



NITTEI

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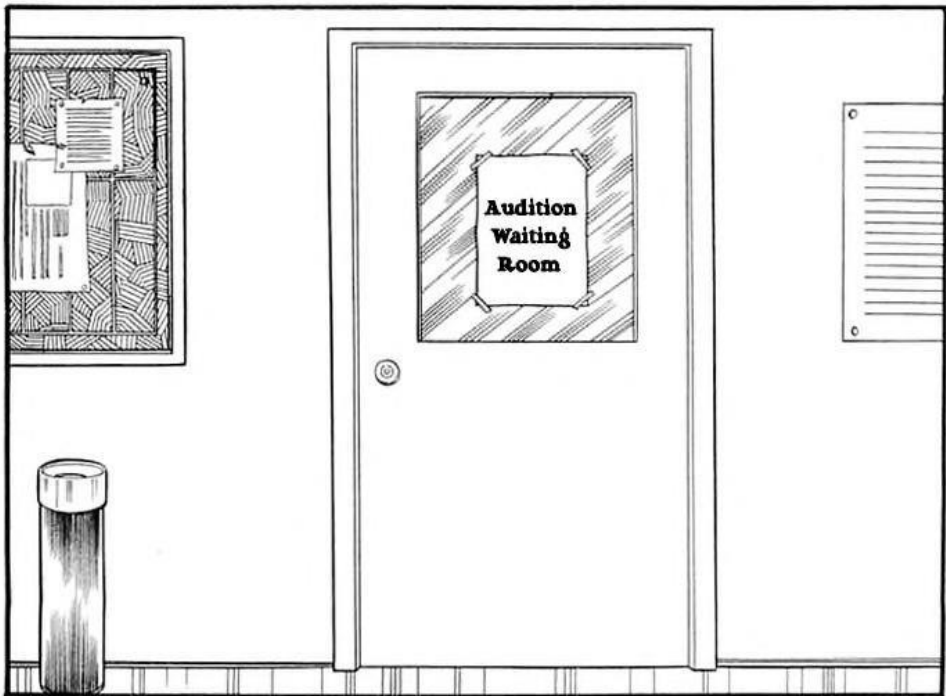
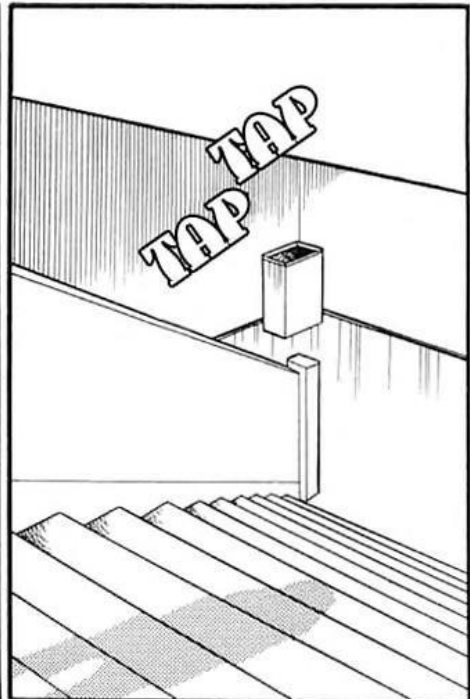
**The Two Princesses**  
Audition for  
Ayumi Himekawa's  
partner  
(Venue)  
Basement studio



