

H O M U N C U L U S

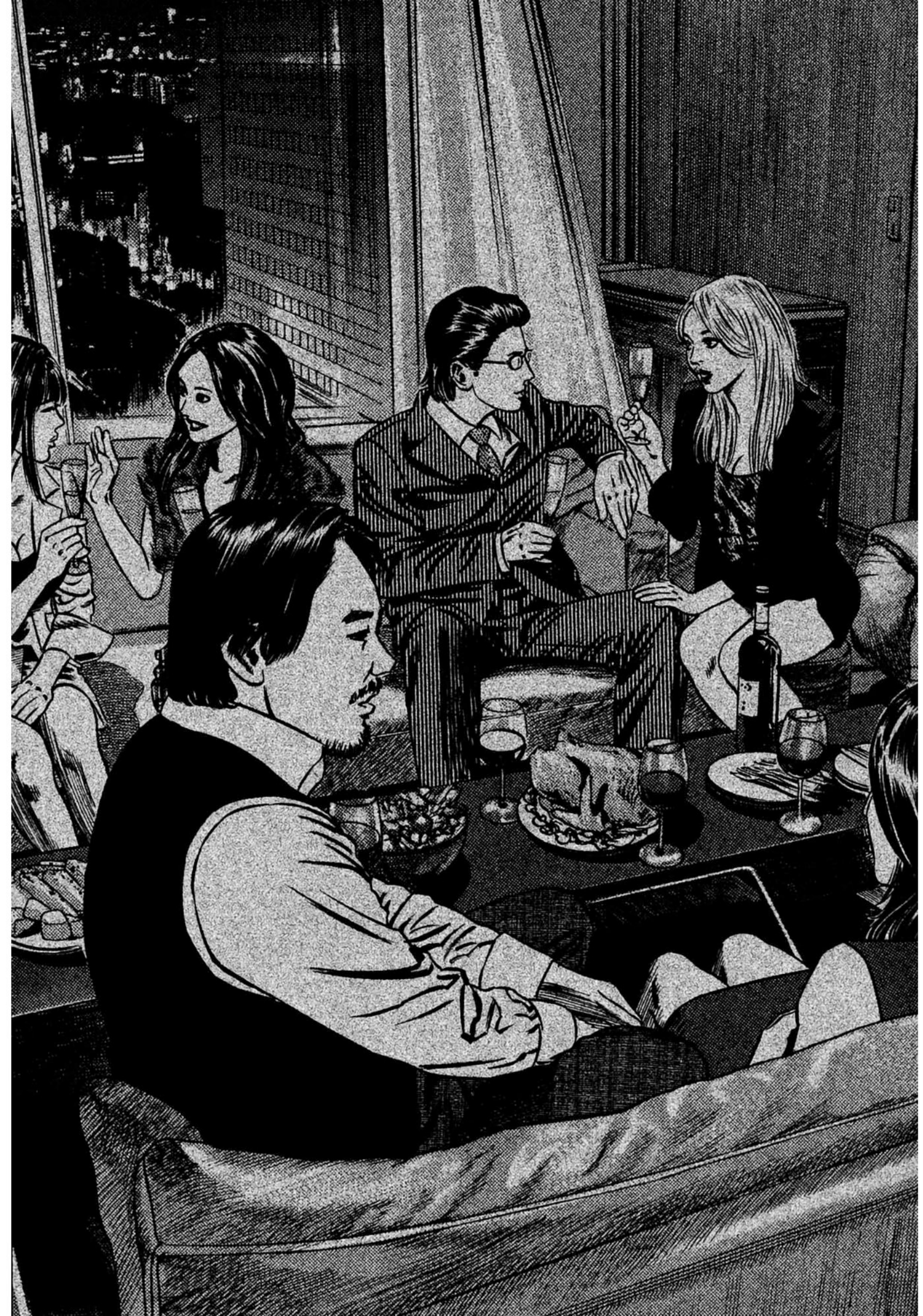
ホ ム ン ク ル ス

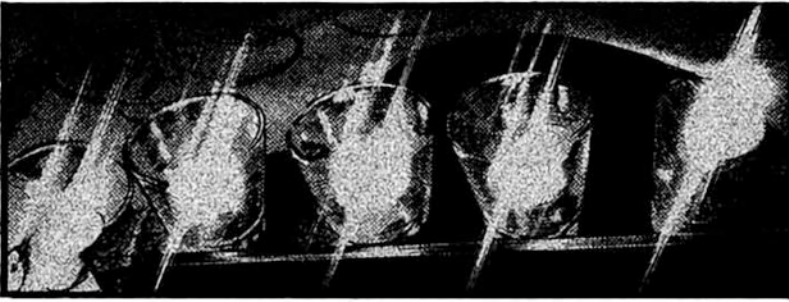
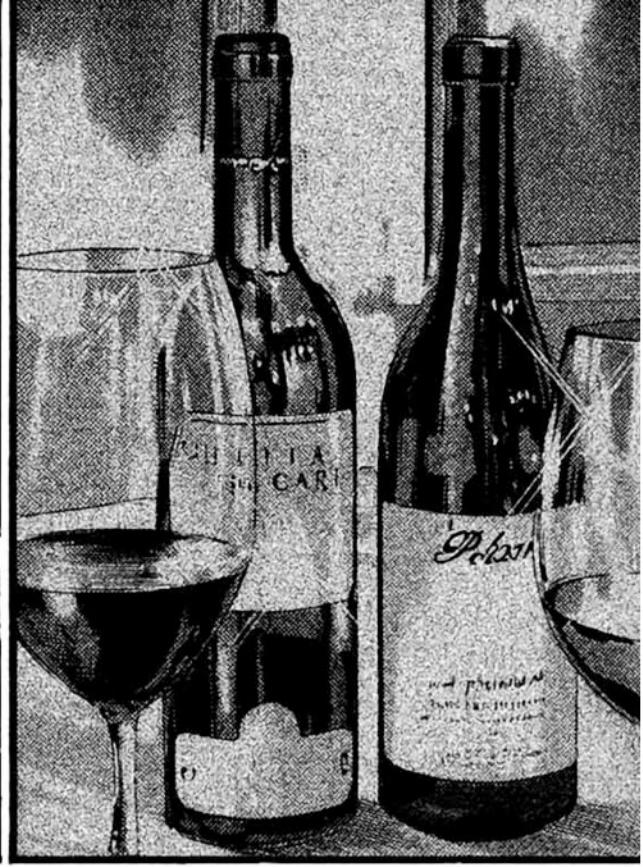


13

H I D E O Y A M A M O T O

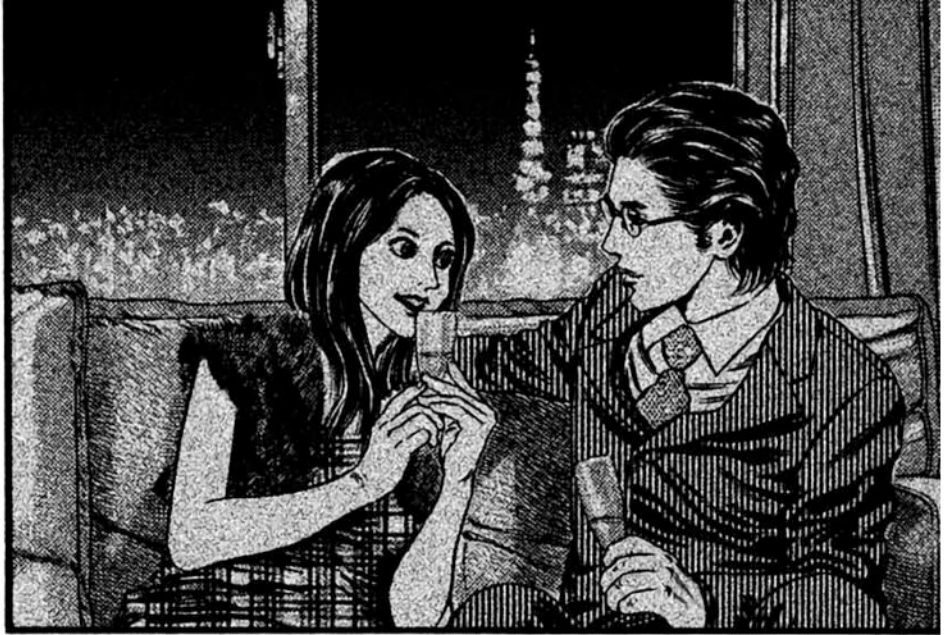
H
O
M
U
N
C
U
L
U
S





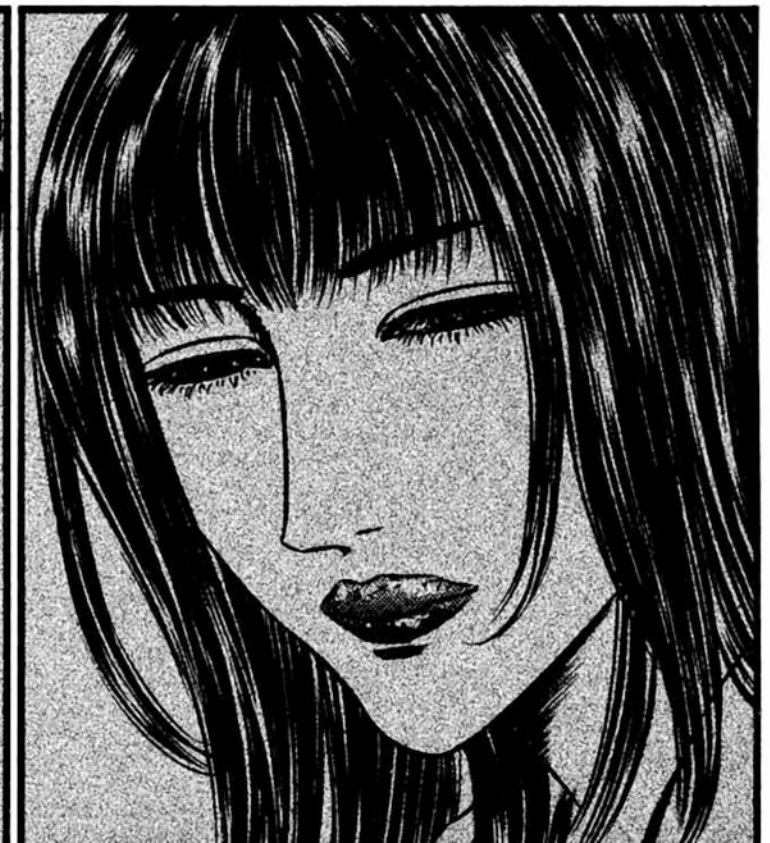
206





208

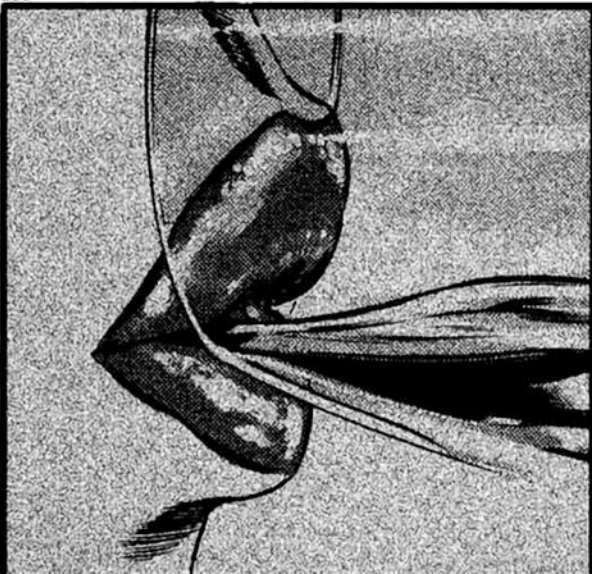


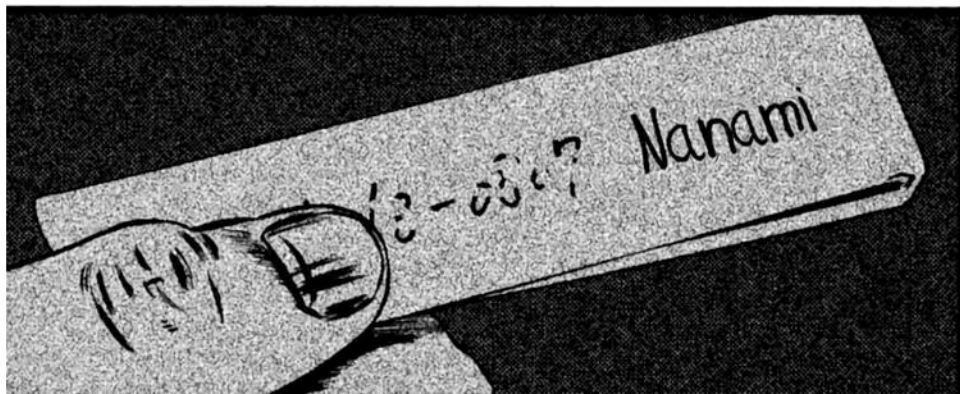
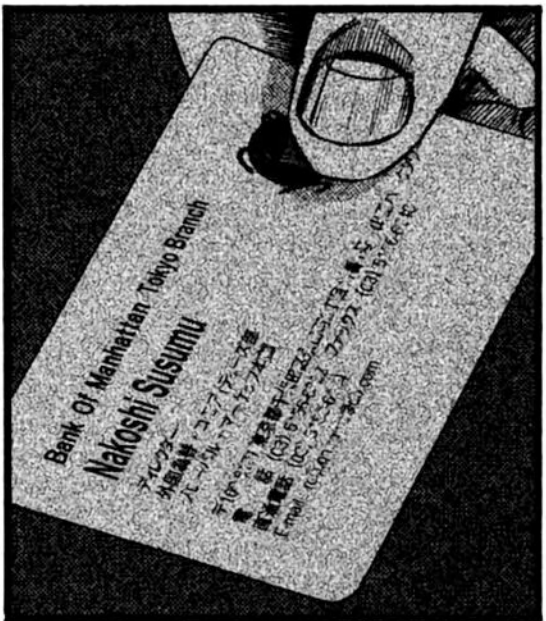


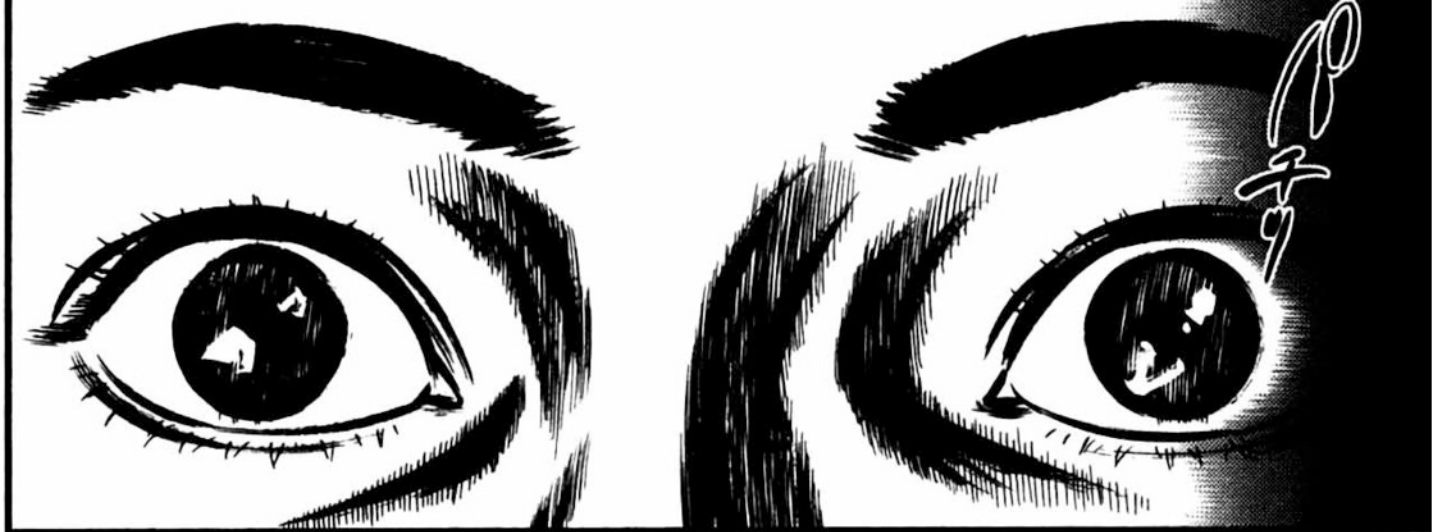




210







AT A
HIGH RISE.

AYA
INTRODUCED
HER TO ME

OH,
RIGHT.



NANAMI?

HER
NAME
WAS...





YOU DID IT BY YOURSELF.

I CAN'T BELIEVE



I'VE WARNED YOU SO MANY TIMES.



IT'S NO WONDER, LEAVING IT LIKE THAT WOULD MAKE IT BECOME INFECTED, INFLAMED, AND CAUSE YOU TO HAVE A FEVER AND BE BED RIDDEN FOR TWO DAYS.

YOU COULDN'T EVEN STICH IT UP PROPERLY...



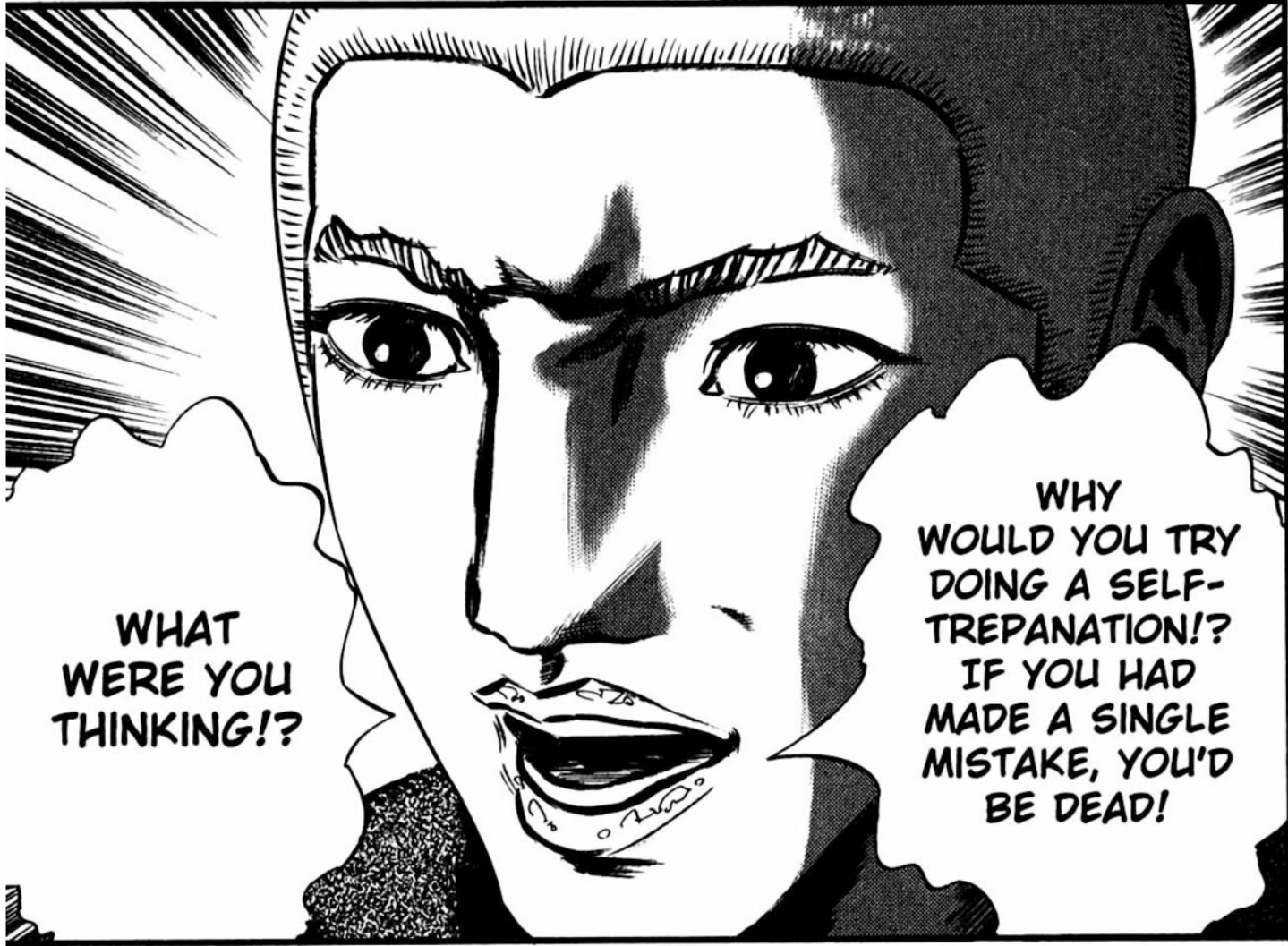
**MORE
IMPOR-
TANTLY!**



**FOR TWO
DAYS?**



**I'VE
SLEPT...**



**WHAT
WERE YOU
THINKING!?**

**WHY
WOULD YOU TRY
DOING A SELF-
TREPANATION!?
IF YOU HAD
MADE A SINGLE
MISTAKE, YOU'D
BE DEAD!**

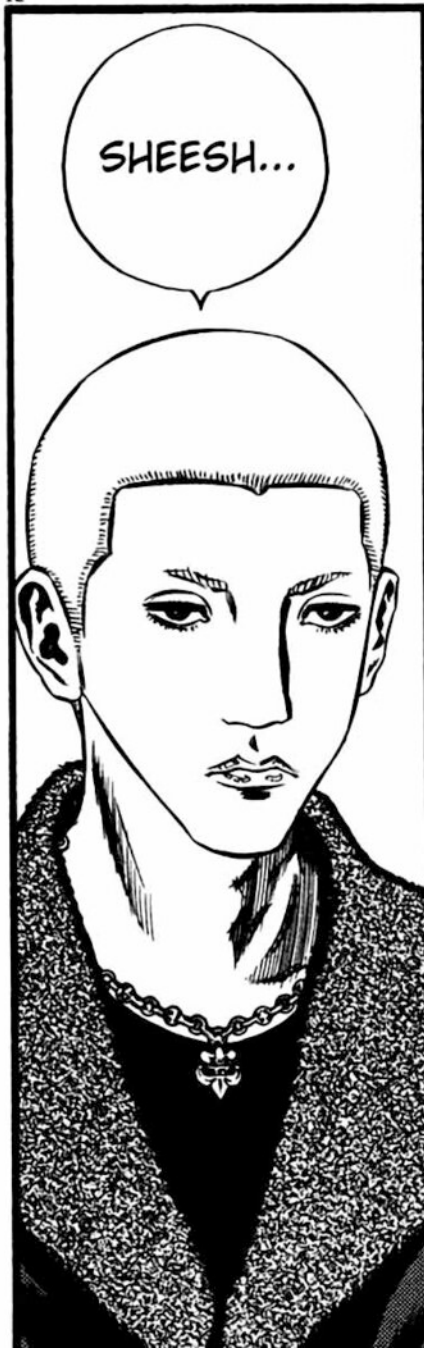


?

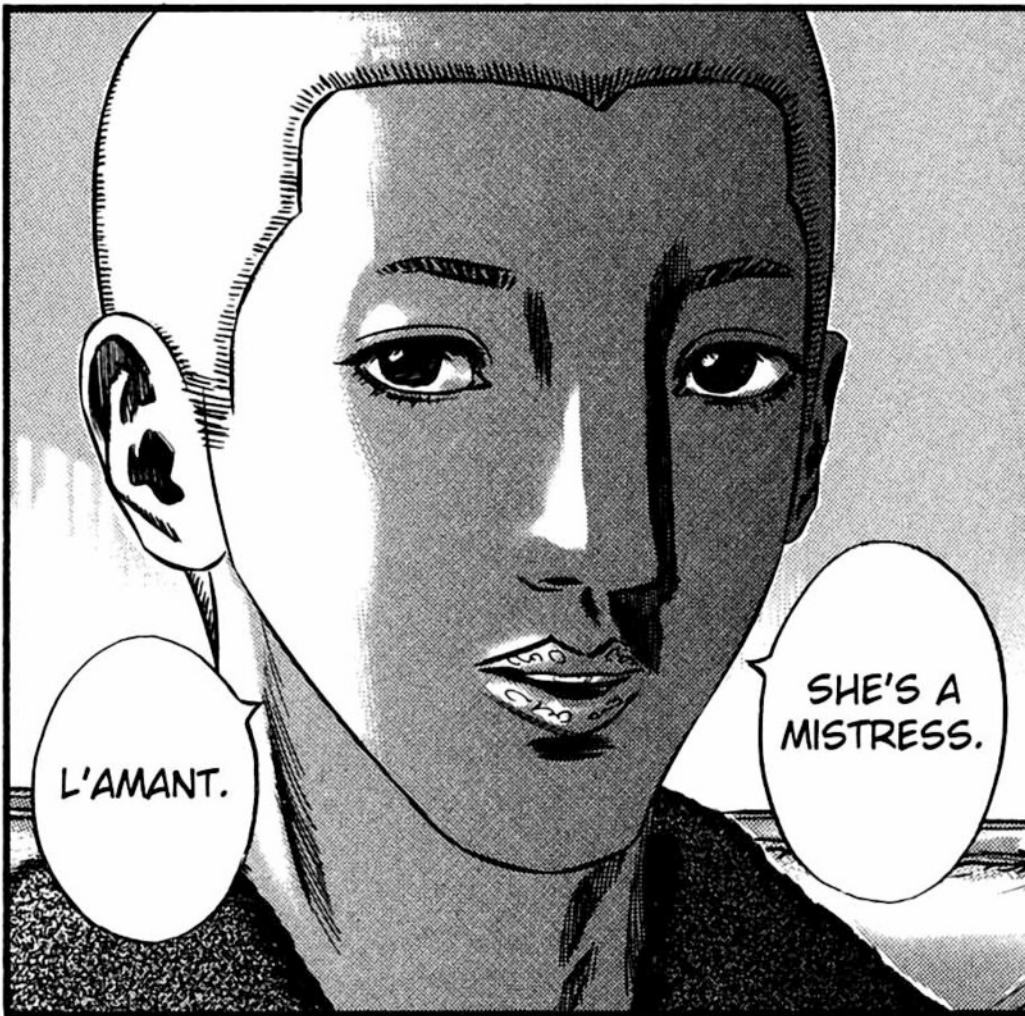




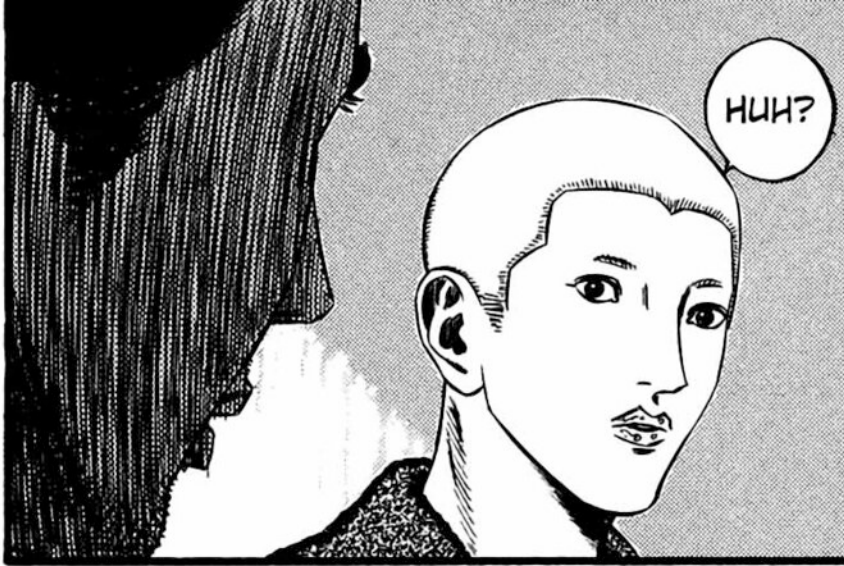
12













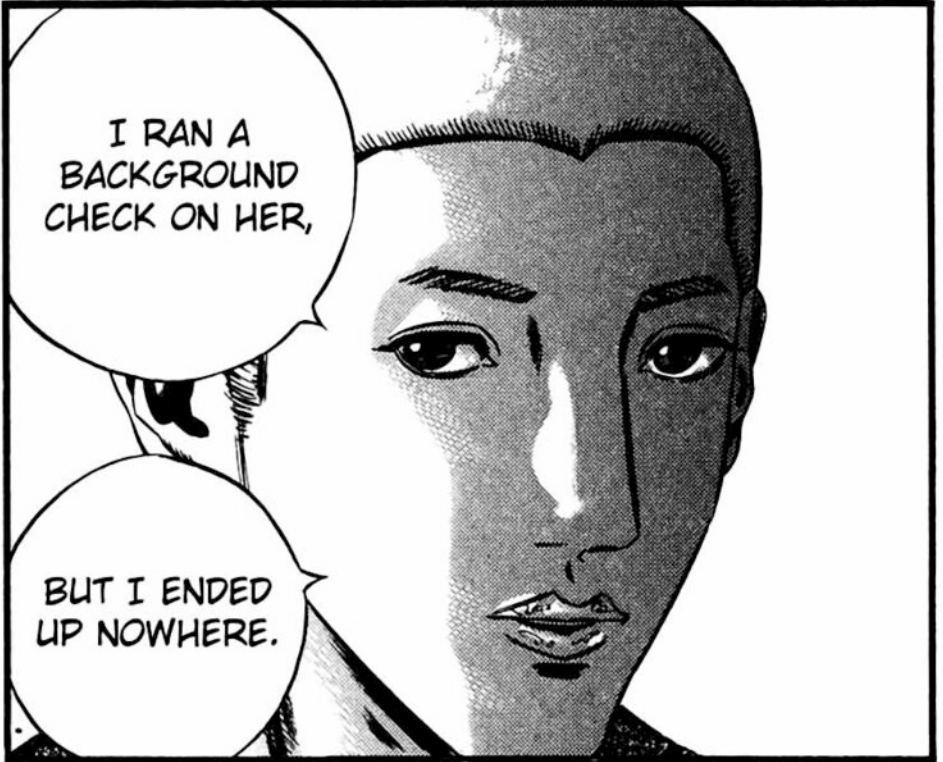
?

SHE'S PRETTY WARY.

ALTHOUGH IT LOOKS CARELESS AT FIRST GLANCE,



!



I RAN A BACKGROUND CHECK ON HER,

BUT I ENDED UP NOWHERE.



NANAMI...

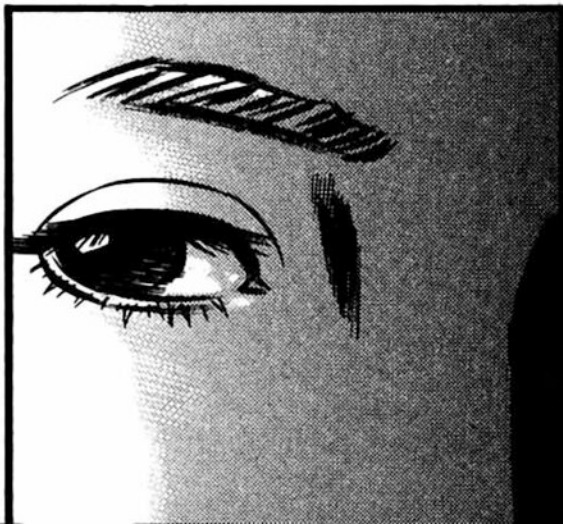


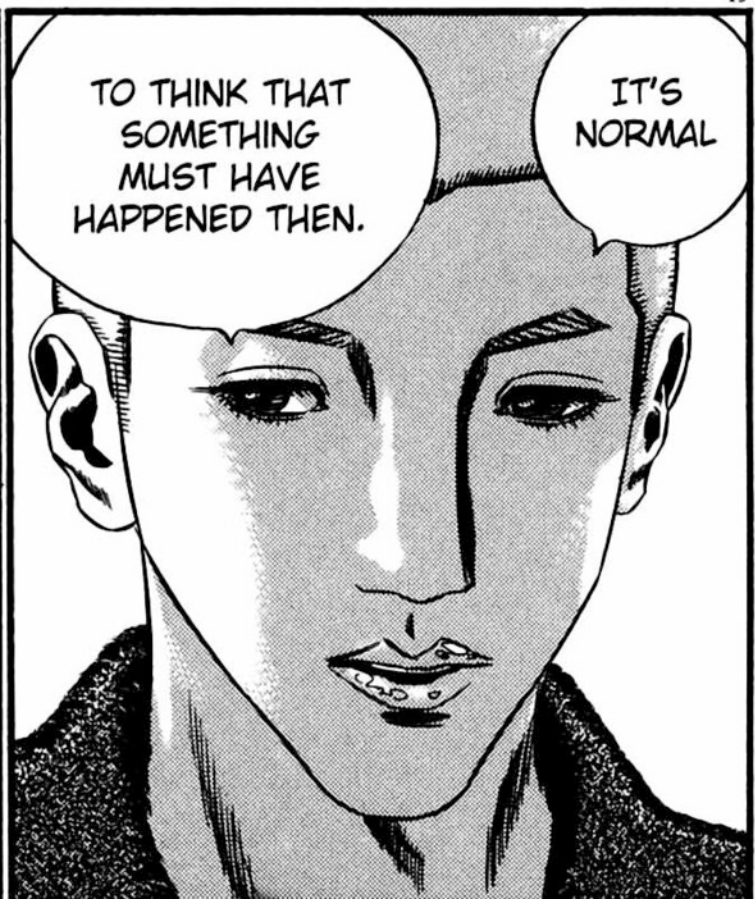
I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING ABOUT HER.

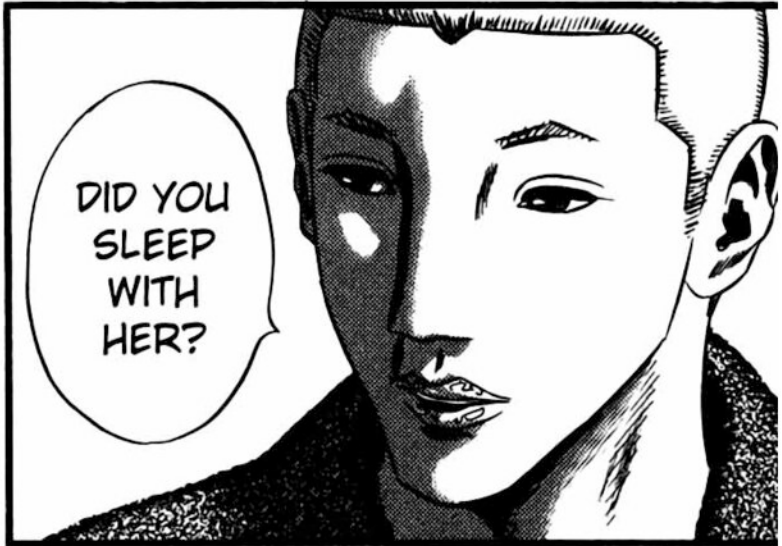
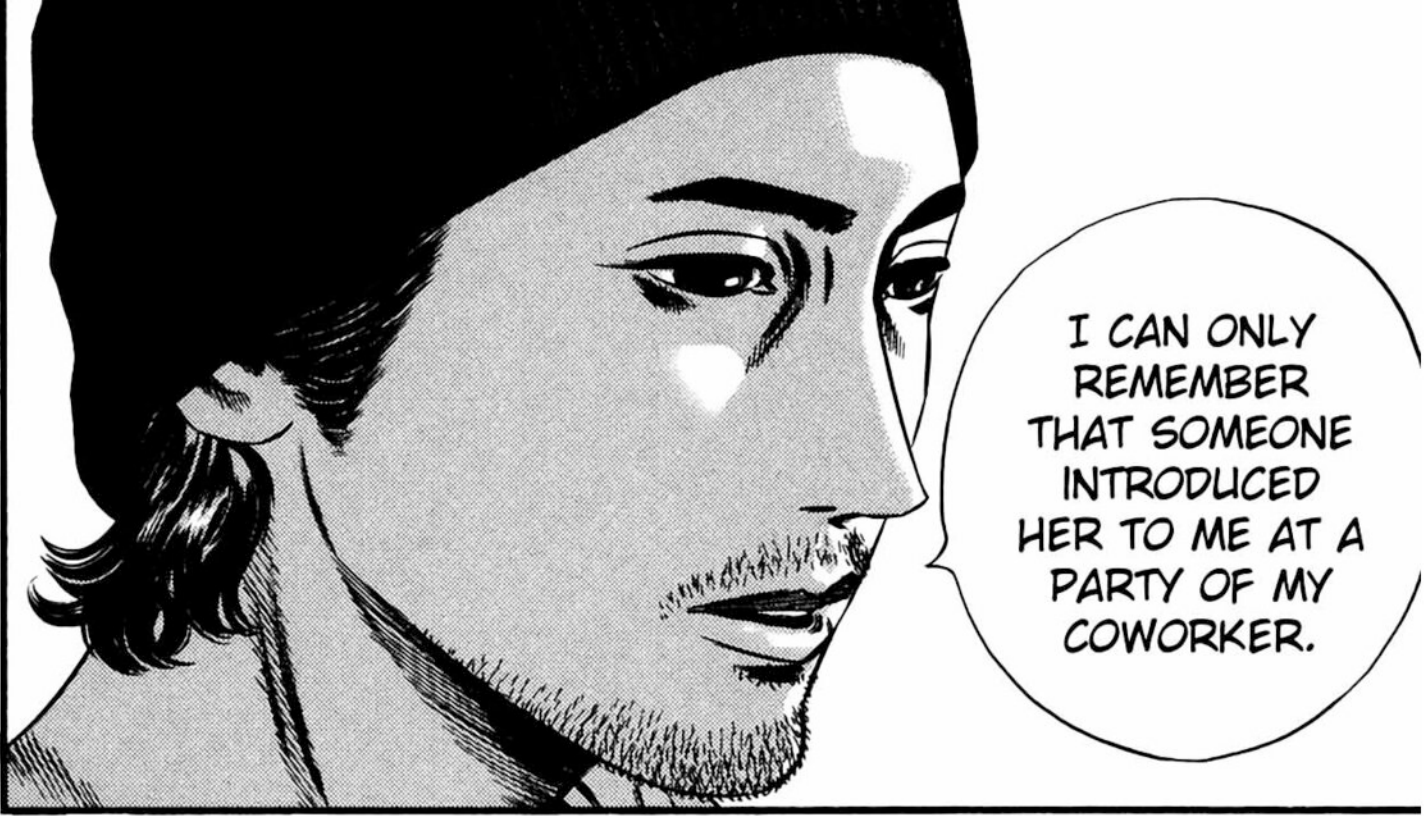
HER NAME, AGE, RESIDENCE...



PARDON?










WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



!?



DID HER FACE ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THAT?



BY THE WAY,



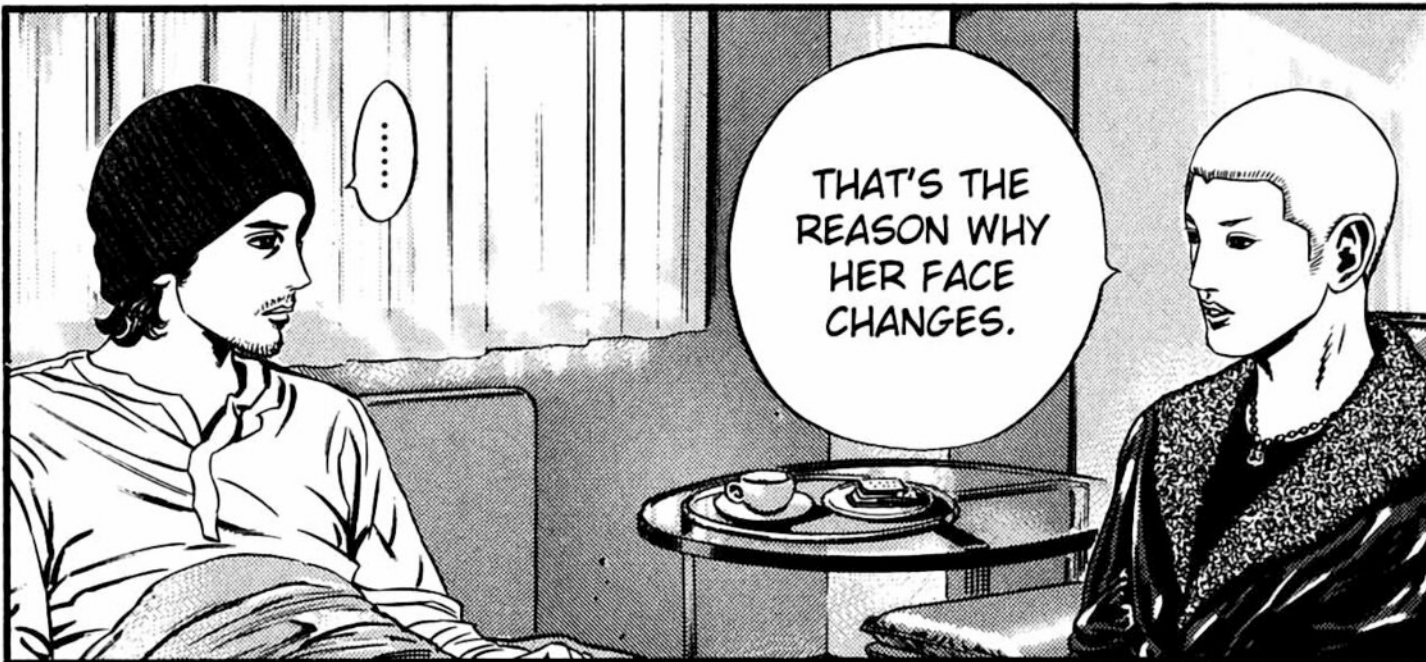
SHE HAD PLASTIC SURGERY.



JUST LIKE YOU,



!!



A close-up, black and white illustration of a man's face, shown in profile from the nose up. He has dark hair and is looking slightly to the left. A speech bubble is positioned to his left.

SHE'S
JUST LIKE YOU,
NAKOSHI-SAN.



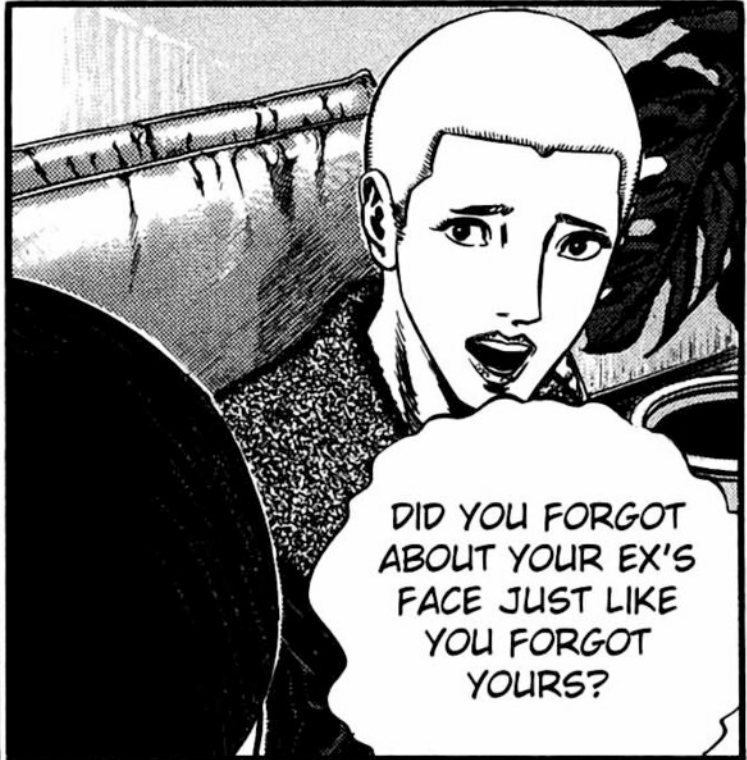
23

A black and white illustration of an interior scene, possibly a hallway or a room with a doorway. A speech bubble is located in the lower right area.

WHAT'S
YOUR EX DOING
RIGHT NOW?

A small speech bubble containing a single question mark.

?





!!



THE ONLY ONE WHO ACTUALLY SAW YOU AS WHO YOU ARE...



I HAVE NO IDEA.

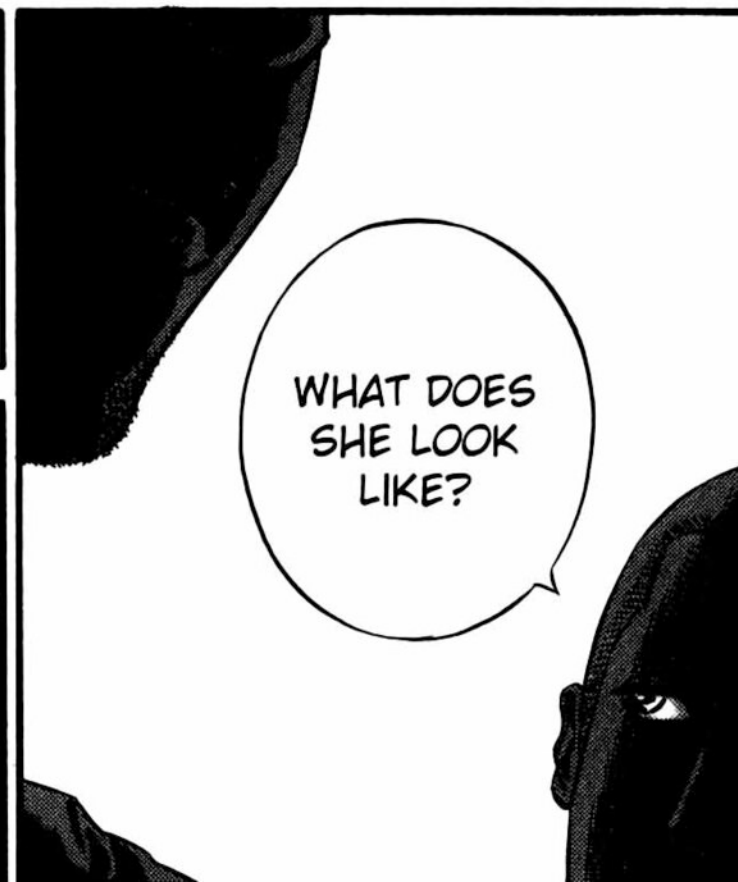


COULD SEE HOMUNCULI, WHERE IS SHE?

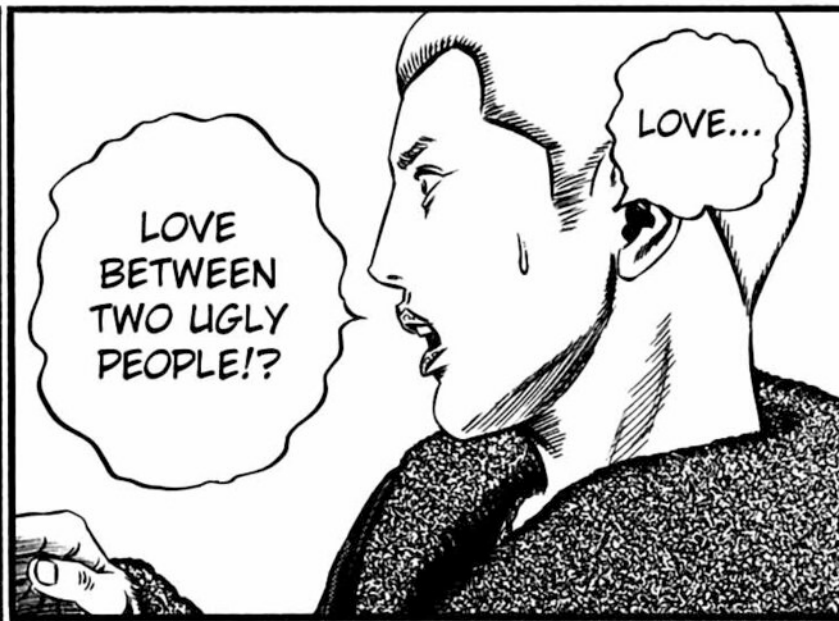
THE ONE THAT

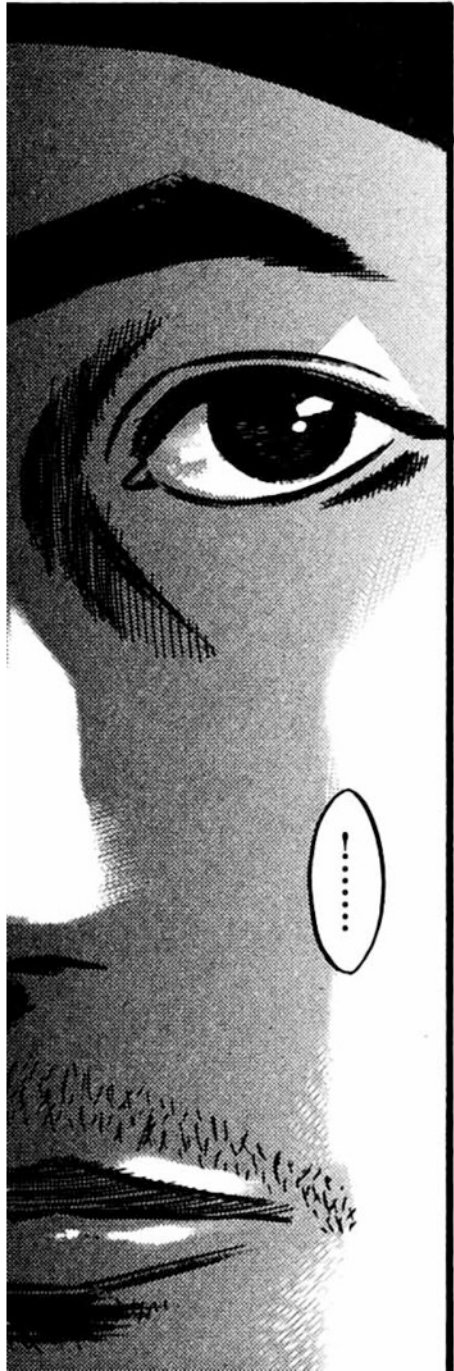


I CAN'T REMEMBER...



WHAT DOES SHE LOOK LIKE?







YOUR WOUND SHOULD BE FINE NOW.



LIPS-A-DAISY.



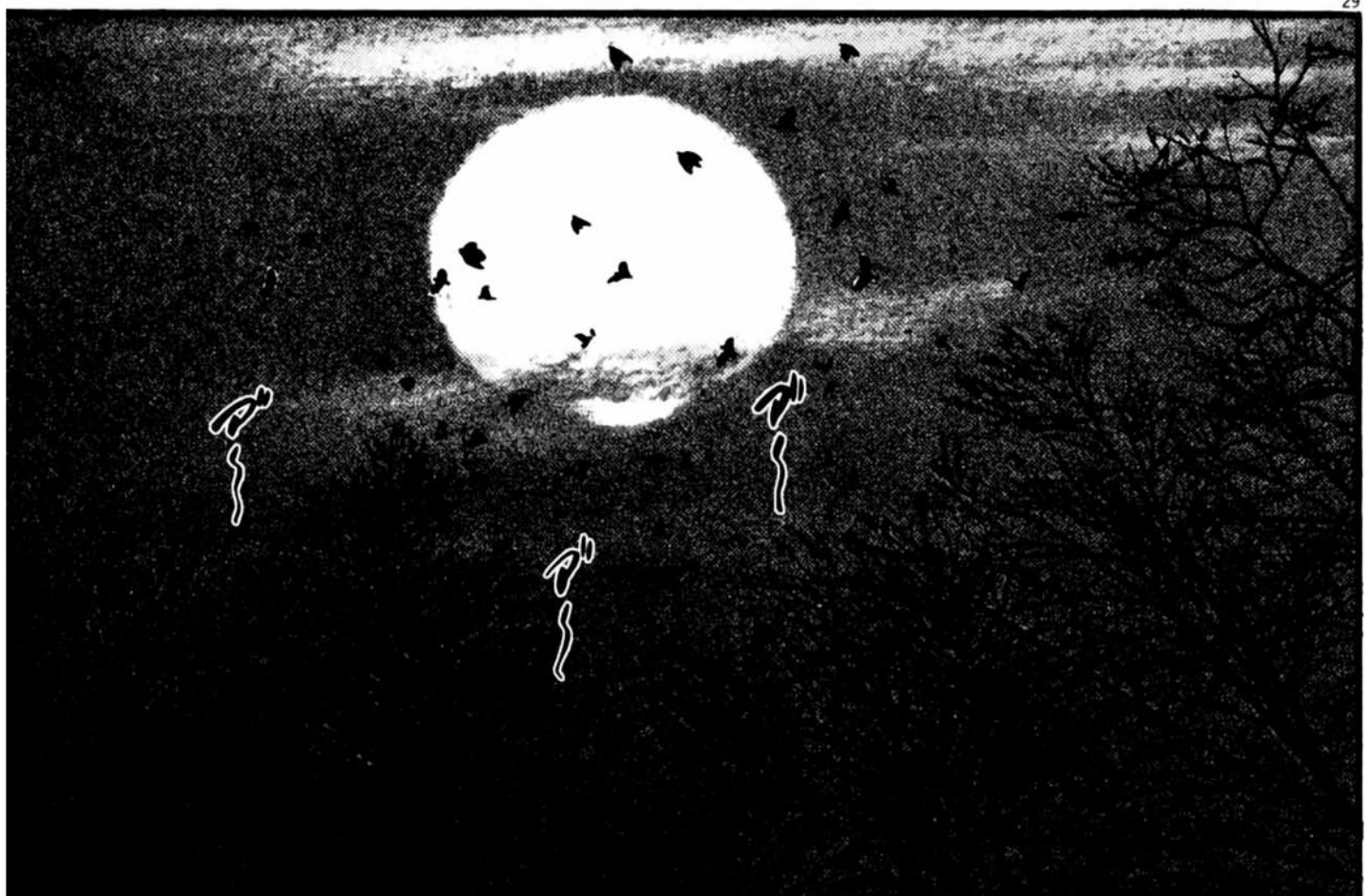
AND I FILLED YOUR TANK AND PARKED YOUR CAR OVER THERE, AS WELL.

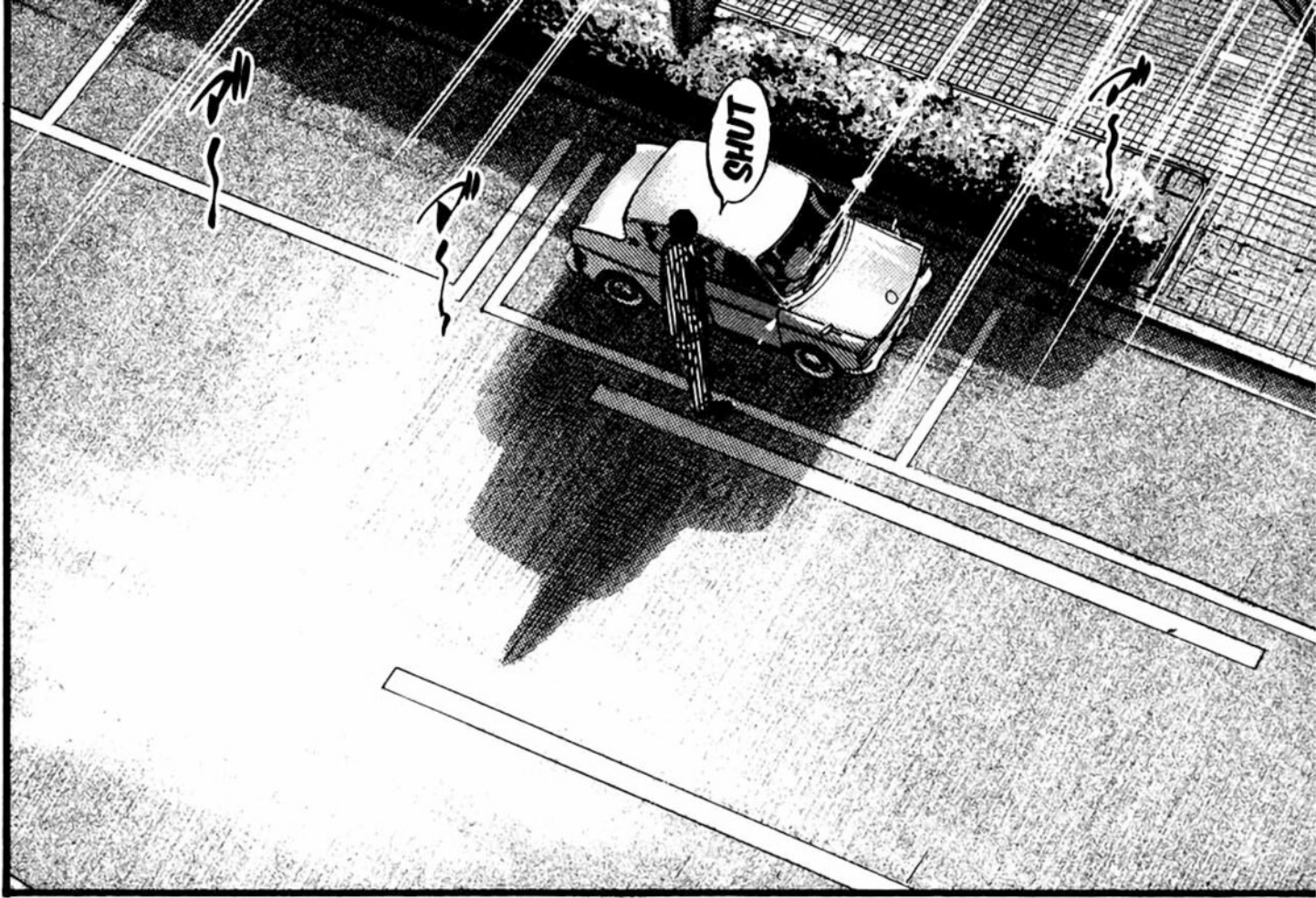


YOUR SUIT AND SHIRTS HAVE BEEN TO THE CLEANERS.

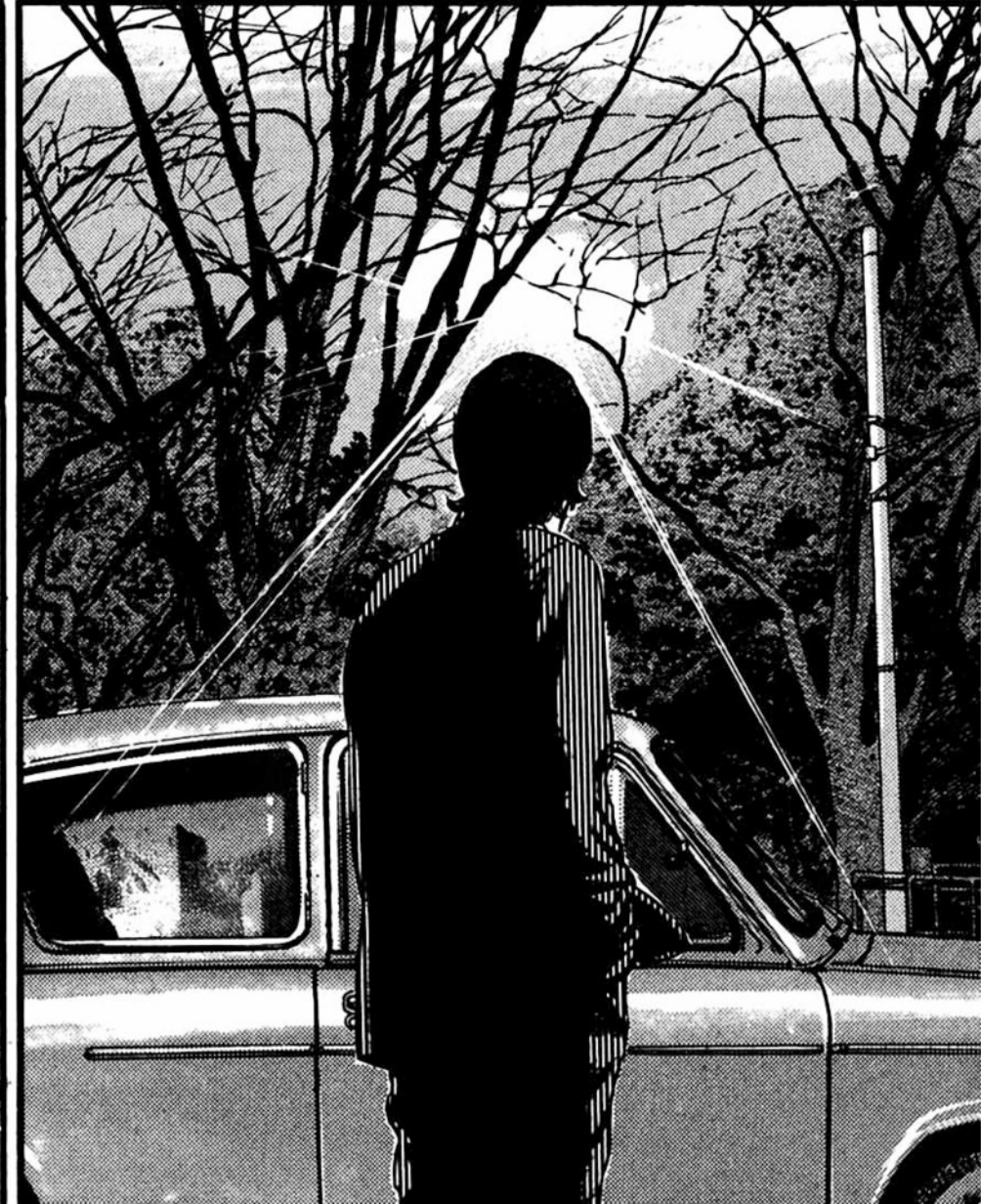


THANKS.





30





OH,
CAR BOY.

AH.



WHERE
WERE
YOU?

I
HAVEN'T
SEEN YOU
LATELY.



HI.

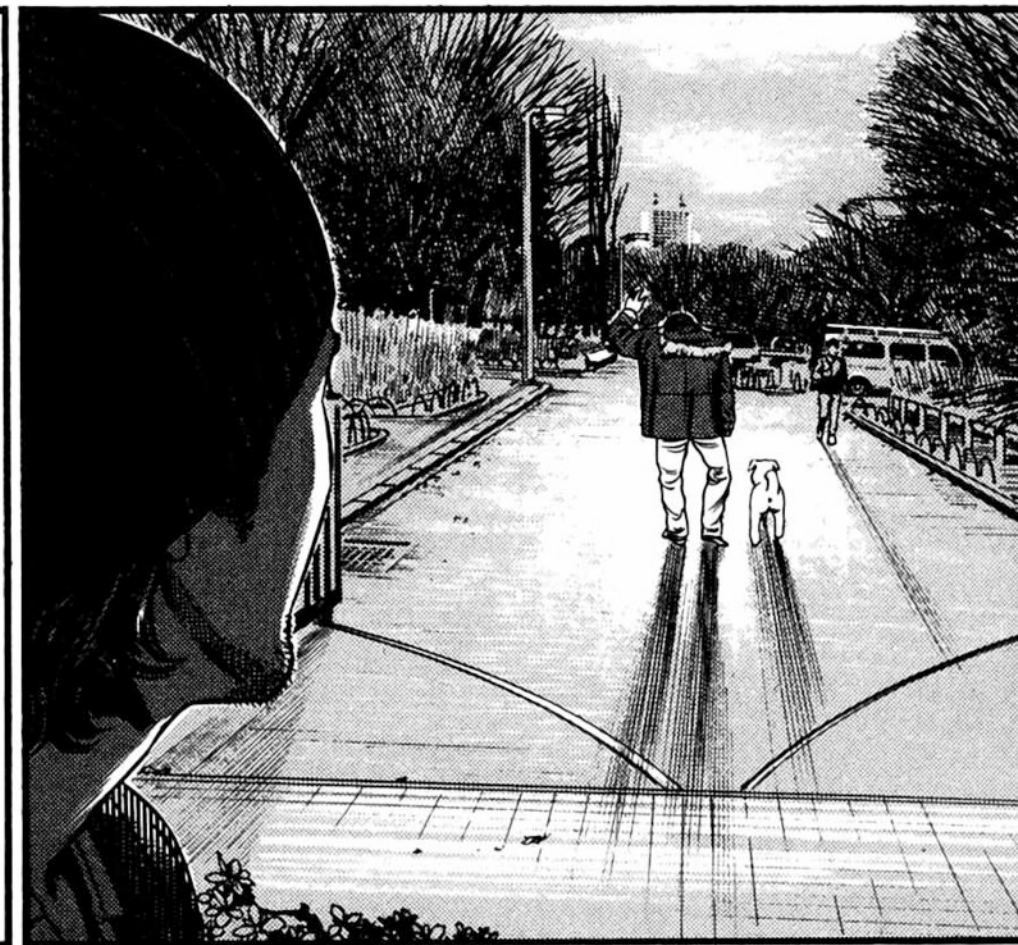
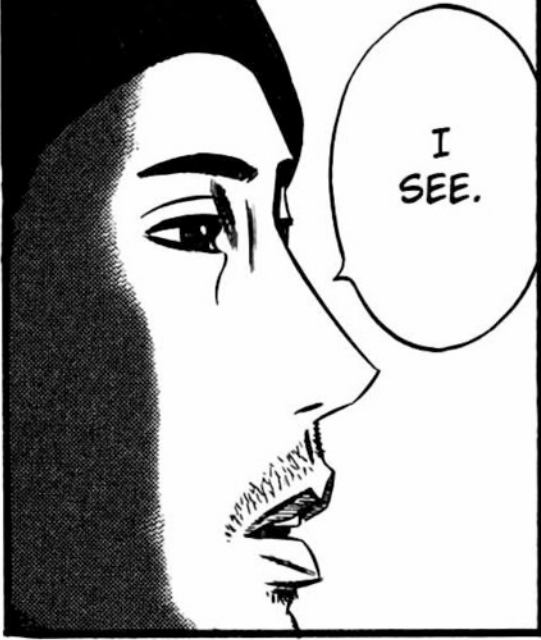
KEN-
SAN.

