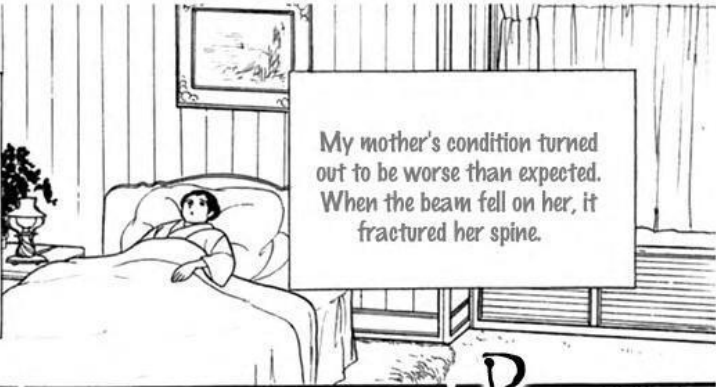


After six months in the hospital, she was finally well enough to come home. However, all she could do was lie in bed.



My mother's condition turned out to be worse than expected. When the beam fell on her, it fractured her spine.

Her tongue would frequently shake so badly that she was unable to swallow her medicine.

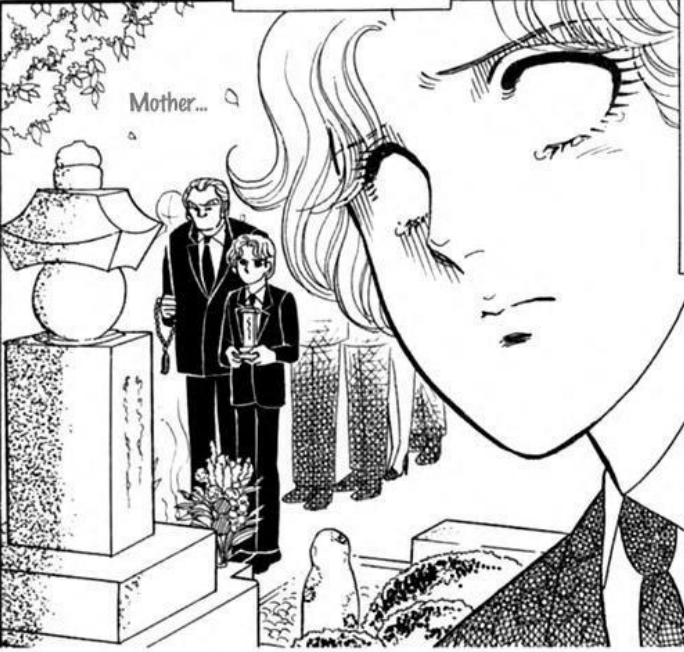


MOTHER!

The fracture had damaged her spinal cord and sometimes her extremities would shake uncontrollably.



Being constantly moved into and out of hospitals had taken its toll on her.



Then she suddenly caught a cold that turned into pneumonia. She died soon after.





YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO NEED TO RAISE THE CHILD OF COMPLETE STRANGERS, BROTHER!

YOU SHOULD LET THAT RELATIVE OF HIS WHO MADE SOME MONEY TAKE HIM AWAY!



Now that my mother was dead, there was no tie between Eisuke Hayami and me.

We were father and son only by law. We were tied by neither heart nor blood.



What need is there for me to stay in this house? Why should I stay near that man?

I'll live on my own

I'll leave.



In spite of everything, perhaps he loved my mother a little bit.

My father was somewhat troubled.



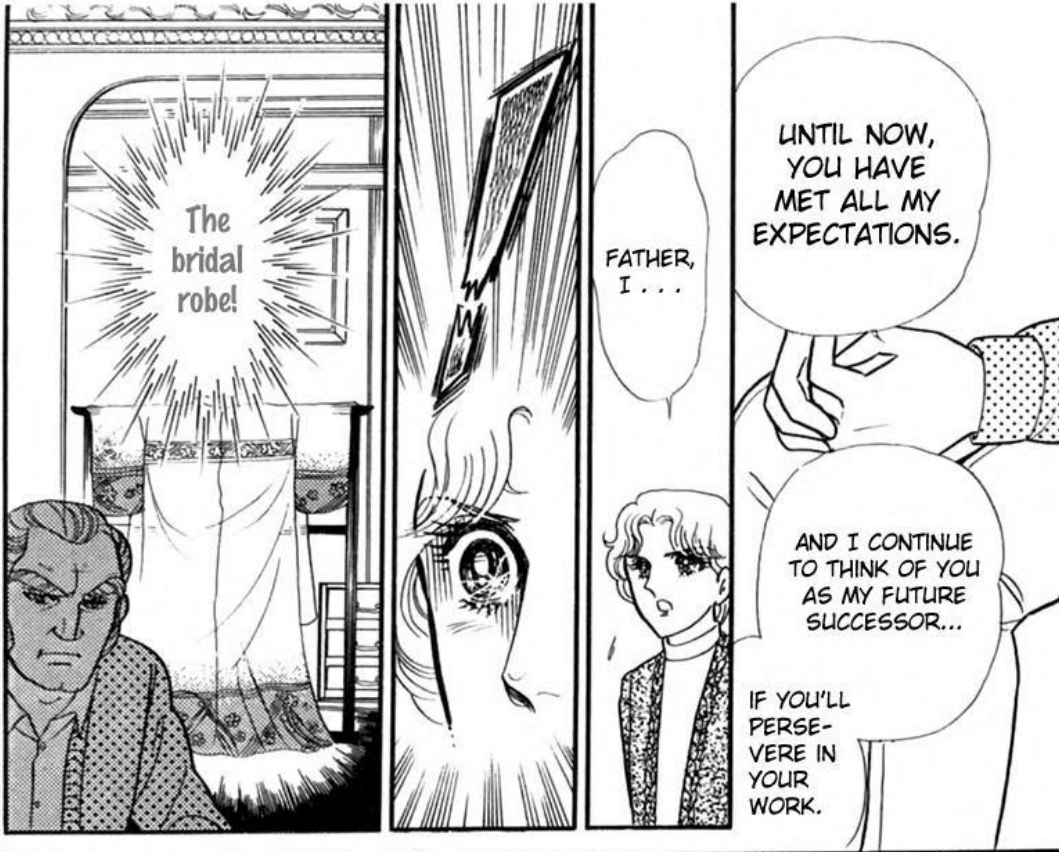
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MASUMI?

DO YOU WANT TO STAY WITH ME AND DEDICATE YOURSELF TO DAITO?

OR DO YOU WANT TO GO TO YOUR RELATIVES?

NOW THAT YOUR MOTHER IS DEAD, THOSE THAT SURROUND ME SAY THAT YOU SHOULD BE SENT TO YOUR RELATIVES. I DON'T INTEND TO LISTEN TO THEIR ADVICE.

MASUMI,





FATHER, I WANT TO BE USEFUL TO YOU AND THE BUSINESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I WILL WORK EVEN HARDER THAN I HAVE BEEN...

SO THAT ONE DAY I CAN TAKE YOUR PLACE.



FATHER, I WILL NOT GO ANYWHERE.

I WANT TO TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE LIKE I HAVE BEEN AND CONTINUE TO STUDY ECONOMICS.



SO MASUMI, WHAT DO YOU SAY?



I'M SURE YOUR MOTHER WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY ABOUT YOUR DECISION TOO.

REALLY? WELL SAID.



I will steal the Crimson Goddess from you!

And everything you have built until now!

And some day, I will steal her from you!

Father, I will become the person you want me to become.



I wasn't given work yet.

After that, I dedicated everything to the company.

I will steal everything!

But I memorized information regarding Daito's business to use in the future.

I was very careful.

I observed the actions of employees.

The power balance.

I turned my back on childhood entertainment. I didn't try to make friends my own age.

I listened to the speeches of the best directors in business meetings - starting with my father.

To understand the best way to behave...

I learned strategies to obtain results from their old achievements.

You can count on that!



Everything I did was related to work.