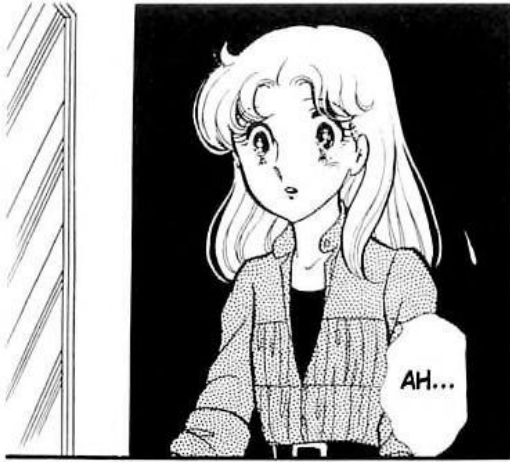
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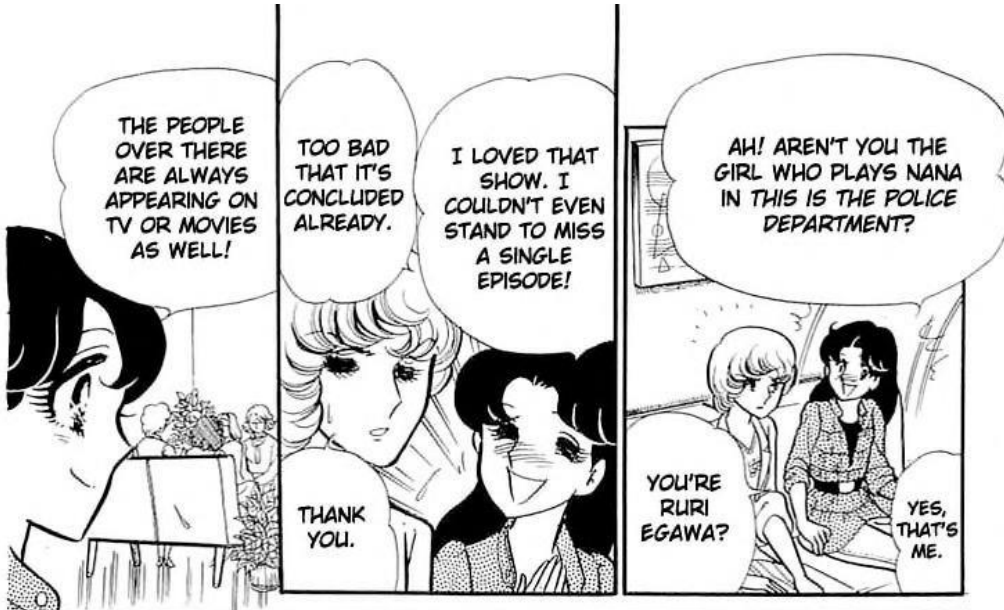
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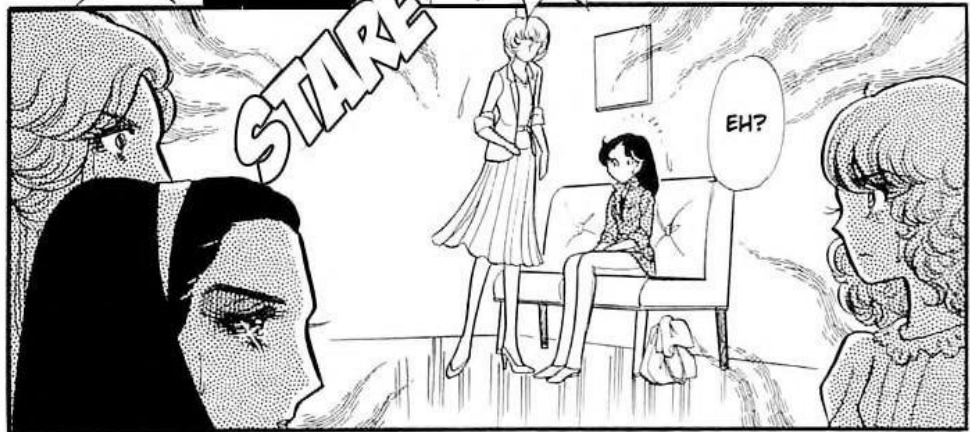
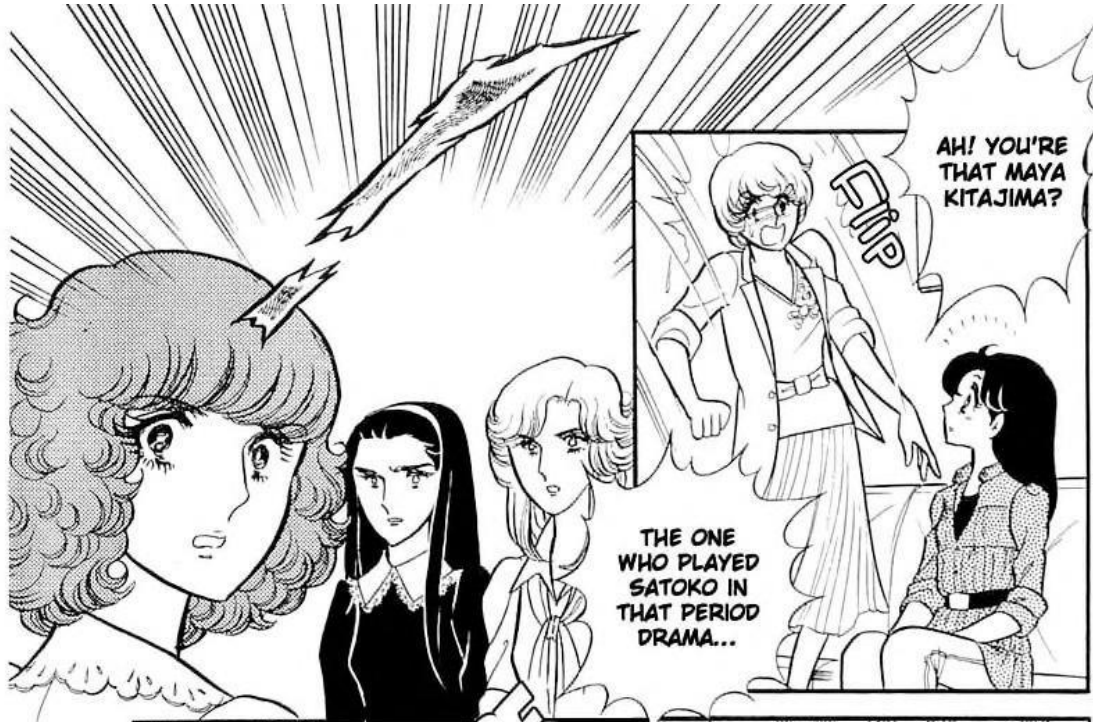
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FIRST, I'LL BE ANNOUNCING THE NUMBERS ASSIGNED TO EACH CANDIDATE FOR THE AUDITION...

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.  
I'M KAWAGUCHI, THE ORGANIZER FOR THIS AUDITION.

OH...

THE AUDITION WILL PROCEED IN THIS ORDER.

PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN YOUR NAME IS CALLED.

I'LL BE EXPLAINING THE AUDITIONING PROCESS NOW, SO PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY.

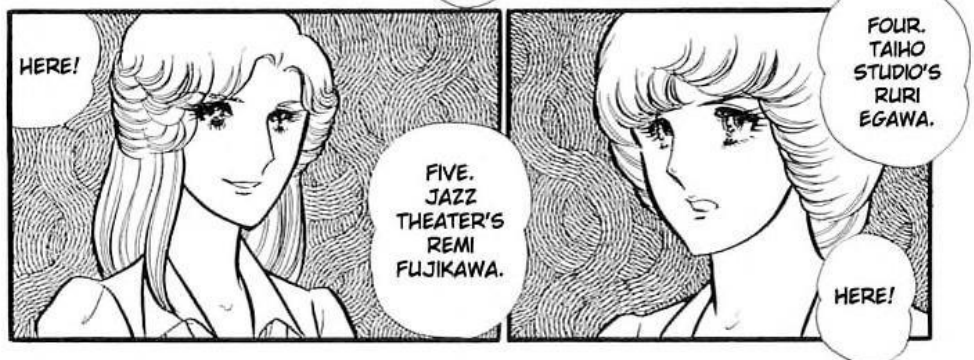


HERE!

TWO. SUZUKI JIMUNSHO AGENCY'S YUKI KOSHIRO.  
THREE. DREAM PRO'S YOKO UEGUSA.

HERE!

ONE. FREEMAN THEATER'S MIDORI KUSAKA.  
PRESENT!

