

CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

konshuu

ANTHOLOGY

2019

cal.moe/konshuu



Anime Destiny is UC Berkeley's own annual anime convention, hosted by Cal Animage Alpha. It will be held on at the Martin Luther King Jr. Student Union on the south side of campus. We hope to bring together local fans and to provide an enjoyable, cozy experience for our attendees through fun events, interesting panels, and awesome merchandise!

More information at <https://calanimedestiny.com/>

Go to cal.moe/tickets to preorder tickets today!

ANIME DESTINY

Nov.
3rd 2019

Pauley
Ballroom



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.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the *2019 Konshuu Anthology!* The second in our series of anthologies that I hope to continue for the foreseeable future. I am *Konshuu's* current Editor-in-Chief, Abeer. In this anthology, you will find a collection of some of our best work from the past year.

2019 will mark my second year in Cal Animation Alpha and my first semester as Editor-in-Chief of *Konshuu*. Over the past year, we have bid farewell to our previous Editors-in-Chief, Bogeun and Andrew, both of whom have graduated and continued onto greater ventures. They both worked hard to keep the magazine at a consistent level of quality and helped it grow into a more professional publication. This anthology is a celebration of the work done by the entire staff during Bogeun's and Andrew's tenures as Editor-in-Chief.

Four years ago, *Konshuu* began being printed as a small booklet, half the size of our current prints, but thanks to the work of previous editors, writers, artists, and you, the readers, it has grown to what it is today. With two anthologies already completed and more on their way, past staff members and current staff members can be proud of what we have accomplished.

Konshuu is now an eight-page weekly newsletter/magazine featuring original art and articles from our diverse and talented group of artists and writers. Currently, *Konshuu* has a ten person team made up of four artists, three writers, two layout editors, and me. This upcoming semester, we hope to recruit more amazing contributors to an ever-evolving *Konshuu*. We are also aiming to diversify our themes, article types, and layout, in order to bring you a bigger and better *Konshuu* with each passing semester.

Konshuu is our love letter to anime and manga. Through our work in *Konshuu*, we relay our appreciation of the efforts given by manga authors and artists, anime directors, artists, animators, etc. I joined CAA to find a place where Berkeley students and Bay Area anime and manga fans can come together and discuss our love for this medium, and *Konshuu* gave me a direct outlet to voice my admiration.

This anthology is a snapshot of this club and the publication. As new anime air, and new writers, artists, and editors come in to replace older ones, these snapshots will probably vary tremendously in their content. What will never change is the love and care we pour into *Konshuu*.

With that, I invite you to explore and enjoy our second anthology issue, the *2019 Konshuu Anthology*.

ABEER HOSSAIN

Editor-in-Chief

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To Kyoto Animation and Our Readers,

On the morning of July 18th, 2019, one of the deadliest massacres in Japanese history unfolded at Kyoto Animation's Studio 1 building. This tragic event took the lives of 35 people and injured 33 more. As fans of anime, we may focus on the loss of artistic talent at one of the most cherished anime studios of all time, but we should also remember that these were people with family, friends, goals, and dreams of their own. Nothing can excuse the senseless violence nor can anything make up for the loss of life that occurred on that day.

Rather than dwelling on the horrific events of that day, I believe it would be better to direct our attention to the KyoAni's fantastic works and amazing accomplishments instead. Kyoto Animation has given us anime that have brought countless laughs and tears over their thirty-four years of existence. On top of that, KyoAni has also delivered awe-inspiring modern animation, created relatable characters, and built immersive worlds in many of their anime. Their quality of work is rivaled by very few studios and their attitude towards their workers is rivaled by none.

Some of the most popular and acclaimed anime of all time were created by KyoAni. Shows such as *Free!*, *Kobayashi's Maid Dragon*, *Nichijou*, *K-On!*, *Haruhi Suzumiya*, and *Clannad* demonstrate the wide range of genres that KyoAni can tackle with great polish and care. The Winter 2018 season was exploding with talk of *Violet Evergarden* and its beautiful animation and heartbreakingly stories. The year prior, the focus was on *Kobayashi-san Chi no Maid Dragon*. *Clannad: After Story* remains one of the top rated anime of all time on MyAnimeList, reflecting its timelessness. In addition to TV anime, KyoAni has created many fantastic movies like *Koe no Katachi* and *Liz to Aoi Tori*. Kyoto Animation's repertoire is nothing short of amazing.

On the professional side of things, Kyoto Animation is also setting a great example. In an industry filled with overworked, underpaid animators and artists who have to live up to unbelievable expectations, KyoAni shines as a company dedicated to the health and well-being of their workers, exemplified by its selective gallery of shows and completely salaried workforce.

Kyoto Animation is a hallmark of the anime industry. Throughout the years, they have continuously created quality anime for all types of anime fans and have shown tremendous strength in the face of adversity and tragedy.

Thank you Kyoto Animation.
Abeer Hossain and the CAA Staff



HAIKYUU: A SPORTS ANIME FOR A SPORTS FAN

BOGEUN CHOI

ANYBODY ELSE EXCITED ABOUT THE START OF FOOTBALL SEASON? NO? OK...

Sports and anime -- what do these two things have in common? More specifically, what do people who like anime and people who like sports have in common? Usually, not much. Speaking from personal experience as someone who loves both, it can be hard to find someone who also shares the same passions. It has gotten a lot better though: anime is slowly working its way into the mainstream, and the two worlds of anime and sports are crossing together as well with athletes not ashamed to admit they watched (and for some still watch) shows like *Naruto* and *Dragon Ball Z*. Despite this, it's still hard to find someone in a typical crowd who enjoys both the hard-hitting action of football and the calm happenings of a slice-of-life show like I do. For now, the worlds are still very much separate.

Now I know what you're thinking: "what about sports anime? It's both sports and anime -- combined!" Yes, that is technically right -- sports anime is a combination of sports and anime

(to an extent). However, there's some nuances that makes it more complex than its name implies: it's not that easy to say that liking sports and anime = liking sports anime. Let's dive deeper into why that is, and after doing so talk about a show that I feel encompasses the best of the worlds of anime and sports (hint: it's in the title of the article).

