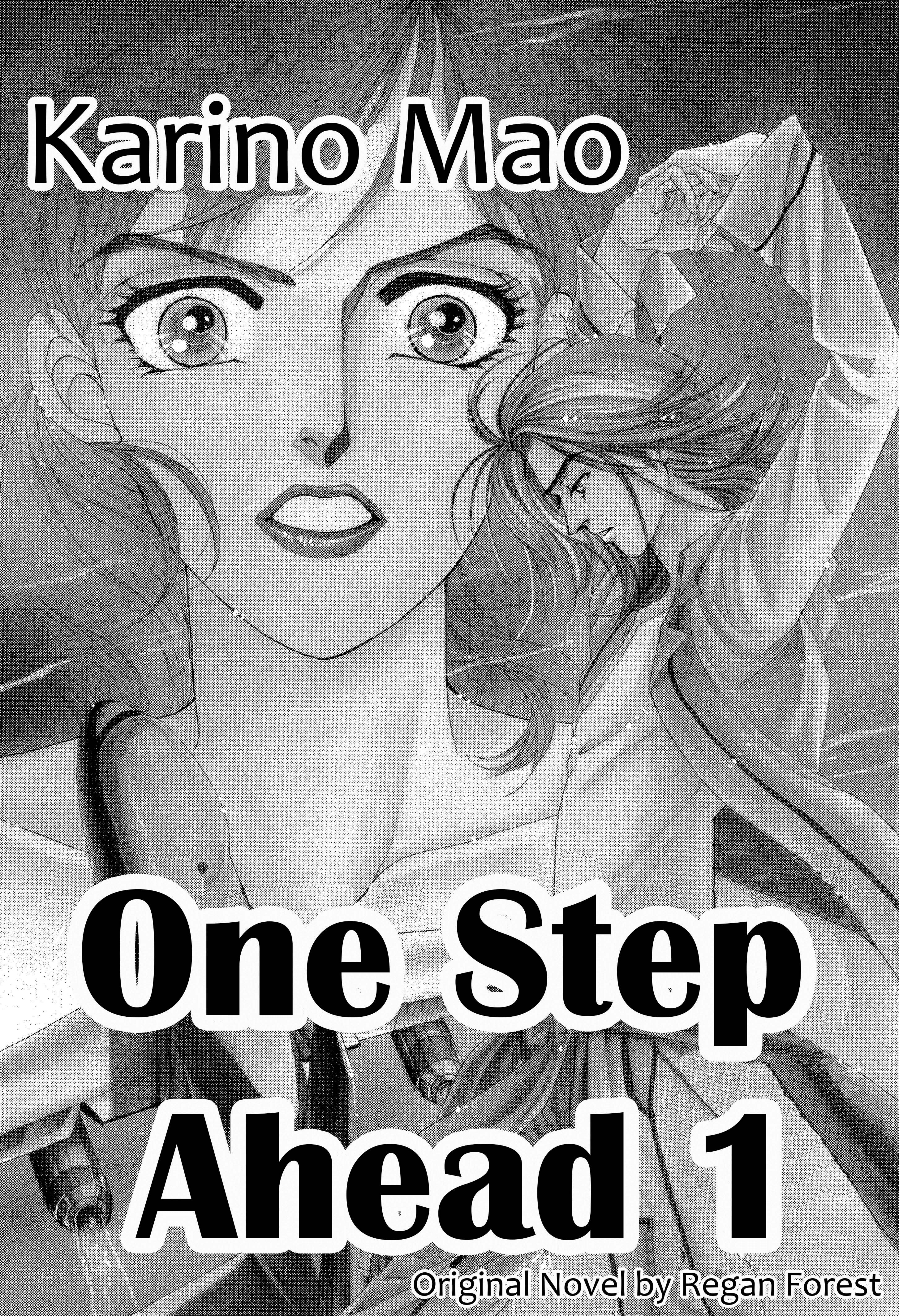




Karino Mao

**One Step
Ahead 1**

Original Novel by Regan Forest



IVROOM I
THINK
MY
GRAND-
FATHER
IS THE
REASON
FOR
THAT.
HE
WAS
A
FIGHTER
PILOT
IN
THE
WAR.