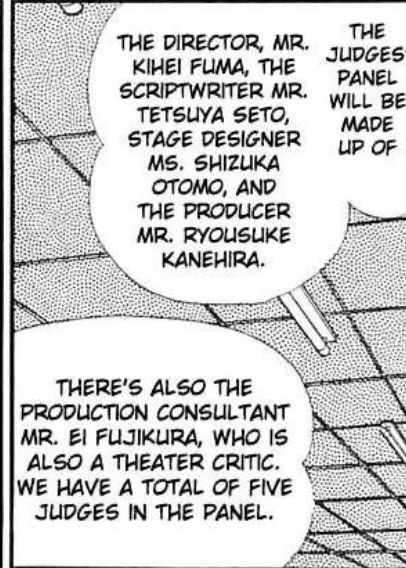


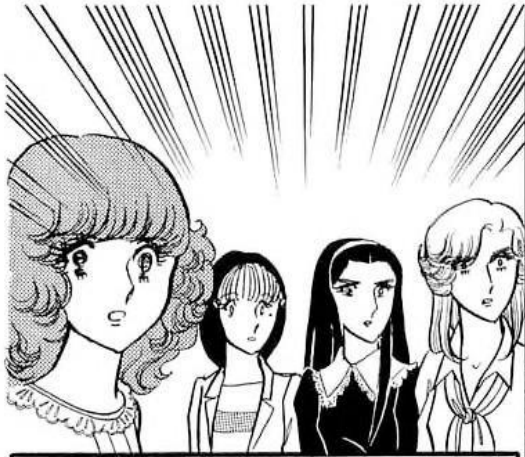
HERE!

FIVE. JAZZ THEATER'S REMI FUJIKAWA.

FOUR. TAIHO STUDIO'S RURI EGAWA.  
HERE!

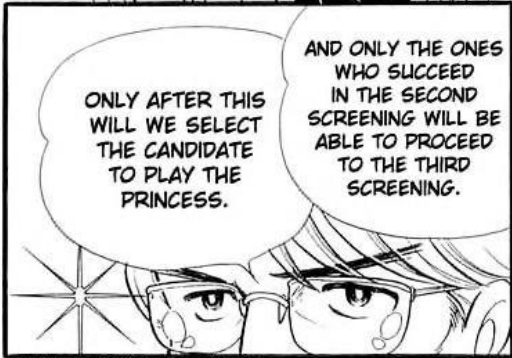






A FIRST SCREENING, A SECOND SCREENING, AND A THIRD SCREENING, FOR A TOTAL OF THREE STAGES.

AS FOR THE SELECTION PROCESS, IT WILL BE DIVIDED INTO



ONLY AFTER THIS WILL WE SELECT THE CANDIDATE TO PLAY THE PRINCESS.

AND ONLY THE ONES WHO SUCCEED IN THE SECOND SCREENING WILL BE ABLE TO PROCEED TO THE THIRD SCREENING.

WILL BE ABLE TO PROCEED TO THE SECOND SCREENING THREE DAYS LATER.

ONLY THE ONES WHO PASS THE FIRST SCREENING TODAY



THE SUBJECTS OF THE AUDITION MIGHT BE DIFFICULT. DON'T WORRY THOUGH,

Blab Blab

IF YOU FEEL YOU CAN'T DO IT, YOU MAY OPT TO FORFEIT YOUR PLACE.



Method of elimination...



THEN SOME OF US WILL ALREADY BE DISQUALIFIED DURING TODAY'S SCREENING!



ANYBODY WHO DOESN'T PASS MUSTER WILL BE ASKED TO BOW OUT, SO THE LAST ONE LEFT STANDING WILL BE THE OTHER PRINCESS...

MOM ...



THIS IS GOING TO BE BY METHOD OF ELIMINATION.



This audition is turning out to be more difficult than I first imagined...



I'M DEFINITELY NOT GIVING UP MY PLACE HERE!

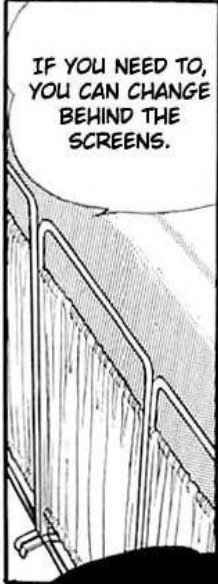
I WONDER HOW THEY'LL TEST US.

IT SOUNDS SCARY!



I'LL BE CALLING YOU IN BY NUMBER AFTER 30 MINUTES.

THE CANDIDATE WHO'S CALLED CAN PROCEED TO THE SCREENING ROOM.

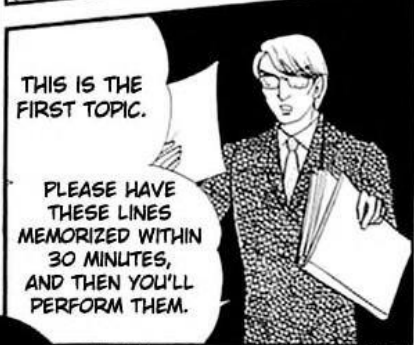


IF YOU NEED TO, YOU CAN CHANGE BEHIND THE SCREENS.



TWO TOPICS?

TODAY'S FIRST SCREENING HAS TWO TOPICS.



THIS IS THE FIRST TOPIC.

PLEASE HAVE THESE LINES MEMORIZED WITHIN 30 MINUTES, AND THEN YOU'LL PERFORM THEM.



BLAH

THE FIRST TOPIC...

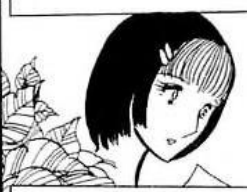


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THEIR ENTIRE EXISTENCE, THEIR FATE, THEIR VERY LIFE. ALL CONTROLLED BY MY HAND.

I CAN CHANGE ANOTHER PERSON'S FATE AT A WHIM.

TOPIC 1: "POISON"



NEVER AGAIN WILL I LET THEM MAKE LIGHT OF MATTERS.

YOU! YOU ALWAYS THINK ONLY OF YOURSELF, WITH NEVER A CARE FOR HOW OTHERS MIGHT FEEL.

WHEN MY HEART HAS BLED UNDERNEATH YOUR CRUEL TRAMPLING, YOU FEIGN INNOCENCE.

