





"THE TREE
AND THE
SPIRIT."

GO ON, MAYA!
SAY THE LINES OF
THE CRIMSON
GODDESS!

"THE SPIRIT
OF THE EARTH'S
GODS GROWS
AND SHOWS
ITSELF ON THE
SURFACE."

SAY THEM!

THE TREE...
AND THE
SPIRIT...

THE SPIRIT
OF THE EARTH'S
GODS GROWS AND
SHOWS ITSELF ON
THE SURFACE...

EWAD



HERE...
IN THIS HOLY
GROUND,

WHERE GODS
THRIVE...

I HAVE THE
SHAPE OF A
PLUM TREE!

brrr

FWISH





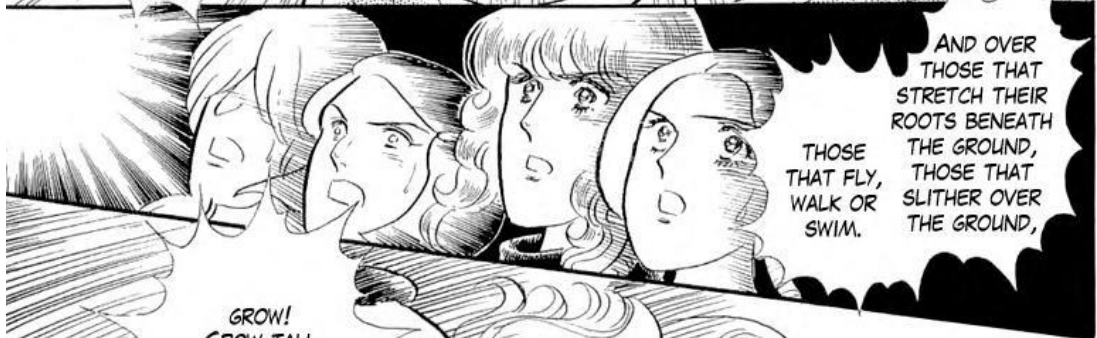
WHOO

MY
STRENGTH
SPIRALS UP
TOWARDS THE
HEAVENS,

WATCHING
OVER THE
CREATURES
OF THE
EARTH...

SH

AND OF
THE WATER!



AND OVER
THOSE THAT
STRETCH THEIR
ROOTS BENEATH
THE GROUND,
THOSE THAT
SLITHER OVER
THE GROUND,
THOSE
THAT FLY,
WALK OR
SWIM.

GROW!
GROW TALL
AND PROUD!

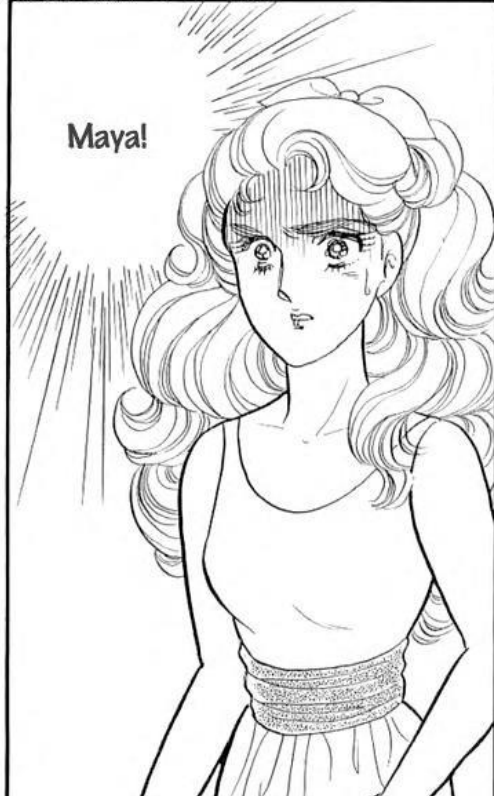
FASTER!
SPREAD OUT
ACROSS THE
LAND! SPREAD
YOUR SEEDS
WITH MY
BLESSING!





BLOOM,
YOU CRIMSON
FLOWERS OF
ETERNAL LIFE!









The Crimson Goddess...?



