

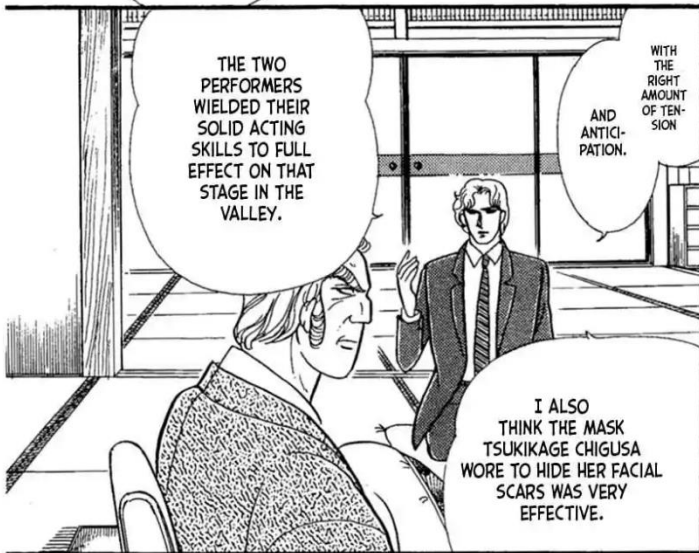


ADD THE MIST  
AND THE WIND  
...

THE LIGHTING CAME FROM THE DUSK SKY  
AND THE TORCHES THAT ILLUMINATED THE NIGHT.

THE WIND, THE WATER, AND THE RUSTLING TREES...  
...PROVIDED THE SOUND EFFECTS.

...AND YOU HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE EFFECTS FOR THE PLAY.



THE TWO PERFORMERS WIELDED THEIR SOLID ACTING SKILLS TO FULL EFFECT ON THAT STAGE IN THE VALLEY.

WITH THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF TENSION AND ANTICIPATION.

I ALSO THINK THE MASK TSUKIKAGE CHIGUSA WORE TO HIDE HER FACIAL SCARS WAS VERY EFFECTIVE.



ALL THIS WITH JUST TWO MAIN ACTORS.

IT WAS A GOOD, WELL-BALANCED PLAY.



I WOULD SAY THAT THIS WAS THE ULTIMATE PLAY EXPERIENCE.

AND SHARED THE STORY WITH THE ACTORS ON THE STAGE ...

IT WAS LIKE THE AUDIENCE GOT A FIRSTHAND GLIMPSE OF HISTORY.

AND MORE THAN ANYTHING, IT WAS WONDERFUL HOW THE STAGE AND THE AUDIENCE BECAME ONE SO THAT WE COULD EXPERIENCE THE STORY OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS FIRSTHAND.

I DOUBT WE'LL EVER SEE A PERFORMANCE LIKE IT AGAIN.



I'D EVEN CALL IT THE DEFINITIVE VERSION OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS.

GIVEN ALL THESE POINTS, IT WAS PERFECT.

THAT'S WHAT I BELIEVE, FATHER.

SURPASSING IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR DAITO NO MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY WE SPENT...



THERE WILL NEVER BE A CRIMSON GODDESS GREATER THAN THE ONE WE SAW.

YOU'RE EXACTLY RIGHT.

I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK.

HMM ...



IT IS WITH DAITO THAT THE NEW CRIMSON GODDESS WILL BE RESURRECTED.

THE SAME FATE AWAITS THE CRIMSON GODDESS.

BUT JUST AS A PHOENIX RISES FROM THE ASHES...

...TO SOAR THE SKIES...



WHEN THAT HAPPENS, THE PLAY WE SAW YESTERDAY WILL BECOME MERE LEGEND.

...SO THAT THE NEW CRIMSON GODDESS SURPASSES EVEN THE OLD.

AND SOMEDAY, I WANT TO NURTURE IT TO BRILLIANCE,



YES...

YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

MAKE SURE DAITO GETS THE CRIMSON GODDESS. DO WHATEVER IT TAKES, MASUMI!

YES...

FATHER...

I KNOW, FATHER...

DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THAT'S YOUR MISSION!



SHE'S DIFFERENT FROM GIRLS WHO WERE BLESSED WITH JUST LUCK AND TALENT.

I'VE KNOWN AYUMI SINCE SHE WAS YOUNG.

ONE OF THE TWO WILL BE CHOSEN AS THE NEXT CRIMSON GODDESS.

THIS IS THE DECISION THAT WILL SIGNAL VICTORY OR DEFEAT FOR DAITO.

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT THE TWO CANDIDATES.

