

From the publisher of
The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye

REALITY BITCHSLAP

ARIF RAFHAN



**A GRAPHIC
MEMOIR**

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EPIGRAM
SINGAPORE · LONDON

For my life bandmates:
Suhana the Tuner, Mya the Shredder,
Hamka the Beatboxer and Avicenna
the Growler.
Thank you for making me quit
my one-man band.

This is a love letter to my consiglieres:
Azlan Daniel (Landen), Mohammad Imran (Tupak),
Hasafarudy (Rudy), Arif Fauzan (Ojan),
Raja Azhar (RR) and Zan Azlee (Zan).

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Cover design by Priscilla Wong

Published in Singapore by Epigram Books
www.epigrambooks.sg

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Originally published as *Pelempang Realiti* in Malaysia by
Maple Comics Sdn Bhd
No A-08-04, Sierra Residency, Jalan BK5B
47180 Bandar Kinrara
Selangor Darul Ehsan
© 2015 Arif Raffhan

National Library Board, Singapore
Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Name: Arif Raffhan, author, illustrator.
Title: Reality bitchslap : a graphic memoir / Arif Raffhan.
Description: Singapore : Epigram Books, [2020]
Identifier(s): OCN 1140343054
ISBN 978-981-47-8582-2 (paperback)
ISBN 978-981-47-8583-9 (ebook)
Subject(s): LCSH: Arif Raffhan—Travel—Comic books, strips, etc. I
Southeast Asia—Description and travel—Comic books, strips, etc.
Classification: DDC 915.9—dc23

First Epigram Books edition, June 2020.



Puduraya Bus Terminal, Kuala Lumpur.
Hi, I'm Arif, but my family and friends call me Apan.

That's me with my goatee friend, RR. We have been friends since college.

We were in a metal band together back then. He rocked a look that reminded people of the singer Max Cavalera.



Where are the others?

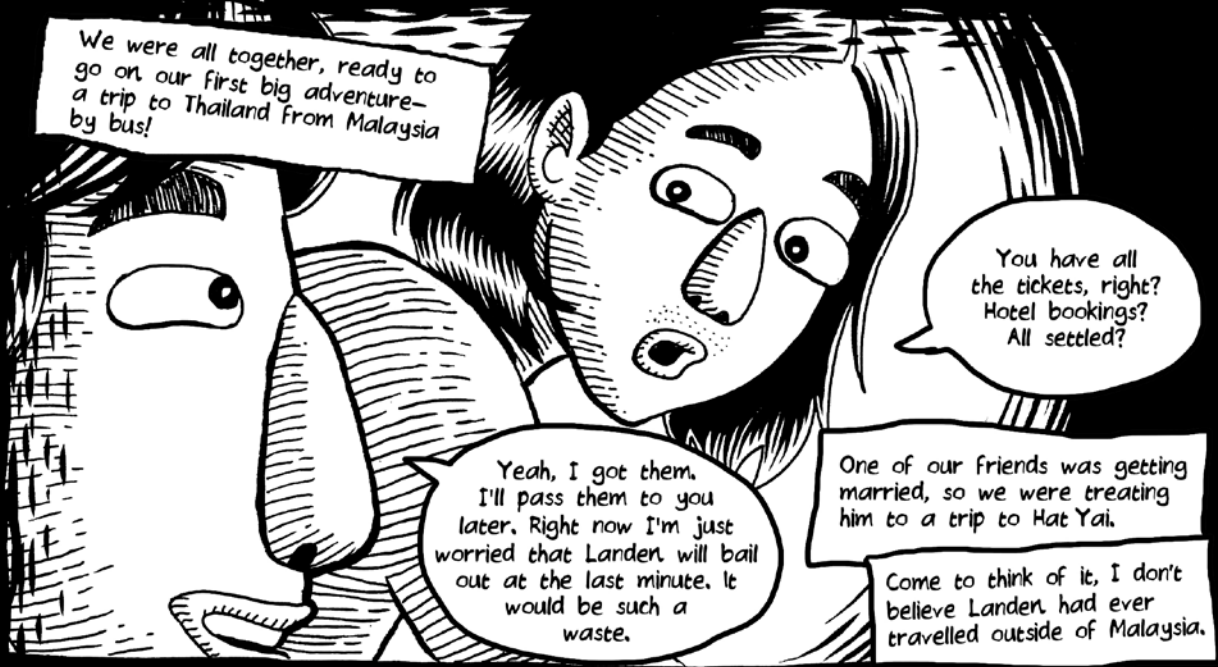


I'm not sure. RR was the only one here when I arrived.

