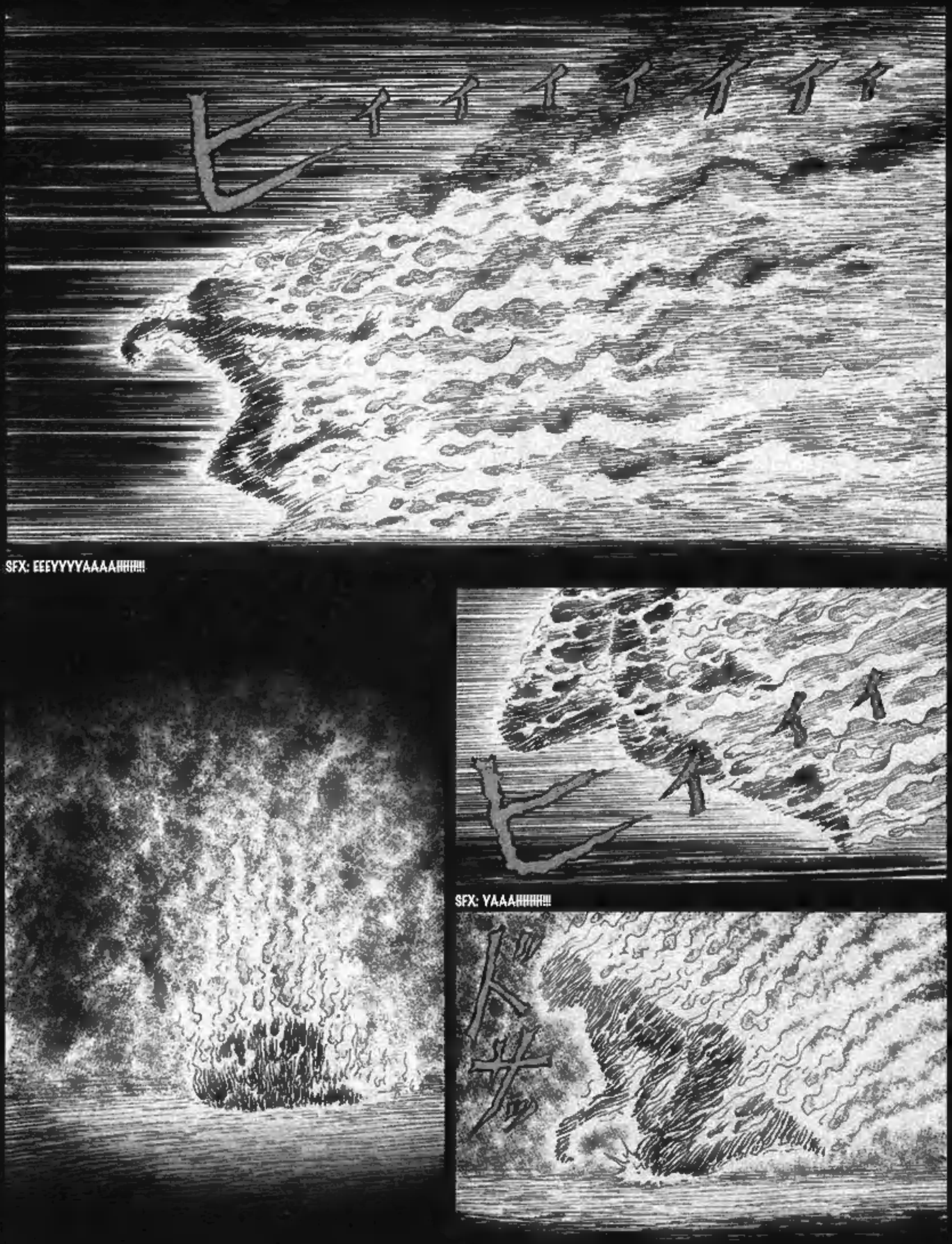
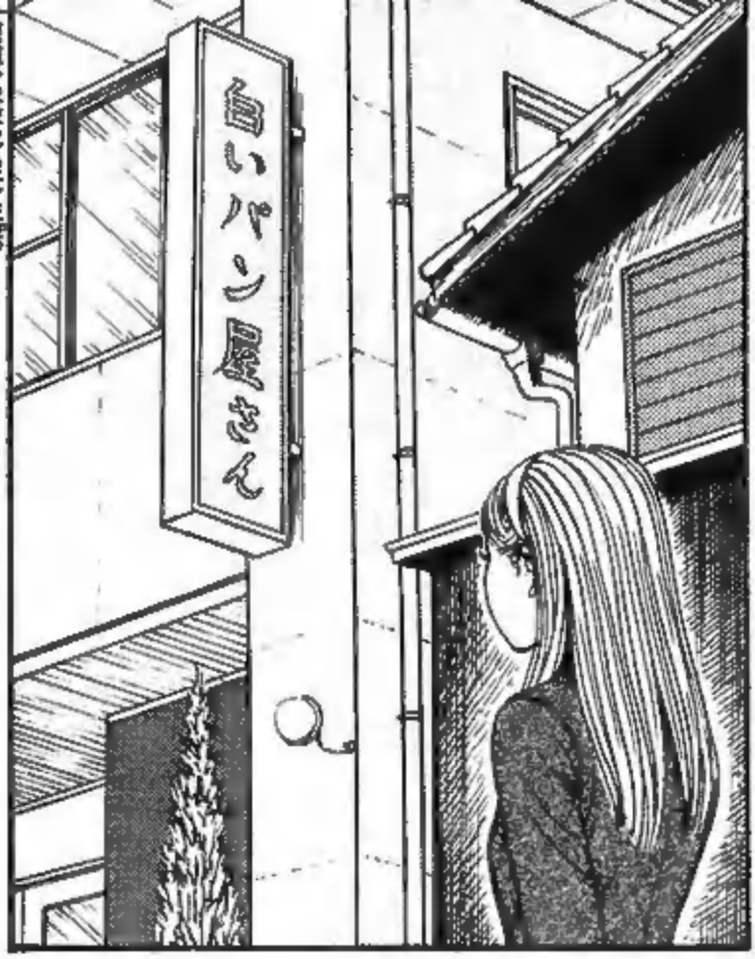
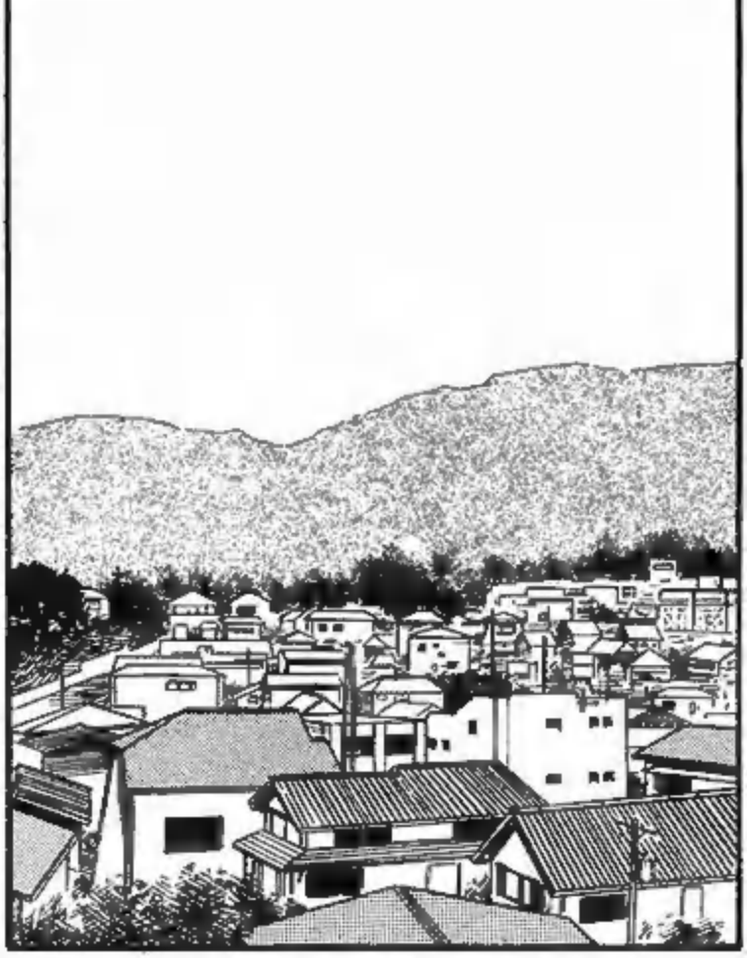
トボッ
カチッ
ALONE WITH YOU


ドイイイイイイイイ
SFX: EEEYYYYAAAAHHH!!!
SFX: YAAAHHHHH!!!
SFX: Fwump



Sign: The White Bakery



SOMETHING CAME UP WITH THEM SO WE HAVE TO LOOK AFTER HER FOR AWHILE.
SHE BELONGS TO SOMEONE DAD KNOWS.
UH-HUH. THIS IS KEI.
HEY, WHOSE KID IS SHE? SHE'S TOO LITTLE TO BE ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS.
I'M SICK OF DOING THIS.
BUT SHE'S SOOO CLINGY.
SO I HAVE TO PAL AROUND WITH HER.
BUT DAD AND MOM ARE BOTH BUSY WITH THE BAKERY, RIGHT?
WHOA.
HANA, WAIT!!
WHAT ?!
KEI, FROM NOW ON MIMI WILL HANG OUT WITH YOU. CATCHA LATER.

