

fanmade

magazine

S E x i e s t

C h a R A c t E R

a l i v e

LIKE A

MOTH

TO A

FLAME



fanmade

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from the editor...

Welcome to our first mini issue, which somehow took a very much *not* mini amount of work to put together. You saw the cover, so you know what's up – this issue is all about choosing the FANMADE Sexiest Fictional Character Alive. You'll need to read on to find out who took the title...

Our team grew significantly since the last issue, so thank you to our awesome team of over *twenty* volunteers for all of their hard work. They're awesome. Please go and show them some love!

Our beautiful amazing and showstopping cover was once again designed by MY O VLKU. The coverline is *LIKE A MOTH TO A FLAME*, and to quote the woman herself: "Isn't that what hot people are? A flame to our moth hah." Indeed.

Enough yapping – I hope you enjoy this chaotic mini issue. Happy reading!

cont



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illustrations by jakumi

What is **sex**

adjective

'sek-sē

sexually suggestive or
stimulating: **EROTIC**

generally attractive or
interesting: **APPEALING**

Synonyms: desirable, hot

Why?

What does it mean for a
fictional character to be sexy?
According to FANMADE
readers.

I think that in order for a character to be truly "sexy", they have to be sexy in mannerisms, not just in body.

How they present themselves, and their personalities. If by those qualities they're attractive, then looks don't matter most of the time.

I think it's a combination of things, of course there is appearance, but mostly for me I think it's personality, if they're confident, a bit pathetic and, above all else, I love competency. If they are good at what they do, then I am melting.

Sad, whump-able, and looks great covered in blood.

My type is sad, tragic and pathetic, makes me laugh, and appeals to my daddy issues. However, they must be kind, as that is the sexiest thing someone can be.

Does sexy things. Like fight crime.

Someone who will treat you right.

Being sexy doesn't just mean you're eye candy. It means you have to be so **UNDENIABLY INEXPLICABLY UNATTAINABLY** hot that it's unanimous. You have to have the bod too. And most of all.... You have to have the personality. You need to be so sexy with your words and rizz that you're pulling without even knowing you're pulling. Being the best person you are but still being sexy and being more than just being sexy at the same time. Your honour, I rest my case.

Cannot truly be played by an actual human.

I think a character has to a) be physically attractive, especially in comparison to other characters in their world and b) be charming, charismatic or otherwise make u giggle just thinking about them. Like they gotta have a certain *oomph*.

I'm ace, so "sexy" is usually a character I think is neat and/or have a crush on. Also, if I'm down to read x reader smut of them then they are sexy to me.

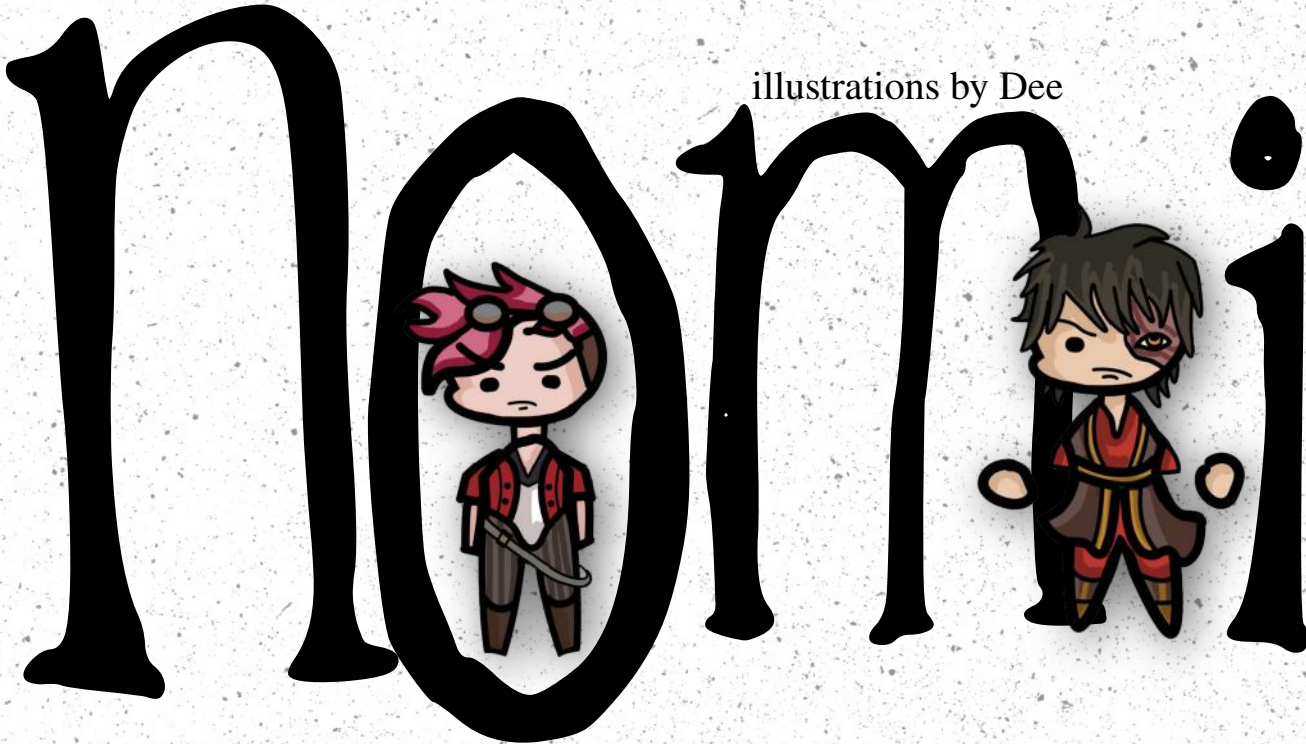
They have to have the skill and confidence to do something odd and have you fawn over it.

I like features that can be easily drawn.

Who do you think is the sexiest fictional
character alive? *

meet the

illustrations by Dee





leon s. kennedy

Leon Scott Kennedy is a playable protagonist in the Resident Evil franchise. He appears in RE2, RE4, RE6 and RE9-Requiem, as well as several other forms of media: movies (Degeneration, Damnation, Vendetta, Death Island) and series (Infinite Darkness), plus a few comics (Infinite Darkness – The Beginning, Death Island).

Throughout the games, we follow Leon as a rookie cop in Raccoon City, fighting through an outbreak of zombies infected with the T-virus by the evil Umbrella Corporation, surviving alongside Claire Redfield and Sherry Birkin.

Personality-wise, Leon fits into the cinematic hero archetype kind of protagonist. He is compassionate, almost to a fault, always willing to understand and help others, even if it could cost him.

He doesn't have a hidden agenda behind his actions, he just sees the good in people when others don't. Leon's not a saint either (lots of mistakes, many unhealthy coping mechanisms, and very much emotionally closed off to a point of self-destruction). But he's always kind and willing to sacrifice himself first.

Stats

~45k fics in fandom, ~22k involving Leon

popular Ships:

Leon S. Kennedy/Chris Redfield

Leon S. Kennedy/Ada Wong



illustration by Tagzpite



illustration by ellestrade

t @ellestrade

ilya rozanov

Ilya is the main character (alongside his love interest Shane Hollander) of the novel series *Game Changers* (2018-2022) by Rachel Reid and its TV adaptation *Heated Rivalry* (2025-present). In the books, Ilya is a Russian professional ice hockey player and captain of fictional National Hockey League teams. In the show, he was reimagined as the captain of the Boston-based team the Boston Raiders and his background and life in Russia were expanded upon.

Ilya is extremely guarded but fiercely protective of the people he loves. He uses sarcasm as a sword on the ice and a shield off of it. He is charming, to the point of being just a bit of a hoe, but that doesn't stop him from being a lover boy at heart.

Ilya identifies as bisexual and is portrayed by American actor Connor Storrie. He is the only live-action character among our nominees!

Stats

~42k fics in fandom, ~37k involving Ilya

most popular ship:

Ilya Rozanov/Shane Hollander

Violet

Violet, or Vi, is a character from the League of Legends media franchise. She was introduced as a playable character (Champion) in the multiplayer online game League of Legends in 2012. Her weapon of choice is a pair of gauntlets powered with magical energy.

In the animated show Arcane, she is one of the two protagonists along with her younger sister, Jinx. When their parents were killed, they were adopted by Vander and forced to take up thieving jobs. A mission to rescue Vander goes wrong when Jinx murders him – Vi then abandons her sister and gets sent to Stillwater Hold prison. Years later, she is freed by Caitlyn Kiramman.

Vi is, in a word, badass. She is resilient, sometimes to the point of recklessness, but she takes her responsibility as the older sister and example to Powder, Mylo, and Claggor very seriously. Her role as the eldest of her rag tag family combined with the dangerous nature of where she grew up turned Vi into a muscle mommy who often lets her fists do the talking.

Stats

~63k fics in fandom, ~27k involving Vi

most popular Ship:

Caitlyn/Vi

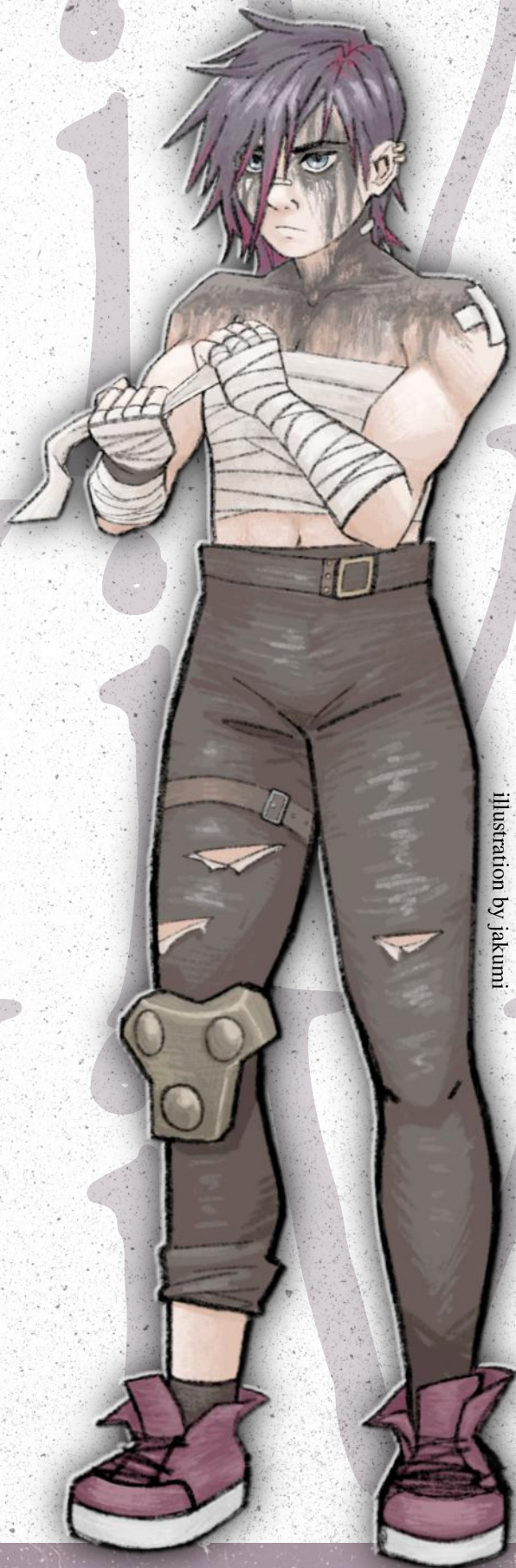


illustration by jakumi



illustration by Allaire

Zuko

Zuko, commonly known as Prince Zuko, Fire Lord Zuko, or just Lord Zuko, is one of the main characters in Avatar: The Last Airbender. He was born the Crown Prince of the Fire Nation in Caldera City as the eldest child of Fire Lord Ozai and Lady Ursa.