Have you eaten?

At home. My mom cooked.

This is Zan. Every weekend, after we graduated from college, the three of us would hang out at a mamak stall* and talk about making movies.
*indian-muslim, open-air food establishment



We were all together, ready to go on our first big adventure—a trip to Thailand from Malaysia by bus!

You have all the tickets, right? Hotel bookings? All settled?

Yeah, I got them. I'll pass them to you later. Right now I'm just worried that Landen will bail out at the last minute. It would be such a waste.

One of our friends was getting married, so we were treating him to a trip to Hat Yai.

Come to think of it, I don't believe Landen had ever travelled outside of Malaysia.



Yo guys! What's uuuup!

Tupak is the one on the left. He's an undiscovered rapper.

On the right is Rudy, who was also my bandmate... from another band.



Relax, dude. This is our last chance to hang out with him as bachelors! I don't think he'll bail.

We still have time. It's only 9.45pm. Our bus leaves at 11.30pm, right?

Well, the last time I spoke to him, he said he was 70% in...



Okay, everyone's here except for the main man of the event. Have any of you seen Landen?



You called? Were you guys worried I wouldn't show? Hah! Have a little confidence, will ya?

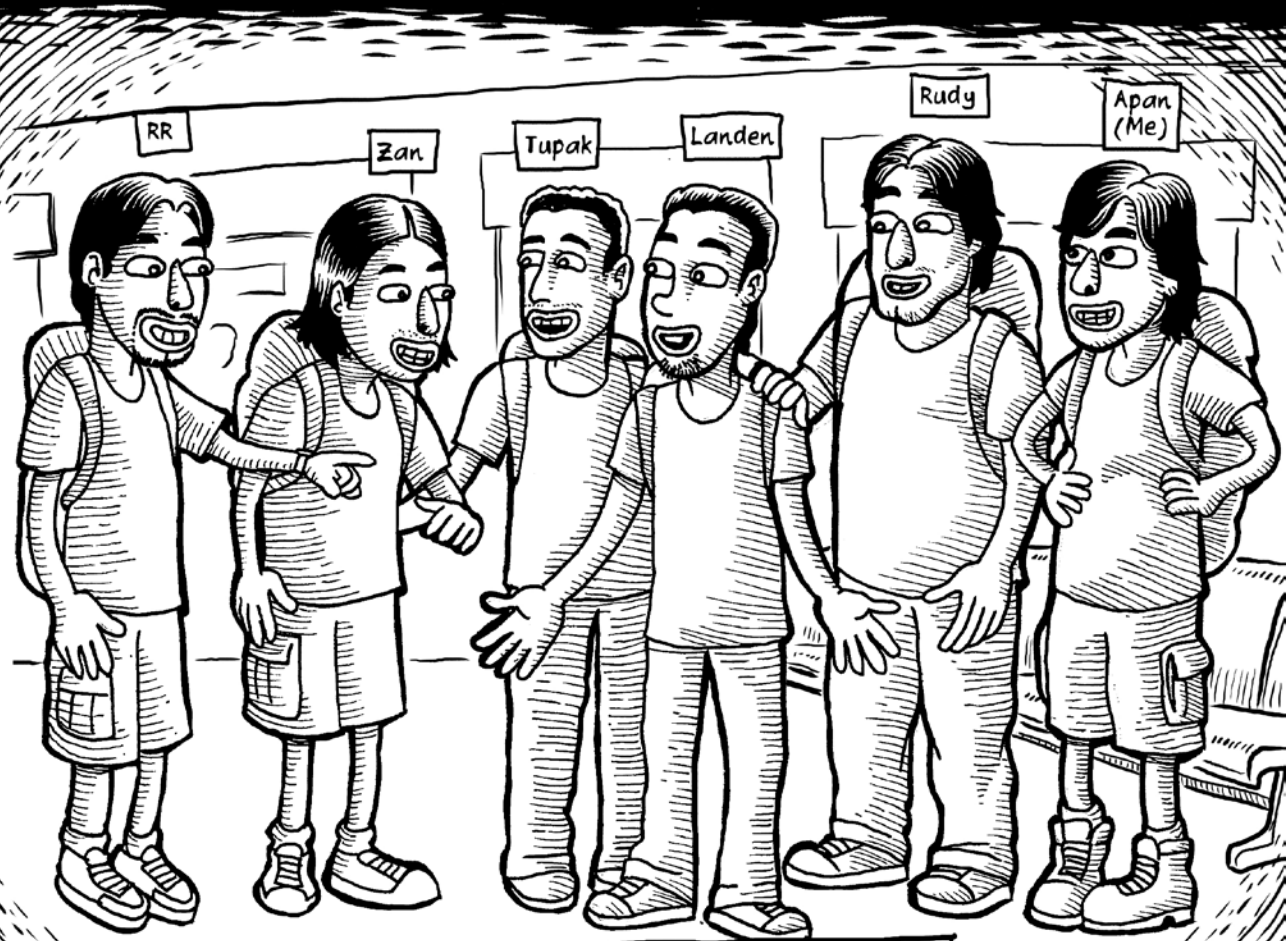
LANDEN!!!

