



**ROSENA FUNG** is an illustrator, educator, and comic artist. Her debut graphic novel, *Living With Viola*, was named a best of the year by the New York Public Library, *School Library Journal*, and *Kirkus Reviews* and was nominated for the Silver Birch Award, the Jean Little First-Novel Award, and the Garden State Teen Book Award. In her many starred reviews, she is often praised for her heartbreakingly honest storytelling mixed with her signature poignant humor. Rosena spends her free time reading, petting cats, and eating snacks in Toronto, Canada.

### THE PATH TO THE FUTURE STARTS IN THE PAST

**Guangdong, 1954** Sixteen-year-old Mei Laan longs for a future of freedom, and her beauty may be the key to getting it. Could an arranged marriage in Hong Kong be the answer to all her problems?

**Hong Kong, 1972** Sixteen-year-old Lydia wants nothing more than to dance and to gain approval from her mother, who is largely absent and sharply critical, especially about Lydia's looks. Maybe her way to happiness is starting over in Toronto?

**Toronto, 2000** Sixteen-year-old Roz is grappling with who she wants to be in the world. The only thing she is certain of is that if she were thinner, things would be better. How can she start living her life, instead of just photographing it?

When Roz's estranged por por abruptly arrives for a seemingly indefinite visit, three generations are now under one roof. Delicate relationships are suddenly upended, and long-suppressed family secrets begin to surface.

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# Age 16

Rosena Fung



Guangdong 1954. Hong Kong 1972. Toronto 2000.  
It's always complicated being Age 16.

"Age 16 is a needed reminder that we are all echoes from wartimes and generations past, a crucial addition to the AAPI graphic memoir collective. Painful but kind, holistic without stretching too thin, this book will live in my head for a long time."

Deb JJ Lee, author of critically acclaimed *In Limbo*

"This beautiful triple timeline story will top critics' lists and young adults' bedside reading piles!"

Fiona Smyth, illustrator of Stonewall Honor Book *Sex Is a Funny Word*

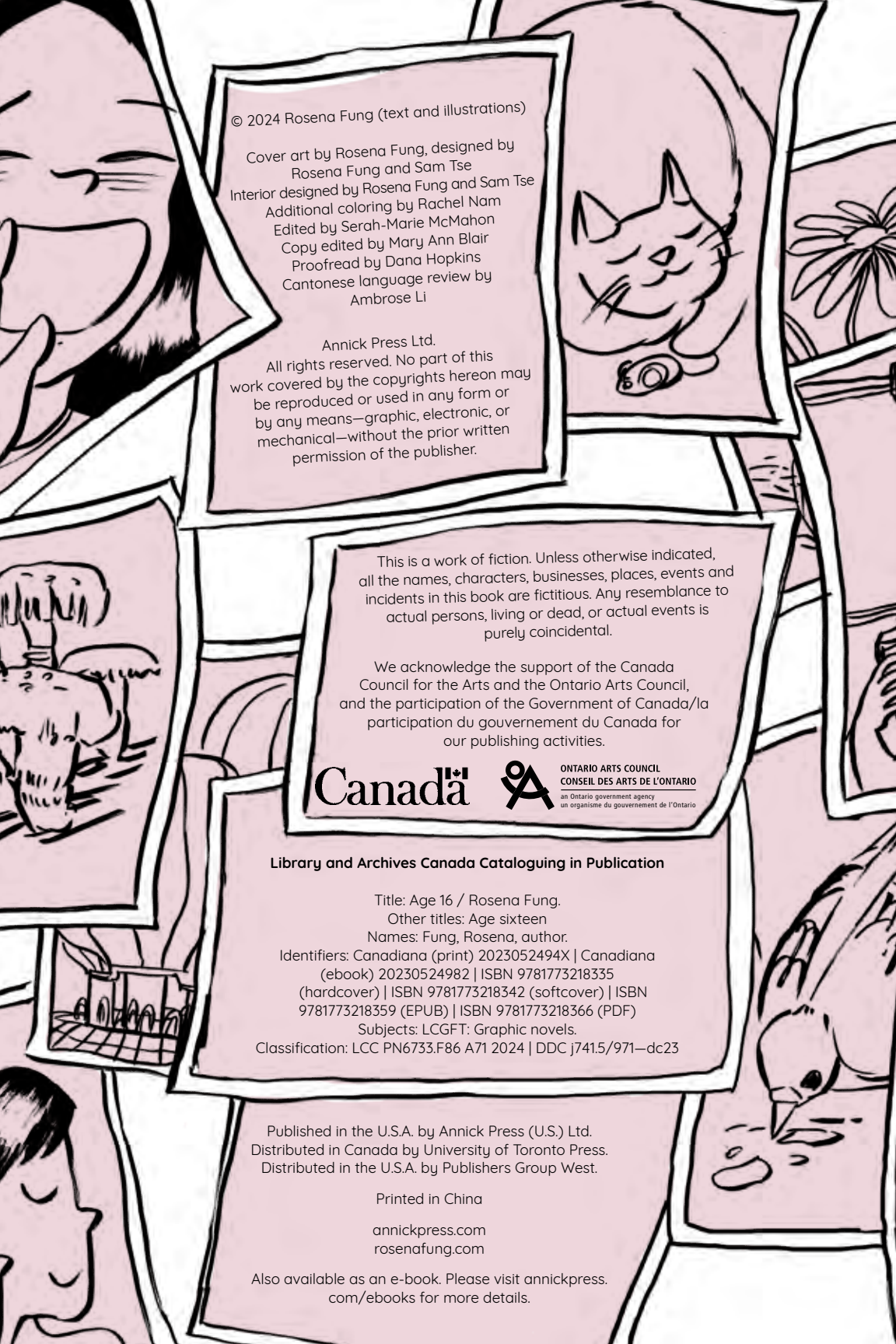
"Connecting three generations of women with the thread of the transformational age of 16, this moving and emotional graphic novel shows us how our history can come to define us, and how we can choose to change."