What have I been doing?
What have I been doing until now?



All my own technique and experience is totally useless!

I can't believe it...

I just can't believe she's capable of so much!

tremble

tremble



Just half of her talent would be enough for me!

Why am I not in her place?

She makes me realize how narrow my potential is!

I am not a genius!

But in truth, my "talent" is the product of continuous hard work!

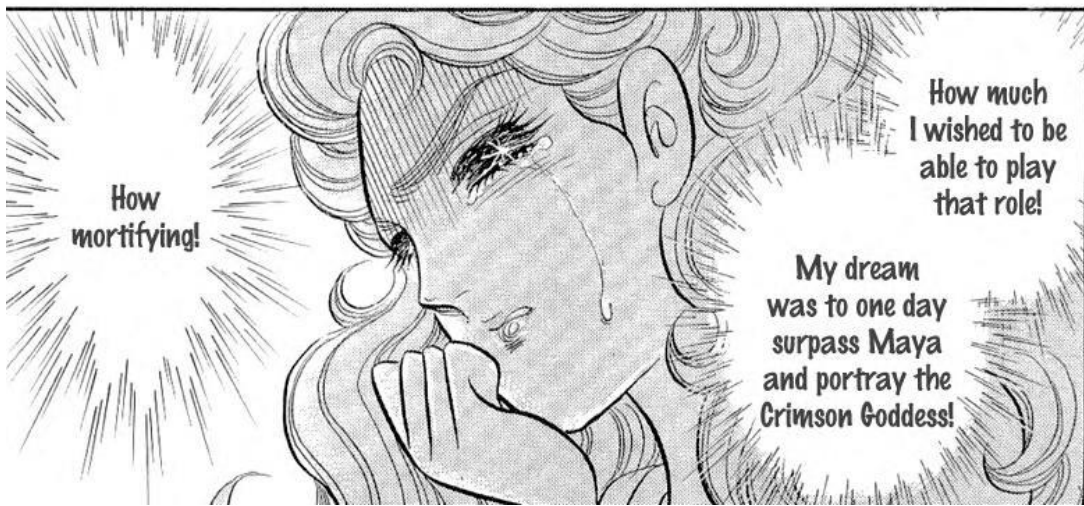
They call me a prodigy...

When I look at Maya I understand this!

Whatever I do is still not enough!

Just like her!

If I could portray the Crimson Goddess like her...



How mortifying!

How much I wished to be able to play that role!

My dream was to one day surpass Maya and portray the Crimson Goddess!



Whatever I do,
I can't compete
against her!

