

konshuu

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Volume XLIV, Issue VIII
11.10.16

THIS WEEK'S SERIES

► ANIME RECOMMENDATION

SAEKANO: HOW TO RAISE A BORING GIRLFRIEND

Our anime- and light novel-obsessed protagonist, Tomoya Aki, dreams of creating his own visual novel inspired by a real life romantic experience. Tomoya recruits members from his high school to help develop his “dream game.” He first recruits his childhood friend and doujinshi artist, Eriri, to handle the art, and his classmate and secretly published author, Utaha, to handle the writing. Tomoya’s “plain” classmate, Megumi, becomes the model for game’s main heroine; Tomoya hopes to elevate her to idol status by publishing his game. The premise is filled with tropes, yet grows darker and more mature as Tomoya’s elusive past with each girl is explored; Saekano’s characters question the archetypes they are assigned, fleshing out their personalities and actively resisting the clichés so often seen in today’s anime.



Studio: A-1 Pictures

Written by: Fumiaki Maruto

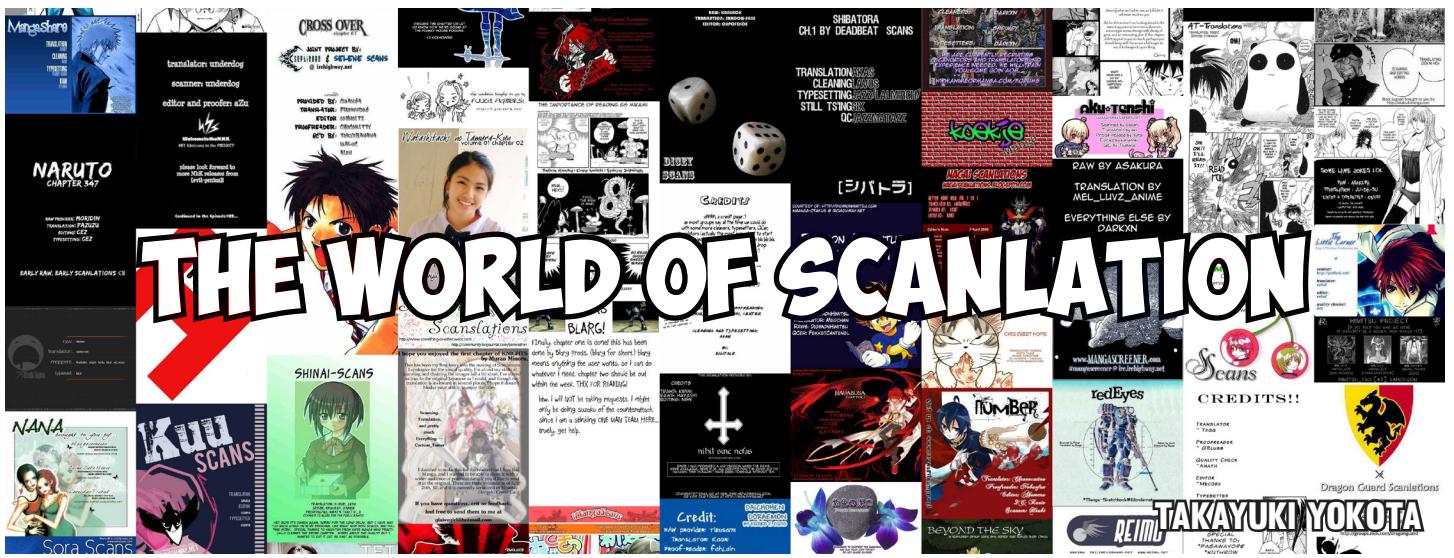


Artist: Sakuya Amano

Original Writer: Kazuki Sakuraba

MANGA SOCIAL GOSICK

Sauville is a fictional country in Europe, which in 1924, was unused to foreign students with dark hair. Kazuya Kujo is a Japanese student who runs away from home to attend the prestigious Saint Marguerite Academy in Sauville, where he becomes known as the “Black Reaper.” Shunned by his peers for his dark hair and untimely transferrance to the school, his nickname comes from an urban legend in the area. Mysteries abound in Saint Marguerite, such as rumors of a ghost ship. Kujo’s exploration of these mysteries begins with him meeting an odd student, Victorique. Frail, doll-like, and brainy, the blonde Victorique spends most of her time in the library. She shares Kujo’s intrigue in these mysteries, but plans to use logic and deduction to uncover the facts. Part mystery, part detective story, Gosick follows Kujo and Victorique as they explore Saint Marguerite’s urban legends, their destinies now intertwined by their inquisitive natures.



Scanlation: the team of people who scan translated manga from the foreign Japanese into their native tongue to expand readership. Even if you do not read their works online, many others read them as a means of staying up to date with the latest chapters. Their efforts are usually done voluntarily, for the fans, by the fans, to bring to those around the world what publishers have not brought to them just yet. That is scanlation, and I, the writer of this article, am a scanlator.

What is the history behind scanlation? Starting as early as the 1970s, fans in Europe began translating manga from Japan, with the most popular target language being French. Between the 1970s and early 1990s, scanlators could only share their works in small groups and clubs through CDs, mail and emails later on. Famed manga translator Frederik Schodt refers to these early groups as the beginning of manga translation, but also believes that at the time, their efforts were too early as the groups lacked the means to share or publish their works to a large audience.

