





WELCOME
TO THE
BIRTHPLACE
OF THE
CRIMSON
GODDESS...

...MAYA AND
AYUMI-SAN.



THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME REMEMBER SUCH A NOSTALGIC SIGHT, TSUKIKAGE-SAN.

AH!

TSUKIKAGE -SENSEI!

PRESI -DENT!

GENZO-SAN!

SO, BEFORE YOU KNEW IT, YOU ALL GATHERED HERE?

I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU ALL.

ME TOO.

I FOLLOWED THE SOUND OF THE TSU-ZUMI...

WHEN I WOKE UP I COULDN'T FIND ANYONE SO I DECIDED TO GET UP AND LOOK FOR THEM.



YOU LOOK FINE TOO, PRESIDENT.
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE.

AND ALSO FOR BRINGING THESE TWO GIRLS HERE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, TSUKIKAGE-SAN.
I AM HAPPY TO SEE THAT YOU ARE IN GOOD HEALTH.



THANK YOU, AYUMI-SAN.
I KNEW YOU'D COME.



Maya...



TSUKIKAGE-SENSEI
I AM HAPPY TO BE HERE... ..

...AND TO FIND YOU IN GOOD HEALTH...

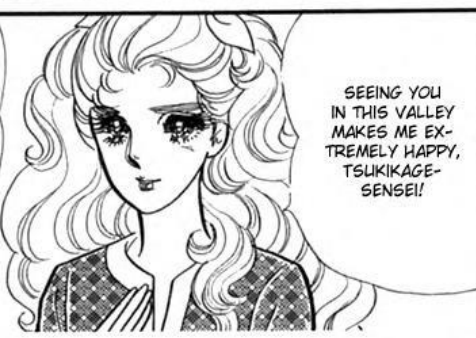
...IN THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS...



OH, SENSEI ...!



I AM SO NERVOUS! SOON, IN THIS PLACE, YOU WILL BEGIN TEACHING ME THE ROLE OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS.



SEEING YOU IN THIS VALLEY MAKES ME EXTREMELY HAPPY, TSUKIKAGE-SENSEI!



THE PLUM TREES ARE IN FULL BLOOM FOR HALF A YEAR.

THIS VALLEY IS A MYSTERIOUS PLACE.

THIS IS NOT THE TREE FROM WHICH THE SACRED STATUE WAS CARVED, BUT...

IT IS SPLENDID. I CAN'T TELL HOW OLD IT IS, BUT IT SHOULD BE AS OLD AS THE ONE FROM THE LEGEND.

COULD THIS BE THE CRIMSON PLUM TREE WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS DWELLS?

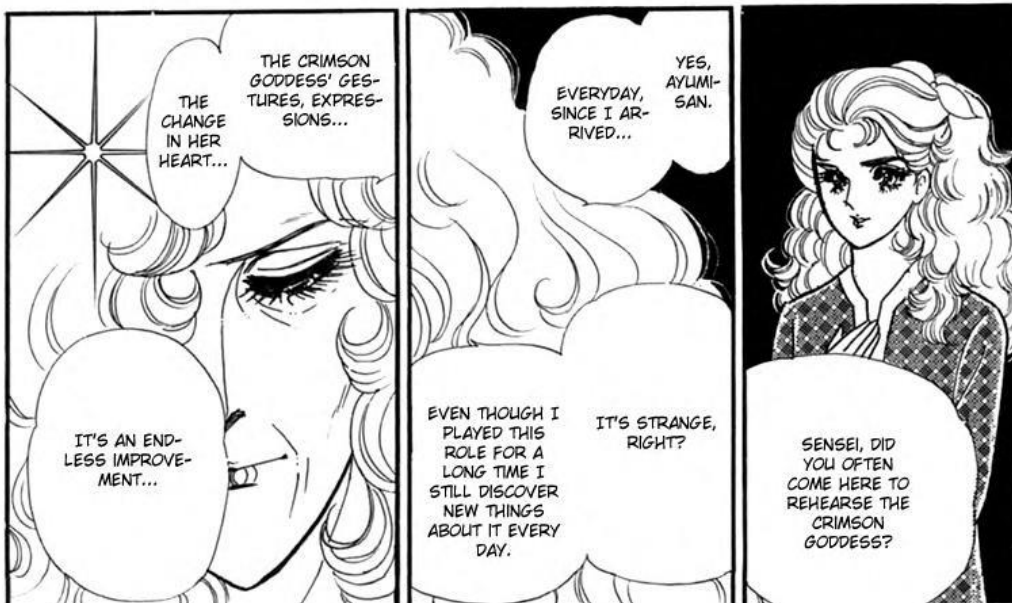
IT MUST BE DUE TO THE CONSTANT TEMPERATURES AND UNCHANGING CLIMATE.

AS IF THE SEASONS HAD STOPPED.

ICHIREN GOT HIS INSPIRATION FROM THIS TREE TO WRITE THE CRIMSON GODDESS!

IT KEEPS LIVING AND OFFERING US THESE MANY CRIMSON BLOSSOMS.

IT SURELY IS A SACRED TREE.



THE CRIMSON GODDESS' GESTURES, EXPRESSIONS... THE CHANGE IN HER HEART...

IT'S AN ENDLESS IMPROVEMENT...

EVERYDAY, SINCE I ARRIVED...

EVEN THOUGH I PLAYED THIS ROLE FOR A LONG TIME I STILL DISCOVER NEW THINGS ABOUT IT EVERY DAY.

IT'S STRANGE, RIGHT?

YES, AYUMI-SAN.

SENSEI, DID YOU OFTEN COME HERE TO REHEARSE THE CRIMSON GODDESS?



YOUR PERFORMANCE EARLIER WAS WONDERFUL.

I'M READY TO DO ANYTHING.

FOR A LONG TIME I DREAMED OF THE DAY WHEN I COULD BE TAUGHT BY YOU.

DON'T EVER GET TIRED OF TRYING.

