



8

Domestic
Girlfriend

KEI SASUGA

D O M E X G

Domestic Girlfriend

8

D O M E
G I R L

KEI SASUGA

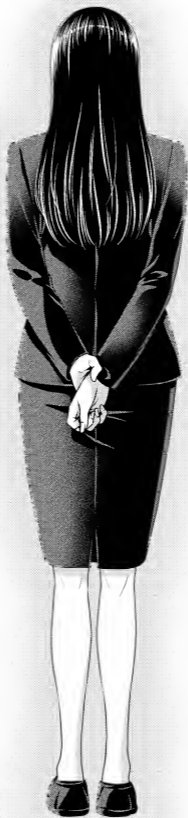
D O M E G I R L

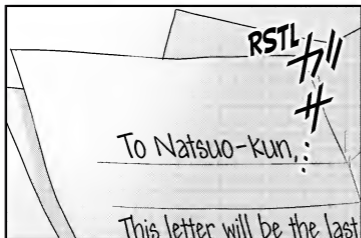
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CHAPTER 65: BREAKUP





PLEASE
FORGIVE
ME.

THIS LETTER
WILL BE
THE LAST.





I WAS THE ONE WHO ASKED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO A NEW SCHOOL.

THE REASON BEING THAT...



I'M SURE YOU'RE CONFUSED ...

...WITH HOW SUDDEN ALL OF THIS IS.



...FOUND OUT ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP.

...THE SCHOOL ...



IF YOU HAD FOUND OUT,

I'M SURE YOU WOULD HAVE THROWN AWAY EVERYTHING FOR ME.

EVEN THOUGH YOU ASKED ME TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT ANYTHING,

I'M SORRY FOR KEEPING QUIET ABOUT THIS.



...!

...COULDN'T
BRING
MYSELF TO
TELL YOU.

I JUST
...



AND PLEASE
DON'T TRY
TO FIND ME.

MY ONLY
HOPE...

THAT'S
WHY, YOU
ABSOLUTELY
CANNOT TELL
ANYONE ELSE
ABOUT US.

IN
EXCHANGE
FOR MY
LEAVING...

...IS THAT
YOU FORGET
ABOUT ME
AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE,

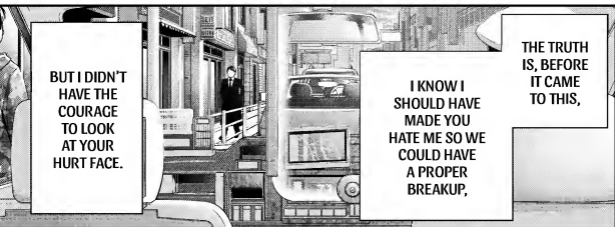
GET INTO
COLLEGE
WITHOUT
A HITCH,

...OUR
RELATIONSHIP
WON'T BE
MADE
PUBLIC.



AND MAKE
YOUR DREAM
OF BECOMING
A NOVELIST
COME TRUE.

THAT'S
ALL.



BUT I DIDN'T
HAVE THE
COURAGE
TO LOOK
AT YOUR
HURT FACE.

I KNOW I
SHOULD HAVE
MADE YOU
HATE ME SO WE
COULD HAVE
A PROPER
BREAKUP,

THE TRUTH
IS, BEFORE
IT CAME
TO THIS,



I'M A
WEAK
PERSON.

I'M
SORRY.



IN BOTH
THE GOOD
AND BAD
TIMES,

DURING
THE THREE
MONTHS
WE WERE
TOGETHER,

I COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
HAPPIER.



THANK
YOU.



...SO YOU
CAN FORGET
ABOUT ME
AND MOVE
ON.

I KNOW
THAT FOR
YOUR SAKE,

I SHOULD
WRITE SOME-
THING THAT'LL
MAKE YOU
HATE ME...

BUT I
JUST
CAN'T.



YOUR
WORDS,

EVEN AS I
WRITE THIS,



I CAN'T
STOP
REMEM-
BERING
EVERY-
THING
ABOUT
YOU.

YOUR
SMILE
...



THE
SCENT
OF YOUR
HAIR,



YOUR
WARM
HANDS,



I LOVE
YOU.

I'M
SORRY.

I LOVE YOU...





NO
WONDER
YOU'RE
WORRIED.

YOUR
SISTER
JUST UP
AND LEFT
WITHOUT
A WORD,
DID SHE?

I SEE
...



I HEARD
BITS FROM
FUMI-KUN.

DON'T
WORRY, MY
LIPS ARE
SEALED.

YOU
KNEW?

HUH?

I TAKE IT THAT
MEANS THE
SCHOOL FOUND
OUT ABOUT
HER AND
NATSUO-CHAN'S
RELATIONSHIP.



BUT SHE
DIDN'T TELL
HER WHERE
SHE WAS
TRANSFER-
RING TO OR
HER NEW
ADDRESS.

I GUESS
SHE CALLED
MOM ONCE,

NO
...

YOU HAVE
NO IDEA
WHERE
YOUR
SISTER
WENT?



HOW'S
NATSUO-
CHAN
DOING?

SO,



HE DIDN'T
COME HOME
THE NIGHT
OF THE
CLOSING
CEREMONY.

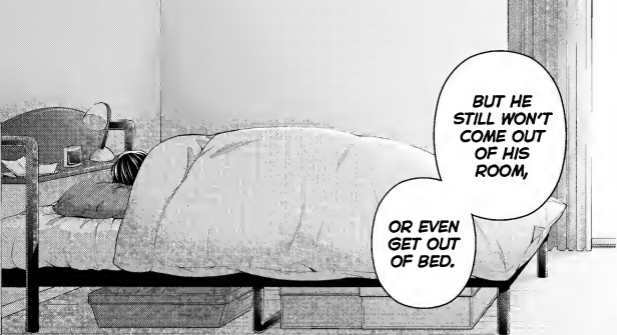
WHEN I
WENT
LOOKING
FOR HIM,
I FOUND
HIM IN
HINA-NEE'S
EMPTY
APARTMENT.

IT'S
BEEN A
WEEK
SINCE
THEN,



SO
NATSUO-
CHAN
WOULDN'T
CHASE
AFTER
HER,
HUH?

SHE TOOK
THE BEST
COURSE OF
ACTION AT
THE TIME
FOR HIS
FUTURE.



BUT HE
STILL WON'T
COME OUT
OF HIS
ROOM,

OR EVEN
GET OUT
OF BED.



WELL...I
CAN'T SAY
I'M SUR-
PRISED.

IT SOUNDS
LIKE HE WAS
REALLY IN
LOVE WITH
HER.

HE
BARELY
EATS,
TOO...



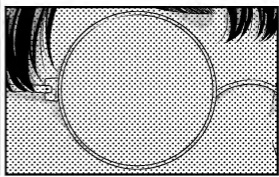
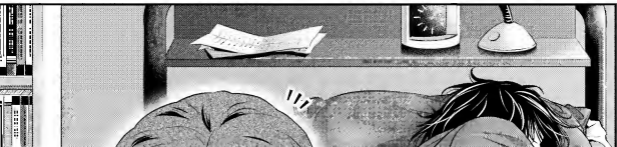
TO BE
HON-
EST,

I DON'T
EVEN
KNOW WHAT
I SHOULD
SAY TO HIM
...

IT WAS ALL SO
SUDDEN I'M
STILL TRYING
TO PARSE
EVERYTHING,
TOO.









DON'T
KEEP
PRETENDING
TO BE
ASLEEP!

AT LEAST
ANSWER
ME, JACK-
ASS!

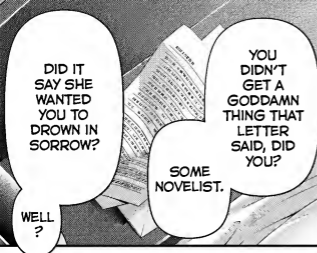


GET
OVER
HERE.

BY
THE WAY,
YOUR
HAIR
REEKS.

YOU
HAVEN'T
EVEN BEEN
BATHING?





DID IT SAY SHE WANTED YOU TO DROWN IN SORROW?

SOME NOVELIST.

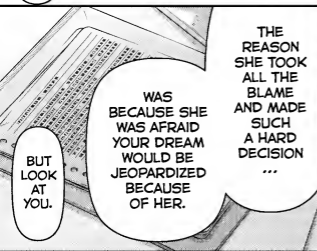
WELL ?

YOU DIDN'T GET A GODDAMN THING THAT LETTER SAID, DID YOU?



LISTEN.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT SORT OF RESOLVE SENSEI HAD WHEN SHE BROKE UP WITH YOU?



THE REASON SHE TOOK ALL THE BLAME AND MADE SUCH A HARD DECISION ...

WAS BECAUSE SHE WAS AFRAID YOUR DREAM WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED BECAUSE OF HER.

BUT LOOK AT YOU.



IF YOU KEEP ACTING LIKE THIS,

THEN EVERYTHING SHE DID WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING!







I WAS HOPING...

YOU'D LET ME TAKE A BREAK FROM THE WEEKLY SHORT STORIES.

UM ...

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU DURING BREAK.



IN-STEAD,

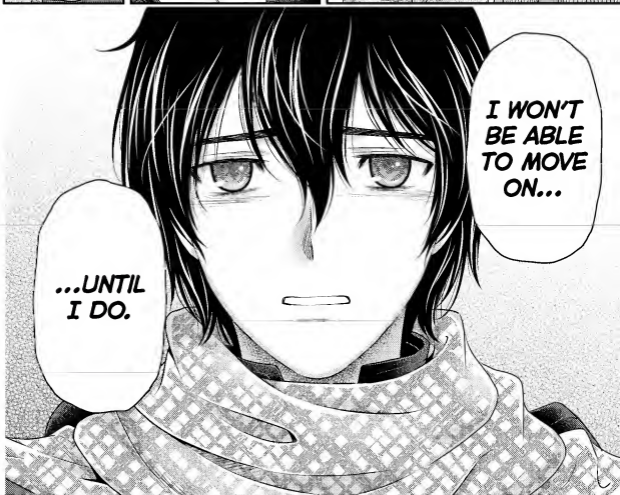
PLEASE LET ME WRITE A LENGTHIER ONE.



...

THAT ...

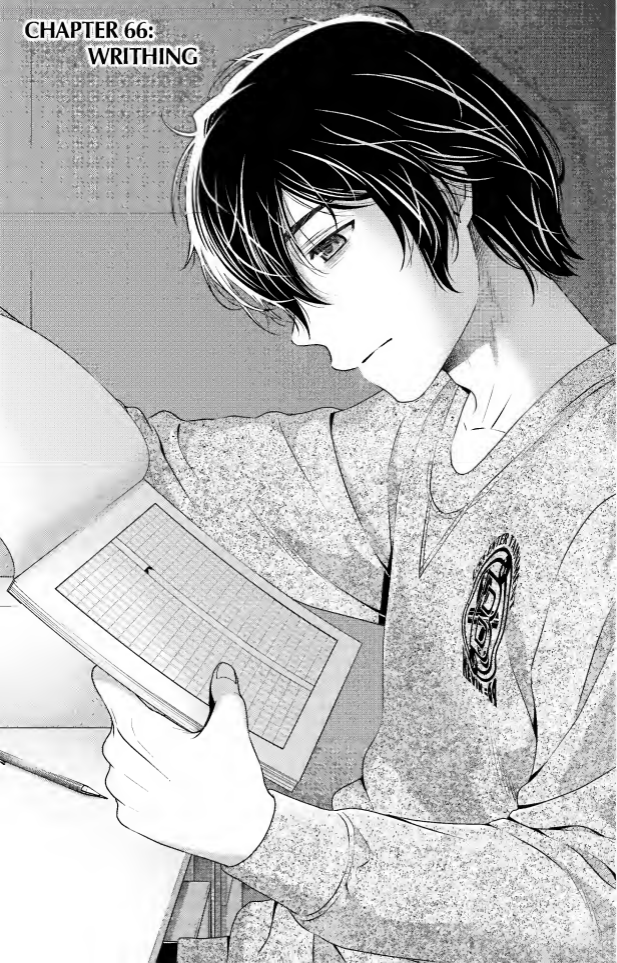
IS ENTIRELY UP TO YOU.



...UNTIL I DO.

I WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE ON...

CHAPTER 66:
WRITHING





HI!
CLACK

I'M HOME.



HOW'S NATSUOKUN DOING?

YES.

LONG DAY?
YOU'RE AWFULLY LATE TONIGHT.

STILL COOPED UP IN HIS ROOM.



YOU KNOW,

I SEE ...

I STOPPED BY THE PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR'S OFFICE ON THE WAY HOME.

WELCOME HOME, TSUKIKO-SAN.



THEY'VE
TRACKED
DOWN
HINA.



I'M
JUST GLAD
TO KNOW
SHE'S
SAFE.

SHE RENTED
AN APARTMENT
NEAR HER NEW
SCHOOL.

YES.

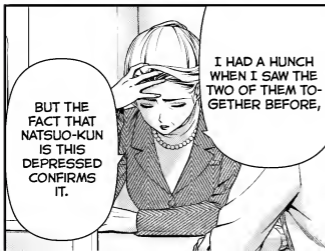
RE-
REALLY
?!



I STILL
HAVE A
HARD TIME
BELIEVING
IT.

DO YOU
REALLY
THINK NAT-
SUO AND
HINA-SAN
WERE...?

...



BUT THE
FACT THAT
NATSUO-KUN
IS THIS
DEPRESSED
CONFIRMS
IT.

I HAD A HUNCH
WHEN I SAW THE
TWO OF THEM TO-
GETHER BEFORE,



I THINK IT
WOULD BE FOR
THE BEST...

YEAH
...

IF WE DON'T
TELL THE
KIDS FOR
NOW, ESPE-
CIALLY NOT
NATSUO-KUN.



