

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

P-PLEASE, MERCY!

HERE NOW IS THE HOUR OF YOUR DOOM!

PUNISHED MUST HE BE A'FORE HIS EXECUTION.

THE WRETCH HAST CAUSED THE LOSS OF ALL THE ROSES!

IDLE HAS HE BEEN FOUND, THE PRINCESS'S ROSES NEGLECTED.

FATHER ...
FORGIVE HIM.

THE ROSES HATH NOT WITHERED UNDER THIS GENTLE GARDENER'S HAND...

HAST THOU TRULY BEEN REMISS?

NO, NO, YOUR HIGHNESS!

A HUNDRED LASHES BE HIS FIT AND JUST PUNISHMENT!

PLEASE, HOLD!

GOD HAVE MERCY!

W'IT GREAT CARE DID I TEND THE FLOWERS, YET STILL DID THEY WITHER.



CHILLED
T'WAS THE
BREATH

THAT HATH
COVERED
THESE PETALS
WITH FROSTED
JEWELS.



TOO OFT,
HARSH IS
OUR FICKLE
CLIMATE.

YET HYPERION HID
HIS FACE FROM US,
OVERVEILED BY
WROTHFUL CLOUDS,
THE SKY WEPT ONCE
MORE.

T'WAS OUR
THOUGHT THE
TOUCH OF GENTLE
PERSEPHONE
HAD RETURNED



'TIS
THE SUN!

'TIS THE
CLOUDS.



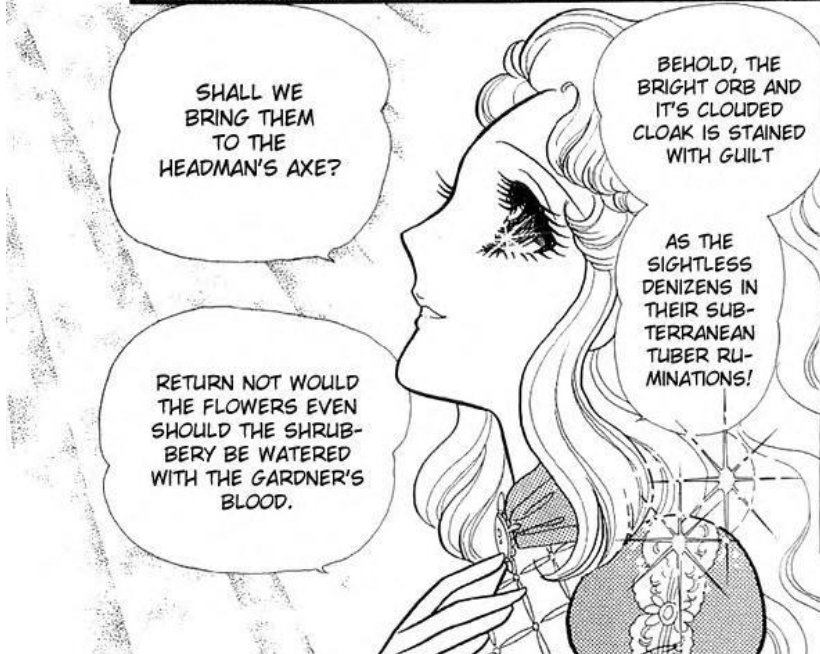
THE ROOTS
HATH
RAVAGED!

T'WAS NOT
THEIR
FIRST
FORAY.



ALDIS!

OR PERHAPS
OUR SUBTERRA-
NEAN CITIZENS,
PECKISH
MOLES...



SHALL WE
BRING THEM
TO THE
HEADMAN'S AXE?

RETURN NOT WOULD
THE FLOWERS EVEN
SHOULD THE SHRUB-
BERRY BE WATERED
WITH THE GARDNER'S
BLOOD.

