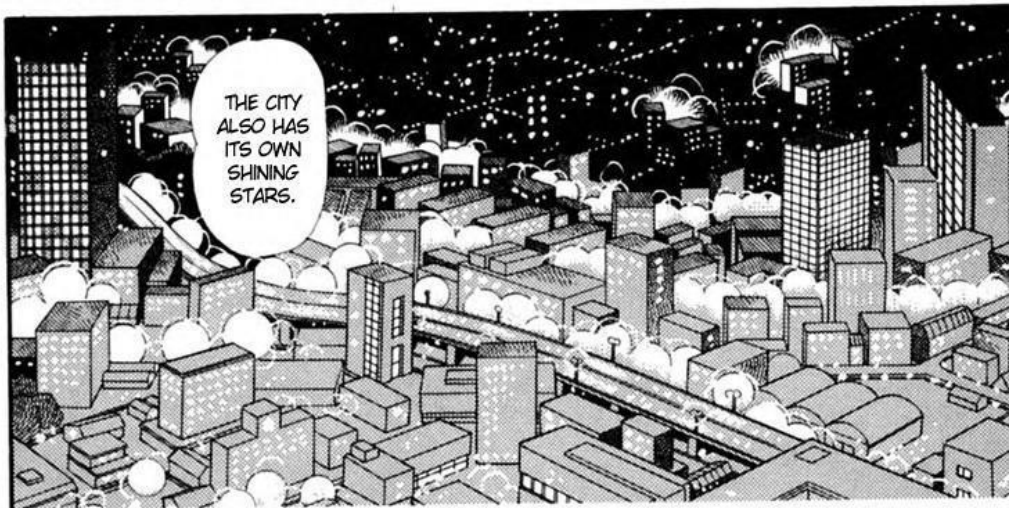
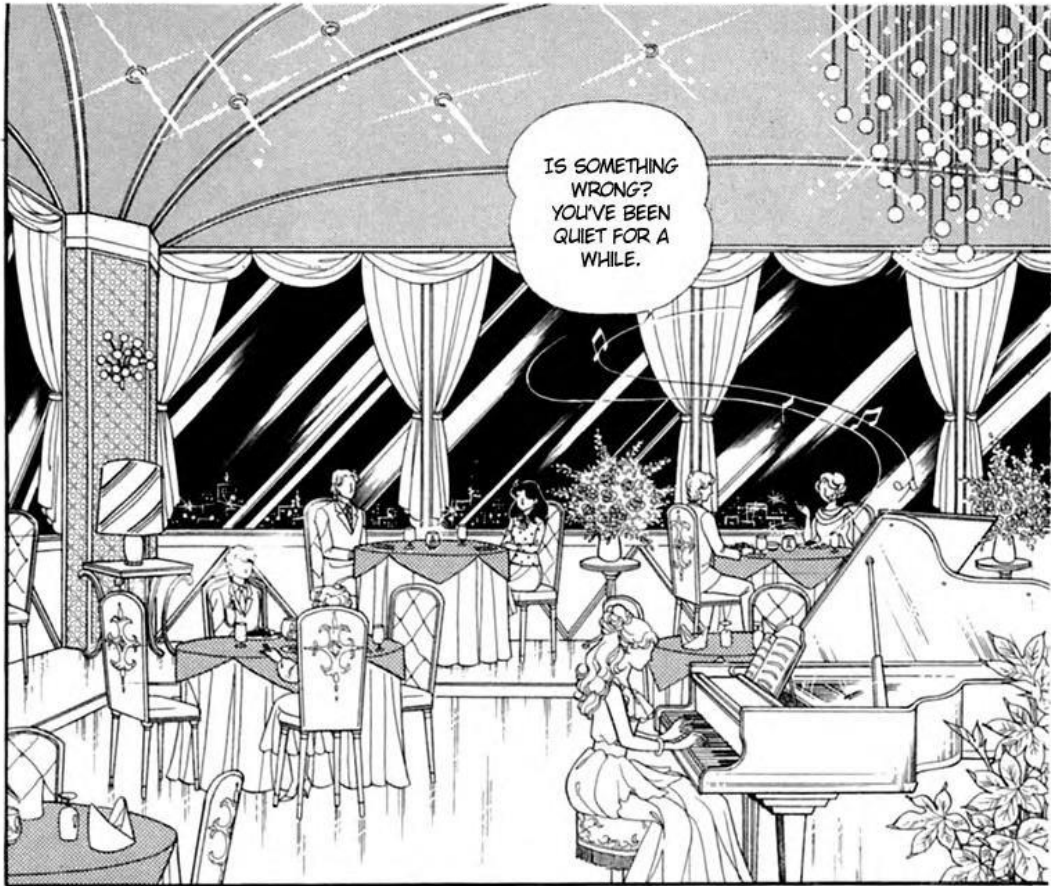


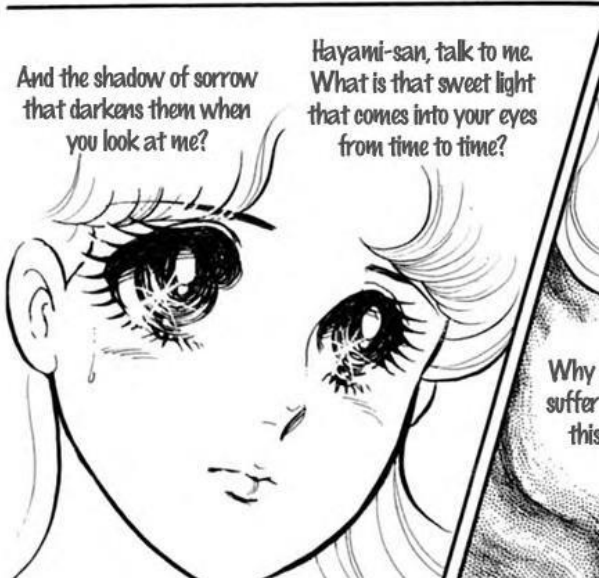


Why have you
invited me today?



