

vol.50 #03
glasses

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Kikkou Sadamune
Touken Ranbu
art by Elliot Lu

THE GLORY OF GLASSES

JONATHAN QIAN
3RD YEAR, CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

<3 megane <3

STAFF WRITER



Glasses have always been a weakness of mine when it comes to anime characters. Character designs with glasses always strike my eye and interest me to the character. However, not all megane characters' glasses are created equal. In that spirit, I wanted to discuss two of my favorite glasses characters, Rei Kiriya and Saiki Kusuo, and the vastly different roles that their glasses play in making them better characters in their respective shows.

Let's start with Rei Kiriya from *3-gatsu no Lion*, who is easily one of my all-time favorite characters. His glasses serve vital roles in lots of emotional moments that characterize him. For instance, in the first episode of the series, Hina removes Rei's glasses to find him crying underneath them.



Rei with tears on his eyes

While Rei's usual calm demeanor in front of Hina, Momo, and grandpa Kawamoto gives them the impression that Rei is a strong, independent person, Hina seeing him cry underneath his glasses shows her that everyone is vulnerable sometimes. Rei's glasses are an analogy for the face he puts on for the world, a quiet, humble, yet confident person who takes shogi very seriously, but underneath, he struggles with personal trauma and anxiety. Rei also fulfills the classic anime trope of megane characters pushing up their glasses when they decide to focus or get serious in a situation. As with most cases of the trope across anime, when Rei pushes up his glasses, it is almost guaranteed that he will accomplish whatever it is he set out to do. Fortunately, *3-gatsu*'s plot progresses in a way where Rei's accomplishments always feel earned, rather than the result of a trope giving him plot armor. Not

only is Rei an extremely well written character, he is also a megane character where the glasses are used for things besides tropey moments and instead used for character development and plot advancement in such a natural way.

On the other hand, Saiki Kusuo's glasses serve completely different purposes. Saiki's glasses act as a way to help constantly and consistently distinguish him in every shot he is in, especially when Saiki transforms his appearance. Whether it's his cat form or his female high school student form, Saiki consistently wears glasses and it helps make him instantly recognizable. His green glasses serve the same purpose as his bright pink hair; they are both defining visual aspects that make him look like a main character in every scene he is in.



Even as a cat, Saiki keeps his glasses on

In addition to being an iconic part of Saiki's appearance, Saiki's glasses also serve as a way for the show to tell jokes and give the audience some funny dramatic irony. For example, the viewers know about Saiki's powers and physical prowess, and know that his glasses are actually worn as a way to help limit his supernatural powers, while the other characters see his glasses and assume that he needs them to see properly, just like any other normal person.

Megane can serve much larger purposes in anime than just being parts of a trope; when utilized correctly, glasses can become integral parts of a way a character develops in the case of Rei, or a way to make comedical situations funnier, in Saiki's case.



THAT HIDDEN GEM CHARACTER

 **SHARREL JAN NARSICO**
2ND YEAR, UNDECLARED

ARTIST

I tried not to spoil too much. TRIED.

Slight Spoiler Warning for *D. Gray Man*

Johnny Gill Is Best Boi From The Science Department—and no, you can't convince me otherwise. It's time to shine some light to *D.Gray-Man's* lowkey adorable character who needs to be protected.

Welcome to another one of my rants where the department has unfortunately given me space to get lost and forget what my point was. Like right now. But yes, Johnny Gill probably isn't a character you've heard a lot. He's not exactly a mainstream character, nevermind even a main character.

Instead, you might have seen Kyoya Ootori from *Ouran High School Host Club*, mysterious and clever with an impeccable appearance completed by the nice framings of his glasses. Or perhaps Maes Hughes, the father we were all rooting for in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, with glasses that fixed the kind but steady energy of his character. There's Tenya Iida, rule-enforcer, class president of Class 1A in *Boku No Hero Academia* who have glasses that enforce the rigid tensions in our leg-mecha boy. Or Mei-rin and Grell from *Black Butler*, Or Sakamoto-kun.

If you have actually heard of them, it's not a surprise. These are all what I'd consider... more mainstream glasses characters. Science nerds, literature "fanatics", the computer geeks, the introverts, the grandmas and grandpas—there's no shortage of what megane characters can be and most (if not all) of my aforementioned characters are obviously not main characters of their show. However, they have strong, established personalities that allow them to stand out as we watch their anime.

Johnny... Johnny isn't like that. Not only is our boi here not a main, he's also tragically not even part of most of the action in *D.Gray-Man*. And I really mean it in his position—the main character is an exorcist, the central characters are exorcists and officials in the order, the main nemesis is a terrifying man in

a demon bunny costume, and then he has this family of pretty important antagonists. Not to mention a fourteenth leech on the main character. With all this going on, Johnny the scientist is pretty low on screen time, just like the typical side character. He scarcely appears in Allen's, the main character's, very trying and tumultuous life. In short, he's very easy to forget.