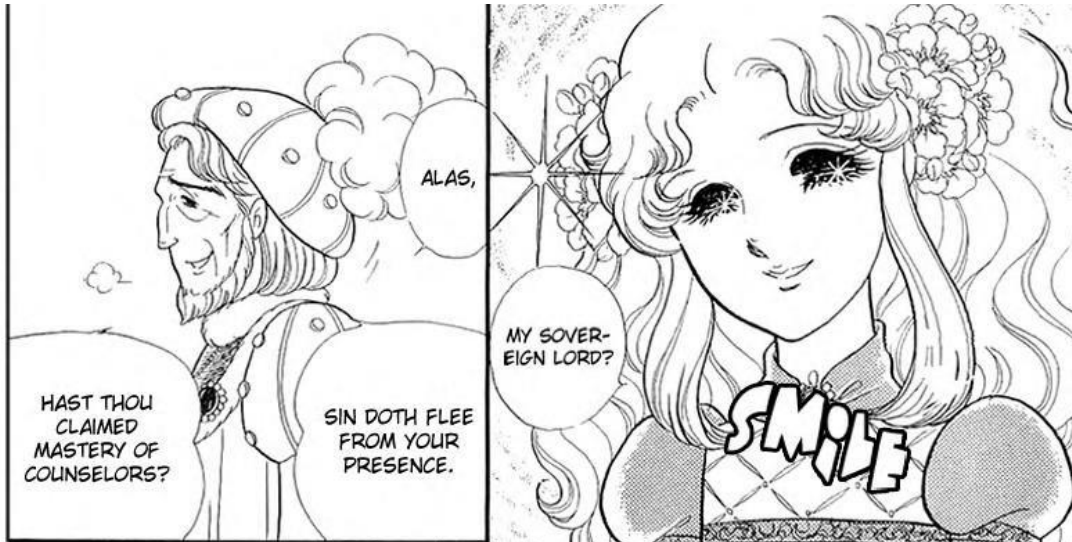
BEHOLD, THE
BRIGHT ORB AND
IT'S CLOUDED
CLOAK IS STAINED
WITH GUILT

AS THE
SIGHTLESS
DENIZENS IN
THEIR SUB-
TERRANEAN
TUBER RU-
MINATIONS!



LADY
ALDIS!

YOUR
HIGH-
NESS!



HAST THOU CLAIMED MASTERY OF COUNSELORS?

SIN DOTH FLEE FROM YOUR PRESENCE.

ALAS,

MY SOVEREIGN LORD?

SMILE



MY THANKS, YOUR MAJESTY!

SO BE IT! THUS DO WE DECLARE THE CLOUDS AND SUN SCARLET WITH SIN, UPON OUR DAUGHTER'S PERSUASION.

THOU MAYEST WITHDRAW.



WELL LOVED ARE HER ROSES, YET SHE PLEADED CLEMENCY FOR THE GARDENER!

HOW TEMPERATE IS LADY ALDIS.



AHHH... BLESS YOU, BLESS YOU LADY ALDIS!

BLESS YOU!



SUCH SENTIMENT IS NOT MINE ALONE.

BEYOND THE STAR SPECKLED SKY SHINES HER BEAUTY.

MORE WORTHY OF ASCENDANCY IS SHE, THAN HER SICKLY SIB.



A HEART OF ANGELS HAVE YOU, PRINCESS!

I AM YOUR SERVANT 'TIL MY LAST BREATH!



KNOWEST THEY FULL
WELL THE GARDENER
MORE SODDEN THAN
HIS CHARGES!

IN SLOVENLY
DRUNKENNESS DID
HE WATER THEM
WITH WINE!

THE PARASITIC
PESTS ARE
NOT EVICTED,
THE BLOSSOMS
WITHER FROM
HIS FORGET-
FULNESS.



INCESSANTLY
DO THEY SPEW
THEIR PRAISE
UPON THAT MILK-
SOP MAID! E'EN
THE KING!

OUTRA-
GEOUS!

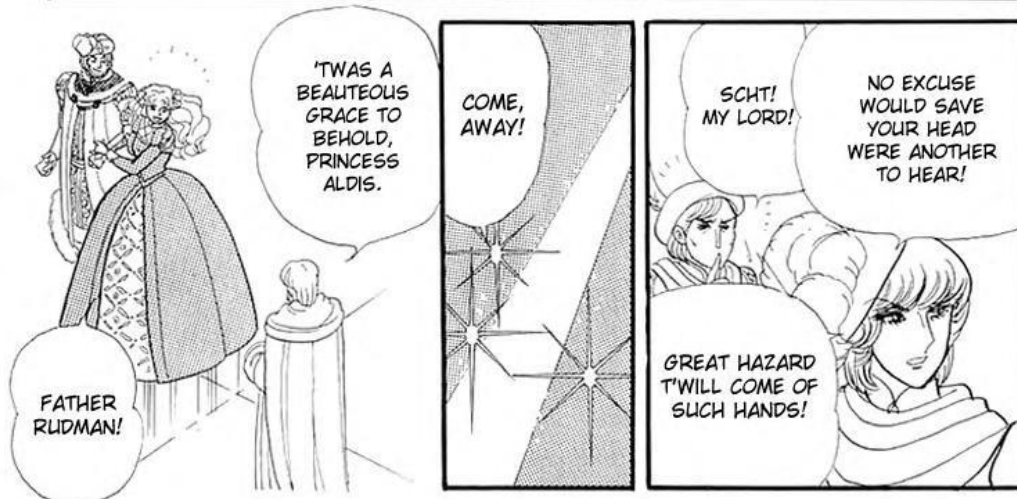
MY LORD!



BLINDED ARE THEY
TO INDULGENCE BY
THE PRINCESS'S
GENTLE FACADE?

MOST ASSUREDLY
THAT LACKEY BE IN
GREAT MIRTH!

FAUGH! THE GUILT
BE APPLIED TO
THE SUN AND
CLOUDS!



FATHER
RUDMAN!

'T WAS A
BEAUTEOUS
GRACE TO
BEHOLD,
PRINCESS
ALDIS.

COME,
AWAY!

SCHT!
MY LORD!

NO EXCUSE
WOULD SAVE
YOUR HEAD
WERE ANOTHER
TO HEAR!

GREAT HAZARD
T'WILL COME OF
SUCH HANDS!



SEEMINGLY THEY DO NOT WISH ME NEAR MY SISTER.

LET IT BE SECRET, FATHER!