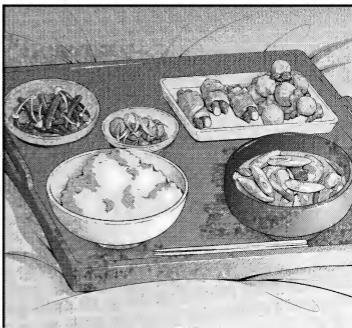


SURE
...



WANT
SOME
COCOA?

I PUT A LITTLE
GINGER IN,
SO IT SHOULD
WARM YOU UP.



SO,
AMATERASU'S
CAVE*
REMAINS
SHIT, HUH?

HMM
...

*SEE TL NOTES.

IT'S LIKE HE'S
FORGETTING
TO EVEN EAT
OR SLEEP.

...BUT I GET
THE FEELING
HE'S PAINTING
HIMSELF INTO
A CORNER.

HE MIGHT
COLLAPSE AT
THIS RATE...

OH?

BUT HE'S
ACTUALLY
DOING
SOMETHING
ASIDE FROM
LAYING
IN BED ALL
DAY, RIGHT?

I'D
CALL
THAT
PROG-
RESS.

WAY
TO GO,
FUMI-
KUN.

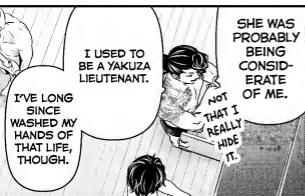
SAY,
RUI-RUI.

CAN YOU
DO SOME-
THING
FOR ME?

...
THAT DOOFUS
GETS REALLY
BAD TUNNEL
VISION WHEN
HE'S ABSORBED
IN SOMETHING.

YEAH,
THAT'S
GOOD
AND ALL
...





I USED TO BE A YAKUZA LIEUTENANT.

I'VE LONG SINCE WASHED MY HANDS OF THAT LIFE, THOUGH.

NOT THAT I REALLY HIDE IT.

SHE WAS PROBABLY BEING CONSIDERATE OF ME.



...THEY'LL LET YOU IN WITH THAT?

ARE YOU SURE...

UMM ...



DIDN'T RUI-RUI TELL YOU?

HUH?

YOU DIDN'T KNOW, NATSUO-CHAN?

NO ...

NOTHING...



YEAH, I
BET THAT
GETUP IS
USEFUL FOR
BREAKING
UP FIGHTS
...

HEY,
BOSS!
LONG
TIME NO
SEE.

YOO-
HOO,
GRAMPS.
HOW'S
THE OLD
PLUMB-
ING?



SHE
MAKES
AN EX-
CEPTION
FOR ME.

THE
OWNER
IS A
REGULAR
AT MY
STORE.

MAA-CHAN IS
SOMETHING LIKE
A BOUNCER FOR
THE SHOPPING
DISTRICT.



SO I
KNOW JUST
ABOUT ALL
OF THEM.

THE
SLIDE

THE
CUSTOM-
ERS HERE
ARE ALL
LOCALS,

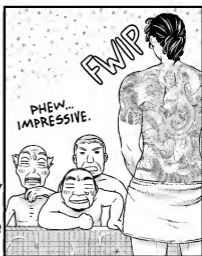


STILL AS
CHISELED
AS EVER
I SEE.

AH,
SHOVE
IT, YOU
GEE-
ZERS.

DID'JA
COME
FISHIN'
FOR
GUYS?

HEY, IF IT
AIN'T MR.
L'AMANT
HIMSELF!





UMM
...

LIAR.

REMINDS
ME OF MINE
BACK IN
THE DAY...

WHEW...
LIKE ONE
OF THE
GODS
INCARNATE,
AIN'T IT?

WHY
A BATH
HOUSE,
ANYWAY?



IS A
NICE,
LONG
BATH
...

SO, I
FIGURED
WHAT YOU
MIGHT
NEED...

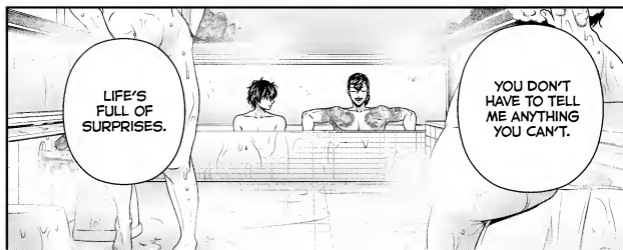
...TO
REFRESH
AND GET
YOUR HEAD
IN ORDER.



WELL,

I DON'T
KNOW
THE FULL
STORY,

BUT I HEARD
YOU'VE BEEN
PRETTY DOWN
IN THE DUMPS
LATELY.



LIFE'S
FULL OF
SURPRISES.

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO TELL
ME ANYTHING
YOU CAN'T.



GROWING
UP IN THAT
ENVIRON-
MENT,

I NEVER
IMAGINED
I'D END UP
CUTTING
TIES WITH MY
PARENTS AND
DISOWNING
THE FAMILY.



...

I COME
FROM A
LONG-
STANDING
YAKUZA
FAMILY.



HE WAS
STEAMING
AND
CRYING
AT THE
SAME
TIME.

MY OLD MAN
WAS BOILING
MAD WHEN I
TOLD HIM I
WAS LEAVING
THE GROUP.

AS THE
ELDEST SON,
I KNEW I WAS
RAISED WITH
SPECIAL CARE
TO INHERIT
THE BUSINESS
SOMEDAY.



WHY
DON'T WE
WASH UP
NOW?



Z
S
H
H

HONESTLY, I
THOUGHT HE
WAS GONNA
KILL ME
FOR SURE.



I EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT HAVING THIS TATTOO REMOVED.

I NO LONGER HAD TO HIDE MY PREFERENCES.



AFTER I LEFT, I WAS FREE.



THAT WAS WHEN ...

I COULD DO ANY JOB I WANTED TO AND ASSOCIATE WITH WHOEVER I WANTED TO AS JUST ANOTHER REGULAR PERSON.



...I RECEIVED WORD THAT MY OLD MAN HAD DIED.



WHEN I RECALLED THE LOOK ON HIS FACE THE DAY I LEFT,

AP- PRENTLY, IT WAS CANCER.

AND THOUGHT ABOUT HOW HE MUST HAVE FELT, I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO GO TO HIS FUNERAL.

A PRETTY ANTICLIMACTIC END FOR A MOB BOSS, HUH?



...!

THAT WAS SIX YEARS AFTER I LEFT HOME.



LIFE WILL
THROW ALL
SORTS OF
THINGS
AT YOU.

UNTIL
THE
DAY
YOU
DIE,

NATSUO-
CHAN.



NOR CAN
YOU ERASE
THE PAST.

YOU
CAN'T
TURN
BACK
TIME,

NO
MATTER
WHAT
HAPPENS,
OR WHAT
YOU GO
THROUGH,



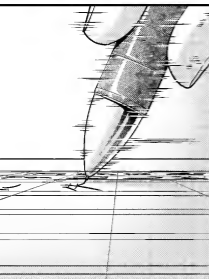
ALL
YOU CAN
DO IS
CARRY
ON,

SHOULDERING
EVERYTHING
AS A PART
OF YOU.



NO
PROBLEM

...



THE
SPOTLIGHT

WORDS,
STACKED LIKE
A RAINBOW

AMESTRUCK
BY ITS BEAUTY

RUNNING
AT FULL
SPEED,

AS I
PASSED
THE
USUAL
PATCH
OF
GINGKO
TREES

LIGHT
SEEPED IN
LITTLE BY
LITTLE

SEEMED
TO SCREAM
"SPRING"

AS IF
I WAS
PUNCHED
IN THE
FACE

WAS ALL
THAT
ANSWERED
THE HAIL
OF BLOWS.

WITH SIX
UNSETTLING
PILLARS,
EACH
POINTING
DIFFERENT
DIRECTIONS

WHILE
FEELING
MYSELF
PULLED
DEEPER
INTO THE
ALMOST
PAINFULLY
DARK
VOID,

POURED
IN WITH
THE SOUND
OF LOOSE
EARTH

I BOARDED
THE BUS
AND CALLED
OUT TO
HER...

THE RAIN
ENVELOPED
THEM LIKE
A VEIL

APPEARED
TO BE
GLARING

ACCUSINGLY

HER SMILE
ETHEREAL
AS THE
HEAVENS

SMILING,
SHE CLAPPED HER
HANDS ASSUREDLY

SHE
PALELY

HANDS
SHAKING,
LOOKING
UP AT
THE
BRIDGE,

CONCEALED
EVEN MY
TRUE
FEELINGS

ONLY
MEMORIES
LINGER
IN BOLD
PROTEST

THE
SOUND
OF RAIN
BATTING
AGAINST

THE SUNSET
REFLECTED
IN HER EYES
APPEARED
DIM AND
DEPRESSING.

HER
PRONGED
WORDS,
AS IF
TO RAKE
UP THE
LITTERED
SIGHS

POSITIVE
SHE'D
RESPOND
WITH AN
UNADULTERATED
SMILE

THE WATER
BROUGHT
DOWN THE
PAPER
AIRPLANE

THOUGH
SEEMING
THE SAME,
TIME
CRAWLED
BY

THE
CAR
NDOM

ITS SOMEHOW
NOSTALGIC HUE



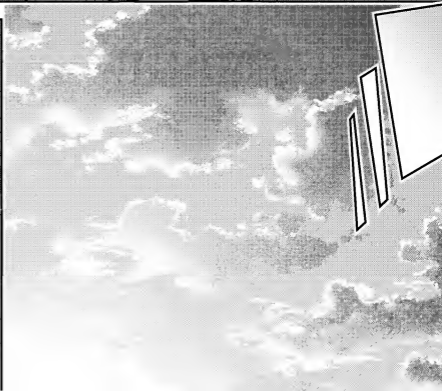


NO.

NOT
HUB
...

WELL ?

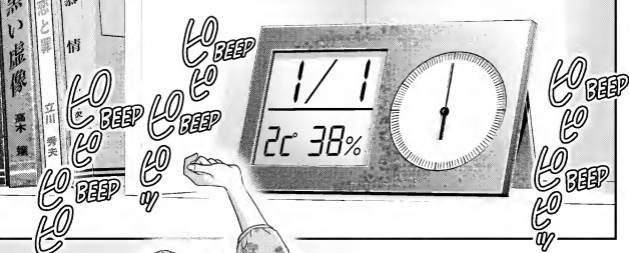
STILL
NO SIGN
OF HIM
COMING
DOWN?





CHAPTER 67: A NEW YEAR WITHOUT HINA





I
THOUGHT
...
I'D MAKE
ZONI!...

AH.

I LOST
TRACK OF
THE DAYS
AND ONLY
AND DIDN'T
REALIZE IT
WAS NEW
YEAR'S UNTIL
I TURNED
ON THE TV
JUST NOW.

YOU'RE
UP
EARLY.

MORN-
ING.



I KINDA
FEEL LIKE
AN EMPTY
SHELL
NOW.

UNTIL
NOT A
SINGLE
DROP
WAS LEFT.

I POURED
EVERYTHING
I HAVE...
INTO
THOSE
PAGES.



DID
YOU
...

...FINISH
IT?



SURE
...!



I DON'T
KNOW IF
IT'S GOOD
OR NOT,

BUT
WOULD
YOU MIND
GIVING IT
A READ,
TOO?



SO IT'LL
HAVE TO
BE AFTER
THAT,
BUT...

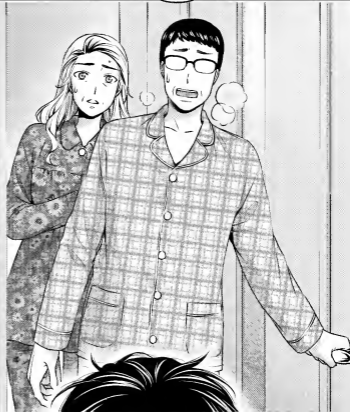
I'M
GONNA HAVE
KIRIYA-SENSEI
LOOK AT IT
FIRST,



DAD
...
TSUKIKO-
SAN...

WE
HEARD
...

...YOU
GUYS
TALK-
ING.





...FOR
MAKING
YOU
WORRY.

I'M
REALLY
SORRY
...



I REALIZED
THINGS
COULDN'T GO
ON THE WAY
THEY WERE.

AT
ANY
RATE,



...OKAY
NOW?

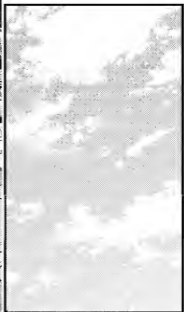
ARE
YOU
...



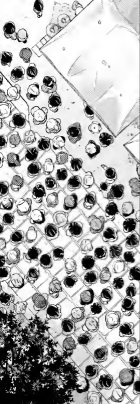
LET'S
KICK
OFF THE
NEW YEAR
RIGHT!

BUT SEEING
AS NATSUO
HAS FINALLY
COME OUT OF
HIS ROOM,

IT'S A
SHAME
THAT
HINA-SAN
ISN'T
HERE,







AND PLEASE DON'T TRY TO FIND ME.

...

YEAH

...



I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK, "I WONDER IF HINA-NEE'S HERE."

EVEN THOUGH THERE'S NO WAY SHE'D COME TO A SHRINE THIS CLOSE TO HOME.

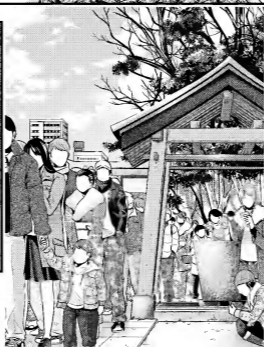
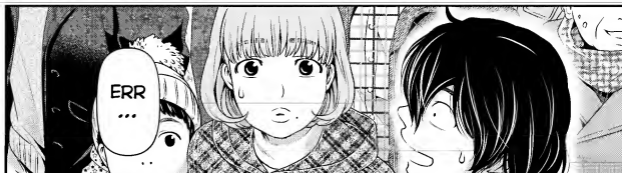


HUH...?