The VIP finally arrived!

He's the smartest kid I've ever met.

Our college system follows the one at Indiana University, which has a passing mark of "C" at 75%. You can only get an "A" if you score 95% and above.

And this guy consistently scored a 4.0 GPA every single semester. Crazy, right?!



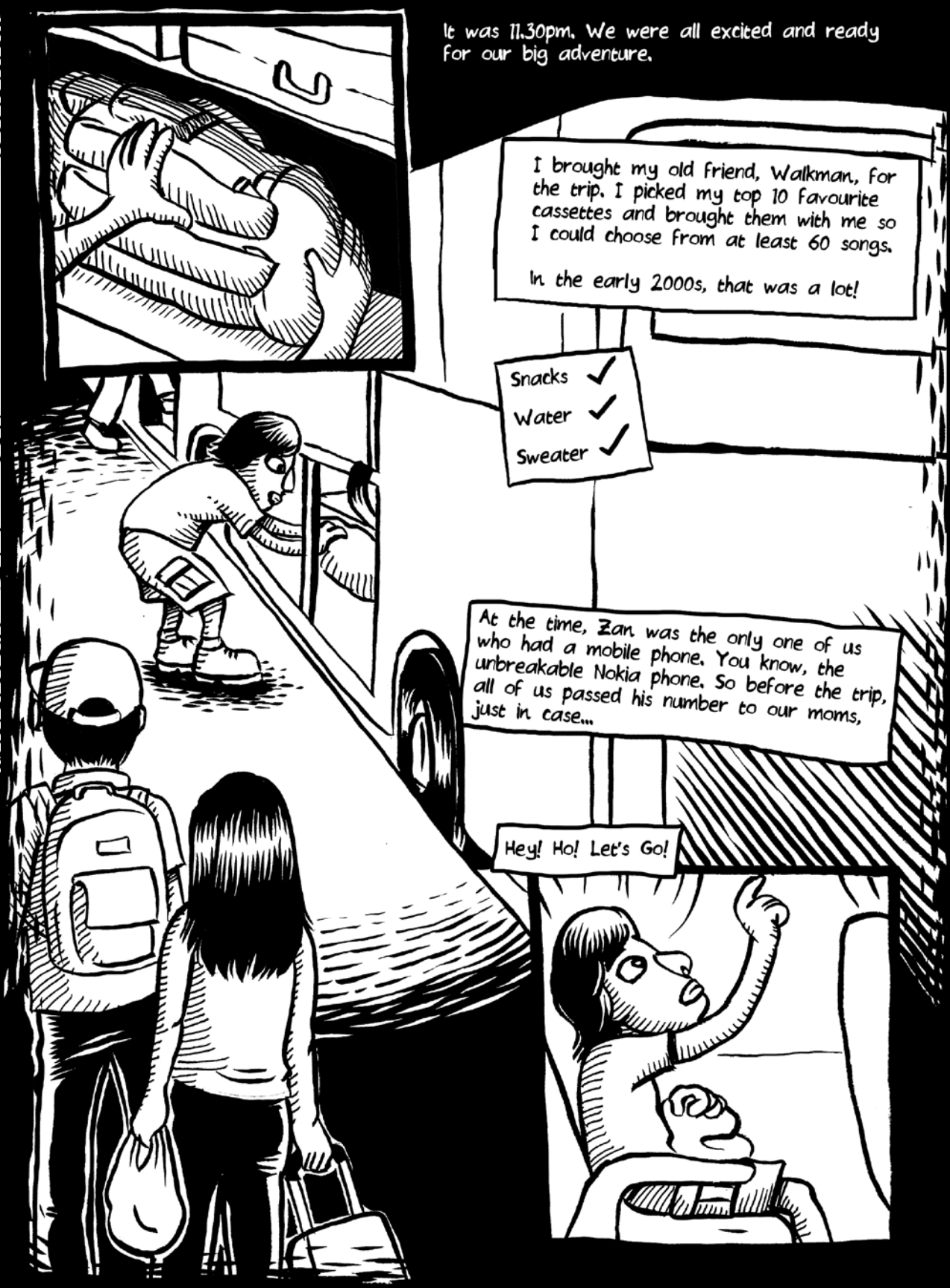
This was the plan: the six of us would go to Hat Yai, Thailand, to hang out with Landen before he got hitched. Then, everyone could do what they wanted—either head back to Malaysia or continue to travel. Super flexible and no commitments.