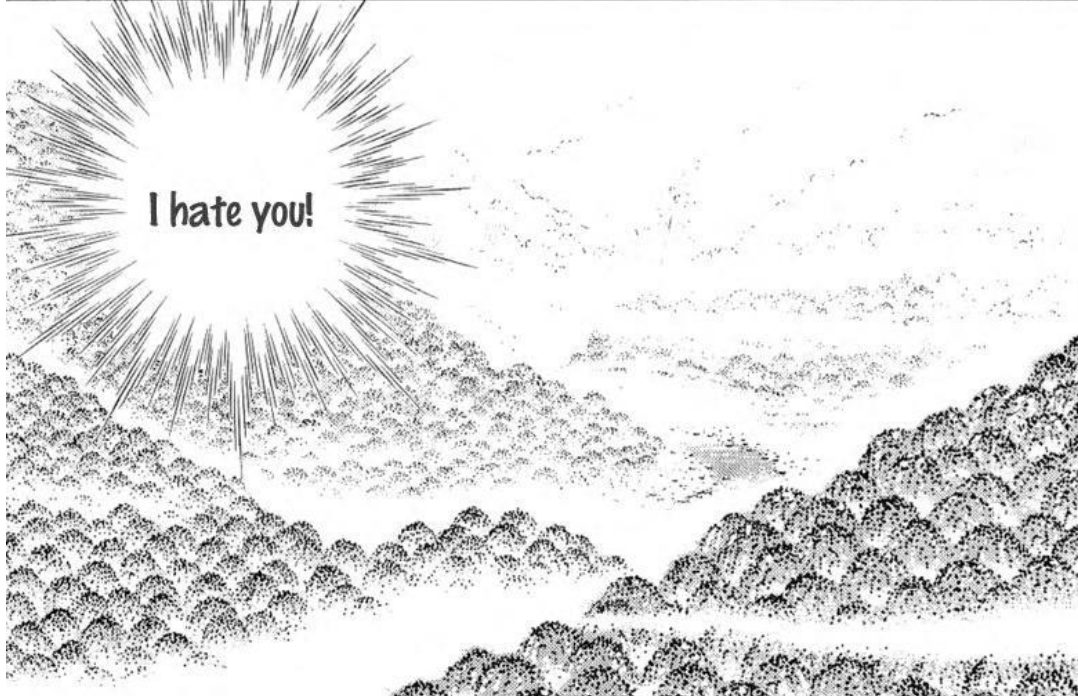
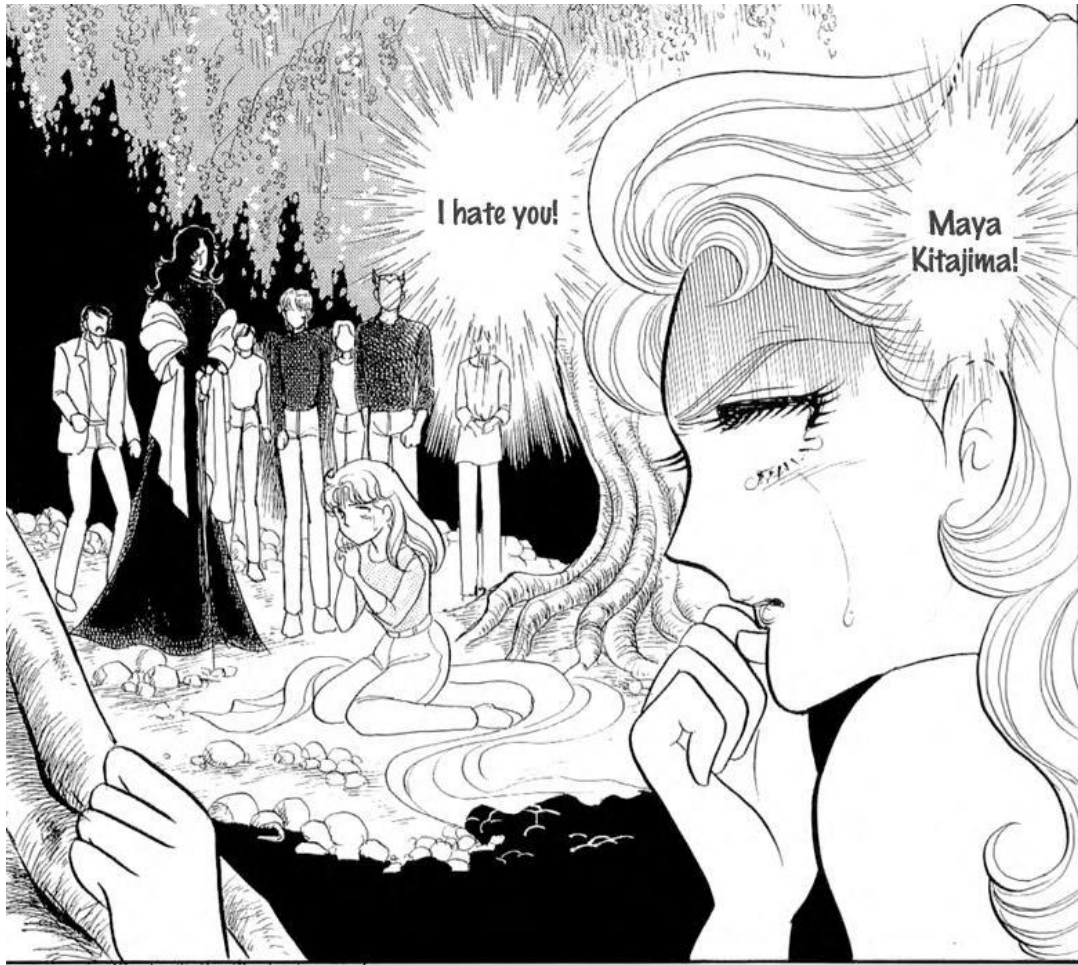
How awful!