AFTER THAT SHE CLUNG ONTO ME AND NEVER LET GO.
バタン
WAIT OUT HERE, 'K?
HEY NOW, I NEED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM.
WEIRD KID.
AAAA

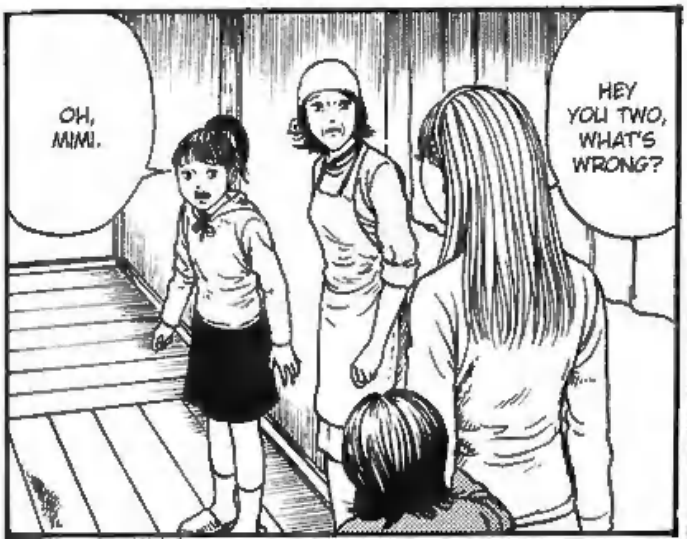
HEY DAD, HEY MOM.
UM, COULD YOU GUYS DO SOMETHING ABOUT HER?
SHE WON'T LET GO OF ME.
MIMI! YOU'RE HOME.
WELCOME BACK.
WILL YOU STICK AROUND FOR ALL OF NEW YEAR'S?
LISTEN, MIMI, WE JUST REOPENED THIS PLACE AFTER ALL THAT REMODELING, SO THINGS ARE REALLY BUSY.
WOULD YOU PLEASE LOOK AFTER HER OVER WINTER BREAK?
WHAT?! I'M BUSY TOO, Y'KNOW!
I'M BEGGING YOU! I'LL OWE YA ONE.

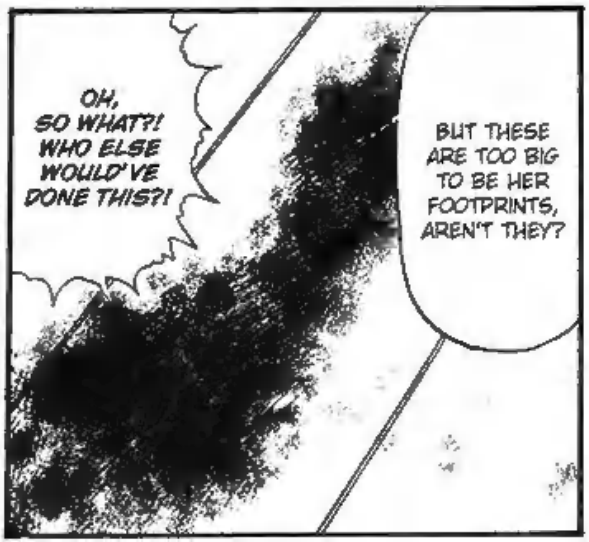
HUH?
WE CAN'T HAVE HER IN THE KITCHEN LIKE THAT!
HEY MIMI, HER FACE IS ALL DIRTY!
HM?
COME ON, I'LL CLEAN YOU UP.
WHATEVER.
IT'S ALL BLACK. WHERE'D YOU DO THAT?
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT. WHEN DID THAT...
MOM, LOOK AT THIS! IT'S ALL FILTHY AND BLACK HERE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, HANA?
AH! WHO DID THIS?!
WHO GOT THE HALLWAY ALL FILTHY?!

SEE?

SHE'S THE ONE WITH THE DIRTY FACE!
NO, I'LL BET KEI DID THIS!

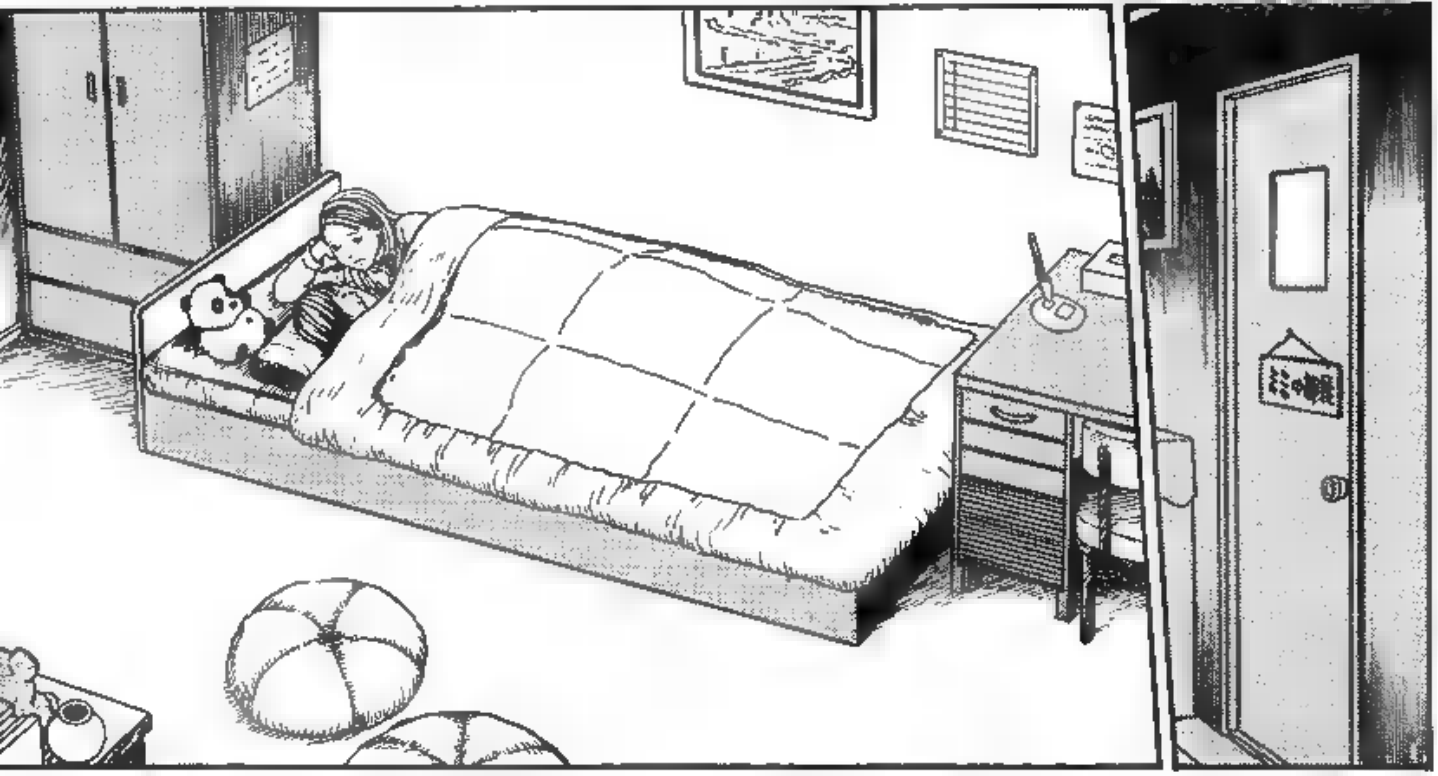
IT KINDA LOOKS LIKE FOOTPRINTS. MY GOD, IS IT A BURGLAR?!
YOU'RE RIGHT... HOW'D THIS HAPPEN?

