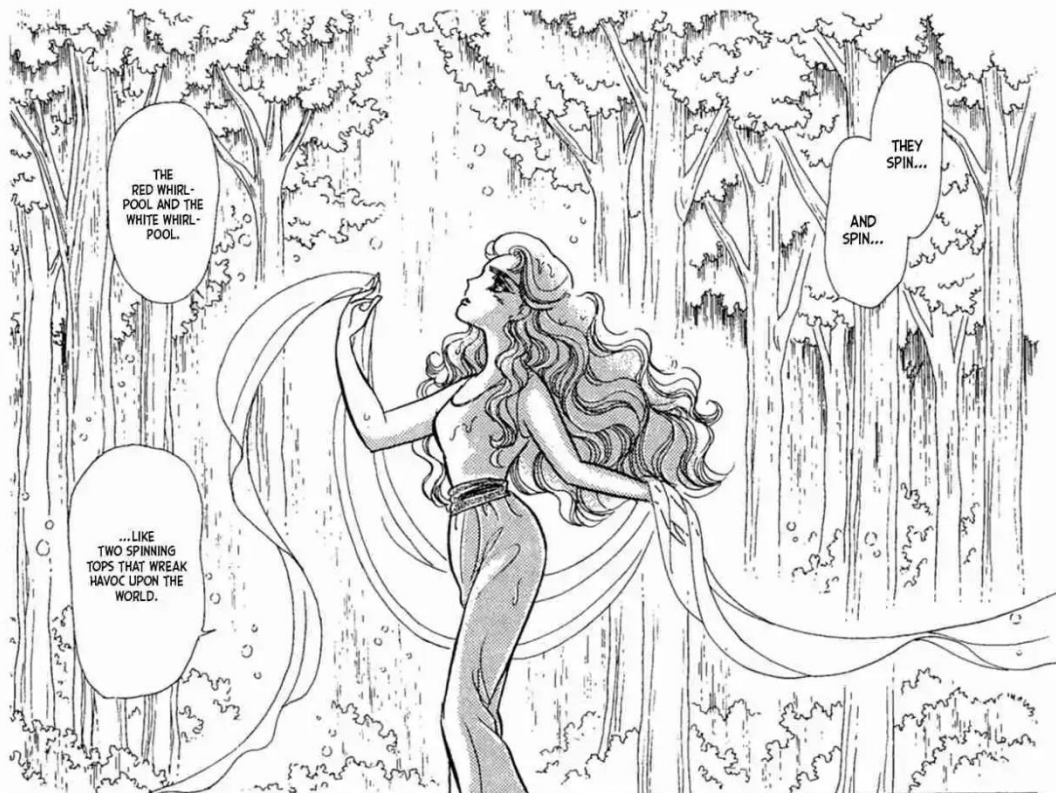




AYUMI!



THE
RED WHIRL-
POOL AND THE
WHITE WHIRL-
POOL.

THEY
SPIN...

AND
SPIN...

...LIKE
TWO SPINNING
TOPS THAT WREAK
HAVOC UPON THE
WORLD.



...THEIR DANCE
GROWING EVER
FIERCER...

COLLIDING
OFF OF ONE
ANOTHER...

...LEAVING
DESTRUCTION
IN THEIR WAKE...

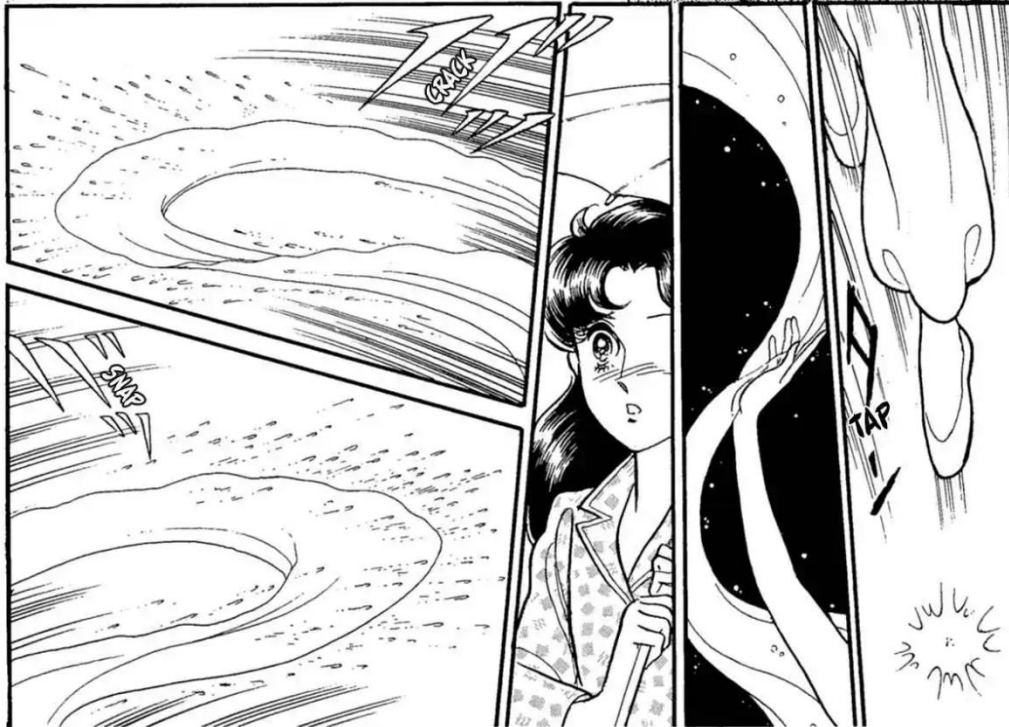


...AND THE
PEARLS OF
LIFE ARE EXTING-
LISHED ONE AFTER
THE OTHER...

