

THE BALCONY
OVER THE
CITY..

THE PIRATE
SHIP...

I HAVE TO
SHOW ALL OF
THAT

BUT HOW
TO DO IT?

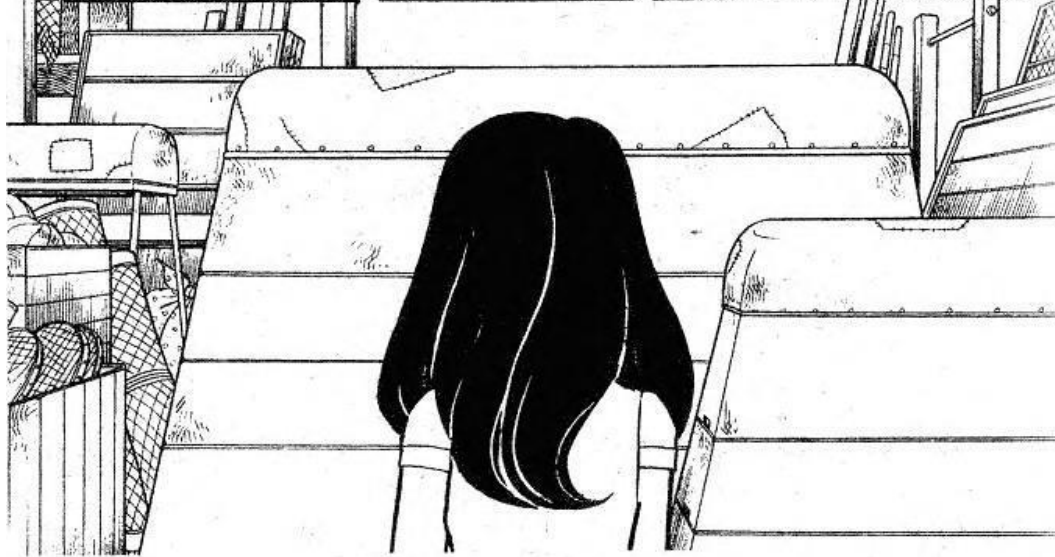
IF I CAN ONLY
ARRANGE
EVERYTHING IT'LL
BE FINE..
LIKE THE CASTLE...

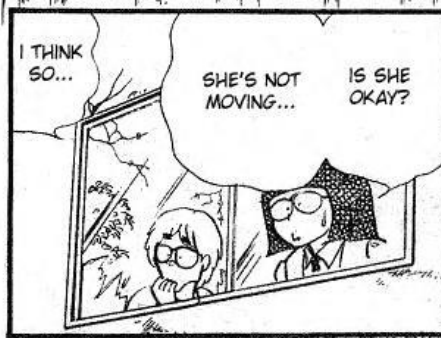
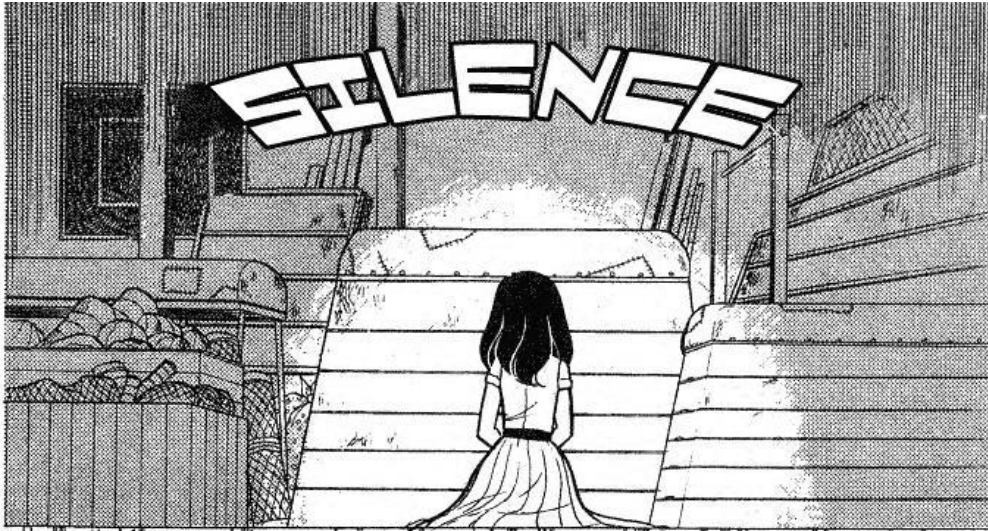
AND THE
GONDOLA,
THAT'S GOING
TO BE HARD...

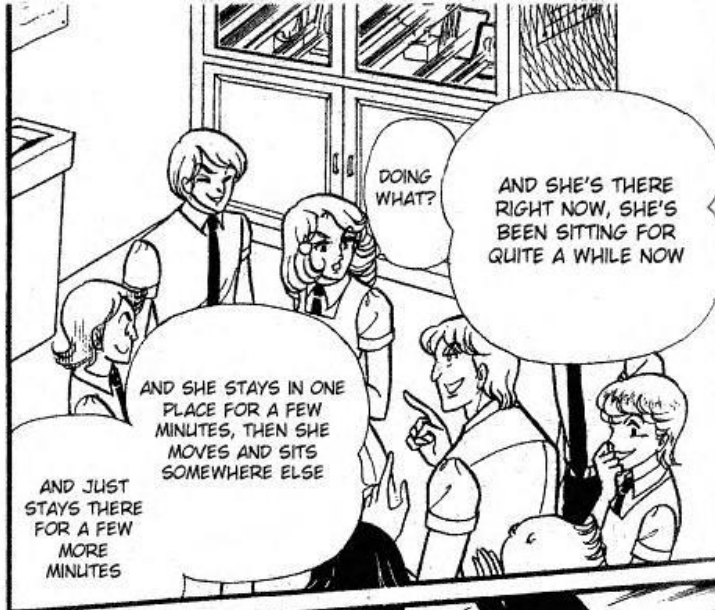
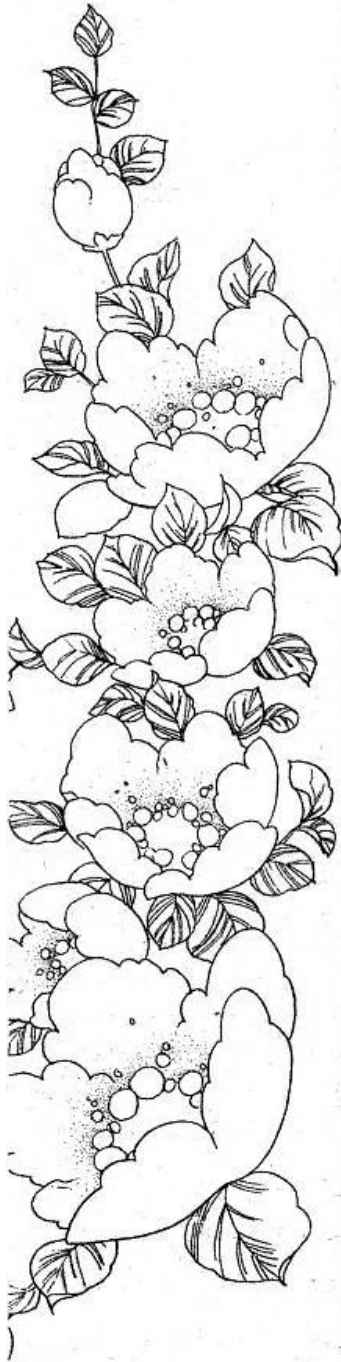


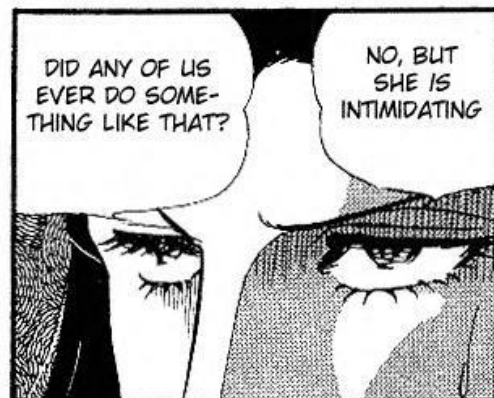
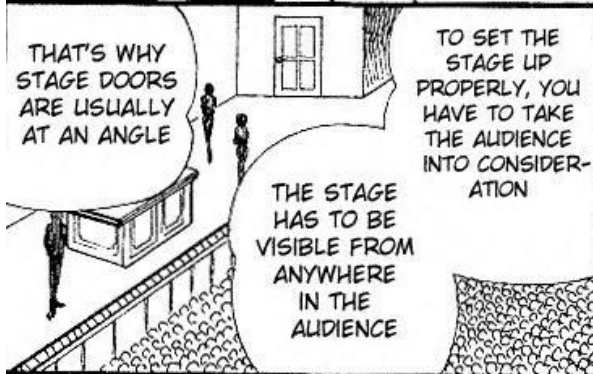
EVERYONE
SHOULD BE ABLE
TO SEE THE
SET..

