

Our air
conditioner
finally died
the other
day.

The apartment
building I live
in is 25 years
old. It's been
renovated over
and over, but
it's still a dump.

Just
let that
soak in.

I wouldn't
have been able
to experience
the pleasure
of standing
in the bright
noonday sun.

... but at this time
of day I used
to be in an
overly air
conditioned office
pounding on
a keyboard.

I went out,
intending to
go to the
appliance
store...



I'll
take
it!

How can I
describe
it? This is
freedom!

Summer's
great!
Even if
it's
burning
hot.

This is
great!



My bank
balance ruins
the moment.

The
expiration
date on
freedom
is rapidly
approaching.



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
PATRONAGE.



ANOTHER
YEAR...?

IF
I DON'T
CUT BACK ON
EXPENSES,
I'LL BE LUCKY
TO LAST SIX
MONTHS.

I THINK
I CAN MAKE
IT THROUGH
SUMMER,
BUT...



A NEW AIR
CONDITIONER
WILL HAVE
TO WAIT...



JUST
SOME
SHOPPING...

UGH...

OH!
MEIKO!

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE?

YES,
WE ARE!

ARE YOU
AND THE
BOSS
GOING TO
LUNCH?

OH,
I HAVE
TO GO!
GOOD
LUCK,
MEIKO!

BUT
WHO CAN
BLAME HIM?
AS FAR AS HE'S
CONCERNED,
I'M JUST A
USELESS
SLACKER.

AND
THE
STUPID
BOSS
IGNORED
ME
COMPLE-
TELY.

GOOD LUCK
WITH WHAT?
SHE'S JUST
SAYING THAT
CUZ IT'S
EXPECTED.



UGH!
GROWN-
UPS
ARE SO
GROSS!

WAIT A
MINUTE...
WERE
THEY
HOLDING
HANDS?!
ARE
THEY
HAVING
AN
AFFAIR!?



NO,
THEY'RE A
LITTLE
STEEP
FOR ME...

SHALL
I BRING
SOMETHING
IN YOUR
SIZE?

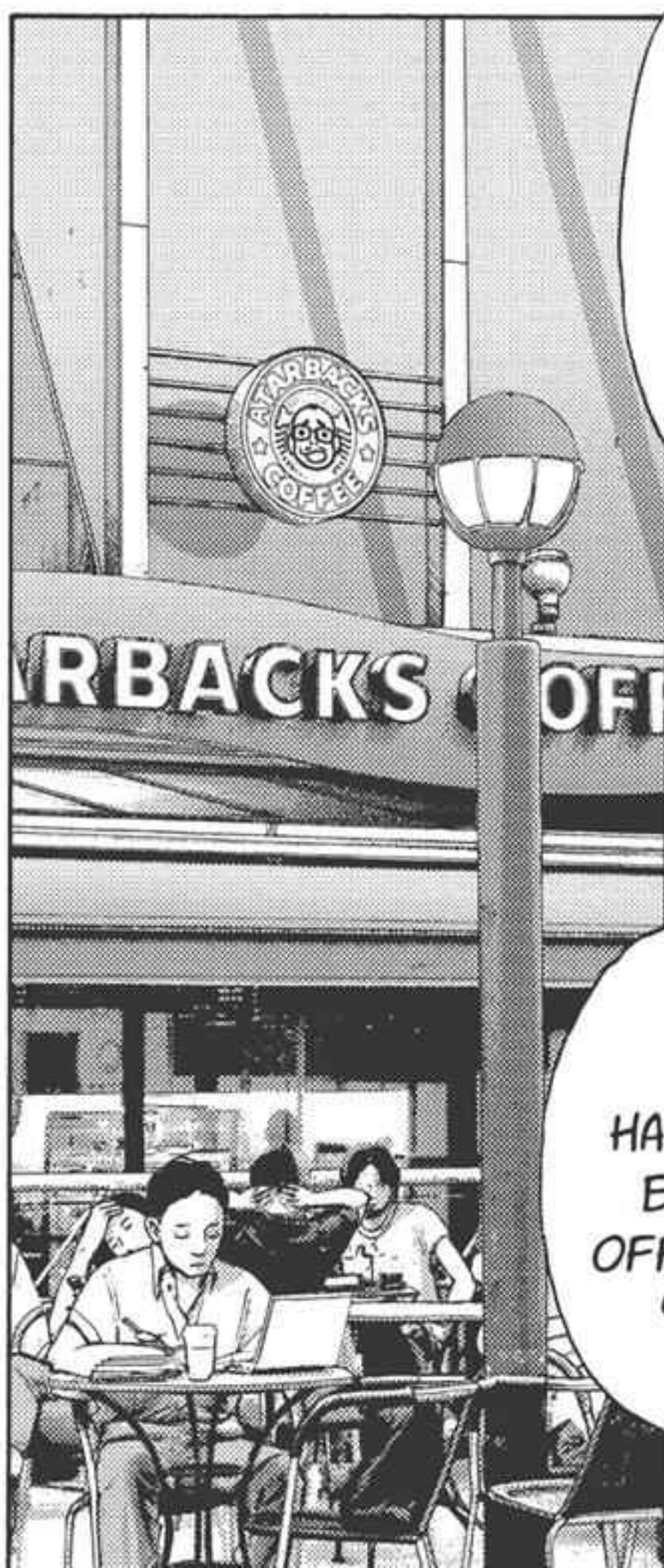
THAT
LOOKS
WONDERFUL
ON YOU,
MA'AM...



