

konshuu

presented by: Cal Animage Alpha



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THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

MANGA SOCIAL: TORIKO

The world is nothing without culinary flavor in the world of Toriko; on a planet largely populated by powerful and exotic animals, the minority that is humanity lives comfortably in the Human World, separating themselves from most of the land teeming with dangerous beasts known as the Gourmet World. These large animals also happen to be quite delectable; the rarer and stronger, the better. While most humans are not allowed in the Gourmet World, many chefs hire the Gourmet Hunters, who are either brave or foolish enough to hunt the world's most dangerous game. Toriko, perhaps the most dangerous wild beast roaming the Gourmet World, is on the hunt for new exotic flavors to satisfy his hunger and create the ideal dinner course. This job does not come without competition, however, and is not an honest job; Toriko and his friends set out, letting his tongue do the thinking and his fists do the talking.



Story and Art by: Mitsutoshi Shimabukuro

ANIME SHOWING: GATE



Studio: A-1 Pictures
Original Creator: Takumi Yanai

Medieval fantasy and modern military literally clash when a mysterious portal opens up in the middle of present-day Tokyo; flooding from that portal, a slew of Roman-esque soldiers and mythical creatures pour out into modernized streets. The JSDF, a modern Japanese defense force, matches the swords and claws of these invaders with superior firepower and military tactics. Yoji Itami, an avid player of fantasy video games and a reserve member of the JSDF, leads citizens and local police at the first appearance of the portal, later known as the Gate. Afterwards, due to his firsthand experience and bravery, Yoji is chosen to join a task force to investigate the strange world on the other side of the Gate, filled with creatures and environments similar to Yoji's own fantasies. Military experience and his otaku knowledge come in handy as he and the task force start to make sense of the other world.



(Warning: Mild spoilers ahead.)

Everyone has that one show—a show you revisit again and again, discovering anew each time. It could be a show from your childhood, or it could be a show you watched today. A classic can withstand criticism and the test of time. Generally, classics are universally liked because they appeal to a broad audience in several ways. A classic does not just do one thing well; it does almost everything well.

Hayao Miyazaki set the bar for Japanese animation with *Spirited Away*. With its engaging plot and enthralling characters, *Spirited Away* appeals to not only children, but also adults. While the film can be taken as a simple quest in a fantasy land, it can also be interpreted in a much deeper way. For example, characters like No-Face and Chihiro's parents exhibit excessive greed and gluttony and are forced to succumb to repercussions. Haku, the personified form of the Kohaku River, feels liberated by Chihiro after she discovers his true name, and his new sense of freedom and independence is represented by his subsequent flight into the sky. Chihiro becomes "Sen" the moment she loses her way and ventures into the bathhouse, which is highly intriguing because "Sen" has the same exact kanji as Chihiro, but is read differently. Thus, the abrupt alteration of her name parallels her feelings of venturing into the unknown. This small yet significant detail illustrates how much thought and planning went into *Spirited Away*.

Of course, there are a number of other reasons why *Spirited Away* is considered to be the definitive animated classic among many. *Spirited Away* appeals to Westerners because its plot and encompassing themes are essentially universal due to the fantasy setting. Other films like *Princess Mononoke* are definitely much more esoteric, because they have a plethora of Japanese cultural references and sometimes take place in an obscure Japanese setting. *Spirited Away*'s music, produced by Joe Hisaishi, has a brilliant and elegant composition. Although unimportant background characters are typically drawn lazily and without detail, *Spirited Away* differs in this respect: even minor characters like the Radish man are unforgettable and sport intriguing designs. I know *Spirited Away* may not be perfect, but I am sure it holds a special place in many of our hearts.