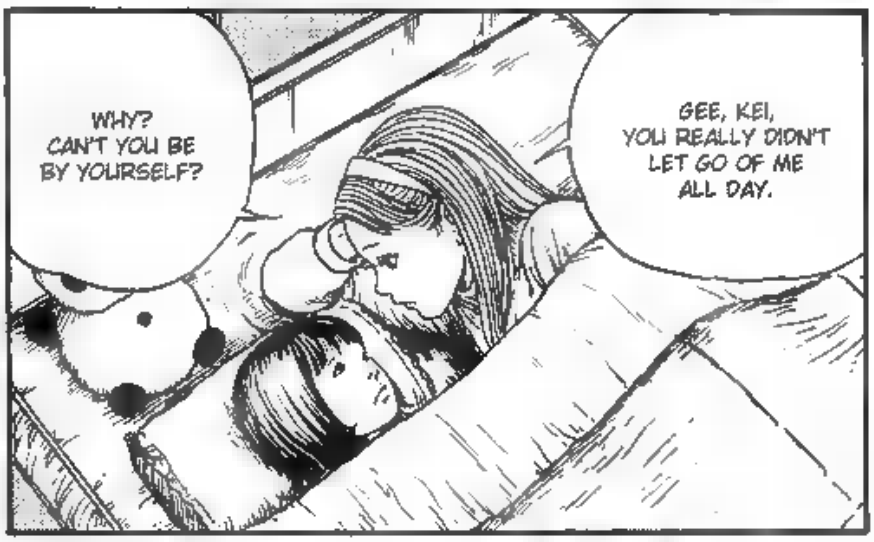

OH, MIMI.
HEY YOU TWO, WHAT'S WRONG?


OH, SO WHAT?! WHO ELSE WOULD'VE DONE THIS?!
BUT THESE ARE TOO BIG TO BE HER FOOTPRINTS, AREN'T THEY?

KEI, LEMME SEE THE BOTTOMS OF YOUR FEET.
REALLY?
HUH?
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS! AREN'T THESE KEI'S FOOTPRINTS?!
OUR FEET AREN'T DIRTY EITHER!
WHAT? THEN WHO DID THIS?!
NO, HER FEET AREN'T DIRTY.
JUST LIKE GOLDFISH DOO-DOO!!
HMPH!! WELL, SHE SURE HAS BEEN TAGGING ALONG WITH YOU THE WHOLE TIME.
THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD'VE DONE THIS.
HANA! KEI'S BEEN WITH ME THE WHOLE TIME.

YOU SETTLE DOWN!!
HANA!!
MIMI'S MY SISTER!!
GRRR, YOU REALLY TICK ME OFF!!
...IS THAT HER MOTHER SUDDENLY PASSED AWAY.
ACTUALLY, THE REASON WE'RE LOOKING AFTER HER...
THIS CHILD DESERVES OUR PITY.
PLEASE DON'T BULLY HER, I'M ASKING YOU.
HUH?
SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HER MOTHER DIED YET. THE POOR THING.
HER HOME ■ ALL ASTIR WHAT WITH THE FUNERAL AND SUCH, SO WE'RE TAKING CARE OF HER 'TILL THINGS SETTLE DOWN.
THE CASE WAS LEFT UNSOLVED.
AS FOR THE FOOTPRINTS ...
.....



