

THE VERY SOLID ADVENTURES OF HANDSOME HOCK AND CHAMPION POH



PHUA SAN SAN



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PHUA SAN SAN



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This book is dedicated to my Pa for his fighting spirit, my Ma for always smiling, and to Sha, for being the best sister ever. And to Dick Lim, for being friends at first sight.

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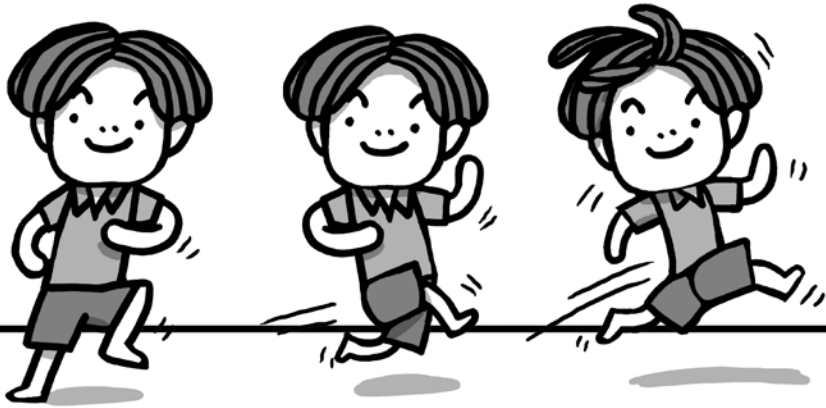
FRIENDS AT FIRST SIGHT

In Singapore, not too long ago, somewhere in the heart of Toa Payoh on different floors of the same flat lived two boys who had not met.

Tan Lye Hock was one boy's name, but he thought it was a bit mundane. He said, "I am quite a handsome chap, even though my teeth have gaps.

"With other boys if you compare, I have very *stylo-mylo* hair. Watch me comb it into a *curry-pok*. So, call me Handsome, Handsome Hock."