Cowboy Bebop is also dubbed as a reputable classic for our generation, most likely due to its largely positive reception on Cartoon Network. For those of you who have not watched *Cowboy Bebop*, it is a tale about Spike and Jack, two bounty hunters traveling around in space and capturing nefarious villains. The lighthearted, episodic nature of *Cowboy Bebop* makes it easily watchable by many, and its jazzy music will get stuck in your head for days. *Cowboy Bebop*'s music style definitely catered to the Western audience and influenced its success in America. The frequent comedy in *Cowboy Bebop* had me chuckling plenty of times, and I bet you feel the same way, too! *Cowboy Bebop*'s plot functions similarly to *Spirited Away*. Although it may seem simple, it can be quite intricate if you look at it from another angle. The story successfully builds up a tragic romance despite its episodic nature and ends in an equivocal but climactic fashion.

Overall, *Spirited Away* and *Cowboy Bebop* are iconic animes befitting of the title "classic." Classics like these undoubtedly emerged from the effort of talented and hardworking individuals. However, I have not exactly exhausted the list of classics in the anime and manga industry. I urge you to find other shows that hold a special place in your heart. Until then, see you, space cowboy!



(Warning: Spoilers ahead.)

Many anime watchers tend to judge the quality of a material by its characters, so it is not unusual to see the rather notorious series *School Days* split between like and loathe, although the latter seems to be the more common opinion. In a single sentence, *School Days* is the story of how main character Itou Makoto is thrown into a convoluted love triangle, which then becomes a convoluted love dodecahedron, and surprisingly for an anime, ends with actual blood.

A great deal of the hate for the series arises because the aforementioned main character, Itou Makoto, is indecisive, dishonest, selfish, perverse, and a plethora of unpleasant words that you can find by looking him up on any anime forum. The anime accomplished exactly what it wanted to by creating this disaster of a character, so I do not blame people who despise him and/or the show. However, is this a fair depiction of the character Itou Makoto? The reason I ask this is because the original *School Days* was based on a visual novel, which drastically changes the implications for the character.

For the uninformed, a visual novel is best described as a tree: You start at the trunk and have to make decisions where the path splits, changing the story anywhere between infinitesimal to drastic amounts in the narrative, and do so until you reach one of the many ends to the game. Most visual novels require that you play through all of the routes by making different choices in order to completely understand the characters and setting, often leading to a much greater width of content than normally possible in other mediums.

Anime is no stranger to visual novel adaptations, but the reason that *School Days* stood out was because it was debatably the first visual novel adaption to adapt the ending to a bad route, or was loosely based on a bad ending, at least. In other words, the anime adaption of *School Days* was an interpretation of the story where the player/main character deliberately made poor choices, which subsequently led to a poor ending. Knowing this, is the main character Itou Makoto always a douche, or was it just one bad showing? To find an answer to this question, one must

actually play through all of School Days, and seeing that summer was relatively lax, I did us all a favor and did exactly that.

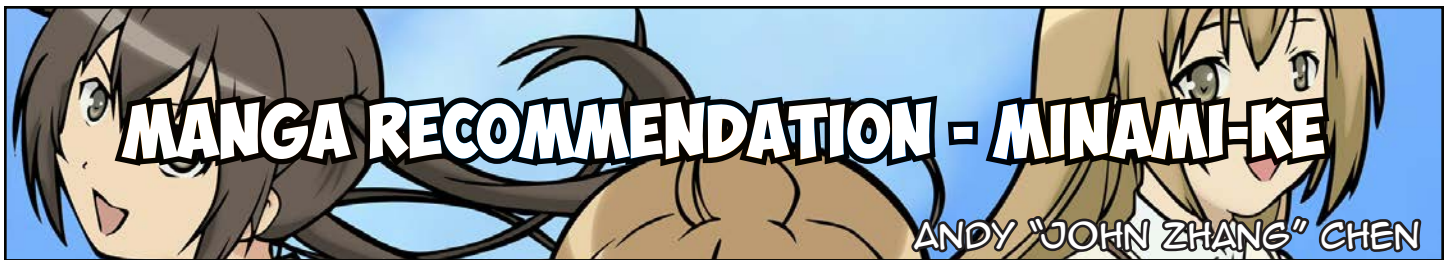
Now before I begin, I must inform you all that School Days is just the main entry in a series that still has releases that continually add new information and new perspectives. For the purposes of keeping things simple (and for not having access to the other games), I will be speaking in the context of the School Days visual novel only.

