

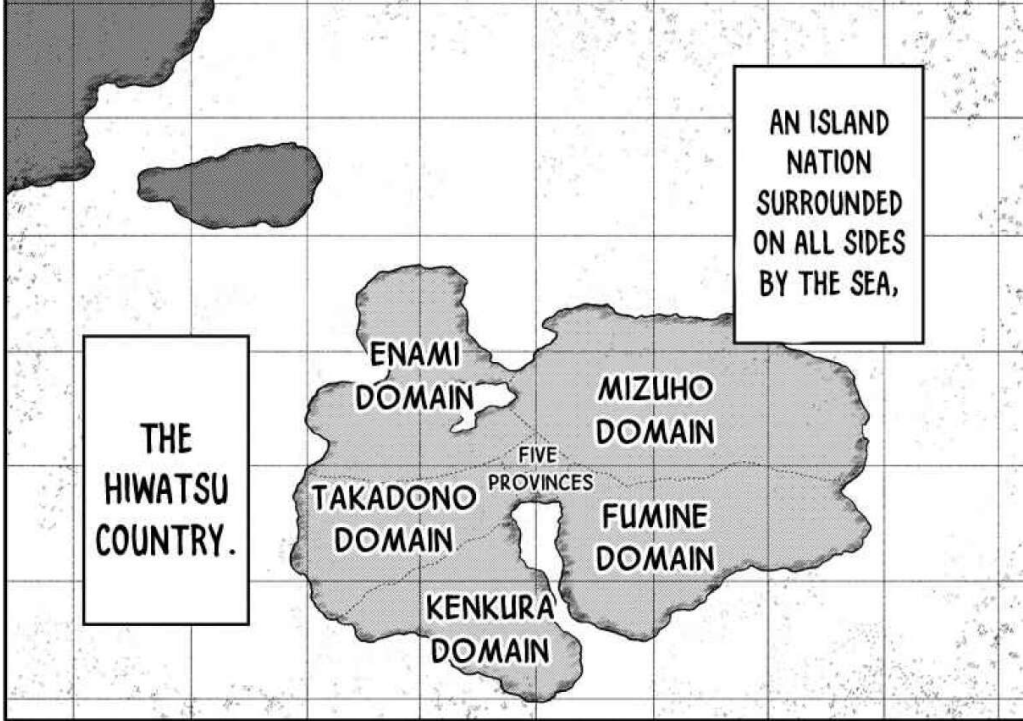
I ALWAYS
THOUGHT
THAT THERE
WOULD
NEVER BE A
WAR...

SOME-
WHERE IN
THE BACK
OF MY
MIND...



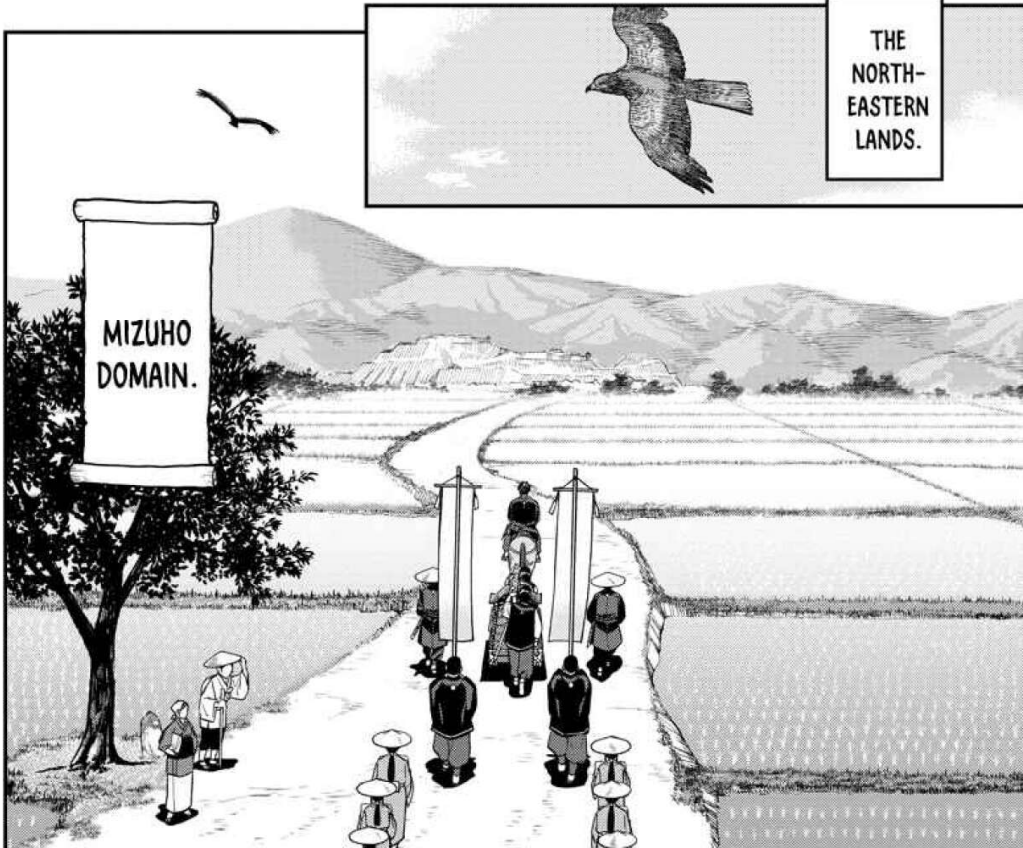
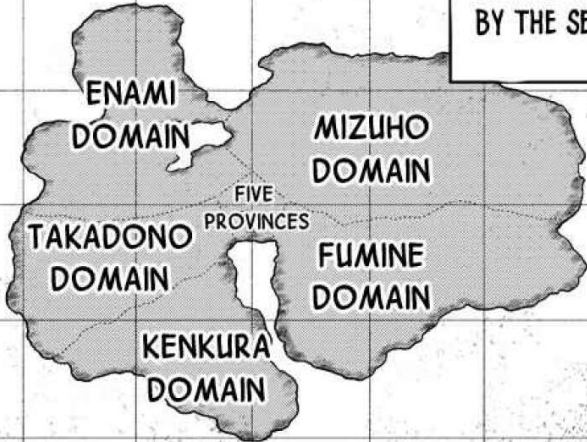
**CHAPTER 1:
THE WEDDING**