FROM THE
CENTER OF THE
TWO TOPS SPREADS
SADNESS AND
HATRED...

THE POWER
OF THE GODS IS
LEFT IN DISARRAY
AND THE FLAMES
OF WAR SPREAD...









...ALMOST
AS IF IT'S
ALIVE!

WOW!
LOOK AT THE
WAY SHE USES
THE CLOTH!

IT MOVES
LIKE A LIVING
CREATURE!

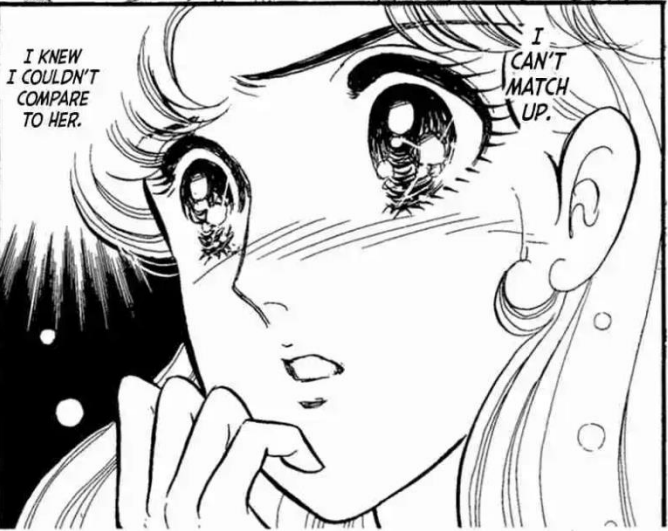
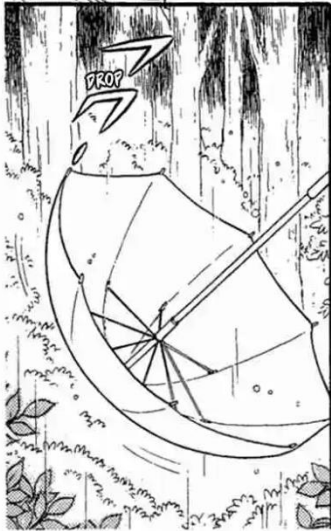
HOW
LOVELY!



SHE'S SO PRETTY... THE WAY SHE MOVES AND THE EXPRESSION ON HER FACE...

IT'S AYUMI... LIKE SHE'S A REAL GODDESS..

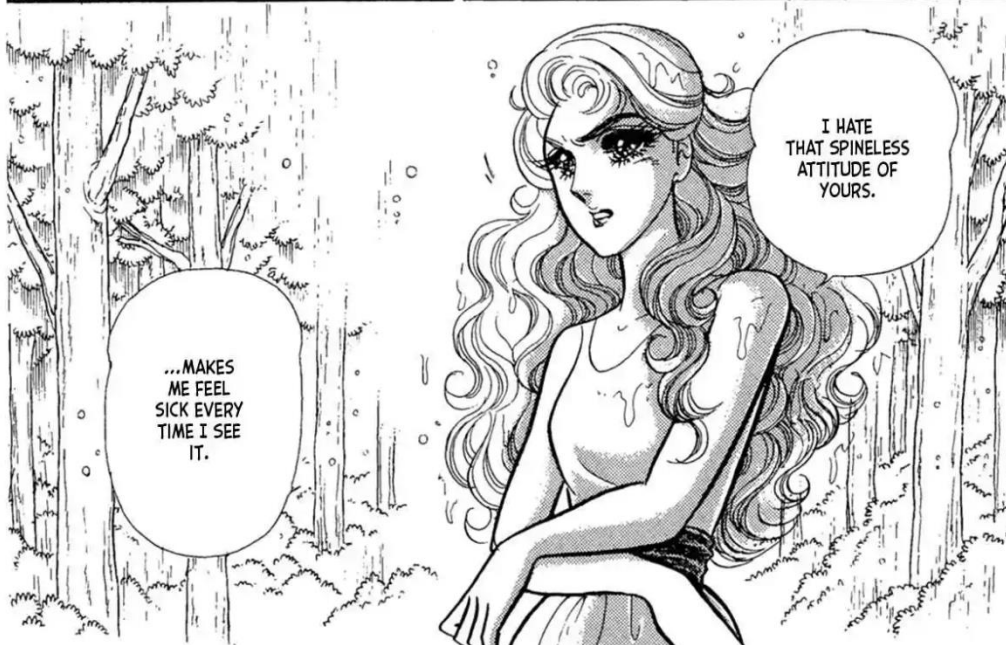
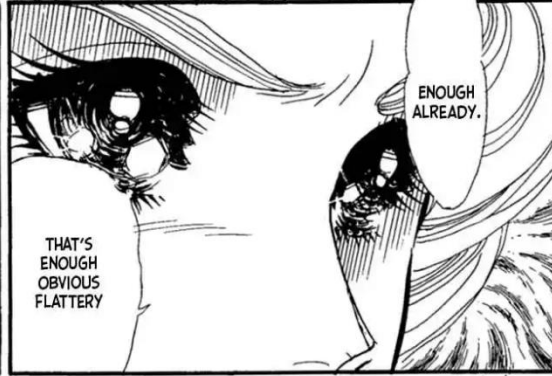
ANYONE WOULD BE FASCINATED BY HER...