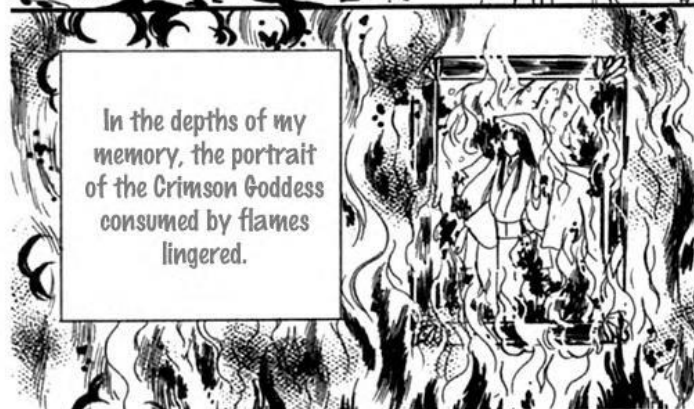
When I started high school, my father made me his secretary.

For most people, playing sports is a way to relax. For me, it was a way to strengthen my body.

It was also a way to socialize.

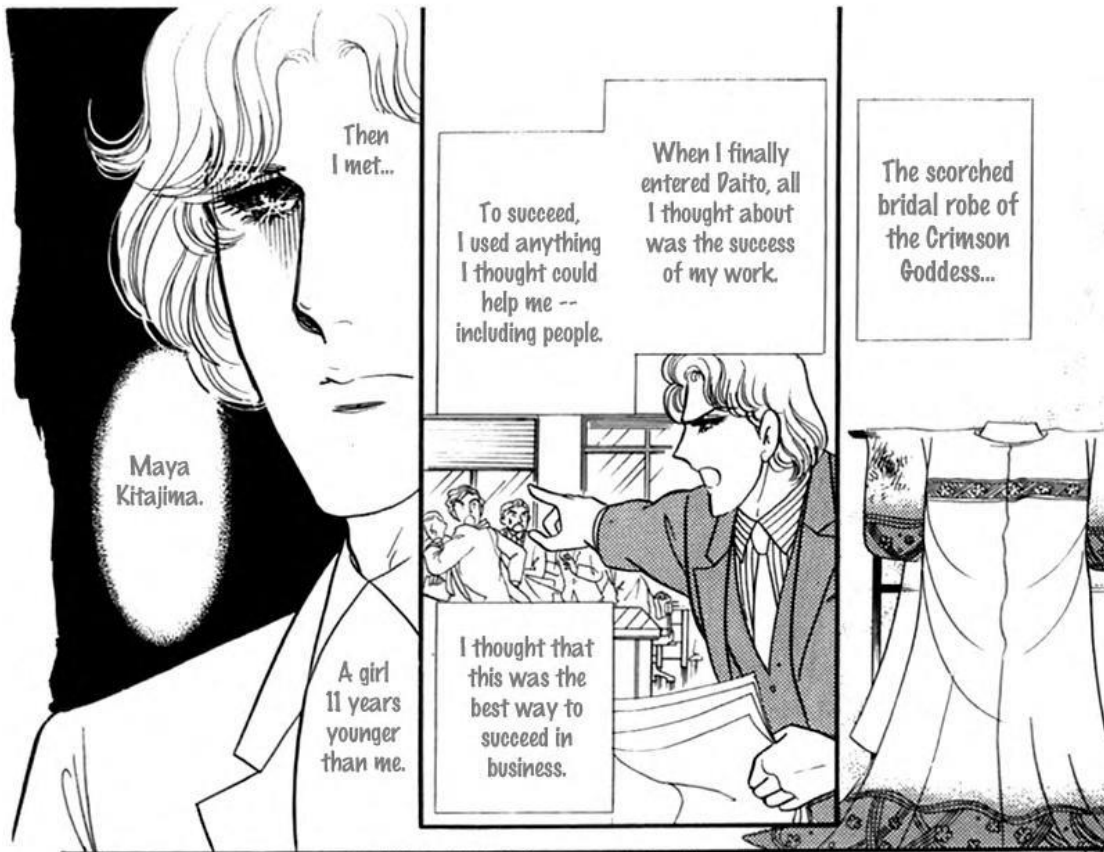


He thought that by following him, I would learn to understand his job better.



In the depths of my memory, the portrait of the Crimson Goddess consumed by flames lingered.

Then I reached university. I could hardly wait to begin work at Daito. Not just in one of Daito's numerous branches but in Daito's art production department.



Then I met...

Maya Kitajima.

To succeed, I used anything I thought could help me -- including people.

When I finally entered Daito, all I thought about was the success of my work.

The scorched bridal robe of the Crimson Goddess...

A girl 11 years younger than me.

I thought that this was the best way to succeed in business.



The girl seemed so happy just to be able to act.

Meeting her caused me to reflect on the meaning of my life.



Acting with a 104 degree fever?

She was such a small girl.

I didn't understand why she would go to such extremes.



On the stage, Maya Kitajima was full of a passion for life.

She shone with a light of her own.

Why did she perform the show on her own?

Why did she go on stage when the other actors were unable to?

No one who watched her could remain indifferent.

Because she could live the life she wanted?

I hadn't seen such enthusiasm since the day I became the son of Eisuke Hayami.

Was it...

Her vague smiles...

Her many gestures and expressions...

The sudden shifting of her gaze...

Her eyes that sparkled...



Me. A man who only thought of actresses as merchandise.

When the curtain fell, all that remained in me was a warm feeling.



They stole my heart.



Without knowing why, I felt the need to express my feelings by sending purple roses.

Why did this happen to me? The president of a production company can't publically admire someone.



He isn't allowed to have special feelings towards an actress who should be considered merchandise - especially one who is 11 years younger than he is.

Since the day my father abandoned me, I stopped loving anyone.



And still...

No one had ever been able to impress me.

These feelings were just born.



I couldn't believe I actually admired someone.