Before the events of the series, Zuko is banished from the Fire Nation by his father, and to restore his honour, he is ordered to capture the Avatar – an individual capable of bending all four elements who can end the Hundred Year War started by the Fire Nation's genocide of all airbenders.

Zuko starts out as the primary antagonist of the series, opposing Avatar Aang and his allies. But over time, he loses faith in the war and redeems himself, eventually joining Aang. He values honour above all else. He strives to do the right thing, even when he isn't quite sure what it is. He is determined when given a task but lovably awkward in social interactions, which somehow makes him even more attractive.

FANMADE readers specifically nominated Adult Zuko (very fervently, might we add) – the version of Zuko from the upcoming animated feature film Avatar Aang: The Last Airbender, which follows a grown-up Team Avatar.

Stats

~54k fics in fandom, ~36k involving Zuko

popular Ships:

Katara/Zuko

Sokka/Zuko



The FANMADE
Sexiest Fictional
Character Alive has
been chosen and it's
truly, incredibly
unexpected (read:
heavy sarcasm).
With more than
40% of the votes,
Dick Grayson won
our election by a
landslide.

words and illustration by
violettavonviolet



The problem with this contest is that it will always result in Nightwing winning.

Sexiest fictional character alive

The circus acrobat turned vigilante, the crime-fighting bat-adjacent boy wonder, a cornerstone of the Dynamic Duo, Dick Grayson has had a long and illustrious history – but he’s always been known as a fashion icon (Discowing, anyone?) and a sex symbol. Whether it be countless edits on TikTok raving about his fine backside, strong thighs and delectable muscles, or the millionth thirst tweet imagining what Dick Grayson might do with those wonderfully blue-striped fingers, it’s clear that Nightwing is more popular than ever.

He’s appeared in well over 10k different comics in the last 80 years, more than 400 issues of which are his Nightwing solo run. In fact, Dick Grayson actually appeared in more Golden Age comics than Batman himself.

the history

The character of Richard (Dick) Grayson, aka Robin, was first created by writer Bill Finger and artist Bob Kane in 1940, when he appeared in Detective Comics #38. Thus, he has been a character within the Bat Comics for longer than any other character (even Alfred, who joined the cast in 1943). Dick is considered the first sidekick, quickly emulated across franchises in characters like Aqualad or Bucky Barnes. He was the blueprint for the teenage sidekick of an already established hero, and even beloved characters like Peter Parker are partially inspired by him. He allowed children to project onto him and imagine themselves as a help to their hero, and offered a Watson to Batman's Sherlock, giving the Bat an opportunity to explain his heaps and bounds of logic to someone (and thus also to the readers). He softened the tone of Batman comics significantly – the bright red, yellow, and green traffic light to Batman's doom and gloom, redeeming the detective in the eyes of concerned parents.

At the beginning, the relationship between the Dynamic Duo was a lot more ambiguous, and much closer to mentor/

mentee than father/son, especially considering Bruce didn't legally adopt Dick until May of 2001 (he was only his legal ward before that).

In Seduction of the Innocent (1954), psychiatrist Fredric Wertham famously claimed that "Batman stories are psychologically homosexual," arguing that the duo lived a "lavender-scented" lifestyle. This sparked a moral panic that forced DC Comics to introduce female characters to create a more obvious heterosexual story. Over the years, the relationship and its ambiguity have been the butt of many jokes, but DC has solidified Nightwing and Batman's relationship as firmly platonic. It does, however, explain why Bruce Wayne/Dick Grayson persists as a popular ship.

**"Nightwing became the
protector of the
impoverished and crime-
riddled sister city of
Gotham, bludhaven.**

In 1964, Dick became a founding member of the Teen Titans, a group of sidekicks to the Justice League, who go on to have their own adventures. Teen Titans originally included

Wally West (Kid Flash), Donna Troy (Wonder Girl), Roy Harper (Speedy) and one of Dick's most famed romantic interests – Koriand'r or Kory (Starfire), the alien princess of Tamaran.

In 1984, he lost the mantle of Robin in favour of his new superhero identity, Nightwing. Dick had an altercation with the Joker that left Bruce reeling, and Dick searching for more independence. After a lot of fighting between them, the then 17 year old Dick moved out and eventually adopted the moniker Nightwing, which originates from a fairytale from

Superman's home planet, Krypton. Nightwing became the protector of the impoverished and crime-riddled sister city of Gotham, Blüdhaven.

Jason Todd would go on to take up the Robin mantle, establishing the tradition of it being passed on from one child of Bruce Wayne to the next.

As is common with comics, there are a lot of different universes in which Dick's story slightly differs. In one of them, he's infamously a ravenous vampire, in another one he's a cop, a dog walker, a bartender, or even a college dropout. He dies, he gets resurrected, he goes undercover as a spy and fakes his death, he proposes to Barbara Gordon (Batgirl) or Koriand'r, though he ends up marrying neither. He poses as Batman when Bruce is dead, gone, or otherwise occupied, and sometimes raises Damian Wayne.

He's the most commonly and widely known Robin, so he's had a lot of adaptations in TV and other media, probably most famously as the Robin in Teen Titans Go! (although he borrows Tim Drake's suit there for some reason). The roundness of his ass is a running gag in the animated Harley Quinn show. And who could forget Lego Batman in which Dick acts as the wide-eyed orphan in hunt of a father?

He's typically the de-facto Robin when no other is specified, possibly since the other Robins' existence would somewhat hinge on his existence as their predecessor – Robin is the nickname his mother gave him in the circus; the original costume, which included no pants but a leotard (with shorts) and pixie boots, is also fashioned after their costumes in the circus.

Stats

120k works featuring Dick Grayson Most popular ships/ pairings:

Dick Grayson & Jason Todd	14100
Dick Grayson & Bruce Wayne	11800
Dick Grayson/ Jason Todd	10800
Tim Drake & Dick Grayson	9000
Dick Grayson & Damian Wayne	7600
Dick Grayson/ Wally West	5700
Dick Grayson/ Bruce Wayne	3700
Dick Grayson/ Slade Wilson	3300
Dick Grayson/ Koriand'r	2900

Popular tags:

- Dick Grayson has eldest daughter syndrome
- Dick Grayson has a nice butt
- Dick Grayson is a better parent than Bruce Wayne
- Dick Grayson has (abandonment) issues
- Dick Grayson needs a hug



Who is he?

"dick is Such a
good guy he'd
be boring if he
Weren't so
charming"

geek girl penpals

As a young boy in the circus, Dick witnessed his parents' murder as they fell from the trapeze. He then got adopted by Bruce Wayne, resident billionaire bachelor and secret Batman, who could just barely constrain the murderous energy exhibited by the nine-year-old orphan. Dick grew up to be an expert fighter, utilizing wing-dings (electrified escrima sticks) and martial arts; and the leader of the Teen Titans and various other organisations.

Dick is multilingual and proud of it. One of his favorite activities is coming up with (bad) puns and regularly questioning the rules of the English language, with gems like *whelmed* (this author's favorite word!). After all, why does everyone have to be over or underwhelmed? Can't we just all be *whelmed*?

Speaking of naming conventions, Dick is also the one who named the Batmobile, the Bat-Computer, the Bat-arangs, Bat-sharkspray and any other Bat-related accessories.

He is, without a doubt, by far the most whimsical of all the Bats, with a love for fashion and anything silly. This by no means implies he's a bad fighter – he's a master detective and martial artist who can outthink and out-act most villains with a flip and a backwards handstand. This is actually how Tim Drake eventually figures out Batman's identity: not many people can do a quadruple flip!

"he'S actually how
tim drake
eventually figures
out batman'S
identity: not many
People can do a
quadruple flip!"

Dick has been described as a womanizer with a self-proclaimed love for redheads. He's also what we would define as Schrodinger's bisexual. He's never been publicly confirmed as queer, but he certainly has graced

the cover of multiple pride issues. In fact, in the non-canon game *Gotham Knights*, he's openly bisexual. And yet, he's still considered straight in the current canon. The only member of the core Batfamily who's out is Tim Drake, though Batman's cousin Kate Kane is also canonically a lesbian.

the Picture

Let us paint this very easy on the eyes picture: shiny teeth, baby-blue eyes, shaggy black hair, tousled effortlessly. Like most heroes, his body is chiseled, and it's been noted that he has a lot more butt than most people, highlighted by the comments of our readers, who added such charming explanations as:

caUSE he got that
bakery in the back
boiii look at that
ass on himmmm
i am astonished at
the amount of
cheekage
have you Seen
that butt?????
next question

He's typically depicted in his Nightwing uniform, which is skin tight blue and black, occasionally with long blue stripes running down his arms and ending at his fingers, typically only two, which the fandom affectionately named finger stripes and continues to salivate over on social media.

It's a known fact among comic book connoisseurs that the appearance of a character can change drastically from artist to artist. Poor Jason Todd is currently suffering from the incurable affliction of continuously being drawn looking like he's 45 with a mortgage. Dick suffers from these changes less, though the fandom sure has its favorites. These (predictably) include Dan Mora and Jorge Jimenez. These guys know how to make our pretty boy look... Well, pretty!

Why him?

When trying to dig deeper into the appeal of Dick Grayson, some things immediately come to mind. For one, he has the appeal of the older brother's best friend, a pretty classic trope. That's not to say he's responsible or has his life together (though he does live on his own and most of the time also supports himself). Rather, it's the general vibe of someone slightly older, who – at least in his professional life (as Nightwing) – seems to know what he's doing.

He's a natural leader, even though he doesn't have any superpowers. He's sympathetic, witty, and most of all – he's funny! Batman comics can get pretty dark

and gnarly, and though Nightwing's life certainly isn't all sunshine and rainbows, he's still upbeat. He makes endless amounts of (really bad) puns and he's always up for some acrobatic grandstanding. That makes him seem a lot more fun than the brooding Bat, who has more of a DILF appeal to him.

Dick is kind and willing to help other characters, like most heroes – think Spider-Man or Superman. He's not so rich he becomes unrelatable, as he's often shown struggling for rent at the end of the month or eating day-old pizza on the sofa. He's more easy-going, though his childhood can by no means be called relatable. His daddy issues, specifically concerning Batman, are also appealing – who doesn't like a character who cries sometimes?

