

Musha Comic Teaser

Page 1

Panel 1

A workshop. There are gas lamps hanging from the ceiling, which is fairly high, but only a few of them are lit. The building was once a warehouse, but it is entirely underground, so there are no windows. There is an iron stairwell on one wall that leads up to an exit on the second floor, and two doors on the first level. There are two mechanists working on various projects; **Delightful Sunrise**, the Rooster Juunishi-p'o known as Del, has his claws sticking out from underneath a large steam engine of some sort. A second mechanist—Keshou, perhaps—is working at a table on some intricate little thing.

Caption: Kuang-Cho, The ClockWorkshop

(This is a general description; I don't expect to be able to see the whole room in the image, but I do expect the shot to be from pretty far out so we see vague details of the two mechanists.)

Panel 2

A closeup on one of the doors on this level. It has opened, and two men in black are sneaking in, obviously up to no good. All that is visible of them is their eyes—they are wearing ninja-style masks around the rest of their faces. The one in front carries a small gun, probably a six-shooter.

Panel 3

A closeup on Del under the machine. He is focused on what he is doing, and possibly has his tongue sticking out of his beakish mouth in concentration.

Panel 4

Del holds very still, suddenly concentrating, not on his work, but on the conversation of his fellow mechanist.

Caption (from off panel): "Who... who are you?"

Panel 5

Close-up on Del's terrified, wide-eyes.

Caption (from off panel): BANG!

(Other gun noise is fine.)

Page 2

Panel 1

Focus on the body of the Keshou mechanist, now lying, open-eyed and staring at the ceiling, on the floor, clutching a small machine in his hand. One of the men in black is at the edge of the frame, so we see his legs.

Caption (Man in Black): Aw, shit, I think I killed him.

Panel 2

Both men in black look over toward the machine where Del has been working. The front man in black has his gun held up in front of him, and he's ready to cock it again.

Caption: Clank

(Other noise of a tool dropping is fine.)

Panels 3-5 <<these should be skinny, in the middle of the page>>

Del's shadowy form races up the iron stair well.

Panel 3: He is running up the bottom of the stairs, hurrying as fast as he can.

Panel 4: He is halfway up the stairwell, and the gun is being fired. It clangs off the iron stair railing. Del's feathered arms are pulled up around his head, as though they will offer him protection.

Panel 5: Del is half out the door at the top of the stairs. There is another gunshot, tagging the wall right where his head would have been a moment before.

Panel 6:

Shot of the men in black. The one with the gun is still holding it aimed at the top of the staircase.

Panel 7:

The men in black look at each other, their eyes revealing that they know they're in trouble. Their bodies seem to be prepared to either dash up the stairs after Del or make a getaway.

Caption (man with gun): Shit.

Page 3

Panel 1

The two lower-floor doors burst open, and police swarm in at the entrances. Their uniforms look something like this: <http://www.neaikikai.org/early.html>. All wear swords at their belts, but have guns trained on the two villains.

Panel 2

The first police officer to come in is **Inspector Tran Vui**. She has long dark hair in a braid, and is holding her gun in front of her with both hands. She has a very serious expression on her face, although she is probably very pretty. (The uniform is obviously meant for men, but I imagine she fills it out nicely while still looking like she means business.)

Caption (Tran): Freeze! You're under arrest!

Panel 3

The same workshop, hours later, now with yellow police tape winding up the staircase (at least, the bottom of it, which is all we can see) and around the tables and devices in the room. There is a painter stationed next to the body of the Keshou, trying to capture the dead body's position in images on paper, for posterity (or the crime record). Inspector Tran is standing next to him, but is looking up at the staircase at something we can't see.

Panel 4

<<note: How do we feel about honorifics? Meaning -chan, -san, -sama, -kun... all of that? I'll use them, but if you don't think they're appropriate, let me know.>>

Inspector Tran walks to the bottom of the staircase to greet **Amura Hiroko**, a Shangti Cowboy who has seen better days. Amura's clothing is raggedy, and she herself looks slightly gaunt and underfed, making her extreme height even more obvious. She is probably a half-foot taller than Tran. While Tran looks delighted to see Hiroko (extending her hand out as though she will either shake Hiroko's hand or embrace her), Hiroko is taking in the scene passively, with disinterest.

Caption (Tran): Glad you could make it, Hiroko-chan.

Panel 5

The two women stand together at the bottom of the stairs now, Tran's posture still open, though she looks as though she has just been snubbed—and she has. Hiroko has just passed her on the stairs to stand at the bottom of the steps, slightly in front of her.

Caption (Hiroko): Murder?

(Tran): Yes. We got here too late to stop it.

(Hiroko): So I'm on clean-up?

(Tran): Not with the murder. I called you in for something else.

Panel 6

Hiroko spreads her arms at the scene not understanding.

