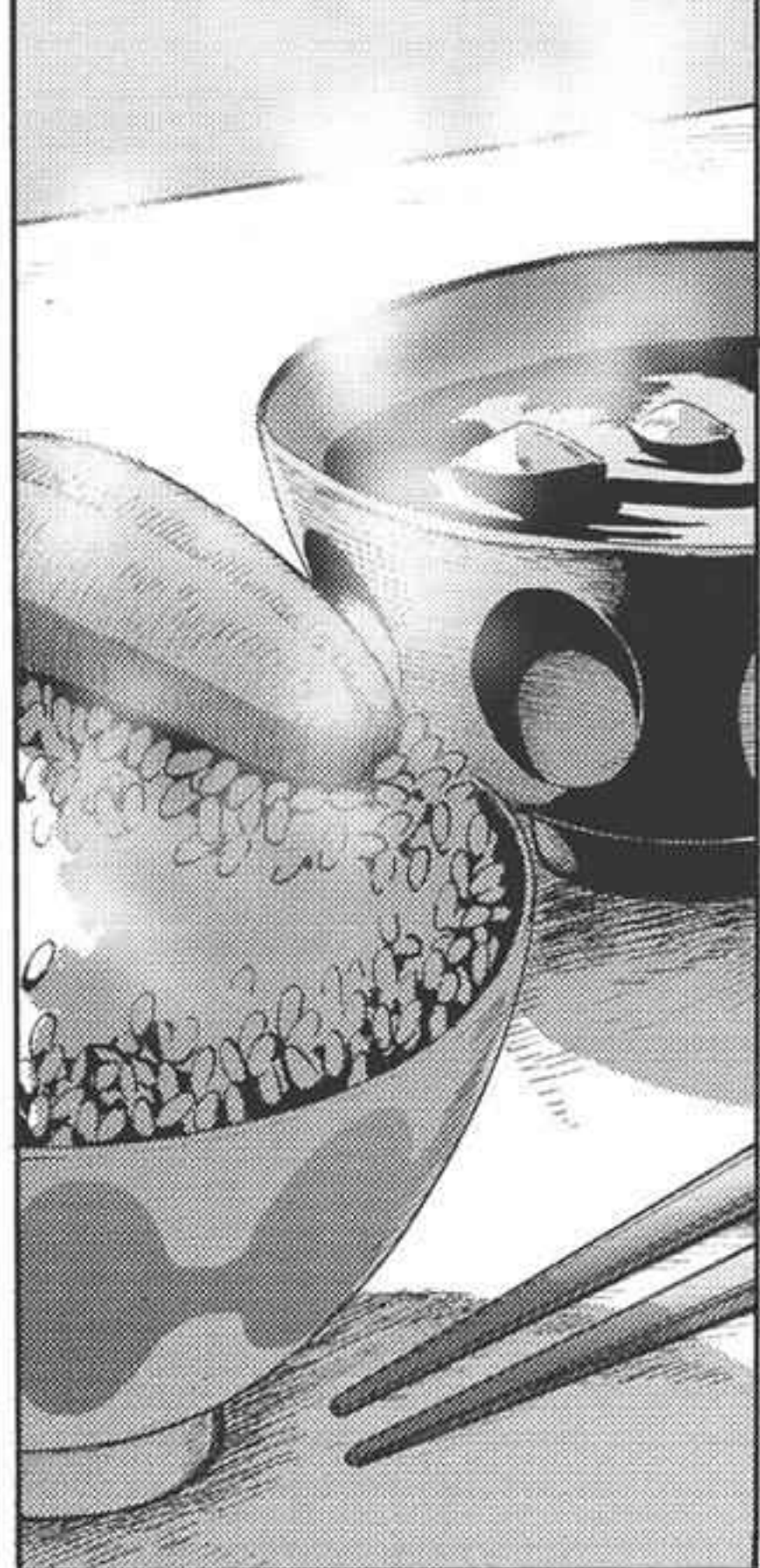




This is only the second time I've met him, but I feel strangely comfortable with him.

It's strange.

I'm eating with Taneda's dad.



SO YOU DO THE COOKING?



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A WORKAHOLIC...

...SO UP UNTIL A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE MY TEACUP WAS KEPT.

WELL... MY WIFE'S BEEN A LITTLE DEPRESSED, AND NOT DOING TOO WELL, YOU SEE...



IT MAY SOUND STRANGE, BUT WE'VE FINALLY BECOME MORE LIKE A FAMILY.





SO WHEN
I SAW NARUO
AFTER SUCH
A LONG TIME,
I WAS MORE
SURPRISED
THAN SAD.

AND I
WAS
SELDOM
HOME.

WE
WERE
NEVER
REALLY
CLOSE
AS A
FAMILY.