[Before I start, a little disclaimer: I'm not very experienced in the world of sports anime. Sure, I've watched the occasional series like *Yuri on Ice* or *Ping Pong The Animation*, but I still have yet to watch any of the classics. Name a classic sports anime and I'm 99% sure I haven't watched it. Nevertheless, I've had enough of a taste of the genre to understand it to an extent.]

Let me start with a personal "story". The reason why I enjoy watching sports is the feeling of competition: something about cheering on a team and experiencing all of the emotions that comes from that is an amazing experience. The jubilations of a win. The sadness of a loss. It's why I go to Cal's home football games even when I have 3 problem sets due the day after: nothing matches the excitement from sports, and it's always a great time win or lose (except that time we got blown out by Washington... though at least I got a nice bobblehead).

The thing with sports anime is that they usually revolve around characters and not playing the actual sport itself. That makes sense to an extent: the viewer is in the perspective of someone who's playing the sport, so of course emphasis would be placed on the character playing the sport. Honestly



Mike Daniels is my hero



that's not a bad thing -- see *Ping Pong The Animation* for an example. It's a character-driven show where ping pong is secondary to the stories of each of the players, and it's one of the best sports anime out there (even probably one of the best anime in general).

Unfortunately for most shows that focus on the characters, the main character (MC) is usually a weakling who doesn't have a clue about the sport they're getting into. Thus the show becomes a story on the growth of MC as they start learning about this new sport. Now this is where my inexperience in the genre really shows because this describes shows such as *Hajime no Ippo* and *Yowamushi Pedal*, both popular and highly respected, both shows I've never watched.

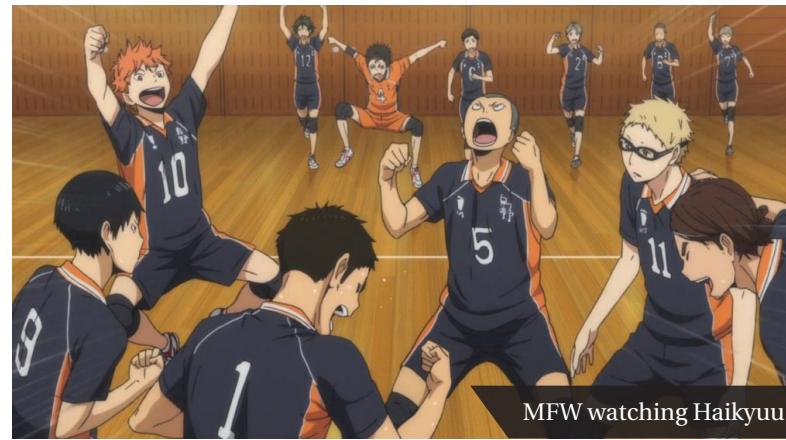


But my point still rings true: the reason for watching sports anime isn't about watching people play the sport itself. Because MC is clueless, the show usually teaches the viewer alongside the MC about the sport. While that's great if the sport is obscure (like rugby or sumo), if it's something like basketball or soccer it's not very fun to watch until the end when MC finally understands the basics. Just watching the sport being played right from the get-go is usually rare, which is unfortunate for any sports fan like me.

Now there is a sports anime that does offer the best of both anime and sports: delivering great sport play while also just

being a great anime all around. That is *Haikyuu*. *Haikyuu* tells the story of a boy named Shoyo Hinata who's pretty short. After watching a high school volleyball match featuring a similarly short player on TV, he starts playing volleyball on his middle school team. In their first (and last) tournament match, the team faces a powerhouse featuring one of the best middle-school players named Kageyama Tobio. Of course, they lose horribly, but Hinata is determined as he trains after the defeat and ends up at Karasuno High School, where he hopes to join the volleyball team. Alas, he finds his "rival" Kageyama is also enrolled at Karasuno, and thus they must learn to play together as they try to become the best high school volleyball team in Japan.

Notice one very minute detail: MC Hinata already knows how to play volleyball. Not amazingly, mind you, but he at least knows the basics of serving, setting, and all that. That makes a huge difference as the show is able to focus on the most important thing for me in a sports anime: the sport. And hoo boy does *Haikyuu* deliver on that front. Watching Karasuno play other teams in tournament matches is pretty much like watching a real volleyball match. Every point leaves you at the edge of your seat, and you cheer when they score and boo when they don't. It's so good that after watching *Haikyuu*, I started watching more real volleyball (which is very hype by the way, would recommend).



Haikyuu isn't just about the sport, however: it is a sports anime after all. We learn not only about the struggles Hinata and Kageyama go through while playing volleyball but also the other members (not limited to the Karasuno team). The character storylines add a lot to the volleyball play: we get into the players' minds while they're on the court. Conversely the volleyball play affects the character storylines -- it's a one-to-one relationship.

So if you haven't already watched *Haikyuu*, I highly recommend you do so. It's a sports anime that any sports fan can enjoy greatly -- heck, even a non-sports fan can enjoy this. It's a show for everybody.



SMASH IN ALL ITS FORMS

JONATHAN QIAN

SMASH HAS BECOME SO MUCH MORE THAN A FUN PARTY GAME

Super Smash Bros has always been a cornerstone of Nintendo, ever since the original version was released for the Nintendo 64 in 1999, and it's never been hard to see why. It has been a consistent success for Nintendo and is one their best selling franchises of all time. Both casual and competitive fans can enjoy the games, and they are accessible to anyone, and with Super Smash Bros Ultimate releasing on December 9th, a quick overview of the game and its long competitive history seemed appropriate. So let's get into it.

For readers who may not know, Super Smash Bros (Smash) is a series of platform fighting games created by Nintendo for Nintendo consoles. Players can choose a fighter from a variety of Nintendo and Nintendo related characters, and battle on stages set in the various worlds that the fighters originate from. Nintendo created the series with the intention of creating a game that anyone could play with their friends, and the stages, items, and simple controls reflect that vision.

Smash's success as a casual game is undeniable. As of June 2018, the most recent Smash title, Smash 4, sold over 14 million copies worldwide between the 3DS version and Wii

U version, along with plenty of DLC character sales. If you have played any of the Smash Bros games, it's easy to see its appeal. No other game allows you to fight Mario as Link with pokeballs and ray guns. The huge cast of characters from your favorite nintendo games, the huge variety of items, and the uniquely designed stages all offer endless fun. Smash even offers different single player experiences in each iteration. Despite all of these things designed to make the game simple, casual fun, Smash has also steadily grown as a complex, competitive game due to the unique nature of its physics and notoriety as a series.