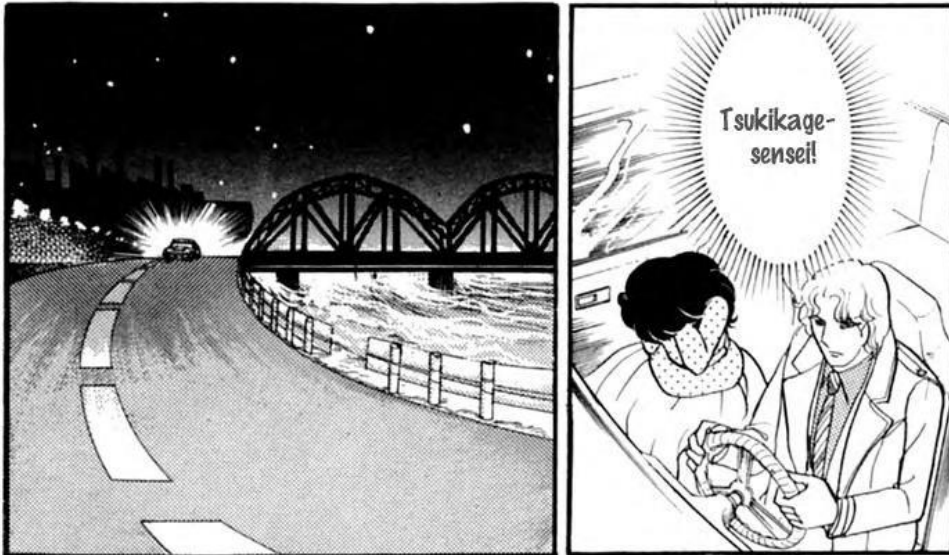
THE CITY
ALSO HAS
ITS OWN
SHINING
STARS.













STOP
HERE!



READ THIS
LETTER! IT'S
FROM HER.





I didn't want to worry you too much.

members of the Ikka-Kyu Theatre, Rei, Sayaka, Taiko and Maya...

At the moment I'd only be a burden for all of you and the Actors' Studio.

Forgive me for leaving Tokyo without notice.



Genzo is with me.

Even if I won't tell you where I'm going, don't worry...

I intend to live somewhere else until I feel better, just like the doctor recommended.

TOTEN TOTEN
TOTEN
TOTEN

SWOOSH

I'll return again someday, be sure of that.

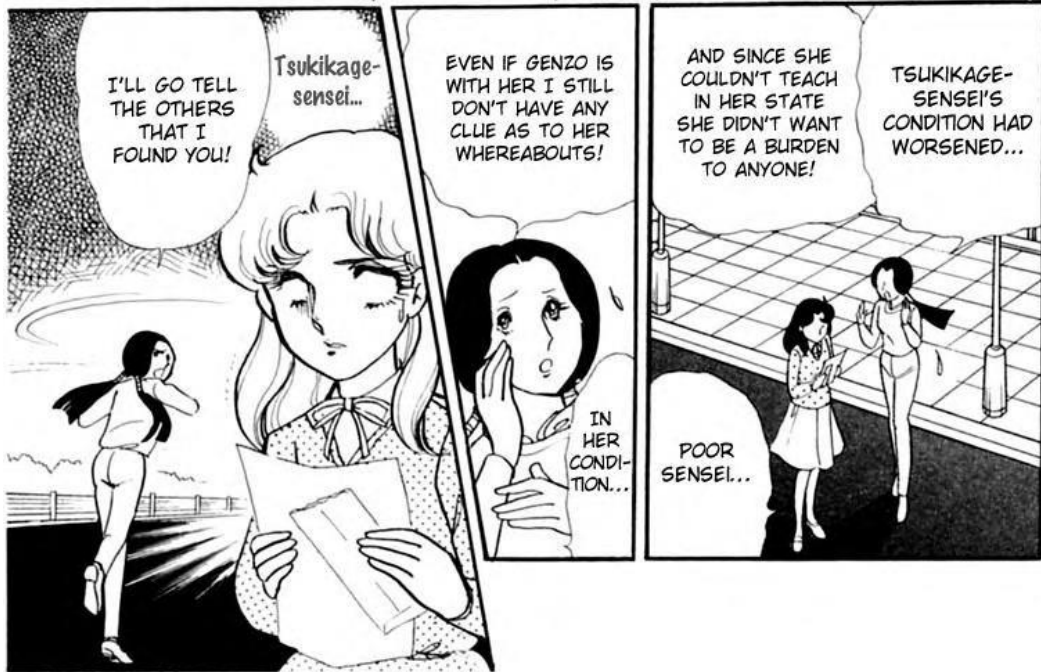


Whatever happens,
do not lose
hope...

Listen well
Maya. I shall
keep watching
you from afar!

