

# RAINBOW APARTMENT

## 彩虹公寓

*Set in 2024, five years after the legalization of same-sex marriage in Taiwan, this LGBTQ comic compilation gathers six humanizing stories that showcase the strength and dignity required to live in a society that has only just begun to acknowledge your basic rights.*

Taipei, 2024, five years after the legalization of same-sex marriage in Taiwan. In a building called the Rainbow Apartments, we find six stories addressing the issues of friendship, love, family, and work that the LGBTQ community must navigate within a society that is still adjusting to the formal acknowledgement of their basic rights.

Moving up through the floors of the building reveals a diverse range of lives in the process of unfolding. Living under the shadow of HIV, an art teacher falls for the nude model who poses for his classes. A young woman who has never been in love begins to have stirrings of affection for a same-sex online friend, but struggles to bridge the gap to real-world romance. Two lesbians who met through a dating app linger in the tentative yet exhilarating exchanges of the first blush of love. Having already cohabited for one year, another lesbian couple struggles with the necessity of living in the closet to avoid upsetting a conservative parent. A transgender woman who has not completely transitioned faces disappointments in life and love. And, a bisexual man falls for his gay roommate, but is forced to come to terms with what it means to live truly as oneself.

*Rainbow Apartment* compiles the work of six different comic book artists, each with their own unique style of art and storytelling. Showcasing the diversity of the LGBTQ community, this collection carries us through the full range of human emotions, while also normalizing difference by situating these characters in the most familiar of circumstances: the slightly cramped but wonderfully convenient apartments we all inhabited in our youth.



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**Rights contact:**

booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com

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## Moriku 墨里可

Moriku is a comic book artist, illustrator, graphic designer, and lecturer on comic book art. Her most representative work is the boys love manga *My Honey, My Hero*, which has been licensed for re-release on the WEBTOON platform as a full color serial comic strip.

## Chen Pei-Hsiu 陳沛琄

Originally an archaeological illustrator at Academia Sinica, Chen Pei-Hsiu eventually went freelance, publishing work in magazines, newspapers, and books. She has been short-listed twice for the Angoulême Prize for Young Talent, and twice for the 3×3 International Illustration Award. Her comic book *For the Time Being* has been published in French.

## Elainee

An illustrator and artist/writer of graphic novels, Elainee studied occupational therapy at university and worked in hospitals and clinics for three years before realizing her true passion was art. After quitting her day job, she began selling her art from a street stall. In 2017 she obtained an MA from London's Royal College of Art and was awarded a residency in Angoulême, France.

## Nin

Comic book artist Nin graduated from National Taiwan University of Arts with a degree in visual communication. She excels at watercolor, pencil, and expressive ink line work. She was a 2020 artist in residence in Angoulême, France. Her previous works include the graphic novel *Weight-less*.

## Lee Weien 李瑋恩

A graduate of the University for the Creative Arts in the UK, Lee's works tend towards realism, using beautiful interlinked images to explore contemporary social issues. She participated in the 2019 Creative Expo Taiwan, and won a gold medal at the 2018 Taipei Illustration Fair. She was also a finalist for the 2nd Comico Original Comic Book Award.

## Lucas Paixão 盧卡斯

Born in 1990 in Salvador, Brazil, Lucas Paixão graduated with a degree in graphic design from Universidade Salvador. After working as a freelance designer in Brazil, he came to Taiwan in 2014 to study at the Institute of Fine Arts at Taipei National University of the Arts. His previous works include *Binlang Beauty*, *Orange Boy*, *Picasso Compulsive Disorder*, *CURTA! Short Comics by Lucas Paixão*, and *Seven Day Life*.

# 1F

Prologue

Apartment of the Future

Taiwan, 2024. Five years since the legalization of same sex marriage.

The sun still rises, and the oceans haven't risen up to flood the earth. The human race has not only avoided extinction, but continues to survive much as before.

