



BOOK 1
SUGIN VALLEY
CHAPTER 1

CURTLY FERGUSON

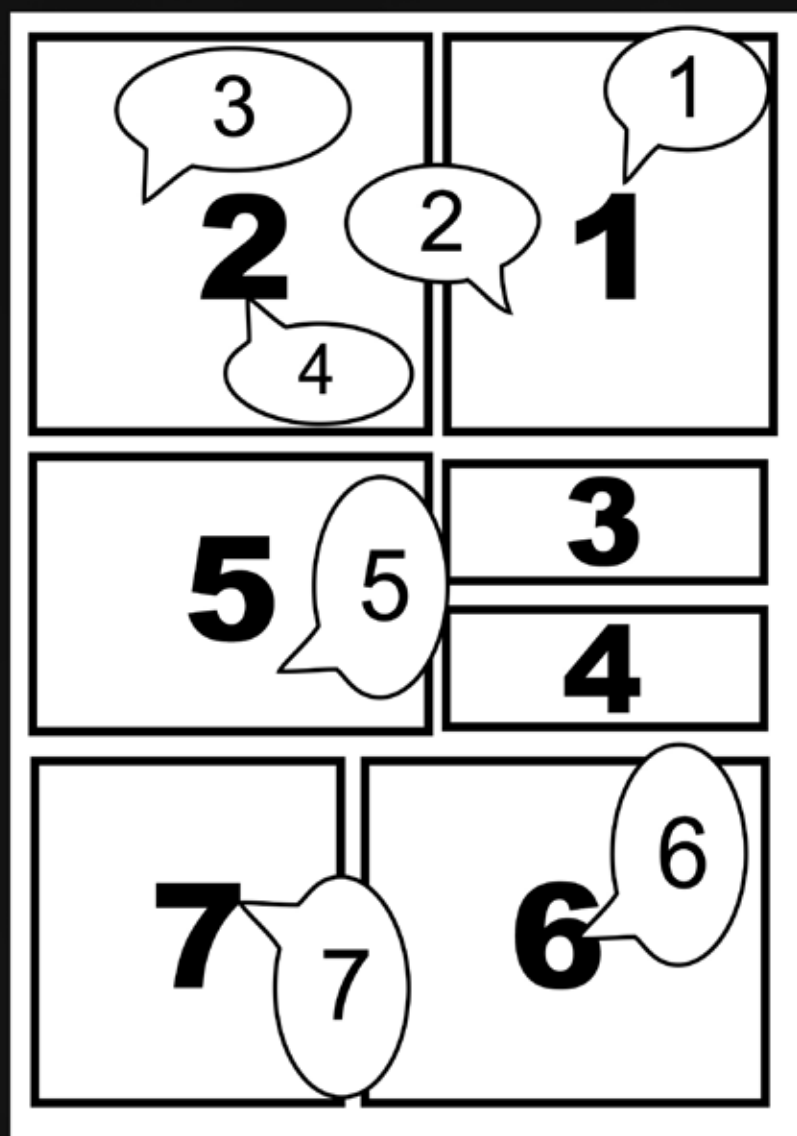
C.H. BARNETT

WAIT!

**THIS BOOK READS FROM
RIGHT TO LEFT!**



(FOLLOW ALONG THIS WAY)



In order to enjoy this book properly, read it **from right to left!** Japanese books read from right to left. we have formatted our manga in the traditional japanese way. We have done this for the familiarity of other manga fans, and to pay homage to the whole manga tradition in general!

THANK YOU!



AKIO

BOOK 1 SUGIN VALLEY CHAPTER 1

CREATED BY
CURTLY FERGUSON
C.H. BARNETT



STAFF CREDITS
C.M. BARNETT
CURTLY FERGUSON
C.H. BARNETT

VISIT US AT
DREAMBAKED.COM

AKIO
BOOK 1
CHAPTER 1
DREAMBAKED
DIGITAL EDITION

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This is a work of fiction.
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Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons is entirely coincidental

RATED
12
TEEN

This volume contains graphic scenes of fantasy violence, & Alcohol and drug references

Author's Note

I can't say how excited I am to have finally finished creating book 1 of AKIO, and found time to write this note to you. This manga was inspired by a dream to add something new to the manga industry that will inspire people in the same way I was. A dream to create something I can be proud of.

That dream has been made a reality by the people around me that have invested their time and effort into helping and without them involved this wouldn't have been possible. So to those people I thank you, and I greatly appreciate you. I hope you all enjoy reading, and stick around for more AKIO!

Big up Femi and Moses Mckenzie, and Calvin Bennett for their early input and encouragement. Much love to the dons at Dreambaked Studio who went, and continue to go above and beyond to bring this project to life!

BLESS.
-Curtly Ferguson



(Putting in groundwork, fronting in a shop in Japan, the mecca of manga, with the first release of AKIO. Respect to the dons that came with me and helped out!)



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CHAPTER 1: READY OR NOT

You must see...

There is much more to this world than meets the eye.
What you can and cannot see in this world is limited
to the breadth and strength of your mind.

You must understand...

THE SOUL is where the spirits of light and shadow reside.
The symphony of life and soul flows through our world eternally.
It's power is magnificent, stateless and subjective.

You must control...

Your **MIND** is **THE BRIDGE** between this realm and the soul's.
you must build your bridge strong in order to harness and
use the power of the soul. For weak bridges will crumble.



DALOS

AGOMPI RAINFOREST

XIMAKWAE MOUNTAINS

SUIGIN

LEEDIUM A G O M P I
BOKI
LALLAKE HIGHLANDS

HIYŌCHI
RIVOTO
EROSHUE
LINBOURNE
Z K I R O K U E

SUIGIN TOWN
KINBOSHI
SAVONO
H

OCHEE
ARASHA

WUNTI
LORONDI FOREST
LORON TOWN
L O O C

YOSAI MOUNTAINS
ALAYUM VALLEY
FORT ALAYUM
L O O C

MAWMI
MANGROVE

WILANCA
NOTTIKA
YEWKAM
LOIRMAY

YANNAK
JORGOT
REMDA

GOIYA
IYUMBAR

LOKOPO
BARHAM
DERHAM WOODS
ZAXSAH
BIRIM
WAXAR
EAXAK

LITIKAT
YIDRID
MORGAT
SAI

RHEMYNKA CHANNEL


DIZRAHO
KŌR TAKEA
VON
GINBUKTI
H A R

LOLLUCVIAN SEA
JIBAR

WAKOPI
GONGON
KAPPI


AKRAN
WAKOMPO OASIS

LOLLUCVIAN SEA




DALOS IS A COMPLEX AND UNFORGIVING LAND.
RAVAGED BY ENDLESS WARS BETWEEN
THE 7 KINGDOMS THAT RULE.
INVASION FROM DISTANT NATIONS ARE FREQUENT.

MYSTERIOUS, AND MURDEROUS
CREATURES TERRORIZE THE COUNTRY.



THE LIGHT OF THE SOUL GUIDED
THE PEOPLE THROUGH THE DARKNESS.



Over countless years, the knowledge and understanding of the Soul's power became greater, and more refined.

Through the understanding of the soul, the Martial Arts were formed.

The people used the Martial Arts as a shield. Savage warrior tribes could not harass them. Nor could rich and powerful monarchies subjugate them.



And all the other evil that haunted the people was repelled.



THE ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL, AND THE MARTIAL ARTS STYLES WAS RECORDED CAREFULLY OVER MANY YEARS. WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS AND SCROLLS OF HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE AGES. THESE TEXTS WERE KEPT IN THE 7 GREAT LIBRARIES ACROSS DALOS. PROTECTED BY THE MOST POWERFUL SERVANTS OF THE MONARCHIES, AND THE STRONGEST MEMBERS OF THE CLANS.

PROPER TRAINING IN THE CONTROL AND USE OF THE SOUL WAS REQUIRED BEFORE PUTTING CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE. FOR IT COULD END IN TRAGEDY FOR AN UNREADY STUDENT. THIS IS WHY THE KNOWLEDGE WAS CAREFULLY PROTECTED.

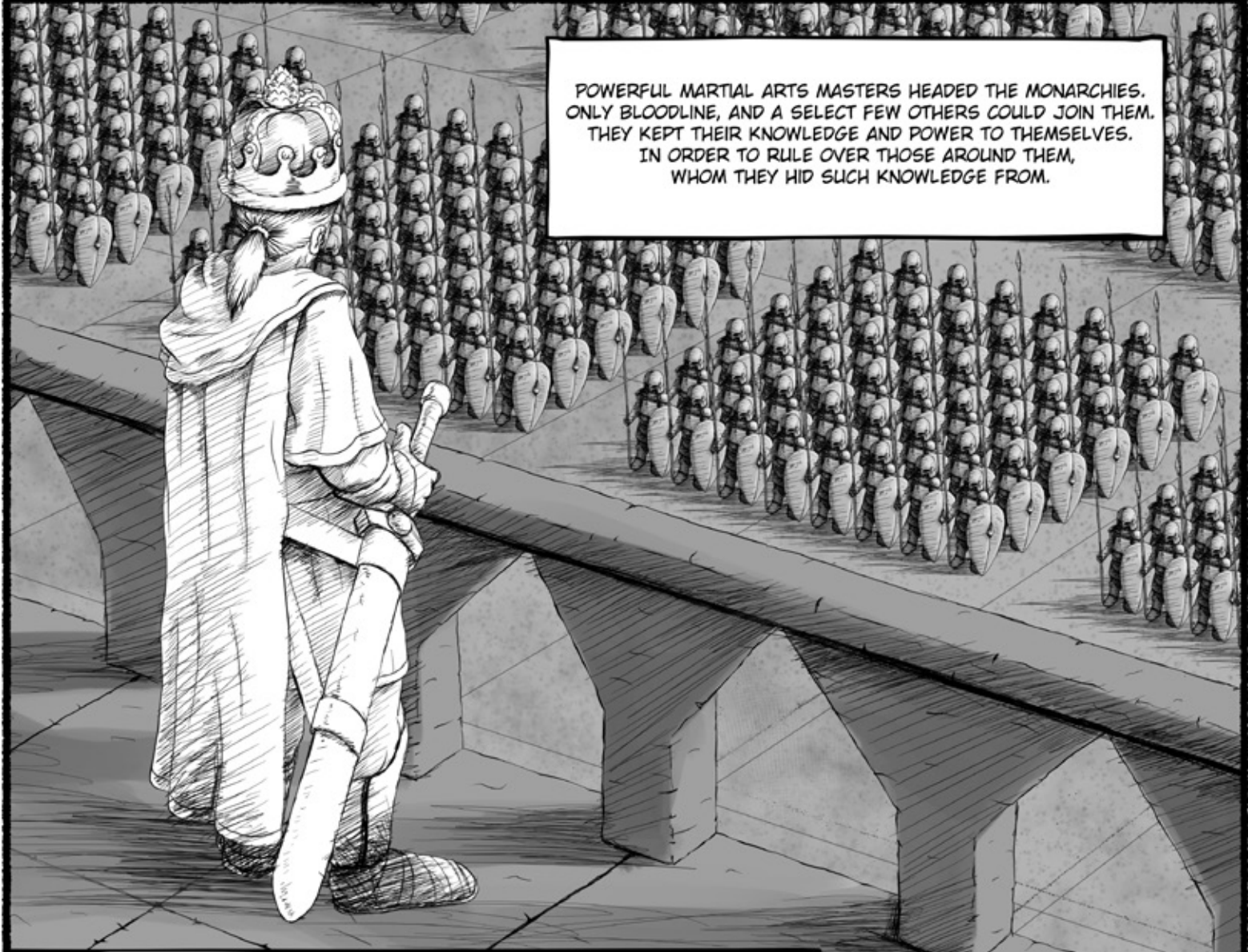
THERE EVEN EXISTED KNOWLEDGE THAT SHOULDN'T BE REVEALED TO ANYBODY. FOR IF PUT IN TO PRACTICE, DEATH AND CATASTROPHE WILL COVER ALL OF DALOS.



OVER THE COURSE OF TIME, NUMEROUS MARTIAL ARTS STYLES WERE DEVELOPED, WITH THEIR OWN PATH TO THE SOUL. SOME STYLES GAINED SO MUCH REPUTE, THAT POWERFUL CLANS AND MONARCHIES ROSE UP AROUND THEM.



NO STYLE IS STRONGER THAN ANOTHER BY DEFAULT. A STYLE'S POWER IS SOLELY DEPENDANT ON THE USERS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOUL.



POWERFUL MARTIAL ARTS MASTERS HEADED THE MONARCHIES. ONLY BLOODLINE, AND A SELECT FEW OTHERS COULD JOIN THEM. THEY KEPT THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND POWER TO THEMSELVES. IN ORDER TO RULE OVER THOSE AROUND THEM, WHOM THEY HID SUCH KNOWLEDGE FROM.

THE CLANS HAD NO SUCH POWER STRUCTURE. THE MASTERS WERE SIMPLY THE STRONGEST AND MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE MARTIAL ARTISTS. REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ONE'S BIRTH. THERE WERE NO RULERS OR COMMANDERS, BUT ALL MEMBERS WERE REQUIRED TO HONOUR THE CODE OF THE MARTIAL ARTS. THE MASTERS OF THE CLANS SHARED THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH ALL WHO COULD PROVE THEMSELVES WORTHY OF IT.





MANY MONARCHIES WANTED TO REMOVE THE MARTIAL ARTS CLANS. FOR THE CLANS CREATED EDUCATED PEOPLE, WHO NEED NOT LIVE AS SERVANTS AND SLAVES OF THE MONARCHIES.

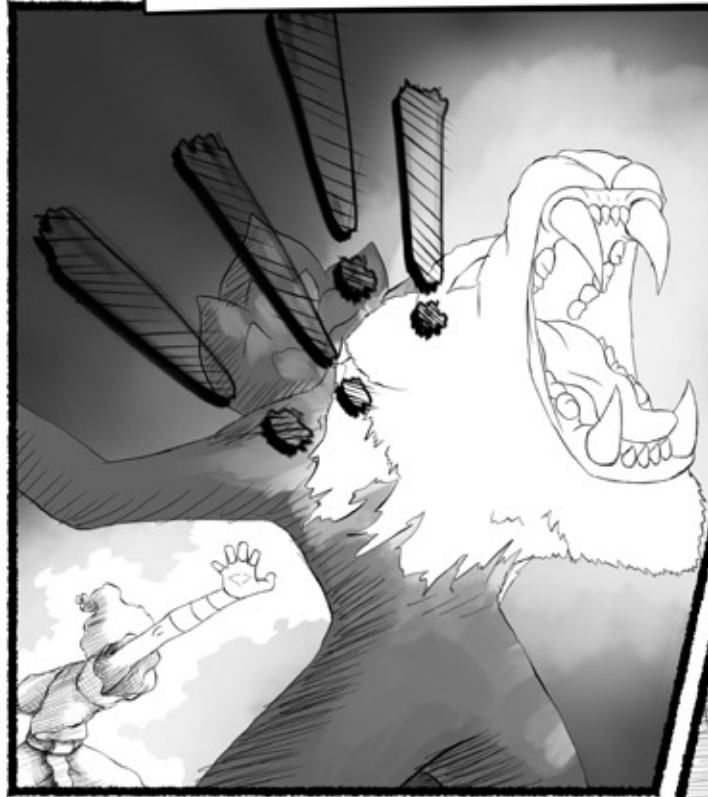


BOOM!



WOOSH!!!