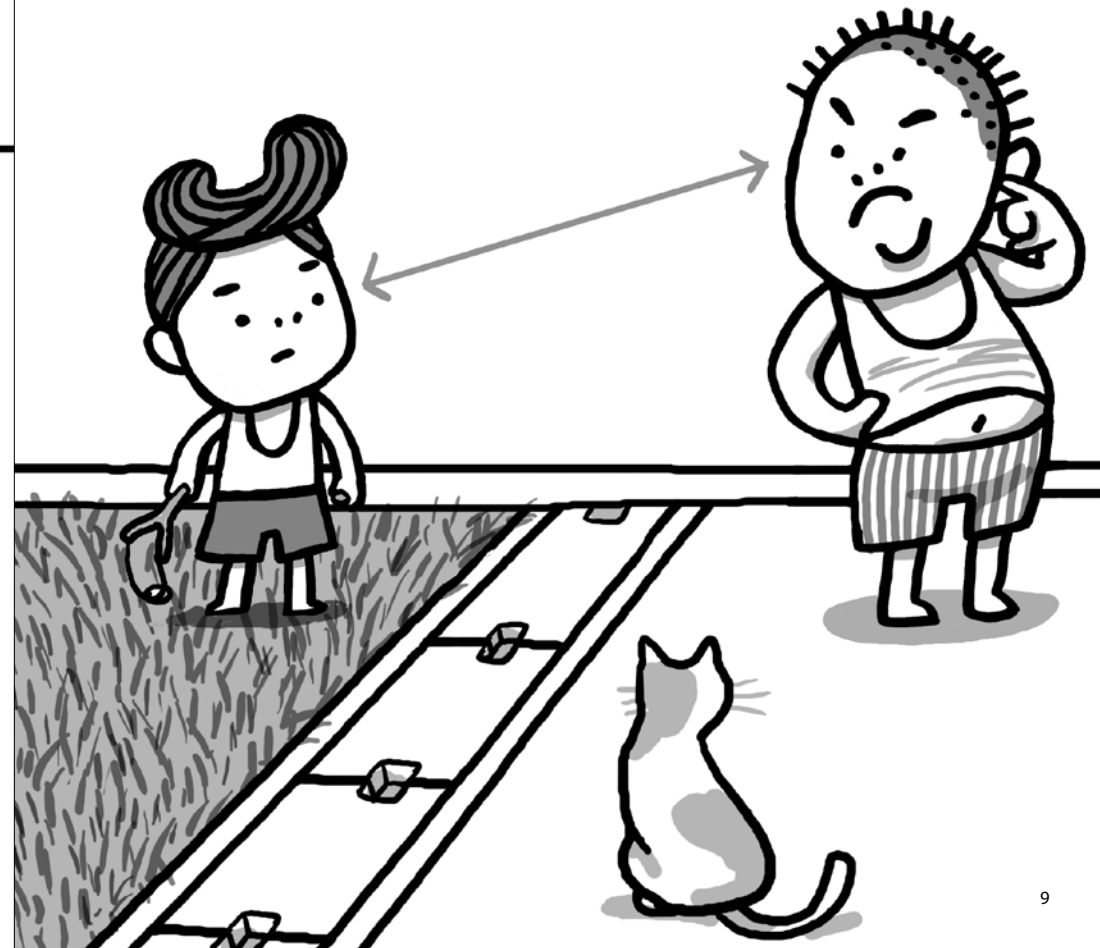


The other boy, he was never slow.
Everything was go-go-go!
He was faster on his feet,
than any seven-year-old you'd meet.

When he won his first race at one,
the proud father said to his son:
"You are fast in every way,
we'll call you Champion from today."

The boys were seven when they first met
at a chance encounter, just like that.
When at the playground one afternoon
Handsome was bullied by *sumseng* Boon.

Champion saw and thought it was unfair
that Boon started a fight because of a stare.
Boon was a bully, quite big for his age
but how smart he was no one could gauge.

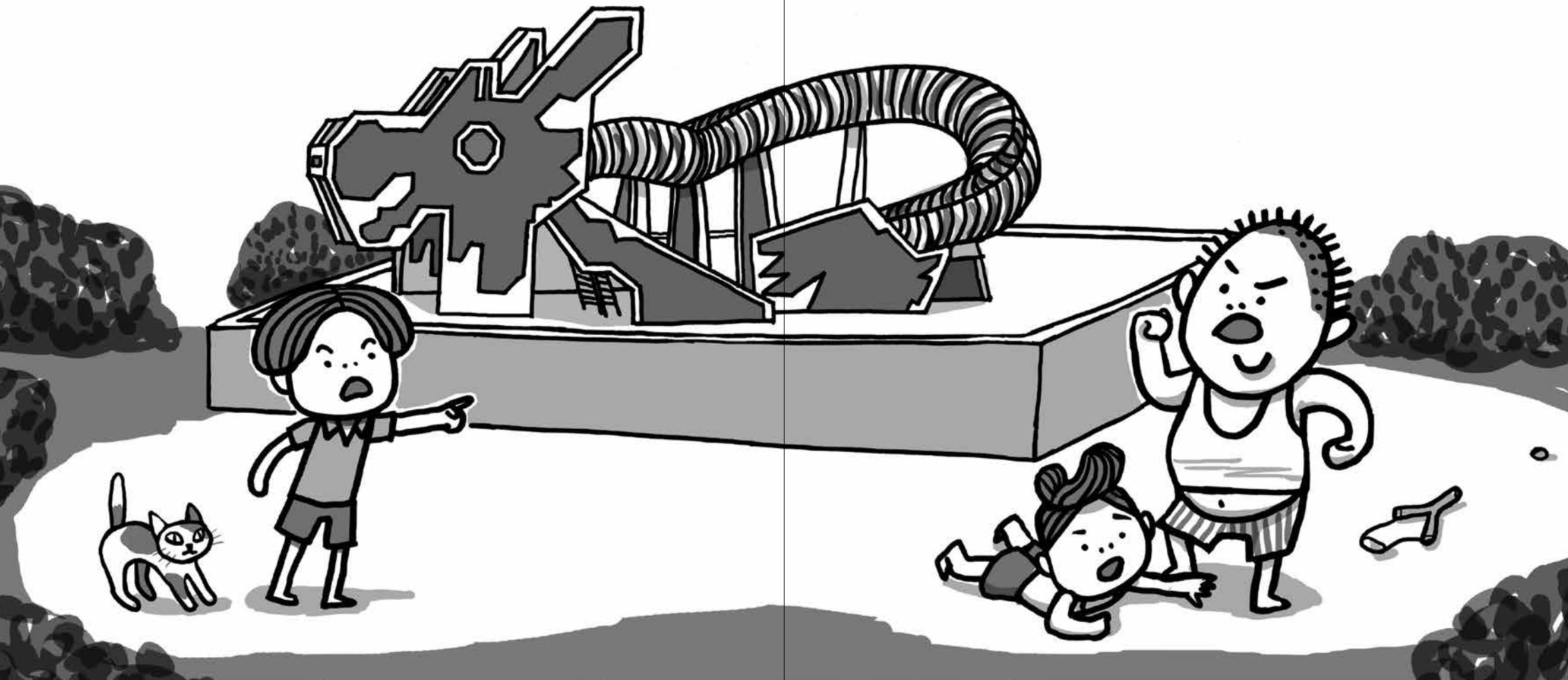


Boon's foot stepped on Handsome's arm.
Though it hurt, Handsome Hock kept calm.
Fearing that Boon would use all his might
Champion decided to do what was right.

