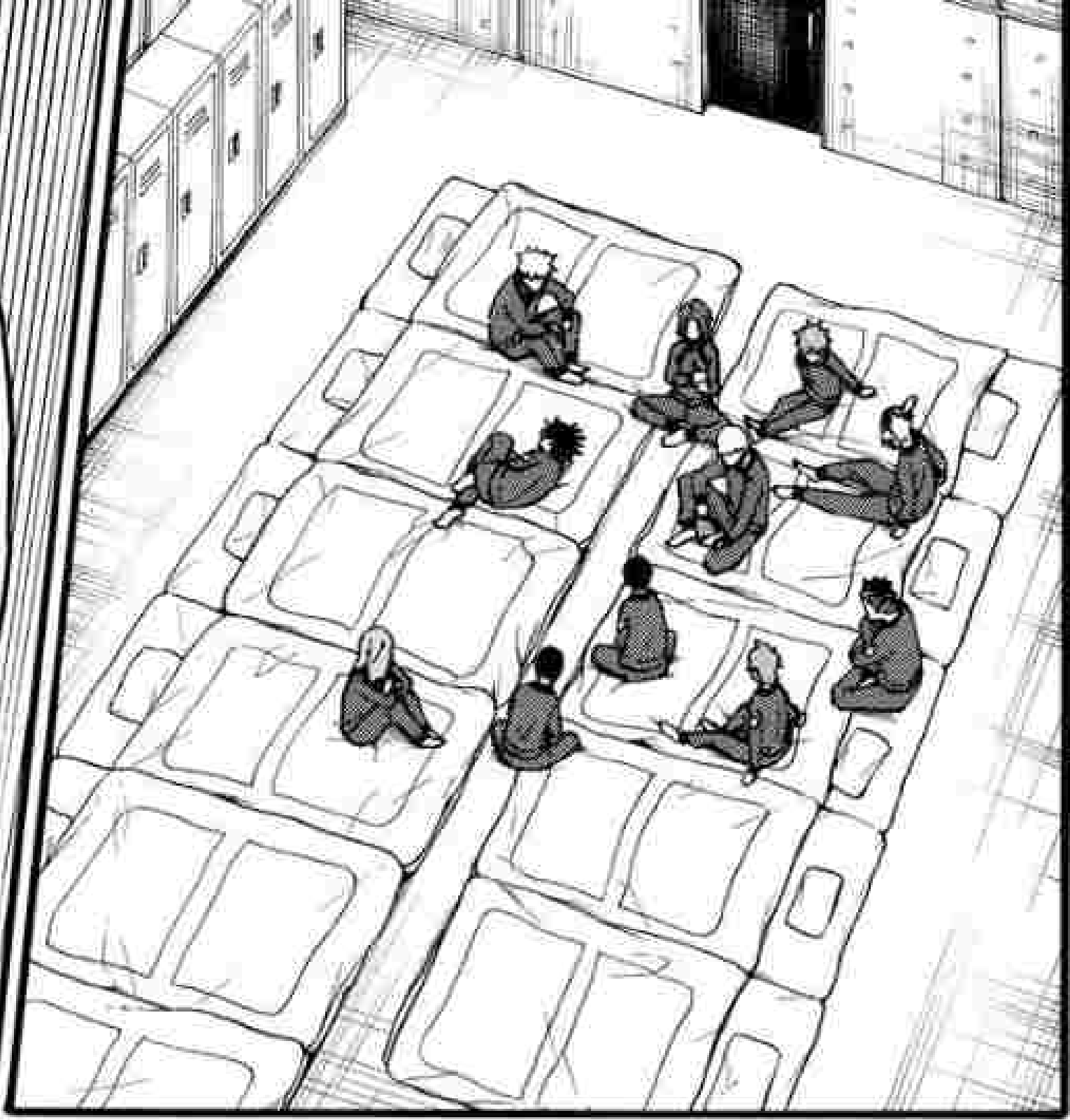








...WE'LL  
GO WITH  
"OPERATION:  
ME, NEXT  
9"!



WE  
DON'T HAVE  
ANY OTHER  
CHOICE!

YEAH.



...I  
SEE.

