

How *Hyouka* and Its Characters Turn the Mundane Into the Extraordinary

By [Deanna Nguyen](#) October 14, 2021

If anyone has ever told you that you're overanalyzing things, they haven't met the characters of *Hyouka*—and I say this in the most endearing way possible.

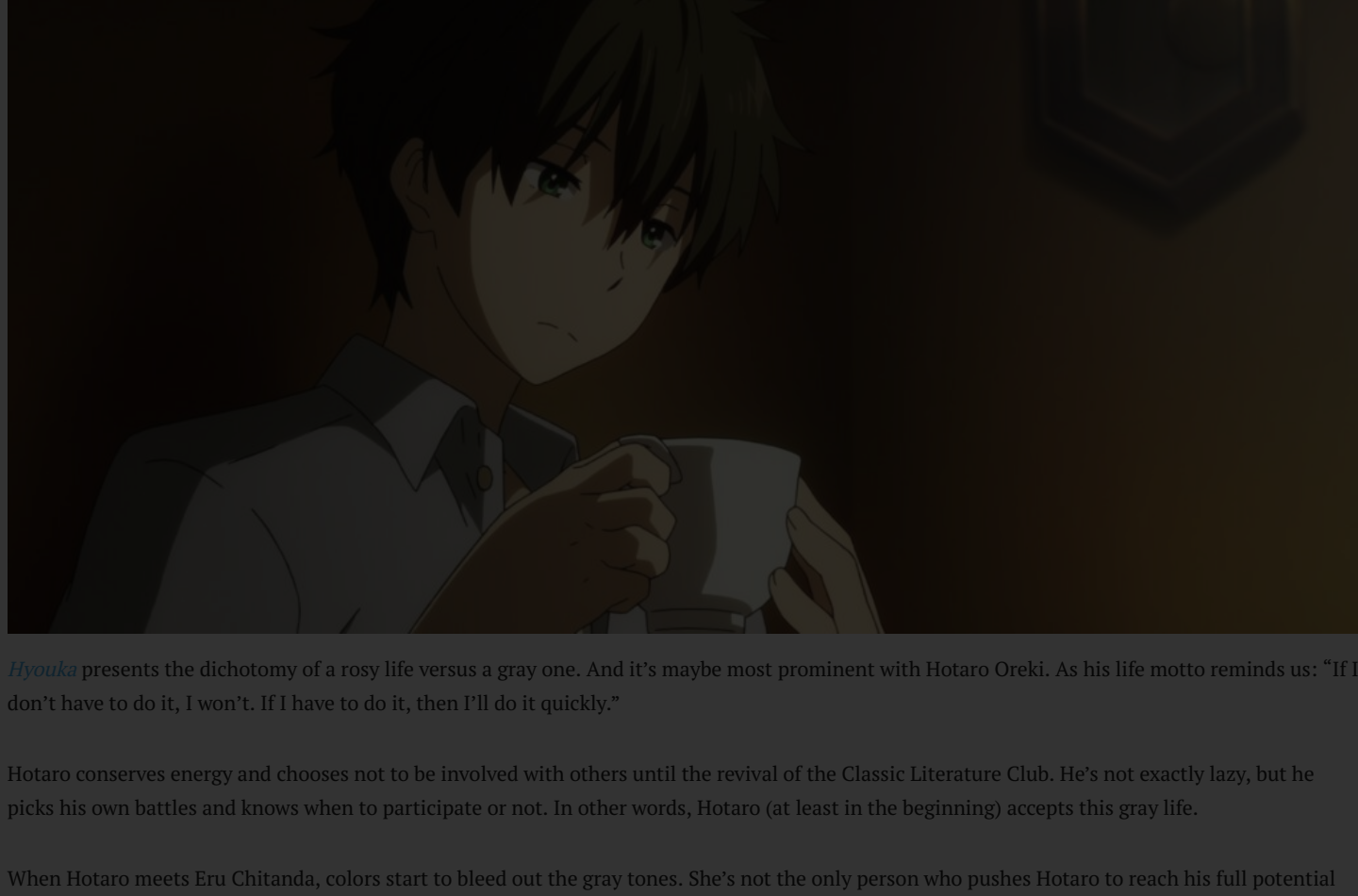
Hyouka is a special show, not just personally, but also visually and story-wise. It centers around the phrase "life is what you make it" and asks, what does leading a normal life really mean? The show doesn't directly answer, but it does play around with the idea that leading any life, no matter how dull or exciting, is better when you're connected to friends and family.