Victoria Ying, Harvey Award-winning author of *Hungry Ghost*



Age 16

Rosena Fung



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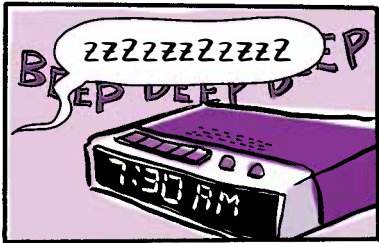
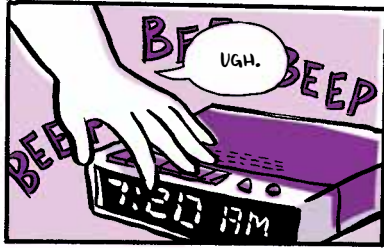
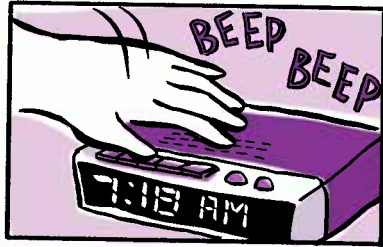
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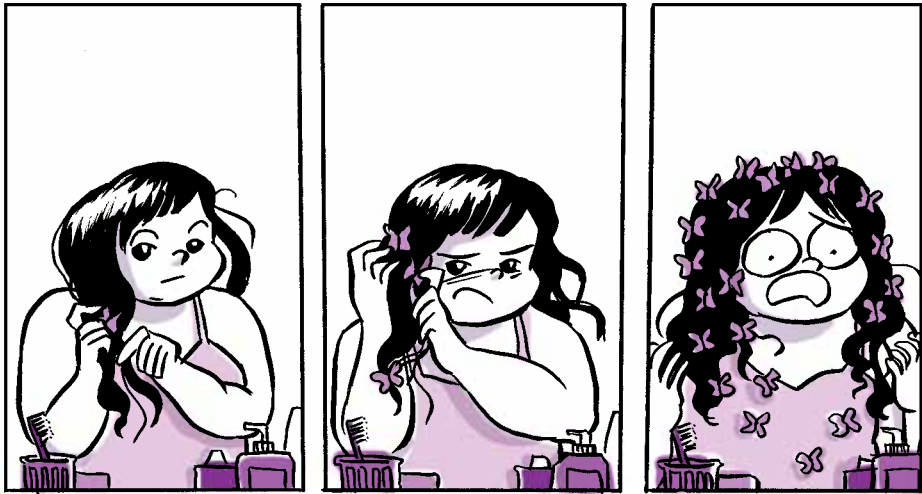
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—R.F.