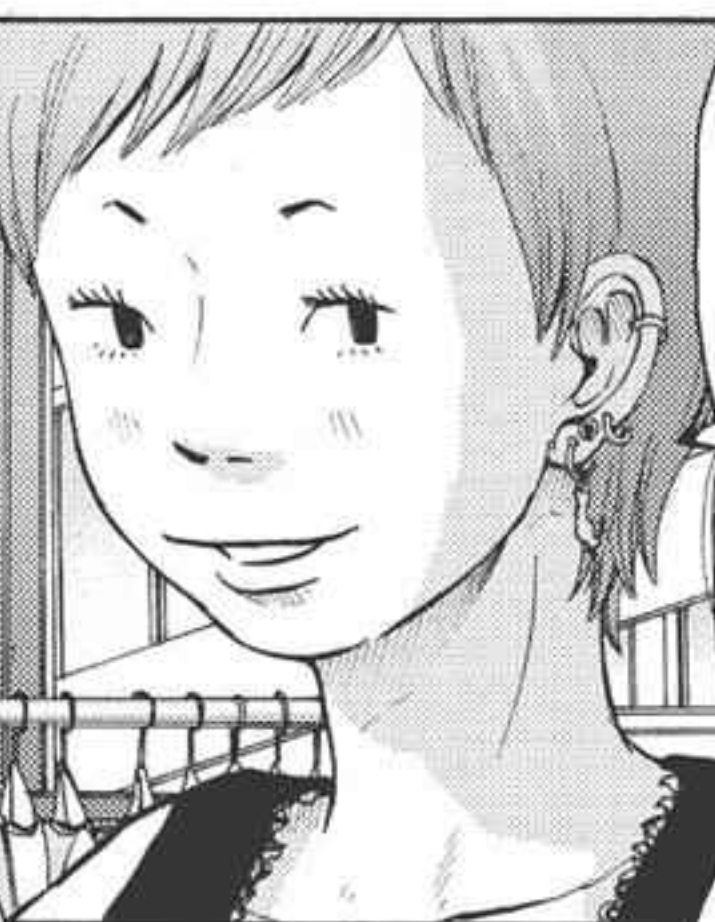
AI, YOU
MAKE A
REALLY
GREAT
SALES
CLERK.



THIS
IS ONE OF
OUR SUMMER
LOOKS AND IT
COMES IN FIVE
COLORS.



I COULD
PROBABLY
SELL TO
A DOG,
IF HE
WERE A
CUSTOMER.



HEH HEH.
IT COMES
NATURALLY
NOW.

YES,
THANK
YOU!

I
HAVEN'T
EVEN
OFFERED
YET.

BY
THE WAY,
ARE YOU
GRACING ME
WITH YOUR
PRESENCE...

...BECAUSE
YOU WANT
ME TO
TREAT
YOU TO
LUNCH?





YOU ALWAYS RUN AWAY FROM ANYTHING THAT COULD HURT YOU.

I BET EVEN IF YOU SUSPECTED THAT TANEDA WAS CHEATING ON YOU, YOU'D BE TOO AFRAID TO CHECK HIS CELL PHONE, RIGHT?

WELL, MAYBE...



...and can't sleep at night.

I think about the possibility of winning the 300 million yen lottery...

THEN HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH KATO, AI?



WHEN I CHECKED HIS PHONE AND SAW THAT HE WAS EMAILING A COLLEGE GIRL, I HIT HIM.



YES, WELL... YOU HAVE TO TRAIN THEM RIGHT.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!



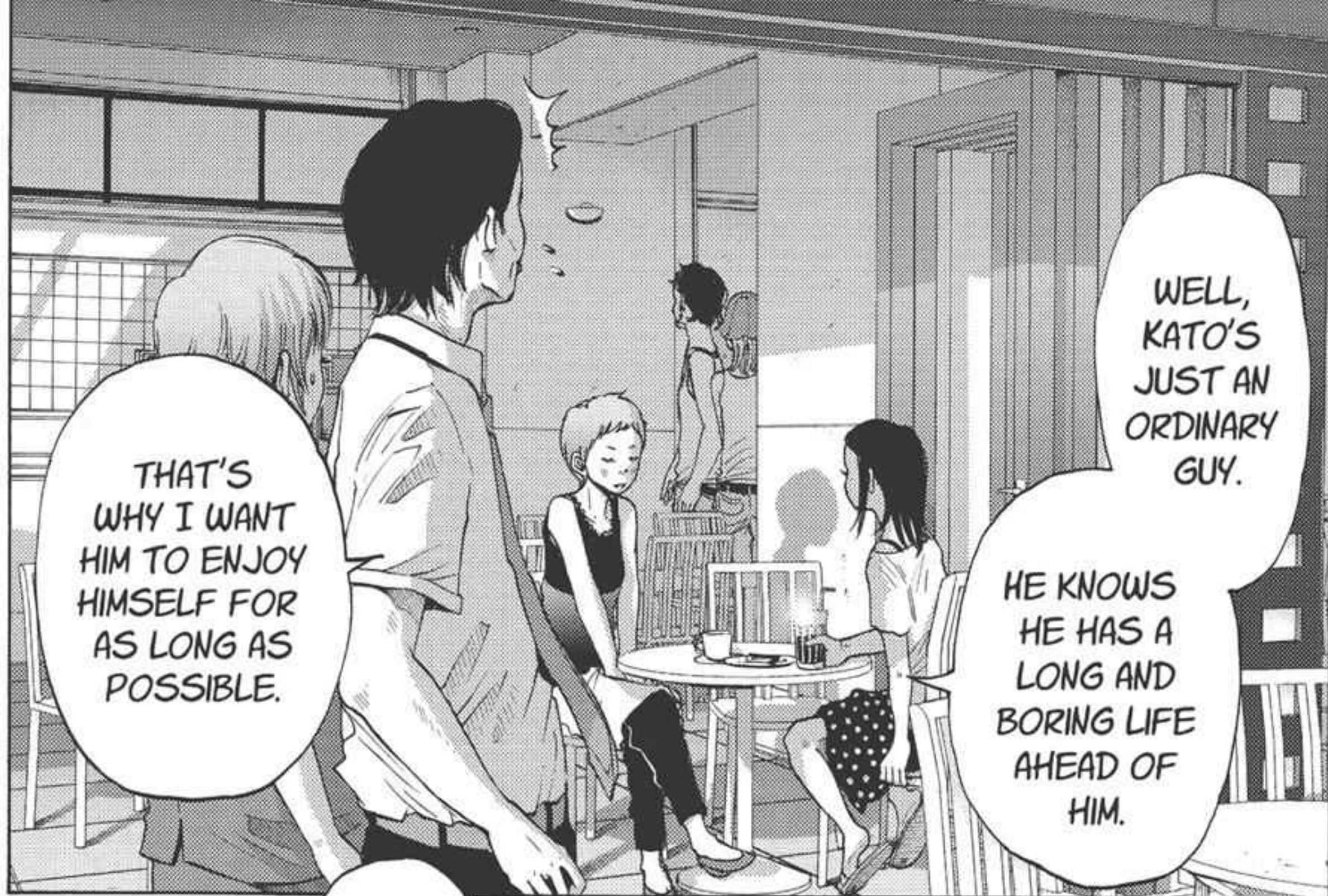
HA HA...