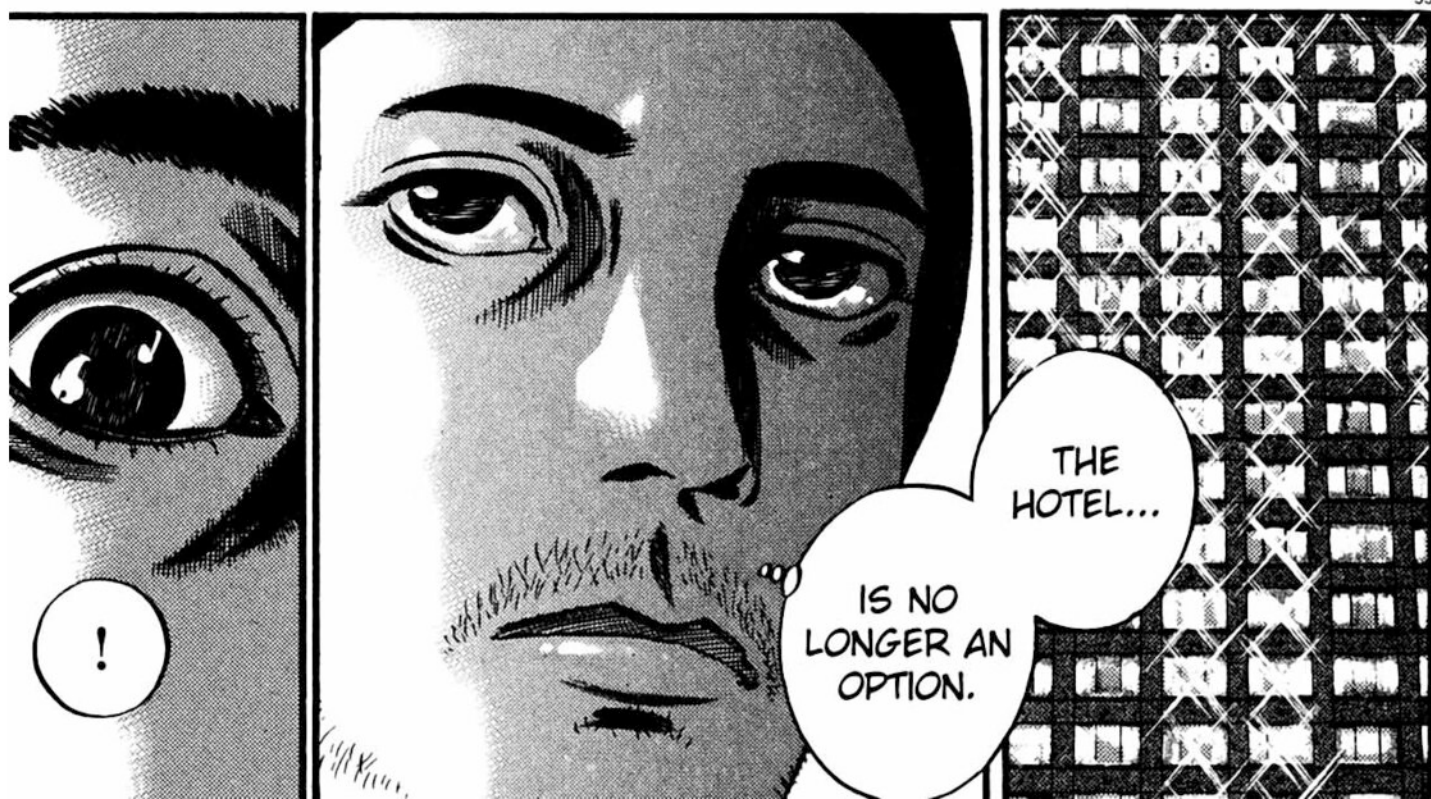
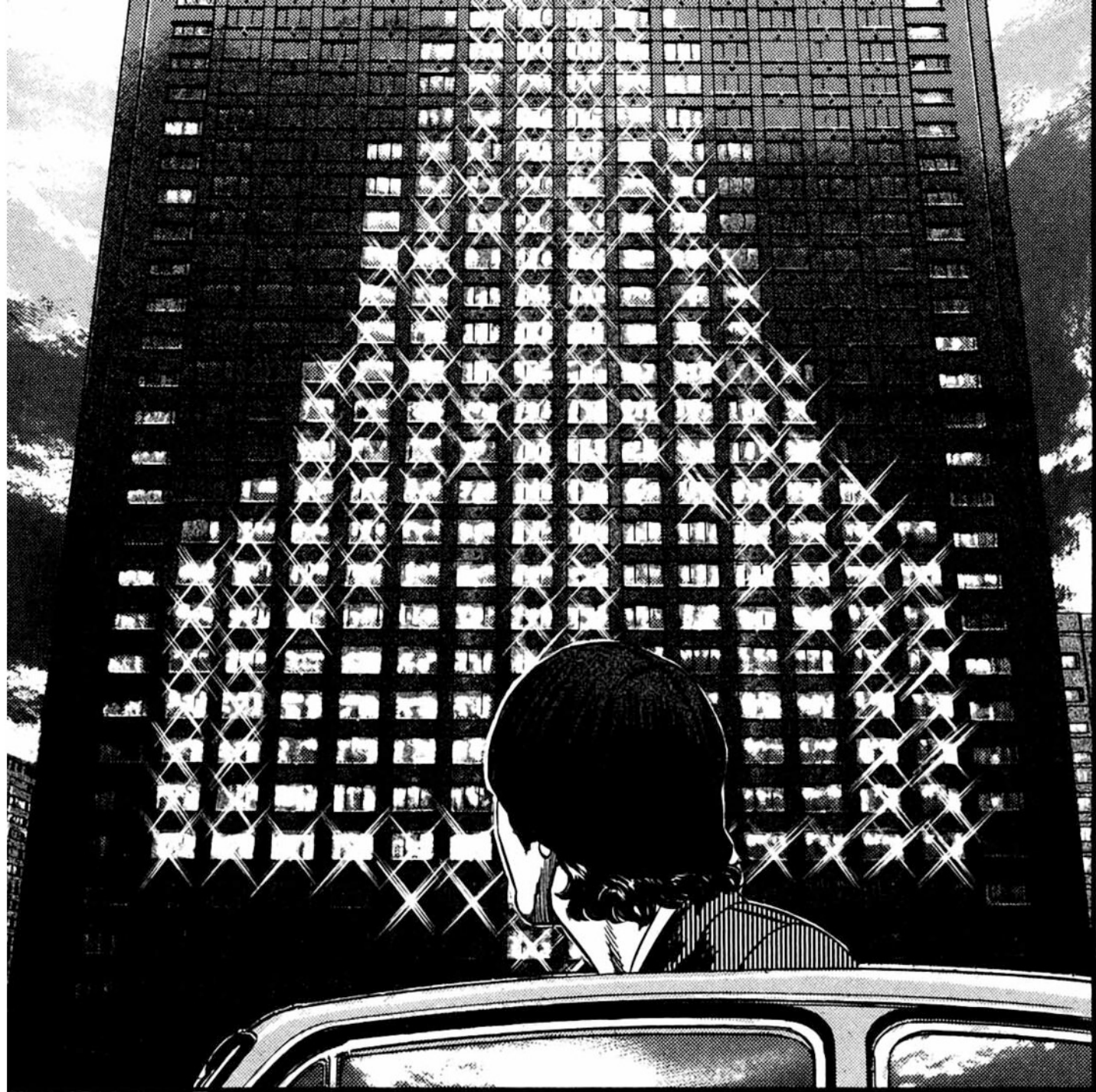


HAHAHAHA.



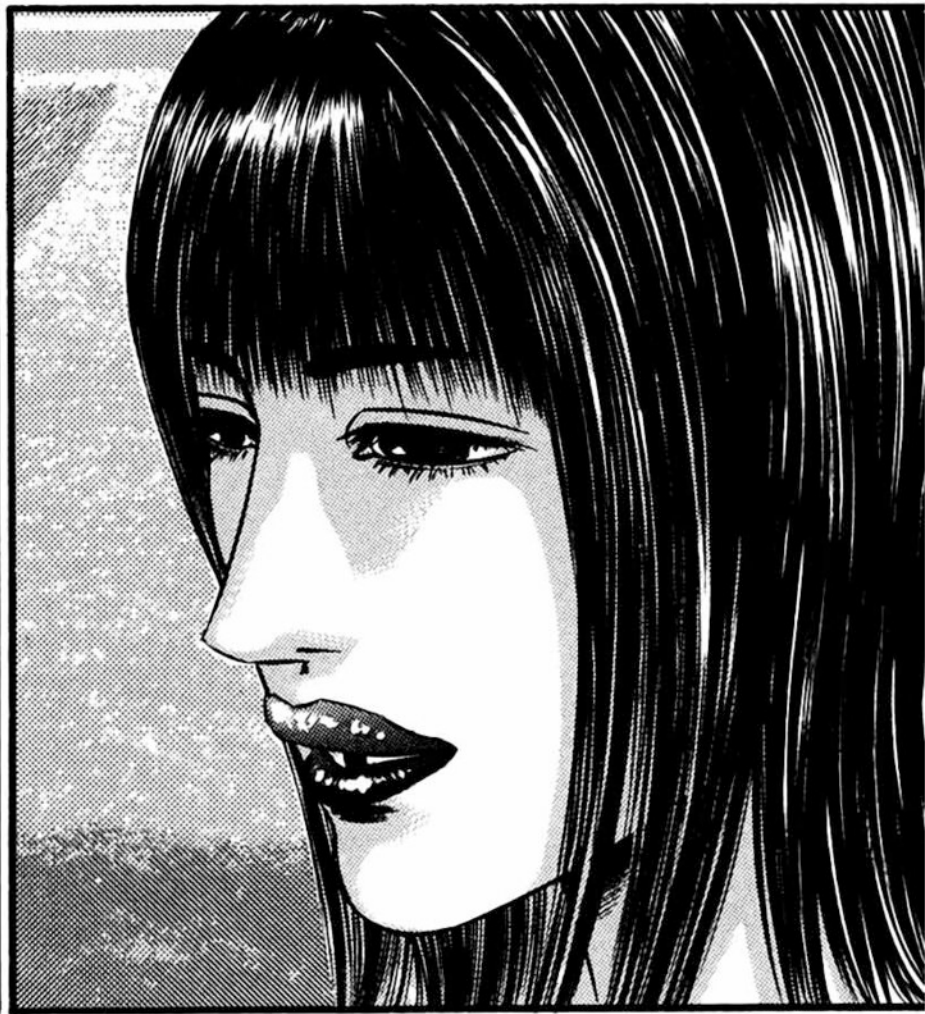
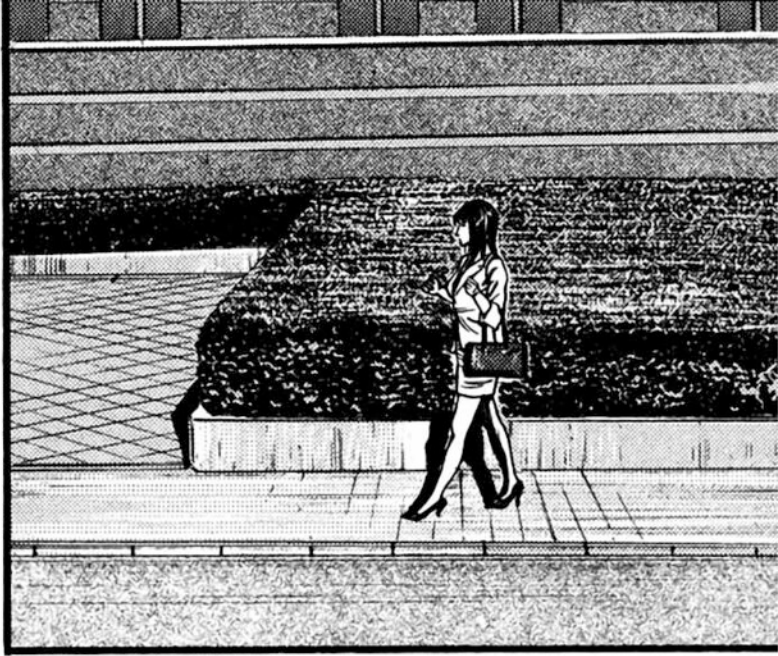
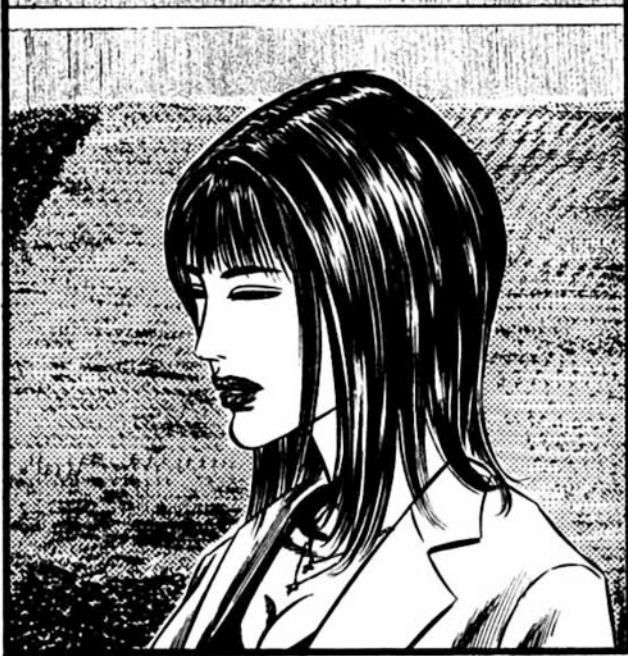
YOU
KNOW, JUST
SPENDING
TIME WITH
MY GIRL.

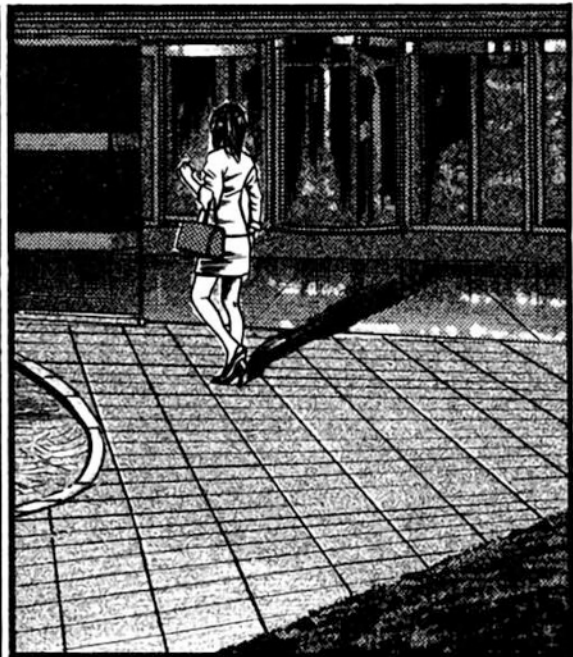
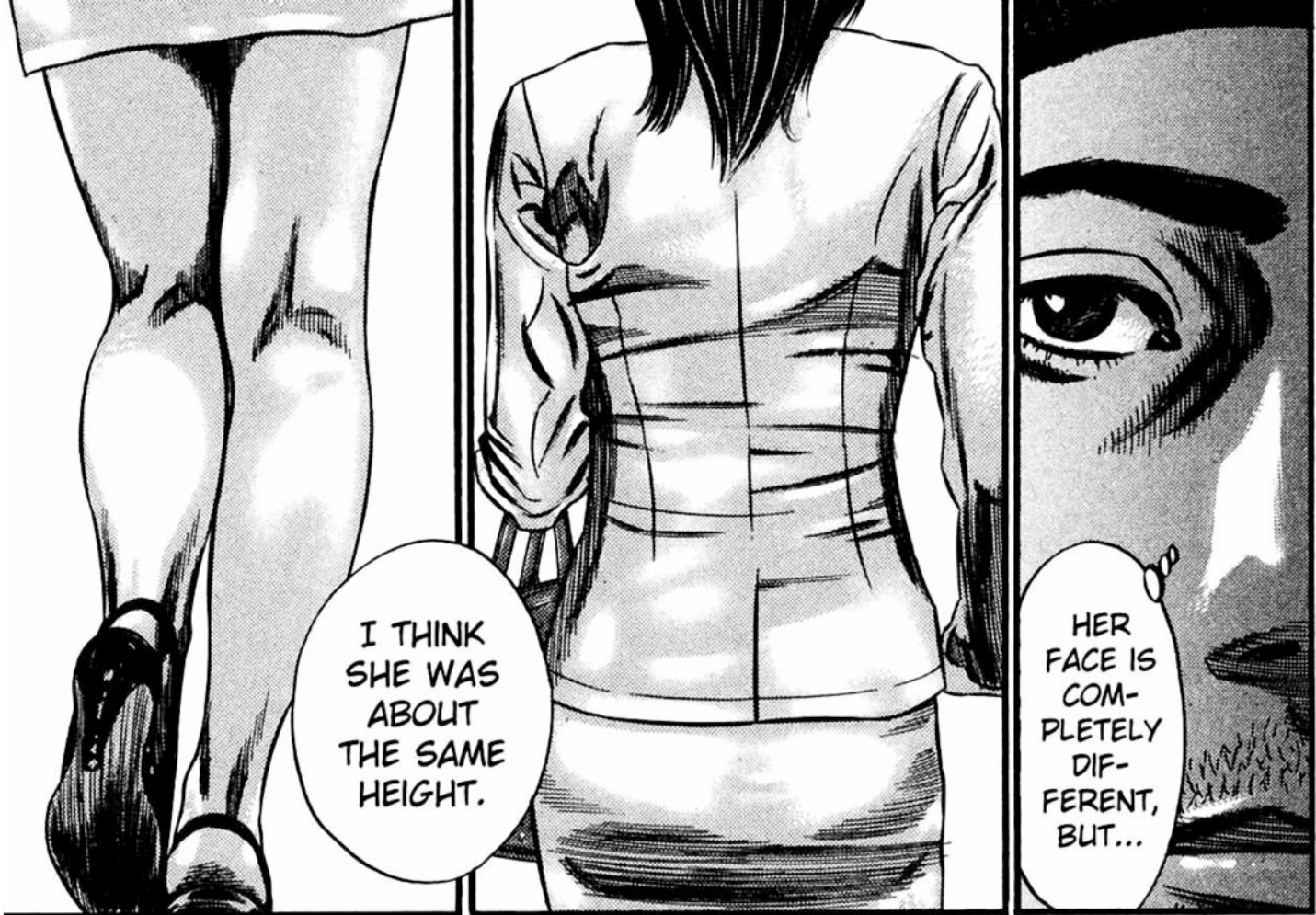


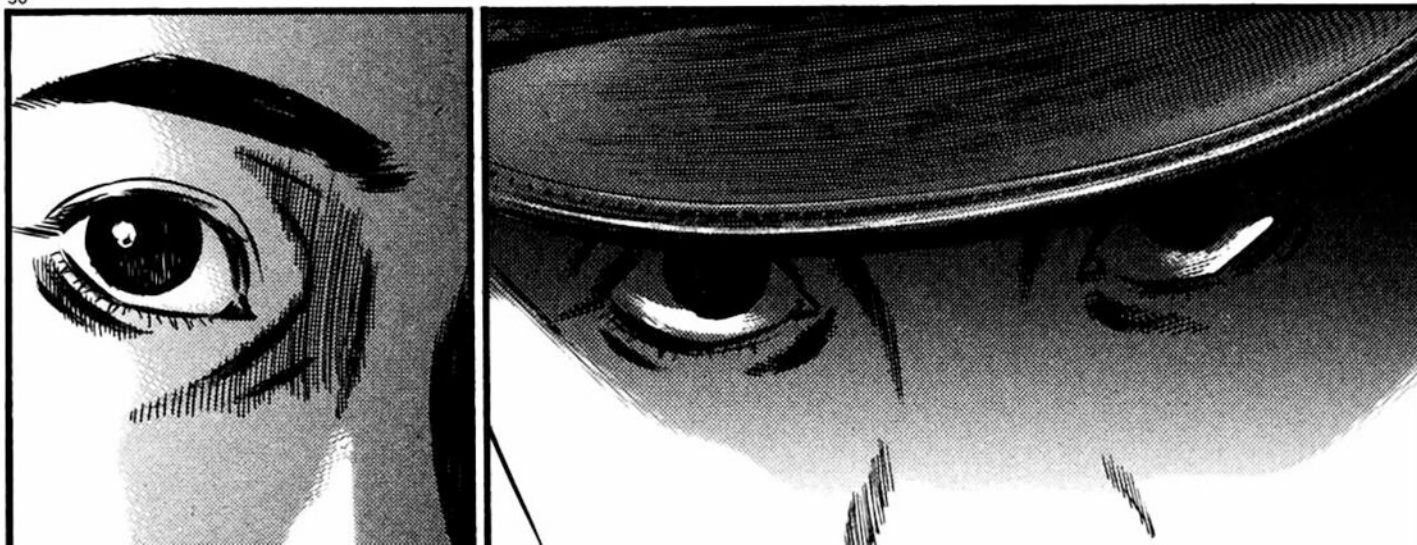


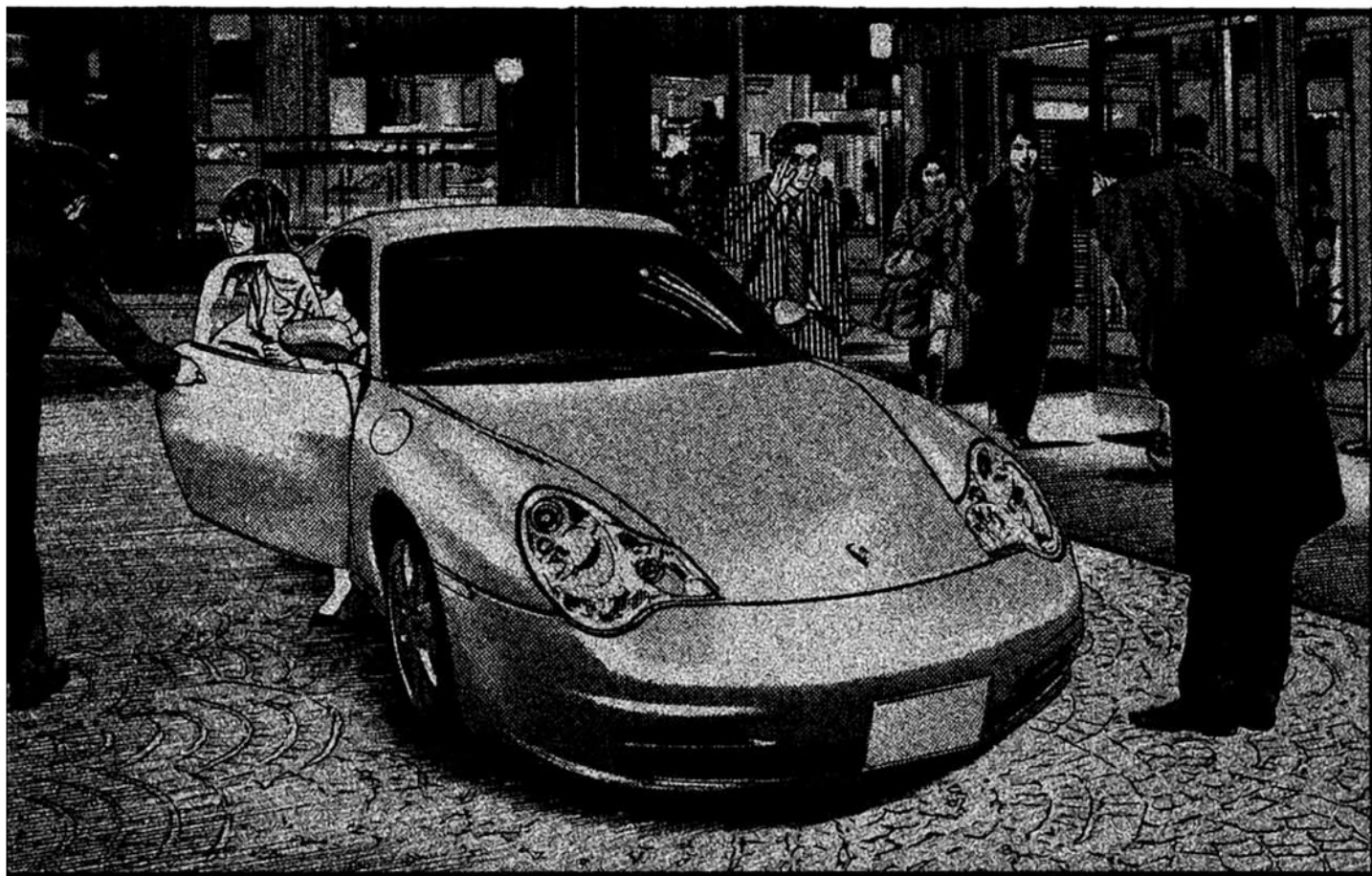
!

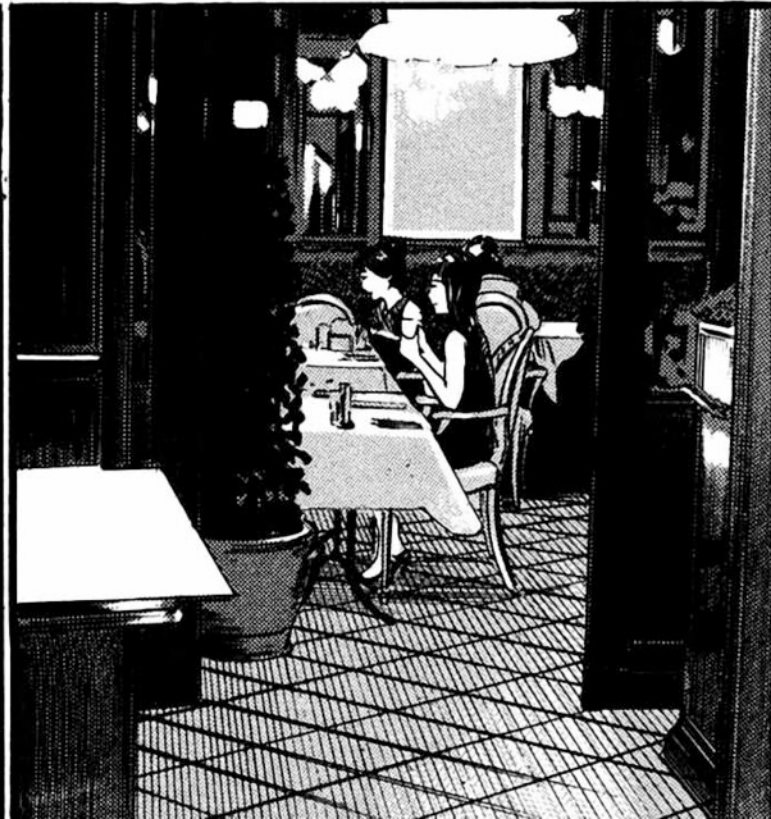
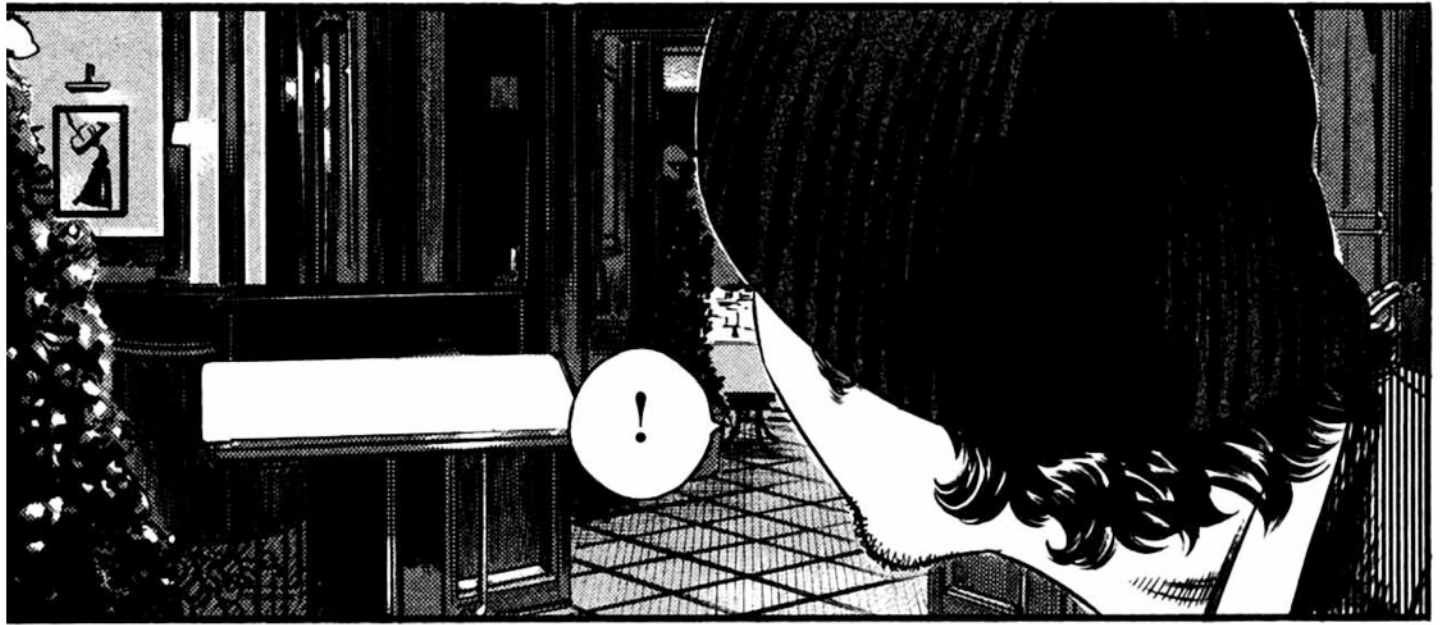
THE HOTEL...
IS NO LONGER AN OPTION.



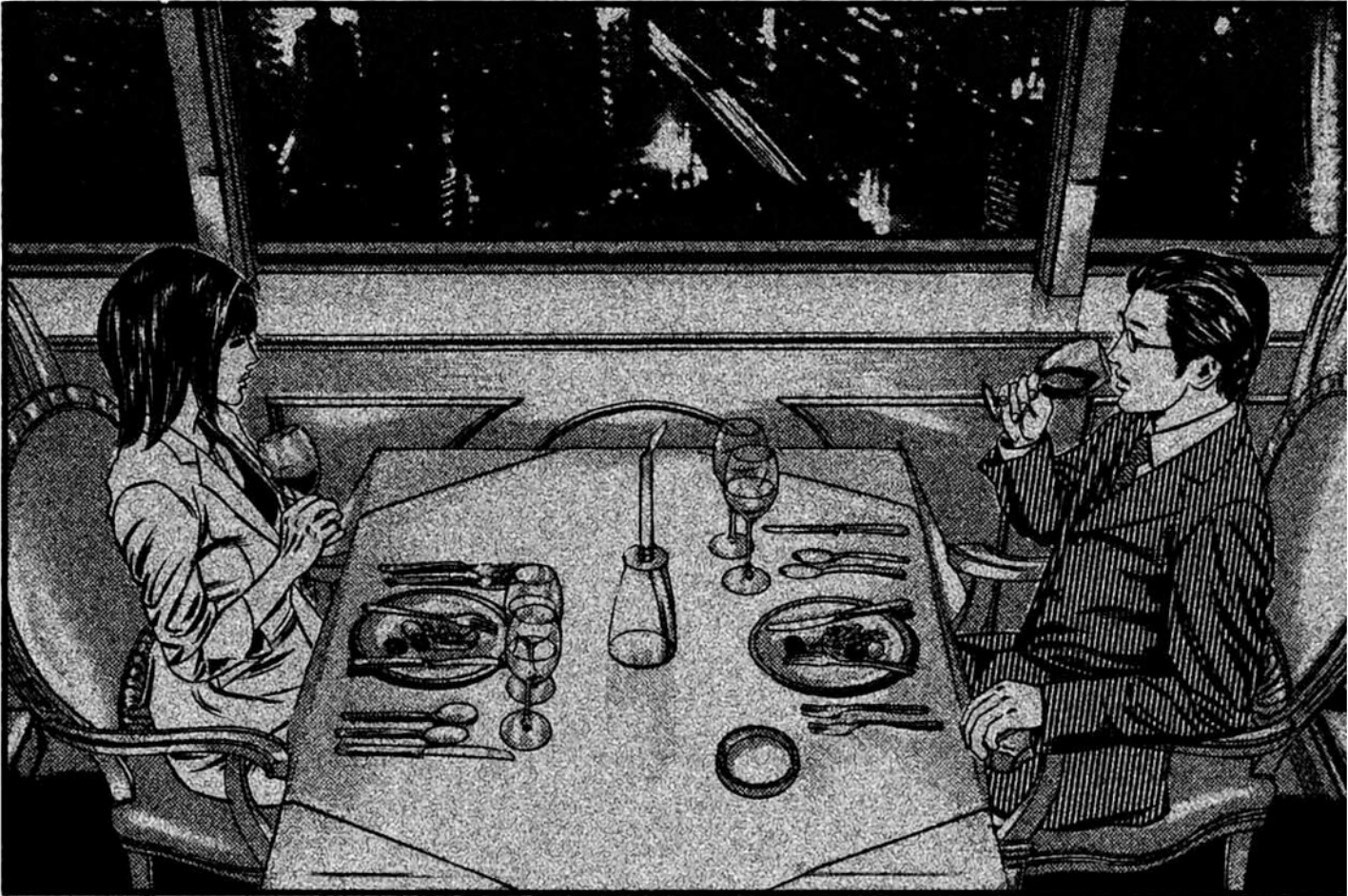
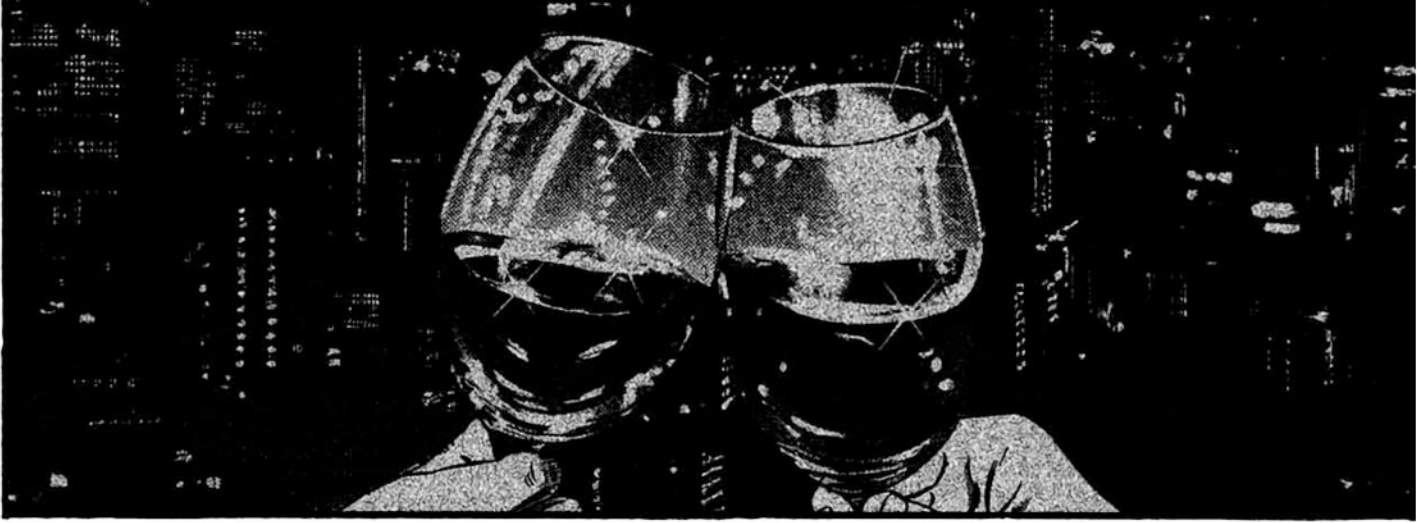






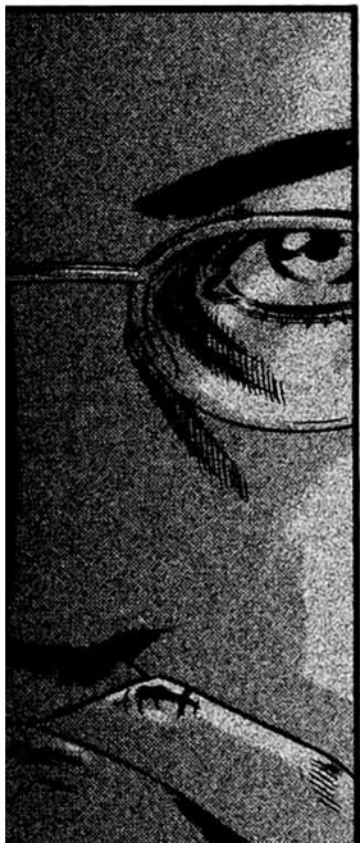
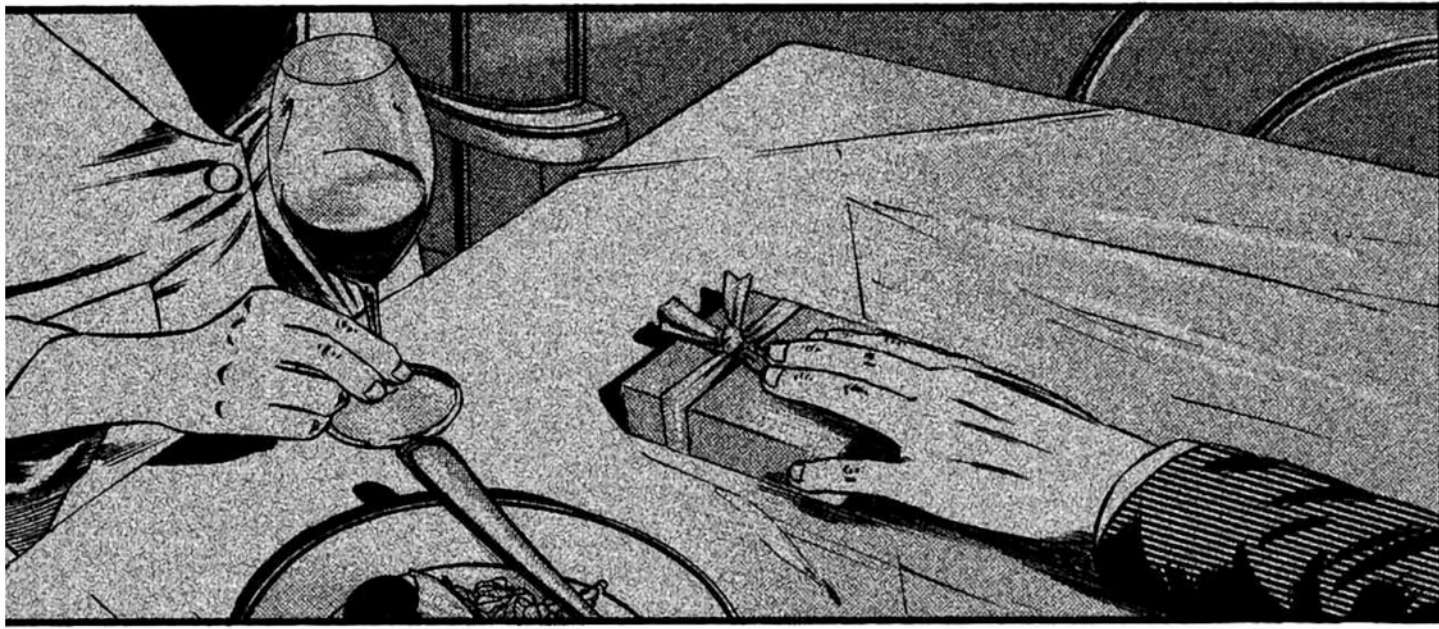






40







42

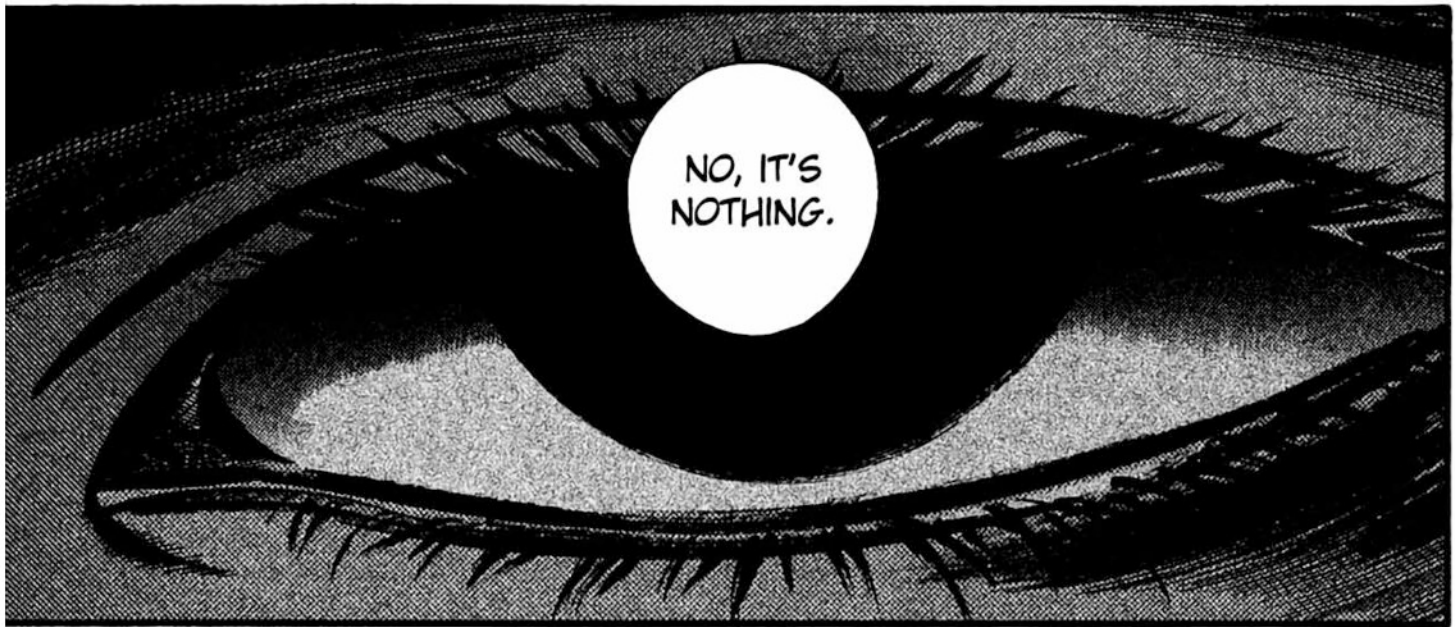




IS THERE
SOMETHING
ON MY
FACE?



WHAT'S
WRONG?



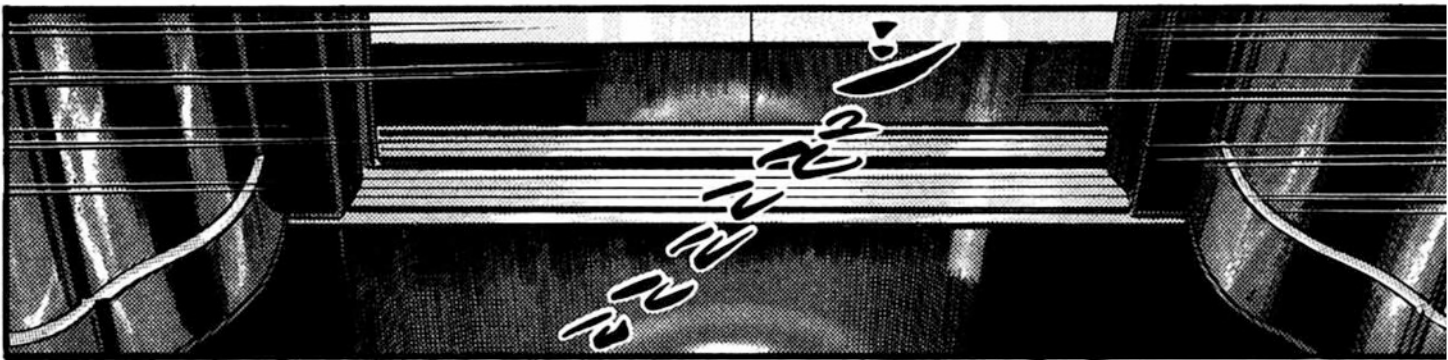
NO, IT'S
NOTHING.



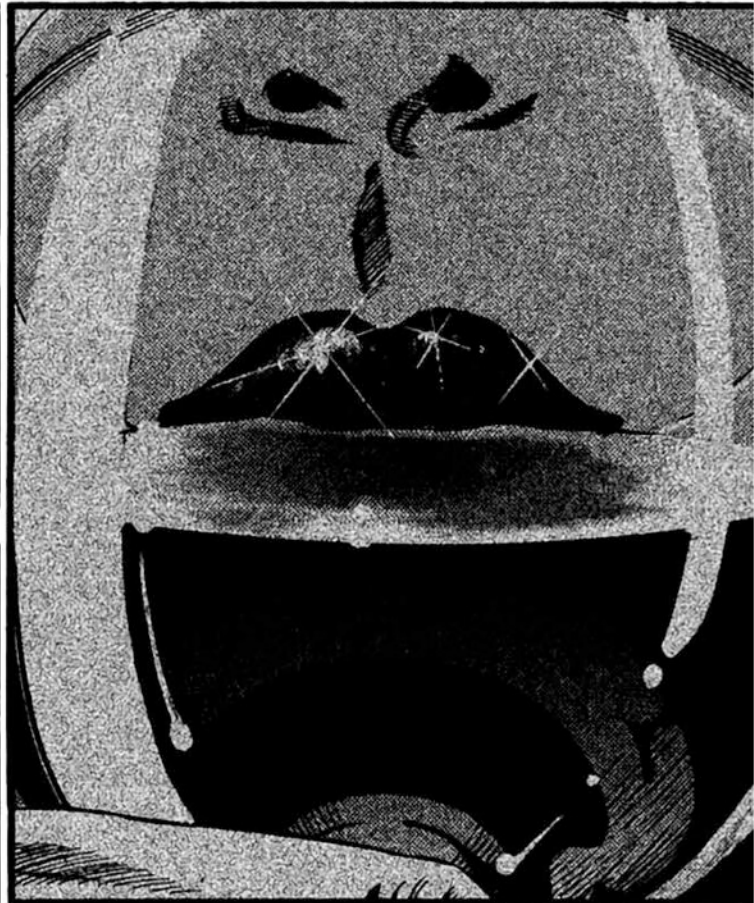
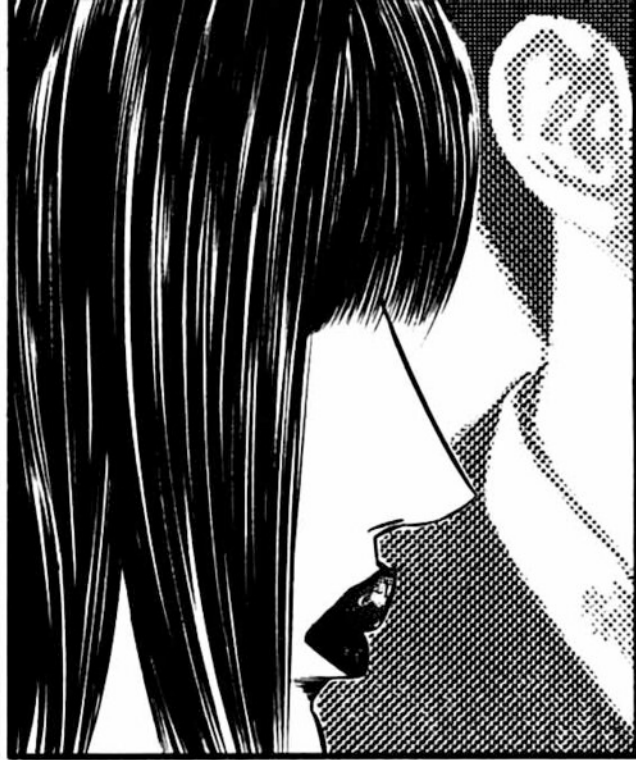
NOTHING...



...AT
ALL...









.....
?



SLIP



WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT?



THIS GLOSS WILL LOOK LOVELY ON YOUR LIPS.

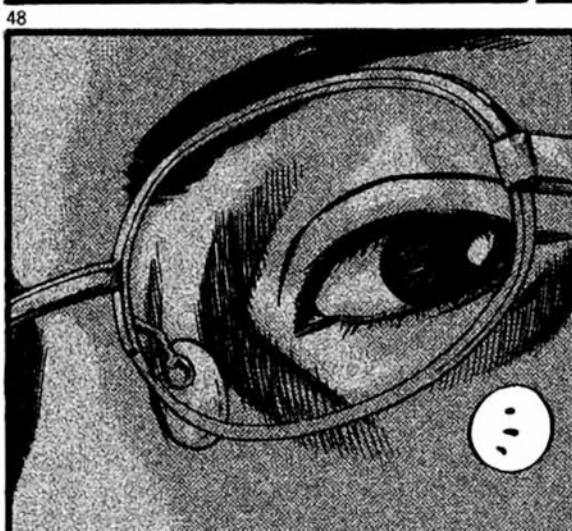
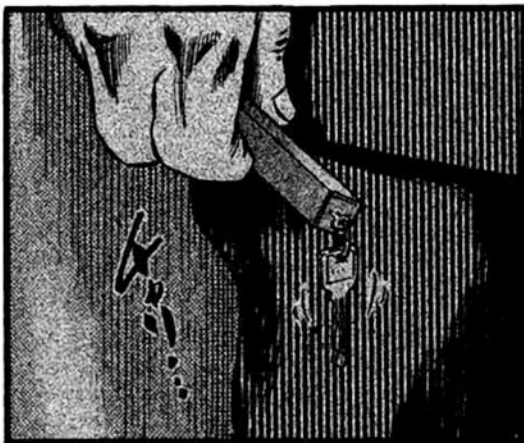
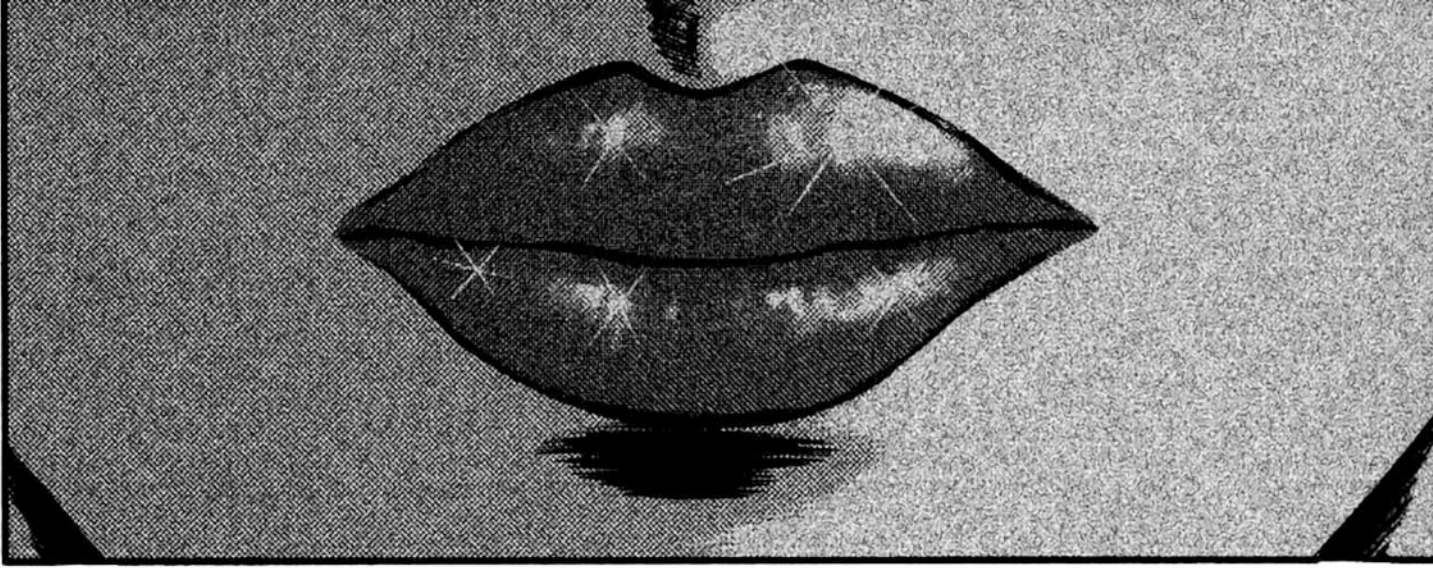
I THINK...



CARRY THIS ALONG?



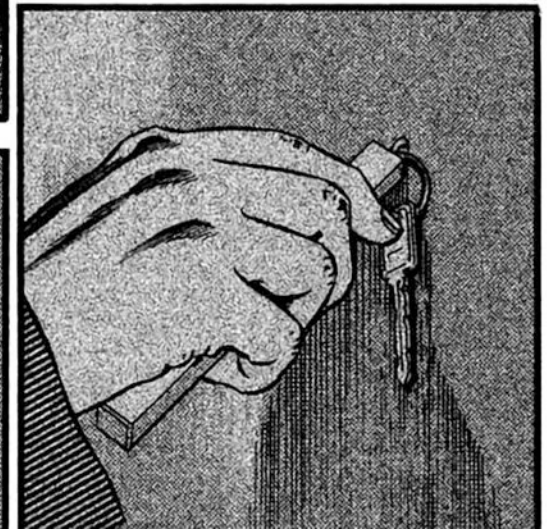
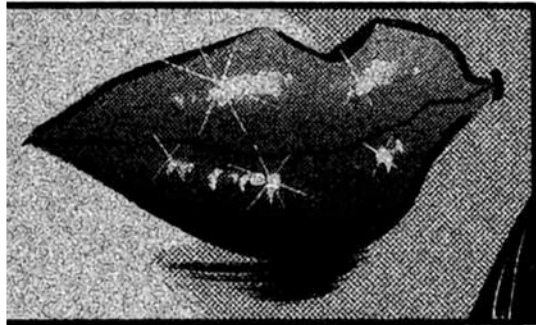
DO YOU ALWAYS

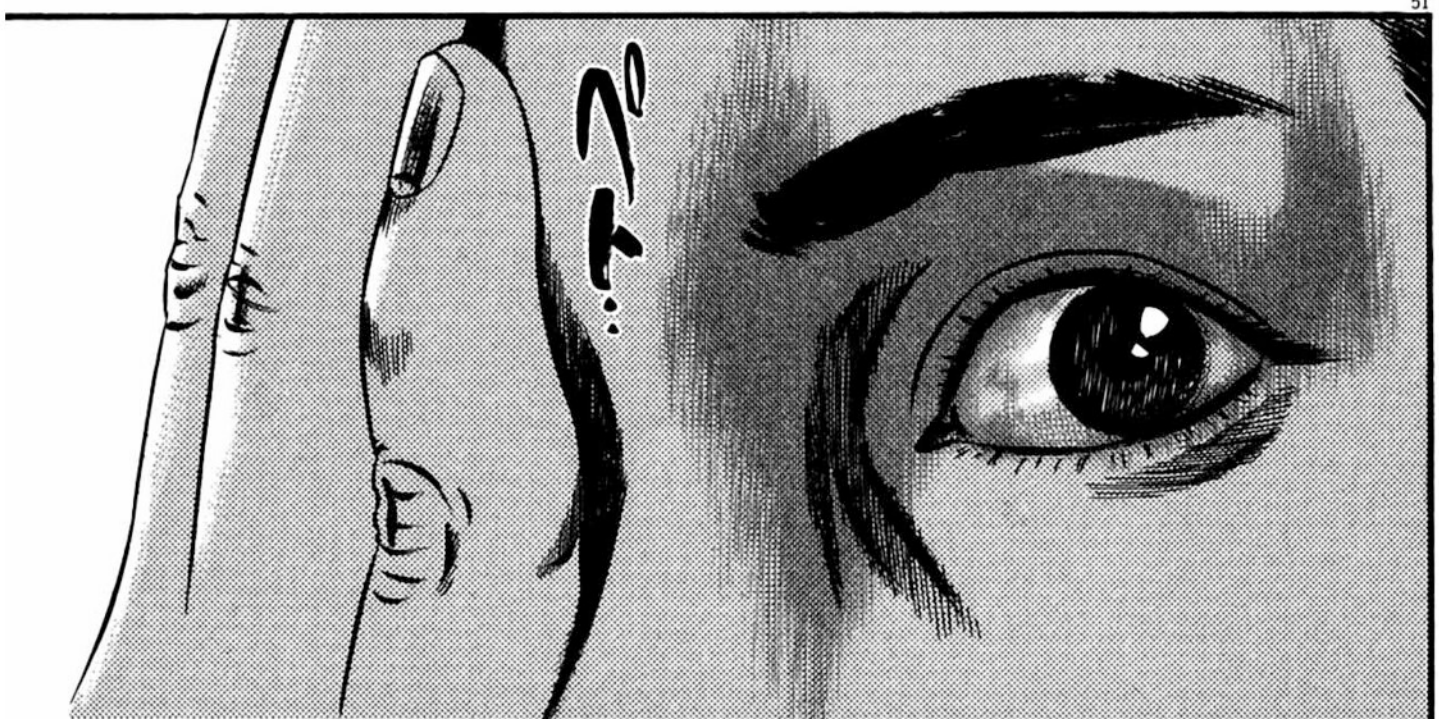
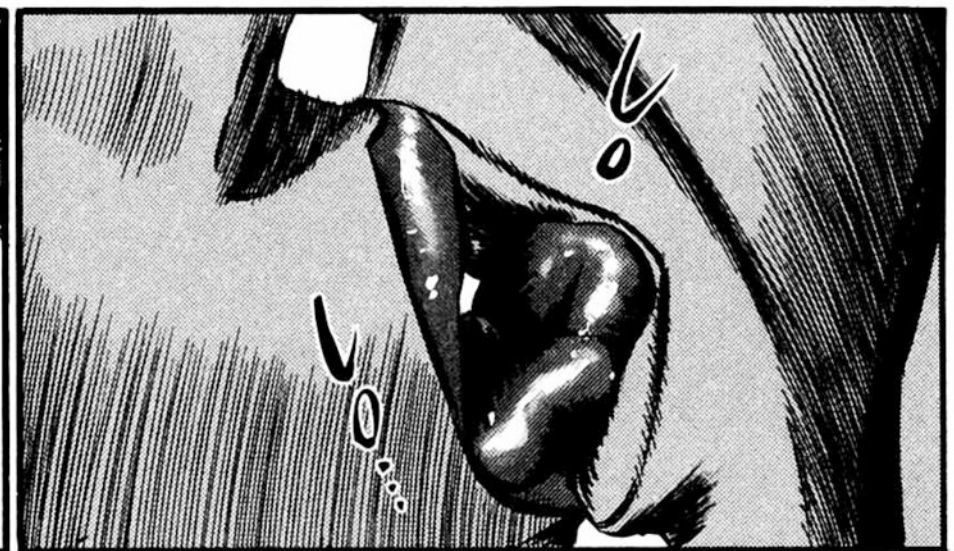
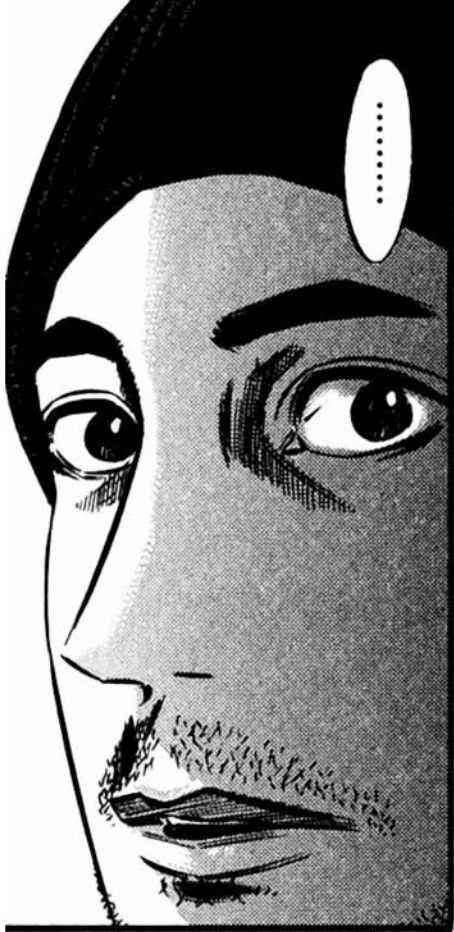




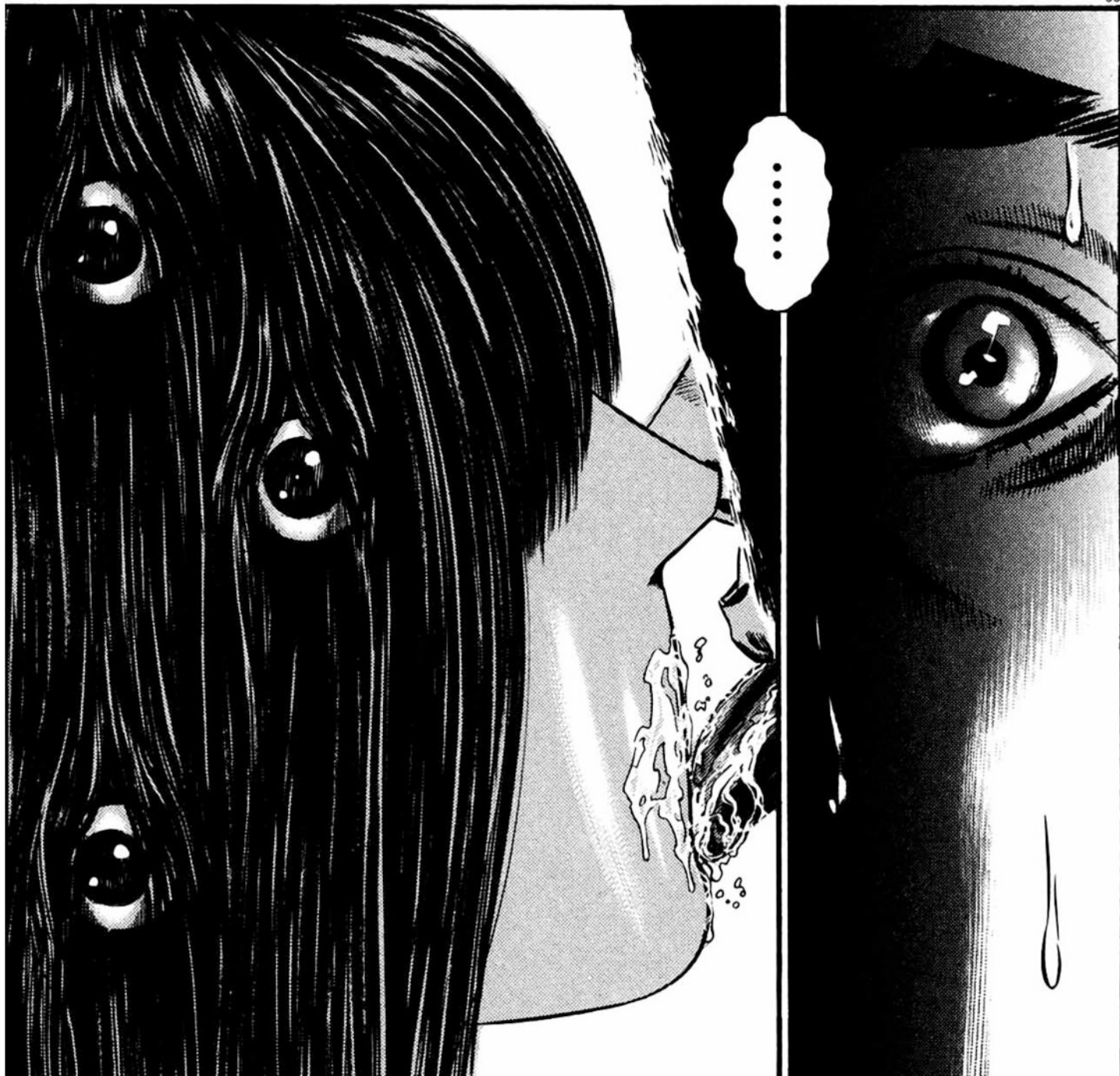
50

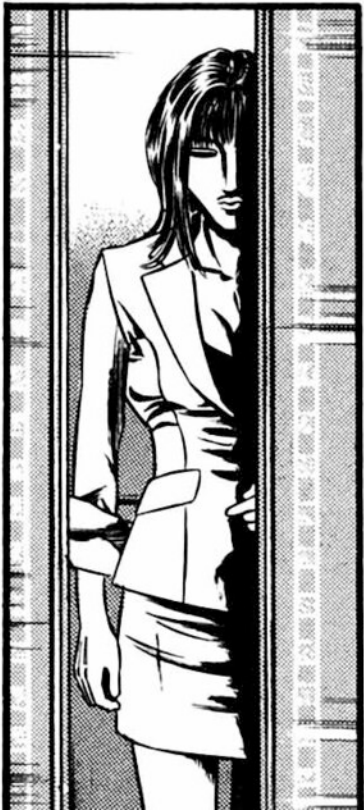
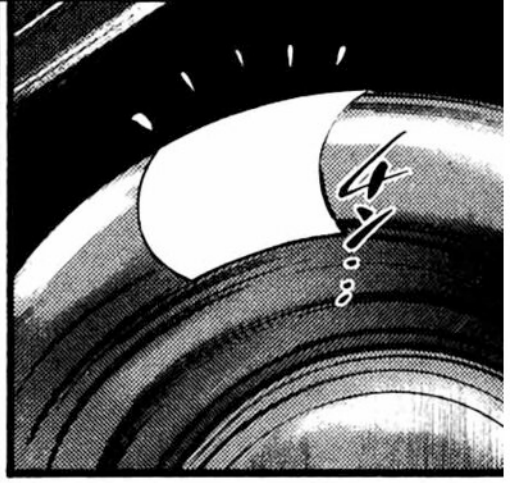