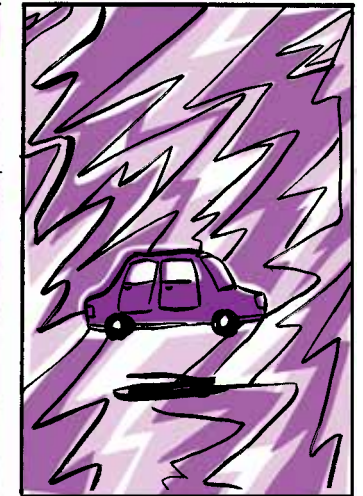
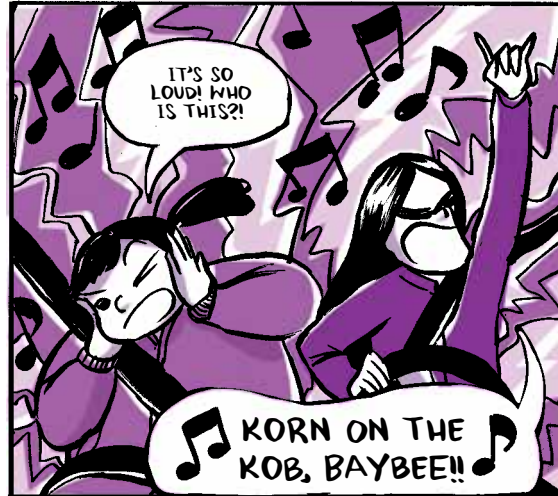
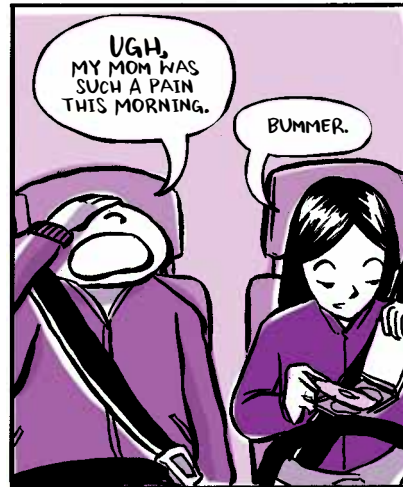
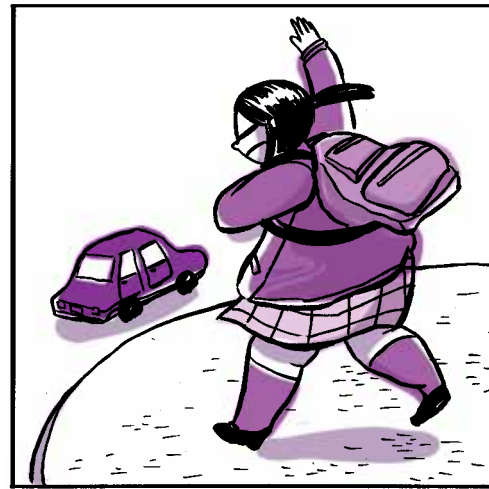
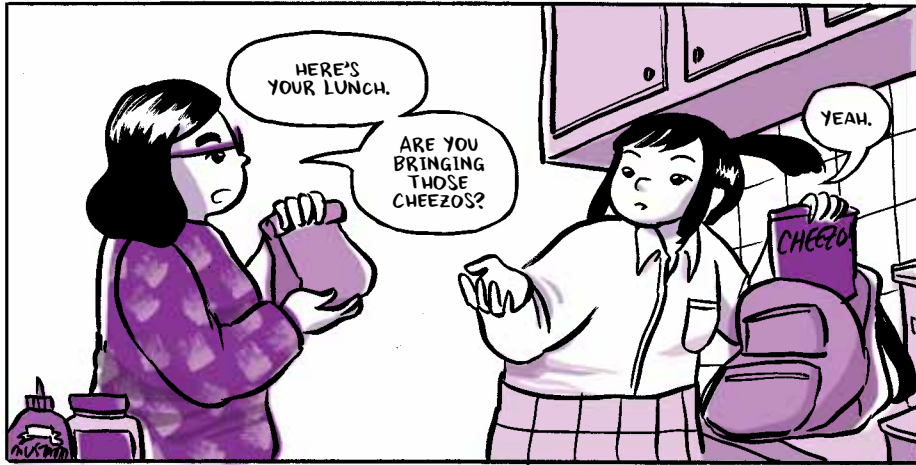




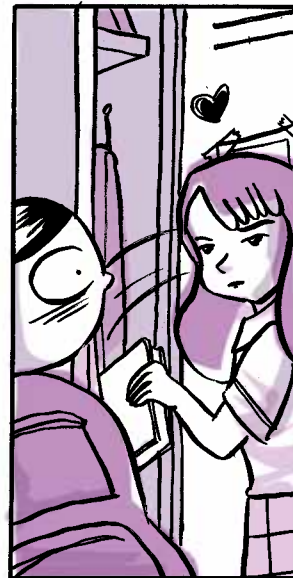




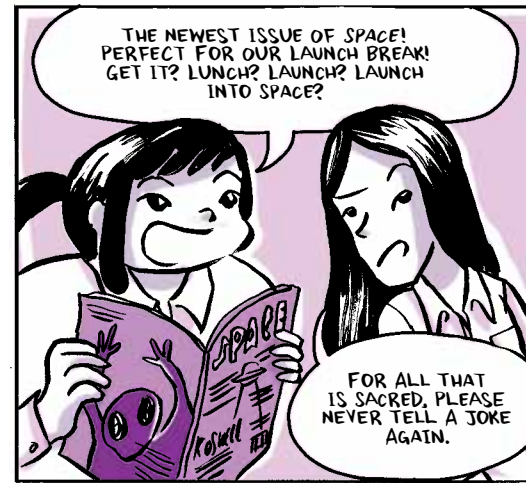
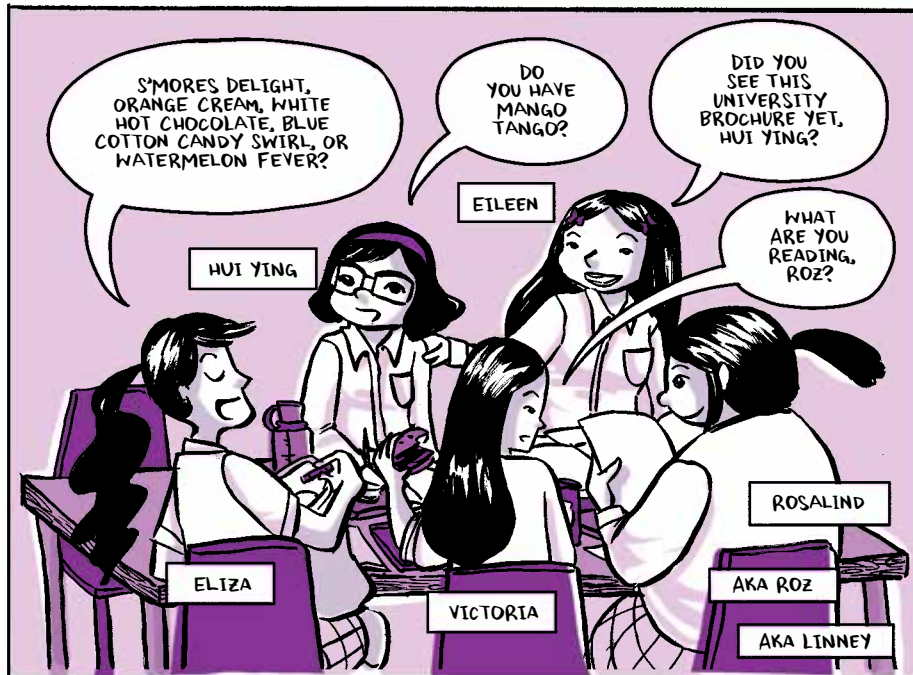