WHEN I
PICTURE
THE SKY...

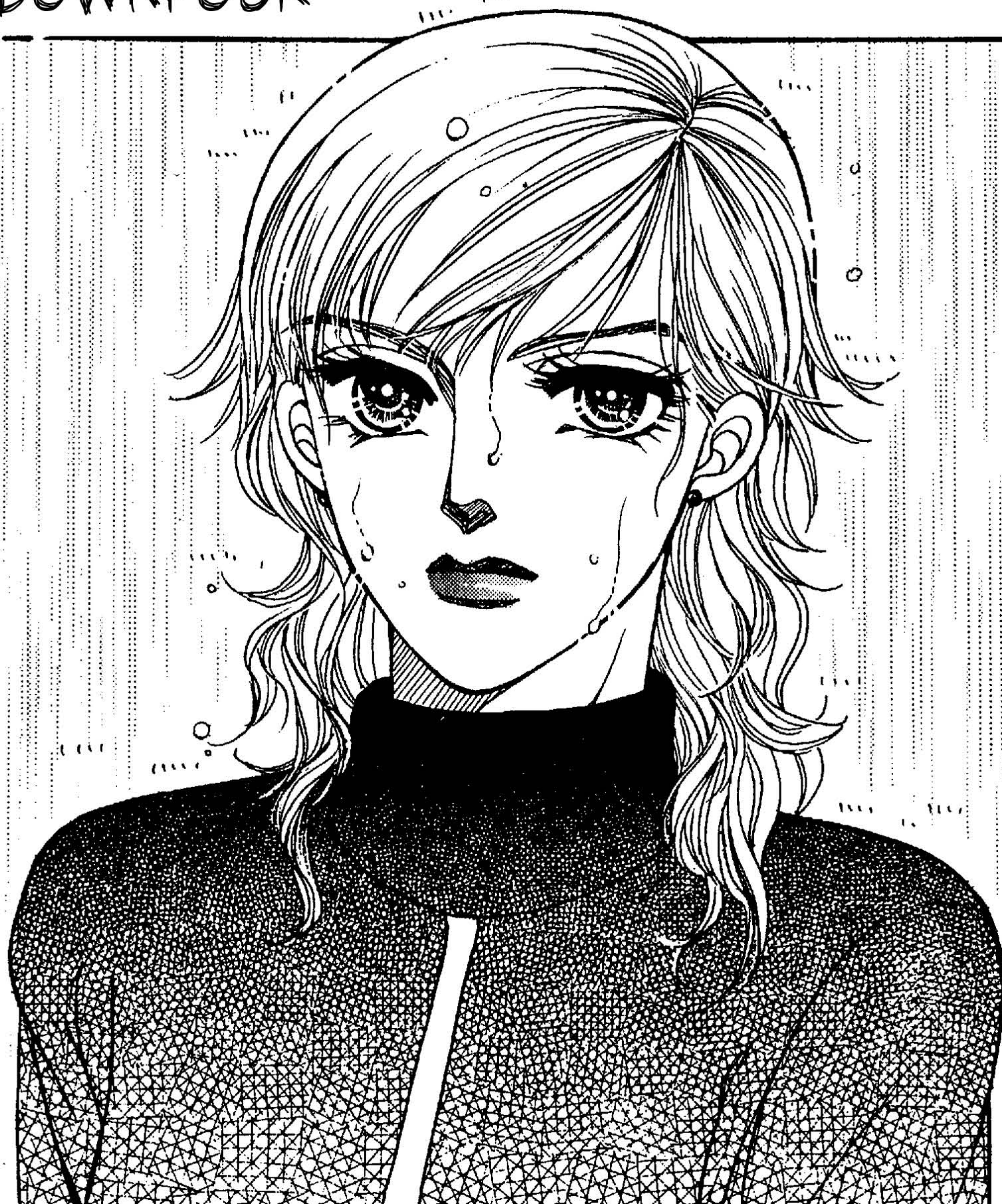
...I DON'T
PICTURE
IT BLUE.
I PICTURE
IT SEPIA.

