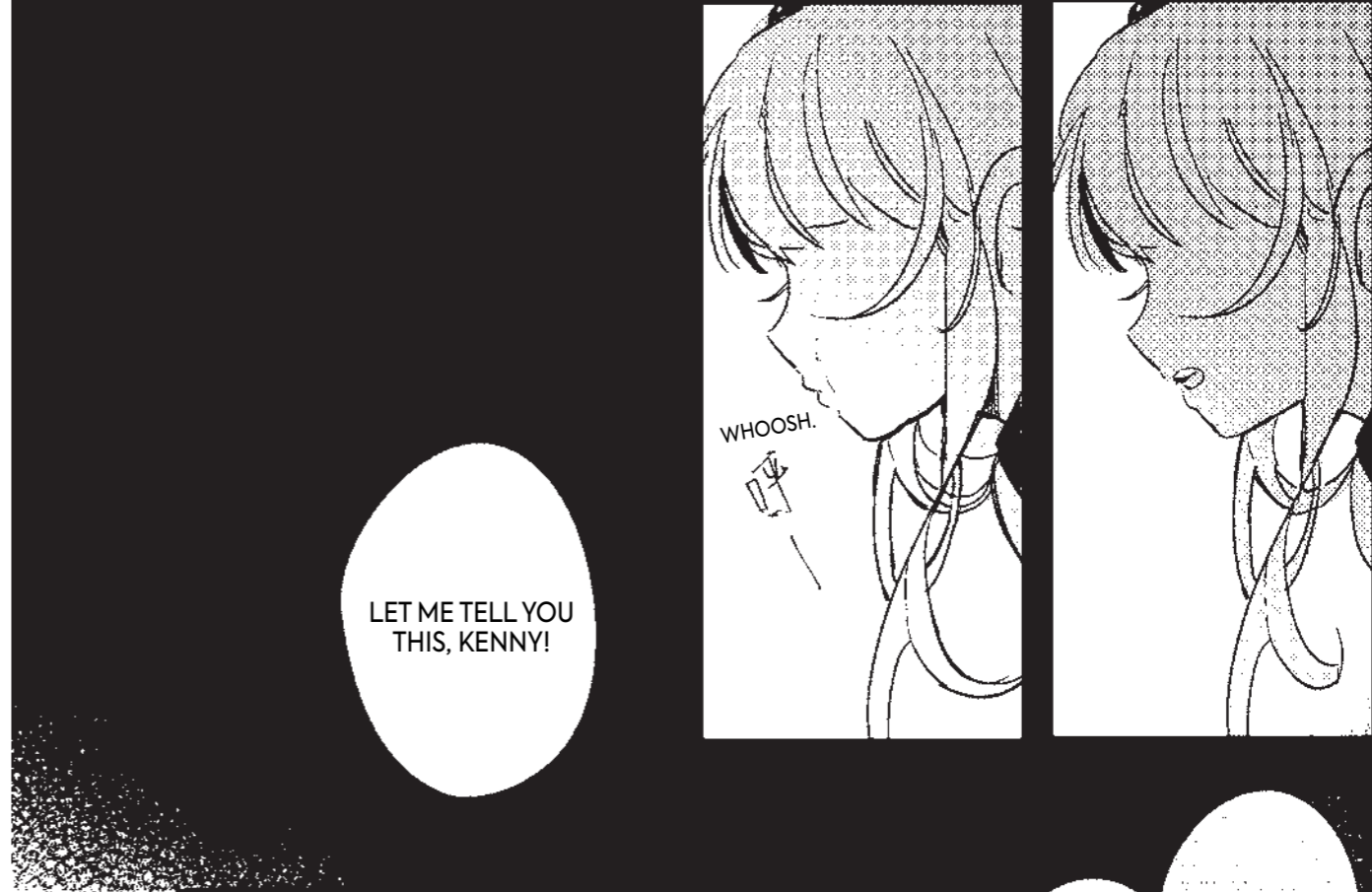


Author **Li Lung-Chieh**

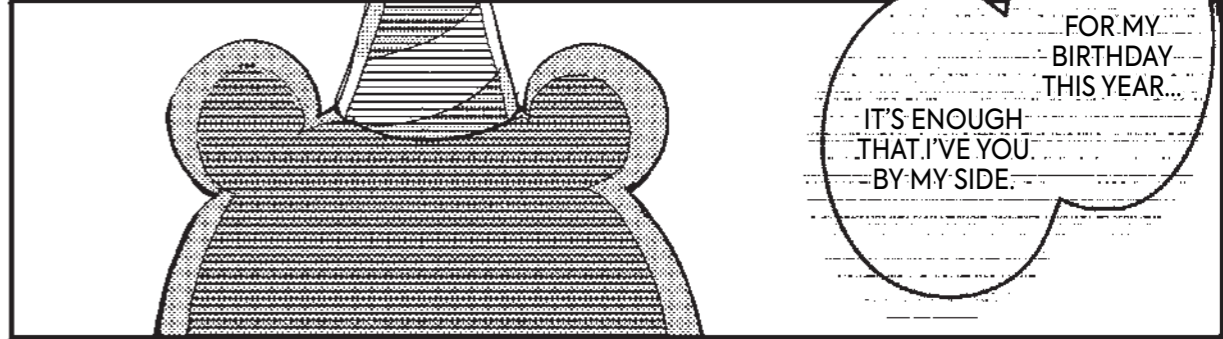
A hard-boiled comic artist devoted to traditional techniques, Li Lung-Chieh is known for bold lines and striking black-and-white crowd scenes. His work combines dark humor with raw, passionate energy, using a distinctive visual language to reinterpret Taiwanese history beyond conventional boundaries. His major works include *Ichthyophobia*, *Taiwan Determination: Legend of Beigang*, *Koxinga Z*, and *Formosa X*. *Ichthyophobia* won the Excellence Award at the 9th Japan International Manga Award and the Youth Comic Award at the the 9th Golden Comic Awards, while *Koxinga Z* received multiple honors, including Japan International Manga Award Bronze and Golden Comic Awards' Comic of the Year. *Formosa X* won Comic of the Year at the 13th Golden Comic Awards and was selected for national recommended reading lists.



