THE STORY THUS FAR...
Since Rei’s training journey began, he has made some good friends.
In PASSAGE 1, he befriended Ayersha and her family, who were struggling to pull themselves out of poverty.
In PASSAGE 2, Rei fell in love with Somaline, who lost her mother to AIDS. And when Rei had to move on, he didn’t know whether her little sister Bisay had contracted HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.
In PASSAGE 3, Rei traveled to a tropical paradise, where an old fisherman and his family were in danger of losing their homes and livelihoods because of alarming changes in the ecosystem—and soon Rei was in danger of losing his life.
Rei’s inner strength, animal spirit guide, and new friends have seen him safely through great perils so far, but the hurdle against him in PASSAGE 4 may prove to be too much for anyone...
PASSAGE 4

CHILD SOLDIERS
OF BOYS AND MEN
I'm starved!

Can't you turn into something that lays eggs, or makes milk, or something I can eat?

Snakes lay eggs.

I'm not that hungry!

Halt! Who dares enter my kingdom!

Stop calling me that! My name is Sir Skull-Cracker!

It is I, Sir Skull-Cracker, oh brave knight!

And I will pass or die trying!

Ouch! I forgot!

Ouch!
AHHH!!

How dare you humiliate me, sir skull-cracker??

Take PANT 'n' PANT 'n' THAT?

I have defeated you, vile interloper!!

ARGH!!

Is it me?

I'm not dead, Maceboy...

S-sorry... we were just playing, Mister!
YOU'RE LATE! AND YOU WERE GONE ALL DAY.
MAITRE, I TOLD YOU TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR LITTLE SISTER!

YOU KNOW IT'S NOT SAFE TO PLAY IN THE JUNGLE ANYMORE.

YOU'RE WITH THE DRUNKS. DON'T YOU?
STAY AWAY FROM MY CHILDREN!

DON'T TOUCH MY CHILDREN!

WHO ARE YOU?

I'M JUST TRYING TO FIND MY FAMILY. I JUST CAME FROM A JAIL WITH THREE YEARS.

STOP BRINGING ME IN.
THANK YOU FOR BRINGING MY CHILDREN HOME SAFE, MUM.
ALL IN A DAY'S TRAINING?
THIS IS DELICIOUS, MUM. WHAT IS IT?

SNAKE EGG OMELETS!
MY FAVORITE!
BLEACH!

THEY'RE SAYING THE REBELS ARE COLLABORATING WITH THE LOCAL DRUG TRAFFIC.
IF THEY COME ANY CLOSER TO OUR VILLAGE, YOU'LL HAVE TO ROUND UP ALL NIGHT COMBATANTS.

WHAT WOULD THE REBELS WANT WITH LITTLE KIDS?

THAT'S WHEN YOU MIGHT TAKE A BUS TO THE CITY TO SLEEP AS THE REBELS DON'T WATCH YOU OUT OF YOUR BED.
SHUV

schmid 222 sigh.

GET UP, YOU BRATS!

TIME TO TRAIN!
ANY OF YOU CHILDREN WISH TO RETURN TO YOUR FAMILIES?

WHAT? I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

OUCH! NO! AGAIN, AND FELL!
Hold on, Devante!

Yeah?

What's your name, boy?

Devante.

Tell me, Devante, why did you join the regime?

Well, we're going to help the people. The people of this country. We're fighting for freedom. We're fighting against the enemy.

But we're fighting for you. We're fighting for our country.

And when we win, you'll be right. You'll live in peace. We'll have running water and electricity.

And no one... no one will ever... never... again!
WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE! YOU'RE SMART KIDS, RIGHT? BROTHERS! YOU'RE SMART KIDS, RIGHT? GOOD KIDS? YOU KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW RULES? ROBERTS HAVE RULES IN AN ARMY! GOTTA HAVE DISCIPLINE, OR WE'D NEVER GET ANYTHING DONE—NEVER HAVE OLD RAMSAYS, FROM THE ENEMY.

YOU'RE NOT SMART KIDS, RIGHT? BROTHERS! YOU'RE NOT SMART KIDS, RIGHT? GOOD KIDS? YOU KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW RULES? ROBERTS HAVE RULES IN AN ARMY! GOTTA HAVE DISCIPLINE, OR WE'D NEVER GET ANYTHING DONE—NEVER HAVE OLD RAMSAYS, FROM THE ENEMY.

IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE ARMY, YOU Gotta HAVE DISCIPLINE. IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE ARMY, YOU Gotta HAVE DISCIPLINE.

BUT, JUST LIKE RAMSAYS, YOU NEED TO FOLLOW RULES. BUT, JUST LIKE RAMSAYS, YOU NEED TO FOLLOW RULES.

WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE! YOU'RE SMART KIDS, RIGHT? BROTHERS! YOU'RE SMART KIDS, RIGHT? GOOD KIDS? YOU KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW RULES? ROBERTS HAVE RULES IN AN ARMY! GOTTA HAVE DISCIPLINE, OR WE'D NEVER GET ANYTHING DONE—NEVER HAVE OLD RAMSAYS, FROM THE ENEMY.

OF COURSE, IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE ARMY, YOU Gotta HAVE DISCIPLINE. IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE ARMY, YOU Gotta HAVE DISCIPLINE.

WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE! YOU'RE SMART KIDS, RIGHT? BROTHERS! YOU'RE SMART KIDS, RIGHT? GOOD KIDS? YOU KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW RULES? ROBERTS HAVE RULES IN AN ARMY! GOTTA HAVE DISCIPLINE, OR WE'D NEVER GET ANYTHING DONE—NEVER HAVE OLD RAMSAYS, FROM THE ENEMY.

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This man is the enemy.

He needs to be punished.

Guys!

Private: Don't use your gun!

Private: I won't.

Teach me to use the gun, Private.

Take it simple. Or... they'll shoot you instead.
I CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT YOU AND THE CHILDREN.

EVEN IF I'M NOT YOUR FAULT!

BUT IF YOU TAKE THEM NOW, I CAN'T COME WITH YOU.

I WILL COME WITH YOU.

I'LL GUARD YOU THROUGH THE DANGER AND PROTECT YOU.

NO!

IF I WERE TO GO, IT WOULD ONLY END IN FAILURE.

IF YOU WANT TO PROTECT ME, THEN TELL ME TO LEAVE!
F'EH!
YOU DON'T FIGURE I'M SO BAD, BUT YOU'VE HAD A SOFT LIFE.
"Hey, I'm not going to..."
"No, you're not..."
"...and if you're going to fight, you're going to fight..."

"They're attacking the village, too! We have to warn them!"
"But it's a no-winning battle."
"Then let's destroy their ships..."

"Dinner? I'm going to figure something out."
"Together, we can find a way to stop them..."

"What girls, just boys?"
"I don't ask you, girl."

"Well, aren't you a slippery little man?"
"I'm not..."

"The commander gets lonely after a battle."
"You know, he might..."
"...you're not alone."

"The commander gets lonely after a battle."
"You知, he might want a little company tonight..."
"If you're satisfied..."
THEM. I'M GONNA KILL THEM ALL.

— THEY.HAVE IT WITH A KNIFE. IF I DON'T GET AWAY, THEY'LL KILL ME!

— WHAT ABOUT YOU?

— I'M GONNA KILL THEM ALL.

SOLDIERS DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.

— WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

— I'M GONNA KILL THEM ALL.

DON'T GET CAUGHT.

— EASY TO SAY.

HERE'S THE PLAN.

— BUT WHERE ARE WE GOING?

— WE'RE GONNA KILL THEM ALL.
DRAW THEIR FIRE, DEVANTE!

WE'LL COVER YOU!

Sun fires on the village to the river!

Look! They're on fire, the villagers are armed. You kill, the army will drown all their fish.

Here's the river, don't worry about the boats. Don't worry about the river. What's that?"
ARE YOU A DESERTER TOO?

NO, SIR!

WELL, SHUT THEM DOWN THEN!

SCHUTZTRUPPEN LITTLE

SCHUTZTRUPPEN

KEEP GOING AND DON'T LOOK BACK!

MY ARM—!
I DON'T KNOW... I CAN'T GO ANOTHER STEP.

I'M CURIOUS.

I DON'T THINK IT'S SAFE TO STAY HERE.

TO RATHER DO WITHOUT WATER FOR A WEEK THAN DRINK IN BLOOD ONE MORE MINUTE.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, FELLOW? I'M GONNA CALL YOU 'FLUFFY'.

NO! HE'S FANG! HE MUST BE... UM... SOMEBODY'S PET?

GLOM

WELL, I'M HUNGRY.

WHY DON'T WE TRY TO FIND SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN FOLLOWING AROUND.

THAT'S SAFE NOW.
I told Vivieta that I'd follow the Red Rose home. She knew if I didn't tell her your name, I might start calling you Fluffy Whiskers.

Just a little further to your village, Vivieta. She said, and added, you know, if you don't tell me your name, I might start calling you Fluffy Whiskers.

Vivieta thought, I'd never meet you again.

Mama kept your bag for you.

We've come to go live with my brothers. Where it's safe.

But you're welcome to stay with us and tell us stories.

Come live with us, too!

Thank you, but I'm still looking for my family.

You know... I don't want to find my family...

When the soldiers came for me... They took all my loved ones and my home.
Well, your father sure has guts.

Hmm, man will teach you to be a real man like him.

You know what the man if killed it, then it was already... what?

...exhales heavily.

I was going to say it, but because... he was younger, because of his manner, it made me want to watch over for you.