AYUMI OR MAYA...

HER STRONG SENSE OF SELF SHINES IN EVERYTHING SHE DOES!

SHE'LL WORK HERSELF TO THE BONE WITHOUT REST FOR THE SAKE OF HER GOALS.

THE STRENGTH OF HER WILL IS ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL FROM HER PEERS.

NOT MANY KNOW THIS, BUT SHE'S AN INCREDIBLY HARD WORKER...



FATHER !?

THEN THERE'S THE OTHER GIRL...

KITAJIMA MAYA...



YES ...  
I KNOW THAT WELL,

FATHER.

I WON'T GO AS FAR AS SAYING SHE'S GOOD FOR NOTHING ELSE, BUT HER DESIRES DON'T EXTEND BEYOND THE STAGE.

SHE'D PUT HER LIFE ON THE LINE FOR A CHALLENGE.

IF ANYTHING AT ALL DEFINED HER, IT WOULD BE HER PASSION FOR ACTING.

MASUMI, THAT GIRL TERRIFIES ME...

NOW SHE IS AN INTERESTING ONE.  
I KNOW THAT EVEN YOU HAVE A HARD TIME WITH HER.

SHE'S COLORLESS AND TRANSPARENT...

...AND LACKS ANY REAL SENSE OF SELF.



HOW ON EARTH DOES SHE DO IT, MASUMI ?  
SHE SHINES SO MUCH ON STAGE THAT YOU ALL BUT FORGET HOW SHE NORMALLY IS.

...NOR IS SHE ESPECIALLY BEAUTIFUL, BUT STRANGELY, THERE'S SOMETHING THAT DRAWS PEOPLE TO HER.  
NOTHING ABOUT HER STANDS OUT...



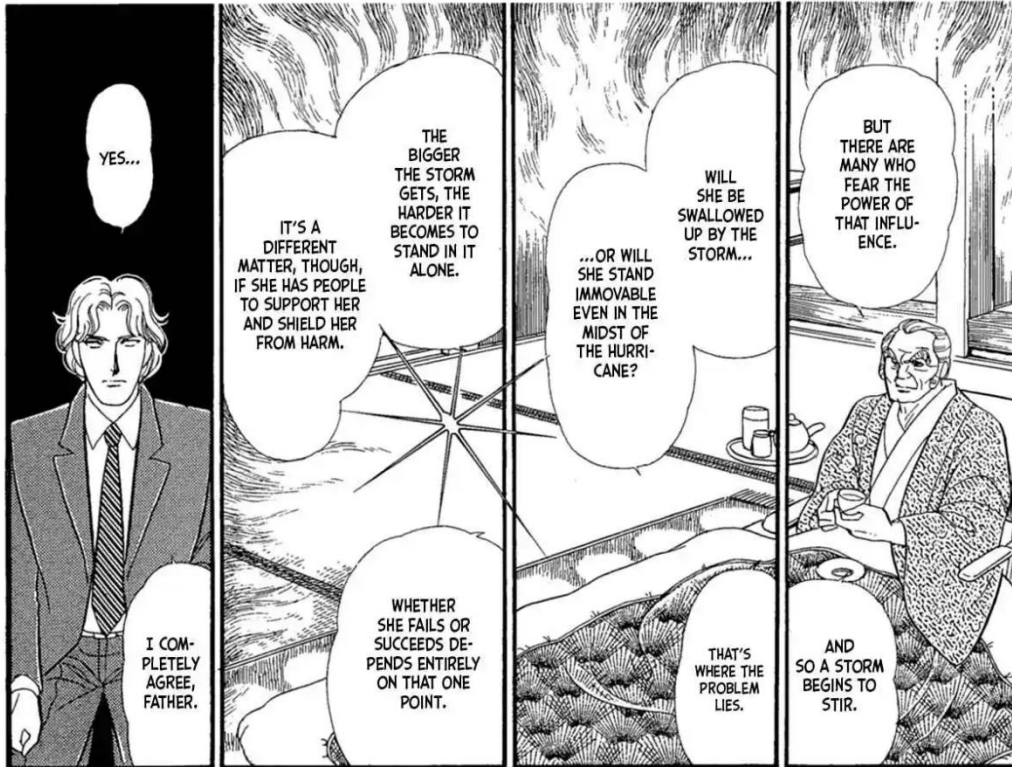
SHE'LL BECOME A PEERLESS ACTRESS AT THE TOP OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY BEFORE LONG.

...I CAN EASILY IMAGINE HOW AYUMI'S FUTURE WILL TURN OUT.  
BY LOOKING AT THEIR QUALITIES AS ACTRESSES...