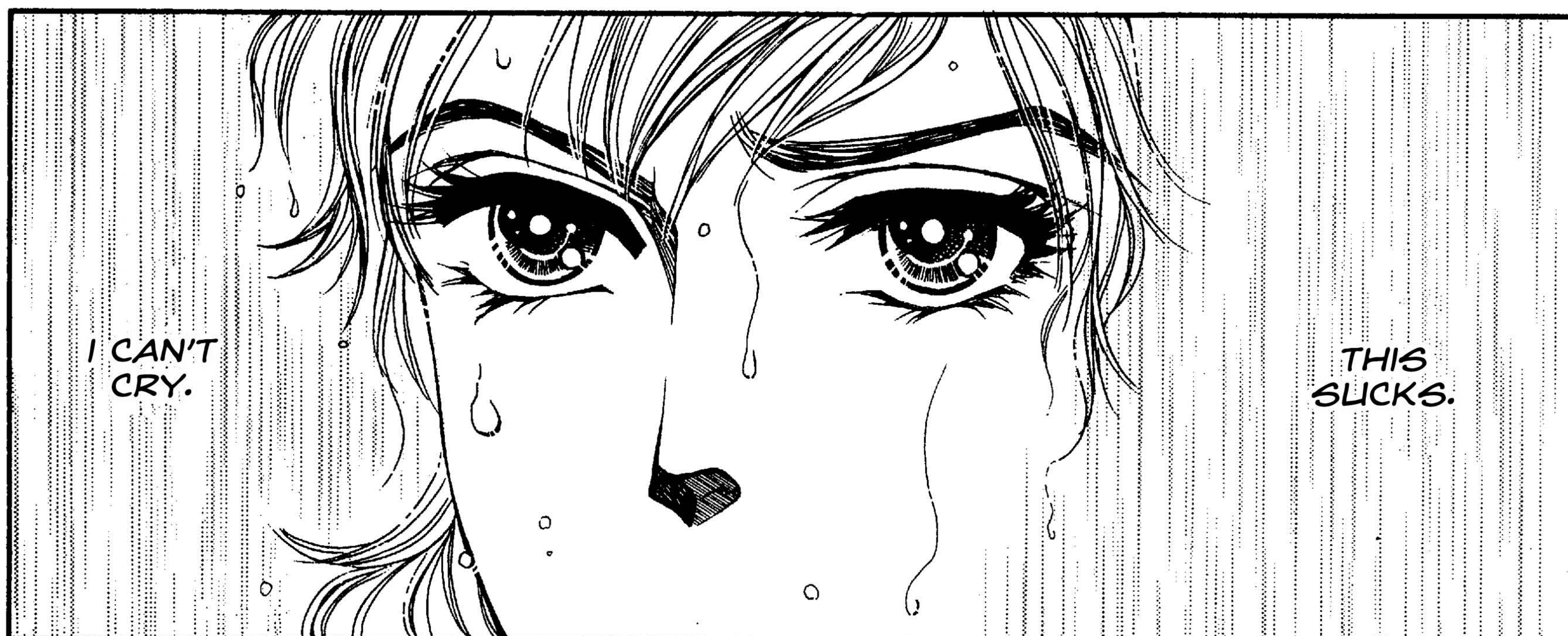
I'VE
LOOKED
AT THIS
OLD
PICTURE
SO MANY
TIMES.



WHEN I HEAR
THE WORD
"SKY," I THINK
OF THE SEPIA
SKY IN THAT
PHOTOGRAPH.