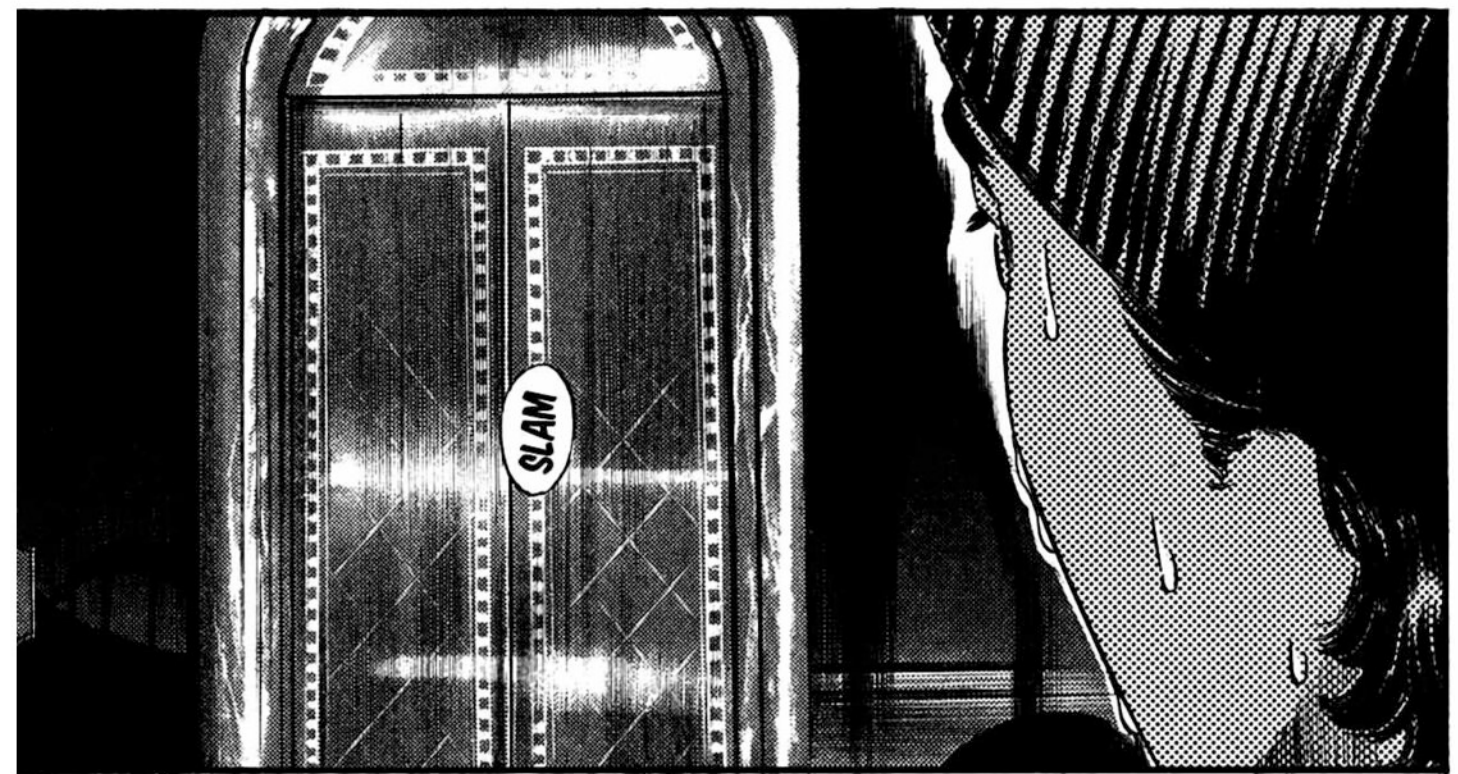


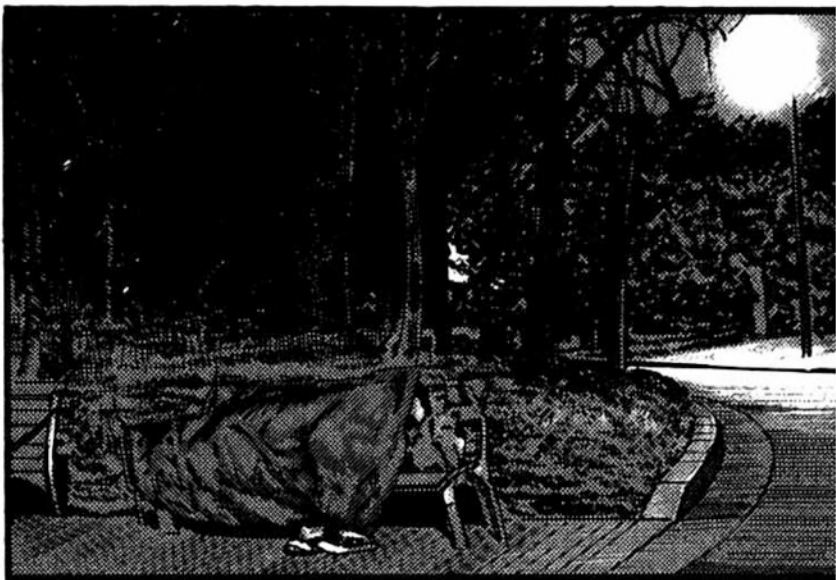
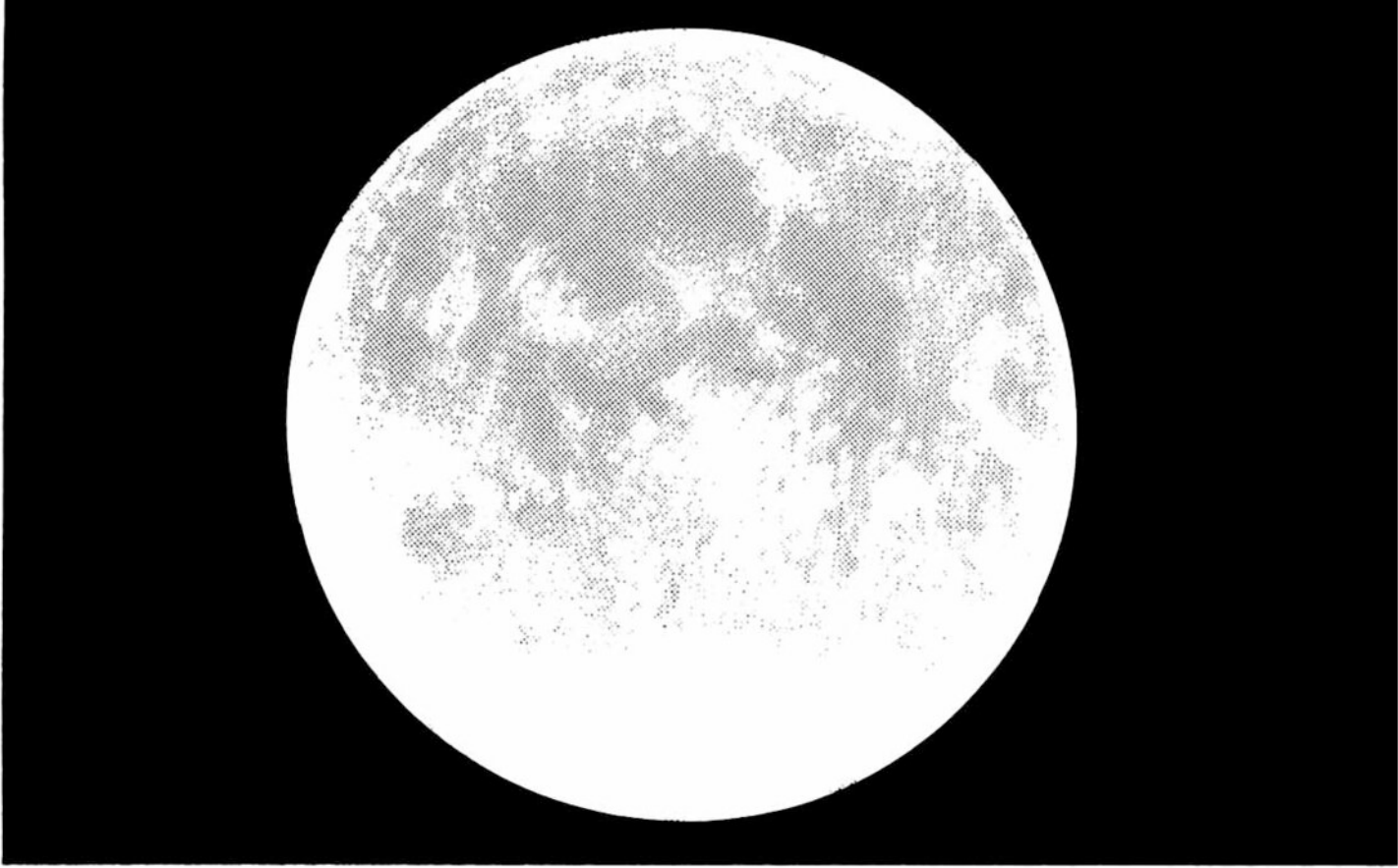




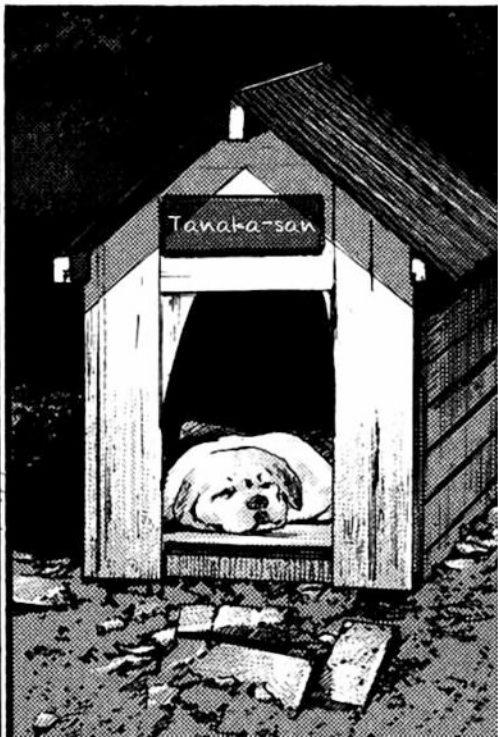
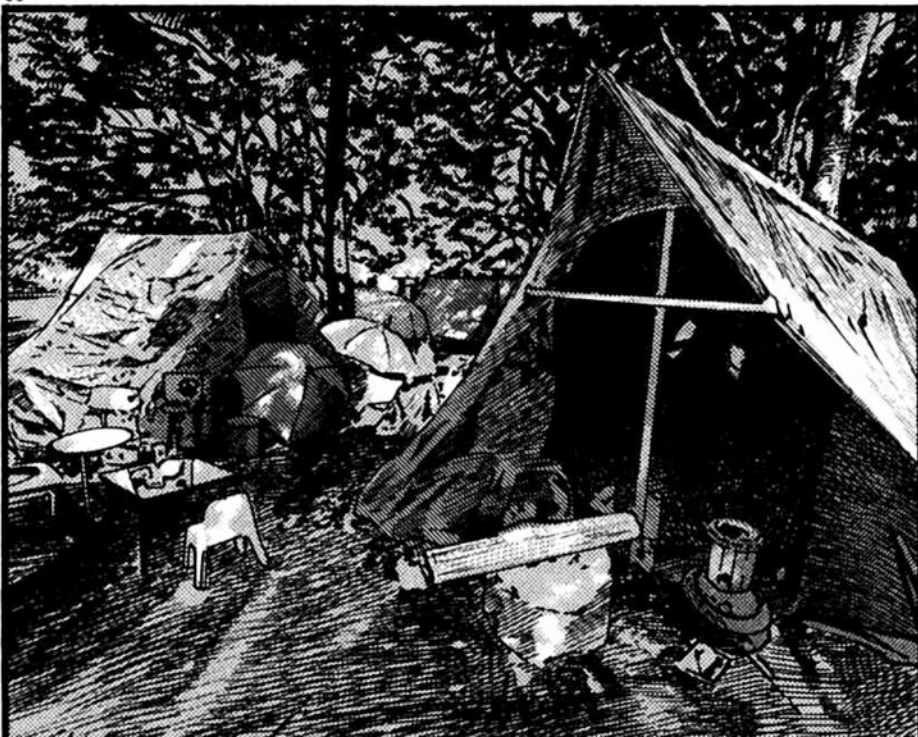


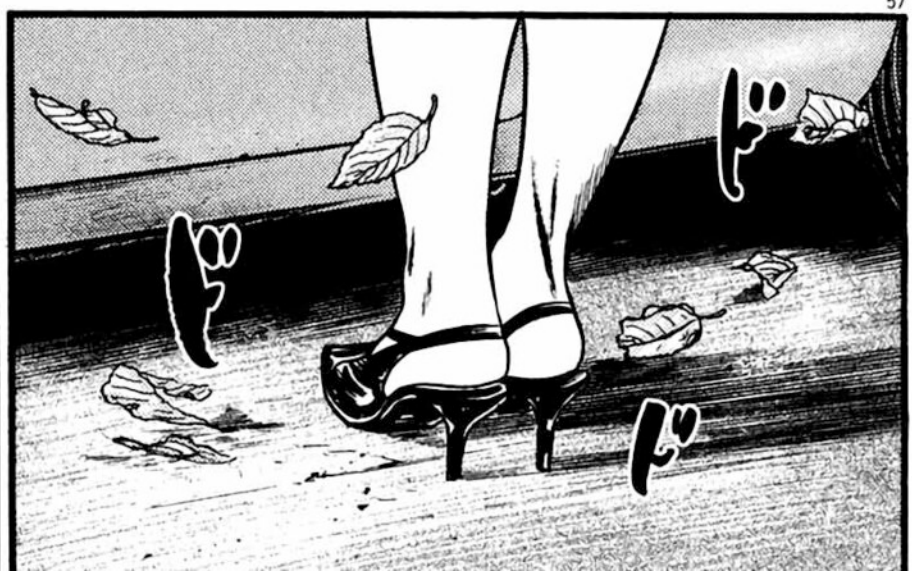
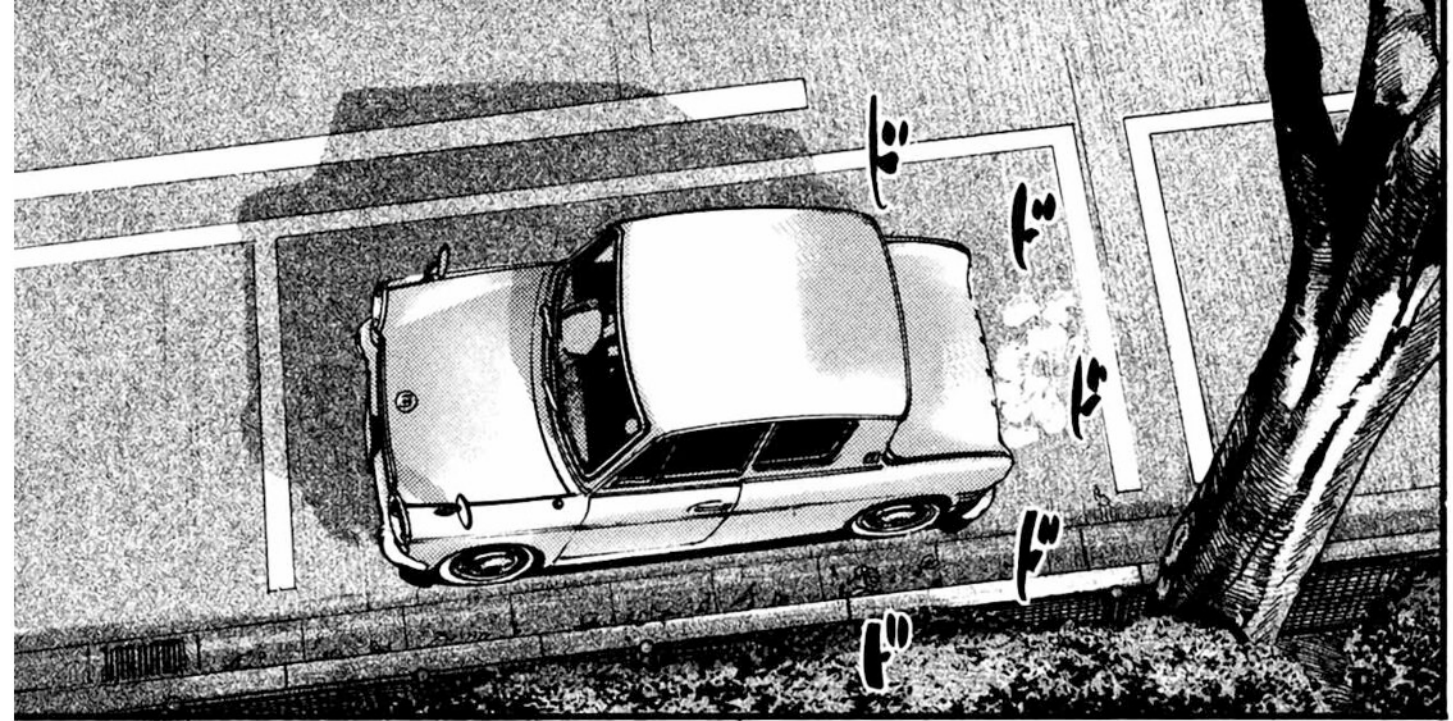






56





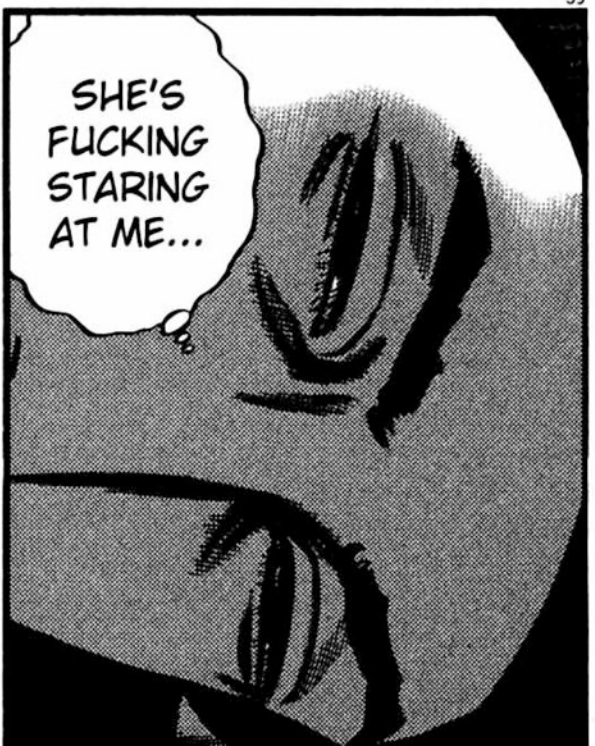


58





SHE'S...



SHE'S
FUCKING
STARING
AT ME...



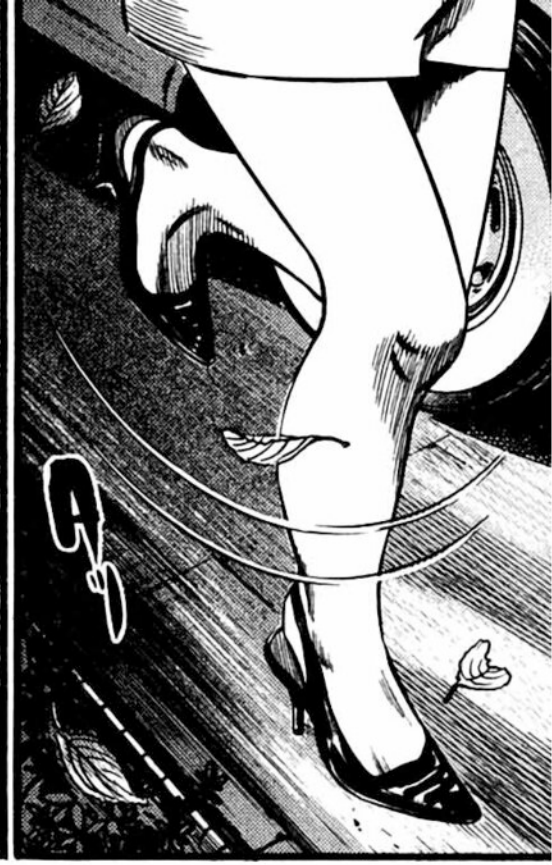
60













NOT A
DREAM!



WASN'T A
DREAM...



THE
NOPPE-
RABOU

NA...

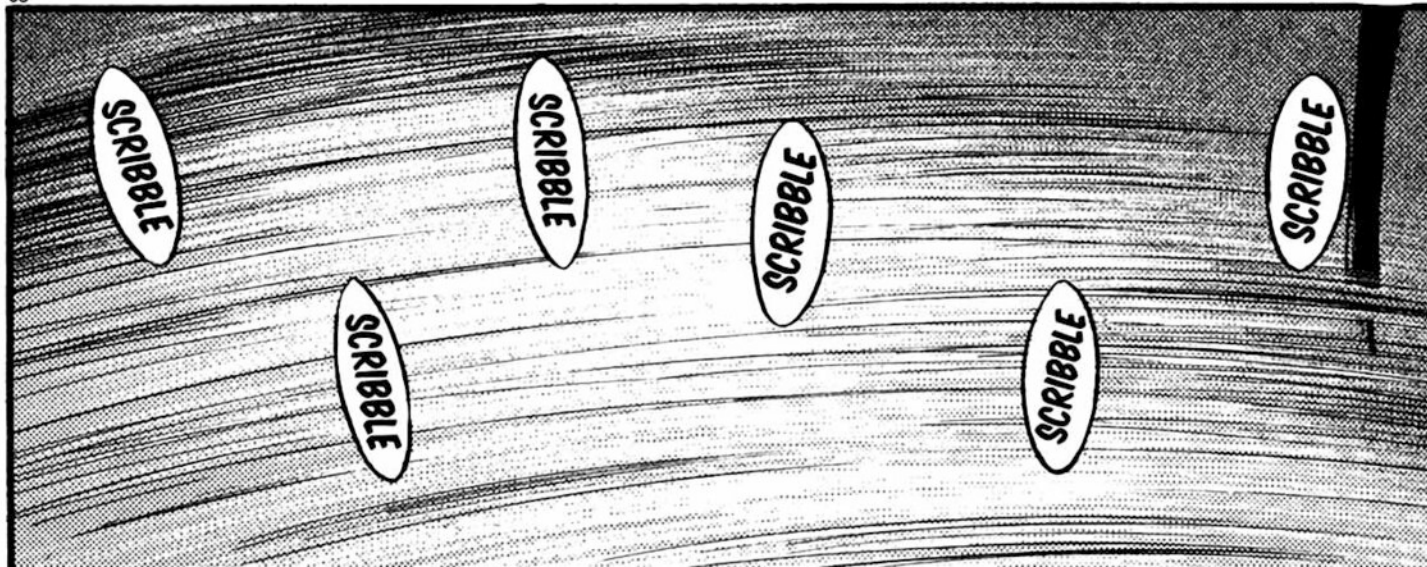
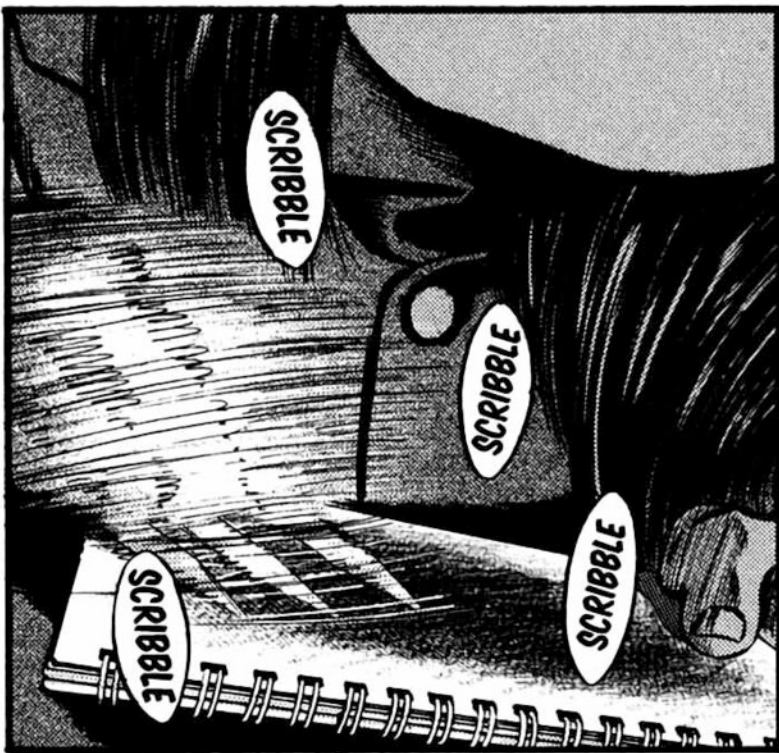


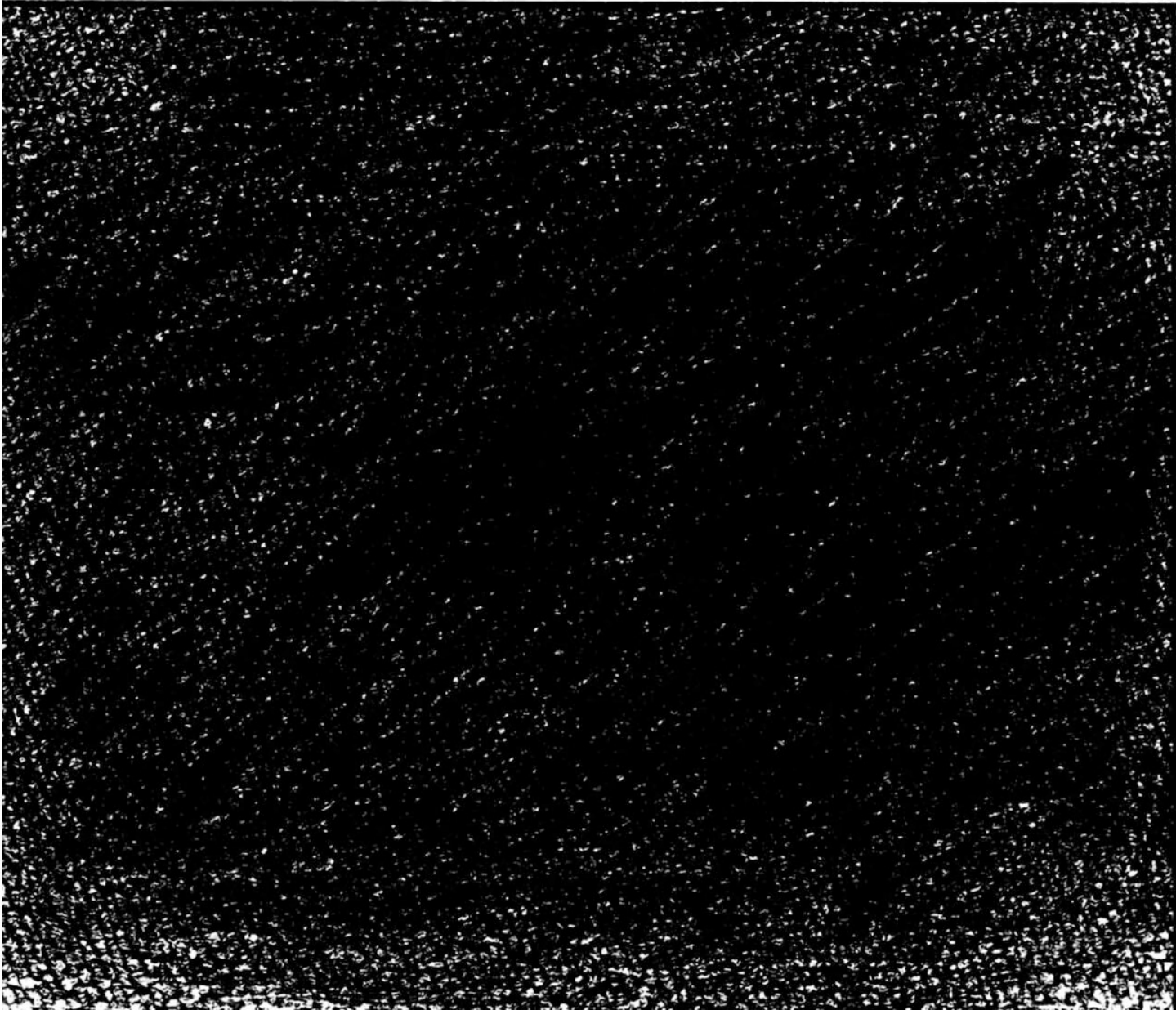
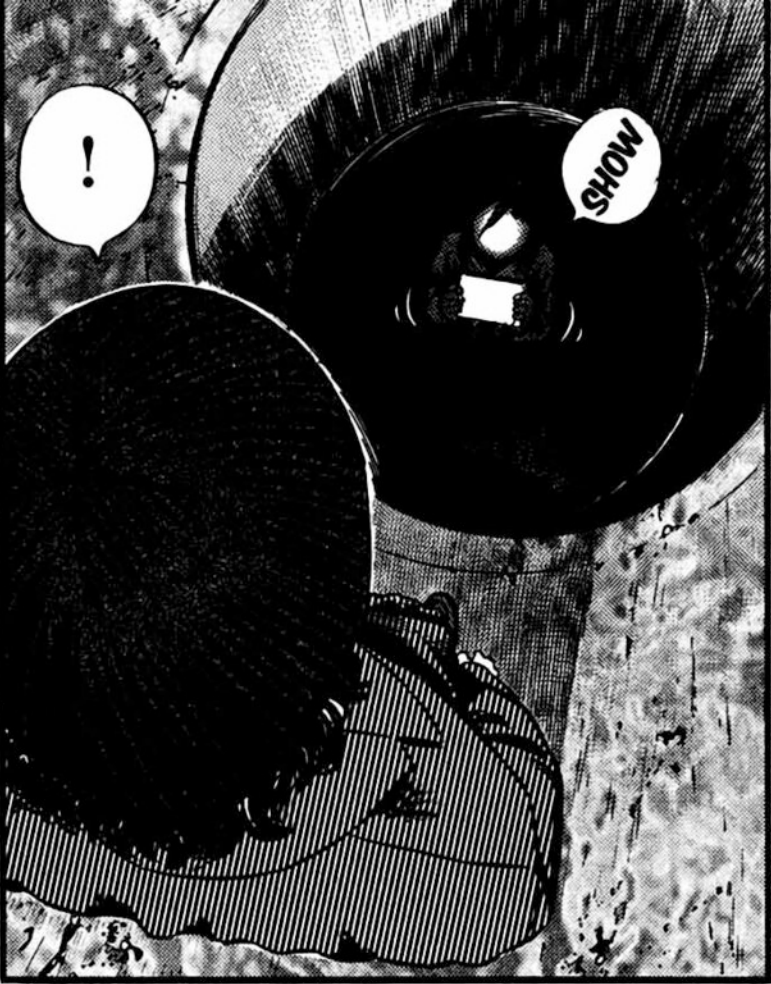


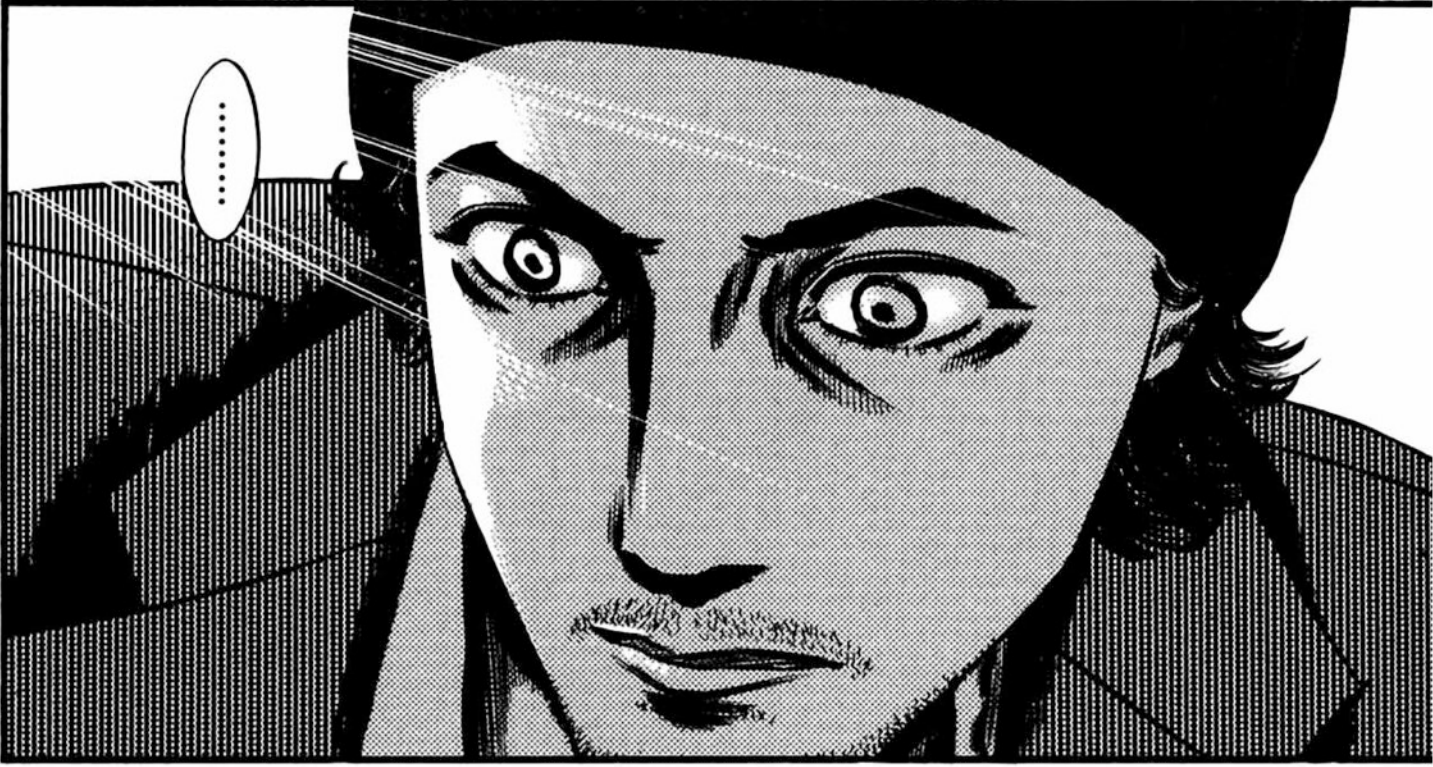
NANA KO?



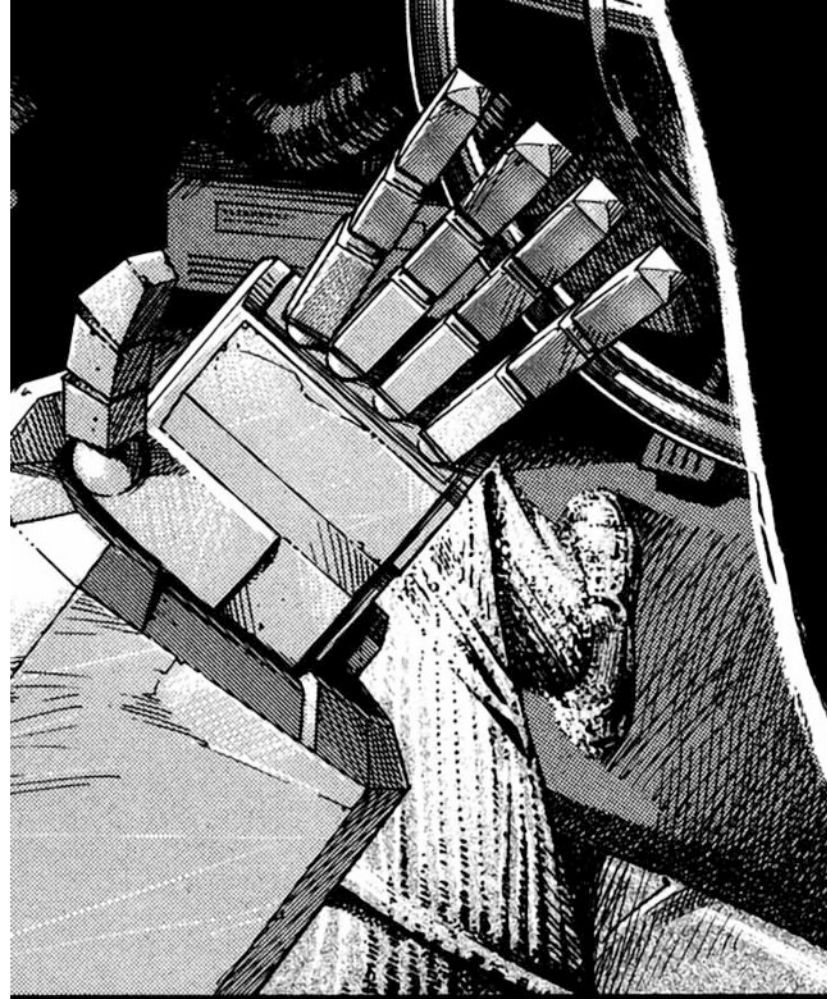


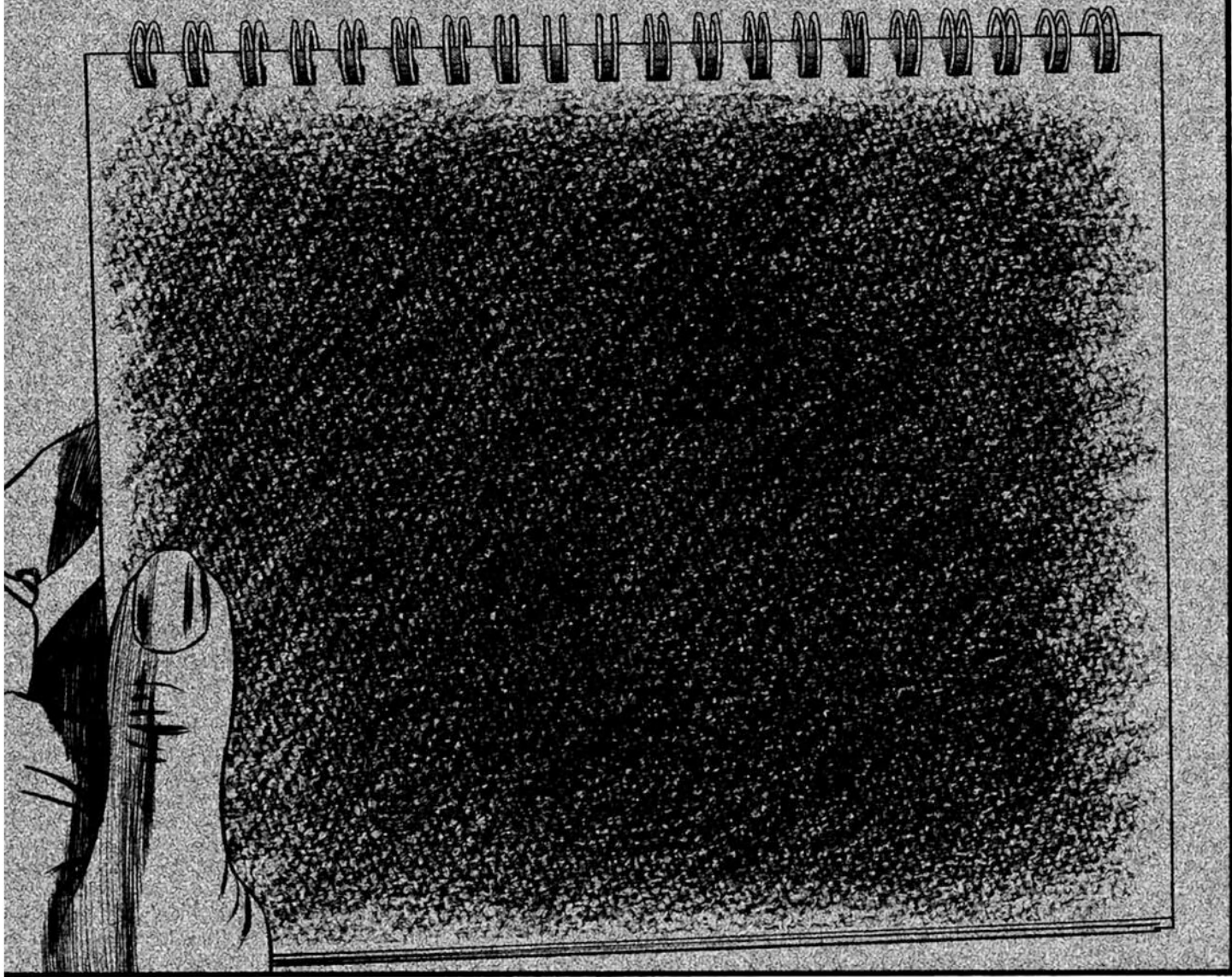








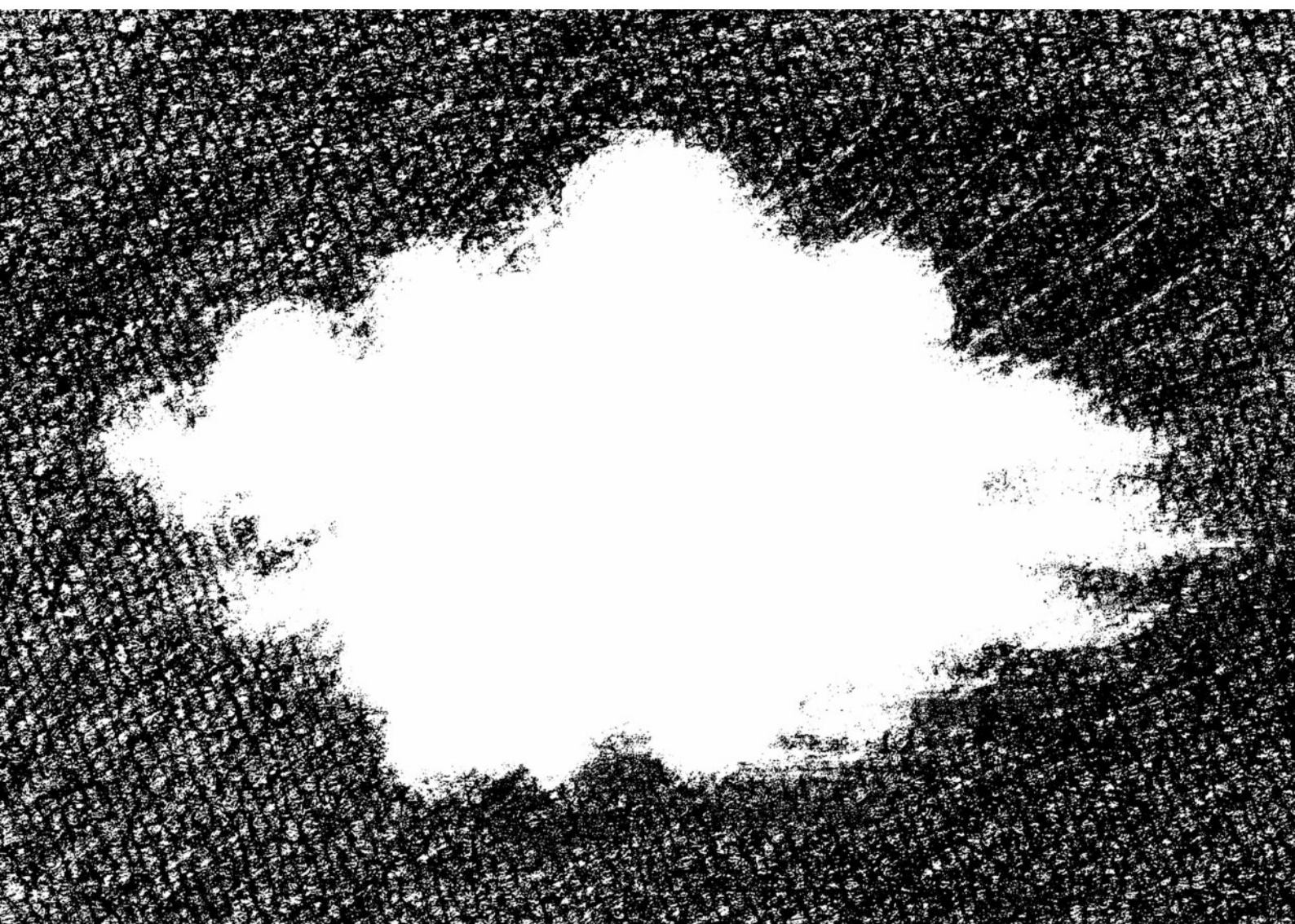




73



BLOW





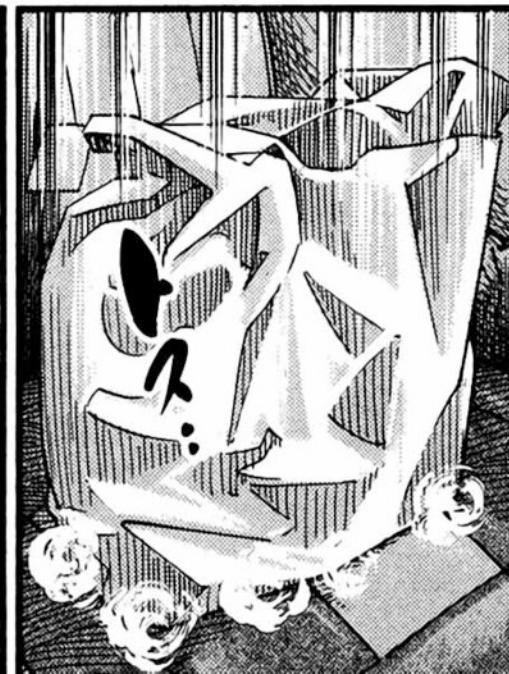
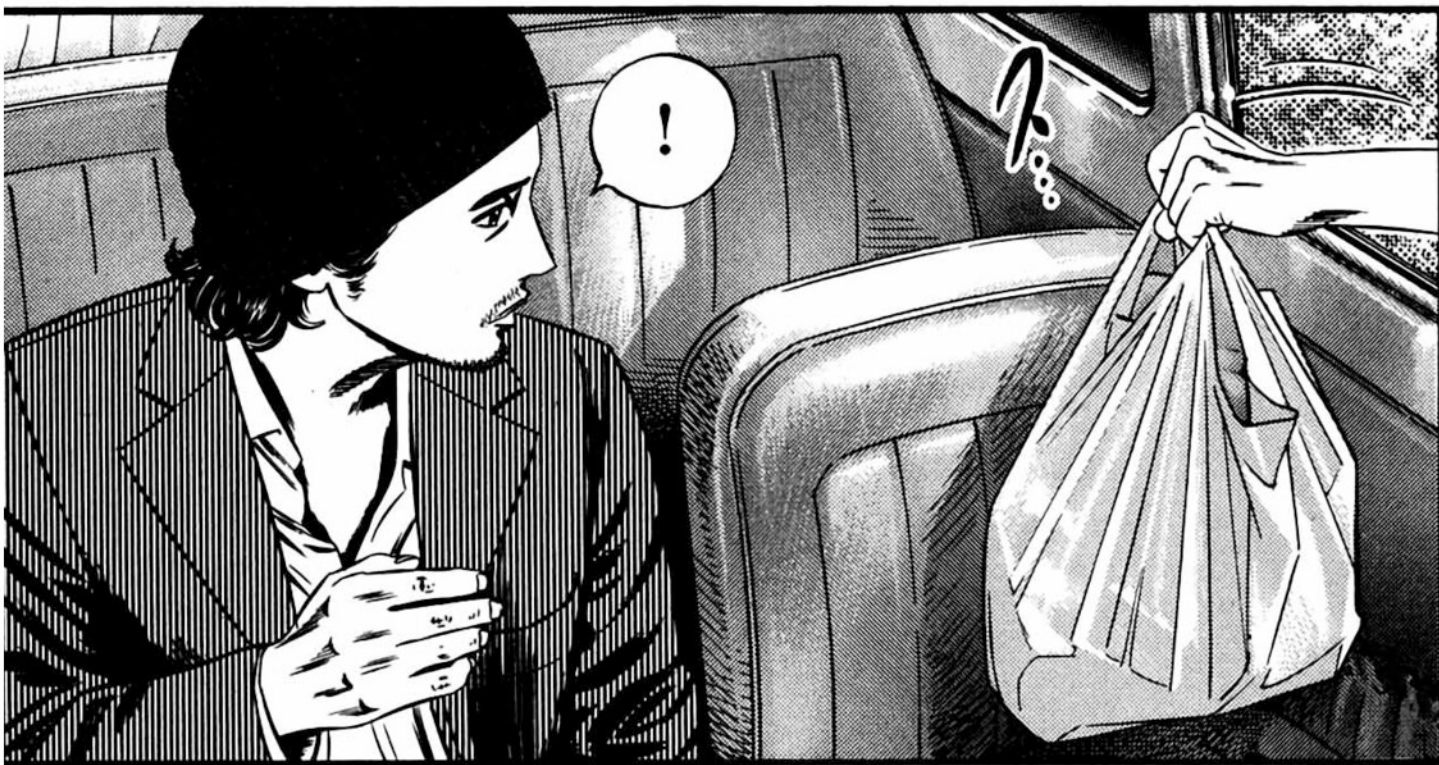
IS THIS
SUPPOSED
TO BE A
CLOUD?



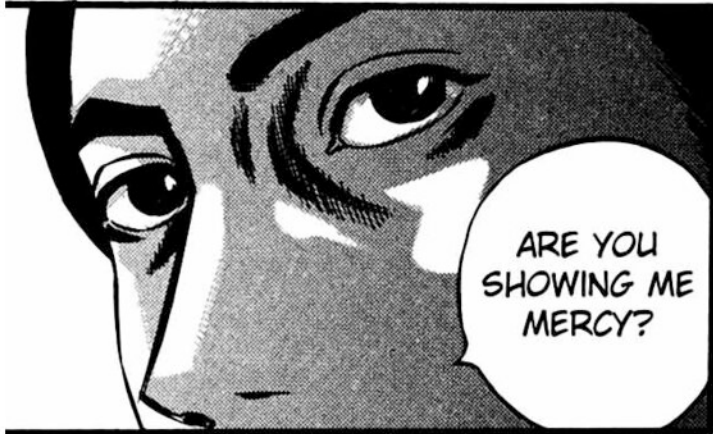
HM...



!!







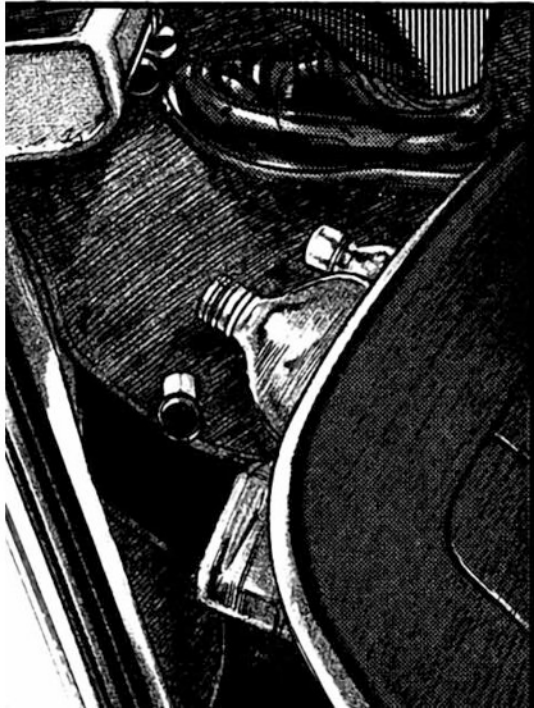
YOU CAN HAVE THEM IF YOU WANT.

I BOUGHT MORE THAN I NEEDED.



IS THERE A REASON FOR ME TO PITY YOU?

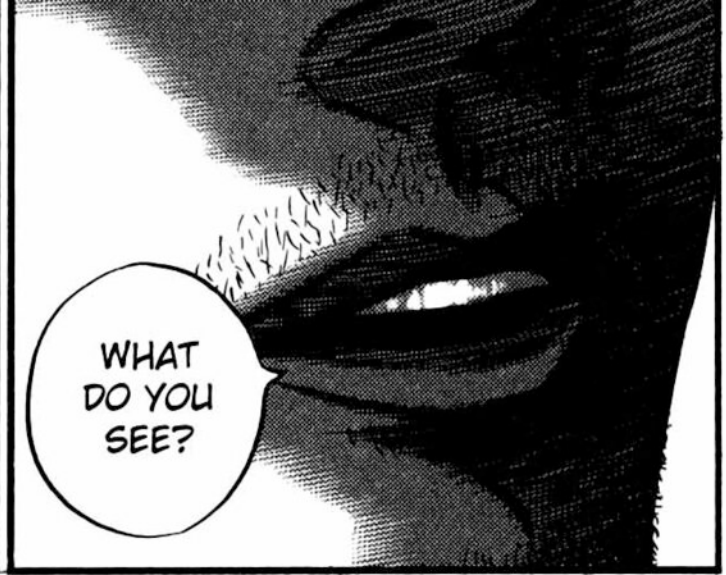
WHAT?







SORRY?



WHAT
DO YOU
SEE?



WHAT DO I
LOOK LIKE?

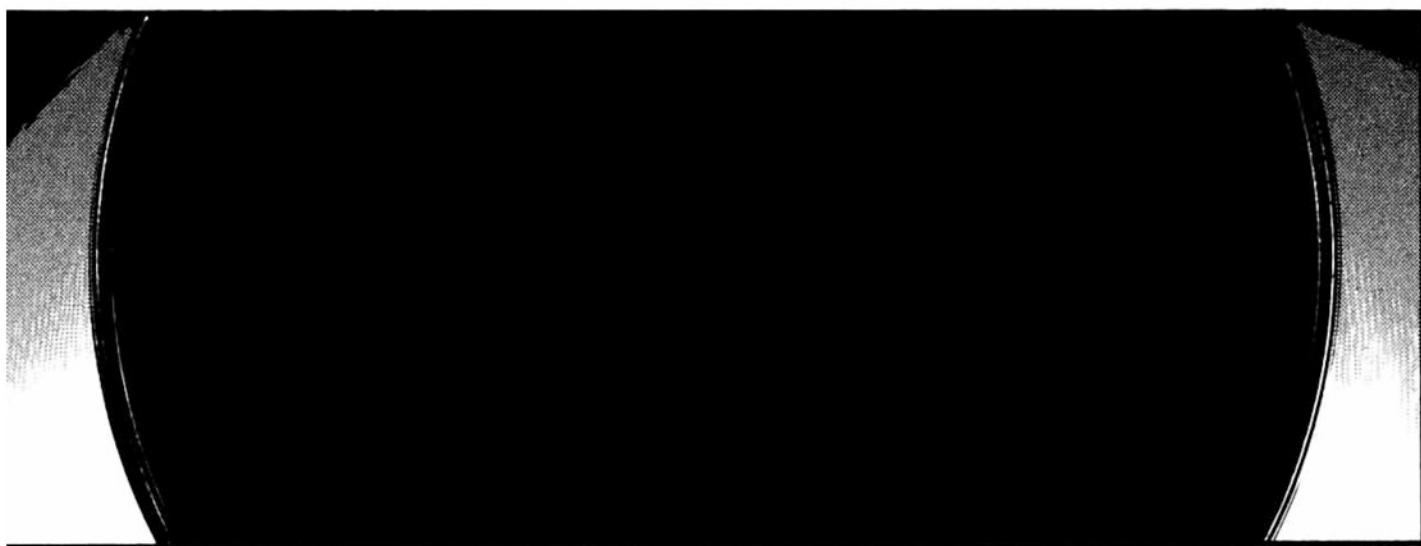
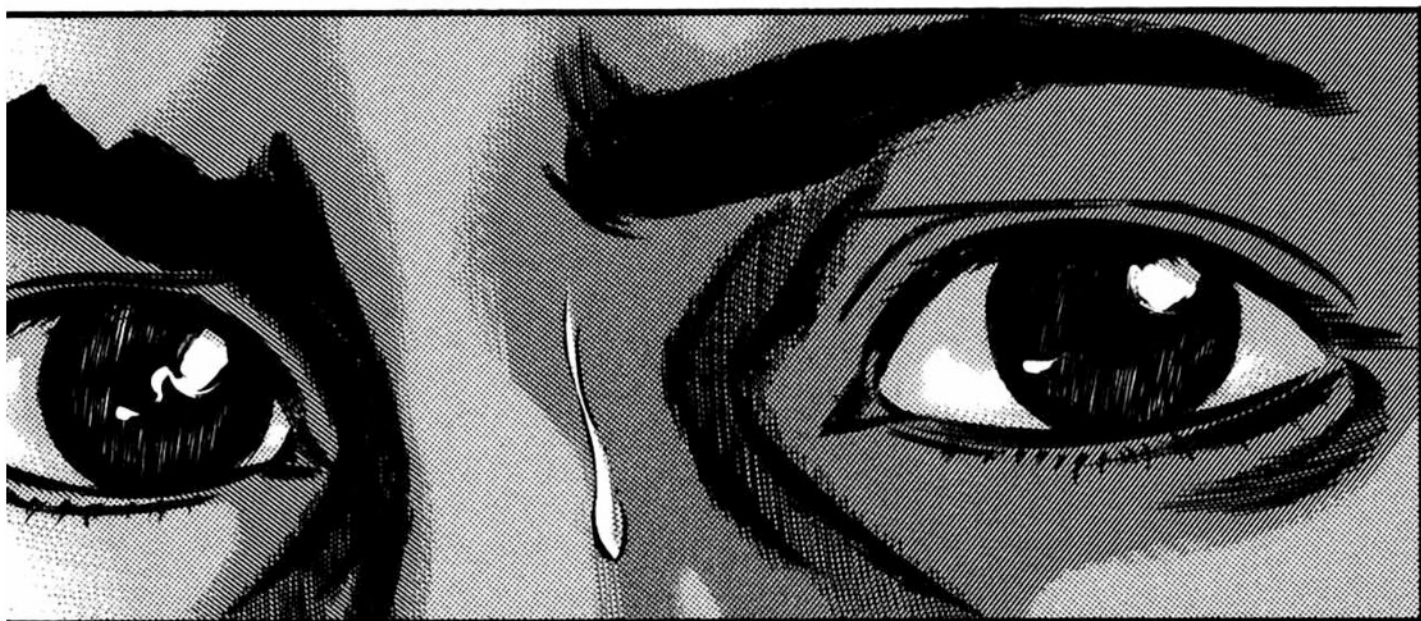


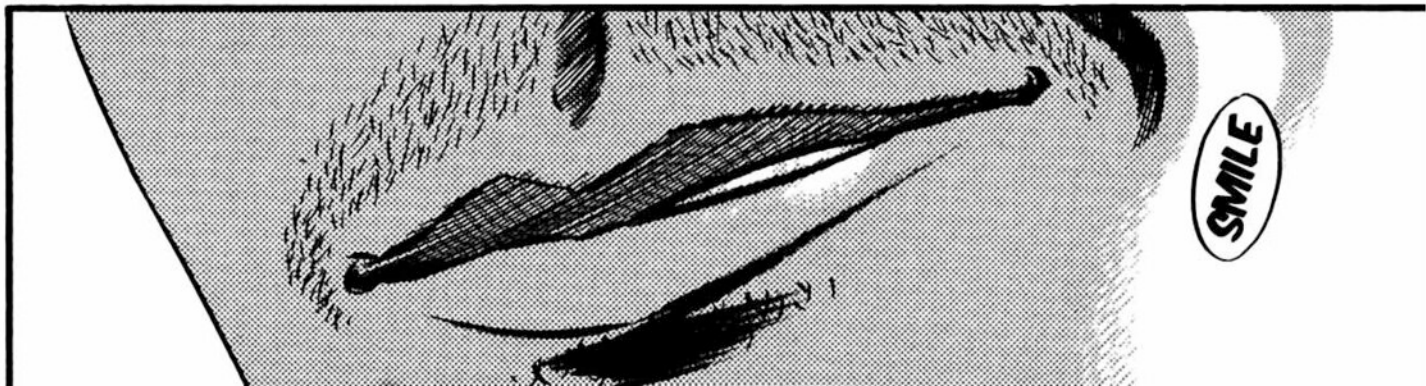


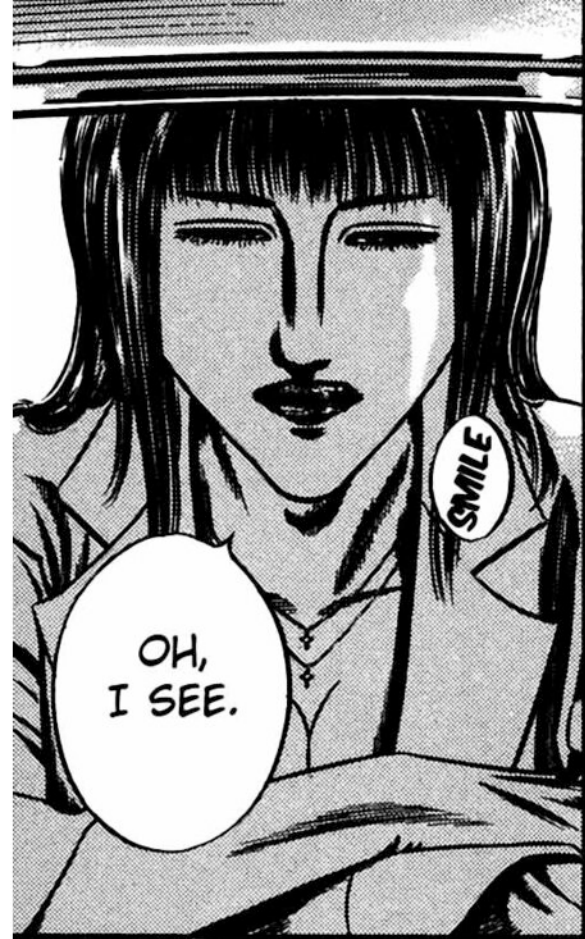
WHAT
DOES
MY

"CURRENT
SELF" LOOK
LIKE?









SMILE

OH,
I SEE.



DON'T BE
SILLY.

JUST
ON A
JOURNEY
TO LOOK
FOR
MYSELF.

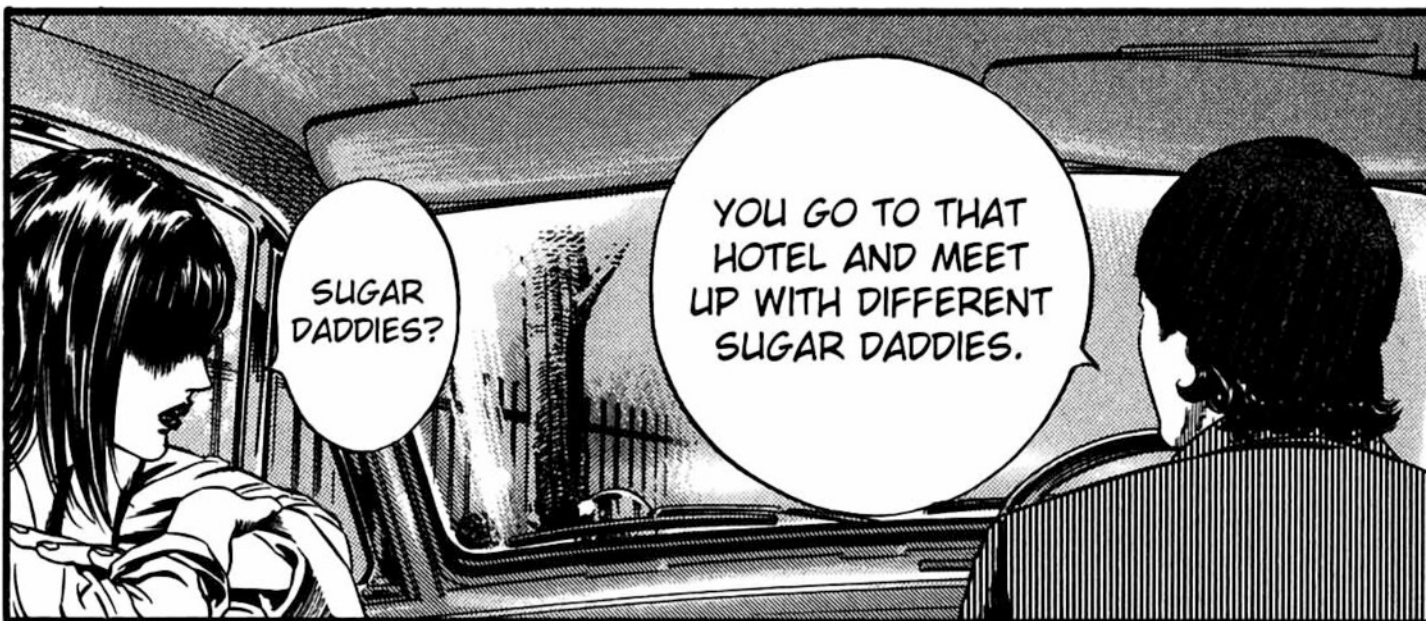


SO...

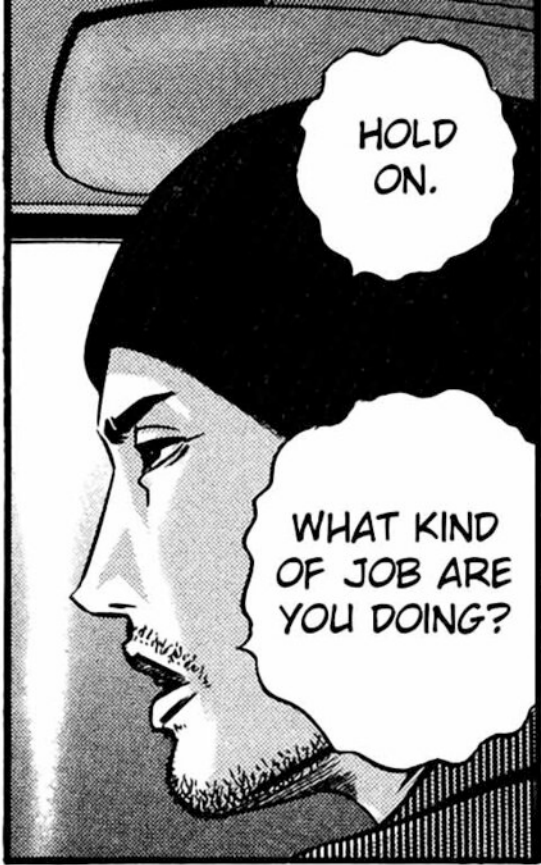


!

ARE YOU
SOMEONE'S
MISTRESS?



DOES YOUR
JOB REQUIRE
KISSING IN THE
ELEVATOR?



HOLD
ON.

WHAT KIND
OF JOB ARE
YOU DOING?



KISSING?



ARE YOU
SURE YOU
DIDN'T
MISTAKE
ME FOR
SOMEONE
ELSE?

WHO
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?



IS FRENCH
KISSING PART
OF YOUR JOB?



CAN'T YOU
LIE BETTER
THAN THAT?

HEY...



MAYBE YOU SAW MY SISTER.

?



!!



WE'RE TWINS. I'M THE YOUNGER ONE.