.....

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT EITHER MYSELF, FATHER.











FATHER!

OF COURSE, IF SHE IS DESTROYED, THEN IT MEANS SHE WASN'T CAPABLE OF MUCH TO BEGIN WITH...

DON'T FORGET YOUR OBJECTIVE.

LISTEN, MASUMI.

I AM THE ONE WHO RAISED YOU.

...NO MATTER HOW MUCH OF A GENIUS SHE MAY BE.

NEEDLESS SYMPATHIES WILL ONLY GET IN THE WAY.

I'LL FORGIVE YOUR IMPERTINENCE JUST THIS ONCE.

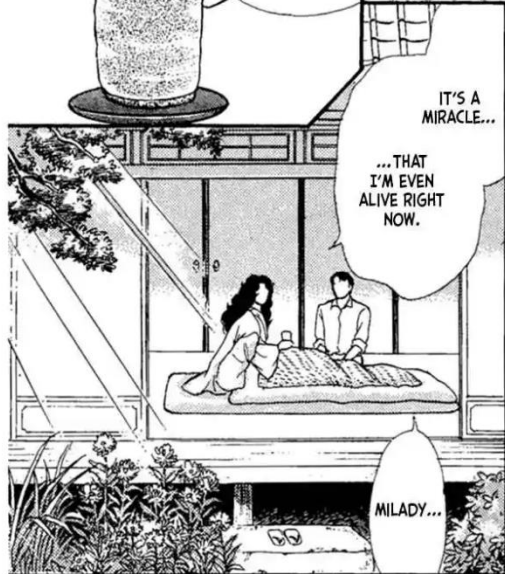
IF YOU CAN'T DO IT, THEN I WILL!

I'LL CRUSH HER WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND, NOW!?



IT'S TIME! I BROUGHT YOUR MEDICINE, MILADY.



IT'S A MIRACLE...  
...THAT I'M EVEN ALIVE RIGHT NOW.

MILADY...



THANK YOU, GENZO.



I WOULD HAVE NEVER REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND DIED JUST LIKE THAT.

IF I HADN'T HEARD HIS VOICE BACK THEN...

YOU KNOW, GENZO...

ICHIREN SAVED ME AGAIN THIS TIME.





IT'S ALL TOO CLEAR TO ME...  
...THOUGH I SUPPOSE NO ONE ELSE WOULD UNDERSTAND,

EVEN IF HE'S LOST HIS BODY, HIS SOUL LIVES ON WITH ME.

GENZO, ICHIREN IS STILL ALIVE, YOU KNOW.

...THAT HIS SOUL IS ALIVE.

HE AND I HAVE BECOME ONE.



GENZO, THAT IS WHAT CONNECTS ME AND ICHIREN.

A SINGLE SOUL SPLIT IN TWO...

HE SPEAKS TO ME IN MY HEART, PROTECTS ME... AND GUIDES ME THROUGH THE TRIALS I FACE.



MILADY.

...THE CRIMSON GODDESS ALONE WILL STAND UPON THE STAGE.

THE CRIMSON GODDESS IS THE PROOF THAT ICHIREN AND I ONCE LIVED...

EVEN AFTER WE'RE NO LONGER OF THIS WORLD...



LIFE IS A CYCLE OF MEETINGS AND FAREWELLS.

I'M USED TO IT...  
BY NOW.



THE TSUKIKAGE AND UNICORN TROUPES WILL ALSO BE LEAVING SOON...

IT'S GOING TO GET LONELY AROUND HERE.

TRUE...



AYUMI WILL BE LEAVING FOR TOKYO TOMORROW WITH AKAME AND THE OTHERS.

SHE'S IN HER ROOM PACKING FOR THE TRIP.

MAYA WAS HELPING IN THE KITCHEN EARLIER.  
SHE'S RETURNING TO TOKYO THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.



WHAT ARE THE GIRLS UP TO?

AH...  
RIGHT.



DO YOU REALLY THINK SO?  
GENZO, YOU...