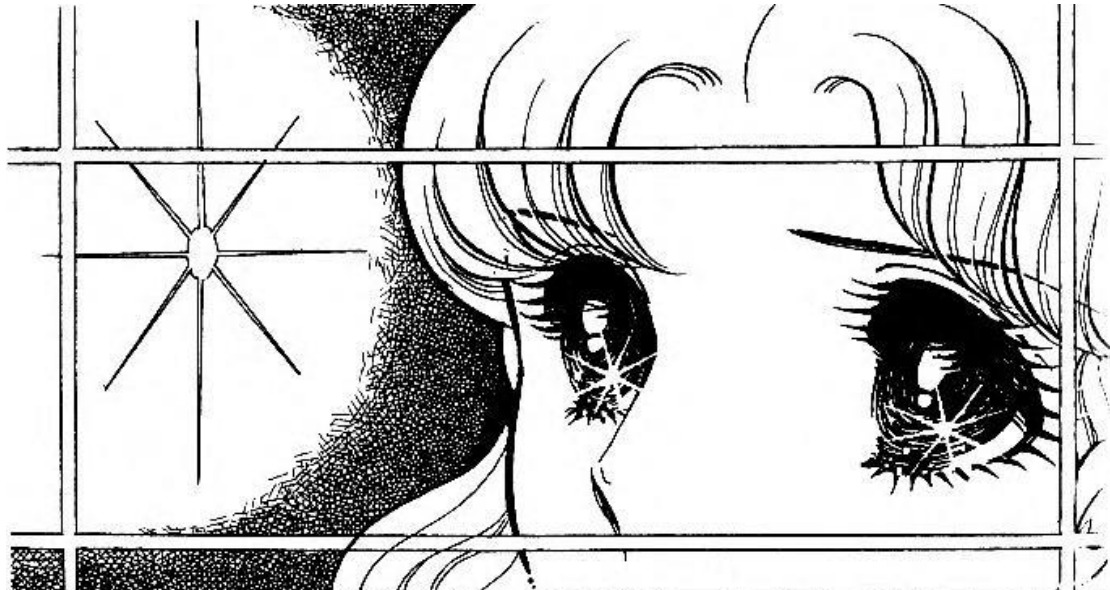
THIS
WILL BE
TOUGH











SET IT AT AN ANGLE



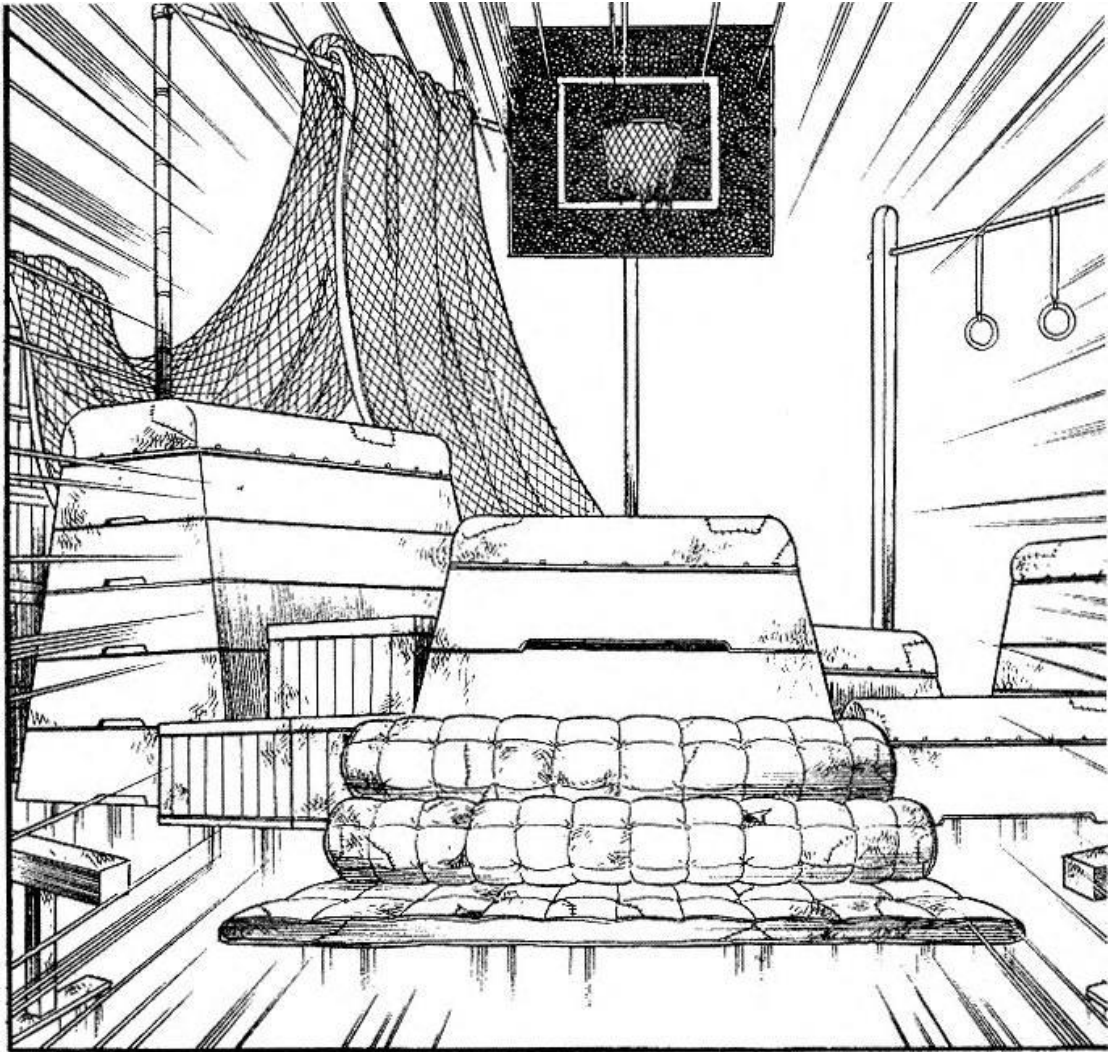
LIKE THIS ?

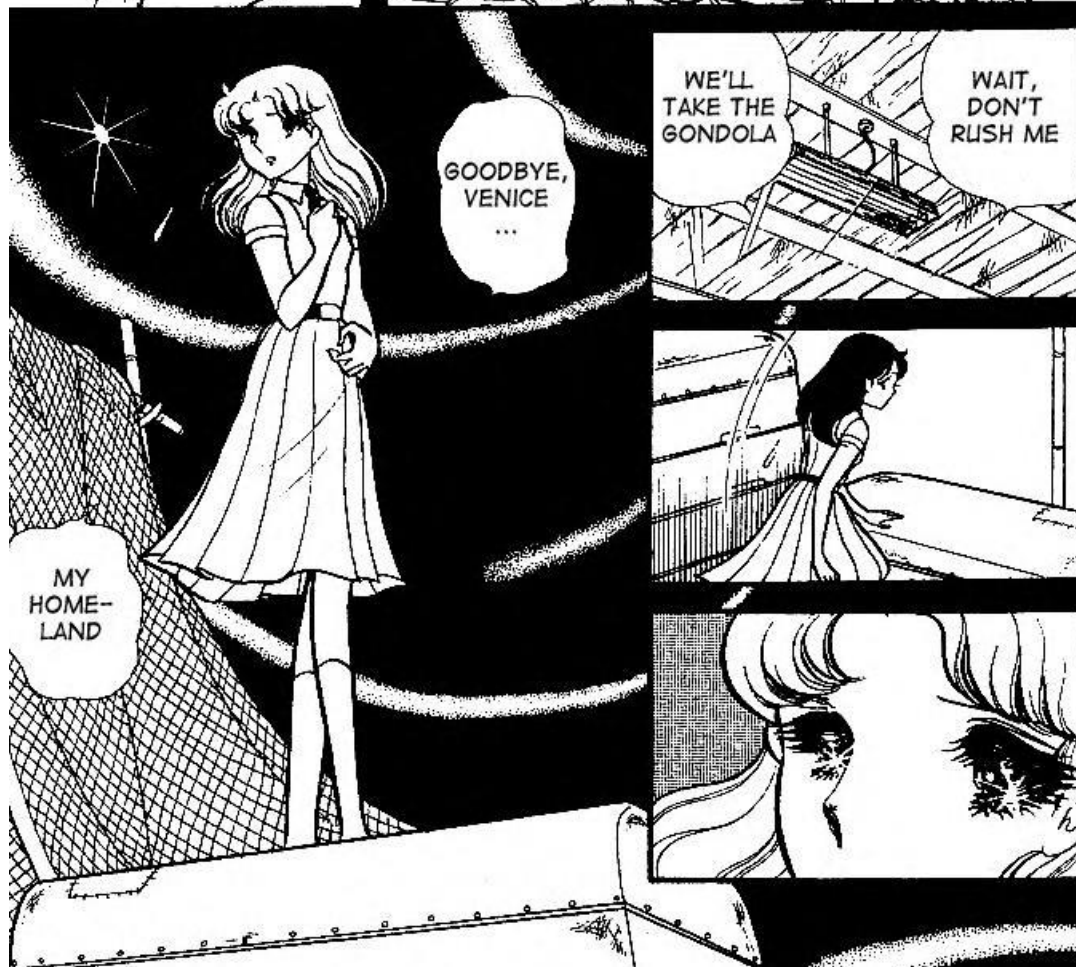
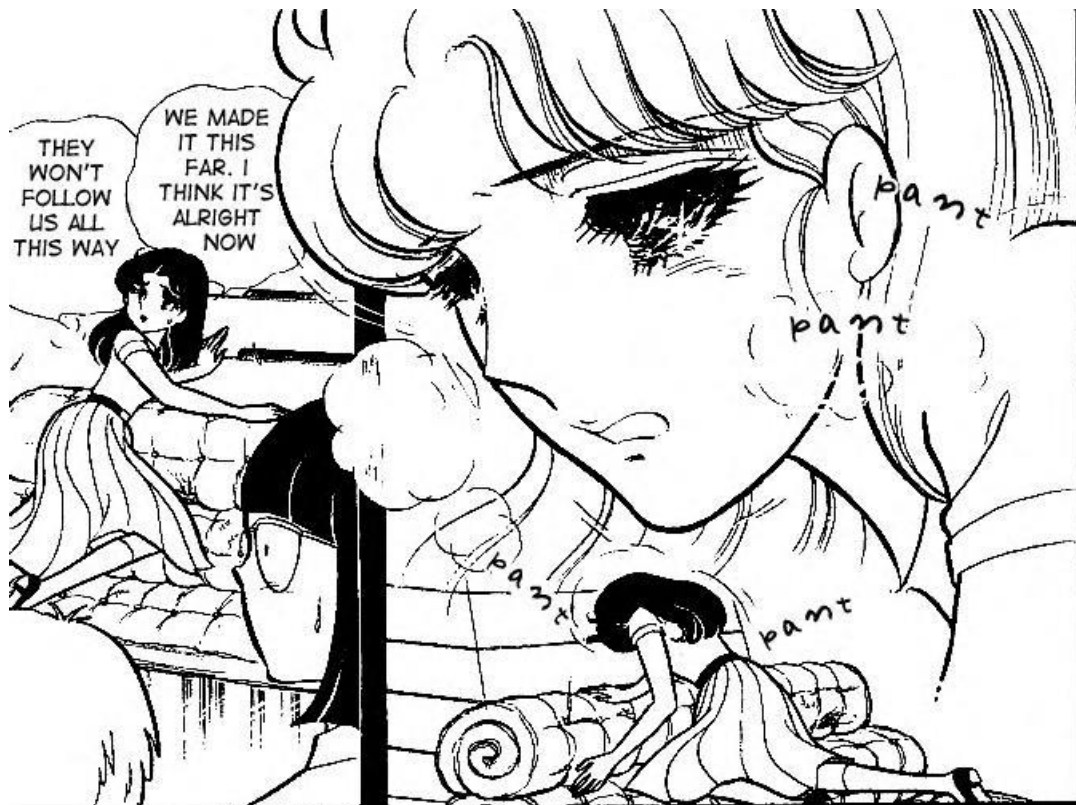
A BIT TO THE RIGHT

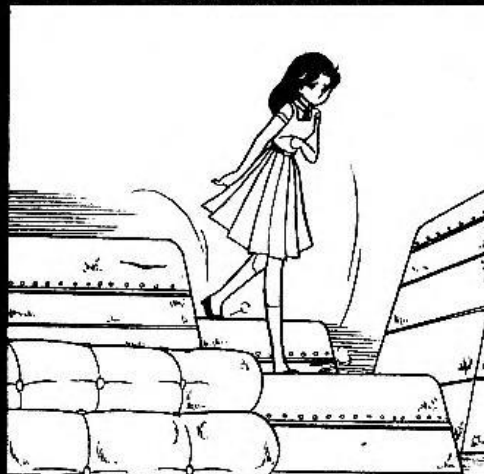
PUT THIS BEHIND IT ...