I THINK  
IT'S GOOD.



THAT'S  
A LAME  
NAME...

SO THEN  
WE...



...WE'VE  
GOTTA  
DO IT!

...BUT IF  
IT'S TO  
WIN...

I'M NOT TOO  
THRILLED  
ABOUT IT...



IN THE NEXT  
GAME...

OKAY.  
THAT  
SETTLES  
IT.



...THREW  
OURSELVES  
INTO  
TRAINING.



THOUGH  
IT'S NOT LIKE  
WE BECAME  
A TRUE TEAM  
RIGHT AWAY...



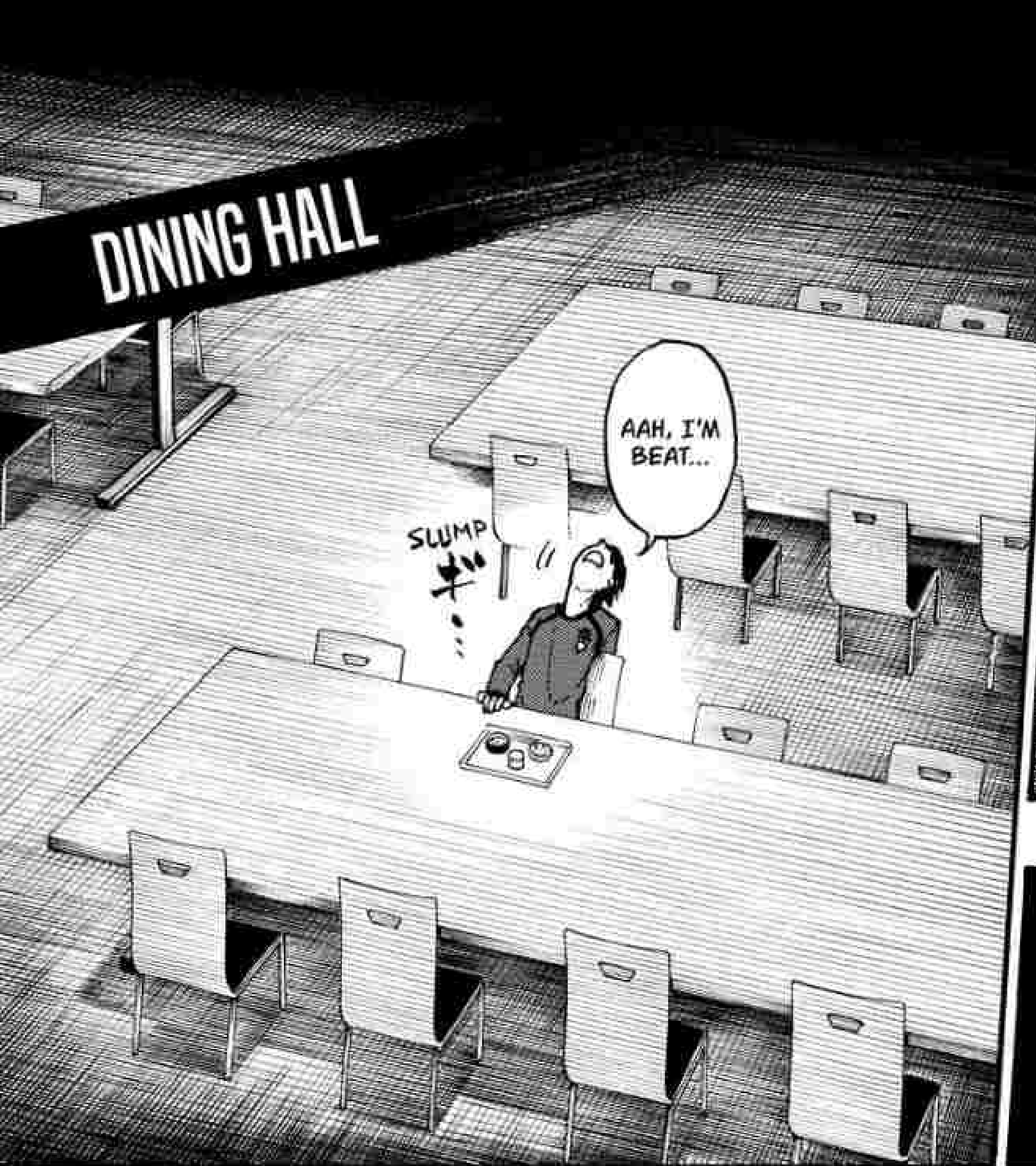
BUT  
EVEN THOUGH  
WE STARTED OUT  
DISCONNECTED,  
I COULD FEEL  
THAT IDEA...