His relationship with his siblings is also adorable. He often easily falls into the role of the older brother, protective and teasing in equal measures. Especially with the baby of the family, Damian Wayne – Dick took on an active role in his life after Bruce vanished and they formed a close bond.

At the same time, his banter and (un)easy camaraderie with his immediate successor, Jason Todd, is the source of a lot of thirsting, as they share similar physical attributes but opposite personalities. We are not oblivious to the numerous TikToks wishing to be in the middle of a Dick Grayson/Jason Todd Eiffel Tower. We see you and we hear you.



in fandom

In fanon, Dick Grayson is the epitome of the “older brother in fics that don't center him” archetype. He's often depicted as somewhat of a boyfail who doesn't have his life together, who's broke or has a messy apartment. He eats ramen and cold pizza, his fridge is never stocked, and he does love donuts on occasion.

“he's often
depicted as
somewhat of a
boyfail who
doesn't have his
life together.”

Digging deeper into his character, what often pops up is an immense amount of guilt, especially surrounding the death (and resurrection) of Jason Todd. In a trope affectionately dubbed Dick Grayson has Eldest

Daughter Syndrome, he's often depicted as someone who takes on too many responsibilities and a lot of the emotional work in the family. It's no secret that a lot of bats are really bad when it comes to feelings, but Dick is typically the noted exception. Which is not to say he's good at communicating but rather that he actually cares to try and address emotions – though preferably not his own. This also causes him to butt heads with Bruce Wayne pretty often.

When he's not dealing with guilt and his life falling apart, Dick is often the silly comic relief in otherwise angst-riddled fics.

He makes (inappropriate) jokes and frets over the other members of the Batfamily (typically consisting of Bruce Wayne, Alfred Pennyworth, Jason Todd, Tim Drake, Stephanie Brown, Cassandra Cain, Damian Wayne and Barbara Gordon.) Fittingly, he's also obsessed with hugs, though it's unclear where exactly that originated from. He calls Jason Todd 'Little Wing' and Tim Drake 'Baby Bird', and is generally very fond of bird related puns.

As with most bats, his fanfics often deal with found family, heavy angst and hurt/comfort. Intra-familiar squabbles between the brothers are also pretty common.

When it comes to the younger version of Dick, he's typically (mis)characterized as the happy, easy-going Robin, which opposes most of canon, as Dick was rather vengeful post the murder of his parents.

On the more shippy side of things, the DCU lends itself to tropes like Fear and Sex Pollen, which authors indulge in often. Dick gets paired up with various members of the Batfam, their villains, his friends, and really anyone the authors can think of. More often than not, Dick is depicted as bisexual or gay, though his ship with Barbara Gordon is also very popular.

Additionally popular are alternate universes, especially of the vampiric/magical sort, and no powers AUs. Fake Dating is also fairly popular, especially when a mission might demand it. And, of course, sharing a bed!

As it usually happens with beloved fictional characters, fandom has made Dick Grayson their own. The fanon version of him is often a lot more relaxed and easygoing, certainly a lot less traumatized, and tends to have a far better relationship with his siblings. And no matter what iteration of Dick it may be – there truly have been too many to count – one thing remains constant: he's always sexy, in one way or another. Perhaps even the sexiest, if you ask the right people.

illustration by Dee





across

- 1 Nickname given to Nightwing by his mother.
- 3 Who is Dick's favourite superhero?
- 6 Who is Dick's best friend?
- 9 "Boy _____"

down

- 2 Where is Nightwing's territory?
- 4 Nightwing is the leader of the...
- 5 Dick's first language.
- 7 Jason sometimes calls Dick...
- 8 The Flying Graysons used to perform on a ...

illustration by **silvaaart**



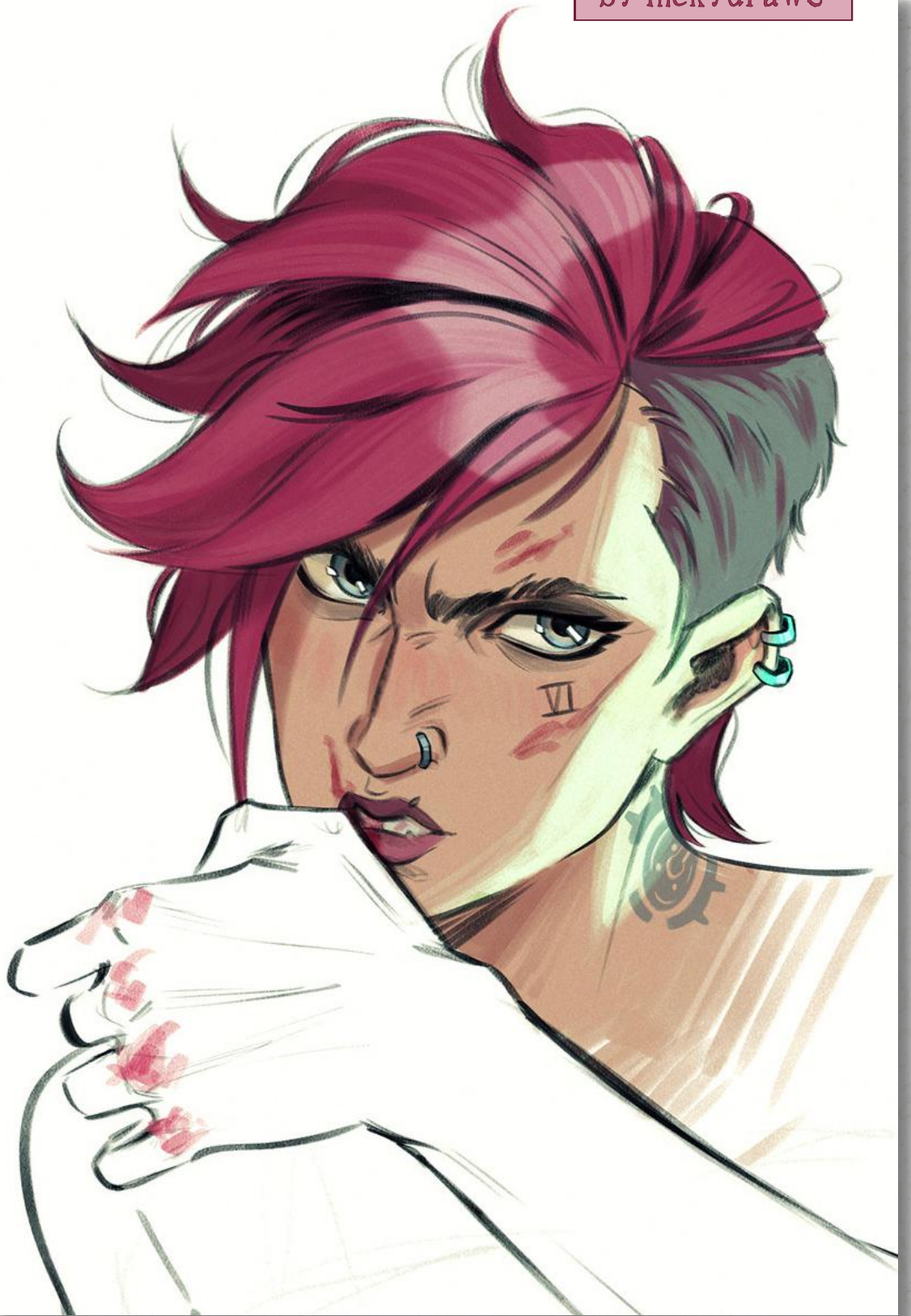
t @silvaaart
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fan