NO-ONE KNOWS THAT I CARRY THIS POISON IN MY HANDS.



ONLY ONE OR TWO BITES,

ONE OR TWO DROPS OF THIS IN YOUR FOOD,

NO TRACE OF THE POISON WILL REMAIN IN THE BODY.

IN FRONT OF YOU, I WILL PRETEND THAT NOTHING IS AFOOT, THAT THINGS ARE AS THEY WERE.

LAUGH THEN! THIS IS THE TURNING POINT OF MY EXISTENCE!



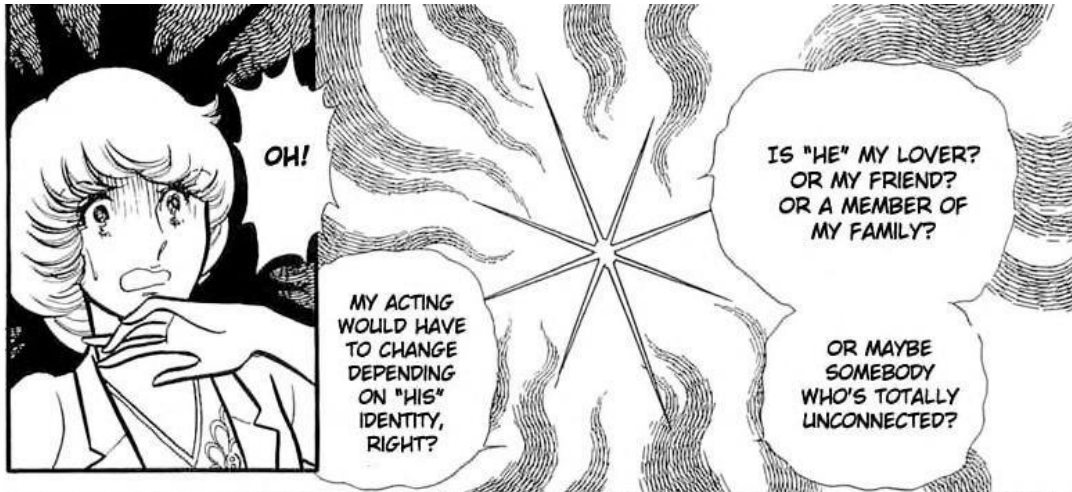
I WILL ESCAPE THE BONDAGE OF PAIN AT LONG LAST.

AND EVERYTHING WILL END.

WITHIN FOUR STRIKES OF THE CLOCK, SPASMS WILL SEIZE YOUR HEART, AND SO SHALL YOU DIE.

YET, ONCE THIS POISON ENTERS THE BODY TOGETHER WITH YOUR FOOD, ITS LETHAL QUALITIES WILL TAKE EFFECT.







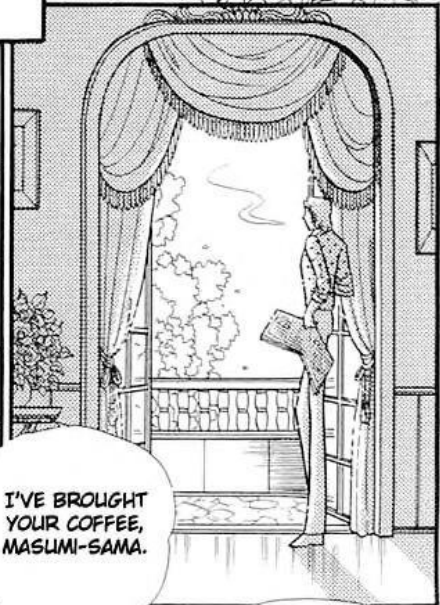
The audition should be starting any minute now... 10:20...

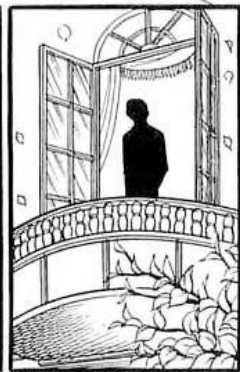


THANK YOU.



I'VE BROUGHT YOUR COFFEE, MASUMI-SAMA.







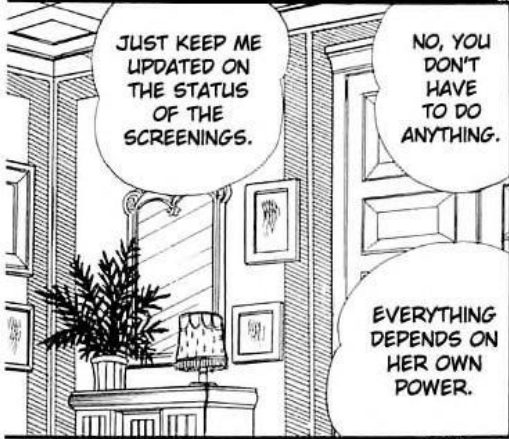


I IMPERSONATED A JOURNALIST TO GET INTO THE NITTEI.

THIS IS HIJIRI.

MASUMI-SAMA, YOU HAVE A PHONE CALL.

I'M CALLING FROM A PUBLIC PHONE NEAR THE NITTEI THEATER.



JUST KEEP ME UPDATED ON THE STATUS OF THE SCREENINGS.

NO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING.

EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON HER OWN POWER.



WHAT SHOULD I DO?

YOUR INTENTIONS ARE?

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO CARRY A MESSAGE?



OH! SO THEY'LL BE DOING THREE SCREENINGS...

ALL RIGHT.



IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?

NO.