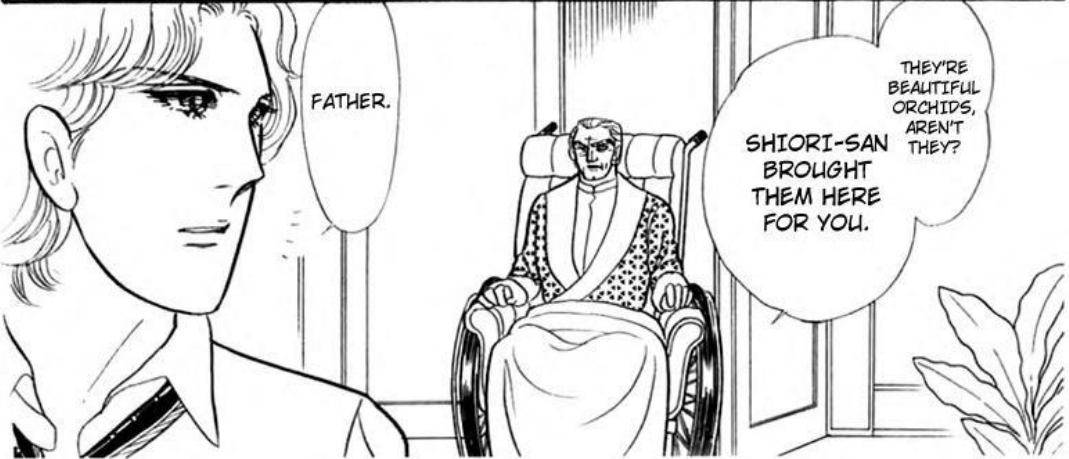
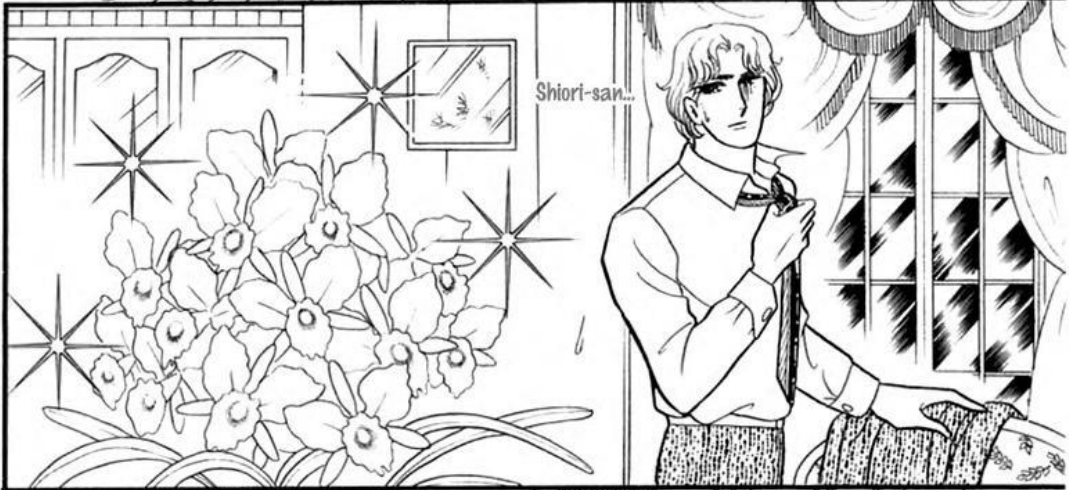
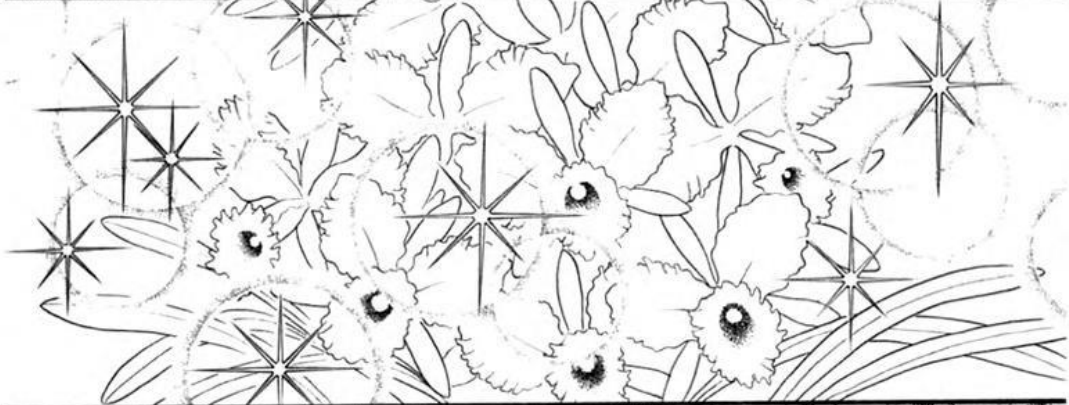
These feelings of mine...

The only thing I could do was continue to observe her progress and stay in the shadows.

Had to remain a secret...

Without anyone noticing.

Maya!





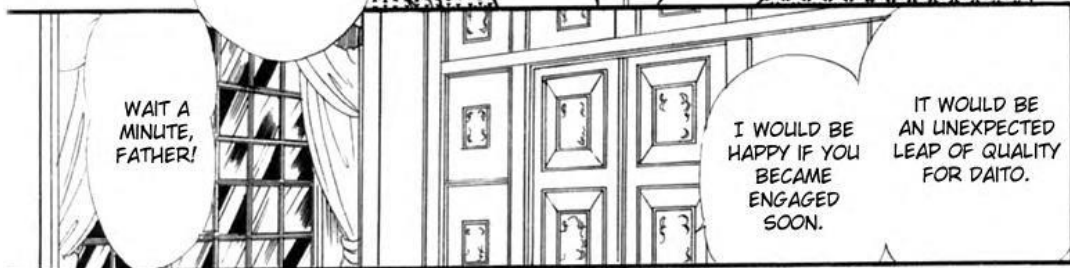
IT WOULD BE A BIG SUCCESS FOR DAITO.

IF YOU MARRY, WE SHALL BE RELATED TO THE TAKAMIYA FAMILY.

SHE SEEMS TO HAVE FALLEN HARD FOR YOU.

CONSIDERING HOW ANTISOCIAL YOU ARE, YOU DID A GOOD JOB.

A MARRIAGE SO PERFECT IS RARE INDEED.



WAIT A MINUTE, FATHER!

I WOULD BE HAPPY IF YOU BECAME ENGAGED SOON.

IT WOULD BE AN UNEXPECTED LEAP OF QUALITY FOR DAITO.



I UNDERSTAND. YOU DON'T HAVE THE DESIRE TO COMMIT YOURSELF YET.

OKAY. JUST THINK ABOUT IT.

I WILL LET IT PASS THIS TIME. YOU ARE DOING A GREAT JOB TAKING MY PLACE AND BRINGING THE CRIMSON GODDESS BACK TO THE STAGE, SINCE I AM UNABLE TO DO SO.



THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I HAVE TO DO BEFORE THAT.



NO! SHIORI-SAN IS A WONDERFUL WOMAN.

SHE IS ALMOST WASTED ON ME.

WHAT IS IT, MASUMI?

DON'T TELL ME YOU ARE AGAINST THIS MARRIAGE!

AT LEAST UNTIL WE HAVE STAGED THE CRIMSON GODDESS.

BUT I WOULD LIKE TO WAIT FOR A BIT.



I WAS STILL SEARCHING FOR CHIGUSA TSUKIKAGE.

IT HAPPENED ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO

PROBABLY ENDED UP THIS WAY BECAUSE OF THE DIVINE PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS.

THESE LEGS OF MINE



BUT EVERY TIME THEY FOUND HER, CHIGUSA RAN AWAY AND WENT INTO HIDING.

I HAD SENT MY MEN ALL OVER JAPAN SEARCHING FOR HER.



I saw her by chance.

Then, one day in the small city of hokuriko where I had gone on buisness...



It was raining.



FOLLOW THAT CAR!

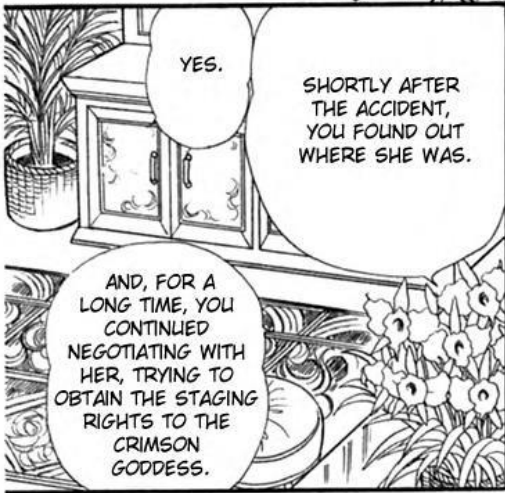
It was really her. Chigusa...

YES, SIR!



and we crashed.

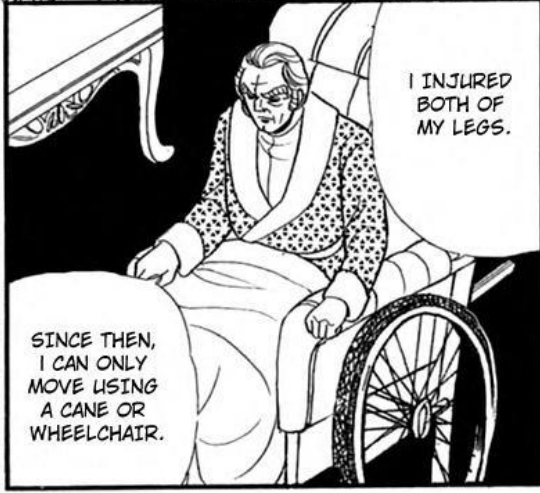
The car skidded



YES.

SHORTLY AFTER THE ACCIDENT, YOU FOUND OUT WHERE SHE WAS.

AND, FOR A LONG TIME, YOU CONTINUED NEGOTIATING WITH HER, TRYING TO OBTAIN THE STAGING RIGHTS TO THE CRIMSON GODDESS.



