

NETHERWARRANT

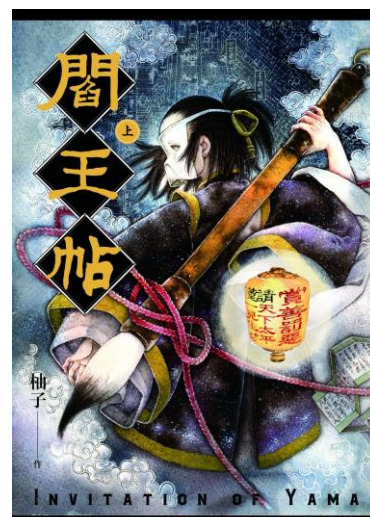
閻王帖

When a young man with the ability to see spirits encounters a strange boy in a mask and old-fashioned garb, he quickly finds himself forced on a journey through the Netherworld – one which teaches him to reevaluate his gifts. From there, his life becomes increasingly interwoven with events of the Netherworld in this darkly humorous re-imagining of the Buddhist afterlife.

Upon death, all spirits must first pass through the Netherworld before continuing to rebirth in a new life. There, King Yama sits before a high table, assigning penances that must be fulfilled before rebirth is attained. The living are forbidden from visiting the Netherworld unless they possess a special document called a Netherwarrant.

This graphic novel features a protagonist born with the ability to see spirits, but who views this gift as nothing less than a curse. Late one night the young man encounters an unusual boy wearing a mask and dressed in ancient garb who claims he is Black Impermanence, assistant to King Yama. Black Impermanence tells the young man he must use his gift of “the sight” to help people, and then, to help him realize the importance of his gift, gives him a folded blank sheet of paper – a Netherwarrant. Within moments, the young man crosses over to the Netherworld.

After returning from the land of the dead, the young man is indeed changed. Some time later, he and Black Impermanence are reunited once more. This time Black Impermanence has a special mission: to locate the missing King Yama. His only clue is that King Yama is located in a mysterious place on an island in the East. Thus, he and his counterpart White Impermanence have been investigating various unusual phenomena in Taiwan, but so far these strange occurrences are mostly the results of human ignorance, greed, and brutishness, and have nothing to do with the missing King Yama.



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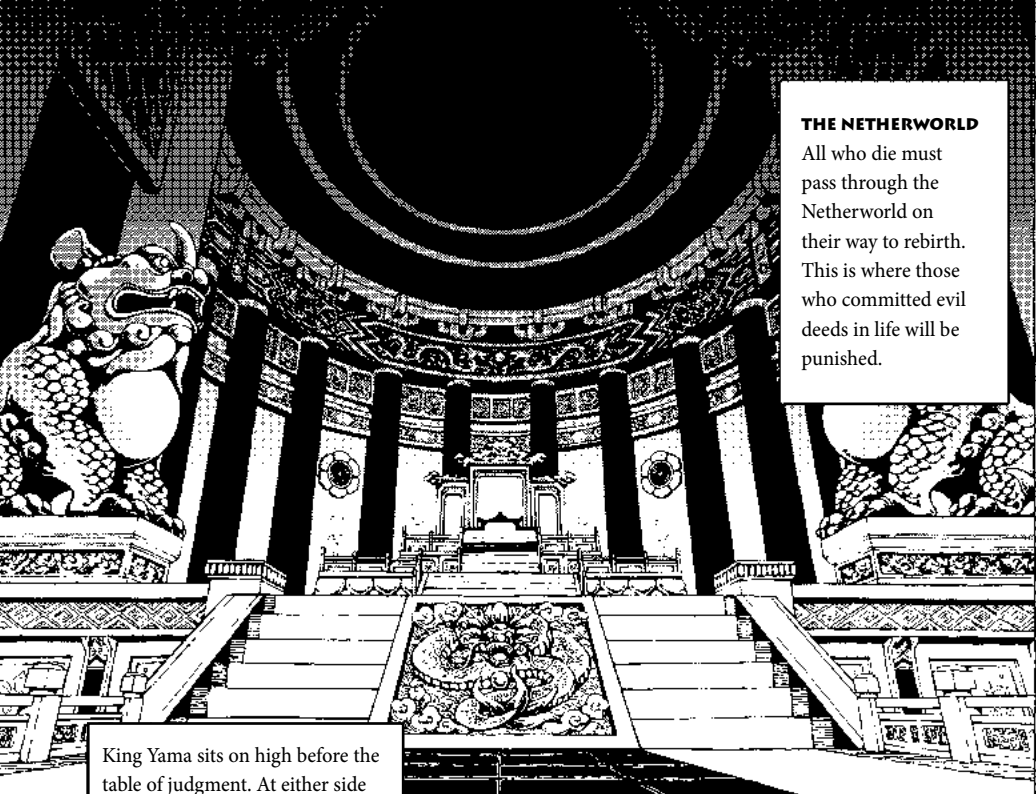
Pages: 196

Volume: 1 (ongoing)

Artist Yuzu excels at depicting uncanny creatures and the expressions of terror and fright that they inevitably inspire in mere mortals. In *Netherwarrant*, she applies her personal style to elements of Buddhist belief to create a darkly humorous and immersive vision of the afterlife. The story avoids black and white approaches to morality, instead constructing a plot that reveals the complexity of human character, and will appeal to readers who love tales of adventure and the supernatural.

Yuzu 柚子

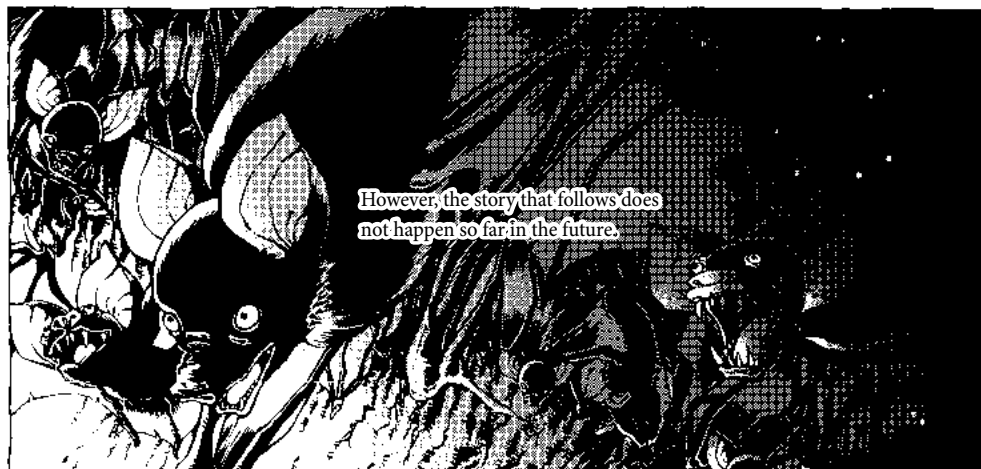
From Chiayi, Taiwan. Yuzu has published graphic novels *The King of Hell* and *The Tiger God*, and also the board game *The Wonderful Island II: Let the Shoes Fly*.



