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FILE.10

消えた光彦③

The Disappearance of Mitsuhiro - Part 3





If you can
hear my
voice then
answer the
badge!!




Where
are
you!!

Mitsuhiko
!!!



This
forest is
danger-
ous!!



So abandon
your search,
take that
badge and
contact me!!

There's
a serial
killer
hiding
in
here!!

**Mitsu-
hiko!!!**

He has to be
somewhere
near the
stream...

If I'm
not
mistaken...

Where is
he?!

Damn!

Numa-
buchi
already
found
him...

Unless
...



But one of my friends is lost in the forest!

Didn't Yamamura say he wanted to take you kids out of the forest?



M-Mister police man...

Eh? Aren't you the boy who was with Yamamura?!



There you are!

What?



I was able to find Numa-buchi Kiichiro!!

Eh?

But I have great news to tell you!



There seems to have been no time to do so...

Why didn't you tell me about the lost kid?



What are you saying ... how could I have done that all on my own ... he ran and of course I lost track of him in an instant!

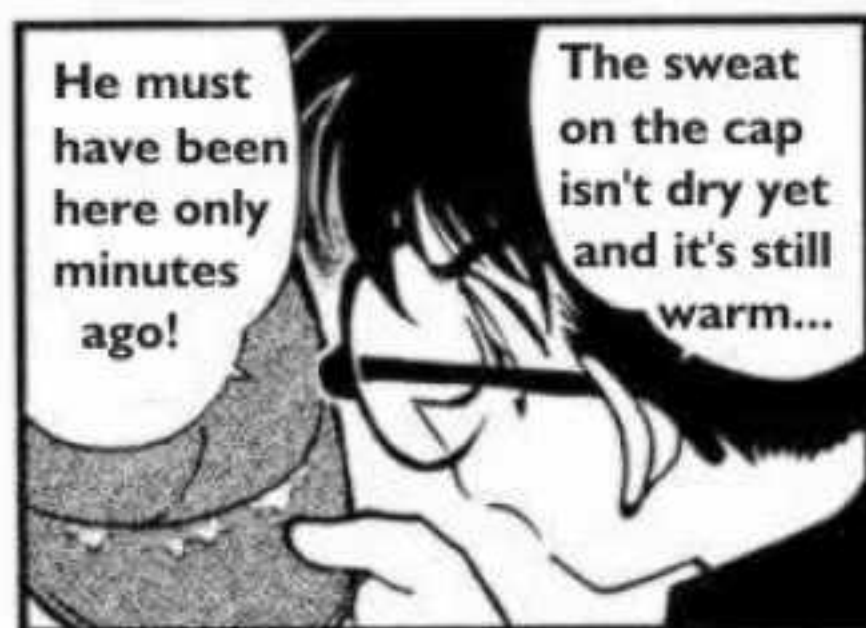
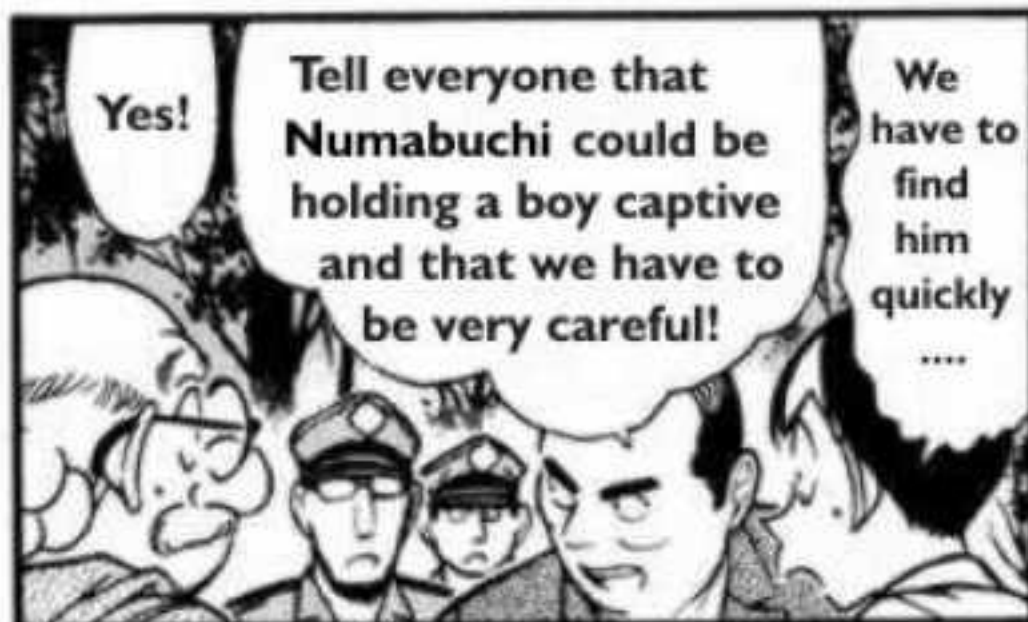
Where is he? You caught him, didn't you?