!

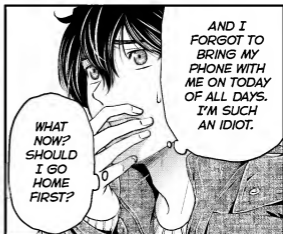






I LOST HER
IN THE
CROWD.

CRAP
...



WHAT
NOW?
SHOULD
I GO
HOME
FIRST?

AND I
FORGOT TO
BRING MY
PHONE WITH
ME ON TODAY
OF ALL DAYS.
I'M SUCH
AN IDIOT.



MRRR

AHH, BUT
DAD AND
THE OTHERS
WILL PROBABLY
LOOK
FOR ME...

DID YOU
LOSE YOUR
FRIENDS?





...LOOK FOR MY PARENTS ?

...WILL YOU HELP ME...



CAN YOU SEE?

I CAN, BUT...

NO SIGN OF THEM.



HMM ...

WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?





THE FUTURE LOOKS DARK FOR BOTH JAPAN AND WOMANKIND.

SIGH...
ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE SO-CALLED BETA MALES?

THE END TIMES ARE UPON US.

WHAT DOES SHE WANT FROM ME?

NOPE.

I'M REALLY NOT IN THAT KINDA MOOD RIGHT NOW.

JUST TO CLARIFY,

YOU'RE NOT GETTING TURNED ON BY THIS OR ANYTHING, ARE YOU?

HUH ?!

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING LIKE THAT!

ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY I'M NOT SEXY?!

STANDS OUT, HUH?

BUT WHAT WAS FATHER WEARING AGAIN?

MOM'S WEARING AN ORANGE COAT, SO SHE'S EASY TO FIND,

ANYTHING THAT STANDS OUT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS ?

LIKE A HAT OR THE COLOR OF THEIR CLOTHES ...

I'M PRETTY SURE HE HAS A BLACK DOWN JACKET ON, SO HE MIGHT BE HARDER TO PICK OUT.



SO I'M NOT RELATED TO FATHER.

OH.

MY MOM GOT RE-MARRIED,



YOU DON'T USE "DAD?"

HM?

FOR YOUR FATHER.



WHAT? DO YOU THINK YOU ASKED SOMETHING YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE?

NO...I WAS JUST THINKING WE HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON.



IT'S JUST THAT MY BIRTH FATHER IS "DAD" TO ME.

I DON'T HATE HIM OR ANYTHING,



YUP.

DID YOU GET SIBLINGS?

SO, YOU GOT A NEW MOTHER, HUH?

DAD'S.

NEAT! WHICH SIDE ARE YOU FROM?

LUCKY! I'M AN ONLY CHILD, SO I'M SUPER JEALOUS! WHAT'S IT LIKE TO HAVE NEW SIBLINGS?



ARE YOU PART OF THE REMARRIAGE BRIGADE, TOO?

MY PARENTS ARE ...



WHAT KIND OF ANSWER IS THAT?



WHAT'S IT LIKE?

WELL ...

THERE ARE GOOD AND BAD THINGS TO IT...



HURRY!

HUH?

WAI-

HEY, LET ME DOWN!



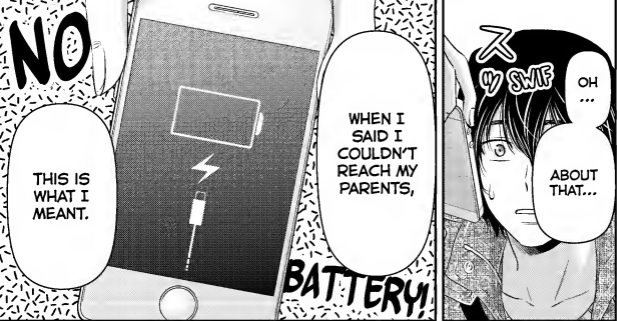
HANG ON...!

LEMME USE YOUR PHONE BEFORE YOU GO!



AH!

THERE THEY ARE!



NO

THIS IS WHAT I MEANT.

WHEN I SAID I COULDN'T REACH MY PARENTS,

BATTERY!



SWF

OH ...

ABOUT THAT...



THANKS FOR THE HELP, THOUGH!

SOR-RYYYY!

ER...



SEE YA!



HUUUH?!



WELL,

AS THANKS,

YOU GOT TO USE MY THIGHS AS A SCARF!





HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!



AH!

IT'S
NATSUO-
KUN!



I LEFT
IT AT
HOME...

WHISPER!

OUR
PARENTS
WENT
TO BUY
CHARMS.

WHAT
WERE YOU
DOING? YOU
WOULDN'T
ANSWER
YOUR
PHONE.

DUM-
MY!



HEAR,
HEAR!

WHY
DON'T WE
HANG OUT
AFTER
THIS?

HEY,
SINCE
WE'RE
ALL
HERE,



WHAT
?

I FINALLY
FOUND
YOU...

WERE YOU
LOST, NAT-
SUO-KUN?

SWAY
ㄋㄤ

SWAY
ㄋㄤ...



THERE'S SOMEWHERE I WANNA GO AFTER THIS.

SORRY...



NEW YEAR!

HAPPY



WE BROUGHT AMAZAKE!

NICE DIGS, MR. KIRIYA.

WHA?!

とっ
PLOD

とっ
PLOD

とっ
PLOD

HEY ...!

*SWEET, LOW OR NON-ALCOHOLIC SAKE.



SORRY. I WANTED TO BRING OVER MY FINISHED NOVEL, BUT EVERYONE SORT OF FOLLOWED ME...

WHAT ARE YOU ALL DOING HERE?!

DID YOU HAVE TO COME ON NEW YEAR'S DAY?!





'KAAA!'

PLEASE TRY TO KEEP THE NOISE DOWN, OKAY?

AND I'M NOT FOND OF AMAZAKE, SO HELP YOURSELVES.

I'M SORRY, BUT I'M TOO SWAMPED WITH WORK TO HUMOR YOU ALL.



TWO HOURS LATER



FWIP

...I VOTE WE PLAAAY YAKYUKEN*!

OOOOKAY! NOW THAD THE PARTY'S HEATING UB...

*A FORM OF STRIP ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS



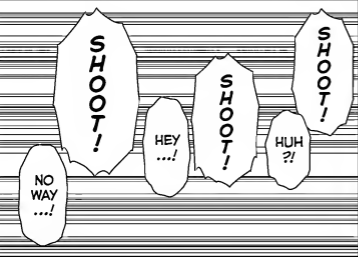
HIC



DON EVEN SHINK ABOUT DRINKING, ALLIE!

I THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH, MOMO-CHAN...

I KNOW, I HEARD YOU THE FIRST FOUR TIMES.





**WHAT
ON EARTH
ARE YOU
DOING?!**

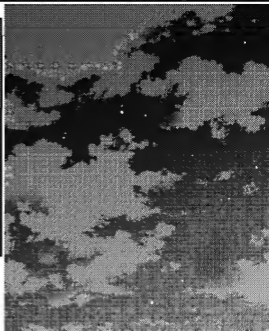
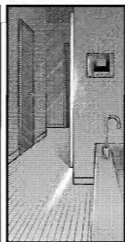
WHA-



**NOT
HAPPEN-
ING!**

**ROCK,
PAPER-**


**LET'S
PLAY
YAKYUKEN,
SENSEI!** **AH!**





I WASN'T
SURE WHAT
TO EXPECT,
BUT...

WHEN HE
SHOWED UP
LOOKING
LIKE A
WALKING
CORPSE,



...OF
SADNESS AND
SUFFERING."

"ART IS
BORN
..."



WHO'D
HAVE
THOUGHT
...

...IT'D
TURN HIM
INTO A
MONSTER.

DOMEGIRL 4-PANEL THEATER







MORN-
ING.

CLACK



A
KOTA-
TSU!

MORN-
ING.

*A HEATER-EQUIPPED TABLE COVERED WITH A BLANKET.



NEW
YEAR'S
CARDS
...

I TOTALLY
FORGOT.
I'LL HAVE
TO SEND
SOME
BACK.



THE NEW
YEAR'S
CARDS
ARRIVED.

HERE
ARE
YOURS.

HUH
...

I WENT
AHEAD
AND
SPURGED
ON ONE
ON THE
WAY
BACK
FROM
THE
SHRINE
YESTERDAY.



OH YEAH. I GOT A TEXT FROM MOMO LAST NIGHT.

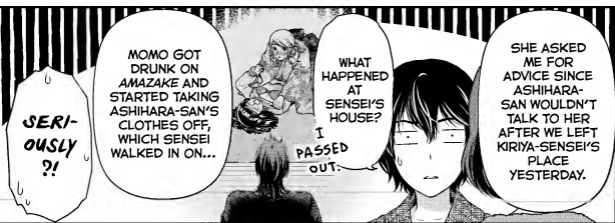
MOMO'S AND ASHIHARA-SAN'S ARE PRETTY FITTING.

I hope we can write more good stories this year, as well.
-Ashihara

Here's to another good year.
ALEX

AL MADE HIS WITH A POTATO STAMP? IT SAYS "HAQQY" ...

HOW OLD-FASHIONED.



SERIOUSLY?!

MOMO GOT DRUNK ON AMAZAKE AND STARTED TAKING ASHIHARA-SAN'S CLOTHES OFF, WHICH SENSEI WALKED IN ON...

WHAT HAPPENED AT SENSEI'S HOUSE?

I PASSED OUT.

SHE ASKED ME FOR ADVICE SINCE ASHIHARA-SAN WOULDN'T TALK TO HER AFTER WE LEFT KIRIYA-SENSEI'S PLACE YESTERDAY.

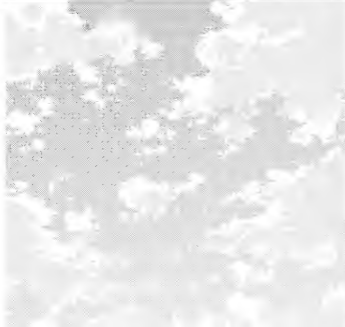


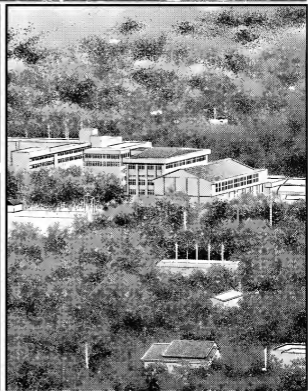
ESPECIALLY SINCE IT WAS KIRIYA-SENSEI OF ALL PEOPLE WHO SAW...

HA HA

I DON'T BLAME ASHIHARA-SAN FOR BEING MAD.

MOMO'S DEFINITELY AT FAULT THERE.







I
WONDER
IF SHE
EVEN
BROUGHT
IT...

MIKA
PROBABLY
FINISHED
ALL HER
HOMEWORK.
WHY DON'T
YOU ASK TO
BORROW
HERS?

I HAVE
CLASS
TOMORROW,
SO I'M GONNA
HAVE TO BLOW
THROUGH
THEM WHEN
I GET HOME
TODAY.

I HAVEN'T
FINISHED
PHYSICS
OR ECON.



I STILL DON'T
KNOW WHAT
SUBJECT
SHE'S GOING
TO TEACH.

A
WOMAN,
I
GUESS.

REAL-
LY?

A MAN
OR A
WOMAN
?

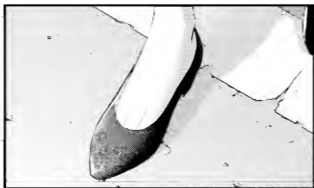
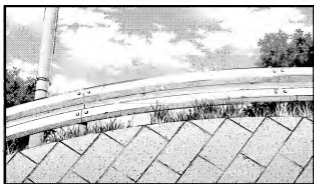
HMM...
KIND OF A
WEIRD TIME
TO START,
HUH?



APPAR-
ENTLY,
WE'RE
GETTING
A NEW
TEACHER.

OH,

DID YOU
HEAR?



WONDER
IF IT'S
"COMPLI-
CATED."





IT'S WEIRD.

KNOWING THAT SENSEI ISN'T HERE ANYMORE,



YOU OKAY ...?



IT FEELS LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SCHOOL.



BUT I'LL JUST HAVE TO GET USED TO IT LITTLE BY LITTLE.

I STILL CAN'T SAY I'M BACK TO 100%,



G' MORNIN'!

HONESTLY,
JUST THINKING
ABOUT ENGLISH
CLASS KINDA
HURTS.



た TAP
た TAP
?



ALL YOU
CAN DO
IS APOLO-
GIZE...

WHAT
SHOULD
I DO?

LOOK,
MOMO.
SPEAK
OF THE
DEVIL.

OH!



UGH
...
WAY
TO BE A
DOWNER
ON THE
FIRST
DAY OF
SCHOOL.

OH, YEAH.
DID YOU
MAKE UP
WITH
ASHIHARA-
SAN?

NOT YET.
SHE WON'T
ANSWER
ANY OF MY
CALLS OR
TEXTS...



I HAVEN'T
SEEN YOU
GUYS
SINCE NEW
YEAR'S!

HOW
HAVE
YOU
BEEN?

NOT
TOO
BAD.



...ING.



ぎ!!
GLARE

ASHIHARA-SAN!

GOOD MORN...



IT'S LIKE HER DESPAIR ONLY GOT WORSE WITH TIME.



MYU-CHAAAAN.

OH, CRAP! SHE'S SUPER PISSED!



I'M GOING ...

...TO QUIT THE LITERATURE CLUB.



