



AYUMI'S STUNNING PERFORMANCE HAS SHOCKED MAYA, LEAVING A STRONG LASTING IMPRESSION IN HER MIND.



AND AS FOR AYUMI...



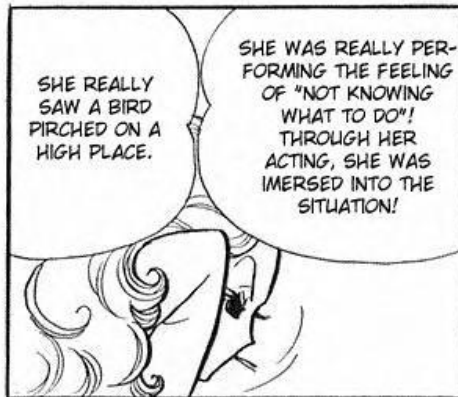
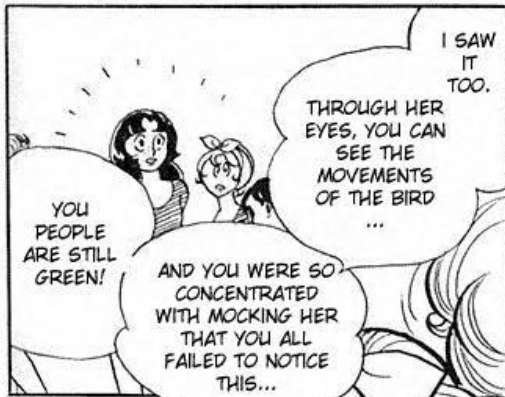
IT WAS LIKE SHE WAS REALLY STUMPED!

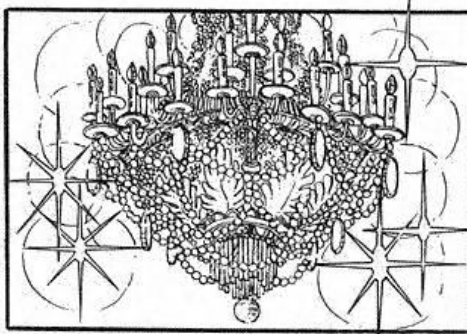
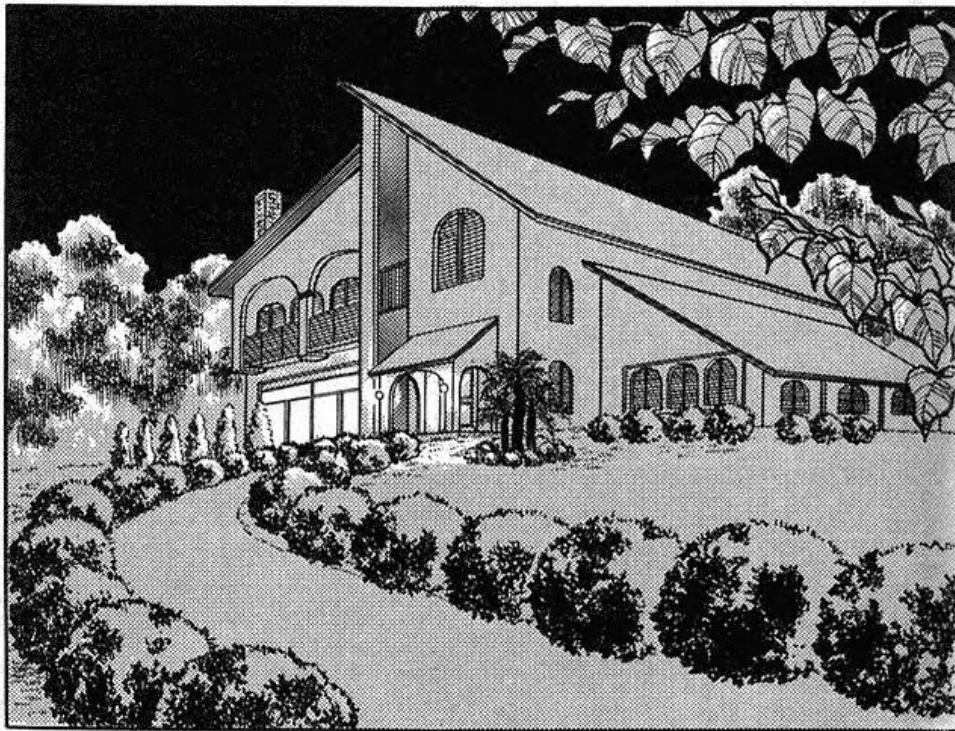
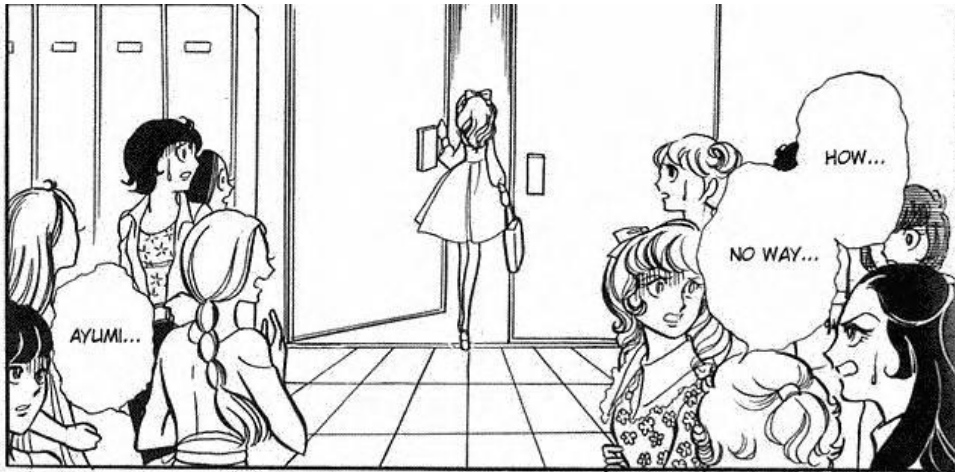
SO STUPID!

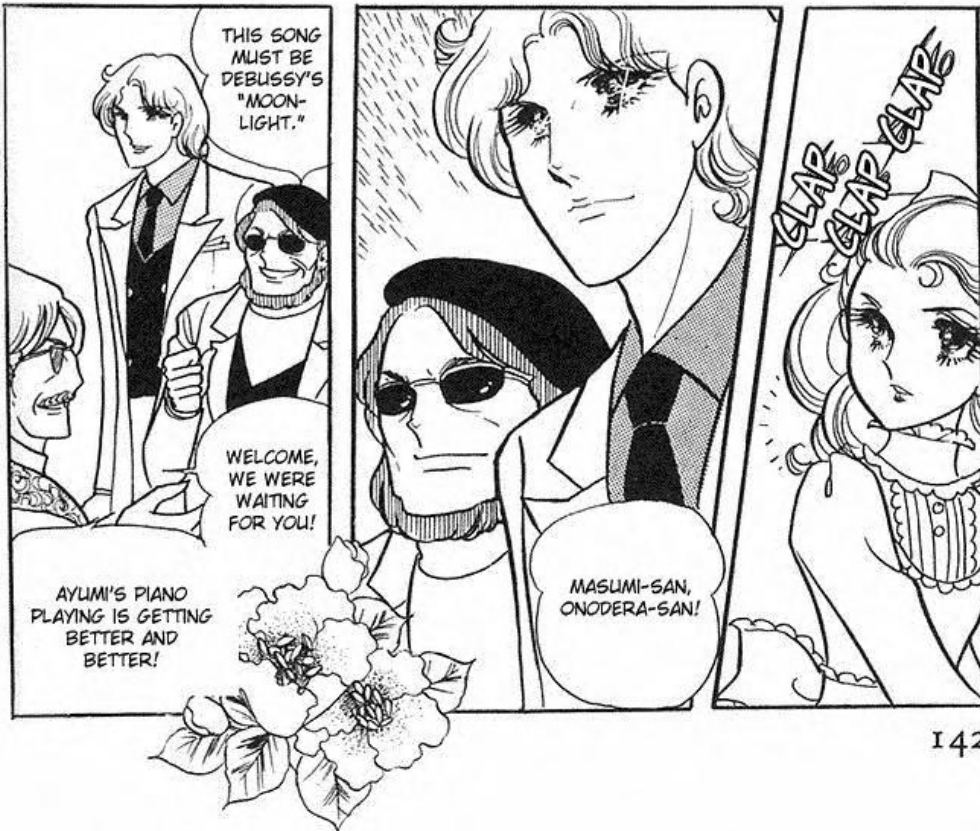
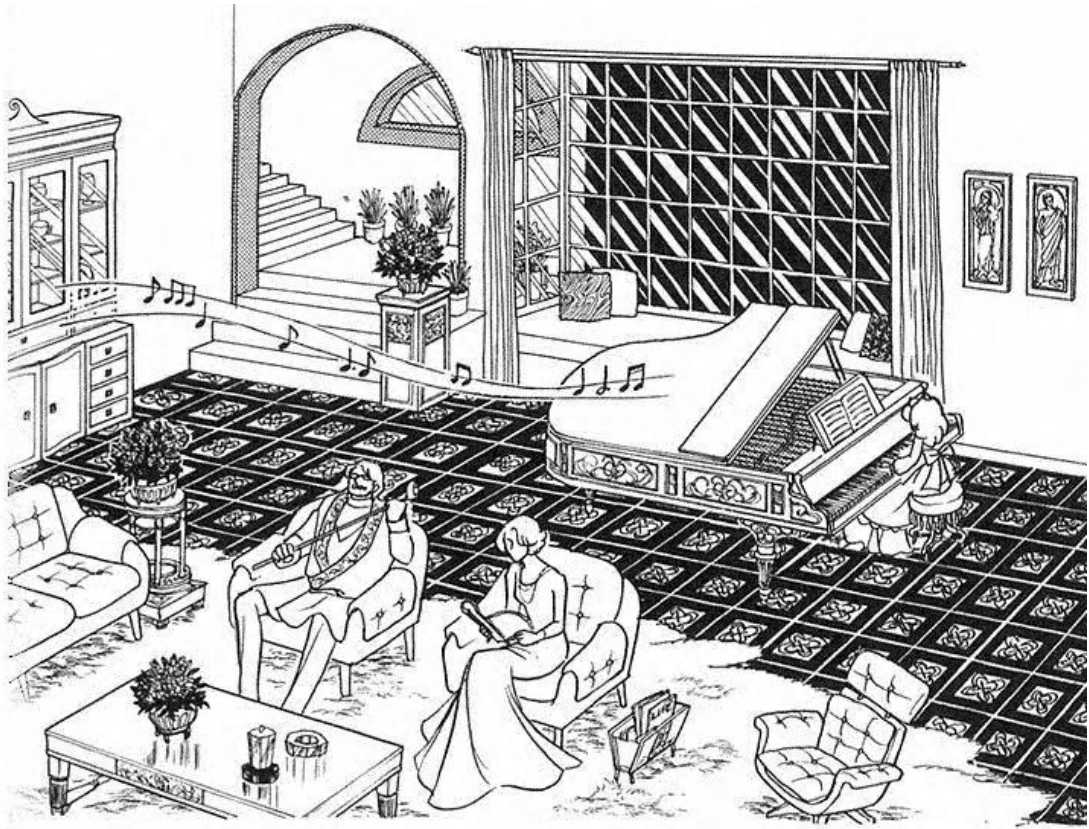
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE SAID THE BIRD WAS PERCHED ON TOP AND DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO CATCH IT...

