

# Girl Overboard!

## A ROSE AMONG THORNS



WRITTEN BY

**SHERI TAN**

ILLUSTRATED BY **FERNANDO HIERRO**

*Girl Overboard!*

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**A ROSE  
AMONG  
THORNS**



Written by  
Sheri Tan

Illustrated by  
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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters,  
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events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

First Edition

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*For Carla, Alejandro and Javier*



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# 1

## First Day Jitters

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Dear Diary,

How do I start...Today is...no, wait. I just got to Singapore...No, I have arrived in a foreign land...and it's over!! My life is over! Yes, that's it, I feel like my life is so over, like I have been thrown into the deep sea with no life jacket...I have no life, no friends, no room...Well, I do have a new room...but it's not my old room. This

//

room doesn't count...It's not my real room.  
I miss my real one back home in New York.



Lying in bed, Rosie Smith writes in the diary that Grandma gave her on her first day in Singapore.

I had a life back in New York. Now I don't have one. Dad's been great, trying to make sure that my pesky eight-year-old brother Alex and I are okay. I love my dad! He's super smart and he's an artist, but right now he works for a real estate company to pay the bills. He has dark brown hair, which is thinning at the top. He says it makes him look smarter-haha. Mom wants him to go completely bald and give up trying to comb over whatever's left. **LOL!!**



Mom can be funny, but she can also be so demanding! Rose, do this, Rose, do that! Okay, I have to explain that Mom stopped calling me Rosie when I turned 12 'cause she thinks Rose is more grown-up sounding, and she thinks I should get used to being called and calling myself Rose. "When you start working, you don't want to be signing off as Rosie Smith, right, Rose? Rose Smith sounds so much better!" I have no idea about my future working life. All I know is

that I like the name Rosie and that I'm always wrong with Mom. She says she's got all the answers!

**Whatever.**



Can you believe that the only reason why we are here, why I had to give up my life in New York, is because of Grandma? See, Mom was born here. But she went to college in California, and then ended up finding a job in New York City, where she met my dad. (They met on a subway platform!) My dad, Alex and I were all born in New York City—at the same hospital, in fact (uh, at different times of course!). I really didn't want to move here at all but Mom said we have to look after Grandma. Although Uncle Amos is here and he's Grandma's favourite anyway?

So why are we here? I was fine with just visiting Singapore during our summer vacations—the way we had always done it—but Dad says moving here is good for us because life is better here, whatever

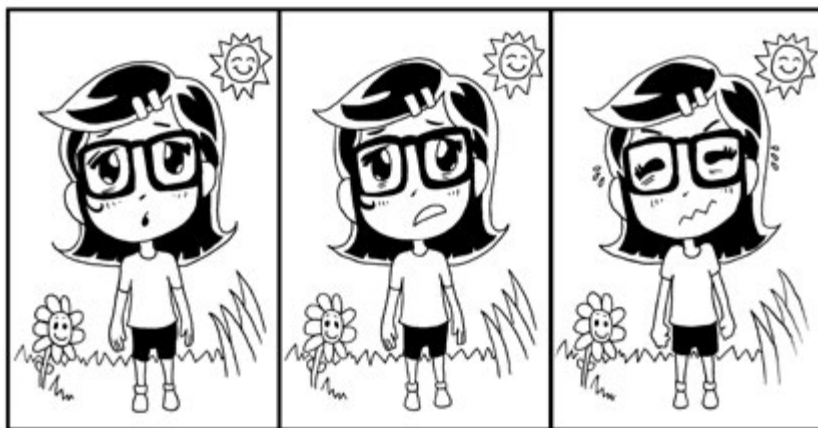


that means. How can life be better when I don't have any friends here? When the weather is the same every day? When kids don't seem to have time for anything but school, homework, tuition, piano lessons, swimming lessons, enrichment classes and on and on?

**SPRING**

**WINTER**

**FALL**



Alex loves it here because of the zoo...and the aquarium. All he talks about is animals and dinosaurs. He can be SO annoying, especially when he touches my stuff!