I'M SURE KIRIYA-SENSEI FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT!

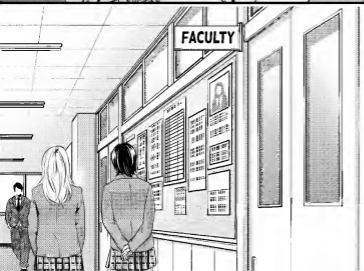
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO DOWN ABOUT IT!

I'M SO SORRY, MYU-CHAN!

A-ASHIHARA-SAN! BY ANY CHANCE, ARE YOU STILL UPSET ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AT SENSEI'S PLACE ON NEW YEAR'S?

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO HELP?

TAP TAP TAP TAP
タタタタタタ





...FOR
WHAT
WE DID.

WE'RE
VERY
SORRY
...



SHE SAID
SHE WANTS
TO QUIT THE
CLUB FOR ALL
THE TROUBLE
WE CAUSED
YOU.

FINAL
?



HUH
?

KASHI-
WABARA-
KUN.


SHE NEVER
ENDED UP
FORGIVING
YOU?



AS THE
CLUB
PRESIDENT,
I'M ASHAMED
OUR
CONDUCT
...

...AFTER WE
BARGED INTO
YOUR HOME
THE OTHER
DAY.

AT THE VERY
LEAST, I
WANTED TO
APOLOGIZE
AS MY FINAL
ACT...




SHE SAID THAT IF MY OPINION OF ANYONE SHOULD SUFFER, THEN IT SHOULD BE HERS AND HERS ALONE.

SHE APOLOGIZED PROFUSELY FOR HER DRUNKEN BEHAVIOR,

AND TRIED TO TAKE ALL THE BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED THE PREVIOUS DAY.

KASHIWARA-KUN DROPPED BY AGAIN THE DAY AFTER NEW YEAR'S.



NOT THAT I HAVE A POOR OPINION OF ANY OF YOU.

WELL,



THE MEMBERS AND I HAVE GREAT FAITH IN YOU,

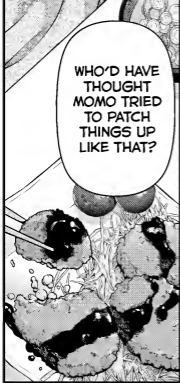
PRESIDENT.



SO, THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT IT, ASHIHARA-KUN.

PLEASE DON'T SAY YOU'LL QUIT THE CLUB.

OKAY!



WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT MOMO TRIED TO PATCH THINGS UP LIKE THAT?



NOT YET.

OH, YEAH. HAVE YOU GOTTEN SENSEI'S FEEDBACK ON YOUR NOVEL YET?

HE SAID HE WANTS TO HOLD ON TO IT FOR A LITTLE LONGER.



COUGH
COUGH

HE SEEMED PRETTY BUSY,

SO MAYBE HE HASN'T READ IT YET...



SHE PROBABLY REALLY REGRETTED WHAT HAPPENED.

SHE WAS ROOTING FOR ASHIHARA-SAN'S CRUSH, AFTER ALL.

WELL, I'M JUST GLAD THEY MADE UP.







ARE YOU
DONE WITH
THAT WHOLE
THING...

...ABOUT
TRYING
TO HATE
ME?



HEY
...

I'VE
BEEN
WONDERING
ABOUT
SOME-
THING.



WOULD
YOU HAVE
PREFERRED
IF IT I JUST
IGNORED
YOU...

...WHEN
YOU WERE
A MESS
AFTER
HINA-NEE
LEFT?

TNK
"



WHAT
?

SHOULD
I HAVE
KEPT IT
UP?



...



I'D PROBABLY STILL BE SHUT UP IN MY ROOM.

IF YOU HADN'T BEEN LOOKING OUT FOR ME,



... NAH.

I'M REALLY GRATEFUL.



HEY.

I'VE BEEN THINKING.



WHY DON'T WE...

...GO
LOOK FOR
HINA-NEE
TOGETHER?



CHAPTER 69: NATSUO'S RESOLVE

THOUGH I GET THE FEELING OUR PARENTS KNOW SOMETHING AND THEY JUST WON'T TELL US.



I MEAN, IT'S WEIRD TO BE THIS IN THE DARK EVEN THOUGH WE'RE FAMILY.

HUH ...?



SO ...





HUH?

THANKS FOR DINNER.



COUNT ME OUT.

NAH.



YEAH,

BUT ...

WELL,



ANY-WAY,

I'M FINE.

BUT?



...SHE LEFT SO SUDDENLY!
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY TO HER?

WHY NOT?

BUT ...

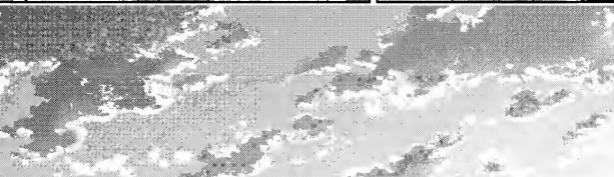
YOU STILL HAVE REGRETS, DON'T YOU?



JUST
LEAVE THE
DISHES IN
THE SINK.

WHAT
DO
YOU
MEAN
FINE?

I'LL
DO THEM
AFTER
I TAKE
A BATH.



I DUNNO IF
THAT'S THE
RIGHT LINE
TO DUB A
HIGH-SCHOOL
GIRL WITH.

THAT'S
THE
FACE
YOU'RE
MAK-
ING.



THERE'S
NO WAY
HE'S
ALREADY
OVER
HER.

WELL,

I REALLY
DON'T
GET IT.



"I CAN'T
FATHOM
IT."



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO, RUI-RUI?

SAY ...



...



YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH NATSUO-CHAN, AREN'T YOU?

WELL,

HUH ?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



...

EVEN THOUGH THEY BROKE UP,

IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT TO JUST SWOOP IN LIKE THAT.



BUT WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO GET THEM BACK TOGETHER NOW?

AS SLY AS THIS SOUNDS, ISN'T THIS YOUR CHANCE TO TAKE HIM FOR YOURSELF?

ACCEPTING THEIR RELATIONSHIP WAS FINE AND ALL,





OH, MY.
GREET-
ING ME
AT THE
DOOR?
HOW
SWEET.

I HEARD
YOUR
HIGH
HEELS
CLACK-
ING.



THERE'S
SOMETHING
I WANTED
TO
ASK YOU...



WEL-
COME
BACK.



I TOLD
YOU BE-
FORE.

SHE
CALLED
ME FROM A
WITHHELD
NUMBER,
BUT
WOULDN'T
TELL ME
WHERE
SHE WAS.

...



YOU
KNOW
SOME-
THING,
DON'T
YOU,
MOM?

ABOUT
HINA-
NEE
...



...BUT HINA'S
A GROWN
WOMAN. I'M
SURE SHE
HAD HER
REASONS FOR
DOING WHAT
SHE DID.

HINA TOLD
US NOT
TO WORRY
ABOUT HER
WHEN SHE
CALLED.

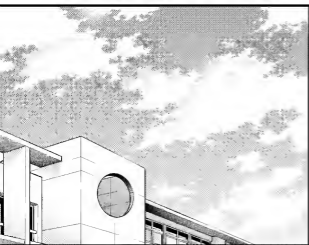
I'M
WORRIED
SICK, OF
COURSE...



THEN WHY
AREN'T YOU
LOOKING
HARDER
FOR HER?

WE'RE
FAMILY,
BUT SHE
JUST UP
AND VAN-
ISHED...

BECAUSE
WE'RE
FAMILY.



BOW.

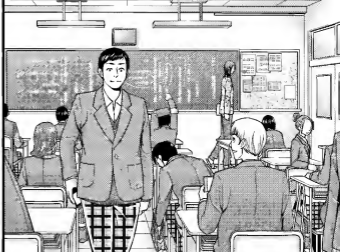
RISE.

THANK
YOU VERY
MUCH!



I'VE
DECIDED
TO TRUST
HINA AND
WAIT.

SO,
AS HER
FAMILY,





NOT TELLING.

WHAT'S WITH THAT MUGGER MENTALITY?

SORRY, I'M SORT OF DESPERATE.

WHAT?!

AND WHAT SECRET DO YOU MEAN?

YOU'RE BLACK-MAILING ME OUT OF THE BLUE?

HUH?!



YOU CAN ASK ALL YOU WANT,

BUT I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW, EITHER.



TURNING ON THE WATER-WORKS NOW?

PLEASE TELL ME.

IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH...

...YOU WON'T GET ANYTHING OUT OF ME THAT WAY.

ほたほた DRIP DRIP



THERE HAS TO BE SOMEONE, RIGHT?!

...WHO MIGHT KNOW SOMETHING?!

YOU'RE SCARING ME.



IN THAT CASE ...



TACHIBANA-SENSEI'S TRANSFER WAS A VERY SPECIAL CASE.

IN KEEPING WITH HER WISHES, NONE OF THE STAFF HAVE BEEN TOLD THE DETAILS.



TAKE-
UCHI-
SENSEI
...



?!
JOLT
!!

SURELY
YOU KNOW
SOMETHING.



AS THE
TEACHER
IN CHARGE
OF MY
SCHOOL
YEAR,



WE'RE
ALL VERY
WORRIED
ABOUT
HER.

TO THINK
SHE DIDN'T
EVEN TELL
HER OWN
FAMILY...



I'M
AWARE
THAT
YOU
PROM-
ISED
HER,

BUT
IT'S NOT
LIKE YOU'D
BE TELLING
JUST ANY
OTHER
STUDENT.



EVEN SO,
TACHIBANA-
SENSEI
ASKED
THAT THE
ARRANGE-
MENT BE
KEPT A
SECRET...



TACHI-
BANA-
SENSEI'S

NEW
SCHOOL
?!



...

IF YOU REFUSE TO TELL ME,



I'M ...

...HER LITTLE SISTER!



HEY, WAIT!

AH, WELL, THESE THINGS HAPPEN WHEN YOU GET OLD-

DO YOU SUFFER FROM AFTER-DRIBBLE?

HUH?!

BUT TO UPLOAD THIS PHOTO I JUST TOOK OF YOU COMING OUT OF THE BATHROOM WITH A WET SPOT ON YOUR PANTS TO THE SCHOOL SITE.

THEN I'LL HAVE NO CHOICE ...



NATSUO!



DANG

DONG

DING



YOU
GOING
TO CLUB
TO-

YANK

!



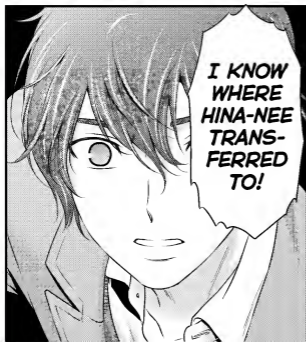
HEY,
RUI.



FOR-
GET
ABOUT
THAT!

WHAT'S
WITH YOU?!
I HAVE
TO GIVE
ASHIHARA-
SAN HER
NOVEL
BACK!

HEY
....!



I KNOW
WHERE
HINA-NEE
TRANS-
FERRED
TO!



WE
HAVE
TO GO
HOME,
NOW!



I DON'T
KNOW WHERE
SHE LIVES,
BUT IF WE
SEARCH
NEAR HER
SCHOOL...



LET'S
GO PACK
OUR
BAGS!



HUH
?!

I GOT IT
OUT OF
TAKEUCHI-
SENSEI!



SN

ENOUGH!

AP



WHY
?

...



I
WANT
...

TO SEE
HER, TOO,
Y'KNOW.

BUT
...





IF I GO
LOOKING
FOR HER
THE WAY I
AM NOW,

...IN HER
LETTER,

I'LL JUST
MAKE HER
RESOLVE GO
TO WASTE.

SHE TOLD ME
NOT TO LOOK
FOR HER,
AND THAT SHE
WAS LEAVING
BECAUSE SHE
WANTED MY
DREAM OF
BECOMING A
NOVELIST TO
COME TRUE.



RE-
OLVE ...

HINA-
NEE'S ...

...



IF I
SEE HER
AGAIN,

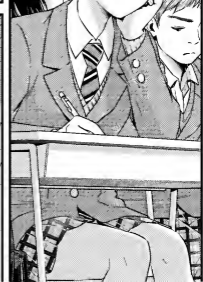
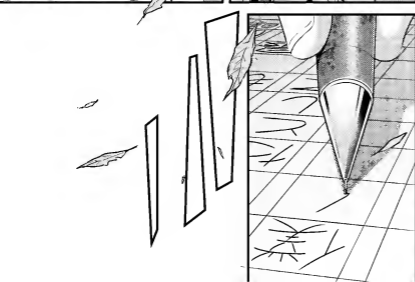


SORRY.

...FOR
LOOKING
OUT
FOR ME,
THOUGH.

THANKS
...

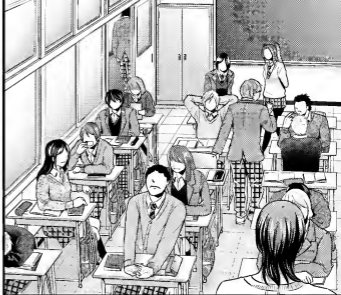
IT SHOULD
BE WHEN
I'M READY
TO.





FUJII-KUN.

A
MOMENT,
PLEASE?



HE
DOESN'T
USUALLY
LIKE
COMPANY.

...SENSEI
ASKED ME TO
COME OVER.

I
WONDER
WHY...



THE
REASON
I ASKED
YOU TO
COME,

IS
ACTUALLY
BECAUSE
...

HEY,
THERE.

SORRY
TO CALL
YOU OVER
ON THE
WEEKEND.

IT'S
OKAY.



GO
DING >
DONG 70

OH...

IT'S
ME,
FUJII.

COME
ON UP.

