

KONSHUU

vol. 52 #2

Mysterious Characters



Kaworu Nagisa

Neon Genesis Evangelion

Art By Sophia Xue

SAND-BAGGING IN REAL LIFE



ROHIT AGARWAL

1st Year, EECS and Intended Applied Math

I wish I was a shoujo manga character. All the guys are hot and I'm a guy so I'd be hot.

Writer

SPOILERS FOR CLASSROOM OF THE ELITE

Classroom of the Elite centers around Advanced Nurturing High School (ANHS), a fictional Japanese school under direct supervision of the government, touted to take the best students across the country. If one graduates from ANHS, the government promises them any profession or induction into any college of their choice. One of these students is Ayanokouji Kiyotaka, whose very existence is shrouded in mystery. To put it bluntly, he's a sand-bagger—he makes himself seem less talented than he actually is.

On the first day of school, every student is assigned a class 1-A through 1-D, the latter of which Ayanokouji is assigned to. The homeroom teacher, Chabashira-sensei, gives out smartphones with 100,000 electronic “points” loaded on them. These points are the currency at the school—they correspond to 1 yen each (Note: 100,000 yen = 950 USD). On campus, points can buy anything.

There are separate class points attached to monthly income. Every time there is an infraction, your class loses some class points. The problem was, every class was told about this after the first month of school. All classes, A through D, started

with 1000 class points; at the end of a month, A still had more than 900 still, yet D had managed to lose all its class points, and thus had no monthly income.

Furthermore, the classes are stacked exactly in this order—the most successful students are placed in Class A and the most defective are placed in Class D. In addition, Chabashira-sensei states that any class can be promoted a letter up if they surpass the class above them in class points. Horikita Suzune, a student with extremely high academic and athletic ability, refuses to be in ‘defective’ Class D and makes it her goal to reach Class A. It is within this complex class v. class competition that the existence of Ayanokouji becomes more and more mysterious.

The first hurdle for Class D is the midterm exams—if anyone fails, they will be expelled. There are three students within the expulsion range, termed the ‘three idiots.’ Horikita, Ayanokouji, and another student try to tutor these ‘three idiots.’ Due to Horikita’s elitist attitude, they quickly leave, with one of them, Sudo Ken, stating that he does not want to focus on studies and instead wishes to be a professional basketball player.

That same night, Ayanokouji overhears Horikita talking with her older brother, Horikita Manabu, who is also the student council president at ANHS. Getting mad with her, Manabu goes to hit his sister before Ayanokouji intervenes. A few more punches are thrown by Manabu which Ayanokouji dodges easily. Manabu notes his quick reflexes and decent build, clear evidence of martial arts training. He proceeds to stop fighting and asks him about these seemingly odd traits



for a high-schooler to have. His return quip is it simply comes "from piano and calligraphy."

Already there is clearly something mysterious about Ayanokouji—why is he hiding his physical abilities? He placed exactly average on the swimming test, in the middle of the pack. Furthermore, Manabu reveals in front of the younger Horikita that Ayanokouji got exactly 50% on each subject on the entrance exam. He solved a problem that only 2% of test-takers got correct, but missed a problem that 97% of test-takers got.

The day of the exam comes, and Chabashira-sensei reveals that everyone got a surprisingly good score. This is due to Ayanokouji pulling some cleverness seemingly out of nowhere. He finds some point-less upperclassman and offers to buy past test questions from him for 15,000 points. To not make himself stand out, he enlists Kushida to distribute the list of questions amongst the class and to claim it was her who procured them. Despite this clever scheme making it seemingly impossible for anyone to fail, Ken Sudo somehow still is a point below the fail line and is branded for expulsion.

Ayanokouji confronts Chabashira-sensei during her smoke break. He first asks a strange question, "Does equality exist in our society?" The teacher gives him a hard "no." He then remembers her words that points can buy "anything" at this school. He offers to buy a point on Sudo's midterm for any price. However, Chabashira-sensei declares that she will only take 100,000 points, which even Ayanokouji couldn't save, as



he had bought food and toiletries. Horikita finds the two of them; Ayanokouji and Horikita agree to spend these points (most of their points at the time) to save their classmate. Once again, he makes Horikita take the credit for this deal to hide amongst the average.