-Chigusa
Tsukikage-

TSUKI-
KAGE-
SENSEI
...



I'LL GO TELL
THE OTHERS
THAT I
FOUND YOU!

Tsukikage-
sensei...

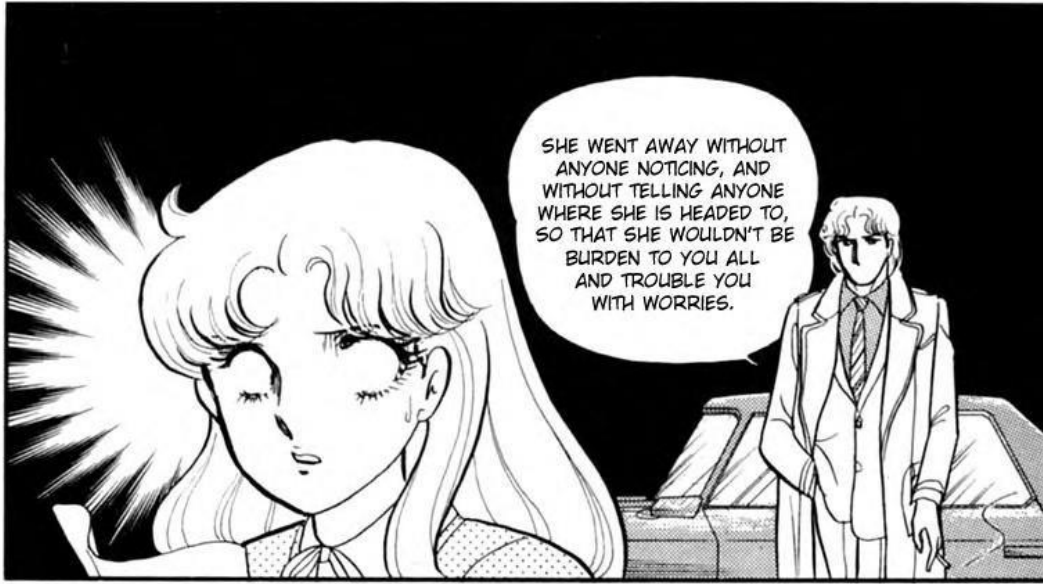
EVEN IF GENZO IS
WITH HER I STILL
DON'T HAVE ANY
CLUE AS TO HER
WHEREABOUTS!

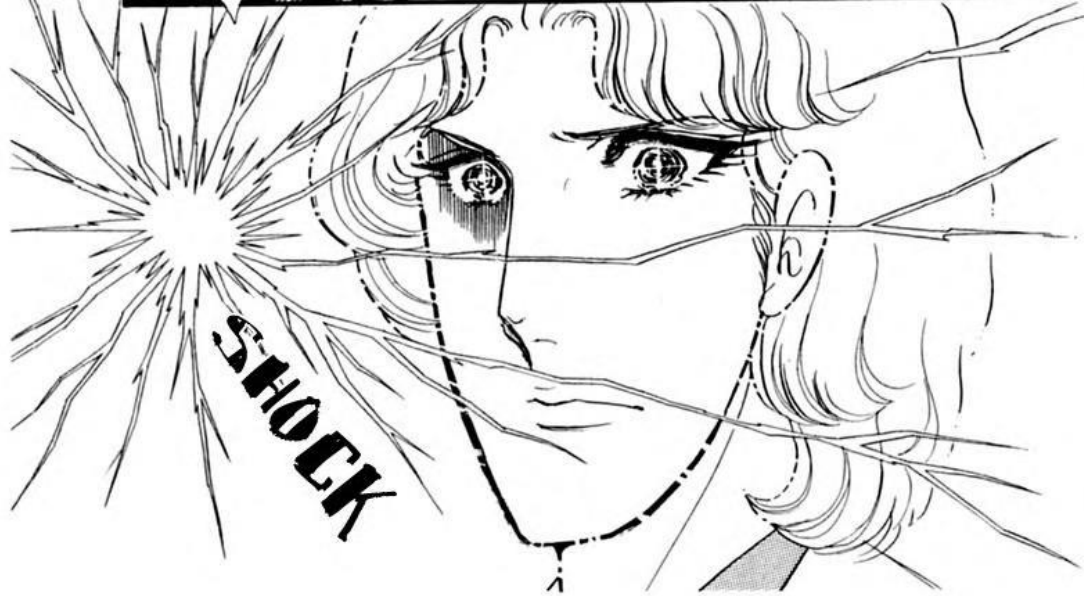
IN
HER
CONDI-
TION...

