

# konshuu

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## UPCOMING SERIES

### ► ANIME SHOWING YOUNG BLACK JACK

This series features a famous back-alley surgeon by the name of Kuroo Hazama, also known as “Black Jack.” Fractures, implants, amputations, and litigations are no match for the medical prodigy, as he is capable of performing any medical operations with absolute perfection. Over the course of the show, we see the motivations behind Black Jack’s profession. As a man who disagrees with the law, Black Jack operates on anybody without discrimination, regardless of their background or past. Will Black Jack come to regret his selfless nature and lack of regard for upholding the law? Or will he become an enemy of the law and save patients even at the cost of his own life? As a tale fraught with moral dilemmas, Young Black Jack resembles other critically-acclaimed medical drama shows like *Monster* and *Team Medical Dragon*.



**Studio:** Tezuka Productions

**Original Creator:** Osamu Tezuka



## NEWS FLASH



### NOBLESSE: AWAKENING

On February 4th, an OVA entitled *Noblesse: Awakening* was released. OVA releases are common, but this one in particular has something that sets it off from the rest: It marks one of the very few times that a manhwa (which can be thought of as a Korean equivalent of manga) has been adapted into an anime format! The OVA is based on the series *Noblesse* by Jeho Son and Kwangsoo Lee, a webcomic that follows Cadis Etrama di Raizel—a noble vampire (or rather, the most noble of vampires)—after he awakens from an 820-year long sleep. Don’t let the simple premise fool you, though; the series is anything but stereotypical vampire fare. *Noblesse: Awakening* is animated by Production I.G. and can be viewed for free on LINE Webtoon and Crunchyroll. To excite fans even further, LINE Webtoon, which hosts the *Noblesse* webcomic, is also releasing a spinoff webcomic called *Rai’s Adventures*, which focuses on Raizel and his life (much) prior to the start of the original series.





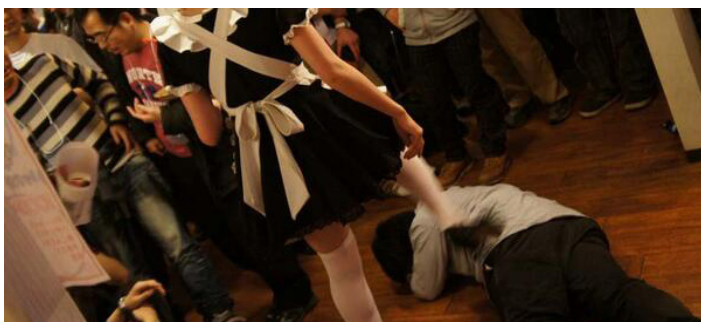
Over the winter break, a few brave CAA members, officers, and alumni decided to band together and pay their respects to the promised land—the origin of anime, manga and all that we hold dear: Japan. While the Japan trip was one of many firsts, some of the fondest memories that I hold come from my experiences in the lustrous world of maid and butler cafés.

The maid café that we went to was recommended to us by our fellow Konshuu writer, Andy “John Zhang” Chen. As with most maid cafés, this one came with a certain flavor; if certain drinks were ordered, the maids would add a special service. So I sat down at the table, accompanied by my fellow CAA members as I swallowed my pride and ordered the “Super Tsunderella.” After my cup coaster was slammed onto the table, I was instructed by the maid to perform certain humiliating actions. Unfortunately, since my J10A vocab wasn’t quite up to par, I didn’t quite understand some the instructions that were being given to me. I awkwardly asked the other club members for help as the maid was left standing there with a scowl on her face. As things figured themselves out, I braced myself for what was to come. There was a sort of bittersweet feeling as I considered all of the life choices I had made, and what exactly had gotten me to this point. Then came the slap. Boy, that was something. I won’t say it was a life-changing experience, but there was something refreshing about throwing away all my shame and allowing myself to be slapped by a maid in front of all my friends.

Afterwards, in true tsundere fashion, the maid gave me a heartwarming apology and told me to do my best in the future. As I sipped on my lemon-sour Tsunderella, I watched as other CAA members were hilariously tormented by the maids in a similar fashion, and I can definitely say that it was a worthwhile experience on the whole. If you ever find yourself in the Nipponbashi area, make sure to give the girls at ccoちゃ a visit!

