FEATURE PRESENTATION *SQUARE* • NEWSLINE *REVELATIONS: PERSONA, POLICENAUTS, GHOST IN THE SHELL, AEON FLUX* • COMIX *BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN, SAMURAI SHODOWN*

GAME ON! USA

THE MAGAZINE OF ELECTRONIC MANGA GAMING

NEWSLINE
POLICENAUTS
ROBOTECH: CRYSTAL DREAMS
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

COMIX
BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN
SAMURAI SHODOWN

FEATURE PRESENTATION

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Write On! USA?

Magazine publishing is like a time warp; as we take this issue to print, the first letters and Reader's Polls from Issue #1 are just arriving, here to pile on your editor's desk. But there isn't a letter column yet! What to do?

We'll answer some of those letters here. Back when *Game On! USA* was just a secret plan known as *Game Project X*, we were already receiving mail, and it's time people had some answers. Certainly the thing most people have been asking for is a hints section, but even before that verdict came back we were working on ON! Command, which starts this issue. We'll have hints and tips on any Japanese games, though RPGs will be especially featured.

"Are you a fan of the movie *Wayne's World*?" asked Michael A. Louie, reminding us that *Game On!* was the name of the video game show in that movie. We plead innocence, Michael. Vincent Riley asks if *Game On!* is a pun of the Borgman battle cry. Again *no!* We would probably be sued by the Borgmen if this were the case…

Some other people asked about our inclusion of American comics, such as *Lobo*, in the Western Front section. This section, should you choose to accept it, is where we'll be mentioning American games and comic crossovers that don't fit into manga. We feel that we should give a nod to good comics and animation, such as this issue's *Aeon Flux*, even if it's not necessarily Japanese. Of course, as always, a good comic doesn't mean a good game…

Mike Rojas gives his approval but adds conditionally: "There is censorship in the manga section." Censorship? Not in Issue #1, I hope; we oppose censorship, whether of *Fatal Fury Special* or *The Handmaid's Tale*. However, in some cases, mostly nudity, Japanese standards are just too different from American ones. For instance, in Issue #3's *Samurai Shodown* Nagiri's clothes are violently torn from her; if we hadn't lessened the damage slightly, *Game On! USA* would have been in the 18-and-Older section. This is the only change we've made so far, and I apologize; when American publishing guidelines become more friendly, we'll be the first to celebrate. We certainly don't censor violence, blood, etc., and Your Editor will try to bring back Nagiri's natural (ahem) state if *Samurai Shodown* is collected in a graphic novel.

One question seems to come back to us again and again: is *Game On! USA* a comic magazine, or a video game magazine? It seems obvious we're a game magazine, in one sense (plus, the name *Comic On! USA* was taken). But on the other hand, nearly 3/4 of the pages *are* comics, and many of our readers list anime and manga as their top interests. *Game On! USA*'s goal is to provide a bridge between manga-reading and game-playing people. We want to go places where you don't expect to see comic books *or* game magazines. So are we comics or video games? We're both.

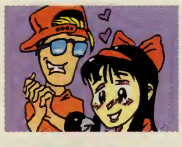
Speaking of the unexpected, *Game On! USA*'s readers are a diverse bunch. I'm pleased to see that, in contrast to *EGM*'s latest poll which showed 99% male readership, nearly 20% of *Game On! USA* readers are female! We're also in Hawaii, New York, Canada and every place in between.

As of this writing, we don't have a name for the letters section, but by September the big decision will be made. Look out for upcoming contests, and keep writing!

See you in the sequel,

Jason Thompson

CONTRIBUTORS



Jay McGavren (ON! Command) says "I love all the graphic arts, from comics to anime to rendered graphics. But few mediums allow the expression of musical, artistic, and writing skill and give you an adrenaline rush to boot, which is why my favorite area is video games, and why I own about ten systems." And about ten Game Genies and Game Sharks, it seems…

Tyrone Rodriguez (ON! Command) hails from sunny Southern California where his time is spent watching anime and playing games. He's still in search of the perfect California Roll and says he can die happy when he does find it. Other than that he's happy spending as much time on ***SFA2*** as humanly possible. "Not to mention contributing to ***Game On! USA***," he adds.

James L. Alsup III (Game Over!) has been writing for publications and watching anime (not necessarily in that order) for the past 10 years. His work has been published in the Chicago area newspaper New Expression, the Chicago Sun-Times, and the Chicago Tribune. James is currently finishing up his bachelor's degree at Drake University, and would like everyone to know that he will gladly accept any job offer.

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Publisher
Seiji Horibuchi

Editor-in-Chief
Satoru Fujii

Senior Editor
Trish Ledoux

Art Director
Yoshiyuki Higuchi

Editor
Jason Thompson

Associate Editor
Toshifumi Yoshida

Editorial Assistant
Kit Fox

Layout and Design
Ted Szeto

Assistant Designer
Samuel Chew

Contributing Writers
James L. Alsup III
Jay McGavren
Takuo Henmi
Alan Kwan
Rip Van Fish
Joseph Mooney
Shidoshi Naga
Raymond Pat
Kirk Patten
Tyrone Rodriguez

Contributing Artist
Adam Burns

Special Thanks to
Toshifumi Yoshida
Tyrone Rodriguez
Jay McGavren
Adam Burns

Game On! Japan
Editorial Liaison
Kiminori Nakamura

Comics Editor
Annette Roman

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN
Story and Art by Tsukasa Kotobuki
Translated by Lillian Olsen and James D. Hudnall
Lettering and Touch-Up by Wayne Truman

SAMURAI SHODOWN
Story by Kyoichi Nanatsuki
Art by Yuki Miyoshi
Translated by Fred Burke and Kaoru Hosaka
Lettering and Touch-Up by Mary Kelleher

FOR ADVERTISING RATES AND INFORMATION CONTACT:
Sales Manager Bob Ryan
(415) 546-7073 Ext. 121

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FALSE GAME TIP OF THE MONTH: In *Final Fantasy VI*, there is a secret shop in Narshe where you can apply to be a Conscientious Objector. For the rest of the game, you will gain experience points by giving monsters food and enrolling them in community outreach programs.
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It's Hip to be Square

The history and experience of Square

Rad Racer

Final Fantasy

Final Fantasy II

It may come as a surprise to American readers, accustomed to superhero comics, that so much Japanese anime & manga is based on sword & sorcery fantasy—but it's no surprise to gamers. No kind of console video game is as Japanese as role-playing games. Tabletop fantasy RPGs such as *Dungeons and Dragons* hit the country in the '80s, winning fans, references in anime series such as *This is Greenwood* and *Record of Lodoss War*, and devoted comics magazines such as the RPG-focused *Comic Master*. American RPGs were the first in the PC market, but Japanese console RPGs have taken them to a larger audience. And Square was there from the start.

Measuring the Foundations

Square Co., Ltd., first developed video games in 1983 as a division of Denyu Co. Ltd. in Tokyo. In September 1986 it became its own independent entity. By that time it had already produced software under the Square name and signed a licensing contract with Nintendo.

Square's first games for the American NES, in 1987, were decidedly atypical: the early *Rad Racer* and the *Space Harrier*-like *The 3-D Battles of World Runner*. Neither made a name for the company—*Rad Racer* was published by Nintendo itself, *World Runner* published by Acclaim. However, they proved that Square could do action games and not only "passive" interface RPG programming; action and graphics, in fact, certainly helped Square push epic RPGs to a larger and younger audience.

First Fantasies

Although made in 1987 in Japan, *Final Fantasy* (developed by Square's current Vice President, Hironobu Sakaguchi) wasn't released in the U.S. until 1990. After years of action-oriented RPG adventures and American PC conversions, gamers finally had a RPG designed specifically for the NES.

The color, the music, and the length of *FF* were impressive by NES standards. Although the gameplay was more linear than many American RPGs, the *Final Fantasy* series appealed based on drama and plot. *Final Fantasy*'s game engine combined traditional RPG elements, such as the overhead view, with a more entertaining look (courtesy of Yoshitaka Amano's big-headed character designs) and a cinematic combat interface. In *Final Fantasy* the combat scenes still separated the characters from their opponents in two boxes, but even the simple animation of swinging a sword was more exciting than text ("Elf loses 8 HP!"). In the U.S., the need to trim the text for English translation and a younger audience made the game even more action-driven.

Final Fantasy II and *III* followed in Japan. Neither of these NES games appeared in the States, although each offered new plots and new, slight technical changes. *Final Fantasy IV* was the first 16-bit *Final Fantasy* game for the Super Nintendo; for the first time the characters were out of their boxes, jump-kicking, fireballing and being struck hit by the monsters in an even more exciting interface. Other games had an even more active interface, such as *Front Mission* (which incorporated platform-style mecha/vehicle fighting), *Seiken Densetsu 2/The Secret of Mana*, and this year's *Tobal No.1*, a complete turnaround to action in the form of Square's first fighting game.

Into the West

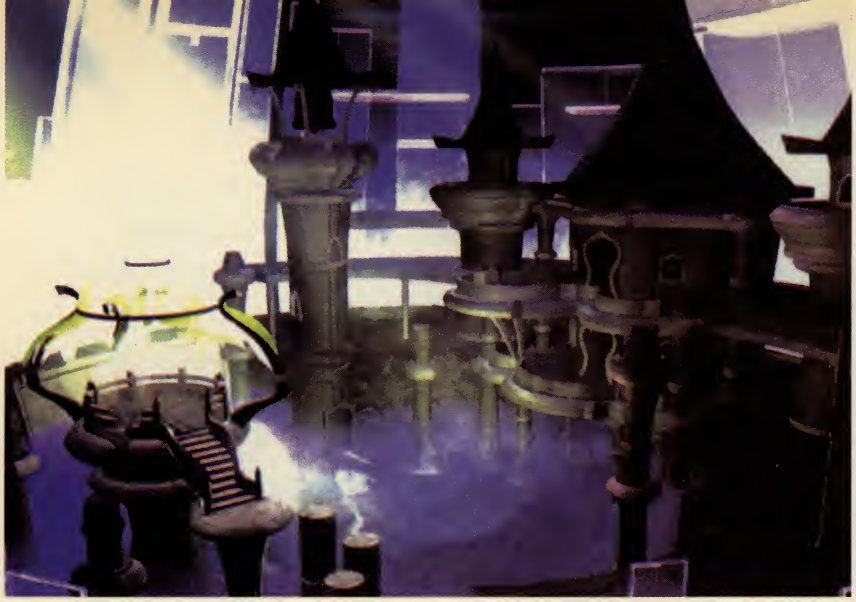
In 1989 Square followed Nintendo, its sole publisher, overseas, establishing Square Soft in the Westpark business center in Redmond, Washington not far from the eyes of Nintendo of America. There they rubbed shoulders with Enix and other primary Nintendo developers.

The initial job of Square Soft was, simply, game conversions. For its 1990 release Nintendo pulled out the stops to publicize *FF*, and the U.S. RPG market, once tested, proved true blue. The game's fans praised its plot—some even formed role-playing groups to enact characters from the game—and its interface. The Game Boy series *Magic Warrior Sa•Ga* was released in the U.S. in 1989 as *The Final Fantasy Legend*, and its sequel in 1991. Except for a few familiar touches, such as the friendly Chocobo birds, *Sa•Ga* was unrelated to the *Final Fantasy* series, but name recognition was expected to do its work.

To the disappointment of fans who couldn't get enough, though, Square Soft never released all the *Final Fantasy* games. Like many American divisions of Japanese companies, it was unable to keep up with the pace of translation required, or to risk losing money. 1991's *Final Fantasy IV* became the English *Final Fantasy II*. 1994's *Final Fantasy VI*, one of the most popular Super Famicom games ever, became the English *FFIII* in 1995.

One of the last and most successful Square Soft

Rad Racer ©1987 Square, Final Fantasy I ©1990 Nintendo/1987 Square, Final Fantasy II ©1991 Square Soft, Final Fantasy III ©1994 Square



Final Fantasy VII

Final Fantasy III

Final Fantasy VII

Final Fantasy VII

games, in 1995, was Akira Toriyama's ***Chrono Trigger***; drawn by the popular ***Dragon Ball Z*** artist, the time-travelling game achieved huge popularity. Toriyama miscalculated his own fame, however, when he asked U.S. video game publications to pay money to reprint his character designs. Most magazines simply ignored Toriyama and stuck with screen shots.

Square Soft was allowed to do its own programming, but their independent efforts did not always meet with success. ***Final Fantasy Mystic Quest***, a "beginner's RPG," was developed in Japan specifically for American use. The science fiction game ***Secret of Evermore*** was designed by Square Soft's in-house development team, Sage, to be similar to the ***Secret of Mana*** game system but compared with the Japanese ***Chrono Trigger*** it did not perform as well as expected. Conversions, in coordination with the Japanese offices, remained Square Soft's stock-in-trade.

The PlayStation Gambit

In October 1995, Square formed Square L.A. (with Hironobu Sakaguchi himself as president) to take advantage of American talent and technology. Following this move, Square Soft in Redmond closed and was re-opened in Costa Mesa in August 1996. The move from placid Redmond to Southern California indicated a big change for Square.

After seeing the 1995 Siggraph computer graphics conference, Square decided to make their next generation RPGs a step up from 16-bit. "Feature film production techniques," from L.A., the center of film technology, would be the focus of the new offices. Square hired new programmers and new artists, especially American ones. Stunning photographs were released of polygon ***Final Fantasy*** characters, said to be in development for the Nintendo 64. But Nintendo purists had a surprise coming when, in February, Square Co. announced that ***Final Fantasy VII*** would be released for the PlayStation.

Many factors have been attributed to Square's switch. The wait for the N64 was too long; cartridges would cost more and cut back on marketing control; but most importantly, Square did not feel that N64 cartridges, at 4-12 megabytes, would contain enough space for their games. Square had never made games for Sega, Nintendo's traditional competitor, but the PlayStation was simply the newest ally on the block. Square has denied having any hard feelings towards Nintendo, and claims that they may produce Nintendo games in the future, when the 64DD "Bulky Drive" makes the increasing size of Square games again feasible. Now Square is truly a free agent, without system exclusivity, planning even to produce ***Final Fantasy VII*** for Windows as well as PSX.

Business deals, labor shakeups, new technology; no Square release before now has received the advance publicity (such as this very article) of ***Final Fantasy VII***.

Things to Come: Final Fantasy VII

Final Fantasy VII is an American-Japanese team effort, with teams in Osaka and Los Angeles collaborating. The setting is the dingy magical-industrial city of Midgar, reminescent of ***Final Fantasy VI***'s Magitek armor and factories. Square plans to have ***Final Fantasy VII*** finished in Japan in time for Christmas, and in the U.S. by Summer 1997.

A playable demo for ***Final Fantasy VII*** is included on the CD for ***Tobal No. 1***, their slightly-delayed August fighting game; until that comes out, what can we speculate? Both the travelling interface and the battle interface are different than in past games. The walking scenes have a ***Resident Evil***-like fixed perspective 3D view. The polygons in the battle scenes, on the other hand, are built more for action than detail. When a fight begins, the walking scene may jump into the fight scene, as in previous ***Final Fantasy*** games; i.e., an urban neighborhood may become the generic street fight background. Avoiding endless repetitive experience-raising battles has always been important to Square; hopefully ***Final Fantasy VII*** will move as quickly as its predecessors, or the battles will be so exciting no one will mind.

On two CDs, it's also worth asking when the CDs will switch. Will your character cross a continent or a gate with no turning back from one CD to another? Will they, less pleasantly but more effectively, require switching back and forth between CDs?

It's a sign of Square's success that—with only half the ***Final Fantasy*** series released in the U.S. so far—anticipation of ***FFVII*** is so high.

Final Fantasy VI

Final Fantasy VII ©1996 Square

The Games of Square

From past to present. Games listed by first appearance on a system. Parentheses indicate American names.

1985	12	Shooting	Thexder
1986	9	Shooting	King's Knight
	12	Adventure	Crystal Dragon
	12	RPG	Deep Dungeon
1987	3	3D Action	Run-Out Operation
	4	Simulation	Appletown Story
	5	Action	Hao's Wondrous Journey
	5	RPG	Emblem of Heroes
	7	Action Puzzle	Magnetic World Boys MetMag
	7	RPG	The Cursed Treasure of Cleopatra
	8	3D Racing	Highway Star (**Rad Racer**)
	10	Action RPG	Sword of Killeen
	12	3D Shooting	J.J. (**The 3D Battles of World Runner**)
	12	RPG	Final Fantasy
1988	5	RPG	Deep Dungeon 3
	7	Shooting	Raiden
	7	Pinball	Moonball Magic
	12	Simulation	Half-Boiled Hero
	12	RPG	Final Fantasy II
1989	11	RPG	Square's Tom Sawyer
	12	RPG	Sa•Ga
1990	4	RPG	Final Fantasy III
	12	RPG	Sa•Ga 2
1991	6	Action RPG	Seiken Densetsu
	7	RPG	Final Fantasy IV
	10	RPG	Final Fantasy IV Easytype (**Final Fantasy II**)
	12	RPG	Sa•Ga 3
1992	1	RPG	Romancing Sa•Ga
	10	RPG	Final Fantasy Mystic Quest
	12	RPG	Final Fantasy V
	12	Simulation	Half-Boiled Hero 2
1993	8	RPG	Seiken Densetsu 2 (**Secret of Mana**)
	12	RPG	Romancing Sa•Ga 2
	12	Action	Alcahest
1994	1	RPG	Final Fantasy I & II
	4	RPG	Final Fantasy VI (**Final Fantasy III**)
	9	RPG	Live Alive
1995	2	Simulation RPG	Front Mission
	3	RPG	Chrono Trigger
	9	RPG	Seiken Densetsu 3
	10	RPG	Secret of Evermore
	11	RPG	Romancing Sa•Ga 3
1996	2	Simulation RPG	Bahamut Lagoon
	2	Simulation RPG	Gun Hazard
	3	RPG	Super Mario RPG
	4	RPG	Roodra's Treasure
	5	RPG	Treasure Hunter G
	8	Fighting	Tobal No.1

Super Famicom — Super Nintendo
Famicom — Game Boy
Famicom Disk — PlayStation

Characters of FFVII

Final Fantasy VII won't have the massive number of characters seen in other ***Final Fantasy*** games, but the five heroes at your command *are* fully rendered and animated. (Their names may be changed in America.) Now where are the moogles?

Claude

Your tow-headed hero, and the character who represents your party on overview screens, Claude (or "Cloud") wields the largest sword seen in a RPG so far.

Ellis

Ellis swings a staff and has the greatest magical ability.

Barett

Cloud's ally makes up for his ponderousness with the gatling gun which replaces his right arm.

Chocobo

The latest descendant of the popular Chocobo species, the big yellow bird becomes Cloud's mount.

Red 13

In Square tradition, your pets—including the feather-wearing war cat, Red 13—aid you in combat.

Characters ©1996 Square

Secrets of Square

Famed games not released in the U.S.

Final Fantasy V

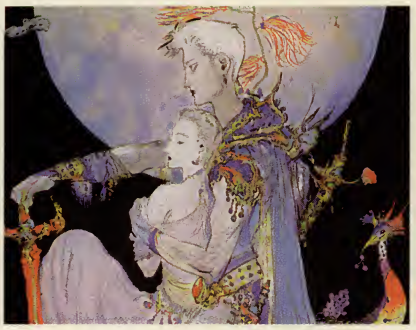
The world of FFV is balanced by four crystals: wind, water, earth, and fire. As the adventurer Battsu, princess Rena, mysterious old man Garafu, and Farisu, head of pirates, your mission is to save the crystals from being shattered by the dark emperor, Exdeath.

The main new and original feature of FFV is its class and ability system. At the beginning of the game, all of your characters are "suppin" (jobless), but various classes (more than 21) become available as the game goes on. If your characters have classes, then they get ability points (ABP) at the end of a battle as well as the usual experience and money. As ABP accumulate, the character learns abilities.

For example, a knight's ability of level one is "kabau (to protect)". With this ability, your knight character protects those with low HP from enemies' direct attacks. These learned abilities are valid throughout the game, even if a character changes jobs.

Some like the small number of characters (only four) in FFV. You don't have to worry about the extra characters' levels or abilities, or about events which would not happen without certain characters' presence (as in FFVI)). The ending is especially good.

Takuo Henmi



Bahamut Lagoon

Bahamut Lagoon takes place in Orelus, a world of floating islands in the sky, where the Gran-Beross empire uses its military might to conquer the other islands. After the fall of Karnha, his homeland, our hero becomes the leader of the Resistance and tries to recover Karnha, rescue the captured princess Yoyo, and liberate the world.

Bahamut Lagoon is Square's third "simulation strategy game" for the Super Famicom. The player has party units consisting of four human characters and an accompanying dragon. On the battle field, the player directly controls the party units, but the dragons are basically controlled by the A.I.. There are two ways of attacking the enemy—field commands (which generally effect a larger number of units or units farther away) and engaging an enemy unit (which is the main way to deal massive damage). When a party or dragon unit engages an enemy unit, the screen shifts to an Final Fantasy-style battle screen.

One feature of the game is "feeding the dragons". Between scenarios, you can feed a dragon any item (including weapons and armor). This alters the status attributes of the dragon. By choosing which items to feed to which dragon, the player can develop the dragons in the way he likes.

As a strategy simulation game, the game contains a fair amount of innovative elements, but the difficulty level is rather low.

Alan Kwan

Romancing Sa•Ga

Long ago the god of destruction, Sariun, was sealed with ten jewels called the Destiny Stone. Time has passed and some of the jewels have vanished, and now Sariun once again menaces the lives of the worlds of Malduis.

The original feature of Romancing Sa•Ga is that you can select the main character from 8 characters, and the story is (slightly) different depending on who you choose to be. Your characters can equip a large number of weapons (and medicine items), and there are 4 different special tricks for each weapon which you learn as you use the weapons over and over. Romancing Sa•Ga's random enemies, like those in Chrono Trigger, can be seen approaching, and you'll spend most (even too much) of your playing time fighting them. It also has an unusual monetary system, which goes only as high as 9999. The sequels to the game—Romancing Sa•Ga 2 and 3—were more popular than the original.

Takuo Henmi

Romancing Sa•Ga 3

Seiken Densetsu 3 (Secret of Mana 2)

A young person sets out towards the Holy City to meet the High Priest because of a personal distress. Unknown to him or her, the Mana in the world is decreasing, the fairy has left the Mana Tree to search for a wielder of the Mana Sword, and our hero will be involved with saving the world.

In this installment of the Seiken Densetsu series (known as Secret of Mana in the U.S.), the player gets to choose three characters to form his party from an array of six. In addition to some parts of the story being different, the characters also have different abilities which affect how they fight in combat. There is also a class change system. The day and time concept has been introduced: different monsters such as ghosts and zombies haunt at night, and the day of the week influences the strength of monsters and magic spells.

The main story develops around your three party characters, centered on the one you choose to be the hero, while the other three characters show up occasionally as guest characters. Character designs are excellent and, needless to say, the graphics and music are among the top of Super Famicom games.

Alan Kwan

"SEIKEN DENSETSU 3 WAS NEVER TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BECAUSE, AS THE RUMOR GOES, OF A NASTY BUG IN THE GAME THAT THE COMPANY COULD NOT FIX. BUT FRANKLY, THAT'S HARD TO BELIEVE. SQUARE EMPLOYS HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, AND THEY CAN'T FIX A SMALL BUG IN GAMEPLAY?"

Raymond Pat

Seiken Densetsu 3 ©1995 Square, Bahamut Lagoon ©1996 Square, Final Fantasy V Illustrations ©1992 Square/Yoshitaka Amano, Romancing Sa•Ga ©1995 Square

Steve Gray

To Live and Game in L.A.

Exclusive Interview

In the Marina Towers in Marina Del Rey, California is the new U.S. headquarters of Square. It's not a giant supercomplex, or as big as the Arco Tower HQ in Japan; Square almost, but not quite, fills one floor.

The office shows its newness, with cardboard boxes and signs of construction. In a cool, humming room two SGI workstations and a mainframe computer provide the brain trust for all those graphics. Dark offices line the halls, and at the end is the lounge, where a S-NES sits with Super Mario RPG circuit board sticking out of its cartridge slot, and a library of PlayStation games is visible. After introductions, we were introduced to Yanagihara and Steve Gray, vice president of game production.

Reflecting how much downtown Los Angeles looked like Midgar in Final Fantasy VII, we asked the first questions and everything came together.

SAGA ONE

Game On! USA: Since we're both coming from E3, I suppose the questions is...what did you think of the Nintendo 64?

Gray: Nice graphics. Still no CD. *(laughs)*

Game On! USA: Now, I notice that one way all this CD space tends to be filled, especially in Japanese RPGs, is with animation. Are there going to be many CG animation scenes separate from the gameplay in *Final Fantasy VII*, or are you trying to be more interactive?

Yanagihara: We don't know yet.

Gray: I will say that there is a general feeling here, in our L.A. office and I think in our Tokyo office, that anything that is linear that is too long is boring. So I wouldn't expect to see a ton of these long full-motion video things. I know there isn't going to be much of that in what we're working on here.

Game On! USA: Another thing that Square RPGs generally don't have that many other Japanese RPGs do is a sort of simulation combat aspect, where you deploy your troops, etc. The Square system seems to be a little closer to real-time.

Gray: Correct.

Game On! USA: Now, the combat system in *Final Fantasy VII*, is that going to be something even closer to real-time, or something similar to the previous *Final Fantasy* games?

Gray: It's turn-based. But it's pretty different.

Game On! USA: Is it going to be called *Final Fantasy VII* in the U.S., despite the fact that it's been *I, II, III* in the U.S. so far?

Yanagihara: That's something we don't know. It could be *Final Fantasy IV*, it could be the same title as Japan. But traditionally we have different titles..