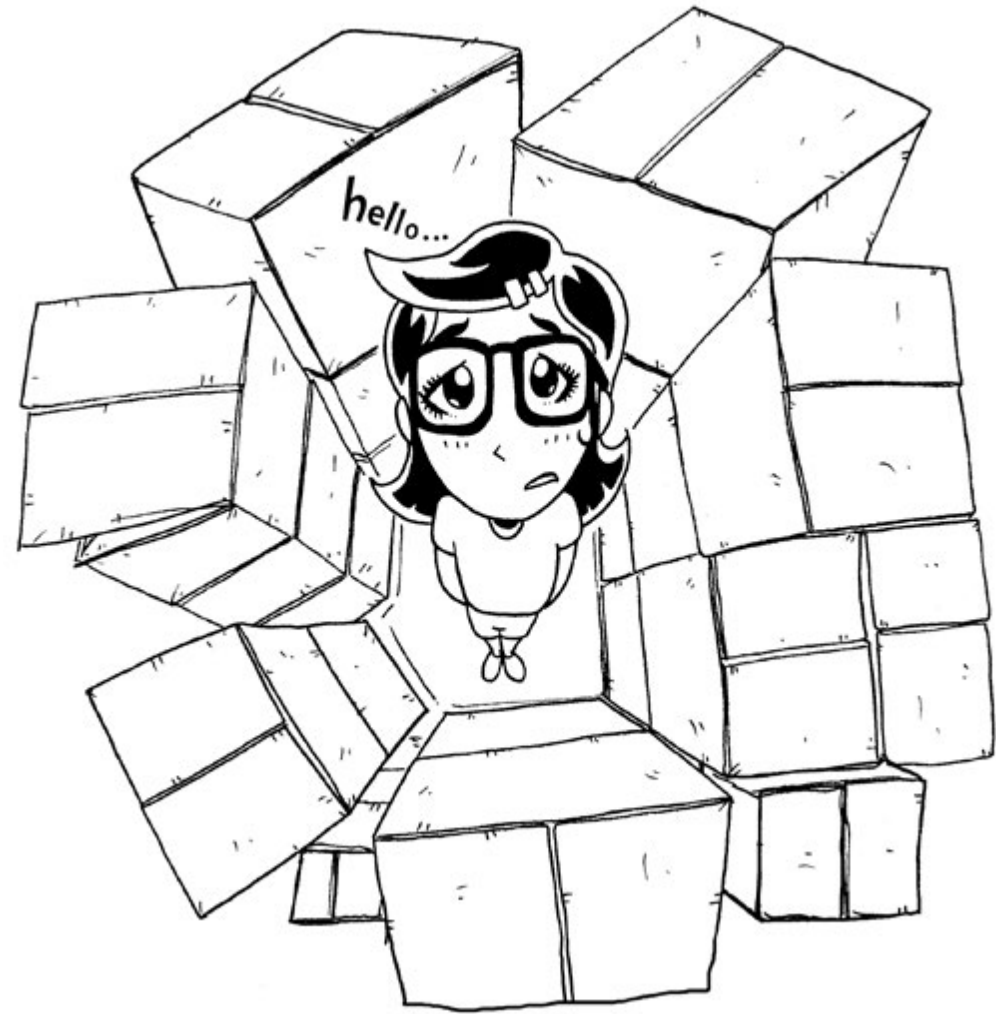
Grandma is sweet and nice and is always giving me stuff, odd things like a shirt that is way too big for me and for one of my birthdays she even sent me medicinal tea for backaches. Mom tells me to just be happy that Grandma thinks about me. Anyway, she did give me this diary when we arrived.



I still can't believe we actually moved here.

Oh yeah, there's also Uncle Amos and Auntie Jen. They have three teenage boys. Well, they are actually cavemen, or cave boys! **LOL!** Jason, Jared and Joey-triplets, can you believe it??

Boy, I just wish I still had my old room and my friends. I miss New York.



Suddenly Rosie hears her mom call, "Rose! Where are you?"

