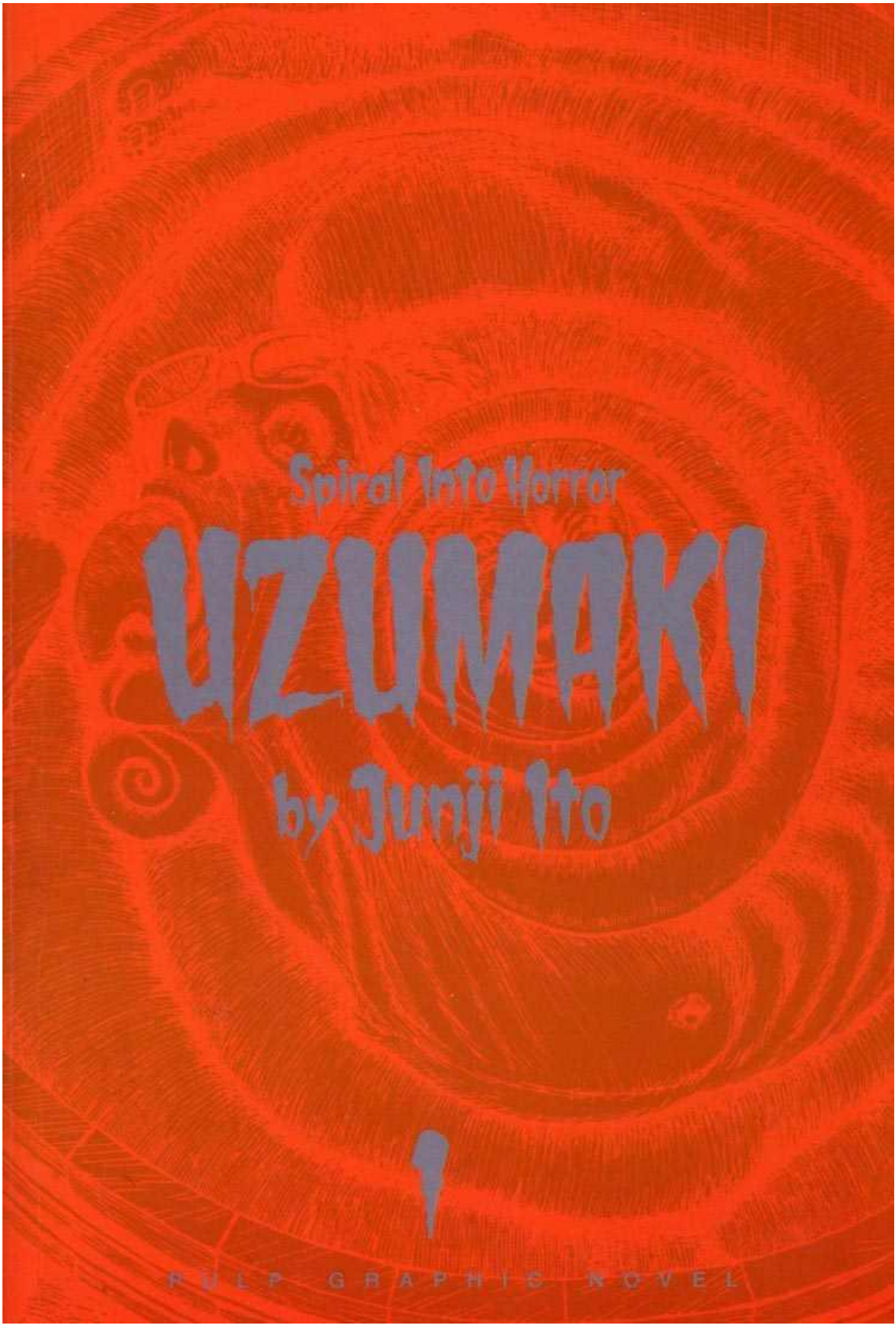
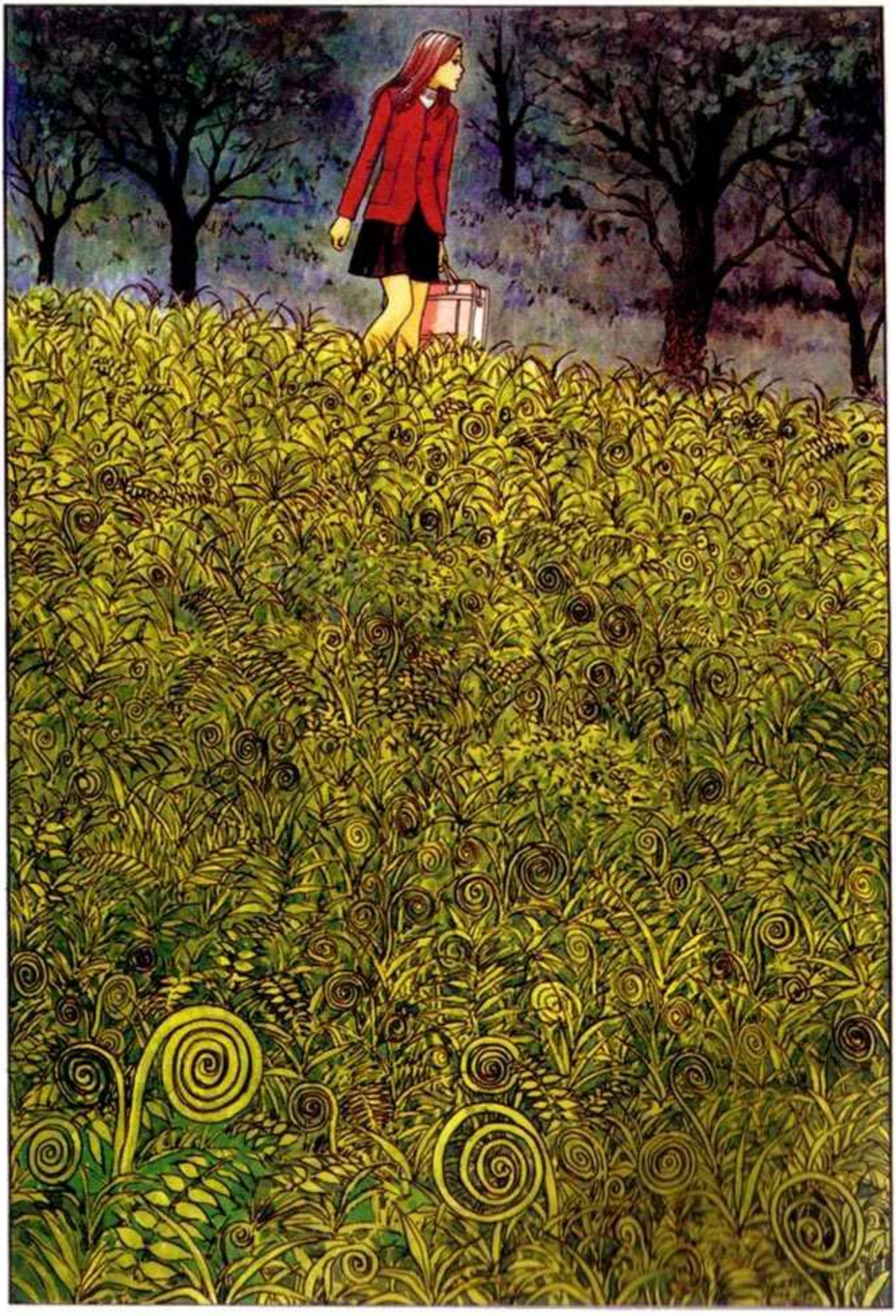

Spiral Into Horror
UZUMAKI
by Junji Ito
1
PULP GRAPHIC NOVEL

THIS IS KURÔZU-CHO, WHERE I GREW UP.
I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU...

CHAPTER 1
THE SPIRAL OF FATE
...THE STRANGE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE HERE.



MY NAME IS KIRIE GOSHIMA.
I ATTEND KURÔZU HIGH SCHOOL LOCATED HALFWAY UP THE MOUNTAIN OVERLOOKING OUR TOWN.

I LIVE WITH MY FATHER WHO IS A POTTER, MY MOTHER AND MY YOUNGER BROTHER...
...IN THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF THE TOWN.

OH NO... I'M LATE! I MIGHT MISS SHUICHI AT THE STATION!

AIEE!
FWEEEE
A WHIRL-WIND ...

WHAT?
WHY, THAT'S SHUICHI'S FATHER.
WHAT'S HE DOING THERE?
HELLO, SIR.
...

MAYBE IT'S NOT HIM.
...
WEIRD...

KURÖZLI STATION

FSSHHH
SHUICHI SAITO AND I USED TO BE CLASSMATES BUT NOW HE GOES TO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE NEXT TOWN.
HEY SHUICHI.

...
HEY... YOU KNOW WHAT? I THINK I SAW YOUR FATHER...
...BUT IT WAS KIND OF STRANGE. HE WAS STARING AT AN EMPTY SNAIL SHELL...
IT MIGHT'VE BEEN SOMEONE ELSE. I DON'T KNOW... THE ALLEY WAS DARK...
OH... YEAH, THAT'S DAD.
HE'S BEEN STRANGE LATELY.
STRANGE? HOW SO?
JUST...
...STRANGE...

SHUICHI, YOU'VE BEEN ACTING DEPRESSED...
WHAT'S WRONG?
IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
...
KIRIE...
LET'S LEAVE THIS TOWN TOGETHER.
LEAVE?
WHAT? YOU MEAN RUN AWAY?
I'M SERIOUS.
I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE.

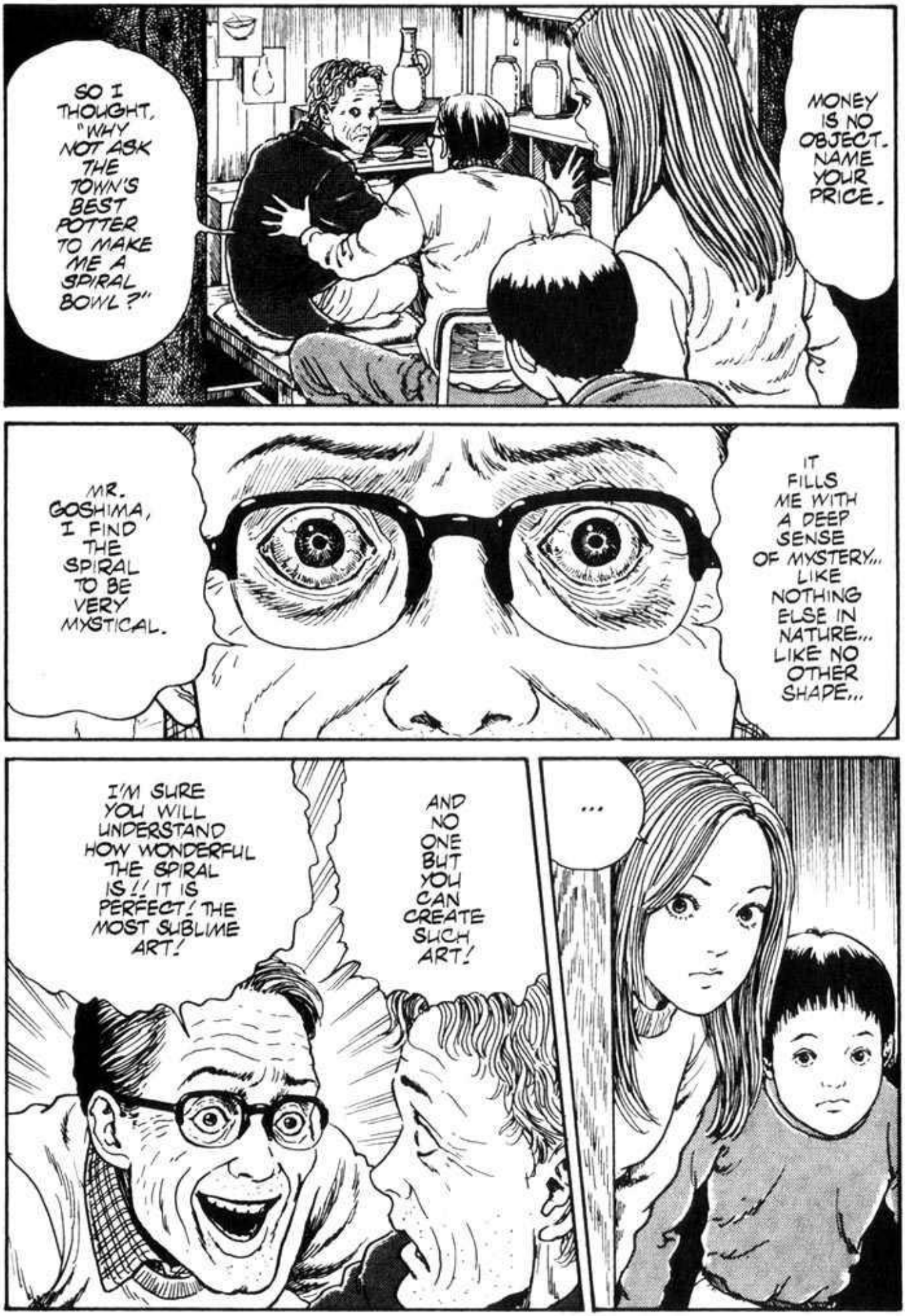
I FEEL DIZZY EVERY TIME I GET OFF AT THE STATION PLATFORM.
IT'S SO OBVIOUS TO ME BECAUSE I SPEND THE DAY AWAY FROM HERE.
THIS TOWN IS DRIVING ME INSANE!
WE'LL GO CRAZY IF WE STAY HERE.
I CAN'T STAND THIS PLACE.
BUT... DON'T YOU FEEL IT?
I DON'T GET IT.
I DON'T FEEL IT...
EHOOOOO
EHOOOOO

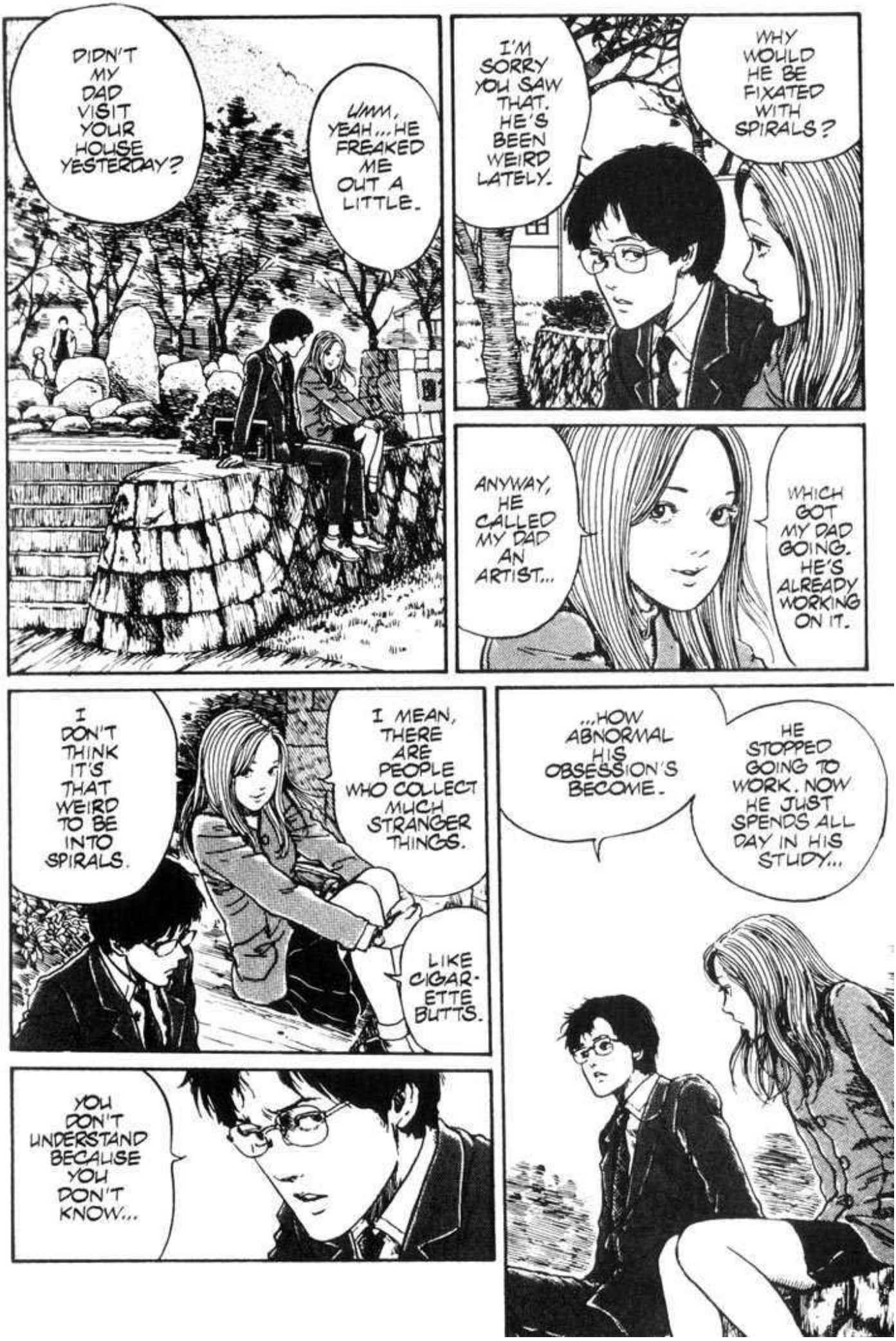
WHOOOO
HEY... IT'S ALREADY FIVE...
I HATE THAT SOUND!
I HATE IT!
IT JUST PIERCES THROUGH MY EARS!
I... I HAVE TO GO HOME.
I HATE THAT GLOOMY SEA.

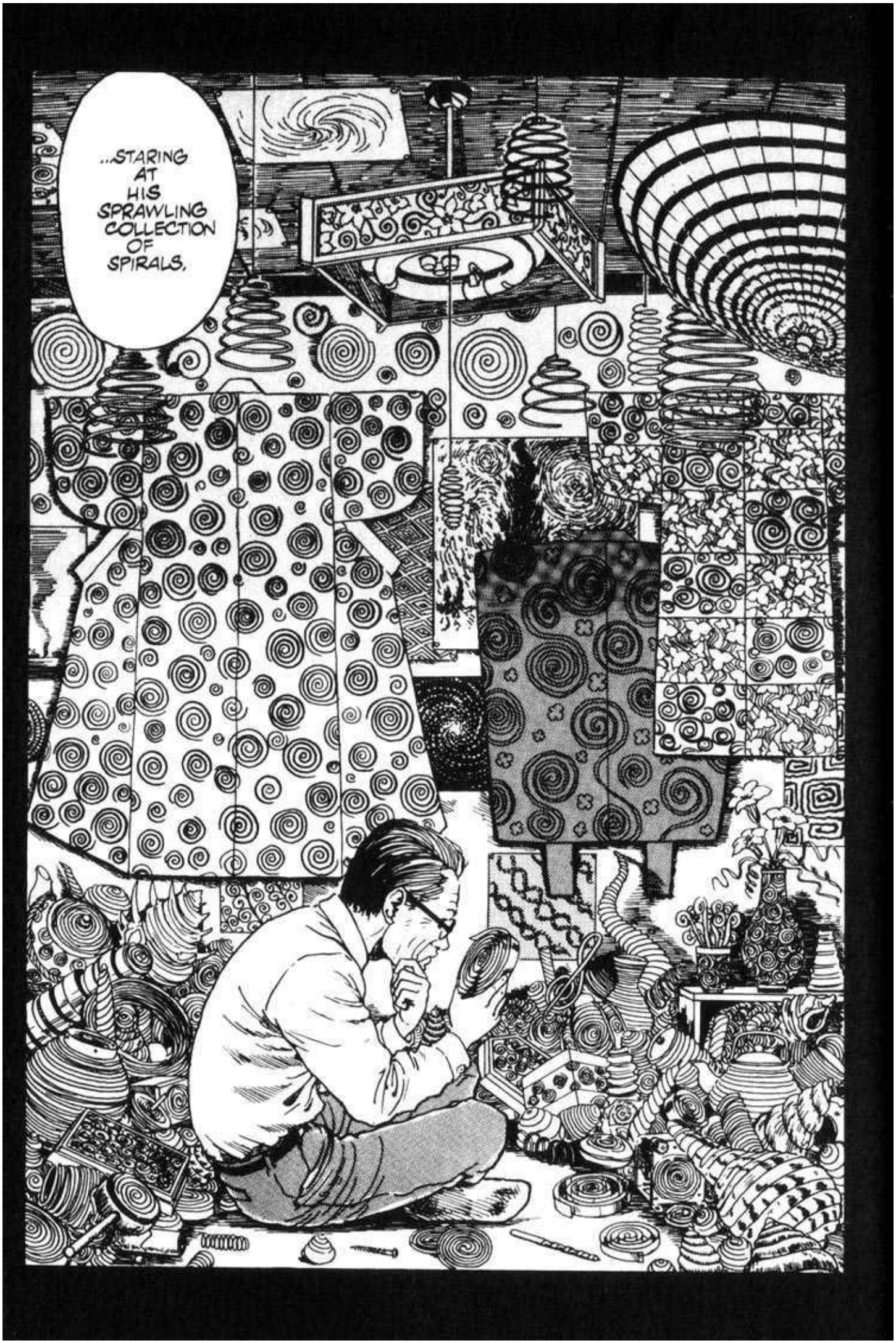
THE OCEAN LOOKS NOTHING LIKE THIS IN MIDORIYAMA-SHI, WHERE I GO TO SCHOOL.
THAT BLACK LIGHTHOUSE IS EVIL, TOO.
THE LOOMING MOUNTAINS BEHIND US.
THE WINDING STREETS... IT GETS ON MY NERVES...
YES, WINDING ...I'M GETTING WOUND UP...
SPIRALS... THIS TOWN IS CONTAMINATED WITH SPIRALS ...
HUH... WHAT? WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
OH...
...NO- NOTHING ...
...?

THE NEXT DAY, SHUICHI'S FATHER VISITED MY FATHER AT WORK.
MR. GOSHIMA, YOU'RE ALWAYS WORKING SO HARD...
WELL, YOU KNOW...
...IT'S MORE "WORKING SLOW" THAN WORKING HARD.
IT'S NOT EASY BEING A CRAFTS-MAN.
NO, NO! I TRULY RESPECT YOU. MAKING THESE TRADITIONAL CERAMICS ...
IT'S REALLY THE ART OF THE SPIRAL!
I'M SORRY?
THE ART OF THE SPIRAL?
OH, OF COURSE ...THE SPINNING WHEEL ...
IT CAN BE PRETTY DIZZYING... HA HA...

YES! PLEASE! CAN YOU MAKE ME ONE?
I WANT ONE THAT WILL MAKE ME DIZZY.
I WANT ONE WITH A SPIRAL PATTERN.
THE SPIRAL PATTERN IS CRUCIAL!
IT GOES LIKE THIS... AROUND AND AROUND.
BLACK... A BLACK SPIRAL WOULD BE PERFECT!
LATELY I'VE COME TO LOVE THAT PATTERN.
I'M COLLECTING EVERYTHING THAT HAS SPIRALS.
OLD AND NEW KIMONOS WITH VOLUTE PATTERNS, CONCHES, SNAIL SHELLS, AMMONITE FOSSILS...
WIND-UP SPRINGS, SCOTCH TAPE, MOSQUITO REPELLENT INCENSE, EVEN TWISTING VINES...
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE ONCE YOU LOOK FOR THEM!


SO I THOUGHT, "WHY NOT ASK THE TOWN'S BEST POTTER TO MAKE ME A SPIRAL BOWL?"
MONEY IS NO OBJECT. NAME YOUR PRICE.
MR. GOSHIMA, I FIND THE SPIRAL TO BE VERY MYSTICAL.
IT FILLS ME WITH A DEEP SENSE OF MYSTERY... LIKE NOTHING ELSE IN NATURE... LIKE NO OTHER SHAPE...
I'M SURE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND HOW WONDERFUL THE SPIRAL IS!! IT IS PERFECT! THE MOST SUBLIME ART!
AND NO ONE BUT YOU CAN CREATE SUCH ART!
...


DIDN'T MY DAD VISIT YOUR HOUSE YESTERDAY?
UMM, YEAH... HE FREAKED ME OUT A LITTLE.
I'M SORRY YOU SAW THAT. HE'S BEEN WEIRD LATELY.
WHY WOULD HE BE FIXATED WITH SPIRALS?
ANYWAY, HE CALLED MY DAD AN ARTIST...
WHICH GOT MY DAD GOING. HE'S ALREADY WORKING ON IT.
I DON'T THINK IT'S THAT WEIRD TO BE INTO SPIRALS.
I MEAN, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO COLLECT MUCH STRANGER THINGS.
LIKE CIGAR-ETTE BUTTS.
...HOW ABNORMAL HIS OBSESSION'S BECOME.
HE STOPPED GOING TO WORK. NOW HE JUST SPENDS ALL DAY IN HIS STUDY...
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW...

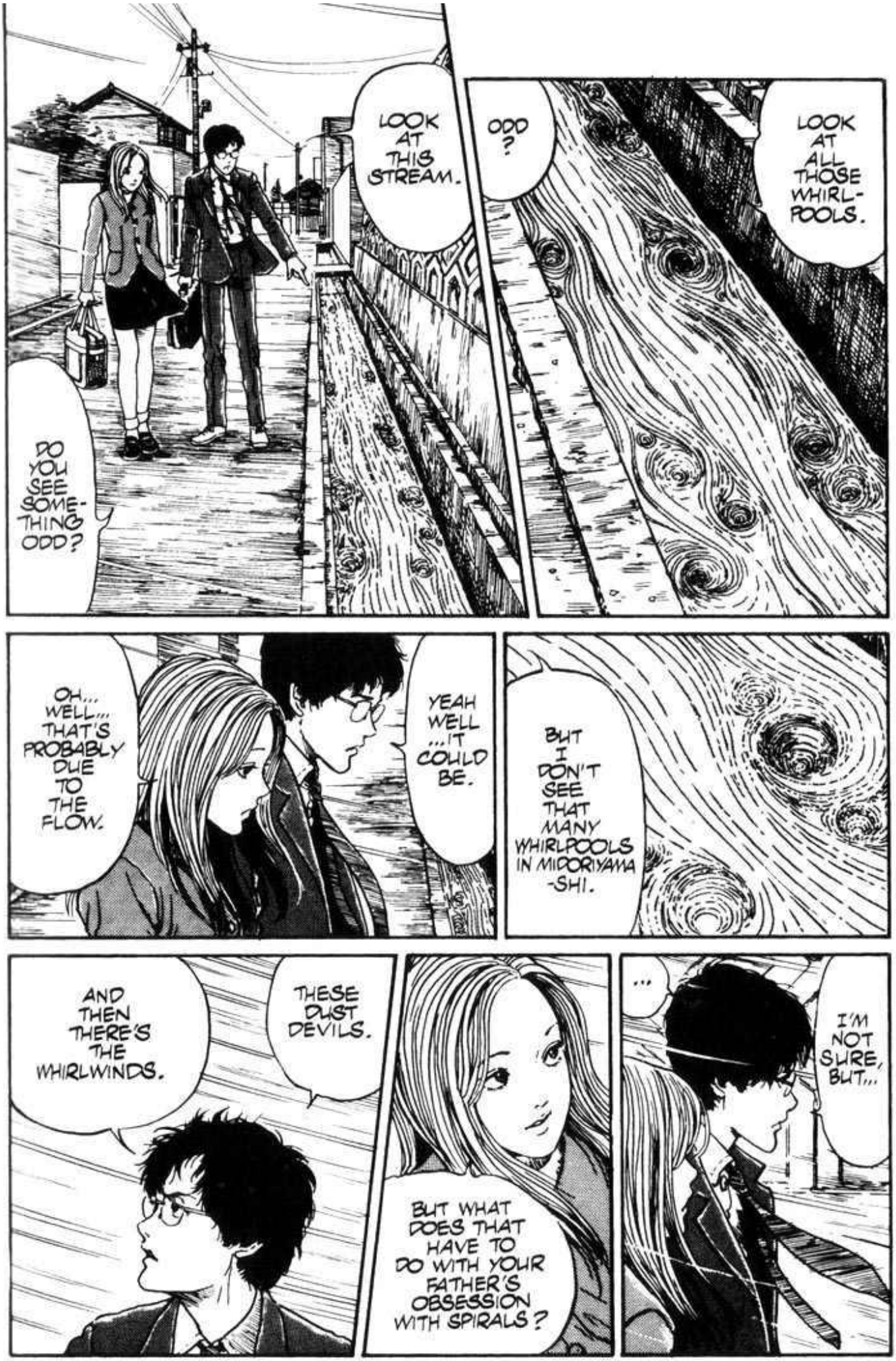

..STARING AT HIS SPRAWLING COLLECTION OF SPIRALS.

ONCE HE'S FIXATED HE CAN'T HEAR US.
HE JUST STARES INTO THE SPIRAL.
AND WHAT'S WEIRD IS THAT ...
...HIS EYES START SPINNING AROUND... AROUND AND AROUND... IT'S SO STRANGE.
WHAT?
HIS EYES SPIN?
THEY SPIN LIKE THEY'RE FOLLOWING THE SPIRAL.
MAYBE HE'S TRYING TO GET A LAUGH OUT OF YOU.
NO, IT'S NOT FUNNY AT ALL!
HIS RIGHT AND LEFT EYE MOVE INDEPENDENTLY OF EACH OTHER!

HIS RIGHT AND LEFT EYE... SEPARATELY?
THEN THIS HAPPENED DURING DINNER.
HE GOT REALLY ANGRY BECAUSE THERE WEREN'T SPIRAL PATTERNED FISHCAKES IN THE MISO SOUP.
MY MOM EXPLAINED THAT SHE RAN OUT OF THEM.
HMPH!
I CAN'T EAT MISO WITHOUT THOSE FISHCAKES!
SUDDENLY HE STARTED TO STIR THE MISO, VERY FAST...
TAK TAK TAK
HE WAS SATISFIED.
SHHRRRRR

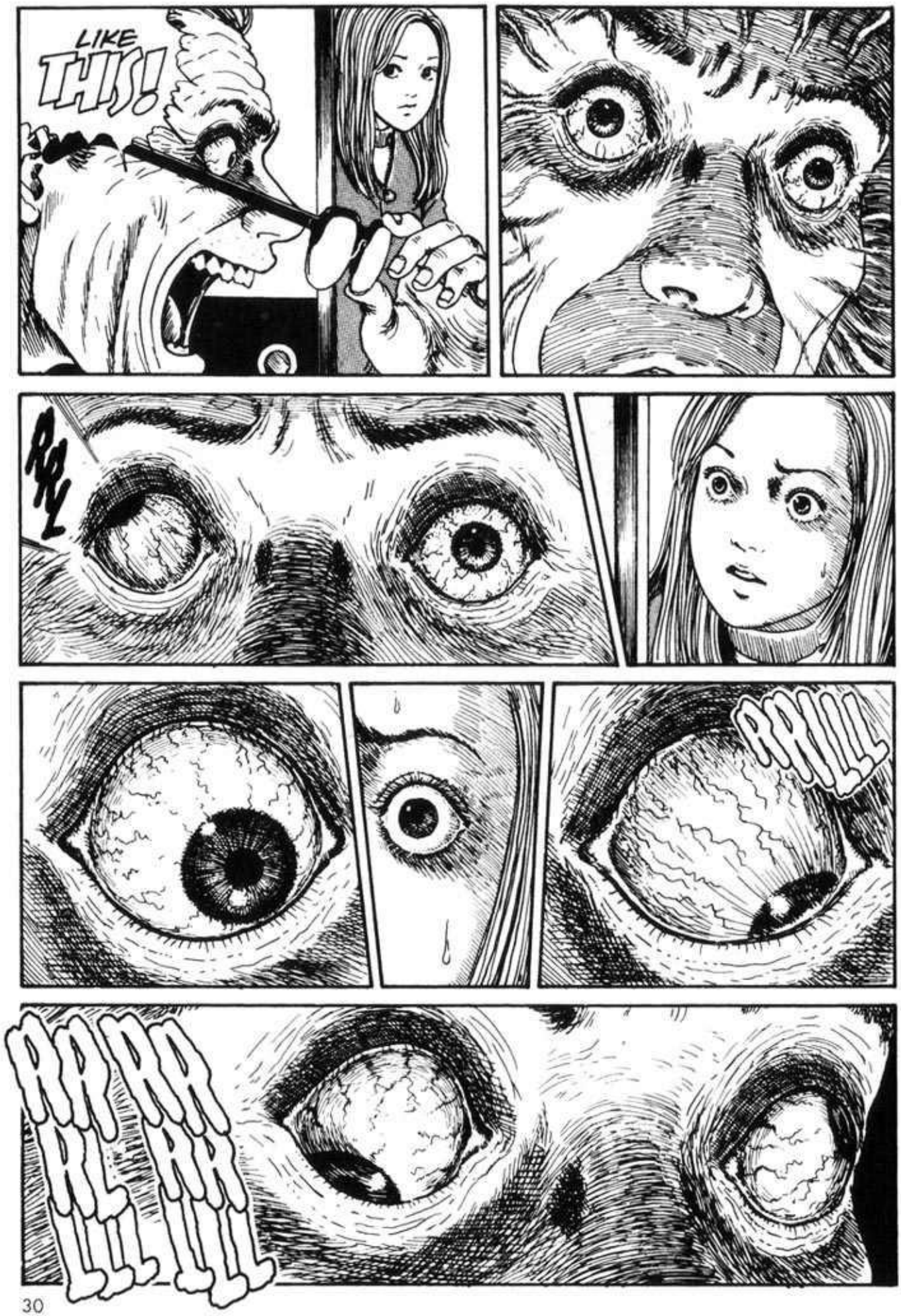
SPLISH SPLISH
NOW HE ALWAYS STIRS A WHIRLPOOL BEFORE HE BATHES.
SPLASH
Hhnnn...
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
THERE'S NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT IT!
HEE HEE
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, DO YOU?
I'M SORRY, IT'S JUST...
I DON'T BLAME YOU. I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT, EITHER.

WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER AND SEE FOR YOUR-SELF?
THEN YOU'LL SEE HOW SERIOUS THIS IS.
THEN ...
...YOU MIGHT HATE THIS TOWN AS MUCH AS I DO.
WHY WOULD I HATE THIS TOWN?
...
I THINK IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS TOWN THAT MY DAD'S GETTING STRANGE.
BUT WHY?
WELL ...
LET'S SEE...

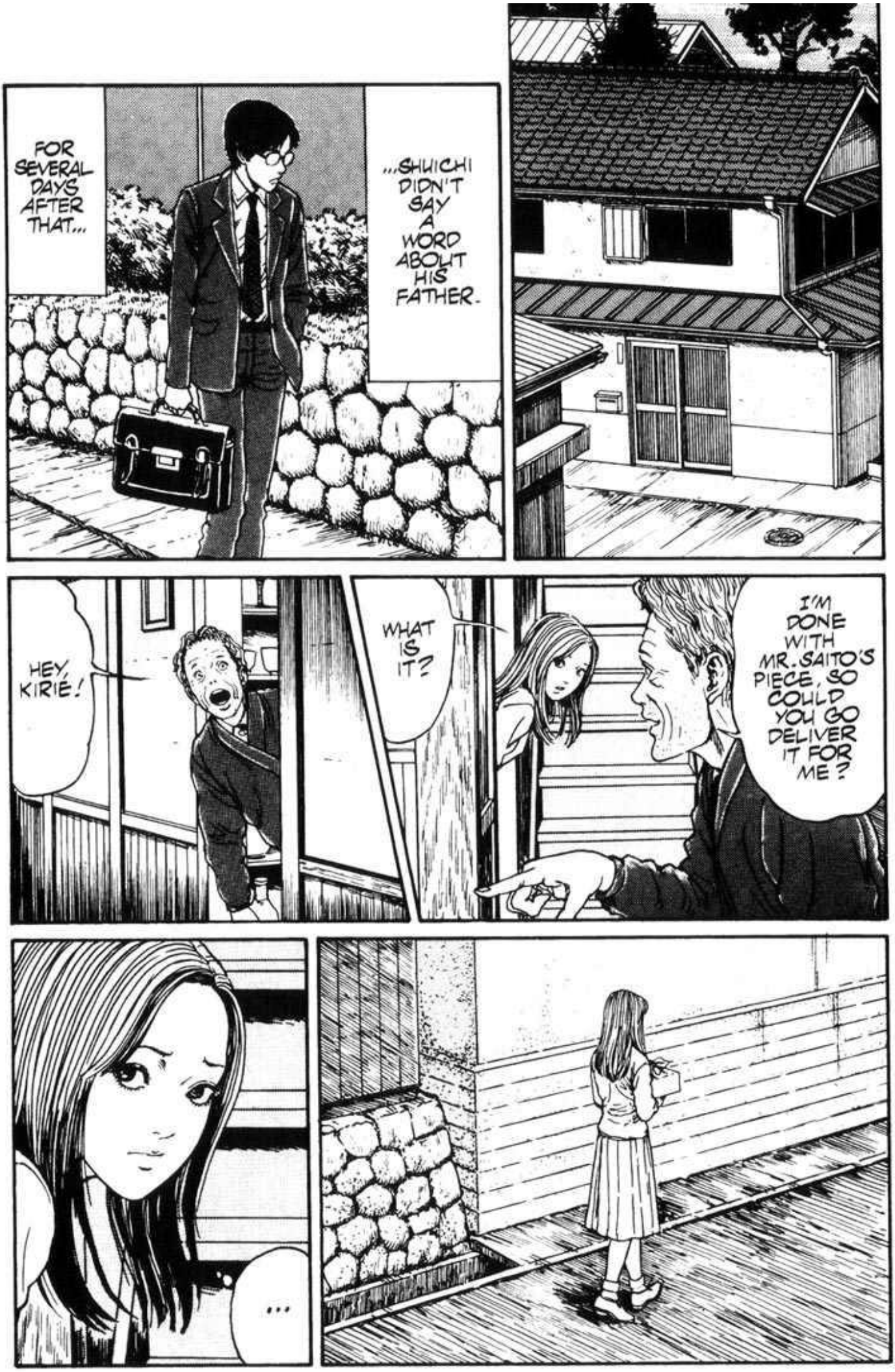

LOOK AT THIS STREAM.
ODD?
LOOK AT ALL THOSE WHIRL-POOLS.
DO YOU SEE SOME-THING ODD?
OH... WELL... THAT'S PROBABLY DUE TO THE FLOW.
YEAH WELL ...IT COULD BE.
BUT I DON'T SEE THAT MANY WHIRLPOOLS IN MIDORIYAMA -SHI.
AND THEN THERE'S THE WHIRLWINDS.
THESE DUST DEVILS.
BUT WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH YOUR FATHER'S OBSESSION WITH SPIRALS?
...
I'M NOT SURE, BUT...

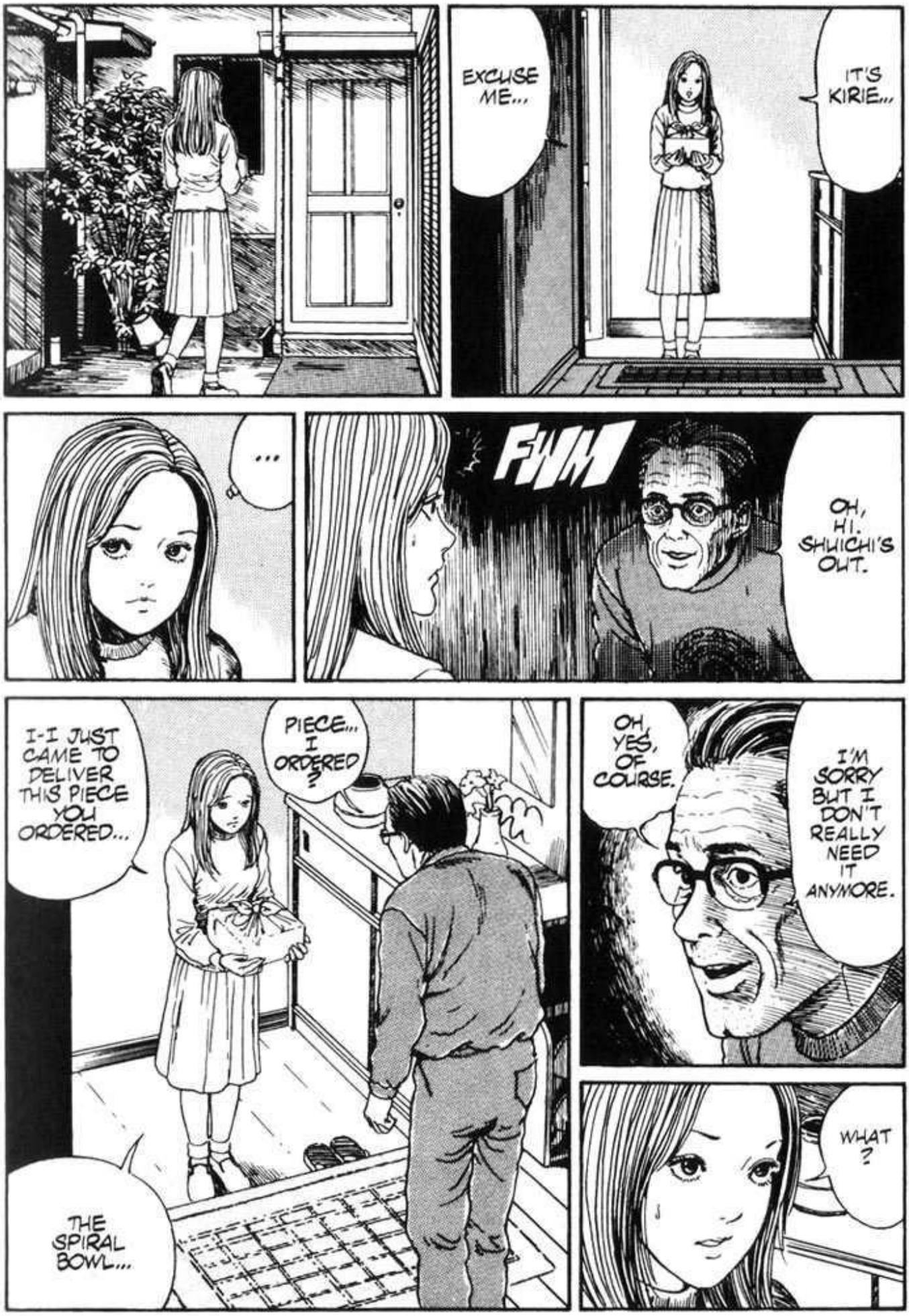
HOW COULD YOU?
?!
AAAH!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
DAD? MOM?
WHY, YOU DAMN--
STOP IT, DEAR!
STOP IT, DAD!
WHAT HAPPENED?
SHE THREW AWAY MY COLLEC-TION!
SHE THREW IT AWAY WHILE I WAS OUT!

YOU HAVE TO WAKE UP DEAR!
I HAD TO GET RID OF IT! YOU HAVE TO GO TO WORK!
HUFF...
HUFF...
HUFF...
HAH!
SO IT'S GONE, THEN.
I DON'T CARE.
I DON'T NEED TO COLLECT SPIRALS ANY MORE.
I FINALLY REALIZED THAT YOU CAN MAKE SPIRALS YOURSELF!
YOU'LL SEE!
YOU CAN EXPRESS THE SPIRAL THROUGH YOUR OWN BODY!!

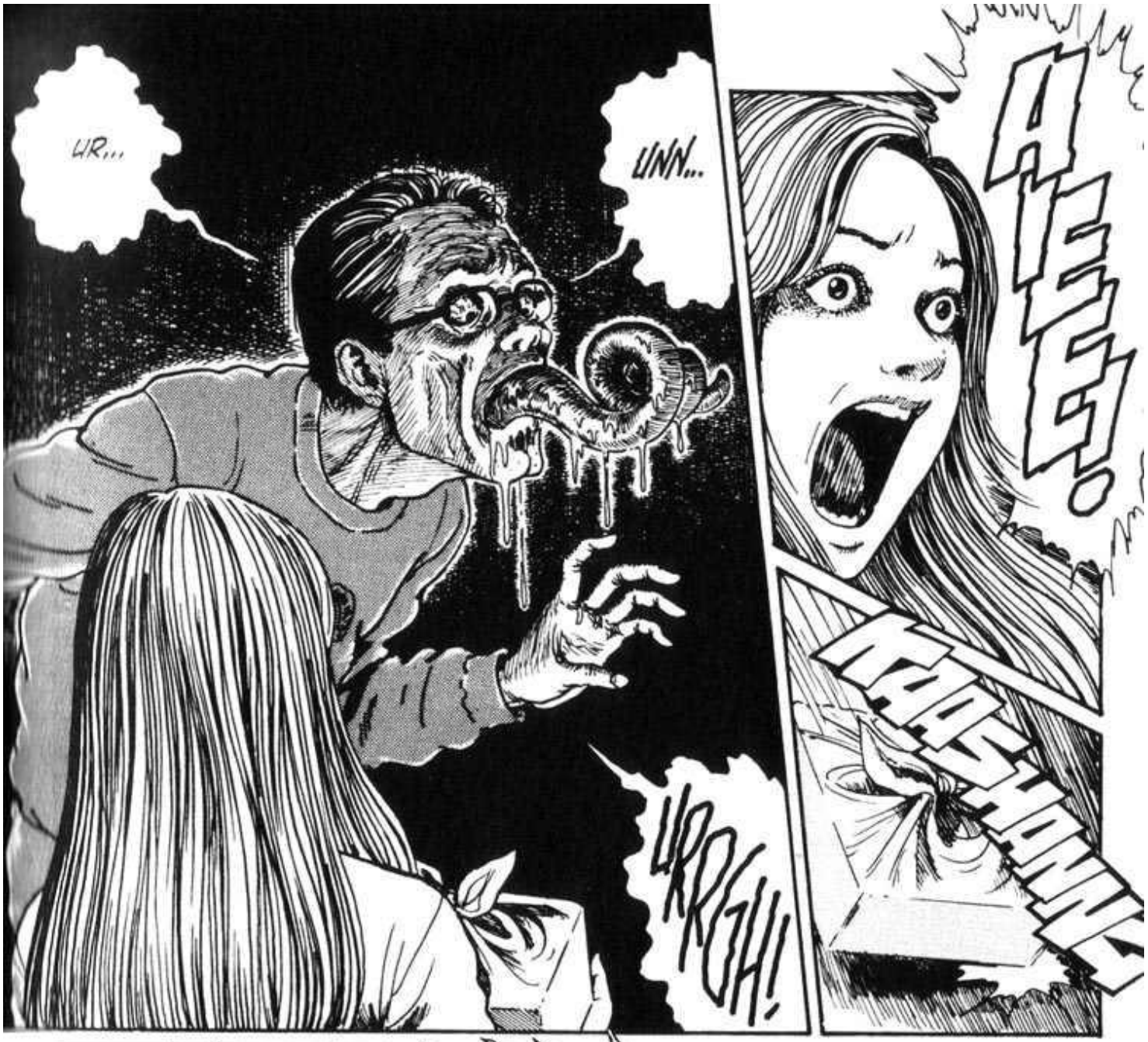

LIKE THIS!
RRL
RRRR
RRRRRRRR

HA HA HA
HA HAHA HAHA HA!
I SAW IT MYSELF NOW.
HIS EYES WERE SPINNING AROUND AND AROUND ...
...SEPARATELY ...


FOR SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THAT...
...SHUICHI DIDN'T SAY A WORD ABOUT HIS FATHER.
HEY, KIRIE!
WHAT IS IT?
I'M DONE WITH MR. SAITO'S PIECE, SO COULD YOU GO DELIVER IT FOR ME?
...


EXCUSE ME...
IT'S KIRIE...
...
FWM
OH, HI. SHUICHI'S OUT.
I-I JUST CAME TO DELIVER THIS PIECE YOU ORDERED...
PIECE... I ORDERED?
THE SPIRAL BOWL...
OH, YES, OF COURSE.
I'M SORRY BUT I DON'T REALLY NEED IT ANYMORE.
WHAT?

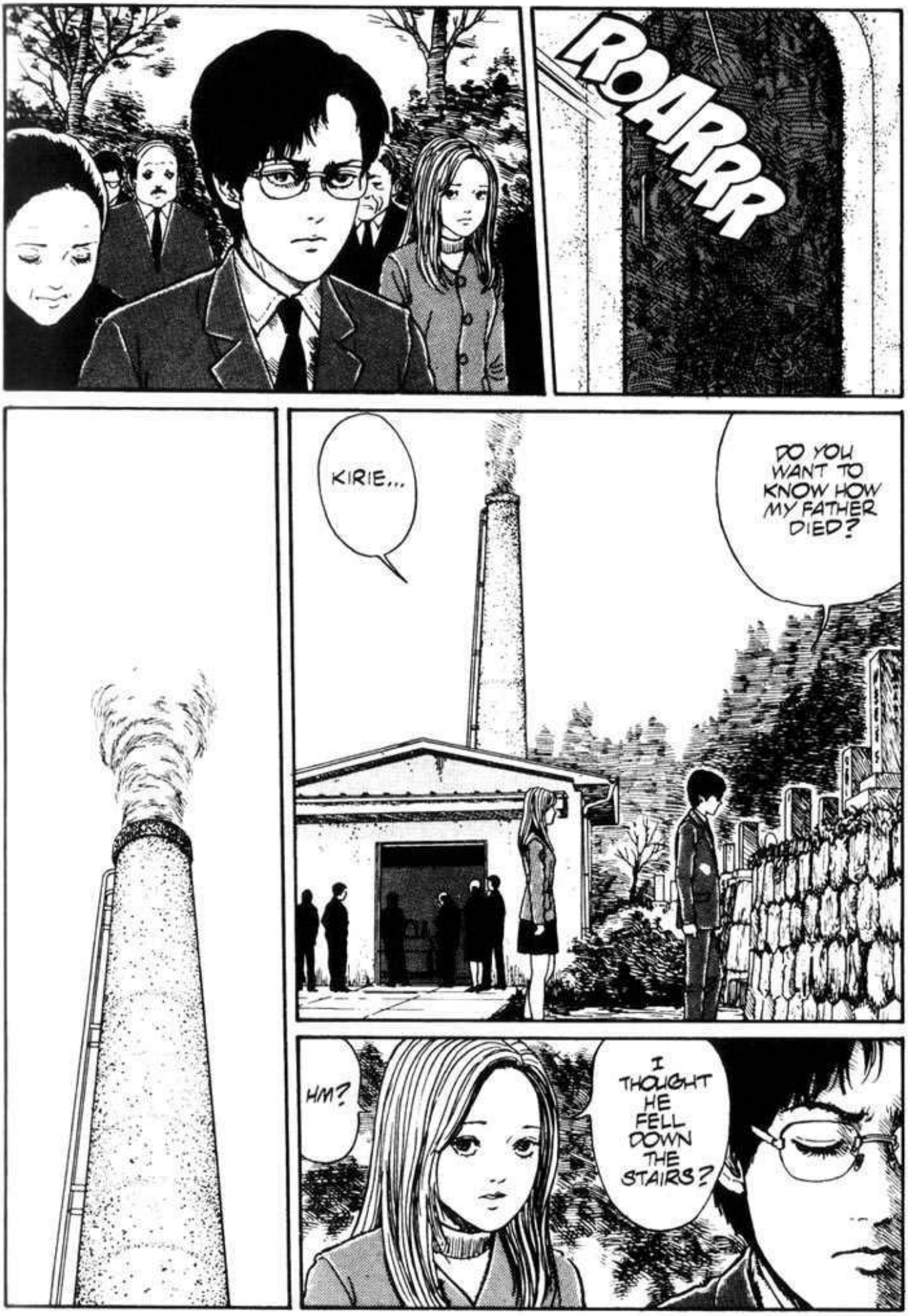
BUT THIS...
KIRIE... AS I SAID BEFORE...
I DON'T NEED THOSE THINGS.
YOU CAN CALL THE SPIRAL FROM WITHIN YOURSELF.
LOOK AT WHAT I CAN DO NOW.


UR...
UNN...
URGH!
AIEEE!
FAINT

AAAAIEEEE!

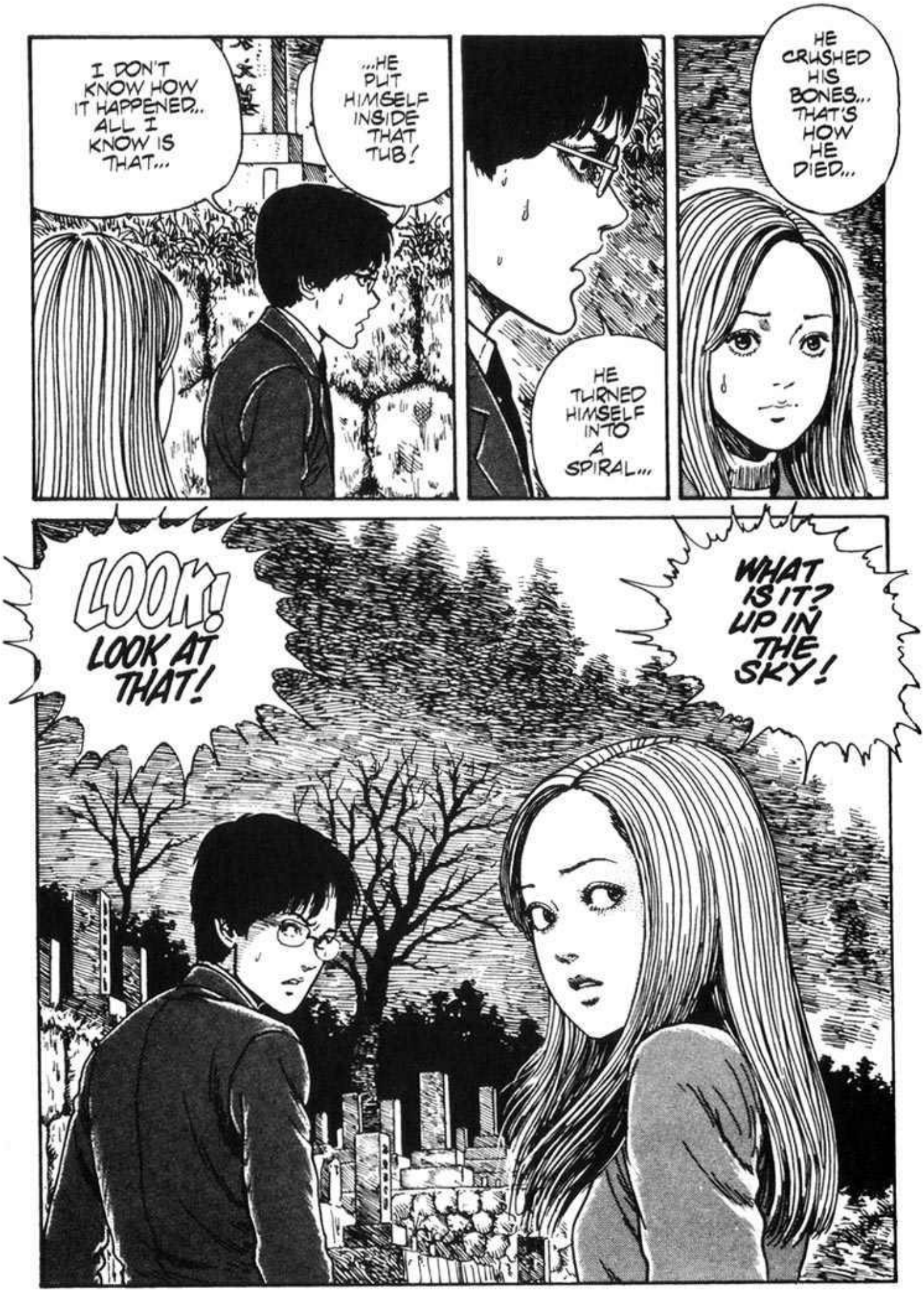
?

HELLO! DELIVERY FROM TANAKA COOPER.
WE HAVE THE ITEM YOU ORDERED.
WHY, THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS.
SEVERAL DAYS LATER...
MR. SAITO PASSED AWAY.

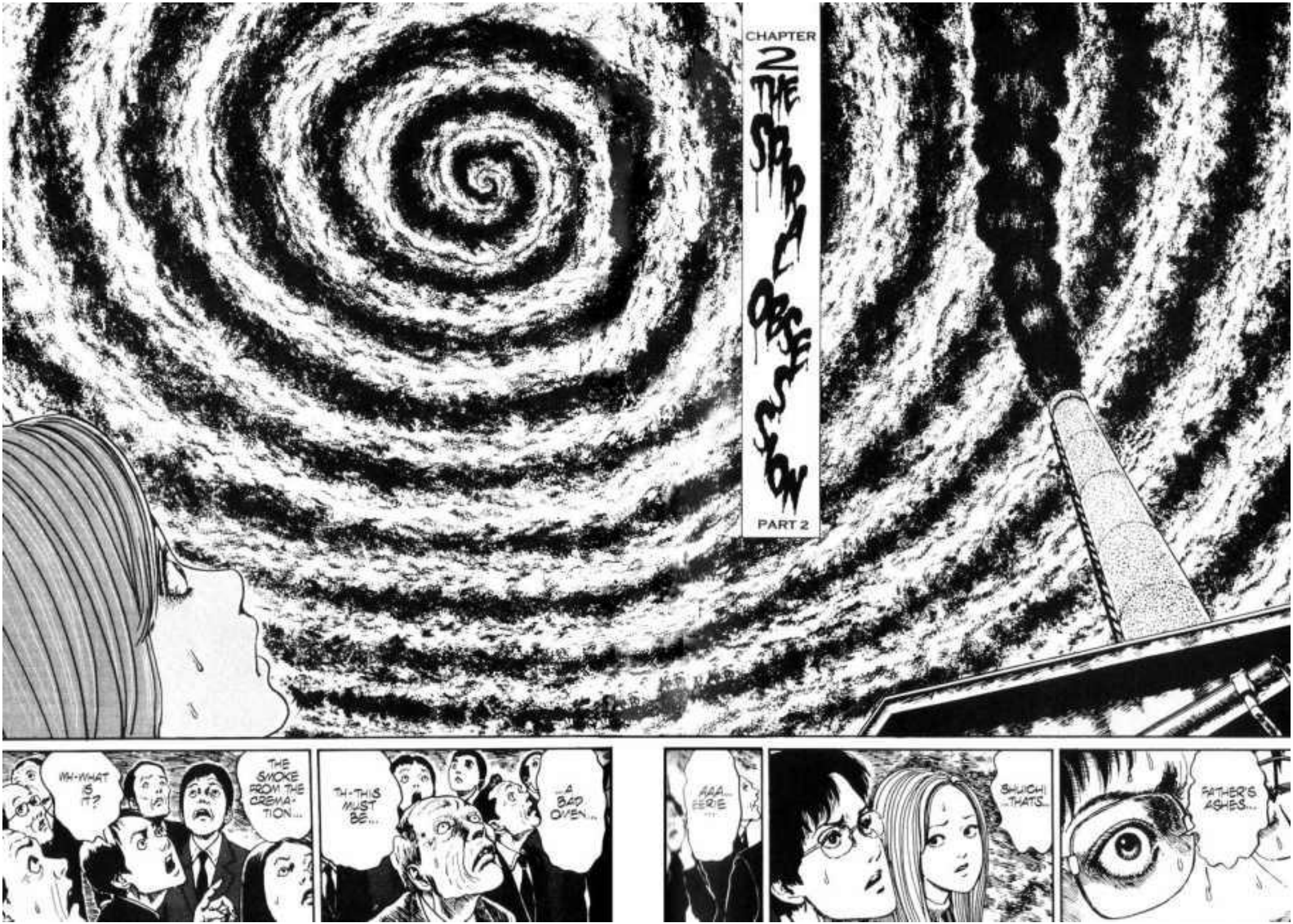

ROARRR
KIRIE...
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW MY FATHER DIED?
HM?
I THOUGHT HE FELL DOWN THE STAIRS?

THAT'S WHAT WE TOLD EVERY-ONE!
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED!
...
MY MOM AND I WENT TO THE HOSPITAL. WE CONSULTED A DOCTOR WITHOUT TELLING HIM.
BECAUSE MY DAD WAS BECOMING SO ABNORMAL...
WE ALL AGREED THAT HE SHOULD BE HOSPITALIZED. WE CAME HOME LATE THAT NIGHT BUT...
...WE COULDN'T FIND HIM...
...ANYWHERE...
THEN...
HIH

WE FOUND THIS LARGE TUB WE'D NEVER SEEN...
...IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS STUDY.
I WONDER...
...WHAT THIS IS...

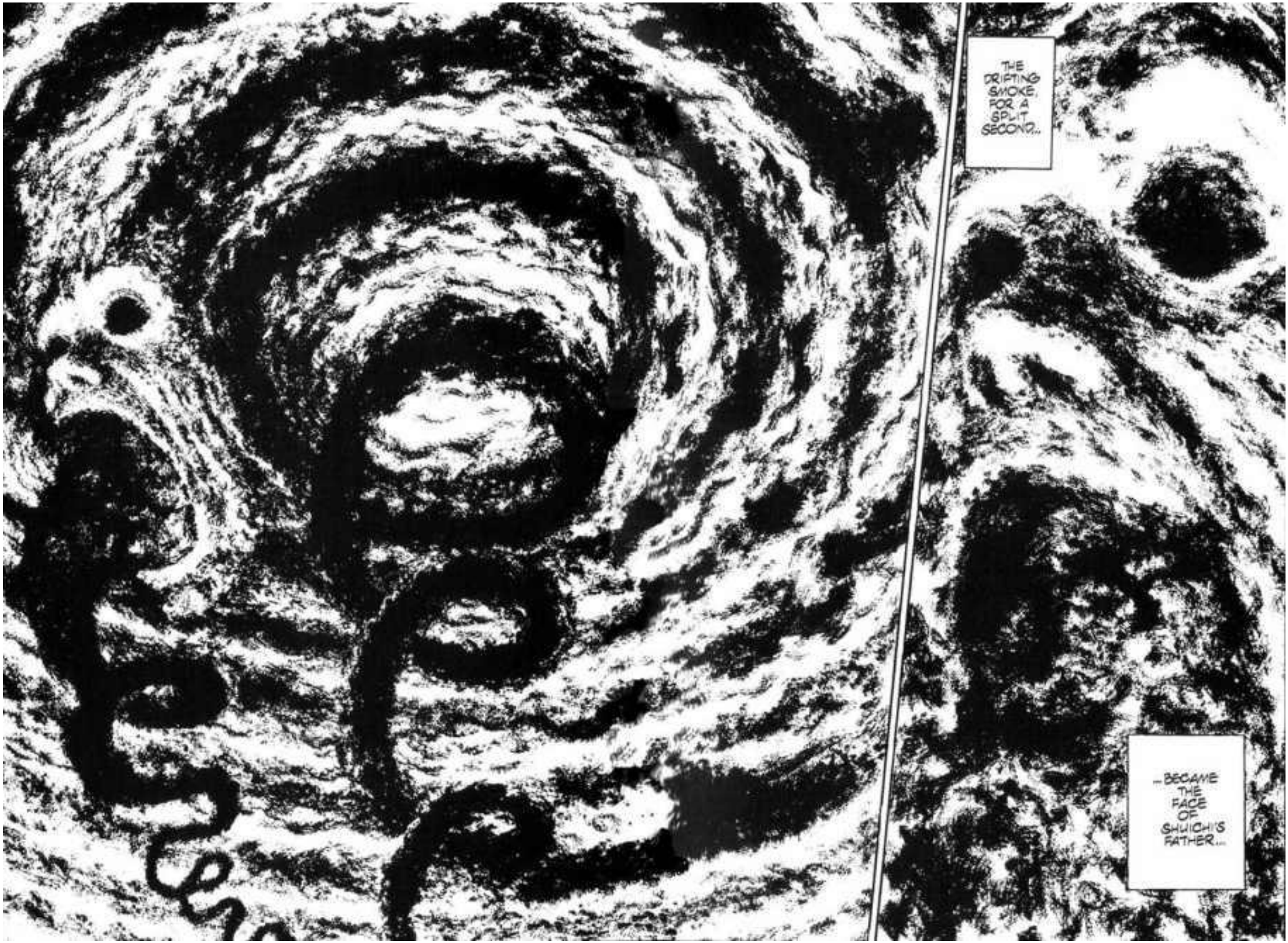

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED.. ALL I KNOW IS THAT...
...HE PUT HIMSELF INSIDE THAT TUB!
HE TURNED HIMSELF INTO A SPIRAL...
HE CRUSHED HIS BONES... THAT'S HOW HE DIED...
LOOK! LOOK AT THAT!
WHAT IS IT? UP IN THE SKY!