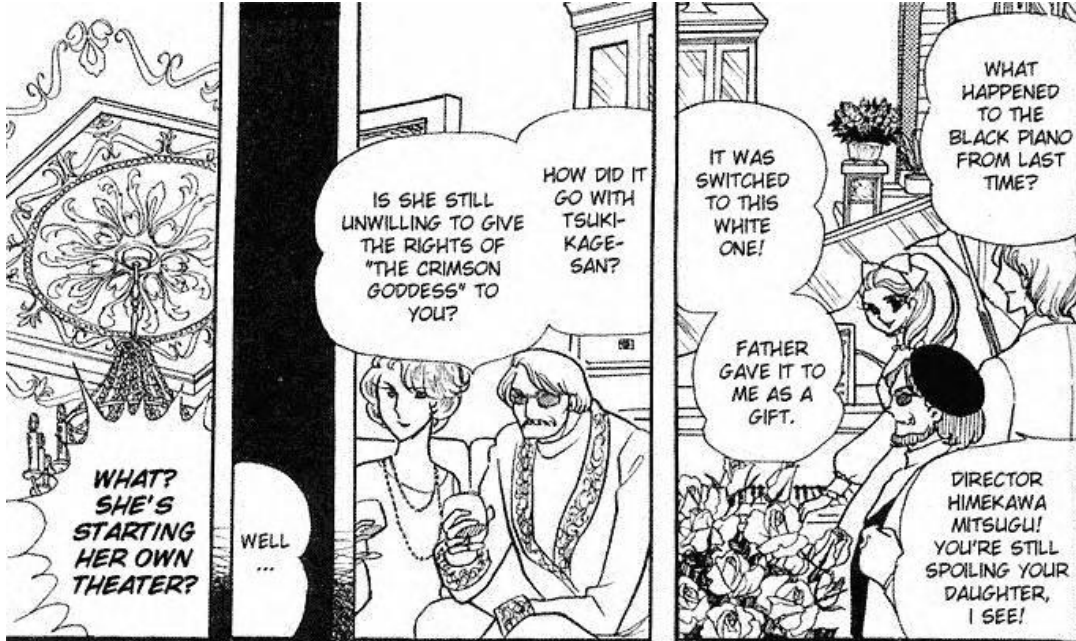
THAT GIRL WAS SO FUNNY!

AHA HA HA HA HA HA HA









WHAT?
SHE'S
STARTING
HER OWN
THEATER?

WELL
...

IS SHE STILL
UNWILLING TO GIVE
THE RIGHTS OF
"THE CRIMSON
GODDESS" TO
YOU?

HOW DID IT
GO WITH
TSUKI-
KAGE-
SAN?

IT WAS
SWITCHED
TO THIS
WHITE
ONE!

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO THE
BLACK PIANO
FROM LAST
TIME?

FATHER
GAVE IT TO
ME AS A
GIFT.

DIRECTOR
HIMEKAWA
MITSUGU!
YOU'RE STILL
SPOILING YOUR
DAUGHTER,
I SEE!



WHAT? TO
PERFORM IN THAT
LEGENDARY PLAY
HAS LONG BEEN
MY DREAM...

WHY DID IT
SUDDENLY
COME TO THIS?

YES! AND SHE
SAID SHE'LL
TRAIN THE
ACTRESS FOR
THE CRIMSON
GODDESS
HERSELF.



I WILL DEFEAT
HER THEATER.

RIGHT,
MASUMI?

THE MORE
FAMOUS THE
THEATER, THE
MORE PROFITABLE
FOR THE
COMPANY!

SINCE LINDINE
THEATER IS A
PART OF DAITO
ENTERTAINMENT
...

WHATEVER IT
TAKES, I WILL
GET THE RIGHTS!



I MUST HAVE THE PERFORMANCE RIGHTS TO "THE CRIMSON GODDESS!"

NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES...

HMPH, YOU ARE QUITE RIGHT!



A THIRTEEN YEAR OLD KID CAN'T PERFORM THAT ROLE! HAHA!

IF YOU DON'T MIND, MOTHER, I WANT TO PERFORM IT ALSO.

NOT RIGHT NOW.



THE FAMED PLAY OF THE PERFORMANCE INDUSTRY, "THE CRIMSON GODDESS"...



HAHAHA! MAYBE AYUMI CAN PERFORM IT!

IT'S LIKE AYUMI WAS BORN FOR THIS ROLE!



IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE NOW...

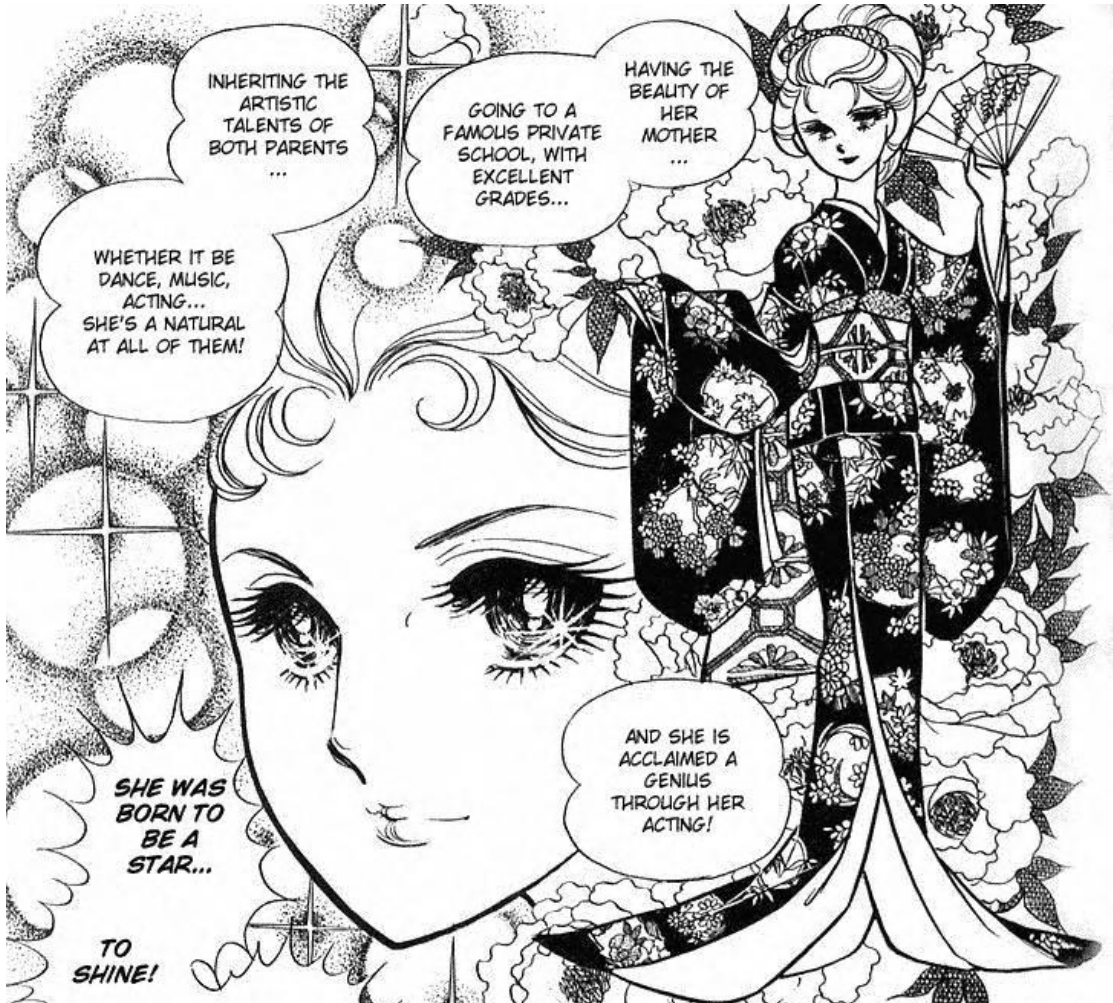
BUT AFTER 5 MORE YEARS, WHEN I'M 18...

THEN I WOULD BE ABLE TO PERFORM IT.



DIDN'T TSUKIKAGESAN SAY SHE WILL TRAIN HER OWN ACTRESS FOR THE GODDESS?

SHE WILL NOT GIVE THE RIGHTS TO ANYONE ELSE BEFORE SHE FINISHES TRAINING SUCH AN ACTRESS!