"In my room, Mom," Rosie says, shoving the diary under her pillow and closing her eyes. She hopes her mom doesn't want her to help unpack yet another box.

As the footsteps get closer to her room, Rosie shuts her eyes tighter.

"Oh, okay, I see...Rose, please watch your brother. The painters are here already, and I have

to tell them what to do. *Aiyah*, I don't know why they came so early..."

Rosie's eyes pop open. "Noooooo, not now, Mom, I'm trying to get 10 more minutes of sleep," she says, but her mother has already disappeared.

With a sigh, Rosie takes her diary out from under her pillow and is about to hide it in her closet when Alex bounces into the room.



**“RAWRRR!”**

Alex roars as he jumps onto Rosie’s bed and pretends he’s about to sink his teeth into his sister.

**“Alex, stop that!”**

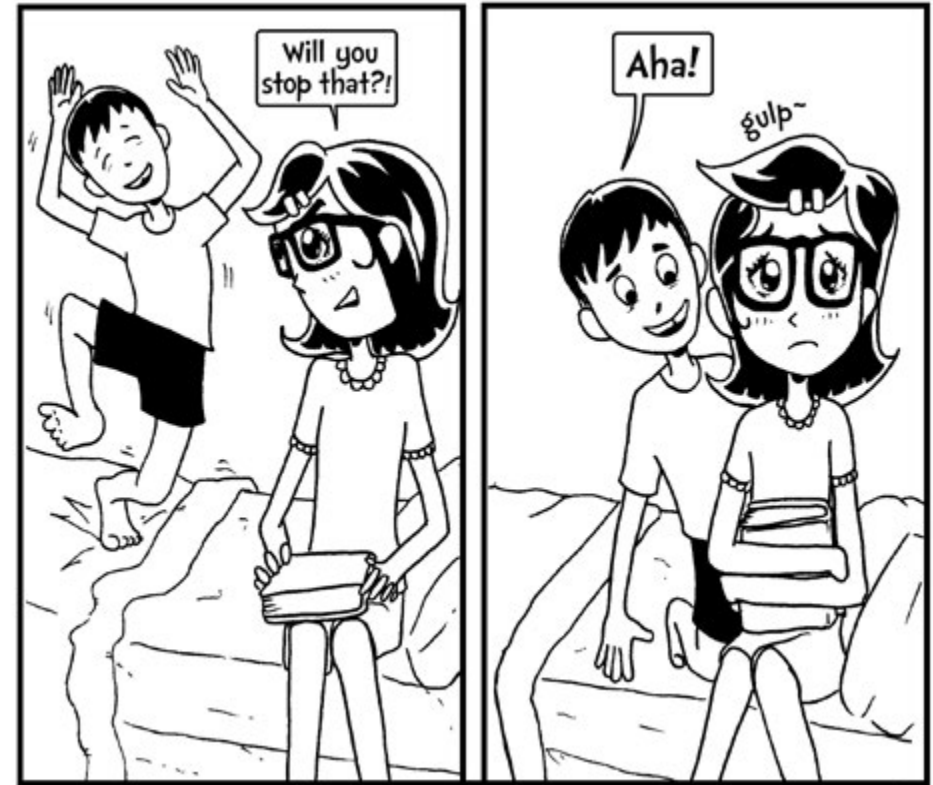
Rosie yells, pushing her brother away.

“What are you, five?”

It’s time to stop pretending you’re a lion.”

Alex surprises Rosie by not resisting and drops his act—a little too quickly. Rosie realises that it’s because he has spotted her diary.

“Ooh, what’s that?” he asks. “Isn’t that the diary that Grandma gave you? What did you write in it...can I see?”



“No! Alex, don’t touch anything!” Rosie says, clutching the diary tightly and glaring at him. “Why can’t you just wait in the kitchen? Why do you have to be all up in my face...in my room...”

Alex shrugs and looks thoughtful. “Hey, I found a spider in my room. Want to come see? Wait, oh yeah, they’re painting my room now. I wonder if they’re going to paint over the spider...” He pauses

before adding with a grin, “No, I don’t think they will because I’ve got it right here!”