?!
WHAT IS THAT?!
WHAT?! WHERE?!
RIGHT UP THERE. UP IN THE SKY!


CHAPTER 2
THE SPIRAL OBSESSION
PART 2
WH-WHAT IS IT?
THE SMOKE FROM THE CREMATION...
TH-THIS MUST BE...
...A BAD OMEN...
AAA... EERIE...
SHUICHI ...THAT'S...
FATHER'S ASHES...

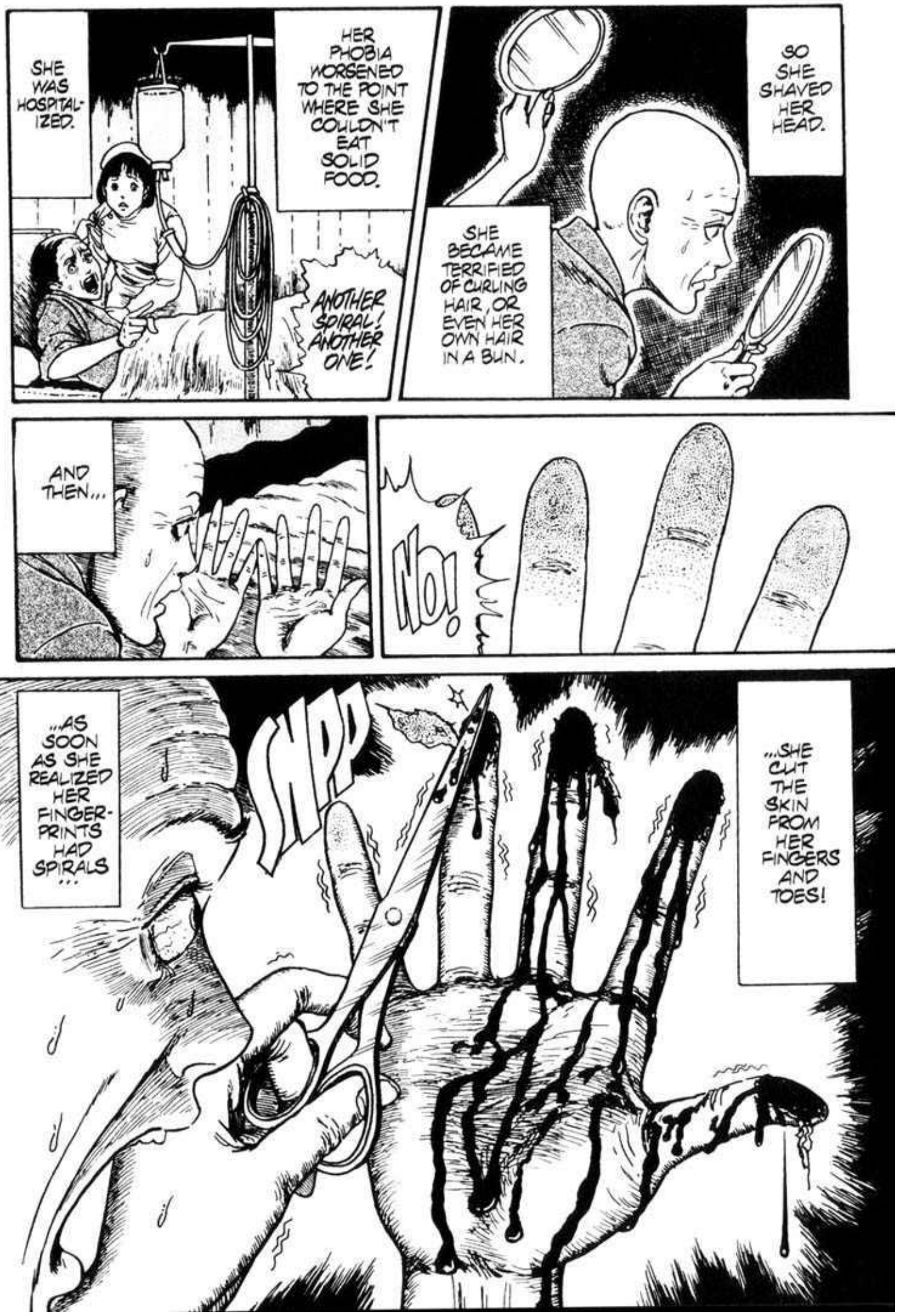
LOOK! THE SMOKE IS SETTLING!
IT'S SWIRLING DOWN TOWARDS THE WATER!
IT'S GOING INTO DRAGONFLY POND!
THE POND IN THE CENTER OF TOWN.
IT'S TOO STRANGE...
DRAGONFLY POND...
...IS RIGHT BEHIND OUR HOUSE, RIGHT NEXT DOOR.

AIEE!
PLEASE STOP IT, DEAR!
GO AWAY!
EEEE!
MRS. SAITO, PLEASE!
MOM! MOM! YOU HAVE TO CALM DOWN!
SHUICHI!
THAT'S YOUR FATHER!
N-NO... THIS IS JUST A COINCI-DENCE.
B-BUT... LOOK... OVER THERE...

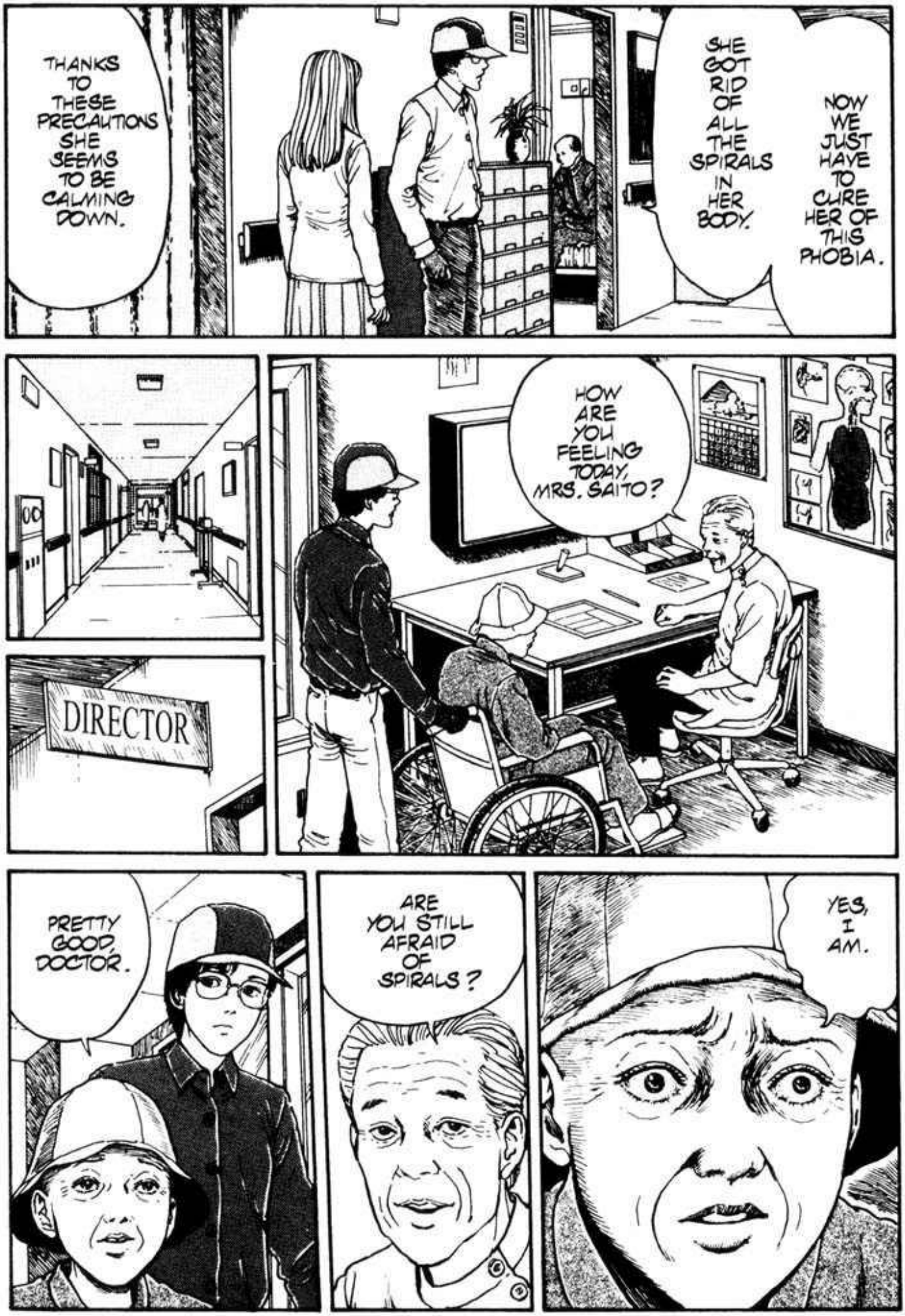

THE DRIFTING SMOKE, FOR A SPLIT SECOND...
...BECAME THE FACE OF SHUICHI'S FATHER...

IYAA!
EEYAH!
AHH HA HA
MOM?!
SOME-ONE CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!
HA HA HA HA
HA HAH
eeyoo
eeyoo
KURŌZU HOSPITAL

NO! NO! DON'T LET HIM NEAR ME!
AIAA!
PLEASE, MRS. SAITO, THE DOCTOR WILL COME SOON.
NO... NO...
IN THE SKY...
!
AIEE!
A SPIRAL!
AIEE!
SPIRAL! SPIRAL! TAKE IT AWAY!
MRS. SAITO!!
AND SO SHUICHI'S MOTHER...
AIEEE
...DEVELOPED AN EXTREME PHOBIA OF SPIRALS.


SHE WAS HOSPITAL-IZED.
HER PHOBIA WORSENED TO THE POINT WHERE SHE COULDN'T EAT SOLID FOOD.
ANOTHER SPIRAL! ANOTHER ONE!
SO SHE SHAVED HER HEAD.
SHE BECAME TERRIFIED OF CURLING HAIR, OR EVEN HER OWN HAIR IN A BUN.
AND THEN...
NO!
...AS SOON AS SHE REALIZED HER FINGER-PRINTS HAD SPIRALS ...
SNIP
...SHE CUT THE SKIN FROM HER FINGERS AND TOES!

SHUICHI TOLD ME...
MY MOTHER...
TO MY MOTHER, EVERY SPIRAL LOOKS LIKE...
...MY FATHER WHEN WE FOUND HIM DEAD.
BUT HE'S NOT DEAD. AND HE LOOKS AT HER...
...AND HE SAYS...
YUKIE DEAR...
...COME JOIN ME IN THE SPIRAL.
SHE'S COMPLETELY DELUSIONAL...
I WEAR THIS HAT AND GLOVES SO SHE WON'T SEE MY FINGERTIPS OR THE WHORLS IN MY HAIR.
THE DOCTORS AND NURSES ARE BEING CAREFUL, TOO.


THANKS TO THESE PRECAUTIONS SHE SEEMS TO BE CALMING DOWN.
SHE GOT RID OF ALL THE SPIRALS IN HER BODY.
NOW WE JUST HAVE TO CURE HER OF THIS PHOBIA.
DIRECTOR
HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY, MRS. SAITO?
PRETTY GOOD, DOCTOR.
ARE YOU STILL AFRAID OF SPIRALS?
YES, I AM.

I SEE.
THEN HOW ABOUT THIS?
!
I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU FOR OBSERVATION TO THE MIDORIYAMA-SHI PSYCHIATRIC WARD.
THE HUMAN BODY
I-I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT HOSPITAL ...
SHUCHI ...?
IS SOMETHING WRONG? I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THEM.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE AFRAID OF THE STIGMA OF STAYING AT A PSYCHIATRIC WARD.
THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO FEAR.
SEMI-CIRCULAR CANALS
CRANIAL NERVES
OSSICLES
EUSTACHIAN TUBE
EARDRUM
COCHLEA

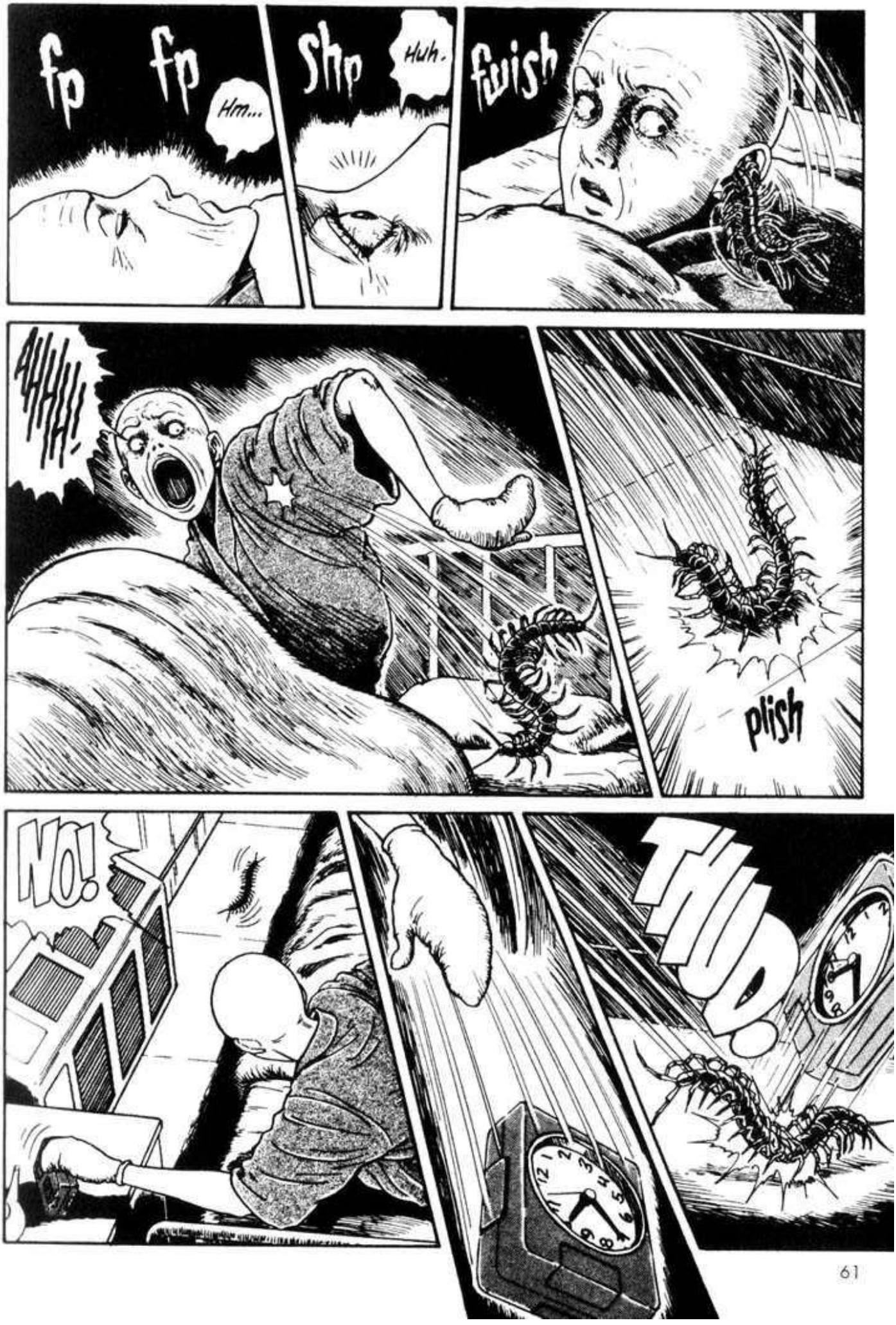
WHAT DO YOU THINK, SHUICHI?
SHUICHI?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
SHUICHI!
HUH?
urk!
OH...
...SORRY.
SOMETHING ON THIS WALL THAT BOTHERS YOU?
OH, NO!
IT'S NOTHING, DOCTOR!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU CAN BE SO STRANGE.

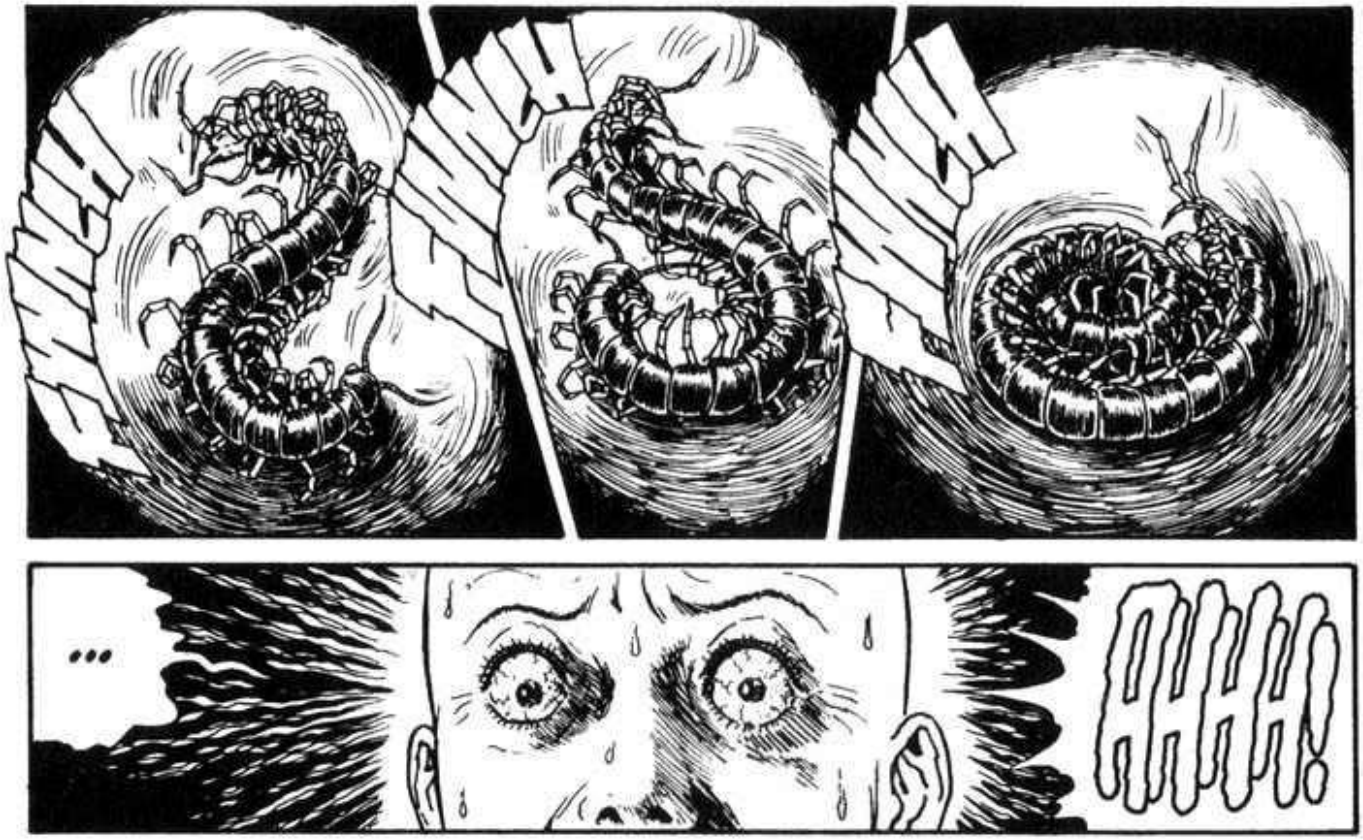
103
YUKIE SAITO
I...
...I DON'T WANT TO GO TO MIDORIYAMA.
THAT WAS WHERE WE WERE GOING TO TAKE YOUR FATHER.
BUT YOU SHOULD GO WHERE THEY HAVE SPECIAL FACILITIES.
DON'T YOU WANT TO GET BETTER?
YOU DON'T WANT TO KEEP HURTING YOURSELF, DO YOU?
OF COURSE, BUT...
...I WON'T HURT MYSELF ANYMORE.
I TOOK ALL THE SPIRALS OFF MY BODY.
YEAH... YEAH, THAT'S TRUE.
...WHOOOOOOOO

WHOOOOOOOOO
AARGH... IT'S THE FIVE O'CLOCK SIREN.
I HATE THAT SOUND!
IT JUST PIERCES THROUGH MY EARS!

KIRIE...
MY MOTHER DOESN'T REALIZE...
...AND HOPEFULLY SHE NEVER WILL.
HUH?
REALIZE WHAT?
I THOUGHT THAT HAIR AND FINGERPRINTS WERE THE ONLY SPIRALS ON THE HUMAN BODY...
...BUT THERE'S MORE.
THERE'S THE SENSOR FOR SOUND, THE COCHLEA IN THE INNER EAR.
I SAW IT IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE WITH THE ANATOMICAL CHART ON THE WALL.
AAAAAA
IT'S PROBABLY THE MOST OBVIOUS SPIRAL IN THE HUMAN BODY.
WHAT WILL SHE DO IF SHE FINDS OUT THERE'S A SPIRAL INSIDE HER?
NO ONE CAN TELL... BUT SHE CUT OFF THE TIPS OF HER FINGERS...
...

KURŌZU
HOSPITAL
103
zzz
zzz
fp
fp
fp
shp
shp
shp
shp


fp fp
Hm...
Shp
Huh.
fwish
AHHH!
plish
NO!
THUD!

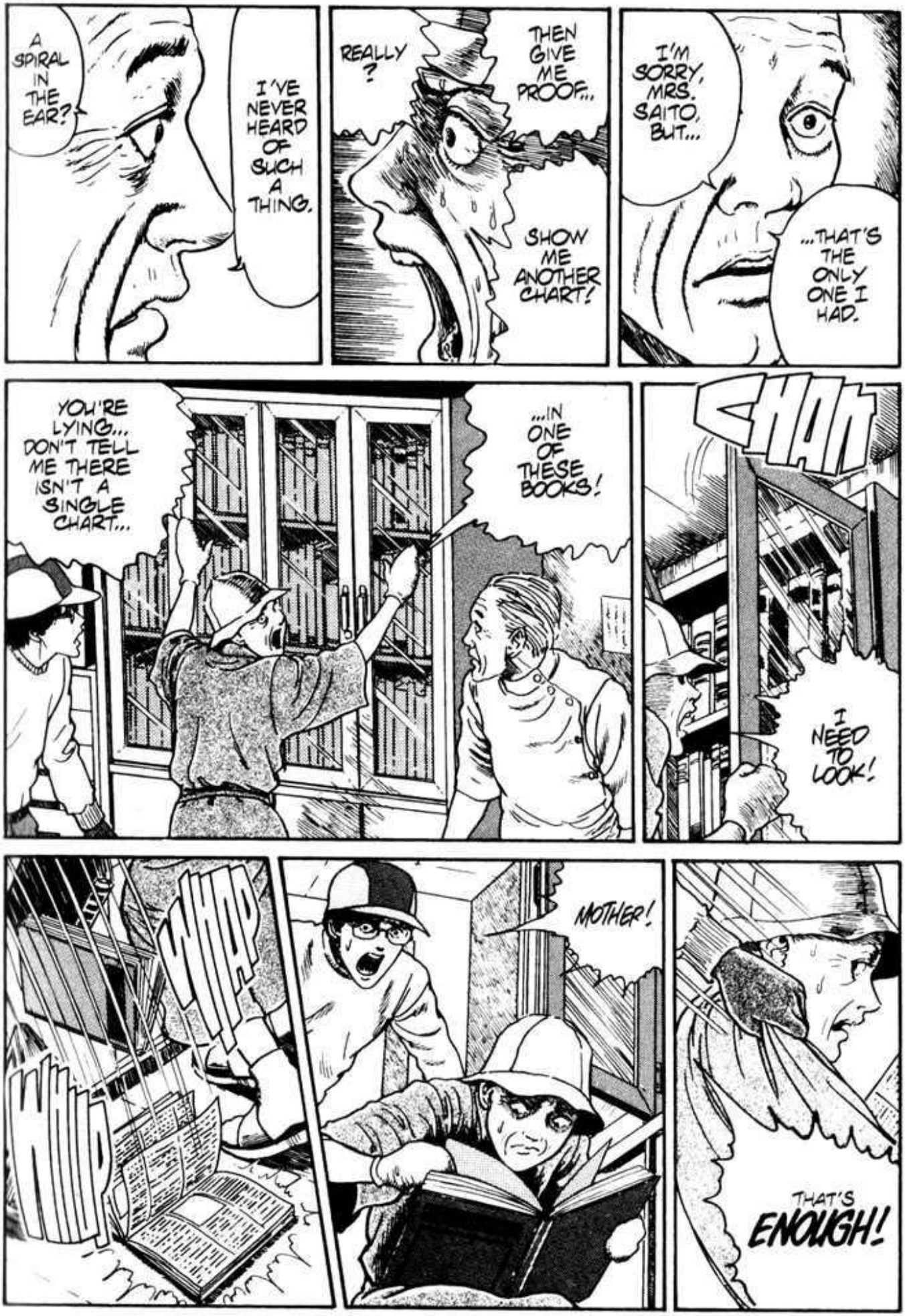

...
AHH!

YUKIE, DEAR...
COME JOIN ME IN THE SPIRAL...
NO--
NO!
WHY DO YOU HATE THE SPIRAL SO?
YOU STILL HAVE THEM IN YOUR BODY!
AAA... I WANT TO CRAWL INTO YOUR EARS SO BADLY.
I WANT TO CURL UP INSIDE YOU AND SLEEP THERE...
...DEEP INSIDE YOUR EARS...

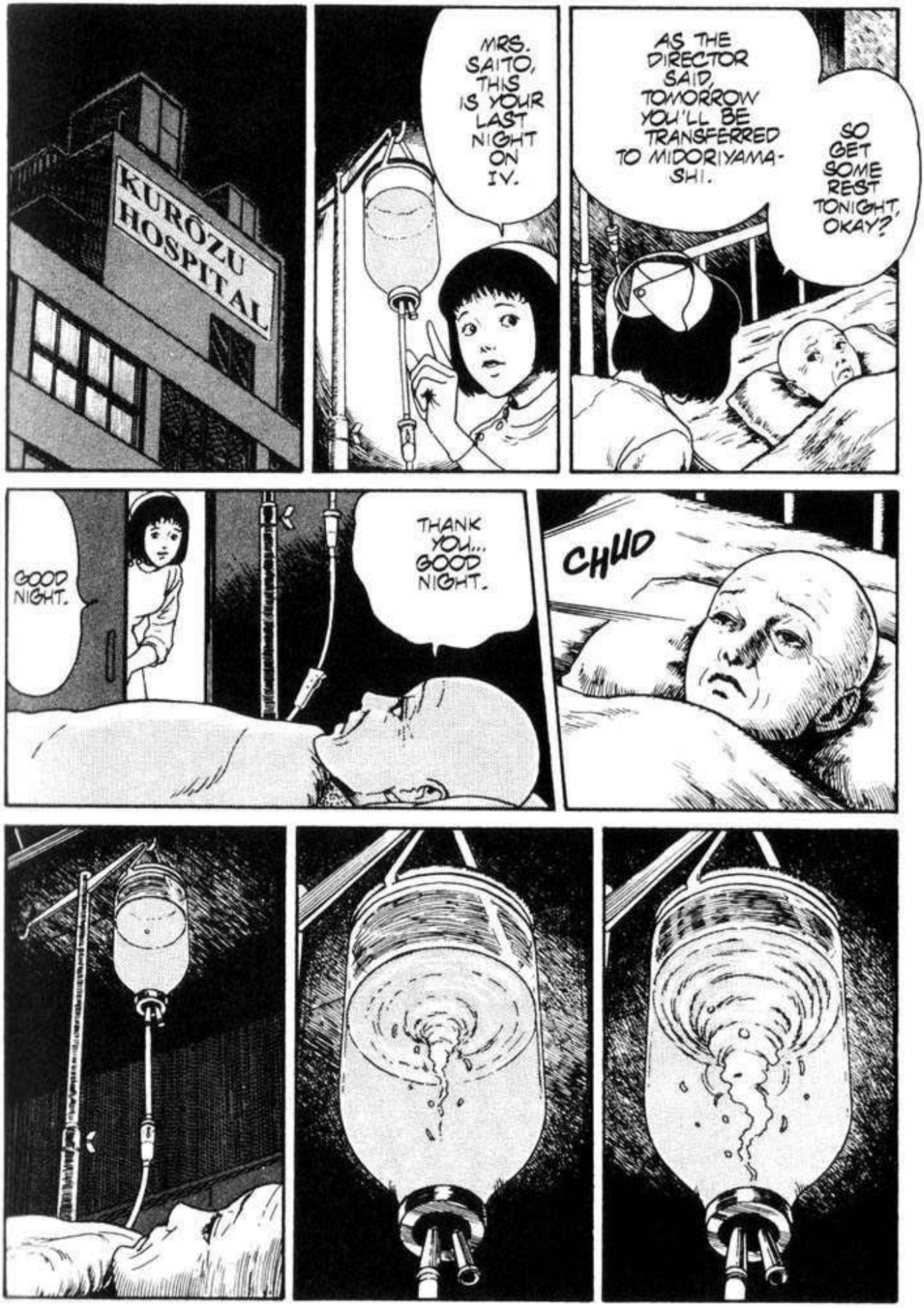
MOTHER, THEY SAID YOU SCREAMED LAST NIGHT.
KURÔZU HOSPITA
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
...
MS. SAITO...
...ARE YOU FEELING BETTER?
MRS. SAITO, IT'S TIME TO TAKE YOUR TEMPERATURE.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
I WAS WONDERING...
YES?
WHAT'S INSIDE...
...THE HUMAN EAR?
WHAT? THE EAR?
YES...