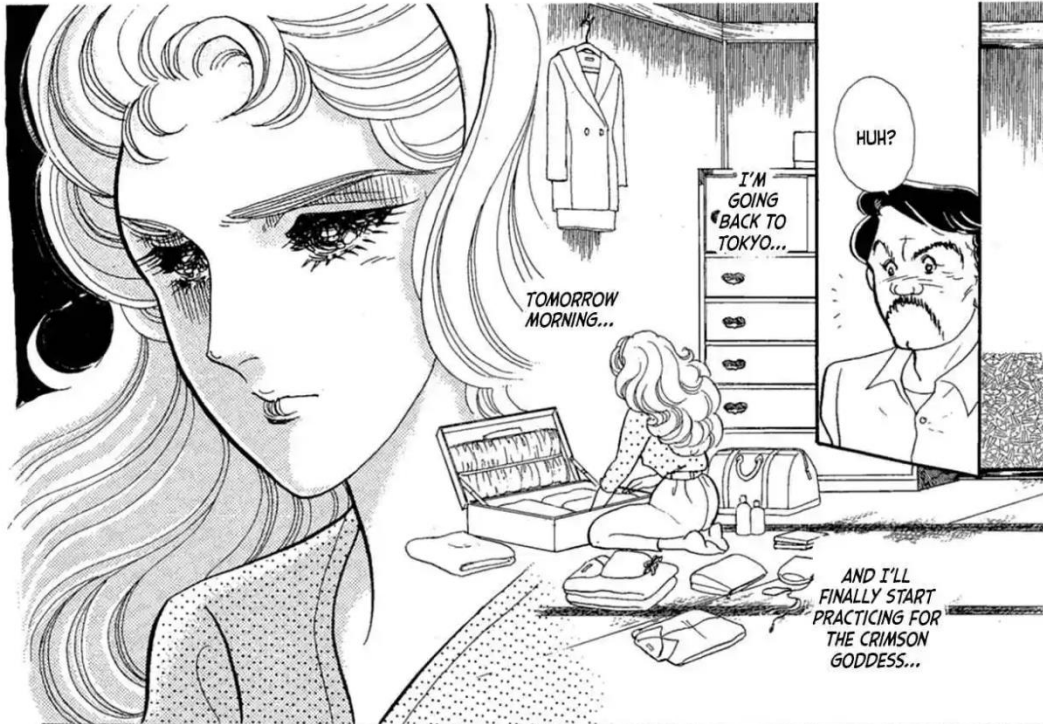
MILADY...



I DON'T BELIEVE THEY'VE FULLY GRASPED THE CRIMSON GODDESS

WILL IT BE ALRIGHT, MA'AM?  
LETTING THEM GO BACK LIKE THIS...

GENZO!



TOMORROW MORNING...

I'M GOING BACK TO TOKYO...

HUH?

AND I'LL FINALLY START PRACTICING FOR THE CRIMSON GODDESS...



THE VALLEY OF THE GODDESS THAT GOVERNS HEAVEN AND EARTH...

THE HEART OF THE GODDESS...

WHAT DID I ACTUALLY LEARN IN THE VALLEY OF THE PLUM TREES?

WILL I BE ABLE TO PORTRAY THEM PROPERLY IF I GO BACK TO TOKYO LIKE THIS?



...WHEN I HAVEN'T EVEN FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE CRIMSON GODDESS.

IS IT REALLY A GOOD IDEA FOR ME TO GO BACK NOW...?



...NOT TO MAYA, MY RIVAL!

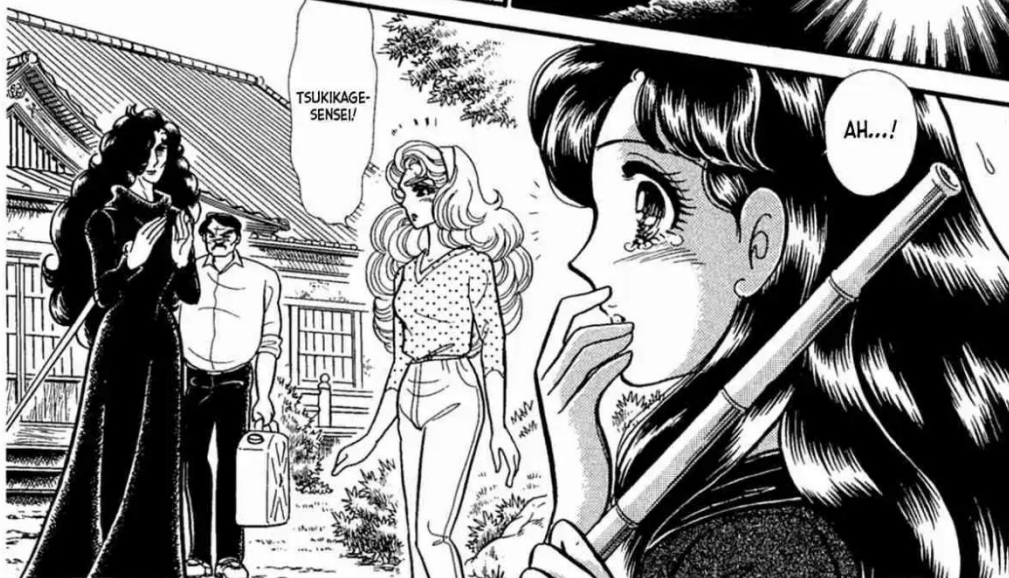
I STILL FEEL SO ANXIOUS!

