

Cover art by: Jacky Zhao

CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

konshuu

Volume XLV, Issue II



ONISAILOR KATANA
(ORIGINAL CHARACTER)

FEB
23
2017

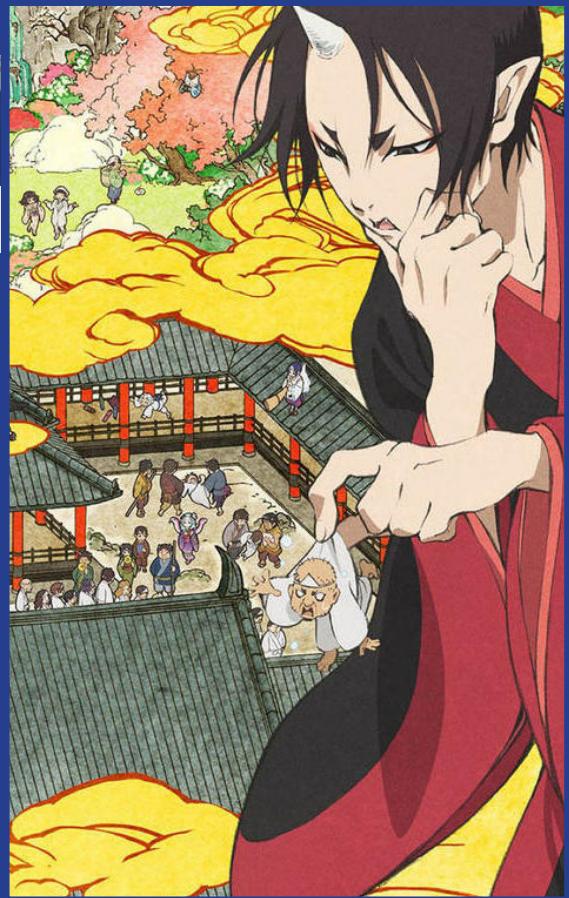
THIS WEEK'S SERIES

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

HOOZUKI'S COOLHEADEDNESS

Winter 2014 | Wit Studio | Directed by Hiro Kaburagi

In 2014, Wit Studio adapted Natsumi Eguchi's manga *Hoozuki no Reitetsu* (known in English as *Hoozuki's Coolheadedness*.) This dark and cynical comedy follows the titular Hoozuki, Chief of Staff to King Enma, ruler of Japanese Hell. Each episode focuses on different aspects of running Japanese Hell, from the unhealthy eating habits of King Enma to going out drinking with meddlesome coworkers. Full of references to actual Japanese and Chinese figures, this show is still easily accessible for the average viewer, since it mostly pokes fun at dreary bureaucracy. *Hoozuki's Coolheadedness* includes everything from a hell for animal abusers (which is run by animals) to a maid-loving Satan, seen through the lens of the ever serious, cold, and calculating yet badass Hoozuki. Boasting an excellent soundtrack and a classic Japanese art style, *Hoozuki's Coolheadedness* is a unique comedy that breaks from the often seen "moe comedy" genre today.



Fruits Basket



Story and Art by:
Natsuki Takaya

MANGA SOCIAL

FRUITS BASKET

1998-2006 | Hakusensha | Created by Natsuki Takaya

Natsuki Takaya's manga *Fruits Basket*, published in *Hana to Yume* from July 1998 to November 2006, is a shoujo staple. Mixing comedy, drama, and romance with supernatural elements, *Fruits Basket* follows protagonist Tooru Honda, who lives in solitude after her mother died. Fortunately, Tooru finds a new home with the Souma family, a group of siblings who are cursed to transform into one of the Chinese zodiac animals if they are hugged by the opposite sex. As Tooru comes to understand the dark past of the Souma family and accept them anyway, they all grow to love and appreciate her. Which of the siblings will Tooru fall for the hardest? Will she be able to help them break the curse? Is a happy ending possible for all these characters struck with such misfortune? Read this award-winning manga to find out!