INHERITING THE ARTISTIC TALENTS OF BOTH PARENTS ...

GOING TO A FAMOUS PRIVATE SCHOOL, WITH EXCELLENT GRADES...

HAVING THE BEAUTY OF HER MOTHER ...

WHETHER IT BE DANCE, MUSIC, ACTING... SHE'S A NATURAL AT ALL OF THEM!

SHE WAS BORN TO BE A STAR...

TO SHINE!

AND SHE IS ACCLAIMED A GENIUS THROUGH HER ACTING!

SHE'S AN IDOL!



THAT GIRL ONCE APPEARED AT TSUKIKAGE'S HOUSE...

CAN IT BE THAT THE ACTRESS SHE WILL TRAIN...

COULD IT BE HER?



13 YEARS OF AGE.... THAT GIRL IS PROBABLY OF THE SAME AGE!

BOTH HAVE A PASSION FOR ACTING... BUT THEIR ENVIRONMENT ARE SO DIFFERENT...

A DAUGHTER OF A RESTAURANT WORKER ...



THE LEAD ROLE OF
"THE CRIMSON
GODDESS" IS MORE
SUITED FOR SOMEONE
LIKE HIMEKAWA UTAKO
OR HER DAUGHTER
AYUMI...

NO... IT
CAN'T BE!

BUT WHY...
WHY DID HER IMAGE
SUDDENLY POP INTO
MY MIND...

WHY...
WHY AM I SO
CONCERNED
ABOUT HER?



YOKO-
HAMA



JUST HEARING
THE WORD
'ACTING' MAKES
MY BODY BURN
WITH PASSION.

I CAN'T
HELP IT.
I LOVE IT
...

I WANT TO
GET INTO
ACTING.



I KNOW
THAT,
BUT...

I WANT TO...
I CAN'T HELP
IT...

I DON'T EVEN
HAVE ENOUGH
MONEY TO ENROLL
IN AN ACTING
SCHOOL...

I'M NOT VERY
PRETTY AND MY
GRADES AREN'T
THAT HIGH.

AH, I WANT TO
TRY IT!
I WANT TO
PANTOMIME AND
STUDY ACTING
...



...AND COLLECT
THE \$5000 ENTRY
FEE? THAT MIGHT
BE GOOD.

THE DIFFICULTY OF
WORKING WHILE
ATTENDING MIDDLE
SCHOOL SHOULD
HELP SMOTHER
YOUR PASSION.



IF... IF
THERE'S A
PART-TIME
JOB I CAN DO,
I'LL WORK..

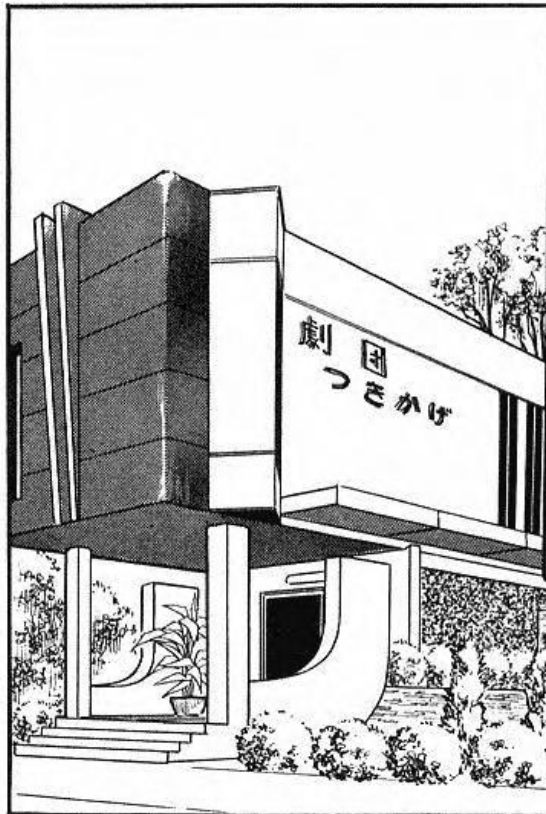
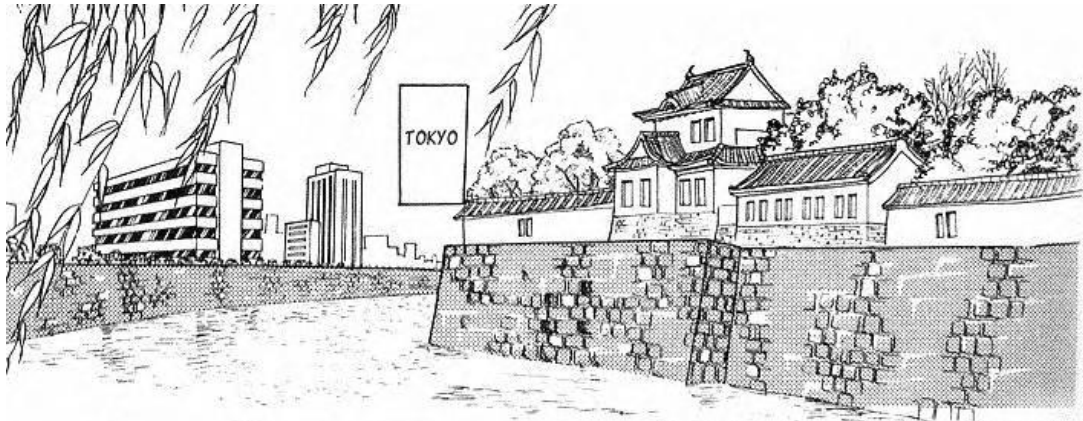


YOU'D
BETTER
FORGET
IT.



LIKE
THOSE
PEOPLE.









NO!

**I WANT
TO ACT!**

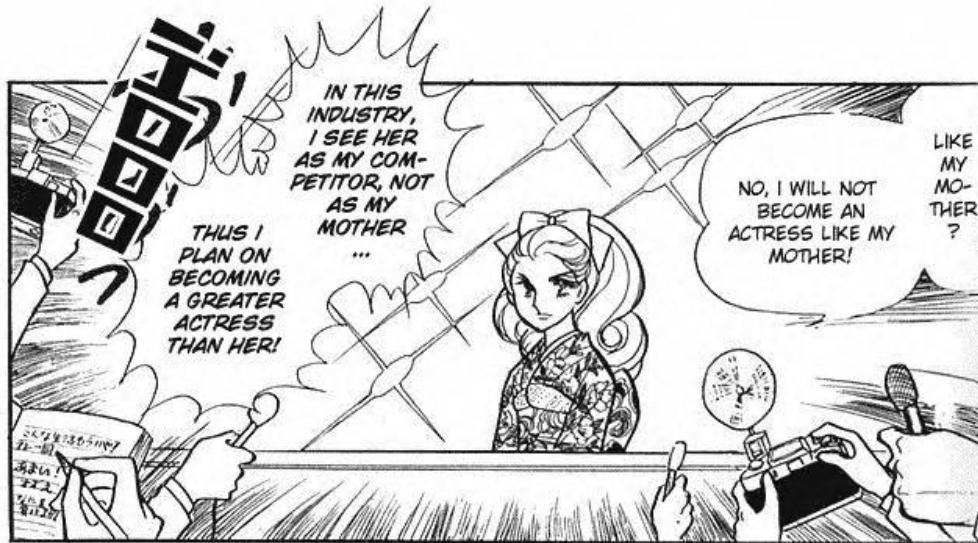
GOOD!
THAT IS
WHAT I
WANTED TO
HEAR!

DO NOT
FORGET
YOUR
DETERMI-
NATION!

TO BE AN
ACTRESS
...

**I WANT
TO BE AN
ACTRESS
!**





IN THIS INDUSTRY, I SEE HER AS MY COMPETITOR, NOT AS MY MOTHER ...

THIS I PLAN ON BECOMING A GREATER ACTRESS THAN HER!

NO, I WILL NOT BECOME AN ACTRESS LIKE MY MOTHER!

LIKE MY MOTHER?



YES, TO BE AN ACTRESS!

I HAVE ONLY THIS PATH...

AN ACTRESS ...