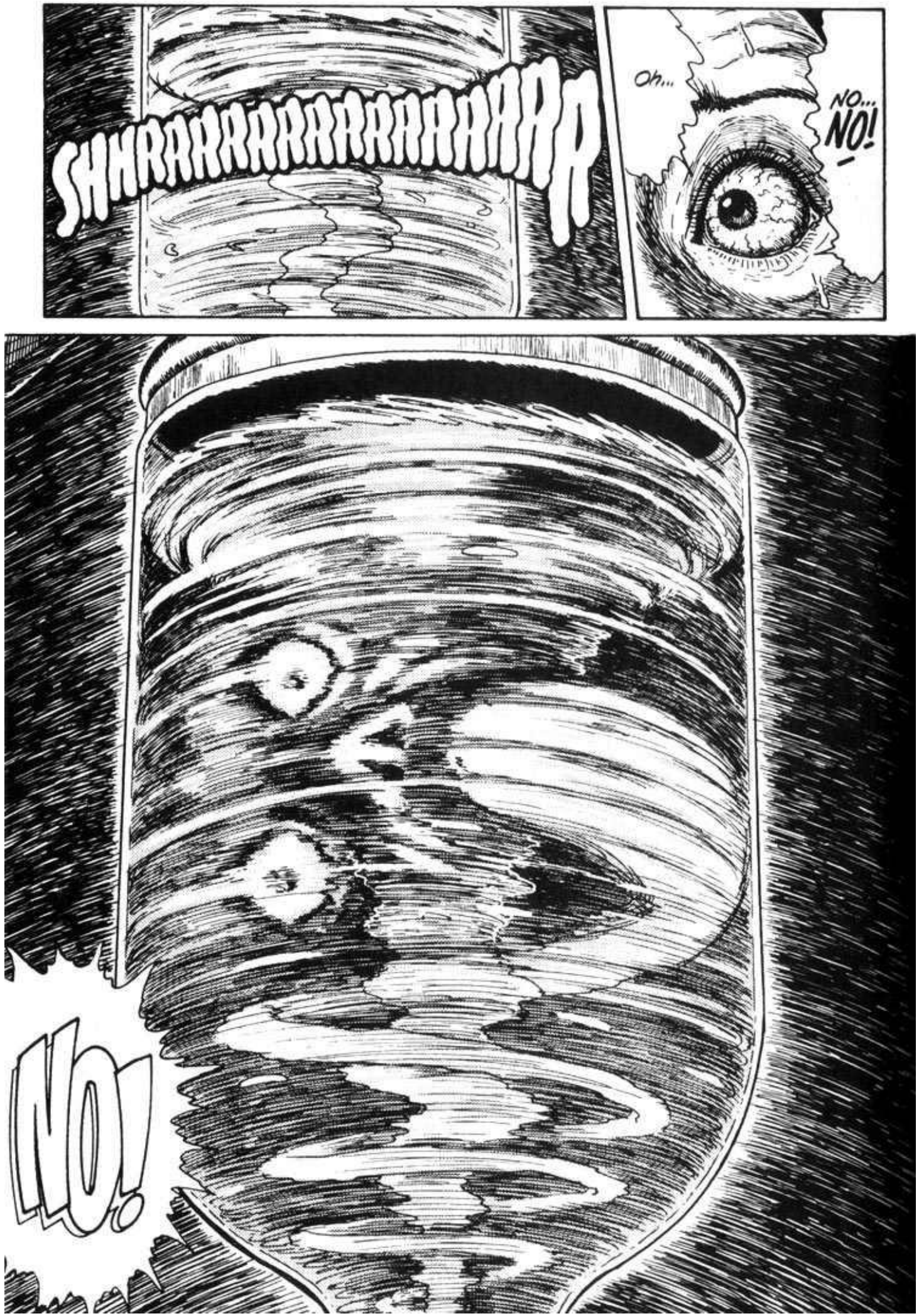
DON'T TELL ME...
...THERE'S A SPIRAL.
A SPIRAL?
OF COURSE NOT.
REALLY?
YES.
IS IT REALLY TRUE...
I WON-DER.
YOU HEARD THE NURSE! SHE CAN'T BE LYING!!
GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM, MOTHER!
YOUR LEG HASN'T HEALED YET!
EMERGE
EXIT
WASN'T THERE AN ANATOMICAL CHART IN THE DIRECTOR'S ROOM?
I WANT TO CHECK IT!
MOTHER!

THE DIRECTOR'S A BUSY MAN!
DIRECTOR
STOP IT, MOTHER!
LET ME GO, SHUICHI!
DOCTOR!
SWIT
LET ME SEE YOUR ANA-TOMICAL CHARTS!
MOTHER!
HEY!!
D-DOCTOR!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ONE THAT WAS HERE?
Oh... THAT WAS OUTDATED SO I THREW IT OUT.
WHAT?!
TH-THEN LET ME ASK YOU...
...IS THERE A SPIRAL IN THE HUMAN EAR?


A SPIRAL IN THE EAR?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING.
REALLY?
THEN GIVE ME PROOF...
SHOW ME ANOTHER CHART!
I'M SORRY, MRS. SAITO, BUT...
...THAT'S THE ONLY ONE I HAD.
YOU'RE LYING... DON'T TELL ME THERE ISN'T A SINGLE CHART...
...IN ONE OF THESE BOOKS!
CHAN
I NEED TO LOOK!
WHIP
WHIP
MOTHER!
THAT'S ENOUGH!

LOOK WHAT YOU'RE DOING! THE DOCTOR TOLD YOU THERE ISN'T, ALL RIGHT?
BUT SHUICHI... LAST NIGHT...
...YOUR FATHER SAID SOMETHING VERY STRANGE...
...ABOUT MY EARS.
DAD IS DEAD!
YOU WERE DREAMING!
LET'S GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM...
DIRECTOR
A- ALL RIGHT...
GOOD THING I TOOK THE CHART DOWN...
THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
WE NEED TO HAVE A SPECIALIST TREAT HER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
OTHER- WISE, AS YOU SAID, SHE'S IN DANGER.


KURÔZU HOSPITAL
MRS. SAITO, THIS IS YOUR LAST NIGHT ON I.V.
AS THE DIRECTOR SAID, TOMORROW YOU'LL BE TRANSFERRED TO MIDORIYAMA-SHI.
SO GET SOME REST TONIGHT, OKAY?
GOOD NIGHT.
THANK YOU... GOOD NIGHT.
CHUD


SHHRARRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
Oh...
NO...
NO!
NO!

THERE ARE...
...SPIRALS...
...IN YOUR EARS...
AHH... AHHH...
blup
THERE ARE SPIRALS...
EEAHH!
WING
RIP

CRASH
TIP!
EYAHH!
THERE ARE SPIRALS...
...IN YOUR EARS.
I CAN STILL HEAR HIM!
IT'S IN MY EARS!
HE'S IN MY EARS!
HE SLID INTO THE SPIRALS IN MY EARS!

NO...
NO!
RIP!
I'LL GET THEM OUT!
GRIP
HH...
AHH...
AAAAAA

SHUICHI'S MOTHER WAS HAUNTED BY SPIRALS UNTIL THE MOMENT SHE DIED.
AHH! I'M SPINNING!
MY BODY... SPIRAL...
BY STABBING HER EARS, SHE DESTROYED NOT ONLY HER HEARING BUT HER SENSE OF BALANCE.
AS A RESULT, SHE WAS IN A CONSTANT STATE OF VERTIGO...
NO!
I DON'T WANT TO BECOME A SPIRAL!
ON THE DAY OF HER FUNERAL, AS HER BODY WAS BURNED...
...ANOTHER BLACK SPIRAL... EMERGED IN THE SKY ABOVE OUR TOWN.

CHAPTER
3
THE SCAR

WHEN I STARTED GOING TO KUROZU HIGH SCHOOL...
...I MADE FRIENDS WITH AZAMI KUROTANI.
SHE COMMUTED TO SCHOOL FROM MIDORIYAMA-SHI.
SHE WAS ONE OF THOSE PRETTY, RESERVED GIRLS.
BUT NOW I REGRET EVER MEETING HER.
IF I HADN'T, SHE WOULD NEVER HAVE MET SHUICHI...
...AND WE MIGHT HAVE PREVENTED WHAT HAPPENED.

FROM THE DAY SHE STARTED SCHOOL, SHE WAS ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY GUYS.
TH-THIS IS FOR YOU.
STP
HEY, WANT TO GO FOR A RIDE?
Hmph.
LET'S GO, KIRIE.
YOU'RE SO POPULAR.
NO, I'M NOT.
SHE WAS OBVIOUSLY USED TO IT.
EAT ME!
SHE WAS GOOD AT GIVING THE COLD SHOULDER.
OH, COME ON, YOU'RE SO PRETTY.

AS TIME WENT ON, A RUMOR STARTED.
KIRIE, ARE YOU STILL HANGING OUT WITH AZAMI?
UH, YEAH...
YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T.
WHY NOT?
SHE'S GOT A BAD REPUTATION.
SHE USES HER LOOKS TO GET GUYS...
SHE GETS THEM OBSESSED ...AND THEN DUMPS THEM.
THEY SAY SHE'S GOT A MAGIC POWER.
MAGIC?

THE POWER TO ATTRACT BOYS...
THE SECRET'S ON HER FOREHEAD.
DONNG
YOU CAN'T TELL BECAUSE OF HER BANGS, BUT SHE'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE A SCAR THERE.
DONNNG
THEY SAY THAT'S THE SOURCE OF HER POWER.
...
YOU'D BETTER BE CAREFUL OR SHE'LL END UP STEALING YOUR BOYFRIEND.
KIRIE, THE BELL RANG.
LET'S GO BACK TO THE CLASS-ROOM.
S-SURE, AZAMI.
PLISH SPLASH

Ahh.
THAT WAS GOOD.
...
Oh...
THIS SCAR.
WHAT'S WRONG, KIRIE?
Uh...
THEY WERE TALKING TO YOU ABOUT IT, WEREN'T THEY?
THEY'RE JUST IDIOTS... DON'T BELIEVE THEM.
Oh...
OF COURSE I DON'T.

IT'S TRUE, THOUGH, THAT THIS SCAR MEANS SOMETHING TO ME.
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, THERE WAS THIS BOY I HAD A CRUSH ON. I WANTED TO IMPRESS HIM SO MUCH...
...SO I TRIED WALKING ON THE ROPES IN THE PLAYGROUND. I FELL AND THAT WAS HOW I GOT THIS SCAR.
HEY! GET DOWN HERE!
THE FUNNY THING IS, WE BECAME FRIENDS BECAUSE OF THAT.
I TOLD YOU SO! ARE YOU OKAY?!
WAHH!
I'LL GO GET THE TEACHER!
SO SOMETIMES I ACTUALLY WONDER ...
...IF THIS SCAR HAS THE POWER TO ATTRACT BOYS.
EVER SINCE I GOT IT, I'VE HAD EVERY BOY I EVER LIKED.
BUT OF COURSE IT'S JUST A COINCIDENCE. NO ONE HAS THAT KIND OF POWER!
...

KIRIE, WAIT!
HUH?
OHH! IT'S YOUR BOYFRIEND, RIGHT?
I'M SORRY... TODAY I HAVE TO GO SEE SOME-BODY.
AREN'T WE GOING TO WALK TOGETHER?
BUT...
A-ALL RIGHT ...IF YOU WANT TO...
BUT WHAT?
I MIGHT HAVE SEEN HIM AT THE STATION WITHOUT KNOWING IT!
I KNEW IT! SHUICHI SAITO! DOESN'T HE GO TO MIDORIYAMA HIGH SCHOOL?
WHAT'S HE LIKE? WHY DON'T YOU INTRODUCE ME TO HIM? I WANT TO MEET HIM RIGHT NOW!

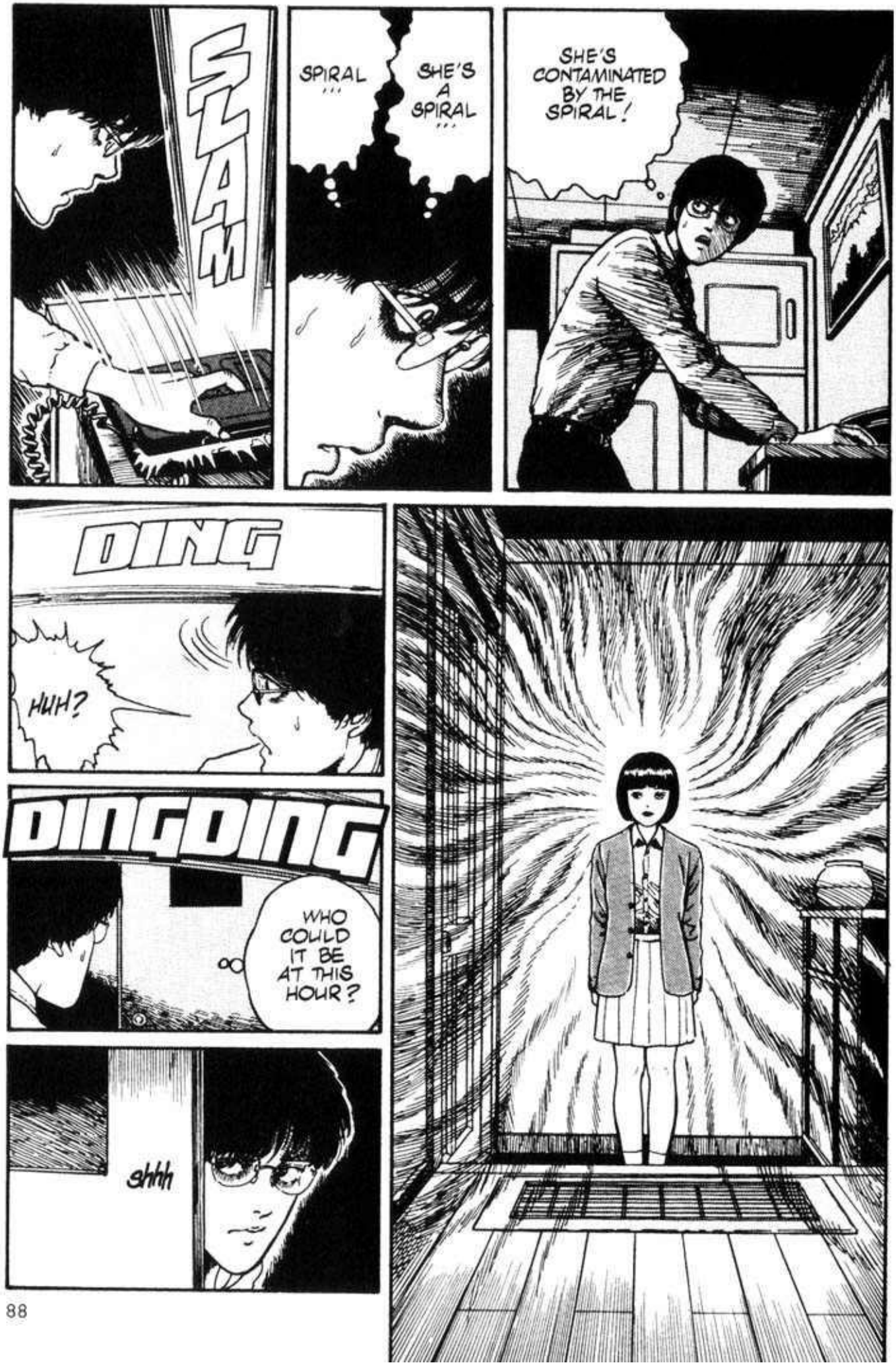
HE HASN'T BEEN GOING TO SCHOOL LATELY.
REALLY? WHY?
HE HAD A HORRIBLE EXPERI-ENCE...
HE LOST BOTH HIS PARENTS RECENTLY ...
OH...!
I WAS RELUCTANT TO LET HER MEET SHUICHI.
BUT SHE INSISTED ON IT SO I GAVE IN.
CHAT
HELLO!
SHUICHI, ARE YOU THERE?

SHH
HEY...
COME ON IN...
SHUICHI, THIS IS MY CLASSMATE, AZAMI KUROTANI.
HELLO.
CALL ME AZAMI.

HELLO.
HUH?
UR...
WHAT'S WRONG, SHUICHI?
G-GO AWAY!

I-IT'S YOU!
GO AWAY!
AND DON'T EVER COME AGAIN!
...!!
I'M SORRY, AZAMI... HE'S BEEN SO STRANGE.
OH... DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
HE SEEMED STRESSED.
BUT SHE LOOKED PALE...
...AND HARDLY SAID A WORD ON OUR WAY HOME.

HELLO, SHUICHI?
IT'S ME, KIRIE.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TODAY?
YOU SHOCKED AZAMI.
WHY'D YOU TREAT HER LIKE THAT?
KIRIE, YOU DON'T FEEL IT?
WHAT?
THERE'S SOMETHING MESMERIZING ABOUT HER.
IT'S LIKE LOOKING DOWN FROM A HIGH PLACE...
...LIKE VERTIGO...
IT'S LIKE LOOKING INTO A SPIRAL!
YOU HAVE TO WATCH OUT. SHE'S A SPIRAL!
SHUICHI?

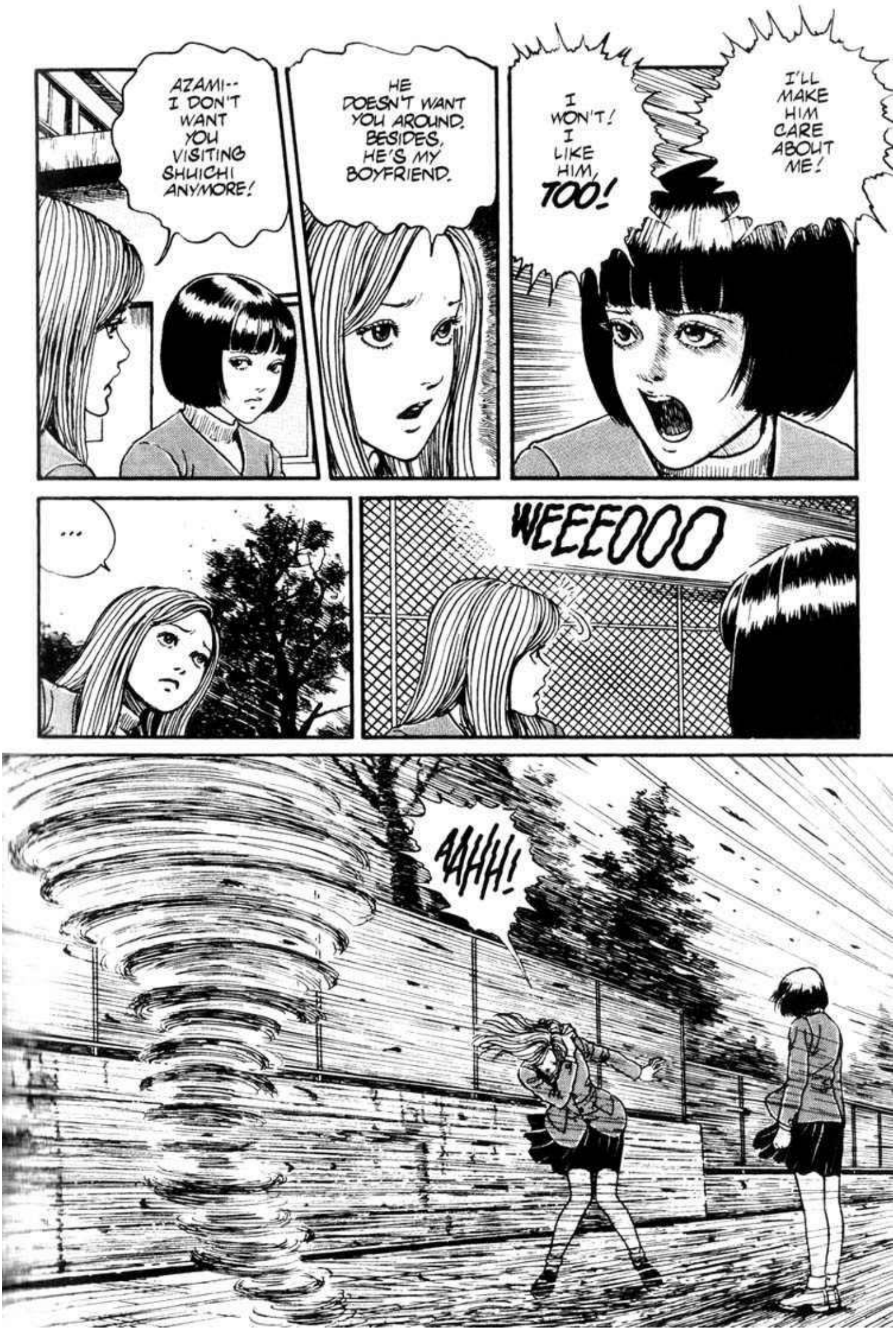

SLAM
SPIRAL ...
SHE'S A SPIRAL ...
SHE'S CONTAMINATED BY THE SPIRAL!
DING
HUH?
DINGDONG
WHO COULD IT BE AT THIS HOUR?
shhh

AAHH!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
YOU'RE THE FIRST BOY I'VE EVER MET WHO'S TREATED ME LIKE THIS.
WHAT IS IT ABOUT ME THAT YOU DON'T LIKE?
JUST GO AWAY!
GET OUT OF KURÔZU-CHO!
EVERY BOY I'VE EVER MET HAS FALLEN FOR ME.
HOW COULD YOU REJECT ME?
I WILL NOT.

WHY?
...
THERE!
Y-YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING ON YOUR FOREHEAD!
FOREHEAD?
YOU MEAN MY SCAR?
SO KIRIE TOLD YOU?
NO, IT'S NOT A SCAR!
IT'S A SPIRAL! I CAN FEEL IT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IT'S A CRESCENT-SHAPED SCAR...
THANKS TO THIS SCAR, I'VE NEVER HAD PROBLEMS WITH LOVE!
SEE?

I KNEW IT!
IT'S NO CRESCENT. IT'S A SPIRAL!
TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR BY THE ENTRANCE!!
WH-
WHAT?!
I DON'T...
MAYBE IT USED TO BE SHAPED LIKE A CRESCENT...
...BUT THEN THE ENDS STARTED GROWING AND FORMED THAT SPIRAL.
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THIS PLACE... KURÔZU-CHO!
THIS TOWN IS CONTAMINATED WITH SPIRALS!
GO TO SCHOOL IN MIDORIYAMA-SHI! GET OUT OF TOWN AS FAST AS YOU CAN!

INSTEAD OF HEEDING SHUICHI'S WARNING...
...AZAMI KUROTANI TALKED HER PARENTS INTO RENTING AN APARTMENT FOR HER IN KURŌZU-CHO.
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, SHE VISITED HIM.
BAM
SHUICHI! OPEN THE DOOR!
BAM
PLEASE! I'VE NEVER FELT THIS WAY BEFORE! ALL THE BOYS I KNEW COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT ME!
BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE. I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT YOU!


AZAMI-- I DON'T WANT YOU VISITING SHUICHI ANYMORE!
HE DOESN'T WANT YOU AROUND. BESIDES, HE'S MY BOYFRIEND.
I WON'T! I LIKE HIM, TOO!
I'LL MAKE HIM CARE ABOUT ME!
...
WEEEOOO
AAHH!

A-
A...
YOUR
FORE-
HEAD...
AZAMI
...
FSH
AZAMI!
STOP!!

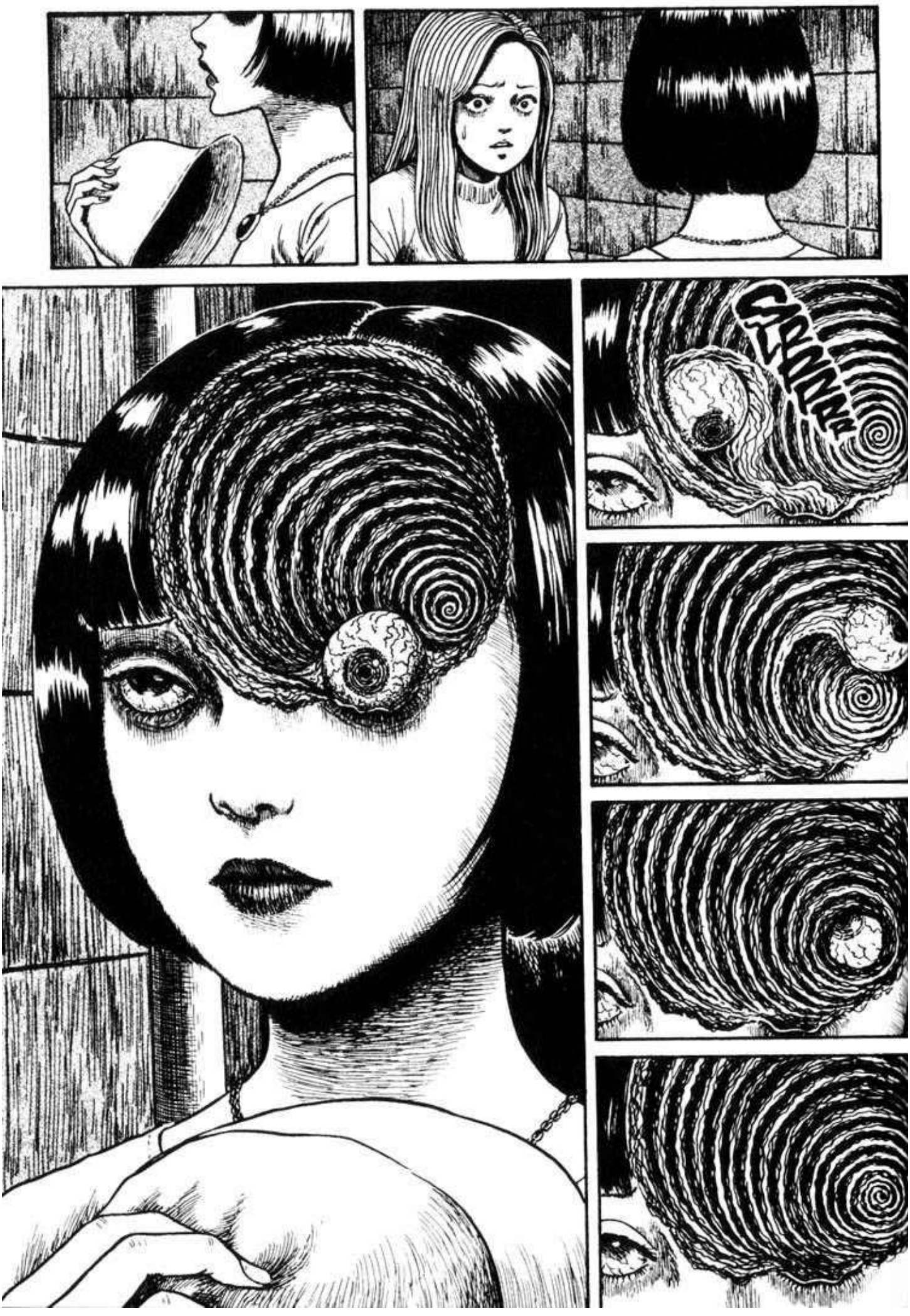
AZAMI!
Hff
Hff
AZAMI
?
IT'S ME, OKADA FROM CLASS C.
PLEASE GO OUT WITH ME.
LEAVE ME ALONE! I TOLD YOU NO!
I KNOW YOU DID... BUT I'M SO DRAWN TO YOU...
I HAVE TO BE NEAR YOU. I CAN'T HELP IT. IT'S LIKE I'M BEING SUCKED IN...

AZAMI STOPPED COMING TO SCHOOL THE NEXT DAY.
I STOPPED BY HER STUDENT APARTMENT BUT NO ONE ANSWERED THE DOOR.
I COULD TELL SHE WAS IN HER ROOM, THOUGH.
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER FORE-HEAD?
IT LOOKED LIKE A SPIRAL DIGGING INTO HER SKULL.
I MUST HAVE BEEN HALLUCI-NATING...
BUT HOW CAN THAT BE?
THEN...
...SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

RRRIIING
RRRIIING
HELLO?
KIRIE, IT'S ME.
SHUICHI?
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE NAMED OKADA?
OKADA? NO, WHO IS HE?
I SEE... HE JUST GAVE ME A PHONE CALL.
SAYS HE WANTS TO TALK TO ME ABOUT YOU.
HE'S MEETING ME AT THE PARK.
SOUNDS LIKE HE HAS A CRUSH ON YOU.
WHAT? I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS...
I SEE...
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
CLIK
HEY.

WHAT IS GOING ON?
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
THIS PARK MUST BE THE ONE.
MAYBE MY FATHER SHOULD HAVE COME WITH ME.

WHY, THAT'S ...
THAT MUST BE AZAMI.
AZAMI?
IT'S YOU, RIGHT?
I KNEW IT!
WHAT'S GOING ON? I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU!
KIRIE... I FEEL STRANGE... MY LEFT EYE ...
...I CAN'T SEEM TO FOCUS ...
CAN YOU TAKE A LOOK?


SLURP

SLUMP
...
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
NO.
SEE... HERE SHE COMES.
JUST HOLD ON...
SHE'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE.
WHO? KIRIE?

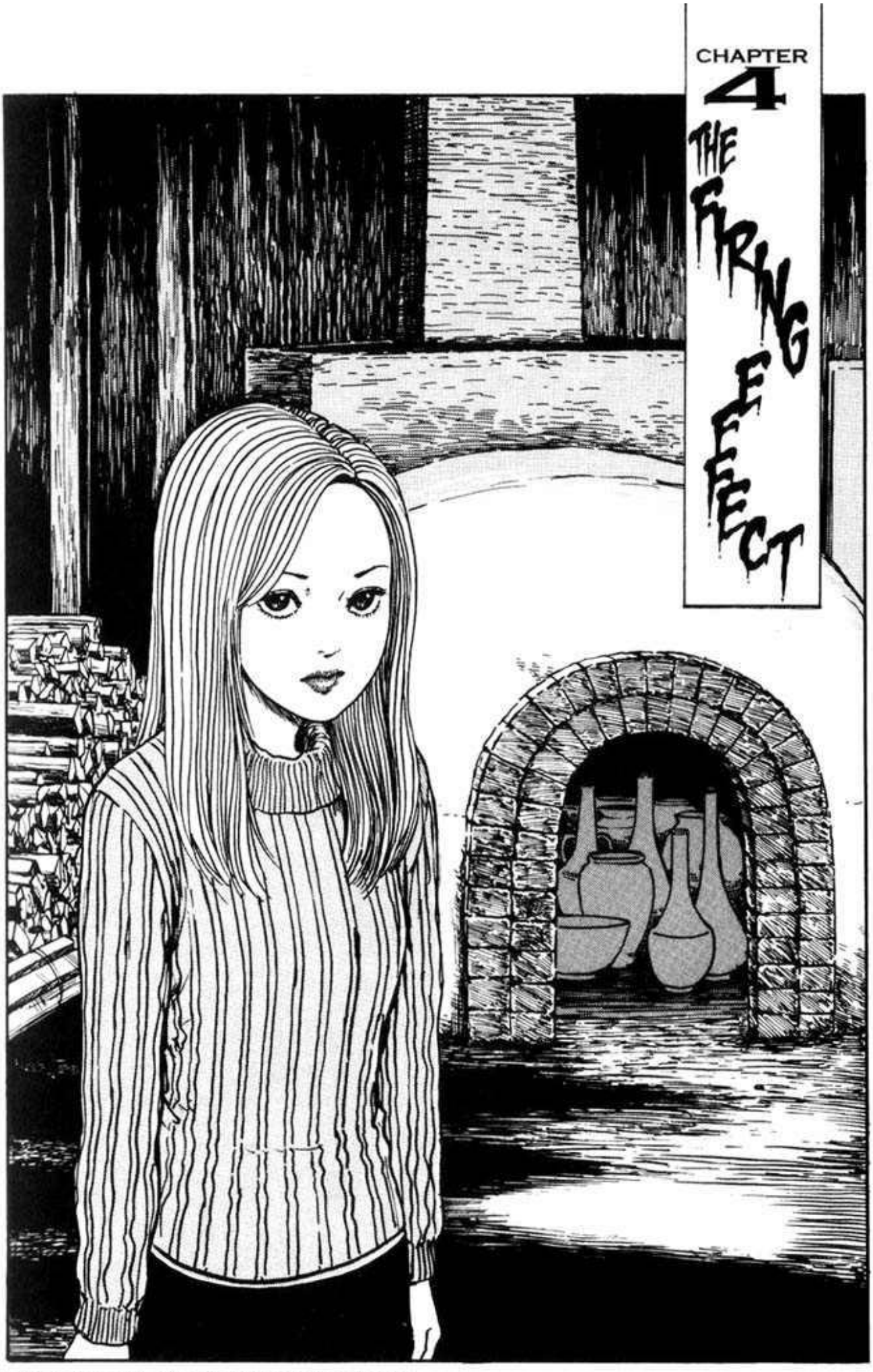
ALL RIGHT. I BROUGHT SHUICHI SAITO LIKE YOU ASKED.
NOW YOU'LL GO OUT WITH ME, RIGHT?
NO, I HAVE NO USE FOR YOU ANY MORE.
GO HOME.
WH-WHAT? BUT YOU PROMISED!
YOU SAID IF I BROUGHT HIM YOU'D GO OUT WITH ME!
HA HA... I DON'T CARE ABOUT MY PROMISES.
I JUST WANTED TO SEE SHUICHI.
WH-
WHAT?!
YOU LIED TO ME!
FLAP!

