

= 12 Days =

12 Days is a debut graphic novel / global manga written and illustrated by June Kim . Basing the plot partially on a story told to her by a stranger , Kim began an early version of 12 Days as a sophomore in college to help herself cope with the end of a relationship . After moving on emotionally with her break @-@ up , she stopped developing the comic and later left South Korea to attend the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan , New York , United States , from which she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in cartooning . Following her successful pitch of 12 Days to manga publisher Tokyopop , she resumed work on it in early 2005 and finished in the middle of August 2006 . 12 Days focuses on Jackie Yuen , who decides to drink the ashes of her former lover for twelve days in beverages as a way to cope with her grief over her death .

Tokyopop published 12 Days in North America on 7 November 2006 , to generally positive reviews . Critics praised the manga for its mature portrayal of grief and relationships , and its realistic artwork , although the choice of print for the dialogue was considered distracting . Reviewers also discussed the comic 's treatment of the issues of love , loss , and lesbian elements . In May 2011 , Tokyopop shut down its North American publishing branch , with the status of its original , global manga titles left unclear .

= = Plot = =

For the first eight chapters , 12 Days centers on Jackie Yuen , a 29 @-@ year @-@ old part Cantonese and part Korean editor . After the death of her former lover , the Korean American school nurse Noah Yoon , she decides to drink her ashes over twelve days in beverages as a way of coping with her grief . Nicholas " Nick " Yoon , Noah 's younger half brother , steals some of Noah 's ashes for her to use , and soon joins her in mourning . She reminisces on how she met her and became involved in a lesbian relationship ; however , Noah ended their relationship to marry a man to appease her father , and died returning from her honeymoon in a car accident a month ago . As Jackie continues her ritual , she begins to feel ill and eventually faints . Nick takes her to the hospital , where she recovers . On New Year 's Day , she parts from Nick and returns to her apartment to find that he has taken the engagement ring she had wanted to give Noah , and unknown to her , he mixes it in with the remaining ashes . 12 Days concludes with " Chapter 0 " , set before the events in the rest of the comic : Noah finds Nick studying for exams , and they briefly discuss Artemisia II of Caria , an ancient Greek queen who drank the ashes of her husband . Noah then hints that she has found someone whose ashes she would drink .

= = Style and issues = =

June Kim , the author and illustrator for 12 Days , primarily drew the artwork in the realism style , although she occasionally rendered characters as super @-@ deformed versions of themselves . While the cover art incorporates red and silver coloring , the artwork primarily appears in black and white , with occasional gray shading . Kim used pen and ink as the artistic medium , then toned her art with the software application ComicStudio . For the narrative , she explores the characters ' pasts through dreams , and periodic , nonlinear flashbacks . Several character traits , such as Jackie 's chocolate allergy , are presented to the reader through inference rather than exposition . Additionally , Kim uses a brief , untranslated Korean song alongside the predominantly English text .

Critics have focused on the issues of love and loss . 12 Days primarily deals with " a love affair and its aftermath , " according to Dirk Deppey of The Comics Journal . He considered it " a meditation on loss , " which explores " a relationship neither fully ended nor easily forgotten by either party . " Theron Martin of Anime News Network considered it a story about " trying to find a way to cope with a devastating loss " . According to Katherine Dacey , the former senior manga editor for PopCultureShock , 12 Days contains " lovely , quiet observations about the way we grieve , define family , express desire , and remember moments of hurt and betrayal . " Johanna Draper Carlson , a reviewer for Publishers Weekly , wrote that Jackie 's action of consuming the ashes serves as " a

transition period , a way to indulge her grief and then a time to be able to be herself again . " AfterEllen.com 's editor @-@ in @-@ chief Karman Kregloe stated that the comic " explores the impact of loss , and how relationships are supported and broken in times of grief . "

To a lesser extent , critics also discussed the lesbian aspect . Martin felt that the lesbian element of 12 Days had been addressed , without becoming overstated . Casey Brienza , a fellow reviewer for Anime News Network , suggested that the shame Jackie and Noah felt as lesbians " ultimately destroyed their relationship . " In her comparison of Alison Bechdel 's 2006 graphic memoir Fun Home and 12 Days , Erica Friedman , the founder of the lesbian @-@ themed anime convention Yuricon , considered neither story to be " lesbian narratives " , but rather " narratives of grief , of relationships and of missed opportunities for communication and closeness . "

= = Production = =

Partially modeled on a story told to Kim by a stranger , 12 Days began during her sophomore year in college as a way of coping with the end of a relationship . Kim soon abandoned the unfinished comic after moving on emotionally from the breakup , and considered the early concept " poorly built . " After completing her junior year in college in Seoul , South Korea , where she had been studying Japanese language and literature , Kim moved to New York , United States . There , she attended the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan , New York , for four years , and graduated in 2002 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in cartooning . In addition to illustrating the cover of Australian rock band Jet 's 2003 debut album Get Born , she had three of her short comics published in anthologies : " SheepSheepSleep " ( 2003 ) in Broad Appeal , " B @-@ 612 " ( 2003 / 4 ) in New Thing Vol.2 , and " Repeat " ( 2005 ) in SheWolf Vol.1.

At the 2004 San Diego Comic @-@ Con International , she encountered now @-@ former Tokyopop editors Mark Paniccia and Lillian M. Diaz @-@ Przybyl , who helped to pitch 12 Days to their publisher . Kim later expressed surprise for her successful pitch of 12 Days , and commented : " It made me believe there is room for diverse stories . " Resuming work on 12 Days in early 2005 , Kim felt that her " slow speed , other projects and family matters " delayed its production . Additionally , the South Korean @-@ native Kim , who speaks Korean , English , and Japanese fluently , would think of ideas in Korean that did not translate well over to English , ultimately leading her to change her method of thinking for the comic . She considered her creation of a global manga " a bit ironic , " because she " wanted to do something different from manhwa or manga , " which she had grown up around . Completed in the middle of August 2006 , 12 Days was published by Tokyopop in North America in November of the same year . However , in May 2011 , Tokyopop shut down its North American branch , with the status of global manga titles left unclear . 12 Days is also published in Germany by Tokyopop Germany .

= = Reception = =

12 Days received generally positive reviews from critics . Caroline Ryder of The Advocate , a LGBT @-@ interest magazine , highlighted 12 Days as " a dark , deeply emotional graphic novel . " Brienza complimented Kim 's artistic attention to the background and setting 's details , and summed up the comic as " a sensitive depiction of lesbians that strives for literariness " . While not personally enjoying the comic , Friedman considered it " excellent and well worth reading . " Noting the potentially confusing flashbacks , Martin stated : " 12 Days doesn 't easily fall into any of the normal manga ( or manga @-@ like ) categories . It avoids any kind of sensationalism in providing a mature piece about a difficult topic , which may limit its appeal but certainly makes it worth reading . " While Deppey praised it as " an ambitious and partly satisfying work that very nearly succeeds , " he considered it not " as daring or complex a work " as Fun Home . Although Dacey disliked the backgrounds and the " self @-@ consciously literary " ashes @-@ in @-@ beverages aspect , she enjoyed the plot and Kim 's use of naturalism in her artwork . She later placed it on her list of the top ten global manga . Draper Carlson recommended it , commenting : " The emotions the book carries will be familiar to anyone who ? s suffered a loss in love . It ? s a work to meditate on . " Conversely

, A. E. Sparrow of IGN wrote that the story sacrificed its coherency in its attempt " for a deeper level of understanding " ; Sparrow concluded : " 12 Days is simply trying too hard , burying some absolutely beautiful illustrations in a sea of chaotic storytelling . "