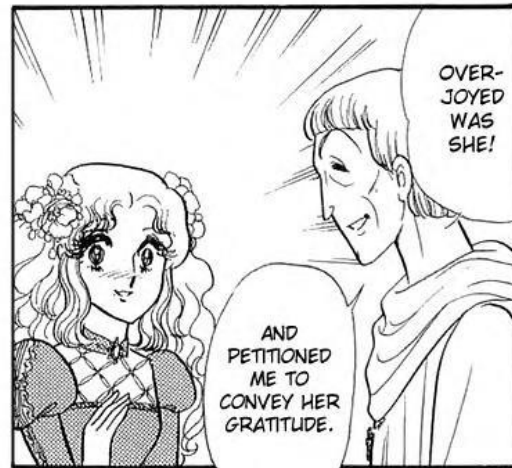


OH, HUSH...

AND ANON, THE PRESENTS FOR LADY ORIGELD...



OHH ...
TRULY?



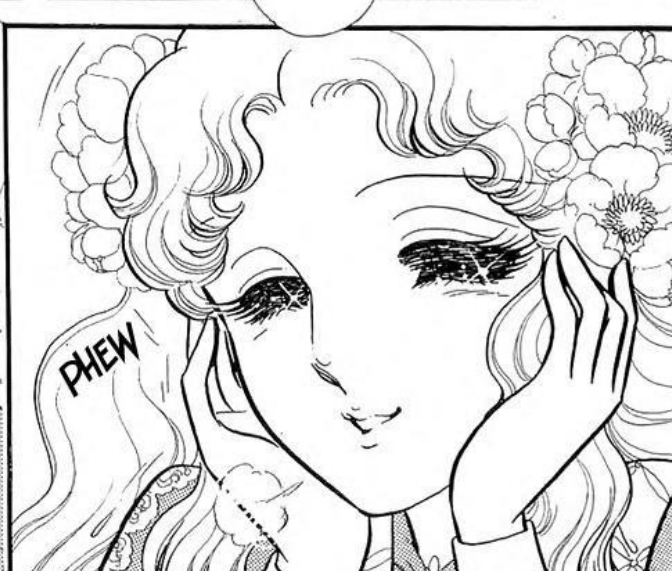
OVER-
JOYED
WAS
SHE!

AND PETITIONED ME TO CONVEY HER GRATITUDE.



MY GIFTS HAVE BROUGHT HER HAPPINESS?

REA-
LLY?



PHEW



THANK YOU!

MY ELDER SISTER HAS MY PRESENTS ACCEPTED...

LORD!

SUCH GENTLE QUALITY IS IN HER!

IMPRISONED FOR SO LONG...

I BUT THOUGHT HATRED WOULD BE HER CHIEF CONCERN...

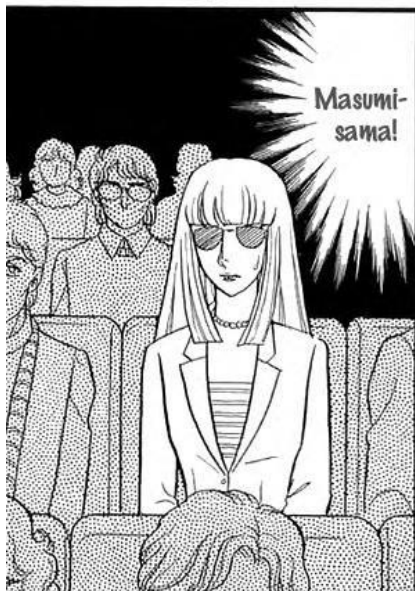


IT MAKES MY HEART BEAT FASTER!

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL, GRACEFUL, WARM AND CHEERFUL.

ALDIS' ACTING IS AWESOME!

CHARMING!



Masumi-sama!

Sometimes when I watch you, I forget you are an actress...

And I have the feeling I'm in front of a real person, not just an act...



Chibi-chan, who are you really?



YET NO OTHER COURSE LIES BEFORE US...

RIGHTEOUS YOUR ANGER BE

'TIS THE BETTER WAY.

BY THIS, SHALL WE SKIRT A BLOODY CONFLICT?



WHAT?!

THOU ASK OUR DAUGHTER TO BETROTH A SON OF ERIWALD?!

TO BIND HER IN MARRIAGE TO THE ENEMY!



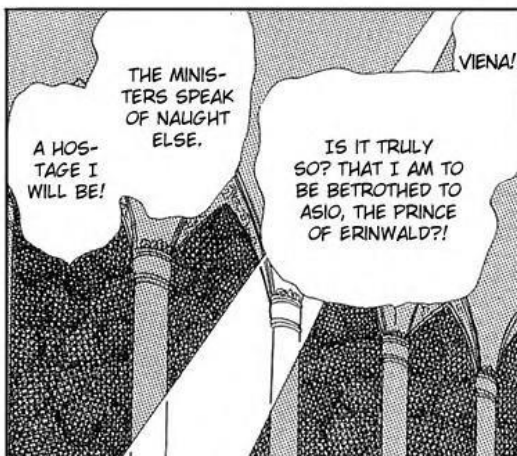
AND AFTER THE PRINCESS IS BACK SAFELY BEHIND OUR BORDERS, WE MAY CRUSH THEM!