HEE...
HEE HEE HEE HEE ...
A-AZAMI.
WH...
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
HEE HEE HEE

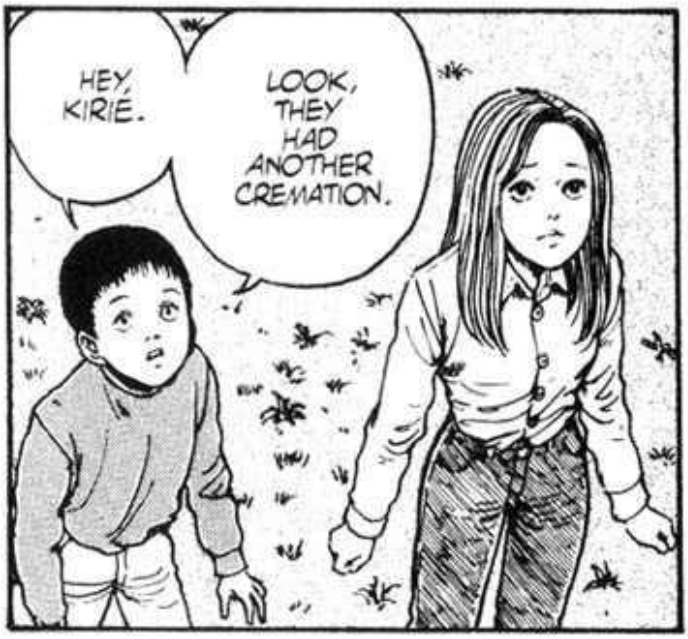
I-IS THAT... BONE?
SHEEDO
KYEE!
EAAAGH!
HUH?!

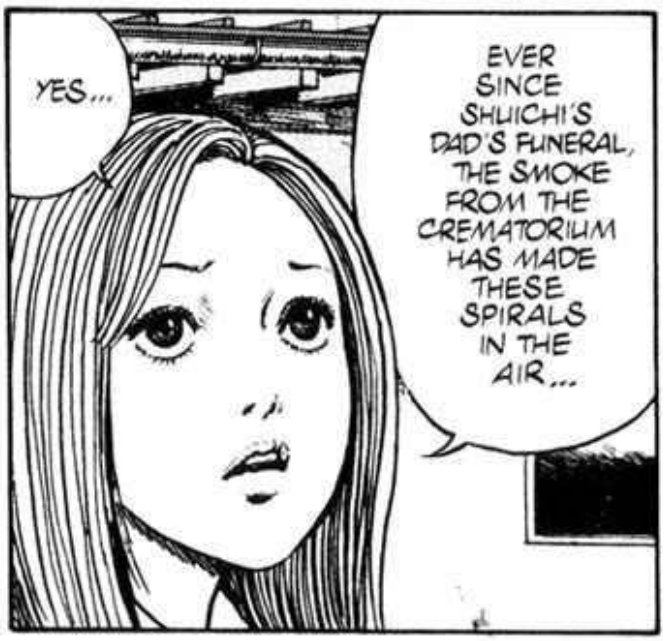
WHERE ARE YOU?
WHO WAS THAT?
SHUICHI?!
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
KIRIE!
OVER HERE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THERE?
OKADA JUST GOT SUCKED IN!
HE'S GONE!
NOW SHE'S GOING TO VANISH, TOO!
LOOK!
WHAT?!

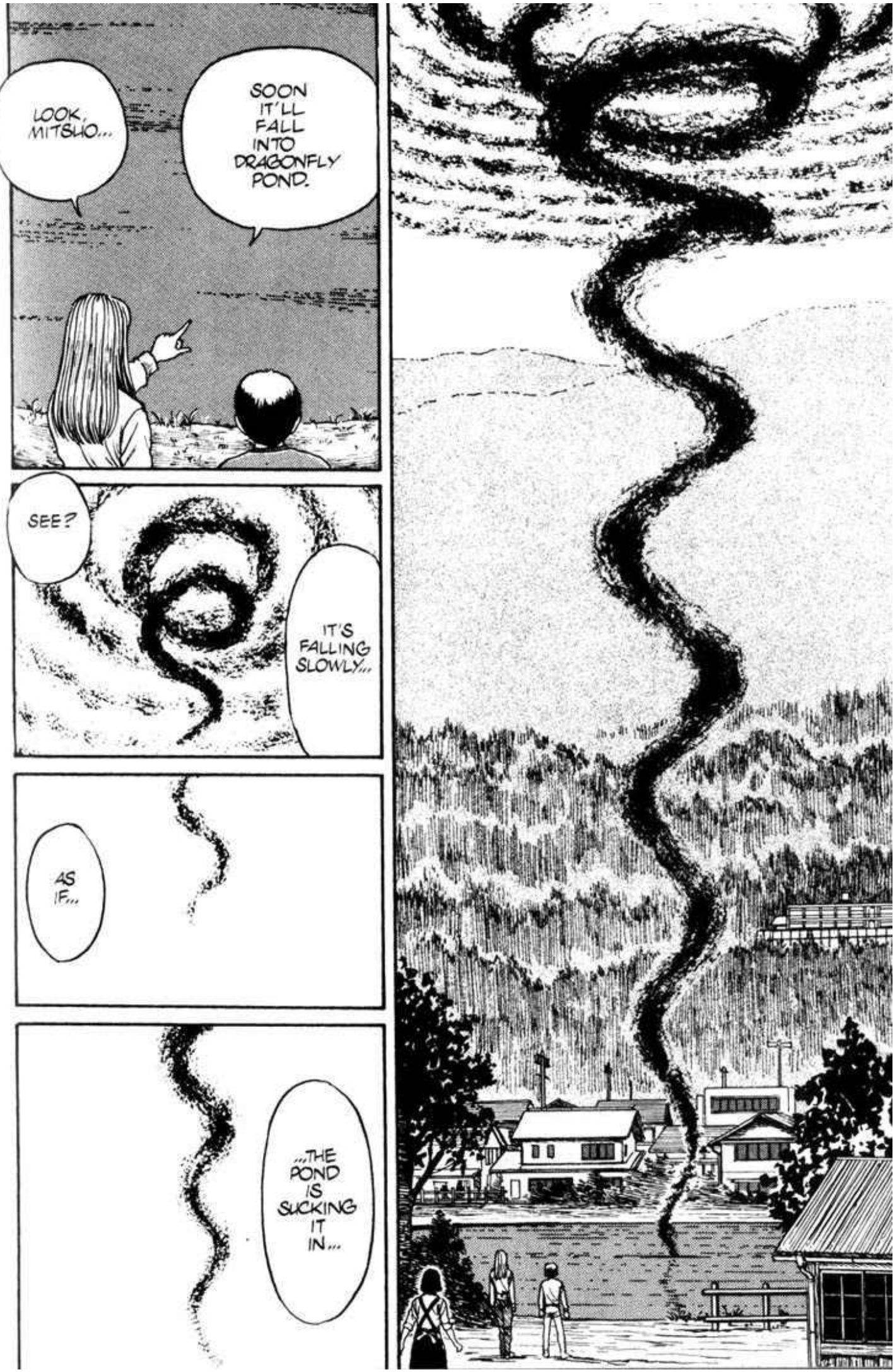
SHE'S BEING CONSUMED BY THE SPIRAL THAT APPEARED ON HER BODY!
LOOK! LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING!
HEEOOOO
AZAMI KUROTANI WAS DEVOURED FROM HEAD TO TOE...
...WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE BEHIND.



RESEARCH CONSULTANT: HISASHI SATO


HEY, KIRIE.
LOOK, THEY HAD ANOTHER CREMATION.


YES...
EVER SINCE SHUICHI'S DAD'S FUNERAL, THE SMOKE FROM THE CREMATORIUM HAS MADE THESE SPIRALS IN THE AIR...


LOOK, MITSUO...
SOON IT'LL FALL INTO DRAGONFLY POND.
SEE?
IT'S FALLING SLOWLY...
AS IF...
...THE POND IS SUCKING IT IN...

KIRIE, MITSUO.
STOP STARING AT THAT AWFUL THING AND COME INSIDE.
MOM ...
WHERE IS YOUR FATHER?
HE'S TAKING CARE OF THE KILN IN THE COTTAGE. I THINK HE WAS UP ALL NIGHT.
RROOARRRR
RROARR
BUT ...
...THIS CAN'T BE...
DEAR?
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TAKE OVER?
NO... IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

YOU'LL GET SICK IF YOU DON'T GET SOME REST SOON.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE FIRE?
JUST GO BACK TO THE HOUSE!
DON'T LOOK INSIDE THE KILN!
BUT...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOUR FATHER'S ACTING STRANGE.
L-LOOK!
EVEN THE SMOKE FROM FATHER'S KILN IS SWIRLING!

MIDORIYAMA-SHI
MIDORIYAMA-SHI CULTURAL CENTER
CERAMICS EXHIBITION 2nd Floor
Hmm...
INTERESTING ...
MR. GOSHIMA, YOUR SUBMISSIONS THIS TIME ARE VERY ODD.
YES, THEY'RE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM YOUR PREVIOUS STYLE.

I'M EMBARRASSED. THEY WERE ALL NORMAL POTS AND PLATES...
...BUT AS SOON AS I PUT THEM IN THE KILN THEY BECAME RADICALLY DEFORMED.
¥50,000
¥35,000
¥40,000
¥50
¥10,000
¥40,000
I USED A NEW CLAY, SO I SUPPOSE THE TEMPERATURE WASN'T RIGHT.
BUT I BELIEVE AS WORKS OF ART THEY'RE QUITE SUCCESSFUL.
I SEE. THEY DO HAVE A LIFE OF THEIR OWN.
THE SUBLIME COLORS, THE SPIRAL PATTERNS, THE ORGANIC SHAPES...
OH, I DIDN'T DO THAT.
THEY WERE FORMED NATURALLY IN THE KILN.
SOME KIND OF CHEMICAL REACTION MUST HAVE OCCURRED DURING THE BURN.
I SEE, "THE FIRING EFFECT"!
BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN IT CREATE SPIRALS.

BY THE WAY...
...WHAT KIND OF NEW CLAY DID YOU USE?
HEH HEH HEH...
LET'S KEEP THAT A SECRET.
SO...
YOU DIDN'T SELL A SINGLE PIECE?
THEY DON'T KNOW ART WHEN THEY SEE IT.
WELL, IT'S NOT SURPRISING. I MEAN, THIS STUFF ISN'T VERY PRACTICAL.
THEY LOOK WEIRD, TOO.
YOU'RE SUCH A HARSH CRITIC, KIRIE.
HOW COULD THESE PATTERNS FORM NATURALLY?
I DON'T KNOW.
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY-THING LIKE IT.

HEY, WHAT'S THIS?
THERE'S A PERSON'S FACE HERE!
WHAT?
WHERE? WHERE?
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
OH, NO...
THIS FACE...
AND OVER HERE, TOO!
HUH?!

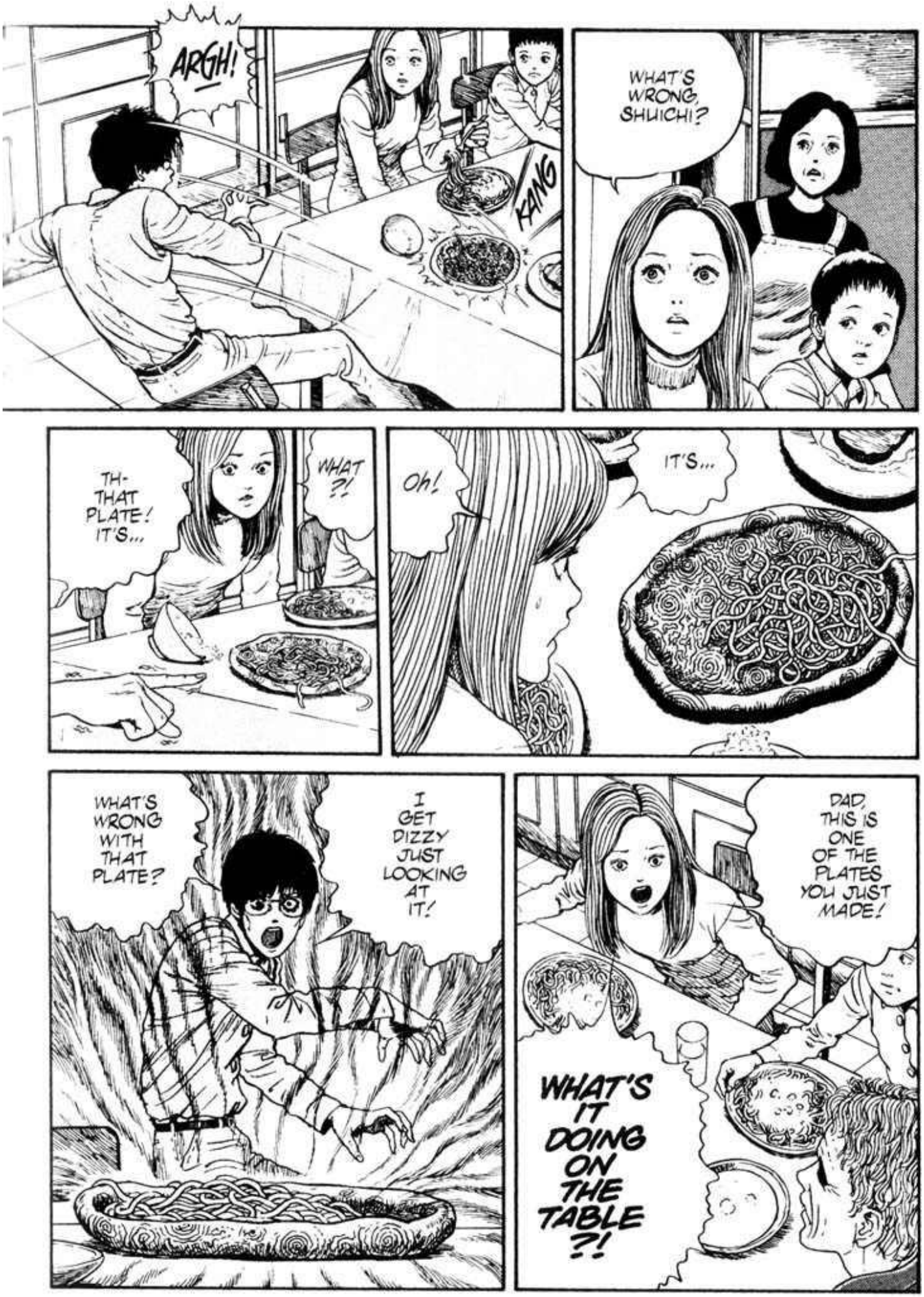
IT LOOKS LIKE A WOMAN!
UH...
MOM...
DAD...
DON'T YOU THINK THEY LOOK LIKE...
SHUICHI'S MOTHER AND FATHER?
DON'T YOU THINK SO, MOM?
OH, PLEASE...
Y-YOU'RE RIGHT!
THEY DO LOOK LIKE THEM!
THIS IS HORRIBLE.
DEAR, WHAT IS THIS?
I DON'T KNOW. IT MUST BE A COINCIDENCE.

HOW COULD YOU MAKE SOMETHING SO VICIOUS?
BUT I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING!
HERE'S ANOTHER ONE!
THERE WERE FOUR FACES IN ALL.
THE TWO NEW FACES WERE IDENTIFIED AS CITIZENS WHO HAD RECENTLY DIED.
EACH HAD BEEN CREMATED IN KUROZU-CHO.
THEIR SMOKE AND ASH HAD FORMED THE SPIRALS...
WHAT'S GOING ON, DAD? WHY WOULD THEIR FACES APPEAR ON YOUR POTTERY?
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW, BUT...
CERAMICS ARE MADE FROM EARTH AND FIRE. IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S THE WORK OF NATURE...
WE TRY OUR BEST WITH HUMAN HANDS, BUT SOMETIMES NATURE CAN CREATE THINGS BEYOND OUR IMAGINATION. AFTER ALL, MOST SHAPES ARE REALLY PATTERNS, BUT WE CAN ONLY SEE A PIECE OF THEM AT A TIME.
...

YOU STILL MAKING LUNCH FOR THAT WEIRDO?
YOU SHUT UP.
HURRY UP AND GO TO SCHOOL.
SO IS SHUICHI STILL NOT GOING TO SCHOOL?
I HOPE HE'S BEEN EATING PROPERLY.
WELL, THAT'S WHY I'M DOING THIS FOR HIM.
BUT HE HAS TO EAT A BIG, HEALTHY MEAL ONCE IN A WHILE.
WHY DON'T WE HAVE HIM OVER FOR DINNER? YOUR FATHER WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM, TOO.
WELL ...
OKAY.

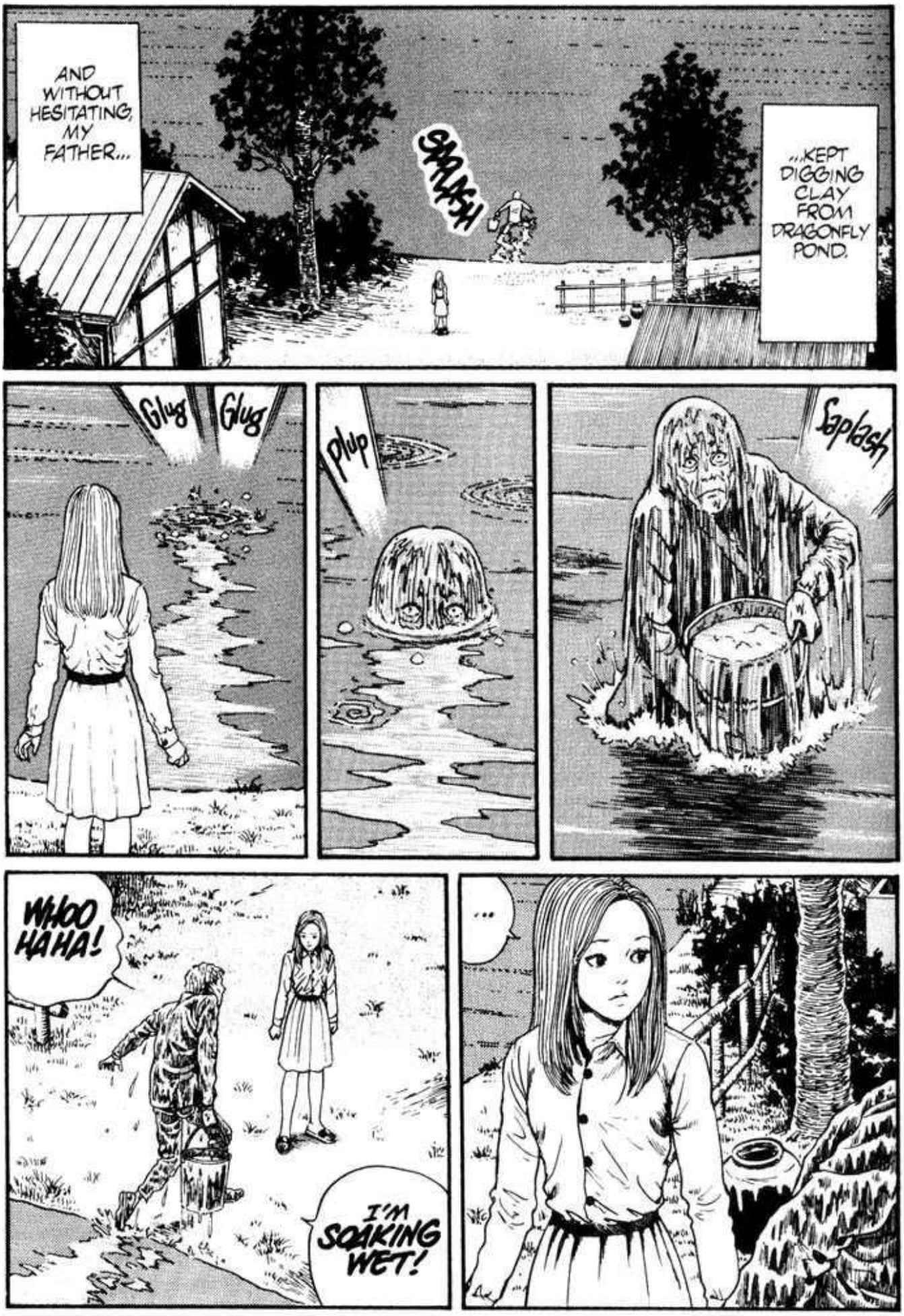
YOU DON'T HAVE TO PULL ME, KIRIE!
I HAVE TO, OTHERWISE YOU WON'T GO OUT!
YOU'LL DIE OF MALNUTRITION LIVING LIKE THAT!
BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO TO YOUR HOUSE!
IT'S NOT YOU! YOU LIVE NEXT TO DRAGONFLY POND!
DRAGONFLY POND?
YES. THAT POND IS INFESTED,, INFECTED WITH SPIRALS!
...
JUST THE SAME, I FORCED HIM TO COME OVER.

SHUICHI, PLEASE EAT ALL YOU WANT.
THANK YOU...
Gip.
...MRS. GOSHIMA.
SHF SHF
MY...YOU MUST BE REALLY HUNGRY.
YOU SHOULD COME OVER MORE OFTEN.
YES, SIR.
SLURP SLURP SLURP
SLU-
?!


ARGH!
KANG
WHAT'S WRONG, SHUICHI?
TH-THAT PLATE! IT'S...
WHAT?!
Oh!
IT'S...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT PLATE?
I GET DIZZY JUST LOOKING AT IT!
DAD, THIS IS ONE OF THE PLATES YOU JUST MADE!
WHAT'S IT DOING ON THE TABLE?!

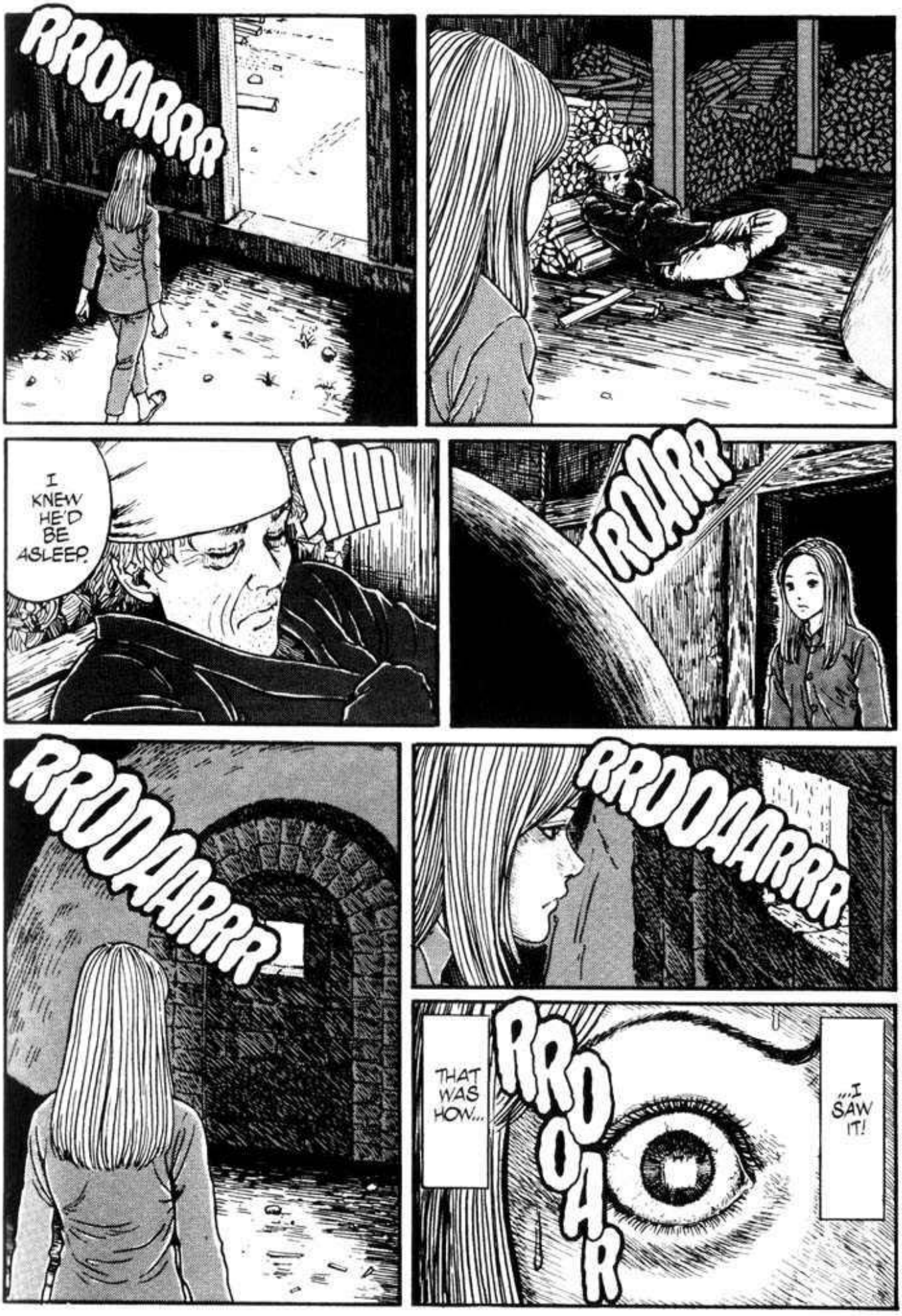
WELL, THE PLATE WAS FLAT ENOUGH TO EAT ON, SO I BROUGHT IT OUT ESPECIALLY FOR SHUICHI.
WHAT? HOW COULD YOU GIVE HIM THAT TWISTED THING?
I THOUGHT, IF ANYONE, SHUICHI WOULD LIKE IT.
TWISTED? IT'S A WORK OF ART.
BECAUSE YOUR FATHER UNDERSTOOD ART.
I STILL REMEMBER WHEN HE TOLD ME, "CERAMICS IS THE ART OF THE SPIRAL."
HE WAS A HUGE INFLUENCE. BEING AN ARTIST, NOT JUST A CRAFTSMAN. I EXPERIMENTED BY TRIAL AND ERROR AND FINALLY I FOUND THE MOST AMAZING CLAY...
AND THIS IS THE WORK I CAME UP WITH!
S-SIR...
WHERE DID THIS CLAY COME FROM?
...
DRAGONFLY POND.
DR-
DRAGONFLY POND?

FATHER, YOU USED THE MUD FROM DRAGONFLY POND?
THAT'S RIGHT. I DREDGED IT UP FROM THERE.
I-I'M SORRY! PLEASE EXCUSE ME!
SHUICHI!
URGH!
I FEEL BAD ABOUT SHUICHI, BUT DON'T YOU THINK HE'S OVERREACTING?!
AFTER ALL, IT'S JUST A PLATE.
I WOULDN'T EAT OFF A PLATE THAT WAS MADE FROM MUD FROM DRAGONFLY POND!
THAT CLAY MIGHT BE MADE OF DEAD PEOPLE!
BUT, DEAR...

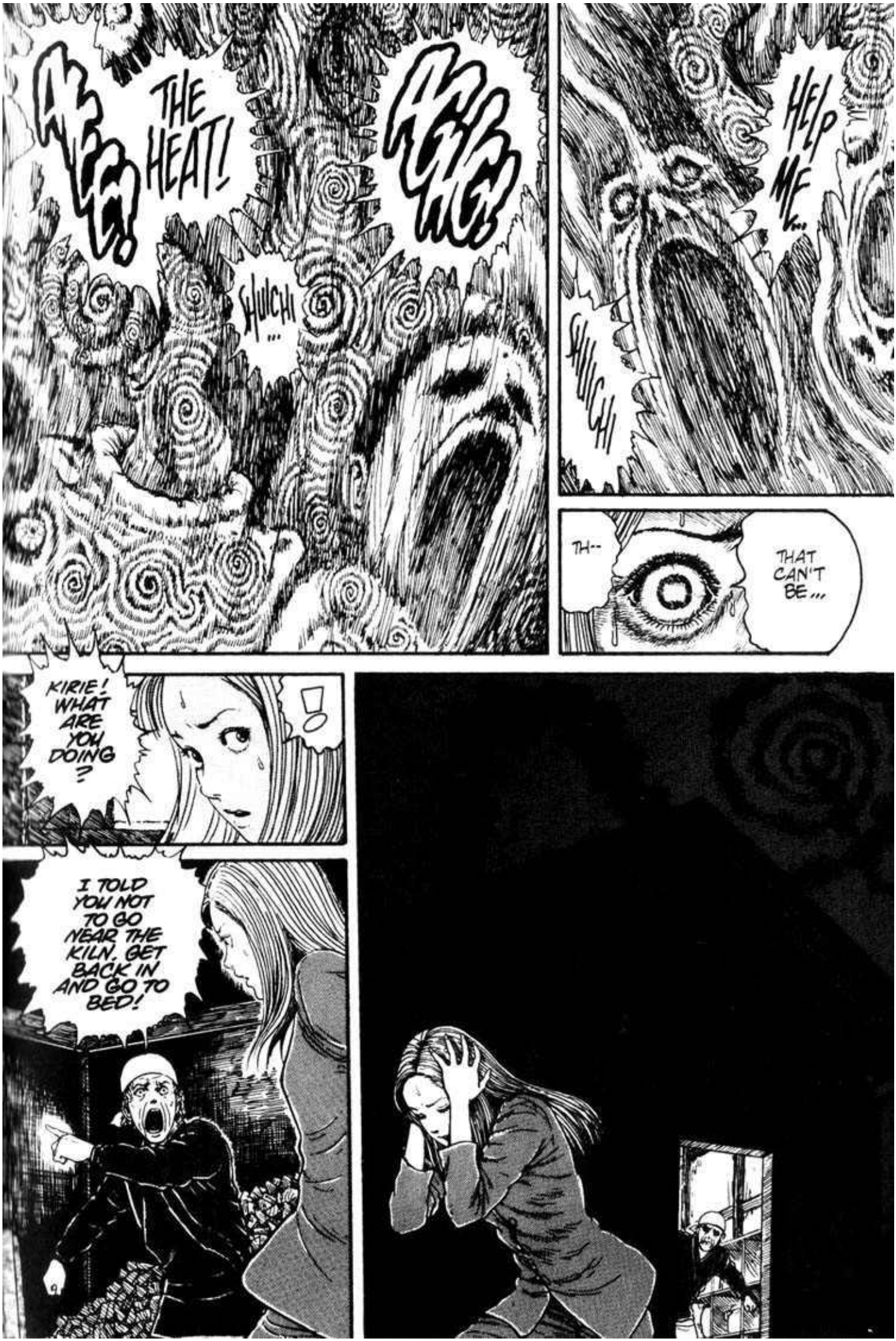

AND WITHOUT HESITATING, MY FATHER...
SPLASH
...KEPT DIGGING CLAY FROM DRAGONFLY POND.
Glug Glug
Plup
Saplash
WHOO HA HA!
I'M SOAKING WET!
...

HEY, THESE ARE NORMAL VASES.
YOU'RE NOT MAKING THOSE WARPED ONES ANY MORE?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S ONLY AFTER I PUT THEM IN THE KILN ...
...THAT THEY TURN THAT WAY.
FINALLY THE KILN WAS FIRED UP.
FOR SIX DAYS AND NIGHTS IT WOULD BURN.
ROAARR
WE WERE STRICTLY FORBIDDEN TO GO NEAR THE COTTAGE.

IT'S ALREADY ONE IN THE MORNING.
I WONDER IF FATHER'S STILL UP.
CHAK
I WONDER IF HE'S ALL RIGHT. HE HASN'T SLEPT IN TWO DAYS.
ROARRR
I SHOULD GO CHECK.
THE COTTAGE MIGHT CATCH FIRE IF HE FALLS ASLEEP.


RROARRR
I KNEW HE'D BE ASLEEP.
ROARR
RRODAARRR
RRODAARRR
THAT WAS HOW...
RROAR
...I SAW IT!

RRRROARR
AHHH
AHHHH


AGH!
THE HEAT!
AGHG
SHUICHI...
HELP ME...
SHUICHI
TH--
THAT CAN'T BE...
KIRIE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO GO NEAR THE KILN. GET BACK IN AND GO TO BED!

AIEEE
THE HEAT... THE HEAT...
SHUICHI... SHUICHI...
THE HEAT...
THE HEAT!!
I CAN STILL HEAR THEM!!!
THEIR VOICES ARE REACHING THIS FAR!
SHUICHI!!!
SHUICHI!!!
THIS IS GOING TO CONTINUE FOR FOUR MORE DAYS!
THEY'RE GOING TO BE SUFFERING LIKE THIS FOR FOUR DAYS IN THE KILN!!
!
RRRING
RRRING
HELLO...
THE HEAT... THE HEAT...
AIEEE
IT'S ME, SHUICHI. I GOT LONELY, SO I CALLED YOU.
Oh...
YOU DON'T SOUND WELL.
AIEEE
OH... NO... IT'S NOTHING.