BUT YOU NEVER COMPLAIN TO HIM ABOUT STILL BEING IN COLLEGE.



AND WHEN I FOUND A CARD FROM A GIRLIE BAR IN HIS WALLET, I HIT HIM...

...WITH A BEER BOTTLE.



THAT'S WHY I WANT HIM TO ENJOY HIMSELF FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

WELL, KATO'S JUST AN ORDINARY GUY.

HE KNOWS HE HAS A LONG AND BORING LIFE AHEAD OF HIM.



WE WORK AND WE EAT, AND THAT'S WHAT'S EXPECTED OF US.

STILL, I'M BEING EASY ON HIM.

The wind's picking up.



WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU QUIT YOUR JOB, I COULDN'T HELP WONDERING...

...IF MAYBE YOU'RE UNCONSCIOUSLY PUTTING PRESSURE ON TANEDA.

Should we go somewhere else?

IT'S JUST A PART-TIME JOB, BUT HE'S PUTTING A LOT OF EFFORT INTO IT.

OH, HE'S REALLY BUSY AND HASN'T BEEN HOME IN THREE DAYS.

SO WHAT'S TANEDA DOING TODAY?

There she is again.



THIS
MIGHT BE
YOUR LAST
CHANCE.

BEFORE
HE GETS
THE WRONG
IDEA.

IF
YOU ARE,
YOU SHOULD
JUST
TELL HIM...

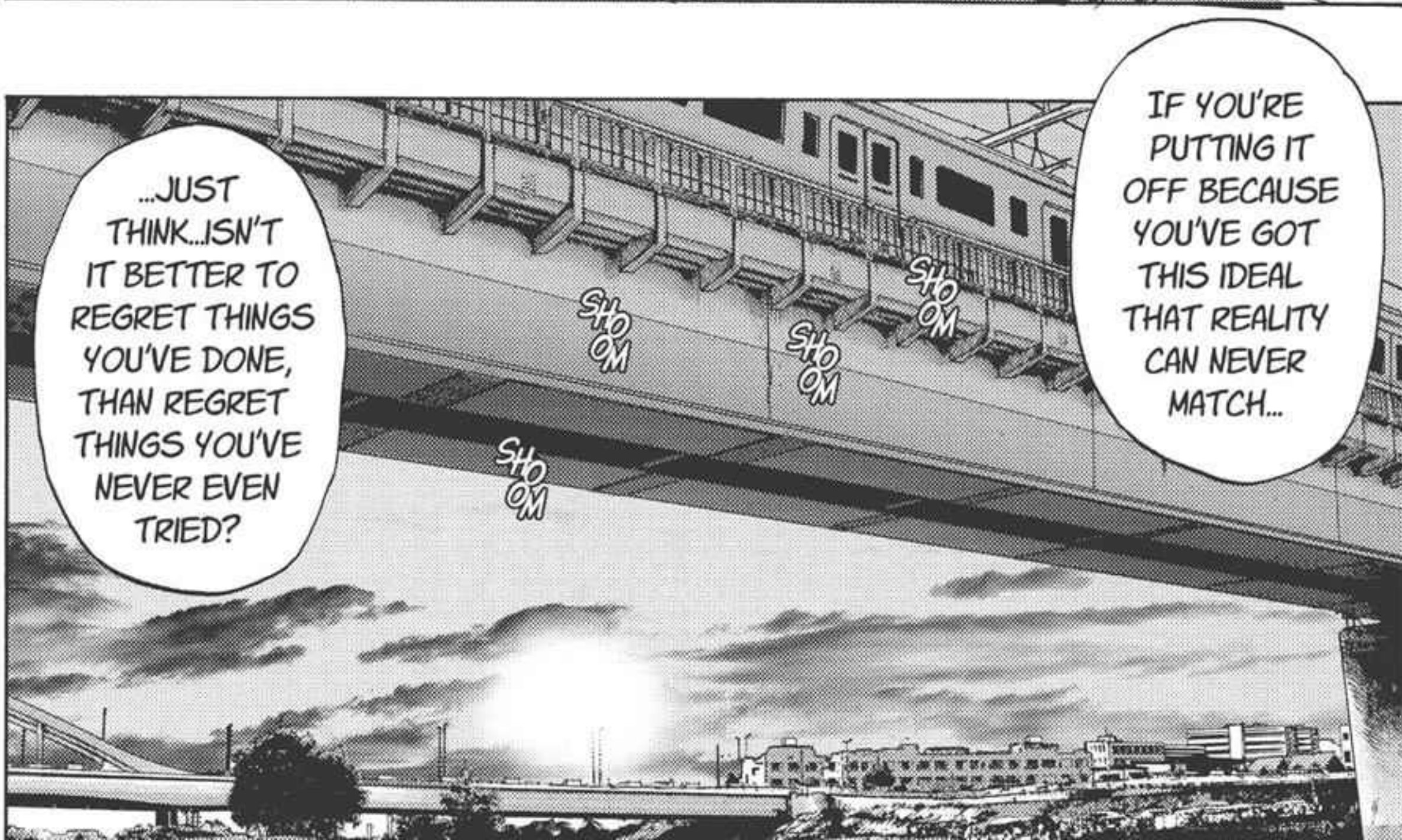
...WHAT
YOU WANT
HIM TO
DO.