By 1998 though, IRC (Internet Relay Chat) channels and free hosting services became the hub for scanlations, and organized scanlation groups finally emerged in 2000. With the increase of awareness of the anime and manga culture in the West due to the adaption of Ghibli films by Disney, along with the serialization of “the Big Three” (Naruto, One Piece, Bleach), scanlation groups also grew in response.

The ethics behind scanlating manga can be shaky, but it had to start for a reason. When scanlation began decades ago, it was started due to the lack of commercial publication of manga in the West. As

manga became published globally during the 1990s, different reasons emerged as to why scanlations still existed. First, the lack of niche series being published (as publication companies focus on solely the popular series) allowed scanlation practices to continue. Second, some fans became disgruntled by how companies chose to translate a series, in many cases removing Japanese culture “to suite the target audience.” Then there are also those who do not have access to manga through “normal means” either, because they lack the funds to purchase them or are in a remote area where their only access to reading manga is online; scanlation becomes a necessity. Personally, I vie to expand the readership of series that I love since their authors have put their love into writing and drawing them.



Even with these reasons, scanlating can be a dangerous job, even if it does not seem like it. While the process of scanlation is done without the direct permission of the authors, and is in the grey zone of copyright infringement, many scanlators are willing to stop their work on a series if that series is officially serialized by a company in the West. They may keep a file, but

scanlation groups will honorably remove the series off the list of what they are working on. Others though continue if these companies do not offer the series at an affordable price or translate them in the way more appropriate for fans. Because of this, every now and then, there will be scanlation groups who are shut down for illegal activities, such as hiring someone to receive the scans (the original Japanese manga chapters) before they are even released in the magazines of Japanese stores. This side of scanlation is what makes the animosity between the publishing companies and scanlation groups.

Now what is the process behind scanlating manga? To some, this process is steadily becoming known by their fans over the years, but to many others, they are still unaware of what goes on among the members, or “staff,” who works on these fan translations. This is either out of ignorance as they read scanlated series or because of the lack of direct communication between the fans and the scanlators. This lack of knowledge is obvious when asking anyone who knows nothing about scanlated series, making it similar to having people not knowing what a company is composed of. Some scanlators may not care about their roles being known, but to others such as myself, it would be for the best if both fans and non-fans knew what goes on behind the scenes.



