9

Glass Mask

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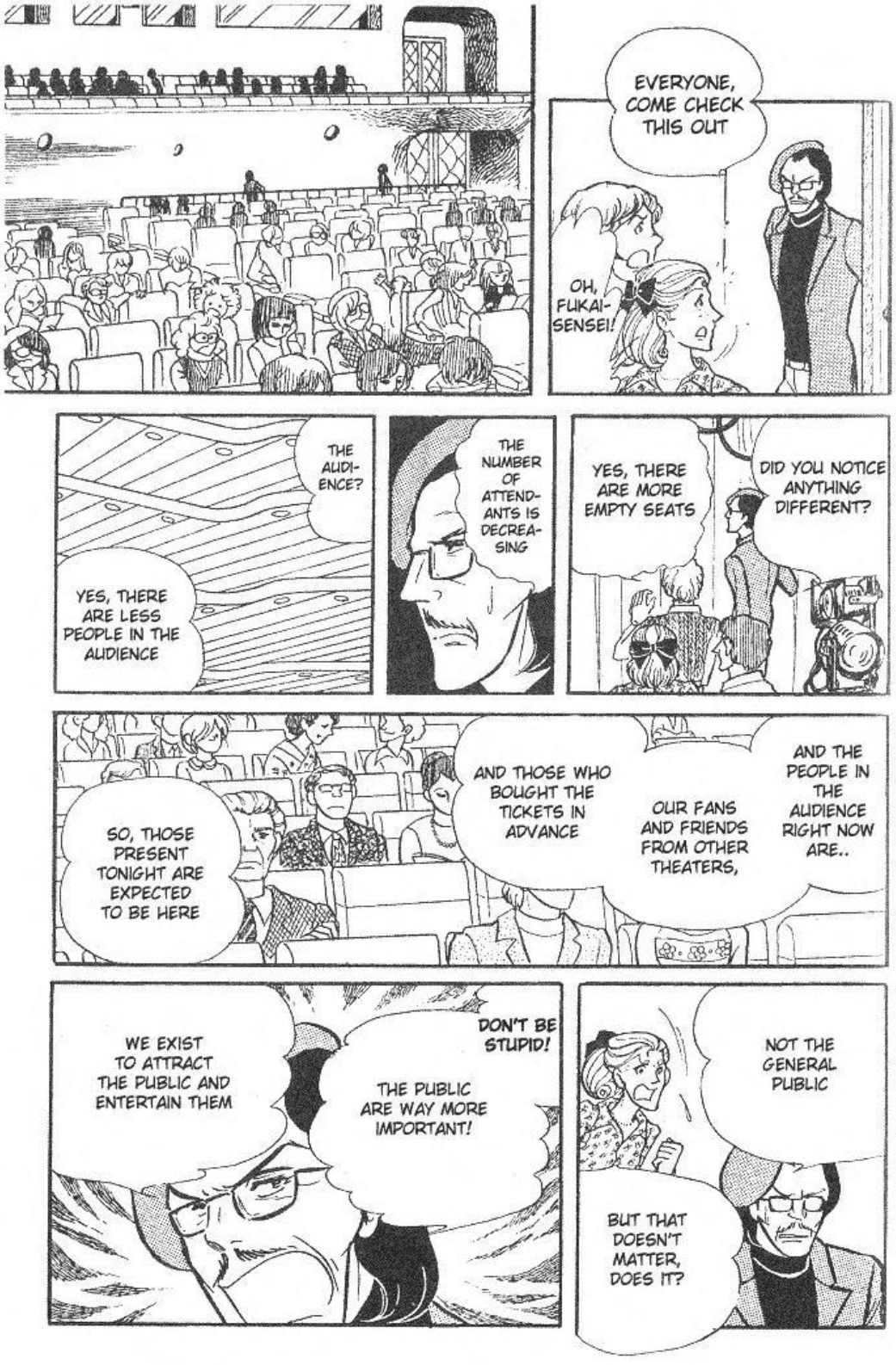
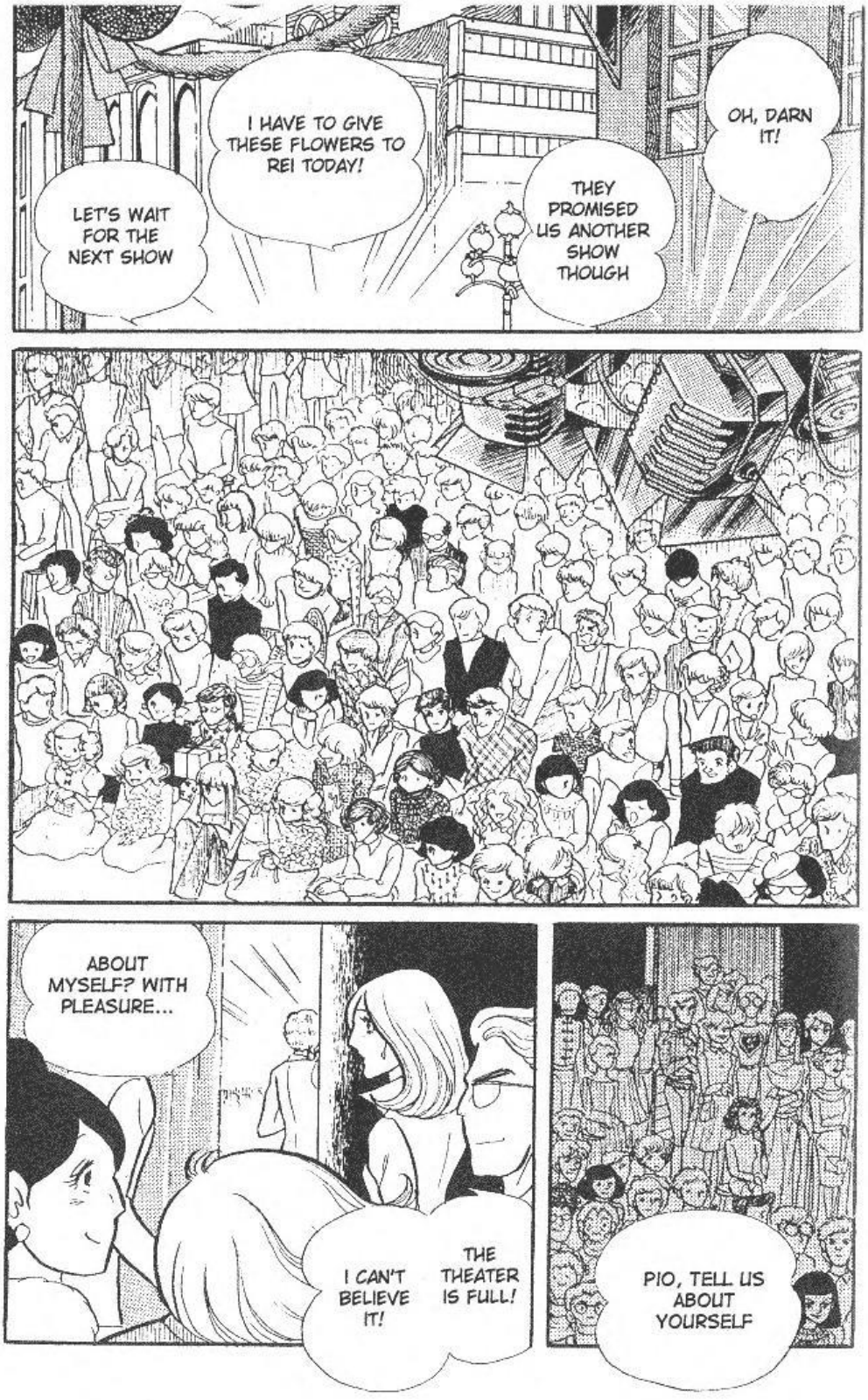
DON'T PUSH THE PEOPLE IN FRONT OF YOU!
STAY IN LINE, PLEASE!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