BUT YOU HAVE YOUR OWN CRIMSON GODDESS.

IT LOOKED AS IF THE WIND WAS GENTLY CARESSING THE PLUM TREE BLOSSOMS ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO WIND BLOWING.

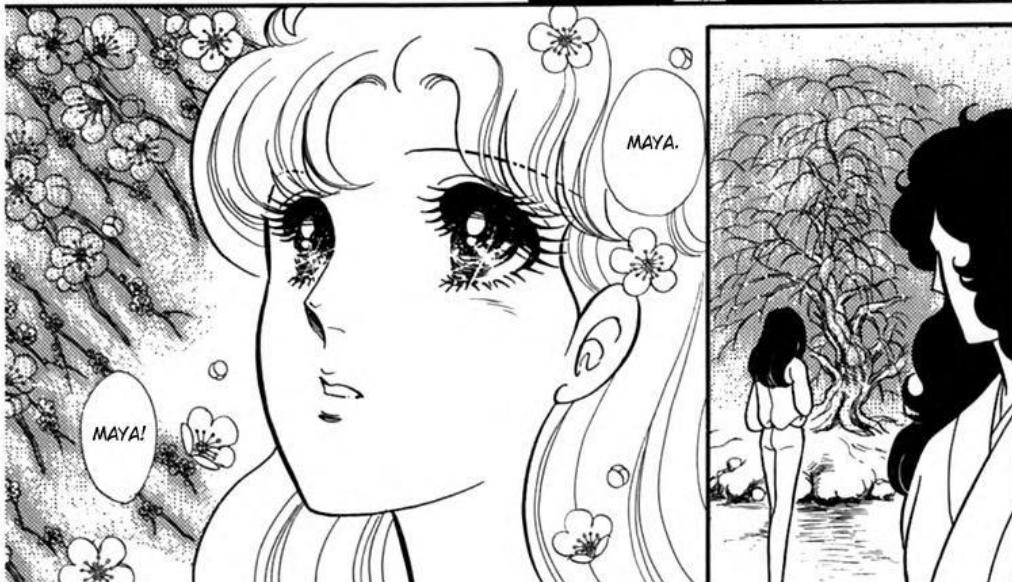
I FEEL HONOURED TO BE GUIDED BY YOU, TSUKI-KAGE-SENSEI.

YES, TSUKI-KAGE-SENSEI.

YOU MUST AIM FOR PERFECTION.



THANK YOU, AYUMI-SA...



MAYA.

MAYA!

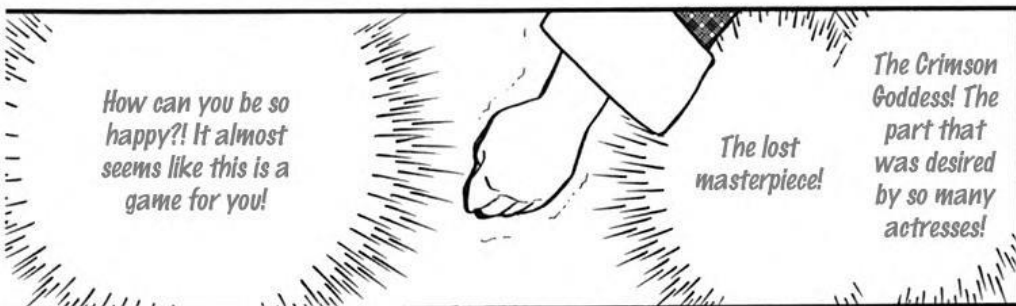




While I'm filled with tension at the thought of the challenge the Crimson Goddess is!

What kind of person are you!

You are excited to become the spirit of a plum tree!



How can you be so happy?! It almost seems like this is a game for you!

The lost masterpiece!

The Crimson Goddess! The part that was desired by so many actresses!



Ah, why do you exist...?!

When I compare myself to you I notice how futile my efforts are.

If I look at you I start to feel self conscious.

NOW I SHALL TELL YOU A BIT OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS' STORY.

Why...?!

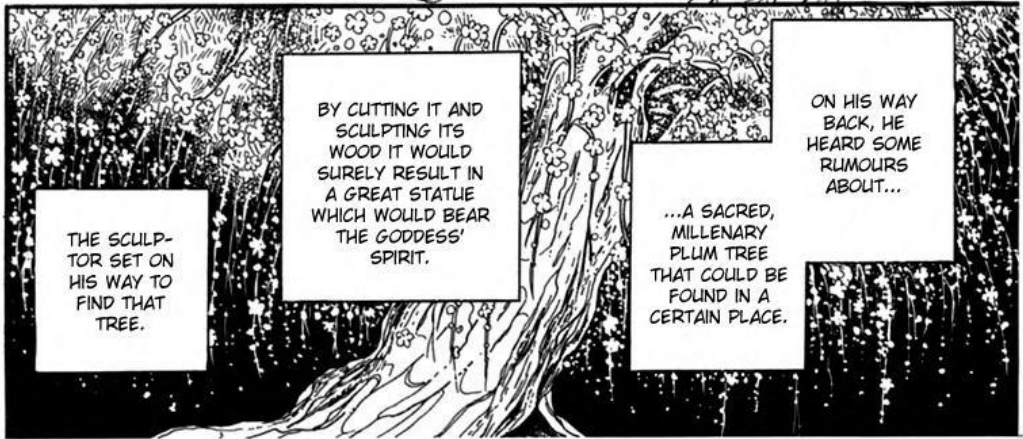


A LONG TIME AGO
WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS TORN APART BY WAR...

...THE EMPEROR ORDERED A SCULPTOR THAT SPECIALISED IN SACRED IMAGES TO MAKE THE STATUE OF A GODDESS TO PLEAD TO HER FOR PEACE.

THE SCULPTOR MADE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS BUT NONE SATISFIED HIM.

HE WONDERED HOW HE COULD MAKE A STATUE IN WHICH THE SPIRIT OF THE GODDESS WOULD LIVE.