IT'S DONE !









WHAT'S WRONG ?

RUB
RUB
RUB

EH?
NO, NO...
I'M OKAY



BIANCA,
THE
FEMALE
PIRATE

FINALLY, I
GET TO
PERFORM

A
ROYAL
PRINCESS

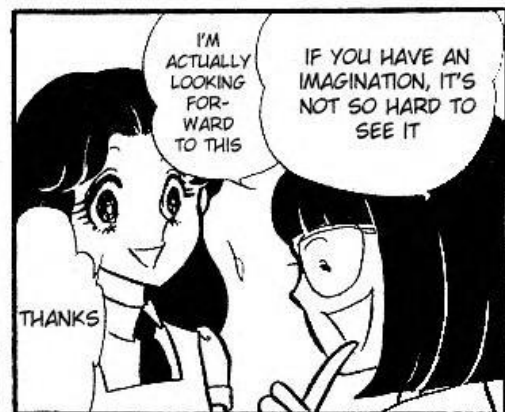
HAVING BEEN
FRAMED, SHE WAS
FORCED TO LEAVE
HER COUNTRY AND LIVE
A LIFE OF ADVENTURE
AND EXCITEMENT



I GET IT:
THEN YOU
JUST RIDE
THE GONDOLA,
RIGHT?

STRANGE, FOR A
MINUTE THERE I
SAW VENICE AND
ITS CANALS

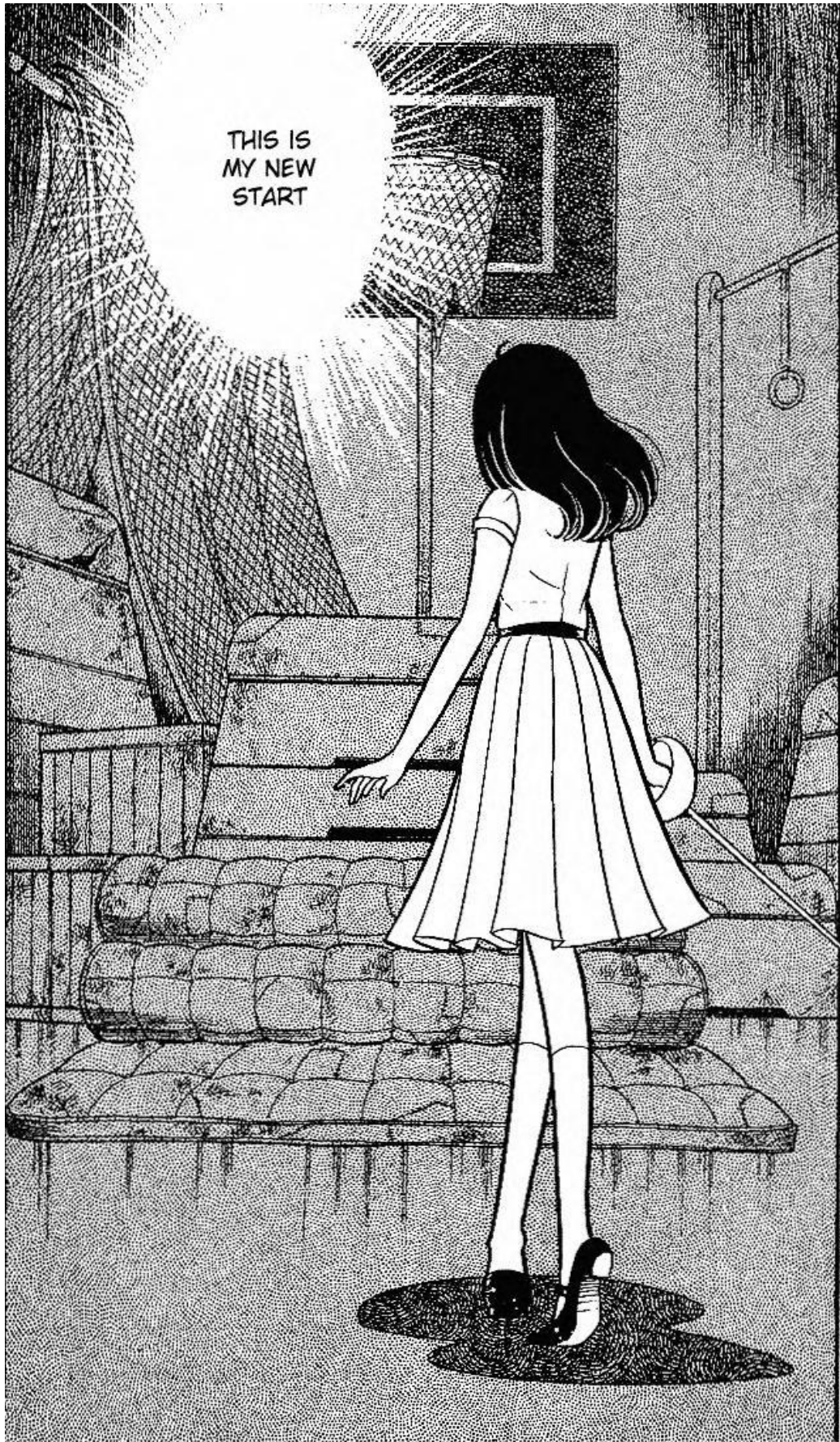
YOU
GOT
IT !



I'M
ACTUALLY
LOOKING
FOR-
WARD
TO THIS

IF YOU HAVE AN
IMAGINATION, IT'S
NOT SO HARD TO
SEE IT

THANKS



THIS IS
MY NEW
START



GOOD.
MAYA IS
DOING A
SOLO ACT
AT SCHOOL



THE
AUDIENCE
WILL

I WILL NO
LONGER GUIDE
HER NOW

SHE'S
FINALLY
LEARNING
TO FIND
HER OWN
PATH

OR RATHER,
TO MAKE
HER OWN
PATH

THE
AUDI-
ENCE
?

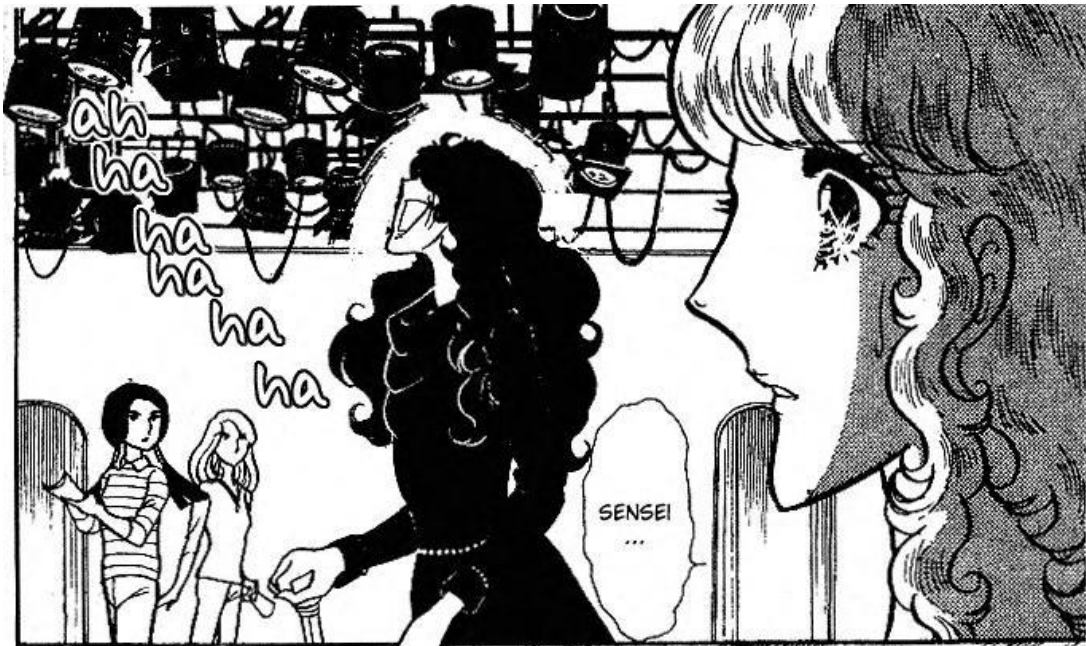


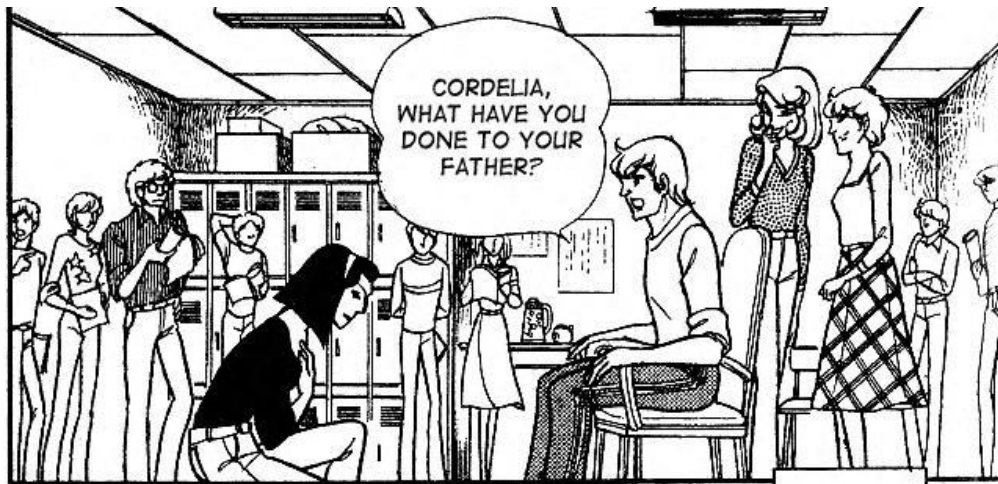
THAT THE
AUDIENCE IS
JUST AS GOOD
A MENTOR AS
A TEACHER IS

SHE
DISCOVERED
IT



THE AUDIENCE
...
A MENTOR
?





CORDELIA,
WHAT HAVE YOU
DONE TO YOUR
FATHER?