I KNEW I COULDN'T COMPARE TO HER.

I CAN'T MATCH UP.







JUST STOP!

AYUMI, I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE...

WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?!



DO YOU MEAN TO MOCK ME WITH THOSE WORDS?

YOU SAY THAT YOU CAN'T MATCH UP TO ME?

...THAT I'M LIKE A REAL GODDESS?

SURELY YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...



...BUT WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE... THAT'S WHEN YOU SHOW HOW INCREDIBLE YOU TRULY ARE!

YOU ACT TIMID, LIKE YOU HAVE NO CONFIDENCE...

WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS LIKE THIS?!

YOU WERE ONLY DECEIVING YOURSELF!

...OR MAYBE YOU WERE JUST PRETENDING NOT TO SEE WHO I REALLY WAS!



IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO LOSE TO YOU.

...BECAUSE I WANT TO PERFORM THE CRIMSON GODDESS AND WIN AGAINST YOU FOR ONCE.

I'M OUT HERE IN THE RAIN, PRACTICING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.

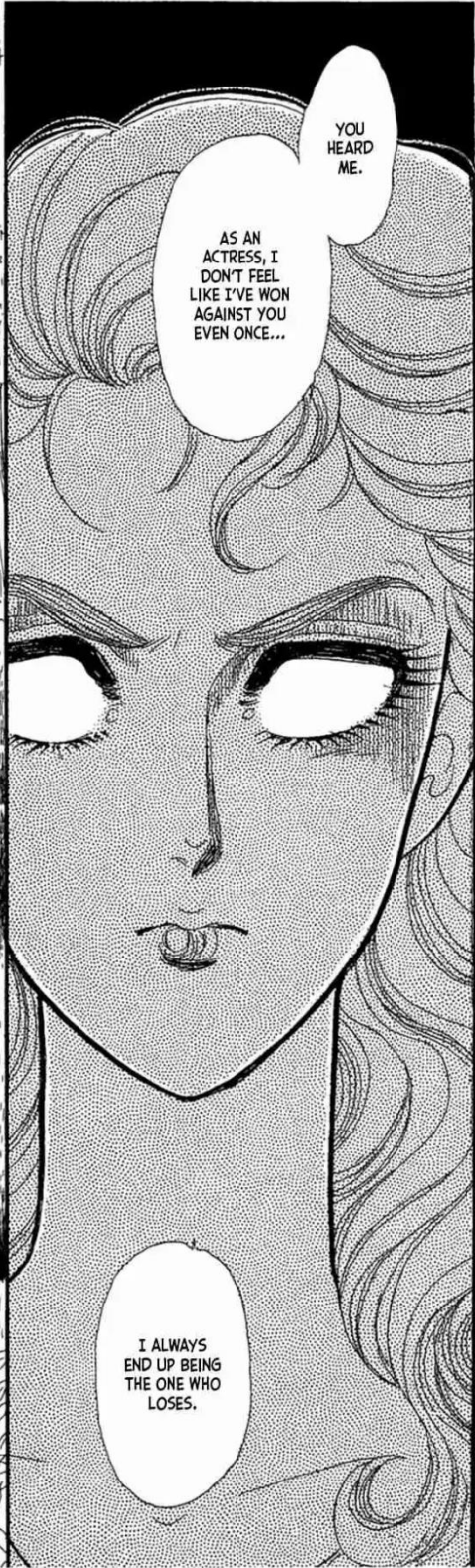
DO YOU KNOW WHY?

AYUMI...

WHY ARE YOU SAYING SUCH...



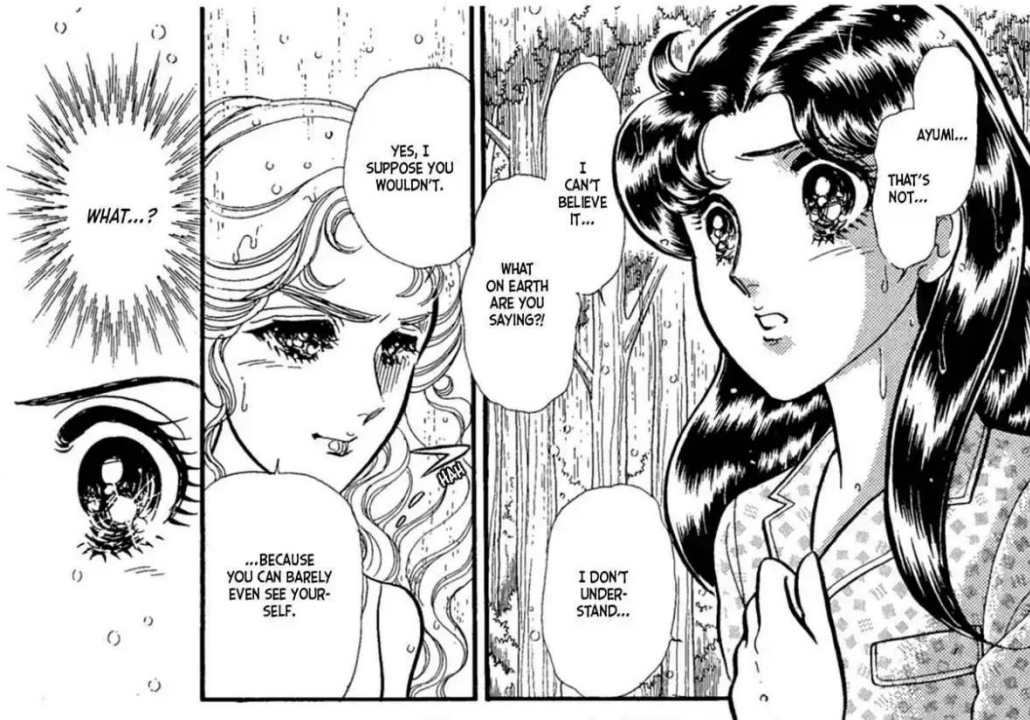
AYUMI...?!