SHUICHI... SHUICHI...
YOU'RE LYING! TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!
I TOLD YOU, IT'S NOTHING.
SHUICHI... HELP ME...
HM? HEY, I HEAR SOMETHING... SOMEONE'S VOICE?
WHAT?
TH-THERE'S NO ONE.
SHUICHI...
SHUICHI...
YOU'RE LYING! SOMEONE'S SCREAMING... I CAN HEAR IT!
AIEEEEE
THE HEAT... THE HEAT...
HELP ME...
AIEEEEE
THE SAME THING MUST HAVE HAPPENED THE LAST TIME HE FIRED UP THE KILN.
WE JUST DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT.
ONLY FATHER KNEW.
AND HE DIDN'T TELL US...

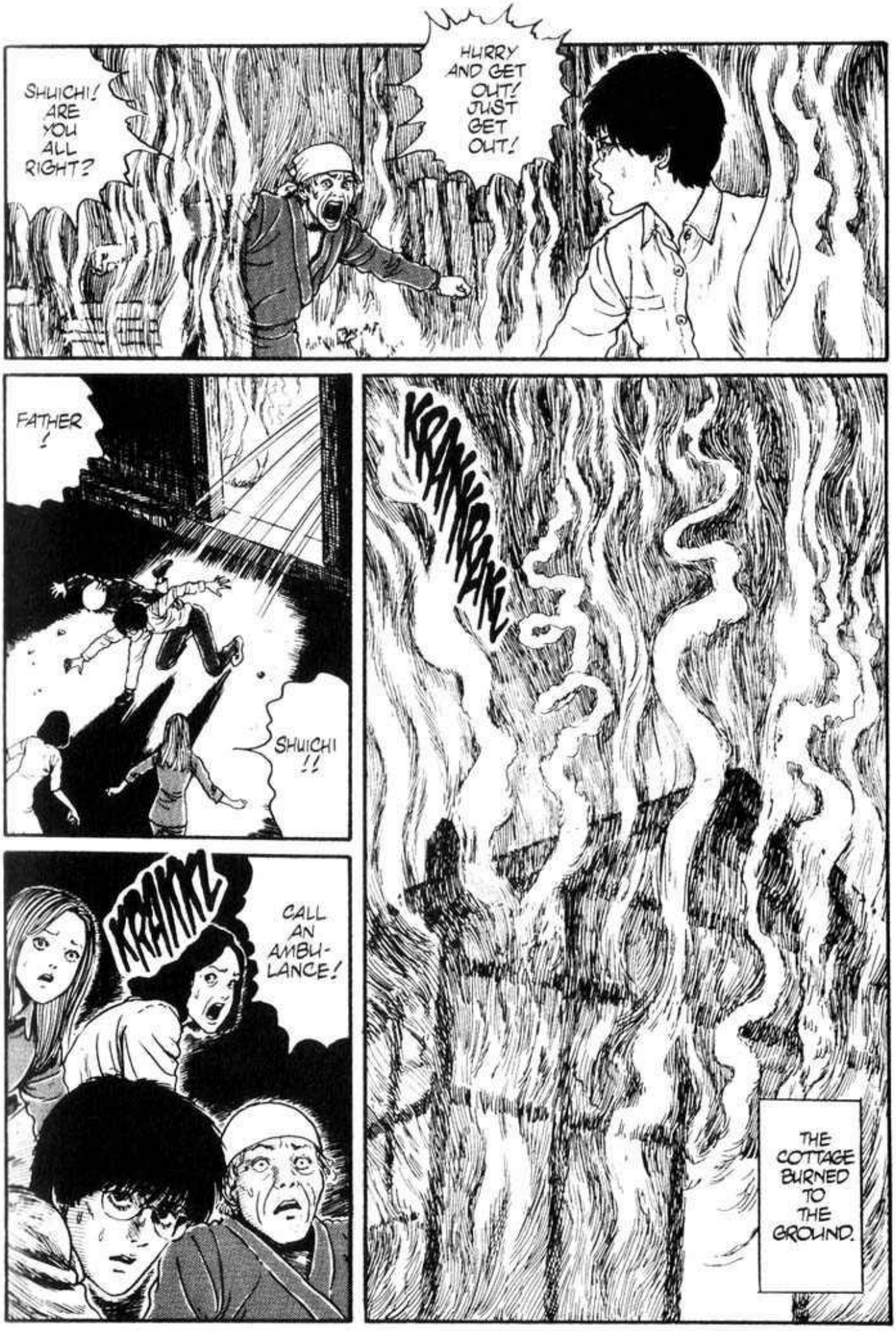
SHUICHI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?! IT'S LATE!
GO HOME!
?!
MR. GOSHIMA, I NEED TO SEE YOUR KILN!
NO! GO HOME!
SHUICHI ...?
YOU'RE HERE?
SOMEONE'S CALLING FOR ME!
RRROAR
CALLING ME FROM THE KILN!
NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE!
SHUICHI
IT SOUNDS LIKE MY MOTHER!
HELP ME!
I SAID GO HOME!
SHUICHI...
RROARR
SHUICHI...

YES... IT'S HER...
MY FATHER'S THERE, TOO!
WHY?
HOW COULD THEY BE IN THERE?
GET OUT OF THE WAY!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
WHOO

HRRRR
OOOOORR

DIDIDIDI

AHEE
RRRRILLL
THE HEAT! THE HEAT!
SHUIIICHIII!
TUMP
TUMP
SSLL
SSLL


SHUICHI! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HURRY AND GET OUT! JUST GET OUT!
FATHER!
SHUICHI!!
KRAKKRAK!
KRAKKRAK!
CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!
THE COTTAGE BURNED TO THE GROUND.

I SUPPOSE WE WERE LUCKY WE ONLY LOST THE KILN.

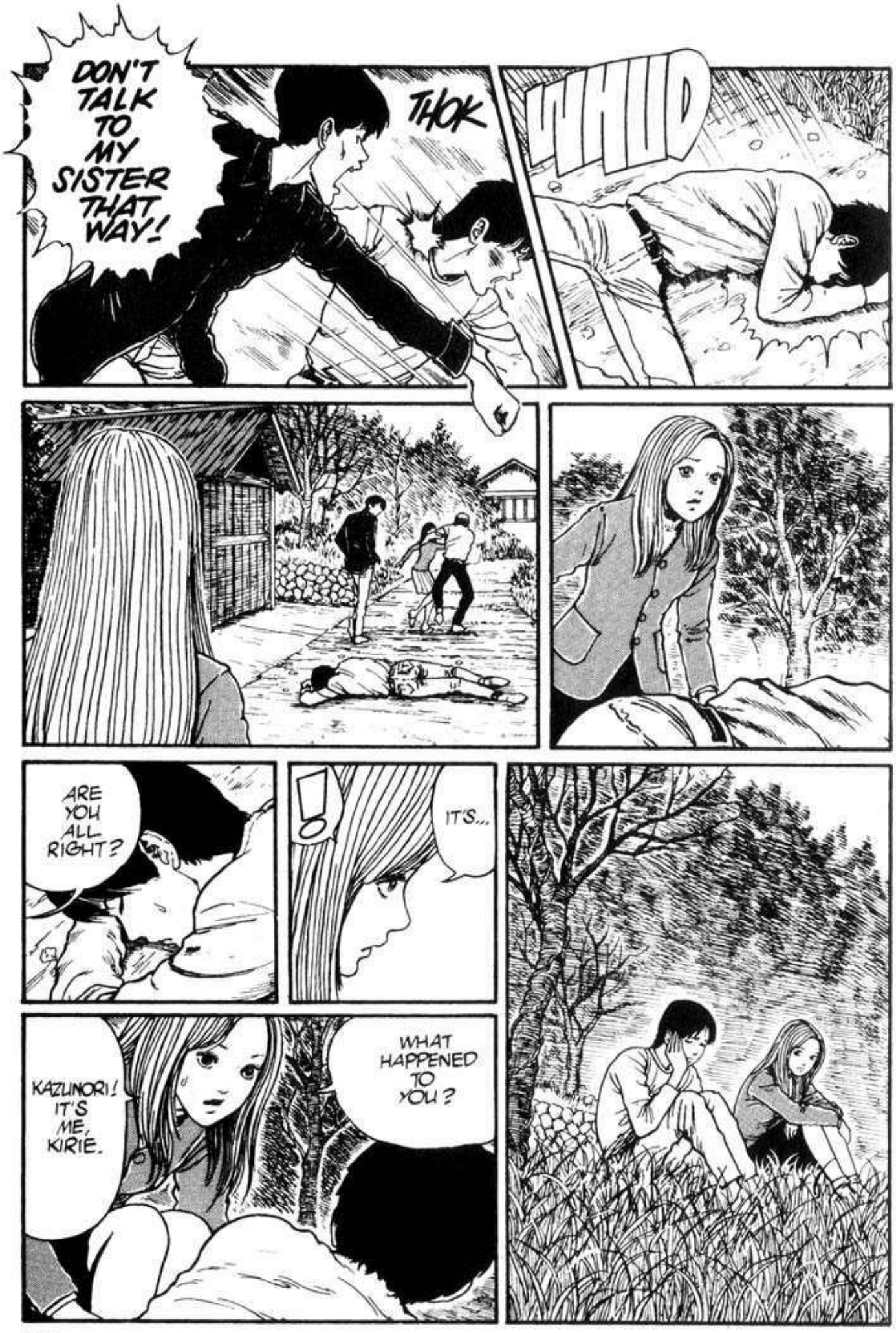
EVEN BY DAYLIGHT, FATHER'S OBSESSION CONTINUED.
SCRP
SCRP

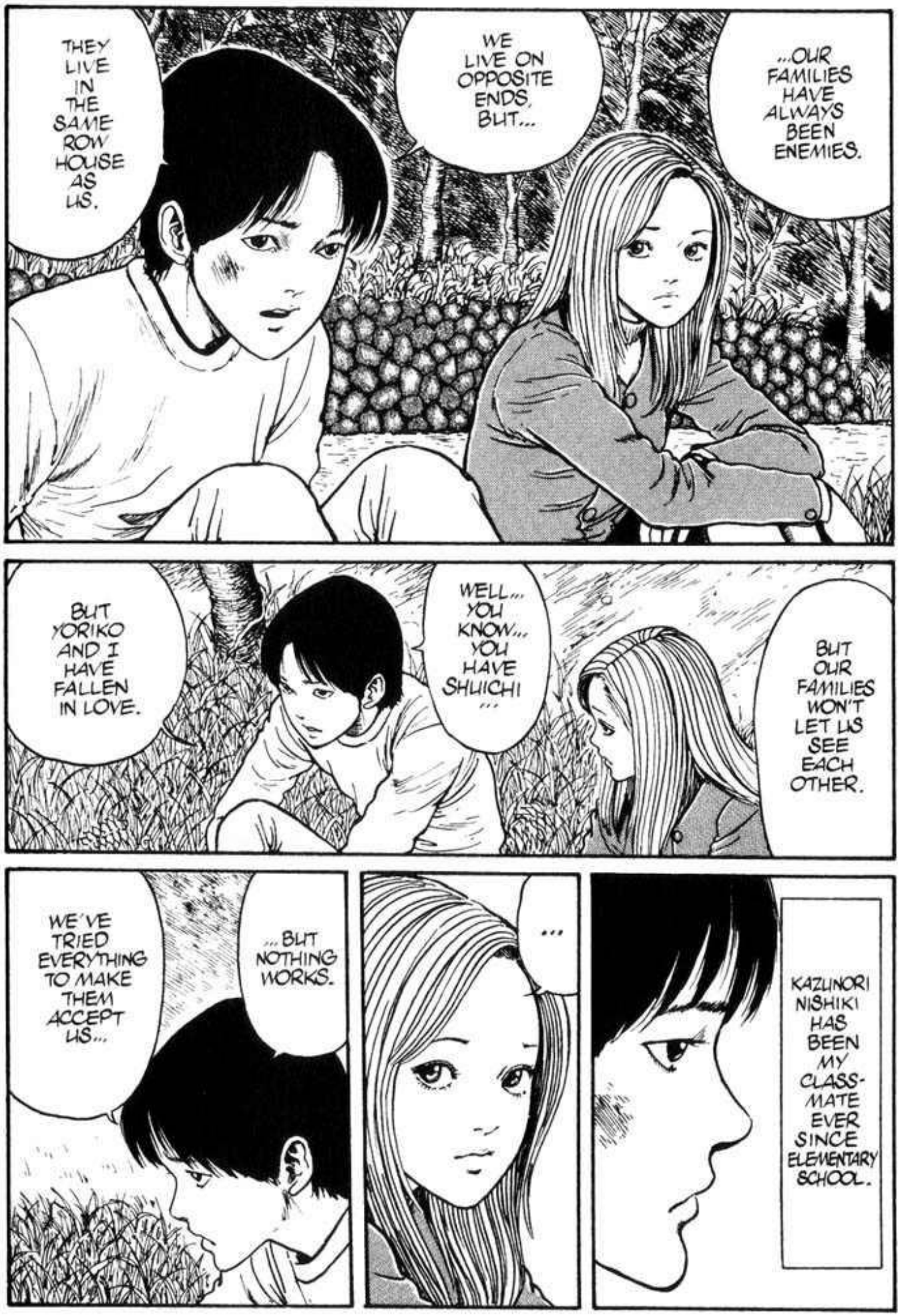
AHH, YES, HERE WE GO!
WHAT A NICE SURPRISE... THIS TURNED OUT WELL...
THERE MUST BE OTHERS BURIED AROUND HERE...

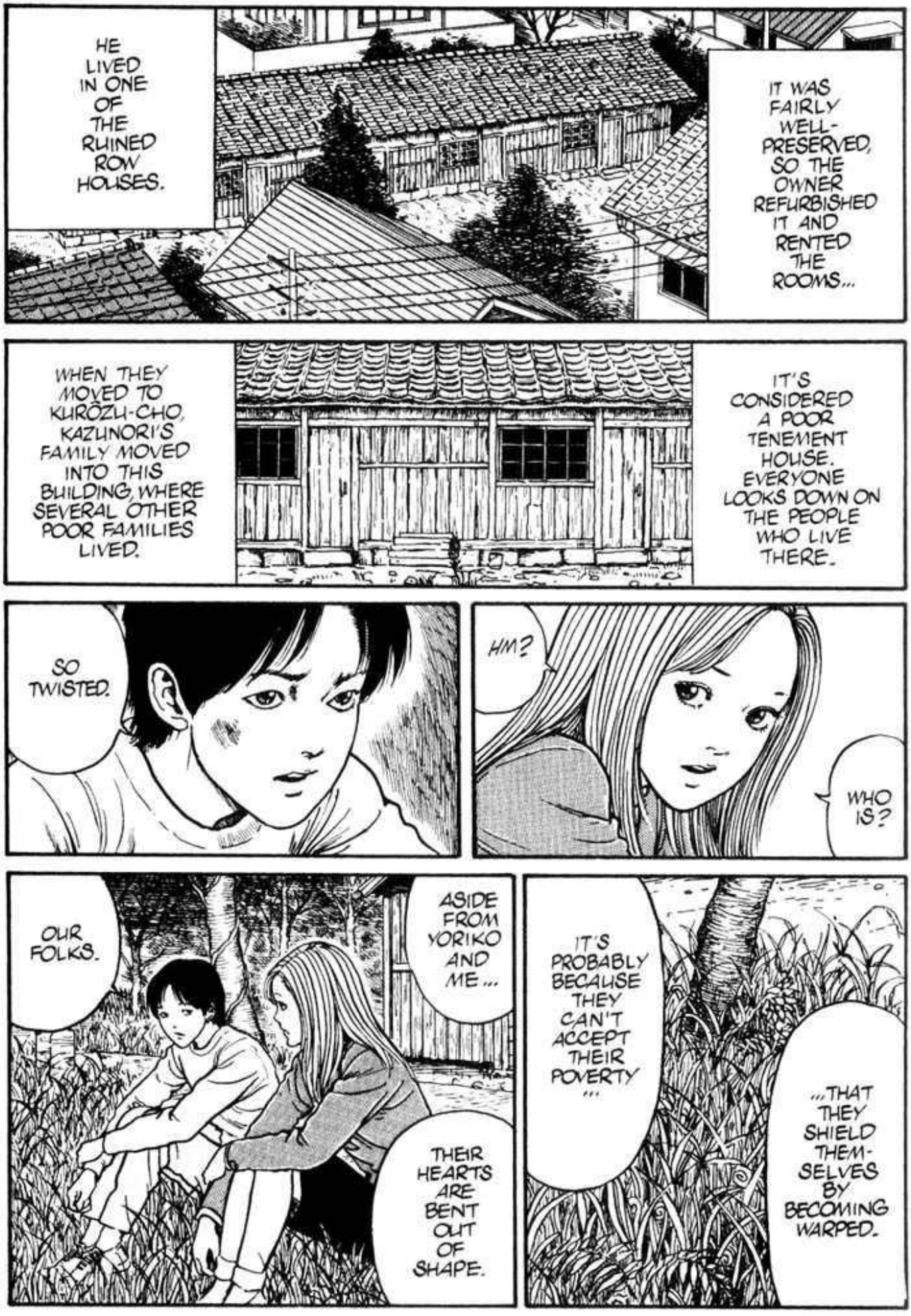
CHAPTER
5
TWISTED SOULS

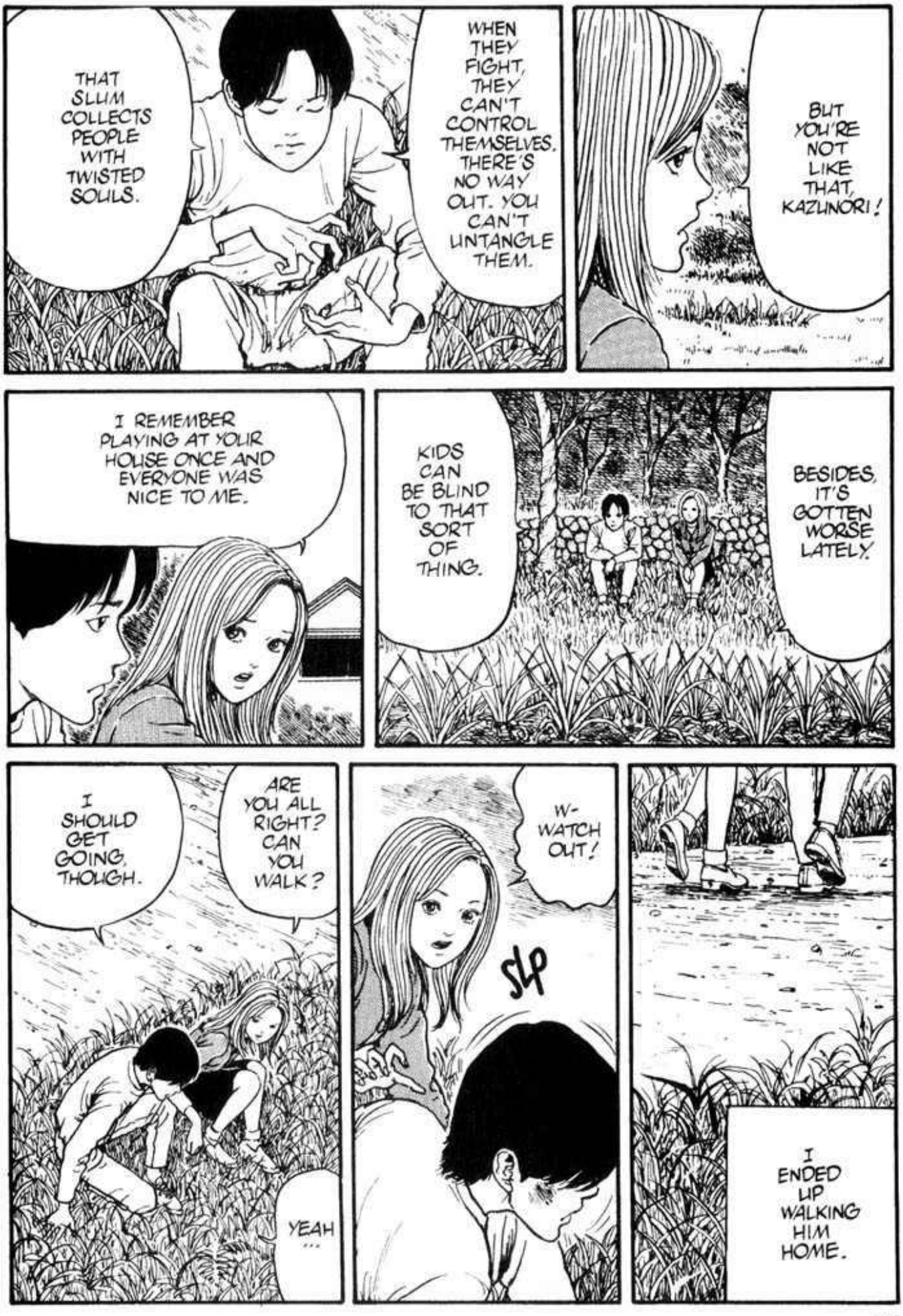
IN KURÔZU-CHO...
...THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ROW HOUSES IN RUINS.
SOME ARE HIDDEN BETWEEN NEW BUILDINGS.
SOME IN THE OPEN, SIDE BY SIDE.
WHILE OTHERS, ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSING ...
...CAN BE FOUND ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN.

I TOLD YOU NOT TO SEE HER AGAIN!
THE NEXT TIME I CATCH YOU WITH MY DAUGHTER, I'LL MAKE YOU PAY!
PLEASE, SIR, JUST LET ME TALK TO HER!
NO!
I CAN'T LET MY PRECIOUS DAUGHTER NEAR YOUR WRETCHED FAMILY!
COME ON, YORIKO!
LET ME GO, DAD!
YORIKO!


DON'T TALK TO MY SISTER THAT WAY!
THOK
WHUD
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S...
KAZUNORI! IT'S ME, KIRIE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?


KAZUNORI NISHIKI HAS BEEN MY CLASS-MATE EVER SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
...
...BUT NOTHING WORKS.
WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING TO MAKE THEM ACCEPT US...
BUT OUR FAMILIES WON'T LET US SEE EACH OTHER.
WELL... YOU KNOW... YOU HAVE SHUICHI ...
BUT YORIKO AND I HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE.
...OUR FAMILIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ENEMIES.
WE LIVE ON OPPOSITE ENDS, BUT...
THEY LIVE IN THE SAME ROW HOUSE AS US.

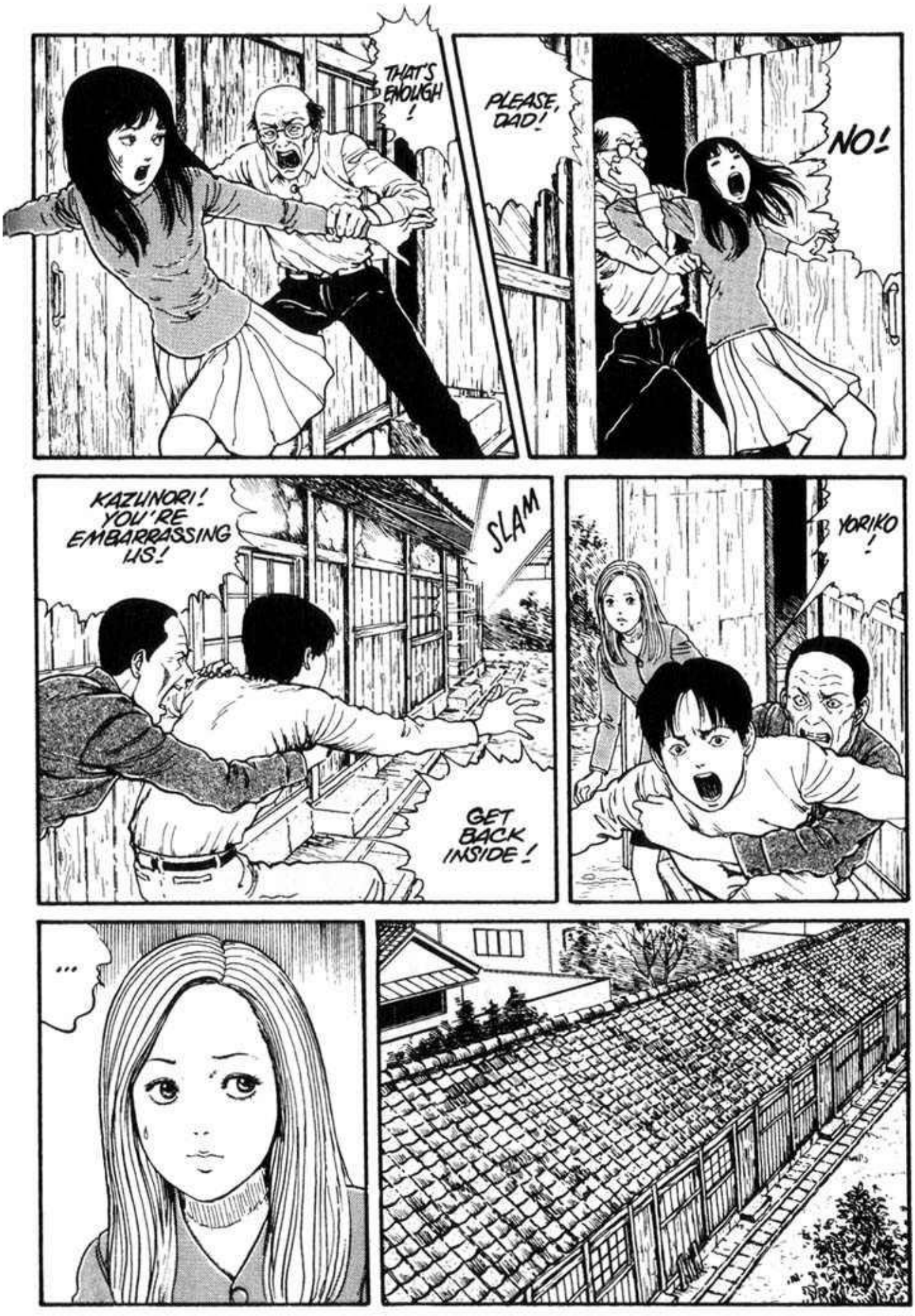

HE LIVED IN ONE OF THE RUINED ROW HOUSES.
IT WAS FAIRLY WELL-PRESERVED, SO THE OWNER REFURBISHED IT AND RENTED THE ROOMS...
WHEN THEY MOVED TO KURŌZU-CHO, KAZUNORI'S FAMILY MOVED INTO THIS BUILDING, WHERE SEVERAL OTHER POOR FAMILIES LIVED.
IT'S CONSIDERED A POOR TENEMENT HOUSE. EVERYONE LOOKS DOWN ON THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE.
SO TWISTED.
HM?
WHO IS?
OUR FOLKS.
ASIDE FROM YORIKO AND ME...
THEIR HEARTS ARE BENT OUT OF SHAPE.
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY CAN'T ACCEPT THEIR POVERTY ...
...THAT THEY SHIELD THEM-SELVES BY BECOMING WARPED.


THAT SLUM COLLECTS PEOPLE WITH TWISTED SOULS.
WHEN THEY FIGHT, THEY CAN'T CONTROL THEMSELVES. THERE'S NO WAY OUT. YOU CAN'T UNTANGLE THEM.
BUT YOU'RE NOT LIKE THAT, KAZUNORI!
I REMEMBER PLAYING AT YOUR HOUSE ONCE AND EVERYONE WAS NICE TO ME.
KIDS CAN BE BLIND TO THAT SORT OF THING.
BESIDES, IT'S GOTTEN WORSE LATELY.
I SHOULD GET GOING, THOUGH.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? CAN YOU WALK?
YEAH ...
W-WATCH OUT!
SLP
I ENDED UP WALKING HIM HOME.

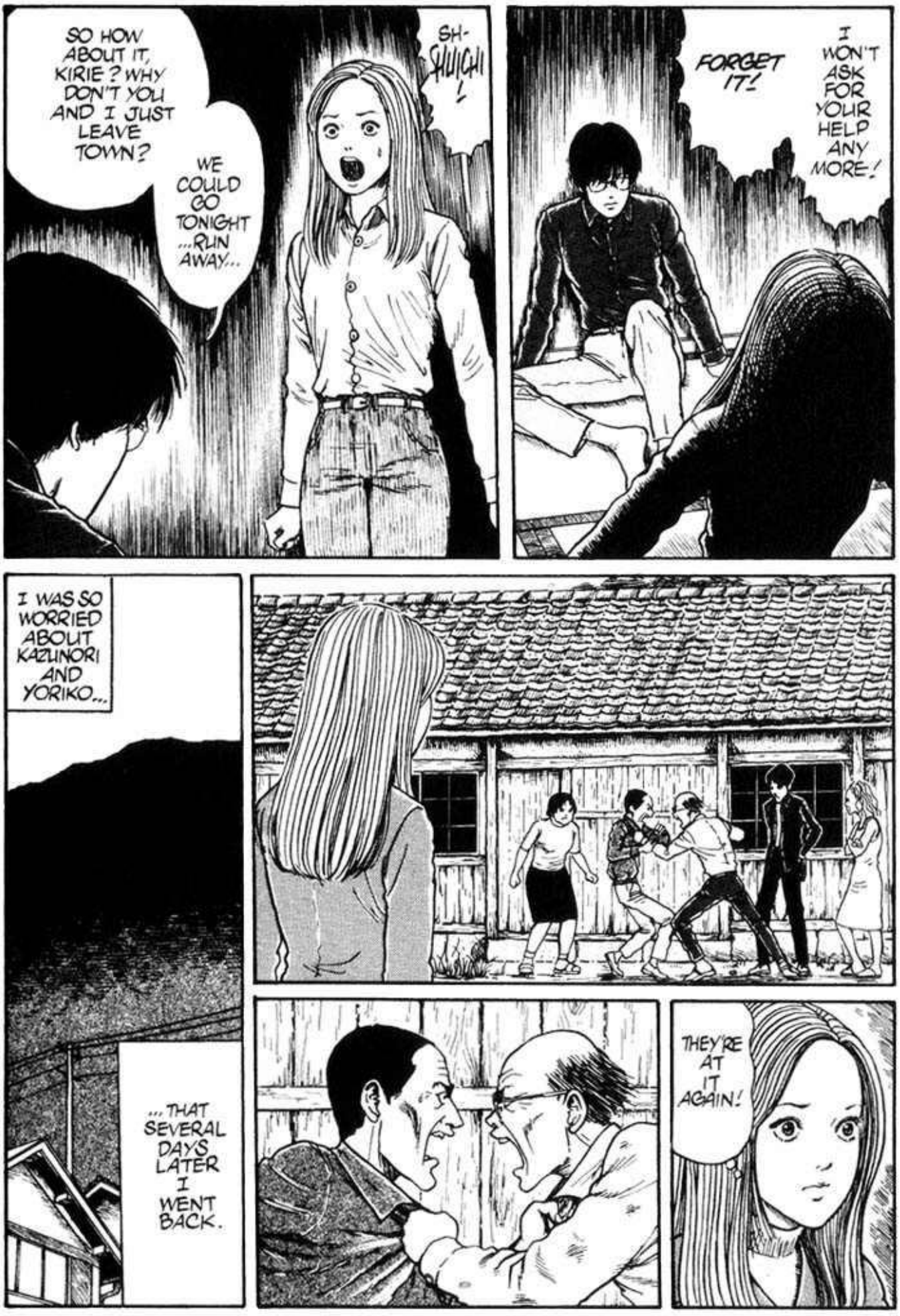
KAZUNORI! I TOLD YOU NOT TO SEE THAT GIRL!!
AND THEN YOU LET THEM BEAT YOU UP? HOW PATHETIC!
DAMN THOSE ENDOS!
I'LL TEACH THEM A LESSON...
THEY HURT MY POOR KAZUNORI ...
SO THEIR SON DID THIS TO YOU?
OW, MOM...
MAYBE IF HE GOT A JOB HE WOULDN'T HAVE TIME TO HURT MY BOY!
INSTEAD OF LYING AROUND ALL DAY LIKE A PARASITE!
SHUT UP, BITCH! OR I'LL KILL YOU!
W-WHAT? WHY, YOU THUG!
THEY LIVE AT OPPOSITE ENDS, BUT THEIR VOICES GO RIGHT THROUGH THE WALLS...