...YOU
CAN'T
FIX IT
FOR
THEM.

NO
MATTER
HOW MUCH
YOU WORRY
ABOUT
SOMEONE
ELSE'S
PROBLEMS
...

NOTHING'S
GOING TO
CHANGE IF
YOU'RE JUST
THINKING
ABOUT IT.



...JUST
THINK...ISN'T
IT BETTER TO
REGRET THINGS
YOU'VE DONE,
THAN REGRET
THINGS YOU'VE
NEVER EVEN
TRIED?

IF YOU'RE
PUTTING IT
OFF BECAUSE
YOU'VE GOT
THIS IDEAL
THAT REALITY
CAN NEVER
MATCH...

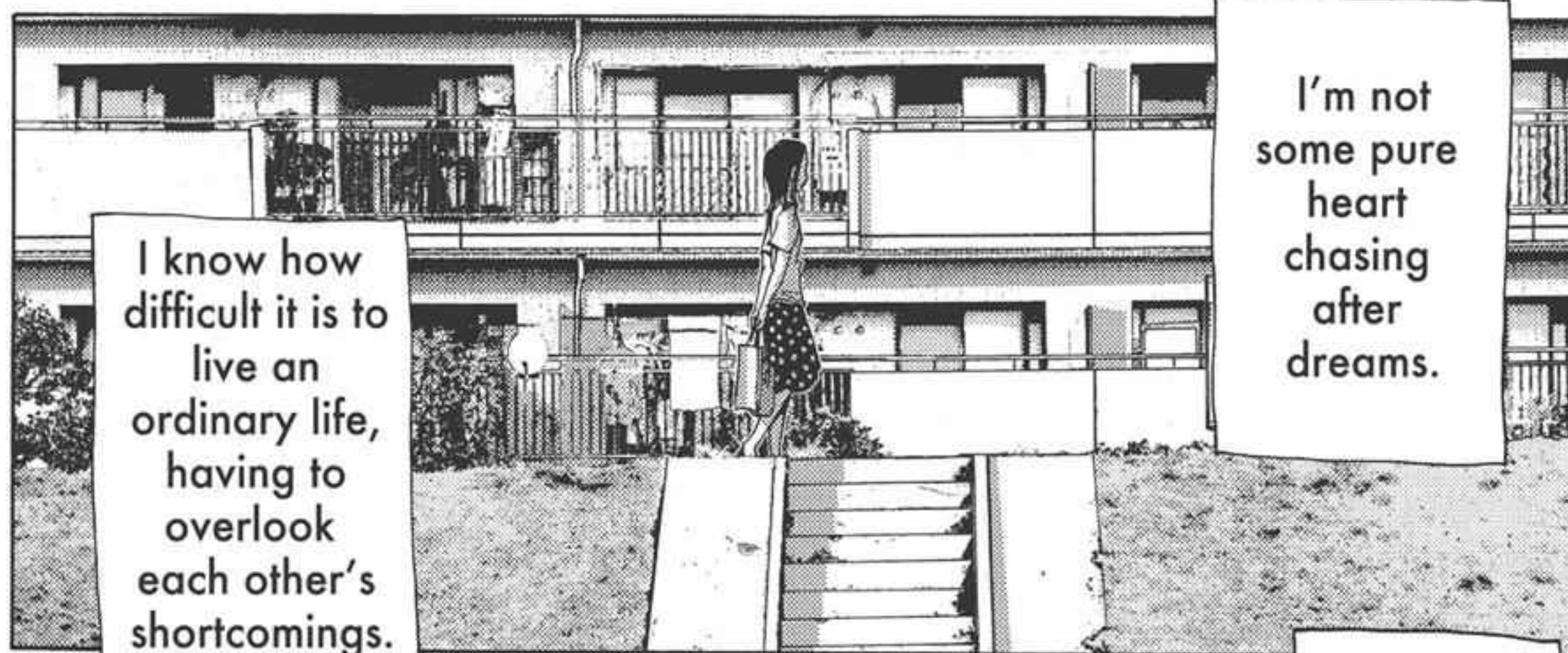
...because
I have this
feeling that
it will
make our
relationship
fall apart.

And I
haven't
had a
serious
talk with
Taneda
about our
future...



I didn't
quit my job
because
I hated it.

I quit
because
I hated the
way I was
getting
exhausted
and worn
out.