After some more big-brained plays from Ayanokouji, Class 1-D makes leaps and bounds in class points. One of the biggest point swings was a task where the classes had to live on a desert island for one week. Each group had a leader who

could claim certain areas of the island by swiping a key card. At the end of the week, each class could guess the other class' leaders. If they guessed correctly, they received some class points, but if they guessed incorrectly, they lost some. Ayanokouji finds a spy from Class C at Class D's camp and uncovers an alliance between Classes C and A that will trade Class A's points for the names of the leaders of the other classes. Yet, he does not confront any of the parties directly.

To bamboozle them, Ayanokouji makes sure Horikita becomes the leader (which the Class C spy learns about very quickly). Noticing her failing health, he purposely tries to get mud on her and get her to wash up in order to make her cold worse and worse. He even starts an open fire at Class D's camp to serve as a distraction for the Class C spy to escape. Horikita stops resting in her tent to chase the Class C spy down. This works even better in Ayanokouji's favor as he notices a storm coming and predicts correctly that Horikita will simply collapse from fatigue and fever after confronting the spy. He then carries her over to the medical area, forcing her to retire from the challenge. In her stead, he secretly makes himself the new leader (which is only allowed in such an extenuating circumstance), causing every class' guess to be incorrect. Once again, he states to others that he was simply following Horikita's orders and that she was the reason so many class points flipped the way of Class 1-D.

At the end of the anime, Ayanokouji encourages the typically selfish and independent Horikita to rely more on her allies. After she exits the scene, we get a soliloquy from Ayanokouji. He proclaims that he had never perceived her as an ally—that humans are just mere tools for him.



This left me with a lot of questions when I first watched. Just who is Ayanokouji? What is his goal at this school? How is he so insanely able, but hides his abilities? These questions lead me to read the light novel series behind the anime, where Ayanokouji's backstory and the source of his powers are eventually revealed. *Classroom of the Elite* makes you feel incredibly mystified by Ayanokouji's clever deductions.



THE REAL ONE PUNCH MAN



MITCHELL MADAYAG

1st Year, Undeclared

Debuting in Konshuu with my Haruhi Simping Manga
Binging Weeb Fist!~

Writer

SPOILERS FOR ONE PUNCH MAN S2

The world of *One Punch Man* is full of mysterious figures. There's Blast, the Rank 1 S-Class Hero who has yet to appear, and Metal Knight, the Rank 6 S-Class Hero whose true motives are hidden behind the vast arsenal of killer robots he built. However, most fans often forget about the mysterious unranked fighter in the 22nd Super Fight martial arts tournament, Charanko, the #1 disciple (and the only one) training under Rank 3 S-Class Hero, Silver Fang of the Water Stream Rock Smashing Fist.



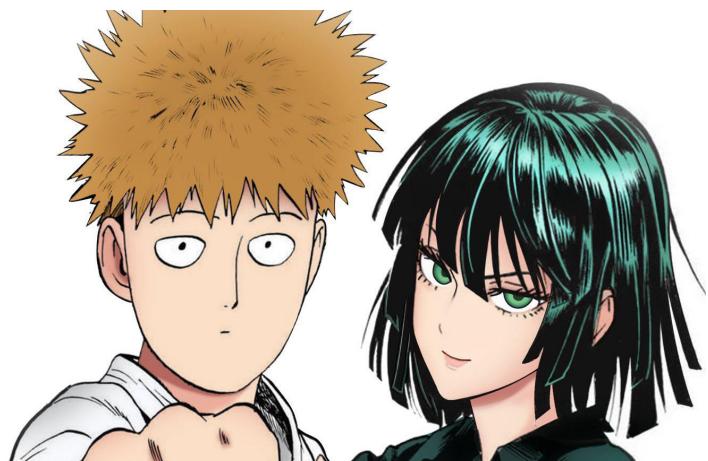
Despite being Bang's student, Charanko specializes in the Water Polo Carbonated Fist, a fighting style we don't get to see until Super Fight's preliminary matches. Donning an incorrectly tied white belt and gi, Charanko defeats Zakos of the Head Rushing Style with a single slap to the face, surprising both the tournament audience and us viewers alike. Some may have thought of the victory as nothing more than a fluke only then to be proven wrong when Charanko beat Bakuzan of the Dark Hell Assassination style, the projected champion to win this year. All Bakuzan did was pretend to chop Charanko's head only to get sent flying out of the ring by a carbonated fist to the jaw. Perhaps Charanko's head is his biggest weakness which would explain the sudden retaliation.

