



# Let's Pretend We're Fish

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

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

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

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

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Michelle Kuo

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

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

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



## Bei Lynn

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

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

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

by Higo Wu  
(originally published at Okapi)

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

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

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

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

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

Having previously collaborated with

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

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

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

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

*This has been condensed and edited for this booklet.*

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

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







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