THIS IS BUT A RUSE FOR US TO BRING OUR MIGHT TO BEAR?

FOR MORE TIME IS IMPERATIVE.

WISDOM IS FOUND IN AN ENTERPRISE TO AVOID BARBAROUS WAR.

TO DIFFUSE THEIR ENMITY IS OF NO SMALL IMPORT.



A HOSTAGE I WILL BE!

THE MINISTERS SPEAK OF NAUGHT ELSE.

IS IT TRULY SO? THAT I AM TO BE BETROTHED TO ASIO, THE PRINCE OF ERINWALD?!

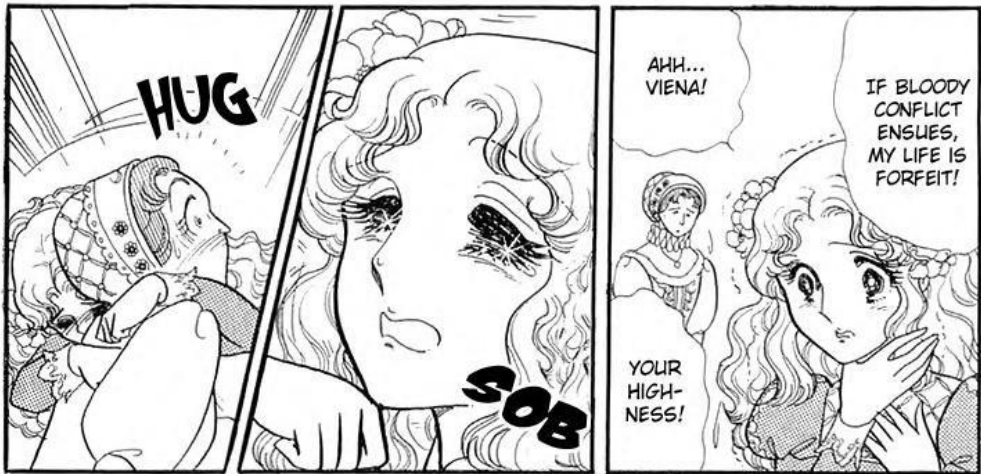
VIENA!



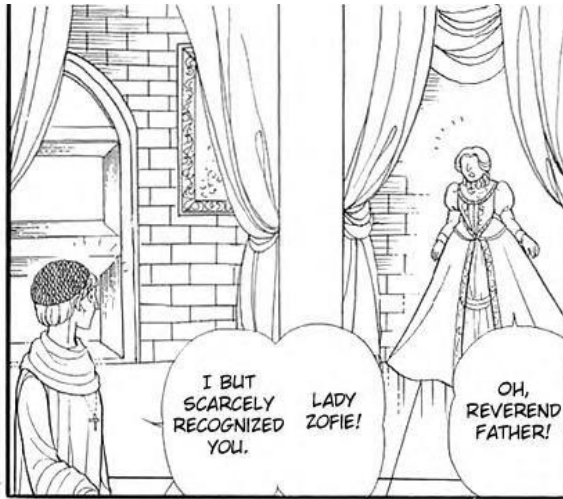
YOUR MAJESTY!

CAN SUCH A MARRIAGE GUARANTEE HER SAFETY?

THOU SPEAK OF MY DAUGHTER AS HOSTAGE?!



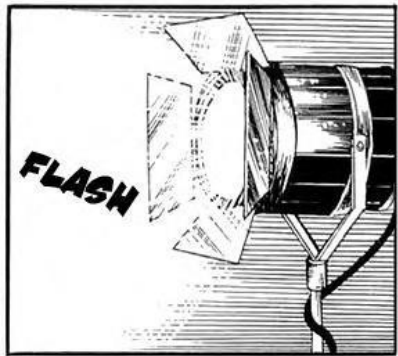




I BUT SCARCELY RECOGNIZED YOU.

LADY ZOFIE!

OH, REVEREND FATHER!



WELL DO YOU LOOK.

HAVE YOU AT GENERAL KIRGE'S ABIDED.

FOR FORTY DAYS

IT BELIKE A RETURN FROM THE GRAVE.

AND SO SUITABLE IS YOUR RAIMENT.



OH, ANOTHER PRESENT FROM LADY ALDIS?

