

SEN-
SEI
...

SNIK
AH,
BOTH THE
CANDIDATES
HAVE
ARRIVED.



HAVE YOU MADE
YOUR DECISION?
DO YOU THINK IT
SHOULD BE
AYUMI-SAN?

THAT'S RIGHT!
TSUKIKAGE-SENSEI,
HAVE YOU DECIDED
WHICH CANDIDATE
WILL BECOME THE
SUCCESSOR TO
THE "CRIMSON
GODDESS"?



OH! THAT'S
THE LEGENDARY
MASTERPIECE
OF THE
THEATRE
WORLD!

HEY, HEY, AREN'T
THEY THE TWO
CANDIDATES FOR
THE "CRIMSON
GODDESS"?



WHAT!



I HAVE
COME
HERE
TODAY,

AND HAVE
ASKED THE
OTHER
CANDIDATE
MAYA KITA-
JIMA HERE
ALSO,

FOR THE
PURPOSE OF
ANNOUNCING
THE SUCCESSOR
OF THE
"CRIMSON
GODDESS".



BUT EVEN IF SHE HAD NOT RECEIVED THE AWARD, I WOULD HAVE MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT ANYWAY.

I WAS ALREADY CONSIDERING THE MATTER WHEN AYUMI-SAN WAS NOMINATED FOR THE ACADEMIC ARTS AWARD.



... IS AYUMI HIMEKAWA.

THE SUCCESSOR TO THE THEATRE WORLD'S LEGENDARY MASTERPIECE, THE "CRIMSON GODDESS"...



TSUKIKAGE SENSEI!

DAD!

Ayumi-san...

I HAVE DECIDED TO GIVE THE OTHER CANDIDATE ONE LAST CHANCE.

HOW-EVER!

AYUMI!

BRILLIANT! THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED OF TSUKIKAGE-SAN, THERE'S NO ONE MORE SUITABLE THAN HER.

ONLY THEN WILL SHE BE A WORTHY OPPONENT FOR AYUMI-SAN; THE TWO WILL AGAIN COMPETE FOR THE ROLE OF THE "CRIMSON GODDESS", AND AFTER THAT THE FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE.

IF WITHIN TWO YEARS SHE CAN WIN THE SAME ACADEMIC ARTS AWARD, OR THE SIMILARLY PRESTIGIOUS BEST ACTOR AWARD GIVEN BY THE JAPANESE PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION...

THAT IS, IF SHE CAN WIN AN AWARD OF THE SAME STANDING AS THE ONE ACHIEVED BY AYUMI-SAN...

IF ANYTHING BEFALLS MY HEALTH IN THESE TWO YEARS,

OR IF THE OTHER CANDIDATE FORFEITS,

Ooooooh!

THEN THE ROLE OF THE "CRIMSON GODDESS" WILL BECOME AYUMI-SAN'S,

AND THE RIGHTS TO THE PLAY WILL ALSO PASS TO HER.





PLEASE TELL ME,

WHAT MUST I DO TO WIN THE ACADEMIC ARTS AWARD OR THE BEST ACTOR AWARD?



GRRR

AH! HOW DARE SHE GET SO CLOSE TO MASUMI-SAN!

EVEN IF SHE'S A KID, THAT'S UNFORGIVABLE!

OUTRAGEOUS!



AND ON TOP OF THAT, THE JAPANESE PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION SELECTS THE PANEL OF JUDGES FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY...

THEY WILL LOOK FOR SOMEONE THEY DEEM WORTHY OF THE AWARD. HAVING TREMENDOUS ACTING ABILITY, OR MAKING A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE PERFORMING ARTS WORLD- THESE THINGS CAN HELP WIN THE AWARD...



PAST ACHIEVEMENTS, POPULARITY WITH THE AUDIENCES, AND REGULARLY PLAYING LEADING ROLES.

THOSE ARE ALL CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION.



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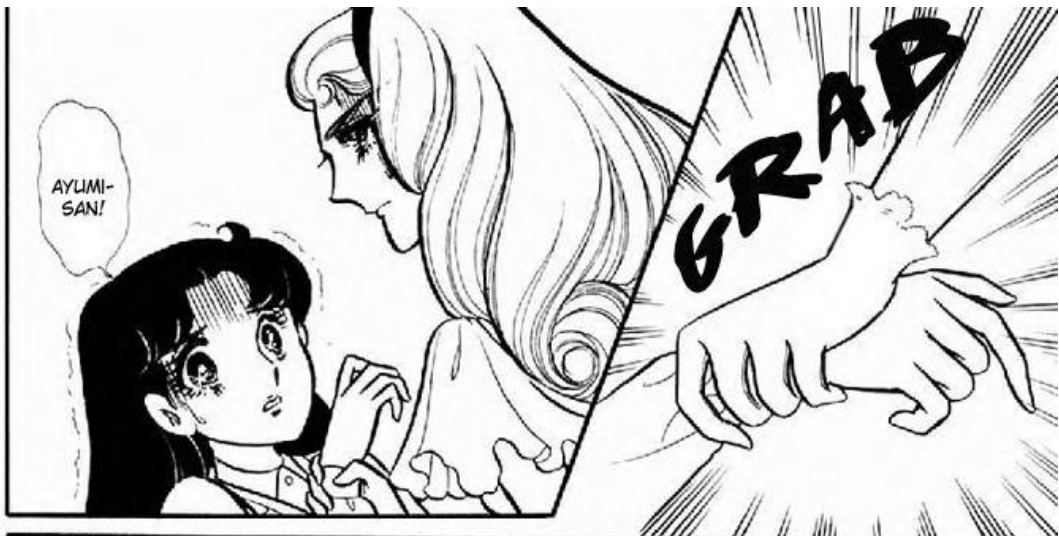
LOOK AT HER, SHE REALLY WANTS TO TRY TO WIN AN AWARD AND BECOME THE NEXT "CRIMSON GODDESS"!