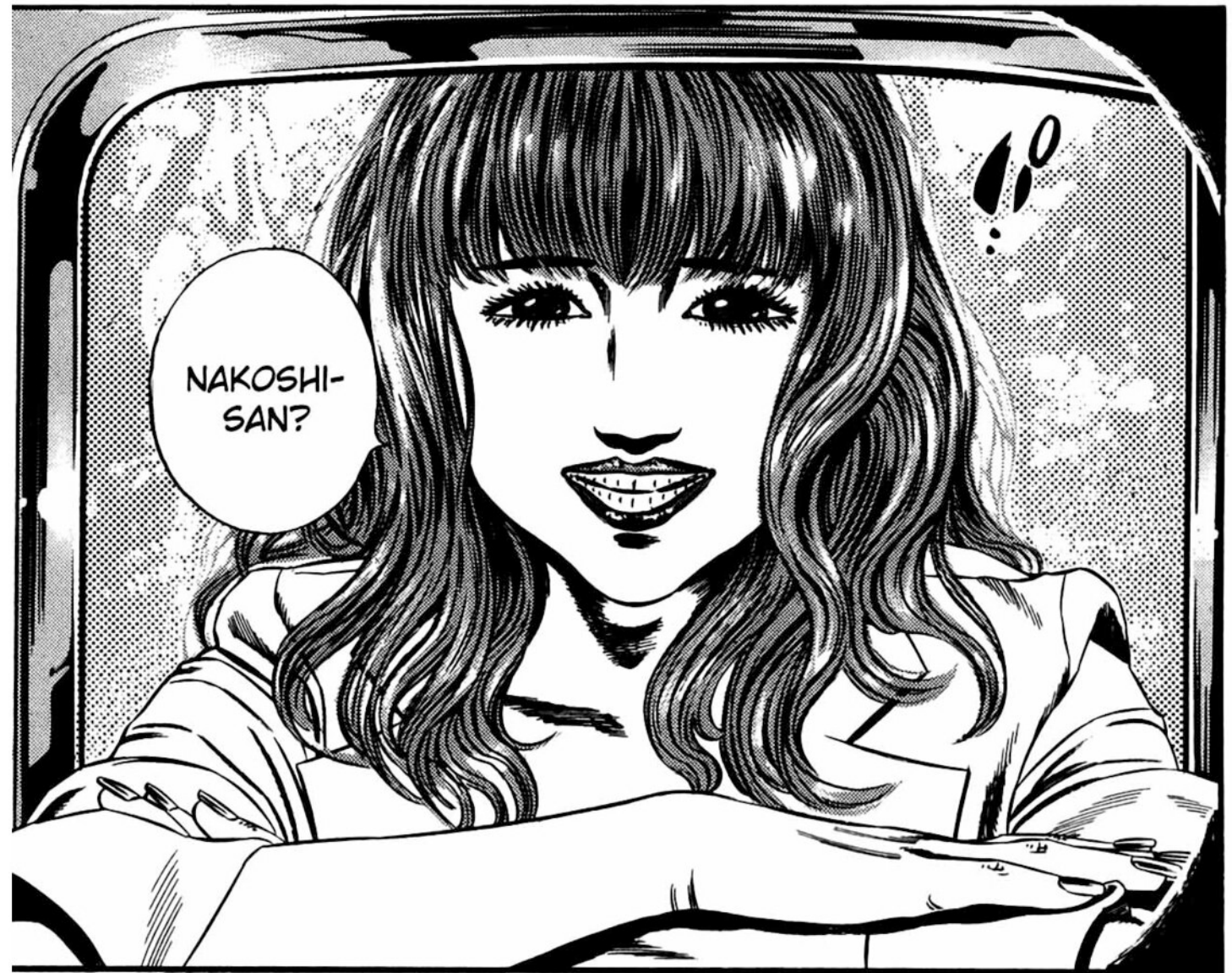
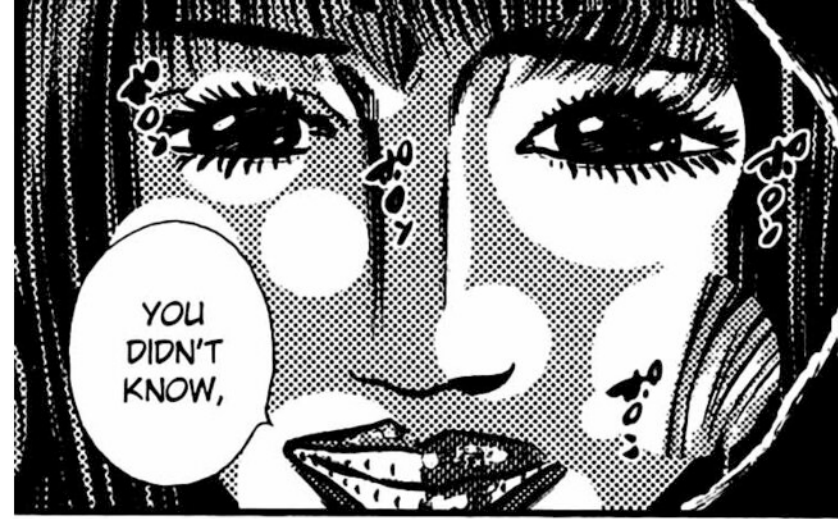


GLARE

NO...

I'M NOT BUYING IT...









DID YOUR
OLDER
SISTER...



THEN...



ALSO
UNDERGO
PLASTIC
SURGERY?



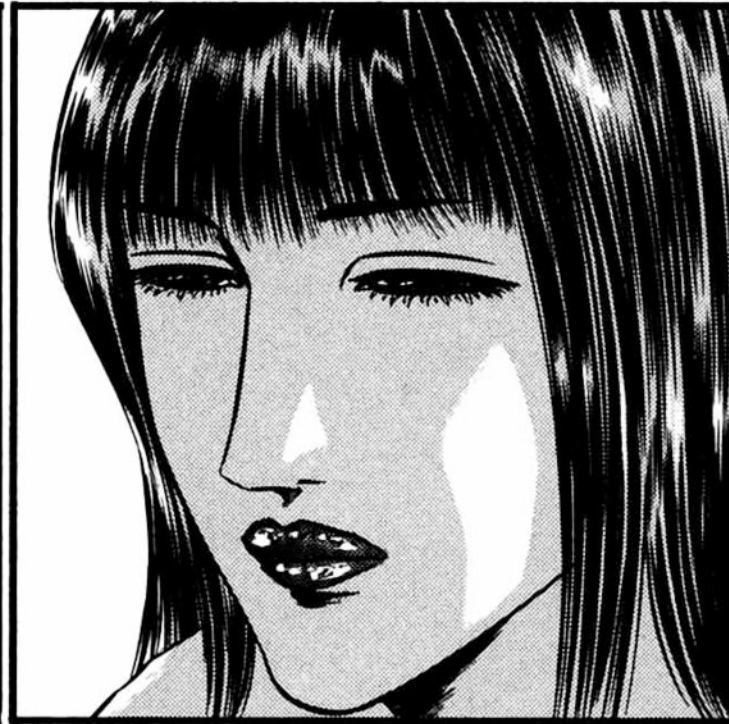
A PLASTIC
SURGERY

IS A
PLASTIC
SURGERY.



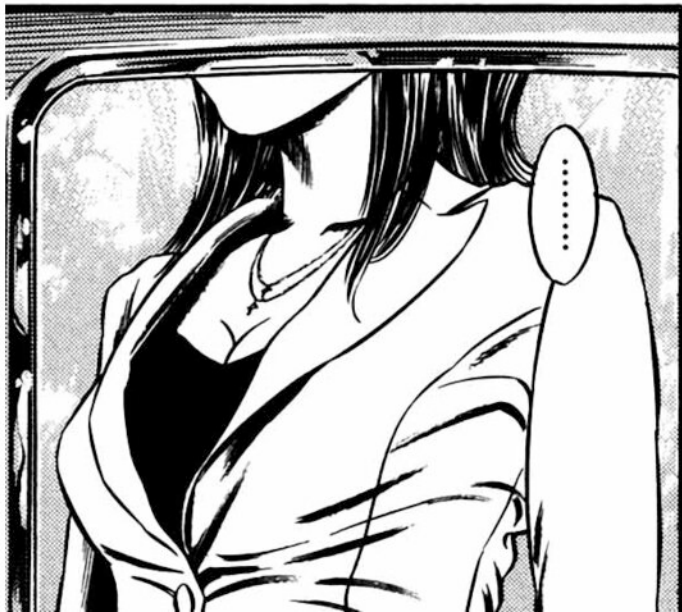
BY PLASTIC
SURGERY?

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN



92







I'M GOOD AT DRAWING.

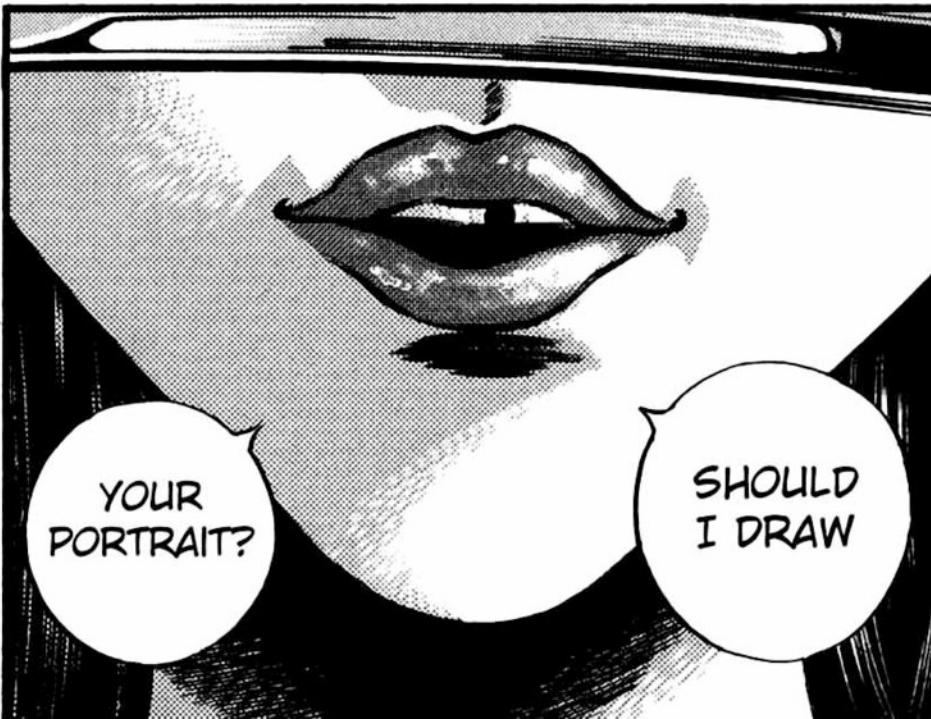
YES, I AM.



FROM SCENERIES TO PEOPLE, FROM SIMPLE SKETCHES TO OIL PAINTINGS, I DRAW PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING.



WHAT KIND OF PICTURES DO YOU DRAW?

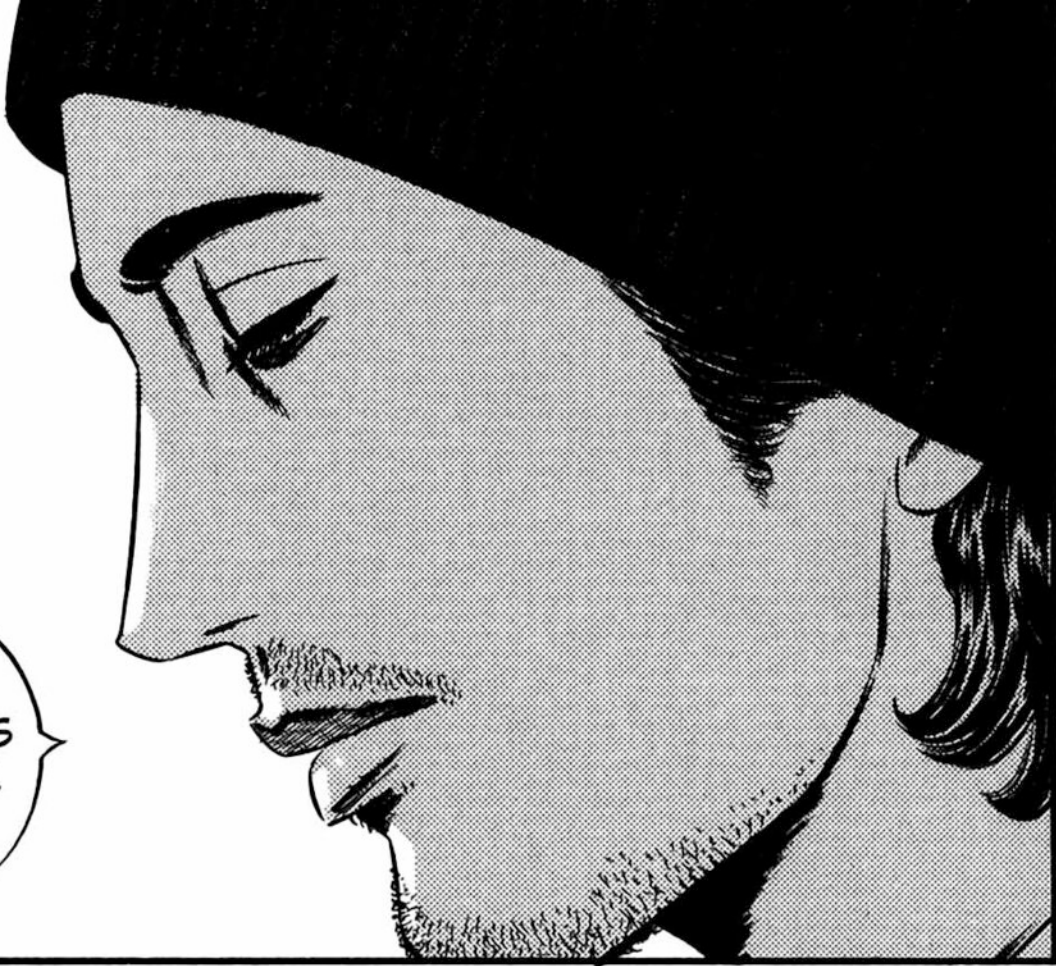


YOUR PORTRAIT?

SHOULD I DRAW

HMPH.

I'LL PASS ON THAT.

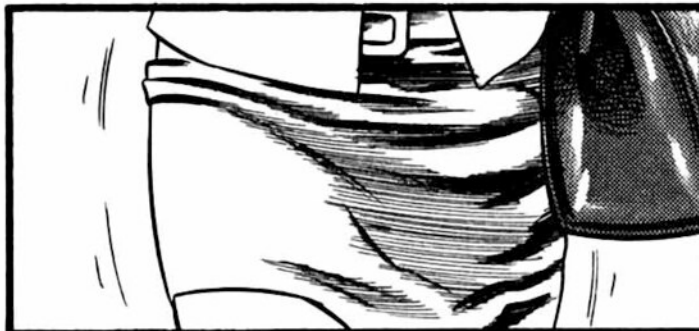


ARE YOU TAKING YOUR MEDICINE? NAKOSHI-SAN!



BRAKE

!





WOMAN
COME
HERE?

WHY
DID THAT
EX-UGLY



!



ISN'T
MY EX.

SHE...



...?
?



NANA
KO
WO
ULD
NE
VER
LIE.

SHE ISN'T
THAT
KIND
OF
WOMAN.



98





IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO EAT THEM ALL.

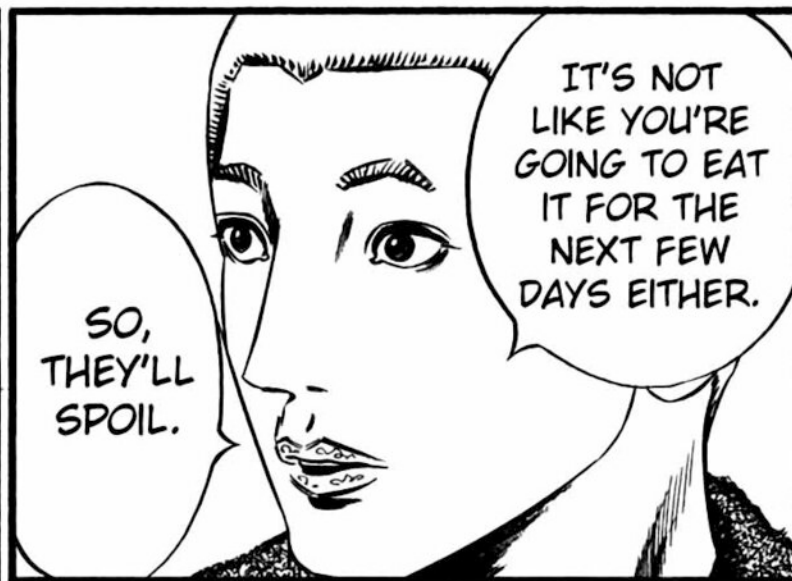
YEAH.



SO?

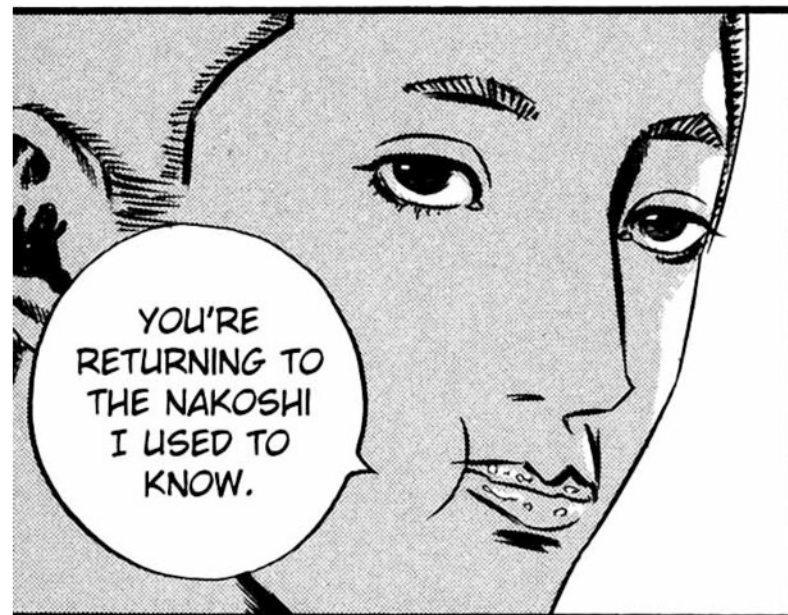


I KNOW THAT.



SO, THEY'LL SPOIL.

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO EAT IT FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS EITHER.



YOU'RE RETURNING TO THE NAKOSHI I USED TO KNOW.

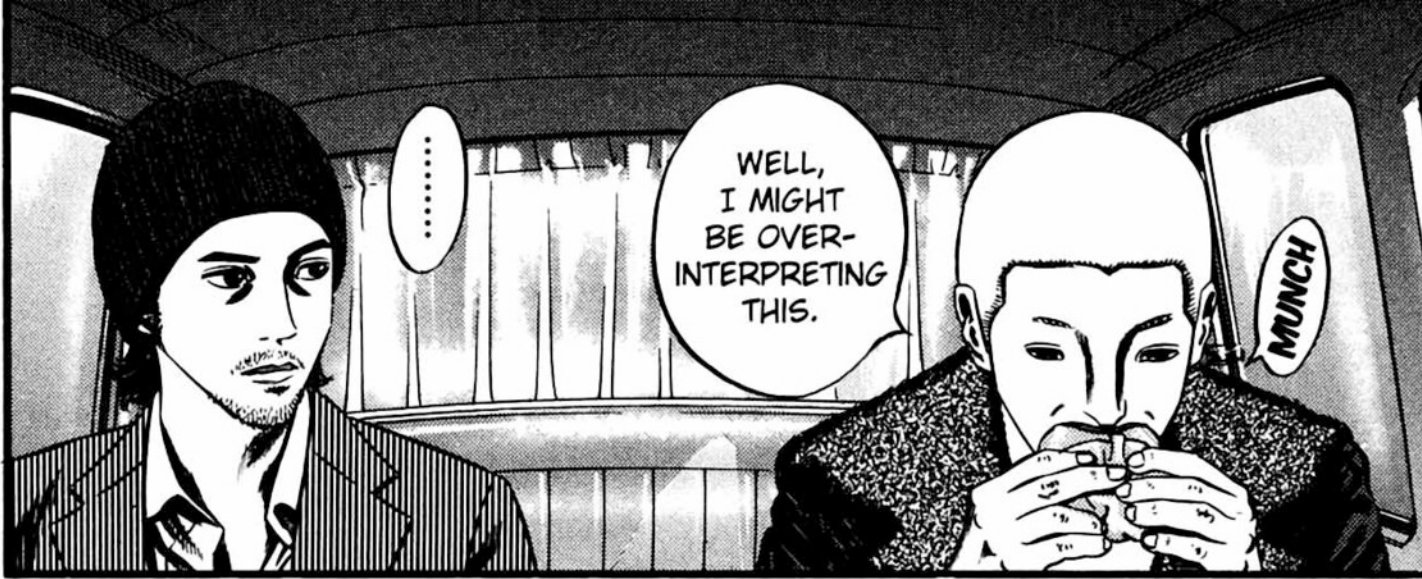


YOU'RE BEING STUBBORN WITH THESE CODE NUMBERS THAT MAKE NO SENSE.

?



!



.....

WELL,
I MIGHT
BE OVER-
INTERPRETING
THIS.

MUNCH



!

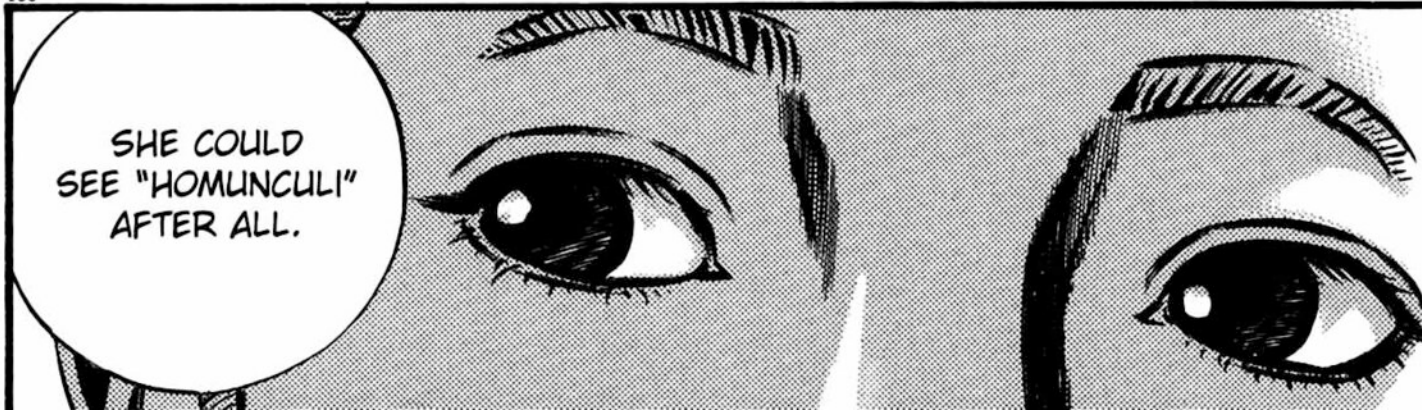


YOUR
EX...

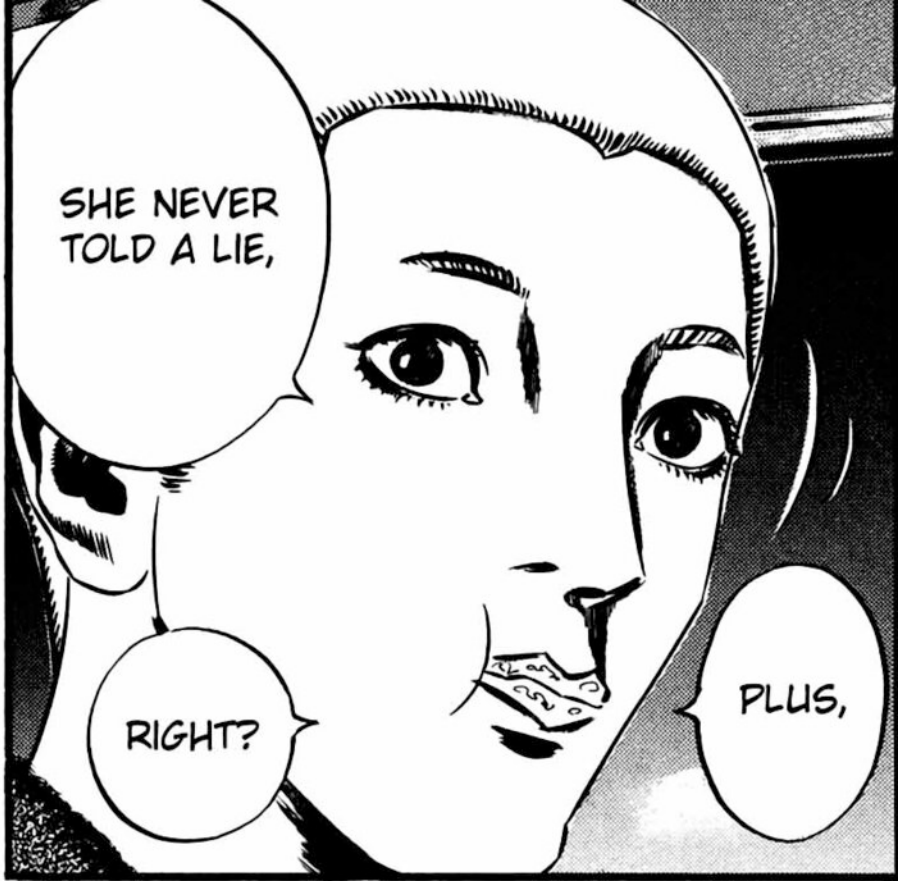


.....

COULD SEE
THROUGH YOU,
RIGHT?



SHE COULD
SEE "HOMUNCULI"
AFTER ALL.



SHE NEVER
TOLD A LIE,

RIGHT?

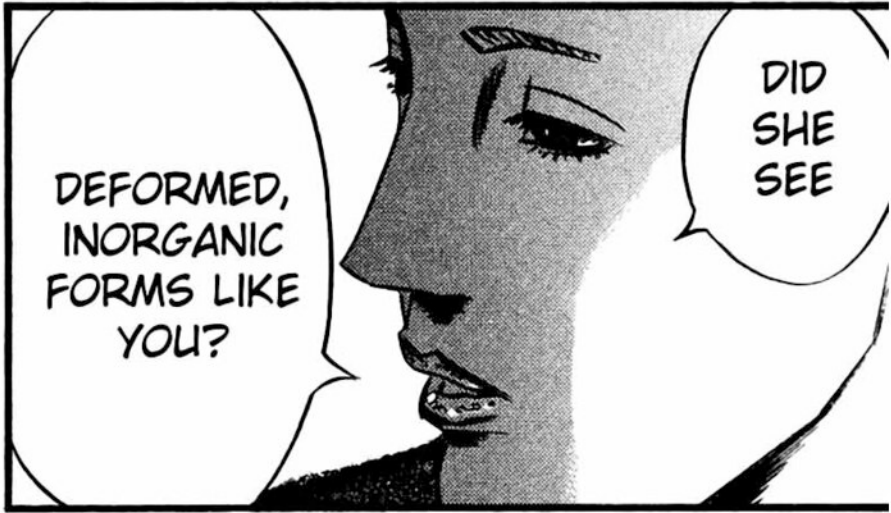
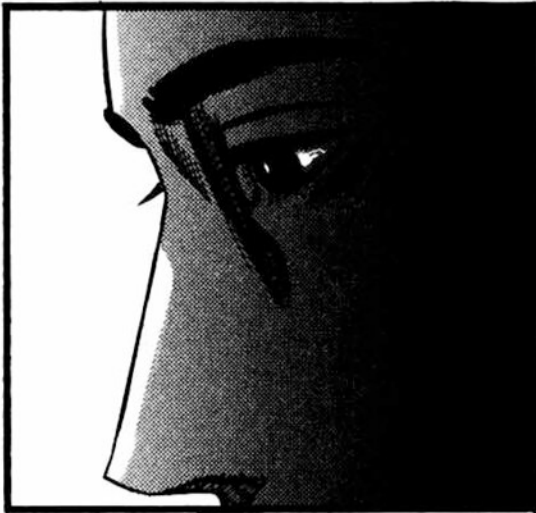
PLUS,



SO, IN WHAT
WAY DID SHE SEE
HOMUNCULLUS?



IN WHAT WAY DID SHE SEE DISTORTION AND TRUE NATURES?



DEFORMED, INORGANIC FORMS LIKE YOU?

DID SHE SEE

102

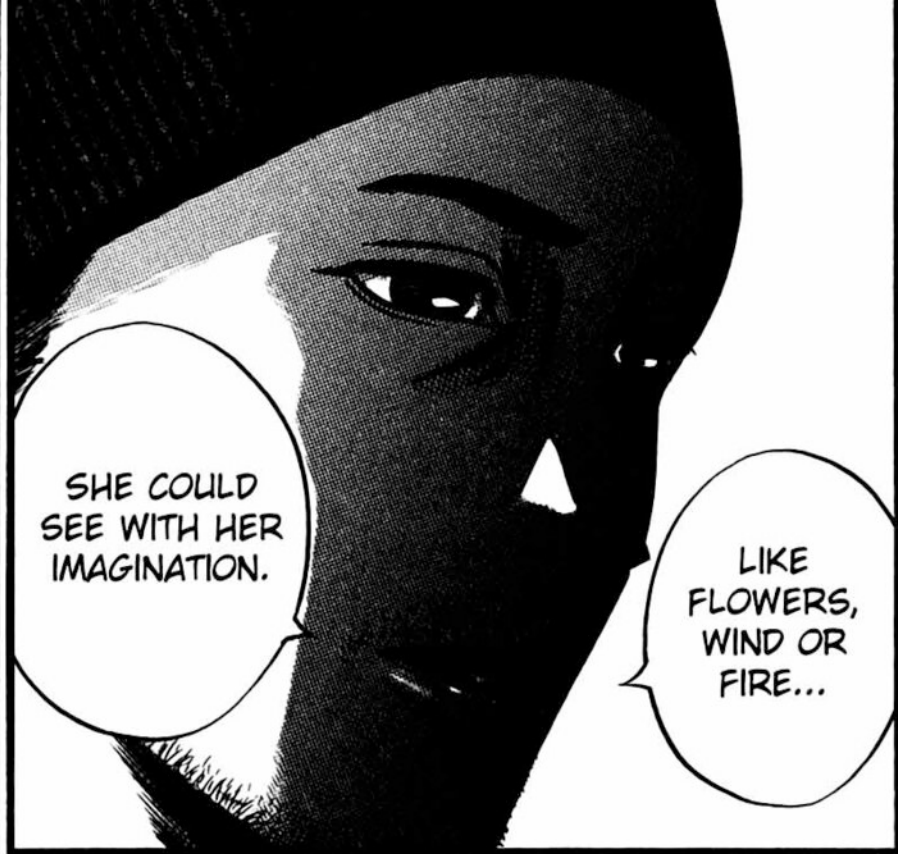


SHE COULD SEE IT AS ORGANIC SUBSTANCES.



!

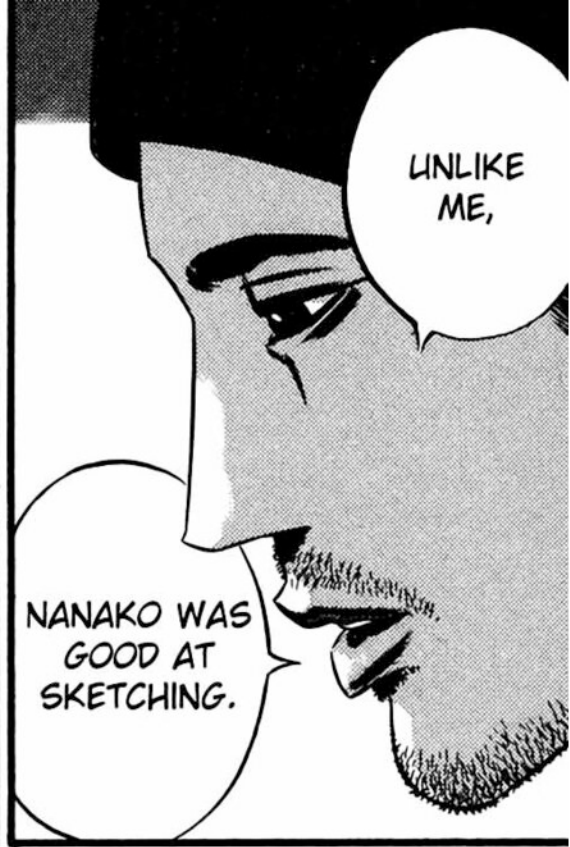
SHE'S A BIT DIFFERENT.





WELL YEAH,
YOU SEEM
TO SUCK AT
DRAWING.

...

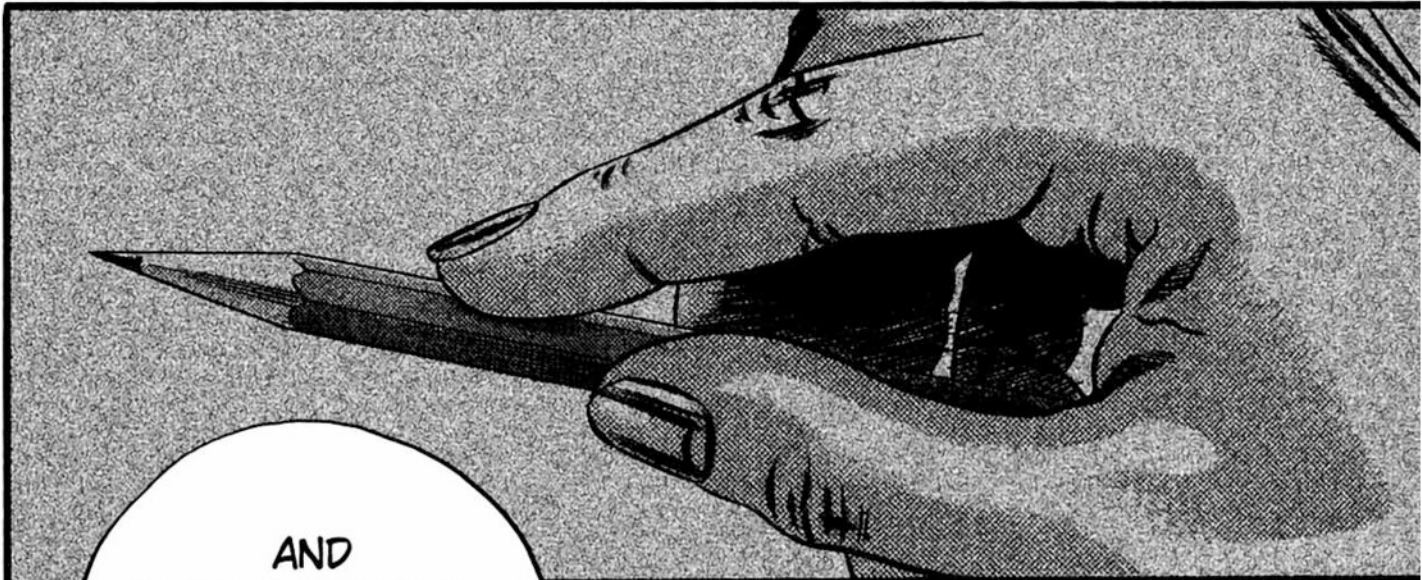


UNLIKE
ME,

NANAHO WAS
GOOD AT
SKETCHING.



SHE'D HOLD
THE PENCIL
LIKE THIS,




AND
WOULD SHOW ME
THE "MINDS" OF
(Homunculus)
THE PEOPLE SHE
SAW THROUGH
SKETCHING.




SHE HAD
A RATHER
AVANT-GARDE
WAY OF
SKETCHING.



FIRST SHE'D FILL
THE ENTIRE PAGE OF
HER SKETCHBOOK
WITH HER PENCIL.



JUST LIKE A FAINT
LIGHT OF A SOUL
TAKING ITS PLACE
IN THE PITCH BLACK
DARKNESS THAT
IS MAN...

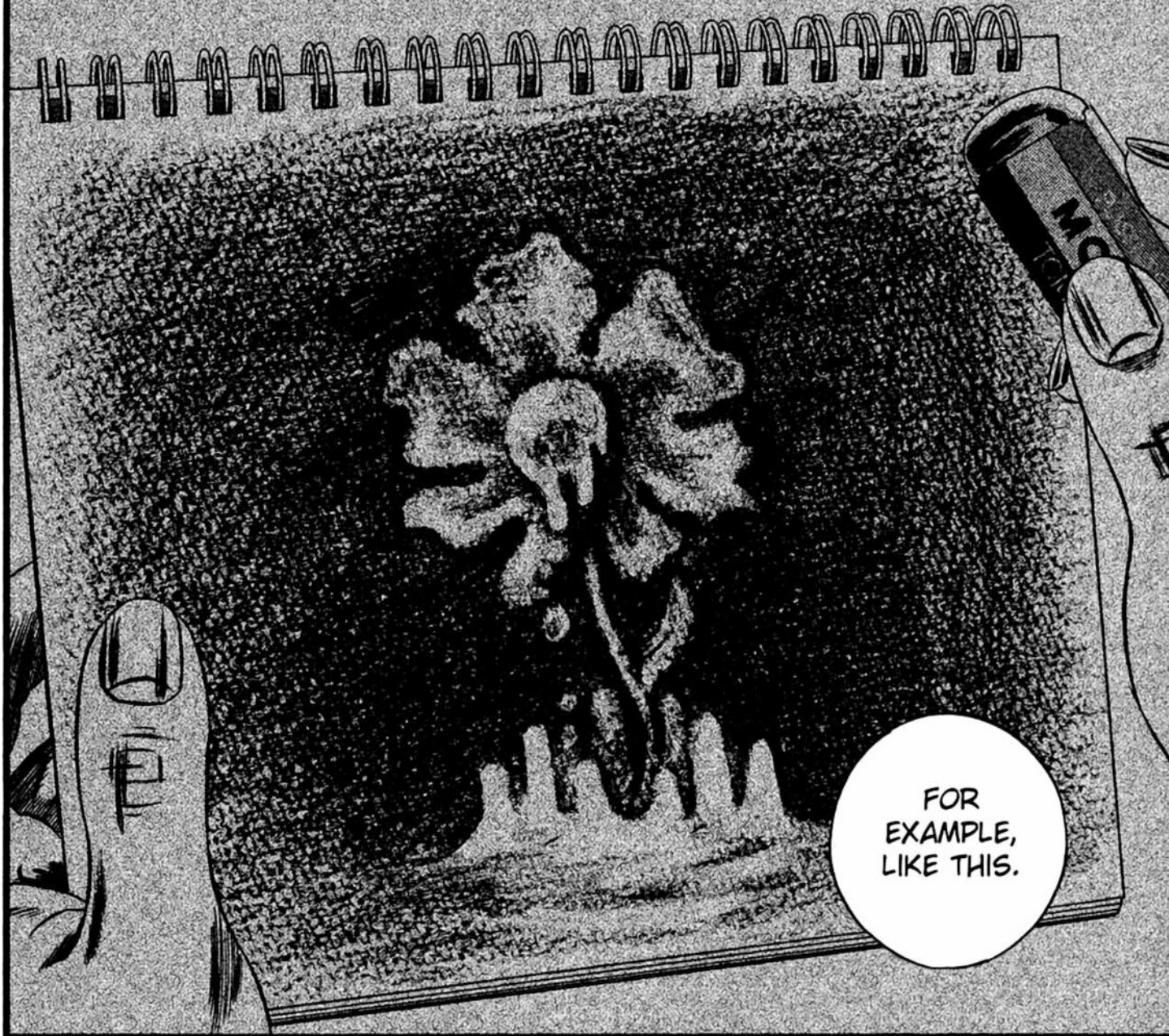


SHE'D SAY IT'S
MORE "HUMAN"
TO WORK WITH
BLACK TO WHITE.



SHE'D USE
AN ERASER
TO EXPRESS
HERSELF...

AND
THEN,



FOR
EXAMPLE,
LIKE THIS.

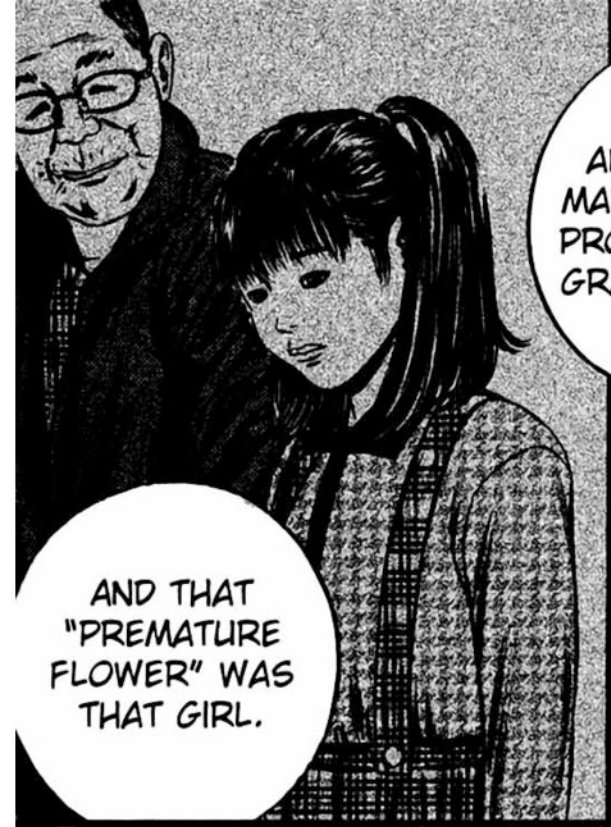


IT WAS STILL
PREMATURE.

WELL,
IT WAS A
FLOWER,
BUT...



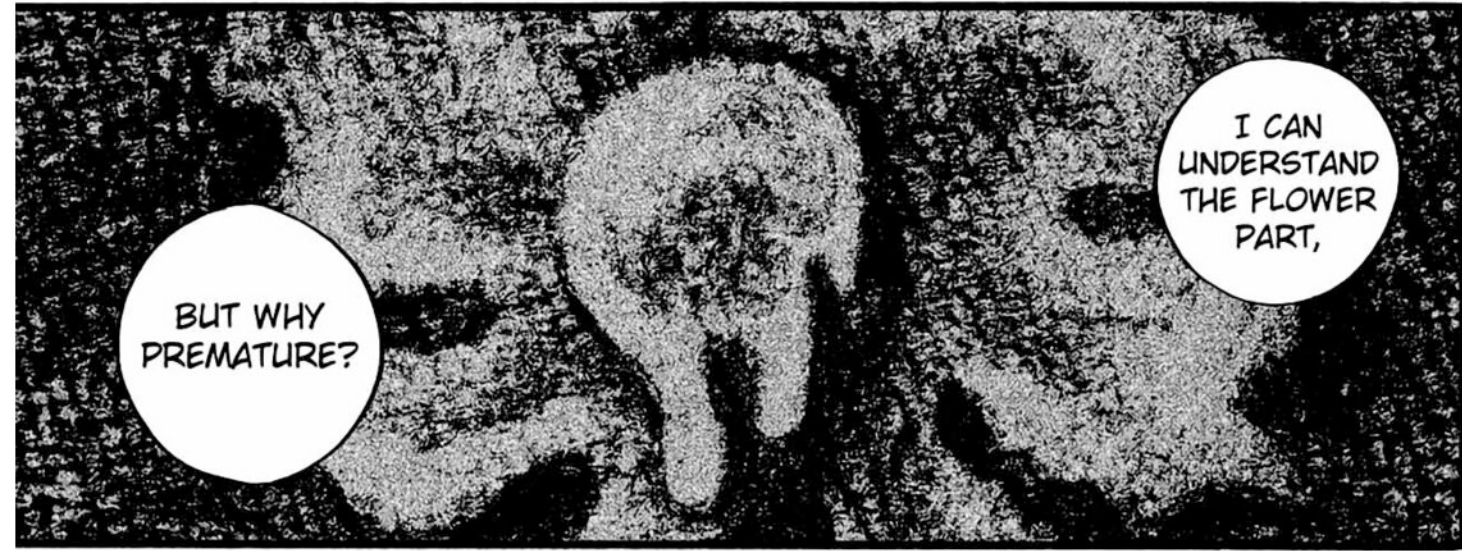
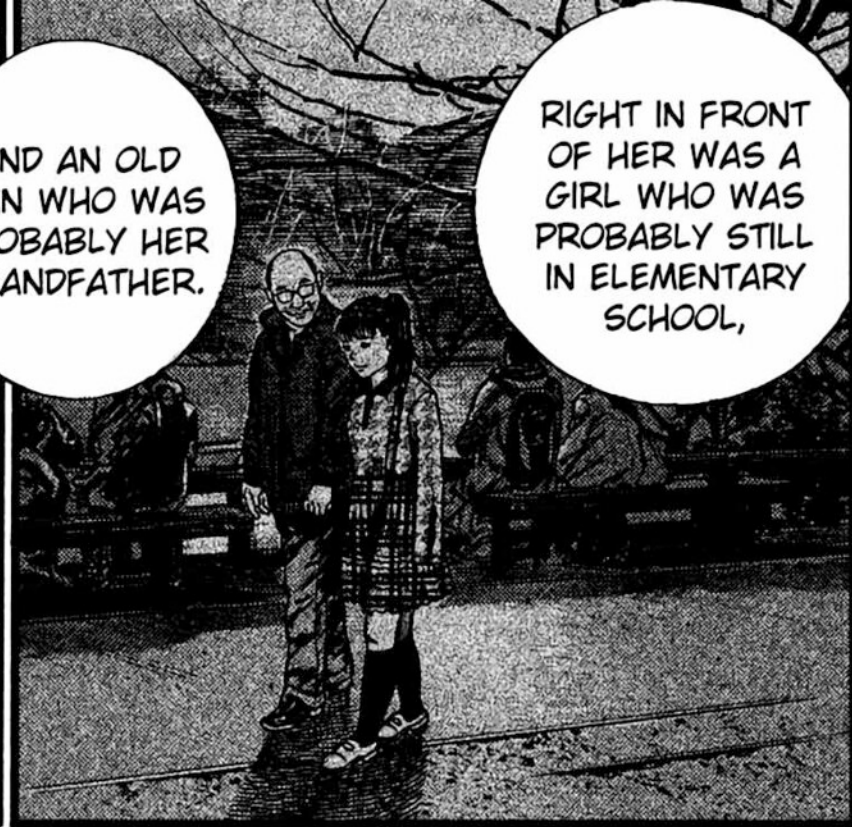
ONE DAY
WHEN WE WERE
AT THE PARK,
SHE DREW
A FLOWER.



AND AN OLD
MAN WHO WAS
PROBABLY HER
GRANDFATHER.

RIGHT IN FRONT
OF HER WAS A
GIRL WHO WAS
PROBABLY STILL
IN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL,

AND THAT
"PREMATURE
FLOWER" WAS
THAT GIRL.



BUT WHY
PREMATURE?

I CAN
UNDERSTAND
THE FLOWER
PART,



HER EYES WERE
LOCKED ON THE
OLD MAN WHO
WAS WALKING
WITH THAT GIRL.

WHEN I
ASKED NANAHO,
SHE QUICKLY
FROWNED.



WHAT!?

HE
DEFLOWERED
HER

THAT OLD
MAN WITH
HER...

AGAINST
HER WILL.

108



I
DOUBT
THAT.

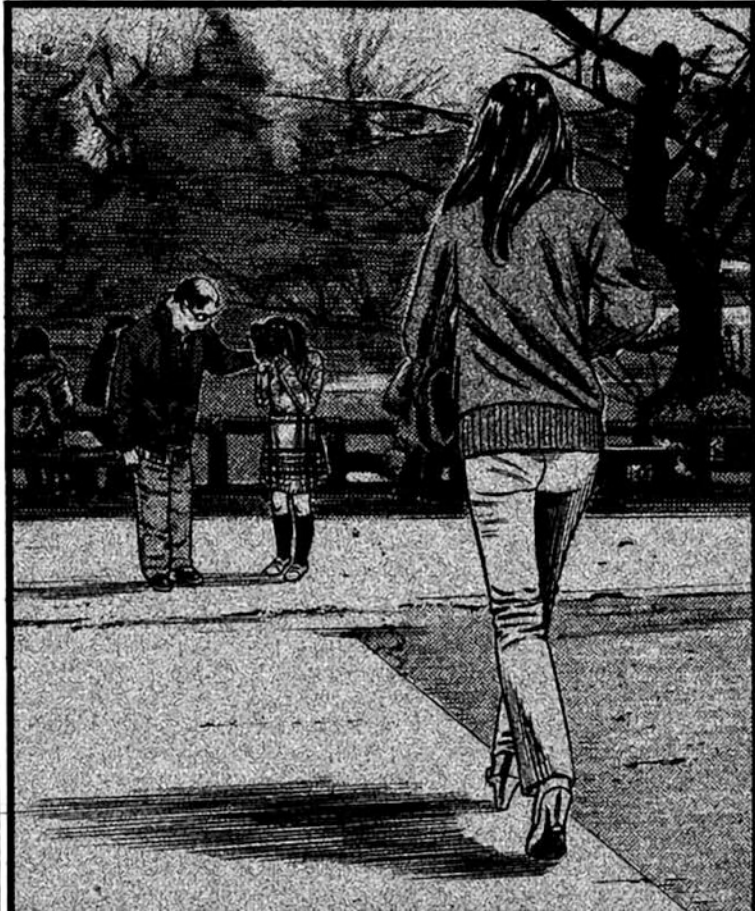
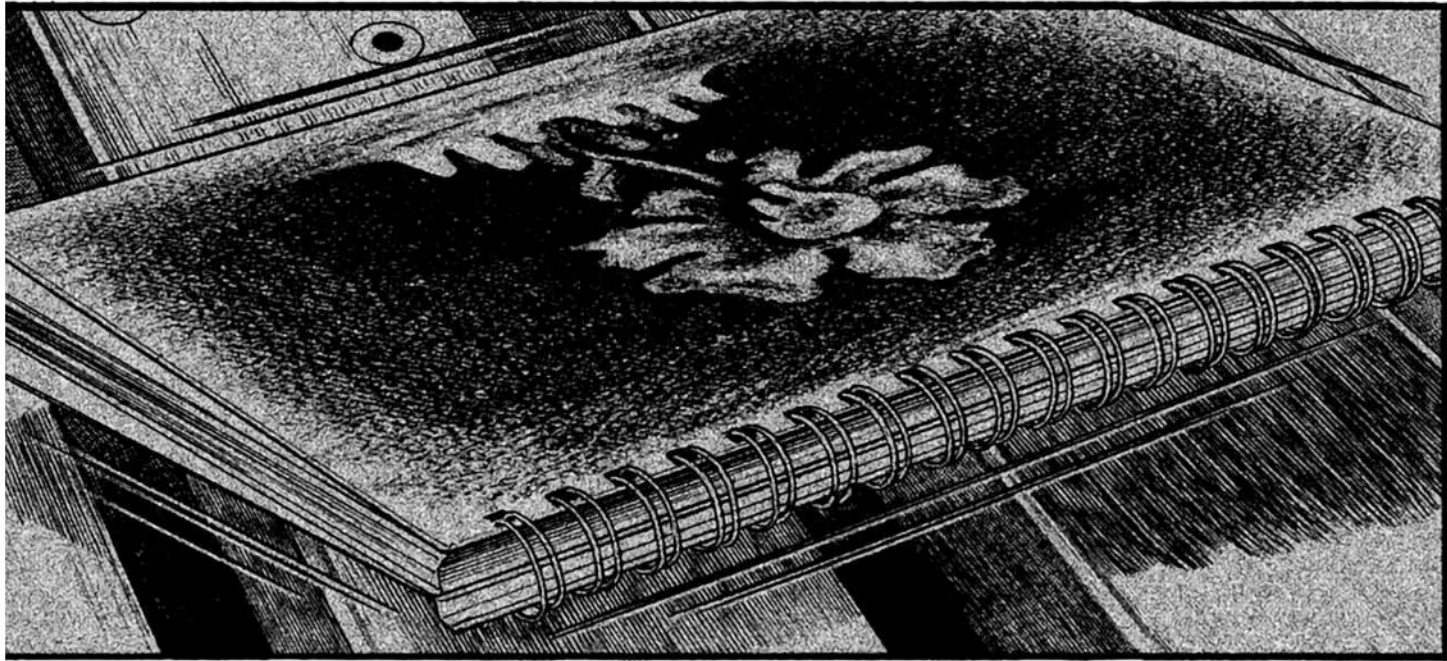


NO
WAY...

WHAT
ARE
YOU...

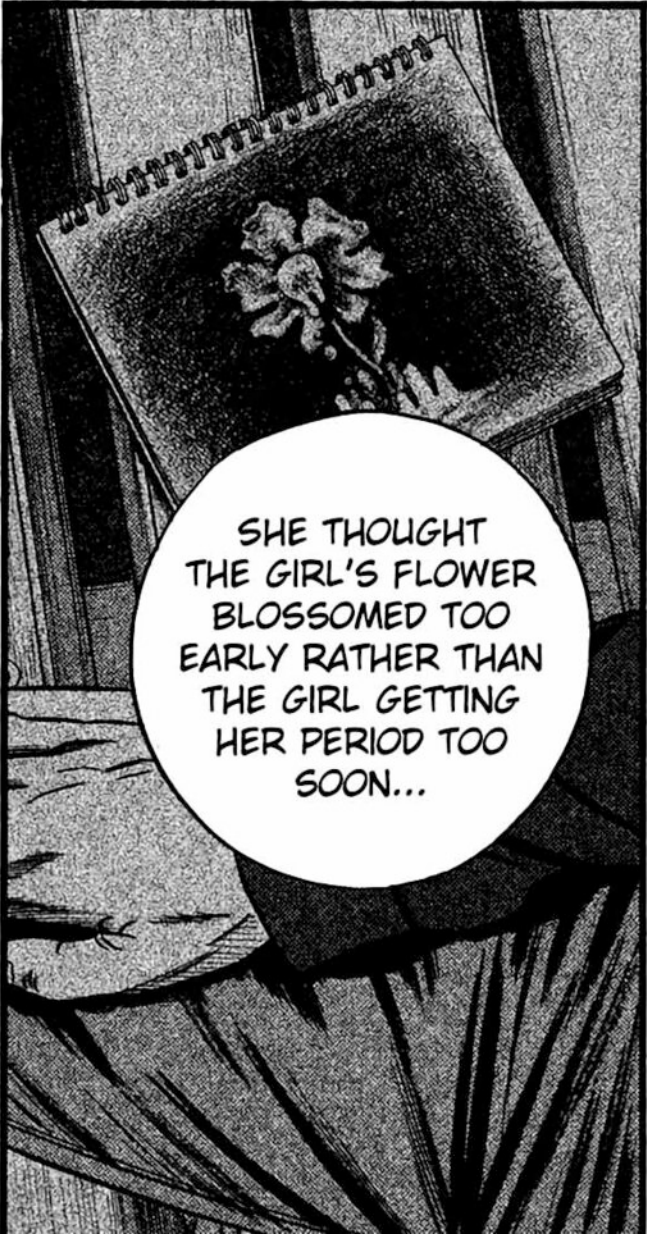


HE'S
A BAD
PERSON.

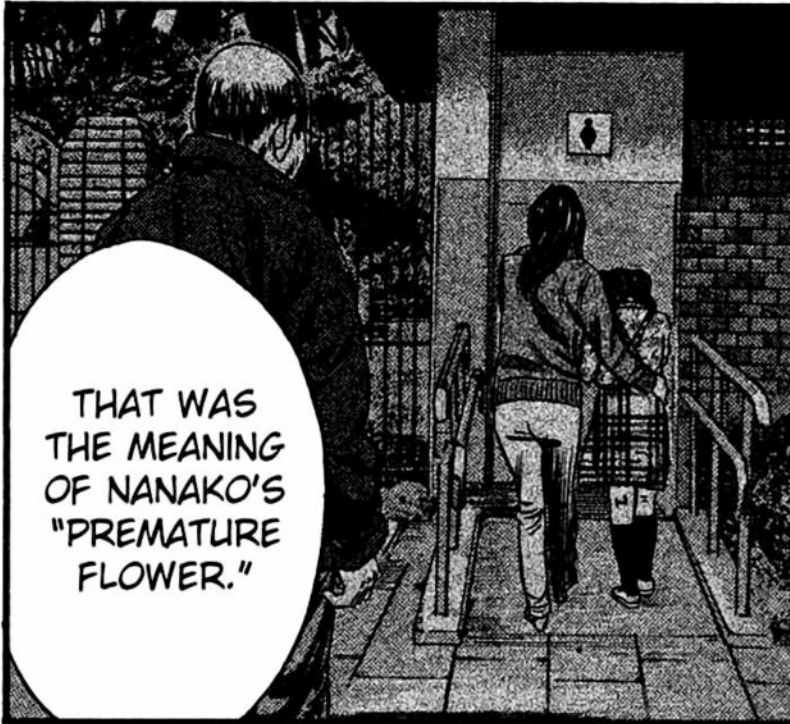




SHE GOT
HER PERIOD
TOO EARLY.



SHE THOUGHT
THE GIRL'S FLOWER
BLOSSOMED TOO
EARLY RATHER THAN
THE GIRL GETTING
HER PERIOD TOO
SOON...



THAT WAS
THE MEANING
OF NANAOKO'S
"PREMATURE
FLOWER."



THE SEXUAL
ABUSE PART
WAS NANAOKO'S
MISINTERPRE-
TATION.

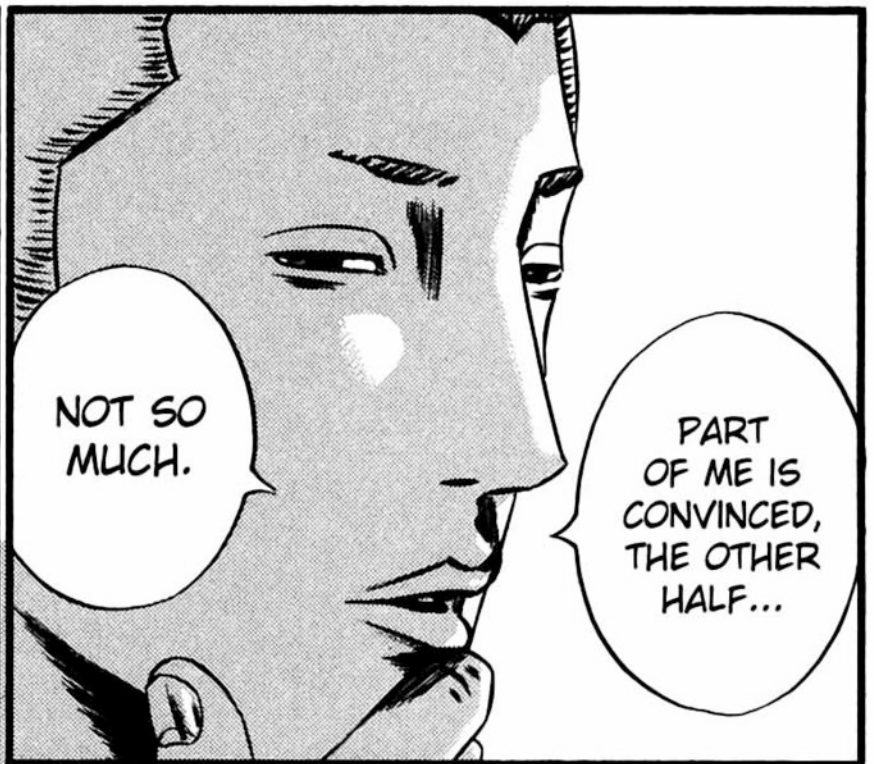


!

HMMM...



THAT'S WHAT
HAPPENED.
NOTHING
MORE TO IT.



NOT SO
MUCH.

PART
OF ME IS
CONVINCED,
THE OTHER
HALF...



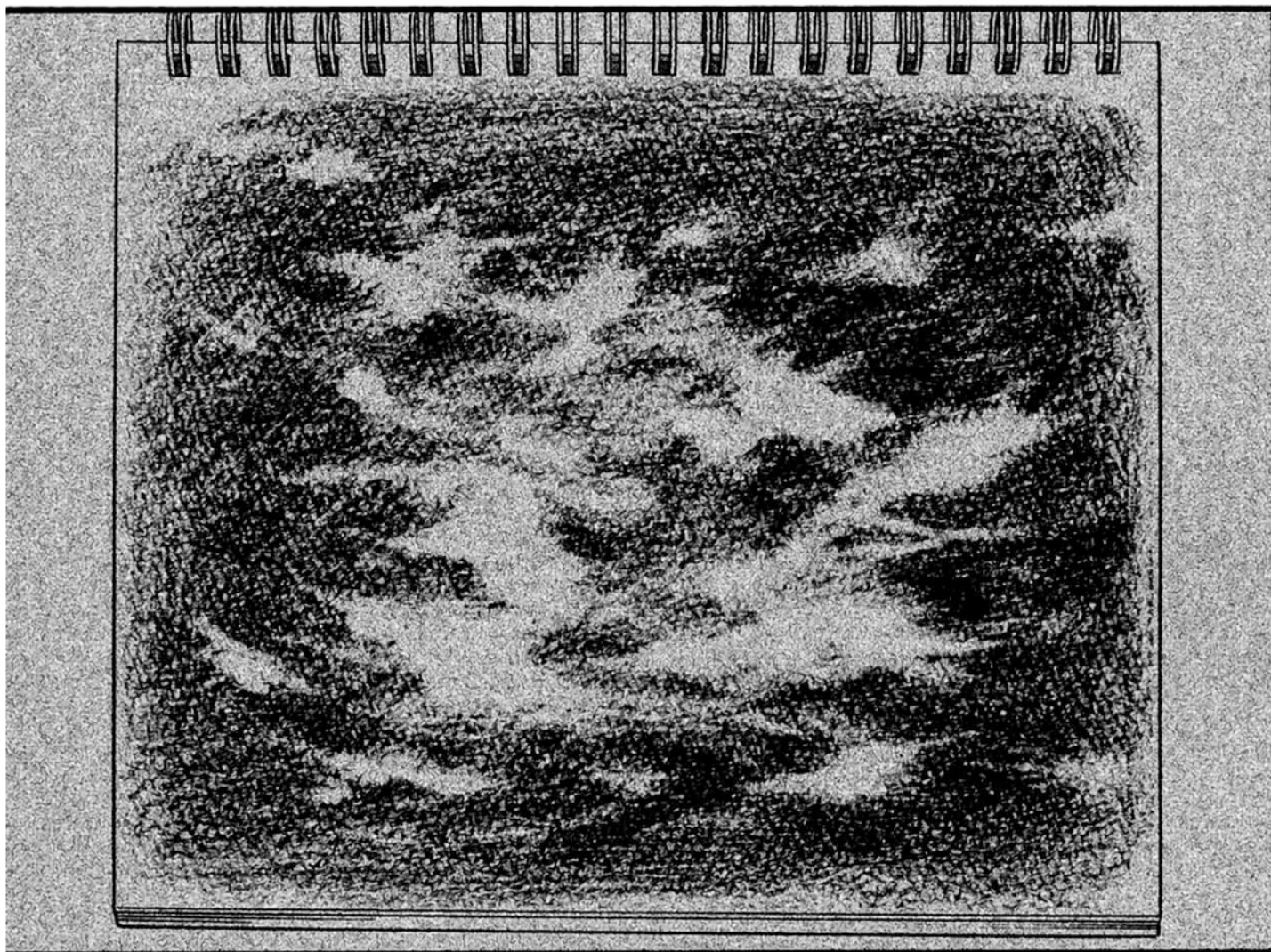
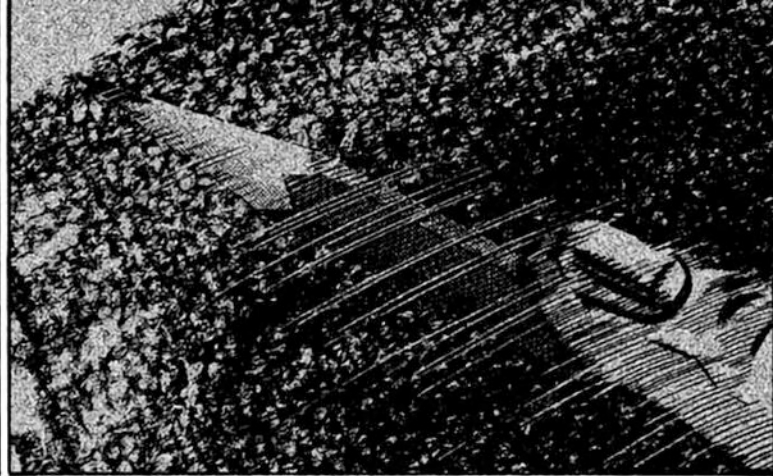
?

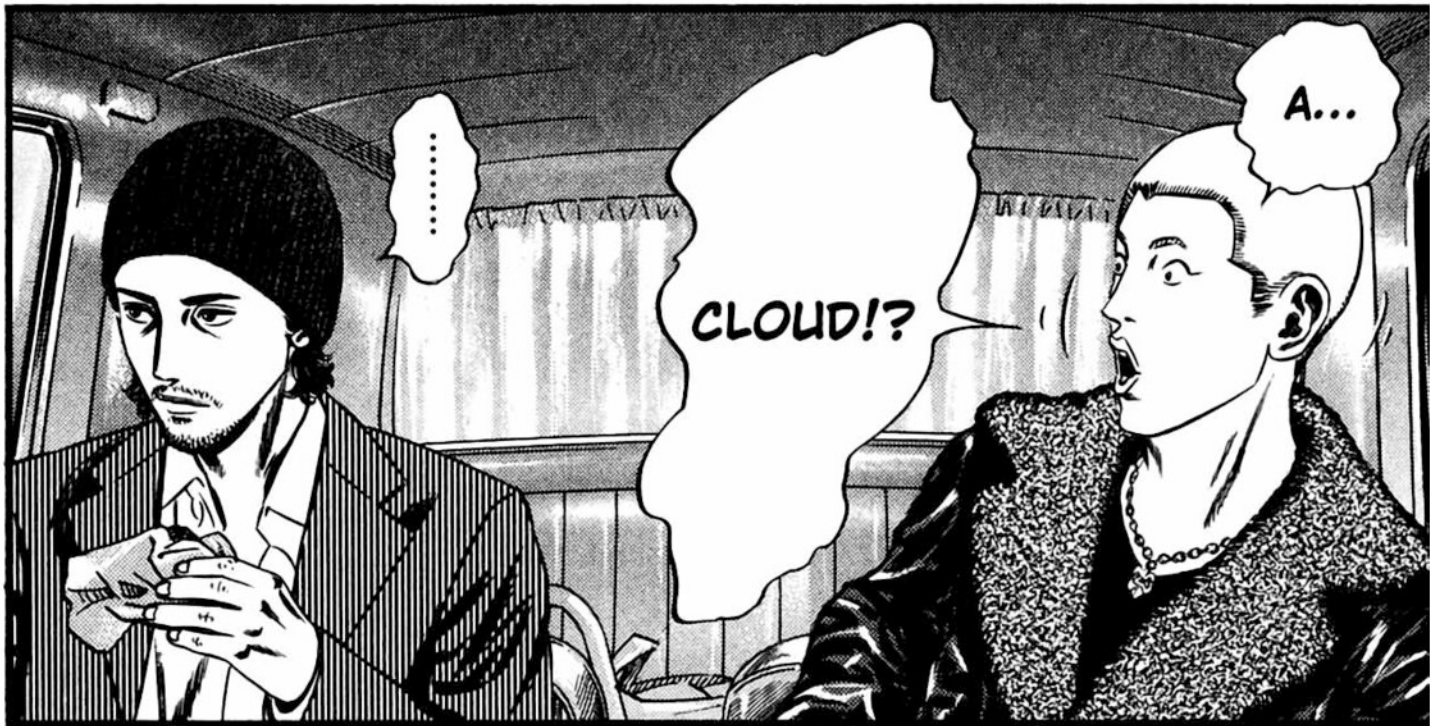
7

AND?

AND?







*Kumo can mean spider (蜘蛛) or cloud (雲).





WHAT ABOUT YOUR MIND?



?

AND?

AND?



OH, I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND YOU.

THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THIS.

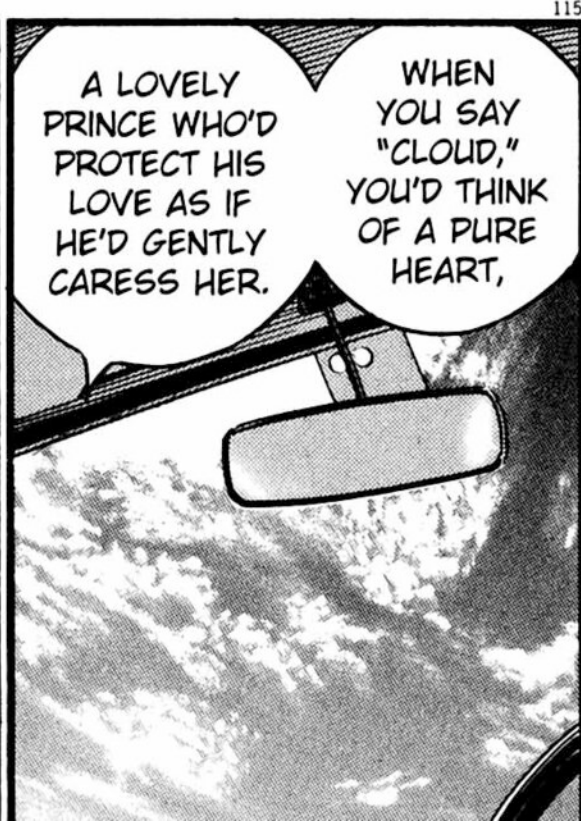
.....



