

# FOR THE TIME BEING

## 暫時先這樣

\* 2021 Taipei Book Fair Award

\* 2020 Golden Comic Award

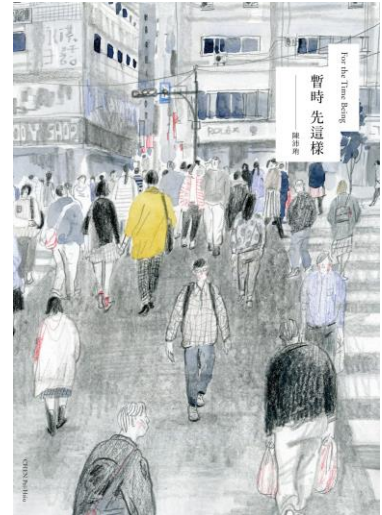
*These are tales of women making lives for themselves in the big city: commuting to office jobs, enjoying cooking for one, and wandering through the historic streets with an old friend. In the city, everyone is playing a role in their own stories, and our author depicts those ordinary yet meaningful scenes of everyday life, building up a Taipei tapestry.*

Have you lived in a city? People come here for their own reasons – to stay, to study, to follow their dreams, to love, to work, to marry. Maybe you thought you'd just be passing through, but one day you realize you've become used to the urban bustle – and are now a part of it.

For one young woman working in the big city, Taipei is the flood of motorbikes at rush hour, tiny apartments that get more expensive by the minute, and her only source of joy: her cat. For another, it is catching up with an old friend in Dadaocheng, savoring the childhood tastes of a bowl of almond tofu, and visiting the Xiahai City God Temple to pray for a new love. For a third, there are sad times, as caring for a grandmother in hospital with cancer stirs up old memories. But what can she do, but accept the facts and make the most of what time is left?

Nine stories of women living in the city, told with only sparse dialogue, shows the reader the different lives playing out in the city, whether those are lives of leisure or of scraping by. And sometimes, when it's too hard to make sense of, just tell yourself this is all just "For the Time Being".

Chen Pei-Hsiu has twice been nominated for the Angoulême Young Talent award. With her realistic watercolor art and authentic young



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urban voice, she records vignettes of daily life on Taipei's streets. The scenery may be unique to Taipei, but the estrangement and self-sufficiency are something familiar to anyone who has lived in a city.

## Chen Pei-Hsiu 陳沛琄

Originally an archaeological illustrator at the Academia Sinica, Chen eventually went freelance, and has published work in magazines, newspapers, and in book form. She has been short-listed for the Angouleme Prize for Young Talent two times, and her most recent titles include picture book *Asleep All Day Long, Le Anguille Comandano*, and her first comic book *For the Time Being*.

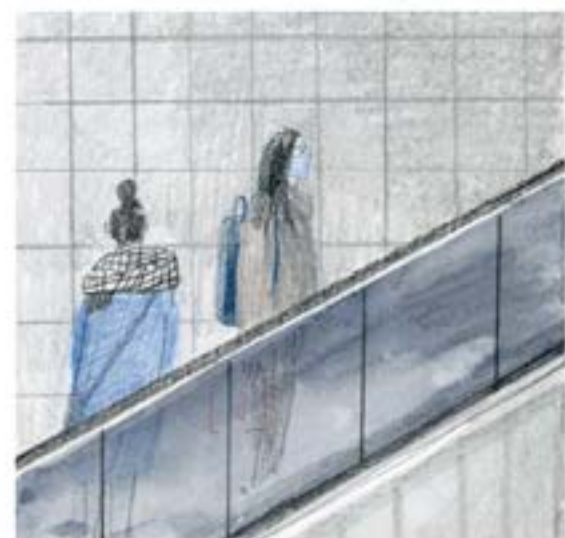
*Chapter 1.*

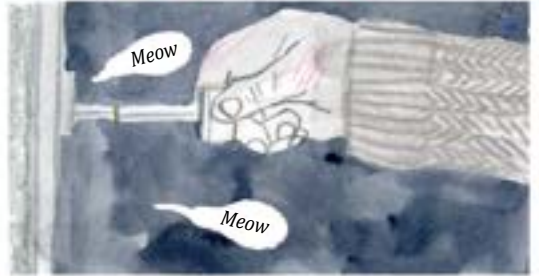
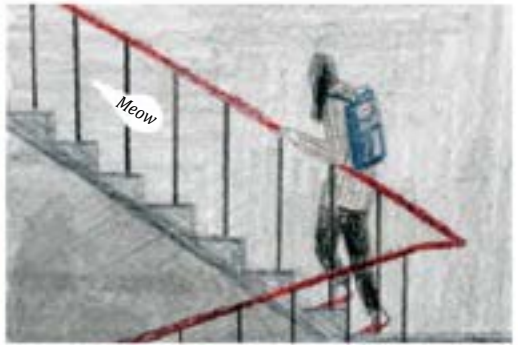
**Nest**



I'm on the bus,  
you get some rest.