YOU
HEARD
ME.

AS AN
ACTRESS, I
DON'T FEEL
LIKE I'VE WON
AGAINST YOU
EVEN ONCE...

I ALWAYS
END UP BEING
THE ONE WHO
LOSES.



WHAT...?

YES, I SUPPOSE YOU WOULDN'T.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

AYUMI... THAT'S NOT...

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU SAYING?

...BECAUSE YOU CAN BARELY EVEN SEE YOURSELF.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...



I HAD NEVER FELT SO WRETCHED IN MY LIFE.

EVEN WHEN THE JUDGES RULED THAT I HAD WON THE NATIONAL DRAMA COMPETITION...

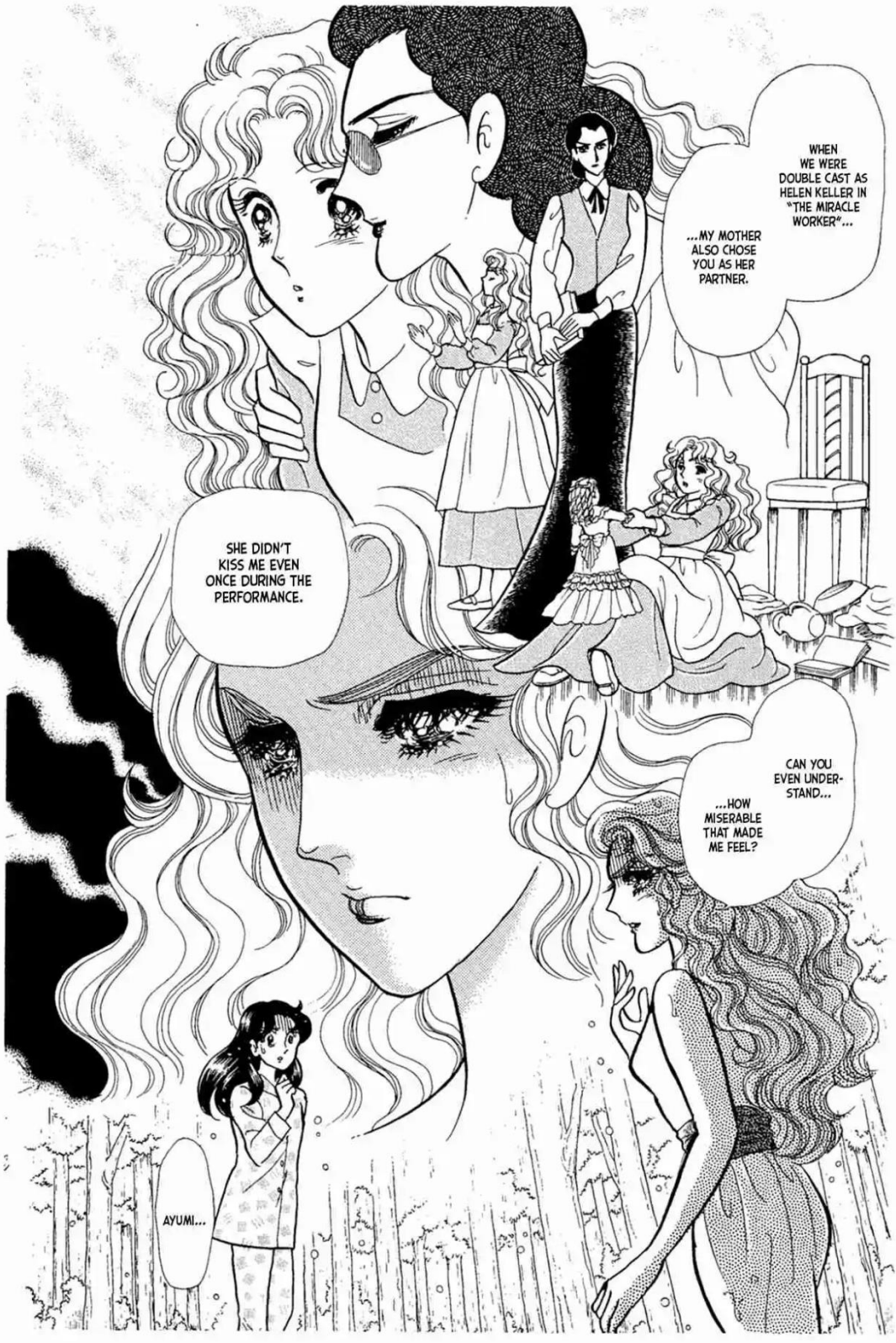
...ALL I FELT IN MY HEART WAS A SENSE OF DEFEAT...

AYUMI...?

ALL THIS TIME, IT'S FELT LIKE I'VE BEEN DOING NOTHING BUT LOSE TO YOU...

