

THE LIGHT NOVEL ISSUE

CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

konshuu

Volume XLVIII, Issue XII



ANNA-NISHIKINOMIYA

Shimoneta

Art by Deborah Lim



THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

RASCAL DOES NOT DREAM OF BUNNY GIRL SENPAI

青春ブタ野郎は
バニーガール先輩の
夢をみない

Second-year high school student Sakuta Azusagawa is in a library one day when he sees a bunny girl. This girl is Mai Sakurajima, a famous actress on hiatus. Somehow, Sakuta is the only one who can see her -- the effects of a disease called Adolescence Syndrome. Through witty character interactions and pseudo-science, Sakuta helps Mai and other girls suffering through this phenomenon in this *Monogatari*-like story.

endrome: nor due to sensitivity and instability.



Fall 2018, Cloverworks
Directed by Soichi Masui



Fall 2012, Kyoto Animation
Directed by Tatsuya Ishihara

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

CHUUNIBYOU DEMO KOI GA SHITAI!



Yuuta Togashi is a former chuunibyou who starts anew in a faraway highschool wanting to be a normal highschool student. However, that isn't easy as he meets current chuunibyou Rikka Takanashi, who is very interested in his past. Yuuta meets other chuunis (both former and current) as he starts to come to terms with his past and present in a story about identity and self-understanding.

ZERO NO TSUKAIMA: FROM ANIME TO LIGHT NOVELS



BENSON PENG

2ND YEAR, ENGINEERING AND PHYSICS

I am as behind schedule on reading light novels as everything else T^T.

STAFF WRITER

My introduction to light novels will probably make major publishers in Japan grin and say under their breath, “just according to keikaku (the plan).” I started reading light novels because I watched the novels’ anime adaptations and eventually developed enough curiosity to buy the novels. However, thanks to light novels, I have again fallen in love with the anime I watched.

The first light novel I have read happened to coincide with the first anime I have watched: *Zero no Tsukaima*, or *The Familiar of Zero*. It is perhaps the anime that helped open two Pandora’s Boxes in the anime industry: the isekai genre and light novel adaptations. It pioneered the old isekai formula: a typical Japanese high school boy travelling to another world brimmed with magic and Tolkien beasts. Our hero, a boy named Saito, would go on an adventure in this world, defeating enemies using special ability granted upon him. Finally, he would become romantically involved with a girl. Of course, when I was watching the anime in 2010, none of these would come across my mind as I was just a naive boy thinking, “Yay, explosions! Yay, magic! Yay, anti-tank missile!” I considered *Zero no Tsukaima* as my favourite anime simply because it is isekai. Naturally, as I watch more animes, the clichés catched up, and I was about to let the anime gather up dust when I decided to open up the light novels.

When I first opened up the light novels of *Zero no Tsukaima*, I discovered that if watching an anime is like glancing over news of happenings, reading light novels would be like having an intimate conversation with the characters. Through reading his monologues, I began to see the hero, Saito, as an atypical isekai protagonist. He is a boy who misses his family, treasures his partner Louise, and wants to belong in a world where he is an outcast. Louise, the archetypal tsundere type character who summoned Saito to the isekai, became a more nuanced character who cares about people around her, and like Saito, wanted to prove herself to be worthy and “honorable” due to her insecurities. [slight spoilers] In one of the turning point of the light novel series, where both characters need to make a life-and-death decision, the vividness and depth of the author’s description of each character almost shocked me. Saito, despite appearing as a hero fighting for his kingdom, is just a boy who wants to overcome fear and protect his love interest. Louise, who until then has repeated the mantra of “honor” and “glory” typical of the young aristocrats around her, has to struggle with guilt and regrets in the aftermath of the decision before maturing as a character. Thanks to the novel, I see *Zero no Tsukaima* not just as a isekai comedy, but a tale of love and growth.



Perhaps this is what the author Noboru Yamaguchi wanted when he continued to write *Zero no Tsukaima* while combating with cancer in 2011: to write a tale of love and growth. And just as what Yamaguchi sensei remarked in his postscript script in volume 17 and 20, Louise has came to lead his story, and I have witnessed Saito growing up. I am grateful to have such wonderful characters growing up with me. Thank you, and rest in peace, Yamaguchi-sensei.