From today's vantage point, the fierce debates and anguished conflicts of five years ago seem worlds away.

But the dust has not completely settled. The story goes on...

The "for rent" sign has just been taken down from an apartment in Taipei.

It is located in a seven-story building, just three minutes from the nearest MRT station. There's a park across the street that's perfect for an after-dinner stroll. Just around the corner are a 24-hour supermarket and a chain fast-food restaurant. On the first floor of the building there's a small bar that stays open until daybreak, perfect for night owls.

The residents of the building each have their own stories, their own colors.

Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Sweetness, bitterness, tears, and triumph. All find their way into the portrait of this building. All come together in its melting pot.

This is the story of the Rainbow Apartments.

When the end of the world finally comes, it won't be because of love, but its absence.



IF THEY SEE US EVERY-  
THING WILL BE RUINED!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING  
TO DO?



I WILL BECOME  
INVISIBLE!

THAT WAY I CAN FREELY  
ENTER THEIR VILLAGE  
WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE.



NO ONE WILL DIS-  
COVER ME! HA HA HA!



Does time change us?



I don't think so. I think it's our environment that changes us.



But if we decide to change ourselves, the environment, and time,  
and the whole world will change with us.





HEY, YI-HAO!

YOU'RE BACK!



WHERE'D YOU RUN OFF TO TODAY?

I WAS PLANNING TO WORK OUT BUT IN THE END I JUST SLEPT ALL DAY.

YOU LAZY SLUG! I WENT TO JOIN THE PARADE!



PARADE?

THE PRIDE PARADE! EVERYONE THERE SAW THE STORY.

I POSTED YESTERDAY THEY ASSUMED WE WERE A COUPLE.



WHEN I TOLD THEM YOU'RE STRAIGHT, THEY WERE HEARTBROKEN!

HEH...



OH YEAH!  
SCOOT OVER A SEC.

I ALMOST FORGOT  
TO SHOW YOU. I WAS IN  
THE INTERNATIONAL  
NEWS TODAY!



WOW, YOU'RE ON  
THE COVER!

LGBT Pride parade in Taipei  
to celebrate self-identity

By [Name] on [Date]

Thanks to My Girl (2012),  
Lilya, Beauty of the Night,  
LGBT Pride parade  
to celebrate people taking  
time to themselves while that  
celebrating the diversity of gender  
expressions, and [Name] being  
one of the organizers.

NOT BAD  
HUH?  
I'M FAMOUS!

WHOAH YOU'VE GOT  
A BIGGER CHEST THAN  
MOST GIRLS.



KO... THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND

ISN'T THE PARADE MEANT TO BE A KIND OF PROTEST?

SO WHY DOES EVERYONE STRIP OFF THEIR CLOTHES?



IN THE EYES OF THE ANTI-GAY GROUPS, COULDN'T IT JUST END UP

HAVING THE OPPOSITE EFFECT OF WHAT YOU WANT?



ALL OF THIS STUFF HAS A PURPOSE.

GAYS, LESBIANS, AND TRANSEXUALS...

... STILL AREN'T ACCEPTED IN MOST COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD



SOCIETY JUDGES US AS ABNORMAL, AND TRIES TO PUSH US INTO A CORNER WHERE WE CAN'T BE SEEN.

BUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN CHANGE.



DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

IN SOME PLACES

JUST WALKING DOWN THE STREET AS AN OPEN HOMOSEXUAL IS A CHALLENGE.