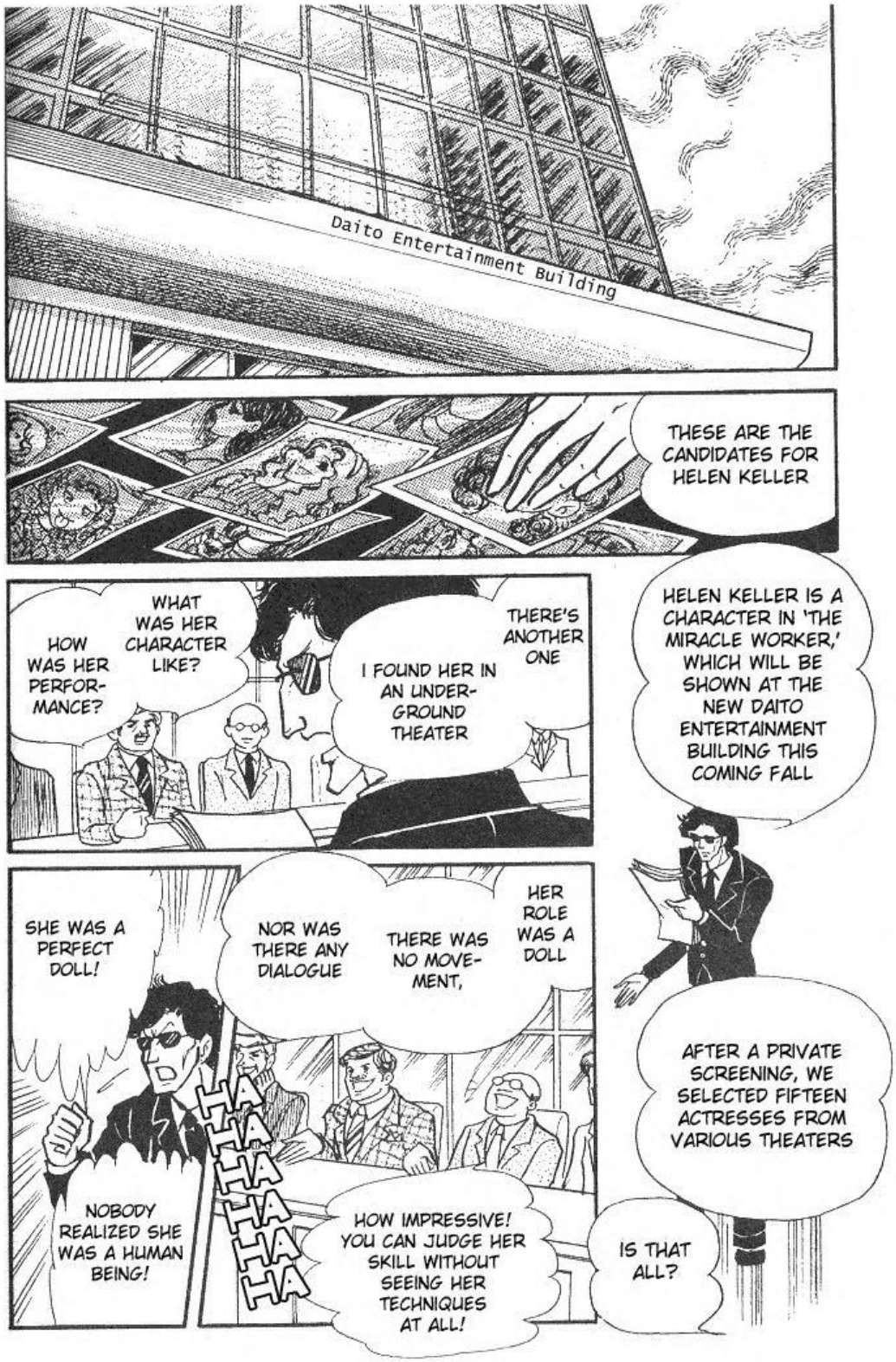

EVERYONE, COME CHECK THIS OUT
OH, FUKAI-SENSEI!
THE AUDI-ENCE?
YES, THERE ARE LESS PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE
THE NUMBER OF ATTEND-ANTS IS DECREA-SING
YES, THERE ARE MORE EMPTY SEATS
DID YOU NOTICE ANYTHING DIFFERENT?
SO, THOSE PRESENT TONIGHT ARE EXPECTED TO BE HERE
AND THOSE WHO BOUGHT THE TICKETS IN ADVANCE
OUR FANS AND FRIENDS FROM OTHER THEATERS,
AND THE PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE RIGHT NOW ARE..
WE EXIST TO ATTRACT THE PUBLIC AND ENTERTAIN THEM
DON'T BE STUPID!
THE PUBLIC ARE WAY MORE IMPORTANT!
NOT THE GENERAL PUBLIC
BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER, DOES IT?

IF THE PUBLIC AREN'T HERE, THEN THIS WON'T BE CALLED A PUBLIC PLAY!
THEY WILL COME TO OUR PLAY BECAUSE THEY LIKE US
THEY WILL COME WHEN OUR PLAY IS INTERESTING
OH!
I'M SORRY, BUT THE THEATER IS FULL
THERE WILL BE ANOTHER SHOW AT 8:00 PM!
WAAAAAAA
GULP
WE HAVE A PROBLEM
I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TOMORROW


I HAVE TO GIVE THESE FLOWERS TO REI TODAY!