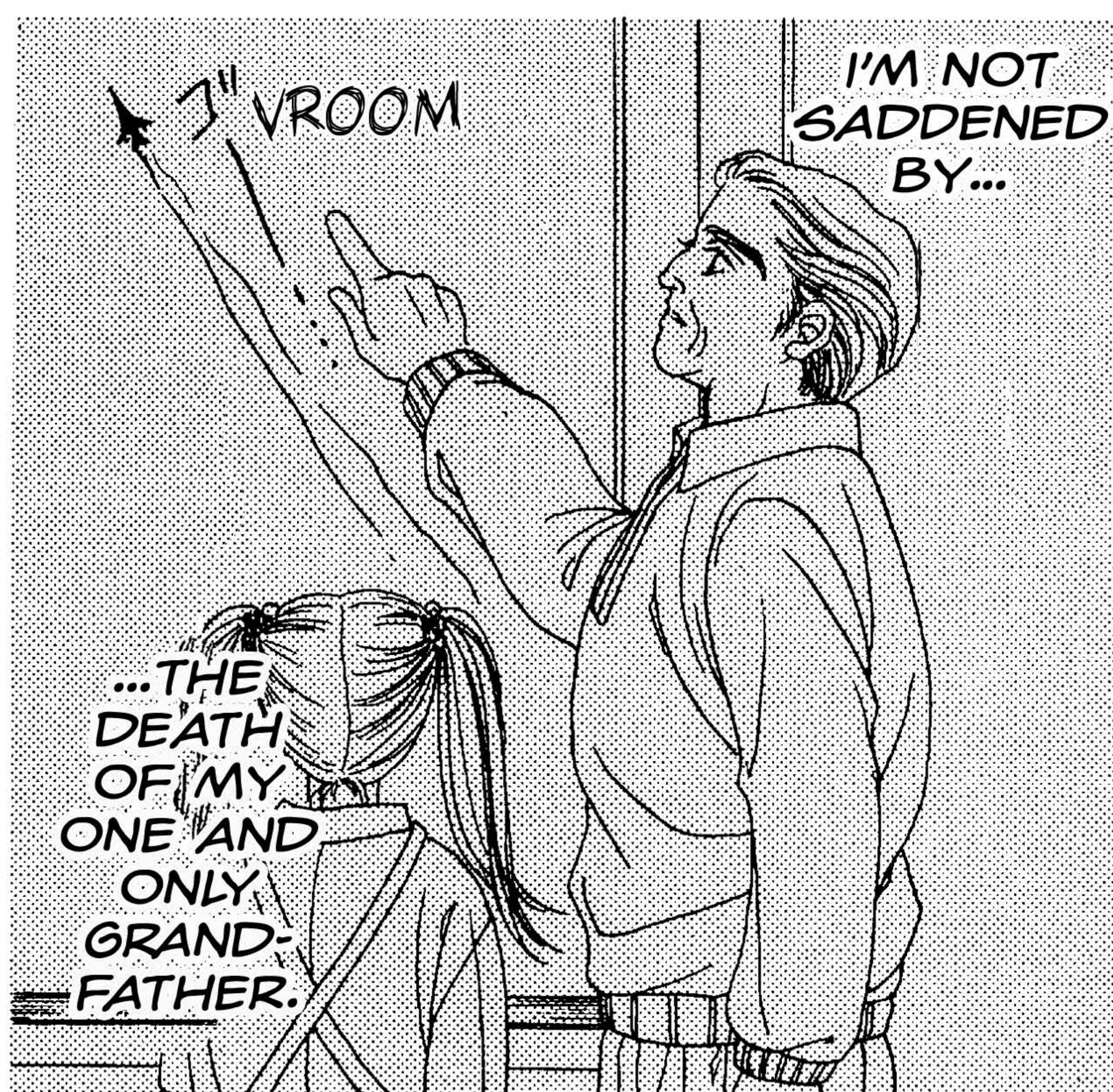
DOWNPOUR





I CAN'T
CRY.

