

Title:

A Garden Of Roses: Character Relationships In "Marimite"

Word Count:

612

Summary:

While most hit anime shows that make it to Western audiences are the ones that either show off an excessive amount of cleavage or have hideously long fight scenes, there are shows that actually have some level of substance. Among those shows is "Maria-sama ga Miteru," which focuses heavily not on an overarching plot, but on the intricacies and nuances of daily life for a group of tightly-knit girls in high school. The show is often applauded for the intense emotional depth of the characters and how their emotions and relationships form the core of the show's appeal.

Keywords:

relationship, emotional stability, trauma, anxiety, recovery

Article Body:

While Japanese animation is better known for having flashy special effects and obscenely choreographed fight scenes, there are other shows out there that offer a very distinct visual treat. Some shows become sleeper hits, never really making the headlines but having special places in the hearts of more...discerning anime fans. Among these shows is "Maria-sama ga Miteru," (affectionately called "Marimite" by fans) which is a show that focuses heavily on the characters' everyday lives, relationships, and personal complexities. Unlike most other anime, "Marimite" has no plot to follow, with the story instead taking time to examine each character in turn. The focus often falls on the relationship a character has with their closest companion, but can also delve deeply into the themes like how their connection with others gives them emotional stability. Some episodes highlight the depth of the devotion that the characters have for each other.

For example, several different chapters delved deeply into the emotional trauma that one of the major characters experienced. The story is one that is told in every high school, with two lovers being forced apart for some reason. In the case of "Marimite," it could be boiled down to one-sided anxiety in the affair. One of the girls in question, Shiori, was afraid of what would happen if she let go of her lifelong dream and decided to abandon her budding romance with Sei in favor of the stability of pursuing a goal. The nature of the relationship and

the ominous end was studied in an early chapter but her recovery, thanks to her friends, was examined more deeply later on in the story. For most fans, that collective "story arc" is considered to be among the chief highlights of the show and is cited as among the most emotionally stirring moments in the history of anime.

Much more prominent, but arguably less dramatic, is the growing relationship between the main character, Yumi, and her idol, Sachiko. The pair, as noted by observers who are close to them, seem to be rather different from one another. Yumi is an ordinary girl who often sees herself as normal in every way, with more than her fair share of fear and anxiety at being in such close proximity to girls whom she saw as the "royalty" of the school. Sachiko, on the other hand, was every inch a princess bred for the sole purpose of fulfilling a role and maintaining appearances. Their growing ties with one another, along with just how much they influence and cherish one another, is the most prominent among the running threads of the show. As the story progresses, Sachiko slowly starts to open up more and learn to let go of her mask of emotional stability when needed. At the same time, Yumi is learning to become more confident with herself, along with learning to get better control of her emotional outbursts.

Ultimately, there are several other relationship threads and emotional connections than the ones presented above. The friendships between girls of the same year-level, their interactions with those that are ahead of them, and the recurring visits of girls who have already graduated offer glimpses into the depth of the closeness the cast shares. As some fans of the show have said, each girl is a window in every other girl's soul, often appearing as either a reflection of something inside them or as that unidentifiable piece that is missing from their lives. The show certainly lacks the capacity for epic drama, but then again, it is a show about ordinary lives and ordinary girls. Really, how much "epic drama" does the average girl have to look forward to, anyway?