THE NETHERWORLD

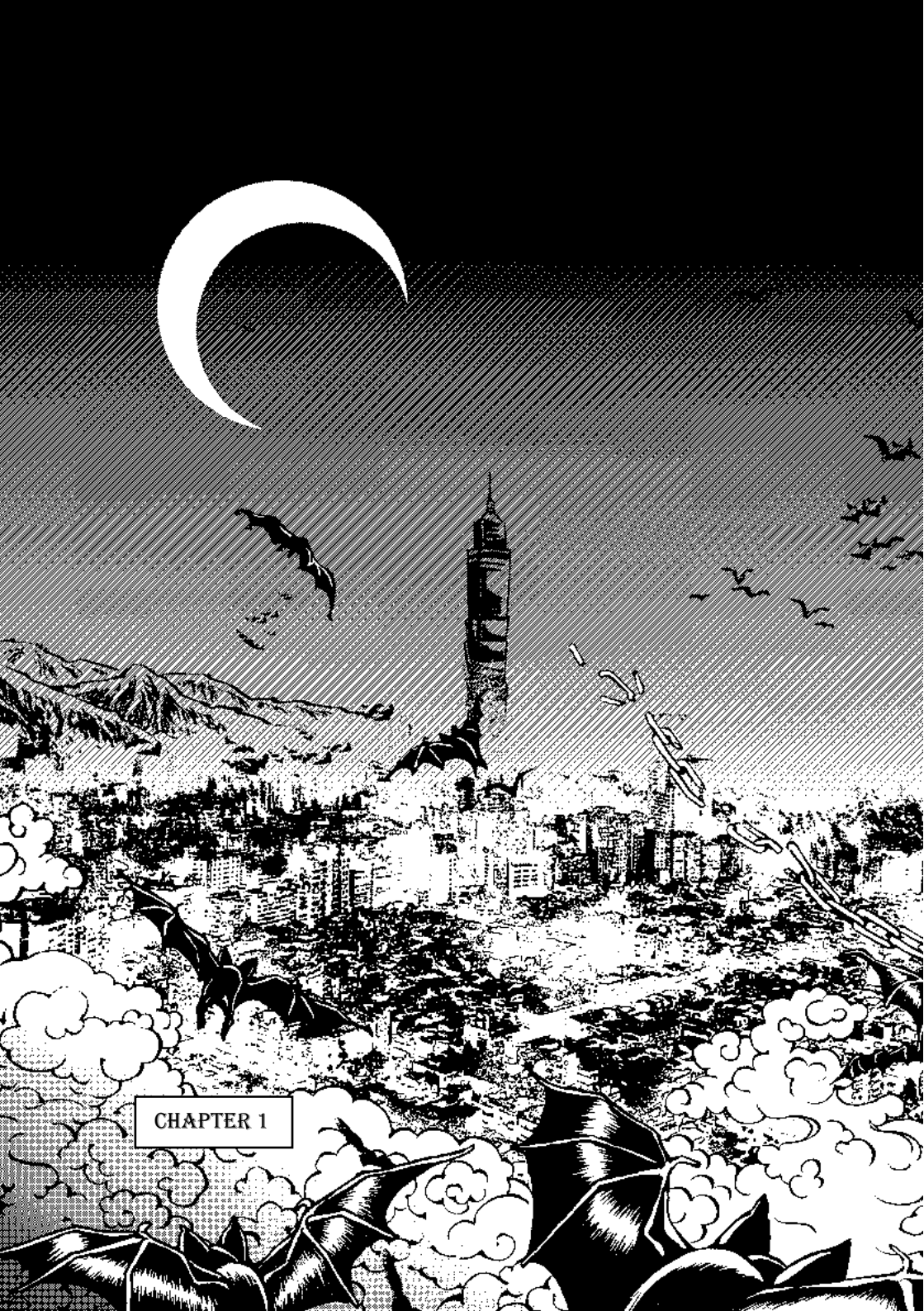
All who die must pass through the Netherworld on their way to rebirth. This is where those who committed evil deeds in life will be punished.

King Yama sits on high before the table of judgment. At either side stand the twin judges, Black and White Impermanence. Beyond them are the ox and horse-faced generals, and well as various other lesser monstrosities. Some hundred years from now, this will still be the scene that awaits us.

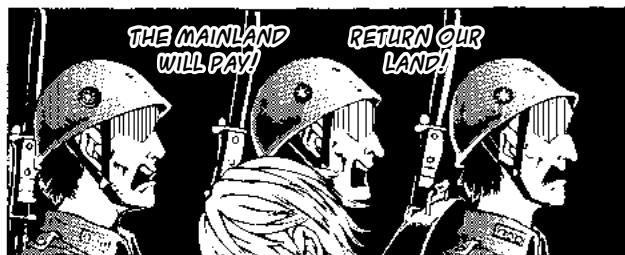


However, the story that follows does not happen so far in the future.





CHAPTER 1





ARE YOU
FINISHED
YET!?

YOU PACK
OF LOUD-
MOUTHS!



WIRELESS
HEADSET...

UH, UMM...
I'M USING
BLUE-
TOOTH...

HEH, HEH...



WANDERING SPIRITS

Commonly known as ghosts. They often appear at night, but are undetectable to the eyes of ordinary people.

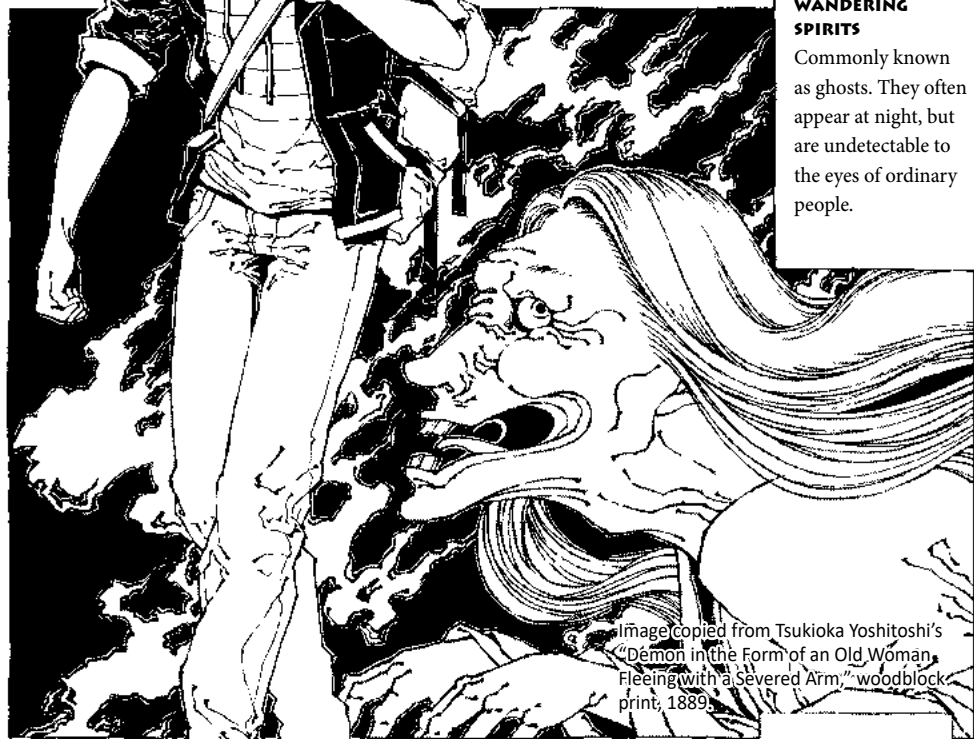


Image copied from Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's "Demon in the Form of an Old Woman, Fleeing with a Severed Arm," woodblock print, 1889.



Only those with the rare gift of "the sight" can see them.



TAKE A GIRL
FOR A RIPE
ON MY
SCOOTER!



SEE A
MIDNIGHT
MOVIE!



GO TO
A KTV!

I JUST
WANT TO
HAVE A
NORMAL
NIGHT OUT!

WHO THE
HELL WANTS
TO SEE THIS
DEPRESSING
CRAP!



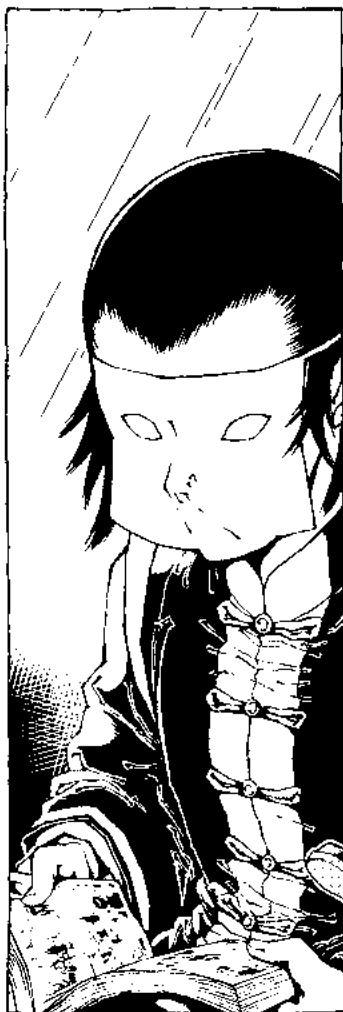
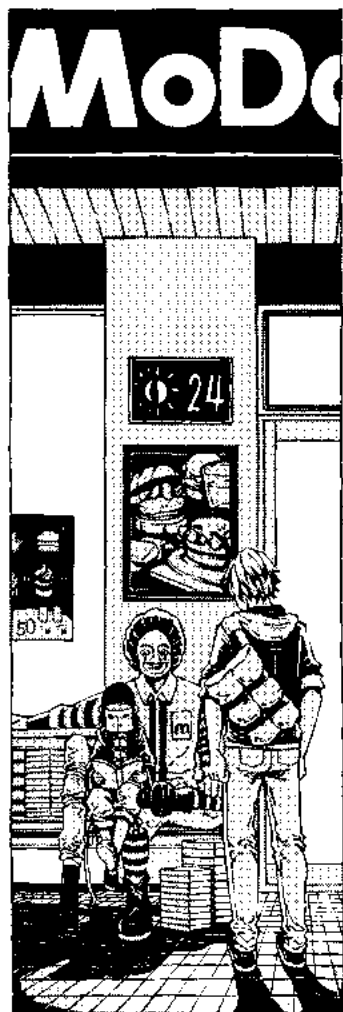
BUT
NO!!!



