

# Bubble G.U.M.

Happy Smiley

ASiFF

Asian Science Fiction and Fantasy  
An Imprint of Two Trees

**Happy Smiley** is the pen name of the Happy Smiley Writers Group.

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# Book Launch

Date: 31 October 2009

Time: 2pm–4pm

Venue: earshot café, The Arts House

An event of the Singapore Writers Festival 2009 co-organised by:



[www.singaporewritersfestival.com](http://www.singaporewritersfestival.com)

# Prologue (maybe)



It all began, as often happens, with a logical conclusion: If time travel is invented in the future then it already exists. The result of this was a tall, dark stranger walking into Geek Terminal, 55 Market Street, one wet Saturday afternoon and asking, "Where are the Ninja Novel Writers?"

The NiNoWs derive their name from the fact that they write novels very fast and one day they all turned up in black for a write-in – oh, and their mascot was a rabbit dressed in a ninja outfit.

"I'm here in response to the ad," said the stranger. The eyes of several novel writers looked up from their notebooks and took in the fact that their advert placed in the *Straits Times* (*Time traveller please meet the NiNoWs this Saturday at the big 55*) had produced a result.

"There is a reason for everything and in time all becomes clear," continued the stranger. The NiNoWs exchanged glances and is-he-weird-or-what? expressions while he sat down at their table and, without consulting the menu, ordered rabbit curry with rubber leaf salad.

**So ...**

In the future world from where this stranger has come, Singapore is the repository of all humankind's knowledge, art, culture and innovation. It is planet Earth's last surviving oasis of civilisation, thanks to the forward-planning of several generations of administrations dating back to Stamford Raffles.

The ban on chewing gum was the key to Singapore island's survival when global meltdowns, geographic, economic and scientific, raised the sea levels, drowning all but the highest of mountains.

By 2020 frantic scientific work had yielded no solution to the inevitable doomsday that was fast approaching. At this point anthropologists, archaeologists, art historians and speculative fiction writers took over, having spent 200 years in preparation for just this event.

The stock piling of bubble gum for 30 years enabled the creation of the Green Underwater Metropolis, affectionately known as the Bubble G.U.M. Its success hinged on a subspecies of jellyfish that exists only in the waters around Tekong Island. Its sting, when mixed with bubble gum, blachan and human saliva, creates a flexible but near indestructible membrane. At one point, in the early years of the 21st century, there was a major crisis when these new world seers realized that not enough people in Singapore knew how to blow bubbles. Fortunately a programme of compulsory balloon blowing, instituted under the aegis of a school creative writing module, resulted in the necessary skills being available when ten billion sticks of bubble gum were inflated, thrown into the sea surrounding the dykes that had kept the island safe up to that point, stung by the jellyfish and gradually built up, with help of dolphins, to form the bubble that saved this little island and its precious cargo of humans, animals, plant life and world treasures.

This is the story of the first generation born inside Bubble G.U.M. (The time traveller was born much later so he's not in the story.)