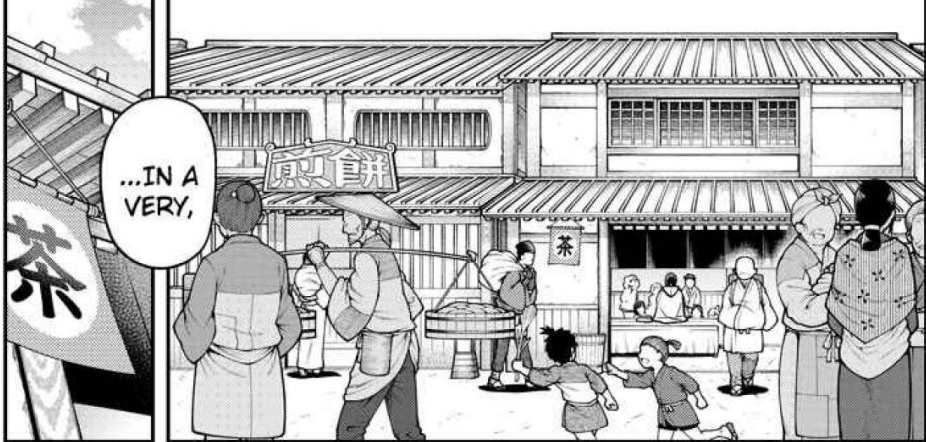
AN ISLAND
NATION
SURROUNDED
ON ALL SIDES
BY THE SEA,

THE
HIWATSU
COUNTRY.



THE
NORTH-
EASTERN
LANDS.

MIZUHO
DOMAIN.





AND THEY ALSO HAD AN AMAZING ABILITY TO CONTROL STONE.

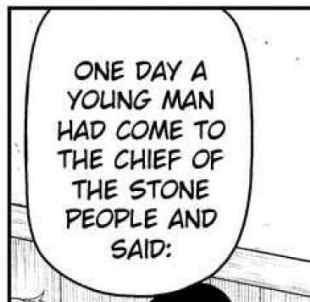
THEY COULD NOT BE HARMED BY SWORDS OR ARROWS,

THEIR BODIES WERE AS HARD AS ROCK,



AND THEY ARE ALL AT WAR WITH EACH OTHER."

"OUR COUNTRY IS SPLIT INTO PARTS



ONE DAY A YOUNG MAN HAD COME TO THE CHIEF OF THE STONE PEOPLE AND SAID:



TO END THIS WAR AT ONCE?"

"PLEASE COULD YOU LEND US THE STRENGTH OF THE STONE PEOPLE



THE LONG WAR HAS BROUGHT RUIN TO OUR LANDS."

"COUNTLESS LIVES HAVE BEEN LOST,

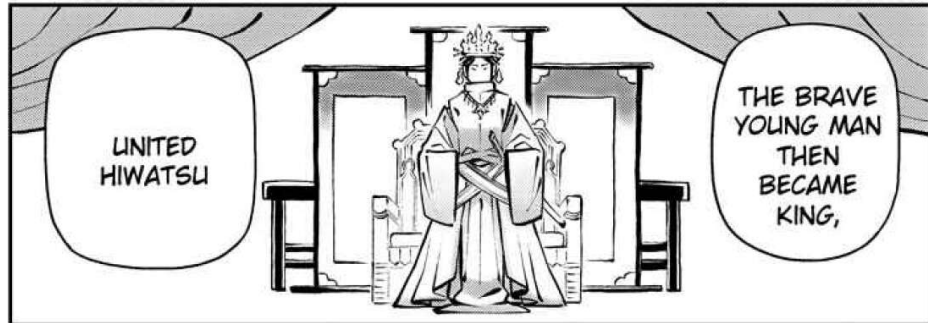




AND THEY ENDED THE WAR IN NO TIME.

THE STONE PEOPLE STOOD SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH THE WARRIORS LED BY THE YOUNG MAN,

"VERY WELL" REPLIED THE CHIEF.



UNITED HIWATSU

THE BRAVE YOUNG MAN THEN BECAME KING,



TELL US SOME MORE!

TODAY'S STORY IS SO SHORT...

EH?! THAT'S THE END?!

AND BROUGHT PEACE AND HARMONY TO ALL,

AND EVERYONE LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.



I HEARD IT FROM MY DAD!

IT HAS A CONTINUATION!

TELL US! TELL US!



I'VE HEARD THIS STORY BEFORE!

AAAAH! RIGHT-RIGHT!



AH...

THAT STORY...



THEY MUST HAVE ONE HUMAN FROM HIWATSU AS A SACRIFICE!



THEY DEMANDED THAT FOR EACH OF THE STONE PEOPLE WHO WENT TO WAR,



ASKED FOR A REWARD FOR THEIR VICTORY.

THEN THE STONE PEOPLE...



