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## **That Interview Series on Ash's Patreon #7: Louis Lloyd-Judson of Apricot Cookie(s)**

So one day, I was looking for webcomics to read on Tapas. And I was looking for something that wasn't BL, or gag-a-day, or too heavy in its narrative. Cause I found those genres of webcomics are a dime a dozen on that platform, but I didn't see a balance of those elements that fit my particular taste. But oh I was delightfully surprised when I found...

*[[Apricot Cookie\(s\), Tapas.io](#) banner, illustrated by Louis Lloyd-Judson]*

It was this weird and surreal western take on the magical girl genre. It is, yes, a parody, but it's delivery and execution are a step above most webcomics that are based on parody of an existing genre. I knew I had to interview the mind behind this wonderful Amerimanga(?)

This is that interview

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### **Wednesday Ash (ASH)**

Hey! Can you introduce yourself, what is it that you do and what is your main comic that you are writing and drawing?

### **Louis Lloyd-Judson (LOUIS)**

Hello! Firstly thank you for interviewing me, hopefully I won't let it go to my head haha!

My name's Louis and I'm full-time web developer, I contribute code to various web sites used around the world. In short, I get paid to sit at a computer all day! I presently live just outside of London with my wife, five year old daughter and fluffy cat.

When I'm not working, commuting, cooking or cleaning up after aforementioned daughter I create a weekly web comic titled "Apricot Cookie(s)!". I've always struggled to accurately describe the comic. It's a magical girl story at it's heart, but essentially it's my comedic take on everything I love and also hate about Japanese comics and anime.

*[sample page from Apricot Cookie(s), illustrated by Louis Lloyd-Judson]*

### **ASH**

So what struck me about "Apricot Cookie(s)" is how on point the writing is, which isn't necessarily a given the world of webcomics. Where do you get that sense of humor and do you have a particular method to your joke writing. I'm still very impressed by the density of the joke to panel ratio while still maintaining forward momentum to the plot. Is it something you are conscious of?

### **LOUIS**

I've always considered writing to be my weakest skill, so I really appreciate you saying that! I have to admit that I'll often rewrite dialogue simply so it'll fit into a bubble better!

People have previously asked how I write jokes and I honestly don't know the answer, I just write what I find amusing myself. The UK has a pretty distinct humour that finds sensibility in the absurd, so no doubt I will have been influenced by the people and media I've grown up with.

For a long-form comic Apricot Cookies is actually very condensed, it's not uncommon for jokes to be cut due to each chapter having a fixed number of pages. I have no shortage in thinking up terrible jokes it seems! Perhaps that's the key to keeping a good pace? I don't really know, haha!

## **ASH**

In regards about rewriting to fit bubbles, I do that too constantly with [Cloverlines](#)! No shame in that!

## **LOUIS**

Oh that's good to know! There's nothing more satisfying than having the curvature of the text match that of the bubble!

## **ASH**

I would consider Apricot Cookie(s) to be like a hybrid long-form gag-a-day almost. There's a joke a page, but also an overarching plot. One of your pages directly comments on Apricot's format as an "Amerimanga", is that a term you came up with, or have you seen it used in outside context?

To that end, why make an Amerimanga in the first place? Is there like a middle market for something like that, or was it purely a creative decision?

## **LOUIS**

That's a nice sounding description! Due to my comic updating only once a week it demands a lot of patience from readers, so I try my best to at least have something of interest on each page! Also, you must be thinking of the comic created by the character Starlet within my comic. Apart from sharing the same name her comic is the reverse of mine, hehe are you confused enough yet?!

I don't know where the term "Amerimanga" first originated from, but it was used by outlets to describe western comics that had a Japanese influence (the wonderful Scott Pilgrim series for example). The term is generally disliked by the community, so naturally I put it into my comic.

In my case, the format and art style I ended up using was created specifically around the character and scenario. The format I was originally aiming for was that of "a bad scanlation". In fact, one of the main reasons I chose to run with Apricot Cookies was due to my ageing computer struggling less with the smaller manga page size. Wow, that's a boring answer!