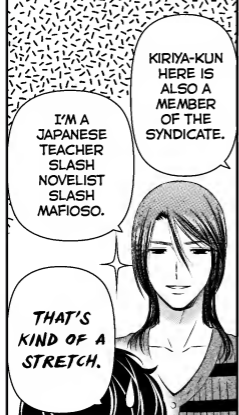






CHAPTER 70: TURNING POINT





I'M A
JAPANESE
TEACHER
SLASH
NOVELIST
SLASH
MAFIOSO.

KIRIYA-KUN
HERE IS
ALSO A
MEMBER
OF THE
SYNDICATE.

THAT'S
KIND OF A
STRETCH.



THE TRUTH IS,
I'M ACTUALLY A
MEMBER OF AN
UNDERWORLD
SYNDICATE THAT
HAS ALL OF
JAPAN UNDER
ITS THUMB.

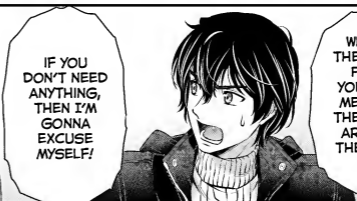
I WAS
ORDERED
TO PROCURE
ONE PERSON
TO BE
SOLD ON
THE BLACK
MARKET.

CHIK

WELL, I
CAN'T
BLAME
YOU FOR
BEING
SKEPTI-
CAL.



IF YOU
DON'T NEED
ANYTHING,
THEN I'M
GONNA
EXCUSE
MYSELF!



WHAT'S
THE DEAL?
FIRST
YOU CALL
ME OVER
THEN BEAT
AROUND
THE BUSH
...



CLINK
HM?



AND I'M
ASKING
WHAT
YOU WANT
TO TALK
ABOUT!

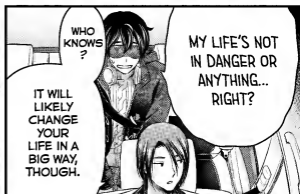
YOU'VE
JUST BEEN
MESSING
WITH
ME THE
WHOLE-

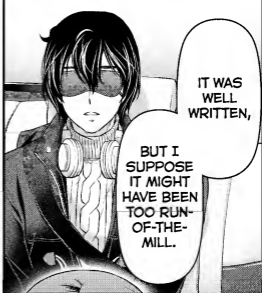
C'MON,
DON'T
BE SO
PRICKLY!

LET'S
TALK
FOR A
WHILE,
OKAY?

CLINK
CLINK
CLINK







IT WAS WELL WRITTEN,

BUT I SUPPOSE IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TOO RUN-OF-THE-MILL.



MAYBE...

...IT'S HOPELESS, AFTER ALL.



OKAY.

I'M TAKING THE BLIND-FOLD OFF.

IF I'M THIS POWERLESS, THEN...

HERE WE ARE.

GET OUT, PLEASE.

WATCH YOUR STEP.

I KNOW SIMPLY BEING PASSIONATE ISN'T ENOUGH.

BUT IF THIS IS HOW THINGS TURN OUT EVEN WITH KIRIYA-SENSEI'S GUIDANCE...

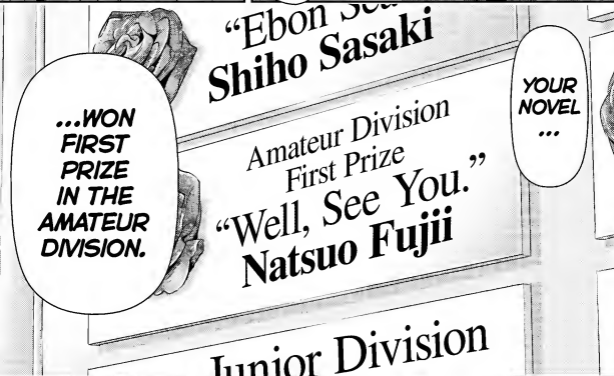
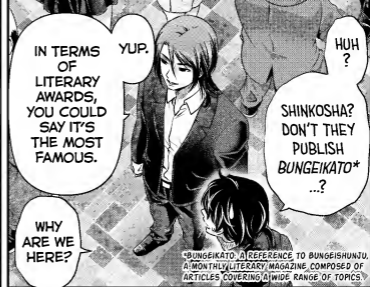
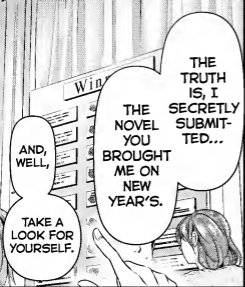
MY ONLY HOPE ...

IS THAT YOU MAKE YOUR DREAM OF BECOMING A NOVELIST COME TRUE.

I LOST HINA WHILE CHASING AFTER THIS DREAM...

77TH
SHINKOSHA LITERARY AWARD CEREMONY







I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT TO
SAY.

UMM
...
THIS IS
ALL JUST
SUCH AN
HONOR...



THAT I WAS ABLE
TO WRITE IT TO
COMPLETION.

IT WAS ONLY
WITH THE
COURAGE AND
SUPPORT OF
THOSE
CLOSEST
TO ME...

THIS NOVEL
...
ISN'T THE
PRODUCT
OF MY
EFFORT
ALONE.



CLAP
ノ
+

CLAP
ノ
+

CLAP
ノ
+

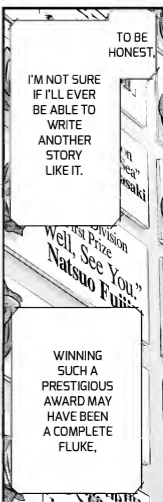
CLAP
ノ
+

ノ
CLAP
+



BUT
FOR THE
PEOPLE WHO
SUPPORTED
ME, AS
WELL!

I'LL WORK
HARD TO
FOLLOW MY
DREAM OF
BECOMING A
NOVELIST!



TO BE
HONEST

I'M NOT SURE
IF I'LL EVER
BE ABLE TO
WRITE
ANOTHER
STORY
LIKE IT.

WINNING
SUCH A
PRESTIGIOUS
AWARD MAY
HAVE BEEN
A COMPLETE
FLUKE,



MAKE NO MISTAKE,

THAT NOVEL WAS BORN FROM YOUR HEART.

...WINNING THIS AWARD WAS NO FLUKE.



THAT WAS A NICE SPEECH.

WELL DONE.

HOWEVER ...



IT'S A TAD LATE FOR FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS, BUT...

ALSO,

THANK YOU SO MUCH...

...



HE'LL BE IN CHARGE OF YOU FROM NOW ON.



THIS MAN ...

I OWE HIM A LOT FROM MY AMATEUR DAYS.

IS TSUTAYA-SAN, AN EDITOR FOR SHINKOSHA'S LITERARY DEPARTMENT.



THAT'S
CUTE,
RUI-RUI.



PASS.

MMM
...

WHY
DON'T
YOU TRY
IT ON?



FRILLY
CLOTHES
DON'T
REALLY
SUIT ME.

WHAAAT?
WHY
NOT?

IT'S
CUTE,
BUT,



IT'S
YOUR
COLOR,
TOO.



I FOUND
SOMETHING
AWESOME WHILE
DOING END-
OF-THE-YEAR
CLEANING!



HEY!

WANT TO
STOP
BY MY
PLACE ON
THE WAY
BACK?

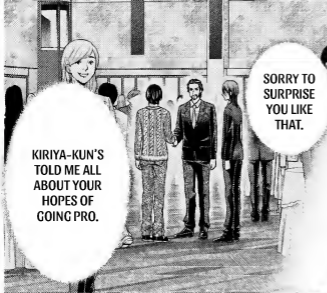


BUT
...



PHEEW.

I'M
EXHAUSTED
FROM TALKING
TO SO MANY
IMPORTANT-
LOOKING
PEOPLE.



KIRIYA-KUN'S TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOUR HOPES OF GOING PRO.

SORRY TO SURPRISE YOU LIKE THAT.



Amateur Division
First Prize
"Well, See You."
Natsuo Fujii



FUJII-SENSEI!



LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE SOME REAL MASTERPIECES,

I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOU!



AHH... THIS ISN'T A DREAM, RIGHT?

WRITING IT WAS PAINFUL, BUT I'M GLAD I PUSHED THROUGH!

RUFF RUFF RUFF RUFF



I'M IN YOUR CARE!



CONGRATU-
LATIONS!

THAT'S
AMAZ-
ING!

THIS IS
WONDER-
FUL!



HOW
GREAT
WOULD
THAT
BE?

IF ONLY
I COULD
TELL HINA
FIRST.



I BET...
...SHE'D
BE EVEN
HAPPIER
THAN ME.

NATSUO-
KUN!



I'VE JUST
NOW MADE MY
WAY TO THE
STARTING LINE...

I'M HO-



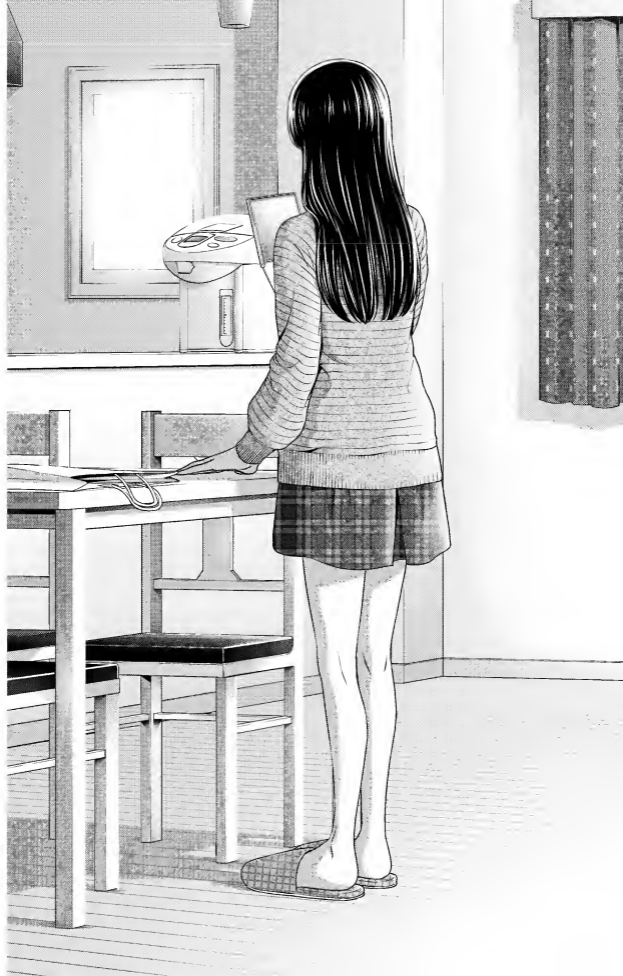
...

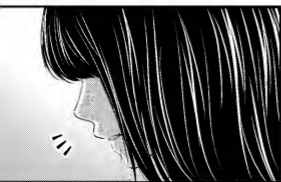
GUESS
THAT'S STILL
OUT OF THE
QUESTION...



LET'S GO
ALL OUT
TONIGHT!

YOU
DESERVE
IT!









...HOW
BADLY I
WANTED
TO SEE
YOU!

YOU
HAVE
NO
IDEA
...

I
MISSED
YOU SO
MUCH
...



YOU HEAR
WHAT
HAPPENED
TODAY.

WAIT
UNTIL
...

THERE'S
SO MUCH
I WANT
TO TELL YOU.



I WON'T
ASK...

...WHERE
YOU'RE
LIVING
NOW OR
ANYTHING
LIKE
THAT.



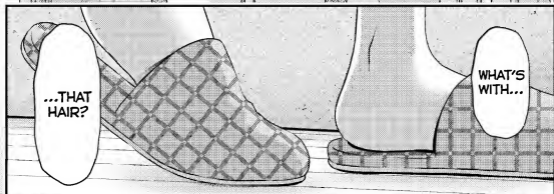
HINA
...?

...?



RUI
...!

CHAPTER 71:
CELEBRATION





GO
AHEAD.

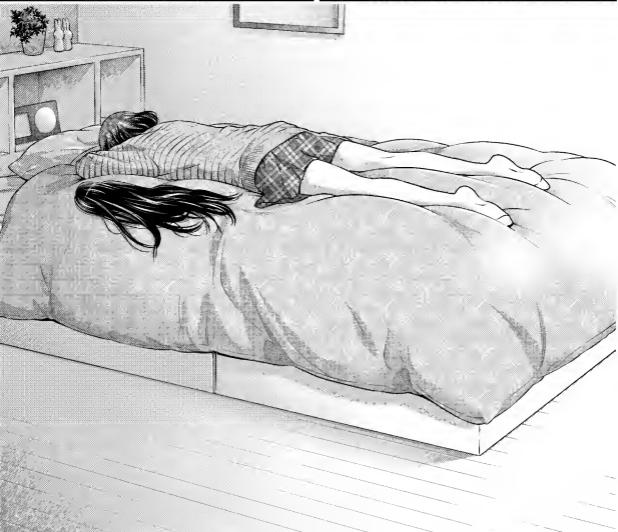
...

THE
DOOR'S
UN-
LOCKED.

RUI?

CAN I
COME IN?

FLACK
FLACK
...







WIG.

...

WHY THE
HAIR-
PIECE?

OKAY
WHY
THE
WIG?



I NEVER
IMAGINED
YOU'D BE
WEARING THAT
AND JUMPED
THE GUN...

...



SHE
SAID IT
CHANGED
MY VIBE AND
WOULD GIVE
ME MORE
OUTFIT
OPTIONS.

WE
STOPPED
BY HER
PLACE ON
THE WAY
BACK AND
SHE LENT
IT TO ME.

I GUESS SHE
REMEMBERED
THAT I
MENTIONED
GROWING MY
HAIR OUT.

I WENT
SHOP-
PING
WITH
MOMO
TODAY.