Fan-tastic !!

Really ?!







But he's got his badge! Even with a soft voice he could call us....

No!



By now he must be completely hoarse right?

So if he got lost at the very beginning and called out for help the whole time...



But to do so he would have to use both of his hands- if he could!

Yeah, had he answered the badge, we would have found him immediately!



Well then, we find that murderer!

But Mitsuhiro cannot make himself heard and might even be found by that murderer! How are we supposed to find him!



If he's still nearby, we mustn't lose anymore time!

We can discuss that once we've found him!

Did he hurt his hands?!

What!?

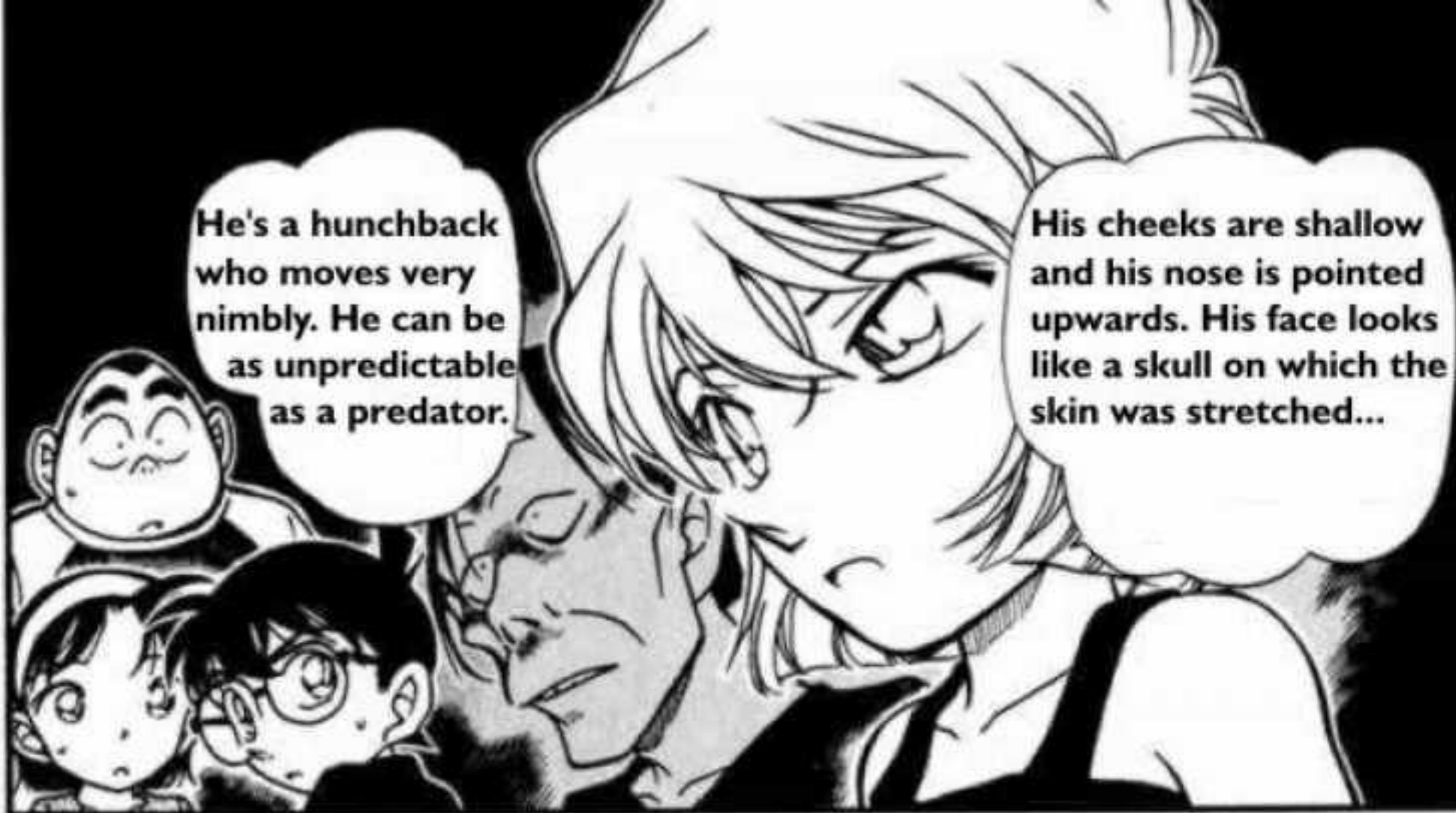


He has thin eyebrows and his eyes lie deep in their sockets...



Not so long ago I remember I saw him on TV...

But we couldn't see his face cause it's so dark out here. How can we tell that guy apart from the police?



He's a hunchback who moves very nimbly. He can be as unpredictable as a predator.

His cheeks are shallow and his nose is pointed upwards. His face looks like a skull on which the skin was stretched...