COAST
IS CLEAR.
GOTTA MOVE
WHILE THEY
AREN'T
AROUND



EVEN IF I CAN GET BY
WITHOUT KTV, MOVIES,
GIRLS, AND ALL THAT,



THEY CAN SEE HIM, TOO!
HE MUST NOT BE ONE OF
"THEM" AFTER ALL!

WHAT'S SO
SPECIAL
ABOUT A
PLASTIC STATUE
ANYWAYS?

THERE'S
ALREADY
ANOTHER
KID SITTING
THERE!

ANYWAYS,
HE'S JUST
SOMEBODY'S
KID. NONE OF
MY BUSINESS.

HEY KID

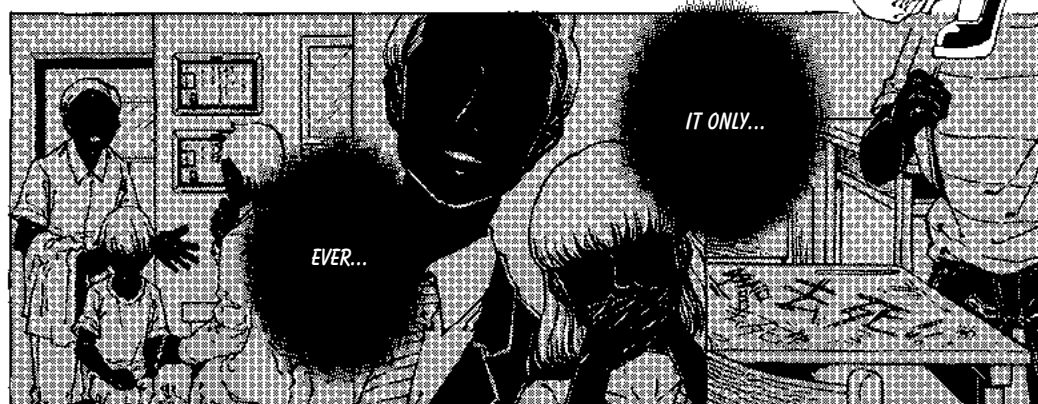
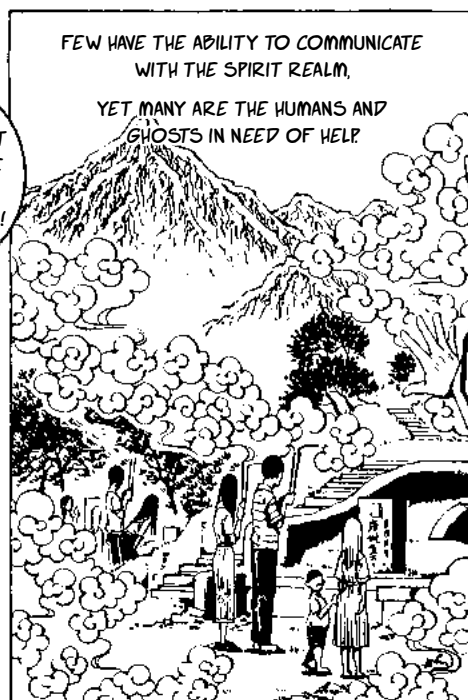
YOU'VE
GOT A
GOOD PAIR
OF EYES.

IT'S TOO
BAD YOU
DON'T PUT
THEM TO
USE.

YOU!!!

THOUGH THIS KID IS PRETTY
WEIRD, WEARING A MASK
AND ALL DRESSED UP IN
TRADITIONAL CLOTHES.

IS HE ONE OF THOSE...
WHAT ARE THEY
CALLED... COSPLAYERS?



...BRINGS BAD LUCK.

BUT I
GUESS
YOU
CAN SEE
THEM
TOO.

I DON'T
KNOW
WHO YOU
ARE...



YOU'RE
BETTER OFF
PRETENDING
THAT YOU CAN'T
SEE. THAT YOU
CAN'T HEAR!

AND DON'T
STRIKE UP
CONVERSATIONS
WITH PEOPLE
LIKE ME!

THIS
WORLD
DOESN'T
TOLERATE
FREAKS!

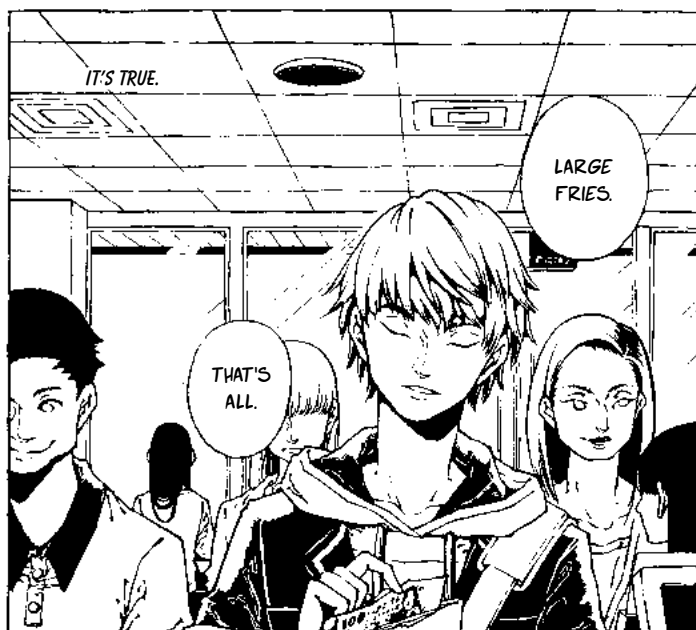


砰!
GLUNK!



JUST A
LITTLE
ADVICE...

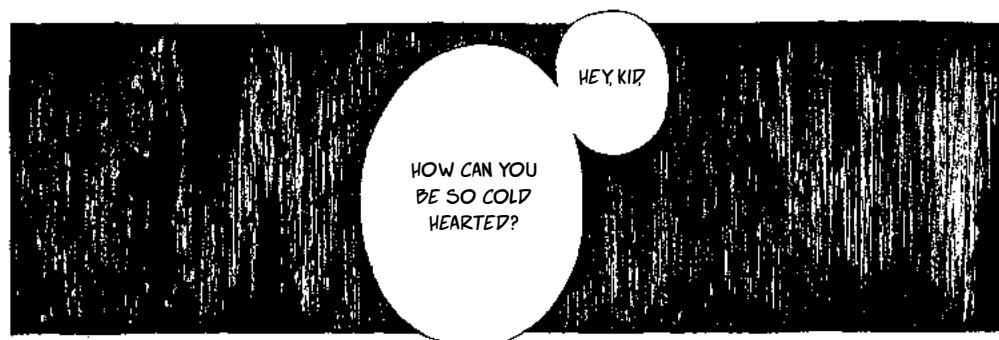
FROM
SOMEONE
WHO'S BEEN
THERE.





OR I CAN SEE THAT THE LIVING...