The next two matches were even more of a breeze for the orange-haired twenty year old, once again using one punch to

knock out Sour Face of the Sour Face Kenpo and Choze of the Chosen-One Way needing only to take two seconds with each. The finals were different however, as Suiryu of the Dark Corporal Fist was successful in landing some attacks, enough to knock off Charanko's wig and reveal that he's actually bald! Surprised that his darkest secret was discovered, Charanko delivers an intimidating one inch punch, tearing Suiryu's clothes to shreds, an attack that would make Bruce Lee proud. Then, imitating Suiryu's Dark Body Flying Dragon attack, Charanko nonchalantly lands a serious hip blow, launching Suiryu into the stands. Charanko may have stolen Suiryu's victory, but Suiryu stole Charanko's belt and dignity, revealing scandalous heart printed boxers for all to see. Embarrassed, Charanko runs away and has yet to be seen again...

Some daring theorists believe that Charanko's true identity is actually the Rank 7 B-Class Hero, Caped Baldy, but that is merely a pipe dream. Even crazier is that some go so far as to claim that this Charanko is fake and that the real one is in the hospital after getting curb stomped by the Hero Hunter Garou. However, the real Charanko would never lose to a wannabe monster who only has a low demon disaster-level at best. Regardless, I think it's safe to assume that Charanko is just Charanko.

Season 2 revealed a lot about Charanko but it's going to be a while until we get a third season of *One Punch Man* to learn more about this mysterious figure (unless you went ahead and read the manga or, even better, the webcomic). Why is Charanko wearing a wig? Does Charanko even play water polo? Is Charanko the One Punch Man? Could Charanko beat Goku? The truth may soon be revealed, but one thing's for sure: if you're gonna fight Charanko, you shouldn't aim for the head.



WHAT MAKES A MYSTERIOUS CHARACTER?



KHALEA RIDAD

4th Year, English

Who needs sleep when I can read one more chapter... or ten...

Writer

SPOILERS FOR TENKUU SHINPAN & MHA

Besides the allure of their quiet demeanor that draws us in, what else makes a character mysterious? These are characters we want to know more about, have cool designs, or behave in ways that keep the audience interested. Whatever isn't provided by the story or their appearance, we glean from their conversations with other characters and their behaviors. Curious fans take these observations and let their imaginations run wild as they enjoy creating their own theories about these unique characters and what role they play. Although mysterious characters could pose a threat to the protagonist(s), they can be allies, but it may not always be obvious.



In "Tenkuu Shinpan," an action-horror manga by Tsuina Miura and illustrated by Takahiro Oba, the main character Yuri Honjo is thrown in an unfamiliar city seemingly devoid of life, filled with high-rise buildings with no way to get down, and strange, masked "Angels" out to kill. Yuri's few close encounters in this world put us on edge with her, as any decision can lead to death. Amid a demeaning experience with a corrupt police officer, we are introduced to the Sniper Mask dressed in a black suit and tie, a white button-up, black leather gloves, and a fedora armed with his namesake sniper rifle. We are led to believe that he is like the rest of the masks. However, his character leaves an un-

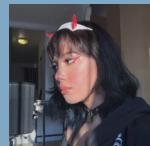
easy impression as he kills the predatory officer that was after Yuri. The story also reveals that the Sniper Mask has a photo of Yuri addressed to her brother, suggesting a possible connection. From what the manga reveals to us about the Sniper Mask, we become invested as Yuri unravels the questions of how she got there and how to get out.



In "My Hero Academia," by Kohei Horikoshi, there are many amusing and endearing characters from villains to civilians. One character that captured the fans' attention since his debut is Hitoshi Shinsou. Despite how little he appears, people love what crumbs of information they discover about him. Fans even go as far as pointing out how much Shinsou bulked up since his arrival due to a passing comment by another character later in the series. Shinsou is fortunate to be born with a quirk, unlike our protagonist, that was a disadvantage during the entrance exam for UA High. His brainwashing quirk is also perceived as villainous by his peers. Despite this, Shinsou strives to prove his doubters wrong as he trains under Aizawa Shouta and appears again during the joint training between classes 1-A and 1-B. Currently, fans do not know anything about Shinsou besides his hero equipment. However, this does not stop fans from imagining what Shinsou could look like when he does become a hero or what he does in his spare time.

