

vol.49 #10

College

KÔNISU

Makise Kurisu
Steins;Gate
art by Deborah Lim



THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

THE TATAMI GALAXY

Upon meeting a mysterious stranger claiming to be a god at a ramen stand, a third-year college student is forced to reflect upon his lonely past 2 years. He tries, and fails, to ask out an anti-social underclassman, and is filled with anguish at his wasted college years. He is given an unimaginable opportunity, however, and is whisked back in time, allowing him to relive his last 2 years.

TATAMI GALAXY

四畳半神話大系



Spring 2010, Madhouse
Directed by Masaaki, Yuasa

MANGA RECOMMENDATION

GRAND BLUE

Iori Kitahara, just beginning his freshman year at Izu University, eagerly anticipates his dream college life filled with beautiful girls and good friends. Things don't exactly go according to plan, however, as he constantly finds himself in strange, alcohol-filled situations. Undeterred, Iori still vows to realize his ideal college life, but will things go according to plan, or will his situation continue to take a dive?



2014 - Present
Written by Kenji, Inoue

A NOT SO GOLDEN TIME

ABEER HOSSIAN

2ND YEAR, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING AND ASTROPHYSICS

Did I really just spend \$150 at the Cherry Blossom Festival...

STAFF WRITER



Let's start the college issue by stating something obvious: there is a dire lack of anime/manga based around college students and grown adults. College is a much better setting for the hyper-dramatic themes present in many school anime and the adult realizations and thought processes that many of the middle and high schoolers in anime experience. Now, quite ironically, let's talk about an anime in college that doesn't technically revolve around decidedly adult themes. It's a love story with quite a few childish characters, but I'm sure we've met these exact caricatures somewhere during our college tenure (so far). *Golden Time* presents a group of college students suffering through romantic drama. The main character has amnesia and doesn't remember his previous love who failed to acknowledge her own feelings and tell the MC of them before he tragically fell off a bridge. Then we have the eccentric and honestly meme of a character, Kouko Kaga, who chased the boy she liked to college and then instead began dating his best friend, the MC Banri Tada.

The show does deal with some heavy themes of identity and acceptance of change regardless of how drastic or gradual it may be. The success it has with the themes is debatable, but having characters attack these issues in a college setting is so much more believable than seeing middle schoolers wonder about "what it means to be me" like in *Kokoro Connect* (love the show, don't get me wrong) and a plethora of other shows. In addition, seeing adults approach serious romance is very refreshing and gives the moments of drama and tension much more gravity as these are relationships that could possibly define entire lives. While this is not to say that real and mature relationships cannot exist before college and adulthood, many of the decisions and thoughts seen in romance anime that take place pre-college seem too mature and too aware for children and teenagers. *Golden Time* takes many of the romcom tropes and applies them to a (slightly) more mature group of friends. While the usual exaggeration of personalities still exists to highlight the comedy aspect of the show, the characters are often given the respect and thoughtfulness that adults deserve for their motives and emotions in anime.

There are quite a few other college-based shows I could have discussed (I definitely wouldn't mind talking about *Run With the Wind* for another article) such as *Tatami Galaxy* and *Nodame Cantabile*, I decided to go with *Golden Time* as it provides a more direct comparison to anime that take place in middle or high school. The show isn't anywhere near as mature as the two I just mentioned, but it provides a window into the possibilities and strengths of creating anime around adult characters and adult themes, as opposed to mixing the two aspects. In college and beyond, shows can tackle topics of sexual harassment and rape, alcoholism, identity, mental illness, sexuality, and so much more through characters that are likely to experience them and address them in mature ways; a parallel to the teenagers in anime solving their issues as if they were mature, experienced adults.

Also, *A Sister's All You Need* is set in college and is some good dumb, ecchi fun if you needed a recommendation. They don't really act like adults very often though.