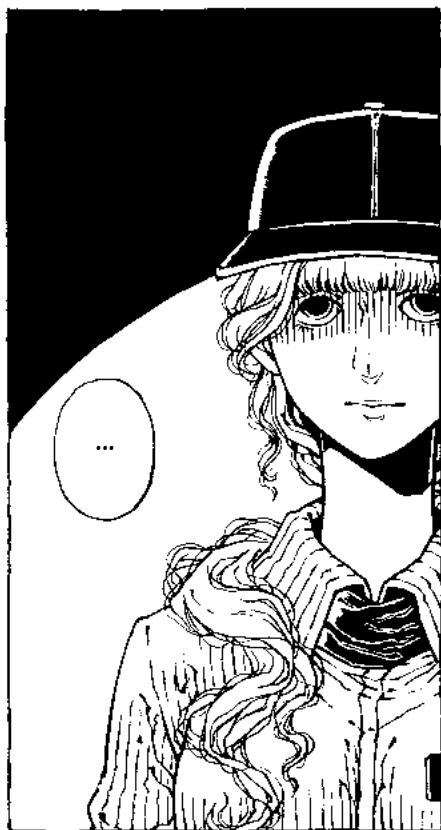
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE WITH YOUR ORDER?



INFANT SPIRITS ARE DANGEROUS IF NOT DEALT WITH!









YOU HAVE TO
TAKE ADVANTAGE
YOUR TIME HERE
TO ACCUMULATE
GOOD MERIT.
YOU'LL SEE! AFTER
YOU KICK THE
BUCKET YOU'LL
THANK ME, KID!

YOU'VE
LOST SIGHT
OF RIGHT
AND WRONG!
I WAS ONLY
TRYING TO
HELP.

FINE, IF
THAT'S WHAT
YOU WANT,
BUT DON'T
DRAG ME
INTO IT!

STOP MESSING
AROUND! YOU
WANT TO GET
LOCKED UP IN
SOME RESEARCH
LAB WHERE THEY
EXPERIMENT
ON ALL THE
WIERDOS!?



LISTEN UP,
I'M...

AND CLEARLY
YOU CAN'T
SEE WHAT'S
STARING YOU
STRAIGHT IN
THE FACE, KID

I CAN SEE YOU'RE
BLEEDING. WIPE
YOUR NOSE!

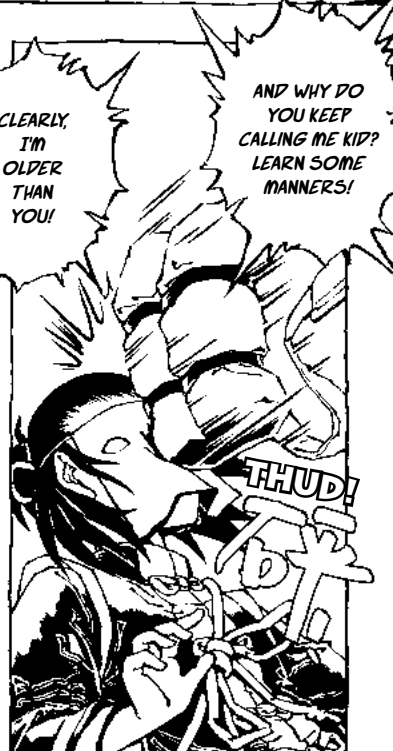
CLEARLY,
I'M
OLDER
THAN
YOU!

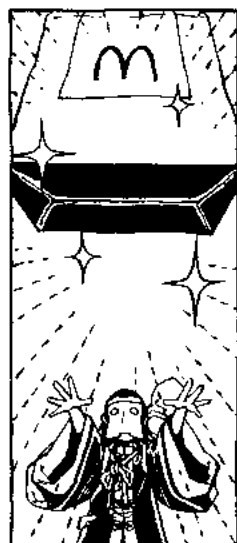
AND WHY DO
YOU KEEP
CALLING ME KID?
LEARN SOME
MANNERS!

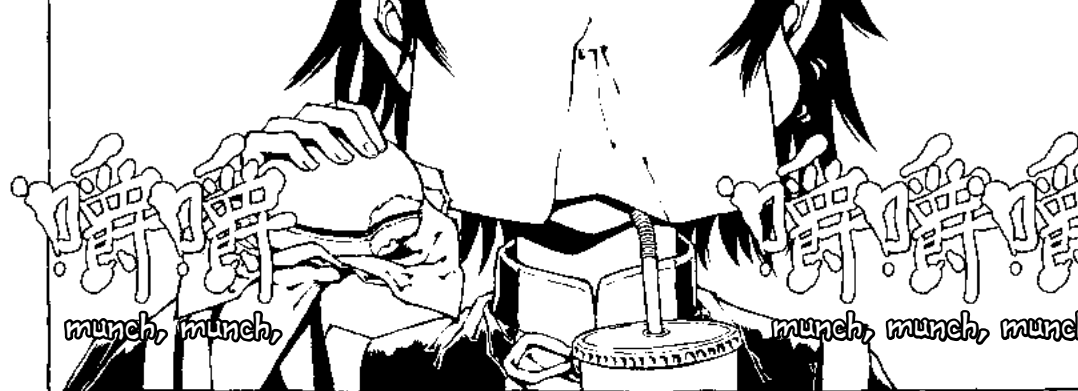



rumble

rumble





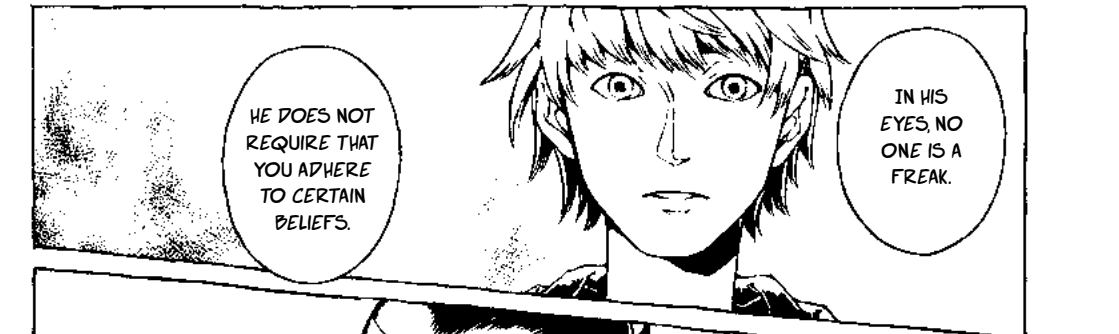




IN HIS
GREAT WISDOM,
HE MAKES NO
DISTINCTION
BETWEEN
VARIOUS FORMS
OF SENTIENT
BEINGS

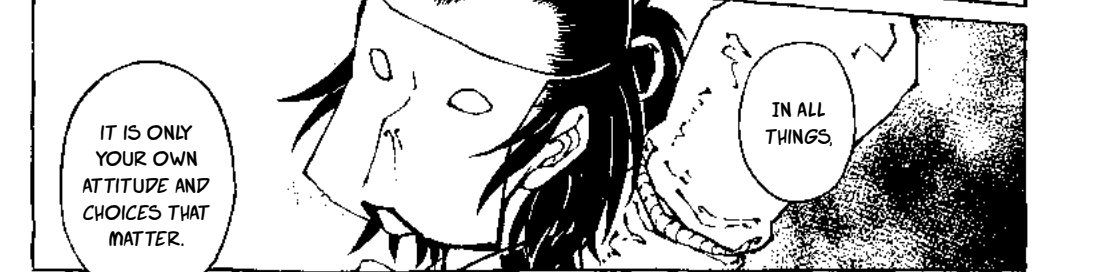
HE DEALS
WITH THOSE WHO
DID EVIL IN THEIR
LAST LIFE, AND
ARRANGES THE
CIRCUMSTANCES
OF REBIRTH IN
THE NEXT

KING YAMA
IS THE RULER
OF THE
NETHERWORLD
THE MOST FAIR
AND IMPARTIAL
OF ALL THE
GODS.



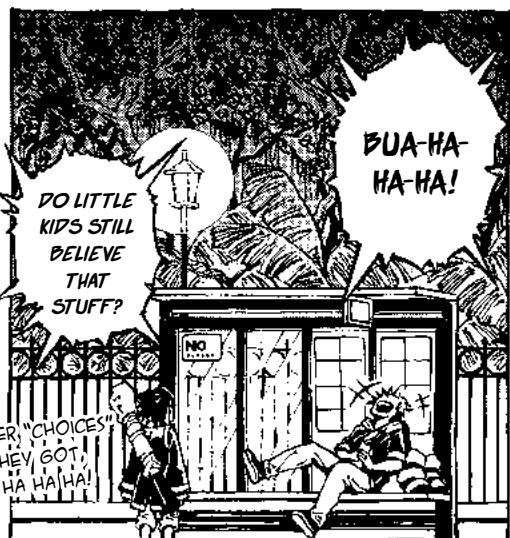
HE DOES NOT
REQUIRE THAT
YOU ADHERE
TO CERTAIN
BELIEFS.

