

# konshuu

presented by: cal animage alpha



## ANIME SHOWING: **SHOKUGEKI NO SOMA**

Ingredients for Shokugeki no Soma: delicious images of food, delicious images of anime characters reacting to that food, and a good sense of humor. Yukihira Souma is a chef who wants to overtake his father's cooking skill; this means attending an elite culinary school that his father has challenged him to succeed in. Only 10% of the students ever make it to graduation day. The students can be rather competitive when it comes to cooking, but Souma, being the hard-headed but ambitious character that he is, will challenge anyone to prove his culinary talent. The cooking itself: scrumptious; the characters being launched into pure ecstasy after eating said food: exquisite; the feeling of an anime not taking itself too seriously while being hot-blooded and lively: refreshing.



## MANGA SOCIAL: **SAIUNKOKU MONOGATARI**

Inside of the oriental empire of Saiunkoku, eight provinces vie for power and control over the state. A member of one such province, Shurei of the Hong clan, is a descendant of the Hong noble family. Yet despite her status and nobility, she spends her life living between paychecks because of unfortunate circumstances. Furthermore, due to her female gender, she is forbidden from pursuing her one true passion: politics. But this soon changes as the new Emperor, Ryuuki Shi, ascends the throne. Emperor Ryuuki is a do-(no-)gooder who rarely attends council meetings and is rumoured to be gay. In order to set him straight, Shurei is soon appointed as both Ryuuki's consort and advisor. Having finally attained a well-paying salary and a respectable position in the imperial court through Ryuuki, Shurei begins to enact her will on the country, and slowly the gears begin to turn.

Reading: Chapters 1-12.5







*"No one really cared anymore, when we all realised that this once strange thing had become ordinary."*

The slice-of-life genre is often grossly undervalued as simply being a genre with only "cute girls and boys doing cute things." While this is true for some slice-of-life works, and many great works have been made following this formula, more contemplative works in the slice-of-life genre have been made. These works choose to crawl a little deeper into our daily mundane lives, picking out the intricacies, eccentricities, and absurdities that are so commonplace, we never even notice them.

Created originally as a doujinshi by Yoshitoshi ABe and produced by the now defunct Triangle Staff at the turn of the millennium, *Niea\_7* was and is a relatively unknown masterpiece of this specific, contemplative slice-of-life genre. Much of the staff that worked on *Niea\_7* had previously worked on another of ABe's works, the much more famous and celebrated cult classic "Serial Experiments Lain." Released in 1999, *Serial Experiments Lain* was itself a very unique, avant-garde anime that tried to ask some important philosophical questions (namely, about the reality of the "wired" network of disembodied ideas and data that we all live in and take for granted today). So, when it was announced that the same staff would work on a more lighthearted slice-of-life in *Niea\_7*, not many people knew what to expect.

The story follows Chigasaki Mayuko, an extremely poor cram-school student who lives inside of an old traditional bathhouse, and the titular character Niea, a quirky, happy-go-lucky "under-seven" alien from outer space. The anime starts off just as your average slice-of-life today would: with comedic scenes and jokes. Niea is usually the instigator of any comedic moments, with Mayuko begrudgingly adding to the joke as the

"straight man" and being the victim in many of Niea's misadventures. In between these comedic bursts are quieter, more relaxing scenes; the general tone of the start of the anime is very lighthearted and fluffy.

But beneath the upbeat exterior of the first few episodes is a slow-acting poison of emotional distress for Mayuko. For one, Niea is notably the only real excitement in Mayuko's life. The only times that we see Mayuko act in an eccentric or bizarre manner are during her interactions with Niea; when Niea is not involved, Mayuko's daily life is almost too bland and somber for even a slice-of-life work. This is in part because the other characters that Mayuko interacts with in the bathhouse, while by no means boring or one dimensional, are all very measured and elderly. Even the bathhouse's manager, Konomi, mentions to Mayuko that she'll "grow boring" if she keeps living with old people. This is the sad reality of Mayuko's life situation. By spending all her time working multiple jobs just to fund her studies, she never has the time or money to act freely, like other people of her age.

Mayuko realizes her own dull nature all too well, which is why in the later episodes of the anime, she makes strides towards becoming more sociable and extroverted. As an example, Mayuko is invited to a drinking party with a few college boys by one of her few friends at cram school, Chiaki. Normally reluctant to go to social outings, Mayuko pushes herself to attend. However, Mayuko soon grows anxious about the party. She becomes self-conscious of her meager image; her unkempt hair and plain, unfashionable clothes slowly chip away at her self-confidence, and without the money to participate in the first place, she decides at the last minute to decline Chiaki's invitation.

-AUSTIN "COZYKLING" TAI

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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: CHARLOTTE