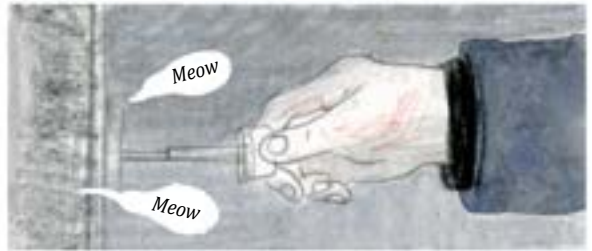




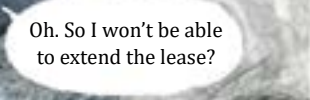














Okay, no problem.

I've got enough time; I'll start looking now.



No, bye-bye.



Oh no... I've got to move again!

Meow



And my stomach hurts.



I'll take another  
painkiller.

This chapter was serialized across three issues of *The Big Issue Taiwan*, so each three pages form one small episode. Shortly after finishing it, my landlord phoned to tell me he had sold my apartment. My roommate asked me to stop making my stories come true.

*Chapter 2.*

# **Wishlist**





Is that her? I'm not sure.



There you are!



I'm fatter, aren't I?  
Do I look fat?

I've put on  
five kilograms.

You look  
fine.



It's so hot. I want  
almond tofu, though  
even if I am fat.  
Do you want some?



Where will  
we go?

I usually go to a  
place over there,  
it's close.





This one.



A bowl of almond  
tofu, please.

Two bowls.

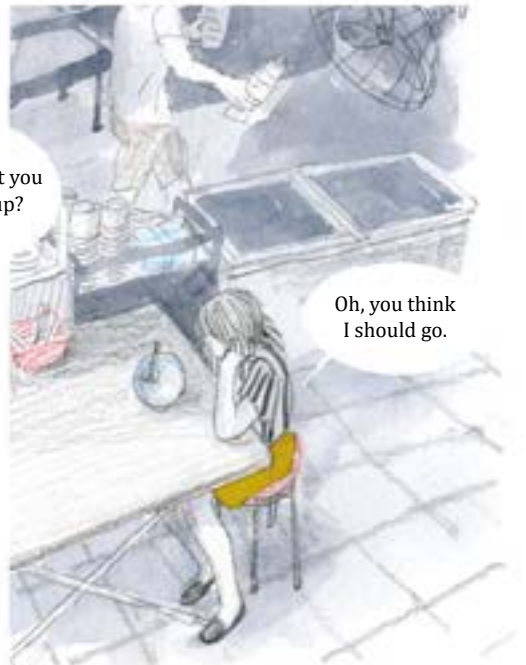


Taipei is  
so hot!

Isn't Shanghai  
even hotter?



It is, it was 43C last week.  
I don't know how I'll get  
through the summer.



But I just didn't have the heart for anything new yet...



Come on, I'll drop you at the bus stop.

Wait...



I think we should just be friends.



... and what are you meant to say to that?

I never thought anyone would use such a shitty line to break up with me.





Oh. Okay.



I still like you...

Okay,  
goodbye.



I'd seen it coming, but it didn't  
seem fair to choose that day.