"IF WE LOSE,  
OUR SOCCER  
LIVES ARE  
OVER."



...BRINGING  
US ALL  
TOGETHER.

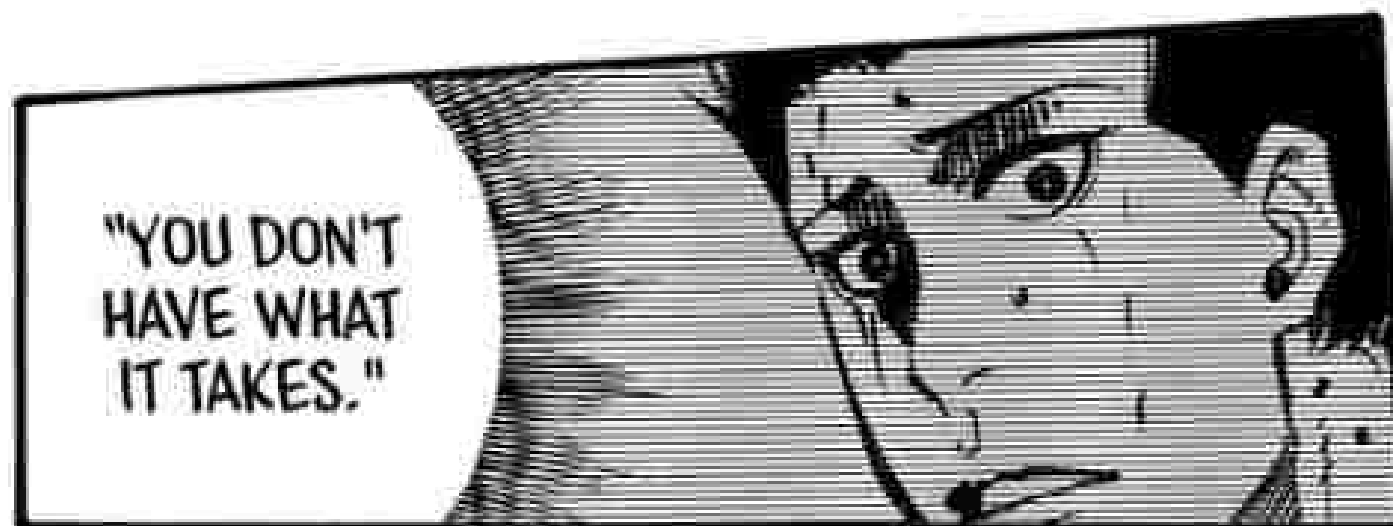
...WAS  
GRADUALLY...



TO BE HONEST...  
I JUST KEEP LOSING CONFIDENCE.



IT'S SO  
PATHETIC  
HOW I  
COULDN'T  
THINK OF  
SOMETHING  
RIGHT  
AWAY...



"YOU DON'T  
HAVE WHAT  
IT TAKES."



...LIKE  
EVERYONE  
ELSE.

I DON'T  
HAVE...

...A  
WEAPON I  
CAN BOLDLY  
DECLARE...



HAAH...

DO I  
HAVE WHAT IT  
TAKES TO BE A  
STRIKER...?

WHAT'S MY  
WEAPON...?

WHAT CAN  
I DO...?



...DON'T  
HAVE  
ANYTHING  
AT ALL...