## **ASH**

Lol! Wow! Why do you think that Amerimanga style never really took off? Scott Pilgrim certainly did, or do you feel Scott Pilgrim succeeded despite its format...or maybe Bryan Lee O'Malley's

"Scott Pilgrim" was the ONLY story that could have been told in such a way?

Why do you think that term gets a bad rap? Surely aesthetic purity has no bearing on quality of work?...does it?

## **LOUIS**

I wouldn't say it didn't take off exactly, it's still there more than ever. Maybe the division is a bit more blurred these days? Babs Tarr's take on Batgirl was very well received from what I can tell. I only have a very limited knowledge of the American comics industry though, so I'm probably not the best person to ask!

I think "Amerimanga" was disliked because it somehow diminished the legitimacy of the work. This is what I've picked up from comments on the Internet anyway, and the Internet can be a fickle place! I think "OEL manga" or "Original English Language manga" is the term that the cool kids use these days!

[Apricot Cookie(s) pin-up art, by Louis Lloyd Judson]

## **ASH**

That's a good point actually, another example that pops into my mind now that you mention Batgirl, is the Gwenpool stuff from the Marvel side. There's certainly a blending of the styles happening in the secondary Big 2 books!

Another cultural touchstone in your work is the magical girl concept, have you been a fan for long? And what was your entry point into the magical girl genre, as a fan (or at least an observer)?

## **LOUIS**

Oh yes! I always gravitated towards cute and "girly" things when I was little, so it's only natural that the magical girl genre would resonate with me! Secret identities, transformations, animal companions - there's a lot to love! My first exposure to a magical girl show would have been Sailor Moon when it began broadcasting on satellite television.

Unfortunately Sailor Moon was handled poorly here in the UK so it was nowhere near as successful as it was in the states (to this day we've never had anything beyond the second season). The show left a lasting impression on the fans it found though. It was my wife's suggestion that our daughter should be named after Sailor Moon!

## **ASH**

Ah I see, but you've caught up on Sailor Moon since then with the modern internet surely? Is Apricot Cookie(s) your first attempt at using the magical girl style in your comics or were there predecessors?

## **LOUIS**

Of course! Even before the Internet there were ways, there's some NTSC format VHS videotapes of the movies laying around the house somewhere! The Internet thankfully makes

things a lot easier these days. Crunchyroll weren't able to offer Sailor Moon Crystal for streaming in the UK though, so who knows what kind of licensing limbo it's still in!

Apricot Cookie(s) is my first magical girl comic yes. Previously I created a handful of standalone manga-style comics centred around a young tea shop owner named Chipper.

I had planned for a couple of magical girl themed pages for that, but those never came to fruition. Apricot Cookie(s) would eventually cannibalise a lot of my unused comic ideas and Chipper herself became a support character (she's the character with the lovely twin drills, albeit they're not quite as magnificent as Aimi's from Cloverlines!)

**Aimi Hoshikawa (AIMI)**

Ha-ha ha thank you (o^ ^o)

**ASH**

Oh hey Aimi! You have a question for Louis?

**AIMI**

Sure! So uhh like, why is all the character design so pretty? How do you do it? Are you making like new characters we havent seen?!!

*[Apricot Cookie(s) page showcasing character designs from the comic, illustrated by Louis Lloyd-Judson]*

**LOUIS**

Thank you! I can't take full credit for all of the character designs! Early on I asked my wife if she wanted to design some magical girl costumes - which she did with great glee! Half of Apricot's friends are actually based on her doodles, although I had to simplify them to be more manageable (she's a better artist than me!).

I go through many design iterations that I gradually narrow down. Oddly, I think it was the school uniform that took me the longest time to finalise! There's very few main characters who haven't yet been introduced, but there's a lot of magical girl extras that appear in later chapters. Like, a whole lot. It's going to be a massive undertaking haha!

