

konshuu

presented by: Cal Animage Alpha

Cover Art by: Don Arboleda

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THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

ANIME SHOWING: CHARLOTTE

Yuu Otosaka has the power to control other people's minds by entering their bodies for five seconds. Like any respectable and upstanding individual who stumbles upon some form of superiority over his fellow man, he abuses that power to improve his own life. Such a slight power can still dramatically impact others' lives; consequently, Yuu's power is discovered by Nao Tomori, a student from his school. All would be well for Yuu, barring any definitive proof of his power, if Nao were not part of a student council whose hidden purpose is to find these individuals abusing their powers. Transferring to Hoshinoumi Academy, a high school tailor-made for the supernaturally gifted, Yuu will discover secrets about his own supernatural power amidst the confusion of a supernatural high school life.



Studio: P.A. Works

Written by: Jun Maeda

MANGA SOCIAL: SHAMAN KING

Shaman are those gifted with the unique ability to see, interact, and channel the spirits of the dead. Every 500 years, these shaman compete in the Shaman Fight to declare the new "Shaman King"—the Shaman most worthy of channeling the Great Spirit, a spirit rumored to be capable of producing miracles. Yoh Asakura is one such shaman, whose pipe dream is to become the next Shaman King. But, being extremely laid back and easygoing about everything, Yoh rarely makes an effort in training for the Shaman Fight. That is, until his fiancée Anna arrives, declaring that she'll whip Yoh into shape and become the wife of the Shaman King. With its unique pop-art style, intense fights scenes, surprisingly intricate plot, and gigantic cast of interesting characters, Shaman King is considered among the greats of the shounen genre.

(Reading: Chapters 1-7)



Story and Art by: Hiroyuki Takei

GUEST SUBMISSION: **ZENOPHOBIA**

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THE CHEAP WAY OUT OF A STORY

JOSH "BUBEEZ" ROQUE

A recurring problem in anime is the use of character exposition to explain plot points, character traits, or other important details to its viewers; this is usually done in a conversation between two people. One character, who knows everything, feeds information to another character who knows nothing, consequently giving the viewer that same information. Essentially, having central issues "talked about" makes it easy, escaping any complexity or good storytelling. Rather than rattling off the reasons flat exposition weakens a story, I'll suffice myself with a few examples of both good and bad. I chose anime with similar target audiences, as adding a more mature anime gives a slight disadvantage.

BAD: HYOUKA



To be completely honest, I only watched half of Hyouka; maybe the show redeemed itself by its end. From what I saw, however, the story seemed to spell itself out: A boy named Oreki solves small mysteries with the Literature Club, from finding missing newspaper archives to finding a lockbox left by previous generations of students. The largest mystery involves the events of the Literature Club from 45 years ago. While the premise is interesting, the show takes the "cheap way out"—rather than finding a clever way to reveal these elements, they are mentioned in passing, almost too conveniently. An entire

episode, the one that made me quit watching, had Oreki and his friends printing out their evidence reports based on clues they had collected—off screen, sadly. And it was as interesting as it sounds: reading evidence reports.



No lead-up, search for clues, or any interaction with the viewer. The issue is not that the 'mystery of missing newspaper' was hard to understand; it is just easier to remove the 'mystery' and have it be incessant dialogue to move the plot forward. The first mystery even withheld the key details to its own solving until Oreki monologues his own genius. A door sensor he had noticed had gone unmentioned until he explained everything. Bad!

KIND OF GOOD: NORAGAMI



An action and comedy show, Noragami should be far and excused from needing an intricate plot or complex world-building. Yato, a minor God who only wants to be recognized and praised, is the typical blockhead who knows how to handle a sword well enough that it is excusable. Most of his days are spent doing community service for any human willing to pray to him. We soon learn,

through small details and flashbacks, that Yato was a god of death a long time ago, before he renounced his ways. The way it handles its new plot points or character developments feels like a learning process in and of itself. As our prankster suddenly becomes serious in certain moments, and a killer gaze reveals itself through his eyes, we can piece together that he is used to killing despite being a minor God.



I call Noragami “kind of good” in the sense that it caters to both; the plot allows those who care to solve the puzzles themselves, as new details seem to fit together. However, after a few episodes, a character “figures it out” and spews out the details themselves. While it had the engaging details I liked, it also summed up those details rather cheaply shortly after.

GOOD: KYOUKAI NO KANATA

Warning: Spoilers ahead.



The anime that inspired this article, Kyoukai no Kanata, is as easy to praise as it is difficult to defend. Akihito Kanbara, a half-demon, meets Mirai Kuriyama just as she seems to want to kill herself on his school’s rooftop. Instead, she attempts to kill him with a sword made of her

own blood. Through passing dialogue, and by the obvious tension between students, one can infer that half-demons are not particularly cared for. Kyoukai no Kanata respects the intelligence of its viewers, offering endearing and funny moments along with mesmerizing fight scenes. As a viewer, I started to feel as if I was personally learning about the world, not being told about it. Akihito is not the calm-and-happy human he tries to look like; a few wary glances from his classmates and his esoteric question “Do I look normal?” brings up the issue before any details are spared. The show does, admittedly, hold some information until its conclusion. While Mirai seemed on the brink of suicide, she was actually plotting to kill Akihito the entire time, even before they met. Her actions before that “reveal” could have been summed up as oddly distant, with an obvious goal set up from the beginning. The reveal towards the final episodes, however, makes the anime something like a Mobius strip: looping the show from the beginning, knowing the plot and its twist, actually forms a more interesting show. Each character’s actions are two-fold, serving the original plot (Mirai Kuriyama wants revenge) and the new ‘revealed’ plot (Mirai Kuriyama knew everything, played dumb, and plotted murder.)