I DON'T WANT TO LOSE... NOT TO HER.











YOU SAID THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO SHOW US...

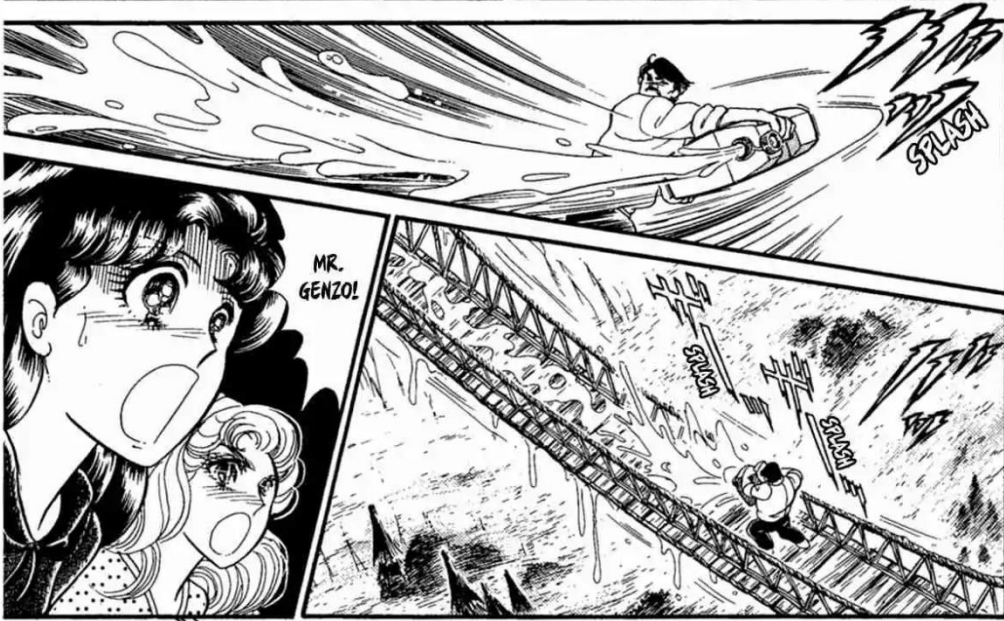
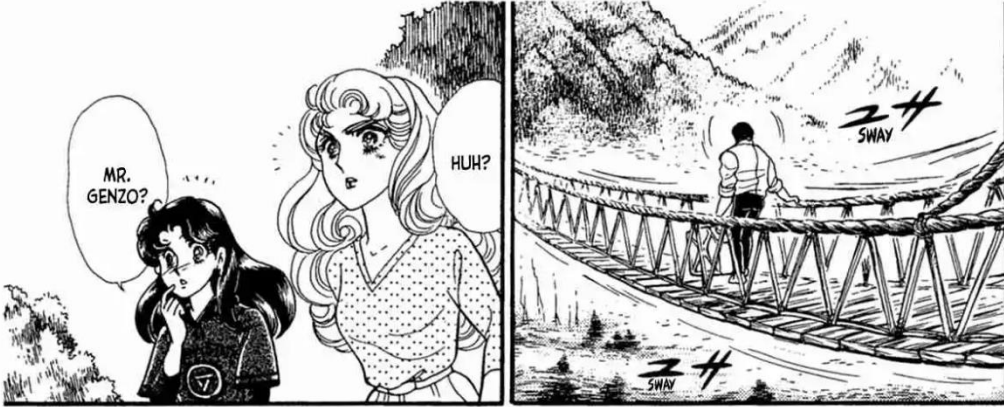
WHAT'S GOING ON, TSUKIKAGE-SENSEI?

THIS IS THE BRIDGE THAT LEADS TO THE VALLEY OF THE PLUM TREES.