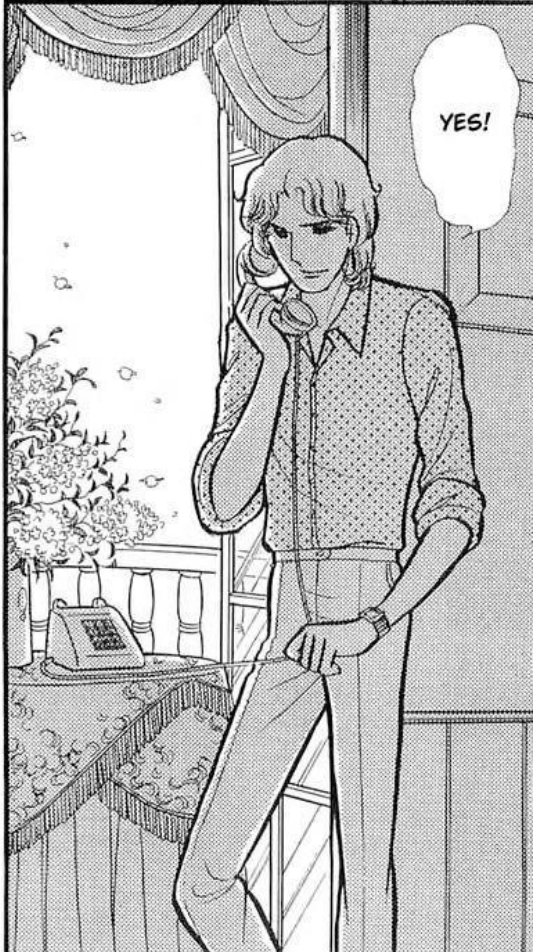
BUT PLEASE WATCH OVER HER CAREFULLY.

JUST AS I EXPECTED, THEY'RE GOING TO BE VERY SELECTIVE.



I UNDERSTAND...

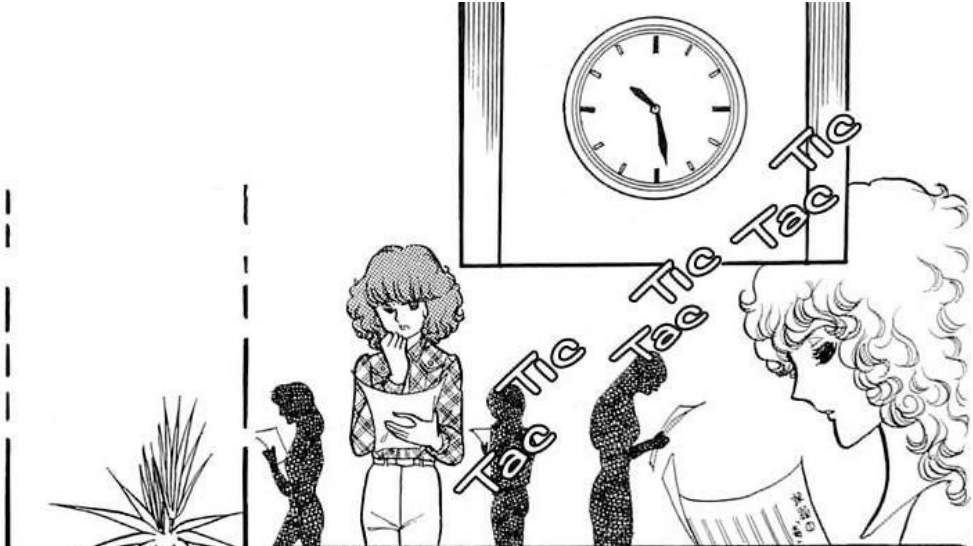
I'LL DO IT IN YOUR PLACE?



YES!

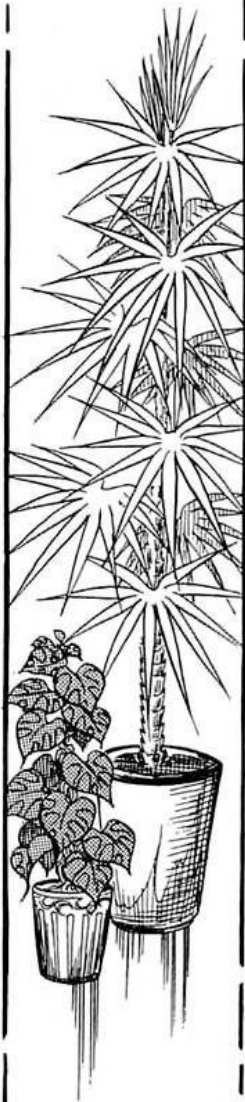


Smile



Also, what am I going to mix the poison with?

What sort of container is the poison hidden in?

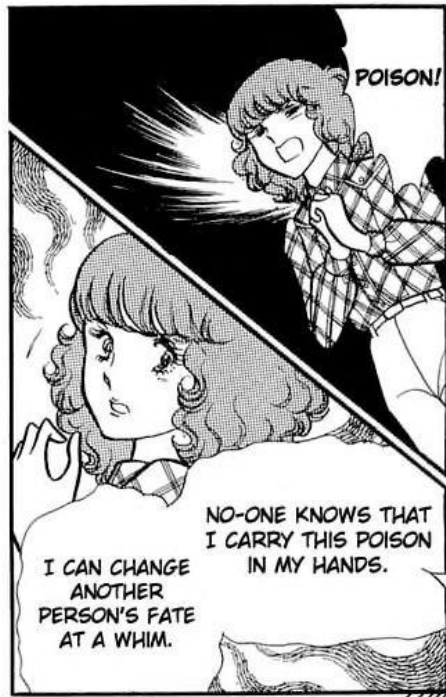




I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE THIS MY BEST.

I'VE ALREADY MEMORIZED ALL THE LINES, MOTHER.

ARE YOU READY, MIDORI?



POISON!

NO-ONE KNOWS THAT I CARRY THIS POISON IN MY HANDS. I CAN CHANGE ANOTHER PERSON'S FATE AT A WHIM.



I'M CANDIDATE NUMBER 1, MY NAME IS MIDORI KUSAKA!

I'M VERY PLEASED TO BE HERE!



ENTIRE EXISTENCE, THEIR FATE, THEIR VERY LIFE.

THEIR ...