THE SCULPTOR SET ON HIS WAY TO FIND THAT TREE.

BY CUTTING IT AND SCULPTING ITS WOOD IT WOULD SURELY RESULT IN A GREAT STATUE WHICH WOULD BEAR THE GODDESS' SPIRIT.

...A SACRED, MILLENNARY PLUM TREE THAT COULD BE FOUND IN A CERTAIN PLACE.

ON HIS WAY BACK, HE HEARD SOME RUMOURS ABOUT...



IT WAS THE CRIMSON GODDESS, THE MILLENNARY SPIRIT OF THE PLUM TREE...

THEN HE MET WITH A YOUNG MAIDEN.



ALL RIGHT.



...SO THAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND HER AND EXPRESS YOURSELVES...

STARTING FROM NOW I SHALL TEACH YOU SOMETHING ABOUT THE CRIMSON GODDESS ...

...AS THIS CHARACTER AND THUS ACT IN THE PLAY.



COME NOW!



A PLUM TREE?

SO, YOU TWO, BECOME A PLUM TREE.







My hips and right leg are aching! My arms feel heavy and my body is stiff!

How...how much longer must we continue to hold this pose..?!

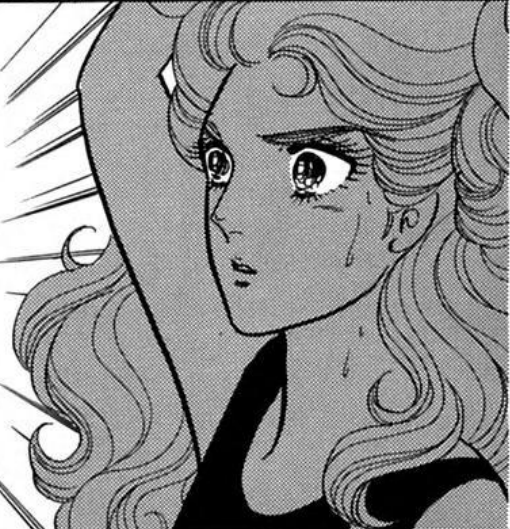
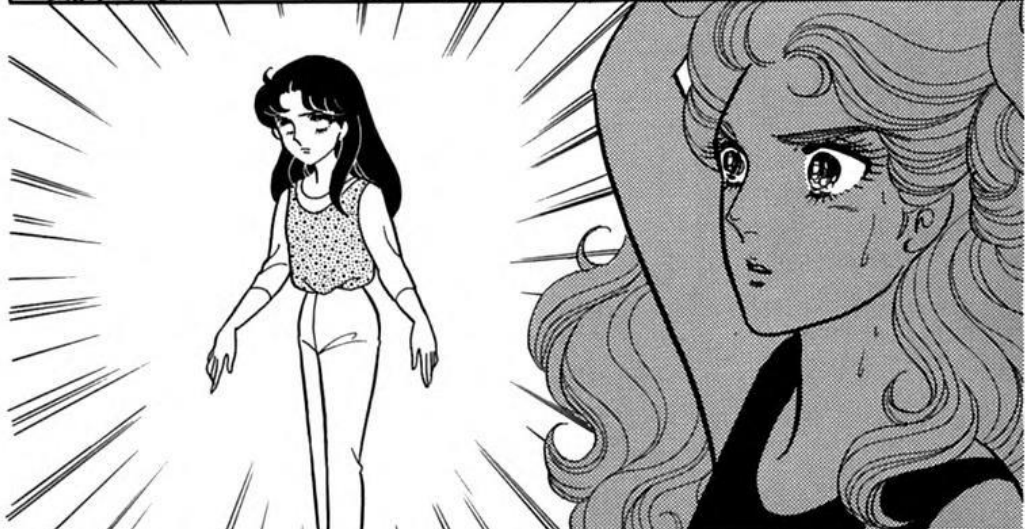
We've been like this for a long time.

I am not a true plum tree...