The main cast of *Golden Time* featuring characters with a wider range of intellectual and romantic maturity



DON'T LOOK BACK: THE STORY OF THE TATAMI GALAXY

BOGEUN CHOI

4TH YEAR, APPLIED MATH AND DATA SCIENCE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

College is overrated anyway

As someone who's about to graduate college, there's a lot of things I look back on and think about. Granted, the past already happened and there's nothing I can do to change that. But sometimes it's still fun to look back and wonder "what if?". What if I joined CAA as a freshman instead of as a sophomore? What if I ended up rooming with my friends instead of living in Bowles Hall (a decision I regret to this day)? What if I didn't go to Berkeley? It's a fun thought exercise, but not very productive in the long run. Looking back at the past prevents you from living in the present and looking towards the future.

That's where one of my favorite anime comes into play: *Yojouhan Shinwa Taikei*, otherwise known as *The Tatami Galaxy*. One of the few anime that are set in college, it tells the story of an unnamed third-year (MC) who runs into a weird eggplant-head man in a ramen stand. Doing so causes MC to recall his past two years in college, a time of regret and loneliness spent ruining relationships with his "friend" Ozu. Wanting to make the most out of his remaining time, he tries to ask out his underclassman, the cold yet kind-hearted Akashi, but fails to do so. As he regrets his past, he travels back in time to when he was a freshman, and is able to start anew.

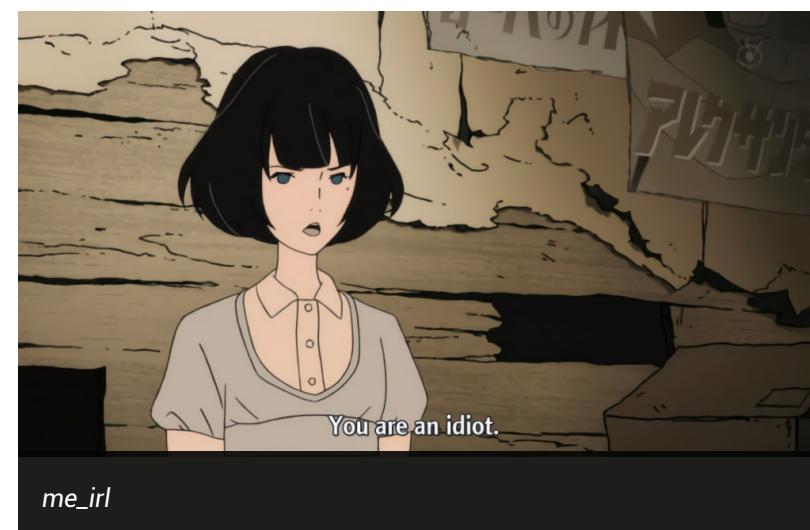


Our protagonist with eggplant-head man

I've heard one of my friends call this the quintessential college anime, and I would highly agree for obvious reasons described in the plot

— namely the characters being in college part. Each episode follows a pattern where MC joins a club with high hopes, but somehow it doesn't end up bringing the "rose-colored campus life" he dreamed of. He meets Ozu, goes down a dark path, meets Akashi, makes a promise to her, meets a fortune teller that informs him of an opportunity "dangling" in front of his eyes, remembers to return Akashi's keychain hanging in his room, forgets to do so, regrets his life, and goes back in time to repeat it all again.

Now I know what you're thinking: what is this Endless Eight baloney. And yes, the way I described it makes it seem like the same formula every time. But I assure you that I had to go very barebones in describing it to not spoil too much of what happens. Though each episode does follow that template, they are all very different in how they implement said template and it doesn't feel formulaic at all. And all I'll say is that the last few episodes don't follow it.



One of the biggest reasons why I enjoy this anime so much is that it is relatable. But it is not just limited to those who've experienced college. In fact, I would argue the relatable nature of the anime doesn't have anything to do with the characters being in college. MC wants a "rose-colored campus life", and every path he takes throughout the anime results in him looking back at his past regretting his actions. We all have regrets about past actions in our lives that we wish we could redo again. But the point of the anime is something I mentioned within the first paragraph of this article: the past is the past, what happened already happened, and you can never live your "rose-colored" life unless you live in the now. That's something that really stuck with me, and is the reason why I highly recommend this to anybody reading this, even if you're not in college.

GRAND BLUE DREAMING

GRAND BLUE AND EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED



JONATHAN QIAN

2ND YEAR, CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

STAFF WRITER

Make sure to check that your water is water with a lighter.