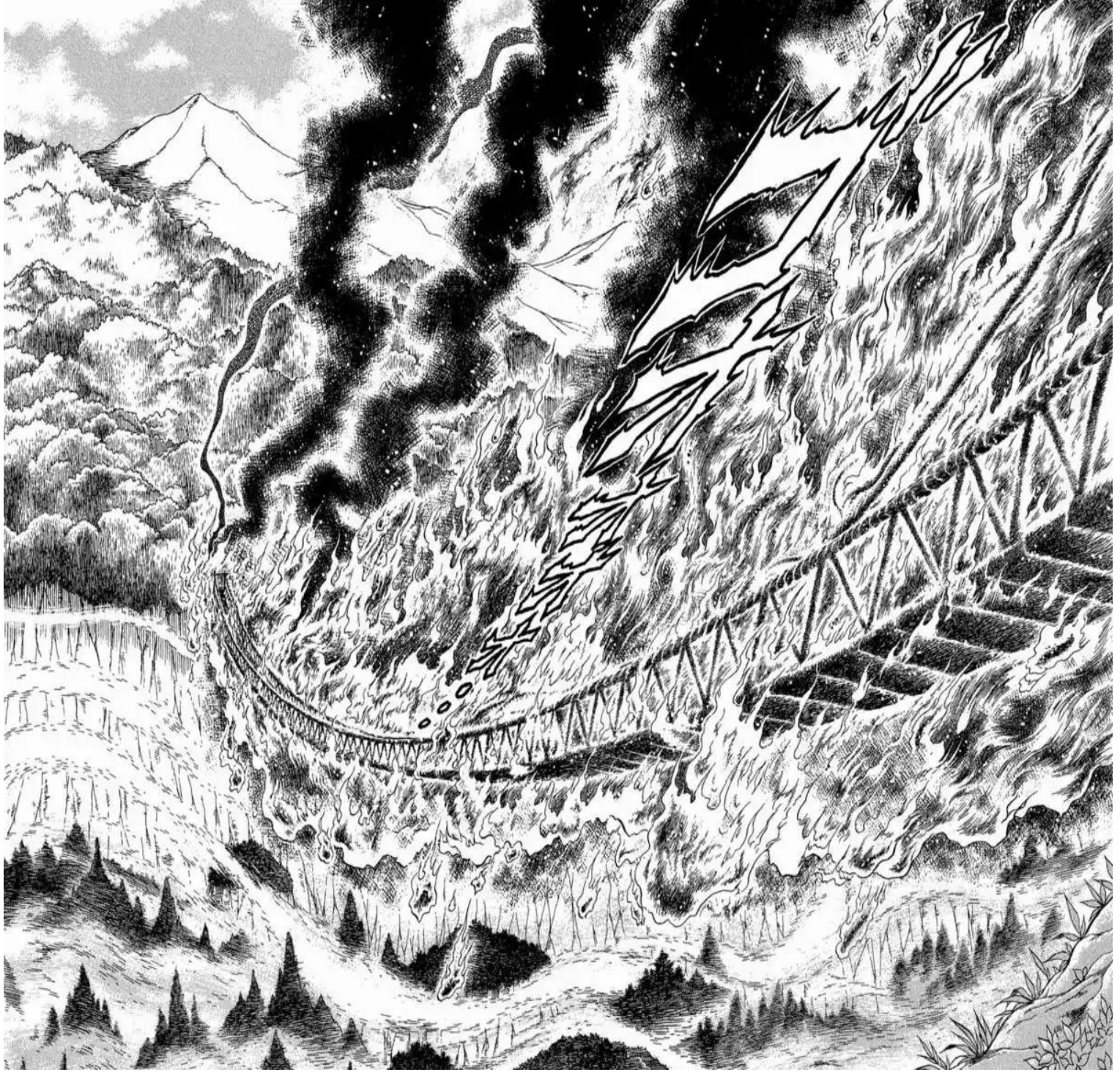


DO IT, GENZO!

O-O-KAY...









LISTEN WELL, YOU TWO!

WHY WOULD SHE...

TSUKI KAGE-SENSEI ...

THIS IS NOT THE LAND WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE THOUSAND-YEAR PLUM TREE IS SAID TO LIVE!

IT DOES NOT EXIST ANYWHERE EXCEPT YOUR HEART!

THAT WAS AN ILLUSION!

THERE IS A MYSTICAL VALLEY OF THE PLUM TREES THAT EXISTS ONLY IN YOUR HEART!

THAT IS WHERE THE CRIMSON GODDESS LIVES!

YOUR VERY OWN CRIMSON GODDESS!