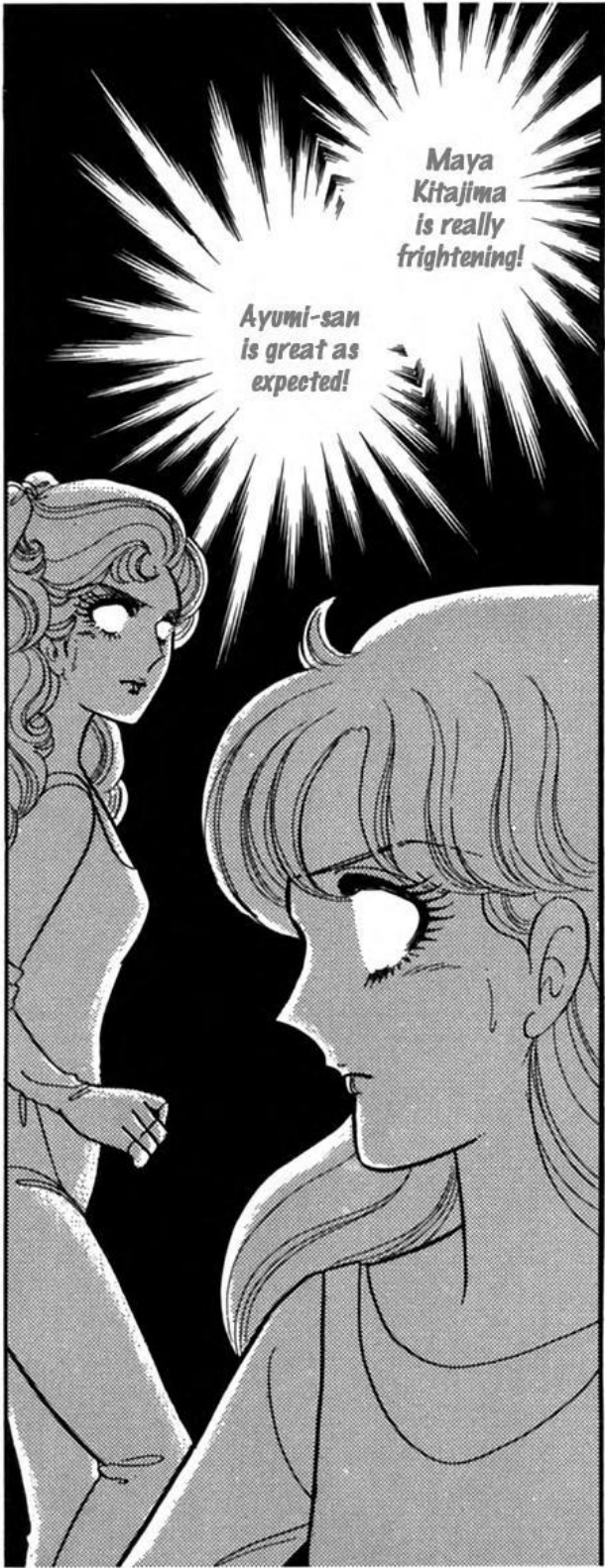


Ah!

A true plum tree...







Ayumi-san
is great as
expected!

Maya
Kitajima
is really
frightening!



IN THIS CASE
AYUMI'S POSE
SEEMS MORE
FITTING.

BUT ON THE
STAGE YOU
WON'T HAVE
TO MAINTAIN
IT FOR SO
LONG.



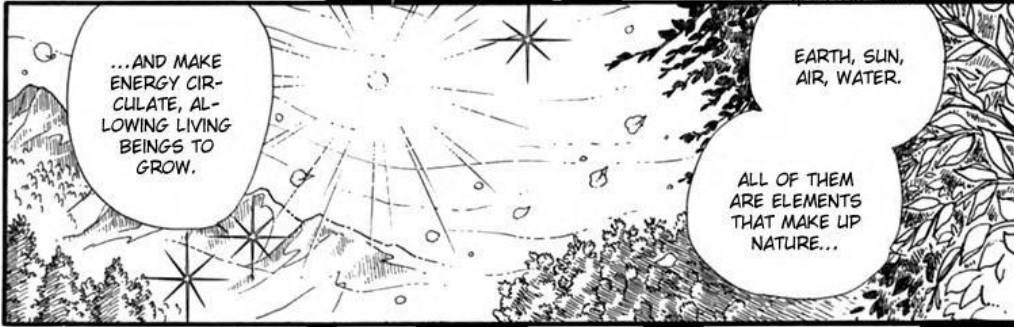
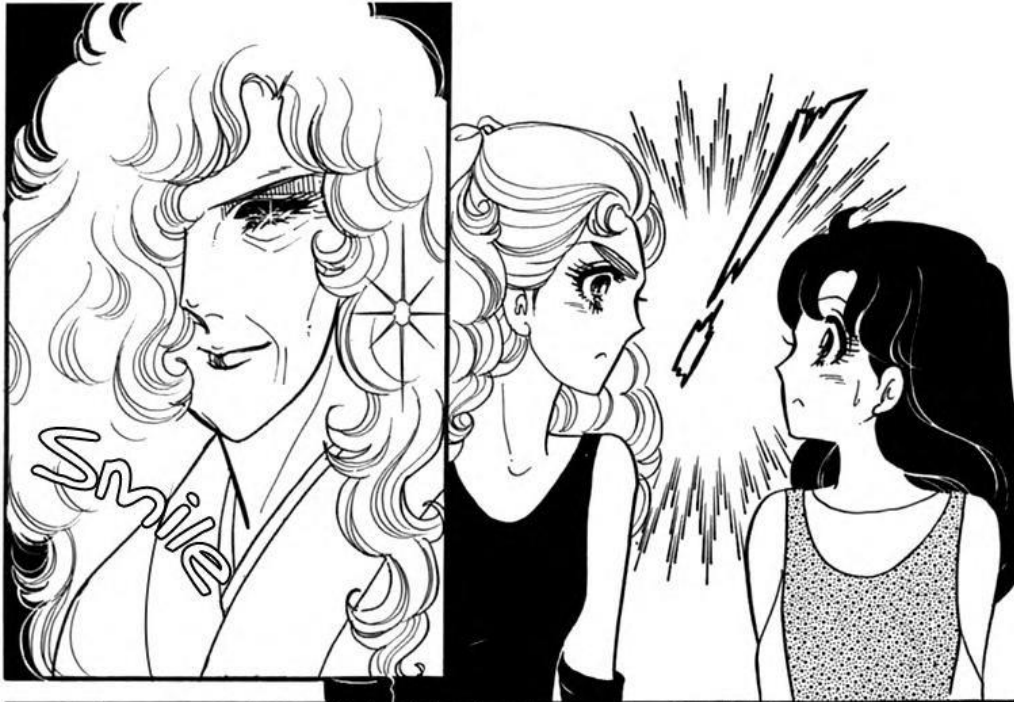
More
fitting...



With the passing time my
plum tree has brought for-
ward the fragility of a
human being while on the
contrary Maya seemed
even more like a tree...

Why...
?





...AND MAKE ENERGY CIRCULATE, ALLOWING LIVING BEINGS TO GROW.

EARTH, SUN, AIR, WATER.

ALL OF THEM ARE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE UP NATURE...