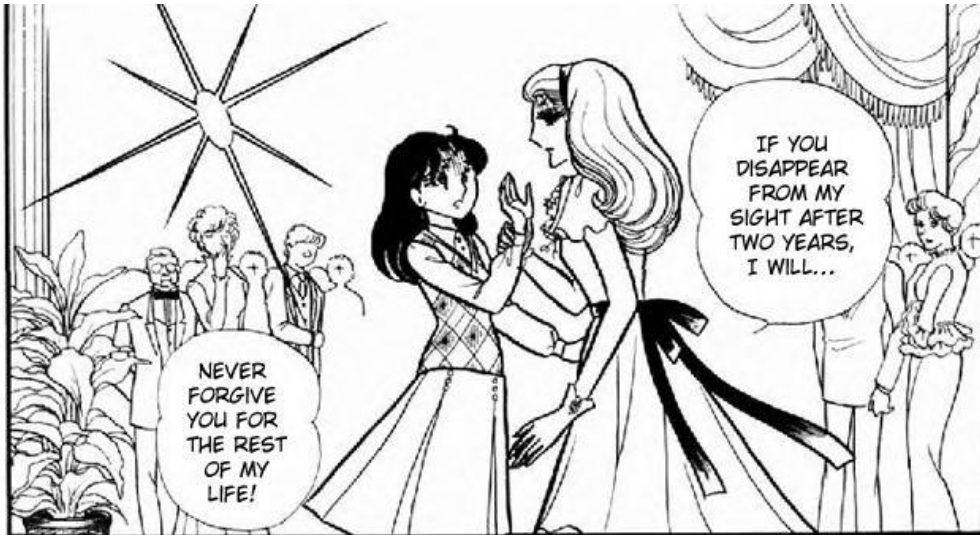
How will I do it? I, who at the moment can't even perform in a production?

ハハハハ
ハハハハ
ハハハハ

Past achievements...popularity with the audiences and... leading roles... To be considered worthy of the award... Tremendous acting ability, and recognized as a significant contributor to the performing arts world...









AND I'VE
ALREADY LOST
TO HER THREE
TIMES...

AYUMI-
SAN!

I PERSONALLY
THINK THAT I'VE
NEVER BEATEN
HER EVEN ONCE.

ENOUGH! DO
YOU REALLY
BELIEVE SHE IS
ONLY AT THAT
LEVEL?



AYUMI-
SAN, WHO IS
HAILED AS
THE YOUNG
FEMALE ACTING
PRODIGY...

HOW
CAN
THAT
BE!



RIGHT NOW,
MAYA DOESN'T
EVEN HAVE ANY
OPPORTUNITIES
TO APPEAR ON
THE STAGE.

PLUS, SHE
DOESN'T
HAVE THE
KIND OF
ACTING
TEACHERS
THAT AYUMI
HIMEKAWA
HAS...



IT'S NOT
POSSIBLE.
NO MATTER
HOW MUCH
EFFORT
SHE PUTS
INTO IT.

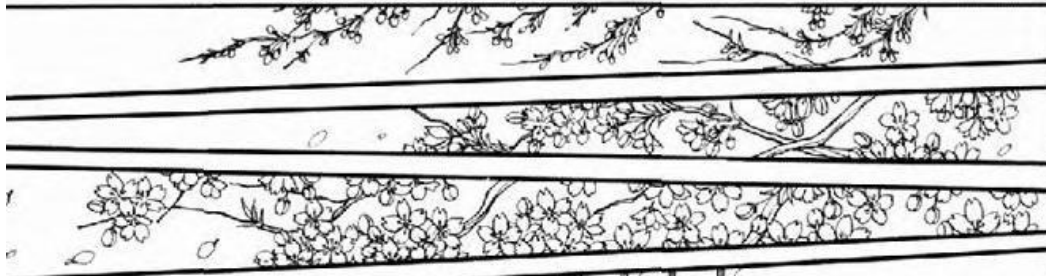
WIN THE
ACADEMIC ARTS
AWARD OR THE
BEST ACTOR
AWARD WITHIN
TWO YEARS...

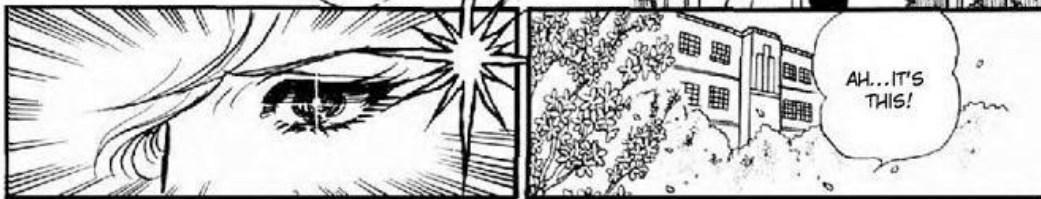
FROM WHERE
SHE'S STANDING
NOW, IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE FOR
MAYA TO WIN
THESE TYPES
OF AWARDS!
NEWCOMERS
NEVER WIN
THESE
AWARDS.

"Crimson Goddess"
...it's so far...
too far away...

Why does Tsukikage-
sensei have to do
this to me?

It doesn't make sense... the
Academic Arts Award, the
Best Actor Award...







I UNDER-
STAND.
I WILL
PASS THE
MESSAGE
ON.



IT'S TIME
TO SAY
GOODBYE
TO THE
OLD GYM
SHED,

I WON'T
BE ABLE TO
PERFORM
PLAYS HERE
ANYMORE;
IT'S SO
DEPRESSING...

