

2020



CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

konshuu

ANTHOLOGY

cal.moe/konshuu

ABOUT KONSHUU

Konshuu is a weekly publication created by Cal Animage Alpha, a student-run organization at the University of California, Berkeley.

Cal Animage Alpha (CAA) was established in 1989, and additional Cal Animage chapters were formed at other universities in the following years. Notably, our alumni are famous for founding Anime Expo, the largest anime convention in the United States. Cal Animage members have also gone on to create notable conventions like Fanime and the streaming service Crunchyroll.

We remain an active club on the UC Berkeley campus with weekly showings, workshops, game nights, and dinner socials on weekdays as well as special events in the Bay Area on weekends, ranging from social gatherings to tours of local companies in the anime/manga/video game industry. Cal Animage Alpha is comprised of students at UC Berkeley along with a growing alumni network of several generations. We strive to maintain and enhance a community for fans of Japanese popular culture and media, particularly anime and manga. Above all, Cal Animage Alpha aims to be an inclusive social club for the Berkeley community. The majority of our events are also open to the general public.

Our most prominent event is **Anime Destiny**, an annual anime convention held on UC Berkeley's campus. Cal Animage Alpha invites local artists to promote and sell their artwork, invites dealers to sell merchandise, hosts panel events and discussions, and prepares a variety of convention activities for Anime Destiny attendees. Residents of the Bay Area come for an all-day experience centered around anime, manga, games and more, hosted and staffed by the officers of Cal Animage Alpha.

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the third *Konshuu Anthology*! My name is Athena, and I'm the Editor-in-Chief of *Konshuu* as of fall 2020. We are proud to present the highlights of our work over the past 1.5 years in this special edition of *Konshuu*.

In 1995, six years after the founding of Cal Animage Alpha, the first issue of *Konshuu* was published. The format received a major overhaul in 2015, where it went from a four-page newsletter to an eight-page magazine, complete with cover art and several articles.

Now, *Konshuu* is by far the largest department in Cal Animage Alpha, with a team of around 20 creatives and editors as of spring 2021. And still, the publication continues to evolve. From a big redesign in early 2020 to a greater focus on digital publishing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as experimenting with different types of content on our new YouTube channel (cal.moe/youtube), our staff always strives to improve and adapt *Konshuu* as the times demand.

But most of all, *Konshuu* holds great personal significance in many of its staff and readers alike.

Back when I was a new admit visiting Berkeley on Cal Day, *Konshuu* was what first drew me to Cal Animage Alpha's table. An anime club that also produced a weekly publication was a fascinating idea to me, and as an aspiring creator I thought it would be a good opportunity to get my work published. I had originally planned to apply during my second year at Berkeley, but somehow I found myself sending an application right after attending the first general meeting as a freshman. And I'm glad I did.

Being part of *Konshuu*'s creative team taught me a lot about managing projects and deadlines, working with others, and the publishing process from start to finish. Having regular illustration assignments helped me break out of my comfort zone and greatly improve as an artist. But most importantly, I've made some of my closest friends through being part of *Konshuu* and CAA. *Konshuu* means so much to me in so many ways, and I'm sure there are others who feel the same.

Konshuu is not only a magazine, it's a passion project where people come together to express their love for anime, manga, and other related media. It's a legacy left behind by generations of talented artists, writers, and graphic designers. *Konshuu* has been ongoing for over 25 years now, and it's far from stopping anytime soon.

Here's to another great year for *Konshuu*!

Athena Chen
Editor-in-Chief



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Highlights: Articles of 2019-2020



A-SET

AI: THE SOMNIUM FILES

ART BY ATHENA CHEN



MONOGATARI AND OUR INNER DEMONS

JONATHAN QIAN

MONOGATARI IS LIKE THE ONLY DEMON-RELATED THING I'VE REALLY EVER SEEN SO...

⚠ SPOILERS FOR MONOGATARI

Everyone has their own inner demons; they are something we live and contend with on a daily basis, and often take a lot of strength and help to overcome. *Monogatari* explores inner demons and overcoming them in a unique, yet relatable way. In this article, I wanted to take a closer look at Senjougahara and Hanekawa as examples of battling and overcoming your inner demons.

Let's start with Senjougahara. At a young age, Senjougahara dealt with multiple traumatic experiences involving her mother and her illness. Many of these experiences were so horrible that she wanted to completely forget about her mother and the terrible experiences associated with her mother. In exchange for her weight and emotions, Senjougahara allowed a crab god to completely remove her memories of those times and her mother.



Senjougahara meeting the crab god

Now, I am sure this is something that many of us can relate to. When terrible things happen, it is often easier to try to forget about them than it is to process and grow from them; the weight of these events is often too much for people to handle immediately. The issue then becomes WHEN you decide to confront those painful memories and try to learn and grow from them. In the case of Senjougahara, her very existence began to fade from the moment that she accepted the deal with the crab god, which is almost equivalent to losing the battle with her inner demons. However, with enough time away from those memories and a little support, Senjougahara confronts the crab god and her past, and accepts her traumatic experiences as things that are simply a part of her that she must live with and learn from. Senjougahara's story is something anyone can learn from; it's ok to

forget about painful memories for a while, but at some point, you must process them because they are a part of you.

Hanekawa's case is a little less relatable, but showcases an extreme way to deal with personal demons like trauma and stress. Rather than forgetting about them, Hanekawa forces herself to only see the positives of every situation, and accepts everything that comes her way. As a result of this choice, Hanekawa becomes a person without any preferences; she simply just lets life wash over her while completely shutting out her inner demons and emotions while letting those demons deal with her negative emotions while she is asleep.



Black Hanekawa, Hanekawa's inner demon that helps her deal with negative emotions

However, since these are demons with the added weight of Hanekawa's stress, anger, and sadness, the way they help Hanekawa deal with these negative feelings ends up hurting bystanders and her loved ones, going against the way that Hanekawa tries to live her life. She becomes a walking contradiction. Fortunately, Hanekawa learns to accept her inner demons and negative emotions as a part of being human, and becomes someone more normal and well-adjusted. The lesson to be learned from Hanekawa is that while it is ok to rely on others for help during tough times, you must eventually learn to face your inner demons and the hard parts of life directly too.

At the end of the day, our inner demons are things we must all face, but we should face them in ways that are healthy and safe for ourselves and the people around us. *Monogatari* explores this theme in a way that is relatable and impactful through Senjougahara and Hanekawa's character arcs.



PROMARE REVIEW

ABEER HOSSAIN

KISS KISS KISS KISS KISS KISS

⚠ SLIGHT SPOILERS FOR PROMARE

After freezing in Los Angeles Convention Center's Hall B for hours and hours, through four other panels, my friends and I sat front row for TRIGGER's US premier of *Promare*. I honestly didn't know what to expect. I hadn't seen any trailers or previews and my only exposure to the movie was its poster and people saying, "You know that *Fire Force* anime coming out? Yea it's like that but not really." Still, I had to see what the studio that's given us *Kill la Kill*, *Little Witch Academia*, and the mediocrities that are *Darling in the Franxx* and *Kiznaiver* had to offer us this time. The room was filled with thousands of people, and the premier began with its outstanding soundtrack blasting from the speakers. After a short introduction, the movie was on its way.

There's a lot to tackle for this movie, so let's take things one at a time. The music in this movie is chilling. When it needs to sit back and let what's on the screen speak for itself, it does. When it needs to accentuate the emotions and thoughts of the characters, it does. And when it needs to blow the viewer away with bombastic vocals and a blaring orchestra, it does. "Inferno" is catchy and enthralling and had all of Hall B hyped before and especially after the movie. The piece makes sure its energy is felt by its listeners. My personal favorite (and many others') is Lio Fotia's theme, Kakusei. The song starts off slow and unassuming with a smooth, lilting voice as if it were a lullaby. Thirty seconds in, the song hits you with exploding drums, a chanting chorus, and a smooth guitar riff. The song is as dynamic as the character it was made for and was on repeat for weeks after seeing the movie.

A discussion of the movie's visuals would be the most logical transition after its audio, but I want to save the best for last. I'll instead focus on the characters. The main character of *Promare*, Galo Thymos, is definitely the weakest part of the film. It's hard to firmly say that he brings the movie down as the movie is a parody of itself and of TRIGGER, so this empty



Cover art for the *Promare* OST

Kamina replica may be somewhat excusable. He definitely isn't the most complex, intricately woven character, but something more than a screaming machine would have been nice. I may be nit-picking here as in the bigger picture, the movie is perfectly fine with a loud, bull-headed MC and while a deeper character could elevate the movie further, it certainly isn't a necessity. The side characters around Galo are just okay. None of them are particularly special and they all fulfill their roles in the movie. Not much to say there. Same goes for the main antagonist. His motivations and character aren't anything special, but they don't detract from the movie. The shining start of this movie is Lio Fotia. He is basically everything the main character is not (which further adds to the list of reasons I can excuse MC's lack of depth). He is caring, cunning, highly

intelligent, and a great leader. I don't want to go too far into his character development as it would involve some pretty strong spoilers, but I will say that his changes throughout the movie are handled spectacularly. While we don't see the world from his eyes in the movie, he has certainly earned his place on all the promotional material. I know it's a bit of a letdown to say he's the best character and not go too far into why, but if you haven't seen the movie already, his character is enough reason.



Look at best boi.

