

konshuu

presented by: Cal Animage Alpha



**Volume XLII, Issue X
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THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

► ANIME SHOWING RANPO KITAN: GAME OF LAPLACE

Yoshio Kobayashi, a feminine-looking boy who doesn't have interest in others or his surroundings, is one day cured of his boredom when he wakes up to find the dismembered body of his teacher. As if the gruesome scene weren't shocking enough, he's then accused for murdering the teacher! Luckily, he meets a young genius detective named Akechi Kogorou, who arrives at the school to investigate the murders. Yoshio, excited by mysteries and unfaltering by the gruesome murder, volunteers to be Akechi's assistant in finding the real murderer, even though Hashiba, Yoshio's best friend, is against Yoshio joining the investigation. Little did they know that the dismemberment of Yoshio's teacher is only the beginning of a series of mysterious murders in this middle school.



Studio: Lerche

Directed by: Seiji Kishi



Story and Art by: Takako Shimura

MANGA SOCIAL ◀ AOI HANA

(Alternate name: Sweet Blue Flowers)

Akira Okudaira was all dressed up and ready to begin her high school life at the prestigious Fujigaya Girls Academy when she saved a tall girl from a pervert on the train. The girl she saved was actually Fumi Manjoume, an introverted bookworm who was Akira's best friend from a decade ago. The two quickly become friends again, and after hearing Akira's comforting and supporting words, Fumi realized that nothing has changed between them since their childhood. Life goes well until Fumi is heartbroken by the news that her cousin, Fumi's love interest for a long time, has announced her marriage. Fumi soon develops a crush for her school's basketball team captain, Yasuko, but she's still unable to fully express her feelings. She then consults Akira about her relationships, and the two begin talking more and more with each other as they learn more about their true feelings.



MANGA RECOMMENDATION: GISELE ALAIN, AT YOUR SERVICE!

AUSTIN "COZYKLINS" TAI

There's simply nothing I could write that would do Gisèle Alain justice. The art style of Kasai Sui, in case you couldn't tell by the header, is simply breathtaking, befitting the grim and proper of the Victorian Age the story is set in, yet still adhering to a very cute, distinctly Japanese manga style. The plot hinges on a fairly simple premise: It is the slice-of-life of a smart yet naive noblewoman, the young Ms. Gisèle Alain—self-proclaimed “femme-à-tout-faire” (jack of all trades)—and her day-to-day adventures alongside her partner and debtor, Eric. Taking on various arduous tasks with a smile, Gisèle tries her best to satisfy her clients.



The wonder of Gisèle Alain comes from its wonderful episodic storytelling. Most of the rather childish jobs that Gisele takes upon herself simply happen to coincide with the adult world. While trying to protect a park from being torn down, she ends up saving the entire forest from being subjected to urban sprawl. While trying to repair an abandoned ship that she stumbled upon, she ends up helping rejuvenate the deadened drive of a washed-up shipwright. And while helping inspect the mysterious behavior of a lady's boyfriend, she ends up “rescuing” a woman from the trials of a whorehouse. Ironically, Gisèle manages to solve these complicated adult problems with guileless methods unapparent to the grown-ups around her, and perhaps even more ironically, Gisèle always ends up becoming more adult as a result.

Many slice-of-life works also use this episodic technique as their main characters go about from one adventure to the next in their daily lives. But after the resolution of each episode, everything seems to return to a status quo. The magic of Gisèle Alain lies in the fact that each of these unique storylines has a profound effect on Gisèle, Eric, and her clientele in a way that permeates through a single chapter and bleeds into the rest of the manga. When Eric finally lands a job at a writing house, Gisèle decides that Eric's debt to her has been fulfilled, so she searches for a different partner. The boy that Gisèle discovers in the abandoned ship lying in the park, Lucas, leads her to seek out the famous naval architect Henri Patrice to help patch up the ship. After Patrice refuses, Gisèle enlists the help of one of Eric's old novels to allow Henri to explore “the sea of stars” and reinvigorate his spirit. Eventually, Henri performs repairs on Lucas's ship. Unlike other slice-of-life works, where one event haphazardly produces the next without transition, everything in Gisèle Alain is held together by tight knots of happy little coincidences.



All in all, Gisèle Alain is one of those hidden gems to be found in that boundless treasure trove of Japanese manga. It's enjoyable reading about such a young, inquisitive girl tackling grown-up problems with her creative ways and childlike charm, and there's also a sort of fuzzy pleasure in watching her grow from her naiveté into a young woman. Just give it a try, and you too might find yourself enchanted by the magnificent world of Gisèle Alain!