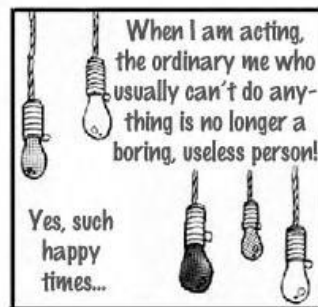


YES.

IT'S SUCH
A PITY THAT
WE HAVE TO
LEAVE THIS
BEHIND.

KUSAKI-
SAN,
YOSHIKAWA-
SAN,

KITAJIMA-
SAN!





BECAUSE WE WANT TO SAY FAREWELL TO A FUTURE ACTRESS.

FROM THE UNDERCLASSMEN TO THE GRADUATING STUDENTS, WE'VE ALL COME TO SEND YOU OFF.

EVERYONE HERE IS YOUR FAN.

CLAP CLAP

IF YOU ACT IN A PLAY, I'LL GO AND SEE IT!

YOU WILL STILL CONTINUE TO ACT AFTER GRADUATION, RIGHT?

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

HEY! "BIANCA, THE FEMALE PIRATE" WAS REALLY GOOD!

CLAP CLAP CLAP

YOU SHOULD DO A ROMANTIC PLAY NEXT TIME!

THANK... THANK YOU...

I HOPE YOU BECOME A BIG STAR SOON!

CLAP CLAP CLAP

CLAP CLAP

DO YOUR BEST AFTER GRADUATION!

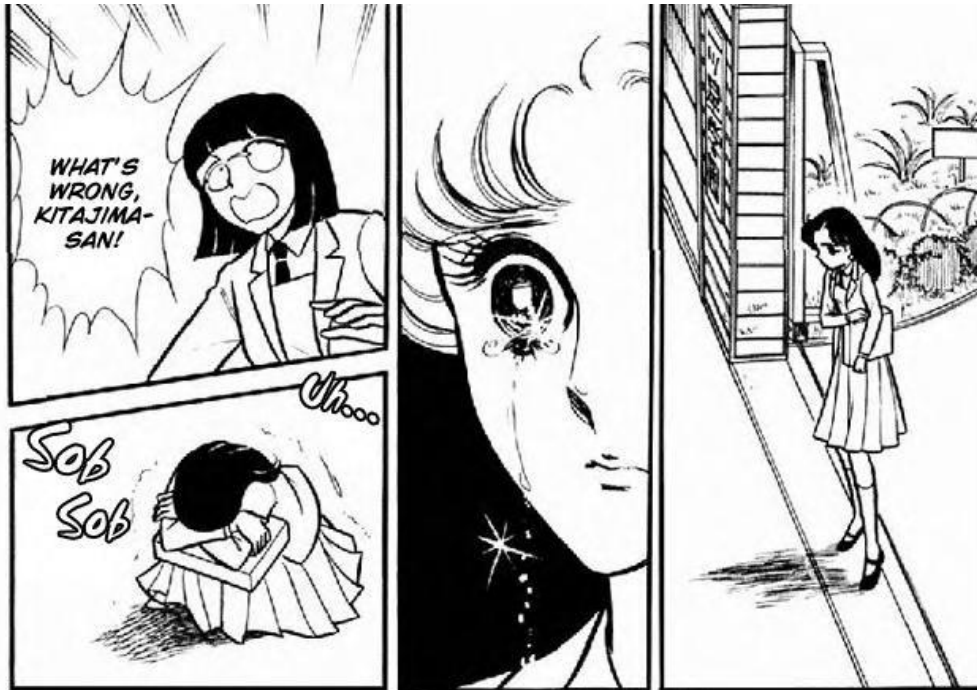
IF YOU'RE IN A PLAY, WE'LL ALL COME TO WATCH!

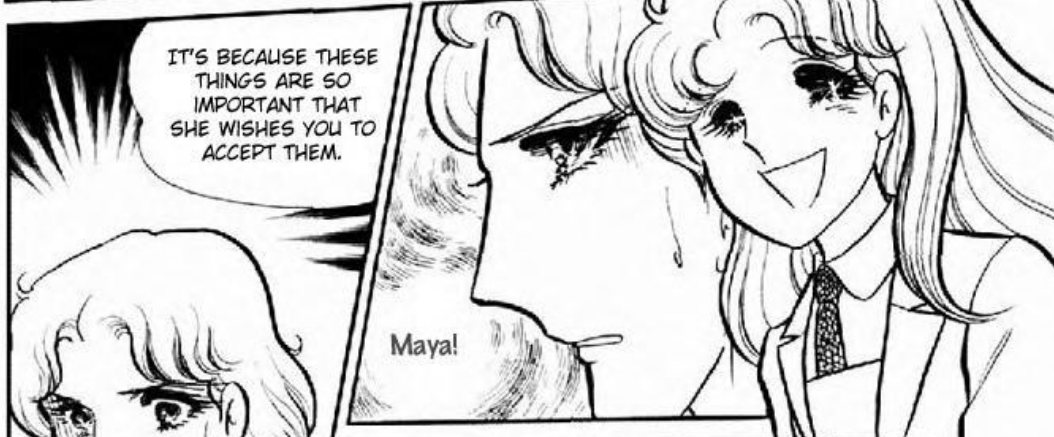
CLAP

AH!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

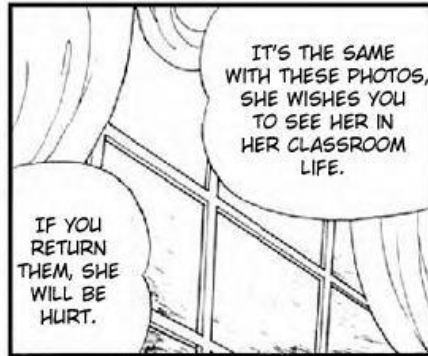








GIVING ME HER GRADUATION DIPLOMA ...