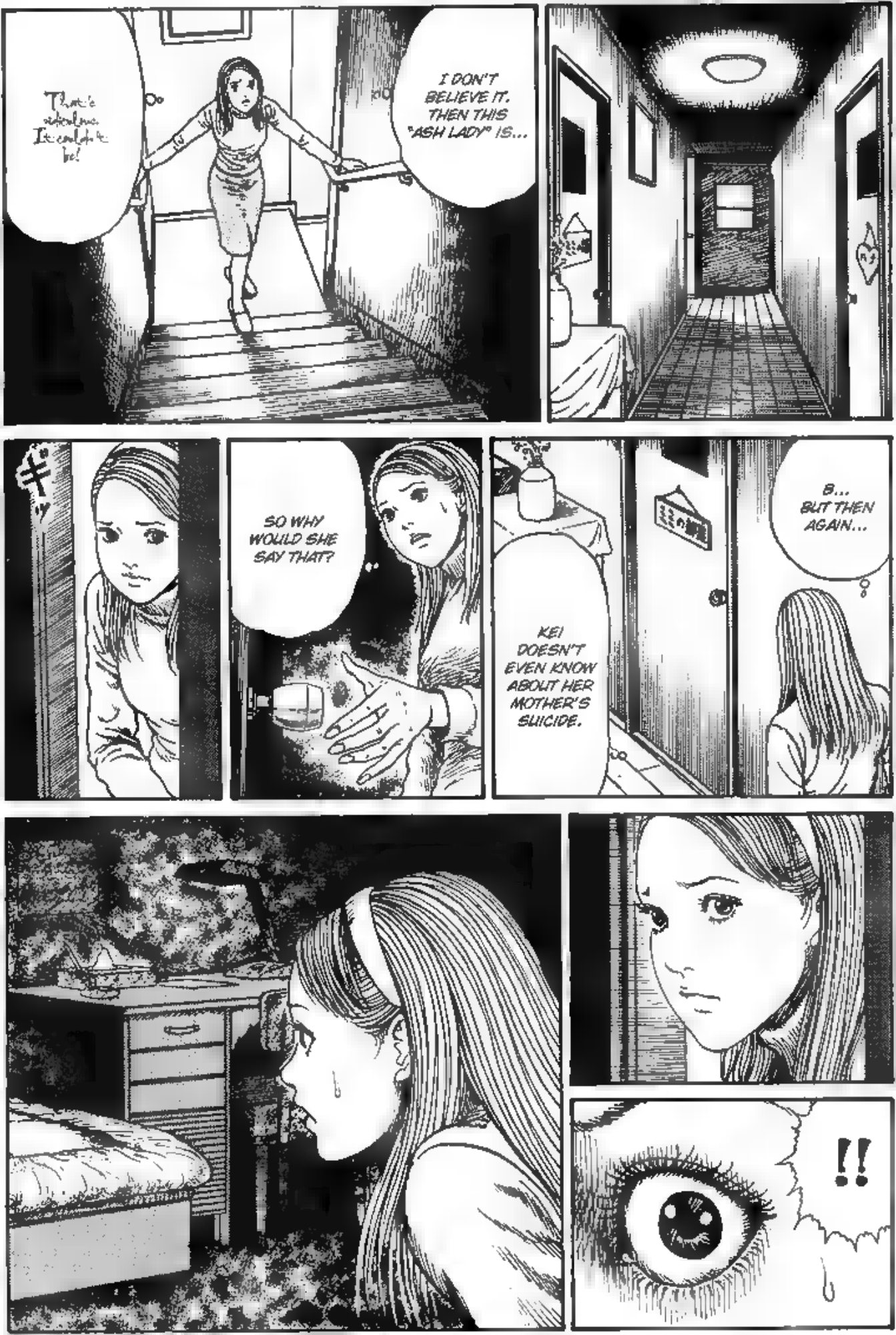


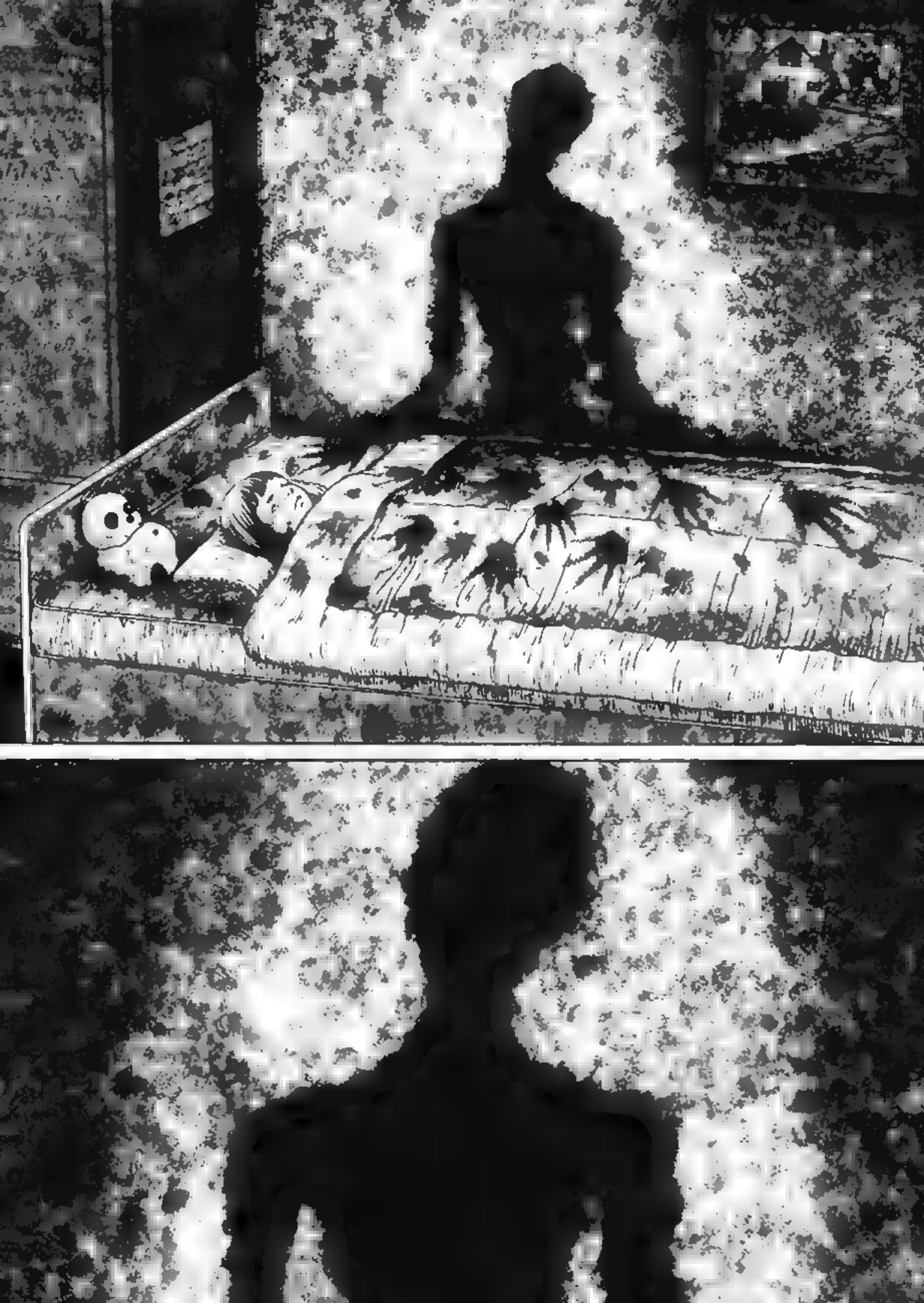
TN: The original text refers to the "ash person" as "kuroi hito", or "black person", but I changed it to avoid turning the entire story into an accidental comedy

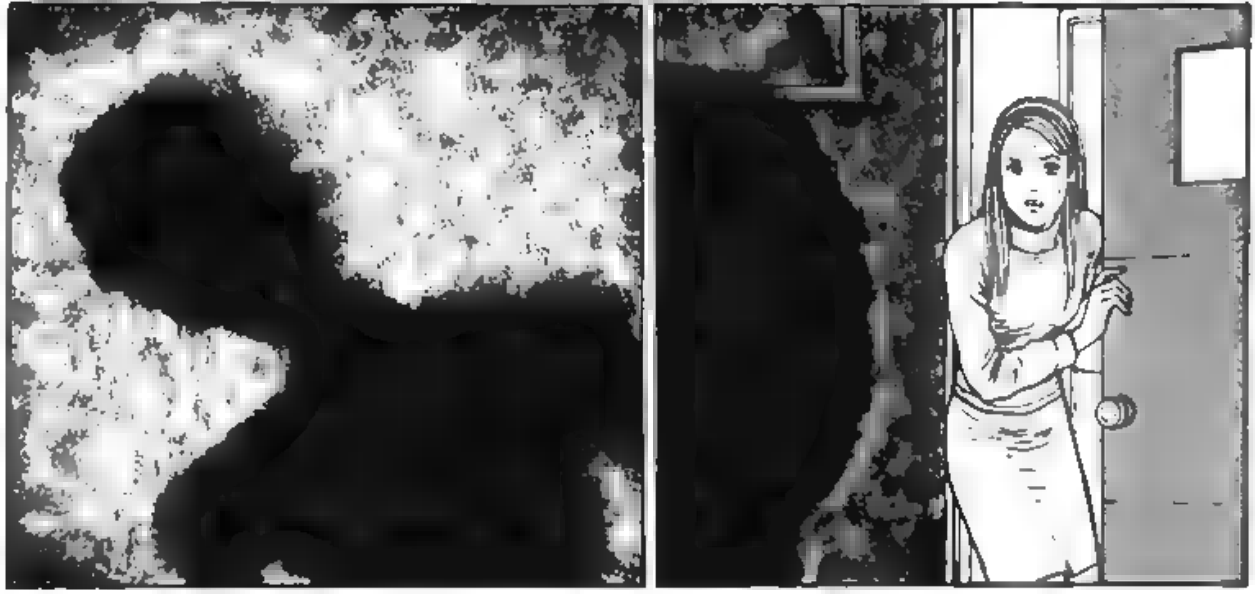
THERE'S NO "ASK LADY".
KEI, DON'T WORRY!
...I'LL BE ALONE WITH HER!!
IF I LET GO OF YOU...
AH!
KEI, IT'S JUST YOUR IMAGINATION!
CAN'T YOU SEE HER?
YES THERE IS... SHE'S RIGHT HERE
WHEN IN THE HECK?
KEI, YOUR CHEEK'S ALL DIRTY AGAIN.

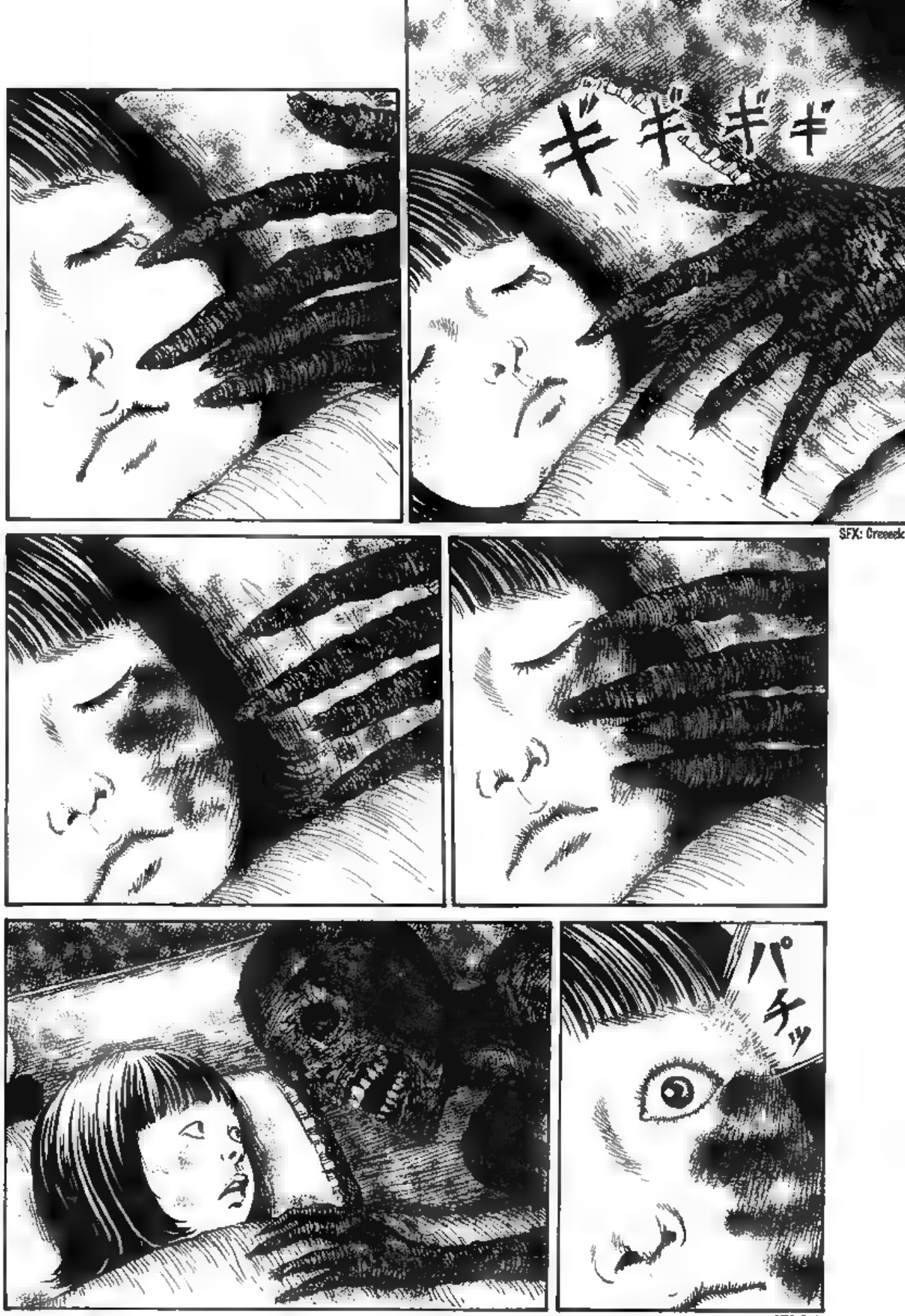
THAT'S WEIRD... THIS DIRT...
IT KIND OF LOOKS LIKE A HAND ...
MIMI, THANKS FOR HELPING OUT TODAY.
UH-HUH. SHE'S FINALLY ASLEEP.
BUT IT'S REALLY STRANGE.
NOT JUST THAT DIRT ON HER FACE...
SHE WAS ALSO CRYING ABOUT SOME "ASH LADY" SHE SAID WAS RIGHT NEXT TO HER.

