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[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

Acclaimed filmmaker Ken Kwek makes writing debut with tween novel, *Timothy and the Phubbers*



SINGAPORE — Epigram Books is happy to announce the release of *Timothy and the Phubbers*, the debut novel by acclaimed filmmaker Ken Kwek.

The book is available from Epigram's online store (epigrambooks.sg) as well as LocalBooks (localbooks.sg). It is also available at all major bookstores.

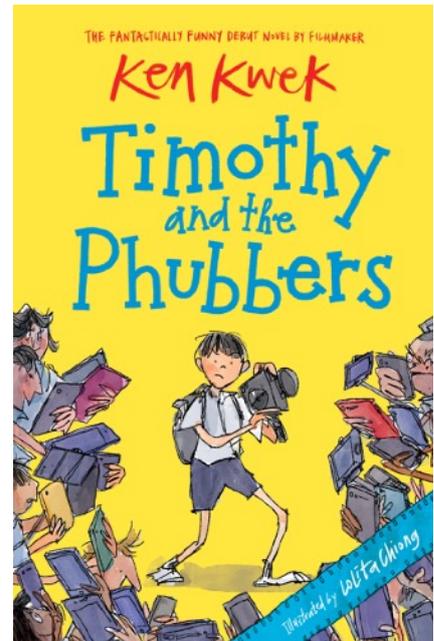
About the book

Twelve-year-old Timothy Pong is in Secondary One, but adjusting to life in school isn't smooth sailing.

The most menacing bully in school, Bella, just happens to be the prettiest girl Timothy has ever seen. But she has plucked him out as her new favourite target.

Timothy can't turn to his family for help because they are "phubbers" — they only interact with each other through mobile devices and social media platforms. Timothy is too young to own a phone (according to his mum), so he hasn't actually spoken to his family in years!

Luckily, Timothy has a few ideas up his sleeve, and with the help of his friend Rudy, he plans to get even with the bullies by using a rather unusual "weapon".



"*Phubbers* was my first crack at writing long-form fiction. I have a son in primary school, he's a bit of a joker and quite precocious for his age. *Phubbers* was an opportunity to render the world through a child's eyes, to create something that both resonated with and tickled middle-schoolers," said Ken Kwek.

"I've spent over 10 years churning out screenplays, so why not try my hand at something new?"

Although Ken says that he and his lead character aren't similar ("Timothy is actually adorable"), he empathises with what Timothy goes through. "Schools are a microcosm of the adult world, filled with gormless peers, obnoxious superiors and ridiculous bullies," Ken said. "For most of the decent guys and gals out there, making it to the end of each day without too much mud on one's face is a triumph."

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Praise for *Timothy and the Phubbers*

“Silly, irreverent ... and utterly relatable. A fun and exciting read!”

— Monica Lim (award-winning author of the bestselling *Secrets of Singapore* series)

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About the author

Ken Kwek is a screenwriter, film director and playwright. He spent his childhood watching movies on an ancient machine called a VHS player. Ken studied literature at the University of Cambridge and dramatic writing at New York University. He worked as a journalist and a cook for a few years, then wrote the scripts for and directed several movies, including *Unlucky Plaza* (writer, director); *It's a Great Great World* (co-writer) and *Blue Mansion* (writer). *Timothy and the Phubbers* is his first children's novel.

About the illustrator

Lolita Chiong is currently studying illustration with animation at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore. She loves drawing cartoons, pixel art and comics. In her spare time, Lolita loves going to the bird park to draw the birds, and the prawning pools to catch prawns. She also loves eating chicken nuggets with her boyfriend. Lolita lives at home with her parents, sister, maid and two terrapins.

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About Epigram Books

Epigram Books is Singapore's largest independent publisher. It was formed in 2011 to champion Singaporean literature, and publishes all manner of fiction — novels, short stories, plays, graphic novels, chapter books and picture books. It is best known for publishing award-winning books such as *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* and *Ministry of Moral Panic*, and popular series such as *The Diary of Amos Lee* and *Sherlock Sam*.

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