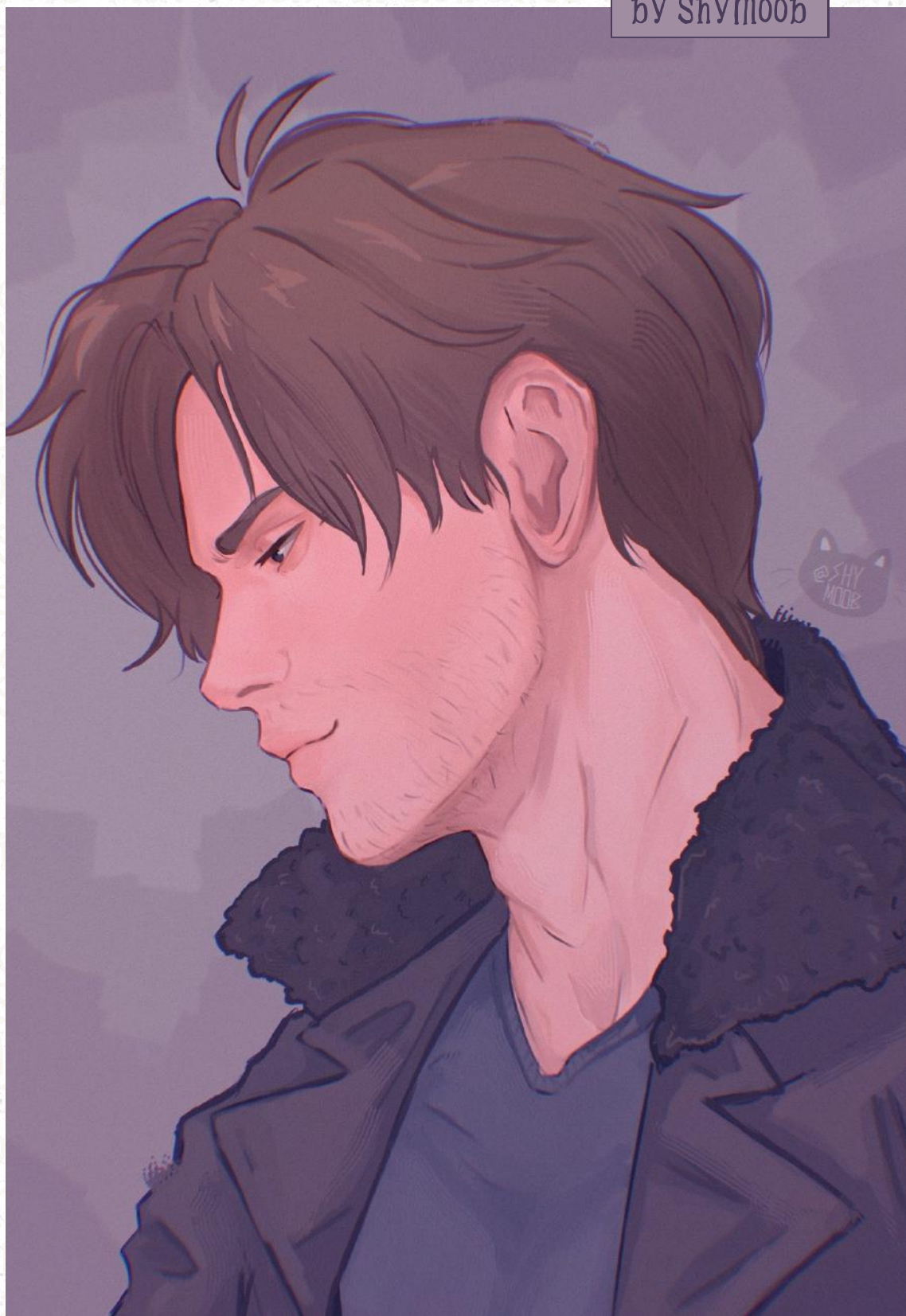


costume gallery

by Nickydraws



by ShYmoob



@shymoob



@umitsmeshy



by ch0c0lace



@chocolace



by charleSlove



by mothsartart



@mothsartart



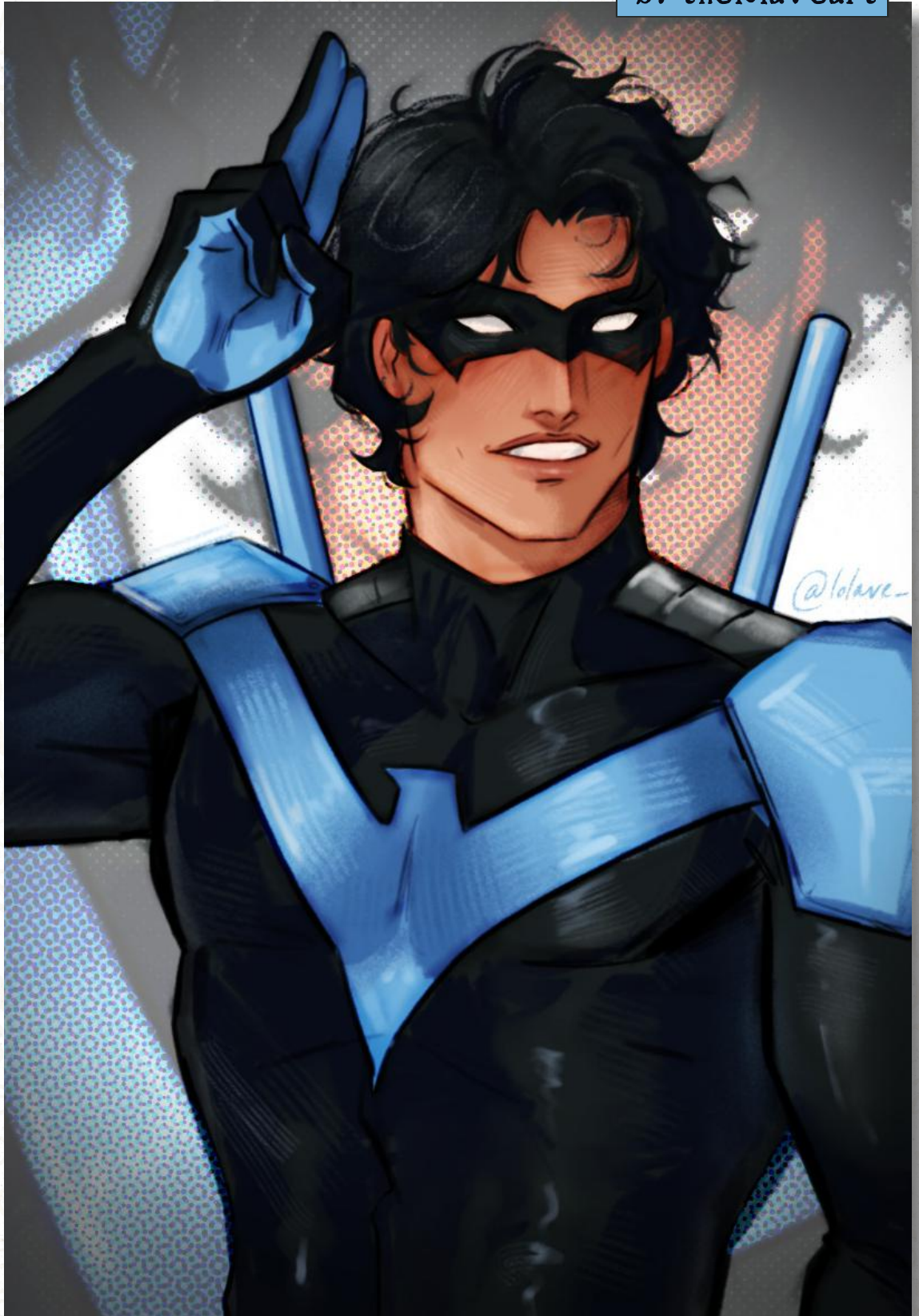
@lilliesandpucks



by NickYdraws



by thelolaveart



t @thelolaveart

by SilVaaart



hall of fame

wild sexy tags

Gender Norms: Out The Window, Porn: bustin down the door

A Gets Ragebaited So Hard He Gets Hard

discussing the etymology of sexual slang during sex is actually
peak romance

Feminism win! These ladies objectify their male coworkers back

If they both cheat it cancels out like pemdass right

The only conflict here is me trying to figure out how much I can
make these doctors fuck without straining something

First base: murder attempt, second base: marriage,
third base: sharing a bed

A and the bad bitch (B) she pulled by being competent and
smart and autistic

A is a good sibling – except for the part where she cockblocks
her sibling

Warning: May cause Hysterical Laughter and
Uncomfortable Arousal

normal and chill bff activities: fucking each other in front of 8
other dudes on a loveseat

Is it slow burn if they're fucking a lot but feeling like reeeeeeal
bad about it??

Surprisingly Character-driven for something that started
in my dick

Snuck into the library for a quickie got distracted by the
extensive mythology section

Sexually charged Google Calendar sharing

A loves being called baby in the workplace (but won't admit it)

yes I wrote porn again but in my defence: hhhhhhhhhh

let's all ask ourselves what if they were best friends who could
not be normal about each other for one minute ever, because
the answer results in a totally platonic bath, wink wink

A discovers a competency kink because B is extremely stupid

Tone it down A sheesh – don't just jizz your feelings all over B

As many positions as a 50 Cent song

A has an incredibly intense sexual awakening at the
ripe old age of 70

Genre is psychosexual mystery inside an erotic spy romcom

What is this character development doing in my porn

What I shove up his ass is between Me and god

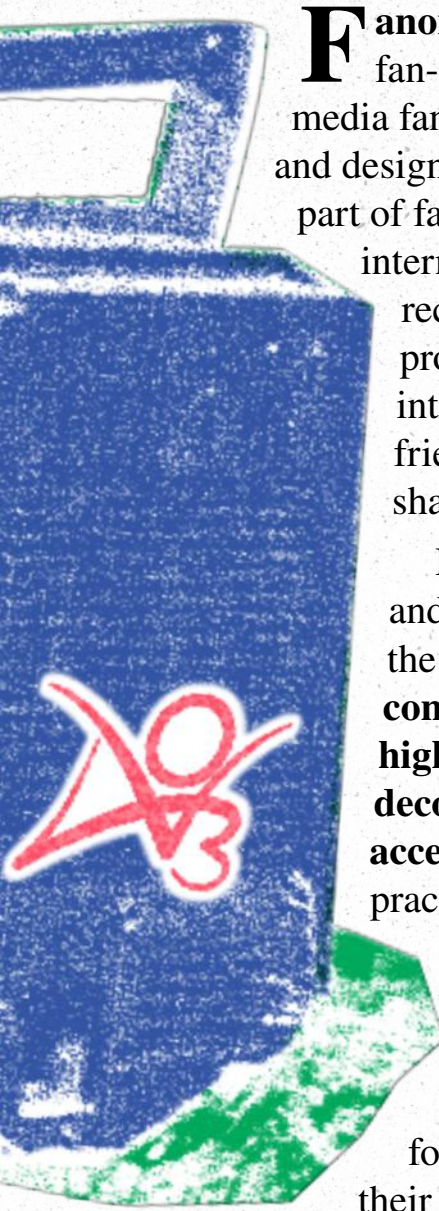
These bitches are so soft for each other.. And also haRD

FANON RADIO

Illustration by Eleni

WARNING
YOU ARE APPROACHING A
FANGIRL
PLEASE PROCEED WITH CAUTION

<https://fanon.radio> 



FanonRadio is an online radio platform meant as a fan-owned, fan-run third space for transformative media fandom. The project is run by **Eleni Flli**, an artist and designer located in Rotterdam, NL. She has been a part of fandom for as long as she's had access to the internet and wants to reciprocate the love she has received. Her practice focuses on reclaiming programming from tech-bro culture and introducing it to her community through open, friendly documentation and judgement-free skill sharing.

Fandom online is experienced through visual and textual interactions, while orality remains in the sidelines. **Radio creates a temporal connection between host and listener, while highlighting layers of queerness and decolonizing fandom through the presence of accents.** Liveness can lead to new sets of fan practices and fan connections.

The project is hosted on a raspberry pi 5, located on Eleni's windowsill. Somewhat self-taught, she has been building the server using free, libre and open source software, following the teachings of feminist servers and their manifesto.

t @fanonradio

thirst tweets

leonskennedytruther @thekennedy

The urge to turn into a rifle when Leon starts flirting with his weapons...

thethesaurus @t3432

The "S" in Leon S. Kennedy stands for sexy

zukowife @marrymezuko

@princezuko I'd sit on this throne, if you know what I mean

setmeonfire @smof34523

The sluttiest thing a man can do is have a little man bun
UUUUUGH

imgayforviolet @imgayforviolet

I want Vi to squeeze my head between her thighs send tweet

vi notice mi @lesbotron3000

I'm SO jealous of those gauntlets I want Vi's hand up my *** too

hockey1 @shanefightme

@ilyarozanov these are some noise cancelling thighs and I just lost my earplugs oh noooo