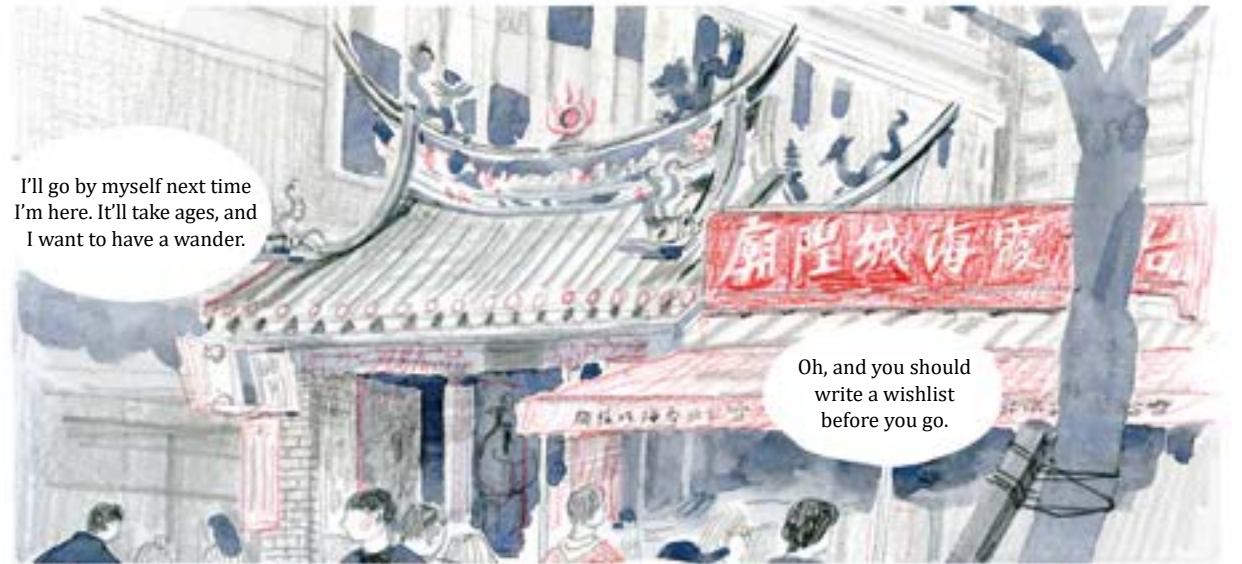
It's my birthday!



Let's go.



I'll get this.





I can't believe I'm telling you this, but...



I wrote a wishlist and went to pray to Yue Lao... and that was when my husband asked me out!



Really?

And he matched up with almost everything on my list.



He just doesn't have big hands.

Wow, you even wrote down the size of hands you wanted!



A wishlist... I should make mine really long.



It won't be longer than mine, I even included his family.

Well, if you included his hands, why not his family.



I could look for it when I get back, if you'd like some reference material?



So... what's it like being married, overall?

Well... I always argue with him.

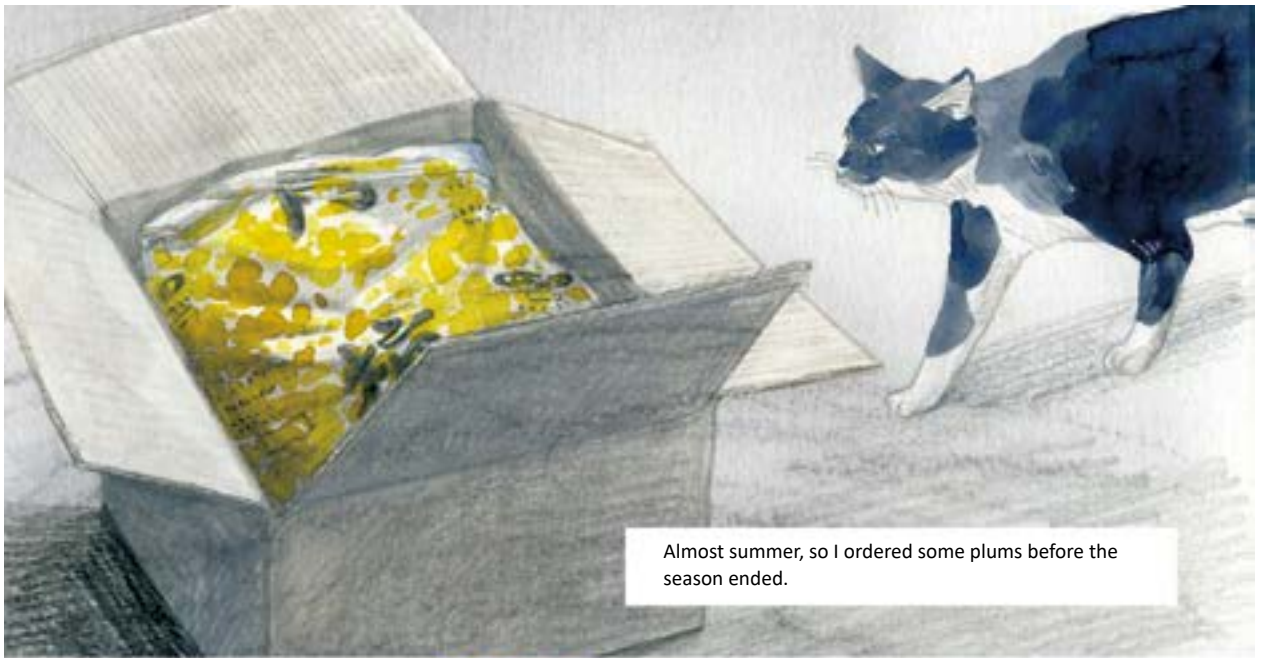




My friend's wishlist story really grabbed my attention, and combined perfectly with the Dadaocheng scenery. I had thought the Xiahai City God Temple was the most popular place in Taiwan for those seeking a match, but when I checked it turned out to be Longshan Temple.