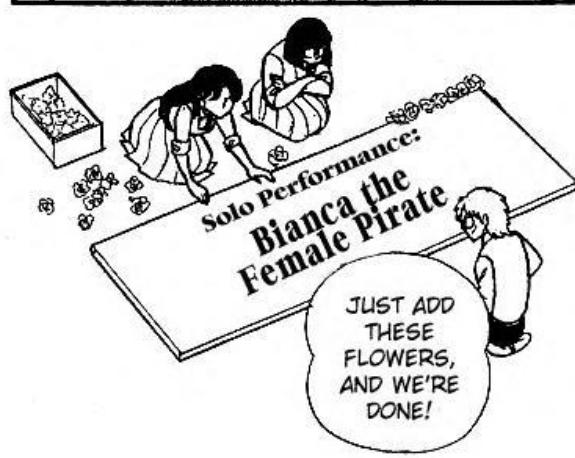


THE STUDENTS
ARE GETTING
ALL EXCITED

REHEARSALS
AND SETTING
UP STANDS
...



IS THIS
SIGN GOOD
ENOUGH?



JUST ADD
THESE
FLOWERS,
AND WE'RE
DONE!



YOSHIZAWA,
THAT'S
GREAT!



WITH THE SIGN UP, IT LOOKS LIKE A REAL THEATRE

MORE FLOWERS, MORE FLOWERS!



THIS IS LIKE A DREAM. I'M REALLY DOING THIS MYSELF

I'VE GOT ALL THE COSTUMES I NEED FROM THE COSTUME RENTAL



EVEN KIDS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS ARE COMING TO SEE HER PERFORM

IS SHE GOING TO UPSTAGE THE DRAMA CLUB?

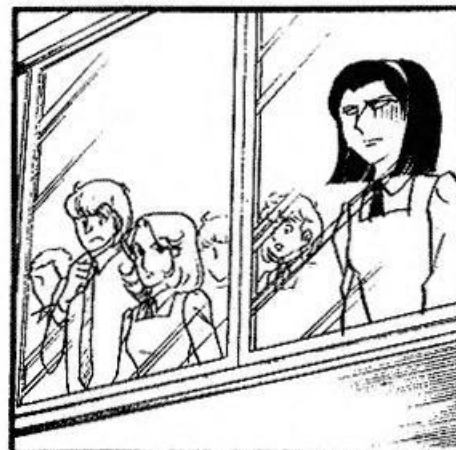
MAYA AND HER ONE-WOMAN SHOW: THAT'S ALL EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT HERE AT SCHOOL



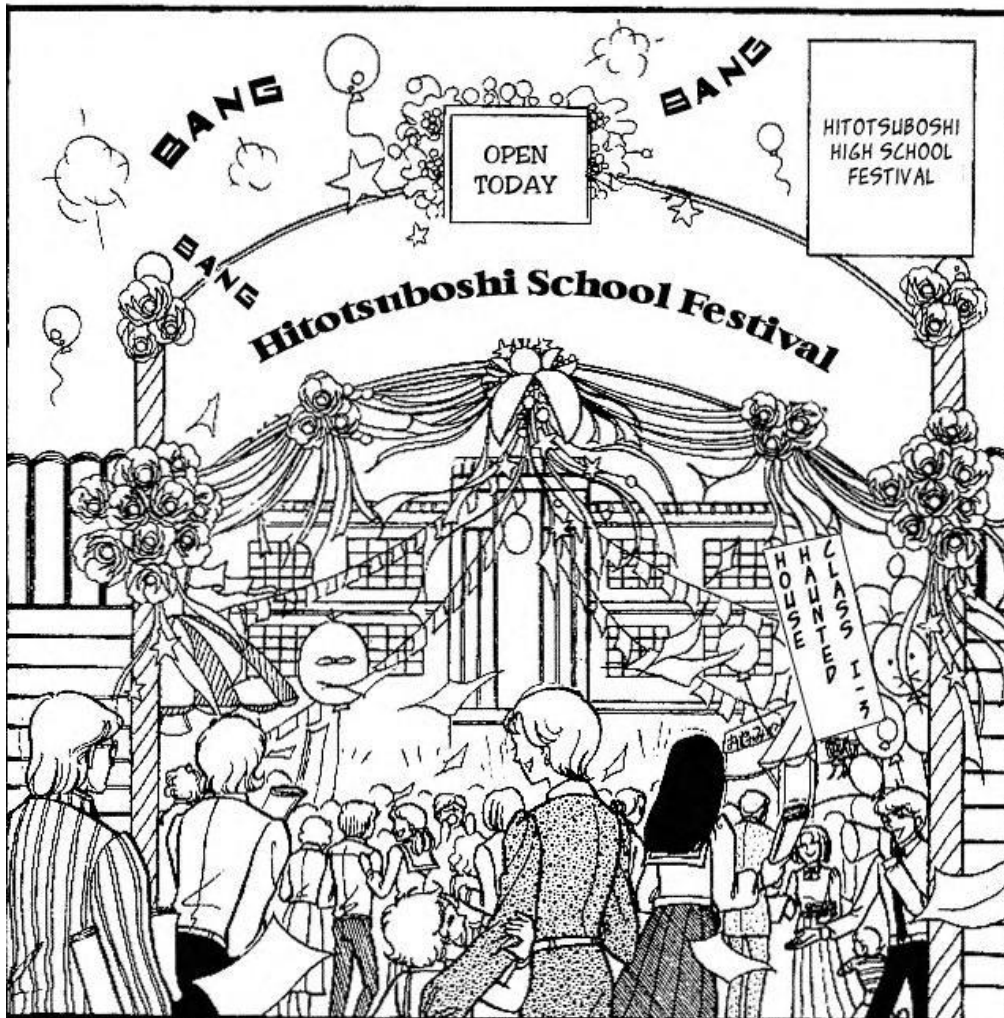
BUT SHE IS AWESOME. SHE IS HIMEKAWA AYUMI'S MAIN RIVAL, AFTER ALL...

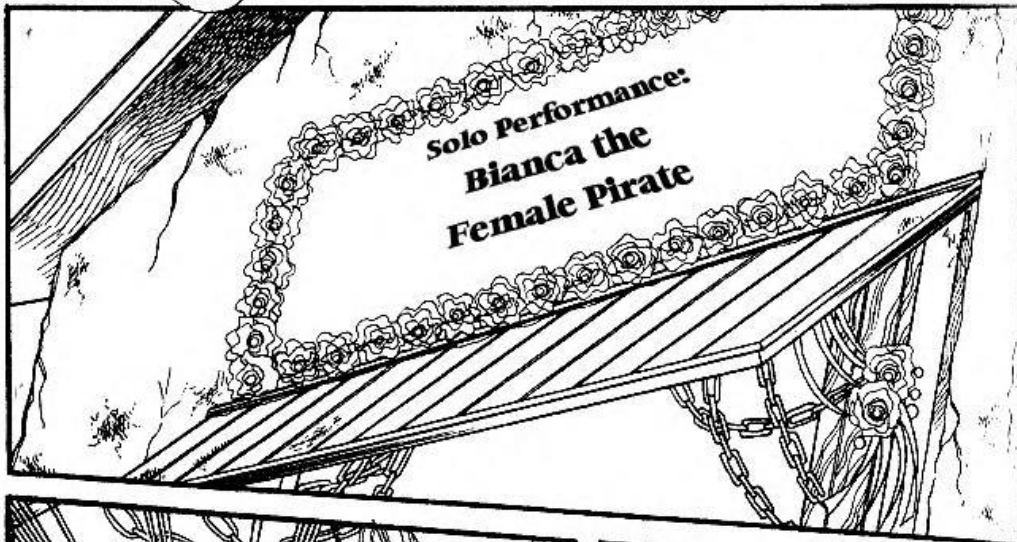
THAT IDIOT! WHAT CAN SHE DO ALONE?

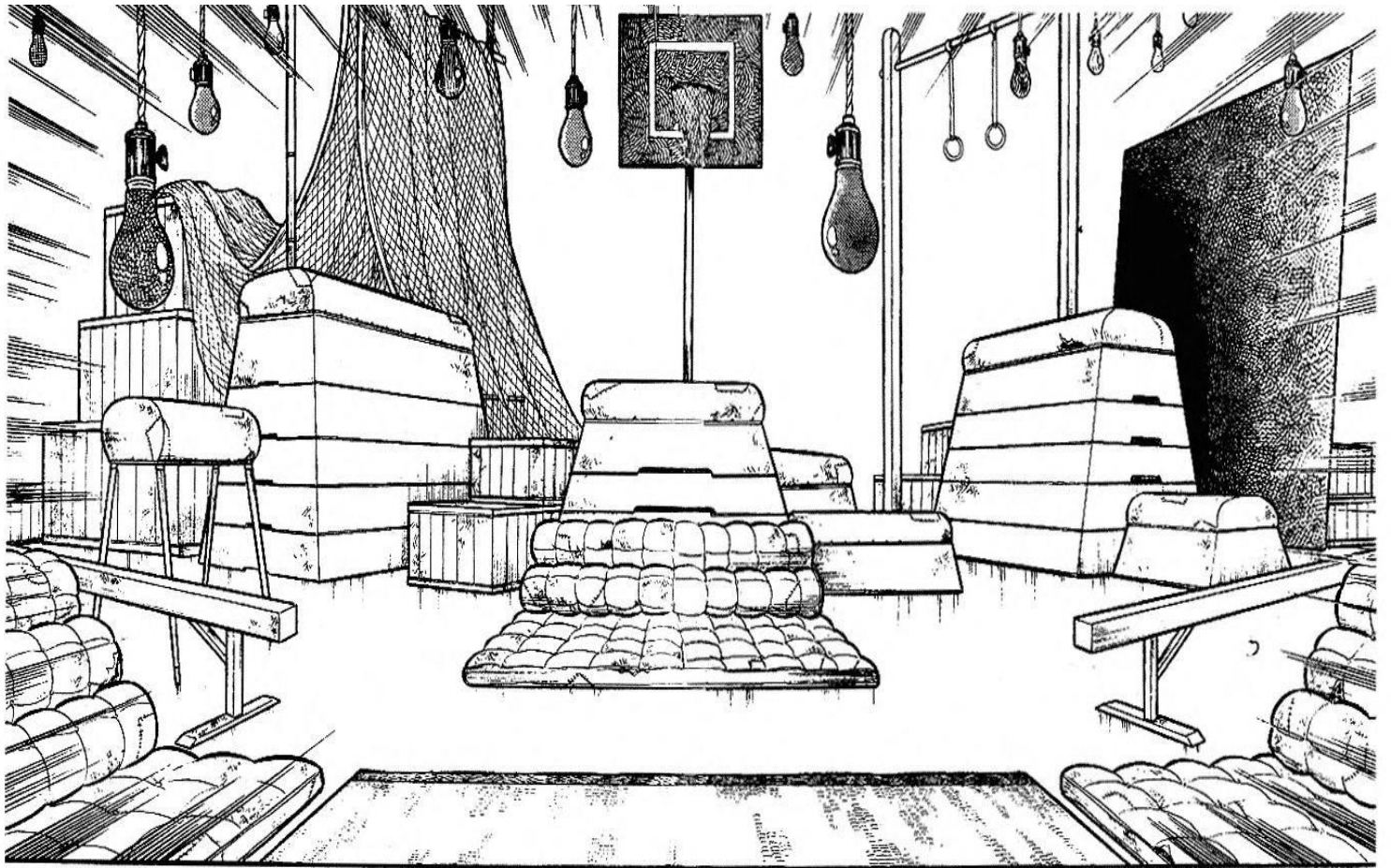
SHE'S A CANDIDATE FOR THE CRIMSON GODDESS