IN HIS
EYES, NO
ONE IS A
FREAK.



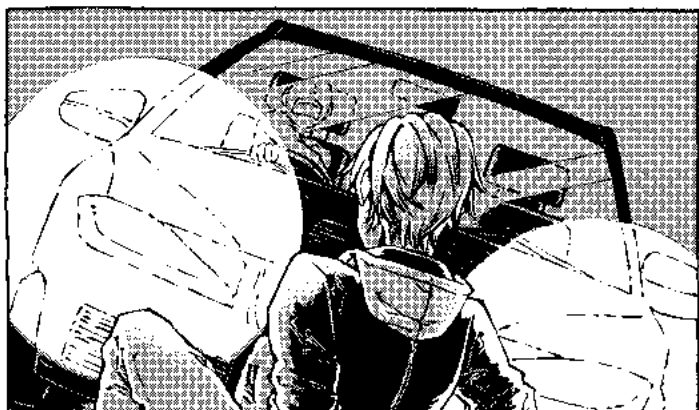
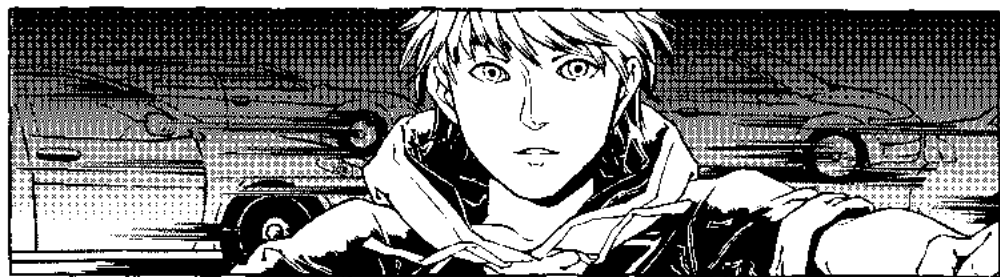
IT IS ONLY
YOUR OWN
ATTITUDE AND
CHOICES THAT
MATTER.

IN ALL
THINGS.





*Taiwanese people burn "spirit money" at temples for their dead relatives to spend in the afterlife.





WHAM!

YIKES!
THAT GUY
JUST GOT
CREAMED BY
THAT CAR!

NONE
OF MY
BUSINESS!

HE
JUST
RAN
OUT...





HEE, HEE,
HEE, KID..

MAYBE YOU
BETTER
CHECK: ARE
YOU BREATH-
ING? DO YOU
HAVE HEART-
BEAT?

SHE'S NOT
BREATHING.
NO HEART-
BEAT.

HANG
ON!

I'LL
CALL AN
AMBU-
LANCE!

IT'S THE GIRL WHO
TOOK MY ORDER!

HEY! ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT?



YOU... YOU...

WHO THE
HELL ARE
YOU?

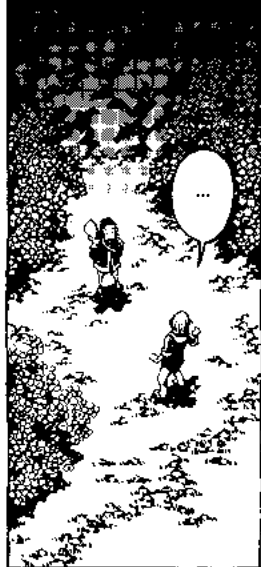
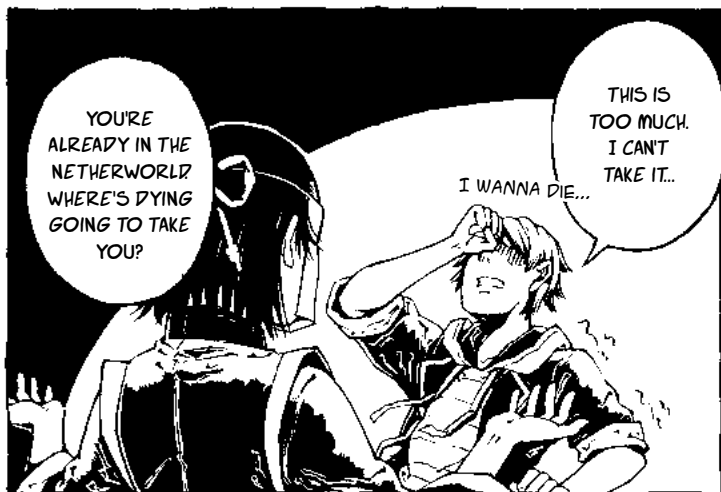


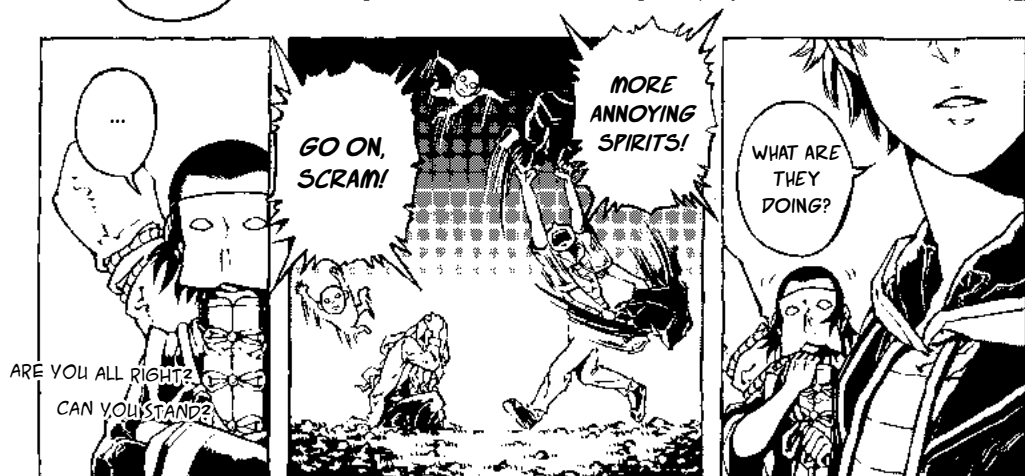
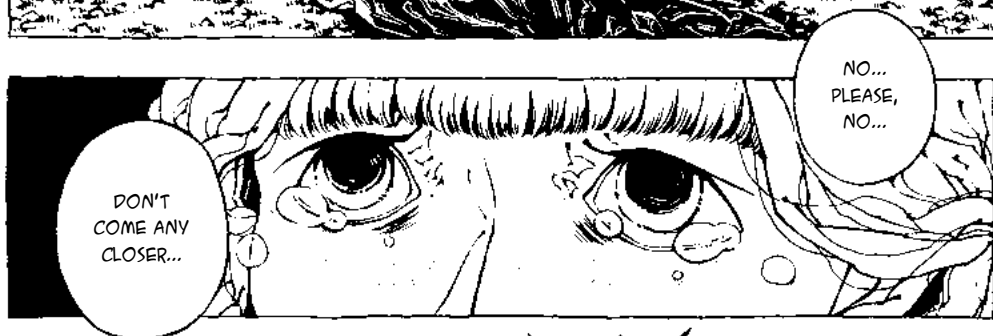
HEE, HEE



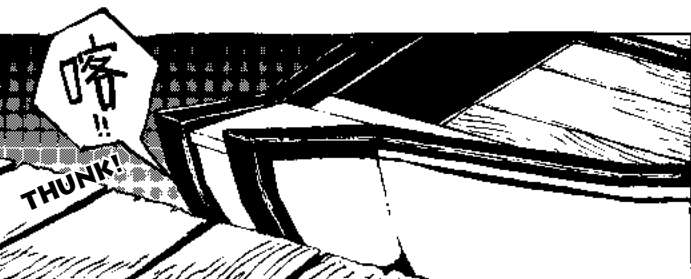
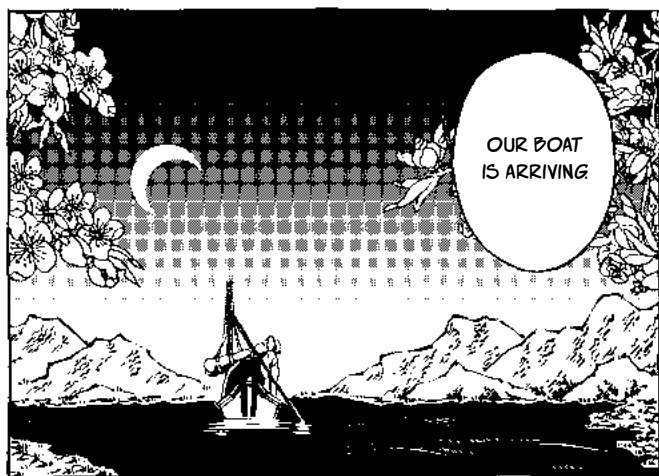
WELCOME
TO THE
NETHERWORLD,
DOGO.