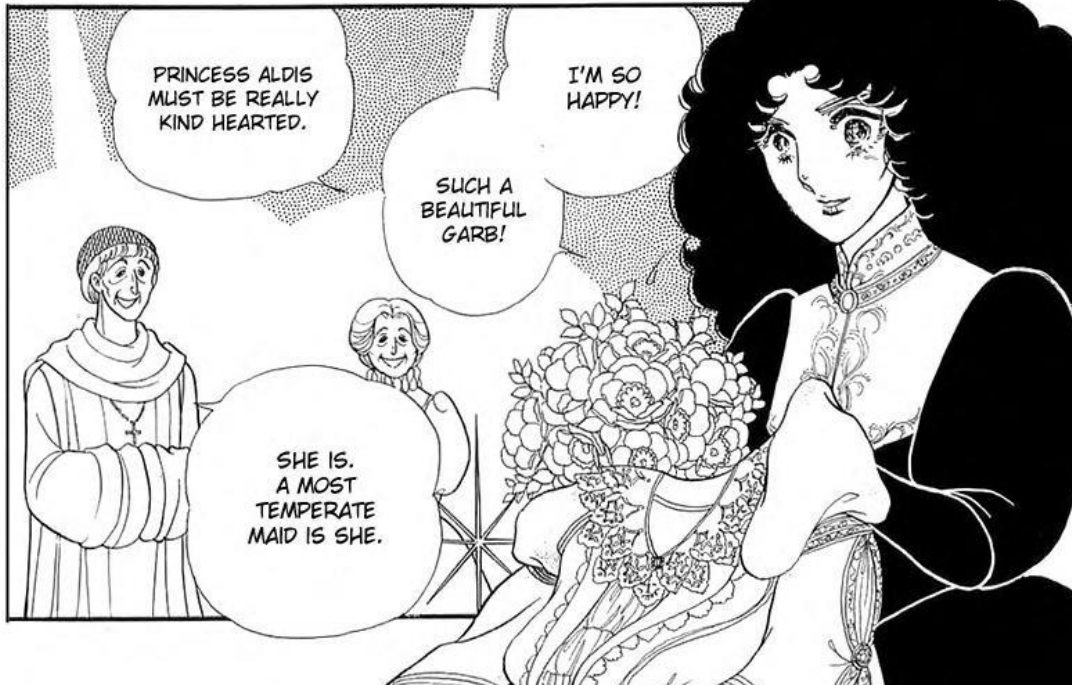
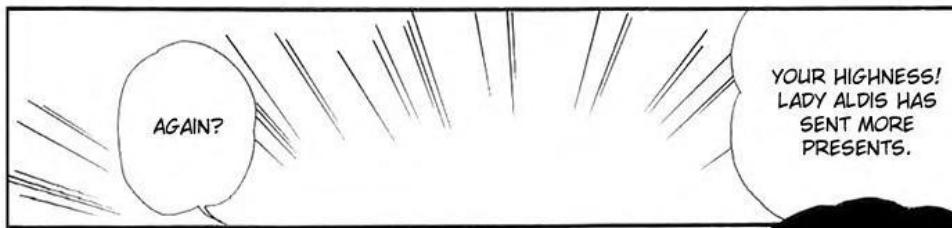
ARE THESE COME.

FROM PRINCESS ALDIS

YOUR HIGHNESS!
LADY ORIGELD!



WHY DOST THOU CALL SO WITH SUCH A CLAMOUR!





WITH THE HEART OF AN ANGEL!

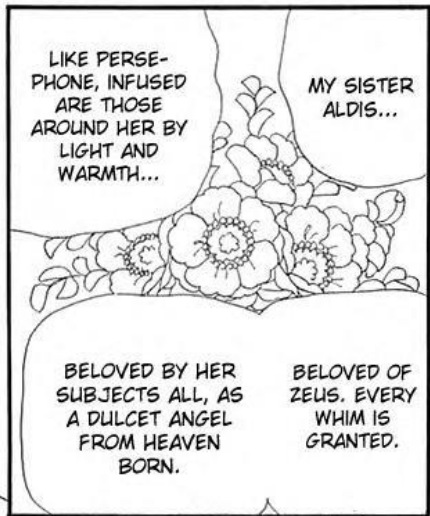
LIKE AN AVATAR OF PERSEPHONE, AND WELL LOVED HAVE I HEARD OF HER.



LOVELY AND TEMPERATE THE WHISPERS SAY...



HOW BEAUTIFUL!



LIKE PERSEPHONE, INFUSED ARE THOSE AROUND HER BY LIGHT AND WARMTH...

MY SISTER ALDIS...

BELOVED BY HER SUBJECTS ALL, AS A DULCET ANGEL FROM HEAVEN BORN.

BELOVED OF ZEUS. EVERY WHIM IS GRANTED.

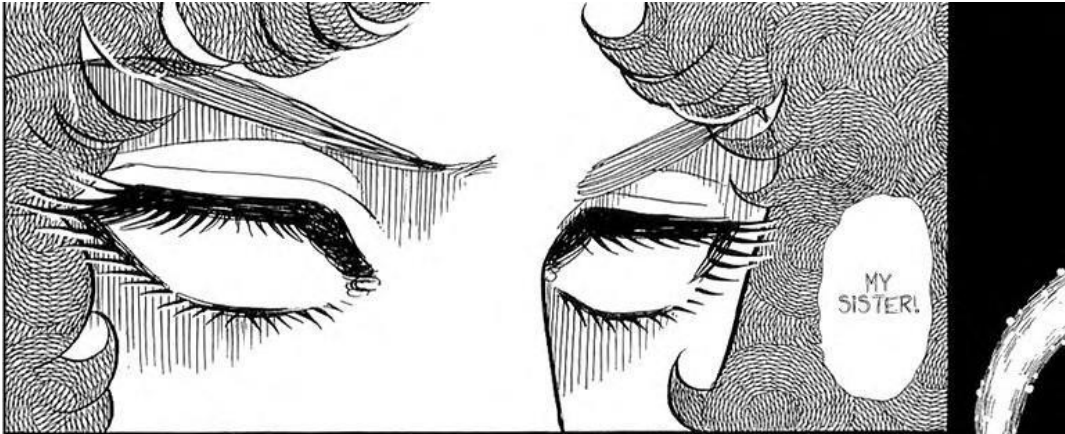
WONDROUS AND GENTLE PRINCESS ALDIS MUST BE!