OH,
YEAH.

I HAVE
SOMETHING
TO TELL
YOU.



...



ARE YOU
GONNA
GROW IT
OUT?

I DUNNO.



**...WON
FIRST PRIZE
IN THE
SHINKOSHA
LITERARY
AWARD.**

**THE
NOVEL
I WROTE
DURING
WINTER
BREAK
...**



CONGRATS.

...



**BELIEVE ME,
I CAN STILL
BARELY
BELIEVE IT
MYSELF.**

**I'M NOT
PULLING
YOUR
LEG.**



**I GOT
PRIZE
MONEY,
TOO.**

**A
WHOPPING
300,000
YEN*!
ISN'T THAT
NUTS?**

*APPROX. 3,000 USD.

**APPARENTLY,
KIRIYA-SENSEI
SUBMITTED
IT WITHOUT
TELLING ME.**

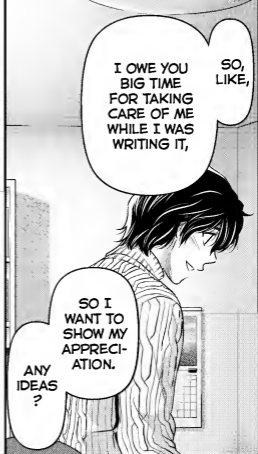


IT CAN BE
SOMETHING
FAIRLY
EXPENSIVE
IF YOU WANT.



THEN
...

...



I OWE YOU
BIG TIME
FOR TAKING
CARE OF ME
WHILE I WAS
WRITING IT,

SO,
LIKE,

SO I
WANT TO
SHOW MY
APPRECI-
ATION.

ANY
IDEAS
?



DO
WHATEVER
I SAY
FOR THE
WHOLE
DAY.

...SINCE
TOMOR-
ROW'S
SUNDAY,







OWW
...

DON'T-

FWUMP

ヤ

ッ



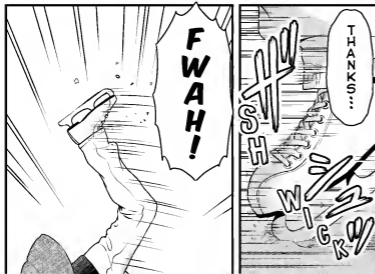
I'LL
SUPPORT
YOU WITH
BOTH
HANDS
THIS TIME.

C'MON,
GET UP.



HOW'D
YOU ROLL
YOUR ANKLE
WHEN I
ONLY LET
ONE HAND
GO?

I
TOLD
YOU
NOT
TO!



FWAH!

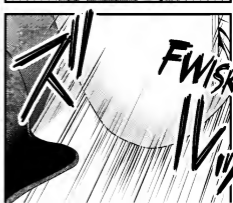


THANKS...



IT
TRIPPED
ME UP
MENTALLY!

FORGET
THE MENTAL
ISSUES
AND TRY
PUTTING
YOUR BACK
INTO IT
MORE.



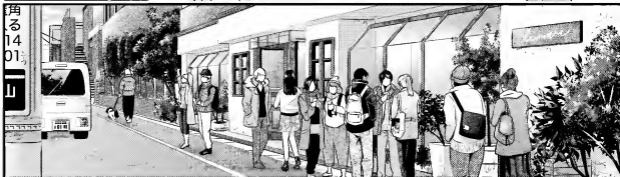


**ITH
NAH ON
BURPUF!**
(IT'S NOT ON
PURPOSE!)

**DON'T
LOOK.**

**HEY! WOULD
YOU GIVE
IT A REST
ALREADY?!**

MOMMY!



**YOU
PROBABLY
THOUGHT
MINE
COULDN'T
COMPARE TO
HINA-NEE'S,
DIDN'T YOU?**

**EVEN
IF IT
WAS
AN
ACCIDENT,**

**I DID
NOT!**



**I DIDN'T
DO IT ON
PURPOSE!**

**I SWEAR
TO THE GOD,
BUDDHA, AND
MY MOTHER
IN HEAVEN...**

**OKAY,
OKAY. I
GET IT.
JEEZ...**

**DON'T
SWEAR
TO YOUR
MOM FOR
DUMB
STUFF.**



**FORGIVE
ME.**



BE-
SIDES,

IT'S NOT
LIKE I FELL
IN LOVE
WITH HER
BOOBS OR
ANYTHING...



BUT ALL WE
DID WAS GO
SKATING AND
LINE UP FOR
WAFFLES.

IT'S SO
NORMAL IT'S
ALMOST A
LET-DOWN.

WHEN YOU
SAID, "DO
WHATEVER
I SAY FOR
A DAY," I
THOUGHT YOU
WERE GONNA
MAKE ME DO
SOMETHING
CRAZY,

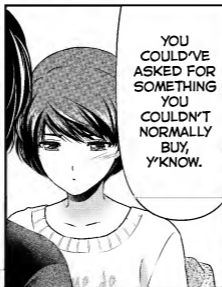


I'M
KINDA
SUR-
PRISED.

I
GOTTA
SAY,



...
NORMAL'S
FINE.



YOU
COULD'VE
ASKED FOR
SOMETHING
YOU
COULDN'T
NORMALLY
BUY,
Y'KNOW.

ABOUT
WHAT?



WHAT
WHAT'S
LIKE?

SERVANTS
SHOULD
JUST
LISTEN
TO THEIR
MASTER!

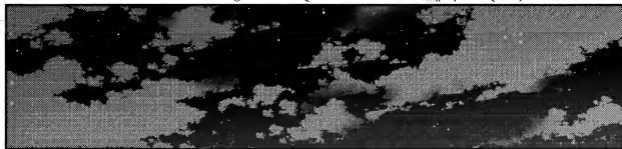
NEVER
MIND!

SER-
VANT
?!



I
JUST
...

...WANTED
TO KNOW
WHAT IT'S
LIKE.



HUH?

ARE THEY
NOT BACK
YET...?



WE'RE
HOME!



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR AWARD!

NAT-SUO!



WHA ?!



THANKS...

TH-



WOW ...!

ALSO ...



WE PREPARED A BIG FEAST,

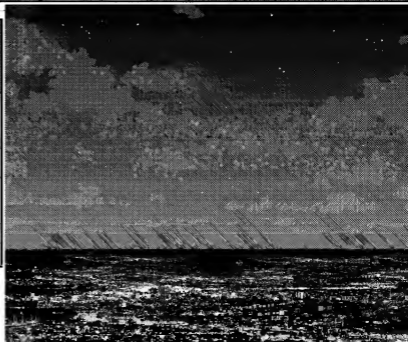
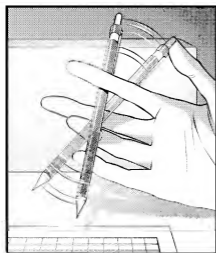
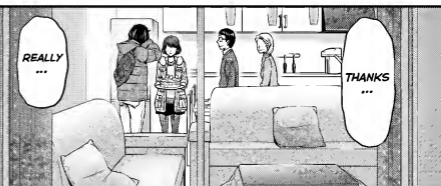
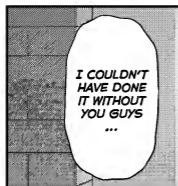
SO EAT PLENTY, OKAY?

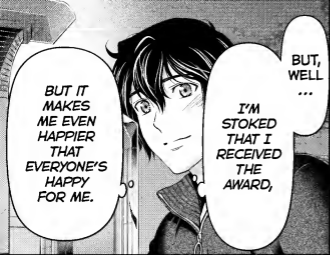
YOU RECEIVED SUCH A PRESTIGIOUS AWARD, SO WE HAVE TO CELEBRATE BIG TIME!

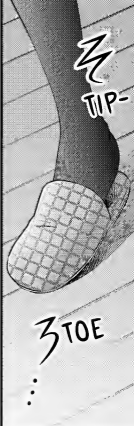


FIRST RUI-CHAN, NOW YOU! I COULDN'T BE MORE PROUD!

WE'RE HAVING A PARTY TONIGHT.

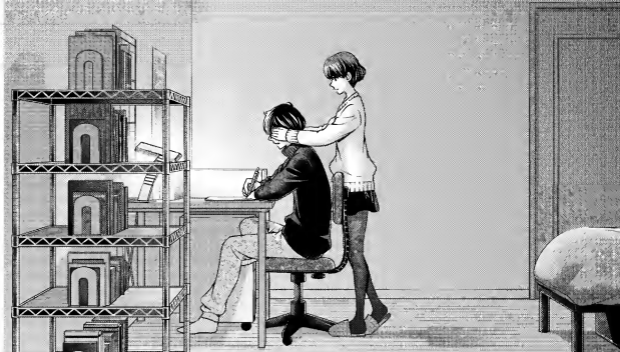


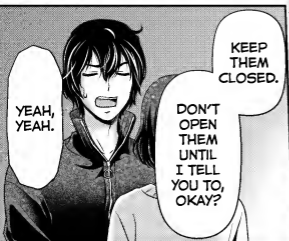
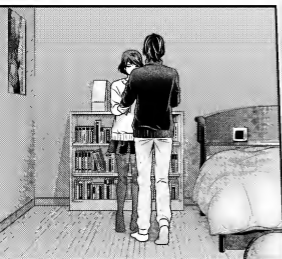
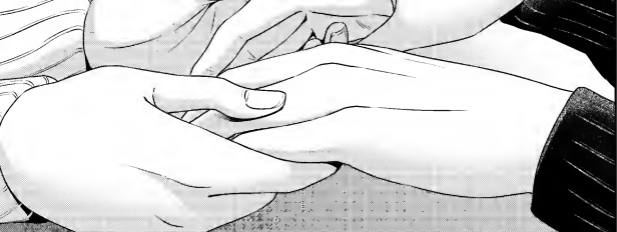




CHAPTER 72: CINDERELLA IN THE SHEETS









JEEZ...

WHAT WAS THAT FOR ?!

I SAID KEEP YOUR EYES CLOSED.



AAH ...!

ほ
POMF



NOW,

CLOSE YOUR EYES,

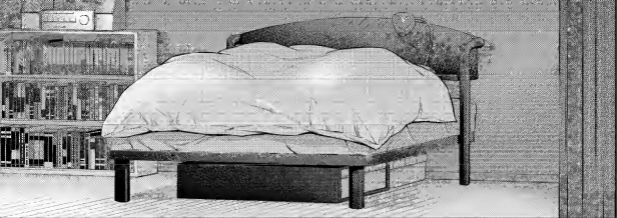
AND LIE DOWN.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO TENSE. I WON'T DO ANYTHING WEIRD.



I JUST WANNA TALK.



IS THERE
SOMETHING
YOU WANT TO
TELL ME?



YOU
WANNA
TALK?

ABOUT
WHAT?



...



LET'S
JUST
...

STAY LIKE
THIS UNTIL
MIDNIGHT.



NOT
REALLY.

IT'S
FINE.

WE CAN
JUST STAY
QUIET IF
YOU DON'T
HAVE
ANYTHING
TO TALK
ABOUT.



ABOUT
...

YES-
TER-
DAY.

...



...

...
SORRY.



WHEN I
WENT TO
YOUR
ROOM,

YOU
REALLY
WERE
CRYING,
WEREN'T
YOU?



...

IT WASN'T ...

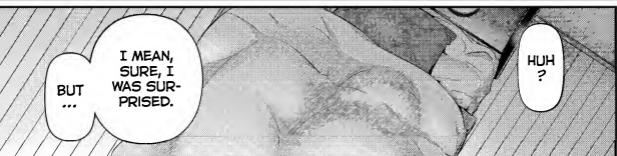
BECAUSE I WAS SCARED OR ANYTHING.



I'M REALLY SORRY FOR SCARING YOU.

I HUGGED YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN, MISTAKENLY, AT THAT.

I CAN'T BLAME YOU FOR BEING SURPRISED.



BUT ...

I MEAN, SURE, I WAS SURPRISED.

HUH ?



...

AT THE SAME TIME,



IT WAS CLEAR JUST HOW MUCH YOU MISSED HINA-NEE AND KEPT EVERYTHING BOTTLED UP UNTIL NOW.

YOU LOOKED SO SAD AND MISERABLE THAT...

I JUST STARTING CRYING.

WHEN YOU HUGGED ME SO TIGHTLY,

SO DEARLY,



THAT
MADE
ME
FEEL
...

I
THOUGHT,

"OH, THIS
MUST BE
HOW HE
ALWAYS
HUGGED
HINA-NEE."



NEVER
MIND.

...



"LISTEN TO
ANYTHING
YOU SAY
FOR A DAY!"

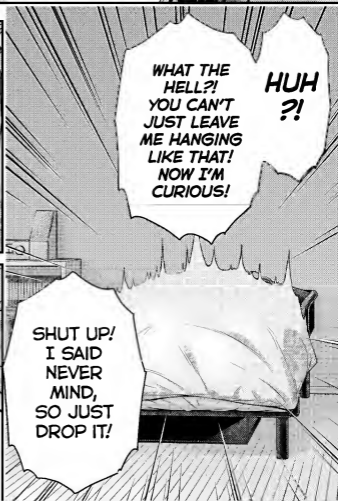
WHAT
WAS
THE
DEAL
?!

GOOD!



NOW IT'S
MY TURN TO
ASK YOU
SOMETHING.

OKAY.



WHAT THE
HELL?!
YOU CAN'T
JUST LEAVE
ME HANGING
LIKE THAT!
NOW I'M
CURIOUS!

HUH
?!

SHUT UP!
I SAID
NEVER
MIND,
SO JUST
DROP IT!



DID
YOU DO
IT WITH
HINA-
NEE?



WHA-



...
YEAH.

WE WERE
GOING OUT,
AFTER
ALL...



GRIP

...
~



WHERE
DID
THAT
COME
FROM
?!