Caption (Hiroko): Then why show me this?

(Tran): There was a witness. The killers were hired thugs, and I've got a solid case. But they aren't masterminds. If we get him in court and have him say all he knows, which can't be much, the damage will be done and they won't go after him.

Page 4

Panel 1

Hiroko looks back at Tran, and the image should be of their faces, looking at each other. There is definitely history here, and there are old wounds not yet uncovered. Tran seems more frustrated than hurt, and Hiroko's dispassion is covering her own pain.

Caption (Tran): Hiroko-chan, why did you come?

(Hiroko): Just needed a job, Inspector Tran.

Panel 2

We're looking at Tran, at the bottom of the stairs, watching as Hiroko walks up. We probably see the bottoms of Hiroko's legs. Tran looks visibly shocked by Hiroko's comment, and hurt by it as well.

Caption (Hiroko): Somebody took mine.

Panel 3

External shot of Kuang-Cho, the underground city. What used to be barracks are now shops, restaurants, houses of delight. Hiroko walks through the crowded, narrow street

with her head tucked in. The ceiling of the underground city is well above her head, but she is hunched to make herself look shorter.

Caption (Hiroko, V.O.): Kuang-Cho, the Underground City. First city in all of Rosuto-Shima to have a female police inspector.

Panel 4

Hiroko at the door of a seedier looking bar. The sign out front is in kanji, and appears to be a menu or advertisement. Her hand is on the knob.

Caption (Hiroko, V.O.): I'd probably like her in other circumstances. Hell, I used to love the girl. But that was back when we were partners.

Panel 5

The scene inside is dark, with red and blue highlights from colored lanterns hanging around the bar (which is on the left side of the room). Female employees, dressed in cheongsams slit high up the side and cut with rather large teardrops cut from the high neckline, hang over male customers. There is probably a dice game going on in one corner. Lots of action, lots of people, lots of debauchery. Hiroko is off panel.

Caption (Hiroko, V.O.): Just two women, against the world.

Page 5

Panel 1

Hiroko is at the bar, just opposite the bar-tender. He is a very round man, not as tall as Hiroko, so she is leaning on the bar to match his height. He is pouring sake from a bottle into a small carafe, and a pitcher of water is also sitting on the counter (which he used just before to water the sake down).

Caption (Hiroko): I'm looking for the Emperor's Man.

(Bar-tender): No race today. Come back tomorrow.

Panel 2

Hiroko places her hand over the man's wrist, gently, but with a slight threat behind it. He looks up at her, away from his carafe, and stops pouring the sake.

Caption (Hiroko): Maybe I'm looking for a tip. Word on the street is that some team has a new rickshaw. Word on the street is that that's the team to bet on.

Panel 3

Hiroko is leaning back, and the bartender is smiling at her across the bar, leaning in.

Caption (Hiroko): Word on the street is that they're looking for a little additional financial backing. I might know someone who can help.

(Bar-tender): Oh, really?

Panel 4

Hiroko is in a darker area of Kuang-Cho. Probably a warehouse district of some sort (although much of the city was once warehouses). She has her hand on a doorknob and is leaning back up against the building, her hand-gun ready in her other hand.

Caption (Hiroko, V.O.): Sometimes it's too easy. Listen to gossip. Dangle a coin and get a tip. Shoot the bad-guy in the knee-caps. Get paid.

Panel 5

Inside the building. Del is again under a machine, this time a steam-powered rickshaw. Several dangerous looking men stand around him, all Yakuza.

Caption (Del): You know, this would be a great deal easier if you weren't all standing around me, watching. I have performance anxiety.

(Yakuza): You want our help getting out of town or not?

Panel 6

Inside the building. There is a large explosion as the steam-powered rickshaw turns from a solid machine into flying pieces. The yakuza are all darting away (though one of them has caught on fire). Del is huddling, face down, right where he had been, his hands over his head, looking more like a turtle than a Rooster. Hiroko has swung open the door and is immediately in the doorway, her gun pointed at the closest yakuza.

Caption (Hiroko, V.O.): Sometimes it gets complicated.

Page 6

Panel 1

Close up on Hiroko. She is in the same posture Tran used earlier—both hands on the gun, aiming at the closest Yakuza.

Caption (Hiroko): Freeze! You're all under arrest!

(Hiroko, V.O.): I've thought about being a cop.

Panel 2

Any number of bullets are flying at Hiroko. She tumbles to the side, trying to dart behind a table that got turned over during the explosion.

(Hiroko, V.O.): Then again...

Panel 3

Wide shot on the room again. Hiroko has cover behind the table and is firing back at the Yakuza. Several of the Yakuza are fleeing, while others are still shooting at Hiroko. The yakuza on fire is rolling around on the ground. A large yakuza has lifted Del up by his singed outfit and is holding the small Juunishi-p'o opposite his face, cocking back his gun and aiming at Del's head.