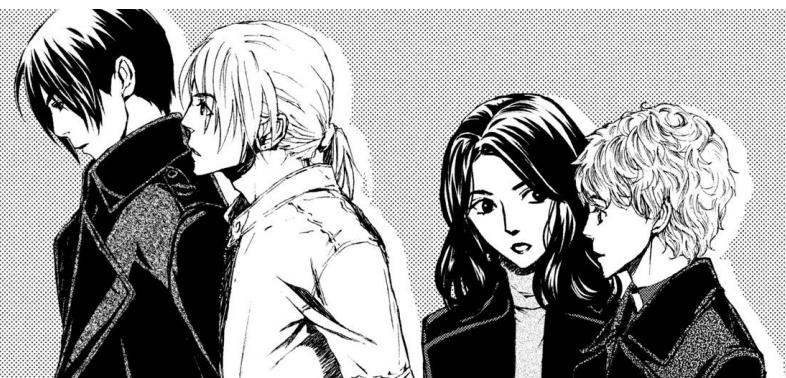
LIGHT READING

ZIANA DEEN
3RD YEAR, ARCHITECTURE

STAFF WRITER

Everyone always thinks I'm a great artist because I study architecture but the truth is I learned how to draw from manga.

The prevalence and normalization of manga in Japanese culture makes the existence of light novels a unique sort of literary work. The love child between manga and novels, light novels are short volumes of stories that have become the origin of many great manga. Often coupled with manga art, these stories are a great reprieve aimed towards teenagers. And me.



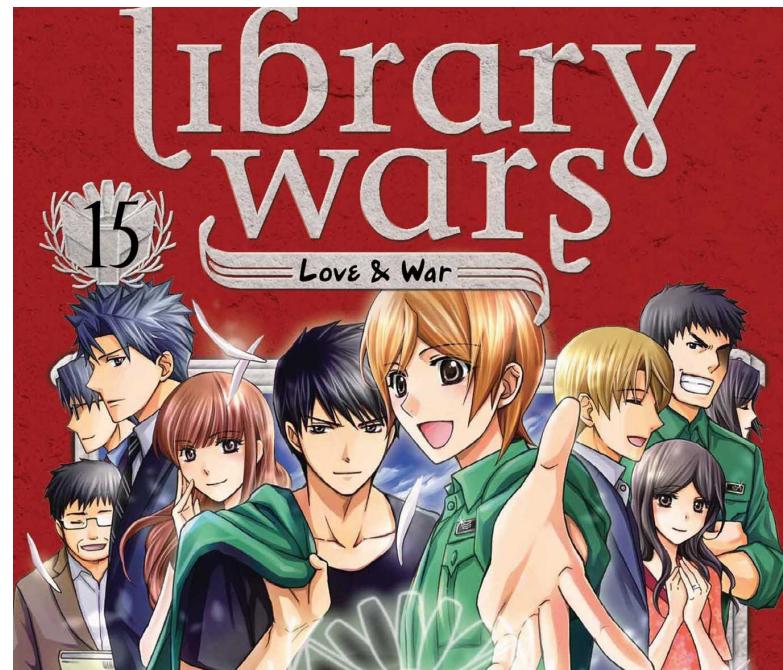
The first manga that I'm aware of originated from a light novel was *Ghost Hunt*, when my sister picked up a Japanese copy in the local library. As a third grader, I fondly remember being equally horrified and fascinated by the supernatural horror mysteries as pursued by Mai and Naru. Since I was a cheap, you know, elementary school student, I majorly relied on online websites to read manga. But even then, I had to rely on the interest of scanlators, and for a while, *Ghost Hunt* wasn't in the interest of many. So when I'd read the first five thrilling manga volumes of *Ghost Hunt* and found no continuation online, I turned to translations. Because if the manga isn't there for you, the original light novel is, and there's far more to it.

Library Wars, my favorite light novel turned manga, is an interesting light novel for several reasons. Firstly, there are two manga adaptations: *Love and War* and *Spitfire*. *Love and War* has fifteen volumes while the short-lived *Spitfire* has been turned into an anime. Both stay true to the original content, with their own unique twists. It was my first time realizing that

there could be different interpretations of manga, and from the written word of a light novel, two different manga artists could envision separate retellings of the same story.

Ascendance of a Bookworm frustrated me because when I started reading the manga, there were only fourteen chapters. And that was incredibly frustrating because the premise is so interesting: a booklover gets sent into a fantasy world as a five year old where literacy and books are rare. Something unique about light novels is that, much like regular novels, a lot of details go into the world building so that we, as readers, can understand. Manga does that in half the time. When I found the light novel translations (there were three times more than manga chapters), I realized just how much went into it. I also realized that many light novels were written as manga are drawn, which can be a little awkward. It's one thing reading in comic form someone doing seiza as a gag; it's a completely other thing reading it in words.

