

THE BOY'S LOVE ISSUE

volume XLVIII, issue XI

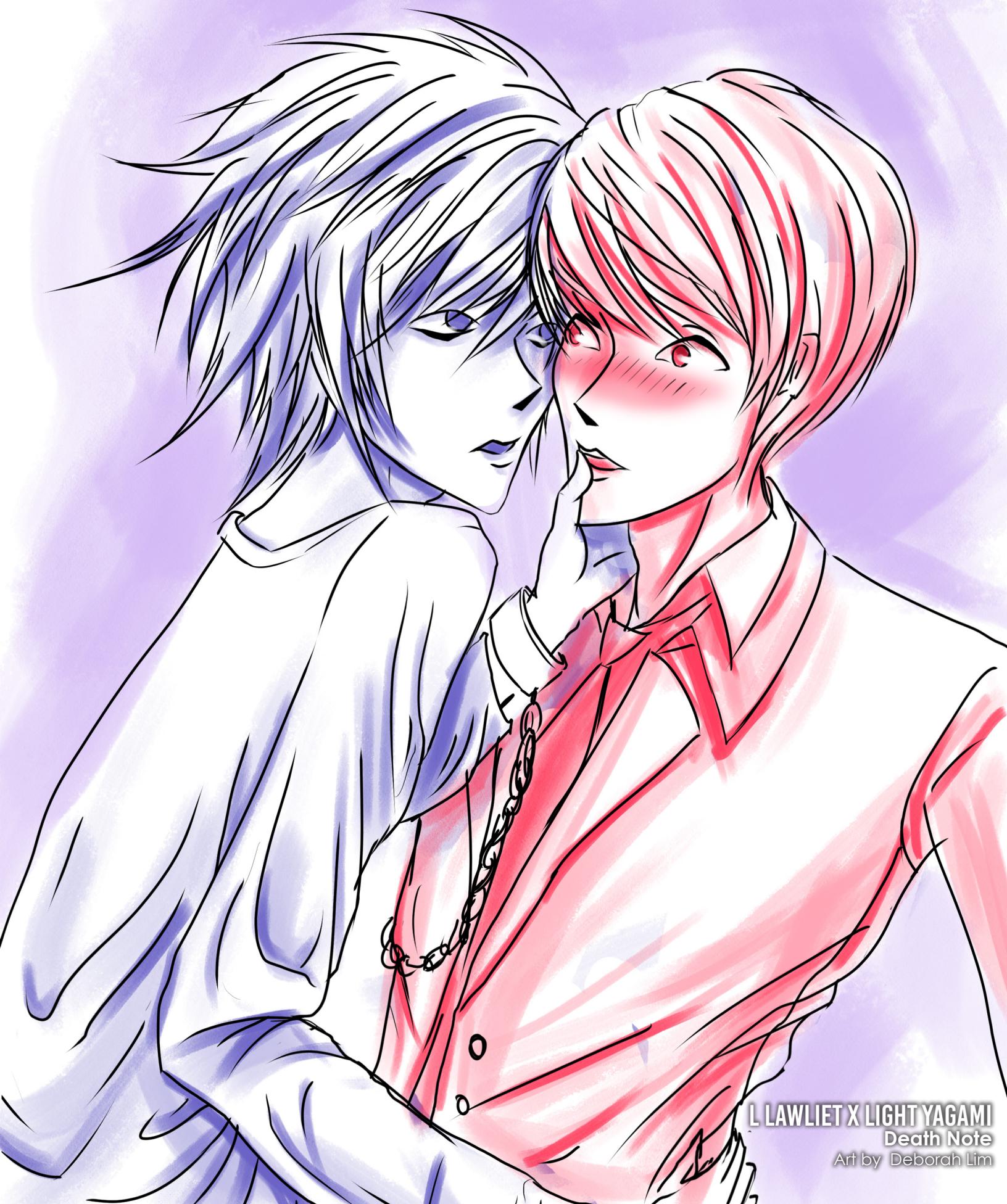


今週

konshuu

Hakuba/Kaito KID

Magic Kaito
art by Elliot Lu



L LAWLIET X LIGHT YAGAMI
Death Note
Art by Deborah Lim

BLACK AND YELLOW

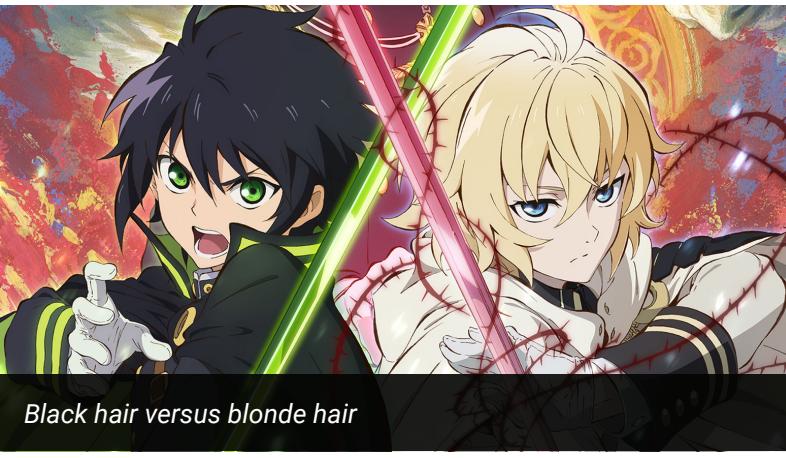

ANDREW WING
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I'm not a yaoi expert.

STAFF WRITER

Anime is quite famous for featuring characters of the whole spectrum of hair colors. You have characters with pink hair, orange hair, green hair, and blue hair, just to name a few. You even have characters, like Yugi Muto from *Yu-gi-oh!*, who have multiple hair colors at the same time. One thing I've noticed is how commonly dark-haired (usually black-haired) characters are paired up with light-haired (usually blonde) characters as the main characters in anime. Heck, my first anime was *Attack on Titan*, and Eren and Armin, the two male leads, have black and blonde hair, respectively. I'm going to be looking at this dynamic in BL anime, which frequently pairs a dark-haired character with a light-haired character. Let's get into it.

The reason why the pairings have one dark-haired and one light-haired is historic: it makes it easier to tell them apart in the manga. One example of the dark and light-haired pairing is *Owari no Seraph*. Yuu is the black haired character, and Mika is the blonde one. *Banana Fish* has Eiji and Ash, the list goes on and on. Even *No. 6* had it, when Shion's hair turned white, contrasting Nezumi's black hair.