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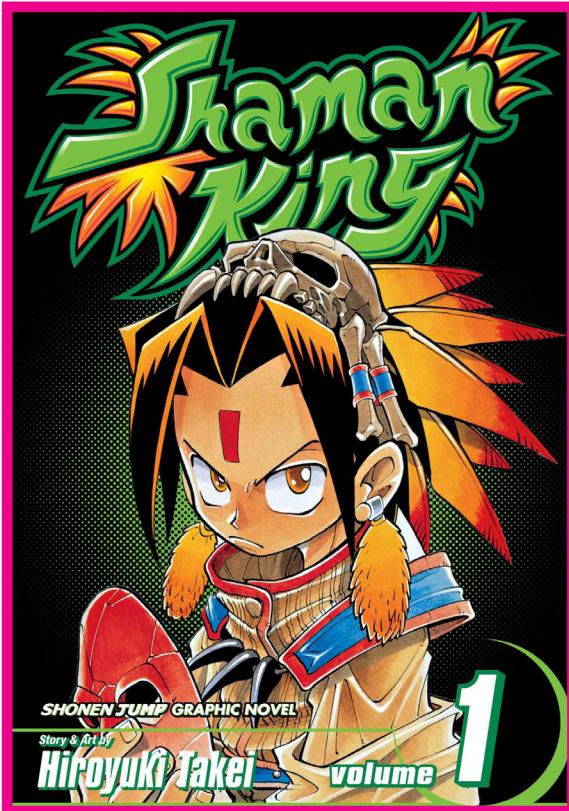


ANIME RECOMMENDATION

HYOUKA

Spring 2012 | Kyoto Animation | Directed by Yasuhiro Takemotogi

Houtarou Oreki lives by the motto: "If I don't have to do anything, I won't, but if I have to, I'll do it quickly." However, his comfortable lifestyle begins to change when his older sister forces him to join his high school's Classical Literature Club to prevent it from shutting down. His life is further shaken when he meets another member of the club, Eru Chitanda, who is unrelentingly curious about school mysteries. Houtarou must lamentably solve all of them to satisfy her. In this anime, Houtarou uses brilliant logical deductions to uncover mysteries around his school and town, gaining close connections with other classmates at the same time. Alongside Chitanda, and later, Satoshi and Mayaka, Houtarou discovers that living an energy-conserving life may not be as satisfying as he once thought it was. If you like lighthearted and warm mysteries with cute characters, *Hyouka* is definitely the show for you.



MANGA SOCIAL



1998-2009 | Shueisha | Created by Hiroyuki Takei

Shaman King follows the adventures of easygoing Yoh Asakura, a young man who has decided to enter the Shaman Fight, a once-every-five-hundred-years battle in which shamans compete against each other for the chance to become the Shaman King. The winner will wield the Great Spirit, which will give them the power to alter the world as they please. Joined by his violent and blunt fiancee, Anna, his compassionate friend, Manta, and his samurai spirit companion, Amidamaru, Yoh meets, befriends, and fights other shamans in his journey to win the tournament. At the same time, he learns more about the shaman world, discovers the true nature behind the Shaman Fight, and makes an enemy out of Hao, a strong shaman who wishes to become the Shaman King in order to eradicate humans and create a shaman world.

KATAWA SHOUJO: AN INTRODUCTION TO MY FAVORITE MEDIUM

BOGEUN "THEJPFDUDE" CHOI

Yes, this is an article for an anime club's magazine, and I have the nerve to call visual novels my favorite medium. But really, without them I wouldn't be here today watching anime instead of doing real work. It all started at a hospital lobby...

It's not what you're thinking. I was volunteering at my local hospital's information desk. I worked Sundays from 8am to noon, and the shifts were always slow. One, because no one wants to wake up at 8am on a Sunday unless they were going to church, and two, because a lot of clinics were closed that day. Anyway, since it was so slow, I usually had nothing job-related to do. So 14-year old me browsed the internet for the majority of the shift. One Sunday morning, I was browsing Reddit, and I saw an image with some unfamiliar anime girl:



At the time, I was vehemently opposed to anything anime. When I thought anime, I thought of the negative stereotypes: the slobby guy who owns ten body pillows and never goes outside, the nerds in school that wear *Naruto* headbands and utter random Japanese into their normal English conversations. That sort of thing. I did not want to be associated with that, so I never

really watched anime, even though there was a little part of me inside that was interested in it. That small interest, along with the laugh I got from the image, made me go through the comments of the post for a source, and from there I found out about this game called *Katawa Shoujo*. Apparently it wasn't really a game, but something called a visual novel. "Huh", 14-year old me thought, "that's interesting. Let's learn more about it."