THEY TOOK
THE PEOPLE
AND ATE
THEM UP!

IN
RETURN
FOR THEIR
HELP IN
THE WAR...

I DIDN'T
DRAW THAT
PART JUST
SO AS
NOT TO
FRIGHTEN
THEM, BUT...



GYA-
AAA-
AAA!!

I DON'T
KNOW...

THAT'S
SOME
STRANGE
STORY,
ISN'T IT?

ALLOW HIS
PEOPLE TO
BE EATEN?

HOW
COULD
THE
KING

DO STONE
PEOPLE
STILL
EXIST?







YOU KNOW, HE ALSO TELLS US ALL KINDS OF STORIES AND TEACHES US HOW TO WRITE!

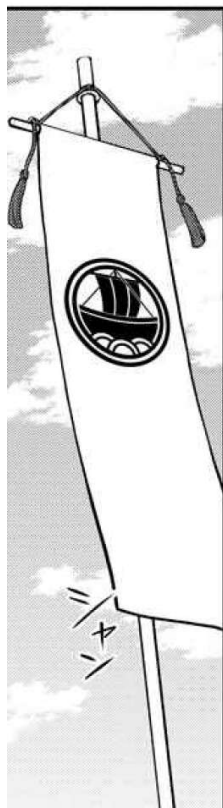
GREAT, RIGHT?



THANK YOU.

THAT'S PRETTY GOOD WORK.

IS THAT SO?



KIDS!

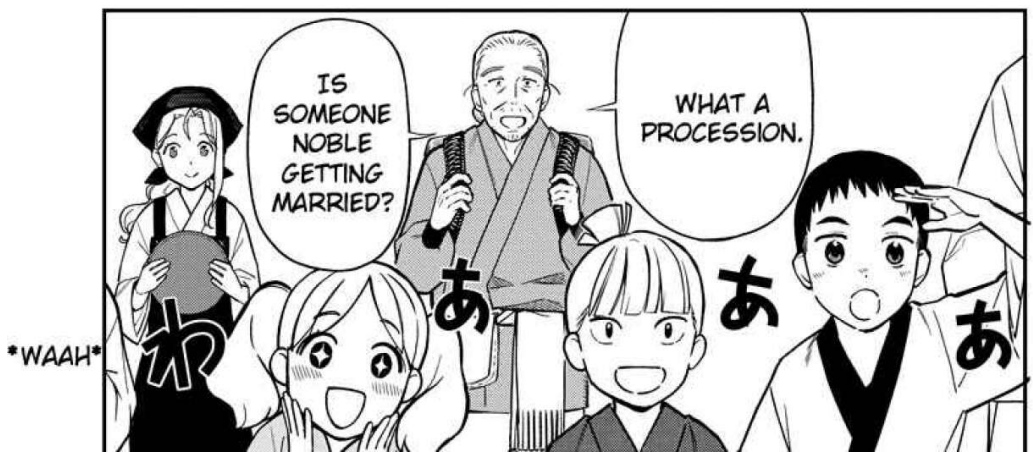
HAAAAHA!
YOU LOT SEEM TO LOVE HIM.

YES!



HURRY, HURRY!

THEY'RE COMING!





YES,
LORD OF
MIZUHO.



SAKU-SAMA
IS GETTING
MARRIED.



MISTER
TRA-
VELER?

DO
YOU
KNOW
HIM,



THE
YOUNG
LORD OF
MIZUHO.

AH...



HE EVEN
CLEARED
THE ROADS
FOR US.

HE HIMSELF
LED HIS MEN
AND DEALT
WITH THE
RYOZAKAI
BANDITS.



IS
THAT
SO?

BUT EVEN
THERE
THERE IS NO
ONE THERE
WHO HASN'T
HEARD OF
HIM.

I COME
FROM
FLUMINE,



HE'S A
GREAT
RULER, YOU
WOULDN'T
BELIEVE
HE'S ONLY
18...
AND NOW
HE'S FINALLY
GETTING
MARRIED...



TO RUN
OUR BUSI-
NESSES.

YOU HAVE
NO IDEA
HOW MUCH
EASIER IT
HAS BECOME
FOR US
PEDDLERS



WHY ARE
YOU... ?

THANK
YOU.



I JUST REALLY WANTED TO DRAW PEOPLE ON THE STREETS OF THE CASTLE TOWN.



BY THE WAY...

ARE YOU REALLY SURE YOU SHOULD BE DRAWING IN THIS PLACE?



??



AND FINISH THE DRAWING, I CAN GET BACK...

IT'S OKAY, THE PROCESSION IS STILL GOING BY, AND IF I HURRY UP...



IT IS CERTAINLY NOT OKAY!

"IT'S OKAY."



WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS?!

GOING OUT WITHOUT AN ESCORT AGAIN...!



GANKEN!

AAH

BYE!



THAT'S IT, WE'RE HEADING BACK!

またね〜



ON A DAY LIKE THIS, I HAVE TO...

JUST A FEW MORE MINUTES!

WOOSH



I'M NOT LISTENING.



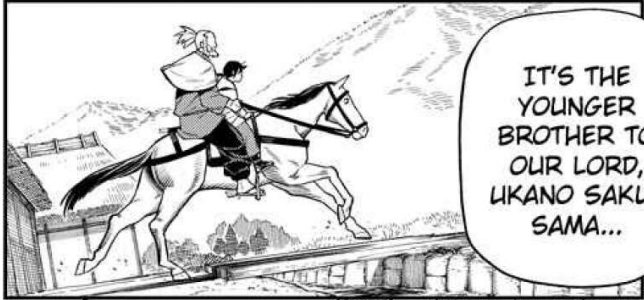
I WAS TALKING ABOUT THE BOY...