It's not his fault.

I should have... even if you promise, even if you promise, I am... a terrible son, and a terrible monstrous.

An hour later...

I've killed a lot of people since that day.

The first time, I didn't feel anything.

Now, I don't feel anything.

Don't say that... daughter.

You saved me! You saved my life!
My name is... N/A. I'm a student in the class. I speak English, Japanese, and Chinese. I'm here to help you with your studies, especially in math and science.
Hey! That's...

My little brother! He's here and... he's looking for me!

Hey, what's going on?

I'm sorry, I don't know.

This is our only chance. Take us to your brother.

It's safe, don't worry. They're our friends now.

I know what you're saying, but I don't.

They're not safe. They're not to be trusted.

They're not. They're not!
I want you to have this. It's a manga about fighting—the good kind—where you protect and help people.

My father used to read it to me. Soon you'll be able to read it yourself.

Thanks, but...

Goodbye—brother.

This is from your father. It's all you have left of him. My father gave me this.

I can't take this from you, but I'll keep a photo to remember you by.

I hope you find your way home. You're someone's little fellow...

Thank you, squeak.
Fyuuu...

"Your dear son Kei..."
Birth Date: 11/10/9...
Lost 3 years ago in the mountains where he was..."

Please contact me if you have any news.

"It's getting dark..."
Today, over 300,000 children are involved in armed conflicts in more than 30 countries around the world. Forty percent of the world's armed groups have children in their ranks, including nearly half a million serving in armies that are not at war. Another five million children have been left with permanent injuries.

CHILD SOLDIERS
One of the ugliest realities of modern war is the deliberate recruitment of innocent children into armed forces. In many conflicts around the world, adolescents and children—some as young as six years old—are given guns and taught how to torture and kill.

From Africa to the Middle East to Europe, Latin America, and Asia, countries at war have seen boys and girls engaging in active combat or supporting armed forces in other ways, such as carrying ammunition or preparing food. They suffer from AIDS and other diseases that accompany combat. Girls are often used as sex slaves, or are at particular risk of rape, sexual harassment, and abuse. Turned from their families and thrust in the middle of intense violence, many of the children who survive armed conflicts are left with physical, emotional, and psychological scars that affect them for the rest of their lives.

WHAT IS A "CHILD SOLDIER"?
In 1997, an international symposium sponsored by UNICEF and a child's rights organization was held in Cape Town, South Africa, to develop strategies for preventing children from being recruited as soldiers. The "Cape Town Principles" that resulted from this meeting describe a child soldier as any child associated with a fighting force. This includes girls who are forced to serve as sex slaves or children used as spies, lookouts, or in other roles to serve armies. According to these principles, a child does not have to use a weapon in order to be considered a child soldier.

WHY DO ARMIES USE CHILDREN?
Armies that exploit children view them as effective, cheap, obedient, and expendable fighters. They are easy to indoctrinate and transform into fearsome killers through tactics including torture, terror, humiliation, brainwashing, and false promises of material rewards. Armies take advantage of children's innocent appearance. They send child units onto the field to mislead and confuse opposing forces. Child soldiers can serve as effective spies or decoys, or as advance troops in ambush attacks. They can also be very mobile on the field and more daring than adults in combat. Many armies deliberately try to heighten children's natural fearlessness by getting them high on alcohol or drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines, or hallucinogens.

HOW CAN CHILDREN HANDLE ADULT WEAPONS?
One factor that enables armies to use children as soldiers is the technical advancement of small arms. Modern weapons used today are lightweight, portable, easy to use, and inexpensive. For instance, the readily available Kalashnikov AK-47 weighs only about 10 pounds, or 4.5 kilograms. A ten-year-old can learn how to fire an AK-47 in about half an hour.

HOW ARE THE CHILDREN RECRUITED?
Various types of armed political groups, from government-backed paramilitary groups to opposition forces, militias, and self-defense units, have actively recruited children. Most of the children are recruited against their will, some even kidnapped from their homes and schools. But many also "volunteer" to join because they see no better alternatives in life. Their families may be too poor to afford food or a decent education, with the breakdown of communities and
families during war, these children may turn to armed forces as the only way to survive. Because they only know a culture of violence, they may develop a twisted belief that being a soldier will give them power and prestige. Some also join to take revenge for the loss of a relative or family member in the war, continuing a vicious cycle of violence.

AFTER WAR...
WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILD SOLDIERS WHEN WAR ENDS?
Restoring the lives of children who have experienced the worst forms of brutality is one of the most difficult yet urgent tasks for countries that are coming out of war. Until recently, though, child soldiers were not even recognized in peace settlements, and were lumped together with adults as "ex-combatants." This was partly because countries did not want to admit they used child soldiers.