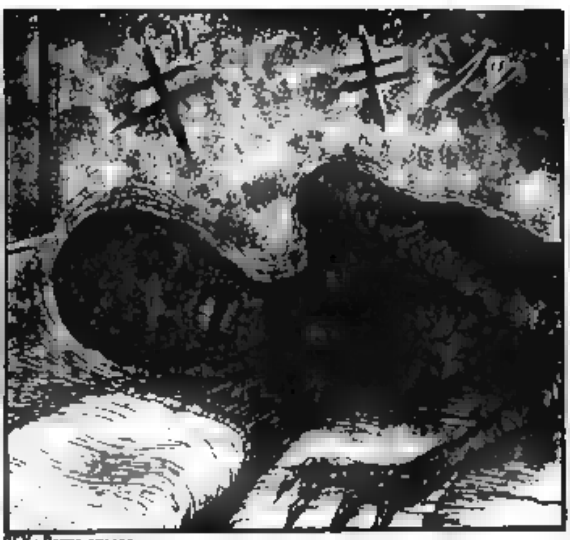
.....
YES. SHE WAS JUST TELLING ME.
MIMI, IS THAT TRUE?
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
ABOUT THAT GIRL'S MOM...
WELL... ACTUALLY ...
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THIS?
WHY'D YOU GUYS GET SO QUIET?
WHEN THEY FOUND HER ...
... SHE HAD ALREADY BURNED TO ASH.
WH... WHAT?!
THE TRUTH IS...
...SHE DIED OF SELF-IMMOLATION.


That's ridiculous. It couldn't be!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. THEN THIS "ASH LADY" IS...
SO WHY WOULD SHE SAY THAT?
KEI DOESN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT HER MOTHER'S SUICIDE.
B... BUT THEN AGAIN...
!!





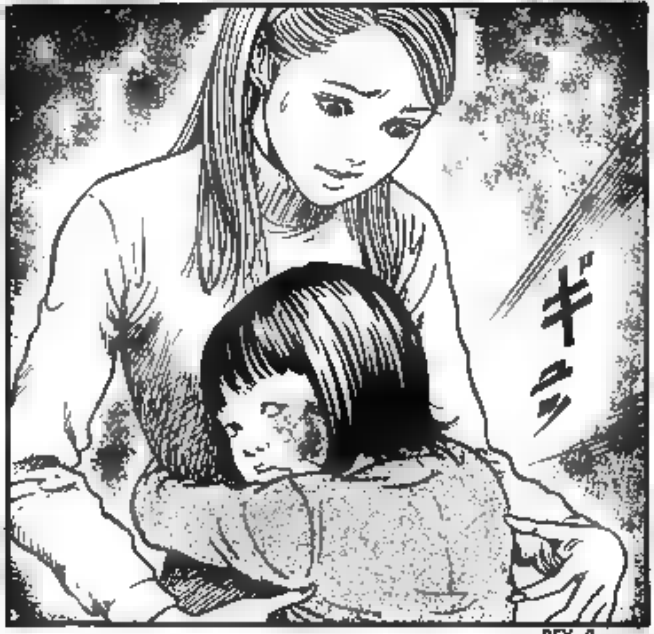

ギギギギ
SFX: Creeeek
パチッ
SFX: Fwip



SFX: Creeee

ギシッ
ギシッ
SEX CRACK CRACK

MIMI! WHAT HAPPENED?!
SHE'S HERE!!
とわわわ!
WHAT?! WHERE?!
IN MY ROOM!!
THE ASH LADY REALLY EXISTS!!
SHE WAS THERE! SHE REALLY WAS!!
I DON'T SEE ANYONE.
WHAT THE?
SHE WAS LYING IN MY BED!!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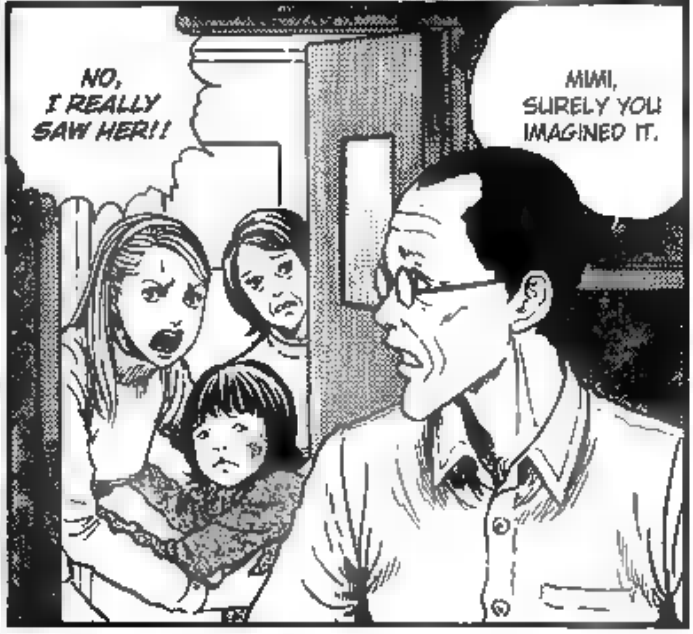

NO, I REALLY SAW HER!!
MIMI, SURELY YOU IMAGINED IT.

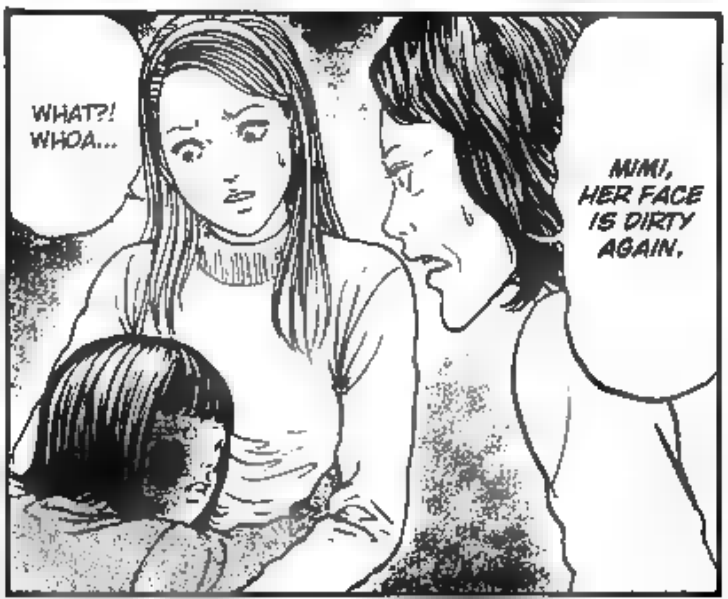
SFX: Squeeze

SHE'S...
...RIGHT BEHIND ME.

WHERE IS SHE?
KEI, YOU CAN SEE HER?

SHE'S STILL HERE.
SHE'S...

OH, MY!


WHAT?! WHOA...
MIMI, HER FACE IS DIRTY AGAIN.