How
humiliating!

*The Crimson
Goddess is hers!*

How can my
interpretation
possibly compare
with hers?

How can I
perform?





Once more in
the Valley of
the Plum Trees!

I felt like
I wasn't
myself
anymore...

What could
that have been?
It was an
extraordinary
sensation...

The Crimson
Goddess...

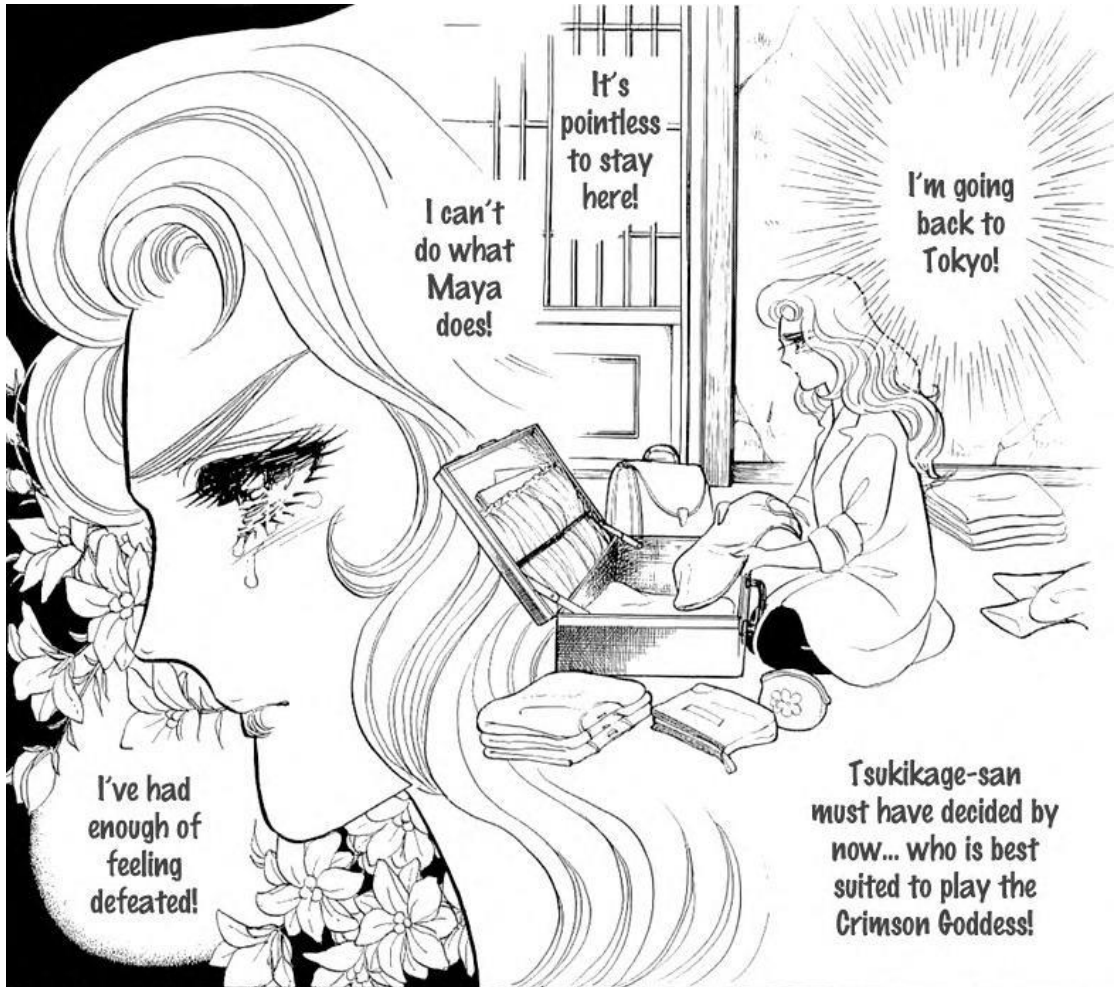


The Crimson
Goddess...