**AIMI**

Wow coool! Okay cya byeee...

**ASH**

Okay bye Aimi!

So I'll pick it up again then.

So with the nature of it being a weekly page update comic, by nature it lives with you. Do you operate on a gigantic buffer of pages in case of emergency, or are you living on the edge one page at a time?

**LOUIS**

Ohoho, I used to have a consistent buffer of comic pages to last me a month! Those were good times! Now it seems to be the norm that I don't have any pages in reserve.

I had a couple going into chapter five, but I seemingly spent the entirety of January feeling ill!

However I tend to be the most productive during Spring (plus that's when all the bank holidays are) so I'm hopeful I can claw back some of my buffer soon! That'll give me more freedom to draw fan art and play video games!

**ASH**

Ha ha I see, how much of Apricot do you think about day to day tho. I'm just starting with Cloverlines, now in week 7 of it's run, and sometimes Cloverlines is all I can think about when I'm away from the project doing other things. Is it the same with you and Apricot, or are you to some extent over it already, and just focus on the work?

**LOUIS**

Haha, welcome to the club! Have you reached the point where you have trouble sleeping because your mind's so busy trying to process everything?! I often wonder what people who don't make comics think about! The story for Apricot Cookie(s) has been planned out since the beginning so there isn't any major plot elements I have to think about any more. I'm constantly refining scenes and thinking about how to make things flow better though, so it always has a large share of my mind. I try my best not to think up new ideas, having an end point is massively helpful in maintaining my motivation.

*[front page of <https://apricotcookies.net/>, designed by Louis Lloyd Judson]*

**ASH**

So what is behind the multi platform approach to Apricot Cookie(s)? I noticed you just recently launched a website, is the goal to funnel all traffic to that website?

**LOUIS**

I have no qualms over having the comic mirrored in different places, it's up to people where they prefer to read.

Both Tapas and Webtoon Discover have wonderful and distinct communities, I'm very happy to be on both! The Apricot Cookie(s) website has been there from the start, but it temporarily became a Tumblr powered site when I couldn't afford the web-hosting (child care is devastatingly expensive!).

It's just recently been rebuilt and relaunched as it's own independent site. I probably should finish it at some point!

**ASH**

Are you considering some crowdfunding options like Kickstarter for a print run, or Patreon for more of a monthly income type deal (or others)?

**LOUIS**

I quite frequently have requests for physical copies to be printed (along with hug pillows?!) and it's certainly something I intend to do sometime in the future. The first chapter has been online for almost three years now and people are still finding spelling mistakes, so I can't help but feel a little apprehensive about committing to paper haha!

Both Kickstarter and Patreon would require additional time from me to maintain and prepare, plus I don't feel I'm able create enough incentives to warrant a Patreon. They're still things I'll continue to look into, but my main focus at the moment is working through the remaining chapters. I never had any massively ambitious plans or visions of grandeur for the comic apart from maybe having a few copies printed one day.

Selfishly I created the comic purely for myself and it's already reached a level of popularity that I wasn't anticipating. I'm constantly surprised and grateful that so many people have liked what I've made!

## **ASH**

Alright! Thank you very much for this interview Louis! Any words you want to share for Apricot Cookie(s) fans that have been reading the comic so far?

## **LOUIS**

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me! I think I just about managed to get through the interview without dropping any spoilers somebody dies.

It's probably best to wrap things up now before people get suspicious of why I've been sat on the toilet for so long. And yes, to any Apricot Cookie(s) fans out there; I love you, you have the patience of a saint and Jammy's the best girl.

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And that was my interview with Louis, the mastermind behind Apricot Cookie(s)!

Check out his comic on [Tapas.io](https://www.tapas.io) and [Line Webtoons Discover](https://www.line.com/webtoons/discover) as well as the [Apricot Cookie\(s\)](https://www.apricotcookie.com) website!

I've been Wednesday Ash,

And have a nice day!

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