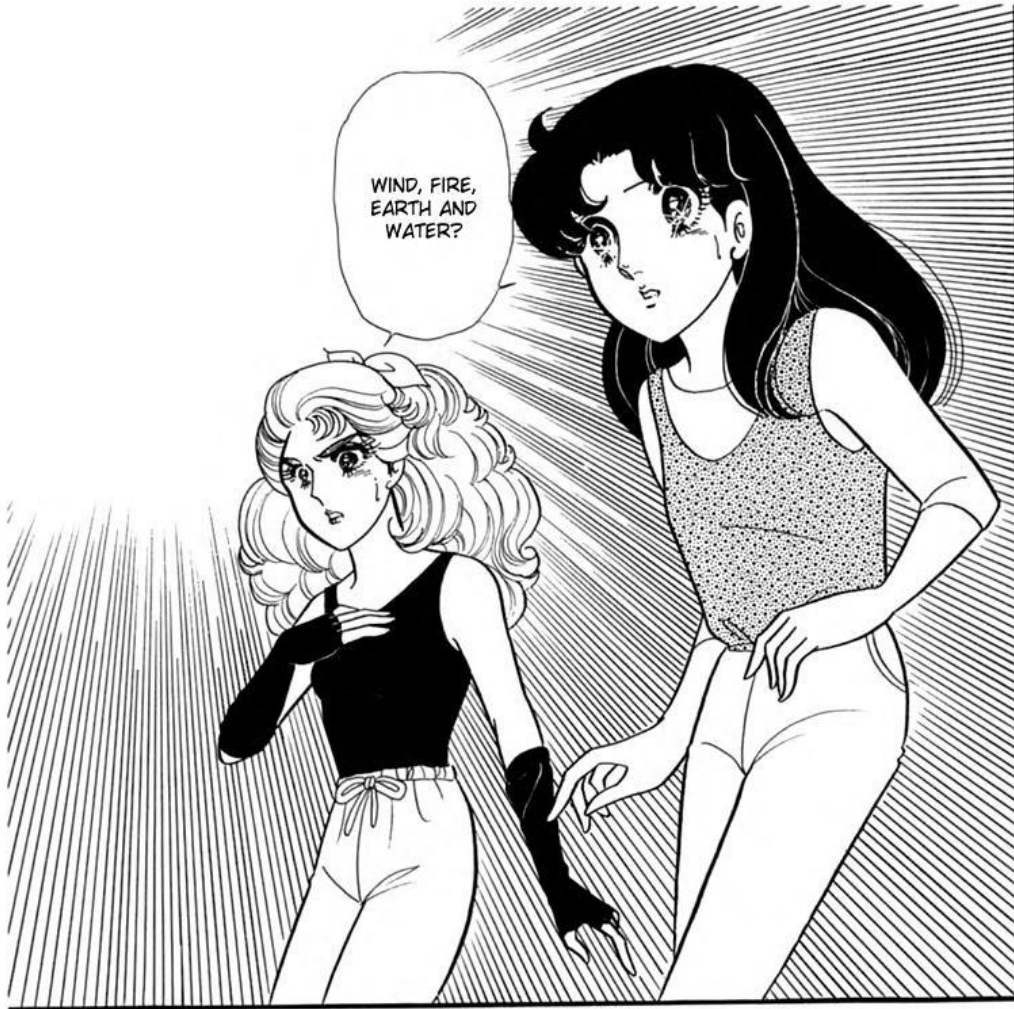
EARTH ...
WATER ...

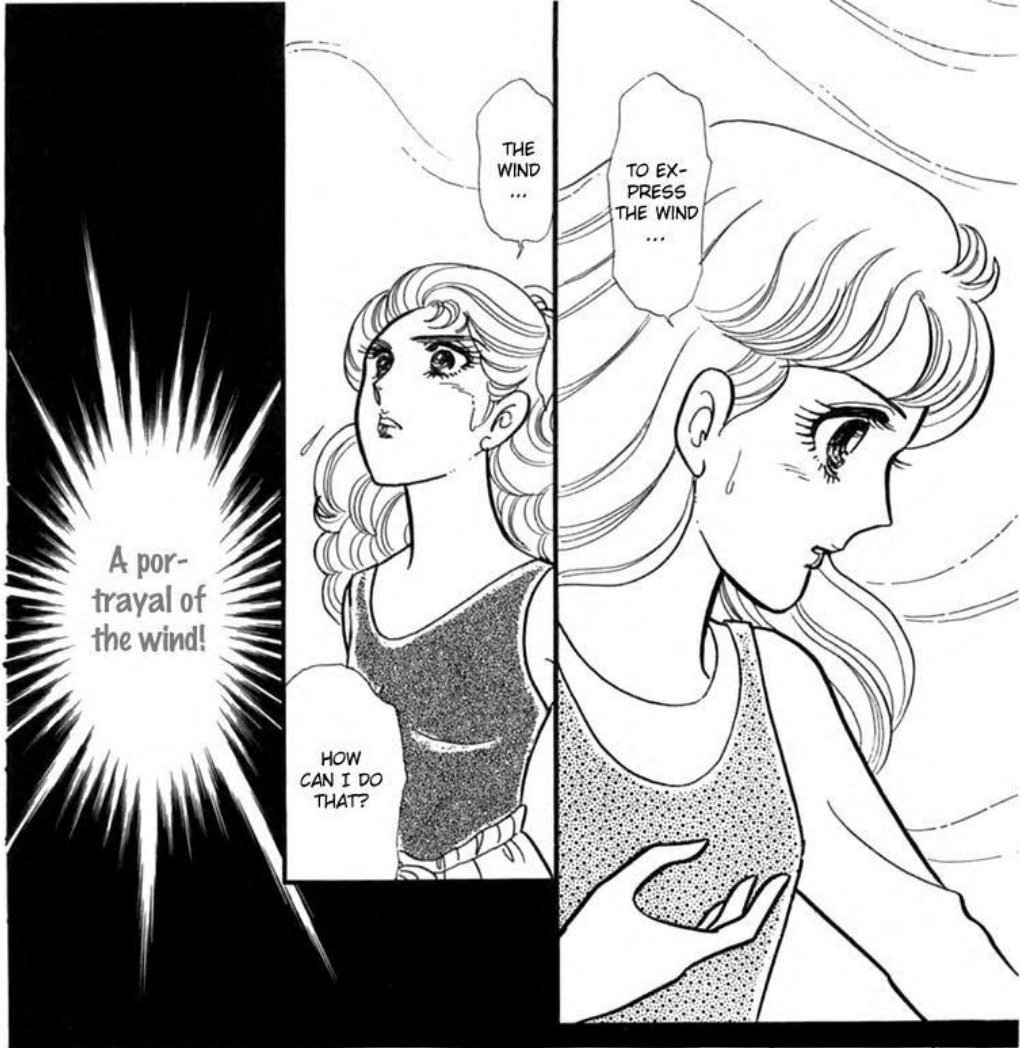
FIRE ...