BEFORE
I KNEW
IT, HE'D
GROWN
INTO A
MAN.

OH...
THAT
GUY...



Oh,
I get
it...



I'd have
been more
surprised if
he'd grown
into a
woman.

OF
COURSE,
IT'S ONLY
NATURAL.



AH...
DO YOU
PLAY THE
GUITAR,
MEIKO?

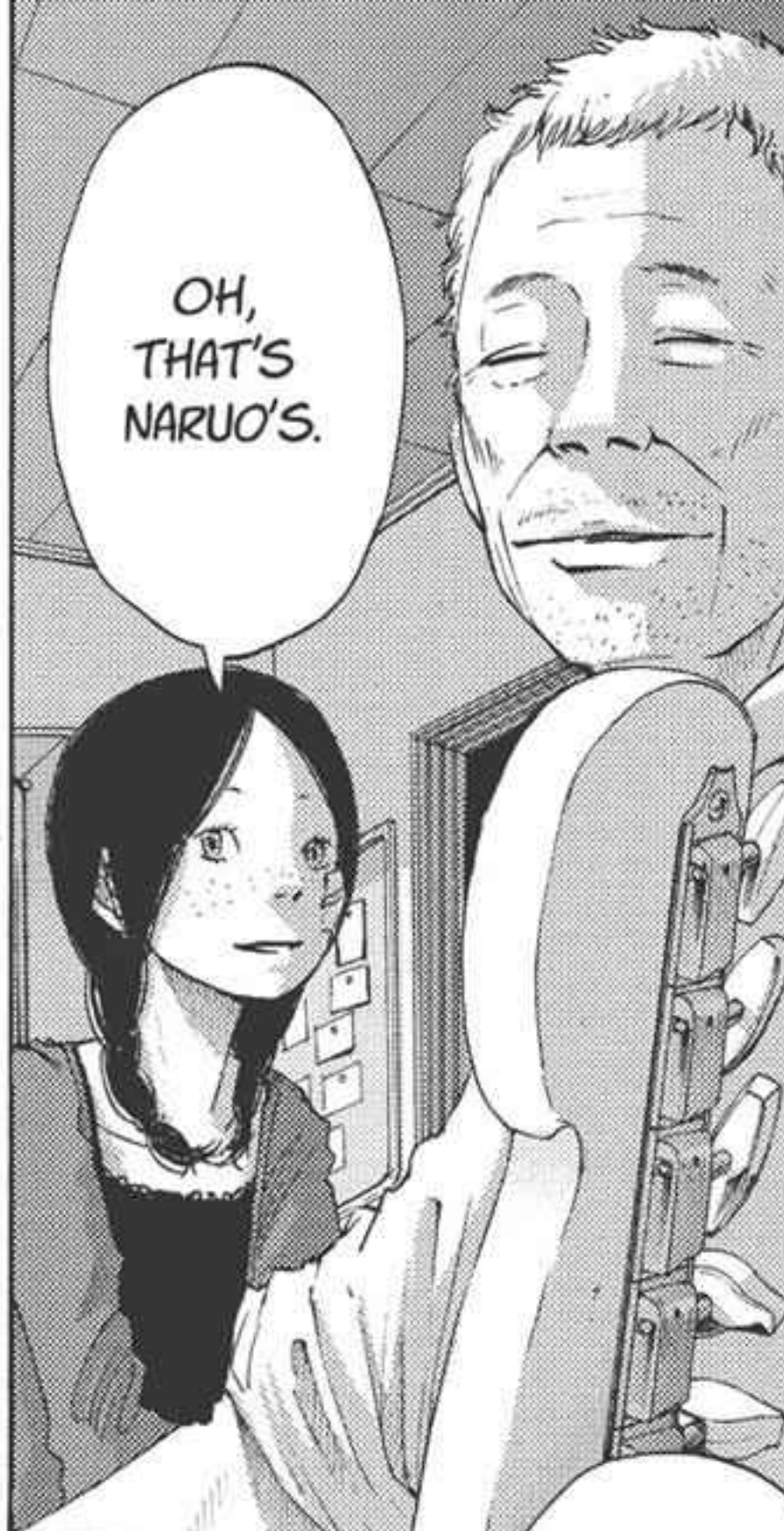
He has an
air about him
that's just like
Taneda.



HA
HA HA...
I
REMEMBER
NOW.



WHEN NARUO
WAS A
SENIOR IN
HIGH SCHOOL,
WE HAD A BIG
ARGUMENT
ABOUT HIS
FUTURE.



OH,
THAT'S
NARUO'S.