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While we're all aware and in awe of Kyoto Animation's handwork with *Hyouka*, its cast shines through as the perfect complement. The characters don't fit into a "mold" or a "stereotype," which means each of them feels like one of us. Yes, they may have special talents and a penchant for detective work, but they work in tandem with each other, rather than individually. They're connected.

Solving mysteries every day might seem boring to some, but the characters' involvement with each other (working together to form deductions) and the subjects of those mysteries (observing people's actions, interactions, speech patterns, etc.) are the reasons why the appearance of mundane life can be depicted as extraordinary.

Hotaro Oreki, the energy saver who's also a genius



Hyouka presents the dichotomy of a rosy life versus a gray one. And it's maybe most prominent with Hotaro Oreki. As his life motto reminds us: "If I don't have to do it, I won't. If I have to do it, then I'll do it quickly."

Hotaro conserves energy and chooses not to be involved with others until the revival of the Classic Literature Club. He's not exactly lazy, but he picks his own battles and knows when to participate or not. In other words, Hotaro (at least in the beginning) accepts this gray life.

When Hotaro meets Eru Chitanda, colors start to bleed out the gray tones. She's not the only person who pushes Hotaro to reach his full potential after noticing his hidden talents, but she's the *pushiest*. For that reason, Hotaro and Eru are the perfect match: one prefers to stay in the shadows, while the other is constantly in the light. Eru gradually brings Hotaru into the light by presenting mysteries for him to solve, entangling his life with not just hers, but everyone they meet.

Throughout the series, we see Hotaru change from someone who doesn't like to get involved to someone who just *has* to participate, if only because he wants to satisfy Eru's curiosity. This change also hints at a budding romance, though not as overt, and with romance comes a rosy life.

Eru Chitanda, with "I'm curious" as her famous tagline



While Eru pushes Hotaro to exercise his genius brain, her curiosity pushes her to learn more about people and the world around her, even if the events and mysteries are minuscule. She may come from a rich and reputable family, but that doesn't mean her social class is what separates her from the club members. She's the force behind the Classic Lit Club, taking words to heart, as any bibliophile would.

Every time the club members dive into a mystery, Eru hangs onto every deduction, anecdote and conclusion word for word. She's every bit of a detailed and logical person as she is one who doesn't understand the concept of personal space and is constantly distracted. Her tenacity for solving mysteries is what forces Hotaro to move away from his gray life and into the rosier one.

One of the most iconic scenes from *Hyouka* is when Eru first tells Hotaro that she's curious, and the scene figuratively shows how he's getting tangled up in her antics by making Eru's long hair grow like tree vines that twine around Hotaro—no late to back out, as he's already caught in her trap. It's a stunning example of how Hotaro's life will no longer be the same as long as he's with Eru.

Satoshi Fukube, otherwise known as everyone's favorite humanoid database



As Hotaro's friend, Satoshi Fukube is already well-aware of Hotaro's insistence on conserving energy and leading a gray life. In contrast to Hotaro's critical thinking abilities, Satoshi is better known for his memory retention.

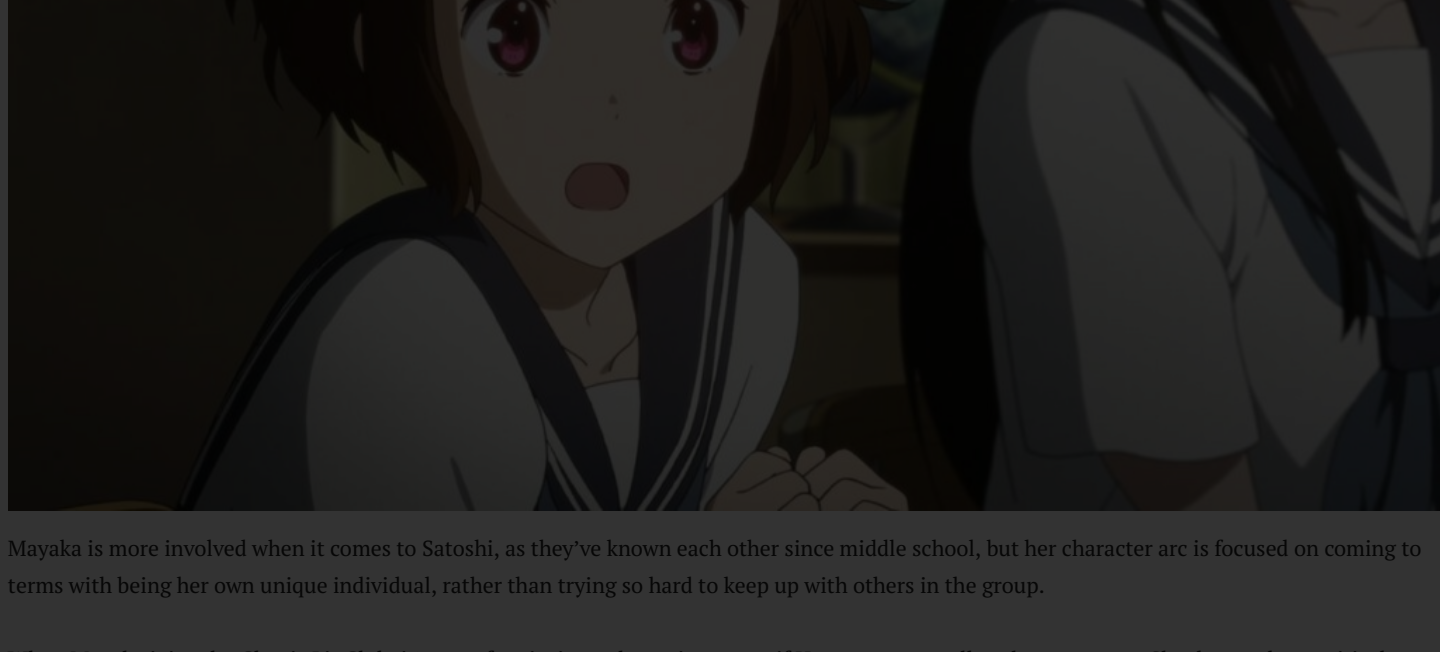
He's the "database" of the Classic Lit Club, providing information to help paint a better picture of the mystery they're trying to solve. It's clear from early on that Satoshi is also jealous of Hotaro, but that doesn't deter him from being Hotaro's friend.