.....

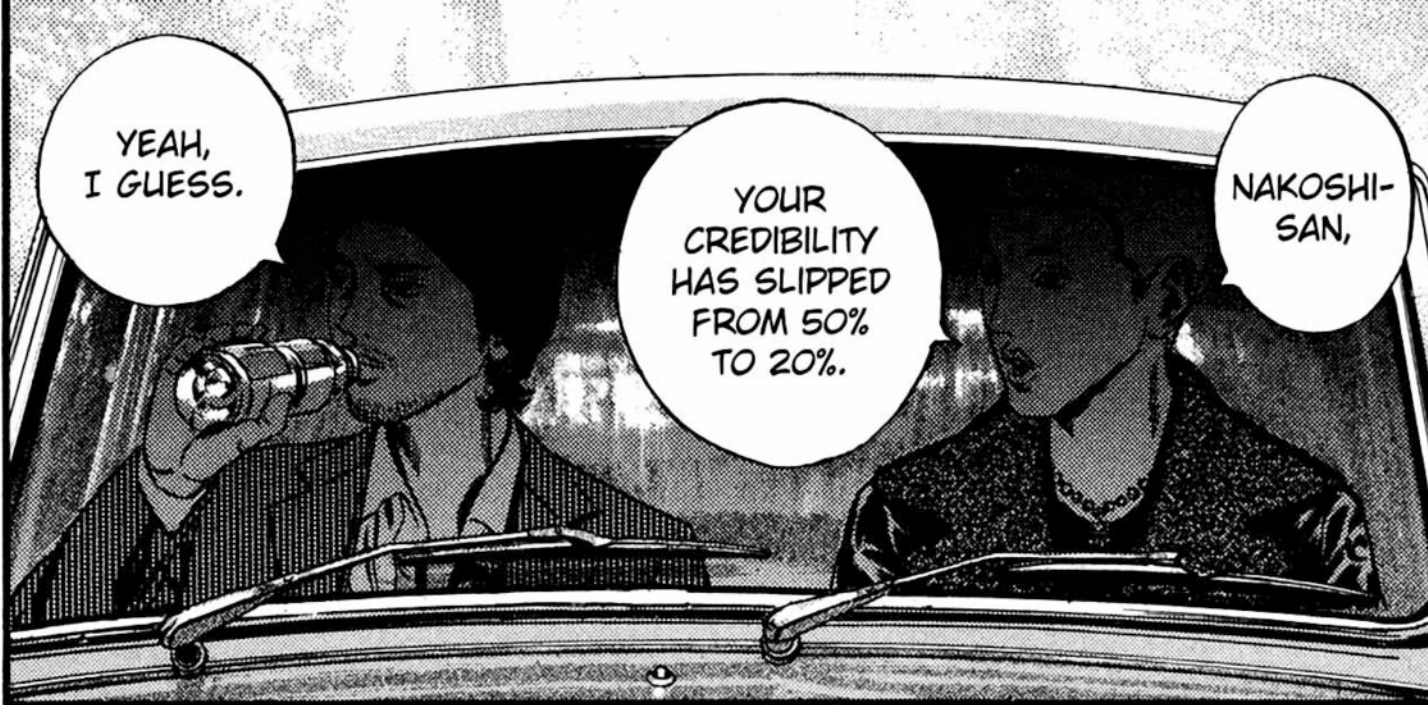


ISN'T THAT YOUR SELFISH WISH AS AN UGLY, AMOROUS ESCAPIST?



A LOVELY PRINCE WHO'D PROTECT HIS LOVE AS IF HE'D GENTLY CARESS HER.

WHEN YOU SAY "CLOUD," YOU'D THINK OF A PURE HEART,



YEAH,
I GUESS.

YOUR
CREDIBILITY
HAS SLIPPED
FROM 50%
TO 20%.

NAKOSHI-
SAN,



IT'S
25%
NOW!
IT'S...



JUST LIKE YOU
"BELIEVE" IN MY
HOMUNCULUS.
YES.



NAKOSHI-
SAN,
DO YOU
SERIOUSLY
BELIEVE
THAT?



THIS SOUNDS
LIKE THAT YOU, WHO
USED TO BE UGLY
AND RAN AWAY FROM
REALITY, JUST MADE
EVERYTHING TOO
CONVENIENT FOR
YOURSELF.

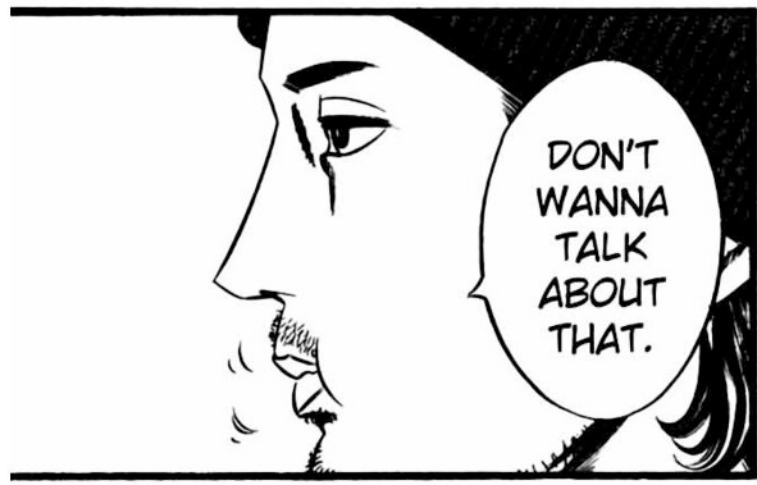
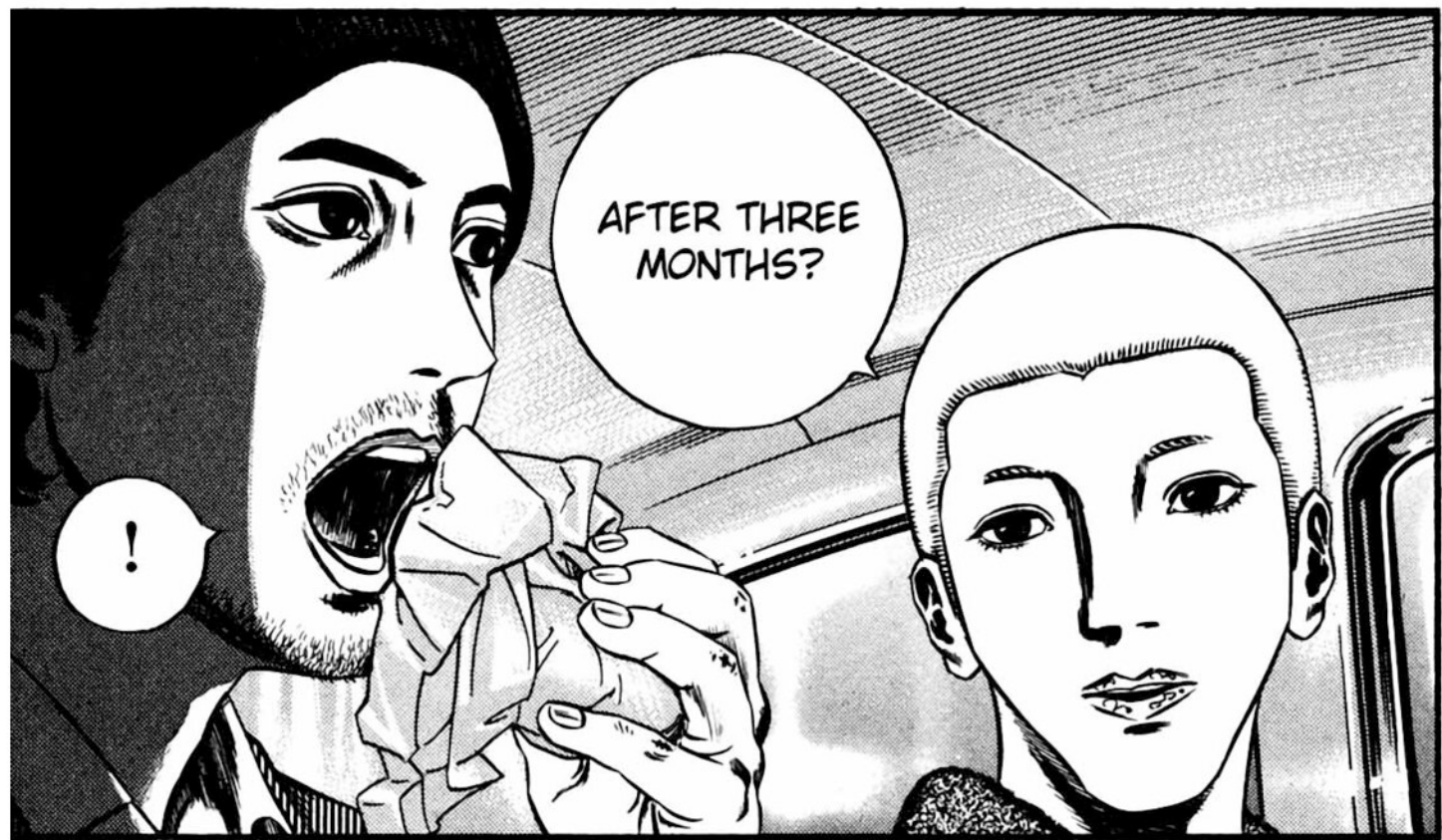
BESIDES, DOES "I
SAW MY TRUE SELF,"
"I'M A CLOUD" EVEN
MAKE SENSE?



WHY DID YOU BREAK UP



AND?





I'LL TAKE
A LOOK
AT IT.



?

CAN YOU TELL
ME MORE ABOUT
NANAKO? LIKE
HER SURNAME,
WHERE SHE'S
FROM OR HER
AGE?



ARE YOU
DEAF?



BUT IF I INVESTIGATE
HER, I MIGHT FIND
OUT IF THAT WOMAN
WHO "TRANSFORMS
HER FACE" IS
YOUR EX.

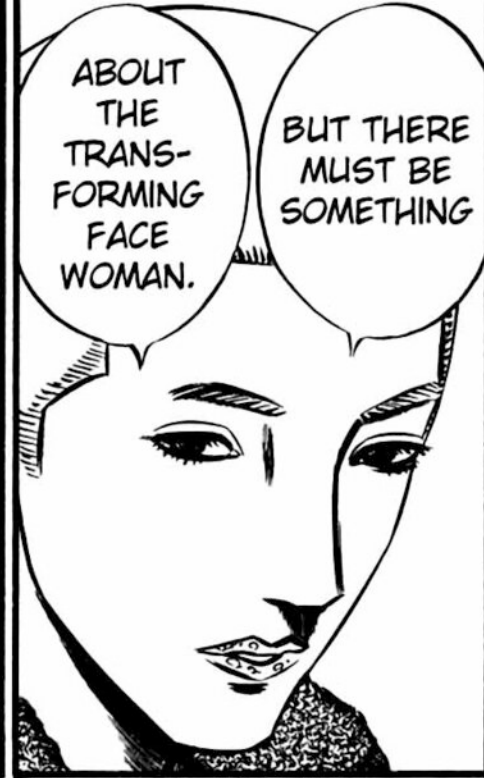


YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO
RUINED MY
TALKATIVE
MOOD.



NANAKO
WOULD
NEVER LIE.
EVER.

SHE'S
SOMEONE
ELSE.



ABOUT THE TRANSFORMING FACE WOMAN.

BUT THERE MUST BE SOMETHING



LET'S SAY SHE'S NOT YOUR EX.

OKAY, OKAY.



BESIDES, YOUR MEMORIES OF MEETING HER ARE SO VAGUE. YOU DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHETHER YOU HAVE SLEPT WITH HER OR NOT...

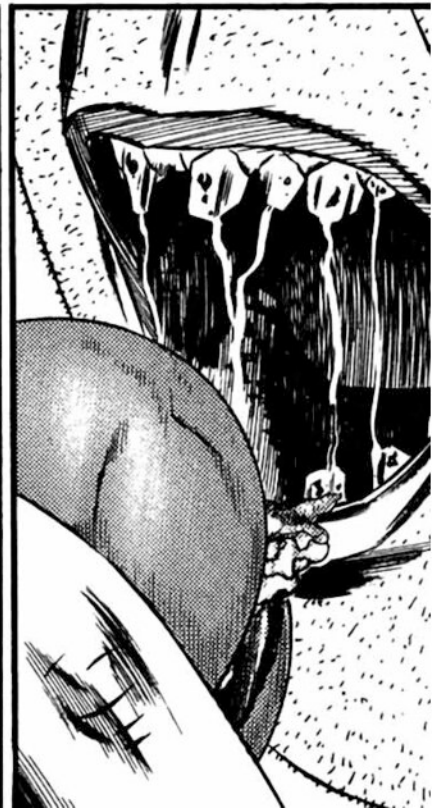
NAKOSHI-SAN, EVEN WHEN YOU LOST YOUR ABILITY, SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO LOOKED LIKE A HOMUNCULUS, RIGHT?



THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING. YOU'RE TRYING TO FILL THE GAP UNCONSCIOUSLY.

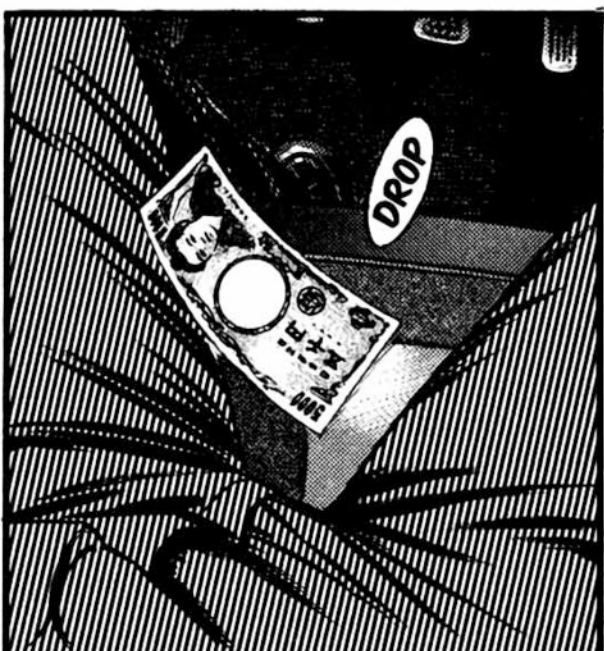
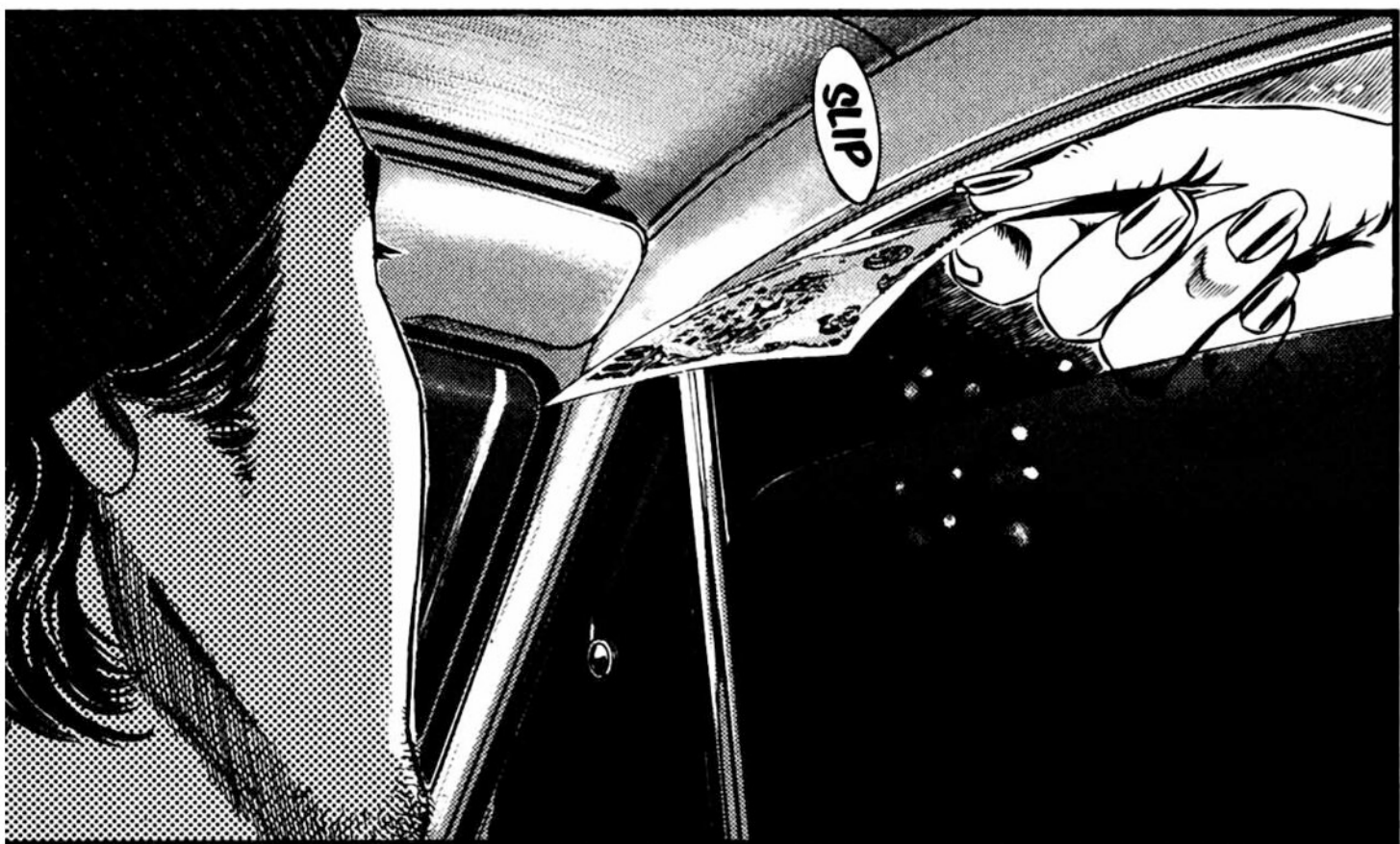


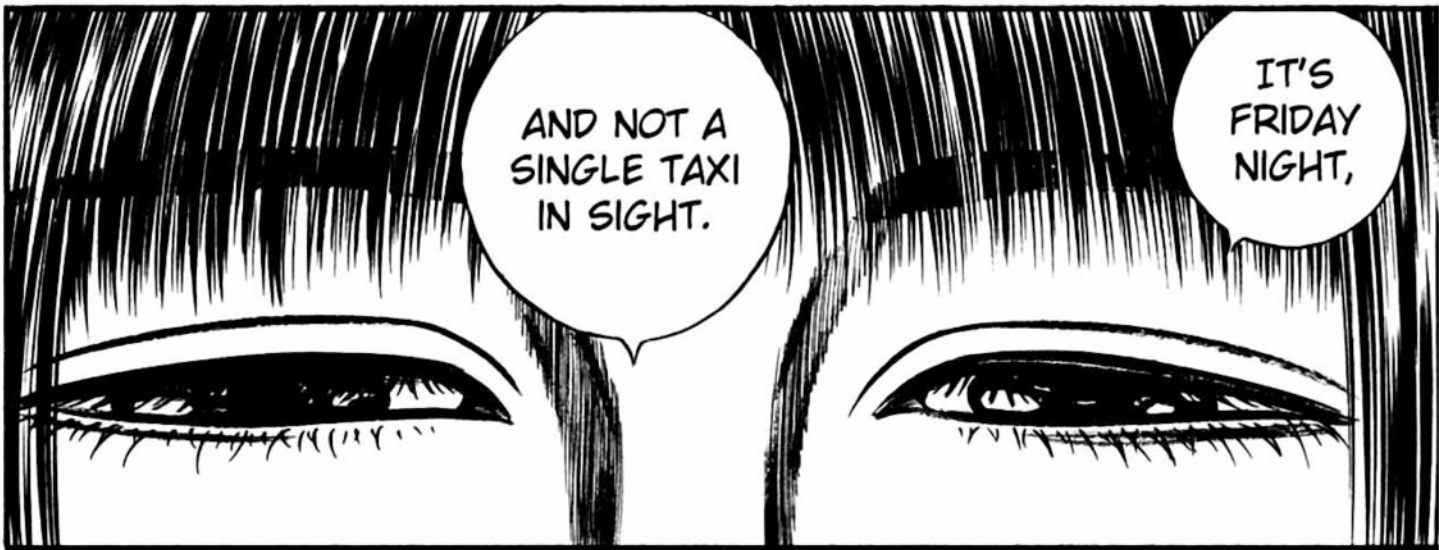
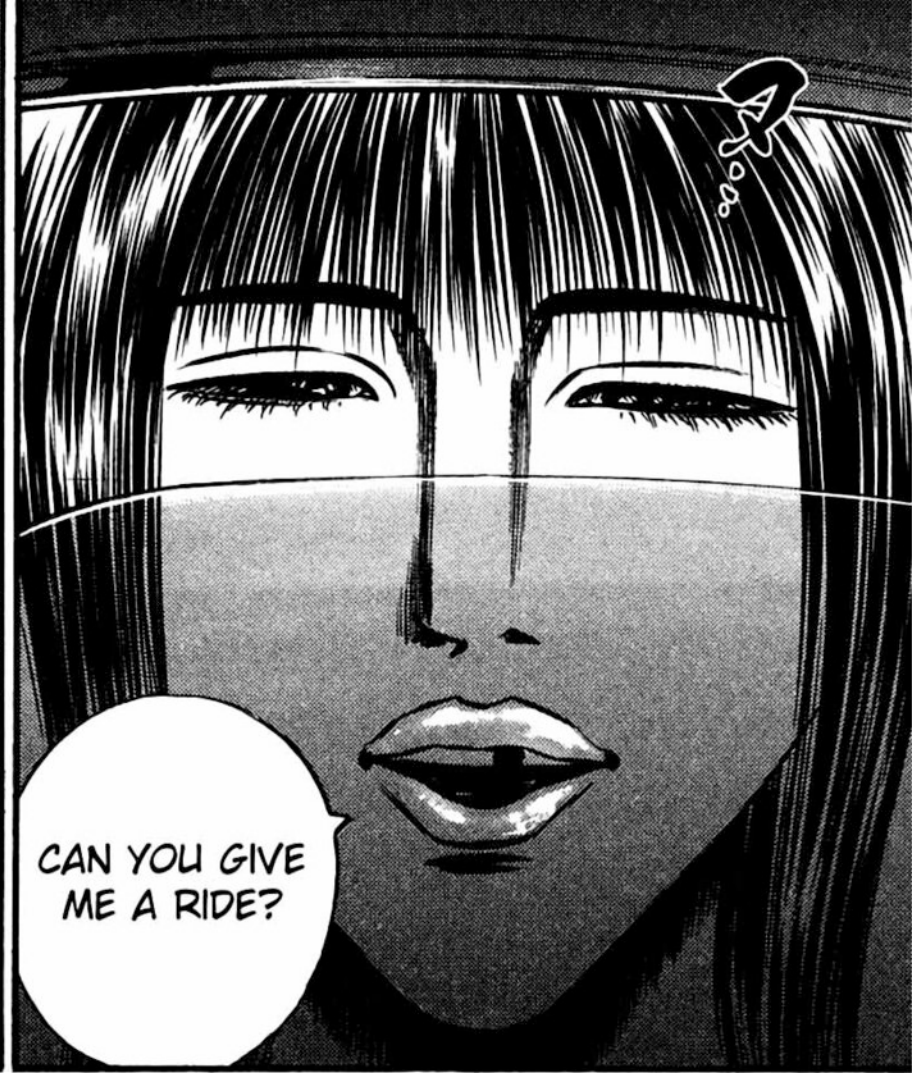
120













NOT ENOUGH?

OH, IS THIS



!



DO I HAVE TO PAY

WITH MY BODY?



OR...

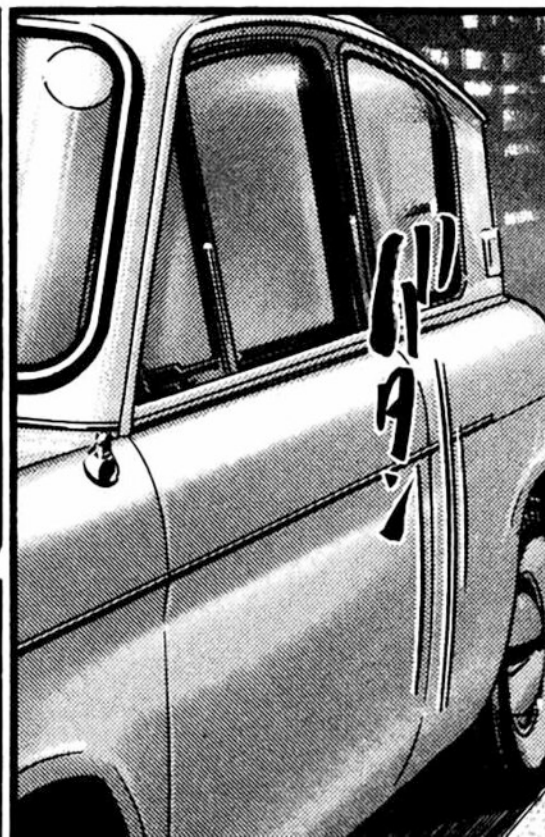


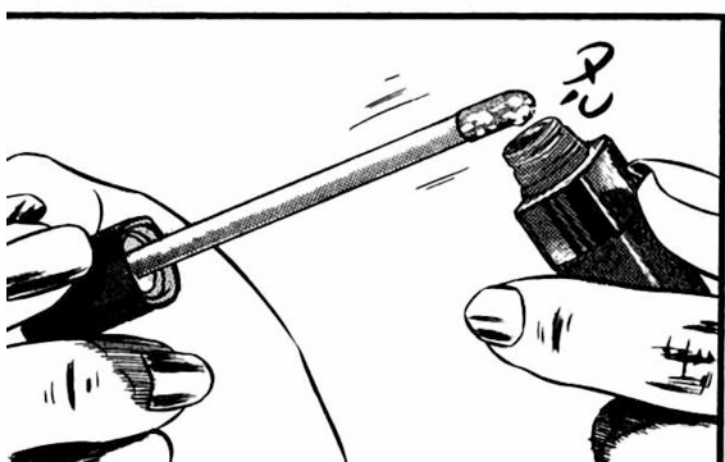
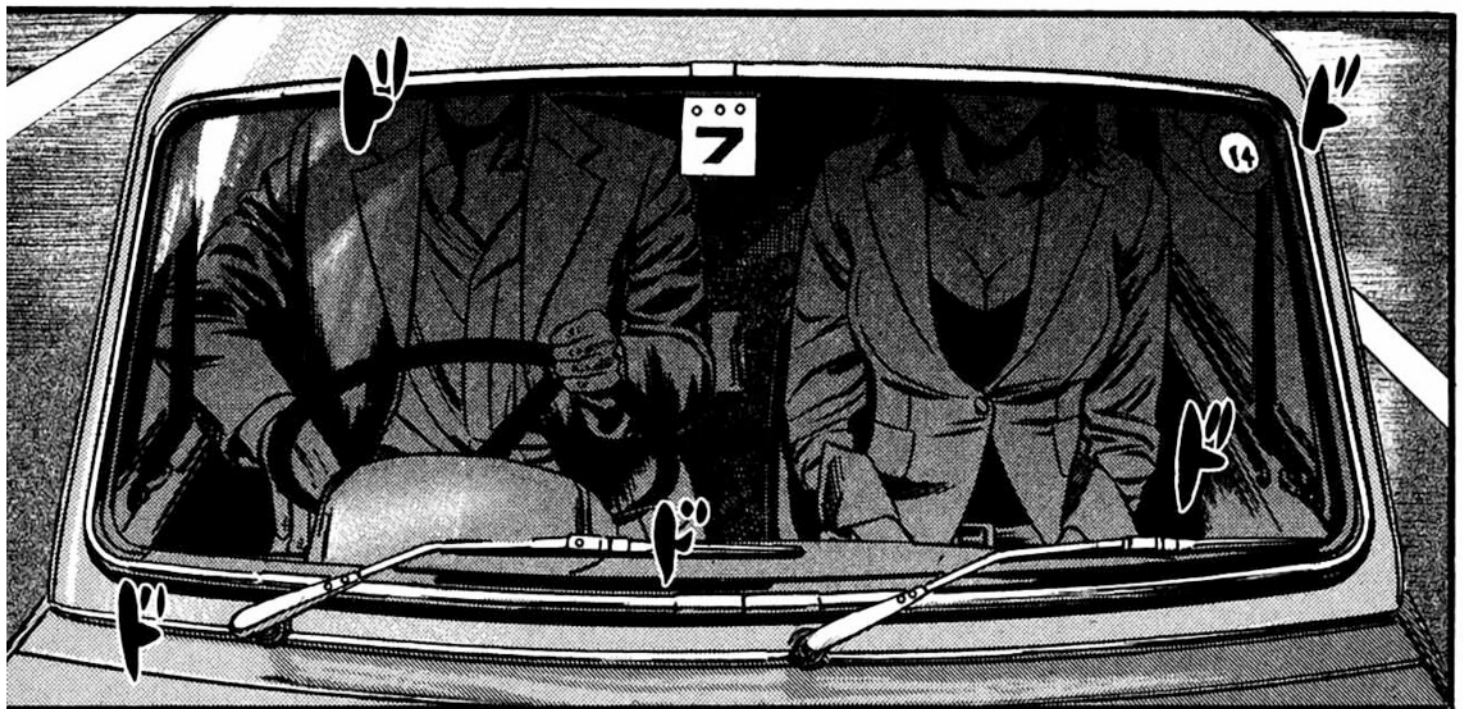
SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED BACK THEN!

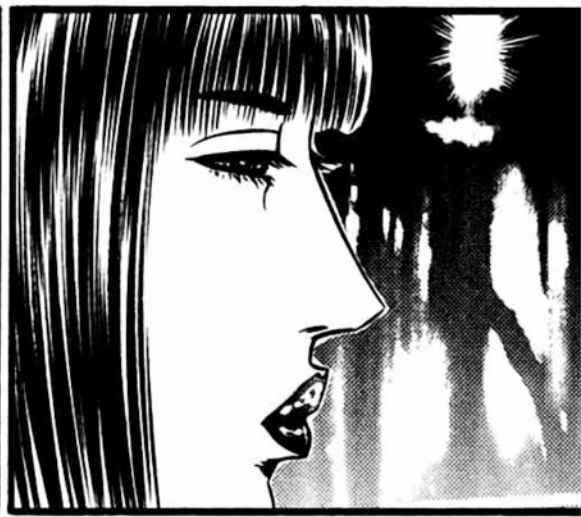
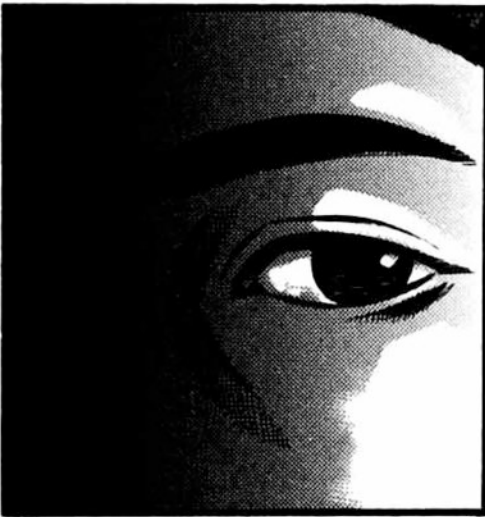
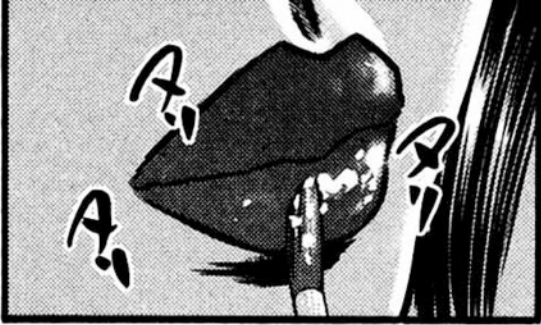


DO YOU WANT TO HAVE SEX WITH HER?

SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO LOOKED LIKE A HOMUNCULUS.













AH...

EXCUSE ME?

NOTHING.



YOU'RE THE LIAR...



...?



?



WHAT HAPPENED THE DAY I MET YOU?





SORRY?

DID WE
DO IT?



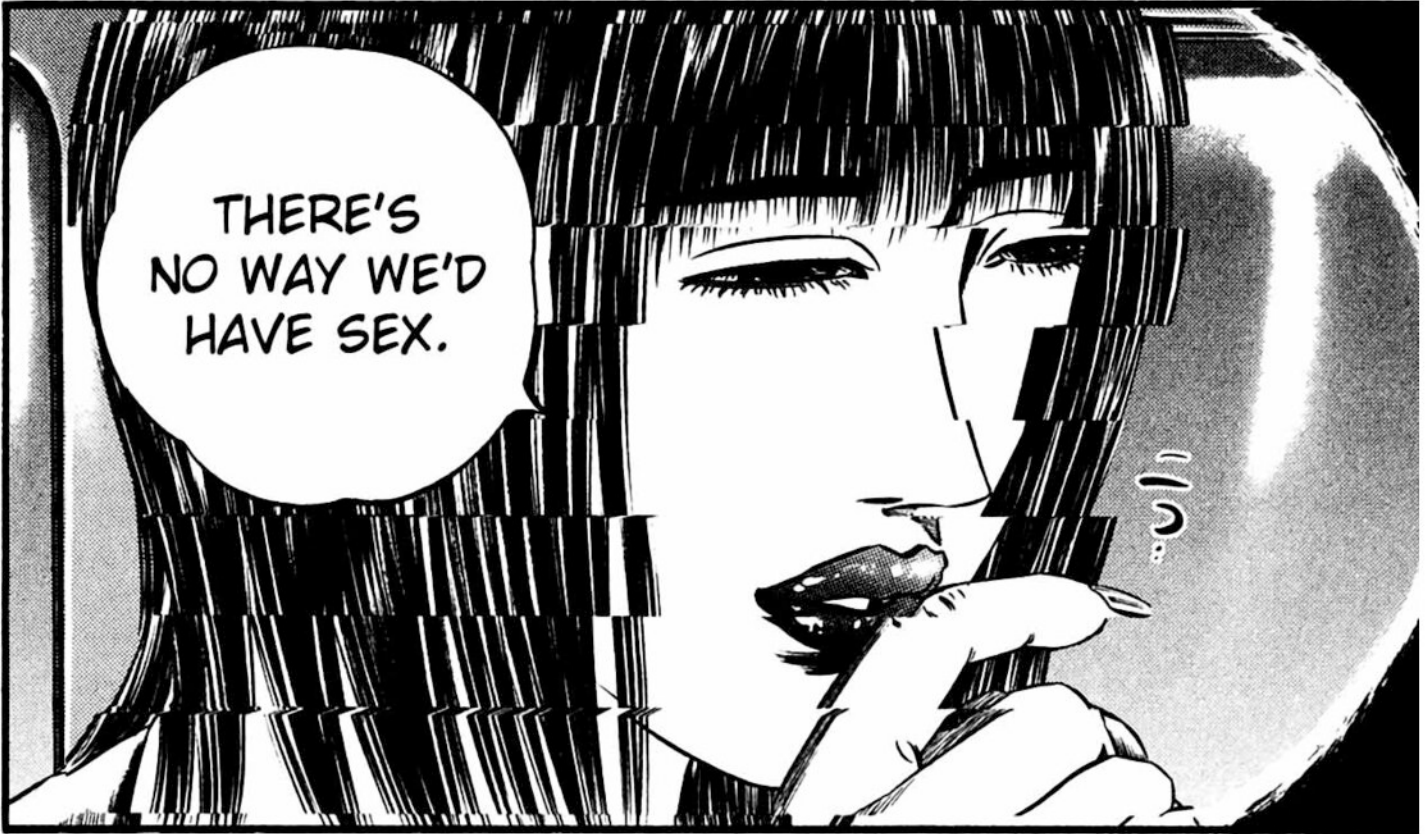
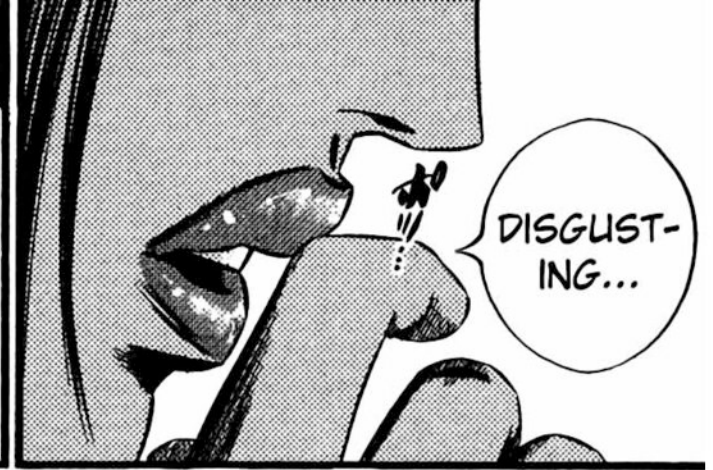
DID WE
HAVE SEX?



Y-
YEAH...

YOU
REALLY DON'T
REMEMBER?

WHAAA
AAAT?





WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

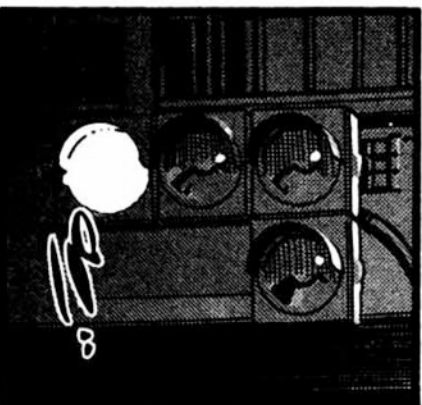


ANOTHER LIE?

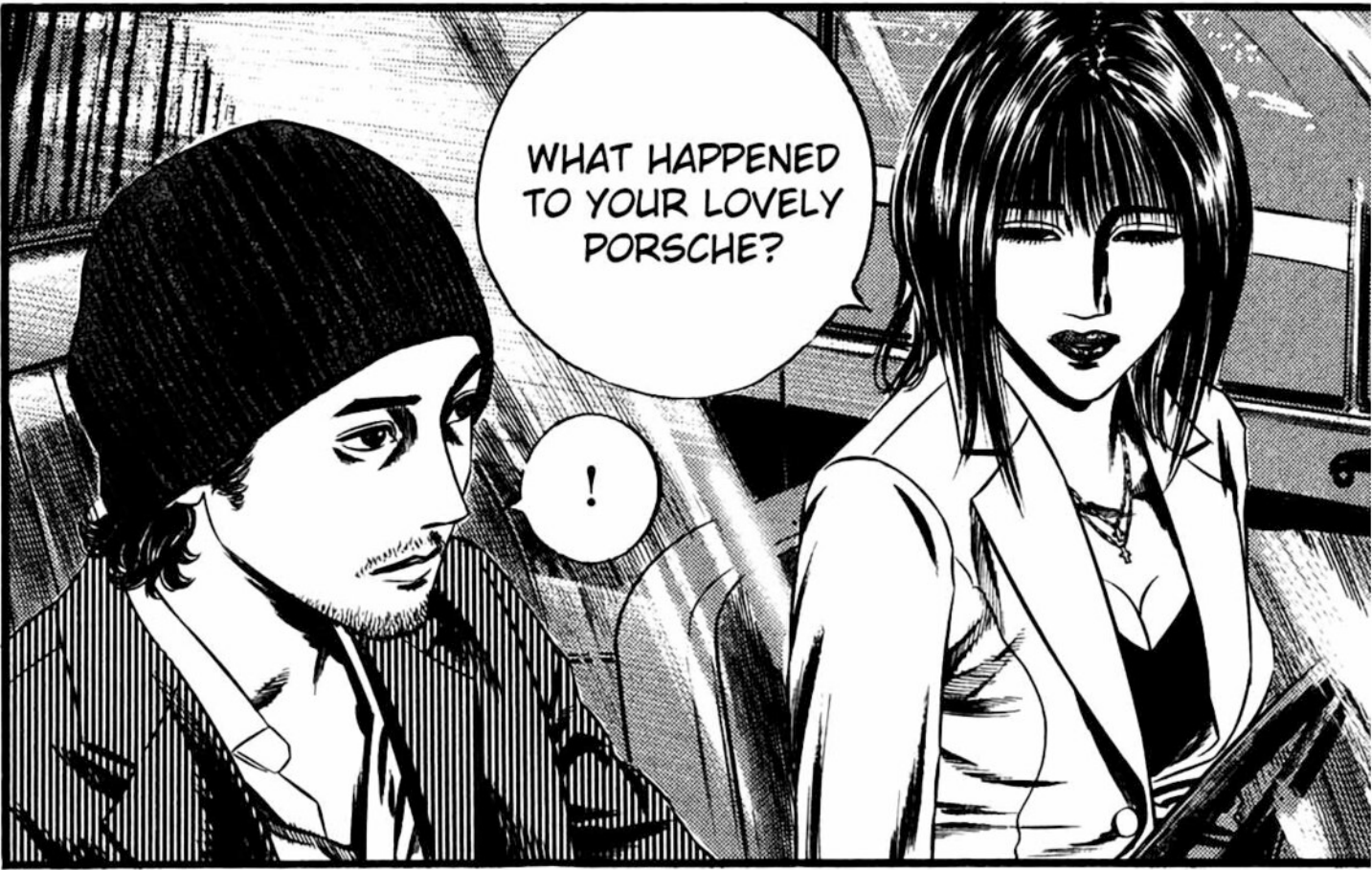


YOU REALLY PISS ME OFF.

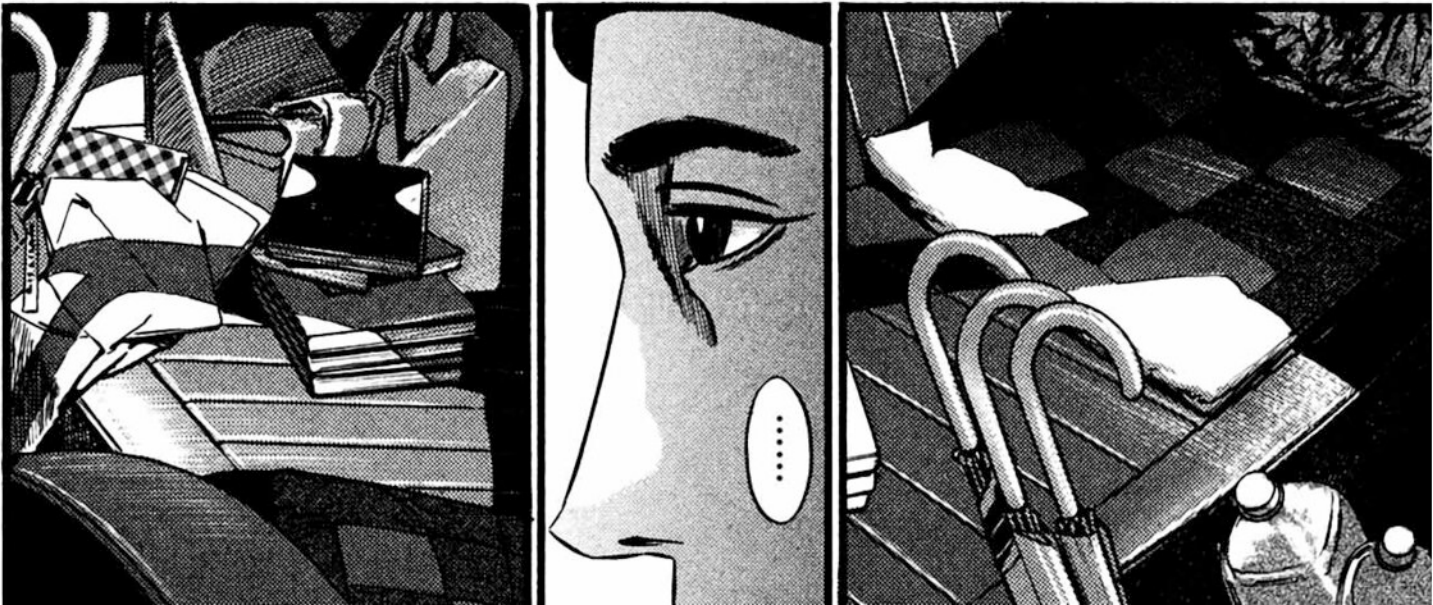
!

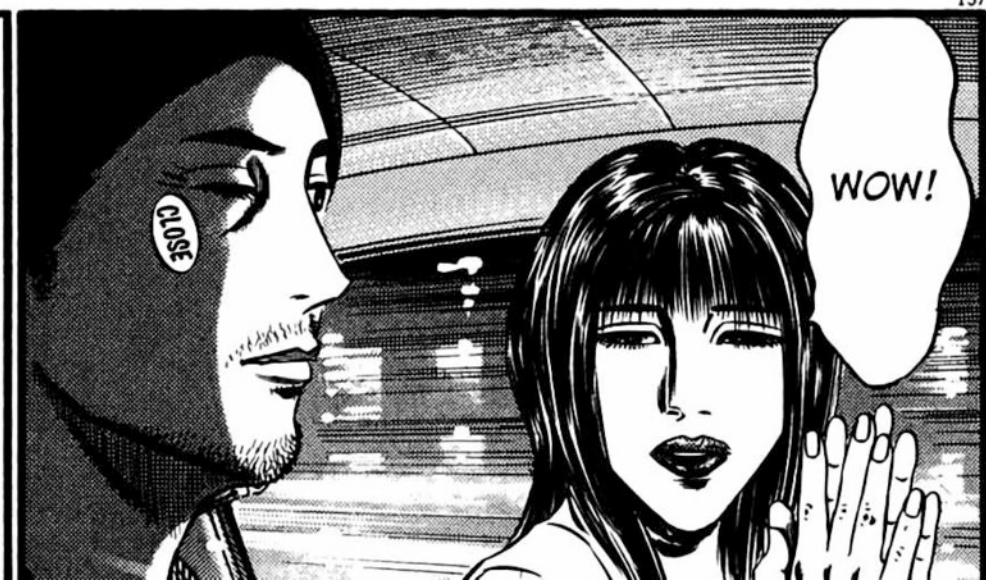
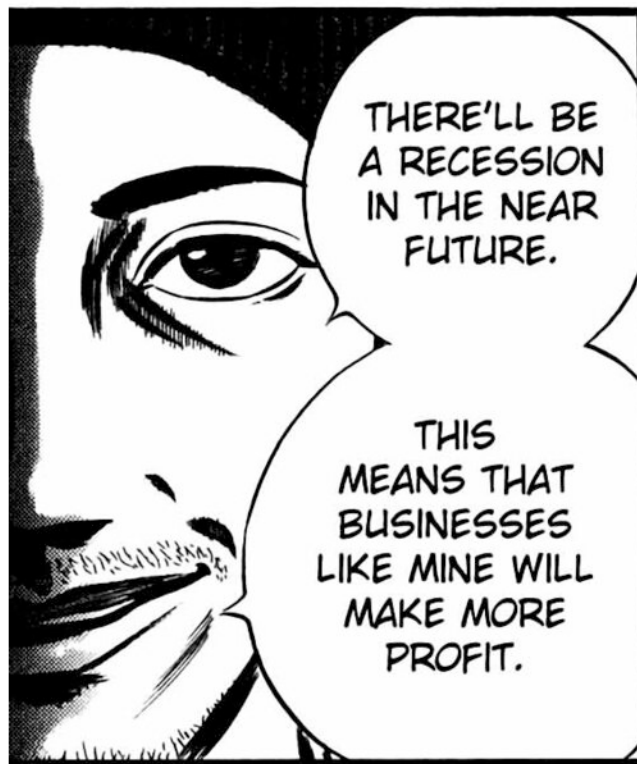


.....?

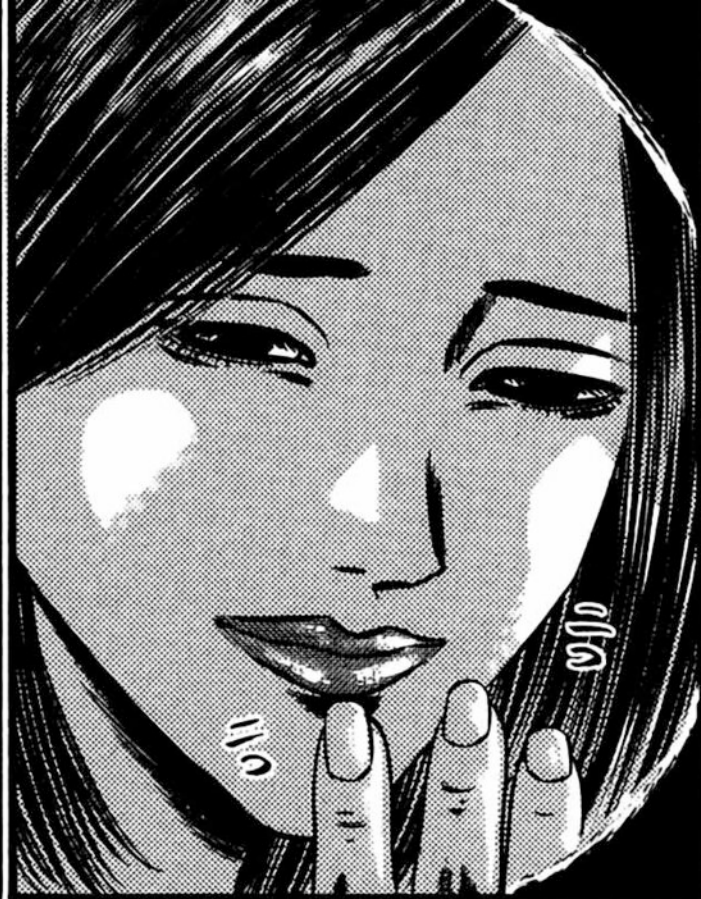


136

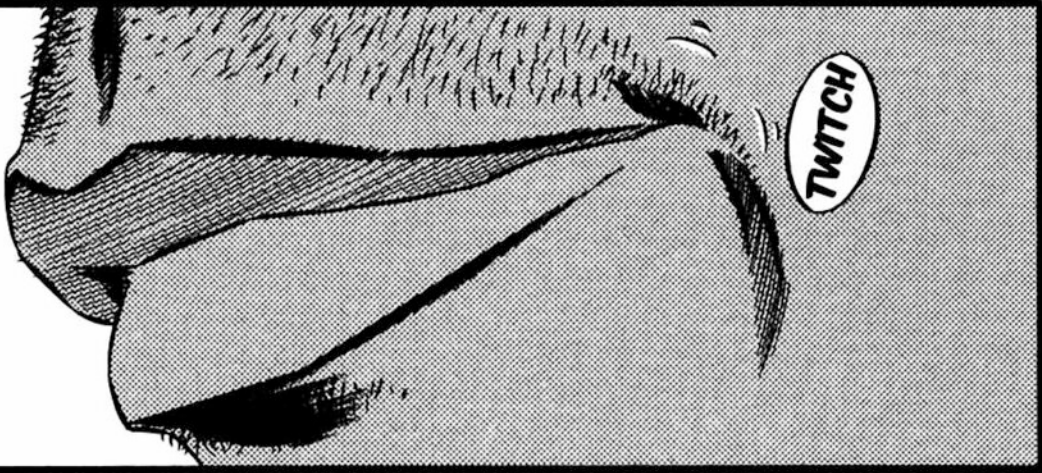








JUST LIKE I TOLD YOU, I'M ON A QUEST TO FIND MYSELF.



THERE'S BEEN AN INCREASE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE SINCE THE DOWNSIZING, SO I WAS DOING MY RESEARCH BASED ON OWN EXPERIENCE.

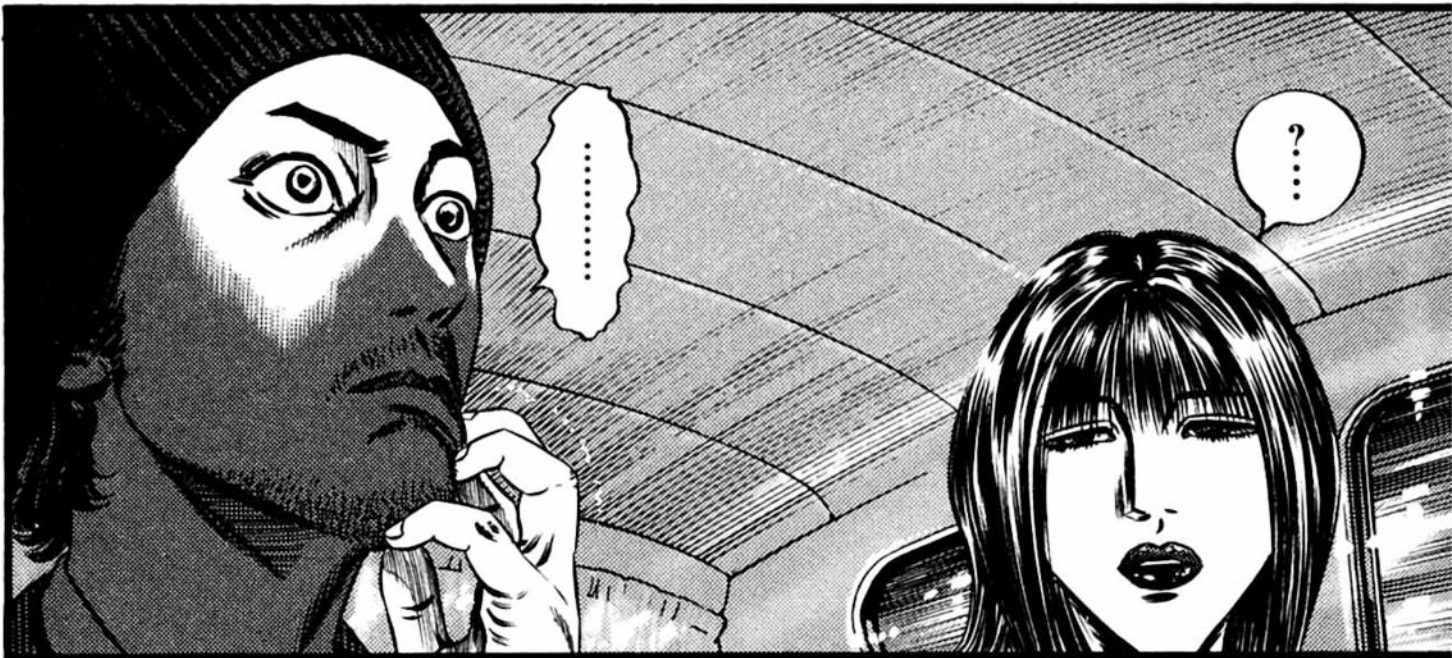


I'VE BEEN ASKED TO BE THE CONSULTANT FOR THAT HOTEL TO COLLECT SOME DATA.



SOMETIMES I REMEMBER THE ZEAL I HAD IN MY YOUTH. BUT BEING HOMELESS IS KINDA COOL TOO.







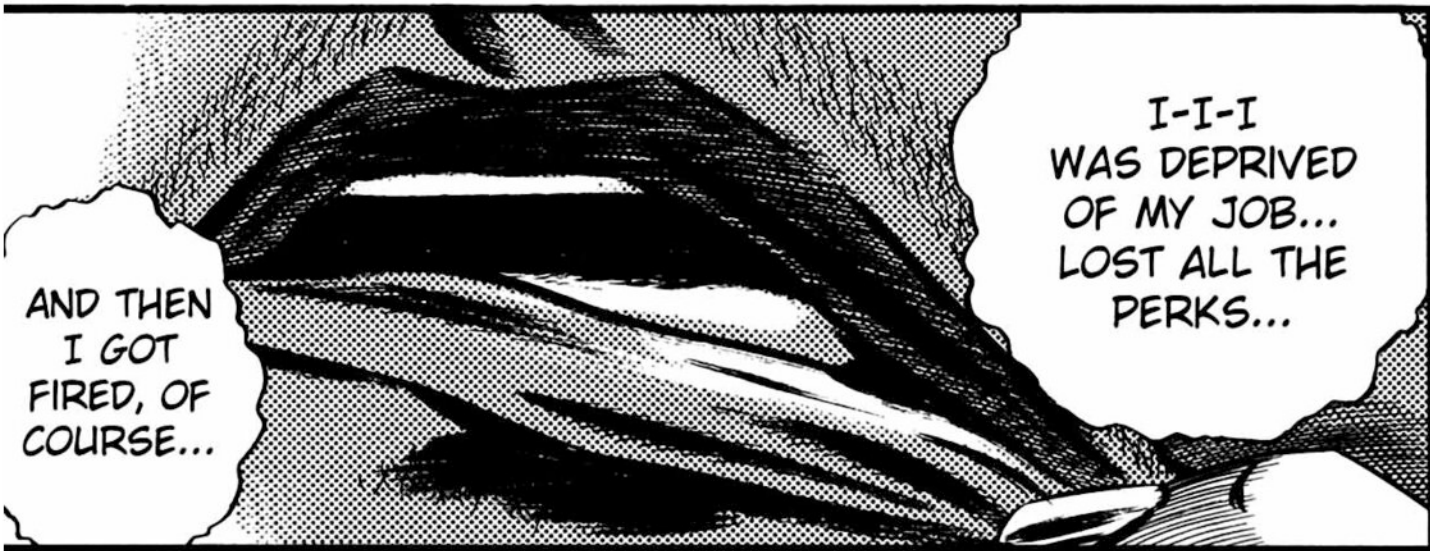
WA...

WA-WAS...
A TOTAL
FAILURE...

MY...

MY...

MY
WORK...



AND THEN
I GOT
FIRED, OF
COURSE...

I-I-I
WAS DEPRIVED
OF MY JOB...
LOST ALL THE
PERKS...



I JUST
HAVE
DEBTS
NOW.

THE STOCKS
I INVESTED
ALL OF MY
MONEY IN ARE
GONE, TOO.



AND I GOT
RID OF MY
PORSCHE TOO.

AS A
RESULT,
I LOST MY
HOUSE,



AND MY
SUIT.



ALL THAT'S
LEFT IS
THIS CAROL



.....



HUH!?

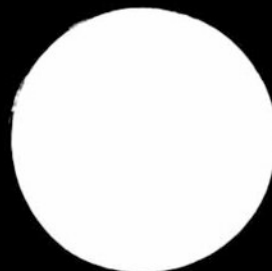


BUT YOU SAID
YOUR PORSCHE
WAS IN A GARAGE
IN HIROO, AND YOUR
BUSINESS WAS DOING
WELL JUST A
MOMENT AGO.



THAT WAS
A LIE, DUH.

Handwritten signature
○○○○○

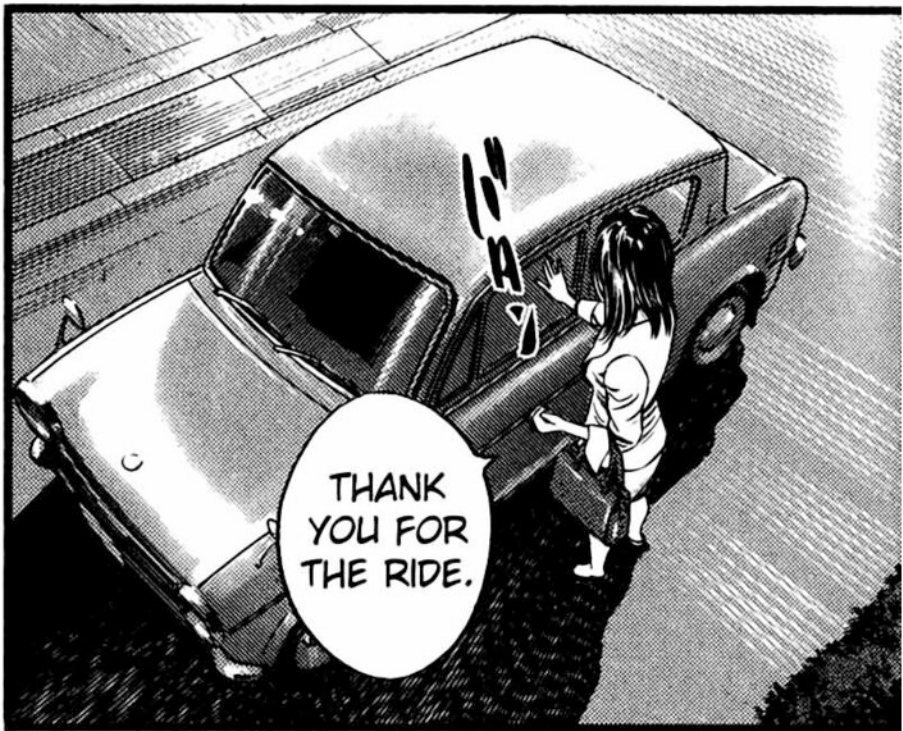




THIS IS THE PLACE.



DON'T MENTION IT.



THANK YOU FOR THE RIDE.



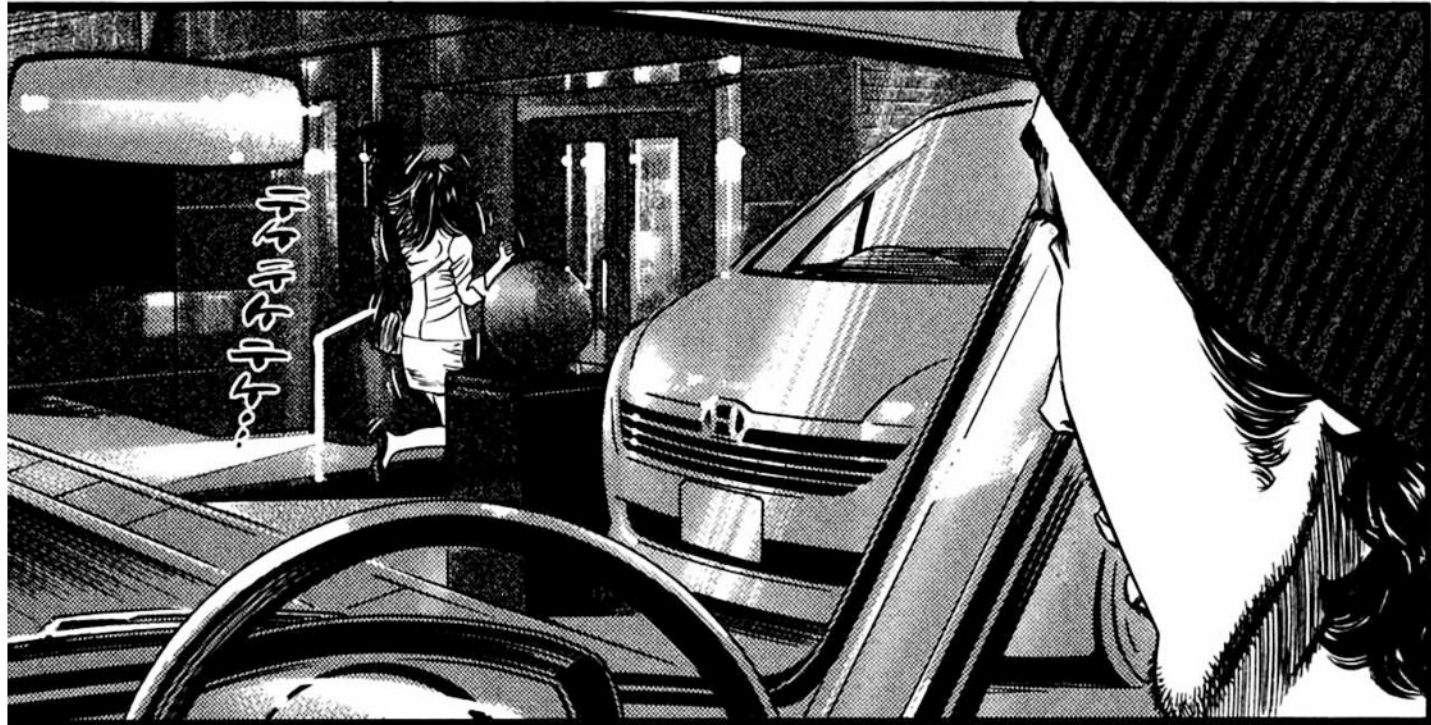


HEHE...

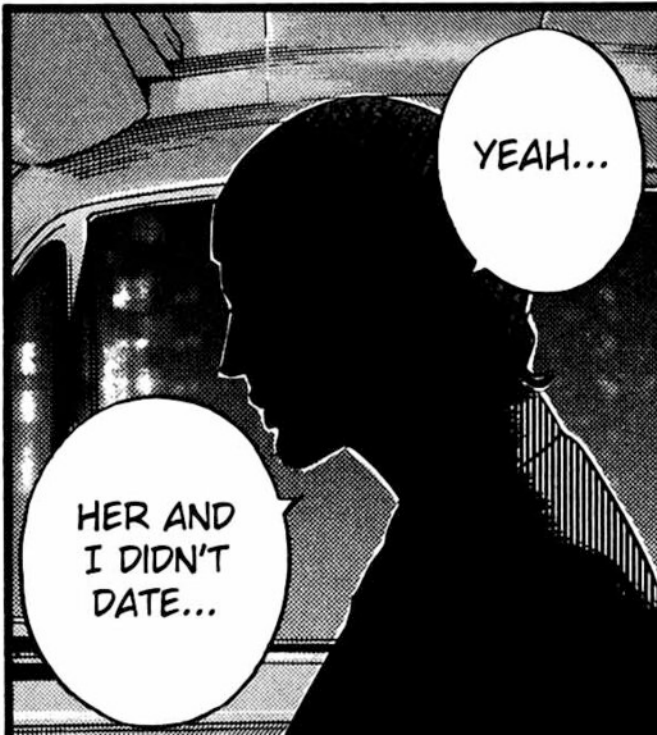


I BET THIS APPARTMENT

IS ANOTHER LIE, ANYWAY.



