

BLOSSOM

百花百色

A young girl explores her gender identity, with a close-up look at her internal struggles and a realistic view of the tradition and social context she lives in. Published just as Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize gay marriage, this is a timely read.

The flowers of the legendary Hundred Flowers Bridge represent children soon to be born: white flowers for boys, red flowers for girls. Lady Linshui, who looks over the bridge, can decide whether a boy or a girl will be born – but if you wish for boys, there is a Daoist ritual that will ensure your wish is granted.

Grown-ups have always told Yu-Fan that a girl should act like a girl: learn the piano; be quiet and dignified rather than noisy and rough; and wear skirts. Under pressure from her mother and grandmother, Yu-Fan has no choice but to hide who she really is and dress up as the girl they want her to be.

One day, she learns her mother carried out that Daoist ritual while she was pregnant, in order to ensure a boy. And as she reaches puberty, she realizes she is not developing in the same way as the other girls and becomes even more confused. Then a cousin she has always looked up to invites her to an LGBT event, helps her learn about herself, and takes her to a gay wedding. Things start to become clearer for Yu-Fan.

This graphic novel was published shortly before Taiwan legalized gay marriage. It takes a close look at the main character's exploration of her gender as she grows, and the family traditions and religious beliefs that stand in her way. It is an accurate reflection of progress in gender issues in Taiwan.

D.S.

From Keelung, Taiwan. Has published *The Boxes on the Sun* Comics platform. Particularly good at expressing the intricate emotions of young women.



Publisher: Gaea Books

Date: 12/2018

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Pages: 210

Volume: 1 (END)



I had to start pretending to be one.

So, before I even knew what it meant to be a woman,



BECAUSE BOYS AND GIRLS ARE DIFFERENT, AND GIRLS LOOK NICE IN A SKIRT.

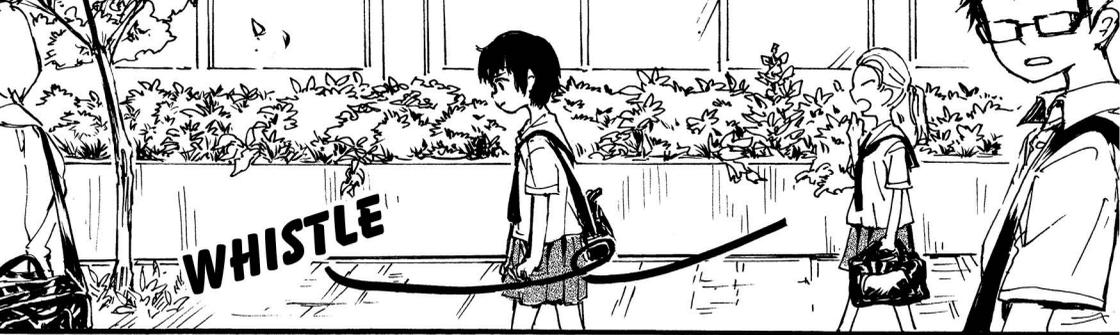


WHY DO I HAVE TO WEAR A SKIRT TO GO TO JUNIOR HIGH?



DO WE? IT FEELS LIKE HAVING AN OLD TOWEL WRAPPED AROUND ME.





WHISTLE



NEW SCHOOL, SAME OLD FACES!

YEAH, SO MUCH FOR SOME THING NEW.



YU-FAN, HI!

CHIH! PINPIN!



Flick~

HEY, IT'S THE TOMBOY!



WHAT
ARE
YOU
DOING!

NOTHING
DIDN'T THINK
YOU'D MIND
YOUR SKIRT
BEING LIFTED.

MAYBE YOU
ARE A GIRL
AFTER ALL!

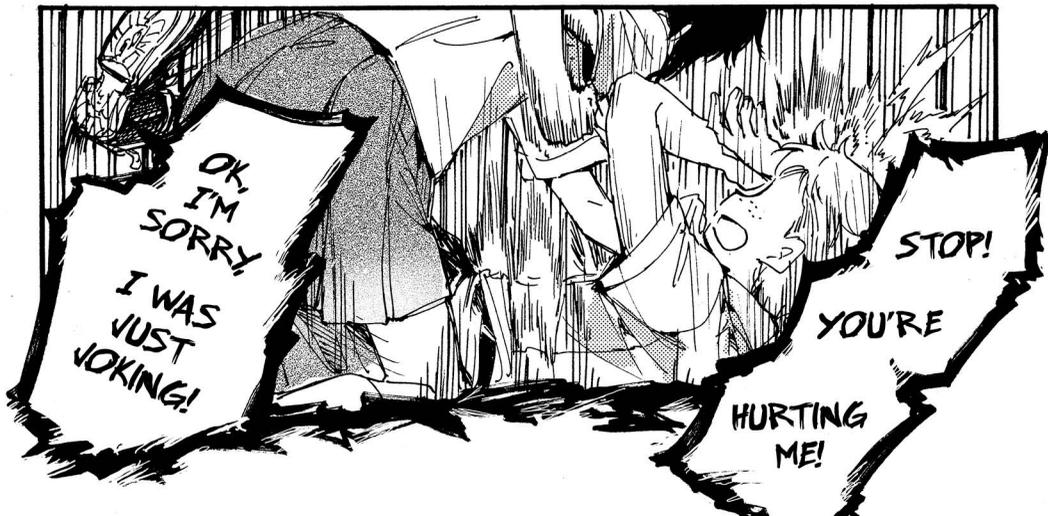


PUT SOME
SHORTS ON
UNDERNEATH
IF YOU
DON'T WANT
US TO SEE.



OH, SO
IT'S FINE
TO DO
THAT TO
GIRLS?

YOU DON'T EVEN
KNOW HOW TO
PROTECT YOURSELF.





CHIH, GET HER
OTHER ARM,
PULL HER OFF.

YU-FAN!
STOP THAT!

YOU
THINK I
WANTED
TO
WEAR
THIS?



So this
is what
getting
older
is
about.



I SAID
SORRY,

YOU
CAN'T
KEEP
HITTING
ME.

JUST YOU WAIT!
I'M GOING TO TELL
MY MOM TO COME IN!

Obeying
rules
made
up who
knows
who.

Putting
kids into
little
boxes:
boys,
girls.



I'M
SO
SORRY,

OUR
YU-FAN
CAN BE
TOO
ROUGH...

HOW
ARE YOU
RAISING
THE CHILD?
SHE'S
GOT NO
MANNERS
AT ALL.

YOU GOT
HIS NEW
UNIFORM
DIRTY ON THE
FIRST DAY.
YOU'LL NEED
TO PAY FOR
A NEW ONE.



SO MUCH
FOR MOM
SPEAKING UP
FOR ME...