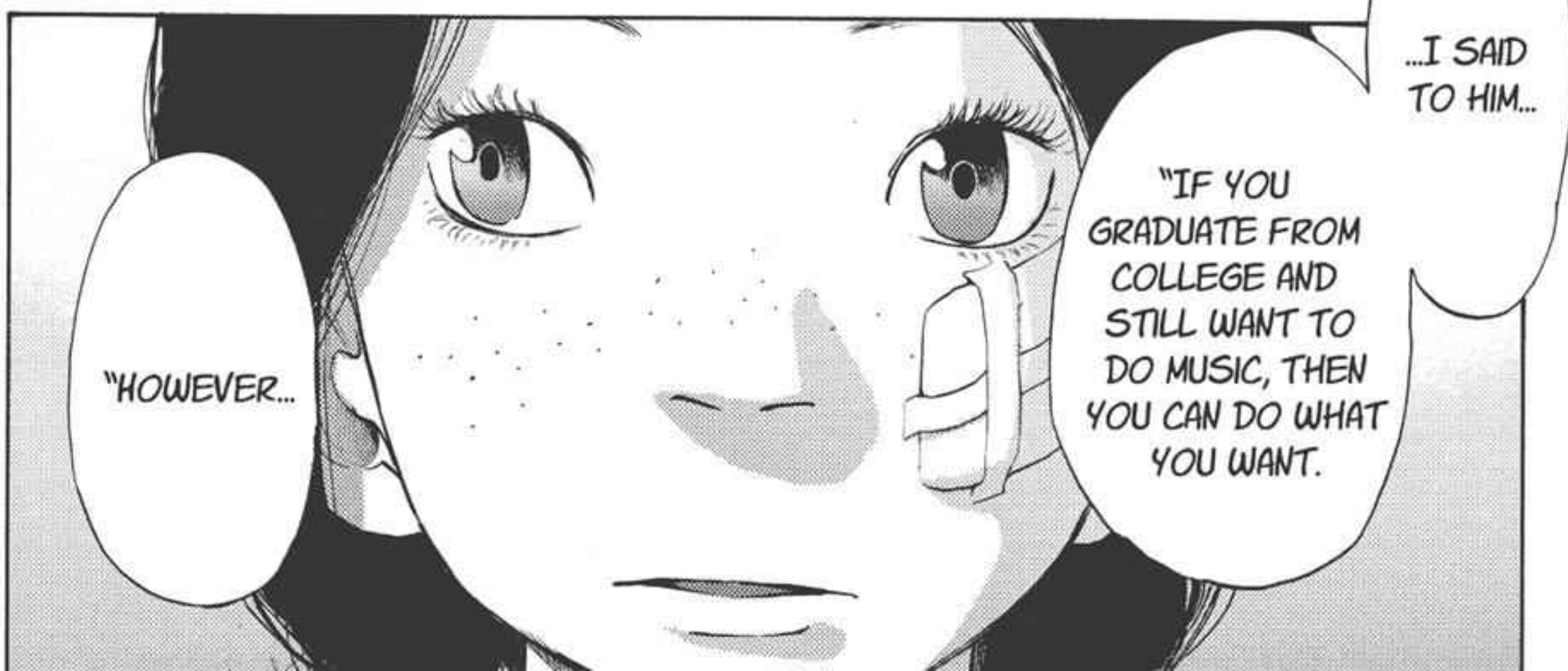


BOY,
WE FOUGHT
ABOUT IT
ALL NIGHT...

...AND WHEN
I FINALLY
GOT HIM
PINNED DOWN—
IT WAS
AROUND DAWN,
I GUESS...

HE INSISTED
HE WAS GOING
TO TOKYO TO
PURSUE MUSIC
WHILE WORKING
ON THE SIDE.

I HAD A
COMPLEX
ABOUT ONLY
GETTING AS
FAR AS MIDDLE
SCHOOL, SO
I WANTED HIM
TO GO TO
COLLEGE.



"HOWEVER..."

"IF YOU
GRADUATE FROM
COLLEGE AND
STILL WANT TO
DO MUSIC, THEN
YOU CAN DO WHAT
YOU WANT.

...I SAID
TO HIM...



Throw them away if you don't want them.

IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THERE'S VERY MUCH.

BESIDES, I THINK THEY WANT TO STAY WITH YOU A LITTLE LONGER.

WHAT ABOUT NARUO'S THINGS?

WELL, I SHOULD BE ON MY WAY...

WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?

I'M SORRY...



...THIS MIGHT NEVER HAVE HAPPENED TO NARUO.

IT'S JUST THAT...

IF NOT FOR ME...



HE WAS
SUDDENLY
TALKING
ABOUT
RETURNING
TO FUKUOKA.

AROUND
THE END OF
AUGUST,
NARUO
SURPRISED
US WITH A
CALL.

NO...