"Stop!" shouted Champion, "Oi! Let go!"
"WHO YOU?" asked Boon, "Don't *kay-poh!*"
He reached for Champion, about to smack,
but Champion ducked and dodged the attack.

Champion was fast and Champion was quick.
He made Boon dizzy with his high-speed trick.
Handsome saw the chance and wriggled free.
"Come back here, you two!" Boon said angrily.

Champion pointed, "Look, your mother!" he lied.
Boon turned to look, scared enough to hide.
The two boys ran as fast as they could.
With the bully far behind them, all was good.

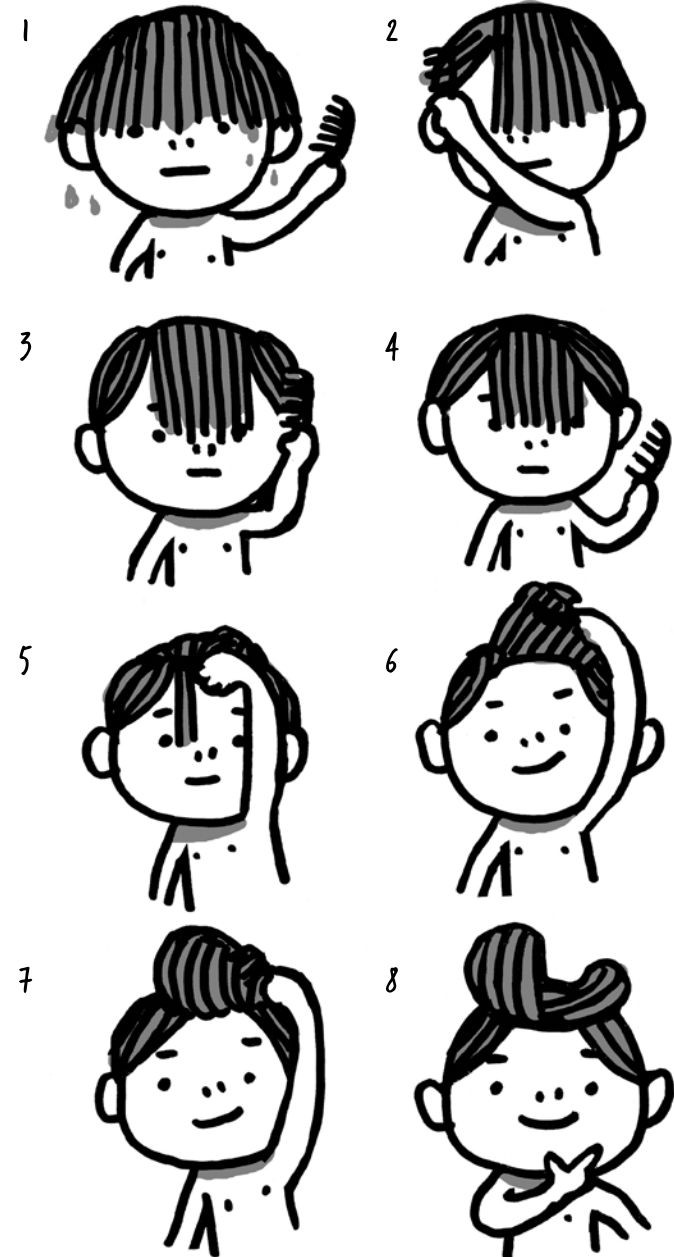




Handsome said thank you, and rubbed his sore arm.
 Champion even gave him some white Tiger Balm.
 Handsome looked at Champion and shook his hand.
 It was friends at first sight for the two young men.

The two boys can talk and play all day,
 close like brothers, some would say.
 Handsome Hock and Champion Poh,
 they are best friends in Toa Payoh.

HOW TO CURRY-POK





Hello!

My name is San San. Thank you for reading the first book I've written and illustrated! I hope Handsome Hock and Champion Poh's stories will help you imagine how children spent their time in the 1970s — a time when there were no mobile phones or personal computers. But no matter how old you are, or how times have changed, there's always time for stories and adventures.

Wishing you many very solid adventures!

SanSan

**In Singapore, not too long ago,
somewhere in the heart of Toa Payoh
On different floors of the same flat
lived two boys who had not met.**

And when they did meet, Handsome Hock
and Champion Poh became best friends immediately.
From defeating bullies and racing paper boats in *longkangs*
to eating at the Satay Club, these two seven-year-olds
shared lots of laughs and adventures growing up in
1970s Singapore. Told in rhyme, this timeless collection
of stories will appeal to readers of all ages.



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