Promare's story is definitely a strong point. It isn't incredibly layered and complex, and it doesn't need to be. While deeper and more intricate themes can be parsed together with a bit of analysis, *Promare*'s plot succeeds without them. It is a simple story of oppression and control. Going further, you could say it's a story of racism, prejudice, fear, and a commentary on totalitarian governments. The Burnish are a race of mutant humans capable of manipulating fire. Due to the possible destruction that can be caused with these powers, intentional or not, the Burnish are persecuted by the rest of society. While the plot gets a bit more fantastical than this, that basic premise of oppression holds true throughout. Personally, the simplicity of the story is quite endearing, and the splattering of various other themes throughout only adds to the plot rather than diverting attention towards missed potential.

In connection with *Promare*'s story are its unyielding self-parodies. While the movie has been in production for years, it feels as if the studio took the complaints from *Darling in the Franxx* and its utterly nonsensical ending and turned it on the audience. *Promare*, like *Kill la Kill* and *Gurren Lagann*, takes the action and plot to eleven. There is no sense of being grounded in reality. Where *DitF* attempted to create a somewhat realistic world (despite the existence of monsters and mechas), it abandoned what made it great by launching the story into space. *Promare*, on the other hand, breaks logic and "realism" from its initial scenes. Additionally, with names like "Deus Ex Machina" and a giant city-wide spaceship, we can safely say this is TRIGGER fully embracing their crazy selves and pointing the middle finger to their critics.

These insane plotlines and fights are accompanied with epilepsy-inducing animation. *Promare*'s fight scenes are



The promotional art alone reflects the levels of epic TRIGGER achieves with *Promare*

spectacles like no other and had thousands of viewers in Hall B brimming with energy and pure hype. Every character is uniquely designed, and so are the mechas, cars, firefighter trucks, etc. The in-your-face pastel-neon color scheme screams for attention, and the fluid, explosive animation makes sure you give it. *Promare* is unapologetically an assault on your eyes in the most beautiful of ways, and I would see the movie five more times just to marvel at its artistic design and animation.



If I were to sum up *Promare* in one simple word, it would be "fun." The movie is simply one of the most fun experiences I've ever had. Being in a room with thousands of other die-hard weebs probably added to that experience, but the movie itself was just amazing. Watch *Promare*, not to dissect its plot and its characters, but to sit back and enjoy what it has to offer.



DESIGN SPECS OF A GLASSES CHARACTER

ELLIOT LU

MEGANE IS LOVE, MEGANE IS LIFE

The most important design note of a character who wears glasses is frequently the glasses.

Unlike in real life, where glasses mean you just can't see without them, glasses carry insight into character personalities or become a metaphor for something else. Rarely do you see a character that doesn't fall into a glasses trope within anime -- character design often defaults to no glasses, and they are then added for a specific reason.

Certain recurring traits pop up in fictional characters who have glasses. The glasses tend to signal that the character is serious, with differences between female and male characters. Male and female glasses characters overlap in the student council, smart, logical, visually cool character tropes.

Sakamoto, from *Sakamoto Desu Ga*, is a perfect representation of how male glasses characters are both funny and serious. He is the ideal student and competent at all things, which gets played for comedy because he goes to absurd and extreme ends to do very ordinary things. He is known as "Bayonetta's son" within fandom, and the contrast between Sakamoto and Bayonetta's presentation in their franchises mirrors the general approach to male versus female megane characters. Bayonetta is a video game protagonist noted for her sex appeal and legendary gun heels, with glasses tied into her core design. She's one hell of a sexy witch and just as over the top as Sakamoto, but while Sakamoto stars in a comedy franchise, Bayonetta leads a fanservice-y, action-adventure franchise. The glasses trope is prone to the same stereotypes that male and female anime characters tend to fall into - female characters are emphasized

for their femininity, whether cute or sexual, unlike their male counterparts, which can be masculine without it being their defining visual.

One major subversion of the glasses character trope occurs in *Persona 4*, where they flat out give almost everyone glasses, so personality design ends up being non-important in relation to wearing glasses. Instead of the presence of glasses being a shorthand for character personality types, *Persona 4* uses glasses as a literal sense for its characters to see through dense fog in a crazy alternate dimension called the TV world. Every single main character wore them (except Teddie) and then removed them as a metaphor for when the fog was dispelled at the same time as the truth behind *P4*'s mystery was revealed. Ironically, *P4* also falls back into the glasses character trope by giving each character different glasses symbolic to their personality type - the beautiful Yukiko with delicate red wire frames, the strong delinquent Kanji with shaded sunglasses, and the spunky tomboy Chie with bright yellow thick rims, and so forth. So the distinction between design stereotype and unique personality symbolism is that wearing glasses did not associate with their personality types, but they were given certain types of glasses frames to match personalities.

In the end, glasses are a useful visual shorthand within animanga franchises. After all, it's similar to how younger characters have bigger eyes, or how straight cut bangs go on traditionally Japanese characters. For better or worse, giving a character glasses is a strong way to associate certain personalities with an appearance.

BL OR SURVIVAL HORROR?

RACHEL MIN

I'VE NEVER PLAYED SWEET POOL BEFORE

Nitro+Chiral claims to be a company that produces BL visual novels. To this date, they've released four main titles, their most famous titles being *Togainu no Chi* and *DRAMAtical Murder*.

You may recognize Nitro+Chiral by its parent company, nitro+. nitro+ has created many famous titles such as *Steins;Gate* and *Chaos;Head* and has also had a hand in creating titles such as *Madoka Magica*.

You may also recognize nitro+'s penchant for adding edge and horror to their franchises while luring people in with promises of cute characters. Nitro+Chiral stays true to their parent company.

Most of Nitro+Chiral's VNs have relatively benign plots. *Togainu no Chi* follows a guy named Akira as he is forced to participate in a competition to avoid being arrested. The protagonist of *DRAMAtical Murder*, Aoba, fights his way into the city of the bourgeoisie so he can bring down an evil corporation. But the plot is obviously not the main focus of these VNs. Like every other BL VN, the main objective is to successfully romance a character and live happily ever after.

Or at least that's what Nitro+Chiral wants you to think.

The real objective is to avoid getting brutally tortured and/or murdered. These aren't BL VNs; they're survival horror games. *Togainu no Chi* and *DRAMAtical Murder* are riddled with death traps. Bad ends could mean

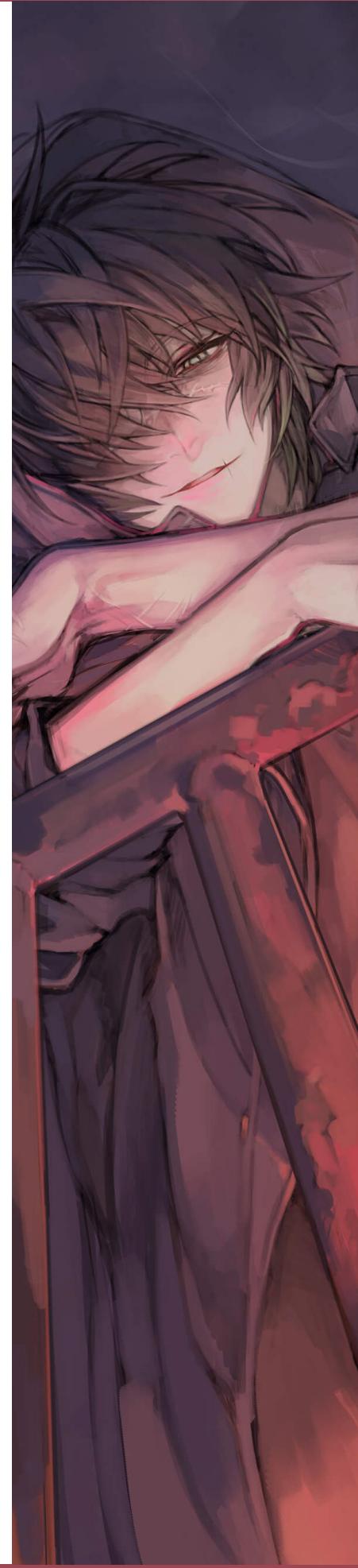
anything from getting brutally slashed, stabbed, decapitated, or amputated, amongst other things. One end even sends you into an eternal blood hell. One would normally play VNs thinking "How do I romance my favorite character?", but with the Nitro+Chiral titles, there's the added question of "How do I survive?"

And then there's *sweet pool*, in which Nitro+Chiral seems to have briefly forgotten that they weren't actually supposed to be making a survival horror game. At first glance, *sweet pool* has the makings of a stereotypical VN--a school setting, a childhood friend, etc--but within the first few scenes, *sweet pool* bolts off in a direction nobody imagined it could go. Suddenly, the main character starts hallucinating scenes out of some hellscape, water starts turning into blood, and gore starts dropping out of nowhere.

Long gone are those days where failing a romance route ends in simple heartbreak. In the eyes of Nitro+Chiral, failing to fall in love is the end, the annihilation of all the hope and joy in the protagonist's life. You fall in love, not for the sake of falling in love but for the sake of not being wiped from the face of the earth. The heart-warming and sexy scenes granted for surviving the VN are simply incentives.

Fact: Japan's visual novel market is huge. Are Nitro+Chiral and nitro+ trying to tap into the VN market by adding romance to their survival horror games and marketing it as a BL VN? Does Nitro+Chiral just want to be a company that produces edgy BL VNs with intense horror elements? Am I reading too much into this?

Whatever Nitro+Chiral's intentions are, it seems to be working seeing as they're profiting enough to release another visual novel next year. By the looks of it, it's another survival horror game.





GET HYPED FOR JUJUTSU KAISEN!

NEIL FRYDENDAL

YUUTA BEST BOI.