...HE
CALLED
AGAIN AND
TOLD US TO
FORGET
ABOUT
WHAT HE'D
SAID.

THEN,
MAYBE
ABOUT
FIVE DAYS
BEFORE
THE
ACCIDENT...

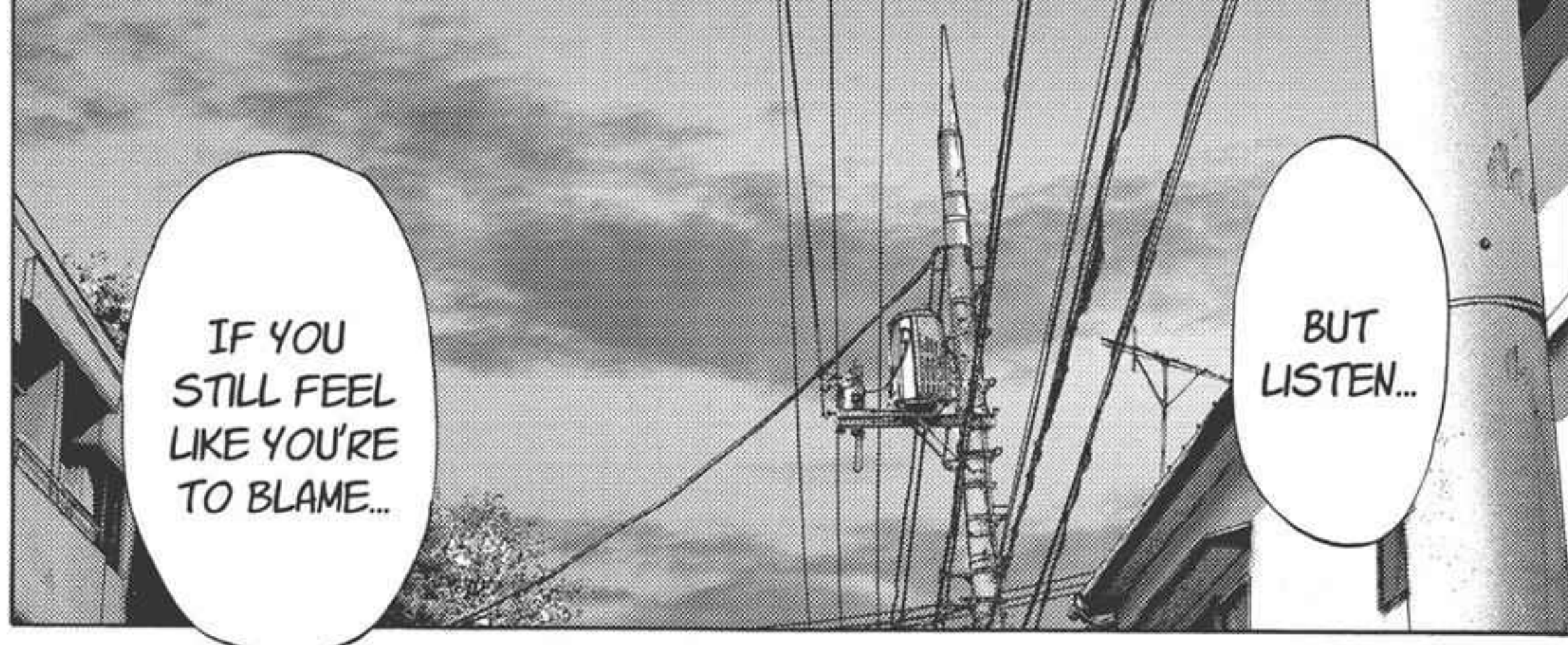
YOU'RE
MISTAKEN,
MEIKO.

HE SAID IT
WAS BECAUSE
HE'D "FOUND
SOMETHING
PRECIOUS
IN TOKYO."

IT WAS
PROBABLY
BECAUSE
OF YOU,
WASN'T IT,
MEIKO?

I THOUGHT,
"HE'S SURE
GOTTEN GOOD
WITH WORDS."

I
JUST SAID,
"IS THAT
SO?" AND
HUNG UP.



IF YOU
STILL FEEL
LIKE YOU'RE
TO BLAME...