LET'S WAIT FOR THE NEXT SHOW
THEY PROMISED US ANOTHER SHOW THOUGH
OH, DARN IT!
ABOUT MYSELF? WITH PLEASURE...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
THE THEATER IS FULL!
PIO, TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

THIS IS TOUGH FOR ME...
UGH...
BESIDES, REI HAS BECOME MORE POPULAR, HASN'T SHE?
EVERY GIRL IN THE FRONT ROW IS HER FAN
IT'S REALLY TOUGH
AS IF SHE'S NOT ALIVE
TO ACT LIKE THAT FOR TEN DAYS,
MAYA IS GREAT AS WELL
YES, I CAME WITH A NURSE THIS TIME...
ARE YOU OKAY?!
SEN-SEI!
IT'S BETTER IF I COME ALONG, INSTEAD OF HER SNEAKING OUT AGAIN
IT'S TRUE, THIS PLAY DEPENDS ON MAYA'S ACTING

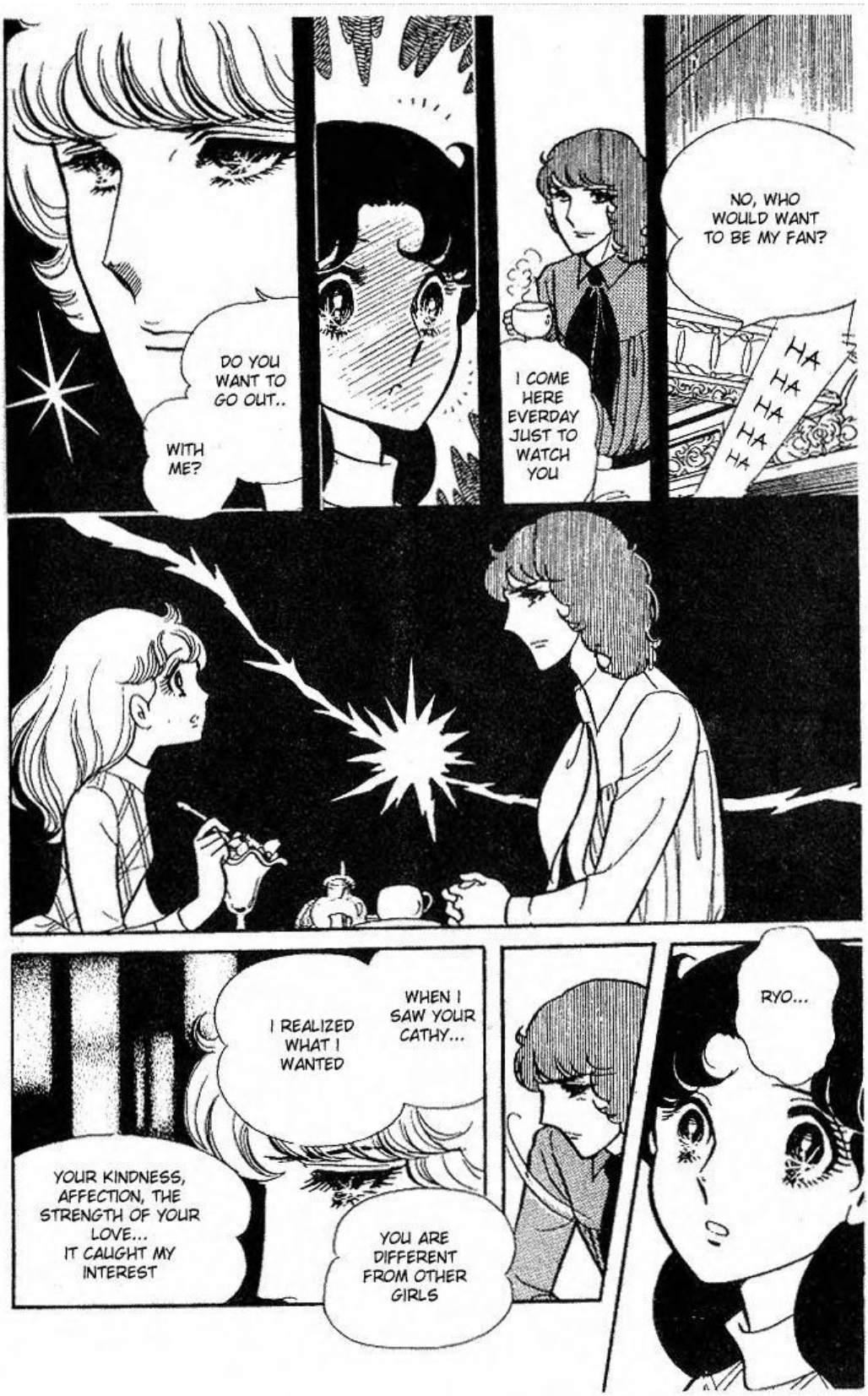
IT'S TRUE, THIS PLAY'S LIFE AND DEATH DEPEND ON HER PERFORMANCE
IF THE AUDIENCE FINDS OUT SHE IS A PERSON, EVERYTHING IS OVER
THAT'S WHY THIS PLAY HAS A VERY HIGH RISK FACTOR
LOOK, MAJIMA RYO IS HERE AGAIN
HE KEEPS COMING EVERYDAY
WHO IS HE?
DO YOU KNOW THAT MAN?
THE ONE WITH THE SHADES?
THAT'S WEIRD
MAYA'S BOY-FRIEND, YUU, HASN'T SHOWN UP
HE USUALLY COMES TO SEE HER