What is part of your ideal college life? Amazing friends? A significant other? Good grades? Whatever the answer may be, there are many ways of reaching your goals, and not everyone will take the same path to reach those goals. Sometimes the path you end up taking is a little messy.

Grand Blue, a comedy anime about a college diving club, follows the daily lives of the diving club's members and their antics, with drunken character interactions and college-related situations and gags being the main source of entertainment and laughs. If you're looking for a college-based diving anime, however, this is the wrong show.

The main character, Iori Kitahara, is a young man who decides to attend college in a seaside town, where his uncle owns a diving shop. He has big hopes for college; Iori is set on finding good friends in a club, finding a cute girlfriend, and having the idealistic college experience.

Or so he thought.



Our main character, Iori

Iori ends up being roped into the "diving" club at his university, "Peek-a-boo", by two of his upper classmen, Kotobuki and Tokita. Iori quickly learns that the diving club is more like a drinking club, as the first few events that he participates in with the members all involve drinking and losing clothing. Iori begins to realize his

idealistic college lifestyle probably won't be attainable anymore because of the club. The culture around his uncle's diving shop and the diving club upperclassmen is not all what Iori is used to and he has to adjust to his new life, which leads to a lot of funny reactions and moments as Iori discovers that clothing is often optional for the men while drinking is mandatory. In fact, drinking and stripping are such a large part of the comedic aspect of the show, that fans have even created a Grand Blue drinking game that makes you drink each time a character loses a piece of clothing or is forced to drink.

Grand Blue Drinking Game Rules

Original Rules

- 1 Shot - Someone takes off/loses any clothes
- 1 Shot - Someone's sexuality is questioned
- 1 Shot - Every titan face
- 2 Shots - Someone is forced to drink
- 2 Shots - Iori and friends betray each other
- 2 Shots - You actually start laughing
- Finish your drink - If Chisa Retaliates at Iori
- Finish your drink - If by any chance they actually go diving

Penalty Rule

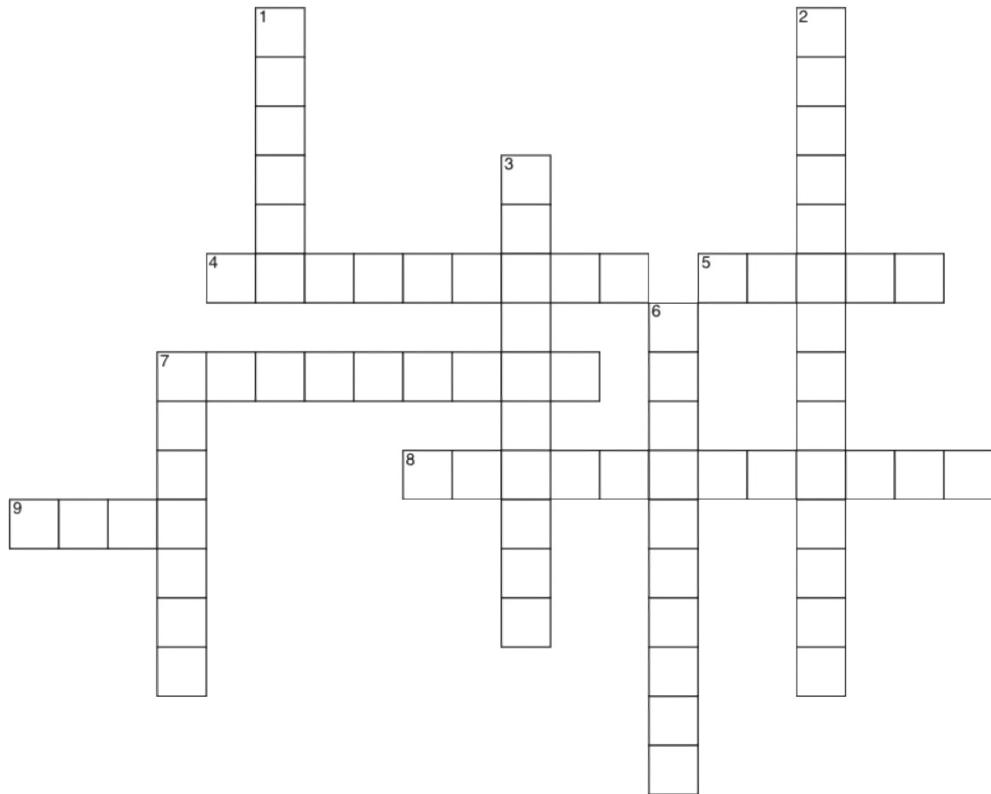
- 2 bottles - You question the rules (or say I am trying to kill people with the rules.)