Yes, that's right...

Don't say that Numabuchi ...



Ai, why are you able to describe him that precisely?

So we have to look for someone who looks like a skeleton!

I guess so...




Numabuchi Kiichiro was a member of the organization ...



The Men In Black.

An associate, you could say, of the men who shrank you...



The syndicate wanted to make him one of their killers because he had the physical qualities...

But he wasn't very important to them...

But he was useless for them after all, so they sent him to my department...

He fled?

But a short time after, I escaped myself, while he was still on the run, so I never met him in person...

Before I could do the test, however, he escaped

That's why I know so much about him... before testing the poison, I got his file with his physical data and picture...

What!?

There I was supposed to test the APTX on him...



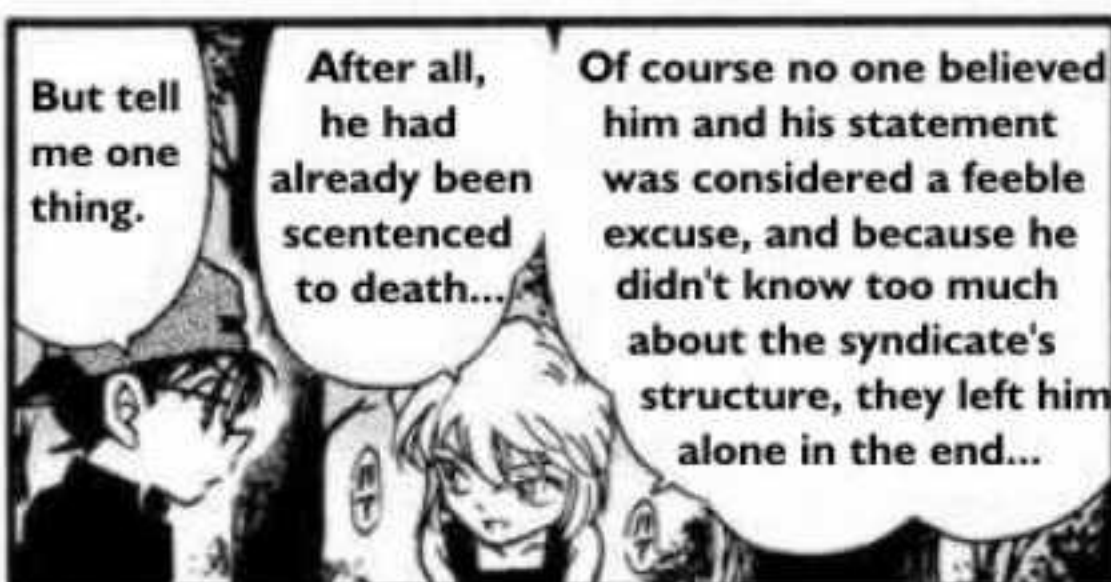
Now I understand - when he was caught, he shouted at the camera, "It's all their fault!"