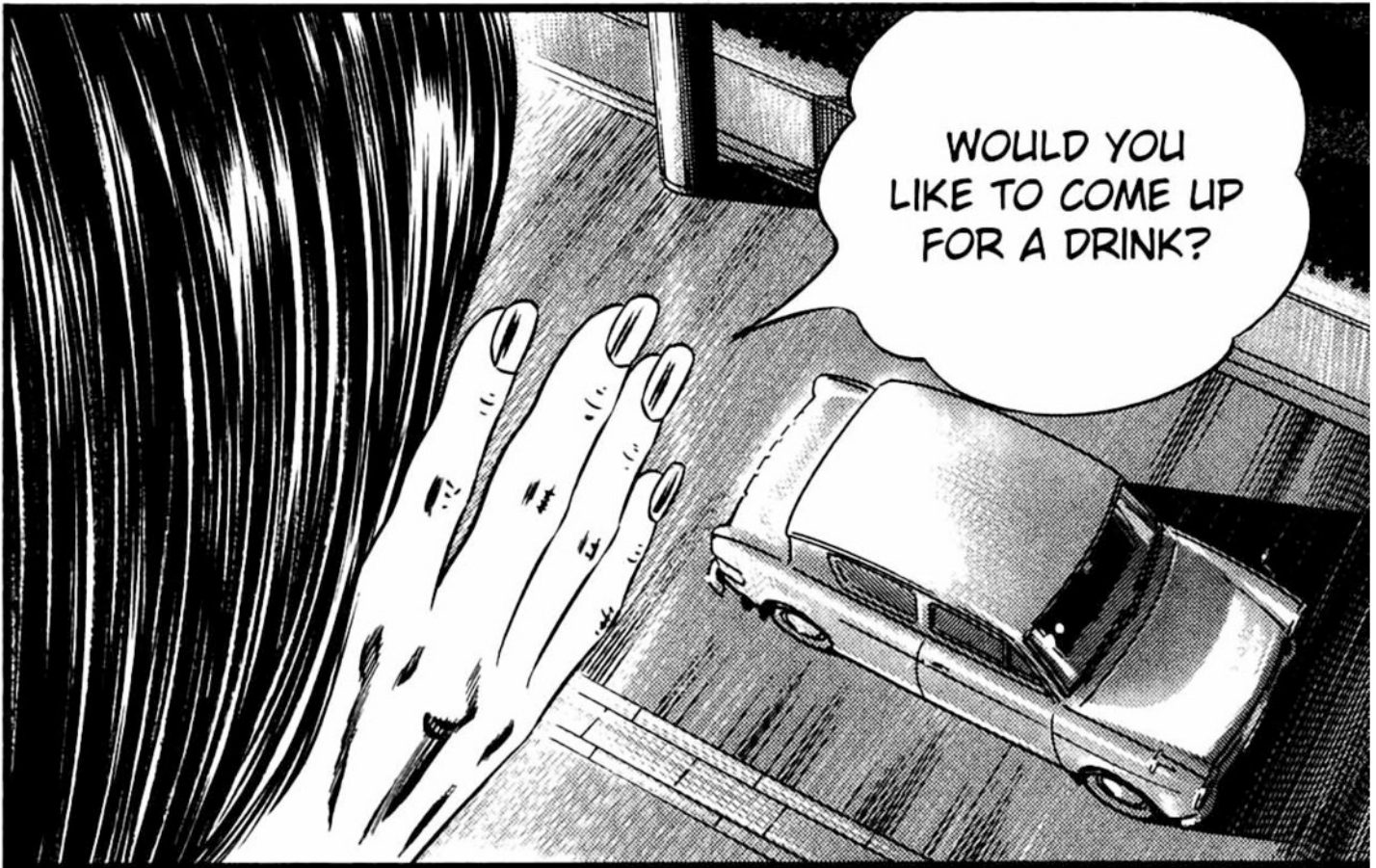
SHE'S FULL OF BULLSHIT.

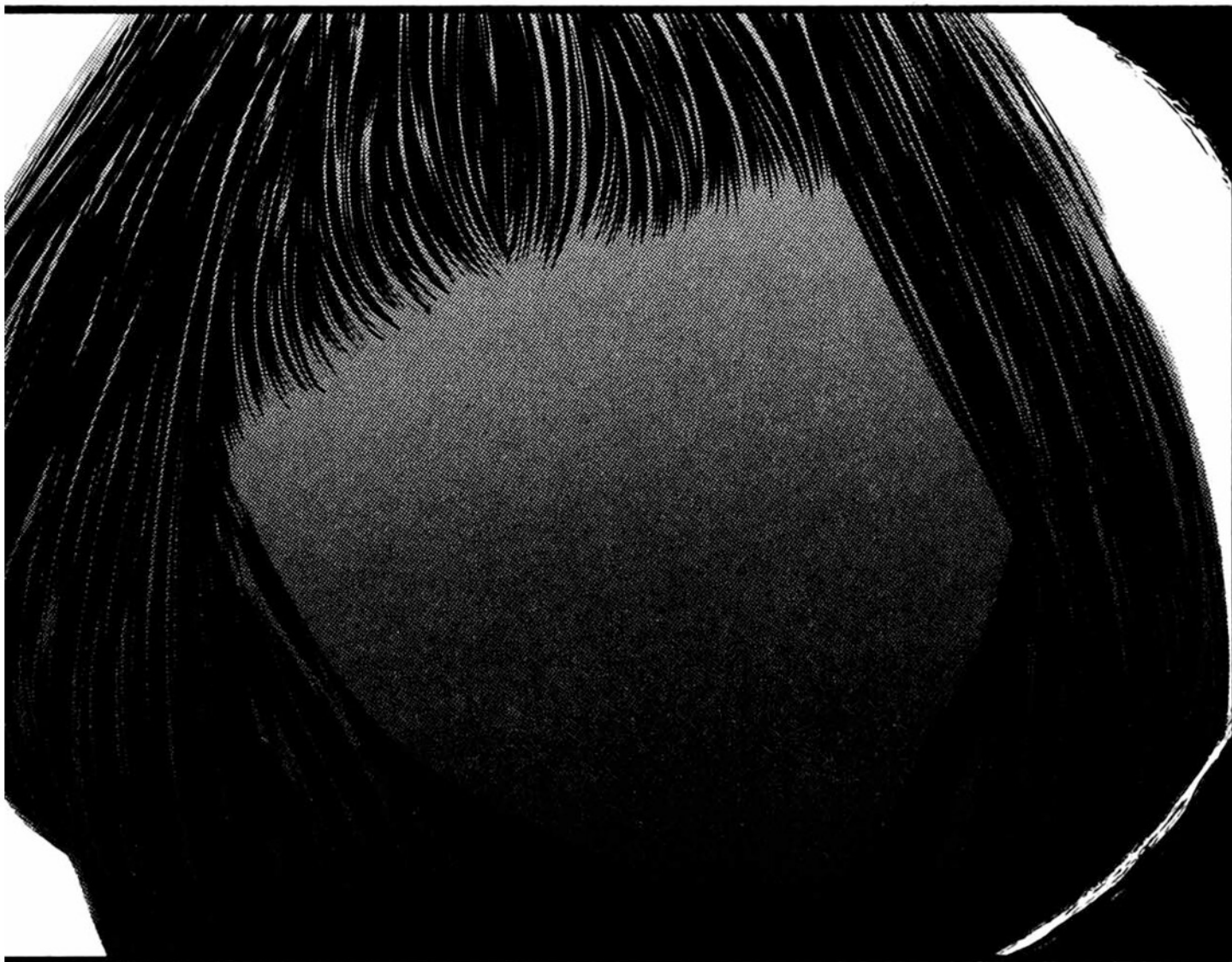


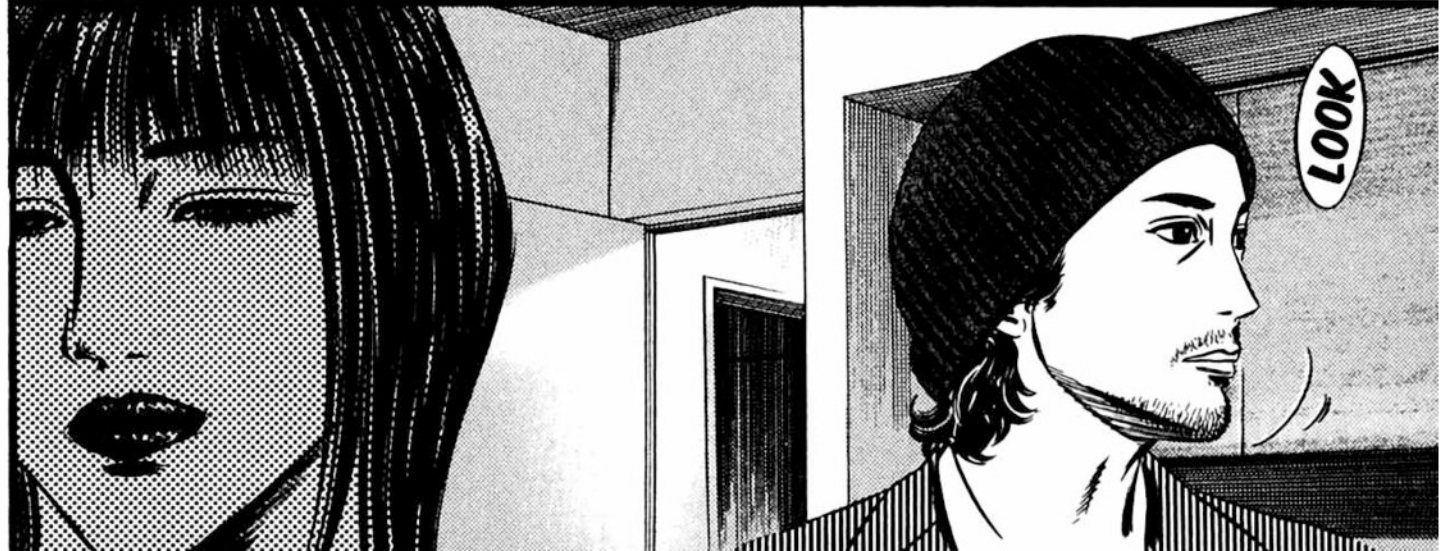
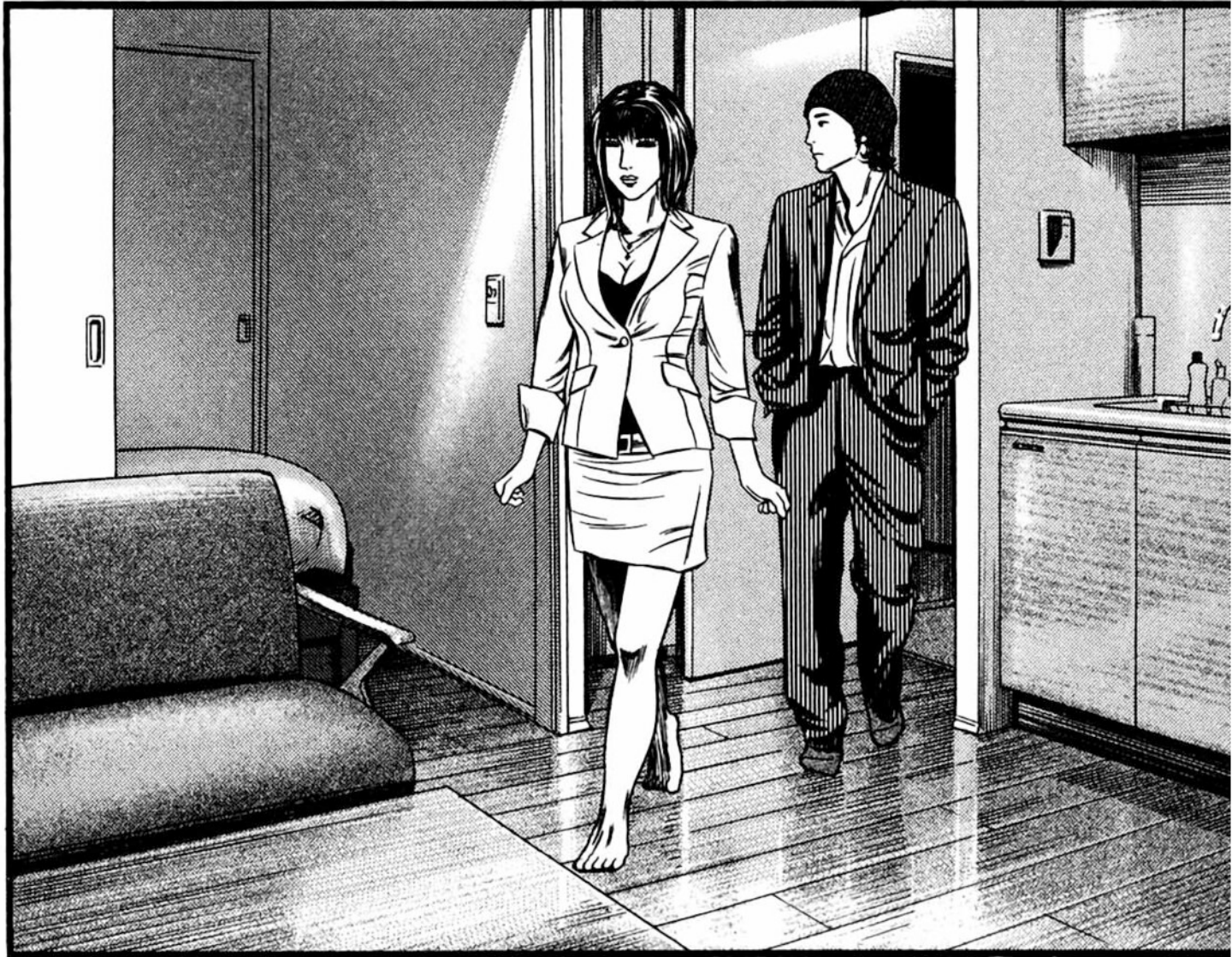
YEAH...

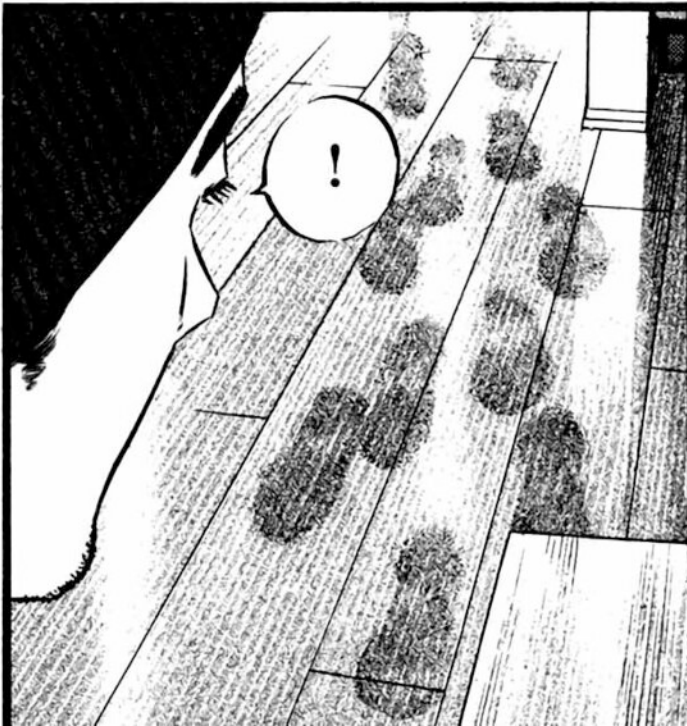
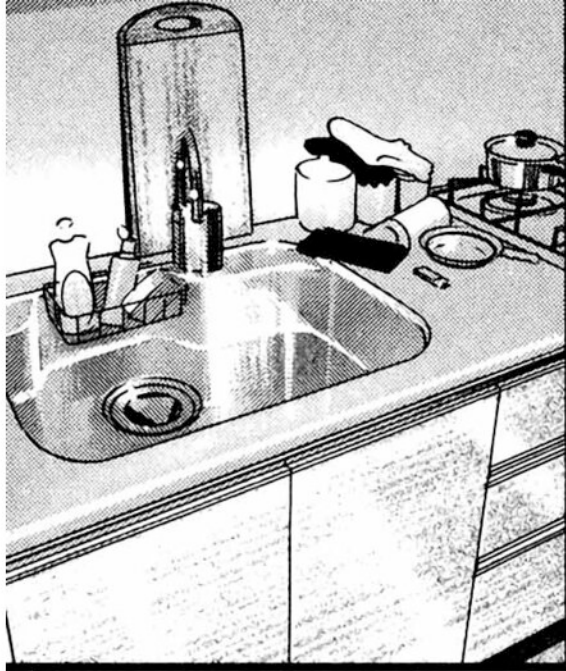
HER AND I DIDN'T DATE...

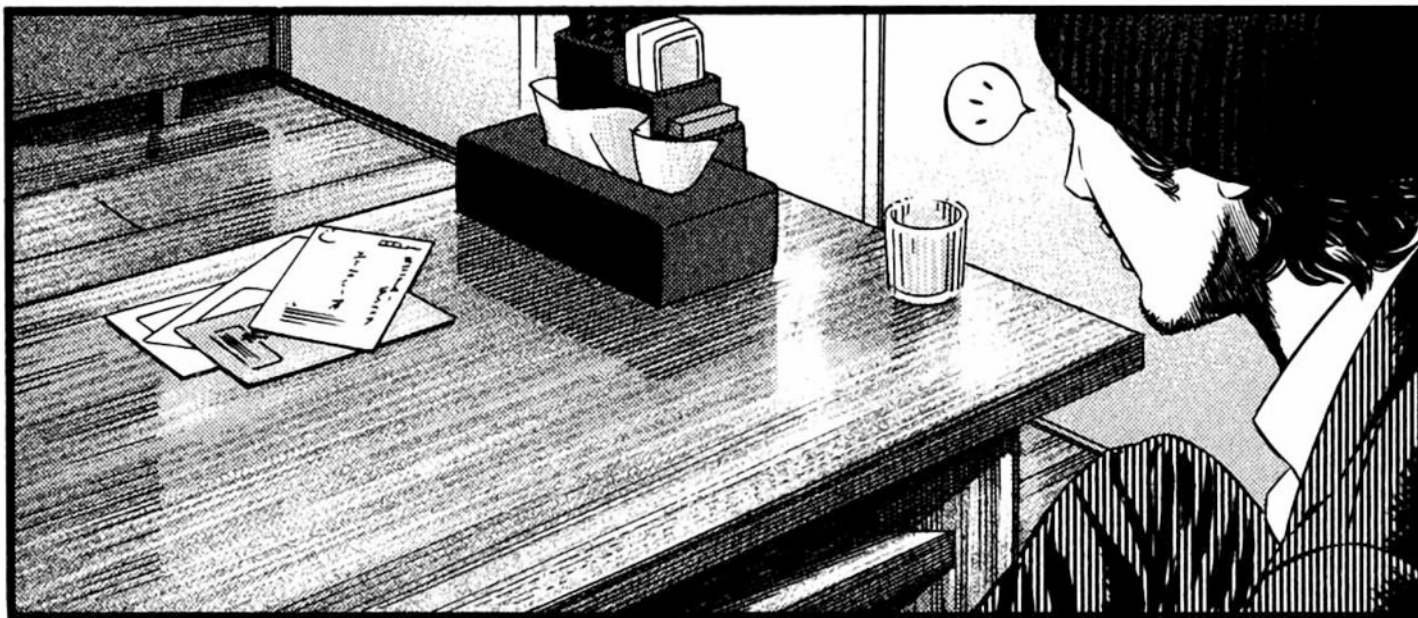






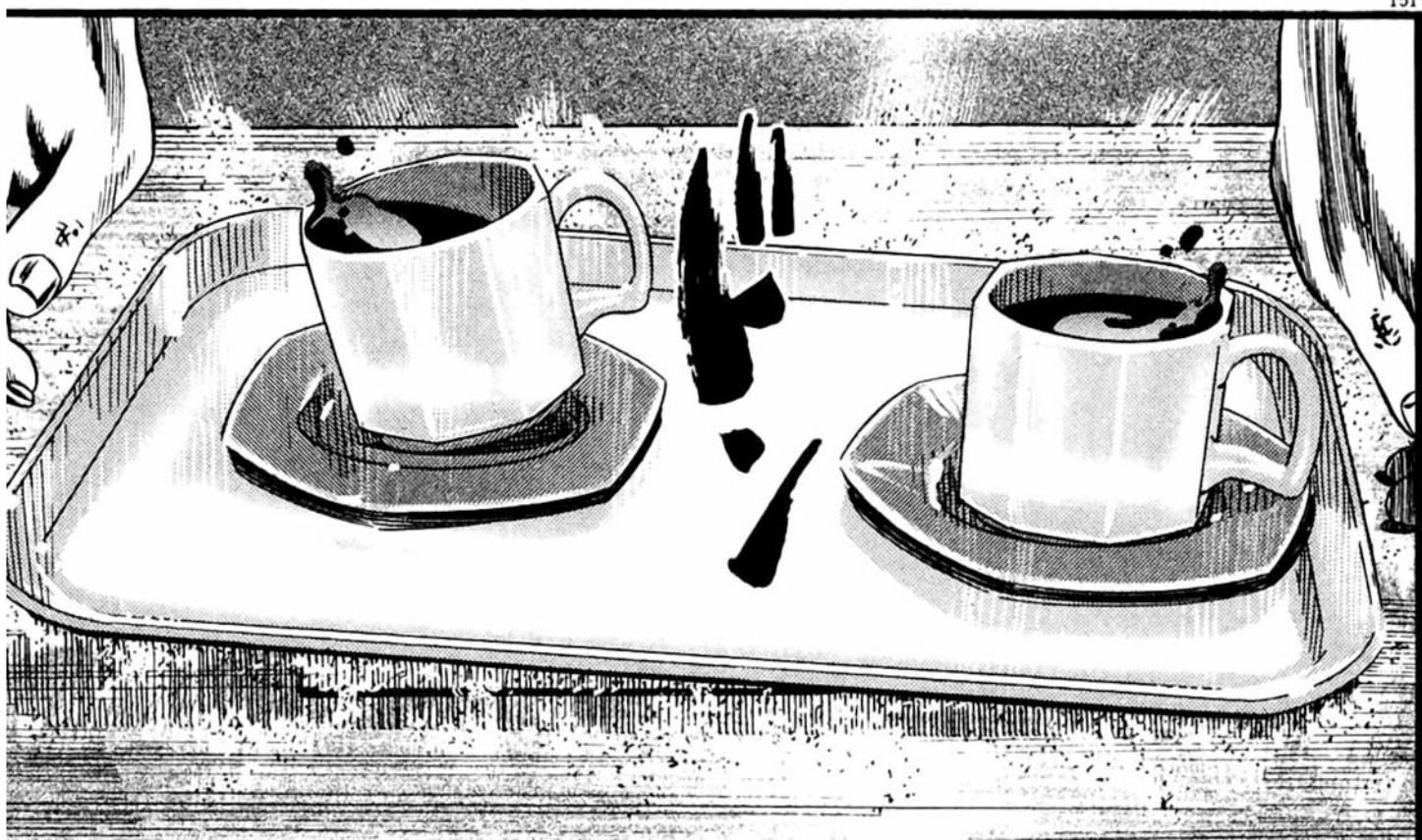
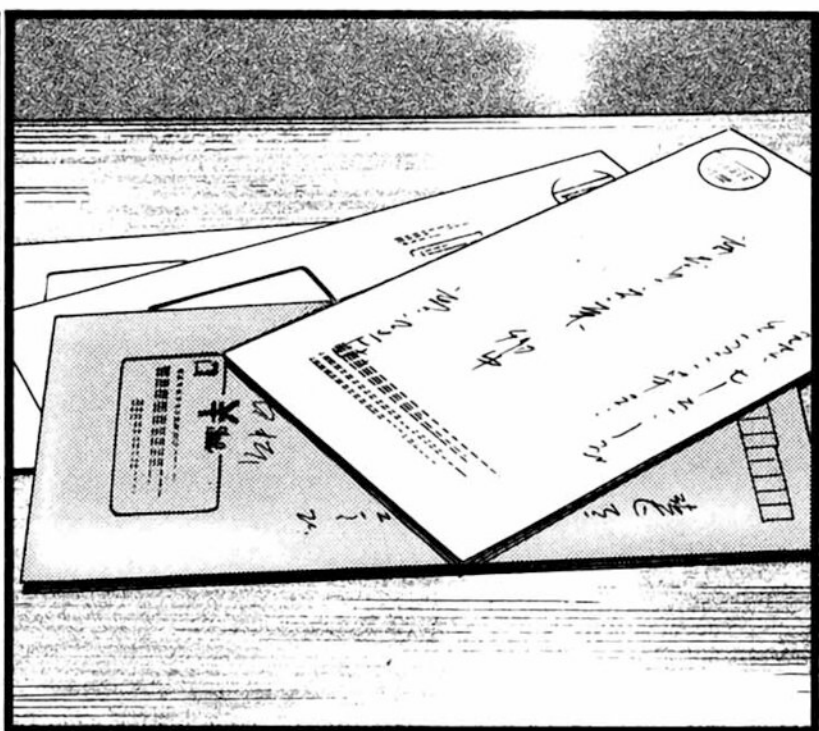


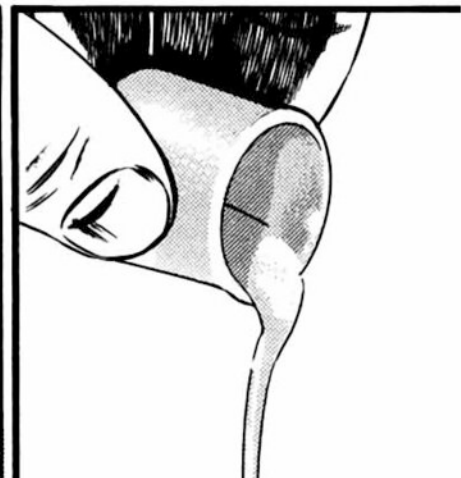




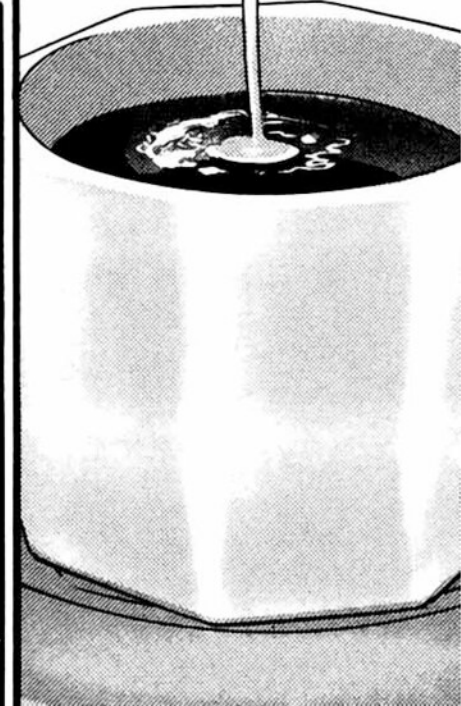
150



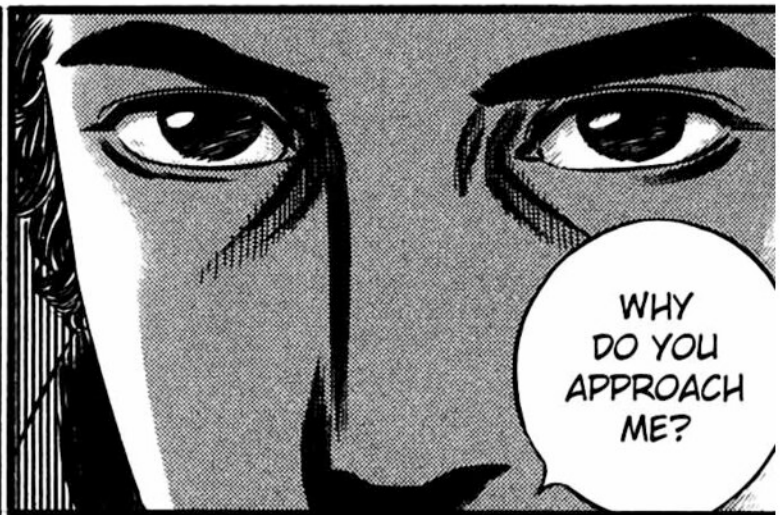




152





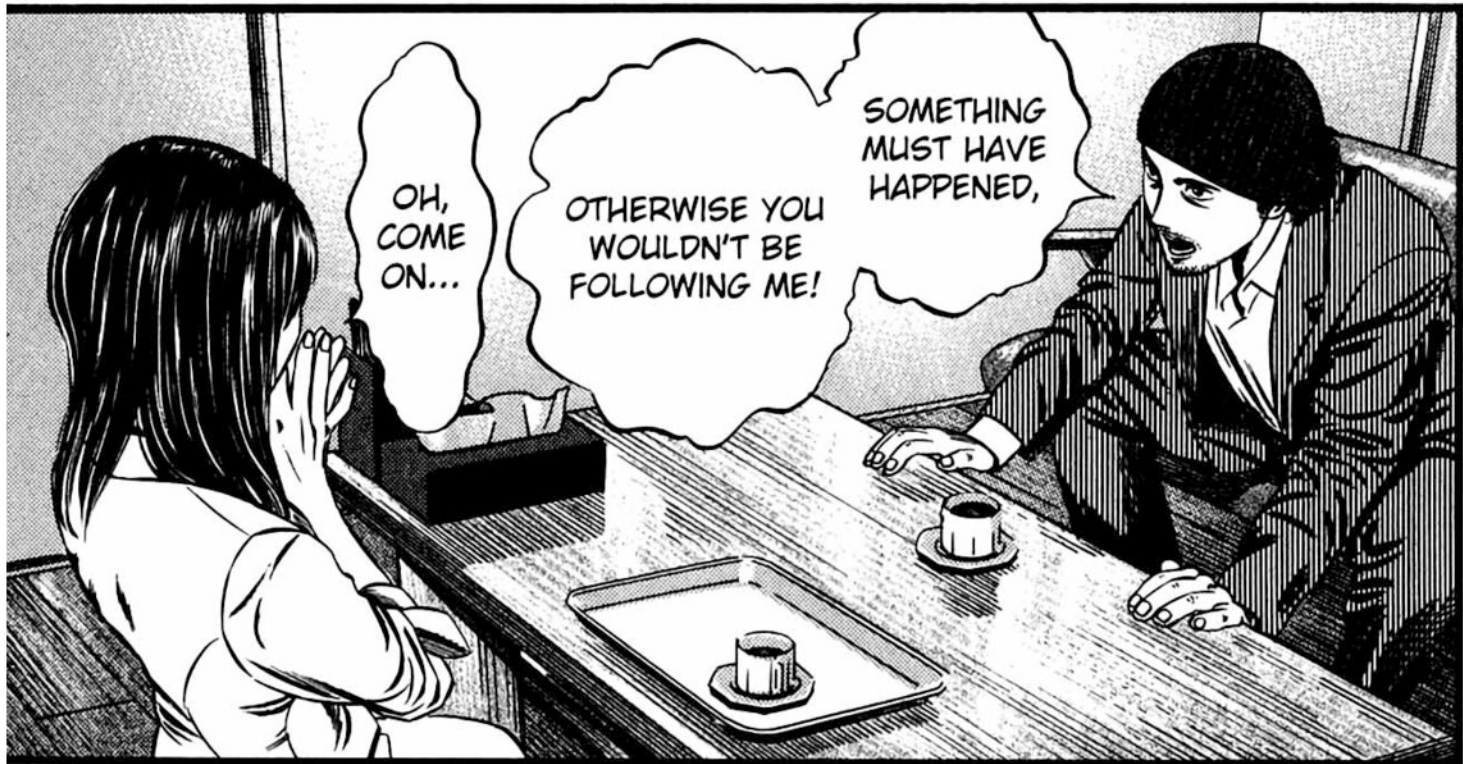




UHMM
MMM...



"WHAT"
HAPPENED
BETWEEN
US?



OH,
COME
ON...

OTHERWISE YOU
WOULDN'T BE
FOLLOWING ME!

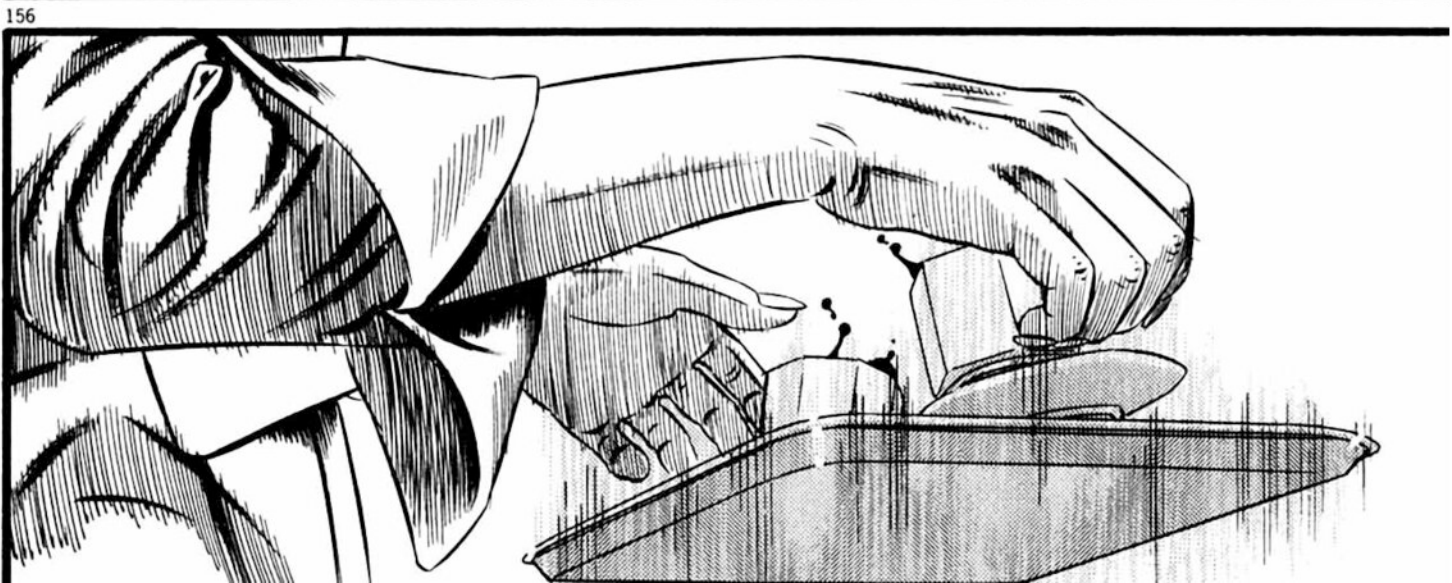
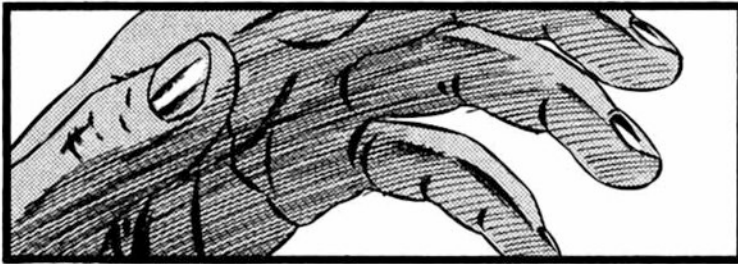
SOMETHING
MUST HAVE
HAPPENED,

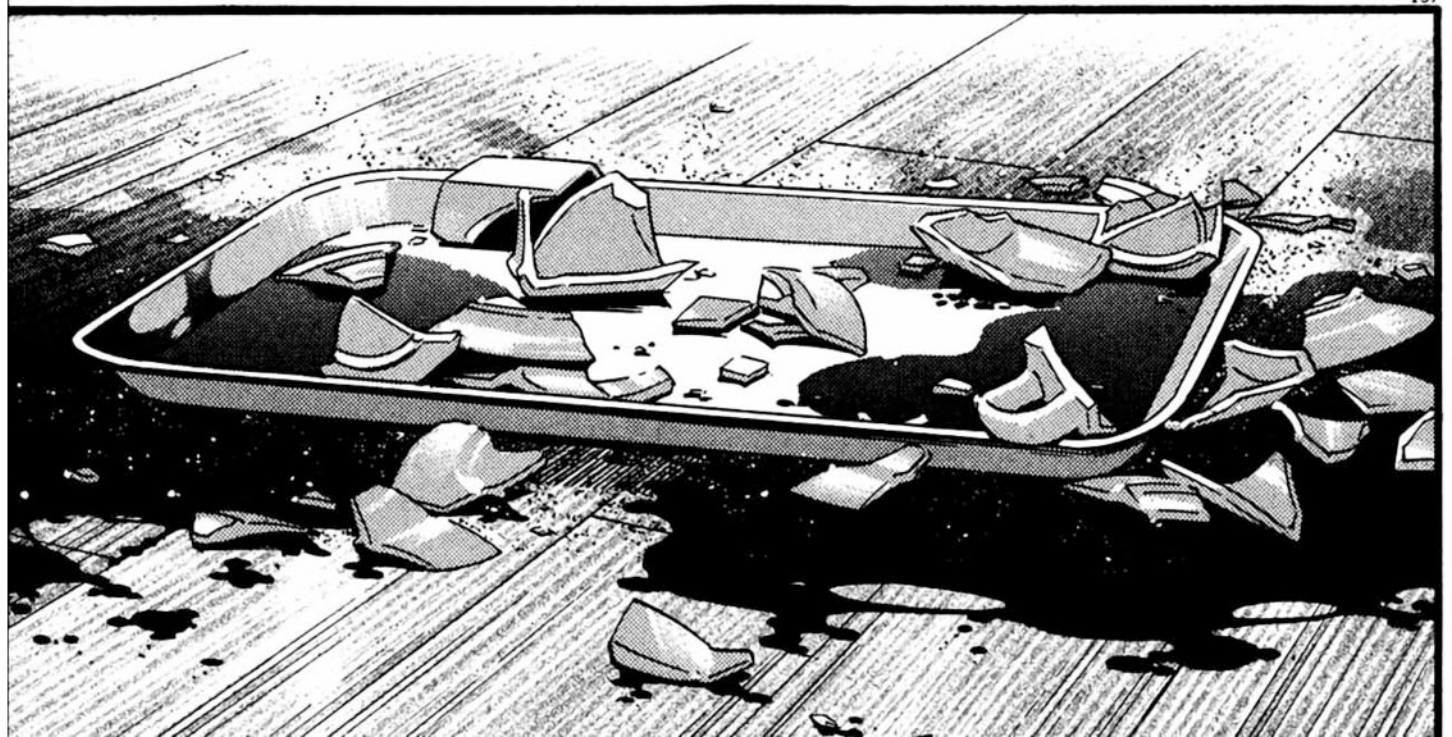


DID WE
KISS?



DI...







DID WE SLEEP TOGETHER?



TRYING TO

ARE YOU



!?

SEDUCE ME OR WHAT?



N...

NO!



IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU JUST WANT TO HAVE SEX WITH ME.



THAT'S A REALLY WEAK PICKUP LINE, YOU KNOW.

.....



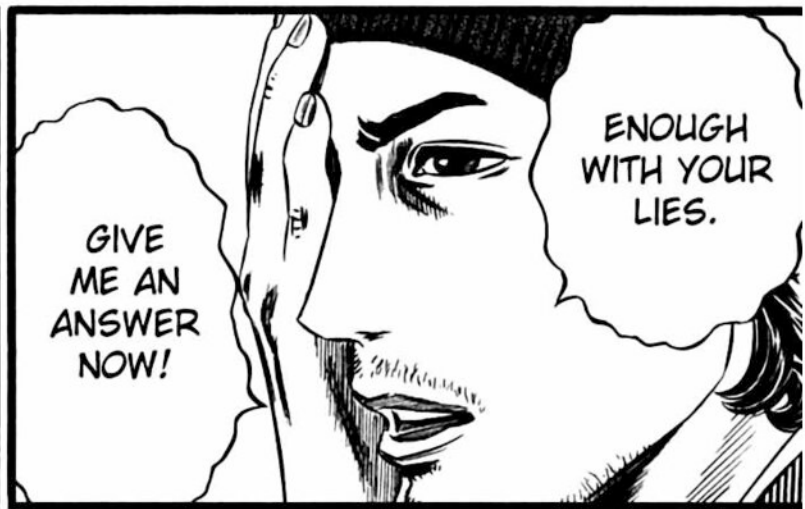
YOU'RE SO PETTY...
YOU ALREADY TOOK THE 5,000 YEN.

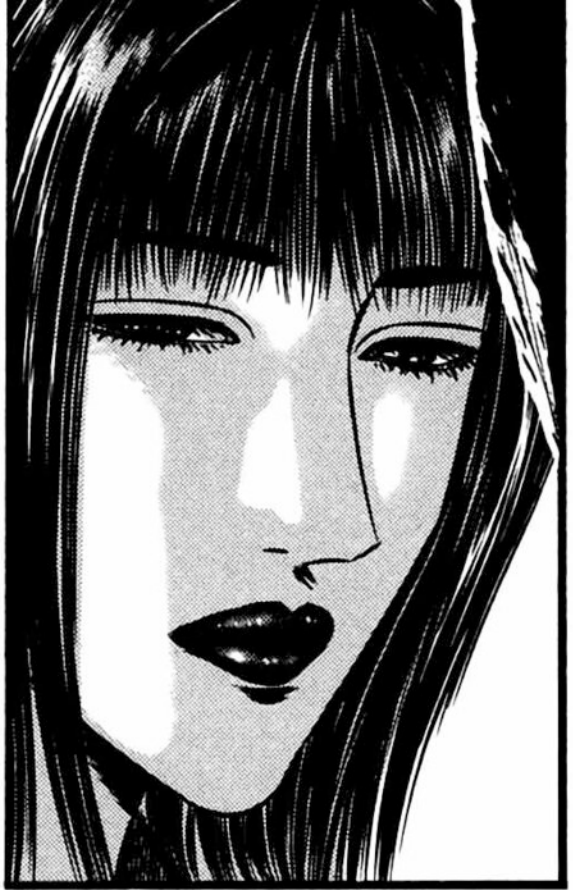


OR ARE YOU SAYING THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO TAKE ME UP ON MY OFFER TO SLEEP WITH YOU FOR GIVING ME A RIDE.



I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN US.
I'M NOT TRYING TO SEDUCE YOU.

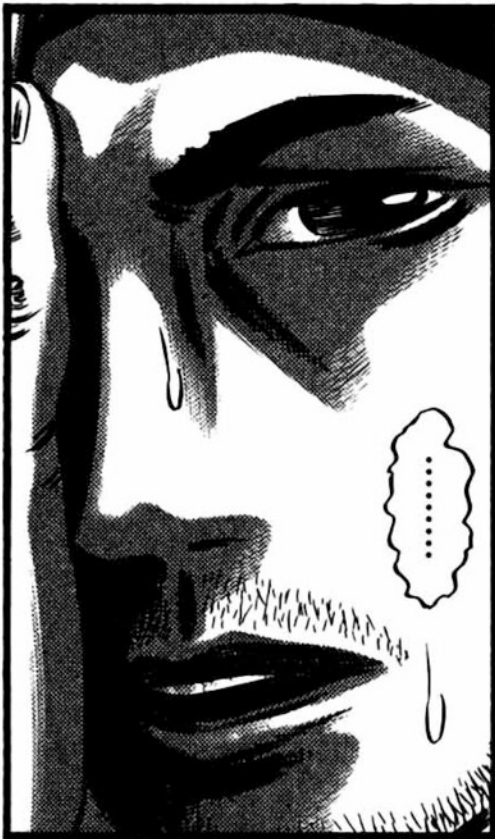






THEN JUST SAY SO.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO DO ME,



.....



WILL YOU STOP CALLING ME A LIAR?

WHAT'S WITH YOUR ACT?




WELL?



!?



SO?



HOW MUCH
ARE YOU
PAYING?

163

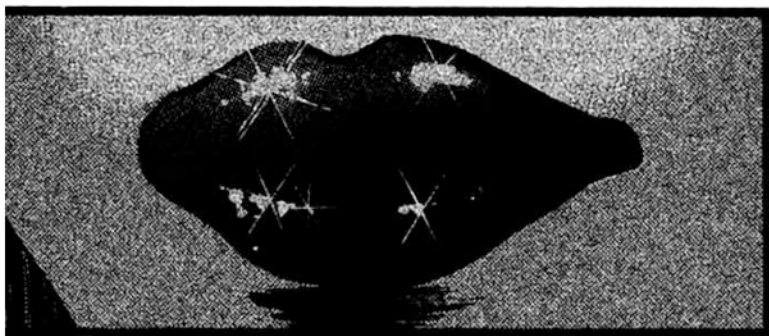
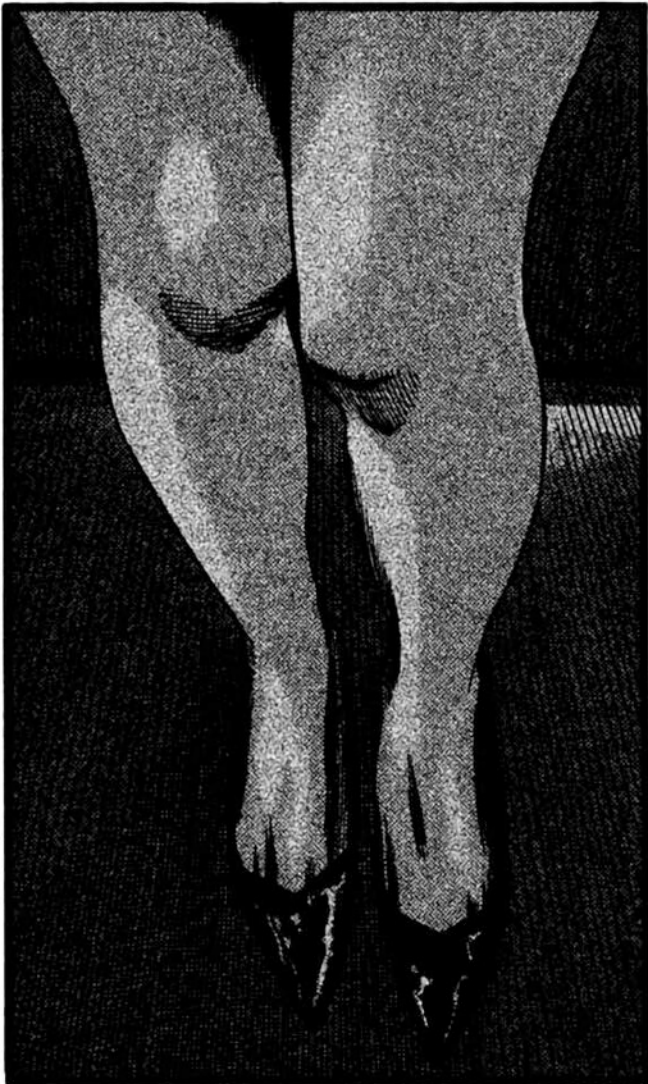
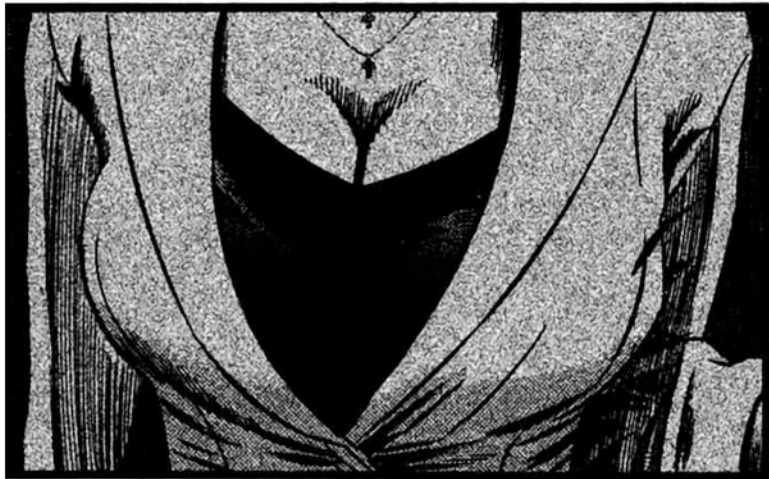


Shojo



164







STARING AT MY FACE?

WHY ARE YOU

IT'S NOT YOUR FACE.



.....
?



I'M LOOKING AT YOU,

NAKOSHI-SAN.



?



DO YOU SEE?

WHAT

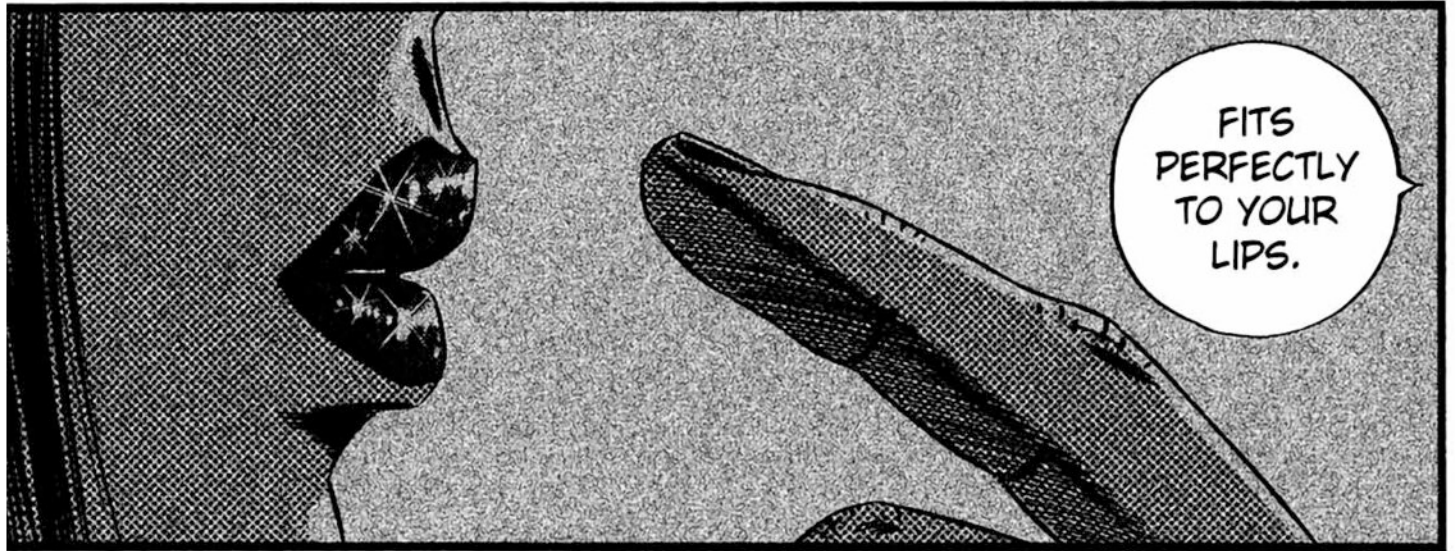
NAKOSHI-SAN,



THAT GLOSS



YEP.



FITS PERFECTLY TO YOUR LIPS.

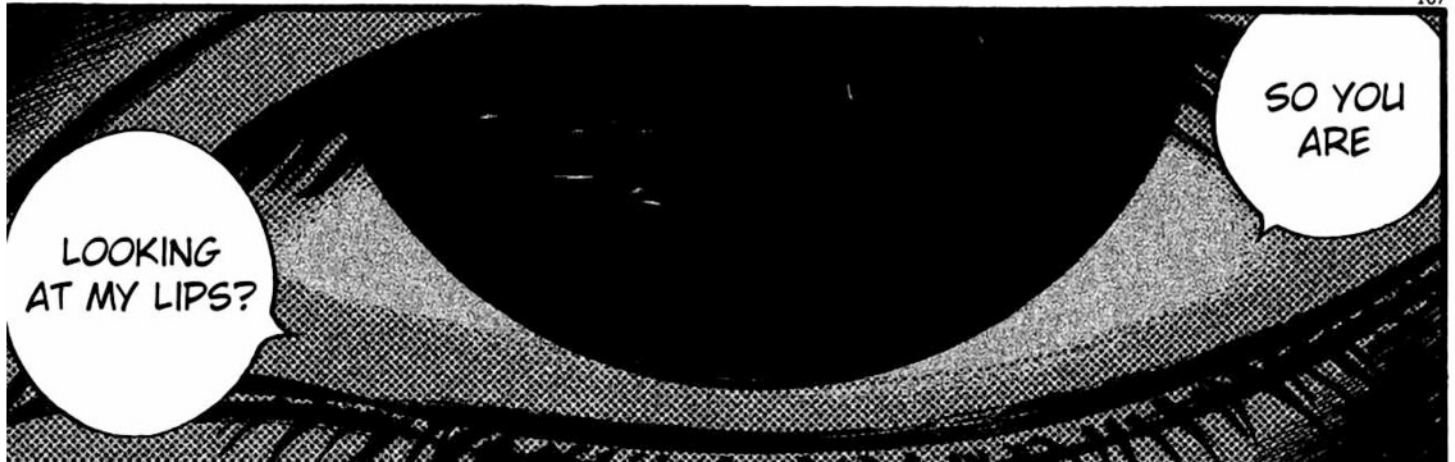


OH DEAR...



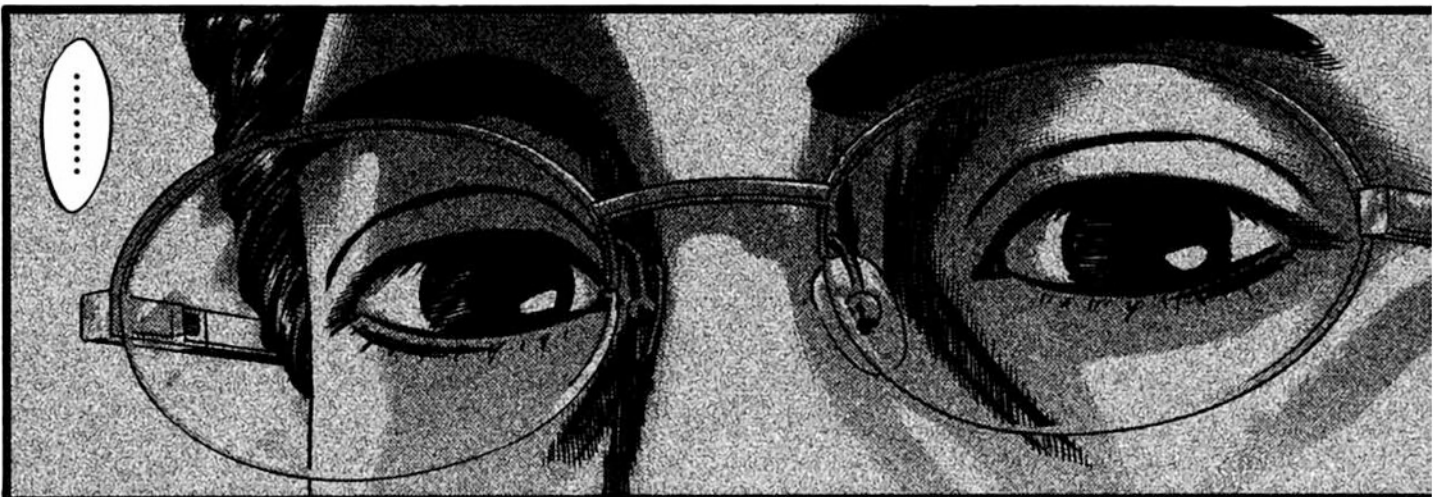
...

HEH



LOOKING AT MY LIPS?

SO YOU ARE



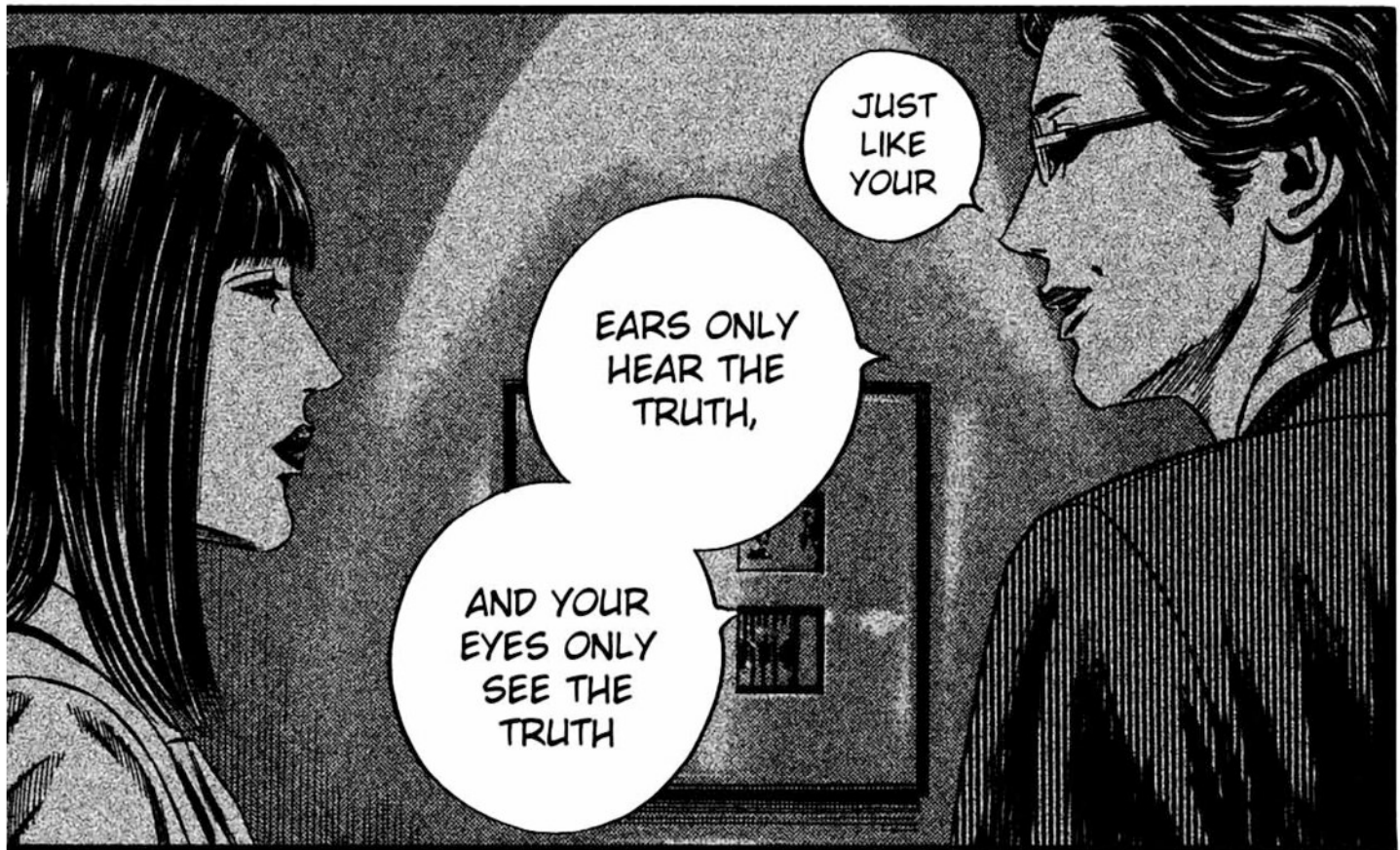


HUH?



I WAS
LOOKING AT
YOUR MOUTH
THAT ONLY
SPEAKS WHAT'S
REALLY

ON YOUR
MIND.



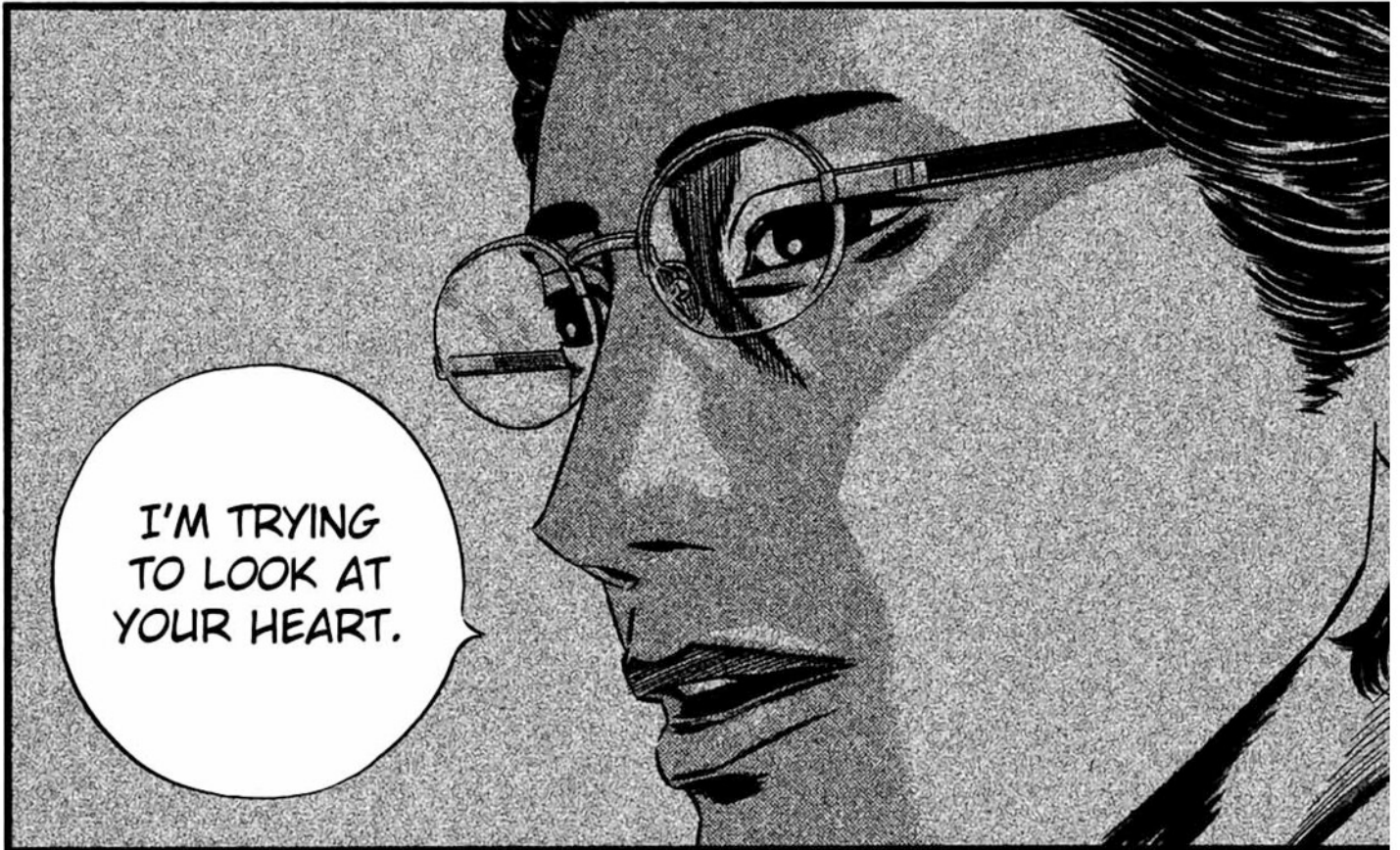
JUST
LIKE
YOUR

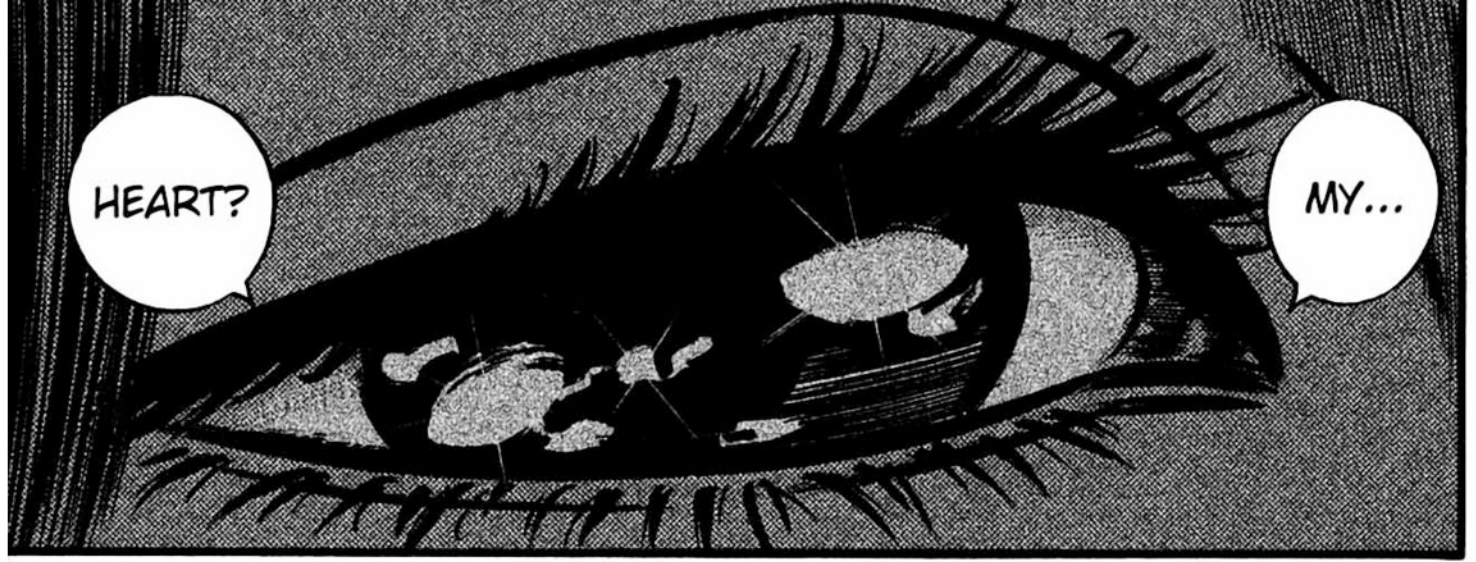
EARS ONLY
HEAR THE
TRUTH,

AND YOUR
EYES ONLY
SEE THE
TRUTH



AS YOU
PERCEIVE
ME...





HEART?

MY...



YEAH.



SEE HOW I FEEL...

HOW CAN YOU



.....

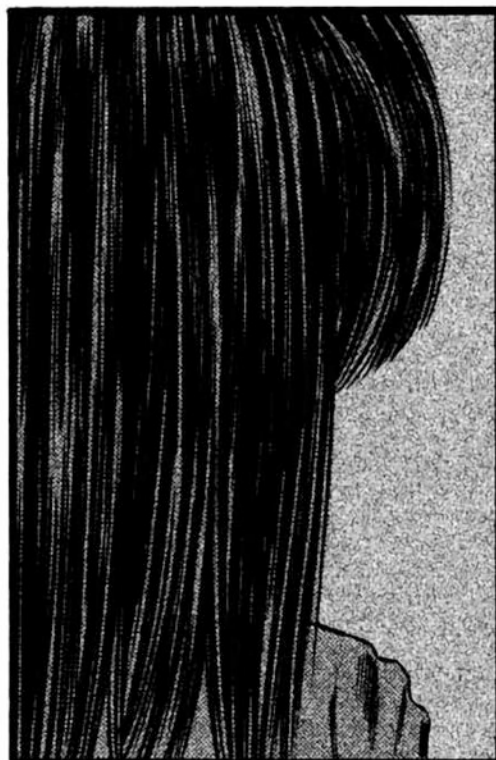
THAT'S ...