As someone who wants to be a writer and is embarrassed by her drawing skills, the idea of light novels is particularly fascinating to me. I could come up with the ideas while someone else draws and interprets it for me. But the prominence of light novels in Japan is not as readily available in America – and I really wonder what that would look like.



**My Teen
Romantic
Comedy
SNAFU**

WHY OREGAIRU IS MY FAVORITE ANIME

©2013 WATARU WATARI, SHOGAKUKAN/OREGAIRO PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

sental
FILMWORKS

BOGEUN CHOI

STAFF WRITER

4TH YEAR, APPLIED MATH AND DATA SCIENCE

Now that I wrote this article, I have nothing left I want to write about.

If there's one thing you should know about me, it's that my favorite anime is *Yahari Ore no Seishun Love Comedy wa Machigatteiru*, better known as *My Youth Romantic Comedy is Wrong As I Expected*, *My Teen Romantic Comedy SNAFU*, *Oregairu*, or simply *SNAFU* (I'll be using *Oregairu* from onward).

Originally a LN (light novel), *Oregairu* tells the tale of a highschool student named Hikigaya Hachiman, otherwise known in the fanbase as 8man because of "hachi" meaning 8 in Japanese. As punishment for writing an essay mocking social relationships and the idea of youth, 8man's teacher forces him to join the Service Club, whose lone member is the popular and beautiful Yukinoshita Yukino. Their job in the club? Help solve other students' problems. Along the way, they meet the outgoing Yuigahama Yui, who starts as their first case but ends up joining their club afterwards. The show is very much a character-driven one as the main three characters end up going through some slow character development (especially 8man as his beliefs and lifestyle are challenged).



The three main characters (Yukinon, Yui, Hachiman)

Now why is this such a good show? The concept doesn't seem like anything special, just high school students living their lives. Well it's not the concept, it's the execution. That's what separates *Oregairu* from its peers, similar shows such as *Boku wa Tomodachi ga Sukunai* (*Haganai*) and *Ore no Kanojo to Osananajimi ga Shuraba Sugiru* (*Oreshura*).



The biggest thing is the characters. Unlike most protagonists, 8man has a pretty well-defined personality: he's pessimistic, apathetic to the concept of youth, and has always been a loner. Off the bat, that's something that separates *Oregairu* from a lot of anime -- the characters are very in-depth and not just cookie-cutter tropes. Though you could label characters under a trope, they're more than that with their own motivations and reasons for acting the way they do. For example, Yukino could be labeled kuudere or tsundere, but it's very debatable to do so. She's more of an "ice queen", a character that is cold towards a character/characters. And even then, there's a legitimate reason why she acts the way she does (which is minor spoilers). Yui is more easily defined as the "genki" character, one who is very cheerful and outgoing. However, there is more to her than that which again, is minor spoilers.

Another reason the show is so good is because the story is very relatable, especially to anybody who went through high school without many friends *cough me cough*. This is a dialogue-heavy show, and the dialogue mostly comes from 8man, king of loners. So it's not a big surprise that a lot of what is said is #relatable to those with a similar background. From recalling cringeworthy interactions with the opposite sex to the famous "I hate nice girls" spiel, there's a lot in the show that hits just right. And it's not limited to loners only: anybody who's been through high school can remember meeting somebody similar to any *Oregairu* character. I know I did while I was watching, vividly remembering past classmates with both good and bad memories.



So with that, I highly recommend watching *Oregairu* if you haven't already done so. If not for any of the reasons above, do it for the aforementioned Yuigahama Yui. AKA my profile picture and my best girl in anime (for best girl overall refer to a previous article on our Valentine's Issue... actually don't. Please).



MAKING OVERPOWERED CHARACTERS INTERESTING

ETHAN CARTER

2ND YEAR, MATH AND DATA SCIENCE

If I could sell my boredom, I'm confident I could make a living.

STAFF WRITER

"Mary Sue" is a pretty common insult thrown around to describe characters in anime. It's used to describe characters who are seemingly perfect: powerful but humble, attractive, well-liked by other characters, and without any personality flaws. Basically, these characters are boring. It's just not very interesting watching some flawless bozo effortlessly body his enemies and live a perfect life. That's not to say that any strong character will be boring though. There are characters that are incredibly powerful in their setting, but are still interesting and enjoyable. An example is Izayoi Sakamaki from the light novel series "*Mondaiji-tachi ga Isekai kara Kuru Sou Desu yo?*" (which I will call *Mondaiji-tachi* from now on).