I'M JUST
A PLUSHIE.



LET ME TELL YOU
THIS, KENNY!



FOR MY
BIRTHDAY
THIS YEAR...
IT'S ENOUGH
THAT I'VE YOU
BY MY SIDE.



I CAN'T
SING YOU
A BIRTHDAY
SONG...

I CAN'T
TALK, CAN'T
WALK...

COME EAT
THE CAKE!

BUT
TUNG-
TUNG...

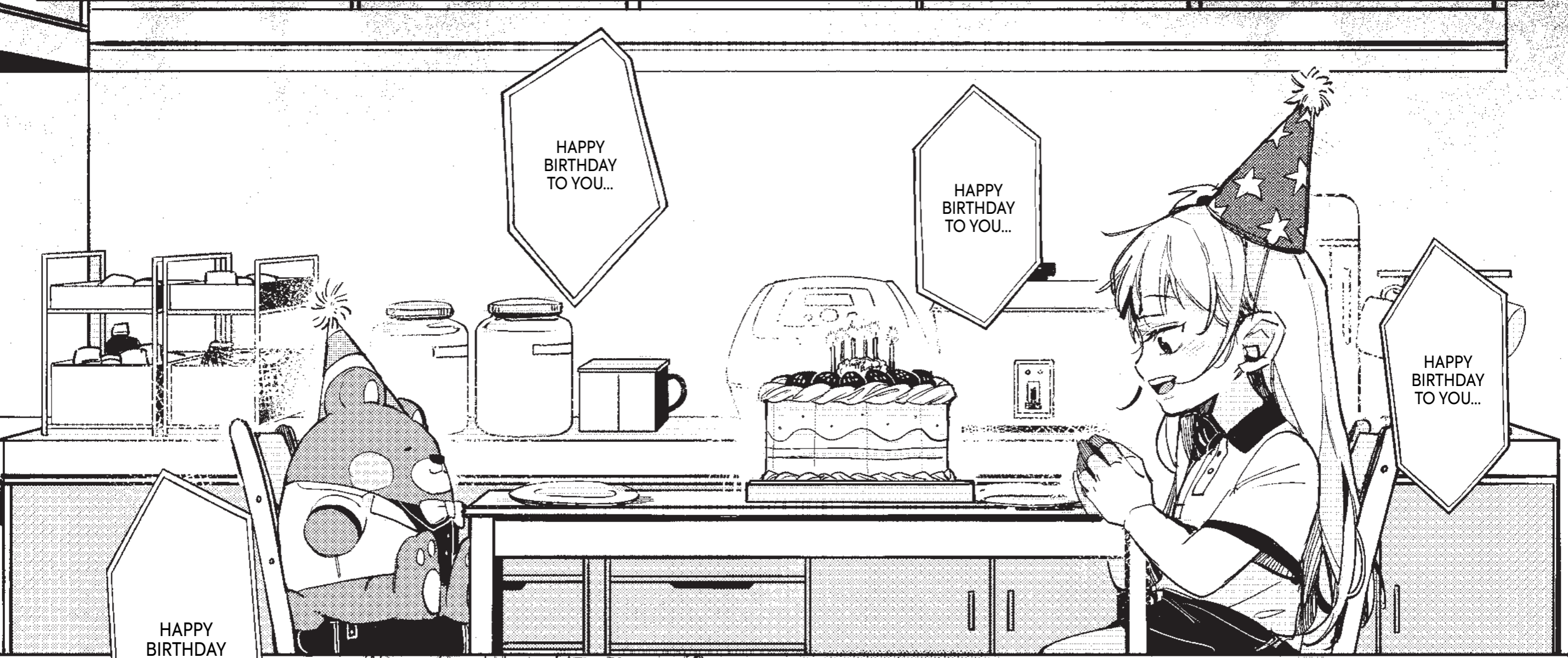
YOU'VE GOT TO SING THE BIRTHDAY SONG WITH ME!