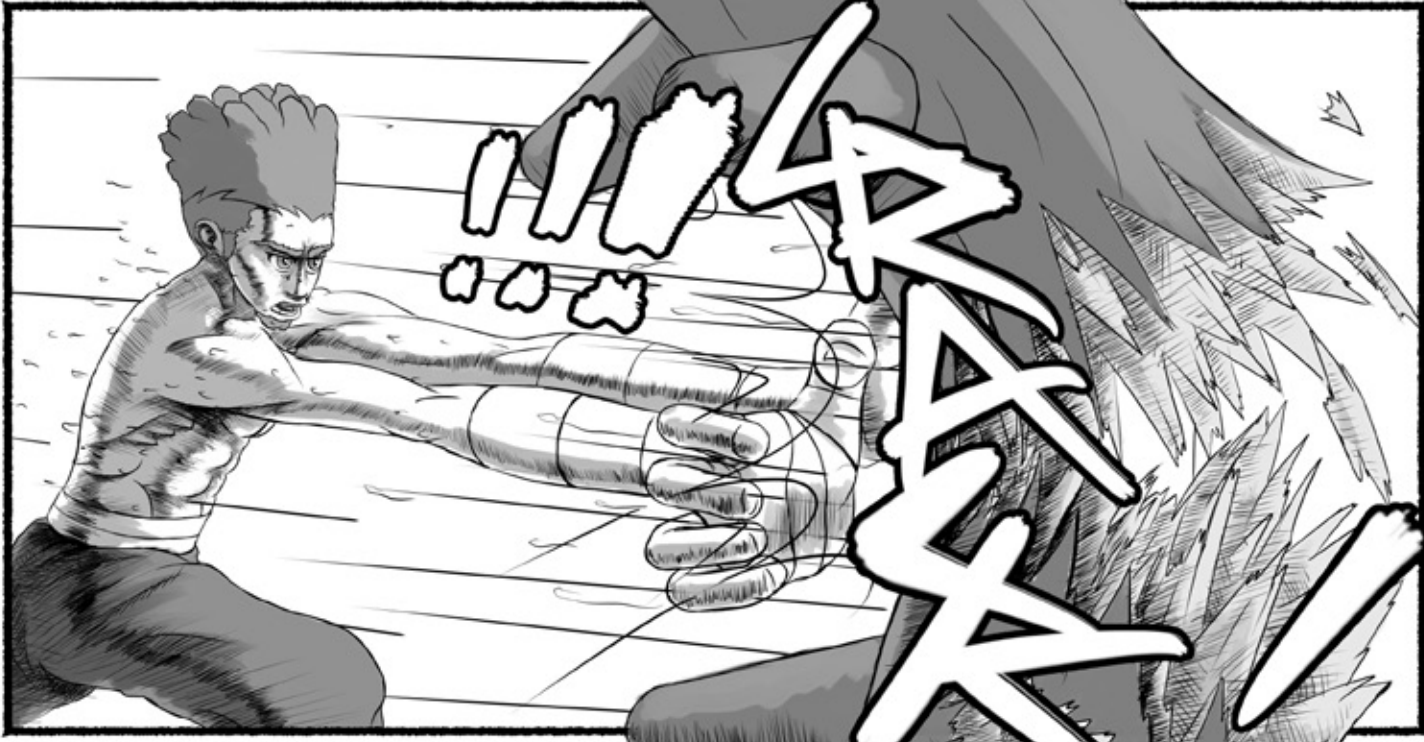
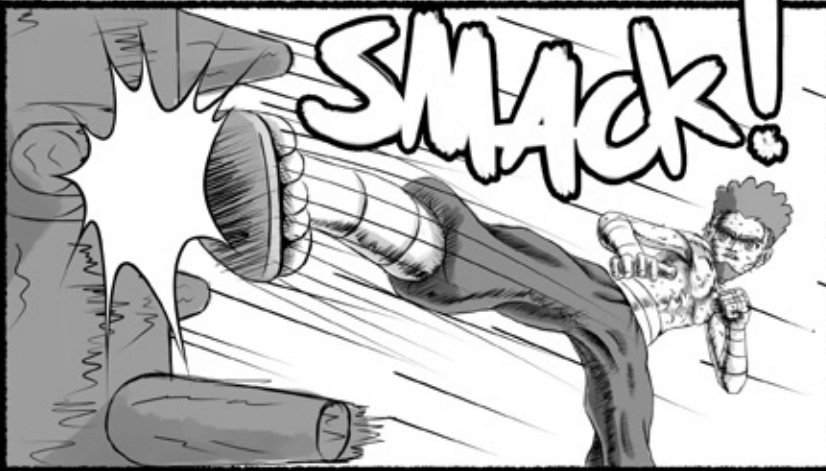
THEY DID NOT NEED THE PROTECTION OF THE MONARCHIES AND THEIR SOLDIERS. SO THEY DID NOT NEED TO SERVE THEM.



ICE!!

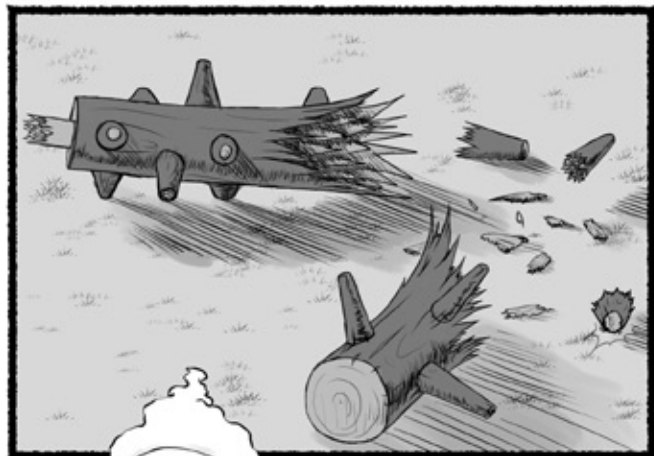


PRESENT DAY.





Phew!



Good Akio,
you are becoming
stronger everyday.



Thanks Gramps,
but did I have to
do it 101 times?



THOSE
TRAINING
DUMMIES
AREN'T
CHEAP
YOU
KNOW!!

SORRY

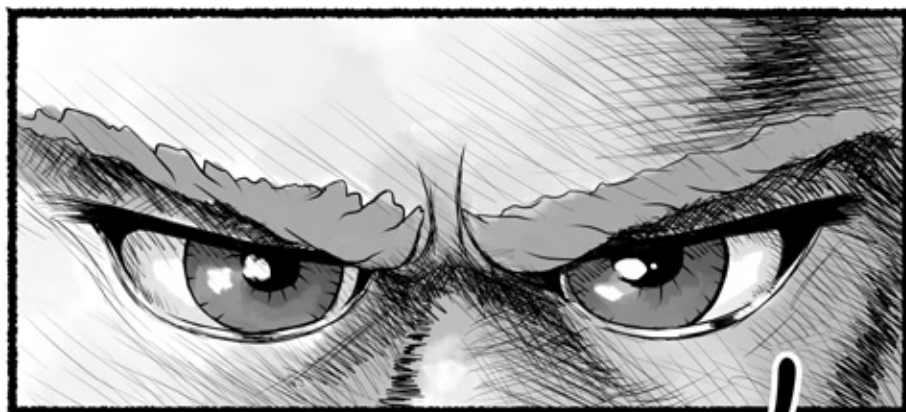


EHEP



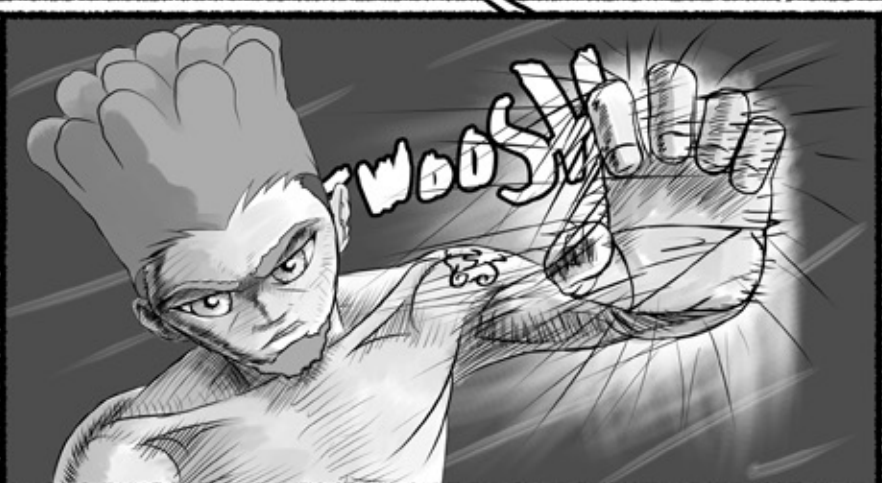
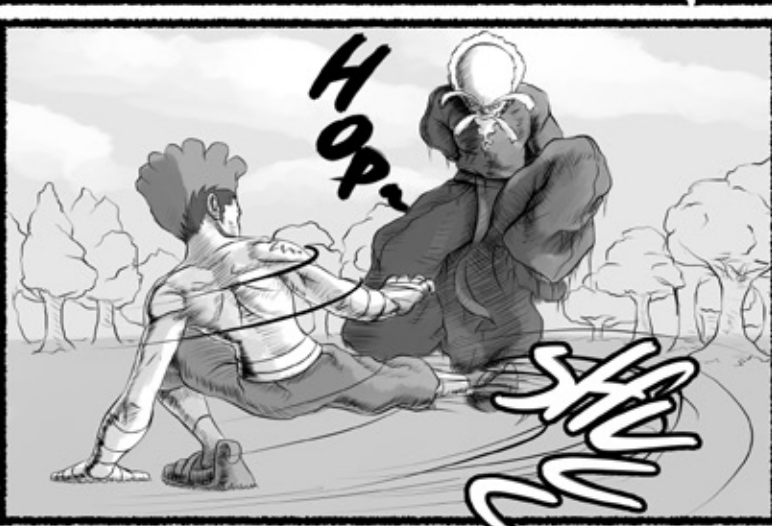
Akio?

Yeah?



**THIS TIME...
THIS TIME,
I'LL LAND ONE!**







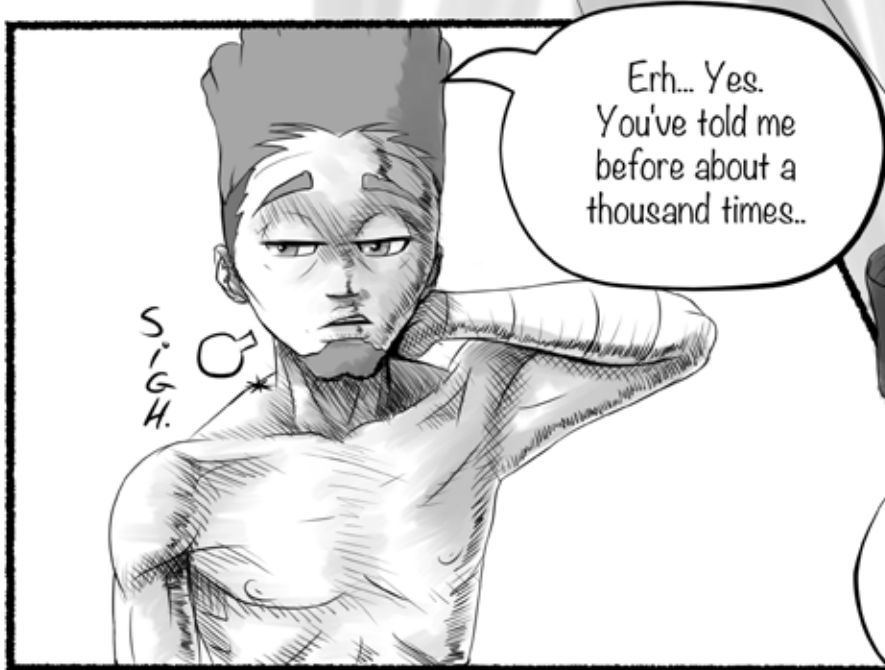
As usual Gramps,
you make it
look effortless.



As I keep telling you, Akio.
Physical strength has little to
do with the power of the **soul**.
You must focus and utilize your style.
For that is of greater significance.
Take for example,
the styles of the Gorilla and the Mantis.



I have! Yet you still don't listen,
so I'll tell you again.
I never had this problem with your
brother and sister



Erh... Yes.
You've told me
before about a
thousand times..



Martial arts styles are manifestations of the soul. Not physical weapons.
A strong martial artist is one that has great knowledge
and understanding of the mind and soul.
The individual's ability to combine their own style and soul
is what will determine the outcome of a fight.



Should the Gorilla fail to
be vigilant in combat...

The brute strength of the Gorilla style
martial artist will not save them from the
speed and precision of a Mantis style fighter.



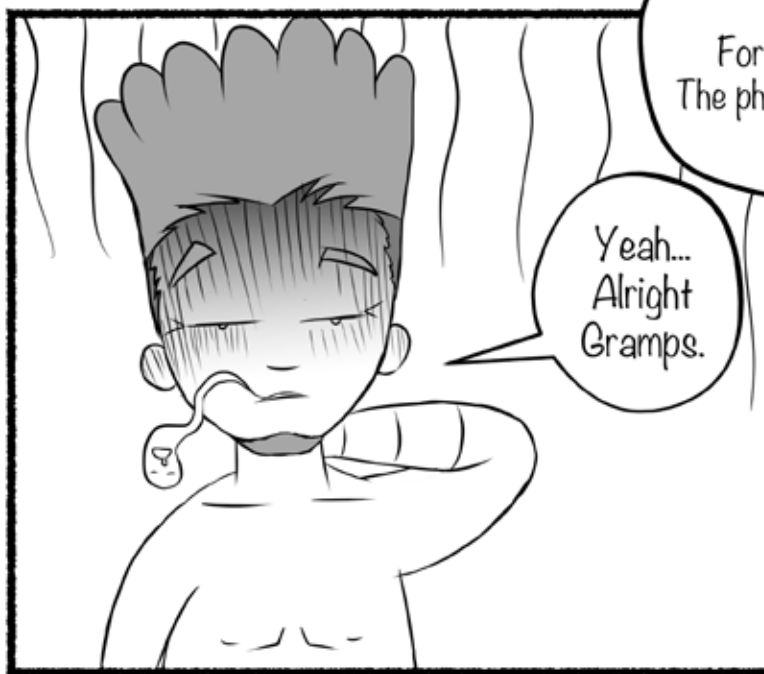


Before it knows what happened...

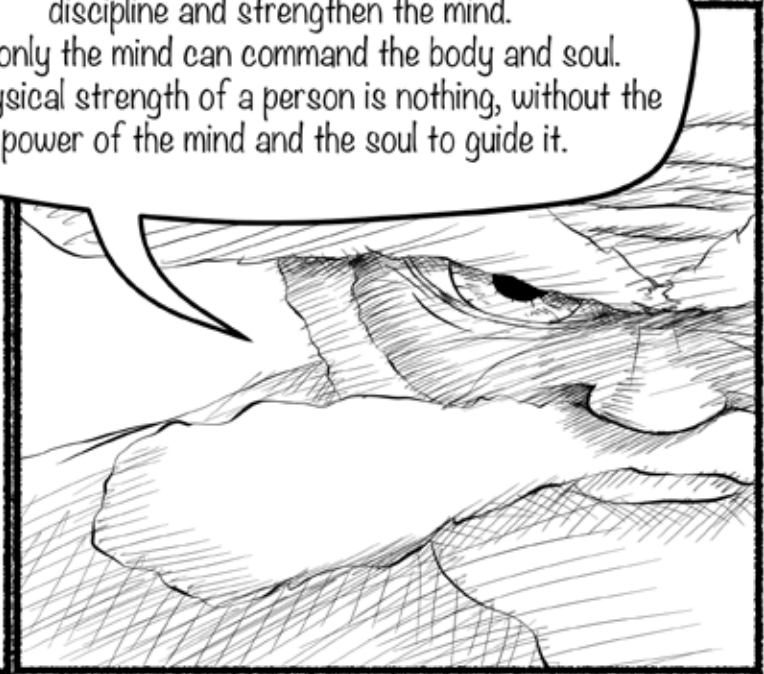


...It will be defeated.

The physical training we do is designed to discipline and strengthen the mind. For only the mind can command the body and soul. The physical strength of a person is nothing, without the power of the mind and the soul to guide it.



Yeah... Alright Gramps.



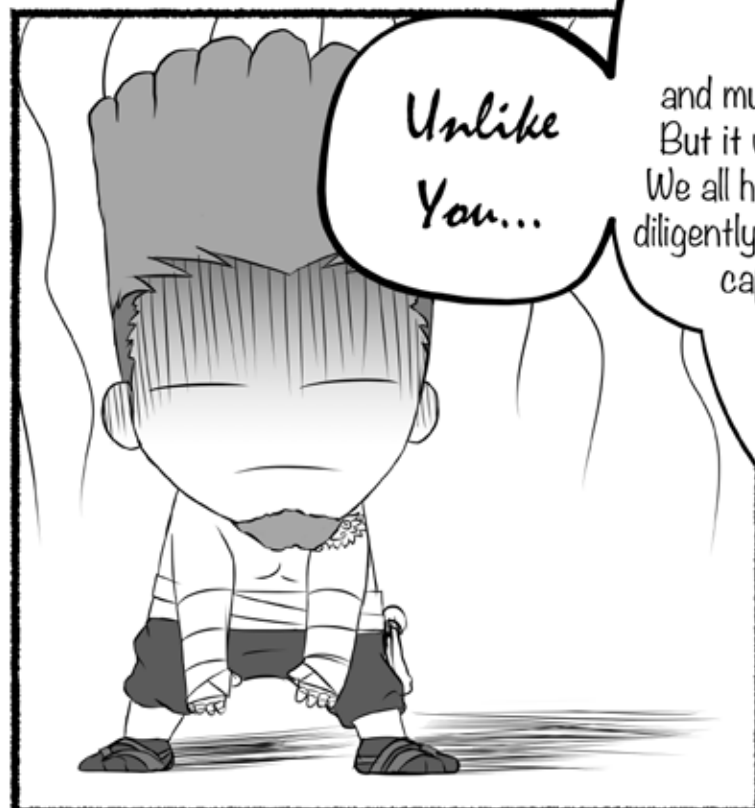


I certainly hope so, your brother and sister had a strong grasp on this by the time they were your age.