In *Konshuu Volume 50*'s Anime Destiny issue from early November of last year, I predicted that *Jujutsu Kaisen*'s anime adaptation would be announced at Jump Festa 2020 (late December). However, it was actually announced even earlier than that in *WSJ Issue 52*, 2019 (late November)! Although they heavily promoted the announcement at Jump Festa, so I wasn't that off. Regardless, as a huge fan of the series, I'm beyond ecstatic that soon a ton more people are gonna get to experience its amazingness! Towards that end, I'm writing this article to tell you a little bit about *Jujutsu Kaisen* and get you as hyped as I am for its upcoming anime adaptation!

Jujutsu mainly follows 3 high school students and their teacher as they explore the world of sorcery, try to save people from that world's horrors, and battle against those who misuse their sorcery powers. It definitely gives off some serious *Naruto* vibes with its dark/serious tone and team setup (3 students and a teacher?), but I've also heard it compared to early *Bleach* a lot (although I haven't read/watched that yet, so I wouldn't know). Like *Naruto*, JK's worldbuilding is masterful and thoroughly immerses you in its world of exhilarating sorcery battles and interesting characters. Side note: I actually like the translated English title: "Sorcery Fight" and think it captures the series quite well, but Viz clearly went with "Jujutsu Kaisen" because it sounds less generic. I personally hate this developing trend of leaving Japanese words untranslated for basically no reason, but whatever.

Anyway, speaking of the characters—and I know this is said about basically every series, but—I think its characters are one of *Jujutsu*'s

biggest strengths. They're well-written, deeply fleshed out, and all unique. And you really come to care about them, so when they experience hardship, it's that much more meaningful. The 4 main characters are protagonist Yuuji Itadori, his 2 teammates Megumi Fushiguro and Nobara Kugisaki, and their teacher Satoru Gojou. Having Yuuji be the protagonist is great because he's different from the usual shounen protagonist in the way he thinks about things, so it makes *Jujutsu Kaisen* feel fresh and innovative. Additionally, there are no Sakuras on this team! Megumi and Nobara both carry their own weight and are plenty interesting themselves. And lastly, there's Gojou-sensei, who's definitely reminiscent of Kakashi as the powerful teacher character, but his distinct personality and design set him apart and also make him one of the series' best characters.



mask boi, Satoru Gojou



protag boi, Yuuji Itadori

Lastly, I need to talk about the series' villains because they're also one of *Jujutsu Kaisen*'s biggest strengths. They have actual motivations for their actions, and you can sometimes even feel for them, especially with the main villain, who is brilliantly written and many people's favorite character. And the great fights—and I don't know if I emphasized this enough, but they are indeed great—are made even better by this character depth on both sides. I cannot wait to see them animated! Assuming Toho doesn't screw it up, *Jujutsu Kaisen* absolutely has the potential to be 2020's *Demon Slayer*, so don't sleep on it! Fun fact side note: just like *Demon Slayer*, JK has a 4-chapter prequel volume! Although actually *JK Vol 0* came before the rest of the series, so it isn't a prequel, but it's treated as such. Definitely check it out if it's not adapted as part of the anime! It's important! Now to go pray for that sick *Chainsaw Man* anime announcement ... ;).



WELCOME TO GRIND-BLUE FARM-TASY: A PRIMER TO GOOD GACHA DESIGN

MARC CASTILLO

REGARDLESS OF WHAT I SAY, I STILL THINK THAT YOU LOSE THE MOMENT YOU PLAY A GACHA GAME.

My first introduction to *Granblue Fantasy* or *GBF* was through the collective screams of fangirls about a certain “gay, emo, angel twink Sandalphon” in my Twitter feed. As a connoisseur of all things gay, gacha and trashy, I was compelled to dive my head into this curious game my friend insists to be “not like the highway robbery gacha that is *F*te/Go*.” Little did I know that this would start my journey to late-night raids, coffee-induced guild pvps and friendships torn by biases. Despite this, *GBF* left me with the thought that maybe-- just maybe, gacha games can be good?

Similar to every other RPG-inspired gacha game, *GBF* tosses you into the shoes of an unnamed protagonist living quietly in a small village at the edges of the Empire. Until suddenly, your life is upturned by the Empire searching for the girl you have just saved. In order to escape the pursuers hot on your tail, the game finally introduces you to its gacha system that summons a band of skyfarers to protect against the Empire and the various monsters in the world of *GBF*. Now you could be excused for skipping out of this game for its generic plotline (I swear the plot gets better after chapter 40), but what makes *GBF* shine is not just its plot but the various elements in the game that make game progression feel extremely satisfying.

We can’t have a discussion about a gacha game without addressing the elephant in the room--how kind is the gacha system? At a glance, *GBF* gacha might seem brutal, (0.3% chance to draw a rate-up unit), until you consider the sheer amount of safety net the game provides you. For starters, you are guaranteed whatever character is in rate-up as long as you roll 300 times in that banner, called a “spark.” In this way, you can feel reassured that through all the salt piling up from seeing your friends rolling the shiny, new bait character, you are guaranteed of rolling them as long as you work hard enough.

Saving up 300 rolls is definitely an arduous task; however, the game helps you by bestowing tons and tons of premium currency--and I really do mean a TON. Consider this, a typical celebration event in *GBF* lasts for about 30 days giving out 200 crystals every day per login (1 roll=300 crystals). Then, on the actual celebration day, players can

receive about 3,000-10,000 crystals. That will net us around 30-50 rolls just from login. Now that is generous enough, but we still haven’t considered the king of all salts, the envy of all gachas and the bane of *F*te/GO*--yes, I am talking about the infamous *GBF* roulette.

In a sentence, the *GBF* roulette is “probably a gambler’s w*t dream.” As the name implies, the roulette provides you a chance to get a 10, 20, 30, 100 or 200 roll, in order of decreasing chance of hitting. This roulette lasts for 10-15 days giving you a minimum of 100 free rolls if you got tossed to the wrong end of the bell curve. Now you might be frustrated for getting 10 rolls everyday, but worry not, for RNGesus is here for you. *GBF* giveth the double whammy of receiving the chance of doubling the number of rolls you won and filling a gauge that will guarantee an SSR. Combined with all of the above, it is not rare to see players “sparking” two times in a span of a month!



Regardless of what I said above, I still think *GBF* is not without its flaws. For example, the current shift to seasonal characters becoming more meta than their free-to-play alternatives and the artificial scarcity of some endgame items is alarming me. Nevertheless, I still firmly believe that for the occasional gacha spenders or the so-called “dolphins,” like myself, will enjoy trying out *Granblue Fantasy* for themselves.



GENEALOGY OF THE HOLY WAR, PART 1

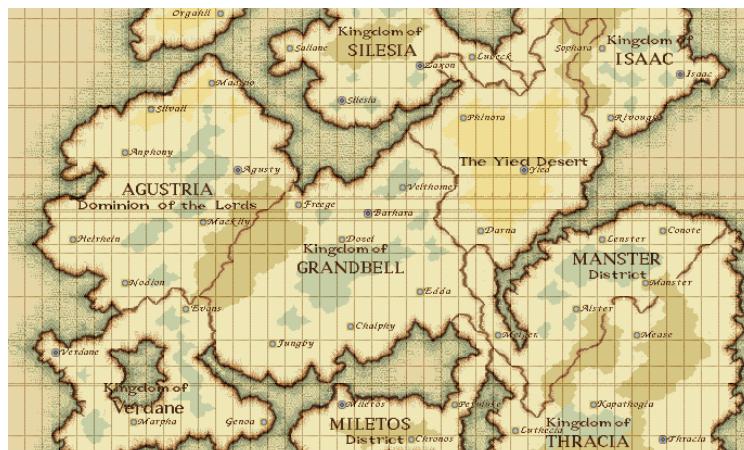
NICHOLAS WONO SAPUTRA

THE DOOR TO DESTINY

"The year is 757, Grann Calendar. And thus the threshold of fate is cast open. Nobody could have known then that this simple disturbance was but the first of countless calamities to come."

Genealogy of the Holy War is the fourth installment in the *Fire Emblem* franchise and was released on the Super Famicom in 1996. While the game was never released internationally, fans all over the world have made a plethora of translation patches, the most recent ones receiving near-professional polish. On top of that, the game is easily emulated, so there should be no reason for one to not have access to it.

What makes *Genealogy* stand out from other tactical rpgs, including, but not limited to, the rest of the *Fire Emblem* franchise, is the way in which it mixes *Legend of the Galactic Heroes*-level political drama and large-scale military tactics with *Fire Emblem*'s character-driven storytelling, support bond mechanics, and fantasy setting.



This is best exemplified by the game's narrative structure, which begins with fairytale-like mysticism and romance that devolves into a tragic tale of death, destruction, and betrayal.

Unlike many of the other *Fire Emblem* games, *Genealogy* isn't set in a world where an established evil entity is already wreaking havoc. Instead, it begins with a string of seemingly unrelated attacks upon the Kingdom of Granville and its close political allies, enacted by

nations who had previously been neutral or even allied with the Kingdom.

Since Granvalle's main force is occupied with its war against the Kingdom of Isaach to the east, it's up to House Chalphy's Lord Sigurd and his handful of soldiers to defend the west border between the Kingdoms of Granvalle and Verdane and rescue House Jungby's Lady Aideen from the hands of the Verdane invading force. Along the way, Sigurd receives suspiciously aggressive orders from Granvalle's capital, Belhalla, to march into foreign territory to halt any further invasions. However, Sigurd is blinded by the beauty of the mysterious maiden of the forest, Deirdre, to realize that he's marching his soldiers into a political trap...