In contrast to the maid café visit, Queen Dolce, the butler café we visited that lies around the notorious Akihabara area, was a much simpler experience. This time, we went as a small group of 3, and good thing we did, because the butler café was more like a tiny bar with limited seating. The café also had its own special something. Queen Dolce is actually a dansou butler café, which means that we were served by female butlers in cross-dress. The atmosphere as a whole was really nice and extremely natural; the hosts freely chatted with their customers as they mixed drinks, and nothing felt forced at all. One of the hosts even attempted to make conversation to us in English, which was adorable to see. The butlers were also extremely good-looking, in an androgynous way, and sharply suited up in a way that made me envious. The drinks that were mixed for us were extremely top notch. The honey cocktail that I ordered, which was one of the butler’s specialties, simply melted in my mouth as the sweetness permeated throughout all of my taste buds. And, as a bonus for being first timers, we were privy to photo albums of the butlers making their coolest and cutest poses.

While a lot of hype is built around maid and butler cafes, not many people have the actual experience of entering one, and some are ambivalent about the concept as a whole. I can gladly say that the experience is well worth it, and if you ever find yourself curious, don’t be shy and head over to one of these cafes. You’re sure to be in for a good time.



# EXPLORING THE LABYRINTH: A JOURNEY INTO YGGDRASIL

AARON "STURGEON" CHON

When *Persona Q: Shadow of the Labyrinth* came out in 2014, it received an astoundingly positive response in both Japan and the States. While the bulk of the game's popularity came from the intersection of *Persona 3* and *Persona 4* in a single narrative, the unique gameplay of this title was what made this game work seamlessly instead of tapering off as an obscure spinoff. What many do not know, however, is that the mapping, the labyrinthine world, and the ever powerful FOEs are nothing new to Atlus. Those in the know very easily recognize these as trademark elements of another series, *Etrian Odyssey*.



*Etrian Odyssey*, or *Sekaijuu no Meikyuu* in Japanese, is a 3D dungeon crawler game that was first released in 2007 for the Nintendo DS. At present, there are four main titles in the series, along with two remakes and a Mystery Dungeon styled spinoff, while a fifth game has been announced. While there are variations between the different games, they share the same structure in that players must draft a party of up to five characters from a number of different character classes in order to explore the massive structure that is the Yggdrasil Labyrinth, the World Tree. Exploring the Labyrinth is time consuming and difficult; not only are there hordes of enemies that have a chance to attack with every step, but the world itself is literally a maze—a mess of dead ends, loops, and enemies in the overworld that threaten to end your journey prematurely. Even with wisdom and know-how, those who let their guards down find that the Labyrinth remains as treacherous as ever.

One of the primary features that sets *Etrian Odyssey* apart from other titles is that there is no explicit storyline other than exploring the Labyrinth, although that task in itself is

often the most time-consuming element of the adventure. Players are also able to and are strongly encouraged to participate in quests that reward the player in ways that simply mulling through the labyrinth would not reveal. The truth that awaits at the very end of the Labyrinth is the goal of the game, but the game rewards those who do so by giving new quests and features that are exclusive to the post-game.

2007 was a while ago, and the series has made leaps and bounds since then with the newer *Etrian* titles. *Etrian Odyssey 2*, also for the DS, introduced a new Labyrinth and a few new classes, but aside from that, it was mostly the same as the first *Etrian*. Major changes first became apparent with *Etrian Odyssey 3*, the last DS title, as all of the classes from the first two *Etrians* were cycled out in favor of an entirely new set of classes, a new level was added to the overworld with boat travel, and for the first time in the *Etrian* series, a significant plot branch was introduced according to the player's choices. The repercussions of this choice lead to deviations in class availabilities, certain boss battles, and an overall difference in NPC interactions.



*Etrian Odyssey 4*, the first of the 3DS titles, was just as wildly different and imaginative as 3, opting for a new take on old classes while introducing new classes as well. Unlike the three former titles, the Yggdrasil Labyrinth was taken apart and split into multiple smaller dungeons separated into different lands, lands which now require an airship to access, replacing the ship function of the third game while seamlessly integrating it into the world. Additionally, it was the first game (the only one at present) to introduced non-human character classes to the game, a choice which many felt increased the variety of the game.



Many have compared Etrian Odyssey to old school RPGs, which are quite notorious for their difficulty level, and this evaluation is especially true of the older Etrian titles. The learning curve is difficult, a fact not helped by the difficulty of the leveling curve, and a poor draft choice will often devastate the party at lower levels of the Labyrinth. Most notorious are the FOEs, enemies so powerful that they patrol the overworld alone and can very easily cause a team wipe for the unprepared; the game itself advises the player to avoid fighting FOEs that can be avoided at all. FOEs are so notorious that Japanese circle IOSYS released a flash video relating to them, bringing attention to the Etrian series online.