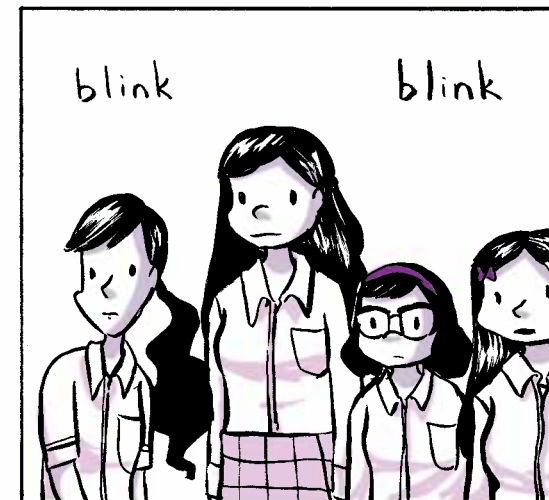
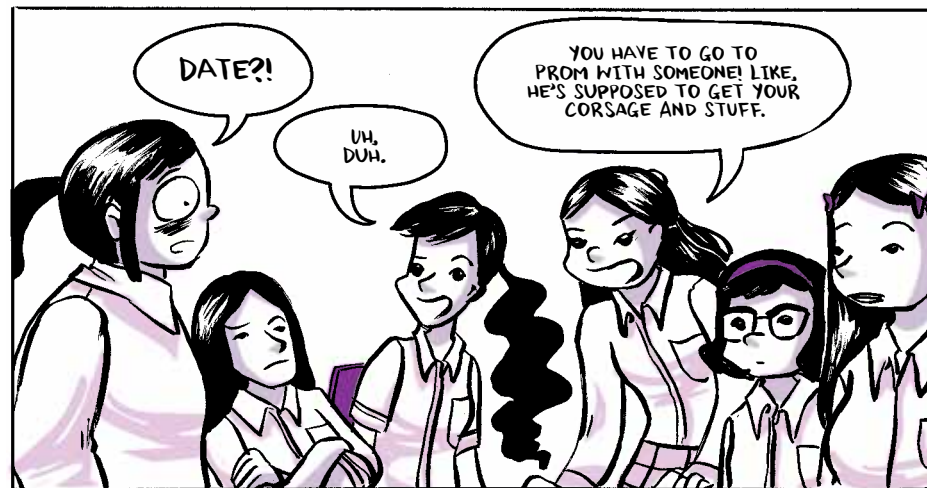
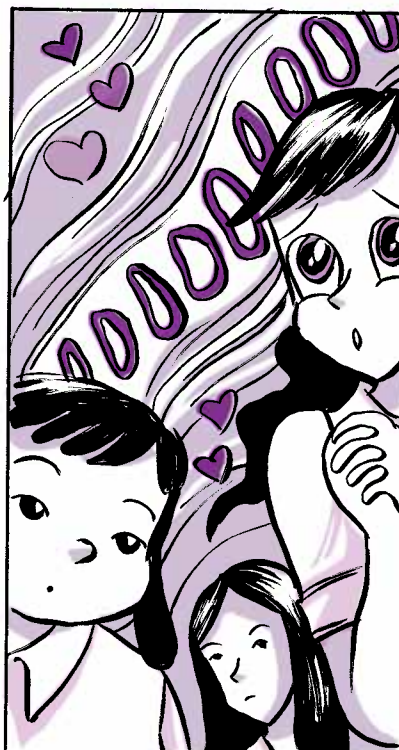