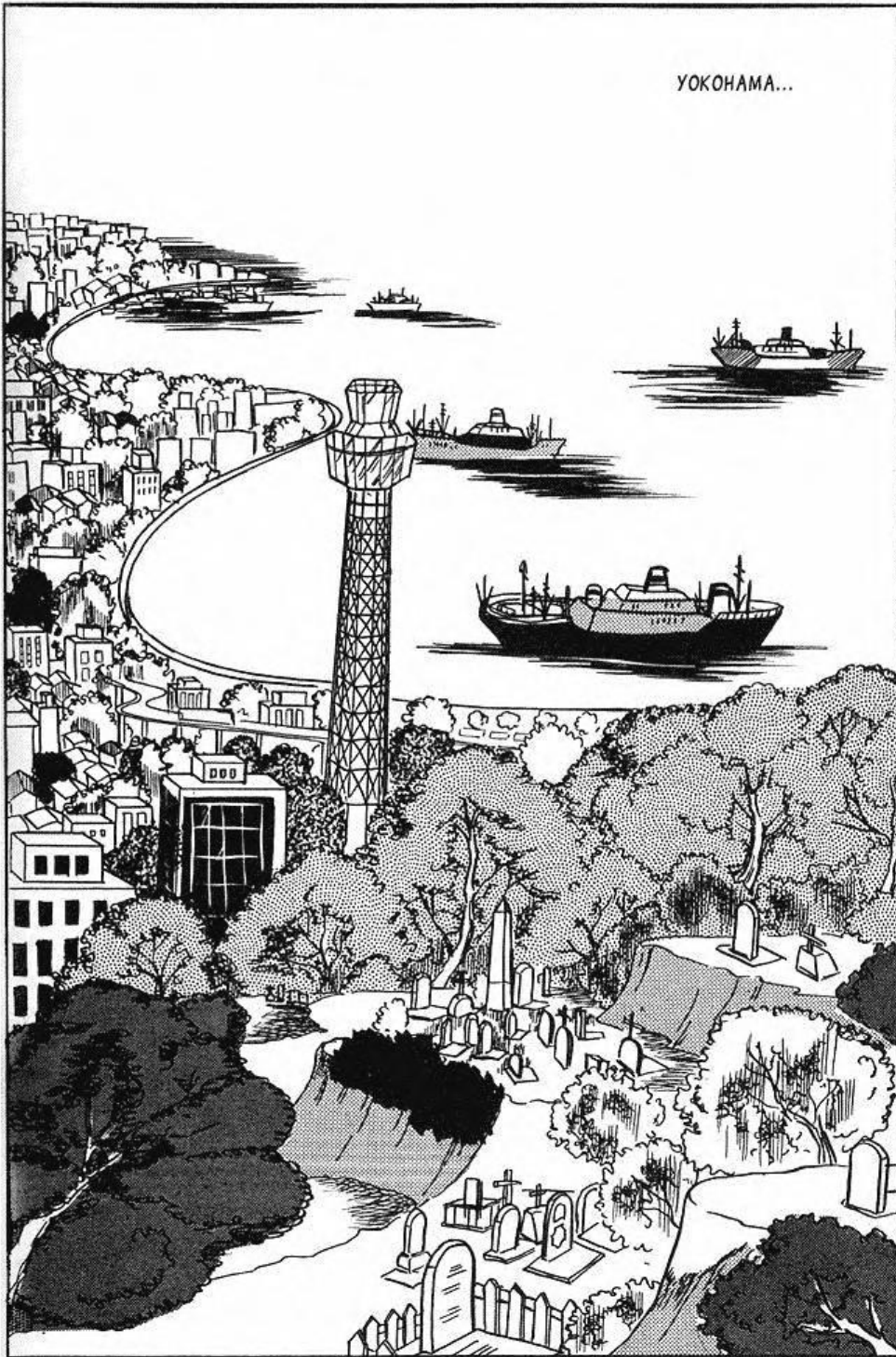
SOMEONE LIKE ME CAN BE AN ACTRESS...



I WANT TO BECOME A WELL KNOWN ACTRESS NATIONALLY, AND SOMEDAY, INTERNATIONALLY!

I HAVE DETERMINED TO DEVOTE MY LIFE TO PERFORMING!

YOKOHAMA...





TO BECOME AN ACTRESS ...

TO BECOME AN ACTRESS ...



YOU HAVE THE TALENT...

COME HERE AND LEARN!



YOU WILL UNDERSTAND VERY SHORTLY!

TO HAVE TALENT IS TO TRUST YOURSELF, TO HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF.



TALENT? DO I REALLY HAVE TALENT?



WE PROVIDE A DORM HERE! AND WE EVEN HAVE A SCHOLARSHIP SET UP!

PEOPLE WITH TALENT WOULDN'T HAVE TO PAY THE FEES! COME HERE AND LEARN!



I WANT TO ACT!

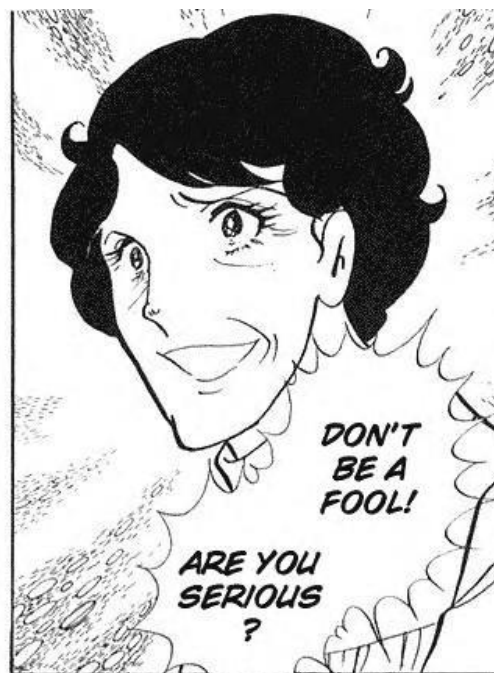
I WANT TO ACT!



STOP DREAMING!
HOW CAN YOU
HAVE A TALENT
FOR IT!

ACT?
YOU WANT ME
TO LET YOU GO
TO A THEATER
IN TOKYO TO
LEARN TO ACT?

I WON'T
LET YOU
GO!



DON'T
BE A
FOOL!

ARE YOU
SERIOUS
?



THE NEW
SEMESTER IS
ABOUT TO START.
CAN'T YOU CON-
CENTRATE ON
YOUR STUDIES?



YES!
LEAVE THIS
HOME!

I SHOULD
LEAVE!

DONE!
HURRY UP
AND DELIVER
THIS!



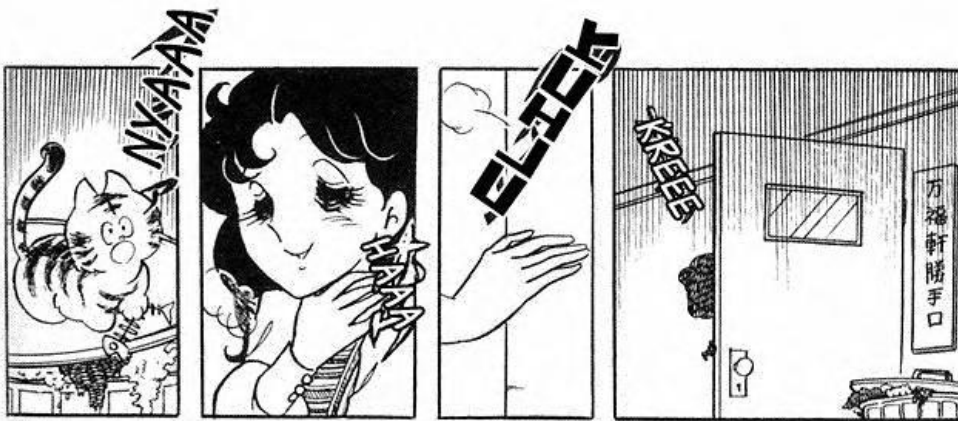
I WILL STILL
GO TO MADAM
TSUKIKAGE'S
THEATER!

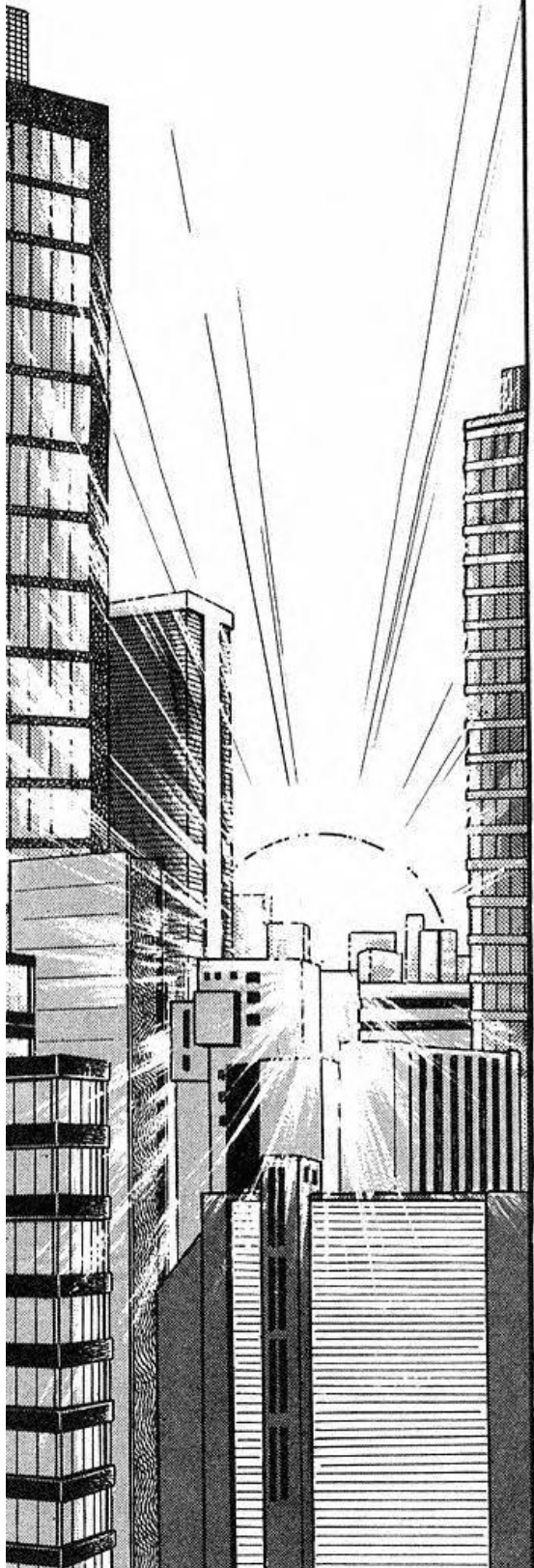
AS LONG AS
I'M AT HOME,
MOTHER WILL
NOT AGREE!

THIS IS
THE BEST
WAY!

I WILL
GO
THERE!







THE NIGHT'S AIR
WAS COOL, THE
DARK ROADS
SEEMED LONG
AND GLOOMY
...