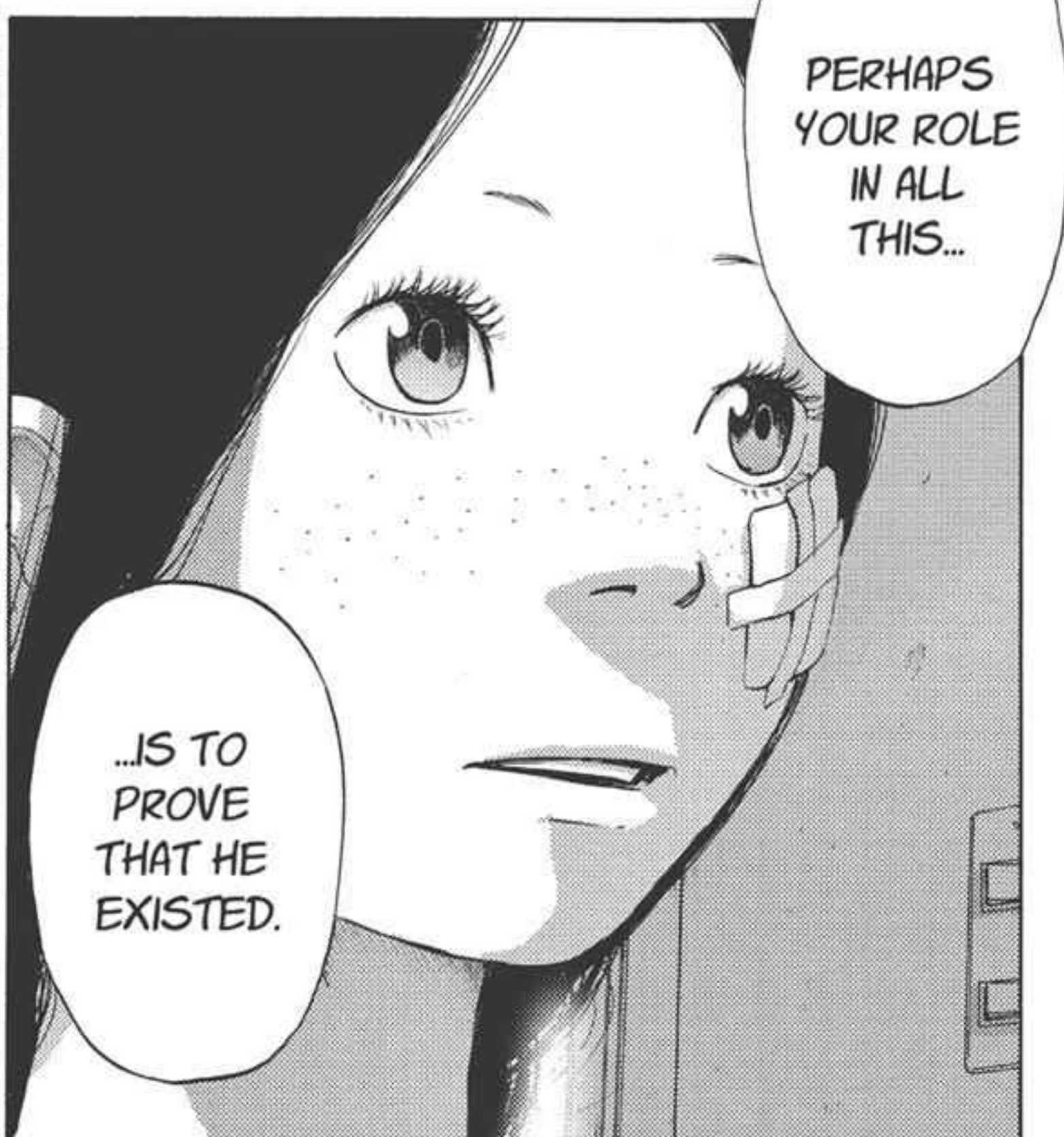
BUT
LISTEN...



...PLEASE
DON'T
FORGET
ABOUT
NARUO.