ROAR

ROAR

ROAR

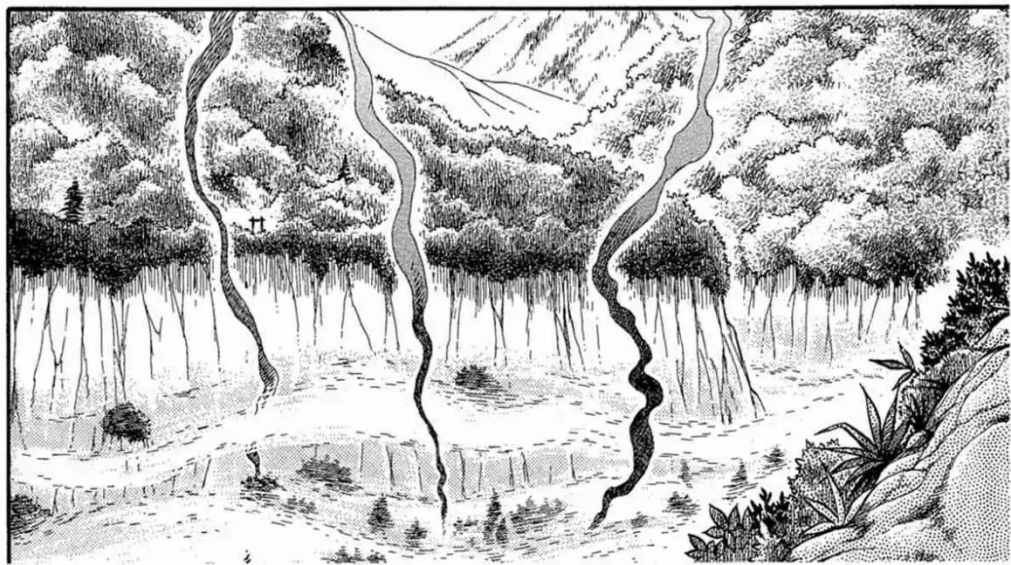


YOUR  
TRAINING IN THE  
VALLEY OF THE  
PLUM TREES IS  
OVER!

ENGRAVE THIS  
INTO YOUR  
HEARTS!

TSUKIKAGE-  
SENSEI...

THE  
CRIMSON  
GODDESS IS AL-  
READY INSIDE OF  
YOU!





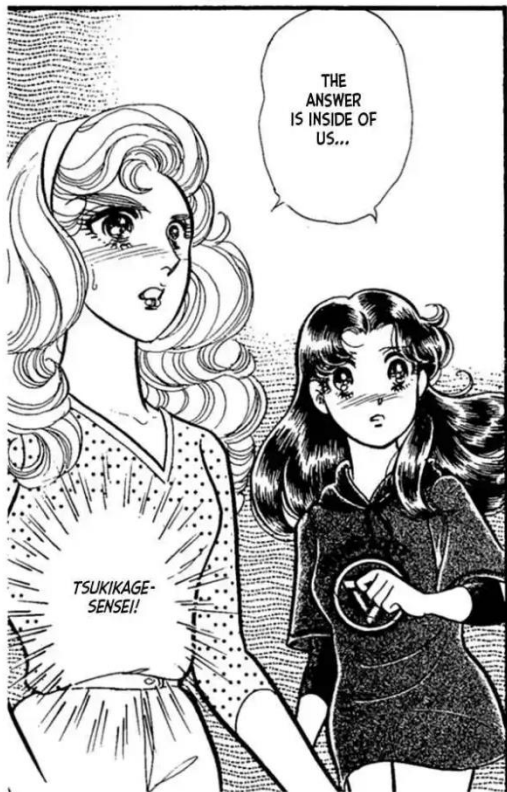


ILLUSIONS  
CAN BE MADE REAL  
THROUGH CONFIDENT  
ACTING AND THE  
POWER OF IMAGI-  
NATION...

ON THE  
STAGE!

YOUR JOB  
WILL BE TO CREATE  
THE "BRIDGE" THAT  
WILL GUIDE PEOPLE  
TO THE ILLUSIONARY  
VALLEY OF THE PLUM  
TREES.

NOW NO  
ONE WILL  
BE ABLE TO  
CROSS OVER TO  
THE ILLUSIONARY  
VALLEY OF  
THE PLUM  
TREES.



THE  
ANSWER  
IS INSIDE OF  
US...

TSUKIKAGE-  
SENSEI!



YOU WILL  
NEVER BE  
ABLE TO  
RETURN  
HERE.

THE  
ANSWERS YOU  
SEEK WILL NOT BE  
FOUND IN THIS  
VALLEY.

IT IS  
INSIDE  
YOUR-  
SELVES.



NO MATTER HOW MUCH I PRACTICED, I WASN'T CONFIDENT IF MY CRIMSON GODDESS WAS GOOD ENOUGH.