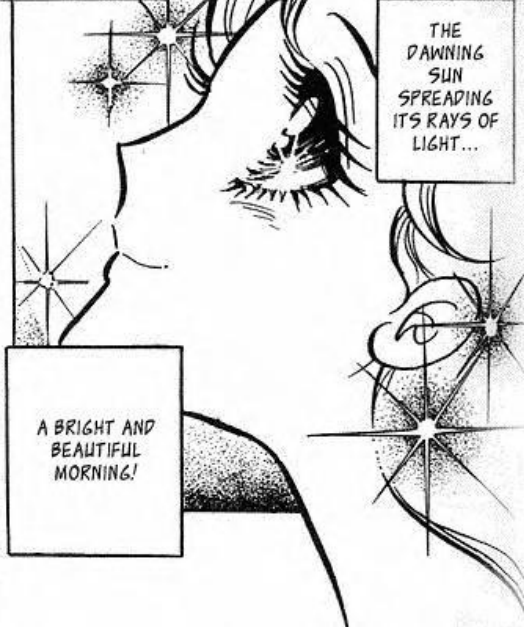
BUT I FELT THAT
MY FUTURE WAS
FULL OF LIGHT
AND HOPE!



MY FEET
HAVE
STARTED TO
HURT!

HOW FAR
HAVE I
WALKED?

THE SUN IS
RISING...



THE
Dawning
SUN
SPREADING
ITS RAYS OF
LIGHT...

A BRIGHT AND
BEAUTIFUL
MORNING!



SENSEI!
PLEASE
LET ME
STAY
HERE!

DIDN'T YOU
SAY THERE
WAS A DORM
HERE?

MADAM...
NO...

WHY ARE
YOU HERE
SO EARLY?



I'LL
DO
ANY-
THING
!

PLEASE
LET ME
STAY
HERE
...

I'LL DO ANY-
THING, WHETHER
IT'D BE CLEANING
OR COOKING!



SENSEI!
DID YOU
CALL FOR
US?



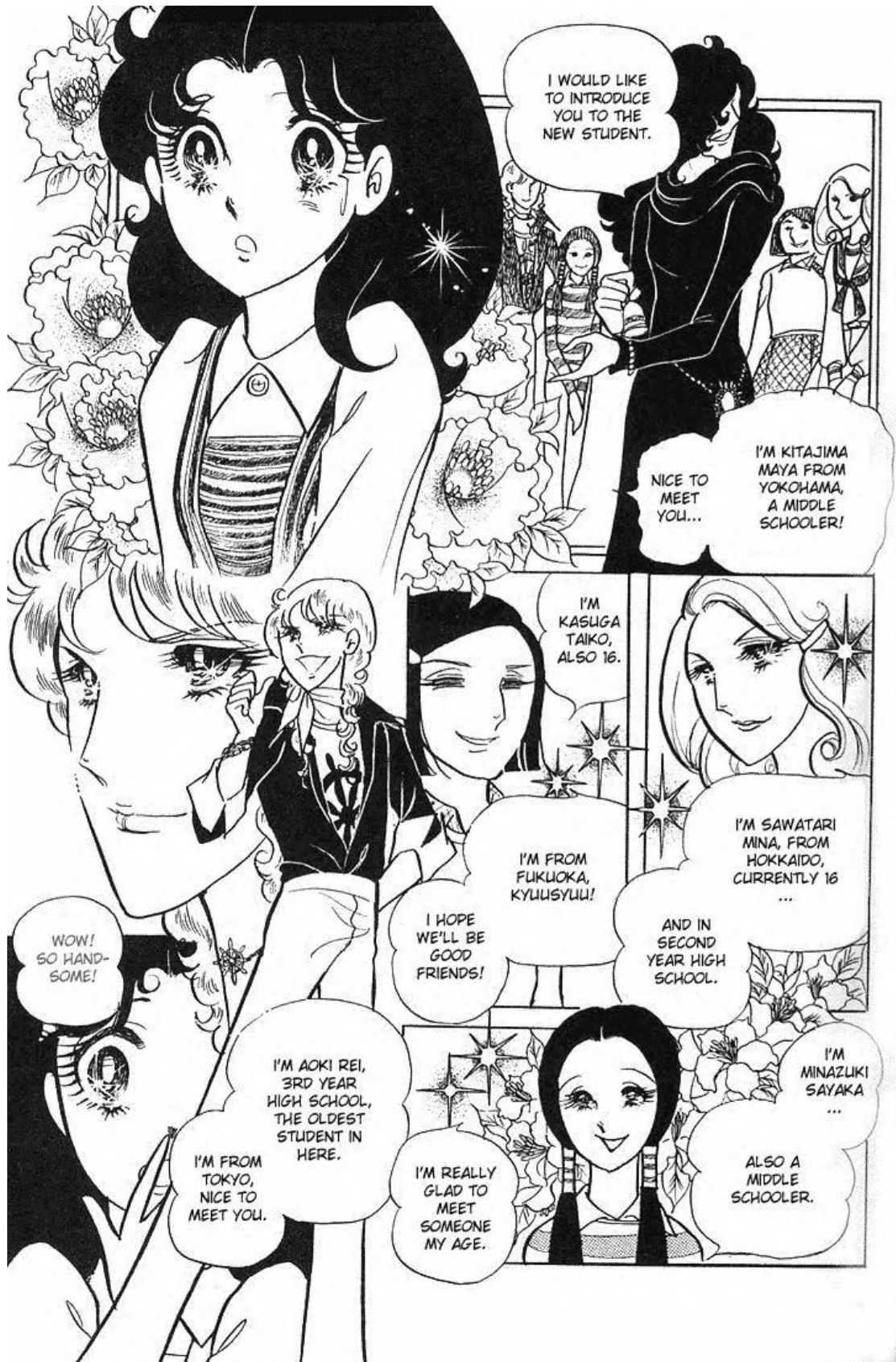
DID YOU
GET THE PER-
MISSION FROM
YOUR MOTHER?

YES!



heh





I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE NEW STUDENT.

NICE TO MEET YOU...

I'M KITAJIMA MAYA FROM YOKOHAMA, A MIDDLE SCHOOLER!

I'M KASUGA TAIKO, ALSO 16.

I'M FROM FUKUOKA, KYUUSYUU!

I'M SAWATARI MINA, FROM HOKKAIDO, CURRENTLY 16 ...

AND IN SECOND YEAR HIGH SCHOOL.

WOW! SO HANDSOME!

I HOPE WE'LL BE GOOD FRIENDS!

I'M AOKI REI, 3RD YEAR HIGH SCHOOL, THE OLDEST STUDENT IN HERE.

I'M FROM TOKYO, NICE TO MEET YOU.

I'M REALLY GLAD TO MEET SOMEONE MY AGE.

I'M MINAZUKI SAYAKA ...

ALSO A MIDDLE SCHOOLER.



YES, I'M A GIRL TOO!

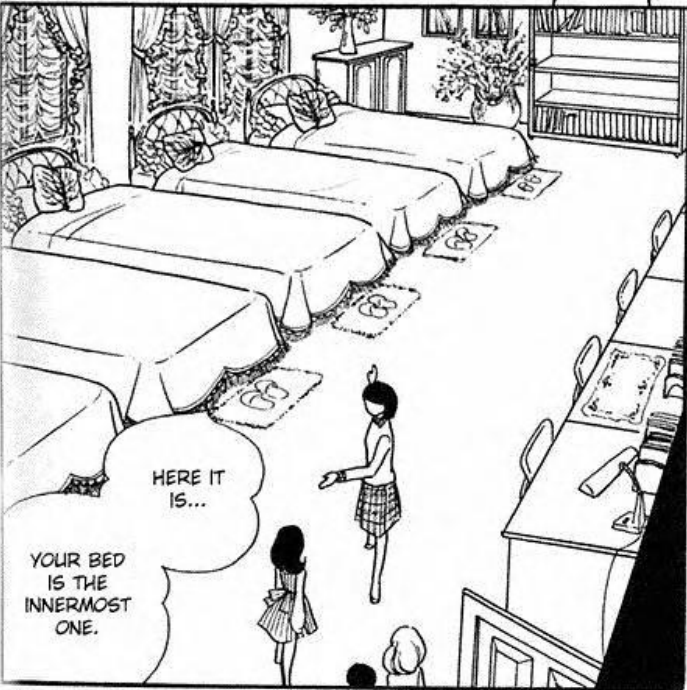
EH? ALL GIRLS?

ALL OF YOU HERE ARE TALENTED GIRLS, I HOPE YOU'LL ALL BE NICE TO EACH OTHER!



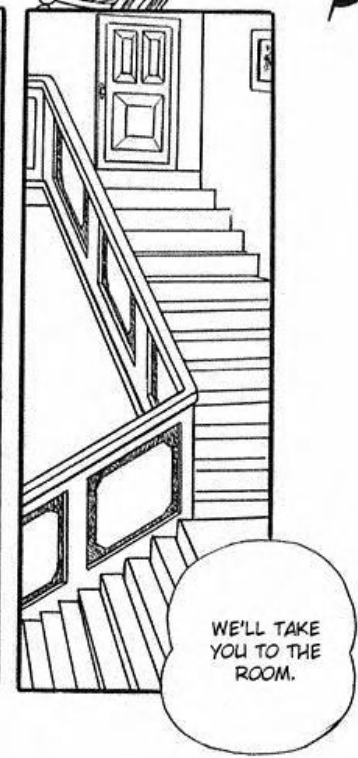
THAT'S OKAY... REI'S OFTEN MISTAKEN TO BE A GUY!

EH? WHAT?

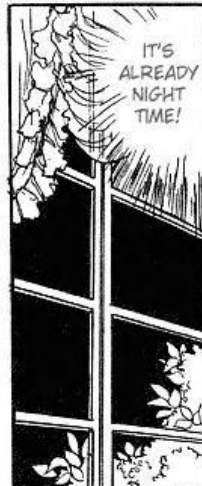
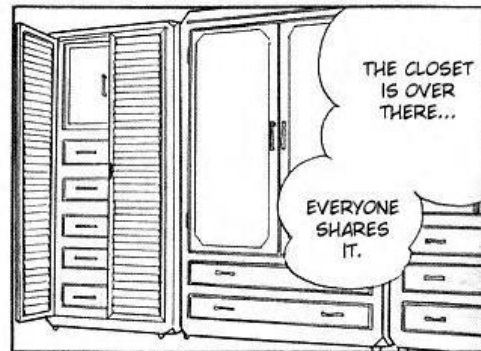


HERE IT IS...