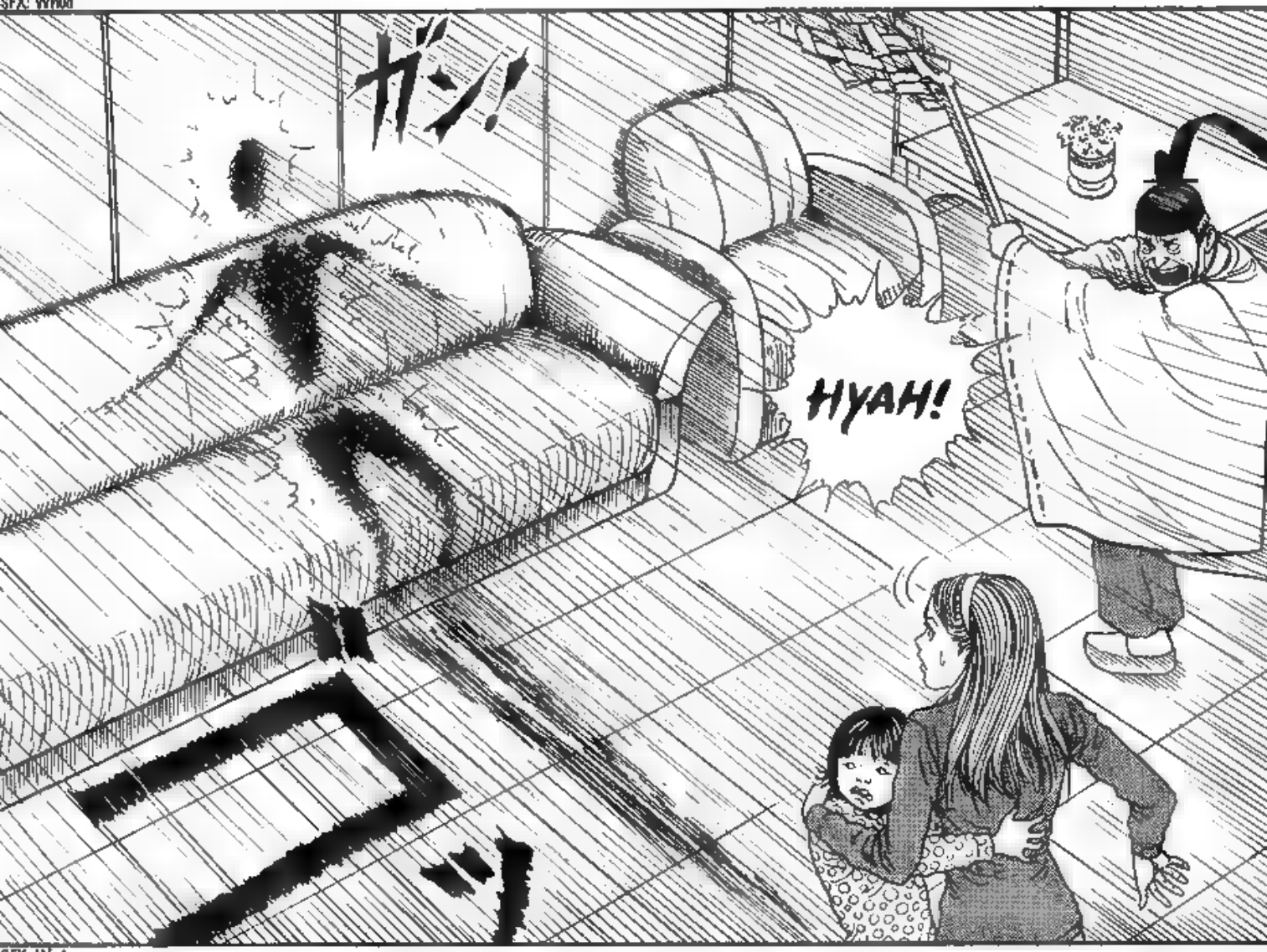
I CAN'T SEE HER ANYMORE, BUT I DEFINITELY SAW HER BEFORE.
SHE'S STILL HERE.

I CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS GIRL ON MY OWN!
DAD, DO SOME-THING!
DO YOU GET IT NOW? THAT ASH LADY IS RIGHT HERE WITH US!
IT'S FROM WHERE HER MOTHER TRIED TO WIPE AWAY HER TEARS.
YOU'VE GOTTA BE JOKING!! I CAN'T WAIT THAT LONG!!
CAN'T YOU JUST TOUGH IT OUT?
BUT, WE'VE AGREED TO LOOK AFTER HER FOR THE WHOLE WEEK.
WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO? AND WHAT WOULD WE TELL THEM ANYWAY?
"THE LADY OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS GONE ASH BLACK AND WON'T STOP HAUNTING YOUR DAUGHTER"?
I KNOW A SHINTÔ PRIEST. MAYBE WE CAN HAVE HIM DO AN EXORCISM.
MM, WHAT TO DO?
IS IT REALLY OKAY TO DO THAT WITHOUT CONSULTING HER FAMILY?
AN EXORCISM ?

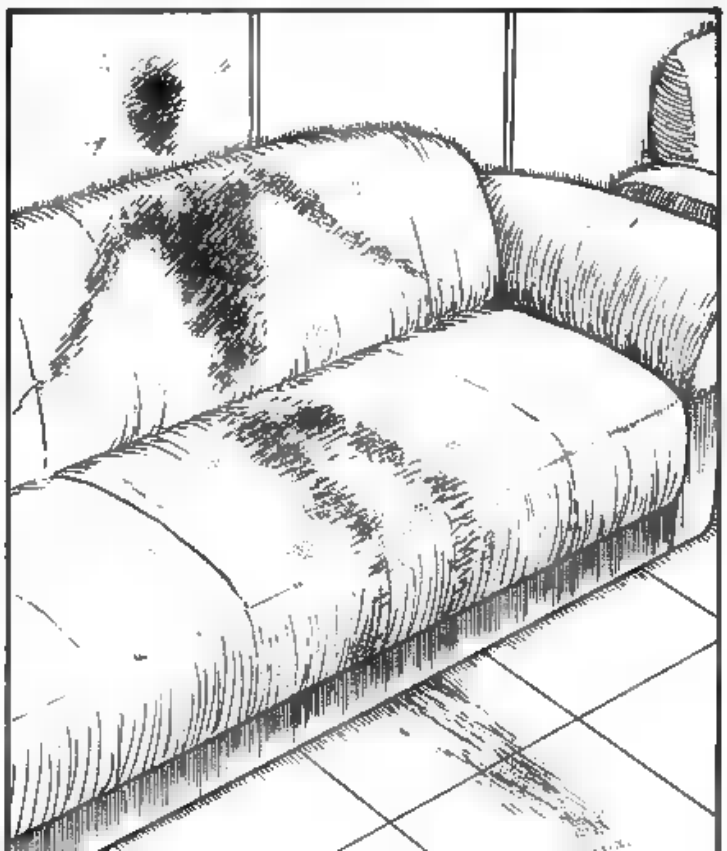
THE PRIEST CAME OVER THE NEXT DAY.
SIR...
WOULD YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO PERFORM AN EXORCISM ?
THE ASHEN WOMAN IS RIGHT THERE BY THE GIRL.
GOODNESS!! THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!!
WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER OR NOT I CAN DO IT, BUT...
IT'S CERTAINLY WORTH A TRY.