Competitive Smash began with the release of Melee for the Nintendo Gamecube in 2001. Anyone who grew up playing video games in the 2000's had heard of or played it. With over seven million copies sold as of 2008, it was far and away the best selling title on Gamecube. While people around the world enjoyed the game for its casual fun, people began to dig deeper into the game and discovered that Nintendo had created a beautiful accident. Nintendo had unintentionally created a game that could be played at high speeds if the player had the skill to make the correct inputs. It combined



The original cast from Nintendo 64



The crowd at one of Melee's biggest annual tournaments, Evo

casual and competitive in a way no other game had done before. Soon, people began turning off items and banning certain stages to emphasize the player's skill with the character even further for competitive play. The world had never seen a game with such a low skill floor for casuals and such a massive skill ceiling for competitors. Thanks to the huge growth of the internet in the 2000's, a dedicated and amazingly passionate fan base, and the explosion of eSports in the last five years, competitive Smash Bros, specifically Melee, has grown steadily over the 17 years since its release and is now a healthy eSport that continues to grow.

Brawl suffered a much sadder fate compared to Melee during its competitive history. Competitive Smash players were expecting a new version of Melee, with bug fixes and new characters play and new stages to play on. Unfortunately for those expecting a new Melee, Nintendo had removed many of the elements of Melee that had made it so appealing as a competitive game. The lightning fast gameplay was gone, and combos were almost nonexistent. It was less exciting for players and spectators. On top of all this, there was very little character diversity. Meta Knight was far and away the best character in the game and dominated the highest level of play, since picking any other character would automatically put you at a disadvantage. Many of the Melee players who were excited about Brawl abandoned it as a competitive game and returned to Melee. Despite all this, Brawl enjoyed a period of competitive success before slowly dying and finally being replaced by Project M.

Project M was a fan made mod for Brawl that began development in 2008 that gave Brawl more Melee-like mechanics. It brought back the beloved combo system from Melee and changed many characters' movesets to increase their competitive viability. Suddenly, the dreams of a new Melee were becoming reality. Its fan base, made up mostly of Brawl and Melee players, grew quickly, and the mod continued to grow and evolve as the development team responded to feedback. Project M had breathed new life into a dying game and birthed a new competitive Smash scene. Unfortunately, Project M was also changing and editing Brawl's original code, and Nintendo could not let a fan made mod become one of the faces of the Smash franchise.



Project M, a fanmade mod for Brawl

Nintendo sent a cease and desist to Project M's development team, and Project M's development ended. The Project M team took down their website and removed download links for the hack, while Project M players went back to Melee, waited for Smash 4, or continued to keep Project M alive through local scenes.

Melee continued to dominate the competitive smash scene, until the release of Smash 4. Smash 4 improved slightly upon Brawl, but combos were still not nearly as potent as they were in Melee. Smash 4 also had two new aspects that previous titles never had: official balance patches from Nintendo and DLC characters. Smash 4 has always had problematic characters since its release. Starting from Diddy Kong during release to Bayonetta now, Smash 4 has always had a character that is very clearly stronger than the others. Despite that, these characters were not unbeatable and Smash 4's competitive scene grew fairly steadily. Many of Smash 4's high level players were past Brawl and Project M players or newcomers to the competitive scene. Smash 4 had captured a generation of players who had previously played Brawl as kids and held onto the nostalgia of the Smash games. Unfortunately, Smash 4's popularity has slowly been dwindling, ever since the announcement of Super Smash Bros Ultimate. Many Smash 4 players and spectators are also tired of Bayonetta, who is a DLC character that has dominated the competitive scene since her release. Her reign at the top has been a controversial point for the Smash 4 community, with some advocating a ban on Bayonetta and blaming the game's slow decline on the character.

Smash Ultimate came as a shock to many Smash fans, since it was largely thought that Smash 4 would be the final entry in the series. Ultimate features the largest cast of fighters out of any Smash game and some game mechanics similar to Smash 4, with a few changes. While it's likely that Melee will continue its dominance as the biggest competitive Smash game, Smash Ultimate will be a treat for both casual and competitive fans alike, since Nintendo has begun to express support for its competitive scene after many years of ignoring it, while adding a plethora of new content for casual fans to enjoy.



Bayonetta, a controversial character within the Smash 4 community

WHAT IS A “THRILLER BARK” ANYWAY?

ABEER HOSSAIN

I'VE NEVER DRESSED UP FOR HALLOWEEN AND THAT'S SAD

⚠ MAJOR SPOILERS FOR ONE PIECE

It's honestly surprisingly to check back on the list of *One Piece* sagas and see that the Thriller Bark Arc appeared in the anime a decade ago. The eighteenth in the series, Thriller Bark takes place entirely on a ship of the same name, belonging to one of the seven pirates who have allied themselves with the World Government, the Shichibukai Gekko Moriah. Moriah transports the Straw Hats to his ship as they enter the *One Piece* world's equivalent of the Bermuda Triangle and subsequently steals their shadows, without which the crew is destined to perish upon sunrise. A typical horror mystery setup for a surprisingly quirky and colorful arc that has all the makings of a *One Piece* storyline: outrageous designs, fleshed-out characters, and a wonderfully sad backstory for the newest member of the Straw Hat crew, Brook the skeleton.



The previous *Shichibukai* before the famous Marineford Arc, with Gekko Moriah at the top left.