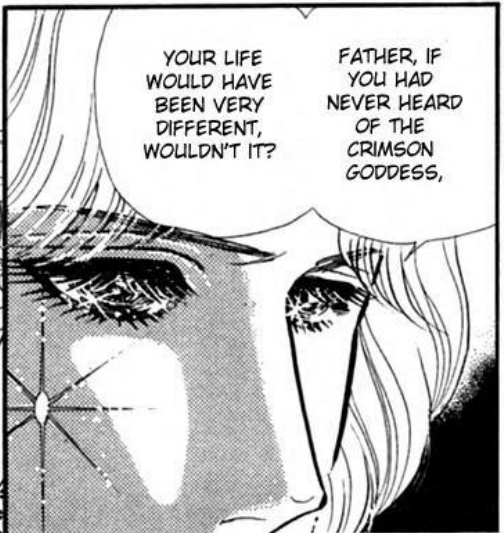
I INJURED BOTH OF MY LEGS.

SINCE THEN, I CAN ONLY MOVE USING A CANE OR WHEELCHAIR.



YOUR LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFERENT, WOULDN'T IT?

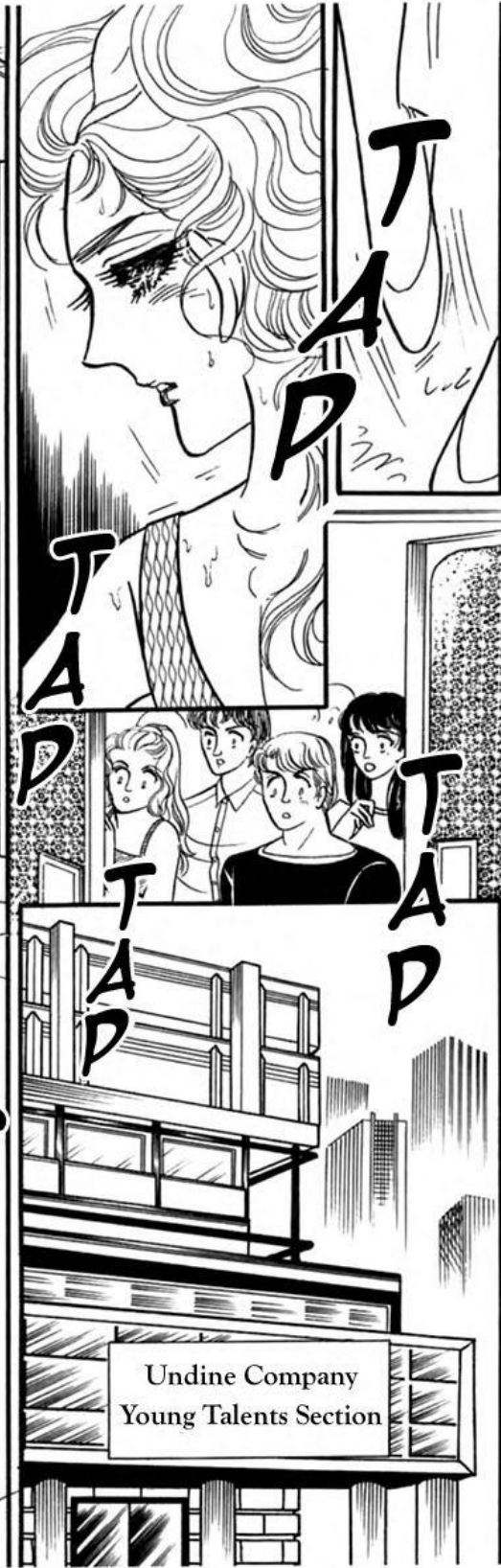
FATHER, IF YOU HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS,



THIS MUST BE THE DESTINY THAT TIES US TOGETHER. FATHER AND SON, TWO GENERATIONS LINKED BY THE CRIMSON GODDESS.









I will not lose to Maya Kitajima. I will NOT lose to her.

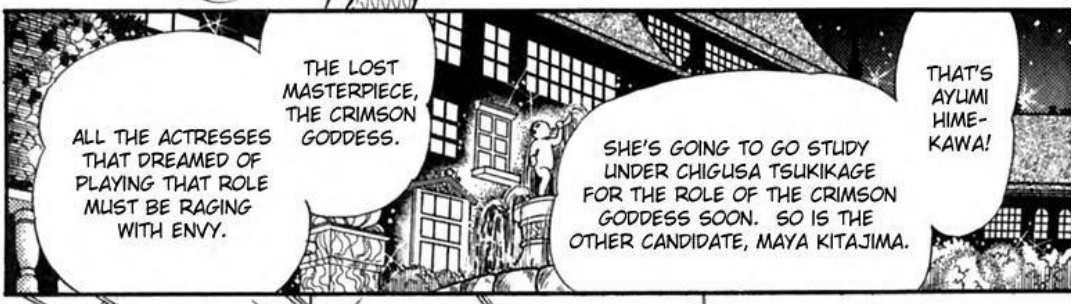
Whatever happens.



EVERY DAY SHE PRACTICES BASIC TECHNIQUES FOR SEVEN HOURS.

AYUMI-SAN IS AMAZING.

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE SHE'S GOING TO THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS SOON.



ALL THE ACTRESSES THAT DREAMED OF PLAYING THAT ROLE MUST BE RAGING WITH ENVY.

THE LOST MASTERPIECE, THE CRIMSON GODDESS.

SHE'S GOING TO GO STUDY UNDER CHIGUSA TSUKIKAGE FOR THE ROLE OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS SOON. SO IS THE OTHER CANDIDATE, MAYA KITAJIMA.

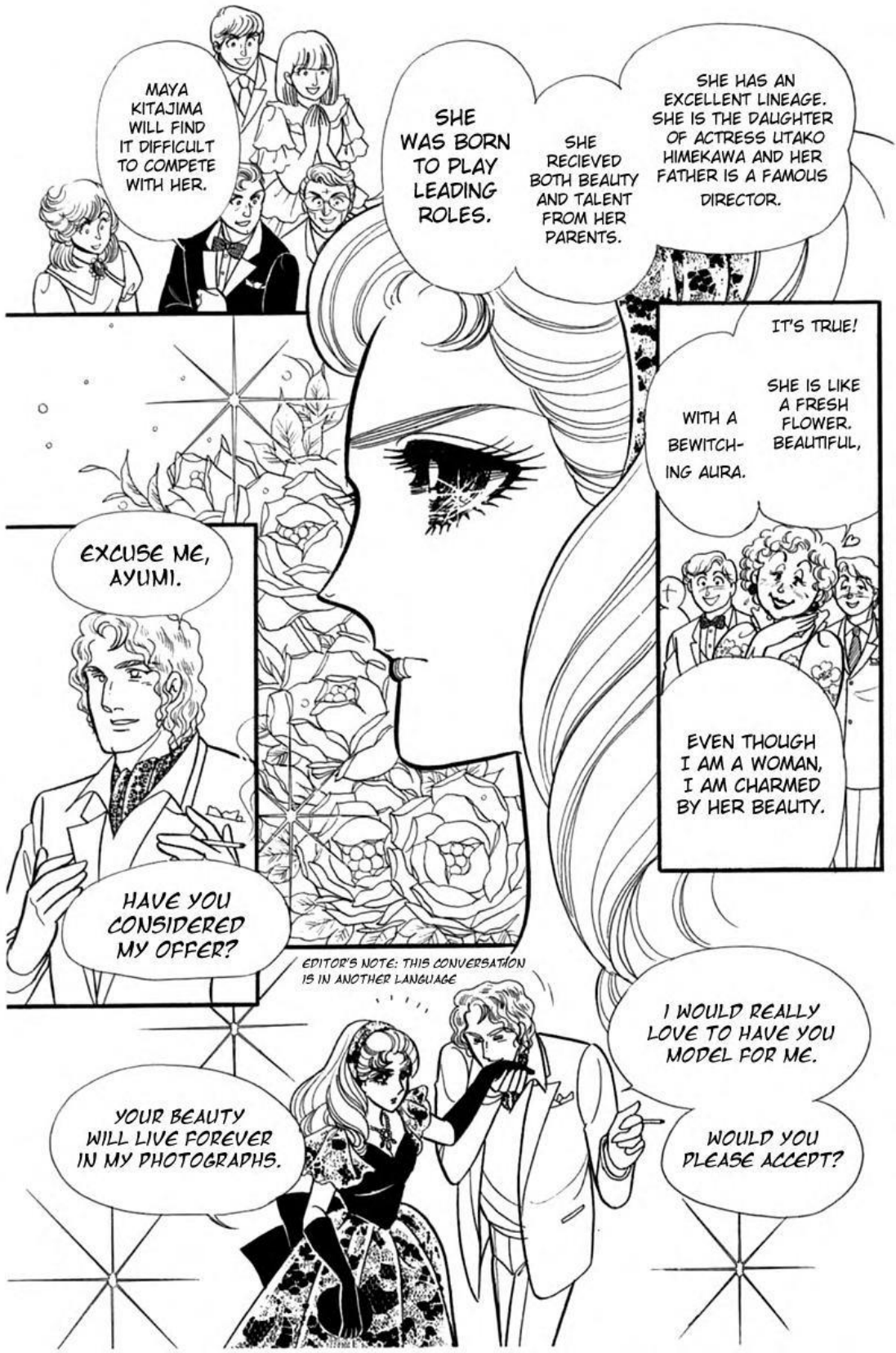
THAT'S AYUMI HIME-KAWA!