Junichi Yanagihara

Game On! USA: Square has traditionally released in America relatively few of the many, many games they've released in Japan. Would you say that's because of timing, or do you think the games you've put out in the States are the best?

Yanagihara: I think it's a combination of all of the above. It could be marketing conditions are difficult…it takes lots of time to convert from the Japanese language to English. It has to be a sure sell. There are various reasons, including who would buy that type of game, who's out there?

Game On! USA: I'm curious if in the programming you're doing now is language-neutral, or if the memory maps are in kanji or English.

Gray: We are currently trying to figure out how to build a system that will work in all three of the Japanese alphabets as well as English…We're also working on a system that will allow both the Japanese and the American designers to share design documents and AI.

Game On! USA: It's interesting that you're going to make this a truly 32-bit game, while 16-bit games are still so hot in Japan…would you say that the switch from 16-bit to 32-bit is more profound than the switch from 8 to 16?

Gray: I think the thing that's really made a difference is the ability to do realtime 3D, and to display relatively high color resolution images. The quality of the color you can display on one of the new consoles is so much more than what you used to be able to display on a cart. That means that a lot more care has to be put in the art production than ever before. So that's a long way of agreeing with you…I think that the jump to the new consoles is a huge, huge difference.

SAGA TWO

Game On! USA: Have you people at Square L.A. had any input into the art and story part of *Final Fantasy VII*?

Gray: The team that's working here on *FFVII* has done some of the design art, so yes, to some degree.

Game On! USA: Can you name some past projects you've worked on, Steve?

Gray: Everything in recent history would all be movies…well, no, that's not true. I worked peripherally on *J-League Baseball* and *NBA '96* for Electronic Arts, just before I came here. Then before that, I was at Digital Domain. We did *Apollo 13*, *Strange Days*, *Interview with the Vampire*…have you ever seen those polar bear Coca-Cola commericals? We did some of those. A bunch of theme park rides.

Game On! USA: I understand one of the purposes for which Square L.A. was founded was to do original titles.

Gray: I assume so…that's certainly why I'm involved. *(laughs)*

Game On! USA: So, the Super Nintendo is partly here for recreation?

Gray: Oh, yeah…I mean, all of this is partly here for recreation. There is some validity to the idea of doing research and looking at other peoples' games…but a lot of gaming goes on that I don't think has to do with research. *(grins)*

Game On! USA: Did you play a lot of RPG and computer games before you worked for Square?

Gray: I guess a lot of what passes for RPGs in the States. Then I was with EA, and it was all sports.

Game On! USA: I notice that most of the movies you mentioned working on are science fiction, not fantasy. Of course, *Final Fantasy* always integrated technology and magical designs.

Gray: Yes, I think the reason that science fiction is such a big hit in action movies is that in Hollywood there's a great desire to blow things up. You've gotta make the movie, you've gotta blow things up. And sci-fi, action, you can really blow things up. *(grins)*

Game On! USA: I understand you're relocating Square Soft to L.A. So some of Square Soft's people are going to come down from Seattle and work here?

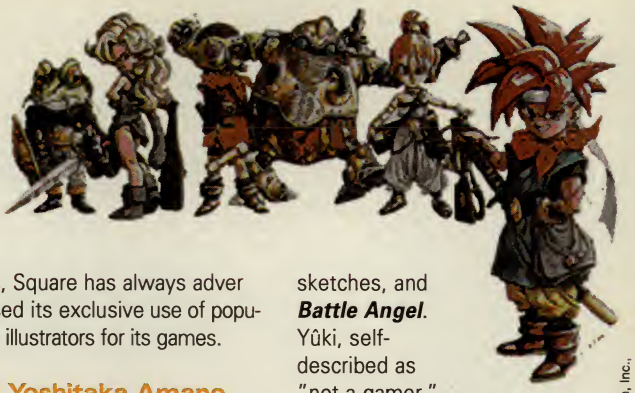
Gray: In the future we're going to do a lot of titles here…I'm kind of a combination of product manager and head programmer. Mostly I've been trying to hire people, delegating responsibility.

Game On! USA: As a final question…if you're doing your own games, how do you feel about following in the footsteps of Square, such a large, established company?

Gray: Well, it means our game better be damn good *(laughs)*. Yeah, it's a big reputation to live up to. We (Square L.A.) are working on an original adventure title, with a science fiction setting. The art and designs are all American, but we think it captures some of that Square feeling…We're really the right team…especially with the help of the game designers who are here from Tokyo, that's a critical aspect. They bring with them all of Square's mass knowledge of how to do it right. We really hope that talent, combined with the programming and art talent that we can get because we're here in L.A., will make the right combination.

Game On! USA: Thanks, Steve.

A SQUARE OF ARTISTS



Akira Toriyama

Square Feature

For such a well-known company, Square has had remarkably few manga conversions, probably because the games themselves provide so much storyline (though this hasn't stopped several books). CD soundtracks for games such as ***Final Fantasy VI*** are commonly found, but game music is always more common in Japan.

The only direct Square tie to anime is the ***Final Fantasy*** video series, which was released in four 30-minute volumes in 1994 by Columbia Japan. The storyline is a rough continuation of events in ***Final Fantasy V***; the female protagonist, Rinari, is a descendant of ***FFV***'s long-ago hero, Butz. In the first volume, ***Chapter of Wind***, Rinari and her friend, the boy swordsman Blitz, are sent to protect the Temple of Wind from evil forces who want to steal the Crystal of Wind. In the next three volumes—***Chapter of Fire***, ***Chapter of the Dragon***, and ***Chapter of the Stars***—they end up saving the world from mechanical overlords, dragons and Rouge, a pirate villainess in black leather. The character designs for the OAV series are by Yoshinori Kanemori (***Galaxy Express 999***), whose style is much cuter and more conventionally manga-like than the style of the original designer.

Keita Amamiya

Square's most distinct tie to manga is its artists, beginning with Yoshitaka Amano, character designer for the ***Final Fantasy*** series. As shown by the Square print ads which show a pile of sketches, Square has always advertised its exclusive use of popular illustrators for its games.

Noboteru Yûki

Yoshitaka Amano

Amano *is* the ***Final Fantasy*** series, having designed the characters since the beginning. Amano's sketches have a fairy-tale fantasy look, and his heroes and heroines generally are pale, thin and ornately dressed. This is a natural considering that he is second-best-known for doing character designs for the 1985 animated film ***Vampire Hunter D***, whose tormented "man in black" hero is as Gothic as Japanese animation gets. Strangely, he successfully adapts his own concept sketches to the better-recognized, quaintly big-headed characters actually seen onscreen in ***Final Fantasy*** games. His other work for Square includes the action war simulation ***Front Mission*** and the sequel, ***Gun Hazard***.

Keita Amemiya

The character designer for ***Rudra's Treasure***, a recent Super Famicom RPG about the advancing end of the world, Amemiya's designs are darkly biomechanical, insect-like and stretched. No surprise; a part-time live action movie director, Amemiya designed the kick-butt giant fungus ***Zeiram*** for the movie of the same name. He writes a regular column in Japanese ***B-Club*** magazine showcasing his latest science-fiction monster movie creations.

Nobuteru Yûki

Yûki, a character designer for animation, also did the character designs for the colorful ***Secret of Mana*** (***Seiken Densetsu***) games. Outside of Square, he is best known for doing animation designs for ***Record of Lodoss War***, for which he drew over and expanded on Yutaka Izubuchi's original character sketches, and ***Battle Angel***. Yûki, self-described as "not a gamer," nonetheless was discovered for ***Record of Lodoss War*** from manga he had running in the Japanese ***Dragon*** magazine.

Akira Toriyama

Toriyama, the most popular artist listed here, traditionally works for another RPG company, Enix, whose ***Dragon Warrior*** series he character-designed. His martial arts series ***Dragon Ball*** is the best-selling anime series *ever*, with over 500 episodes since its origin in 1986, and 42 volumes of manga which only recently concluded. His spiky-haired designs are very recognizable, and Square has not passed up the chance to use his popularity. Square's Super Famicom/SNES RPG ***Chrono Trigger*** used Toriyama characters, and the new fighting game ***Tobal No.1*** sends his characters into battle. Toriyama is the definition of the term "hot property." 95

Noboteru Yûki

Yoshitaka Amano

Chrono Trigger illustrations ©Akira Toriyama/Bird Studio, Record of Lodoss War ©1990 Group SNE/Kadokawa Shoten Publishing Co., Ltd./Maruberi Corporation/Tokyo Broadcasting System, Inc., Vampire Hunter D ©1985 EPIC/SONY Inc./MOVIC, Inc./CBS/SONY GROUP, Inc./Illustration by Yoshitaka Amano, B-Club Illustration©Keita Amamiya

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Manga gaming at E3!

Yes, it's long over—E3, the Electronic Entertainment Expo, premiere show of video and computer games for 1996. While we were there, Game On! USA checked out what and how many Japanese games are coming to the States—and the news is good.

Namco

Tekken 2, coming to the States in September, was the game of the day at Namco's extensive booth. ***Ridge Racer Revolution***, another Japanese port, was also shown for 3rd Quarter, and ***Soul Edge*** was announced for the end of 1996.

Konami

At the Konami booth, basketballs flew wild for an In the Zone promotional while Japanese games hummed (relatively) unpromoted in the corner.

•***Policenauts.*** The prequel to Snatcher, Konami's cult hit Sega CD cyberpunk detective game, Policenauts is another "interactive comic"-style title, this time for the Sega *Saturn*. Release date TBA.

•***Suikoden.*** A *PlayStation* port of Konami's Japanese RPG Genso Suikoden, it wasn't running at E3 but is planned. 4th Quarter release.

•***Kumite***-The Fighter's Edge. Still unfinished in Japan and the U.S. (only a videotape was shown),

Kumite is a 3D polygon fighting game with the Art of Fighting-like addition of blood and bruises. Some of the characters look extremely large and punkish. *PlayStation* and *Saturn*. 4th Quarter release.

Sony

Good news for *PlayStation*-owning manga fans; although ***Crash Bandicoot*** is without a doubt the PlayStation's flagship title, of their first- and second-party non-sports lineup for late '96, 12 out of 16 games are Japanese 'ports. These include:

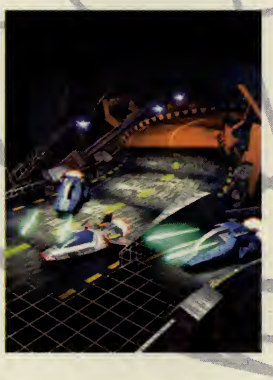
•***Carnage Heart.*** A 3D mecha battle simulation game from Artdink, one of the favored PlayStation developers. Summer release.

•***Aquanauts Holiday.*** Another Artdink game, this was an enormous hit in Japan, despite (or because of) its zero violence and tension level. Send your aquasub to the bottom of the ocean, discovering sunken ships and schools of fish instead of hidden characters or secret moves. Summer release.

•***Bogey: Dead 6.*** Known in Japan as Asmik's ***Sidewinder***, this fighter plane duel game is coming out this Summer.

•***Epidemic.*** The sequel to the mechanical, ***Doom***-like ***Kileak the Blood*** from Genki, this game (known in Japan as ***Kileak the Blood: Reason in Madness***) has a better color spectrum and more 3D than its predecessor. Fall release.

•***Tunnel B-1.*** A 3D shooter/adventure developed by GaGa Communications in Japan, this takes "corridor shooter" to new levels as you zoom through underground passages committing sabotage against the dictatorial leaders aboveground. Apparently puzzle-solving and item-finding is at least part of the game. Fall release.



•***Samurai Shodown III and King of Fighters '95.*** Although SNK's 32-bit licensees came out for the Saturn first in Japan, in the U.S. Sony has them. *KoF '95* was 80% complete, *SSIII* only 40%, but both were playable and the loading time is reasonable. ***Fatal Fury Real Bout*** is also planned but wasn't at the show. Fall release.

•Other games: Masamune Shirow's ***Project: Horned Owl*** (minus the inessential Konami light gun), ***Jumping Flash! 2***, ***Tobal No.1*** and ***Beyond the Beyond***. There was no news at E3 of ***Arc the Lad***, PlayStation's second official RPG.

Tekken 2 ©1996 Namco Ltd., Bogey: Dead 6 ©Asmik/Pegasus Japan, Epidemic ©Genki, Tunnel B-1 ©1996 Ocean, Aquanauts Holiday ©Artdink, Policenauts ©Konami, Kumite ©1996 Konami

Gametek

The people best known for Jeopardy showed a demo tape of the *Nintendo 64* ***Robotech: Crystal Dreams***, with the camera flying past a spaceship, small foes,and finally towards a transforming Veritech. Gametek promises your Veritech will be fully transformable, and that the storyline will be all-new, set in 2019 AD after the Zentraedi Malcontent Uprisings. Fall/Winter release, presumably Winter.

Sunsoft

Sunsoft showed off several forthcoming games, including ***Albert Gaiden***, a RPG for the *Saturn* released in Japan as *Albert Odyssey Gaiden*.

•***Galaxy Fight.*** This Neo•Geo space alien fighter is finally headed for the American *PlayStation* (3rd Quarter).

•***Takeru.*** Although plans are early, Sunsoft may port the PC game *Takeru* (developed in Britain) to the U.S. An adventure game based on Buichi Terasawa's comic, it stars you as the death-dealing, red-haired hero. Like much of Terasawa's work, it's got a roguish hero! And cyborgs! And women in thongs!

Jaleco

Although Shokendo ended production in Japan due to labor disputes at the developing company, Jaleco still had plenty to show for the *PlayStation*. ***Jajamaru*** is incomplete at this time, with its red-suited manga ninja exploring a very traditional-looking Japanese mansion. ***Dream Knight*** is a polygon adventure game designed by a Japanese artist Mako Kido and in production since early 1995 (which doesn't bode too well for its eventual release...). Jaleco also showed ***Tokyo Highway Battle***, a hit in Japan.

Capcom

The Street Fighter people showed off a variety of games, though the clear center of attention was the arcade ***Star Gladiator***, with its dramatic motion lines. *Star Gladiator* is planned for the *PlayStation*, although no release date was given.

Working Designs

Sega's #1 manga-style game developers were proudly featured in the Sega area. Working Designs showed off the beautifully colorful fantasy RPG ***Magic Knight Rayearth*** (3rd Quarter) from all-female design studio Clamp's comic and TV series as well as the simulation game ***Dragon Force*** (August/September) and their most recent releases, ***Shining Wisdom*** and ***Iron Storm***. In 1997 Working Designs plans to publish Japanese PC games as well.

Nintendo

At 1 pm on May 15th Nintendo debuted their plan to retake the market from Sega and Sony: the *Nintendo 64*. The majority of the first Nintendo 64 products should appear in the U.S. as well as in Japan (except for a Japanese chess game); already dozens of U.S. developers seemed to be signing up for the N64 at E3. Acclaim's ***Turok Dinosaur Hunter*** and Lucasarts' ***Shadows of the Empire*** were the only playable games which will be published outside of Nintendo.

Checklist

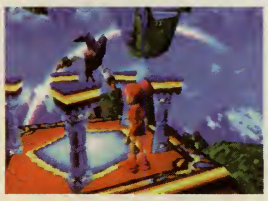
Also at E3...

ASCII showed new controllers and a Beta version of the PSX ***King's Field II*** (***King's Field III*** in Japan)...American Sammy's latest title was a fishing game, but at their booth lurked the Arkanoid-like semi-3D PSX ball-bouncing game ***Blockids***, with a toggle controller by Namco, which they were considering releasing...Data East mentioned plans (no specifics) for more Japanese games, but their main line-up was sports and only lone arcade puzzle game ***Magical Drop 2*** (also for Neo•Geo) stood out of the green astroturf...Koei showed ***Aerobiz 2000*** and Imagineer's ***Mystery of the Seven Mansions*** but announced later that they would release two British games instead...Vic Tokai revealed that the forthcoming Saturn fighting game ***Dark Rift*** was the (renamed) ***Criticom 2***, and also showed other American-developed games, ***Wet Corpse*** and ***Abuse***.

Robotech ©1996 Gametek Inc., Star Gladiator ©1996 Capcom Coin-Op Inc., King's Field III ©1996 From Software, Inc., Magic Knight Rayearth ©1995 Clamp/Kodansha/Yomiuri TV/Densu/TMS/Sega, Galaxy Fight ©Sunsoft

Sega

In addition to the latest additions to the Sonic and Virtua Fighter series (including the U.S.-made ***Sonic X-treme*** and the same awesome demo tape of ***Virtua Fighter 3*** that showed at the ACME arcade show), Sega is emphasizing their arcade conversions for the future of the *Saturn*...but also bringing over several Japanese games.



•***Nights,*** the walking and flying game by the Sonic team, was up and (mostly) running. When your human character is on the ground, movement is simple; it's when you fly that the analog joystick takes control and Nights "enters your body," in the words of one PR agent.

•***Fighting Vipers,*** Sega's fighting game of skate punks and biker thugs, with its superior shadow effects, will come to the Saturn in Fall.

•***Virtual On***, the mecha fighting game. Winter release.

•***Baku Baku,*** a Tetris-y puzzle game with manga-style commentators (like many Japanese puzzles), in this case rendered. Sega will release it for Genesis and Game Gear as well. Summer release.

•Other Games: ***Legend of Oasis***, ***Dark Savior***, ***Blazing Heroes*** (the renamed RPG ***Mystaria***), ***Guardian Heroes***, and ***Gungriffon*** were also shown.

Taka Arashi, the new ***Virtua Fighter 3*** character

T•HQ

With a tape of Masamune Shirow's ***Ghost in the Shell*** playing outside their meeting room, anime-tied game publishers T•HQ had several Japanese games to show off, including ***Floating Runner*** and ***Robo Pit***, scheduled for 3rd and 4th Quarter respectively.

•***K-1 Super Kick Boxer.*** This uncompleted title is scheduled for 4th Quarter for the *PlayStation* in both Japan (as ***Fighting Illusion***) and the U.S.. As you duke it out in 3D, sweat drips and flies from your exhausted fighters.

•***Ghost in the Shell.*** Little was revealed about this *PlayStation* game (4th Quarter 1996 in Japan, 1997 in the U.S.) based on the movie and comic, except that it stars you as main character Motoko Kusanagi, driving a police tank. The character designs are by Masamune Shirow himself.

Mizuki

Next door to the Japan Multimedia Software Association, Mizuki showed off its V***S Racingroovy/Speed Driver***, a *PlayStation* racing game released in July in Japan, which they hope to take to the U.S. The game features a total of eleven cars and three tracks (jungle, alpine, highway), rear view mirrors and other features.

Atlus

Having cancelled a *Saturn* ***Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner*** game, Atlus revealed they'd instead be doing the *PlayStation* version of the newest in the Megami Tensei occult RPG series, translated as ***Revelations: Persona***. *Persona* (September release in Japan) features your adventuring party of Japanese high school students, armed with shotguns and belief in the supernatural, as they deal with the devil and other dangerous spirits in first-person, 3/4-view battle, and polygon cityscape scenes. Atlus plans to change the character designs in the U.S. version so that the teens are not universally Japanese-looking.

Beside Atlus' booth was also a not-quite-complete polygon fighting game, ***Near Death***, with Virtua Fighter-like controls, ring outs, and colorful backgrounds. The character designs are manga-like, with several of the eight characters (not counting the bosses) being beautiful, and sometimes alien, women. Control was still rough and Atlus is retooling the game, to release it probably at the end of 1996.

Coconuts Japan

This Japanese game company showed off card-playing games and, more impressively, ***Team 47 GoMan***, a *PlayStation* mecha game by (who else?) 47 Tek. You control any of five mechs who must defend different cities and landmarks, in 3D combat, from giant polygon monsters which put Ultraman's to shame. No known plans for U.S. release.

Nights ©Sega 1996, Virtua Fighter 3 © Sega, Baku Baku ©Sega, K-1 Super Kick Boxer ©1996 Xing, Mizuki Racingroovy ©Mizuki, Revelations: Persona ©Atlus, Team 47 GoMan © 47 Tek

Bandai

In Japan, Bandai is known for about a million anime and game licenses, including the almighty Gundam, but Bandai of America has been quiet lately (except for the upcoming *PlayStation* ***Power Rangers Zeo Power Pinball***). At E3, we found out why; they're concentrating on the new Bandai Digital Entertainment, who've allied with Apple to produce a Macintosh-like "Internet only" TV machine, the Pippin, which allows you to roam the Web and get e-mail. What about games? As it turns out, in Japan Bandai is releasing some of the only games available for the Pippin; an epic ***Gundam*** game, also expected for PlayStation in 1997, and a ***Power Rangers Zeo*** game, with the standard platform jumping and punching. In the U.S., only edutainment "games" are available at this time.

Western Front

American comic and multimedia gaming

U.S. comics and animation also got big exposure at E3. Mindscape unveiled their ***Marvel 2099*** platform game with a CG animation of Hulk 2099; the PlayStation signed up ***Spawn*** for Fall '96; Capcom showed ***Marvel Super Heroes*** and nobody let a good license rest.

Hard Boiled: Nixon's Revenge

GTE Entertainment locked and loaded its plans for a game based on Frank Miller's ***Hard Boiled*** mini-series from Dark Horse Comics. The game is scheduled for November release for *Saturn*, *PlayStation* and PC, and is also developed by Cryo Interactive Entertainment, who evidently know their comic books. What's less certain is whether a racing/shooting game can capture the unbelievably violent, in-your-face attitude of Frank Miller's tale of cyborgs in future Los Angeles.

Aeon Flux

Viacom New Media, the MTV-owned game company, showed ***Aeon Flux***, a PC and *PlayStation* game scheduled for 4th Quarter 1996, developed by Paris-based Cryo Interactive Entertainment. Although *Flux* isn't manga-based—it owes more to French comics—its clones, nihilistic flavor, and women assassins in leather are familiar to many. The pre-Alpha version at E3 was slow and sketchy, but Viacom promises the end result will work. The game engine is ***Resident Evil***-like.

Hard Boiled ©Dark Horse Comics/Frank Miller/GTE Entertainment. Aeon Flux ©Viacom International Inc.

top ten

Game On! Japan's Top Ten Games

This top ten list is based on sales, overall popularity, and industry expectations compiled by Game On! Japan, one of the leading cross platform game magazines in Japan. The following list appeared in its July 1996 issue.

#1——Tekken 2
Sony PlayStation/Namco/Fighting
The fighter of the summer jumps up from third place, with its popularity more evident now that it's been selling since March 29 (it's said to have exceeded one million copies). What does Namco have in store next for Kazuya and Co.?

#2—Biohazard
Sony PlayStation/Capcom/'Survival Horror'
Known only to lucky journalists, Capcom's American press kit for the horror game called ***Resident Evil*** in the U.S. contains an unusual item: a black, military-style boot. Attached instructions read: "1. Put on boot. 2. Take ripe melon. 3. Draw human face on melon. 4. Stomp on melon until satisfaction ensues..."

#3—Super Bomberman 4
Super Famicom/Hudson/Action
Though Hudson Soft USA remains inactive, Super Famicom Bomberman still reigns. The normal 2-player simultaneous play mode is back, as well as new system features.

#4—Kirby Super Deluxe
Super Famicom/Nintendo/Action
A game (unlike many in these days of *ecchi* and combat games) suitable for both adults and children, ***Kirby Super Deluxe*** (***Kirby Super Star*** in the U.S.) has performed quite well. Since its visually unimpressive debut on the 8-bit Nintendo, the series has grown to success.

#5—Super Mario RPG
Super Famicom/Nintendo/RPG
It's said that there will be a continuation of this game, to be released on the N64. What fully-3D Nintendo 64 RPGs could possibly look like, however, is still unknown.

#6—Gundam v.2.0
Sony PlayStation/Bandai/Action

#7—Tokimeki Memorial Private Collection
Sony PlayStation/Konami/Etc. (not a game)

#8—Derby Stallion '96
Super Famicom/Ascii/Simulation

#9—Can Can Bunny Premiere
Sega Saturn/Kidd/Adventure

#10—J-League Excite Stage '96
Super Famicom/Epoch/Sports

MANGA

F E A T U R E S

Battle Arena Toshinden

Sony knew their audience when they released ***Battle Arena Toshinden*** for the Japanese PlayStation in January 1995. The comic reprinted here first ran as a one-shot in the January 10, 1995 issue of monthly ***Dengeki PlayStation*** magazine.

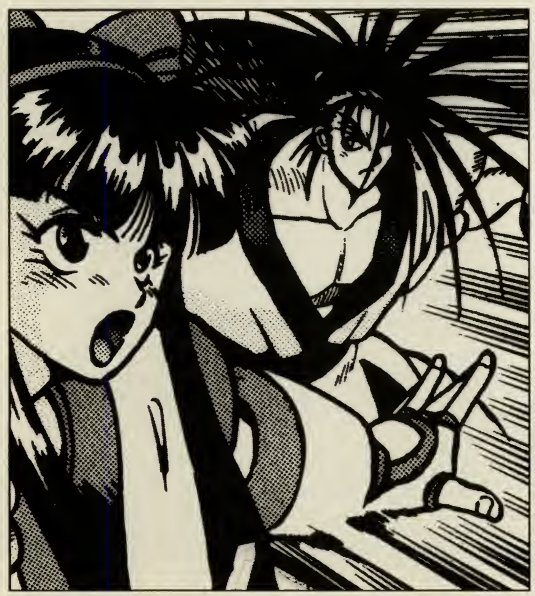
The manga isn't an ordinary promotional comic, though; Tsukasa Kotobuki, the ***Toshinden*** artist and scripter, was also the character designer for both ***Battle Arena Toshinden*** 1 and 2, lending Eiji, Sofia and the rest as presented here some credibility. Kotobuki, whose razor-keen, sound-effects-heavy style makes the manga even more wicked-looking than the game, is apparently very willing to draw ***Toshinden*** art and has done covers for comic anthologies, advertising material, the upcoming videos, etc. His past work includes some extremely distinctive character sketches of the ***Samurai Shodown*** cast.