This comic documents our experience travelling through Southeast Asia. This is NOT a guidebook with travelling tips. You can easily get that type of information online. What I'm sharing is my experience and it's all very personal.

Similar to others, the group of us landed our first jobs after graduating from college. The salaries were meagre, but we saved every day with the goal of venturing out and travelling. It has been a dream of mine since I was a kid. Before this trip, I thought I had some street smarts—I read the news, kept up with current affairs; but I soon found out I was completely oblivious to the "real" world.

What I'm sharing in this book are true stories (well, almost!); stories that have made an impact on my life and experiences that have shaped my perception and understanding of the world. These incidents have slapped my version of reality out of my head, and taught me what the world is really like. I call these stories...

...a REALITY BITCHSLAP!



It was 11.30pm. We were all excited and ready for our big adventure.

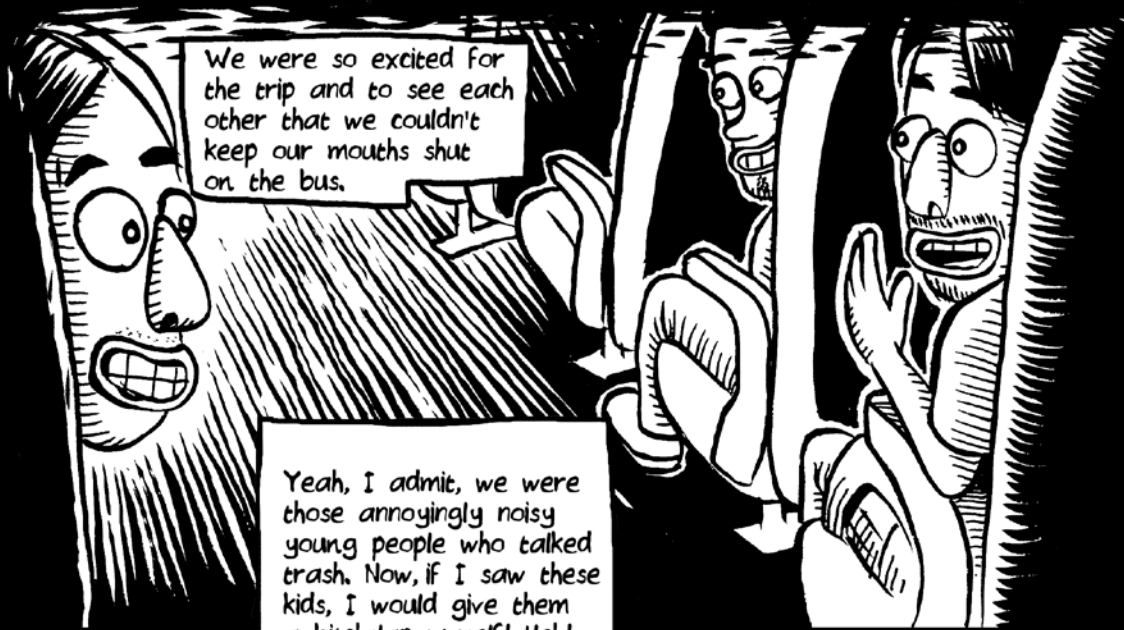
I brought my old friend, Walkman, for the trip. I picked my top 10 favourite cassettes and brought them with me so I could choose from at least 60 songs. In the early 2000s, that was a lot!