NO, NO,

IT WAS HIS CHAPERONE, GANKEN-SAN...



...JUST WHO THE HELL WAS THAT?



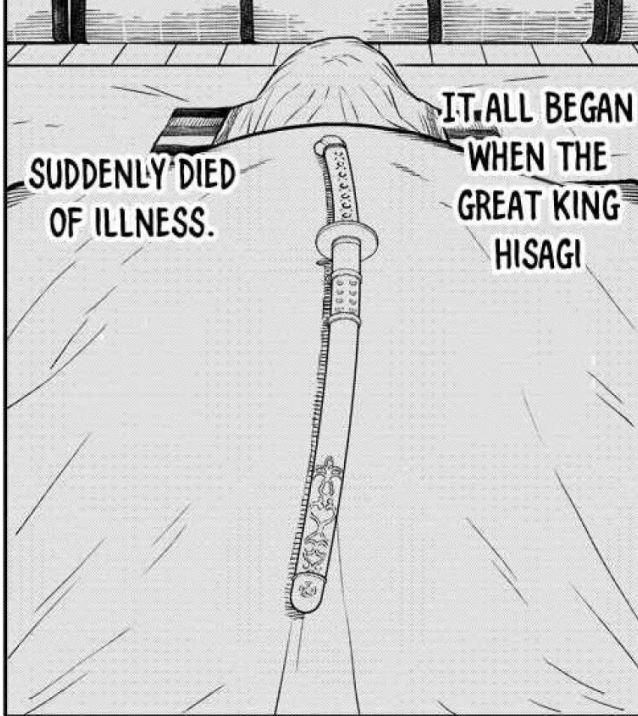
IT'S THE YOUNGER BROTHER TO OUR LORD, LIKANO SAKU-SAMA...



AH!



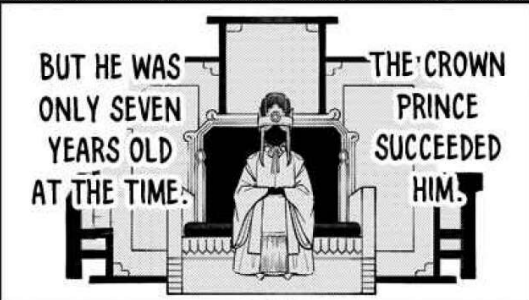
LIKANO ISAZA-SAMA.



SUDDENLY DIED
OF ILLNESS.

IT ALL BEGAN
WHEN THE
GREAT KING
HISAGI

RIGHT NOW, THE
COUNTRY OF
HIWATSU IS ON
THE VERGE OF
SPLITTING
APART...



BUT HE WAS
ONLY SEVEN
YEARS OLD
AT THE TIME.

THE CROWN
PRINCE
SUCCEEDED
HIM.

BUT AFTER
THAT, SHE
FACED NEW
PROBLEMS.

AND TOOK
POLITICAL POWER
INTO HER OWN
HANDS.

HIS MOTHER, THE
QUEEN DOWAGER,
BECAME HIS
GUARDIAN



SHE BECAME
PARANOID AND
MORBIDLY
SUPERSTITIOUS

IN HER ZEAL TO
SECURE HER SON'S
REIGN,

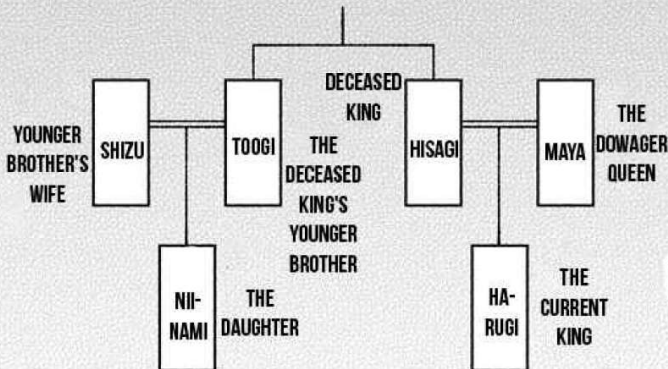


THIS CAUSED
DISCONTENT AMONG
THE PEOPLE AND
THE RULERS OF THE
OTHER DOMAINS.

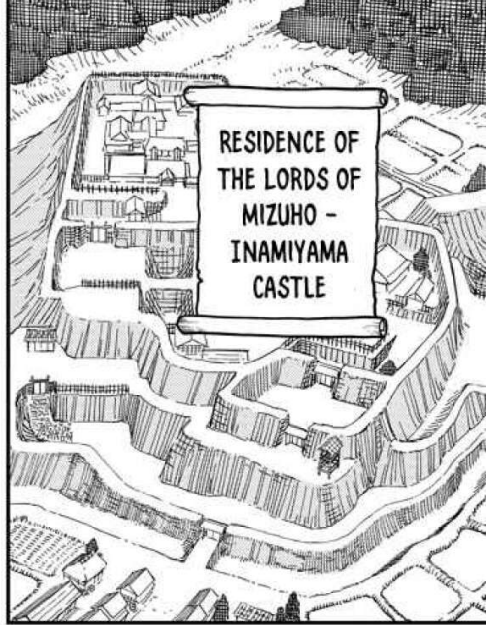
ALL IMPORTANT POSITIONS WERE
OCCUPIED SOLELY BY HER RELATIVES,
THE MAHITOTSU, WHO WERE THE
RULERS OF TAKADONO.