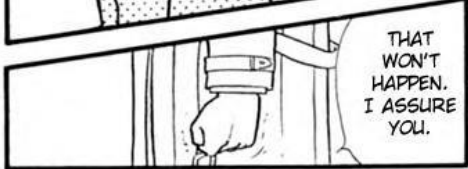
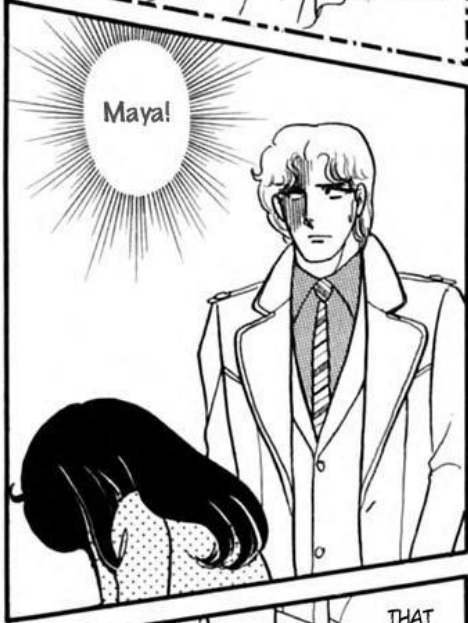
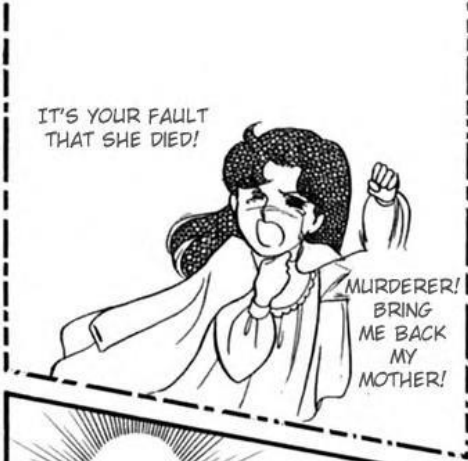
AND SINCE SHE
COULDN'T TEACH
IN HER STATE
SHE DIDN'T WANT
TO BE A BURDEN
TO ANYONE!

TSUKIKAGE-
SENSEI'S
CONDITION HAD
WORSENED...

POOR
SENSEI...





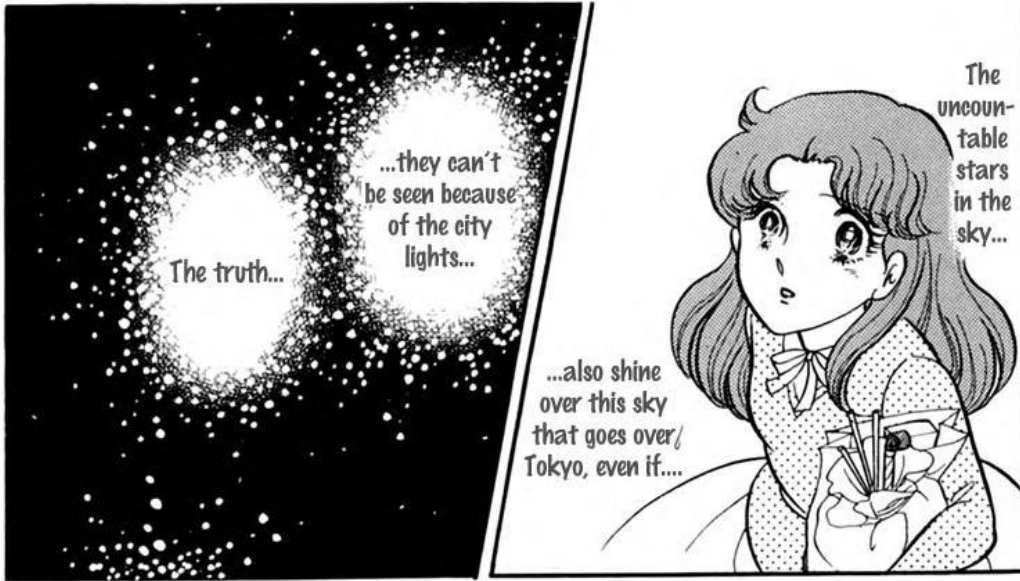




Just to...?







The truth...

...they can't
be seen because
of the city
lights...

The
uncoun-
table
stars
in the
sky...

...also shine
over this sky
that goes over/
Tokyo, even if....



...can't be
clearly
seen...



Hayami-
san...





I am going to
the Goddess's
birthplace...

Ichiren Ozaki...
The man who gave
me the life of the
Crimson Goddess...

Ichiren!

I can feel that there
I shall meet you...
Ichiren...

SNOOSH





Little by little I've begun to feel an invincible attraction for her...



...an unbelievable passion...



I've never met anyone like her... loyal and spontaneous, able to hide in that tiny body...



An unheard-of thing.

Me!

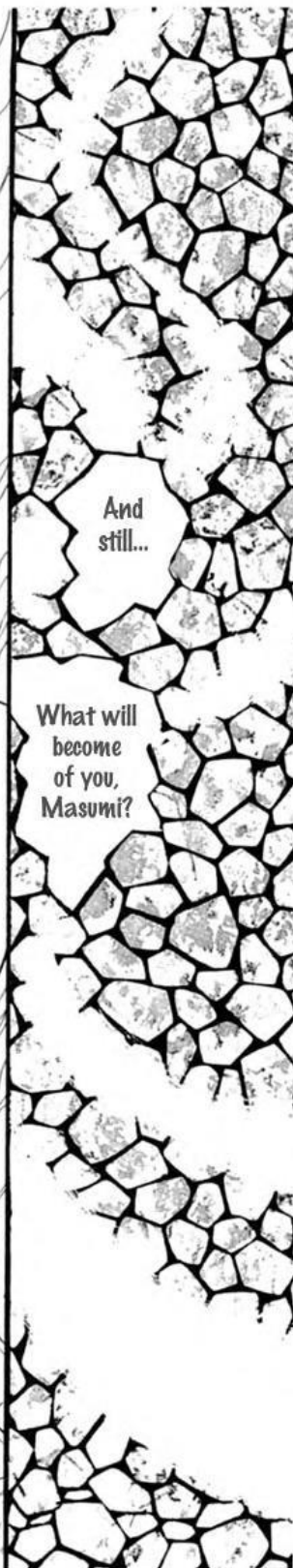


Masumi-
sama!