What's interesting to look at is the characterization and symbolism that the hair color gives the characters in BL anime. A thought that comes to mind is that the dark-haired character would be the dark/mature one and the light-haired character the light/pure one, judging by colors alone. The dark one is usually the more aggressive, rough,

mature, and alpha one, while the light one is the more innocent, effeminate, submissive, and beta one. This lends itself to the top/bottom yaoi dynamic - the dark-haired boys are usually the seme/top and the light-haired boys are usually the uke/bottom. Most of the time, this is the case: Yuu from *Owari no Seraph* definitely has a more aggressive personality, while Mika is a bit more effeminate. Nezumi is definitely the seme in *No. 6*, as opposed to the uke Shion. Nezumi has a rather rough and rude personality, and served as mentor figure to Shion. Shion, on the other hand, is gentle, kind, and naive.

The dark-haired vs light-haired dynamic in BL anime is a two-way street. There are plenty of examples where the light-haired character is the seme rather than the uke. The currently airing *Banana Fish* is one such case. The blonde Ash is a strong, courageous man, who is very protective of the black-haired Eiji. Eiji is more of an uke, because he is weak, childish, and dependent on Ash.

There are even couples whose positions are debated by fujoshi. One example is the black-haired Hirotaka and the orange-haired Kabakura from *Wotakoi*. The characters from the show themselves debate this: In episode 8, Narumi and Koyanagi have a fujoshi fight shipping their boyfriends together and debating who comes out on top. They fight over whether it should be Kaba/Hiro or Hiro/Kaba (in ship names, it's always seme's name first, then the uke's name, to show which positions you think they fit in).