For those of you unfamiliar with what a visual novel is, think of it as a combination of a book and an anime (yes, that is pretty crude, but it basically boils down to that). Visual novels are a very text-driven medium: though it is technically considered a video game, the only player interactions involve clicking through text and making narrative decisions through choices given by the game. Most visual novels have branching routes, meaning different endings, both good and bad. In a way, it's like those Choose Your Own Adventure books, only with added elements like music and visuals. Usually, most visual novels have anime-style visuals, hence the anime part in my horribly generalized explanation. As you can probably guess from this, most visual novels come from the Land of the Rising Sun, good ol' Japan. However, *Katawa Shoujo* is one of the few visual novels that is not; instead, a couple of people from 4chan came together to create a "disabled girls dating simulation" which in the end became less "dating sim" and more "feels factory." The story features a guy named Hisao Nakai who has a heart attack, learning he has a rare heart condition called arrhythmia, and enrolls in a school for the disabled, where he proceeds to woo every girl that gets significant screen time one by one.



Back to the hospital, where I actually worked. After finding out what exactly a visual novel was, I was interested in *Katawa Shoujo*. Not actually playing it, because then I would have to download it, and I did not want that weeb trash on the computer. Instead, I watched “Let’s Play” videos of it on YouTube during my shifts, without sound, since I did not didn’t have access to headphones (and didn’t want to broadcast it to people visiting their loved ones). It was a nice waste of my time, and I was so invested in it that I decided watching volumeless videos on YouTube was ruining the experience. So I finally downloaded the game, and a week later I finished it, having changed for the better (or worse).

One thing that I really love about visual novels are that they can be as long as they want to be. There’s pretty much no limit on their length, which is a boon that most of its medium counterparts don’t really have. What that means in a nutshell is that the story can be more fleshed out. *Katawa Shoujo* is not really considered a long visual novel, but it still sets up its world and story very nicely. I felt like I was Hisao, going through my days with my heart condition, worrying about every day while slowly making new friends who all happen to be cute girls.

It did a great job of describing the troubles of Hisao’s life, making me aware of all of the things he was struggling with, both from his past life and his new life. Most anime can’t pull this off mainly because of the limited amount of screen time, but also because endless self-narration would be boring to watch. In other words, it’s the way the medium works: anime is a very visual medium, which means animation is a huge part of how to portray a story. Script is important,

but not as important as it is in visual novels, where it’s literally everything. I realize that visuals are a big factor in visual novels as well; after all, it’s in the name. But the visuals don’t really play a role in the story: in terms of story, it is the words on the screen that matters the most.

But it’s not just the story. You can’t have a good visual novel without some good characters. And was *Katawa Shoujo* full of them. Featuring heroines such as Emi, the girl without legs who runs track; Rin, the girl without arms who paints; Shizune, the student council president who’s deaf; Lilly, the girl who’s blind and is a class representative for the vision-impaired; and Hanako, crispy bacon girl (I am so sorry). The thing is, by the time I was done reading, I never thought of the characters through their disabilities. Emi was not just a girl without legs: she was a hyperactive, positive girl who always faced the main character with a smile. I could say the same for all five heroines as well. The point is not necessarily that you shouldn’t judge people by their disabilities, although that is an important point and something that *Katawa Shoujo* touches on frequently. Through reading *Katawa Shoujo*, the characters did not just feel like walking tropes: they were well developed characters with their own motivations and life stories. Not all visual novels have good characters, of course, but the way the medium works allows more time to get to know characters and to develop them.



One last little thing I loved about *Katawa Shoujo* was the branching routes. If one of the routes was boring or the relationship was stupid, that’s okay! Just go to another girl’s route, and hopefully that is better! You are not stuck with whoever is chosen as the one true pairing: you have the power to go down the route of your favorite girl (provided she has one), and call that your OTP! Just be ready for the arguments against people who disagree with you.