The first thing that occurred to me as I played through was the significance of the very beginning (for anime watchers, this constitutes the first episode). Regardless of what choices the player makes (only two for the first chapter), the story will proceed in exactly the same way. This is problematic because one of the two choices involves denouncing any romantic interest in Katsura Kotohana, one of the main heroines. For those who do not know the beginning, the other main heroine, Saionji Sekai, sets the two up on a date and into a relationship. Those who have watched School Days can tell that Itou is incredibly indecisive, a feature which the game highlights by making it possible to time out choices, amusingly enough. In context, said indecisiveness potentially leads to an unwanted relationship driven by the much louder and overbearing Saionji, so there is no doubt that there will be relationship troubles down the line.

If you are looking for a clean depiction of Itou in this article, allow me to quash your hopes right here and now: In spite of the game having more good endings than bad endings, I have found that only one involves a relationship that is consistent in having only one partner, an unfortunate result of always being with Katsura in the beginning, and most of the other female routes branch out from Saionji's as well. Nearly of all Katsura's routes and the entirety of all of the other routes, good or bad, involve Itou being involved with more than one girl at least once, so Itou being some sort of saint is out of the question, courtesy of his indecisiveness. However, does this make him the scumbag villain that he has been painted as? The answer may surprise you.

As far as all the routes go, there is always some manner of sexual tension that is resolved in one way or another; there is no helping Itou's perversion. To be frank, this lack of restraint is something that I am not able to judge very well, as I assume that some people have more "needs" than others, a subject that the visual novel actually covers. Not including the earlier mentioned Katsura ending and an ending that involves a successful three-way relationship, the rest of the routes involve some manner of turning at least one of the girls down, some being situationally proper, and some being completely uncalled for. In spite of these shortcomings, I should say that in a majority of the routes, Itou will at least attempt to remedy the situations for which he is at fault, a trait that is rare even in real life.

Itou Makoto: a monster or a man? For an indecisive character, I thus award an indecisive answer. Itou is a character who makes tragic mistakes because of his inability to fully comprehend his feelings and the feelings of others, but he at least makes efforts to try and make up for these shortcomings, lacking as they may be.



Minami-ke, a seinen slice-of-life manga by Sakuraba Koharu, began its serialization in Young Magazine in 2004. The manga includes many common tropes of the slice-of-life genre: adolescent romance, school life, and just about anything that involves daily life. In fact, it presents the most basic idea of what defines a slice-of-life genre, but at the same time makes interactions between the characters interesting enough to be a solid read. The lives of the Minami sisters lead to over 4 seasons of anime adaptations and OVAs.

Minami-ke translates to the “Minami Family,” and the story is mainly about the life of the Minami sisters. The sisters all live under the same roof, but have surprisingly different personalities. Chiaki, the youngest of the three, is a slightly snotty elementary school student who is very nonchalant about daily happenings, but excels at school and is quite intelligent for her age. Kana, the second oldest, could be considered the antithesis(ter) to Chiaki; she’s a cheerful middle schooler who always tries to make a big deal out of her ordinary life, yet is completely terrible at school. Haruka, the oldest of the three, is a guardian and parental figure who enjoys the interactions of her younger sisters. Despite Haruka’s soft personality, she has shown her serious side many times in the series. The series is character-driven, and the stories within each chapter revolve around interactions between the sisters and their friends. The interactions range from discussing Halloween costumes to just deciding what to have for dinner. The general story behind every chapter is that the sisters and their friends will be discussing the topic of the chapter, but the interactions always bring a small twist that makes the chapter interesting. For example, my favorite chapter was the one in which Kana received a love letter from her classmate Fujioka. Kana brought the letter home to show it to Haruka and Chiaki, since she was too embarrassed to read it herself. Yet by analyzing the sentences and words, Chiaki managed to conclude that the letter was actually a challenge, written in the hopes of dueling Kana after school. Kana, who at this moment felt that it was easier to accept the letter as a challenge rather than a real love letter, confronted Fujioka after school and gave him a kick to his knee, leaving Fujioka confused as to whether she disliked him or not.

