

Experiences in the Alterhuman Community (and Beyond) as a Fictive

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Content Warnings:

- Alterhumisia mentions (specifically toward fictionfolk).
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It's a weird experience being a fictional character, especially dealing with fandom, the fact that your source *is* fictional, and interactions with people based on that—including some of the dehumanisation that's so common toward fictionfolk. I'm gonna go into that here because I need somewhere to collect my thoughts, so this might get long. I'll be talking about my experiences as a fictive, but this could very well apply to anyone who identifies as a fictional being—fictionkin, fictionlinkers, etc.

So, I see the version of me on the screen as an AU version of me, in short. I mean, *I'm* me, and I don't think I even looked exactly 1:1 with my canon self—so naturally, even though events line up pretty closely, I see my source as... Almost like a fanfic of my life? Like sure, that's decidedly me, and decidedly a lot of the things that happened to me and my friends, but also not *me*. I'm not that guy on the screen, he's what represents *me*.

Even though I fully believe I got here by dying in a literal past life, my source media here is absolutely fictional to me and I just... Don't look at it in really any other way. Which I guess makes sense if you put it into my perspective—what else *would* it be? It really is like reading a fanfic based on your life though, or reading an article about yourself in the news. A bit of a shock, a bit of "why did they include THAT?" sprinkled in here and there, a bit awkward sometimes, and it does tend to resurface bad feelings. But overall, it's not *that* personal to me. I'm largely fine with it existing.

On the other hand, what *is* shocking is that people see *me* as fictional. I'm a *fictional* introject, from a *fictional* source, from the perspectives of a lot of people here. But I look at my source and I go well... Yeah, that's fiction of course, but *my* life is an actual thing that happened to me. Realistically I know that not everyone has spiritual beliefs and not everyone even accepts fictional identities as something "real", but *man* is it weird to just... Have it be spun in such a way?

I'm used to being in the media, I'm used to having cameras on me and being in the public eye. I'm used to articles and stories and posts on the internet. I'm used to fans even! But this isn't your regular, run-of-the-mill experience of people wanting to know you because you're a hero. These are people who see your life and experiences as a fun story they saw in a book or on TV, coming up to you with the idea that you're their favourite character, and not... A whole entire person. It's so damn weird.

There's still that level of disrespect that comes from people who are a little parasocial with you, but it almost hits *deeper* here because a lot of the time, you know they're not seeing a hero or the things you've literally done in your memories. They're seeing that guy on the screen they think is cool, and while he represents you, he's not *you*. And they're treating you like a celebrity because of that weird fanfic version of you on the TV or in that book.

There's usually little acknowledgement of your life or experiences as "real". When you're presenting as your fictional identity around others, you tend to get put into one of a few camps:

- Cool Character from Media who I love and adore and want to talk to (and will probably get fanperson excited about it). I will probably get disproportionately upset if Character tells me to back off a bit because I don't want my blorbo to be mad at me.
- Character from Media I'm in love with and will immediately start asking invasive questions to or outright flirting with. Could get real gross real quick.
- Problematic Character or Guy From Problematic Media that I instantly dislike because that's so Problematic how dare you show your face. I'm reporting you for being Character, you should change your identity if you want to exist so bad.
- Character from Media who is disabled/queer/mentally ill/has any soft personality trait ever and I will now be treating you like a sweet little babyboy cinnamon roll who could not hurt a fly.
- Person who identifies as Character? How interesting! I'm going to really pry and question everything from your actions in-source (to get unique perspectives from Character) and question literally everything else. Because this is Science and I'll get mad if you don't tell me everything, you need to tell me everything or you're rude.

Of course there's nuance and there's absolutely times where you'll be treated as a normal person, but the above are... So damn common. I've been here for a few months and I've already had some weird stuff happen to me simply because I'm Kirishima and people feel entitled to give me cutesy nicknames or whatever. Even without knowing me or my system at all beforehand. It's just.. So different from anything I've experienced before? Being treated like a celebrity is dehumanising enough, but being treated like a character.ai bot or just generally a form of free entertainment and not a *person* is so perplexing to me.

There's also that if you're from a popular source, you see stuff about yourself everywhere. Posters, plushies, advertisements, posts on social media--all of it. Some of that I'm used to already, but it's kind of weird when you're mentally aware that this is all for that twisted-mirror version of yourself and not *you*. And if you get a little uncomfortable at some fanart showing up out of the blue, or someone making a source related joke... You're kind of just expected to brush

it off. Which yeah, I get it! It's about the source, not *me*, but it's still just... A weird feeling. A feeling of not being *allowed* to be upset because it's about the source and not literal *you*.

I think there needs to be a line, maybe. Not saying that fictives should be putting a stop to any media or fandom ever, just.. That maybe respect toward us for being uncomfortable with fan content due to being a fictive or fictionkin should be more normalised. It should be more okay to say "hey, I'm Character, please don't joke like that" to a friend, or "don't send me fanart of this thing, I'm Character and that's weird"--which it normally is! But there does tend to be a sort of layer of "Oh, it's because you're Character. You know that's not *you*, right? You shouldn't be upset, you need to source separate more."--when if most other people were to set a boundary like that, it would usually be respected. Source separation can be great, but if someone hasn't separated or doesn't want to, why is it okay to still send them material they're uncomfortable with--or at least, why do people tend to argue that the fictive should "just separate from source" instead? It... Just boils down to alterhumisia toward fictionfolk, honestly. It sucks.

There's a lot of problems with basic respect toward fictionfolk of all kinds--hell, even *in* the alterhuman community where it's meant to be safe. I don't know if this rant is entirely coherent or not, I don't know if there's anything noteworthy to take from it--but if you do take something from it, let it be that fictionfolk want to be treated like people. Source separated, not source separated, canon divergent or compliant, hearted, linker, 'kin or 'tive--we're *people*. Don't let our identities change the way you instinctually treat us. Let us be openly *us*, and treat us as you would anyone else.