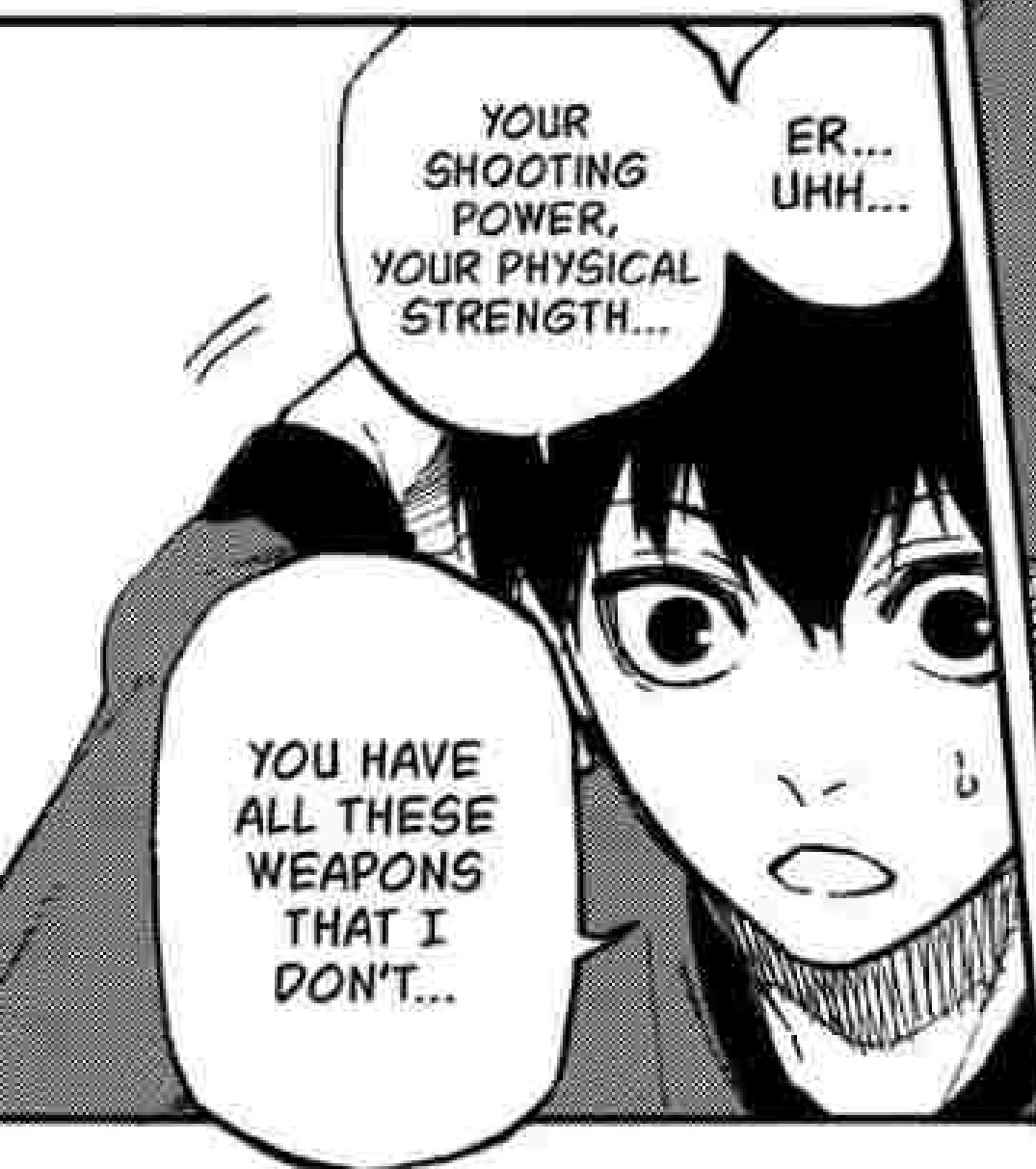
I'M SO  
TIRED OF  
NATTO...

MAYBE  
I...











I PLAY  
SOCCER...

...SO  
I CAN  
BECOME  
A SUPER-  
HERO.



...THE ONES  
I LOOKED  
UP TO WEREN'T  
POWER RANGERS,  
OR ROBOTS,  
OR THE PIRATE  
KING...

WHEN  
I WAS  
A KID...

HUH?





...AND  
STEAL GOALS  
TO WIN.

...WHO WOULD  
RUN AROUND  
THE FIELD...