...BECAUSE IN THE END, THE AUDIENCE CHOSE YOU OVER EVERYONE ELSE.

...EVER SINCE WE BOTH PERFORMED "GROWING UP"...



WHEN WE WERE DOUBLE CAST AS HELEN KELLER IN "THE MIRACLE WORKER"...

...MY MOTHER ALSO CHOSE YOU AS HER PARTNER.

SHE DIDN'T KISS ME EVEN ONCE DURING THE PERFORMANCE.

CAN YOU EVEN UNDERSTAND...

...HOW MISERABLE THAT MADE ME FEEL?

AYUMI...



YOU WERE ALWAYS ABLE TO DO IT INSTINCTUALLY.

EVEN THOUGH I WORKED SO HARD AND STRUGGLED TO UNDERSTAND MY ROLE,

I BECAME UNABLE TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF.

WATCHING YOU, IT FELT LIKE ALL MY HARD WORK MEANT NOTHING AT ALL.



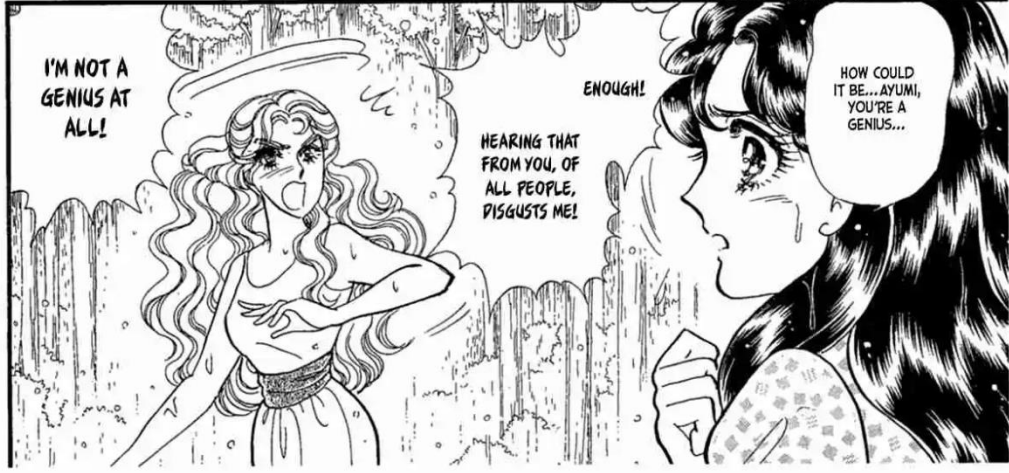
THAT WAS AN IRRECOVERABLE BLOW TO MY PRIDE.



...THE FIRST TIME I TRULY "BECAME" A CHARACTER...

"THE TWO PRINCESSES" WAS...

...BUT YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU DID IT ALL THE TIME.



I'M NOT A GENIUS AT ALL!

HEARING THAT FROM YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, DISGUSTS ME!

ENOUGH!

HOW COULD IT BE... AYUMI, YOU'RE A GENIUS...



THE TRUE GENIUS IS YOU!



AYUMI...

HOW LONG DO YOU INTEND TO PLAY DUMB?

I'M NOT MAKING FUN OF YOU.

WAIT A MINUTE, AYUMI... WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

WAIT...

...THAT'S THE PART OF YOU I HATE THE MOST!

FOR YOU TO POSSESS TRUE GENIUS AND NOT EVEN BE AWARE OF IT...

ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?

THAT'S RIDICULOUS...



I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE SO FAR ABOVE ME THAT I'D NEVER CATCH UP.

EVERY TIME I SAW YOU ACT, I FELT DEPRESSED KNOWING I'D NEVER MATCH YOU.

YOU'RE AN ELITE ACTRESS!

YOU'RE MORE BEAUTIFUL AND TALENTED THAN ANYONE!

HOW COULD I BELIEVE THAT YOU'D THINK OF ME THAT WAY! IT CAN'T BE TRUE!

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

WHY...? AFTER ALL YOU'VE DONE FOR ME...

...WHEN I'VE LOOKED UP TO YOU ALL THIS TIME...

...IT ENCOURAGED ME SO MUCH...

BUT WHEN YOU CALLED SOMEONE LIKE ME YOUR RIVAL...

I FELT SO JEALOUS, WONDERING HOW SOMEONE LIKE YOU COULD EXIST!

I ADMIRED YOU!



...IN MY STRENGTH

...IN MY WAY OF LIFE!

IT WAS FOR THAT MOMENT THAT I COULD BELIEVE...

I WANTED TO COMPETE AGAINST YOU FOR THE CRIMSON GODDESS FAIRLY... AND WIN!