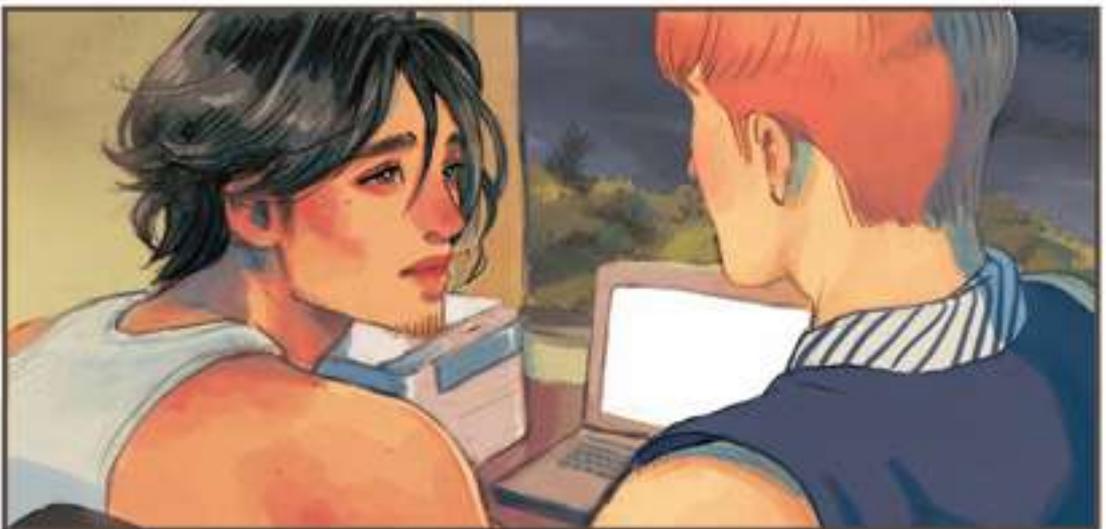
SO WE TAKE OFF OUR CLOTHES, OR FRENCH KISS, OR DRESS IN DRAG THE MORE OUTRAGEOUS THE BETTER

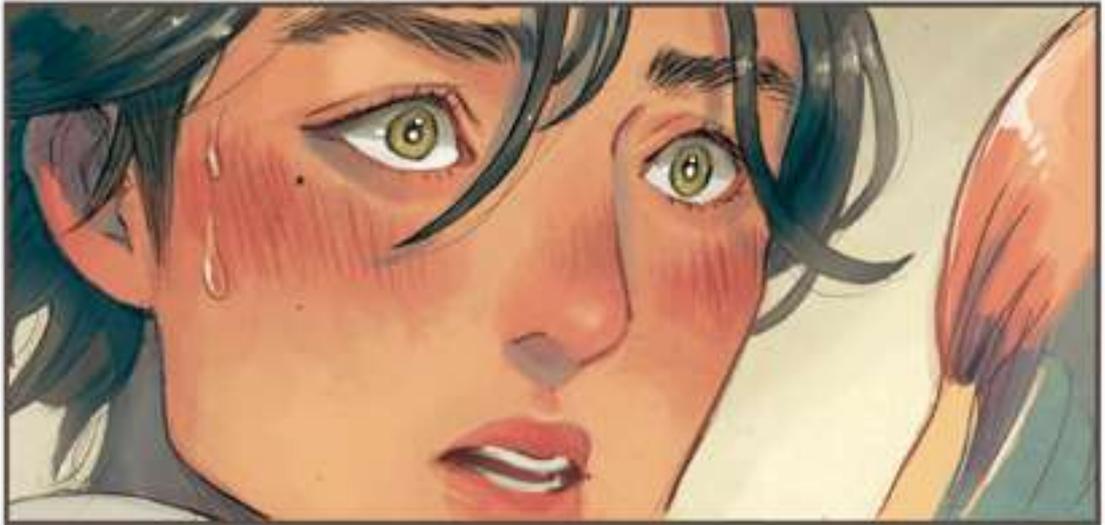
BECAUSE TODAY IS ALL ABOUT MAKING SURE WE ARE SEEN.

WE FORCE SOCIETY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE EXIST!



...







HUH?

YOU'RE REALLY  
HARD?  
WHAT THE HELL?



I... I...



KO, I...

I THINK I MIGHT  
LIKE YOU A LITTLE BIT.