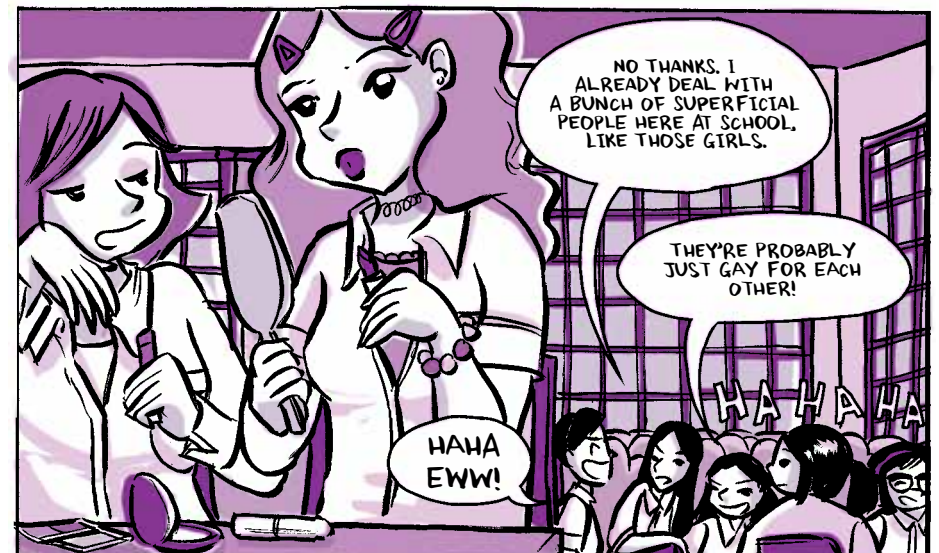
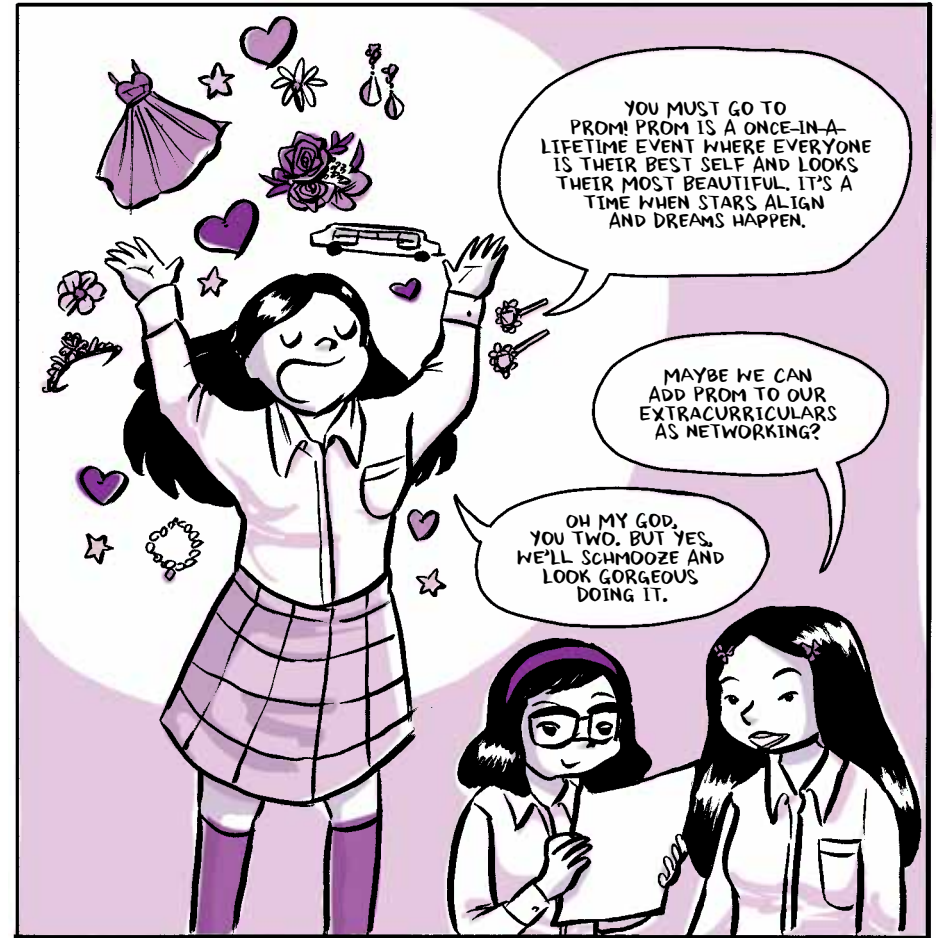