WHY
WOULD
YOU
ASK ME
SOME-
THING
LIKE-

...
ANYTHING
FOR A
DAY!



**I DON'T
REMEM-
BER!**

HOW
MANY
TIMES
?



HMM
...

...



**WHAT'S
WITH
YOU?!**

**FINE,
FINE!
YEAH,
WE HAD
SEX!**

OH?

YOU DID IT
SO MANY
TIMES YOU
LOST COUNT,
HUH?



SILENCE



≠||
C
R
E
A
K



FLIP
...?
お
...



YEAH,
THEY
ARE!

?



ARE YOUR
EYES STILL
CLOSED?

HUH?

YOU
BETTER
...
...KEEP
THEM
CLOSED,
OR ELSE.



OMP
P
H
H







NO.



DO YOU
HAVE A
FEVER OR
SOME-
THING?



...
YOU'RE
HOT.



...THE
FIRST
TIME WE
DID IT.

I DIDN'T
THINK
MUCH OF
ANYTHING
...



BUT I
WONDER
...

...IF IT
WOULD
BE ANY
DIFFERENT
NOW.



...THAT
SUP-
POSED
TO
MEAN?

WHAT'S
...



HUH
...?

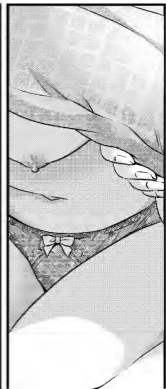


IT'S
YOUR
FAULT,
YOU
KNOW.



...GOING
TO HOLD
BACK FOR
HINA-NEE
ANYMORE.

I'M
NOT
...





GOOD
LUCK
ON YOUR
WRITING.

THANKS
FOR
PUTTING
UP WITH
ME
TODAY.



THUD / 10



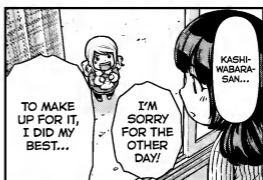
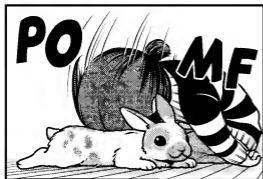
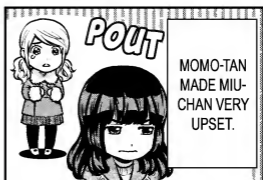
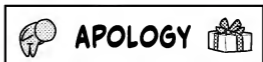
...WAS
THAT
ABOUT
?

WHAT
THE
HELL
...



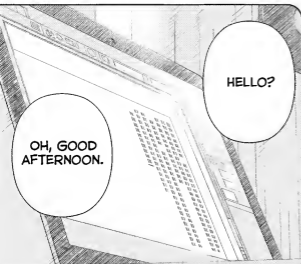
CHAPTER 73: A NEW WIND

DOMEGIRL 4-PANEL THEATER



RECHARGED







MY
NEXT
WORK
?

GOOD
QUESTION.
I HAVE A
GENERAL
IDEA
IN MIND,
BUT...

YES.

OH, NO. I'M
HONORED
JUST TO BE
NOMINATED.

IT WAS NICE
TO TALK
TO YOU AT
THE AWARD
CEREMONY
THE OTHER
DAY.



I SWEAR,
HE NEVER
QUITS...

THAT'S
KIND OF
A TOUCHY
TOPIC...

WHO'D YOU
HEAR THAT
FROM? I
BET IT WAS
TSUTAYA-SAN,
HUH?



BACK!

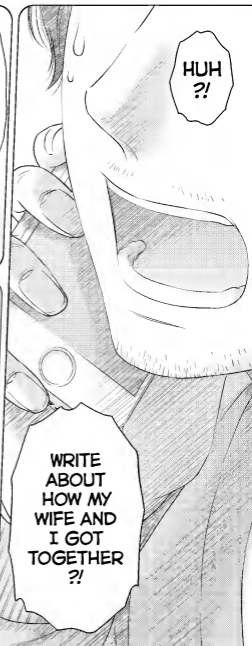
WE'RE
BACK!

WEL-
COME
HOME!



I MEAN, IT'S
DEFINITELY
A UNIQUE
STORY,

BUT MY
FRIENDS
AND FAMILY
WOULD KNOW
IMMEDIATELY
IF I TRIED TO
TURN IT INTO
FICTION.



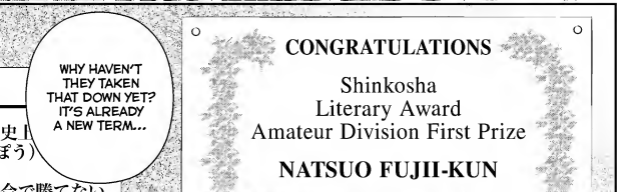
HUH
?!

WRITE
ABOUT
HOW MY
WIFE AND
I GOT
TOGETHER
?!



MMM...
I CAN'T SAY
ANYTHING AT
THE MOMENT.

I'LL
HAVE TO
TALK TO
MY WIFE
FIRST.

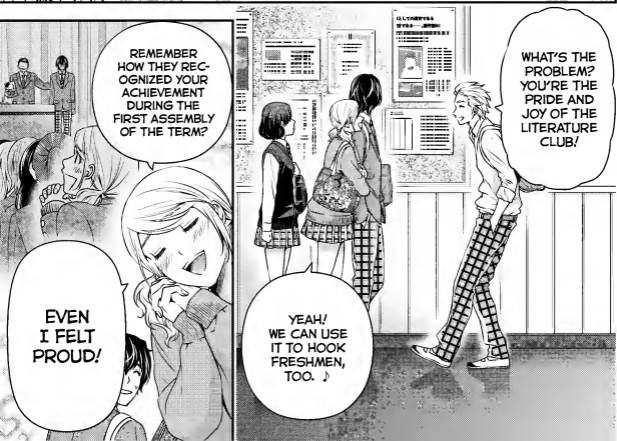


WHY HAVEN'T
THEY TAKEN
THAT DOWN YET?
IT'S ALREADY
A NEW TERM...

CONGRATULATIONS

Shinkosha
Literary Award
Amateur Division First Prize

NATSUO FUJII-KUN



REMEMBER
HOW THEY RECOGNIZED
YOUR ACHIEVEMENT
DURING THE
FIRST ASSEMBLY
OF THE TERM?

EVEN
I FELT
PROUD!

YEAH!
WE CAN USE
IT TO HOOK
FRESHMEN,
TOO. ♪

WHAT'S THE
PROBLEM?
YOU'RE THE
PRIDE AND
JOY OF THE
LITERATURE
CLUB!

RESULTS
MAKE FOR
THE BEST
KIND OF
PUBLICITY!

SLIDE

THAT
PROBABLY
HELPED
GET THE
LITERATURE
CLUB'S NAME
OUT THERE,
DON'T YOU
THINK?

Freshmen Welcoming Assembly
Club introduction

OH,
GREAT!

YOU ALL
MADE IT!

I WAS THINKING WE
COULD BRAINSTORM
SOME DIFFERENT
WAYS TO ATTRACT
NEW MEMBERS.

HUH.

YOU'RE
PRETTY
FIRED UP.

NOW THAT
WE'RE
OFFICIALLY
RECOGNIZED
AS A CLUB,
WE GET TO
EXPLAIN
OUR CLUB
ACTIVITIES
ON STAGE.

HEY!

IT'S
ALMOST
RECRUITING
SEASON,
HUH?



I WANT
TO DO
MY PART
AS THE
PRESIDENT
...

...TO TURN
THIS CLUB
INTO A FUN
AND LIVELY
PLACE
TO BE.

UNTIL NOW,
I'VE BEEN
PLAYING
THE ROLE
OF INTERIM
CLUB PRES-
IDENT AS
THE CLUB'S
LEFTOVERS,

BUT AFTER
KIRIYA-SENSEI
SAID HE WAS
COUNTING ON
ME, I FEEL
LIKE I HAVE
TO GET IT
TOGETHER.



I'M NOT
WEARING
A SKIRT
AGAIN,
GOT IT?!

HOW
ABOUT
COS-
PLAY?

OKAY!

LET'S
START
TOSSEING
OUT IDEAS,
THEN!



DA-DUN

NEXT
UP.

THE
DAY OF
THE
ASSEM-
BLY

AN
INTRODUCTORY
SPEECH
FROM THE
LITERATURE
CLUB.

IS SHE GONNA BE OKAY? I DON'T THINK SHE COULD STUTTER MORE IF SHE TRIED.



WH-WHILE ...

WE'RE A P-PRETTY SMALL CLUB...

HE-HE-HE-

HELLO ...



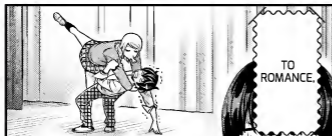
WE-

WE'RE THE LITERATURE CLUB.

F-FROM MYSTERY.

TO ROMANCE.

TO FANTASY ...



SWOBL

W-WE GAIN A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING...

OF LITERATURE...



...TH-THROUGH READING, WRITING, AND DISCUSSION.

B-B-BY EXPERIENCING VA-VARIOUS GENRES...

WHAT
NOW,
NAT-
CHAN?



FEEL FREE TO
DROP BY THE
CLUB AND
TAKE A LOOK.



AS YOU CAN
SEE, SHY
PEOPLE ARE
WELCOME,
TOO.

DON'T LET
IT GET TO
YOU.

C'MON,









WELCOME
TO THE
LITERATURE
CLUB!

HEY,
THERE!

DASH

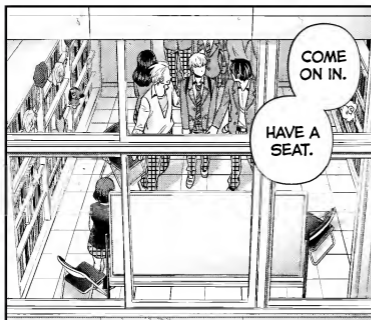


NO
PROBLEM!

OF
COURSE
YOU'RE
WEL-
COME!

WE KEPT
GETTING
PULLED
EVERY
WHICH
WAY BY
OTHER
CLUBS...

ARE YOU
STILL
OPEN FOR
VISITS?



COME
ON IN.

HAVE A
SEAT.



THANK
GOOD-
NESS!

THANK
YOU SO
MUCH FOR
COMING!





AS FOR AUTHORS,

I LIKE KENZO KITAKATA, TOYOKO YAMASAKI, AND YOU HASUKAWA.

SUBARU SHIBASAKI, CLASS 1-5.

A CONSERVATIVE!



MY FAVORITE SERIES ARE THE MELANCHOLY OF HARUHI SUZUMIYA,

I'M RITSU OSAKA FROM CLASS 1-1!

AND IF HER FLAG BREAKS!

A LIGHT NOVEL FAN, I SEE.



FIRST ...

NEXT, WE'LL START FROM THE THIRD-YEARS.



UH-HUH!

YOU HEAR THAT? YOU HASUKAWA.



H-HEY!

YOU'RE THE WINNER, SEMPAI?

KNOCK IT OFF!

I SAW THE NOTICE ON THE BOARD! THAT'S AMAZING!



AND SHINKOSHA LITERARY AWARD WINNER,

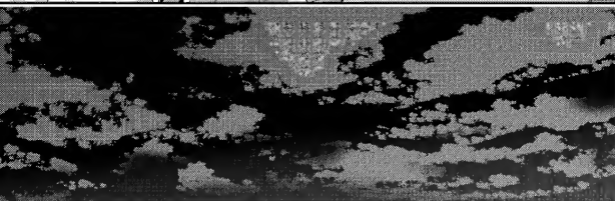
...OUR CLUB'S ACE,

NATSUO FUJII!



**EVEN IF IT
WAS JUST
A FLUKE,
WINNING THE
LITERARY
AWARD IS
CRAZY!**

**IT WAS
MORE LIKE
THE STARS
HAPPENED
TO ALIGN...**



**WE STILL
DON'T KNOW
IF THEY'LL
JOIN OR NOT,
THOUGH.**

**SURE,
BUT...**

**THEY ALL
SEEMED
PRETTY
ONBOARD.**



**I'M
REALLY
GLAD
THOSE
THREE
CAME.**

YOU'RE
PRETTY
MOODY,
TOO.

DON'T
DISS
HIM SO
CASUALLY.

YOU
MEAN
THE
MOODY
TRYHARD
CONSER-
VATIVE?

OH,

PERSONALLY, I
WANT THE BOY
WHO NAMED YOU
HASUKAWA AS ONE
OF HIS FAVORITE
AUTHORS TO JOIN.

IT WAS A
WHILE AFTER
I TRANS-
FERRED, SO
AROUND THE
BEGINNING
OF SUMMER,
I GUESS?

UHH
...

WHEN
EXACTLY
DID YOU
JOIN
AGAIN?

TRUE
...

THERE
COULD BE
PEOPLE WHO
JOIN IN THE
MIDDLE OF
THE TERM
LIKE I DID.

STILL,
NO NEED
TO RUSH.

WELL, IT WAS
MORE LIKE
WE "GOT RID
OF THEM" AT
THE TIME.

...WHEN
WE...

...LOST OUR
VIRGINITIES
TOGETHER.

I SEE
...

THEN IT
WAS JUST
AROUND THIS
TIME LAST
YEAR...



UHH.

OH.

NOTHING...



HM?



ARE YOU GONNA GROW IT OUT AFTER ALL?

YOUR HAIR'S GROWN A BIT.

B-BY THE WAY,



AND IF IT DOESN'T GET IN THE WAY, I'LL PROBABLY LEAVE IT.

MAYBE I'LL JUST LET IT GROW ...

OH.

MY SHOW'S STARTING.



BUT I DIDN'T GO LAST MONTH.

MMM. I'M STILL ON THE FENCE.