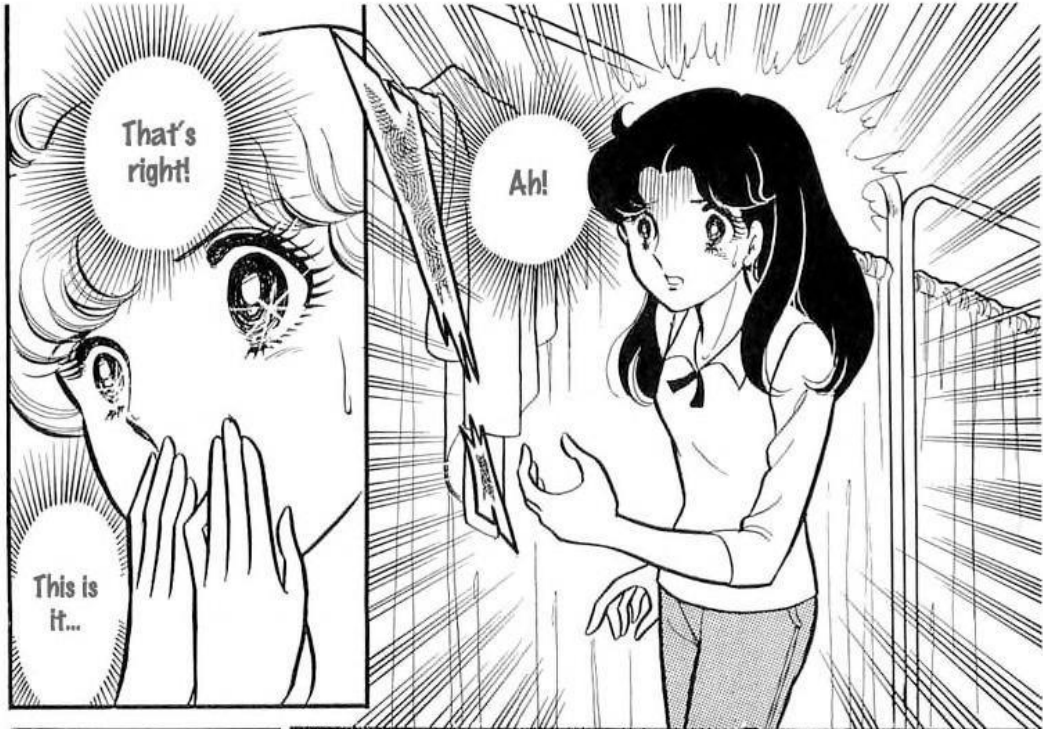
DO THEY WANT US TO GUESS WHAT'S GOING ON BY LISTENING ON BY LISTENING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS?

WHAT A BOTHER. EVEN THE WAITING ROOM AND THE SCREENING ROOM ARE OFF LIMITS TO US!



ALL CONTROLLED BY MY HAND.







HO HO  
HO HO  
HO HO  
HO HO

NEVER AGAIN  
WILL I LET  
THEM MAKE  
LIGHT OF  
MATTERS!

NUMBER 3: YOKO  
UEGLISA



WITH NEVER A  
CARE FOR HOW  
OTHERS MIGHT  
FEEL!

YOU  
ALWAYS  
THINK  
ONLY OF  
YOUR-  
SELF!

WHEN MY HEART HAS  
BLED UNDERNEATH  
YOUR CRUEL  
TRAMPLING, YOU  
FEIGN INNOCENCE.



YES,  
IT'S VERY  
DIVERTING!

HER DELIVERY IS  
COMPLETELY UNLIKE  
NUMBER 1 AND  
NUMBER 2!



I can...  
I can act  
this now!

Everything that  
I've learned so  
far... I can use  
today!



NUMBER 4: RURI EGAWA

IN FRONT OF YOU, I WILL PRETEND THAT NOTHING IS AFOOT, THAT THINGS ARE AS THEY WERE.

THIS IS THE TURNING POINT OF MY EXISTENCE!

LAUGH THEN...



ONE OR TWO DROPS OF THIS

NO TRACE OF THE POISON WILL REMAIN IN THE BODY...

IN WITH YOUR FOOD...

...ENTERS THE BODY TOGETHER WITH YOUR FOOD, ITS LETHAL QUALITIES WILL TAKE EFFECT.

WITHIN FOUR STRIKES OF THE CLOCK, SPASMS WILL SEIZE YOUR HEART, AND SO SHALL YOU DIE.

YET, ONCE THIS POISON...

NUMBER 5: REMI FUJIKAWA



MY TURNING POINT.

ONLY ONE OR TWO BITES,

I WILL ESCAPE THE BONDAGE OF PAIN AT LONG LAST.



AND EVERYTHING WILL END!

NUMBER 6: MICHIRU YUKIMURA



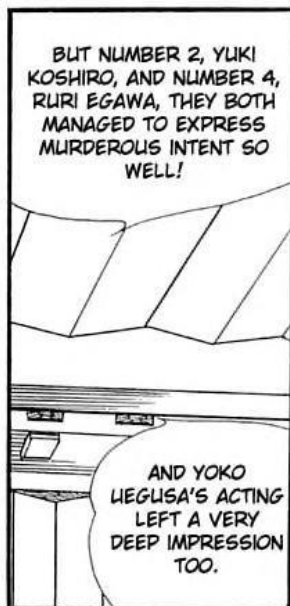


EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE ALL USING THE SAME LINES, EACH PERFORMER HAS A DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION, WHICH COMMUNICATES A SENSE OF FRESHNESS DURING HER TURN.

**Blah Blah**

EVERYONE'S PERFORMED WELL SO FAR.

THEY'VE ALREADY MASTERED THEIR LINES. THEIR DELIVERY IS SMOOTH, AND THEIR EMOTIONS WERE CONVEYED NICELY.



BUT NUMBER 2, YUKI KOSHIRO, AND NUMBER 4, RURI EGAWA, THEY BOTH MANAGED TO EXPRESS MURDEROUS INTENT SO WELL!

AND YOKO UEGUSA'S ACTING LEFT A VERY DEEP IMPRESSION TOO.



YOU MEAN THAT THEY'RE BEING TOO SHOWY?

YES. AND THEY'RE SHORT ON GENUINE FEELING BECAUSE OF THIS...



DON'T YOU FEEL THAT THEIR PERFORMANCES ARE STILL IMPERFECT?

HOWEVER,

ACTING THAT'S DESIGNED JUST TO EXHIBIT ONE'S SKILL... SEEMS TO LACK A CERTAIN SOMETHING...



YES. I GAVE HER SPECIAL PERMISSION TO JOIN THE AUDITION.