IT'S THE SAME WITH THESE PHOTOS, SHE WISHES YOU TO SEE HER IN HER CLASSROOM LIFE.

IF YOU RETURN THEM, SHE WILL BE HURT.

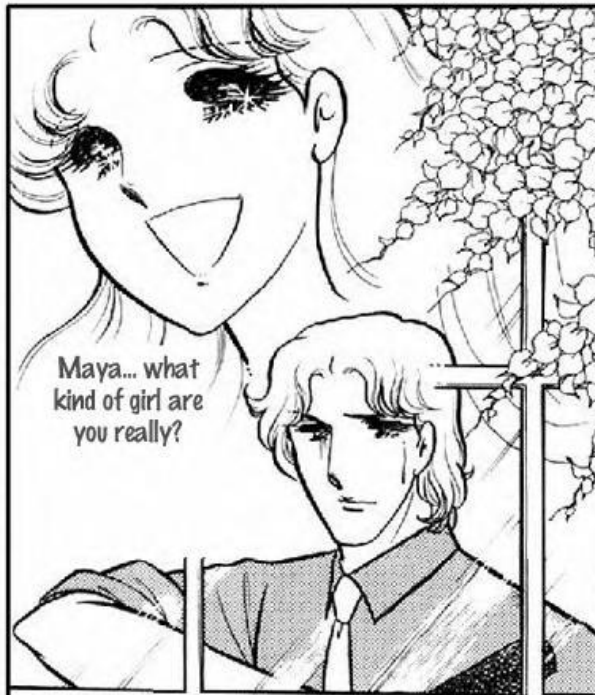


"The Crimson Goddess"

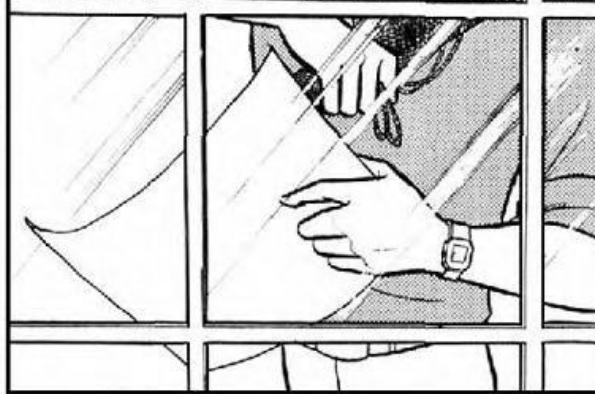


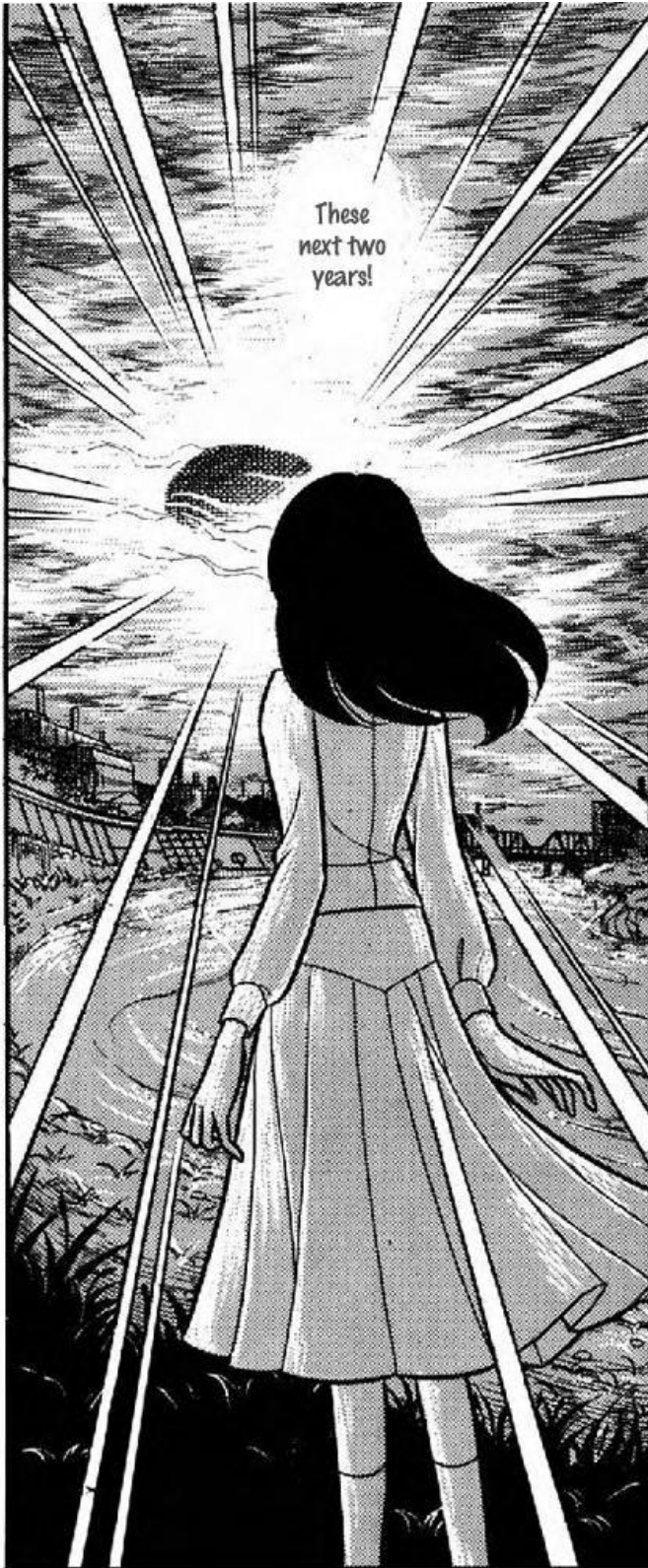
The role that all the superstars in the past have wanted to play, the Crimson Goddess!