THE PART OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS, THE THOUSAND YEAR-OLD PLUM TREE SPIRIT OF PEERLESS BEAUTY...

IT IS TRULY A ROLE MADE FOR HER.

BUT SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL.



MAYA KITAJIMA WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPETE WITH HER.

SHE WAS BORN TO PLAY LEADING ROLES.

SHE RECEIVED BOTH BEAUTY AND TALENT FROM HER PARENTS.

SHE HAS AN EXCELLENT LINEAGE. SHE IS THE DAUGHTER OF ACTRESS LITAKO HIMEKAWA AND HER FATHER IS A FAMOUS DIRECTOR.

IT'S TRUE!
SHE IS LIKE A FRESH FLOWER. BEAUTIFUL, WITH A BEWITCHING AURA.

EVEN THOUGH I AM A WOMAN, I AM CHARMED BY HER BEAUTY.

EXCUSE ME, AYUMI.

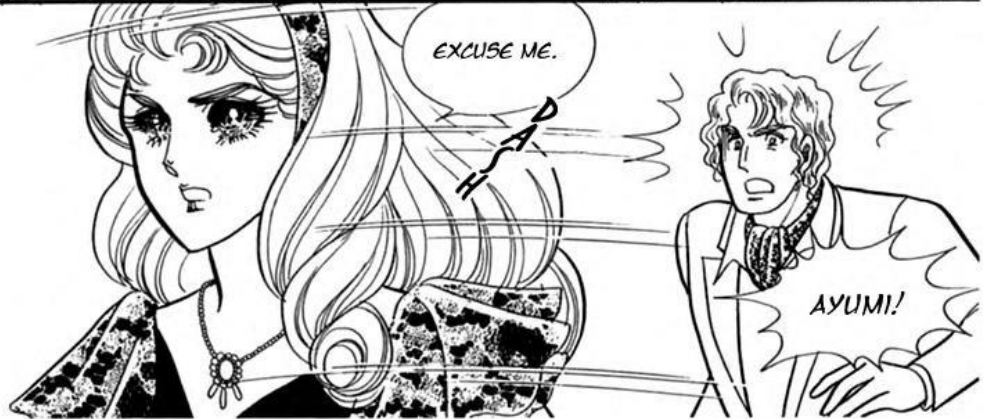
HAVE YOU CONSIDERED MY OFFER?

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS CONVERSATION IS IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

I WOULD REALLY LOVE TO HAVE YOU MODEL FOR ME.

YOUR BEAUTY WILL LIVE FOREVER IN MY PHOTOGRAPHS.

WOULD YOU PLEASE ACCEPT?





I COULDN'T BEAR TO POSE, SMILING HAPPILY, JUST FOLLOWING SOMEONE'S ORDERS.

I AM NOT A DOLL.

WHAT ARE AYUMI AND HER MOTHER TALKING ABOUT?

COULD YOU TRANSLATE FOR ME?

HAMIL-SAN!

I AM A PERSON!

I HAVE A MIND OF MY OWN!

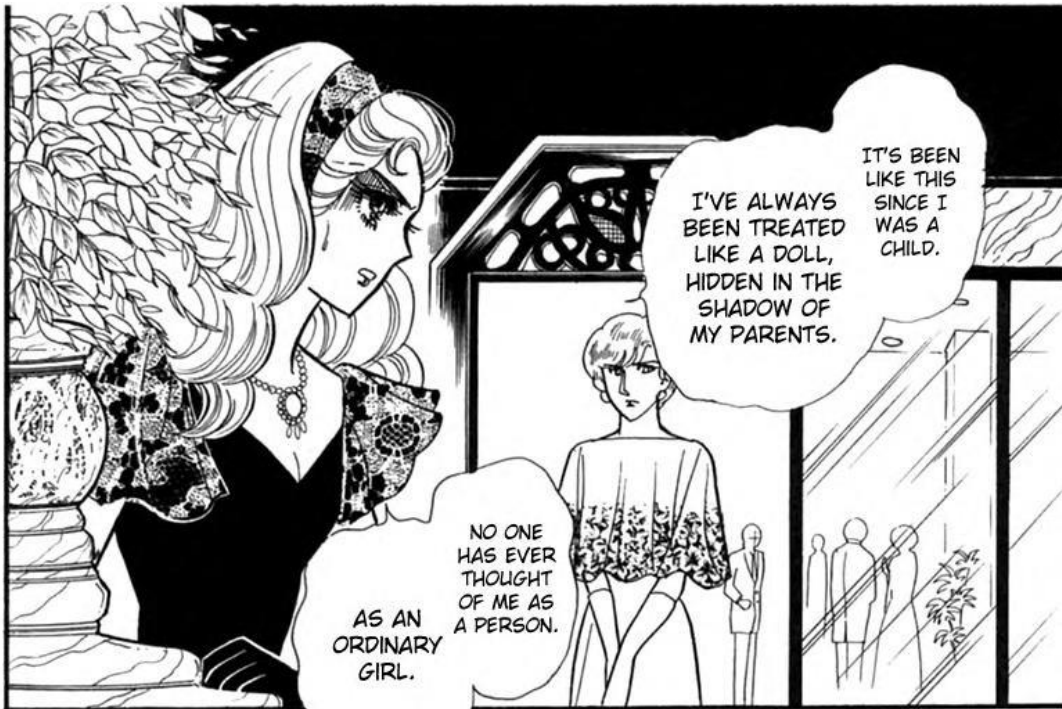
AYUMI!

WHAT A WASTE! TO REFUSE SUCH AN OFFER FROM MR. HAMIL.

MAMA!

I AM A PERSON!

I HAVE A MIND OF MY OWN!



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TREATED LIKE A DOLL, HIDDEN IN THE SHADOW OF MY PARENTS.

IT'S BEEN LIKE THIS SINCE I WAS A CHILD.

NO ONE HAS EVER THOUGHT OF ME AS A PERSON.

AS AN ORDINARY GIRL.



SHE CAN LIVE HER OWN LIFE.

I ENVY MAYA KITAJIMA.

WHATEVER SHE DOES, SHE'S APPRECIATED FOR HER OWN ABILITIES.



MAMA.