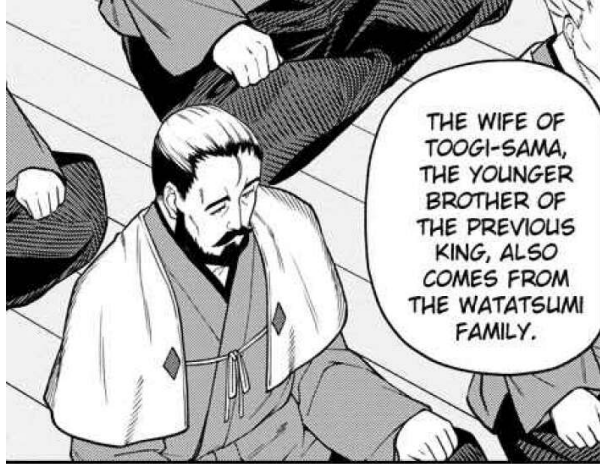


THE NUMBER
OF PEOPLE
SUPPORTING
THE DECEASED
KING'S
BROTHER
ALSO GREW.

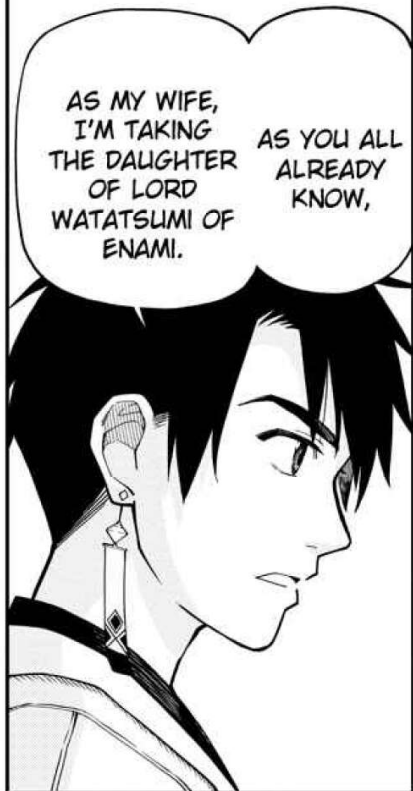


ALONG
WITH
THIS
DISCON-
TENT,





THE WIFE OF
TOOGI-SAMA,
THE YOUNGER
BROTHER OF
THE PREVIOUS
KING, ALSO
COMES FROM
THE WATATSUMI
FAMILY.



AS MY WIFE,
I'M TAKING
THE DAUGHTER
OF LORD
WATATSUMI OF
ENAMI.

AS YOU ALL
ALREADY
KNOW,



THIS MARRIAGE
ALLIANCE WITH
ENAMI SIMULTA-
NEOUSLY
SERVES AS A
STATEMENT



AND NOT
TO SUBMIT
TO THE
TYRANNY OF
TAKADONO.

I URGE
YOU TO
CONTINUE
DEFENDING
OUR LANDS
AND
PEOPLE



THAT MIZUHO
WILL SUPPORT
THE KING'S
BROTHER'S
FACTION.



EVEN
TAKADONO
WON'T DARE
TO PULL
SOMETHING
OUT OF LINE.

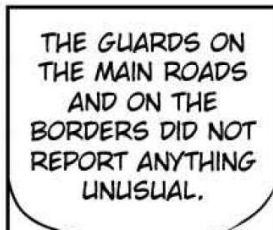
WELL, IF
MIZUHO AND
ENAMI MAKE
AN ALLIANCE,



REST
ASSURED.

AS FOR
SECURITY AT
TOMORROW'S
CEREMONY,

HIRAGI IS
FULLY
PREPARED.



THE GUARDS ON
THE MAIN ROADS
AND ON THE
BORDERS DID NOT
REPORT ANYTHING
UNUSUAL.



HMM,
I'LL
ENTRUST
IT TO
YOU.



LET'S
CELEBRATE
THE
OCCASION
PROPERLY
TOMORROW!



NOW,
ENOUGH
WITH THE
FORMALI-
TIES.





I AM VERY SORRY.

I'D FEEL SAFER THAT WAY.

AT LEAST TAKE SOMEONE WITH YOU.

*AN OBJECT THAT CONTAINS SPIRIT OF KAMI



IT IS A VERY VALUABLE THING AND IS ONLY SEEN BY OUTSIDERS DURING FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES.

*GO-SHINTAI AT THE SANCTUARY. IT IS SAID TO CONTAIN THE GUARDIAN DEITY OF MIZUHO.



I WANTED YOU TO DRAW SOMETHING FOR ME.


...OH RIGHT, ISAZA,

?



CAN YOU DO A DRAWING OF IT SO WE CAN HAVE IT FOR REFERENCE?

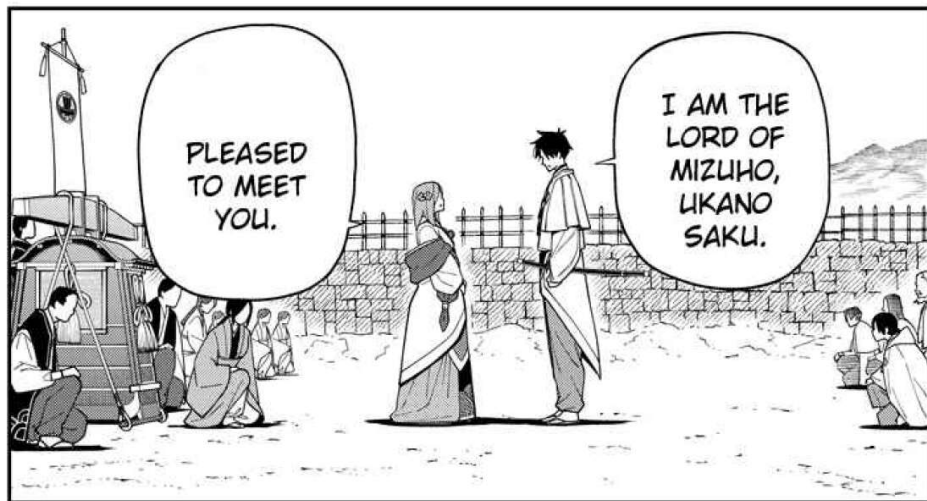




I AM THE
DAUGHTER OF
WATATSUMI
TAIKAI, LORD
OF ENAMI.

