



Secret Whispers

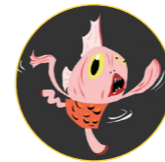
A Full English translation is available.

秘密耳語

Author: Fish Wang **Illustrator:** Chimney Elves (Yu-sheng Lin, Hsuan-ting Wang, Kai-ting Yang, Hiho Lin, Shuwei, FallinTa) **Publisher:** Locus Publishing
Date: 12/2020 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw
 112 pages | 19 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1 (Three-book series, already published two)
BFT2.0 Translator: Michelle Kuo

An android boy named Secret must hide his true identity: he's a superweapon created by the state to fight terrifying monsters. But when he's not on the battlefield defeating enemies, he lives undercover as an ordinary elementary school student. Bullied by classmates and shunned by teachers for being different, this boy assumes life will always be this lonely. But one day, a newcomer just as unusual joins his class. At first, Secret believes he has finally found a friend—but the truth proves far more complicated.

Set against a richly imaginative sci-fi backdrop, this story is an exploration of a boy's budding self-consciousness. The painful and awkward journey of coming of age unfolds alongside extraordinary adventures.



Author Fish Wang

Born in 1971 in Taipei, Taiwan, Fish Wang has worked in animation since 1987. A multidisciplinary artist, he also creates picture books, short stories, and three-dimensional sculptures. He has served as planner and editor for comic magazines *TAIWAN COMIX (TX)* and *Graphic Fiction (GF)*.

Wang's works span comics, fiction, illustrated books, and animation. Notable comics include *Goldfish LOVE Dream Road*, *Jack & The Beanstalk*, and *Secret Whispers*. His illustrated books include *Scenery of the Dim Path* and *The Traveler Cat's Carry-on Luggage*. In animation, his short films *Goldfish* and *Red Tail* have won top awards, and *The Ghosts of the Dim Path* qualified for Academy Award submission.



Illustrator Chimney Elves

Chimney Elves are creators based at Chimney Animation, which was established in 2018. It aims to produce high-quality Taiwanese animated works and develop cultural and creative merchandise. The company's founder, Fish Wang, possesses over 30 years of industry experience. With a distinctive style, he strives to differentiate the company by developing unique story content and innovative projects.

A Rogue Beast in Disguise as a Classic Hero: Reflections on *Secret Whispers*

by Zhi-Xiang You

One of the greatest pitfalls in storytelling is when an author imposes a black-and-white view on their work, attempting to persuade or influence the reader. The true power of a narrative lies in its ability to present complex, conflicting, and multifaceted situations, inviting the audience to think deeply, reflect, and empathize. *Secret Whispers* exemplifies this mastery of layered storytelling.

In *Secret Whispers 1*, the protagonist is a robot named Secret. On the surface, he looks like an ordinary elementary school student, innocent and unassuming. Yet, in reality, he is the nation's ultimate weapon, repeatedly facing and defeating terrifying monsters sent by enemy nations. Despite being armed with world-ending weaponry,

Secret's personal life is filled with uncertainty and doubt. Bullied by classmates and often misunderstood or ignored by teachers, he wrestles with self-doubt. Though capable of annihilating monsters in a single strike, he worries that, aside from his combat skills, he possesses no other talents, and fears growing up to become useless in society.

The story takes an unexpected turn in *Secret Whispers 2*. Secret's encounter with the transfer student Chialin. At first, it appears to be a moment of friendship or even redemption. Yet with shifting perspectives, the narrative reveals Chialin comes from an enemy nation. Her internal struggles and motivations point to the irony and contradictions in Secret's very existence. What seems like a

classic robot-versus-monster in a classic Japanese live-action special effects style becomes a dark, politically charged story, where moral ambiguity, conflict, and ethical dilemmas are intertwined, building tension after tension.