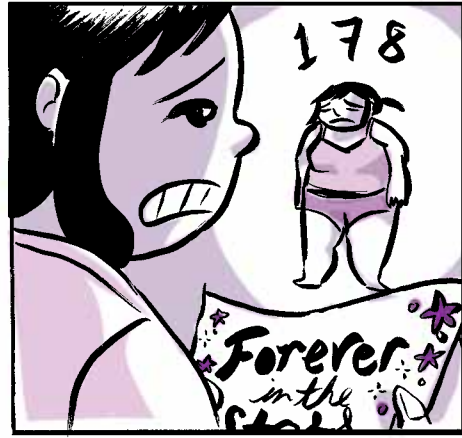




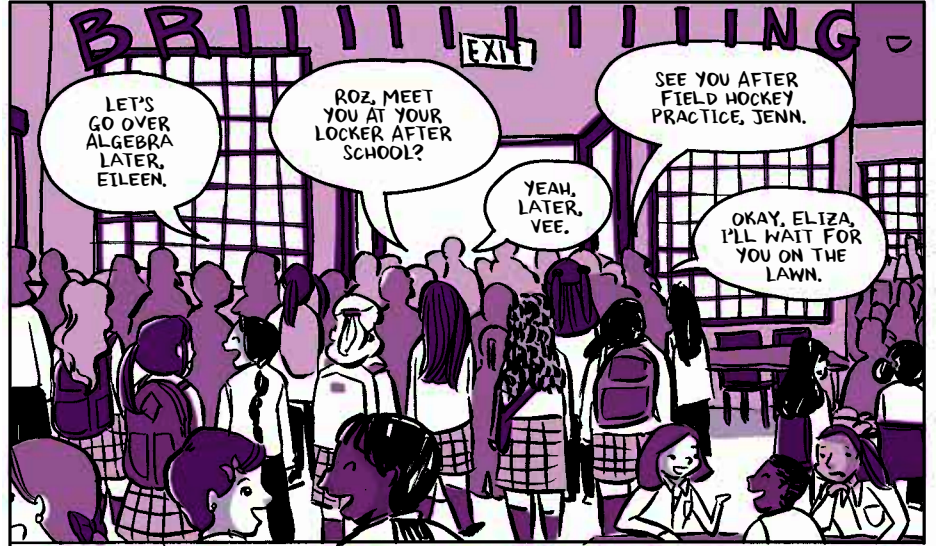




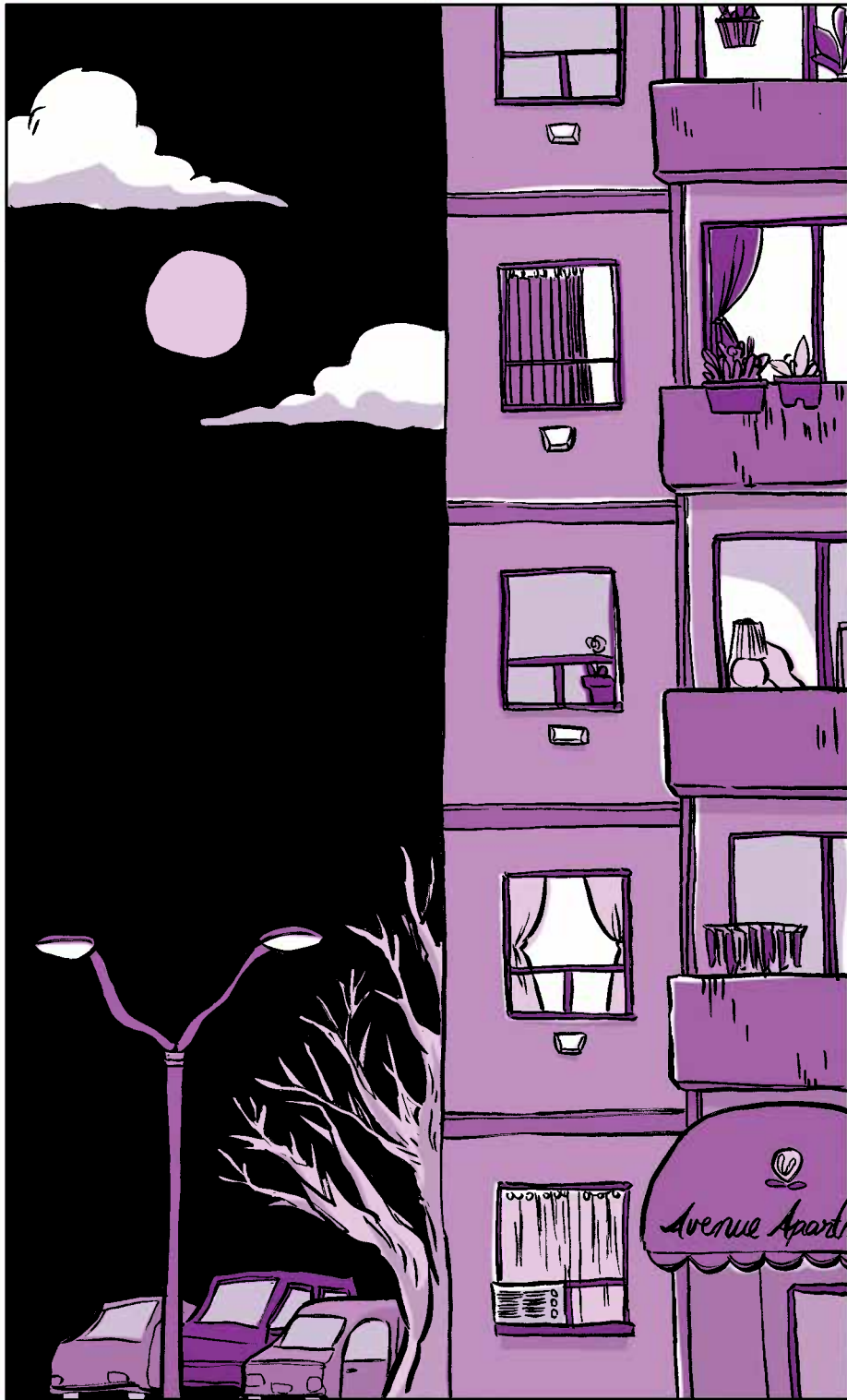




