

SPRING 2026 | VOL.1 | ISSUE.3

VISIONS

*Nourish.
Grow.
Bloom.*

*Exploring
The Stories
That Shape
Us.*

**Representation
Matters**

EVERYONE DESERVES
A SEAT AT THE TABLE

CONTENTS

SPRING
2026



01. Kanan on the Cover of
VISIONS Magazine

02. Index

03. Editors Note

04. The Apothecary

05. Diaries

06. A Taste of Belonging
07.

08. Everyone Deserves A Seat
11. At The Table

12. A Garden That Devours ft.
15. Kanan

16. Monthly spotlight

17. A Dessert Shop Holding
20. My Past, Present, and
Future Self

21. Closing notes



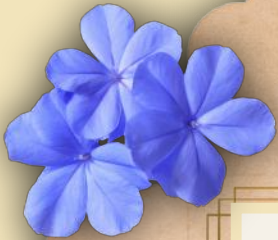
Editors note:

This special Spring issue of VISIONS includes content centered around nutrition, fashion, disability, and mental health awareness. Rather than releasing separate monthly issues, I decided to combine March through May into a single edition.

I truly love this project, but balancing it alongside other commitments and upcoming projects has become increasingly challenging. That said, I deeply appreciate everyone's support and hope you've been enjoying it so far.

I'd also love to feature more cosplayers in future issues, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you're interested in being included!

With love
Solgaze





The Apothecary Diaries



Why you should *watch* it

If you like watching *House*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and pretty much any medical drama, then this is definitely up your alley. The difference is that it is influenced by historical Chinese time periods, from the fashion to the inner court drama. There's even a touch of slight romance if you squint hard enough.

The show also plays with floral motifs, using them like easter eggs throughout the openings, not only to foreshadow events but also to represent the characters. On top of that, the humor is an added bonus that gives the series even more charm.

Rating:

4.9/5 on Crunchyroll

Themes: Mystery, feminism, historical, medicine

Genre: Drama, Shojo

This show draws us into a world of herbal medicine and inner palace drama. The series excels in using food and flower motifs not only to symbolize growth, but more importantly, as tools for survival. Mao Mao stands as a protagonist who fights for what she believes in and, above all, for those she cares about. In doing so, she pushes **against the boundaries of a time when women were not expected, nor allowed, to achieve such independence.** Her story reminds us to remain true to ourselves and not to change for the sake of others, but instead to take pride in our interests, regardless of societal judgment.

Apothecary [uh·paa·thuh·keh·ree]

noun

a person who prepared and sold medicines and drugs.



Jasmine

Known for its **flavorful aroma** and wide range of uses, it is employed in **culinary arts, crafts, and medicinal practices.**

S2, ep.2

Perilla leaves

Commonly used for curative and therapeutic practices, often to treat **mild colds and allergies.**

Episode 3.



Below are some of the plants featured throughout the show and descriptions of what they were used for, as well as what they may be used for today. I've also included the episodes in which they can be found. Many of these plants can also be seen throughout the series' opening theme.

Wood Sorrel (Cat's Paw)

Used to help **treat poisons and insect bites.** Spotted in the opening theme.



Chinese Lantern

Although the plant is **entirely classified as poisonous**, its ripe fruit and young leaves are occasionally used in herbal remedies.

While it may induce miscarriages, it is also employed to treat **kidney and bladder disorders.**

S2, ep.18



Poppy seeds

They were once used to support health aspects related to **sleep, pain, beauty, digestion, and fertility.** Today, they are found in modern **pastries, bread, and oils.**

Episode 2 and 8.



A Taste of Belonging

Aoi Tsubaki in *Kakuriyo: Bed & Breakfast for Spirits* is a perfect representation of finding community from a solitary perspective. Aoi uses her skills to overcome life's hardships while learning how to form meaningful bonds. One of her main challenges is adapting and creating dishes that bring the spirits joy and replenishment. The show emphasizes that food is more than just nutrition, it becomes a form of currency, connection, and communication between characters.



Chibi is the best kitchen assistant and adds so much joy to show.



A Taste of Belonging

Rating:

**4.7/ 5 on
Crunchyroll**

Themes:

**Food, hardship,
feminism,
arranged
marriage**

Genre:

**Comedy,
Drama,
Supernatural**

Why you should **watch** it

If you're a foodie and enjoy dabbling in the kitchen or creating new recipes, then give this show a go. Paired with comfort and a touch of slice-of-life storytelling, the series also weaves meaningful life lessons into various episodes.

Everyone Deserves A Seat At the Table

In honor of **Developmental Disabilities** and **Mental Health Awareness** Months in April and May, I wanted to highlight shows that focus on inclusion and healing. These works showcase how anime continues to create space for inclusivity and representation. The following films and series thoughtfully explore **disability** and **lived experiences**, emphasizing themes of **resilience**, **communication**, **identity**, and **emotional growth**.





Josee, the Tiger and the Fish

A playful rom-com that follows a character who uses a wheelchair as she navigates her journey toward independence.

