

Manga Review - Kimi to Pico-Pico

きみとピコピコ

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COMICS

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KIMI TO PICOPICO

At first glance, *Kimi to Pico-Pico* is a story about a video game otaku suddenly finding himself in the same gaming club as a gyaru brought up on classical NES titles. Looking at it from a broader perspective, it's a story that's less about the video games themselves and more about the gamers. Old school gamers, competitive gamers, even gamers modding their peripherals or trying to make their own short works in the Game Maker. Of course, it's also a rom-com filled with references to Japanese computer games.

At its core, *Kimi to Pico-Pico* is a comedy about video games first, even if Japanese peculiarities about effective lack of fair use force them to use very blatant ersatzes for many game titles. We get jokes about searching for easter eggs, trying to circumvent modesty shadows to peek under skirts of 3D models and people pointing out the inherent hilarity of the existence of a co-op video game wholly based around parodying stereotypical Japanese politeness. The games referenced are varied, though the series has clear bias towards both the older titles and the works seen as iconic or at least peculiar enough to warrant their mention. Overall, I'm pretty sure that the wide variety of game related topics and jokes will reach anybody with interest in them, even if some references will likely send you for a wiki crawl.

As for the second pillar of comedy in this series, our gamers, the series doesn't disappoint either. Characters are both vivid enough to perform their comedic roles and down to earth enough to be relatable. Without spoiling the later developments, the main cast consists of four characters: our main duo of Taichi Oota, introverted gamer otaku and Ageha Onisaki, gyaru girl who got into gaming playing with her father on NES, and the secondary couple of their two seniors at club. The most important thing to know about them is that they have great chemistry, especially the main couple. It's refreshing to see romantic leads of the series genuinely enjoy each other's presence this much, especially since it makes their slow progress towards becoming a couple much more believable.

It's worth pointing out that this comedy makes full use of both quid pro quo misunderstandings and dramatic exaggerations showing us games from the perspective of the already immersed characters. This gives this series decent levels of fanservice and innuendos, while usually keeping it from overtaking the plot. Though I personally felt like one fanservice arc in the middle was a bit too long and a bit too on the nose with suggestive, exaggerated expressions. I particularly enjoy the fact that *Kimi to Pico-Pico* occasionally ventures out with its jokes outside the realm of gaming, providing a pleasant and refreshing change of pace.

If I were to point out the series' main weak point, I'd say it's the feeling that the ending felt a little compressed, like the series needed two more chapters to properly finish the denouncement. Still, I consider it as distinctly above average with how the series handles it, especially compared to the unfortunate tendency of rom-com manga series to end right at their emotional zenith. While this vague description doesn't do the series justice, it's the most detailed one I can give without revealing the key details of the plot.

Overall, I believe that *Kimi to Pico-Pico* is a masterpiece of a nerd culture rom-com manga. I can honestly rate it 10/10 and recommend it to others.

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