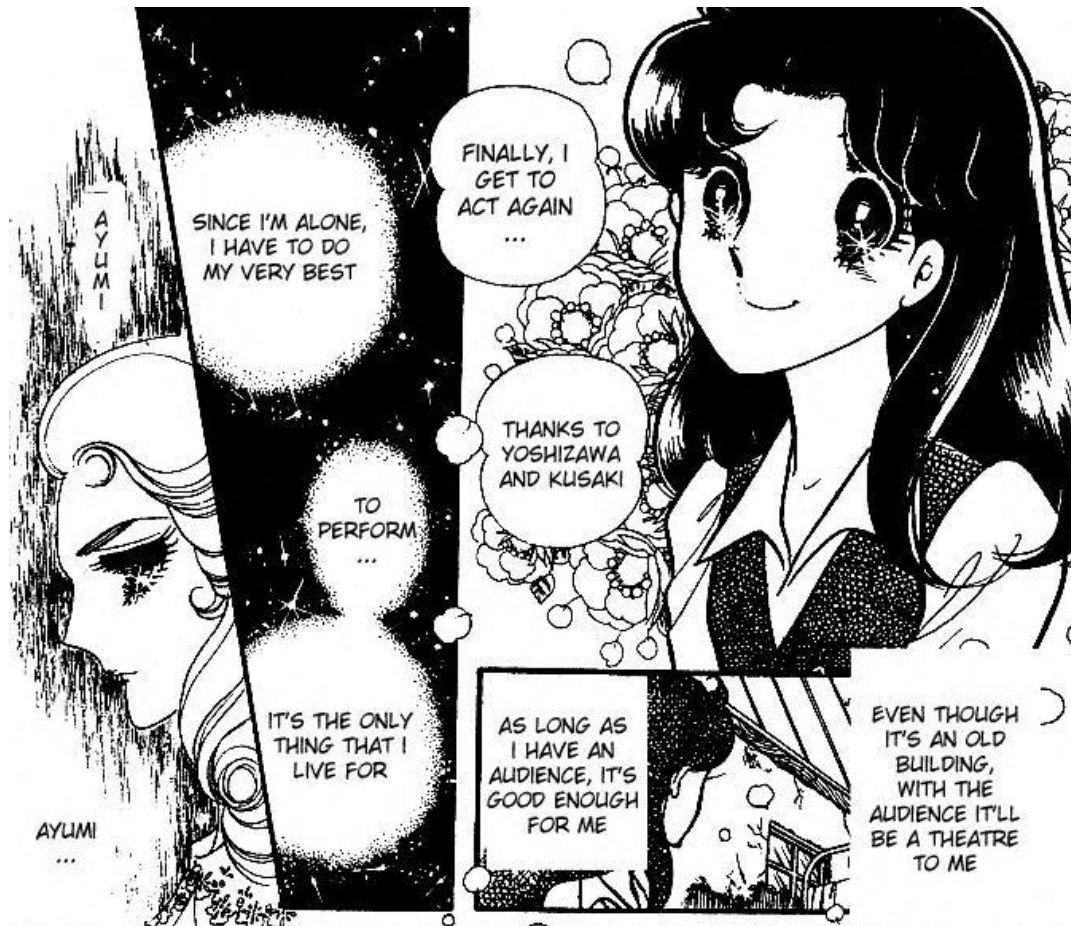












AYUMI!

SINCE I'M ALONE,
I HAVE TO DO
MY VERY BEST

FINALLY, I
GET TO
ACT AGAIN
...

THANKS TO
YOSHIZAWA
AND KUSAKI

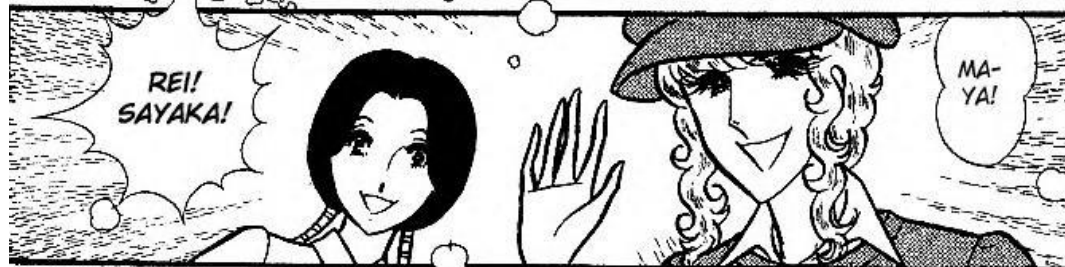
TO
PERFORM
...

IT'S THE ONLY
THING THAT I
LIVE FOR

AS LONG AS
I HAVE AN
AUDIENCE, IT'S
GOOD ENOUGH
FOR ME

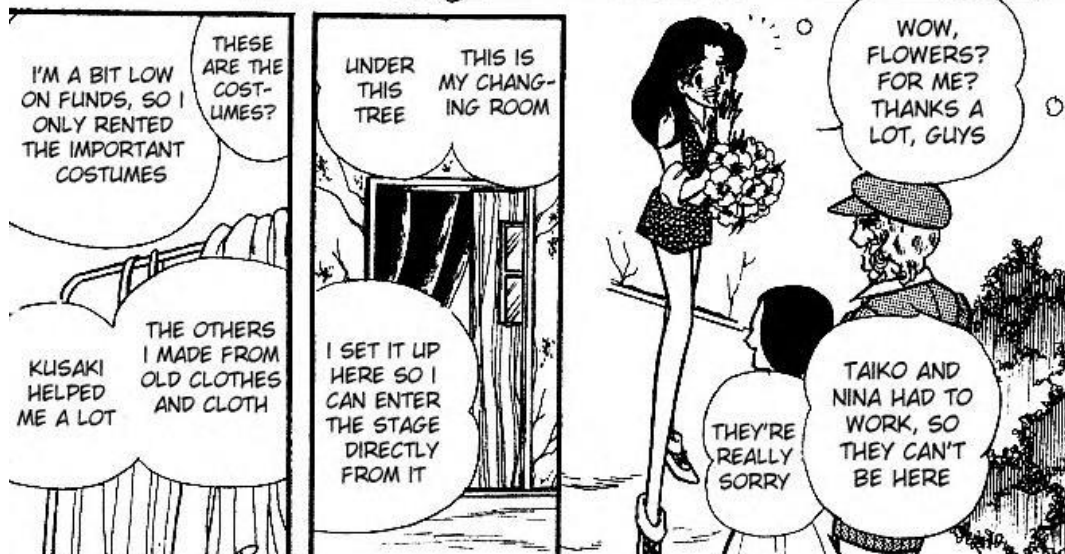
EVEN THOUGH
IT'S AN OLD
BUILDING,
WITH THE
AUDIENCE IT'LL
BE A THEATRE
TO ME

AYUMI
...



REI!
SAYAKA!

MA-
YA!



I'M A BIT LOW
ON FUNDS, SO I
ONLY RENTED
THE IMPORTANT
COSTUMES

THESE
ARE THE
COST-
LUMES?