...THAT IS, WIND ...

IN THIS MONTH I'LL HAVE YOU STUDY AND UNDERSTAND ALL THESE ELEMENTS...

IF YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO EXPRESS THEM AND ULTIMATELY YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO INTERPRET THE CRIMSON GODDESS.





A portrayal of the wind!

THE WIND ...

TO EXPRESS THE WIND ...

HOW CAN I DO THAT?



HAVE A SAFE TRIP.

GOOD-BYE THEN.

OF COURSE, PRESIDENT.

I HAVE TO RETURN TO TOKYO BUT I LEAVE THEM IN YOUR CARE, TSUKIKAGE-SAN.

I'D LIKE TO STAY AND WATCH THE GIRLS BUT I CAN'T.

I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO COME AND GET THEM BACK SO I CAN SEE THEIR PROGRESS IN THEIR CRIMSON GODDESS.

Ha
Ha
Ha





Until I've
trained the girls
for the part of
the Crimson
Goddess!

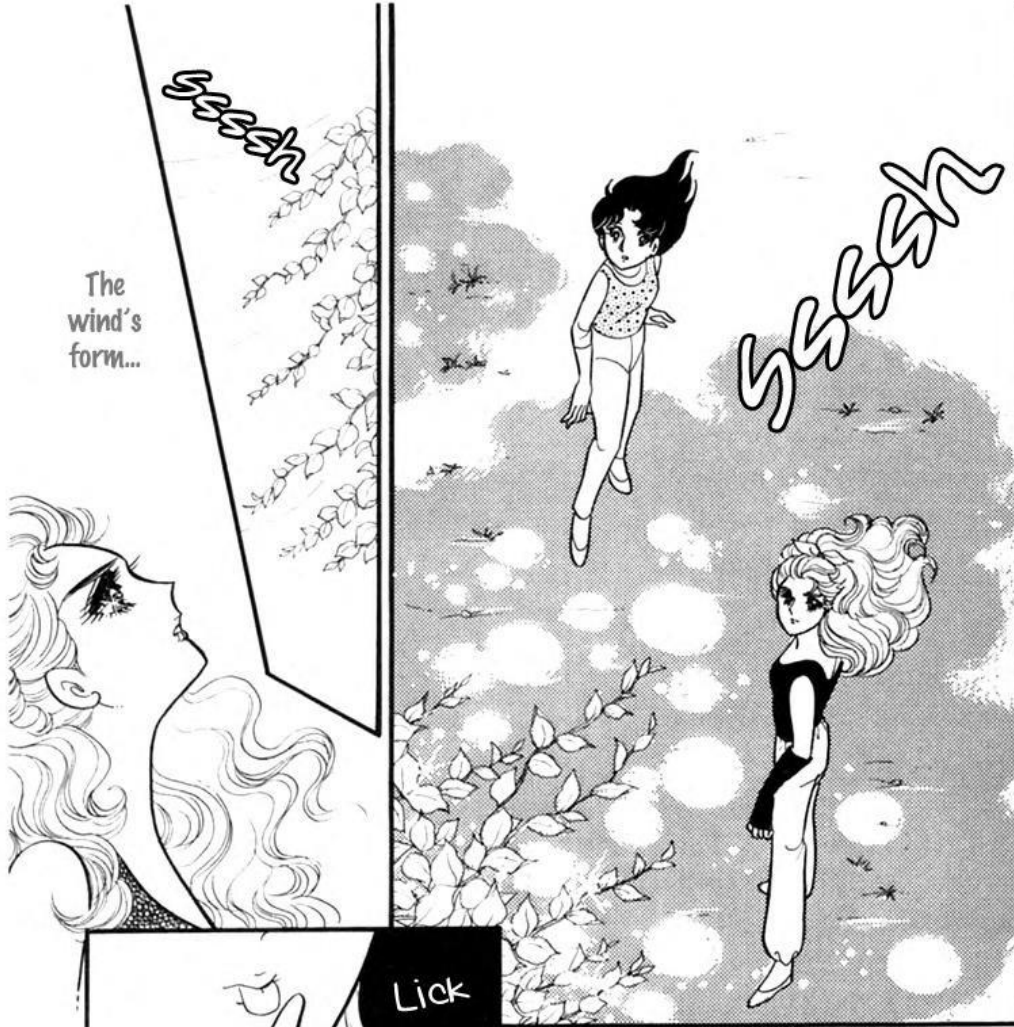


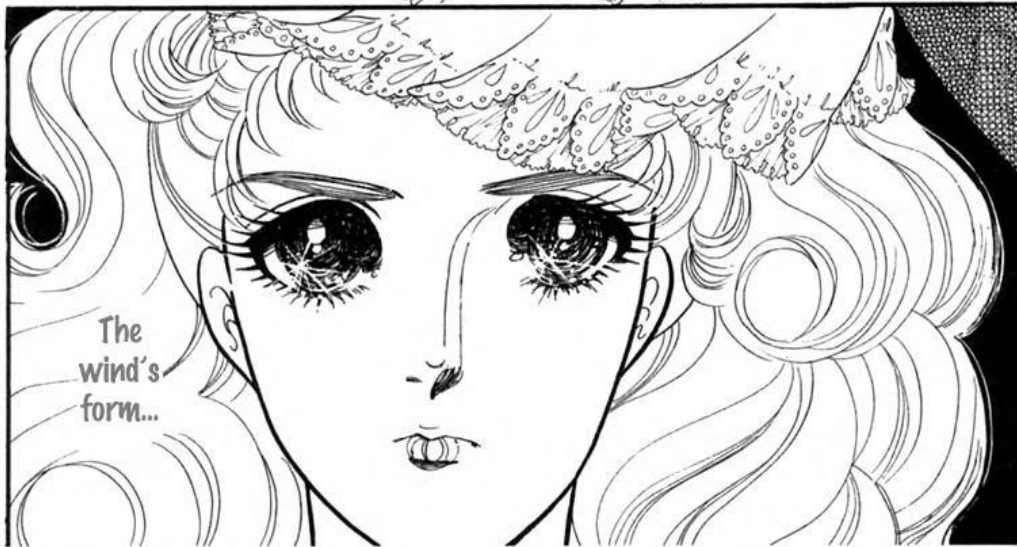
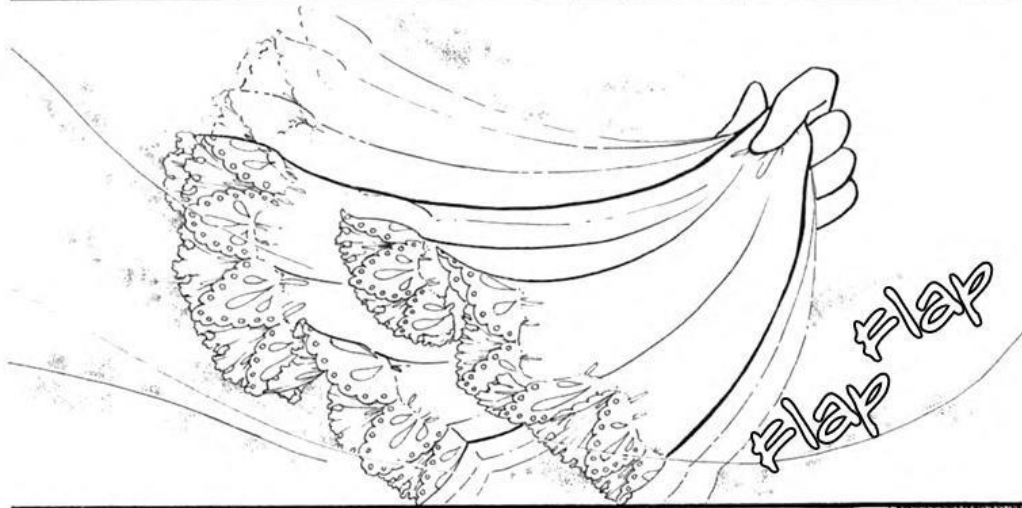
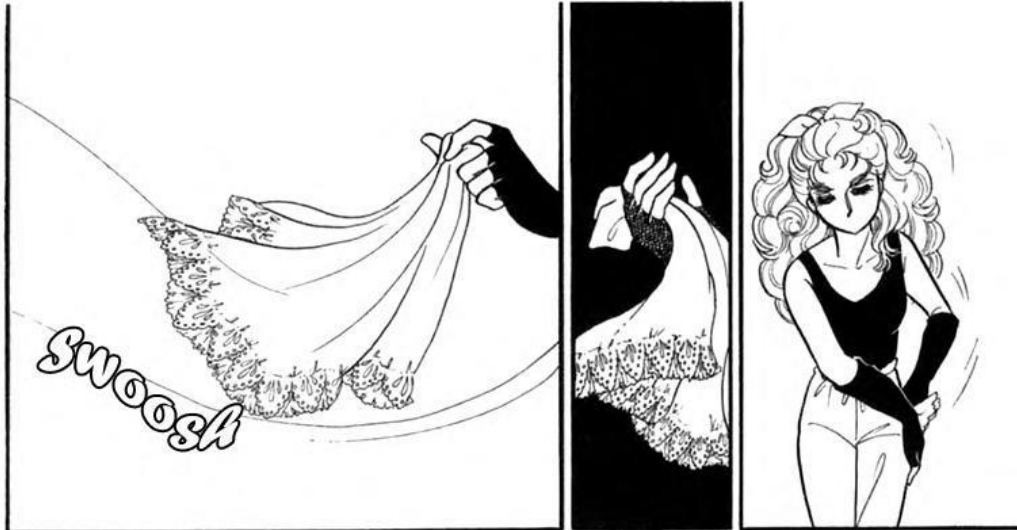
The wind
...

Portraying
the wind!

How can I
express the
wind...?!

Whoosh!







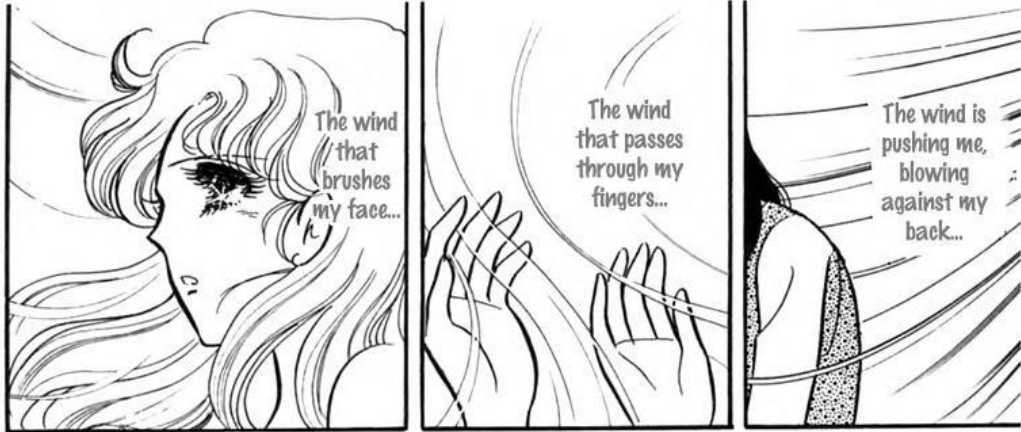
Whoooooosh



The mass
of air is
moving...

It's so
loud...the
sound of the
wind...