When watching the show a second time, as Mirai picks up knowledge about Akihito and befriends him, it suddenly makes sense why she’s saddened by his kindness or feels regret for saving his life. So, Kyoukai no Kanata is the prime example of good storytelling because it spreads the story out discreetly not just once, but twice; and somehow, the second time is even more refreshing.



Pushing herself outside of her comfort zone without much gain haphazardly passes for normality in Mayuko's daily life. Indeed, if Nica_7 had been just another one of those cutesy slice-of-life works, these tiny incidents of Mayuko's shyness and self-consciousness would probably have been glossed over, just like any other scene in an anime. But as in real life—though we can insist to ourselves that this too shall pass—every little moment adds up. As much as we try to ignore our minor struggles, the pressures and anxieties within us all inevitably begin to build.

Mayuko's shaky attempts at "bettering" herself weigh more and more heavily on her, and she becomes increasingly desperate. In another attempt at being sociable, when Genzo-kun, her childhood friend, comes to deliver rice for Mayuko, she insists on having him over for tea. She becomes so invested in trying to converse with Genzo that she is willing to skip the cram school classes she is working so hard to pay for, something that even Genzo points out as odd, given Mayuko's studious nature. The two briefly exchange words with each other, but the majority of their conversation is silent. This is until, much to Mayuko's chagrin, she finds herself falling back to talking about Nica, the only interesting thing in her life. Being able to talk so freely with her childhood friend about Nica, but not herself, is painful to Mayuko, and this episode with Genzo only increases her feelings of self-contempt.

Despite her attempts, Mayuko is overcome by her unfortunate poverty and introverted nature. So she becomes envious of Nica, someone who can be be natural, carefree, and jovial despite her own unfortunate circumstances. And when she has to face the fact that she is jealous of Nica, a "good-for-nothing, under-seven" alien, Mayuko snaps. Mayuko's insecurities ring out louder than ever, and perhaps it is at this point that the anime transcends slice-of-life and touches reality. Why is it that the ones who work the hardest are the least content with their lives? Life is hard; or rather, life is as hard as you make it.

Strangely, though fittingly true to life, the anime fails to fully resolve Mayuko's anxieties. It ends abruptly. Seemingly no resolution is reached; Mayuko continues her dull, uninspired life, and time flows by as it always did. But given time, Mayuko is content. As she puts it herself, "in the end, it didn't really matter anyway."

Nica_7 is one of those remarkable works that reminds us of what the slice-of-life genre is capable of. Indeed both the audience and the industry today are slowly gravitating towards the more escapist view of slice-of-life, the moe-infused braindead entertainment that we all know and love. But deep within the theme of "cute girls doing cute things" is a hidden wealth of possibility. The strongest element of slice-of-life is not the escapism, but the realism. The potential to, behind the safety barrier of a cartoon filter, portray our own fears and anxieties is what makes slice-of-life so much more than it seems to be.

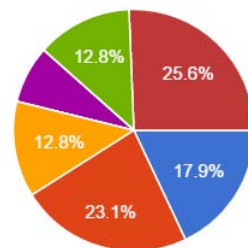
STAFF PLAYLIST

ALL ABOARD THE FEELS TRAIN

| | Title | Artist | Series | Added by |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------|
|  | Faraway | Rita | Little Busters! | Aaron |
|  | Fugainaiya | Yuki | Honey and Clover | Austin |
|  | Hakou | Suga Shikao | Honey and Clover | Rika |
|  | On My Own | Ai Ninomiya | Kekkai Sensen | Edward |
|  | Rain | Motohiro Hata | Kotonoha no Niwa | Josh |
|  | Shiki no Uta | Nujabes ft. MINMI | Samurai Champloo | Nimsi |
|  | Sora wa Takaku Kaze wa Utau | Luna Haruna | Fate/Zero | Tina |
|  | Unjust Life | Jun Maeda | Angel Beats! | Andrew |
|  | Yakusoku | Asami Imai | iDOLM@STER | Andy |

LAST WEEK'S POLL - RESULTS

WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE VOCALOID?



| | |
|--------|-------|
| Miku | 17.9% |
| Luka | 23.1% |
| Len | 12.8% |
| Rin | 0% |
| Kaito | 7.7% |
| Meiko | 0% |
| Gakupo | 0% |
| Gumi | 12.8% |
| Other | 25.6% |

THIS WEEK'S POLL

MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL,
WHO'S THE FAIREST -DERE OF ALL?

VOTE NOW AT: J.MP/KONPOLL42-03

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J.MP/KONSLUB

PUBLICATION STAFF

Managing Editor: Tina Nguyen

Layout Editors: Edward Hong, Nimsi Garcia

Writers: Aaron Chon, Andrew Oeung,
Andy Chen, Austin Tai, Josh Roque

Illustrator: Rika Sato

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS

Anime Showings and Socials

243/247 Dwinelle

Mondays, 7:00 - 10:00pm

Manga Socials

121 Wheeler

Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30pm

Game Nights

85/87 Evans

Thursdays, 7:30 - 10:00pm

WEEKLY SHOWINGS

Gangsta.

Gakkou Gurashi!

NEXT WEEK'S SHOWING: GATE