But he seems to have killed a person before becoming a member of the syndicate, so no one should really pity him...



And while he was on the run and living in continuous fear of the members of syndicate, he must have mistaken those three people for pursuers and killed them in panic ... why I pity him?

I guess he got scared - which doesn't surprise me at all, considering what they had planned



But tell me one thing.

After all, he had already been sentenced to death...

Of course no one believed him and his statement was considered a feeble excuse, and because he didn't know too much about the syndicate's structure, they left him alone in the end...



Eh?

I didn't.

That's just what troubles me...



So why didn't you sense him on the tree?

Didn't you recently say you could make out members of the syndicate at once?



I've become desensitized to danger, it could mean the end of me very soon....



But I've grown accustom to my new quiet life ...

I had always been able to rely on that ability...



That reminds me of you not being able to help my sister back then...

But it's
also a
good
thing!

Cause the things
he loves most
in this world are
your and
Ayumi's
smiles...

But now we
should really
find
Mitsuhiko!

Well to have
a quiet life
means not to
worry all the
time, right?

What?

Shuuuush!

Yeah, after all
that's why he's
here in the
first place...

My and
Ayumi's
smiles...

Mitsu-
hi...

Hey!

Yeah, he's
coming
here!

It's getting
louder
and louder!

It has
to be
his
badge
...

Do you
hear that?

Eh?

Nu-
ma-
buchi?! Nu..

KO...

* KYAAA !!

女子校生

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What ?

Eh?



What?!

I've
f-found
him!!

T-There
he is!
Numabuchi
Kiichiro!!



Shut up!
You'd think
we'd fall
for that?

Yeah!
Hundreds of
them so take
care...

You mean
accom-
plices? In
this forest?

They are
scared of the
light. They
won't come
out of their
hiding
places!

Put
those
lights
away!



Phew!
You're
hoarse
as
hell!

I-I'm
sorry...

Mitsuhiko!
We were so
worried!



Don't...

What is it?
Are you injured
or something?

M-my
hands
...

Why didn't
you answer
our calls?

Well you're
badge is
ringing...



Those heralds of summer

Exactly, in the town that you can't see them anymore...

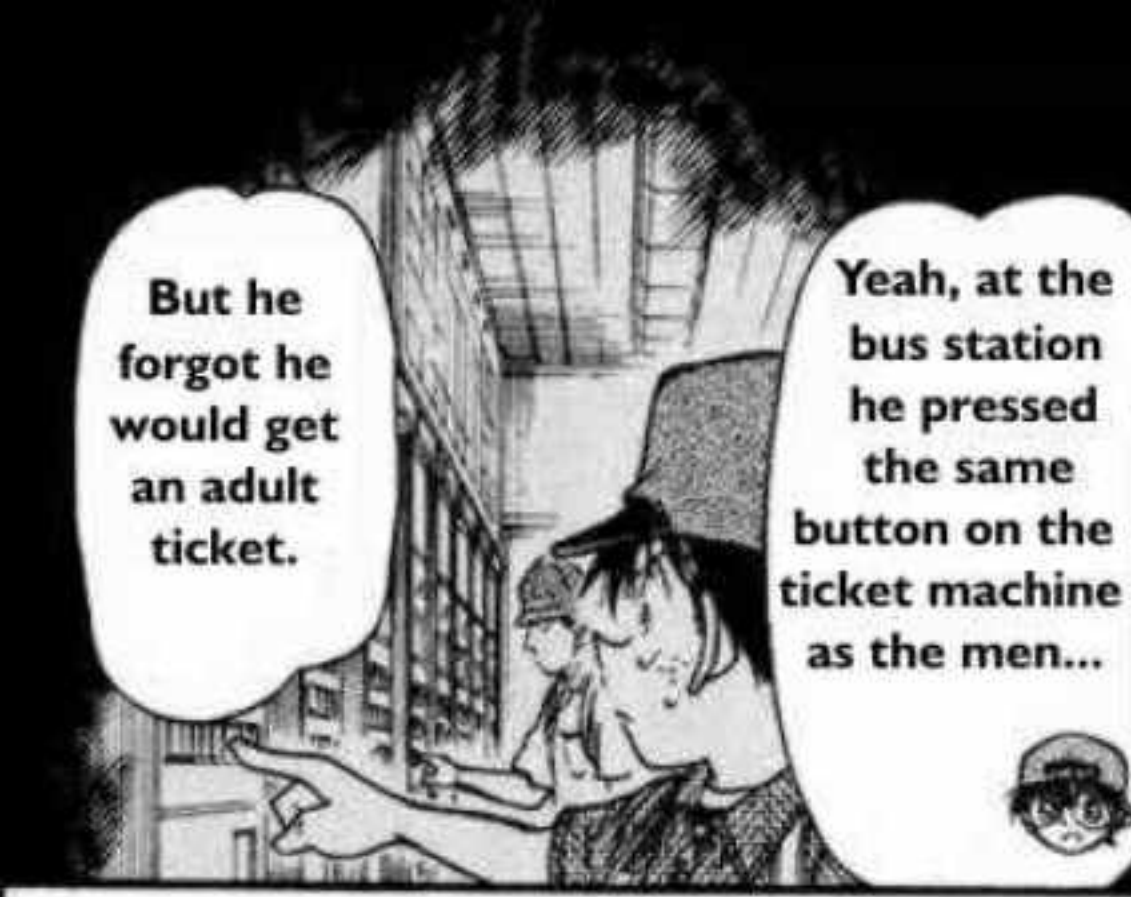
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Mitsuhiko often asked them where the fireflies usually are, but they became angry. They didn't want a kid to mess with the endangered species of fireflies- endangered and therefore protected because they only live near clear streams and rivers.