But of course the main reason this arc is in this article isn't because of its great story, fight scenes, or how it sets up the rest of the *One Piece* universe but because of its spook factor. The entire forty-five episode arc consists of zombies, orcs, monsters, multi-headed dogs, and all the supernatural tropes you could possibly think of. The soul of the Straw Hats' soon-to-be crew member is

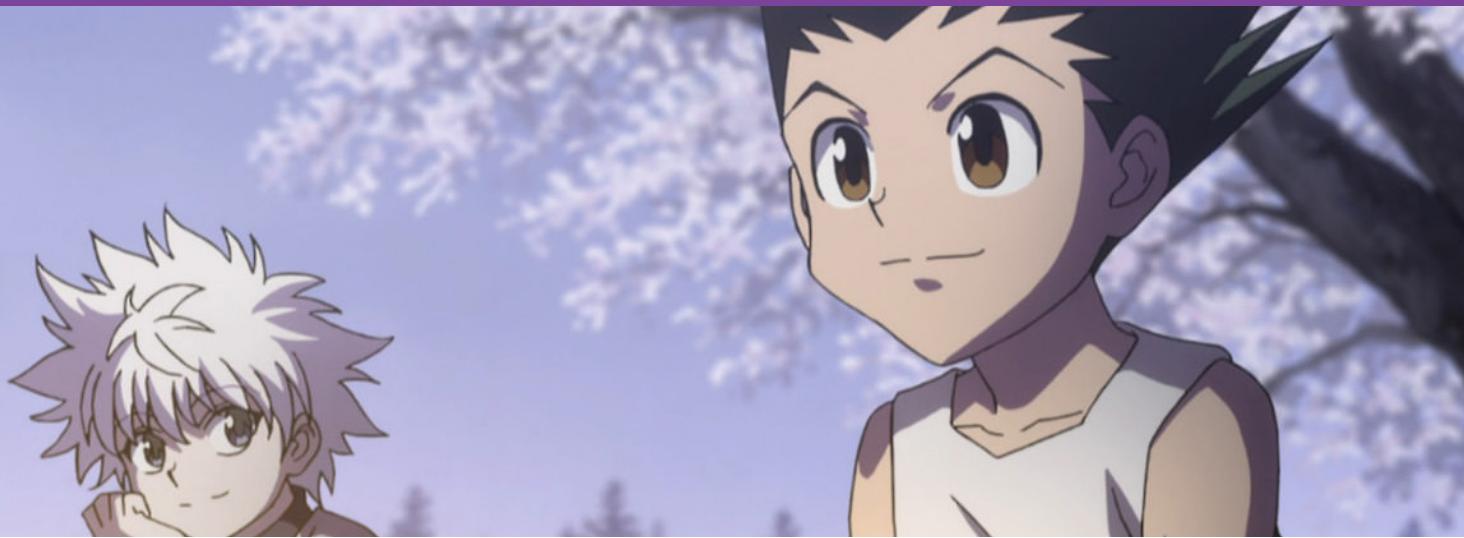
just the start of the spooks, and once he leads them to his long since decayed body at the crash of his crew's ship from hundreds of years ago, viewers know that the entire arc is going to be one full of delightful dread.



You can't have a spooky arc without a spooky orc.

Despite being the big bad of the arc, Moriah himself has quite an endearing and morbid backstory in which all his crew member once on the Thriller Bark died, leading him to abandon living creatures and pursue only undead crew members including zombies, ghosts, unkillable monsters, and frankensteins of his own. Having lost all of his humanity, Moriah wouldn't hesitate to kill any living soul, but a mention of his previous crew will still bring him to tears. The arc handles the ideas of life and death, what it really means to live, and the purpose of life quite well through the humor and action sequences scattered throughout. It is also a great example of the different kind of shonen that *One Piece* is: one less focused on fights and power levels and more on world and character building. The Straw Hat crew sails from island to island with each arc, but each island is more of a complete different world than simply another piece of land within the same stretch of the sea. Thriller Bark just happens to be an island-sized ship with hundreds of thousands of zombies and monsters on it as well as a powerful pirate who can take away people's shadows at will. Honestly nothing out of the ordinary.





THE RAMBLINGS OF A FUDANSHI

SHAO-LON YEH

I JOINED KONSHUU FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PUSHING THIS ISSUE

For those of you who don't know me, I'm the ultimate yaoi lord of the intergalactic universe, and today, I'll be telling you why yaoi is great. Warning: after reading this article, you will actually become a degenerate (although most of us in CAA are already beyond saving).

First of all, what is yaoi? Yaoi is actually an acronym of ヤマなし、オチなし、意味なし or "Yama nashi, Ochi nashi, Imi nashi" which translates to "no climax, no point, no meaning," so just from the name, you can tell that yaoi is going to be some spicy stuff. Personally, my favorite acronym for yaoi is やめて お尻が 痛い or "Yamete, Oshiri ga Itai" which translates to "Stop, my butt hurts." I'm not explaining what that means; if you know, you know. Sadly, Konshuu isn't an 18+ publication so I have to keep this article relatively tame.

Now that you know what yaoi is, let me explain what a fudanshi is. A fudanshi is a male that likes yaoi, and being a fudanshi is probably one of the most awkward things in the world. Allow me to elaborate. Imagine being in Japan at a manga store casually browsing the wholesome books when you come across the fabled yaoi section. You look around and see no one near you, so you decide to pick up something spicy just for a little peek. Suddenly, a Japanese store worker comes out of nowhere and talks to you in Japanese, but since you don't speak Japanese, you just have a staring contest with the worker in front of all the yaoi books while holding an interesting

looking graphic novel. This happened to me and I felt like dying.

Yaoi isn't the only form of male x male romance. I'm specifying this because if I don't, I know that someone is going to call me out and I'm not about that. Along with yaoi, we have BL, bara, and things that I can't talk about for the sake of keeping this article PG 13. Yaoi came first and it's gay romance that is written by women for a primarily female audience which is why most yaoi guys are pretty boys and twinks. Next we have BL which stands for boy's love. Yaoi is more hardcore and focuses on the more intimate parts of the relationship (if you catch my drift). BL, on the other hand, is more pure and focuses on the romantic aspects of the relationship, and it usually has more plot than yaoi. Bara is similar to yaoi in the fact that it's hardcore, but it differs because it is written by men for a primarily male audience which is why bara guys are extremely muscular and bulky. For the rest of this article, I use yaoi as a catch-all term for all of the forms of male x male romance because it's easier than specifying which specific form I'm talking about.

Now on to the main question, what makes yaoi so good? I really like yaoi because it explores relationships free of gender stereotypes and societal norms. In normal romance, females tend to be super melodramatic and males tend to be idiots. These character tropes make the story very cringey and not enjoyable. Of course, not



all normal romance stories are like that, it's just that it happens more often with normal romance rather than with yaoi. Another reason why I prefer yaoi is because it avoids problematic female stereotypes. Many times in regular romance, females tend to be one dimensional characters that just try to get the male's attention. This creates a boring and predictable story which is also not enjoyable. Of course, I'm also biased towards yaoi because I'm the biggest gay in existence and cute guys are top tier.