GUEST REVIEW



I initially picked up *Etotama* for two simple reasons: First, I was really curious about how anime would handle the Chinese zodiac, and second, the protagonist is the cat zodiac. If there is one thing that describes me besides “anime lover,” it’s “cat lover,” so I was convinced to give *Etotama* a try. Granted, I was only cautiously optimistic—even though *Etotama* had aired in Spring 2015, I hadn’t really heard anything about it. A glance at the image on MyAnimeList told me that the art style leaned heavily towards moe, but hey, I wasn’t complaining. Plus, it was only twelve episodes and seemed to be a standalone series, so I had nothing to lose. With that, I dove in.



My reaction after the first episode was “What did I just watch?” I tried to sort through my initial impressions: It was colorful to the point of being trippy in some scenes (Apparently, I was meant to accept cat girls literally coming out of the floor). It seemed to be a very goofy and self-aware show. Oh, and it had used CGI in a battle scene ... and made it look pretty good. Of course there was an obvious contrast between the standard animation and the CGI, but since the CGI was used exclusively for the other-worldly battle place, it wasn’t as much of a shock. I still wasn’t sure what to expect, but I kept going.

The plot started to reveal itself in the next few episodes, and it was pretty easy to follow: The cat girl wanted to become part of the Chinese Zodiac, and the rat girl wanted to stop her because, well, that’s how it’s always been. (Or has it?) To have a chance at becoming a Zodiac, cat girl—who does have a name, but it’s Nyatan, so cat girl is almost as good—has to gain the “Sol/Lull Seal” of each of the current Zodiacs.



I discovered that the show really enjoys breaking the fourth wall, which can be amusing. However, even self-aware, fourth-wall-breaking fanservice is still fanservice, and I feel that the show could have done without it. But the little jokes during the battles, like a character saying “Don’t worry, there’s still a lot of the episode left,” when it looks like Nya-tan is going to lose, break the fourth wall in a much more effective way. The question then becomes: Does self-awareness justify including certain clichés or tropes? Maybe not, but so long as the show doesn’t take itself too seriously, I don’t think it’s an issue. The problem only arises, then, when the show’s identity becomes confused, and it can’t decide whether it wants to be serious or comedic.



Pluses:

- It has good voice actresses and actors (e.g. Rie Murakawa, who’s done work in everything from Hunter x Hunter 2011 to Kiniro Mosaic and Non Non Biyori; and Hiro Shimono, who’s done work in Yona of the Dawn, Baka to Test, and Soul Eater, to name a few).
- The CGI is done really well, and the rest of the art and animation ranges from acceptable to nice.

It has an interesting, fun, and straightforward premise.

- The battles are fun to watch, because even though you’re almost always sure Nya-tan is going to win, it’s harder to guess how.
- The OP really grew on me to the point where I downloaded it by the end; it felt weird at first because it goes from rock to bubblegum pop back to rock, but it sure is catchy.

- Each of the Zodiacs have a pretty distinct personality, and even though there are twelve of them, you won’t get them mixed up.
- The recap episode was done in an amusing way (and even moved the plot forward a bit).
- Despite the plot seemingly being a straightforward, “one battle (of some kind) per episode” affair, each episode is unique and entertaining.



Minuses:

- There was a recap episode, which feels very unnecessary for a one cour show, especially since I think the ending needed one more episode.
- Almost every character (except Nya-tan) is underdeveloped; the male MC could literally be replaced with almost any generic nice-guy protagonist ever.
- The humor relies on absurdity, over-the-top shenanigans, and fourth wall breaks, which means it won’t be enjoyed by everyone.
- The last few episodes have a very distinct tone shift, but it can be hard to take it as seriously and emotionally as it seems you’re meant to, given the nine previous comedic episodes.
- For the most part, I didn’t notice the soundtrack, which means it didn’t take away from the show, but it didn’t really add to it, either.



Conclusion:

I don’t think anyone will be giving Etotama a 10/10, because it’s inherently an imperfect show. Sometimes I got so caught up in the show, I forgot about the issues, but at other times they were glaringly obvious. On the whole, if you like absurd humor nicely mixed with action, and want to see some of the best CGI anime currently has to offer, then you might just want to give Etotama a shot.