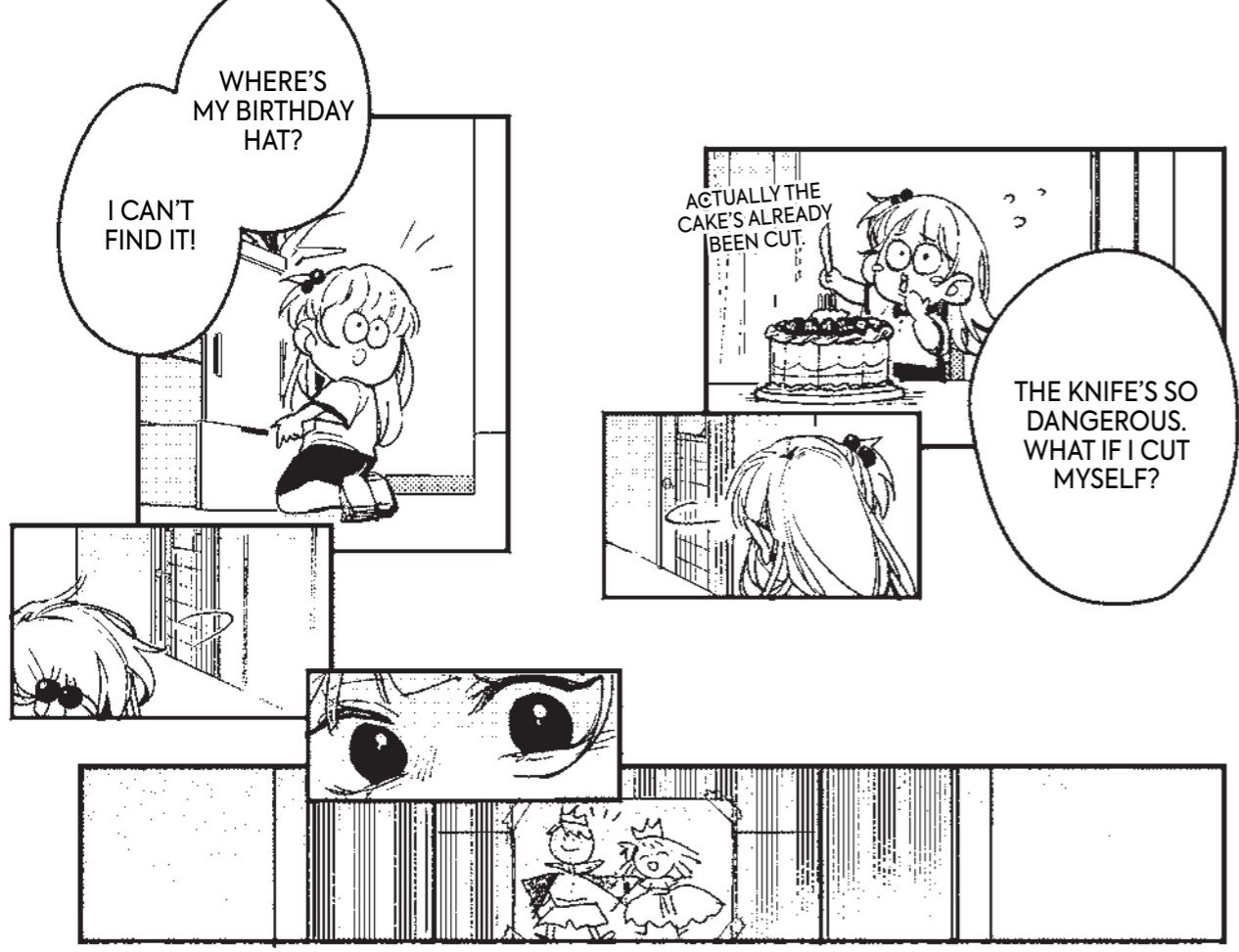
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

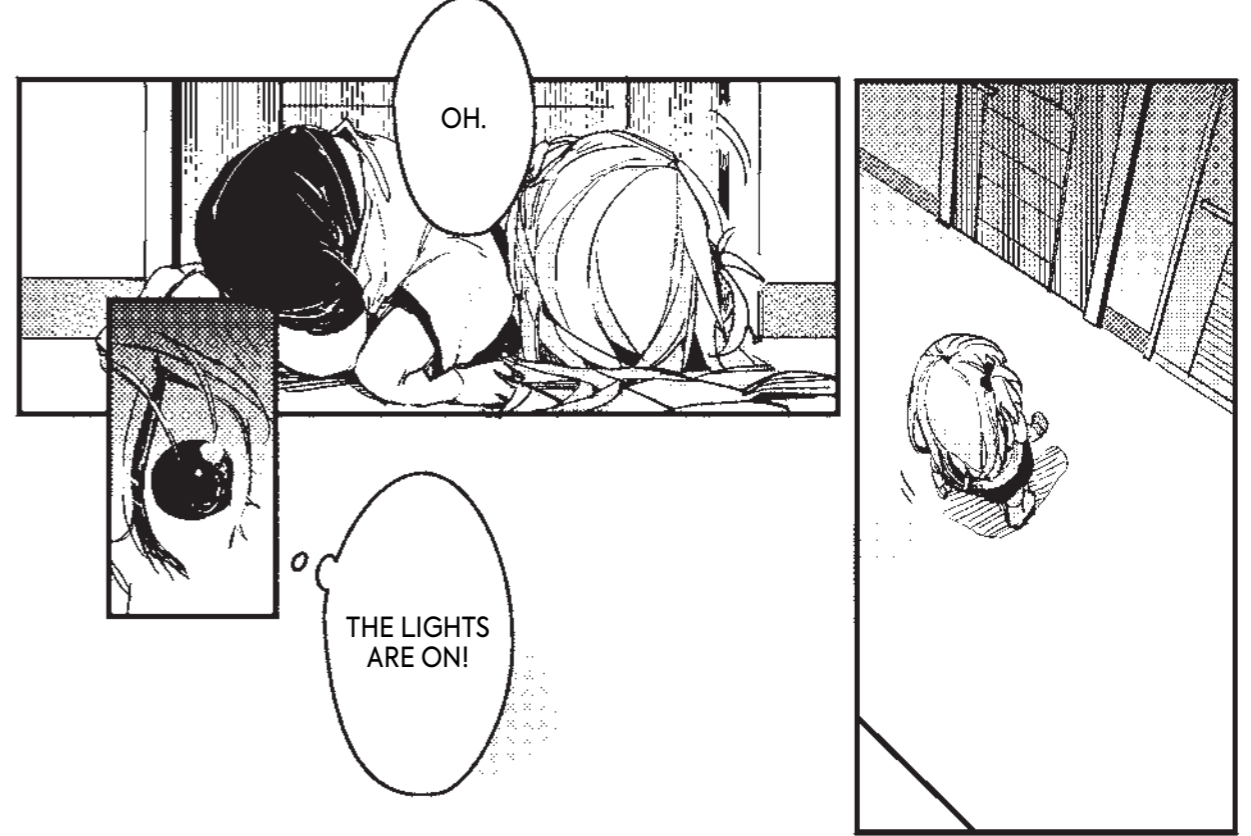
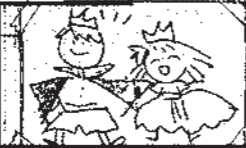