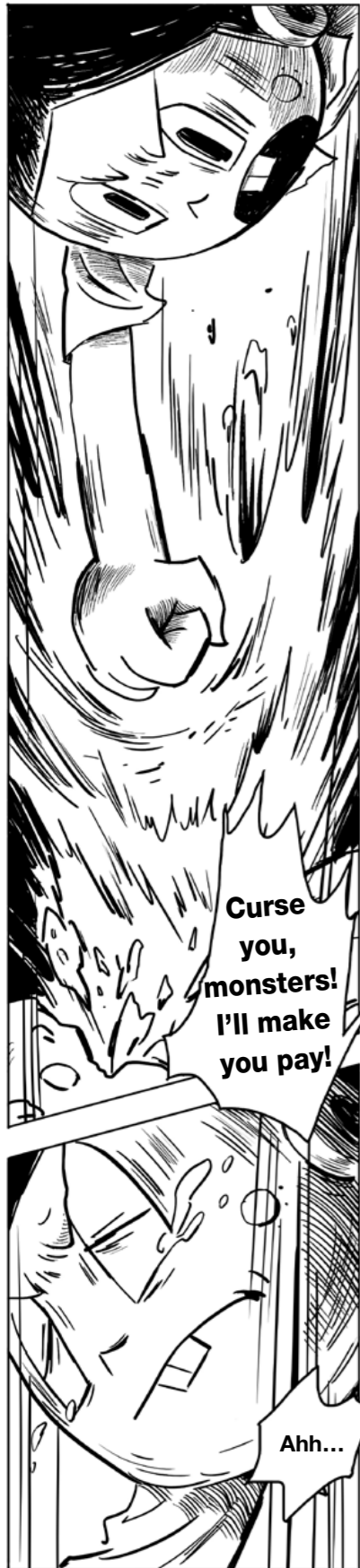
Indeed, who defines what is "justice" or who is truly "evil"? The story challenges simplistic notions of good and bad. Both nations may have reasons to fight. The narrative captures not only the conflict between countries but also the tensions within schools, governments, and communities. Loyalty is demanded from all, and any dissent is labeled as enemy brainwashing. When the pursuit of war outweighs the genuine welfare of a nation, who, in truth, is the enemy? Secret's creators believe "as long as we keep winning, the war will never end," while Chialin's homeland pours resources into crafting flashy monsters, waging continuous attacks, yet losing sight of the original purpose of their struggle. The escalating conflict leads Secret to question himself, his country, and even

his enemies, creating a web of moral ambiguity and layered dilemmas.

Through its portrayal of internal and external conflicts, moral contradictions, and the blurred lines between friend and foe, *Secret Whispers* captivates readers with its intricate plotting and deeply thought-provoking themes. It is a story that challenges readers to question not only the characters' actions but also their own assumptions about loyalty, justice, and the true nature of conflict.

This essay has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.

Zhi-Xiang You is a literary industry professional and avid reader who draws inspiration from both text and imagery. He believes that reading can foster meaningful connections and serves as a community editor for image3: a Visual Language Space. Currently, You is the Image Community Project Editor at Locus Publishing.



Curse you, monsters! I'll make you pay!

Ahh...