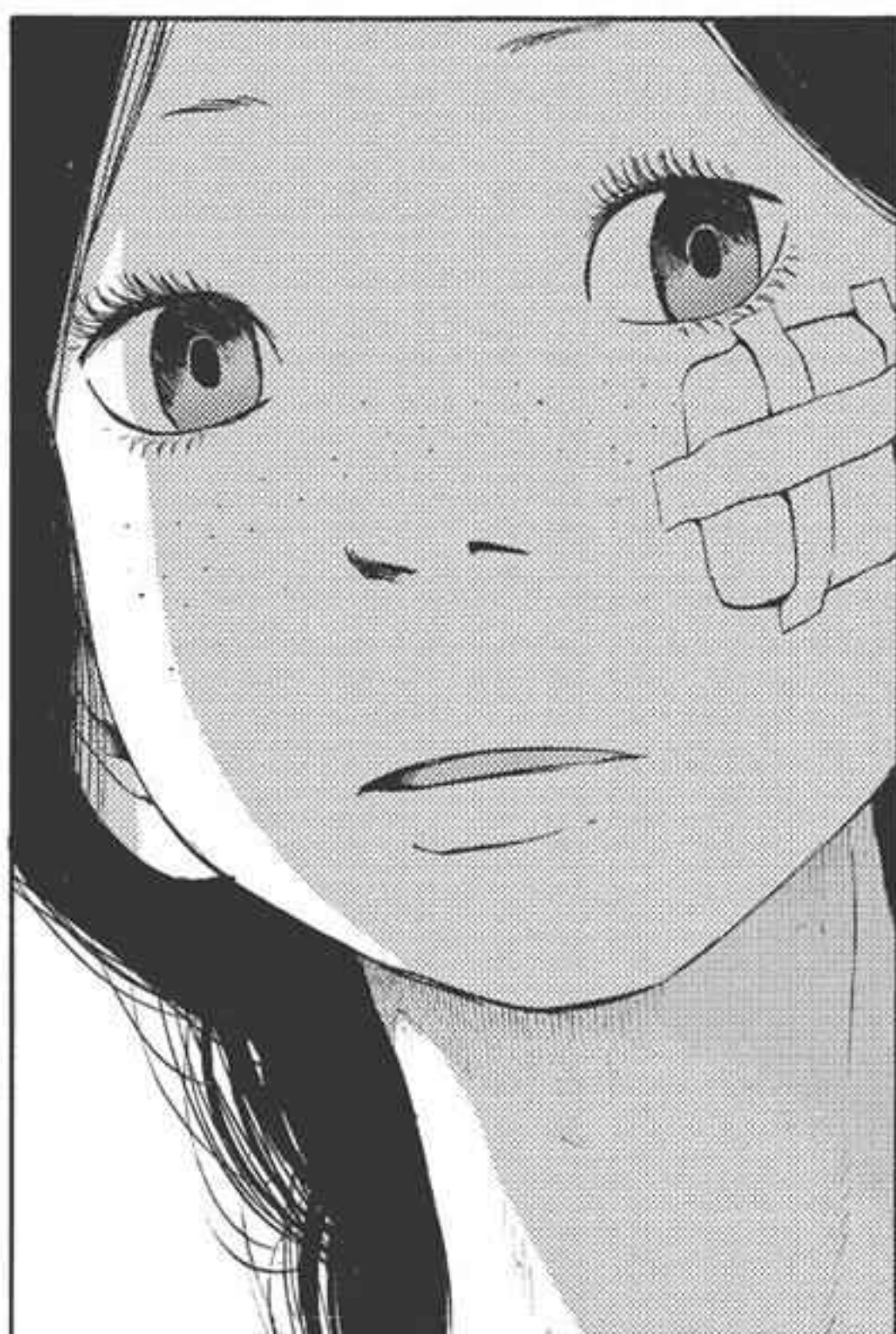
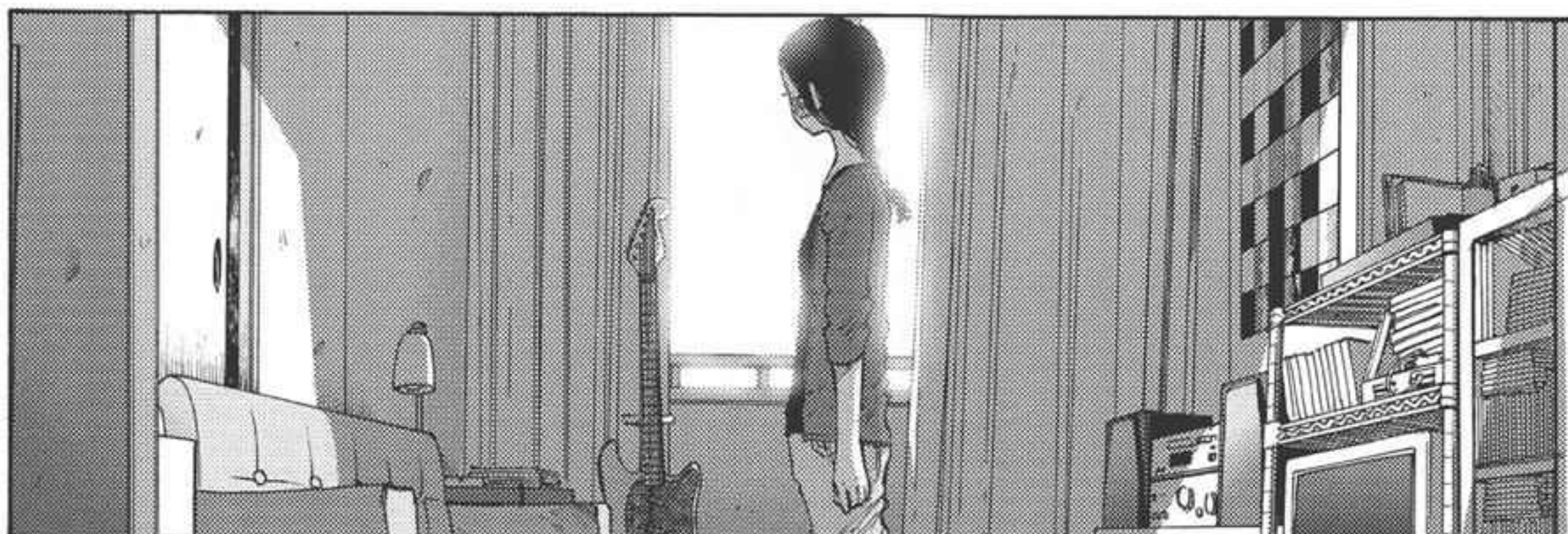
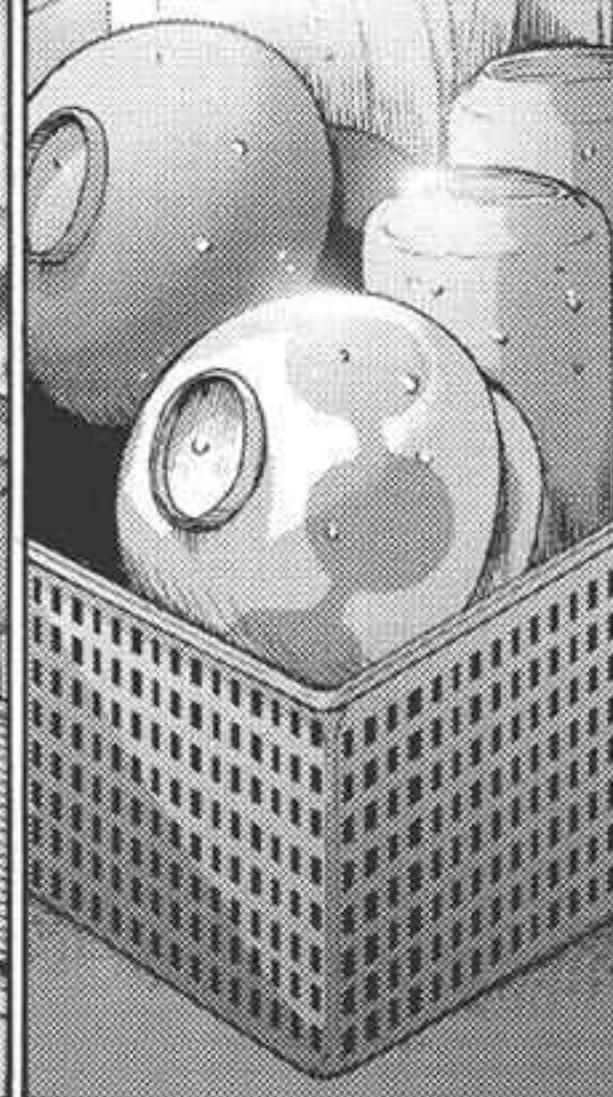