WHERE'S MY BIRTHDAY HAT?
I CAN'T FIND IT!

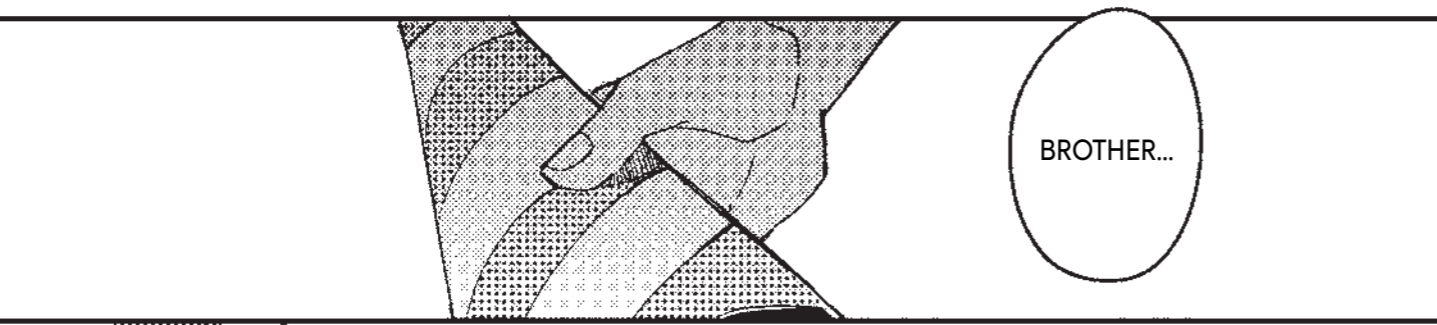
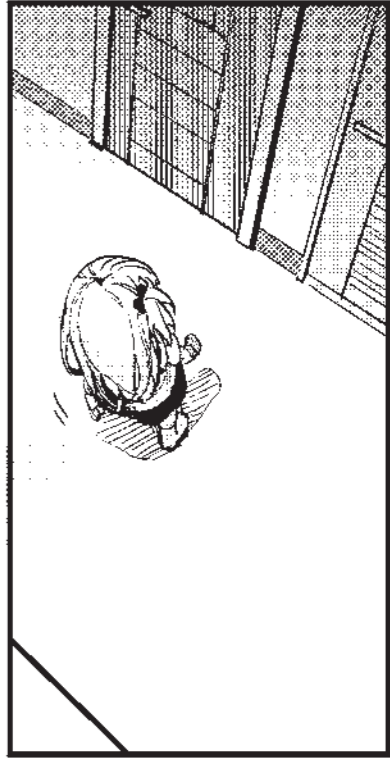
ACTUALLY THE CAKE'S ALREADY BEEN CUT.

THE KNIFE'S SO DANGEROUS. WHAT IF I CUT MYSELF?

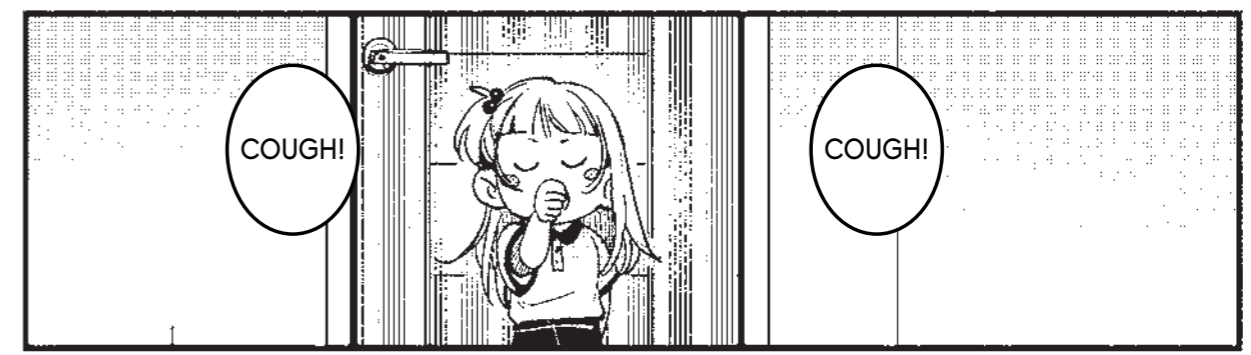


OH.

