

THE LUCK ISSUE

CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

konshuu

Volume XLVII, Issue VIII

DANIEL J. D'ARBY
Jojo's Bizarre Adventure
Part 3: Stardust Crusaders

Art by Jamie You

THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

KAKEGURUI

Hyakkaou Private Academy is a private school housing the richest teenagers in Japan. Normally, a student council values academics, but in this unconventional school, if you fall into debt, the student council decides your assets and path in life. The show focuses on Jabami Yumeko, a "compulsive gambler" who will gladly gamble anything. Will she lose everything or gain it all?



Summer 2017, MAPPA
Directed by Yuichiro Hayashi

MANGA RECOMMENDATION

LIAR GAME



Story & Art by
Shinobu Kaitani

Welcome to the Liar Game, where participants bet money in various games. Liars and cheaters prosper, while honest individuals shall bear an insurmountable debt. In a twist of irony, Nao Kanzaki, an exceedingly honest person, has been forced to enter the Liar Game. Will Kanzaki drown in debt from this gambling extravaganza, or will she buy her way out of the game and escape?



THE QUEST TO FIND A HIDDEN GEM

A STORY OF MY EARLY ANIME WATCHING HABITS



BOGEUN CHOI

3RD YEAR, APPLIED MATH

If you're wondering, I'm watching 9 shows this season.

STAFF WRITER

"How many shows are you watching this season?"

It's a question I don't usually ask, and there's a good reason why. Most of the people around me that watch anime are in college, a time when you're usually swamped with deadlines, midterms, life, etc., and can't spend too much time watching anime. So it makes sense that the most common answers to the hypothetical question can be counted on one hand. I can relate. Though my class load is less strenuous than most and I don't have any other obligations like a job or research, it's still hard to find the time to watch that new episode that came out. It wasn't always like this, though. When I first started watching anime, I watched as much as I could, through both good and bad. As recently as one and a half years ago, too—like the time I watched 20 shows during the Summer 2016 season.

Now I know what you're thinking. 20?! It's a combination of several things that led to this:

1. This was during the summer after my freshman year, when I didn't have any internships or obligations to hold me back. Because of that I had plenty of free time.

2. I was still new to anime—it wouldn't have even been a year since I started watching seriously. So every show, even that one generic moe show, was something new and interesting to me.

3. During the time, I was writing a little blog where every week I would put my thoughts on the anime I watched that week (a blog I still maintain to this day). I told myself if I watched more shows, I could have more potential chances to write about different types of shows.

To be honest, though, there was a hidden fourth reason why I watched so much anime: to find that hidden gem. The one show with no hype. The one show that surpasses the expectations of the few who originally watched it, and the others who joined in later. That was really my reason for 20 shows. I saw something in each of those 20 that made me think "huh, maybe it could be a decently good show".

So how did that work out? Well, off the top of my head, I can remember *ReLIFE*, *New Game*, *Cheer Danshi* (for some reason), *Battery*, and... that's it. 4/20. One for being my anime of that year, one because it's sequel aired pretty recently, one I don't really know why, and one for being bad. Out of those four, only one I remembered for being good—debatably two because I probably would've remembered *New Game* even if it's second season didn't air.



Admittedly I did miss a few obvious shows, like this one.

I hope you see what I'm trying to get at here. It's been around a year and a half since that season ended, which isn't even that much time, yet I remember only a small fraction of the shows I watched that season. If you're one of those people that watches 20+ shows, all the power to you. I can't do that anymore, and it's not worth it to find that hidden gem. Because in the end, you can rely on others to do so.



THESE AREN'T YOUR FATHER'S GACHA GAMES



ANDY LO

2ND YEAR, ECONOMICS

The supreme dao is taiji: union of yin and yang.

LAYOUT EDITOR

Gacha games, for our cave-dwelling *Konshuu* readership, are digital games which include progression related to chance. Their name is derived from the sound that collectible dispensers make when releasing a toy, but the term has been broadened to cover any form of digital game with a chance element relating to progression. Many of the most popular free-to-play (F2P) and AAA titles have been following the gacha monetization model. This model has been increasing in popularity because of public negative response to paid DLC and increasing consumer preferences for F2P games.

What separates good and bad Gacha?

The first tide of gacha games was a plethora of mixed-bag responses both commercially and critically. Some gems have succeeded both critically and commercially like *Overwatch*, *Hearthstone*, *Dota 2*, *CSGO*, *Fortnite*, *PUBG*, and *Team Fortress 2*. Others have been commercial successes but critical failures, the most noted example being *Call of Duty WW2*, which generated 500 million dollars in revenue in its first days of release while being critiqued as a carbon copy of previous titles with few noticeable gameplay changes. Some reviews go so far as to call it "a weak imitation." Recently, the topic has even wormed its way into the public eye, when Disney stepped into the gacha market with the commercially and critically failing *Star Wars Battlefront 2*.

unlock all the game's content. Ultimately this resulted in a game so bad that some countries in Europe have lobbied to have gacha games banned altogether.



An example of ways that gacha games level the playing field: free packs giveaways in **Hearthstone** (PC, iOS, Android).

So what separates good gacha games from their less critically-acclaimed counterparts? Successes are marked by products that are perceived to be worth their value. Additionally the gacha contained in their games have cosmetic gachas, or viable means for unpaid players to compete on a level playing field. "Consumers will also often report that the product doesn't feel "paywalled" or "like a cash grab" post-play. The successes are also fully fleshed out and polished.

