

# THE PUPPET'S TEARS AND OTHER STORIES

## 傀儡血淚及其他故事

*Bringing together elements as diverse as martial arts, AI, software engineering, high seas piracy, and mathematics, the eight science fiction stories collected here highlight the ways in which technology is mediated by human nature, from our basest drives to the highest flowering of morality.*

Though technically “short” stories, the eight sci-fi tales in this collection are never short on world building. Drawing on diverse influences from martial arts to high adventure, software engineering to piracy, they are nonetheless bound by a common concern with how technological advances are mediated by the limitations of our humanity.

The titular first story presents itself as classic martial arts fiction, but behind the duels and high-minded feats lies a sympathetic exploration of human beings transformed into bio-chemical robot slaves. The interstellar setting of “The Death of Chaos” echoes the terrestrial Age of Discovery, drawing out reflections on colonization, and an investigation into the truth behind a series of momentous prophecies.

An AI protagonist named Hamlet features in three stories, “An Affair”, “Hamlet’s Commensurate Crises”, and “Roba’s Farewell”, dialectics on AI morality that pay tribute to Asimov’s three laws of robotics.

Addressing the theme of reincarnation against a setting of high seas piracy, “Vengeance” portrays a man grappling with the contradictions between two selves: that of his current life, and that of his previous life. In “Yaliena” the curator of a computer museum discovers a very human mystery embedded in the code of defunct software programs. In the final story, “Inverse Function”, a simple mathematical principal becomes the deciding factor in a criminal case involving a storytelling machine.



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With a firm grounding in both hard science and classic science fiction, author Isaac Hsu has a gift for posing challenging theoretical and technical questions within a narrative framework. Readers of this diverse collection will know the thrill of keeping pace with his light-speed mind as it pushes into the outer reaches of human thought.

## Isaac Hsu 許順鐘

A graduate of National Taiwan University's Department of Electrical Engineering, Isaac Hsu is one of Taiwan's most recognized science fiction authors. His lifetime of creative work has garnered numerous awards, including the eighth annual China Times Literature Award (Best Science Fiction Novel); the 1988 Chang Shi-Kuo Science Fiction Prize; and multiple prizes at the Keng Hsin Literature Awards. He currently works in the computer industry as a new product and feature planner.