Daito Entertainment Building
THESE ARE THE CANDIDATES FOR HELEN KELLER
HOW WAS HER PERFOR-MANCE?
WHAT WAS HER CHARACTER LIKE?
I FOUND HER IN AN UNDER-GROUND THEATER
THERE'S ANOTHER ONE
HELEN KELLER IS A CHARACTER IN 'THE MIRACLE WORKER,' WHICH WILL BE SHOWN AT THE NEW DAITO ENTERTAINMENT BUILDING THIS COMING FALL
SHE WAS A PERFECT DOLL!
NOR WAS THERE ANY DIALOGUE
THERE WAS NO MOVE-MENT,
HER ROLE WAS A DOLL
HA HA HA HA HA HA
NOBODY REALIZED SHE WAS A HUMAN BEING!
HOW IMPRESSIVE! YOU CAN JUDGE HER SKILL WITHOUT SEEING HER TECHNIQUES AT ALL!
AFTER A PRIVATE SCREENING, WE SELECTED FIFTEEN ACTRESSES FROM VARIOUS THEATERS
IS THAT ALL?

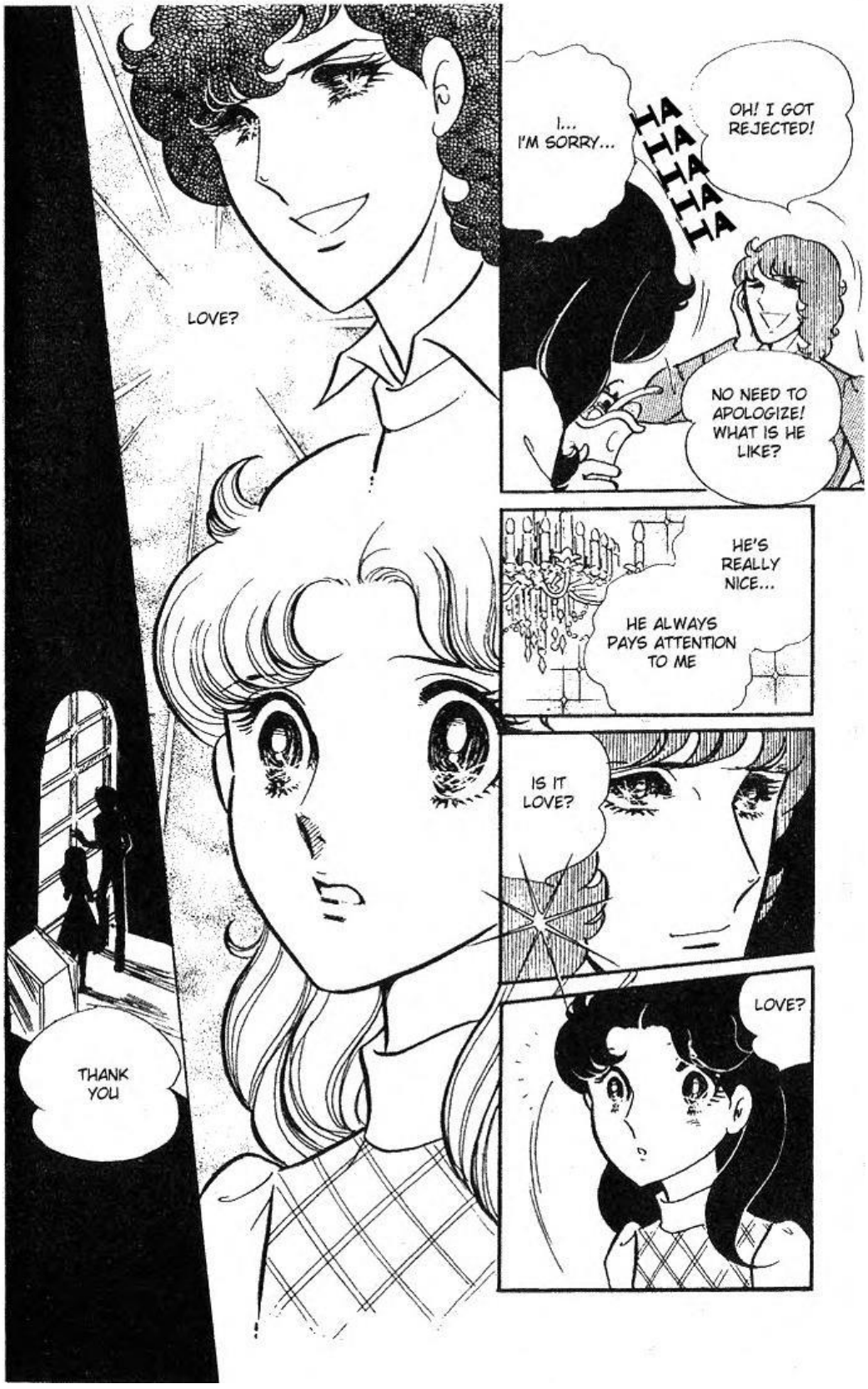
AND HERE'S HER PICTURE
BANG
THAT'S MY OPINION
OR ELSE SHE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO ACT LIKE THAT
THAT MEANS SHE HAS INCREDIBLE TALENT..
HM...
Ehhhh...
ALRIGHT, WE'LL TAKE HER AS A CANDIDATE
YES, SIR!