HER NAME'S MAYA KITAJI-MA.

ONE MORE?



OH! WAIT A MOMENT!

THERE'S STILL ONE PERSON WHO HASN'T BEEN CALLED IN.

THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO DECIDE AFTER THE SECOND TOPIC!



DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO LET HER JOIN THE AUDITION?

TRUE.

BUT SHE'S ALSO THE GIRL WHO BEAT AYUMI FOR THE BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS AWARD IN THE MIRACLE WORKER.



MAYA KITAJI-MA?

THAT GIRL WHO WAS BLACKLISTED FROM THE ENTERTAINMENT WORLD?



MUTTER  
MUTTER



SHE'S NOT HERE?

KITA...



NUMBER 7, MAYA KITAJIMA!



EH?

MUTTER



MUTTER  
MUTTER



I'M UP ALREADY?

YES! WHY ARE YOU STILL SITTING THERE AND STARING LIKE AN IDIOT? DIDN'T YOU COME HERE TODAY TO AUDITION?

KITAJIMA-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? IT'S YOUR TURN!

AH!

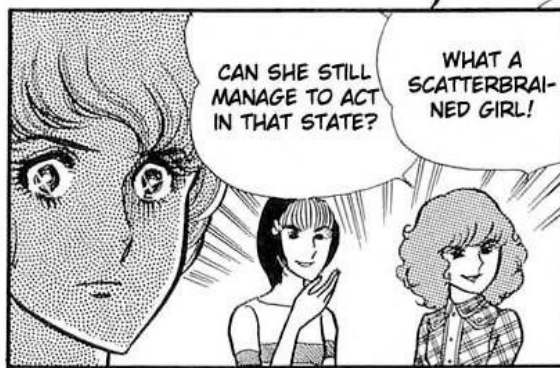
THAT'S RIGHT! THE AUDITION!

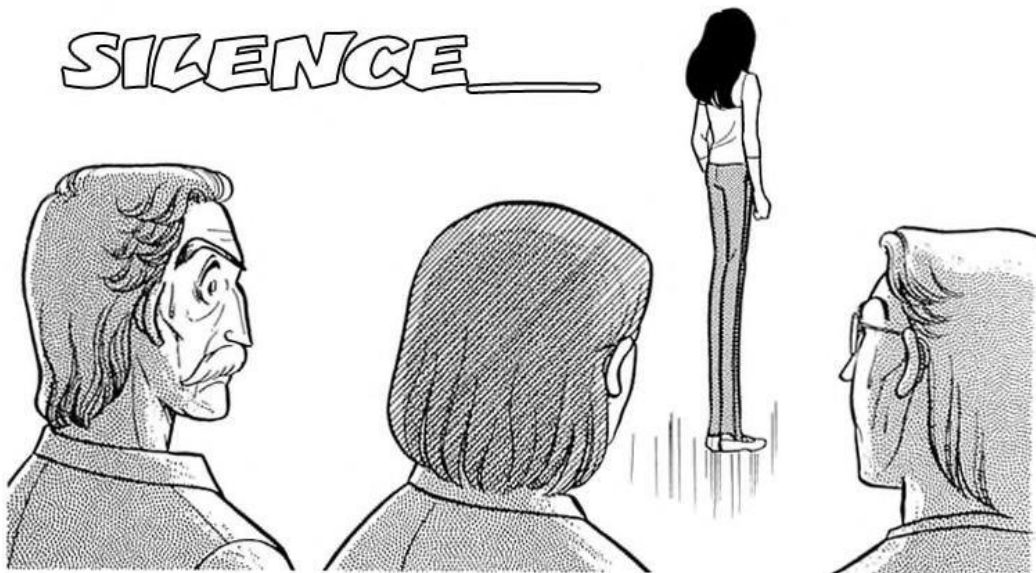
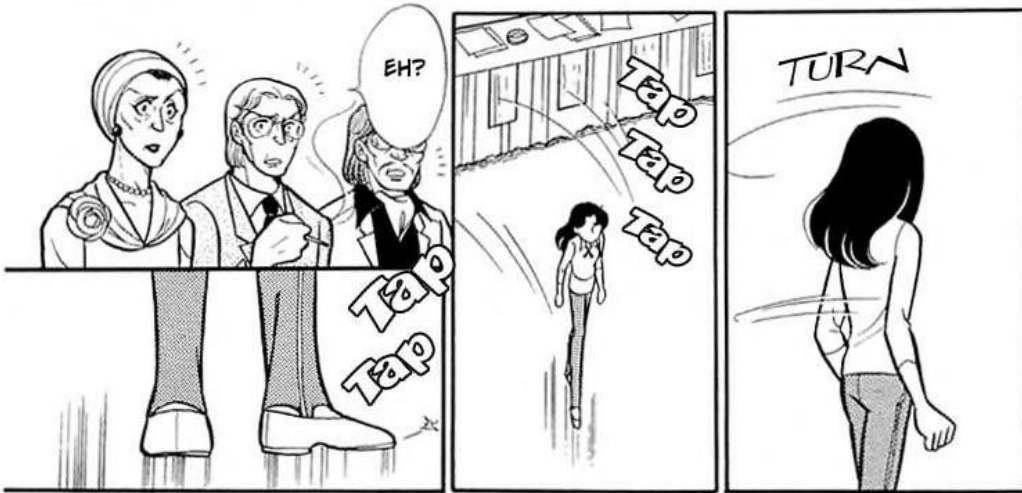
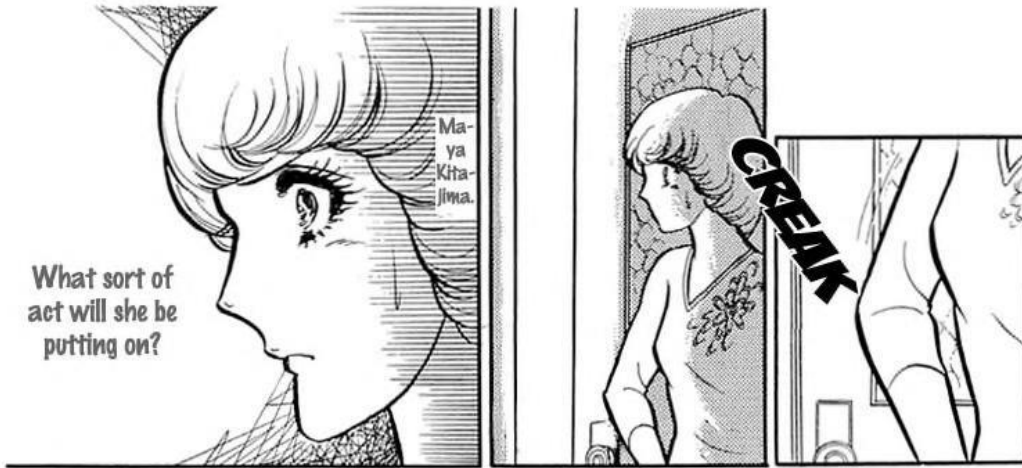
HUH?