I AM KING
YAMA'S
JUDGE, BLACK
IMPERMANENCE.











I'M NOT
OLD I'M JUST
EXCEEDINGLY
MATURE!

THWACK!

SO OUR
OUT-OF-WORK
GRANNY WAS
ASSIGNED TO
FERRY DUTY.

AS YOU CAN
SEE, SHE'S
A BIT THIN-
SKINNED



HEY, GRANNY!
NO HITTING!

HEY!

I JUST SPIT UP BLOOD! NO REALLY,
I'M SPITTING UP BLOOD!



IF YOU WAIT
TOO LONG
THERE WON'T
BE ROOM.

HONORED
GUESTS, WOULD
YOU LIKE TO
BOARD THE
BOAT?

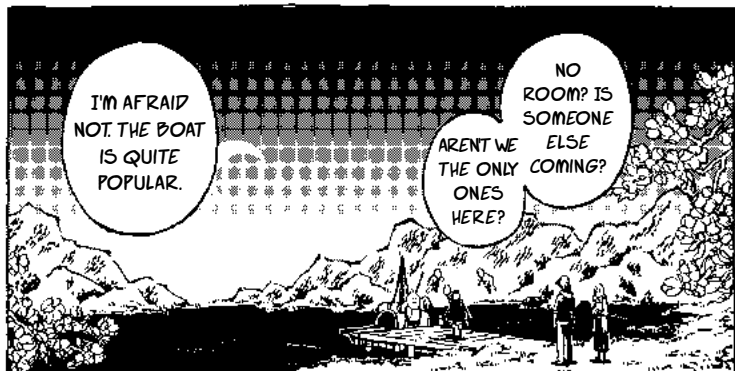


LET ME
INTRODUCE
EVERYONE.
THIS IS OLD
GRANNY
LETHE.

SHE USED
TO COOK UP
THE SOUP OF
FORGETTING
BUT WE RECENTLY
ADDED A CENTRAL
KITCHEN.



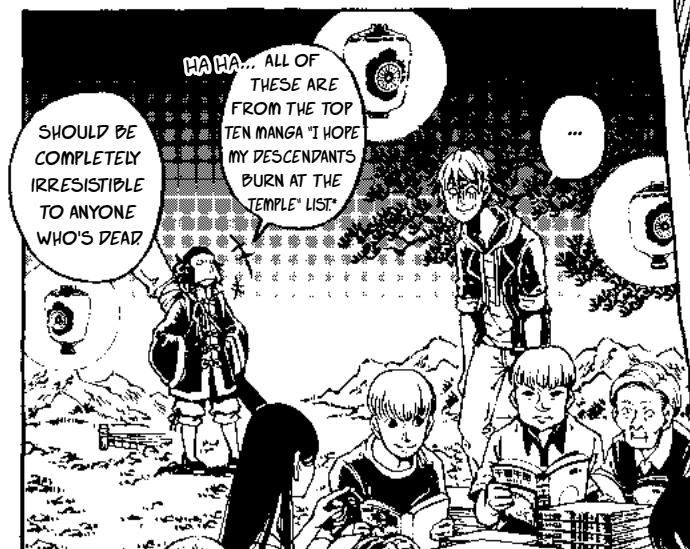
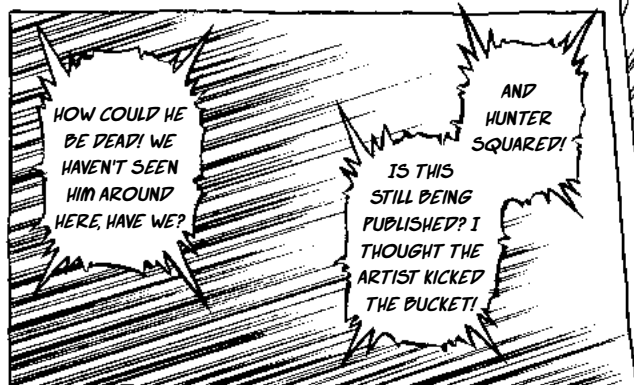
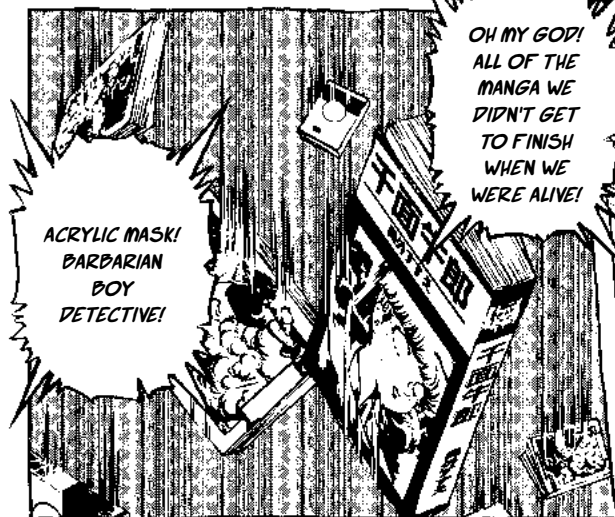
HAVE A
LOOK.
HERE THEY
COME.



I'M AFRAID
NOT THE BOAT
IS QUITE
POPULAR.

NO
ROOM? IS
SOMEONE
ELSE
COMING?
AREN'T WE
THE ONLY
ONES
HERE?





* In addition to spirit money, the living can burn paper cars, cell phones, and other desirable objects to send to deceased relatives for use in the afterlife.



AND AWAY
WE GO!



OK,
WELL THAT
PROBLEM'S
SOLVED

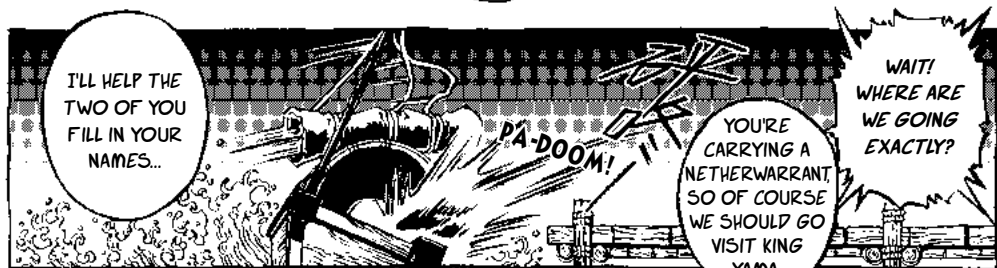


YOU
SHOULD
JOIN US,
YOUNG
LADY!



I HAD TO
LIGHT A HUGE
FIRE TO "SHIP"
ALL THESE
MANGA BACK
HERE...

BURNING
GARBAGE
IS ILLEGAL
YOU KNOW!

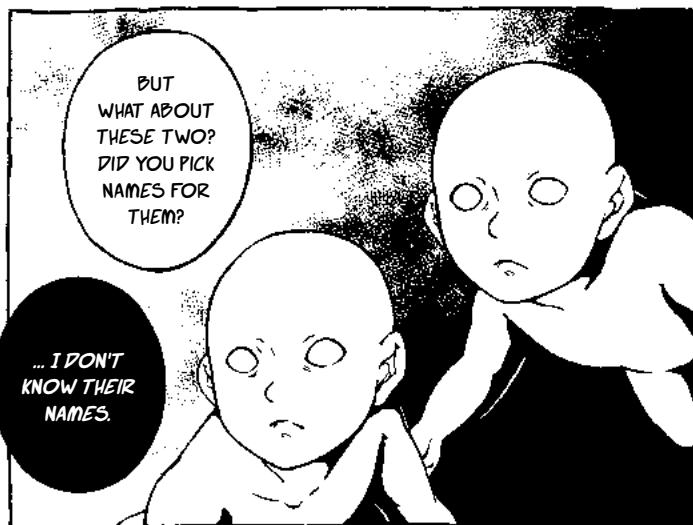


I'LL HELP THE
TWO OF YOU
FILL IN YOUR
NAMES...