The legendary masterpiece of the theatre world.



Maya... what kind of girl are you really?



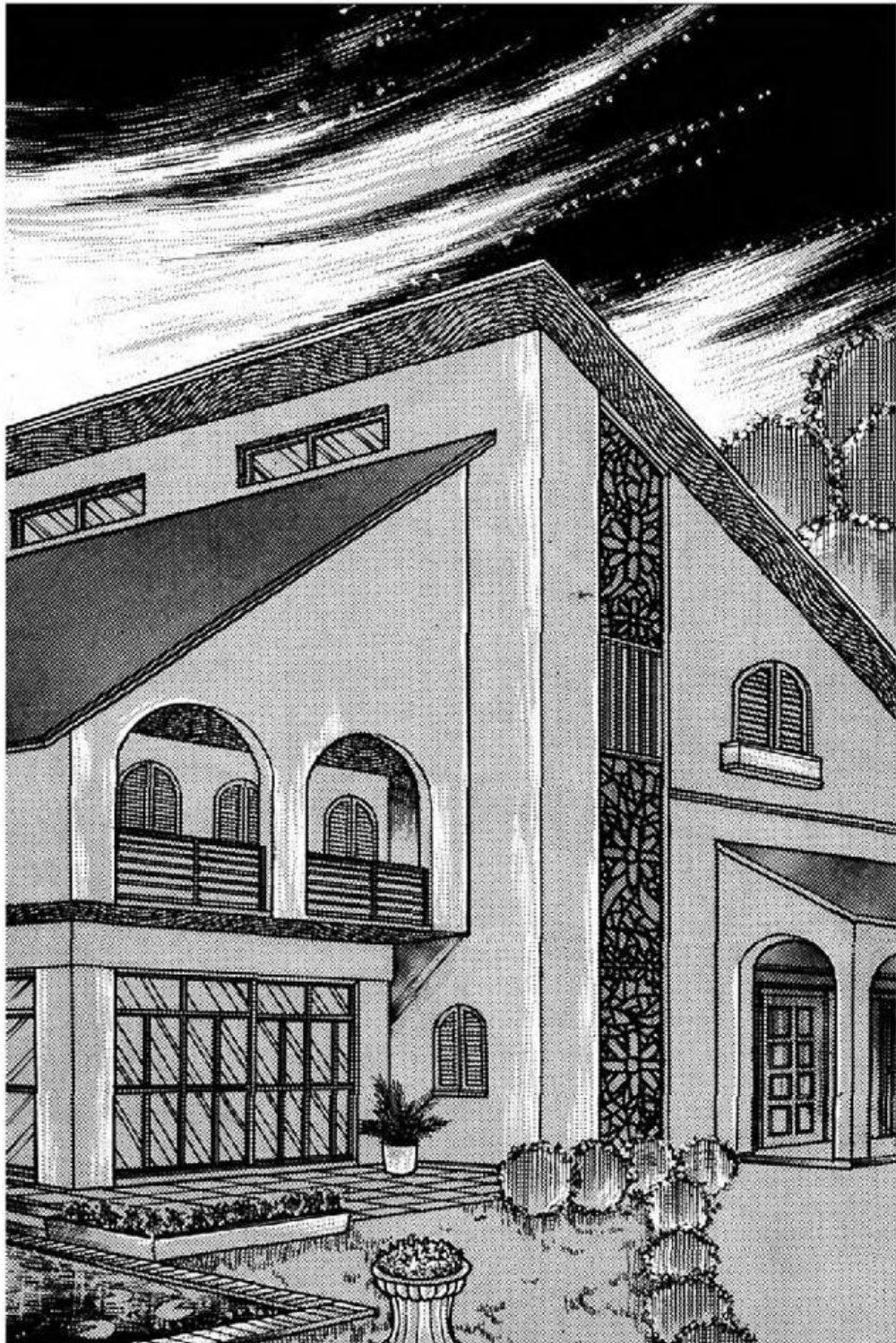


These
next two
years!

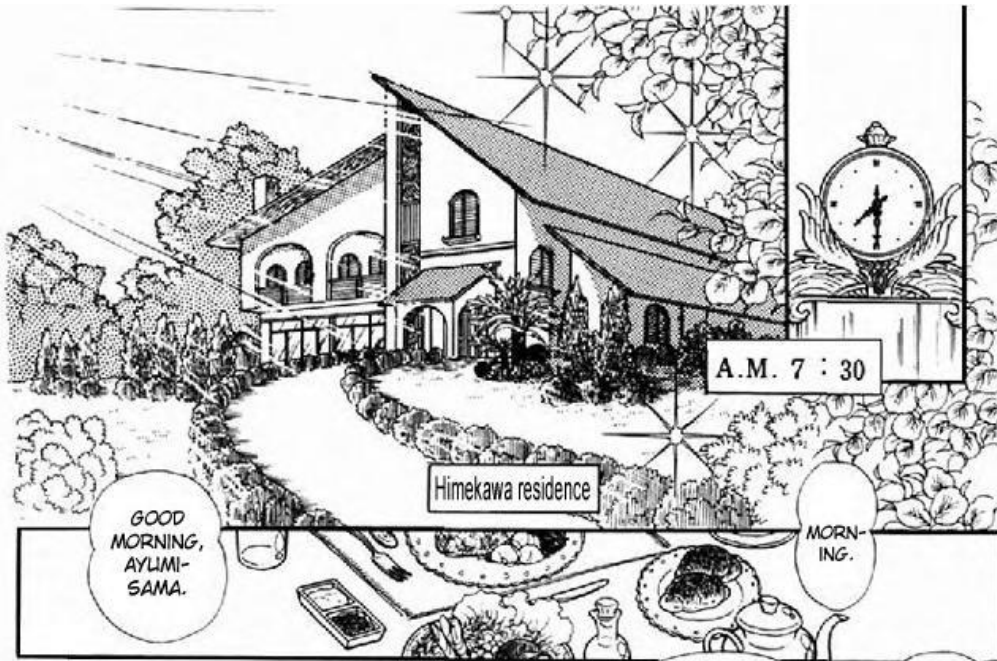


What should I do
in order to take
part in a play?