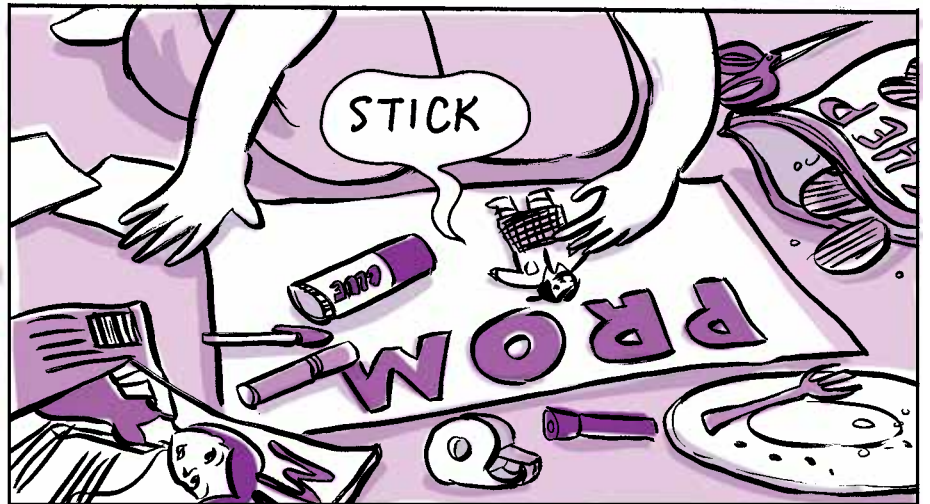
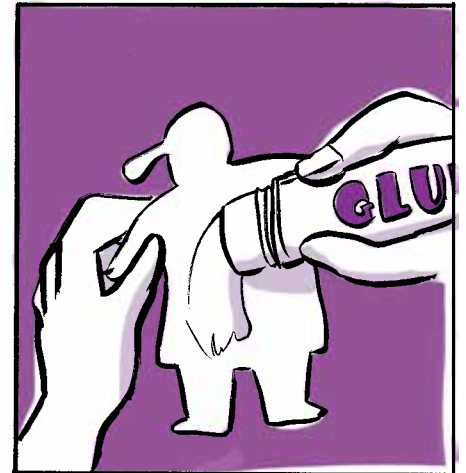
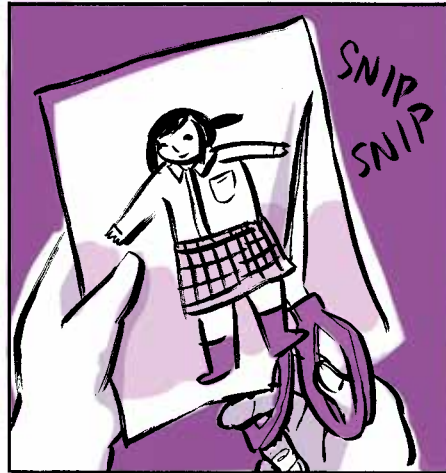