I want to
interpret her!
I want to
interpret her
again in the
Valley of the
Plum Trees!

From the
depths of my
being, a strong
overwhelming
power...





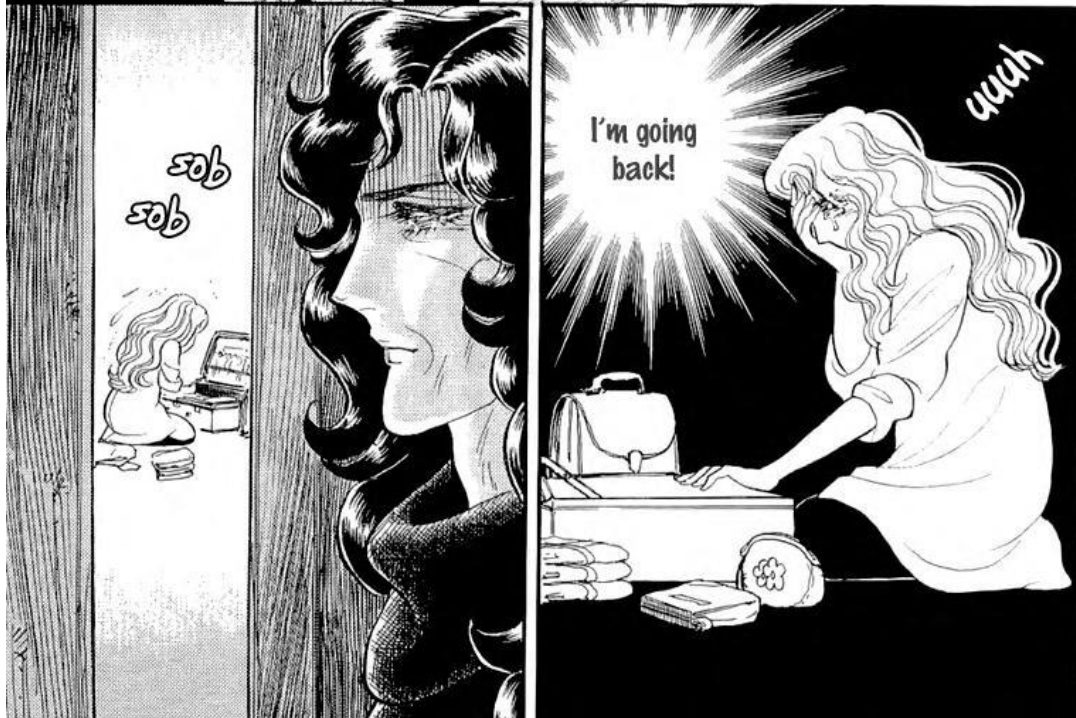
I can't do what Maya does!

It's pointless to stay here!

I'm going back to Tokyo!

I've had enough of feeling defeated!

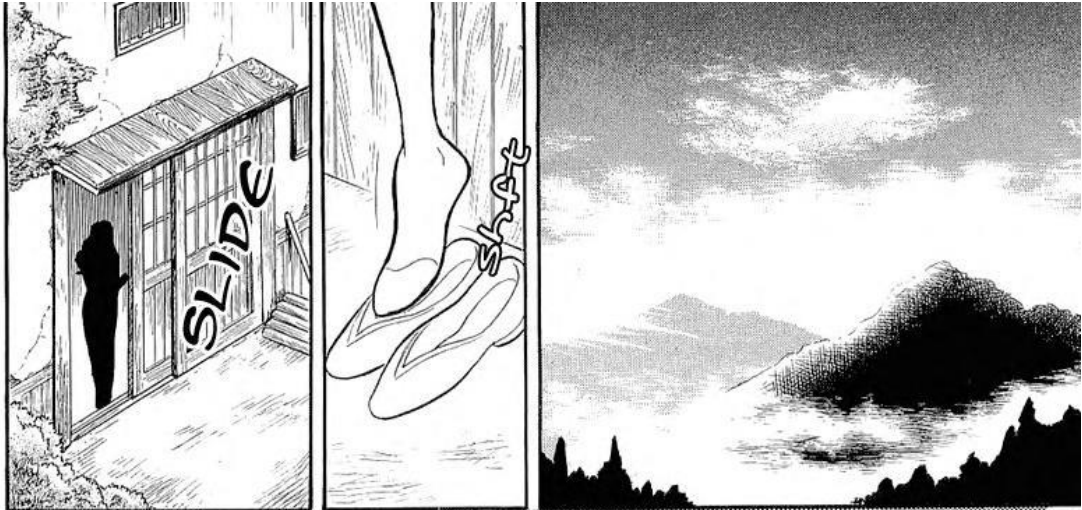
Tsukikage-san must have decided by now... who is best suited to play the Crimson Goddess!