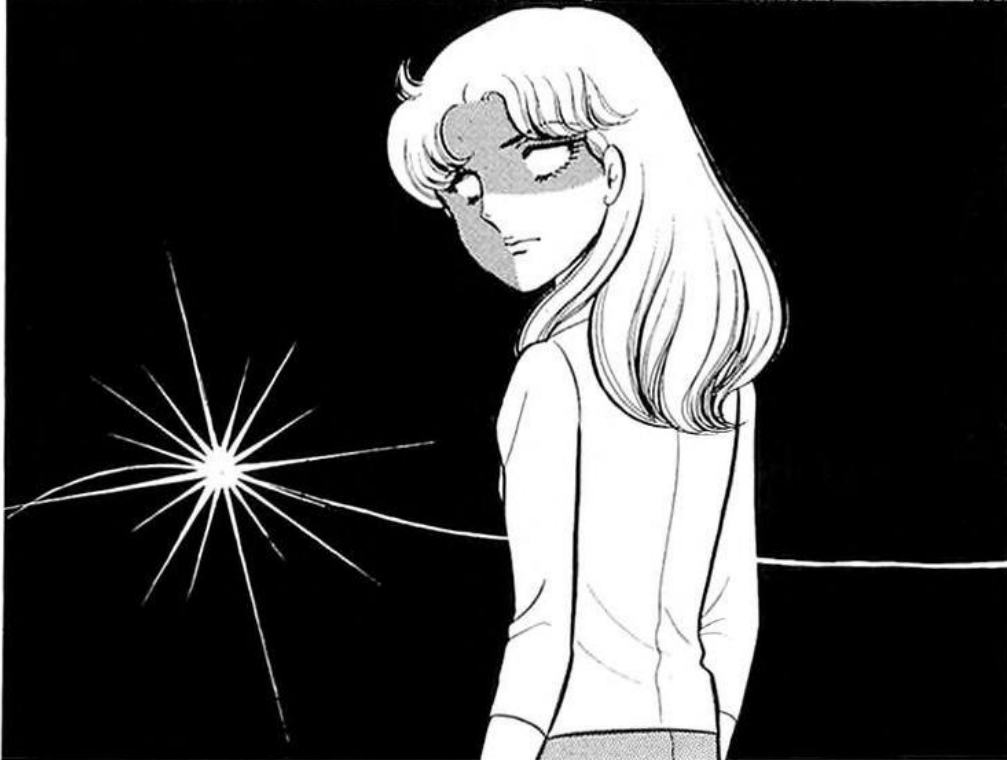
WAA! THUMP!

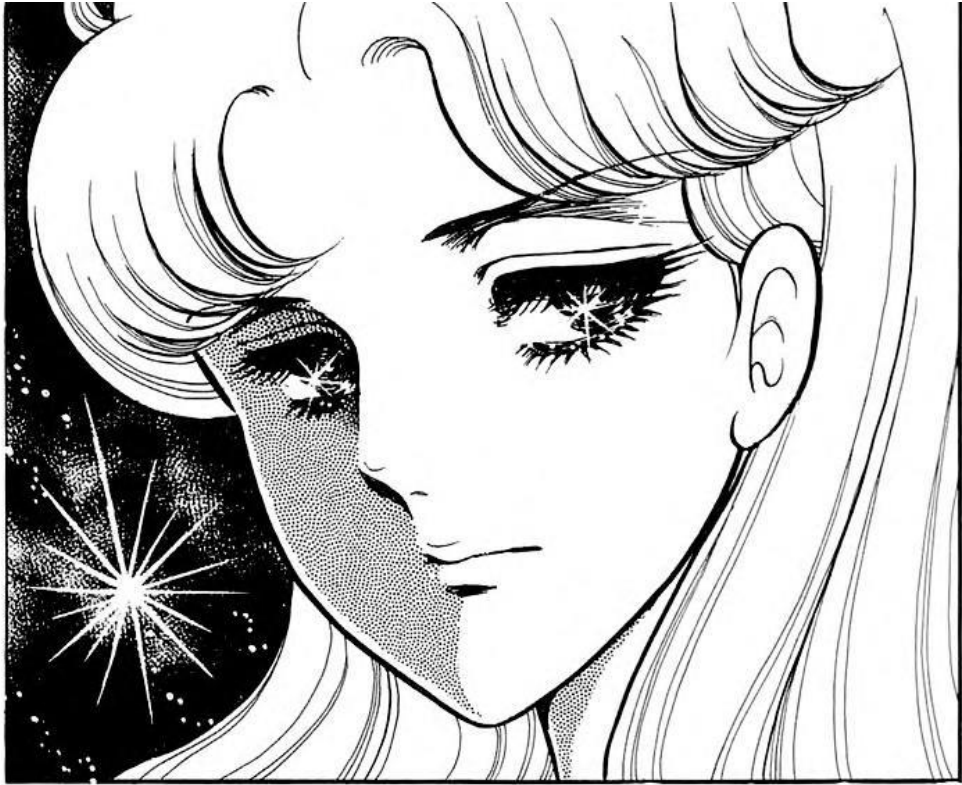
SORRY! COMING THROUGH!

STARE











GLASS MASK (END OF VOLUME 22)