You shall be only
a shadow for
all your life...

Only a
shadow!



And
still...

What will
become
of you,
Masumi?

Television, cinema or theater?
A contemporary part, a historical
one, the part of a young lady from
an established family or that of the
unfortunate lover Ophelia...



Aah... What should I choose?
What would be the part
most suited for me?



TSUKI-
KAGE-
SENSEI
...

I SHALL KEEP
WATCHING YOU
FROM AFAR!

There is little time
left until the
Crimson Goddess!



I'll bet it
all on
my next
performance!

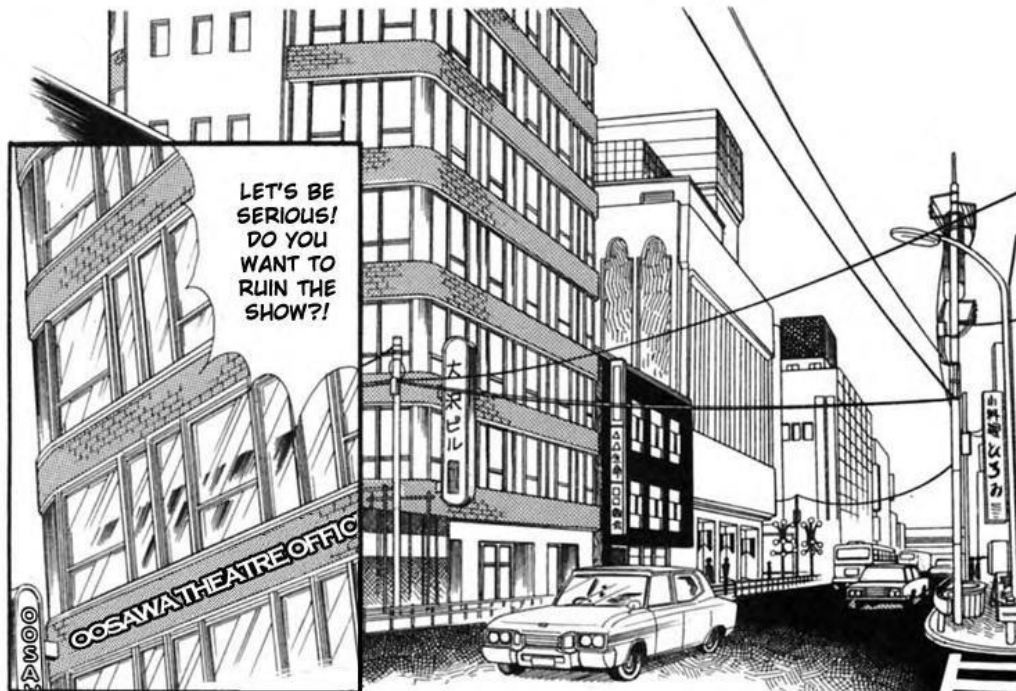


CAN I AGREE
UPON A DATE
FOR YOUR
MEETING?

HAVE YOU
DECIDED?

SO
MASUMI...







IS UNIQUE AND WIDELY KNOWN, IS ALWAYS IN CONTRADICTION WITH EVERYONE AND WAS FORCED BECAUSE OF THIS TO STEP AWAY FROM THE WORLD OF THEATRE FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS.

RYUJIZOU KURONUMA, A DIRECTOR WHOSE TALENT

BUT...

JUN MIMORI IS THE MOST FAMOUS ACTRESS IN OUR PRODUCTION HOUSE!

WATCH YOUR WORDS, KURONUMA-KUN.

DID YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT SHE COULD HANDLE SUCH A CHARACTER?!

WHEN WILL YOU FIND ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS?! DO YOU WANT TO DESTROY EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN?!

PRESIDENT,

YOU CAN SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT BUT I DO NOT INTEND TO HAVE MY NAME CONNECTED TO THAT WHICH IS ALREADY AN ANNOUNCED FAILURE.

JUN MIMORI WILL ATTRACT THE AUDIENCE!

I AM THE ONE WHO KNOWS MORE THAN ANY OTHER HOW TO APPRECIATE AN ACTOR'S VALUE!

DON'T YOU THINK ABOUT THE PROFIT?

IF IT'S GOING TO BE A FIASCO THE PEOPLE WILL NOT COME TO THE PLAY!

TALKING TO KURONUMA-SAN WILL MAKE THE PRESIDENT'S BLOOD PRESSURE RISE.

THAT PERSON IS NOT ABLE TO INTERPRET THE CHARACTER!

NOW THERE.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



HE'S A PERFECTIONIST AND WON'T APPROVE OF ANYTHING UNTIL HE IS TOTALLY SATISFIED WITH IT. EITHER THE ACTORS OR THE STAFF TO DEATH.

HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THE MONEY.

AND TO SEND AWAY AN ACTOR A WEEK BEFORE THE DEBUT.

WITHOUT HIS MISTRUST AND HIS STUBBORNNESS HE COULD HAVE HAD A CAREER.

HE IS ABLE TO FIND A STAR...