This narrative structure is elevated by the game's phenomenal soundtrack, which stands toe-to-toe with some of the most recent entries into the series, like *Fire Emblem: Three Houses* or the remastered tunes of *Fire Emblem Echoes: Shadows of Valentia*. From the panic-inducing, and appropriately named, *Crisis 1* to the hype-filled and uplifting *Recruitment*, *Genealogy* has no shortage of iconic themes for every situation and story-beat, all of which fit *Genealogy*'s

romantic, yet melancholic tone. One especially stand out theme is *Conversation 1*, which is a piece filled with sadness and regret but has a hint of hope to it, like the sacrifices made on the journey won't be in vain. In a way, *Conversation 1* is the one piece that perfectly encapsulates why *Genealogy*'s narrative, and the execution of that narrative, feels so real and impactful as it reminds you that no conflict is without sacrifices, sacrifices that can shake you to your very core and make you question why you fight on through all this suffering, this pain, this regret.



The weight of these sacrifices are further emphasized in *Genealogy*'s gameplay mechanics, which force you to come to terms with the immense scale of this conflict: you aren't just leading a ragtag group of heroes against an easily identifiable antagonist. You are a military commander participating in a war between massive nations, and your tactical decisions must take civilian lives, ally lives, and even the lives of your enemies into consideration. This scale is conveyed through *Genealogy*'s enormous maps, which, without hyperbole, are truly the largest maps in *Fire Emblem* history, despite it being the 4th installment of a 16-game series. These battle maps are literally the size of each nation involved in the conflict and feature multiple castles representing the different houses/fiefdoms within each nation, all of which have their own motivations for participating, or not participating, in the conflict. Each of these maps are technically a chapter, but are all able to be split into multiple distinct acts, as neighboring castles, which may have been previously neutral or even allied, begin to fear your invading army and make preparations to crush your advance, even before you decide to march on their soil.

Thus, you legitimately have to be prepared for what your enemies, and even allies, *can* do, not what they *would* do. This multi-act structure places emphasis on big-picture strategy, and you may find yourself subconsciously applying principles straight out of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*.

Genealogy also features the best possible Love/Romance System in



the entire franchise, 16 years before *Fire Emblem: Awakening* and *Fates*'s controversial matchmaking systems. This is because *Genealogy* restricts the pairings you can have in order to aid the story and keep its tone consistent. In Jugdral, love is a fleeting thing, just like the lives of its people entrapped in the flames of war. That's why *Genealogy*'s second generation isn't just a novel mechanic; it is integral to its themes about the flow of time and the inheritance of hope even in the face of certain doom.

This design philosophy isn't just limited to the romance options, as normal supports are scripted to occur in certain chapters, given that the player has met a certain set of conditions. While it may be a jarring design choice to players used to being able to have supports between every unit in later entries, these scripted supports are arguably far more satisfying as they are filled with purpose and offer uniquely tailored benefits for the characters involved. For example, the current support model in *Three Houses* offers a standardized set of stat benefits given proximity. However, *Genealogy*'s support conversations can offer permanent benefits, from an increase to love points, to a permanent stat increase, and even a legendary weapon you didn't have access to before.

However, it is important to remember that this is a 24-year-old game, and it is limited by the technology of its time. Certain cutscenes that take place on the battle map don't make sense in terms of the allied unit placements, as enemies can simply fill up huge swaths of the map without allowing you to react until they've settled into their battle positions (though, if we're to be honest, this problem seems to still be quite prevalent in even the latest entries in the series). Its wonderful soundtrack is limited to synthesizers, and many official remastered arrangements by Nintendo demonstrate the soundtrack's limitless orchestral potential. Some mechanics such as the inability to trade, the scripted-yet-conditional support conversations, and the plethora of stats and skills built into each character can seem archaic for fans of later entries in the series, a sentiment that is only compounded by the lengthy travel distance between important spots on the map, making chapters seem unnecessarily long. On top of that, future mechanics in the series, like battalions, seem like a perfect fit for *Genealogy*, only further cementing its need for a remake.

That said, *Genealogy* has found a successor in the franchise's latest, and most popular entry, *Three Houses*, which borrows many of its themes and plot points from *Genealogy*. From Crests being clearly inspired by Holy Blood, to the inclusion and reveal of a Flame Emperor, to its heavy political drama, to even the way in which *Three Houses* conveys its conflict through a world map and nation-spanning military campaigns all trace their origin back to *Genealogy*.



Now, if you've been paying close attention, you may have noticed something odd: I've been focusing a lot on the first generation, and have only mentioned the existence of a second generation once. Well, that's because I was only talking about the first half of the game, as its sense of scale can't be contained in just one article. Part 2'll come eventually, perhaps when a *Genealogy* remake is announced.



WEATHERING SHINKAI'S NAME

RICHARD HO

I DO LIKE TENKI NO KO, IT'S SIMPLY OVERRATED IN MY OPINION, AND FEELS ALMOST LIKE IT SHOULD'VE COME FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTOR, IN THE SAME VEIN AS I WANT TO EAT YOUR PANCREAS.

⚠ SPOILERS FOR TENKI NO KO AND KIMI NO NA WA

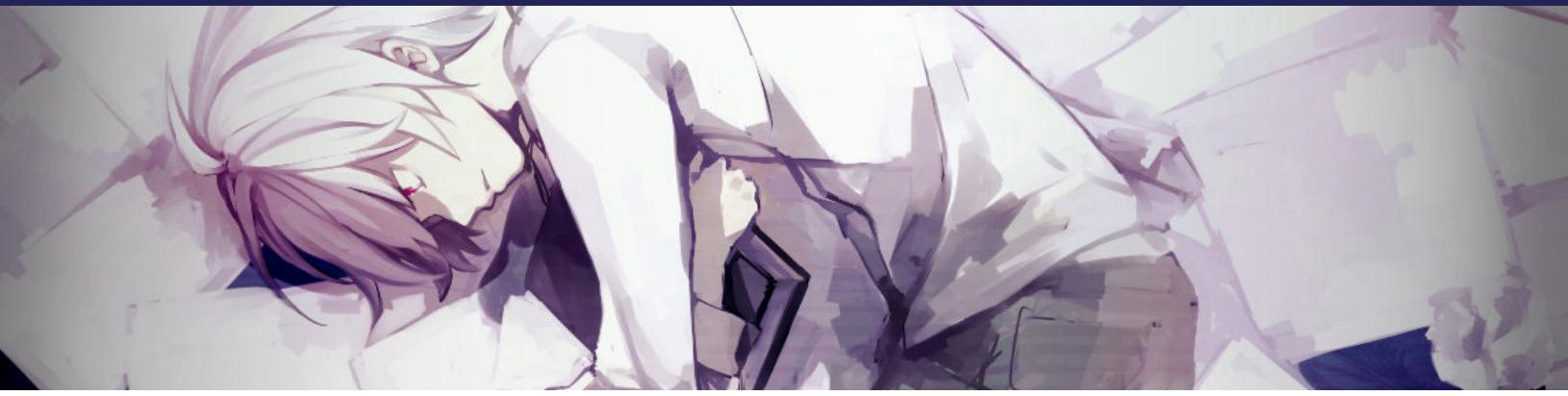
Makoto Shinkai has become the next big name in the anime industry, big enough that you don't have to be an otaku in Japan to know his name. However, his career didn't begin with his breakout success of *Kimi no Na wa* in 2016; in fact, he has been crafting well-regarded short films for decades. Shinkai's earlier works, written and sometimes even animated by himself, often have a surreal, melancholic, or tragic feel to them, and often prominently feature communication as a theme. For example, *Voice of a Distant Star* explored the effects of time on communication and differential experiences of a young couple in a mecha-styled future, almost serving as a deconstruction of the genre at the same time. *5 Centimeters per Second* showed the evolution of communication as technology changes, from a time where telephones and email weren't common to our modern age, and how it affects how close we are to others. *Garden of Words* ironically did not have much dialogue in it, instead choosing to portray emotions through body language, atmosphere, and silence, making the few conversations all the more weighted. Even in *Kimi no Na wa*, we see two teens communicating across time, space, and even mortality, taking a peek into each other's lives and leaving messages behind, and eventually deciding what was important enough to leave as a final message.

However, in *Tenki no Ko* we see a shift towards a broader audience and more of a deviation from Shinkai's previous works. The Ghibli style is in full effect, the scenes are often focused on action and saku-ga moments, and the setting grounded in our reality brings with it echoes of company promotions. The trait this movie lacked the most was subtlety; foreshadowing was rather obvious, symbolism was overemphasized instead of letting the viewer notice them for themselves, and you can't forget about how a McDonald's burger is the best meal you've ever had in your entire life. There was little struggle over communication; secrets and thoughts flowed relatively freely, there was not much dramatic irony to play at the audience's heartstrings, and even Hina's role as a weather miko does not see her ever communicating with the life living in the skies above. And rather than continue with Shinkai's common endings of bittersweetness and acceptance, he gives us a world where actions don't have consequences and the protagonists have a strictly happy ending. Hodoka makes a brash

decision to pull Hina from the skies, regardless of the consequences--which ended up becoming the flooding of Tokyo. As the end scene begins to roll, you hear his voiceover and you think you know what's coming: his actions have caused devastation and the near collapse of Japanese society, and people are desperately trying to survive and rebuild in the new world they find themselves in. Instead, we see a world where firing a pistol at a police officer and resisting arrest gets a light slap on the wrist, where everyone has adapted to their new life perfectly, where our side protagonists succeed and our main protagonist reunites with the girl. No consequence is given to breaking laws, dooming the world; instead, we are taught that true love conquers all, and those who help will be rewarded, and that is distinctively not Shinkai.