He shoves a giant plastic spider into Rosie’s face and laughs hysterically as his sister starts screaming.



“Alex, that’s it!” Rosie says. “**Get out! Get out right now!**”

“Oh, come on, sis, I’m just having fun,” Alex says in a plaintive voice. “Okay, I’ll just sit right here and pretend to be a fly on the wall. You won’t even know I’m here.”

“No, Alex, I’m serious. I need you out ‘cause I’ve got to change into this school uniform. I can’t believe I have to wear a school uniform!”

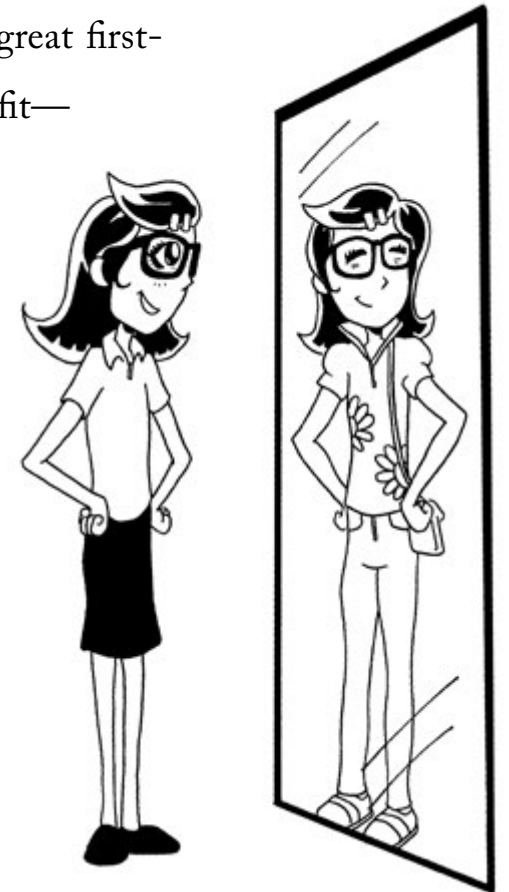
“Eh, it’s a polo shirt and skirt. No big deal, Rosie,” Alex says. “Would have been bad if we had to wear a jumpsuit.”

“You got a point there, little bro. Okay, go. Now. I have to get dressed.”

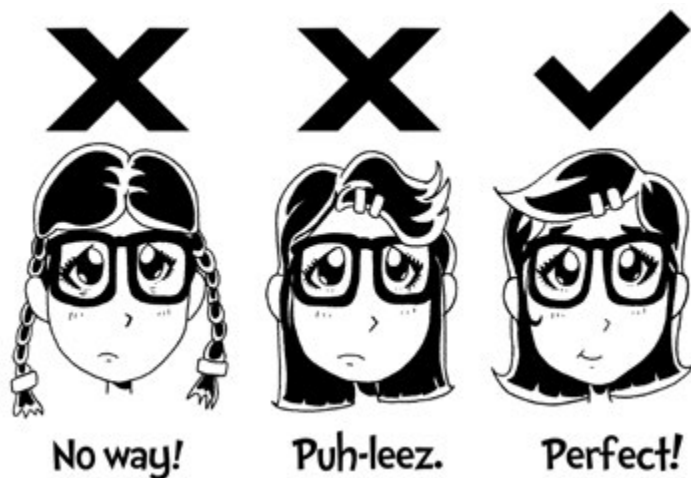
After Rosie closes the door, she takes a look at the three sets of uniforms that have been hanging in her closet for the past two weeks. “Well, it does make it easier getting dressed in the morning,” she says out loud. But she knows she’d much rather be thinking about a great first-day-of-school outfit—

maybe a floral printed top, a cute sling bag and neon pink sneakers?

“Rose,” Mom calls again. “Come eat something, the bus will be here soon.”



“Be right there, Mom,” Rosie replies, zipping up the blue skirt. She makes a face as she looks in the mirror, then pulls her hair back into a ponytail. “Ponytail, no ponytail? Decisions, decisions. First day of school...no ponytail...” Rosie finally decides. But she starts to have second thoughts about going to school.