THE LIGHTS ARE ON!

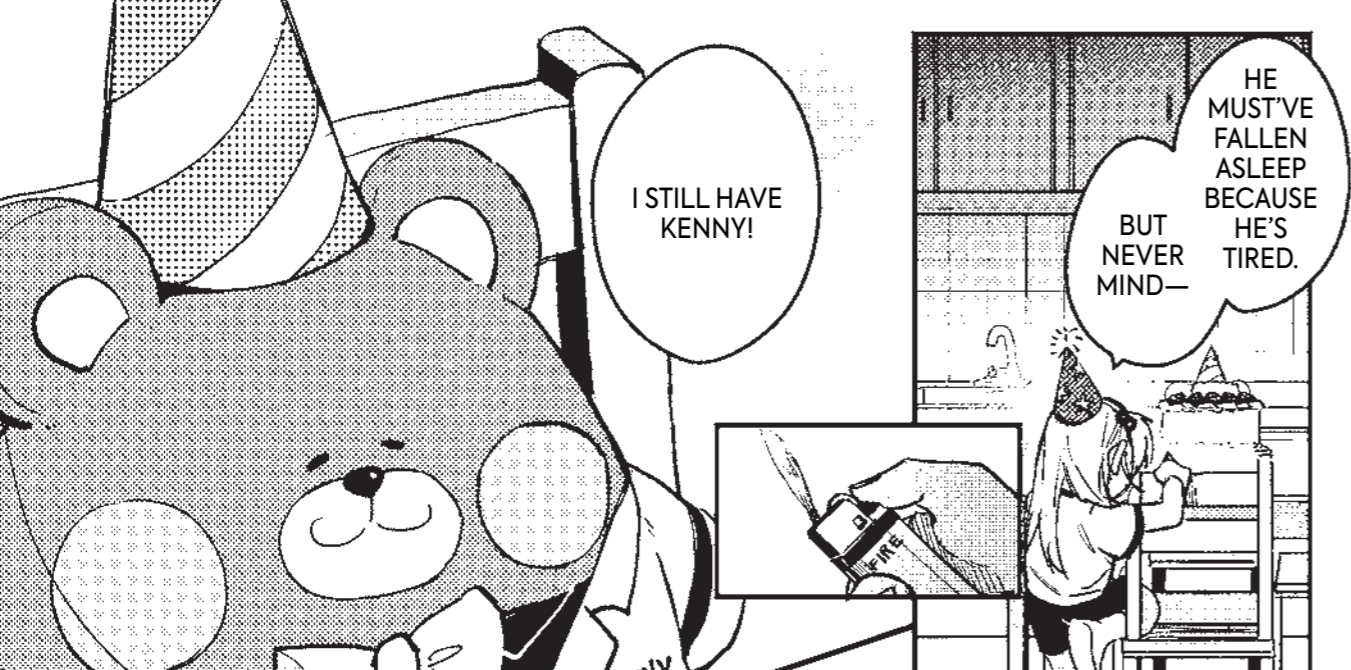


BROTHER...



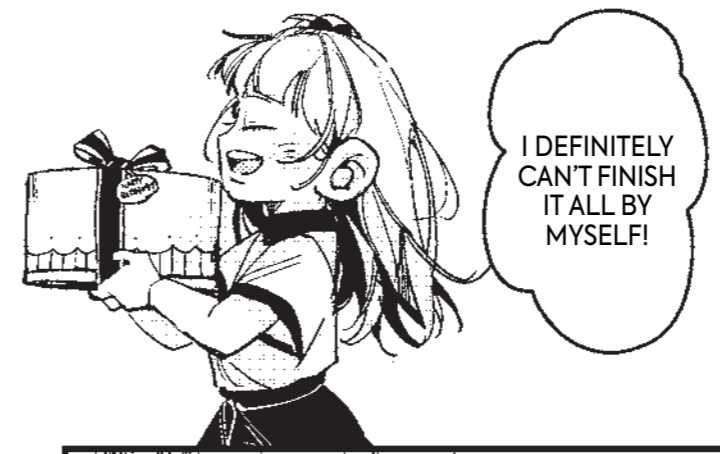
COUGH!

COUGH!



I STILL HAVE KENNY!

BUT NEVER MIND— HE MUST'VE FALLEN ASLEEP BECAUSE HE'S TIRED.



I DEFINITELY CAN'T FINISH IT ALL BY MYSELF!



WOW!

MOM BOUGHT ME SUCH A BIG CAKE!

Taiwan's Own *Toy Story*: These Handmade Plushies Long For Someone to Take Them Home

by Wen-Chien Hsu

As children, many of us had a beloved plushy. But have you ever wondered—if they had consciousness, how would they see us?

In the hands of artist Carbon, *Take Me Home* tells the story of a group of handcrafted plushies waiting on display shelves. They wait and hope, longing for someone to take them home and share in life's journey. Like the protagonists in *Toy Story*, they secretly come to life when no one is around. But unlike mass-produced factory toys, each one is meticulously handmade and carefully distributed to specialty shops, carrying the love and care of its creator.