I ask the reader to consider an alternative ending, and see which gives a little more depth. Our "hero" is sent back home, and continues with his voiceover as usual. Japan is still flooded, and the economy and infrastructure of the country is devastated. Wherever Hodoka goes, his reputation as the one who caused the eternal rain follows him in the background, alone as he started the movie as. When he meets with Keisuke, he is welcomed, though Keisuke obviously seems to have something he wants to say but can't quite bring himself to do it. As Hodoka leaves, Keisuke looks at a picture of his daughter, and the viewer knows he'll never be able to visit her again due to her asthma. Finally, he finds Hina, and we see the same reputation has followed her as well, as she dons her hood to prevent others from recognizing her. He calls out, and she turns to him. A tear rolls down her face to join the rain, and she gives a small sad smile before the screen cuts to black. Is she happy to see him? Or does she regret what they did?



WHY MAFUMAFU IS AN ANGEL

ERIK NELSON

I THINK I LIKE MAFUMAFU TOO MUCH

I love Mafumafu too much. Who is Mafumafu? Mafumafu is an utaite, which is a singer on Nico Nico Douga who covers vocaloid songs. There are tons of other utaite that I love (that are certainly underrated compared to Mafumafu). But why do I love Mafumafu specifically so much? I don't even know, so let's find out together. First, what do his fans think? I was going to do some big brain thing where I go through his YouTube channel and find the most popular keywords in the comments, but that's really hard and I suck at computers. I'll do that later at some point. But I'll bet 12 dollars that one of the most popular keywords is "cute."

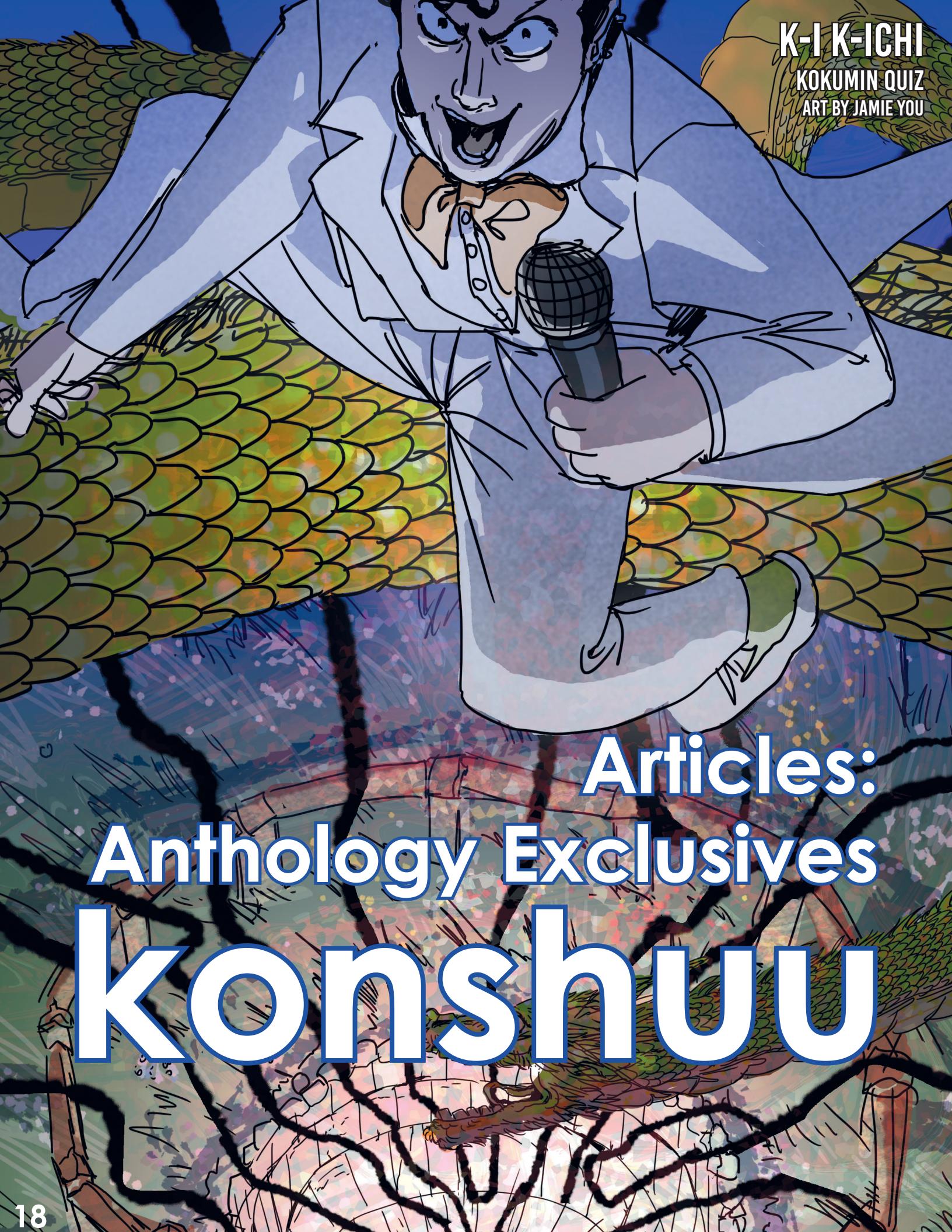


Ok, Mafumafu is cute, but like 90% of people in Japanese pop culture who are remotely well known are liked because they're cute. What is unique about Mafumafu? His voice is often mistaken for a girl's. He looks pretty androgynous, but this again isn't that uncommon. It certainly contributes to why so many female (and male) fans think he's so cute. But Mafumafu became popular on Nico Nico before anyone knew what he looked like, through only the power of his voice. It's certainly high pitched and feminine (though in my opinion clearly male, and also early recordings of his sound a lot more masculine). It's soft and pretty sometimes but can have an edge or be extremely expressive. I know that many fans connect to the expressiveness of his voice when singing about heavy subjects like in "Shuuten" or "Hated

by Life Itself." His voice certainly is very individual and unique, and clearly based off earlier recordings he honed it into its current sound presumably through lots of practice. I can almost instantly identify his voice because it's so unique.

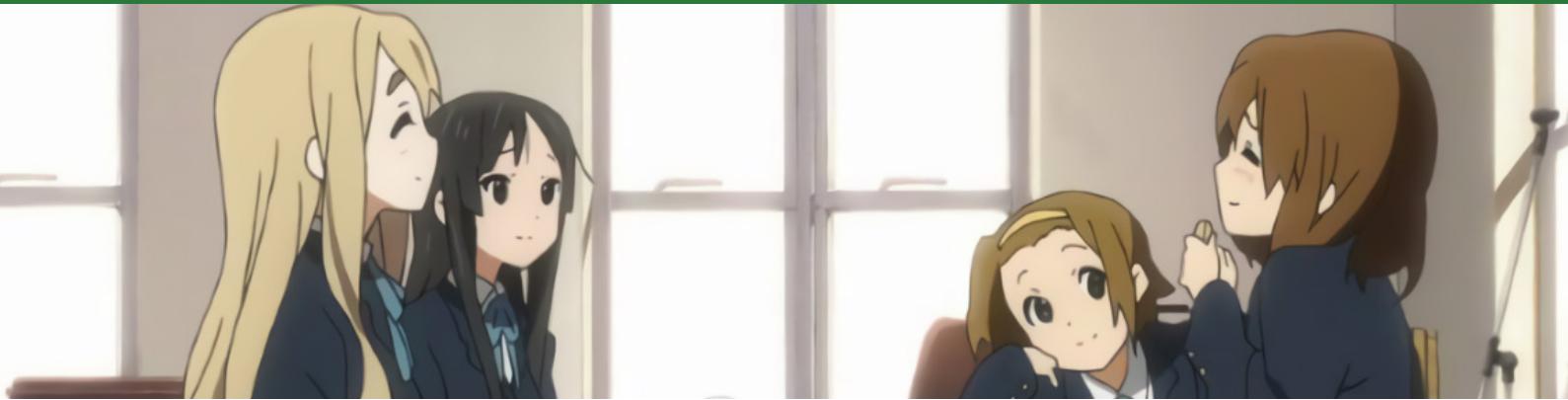


He's had a huge influence on me and my life. His music almost always makes me feel strong emotions: excitement, happiness, emo, etc. He came to me in a time in my life where I had been struggling for a while with my direction. I'm a jazz musician, but I've been growing more and more distant from that genre for various reasons. Mafumafu completely changed my life in a way that I would have never foreseen. He inspired me to pursue my current goal in life: to sound like a weeb on my instrument, the saxophone. This is a whole philosophical/musical idea that I've been thinking of for a long time, but I think "weebness" can be expressed musically, and to discover what the sonic essence of weeb is, I'm unironically studying Mafumafu like I would study John Coltrane or something. I've also decided to study weeb music (including Vocaloid, Utaito, anime etc.) academically, from a sort of ethnomusicological point of view and I'm working on a pretty big (in my opinion) thesis on how "weebness" relates to genre. This was pretty much all inspired by Mafumafu because he got me into utaite and vocaloid and made me the abomination that I am now. Mafumafu has changed my life and inspired me musically, and helped me find a direction in life.



K-IK-ICHI
KOKUMIN QUIZ
ART BY JAMIE YOU

Articles:
Anthology Exclusives
konshuu



CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ANIME

SHAMIN CHOWDHURY

IT WAS ABRUPT, BUT SAYOUNARA BERKELEY!