Another reason why yaoi is great is all of the yaoi ships. One of my favorite ships is Killua x Gon, yes I know some of you guys think it's weird but hear me out. Killua literally has nothing else to live for but Gon. He states that he has no motivation in life during the hunter exam arc and everything he does during the rest of the story is for Gon. The entire plot of *Hunter x Hunter* is Gon trying to achieve his goals and Killua cleaning up after him. I don't want to say anything else because I don't want to spoil anything for those who have not watched *Hunter x Hunter*, but if you haven't watched it, watch it right now and you will understand. Also, Killua and Gon are perfect for each other because their personalities perfectly balance each other out, but I won't talk about it because @Wingdrops already wrote an article over light haired vs dark haired characters (go read it). And if you think this is a filler paragraph that I created so I could talk about *Hunter x Hunter*, then you are correct.

I feel like a lot of people are scared to get into yaoi because it's seen as erotic and forbidden. This applies especially to straight guys because guys have a weird notion that if you like something that is gay, then you must be gay. But yaoi is just like any other romance, except that instead of girls, you have cute guys. Also, not all yaoi is erotic or explicit. There is a lot of BL that is pure and wholesome, they're just not as fun to read as the spicy stuff. If you don't like yaoi, then I respect that (I'll just haunt your dreams), but I think that you should definitely give it a try before you judge it.

Now it's time for the fundashi Q&A because I have extra word space and the main article has ended. Do not read the rest of this paragraph unless you feel like losing all of your brain cells. Ever since I joined CAA, a lot of people have asked me whether or not traps are gay. In my opinion, traps aren't gay as long as you don't know that they're a trap. If you know that the trap is a guy and you would still do the dirty with the trap, that's cutting it pretty close to gay. If the tips touch, then it's over. I've also been asked a lot if I like yuri and the answer is no. Sorry, but yuri doesn't stand up my vanguard. If you've actually read this entire article, I applaud you.



THE WANDERER

ANDREW WING

BLOOD TASTES LIKE IRON

Ping Pong the Animation is my favorite anime of all time. I love it for its characters: they are all incredible, well-crafted characters who show growth and development throughout the story. The show has some all-star side characters: including Sakuma, the childhood friend, and Sanada, Kaio's second-in-command. The side character I want to look at is one who might be overlooked: Egami, the wanderer.

Egami's story begins in episode 3. He's the first opponent for Smile, the main character of the show, in the regionals tournament. At first, Egami is confident. He's a third-year; it's his last chance to break through to nationals, and he's up against a first-year. Unfortunately for him, reality is cruel, and he ends up getting skunked by Smile. As he loses the match, imagery of seagulls and the beach sweep onto the screen. Egami leaves the venue, defeated, and mutters to himself "Maybe I'll go to the beach."

From this point on, Egami wanders the world in search of himself while the rest of the characters progress through their own ping pong narratives. While Peco, Smile, and Kong are playing, training, and improving, Egami is journeying the world. In episode 5, he makes a brief appearance: Egami is shown working part time as a vendor on the beach. Egami remarks to himself: "I guess the sea doesn't agree with me either... Maybe I'll go to the mountains..." At this point in the show, he's a mysterious character whose sporadic presence doesn't add anything to the story. The enigmatic Egami makes another appearance in the Christmas scene from episode 6, where

he is shown at the mountains, only to say "Maybe I'll go overseas..." Egami is shown returning from overseas in episode 9, with a tan. Having taken a journey around the world in search of himself, he seems to have failed, because he returns home as uncertain as ever. He remembers that it's been exactly 1 year since he got skunked by Smile, and decides to check out ping pong one last time.

Egami returns to the tournament in the finale, and is surprised to find that Smile, the man who defeated him and sent him on his journey all that time ago, is in the finals. He comes full circle and is shown watching the match, breaking into tears. He mutters to himself: "I'll be damned.. I like this sport. I left you and wandered the world, but I was looking for you this whole time." Egami, the sporadic appearer, the one who has never touched a ping pong ball since his defeat to Smile, came back only to realize his true love had been ping pong all along. And in the most amusing turn, in the final scene of the show, Egami is shown at the world championships in Germany wearing the Team Japan jersey. A beautiful moment out of a very pleasing finale episode.

In my opinion, Egami is a beautiful side character. He barely has any screen time, probably less than 2 minutes total, yet still has a complete character arc. The whole time, it's like he was speaking to a lover, repentant after straying. He's a play on the "you don't know what you have until you lost it" cliche, but with a "no one ever said you couldn't go back" twist on it. You basically never see Egami speaking to any of the other characters, he's just monologuing to himself, yet his character fits right into the story. Whenever he appears, you wonder where he's going next, and when you see him fulfill himself at the end, you can't help but feel happy for him.

Ping Pong is an amazing show that brings all its characters' various threads gradually together over the course of eleven episodes, and Egami is no exception. In the same timeline as the rest of the characters, he embarks on a journey to find his center, only to realize that it was ping pong this whole time. "Please forgive me, let's start again."





SIDE CHARACTERS ARE THE REAL OG

ZEE DEEN

DO YOU EVER STOP AND THINK: IN YOUR LIFE, ARE YOU MORE A MAIN CHARACTER OR A SIDE CHARACTER?

I personally love it when a manga puts spotlight on side characters to tell their stories. Shounen mangas do a great job of doing it, maybe because mangakas know that a wide cast allows for more storylines, backstory, and an overall richer story. You can love Naruto on his own, but the story would not be the same without Itachi's intense love for Sasuke, Jiraiya's hilarious antics, and the heartwarming bond between Nagato, Konan, and Yahiko. *Detective Conan*'s many, many chapters bring back adored side characters in a longitudinal telling of the story, showing that peoples' lives evolve gradually and over time, and for some reason, almost always over a mystery. And there is no better side arc in *InuYasha* than that of Sesshomaru and Rin, because in these chapters, we can see this cold-hearted demon develop compassion and selfless tendencies as he takes care of Rin, admittedly or not.