Walking into the kitchen, Rosie says, “Mom, I really don’t feel well today—”

“*Aiyoh*,” her mom says, immediately reaching to feel Rosie’s forehead. “Hmm, you don’t have a fever. What are you feeling? Sore throat? Sneezy? Headachey?”

“Yes, yes, all of those, Mom,” Rosie says, trying to talk in a raspy voice. “I don’t think I can go to school today.”

But Mom already has a spoonful of medicine ready. “Probably just allergies, Rose. Take some Zyrtec and after a while, you’ll be okay.”

“I think Rosie’s just trying to play hooky, Mom,” Alex says with a grin.



“Who’s trying to play hooky?” Dad asks, walking into the kitchen. “Not you, Rosie?”

Rosie slaps her hand against her forehead and sticks her tongue out at Alex.

“Aw, don’t worry, Rosie, you’re going to do great at school,” Dad says, hugging her. Then with both hands on her shoulders, he tells her, “You can do it. I know it’s hard being the new kid, but come on, Rosie, you’re from New York!”

And right then, Dad starts singing his favourite Frank Sinatra song and Alex joins in. Rosie’s heart swells when they sing about making it there and making it anywhere.

Okay, I can do this, Rosie tells herself. She walks out the door with her brother, still feeling good, still grinning from ear to ear. It’s not hard when your parents are standing in the doorway, cheering, “**Go, New York, go New York!**”



## 2

### Hooray for School...

“Where’s the school bus?” Rosie asks as she and Alex look around the pick-up point in front of their block of flats on Holland Avenue.

“Don’t know,” Alex replies, then nods his head towards a small red and grey minivan parked by the kerb. “Maybe that’s it.”

He quickly adds, “I hope that’s it. Look, it has cool stripes on the side.”

“**Oh, no, no, no,** that can’t be it,” Rosie says,

# Who's Who?

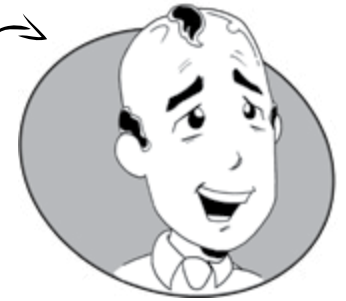


**Rosie**

Rosie is 13 years old and grew up in the New York City borough of Queens—until her family's move to Singapore. She can be shy but likes to express herself through fashion, art and writing in her diary. She enjoys playing basketball and has played center on her school teams. She would love to play at Madison Square Garden one day.

**Dad (Charles Smith)**

Dad is a good-natured guy who lives to make his family happy, even at his own expense. He firmly believes that songs can cheer everyone up and is always ready to sing. While in university, he was part of a rock band called Smitty Mix.



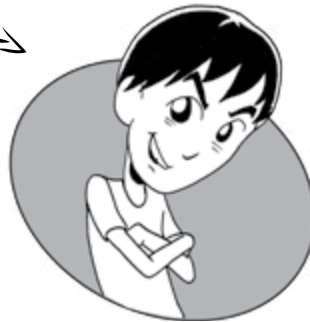
**Pink**

Pink is 13 years old, and like Rosie, is a big sister. Her little sister, Namisha, is five years old. Unlike Rosie, Pink is a go-getter who is not afraid to take risks. She loves music and fashion, and wants to eventually start her own clothing line.



**Alex**

Alex is Rosie's eight-year-old brother. He thinks scaring his sister with his toy spider is the funniest thing in the world. He can rattle off a million facts about animals—especially dinosaurs—and hopes to become famous by discovering a new species of dinosaur.



**Ben**

Ben hails from the seaside town of Margate, England, which is about 121 km southeast of London. He is a fan of electro house music and sports. His easy-going nature and positive attitude helps Rosie adjust to life at her new school.



**Mom (Tracey Smith)**

Ever since she moved back to Singapore with her family, Mom has been immersing herself in everything Singaporean, especially food. She wants to blog about her misadventures in the kitchen, but just hasn't found time to do that yet.