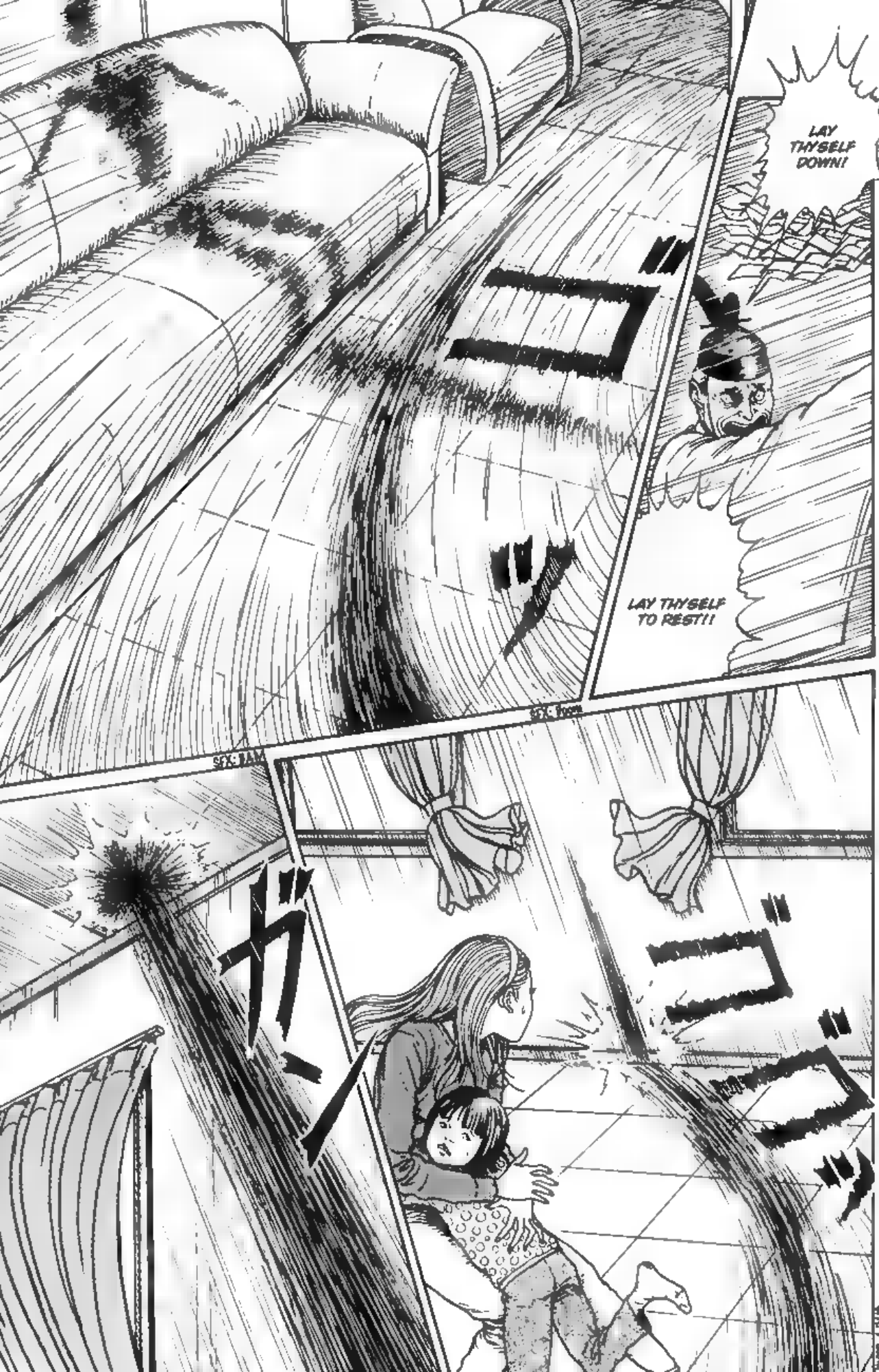
AND SO THE EXORCISM BEGAN.
HURRR!!!!
BE PURIFIED!!
BEGONE!!
BEGONE!!
BE PURIFIED!!