The only thing better than side characters being given the platform to tell their stories is when you realize that besides the main character, they are just as important, just as vital, to the overall story. Let's take, for example, Kaito in *Airgear*. Throughout the main story, he's just this moody, chain-smoking asshole of an older brother to a character with three personalities. Almost three hundred chapters later, you realize not only is he their father, but he's also kind of the reason things in the manga became what they are. Oh, and you realize that his relationship with his baby mama is probably the precursor to main events in the entire story.

Shoujo mangas are not as good as shounen mangas in doing this. Many mangas fail the Bechdel test, in which whether there exists a scene where two female characters talk about anything other than

men. In many romance mangas, the main character's friends exist solely to talk about their love interests. Side characters are shallow and mostly underdeveloped, but this makes sense because many shoujo mangakas don't really know how long their manga will be serialized for, and they have to focus on the main story. Side characters regrettably play second fiddle to the main characters.

But as a shoujo mangas gets more traction and the story kicks off, side characters can get more coverage – their personalities become more developed and they gain more depth. *Usotsuki Lily* is a manga that often breaks the fourth wall by talking about its manga development, and therefore, it's ability to develop more about the side characters. At some point, the main characters don't really have much they develop but the side characters do. The same goes for *W Juliet*. The main characters go through a lot of development early in the story, and when it seems like their capacity for growth remains stagnant, focus shifts to the side characters. In the end, it is these side characters' stories that become the ones we didn't know we wanted.

Honestly, side characters work to make the main storyline more refreshing. Main characters get boring, they eventually become stagnant and there's not a lot that can eventually happen without getting typical or repetitive. Side characters completely change our entire understanding and perception of manga and more often than not, we end up liking them way more than we do the main characters. It may be a stretch, but I think side characters, not main ones, truly make the story we end up loving.



WHAT'S IN A CM, HOW VIOLET EVERGARDEN SHOWS, NOT TELLS

SHAMIN CHOWDHURY

INSPIRED BY UNDER THE SCOPE AND MOTHER'S BASEMENT

The first CM of *Violet Evergarden* draws us in right off the bat with the exquisite detail on everything in its first shot. We see Violet's shiny metal hands typing on the typewriter, the keys of the typewriter moving correspondingly, and the typewriter typing these letters on the paper to spell out "One day, I will show...". The paper written with these words comes off of the typewriter, and we see components of the typewriter coming up and melting away, some into nothingness, some into letters and numbers like those on the typewriter. Violet's letter from earlier gets folded into an envelope and sealed with red sealing wax. Up to this point, "I, with letters, will connect people's feelings,"¹ has been written on the screen in Japanese.

As the letter we're focused on flies off to the left, we transition to Violet coming into the frame dancing by a gorgeous lake, and as she moves back, we see the posterior of a man, perhaps a past lover. Violet in this sequence appears younger, with longer, let-out hair, a white dressy top, a long blue billowy skirt, and a blue parasol, her expression a little concerned. She turns around a couple times as she's dancing, and her following expressions are more stoic. Letters like the ones from earlier fly across the screen, except these ones are golden and script font. The words "Each important person's," has been written in Japanese on screen.

The sealed letter from earlier flies across the screen to transition us to the older Violet in a sunlit bedroom with a little girl bawling and throwing a tantrum at Violet. The light from the windows is blinding, as the camera pans around and it shines directly at us, and is less white and more golden, contrasting the brighter sunlit scene from earlier. Violet here is startled and her expression concerned again, this time due to the sobbing girl. Golden

letters, this time in type font, fly across the screen again, and "Every important feeling" is written on screen.

The sealed letter flies down across the screen transitioning us to a younger Violet holding up a shiny green brooch as she stares at it in awe and then proceeds to bite on it.

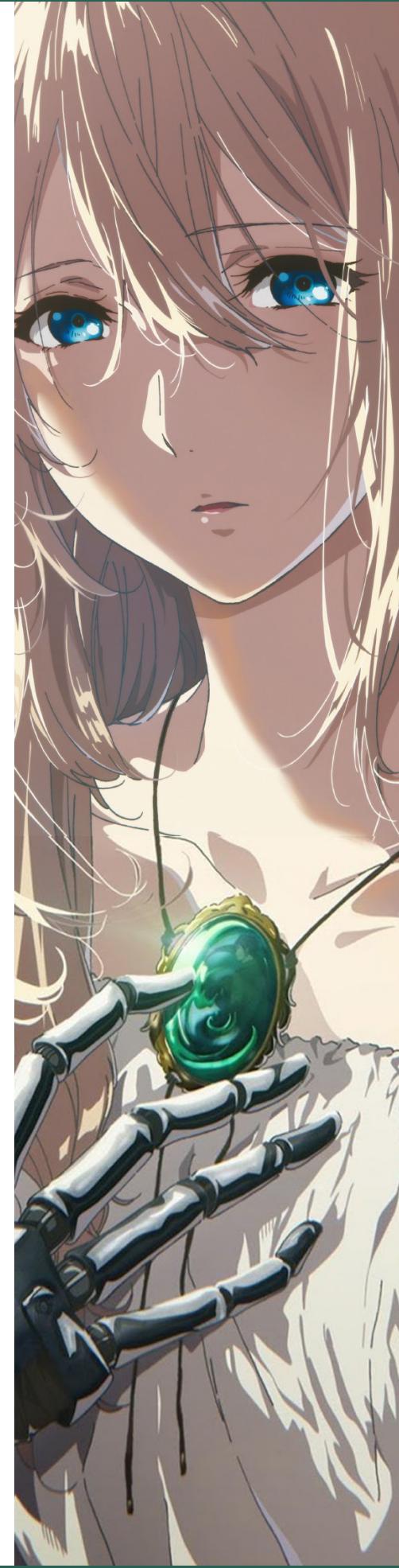
The sealed letter flies across the screen again with the golden script letters along with broken glass as we see the younger Violet in a darker outfit riding a battle axe in midair inside a building with large windows at nighttime, indicating perhaps she broke through a window in the building on that battle axe. She turns around very quickly to show us a focused expression.

The sealed letter, this time burning, transitions us to the older Violet walking towards us in a burning scene carrying a man, possibly the one from earlier. Burning golden letters are falling in this scene as the camera suddenly shows us Violet's face, bloodied, injured, but striking of all, stoic as "But," is written on the screen.

The burning letter flies swift across the screen to the green somber eye of a man's face, on which we see light fading on his face as if doors are being shut.