YOUR BED IS THE INNERMOST ONE.



WE'LL TAKE YOU TO THE ROOM.







SENSEI!
THIS...

PLEASE PERFORM
THE ACT OF
EATING ALL THE
MEALS YOU ALL
JUST LISTED!

PERFORM-
ANCE
TRAINING!

TO TRAIN
YOUR
ACTING
SKILLS
...

EAT!

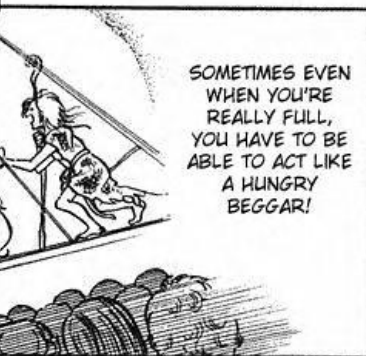
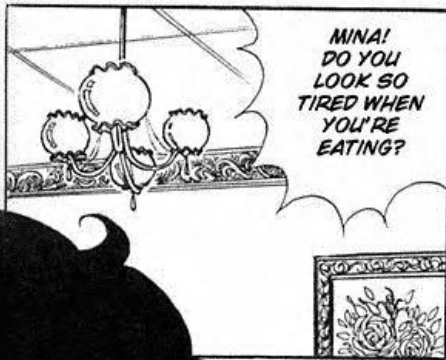
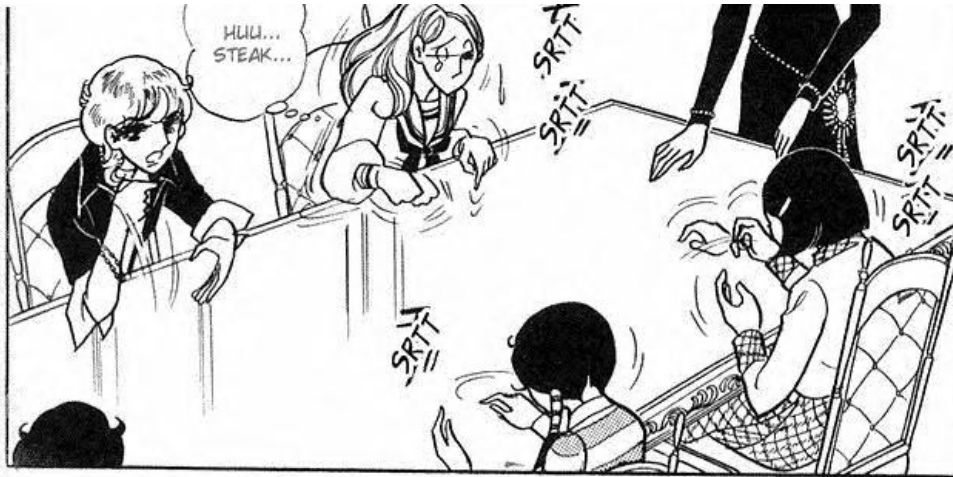
START!

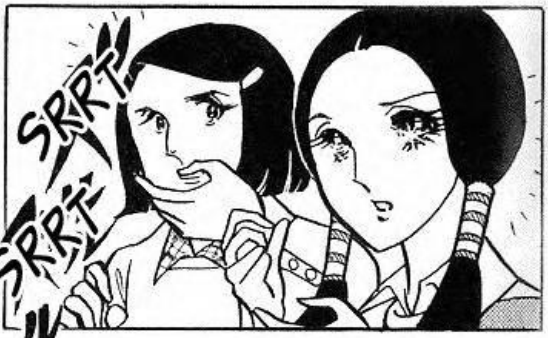
SO UNFOR-
TUNATE!

I LISTED SUCH
A LARGE
COURSE...

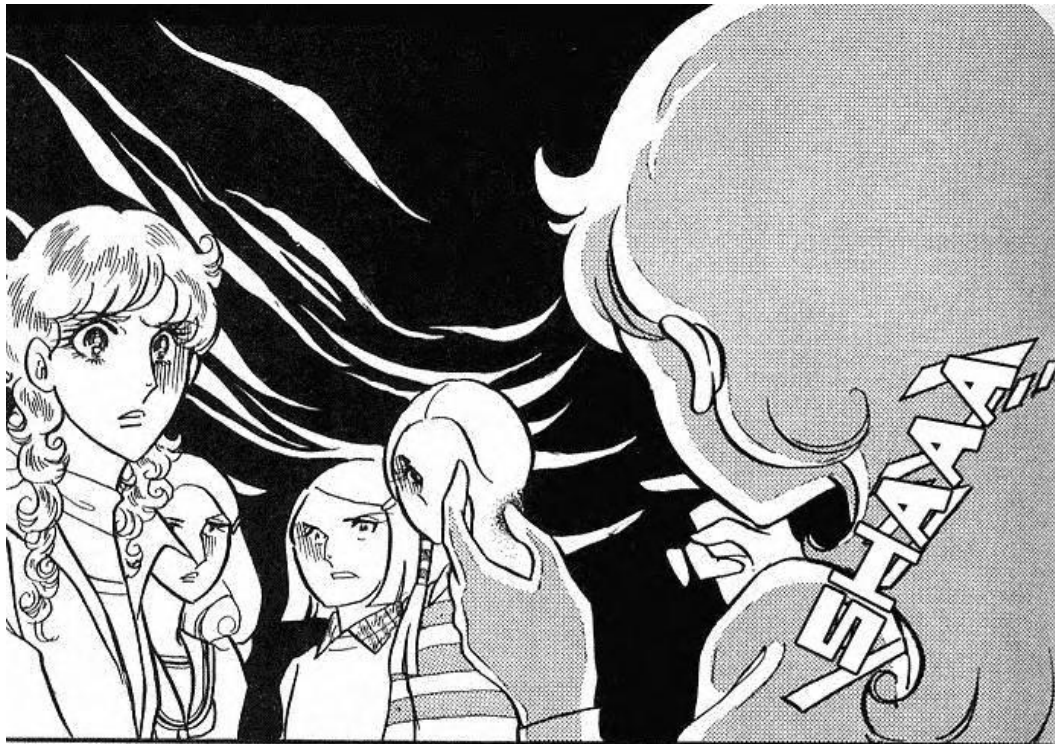
IF I'D HAD
KNOWN,
I'D HAVE
SAID
NOODLES
ALSO...

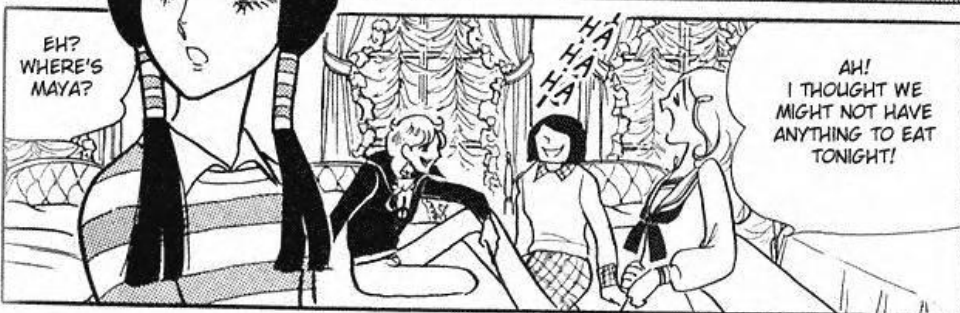
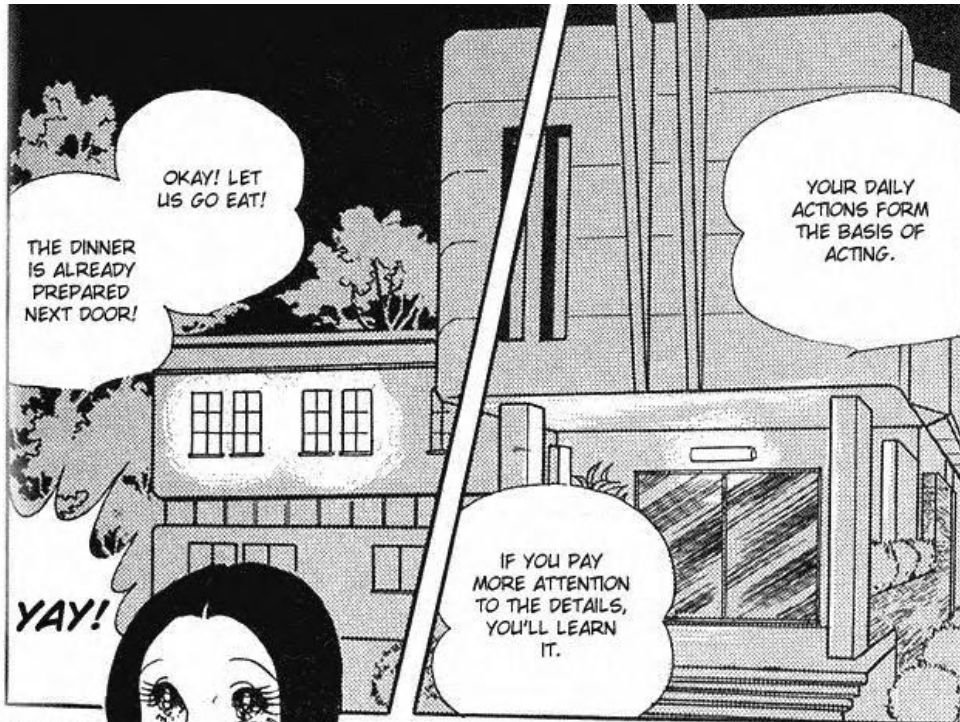
ONLY THOSE WHO
PERFORM WELL
WILL GET TO HAVE
DINNER!













MINAZUKI SAYAKA STAYED FOR 8 YEARS ...

KASUGA TAIKO LEARNED FOR 6 YEARS ...