Whoooooosh





The clouds moving rapidly by...

The power of the wind...

The wind...



To portray the wind...

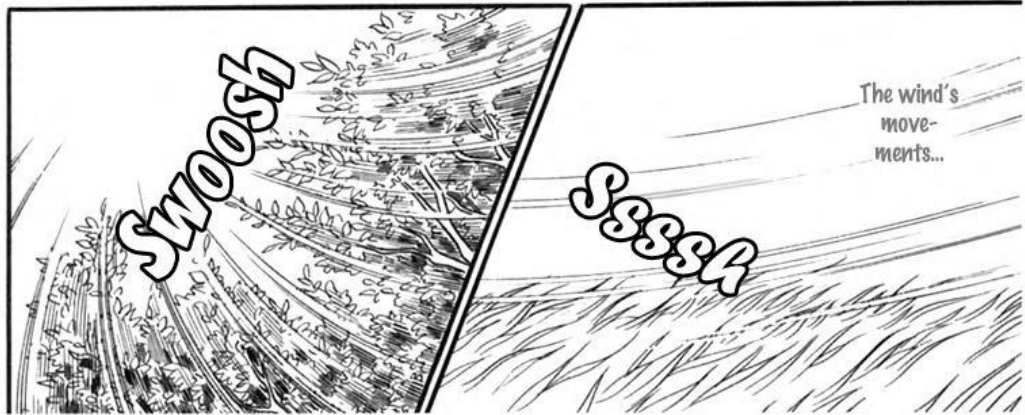
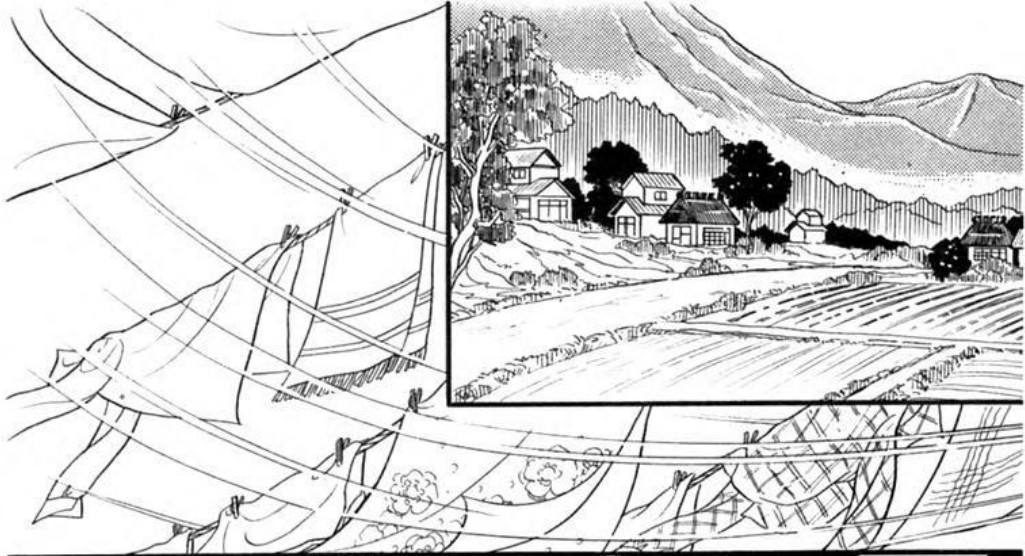


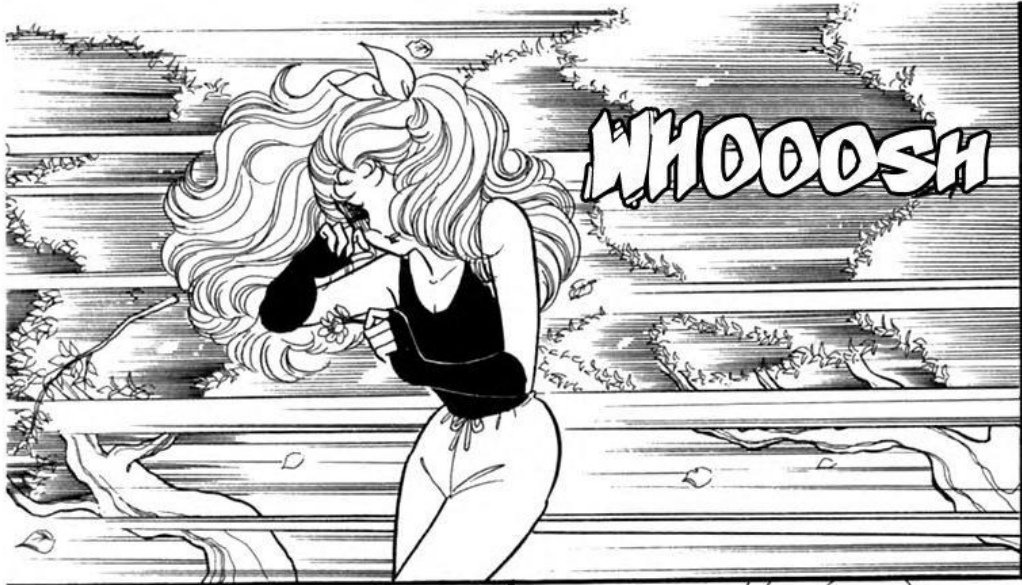
What is the wind...?

How does it come into this world...?

The wind that causes a small swirl at my feet and pushes the clouds in the sky...

The essence of the wind...





EVEN IF IT WAS
FOR A MOMENT
IT SEEMED TO
HAVE THE
STRENGTH OF
A TYPHOON!

AAH,
WHAT A
SURPRISE!
A
SUDDEN
BREEZE!



There must
be a way to
express the
wind's form...

...Using
my
body!

The wind's
form...

The colour of the
wind, the voice of the
wind, the movement
of the wind...

I don't
understand!
You can't see it
nor touch it...

But it
definitely
exists.

