

Dogs and Me

狗與我

Author: Sun Hsin-Yu **Illustrator:** Sun Hsin-Yu **Publisher:** Taiwan Interinds

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BFT2.0 Translator: Kirsten Han

Hsin-Yu Sun, Taiwan's first picture book author to receive the Bologna Ragazzi Award, draws on her childhood experiences of raising dogs as the central theme of her story. With her warm and moving illustrations, she describes how the arrival and departure of pets brought what felt like loss but ultimately became a deep source of inspiration. This book is dedicated to every dog lover and to the uniqueness of all lives. Through the emotional connections between dogs and family, it tells a poignant story about the significance of every life.



Hsin-Yu Sun

Hsin-Yu Sun graduated from the Department of Fine Arts at National Taiwan Normal University. Sun has illustrated stamps, participated in an expedition to trace the Yangtze River, and lived in North America and Shanghai, traveling extensively across Europe and Asia. In 2020, she ventured to Antarctica, creating a travelogue picture book based on her experiences. Sun has earned prestigious accolades, including the Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award and the Golden Tripod Award. In 2015, she became the first Taiwanese picture book author to win the Bologna Ragazzi Award for her work *A Day in Beijing*. Her wordless picture books, such as *A Day Trip*, *Afternoon*, and *The Figure in the Distance*, have been recognized in the "Good Books for All" selection.

In 2016, Sun represented Taiwan at the Singapore and Mexico book fairs. In 2017, her book *Homecoming* was selected for the inaugural AFCC Asian Children's Book Award. Sun's work also features picture books centered on various cities, including Paris, Hong Kong, Tainan, New Taipei City, and Hsinchu County.

A Beautiful Portrayal of the Special Bond Between Dogs and Children

by Rex How

"I've always felt as if there's a secret code that I share with dogs, something special that connects us," writes the narrator of *Dogs and Me*. Many people deeply believe in this connection, and Hsin-Yu Sun seeks to illustrate this bond, particularly the unique relationship between dogs and children.

Like many children, the protagonist of *Dogs and Me* sees dogs as kindred spirits. Whenever she encounters stray dogs on the street, she feels as though they have stories to share with her. Her love for dogs is boundless, and she wishes she could bring them all home. However, her

father insists on keeping the house tidy and refuses to let her adopt a dog.

Fortunately, she finally gets her chance. While her father is away on a work trip abroad, her mother allows her to have her very first dog.

In the book, we witness the child learning to care for her dog, playing with it, and growing up alongside it, gaining valuable lessons from her furry companion. We see her navigate the sadness of losing her beloved

dog and vowing never to adopt another one again. Yet, as she matures, she eventually brings another dog into her life, experiencing that profound connection

We witness a child learning to care for her dog, playing with it, and growing up alongside it, gaining valuable lessons from her furry companion.

once more, only to face another farewell.

Through these experiences, she learns that departing dogs communicate a powerful message: "Life may be temporary, but relationships are eternal. Don't be afraid!" As she grows, her father, who once insisted on a spotless home, becomes a chatty old man, and ironically, the dog becomes his best companion.

The story conveys that, like all living beings, dogs eventually leave us. While the pain of loss is undeniably sad, we each navigate our own journey along the river of life. The stars above will always remind us of the warm, steadfast gazes that once met our own, serving as an essential force propelling us forward.

In 2015, Hsin-Yu Sun became the first Taiwanese illustrator to receive a Special Mention in the Non-Fiction category at

the Bologna Ragazzi Awards. In her latest work, *Dogs and Me*, she draws from her own childhood experiences of raising dogs to explore the emotional bond between dogs and humans, as well as the dialogue each person has with the meaning of life.

With heartfelt words and warm, touching illustrations, Hsin-Yu Sun shares how the coming and going of pets taught her life's most profound lessons. Though these experiences may seem like losses, they are actually gains. This picture book beautifully portrays life education through the flow of emotions between the protagonist, her dogs, and her family, showing that every life has its own inherent meaning.

Rex How is the managing director of Books from Taiwan.