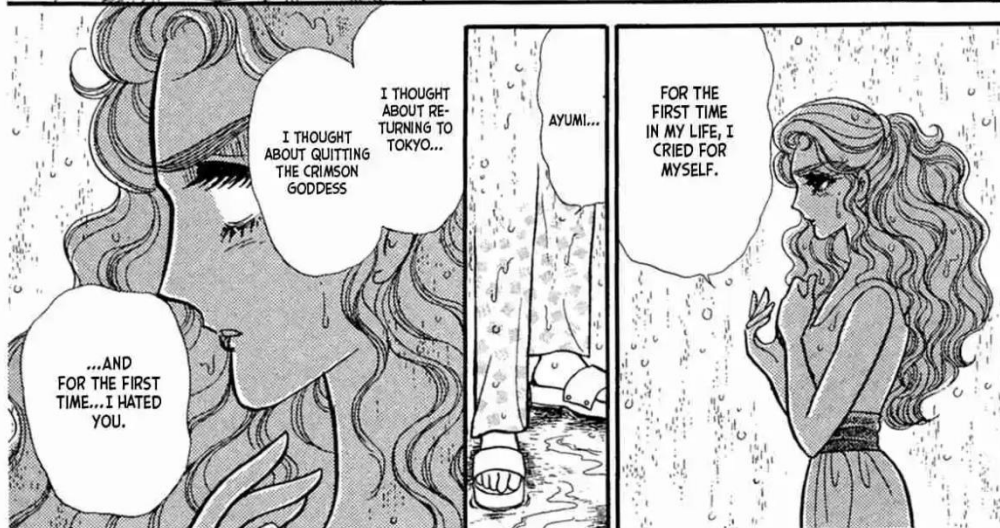
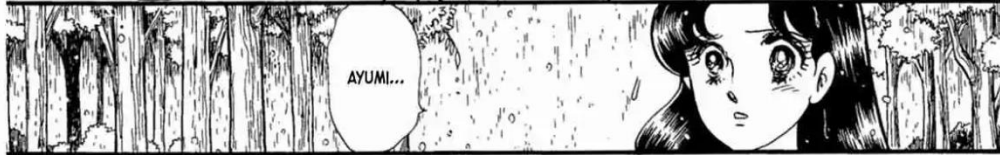
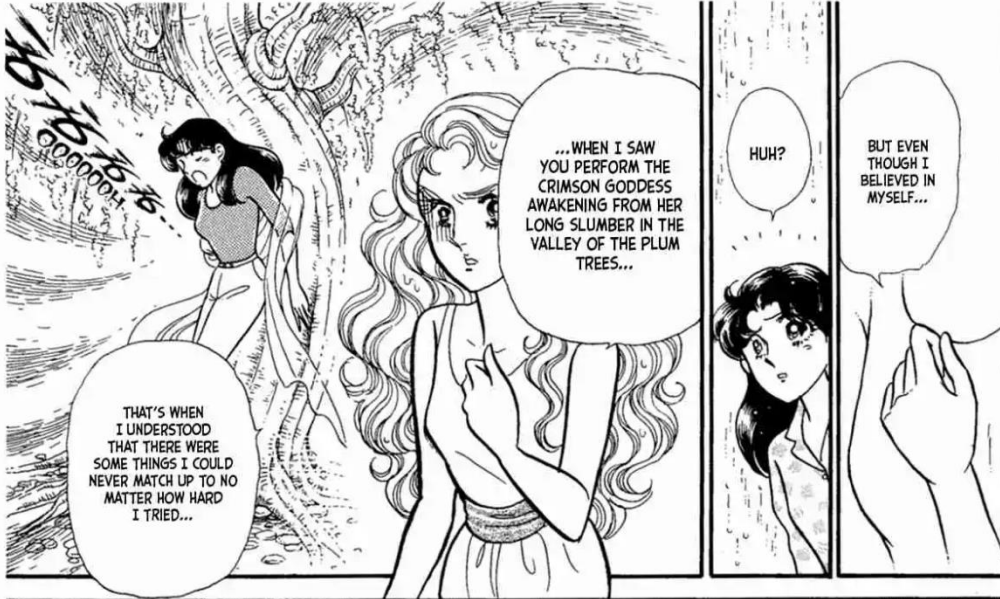
...AND IN MYSELF!

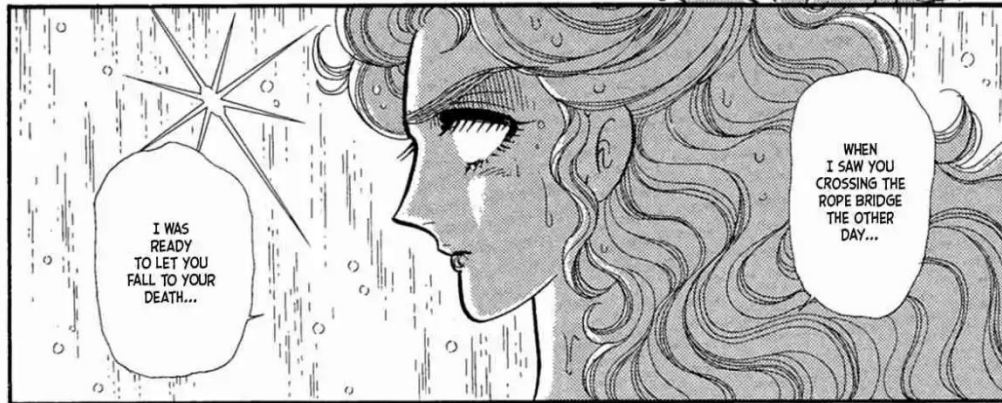
I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE YOU CRUSHED UNTIL THAT DAY CAME.

OTHERWISE, THIS SENSE OF DEFEAT WOULD HAUNT ME FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

I DID IT ALL FOR MYSELF

BECAUSE I WANTED TO WIN AGAINST YOU ONE DAY AND PERFORM THE CRIMSON GODDESS.







THAT
DAY...

I ALMOST
TRIED TO
KILL YOU.

HER
EYES ARE
SO COLD!

AYUMI!

THIS IS
HOW SHE
REALLY
FELT?!