What do I
have to do
to win an
award?





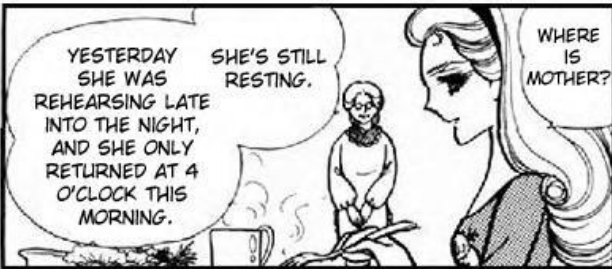


A.M. 7 : 30

Himekawa residence

GOOD MORNING, AYUMI-SAMA.

MORNING.



YESTERDAY SHE WAS REHEARSING LATE INTO THE NIGHT, AND SHE ONLY RETURNED AT 4 O'CLOCK THIS MORNING.

SHE'S STILL RESTING.

WHERE IS MOTHER?



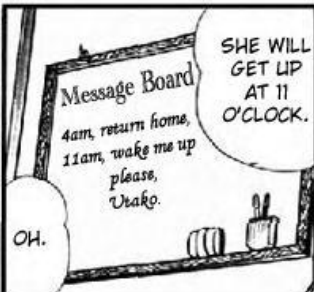
HM, THIS MORNING I WOULD LIKE GRAPEFRUIT JUICE.

WHAT JUICE WOULD YOU LIKE?



IS FATHER STILL SLEEPING AT THE FILM STUDIO?

YES, IT'S THE FIFTH NIGHT ALREADY.



OH.

Message Board
4am, return home,
11am, wake me up
please,
Utako.

SHE WILL GET UP AT 11 O'CLOCK.



AND COFFEE?

AMERICANO, PLEASE.



OH, IS THAT ALL RIGHT? WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR TODAY?

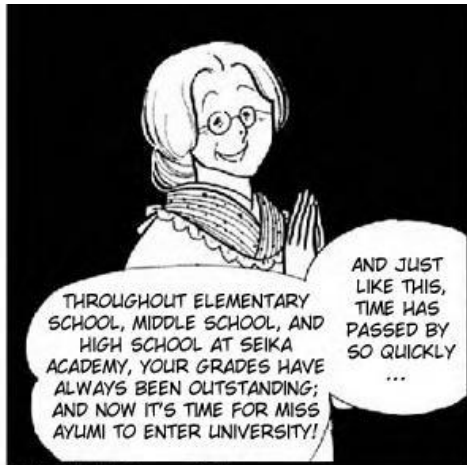
I NEED TO GO DELIVER A CHANGE OF CLOTHES FOR HIM TODAY.

I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO IN THAT AREA ANYWAY.

IN THAT CASE, LET ME DELIVER FATHER'S CLOTHES TO HIM.

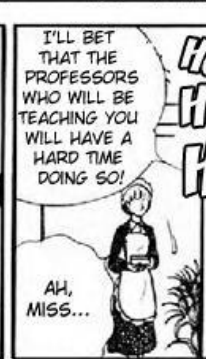


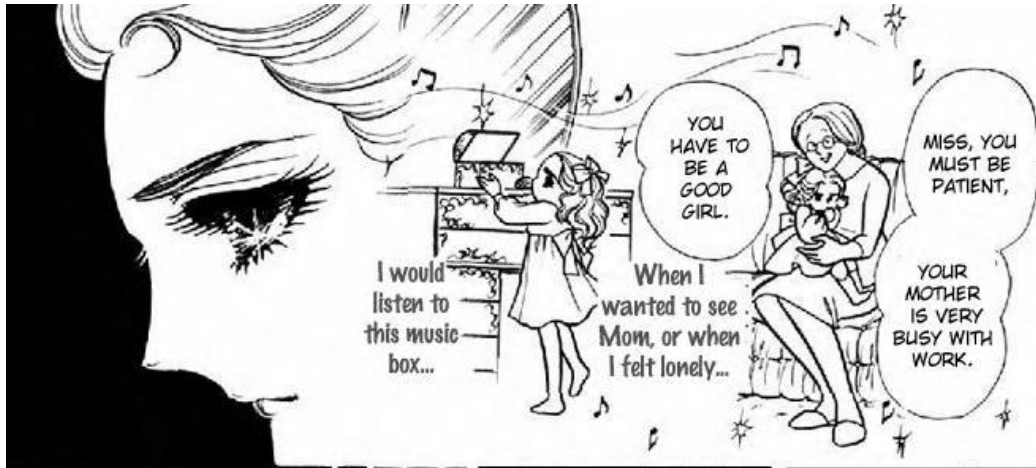
HE WON'T RETURN HOME FOR THE NEXT ONE OR TWO MONTHS AS SOON AS HIS MOVIE BEGINS SHOOTING,



I WASN'T ABLE TO ATTEND MY GRADUATION BECAUSE I HAD A TELEVISION PROGRAM SHOOT SCHEDULED THAT DAY, SO I LEFT THE GRADUATION DIPLOMA WITH A TEACHER AT SCHOOL.