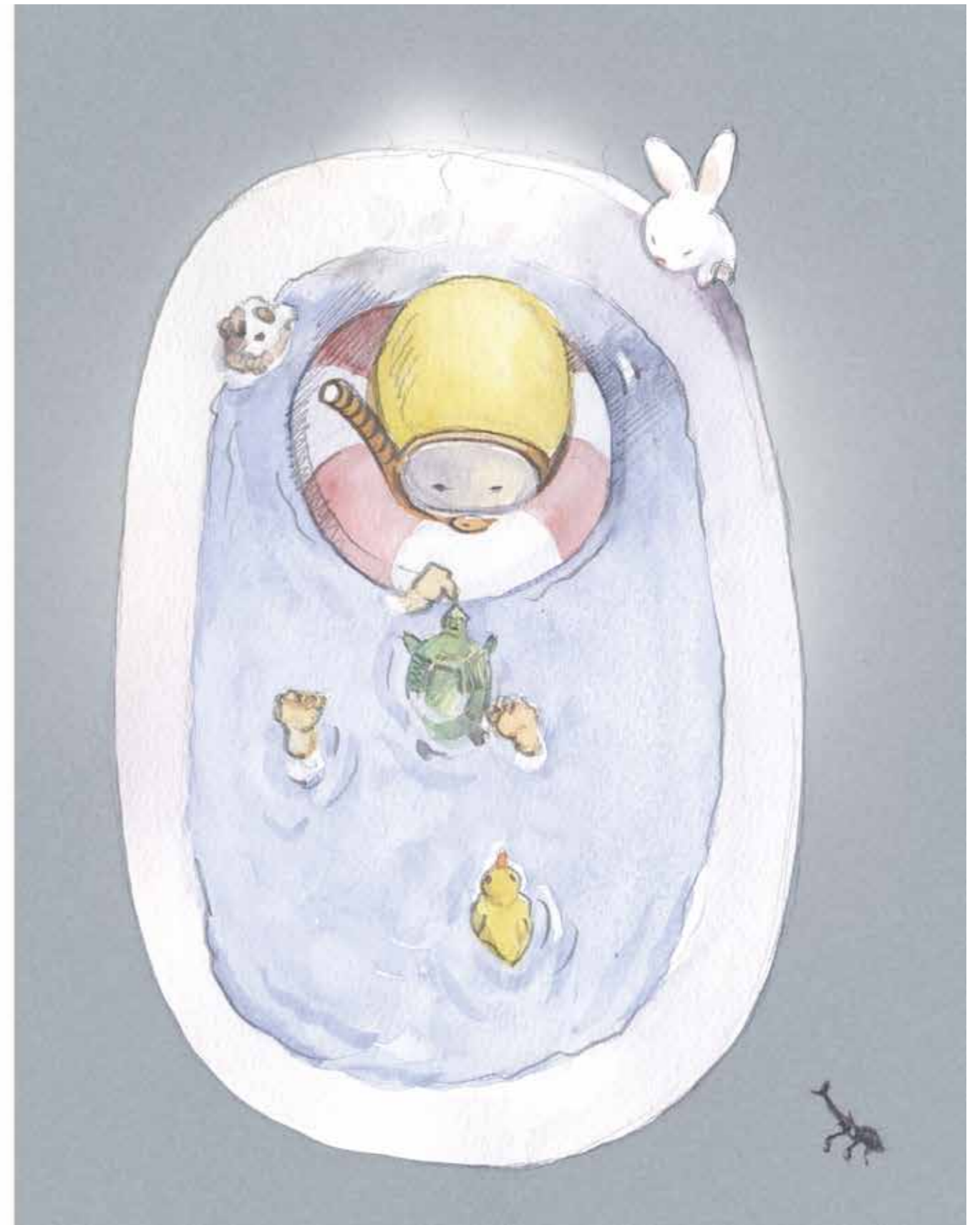
“How about a chicken? When it’s grown we’ll have eggs to eat.” Mom said this very casually; her family ran a chicken farm when she was a kid.

“Or you can keep fish. They don’t eat much.”

“A rhinoceros beetle? They don’t shed fur.”

“What about a guinea pig? It’s easy to clean up after them.”

“Or maybe a turtle? They live longer.....”



But I only wanted a dog.

Dogs probably think I'm just like them—especially the strays on the streets. It always feels like there's something they want to say to me.





I really wished I could bring them home.



They must have really wanted to come home with me, too.