This transitions us back to a side view of Violet from the beginning looking up with a slightly concerned expression again, and we're left with a view of Violet in the well sunlit room with sealed letters falling down all over the room. Across the past two sequences, "What is within me, I still do not understand" is written on screen.

¹Please excuse me if my translations are at all incorrect



konshuu gallery

INKO AND IZUKU MIDORIYA

MY HERO ACADEMIA
Sharrel Jan Narciso

NARUTO UZUMAKI

NARUTO
David Chang

Originally published in Volume 48, Issue 3 (September 20, 2018)

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EVA 01 AND KAWORU NAGISA

NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

Elliot Lu



GIORNO GIOVANA

JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE: VENTO AUERO
Jamie You

Originally published in Volume 48, Issue 8 (October 25, 2018)

volume XLVIII, issue XI





SABER ALTER

FATE/STAY NIGHT

Rika Sato

MIKAN TSUMIKI

DANGANRONPA

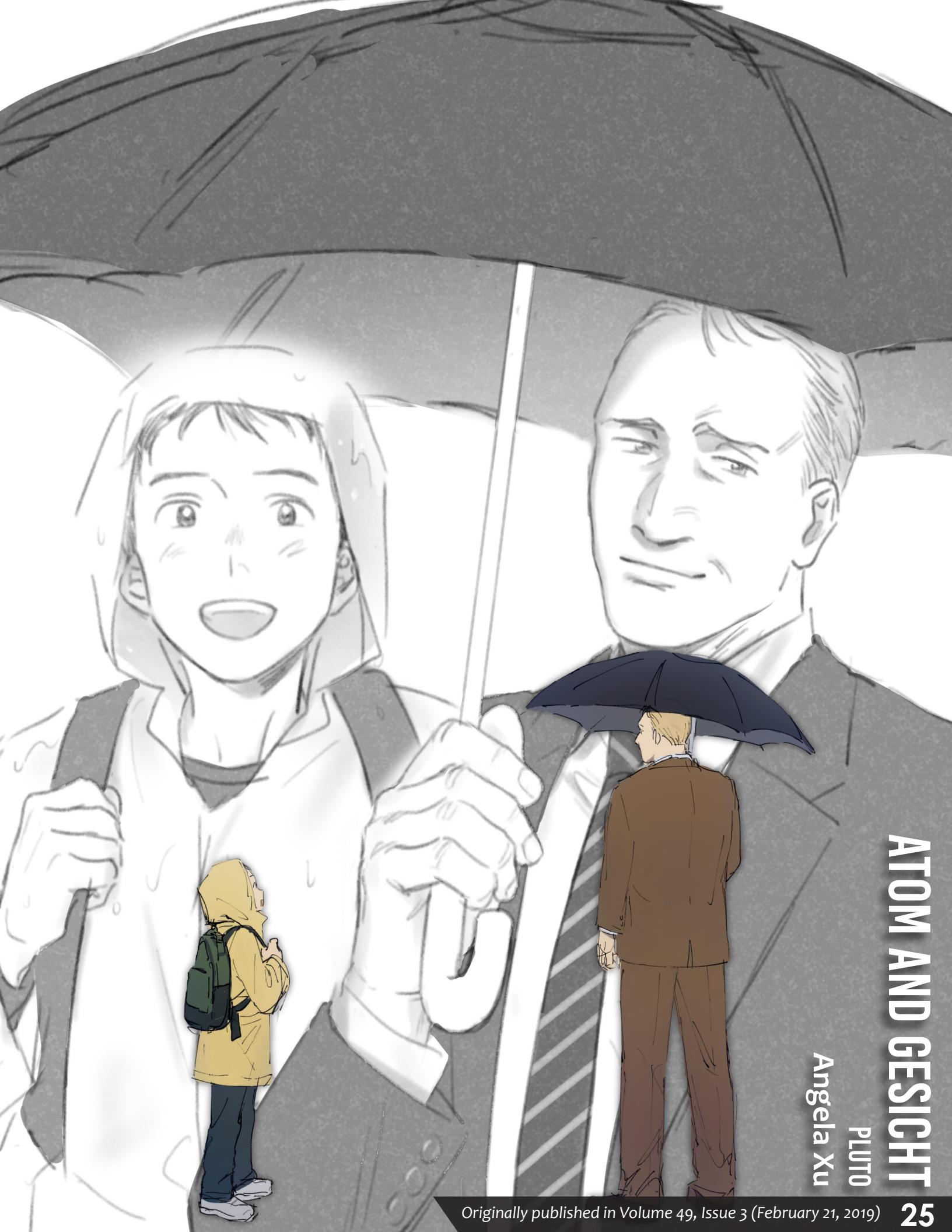
Athena Chen



ATOM AND GESICHT

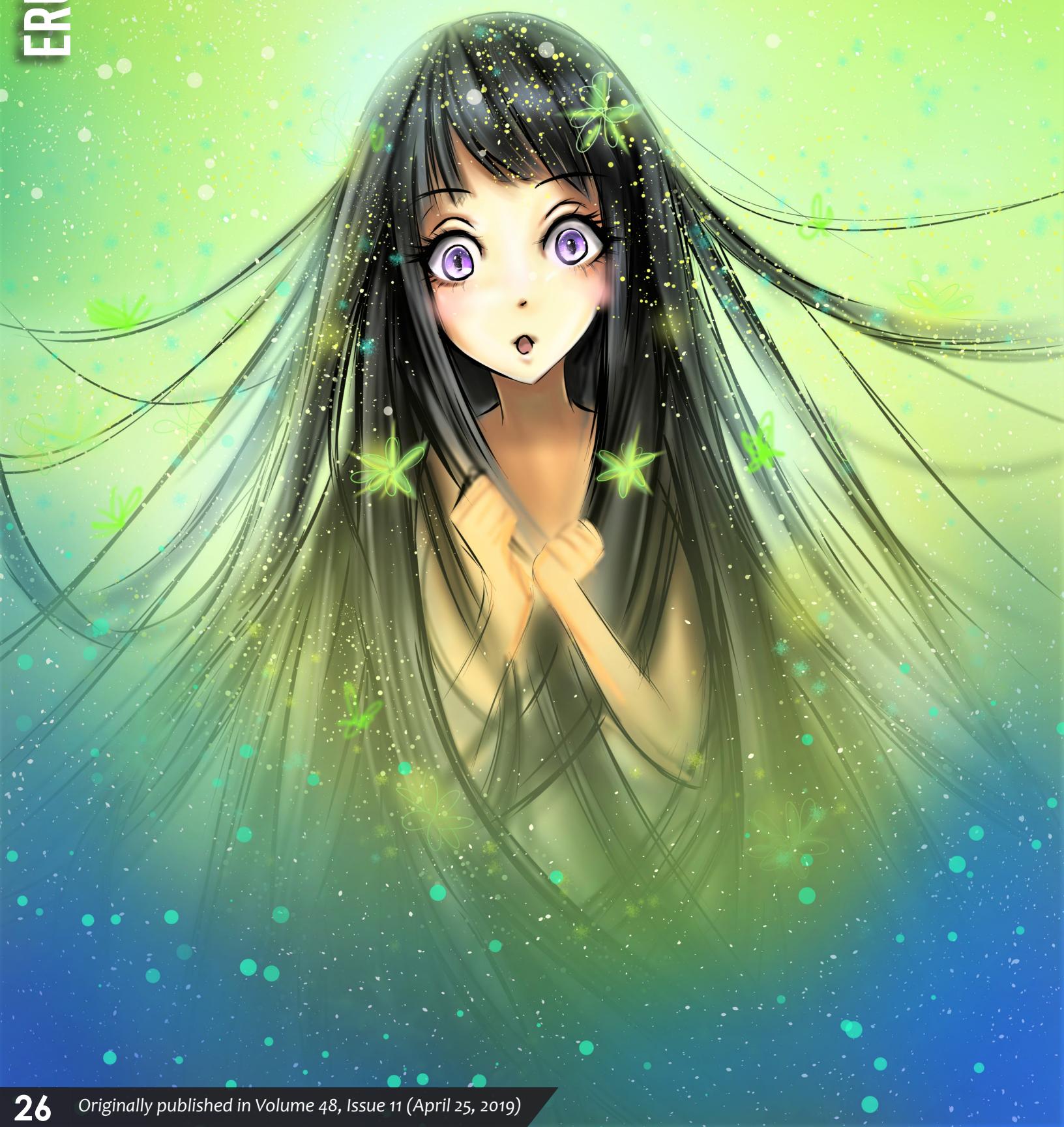
PLUTO

Angela Xu



ERU CHITANDA

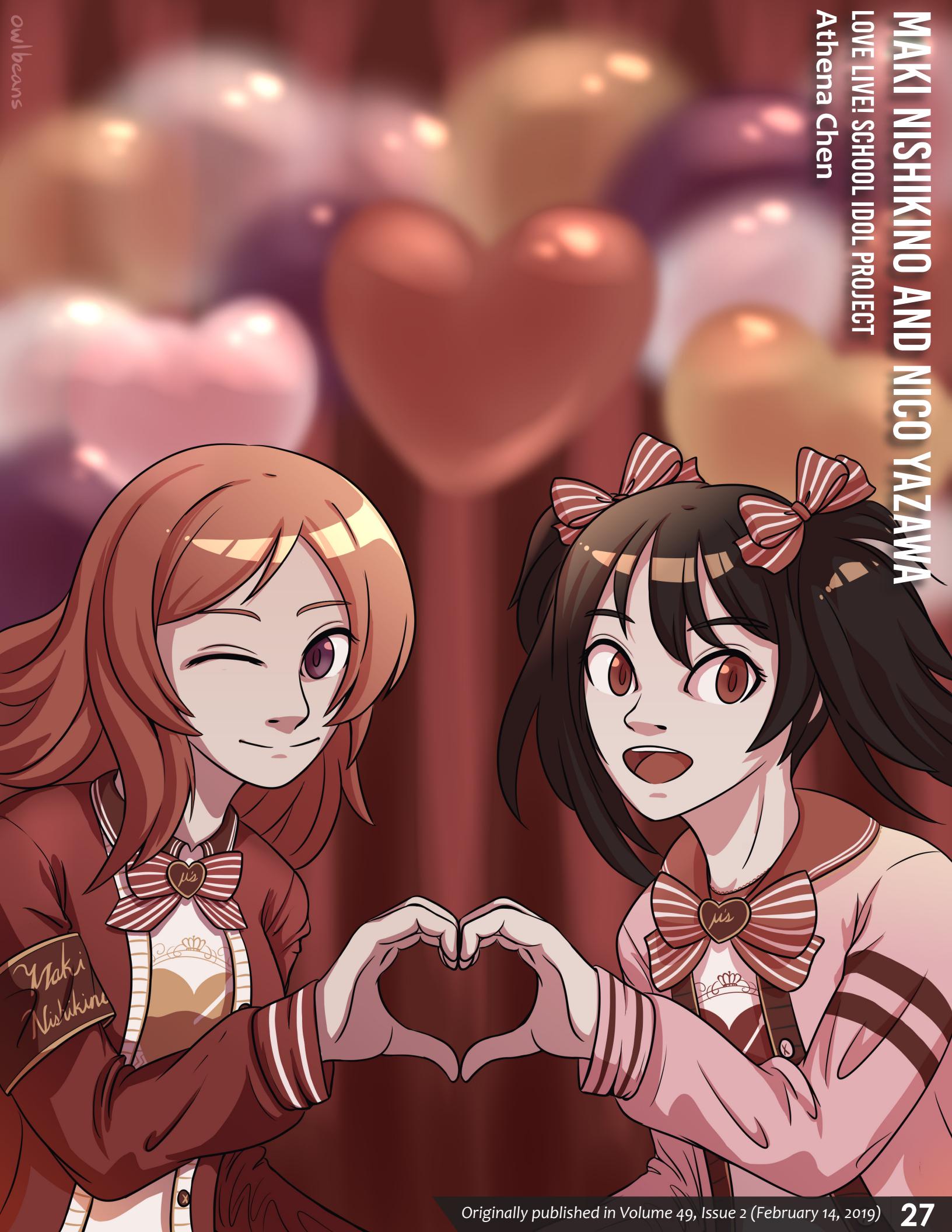
• HYOUKA
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MAKI NISHIKINO AND NICO YAZAWA

LOVE LIVE! SCHOOL IDOL PROJECT

Athena Chen



CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

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