In an action-horror manga like "Tenkuu Shinpan," the audience is on the lookout for mysterious characters who pose a threat to the protagonist(s). Mysterious characters can also serve as characters to cheer for like Shinsou in, "My Hero Academia". The creators may not provide enough about these characters, but they give just enough for fans to be interested. Regardless, the audience has fun immersing themselves in the story, waiting for what little information they can discover or figure out.

ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN



NICOLE OLIVA

1st Year, Undeclared

Aizen lives in my apartment and my head rent free

Writer

SPOILERS FOR BLEACH

"Since when were you under the impression that I hadn't been using [Kyoka Suigetsu]?" The infamous line delivered by the arguably timeless "Big Three" antagonist, slated to make his animated comeback in 2021, perfectly captures his logic-defying existence. The lack of clarity Tite Kubo provides regarding Aizen's motivations has made him all the more appealing to fans, not to mention the flaws in the society he seeks to destroy.



Initially making an appearance as the soft-spoken, intellectual captain of Squad 5, Aizen appears to have solidified his position as a well-loved member of Soul Society. One morning, though, his lieutenant, Momo Hinamori, comes to find him brutally murdered. Upon some investigation, she is led to believe that her childhood friend, Toshiro Hitsugaya, is responsible. The timing lines up with the impending execution of female lead Rukia Kuchiki. Furthermore, the punishment of her seemingly harmless crime of staying in the World of the Living somehow warrants the death sentence. Almost adding insult to injury, Hinamori encounters Aizen yet again, but this time alive and well. Embracing her idol, she suddenly finds herself with a zanpakuto through her chest. Hitsugaya witnesses this and attempts to stop Aizen, who reveals that he set up Kuchiki's execution to retrieve the most powerful weapon, the Hogyoku. Aizen easily subdues the prodigy and proceeds to make a display of leaving Soul Society with the assistance of Hollows. The reasoning he provides at this point for an unforeseen betrayal is "to search for greatness" and stand in heaven, where no man or God has ever stood.

Thankfully, the Turn Back the Pendulum arc provides more insight into Aizen's character, but instead of a backstory arc that elicits sympathy, this only enhances how fearsome he is. As a lieutenant, he is revealed to have experimented on residents of Soul Society, including fellow Soul Reapers and his captain, Shinji Hirako, one hundred years before the events of *Bleach*'s first arc in search of compatibility with the Hogyoku. Aizen escapes unscathed by framing Kisuke Urahara, now former Squad 12 Captain, who is banished from Soul Society as punishment. This time, Aizen justifies his actions by claiming that if Shinji had only been more perceptive and tried to get to know him more instead of keeping him at arm's length out of suspicion, Shinji would have been able to stop him.

Returning to the present, Aizen faces off with Urahara once again, as he asks Urahara why he would utilize his power to defend the ideals of a figurehead king rather than use it to take matters into his own hands to improve society. On the other hand, after battling Aizen for the last time before he is subdued, Ichigo theorizes that Aizen was simply lonely due to his overwhelming power; Aizen's manipulative nature stemmed from a desire for someone worthwhile to fight, therefore bringing purpose to his life.

No matter where his motivations may truly lie, Sosuke Aizen's mystery lies in the fact that he is morally grey in the context of *Bleach*. Soul Society is in no way a utopia, and perhaps a dramatic overhaul at the hands of a powerful man who was willing to repeatedly compromise his own reputation is what it requires in order to be a better afterlife for all of its citizens.



Staff Picks:**FAVORITE MYSTERIOUS CHARACTER****MYSTOGAN****FAIRY TAIL****NEIL FRYDENDAL***Read 100 Years Quest. Do it.***PHI****ZERO ESCAPE****ATHENA CHEN**

At the start of *Virtue's Last Reward* you wake up in a room with this sketchy-looking stranger who knows your name for some reason. And the mysteries surrounding her only continue to pile up the longer you progress through the game, making her one of the game's most interesting characters IMO. Also she's hot, intelligent, and badass.