PA-DOOM!

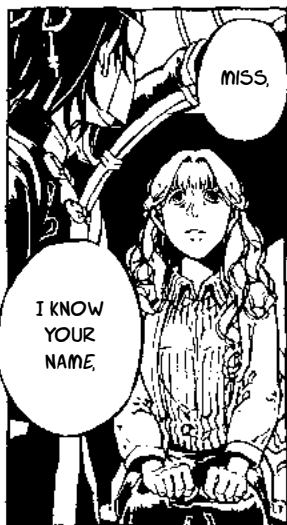
YOU'RE
CARRYING A
NETHERWARRANT
SO OF COURSE
WE SHOULD GO
VISIT KING
YAMA.

WAIT!
WHERE ARE
WE GOING
EXACTLY?



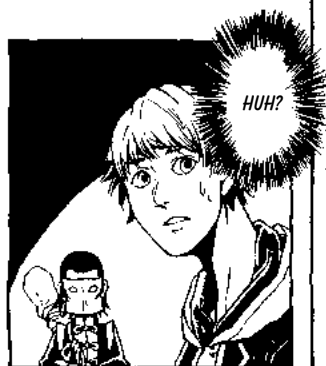
BUT
WHAT ABOUT
THESE TWO?
DID YOU PICK
NAMES FOR
THEM?

... I DON'T
KNOW THEIR
NAMES.



MISS.

I KNOW
YOUR
NAME,

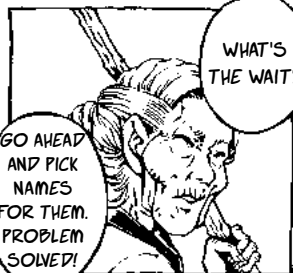


HUH?



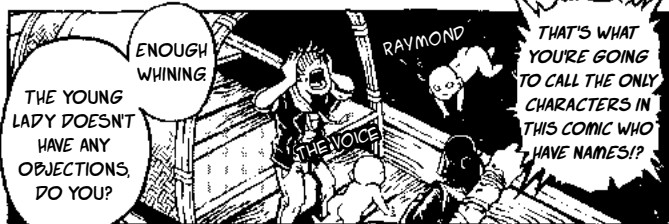
THEY HAVE
NOTHING TO
DO WITH ME.

I DON'T
RECOGNIZE
THEM.



WHAT'S
THE WAIT?

GO AHEAD
AND PICK
NAMES
FOR THEM.
PROBLEM
SOLVED!



ENOUGH
WHINING.

THE YOUNG
LADY DOESN'T
HAVE ANY
OBJECTIONS,
DO YOU?

RAYMOND

THAT'S WHAT
YOU'RE GOING
TO CALL THE ONLY
CHARACTERS IN
THIS COMIC WHO
HAVE NAMES!?



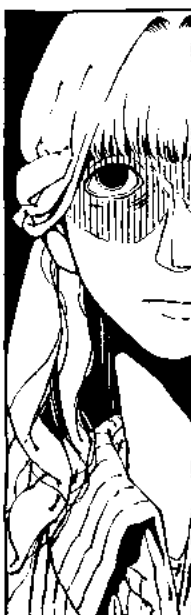
ALL RIGHT.
I'LL JUST
GET A
LITTLE
CREATIVE...

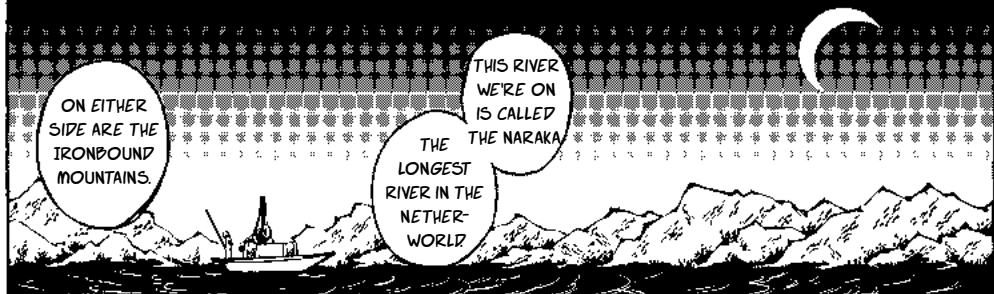
EVERY-
BODY LOVES
RAYMOND
AND THE
VOICE.

COPY-
CAT!!!



IT HAS
NOTHING TO
DO WITH ME.





ON EITHER
SIDE ARE THE
IRONBOUND
MOUNTAINS.

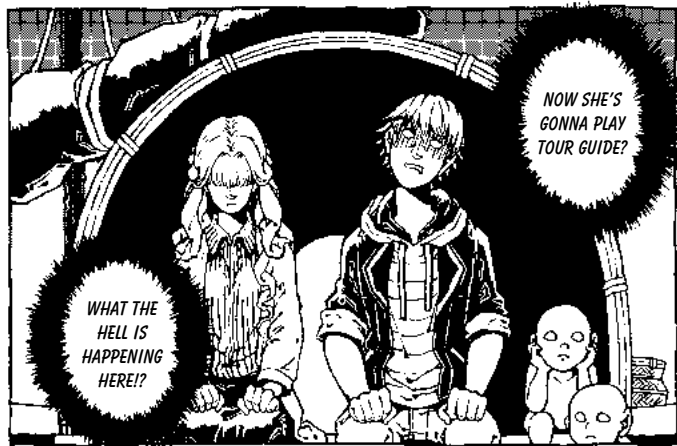
THIS RIVER
WE'RE ON
IS CALLED
THE NARAKA
THE
LONGEST
RIVER IN THE
NETHER-
WORLD



BUT THE
MESSAGE IS
REALLY TOO
MUCH. HERE'S A
FACE SLIMMER.
GO WILD IF
YOU LIKE.

WHAT THE ?

I CAN'T
STAND BEING
AROUND THESE
FREAKS ANY
LONGER. AND I'D
RATHER NOT
BE DEAD!



NOW SHE'S
GONNA PLAY
TOUR GUIDE?

WHAT THE
HELL IS
HAPPENING
HERE!?



NEITHER
AM I. IT'S
THE NETHER-
WARRANT.

COMES
WITH A FREE
TOUR AND
MESSAGE.

EXCUSE ME,
BUT I JUST
DIED SO I'M
NOT REALLY
INTERESTED
IN...



SOMEONE
ONCE GOT
A BIT OF IT
ON HIM, AND...
HEH HEH.

OH, I'D
ADVISE YOU
NOT TO
TOUCH THE
WATER.



BUT
THERE'S
NOWHERE
TO GO.

I GUESS I'LL
HAVE TO JUMP
OVERBOARD
AND SWIM.

I REALLY
DON'T GET
YOU, KID



LIKE HER,
PERHAPS?



DIDN'T
YOU SAY
EVERYONE
THERE
TREATED
YOU LIKE A
FREAK?

ALL YOU
EVER
WANTED
WAS TO BE
NORMAL...

WHY ARE
YOU SO
EAGER TO
GO BACK?



BUT I
KNOW.

MOST
PEOPLE...

DON'T
KNOW
ABOUT
ANY OF
THIS...

THEIR SPIRITS
WILL DISSIPATE
TO NOTHING.



SO I
DECIDED
WHAT APPENS
TO THEM IS
NONE OF MY
BUSINESS.



BUT IF
I HAD
DONE THAT,
EVERYONE
WOULD
KNOW.

AN
UNMARRIED
WOMAN
WHAT WOULD
THEY SAY?

YOU'RE
SUPPOSED
TO HAVE A FUNERAL,
AND GO THE
TEMPLE AND MAKE
OFFERINGS.
ANYONE CAN LOOK
IT UP ON THE
INTERNET.