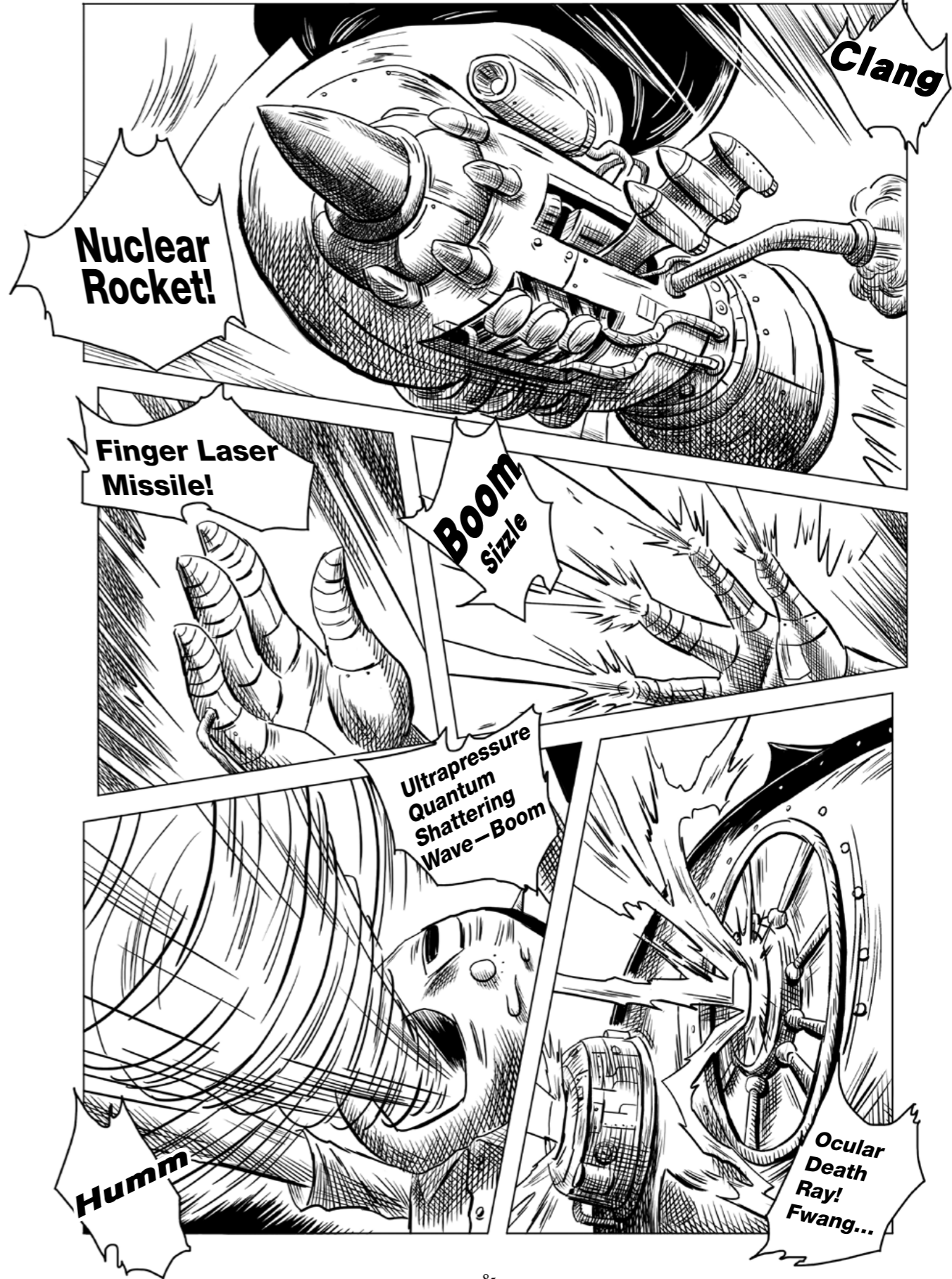
Swish—
swoosh



Hypersonic
Machine
Gun!

Spark Bomb!
Clack clack
clack!

Electric
Hyperalloy
Saw—
whirr!



Clang

Nuclear
Rocket!

Finger Laser
Missile!

Boom
Sizzle

Ultrapressure
Quantum
Shattering
Wave—Boom

Humm

Ocular
Death
Ray!
Fwang...



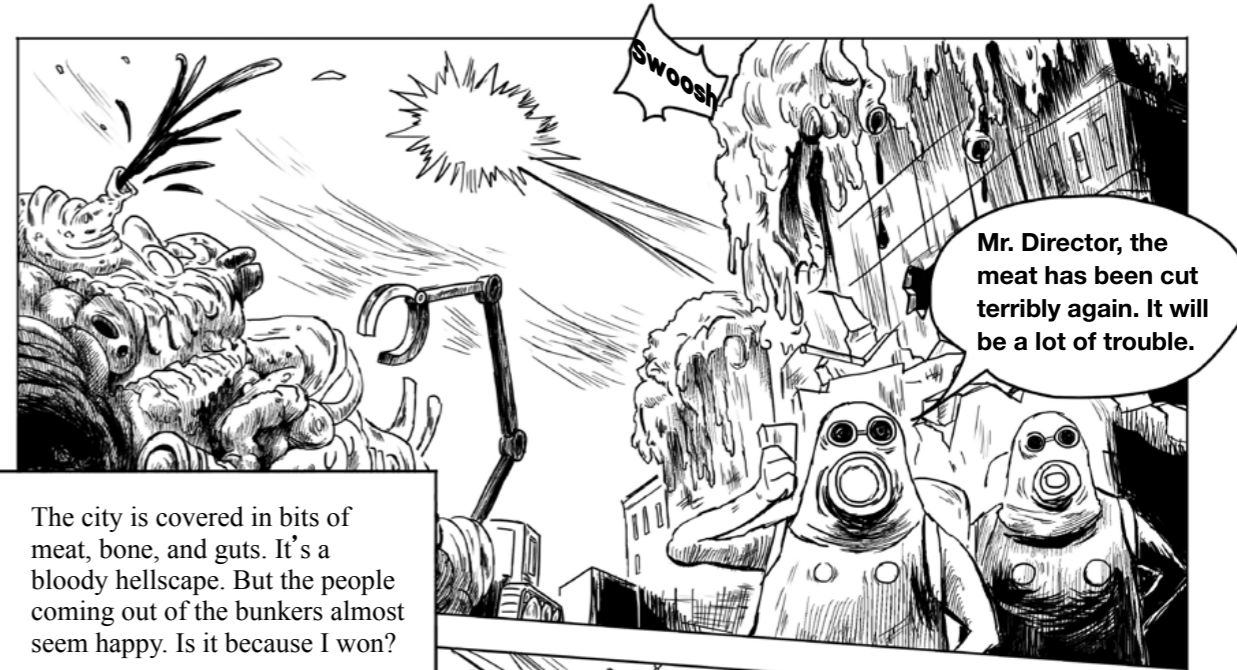
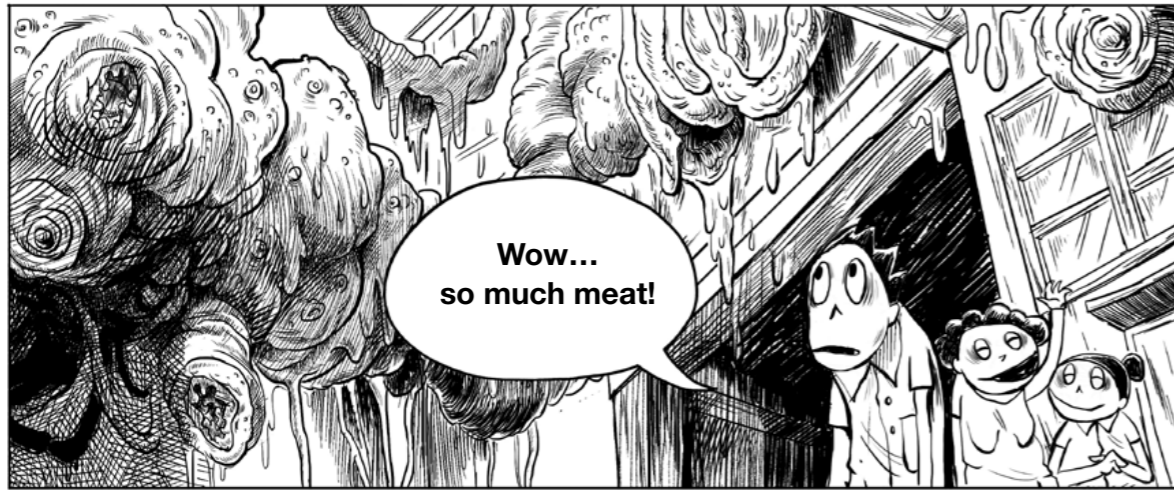
This is payback!
Supersonic!
Mach
Hellspin!

