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Eng 212

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Anime, Comics, GO!

Otaku, Tsundere, Shounen, etc. Ok now those words probably do not ring bells because you're not an anime/comic fanatic; if you are an anime fanatic then you'll know what those words mean. At times it's hard to relate with someone on a culture you love. I feel this way about anime all the time because growing up I had nobody to watch it with. All the kids my age were only interested in wrestling or video games. Thus no one ever watched anime with me or it was never the main topic at the lunch table. As an adult, I perceived that it is risky to even tell someone I'm passionate about anime because some people ridicule people like me, who watches anime. The culture of anime is something anyone could love if they gave it a chance.

First I should explain to you guys how much anime means to me before I begin describing my experiences at this amazing anime store. For as long as I could remember anime and comic books have always made me feel like the most joyful and satisfied kid in the world. Normally cartoons had me intrigued but as I got older it dawned on me that cartoons have no real and engaging plot. Which caused me to move onto anime because it is just like real life television series, only with animation. That's why when people call it childish or boring it get frustrating because it is not. One show I totally grew up with was "Naruto." Back in the 6th grade on a Sunday night I binge watched the first few episodes. After a while it was morning time and the birds were chirping. It was time for school but I did not want to stop watching, pretended to be terribly sick so I could stay home and watch Naruto. My parents fell for it and let

me stay home. That was the beginning for my love for anime. I relate to Naruto like no one else because the protagonist teaches me to never give up.

When I entered this store in Times Square, this was the place where anime lovers could come together and discuss all the things they love and hate, anime related. Saturday, September 29, around 4pm, I was walking slowly, heading towards the Chick-fil-a on 6th Avenue. I saw a store with a bunch of anime wallpapers all over the windows. In my fantasy, it was anime heaven. Walking in not knowing what to expect I saw nothing that was anime related. The store had an odor of fresh cardboard. Coming in this place I thought it was going to be colorful like the main characters in all the anime shows I watched. The longer I stayed in this place I realized there was more to it than dull workers in dull clothes, cleaning dirty bookshelves. I saw a spiral entrance leading down to a lower level. When I started to head down the stairs I saw posters of all the anime I had ever watched throughout my entire life. There was joy in my heart because I knew what was down stairs. In the lower level, there were so many people spread all over with mangas and comics in their hands. One person was reading "One Piece" of Volume 12. Mangas series(mangas are basically Japanese comic books, you read from right to left) on the shelves in chronological order and, they were so shiny. It was as if I entered an anime collectors layer. There were people, woman, and men, all spread out all over the place reading and engaging in important conversations. One conversation I purposefully eavesdropped on was a debate about One Punch Man VS Goku. Two overpowering characters from different animes. There was a constant background noise, which was nothing but pages flipping and indistinct chattering. There was a lot of middle age men around the anime section and they were quietly reading the Naruto

Shippuden manga, of Volume 8. From what I gathered through their aura it seemed like they did not want to be disturbed.

One thing that disturbed me was how quiet it was on the first day. I did not like how lonely it felt in there. In my head, anything that involved anime should be loud and action-packed, because to me that just how it was. I thought to myself “maybe today is just a gloomy day, and if I come back tomorrow the entire atmosphere would be different” The longer that I stayed at this place the more dead it felt. I’m not sure if it felt gloomy at this field site because of the weather or it's simply just the way that place is. It sort of felt like a library, and the people who monitored the store were the librarians. I assumed that a place with anime and manga would be lively, with debates about their favorite characters and story arcs. It was nothing that I imagined it would be on that Saturday evening. I think maybe on a different day it’ll be a different vibe. The next 2 days and I was absolutely right. The aura felt so welcoming, entering on that second visit. All the people and customers were smiling and every few people that walked passed said something to me, which resulted in small talk. Even the employee seemed much more lively. This was great because it’s the way it should have been, for a place that surrounds itself with anime, comics, mangas, etc.

Observing the site was a great for me because while describing my experience I feel less ashamed to speak about my love for anime. I do not care if anyone thinks that it is silly for an adult to watch anime or read comics. Life is too short to be worried about what other people think of you. People will always judge no matter if you doing something great or bad. Writing about my passion and something important made me feel much more content.

