

= An Ideal World =

An Ideal World (simplified Chinese : ??????? ; traditional Chinese : ??????? ; pinyin : xún zh?o zì w? de shì jiè " Seek Self 's World ") is a full @-@ color Chinese manhua authored by Weidong Chen and illustrated by Chao Peng . The series was released in five volumes and published in China by Tian Jin Creator World Comic Company (simplified Chinese : ??????? ; traditional Chinese : ??????? ; pinyin : Ti?n j?n shén jiè màn huà g?ng s?) under the title Seek Self 's World and as part of the Cunren Fairy Tale series . An Ideal World was licensed by various other companies and released simultaneously with the original publisher between 2006 and 2007 . The French manhua @-@ publishing company Xiao Pan licensed the series as " Un Monde Idéal " (" An Ideal World ") and Yen Press later announced at the New York Comic Con that they had licensed the series from Xiao Pan . Yen Press released it in North America as one volume called An Ideal World .

An Ideal World follows the struggles of A You , a young man who , believing he has no luck , does not attempt to succeed in life even though others advise him to make his own luck . When he accidentally gets on the wrong bus , A You finds himself in the suburbs , where he takes shelter from the rain in a large tree and takes a nap . After waking up , A You happens upon the house of an old man , who sends him to an alternate world so that he may resolve his troubles . A You grows to enjoy the fantasy world and does not wish to return to his harsh reality . An Ideal World garnered mixed reception from Western critics , who objected mainly to the beginning and praised the overall story , artwork and themes .

= = Plot = =

A You is a troubled 19 @-@ year @-@ old who dislikes his life ; he feels that his entire life is unlucky , yet he avoids hard work and prefers to be lazy . He is encouraged by the people around him to work harder and told that he can change his life if he takes control of it , but A You refuses to accept these notions . One day , he accidentally takes the wrong bus and finds himself in the suburbs of his city . A You enjoys his time away and takes shelter inside of a large , hollow tree when it begins to rain . After taking a nap and waking up , he wanders until he comes across a small , green old man referred to as Grandpa Beard . Grandpa Beard decides to help A You with his problems and transports him to a " utopia " called Abi Port in an alternate world .

Abi Port is home to several humans , anthropomorphic beings , and other creatures , some of which look similar to people A You knows in his world . A You is found by members of a circus , who invite him to join them in their act . Although he lacks experience , he finds that he can perform well and begins to develop feelings for a young performer named Anan . He meets others who give him advice on enjoying work and life , particularly the " Master of Universal Love " , an anthropomorphic zebra who toiled to earn his position and helps others free of charge .

After A You spends time in this world , Grandpa Beard decides that his problems are solved and returns to take him away from the imaginary world . A You protests , not wanting to return to the cold reality , but Grandpa Beard captures him and tells him that he must change that reality if he dislikes it . Returned to his own world , A You awakens in the tree he had taken shelter in and heads back to his house , where he finds his worried friends and family waiting for him . A You 's experiences at Abi Port inspire him to work harder , and he eventually gets married to his co @-@ worker and friend Su Fei . The two are shown years later at the grand opening of Grandpa Beard 's Fun House , a restaurant themed after Grandpa Beard , where A You sees he will accomplish his dream and spread happiness .

= = Release = =

An Ideal World , authored by Weidong Chen and illustrated by Chao Peng , was originally published in China by the Tian Jin Creator World Comic Company and entitled Seek Self 's World . It is part of the company 's Cunren Fairy Tale series . An Ideal World was licensed by the French manhua

company Xiao Pan , as well as several other companies , which released it in five volumes entitled *Un Monde Idéal* (" An Ideal World ") from September 15 , 2006 to March 14 , 2007 . Contracts were made that allowed for the French , South Korean , Taiwanese , and Mainland Chinese companies to release the five volumes at the same time as the original company ; French , Chinese , and Korean language editions were published through a partnership with Beijing Total Vision Culture Spreads . An Ideal World 's global release was meant to aid in the development of the Chinese comic industry and create a new business model , and its release marked the first simultaneous global release for a comic . Xiao Pan also made an omnibus of the original Chinese version available for purchase .

At the 2008 New York Comic Con , American @-@ based graphic novel publisher Yen Press announced that they had acquired the rights to publish *An Ideal World* and would release it in full color . Rights were acquired from Xiao Pan , rather than Tian Jin Creator World Comic Co . On March 24 , 2009 , Yen Press released *An Ideal World* in North America as a single volume ; at 176 pages long , the volume also includes character sketches , the additional French covers , and information on the author , illustrator , and Chinese publisher .

An Ideal World was licensed for release in Mainland China by TriWorks and Zhiyin Magazine and in South Korea by the South Korean branch of Cambridge University Press . Shenjie published the series in Taiwan . At a conference held in February 2006 , Tian Jin Creator World Comic Company announced that negotiations were being made to release *An Ideal World* in other European countries , Japan , and with traditional Chinese characters in Taiwan .

= = Reception = =

An Ideal World has received mixed reviews from Western critics , who generally praised the book 's artwork and second half but did not like the beginning . School Library Journal 's Lori Henderson reviewed *An Ideal World* positively ; she praised the " Wizard of Oz feel " ending and the message that A You " controls his life , and he has the power to change it " . Henderson called the characters " great " and the world " fantastic " , also noting that the " cartoonish " and " exaggerated " artwork worked with the story . However , she remarked that the beginning of *An Ideal World* was " slow and plodding " and could " leave you wondering if it 's ever going to go anywhere " . Another School Library Journal critic , Joanna Fabicon , felt that the lessons and themes were " unimaginative " , which made the artwork " a waste of visual whimsy " .

Sam Kusek of PopCulture Shock also reviewed *An Ideal World* positively , grading it as a B + . Kusek applauded the artwork , saying that " colors really jump out " and set " the mood of the scene well , while keeping the backgrounds alive " , and that character designs enhance " the mystical and magical elements of the story " . Kusek liked the plot , but felt it was predictable ; however , he noted that the main element and focus was the " philosophy of life " and that , overall , *An Ideal World* " flows really well " . Writing for Comics Worth Reading , Ed Sizemore gave the book a mixed review . Sizemore wrote that he wished the message was conveyed " more [subtly] " and criticized the beginning of the book as " the toughest to get through " , but felt the " pace and readability improve " afterwards . He praised the art as " gorgeous " with " lots of eye candy " for those who enjoy fantasy artwork . Overall , Sizemore thought *An Ideal World* was " wasted potential " , with too much emphasis placed on the message , detracting from the storytelling .

Publishers Weekly praised *An Ideal World* for its message and art , but criticized how " the book gets bogged down in talky heavy @-@ handedness , as if someone put nice fantasy illustrations into a business self @-@ help book " . R. Bézard , a French critic for BD Gest , rated the first volume of the Xiao Pan edition of *An Ideal World* with two out of five stars . Bézard stated that the volume did not draw in the reader or give any indication of A You 's future adventure . However , Bézard praised the artwork as expressive and called it a cross between *Dragon Ball Z* and *Fruits Basket* .