Sizzle

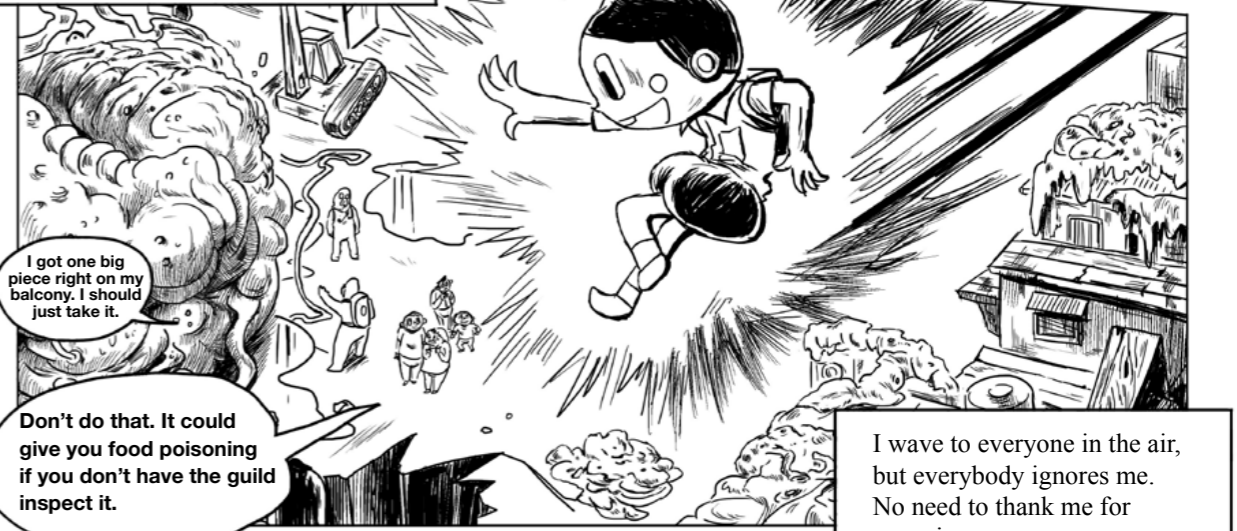
Photon
Death
Punch!

Sizzle
Whoosh

Maybe they all hate me because they don't understand me... but they are all people that I protect! Maybe... maybe one day, when they all understand, they'll stop hating me so much.



The city is covered in bits of meat, bone, and guts. It's a bloody hellscape. But the people coming out of the bunkers almost seem happy. Is it because I won?



I wave to everyone in the air, but everybody ignores me. No need to thank me for avenging us.