MY NAME
IS MIO.





PLEASSED
TO MEET
YOU.

I AM THE
LORD OF
MIZUHO,
UKANO
SAKU.



THIS IS MY MIO-
DONO,
YOUNGER
BROTHER,
ISAZA.



I WAS
EAGERLY
LOOKING
FORWARD
TO IT.



THANK
YOU
VERY
MUCH.

T-
THAT
IS...



AH, THE
INNOCENCE

FUFUFU

YOU DON'T
OFTEN GET
TO SEE HIM
ACT HIS AGE



WELL,
NICE TO
MEET
YOU.



SO I'VE
ALWAYS
WANTED A
LITTLE
BROTHER
OR SISTER.

I'M THE
YOUNGEST
IN THE
FAMILY,



L...

LIKE-
WISE...



THANK
YOU FOR
THE
HOSPI-
TALITY.

YOU MUST
BE TIRED
AFTER
YOUR LONG
JOURNEY.

YOU SHOULD
GET A GOOD
REST BEFORE
TOMORROW'S
CEREMONY.





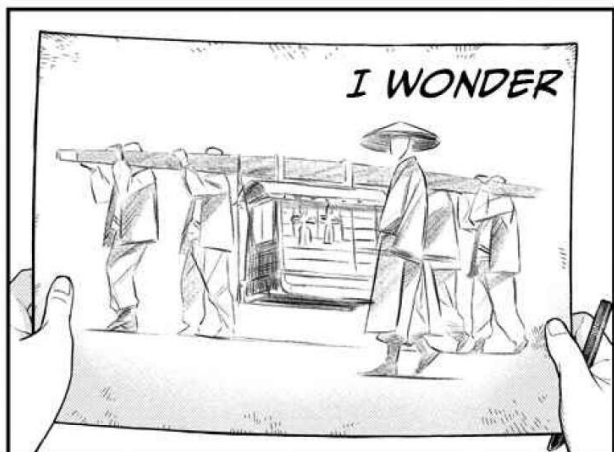
THE
EXPRESSION
ON BIG
BROTHER'S
FACE...



I'VE NEVER
SEEN HIM
LOOK AT
SOMEONE
LIKE THAT
BEFORE...



WHAT IT
FEELS
LIKE TO
FALL IN
LOVE
WITH
SOME-
ONE...



I WONDER





YES.

YOU MUST REALLY LOVE THIS LAND, HUH?

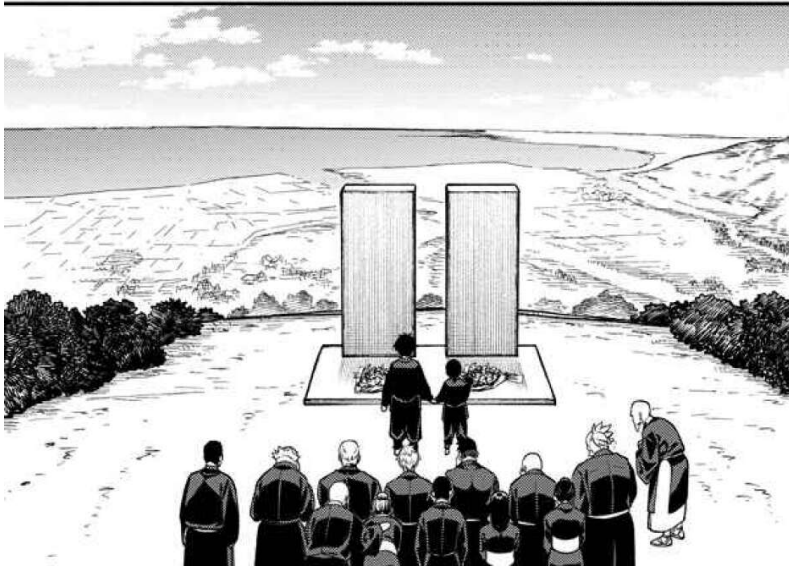


I MADE A PROMISE.

AND ON TOP OF THAT



A PROMISE?



THREE YEARS AGO.



AND
LEAVING
TWO
CHILDREN
BEHIND...

WHAT A
TRAGEDY...

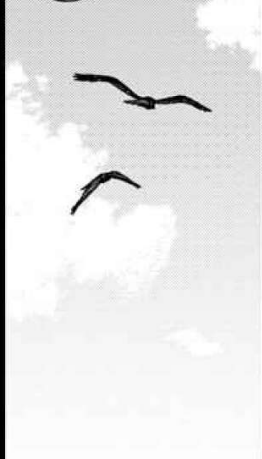
TO THINK
THAT THEY
PERISHED
IN SUCH AN
ACCIDENT...



THE LAND
OF MIZUHO
IS STILL
ABUNDANT
AND
BEAUTI-
FUL...

EVEN
THOUGH OUR
FATHER AND
MOTHER ARE
GONE...

SO
BEAUTI-
FUL...





AND...