What were they like? I can't remember them clearly. You always had me studying those books, while they spent all their time training with you. Even though we lived under the same roof, I don't remember seeing them much.

They too had to study reading and writing before practicing martial arts. Your brain is the most important muscle in your body, and must be exercised even harder than your body. But it was their decision to train so hard not mine. We all have our own paths. If they have kept training diligently they should be strong martial artists by now, capable of wielding power beyond measure.

Unlike
You...



It's just taking me a little longer is all.
But i'll grow stronger than them.
I'll become the strongest master
of the dragon style the world has ever seen.

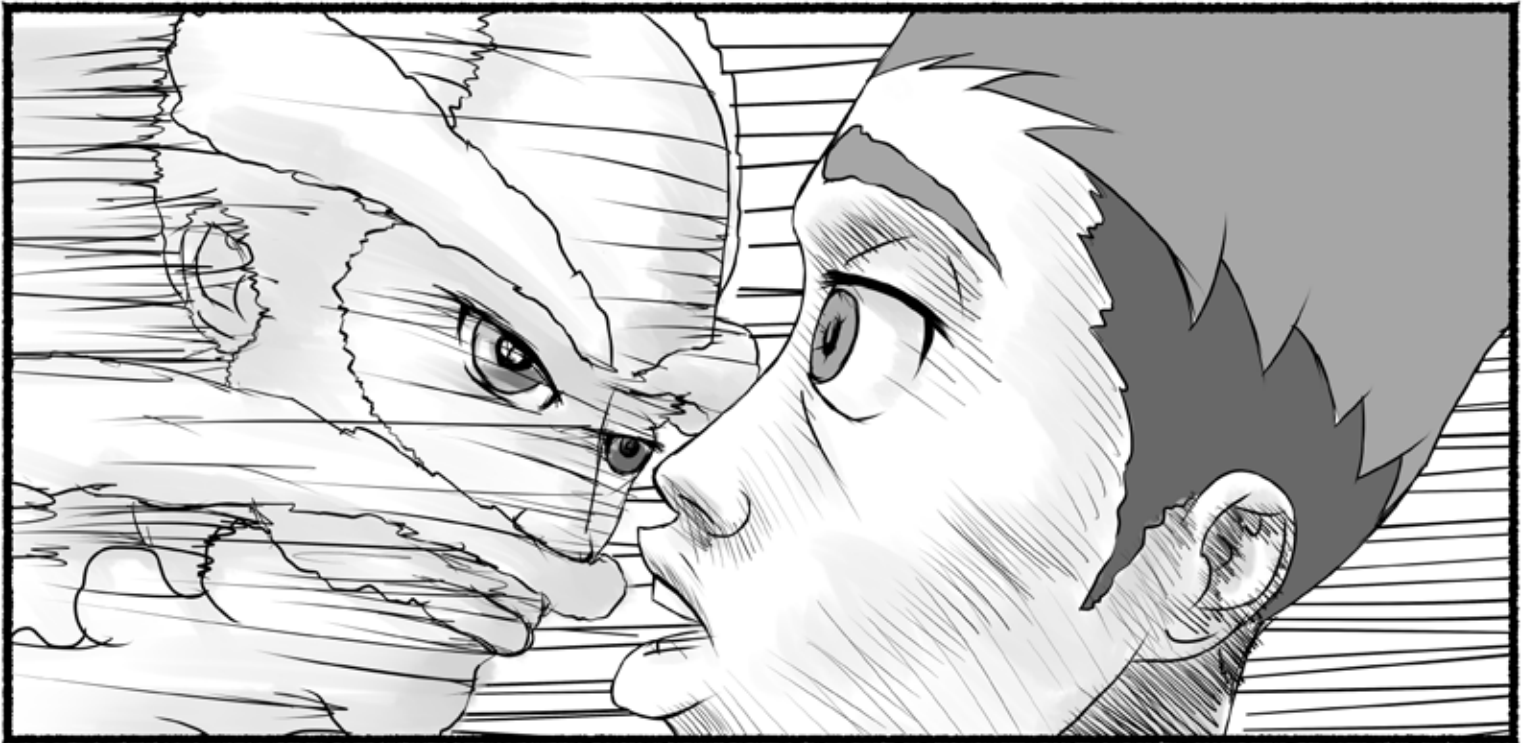
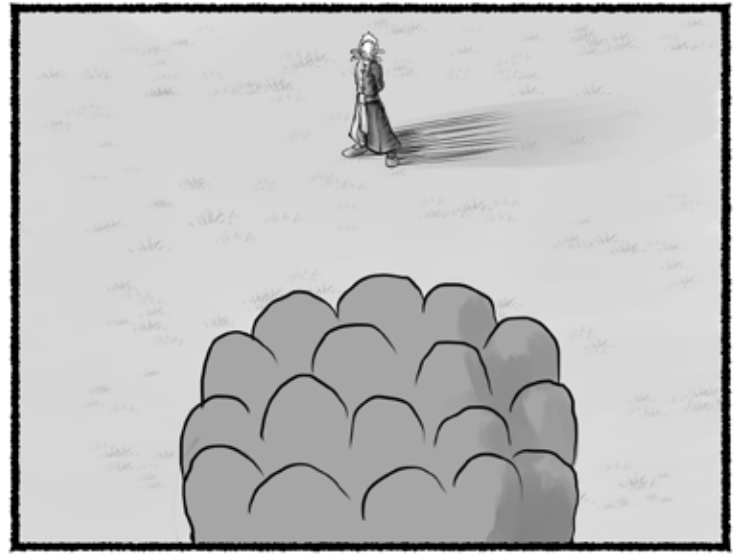
FWIP

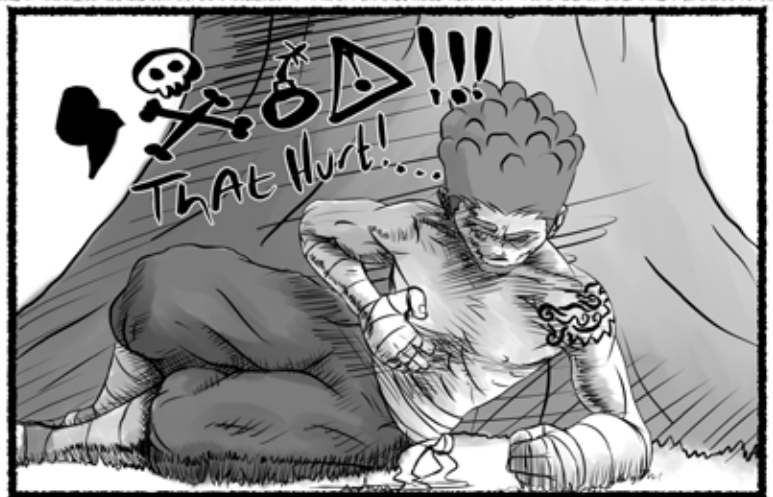
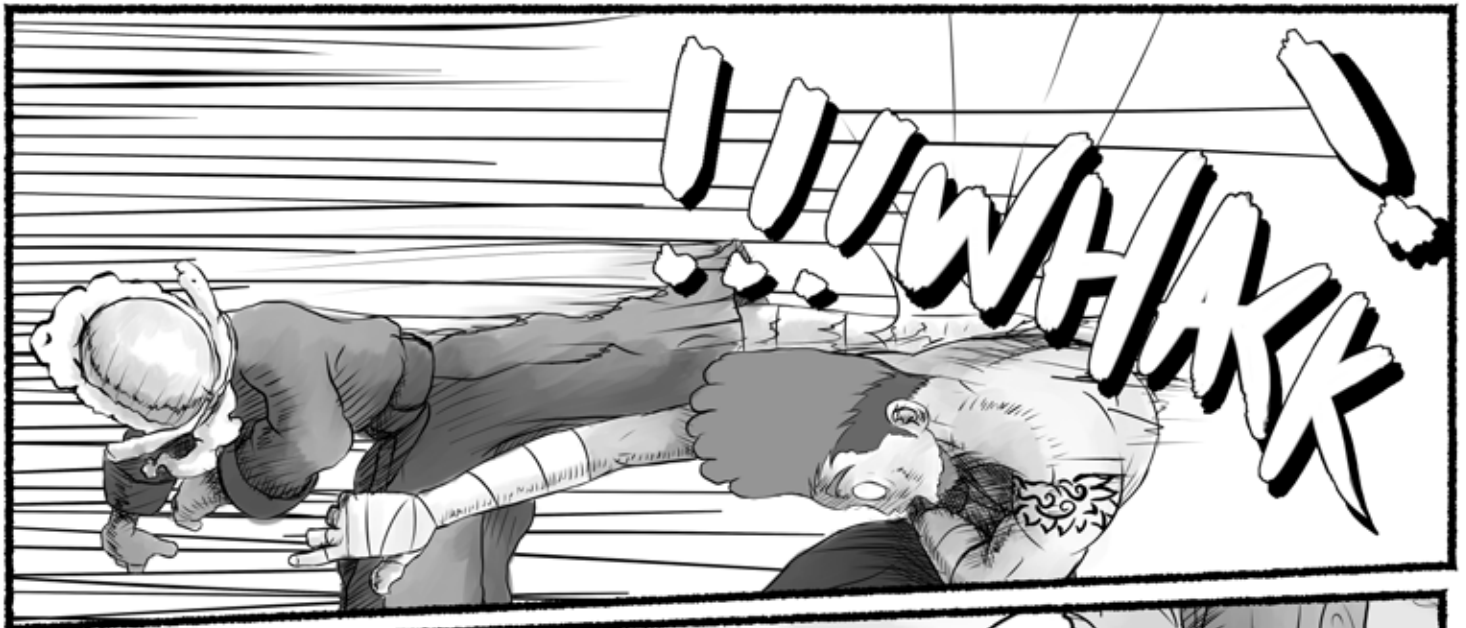
Fu Fu Fuu
perhaps..

perhaps
not...

But talk is
cheap Akio.

.....





Now he is strong enough. . . .
I will show him
the power of the soul
In the form of the...

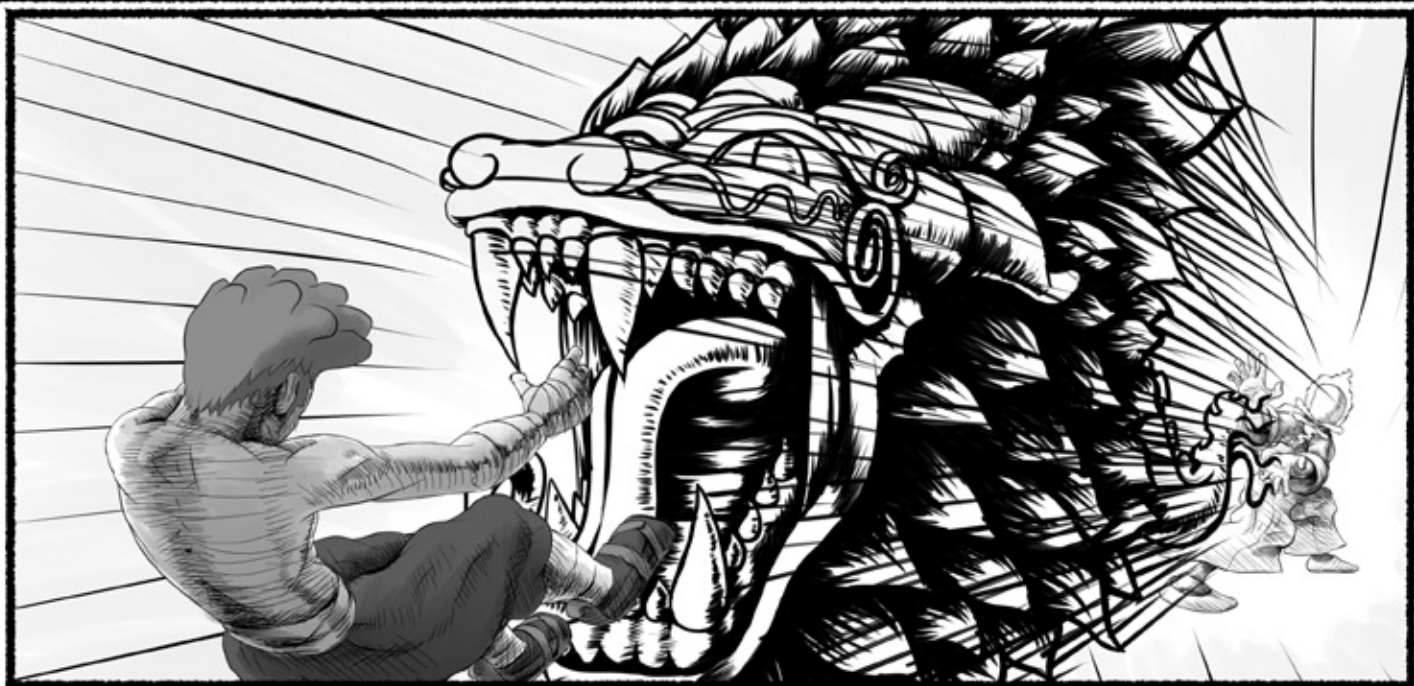





Something feels off



...Just Watch his movements carefully.
Guard and Counter...



HOW DO YOU DO THAT?!



Aah ha ha ha haa. Big bad Akio, floored by an attack that didn't even land!

No!
You definately
hit me!