Battle Arena Toshinden introduces the eight characters of the game, who have traveled from wildly different places to participate in the Toshinden tournament held by a criminal group known only as "the organization." Haughty but fair Duke Rambert goes for a rematch against samurai Eiji, the only opponent who has ever beaten him; Eiji, a hot-tempered swordsman easily inflamed by the rush of blood, has gone in search of his lost brother; the amnesiac detective Sofia looks for clues to her past. The identity of the mysterious figure behind the tournament will come as no surprise to people who've played the game, but Kotobuki's personal ***Toshinden*** shows how all the characters are intended to be, and is one well-drawn example of gaming manga to boot.

Battle Arena Toshinden...

...and Toshinden 2.

Samurai Shodown



The story so far...

With mass starvation leading to social unrest, the Tenmei Era of Japan—1787—is a time of famine and strife. Only a few, such as spiritually attuned Ainu priestess Nakoruru, can see through the everyday horrors to the Dark Kingdom which is using the chaos as an attempt to take over the normal world.

Nakoruru's travels have brought her allies against the darkness—hard-drinking, hard-fighting swordsman Haohmaru, and a disguised traveler who proved to be Hanzo Hattori, loyal ninja of the Shogunate government. Haohmaru's bad reputation precedes him, attracting enemies such as the ninja Nagiri who believes Haohmaru killed her father. After Nakoruru and he intercept a top-secret scroll telling of a secret plan to topple the government, Hanzo takes Haohmaru and Nakoruru into his confidence. But the agents of the Dark Kingdom—the half-human Shiranui commanded by the goblin Gen-An—will do anything to retrieve the scroll, and only pitched battle keeps the three heroes safe.

Now, confident that the Shogunate government can be saved from the dark forces, Hanzo has admitted the heroes to his estate for a brief rest. But the secret true leader of the Shiranui, the Dark Disciple Madou Shiranui, has made preparations...

Name: Nagiri
Identity: Ninja Assassin
Notes: Vengeful master of ninjitsu, Nagiri was nonetheless unable to defend herself when kidnapped by the evil Madou.

Name: Madou Shiranui
Identity: Evil Sorcerer
Notes: A deadly force on the astral plane, Shiranui has performed a magical ritual upon Nagiri...but to what purpose?

Battle Arena Toshinden ©1994 Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc., Battle Arena Toshinden 2 ©1995 Takara/Programmed by Tamsoft/Illustrations by Tsukasa Kotobuki, Samurai Shodown ©1995 SNK/Kyoichi Nanatsuki/Yuki Miyoshi

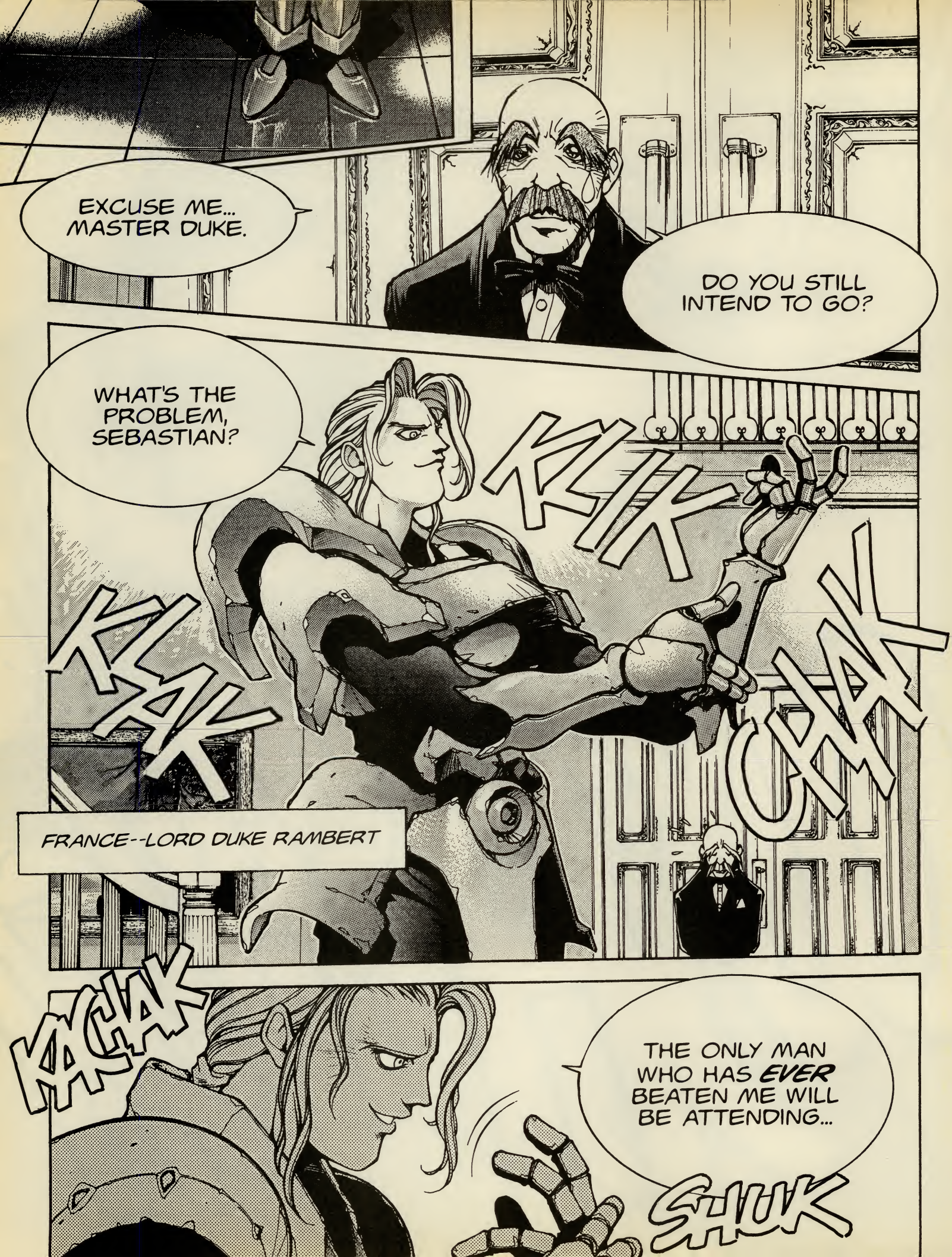
Story based on BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN for the Sony PlayStation

For the purposes of publication in English, the artwork in this publication is in reverse from the original Japanese version.

© 1995 Takara/programmed by Tamsoft

Story & Art by
TSUKASA KOTOBUKI
English Adaptation by
JAMES D. HUDNALL &
LILLIAN OLSEN
Lettering & Touch-up by
WAYNE TRUMAN

AS THE WARRIORS CLASH WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT!
CRASH


EXCUSE ME... MASTER DUKE.
DO YOU STILL INTEND TO GO?
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, SEBASTIAN?
KLIK
KLAK
CRAK
FRANCE--LORD DUKE RAMBERT
KACHAK
THE ONLY MAN WHO HAS *EVER* BEATEN ME WILL BE ATTENDING...
SHUK

BUT, SIR... THERE HAVE BEEN SOME NASTY RUMORS ABOUT THE GREAT TOHSHINDEN TOURNAMENT.
HMPH!
ALL THE MORE REASON, THEN.
KLAK
I MUST GO...
...FOR THE HONOR OF THE RAMBERT FAMILY.

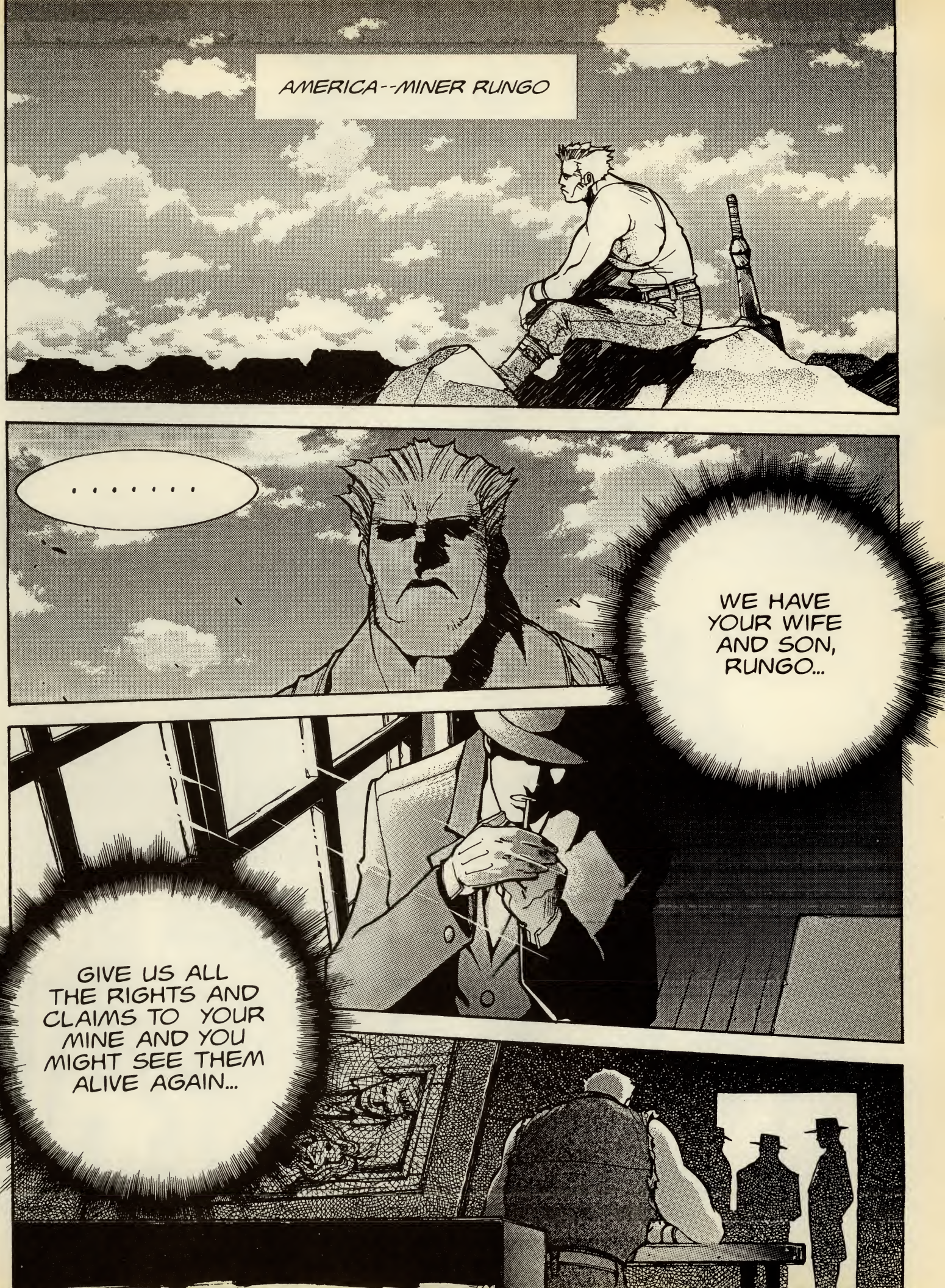
SOBB!
TURKEY--
DANCER ELLIS
OH NO,
I THINK I'M
LOST!
ROA
RR
CAW
CAW
CAW
CAW
CAW
EEP
EEP
EEP
IT'S SO
SCARY TO WALK
IN THE FOREST
ALL BY
MYSELF!
EEK!
...IF DADDY
IS STILL
ALIVE...
I
WONDER...
SNF
SNF

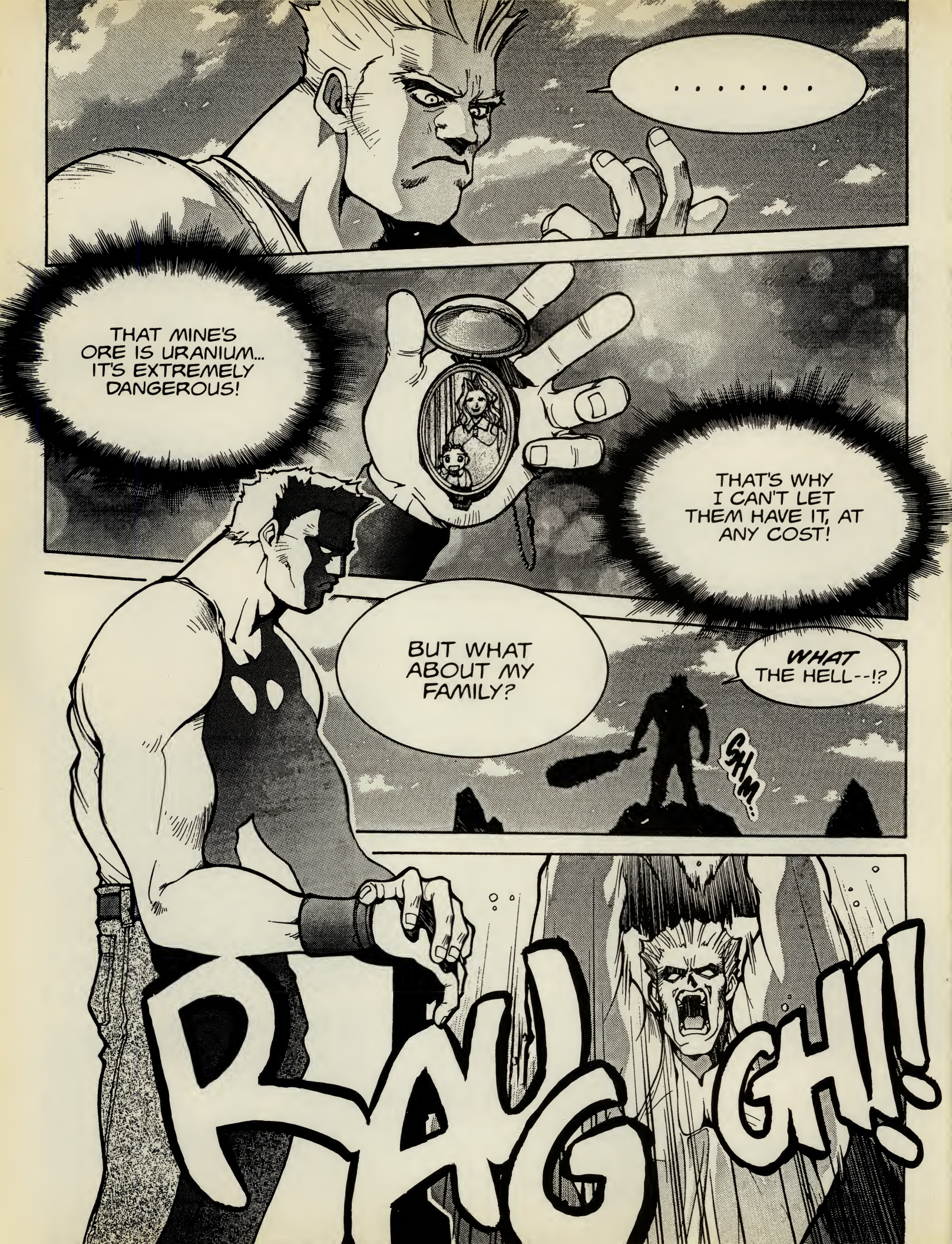
AHH!
TUMP
TUMP
HUFF, HUFF
huff.
TUMP
huff
huff.
HELP!
DAMN! WHO IS THAT SHE-DEVIL!?
KRAK
AIEE!
SLA
SPLISH!
WHUD
RUSSIA-- DETECTIVE SOFIA

UHNN..
KLINK
. . . . . .
...JUST AS I THOUGHT.
HEY, YOU DID IT, SOFIA!
IS IT THE ORGANIZATION?
YES...

SO THAT MEANS THERE'S NO STOPPING YOU...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
KLIK KLIK
BUT IT'S DEEP INSIDE ENEMY TERRITORY!
MM...BUT THAT'S WHERE THE ANSWERS TO MY PAST LIE.
...AND...
FFFT
"YOUR WARRIOR BLOOD IS CALLING"...
...IS THAT IT?
YEP, THAT'S IT...

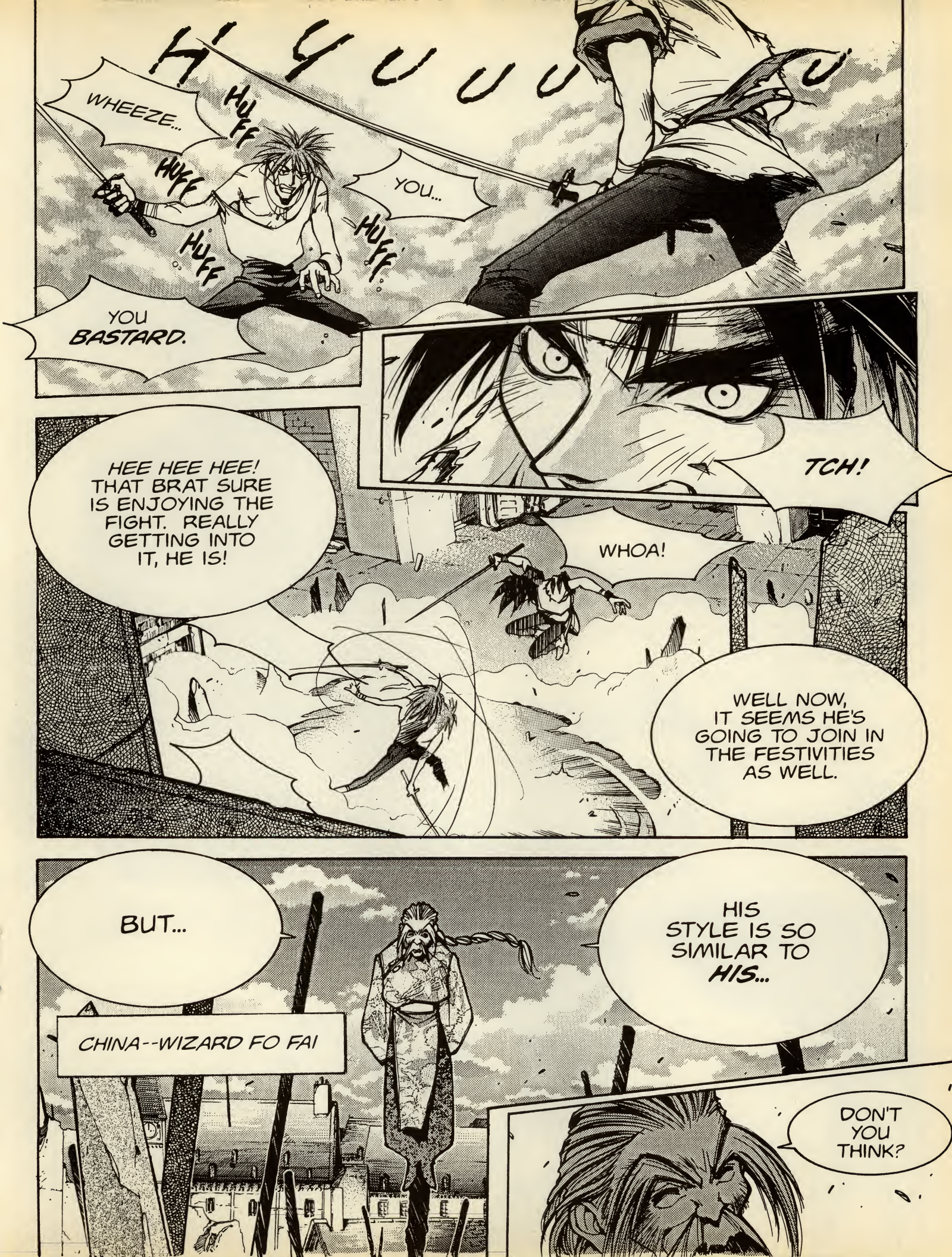
SNIFF
SHEESH! THIS IS TAKING ME FOREVER.
EEK!
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
CAW
CAW
CAW
CAW
RRRRR
EEP
EEP
EEP
AND WEIRDOS KEEP HARASSING ME...


AMERICA--MINER RUNGO
. . . . . .
WE HAVE YOUR WIFE AND SON, RUNGO...
GIVE US ALL THE RIGHTS AND CLAIMS TO YOUR MINE AND YOU MIGHT SEE THEM ALIVE AGAIN...


. . . . . .
THAT MINE'S ORE IS URANIUM... IT'S EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!
THAT'S WHY I CAN'T LET THEM HAVE IT, AT ANY COST!
BUT WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY?
WHAT THE HELL--!?
SHM.
RAUGH!

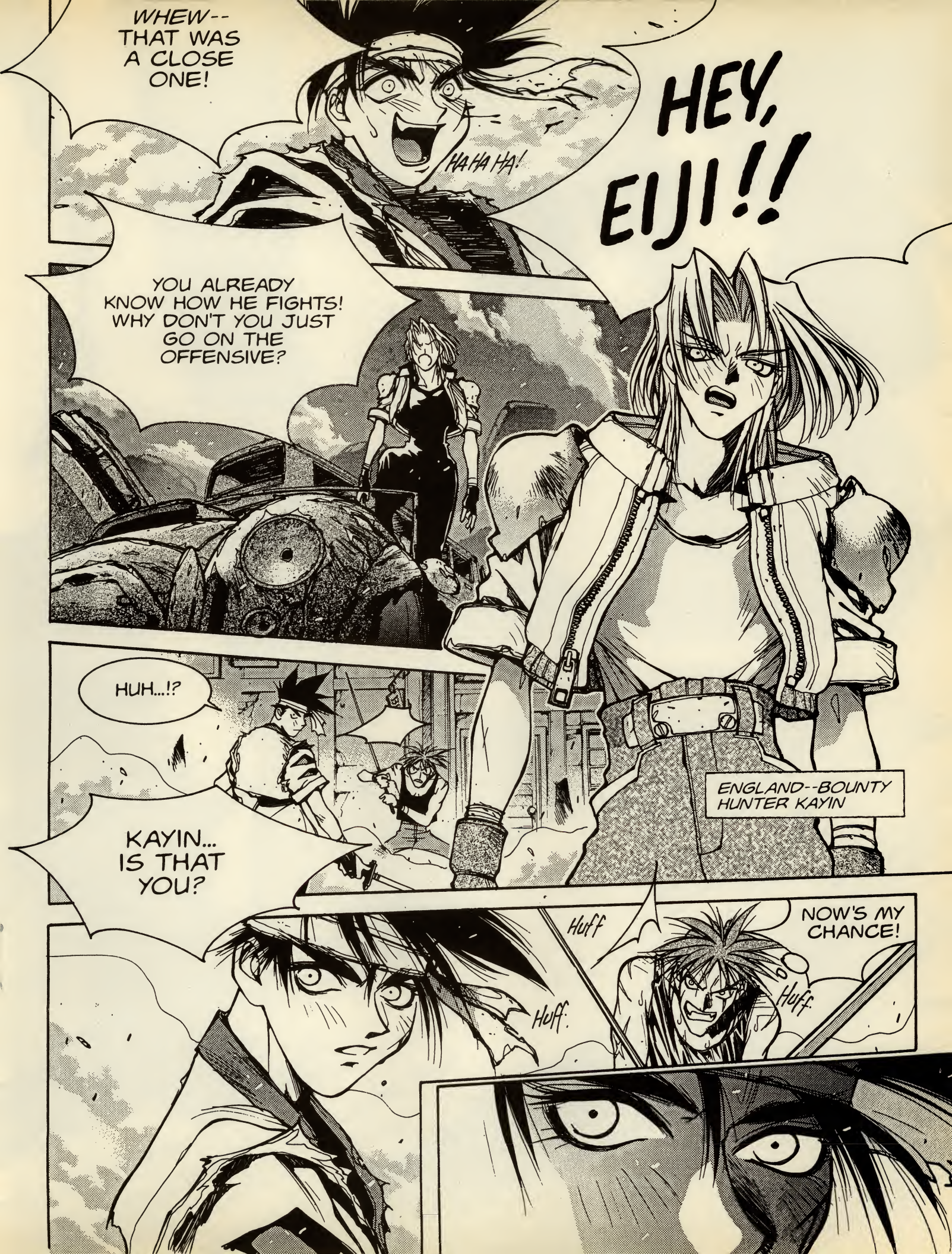
KA
BOOM
PRUM
BABBLE
TKK
TAK
=SIGH=
TKK
HMPH! I SHOULDN'T WASTE MY TIME THINKING ABOUT SAVING THE REST OF THE WORLD...
I SHOULD JUST BEAT THESE GUYS INTO A PULP!