KUSAKI
HELPED
ME A LOT

THE OTHERS
I MADE FROM
OLD CLOTHES
AND CLOTH

UNDER
THIS
TREE

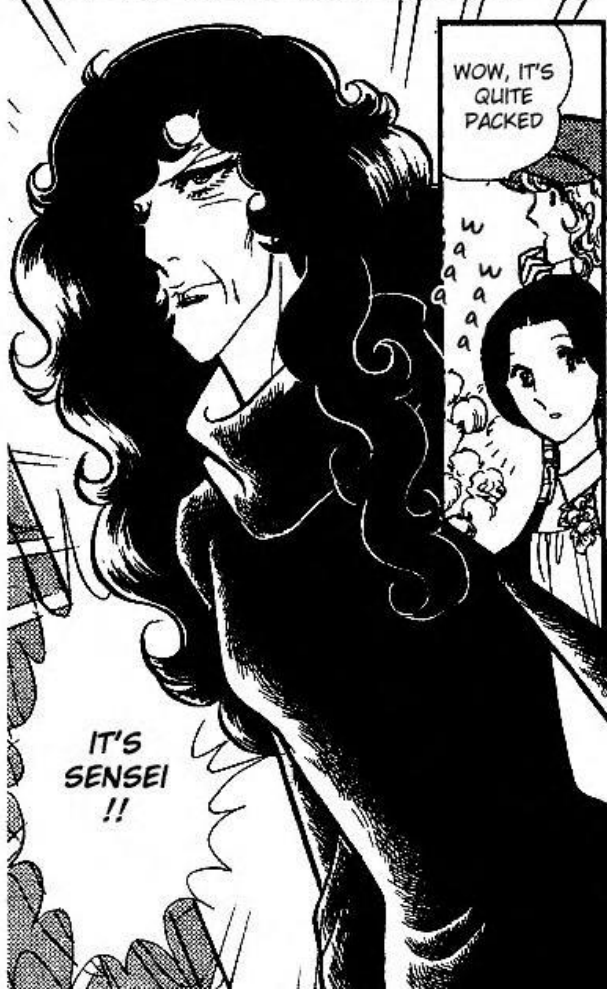
THIS IS
MY CHANG-
ING ROOM

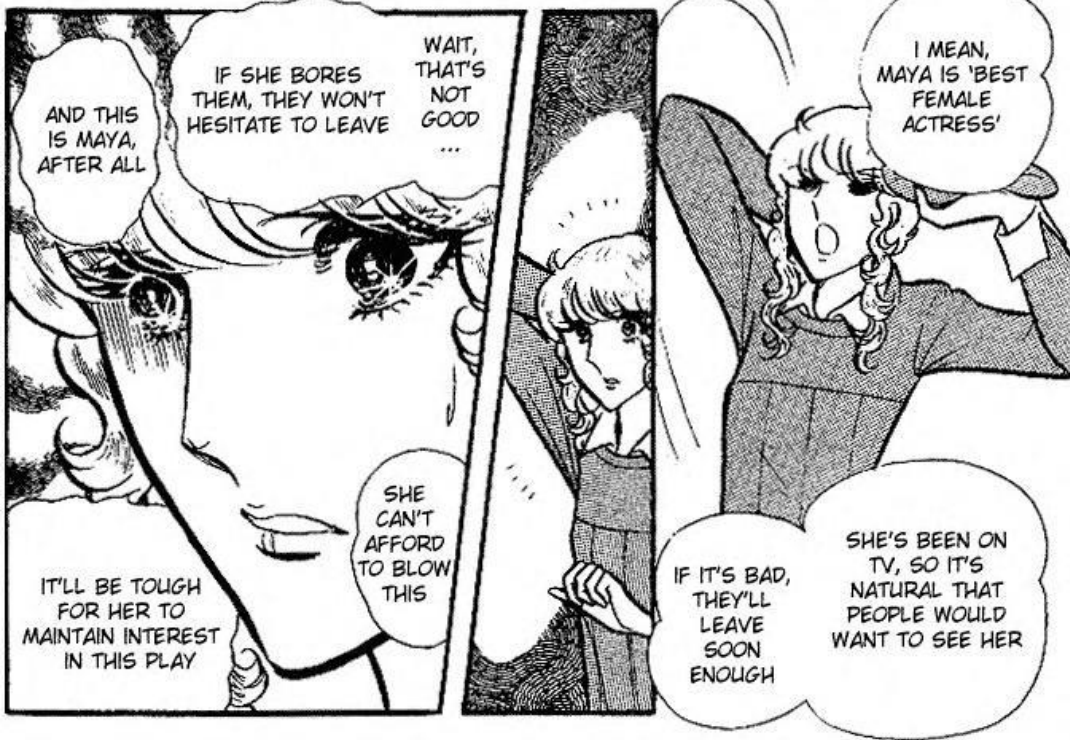
I SET IT UP
HERE SO I
CAN ENTER
THE STAGE
DIRECTLY
FROM IT

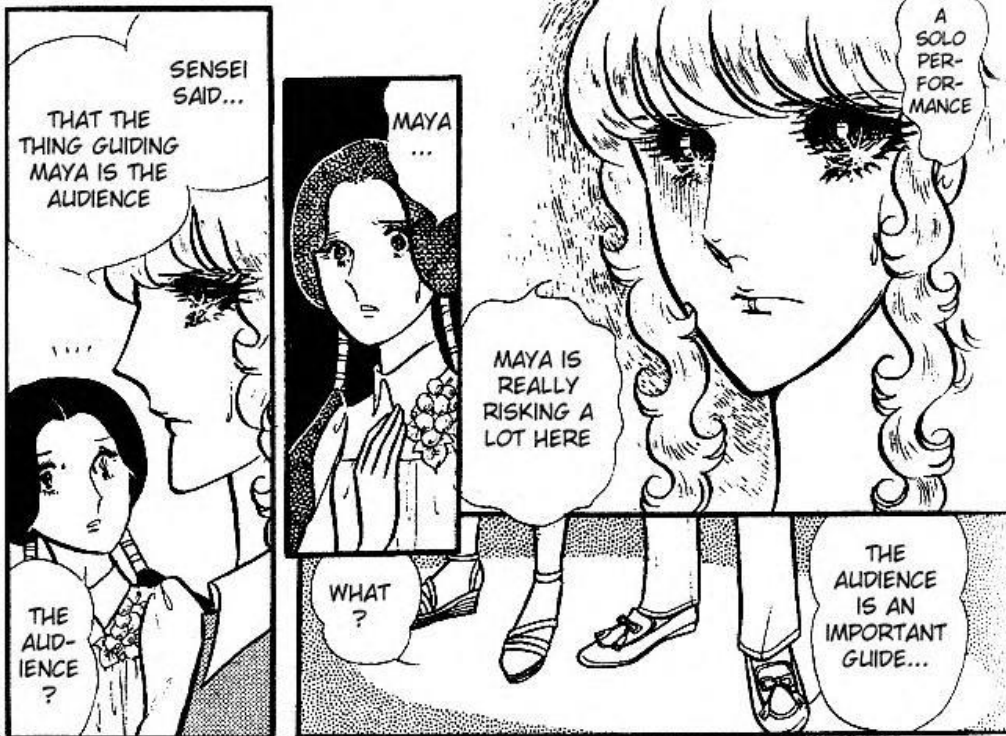
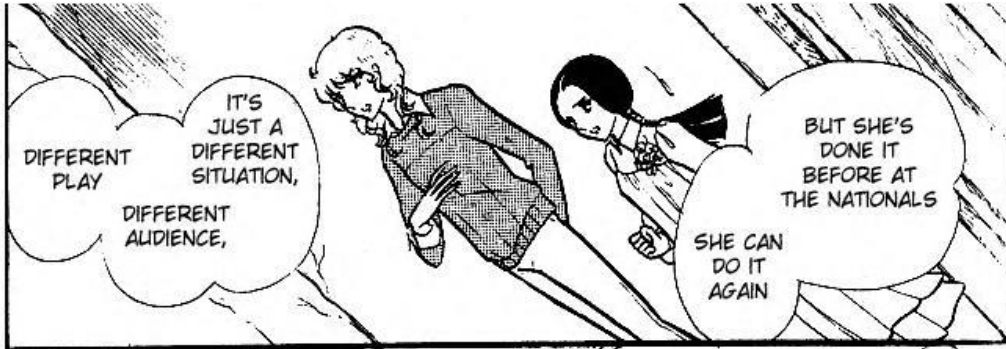
WOW,
FLOWERS?
FOR ME?
THANKS A
LOT, GUYS

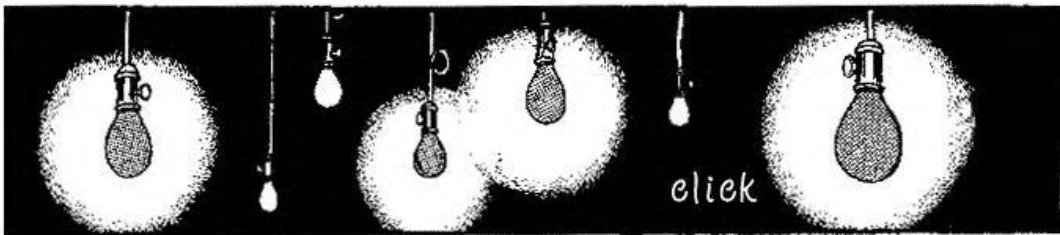
THEY'RE
REALLY
SORRY

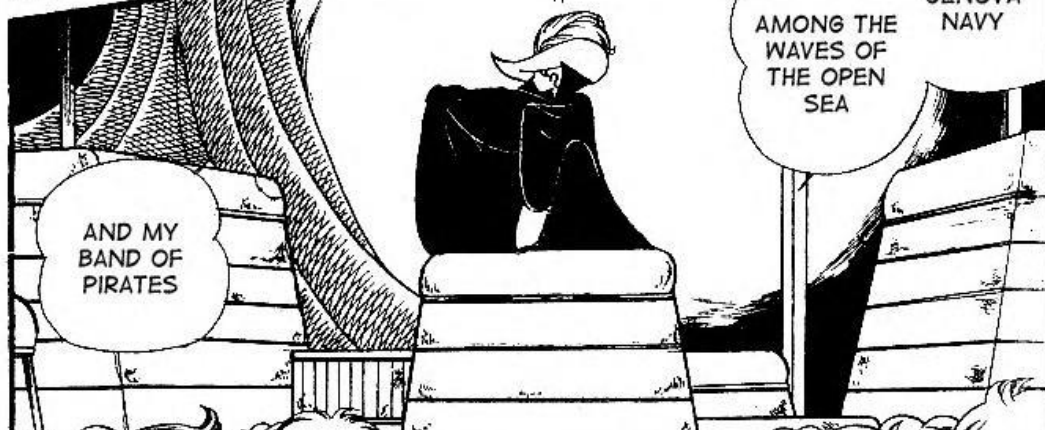
TAIKO AND
NINA HAD TO
WORK, SO
THEY CAN'T
BE HERE













LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE VOLLEYBALL NET

HA HA HA

THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A SHIP?

EACH OF US CARRYING A PAST MOST BLEAK

FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, ALL BEING JUDGED IN THIS MAKESHIFT COURTHOUSE

43 OF US WERE THERE, ALTOGETHER



500, 300, 200 AND 100 LASHES

TO THOSE MORE FORTUNATE,

SOME WERE SENTENCED TO LIFE AS SLAVES IN THE SHIP'S GALLEYS

TWO THIRDS OF THOSE DIE BEFORE THE LASHES ARE COMPLETE

FOR SOME, 800 LASHES OF THE WHIP

CRACK
CRACK

TO THE GUILTY, IMMEDIATE RETRIBUTION BY HANGING LAID IN WAIT



WHEEEST



CRACK
CRACK
CRACK

EVERYONE PLEADED FOR A LIGHTER SENTENCE



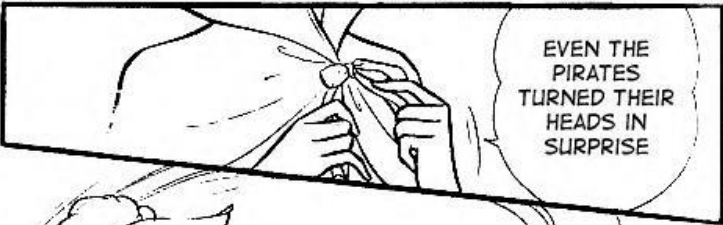
WHAT'S THIS?

THERE'S TROUBLE UP ON DECK



CRIED A
GENOVAN
NAVYMAN

THERE'S A
WOMAN
AMONG
THEM!



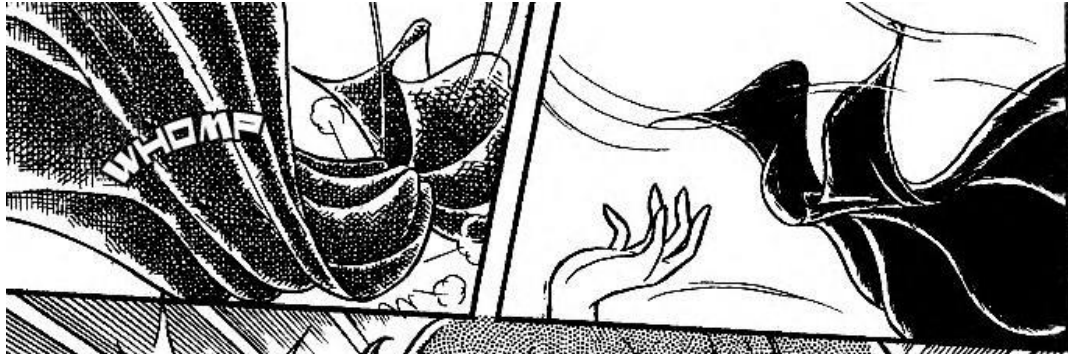
EVEN THE
PIRATES
TURNED THEIR
HEADS IN
SURPRISE



WOAH!