ilyasgirl @shanefightme2

Is naked hockey a thing? I can pay

dickgrayson #1 fan @dick1fan

Nightwing's ass is so tight you
could bounce a nickel off of it

dick notice me @66439302

Hey @dickgrayson do
you wanna *****
**** *****

batmanz wife @3221111

I wonder if Nightwing
can fly because he sure
swept me away

nightwing fanatic @nightwing111

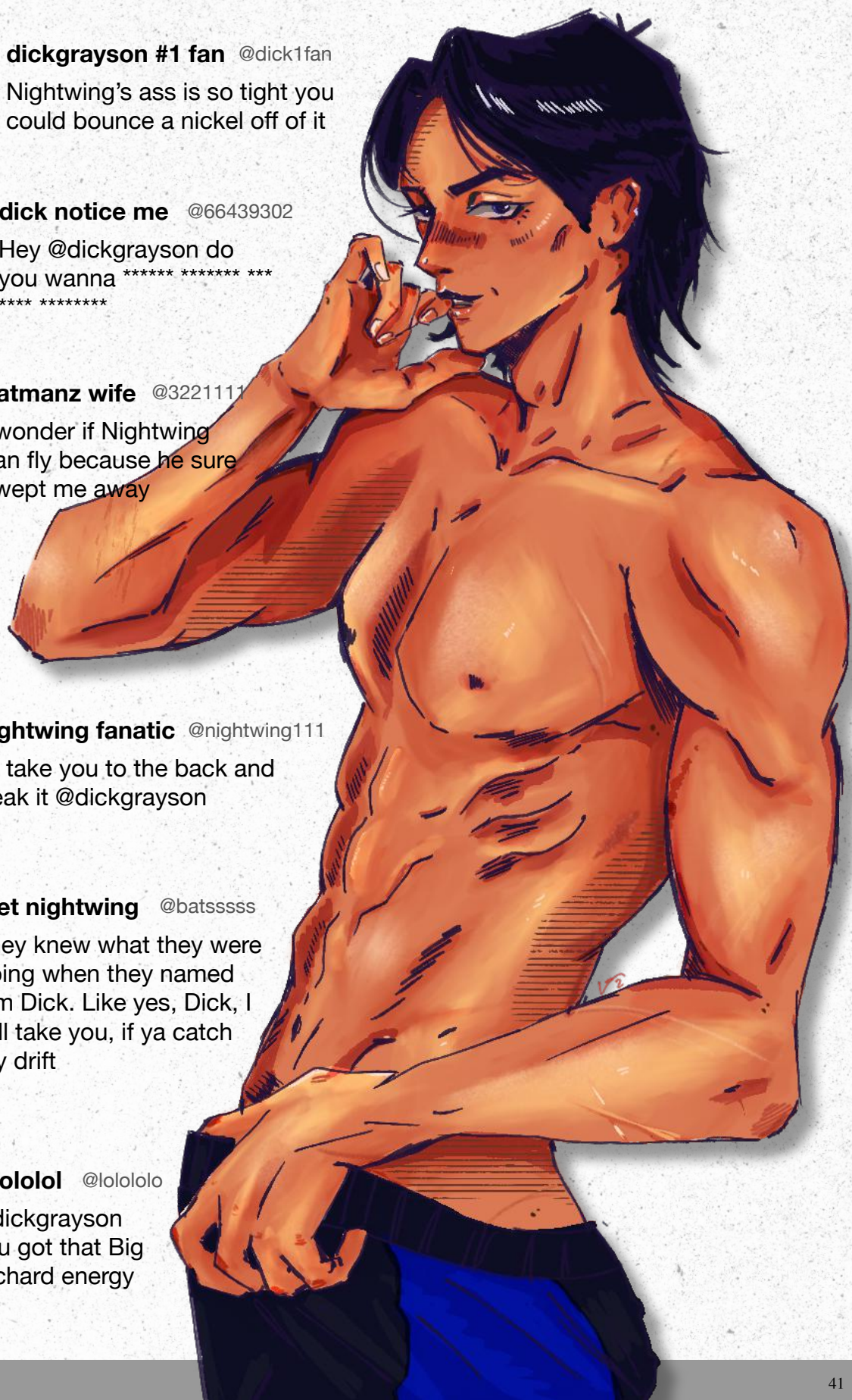
I'll take you to the back and
freak it @dickgrayson

met nightwing @batsssss

They knew what they were
doing when they named
him Dick. Like yes, Dick, I
will take you, if ya catch
my drift

lolololol @lolololo

@dickgrayson
you got that Big
Richard energy



the tumblr sexymen



Who are Tumblr
Sexymen, and **why** is
fandom **so obsessed**
with **them**?

words by violettavonviolet

illustrations by Tagzpite and

t [@sparticus2000art](https://www.tumblr.com/sparticus2000art)

We can't possibly elect the FANMADE Sexiest Fictional Character Alive without honouring age-old traditions. Namely, the Tumblr Sexymen phenomenon.

The idea originated on an account fittingly enough dubbed @sicklywhitedudes, which is unfortunately no longer active on Tumblr. The name points quite well to the type of character typically associated with Tumblr Sexymen. It's no secret that fandom spaces often favour, how do we put it... twink, and Tumblr Sexymen are a prime example of this. They're mostly tall, lanky, somewhat sickly white boys that could be said to vaguely resemble a Victorian orphan. Even when the characters are non-human (like Bill Cipher, the triangular villain from Gravity Falls), the humanised version is usually depicted as the typical sickly white dude.

Though the traits mentioned above are commonly associated with Tumblr Sexymen, there are other ones that reappear quite frequently. For example, the white strand of hair (or entirely light hair) as seen on Jason Todd, Percy Jackson, a variety of anime characters, and even Wilbur Soot from the DSMP.

Often, the Sexymen have a Burton-esque character style, and are capitalist and/or ruthless in some manner. They are (smart) criminals and con artists, have strange eyes or generally animalistic or eldritch features.

Fandom loves Sexymen with great potential for angst and the accompanying scars, and the possibility to be depicted as either utterly pathetic or very dominant. They tend to be at the very least LGBTQ+ coded, and are often headcannoned as neurodivergent and/or traumatized in some way.

Multiple fan elections have been held to determine the Tumblr Sexyman of any given year. Like many polls on Tumblr, it's often fandom against fandom – until the winner comes out on top. In years past, fandoms have been known to join forces to ensure one character wins, especially if the opponent was someone they disagreed with. Typical fandom shenanigans.



Sexypedia

Sexypedia, a website initially founded specifically to record the Tumblr Sexymen, now lists a total of 2529 characters. On the website's main page, it's noted that "as time has gone on, we have branched out into documenting all kinds of fictional sexypeople, not just ones popularised by Tumblr." It then goes on to dub those characters Fandom Sexymen.

Although no longer specific to Tumblr Sexymen, the website still offers an amazing snapshot into their history. Perhaps the most fascinating information one can find on Sexypedia are the classes of Sexymen.

As described on the website, the highest class is Apollyon: "Once-in-a-generation phenomena. The characters that you couldn't escape, no matter if you cared about (or even knew about) the media they're from. The characters who not only transcended their fandom, but created their own." As of May 2026, only three characters are considered to belong to this class: The Once-ler from *The Lorax*, Sans from *Undertale*, and Bill Cipher from *Gravity Falls*.



Once-ler

According to Fanlore, Wheatley from *Portal 2* (2011) could arguably be counted as a proto-Tumblr sexyman, but it all kind of started in 2012 with the release of *The Lorax* – a film that featured the (on Tumblr) much-revered Once-ler. Fan blogs started popping up everywhere, clipping parts of the movie to admire the lanky form of the main character.

Lacking any real power, the Once-ler could be literally and metaphorically pushed into the trope of pathetic, lanky man, with a Burton animation style. But what he lacked in real power, he made up for in charm and (fashion) style. Since he didn't have an actionable romantic partner within the movie, fans started shipping him with himself; thus, birthing Onecest. Yes, it's true, the Once-ler's true love is none other than himself.

Sans

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Bill Cipher

Bill Cipher is an anthropomorphic yellow-glowing pyramid with a top hat, a bow tie and one eye. He's also an eldritch god. Tumblr saw him and said: actually, he's a twink. Humanised Bill Cipher is almost always depicted as a skinny white guy. He's an evil entity that would not hesitate to kill someone (possibly for you...) And that sort of power, combined with his unpredictability, makes him appealing.

The creators of Gravity Falls seemingly make fun of this version of him – in some media, a crude drawing of the Tumblr-human version of him appears on a conspiracy board, with the words “BEWARE THE IMPOSTOR” written next to it.

Cecil Palmer

Cecil Palmer from Welcome to Nightvale won the Tumblr SexyMen poll in 2023, though he's the narrator of the story with vague physical traits at best.

Fandom portrayals of him vary from a quirky 1950s radio host to an eldritch immortal being, though often with outrageous fashion choices, a sleeve of tattoos or even a third eye. Fans have also been known to obscure him or only show vague shapes of him in fanart, affectionately dubbed blob! Cecil.

Stanley Pines

The most recent community-driven election winner was a bit of a wild card – Stanley Pines, also from Gravity Falls. He, as opposed to the other names on this list, is firmly not in twink territory, and could rather be described as a DILF, or even a GILF. Stanley won against Dr. Heinz Doofenschmirtz from Phineas and Ferb in a poll with over 10k participants. Incidentally, he was elected on the same day Pope Francis died, and in typical fandom fashion, we connected the dots. Yes, you guessed right – the Tumblr Sexyman election somehow killed the pope. Another iconic Tumblr moment.

Outlook

After all, this issue of FANMADE is yet another iteration of fans trying to answer the age-old question: what exactly does it mean to be sexy? And the truth is, there's no answer. Anything can be sexy. A glowing pyramid with a top hat, a skeleton, a skinny white guy, or a vigilante with a great ass. Perhaps there are as many sexiest characters as there are fans who care about this sort of thing.



QUIZ

Which of the
nominated characters
are you the most like?

1 What's your favourite colour?

- A. black or gold
- B. blue
- C. warm colours, like reds, oranges, and yellows
- D. pink
- E. simple earth tones, despite wearing mostly black for work

2 What type of person do you find most attractive?

- A. a socially awkward but super hot half Asian man
- B. redheads
- C. I don't have time to think about that kind of thing
- D. rich women who look innocent but could kill you in a heartbeat
- E. not a type, but confidence can be very attractive

3 What would you do if someone was rude to your face?

- A. insult them in a way that makes them rethink every single one of their life choices
- B. hold your ankles as you jump off a rooftop and drop knees-first through their sternum
- C. arson
- D. punch them in the face
- E. try to de-escalate the situation first, but willing to match their energy if it gets worse

4 Describe your perfect date:

- A. tuna melt and sex
- B. romantic vigilantism
- C. candle lit dinner and a stroll
- D. parkour. if they can't keep up that's their problem
- E. couch, Chinese takeout and a good movie, but I don't mind paying for a fancy dinner

5 What is your most attractive trait?

- A. my butt
- B. also my butt
- C. tism rizz
- D. muscles
- E. most say they feel safe around me (and also my butt)

6 Which childhood trauma do you most relate to?

- A. daddy issues
- B. pseudo daddy issues
- C. royal daddy issues
- D. dead daddy issues
- E. how much time do we have?