Luckily for Iori, he is not the only new member of the club. Iori manages to rope Kohei, a handsome first-year otaku, into joining Peek-a-boo with the help of Kotobuki and Tokita. Kohei is less than thrilled to be in the club, but he and Iori quickly develop a rivalry and bond while they face the crazy drinking sessions that the club holds daily.

While Iori's new lifestyle is welcomed by his upperclassmen in the club, his cousin, Chisa, is less than thrilled to see Iori transform from an innocent boy to a drunken degenerate. Chisa plays the straight-man character in the show, and her willingness to punish Iori for his bone-headed decisions creates a lot of the funny moments in the show. Chisa also helps facilitate more serious, sweeter moments in the show, and those scenes serve as a nice break in between all the ridiculous comedy. We get to see Iori leave his comfort zone more often and accept people for who through lessons he learns from participating in club activities.

Overall, *Grand Blue* is a hilarious slice of life with great running gags, good character chemistry, and hilarious yet sometimes relatable moments about a group of college students in a "diving" club. If you're looking for comedy about more mature subjects, *Grand Blue* is the way to go.

Crossword: College Anime



ACROSS

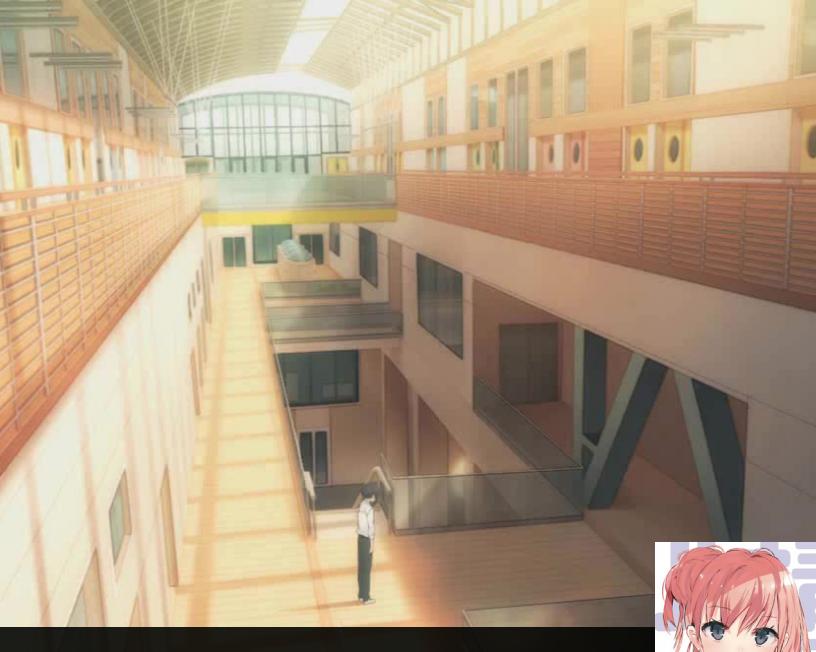
4. "Diving" Club
5. Instrument that MC of Nodame Cantabile plays
7. Anime Club: The Anime
8. College student seeks "rose-colored" campus life
9. Run with the _____

DOWN

1. A _____'s All You Need
2. AKA HachiKuro
3. MC starts law school but friend's rich ex follows
6. Tuturu



STAFF PICKS FAVORITE ANIME SCHOOLS



SCHOOL : TANAKA-KUN WA ITSUMO KEDARUGE



DUEL ACADEMY : YU-GI-OH! GX



NAOETSU HIGH SCHOOL : MONOGATARI SERIES



HONNOUJI ACADEMY : KILL LA KILL



GEKKOUKAN HIGH SCHOOL : PERSONA 3

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CLUB EVENTS



JUNPEI

Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors

Art by Athena Chen