OSHIETE! GYARUKO-CHAN

A UNIQUE CHEMISTRY BETWEEN MISMATCHED GIRLS

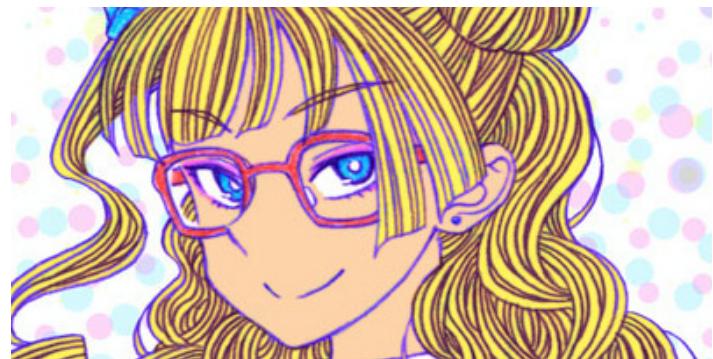
ANDY "JOHN ZHANG" CHEN

At first glance, Oshiete! Gyaruko-chan by Suzuki Kenya seems like yet another generic manga that follows the trope of “cute girls doing cute things.” However, while the manga does follow this trope, the unique chemistry of the characters creates a fantastic slice-of-life comedy manga. Oshiete! Gyaruko-chan is available through an online manga publisher, with a majority of the chapters being available for free. Despite the manga not being published on paper, it still has a huge fanbase in Japan, as it captures the unique personalities of an unusual set of girls and creates interesting topics for the characters to discuss. The characters and their interactions bring out the life and joy within the chapters, and that’s what makes this manga so great.



Oshiete! Gyaruko-chan follows three main girls, Gyaruko, Otako, and Ojou, whose names depict their personalities and character traits. Gyaruko is a wordplay on gyaru, a fashion style prevalent in Japan that involves girls dyeing their hair blond and wearing gaudy clothes (which is also associated with delinquency), and the Japanese suffix -ko, which is often added to denote a girl. Otako on the other hand is a wordplay using otaku (anime maniac) and -ko. Ojou is short for ojousama, a girl from a high-class family. As one might guess, Gyaruko has the look found commonly among gyaru girls, Otako is an otaku, and Ojou has the elegance of an ojousama. Despite these conflicting personalities, the three girls go about their daily lives talking about various topics with each other, giving their own takes on them. What really makes the manga so interesting is the fact that these girls have no real names; the characters call each other with their wordplay names. Additionally, these girls with seemingly no common traits still manage to come together and engage in comedic conversations, usually resulting in Gyaruko being the butt of the joke. The characters’ random thoughts and conversations, along with their reactions, definitely make the manga fun to read.

The manga is divided into the topics the girls talk about, with each topic lasting for a page. The topic is also presented as a question on top of the page; for example, one of the titles, “Is it true that gyaru girls go home in the morning?”, is about why Gyaruko is always so tired in the morning. While her classmates assumed she was doing some “shady business” with guys, Gyaruko was just up watching the anime that Otako lent her. Each question also has its own twist, where the most anticipated answer relies on the stereotypes of the girls, but the actual answer often subverts the stereotypes. This is another aspect of the characters that makes Oshiete! Gyaruko-chan so unique; not only do the group of girls have completely different personalities among themselves, they also often do not follow their own stereotypes. Gyaruko is shown to be a caring girl in contrast to the delinquent stereotype of other gyaru girls, and Otako is not the anti-social otaku found in many anime. Everything to be expected about the characters in Oshiete! Gyaruko-chan is actually unexpected, which really brings out the uniqueness of the manga.



With the fine chemistry of the unusual group of girls and their funny and engaging conversations among themselves, it is no surprise that Oshiete! Gyaruko-chan captured many hearts in Japan. Despite the series being one of the most popular online manga in Japan, it never picked up in the west due to a lack of translations. However, it is still worthwhile to check out the limited English translated manga that’s already out; the characters’ unique interactions and conversations are definitely worth the read. The manga is also going to receive an anime adaptation in January 2016, so hopefully it’ll gain popularity among English anime fans as well. Readers may easily dismiss Oshiete! Gyaruko-chan as a typical bland “cute girls doing cute things” manga, but the manga is truly a gem and definitely worth the time to check out.

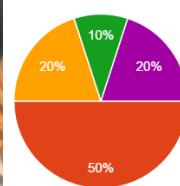
NAME THAT ANIME!

Are you an anime-watching veteran? Then you should be able to recognize the series that these screenshots came from! Take some guesses, then check the bottom of the page for the answers.



LAST WEEK'S POLL - RESULTS

HOW MANY ANIME DO YOU FOLLOW EACH SEASON?



Gotta watch 'em all! Completionists go! 0%
I try all of them, but I only follow the ones I like. 50%
You watch some and you drop some. But I usually drop. 20%
I only watch adaptations I already know about. 10%
I'll watch the good ones once they've finished airing. 20%
Forget other animes. I'm only loyal to [insert name here]! 0%

THIS WEEK'S POLL

THESE GIRLS ALWAYS DO THEIR BEST!
WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE MAGICAL GIRL?

VOTE NOW AT: J.MP/KONPOLL4210

Answers: 1. Bakemonogatari, 2. Steins;Gate, 3. Nichijou, 4. Daily Lives of High School Boys



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

PUBLICATION STAFF

Managing Editor: Tina Nguyen

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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

Wheeler Steps (facing Sather Gate)

Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30pm

Game Nights

85/87 Evans

Thursdays, 7:30 - 10:00pm

WEEKLY SHOWINGS

Gangsta.

Gakkou Gurashi!

NEXT WEEK'S SHOWING: SUBTLE GAFNI WARD