The dichotomy between dark-haired and light-haired characters in BL anime is truly fascinating to see. It's interesting how often dark-haired and light-haired boys are paired together, and how their hair color represents more than just color.



THE RAMBLINGS OF A FUDANSHI



SHAO-LON YEH

1ST YEAR, COMPUTER SCIENCE

I joined Konshuu for the sole purpose of pushing this issue.

STAFF WRITER

For those of you who don't know me, I'm the ultimate yaoi lord of the intergalactic universe, and today, I'll be telling you why yaoi is great. Warning: after reading this article, you will actually become a yaoi-loving degenerate (although most of us in CAA are already beyond saving).

First of all, what is yaoi? Yaoi is actually an acronym of ヤマなし、オチなし、意味なし or "Yama nashi, Ochi nashi, Imi nashi" which translates to "no climax, no point, no meaning," so just from the name, you can tell that yaoi is going to be some spicy stuff. Personally, my favorite acronym for yaoi is やめて お尻が 痛い or "YAmete, Oshiri ga Itai" which translates to "Stop, my butt hurts." I'm not explaining what that means; if you know, you know. Sadly, Konshuu isn't an 18+ publication so I have to keep this article relatively tame.

Now that you know what yaoi is, let me explain what a fudanshi is. A fudanshi is a male that likes yaoi, and being a fudanshi is probably one of the most awkward things in the world. Allow me to elaborate. Imagine being in Japan at a manga store casually browsing the wholesome books when you come across the fabled yaoi section. You look around and see no one near you, so you decide to pick up something spicy just for a little peek. Suddenly, a Japanese store worker comes out of nowhere and talks to you in Japanese, but since you don't speak Japanese,



you just have a staring contest with the worker in front of all the yaoi books while holding an interesting looking graphic novel. This happened to me and I felt like dying.

Yaoi isn't the only form of male x male romance. I'm specifying this because if I don't, I know that someone is going to call me out and I'm not about that. Along with yaoi, we have BL, bara, and things that I can't talk about for the sake of keeping this article PG-13. Yaoi came first and it's gay romance that is written by women for a primarily female audience, which is why most yaoi guys are pretty boys and twinks. Next we have BL which stands for boy's love. Yaoi is more hardcore and focuses on the more intimate parts of the relationship (if you catch my drift). BL, on the other hand, is more pure and focuses on the romantic aspects of the relationship, and it usually has more plot than yaoi. Bara is similar to yaoi in the fact that it's hardcore, but it differs because it is written by men for a primarily male audience which is why bara guys are extremely muscular and bulky. For the rest of this article,



I use yaoi as a catch-all term for all of the forms of male x male romance because it's easier than specifying which specific form I'm talking about.

Now on to the main question, what makes yaoi so good? I really like yaoi because it explores relationships free of gender stereotypes and societal norms. In "normal" (heterosexual) romance, females tend to be super melodramatic and males tend to be idiots. These character tropes make the story very cringey and not enjoyable. Of course, not all hetero romance stories are like that, it's just that it happens more often with hetero romance rather than with yaoi. Another reason why I prefer yaoi is because it avoids problematic female stereotypes. Many times in regular romance, females tend to be one dimensional characters that just try to get the male's attention. This creates a boring and predictable story which is also not enjoyable. Of course, I'm also biased towards yaoi because I'm the biggest gay in existence and cute guys are top tier. Another reason why yaoi is great is all of the yaoi ships.



One of my favorite ships is Killua x Gon. Yes, I know some of you guys think it's weird, but hear me out. Killua literally has nothing else to live for but Gon. He states that he has no motivation in life during the Hunter Exam arc

and everything he does during the rest of the story is for Gon. The entire plot of *Hunter x Hunter* is Gon trying to achieve his goals and Killua cleaning up after him. I don't want to say anything else because I don't want to spoil anything for those who have not watched *Hunter x Hunter*, but if you haven't watched it, watch it right now and you will understand. Also, Killua and Gon are perfect for each other because their personalities perfectly balance each other out, but I won't talk about it because @Wingdrops already wrote an article about light haired vs dark haired characters (go read it). And if you think this is a filler paragraph that I created so I could talk about *Hunter x Hunter*, then you are correct.