THIS LAND
IS OURS
BECAUSE
OUR FATHER
AND MOTHER
KEPT IT FOR
US.



.....

THERE
ARE
PEOPLE
WHO
DO...

ALTHOUGH
THE
HEAVENS
DO NOT
LAMENT
THEM,



IS UP TO
YOU AND
ME.

ISAZA,

FROM
NOW ON,
PROTECTING
MIZUHO



BIG YES,
BROTHER!



I CAN'T
PROTECT
THIS
LAND BY
FIGHTING,

BUT

I'M
NOT AS
STRONG
AS MY
BROTHER,

AS YOU
CAN SEE,



I THINK IN A WAY I WILL PRESERVE THEM TOO.

I CAPTURE THESE LANDS IN A DRAWING

AND LEAVE THEM TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS,



I THINK IT'S WONDERFUL.



OF COURSE!

AS MIZUHO'S PEOPLE?



?

MI...

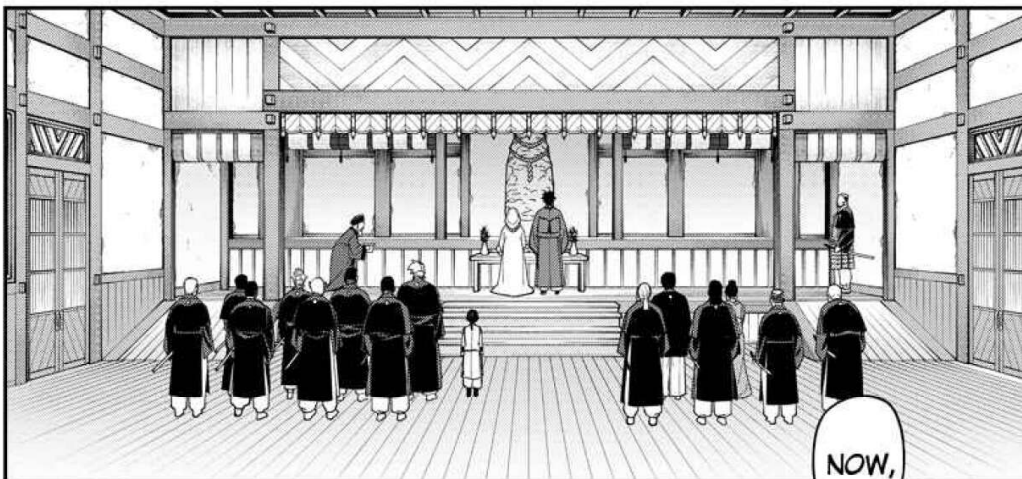
.....



DRAW ME AND SAKU-SAMA

COULD YOU SOMETIME





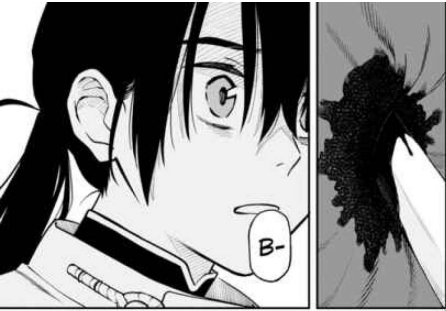


PLEASE

MAY
THESE
BLISSFUL
DAYS



GO ON
FOREVER...







BY THE KING'S ORDER, HE SHALL BE PUNISHED.

LORD OF MIZUHO IS PLOTTING REBELLION!



TAKE THE DAUGHTER ALIVE.

SHE WILL BE USEFUL AGAINST ENAMI.



YOU GAVE IN... TO TAKADONO...



LORD OF TAKADONO DESIRED YOUR HEAD...



AS FOR THE
REST, CUT
OFF THEIR
HEADS!

NO ONE
SHOULD
GET
AWAY!



YES!

GAN-
KEN!



TAKE
THESE
TWO AND
GET OUT
OF HERE!







DON'T BE
COWARDS!
WE'LL
FINISH
THEM
OFF
HERE!

.....



IF WE DON'T
LET THEM
BREAK OUT,
OUR
ADVANTAGE
IS ASSURED.



BIG
BRO-
THER!





PROTECT MIO-DONO!



ISAZA!

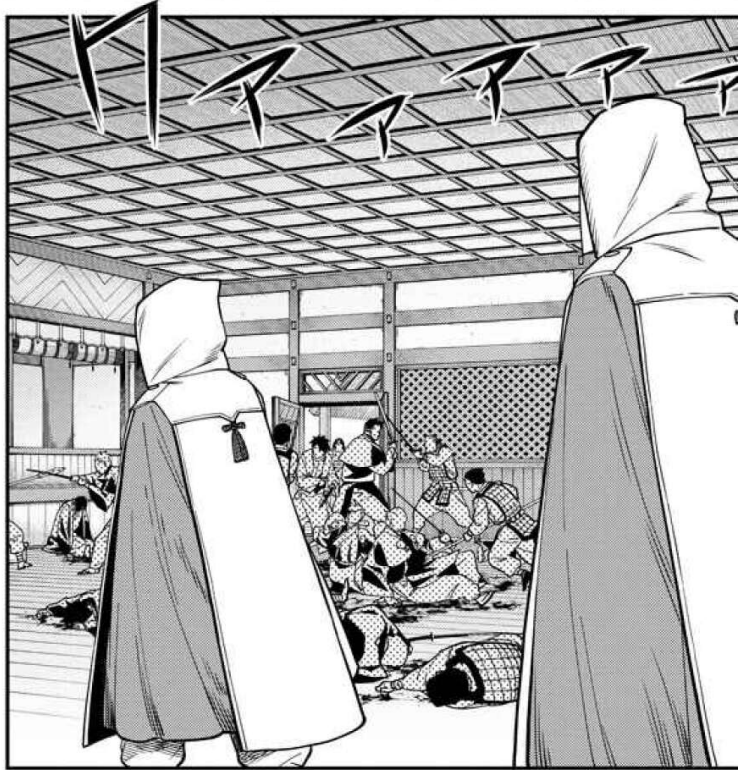


GOT IT!

