

The Boy from Clearwater: Book 2

Yu Pei-yun

Zhou Jian-xin, Illustrator

Lin King, Translator

Levine Querido (May 7, 2024)

Hardcover \$25.99 (356pp)

978-1-64614-372-6

A man restarts life after serving ten years as a political prisoner in the graphic biography *The Boy from Clearwater*, which records society-wide changes in Taiwan over time.

Released from Taiwan's Green Island prison, Tshua Khun-lim returns home, reunites with his childhood love, marries, and finds employment. He also learns to hide his history as a former prisoner. The repressive Taiwanese government continues to impact him: censorship curtails his efforts in the manhua (Chinese comics) publishing industry in the 1960s. After some success, natural disasters and financial difficulties force him to close his popular children's magazine. Decades later, in a freer Taiwan, he meets Yu Pei-yun, the college professor who will write the book about his life, and revisits Green Island, honoring the memories of prisoners who died there.

Tshua is remarkable: a man of modest background whose dogged determination results in success despite substantial adversity. The book's defining moment is a dream conversation between Tshua and the ghost of his father, who died by suicide soon after his son was sentenced to jail. Tshua's father reminds his despairing son about family responsibilities and that "failure is losing the courage to keep fighting." And the art adapts to the narrative's flow and ebb, incorporating detailed landscapes, stark white backgrounds, and photographs depending on the needs of the scene.

Triumphant and rewarding, the graphic novel *The Boy from Clearwater* is about navigating life in a changing Taiwan.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.