



The Wall War

牆壁大戰

Author: Lin Po-Ting **Illustrator:** Lin Po-Ting **Publisher:** Yuan-Liou

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BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

This profound allegory uses a small incident to explore larger themes. A seemingly simple conflict between two boys—both wanting to draw on the same wall but unable to share it—unfolds into a story about history, human rights, freedom, peace, and war. The illustrations encourage critical thinking as readers engage with the artwork. If we held the paintbrush, what kind of world would we create?



Lin Po-Ting

Lin Po-Ting is a picture book author whose works have garnered several prestigious accolades, including the Feng Zikai Chinese Children's Picture Book Award, OPENBOOK Best Book Award, Best Children's Book of the Year from Good Books for All, Taipei International Book Exhibition Grand Prize, and the Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award. Lin's latest work received First Prize in the Children's and Young Adults category at the 2024 Taipei International Book Exhibition Grand Prize and was also named Best Children's Book of the Year by Good Books for All in 2023.

If You Were Holding the Pen, What Kind of World Would You Create?: A Reflection on The Wall War

by Rex How

A boy likes to draw. He treats the wall as his canvas. He draws everything that comes to mind.

He takes pride in his creations. Even though he creates a little chaos, nobody minds.

The story of *The Wall War* by Lin Po-Ting begins here, opening up a world that every child can easily understand and enter. Most children's earliest experiences with creativity involve scribbling or drawing freely, often on walls. Lin captures this relatable act of childhood with humor and insight.

The cleverness of Lin's storytelling shines through in several ways. First is the plot: One day, the boy who's been happily drawing on walls meets another boy, who loves to do the same. Neither is willing

to give up their space, and a "wall war" begins. The two boys compete, drawing more planes, bigger bombs, and causing even more chaos. As the walls fill with their competing images, the situation spirals out of control, leaving the boys confused and unsure of how to fix what they've done.

The Wall War encourages readers to join the boys in confronting the consequences of their actions and coming up with solutions. Along the way, Lin raises an important question: What would happen if everyone wanted to fill the walls with their own desires?

From the first page, the book's illustrations evoke ancient cave walls. Readers follow the boys as they begin by drawing familiar objects from their lives—family, flowers, clouds, and cats.

Soon, the drawings escalate to robots, fire-breathing dinosaurs, and octopuses. As the boys' rivalry intensifies, images of police officers, prisons, barbed wire, planes, bombs, and explosions take over, turning their artwork into a chaotic warzone.

Even after the boys' conflict ends and peace is restored, the book leaves readers with a thought-provoking image: under a clear blue sky in a world where robots can read and water flowers, there are still homeless people. Even when the boys can communicate directly and chat happily, soldiers lurking in dark windows, scissors in hand, hint at a fragile peace that could be cut at any moment.

Lin is a prolific creator who has received numerous accolades, including the Feng Zikai Chinese Children's Picture Book Award, the Openbook Good Book Award, the Taipei International Book

Exhibition Prize, and the Hsin Yi Picture Book Award.

In *The Wall War*, Lin's latest work, the conflict between two boys over graffiti space, along with the thought-provoking scenes depicted in the windows of those walls, reflects themes of life, imagination,

human rights, freedom, war, and peace. The story resonates with young readers, helping them empathize and recognize that these issues are part of the world they live in.

Parents can enjoy reading this book with their children, using it as a starting point for imagination and dialogue. Together, they can ask: If you were holding the pen, what kind of world would you create? In a world full of

conflict, how can we better understand, communicate, care, and act?

Rex How is the managing director of Books from Taiwan.

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