BUT DON'T LET THE BARGAINING CHIP GET AWAY.

CUT OFF HER LEGS IF YOU HAVE TO,







THEY'RE
HERE!



JUDGING BY
HIRAGI, THIS
SURPRISE ATTACK
IS PROBABLY
CARRIED OUT BY A
SMALL, SELECT
GROUP.



STAND
BACK!



IF WE
MANAGE TO
CALL IN
REINFORCE-
MENTS, WE
HAVE A
CHANCE.

TO DO
THAT, WE
HAVE TO
GET OUT
FIRST...













MAYBE...
WE CAN
FIND A
WAY...

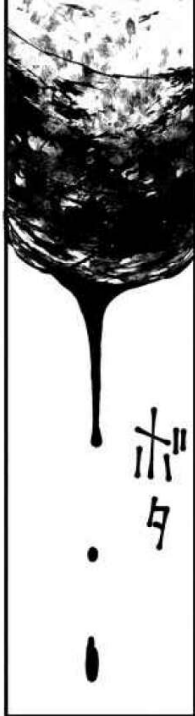
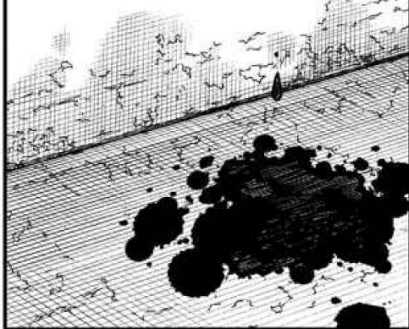
はあ

はあ





THE
SMELL
OF
BLOOD



THE
SMELL
OF
WAR



ONE
WAY OR
ANO-
THER...



ARE THEY
FIGHTING
AGAIN?

ARE THEY
STILL
FIGHTING?



A black and white manga-style illustration. In the center, a large, rounded object is wrapped in white cloth and secured with a thick, braided rope. A small rectangular tag with a geometric symbol is attached to the rope. The object sits on a stone pedestal. In the foreground, a young person with dark hair, wearing a light-colored uniform, sits on the ground, looking up at the object. The background is a simple, light-colored wall. A bright, sunburst-shaped speech bubble is in the upper right corner.

THEY'RE
IRREDEEM-
ABLE.

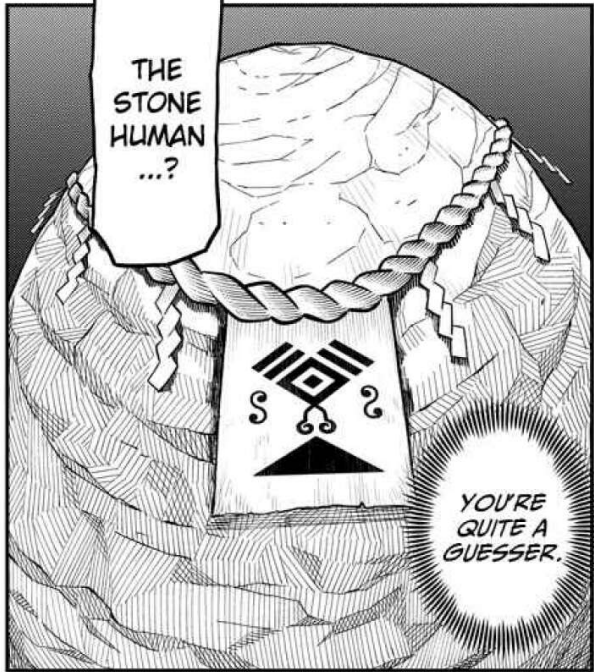


LAD,

YOU'RE IN
A TIGHT
SPOT,
AREN'T
YOU?



THE
STONE
HUMAN
...?



YOU'RE
QUITE A
GUESSER.



WELL,
THAT'S
OKAY.

A BIT
TOO
YOUNG.





IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET HURT,



YOU'D BETTER COME WITH US.



WHAT A SHAME,

THE BLOOD TRAIL GAVE YOU AWAY.



NO...



LET'S HAVE A LITTLE FUN FIRST.

RATHER,



NO!



STOP!



HELP!

QUIET YOU!



IS UP TO
YOU AND
ME.

FROM
NOW ON,
PROTECTING
MIZUHO



I OFFER
MYSELF
TO YOU!

SO

SAVE
EVERYONE!









AS IN
'INTER-
COURSE'.

CATCH
AND EAT

LOOK...



ANYWAY,
A PROMISE IS
A PROMISE.



YOU'RE
GOING TO
BE MY
PARTNER,
AND
WE'RE
GOING
TO HAVE
KIDS.





I AM
YOUR
WIFE.

FROM
NOW ON,



THIS IS A MACHINE TRANSLATION MADE
USING DEEPL. I JUST WANTED TO DRAW
ATTENTION TO THE MANGA THAT CAUGHT MY
INTEREST, SO MAYBE IT'LL BE PICKED UP BY
SOMEONE WITH MORE SKILL (AND
KNOWLEDGE OF JAPANESE.).
OBLIGATORY: SORRY FOR MY BAD ENGLISH
(I'M FROM KAZAKHSTAN.