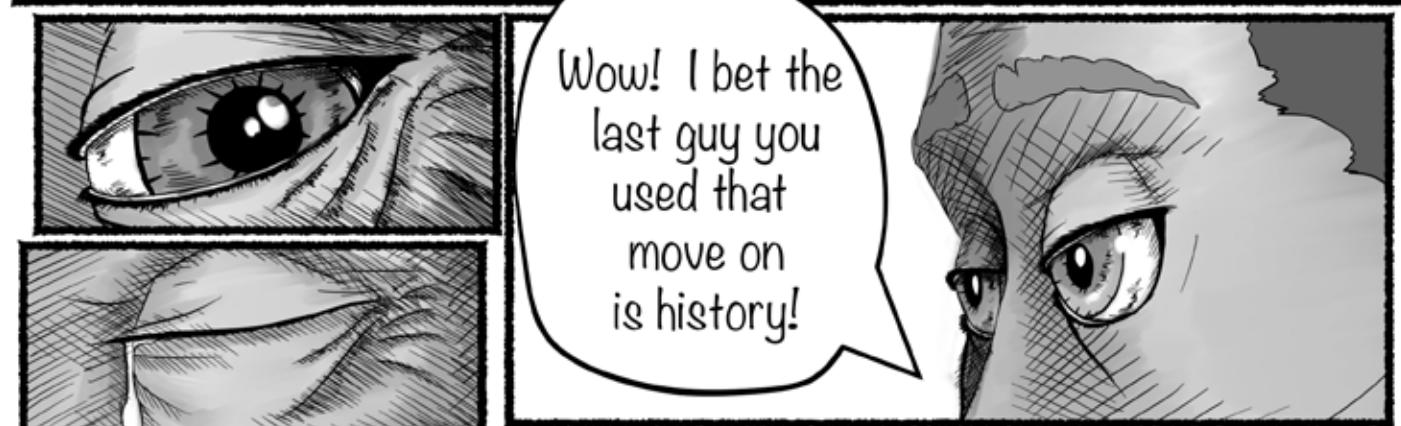
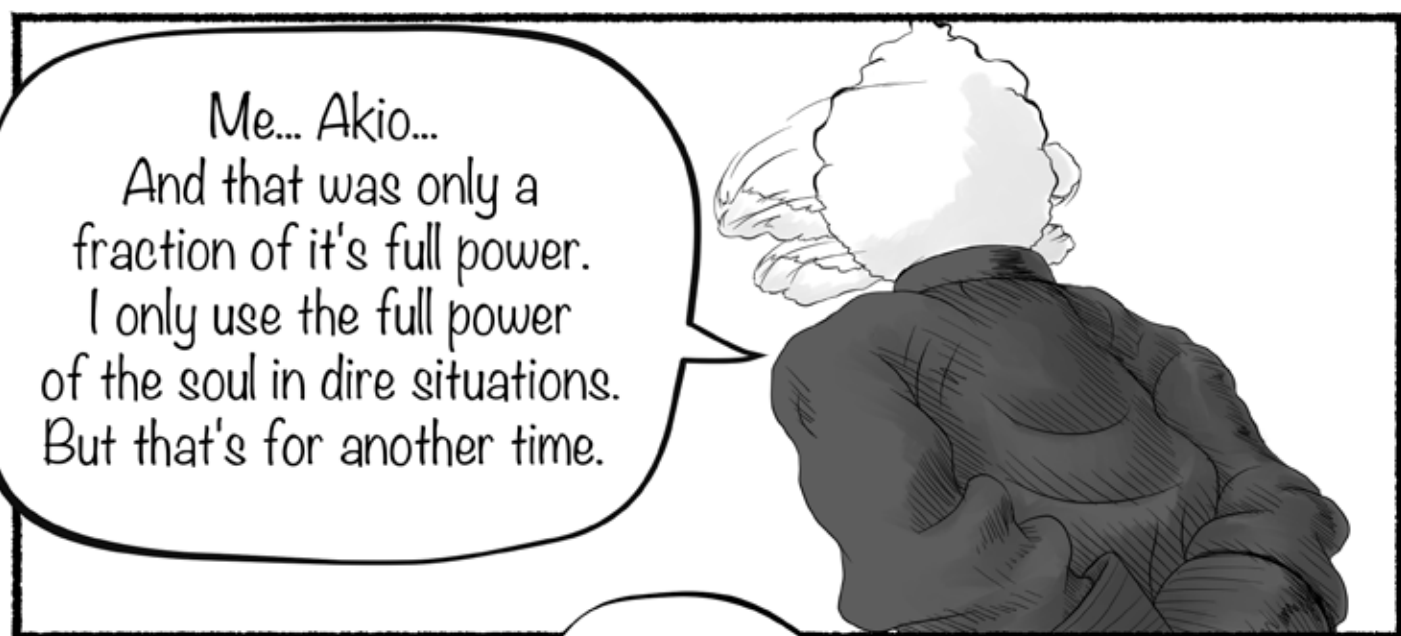
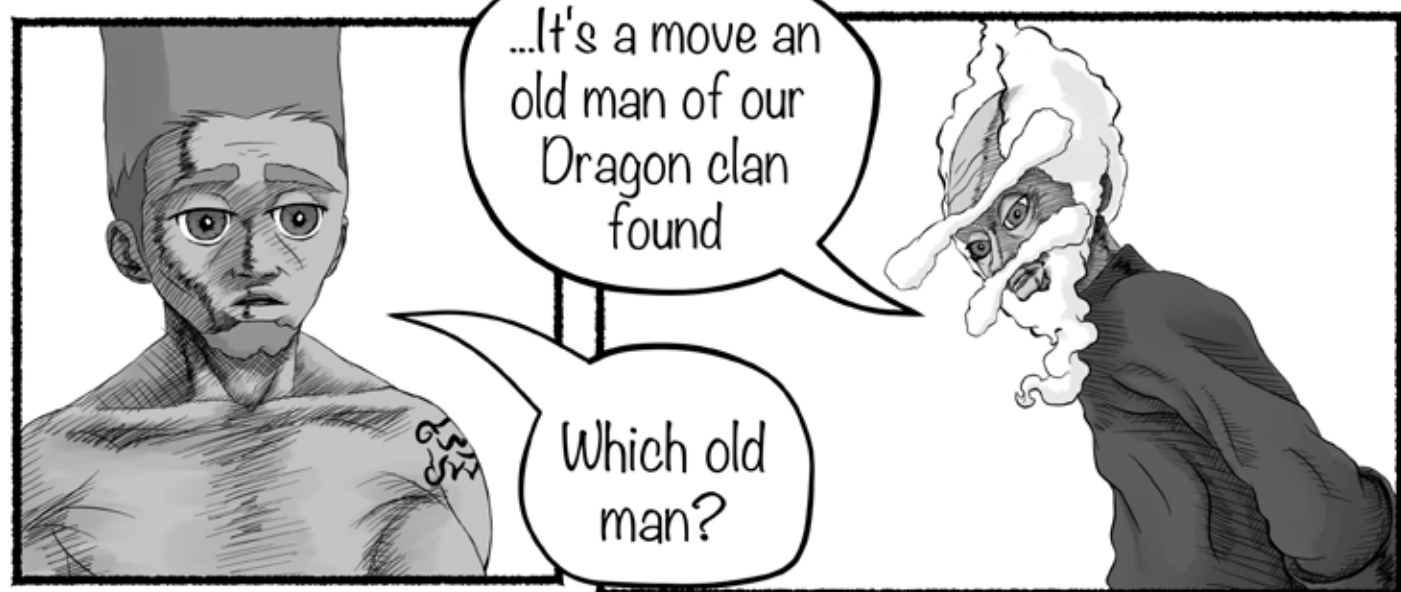
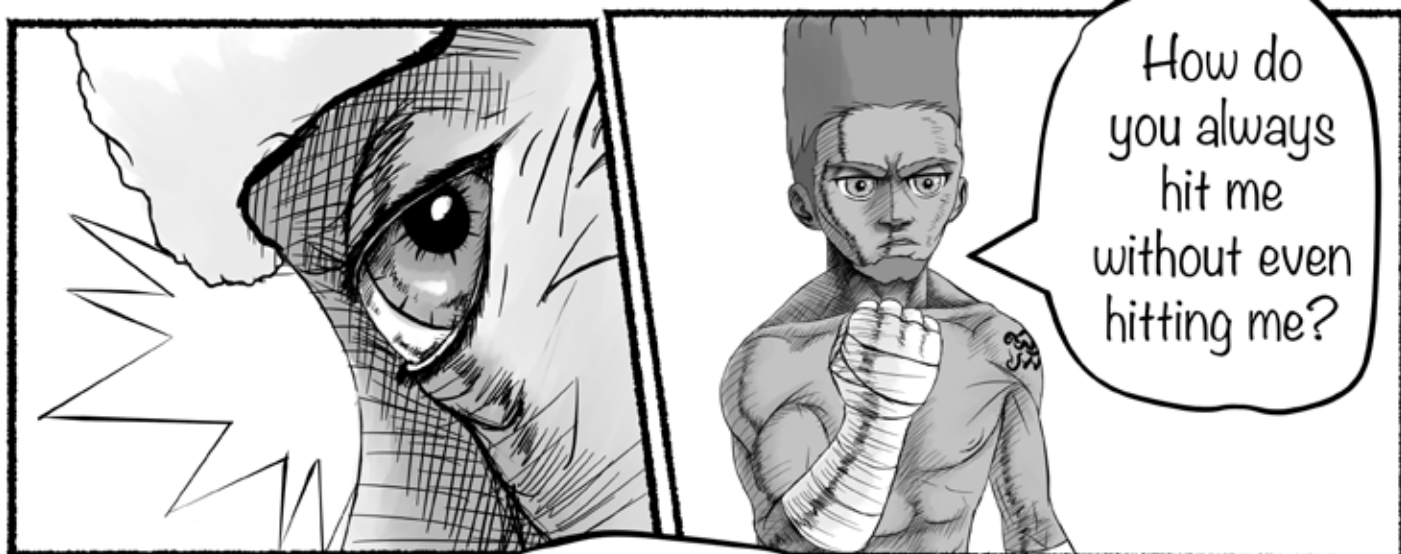
Well you
were out
well beyond
my reach,
So what
was it?


I don't know...
I couldn't
see it.
But I definitely
felt it...

Wait
Gramps!


Interesting...
Let's end our
session there.
I'm starving!

STEP STEP






At one time I had many people under my protection. I had to use that move, and many others to defeat many enemies. But the last man I used them on is still out there.



How do you do it?
You have to show me!

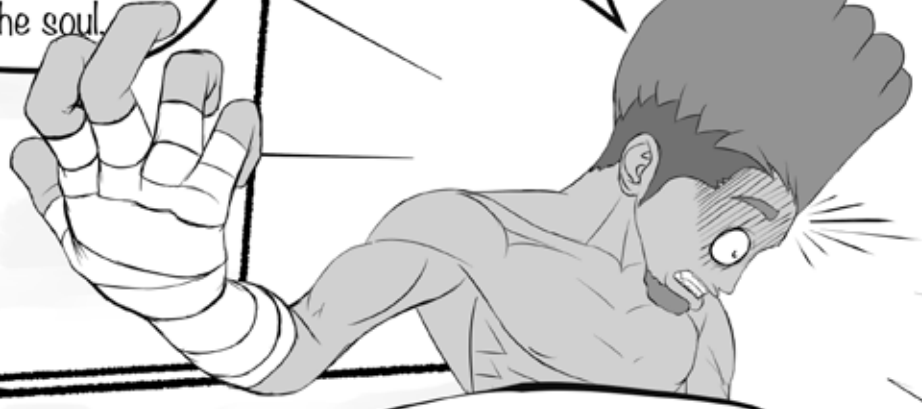


Soon Akio, but you aren't ready yet!



You are indeed very strong Akio! But physical strength alone will not permit you to use these kind of attacks. For these kinds of attacks come from the soul.

You're telling me, that after all of these years of training... I'm still not strong enough?!

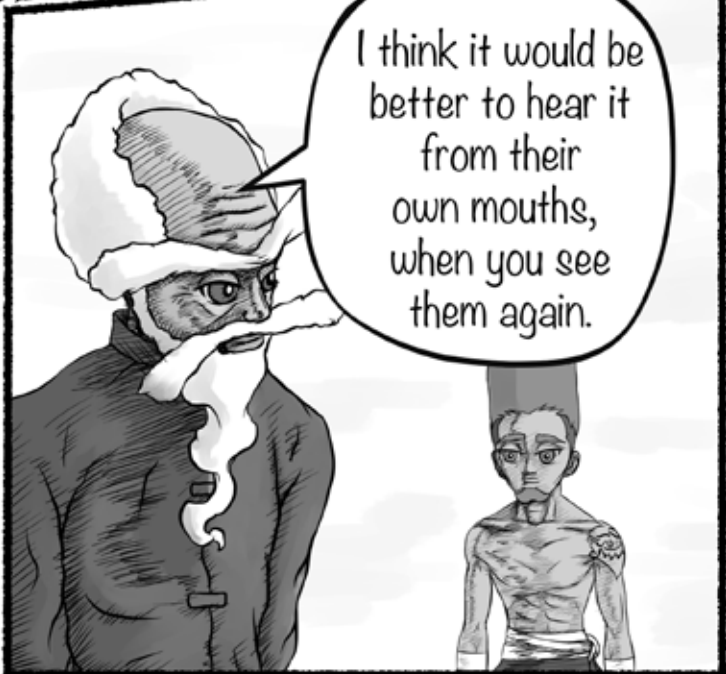


...you can begin to project the power of the soul from your Martial Arts... But NOT before you are ready... As I always tell you.

...you must stay on the path of the **Dragon**, Akio. As you gain wisdom and experience on your journey down this path...

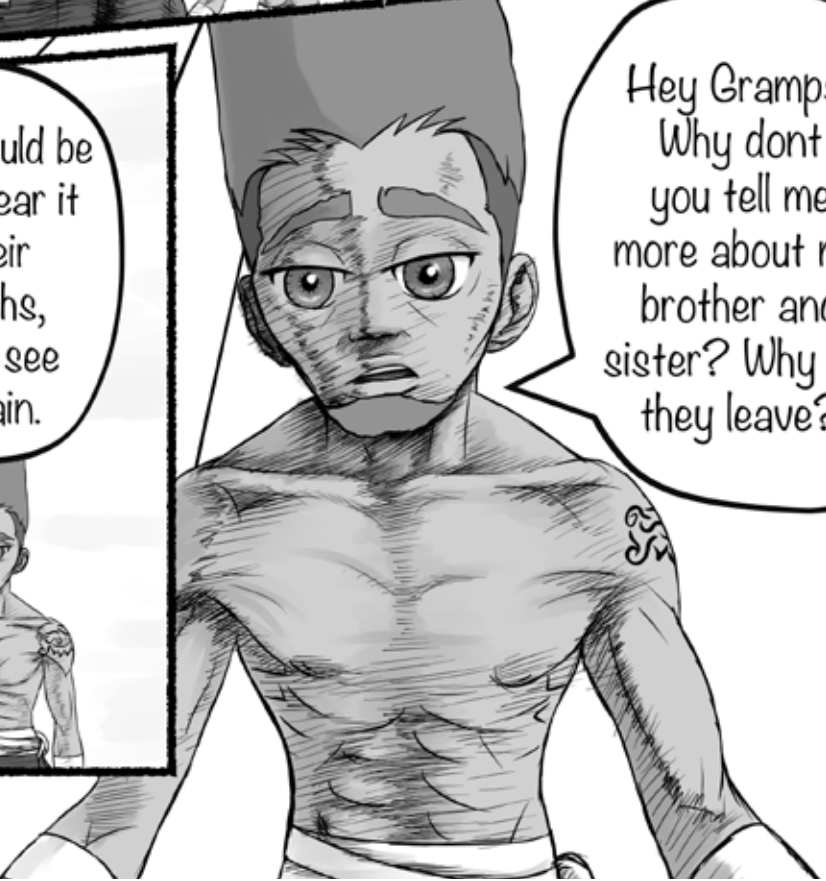



...Now, come let's go eat!




I think it would be better to hear it from their own mouths, when you see them again.

Hey Gramps! Why dont you tell me more about my brother and sister? Why did they leave?







Well, I think it would be just fine hearing it from you gramps!



Oh, is that so? And if I Don't tell you?




You sure you want to find out, old man?



Fu fu fuuu!
Sure!
Why not?



GET UP!
YOU FOOL!




PLEEEASE!-

PLEASE
JUST
TELL ME!




Arghhhhhhhh.....



Akio.
I could show you the move again and again,
every day,
for the next month and you still won't know
how to use it yourself.

These moves can only be found
within yourself, by yourself.
Through immense time and effort
in your work and training,
using wisdom and knowledge gained
in your life experience and meditation.
You will be able to reach into your soul
and bring forth these moves.



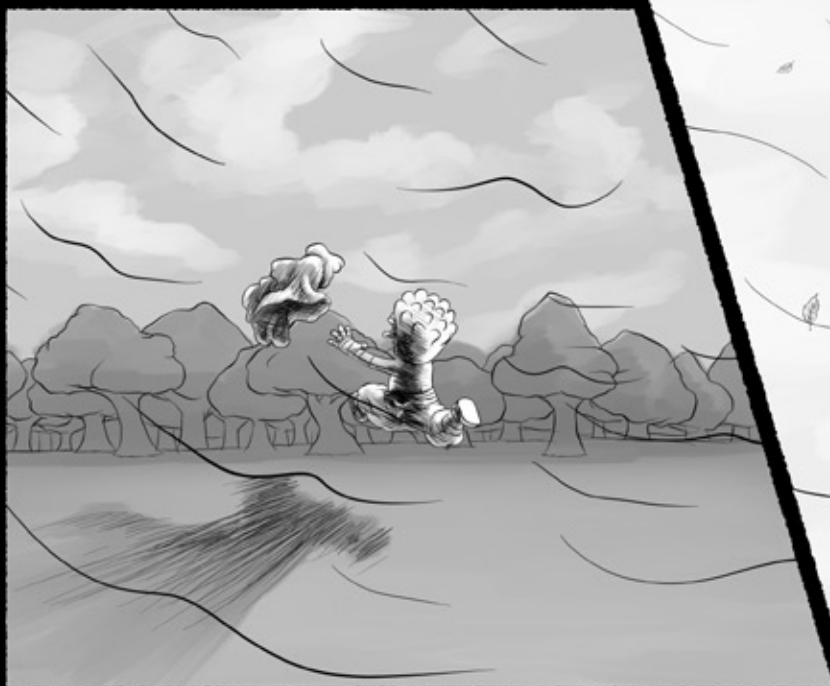
... What if I train extra hard...
Will you teach me
how to use that move?
... And tell me about my
brother and sister?