SNIFF
I'M NOT GONNA MAKE IT AT THIS RATE.
SKSH
SKASH!
HSSS
SKASH
I WONDER IF THIS IS EVEN THE RIGHT WAY...
IT FEELS LIKE I'VE BEEN GOING 'ROUND AND 'ROUND IN CIRCLES FOREVER!
SKSH
SKSH
SKSH
SKSH
SKSH

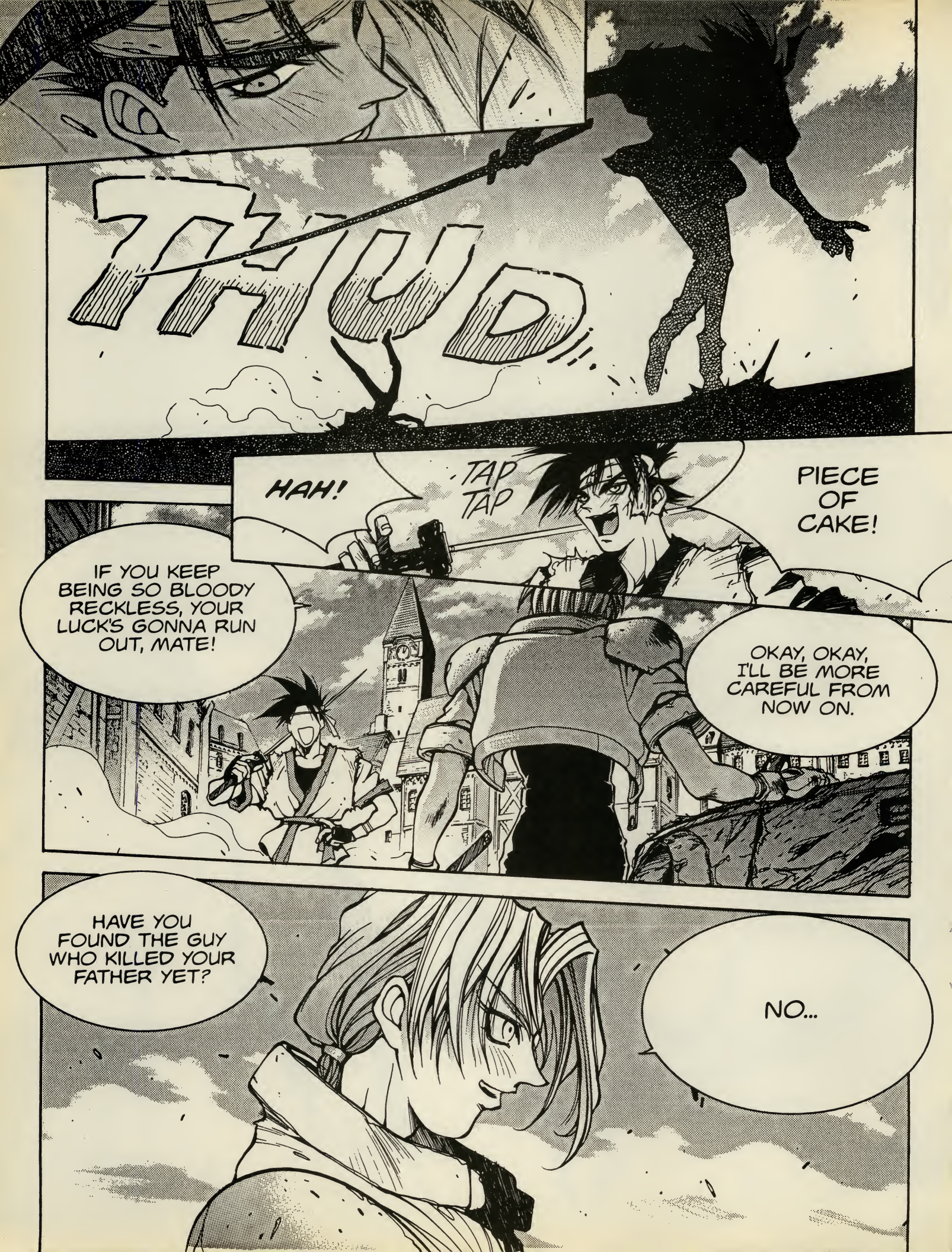

HYUUUU
WHEEZE...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
YOU...
HUFF
YOU BASTARD.
TCH!
HEE HEE HEE! THAT BRAT SURE IS ENJOYING THE FIGHT. REALLY GETTING INTO IT, HE IS!
WHOA!
WELL NOW, IT SEEMS HE'S GOING TO JOIN IN THE FESTIVITIES AS WELL.
BUT...
CHINA--WIZARD FO FAI
HIS STYLE IS SO SIMILAR TO HIS...
DON'T YOU THINK?

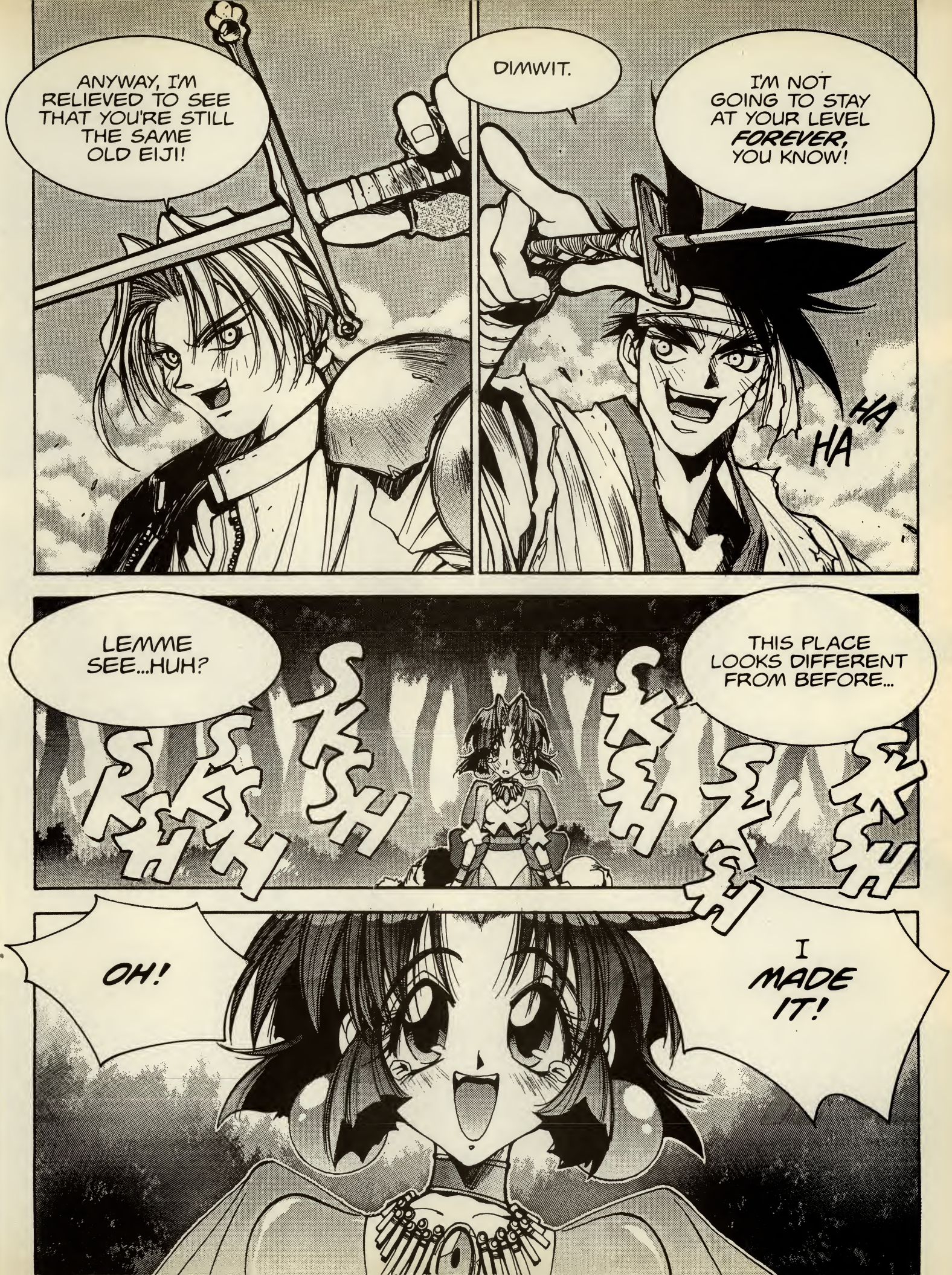
HYUUUU
. . . . . .
MONDO... I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SHINDIG.
IT SEEMS A HEADY MIX OF PLAYERS ARE GOING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS COMPETITION.
HEE HEE HEE
JAPAN-- NINJA MONDO

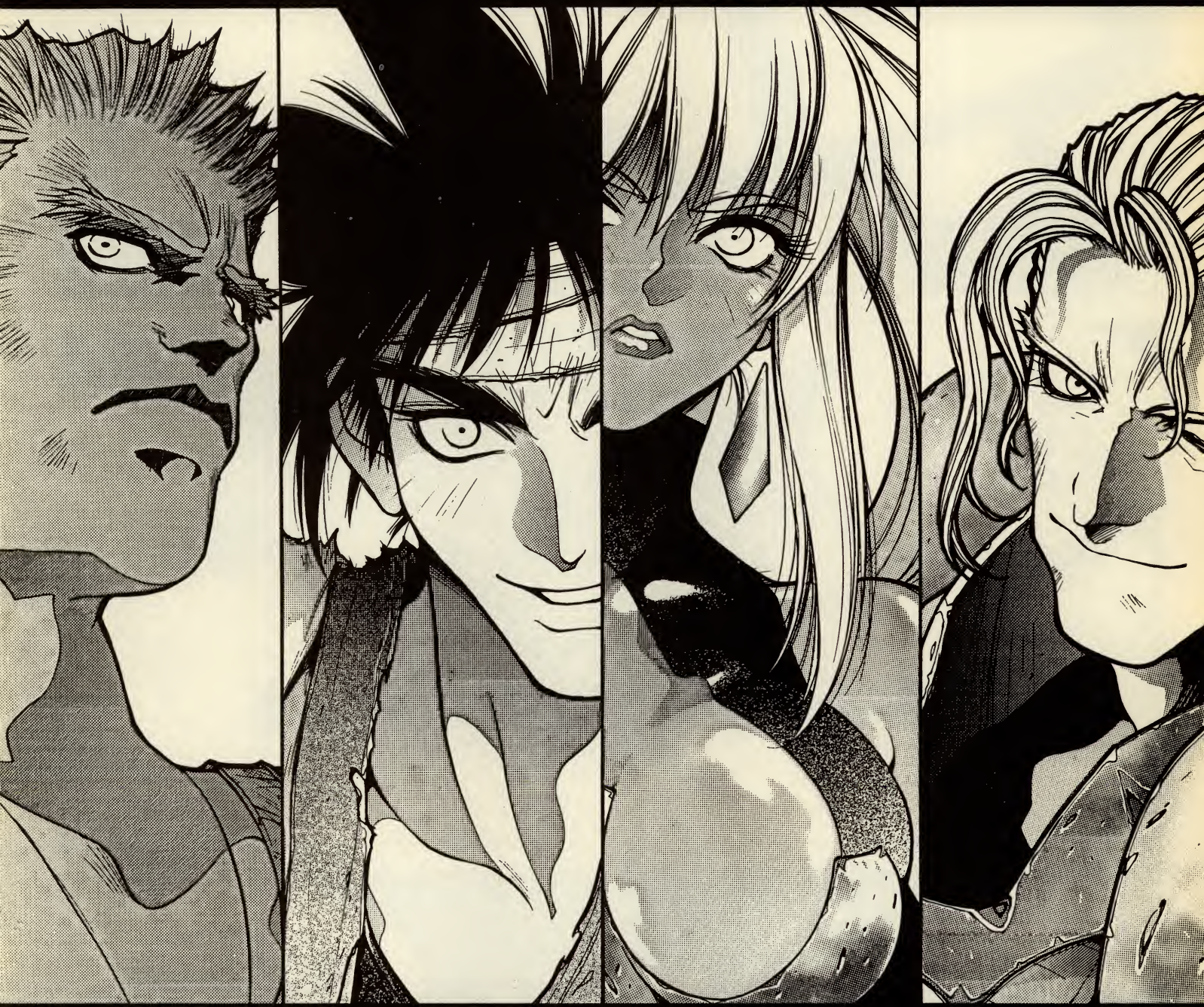
. . . . . .


WHEW-- THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE!
HA HA HA!
HEY, EIJI!!
YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW HE FIGHTS! WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO ON THE OFFENSIVE?
HUH...!?
KAYIN... IS THAT YOU?
ENGLAND--BOUNTY HUNTER KAYIN
Huff
Huff.
NOW'S MY CHANCE!
Huff.

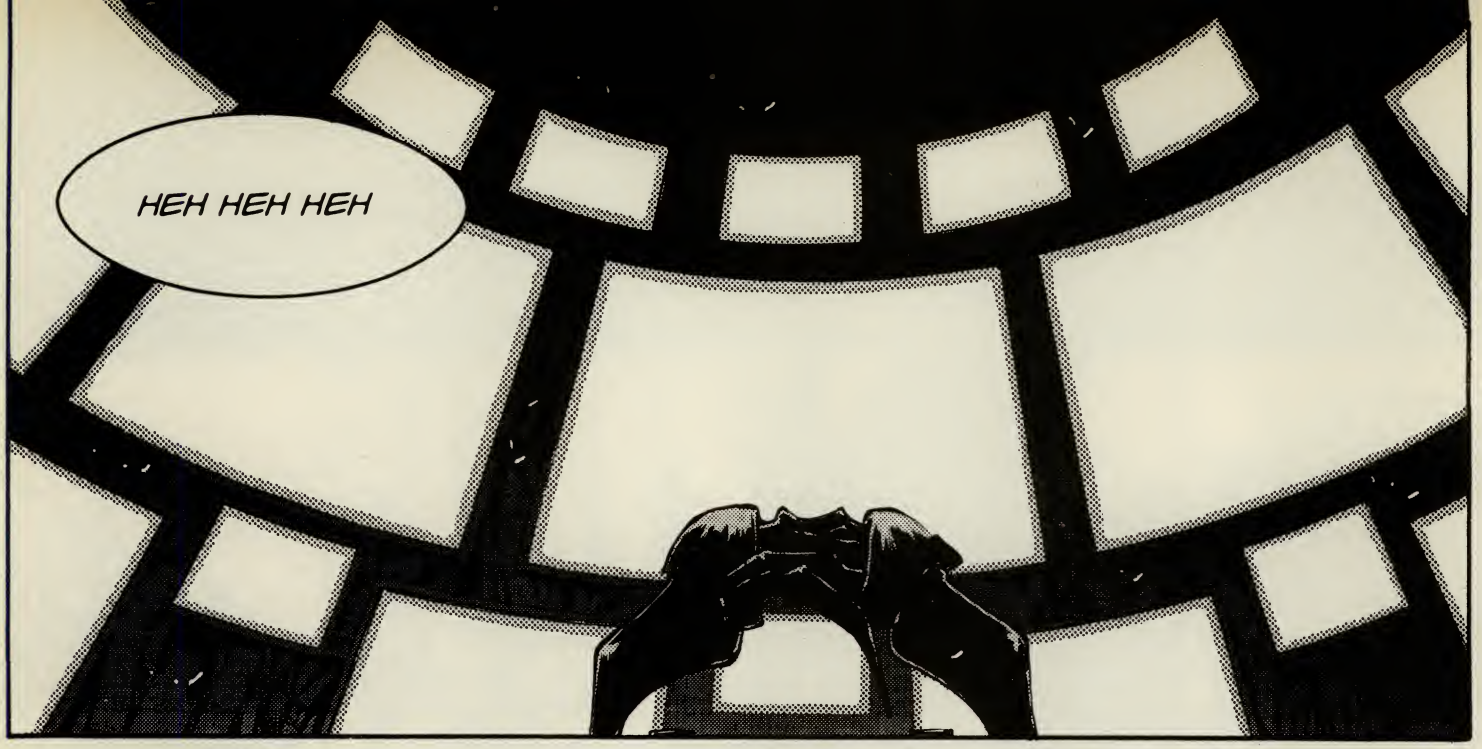
RAZOR WHIRLWIND!

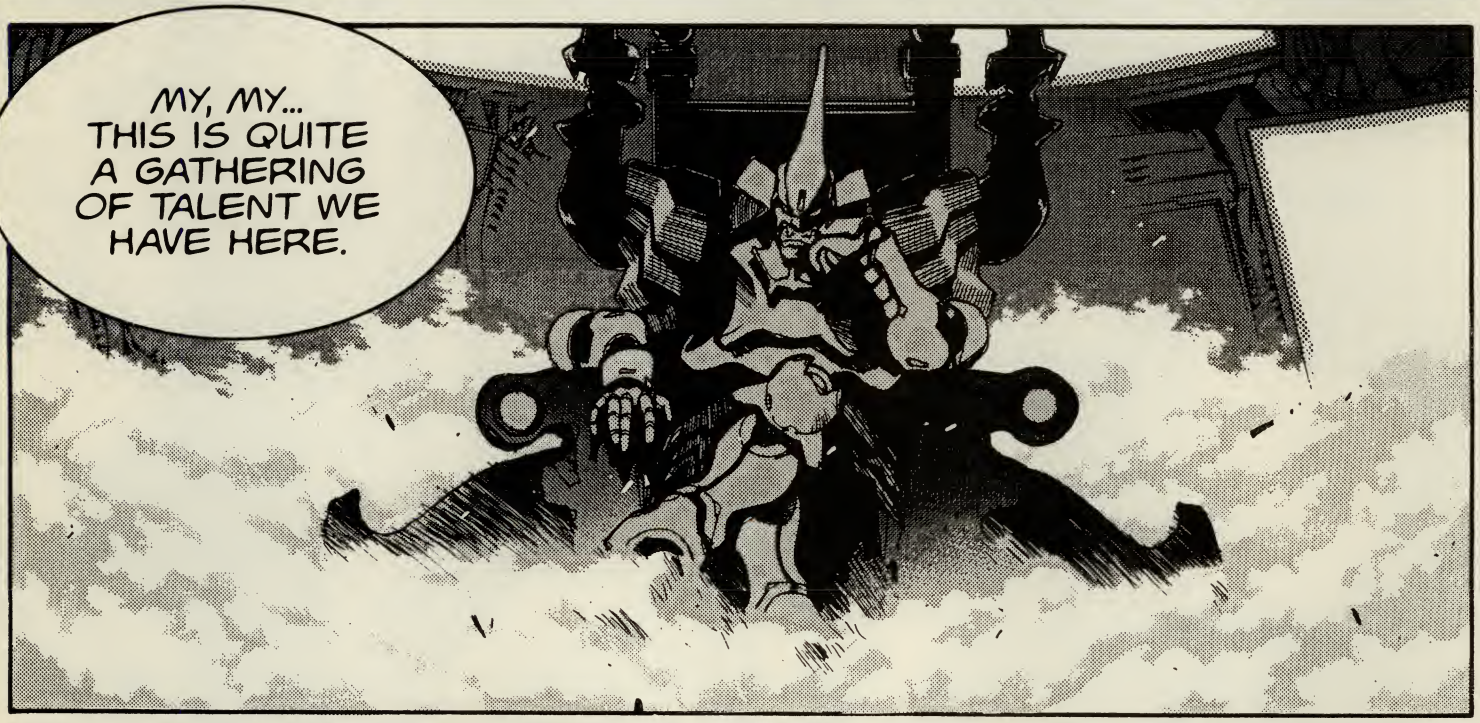

THUD
HAH!
TAP TAP
PIECE OF CAKE!
IF YOU KEEP BEING SO BLOODY RECKLESS, YOUR LUCK'S GONNA RUN OUT, MATE!
OKAY, OKAY, I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL FROM NOW ON.
HAVE YOU FOUND THE GUY WHO KILLED YOUR FATHER YET?
NO...


ANYWAY, I'M RELIEVED TO SEE THAT YOU'RE STILL THE SAME OLD EIJI!
DIMWIT.
I'M NOT GOING TO STAY AT YOUR LEVEL FOREVER, YOU KNOW!
HA HA
LEMME SEE...HUH?
SKKH
SKKH
THIS PLACE LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE...
SKKH
SKKH
OH!
I MADE IT!



THE EIGHT FIGHTERS GATHERED HERE ARE IN FOR THE BATTLE OF THEIR LIVES! IF ONLY THEY KNEW WHAT WAS IN STORE FOR THEM!


HEH HEH HEH


MY, MY... THIS IS QUITE A GATHERING OF TALENT WE HAVE HERE.

I HAVE THE FEELING I'M ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE MORE FUN THAN I'VE HAD IN AGES... HAH HAH HAH!
TO BE CONTINUED IN BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN ON YOUR SONY PLAYSTATION!

Role-playin' in the Streets

by James L. Alsup III

OK...You've thrilled to the adventures of Ken and Ryu in the original ***Street Fighter***. You've helped topple Bison and his Shadowlaw organization in the numerous ***Street Fighter II*** incarnations. You've even had a few knock down drag outs with Sodom and Birdie in ***Street Fighter Alpha***.

But, have you ever wondered how Guile gets his hair to be so spiky? Have you ever wanted to go shopping for a new sports car with Ken? Well, the folks at White Wolf Games have something for you. It's called ***Street Fighter: The Storytelling Game***.

They sent a copy to ***Game On! USA***, and we decided to try it out. We didn't want to give it any old test. I put together a knock-down, drag-out, in-your-face-anime adventure with idol singers, demons from another dimension, and cute little pets. I got a group of guys together during finals week, and we played, with the help of a little pizza and a LOT of caffeine.

I won't bore you with the details of character generation. Suffice it to say, I was liberal with my 3 players. I let them create characters with skill ratings high enough to face the likes of Bison, Vega, Sagat, and Balrog. They chose the names Knight, Balk, and Larson. Knight was a drifting kung-fu fighter, Balk was an intellectual who used the fighting style of Blanka, and Larson was a Muay Thai Kickboxing movie star. These three were Interpol agents charged with protecting a singer, Miss Lynn Apple and her pet Ryo-Oh-P-Chan, from Bison's goons. Bison needed her to activate his new sonic weapon. Our three heroes were her protection, along with Chun Li and Guile.

At the concert, Bison and his henchmen, Vega, Sagat, Balrog, and Zangief, made their move. The fight started in the wings, but quickly spilled onto the stage. Balk, Knight, and Larson quickly eliminated Zangief and Balrog, but had a tougher time against Vega and Sagat. That's when Bison showed up. Our heroes fought valiantly, but the power of the Psycho Crusher proved to be too much for them. Bison and his men took Lynn Apple just as Chun-Li and Guile arrived. However, with the help of Ryo-Oh-P-Chan, they trailed them to a remote part of the desert. Lynn Apple was chained to a large machine. She began to sing the song "Stage Fright." A pentagram formed on the ground, and a large demon rose from it. Unfortunately, Bison was unable to control the beast, and he started attacking everyone. All looked lost until Balk told Lynn Apple to sing her hit "Do you Remember Love?" She did, and the beast was vanquished. Our heroes destroyed the machine, and they all lived happily ever after.

This game took us almost 5 hours to complete. We all had fun, but were very tired at the end. I asked the players if they liked the RPG.

"Yeah," Knight responded. "It was pretty cool."

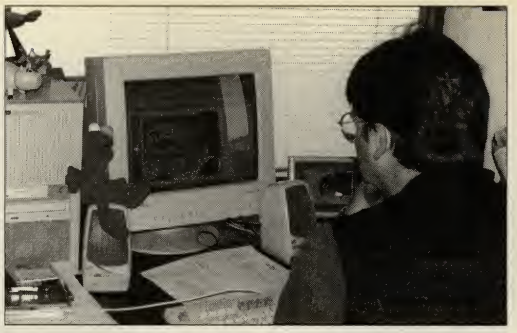
"I thought so, too," Larson added.

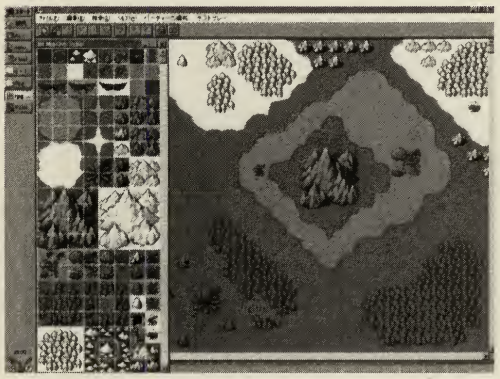
Would they prefer ***Street Fighter: The Storytelling Game*** to the video games?

"Hell no! Are you kidding," Balk added. "I'd take the video game any day."

Street Fighter II characters©Capcom, illustration by Adam Burns

Computer Manga Gaming





RPG Maker

Debut

Console games are the main crossovers from Japan, but at E3 many video game companies were spotted switching to the more stable PC market. With a half-dozen anime-based screen savers, and **rec.arts.anime.games** on Usenet, manga gaming and computing can't be too far apart.

Sega Entertainment: In the (Pentium) Chips

In early May, Sega invited some *Game On! USA* staff to their headquarters in Redwood City, California, to look at their new PC division, Sega Entertainment. There they announced their intent to go into the PC games market—one area where neither Sony nor Nintendo compete.

The company's specialty, of course, will be conversions from the Sega arcade line; other areas intend to be sports and original (mostly family-market) titles. In the Producers' Lounge, Pentium Windows 95 computers (their technological target audience at this point) sat around running early versions of *Daytona USA*, *Virtua Cop*, *Virtua Fighter PC Remix* and the edutainment title *Sonic Schoolhouse. Virtua Cop* (renamed *Virtua City P.D.*) was up and running, and *Virtua Fighter PC Remix* sported a couple of useful features, such as switching from Remix to regular blocky *Virtua Fighter* mode to speed up the frame rate. (*Virtua City P.D.* also reportedly features a 'stealth mode' where you can shell out to a fake window to fool your boss.) For sports titles, *World Series Baseball* was the first in the lineup. After *Daytona USA* and *Sega Rally*, *Manx TT*, the new arcade bike game, will be converted.

To take advantage of PC features, the games run in sizable windows, and Sega hopes to use network play, although only *Daytona USA* supports it at this point. What about the controls? *Virtua City P.D.* uses the mouse, and *Virtua Fighter PC Remix* uses the numeric keypad. Reputedly the Sega AM2 team itself is overseeing the PC conversions in Japan.

Sega's PC plans will be in full force by the end of the year. *Virtua Fighter PC Remix* was originally shipped as a pack-in with a 3D accelerator, but will be available as a stand alone without acceleration in September. Most of the other titles will follow in the fourth quarter of 1996.