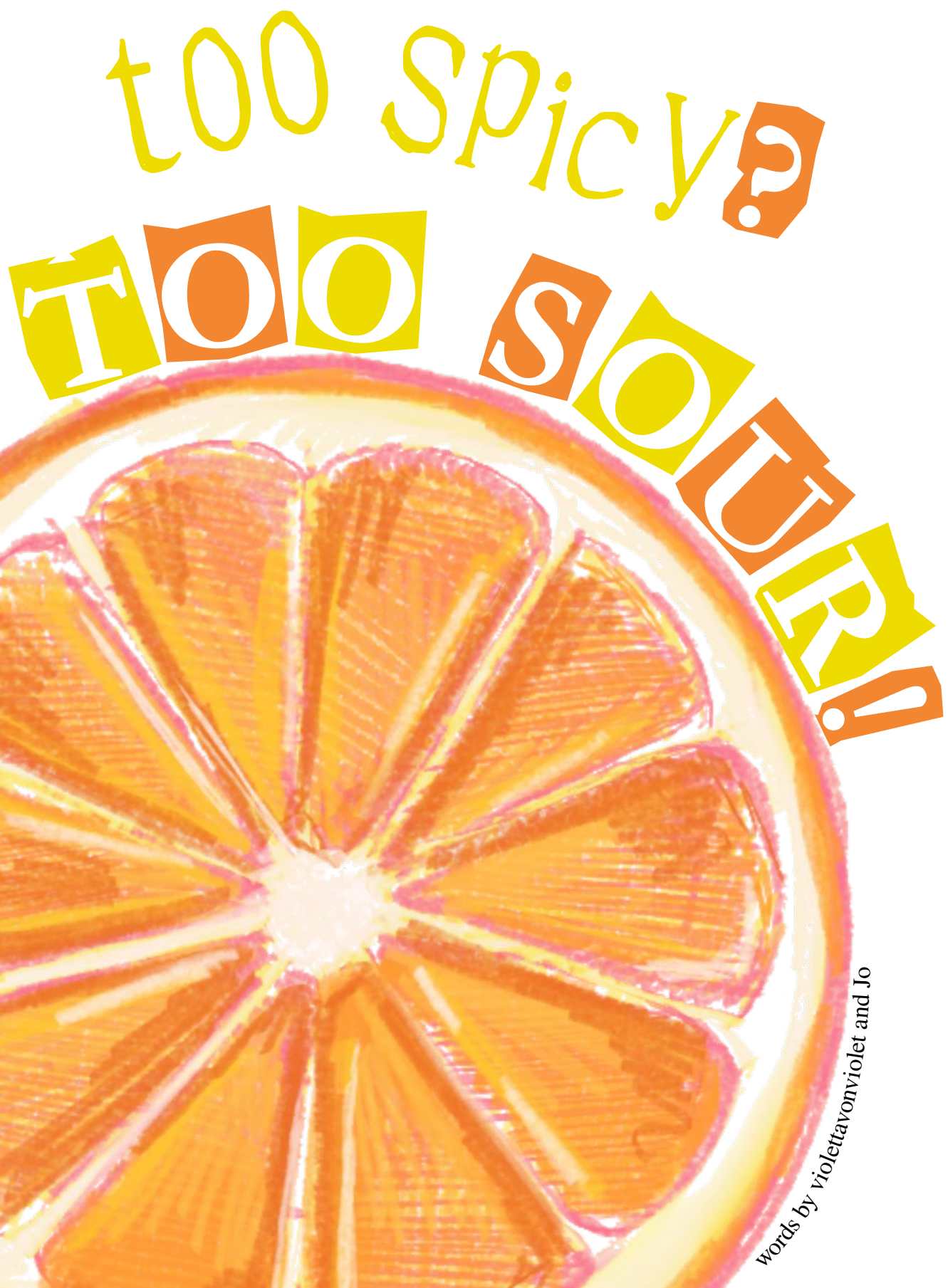
7 Which adult trauma do you most relate to?

- A. disowned from home country
- B. getting shot in the head and developing an awful alter ego as a result
- C. morality induced fever and illness
- D. werewolf dad
- E. chronologically or alphabetically?

8 Describe your sense of style:

- A. athletic
- B. skin tight suits, sometimes with deep V necks and sequins
- C. red.
- D. boxer core
- E. practical, easy and safe

RESULTS ON PAGE 63



too Spicy?

TOO SOUR!

words by violettavonviolet and Jo



illustrations by violettavonviolet

B e f o r e
Booktok discovered **t h e**
spice scale, **fandom** had – unsurprisingly
– already **come up with** a **similar concept**.
It **was used** in **the olden days** to label just
how explicit a **fanfic** was **without ever**
having to use the word sex.

The Citrus Scale originated in the anime space and was a way to label just how explicit a fanfic was going to be without needing to put the actual (more often than not explicit) words in summaries or descriptions. That vagueness was a big part of its appeal – it was a way to hide explicit content on sites with stricter guidelines.

The Citrus Scale was quickly adapted as a fandom meme or an in-joke. In 2018, after the Tumblr porn ban, the blogging site saw a resurgence of posts tagging the Citrus Scale and discussing it, not necessarily actually using it, as people tried to circumvent the ban. Nevertheless, it never really took off as the main way of marking works as explicit.

Generally speaking, the Citrus Scale worked similarly to PG ratings on films, however age was often divorced from the discussion. It was generally



understood that if a work was marked in any way as explicit, people could choose to interact with it at their own risk, no matter their age.

There was no realistic way of banning underage users from reading lemon fics, and despite some authors actively expressing that they didn't want minors to read their works, Tumblr was populated predominantly by teens, often writing smut for other teens. Hand in hand with this knowledge was the general rule of don't like, don't read, which meant that if a reader found themselves in any way uncomfortable with the content of a fanwork, they would simply exit it.

Without a functioning tagging system, this also meant that readers could stumble upon a fic with insufficient trigger warnings or tags – because tagging accordingly was often synonymous with the fic being taken down.

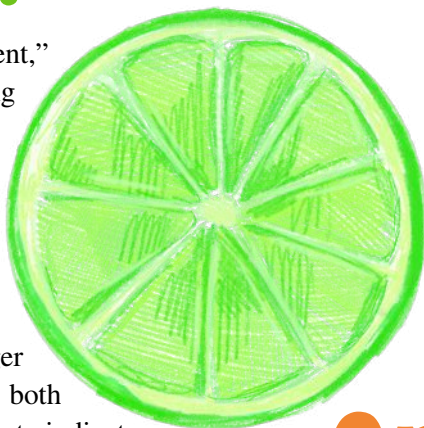




How did it work?

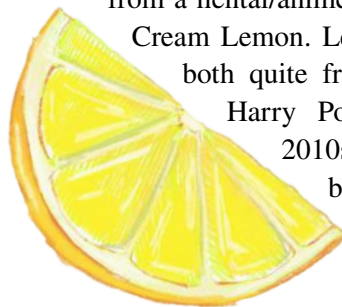
Lime:

Meant “some sexual content,” which could range from making out and heavy petting to straight up oral sex, and sometimes even penetrative sex, which the writer deemed as not kinky, though that was always up to the writer's discretion. Longer works might have added both Lemon and Lime to a summary to indicate that both explicit sex scenes and make out sessions would eventually happen in a fic.



Lemon:

Indicates explicit content; modern day smut, often with little to no plot. According to Fanlore, the name originated from a hentai/anime from the 80s, called Cream Lemon. Lemon and Lime were both quite frequently used in the Harry Potter fandom in the 2010s. The boundaries between the two terms were rather fluid and undefined.



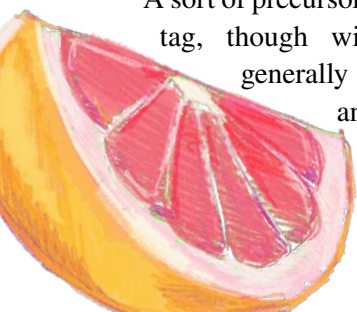
Orange:

Less often used, indicating no sexual content. It was somewhat equivalent to the G rating on Archive of Our



Grapefruit:

A sort of precursor to the “Dead Dove: Do Not Eat” tag, though with slight differences. It was generally used in cases of kinkier smut and/or as a warning for fanfics with more out of pocket content.



Why was it necessary?

Contrary to popular belief, fanfiction is not just smut, and smut itself wasn't always welcome in fandom spaces. Even today, certain fandom communities are against some kinds of smut.

On fanfiction.net or Tumblr, smut or PWP (porn without plot) used to be frowned upon, and repeatedly and ruthlessly purged from the sites – even before the infamous Tumblr porn ban in 2018. Countless works were lost during these purges, which is part of the reason why so few fics from before the 2010s are still available today. In fact, it's also one of the reasons why AO3 has so few content restrictions, as it was created largely in

response to the censorship plaguing other platforms. On AO3, there's no need for labeling within the summary, because it allows open tagging of the content.

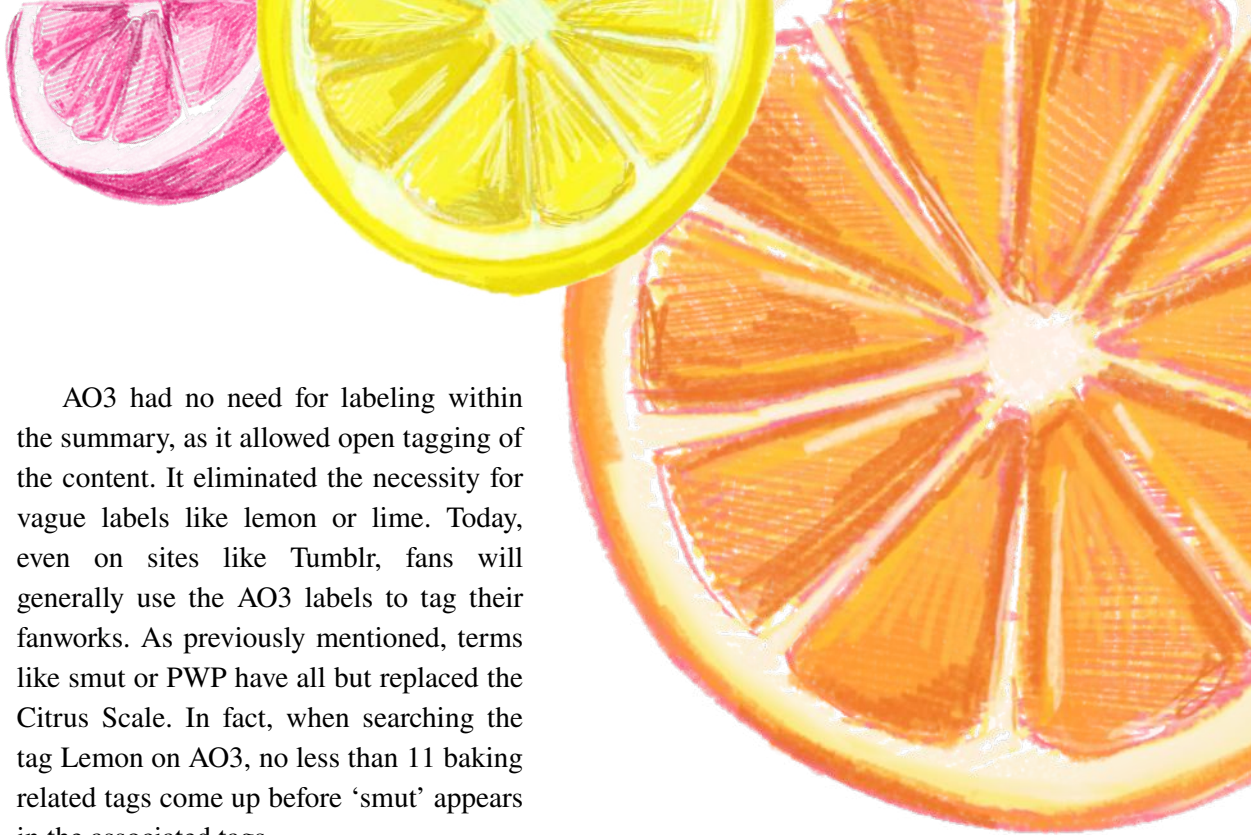


Is it still a thing?