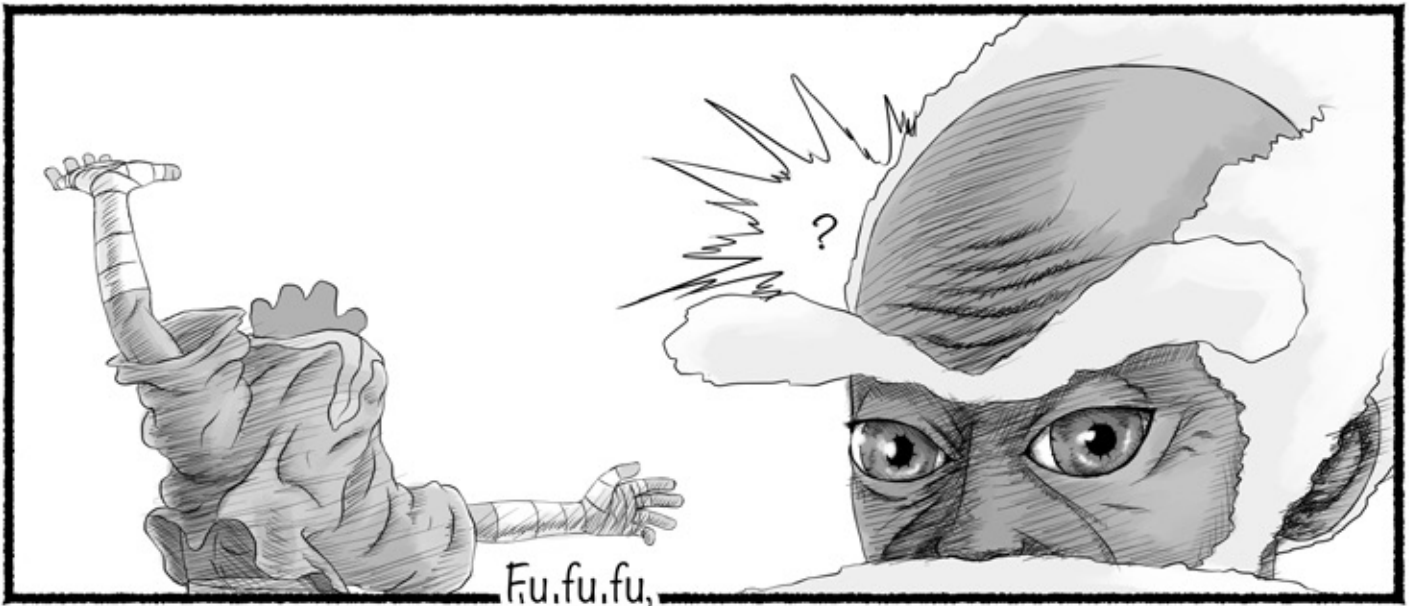
Have patience young man!
Your time will come.
Let's focus on your
development for now.



Alright...

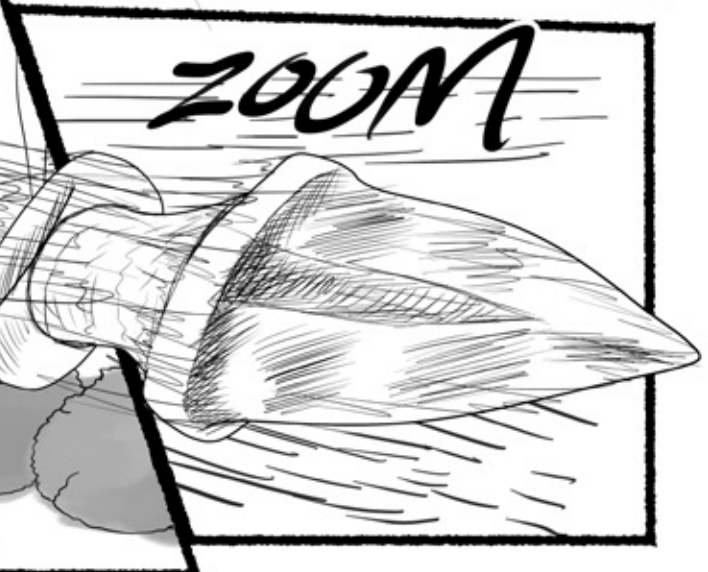
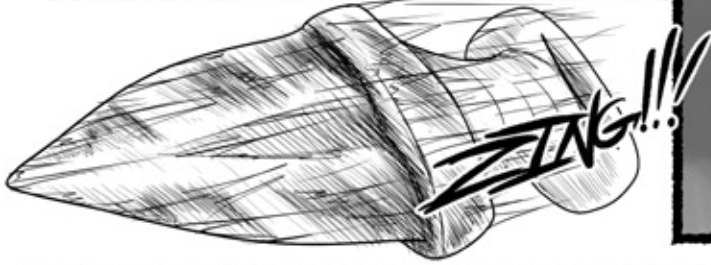
Now, catch
up to your
shirt and
meet me
inside for
dinner.





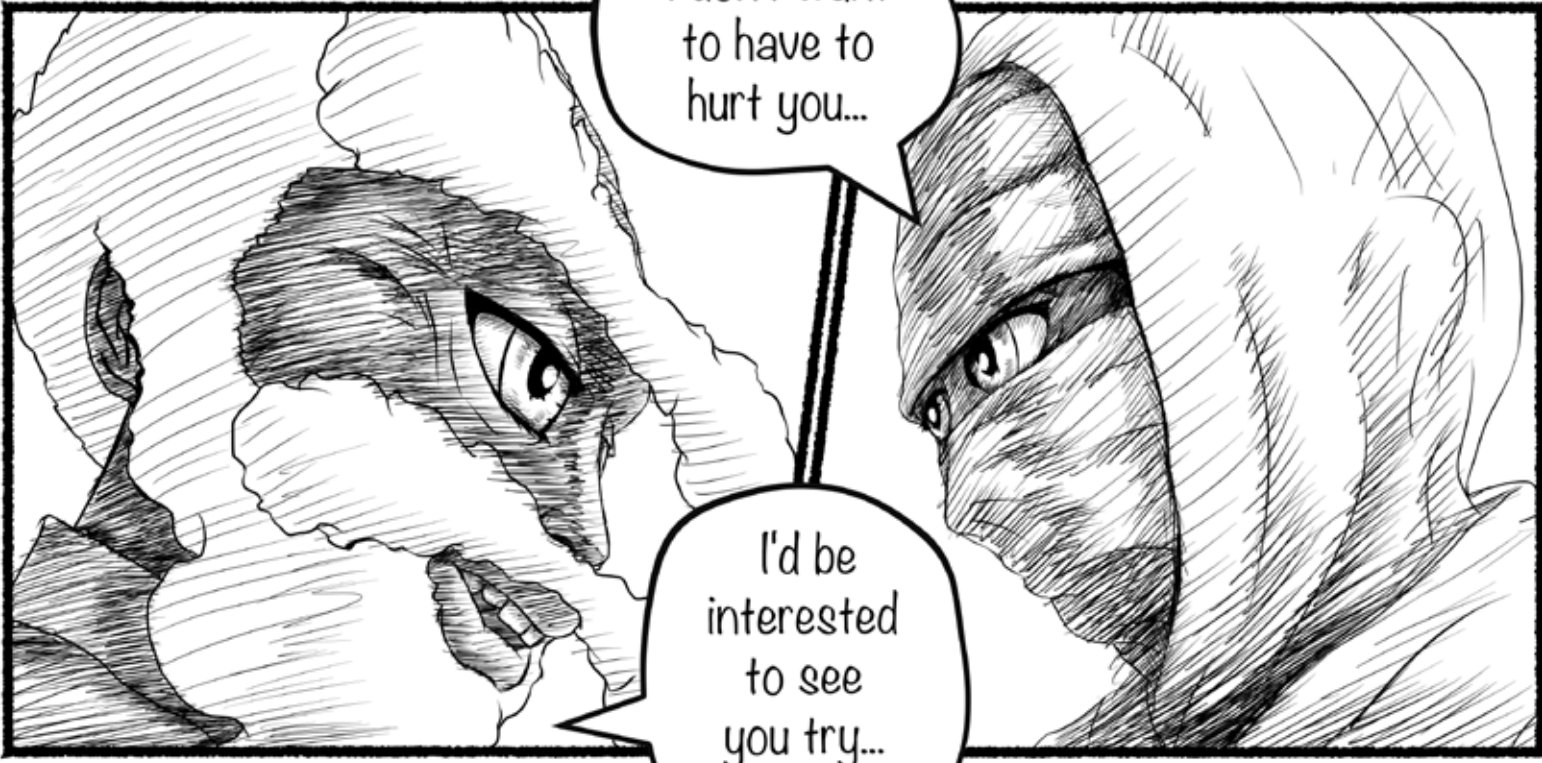
Fu.fu.fu,

It's been a while
since i've seen
some real action!



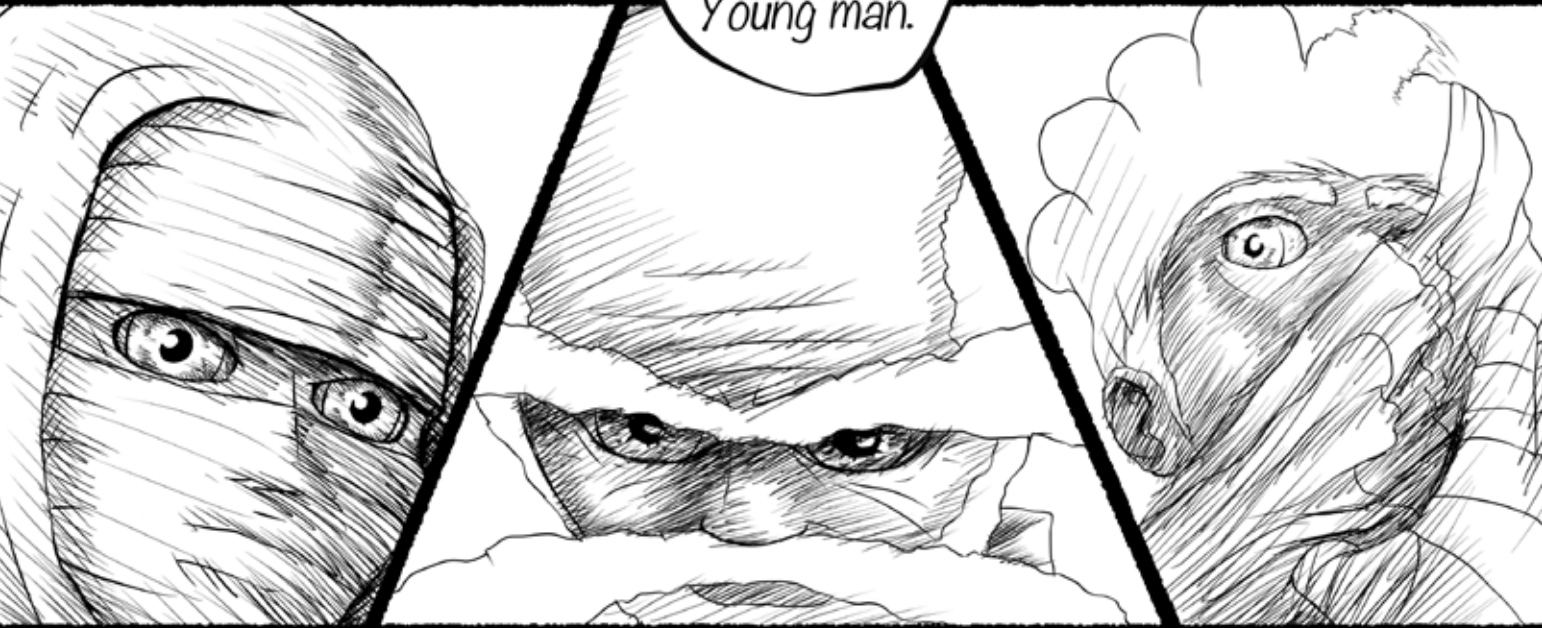



Hand it over,
old man!




I don't want
to have to
hurt you...

I'd be
interested
to see
you try...
Young man.





I won't say it again!
Hand over the gem or I'll
take it by force!

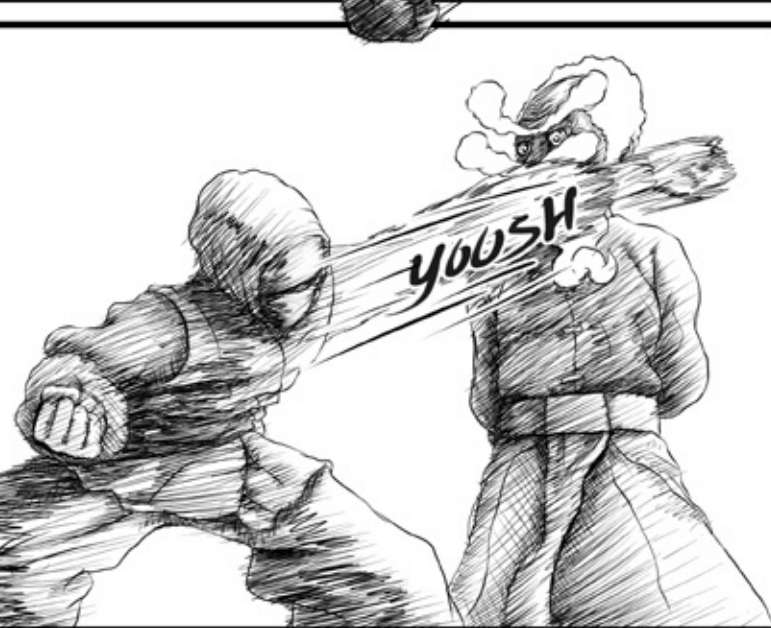
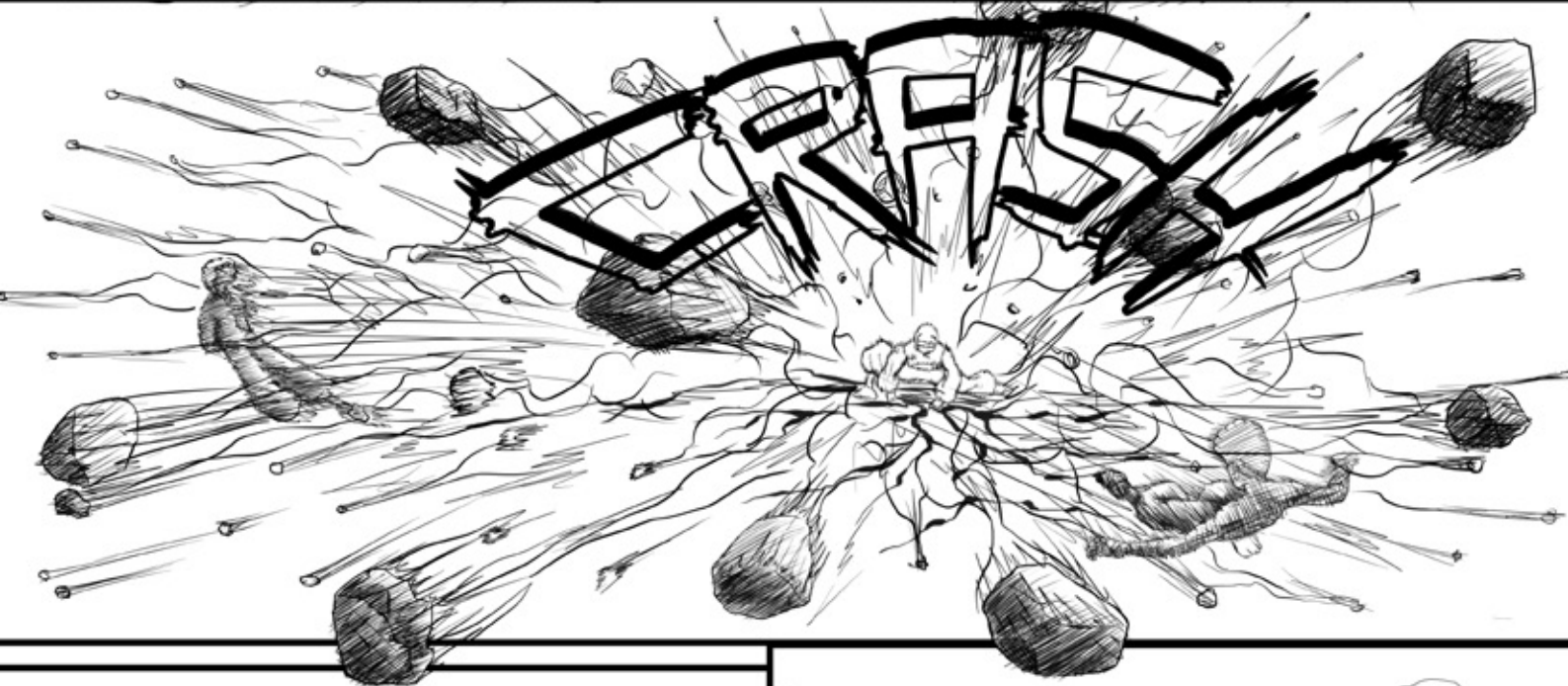