I GET IT CUT ONCE EVERY TWO MONTHS,



RUI HASN'T TRIED ANYTHING SINCE THAT NIGHT.

BUT THEN...

I WON'T ...

HOLD BACK FOR HINA-NEE ANYMORE.



...
IF IT'D BE ANY DIFFERENT NOW.

BUT I WONDER ...

...DID SHE MEAN BY THAT?

...WHAT EXACTLY ...



QUIT OVER-THINKING, IDIOT!

WHAT DO I CARE ?!

WAIT ...

...HAVE HINA.

I ALREADY

...

NO
FUCK

I SHOULD
COOL OFF.

SIT

...

I HAVE TO
HURRY AND
BECOME A
NOVELIST
SO I CAN
REUNITE
WITH HINA
...

THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M JUST GETTING
BLINDSIDED BY
EVERYTHING RUI
SAYS AND DOES.

NOW AND
FOREVER!

NO!
IT'S
NOT WHAT
IT LOOKS
LIKE, HINA!

YOU'RE
THE ONLY
ONE FOR
ME!

FLAP

FLAP
おた
た

おた
FLAP
た

THIIII SLIDE

ラ
ラ







WHY WON'T...

...MY HEART
SETTLE DOWN?



OKAY.

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
OUT HERE?
GO HOP IN
THE BATH.



10月
THMP
Literature
Club Anthology

つくりわけし、いしつか
Natsuo Fujii 夏生
抜け出せないタ...





CHAPTER 74: HOSTILITY









I'M
RITSU
OSAKA!
CALL ME
RITSU!

YEAH
...

NICE TO
MEETCHA!

YOU'RE
GOING
TO CLUB
AFTER
SCHOOL
TODAY,
RIGHT?



MORN-
ING!

UHH
...

SUBARU,
RIGHT?

FROM
LIT CLUB!



BY THE WAY,
MY REC-
COMENDA-
TIONS ARE—

**DON'T
BOTHER.**



IT'S
REASSURING
TO HAVE
A FELLOW
NOVEL
ENTHUSIAST
IN THE SAME
YEAR!

I WAS IN THE
BASEBALL CLUB
ALL THROUGH
MIDDLE
SCHOOL, SO I
DUNNO WHAT
ARTSY CLUBS
ARE LIKE.

GLAD I
DON'T HAVE
TO GO
ALONE.

LEMME
KNOW IF YOU
HAVE ANY
RECOMMEN-
DATIONS.

I WAS
ACTUALLY
PRETTY
NERVOUS.



WHA—



WOULDN'T
CALL
THEM-
SELVES
NOVEL
ENTHUSI-
ASTS.

I
REALLY
WISH
LIGHT-
NOVEL-
READING
PLEBS
...



THERE
ARE
PLENTY
OF GOOD
LIGHT
NOVELS.

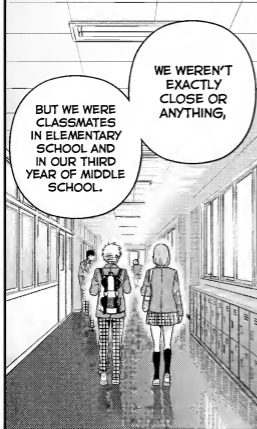
THAT IS
PRETTY
HARSH.

RIGHT?!
IT'S WRONG
TO DIS-
CRIMINATE
AGAINST
A WHOLE
GENRE!

CAN YOU
BELIEVE
THAT?!



...AND
THAT'S
WHAT HE
SAID!



BUT WE WERE CLASSMATES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND IN OUR THIRD YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL.

WE WEREN'T EXACTLY CLOSE OR ANYTHING,



SO TRY NOT TO LET HIM GET TO YOU, OKAY?

BUT... I THINK HE'S PROBABLY JUST ON EDGE BECAUSE SCHOOL JUST STARTED.



HUH?

DID YOU KNOW HIM BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL, KABASAWA-SAN?



CLEANING THE COURTYARD TOOK A WHILE.

WHAT TOOK YOU?

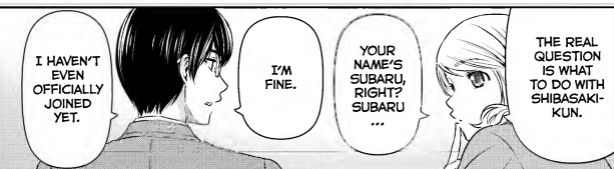
WE WERE JUST COMING UP WITH NICKNAMES FOR THE FIRST-YEARS!



OH.

EVERYONE'S HERE.







SO, I LOOKED THROUGH SOME MAGAZINES AT HOME,

WHEN I HEARD YOUR NAME YESTERDAY, I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED IT FROM SOMEWHERE.

I KNEW IT!

WELL ...

HUH? REALLY?!



Amazing! WHOOOA! ALL THESE?!

YOU'RE A REGULAR IN THE STUDENT DIVISION, HUH?

THE NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS YOU MADE LAST YEAR IS ASTOUNDING.



AND I WAS SHOCKED TO FIND YOU'VE WON AWARDS IN ALL SORTS OF MAGAZINES.

WINNERS

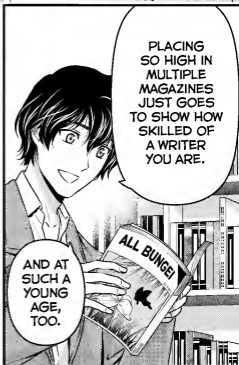
YOUTH DEVISION
"Poem of Despair"
Subaru Shibusaki
"Mountain Pass"
Yoichiro Mori

ADULT DIVISION
"Revelations of a Harlot"
Jun Okoda
"Jolly Job Hani"
Michiyo Muromachi
"Under the Umbrella"
Ayumu Hayashi



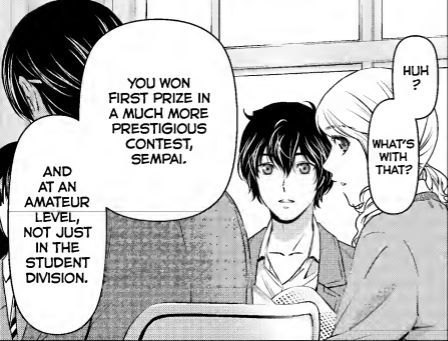
I HAVE A LOT TO LEARN FROM YOU.

THAT'S REALLY SOMETHING!



PLACING SO HIGH IN MULTIPLE MAGAZINES JUST GOES TO SHOW HOW SKILLED OF A WRITER YOU ARE.

AND AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE, TOO.



YOU WON
FIRST PRIZE IN
A MUCH MORE
PRESTIGIOUS
CONTEST,
SEMPAI.

AND
AT AN
AMATEUR
LEVEL,
NOT JUST IN
THE
STUDENT
DIVISION.

HUH
?

WHAT'S
WITH
THAT?



NO
...

I DIDN'T
MEAN ANY-
THING LIKE
THAT...



AND YOU
SAY YOU
HAVE A LOT
TO LEARN
FROM ME?

ARE YOU
MOCKING
ME?



YOU DIDN'T
HAVE TO SNAP
AT SEMPAI
LIKE THAT!

WHY ARE
YOU SO
ANGRY?




HEY
...!

WAIT,
SHIBASAKI-
KUN!



SURE
ENOUGH,
HE'S JUST
ANOTHER
SHALLOW
CLOWN.

I JUST
WANTED TO
KNOW WHAT
KIND OF
PERSON
THE WINNER
OF THAT
AWARD WAS.



I NEVER HAD
ANY INTENTION
OF GETTING
CHUMMY WITH
EVERYONE.



FRANKLY,

I DON'T
SEE ANY
POINT IN
JOINING.



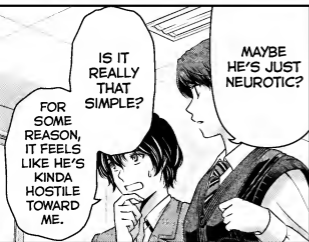
THEIR
ANTHOLOGY
WAS CRUDE
AT BEST,
TOO.

THEY
CAN PUT
LITERATURE
IN THEIR
NAME ALL
THEY WANT,
IN THE END,
THEY'RE JUST
ANOTHER
BEST-FRIENDS
CLUB.



I THOUGHT ABOUT IT ALL NIGHT, BUT I STILL DON'T GET IT.

HMM ...



IS IT REALLY THAT SIMPLE?

FOR SOME REASON, IT FEELS LIKE HE'S KINDA HOSTILE TOWARD ME.

MAYBE HE'S JUST NEUROTIC?



MAN, WHAT IF HE DOESN'T COME ANYMORE THANKS TO THAT?

GRRR!



WHAT DID I SAY THAT RUBBED HIM THE WRONG WAY?



NO SIGN OF HIM...
Y' THINK IT REALLY IS MY FAULT?

HE MIGHT COME LATER.

AND IF THAT WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM QUIT, THEN HE WOULD'VE SOONER OR LATER.



OH.

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE FIRST.



WH-WHAT?

SLIGH
YOU STILL CAN'T LOOK AT ME?



WELL,

EVEN IF HE DOES SHOW,
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I SHOULD SAY TO HIM.



IT'D BE GREAT IF WE AT LEAST KNEW HER EMAIL.

FOR STARTERS, I WONDER IF SHE'S SETTLED IN AT HER NEW SCHOOL.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT SENSEI, TOO,

I JUST HOPE SHE'S DOING ALL RIGHT...

...
GOOD QUESTION.

EVERYTHING SENSEI DID WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING.

IT'LL BE A DISASTER IF WORD GETS OUT THE REASON SHE TRANSFERRED IS BECAUSE THE SCHOOL FOUND OUT ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP.

IT'S ONE THING AT HOME, BUT WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL ABOUT TALKING ABOUT SENSEI AT SCHOOL.

BUT LET'S DROP THIS TOPIC FOR NOW.

TH-

...!

THAT'S ...

ARE YOU JUST GOING TO KEEP WAITING...

YOU'RE RIGHT. SORRY.

WHAT IF SHE NEVER COMES BACK?

...FOR HINA-NEE FOREVER?

LET ME ASK YOU ONE MORE THING.

THEN BEFORE THE OTHERS GET HERE,



...YOU FIND
SOMEONE
WHO COULD
TAKE HER
PLACE?

WHAT
IF...



I WON'T
TALK ABOUT
HINA-NEE
AT SCHOOL
ANYMORE.



FORGET
I SAID
ANYTHING.

...
SORRY.









HUH ?

I'M JUST SORT OF CURIOUS.

I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU USED AN EX-GIRLFRIEND AS A MODEL.



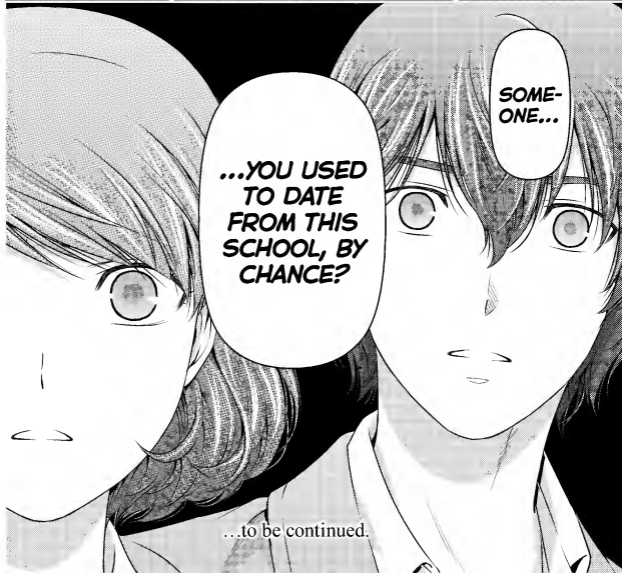
THE PIECE YOU WON FIRST PRIZE WITH...

DID YOU BASE THE HEROINE OFF OF ANYONE?



I HAVEN'T DECIDED YET.

I JUST HAVE SOMETHING I WANTED TO ASK FUJII-SEMPAI.



...YOU USED TO DATE FROM THIS SCHOOL, BY CHANCE?

SOME-ONE...

...to be continued.



THE TRICK TO TURNING THEM BACK...

...IS CANDY ?

☆ ☆ ☆
EXTRA MANGA
☆ ☆ ☆
SWEET HOME
MAGIC
☆ ☆ ☆

☆ THE STORY SO FAR ☆

HINA AND RUI HAVE REVERTED TO CHILDREN AFTER TAKING A STRANGE DRUG. IN A BIND, NATSUO ASKS L'AMANT'S OWNER FOR HELP...



THE WORD OF THE GOD OF MANGA IS ABSOLUTE!

AREN'T YOU THINKING OF OOMU TEZUKA'S MARVELOUS MEOMO?



RED CANDY TURNS A BUTTERFLY BACK INTO AN EGG.

THAT'S RIGHT.

BLUE CANDY TURNS BABIES INTO ADULTS. THAT'S HOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.



I'M SURE THEY'LL TURN BACK IN NO TIME AS SOON AS...



AHH.



...I KNEW THAT WOULDN'T WORK.

WELL ...

GUESS REGULAR OLD STRAWBERRY AND BLUE HAWAII CANDY WON'T CUT IT.

TEN MINUTES LATER



EEEK!

AAAH!

TA-DAAA



DON'T GO GETTING ANY FUNNY IDEAS.

HEY, NOW.

...!



THIS IS NOT A DAY-CARE!

DON'T BE LIKE THAT! PLEASE!

TO BE CONTINUED
PERSISTENTLY.

HMM.
THE ONLY OTHER ADULT I CAN COUNT ON IS ...

to >
Kaine
I done >



LOOK, LOOK!

OUR TONGUES ARE BLUE!

Domestic Girlfriend 8

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