Common arguments for gacha and against gacha

"Gacha games are the same as the games we've always had. Collectible card games are no different from gacha card games, and any payment is optional and at the discretion of the player."



Belgium moves to ban 'Star Wars Battlefront 2'-style loot boxes

Hawaii is also looking to clampdown on micro-transactions.

EA stock value takes a \$3.1 billion hit after Star Wars Battlefront 2 controversy

Headlines describing the EA controversy.

Battlefront 2 is a triple A title that yielded a whopping \$3.1 billion in losses for stockholders of EA, because its gacha system (loot boxes you open for equipment with exponential combat effectiveness increases) asked consumers to spend a whopping \$2100 price tag or spend approximately 4200 hours of playtime to



A card game that is theoretically identical to its physical counterpart: **Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Links** (iOS, Android, Steam).

This argument, however, is too simplistic, because it understates the effects of the digital marketplace. The digital marketplace is excessively accessible to younger children, which is especially disconcerting, because younger consumers are becoming the focus group marketed towards. A fact that presents a huge moral dilemma, because gacha systems have the same appeal as gambling, without any of the restrictions: namely the lack of age restriction and published odds.

What lawmakers aren't talking about

The issue that people haven't been mentioning, however, is the unregulated discriminatory practices that are possible in the digital realm. A pack of baseball or *Yu-Gi-Oh!* cards costs the same no matter who buys it, and contains the same cards on average. A fact that might not always be applicable in the digital realm. Drop rates (the rate at which you receive things) can be manipulated to encourage spending. This practice known as price discrimination could take form even without affecting the rarity drop rate to give the appearance of "luck". For example: A simple algorithm analyzes which cards you play the most and reduces the drop rate for the rare cards that have the same type or class to encourage you to pay for more rolls.

Why bad gacha games are bad

Bad gacha threatens the games you know and love. As previously mentioned, there have been a lot of gacha games coming out lately, which for the most part have been critical failures. Yet, they counter-intuitively keep coming out. Gacha games make money and some publishing companies will release them at the cost of ruining a series that people know and love. The recent single player RPG game *Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor* and its successor *Shadow of War* are a great showcase for what greedy gacha can do to a game franchise.



Greedy publishing companies have left consumers with a title screen constantly showing a notification icon on the marketplace for gacha. The single-player RPG experience has been marred with required grinding. *Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor* forces you to collect orcs that you kill for items of different rarities in a crafting system, and locks the final cutscene behind requirements that are all obviously tailored to encourage spending. And the kicker? All of this is not part of some free to play mobile game where you expect it, it's in a triple A, full-price single-player title. These cases will soon become the new norm if we as consumers keep buying the bad products that these companies put out and show them that we are sheep who'll pay for anything and everything they put in front of us.

Dear Konshuu-sensei

Got a question about school? Need some advice? Don't worry, Konshuu-sensei is here for you! This advice column features answers to questions that our readers posed last week.

Ask a question at tinyurl.com/konshuusensei and you could be featured in the next issue!

Protag-kun



I get a weird feeling sometimes, like somebody's watching me from a distance or something. What should I do about it?

It can be one of two things: Either nothing is happening and you're being paranoid, or you have a stalker. If it's the former, relax. If it's the latter, you should be worried. Be with someone at all times if possible. If and when the stalker flushes out, deal with them properly.

Protag-kun



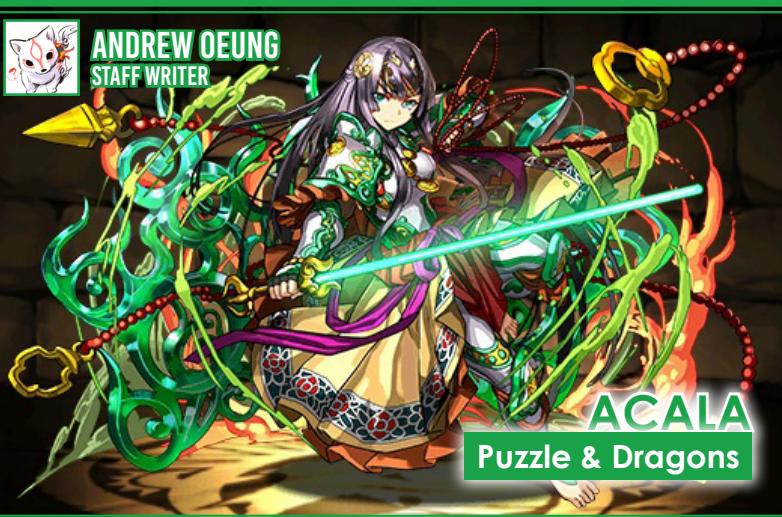
I don't want to do the play, but I feel kinda bad for linchou-chan. Is there anything not the play that I can do for her?

You can be honest with her. Like seriously, Protag-kun, you have a serious problem with communication. Y'all need to actually talk to each other.

Disclaimer: Konshuu-sensei is not responsible for any consequences that result from following their advice.

STAFF PICKS

FAVORITE GACHA PULLS





A2 (NieR: Automata) | Guest Art by Rika Sato

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Konshuu accepts guest submissions from club members! If you'd like to have content featured, please visit:
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CAL Club Mascot
Art by Jamie You

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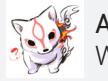
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CORA PEPPER
Undeclared

Art by David Chang