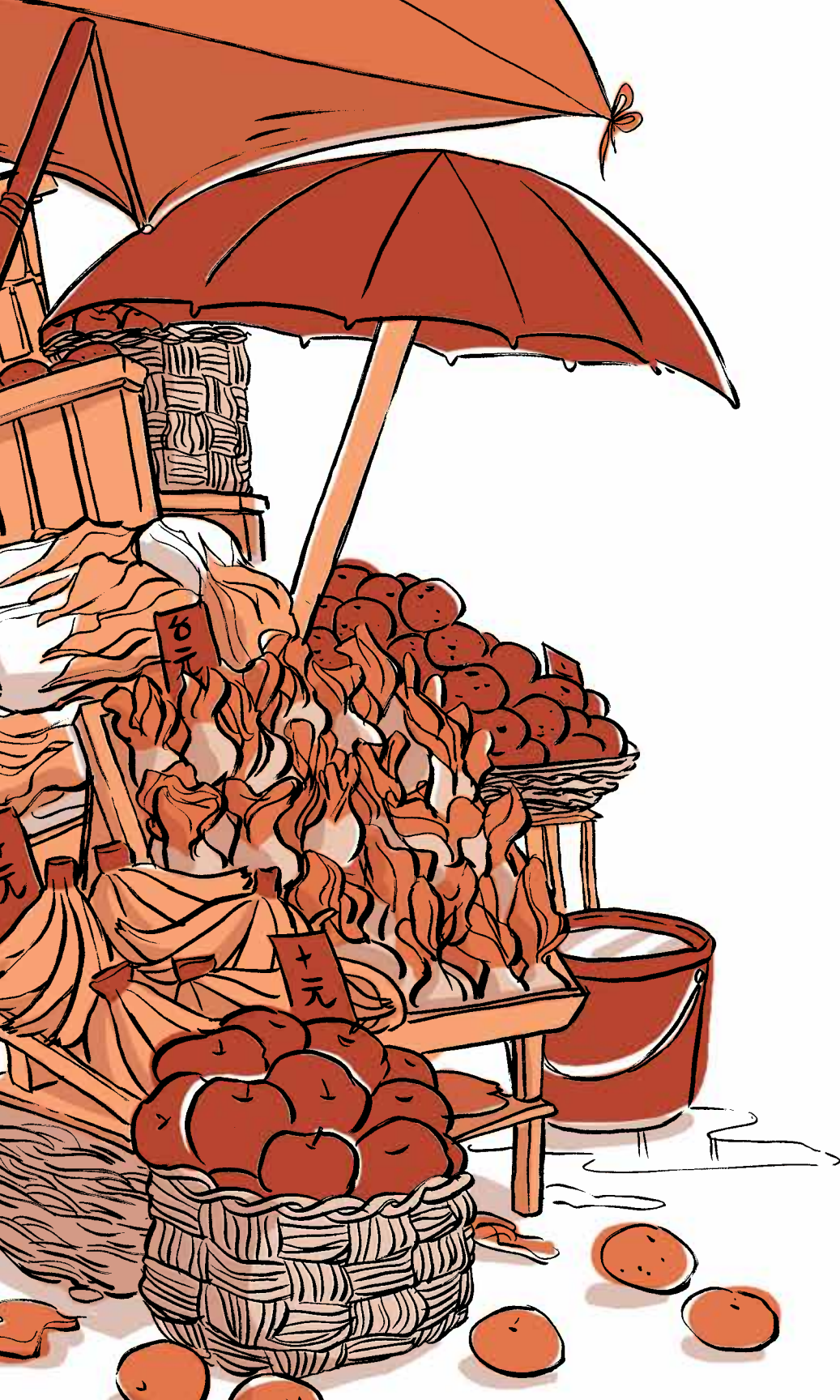










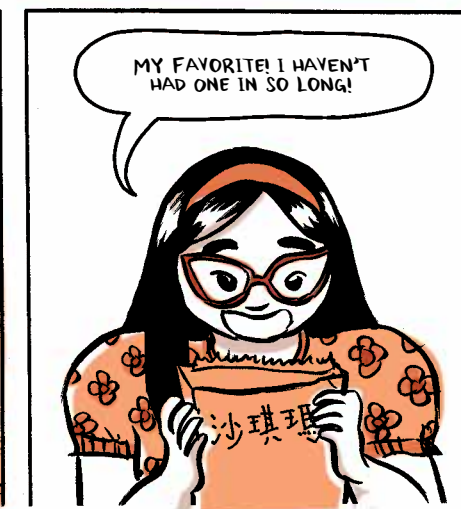
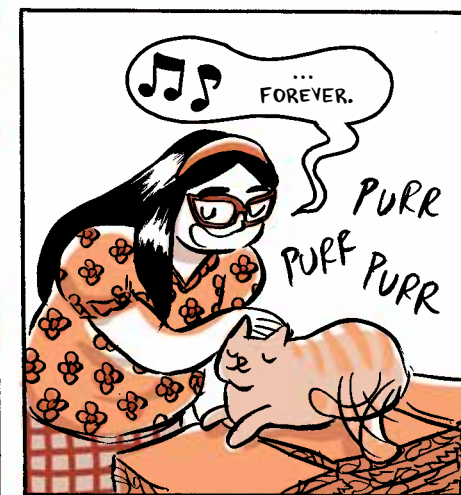
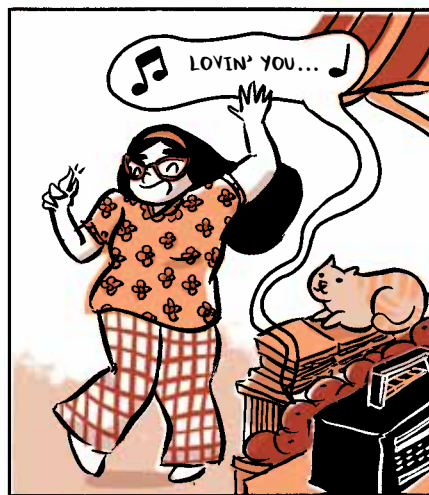
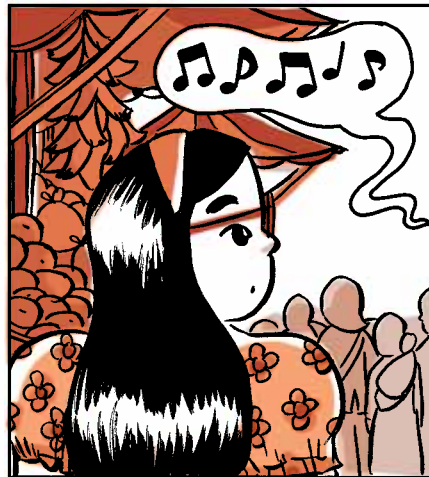


MONG  
KOK,  
HONG KONG  
1972





\*IN CANTONESE







## Author's Note

*Age 16* is a book I have always wanted to write, even when I didn't know it. It's a journey I've been on since before I was born—a story that knit my bones and formed my body together in ways I am still learning. This work is a book of fiction, but it is also a generational memoir.

My por por (Gok Wah, and later, Margaret) was born in Guangdong, China, amidst the violence and fear of invading armies during the Sino-Japanese War. After the war, she lived through great social unrest, political upheaval, and economic instability, eventually joining the many people leaving China. She entered Hong Kong into a marriage that her father had arranged—to a man who already had a wife. My por por, strong and proud, would not consent to being anyone's second wife. So, after my mom (Winnifred, or Winnie) was born, my por por left him—an astonishing act for a young woman with a baby in the 1950s.

My mom was raised by my por por and her guardian. She never knew her father. Lonely and galvanized by the thought of new opportunities, she emigrated to Toronto, Canada, to attend high school and then college and stayed.

I came of age in Toronto in the early 2000s. I went through a lot of photos from that time while working on *Age 16*, and there were many cringe-inducing moments. (Did I really crimp my hair for a semi-formal dance?! The answer is yes.) Yet I can't help but feel tenderness for this person—a girl who tied so much of her happiness and well-being to shrinking herself.

This book is about all the ways we are taught to deny our bodies tenderness, and mothers can be especially critical of their daughters' bodies. They hold the ways the world has been cruel to them as girls and women and pass it on. I