AFTER I GO TO THE SCHOOL TO PICK UP MY GRADUATION DIPLOMA, I'M DROPPING BY THE THEATRE GROUP'S OFFICES TO ENROLL FOR THE YOUTH CLASS AND CLEAR OUT MY LOCKER.





I would listen to this music box...

YOU HAVE TO BE A GOOD GIRL.

When I wanted to see Mom, or when I felt lonely...

MISS, YOU MUST BE PATIENT,

YOUR MOTHER IS VERY BUSY WITH WORK.



Because of this, ever since I was little the house has never been short of guests...

That's right, with a famous movie star mother and movie director father...

The guests who came always complimented me...

Of course, they were there because of mom and dad, but at that time I did not understand this...



OF ALL THE GUESTS WHO HAVE VISITED THIS HOUSE, NOT ONE HAS NEGLECTED TO COMPLIMENT MISS...



I HAVE NEVER REALLY SEEN A LADY AS PRETTY AS AYUMI-SAMA.

EVER SINCE YOU WERE LITTLE, YOU HAVE BEEN MY PRIDE AND JOY.



THIS CHILD WILL BECOME A GREAT BEAUTY IN THE FUTURE!

Everyone praised me, so I believed myself to be very beautiful...

I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A PRETTY CHILD.

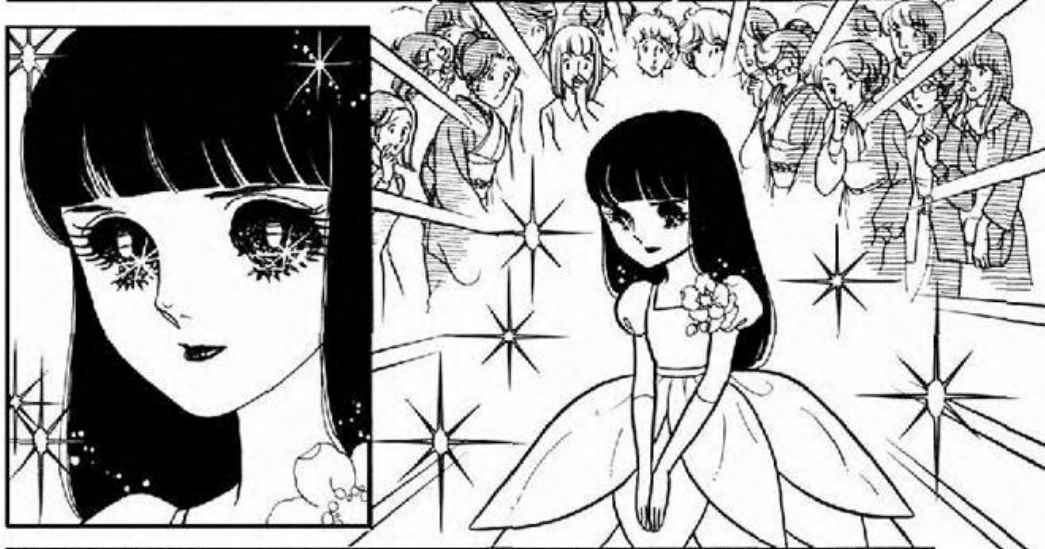
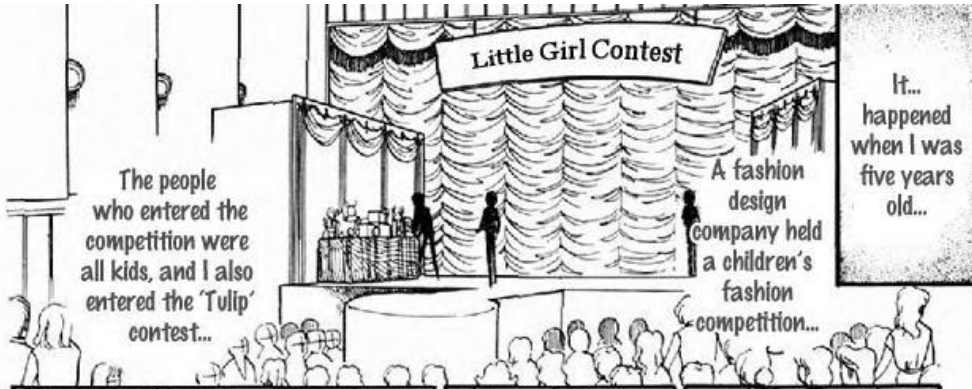
AHA-HAHA!

IS THAT SO?

WHAT A PRETTY YOUNG LADY AYUMI-CHAN IS.

SHE IS SUCH AN ADORABLE YOUNG LADY.





NEVER SAW SUCH A BEAUTIFUL CHILD!

BLAH BLAH BLAH

PRETTY AS A DOLL!

SUCH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL!

The gaze of everyone in the waiting room was centred on that girl...

That girl's beauty stood out from the crowd.



OH? UTAKO HIMEKAWA AND FILM DIRECTOR MITSUGU HIMEKAWA'S DAUGHTER HAS ENTERED THE CONTEST AS WELL?



SHE WILL DEFINITELY GET FIRST PLACE.



BLAH BLAH

BLAH BLAH

THE TULIP PRIZE WILL DEFINITELY GO TO HER.



I THINK THEY'VE PUBLISHED PICTURES OF THEIR FAMILY PORTRAIT IN MAGAZINES BEFORE...

THAT CHILD THERE?

OH, REALLY?



I NEVER KNEW... THERE COULD BE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL...



Nobody came over.

This was the first time something like this happened to me.

And me, not one person spoke to me...



AH! I THINK THAT'S HER.

LOOK!

BLINK



BLAH BLAH

SUCH A CUTE LITTLE LADY. YOUR MOM DIDN'T COME WITH YOU TODAY?