In more recent years, the Etrian series has been toning down on the difficulty level, primarily by actually introducing a difficulty option at the beginning of their most recent games, starting with Etrian 4. For those who preferred the suffering that constituted the original Etrian games, there's the hardest difficulty setting, while Standard and Picnic are options for more casual gamers. These not only affect the rate at which EXP is obtained, but also the intelligence of the AI, the bulk of mobs, and whether or not players are given a second chance after suffering from a party wipe. These new options make the game playable for both newer players of the series and those that appreciated the challenge that was the original game.



While the first two Etrian games have been remade for the 3DS, it would be naïve to assume that they are in fact the same games that the originals were. These remakes, which are referred to as the Untold series, retain the same setting for the most part, but do what no other Etrian games have done before: introduce a story element. If the player so desires, they can play through the new Story mode that has unique party members full of personality and quirks. In addition, the Untold series adds entirely new areas that are separate from the Labyrinth itself, all while being of paramount importance to the story. A final difference in the Untold titles is a new gameplay mechanic known as Grimoire Stones, which are useful whether playing alone or with friends. Grimoire stones allow characters to utilize skills and other abilities outside of their normal class, adding another level of depth to drafting and gameplay. These

can be collected by the player, and if they want, traded to other players of the same Etrian title. For those that simply prefer making their own trek through the Labyrinth without the burden of a story, Classic mode allows players to make their personalized parties as they would have in the original titles, albeit with the new features from the Untold series implemented.

One of the redeeming features of the Etrian series is the amount of care and attention that was put into creating the world. Each Labyrinth in the different games are divided into different strata, and each strata is a completely different and beautiful world from the other. Lush groves, frozen plains, forgotten grottos, burning lands, ancient ruins, and even flying castles are created with great detail, and the mobs that lurk in each stratum reflect the nature of their habitats. The newer titles on the 3DS have only made this more apparent, as creatures that were originally static sprites come to life and FOEs change from glowing fireballs to actual monsters. Even the Labyrinths themselves are designed with great consistency, making a challenging maze for players to navigate through without being pointlessly aggravating. Getting lost in this abysm of walls is not so bad, as long as you don't die while trying to get out.



Should you play an Etrian Odyssey game? This question has been posed many times by many people, and answers tend to vary. The most recent titles in the series have been much more forgiving than earlier entries, but there are still many who find the gameplay to be somewhat pedantic or otherwise not worth their time. Honestly, the best answer that I can think of is to try playing it, and then decide from there, because Etrian Odyssey is a game that either clicks or doesn't click, and it is definitely far too time consuming to just play casually. For those who find they cannot stand this kind of game, exploring the Labyrinth becomes an impossible chore, yet for those who enjoy the long and difficult exploration, the expedition to find Yggdrasil is a rewarding and fulfilling experience.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS



### TINA "MECHATO" NGUYEN:

Erased is currently being heralded as one of the best series of this season, and it's no surprise why. Successfully weaving a tale of equal parts mystery and heartwarming friendship is a difficult task, but within the span of its first five episodes, it has managed to set a solid foundation for doing just that. The premise is certainly unique: A man named Satoru has a supernatural quirk that causes him to travel back in time whenever preventable disasters occur in his vicinity. However, its execution is where the series shines. The anime reveals information more concisely than its source manga, and details are rarely superfluous. By the end of the second episode, I was thoroughly invested in the story's central mystery. On another note, Erased also has consistently good background music, and its OP—Re:Re: by Asian Kung-Fu Generation—seems to get catchier every time I listen to it.

### JOSH "BUBEEZ" ROQUE:

There is an eloquence to creating emotional investment in an anime, but never has a series been as "living and breathing" as Erased; at times, the characters pop out of their storybook and become terrifyingly human with their reactions, their voices, and their personalities. Satoru switches between the deadpan adult in his mind and the child at heart, whose adventure back in time is far from the romantic image that it may imply; he is, essentially, a stranger in a strange land, on a mission to save his loved ones from death. And when he fails, we gasp; when he succeeds, we cheer; when he gets the girl, our own hearts melt. That is a hero. The plot details fail me, because Erased is so cinematic that each moment hinges on the next; a bit of thriller, a lot of mystery, and a dash of science fiction, Erased is the best series to come out in recent years.