sob
sob

I'm going back!

ouch



Forgive me,
Tsukikage-san,
for leaving without
even saying goodbye.
It must seem
ungrateful of me...

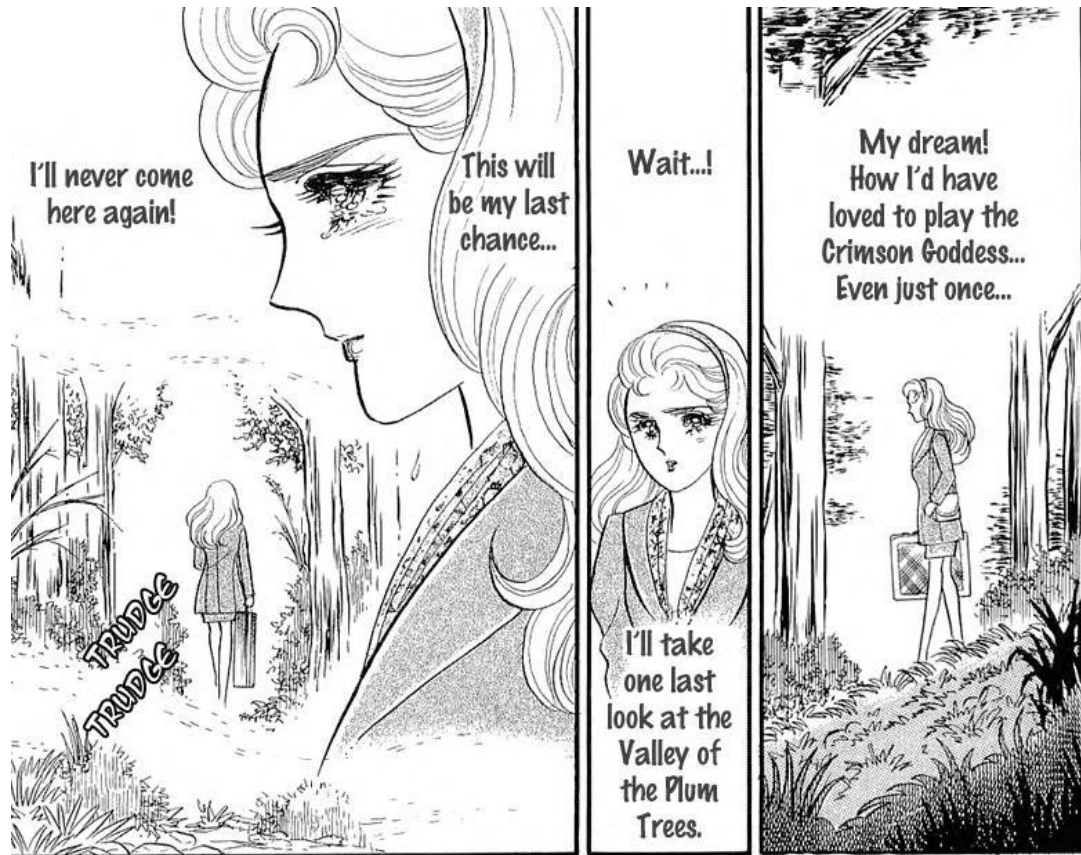


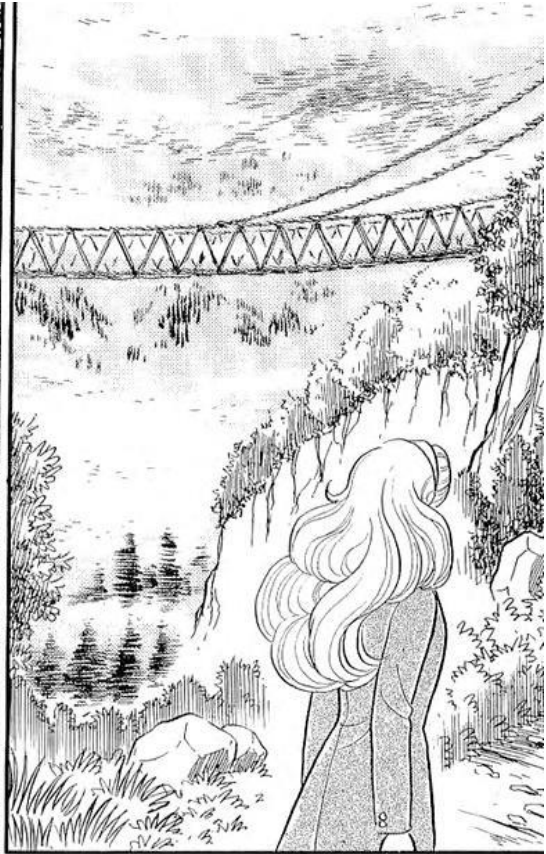
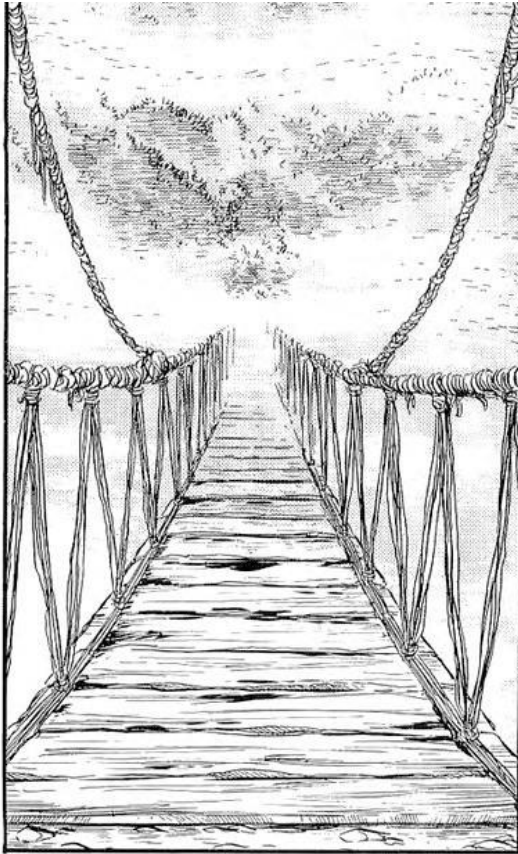
I'll send
a letter
from Tokyo.
Farewell...

But I can't
stand feeling so
miserable!



I never
would've
thought I'd
be forced to
give up my
dearest
dream like
this...







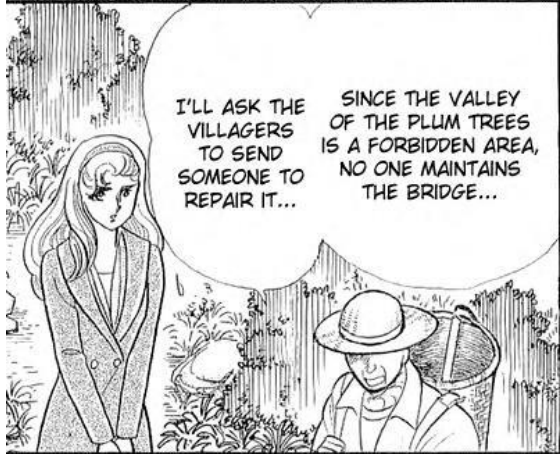
REALLY?
BUT I JUST
CROSSED IT
YESTERDAY.