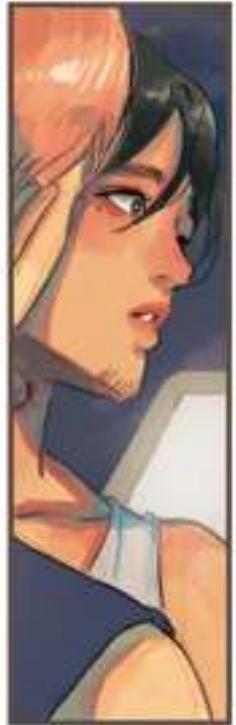
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?  
I WAS JUST JOKING!

BUT... I'M NOT JOKING...









🏠 Han  
I'm downstairs. Buzz me in.







WHAT?! WHY ARE YOU TELLING OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT MY BOOBS?! WHAT A MORON!

I... I DIDN'T



OUT OF MY WAY! WHERE ARE MY THINGS?

IN MY ROOM!



OH, RIGHT...



I HAVE TO SLEEP HERE TONIGHT,

SO NO MOANING AND HEAVY BREATHING FROM YOU TWO!

HOW DID YOU KNOW?



OH PLEASE! I PICKED UP ON YOUR SCENT AGES AGO!

UH... SCENT...

?



WELL...

YI-HAO HAS ALWAYS LOVED SIR DARLING, AND HE USED TO STEAL MY "BOYS LOVE" MANGA TO READ

I'VE SUSPECTED HE'S GAY FOR A LONG TIME!



BUT SINCE YOU LOOK EXACTLY LIKE SIR DARLING, YOU HAVE MY BLESSING!



HAN, DON'T GET ME MIXED UP WITH THE GUYS IN YOUR COMIC BOOKS.

IF YOU LOOK AT IT THAT WAY, IT'S AS IF...



...I NEVER LOVED YOU AT ALL

AS IF YOU SOMEHOW FORCED ME TO MOVE IN WITH YOU... TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU

YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE OUR RELATIONSHIP WAS A FRAUD

I'M MAKING A DIFFERENT CHOICE NOW.

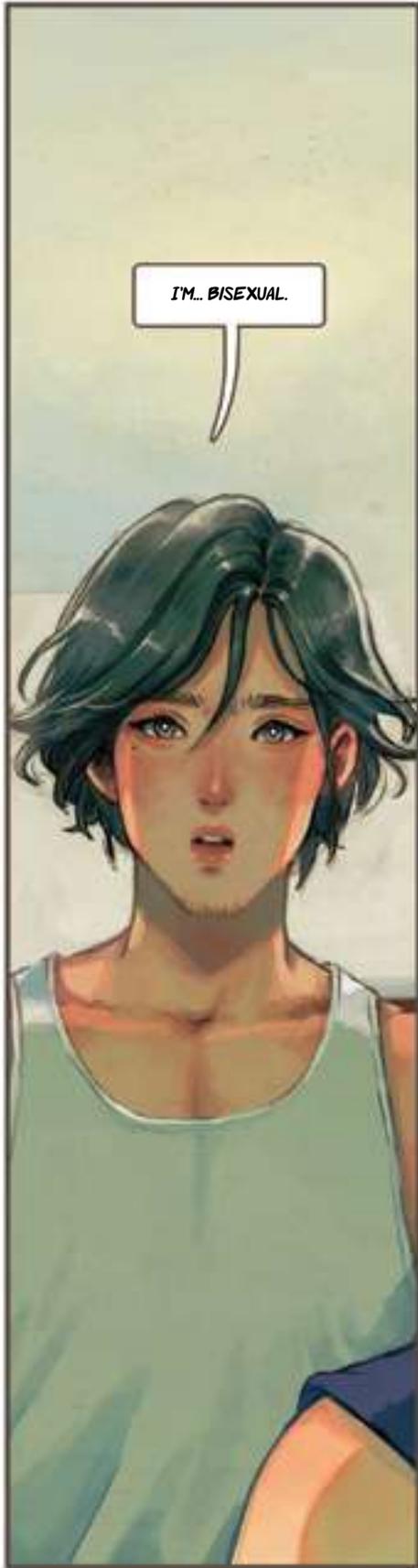
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THE PAST WAS FAKE.