I feel like a lot of people are scared to get into yaoi because it's seen as erotic and forbidden. This applies especially to straight guys because guys have a weird notion that if you like something that is gay, then you must be gay. But yaoi is just like any other romance, except that instead of girls, you have cute guys. Also, not all yaoi is erotic or explicit. There is a lot of BL that is pure and wholesome, they're just not as fun to read as the spicy stuff. If you don't like yaoi, then I respect that (I'll just haunt your dreams), but I think that you should definitely give it a try before you judge it.

Now it's time for the fudanshi Q&A because I have extra word space and the main article has ended. Do not read the rest of this paragraph unless you feel like losing all of your brain cells. Ever since I joined CAA, a lot of people have asked me whether or not otokonoko (male crossdressers) are gay. In my opinion, they aren't gay as long as you don't know that they're a crossdresser. If you know that the person is a guy and you would still do the dirty with him, that's cutting it pretty close to gay. If the tips touch, then it's over. I've also been asked a lot if I like yuri and the answer is no. Sorry, but yuri doesn't stand up my vanguard. If you've actually read this entire article, I applaud you.

BL SHOULD STAND FOR BETTER LOVE



ZIANA DEEN

3RD YEAR, ARCHITECTURE

My roommates really did consider calling the police when I watched *Yuri on Ice*.

STAFF WRITER

When I was in high school, a fellow manga-lover asked me for recommendations. After listing my favorite shoujo and shounen, I asked her if she read BL. Embarrassed by my question, she said, "I don't really like that sort of stuff."

Her close minded answer pissed me off, but I didn't say anything. "That stuff" she referred to, BL, is better known as Boys' Love, a genre better known as yaoi or shounen-ai. It annoyed me that she thought of BL as something shameful and wasn't even willing to give it a chance.

I won't lie, BL art can be kinda weird. Along the way, many BL artists forgot how bodies are proportioned, giving their men some stocky shoulders, oversized fingers, and mile-long backs. It's pretty insane how bad they are with anatomy, but honestly, so are shoujo artists. Ren's face in *Skip Beat* is so long, horses ask him about it. Some people say they won't read BL because of the unrealistic art, but honestly, just look at the entire portrayal of women in literally any shounen manga.

But with all bad things come the good, and artists like Bikke and Shoowa create such wholesome, beautiful artworks. The magnificence that is *Yuri On Ice* literally had me screaming (When Victor kissed Yuri, I screamed so loud in private that my roommates legit thought someone was being murdered.) BL art is usually so much better than straight art. It's somehow...cuter, but not overly cute.

In fact, BL manga in general is better than straight manga. Maybe it's the fact that straight manga caters to a specific cheesy audience,



where hearts throb and flowery hearts and miscommunication and lame arguments happen. In BL, there is real heartache. I find myself relating much more to gay men than straight women in straight mangas. And I don't mean to say I relate to LGBTQ feelings; since I'm straight, I can't. But what I can relate to is the feelings of heartache, of pining for someone you can't have, of having unrequited feelings that will never be returned, of wanting someone so bad it hurts, and the utter bliss when your feelings are somehow returned. I can relate to the feelings of love.

Because unlike straight manga, BL actually covers love. It covers every aspect, and it never fails to mention the struggles with which gay people have, struggles that no straight person in a manga deals with. No, the only things holding back straight couples is miscommunication, excessive drama, and meddling parents. In BL, the person's own feelings can create such a painful encounter.

Personally, I don't think BL should be in its own separate category. Yaoi manga was initially made by straight women for other straight women to fangirl about (an aspect in modern society that I also criticize). There is absolutely nothing wrong with wanting a separate category for one's own sexuality, but when it's used for other sexualities' enjoyment, I think there's something wrong with that.