Media City

E3 attracts companies from around the world, and buried off in the obscure North Hall, was the Japan Multimedia Software Association (JMSA). *Game On! USA* met ASCII, Ask Kodansha, Denon Active Media, Image Works, Tokyo Broadcasting Company and a host of other companies—nine total—that had gathered under one banner to try to attract U.S. publishers and marketers. Most demonstrated CD-ROM encyclopedias and the like, but there *were* some games. **ASCII** showed off their title *RPG Maker*, a PC and Super Famicom which lets you make your own Square- or Enix-style fantasy worlds. **Denon Active Media** showed off *The Legend of Eden 2*, an 8-stage vertical shooter for Windows '95. **Image Works** showed a tape of various simulation games, such as *Marriage* and *Graduation*, which have in their words "been selling like hotcakes" in Japan. JMSA reminded us that there *is* an interesting PC market in Japan. Check them out on the Web at http://www.japanonline.com/jmsa.html.

Screen Savers, Anime Guides and Cult Hits

Vanguard Media continues the American-anime-application market with its *Anime HyperGuide*, a CD-ROM series with each "volume" featuring a different anime film. The HyperGuides are basically anime databases with downloadable screen shots, character sketches, storyboards, scripts, soundtracks, interviews and movie footage. Whether you like them depends probably on whether you like the anime itself; the first volume is *Project A-Ko*, the second is *Farewell Yamato*. Vanguard's other title, *Kerr-Pow!*, a computer comics maker with scads of clip art, apparently has an "anime" mode, but *Game On! USA* hasn't seen it yet.

As more anime-based computer games, of American or Japanese origin, come out, we'll keep an eye on them. Now if only your editors could find that *Bubblegum Crisis* WAD for *Doom*... 96

RPG Maker ©ASCII, Debut ©Image Works

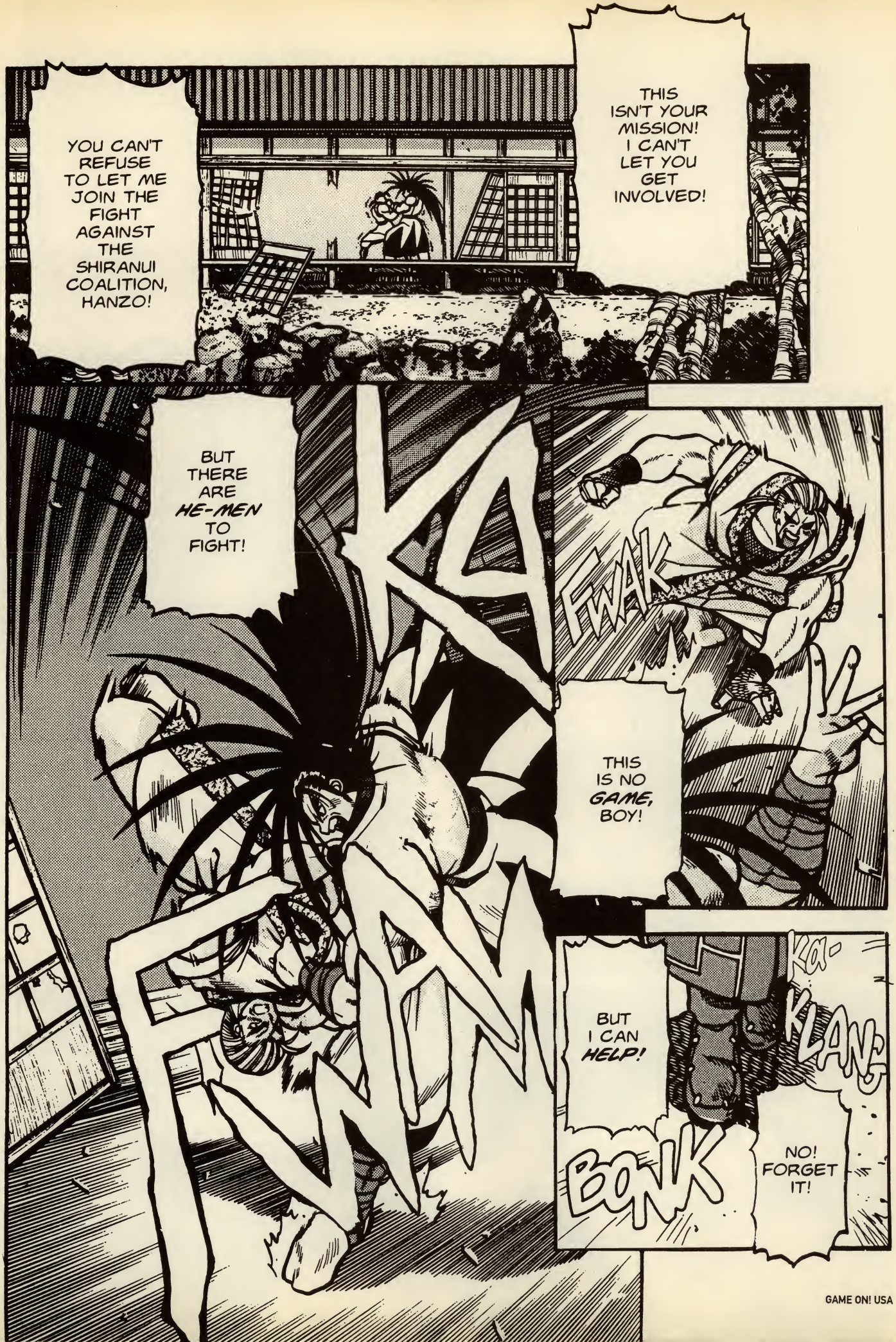
BATTLE FOUR: HELLFIRE

Story by **KYOICHI NANATSUKI**
Art by **YUKI MIYOSHI**
English Adaptation by **FRED BURKE & KAORU HOSAKA**
Lettering & Touch-up by **MARY KELLEHER**

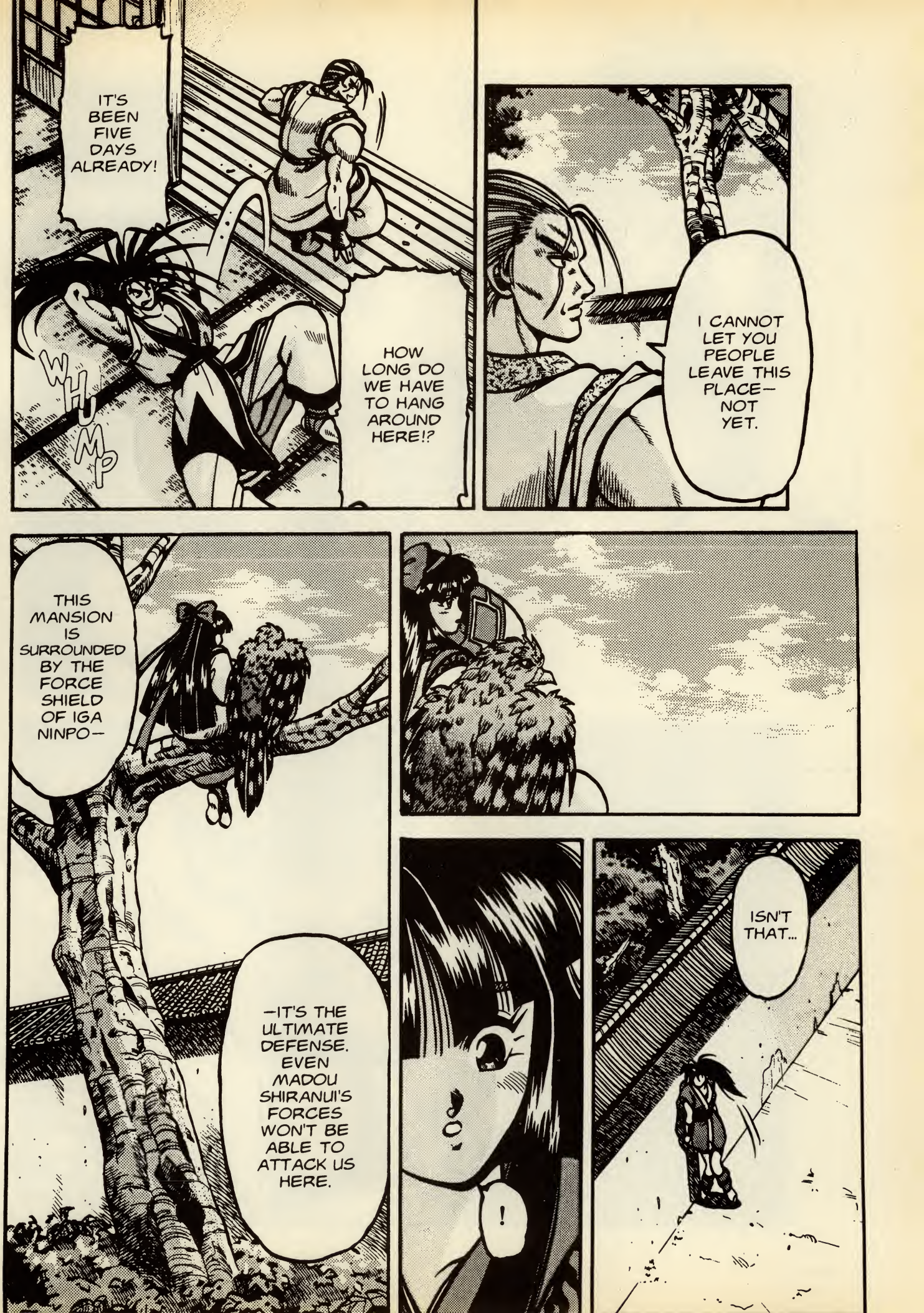
©SNK 1993

For the purposes of publication in English, the artwork in this publication is in reverse from the original Japanese version.

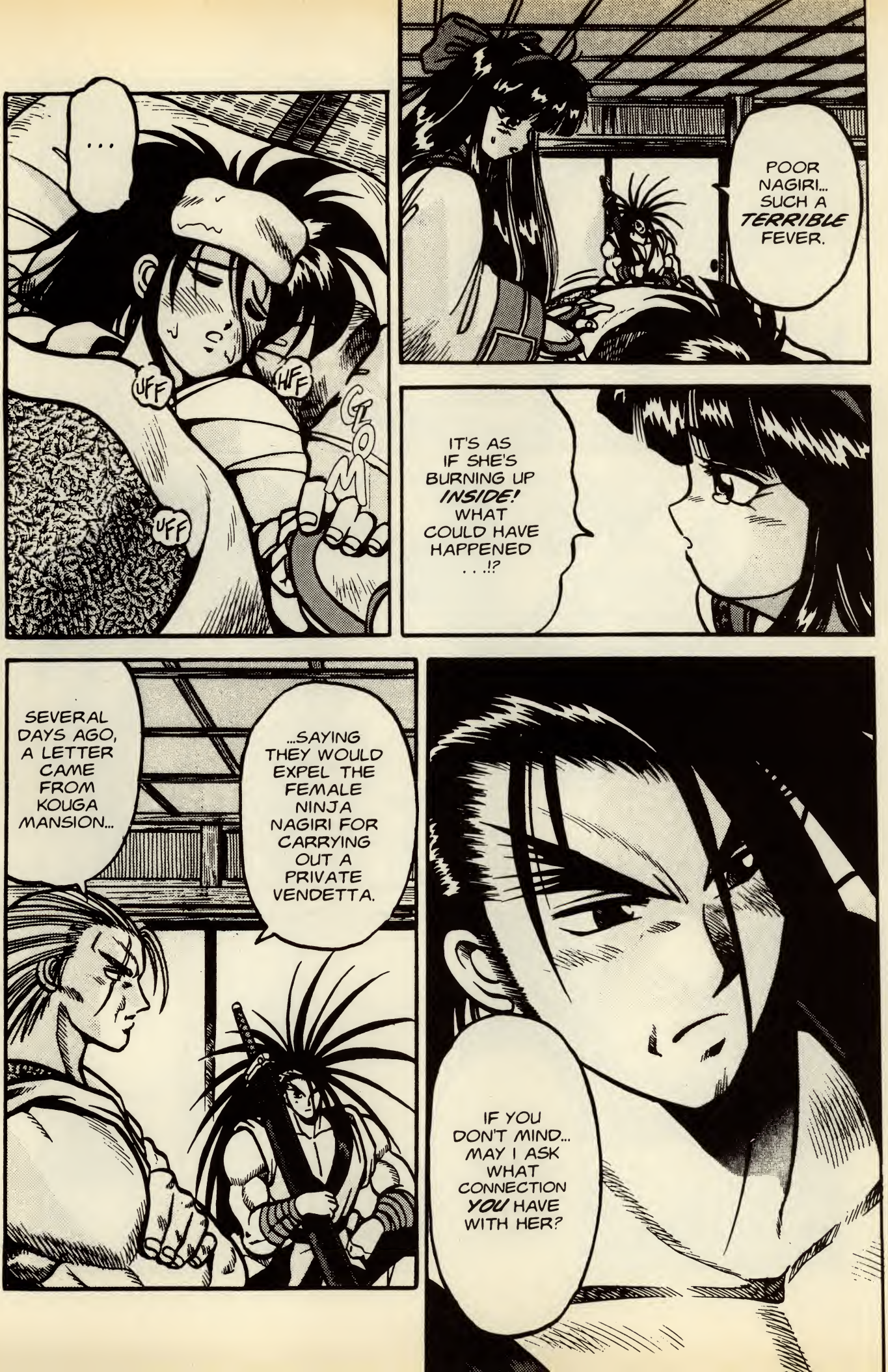
The Kouji-machi Gate to Edo Castle — also known as the GATE OF HANZO.
Behind these walls is the stronghold of the Iga Clan, who guard Edo Castle and direct government espionage. In short, this is the house of HATTORI HANZO.
KRA-
KRESH
HOW CAN YOU BE SO PIG-HEADED ?
STOP BUTTING IN, HAOH-MARU!!

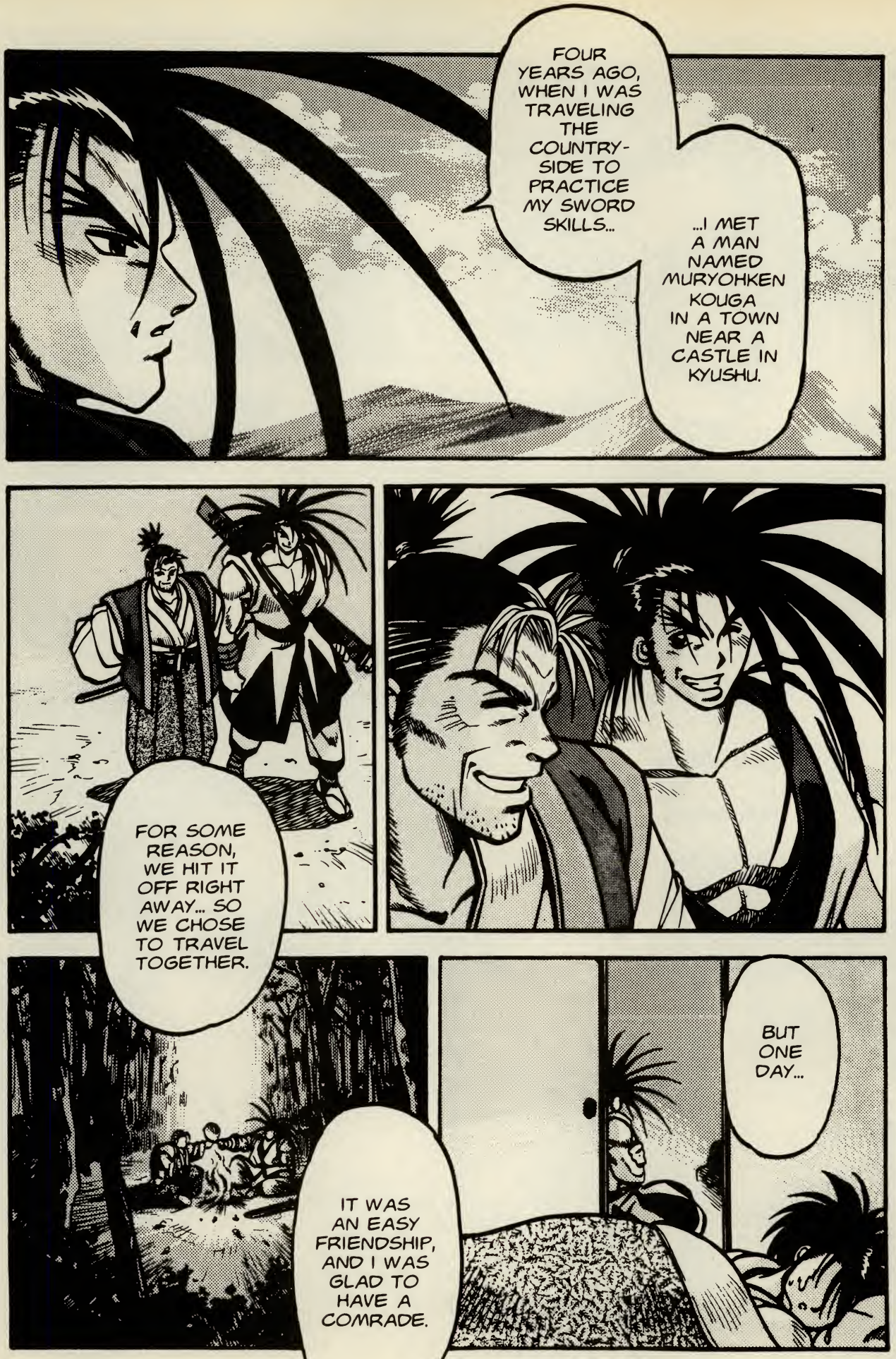

YOU CAN'T REFUSE TO LET ME JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SHIRANUI COALITION, HANZO!
THIS ISN'T YOUR MISSION! I CAN'T LET YOU GET INVOLVED!
BUT THERE ARE HE-MEN TO FIGHT!
KA-
FWAK
THIS IS NO GAME, BOY!
BUT I CAN HELP!
KA-
KLANG
BONK
NO! FORGET IT!

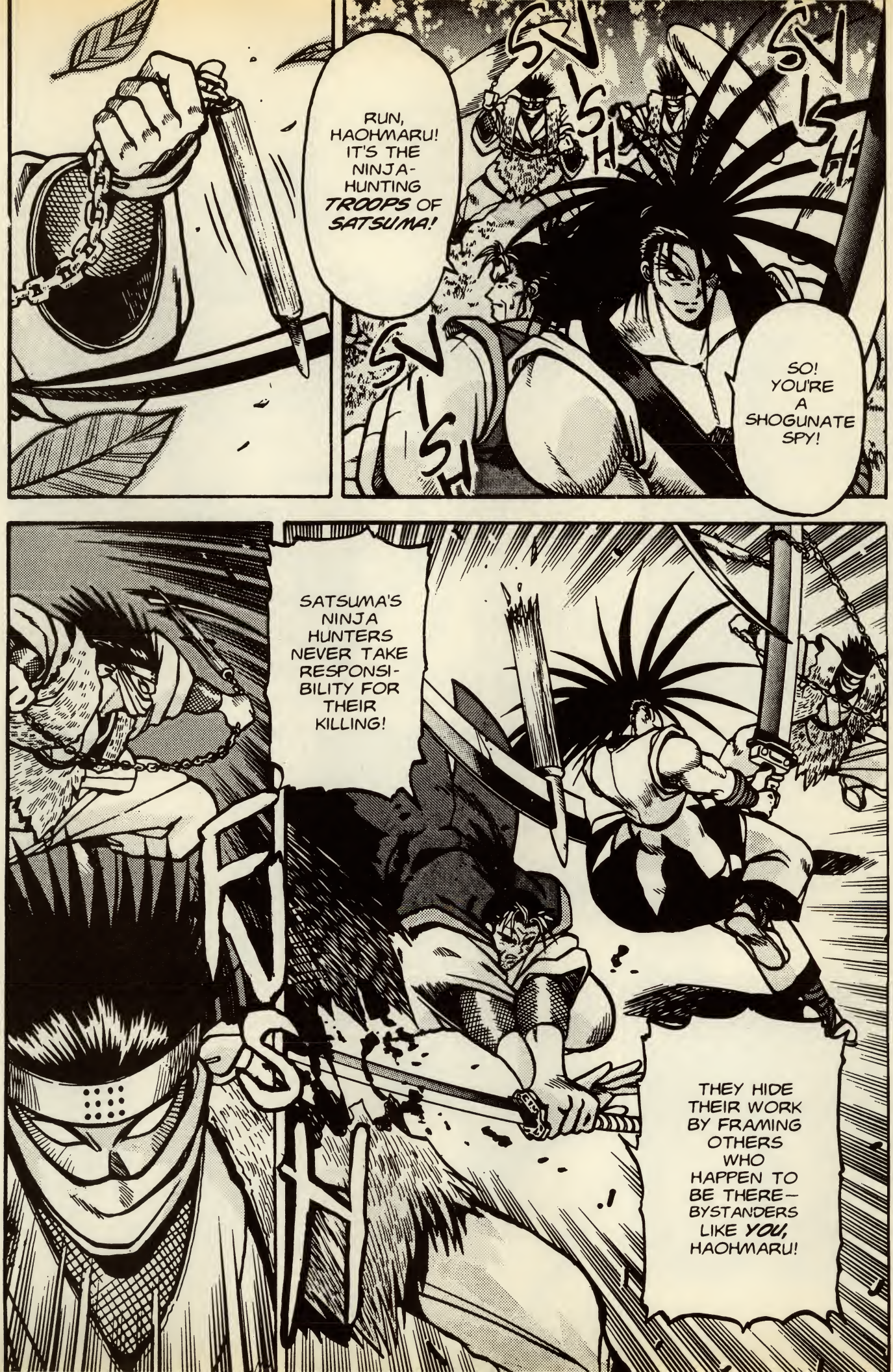
CUT IT OUT, YOU GUYS!
FWAP
PHEW
...
FWP
LET'S GO, MAMAHAHA! WE'LL PLAY IN THE BACK-YARD!


IT'S BEEN FIVE DAYS ALREADY!
WHUMP
HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO HANG AROUND HERE!?
I CANNOT LET YOU PEOPLE LEAVE THIS PLACE— NOT YET.
THIS MANSION IS SURROUNDED BY THE FORCE SHIELD OF IGA NINPO—
—IT'S THE ULTIMATE DEFENSE. EVEN MADOU SHIRANUI'S FORCES WON'T BE ABLE TO ATTACK US HERE.
!
ISN'T THAT...

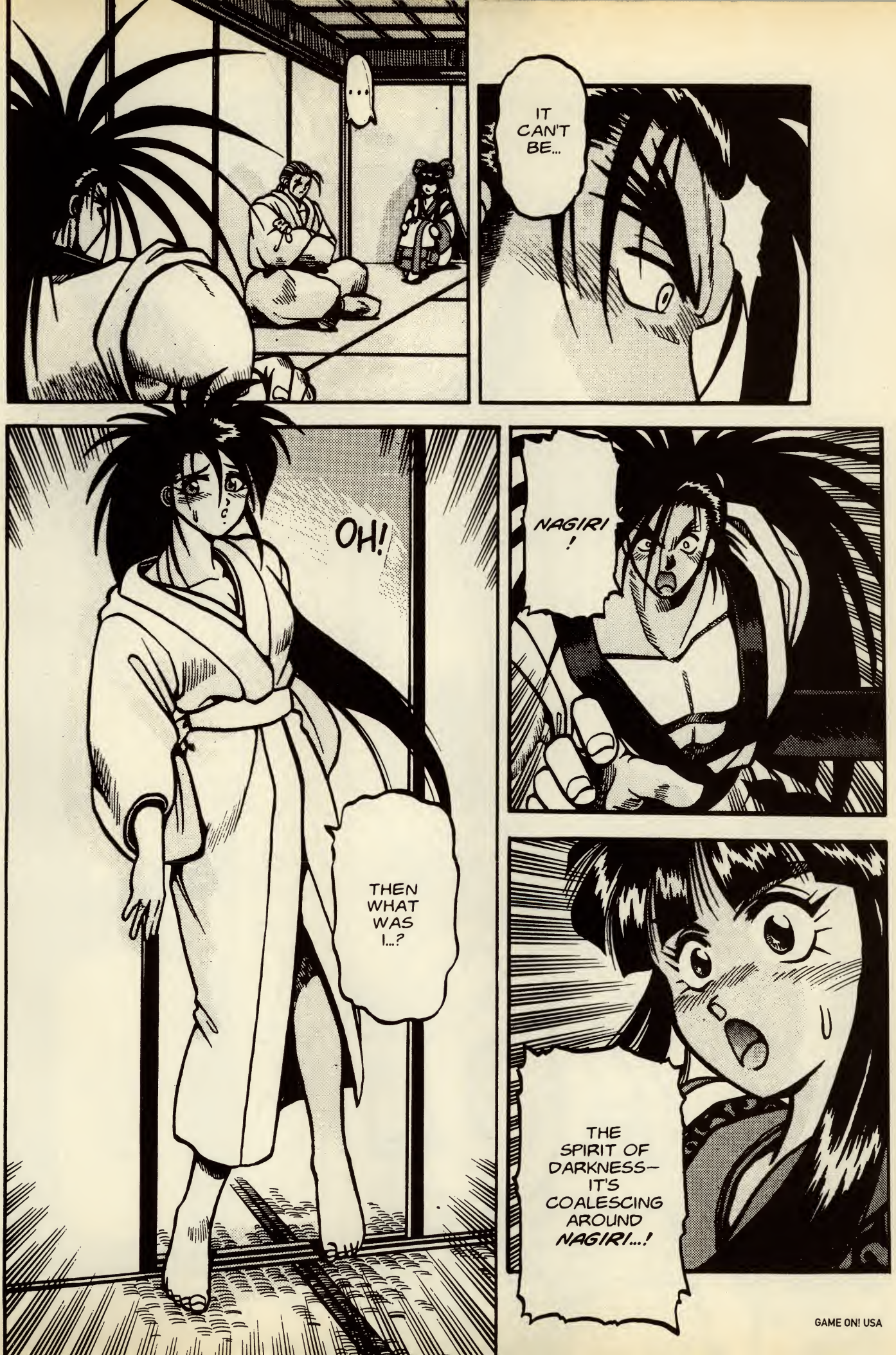
SHLUMP
HAOH-MARU!
NAGIRI!?
HFF
UFF
...SO HOT... H-HELP...
FATHER...
AH!