Johnny Gill got the science nerd card to the letter—lab coat? Check. Round glasses so thick you can't see through their swirls? Check. Lanky I-don't-exercise figure? Check. Low-stamina? Check. These might help him stand out if it weren't for the fact that there's dozens of equally interesting other scientists with him. But the key here is not how he looks, but rather how this curly brown-haired young nerd grows as a character from the sidelines of the anime. I didn't get to see much of him, and I'm ashamed to say that I was definitely one of those people who watched the anime and read the manga, and pushed Johnny to the side until recently.

Johnny's a softie. He's like a tiny trinket hidden in a drawer, in contrast to someone like, say, Kyoya Ootori, who's the dark, popping wall of the room. But this semi-obscured side character really shines during the more recent issues of *D.Gray-Man*, where Johnny's friend gains the isolation and distrust of majority of the Order. When his friend, (no, for those who may not know, this friend is actually not actively trying to destroy the Order. Said friend unfortunately has some connections to the anime's antagonists) escapes from their prison, most people in the Order who still cares for this one friend can't really do anything. They have to follow the Order, and treat ***** as a traitor. These people are trained fighters, officials, but they bowed to the will of the higher ups.

But not Johnny, no. He goes against the crowd mindset. This precious boi, who has no stamina, sets his mind into action. He runs to gain stamina, tries to quit the Order peacefully to follow his friend and becomes a wanted figure against a whole organization. He's defying yes, but he's definitely not blasting doors down. He gets by with his own soft personality.

It's these sort of actions that make me have to bow in absolute adoration of his character. What a gem! This sort of loyalty and friendship deserves an award. And that's why Johnny Gill Is Best Boi From The Science Department.



DESIGN SPECS OF A GLASSES CHARACTER

ELLIOT LU

3RD YEAR, INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING AND BUSINESS

"Megane is love, Megane is life"

*This issue has been aggressively brought to you by Elliot Lu
-Editor-*

ARTIST



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.



Find your fictional megane boyfriend today!

*Disclaimer: much less accurate than even B*zzf*ed

start here

“Who’s Your Anime Glasses Boyfriend?” Quiz

Directions: Start at the “start here” signal and follow the numbers next to your answers.

When Konshuu has decided your CAA-assigned anime boyfriend, instead of a number there will be a letter next to the name.

Follow that letter to the bottom row of images and meet your new anime glasses boyfriend!

0 Do you like fictional characters with glasses?

1. Yes 2. No

2 What are you even taking this quiz for? Why are you reading this week’s Konshuu?

1 Are you picky about the shape, size, color, etc. of glasses frames?

3. Yes 4. No

4 Your approach to clothing is:

3. Functional
5. Fashionable
6. Both!

3 Do you wear glasses for corrective purposes?

- A. Yes B. No

5 You love your friends a lot, but you’re the one with the functional braincell in the group.

- C. Yes 7. No, I’m stupid

7 Is friends to lovers your thing, or are you more of a love at first sight kind of person?

- B. Slowburn all the way
C. Give me the romance from the beginning
D. Both, actually

6 You like to joke around and laugh a lot. Formality isn’t your thing, and you love memes!

- D. Yes 5. No



A
Kanbara Akihito
Kyoukai no Kanata

You’re the glasses babe of Akihito’s dreams! While he might not be a proper glasses character, he loves glasses and looks great in them to boot. You’ll spend hours debating over what frames suit what types, and best of all, he’ll love your glasses too!



B
Hasumi Keito
Ensemble Stars!

No one loves glasses more than this guy. He’s actually not about what people look like wearing them - he just loves glasses and their functionality, and would love to share the same enthusiasm with someone. Keito is also a self-proclaimed otaku, making him an ideal weeb boyfriend.



C
Ootori Kyousuke
Ouran High School
Host Club

A classy, refined, and put-together student with a sharp sense of humor. This is the essential anime megane boyfriend type for most out there. Efficiency is his charm point, but his difficulty getting out of bed in the morning is cute too.



D
707/Seven
Mystic Messenger

He’s handsome, romantic, and endlessly funny. Comes with emotional baggage and is a little tsun, but the appeal of being the special one to break down his outside walls warms your heart like nothing else. He can hack anything, but (mostly) uses his ability to send you memes at 2 am.

STAFF PICKS FAVORITE GLASSES CHARACTERS



Ash Lynx from *Banana Fish*



Hachiken Yuugo from *Silver Spoon*



Rei Kiriyama from *3-gatsu no Lion*



George Ushiromiya from *Umineko no Naku Koro ni*



Waver Velvet from *Fate* series



Kaisei from *That Chess Anime*

UPCOMING EVENTS

ANIME DESTINY 2019 \$8 EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

November 3rd
10 am - 8 pm
Pauley Ballroom

[Squareup.com/store/AD2019](https://squareup.com/store/AD2019)

Details
Coming Soon

BAAG MARATHON

October 19
1 pm
UC Botanical
Garden



COSPLAY PICNIC



KONO SUBA! MOVIE TRIP

November 12
7 pm
Regal/AMC
Bay Street

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Editor-in-Chief



Lea Nakatsukasa
Layout Editor



Marc Castillo
Layout Editor



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Artist/Writer



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Artist



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Artist



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PHI
Zero Time Dilemma
Art by Athena Chen