Panel 4

Angle from just behind Hiroko (she's in the foreground of the panel), lining her up with the yakuza that has Del. She's aiming at him, ignoring the bullets flying past her. This yakuza is actually closer to her than the guys shooting at her.

Panel 5

The knee-cap of the yakuza with Del explodes as the bullet goes through it. He begins to fall backwards, dropping his gun and using that hand for balance. The arm holding Del goes further up above the yakuza's head—which means that Del is actually going toward the left side of the panel, in the direction of Hiroko. It looks as though Del is going to go

flying. Del is terrified; his posture is tucked in, so his elbows and knees are coming in toward the center of his body, and his hands are over his eyes.

Page 7

Panel 1

Del has landed and skittered to a halt a few yards from Hiroko's table. Hiroko is getting up from her hiding place and dashing toward him. There are still bullets flying, and she is still returning fire.

Panel 2

Close up on Del. Hiroko's empty hand is grabbing the back collar of his shirt, which was held by the Yakuza just a moment before.

Panel 3-5 <<thin frames in the center of the page again>>

Panel 3

Half lifting, half dragging Del, Hiroko makes it to the door with him, still firing her gun at the yakuza. She is standing taller and more confidently now than she has at any point until now. Del is still curled up in a little ball as closely as he can be.

Panel 4

Close up on her gun. It jams.

Panel 5

Shot of the empty doorway. Hiroko's legs (or part of Del) are just visible, as Hiroko has dashed around the corner and out of sight.

Panel 6

External shot of a steam engine. The sky is clear and the engine is moving quickly and effectively, with a long cloud of steam rising up from the front car.

Panel 7

Hiroko and Del inside one of the train cars. They are sitting across a table from each other. Del has a cup of tea in front of him, and looks extremely small and childish across from the extremely tall Hiroko. He is looking into his tea as opposed to meeting Hiroko's gaze.

Caption (Hiroko): ...so they'd like you to testify. After that, you're free as a bird.

Page 8

Panel 1

Same basic image. Del is possibly moving the tea cup between his hands.

Caption (Hiroko): I was trying to make a joke.

(Del): It was a noble attempt.

Panel 2

Now both Hiroko and Del look at each other. Del is appraising the Shangti Cowboy, making a decision about whether or not to trust her.

Caption (Del): And you'll protect me? As soon as I fix your gun, I mean.

(Hiroko): Huh?

Panel 3-5 <<skinny again>>

Del fixes the gun over the course of these three panels. The impression is that his hands are moving far more quickly than they have any right to.

Panel 6

Hiroko looks at the gun, as Del smiles at her from across the table. She is impressed, and she actually lets it show on her face.

(Hiroko): How'd you do that?

Panel 7

Del's smug face, grinning at his own talents, his hands under his chin, fingers laced, with the palms of his hands down. He appears to have taken a liking to Hiroko.

Caption (Del): I'm your man.

Page 9

Panel 1

Del, sitting at the witness stand in a courtroom. He looks confident, not the nervous Del we've seen through the rest of the comic. Hey may be speaking, but what he is saying is not relevant.

Caption (Hiroko, V.O.): The only thing more satisfying than tying up the loose ends of a case...

Panel 2

Hiroko and Inspector Tran outside the court room. Hiroko is leaning against the wall, sipping from a Western mug. Tran is cradling a traditional eastern tea-cup (no handle) in her hands. They appear to be waiting for court to release.

Caption (Tran): You did a good job, Hiroko. You've always been good with missing persons.

(Hiroko, V.O.): Is tying them up with a friend.

Panel 3

Hiroko looks up from her drink at Tran, suddenly feeling guilty for the way she treated her old friend earlier. The steam is rising into her face, and Tran is watching her, still stung by their previous interactions.

Caption (Hiroko): Listen, Vui...

(Tran): Hiroko, let's just not, okay?

(Hiroko): No, listen. I'm glad you got the job. You're a good cop.

Panel 4

Tran's face relaxes, as though everything she'd been worried about has gone now, as though she just got her friend back. Hiroko looks slightly embarrassed, but the focus is on Tran here, not her.

Caption (Tran): Thank you, Hiroko-chan.

Panel 5 (long panel)

Watching the train come in. It's sunset, and we can just see the silhouettes of Del and Hiroko on the platform. The captions take up most of the space.

Caption (Del): So, we're partners now, right?

(Hiroko): What?

(Del): Partners! You know, private investigator partners...

(Hiroko): Why are you still following me?

(Del): You're going to protect me. Remember?

(Hiroko): I work alone.

(Del): Okay, not partners. Sidekick?

(Hiroko): Where do you come up with this stuff?

(Del): Novels. I fixed your gun.

(Hiroko): Fine. Sidekick.

(Del): Great. So... where are we going?