FLAP





DON'T YOU
DARE TOUCH
ME!



gulp



I WILL
SURREN-
DER

I WILL
NOT
RESIST

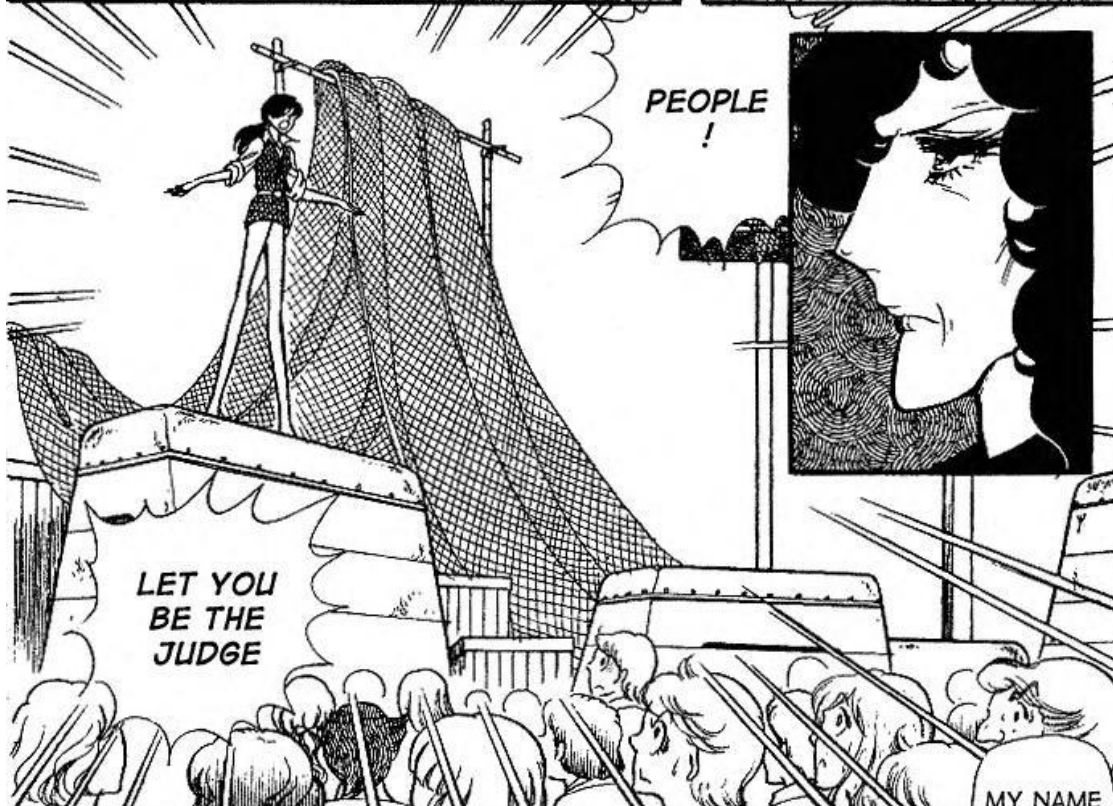
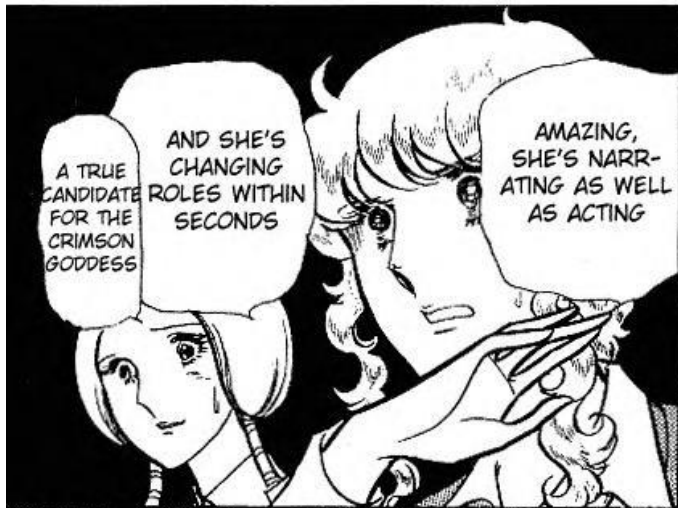
GENTLE-
MEN OF
THE
GENOVAN
NAVY?

MAY I
COME
ABOARD
THE DECK
...



STAY
YOUR
HAND!

IF YOU SO
MUCH AS LAY
A HAND ON
ME, I WILL
BITE OFF MY
OWN TONGUE





BIANCA
CASTINI

WHEN
I AM, IN
FACT, A
WOMAN

PEOPLE
...
AS YOU HAVE
HEARD, I USE
A MAN'S NAME

MY TRUE
IDENTITY
LINDIS-
COVERED

I HAVE
HIDDEN
MYSELF
FOR SEVEN
YEARS...

MY TRUE
NAME IS
BIANCA

I KNOW THIS MUST
COME AS A SHOCK
TO YOU; THE
CASTINIS ARE
A ROYAL FAMILY
IN VENICE, LONG
RIVALS OF THE
GENOVANS

SO WHY
IS A FIRST-
BORN OF
A ROYAL
FAMILY...

...HERE
AMONG A
BAND OF
PIRATES
?

WHEN I WAS
EIGHT AND
MY
BROTHER,
JULIO, WAS
THREE

OUR
DEAR
MOTHER
DIED

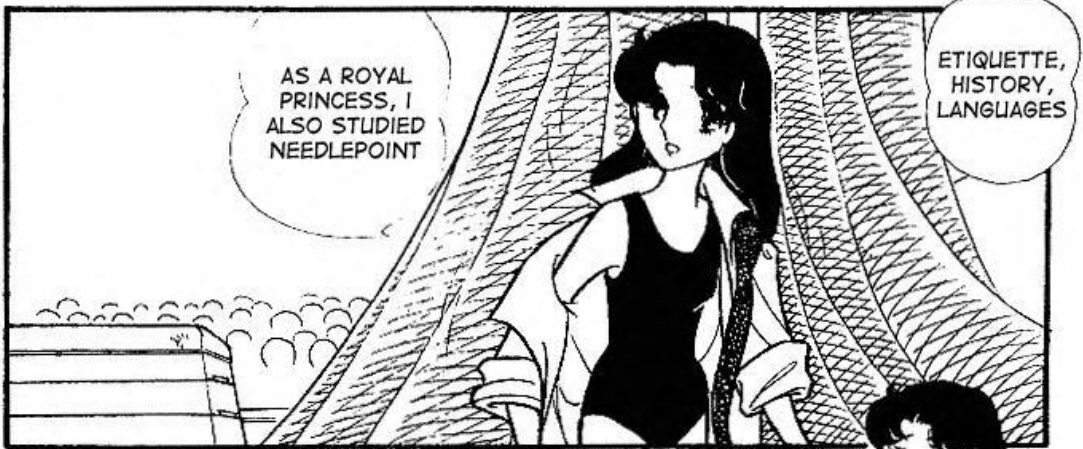
I WILL TELL
YOU MY
REASONS

THEN YOU
MAY JUDGE
ME AS YOU
SEE FIT

MY FATHER,
PHILLIP DE
CASTINI, IS
A PRIME
MINISTER

HE IS
KNOWN NOT
ONLY FOR
HIS GREAT
NAME BUT
ALSO FOR HIS
GREAT DEEDS

I AM THE
FIRSTBORN
OF THE
CASTINI
FAMILY



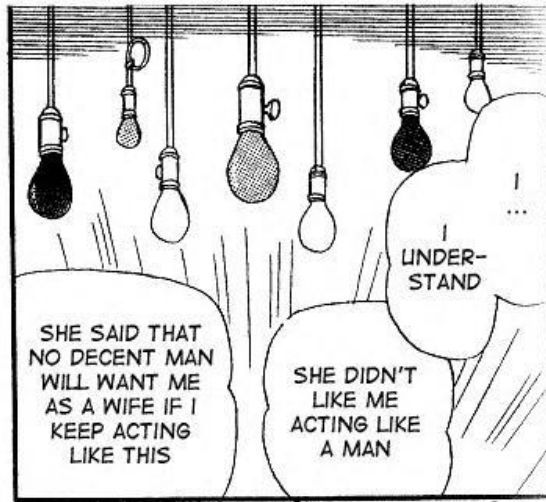






OH, WHY WASN'T I BORN A MAN INSTEAD?

PFFT... LIKE I CARE! I'LL NEVER MARRY



SHE SAID THAT NO DECENT MAN WILL WANT ME AS A WIFE IF I KEEP ACTING LIKE THIS

SHE DIDN'T LIKE ME ACTING LIKE A MAN

I UNDERSTAND



SLOWLY,

I BEGAN TO HAVE DREAMS OF MY OWN

"I WILL WEAR RED WOVEN DRESSES AND RIBBONS IN MY HAIR ..."

AS THE DAYS PASSED, I MET MORE AND MORE YOUNG WOMEN HERE IN THE PALACE

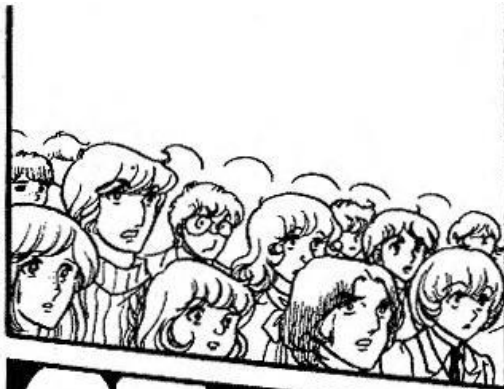
THEY TOLD STORIES OF LOVE

HOWEVER ...



"SOME DAY LATER, MY KNIGHT ON A WHITE HORSE WILL COME FOR ME..."

"WE WILL FALL IN LOVE." THAT WAS MY DREAM



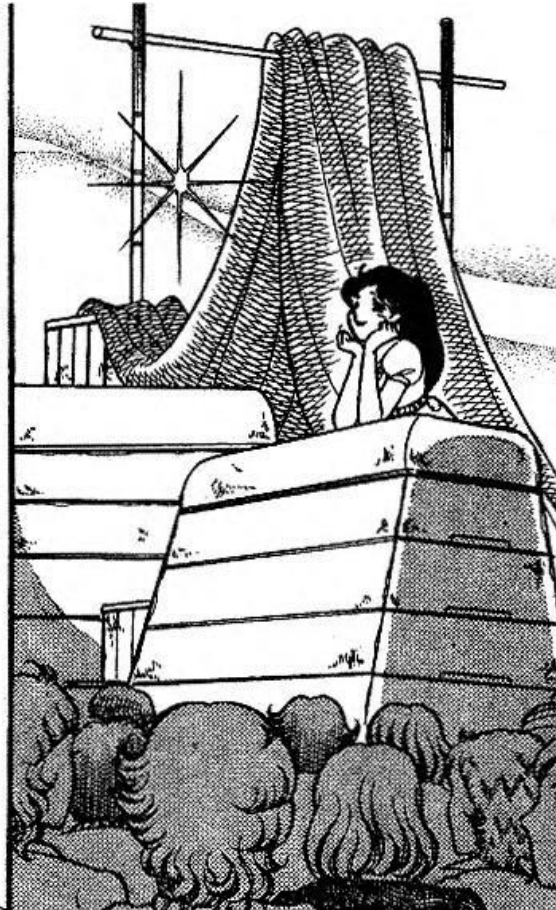
EH ?