The Citrus Scale was riddled with problems from the start. For one, fandom was much less organized, which meant there were no clear cut definitions of what each label included. You might click on a fanfic labelled Lemon and find no sex at all, or one labeled Lime, which included explicit sexual acts. It was essentially up to the writer to decide what they thought belonged in what category. It lacked descriptiveness and the usage differed wildly between different groups and fandoms.

Eventually, the Citrus Scale fell out of fashion, especially as AO3 gained in popularity.





AO3 had no need for labeling within the summary, as it allowed open tagging of the content. It eliminated the necessity for vague labels like lemon or lime. Today, even on sites like Tumblr, fans will generally use the AO3 labels to tag their fanworks. As previously mentioned, terms like smut or PWP have all but replaced the Citrus Scale. In fact, when searching the tag Lemon on AO3, no less than 11 baking related tags come up before ‘smut’ appears in the associated tags.

What we can learn from it

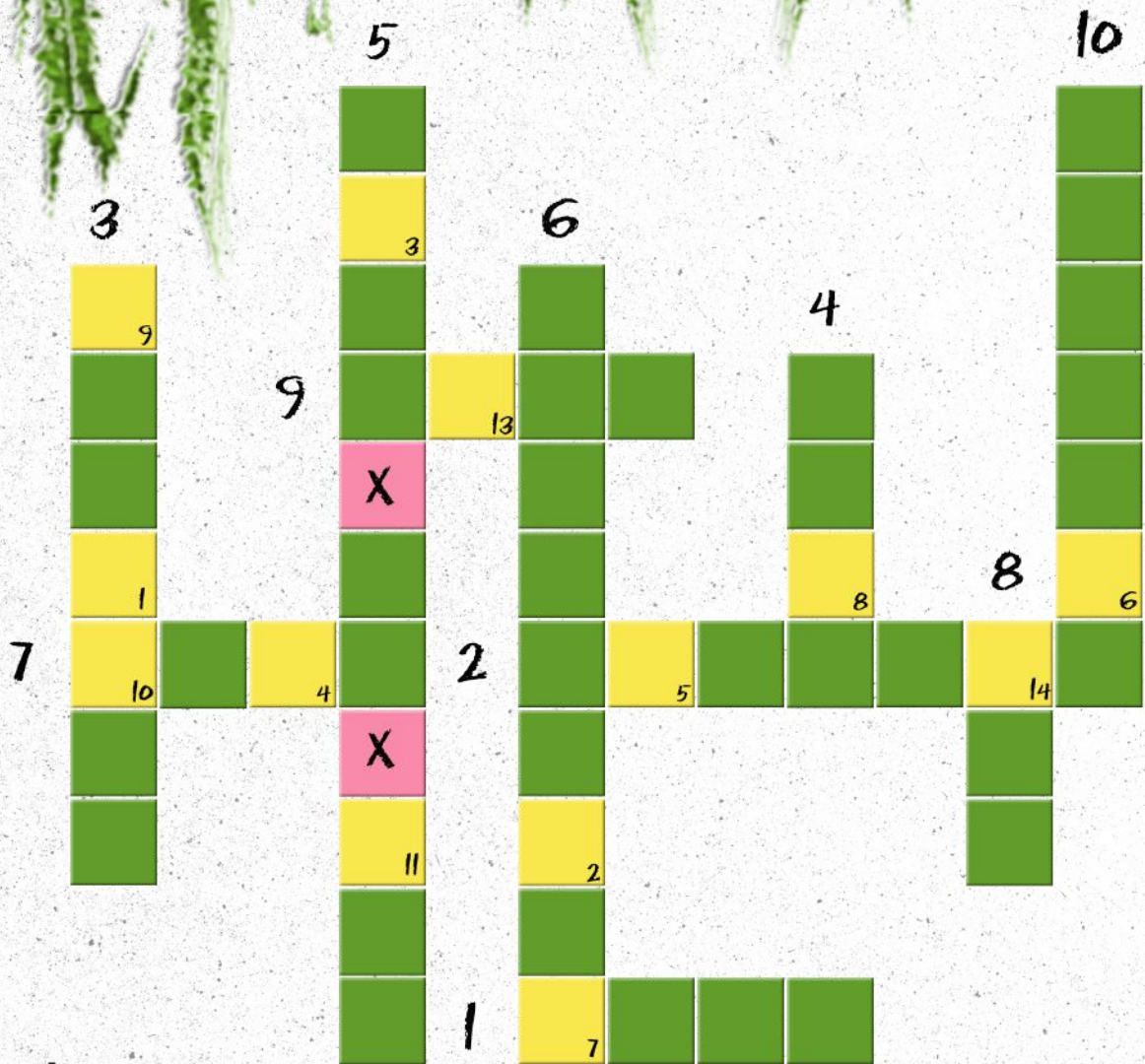
The Citrus Scale is indicative of a time in which fandom had to hide explicit content behind abstract terms for fear of censorship. Perhaps it should serve as a reminder of fandom perseverance and creativity. When faced with an environment in which labelling content is virtually impossible, fans will just come up with a food-related scale to keep each other informed anyway.

At the end of the day, tagging effectively and accurately creates a much safer environment for fans of all ages. Nowadays, fandom communities can comfortably tag their works on platforms

like AO3, where tagging content and trigger warnings is made easy and straightforward. (Though the occasional untagged watersports or surprise mpreg of course sometimes sneak in. It’s still fandom, after all.)

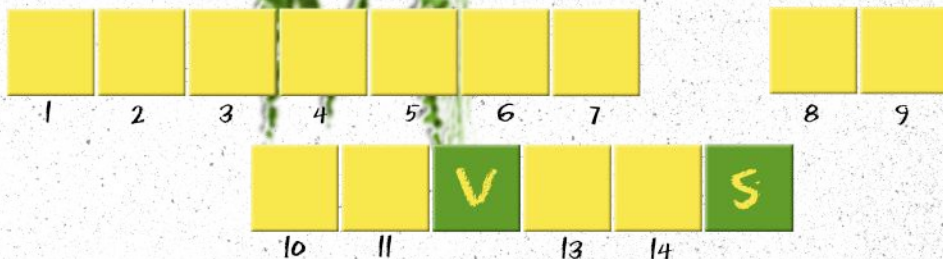


crossword



d @fanmademag
t @fanmademagazine

let US know
how YOU did
on Socials!



down

- 3 Original tumblr sexy man.
- 4 Like a ____ to a flame.
- 5 Questionable attraction.
- 6 Weapons used by both Batman and Nightwing.
- 8 Real person fiction acronym.
- 9 Don't like, don't...
- 10 Why can't everyone just be...

across

- 1 Tag used to inform about explicit content.
- 2 First name of our sexiest character.
- 7 Second on the citrus scale.

the solution might be
the theme of our next
issue...

the fictional character in real person fiction

words by Magda P

art by DNA

design by MY O VLKU



*How much of the RP in RPF is real,
and how much is fictional?*

*Although it sounds counterintuitive, RPF
actually has more to do with fictional
characters, and specifically the process of
creating them, than one might think.*



QUICK DEFINITIONS

star theory/star image – celebrities are constructed images meant to appeal to and be consumed by audiences; the star image is a mixture of publicly available materials (talk show appearances, performances, social media presence, etc.)

recontextualization – the process by which the audience takes media content out of its original context and reimagines it in a new one

archontic literature – texts that behave like an open archive, meaning they actively refer to, build upon, and expand an existing textual world

archive (in archontic literature) – the foundational, ever-expanding body of cultural texts, mythologies, and source material that creators draw upon to build new stories

ACADEMIC INSPIRATION:

Real enough: Power and politics in real person fiction by Kelsey Cummings, published in 2025

When the RP gets in the way of the F: Star Image and intertextuality in real person(a) fiction by Milena Popova, published in 2017

Real body, fake person: Recontextualizing celebrity bodies in fandom and film by Melanie Piper, published in 2015

Where is the line between real person and character... and who draws it? This is a question fan scholars have been attempting to answer for years. What they largely agree on is that the “real person” in RPF is not actually a real person. The fan doesn’t know the real person behind the character they’ve created in their fanwork, so what they’re using instead of the real person’s identity is part of their “star image.”

Richard Dyer’s star theory proposes that celebrities (or “stars”) are constructed images meant to appeal to and be consumed by audiences. The star image is a mixture of publicly available materials – such as talk show appearances, official performances, and social media presence. In 2013, Hilde Van Den Bulck and Nathalie Claessens built on that idea by adding more layers to the star image tapestry. They distinguished between the celebrity’s public persona, their “official” private persona (which could include gossip, incidental fan encounters, etc.), and the “real” person behind all of those. The star image theory is so useful when talking about RPF because it provides a very clear bridge between textual construction (creating the fictional character) and the real person behind the process.

what’s the canon?

The concept of canon and fanon is well known to anyone who’s ever interacted with any form of fanwork. When it comes to fanfiction based on TV shows, films, books, or plays, it’s easy to distinguish between the two: canon is what’s included in the original text, and fanon is what the fans add to it. It gets a little more complicated with RPF because, in the absence of obvious canonical material, the boundary between fanon and canon often ends up quite blurred.

Instead of a single unified canon, the RPF canon is constructed from publicly available information about the subject – but not everyone in one fandom will agree on what pieces of information they accept as canon (although some widely agreed upon pillars might emerge).

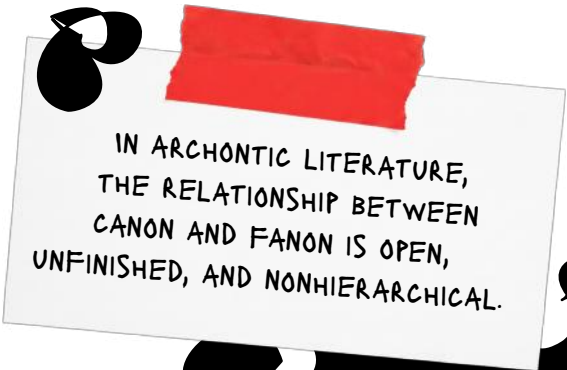
recontextualization and archontic literature

Recontextualization is a method of fanfiction writing, described by Henry Jenkins, and basically the cornerstone of participatory fandom. It’s the process by which the audience takes media content out of its original context and reimagines it in a new one. So, fanfiction, fan edits, fanart, everything we create as fandoms. We change the context and create new meaning, usually because we’re attempting to fill in the blanks left in the original canon, but often for different reasons as well.