MONOKUMA**DANGANRONPA: TRIGGER HAPPY HAVOC****MITCHELL MADAYAG**

One killing game, one school, fifteen students, and...one headmaster who's a bear? This wacky lovable ball of fur is anything but cute. With his freakish ability to appear at the worst times, a seemingly infinite supply of clones, and his iconic "Upupupupu" laugh, good luck discovering the headmaster's true identity without being murdered by him or your classmates.

SNIPER MASK**TENKUU SHINPAN****KHALEA RIDAD**

Who doesn't love a character in a suit that can easily kill someone up to 200 meters away and gets embarrassed if he doesn't keep a cool image.

PAUL VON OBERSTEIN**LEGEND OF THE GALACTIC HEROES****NICK WONOSAPUTRA**

Oberstein's motivation and methods are a point of contention for his fellow high-ranking officers of the Galactic Empire, leading to many questioning his loyalty to the Kaiser. His ruthless tactics and cold gaze contrast against his warm treatment of his dog, leading audiences to be unsure of Oberstein's true character.

N**POKEMON BLACK AND WHITE****NERISSA HSIEH**

I just love characters with trauma. They're too relatable.

VOLUME 52, ISSUE 2

OCTOBER 15, 2020

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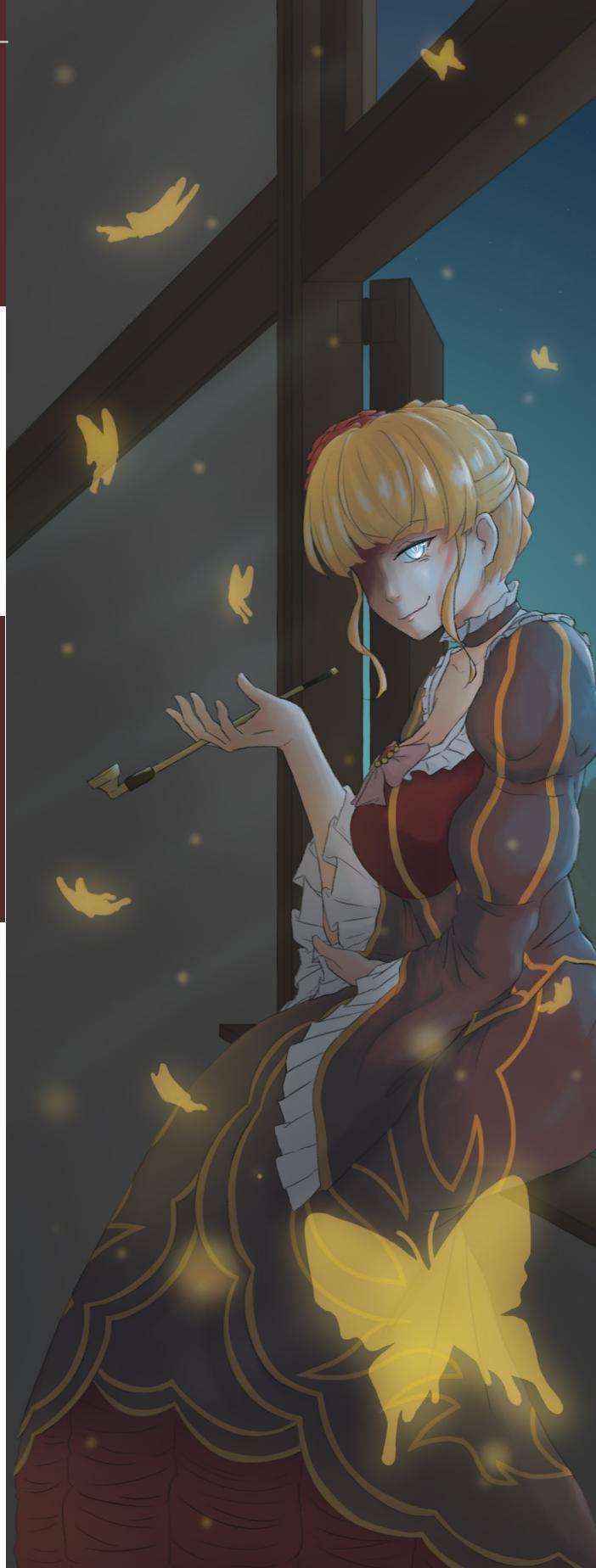
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Umineko

Art By *Miranda Zhang*