SFX: Whud

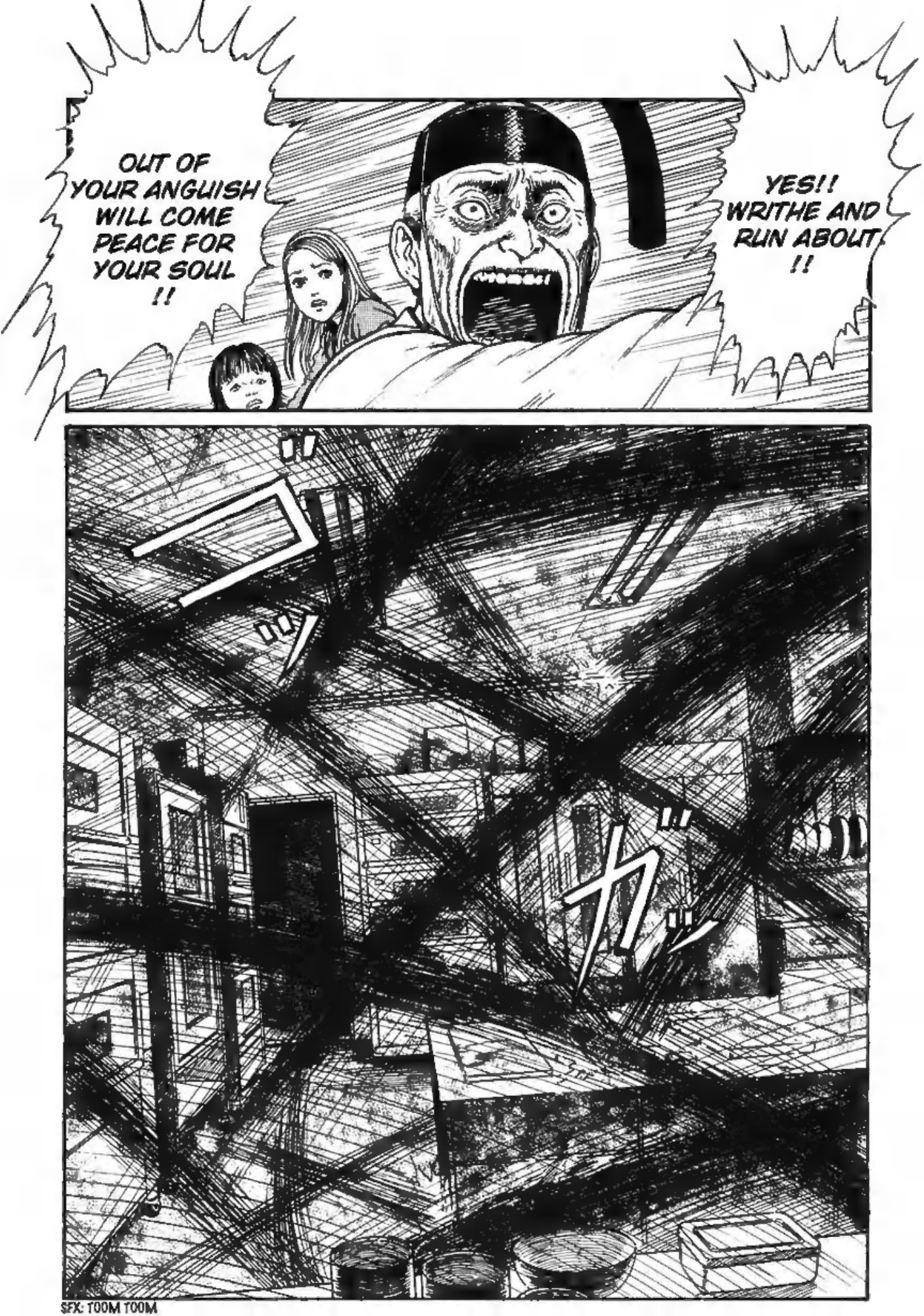


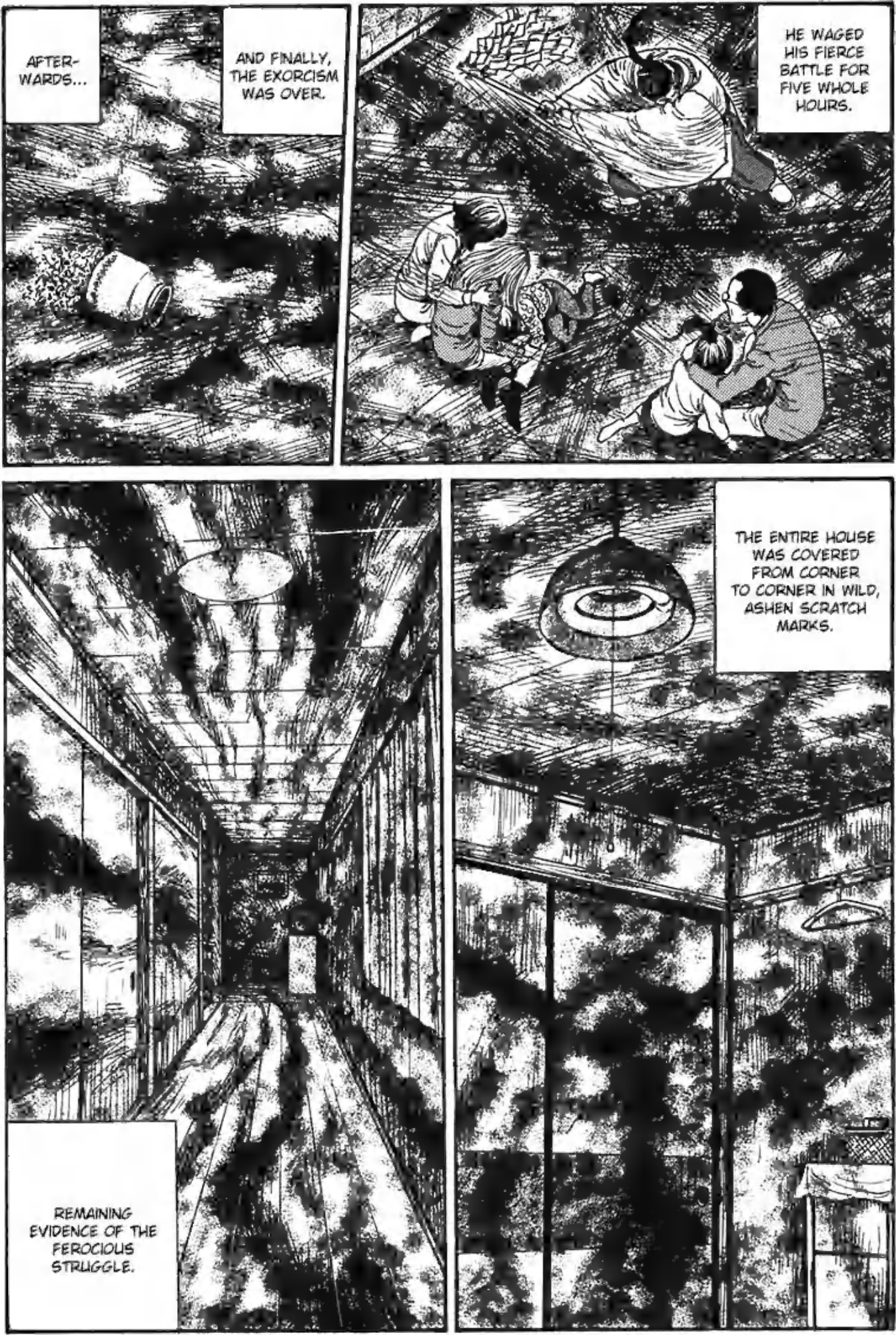
SFX: W-doom

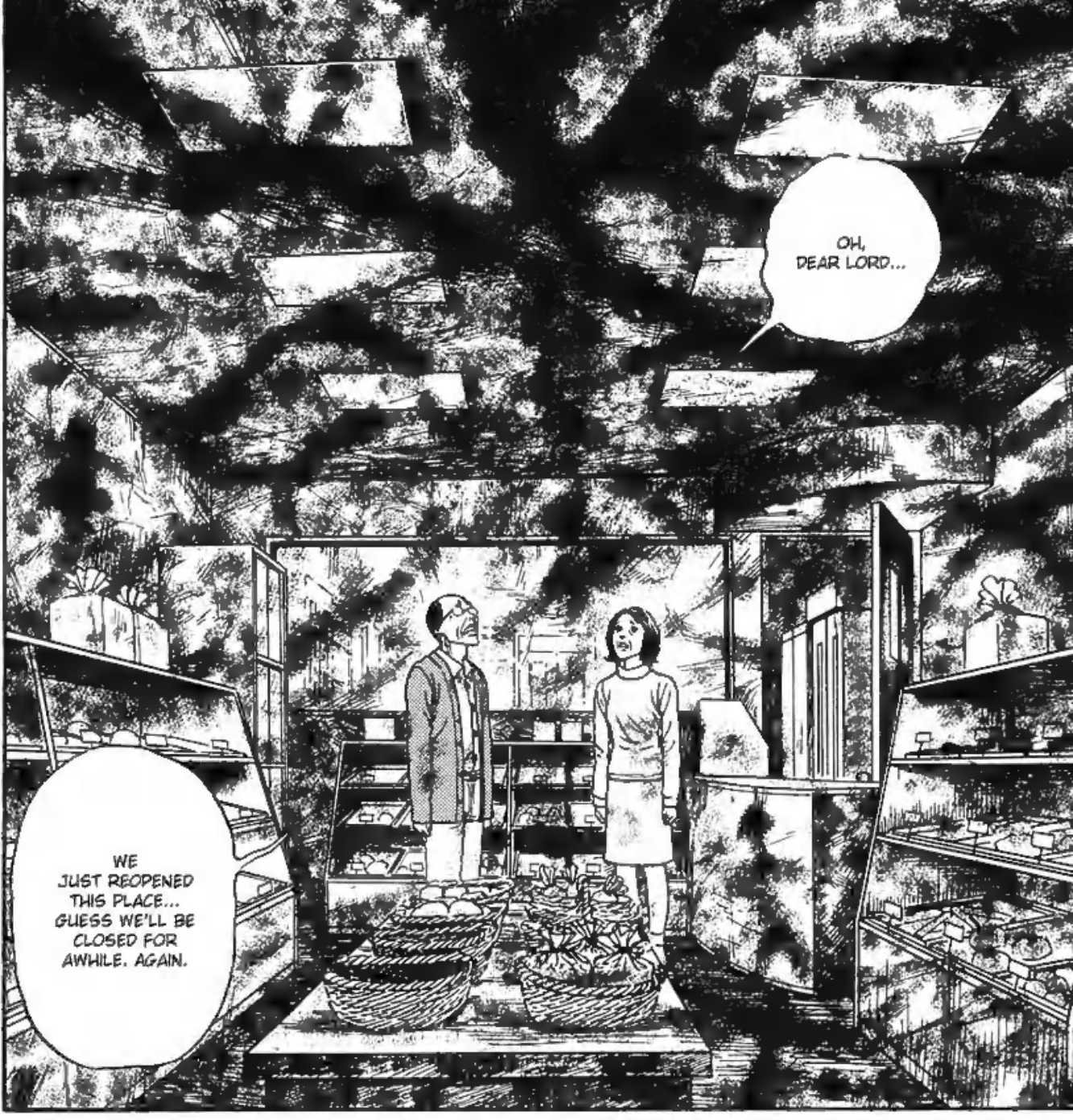



LAY THYSELF DOWN!
LAY THYSELF TO REST!!
SFX: BAM
SFX: boom

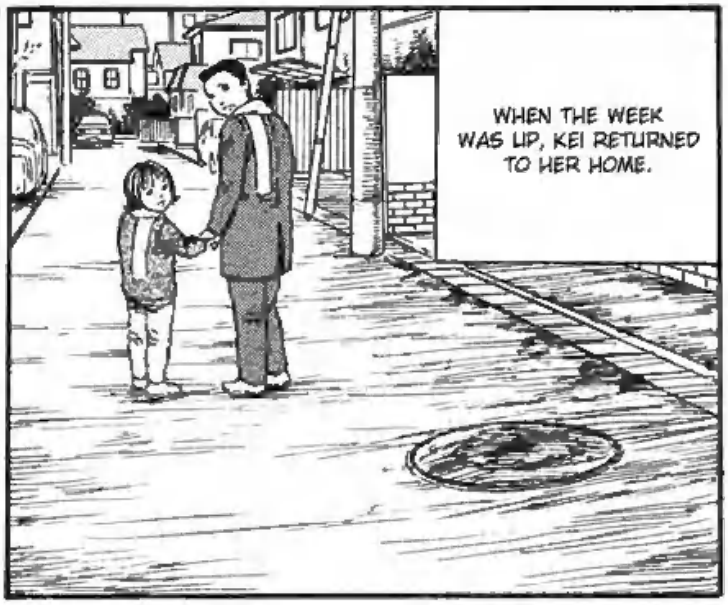
OH MY GOD, I'M SCARED!!
SFX: Vooo
IT'S IN PAIN!! IT'S BURNING UP!!
IT'S RUNNING FRANTICALLY, FOR THE HEAT IS SO UNBEARABLE!!
SFX: fowa fowa fowa


OUT OF YOUR ANGUISH WILL COME PEACE FOR YOUR SOUL !!
YES!! WRITHE AND RUN ABOUT !!
SFX: TOOM TOOM


AFTER-WARDS...
AND FINALLY, THE EXORCISM WAS OVER.
HE WAGED HIS FIERCE BATTLE FOR FIVE WHOLE HOURS.
REMAINING EVIDENCE OF THE FEROCIOUS STRUGGLE.
THE ENTIRE HOUSE WAS COVERED FROM CORNER TO CORNER IN WILD, ASHEN SCRATCH MARKS.


OH, DEAR LORD...
WE JUST REOPENED THIS PLACE... GUESS WE'LL BE CLOSED FOR AWHILE. AGAIN.

THEY SAY SHE MATURED INTO QUITE THE LOVELY YOUNG GIRL.


WHEN THE WEEK WAS UP, KEI RETURNED TO HER HOME.