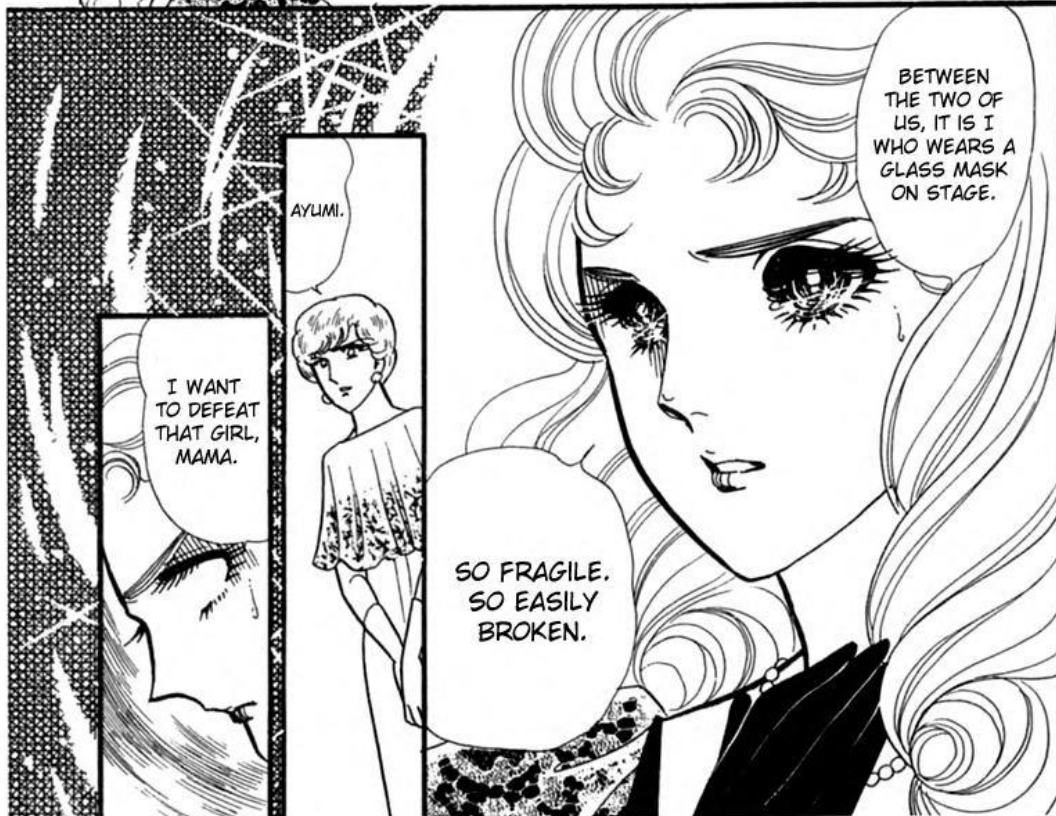
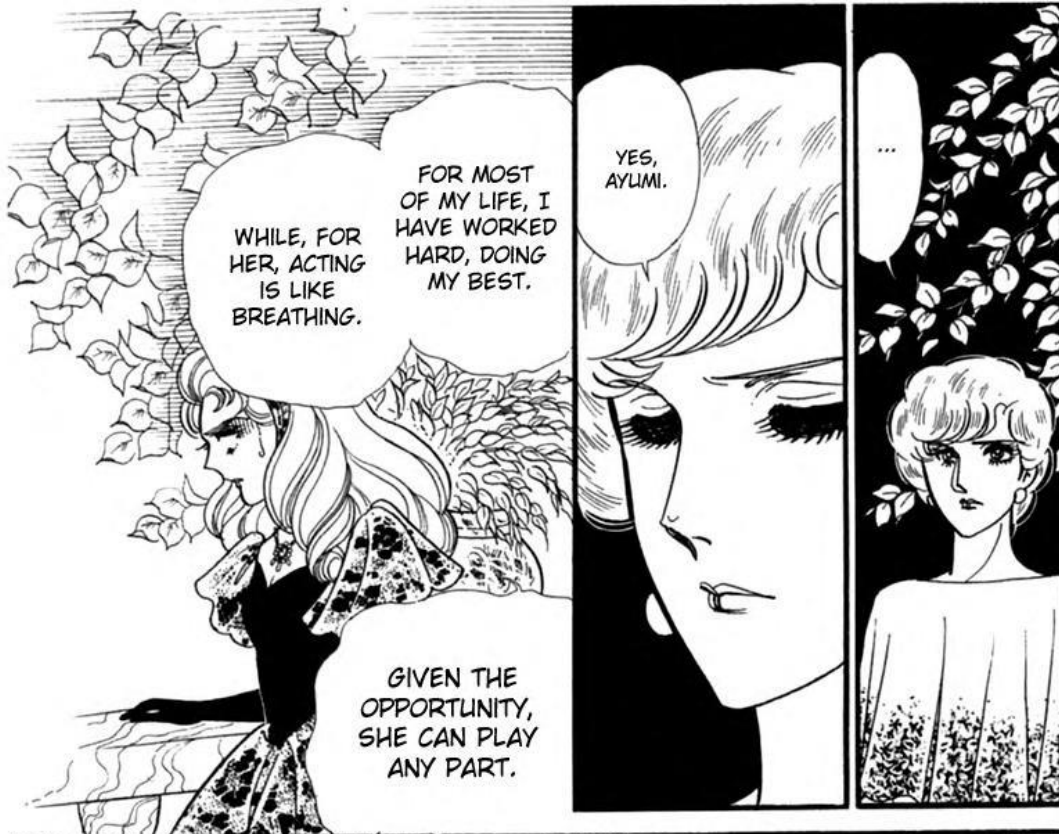
YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU?

AYUMI.

MAYA KITAJIMA ... IS A GENIUS.

SHE CAN SURPASS THE OBSTACLES SHE ENCOUNTERS ONE BY ONE ON HER OWN.

BY DOING SO, SHE BECOMES EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL.





THAT GIRL'S
TALENT IS A
NATURAL
GIFT.

IF I
CAN DEFEAT
HER USING
HARD WORK
AND THE BEST
OF MY ABILITY,
FOR THE FIRST
TIME, I'LL FEEL
CONFIDENT IN
MYSELF.

IF I DON'T,
I WILL
ALWAYS BE
UNHAPPY.

I WANT TO
SURPASS MAYA
KITAJIMA IN THE
BATTLE FOR
THE CRIMSON
GODDESS...

MAMA!

I'LL BE
ABLE TO
LIVE MY
OWN LIFE.

I'LL BE ABLE TO
LIVE MY OWN LIFE
AS AYUMI HIME-
KAWA, INDEPENDENT
ACTRESS.



Maya
Kitajima.

My only
rival.

Ayumi
...

I WANT
TO PLAY THE
CRIMSON
GODDESS.

I WANT
TO
SURPASS
MAYA
KITAJIMA.

NO
MATTER
WHAT.





I've finally
reached
this point.