KATRINA LUQUE



FANDOM: POP CULTURE EXPERIENCES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Fandom. A word that evokes overstimulated *fujoshi* (you know who you are) and hysterical debates over whether *Naruto* has too many filler episodes (it does). According to Wikipedia, the official definition of fandom is described as “a term used to refer to a subculture composed of fans characterized by a feeling of empathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest.” While empathy and camaraderie are not always present in fandoms, harboring a passion for the subject material is a given for those who form fan communities.

Interestingly enough, the first modern fandom formed around the original Sherlock Holmes mystery series created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. As early as 1897, fans of the enigmatic detective were writing fan fiction and holding assemblies to theorize about the Sherlock Holmes universe. In the 1970's, fandom had a huge resurgence in the popular culture world with the genesis of science fiction features such as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*. Today fandoms play a prominent role in all aspects of popular culture, especially Japanese popular culture.

If you have the slightest experience with anime and Japanese culture in general, you will have encountered a fandom. Fandoms are integral to the anime community, due to the impact of the world wide web, which allows any weeaboo with internet access to disseminate their opinion and more importantly, shipping preferences to interested parties. Because fandoms form the backbone of the internet discourse concerning anime, manga, visual novels, etc. they can alter the perception of the material they are involved with, either fostering a negative or positive image of the subject matter. Fandoms often generate damaging

opinions of an anime or manga, typically caused by the vitriolic opinions that members of the fandom espouse when discussing topics such as shipping wars and canon vs. non-canonical plot and character interpretation. However, there are positive aspects to fandoms, for example, abridged videos, YouTube reviews, and productive discourse that result from the combined efforts of individuals who share an interest in a specific anime/manga. This article seeks to explore contemporary fandom culture and the effects that fandoms have on different forms of Japanese centric media. Since it is impossible to overlook the influence of modern fandoms, it is necessary that rabid fans and casual participants are aware of the impact that fandoms have when it comes to the interpretation and perception of Japanese media.

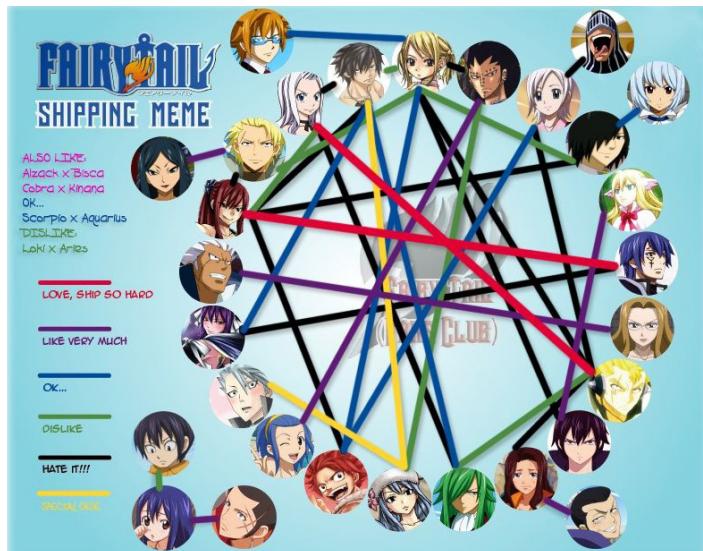
Die For Our Ship

One of the integral roles of a fandom is to encourage discussion over shipping. Some fandoms have an OTP that the majority of the fandom endorses, however,



there are usually disagreements over which characters should be shipped together, engendering ship-

ping wars. Shipping wars can be a productive way to engage in character analysis and promote a personal viewpoint of an anime/manga, but they often degenerate into shallow arguments about best boy and girl, leaving little room for thoughtful commentary about the work.



The level of indignation individuals have towards certain ships is astonishing, as evidenced by Disqus user SimplySam who incited a three page long shipping war over Otonashi and Kanade from *Angel Beats*, by stating that: “Otonashi x Kanade is the worst f*cking couple in anime. It killed the ending for me seeing how incompatible they are and Kanade is the worst written character in anime.” Many shipping wars become highly personal, where the integrity of a commentator is questioned due to their affinity for characters or their preference for a minority ship, case in point, when an anonymous 4chan user responded to fans of Asuka x Shinji on a “Rei or Asuka?” board stating that “if I had a chance I would kill every single one of you as brutally as I could” with another anonymous commentator claiming that “Eva’s fanbase is cancer.”