WHAT WAS THAT YOU SAID ABOUT MY SON?!
THERE SHE GOES!
THE THUG'S MOTHER.
STOP IT, MOM.
SHUT YOUR MOUTH!
I SAID, NO WONDER YOUR SON'S SO SCREWED UP! HIS FATHER GAMBLED AWAY ALL YOUR MONEY!
MAKING YOU LIVE IN THIS SHACK!
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK! YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE IF YOUR HUSBAND COULD RUN A BUSINESS! I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU!
SHUT UP!
URRR...
STOP IT!

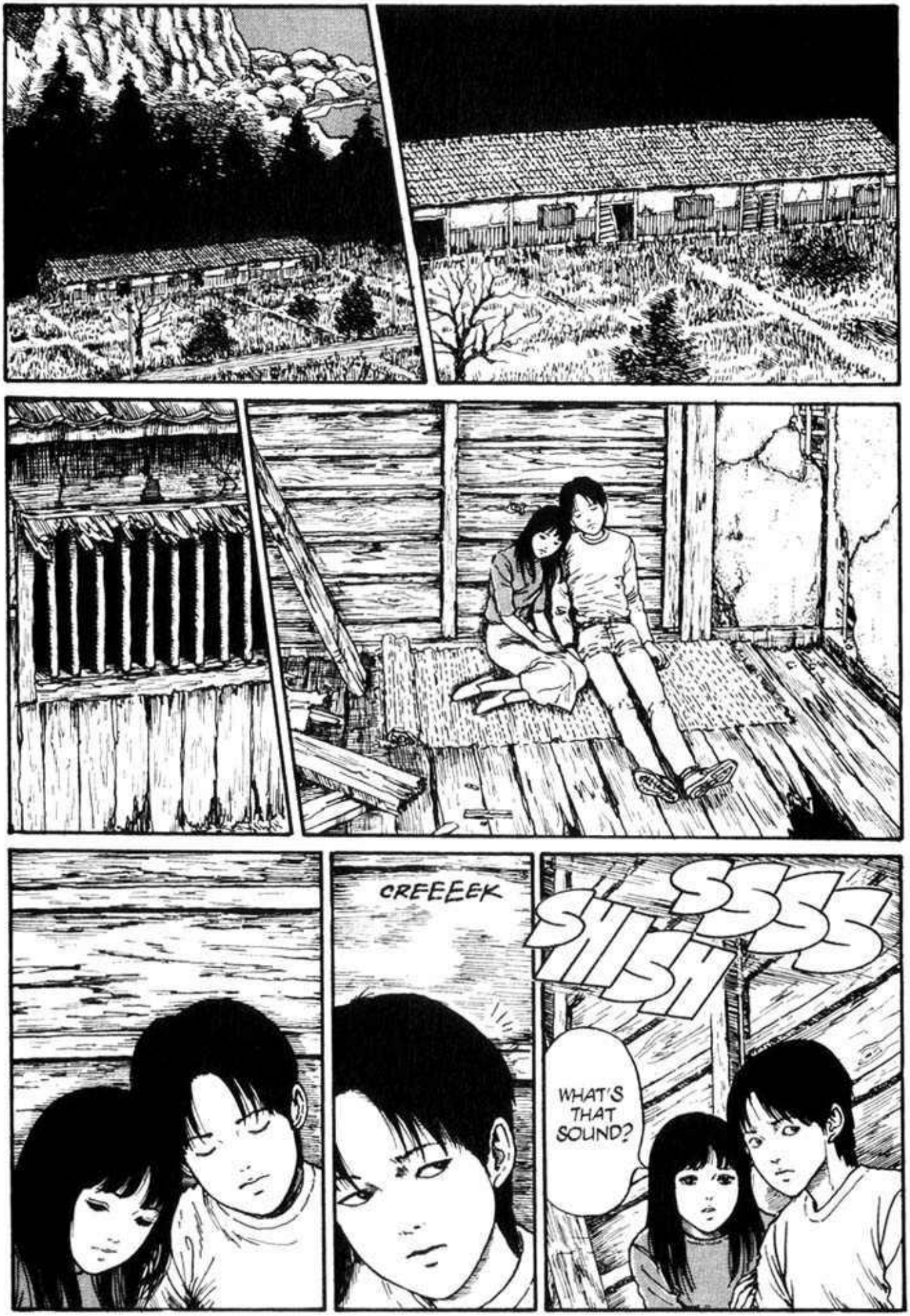
I CAN'T STAND IT!
WHY CAN'T YOU STOP FIGHTING?
DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?
I LOVE YORIKO!
IT'S ALL POINTLESS! FORGET ABOUT IT!
WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ALONG?
SLAM
SLAM
KAZUNORI!
YORIKO!


THAT'S ENOUGH!
PLEASE, DAD!
NO!
KAZUNORI! YOU'RE EMBARRASSING US!
SLAM
GET BACK INSIDE!
YORIKO!
...

THAT'S WHAT'S GOING ON, SHUICHI.
I WISH THEY COULD FIND A WAY TO BE HAPPY.
MMM.
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, THOUGH.
WHY NOT?
THE REASON THE INHABITANTS OF THAT ROW HOUSE DON'T GET ALONG...
...IS BECAUSE THEIR HOUSE IS CURSED BY THE SPIRAL.
THE SPIRAL HAS TWISTED THEIR SOULS.
WHAT?!
IF WHAT I SAW HASN'T DRIVEN ME COMPLETELY INSANE, THEN THOSE HOUSES ARE PART OF THIS. AND EVERYONE IN THEM IS DOOMED.

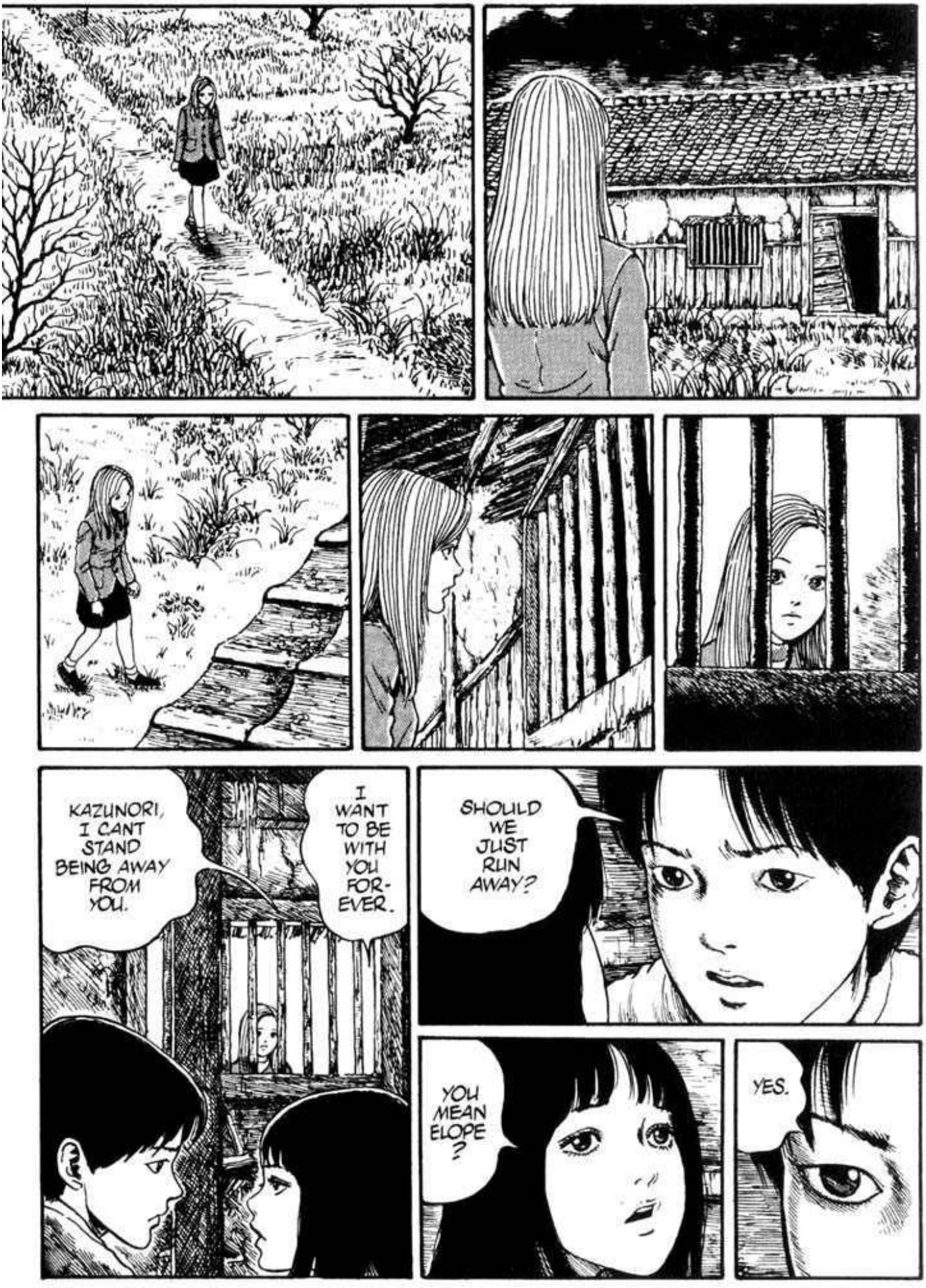

SO HOW ABOUT IT, KIRIE? WHY DON'T YOU AND I JUST LEAVE TOWN?
WE COULD GO TONIGHT ...RUN AWAY...
SH-SHUICHI!
I WON'T ASK FOR YOUR HELP ANY MORE!
FORGET IT!
I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT KAZUNORI AND YORIKO...
...THAT SEVERAL DAYS LATER I WENT BACK.
THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN!

IT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T KEEP AN EYE ON THAT IMBECILE SON OF YOURS!
I ADVISE YOU TIE UP YOUR DAUGHTER.
EXCUSE ME ...
HAS... HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?
OH, KIRIE...
AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU.
KAZUNORI'S BEEN SEDUCED BY THAT GIRL AGAIN. THEY'VE BEEN GONE SINCE YESTERDAY.
IT'S YOUR SON WHO DID THE SEDUCING!
THEY'RE PROBABLY HUDDLED UP IN SOME ABANDONED SHACK.
LET'S GO FIND THEM.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S SPLIT UP. IF THEY FIND THEM FIRST THEY'LL GO SOFT ON THEM.


CREEEEK
SSSS
SHISH
WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

SSSSHISH
SHUURRR
AAHH!
SHUURR
W-WHAT IS THAT?
SNAKES!
TWO SNAKES INTER-TWINED!

HOW CREEPY.
THEY'RE FIGHTING ...
ALL TWISTED UP... JUST LIKE OUR PARENTS...
NO.
THEY'RE NOT FIGHTING.
THEY'RE ...
slish
SLIP


KAZUNORI, I CANT STAND BEING AWAY FROM YOU.
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU FOR-EVER.
SHOULD WE JUST RUN AWAY?
YOU MEAN ELOPE?
YES.

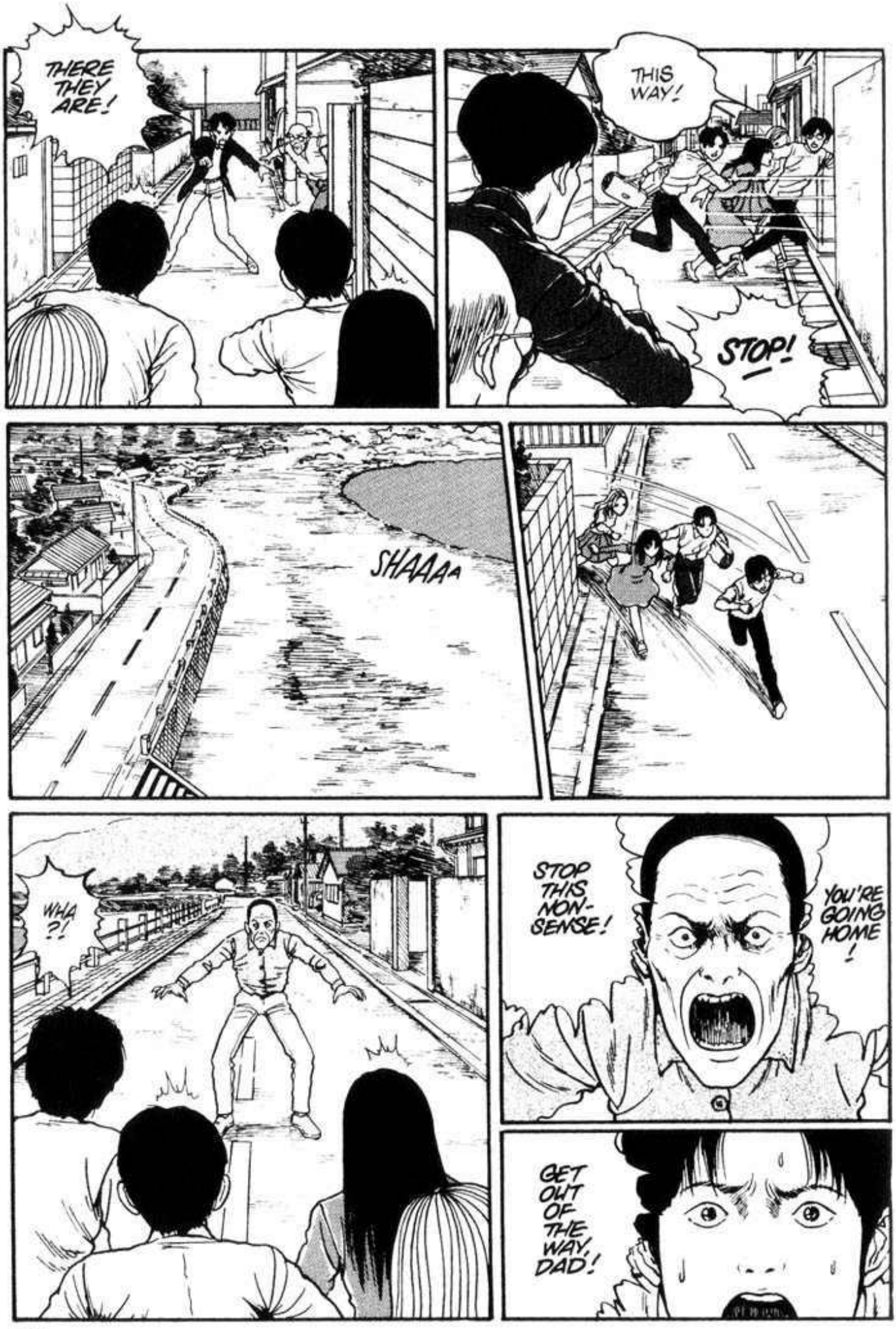
LET'S DO IT! LET'S LEAVE KUROZU-CHO!
I'M SO HAPPY!
WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER!
I'LL GO ANY-WHERE IF IT MEANS I CAN BE WITH YOU.
ALL RIGHT, THEN, TOMOR-ROW!
RUNNING AWAY... WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THEM?
THEY MUST BE HERE.
OH, NO.
MR. ENDO SIR?

HUH?!
EEEYAAH! STOP IT, DAD!
COME ON, YORIKO.
NO!
NO! NO!
...
KAZUNORI ...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

THEY'RE TERRIBLE.
POOR YORIKO...
MAYBE IT WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU TWO TO RUN AWAY.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP...
URR...
OH...
IT'S YOU.

AT THAT TIME, I JUST DIDN'T NOTICE IT...
I DIDN'T SEE HOW HIS BODY WAS TWIST-ED...
THE NEXT DAY...
ARE THEY REALLY COMING?
YES, THEY PROMISED TO MEET ME HERE.
WE'LL ACCOMPANY THEM TO THE STATION AND SEE THEM OFF.
ELOPING, HUH...
GOOD IDEA.

HERE THEY COME!
HUFF HUFF
HUFF HUFF
WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT'S THE RUSH?
OUR PARENTS SAW US LEAVING!
THEY HAVE SOMEONE WAITING AT THE STATION!
OUR FATHERS ARE AFTER US NOW.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO, THEN?
WE'LL HEAD TO THE BEACH!
WE'LL CIRCLE AROUND TO THE ROAD OUT OF TOWN!
SHUICHI!

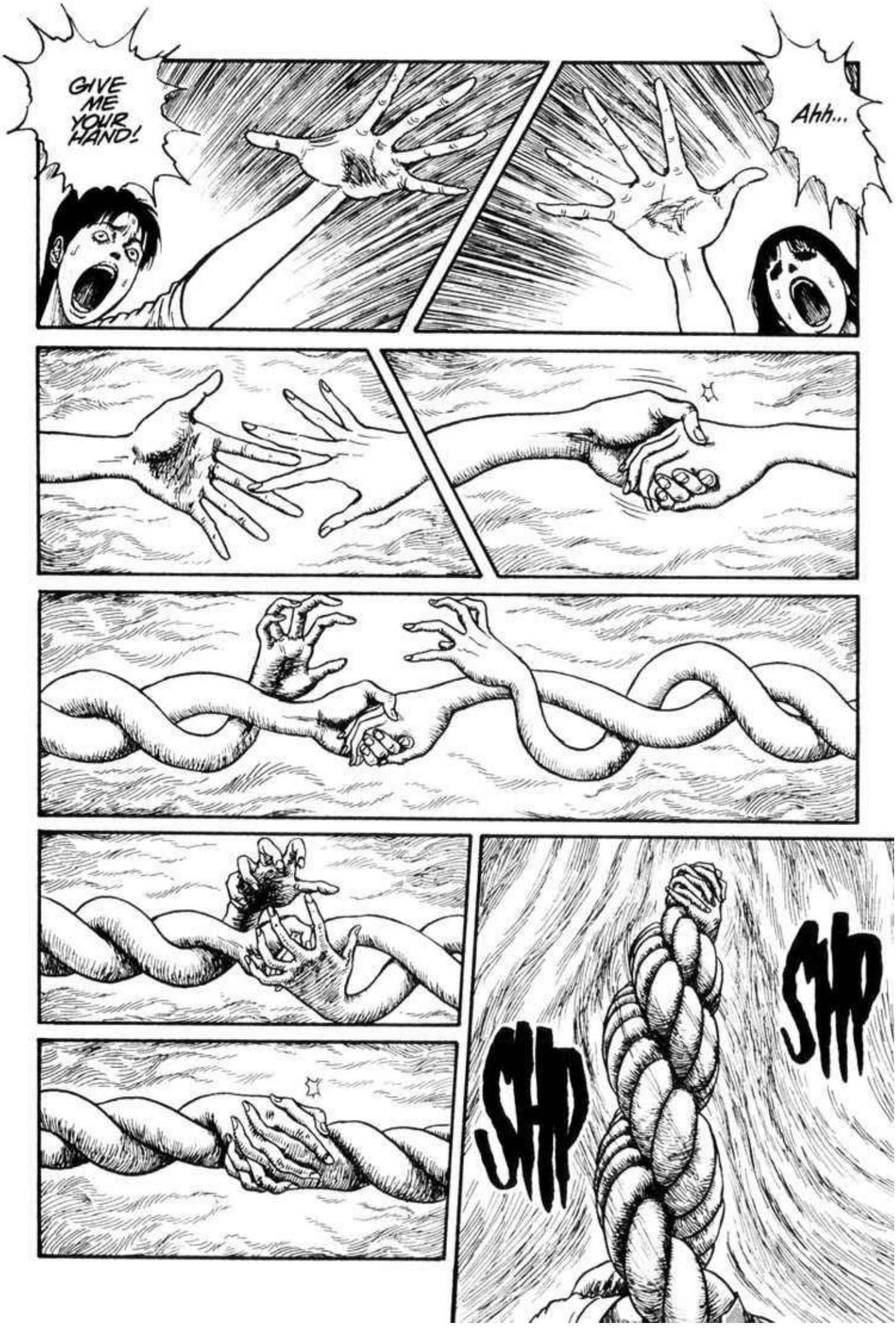

THERE THEY ARE!
THIS WAY!
STOP!
SHAAAA
WHA ?!
STOP THIS NON-SENSE!
YOU'RE GOING HOME!
GET OUT OF THE WAY, DAD!

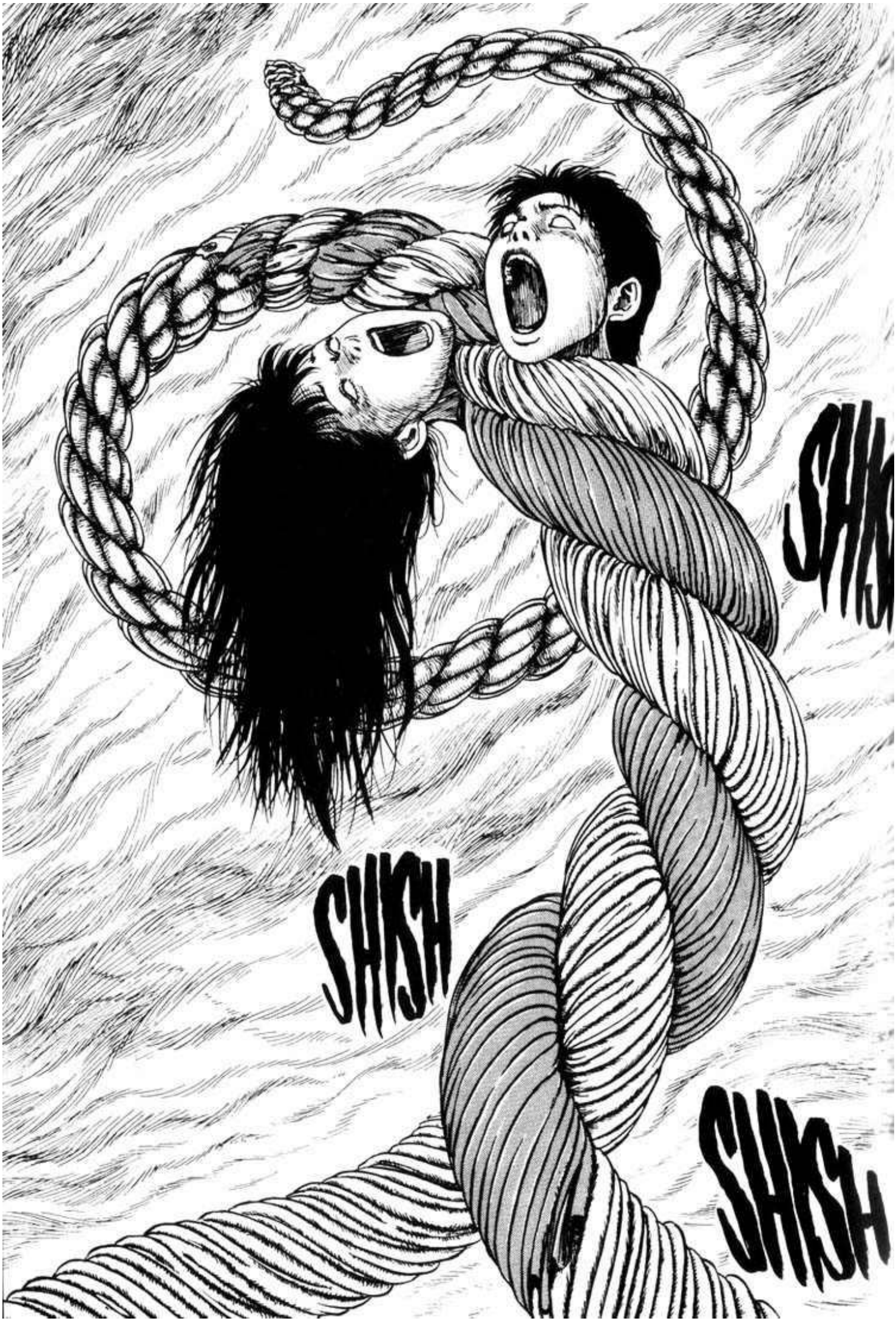
I'VE SPOTTED THEM!
THIS WAY, KAZUNORI!
STOP!
SHAAAA
I... I CAN'T MAKE IT...
KRICH
KRICH

huff
Krich
huff huff
huff
Krich
Krich
YOU'RE BEING A REAL PAIN.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I GOTTA HIT YOU...
...TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND?
BAM
huff huff
SHAAA
huff
huff
KAZUNORI...
THEY'RE SEPARATING US AGAIN.
HUF
HUF
NO...
NOT THIS TIME, YURIKO!
YORIKO, DO IT! LIKE BEFORE!

RAK
LIKE THIS!
RAK
WHAA?
Y... YORIKO...
HURRY!

Y...
YORIKO
?!
YORIKO
!
YORIKO
!!
KAZUNORI!


GIVE ME YOUR HAND!
Ahh...
SHIP
SHIP

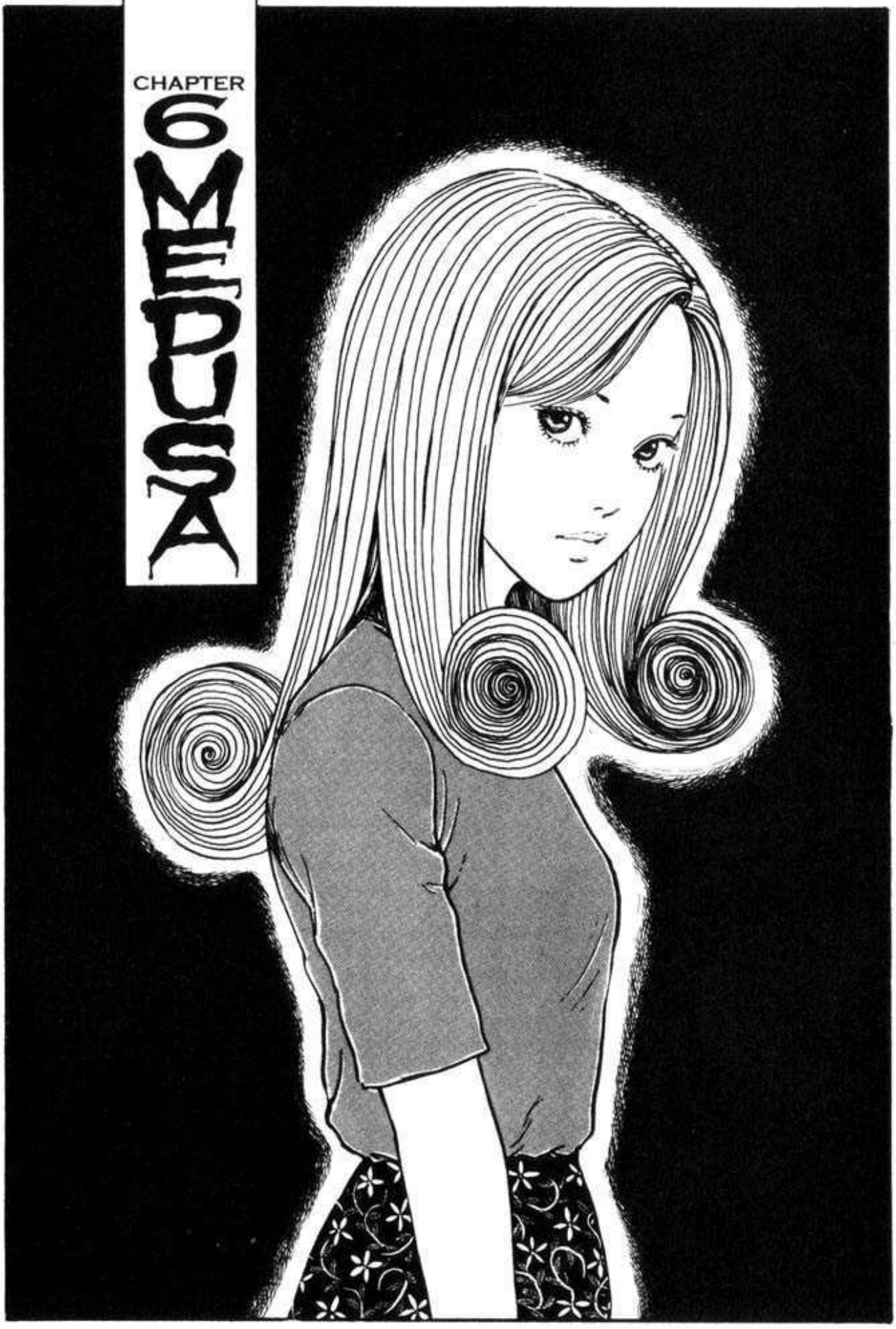

SHKSH
SHKSH
SHKSH

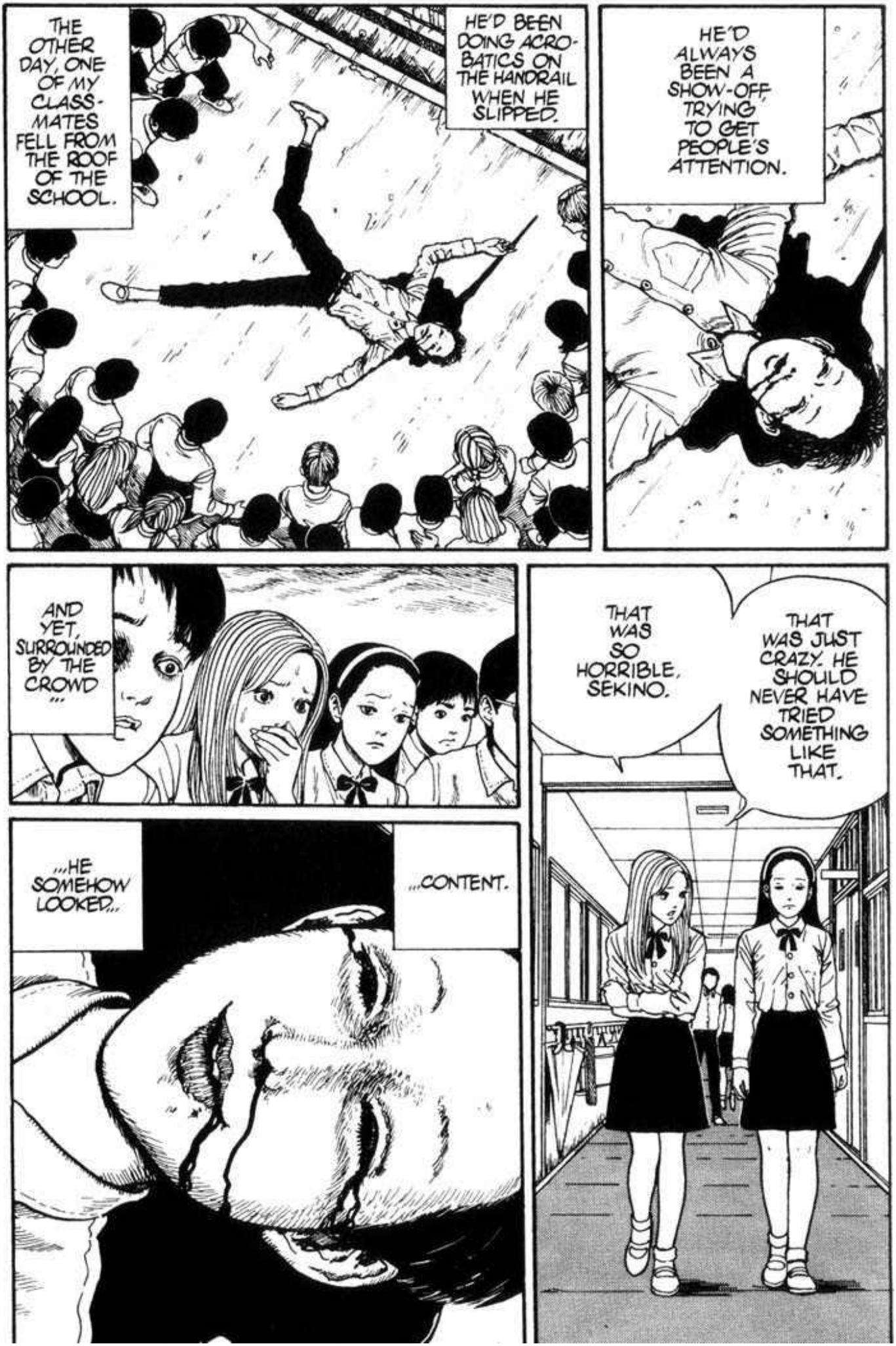
DUNN
W-WHAT'S GOING ON?!
YORIKO! YORIKO! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WE'LL SAVE YOU!
OH GOD... IT'S TOO TIGHT...
THEY'RE LIKE STEEL WIRE!