POOR NAGIRI... SUCH A TERRIBLE FEVER.
...
UFF
HFF
GLOM
UFF
IT'S AS IF SHE'S BURNING UP INSIDE! WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED . . .!?
SEVERAL DAYS AGO, A LETTER CAME FROM KOUGA MANSION...
...SAYING THEY WOULD EXPEL THE FEMALE NINJA NAGIRI FOR CARRYING OUT A PRIVATE VENDETTA.
IF YOU DON'T MIND... MAY I ASK WHAT CONNECTION YOU HAVE WITH HER?

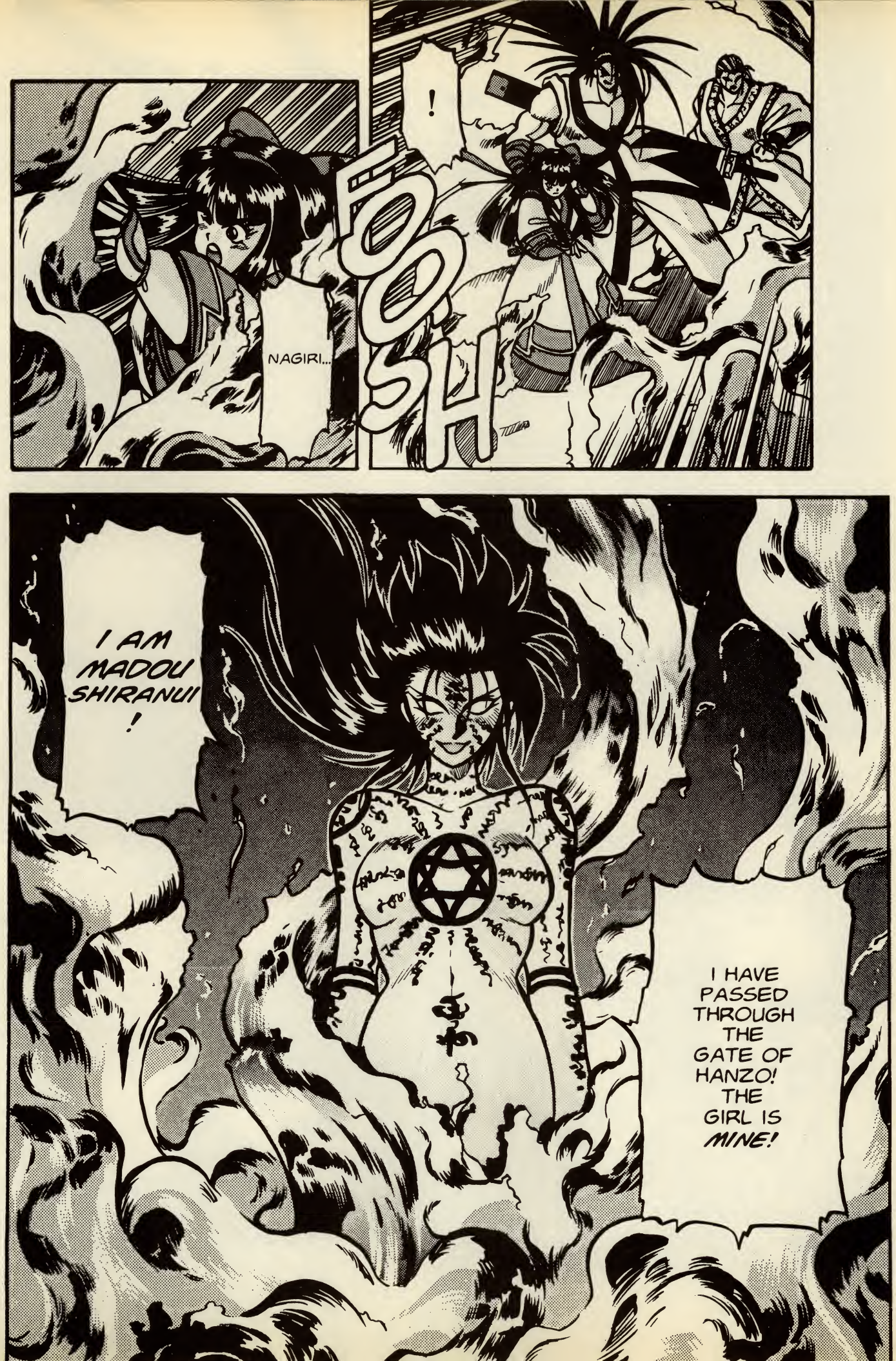

FOUR YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS TRAVELING THE COUNTRY-SIDE TO PRACTICE MY SWORD SKILLS...
...I MET A MAN NAMED MURYOHKEN KOUGA IN A TOWN NEAR A CASTLE IN KYUSHU.
FOR SOME REASON, WE HIT IT OFF RIGHT AWAY... SO WE CHOSE TO TRAVEL TOGETHER.
BUT ONE DAY...
IT WAS AN EASY FRIENDSHIP, AND I WAS GLAD TO HAVE A COMRADE.

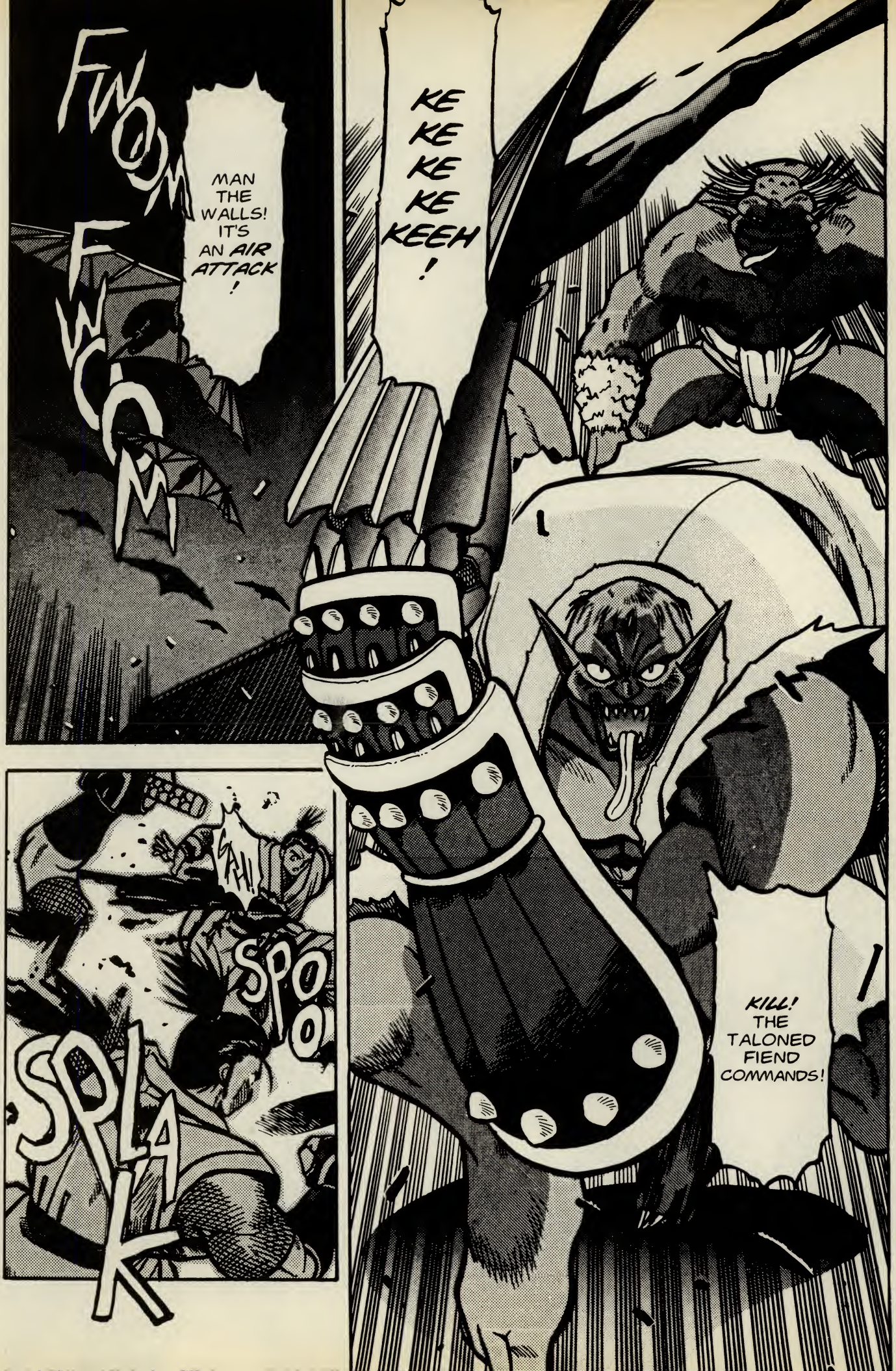

RUN, HAOHMARU! IT'S THE NINJA-HUNTING TROOPS OF SATSUMA!
SVISH
SVISH
SVISH
SO! YOU'RE A SHOGUNATE SPY!
SATSUMA'S NINJA HUNTERS NEVER TAKE RESPONSI-BILITY FOR THEIR KILLING!
FISH
THEY HIDE THEIR WORK BY FRAMING OTHERS WHO HAPPEN TO BE THERE— BYSTANDERS LIKE YOU, HAOHMARU!

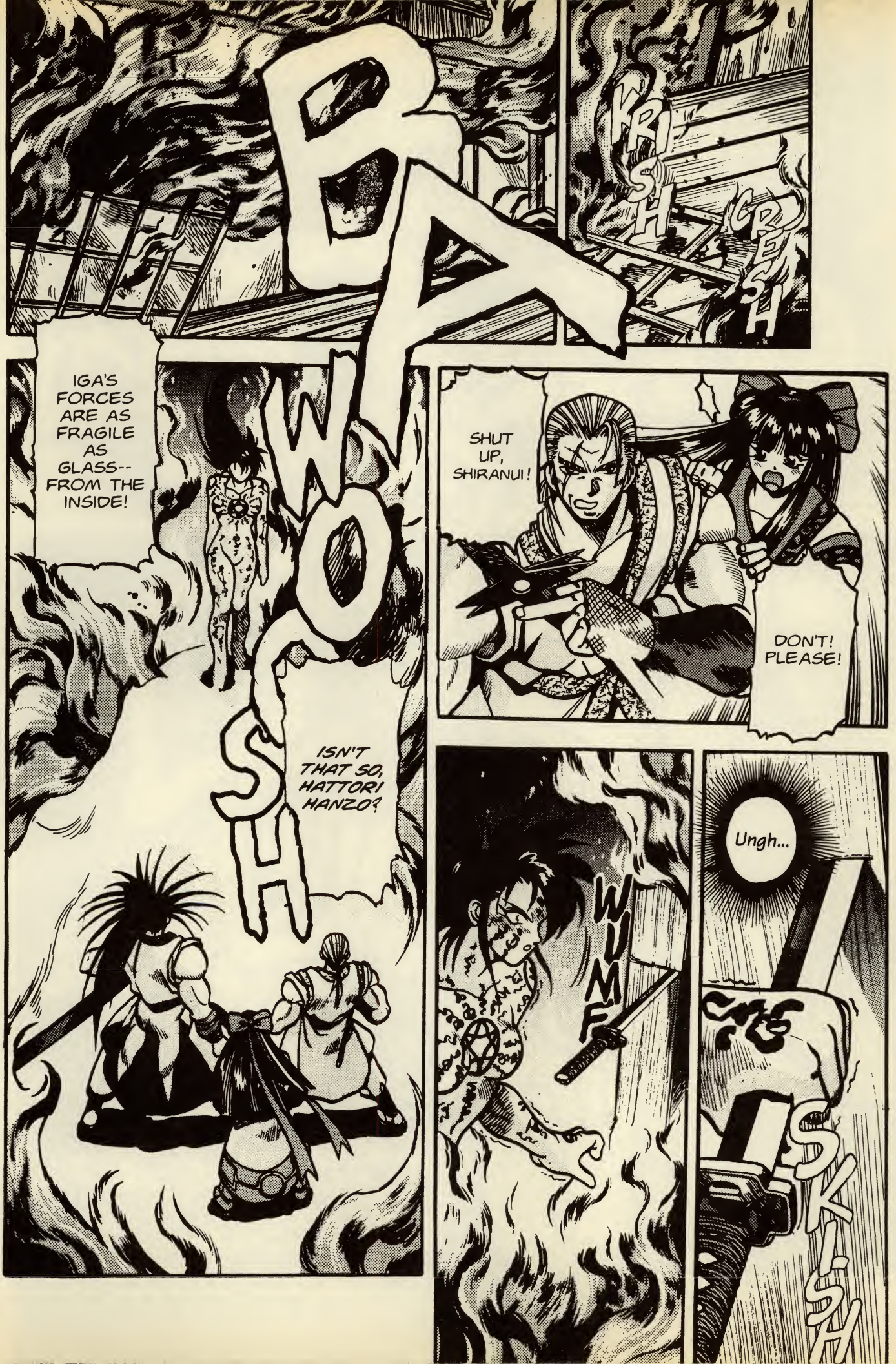
S-SORRY... I GOT YOU INTO TROUBLE...
DON'T SPEAK! A DOCTOR—
NOT A NINJA, BUT A FREE WOMAN, BLOOMING LIKE A WILD-FLOWER IN A MEADOW...
A FLOWER... MY DAUGHTER... NAGIRI.
SPLHH
LISTEN! MY DAUGHTER—
UFF
HFF
—DON'T LET HER BECOME A NINJA LIKE ME, A SPY IN FOREIGN LANDS...
N-NOT THE LAST WORDS ONE EXPECTS... FROM A NINJA...
UFF
HFF
NO, MURY-OHKEN!
YOU STUPID—! YOU CAN'T DIE LIKE THIS!

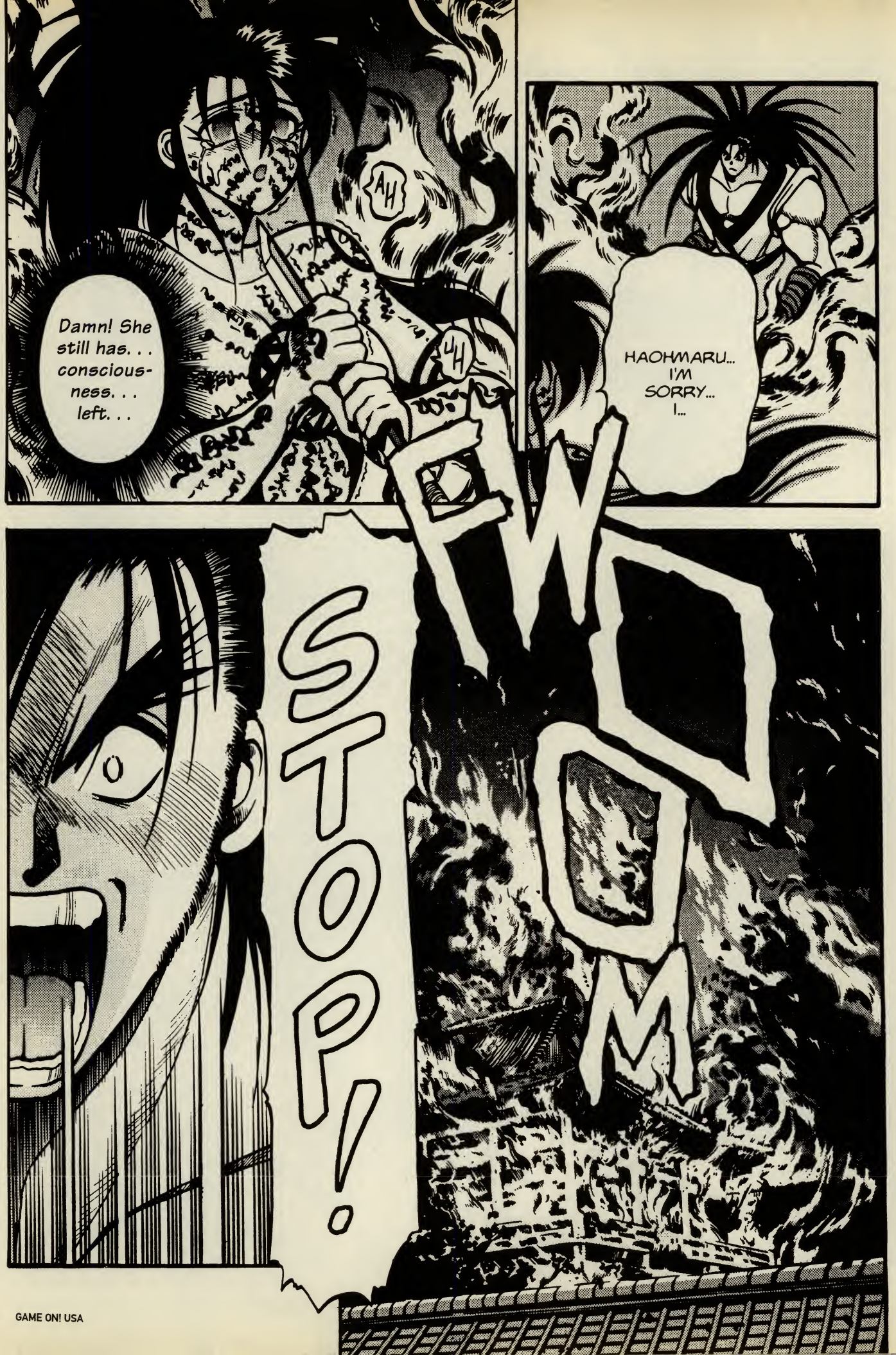

...
IT CAN'T BE...
NAGIRI!
OH!
THEN WHAT WAS I...?
THE SPIRIT OF DARKNESS— IT'S COALESCING AROUND NAGIRI...!

PLEASE FORGIVE ME... HAOH-MARU...
SO HOT...
FWASH!
AAAAGGGH!
GET AWAY, HAOHMARU! STAY AWAY FROM ME!


!
FOOSH
NAGIRI...
I AM MADOU SHIRANUI !
I HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE GATE OF HANZO! THE GIRL IS MINE!


FWOM FWOM
MAN THE WALLS! IT'S AN AIR ATTACK!
KE KE KE KE KEEH!
KILL! THE TALONED FIEND COMMANDS!
SAH!
SPOO
SPLAK


KRISH
CRESH
BA
WOOSH
IGA'S FORCES ARE AS FRAGILE AS GLASS-- FROM THE INSIDE!
ISN'T THAT SO, HATTORI HANZO?
SHUT UP, SHIRANUI!
DON'T! PLEASE!
WUMF
Ungh...
SKISH

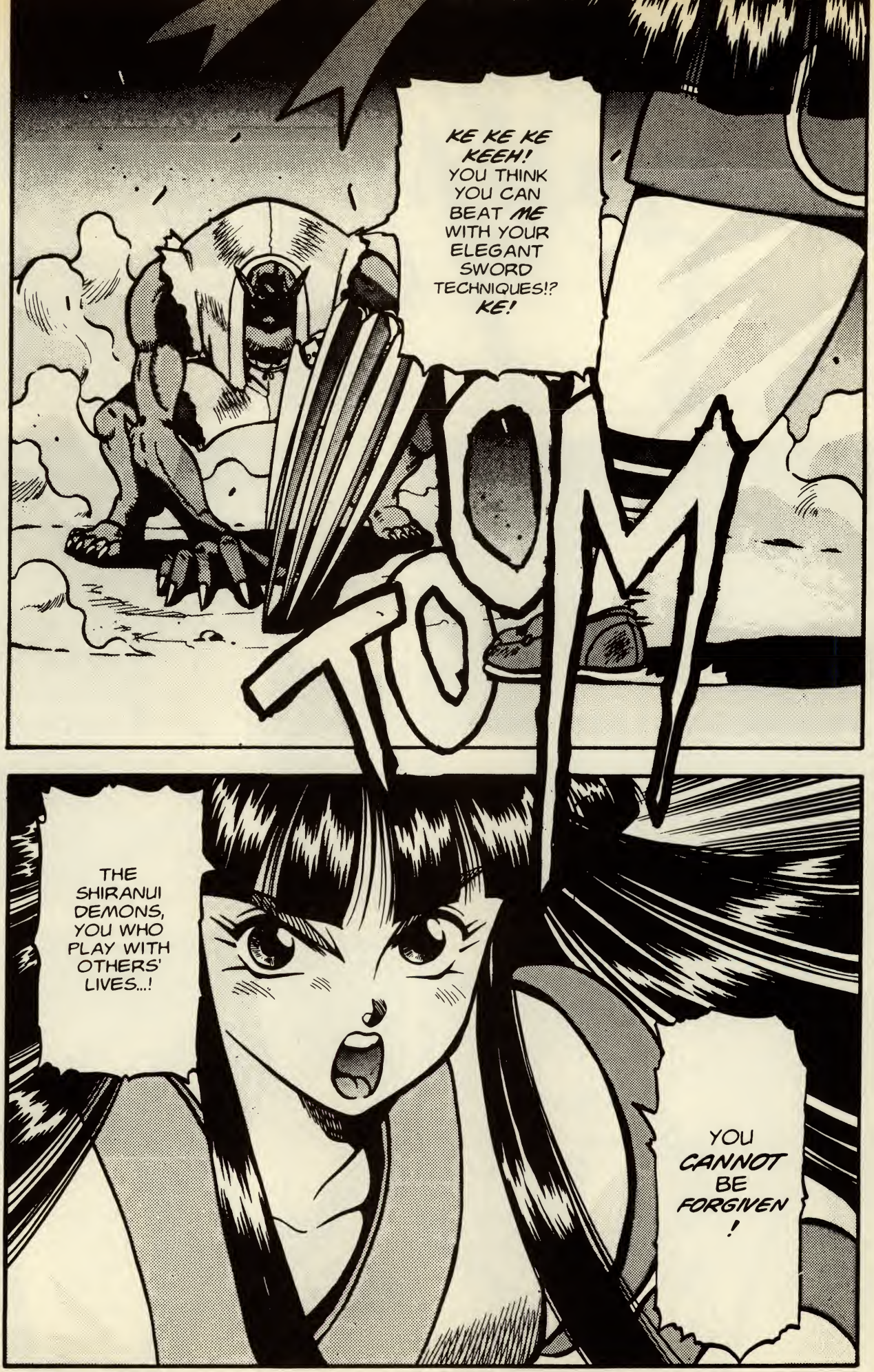

Damn! She still has. . . consciousness. . . left. . .
AH
UH
HAOHMARU... I'M SORRY... I...
KWOOM
STOP!

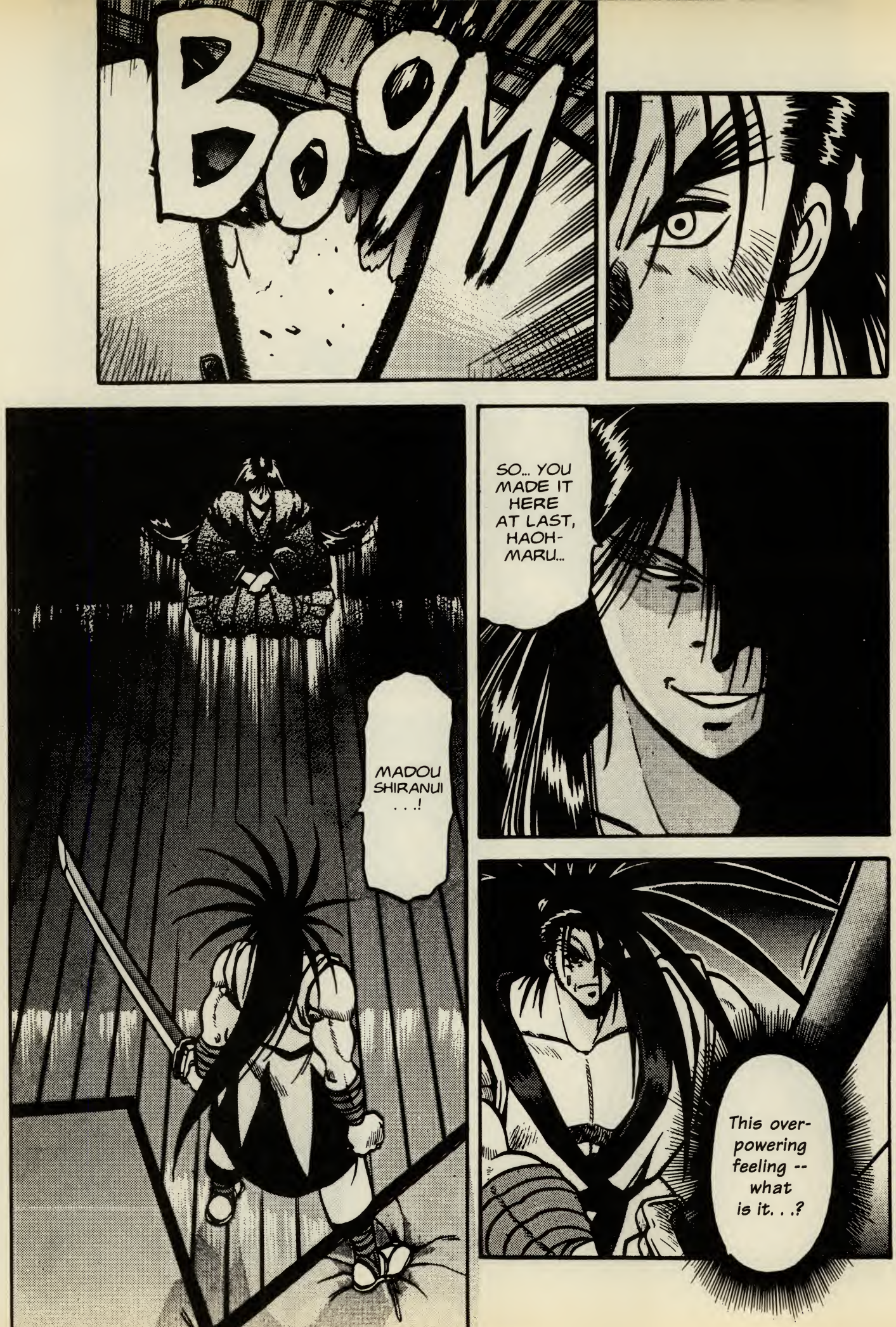
KE KE KE KE KEEH!
HATTORI HANZO! WE *HAVE* THE WRITTEN OATH BACK! KE, KE, KE!