WAAA
A STONES' SMILE, WHICH HAS BECOME POPULAR, WILL HAVE ITS LAST PERFORMANCE TOMORROW
REI!
REI, CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTO-GRAPH!?
CAN I JOIN YOUR THEATER?
SURE, WE'LL TEST YOU TOMORROW
MAYA, YOU HAVE A GUEST!
MAJIMA RYO!
GOOD EVENING ...
I HAVEN'T HEARD YOUR VOICE FOR A WHILE
I COME HERE EVERYDAY

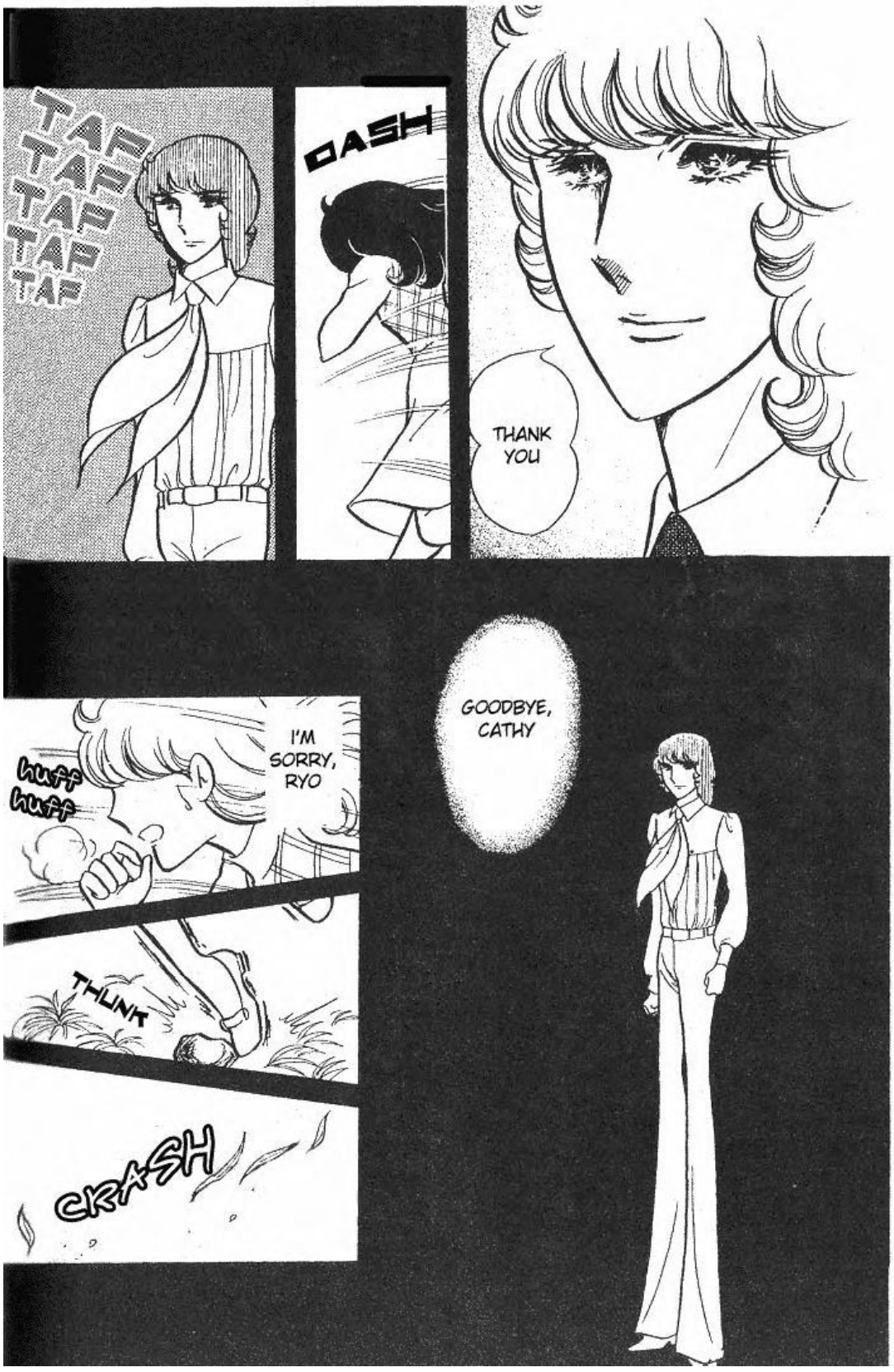
YES
YES, HEATH-CLIFF
SO YOU'VE ALMOST GRADUATED FROM JUNIOR HIGH
WHICH HIGH-SCHOOL ARE YOU GOING TO ATTEND?
CATHY...
I STILL DON'T HAVE ANY PLANS, HONESTLY
IT MUST BE NICE TO HAVE A FAN LIKE THAT
WELL, YOU HAVE A LOT OF FANS TOO
I'M REALLY HAPPY...
I DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS, OR WHERE HE'S FROM, BUT HE ALWAYS SUPPORTS ME
I WANT TO ACT JUST FOR HIM
HOWEVER, SOMEONE ENROLLED ME AT HITOTSUBOSHI HIGH SCHOOL
HE'S A BIG FAN OF MINE SINCE I FIRST STARTED ACTING ON STAGE


DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT..
WITH ME?
I COME HERE EVERDAY JUST TO WATCH YOU
NO, WHO WOULD WANT TO BE MY FAN?
HA HA HA HA HA
I REALIZED WHAT I WANTED
WHEN I SAW YOUR CATHY...
YOUR KINDNESS, AFFECTION, THE STRENGTH OF YOUR LOVE... IT CAUGHT MY INTEREST
YOU ARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GIRLS
RYO...