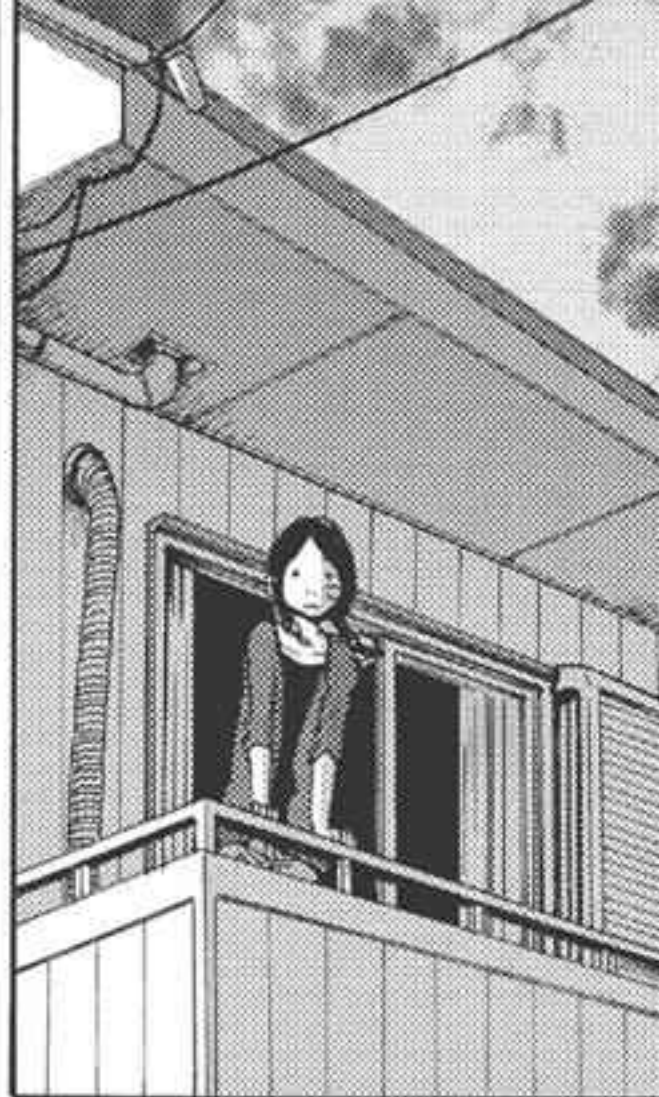
I HOPE
YOU'LL COME
AND VISIT
US SOME-
TIME.