Each plushy has its own distinct personality. Some are gentle and caring; some act tough but are soft-hearted and

secretly afraid of loneliness. Many lack confidence, just like the people who made them. The book also gives us a glimpse of their creators, all artisanal craftsmen. One seeks affirmation from their families; another wants to give a parting gift to his children before a divorce. And yet another, though no longer actively creating, still hopes his work finds a home where it's truly cherished. Because of this deeply personal process, every plushy is like a child—with a past, and with a soul.

Yet no matter their origin, they all share one desire: to be chosen, to become someone's companion. In the stories, Haru, a gruff rabbit, becomes a gift of confession between teenage lovers. Momo, an elephant plushy, reflects a father's quiet support for his daughter's

dreams. And Kenny, a bear, becomes a companion to a lonely girl hoping to reconnect with her brother, who has withdrawn from the world.

But we also see the plushies when they're waiting to be taken home. Some remain full of hope, while others gradually lose confidence, no longer believing they deserve to be loved. Just like the people who take them home—whether child or adult—we all long to be understood and accompanied. Even though the plushies cannot speak, they listen silently. Through companionship, they bring healing and bear witness to their owner's growth and the ups and downs of life.

As you read *Take Me Home*, you may feel a warmth rise in your heart, remembering that one plushy

or stuffed animal who stayed with you through childhood, adolescence, or even adulthood. Of course, we all resemble these plushies, too; each of us carries our own background and scars, but also the same longing to be seen and held. May these stories of plushies and their owners serve as a mirror, reflecting your own self and your relationships, and reminding you: You are worthy of love.

Wen-Chien Hsu possesses a free-spirited soul. She has worked at LGBTQ+ organizations, the 113 Domestic Violence Hotline, and works as an editor of Books from Taiwan 2.0. She is dedicated to bringing Taiwanese comics and picture books to a global audience.



Take Me Home

Take Me Home

A Full English translation is available.

带我回家

Author: Carbon **Illustrator:** Carbon **Publisher:** KADOKAWA TAIWAN CORPORATION

Date: 09/2024

Rights contact: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

276 pages | 14.7 x 21 cm

Volume: 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Christina Ng

In a small plushy shop, three handmade toys await a new beginning. Momo is an elephant plushy on the brink of being returned to his maker. Haru, a gruff rabbit, hides his longing for affection. Kenny, a well-worn bear, wishes to offer companionship. Each plushy carries the emotions and memories of the hands that made it, yet its future remains uncertain.

As they find their way into the lives of new owners, the plushies become silent witnesses in their homes. From broken families to unrequited adolescent love, these cuddly companions serve as trusted confidants. Absorbing tears and holding secrets, they carry the emotional weight of their young friends. Though unable to speak, they listen patiently and offer steadfast companionship. Tender and heartfelt, *Take Me Home* reveals, through the eyes of stuffed animals, the deepest desire of every young heart: to be understood, protected, and loved.



Author **Carbon**

Carbon is a manga and illustration artist whose skin amusingly shifts a shade between summer and winter. She was the Gold Award winner at the 2021 Bahamut ACG Creative Awards and is the author of the comic *Take Me Home*.





RRRA-AH!!

SPLIT UP!!

TWO OF THEM ARE MAKING A RUN FOR IT!!

GO AFTER THEM!!

THOSE TWO HAVE BOLTED!!

STOP!!

QUICK!!



WHAT DO I DO?

IT'S TOO STEEP!
WHAT DO I DO?

NO WAY?
DO I HAVE TO?

SHOULD I KEEP CHASING?

WHAT DO I DO?

SHIT!
JUMPING STRAIGHT DOWN FROM HERE?



SHIT!
HE'S RIGHT BEHIND ME!



A Novice Ranger Discovers His Calling Among the Trees and Mountains

by Eiger Hong

(originally published on [OUTSIDERS.COM.TW](https://outsiders.com.tw))

In Taiwan, where mountains are covered in forests, readers are invited to follow novice ranger Sung-ting Chi into the lush green forests.

Unlike most comics, which draw from fantasy, *The Mountain Seeker* is firmly grounded in reality. From daily tasks to equipment, almost everything reflects actual ranger life. “Since this is a real profession, I wanted to portray it respectfully,” the creator Tsaosu has explained.

With this book, readers step into the deep mountains, where bamboo grass and wild weeds rise to knee height. There are no trail markers, and one misstep could send you off-course—or even over a cliff. On his very first day as a forest

ranger, Chi cautiously follows his senior colleague across a narrow, fragile wooden plank bridge that seems ready to snap at any moment. Filled with anxiety, he lowers his voice and posture, joining the experienced rangers as they track signs of illegal loggers known as “mountain rats.”

When asked why she chose to depict the life of forest rangers, Tsaosu laughs. “Even though I’m an otaku-type comic artist, I actually enjoy hiking,” she says. “I often go on suburban trails with other comic artist friends. Because I love nature, I wanted to understand forest rangers better—and help more people learn about them through this comic.” She admits that before conducting research, her understanding of rangers was limited.

Tsaosu’s research greatly enriched her storytelling and sparked myriad ideas. One scene that deeply affected her was the damage caused by illegal logging. In a chapter titled “Tears of the Trees,” the protagonist stands before a severely scarred Taiwan incense cedar and reflects on its suffering. Tsaosu recalls, “When I followed the rangers to an illegal logging site, I saw massive trees disfigured in brutal ways. Poachers carve out valuable parts—especially burls—and carry them away. The trees are left mangled and scarred. To me, it looked like torture.”