In the end, what makes Minami-ke special is that there are absolutely no gimmicks aside from the character interactions. Whether it be regarding fanservice, special settings, or drama, Minami-ke manages to diverge from these traits and strictly depend on character personalities and interactions to make a seemingly boring story about daily life into something extraordinary. Every chapter, the plot involves something very common in Japanese urban life: Matsuri festivals, talking to friends in school, discussing love, etc. Whatever mundane activity that Sakuraba Koharu decides to pick for the chapter, the Minami-ke sisters and their wonderful friends always bring their own twist to the table, making it a pure joy to read. Minami-ke is built upon one key idea: that character interactions bring out the life of the story. This simple rule that the series follows strongly reflects upon the “daily life” aspect of the slice-of-life genre. The organization of the manga series also follows this idea of daily life, where each volume spans roughly a year’s time, covering activities during Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. On top of all that, the simplicity of Sakuraba’s art, with its lack of detailed background drawings and uncomplicated shading, also contributes to this idea of an ordinary but enjoyable daily life. Minami-ke takes these things and manages to make them into an extraordinary story.

A slice-of-life series does not need anything special to be unique, even just concentrating on one key point of the genre can make it a great work. Sakuraba Koharu masterfully crafted a typical, yet amazing slice-of-life manga simply by strictly following the “daily life” theme that all slice-of-life manga share, and Minami-ke really shows how a simple life can be very unique. For those who want a pure but slightly different slice-of-life series, Minami-ke is certainly a top choice.

GUEST SUBMISSION

AN INTRODUCTION TO WUXIA AND XIANXIA

NIKKY LE

Junior, French

Marketing and Events | CAA

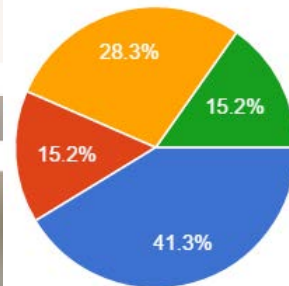
Tired of regular ol' manga and anime? Want something new? Try xianxia and wuxia novels! These are Chinese novels about adventure, training, and magic set in an alternate fantasy universe. A wuxia novel usually features an adventuring protagonist who trains to the height of his power to protect the ones he loves. Xianxia is extremely similar to wuxia, except the hero trains to become an immortal. Both genres provide a door to a fantastical universe we could only dream of accessing.

There are several sites dedicated to translating popular xianxia and wuxia novels, but the most well-known one is WuxiaWorld (wuxiaworld.com). WuxiaWorld is a well-constructed site where you can find great translations with little to no grammar errors. Its translators can get through 4-7 chapters a week for a novel that may run for several hundred or several thousand chapters! Other sites include Radiant Translations (radianttranslations.com) and Void Translations (voidtranslations.wordpress.com), which translate other novels independently of WuxiaWorld. If you prefer more creative works, or want to read something new and fresh, Royal Road (royalroadl.com) has original stories posted by people around the world. This particular site is also great for those wanting to practice their writing and language skills, as many posters don't have English as their first language).

Xianxia and wuxia novels provide a great way to pass the time and relax when you're stressing about finals, but be warned, once you find a riveting wuxia or xianxia novel, you won't be able to put it down! Some personal favorites: Coiling Dragon and Forgotten Conqueror.

LAST WEEK'S POLL - RESULTS

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



Tsundere 41.3%

Yandere 15.2%

Kuudere 28.3%

Dandere 15.2%

THIS WEEK'S POLL

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE
TYPE OF ANIME/MANGA?

VOTE NOW AT: J.MP/KONPOLL42-04

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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: PING PONG THE ANIMATION