I want to hear people have more interesting conversations about anime. Too many times I hear people say things like "Oh, I liked this show. The art and animation was good. The story was nice.", but statements like that don't really say much about the show itself. You can elaborate and give details on your opinions, and in doing so, you can make more substantial statements. You don't have to state an entire essay on what you liked about the show. Just one or two specific details are enough to say something meaningful, maybe even something profound. In fact, the better details, in my opinion, are the ones that say something about your taste because that gets at the core of thinking about anime, and art in general really.

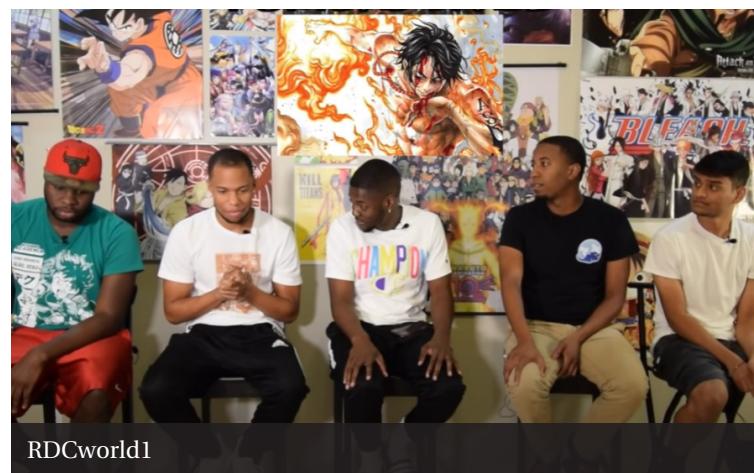
What I have in mind when I think of conversations that aren't as interesting are for example the bits I've heard from *The Filler Arc*, a series of YouTube videos in which streamer/YouTuber LilyPichu and former OfflineTV member Xell discuss anime, often whatever is current. In a video of the series titled "♥ ITALK ABOUT ANIME ft. Xell (*^◡^*)", LilyPichu mentions the anime *Monster* to help describe her dark, psychological taste, and she says "It's very deep, psychological, it has a really good message about humanity and like, good and evil and [...] it's one of those animes where you lay down in bed and you go 'Wow, life.'" It's kinda funny what she said, but it doesn't really help me understand her taste all that well. Yeah, I get that she likes dark, psychological shows, but I don't get a sense of why she likes them or what she values in them. Another point which I found unengaging was when Xell talked about *Made in Abyss*. He described it saying "I thought *Made in Abyss* just had like, the whole package. It was just like front and back one of my favorite anime series I've seen in a long time. The music is great, the OST is great. The animation was great [...] the backgrounds are beautiful, and the whole world that they create through it is amazing[...]" Xell brings up multiple great categories like music, animation, backgrounds, etc to talk about but only goes through each one on more or less a surface level, basically saying they were all good. He's kinda getting there when saying things like the backgrounds create the world, but it's still too vague. It might have been better if he said something like "this one background creates the world in an amazing way through the vastness of the abyss and the small villages around it". From such a statement, one could perhaps infer that he values how scope is illustrated.

If you want to hear conversations that go into more detail, I would



The Filler Arc

point you to pretty much any conversation with YouTuber Dignitee (previously Digibro) or the conversations of YouTubers RDCworld1 (they know how to talk about shonen anime!). If you find it's difficult to come up with specific things to say, there are some natural questions you can ask yourself. If the __(art,music,story,etc.) is good, ask yourself "What do I like about the __?" "What makes __ in this show different from __ in other shows?" "What does this __ remind me of?" With that said, I hope I got you to think more about how you talk about anime, and I hope to hear and have more interesting conversations about anime in the future, maybe even with you!



RDCworld1



MY LAMIA FAMILIAR CAN'T BE THIS STUPID

JET SITU & JASON ZHAO

FUN FACT: JASHIN-CHAN IS A VTUBER! THE CHANNEL IS CALLED... JASHIN-CHANNEL! IT'S NOT BAD, ACTUALLY.

Jashin-chan No Dropkick is an anime that's as wholesome as *Happy Sugar Life*, as heartwarming as *Madoka Magica*, and as straightforward as *Nichijou*. The anime follows a vibrant cast of otherworldly beings, including Social Distancing-chan, a cow that eats other cows, Game of Thrones Chunni, and our protagonist, freshly-chopped snake.



The cast of characters from Season 2.

Follow the life of Jashin-chan, a devil who has the top half of a woman, the bottom half of a cobra, and has **an infinite regeneration ability that renders her effectively immortal**. One day Jashin-chan is summoned via grimoire by the witch and connoisseur of medieval weapons, Yurine. But unfortunately for Jashin-chan, the return spell was missing. As a result, the only way Jashin-chan can return to hell is if her summoner, Yurine, dies. Remember how Jashin-chan is immortal? Well even though each of Jashin-chan's attempts to kill her summoner often leads to her (very often brutal) demise, because she is immortal, Jashin-chan has an infinite number of opportunities to attempt murder, and Yurine has an infinite number of opportunities to give Jashin-chan a very brutal death (kind of like Diavolo in *Golden Wind*).

At a hotpot in Episode 1, Jashin-chan concocts a devious plan to kill Yurine and end the anime on the first episode. Her plan involves her jumping meters into the living room air and retracting her tail midflight, preparing to use her "signature" Jashin-chan dropkick to swiftly kill Yurine.

This plan is stupid, and Yurine easily catches her by the tail, throws her entire body onto a cutting board, and proceeds to slice (uneven) portions of her tail up as additions to the hotpot. However, Jashin-chan doesn't learn from her mistakes and ends up repeating the same series of events. Jashin-chan concocts a convoluted and idiotic plan to kill Yurine (or sometimes just to be a dick). Said plan fails spectacularly due to being idiotic. Yurine pulls out one of her (often newly bought) weapons. Jashin-chan proceeds to receive DIY surgery as punishment. Rinse. Repeat.



Just another addition of meat to the hotpot.

She throws a (murder) birthday party, only to be stunned and chopped. She goes to the beach, only to become a split watermelon. She gets caught extorting money from her friend (on multiple occasions) and gets her hand shoved into a blender. She goes out for yakiniku only to have her hand grilled. She starts a snowball fight that ends in a hand grenade. During Setsubun, she becomes the target of an experimental bean gun. She gets turned into a 15th century style kabob for losing at hide and seek. It's a weird cross of the kind of humor found in moe anime and just a lot of gore and (well-deserved) murder slapstick.

Of course, we still haven't even gotten to the rest of the cast yet.

Starting with the devils, there's Medusa, who actually gets called out



Aftermath of Jashin-chan's attempt to kill Yurine.

in the anime (and manga) for being Jashin-chan's simp and personal ATM. There's Minos the cow, who loves cannibalism beef and delivers milk as a part time job. There's Yusa and Koji, ice devils who use their own blood and piss to sell flavored shaved ice. And finally, there's Persephone II, who is the Guinness world record holder for worst scavenger hunter.

Then there's the three failure angels. Pekola, who was sent to kill Yurine and Jashin, only to lose her halo in an alleyway (thus losing her powers). Poporon, who was then sent to kill Pekola, only to get intercepted by Jashin-chan who then eats her halo. Pino, who was THEN sent to kill Poporon, only to get German suplexed, causing her halo to shatter. Due to being stranded on Earth the three fallen angels descend into varying degrees of depravity. Pekola begins to congregate with devils, Poporon becomes an idol, and Pino commits murder.



Poporon performing a German suplex on Pino.

But *Jashin-chan no Dropkick* isn't just pure slapstick; there's also an astonishing amount of meta-humor (fourth wall breaks) that goes on in the series. Most notably, the characters are shown to be very aware that they themselves are part of an anime, referencing the episode numbers, their publisher affiliation, and name-dropping their ED singers. There's also an entire segment commenting on the fact that despite the title, Jashin-chan doesn't really use her dropkick that much, causing her to spam her dropkick in the next episode in order to avoid a name change to "smart-alek devil". Jashin-chan herself attempts to rebrand the anime on multiple occasions as some sort of reference to *Detective Conan*, *Food Wars*, or *Attack on Titan* (all to be rejected by the publisher).

The anime is so meta it also roasts us. Mei Tachibana, self proclaimed Super incompetent Cop of Akihabara, is known for not doing her job and spending most of her day kidnapping random objects to add to her grand otaku collection (including but not limited to a bus stop sign, a KFC statue, a black monolith, and on several occasions, Koji and Jashin-chan). There's roaming background otakus, who attend idol concerts, ask Poporon to refer to them as pigs, get petrified by

Medusa for wanting to get a look at her face, and spend their days being disgusting weebs.