IT WAS THE  
STRIKERS...



...COURAGE  
AND EXCITE-  
MENT.

...WHO  
GAVE  
ME...

THEY  
WERE REAL  
'SUPER-  
HEROES...

THOSE  
SOCCER  
PLAYERS  
WEREN'T  
FICTION...



OF  
COURSE  
I AM.

ARE  
YOU...

AND THAT'S  
THE KIND...

...SERI-  
OUS?

EVEN IF GOD  
TOLD ME IT WAS  
IMPOSSIBLE...

...OF  
PERSON  
I WANT  
TO BE.

...NONE OF  
THAT WOULD  
MATTER.

...OR  
PEOPLE  
LAUGH AT  
ME FOR  
BEING AN  
IDIOT...



FOR  
THE SAKE  
OF MY  
DREAM...

...I'LL  
FIGHT THE  
WORLD  
FAIR AND  
SQUARE.

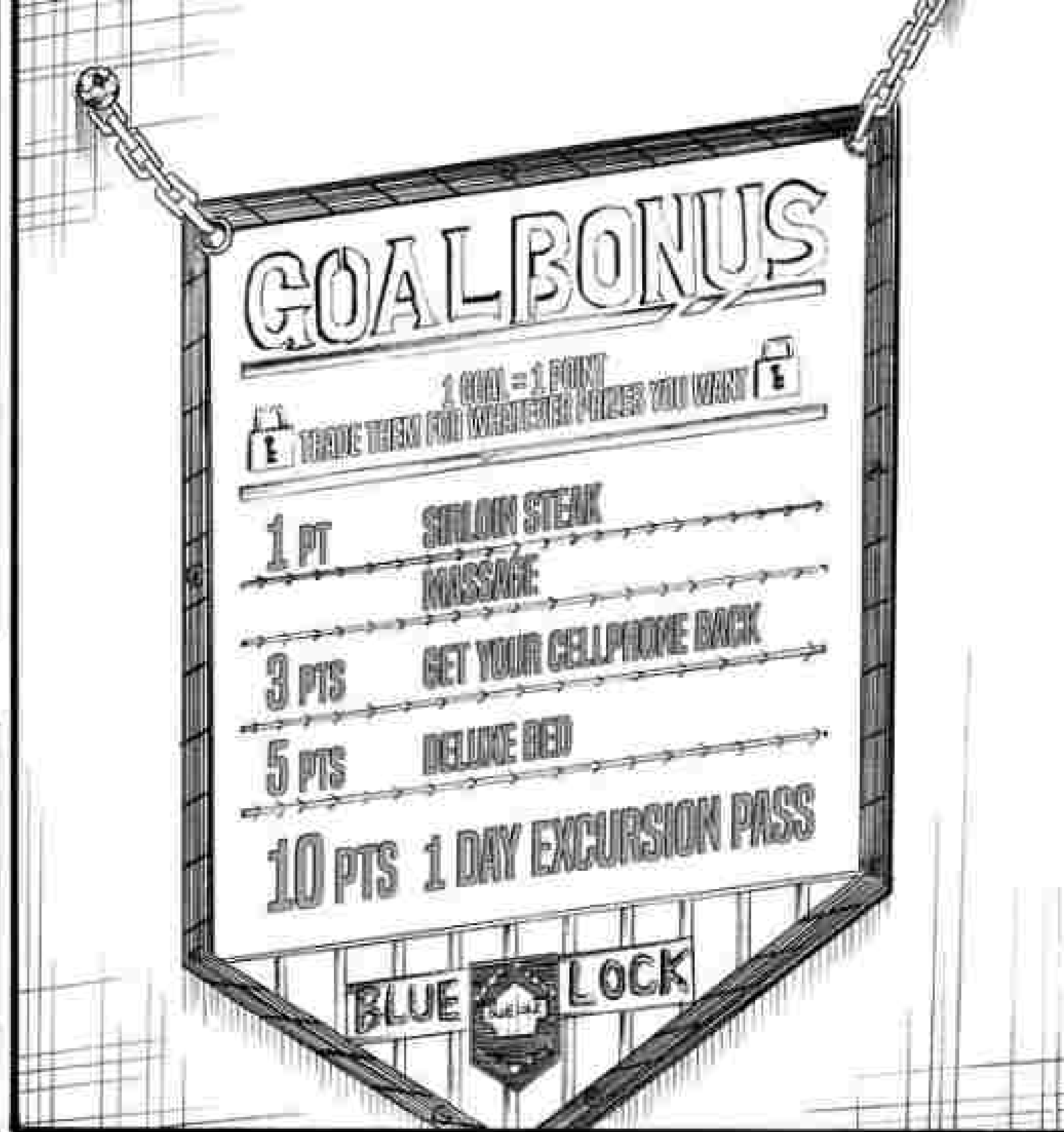
THERE'S  
NOTHING  
EMBARRASSING  
ABOUT THAT.