I WANTED TO
GO ACROSS TO
GATHER SOME
PLANTS...
AND I
ALMOST FELL.



THE BOARDS
ARE ROTTED
HALFWAY
THROUGH!

IF YOU
CROSS IT,
YOU'LL END
UP AT THE
BOTTOM OF
THE VALLEY!



I'LL ASK THE
VILLAGERS
TO SEND
SOMEONE TO
REPAIR IT...

SINCE THE VALLEY
OF THE PLUM TREES
IS A FORBIDDEN AREA,
NO ONE MAINTAINS
THE BRIDGE...



THE BOARDS
ARE OLD,

BUT YOU
CAN STILL
CROSS IT
IF YOU'RE
CAREFUL.



THANK
YOU, SIR.

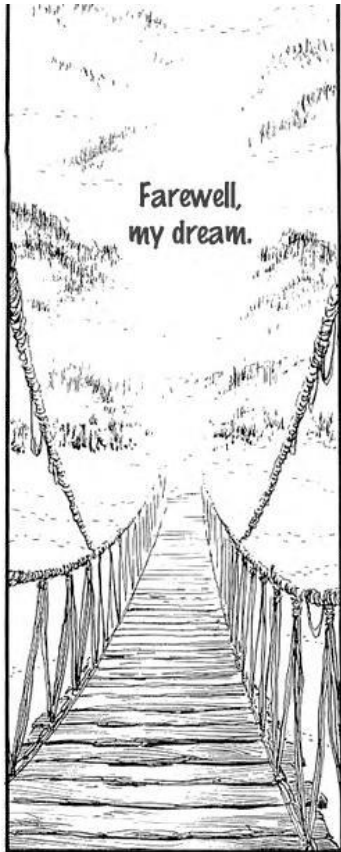
I DIDN'T
THINK ANYONE
ELSE WOULD
BE HERE, SINCE
IT'S STILL SO
EARLY...

BYE.
AND BE
MORE CAREFUL
NEXT TIME.



MOISTURE
ROTTED
THE WOOD,

AND NOW IT'S
DANGEROUS.



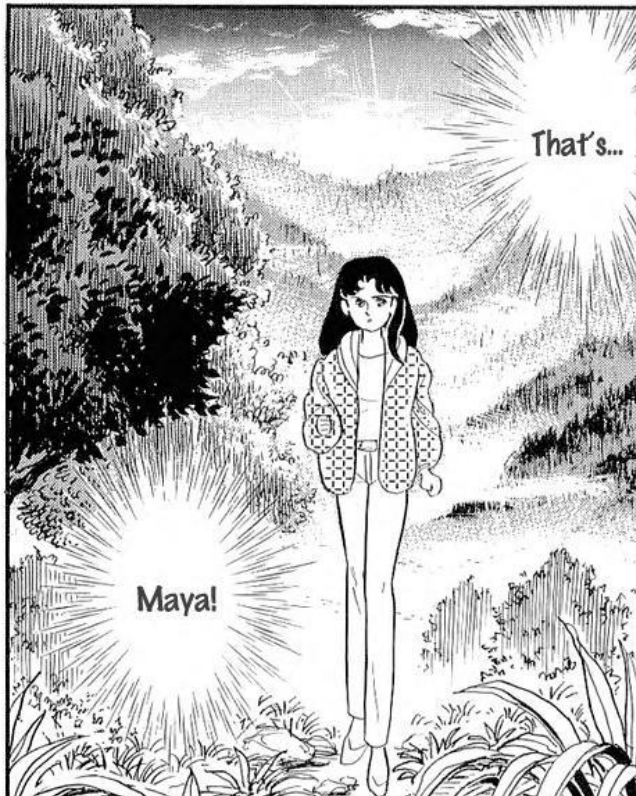
Farewell,
my dream.



The Valley
of the Crimson
Goddess...

Maybe
it's better
this way!

This really
is the end...



That's...

Maya!



TRUDGE
TRUDGE
TRUDGE

HUH?



TRUDGE
TRUDGE
TRUDGE

TRUDGE