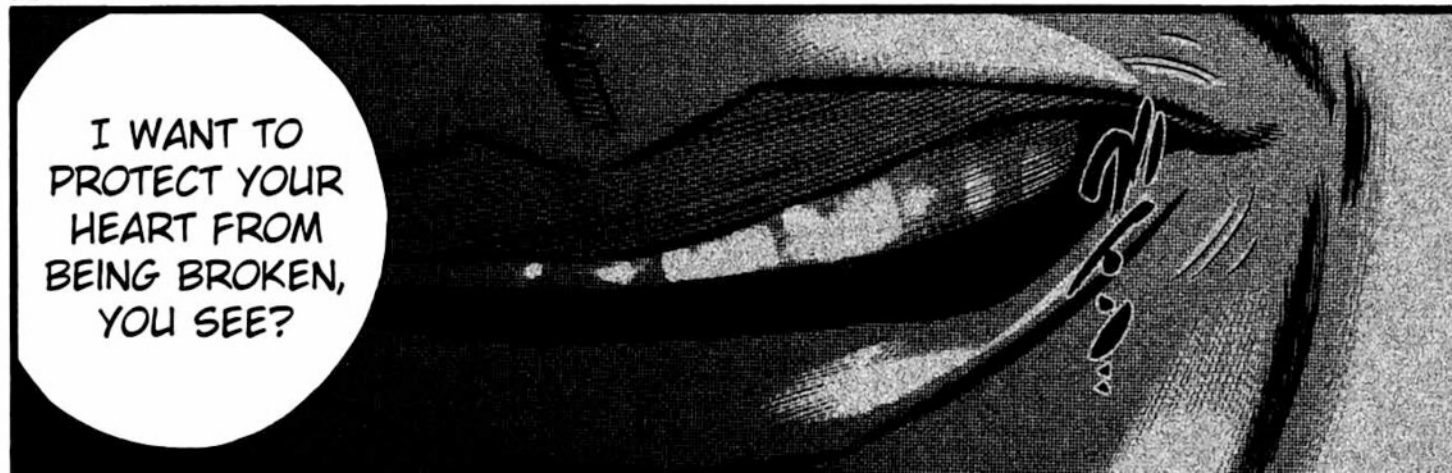
YOU'RE...

PURE AND
PRISTINE.
YOU WEAR
YOUR HEART ON
YOUR SLEEVE,
DON'T YOU?



BUT WHEN YOU
LEAVE EVERYTHING
OUT IN THE
OPEN AND YOU'RE
MISUNDERSTOOD,

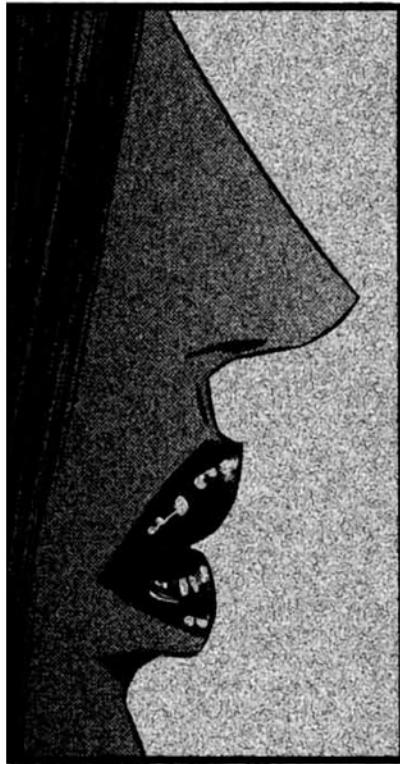
OF COURSE
YOU END UP
GETTING HURT.
THERE'S A PART
OF YOU THAT'S
AS FRAIL AS GLASS
AND IS DEEPLY
WOUNDED.



I WANT TO
PROTECT YOUR
HEART FROM
BEING BROKEN,
YOU SEE?



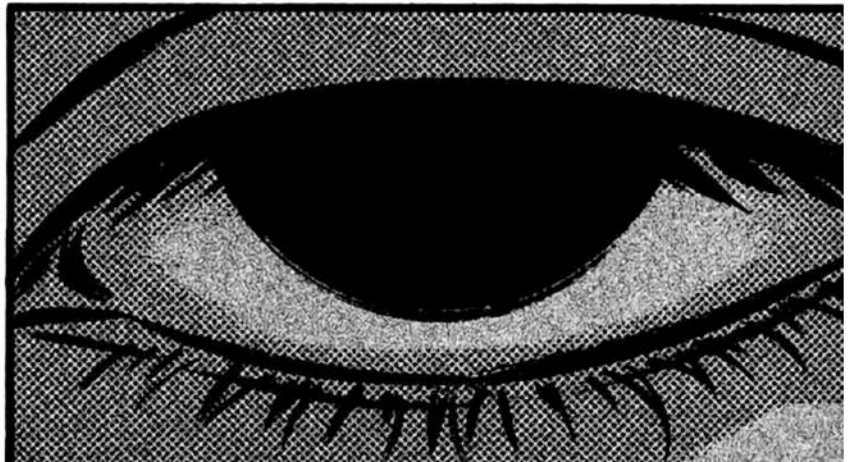
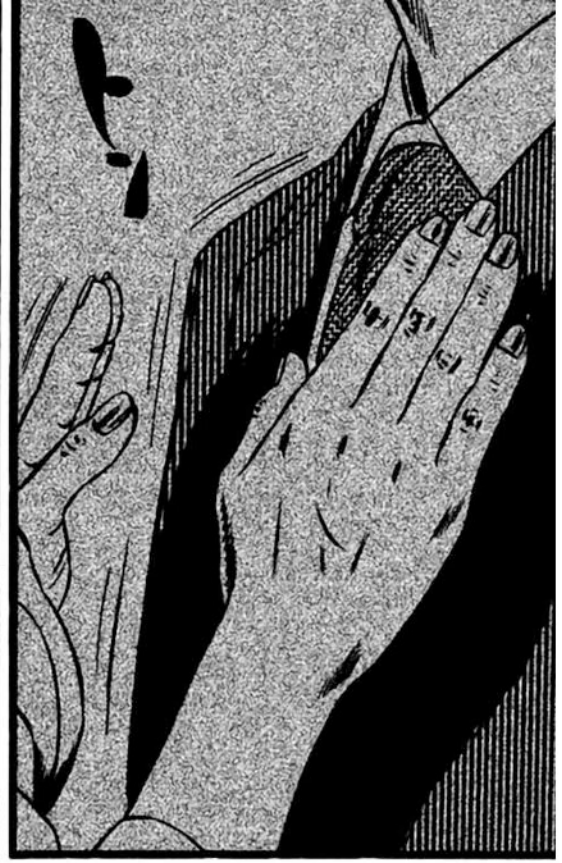
I'M
SERIOUS.



I DON'T
WANT TO
GO BACK
TONIGHT.



COME ON,
OPEN YOURSELF
UP TO ME.





?



I TOLD YOU EARLIER.

SMILE



I CAN'T KISS LIPS

OF A LIAR.

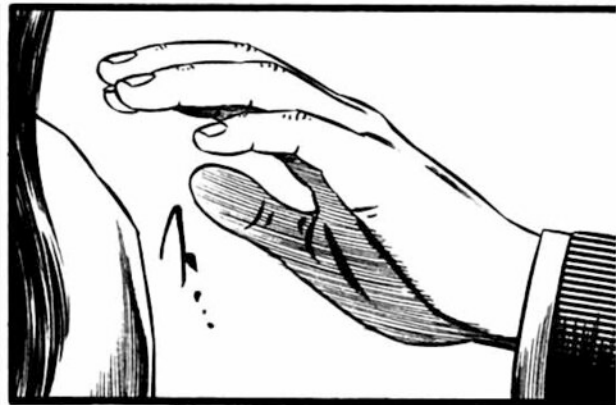


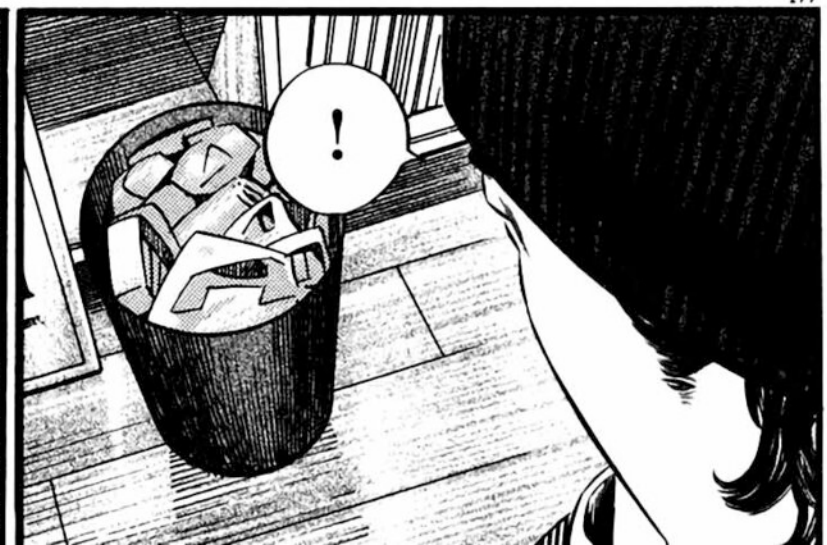
YOU THINK I'D DO YOU JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE MONEY?



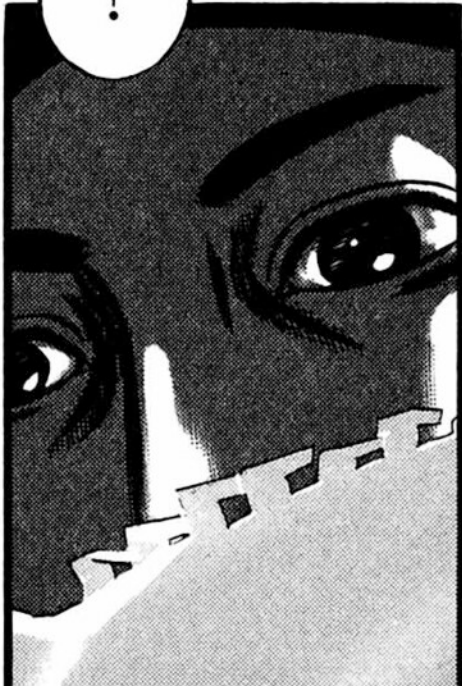
HAHA...







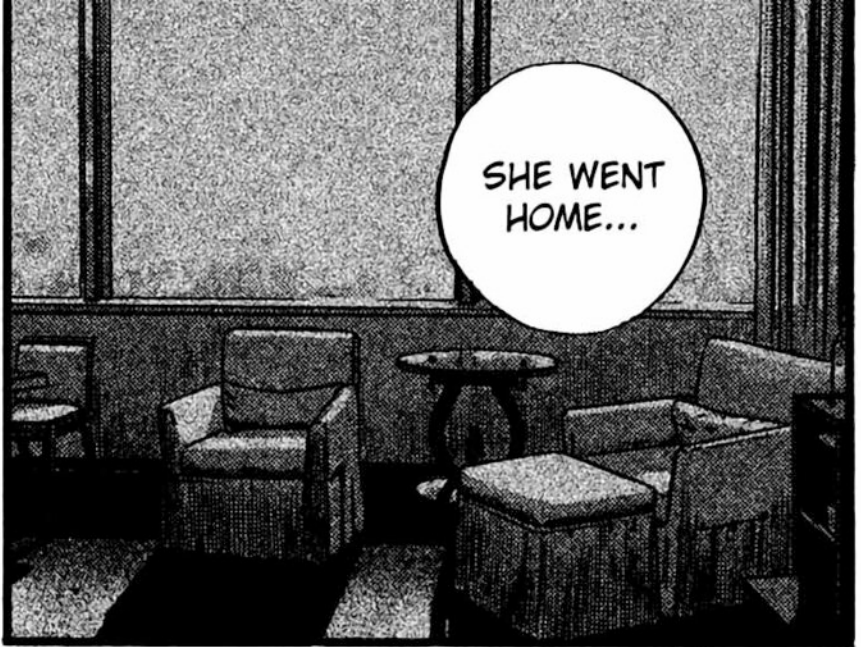






180







182





WHA...

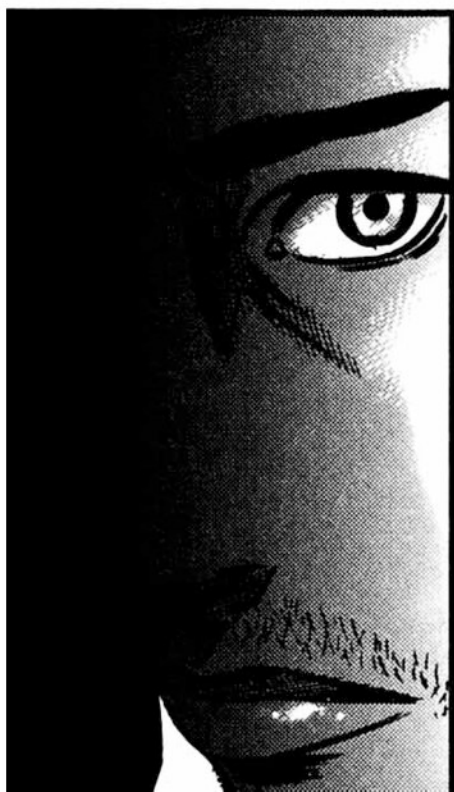
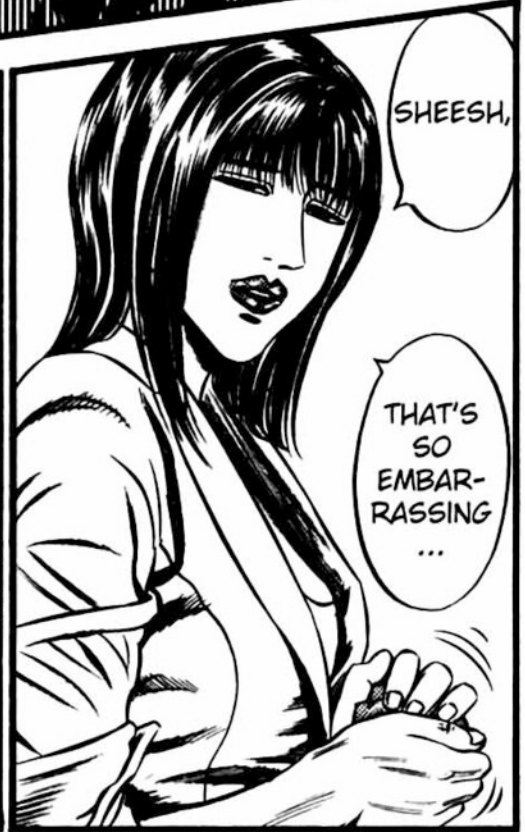


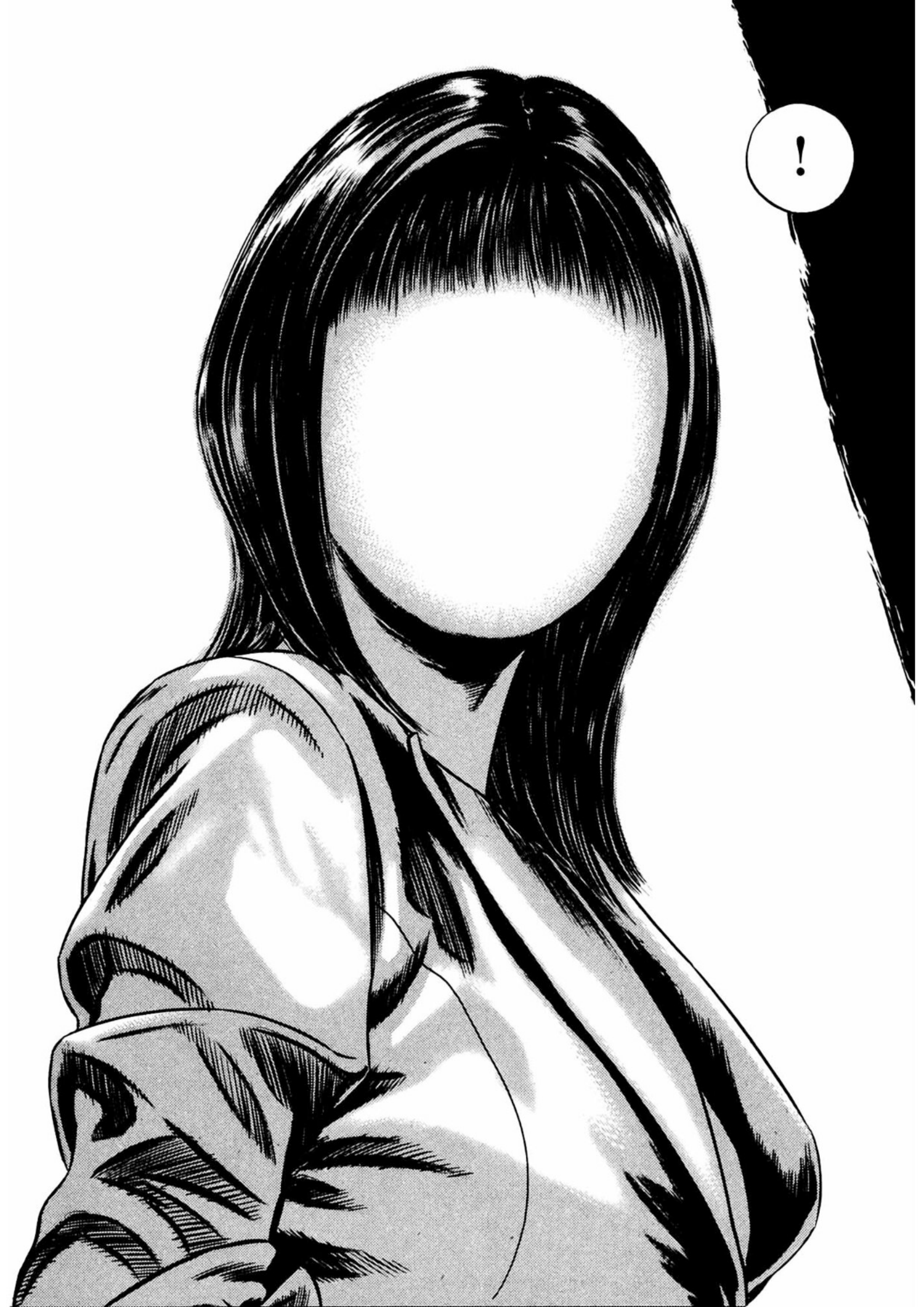
WHAT THE HELL...

IS THIS!?











I
KNEW
IT.

YOU'RE
NANAHO.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIE TO ME.

YOU CAN SEE THEM, RIGHT?

?



NANA WHO?



!?



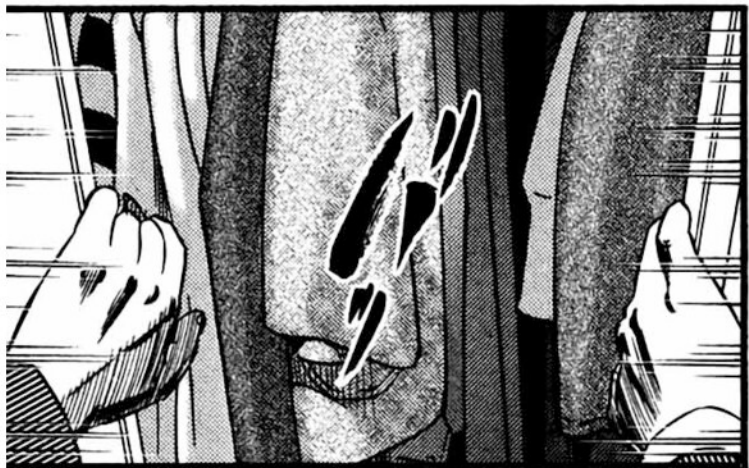
I KNOW YOU CAN SEE "THEM"!!



YOU DREW ME LIKE THAT SO MANY TIMES BEFORE!



ARE YOU SURE YOU AREN'T MIXING ME UP WITH SOMEONE ELSE?



WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



OH, I KNOW.

LEAN

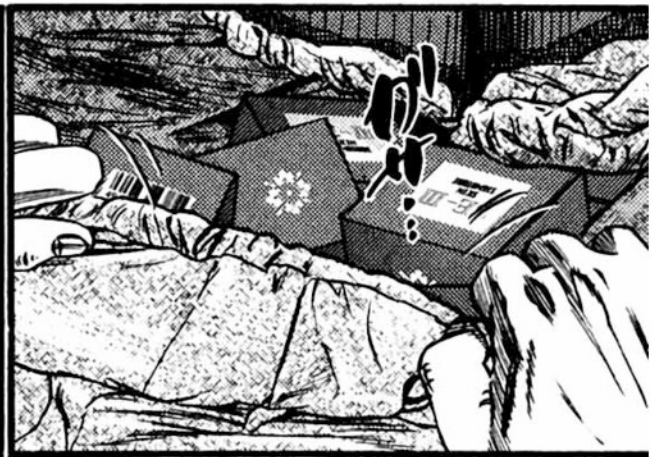


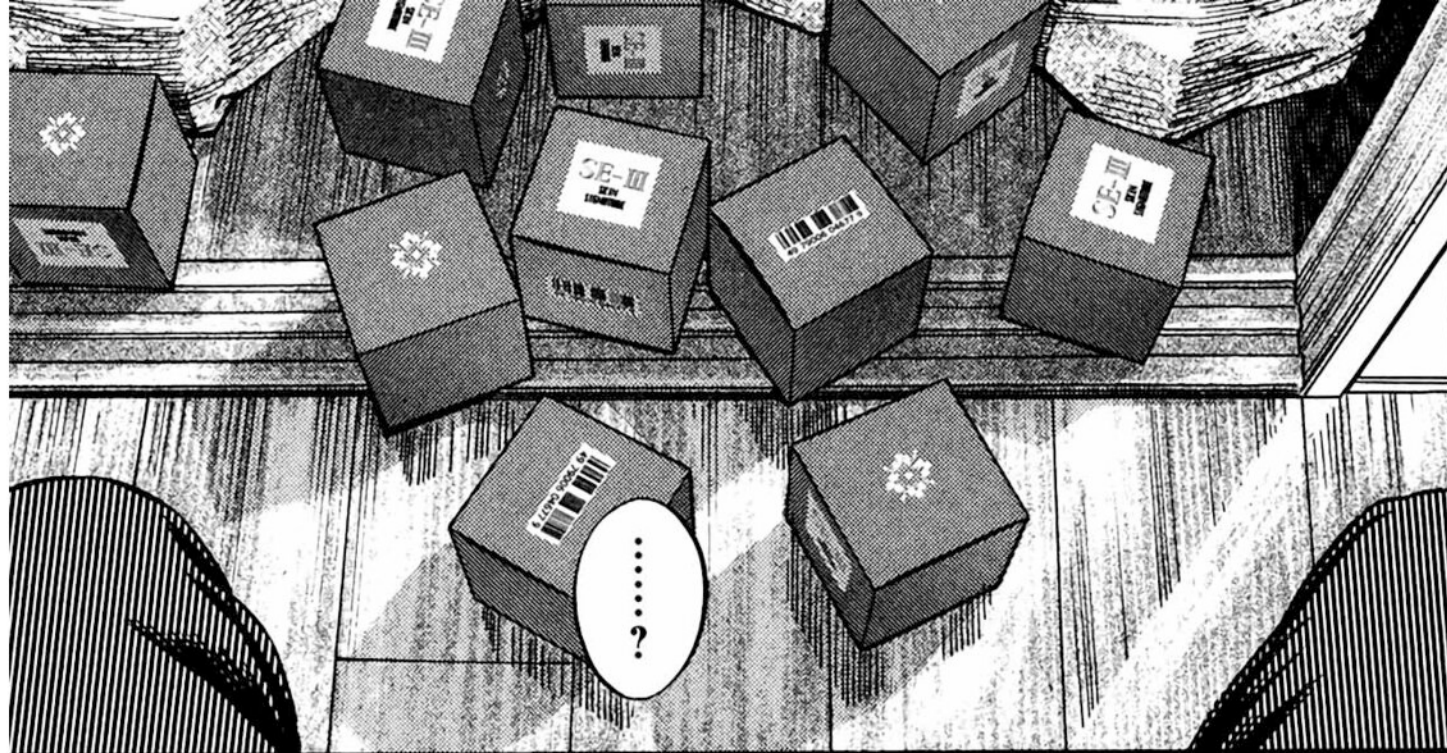
PLEASE, WILL YOU CUT THIS OUT?

WHERE'S THE SKETCH WHERE YOU DREW ME?

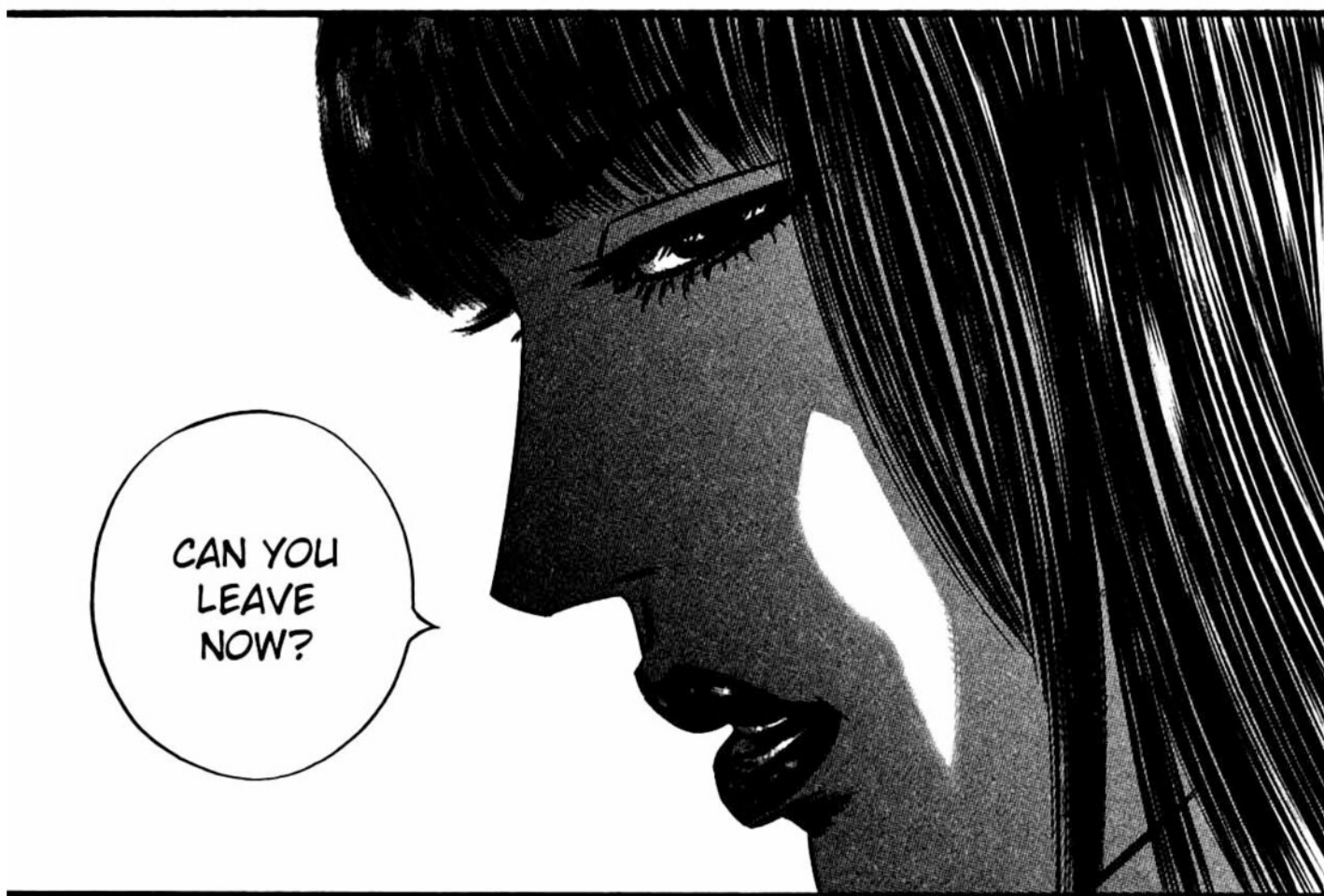


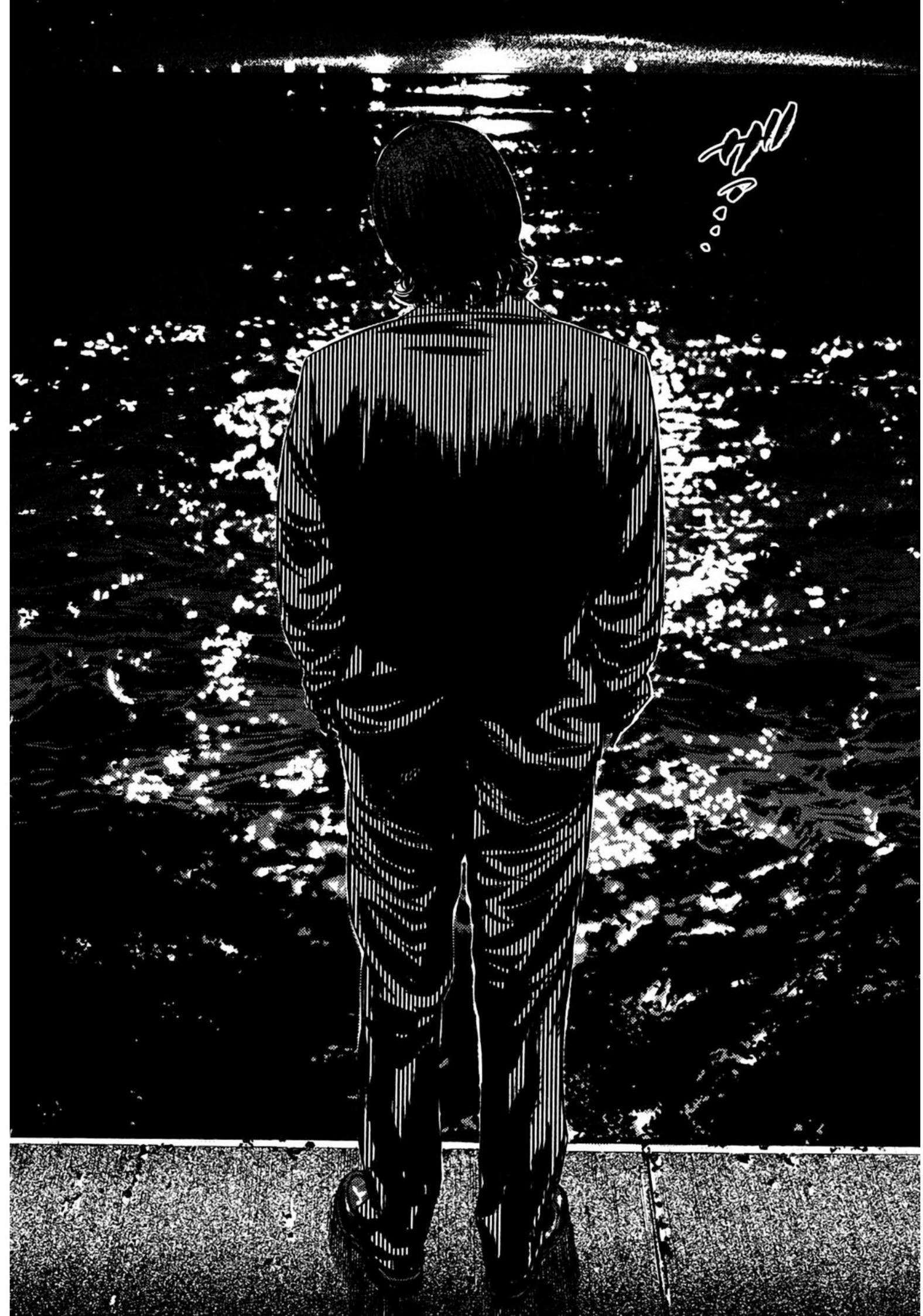
THERE'S NOTHING THERE!

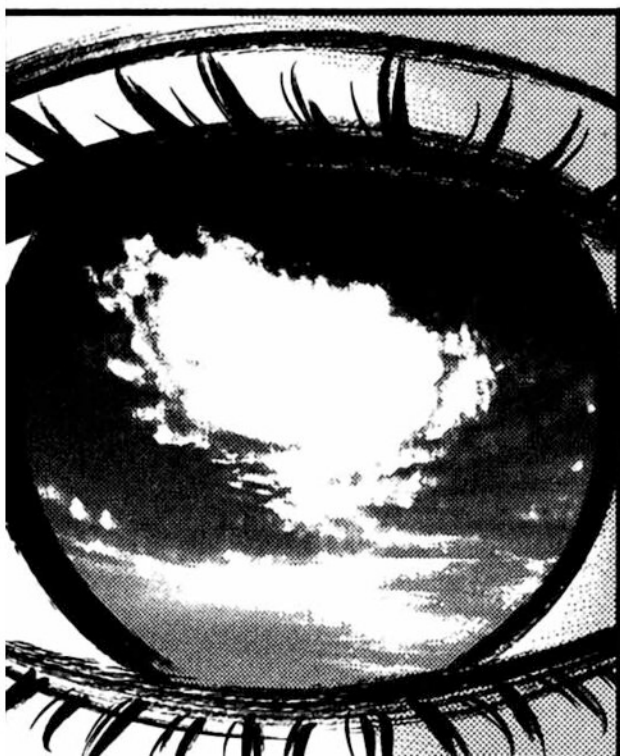


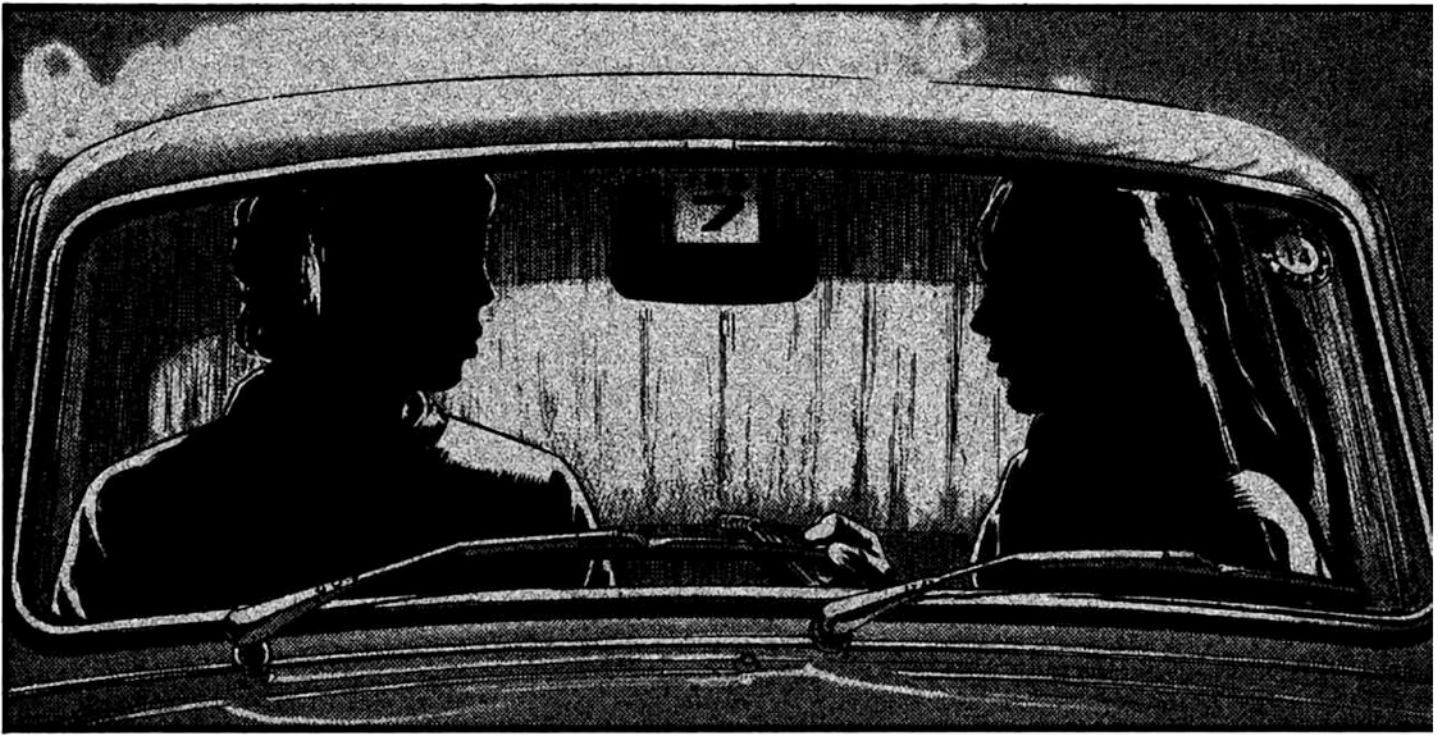
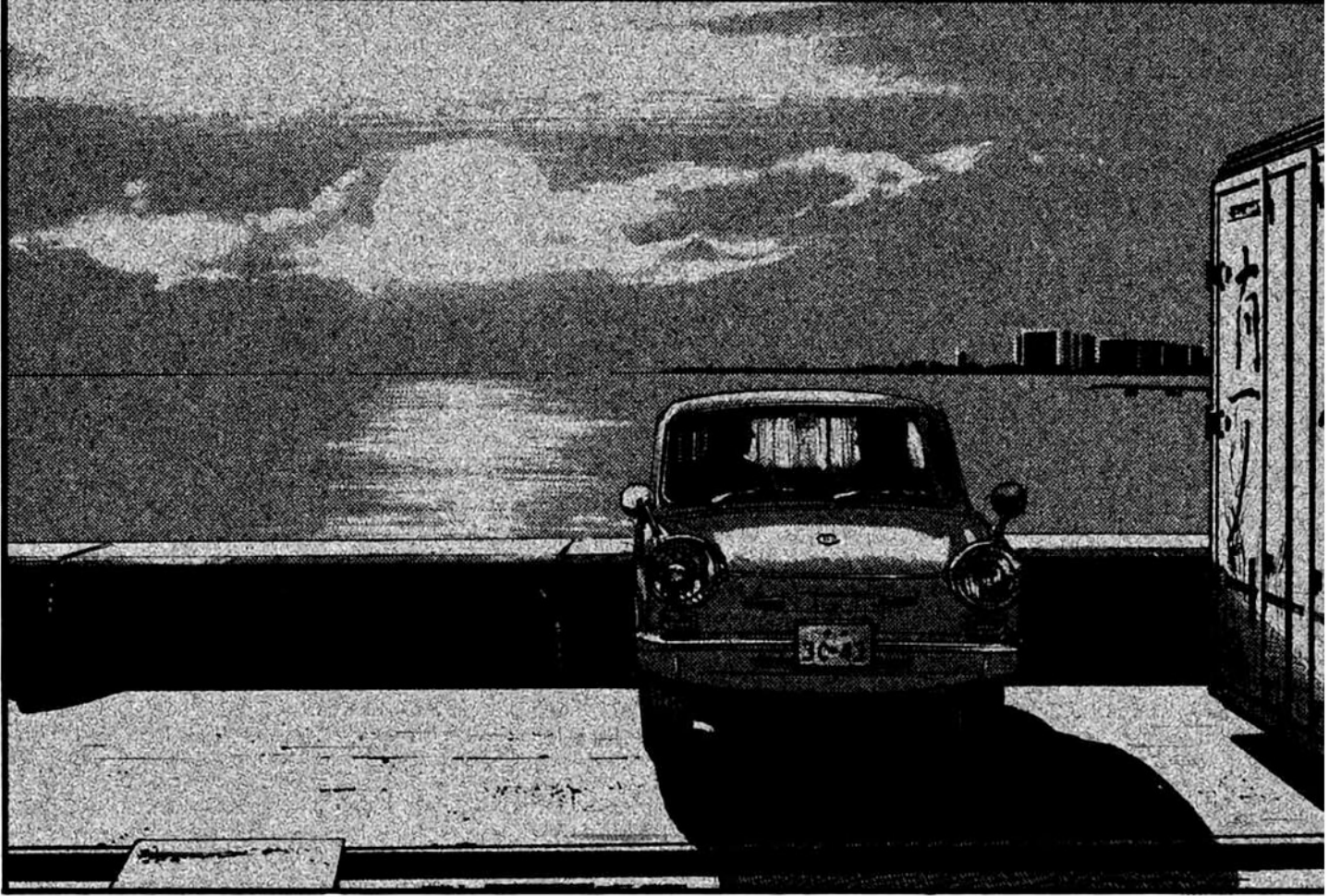




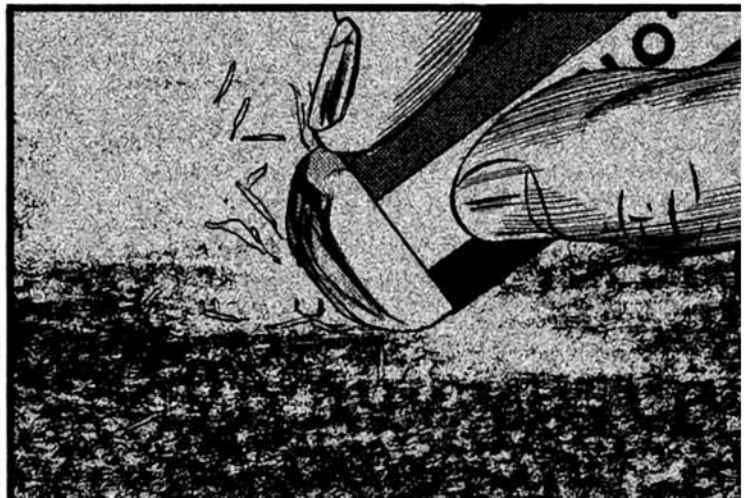








96

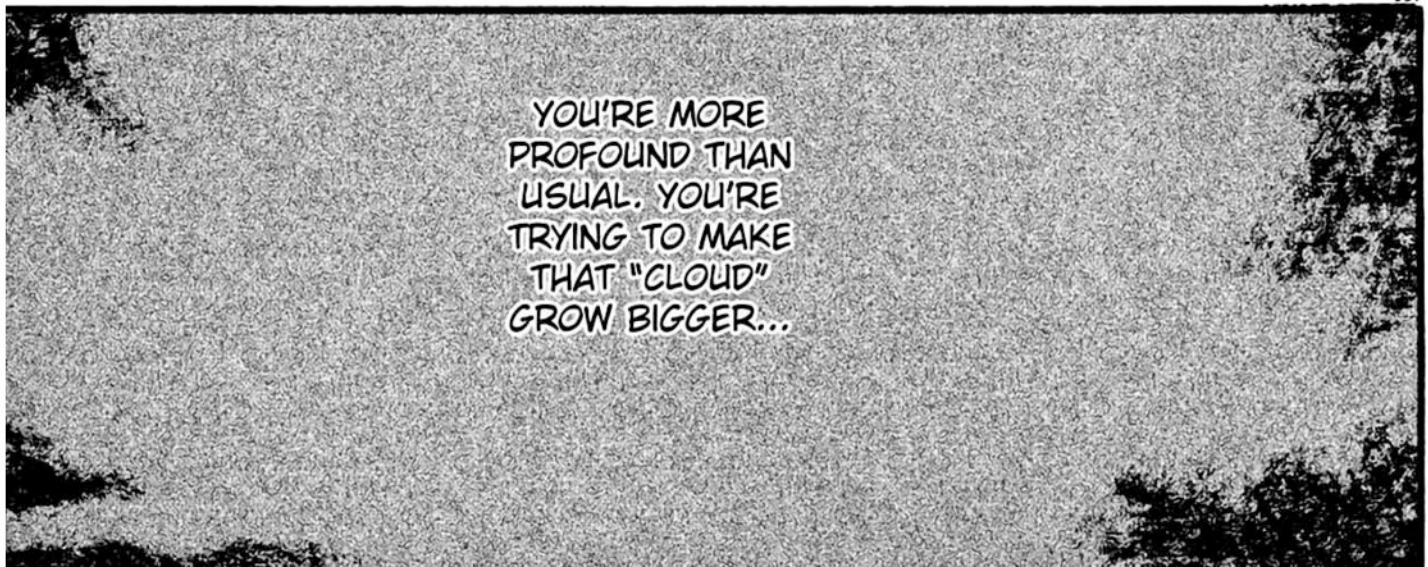




ARE
YOU JUST
SORTING
OUT YOUR
FEELINGS?



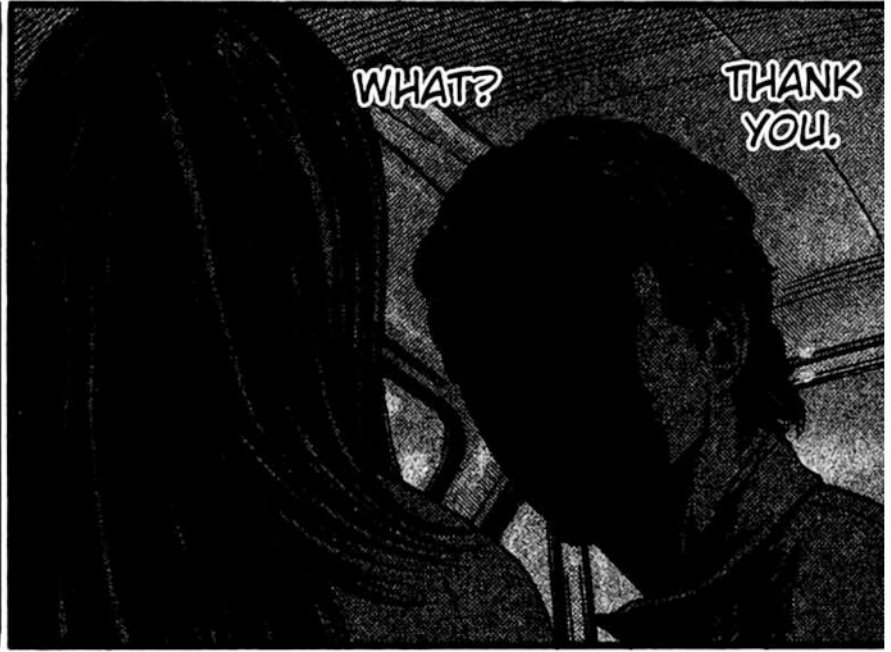
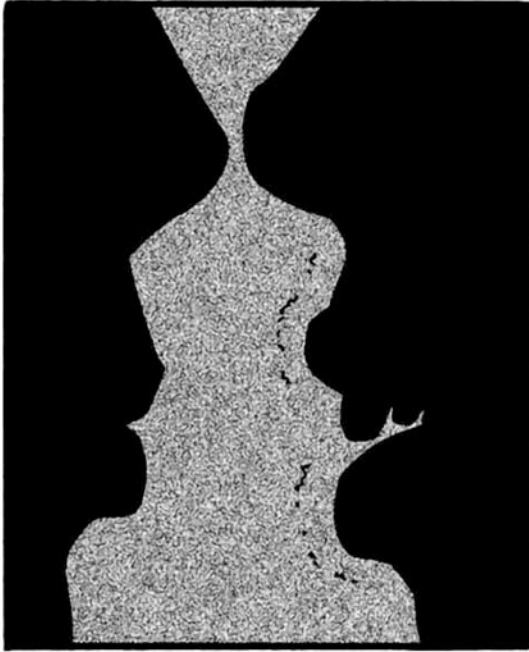
NAKOSHI-SAN,
ARE YOU
NERVOUS?



YOU'RE MORE
PROFOUND THAN
USUAL. YOU'RE
TRYING TO MAKE
THAT "CLOUD"
GROW BIGGER...



IT'S SO
PRETTY...



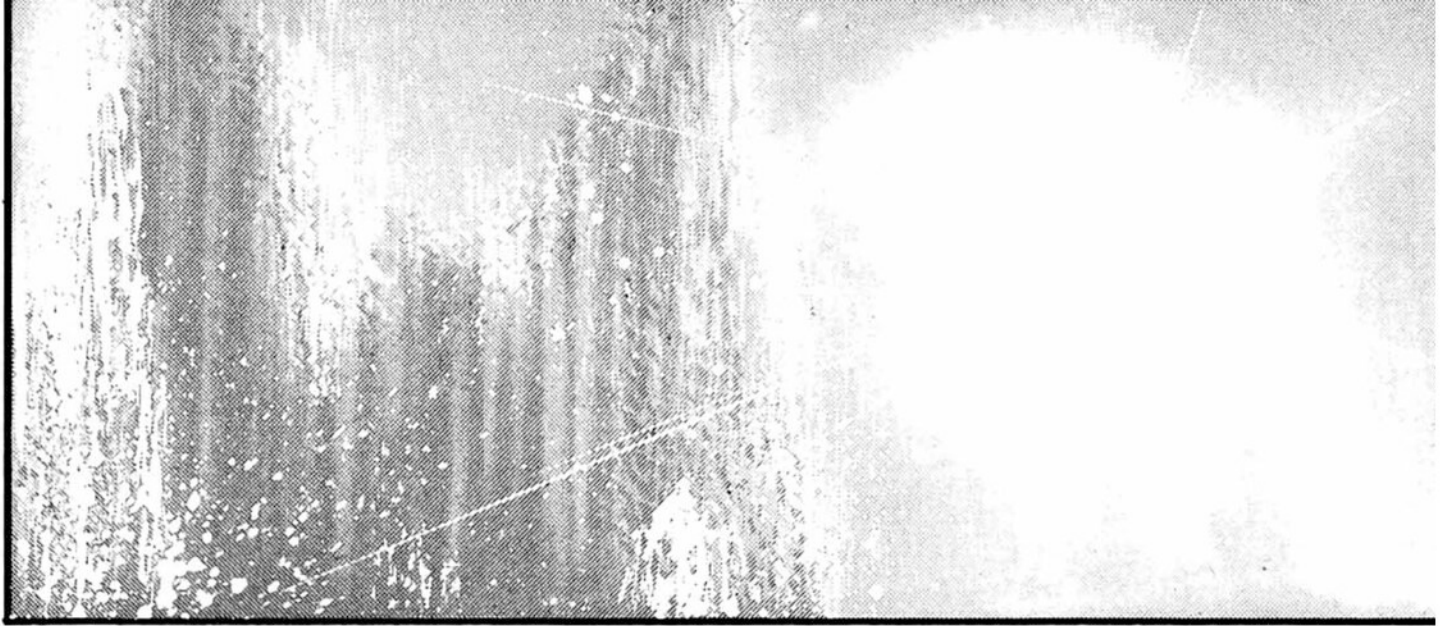
WHAT?

THANK
YOU.

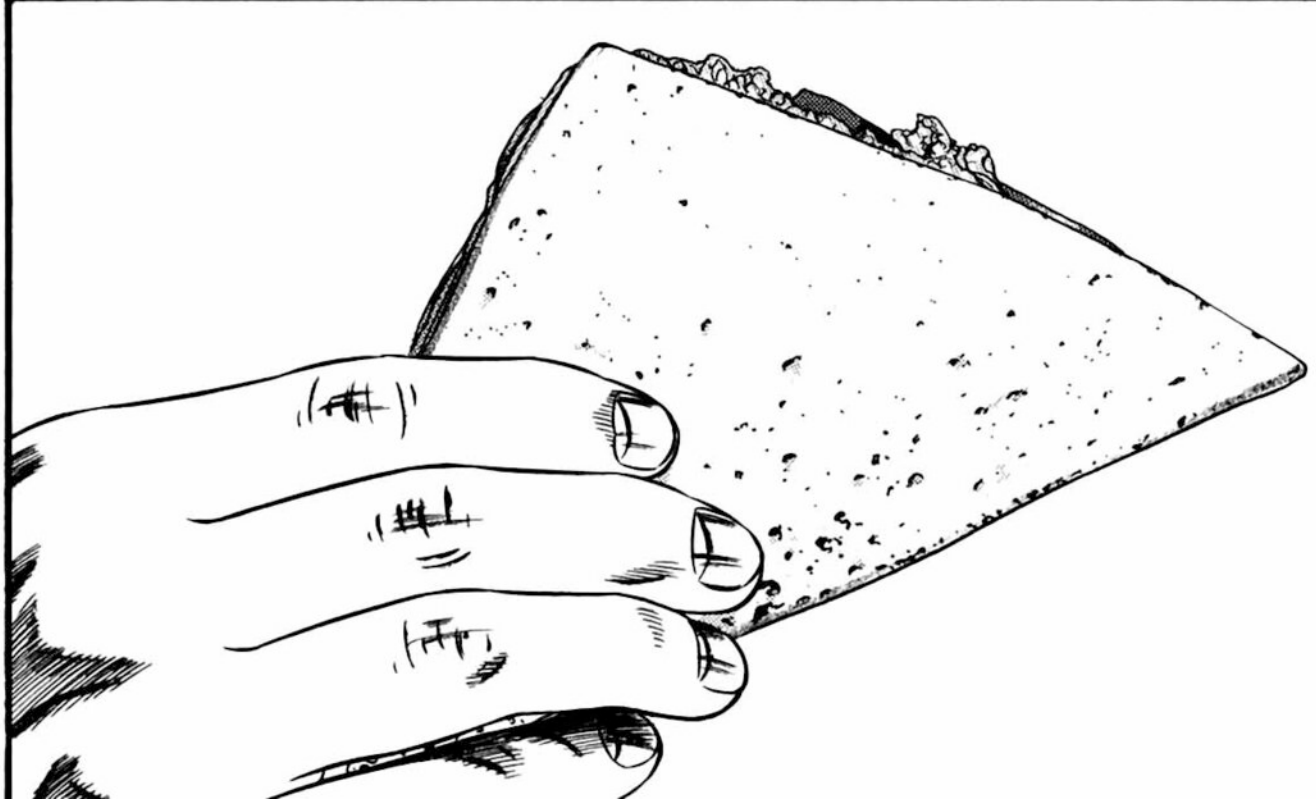
198

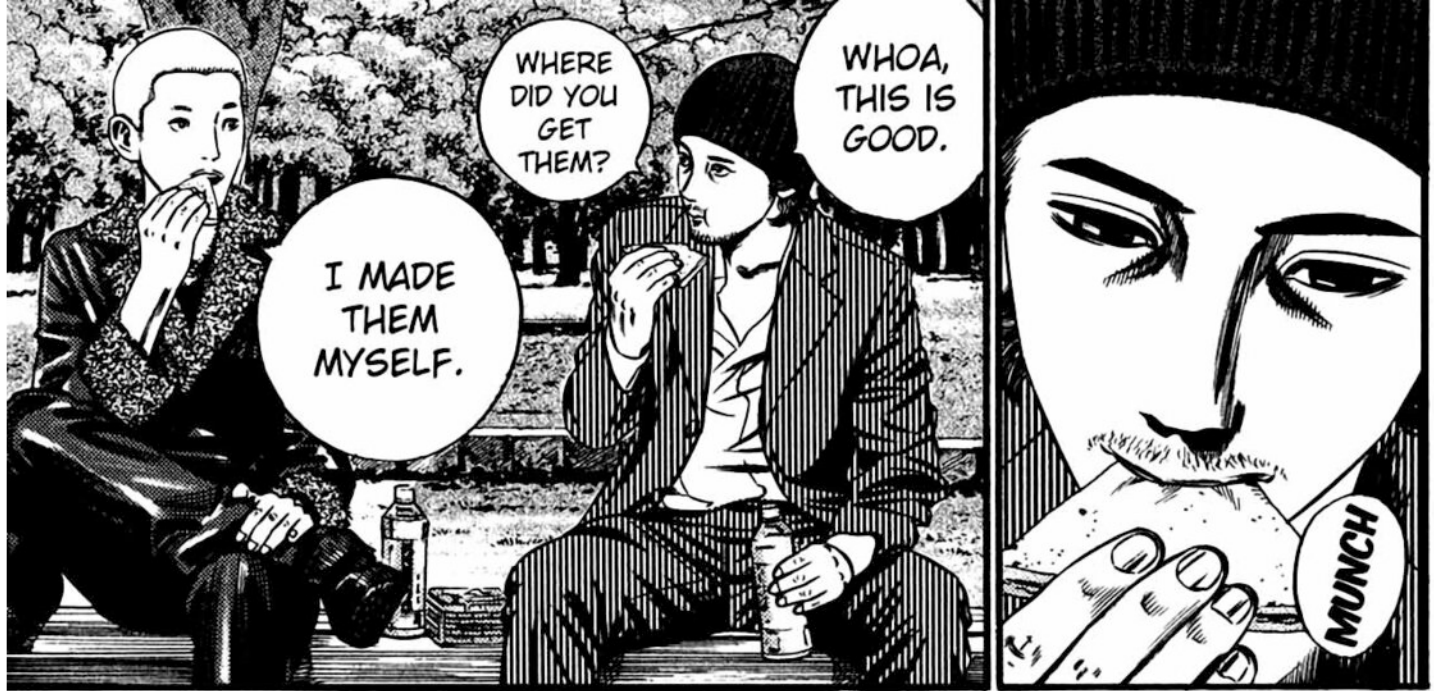






200



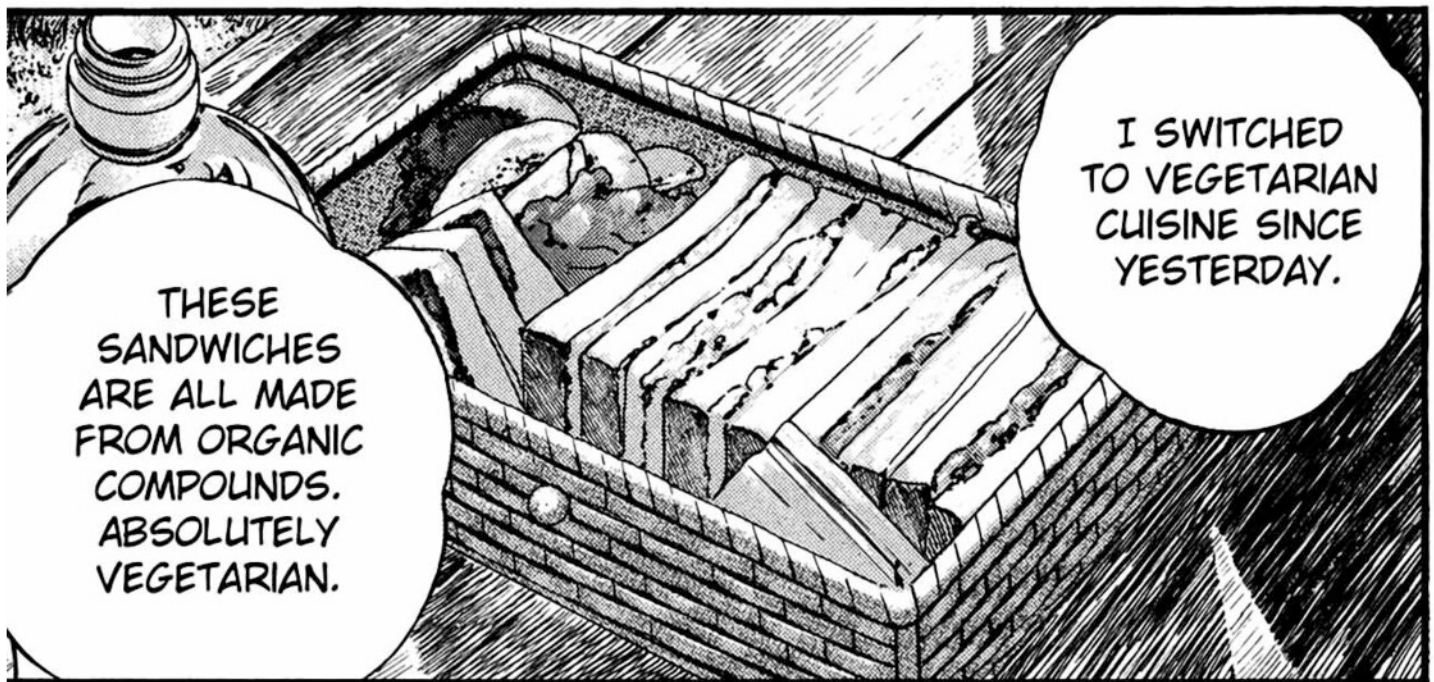


I MADE THEM MYSELF.

WHERE DID YOU GET THEM?

WHOA, THIS IS GOOD.

MUNCH



THESE SANDWICHES ARE ALL MADE FROM ORGANIC COMPOUNDS. ABSOLUTELY VEGETARIAN.

I SWITCHED TO VEGETARIAN CUISINE SINCE YESTERDAY.



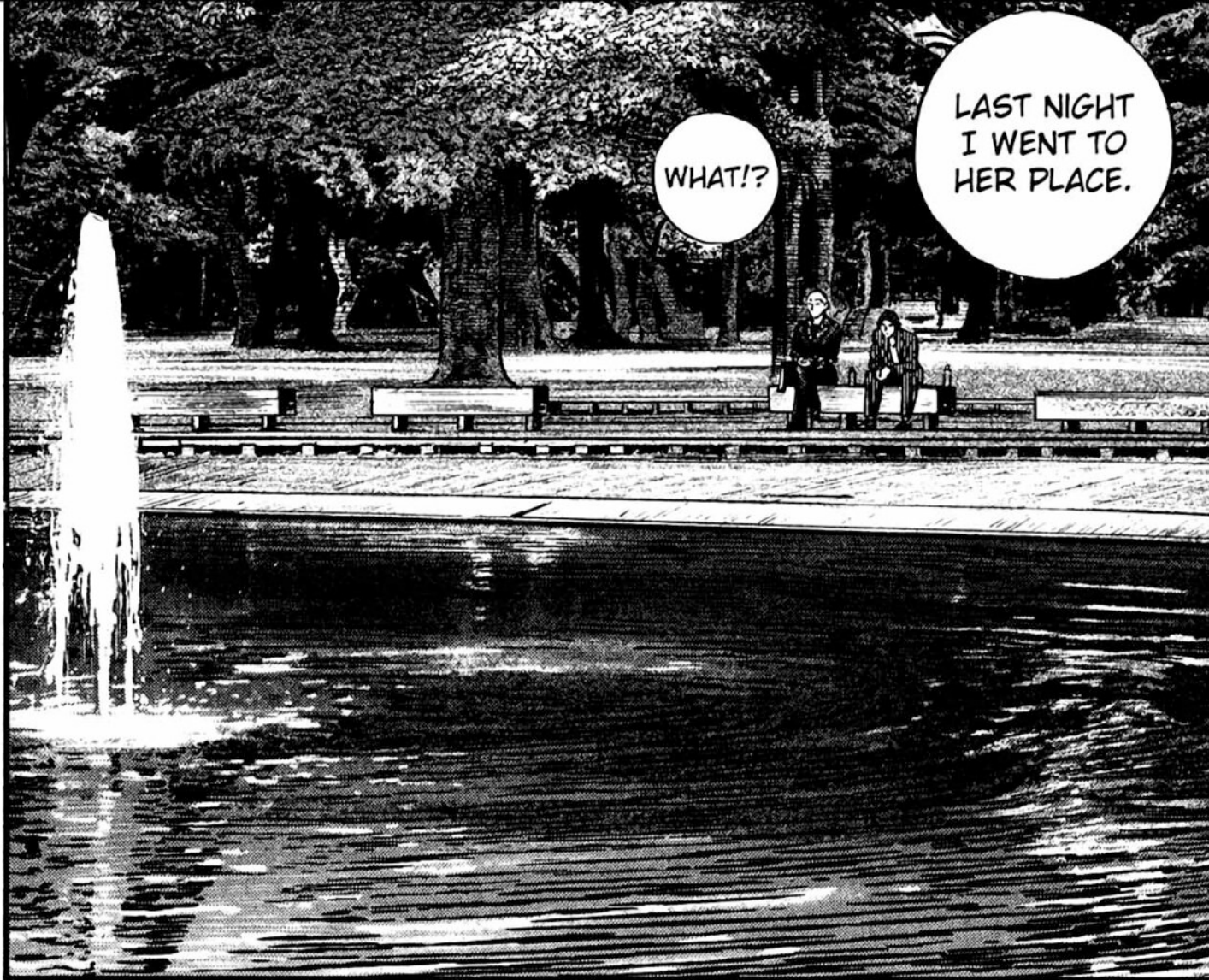
WHAT?

AHA...

SPEAKING OF WHICH, I THINK YOU LOST SOME WEIGHT.

REALLY?

RE...



WHAT!?

LAST NIGHT
I WENT TO
HER PLACE.

202



!



I REMEMBERED
EVERYTHING
THAT HAPPENED
THAT TIME.



DID YOU
SLEEP
WITH
HER?

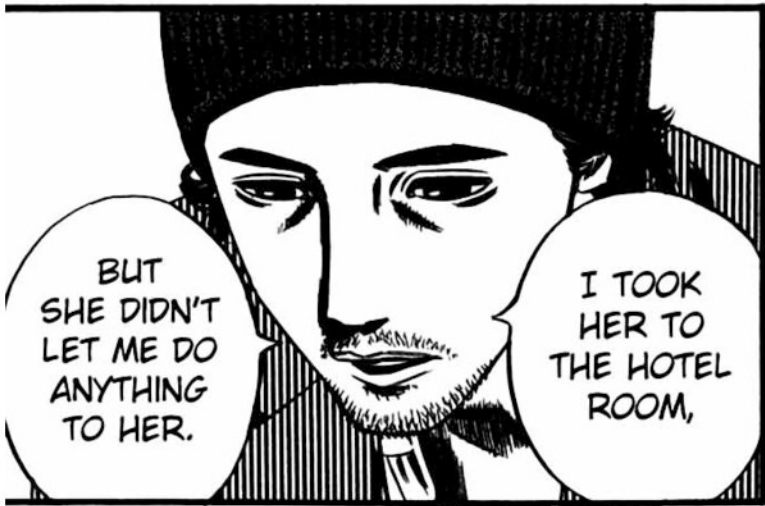
SO...



NAH, I
DIDN'T.



WHAT HAPPENED?



BUT SHE DIDN'T LET ME DO ANYTHING TO HER.

I TOOK HER TO THE HOTEL ROOM,



I DIDN'T LAY A FINGER ON HER.



ARE YOU SERIOUS?



OF YOUR SLEEPING FACE?

A SKETCH



!

I FOUND A SKETCH OF MY SLEEPING FACE.

WHEN I WOKE UP NEXT MORNING,



SHE PAINTED
MY "FACE" AS
PITCH BLACK.

IN OTHER
WORDS, THE
SKETCH OF A
NOPPERABOU.

204



A PITCH
BLACK
FACELESS
GHOST,
HUH?