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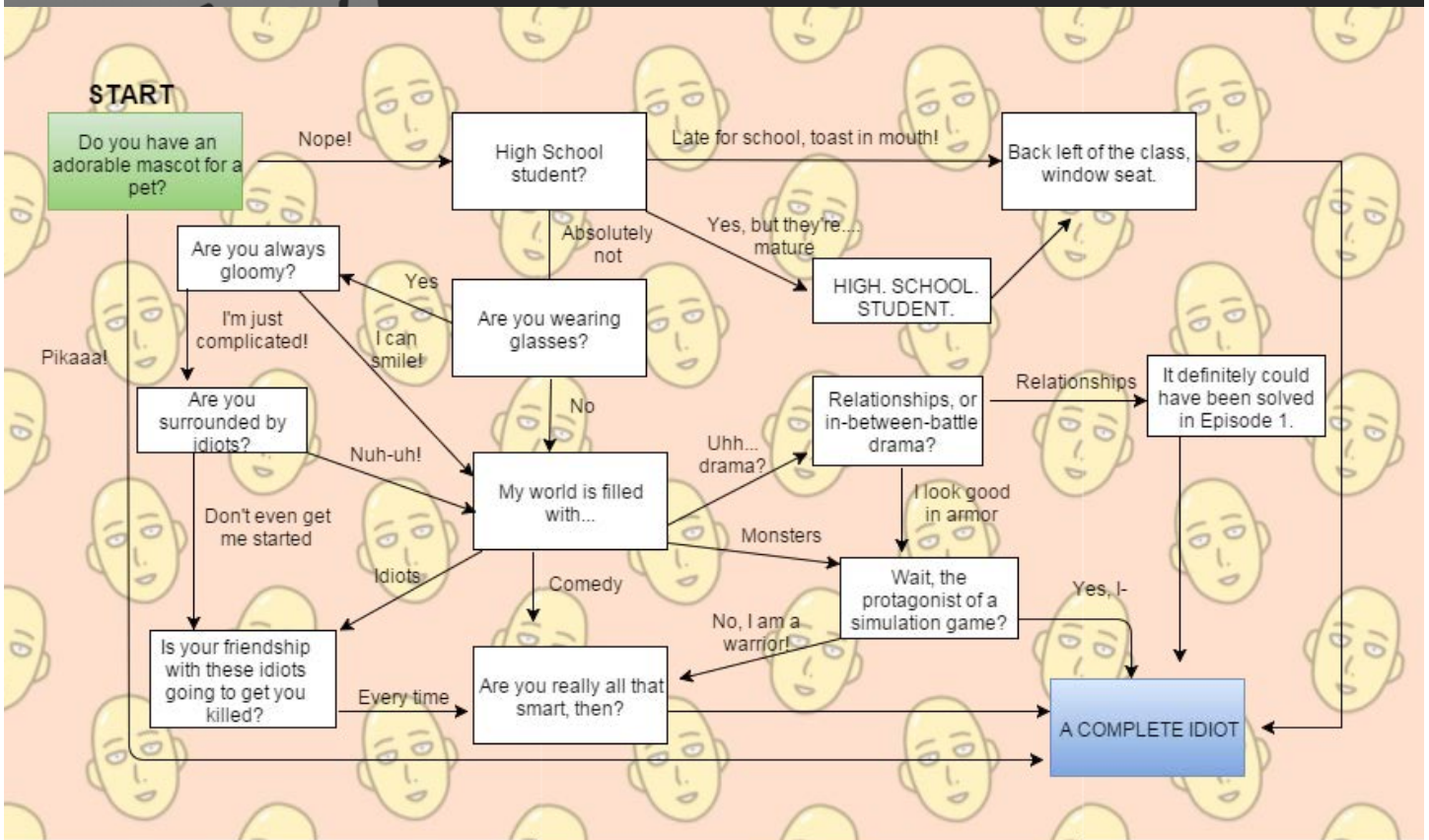
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2016



# ARE YOU AN IDIOTIC PROTAGONIST?



## LAST WEEK'S POLL

It's time for you to pilot the robot!  
Which is your favorite Mecha?

### RESULTS



## THIS WEEK'S POLL

What is your favorite type of ship from  
Kantai Collection (KanColle)?

Vote now at: [J.MP/KONPOLL4302](http://J.MP/KONPOLL4302)



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

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## WEEKLY EVENTS

### Anime Showings and Socials

251 Dwinelle

Mondays, 7:00 - 10:00pm

### Manga Socials

Location TBD

Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30pm

### Game Nights

3 Evans

Thursdays, 7:30 - 10:00pm

## WEEKLY SHOWINGS

Dimension W

Himouto! Umaru-chan

NEXT WEEK'S SHOWING: DAGASHI KASHI