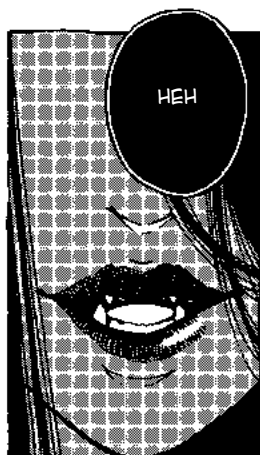
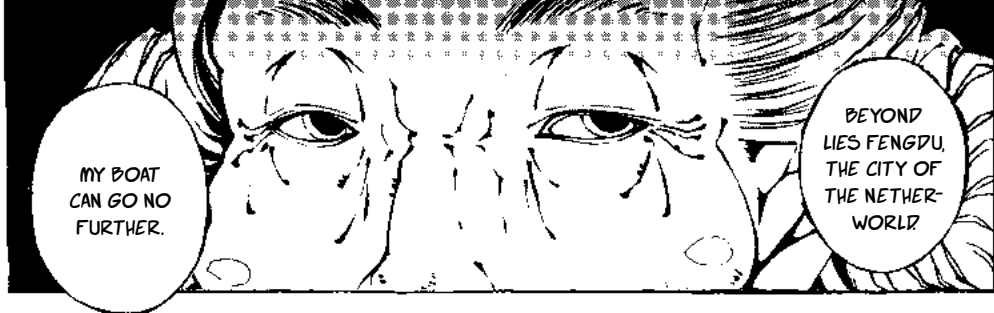


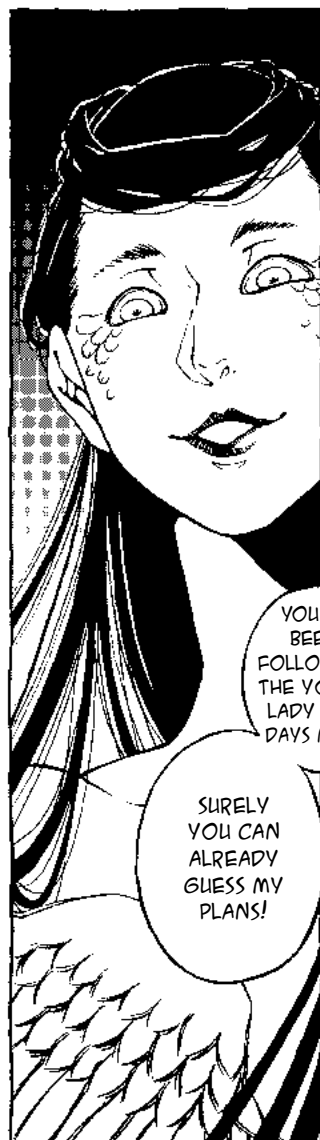
AFTER
DEATH, MOST
SPIRITS WILL
WANDER AIMLESSLY
FOR A TIME, UNTIL
THEY HAVE EX-
HAUSTED THEM-
SELVES.

ADULT SPIRITS WILL
GENERALLY BE
ABLE TO HOLD
ON. BUT INFANT
SPIRITS ARE
WEAKER.

IF THEIR
LIVING RELATIVES
DO NOT MAKE
SACRIFICES FOR
THEM, THEY WILL
NEVER MAKE IT TO
THE CITY OF THE
NETHERWORLD.









OF
COURSE
YOU
COULDN'T
SEE HER.



THIS
MONSTER
HAS BEEN
WITH US ALL
ALONG? WHY
COULDN'T I
SEE HER?

HEY! WHAT
THE HELL IS
HAPPENING?



IF I HADN'T
BEEN ON HER
TAIL THESE PAST
FEW DAYS, SHE
WOULD HAVE
TAKEN THEM
BY NOW.

THEY FEED
ON THE
SPIRITS OF
INFANTS.

SHE'S NOT
A DEAD
SPIRIT. SHE'S
A NIGHTJAR,
A KIND OF
DEMON.



TO A
WOMAN IN
SUCH A
PREDICAMENT,
DEVOURING
THESE TWO
LITTLE ONES
WOULD BE A
KINDNESS.

"I CAN'T
BE FOUND
OUT. PLEASE
SAVE ME
FROM THESE
GHOSTS!"

THE
YOUNG
LADY'S
THOUGHTS
CALLED ME
TO HER.



YOU
MAKE ME
SOUND LIKE
A MONSTER,
BUT MY
INTENTIONS
ARE PURE.



MISS, YOU DIDN'T DIE AT THE HANDS OF THOSE INFANT SPIRITS. IT WAS THIS NIGHTJAR!

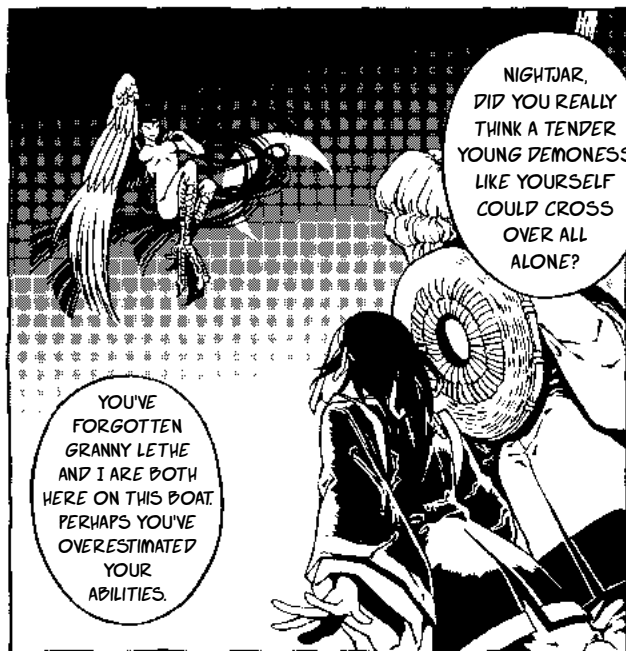
TO HER, THE NETHERWORLD IS NOTHING LESS THAN AN ENORMOUS HUNTING GROUND.

WHAT SHE WANTS IS THE NETHER-WARRANT!



DON'T LISTEN TO HER.

IF SHE REALLY WANTED TO EAT THE INFANT SPIRITS, SHE WOULD HAVE ALREADY DONE SO.



YOU'VE FORGOTTEN GRANNY LETHE AND I ARE BOTH HERE ON THIS BOAT. PERHAPS YOU'VE OVERESTIMATED YOUR ABILITIES.

NIGHTJAR, DID YOU REALLY THINK A TENDER YOUNG DEMONESS LIKE YOURSELF COULD CROSS OVER ALL ALONE?



TENDER YOUNG DEMONESS? WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS?



SHE MUST HAVE KILLED YOU SO I WOULD OFFER YOU THE NETHER-WARRANT!



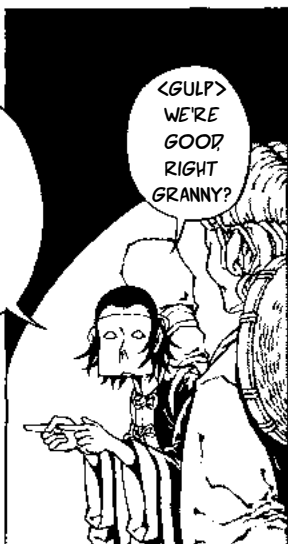
LOOKS PRETTY
SCARY. YOU STILL
THINK YOU CAN
HANDLE THIS?

WHOA...



YOU'VE
FACED
THIS SORT
OF THING
BEFORE...

<GULP>
WE'RE
GOOD
RIGHT
GRANNY?



GET BACK
HERE YOU
OLD HAG!

AND THAT
ENDS TODAY'S
TOUR. IF YOU
HAVE ANY FURTHER
QUESTIONS YOU CAN
CALL OUR TOLL-FREE
SERVICE HOTLINE
%#@!

GRANNY
LETHE!
HEY!



YOU TWO
TAKE THE
NETHER-
WARRANT
AND GET TO
SHORE

LEAVE THE
MONSTER
TO ME.

SPEED
RECORD
MY ASS!
WHAT ARE
WE GONNA
DO!?

I DON'T SEE
HER FOR A
FEW DAYS AND
SUDDENLY SHE'S
SETTING A FREE-
STYLE SPEED
RECORD.

我沒有死
我還活着
I'm not old, I'm just
exceedingly maturing!





NIGHTJAR!
WOULD YOU
CARE TO HELP
ME PRACTICE MY
BRUSHSTROKES?

GO!
NOW!



PWAT PWAT PWAT