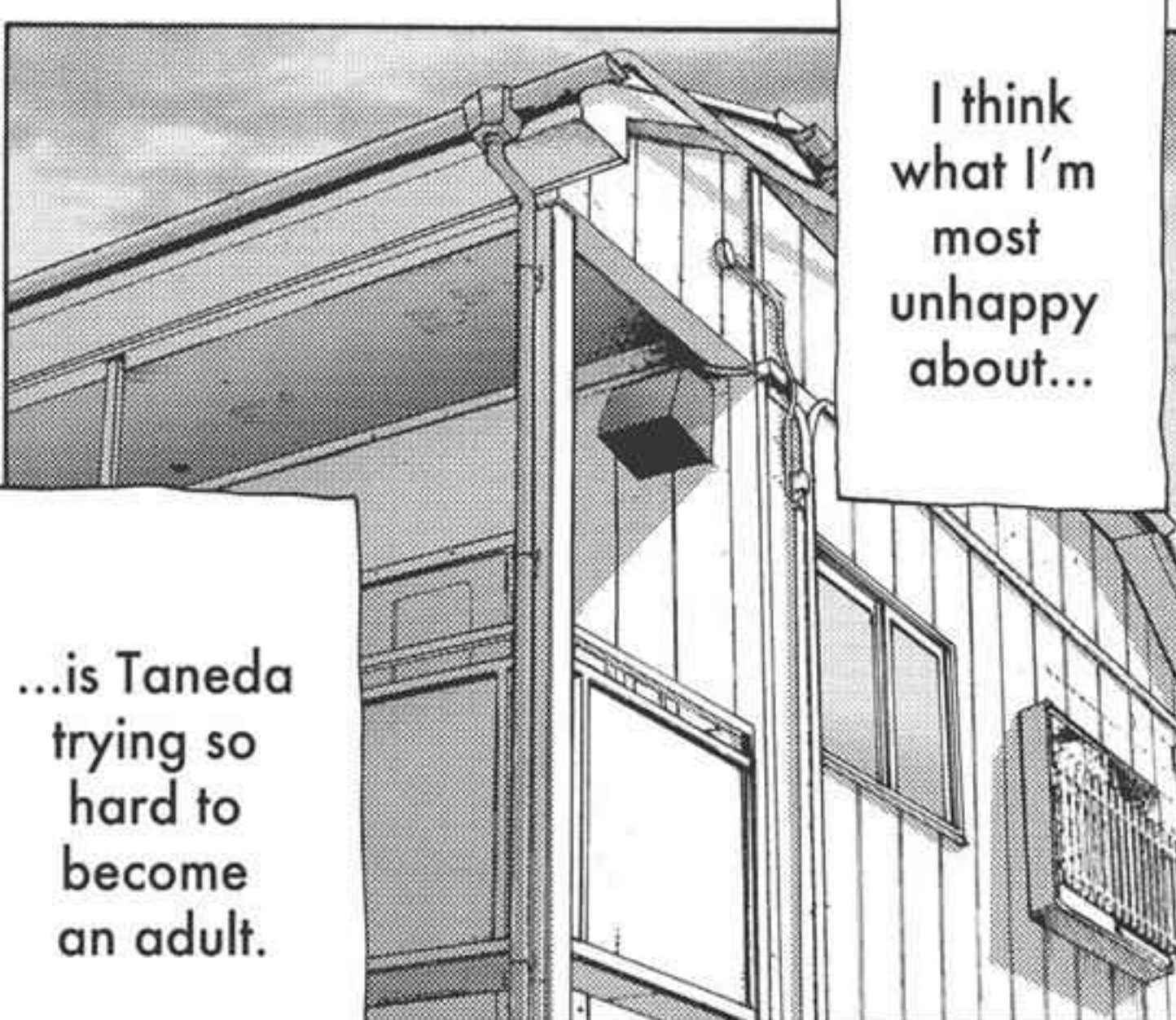


I know how
difficult it is to
live an
ordinary life,
having to
overlook
each other's
shortcomings.

I'm not
some pure
heart
chasing
after
dreams.

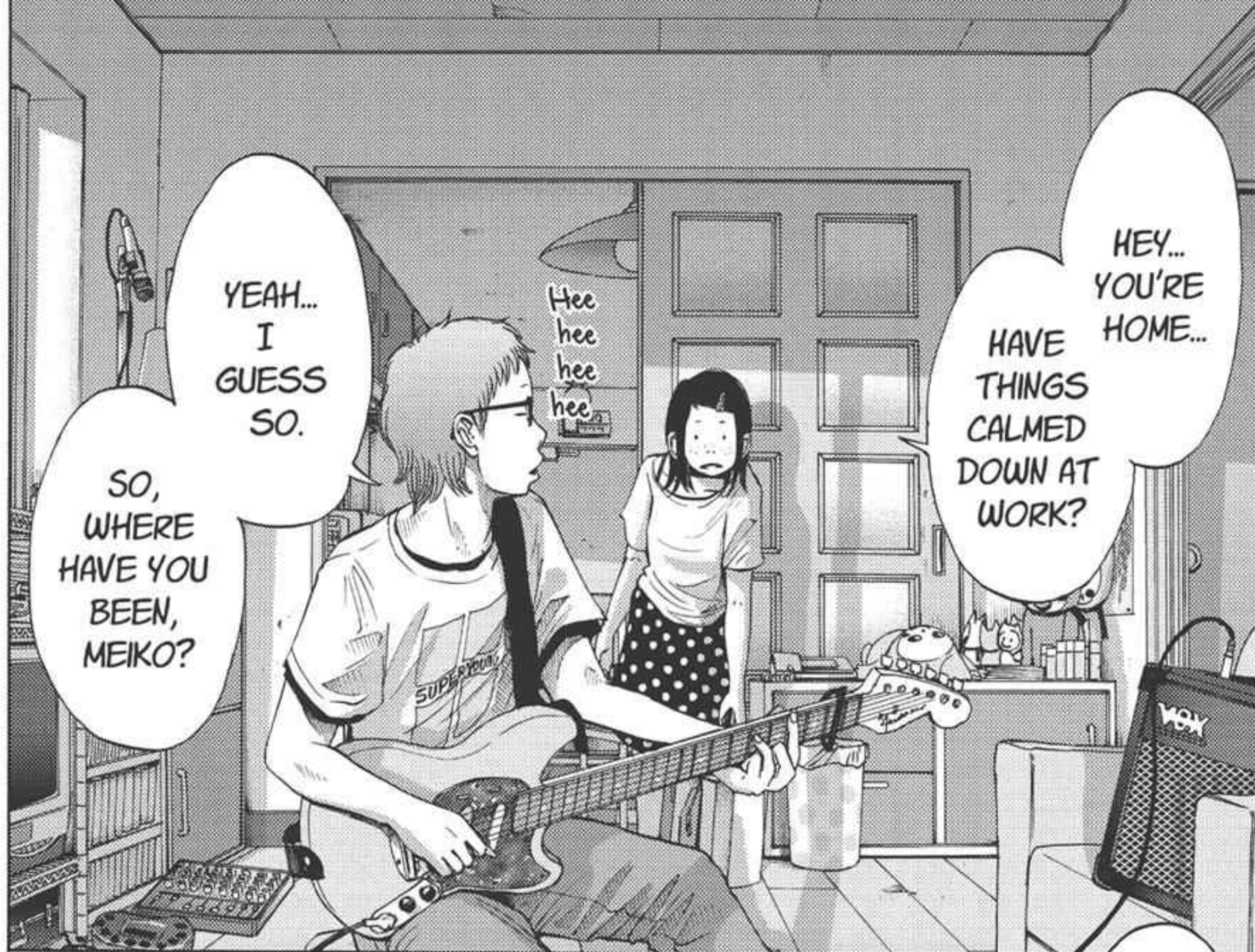


OH...