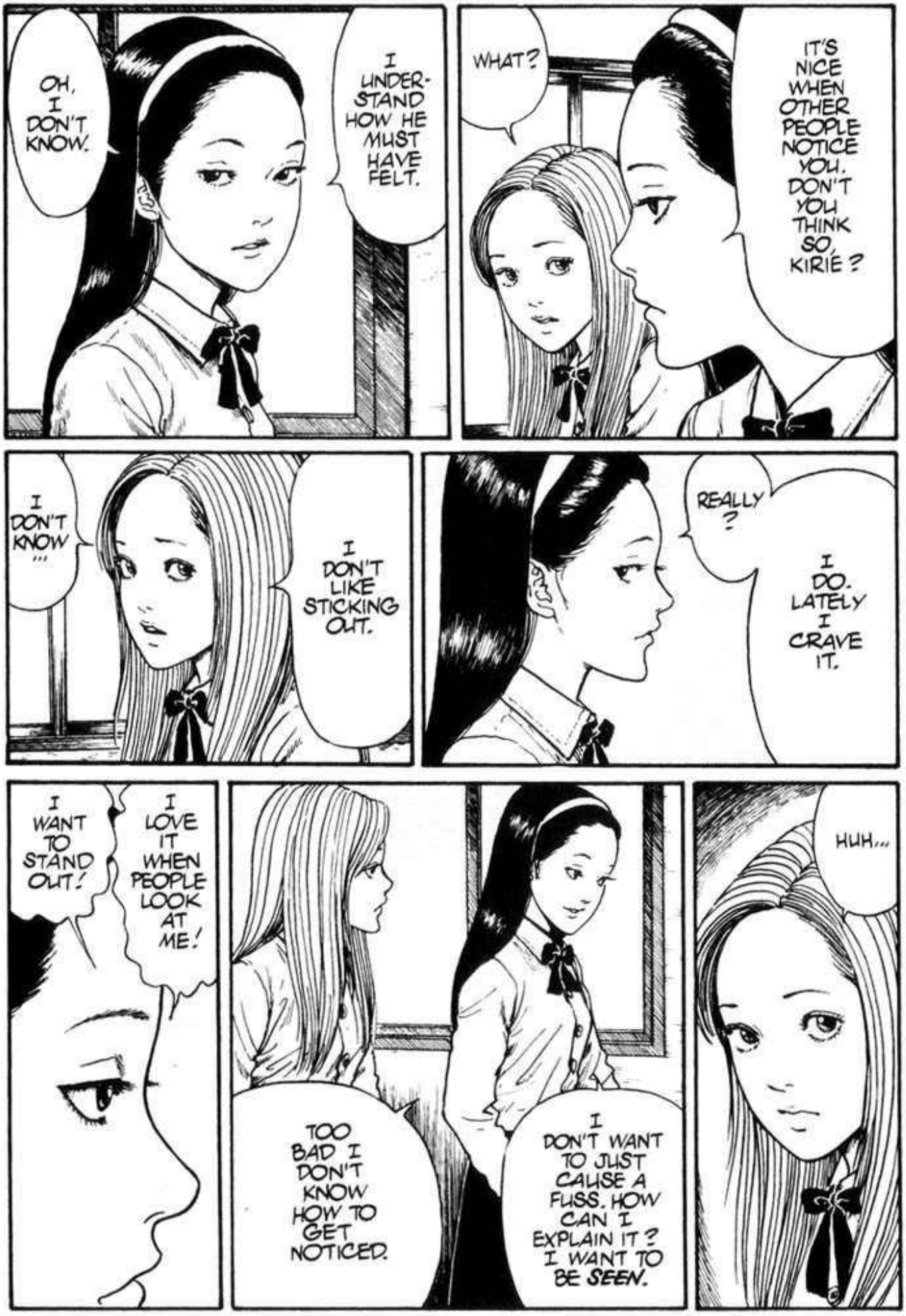
STOP IT... FATHER...
WE'RE NEVER GOING TO BE APART...
Ugh
SHISH
THAT'S RIGHT...
FOREVER...
SHADADA
THAT WAS THE LAST WE SAW OF THEM BEFORE THEY DISAPPEARED INTO THE SEA.
BASHOOM

CHAPTER

6 MEDUSA



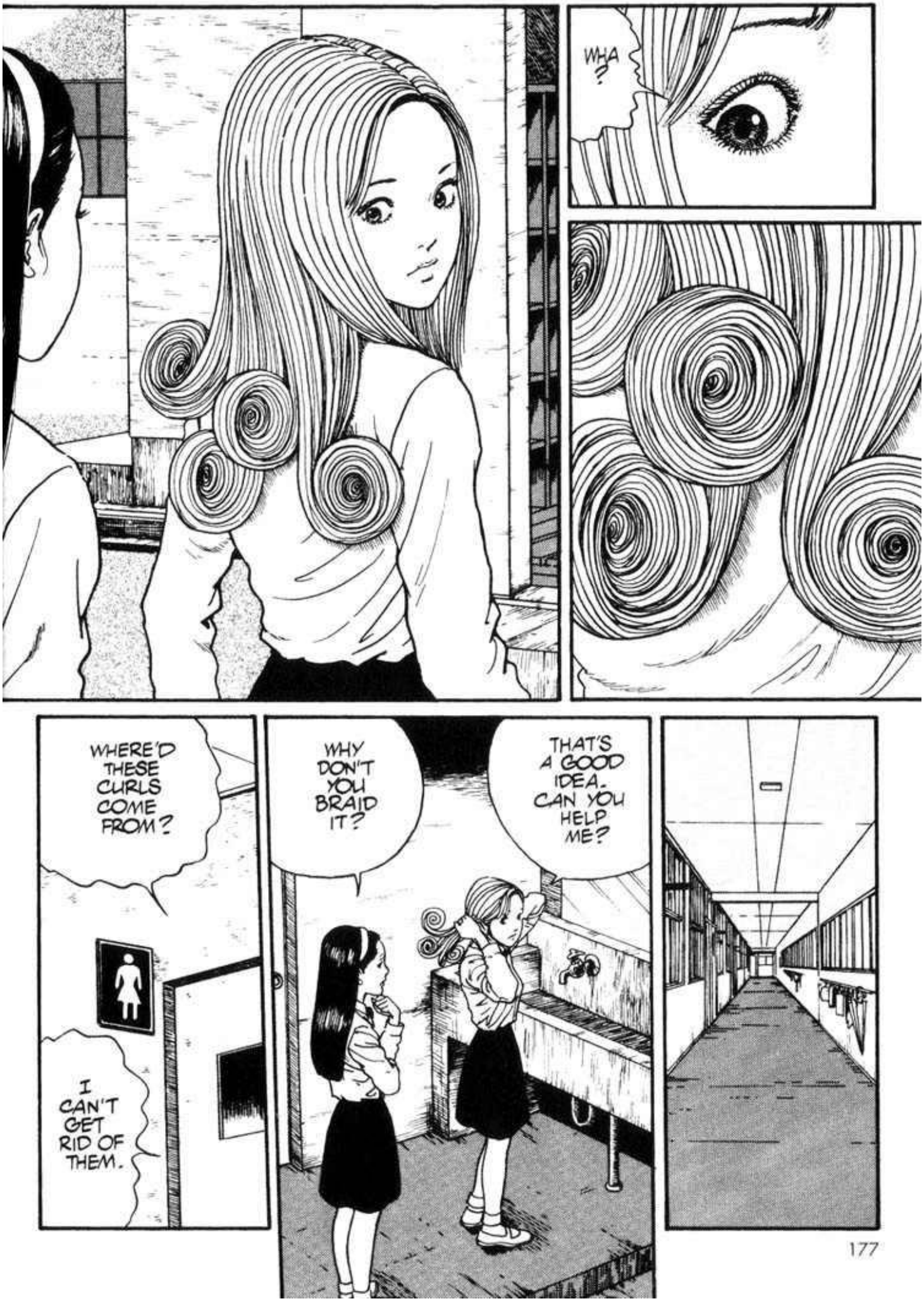

THE OTHER DAY, ONE OF MY CLASS-MATES FELL FROM THE ROOF OF THE SCHOOL.
HE'D BEEN DOING ACRO-BATICS ON THE HANDRAIL WHEN HE SLIPPED.
HE'D ALWAYS BEEN A SHOW-OFF, TRYING TO GET PEOPLE'S ATTENTION.
AND YET, SURROUNDED BY THE CROWD ...
THAT WAS SO HORRIBLE, SEKINO.
THAT WAS JUST CRAZY. HE SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRIED SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
...HE SOMEHOW LOOKED...
...CONTENT.


I UNDERSTAND HOW HE MUST HAVE FELT.
OH, I DON'T KNOW.
WHAT?
IT'S NICE WHEN OTHER PEOPLE NOTICE YOU. DON'T YOU THINK SO, KIRIE?
I DON'T LIKE STICKING OUT.
I DON'T KNOW...
REALLY?
I DO. LATELY I CRAVE IT.
I LOVE IT WHEN PEOPLE LOOK AT ME!
I WANT TO STAND OUT!
TOO BAD I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET NOTICED.
I DON'T WANT TO JUST CAUSE A FUSS. HOW CAN I EXPLAIN IT? I WANT TO BE SEEN.
HUH...

A LOT OF PEOPLE IN KURŌZU-CHO HAVE BEEN ACTING STRANGE LATELY.
WHY RISK YOUR LIFE TRYING TO GET ATTENTION?
THE GUY WHO FELL FROM THE ROOF THE OTHER DAY WAS JUST AN EXTREME CASE.
WHAT, SHUICHI?
I'M BEGINNING TO UNDER-STAND.
THIS TOWN IS CONTAMINATED BY THE SPIRAL.
WHAT DOES WANTING ATTENTION HAVE TO DO WITH A SPIRAL?
NOT AGAIN.
IT'S ABOUT MESMERISM.
DON'T YOU SEE?!
THEY BOTH HAVE THE POWER TO ATTRACT PEOPLE.

SPIRALS SUCK THINGS IN... THE EYE FOLLOWS THE PATTERN TO THE CENTER.
THAT'S WHY PEOPLE POSSESSED BY THE SPIRAL WANT TO GET THE ATTENTION OF OTHERS.
SO YOU'RE SAYING HE DIED BECAUSE OF THE SPIRAL?
THAT'S RIGHT.
NOT JUST HIM, BUT EVERYONE WHO'S OBSESSED WITH ATTENTION.
TH-THAT SOUNDS LIKE SEKINO. SO SHE'S ALSO AFFECTED BY THE SPIRAL?
PROBABLY.
I WONDER IF SHE'S ALL RIGHT.
HEY, YOU KNOW...
YOUR HAIR'S GETTING LONG.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD GET A HAIRCUT.
HUH?

THE NEXT DAY.
IT FEELS LIKE IT'S GROWN ALL OF A SUDDEN.
KUROZU HIGH
I COULD FEEL EVERYONE LOOKING AT ME.
KIRIE ...
WHAT DID YOU DO TO YOUR HAIR?
HUH?


WHA?
WHERE'D THESE CURLS COME FROM?
I CAN'T GET RID OF THEM.
WHY DON'T YOU BRAID IT?
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. CAN YOU HELP ME?

TING
FWP
WHIRRRR!
WHIRRRR!
THIS IS UN-BEARABLE!
...

BEAUTY SALON MARBLE
UTY LON MARBLE
I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO MY HAIR. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW...
SHALL I GIVE YOU A STRAIGHT PERM?
HMMM... COULD YOU JUST CUT IT OFF?
I'LL HAVE SHORT HAIR.
I DON'T WANT THIS WEIRD STUFF ON MY HEAD.
YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
THEN HERE GO YOUR LOVELY LOCKS.

HSHAASSHPAHHH
MARBLE
AIEE!

YOU'RE ...
...YOU'RE A MONSTER!
WAS MY HAIR ...
...CURSED BY THE SPIRAL?
IT GREW RAPIDLY ON ITS OWN AS IF IT WAS ALIVE.
EVERY TIME I TRIED TO CUT IT OFF, IT STARTED TO CHOKE ME.
WHEN MY FAMILY TRIED TO TAKE ME TO THE HOSPITAL...
UAAH!
I CAN'T BREATHE!
...IT STRANGLED ME AGAIN.

EVEN WHEN I STOPPED RESISTING, IT KEPT MOVING.
IT SWIRLED IN PLACE, DISPLAYING ITS CURLS.
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
...
...

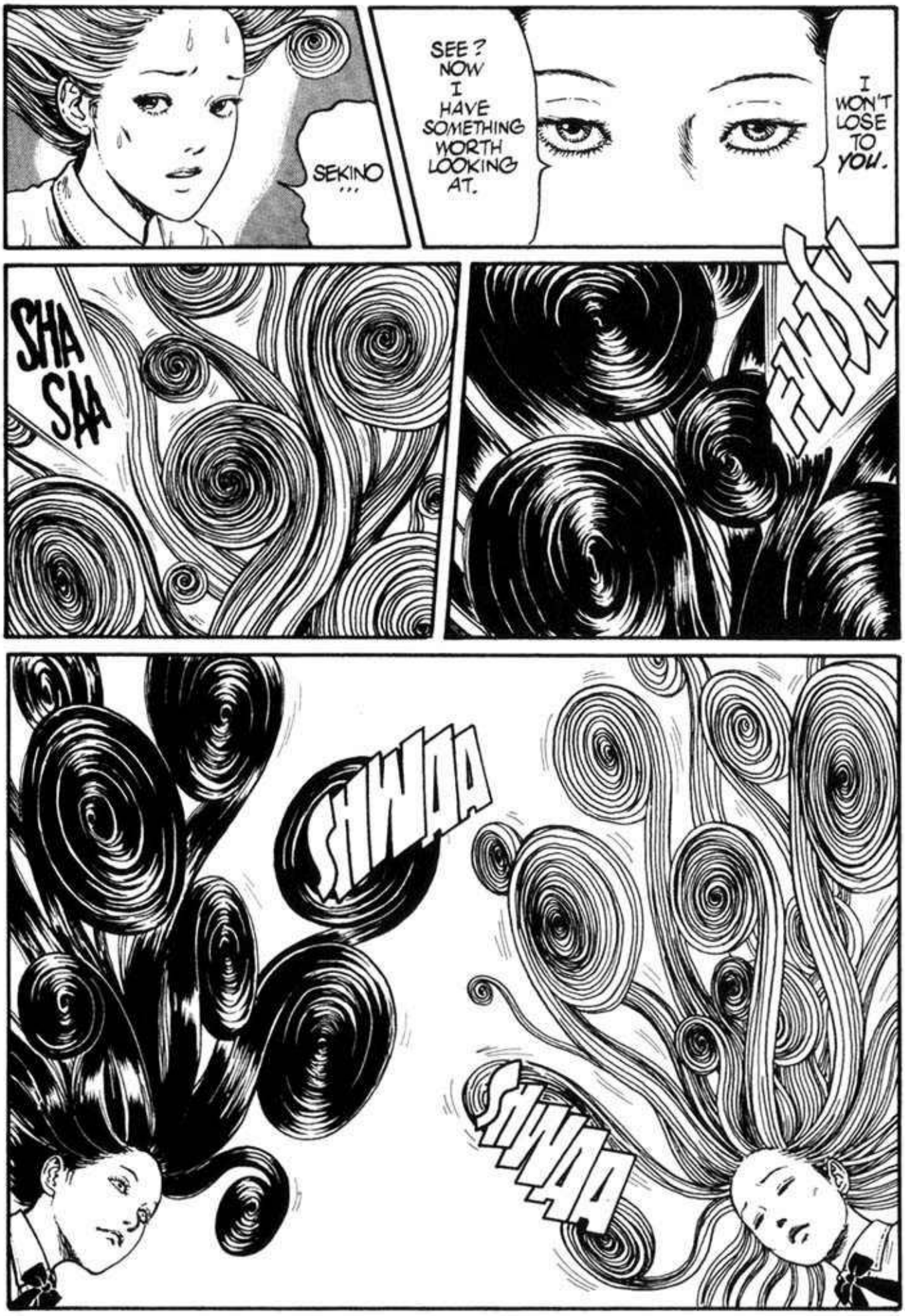
WH-
WHAT'S
WRONG?
MOM?
DAD?
I SOON UNDERSTOOD THAT MY HAIR HAD THE POWER TO MESMERIZE PEOPLE WHO LOOKED AT IT.
AND IT WAS ATTRACTED TO CROWDS.
KIRIE
...

MY HAIR CONSTANTLY CHANGED SHAPE...
...THE BETTER TO DRAW THEIR ATTENTION.
GOSHIMA! WHAT IS THAT HAIR?!
YOU BETTER FIX IT NOW!
SASHH

I'M IMPRESSED, KIRIE.
WOOOOOO
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T LIKE ATTENTION, BUT NOW YOU STAND OUT MORE THAN ANYONE AT SCHOOL.
IT MUST BE NICE.
I ENVY YOU.
EVERYONE WHO LOOKS AT YOU IS CAPTIVATED.
I SHOULD WATCH OUT... NOT LOOK TOO MUCH.
YOU SHOULD KNOW I TAKE THIS AS A CHALLENGE ...
I'LL STAND OUT, TOO... YOU WAIT AND SEE.
...
KURÔZU STATION
AFTER SCHOOL MY HAIR TOOK ME TO THE STATION...
...BECAUSE IT WANTED A LARGER AUDIENCE.

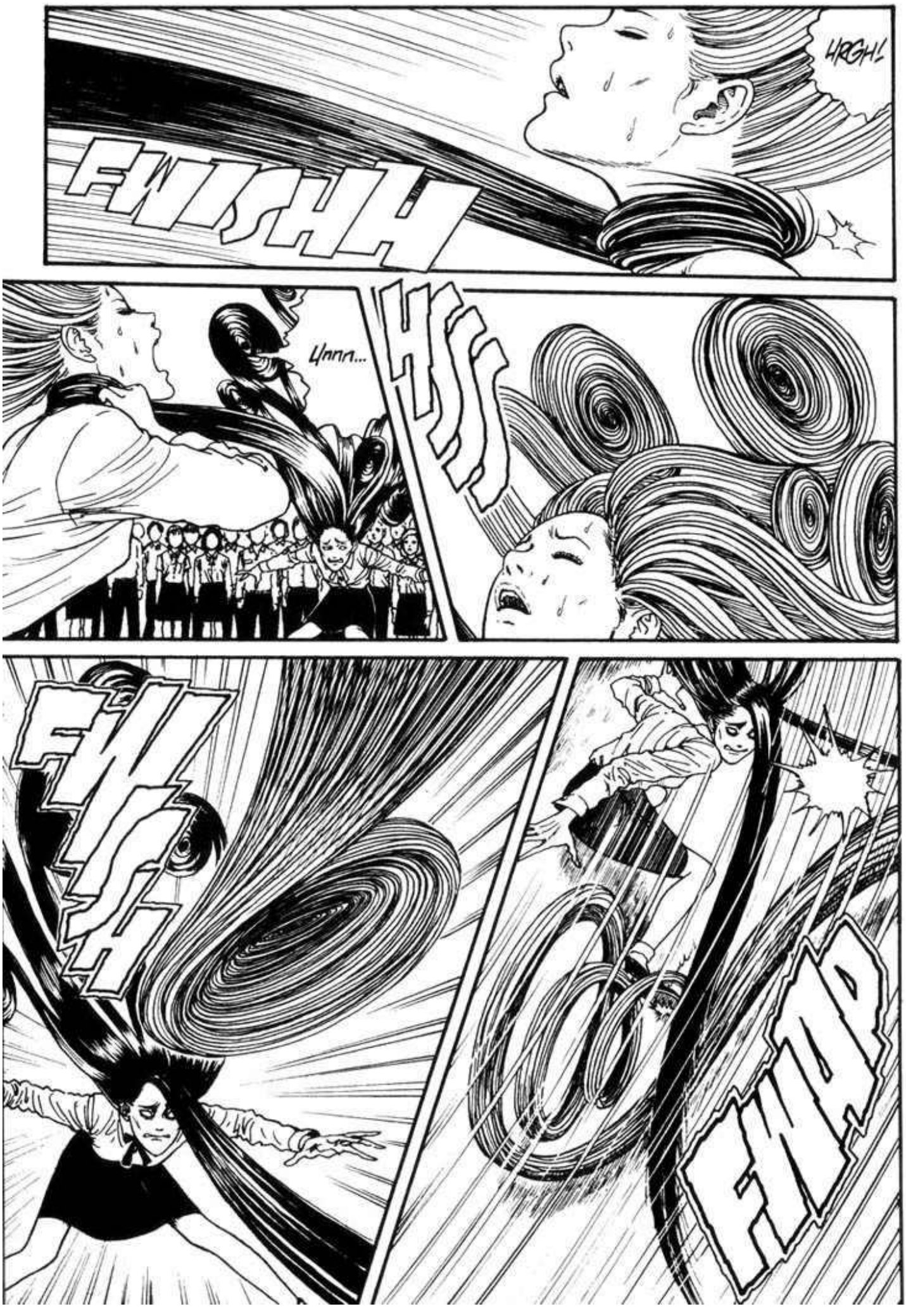
MRRMRR
!
SHUICHI
...
FWIP
SHUICHI
...

KUROZU STATION
...
I ENDED UP LIKE THIS BECAUSE OF THIS TOWN.
BECAUSE THIS TOWN IS CURSED BY THE SPIRAL.
NOW I'M TOO WEAK TO GET AWAY FROM HERE...
IS MY HAIR DRAINING ALL MY STRENGTH?
MY HAIR KEPT ON...
...GROWING AND GROWING.
GOOD MORNING, KIRIE!
LOOK AT ME!
WOW!


SEKINO
...
SEE? NOW I HAVE SOMETHING WORTH LOOKING AT.
I WON'T LOSE TO YOU.
SHA SAA
SHWAA
SHWAA

FROM THAT DAY ON THE SCHOOL WAS A BATTLEFIELD.
NEITHER HER HAIR NOR MINE WOULD BUDGE, AND THE CURLS JUST DISPLAYED THEMSELVES MORE FIERCELY.
STUDENTS AND TEACHERS LEFT THEIR CLASSES AND STARED VACANTLY AT THE SIGHT.
SHWA
SH
AA

SWAY
SWAY
UFF
HUFF
KIRIE... ADMIT DEFEAT!
ONLY ONE OF US SHOULD GET THIS MUCH ATTENTION !!
SWAY
SWAY
UFF
HUFF
SWAY
ARGH! I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
FWOOSH

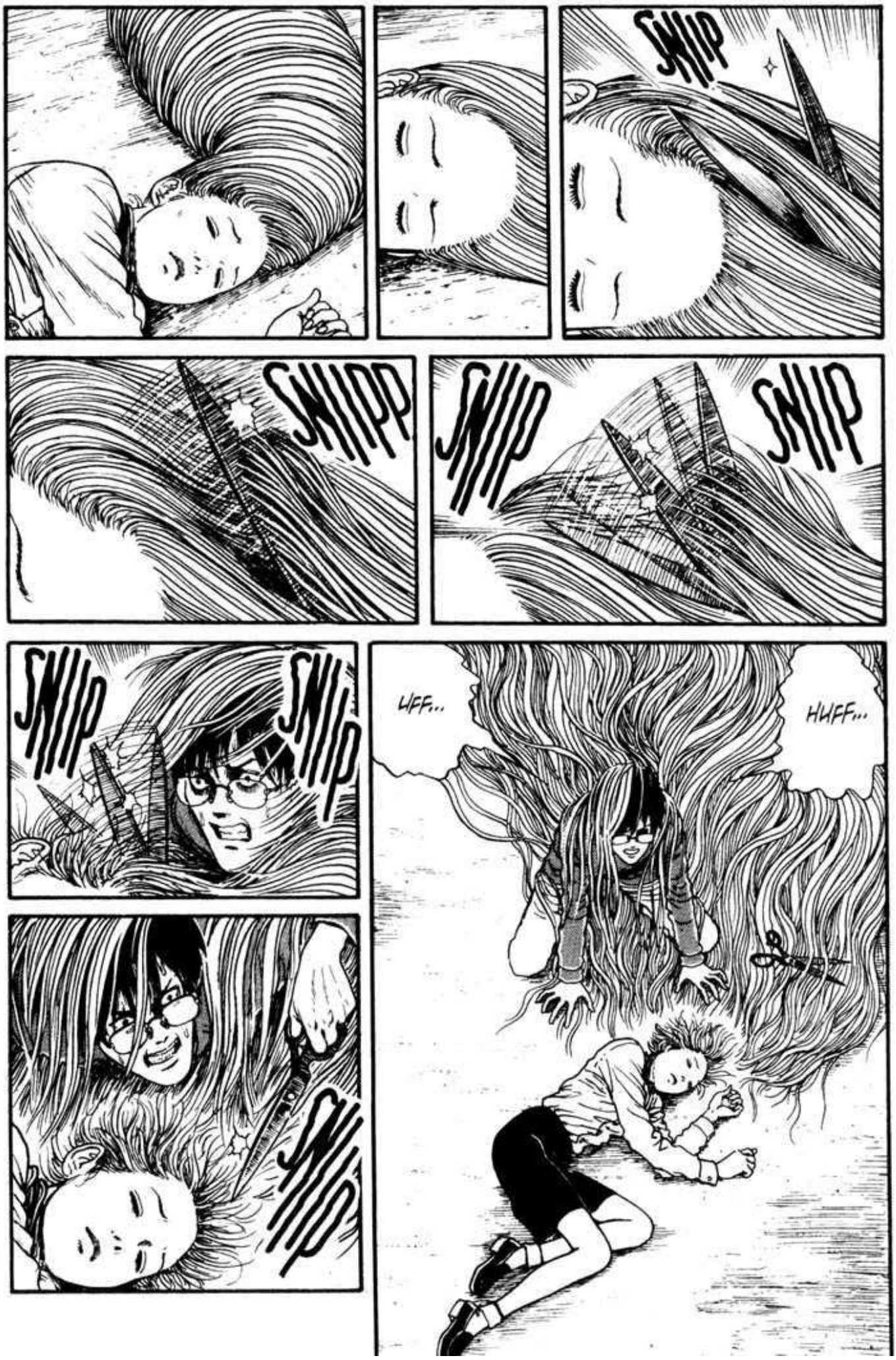

FWISH
URGH!
Unnn...
HSS
FH
FH
FHP

FWISHH
FWISHH
AIEE!
FP
KIRIE!!
THP

SNIPP
KYAA!
KIRIE!!
I'LL CUT IT OFF YOU!
SNIP
SNIP

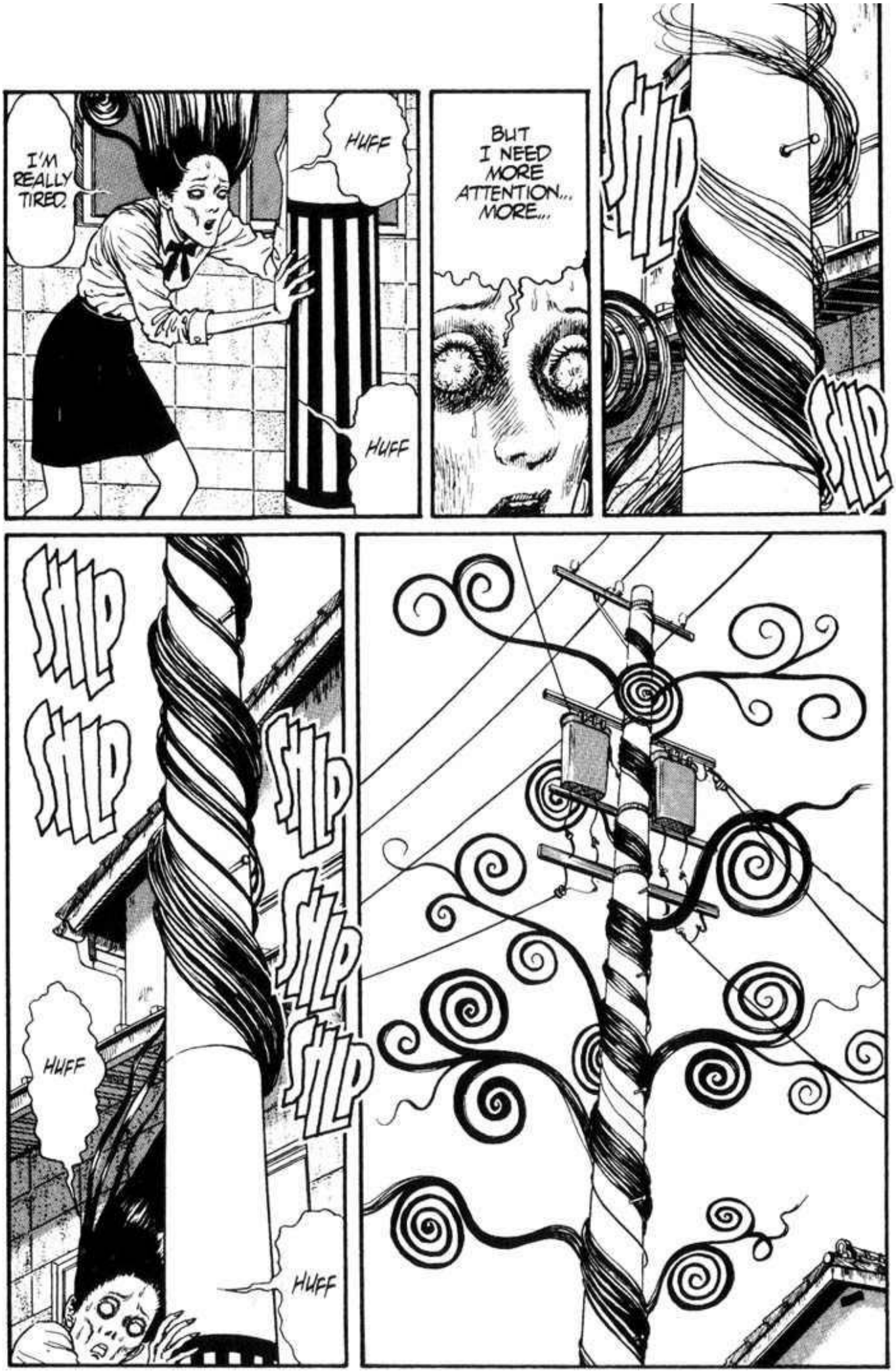
ARGH!
AAAYAH!
SWAT
WHAP

HA HA HA!
I WON!
AHA HA HA! NOW I'M THE MOST...
...THE MOST ATTRACTIVE GIRL IN TOWN!
NOW I'LL SHOW ALL OF KURÔZU-CHO!
EVERYONE, FOLLOW ME!
HA HA HA!
HSSS HSSS


SNIP
SNIPP
SNIP
SNIP
SNIP
SNIP
SNIP
HUFF...
HUFF...

HUFF...
HUFF...
KIRIE!
KIRIE!
SHUICHI...
WHAT HAPPENED?
UFF...
KIRIE...
HUFF...
YOU'RE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED.
THE HAIR...
...MUST HAVE BEEN DRAINING ALL YOUR ENERGY TO GROW.
IF THAT'S THE CASE...
HA HA HA!
AHA HA HA!

AHA HA HA LOOK AT ME!
EVERYBODY LOOK!
SHHH
HA HA HA
SHUSH
HUFF
HUFF


I'M REALLY TIRED.
HUFF
HUFF
BUT I NEED MORE ATTENTION... MORE...
SHLP
SHLP
SHLP
SHLP
SHLP
SHLP
HUFF
HUFF

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
WHUD

HER HAIR REMAINED ON THE TELEPHONE POLE... DISPLAYING ITSELF... FOR SEVERAL HOURS.
To Be Continued...