Satoshi seems to have a permanent smile on his face, but he's the more relatable character compared to Hotaro and Eru. He wears a mask in a group setting, and you can only decipher his true thoughts when he lets his guard down. He thrives on juxtaposition, like being obsessed with not being too obsessed, as well as being self-deprecating but cracking jokes for other people.

Satoshi might not be the most remarkable, but he's considered Hotaro's foil and is the one who calls out the latter's hypocrisy in how he should live his life.

Satoshi is a character that's overshadowed by Hotaro, but tries to stay in the light with everyone else. His relationship with Mayaka Ibara is a prime example of how he's constantly fighting himself and puts his rosy life in jeopardy because of it.

Mayaka Ibara, the creative right-brainer of the group



Mayaka is more involved when it comes to Satoshi, as they've known each other since middle school, but her character arc is focused on coming to terms with being her own unique individual, rather than trying so hard to keep up with others in the group.

When Mayaka joins the Classic Lit Club, it's out of curiosity and wanting to see if Hotaro can actually solve a mystery. She doesn't have critical thinking skills like Hotaro, nor photographic memory like Satoshi, and she isn't at the top of her class like Eru. This makes her appear as the black sheep of the group, but instead of feeling left out or intimidated by the others, she offers her own special talent: drawing.

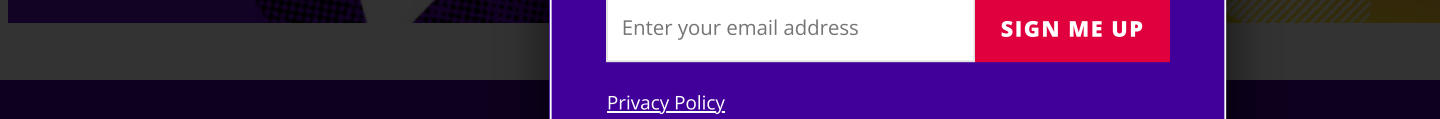
Mayaka is also part of the Manga Research Club and is a talented manga artist, but has strained relationships with its club members. When comparing the two clubs, it's clear that the Classic Lit Club lets her shine as an individual, whereas the Manga Research Club is always filled with tension and competition.

This is why Mayaka is just as vital to the Classic Lit Club in solving mysteries as anyone else: she offers her own ideas up to the table rather than piggybacking off of or comparing herself to others.

In regards to her relationship with Satoshi, she's able to read the room and gives him space to sort out his feelings—until Hotaro shakes some sense into Satoshi. Mayaka and Satoshi's relationship mirrors Hotaro and Eru's relationship in that the boys are reluctant in being honest with their feelings from fear of true change in their lives.

Hyouka isn't for everyone, but it's a really pretty show that gives you a telescope into everyday mysteries, events and people's lives. Aside from its immersive and breathtaking visuals, the show cares a lot about its main characters and how they're connected to each other.

We're given two options when it comes to our outlook on life: rosy or gray. But, just like the complexities that we see in the characters, life can't be one or the other, but rather both, coming and going like waves.



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