*Chapter 3.*

# **Holiday**



Almost summer, so I ordered some plums before the season ended.



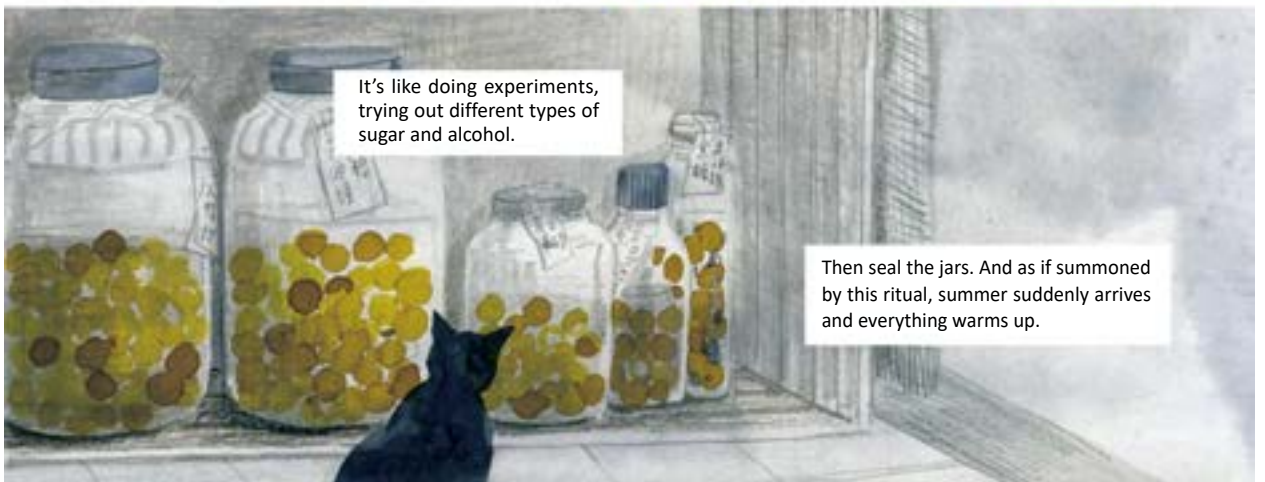
Wash and remove stalks.



Dry for a day or two to remove moisture.

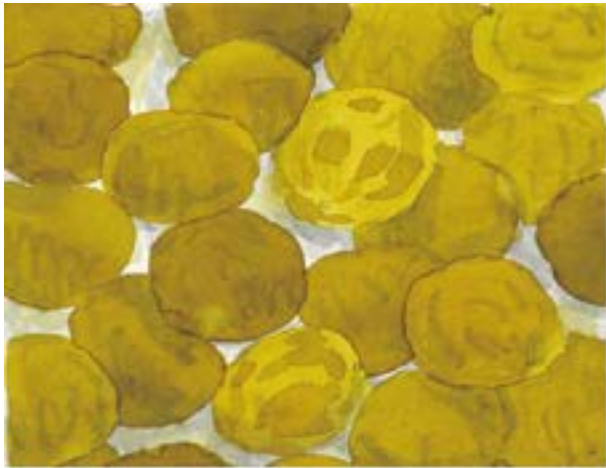


Place in a glass jar, add sugar, then slowly pour in the alcohol.



It's like doing experiments, trying out different types of sugar and alcohol.

Then seal the jars. And as if summoned by this ritual, summer suddenly arrives and everything warms up.



Next, deal with the plums from last year.



Remove the stones.



Put in plenty of sugar and cook over a low flame. Stir until you have a sticky, semi-transparent jam.



Cool, then store in glass jars or plastic boxes.



The jam can be spread on bread or used in cooking. Try Pork with Plum Sauce.



Or mix it with a fizzy drink...



Hey, not bad!



The building behind is so close, I can hear everything they say and smell everything they cook.

Husband, how many eggs do you want?

What!?

Do they have to shout...

I can hear them when they talk normally,

never mind if they're shouting from room to room.



Fried fish? That's a fancy breakfast.

But the smell of oil is so strong...



Shit, even my blanket smells of oil now.





How much a jin?

80.

That's 230 altogether.



I'll take these, and a bunch of greens.

Do you want two bunches for 50?

I wouldn't finish them.



Just the one?  
It's hard to weigh that little.

I can't use any more.



And I've got something to pick up at the post office on the way back.





If you're cooking for one, the easiest and tastiest option is instant noodles. But you can't eat those too often. Second place, curry.