For child soldiers, returning to a normal life is critical, but it is difficult to reverse the physical and psychological effects of war. Now, a number of countries have implemented programs, both during and after armed conflict, to assist former child soldiers in recovering from the traumas of war, acquiring new skills, and returning to their communities.

REINTEGRATION PROGRAM GOALS:

- Help not only those child soldiers who carry weapons, but also the many more engaged in non-combat support roles.
- Address the needs of girls affiliated with armed groups, including those sexually exploited by the combatants. Girls often have non-fighting roles, and thus weapons-collecting programs may overlook them.
- Meet basic physical needs, including food, shelter, and urgent medical attention. Child soldiers are often malnourished and suffer from various diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases.
- Address and try to reverse children's deep psychological scars, including extreme depression, aggressive behavior, nightmares, and learning problems. Counseling, recreational programs, and educational programs can help provide a normal daily routine.
- Return children to their families and communities. Unfortunately, families may be impossible to locate after the chaos of fighting. In fact, many children are left orphaned by war, and if located, families and communities may be reluctant to accept former child soldiers. Reconciliation programs help reintegrate former child soldiers. Traditional methods, such as purification rituals, have also been effective in removing the stigma of fighting in the eyes of the community.

HOW CAN THE RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS BE PREVENTED?

- Prevent family separations and reunify separated children with their families. Separated children are highly vulnerable to recruitment into military forces. During conflict, separations are common. Family tracing programs have been successfully coordinated by various international and local groups.
- Set up child protection networks in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Save the Children UK has experimented with Child Protection Networks involving a wide range of local partners. These networks work to prevent recruitment by negotiating with local armed groups and facilitating family reunification with children vulnerable to recruitment.
- Provide economic alternatives. Tackling the root causes of poverty and providing poor households with job opportunities can help prevent some children from enlisting in armed forces.
- Provide children with educational alternatives. Children who are not enrolled in school are at a higher risk of recruitment. Schools can also educate children about their rights and about the risks of joining a fighting force. However, schools may also be targets for military recruiters.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHILD SOLDIERS

Check out:
- www.unicef.org/emerg/index_childsoldiers.html
- www.childsoldiers.org
- www.child-soldiers.org
- www.unicef.org/protection/index_armenconflict.html

FOR A MAP OF CHILD SOLDIERS, SEE:
THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT AND POVERTY

The tragic phenomenon of child soldiers emerges from a global pattern of increasing warfare not between countries but within countries. The number of civil wars around the world has been rising over the past 40 years, fueled by a vicious cycle in which poverty causes conflict and conflict causes poverty. Eighty percent of the world’s 30 poorest countries have suffered a major war in the past 15 years. On average, countries coming out of war face a 50 percent chance of relapsing during the first five years of peace. Even with rapid progress after peace, it can take a generation or more just to return to pre-war living standards.

To learn more about conflict and poverty, check out:
- www.worldbank.org/conflict
- whayouthink.worldbank.org/issues/conflict

WHAT CAN I DO?
- Chat with other kids who are concerned about child soldiers by joining UNICEF’s Discussion Forum at www.unicef.org/kids/expressed.
- Get involved: Contact organizations such as the international Steering Committee that work with child soldiers and refugee youth. Find opportunities to volunteer to help young people create free war and civil conflict.

Coming Next Issue

Rei learns several lessons next issue when he meets a group of girls who can’t wait to learn their lessons! You think getting up in time to beat the first bell is hard? These girls have much greater obstacles to overcome to get an education! Plus, Rei has a transforming experience—several, in fact—and learns about the animal kingdom up close and personal!

DID YOU MISS THE LAST THREE ISSUES OF Y WORLD MANGA?!?

Order at store.viz.com or your friendly bookstore or online bookseller! All proceeds go to:
- Reading is Fundamental
- Y WORLD MANGA: Passage 1: POVERTY—A Ray of Light
- Y WORLD MANGA: Passage 2: HIV/AIDS—First Love
- Y WORLD MANGA: Passage 3: GLOBAL WARMING—The Lagoon of the Vanishing Fish

Do you know what animal “Ruffy” is? E-mail any comments to worldmanga@viz.com! Every e-mail answered personally!
The Fate of Child Soldiers!

Teenage orphan Rei survives by his wits and guts on the mean streets of the world. His fortunes seem to look up when he meets a mysterious stranger who offers to help him achieve his dream of becoming the greatest martial artist in the world... But Rei's trainer is more interested in developing his mind, spirit, and—ugh—heart than his thrashing, raging, fighting moves! And Rei's master turns out to be a real animal! In fact, Rei never knows what animal he's going to turn into next!

Mercenaries kidnap our hero and force him to fight in an illegal army side by side with other children ripped from their homes and families. Struggling just to survive from one day to the next, will Rei be able to escape, let alone lead his fellow child soldiers to freedom?

*World Manga* is a joint project of VIZ Media, LLC, and The World Bank.