CLINK CLINK
YUKI IS YOUR GIRLFRIEND, RIGHT?
COMPARED TO HER, I'M BORING!
I'M DIFFERENT FROM CATHY...
BUT... UM.. HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS..?
CLINK
CLINK
I KNOW IT'S NOT POSSIBLE...
BUT I CAN'T HELP IT...
FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOUR CHARACTER ON THE STAGE
DIFFE-RENT...
MAYBE I'M A FOOL FOR FALLING IN LOVE WITH A SHADOW
DO YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND?
A BOY-FRIEND?
I LOVE YOUR CATHY
RYO...
NO

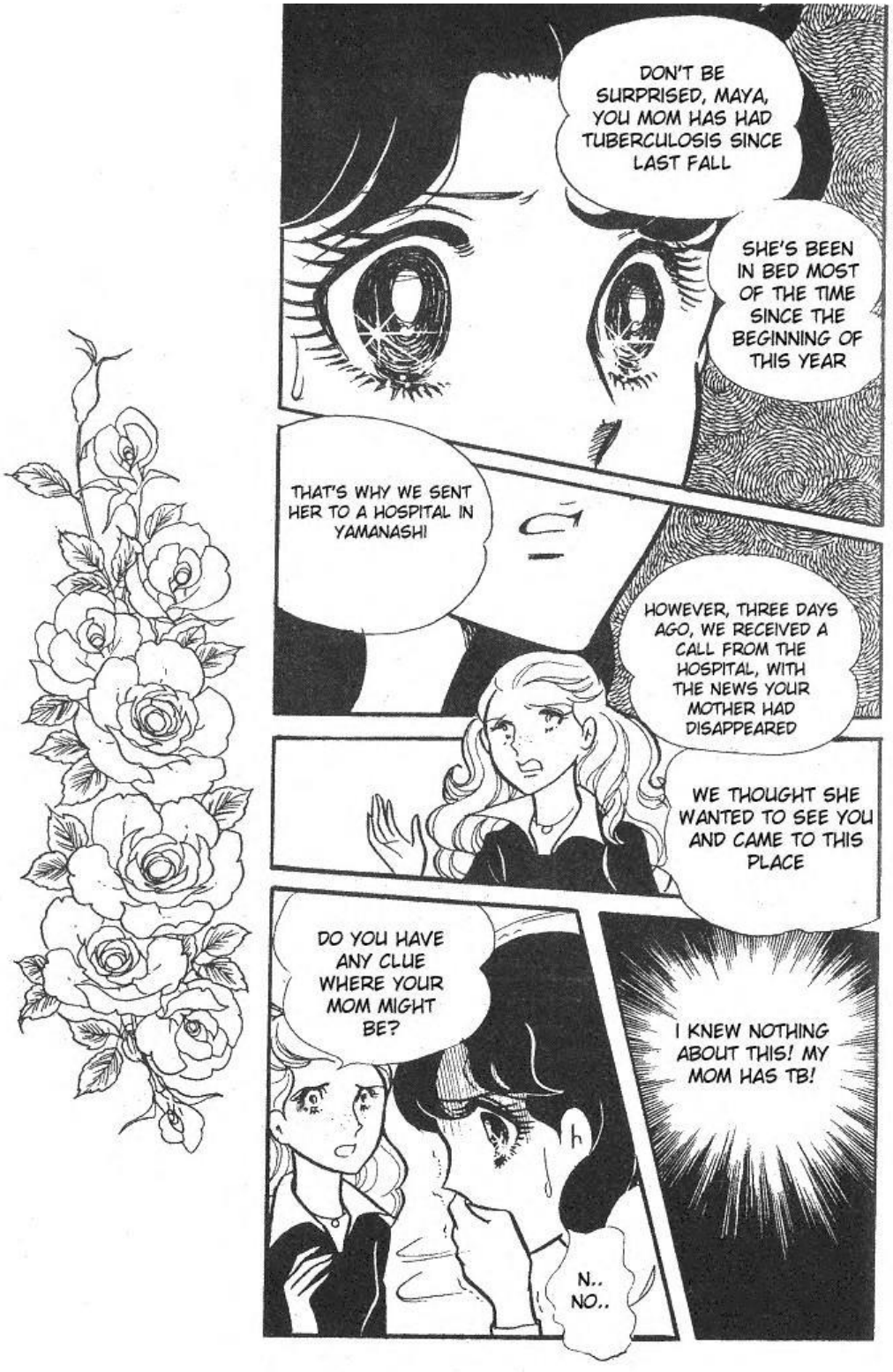

LOVE?
I...
I'M SORRY...
HAHAHAHA
OH! I GOT REJECTED!
NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE! WHAT IS HE LIKE?
HE'S REALLY NICE...
HE ALWAYS PAYS ATTENTION TO ME
IS IT LOVE?
LOVE?
THANK YOU

YES
OKAY?
MAYA, FORGET WHAT I SAID
JUST LIKE BEFORE
NEXT TIME WE MEET, I'LL ACT LIKE A FRIEND...
DON'T WORRY, TRUST ME
BUT IT'S DARK
IT'S ALRIGHT, I CAN GO BY MYSELF
LET ME WALK YOU HOME
SEE YOU LATER!
I'M HAPPY I WAS ABLE TO BE IN 'WUTHERING HEIGHTS' WITH YOU
MAYA!


TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP
DASH
THANK YOU
GOODBYE, CATHY
huff huff
I'M SORRY, RYO
THUNK
CRASH

SOB
SOB
SOB
SOB
SOB
SNIFF
SNIFF
WHY DIDN'T YOU SHOW UP EVEN ONCE?
YUU...
YUU...
I WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN...