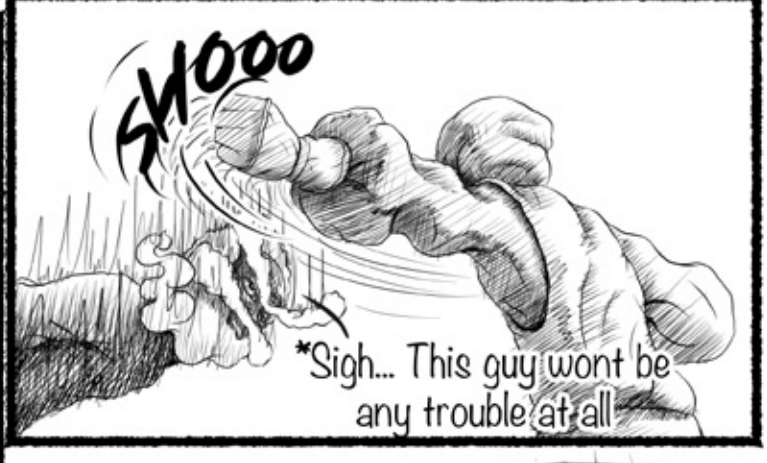
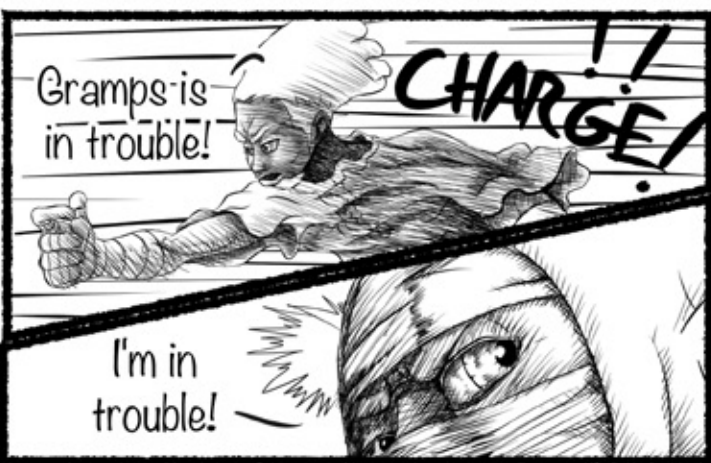
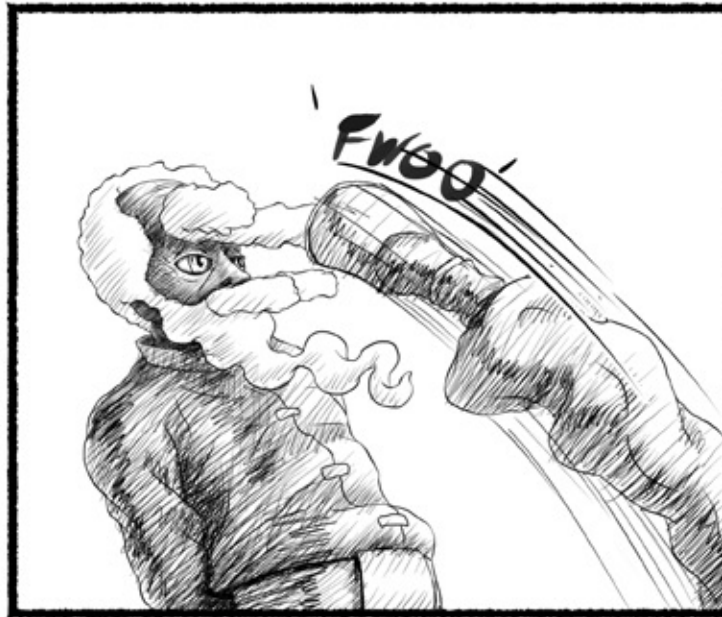
I wasn't expecting two of them...
No matter. I'll split them up and
make short work of them
one at a time.

BEETLE!!! AIR STRIKE!!!



Get ready
Akio!

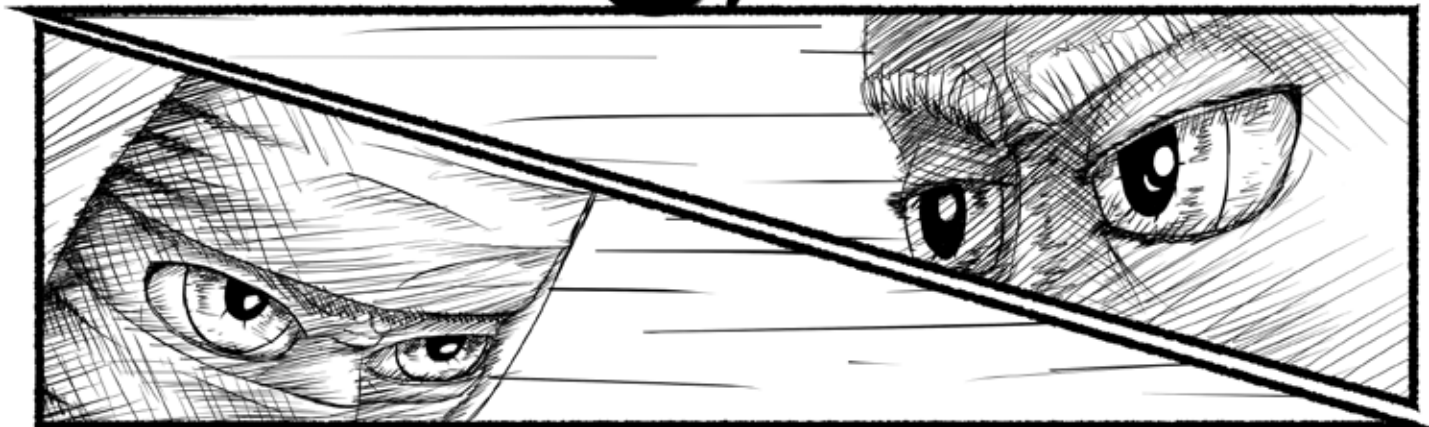


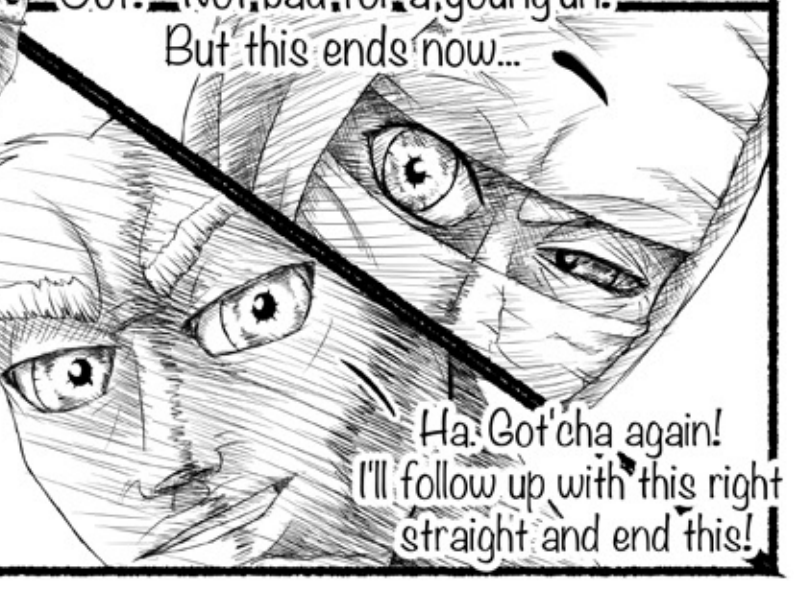
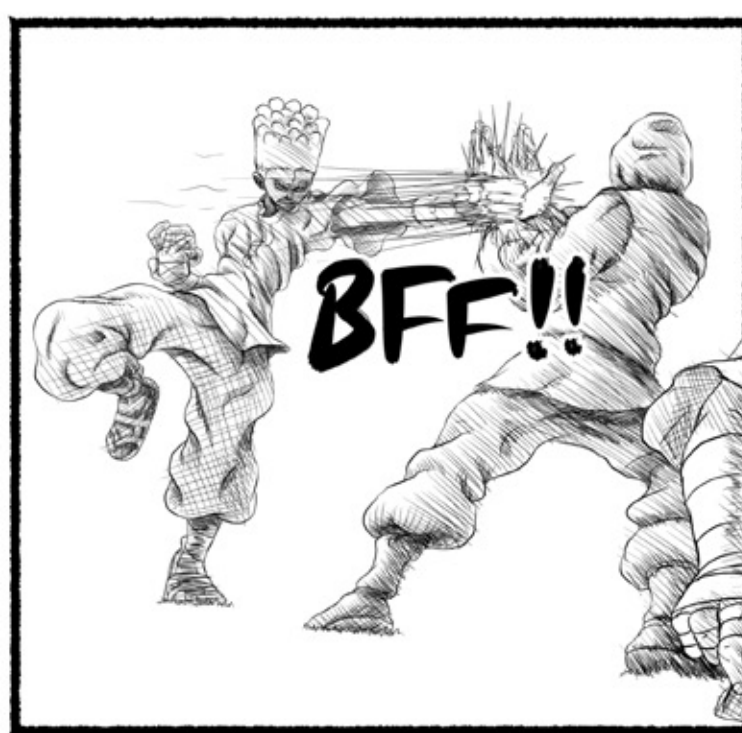


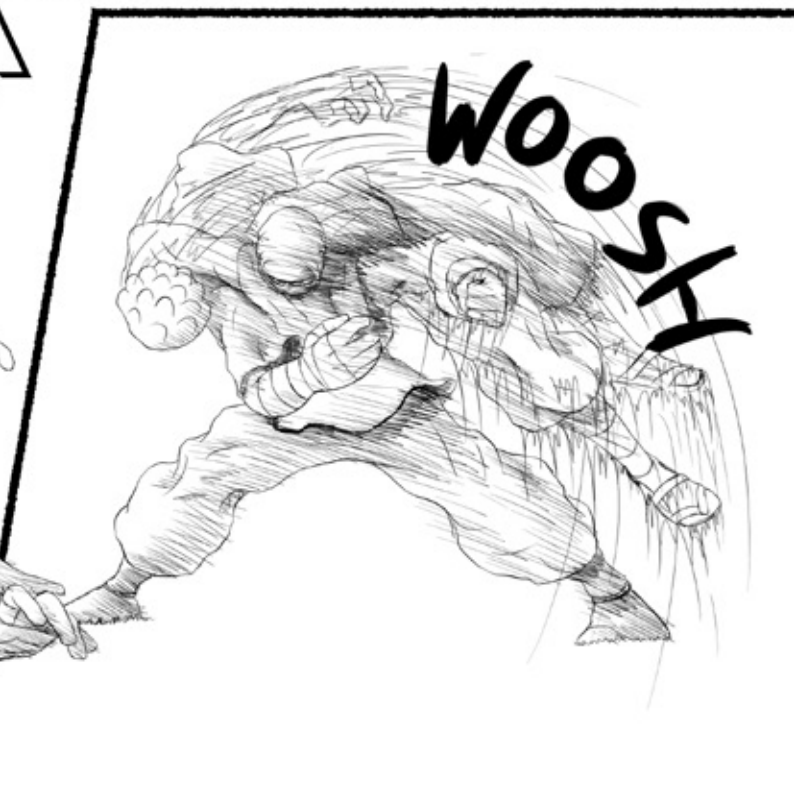
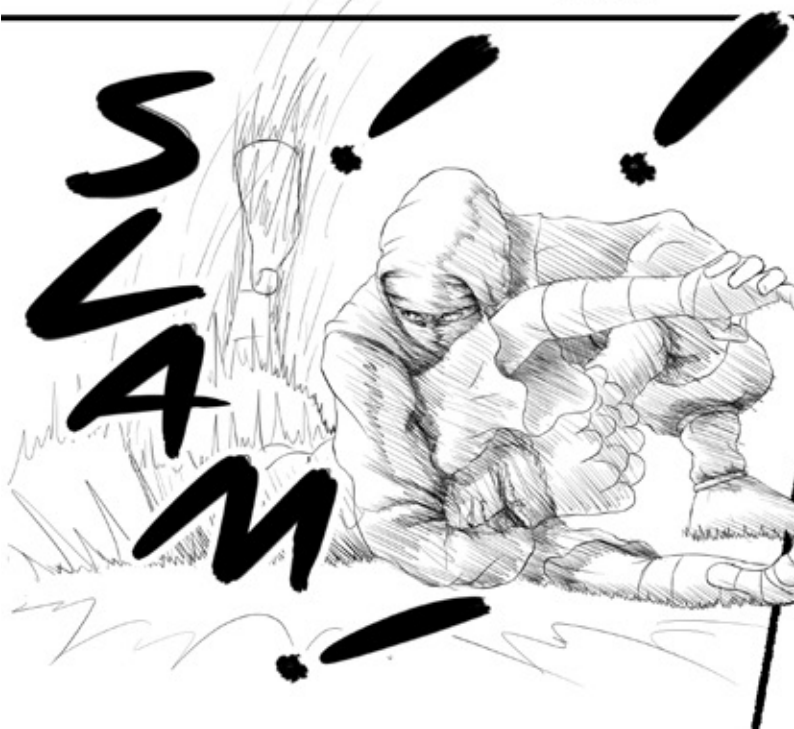
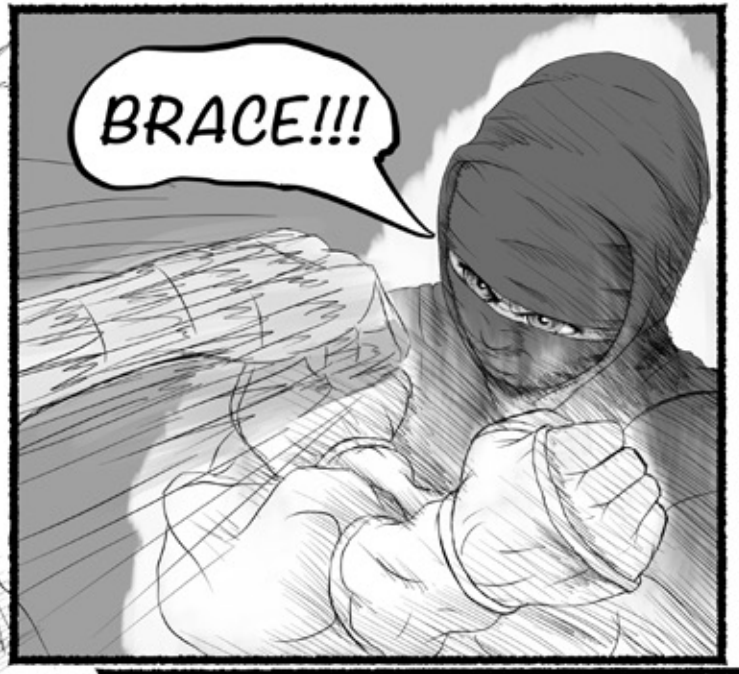


Eh!
I suppose the beating
he is about to get will be
a valuable lesson.

Akio! Wai-







I'm NOT playing around!