JUST A CRAZY PERVERT?

YOU USED TO LOVE A GIRL. NOW YOU LOVE A GUY.

IF THAT'S NOT GAY, WHAT IS?







MOM, YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME SOONER!



I KNOW,  
I'M SORRY  
TO INTRUDE  
LIKE THIS!

AUNTIE!

HELLO.

AUNTIE? GIVE ME  
A BREAK!



HAN? YOU'RE  
HERE TOO?!

HAVE YOU  
MOVED IN  
WITH YI-HAO?



NO, I'M JUST IN TOWN  
FOR AN EVENT.

YI-HAO HAS A  
ROOMMATE NOW.

WOW... YOU'RE A TALL  
ONE! I BET POOR  
YI-HAO LOOKS LIKE  
A SHRIMP NEXT TO  
YOU! THOUGH...

THAT'S AN  
UNUSUAL COLOR  
TO DYE YOUR  
HAIR... FOR A MAN..



AUNTIE, YOU SHOULD  
GO WASH UP AND  
HAVE A REST!

TOMORROW  
MORNING I'LL SHOW  
YOU AROUND TOWN!



AARGH...



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?  
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE  
AT YOUR WIT'S END.

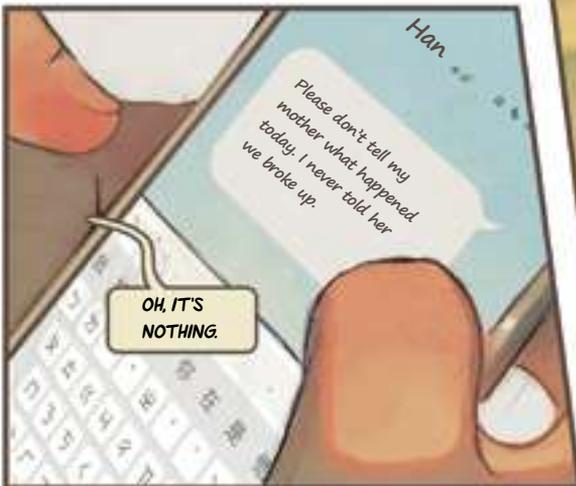


TODAY, I JUST WANTED  
TO TELL YOU HOW I  
FEEL.

NOW, LOOK AT THIS MESS...

I'M IMPRESSED

WE WENT FROM BEING ROOM-  
MATES TO SLEEPING IN THE  
SAME BED IN RECORD TIME.



Han ...  
Please don't tell my  
mother what happened  
today. I never told her  
we broke up.

OH, IT'S  
NOTHING.



I'M SORRY IT SHOULDN'T  
HAVE BEEN  
LIKE THIS.

IT'S OK.

IT'S RARE TO HAVE ANYONE  
BEING SO HONEST.



BUT I'VE BEEN  
THINKING...  
YOU SAID YOU'RE CLEAR  
ABOUT WHO YOU ARE,



AND YOUR  
MOTHER'S HERE,

SO MAYBE TOMORROW  
WOULD BE A GOOD TIME  
TO COME OUT TO HER?









SO, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL HER.



I...

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TIMES I'VE BEEN IN THIS SITUATION?

I CAN'T DECIDE IF YOU'RE BISEXUAL, A CLOSETED GAY OR A STRAIGHT GUY THAT'S JUST MESSING WITH MY HEAD!

I'VE BEEN HURT TOO MANY TIMES.



I DON'T WANT TO GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN.

KO, ALL OF THIS IS STILL UNFAMILIAR TO ME.

I JUST NEED A LITTLE TIME. GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE!