KURONUMA-SAN IS AN EXPERT IN BRINGING FORTH UNKNOWN TALENT FROM THE ACTORS THAT EVEN THEY DIDN'T KNOW THEY HAD.

HIS SHOWS ARE KNOWN TO BE VERY DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET.

AND THERE IS STILL GREAT DEMAND FOR THE RETURN OF THE GENIUS RYUJIZOU KURONUMA...

AFTER FIVE YEARS.



THAT CREATED AGITATION!

YES, THAT'S TRUE. A WEEK BEFORE THE OPENING A STAR OF THE CINEMA LIKE RANKO ARASHI WAS FIRED BECAUSE SHE ARGUED WITH DIRECTOR KURONUMA.



THIS PART WOULD BE WASTED ON JUN MIMORI.

BUT, ONLY THIS ONCE, I AGREE WITH HIM!



THAT'S WHY EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE EXTRA CAREFUL AROUND HIM.

THIS IS THE FIRST PROJECT OF HIS AFTER FIVE YEARS OF ABSENCE.

THE ATMOSPHERE IS TENSE EVEN BEFORE THE REHEARSALS BEGIN!



IF YOU REALLY WANT TO DO IT THAT WAY, THEN SO BE IT! BUT RE-MEMBER!

IF THE SHOW IS A FAILURE BECAUSE OF LOW AUDIENCE NUMBERS, I'LL HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE, KURONUMA!

IT'S A DIFFICULT PART!
BECAUSE IT'S NOT ONE OF A PERSON.

NOW THERE ...
THIS ISN'T FOR ANYONE.

SLAM



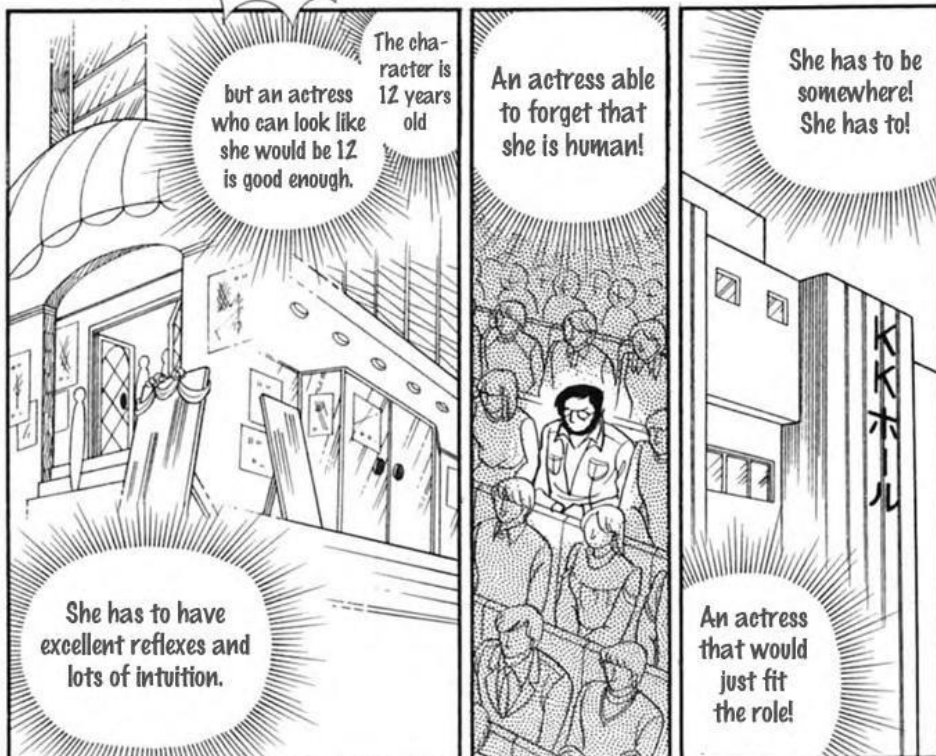
I'LL FIND THE ACTRESS MYSELF!

OF COURSE, I'LL DO AS I WANT!



Somewhere there has to be...

...an actress able to interpret this character...



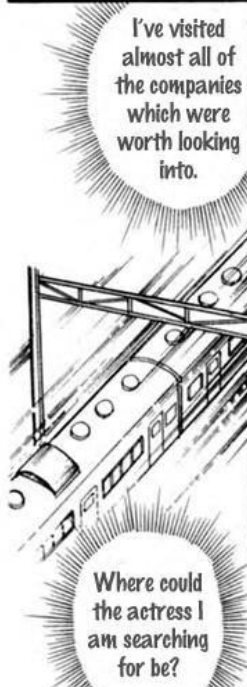
*PARALLEL TO THE WORLD-KNOWN CALENDAR THAT IS STILL IN USE, JAPAN COUNTS THE YEARS FROM THE START WITH EVERY NEW EMPEROR; THE SHOWA ERA IS BETWEEN 1926 1989, SO THE 50TH YEAR WOULD BE 1976.



She has to be somewhere!



She has to be a girl with an expressive sight.



I've visited almost all of the companies which were worth looking into.