EVEN THOUGH NO-ONE'S THERE

THEY'RE HER EYES ...
LOOKING A MILLION MILES AWAY



LOOK AT HER EYES
SHE'S NOT EVEN IN THIS SHED ANYMORE



ARE SOMETHING ELSE

ALL THOSE ...

THERE IS NO POMMEL HORSE, NO BALANCE BEAM

IN HER EYES ...



thump

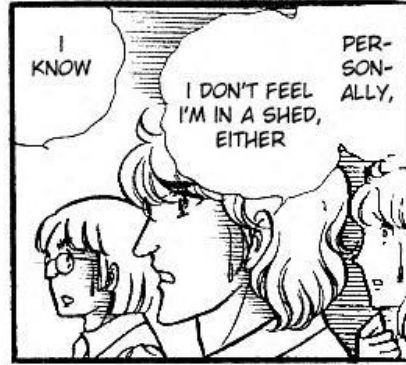


THE BLUE ONES!

YOSHIZAWA!

THE LIGHTS!

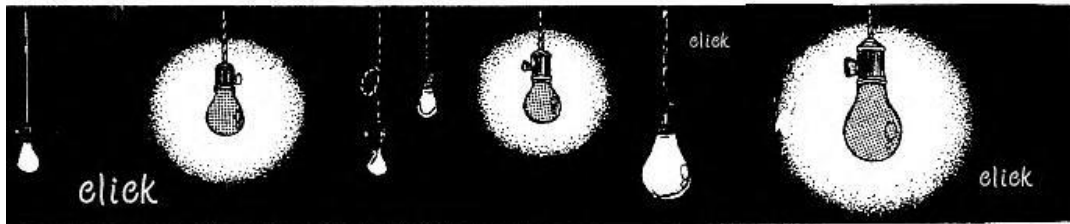
OK, OK



I KNOW

I DON'T FEEL I'M IN A SHED, EITHER

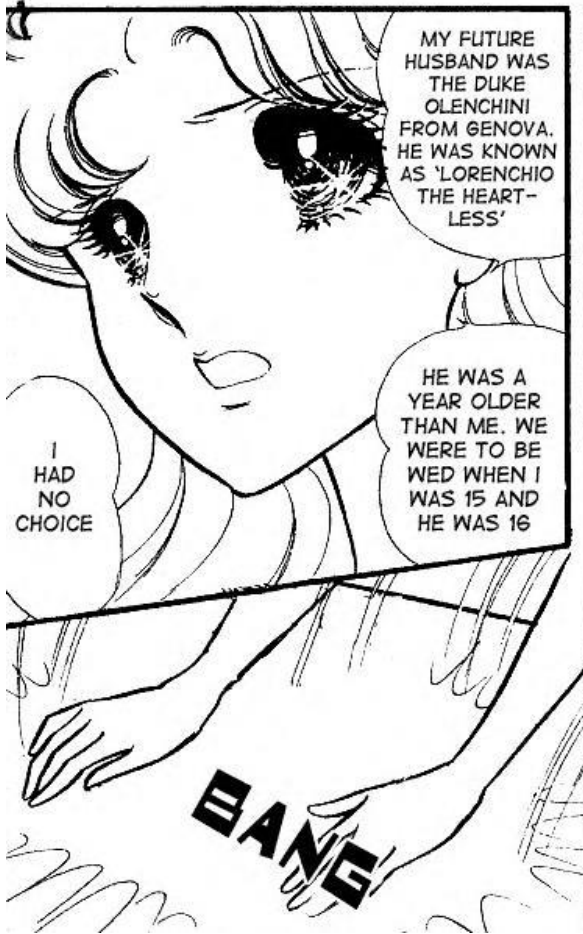
PERSONALLY,



click

click

click



MY FUTURE HUSBAND WAS THE DUKE OLENCHINI FROM GENOVA. HE WAS KNOWN AS 'LORENCHIO THE HEARTLESS'

HE WAS A YEAR OLDER THAN ME. WE WERE TO BE WED WHEN I WAS 15 AND HE WAS 16

I HAD NO CHOICE

BANG!



WHEN I WAS 13, THOSE DREAMS DIED FOREVER

I WAS ARRANGED TO BE MARRIED



EVEN IN
GENOVA
AND
VENICE
...

I'M SURE MANY
ARE AGAINST
THIS MARRIAGE

MY FATHER
MIGHT AS
WELL
IMPRISON
ME

I WON'T BE
A POLITICAL
TOOL FOR
VENICE AND
GENOVA

NO,
I WON'T
GO TO
GENOVA!



IF WE COMBINE,
WE WILL BE
UNSTOPPABLE
...

BUT GENOVA WILL
PROBABLY END UP
TAKING US OVER

YOU KNOW
THAT, DON'T
YOU, FATHER?

DON'T SEND
ME TO THAT
PLACE!

I KNOW THAT
BRINGING THE
TWO COUNTRIES
TOGETHER
WILL CREATE
A SINGLE MIGHTY
NATION

GENOVA HAS A
NAVY JUST AS
STRONG AS THAT
OF VENICE



BUT I SAY
TO YOU,
NO!

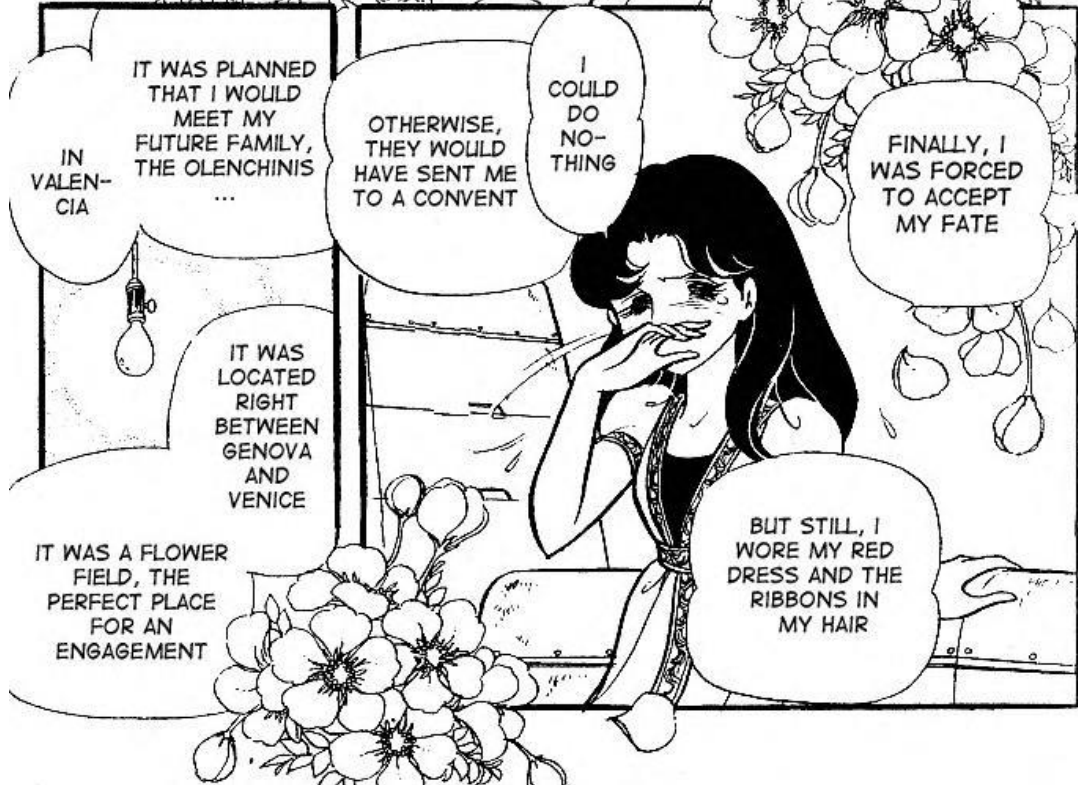
I WILL NOT
BE A WIFE TO
A MAN I DO
NOT EVEN
KNOW!

I KNOW YOU
LOVE ME,
FATHER

I KNOW THAT
I WOULD BE
IN NO DANGER

OR DO
YOU WANT
GENOVA?

TO FOOL
THEM, YOU
SHALL SEND
ME



IN SOME OLD SHED!

...AND NOW SHE'S PLAYING ...

ha
ha
ha
ha
ha

SHE REALLY IS TALENTED

SHE'S REALLY GOOD

IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO END IT HERE

THEY WOULD STOP AT NOTHING TO OPPOSE IT

ARE THOSE THAT ARE AGAINST THE TWO COUNTRIES, AS WELL

THOSE COUNTRIES THAT OPPOSE THIS MARRIAGE ...

...ALL SENT ASSASSINS TO KILL LORENCHIO AND I

MILAN, THE ROMAN EMPIRE, SPAIN AND PERSIA...

MANY COUNTRIES WILL NOT BE IN FAVOUR OF THIS UNIFICATION

I MEAN, SHE WAS A TV ACTRESS, EVEN IF SHE WAS SHUNNED BY HER COMMUNITY

SHE ALSO WON 'BEST ACTRESS'

THEY ALSO SPREAD RUMOURS TO INCITE THE PEOPLE

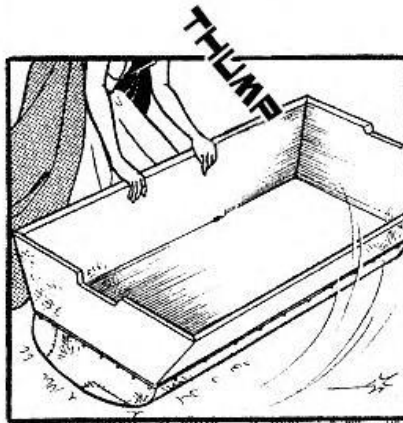
PLUS, SHE'S A CANDIDATE FOR 'THE CRIMSON GODDESS'

WE WERE SURROUNDED BY SOLDIERS

THIS UNION BECAME A DEATH WARRANT

SHE'S AYUMI HIMEKAWA'S GREATEST RIVAL

200 OF THEM, AS WELL AS KNIGHTS



SO, AT THE AGE OF 13, I WAS TO GO TO VALENCIA...

TO MEET MY FIANCE