KUNIGAMI  
REALLY  
IS...

...SOMEONE  
AMAZING.

KUNIGAMI HAS THE RESOLVE THAT I LACK...



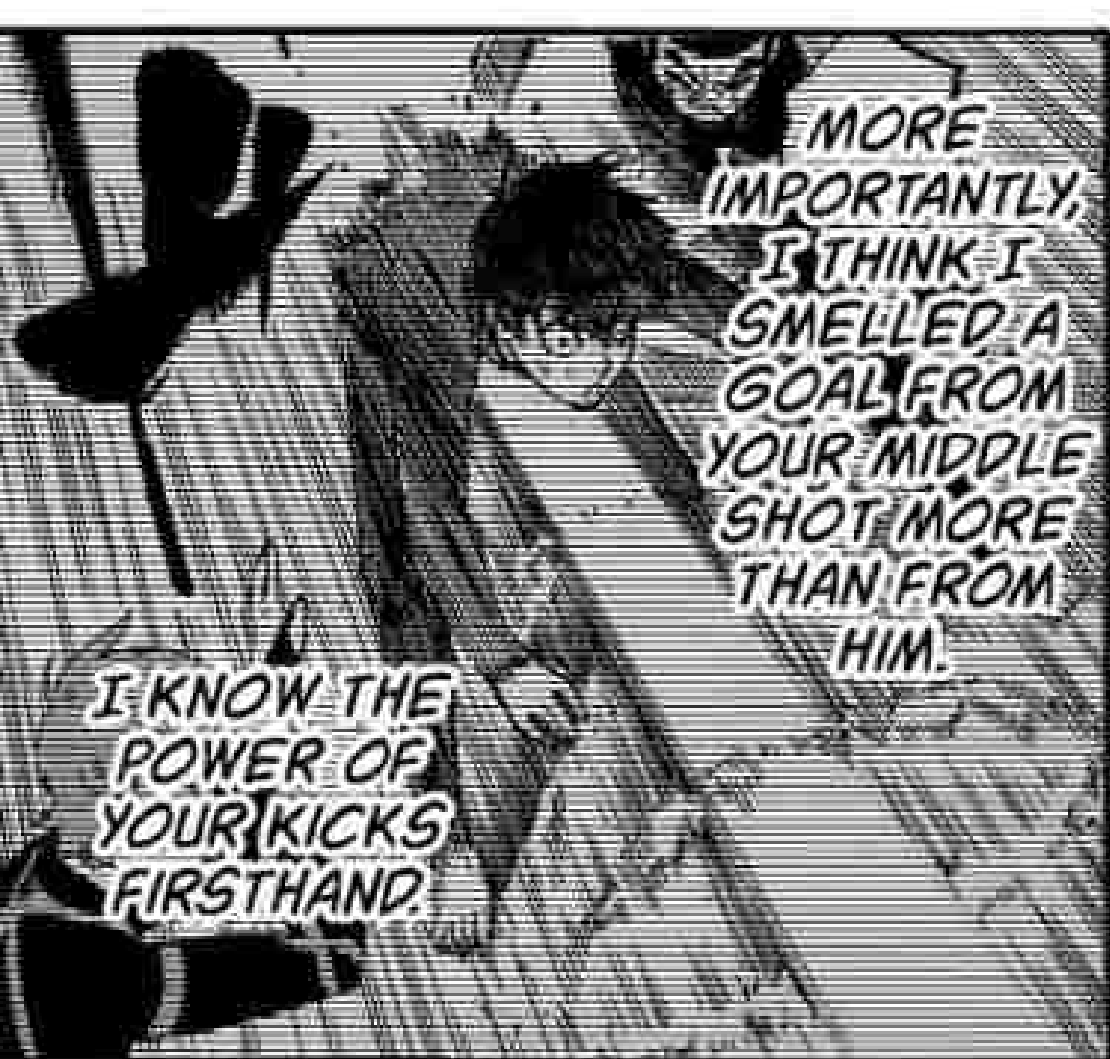






SO I JUST WONDERED WHY YOU PASSED TO ME, WHEN I HAD SOMEONE GUARDING ME SO CLOSELY.

IN TERMS OF POSITIONING, RAICHI WAS MORE OPEN.



MORE IMPORTANTLY, I THINK I SMELLED A GOAL FROM YOUR MIDDLE SHOT MORE THAN FROM HIM.

I KNOW THE POWER OF YOUR KICKS FIRSTHAND.



I CAN'T STOP DROOLING...