- Snacks ✓
- Water ✓
- Sweater ✓

At the time, Zan was the only one of us who had a mobile phone. You know, the unbreakable Nokia phone. So before the trip, all of us passed his number to our moms, just in case...

Hey! Ho! Let's Go!





We were so excited for the trip and to see each other that we couldn't keep our mouths shut on the bus.

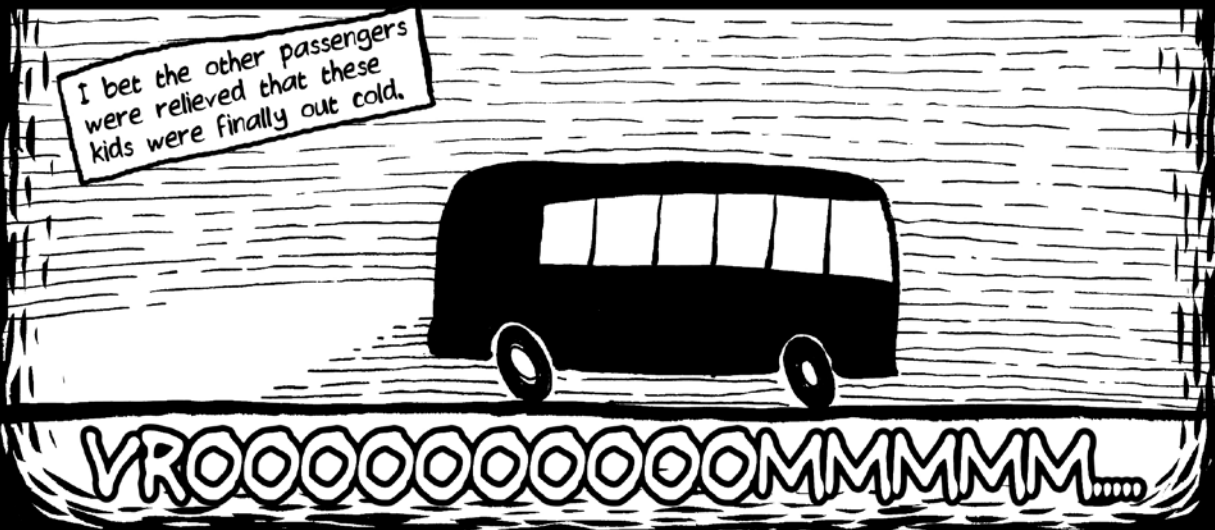
Yeah, I admit, we were those annoyingly noisy young people who talked trash. Now, if I saw these kids, I would give them a bitchslap myself! Heh!

Suddenly, everyone went quiet and relaxed into the bus ride.

...and I turned on my Walkman.

I took a peek outside the window and realised we were still in Kuala Lumpur...