Want to get in touch with Rosie? You can email her at [hellorosiesmith@gmail.com](mailto:hellorosiesmith@gmail.com), or find her on Facebook at [fb.com/hellorosiesmith](https://www.facebook.com/hellorosiesmith). She'd love to hear from you!

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Aditi, for your enthusiasm, cheerful attitude and astute editorial comments;

Lydia, for your artistic guidance;

and everyone at Epigram Books for your encouragement and hard work.







Coming soon!



# *Girl Overboard!*

**A ROSE  
GROWS IN THE  
JUNGLE**

In this second volume of the *Girl Overboard!* series, Rosie Smith continues to document her adventures as she adjusts to life in Singapore. When they get lost on Pulau Ubin during a camping trip, Rosie must rely on her wits and work with her friends Pink and Ben to find their way back to civilisation!



Quick! Turn the page for a sneak peek!

## Here's the Sneak Peek!

“Thank goodness it’s Saturday,” Dad says with a groan as he rolls out of bed. “I’ll get the coffee brewing.”

“Rose, Pink’s mom just sent me a text,” Mom says. “Pink will be up here in a few minutes, so go wait for her in the living room.”

Rosie turns and happily skips down the hallway, just as Dad calls out, “Uh...Tracey dear, I think you need to come see Alex...”

Mom looks up and takes a deep breath. “What now?” she mutters before running to the kitchen. With a gasp she cries out, “Alex, what have you done to your face? Is that...is that my black eyeliner all over your face?”

“Yeah, Mom, I’m a commando and I’m going to protect Rosie,” Alex says with a serious look on his face.

Rosie rolls her eyes. “Right, Alex. Protect me from who? You?”

Dad shoots a look at Rosie, then turns to Alex. “Alex, Rosie will be fine. Now go wash your face before you scare the neighbours. And when you’re done, you can help me make my world-famous pancakes.”

Alex looks thoughtful for a moment and shrugs his shoulders. “Okay, Dad,” he says as he runs off.

Just then, there is a knock at the front door. Rosie hugs her mom and dad before heading out.

“Hi, Ro—” Pink starts to say when the door opens.

Rosie cuts her off. “Not now, Pink. Let’s get out of here before Alex the commando catches up to us.”



# About the Creators



## Sheri Tan, author

Sheri Tan has always loved reading. Growing up in Singapore, her favourite author was Enid Blyton and she often wished she had adventures like the Famous Five or that she attended Malory Towers. After college, Sheri became a writer and editor of children's books and worked in New York City for many years before returning to Singapore.

## Fernando Hierro, illustrator

Fernando Hierro is an illustrator and graphic designer who grew up reading books illustrated by Jack Kirby, a comic book artist from his neighbourhood, the Lower East Side in New York City.



Fernando started drawing at an early age, following in the footsteps of his father. He was also inspired by the art of John Byrne and loves telling stories through pictures and words.

"A very promising voice...Rosie is bright and spunky, headstrong yet endearing—a girl who knows her mind. She is sure to find a lot of devoted readers in Singapore."

—Dr Myra Garces-Bacsal, Assistant Professor,  
National Institute of Education, Singapore

Dear Diary,

Life in New York was looking great. Summer vacation was around the corner, and I'd **FINALLY** turned 13! Then Mom announced we'd be moving halfway around the world to Singapore, where she grew up.

Now it feels like my life is SO over. I don't know anyone here, my family's totally weird and everything seems to go wrong at my new international school. One thing's for sure—I'm gonna figure this out!



Things aren't easy for Rosie Smith. Peek into her diary for tales about her spider-obsessed little brother, **EMBARRASSING** episodes at school and making friends—and enemies—in her new home, Singapore. Narrated with honesty and charm, and peppered with humorous illustrations, *Girl Overboard!* is a fresh new series whose heroine you'll find yourself rooting for.

Look for Rosie's next adventure,  
*A Rose Grows in the Jungle.*



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