When shipping wars escalate to the point where interlocutors are maligning one another and providing absurd evidence to back up a ship, the fandom in general is discredited and the anime/manga is dismissed by individuals outside the fandom for having unbalanced fans. An especially notorious shipping war originated from *Durarara!!*, where Namie x Izaya shippers are crucified by Shizaya fans for mentioning that Izaya is Namie’s boss. The fandom is so vicious

that they have an entry in the “Ship to Ship Combat” page on TV Tropes, with a blurb stating: “some Shizaya (Izaya x Shizuo) fans will rip out the throats of anyone who mentions Namie or Vorona, while Mikado is just torn to pieces between everyone who wants him as their OTP uke.” This contention over shipping impairs intelligent analysis of the series, and reduces the *Durarara!!* fandom to a battleground between delusional yaoi fangirls and trolls. Sometimes shipping itself becomes problematic, especially with a majority of the *Killing Stalking* fandom, which insists that the manhwa explores a romance between a stalker with Borderline Personality Disorder and a serial killer.



The Dark Side of Fandom

When mentioning fandoms it is important to explore the infamous *Naruto* fandom that has embodied the textbook definition of an unreasonable fanbase. On the Reddit thread “Why is *Naruto* so hated within the anime community?” user pmitch94 attributes the general dislike of *Naruto* to its extremist fanbase, stating: “and I don’t want to inflame people here, but the fanbase. the fanbase can be really, really rabid. people talk about *Naruto* as if its one of the greatest animated series of all time, I’m sorry its not. objectively it is not . . . but the fanbase gets really defensive about the show. anytime someone has a complaint I see comments trying to explain it by using the very thing the person is complaining about.”

User pmitch94 indicates an interesting aspect of fandom culture, which is the myopia that many fans display when faced with criticism about their fandoms. The foremost purpose of fandoms is to promote a diversity of opinion or criticism to the work at hand, but blind defense of a piece of media renders criticism and a multiplicity of opinions untenable. Moreover, fandoms like *Naruto* perpetuate the hellish cycle of

fandom/media abuse when people criticize a manga/anime because the fandom is overly dramatic or argue that fandoms in general are unnecessary due to the zealotry of a few avid participants.

Everyone is Jesus in Purgatory (Crises of Interpretation)

Contention concerning interpretations of a manga/



anime is a hallmark trait of fandoms. Typically I would cite *Neon Genesis Evangelion* as the subject of an interpretative crisis, but due to recent trends I prefer to focus on *Killing Stalking*, the manhwa sweeping the Asian pop culture world by storm.

Brought into the public consciousness by the *Yuri on Ice* fandom, *Killing Stalking* has created a veritable colossus of interpretation. Within the panoply of opinions plaguing the fandom, there are two central factions vying for dominance. Is, a commentator on Goodreads proposes: “*Killing Stalking* is a psychological horror/thriller webcomic that features heavy violence, gore, and immensely flawed and well written characters. Although the comic has an abusive gay relationship, it is never romanticized or seen as healthy within the perspective of the comic.” However, not everyone in the faction agrees with Is’s opinion, promoting the theory that *Killing Stalking* is a story about two dysfunctional people who find love in an unlikely place (i.e. Sangwoo’s basement).

Despite the inflammatory claims pertaining to the nature of the main characters’ relationship in this particular fandom, overall a diversity of opinion in fandom should be encouraged since it leads to an examination of the work at hand.

Love, Harmony, and Participation

Despite the less than savory aspects of certain fandoms, there are multiple beneficial aspects of fandom culture. The YouTube phenomenon “TeamFourStar” is an apt example of the joys of fandom. Their highly recommended abridged version of *Hellsing Ultimate* both celebrates and satirizes the anime, displaying the ridiculous yet entertaining quality of the anime and progenitor manga. YouTube reviewers are another bonus of fandom, especially the YouTuber Glass-Reflection, who has excellent anime recommendations and a wonderful summary of *Serial Experiments Lain*. My personal favorite features of fandom involve analytical blogs, such as “The Garden of Proserpine” which provides an exquisitely detailed account of the manga *Monster*, including a comparison of the titular character’s poses to the vengeful archangel Uriel and relating the discovery that the monster’s love poem, “I was born to smother you with flowers” is an allusion to a Roman emperor’s homicide attempt by smothering



his guests in a deluge of roses.