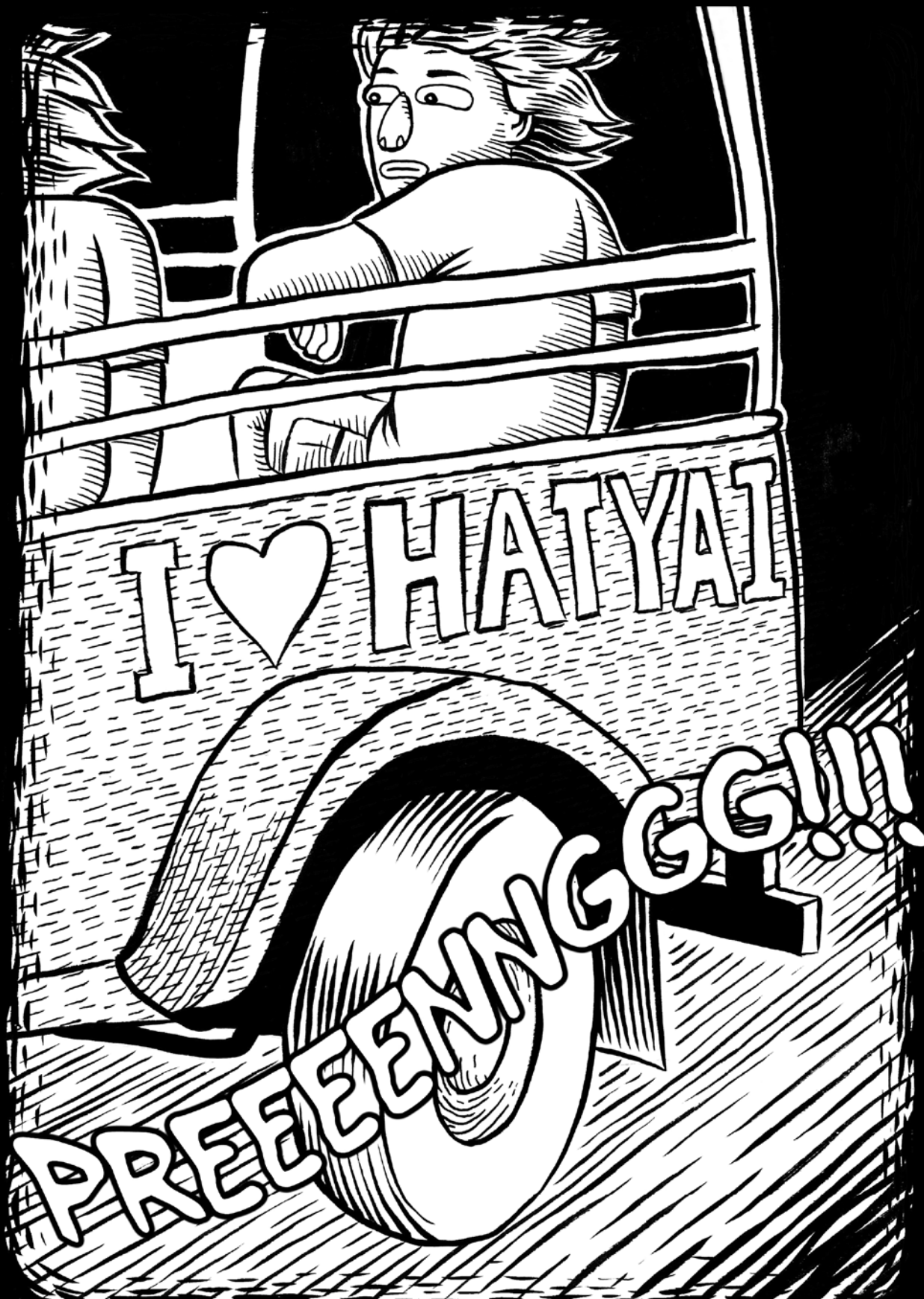
...guess all the trash talk drained us.



I bet the other passengers were relieved that these kids were finally out cold.

YR00000000000000MMMM







ABOUT THE CREATOR

Arif Raffhan is a comic artist, pre-production visualiser, mural artist and animator based in Malaysia. His work spans from web comics, non-fiction graphic novels, to murals in libraries, streets and corporate offices.

His pre-production work involves both local and international clients. He also does animation services for local production companies and is working on his own short animated film debut. Since 2018, he has been working closely with the cartoonist Lat as an inker on several projects. More of Arif's work can be seen on social media under the name Superdoofus.

TIGER SHOWS, happy pizza,
F4 boy band–Arif and the boys get
caught up in some **UNCOMFORTABLE**
situations as they take their
first epic trip around
SOUTHEAST ASIA.

Based on the **REAL LIFE** adventures
of the creator, *Reality Bitchslap*
is a **HILARIOUS** coming-of-age
comic about **AWKWARD** moments
we'd never want to encounter.



FOR MATURE READERS

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ISBN-13: 978-981-47-8582-2



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