TODAY IS THE FINAL SHOW
WE HAVE TO SUCCEED
IF WE SUCCEED, THE NEXT STEP WILL BE EASIER
MAYA, YOU HAVE A GUEST
FOR ME?
IS SHE A FRIEND OF YOURS?
YES, SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF A RESTAURANT OWNER IN YOKOHAMA
MY MOTHER WORKS AND LIVES THERE
IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS...
IS MY MOTHER HEALTHY?
IS SHE STILL UPSET THAT I RAN AWAY?
SUGIKO!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU EVERYWHERE! AFTER YOUR THEATER CLOSED DOWN, I HAD NO CLUE WHERE YOU HAD GONE TO
WHAT? MY MOTHER DISAPPEARED!?
ABOUT WHAT?
OH, DON'T YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?
I SEE, LISTEN TO MY STORY CLOSELY


DON'T BE SURPRISED, MAYA, YOU MOM HAS HAD TUBERCULOSIS SINCE LAST FALL
SHE'S BEEN IN BED MOST OF THE TIME SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR
THAT'S WHY WE SENT HER TO A HOSPITAL IN YAMANASHI
HOWEVER, THREE DAYS AGO, WE RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE HOSPITAL, WITH THE NEWS YOUR MOTHER HAD DISAPPEARED
WE THOUGHT SHE WANTED TO SEE YOU AND CAME TO THIS PLACE
DO YOU HAVE ANY CLUE WHERE YOUR MOM MIGHT BE?
I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THIS! MY MOM HAS TB!
N.. NO..

MOTHER..
HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO...
BADUMP
MAYA!
MOTHER...
BRRR BRRR

MOTHER!
huff
huff
WHERE DID YOU GO, MOTHER?
YOU HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO
THE BUS WAS LATE BECAUSE OF TRAFFIC!
HUFF HUFF
HURRY MAYA, WE'RE LATE!
IF YOU DON'T WORK, HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO SURVIVE?
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU STOPPED WORKING!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAVE TUBER-CULOSIS!
A PROBLEM?
WE HAVE A PROBLEM REI,
I'M SORRY, THE BUS WAS LATE
FOR THIS SHOW-ING....
huff
huff
MAYA, REI!
WE WERE WORRIED, WE WERE ABOUT TO COME PICK YOU UP!

COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
MOTHER!
MAYA!

CLICK
MOTHER!
HALT
VROOM
MO-
THER!
MAYA!
VROOOM VROOOM
MO-
THER,
WAIT!
MO-
THER!

VROOOOM
WE HAVE FIFTEEN MINUTES!
IF YOU DON'T GET READY NOW, EVERY-THING WILL BE OVER!
MO-THER!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MAYA?!
THE SHOW IS ALMOST START-ING!
BADUMP

VROOOOOM
MOTHER...
THE SHOW...
THE LAST SHOW OF 'A STONE'S SMILE'
STARE
LOOK AT THOSE ORION PEOPLE!
ALL OF THEM ARE HERE!
THEIR SHOW WAS OVER YESTERDAY

THE SHOW HAS STARTED!
WE CAN'T MAKE ANY MISTAKES TODAY
MAYBE THEY ARE PLANNING SOMETHING
MOTHER...
SHE WAS SO SKINNY AND PALE...
HOLD ON TIGHTLY
MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T SPILL!
OK!
DO YOU LIKE HAMBURGERS, MAYA?
I DO TOO!
MOTHER...
HOW ABOUT GOING TO THE PARK DURING THE BREAK?

YOU CAN WALK, WHY DID YOU BUY IT?
WHY DO YOU NEED A WHEEL-CHAIR?
WHAT IS THIS, COUNT ISABELLA?
MOTHER, PLEASE FORGIVE ME
I HAVE CAUSED YOU NOTHING BUT TROUBLE
SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANYONE TO SUPPORT HER
SHE ONLY HAS ME
FREDERICA, ARE YOU GOING TO OPEN A TOY STORE?
HEY...
LOOK!
HUH?

CHATTER
MAYA!
huh?
MURMUR
CHATTER
MURMUR
CHATTER

HER MASK IS OFF!
HER DOLL MASK!
MAYA..!

OH..!
SPLASH
OH NO!
MY LEGS ARE TREM-BLING!
I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SHOW!
ELIZABETH IS WET NOW!
I SHOULD BE A DOLL!
HANNA! PLEASE CHANGE ELIZABETH'S DRESS!
YES, SIR

SLAP
FREDERICA, FOR HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO PLAY WITH THOSE DOLLS?
I NEVER KNEW YOU LIKED TO CLEAN UP SO MUCH
MR. GREENSON, YOU KEEP CARRYING THAT DUSTER AROUND TOO
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
NO ACTOR IS ALLOWED TO SHOW THEIR REAL FACE ON STAGE!
THANK YOU FOR COMING!
THANKS!
PLEASE COME TO OUR NEXT SHOW!
CHATTER CHATTER
YES, MA'AM
I DON'T WANT YOU ON STAGE WITH RED EYES
REI, GIVE HER EYE-DROPS!
FIX YOUR MAKEUP!
BA-DUMP
CLENCH