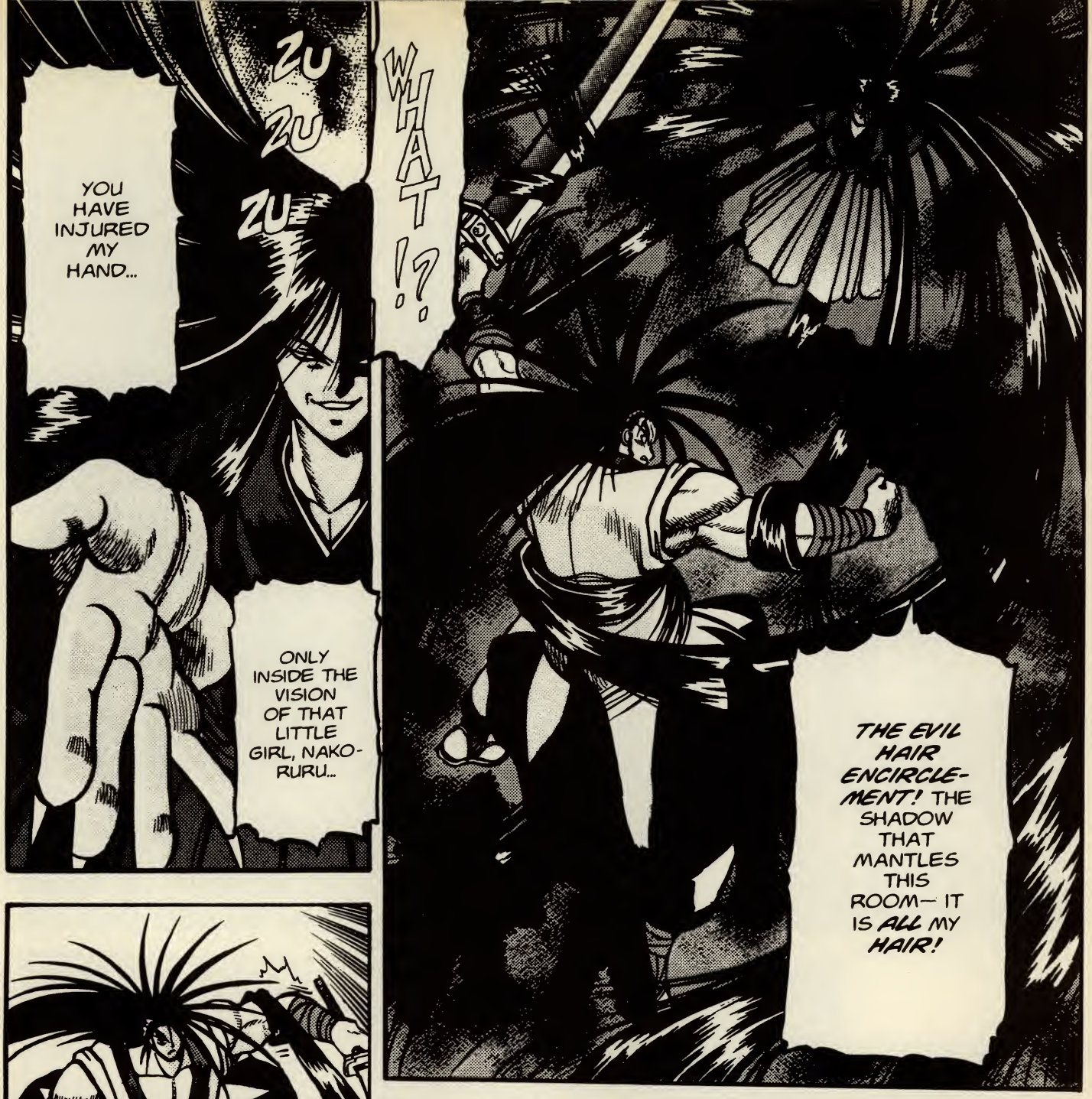
HAOH-MARU! LET'S GO!
MADOU SHIRANUI! I WILL KILL YOU MYSELF! I SWEAR!
YEAH...
FX
They plan to take the scroll to Shiranui Mansion, on Kijin Point!
TMP
TMP
HAI-YA!

The spirit of darkness I followed from Kamui Kotan. . . it's getting stronger!
We're almost there. . . The NUCLEUS of the dark power that would destroy our world is at hand. . .
THIS IS THE SHIRANUI STRONG-HOLD! THIS NIGHTMARE MUST END—
AYE!
KA-FLOOM
ANNIHILATE THEM!

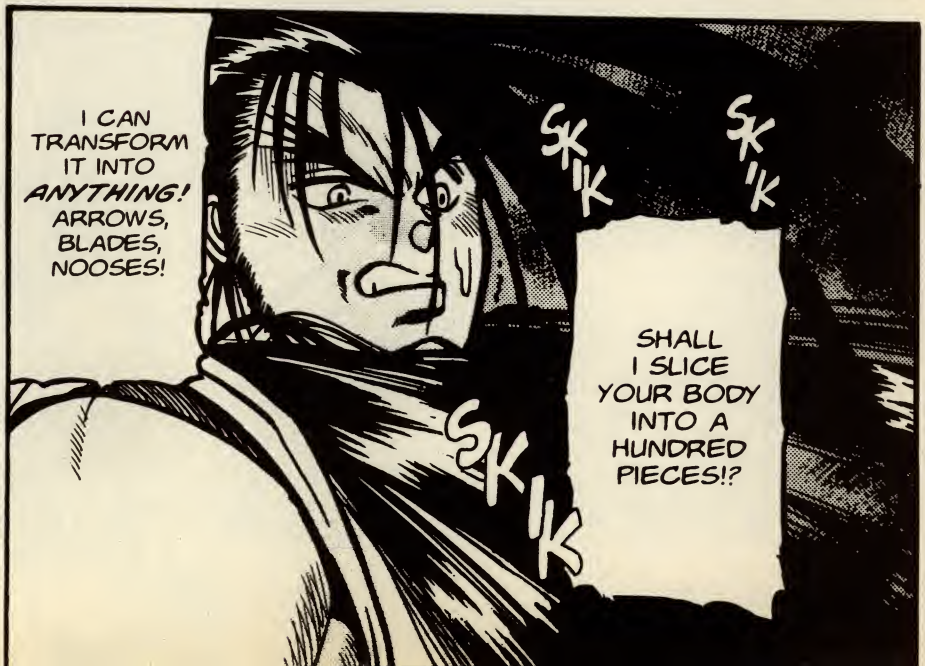
GET OUT OF MY WAY — OR FACE MY FURY!
SLA
MASH
I WON'T LET YOU GO ANY FURTHER! KE, KE!
KLK
SHK
TICK
HAOH-MARU! I'LL TAKE THIS ONE!
SHASH
YOU'RE GOING TO FIGHT ME, GEN-AN!


KE KE KE KEEH! YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME WITH YOUR ELEGANT SWORD TECHNIQUES!? KE!
TOM
THE SHIRANUI DEMONS, YOU WHO PLAY WITH OTHERS' LIVES...!
YOU CANNOT BE FORGIVEN!


BOOM
SO... YOU MADE IT HERE AT LAST, HAOH-MARU...
MADOU SHIRANUI . . .!
This over-powering feeling -- what is it. . .?

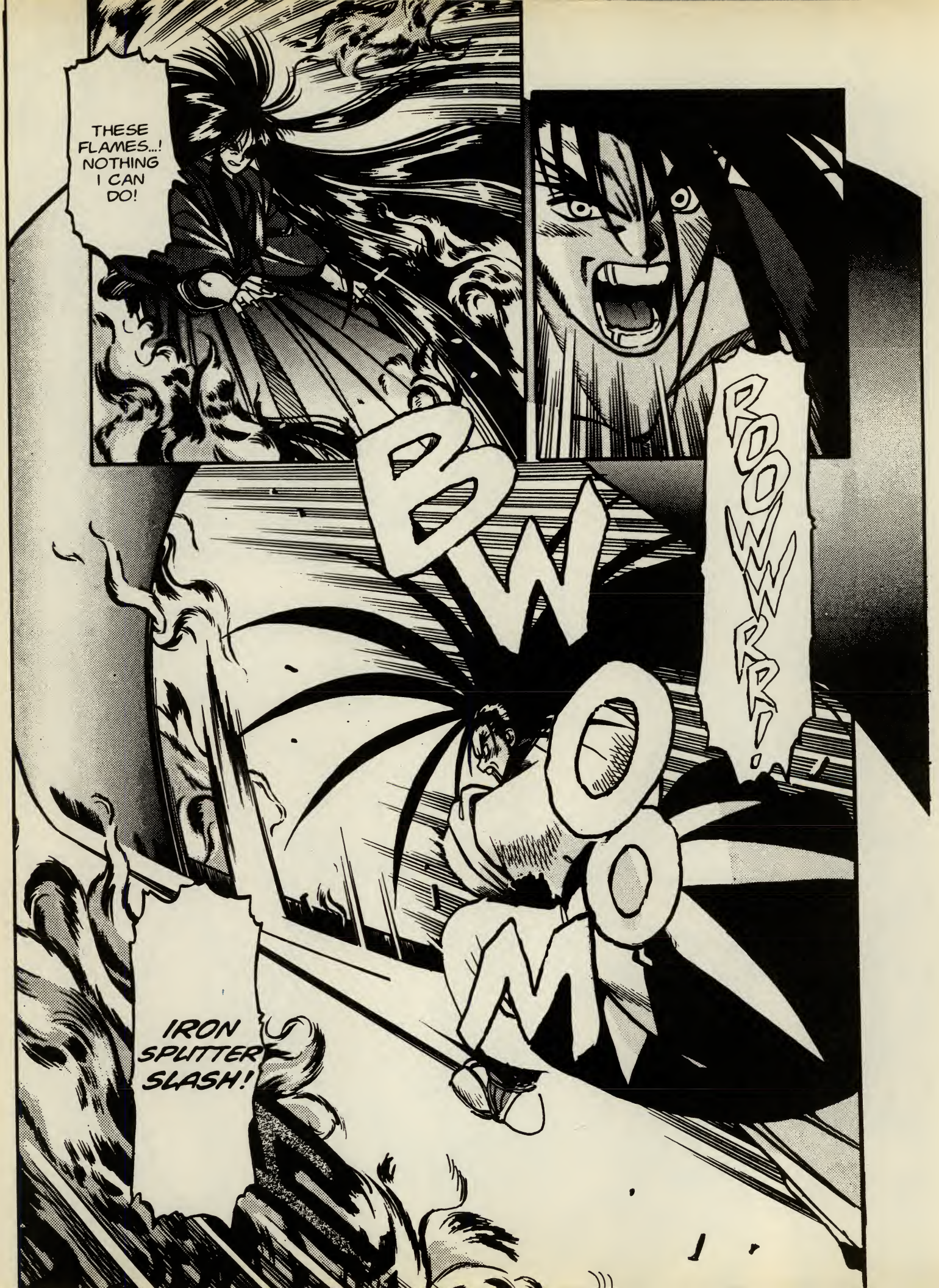

ZU
ZU
ZU
YOU HAVE INJURED MY HAND...
ONLY INSIDE THE VISION OF THAT LITTLE GIRL, NAKO-RURU...
WHAT!?
THE EVIL HAIR ENCIRCLE-MENT! THE SHADOW THAT MANTLES THIS ROOM— IT IS ALL MY HAIR!

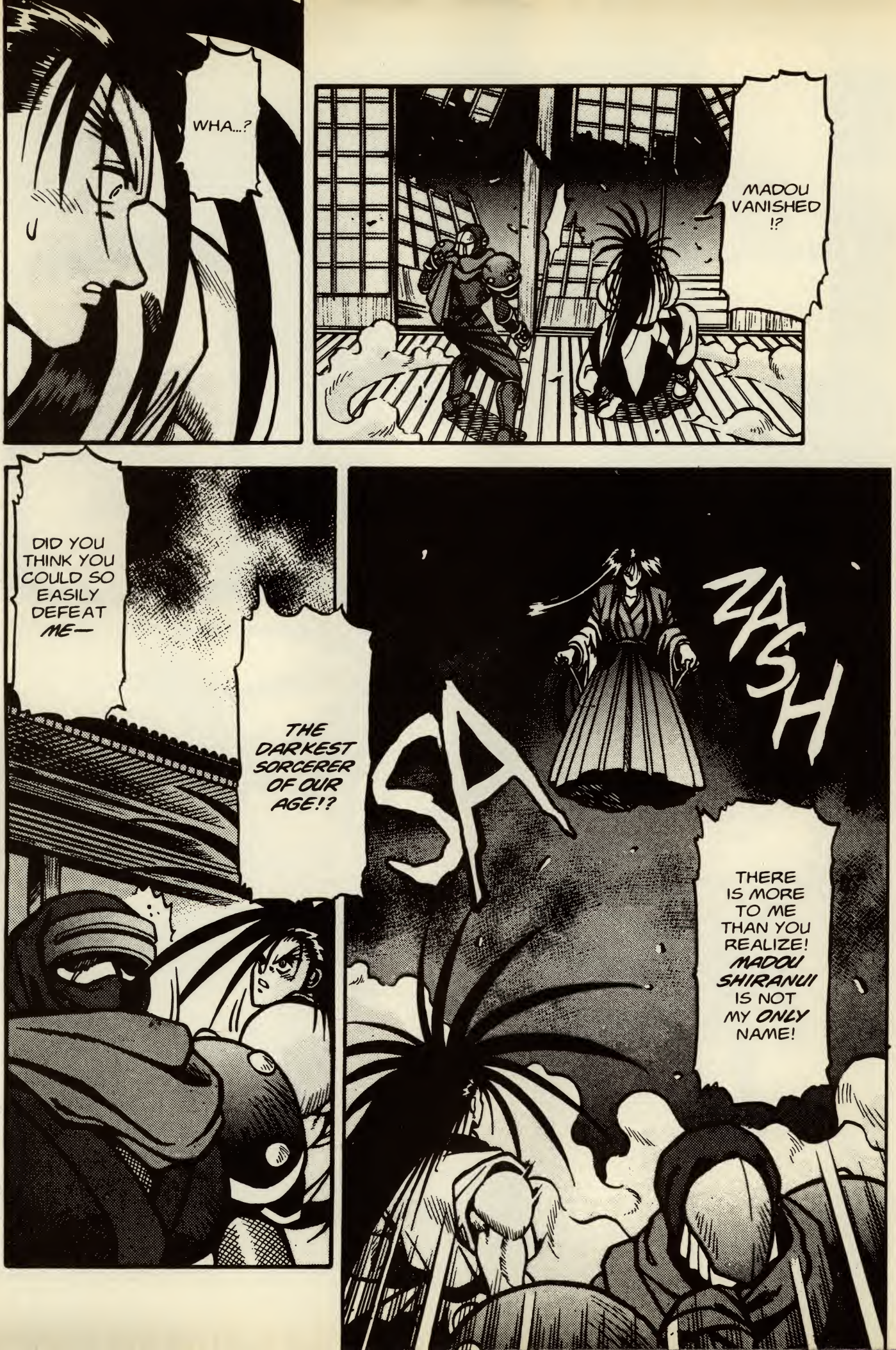
ZWOOM


I CAN TRANSFORM IT INTO ANYTHING! ARROWS, BLADES, NOOSES!
SKIK
SKIK
SKIK
SHALL I SLICE YOUR BODY INTO A HUNDRED PIECES!?

SNIK
HANZO !
SHISH
TASH!
HAOH-MARU, CREATE A WHIRL-WIND!
KA-FWAM
CHA-
NINJA DRAGON FIRE!
FWOOM

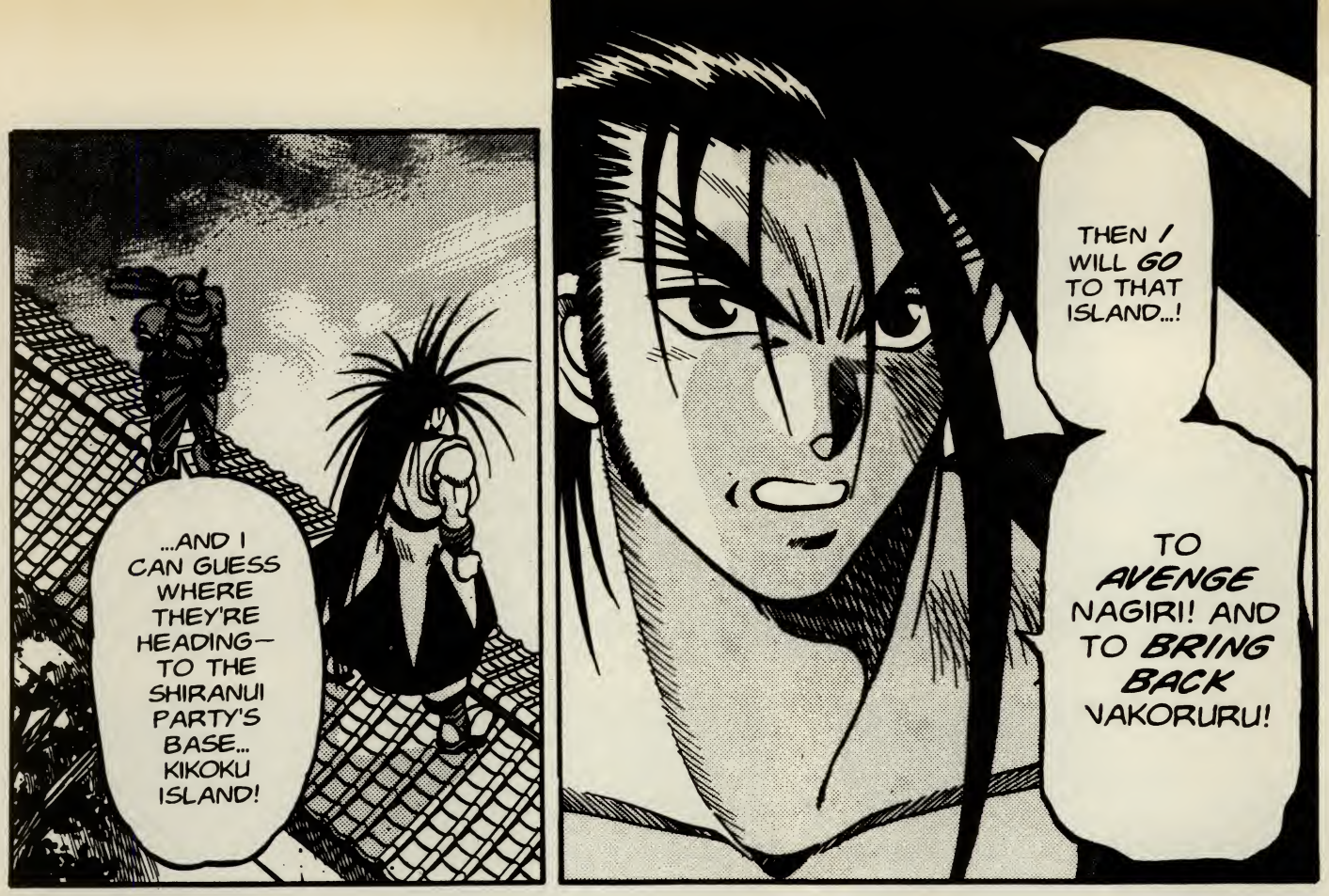
CYCLONE SLASH !
WOLF


THESE FLAMES...! NOTHING I CAN DO!
ROOWRR!
BOWOOM
IRON SPLITTER SLASH!


WHA...?
MADOU VANISHED !?
DID YOU THINK YOU COULD SO EASILY DEFEAT ME—
THE DARKEST SORCERER OF OUR AGE!?
SA
ZASH
THERE IS MORE TO ME THAN YOU REALIZE! MADOU SHIRANUI IS NOT MY ONLY NAME!

I HAVE TAKEN THE FORM OF THE DEVIL AMBROSIA-
-BUT I AM ALSO CALLED YUI MINBUNOSUKE SHOSETSU! I HAVE COME FROM THE DARK KINGDOM MAKAI TO FINALLY REALIZE MY DREAM!
IT CAN'T BE! YUI SHOSETSU WAS A MILITARY SCHOLAR! HE SCHEMED TO OVER-THROW THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE A CENTURY AGO!
KE KE KE, HAOHMARU! LOOKY HERE! I'M GONNA TAKE YOUR GIRL!
TUMP

NAKO-
RURU
!
THSH
KE
KE
KE
KE
!
FWOOSH
DAMN!
MADOU...
I MEAN—
SHOSETSU...
HE EVEN
PREPARED
A SHIP...


...AND I CAN GUESS WHERE THEY'RE HEADING— TO THE SHIRANUI PARTY'S BASE... KIKOKU ISLAND!
THEN I WILL GO TO THAT ISLAND...!
TO AVENGE NAGIRI! AND TO BRING BACK YAKORURU!

SHAFOSH
JUST YOU WAIT, YUI SHOSETSU! I'LL CHASE YOU TO THE DEPTHS OF HELL!
I, HAOHMARU, WILL DESTROY YOU!
TO BE CONTINUED...

Arcade

Street Fighter Alpha 2
Play as the Evil Ryu!

The first hidden characters in ***Street Fighter Alpha 2*** have been found! To select the infamous Evil Ryu follow these instructions:

1. Go to the character selection screen. 2. Go to Ryu and press and hold the Start button for one second. 3. Release the start button and pass through Adon (right). 4. Now go to Akuma (Up). 5. Back to Adon (Down). 6. And finally back to Ryu (Left). 7. Press and hold Start and press any two Punch or Kick buttons to select his color. You will notice that Ryu's skin color is slightly darker than normal.

Evil Ryu's special moves differ from his normal self:

Fireball ↓ ↘ → + Punch

Dragon Punch → ↓ ↘ + Punch

Hurricane Kick ↓ ↙ ← + Kick

Spin Kick → + Forward Kick

Overhead Punch → + Strong Punch

Teleport → ↓ ↘ + all three Punch or Kick buttons

Reverse Teleport ← ↓ ↙ + all three Punch or Kick buttons

Alpha Counters ← ↙ ↓ + Punch or Kick

Super Moves

Super Fireball
↓ ↘ → ↓ ↘ → + Punch

Super Hurricane Kick
↓ ↙ ← ↓ ↙ ← + Kick

Super Dragon Punch
↓ ↘ → ↓ ↘ → + Kick

Raging Demon
Jab Punch, Jab Punch, →, Short Kick, Fierce Punch

Where did Evil Ryu originate? In ***Gamest***, the biweekly Japanese gaming magazine focusing on arcade games. In their recently-completed ***Street Fighter Alpha*** comic storyline by ***SSFII: Cammy***'s own Masahiko Nakahira, Ryu goes crazy in a fight with Adon and after being shot in the chest by criminals. Stranger than fiction!

Play as *Street Fighter 2* Characters

Ever wanted to play the two ***SF2*** returnees in their original style? Really? You're not kidding?...Well, wait no more!

Original Dhalsim
To pick Classic Dhalsim, go to Dhalsim and press and hold start for about three seconds. Move the joystick to Zangief (left), to Sagat (down), to Charlie (right), then back to Dhalsim (up) and press start and all three punch buttons at the same time.

Original Zangief
To get Classic Zangief, go to Zangief for 3 seconds, then go around the selection screen clockwise to Sagat, Sodom, Rose, Birdie, Charlie, Dhalsim, Ryu, Adon, Chun Li, Guy, Ken and back to Zangief and press Start with any punch.

Tyrone Rodriguez

Saturn

Guardian Heroes

You must have all the other characters to play as Valgar in the VS. mode. You must beat the game on normal or higher to play Serena in the Story mode. You must be playing on normal or higher to have monsters you encounter in Story mode be playable in the VS. mode.

Secret Arenas
On levels 3,5 and 12 you can access secret arenas. First you must kill *all* enemies on the level in question, then you must walk past the sign at the end of the level while being on the farthest line. The enemies you fight will be level 40 plus a value ranging from 0 to your current level. You can continue fighting as long as you select the top option after vanquishing an opponent.

98 Continues
The game must be in the Story Mode. Set the difficulty to Easy and let yourself die, then pick the third option when you die to quit. Set the difficulty to Hard and then continue from the point where you left off. You will have 98 continues.

Debug Mode
This code only works for the Japanese version.
On the main menu, pick the option mode. Once on the option screen, press A+Y+C. Choose the first item in the option screen, the setup screen. The Debug mode will be the item on the end of the list. Debug mode gives you various options, including all the VS mode characters, and switching between scenes and levels.