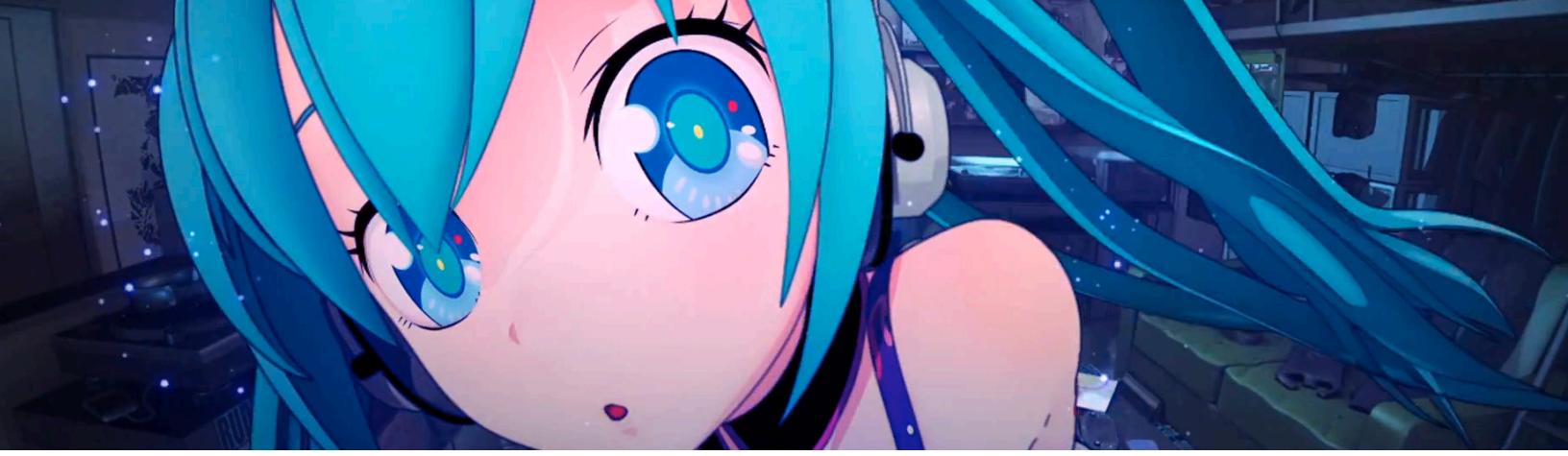


Mei and the black monolith. Also seen is Koji (blue-haired, bottom left), kidnapped once again.

The weirdness of this anime doesn't even stop at the meta humor; no, the producers want to go one further and confuse the audience at all levels. Season 1, Episode 1 opens up with manga chapter #45, whereas Season 2, Episode 1, opens up with manga chapter #1. Season 1 is actually only 11 episodes, with the 12th episode technically being a sequel. Season 2 is really only 10 episodes long, with episode 11 being half recap episode, and half 10 minute national anthem for the district of Jinbocho, Tokyo. Season 2 Episode 12 (*Chapter Chitose*) is basically a sponsored ad for Chitose, Hokkaido. Even the existence of Season 2 is strange - the only reason why it exists (*Jashin-chan no Dropkick Dash*) is because the producers publicly sent out a statement saying that if 2000 BD/DVD were sold, they would make a second season. True to their promise, they did, resulting in an abnormal release where Crunchyroll dropped eight episodes in a single day.

Jashin-chan No Dropkick is a SoL comedy that distinguishes itself from its contemporaries by its heavy use of meta humor and grotesque amounts of violence. The characters are all, for the most part, likeable with the exception of Jashin-chan. Half of the enjoyment of each episode actually comes from watching Jashin-chan being brutally massacred, all of which is well deserved and will turn you into a sadist. But apart from that, this show is not a normal show. This show takes the idea of normal and dropkicks it into oblivion. The use of comedy is closer to that of an abridged series than that of a seasonal anime and there is enough blood and gore to make *Mortal Kombat* fatalities look tame. If you want to watch this anime because you wanted something "similar" to some other SoL, then this isn't the show for you. But if you are bored and looking for a ride, then prepare yourself as you dive into the bizarre experience that is *Jashin-chan No Dropkick*.





WEEB MUSIC VIDEOS ARE PERFECT

ERIK NELSON

THERE IS NO TURNING BACK ONCE YOUR MIND LITERALLY CONVERTS NON ANIME MOVIES TO ANIME AS YOU WATCH THEM.

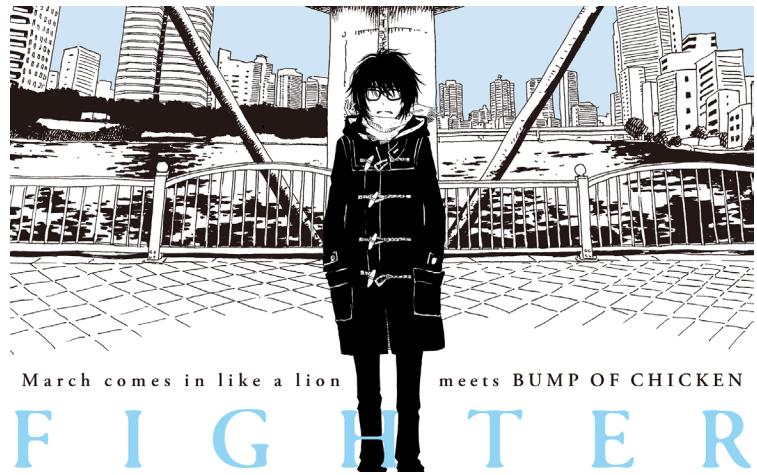
I think that most music videos are pretty pointless. Videos that accompany pop music, especially in the west, tend to be just footage of the artist rapping, the band playing, people dancing and drinking, etc. That's not necessarily a bad thing; basically the entire kpop fanbase just wants to see people sing and dance. Dancing is a legitimate form of artistic expression, I'm just not personally into it. Even in more "artsy" or experimental music videos, a lot of the time the footage is just someone singing albeit with other stuff going on. There are exceptions like Gorillaz and Flying Lotus, but these certainly don't represent the norm.



Since it's me talking, we inevitably come to Japanese music videos. Are these any better? Actually, a lot of them aren't. Most mainstream J-Pop music videos are just a band playing and people dancing or something like that. However within the broad category of Japanese music, there is a category of media that consistently gets it right (in my opinion): weeb music, especially vocaloid, utaite, and anime openings. In this kind of music video, the visuals and music complement each other, so that the impact of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Let's start with anime openings and endings. They can be some of my favorite parts of a show. If done right, they prepare you for the show and encapsulate the essence of the show in a 90 second music video package. They set the mood of the show before or after an episode. An OP or ED ideally serves a specific role in its placement. Often symbolism in the visuals is used to represent major ideas in the show. A well made OP is usually a good standalone music video as well. For

example, pretty much all of *Sangatsu no Lion*'s OP's are amazing as standalone works (as well as the fantastic music video for "Fighter").



In all of them, I get the sense that there's a specific emotional arc taking place - in other words there's a story being told through the music and visuals (both of which are breathtaking) which corresponds to the arc of the show. This brings us to the story structure of music videos. I'm not sure if it's just me, but all my favorite music videos have a story structure. Throughout the course of them, some idea or emotion gets explored, changes and resolves, and it's really satisfying to me. Some of my favorite movies like *Kimi no Na Wa* or *Lord of the Rings* are basically just really long music videos in my opinion.

Now onto Vocaloid and Utaite. The music videos in this "genre" frequently have a story structure. They rarely depict the singer, whether vocaloid or human, actually singing. Rather, they often feature characters acting out a story. Sometimes they feature vocaloids or the utaite's avatars acting out roles as characters in the story. Sometimes vocaloids or other characters and visuals represent the theme of the music. It's impressive to me that even though many of the songs don't have an actual story, the visuals very frequently tell a story of sorts. In the case that the visuals don't depict a story, there are usually still images moving in entertaining ways with lyrics on display, and since the art is usually good, it makes for a better experience than just the



music alone.

In the case of music videos that do tell stories, I think there's a lot more going on. I've noticed the music videos that really connect with me are the ones with a story or arc structure. From Jungian psychology to narrative psychology to comparative mythology, we know that stories reveal things fundamental in the human experience. Humans use stories to distill human experience into patterns of cause and effect to make sense of and explain the world. A story feels meaningful when we can map it onto reality to help solve unanswered questions. In other words, when stories contain meaning, they are a "root metaphor" for human psychology itself. Since things that resonate with me are things I consider meaningful, it makes sense that combining my two favorite mediums, music and anime, into a structure that conveys meaning would resonate with me. Therefore I think of music videos as potentially being some of the most powerful experiences one can have, if done right. If music alone can bring a tear to your eye, and art



can similarly move you, the combination of the two into a compact unit, the sole purpose of which is to express an aspect of human existence, must be powerful indeed. I've been moved to tears by many (mostly weeb) music videos, hyped out of my mind by others, and basically just experienced whatever the song was supposed to convey in its purest form through watching the music video. The combination of the visuals and music make "the purpose of the song" not only apparent but viscerally so. The best music videos are an experience.

One artist, even surrounded by a sea of beautiful art, stands out to me: Eve. His music and videos are so appealing to me that I usually just turn off the subtitles, not knowing what any of the lyrics mean, and just experience them. I could write extensively about his videos, but for now I will say that my favorite one is *Snow*, which presents a short and relatable story featuring animation better than the majority of anime I've seen. When I watch that video, I feel as if I'm experiencing the main character's story along with him. The resolution at the end always fills me with a sense of ...resolution. That's one of Eve's more straightforward music videos, but lots of times the visuals and lyrics are vague and cryptic and leave the audience to piece the clues together. Symbolism in the visuals fit poetically with imagery in the lyrics, creating a beautiful metaphorical synchronicity.

Another artist who exemplifies this kind of storytelling is Jin, and specifically his series of works, the *Kagerou Project*. Not only does *Kagepro* present a pretty confusing story that one must fit together for oneself, it also takes the idea of multimedia presentation to an even more abstract conclusion, including various media like anime, music videos, and light novels, which all contribute to a cumulative *Kagepro* experience. I could write extensively about *Kagepro*, but luckily tons of other people have, plus my IQ isn't high enough to even understand it completely.