The old men who were angry with Mitsuhiko at the bus stop were probably environmentalists. Every sunday they come to this forest and keep the stream clean.



A fire-fly?

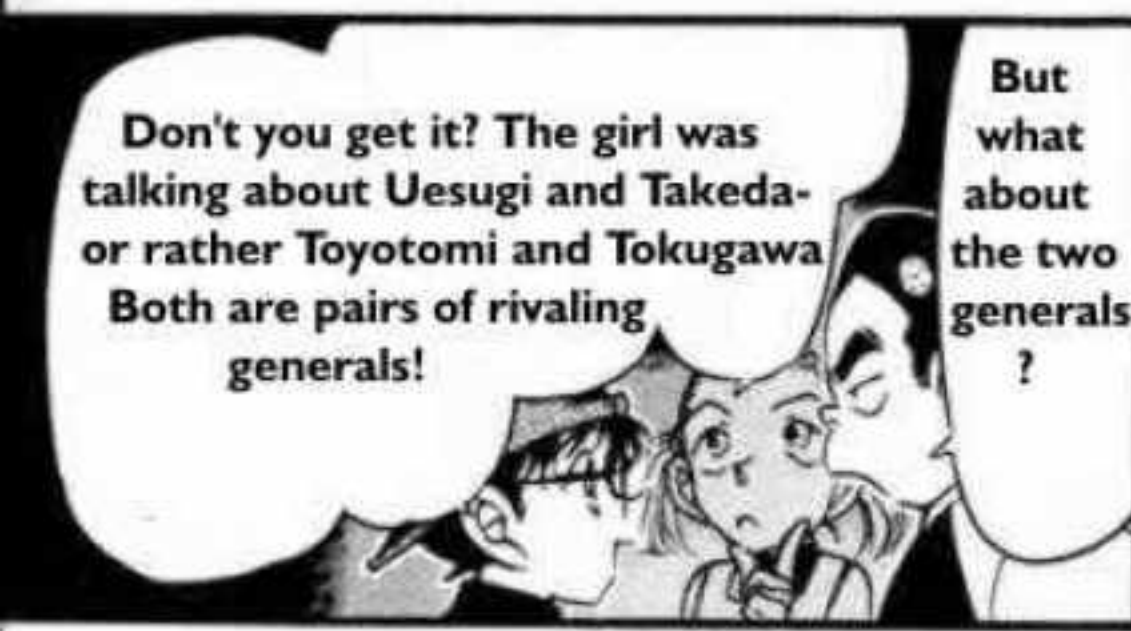


But he forgot he would get an adult ticket.

Yeah, at the bus station he pressed the same button on the ticket machine as the men...