Kirk Patten

Super Nintendo

Final Fantasy III
Game Genie Codes

3CBC-576E Using an item increases your supply
D8D8-EF68 All characters have Haste, Regen, and Float in battle

Note: The following codes must be entered before starting a new game.

EE5C-7C85 Terra starts with more Battle Power
EE5C-7CE5 Terra starts with more Defense

These codes let you choose which relics Terra starts with. Choose the relic you want her to have and substitute its numbers for the "XX" in the code.
XX58-76E5 Terra starts with a different relic in her left hand
XX58-7B75 Terra starts with a different relic in her right hand

8A: Wall Ring	26: Gem Box
A3: Economizer	23: Moogle Charm
2F: Genji Glove	30: Experience Egg
27: Offering	31: Sprint Shoes

These codes let you choose Terra's abilities. Choose the ability you want her to have and substitute its numbers for the "XX" in the code.
XX5C-76E5 Terra starts with different abilities

D1: Capture	DB: Tools	DA: Lore
D5: SwdTech	DC: Blitz	D3: Control
D6: Throw	D8: Runic	DE: Slot
FD: Rage	F5: X-Magic	F8: Shock
F4: Mimic	F6: GP Rain	FA: Possess
F1: Jump	FC: Health	F2: MagiTek

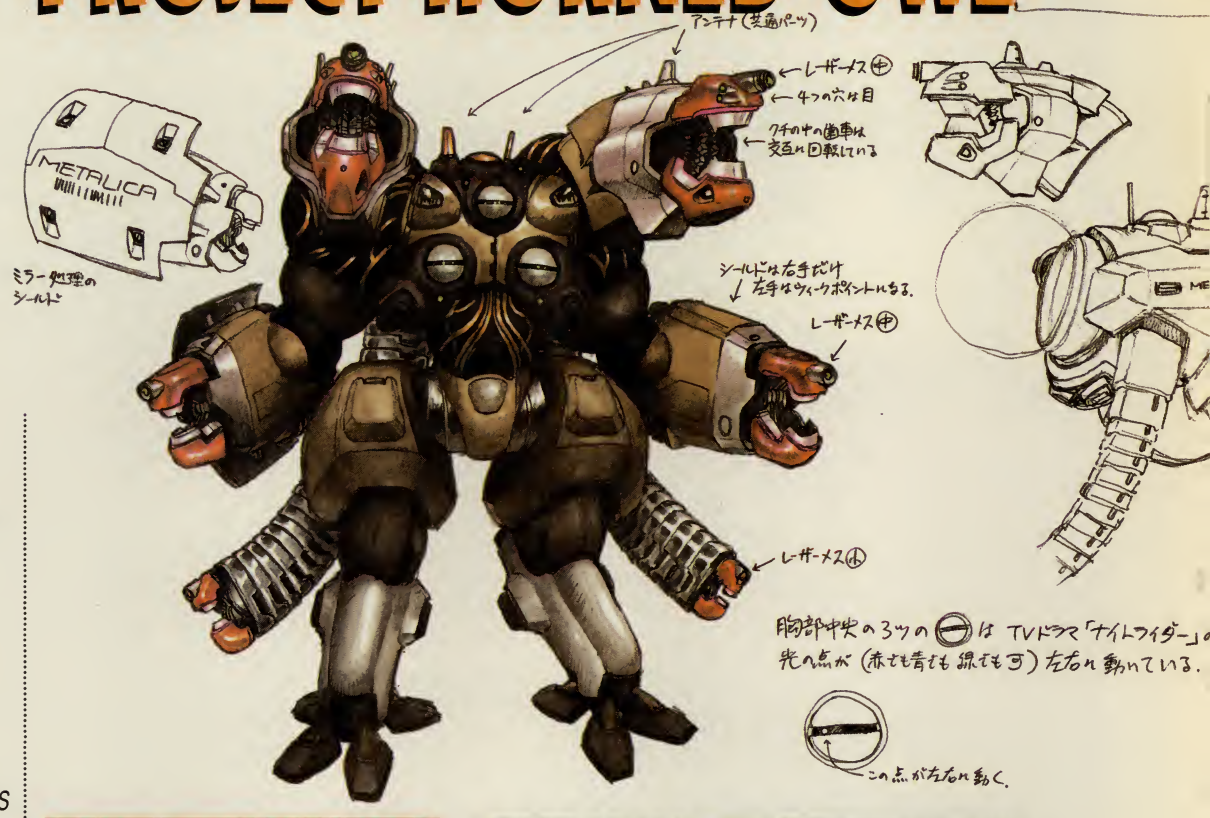
And introducing...the power of General Leo!
F85C-76E5
Remember General Leo attacking Kefka, and his ability called Shock that sent flames all over the screen? It spawned a thousand rumors of how people had found codes to let him join you party, people wanted to be able to use it so bad. Well, this is the next best thing; it gives Terra the Shock command in her menu at the start of the game. Try it and set ***FF3*** on fire!

Jay McGavren

Street Fighter Alpha 2 ©1996 Capcom Coin-Op Inc., Street Fighter Zero ©1995/Illustration by Masahiko Nakahira

PROJECT HORNED OWL™

Masamune Shirow's PlayStation mecha game has finally arrived in the States! Appearing this August, ***Project Horned Owl***™ *features about as much anime as you can fit in a shooter, from the artist of such high-tech works as* ***Appleseed***, ***Dominion*** *and the recent movie and video* ***Ghost in the Shell***



ON THE HORNS OF DANGER

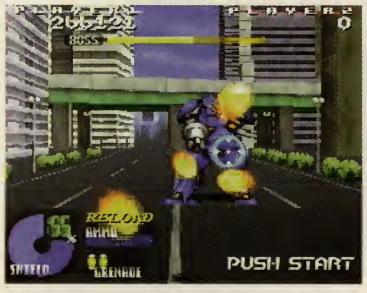
In ***Project Horned Owl***™, your characters, Hiro and Nash, are part of an elite anti-terrorist force which pilots combat robots, or *mecha*. With your female partner, Romeo, monitoring you from afar, you're airdropped into parts of the city where the Metalica (yes, that's their name) terrorist organization is wreaking havoc.

Project Horned Owl™ is a 3D point-of-view shooter with predetermined movement. As usual with 3D games, it's hard to see how smooth the action is in still shots. Most of your enemies are pixellized, but the backgrounds are polygonal.

The game opens with an animation sequence by Shirow, and short interludes come between the stages. In a one-player game, player two can jump in at any time. Your ending—and final boss—are different depending on the difficulty level (in Easy mode, you'll only play two of the five levels). ***Project Horned Owl***™ starts in the streets—but it ends up in places much stranger than that...

OPERATION 1

For this battle you're in the city, jumping on and off buildings, parking garages, highways and bridges. At the end, you'll encounter an enemy who'll fight you again later on.



When the skyscrapers get tall, the boss is about to jump you. He fires a gatling cannon of energy shots which take several hits to knock out.

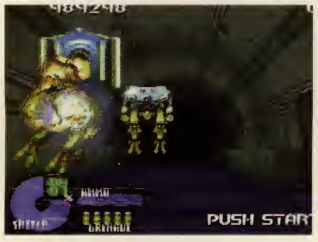
The mysterious leader appears!

OPERATION 2

The terrorists have overtaken an airport, and you're there, just before dusk. Enter a warehouse, then fight your way into the terminal and finally face two bosses out onto the runway.

There's plenty of destructible stuff at the airport (just like in real life, right?).

When you think you've beaten the clawed industrial robot, think again; its even uglier Prototype is next in line to attack you.



OPERATION 3

This infiltration Project takes you from sewer tunnels up into a skyscraper, through ventilation shafts and finally into a secret base. Can you capture the terrorist mastermind, Blair?

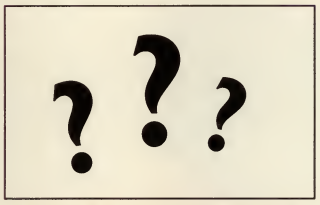
He means business.

The boss is a walking rocket launcher. Save your grenades for the moment when it unleashes its barrage.

OPERATION 4

It's sabotage! An attack on shady company Megalotech takes you from the driving rain into a factory, but it looks like their main export is death. Many small enemies crawl and climb around, but they have heavy firepower!

The robot production line—targets galore!



OPERATION 5: FALLING ARK

From the frying pan into the fire!Climbing over the burning rubble of skyscrapers, can you and your partners save the city? Or will Metalica be victorious?

The Training Room gauges your ability to shoot enemies and avoid damage.

Terrified citizens run about; you ***Maniac Cop*** types out there can shoot them, but they won't fall (lucky they're on your side).

In a one-player game, you can pick either Hiro Utsumi or Nash Stolar.

PROJECT HORNED OWL™ CONTEST

HOW SHIROW CAN YOU GO?

Masamune Shirow, designer for ***Project Horned Owl™***, has a long artist's resume, all the more impressive considering he's a Japanese high school teacher who works under a pseudonym and whose photograph is almost never seen! Shirow trivia is a valued thing to anime and manga fans. In fact, knowing Shirow's projects is what'll get you enrolled in **Horned Owl™ Mecha School!**

Enroll now...and win:

1. **Grand Prize—a PlayStation game console, *Project Horned Owl™*, mouse and Konami Enforcer™ light gun!**
5. **First Prizes—*Project Horned Owl™* and a Konami Enforcer™ light gun**
5. **Second Prizes—*Project Horned Owl™***
25. **Third Prizes—PlayStation T-shirts**

HORNED OWL™ MECHA SCHOOL/CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Not just anyone can pilot a *Horned Owl™* mech. Our elite team members must aim well, reload fast, and have a good eye for collateral damage. Do you have what it takes?

Match the following Masamune Shirow stories to their subject matter to prove your manga and anime survival skills. (Each correct match is worth one point.)

1. **Black Magic M-66**
2. **Appleseed**
3. **Ghost in the Shell**
4. **Dominion**
5. **Orion**
6. **Project Horned Owl**

(a) Dark future of megacorporations, where intelligent programs act as spies on the Net and cyborg police download their consciousness into crimefighting mecha.

(b) Post-World War 4 setting, where *bioroids*, artificial humans, are rebuilding society in "Olympus," a giant artificial island.

(c) In this world, the military uses female-looking anti-personnel androids. When two malfunction and go after their creator's innocent daughter, the destruction is immense.

(d) A world of black magic and superscience, where sorcerors use nine-headed Naga to summon gods, including Susano, a god of chaos, violence...and potential.

(e) Terrorists prowl a world so polluted that humans must wear masks to breathe outside. However, life in the tank police isn't necessarily all that serious.

(f) The mysterious Metalica organization has terrorized the public with destructive robots...until an elite team comes to the rescue!

Entries will be considered for prizes in order of points—but even if you're a rookie, try your chances at HORNED OWL™ MECHA SCHOOL!

1. To enter: send your name and address and the correctly-answered test questions to: **Horned Owl™ Contest c/o Game On! USA, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107.** All entries become joint property of Game On! USA and Sony Computer Entertainment America. Game On! USA and SCEA are not responsible for lost, mutilated, late, postage due, or misdirected entries.

2. Prizes: One (1) Grand Prize: PlayStation game console, Mouse, Project Horned Owl™, Konami Enforcer™ light gun (approximate retail value $307). Five (5) First Prizes: Project Horned Owl™, Konami Enforcer™ light gun (approximate retail value $89). Five (5) Second Prizes: Project Horned Owl™ (approximate retail value $39). Twenty-five (25) Third Prizes: PlayStation T-shirt (approximate retail value $15). Winners to be determined by accuracy of five answers. All correctly answered entries will be entered into a drawing and picked randomly by Game On! USA. Judges' decision will made by October 1 and is final. Prizes will be shipped by October 15. Winners will be notified by mail. Results will be published in Game On! USA. Delivery of prizes will be handled by Sony Computer Entertainment America. Allow six weeks for delivery of prizes. Konami Enforcer™s may be shipped later than other prizes depending on availability. Odds of winning determined by number of valid entries. Prizes are nontransferable and no subsitution is allowed. SCEA reserves the right to substitute prize of equal value if prize is unavailable.

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UP & RUNNING

Floating Runner

System: Sony PlayStation
Developer: Xing
Publisher: T•HQ
Availability: Now (Japan); 4th Quarter 1996 (U.S.)

In ***Floating Runner***, you don't just pick your high score name; you walk on it.

Floating Runner is a 3D platform game similar in some aspects to ***Jumping Flash!***. You can choose between two character, Lay, a boy, and Cress, a girl. Your character starts the game with a basic gun with unlimited ammo but later on can collect much more powerful weapons. The game is comprised mostly of flat shaded polygons and some texture mapping. The simplistic graphics might turn some off at first but in my opinion fit the game well.

The level design in *Floating Runner* is well thought out and challenging with vast areas to explore. There are many floating platforms that you must jump on which take you up hundreds of feet, and a lot of the jumps you have to make are very tricky. There are ten worlds with two stages each and you are given unlimited continues but you must complete each stage before your time runs out or it's game over. *Floating Runner* moves at a good frame rate with smooth character animation (at least 30 fps) and no sign of slowdown. The "Japanese" style BGM in the game for the most part is fantastic.

All is not perfect though. There is only one boss in the entire game and that is the final boss. Don't get me wrong, the final boss is awesome as hell, but I would have liked to have seen at least a boss for each world. Also, you are only given two views in the game, one being an overhead view and the other a behind-the-character view. The two views available are too vertical which makes it much more difficult to see what's ahead of you and know where you are. Offering more variety of views would have been nice. Besides these two complaints, *Floating Runner* is a good 3D platform game.

Joseph Mooney spends all his time playing import video games and maxxing out his credit cards. He works at an import game store and attends a computer animation school. When not playing video games (!) you'll find him having one-man, 12-hour anime marathons. "Mario 64 is one of the greatest games to come out in a long time," Joseph says with a stunned look in his eye.

The Last Word **If you are a platform game fan, Floating Runner is definitely worth checking out. While the game has some minor flaws, the excellent gameplay and challenge overshadow them and makes this a title worth getting.**

Floating Runner ©1996 Xing

BULLET WITH BUNNY EARS

Keio Yugekitai 2

System: Sega Saturn
Developer: Victor Entertainment
Publisher: Victor Entertainment
Availability: Now (Japan); Unknown (US)

If you've ever played ***Keio's Flying Squadron*** on Sega CD, then you know of the adventures of Rami and the ever lovable evil Dr. Pon. In ***Keio Yugekitai 2*** [*which we roughly translated as* ***Keio 2: The Fighting Chapter***—*Ed.*], Dr. Pon is once again bent on taking over the world and ruining our little bunny-eared heroine's dinner, and to complicate things even more, a strange new girl has come into the mix.

It's nice to see shining examples of 2D games among the flood of 3D, and *Keio Yugekitai* shines brightly. In fact, the game seems like a checklist for other platform game makers on how to do things right. The graphics are smooth and beautiful, the Saturn's wide color palette in full effect. Gameplay is quick to learn, and the control is tight. *Keio Yugekitai* also receives honors for getting me to notice the music. Rarely does video game music really stand out to me, so when it does, it usually means that the game has a hell of a score. And I can't get away without mentioning the art gallery (something I wish more games had), which allows you to look at a wide variety of artwork and game tips which must be earned by good gameplay.

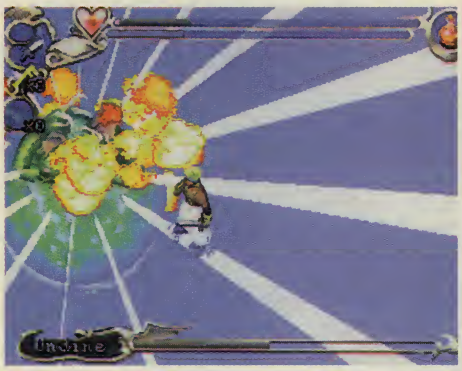
One of *Keio*'s best qualities, however, is its variety. Every stage is different, giving you a diverse offering of things to see and do. Stages include fighting in the middle of a sumo ring, running for your life from a wild pack of marathon runners, and careening along on a roller coaster. While they could have stopped there, there are even a few stages which play like ***Flying Squadron***. While they aren't as complex, shooter wise, as *Flying Squadron* was, they are definitely a nice touch. And, as in any good platform game, secrets abound, if you're willing to take the time to look.

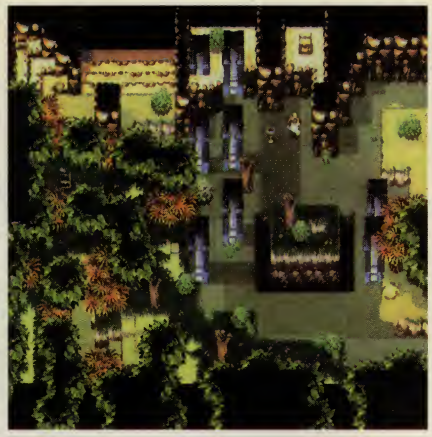
I was ready to mention how *Keio* may not be of the caliber of game as ***Sonic*** or ***Mario***, yet I stopped myself. Maybe it is just as good, but in a different way. No matter how you look at it, however, *Keio Yugekitai* is still one fabulous platform game, both graphically and in game play, and is a breath of fresh air for those of us who still love the world of hand drawn, two dimensional life.

Shidoshi Naga
Not content with just playing Keio Yugekitai, contributing writer Shidoshi Naga has perfected the art of the 'Hyper Cutie Bunny Change.' It has yet to prove useful in saving the world, however.

The Last Word With Sonic abandoning us for the 3D world, thank god there's still Rami. A requirement for all platform fans.

Keio Yugekitai 2 ©Victor Entertainment

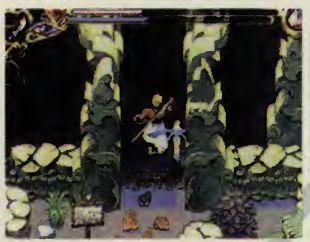


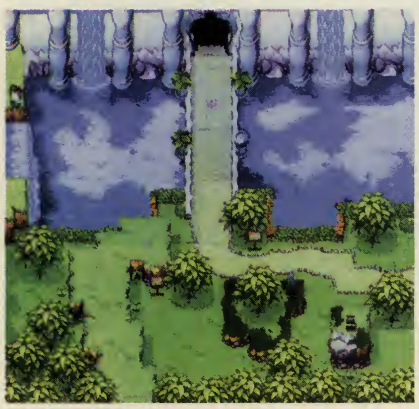


LEGENDS NEVER DIE

Legend of Thor

System: Sega Saturn
Developer: Legend
Publisher: Sega
Availability: Now (Japan); August (U.S.)





Although technically a sequel to ***The Legend of Oasis*** for the Genesis, ***Thor*** for the Sega Saturn can stand on its own as the best ACT/RPG so far in the 32-bit age. Legend has created a very playable, well-rounded, and so-polished-you-can-see-your-face-in-it masterpiece.

Thor is basically an overhead ACT/RPG, much in the same vein as ***Zelda***. Combat is a slight variant on the norm for the genre, more like a side-scrolling beat 'em up like ***Final Fight*** or ***Double Dragon***. Like the aforementioned games, all enemy monsters have their own lifebar that appears when you attack, and you can even perform special moves and combos of a sort using certain joystick and button combinations. The player has a dizzying array of actions he can perform: jump, dash, crouch, roll, kick...the list goes on and on. All your moves and attack possibilities keep combat fun and fresh through the game; it never turns into a chore as in so many other games.

The magic system in *Thor* also deserves credit. As you play through the game you acquire certain elemental spirits, each with their own unique spells. You use these spirits not only as an aid in combat or healing, but also to help solve the myriad of puzzles that lie throughout the game. For example, using the water spirit to douse all the torches in a room may reveal a secret exit.

Thor's graphics are very well done, everything animates beautifully and the breadth and detail of the world is amazing. Splashing water as fish pop out of streams, the steady breathing of a sleeping rat, intricate railings along bridges—seemingly small visual touches such as these are everywhere in the game and create a convincing world for the adventure.

Finally, one of the best parts of *Thor*, and one many gamers might overlook, is the music. Yuzo Koshiro did great with *Thor*'s game design, and he does equally well on the CD soundtrack. The music has a passive, but very effective feel, much like the music in ***Super Metroid*** for the SNES. People were starting to wonder about Mr. Koshiro; the composer of such famous soundtracks as ***Actraiser***, ***Revenge of Shinobi,*** and ***Streets of Rage*** had not produced stirring music in quite awhile, but he is back now, and as good as ever.

The Last Word One of the most enjoyable 32-bit games so far, Thor proves that 2D will never die. With fun and precise control as well as brain-teasing puzzles, anyone who has ever enjoyed an ACT/RPG or even thought about enjoying one should check out Thor.

Rip Van Fish

Raised by a pack of wild Atari 2600s, Rip Van Fish found himself alone after the great videogame crash until a kindly 8-bit machine named the NES found him and took pity on him in 1986. Ever since then, RVF has kept on the cutting edge of the gaming scene, but always with a healthy respect for his roots and the classics.

Legend of Thor ©Sega/Yuzo Koshiro

A LEAP AHEAD

Jumping Flash! 2

System: Sony PlayStation
Developer: Xact
Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment
Availability: Now (Japan); July/August (US)

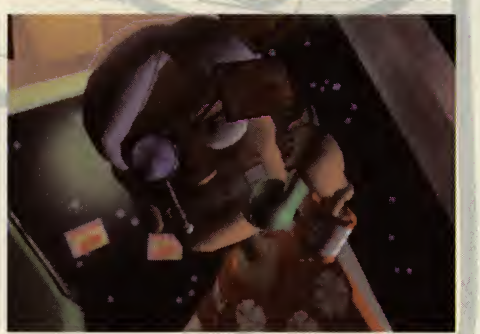
Jumping Flash! was a great first person 3D platform game but the sequel, ***Jumping Flash! 2***, takes the fun factor up another level. ***Jumping Flash! 2*** comes in a 2 CD package which contains not only the sequel but the original ***Jumping Flash!*** as well [*only in Japan, not in the U.S., don't get excited—Ed.*]. The story behind ***Jumping Flash! 2*** now has your character, Robbit, helping out the Baron to try to save the worlds stolen by a space alien with an egg shaped head. The gameplay is still very much the same as in ***Jumping Flash!*** but instead of finding jetpods you have to find 4 Muu-Muus in each stage before the time runs out. You still have six worlds with three levels each (with the Boss being on the third level) but now you have a number of new power-ups to collect along with new enemies.

There have been some graphic improvements over ***Jumping Flash!***. You now have a slightly higher overall frame rate, smoother animation, and the worlds are now much more detailed. Even with these improvements, the overall look of the sequel has not really changed that much from the original. The levels are still laid out in the same fashion (i.e., floating platforms) but are now much larger and have many more challenging jumps. ***Jumping Flash! 2*** also has some cool water effects; you can jump in and out of pools which gives you a feeling of descent to the bottom. As for the music and sound, they both fit the game perfectly.

Joseph Mooney

Special
After you complete all the worlds you get two options, **super** and **extra**. In **super** mode you play in the same worlds but you can jump *extremely* high and plunge much faster if you press down a button. In **extra** mode the worlds are modified and the Muu-Muus are rearranged. There are new cut scenes, the worlds are colored differently and you have less time to complete the stages.

The Last Word **Jumping Flash! 2 is easy to beat, but if you take your time and explore the entire levels (instead of going straight to the exit) it makes the game much more enjoyable. Jumping Flash! 2 is well worth its price, and I would highly recommend you add this gem to your PSX collection.**



Baron Aloha phones his minions.

Jumping Flash! 2 ©Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.

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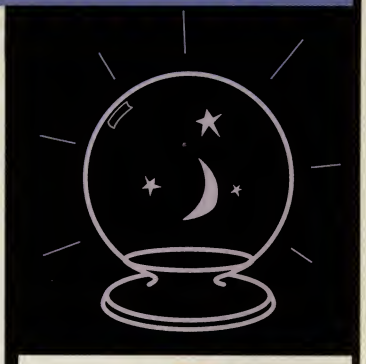

Whether you're waiting for it, or ignoring it, it's here... the Nintendo 64! In the next issue, **Game On! USA** looks at Nintendo's new game machine, delayed for a year and still looking strong. What games are coming out for the N64? Will Nintendo take a space next to Saturn and PlayStation in Newsline #6? Plus a two-page, in-depth look at the PlayStation ***Ranma 1/2 Battle Renaissance***, martial artist Ranma Saotome's first move to a next generation machine. Jump high and punch low in **Game On! USA** #5!

32-bit Manga
She's back...this time in turbo! ***SUPER STREET FIGHTER II: CAMMY***
A birthday gift's no party for Cammy as an afternoon in London attracts the attention of the forces of Shadowloo!

Feature Presentation: INSIDE THE MUSHROOM KINGDOM
Their fame began with plumbers more than ten years ago...this month, Nintendo wants your TV again with the ***Nintendo 64!*** In an exclusive interview, hear Nintendo of America president Howard Lincoln explain why the N64 is the "Cadillac of gaming machines"; imagine the lines in Japanese stores on the Japan release date, June 23; and see ***Super Mario 64*** left, right, up and down! It's Mario (and Zelda) madness in movies, television, manga and more in the console debut of the year!

Swordplay on the high seas in ***SAMURAI SHODOWN***
Haohmaru and Hanzo take to the waves to rescue Nakoruru from the island where the Shiranui lurk...and where Madou's plan is revealed!

All This...

Newsline: The Latest Updates from America and Japan
Play Tests: Reviews of ***The Great Dragon Ball Z Legend***, ***Suikoden*** *and more*
Game Over!, ON! Command, Fanzine Reviews

...And Much, Much More!

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