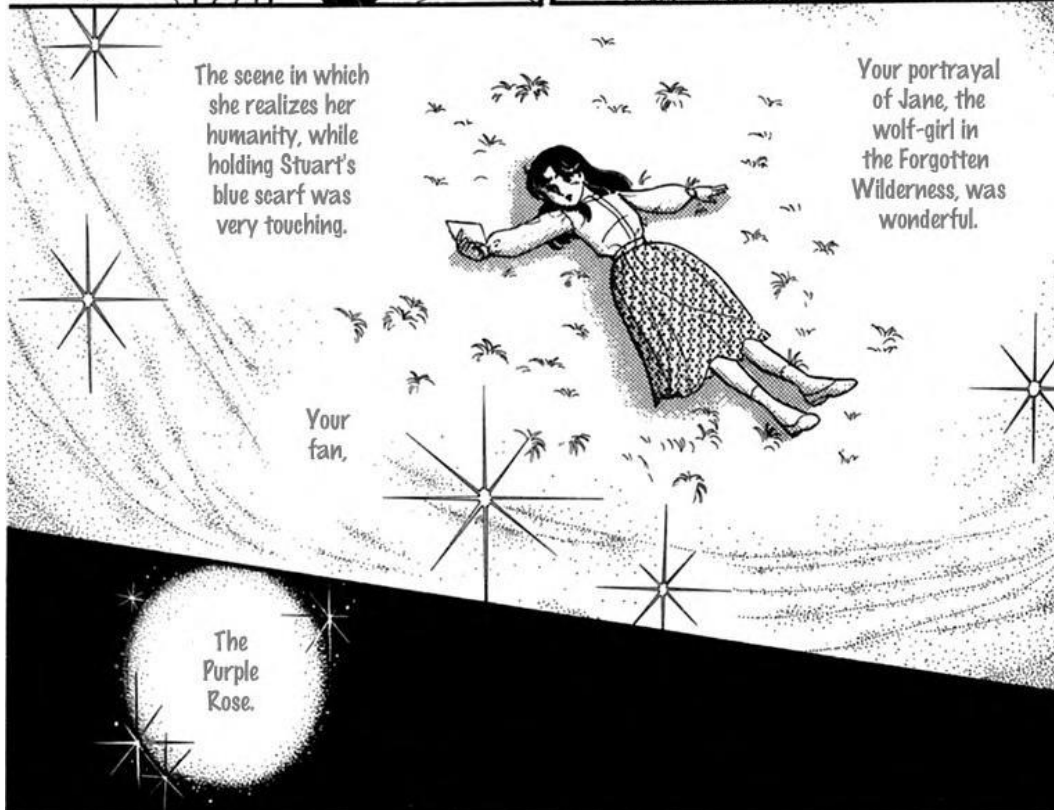


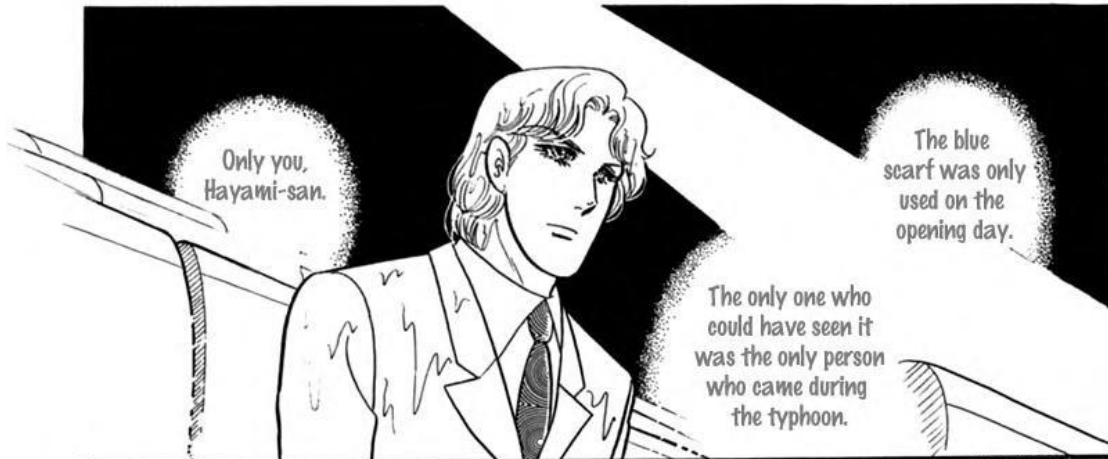
The scene in which
she realizes her
humanity, while
holding Stuart's
blue scarf was
very touching.

Your portrayal
of Jane, the
wolf-girl in
the Forgotten
Wilderness, was
wonderful.

Your
fan,

The
Purple
Rose.





Only you,
Hayami-san.

The blue
scarf was only
used on the
opening day.

The only one who
could have seen it
was the only person
who came during
the typhoon.



Only
you.



The purple
rose...
Is it you?

Hayami-san!

Are you
the one?



The merciless man who would do anything to ensure Daito's success.

Masumi Hayami.
The cold-hearted workaholic from Daito.

My mother's killer.

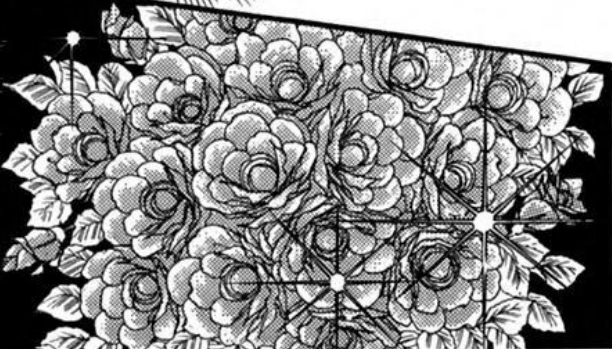
It's incredible that the Masumi Hayami capable of that could be the Purple Rose.

MASUMI HAYAMI FROM DAITO WAS KEEPING HER CONFINED TO THE HOSPITAL.

Could the person I hate the most...

YOUR MOTHER WAS KILLED BY MASUMI HAYAMI.

Be the same person I love the most? My daddy-long-legs.



The fan that has always encouraged me by sending me purple roses, all while keeping his identity a secret.

The Purple Rose. My fan who has followed me from my very first play, Little Women.







I saw a purple rose on the back seat of Hayami-san's car when he had come to speak to the principal of Hitotsuboshi High

Why is a purple rose...
In Daito's car?

FOR WHAT REASON?

I DON'T CARE WHO HE IS!

I JUST WANT TO THANK HIM FOR EVERYTHING HE HAS DONE FOR ME!

IF THE PERSON DOESN'T WANT TO REVEAL HIS IDENTITY, HE MUST HAVE HIS OWN REASONS.

IT'S BETTER FOR YOU NOT TO LOOK FOR HIM.

I'M SURE HE ALREADY KNOWS YOUR FEELINGS.

UHH...

Then, when I was at his villa preparing for the role of Helen in The Miracle Worker...

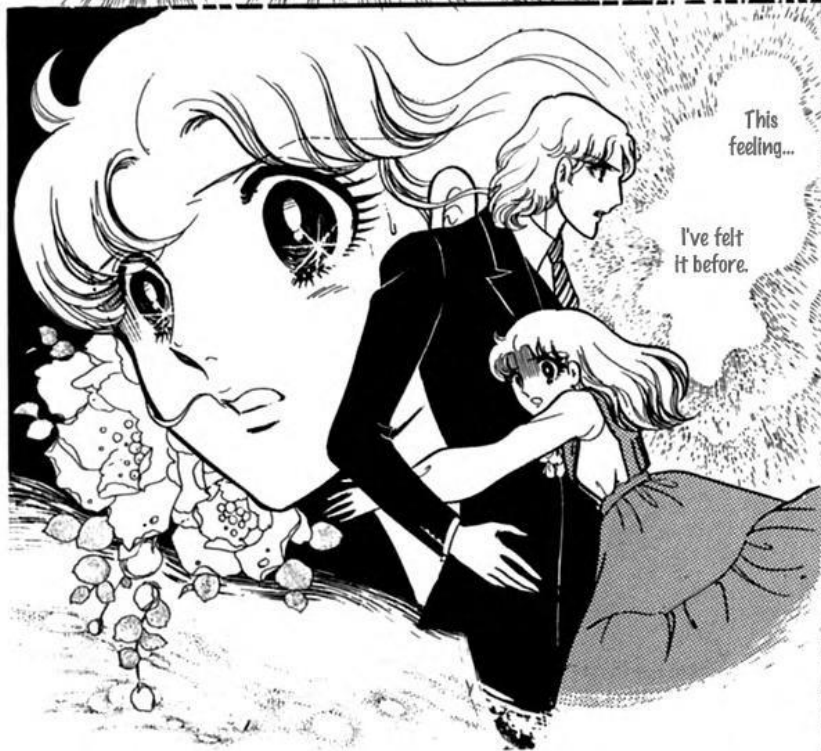


I met the Purple Rose for the first time.

BLUSH

I embraced... Hayami-san?

I... I embraced him!



This feeling...

I've felt it before.

And also at the award ceremony when I won Best Supporting Actress for the role of Hellen Keller.