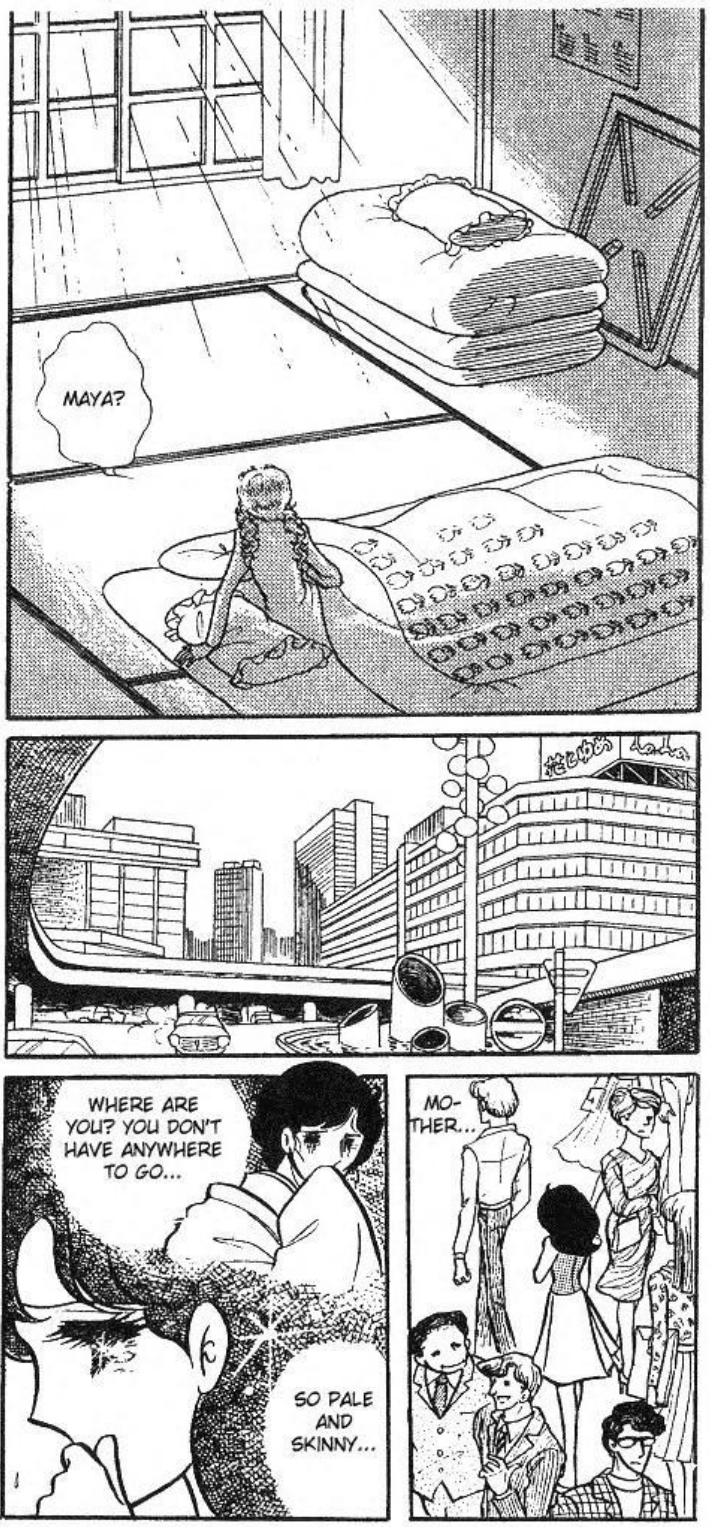
YEAH, MAYBE HER EYES WERE TIRED FROM NOT BLINKING
ALTHOUGH THE DOLL CRIED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PLAY
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THEIR NEXT SHOW
IT'S SAD... WE CAN'T SEE REI ANYMORE
I WILL DEFINITELY WATCH THEIR NEXT SHOW!
I WONDER IF SHE WILL BE IN THE NEXT SHOW
THEY'RE AFFECT-ING US
BESIDES, THEY ALSO HAVE A STRONG WILL...
THEY ARE GOOD
TOO BAD... BUT..
WE HAVE TO PAY THEM BACK!
I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN
WE WILL DIE
THIS IS BAD.. IF THIS CONTINUES...
EVERYONE WAS ENCHANTED
THEIR PERFORMANCE WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE AUDIENCE

WHAT?
SENSEI!
CALM YOURSELF FIRST
MAYA, YOU CAN'T BE IN THE NEXT PLAY
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, AN ACTOR IS NOT ALLOWED TO REMOVE THEIR MASK ON STAGE!
OTHERWISE, TODAY'S PLAY WOULD BE A TOTAL FAILURE
SNCE REI WAS QUICK, EVERYTHING WENT FINE
A PILLAR...
EVEN IF YOU PLAY A SMALL PART IN IT...
YOU ARE SIMILAR TO A PILLAR OF A BUILDING
IF ONE IS MISSING, THE BUILDING WILL CRUMBLE
MAYA, THE STAGE DOESN'T BELONG TO ONE PERSON
EVEN IF YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO FAILED, WHAT YOU DID ALMOST CAUSED THE ENTIRE PLAY TO FALL APART!

IN TODAY'S SHOW...
YOU FAILED AS AN ACTRESS!
FAILED AS AN ACTRESS
FAILED...
YOUR MOTHER DISAP-PEARED?
SO THAT'S THE REASON...
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, YOU CAN'T REMOVE YOUR OWN MASK...
YOU CAN BE SAD, OR IN PAIN, BUT IT'S A PERSONAL FEELING
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR ROLE

A GLASS MASK?
A GLASS MASK...
WE HAVE TO KILL OUR FEELINGS...
YES, MAYA
WEHN WE ACT, WE WEAR A VERY FRAGILE GLASS MASK
EVEN IF WE TRY OUR BEST IN ACTING, IF OUR MASK IS BROKEN...
OUR REAL FACE IS EXPOSED
A GLASS MASK...
THAT'S THE RISK
AN ACTOR'S SKILL DETERMINES WHETHER ONE CAN KEEP THE MASK OR NOT
THAT'S HOW IT IS

IF YOU STOP, THE CANDIDATE FOR THE CRIMSON GODDESS WILL BECOME SOMEONE ELSE'S!
I WONDER WHEN I CAN DO THE ROLE OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS...
IT MUST HAVE BEEN HER...
THE ONE I SAW ON THE CROSSWALK WAS HER
MOM...
ZZZZZZZ...
RING
ARGH!
RING
CLICK
MAYA...
UGH...
I'M STILL SLEEPY MAYA...
RING


MAYA?
WHERE ARE YOU? YOU DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO...
SO PALE AND SKINNY...
MO-
THER...