I'VE BEEN WORKING  
HARD FOR SO LONG  
TO LIVE MY TRUTH. I  
CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU.

LIFE IS TOO SHORT. YOU CAN'T  
FORCE ME TO SLIP BACKWARDS  
BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE THE  
COURAGE TO MOVE FORWARD.

*CAN'T YOU SEE HOW SELFISH THAT IS?*



THIS KIND OF THING  
TAKES TIME. A PERSON  
HAS TO ACCEPT

HIMSELF BEFORE HE  
CAN COMPLETELY  
LIVE HIS TRUTH.

*ISN'T FORCING ME TO COME OUT OF THE CLOSET EQUALLY SELFISH?*





YOU KNOW,

WHILE YOU'VE BEEN WORKING TO BE YOUR TRUE SELF, I'VE BEEN WORKING TO SUPPRESS MINE,

BECAUSE I HAD AN OPTION THAT WAS MUCH EASIER.

I THOUGHT...

SINCE I CAN BE HAPPY WITH A GIRL, WHAT'S THE POINT IN COMING OUT? WHY DO I NEED TO TELL THE WORLD I ALSO LIKE GUYS?



THERE ARE PROBABLY A LOT OF PEOPLE LIKE ME,

EVEN SOME OF THE CHARACTERS IN HAN'S "BOYS LOVE" COMICS.

WE'RE ALL AFRAID OF BEING JUDGED BY SOCIETY.



BUT AFTER GETTING TO KNOW YOU,

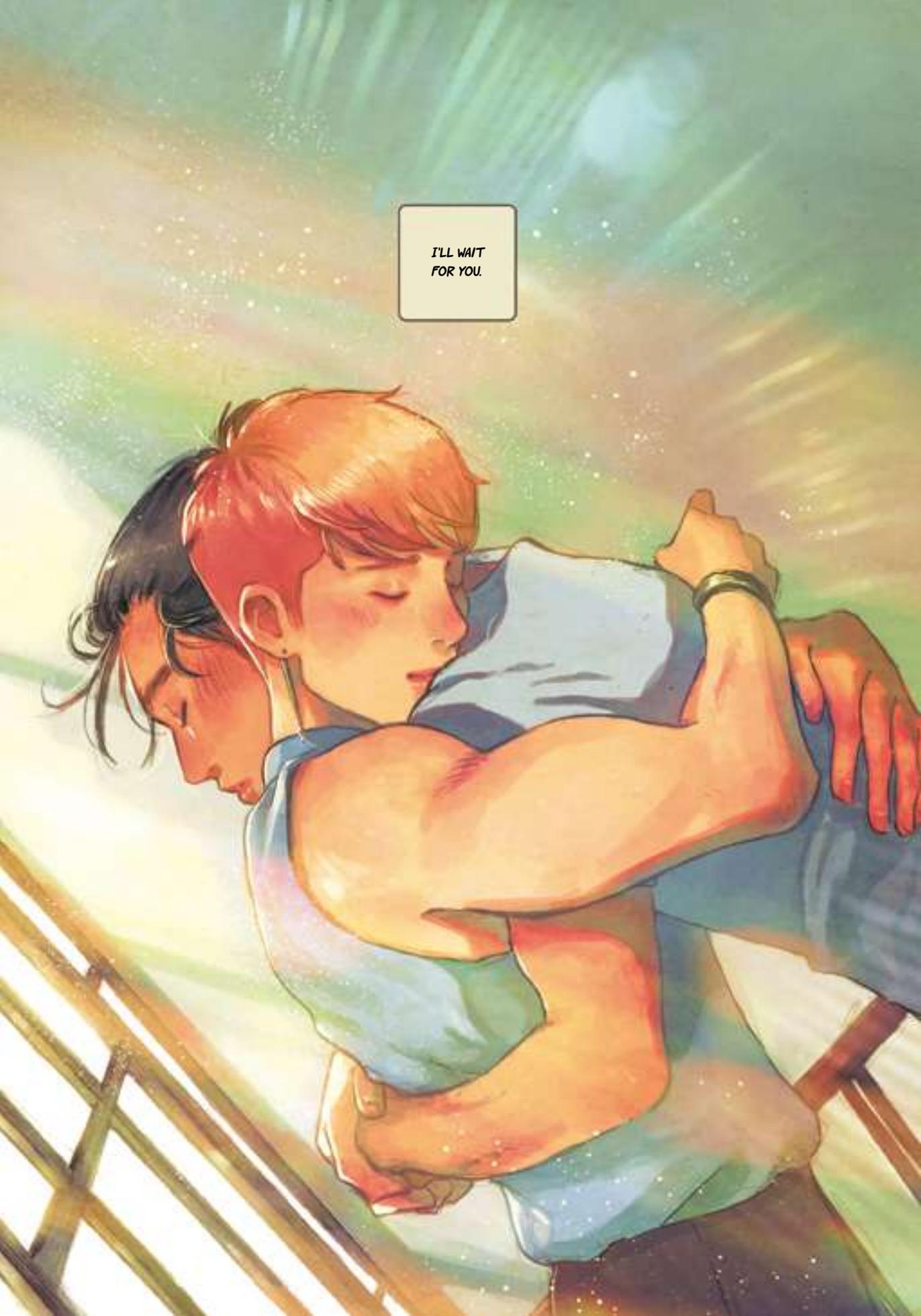
I REALIZE THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE LIKE YOU WHO'VE WORKED HARD