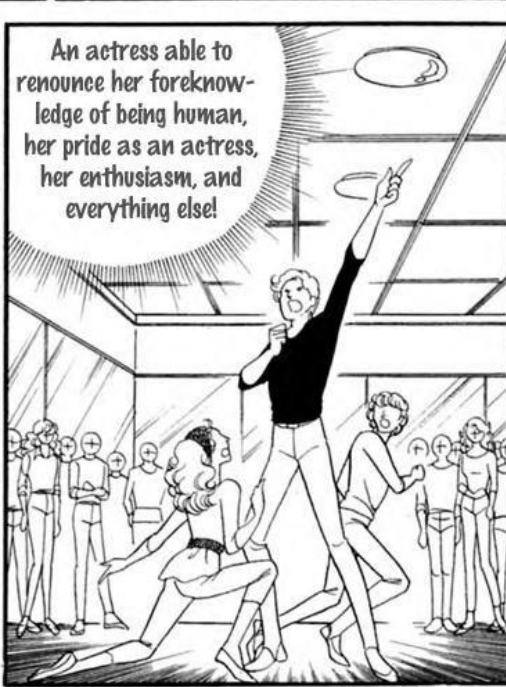
HAVE YOU FOUND A GIRL IN OUR COMPANY WHO MIGHT PLAY THE ROLE?

TELL ME KURO-NUMA-SENSEI...

Where could the actress I am searching for be?

NONE OF THEM HAS THE RIGHT LOOK...

NO.



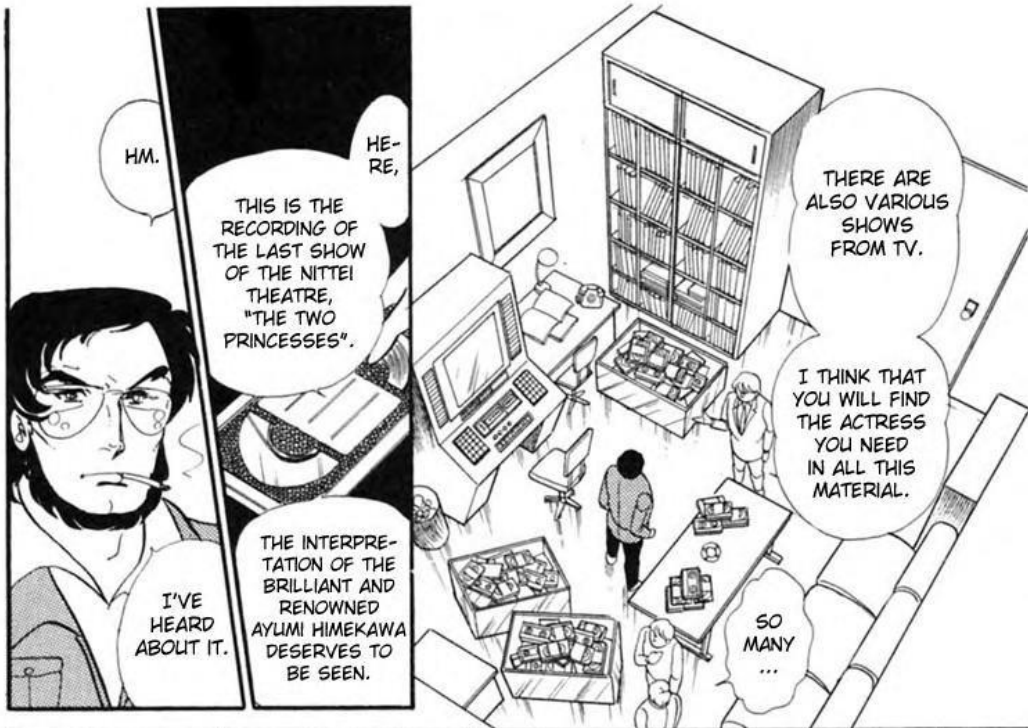
An actress able to renounce her foreknowledge of being human, her pride as an actress, her enthusiasm, and everything else!



I'VE GOTTEN THESE FROM TV AND CINEMA STATIONS AS WELL AS THEATRICAL COMPANIES.

THERE ARE THE ACTRESSES YOU'VE MARKED ON THE LIST.

THESE ARE THE RECORDINGS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PLAYS IN THE LAST FEW YEARS.



HM.

HE-RE,

THIS IS THE RECORDING OF THE LAST SHOW OF THE NITTEI THEATRE, "THE TWO PRINCESSES".

I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BRILLIANT AND RENOWNED AYUMI HIMEKAWA DESERVES TO BE SEEN.

THERE ARE ALSO VARIOUS SHOWS FROM TV.

I THINK THAT YOU WILL FIND THE ACTRESS YOU NEED IN ALL THIS MATERIAL.

SO MANY ...



THEN GO AND BUY ME A THIN BLANKET... ANY WILL DO.

YES!

BRING ME FOOD TWO TIMES A DAY AND GET ME A KETTLE OF COFFEE.



YOU, PHONE MY HOUSE TO TELL THEM THAT I SHALL NOT RETURN THERE FOR A WHILE.

THANK YOU.

Y..YES!



SLAM

3
V-T-R ROOM



THE ISOLATION OF GENERAL KURONUMA HAS BEGUN.

HE'LL STAY THERE FOR ABOUT 15 DAYS TO ARRANGE THE DIRECTING SCRIPT.



HE COMES OUT ONLY TO GO TO THE BATHROOM.

IT'S ALREADY BEEN FOUR DAYS SINCE HE CLOSED HIMSELF IN THERE.



I JUST WONDER WHO WILL SATISFY KURONUMA FOR THIS PART.



ONLY AN ACTRESS OF EXTRAORDINARY TALENT COULD INTERPRET A NON-HUMAN PART, THAT OF A BEAST.

IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT THE ROLE DISTRIBUTION PROCEEDS SLOWLY.



HE HAD A BLANKET BOUGHT AND SLEEPS ON THE COUCH.

IN-CRED-IBLE!



MY
SISTER
ORIGELD!

AAH! MUCH
MALICE WILL
SHE MEET.



TRUST,
I DO
NOT...

...NOR
DO I
LOVE.

SLIDE



BARON
...

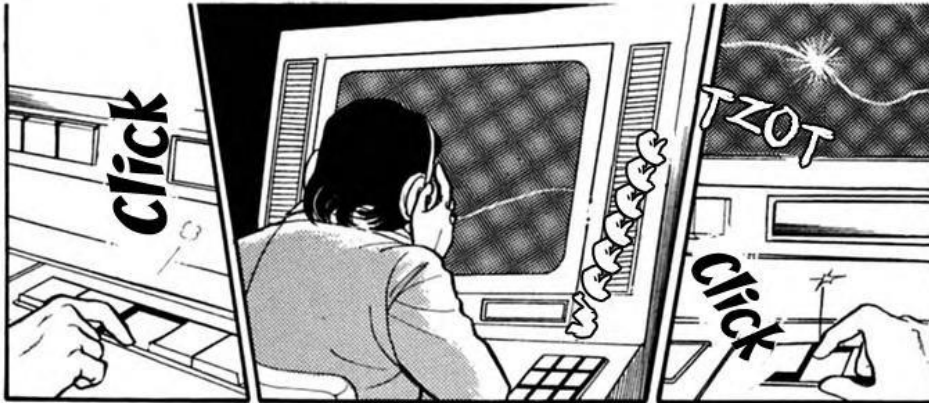
LIKE A
BABE ART
THOU!

TO SPEND
THINE TRUST
SO FREELY!



IS THERE
OUGHT I
MAY DO?

VIENA!





Flipping

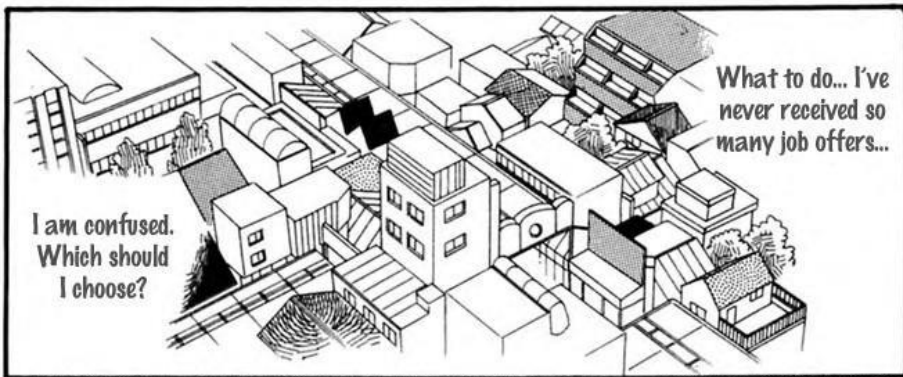




SHE IS THE ONE ABLE TO PLAY THE CHARACTER...

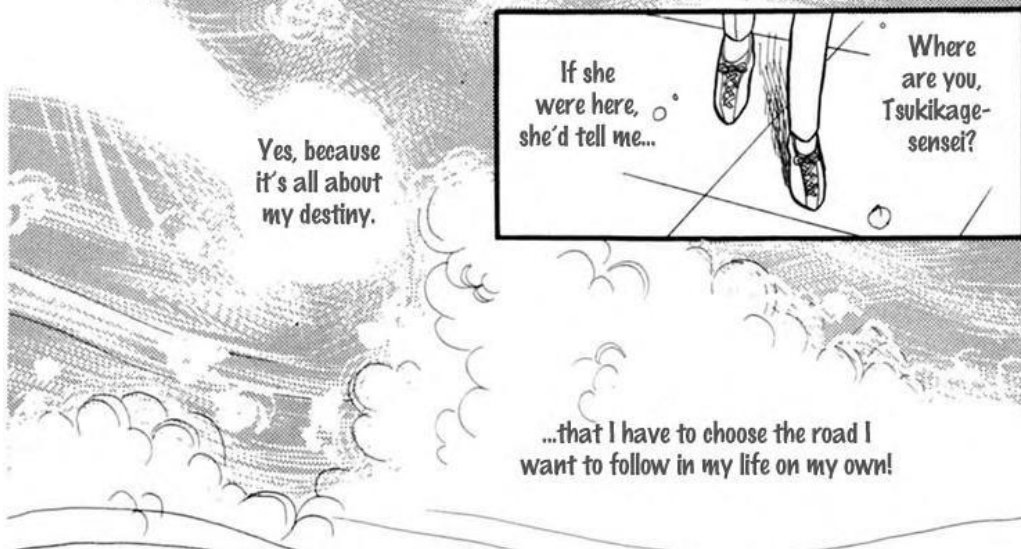
I'VE FOUND HER!

KURO-
NUMA-
SEN-
SEI...



I am confused.
Which should I choose?

What to do... I've never received so many job offers...



Yes, because it's all about my destiny.

If she were here, she'd tell me...

Where are you, Tsukikage-sensei?

...that I have to choose the road I want to follow in my life on my own!