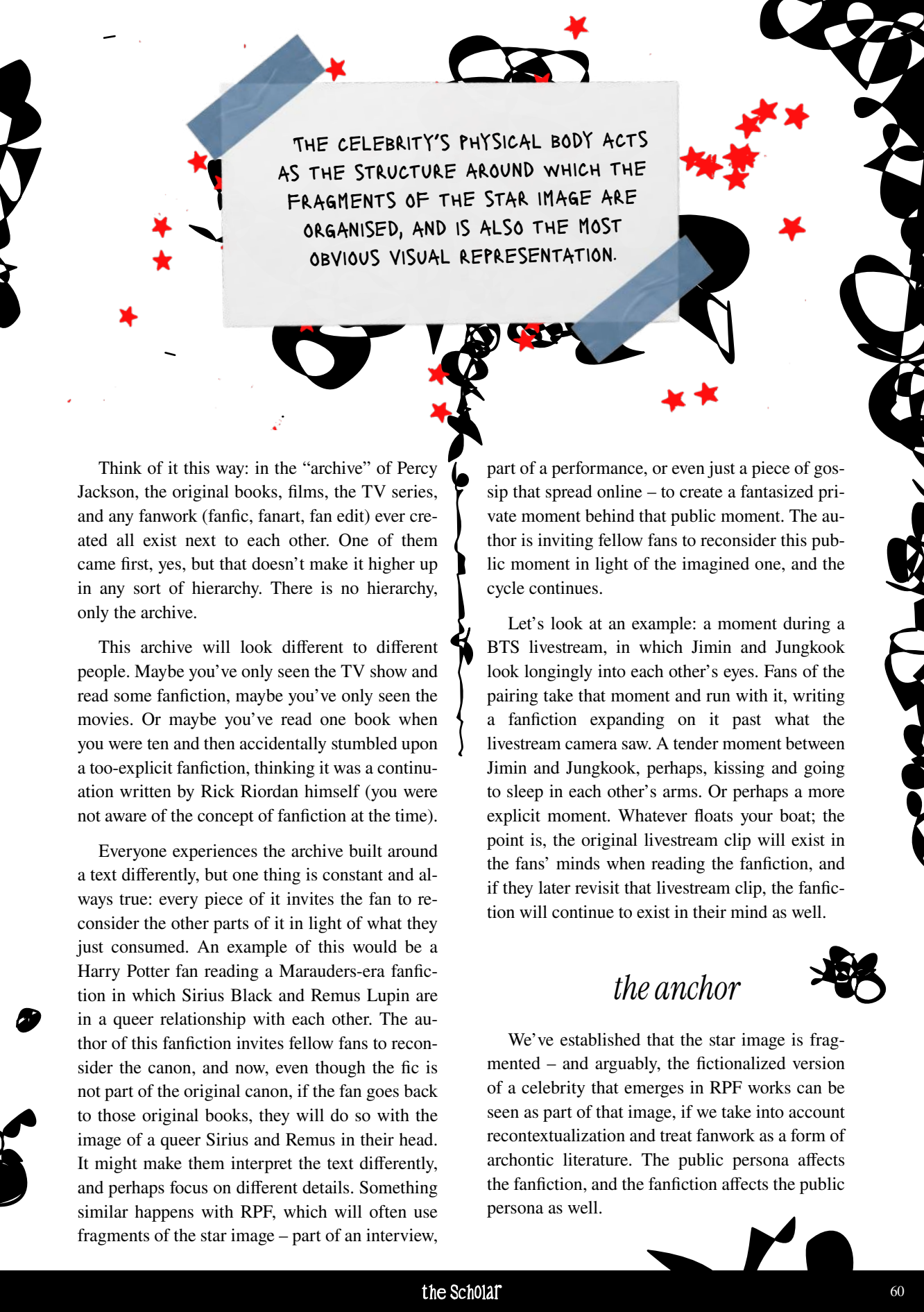
To quote Henry Jenkins himself, “Media creates value and meaning as it travels across the culture.” If we treat a celebrity, or rather their star image, as a piece of media, then this quote slots into this discussion very nicely. The RPF subject’s star image travels across the culture and gains new meaning and values on those travels.

The recontextualization approach is in line with Abigail Derecho’s classification of fanfiction as a form of archontic literature, which is built on the archontic principle – the inherent drive within an archive, or any collection of knowledge, to constantly expand, reorganize, and produce more content within said archive.

When fans recontextualize existing canon and add their own fanon elements, they’re effectively building an archive of related and interconnected texts.



IN ARCHONTIC LITERATURE,
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
CANON AND FANON IS OPEN,
UNFINISHED, AND NONHIERARCHICAL.



THE CELEBRITY'S PHYSICAL BODY ACTS
AS THE STRUCTURE AROUND WHICH THE
FRAGMENTS OF THE STAR IMAGE ARE
ORGANISED, AND IS ALSO THE MOST
OBVIOUS VISUAL REPRESENTATION.

Think of it this way: in the “archive” of Percy Jackson, the original books, films, the TV series, and any fanwork (fanfic, fanart, fan edit) ever created all exist next to each other. One of them came first, yes, but that doesn’t make it higher up in any sort of hierarchy. There is no hierarchy, only the archive.

This archive will look different to different people. Maybe you’ve only seen the TV show and read some fanfiction, maybe you’ve only seen the movies. Or maybe you’ve read one book when you were ten and then accidentally stumbled upon a too-explicit fanfiction, thinking it was a continuation written by Rick Riordan himself (you were not aware of the concept of fanfiction at the time).

Everyone experiences the archive built around a text differently, but one thing is constant and always true: every piece of it invites the fan to reconsider the other parts of it in light of what they just consumed. An example of this would be a Harry Potter fan reading a Marauders-era fanfiction in which Sirius Black and Remus Lupin are in a queer relationship with each other. The author of this fanfiction invites fellow fans to reconsider the canon, and now, even though the fic is not part of the original canon, if the fan goes back to those original books, they will do so with the image of a queer Sirius and Remus in their head. It might make them interpret the text differently, and perhaps focus on different details. Something similar happens with RPF, which will often use fragments of the star image – part of an interview,

part of a performance, or even just a piece of gossip that spread online – to create a fantasized private moment behind that public moment. The author is inviting fellow fans to reconsider this public moment in light of the imagined one, and the cycle continues.

Let’s look at an example: a moment during a BTS livestream, in which Jimin and Jungkook look longingly into each other’s eyes. Fans of the pairing take that moment and run with it, writing a fanfiction expanding on it past what the livestream camera saw. A tender moment between Jimin and Jungkook, perhaps, kissing and going to sleep in each other’s arms. Or perhaps a more explicit moment. Whatever floats your boat; the point is, the original livestream clip will exist in the fans’ minds when reading the fanfiction, and if they later revisit that livestream clip, the fanfiction will continue to exist in their mind as well.

the anchor

We’ve established that the star image is fragmented – and arguably, the fictionalized version of a celebrity that emerges in RPF works can be seen as part of that image, if we take into account recontextualization and treat fanwork as a form of archontic literature. The public persona affects the fanfiction, and the fanfiction affects the public persona as well.

Now, these fragments of the star image all clash (or are perhaps held together by, if one wants to look at it in a slightly different metaphor) in one place – the celebrity’s physical body. The body acts as the structure around which the fragments of the star image are organised, and is also the most obvious visual representation. In simple words, when you’re reading a fanfic about Max Verstappen, you’re most probably imagining the actual Max Verstappen. At the same time, that physical body exists as a real person in the world, beyond its mediated form, beyond the star image.

Let’s go back to the star image visualised as a physical tapestry. In this sense, the physical body of the person behind the fictional character in RPF is the physical tapestry. Their body is holding all of the pieces together: the public persona, the official private persona, the person they truly are behind closed doors, and all of the fictional characters based upon all of those fragments.

Even though writing RPF and creating fictional characters based on real people can be seen as a predominantly textual process, it is still tied to the real person, implicating them in a major way.

The intrinsic fannish desire to get more of and more from the canonical text, which in this instance is the celebrity’s star image, combined with the human desire for authenticity, will always result in an underlying need to seek the “private” person behind the celebrity text.

the line

Although this article isn’t meant to discuss the ethics and morality of reading or writing RPF fanfiction, they should be mentioned and positioned as the main reason why a line between the real and the fictional needs to be drawn.

The trouble with RPF, as we’ve discussed above, is that what’s canon and what’s fanon will often get quite blurry. Different people will take different parts of the celebrity’s star image and treat them as their canon, effectively rejecting whatever doesn’t cleanly slot into their version of

the celebrity. This is not inherently bad or immoral; it’s just part of the textual process of creating fictional characters based on real people. Which is also a widespread thing outside of fandom – see big Hollywood biopics, for example.

So, how do we know where to draw the line? The truth is, dear reader, that we don’t have an answer for you. Perhaps simply knowing that the line is supposed to be there, somewhere, is enough.

We’ve established that it can’t be cleanly drawn in any widely agreed upon place. And maybe we don’t need to strike a hard line through the entirety of RPF. Maybe we should just carry the line with us, and apply it as and where needed in our own corners of fandom, always remembering why the line should be there in the first place: real people’s boundaries, and making sure they’re not crossed because of a fanfic you read once at 2am.

Maybe that fic in which Harry Styles comes out as queer changed your life and made you more comfortable in your own queerness. That’s totally fine and valid. We’ve all been there. The thing is though, Harry Styles actually had very little to do with that. He doesn’t need to receive a bound copy of that fic from you at a random meet and greet.

You know who does? The author of that fic. At the end of the day, it’s them who created that version of Harry Styles anyway.



hear us out

*A collection of hear me outs, courtesy of our readers
and the FANMADE team. Some of these are... questionable.
But that's the point, right?*



quiz results

mostly A ILYA ROZANOV

Direct, sarcastic, protective

Ilya is extremely guarded but fiercely protective of the people he loves. He uses sarcasm as a sword on the ice and a shield off of it. He is charming, to the point of being just a bit of a hoe – but that doesn't stop him from being a lover boy at heart.

mostly B DICK GRAYSON

Witty, charming, impulsive

Dick is *eldest daughter syndrome* personified. He is caring to the point of pushing down his own emotions to help the people around him. He is also impulsive and can be quick to anger, but that's only because he loves so deeply.

mostly C ZUKO

Honourable, determined, awkward

Zuko values honor above all else. He strives to do the right thing, even when he isn't quite sure what it is. He is determined when given a task but lovably awkward in social interactions, which somehow makes him even more attractive.

mostly D VI

Badass, responsible, reckless

Vi is, in a word, badass. She is resilient, sometimes to the point of recklessness, but she takes her responsibility as the older sister and example to Powder, Mylo, and Claggor very seriously. Her role as the eldest of her rag tag family combined with the dangerous nature of the Lanes where she grew up turned Vi into a muscle mommy who often lets her fists do the talking.

mostly E LEON S. KENNEDY

Compassionate, good, closed off

He is compassionate, almost to a fault, always willing to understand and help others, even if it could cost him. He doesn't have a hidden agenda behind his actions, he just sees the good in people when others don't.

CROSSWORD P. 24-25

1. Robin 2. Bludhaven 3. Superman 4. Teen Titans 5. Romani 6. Wally 7. Dickie 8. Trapeze 9. Wonder

CROSSWORD P. 56-57

1. Smut 2. Richard 3. Onceler 4. Moth 5. Hear me out 6. Batarangs 7. Lime 8. RPF 9. Read 10. Whelmed



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