I get it! On the bus he was acting strangely because he didn't want to lose them but had to make sure he didn't lose them.

But Mitsuhiro wanted to know where the fireflies favorite living places were very badly so he followed them.



Don't you get it? The girl was talking about Uesugi and Takeda- or rather Toyotomi and Tokugawa Both are pairs of rivaling generals!

But what about the two generals?




He wanted to make the wet bamboo leaves into an insect carriage to make it nicer for the fireflies ...

And the rice balls?

So they were talking of two species of fireflies, Genji and Heike!

And so are Genji and Heike!



Isn't it obvious? It wouldn't have been a surprise anymore...

But I still don't get why you didn't invite us for the insect hunt!

Right Mitsuhiro?

And when his badge rang, of course he knew that we had come searching for him, but he couldn't answer because it would mean releasing the firefly.

And after all he managed to catch a firefly, but then he lost it in the forest.



You did that for us....

Is that true Mitsuhiko?



Didn't you two say you wanted to see the fireflies just once?

He thought of what Ayumi and Ai said when we came home from the fireworks recently.



It was really beautiful!

Thank you!

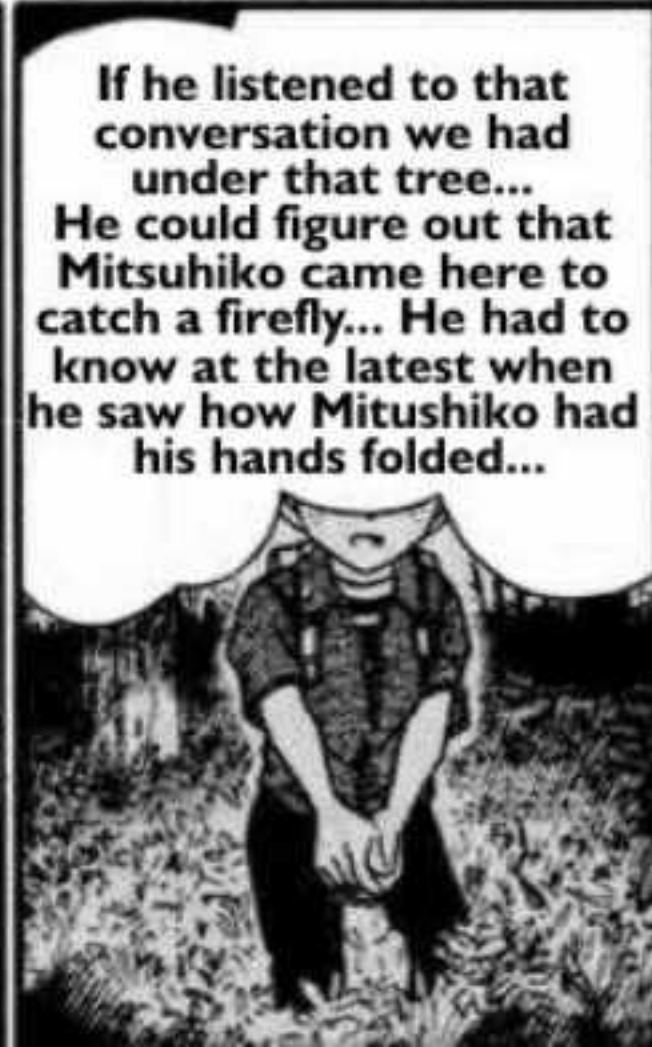


Well ...

But why did Numabuchi bring him here, although he knew they would capture him?



I'm pretty sure that the story of the 4th corpse buried in the forest was just that - a story. He probably wanted to see them one last time before he died...



If he listened to that conversation we had under that tree... He could figure out that Mitsuhiko came here to catch a firefly... He had to know at the latest when he saw how Mitsuhiko had his hands folded...



The same reason?

He was probably here for the same reason as Mitsuhiko was...



Whom he liked so much when he was a child...

His old glowing friends in the forest...



On television I mean!

Did you see that too yesterday?

On the first day of term



What was it called? Takenoko? Maybe Kachinoko...?

.....



There is even an eye-witness who saw it!

Nonsense! They found a legendary animal!



What? Did they find Tokugawa's treasure ?

The unbelievable discovery everyone is talking about!