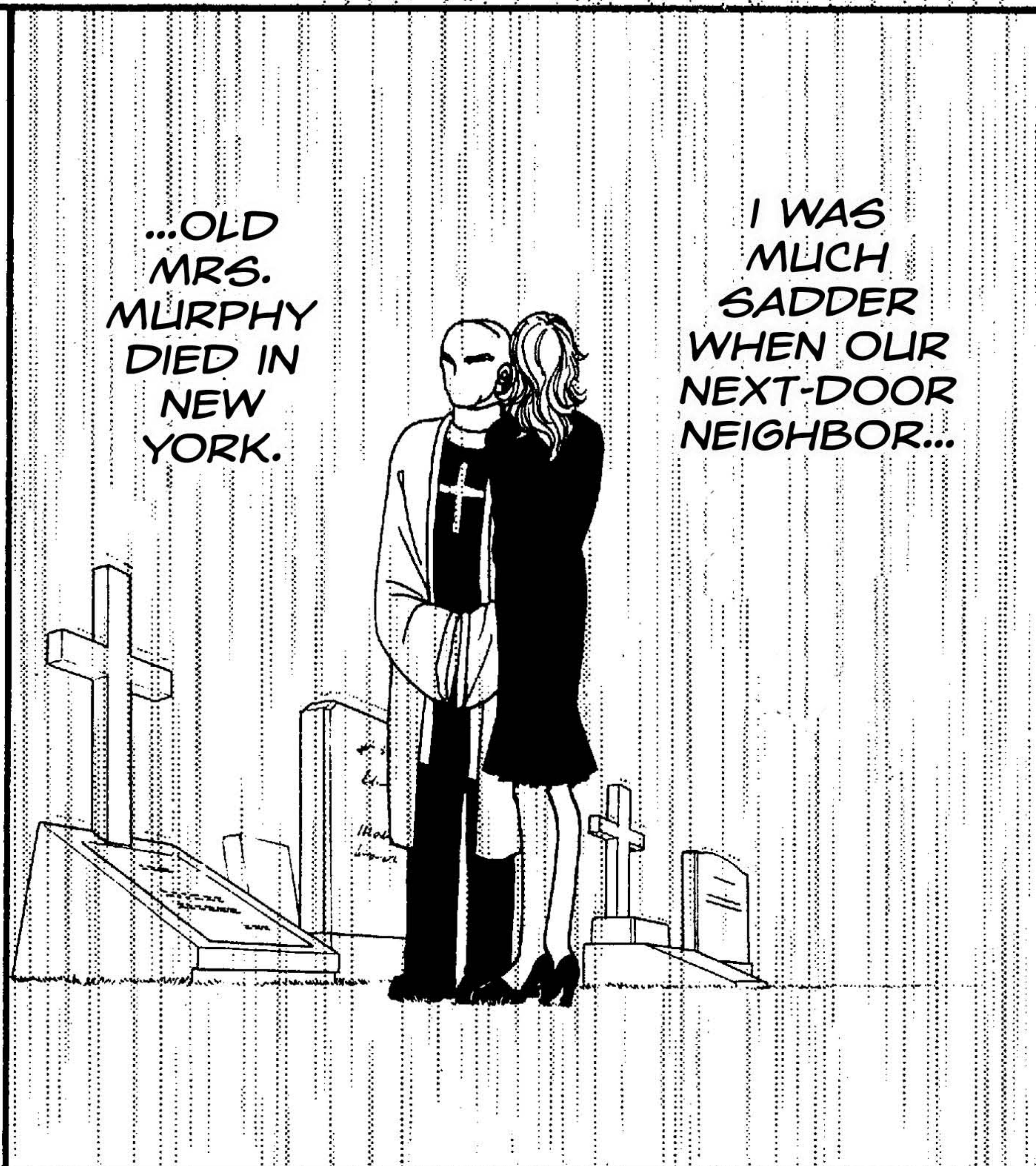
THIS
SUCKS.



3" VROOM

I'M NOT
SADDENED
BY...

...THE
DEATH
OF MY
ONE AND
ONLY
GRAND-
FATHER.



...OLD
MRS.
MURPHY
DIED IN
NEW
YORK.

I WAS
MUCH
SADDER
WHEN OUR
NEXT-DOOR
NEIGHBOR...