I think
what I'm
most
unhappy
about...

...is Taneda
trying so
hard to
become
an adult.



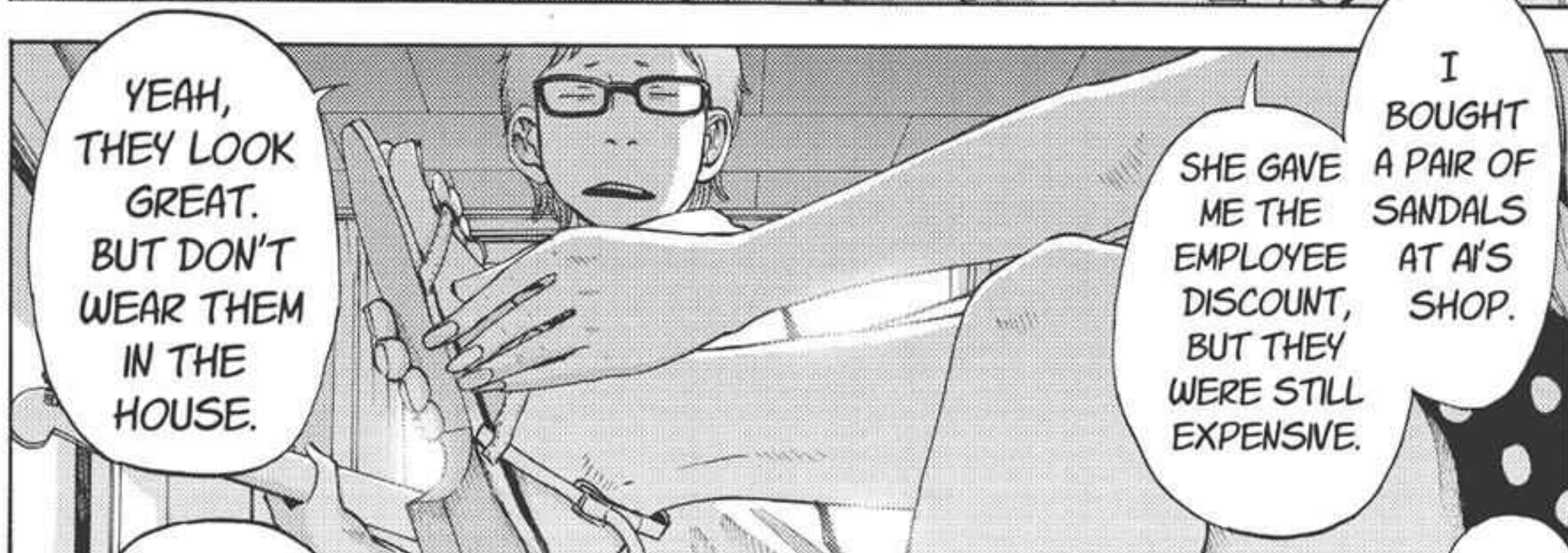
SO,
WHERE
HAVE YOU
BEEN,
MEIKO?

YEAH...
I
GUESS
SO.

HAVE
THINGS
CALMED
DOWN AT
WORK?

HEY...
YOU'RE
HOME...

Hee
hee
hee
hee



YEAH,
THEY LOOK
GREAT.
BUT DON'T
WEAR THEM
IN THE
HOUSE.

SHE GAVE
ME THE
EMPLOYEE
DISCOUNT,
BUT THEY
WERE STILL
EXPENSIVE.

I
BOUGHT
A PAIR OF
SANDALS
AT A'S
SHOP.