THERE WAS A TIME THAT I LOST MY WAY WITH ACTING....  
THERE WAS A TIME THAT I WAS UNEASY.

THERE WERE MANY TIMES THAT I WORRIED.



THAT'S RIGHT.

IF I HAD TO PICK A WORD FOR IT, IT IS SOMETHING YOU "AWAKEN TO".

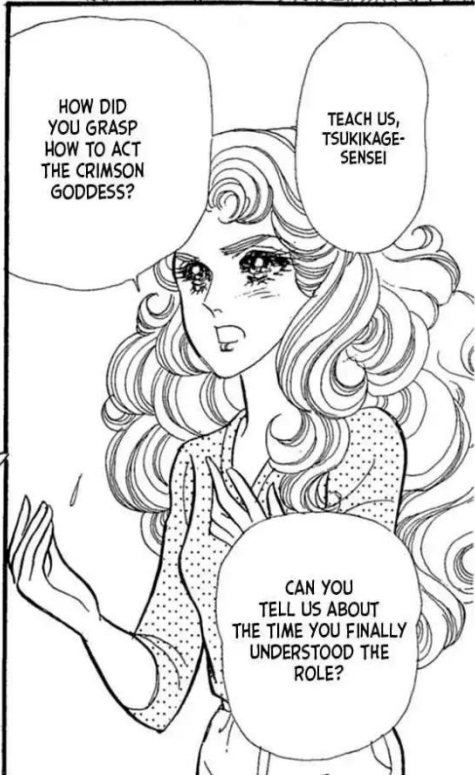


HUH?



ACTING...

...IS NOT SOMETHING YOU GRASP, ...OR OBTAIN.



HOW DID YOU GRASP HOW TO ACT THE CRIMSON GODDESS?

TEACH US, TSUKIKAGE-SENSEI

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE TIME YOU FINALLY UNDERSTOOD THE ROLE?



ONE WITH ALL CREATION ...?

THAT I WAS ONE WITH ALL CREATION...

THAT'S WHEN I "AWAKENED" TO THE FACT...



IT HIT ME LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING.

IT WAS MY FIRST TIME ON STAGE...

AS IF A "LIGHT" HAD RUN THROUGH MY BODY.



AWAKENED TO...?



WE ARE ALL ONE.

THE MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS AND FORESTS AND SEAS...  
ALONG WITH ALL OF THE CREATURES THAT LIVE IN THEM.

THE SUN, THE MOON, AND THE STARS TOO.

ALL THE THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE.

I AM ONE WITH THEM.



THE WIND AND I ARE ONE...

THE FIRE AND I ARE ONE.

THE WATER AND I ARE ONE.

THE EARTH AND I ARE ONE.



ALL THINGS  
ARE WITHIN THE  
UNIVERSE OF  
LIFE...

...BORN  
BEFORE THE  
GREAT WILL.

BIRTH  
AND DEATH  
WERE NO MORE  
THAN CHANGES IN  
"LIFE".

THEY  
ARE ETER-  
NAL.

THE  
"INDIVIDU-  
AL" IS THE  
"WHOLE."

AND BY  
THE SAME TOKEN,  
"WHOLE" IS THE  
"INDIVIDUAL".

ALL  
LIFE IS  
EQUAL...



IT WAS  
A MOMENT  
OF MIRA-  
CLES...

...AND A  
MOMENT OF  
ETERNITY.

MY REALI-  
ZATION  
THAT "LIFE"  
DWELLED  
IN ALL  
THINGS...

THROUGH  
THE COURSE  
OF ETER-  
NITY.





"LIGHT!?"

BUT I OBTAINED ON STAGE WASN'T ACTING TECHNIQUES.

IT WAS "LIGHT".

BUT I WAS NOT ABLE TO SETTLE ON THAT "TRUTH" FOR LONG.

HUMAN SOCIETY IS TOO FAR FROM THE TRUTH. AND GIVES RISE TO GREED, BATTLE, AND HATRED.



AND EARTH, MY LOVE...

WATER, MY LIFE ...

FIRE, MY POWER ...

THE WIND IS MY HEART ...



THEN YOU WILL HAVE CREATED THE CRIMSON GODDESS INSIDE OF YOU.



WHEN YOU ARE ABLE TO SAY THOSE LINES WITH TRUE CONVICTION.



ACCOMPLISH IT, YOU TWO.

THE POWER OF YOUR IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY...

...SHOULD LEAD YOU TO THE PATH OF A NEW CRIMSON GODDESS.

I EAGERLY AWAIT THE THE DAY I SEE THE GODDESSES YOU CREATE.