In the book, Sung-ting struggles with past career failures and a lack of support from his family. By chance, he passes the exam to become a forest ranger. As he patrols the mountains—observing every plant and every shift in the landscape—he is not only protecting the forest. He realizes he has been searching for this all along: a mountain to anchor his life, a mountain he now wishes to protect forever. His uncertainty has gradually transformed into passion and purpose. “Isn’t this what so many people go through?” Tsaosu says. “You graduate, start a job you’re not sure suits you, and hesitate to quit. You feel lost about the future. But no matter how lost you are,

I believe everyone can eventually find a goal—just like Sung-ting.”

While *The Mountain Seeker* is a comic about forest rangers, it is also a story about life, purpose, and self-discovery. As readers follow Sung-ting’s growth and the challenges he overcomes, they may find themselves growing alongside him. The comic must eventually end, but this novice ranger’s journey will not. And in the real world, forest rangers will continue guarding the mountains, quietly inspiring more people to join this noble and deeply meaningful profession.

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

Eiger Hong, whose full name is Meng-Fan Hong, is a Taiwan-based writer and content strategist with over a decade of experience in feature writing, interviewing, and editorial planning. His work spans magazines, books, digital media, and brand storytelling. As a dedicated freelancer, he collaborates with major platforms such as [OUTSIDERS](https://outsiders.com.tw) and Yahoo News, bringing thoughtful, well-crafted narratives to diverse audiences.



The Mountain Seeker

A Full English translation is available.

尋山人

Author: Tsaosu **Illustrator:** Tsaosu **Publisher:** KADOKAWA TAIWAN CORPORATION

Date: 07/2024

Rights contact: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

240 pages | 14.7 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1

Rights sold: French (digital)

BFT2.0 Translator: Chris MacDonald

After graduating from university, Sung-ting Chi drifts through a series of short-lived jobs. Directionless, he's unsure of what to do with his life. Then a recruitment advertisement for forest rangers catches his eye. Sung-ting takes the test, submits the application, and, almost before he knows it, finds himself sworn in as a newly appointed forest ranger.

Soon, the novice ranger plunges into the realities of the job: mountain rescues, wildfire control, and high-stakes battles against poaching. Gradually, the work begins to change him. Standing amid Taiwan's lush, breathing forests, Sung-ting gradually understands what it means to protect the land.

A hopeful thought takes root: maybe this is the vocation he's been searching for all along.



Author **Tsaosu**

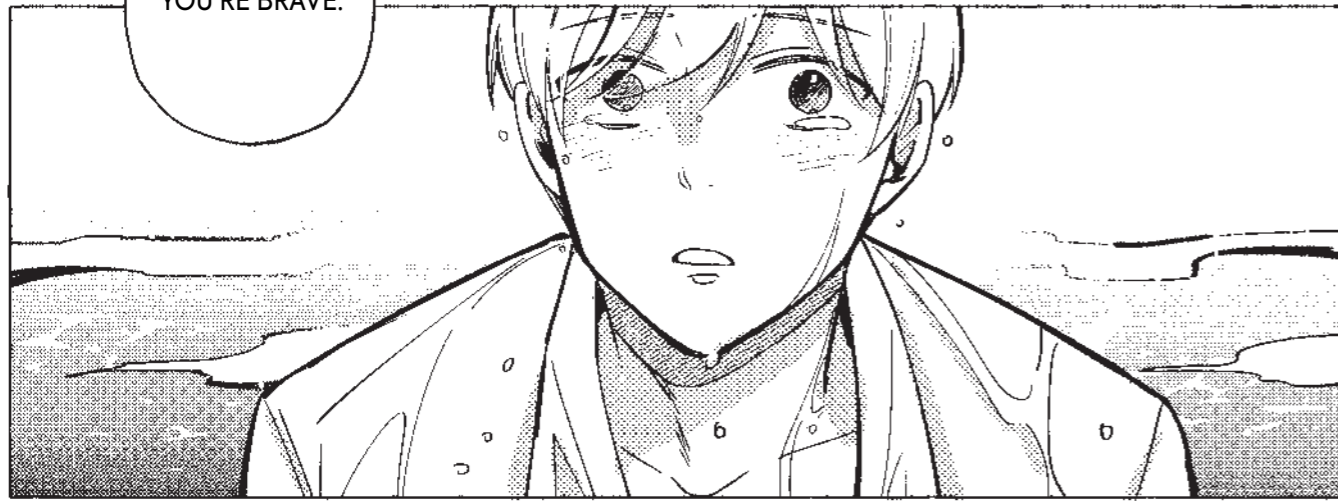
A graduate of the National Taiwan University of Arts, Tsaosu is a comic and illustration artist active in both independent publishing and collaborations with major publishers. Marked by her distinctive visual style and compelling narrative voice, her works span original zines, long-form comics, and digital serializations. Tsaosu is best known for *The Mountain Seeker*, published by KADOKAWA as part of the Creative Comic Collection (CCC), and for the ongoing webcomic *The Taoist's Apprentice and the Zombie Master*, which has garnered a devoted fan base.



WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE—

BOTH LIVING AND DYING TAKE COURAGE.

YOU'RE BRAVE.



IT'S NOT EASY...

BUT YOU'RE WITH ME.

IS IT THAT EASY TO DIE?

FIRST OF ALL,

YOU'RE NOT SELFISH IN THE LEAST, CHIEN.