BLAH BLAH

HER EYES ARE VERY MUCH LIKE UTAKO HIMEKAWA'S.

OH! WHAT AN ADORABLE CHILD.

LOOK OVER THERE! THAT'S THE DAUGHTER OF UTAKO HIMEKAWA AND FILM DIRECTOR MITSUGU HIMEKAWA.

BLAH

OH!



AND NOW THE WINNER OF THE TULIP PRIZE!

FLASH

Finally, the contest results were to be announced...

Could it be because... because...

Why? Why has everyone gathered around me?

CLAP CLAP

IN THIRD PLACE, YUKO TANAKA!

Because I am Dad and Mom's child?



Why? Why am I first?

COME! AYUMI-CHAN, PLEASE COME THIS WAY!

COME! AYUMI-CHAN, YOU'VE WON FIRST PLACE!

Why is it not her?



How could this be? She's so pretty!

Second? She got second?

I can't believe she didn't get first place!

BLAH BLAH BLAH



Aaah!

IN SECOND PLACE, YURIKO OWARA!



Aaah!

FIRST PLACE, AYUMI HIMEKAWA!



IT WOULD BE GOOD TO GET MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TO STAR IN OUR COMMERCIALS.

SHE'S GOOD PUBLICITY FOR US.

I TOLD YOU SO.

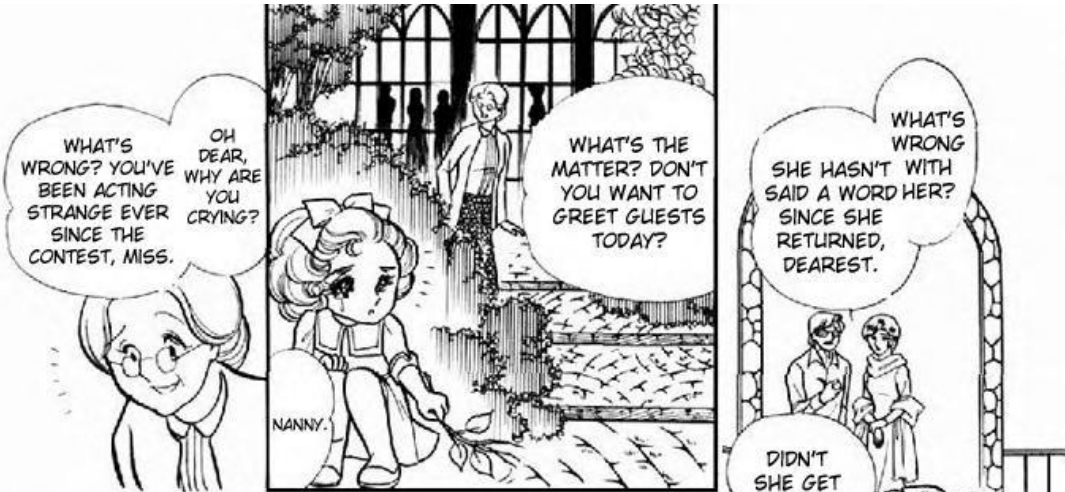
AYUMI-CHAN! LOOK OVER HERE!

UTAKO HIMEKAWA AND FILM DIRECTOR HIMEKAWA'S DAUGHTER GETTING FIRST PLACE, THAT'S A GOOD STORY!

Flash

Flash





WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'VE BEEN ACTING STRANGE EVER SINCE THE CONTEST, MISS.

OH DEAR, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

NANNY.

WHAT'S THE MATTER? DON'T YOU WANT TO GREET GUESTS TODAY?

WHAT'S WRONG SHE HASN'T WITH SAID A WORD HER? SINCE SHE RETURNED, DEAREST.

DIDN'T SHE GET FIRST PLACE IN THAT CONTEST?



IF YOU LIE TO ME, I WILL NEVER TALK TO YOU AGAIN TILL THE DAY I DIE!

BUT YOU MUST TELL ME THE TRUTH.

NANNY, I...

I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK YOU...



BUT IS THAT BECAUSE I AM DAD AND MOM'S CHILD? ALL THE GUESTS WHO COME HERE SAY THAT AYUMI IS PRETTY,

IT MUST BE, IT MUST BE LIKE THAT!

ISN'T THAT WHY THEY ALL NEED TO PRAISE ME?

DAD IS AMAZING, AND MOM IS A FAMOUS MOVIE STAR.



OH, WHAT'S THE MATTER?



THAT IS... NANNY ...

AM I REALLY A PRETTY GIRL?

DON'T LAUGH! NANNY!

OH, AND I WONDERED WHAT IT COULD BE, MISS!

Ah-



LOOK, HERE'S A GIRL WHO SURPRISES EVEN THE FISH WITH HOW PRETTY SHE IS!

LOOK INTO THE POND.

RADIANT EYES, LONG, SLENDER EYE-BROWS,

CHERRY RED LIPS...

A FINE, STRAIT NOSE,



BUT AYUMI-SAMA IS PRETTY,

THERE MIGHT BE PEOPLE LIKE THAT AMONGST THEM...

MISS AYUMI, I WILL SPEAK PLAINLY.

THAT'S THE TRUTH.

NANNY ...



THERE, THERE, MISS!

I LOVE YOU!



NANNY!



YOU'RE STILL YOUNG, BUT WHEN AYUMI-SAMA GROWS UP,

YOU WILL BE EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN YOUR MOTHER.



IT'S NOT BAD TO WAKE HER UP THIS WAY ONCE IN A WHILE.



Click



AH, SHE WILL BE SO SURPRISED!



NANNY, COULD YOU PUT THIS BY MOTHER'S PILLOW WHEN IT GETS TO 11 O'CLOCK?

KEEP THE LID OPEN.