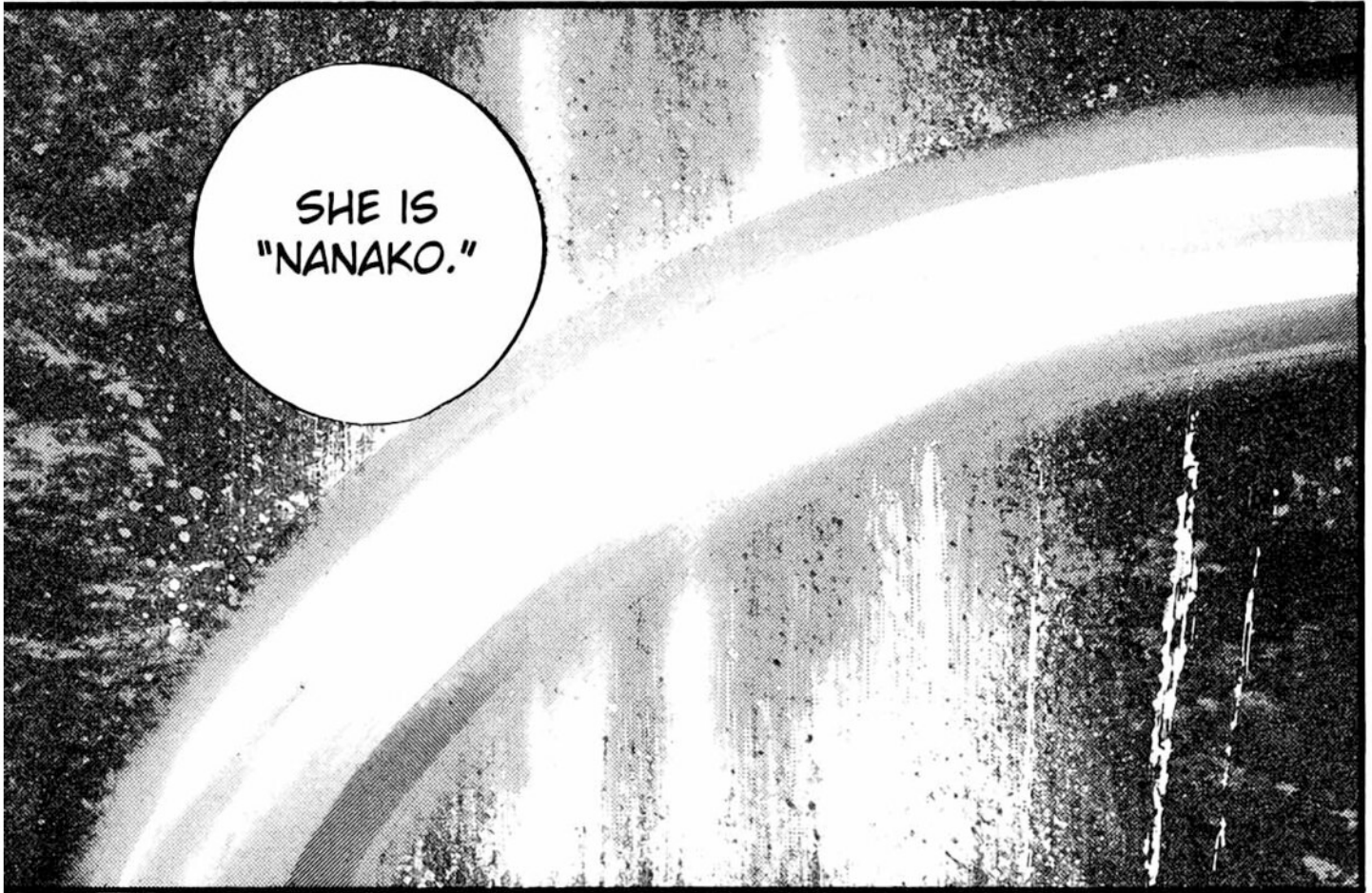


黒い顔の
幽霊



WOULD
DRAW SUCH
PICTURES.

ONLY
NANAKO



SHE IS
"NANAKO."



WEREN'T
YOU A
"CLOUD"?

BUT
NAKOSHI-
SAN,



THERE'S
NO MIS-
TAKE,
IT'S HER
PAINTING.

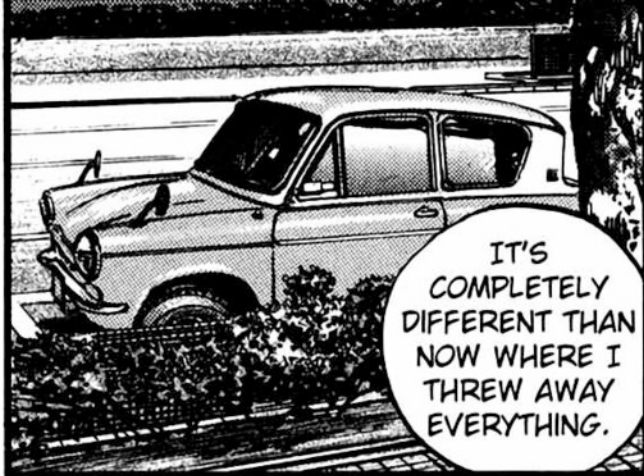
SHE SWITCHED
TO PAINTING
WHITE INTO
BLACK.

SOMETHING
MUST HAVE
HAPPENED.
FROM PAINTING
BLACK INTO
WHITE,



SLOW
DOWN.

H-
HOLD
ON.



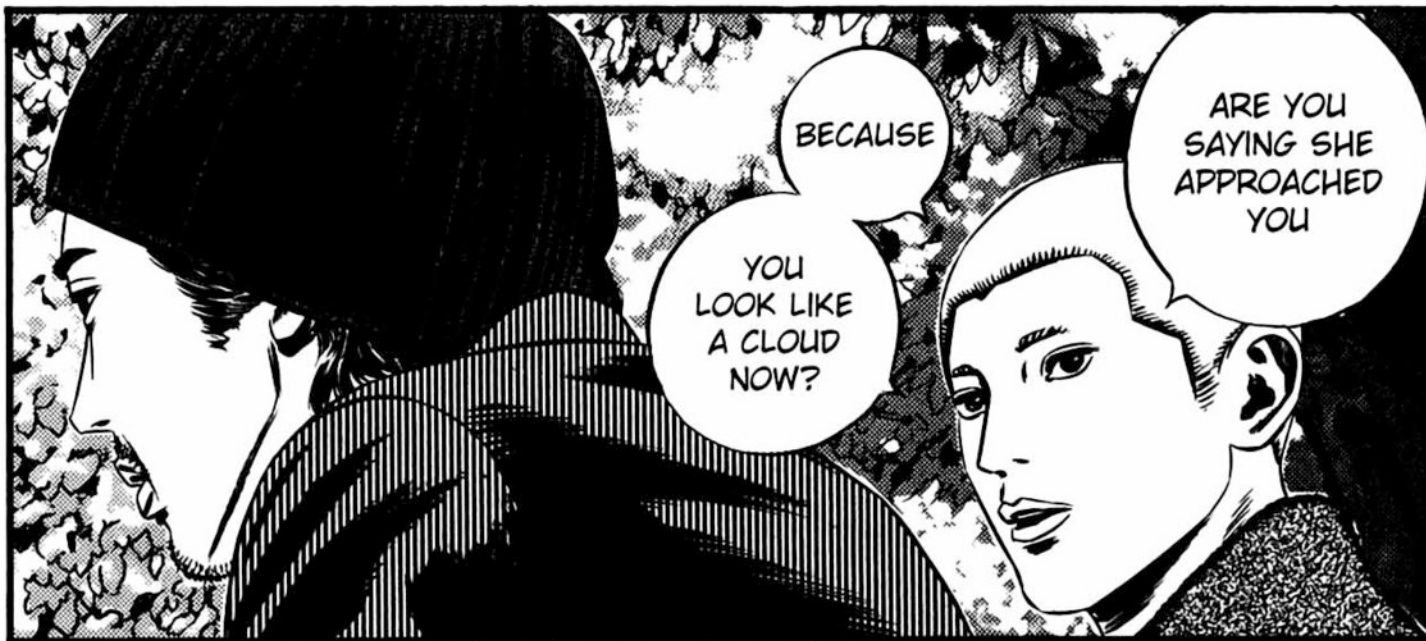
IT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN NOW WHERE I THREW AWAY EVERYTHING.



THAT TIME WHEN MY FACE CHANGED INTO A CLOUD, I THOUGHT IT WAS A SIGN. BUT I DIDN'T LOOK LIKE A CLOUD.



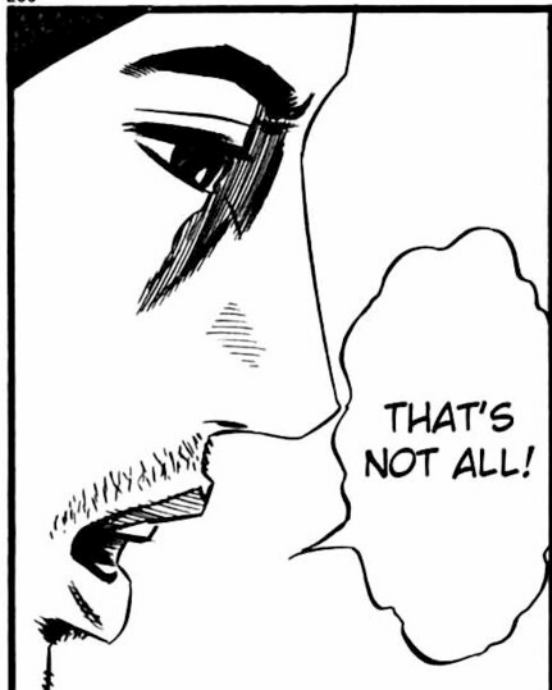
AND THAT'S WHY SHE APPROACHED ME NOW.



BECAUSE

YOU LOOK LIKE A CLOUD NOW?

ARE YOU SAYING SHE APPROACHED YOU



THAT'S NOT ALL!




THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU WANT, IT'S YOUR FANTASY.

LISTEN, NAKOSHI-SAN.

A black and white manga panel showing two men sitting on a park bench. The man on the left is bald and wearing a dark, textured jacket. The man on the right has dark hair and is wearing a striped jacket. They are both looking towards the right. In the background, there are trees and a path.

CHANGES
HER FACE
WITH A
SWIRL.

HER
HOMUN-
CULLUS

A close-up of a woman's face, looking upwards with a surprised expression. Her eyes are wide, and her mouth is slightly open. The background is dark and indistinct.

INTO A
FACELESS
GHOST?

!?

A close-up of a man's face, looking directly forward with a serious expression. His eyes are dark and intense. The background is dark and indistinct.

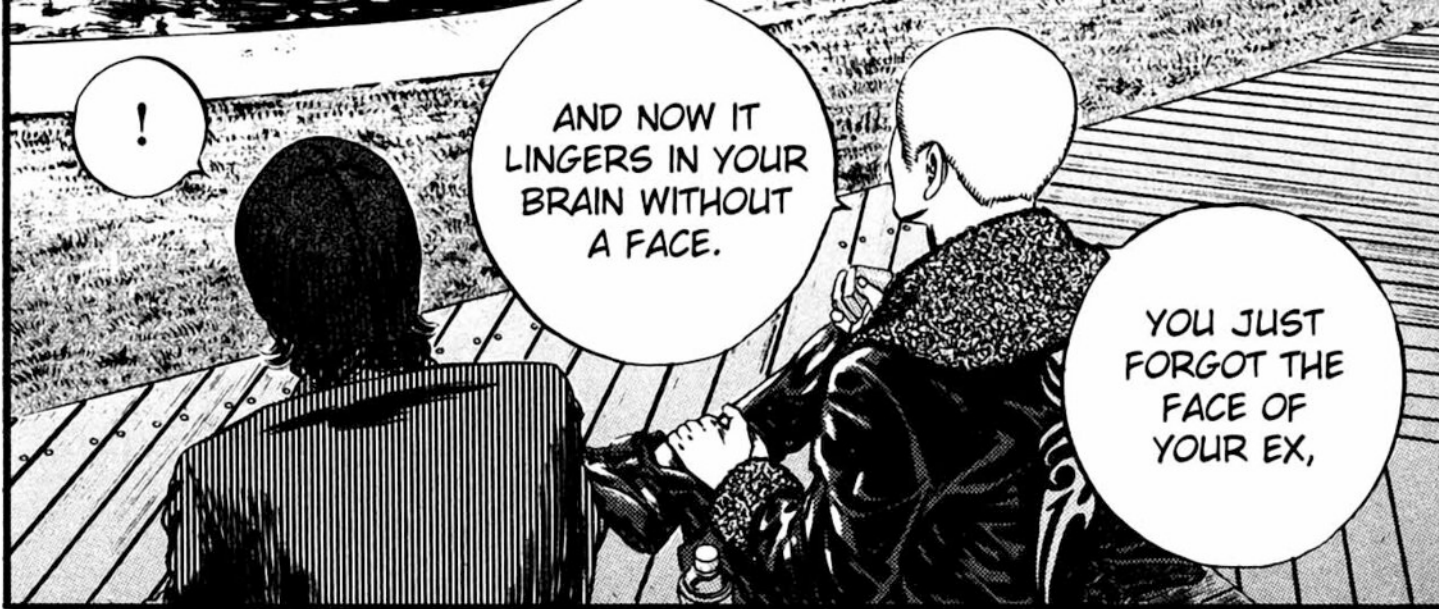
IT TURNS
INTO A
NOPPERABOU.

A close-up of a woman's face, looking upwards with a surprised expression. Her eyes are wide, and her mouth is slightly open. The background is dark and indistinct.

A DREAM
WHERE
SHE HAS
NO FACE.

A close-up of a man's face, looking directly forward with a serious expression. His eyes are dark and intense. The background is dark and indistinct.

LATELY
I'VE BEEN
DREAMING
OF NANAHO
A LOT.

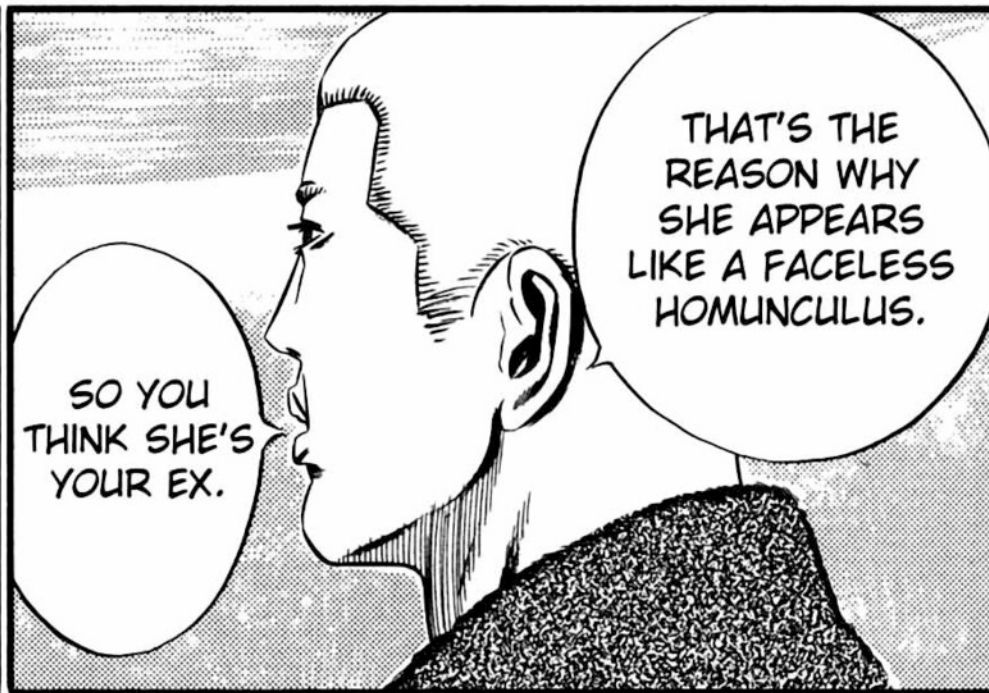


AND NOW IT
LINGERS IN YOUR
BRAIN WITHOUT
A FACE.

YOU JUST
FORGOT THE
FACE OF
YOUR EX,



YEAH.

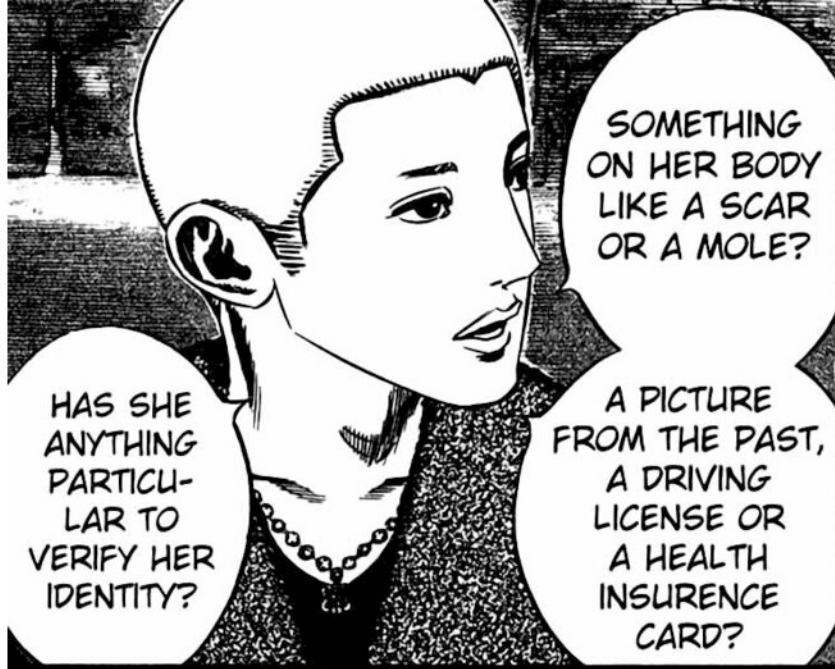


SO YOU
THINK SHE'S
YOUR EX.

THAT'S THE
REASON WHY
SHE APPEARS
LIKE A FACELESS
HOMUNCULUS.



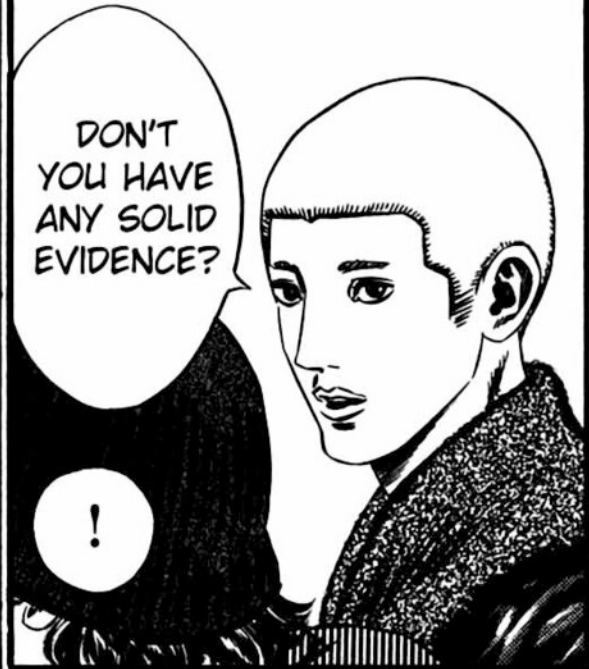
AS I SAID,
IT'S MERELY A
PRODUCT OF YOUR
OWN DESIRES,
DREAMS AND
IMAGINATION.



HAS SHE ANYTHING PARTICULAR TO VERIFY HER IDENTITY?

SOMETHING ON HER BODY LIKE A SCAR OR A MOLE?

A PICTURE FROM THE PAST, A DRIVING LICENSE OR A HEALTH INSURANCE CARD?

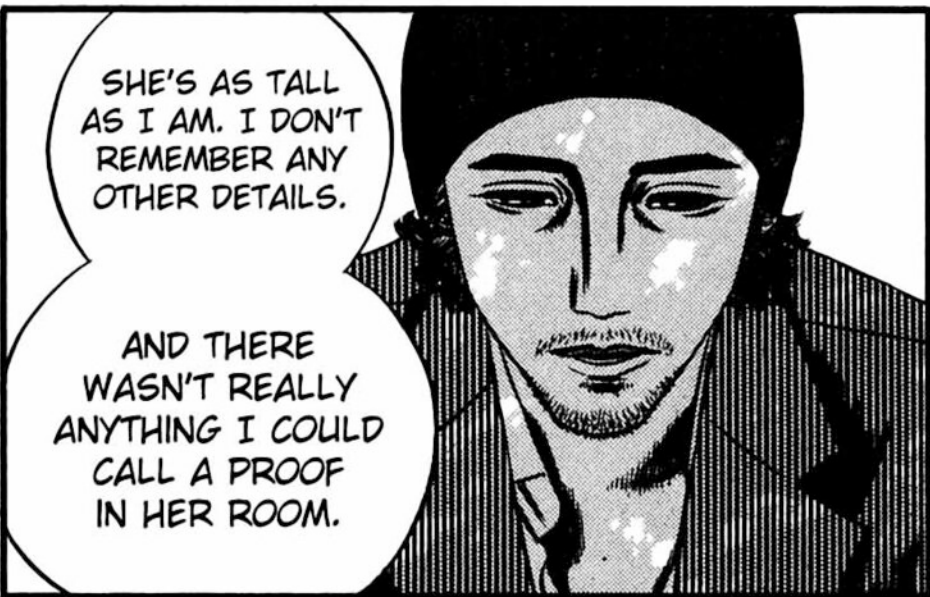


DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SOLID EVIDENCE?

!

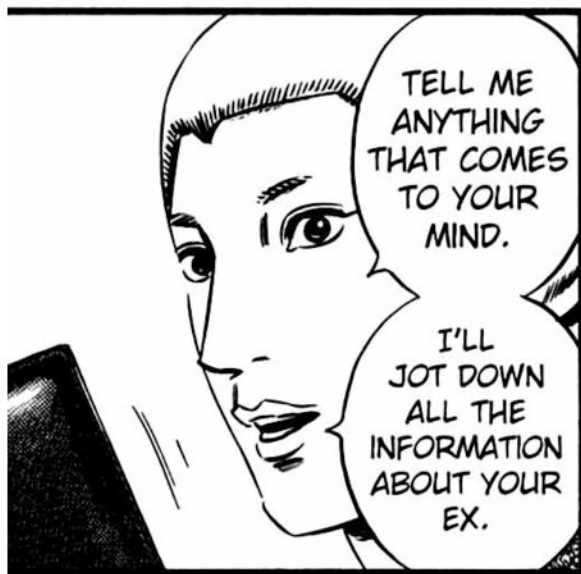


I GOT IT.



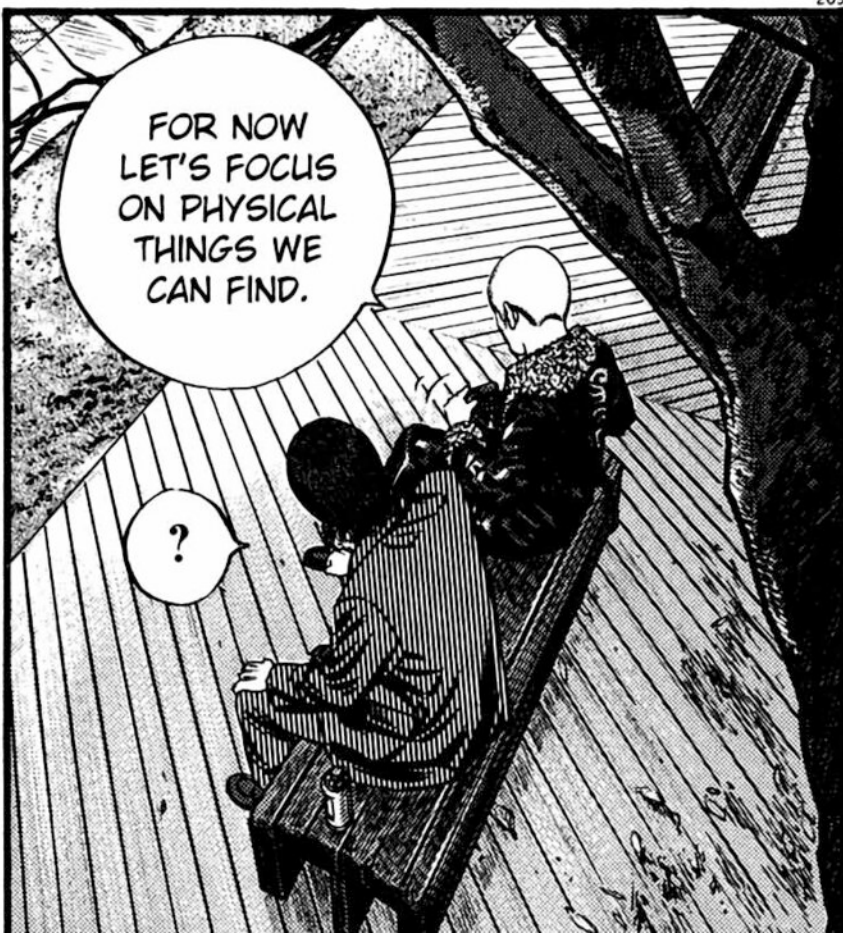
SHE'S AS TALL AS I AM. I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OTHER DETAILS.

AND THERE WASN'T REALLY ANYTHING I COULD CALL A PROOF IN HER ROOM.



TELL ME ANYTHING THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND.

I'LL JOT DOWN ALL THE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EX.



FOR NOW LET'S FOCUS ON PHYSICAL THINGS WE CAN FIND.

?



.....



THE NAME OF THE CAFE SHE WAS WORKING AT WAS "MARIMO."

HER NAME IS NANASE NANAKO.

CURRENTLY 31 YEARS OLD.

LOCATION, NARIMASU.

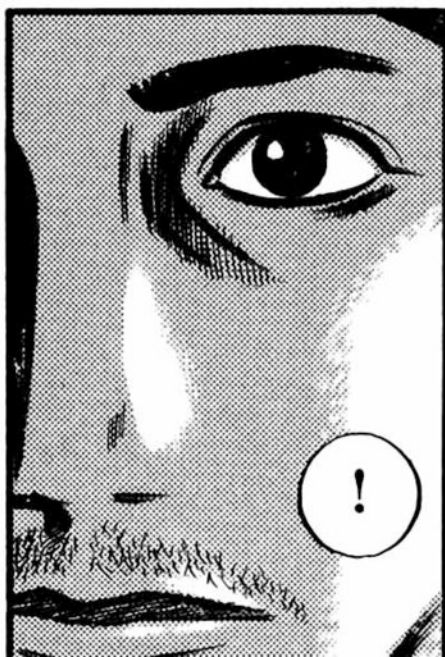


THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.



OKAY.

THAT'S ALL I REMEMBER.

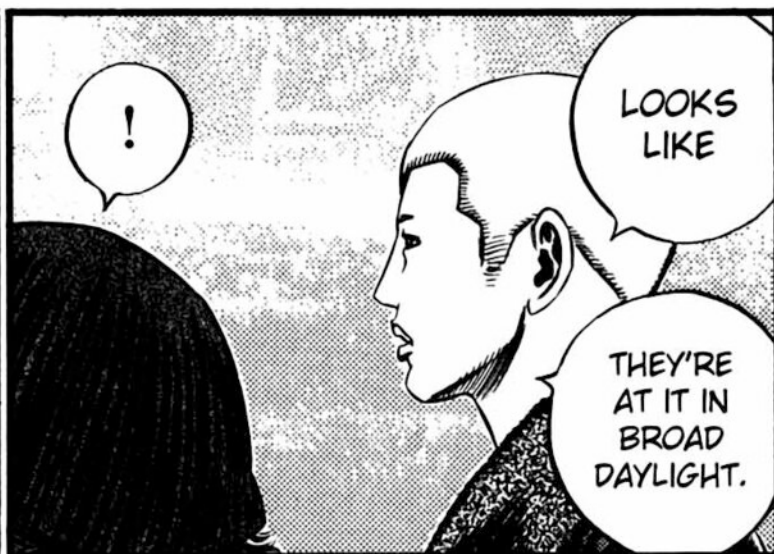
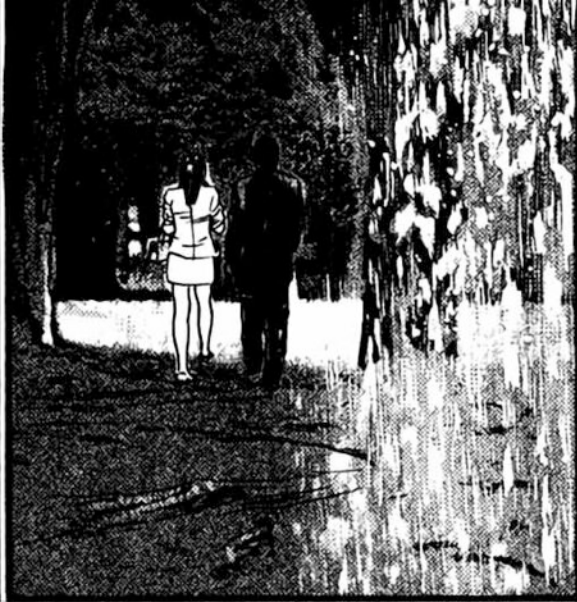
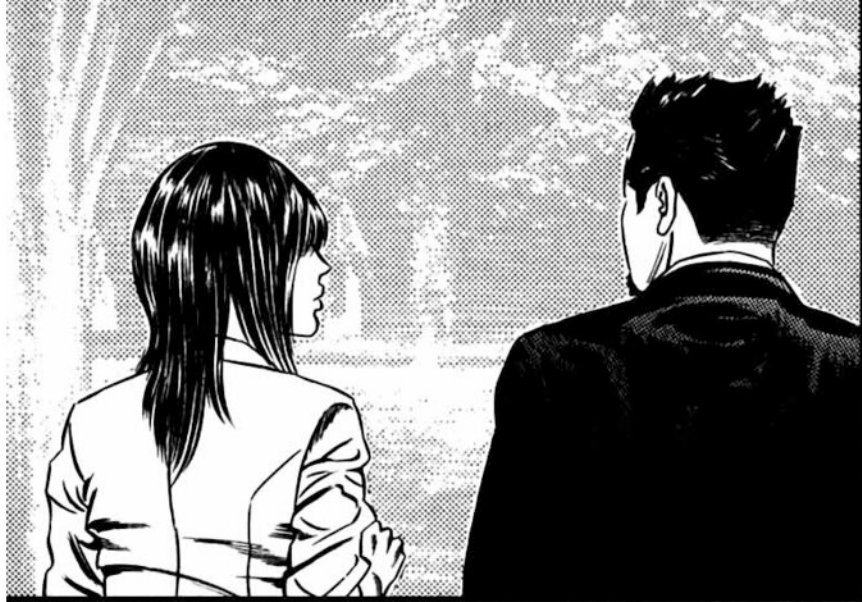


!



I THINK THIS WILL KEEP ME BUSY FOR A WHILE, BUT I'LL DO MY BEST TO

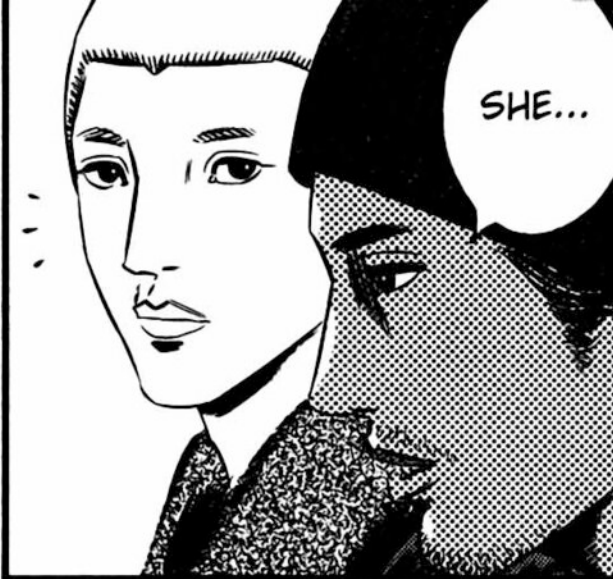
DIG OUT EVERYTHING ABOUT HER.



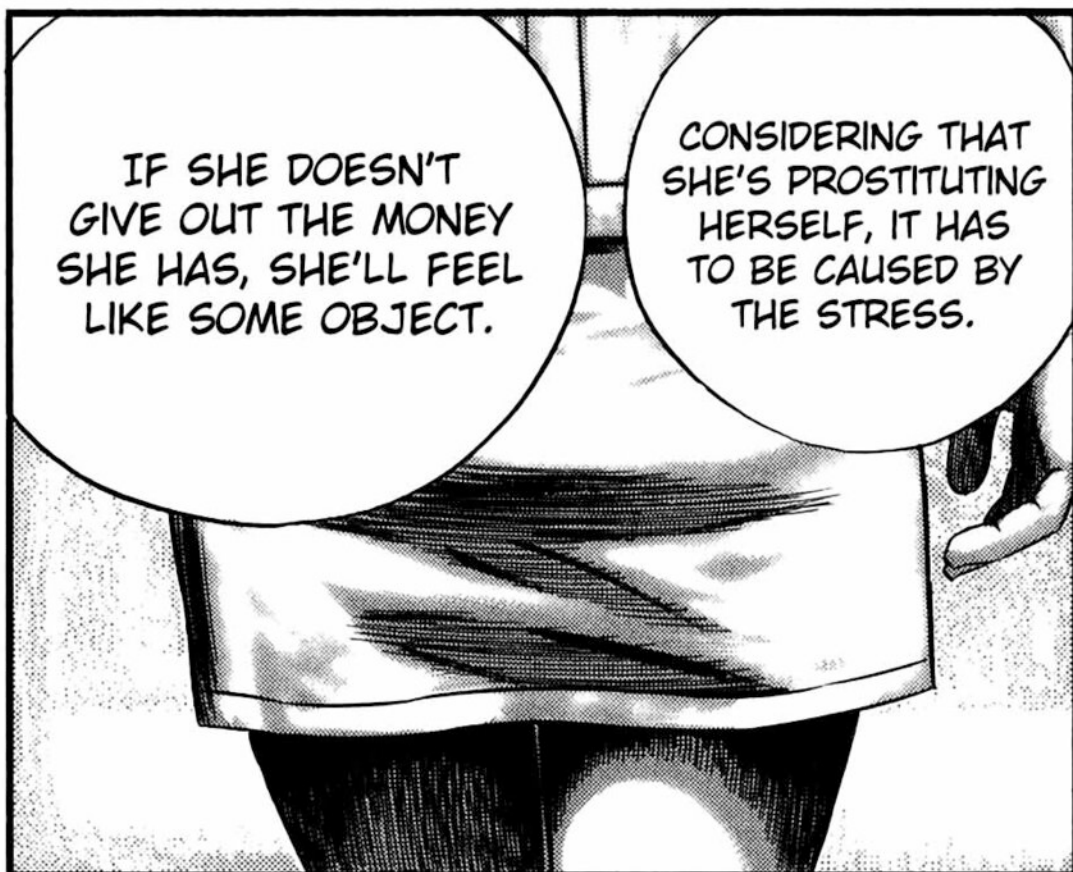


AND ALL THAT CRAP.

THAT WOMAN HAD HER PLACE FULL WITH LOTIONS, NAPKINS



SHE...



IF SHE DOESN'T GIVE OUT THE MONEY SHE HAS, SHE'LL FEEL LIKE SOME OBJECT.

CONSIDERING THAT SHE'S PROSTITUTING HERSELF, IT HAS TO BE CAUSED BY THE STRESS.



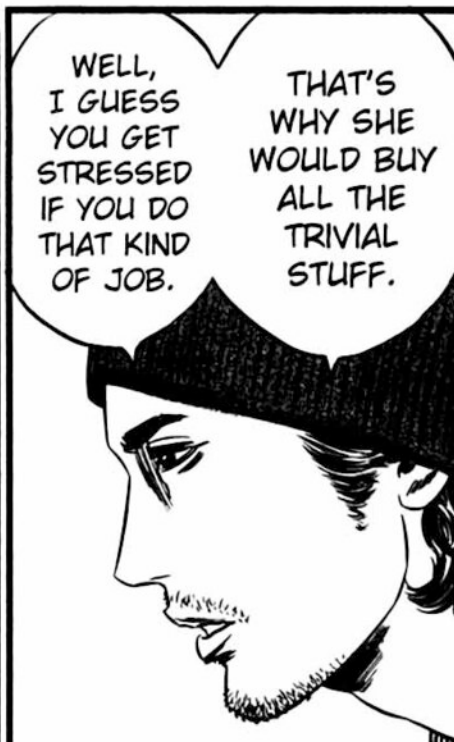
SHE HAS TO BE AN IMPULSIVE PURCHASER.

OH...



EVEN IF YOU CAN'T SEE IT, SHE'S A HUMAN AFTER ALL.

HAHA...



WELL, I GUESS YOU GET STRESSED IF YOU DO THAT KIND OF JOB.

THAT'S WHY SHE WOULD BUY ALL THE TRIVIAL STUFF.



?

HER
HOMUNCULUS...



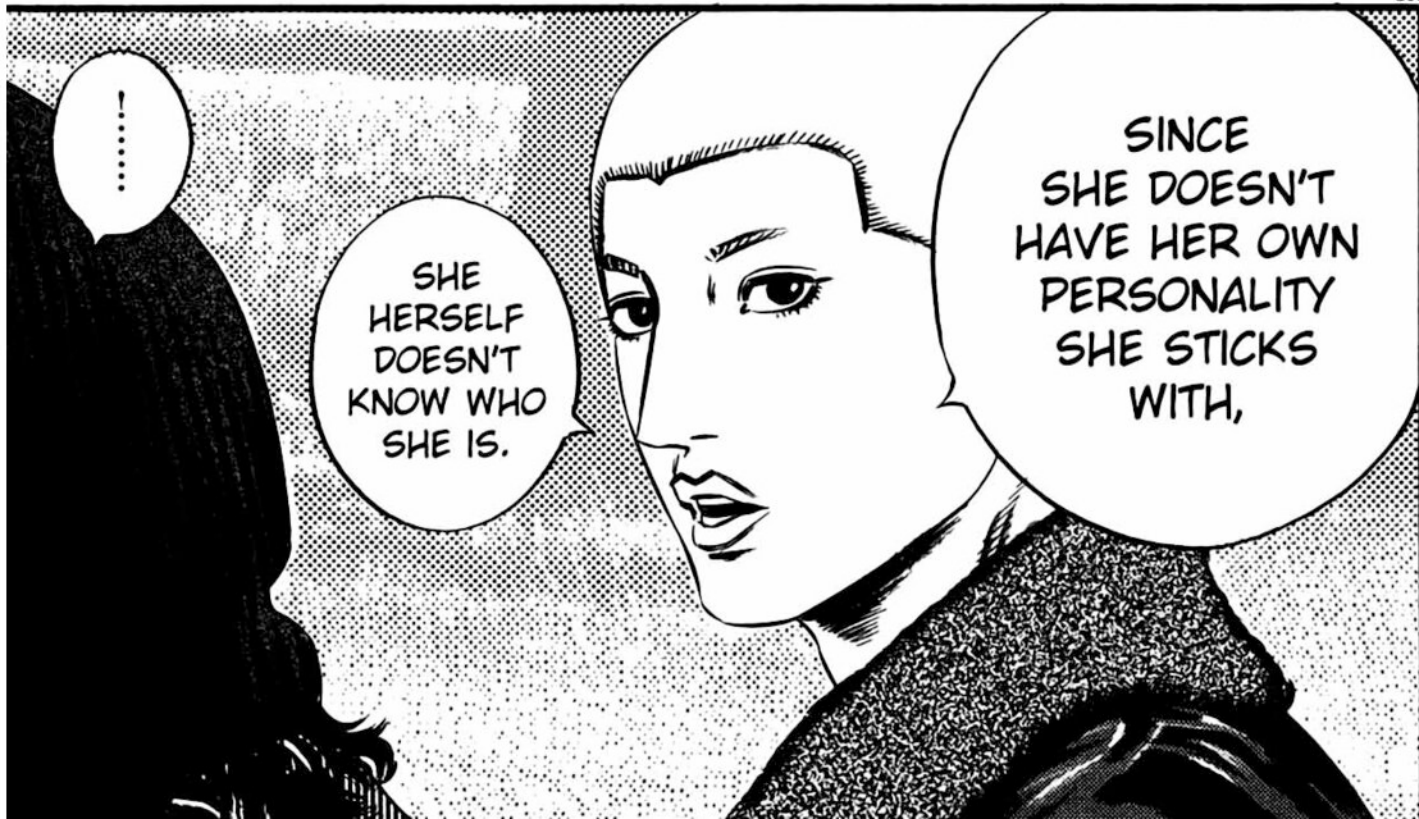
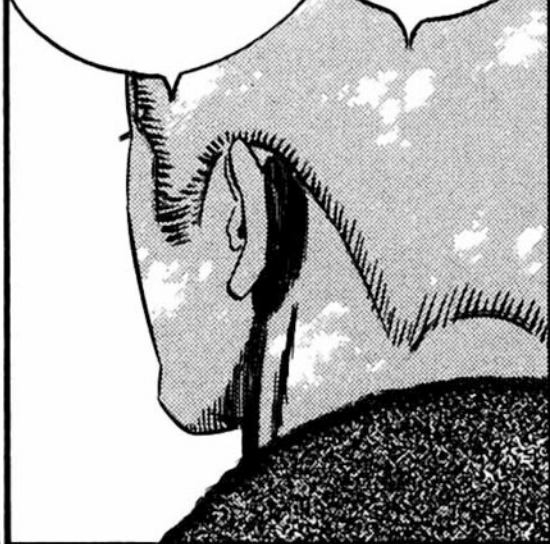
SHE
PUTS UP
EVERYTIME
A DIFFERENT
ACT.

DEPENDING
TO HER SUGAR
DADDY, SHE
CHANGES HER
FACE AND
LIES TO HIM.



IS A SYMBOL
FOR A CHANGE
OF HERSELF.

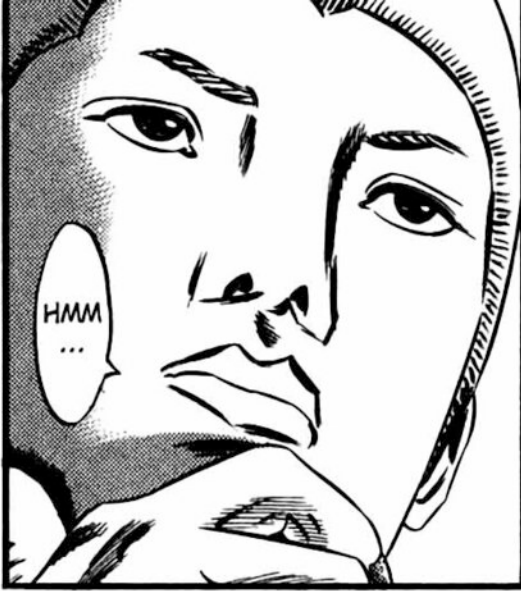
THE
FACT THAT
HER FACE
CHANGES



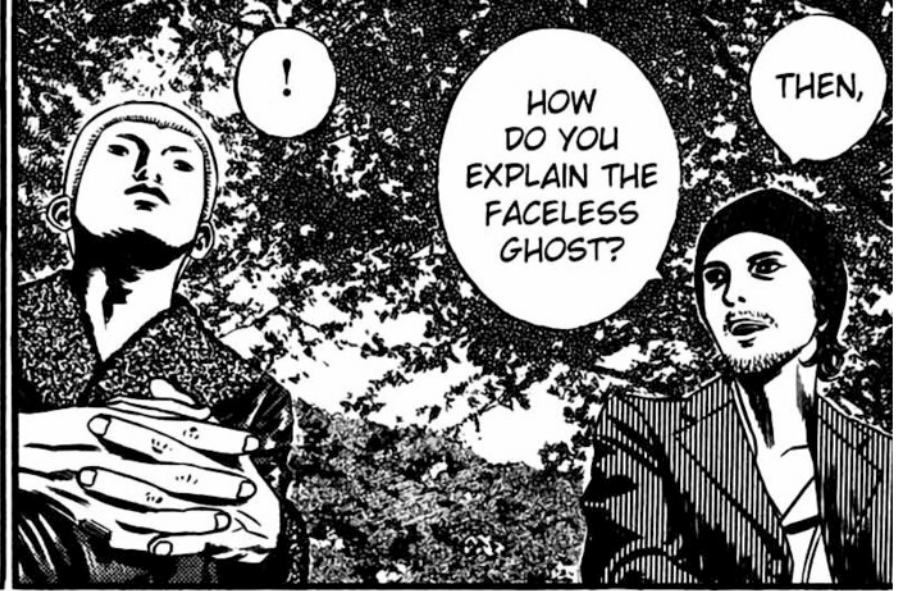
!

SHE
HERSELF
DOESN'T
KNOW WHO
SHE IS.

SINCE
SHE DOESN'T
HAVE HER OWN
PERSONALITY
SHE STICKS
WITH,



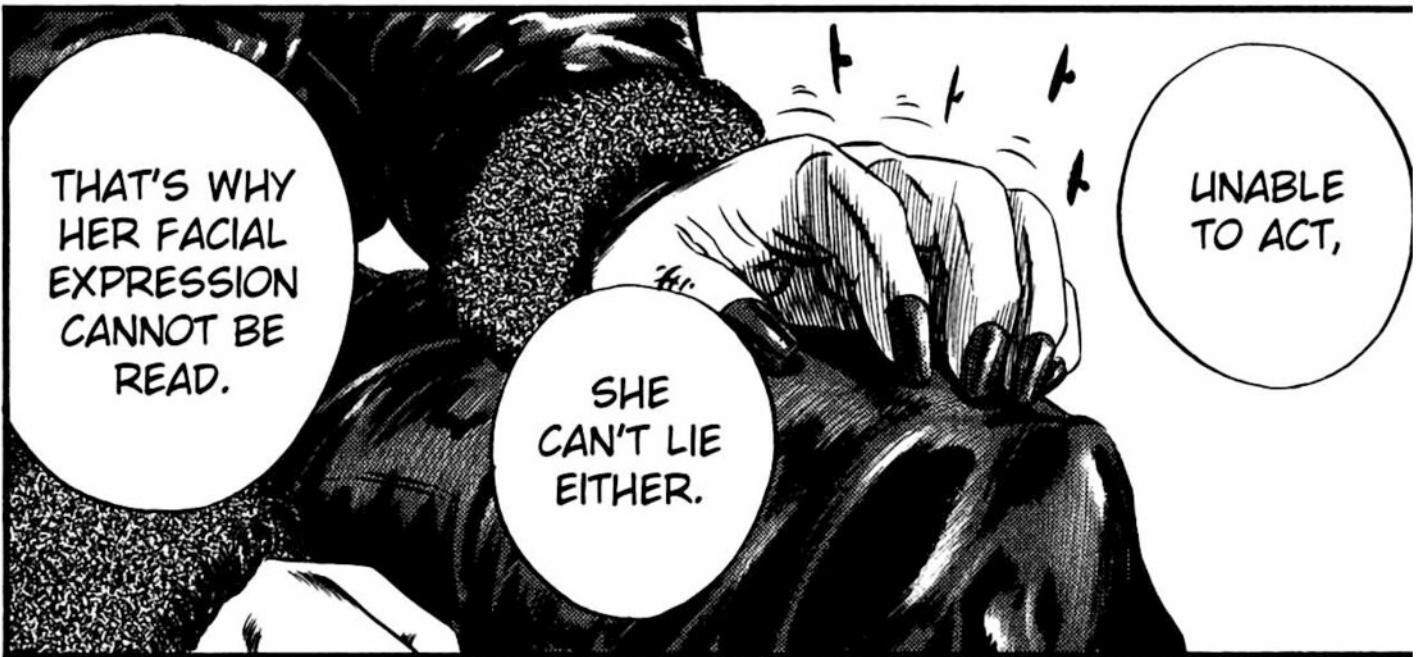
HMM ...



!

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE FACELESS GHOST?

THEN,



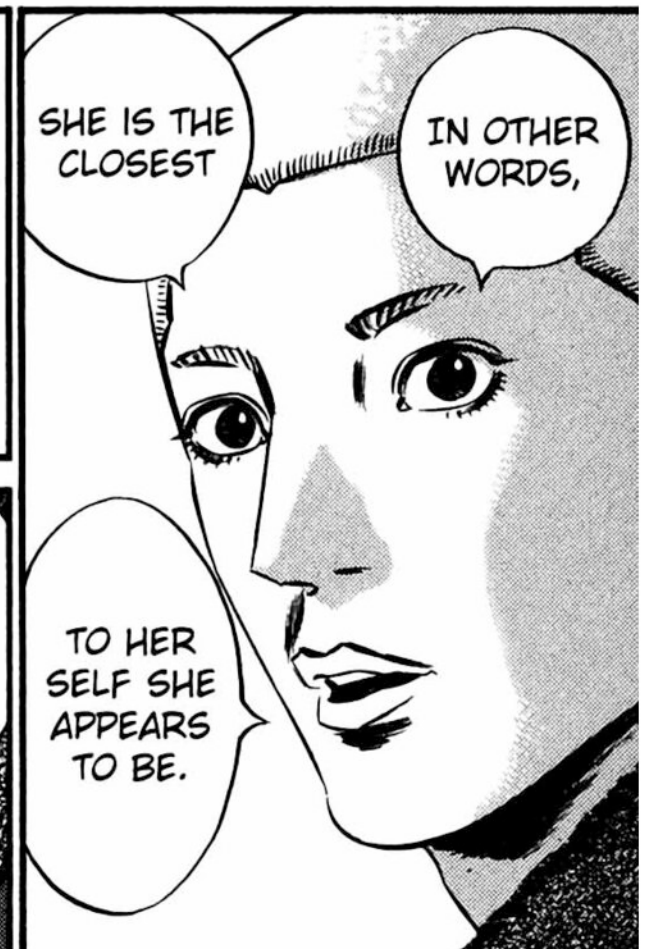
THAT'S WHY HER FACIAL EXPRESSION CANNOT BE READ.

SHE CAN'T LIE EITHER.

UNABLE TO ACT,



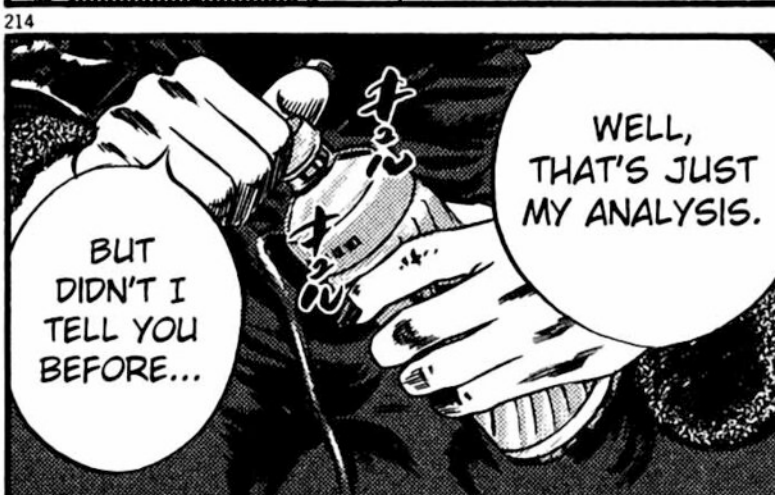
.....



SHE IS THE CLOSEST

IN OTHER WORDS,

TO HER SELF SHE APPEARS TO BE.



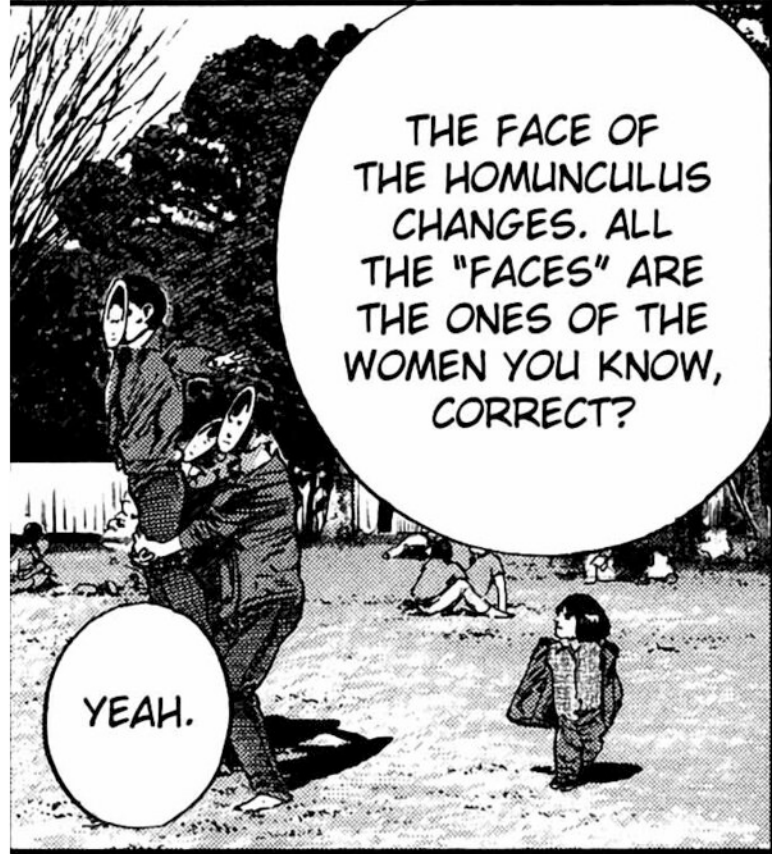
BUT DIDN'T I TELL YOU BEFORE...

WELL, THAT'S JUST MY ANALYSIS.



THAT TOPIC AGAIN?

THE HOMUNCULI YOU SEE ARE MERELY A PRODUCT OF YOUR IMAGINATION?



THE FACE OF THE HOMUNCULUS CHANGES. ALL THE "FACES" ARE THE ONES OF THE WOMEN YOU KNOW, CORRECT?

YEAH.



JUST HEAR ME OUT, OKAY?

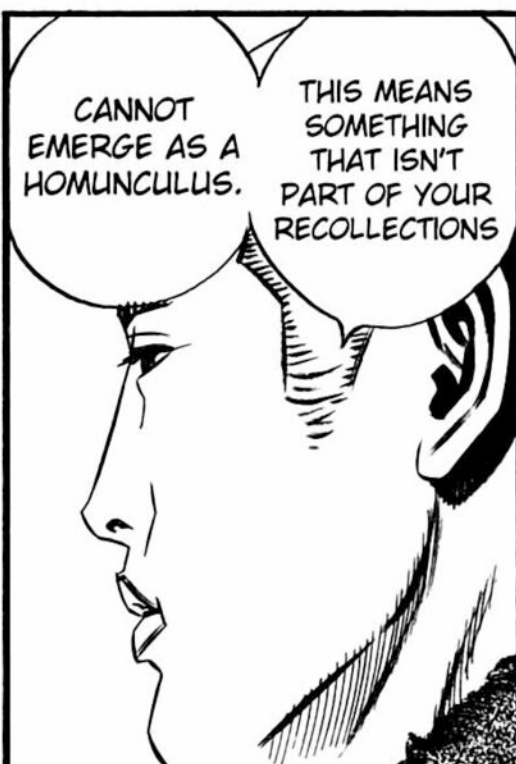
DON'T GET ME WRONG. I'M NOT POKING FUN AT YOU.



.....



.....



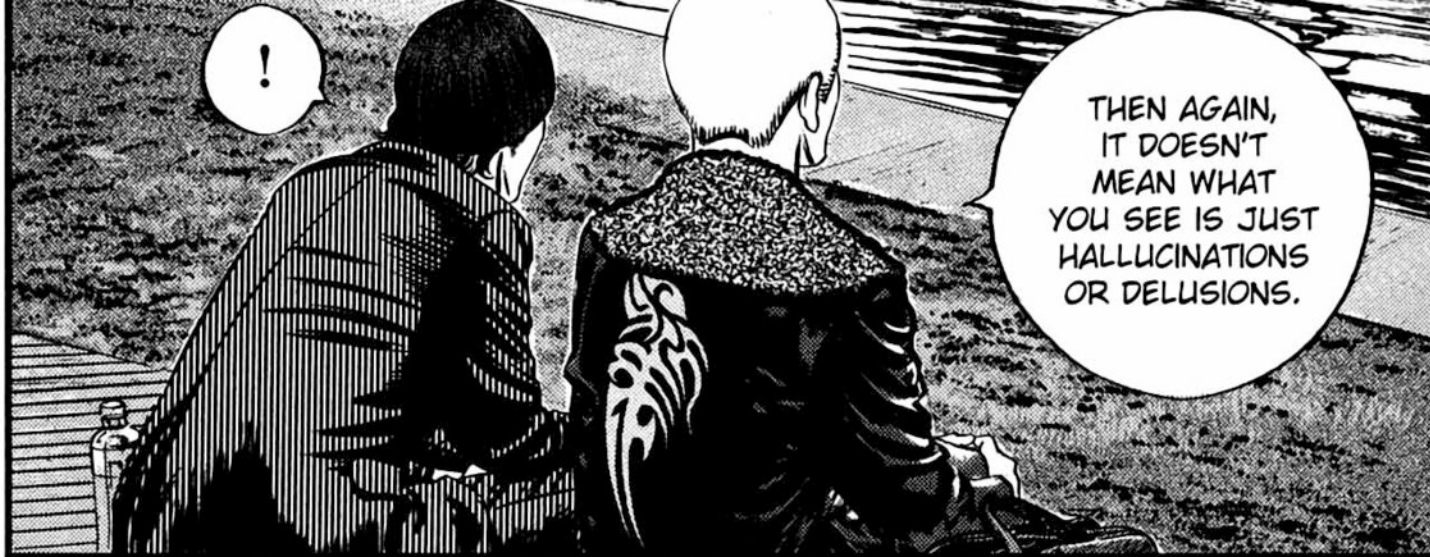
CANNOT EMERGE AS A HOMUNCULUS.

THIS MEANS SOMETHING THAT ISN'T PART OF YOUR RECOLLECTIONS



.....

SO IN OTHER WORDS, THE FACES YOU REMEMBER ARE SURFACED IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES AND CHANGE.



THEN AGAIN,
IT DOESN'T
MEAN WHAT
YOU SEE IS JUST
HALLUCINATIONS
OR DELUSIONS.



.....



BECOME
A MESSAGE
FOR YOU THAT
APPEARS AS A
HOMUNCULUS IN
FRONT OF YOU.

THE MEMORIES
YOU LINK WITH
A PERSON



EITHER WAY,
TALKING TO
THAT PERSON
ABOUT THIS IS
POINTLESS.

!

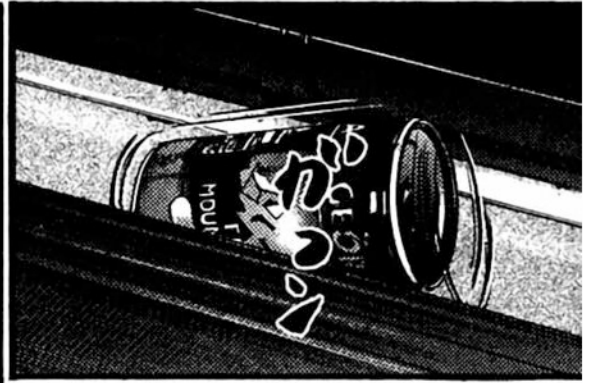
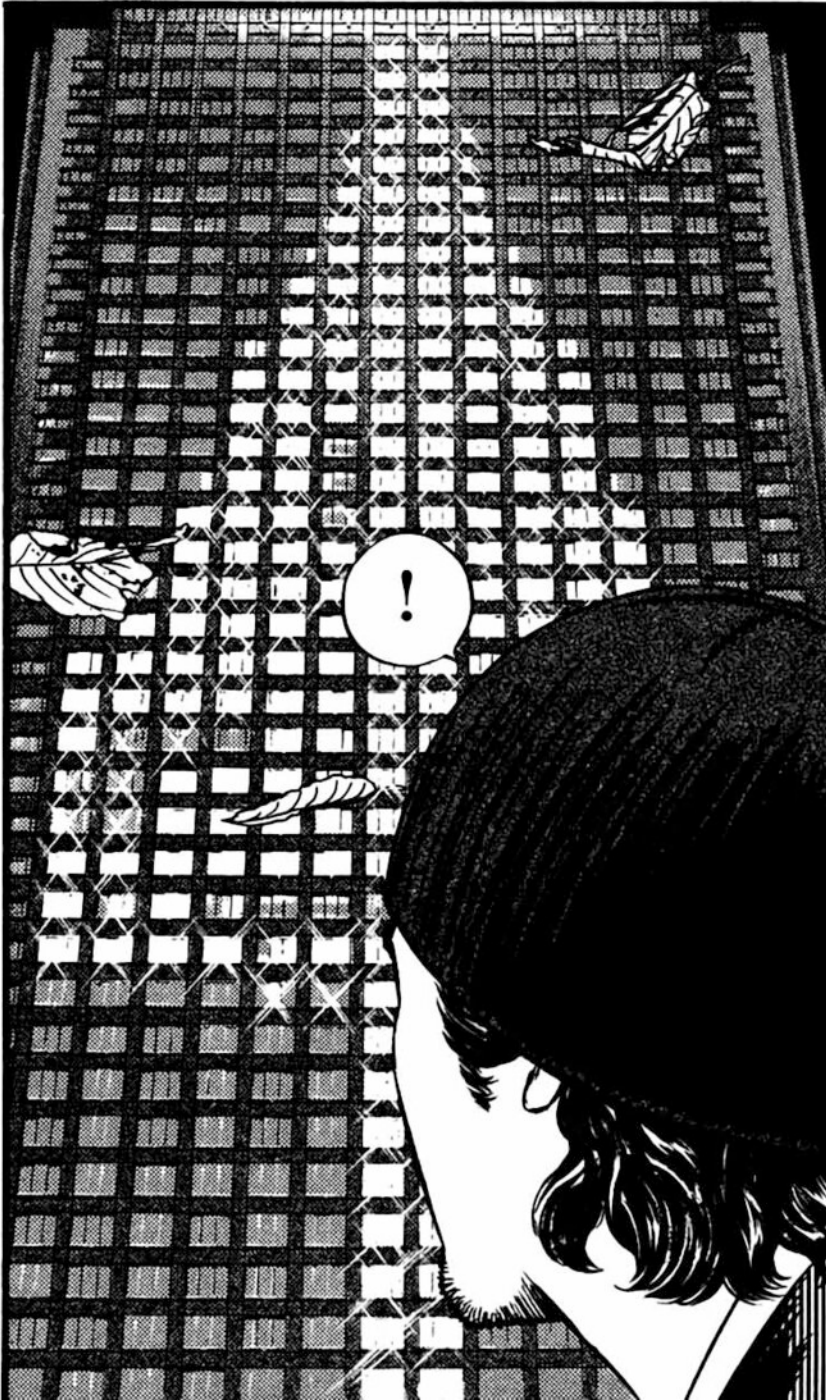


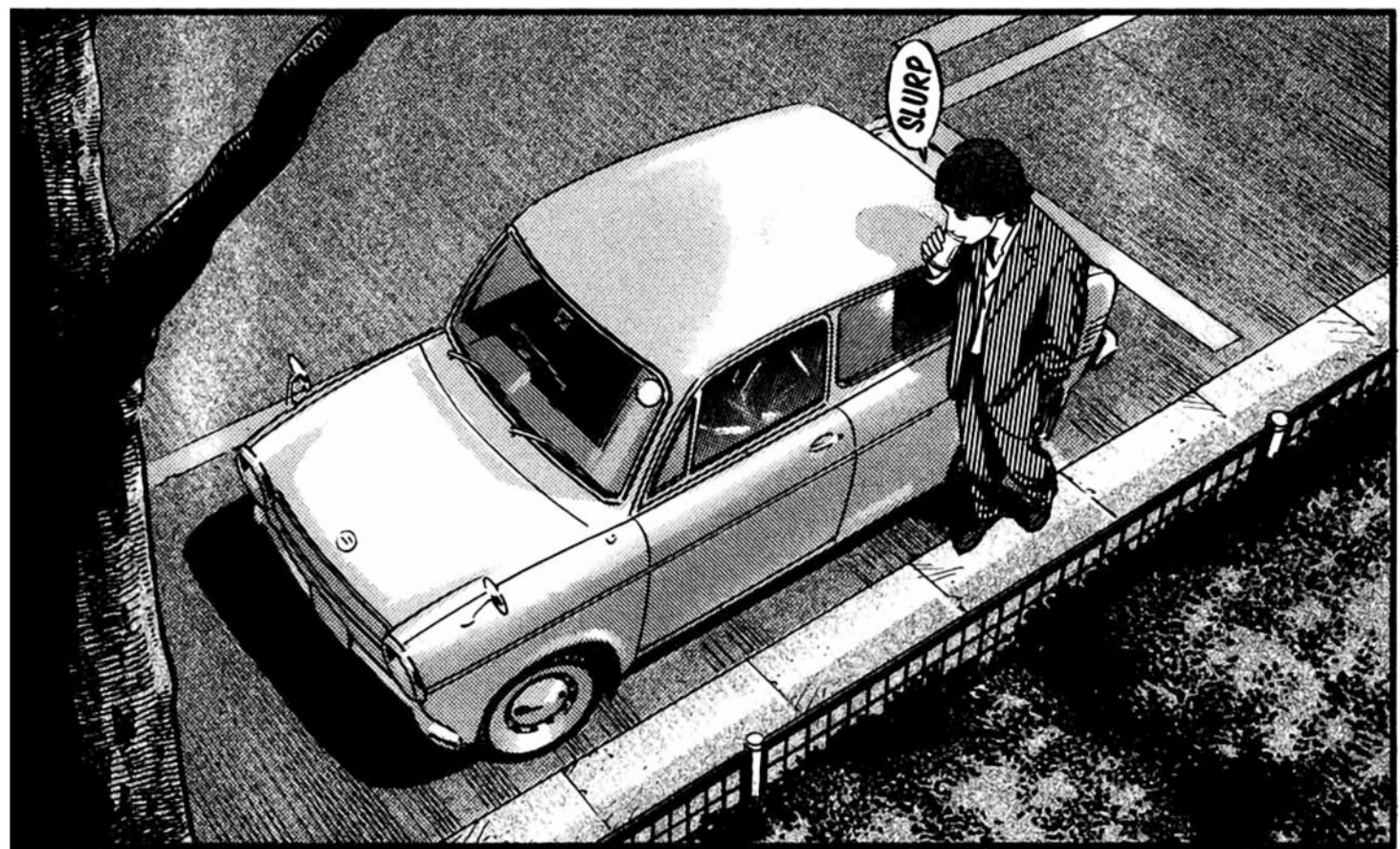
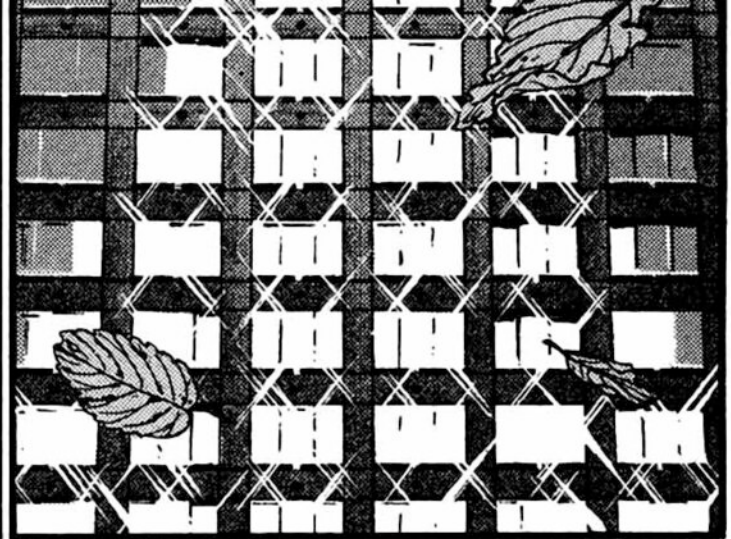
YOU HAVE
TO TALK WITH
YOURSELF.





218







IT WASN'T
LOCKED.



H O M U N C U L U S
H I D E O Y A M A M O T O