Despite the constant conflict that fandoms engender, fandoms act as binding agents, bringing individuals from diverse backgrounds together. A poignant example of the cohesive power of fandoms was related to me by a fellow member of Konshuu, who met their partner during a shipping war. Harnessing the globalizing appeal of the internet, fandoms can create empathy between people who are divided by space and time. Fandom is important because it has the ability to make people feel less alone in a world that is inherently lonely. The next time you cringe over the antics of a group of fans, remember that it is wonderful that these communities exist to entertain, challenge, and bring us together.

STEP-BY-STEP: MAKING OF THE COVER

JACKY ZHAO





STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

ZIANA DEEN

Year, Major: 1st, Architecture

Favorite Anime/Manga: Code Geass and Akatsuki no Yona (among others).

Fun Fact: One of my favorite mangakas was an architecture major in college.

Favorite Anime Quote: "The only ones who should kill are those who are prepared to be killed." -- Lelouch (Code Geass)



BOGEUN CHOI

Year/Major: 2nd, Applied Math

Favorite Anime/Manga: Anime: Oregairu, Manga: Kaguya-sama

Fun Fact: I have two extra bones in my body which result in somewhat curved thumbs (doesn't affect anything though)

Favorite Anime Quote: "People die when they're killed." - Fate series



KATRINA LUQUE

Year, Major: 3rd, English Literature

Favorite anime/manga: Neon Genesis Evangelion and Tokyo Ghoul.

Fun Fact: My hair is both curly and straight.

Favorite anime quote: "Let's slaughter them like animals solve this peacefully." - Furuta (Tokyo Ghoul:re)



JOSHUA SIADOR

Year, Major: 3rd, Economics

Favorite Anime/Manga: JoJo's Bizarre Adventure

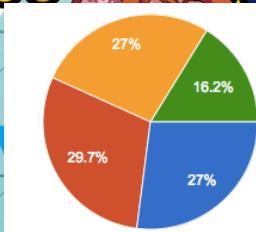
Fun Fact: I always carry ramen seasoning packets in my wallet because I'm always prepared!

Favorite Anime Quote: "Hmph! Who cares about school?! The real me lives on the Internet!" - Natsume (Tonari no Kaibutsu-kun)



LAST WEEK'S POLL

Which 2016 anime season was your favorite?



29.7% Spring 2016 (Re:Zero, Boku no Hero Academia, Bungou Stray Dogs, etc.)

27% Summer 2016 (Mob Psycho 100, Shokuheki S2, New Game, etc.)

27% Winter 2016 (Erased, Konosuba, Dimension W, Shouwa Genroku, etc.)

16.2% Fall 2016 (Yuri!!! On ICE, Keijo, Natsume Yuujinchou Gō, etc.)

THIS WEEK'S POLL

In honor of Valentine's day:
Which of the following is your favorite romance anime?

1: Chuunibyou demo Koi ga Shitai!

2: Toradora!

3: Acchi Kocchi

4: Nisekoi

5: Other...

Vote now at: BIT.LY/KONPOLL4502



FACE OFF! How well do you know the many unique faces of anime? Try to figure out which character these extreme close-ups belong to!



Answer Key: (1) Dio From JoJo's Bizarre Adventure, (2) Joey from Yu-Gi-Oh!, (3) Saitama from One Punch Man, (4) Rikko from Love Live Sunshine!, (5) Yukko from Nichijou, (6) Yunno from Maria Nikki.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

WEEKLY EVENTS

Art by: Jamie You

モノ江
MONOE
(YUME NIKKI)

Konshuu proudly accepts guest submissions from club members! If you'd like to have content featured, please submit to:

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Manga Social: Thurs, 5:30pm - 6:30pm; 106 Dwinelle
Game Night: Thurs, 8:00pm - 10:00pm, 106 Dwinelle
Check Facebook for location announcements!