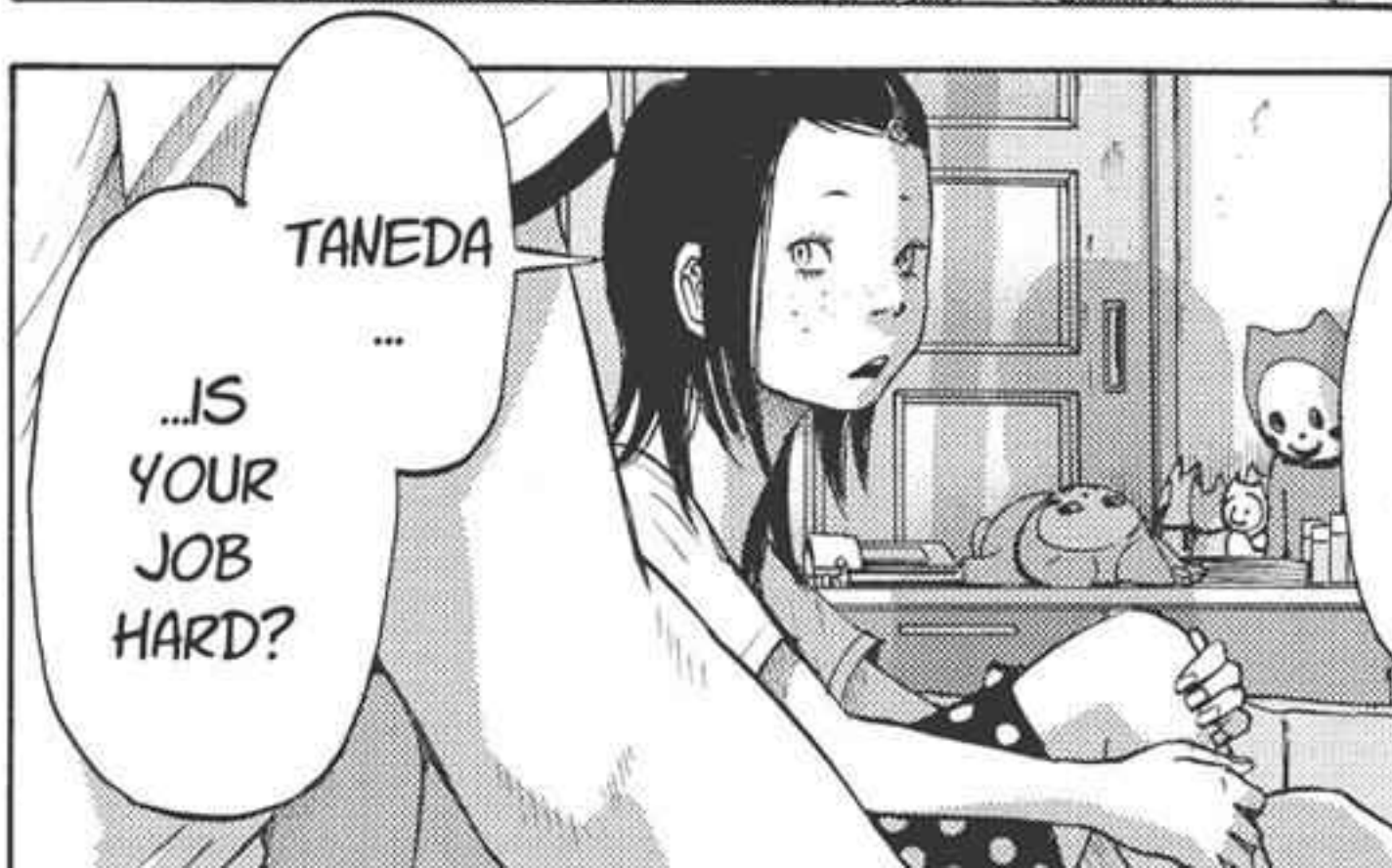


JUST LIKE
PEOPLE,
MACHINES
SHOULDN'T
BE DISPOS-
ABLE.



WHOA!

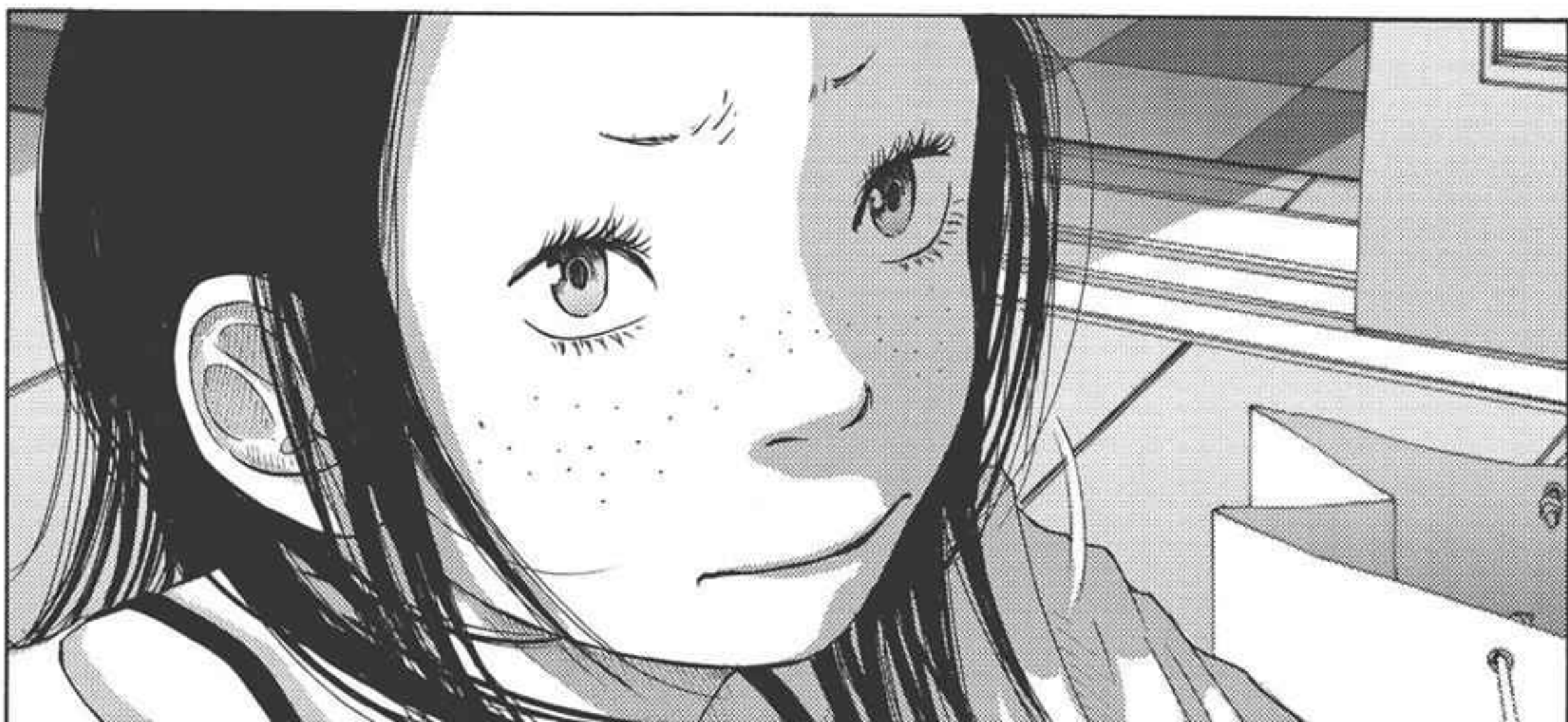
THE AIR
CONDITIONER'S
WORKING!