CRUSH

MY SISTER...

ALDIS...



LTAKO... IS...
IS SHE REALLY
OUR DAUGH-
TER?

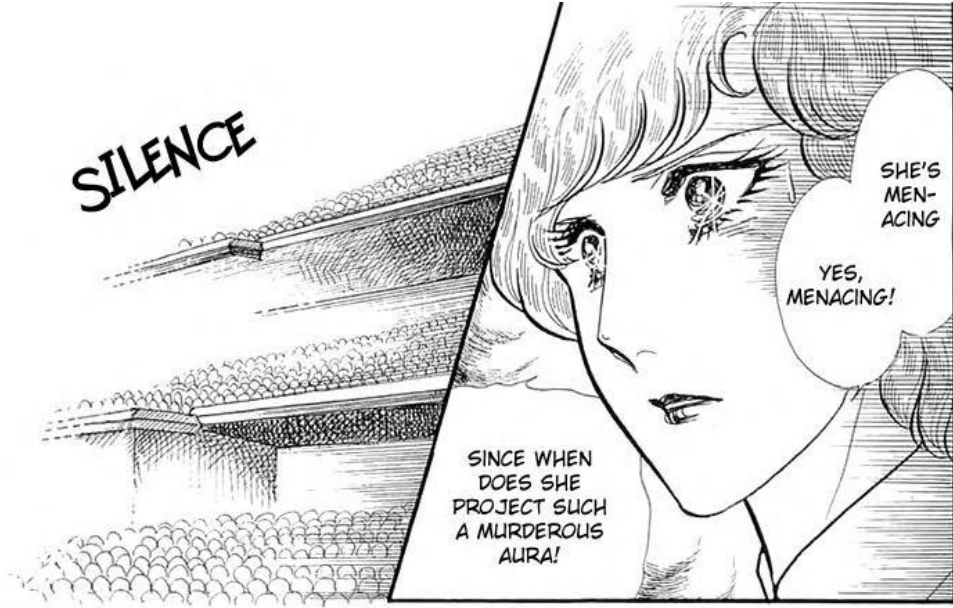
FRUSH

DAR-
LING...

GASP

I CAN
HARDLY
RECOGNIZE
HER!

SILENCE

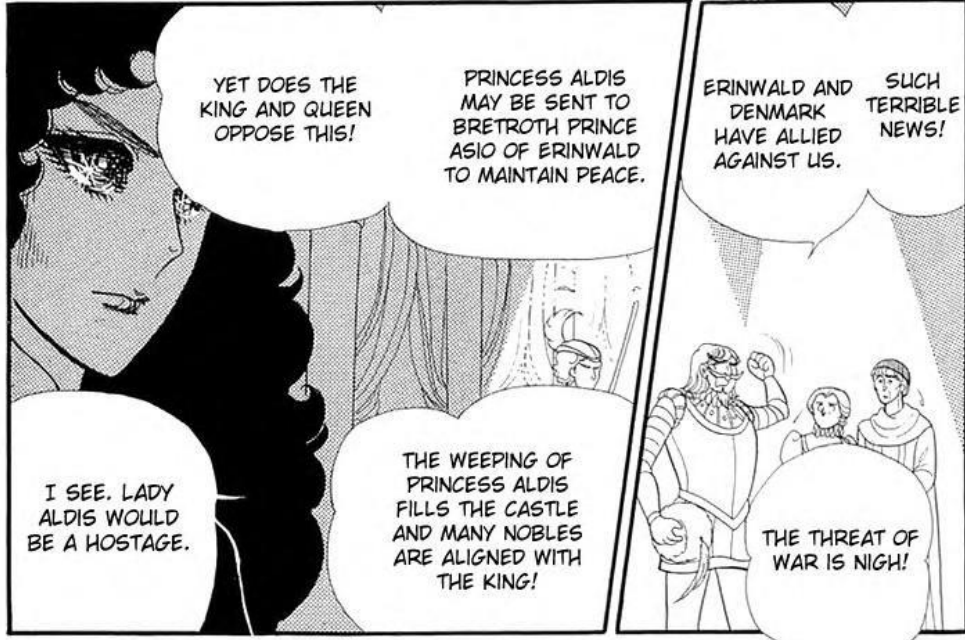


SHE'S MEN-
ACING
YES,
MENACING!

SINCE WHEN
DOES SHE
PROJECT SUCH
A MURDEROUS
AURA!



OH!
WELCOME
BACK,
MILORD!



YET DOES THE
KING AND QUEEN
OPPOSE THIS!