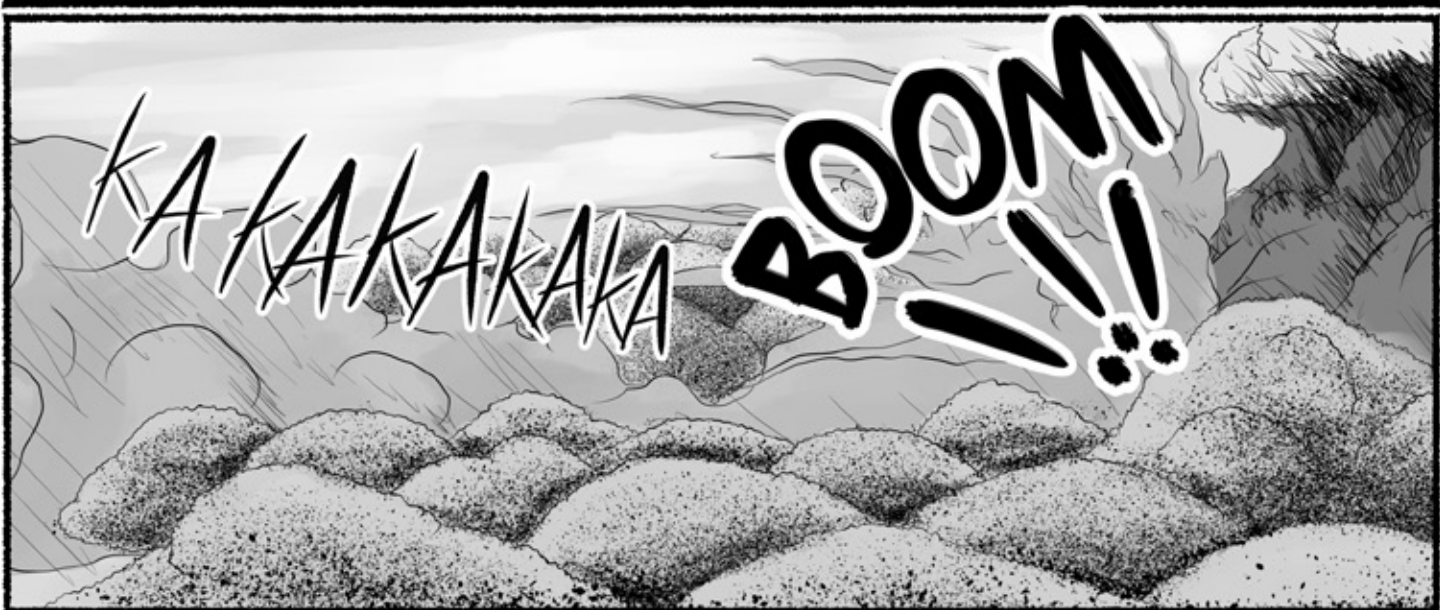
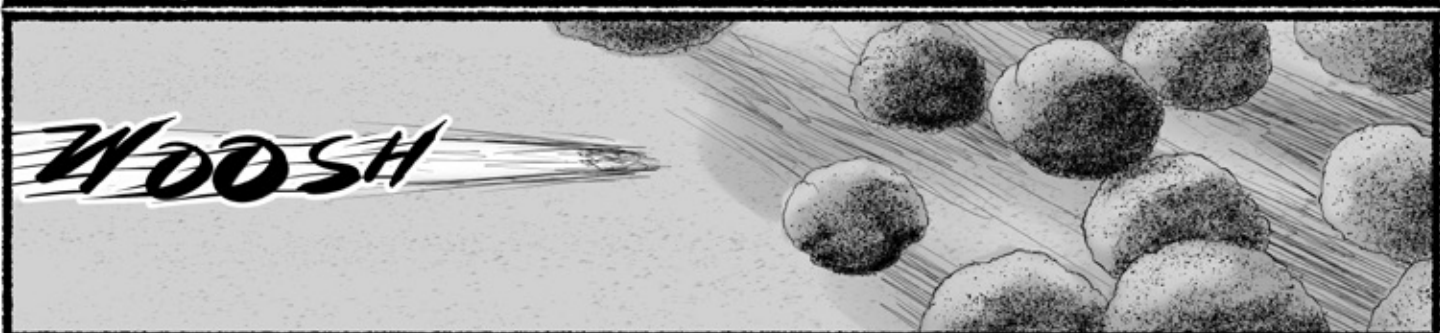
I think he's learnt his lesson

I can't even begin to escape this hold...
And my strongest attack was useless...

I Can't Breathe!

Hand it over! Or i'll Break his-

GASP





Damn...
I didn't realise Gramps
was that strong!

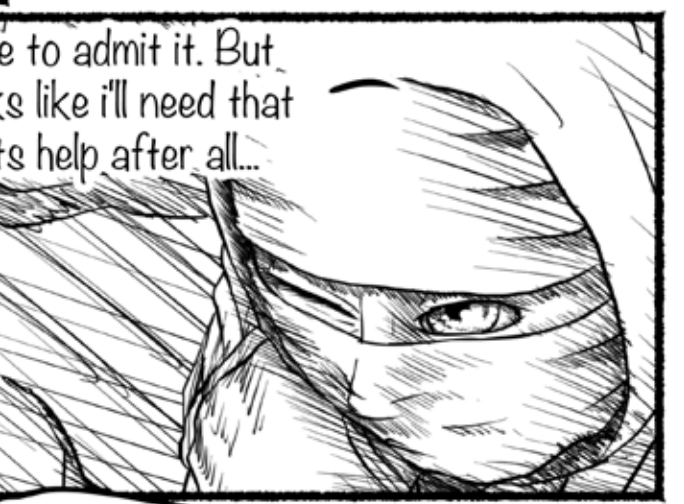


Ha! How's that
for a palm strike,
Aki?

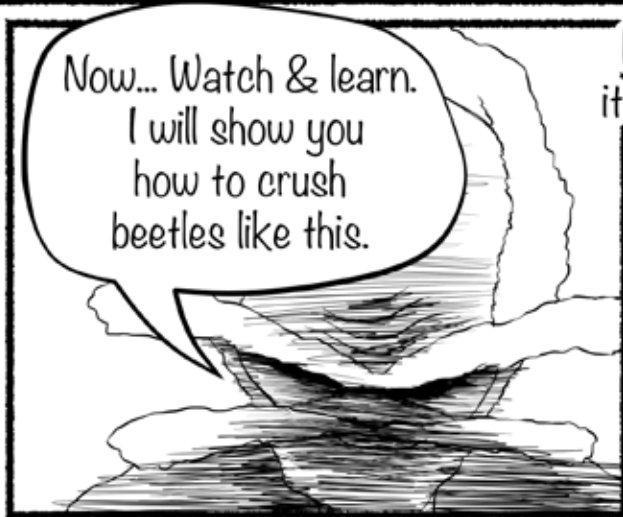


COUGH
COUGH

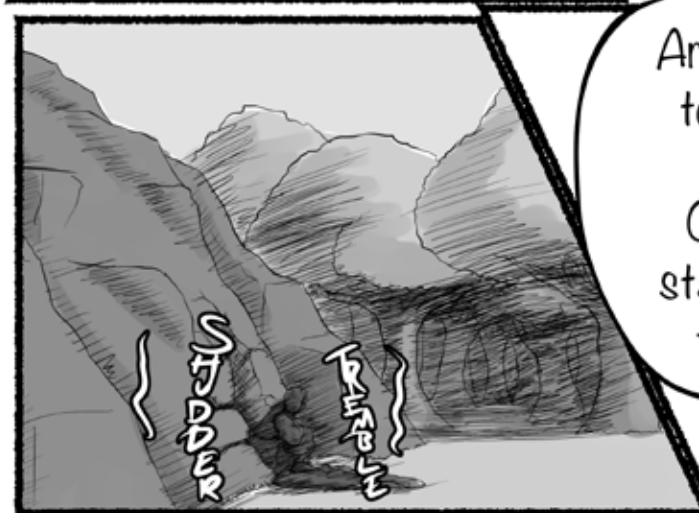
That old man nearly
killed me!



I hate to admit it. But
it looks like I'll need that
brats help after all...



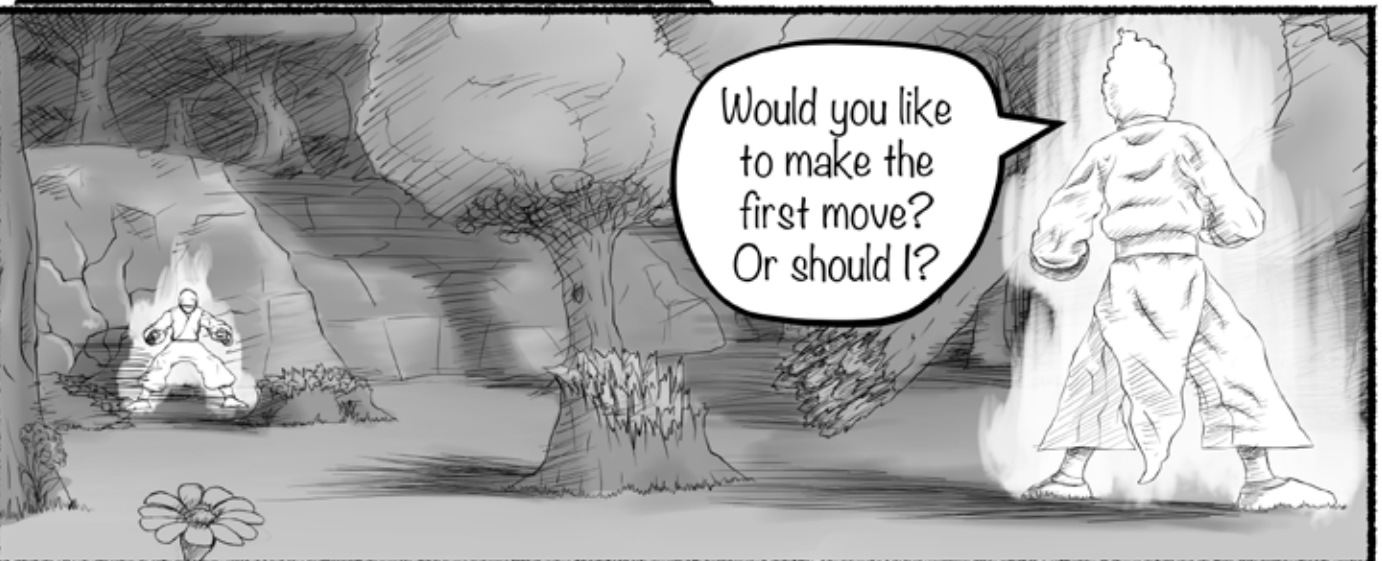
Now... Watch & learn.
I will show you
how to crush
beetles like this.



SHADOW
LIGHTNING



Are you going
to sit down
all day?
Or will you
stand up and
face me?



Would you like
to make the
first move?
Or should I?



What is this energy I can feel?

Keep mocking me, and you'll have to answer to my **BEETLE HOOKS!!**

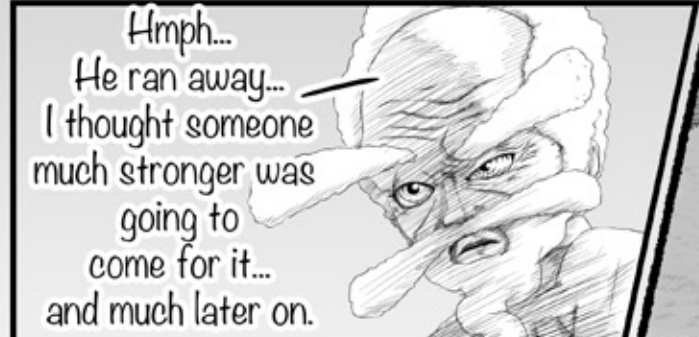
Feeling brave are we? Then show me the power of your style!



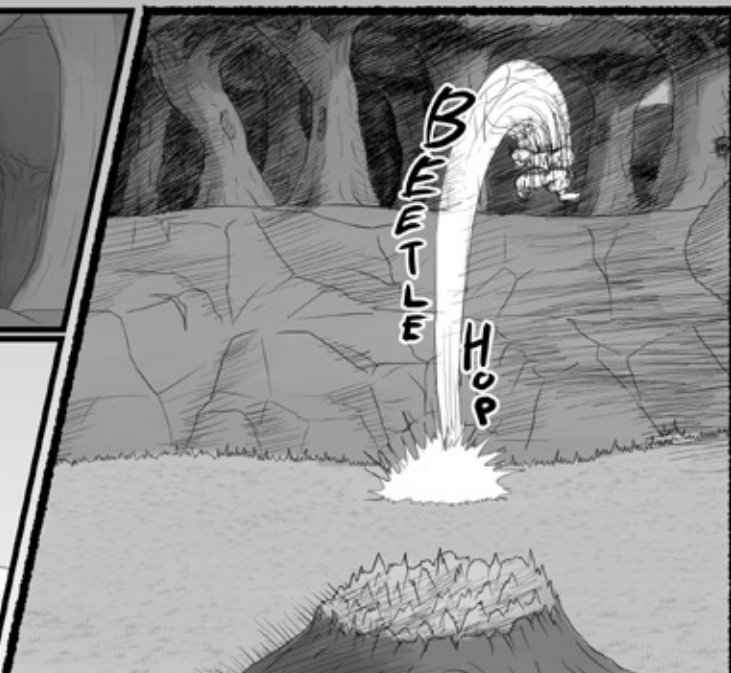
YELP~



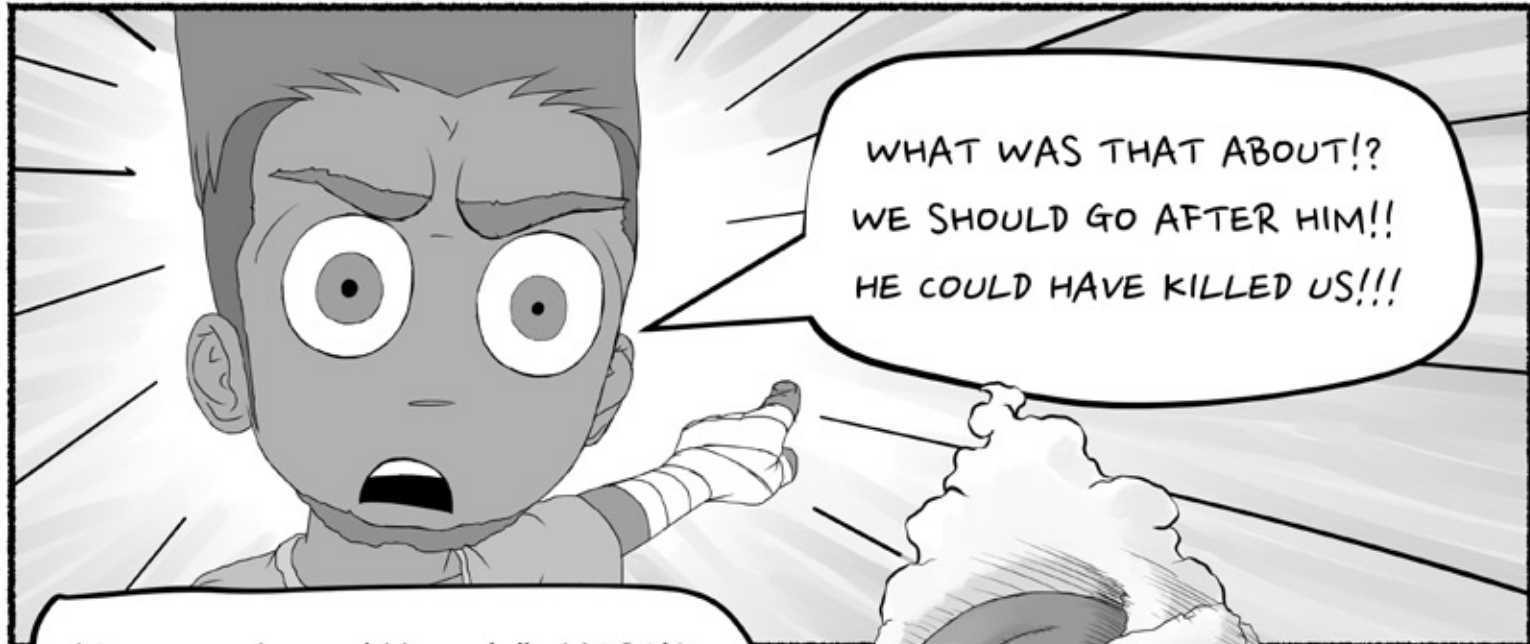
THIS ISN'T OVER!



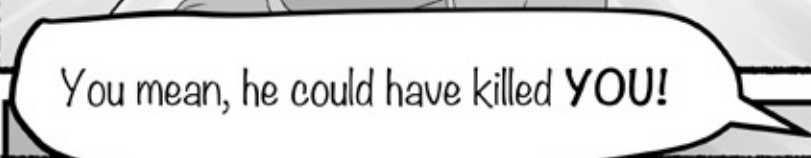
Hmph... He ran away... I thought someone much stronger was going to come for it... and much later on.