REI WAS IN THE SCHOOL'S DRAMA CLUB, WITH 5 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, AND HAS RECEIVED AWARDS BEFORE!

I'VE BEEN AT A STUDIO IN HOKKAIDO FOR SEVEN YEARS...

TSUKIKAGE SENSEI FOUND ME DURING THE STUDIO'S ACTING RECITAL...



TSUKIKAGE THEATER OPENING



I'M SORRY, MOTHER ...

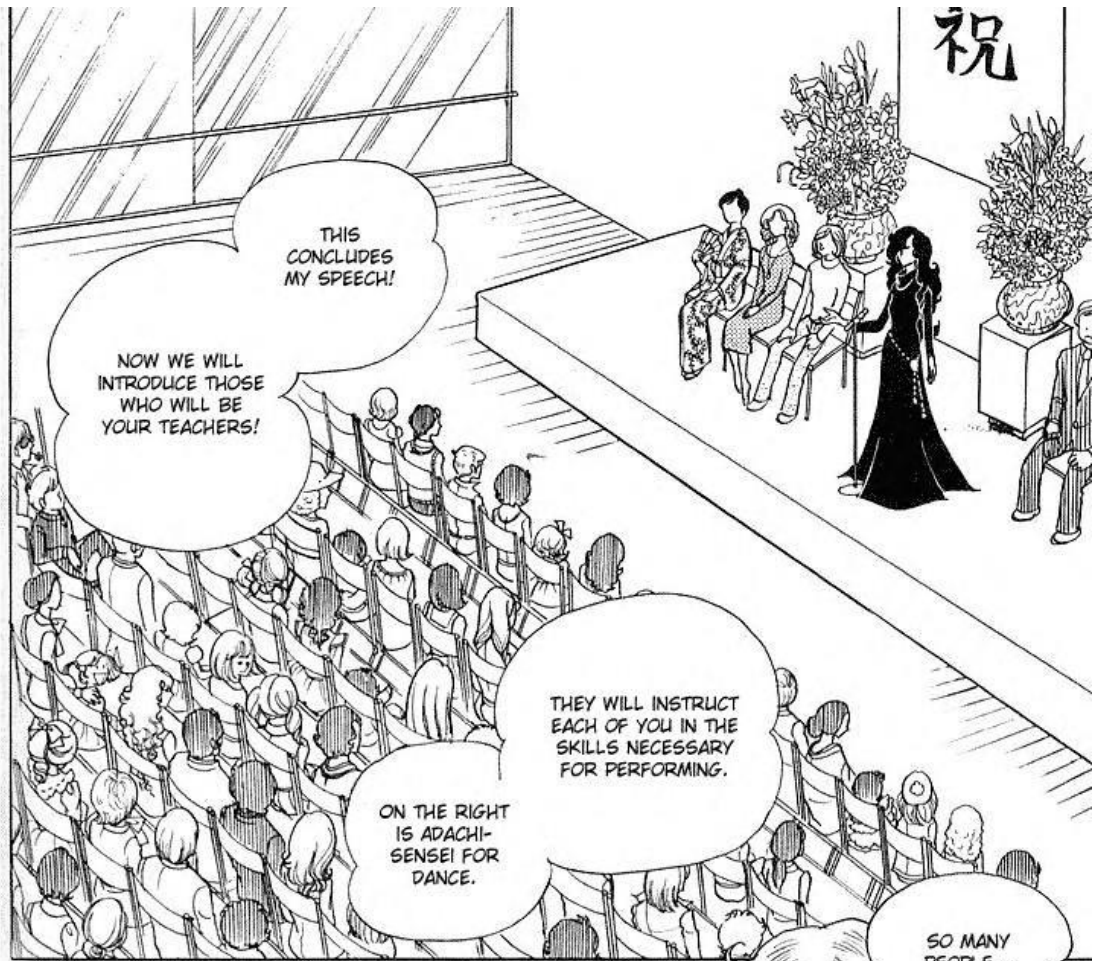
YOU MUST BE LOOKING FOR ME RIGHT NOW...



EVEN WITHOUT HAVING TO PAY TUITION!

BUT HER... WHY WOULD TSUKIKAGE SENSEI WANT HER...

SHE MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF SPECIAL TALENT.



THIS CONCLUDES MY SPEECH!

NOW WE WILL INTRODUCE THOSE WHO WILL BE YOUR TEACHERS!

THEY WILL INSTRUCT EACH OF YOU IN THE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR PERFORMING.

ON THE RIGHT IS ADACHI-SENSEI FOR DANCE.

SO MANY PEOPLE...



CHATTER
CHATTER

CHATTER

CHATTER

THEY'RE PROBABLY HERE BECAUSE THEY SAW THE AD!

THIS IS STILL LITTLE COMPARED TO OTHER STUDIOS!



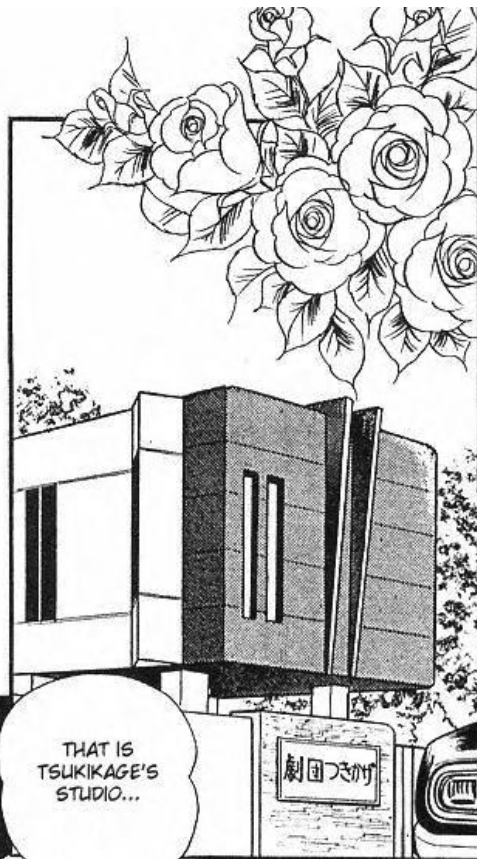
HE'S SO HOT!

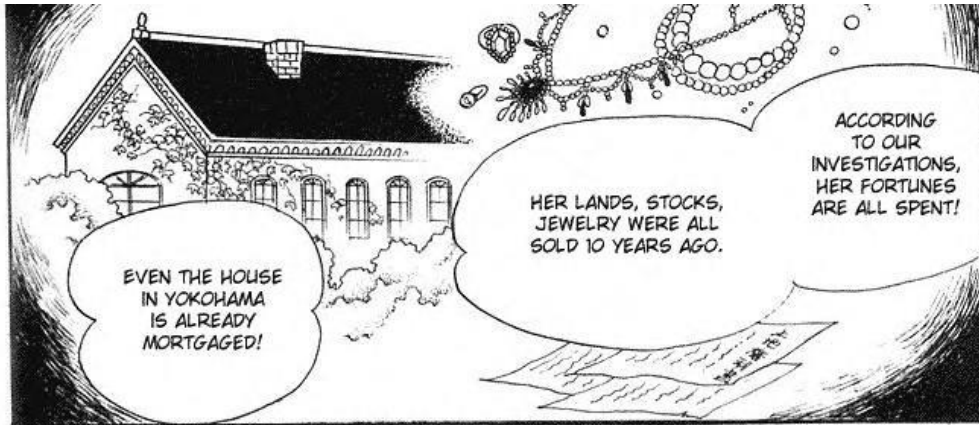
SO ATTRACTIVE!

WOW! THAT PERSON IS SO HANDSOME!

TSUKIKAGE SENSEI WILL HOLD AN ENTRANCE EXAM. I THINK MOST OF THE PEOPLE WILL PROBABLY BE DISQUALIFIED.







EVEN THE HOUSE
IN YOKOHAMA
IS ALREADY
MORTGAGED!

HER LANDS, STOCKS,
JEWELRY WERE ALL
SOLD 10 YEARS AGO.

ACCORDING
TO OUR
INVESTIGATIONS,
HER FORTUNES
ARE ALL SPENT!



THEN WHERE
DOES THE
FUNDS FOR
THIS STUDIO
COME FROM?

I'M NOT SURE EITHER.
BUT IT SEEMS THERE
IS A SECRET SUP-
PORTER BEHIND HER.

SECRET
SUPPORTER
?

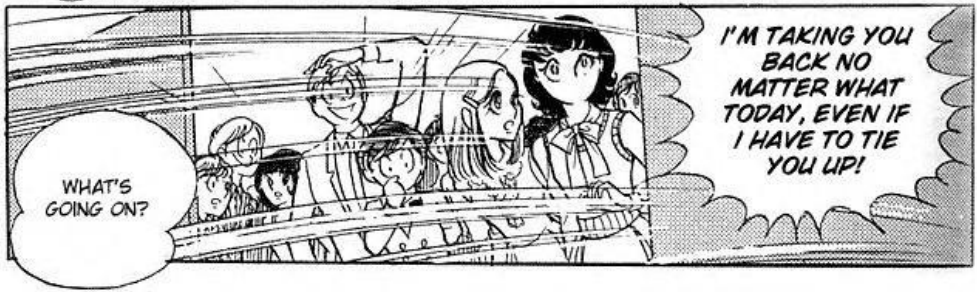


I MUST
DESTROY
IT!

HM...
EITHER WAY WE
CANNOT ALLOW
TSUKIKAGE
THEATER TO
CONTINUE ON!

I HEARD IT WAS
SOMEONE OF
GREAT INFLUENCE
IN THE ACTING
INDUSTRY!

BUT I AM
STILL NOT
TOO SURE AS
OF YET.





**DON'T
RUN!**

**BANG
BANG**

**DAMN IT!
OPEN
THE
DOOR!
OPEN
THE
DOOR!**

**PLEASE
WAIT! I'M
THE SENSEI
HERE!**

WHAM!