TO CHANGE THINGS. YOU'VE MADE THE WORLD START TO ACCEPT US.



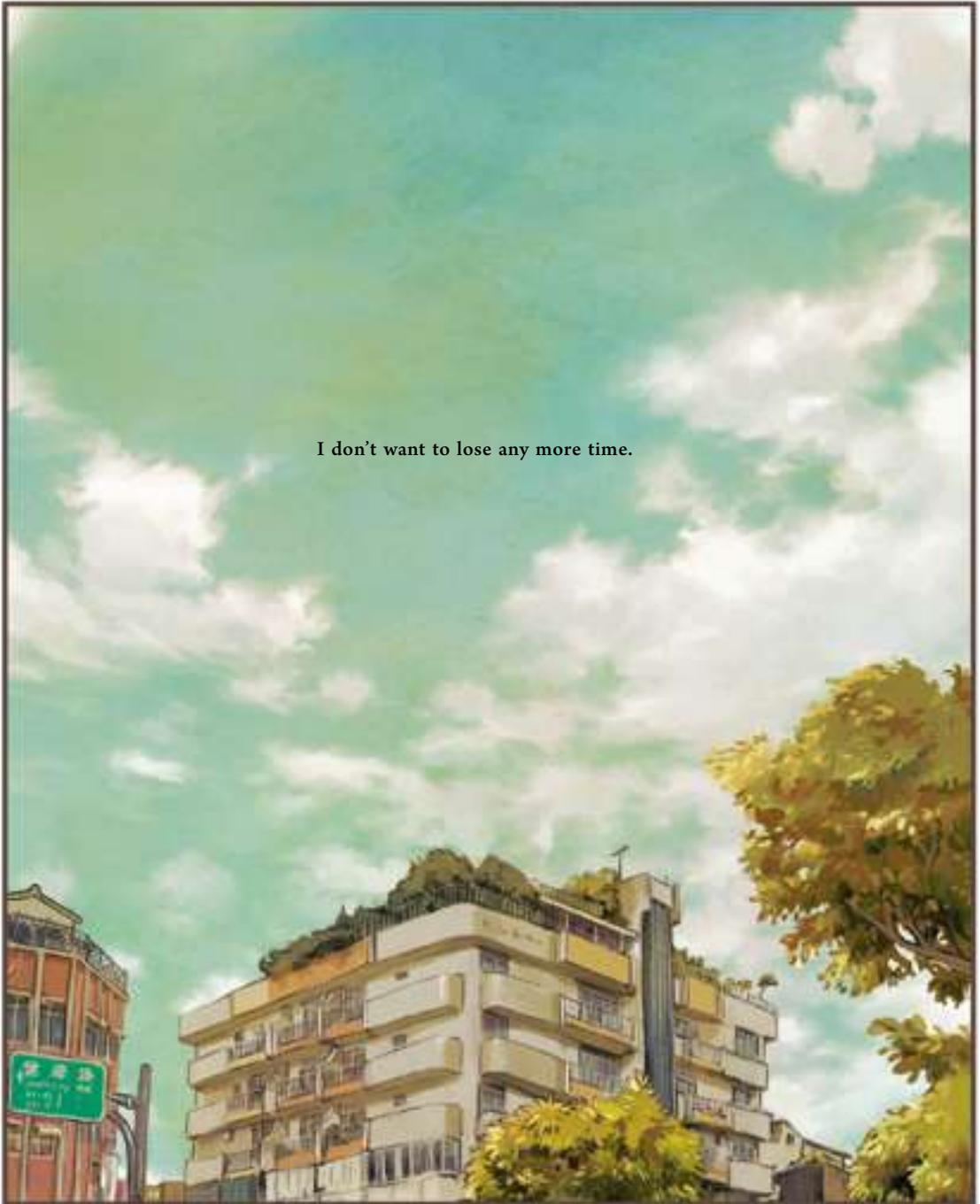
SO, I WANT TO CHANGE, TOO. PLEASE, GIVE ME...