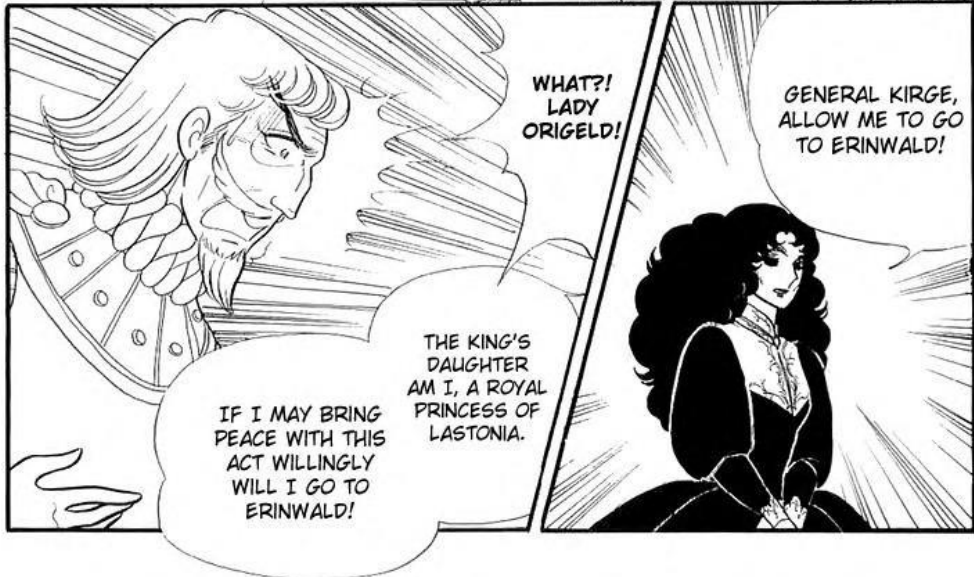
PRINCESS ALDIS
MAY BE SENT TO
BRETROTH PRINCE
ASIO OF ERINWALD
TO MAINTAIN PEACE.

ERINWALD AND
DENMARK
HAVE ALLIED
AGAINST US.
SUCH
TERRIBLE
NEWS!

I SEE. LADY
ALDIS WOULD
BE A HOSTAGE.

THE WEEPING OF
PRINCESS ALDIS
FILLS THE CASTLE
AND MANY NOBLES
ARE ALIGNED WITH
THE KING!

THE THREAT OF
WAR IS NIGH!





BRING ME TO AN AUDIENCE WITH HIS MAJESTY, GENERAL KIRGE.

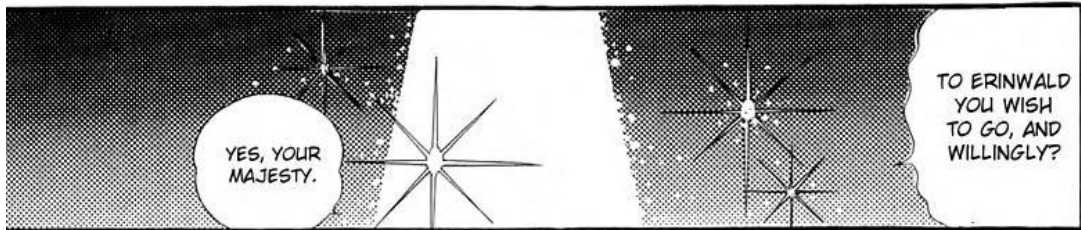


WITH KINDNESS HAS SHE REACHED TO ME ALL THIS WHILE.

THOUGH I HAVE NEVER BRAVED HER COUNTENANCE, DEAR IS SHE TO ME.



LADY ALDIS IS STILL A CHILD... PITY DO I FEEL FOR HER!



YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

TO ERINWALD YOU WISH TO GO, AND WILLINGLY?



LET ME GO IN ALDIS' STEAD!

ORIGELD!



SHOULD'S'T BLOODY CONFLICT ARISE, MORTAL WILL YOU DANGER BE!

THE MARRIAGE IS A SHAM, A HOSTAGE OF LASTONIA WILL YOU BE.

I DO NOT FEAR IT, PRISON COULD HAVE BEEN MY TOMB!



AT ODDS ARE WE, BLOODY RUIN IS IN THE WIND!

BUT MAY I SMOOTH THIS ROAD, IF I BIND MYSELF TO ASIO.

ORIGELD ...

LADY ALDIS IS YOUNGER THAN ME BY TWO YEARS...

THIS SHOULD BE MY DUTY.







YOUR MAJESTY,

ARE YOU REALLY MY FATHER?



W-WHAT QUESTION IS THIS, ORIGELD?

I BESEECH YOU FOR AN ANSWER!



AND WHAT IS THIS REQUEST?

SPEAK.



YES...

MAY YOU ANSWER A QUESTION THAT I POSE TO YOUR MAJESTY?

CONTINUE.





T'IS THAT MEMORY THAT HAS CARRIED ME E'EN TO THIS DAY!

TO THIS DAY, THE MEMORY OF YOUR AFFECTION STILL LINGERS IN MY HEART.

PRIOR TO MY EIGHT YEARS IN THE WHITE DUNGEONS, I WAS YOUR DAUGHTER.



SILENCE

SO DO I SUFFER!

YOUR MAJESTY...



CLEW

YET RUMOURS HAD I HEARD.

A SOURCE OF MIRTH WAS I TO THE DUNGEON KEEPERS...