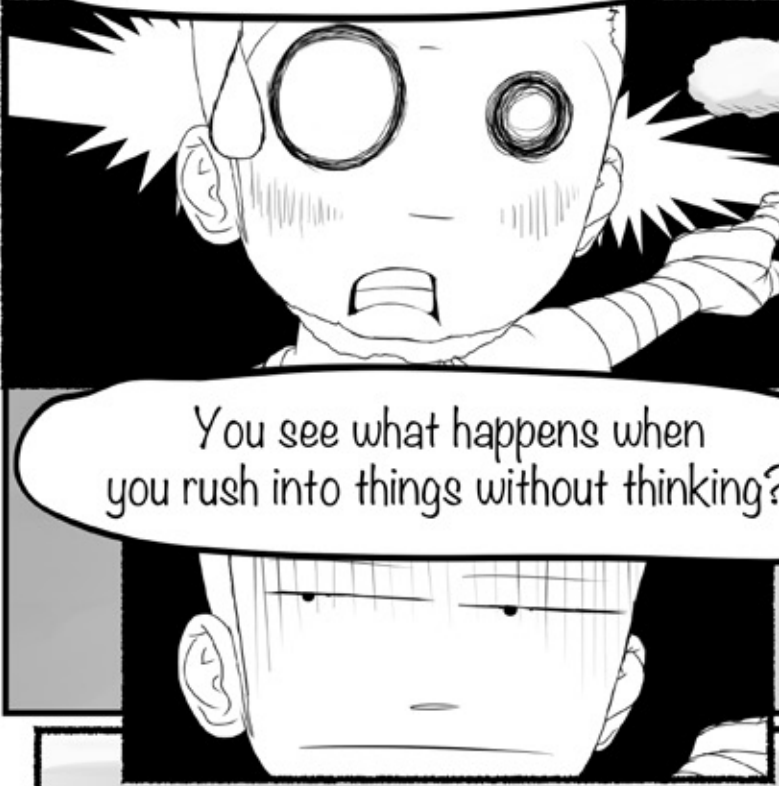
BEETLE HOOKS



WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT!?
WE SHOULD GO AFTER HIM!!
HE COULD HAVE KILLED US!!!



You mean, he could have killed **YOU!**



You see what happens when
you rush into things without thinking?



I'm sure you have many questions.
Follow me inside and I'll
show you everything I know.
There's no time to waste!



He was after
the Gemstone
in that ring,
hanging on the
mother dragon
statue's nose.



A few years
ago an old
friend of mine gave
me this ring
to keep safe.



He didn't have much to tell me about how it got to him.
But the main point was that your father gave it to him.



What about mum?
And my
brother and
sister?

To tell you
the truth...
I don't know where
any of them are.
And I don't know
what has
become of them...



The Monarchies wanted to keep the knowledge within their ruling class. For if nobody had the knowledge of the soul, then nobody would possess the power to refuse them. But they could never overcome the power of the clan's souls when we were united. We never took orders from them, and they had to work with us. Whether they wanted to or not. But over the years, the monarchies built their cities into quite the impressive nests. Where people could indulge in luxury, with a constant supply of bread and circus. Protected by the king's men and their high walls. All you have to do is pay your taxes and obey the rules.

Before we knew it, most of the people were living in their cities, under their rule. With most of the people all gathered into small pockets of space. It was easy for them to spread propaganda and lies about the clans and our martial arts. Slowly but surely, the clans were conquered ...our clan was the last one left.

You see, the monarchies rule with the styles of weaponry. They do not allow their souls to take up natural formations. Instead they pour it all into their swords and axes. Inanimate objects without conscience. Only capable of being swung by their master. They discard the teachings of morality that we clans etched into our teachings of the Martial Arts. Now that the clans are no more in Dalos, more and more people are following the path of the sword. Becoming less and less concerned with humanity. And more and more obsessed with excessive luxury, status and power over others.

Like many other clans, our Dragon Clan used to work within the borders of Dalos. The monarchs of the kingdoms have always wanted rid of us, for we made our Knowledge of the soul available to all. We raised many masters, outside of the monarchies control



Since the fall of the clans. The monarchies have heavily restricted access to the truth & wisdom in the libraries. They have replaced the original texts of knowledge and history. Replacing them with their own renditions, which distort the truths to suit their own agendas. They trick people into putting their faith into weapons of iron & steel. Leading them away from the knowledge of the martial arts.



Your parent's were young and strong-willed. They knew they could do nothing about the spread of corruption sitting at home. So they left, in order to seek out the source of the corruption and put a stop to it. By any means necessary.



Not long after they left, our home was burnt down.... I fled here to the Suigin Valley with you, your sister and brother, to join the many other outcast martial artists. Their clans and dojo's were torn apart like our own. I haven't heard from your parents since the day our clan was broken. Your sister and brother left here to look for your parents. And I haven't heard from them since they left either.



I still remember that fire!
I Can't stop thinking about it.
I want to catch that man and end him!
I bet that guy who attacked us had something to do with it.
I'm going after them Gramps!

You're going to leave me here like the rest of our family?
Let's get the fire going under the pot.



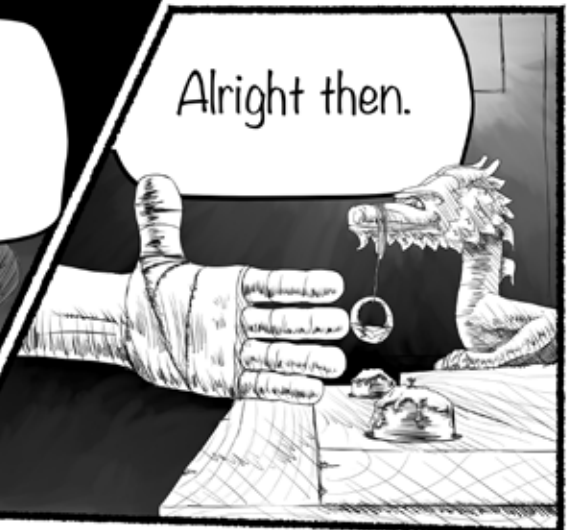


As much as I do not want to see the last of my bloodline disappear over the horizon... I think you are right. I hoped I would have more time for your training. But it seems they have caught up to us already.

Tomorrow when you get up, take the ring and bring it with you to Uncle Gussie's. Keep it safe at all costs! Let nobody know you have this ring. show it to gussie when you reach his place.. He will point you in the right direction.



Just leave it to me gramps!



Alright then.

Remember, it's not safe here in the valley any longer. That beetle will be back, with more fighters at his back. Make sure you are on high alert on your way to Gussie's. Move swiftly and make sure nobody follows you, Both yours and Gussie's lives could depend on it





Despite that, the Suigin Valley is far safer than all of Dalos. We are living in dark times, Akio. Death by violence is commonplace across the 7 kingdoms. Since the decline of the Clans, the kingdom's have done little other than wage wars.



Wars that devastate the country, taking countless lives.



While traumatising all those left alive.



Amongst so much war and chaos.
So many youth have had their families taken from them.
With no clans to turn to, they have little chance of finding their souls.
Gangs, rogues and bandits rise from the ashes of the chaos.
Peace is becoming extinct in Dalos.
before you leave you must understand...
The path of morality, according to the teachings of the martial arts that I raised you on...
Those ways are vanishing rapidly. Beyond Suigin, robbery, cruelty, extortion and murder have near become accepted normalities.

Make no mistake!
Dalos still has many Martial Artists,
from skilled apprentices,
up to bonified masters.
You must be weary of all of them.
For many of them are aligned with
the monarchies.



These days. If you do not belong to the ruling class.
The only way to learn to use the soul with
the Martial Arts is by ranking high enough in the military.



Therefore. Using the power of the soul in public will
make you a target of the authorities.
The enforcers of authority are made
up of skilled Martial Artists.
If you should take anything from today's lesson.
It is that you aren't ready to fight these people.



For now, avoid any confrontation with these types of people.
You must keep a low profile for the time being!
Refrain from making it known that you are a Martial Arts
student, as much as you possibly can!

For every kingdom has a ruling monarchy. On the path you are about to embark. You may come into contact with many members of these ruling classes. The members of the royal families are among the most skilled martial artists in the land. For above all else, it is their superior mastery of the martial arts that keeps them in power.



But you won't be alone in Dalos. It wasn't that long ago, that our Dragon Clan was held in high regard, across all the 7 kingdoms. There are those who will help you if they know that you are my grandson. The son of Heikichi Doragon!



Still, on your journey, never forget that Dalos has been engulfed by the darkness of the energies of the **shadow**. Be ever-weary of the **Shades** that lurk in the darkness.



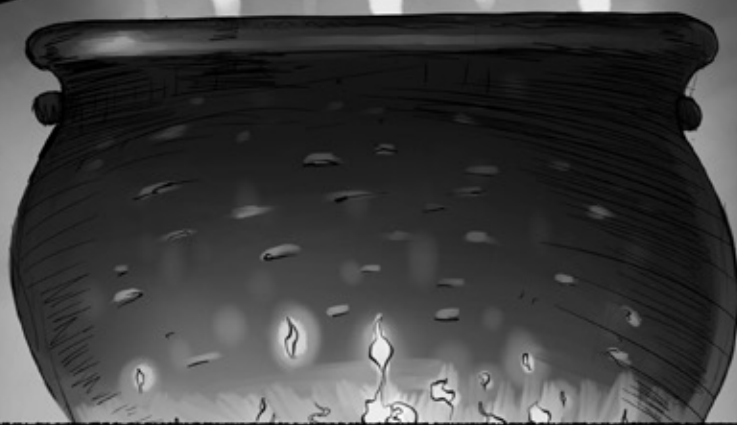


That doesn't scare me!
Like i said, just
leave it to me gramps!
I'll find our
family and bring
them home!

Fu fu fuuuu!
Well if your heart's resolve is even half that
of your stomach's, you should be fine!



I'm already looking
forward to your return,
with the rest of the family!



LATER THAT DAY...





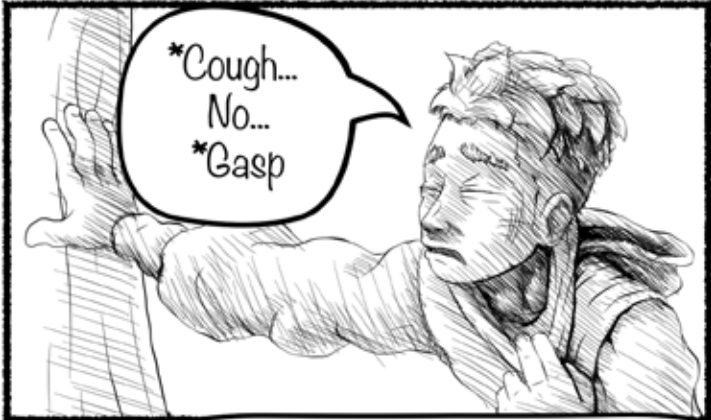
Relax Sota...



You didn't get it then?



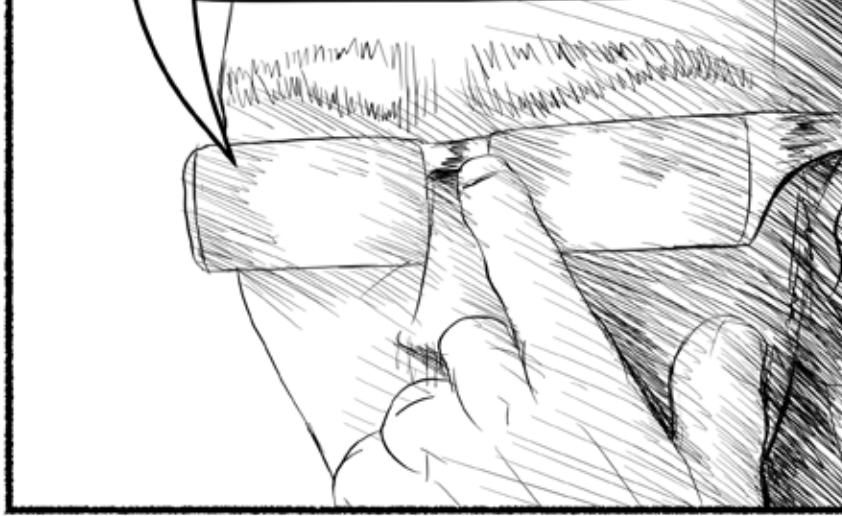
It's only me...




*Cough...
No...
*Gasp

You're far too confident in your abilities Kouki. Under-estimating your opponents like that is the surest way to get yourself sent crashing through the woods, and into the rocks..

I hate to say I told you so. But when you go alone, with no plan. You significantly reduce your chances of success...



S
H SNAP!
OOOAAA!



So you were there! .
And you just hid away
and watched while I
took a beatdown?

Well obviously we need more fighters
don't we! Who aren't as wimpy as you!

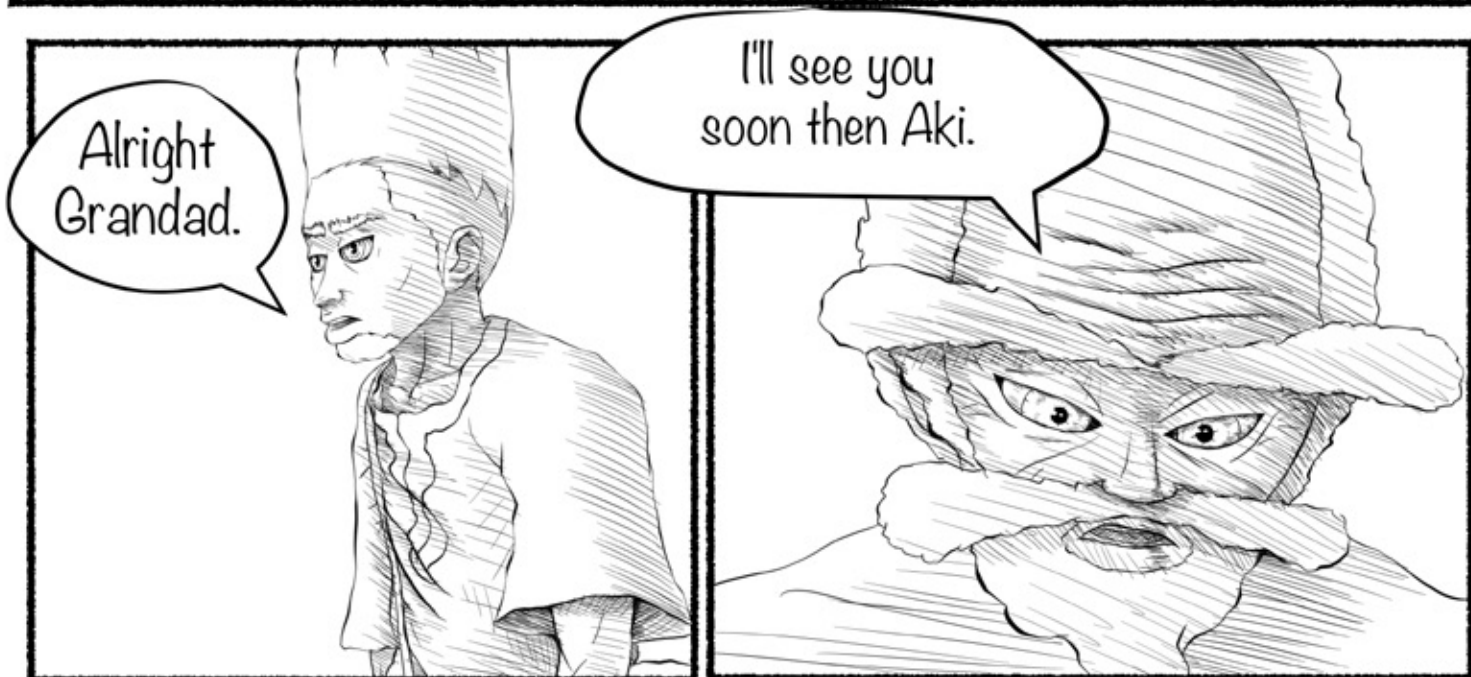
I wanted to reach you and tell you my plan
to get the ring. But before I could do so,
you were hurling kunai at them and shouting
like a buffoon... After watching you fail to
even come close to striking the old man, I
realised we stood no chance,
so I returned to camp.

Listen Kouki. We can't just go dragging anyone into
this. The importance of this ring cannot be made public.
For now we will send word home that we have located it,
and we need support from those we can trust.
In the meantime we can only try to take the apprentice
and offer him up as ransom in exchange for the ring.
Although. You may have gone and made that impossible
by putting them on high alert.

Im not
that smart...
But i'm
much, much,
smarter now,
than you'll
ever be Kouki.

Who said you
were in charge?
You're not
that smart kid!
You're only
here because
of your dad,
you know that!?





END OF CHAPTER 1





only A strong MIND
can begin to see the SOUL.
A strong body is WORTHLESS,
without a strong mind to Guide it...