These are my usual ingredients.



There's no meat because it's too much trouble to prepare, not because I'm vegetarian.



Chop and put in the pot, add a bowl of water.



Put a curry block in.



Tick



Wait 15 minutes for the rice cooker, and the curry will be almost ready.



Il m'a envoyé un message!  
(He sent me a message!)



Now to deal with those veg I impulse bought.



I'll make pickled radish. First, peel.



Add white vinegar and sugar and lemon or chilis or anything else to taste.

Then cube the radish, sprinkle with salt and mix to spread the salt evenly. Then leave for about an hour and rinse.



Then let it pickle in the fridge for two days, and eat. It keeps for ages and makes a handy side dish.



Hey! Don't scratch things!



I'm on holiday, but still have to reply to emails.



It doesn't feel like work



if I don't have coffee.



What will I have for dinner?  
Let's find some recipes.



Watching  
the birds?

*Cheep!*



*Cheep!*

*Cheep!*

I'll try this one.

I love books about food, like the *Little Forest*, *What Did You Eat Yesterday* and *Hana's Lazy Meals* manga, and Naoko Takagi's *Alone* series.

After leaving my university dorm, where we weren't allowed to cook, I came to appreciate how precious being able to make simple but tasty (with a little skill) meals for myself is. I never take it very seriously though.

*Chapter 4.*

## **A Momentary Lapse**







Next stop, Yingqiao  
Elementary School



Oh, your  
medicine bag.



Excuse me! I forgot  
something, I need  
to go and get it.



Oh, the driver's leaving?

I thought that woman was coming back.



Uncle, was that young lady with you? Are you together?

Yes, she is.

Driver, could you stop. This gentleman's carer is coming back.



Oh, okay.

If we could all just wait a minute for her to come back.

Thank you.

No problem.

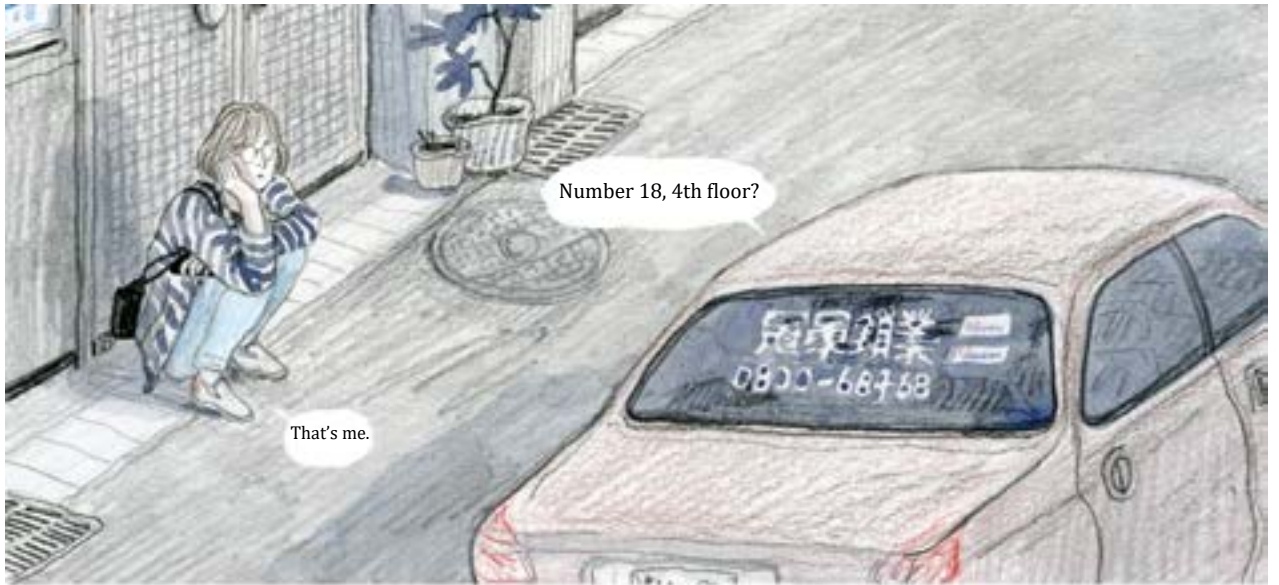
That's fine, let's wait.











Number 18, 4th floor?

That's me.



Those locks are easy.

That was fast.



There you go.

That one was quick too!



It's all in the technique. That's 800.



I thought I'd left them there.

It's been a very expensive day.

Oh.



The garbage truck's here.



I need to take the rubbish out; it's breeding fruit flies.





The scene on the bus really happened.  
And I locked myself out yet again  
while drawing this chapter.