Here is a short rundown of the seven roles necessary to a scanlation. Every scanlation group requires the original manga scans (which are called “raws”) to work off of, which is where the raw provider comes in. Then there is the translator, the person who knows the Japanese language, and hopefully the culture too. When a scanlation group wishes to have quality translations in

their target language, a proofreader is necessary as they will correct the diction and grammar in case the translator is not well versed in one or the other language.

After proofreaders come the typesetters, split into three roles: cleaner, redrawer and editor. The cleaner removes all text, and sometimes even the background text, along with making the page “clean,” if it’s a grey scanned copy of the manga for example. If some background images, such as trees, are erased by the cleaner, the redrawer will draw it back in, redrawing to the best of their ability, as if they are the mangaka themselves. Then the editor takes the translated script, placing the text to their designated spot on the page, also making sure that the texts’ font match the style on the page.

Lastly, there is the quality checker, the person who fixes mistakes made in the assumed final draft and assures that the final product is good to go. Among these, only the translator and editor are seen as the important members by many, even though I believe that the redrawer and quality checker should receive their own end of appreciation.

Many scanlators do not contribute for more than a few years, contrary to the belief that scanlating is a continued effort. Groups may survive, but the average scanlator will only work for about a year or two, whereas small groups will die out in the same amount of time. This is mostly attributed to the fact that many scanlators are students, either in the middle or high school, and sometimes college age, later on quitting to focus on studies or because they had found a paying job.

This does not mean that every scanlator is like so, as there are the veterans who stay with scanlation for many years. For example, I’ve been a scanlator for six years, and plan to continue to translate the series I work on. My reason to remain has been my continued passion to scanlating, even if I have been offered translation jobs outside of scanlating. This passion is important, since scanlators are composed of impassioned readers who wished to help scanlate their favorite series, only to drop out later as the flame of dedication dies down as they find importance in other parts of life.

There is more to be discussed; these are just the basics. Hopefully, you now understand what goes on behind the scenes of your favorite scanlated manga, and have a newfound appreciation for the scanlation process.



ANIME ROMANCE

A CLOSER LOOK

CASSIE SONNE

SPOILERS FOR: SAY I LOVE YOU, KAICHOU WA MAID-SAMA, GOSICK, AMAGAMI SS

Given the prevalence of shipping in the anime community, it is clear that romance is something many anime fans enjoy. Yet within anime itself, romance can be employed narratively in a variety of ways. How can it be used, and what exactly makes romance successful in anime? Let's delve deeper in the world of romance in anime by looking at *Say I Love You* (a shoujo romance), *Kaichou Wa Maid-sama* (a romantic comedy), *Gosick* (a mystery/historical fiction series with a side of romance), and *Amagami SS* (an omnibus format romance).

From the start, *Say I Love You* distinguishes itself from most shoujo romance by establishing the main duo, Mei and Yamato, as a couple by episode two. Rather than focusing on the typical “will they, won’t they,” the show instead examines the joys and struggles of an actual relationship. Although there’s still quite a bit of unrealistic blushing around handholding and kissing from Mei even months into their relationship, the show does a good job of portraying a realistic relationship. Mei struggles with Yamato’s past sexual escapades and eventually has to face her own insecurities in being good enough for him. On the other hand, Yamato has to learn how to better read and understand Mei, whose reserved and shy nature contrasts sharply from his more outgoing and friendly persona.

Sure, most of the characters might seem impossibly attractive, and the drama that occurs is questionably realistic. Few normal couples have to deal with the flirtations of a popular model who seeks to steal away the boyfriend by inviting him to model alongside her. Yet learning how to properly express love and affection, how to communicate needs and desires, how to establish and

respect boundaries with your partner, and how to overcome jealousy and insecurity are pertinent to most couples. *Say I Love You* tackles these core ideas in a way that’s respectful to the viewer’s intelligence while still rewarding them with a cute love story at the end of the day. *Say I Love You* feels like it was written by someone who has experienced the complexity of love and its resulting conflicts, growth, and happiness, and it sets the show apart from the typical shoujo romance fare.