THAT I AM NOT YOUR DAUGHTER IS WHISPERED AMONGST THE NOBLES AND THE COMMON FOLK.



ALL THE EYES ARE ON HER.

AYUMI-SAN IS GREAT!



FORGIVE ME...

WRONG WAS I....

ORIGELD ...

SUCH AFFECTION AND DEVOTION HAVE YOU GIVEN US, WITH NO ANIMOSITY IMBUED. WHAT IS THERE THAT YOUR LOYALTY CAN RECOMPENSE...



THAT YOU
ACKNOWLEDGE
ME AS YOUR
OWN!

MOST
JOYOUS AM
I, YOUR
MAJESTY!



ORI-
GELD
...



YOU
ARE MY
DAUGH-
TER.

YOU ARE
INDEED MY
DAUGH-
TER...

HEED NOT
WHAT IS
SAID...



YES! THAT I MAY
PROUDLY DISPLAY
YOUR AFFECTION
FOR ALL TO SEE,
AND BE PROTECTED
THIS!

THAT BY ROYAL
DECREE, I AM
YOUR DAUGHTER!



AAH...
FATHER...

YET MAY I
BEG FOR
A SIGN?



A SIGN?





AND THAT I MAY STAND STRONG IN ERINWALD.

SHOULD YOU DECREE ME YOUR ELDEST DAUGHTER, GLADLY WOULD I GIVE MY LIFE.

THIS IS MY REQUEST.

ORIGELD ...



SHOULD'S'T THE SACRIFICE BE ASKED OF ME, THAT I MAY BE KNOWN AS YOUR ROYAL DAUGHTER...

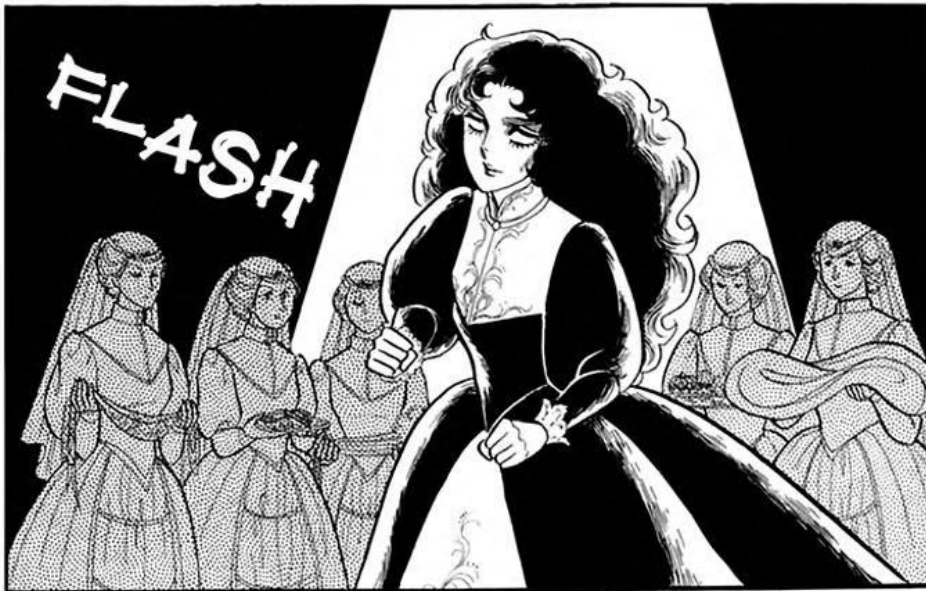
AND AT THE LAST...



YOUR MAJESTY?!

I SHALL GIFT YOU WITH ROYAL TREASURE, THE REINFORBOA! THE SWORD AND THE NECKLACE OF THE DRAGON.

ORIGELD... YOUR WORDS DO YOU CREDIT.





SHE HAS TAKEN THE PRINCESS ALDIS' DUTY.

SHE'LL BE THE HOSTAGE!

HAVE YOU HEARD?

PRINCESS ORIGELD WILL MARRY PRINCE ASIO.

FIRST PRISON, NOW A HOSTAGE!

HIS MAJESTY TREATS HER WITH SUCH CRUELTY!



HOW WILL THE DOWAGER QUEEN RESPOND?

THUS, THE KING HAS ORDERED A BANQUET IN HER HONOUR AND TO GIVE HER A PROPER FARE THEE WELL.



WHAT?

NO, IT IS SAID THAT PRINCESS ORIGELD REQUESTED THE CHANGE.



It's my turn...

CHEER UP, IT'S OUR TURN NOW!

I DON'T EVEN MIND HER TO ECLIPSE THE REST OF US.

AYUMI-SAN'S TALENT IS OUTSTANDING.

OF COURSE!

OH, I'M SO NERVOUS!

And also
with the
Dowager Queen,
Tsukikage-sensei...

It's the first
scene I share
with Ayumi-san!



The
Dowager
Queen...
My
grandmother
in the north-
ern villa...

Although she
has a strong
personality,
she's gentle
to me...

Origeld
...
She's
going to
Erinwald in
my place...

My kind-
hearted
sister...



It's my
turn!

LOOK..

I'm about
to meet
Origeld...

OH!

...and also
grandmother
in the northern
villa!