OH, I THINK THAT WAS JUST AN UNCONSCIOUS REACTION...

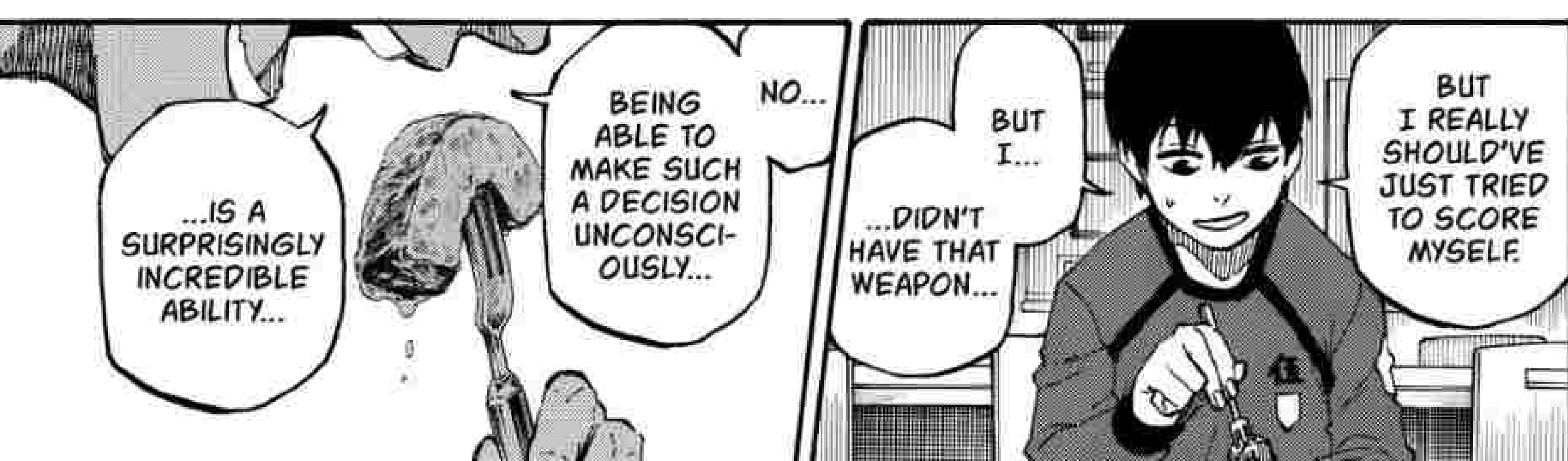
...IT SEEMED LIKE IF I PASSED IT TO RAICHI, HE'D STILL HAVE BAROU UP IN HIS FACE...

BUT WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW...



HUH...

YOU "SMELLED A GOAL"...



...IS A SURPRISINGLY INCREDIBLE ABILITY...

BEING ABLE TO MAKE SUCH A DECISION UNCONSCIOUSLY...

NO...

...DIDN'T HAVE THAT WEAPON...

BUT I...

BUT I REALLY SHOULD'VE JUST TRIED TO SCORE MYSELF.