Then,
that
other
time...

Why didn't
I notice it
at the time?

Yes!
That was
Hayami-san.

WHAT A
COINCIDENCE
TO FIND
YOU HERE.

When I was in
The Two Princesses,
the Purple Rose
invited me to
dinner

The Purple Rose
didn't show up
and I ended up
having dinner
with Hayami-san.

It should have
been obvious that
Hayami-san was
the Purple Rose
at that point.

Hayami-san.

YOU LOOK
REALLY
GOOD
IN IT.
THAT PINK
DRESS...



A long time
ago he took
me out.

But...
Wait a
minute?!

Incredible.

PLEASE
LET GO
OF MY
HAND,
HAYAMI-
SAN.

Hayami-
san must
hate me.

That
man...
The Purple
Rose!?



IF YOU PROMISE THAT AFTER THE PLAY YOU'LL SPEND SOME TIME WITH ME, I'LL LET GO OF YOUR HAND.

I WON'T RUN AWAY.

After the play, we went and ate sweets, and then we went to the planetarium. Then, there was the festival at the shrine and finally dinner.

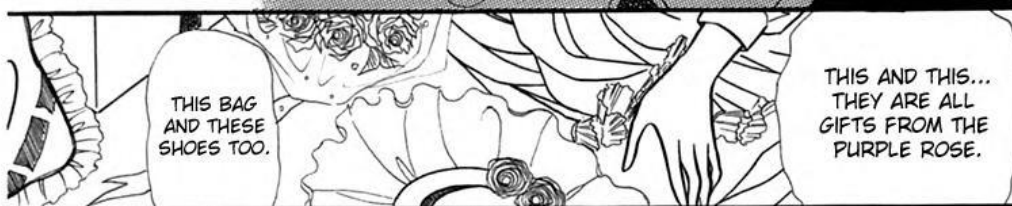
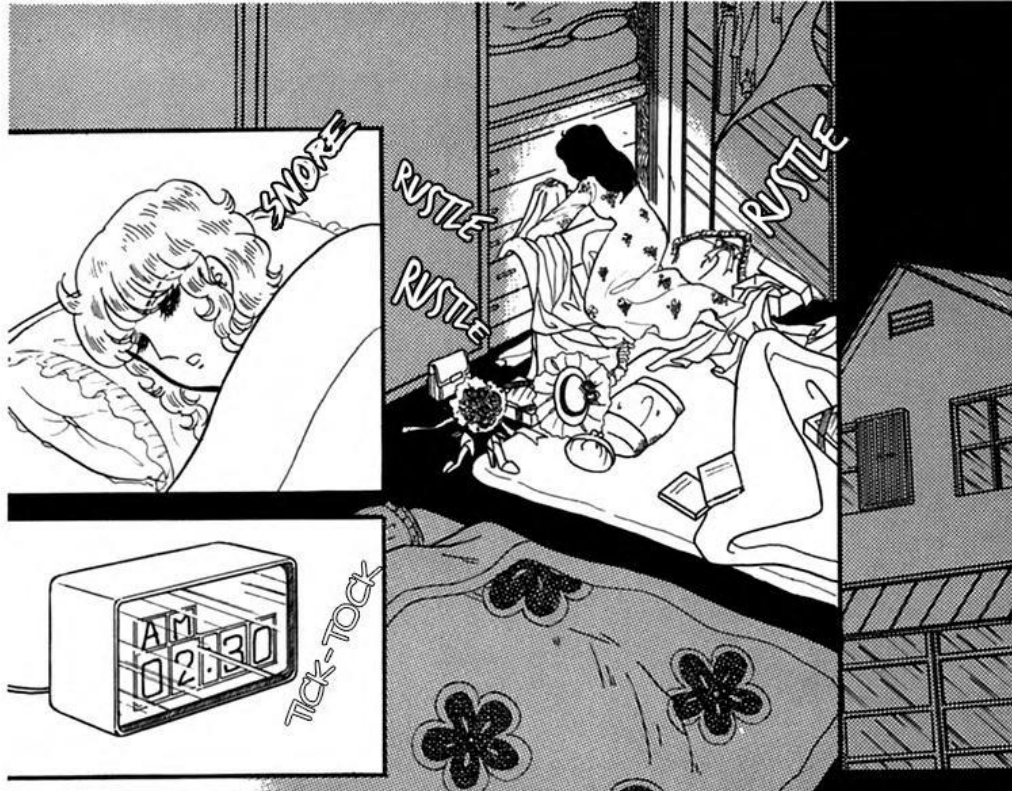
YOU'VE MADE ME REMEMBER SO MANY THINGS. THANK YOU.

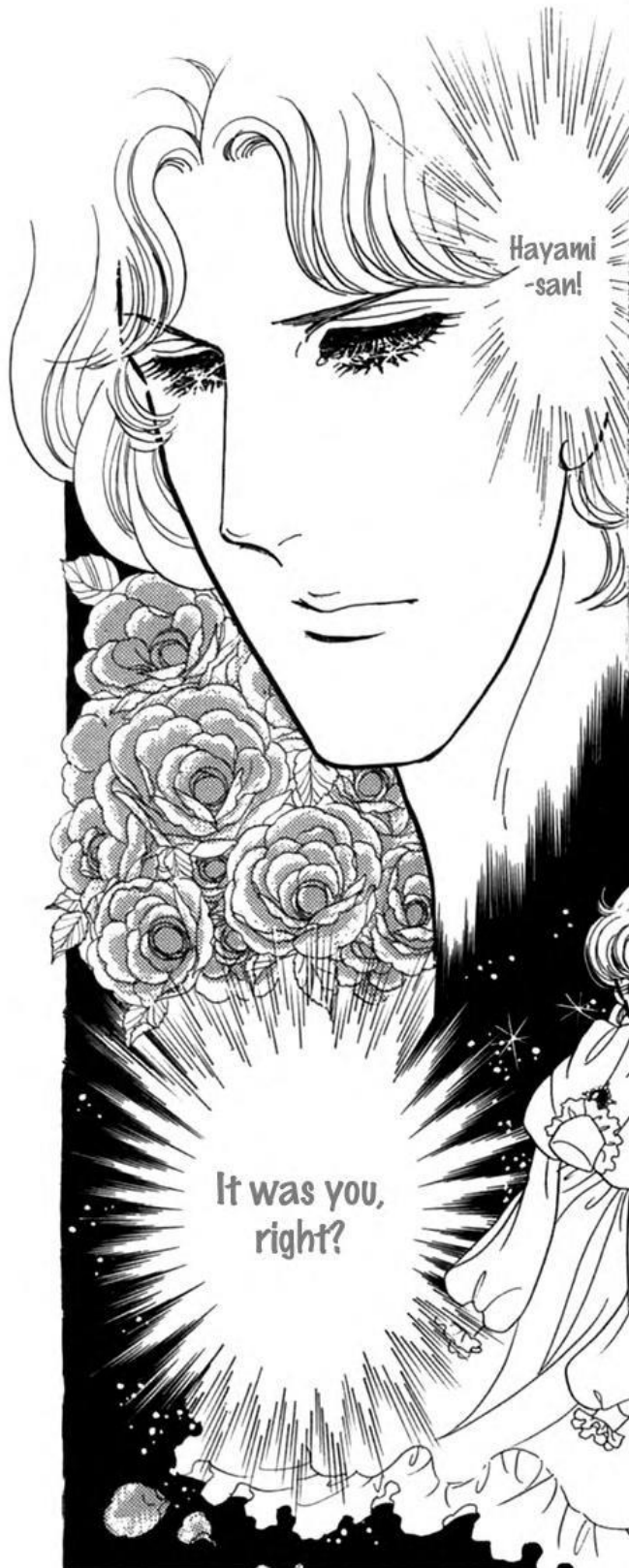
It seemed like a date...

Hayami-san!









Hayami
-san!

I wanted to
meet the
Purple Rose
so much...

I can't
believe it.
I can't
believe it.



And it
was you!

It was you,
right?