Mondaiji-tachi is an isekai series which centers on three teenagers with attitudes (and psychic powers called "gifts") who are transported to world where various communities participate in a game to battle for superiority. The three join the low ranked "No Name" community, and begin to participate in the game. The three have quite varied powers: one has mind control, which allows her to control not only people, but also objects and weapons, while the second can communicate and take on the abilities of animals. Izayoi's gift is never fully explained, but it functions mainly as a



Izayoi having a laugh as he throws rocks at over 2000 miles per hour

form of super strength. Very super strength, to be precise. He mainly uses this ability by throwing things like pebbles at speeds exceeding the third cosmic velocity; faster than a spaceship needs to travel in order to exit the solar system. He is also able to run on walls by planting his foot hard enough to make a foothold, and was even able to lift an entire building with ease. In a setting where the other powers are relatively grounded, these feats are incredible. Through the entire anime series, which adapted the first 2 volumes of the novel, the only tense fights were the ones he didn't participate in.

Despite this, Izayoi is still widely considered to be a very enjoyable character, due mostly to his personality. Unlike characters in some other shows, Izayoi is neither stoic or humble about his power. He described himself as "vulgar, savage and a hopeless hedonist." Because of his brash, cocky, and often rude personality, his interactions with other characters are always enjoyable, and in no way does he appear as "flawless."



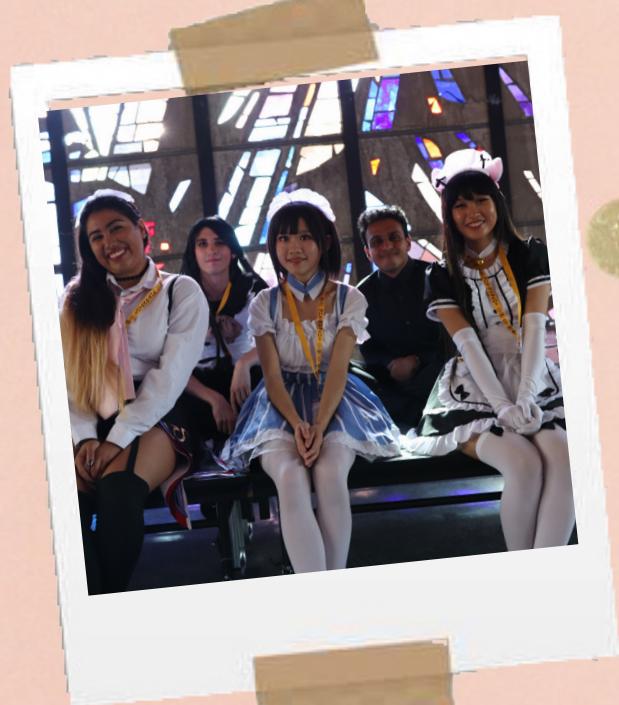
It's art if I can't see anything?!

Izayoi upon learning about magic skirts that, no matter what kind of movement the wearer makes, will never reveal what's underneath

Though he has many of the qualities of a "Mary Sue," Izayoi's character is saved by being engaging, and by the writers not falling into the trap of making their characters perfect and predictable.

ANIME DESTINY FEEDBACK

HERE'S SOME WONDERFUL REASONS WHY YOU
SHOULD JOIN US FOR ANIME DESTINY FOR NEXT YEAR!
(FT. REAL ATTENDEE RESPONSES!)



"Love the custom lanyards and the list/map of AA artists!"

"Playing with Intermission was fun :) Yuzu et Citrus concert was probably the highlight of my event since they had a hella nice setlist!"

"AA is always my fave, and it was the biggest it's ever been! Shopping in artist alley and hanging out with Cal alums and staff was my favorite!"

"The art this year has improved so much compared to last year!"

"It was a little hot, but I still found it enjoyable!"

"A few more events would really elevate AD to the next level."

"The board games were quite fun!"



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CLUB EVENTS

Follow us on social media or visit **cal.moe** for updates!
Bi-Weekly Showings: See you next semester!
Game Nights: Thursday 8-10 pm, 222 Wheeler



SHIROE AND AKATSUKI
Log Horizon
Art by Angela Xu