I also think BL should just be part of shoujo, because love, no matter the form it comes in, is love. Separating it in a different category implies that it's a different kind of love, that straight and gay people experience different feelings. But having read as much gay manga as I have, I know that's not true.

BL manga doesn't just depict boys' love. It depicts a better love.



SHIPPING WARS—BNHA EDITION

SHARREL JAN NARSICO
1ST YEAR, UNDECLARED

STAFF ARTIST

I apologize for everything. I am a BakuDeku fan.

At last! The long awaited Boy's Love (BL)-themed *Konshuu!* When it comes to boy's love, there's no doubt of the one common theme among the many fans of this genre: BL fans have ships—and as what almost always follows—shipping wars.

Alright. If you're not familiar with what ships are, it's simple. A ship is a relationship pair that can be canon (as in the two characters are an actual couple in the anime, manga, etc.) or fanon (alas, the two characters you want to ship are not actually together, and you can only dream that they are). A shipping war is where things get messy. According to Urban Dictionary, a shipping war is when "...a bunch of people start arguing, and wage a war over which couples in a show were meant to be canon." A few famous examples are: (BNHA) Izuku/Katsuki versus Izuku/Todoroki versus Izuku/Uraraka, and (*Naruto*) Sasuke/Naruto versus Hinata/Naruto versus Sakura/Naruto. Since this is not an article about all ships and is specifically focused on BL, we will focus more on male-on-male ships.

As I've mentioned—shipping wars can get intense. Take *Boku No Hero Academia* (BNHA) for one. The main character is Midoriya Izuku, a boy without powers who wants to be save and help people by being a hero. Izuku's rival is Bakugou Katsuki, a blonde boy with an epic exploding quirk with the battle instinct to make him a student with plenty of hero potential. Our third lover boy is Todoroki Shouto, a boy who is not the most socially inclined and has the tragic background of being a tool for his ambitious and callous father. The winner of the shipping war between these two ships varies from person to person.

Fans of Izuku and Katsuki (BakuDeku) can point out many reasons why these two are made for each other. Izuku and Katsuki were childhood friends both aiming to be a hero, both complement each other—an instinctive, hot-headed, delinquent-like Bakugou and the analytic, adorable, polite-and-ready-to-help Izuku. They are a perfect example of opposites attract, and their ship could make a great bully redemption ark where Katsuki learns to become a better person (and possibly apologize?) to Izuku. However, some argue that this ship is only waiting to sink in a storm. Fact: Katsuki bullied Midoriya when they were in middle school. Fact: He's still just as unaccepting of this small boy as he was before—hating that Midoriya seems to have an impression (at least to Katsuki, anyway) that Bakugou is weak. A relationship between these two characters would be a disaster. Katsuki would be an abusive partner and hurt Midoriya.

Those are some things fans of Izuku and Todoroki (TodoDeku) have said in their attempts to reason with me. Izuku and Todoroki would make a much better couple because a) their relationship would not be abusive as above because Todoroki is blatantly sweeter to Izuku than Katsuki ever was and b) Izuku was the one who made Todoroki more open to people and himself, helping Todoroki find himself against the overwhelming might of Endeavor, his father. These two genuinely want to support each other, and what working relationship doesn't have that? Counter: Some have said that TodoDeku would be too mellow and boring. Like a manga scene where two characters are lost—wouldn't it be much more interesting if the two characters had two different ideas on finding their way back than if the characters simply agreed to follow one idea? There's no tension coming from the two. If anything, drama would only happen from outside sources, like if Endeavor, Todoroki's father, were to split them up.

That, dear readers, was a tiny shipping war, and happens to every anime, manga, etc. Based on what you've read and what you already know—which ship would you support?



VOLUME XLVIII, ISSUE 11 — NOVEMBER 29, 2018

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FACTORY HEAD THORTON/COMMANDER SATURN
Pokémon

Art by Jamie You