There's also other series which use multiple music videos (and other mediums) to tell a longer story, like Evillious Chronicles or Synchronicity. These also present an abstract form of the story structure in music videos; instead of presenting and concluding a story in one music video, why not do it over many (49 lol), with each music video as an arc in a greater narrative?

Then there's AMV's and MAD's which can potentially be really cool. Unfortunately a lot of AMV's use non-weeb music which turns me off from them. However I know there's a whole AMV community out there, and I'd really like to learn more about AMV's. I think it's a really creative art form.

Anyway, there's a lot of creative stuff happening in the world of weeb music videos, and I like it a lot. UwU.



2020 THE ROM ENDER

NEIL FRYDENDAL

DISCLAIMER: THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN IN FEBRUARY 2020.

Maybe my genuine watching of *To Love Ru* for the plot gave it away, but I'm actually a huge romance junkie, and as one, I read a lot of romance manga. So I thought it was rather notable that 3 huge ones are all ending around the same time, these 3 being *Domestic Girlfriend*, *We Can't Study*, and *The Quintessential Quintuplets*. Personally, I was pretty meh on *Quints*, so I'm only gonna gush about *DG* and *WCS* in this article, but I guess I would recommend reading it if you have the time. Also, note: it's not officially confirmed that *WCS* is ending this year, but it's definitely close. Although I guess it is feasible that it could last into 2021. I certainly wouldn't be complaining if that happened. First up, screw "Best for last." I've always been a "Best for first." kinda guy, so *Domestic Girlfriend* here we go! Created by Kei Sasuga, the romcomdram follows aspiring author Natsuo Fujii as he navigates life and love after he moves in with his new stepmom and 2 new (& hot) step-sisters from his dad's remarriage. It's definitely a spicy premise, but the series is much more than that. It has this unique emotional backing to it that makes you really love it. And that's mostly because its characters are all so compelling and touching. You love them and root for them, and it breaks your heart when they're sad. If I had to

pick a favorite character, it'd probably be Al, but it's hard. Momo, Rui, Natsuo, they're all amazing! As for the anime, that's a whole thing. It starts off great, but then halfway through the pacing just kicks into overdrive, cutting out entire arcs and ruining the show! Still, I say watch the first 7.5 episodes subbed, if only for Al's amazing Engrish—which is something you don't get in the manga or the dub—and then switch to the manga.

Next up, *We Can't Study!* Created by Taishi Tsutsui, the romcom follows star student Nariyuki Yuiga as he—in exchange for a full-ride college scholarship (which he needs since he's poor)—is tasked with tutoring math genius Rizu Ogata in writing and literature genius Fumino Furuhashi in mathematics so that they can attend the universities of their choices. And swimming prodigy and best girl Uruka Takemoto needs help learning English, so she joins in on the fun studying too! Man, I really do love *We Can't Study!* It's so fun and lighthearted! The characters are hilarious and interesting, and the rapport that develops between them is so genuine and great to see. The anime adaptation is decent enough (you have to at least watch the brilliant Engrish episode), but you'll definitely want to read the manga for the full experience.



If you go on to check out either of these series after reading this article, I'm glad! But I'm also sad that they're ending soon. However, the one thing that comforts me is looking forward towards the future. And if the absolutely genius new series *The 100 Girlfriends Who Really, Really, Really, Really, Really Love You* is any indication of what amazing roms are coming in the 2020s, then I'm beyond excited!

konshuu

Highlights: Art of 2019-2020



MANA WALKER
D.GRAY-MAN
ART BY SHARREL NARSICO

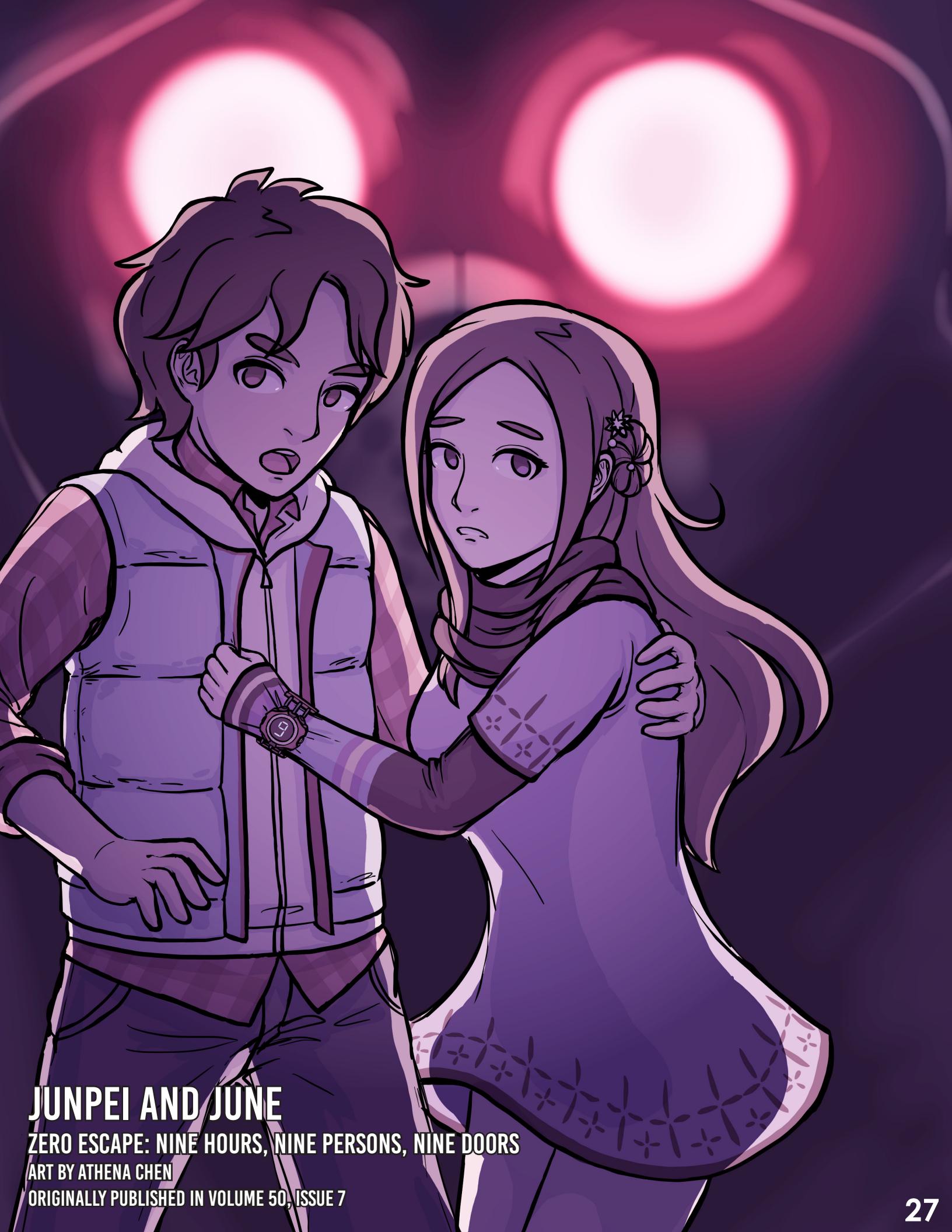


JOLYNE KUJO

JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE: STONE OCEAN

ART BY GRACE LI

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 50, ISSUE 4



JUNPEI AND JUNE

ZERO ESCAPE: NINE HOURS, NINE PERSONS, NINE DOORS

ART BY ATHENA CHEN

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 50, ISSUE 7



MATOU SAKURA, SABER, AND TOHSAKA RIN

FATE/STAY NIGHT

ART BY THEO RAI

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 50, ISSUE 7



COLONEL SANDERS

I LOVE YOU, COLONEL SANDERS! A FINGER LICKIN' GOOD DATING SIMULATOR

ART BY TAMMY LEE

ORIGINALY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 50, ISSUE 10



SARAZANMAI

ART BY ELLIOT LU

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 51, ISSUE 1



RUYA

ORIGINAL CHARACTER

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ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 51, ISSUE 3



ELI CLARK AND AESOP CARL

IDENTITY V

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DEMON KING NOBUNAGA

FATE/GRAND ORDER

ART BY THEO RAI

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 51, ISSUE 4



EMMA WOODS IDENTITY V

ART BY KATE BUSHMAREVA

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 51, ISSUE 5



CR-S01

TRAUMA TEAM

ART BY ATHENA CHEN

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 51, ISSUE 11



BERUI AND ZERUI

ORIGIN: SPIRITS OF THE PAST

ART BY TAMMY LEE

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN VOLUME 51, ISSUE 12

SHERYL NOME
MACROSS FRONTIER
ART BY CRYSTAL LI



Gallery:

Anthology Exclusives
Konshuu



EDELGARD, DIMITRI, AND CLAUDE

FIRE EMBLEM: THREE HOUSES

ART BY TAMMY LEE



KALIM AL-ASIM
TWISTED WONDERLAND
ART BY KATE BUSHMAREVA



FLING POSSE
HYPNOSIS MIC
ART BY KATE BUSHMAREVA

ଫ୍ଲିଂ ପୋସ୍ସେ ହୈପ୍ନୋସି ମିକ୍ରୋଟ୍ରାନ୍‌ସି ପାର୍ଟ୍‌ରେ ଡିଭିଶନ୍ ରାପ୍‌ବାଲ୍‌ଟି ଫ୍ଲିଂ ପୋସ୍ସେ



SHINOBU KOCHO

DEMON SLAYER

ART BY GRACE LI



KYOJURO RENGOKU

DEMON SLAYER

ART BY GRACE LI

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