THEN.. ARE YOU WILLING TO GO ON LIVING WITH ME?



KINDER THAN ANYONE.

YOU NEVER ASKED ME BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO KIND,

SO, PLEASE DON'T APOLOGIZE.



DON'T BE AFRAID, I'LL BE WITH YOU.

...SHU!

HUH?

NO.. NO..

SHU'S BEEN TRYING SO HARD TO SURVIVE...

WHAT THE HECK DID I JUST SAY?

AREN'T YOU AFRAID?

... WHY?



GETS UP

SWOOSH

SWISH

SURE.

SWOOSH

I'LL DIE WITH YOU.



I'VE WANTED
TO ASK YOU
MANY TIMES...

ARE YOU
WILLING TO
DIE WITH
ME?

I'M
SORRY...



“It Hurts, But What If We Try Living?” A Story of Teenagers Overcoming Struggle

by Yu-Ting Tseng

(originally published on creative-comic.tw)

Teenagers' emotions tend to be subtle and elusive. For author Gene, *How to Make Our World* was the hardest story she has ever created. She had to understand the characters thoroughly so their contradictions would appear naturally.

The three protagonists of *How to Make Our World* are Tzu-Chien, cheerful and helpful; Shu-Fan, aloof and sharp; and Hsin-Tung, gentle and considerate. Beneath their outward appearances, each faces deep personal struggles. Tzu-Chien hides scars from domestic abuse inflicted by his father, yet he greets others with a bright, cheerful smile. Shu-Fan, sharp-tongued and withdrawn, is the only one who openly expresses emotion, crying when hurt, while also juggling part-time

work to survive. Hsin-Tung, desperate to fit in, becomes the target of silent exclusion. The story follows how the three gradually glimpse each other's wounds while navigating the challenges of an otherwise ordinary high school life.

Though Tzu-Chien is the main character, he represents the greatest contrast. Outwardly warm and helpful, he is the one who drags Shu-Fan along to celebrate Hsin-Tung's forgotten birthday. Yet at home, he suffers violence and emotional manipulation from his abusive father. “He thinks that by taking on the pain, he is helping his family,” Gene explained. “From my perspective, Tzu-Chien's eagerness to help others is a form of avoidance.”

Gene never intended this book to

feel bleak. Rather, she views it as a form of “life counseling.” The work poses a gentle yet persistent question to life itself. Gene isn't interested in showing how miserable someone can be; she aims to depict situations that readers will recognize from their own experiences. The focus lies in the delicate, everyday moments of confusion that ignite inner dialogue.

Meanwhile, Hsin-Tung experiences subtle but painful social exclusion. She suffers no physical harm, and to outsiders the situation may seem minor, yet the loneliness it brings is profound and difficult to express. Teenagers facing this kind of silent bullying often question themselves—are they overreacting, or is their pain insignificant compared to that of others?

Shu-Fan, on the other hand, wonders whether turning eighteen and entering legal adulthood truly means one has grown up. For Gene, maturity has no fixed definition: “There is no single moment you can point to and say, now you are grown. We don't really know what adulthood means, but we keep striving to

grow.”

In the final chapter, Tzu-Chien finally confesses the words he has swallowed for so long: “Are you willing to die with me?” For a teenager overwhelmed by an unfixable inner rupture, death may feel like the quickest escape. But Gene also seeds the story with another question: “What if we try living instead?”

Gene hopes readers who share the characters' emotional struggles will find comfort and know they are not alone. Her characters face hardship, but they endure. “The future might be good. Or better. We don't know. But maybe it will be.”

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

Yu-Ting Tseng is a writer committed to observing and portraying the subtle details of everyday life with sincerity. A longtime comics reader, she came to deeply appreciate the unique charm of Taiwanese comics later in her journey.



How to Make Our World

A Full English translation is available.

殤否

Author: Gene **Illustrator:** Gene **Publisher:** KADOKAWA TAIWAN CORPORATION

Date: 11/2022

Rights contact: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

232 pages | 14.7 x 21 cm

Volume: 1

Adaptation: Novel

Rights sold: Japanese, Vietnamese

BFT2.0 Translator: William Serrano

Tzu-Chien Wang and Shu-Fan Lu have relied on each other since childhood. One lives with an abusive father, the other grows up in poverty, and both learn to hide their pain behind silence.

Then one day, they notice Hsin-Tung Liu, a lonely classmate. Tzu-Chien steps in, and the three of them share a quiet celebration of her birthday—offering comfort none of them realized they needed. Yet hardship persists. Classmates collect money for Shu-Fan’s graduation trip without consulting him, leaving him feeling exposed and ashamed.

Soon after, Tzu-Chien’s father passes away. Hsin-Tung and Shu-Fan find him standing in the ocean, grief threatening to pull him under. He turns to Shu-Fan and asks, “Are you willing to die with me?” Shu-Fan agrees—but then gently asks if they could try living instead. Those words reach him. For these three teenagers, life has never been easy, yet by choosing one another, they begin to see that survival, healing, and the fragile hope of a future might truly be possible.



Author Gene

Gene won first prize in the Comic Division of the 2020 Kyoto International Manga Awards for her work *The Scarecrow’s Guardian*, as well as first prize in the Illustration Division for “On the Festival Road” in the same year. She has also taught courses on comic creation and vertical webtoon production on the online learning platform Hahow. Her published works include *How to Make Our World*, *Together Till the End of the World*, and *Sweet Moon*.

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