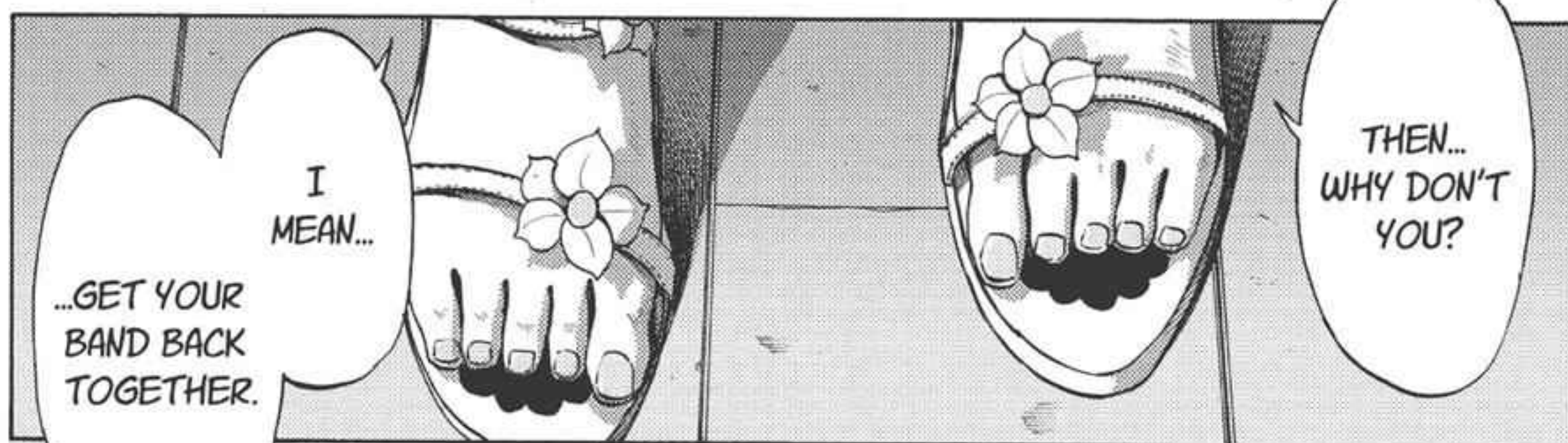
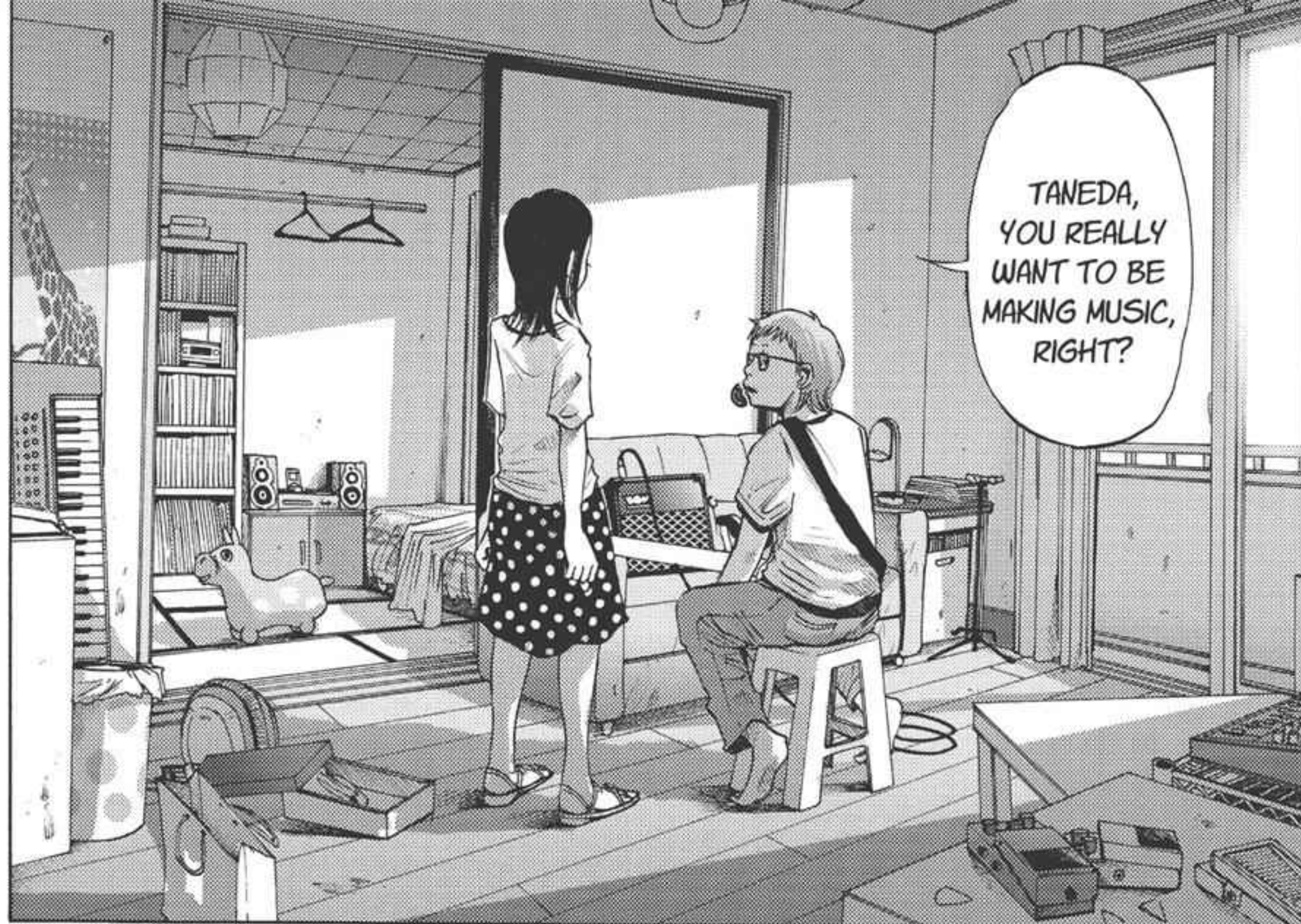


TANEDA

...IS
YOUR
JOB
HARD?

I'M NOT
SURE WHAT
I DID, BUT
I FIDDLER
WITH IT AND
IT
STARTED
WORKING.





Today is
the first
step of our
new lives.

With
cautious
feet, we
move
forward.

But I
love them,
so I'll
probably
wear them
out.

My brand-
new sandals
are a little stiff,
and I think they'll
give me blisters.