I
CAN'T
BELIEVE
IT!



I CAN'T DENY THAT MY FEELINGS TOWARDS YOU WERE MURDEROUS.

...BUT ON THAT DAY.

AYUMI...

IF I HADN'T, I WOULD HAVE NEVER FORGIVEN MYSELF.

YOU RAN ONTO THE BRIDGE AND GRABBED MY HAND...

B-BUT...!
YOU SAVED ME!

I KNEW THAT I'D WISH I HAD DIED WITH YOU RATHER THAN WIN LIKE THAT.



UNEASE.
IRRITATION.
ENVY.
HATRED.

IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT...
I STOPPED BEING ABLE TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF....

BIT BY BIT, ALL SORTS OF TERRIBLE EMOTIONS THAT I HAD NEVER FELT BEFORE BEGAN TO FILL MY HEART.
I STARTED TO HATE MYSELF.

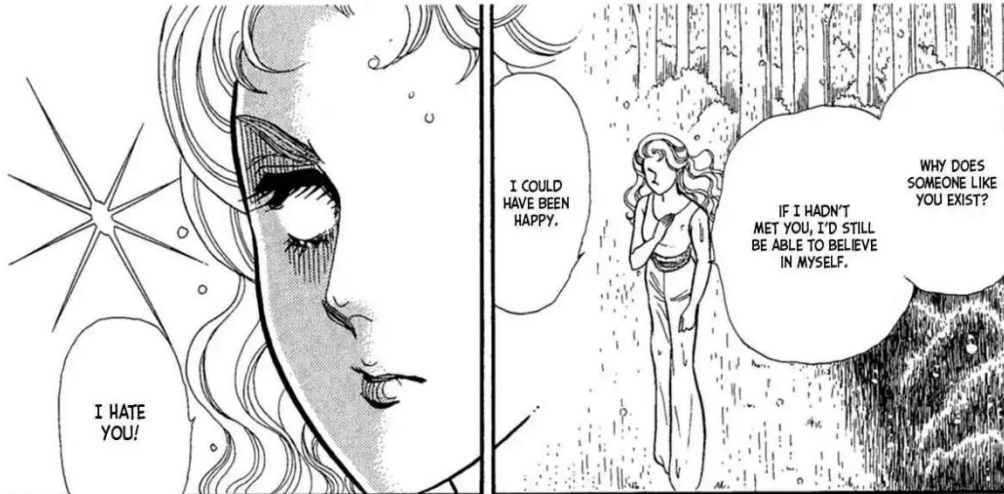
EVER SINCE THE DAY YOU SHOWED UP IN MY LIFE...

TO THINK SUCH HORRIBLE THOUGHTS WERE INSIDE OF ME!

BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN, I CAME TO MY SENSES AND FOUND MYSELF HELPING YOU.
I COULDN'T EVEN BELIEVE MYSELF.

I FELT WRETCHED.

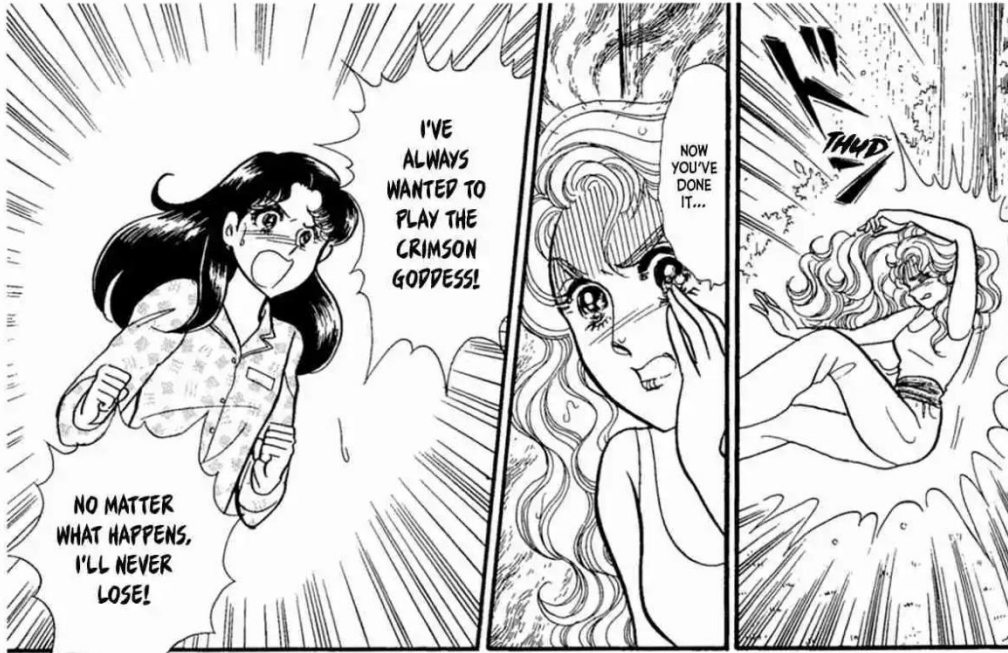
MY PRIDE HAS A HUMAN WAS TORN TO SHREDS.













I HATE THE SERVILE WAY YOU TALK!

I HATE HOW YOU CARRY THAT INFERIORITY COMPLEX AROUND!

YOU WERE ALWAYS AN EYESORE.



CRACK!



AYUMI!



I THOUGHT YOU WERE A WONDERFUL PERSON!