**SO YOU'RE
THE SENSEI
THAT TRICKED
MY GIRL!**

**I'M
SORRY,
MOTHER!
I WANT
TO ACT!**

**MO-
THER
!**

**MAYA!
YOU'RE
BEING
TRICKED AND
YOU DON'T
KNOW IT!**



HURRY UP AND COME HOME WITH ME!

HOW CAN SUCH A USELESS GIRL LIKE YOU WANT TO BECOME AN ACTRESS!

SENSE!! I'M SORRY!

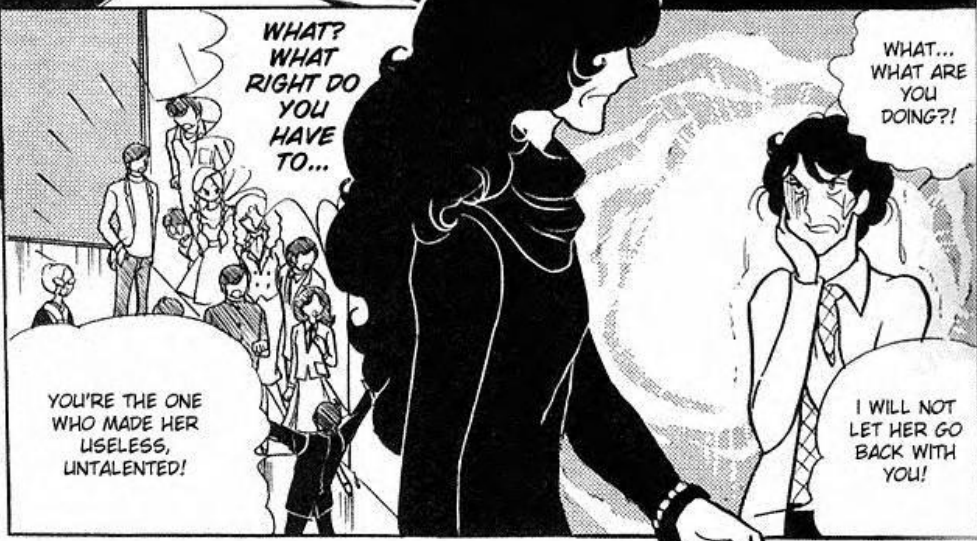
SLAP

MOM! STOP!

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SENSE!

I WAS THE ONE THAT RAN AWAY FROM HOME!

SLAP



WHAT? WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO...

WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO MADE HER USELESS, UNTALENTED!

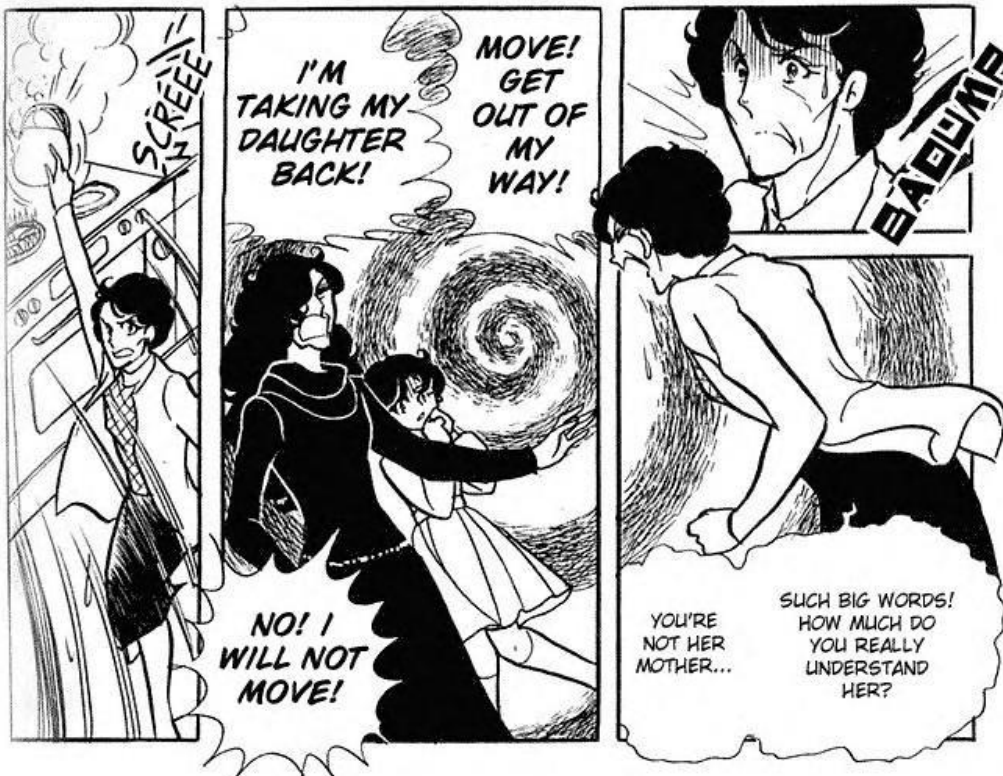
I WILL NOT LET HER GO BACK WITH YOU!



BUT YOU NEVER TRY TO UNDERSTAND HER!

ALL YOU DO IS YELL AT HER, TELLING HER SHE IS USELESS...

WHAT DID YOU SAY?





I
MEAN
IT!

IF YOU STILL
WON'T MOVE, I'M
GOING TO SPLASH
THIS BOILING
WATER OVER YOU!

MO-
THER
!



YOU
...



I WILL
NEVER
MOVE!



SLAM!



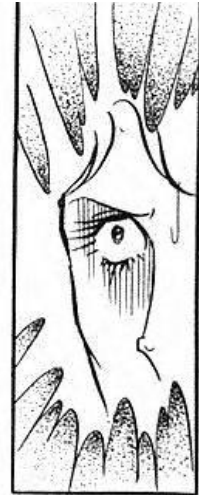
I
WON'T
MOVE!

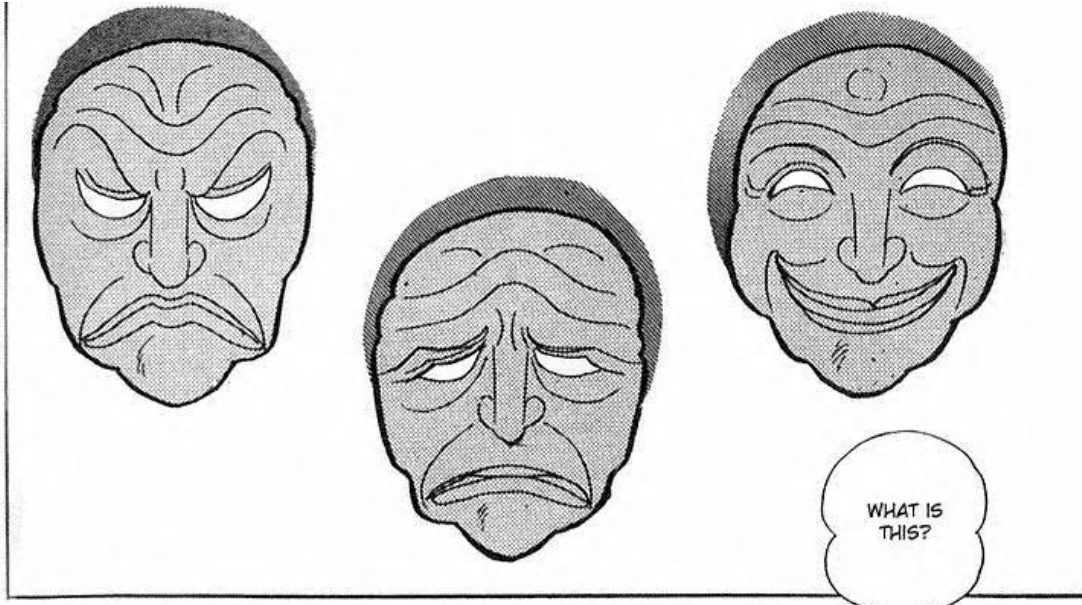


WHAT
RIGHT DO
YOU HAVE?
SHE'S NOT
YOUR
DAUGHTER!

WHEN
PEOPLE ARE
IN TROUBLE,
THEY ALWAYS
TRY TO
PROTECT
THEMSELVES
FIRST!
MOVE OUT
OF THE
WAY! I'M
REALLY
GOING TO
SPLASH
THIS!









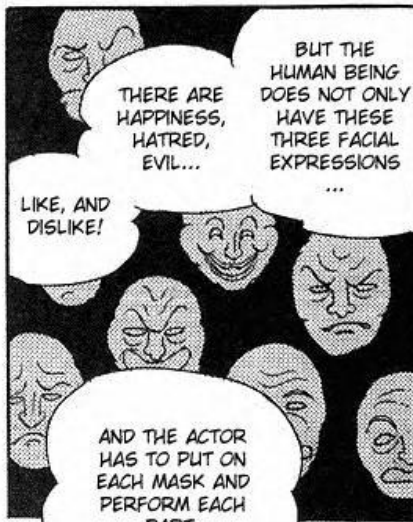
THE ONE WEARING THE CRYING MASK WAS MAYA!

THAT WAS YOU!



THE ONES WEARING THE LAUGHING MASK...

ARE THE CROWDS GATHERED TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON!



THERE ARE HAPPINESS, HATRED, EVIL...

BUT THE HUMAN BEING DOES NOT ONLY HAVE THESE THREE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS ...

LIKE, AND DISLIKE!

AND THE ACTOR HAS TO PUT ON EACH MASK AND PERFORM EACH PART.



AAH!





**NOW
BEGINS
THE FIRST
LESSON!**



NO
MATTER
WHAT
HAPPENS,
I WILL
BELIEVE IN
MYSELF
...

AND TAKE
EACH STEP
FORWARD
ONE BY
ONE DOWN
THE PATH I
CHOSE!

I HAVE
JUST
TAKEN MY
FIRST
STEP!