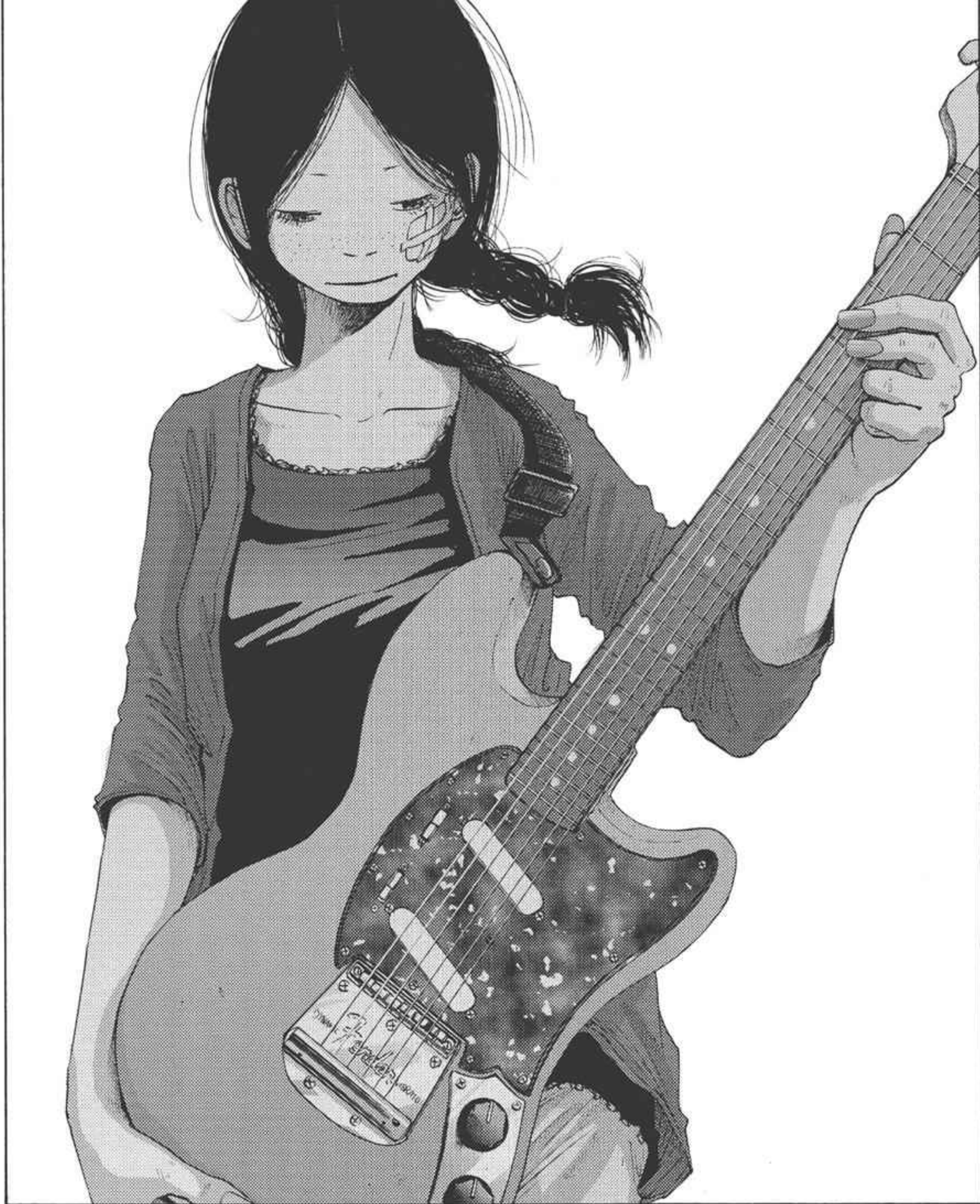


PERHAPS
YOUR ROLE
IN ALL
THIS...

...IS TO
PROVE
THAT HE
EXISTED.

...to
prove
that
Taneda
existed...





That's
my
role...?