OK.



I'LL WAIT  
FOR YOU.

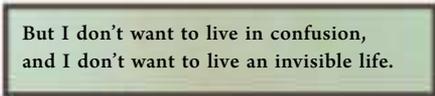
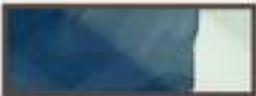
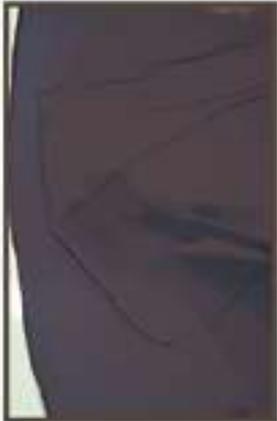
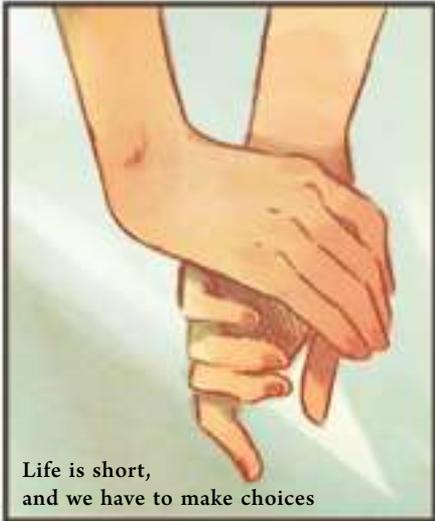
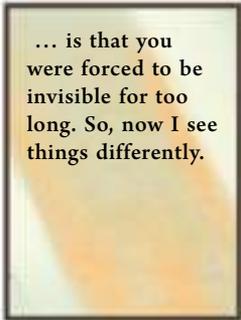
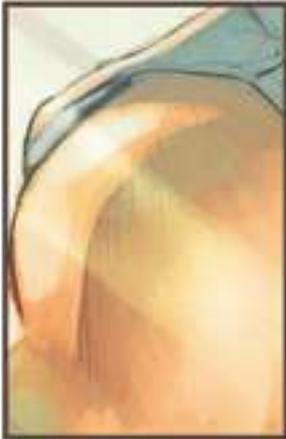




I don't want to lose any more time.



I always thought it was smarter to stay invisible.





Because I choose you.