Kaichou wa Maid-sama, or *Maid-sama* for short, is another shoujo romance, although it leans far more heavily on comedy than *Say I Love You*. Unlike *Say I Love You*, viewers aren’t rewarded with the main couple, Misaki and Usui, getting together until the final episode. Its focus on comedy means that loses much of the realism that *Say I Love You* has. Further, some might feel that it takes an infuriatingly long time for the main couple to get together; a random childhood friend rival is forced into the narrative towards the end, when it is already apparently that Misaki and Usui have feelings for each other.

Yet others might view the slow burn as a way to build up understanding and chemistry between the two leads—and it is true that by the end, I was sold that they would make

a good couple, something that was not apparent near the beginning. In order to succeed, the narrative also requires that you buy into the idea that Usui isn't an annoying stalker, but someone that Misaki legitimately enjoys having around. She does not clarify this until the end of the show, and given her tsundere tendency to throw punches at Usui in annoyance, some may question the healthiness of their relationship. For these reasons, I view *Maid-sama* as a less successful romance than *Say I Love You*—although that does not make it a worse show. Some may prefer their romance less serious and more comedic, in which case *Maid-sama* would be the better choice.

Those reading a summary of *Gosick* would probably not see it as a romance at all. Despite this, the show has one of my favorite couples and indeed one of my favorite romantic plotlines. Rather than focusing primarily on realism, as *Say I Love You* does, or comedy, like *Maid-sama*, *Gosick* instead puts emphasis on the characters. The fantasy world our main couple, Victorique and Kujou, reside in can get dark and depressing. Victorique initially views herself as a damaged person from years of parental abuse, is closed off, and acts harshly towards Kujou.



Yet Victorique gradually opens up and starts to depend on him as he understands her better and sticks with her despite a multitude of trials. Although they are eventually separated by a World War, their love for each other and desire to meet again propels them both to have hope and live on. The story is dramatic and high-stakes, but there is believability behind the actions of both Victorique and Kujou. Better yet, the ending is both satisfying and conclusive, with the final sequence essentially implying their eventual marriage and well-deserved happy ever after. For those who enjoy conclusive romance but need a more substantial storyline to go along with it, *Gosick* is the perfect show.

Amagami SS is different from all the other shows discussed so far because the main guy, Junichi, gets with six different

girls—but he's not a polygamist and this isn't a harem. Instead, the show uses an omnibus format, that is, feeding the viewer bite-sized (four-episode) romances, with the show resetting each time a new romance starts. The sequel season devotes two new episodes to each girl, examining what happens after the pairs have been dating a while. Ideally, this gives the best of both worlds—each romance gets a buildup and some exploration of what life is like for the couple as a duo. In reality, the show does suffer somewhat for devoting minimal time to each girl, most of whom fall into an easily archetype (the childhood friend, the smart class president who isn't quite what she seems, and so forth). As a result, people tend to find the show inconsistent, preferring some arcs purely for whichever girl they feature. For those looking to become invested in a particular couple, *Amagami SS* may fall flat. Yet for those who want to overdose on cute, idealized relationships working out (or who just want to finally see the childhood friend win), *Amagami SS* serves this purpose admirably.

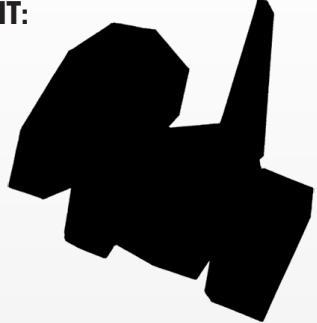


In the end, it is impossible to say what the best romance anime is, since it all comes down to taste and personal preference. What one person finds adorably cute another might find far too sickeningly sweet; others might find themselves valuing escapism over realism or vice versa. The good news is, there really is something for everyone in the world of romance anime. Despite how much people complain about harems and how no one (read: their personal best girl) ever wins, there is a vibrant and varied world of romance anime out there. If you look hard enough, you can find everything from those that explore the workings of fully-formed relationships, to those that take it easy on the romance and focus on the comedy, those that use romance as a successful subplot within a different genre, or those that let everyone's best girl be happy in the end. Anime is truly the medium of “ask, and ye shall receive.”

THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITY

POKÉMON TRIVIA: How well do you know the Pokémon universe?

1. Which Pokémon line is the only one that evolves by trading twice? **HINT:**



2. Which two Pokémon have the only dual-typed attack?

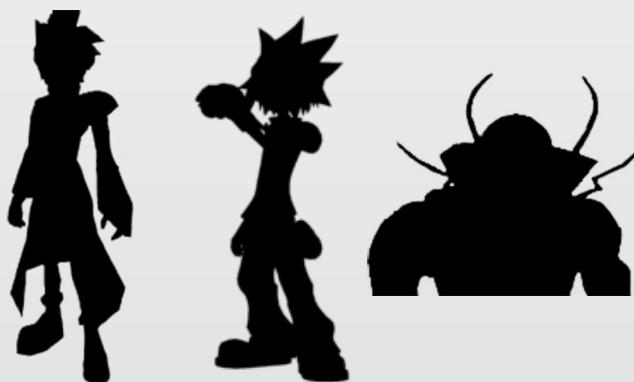
HINT:



3. Can you name all seven regions in order?

4. What official spin off games for the Nintendo gamecube feature Shadow Pokemon?

HINT:



5. What new type was added to the Pokémon universe as of Gen VI?

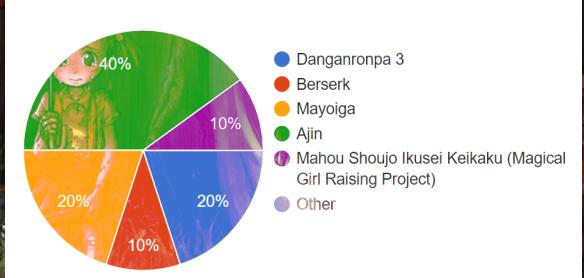
6. What is Ash's name in the Japanese dub of the anime?

1. Poliigon 2. Hawlucha, Tough Cosplay Pikachu 3. Kanto, Johto, Hoenn, Sinnoh, Unova, Kalos, Alola 4. Pokemon Collosseum, Pokemon XD Gale of Darkness 5. Fairy 6. Satoshi

LAST WEEK'S POLL

What was your favorite horror/thriller anime in the past year?

RESULTS



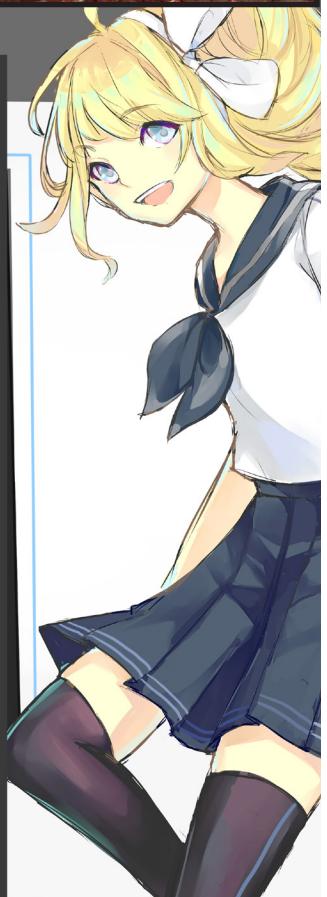
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REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS

Manga Socials

GBC Patio

Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30pm

Game Nights

234 Dwinelle

Thursdays, 8:00 - 10:00pm

COME TO ANIME DESTINY!

Artwork by: Helen Wang
Annie May - Cal Animage Alpha