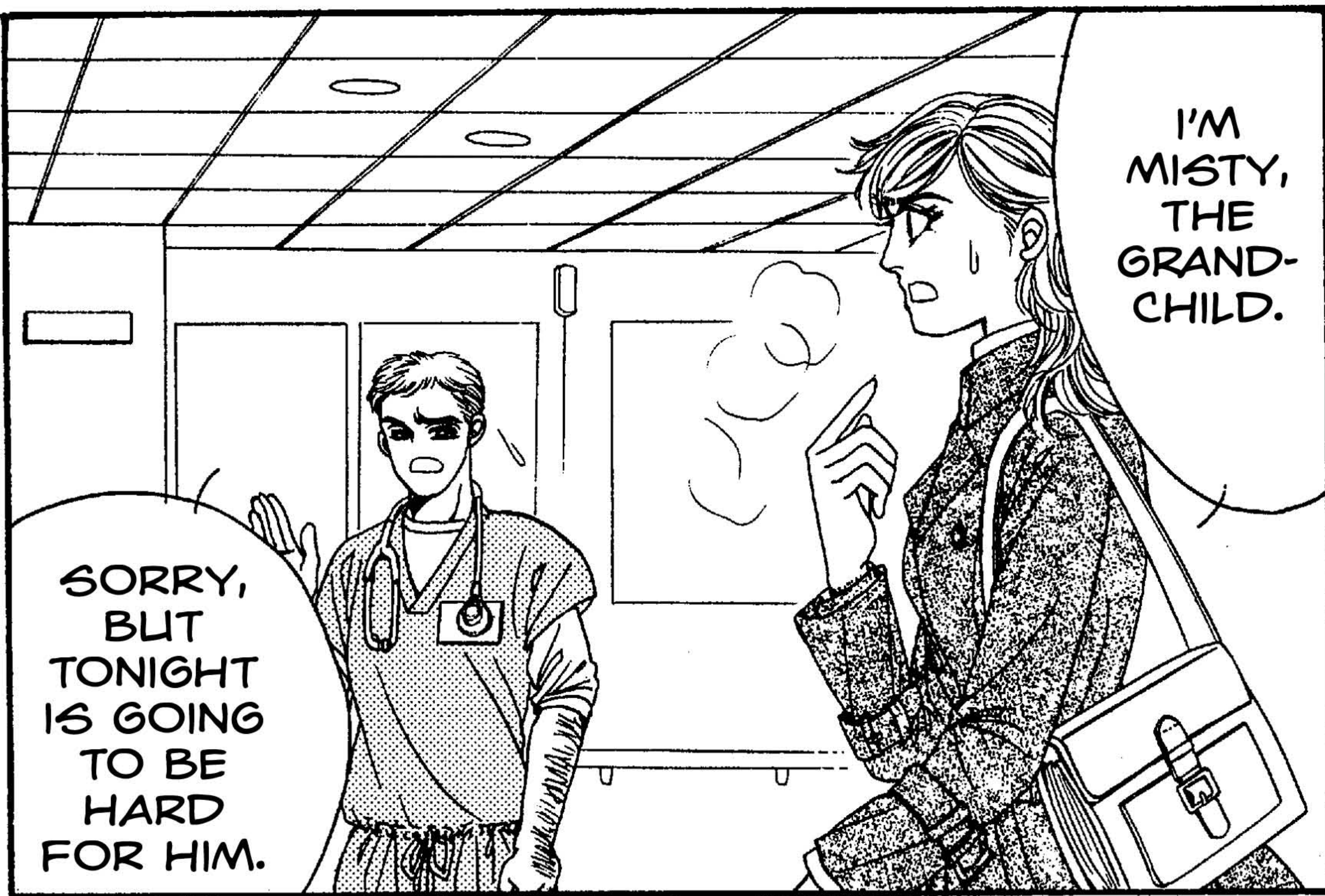


MISS
CHANDLER,
YOU HAVE
A CALL
FROM
WHATEVER
SPRINGS.

...IN A RURAL
TOWN OUT
IN THE MIDDLE
OF NOWHERE
CALLED
WHISPERING
SPRINGS.

MY
MISANTHROPIC
GRANDFATHER
SAM CHANDLER
WAS LIVING
ON HIS OWN...

ONE MONTH AGO, I GOT A CALL FROM A SMALL HOSPITAL IN WHISPERING SPRINGS SAYING THAT MY GRAND-FATHER HAD FALLEN DOWN, AND HAD BEEN ADMITTED.



SORRY, BUT TONIGHT IS GOING TO BE HARD FOR HIM.

I'M MISTY, THE GRAND-CHILD.



I'M NOT GOING TO LAST MUCH LONGER.

GRAND-FATHER? HANG IN THERE. IT'S ME, MISTY. CAN YOU HEAR ME?

...YES, I HEAR YOU...



...ANE.

LISTEN... TO ME. THERE'S... JUST ONE THING... I NEED... FROM YOU.



...TO HIM.



HUH?

WHAT, GRAND-FATHER?

THOSE
WERE HIS
LAST
WORDS.