A TRIP TO THE ASYLUM
疯人院之旅：整個世界就是你的精神病院

* 2021 Golden Comic Award
* 2021 Taipei Book Fair Award

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What is life like inside a modern residential psychiatric facility? Is it oversedated patients slumped over board games as depicted in 12 Monkeys? Or is it a place of simmering conflict and coercive control, à la One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest? Pam Pam Liu’s graphic novel A Trip to the Asylum peels away the stereotypes to reveal the inner world of psychiatric patients and the painful realities each grapples with while undergoing in-patient treatment.

The story follows a new patient who enters residential care at the suggestion of his sister. With his hand bandaged, and clinging to the idea that “I’ll be out of here before you know it,” he begins to adapt to his surroundings and get to know his fellow patients. He meets a middle-aged man so terrified of life he hopes to never leave the facility, a former entertainment reporter never stops mumbling celebrity gossip, and a teen who struggles with gender identity and social ostracization. Though they appear “crazy” at first glance, each harbors a secret trauma that drives their behaviors, including our reticent protagonist.

Ten years in the making, A Trip to the Asylum incorporates author Pam Pam Liu’s personal experiences as well as extensive research into the literature of mental illness, including works such as Erving Goffman’s Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients
and Other Inmates and Bessel van der Kolk’s *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. With its indy comic aesthetic, absurd humor, and fast pacing, *A Trip to the Asylum* delivers deep issues in an entertaining package, bringing mental illness out of the shadows and into the realm of relatable, everyday interactions.

**Pam Pam Liu**

Active as an illustrator, an independent graphic novelist, and a musician, Pam Pam is also a talented animator. She often turns the dark side of life, its anger and failures, into fantastical graphic novels, but also creates true-to-life works such as *Good Friend, Cancer*. Her other works include *When My Brother was a Kid*. She was a resident of La Maison des Auteurs in Angoulême, France (2018-2019).
A relatively small group of prepatients come into the mental hospital willingly, because of their own idea of what will be good for them, or because of wholehearted agreement with the relevant members of their family. Presumably, these recruits have found themselves acting in a way which is evidence to them that they are losing their minds or losing control of themselves.

- Erving Goffman, Asylums
Your mother went to the hospital.

She'll be back in a jiffy. Just be patient.

The hospital!?

She's not dying, is she?
冷氣開放

開心牛肉麵
Drat!
I can't hold chopsticks with my right hand bandaged like this.

What a nuisance! I'll have to eat with my left hand.

Oops!

Sorry, we should have gone to get pizza.
When you're out of the hospital we'll get some.
By that time my hand will be better!
<cough>
I know of a mental health facility that would suit you. Don't worry. It's not so horrible as you might imagine.

Given your present condition, you could spend some time there, see if you like it.

I'll take a moment to explain to your family...
OK,
I’ll say goodbye here.

I’ve got to go pick up my daughter.

Call if you need anything. Bye bye!

Welcome.
Umm...

the room is a bit too...
...blue.
Hey!

You can't smoke in the room, yo!
You can smoke over there by the ladder.

It'll be lights out in a moment.

I'm not sleepy yet.

Perhaps you already know who I am, but I'll just introduce myself anyhow.

Most people call me Little Yu.

Little Yu...

or Little Fei...

or Little Ching...

But whatever you do, don't call me all three at once!*

*Fei Yu-Ching is a Taiwanese singer and entertainer who was popular throughout the 80's and 90's.
May I know your name? There's no need. I'll be out of here before you know it. Why!? Why do you guys always say that!
I want to stay here forever. It's too dangerous outside. Because... I'm... I'm the real Little Yu!

They wouldn't let me bring my suits. That's why no one here recognizes me.

Let us say goodnight to each other.
Fuck, that guy's a mess.

I'm totally fine. I'll be leaving this stupid place in no time.
A recruit’s readiness to be appropriately deferential in his initial face-to-face encounters... is a sign that he will take on the role of the routinely pliant inmate.

-Erving Goffman, Asylums
Little Chick!

peep peep
Little Chick!

You're back!

Quick—you need to find a place to hide!

Otherwise, you'll be eaten like last time.
Come and get it!

No! Not so loud! Dad will hear you!

Time to eat!

Just hang on...
Little Chick?
Time to Eat!

Time to Eat!
Stop shouting! He'll find you!
You'll be slaughtered and eaten!
Time to eat!
Time to eat!
Time to eat!
Having trouble getting up? Did you sneak some sleeping pills?

Don't you recognize me?

I'm Little Yu. No one recognizes me without the suit.

You told me all of this yesterday! Don't you ever shut up?

It's killing me!

I was afraid you forgot. No need to get angry!

Time to eat!
Today is marinated drumsticks. They're fantastic!

I don't eat chicken!

No thanks!

What? How can you not eat chicken? It's so good!

Can you stop talking to me for a bit?

Please?

You're weird.
Humph!

Don't eat if you don't want to!

But there will be nothing left later when you get hungry, yo!

No—

Just leave.

He's still talking...

He's still talking...

He's still talking...
Shower
Open hours:
5:00 pm to 11:00 pm

Hey!
Are you new? Do you need me to show you to the dining room?

I want to shower.

It's only 11:00 am. No showers allowed.

You gotta hurry up and eat!
I don't eat chicken.

mumble mumble

Did you miss your meds? Maybe you need to see the doc?

Follow me.

mumble