

Honey And Clover

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Honey and Clover, Hachimitsu to Kurobaa, HachiKuro

Basic Premise

Spazzy college students trying to deal with life, everything from haphazard romance and drunkenness to getting a job and an accidental soul-searching journey.

Amusing at first, it starts getting good circa episode 5 when the anime suddenly starts addressing life issues in a refreshingly non-anime way. The characters are complicated, lovable, and distinctive in every way (character design, behavior, cell phone rings, hair growth). There is no deus ex machina, and problems never resolve cleanly. Instead, they just move on.

And did I mention it has the Best Opening Sequence evar?

Reviews: Anime Fringe

Similar Anime: Here is Greenwood, KareKano

Main Characters

From left to right, basic stats as presented in 1st episode:

Morita Shinobu: 6th year, sculpture major, Insane and talented

Hanamoto Hagumi: 1st year, everything major. Small and cute. Blessed with glowiness.

Yamada Ayumi: 3rd year, pottery major, has crushed on Mayama since forever.

Takemoto Yuuta: 2nd year, architecture major. Naive and good-willed.

Mayama Takumi: 3rd year, architecture major. Serious

Not pictured: Hanamoto Shuuji: teacher and cousin of Hagu. Seasoned adult from a "previous generation" of craziness.

Pimpage

"Realistic anime" takes on new meaning in H+C. It took the best elements of recent trends in anime, and actually used them. As in, it kept the shininess without losing the plot.

Beautiful backgrounds and character designs are effectively utilized to portray the characters and enhance their believability. HachiKuro effectively creates a realistic environment. Takemoto's hair grows. Everyone has their own wardrobe (Takemoto likes t-shirts, Mayama has button-up shirts). Carrying people is heavy. Driving is dangerous.

Interpersonal relationships are complex. For example, we see true comraderie within the core co-ed group, as well as family relationships, co-worker/employer relationships, teacher-student relationships, etc.

The characters vary in age, providing a complex range of experience. Everyone's dealing with different things, and so no matter what stage on the relationship/growing up cycle you're on, you find someone to resonate with. Thus, **very** high re-watch value.

Furthermore, people's experience influence one another. For example, Shuu-sensei supports Hagu's final choice based on his experience with Rika, and his failed soul-searching journeys allowed Takemoto to succeed in his.

Even the peripheral characters have lives and sometimes become main actors. Nomiya started as a peripheral character, and the guy Takemoto meets on his journey who gives him the bike.

Despite all this realism, however, there is a fair bit of "anime" to it. It's how the comedy works, and it's why we are able to sympathize with the characters. (Here I'm referring to the Scott McCloud thing about realism => external story, abstraction => empathy).

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The pacing may seem a bit odd at first: each episode is actually two half-episodes. In this structure, the story sometimes seems fractured into small vignettes of comedy and character development. However, they seem to have found the right blend of comedy and angst so that neither seems excessive. This subdivision enables them to advance the plot by allowing 47 time/space/theme jumps in 24 episodes. For example, four years pass in 24 episodes. This swift passing of time also allows for repetition, such as Christmas, Sakura-watching, summer festivals, etc, which brings out the changes in each year and highlights the maturation of the characters.