I HAD A LOT OF RESPECT FOR YOU, AYUMI!

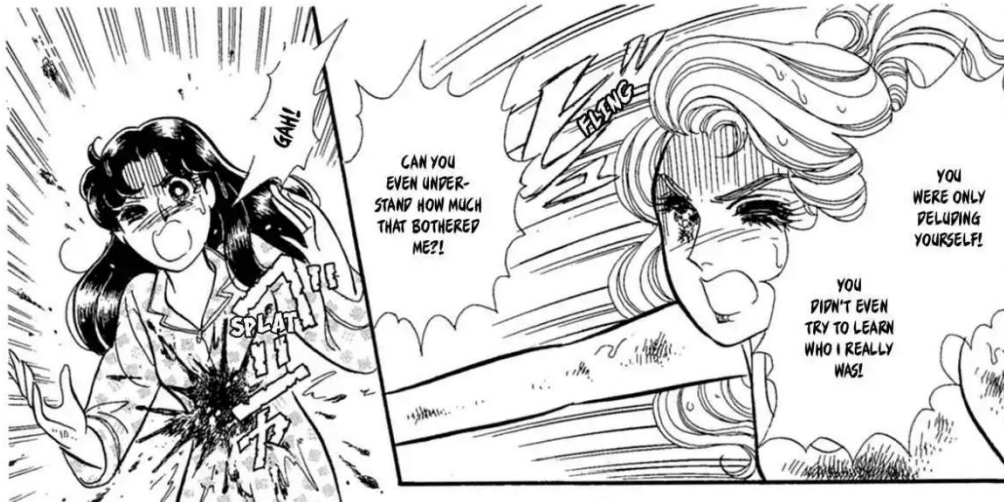
BUT NOW YOU'RE JUST CRUEL!



WHY, YOU...!

AH!

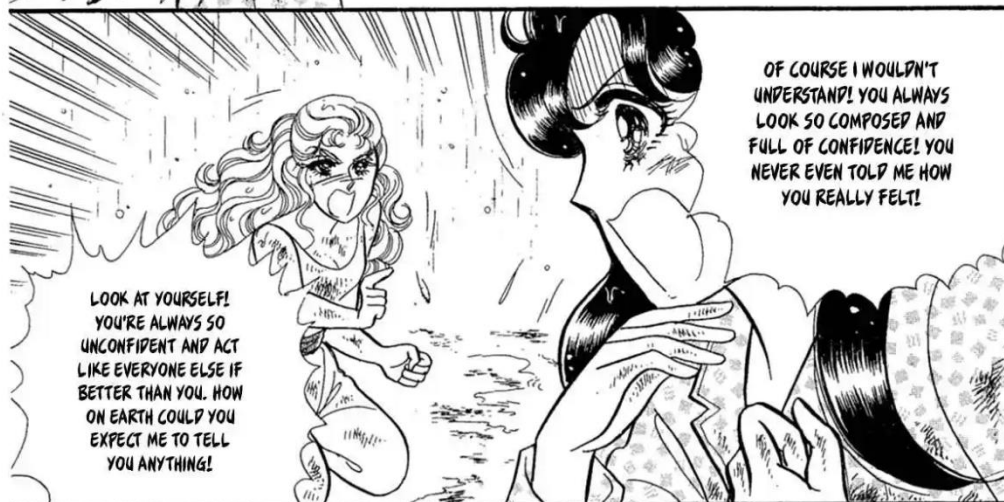
THING



CAN YOU EVEN UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH THAT BOTHERED ME?!

YOU WERE ONLY DELUSING YOURSELF!

YOU DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO LEARN WHO I REALLY WAS!



LOOK AT YOURSELF! YOU'RE ALWAYS SO UNCONFIDENT AND ACT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE IF BETTER THAN YOU. HOW ON EARTH COULD YOU EXPECT ME TO TELL YOU ANYTHING!

OF COURSE I WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND! YOU ALWAYS LOOK SO COMPOSED AND FULL OF CONFIDENCE! YOU NEVER EVEN TOLD ME HOW YOU REALLY FELT!



YOU ALWAYS HAVE YOUR GROUPIES AND PUT ON AIRS LIKE SOME KIND OF PRINCESS!

WHAT PART OF ME IS ARROGANT?!

YEAH, I DID!

NOW YOU'VE SAID IT!

I HATE PEOPLE LIKE YOU THE MOST!

SO DO I, AYUMI! I HATE ARROGANT PEOPLE LIKE YOU THE MOST!







HOW CRUEL!
IS THAT SOMETHING
YOU SHOULD SAY TO
THE ONE WHO SAVED
YOU!

THAT'S
TOO BAD
FOR YOU!

YOU
SEALED
YOUR OWN FATE
BY SAVING
ME!

I KNEW
I SHOULD
HAVE NEVER
SAVED YOU!

I SHOULD
HAVE LET YOU
FALL OFF THE
BRIDGE!

IT TAKES
GUTS TO SAY
THAT WHEN YOU
WERE ABOUT TO
WATCH ME DIE!

ANIM!
YOU WOLF
IN SHEEP'S
CLOTHING!

WHAT
PID YOU
CALL ME?!!
YOU WOLF
GIRL!

WELL,
SORRY FOR
BEING A
BRAT!

ONLY
BECAUSE
YOU'RE SUCH A
BRAT!

AH! OW! OW!

WHACK

POW

PUNCH

SMACK

SMACK

SMACK