Themes: Independence, romance, humor, slice of life, Resilience

A Sign of Affection



Falling in love without speaking the same language, this series follows a deaf character as she navigates adulthood and the relationships around her, highlighting patience, communication, and growth.

Themes: Deafness, romance, character development, nonverbal communication



Fruits Basket (2019)



What rhymes with trauma?
Drama! This story draws from
Chinese folklore and features
complex characters and
generational ties, ultimately
showing that healing is not linear.

Themes: **Mental health, humor,
healing, trauma, emotional
growth**

A Silent Voice



This film follows a deaf girl whose story explores
the challenges of communication, bullying, and
being ostracized for being different. It also
highlights her growth as she forms meaningful
friendships along the way

Themes: **Communication, bullying, character
development**



In/Spectre

Follow our protagonist as she uses her abilities to her advantage, working alongside supernatural beings to solve cases while traveling between realms.

Themes: Supernatural, mystery, humor, prosthetics

The Inner Court: A Garden That *Devours*



FROM FOOD TESTER TO CHIEF LADY-IN-WAITING

Kanan debuted in **Episode 5** of *The Apothecary Diaries* and initially serves as an **antagonist**. As part of Lady Lishu's staff, Kanan was assigned the role of **food taster** and participated in the bullying she endured throughout her time in the Inner Court.

The relationship among the staff was quite strained, as they viewed Lady Lishu as **childish** and a **picky eater**, believing her behavior was merely an act. As a result, **resentment** gradually built among the staff, who saw her as difficult to serve,





Featured Cosplayer: Lady Lishu, portrayed by moonlight.kisses.

Kanan's redemption came in an **unexpected** way. During the Garden Party, she **deliberately** switched her mistress's dish with Lady Gyokuyou's as another act of bullying. Little did she know that, in doing so, she had **unknowingly saved her life**. The dish originally intended for her had been poisoned, while the food she received after the switch contained items she was allergic to.

When her actions were publicly called out, Kanan was reminded that failing to know the **dietary restrictions** and allergies of the person she served was **equivalent to poisoning them**, a serious offense if done intentionally. Realizing that her actions had gone far beyond a harmless joke, Kanan finally understood the gravity of what she had done and the danger she had created.





Following this incident, Kanan takes responsibility for her mistakes and begins to **fulfill** her true role as a **lady-in-waiting**. Her character development becomes evident as she grows more considerate and supportive, and over time, the bond between the two women becomes much stronger throughout the series.

Kanan's story serves as a reminder that making assumptions about others and falling into a herd mentality can go too far. However, owning up to your mistakes and taking accountability in the end is what **prompts growth**. It **isn't always linear**, and oftentimes it takes something to break us or throw us off balance from our usual path.

Because of this, change can be difficult and unprompted, but it is necessary for survival and for becoming better human beings. Is it uncomfortable? Yes. Is it forever? **Not quite.**

Ultimately, change is what allows us to **blossom** into the people we are meant to become and reach the places where we are meant to be, serve a greater purpose or simply grow into **better versions of ourselves**.



In the spotlight

This section was created to feature other creatives, such as cosplayers and artists, providing them with a shoutout and a space to showcase and promote their work within the community.

CREATOR Spotlight

Kaiju HAZARD



**Hazard makes
Tokusatsu/Yugioh
Content through the lens
of Mexican Heritage and
appreciation.**

**TikTok: KaijuHazard
YouTube: KaijuHazard**



**[lunancia.cos](#) is
Lunancia.cos is the
cosplayer featured in
this month's magazine.
She's a personal friend
and an amazing human
being! Make sure to give
her a follow. A huge
shoutout to her for
letting me feature her in
this issue.**



A Dessert Shop Holding My Past, Present, and Future Self

The universe rewards, but only when you step into alignment,
answering the universe's call for growth.

As my sister settles into her seat, we slip into easy conversation, talking about the dessert we just ordered and laughing about how the guy at the counter thought it was her birthday. “#34, your order is ready.” She gets up and brings back our treats. We taste-test each other’s picks, and the conversation drifts back to the usual, mundane things.

The familiar chime of a FaceTime call sounds. She picks up, and I take it as a quiet pause in our outing, a momentary break as she enjoys her smoothie and chats with her best friend. I use the pause to scan the room, and without really meaning to, I find myself slipping into reminiscence. Right across from our table, behind my sister, a strange scene unfolds. Her voice fades into the background, and I become immersed in my own thoughts.

To my left sits a group of young people, maybe late teens. Vibrant. Animated. Fully present with one another. They’re talking about classes, hobbies, plans, mundane things. At one point, someone asks, “*Where are we going next?*” That single question pulls me fully into their orbit for a moment.

Then my attention shifts to the group on my right. They’re older, not distant, but established. A group of friends, dressed to the nines, fully settled into who they are. You know the type, the ones who look like they have their lives together. There’s shared laughter, gentle touches, an ease between them. Intimate, but not performative. Just real community.

Sitting between these two groups, I feel an overwhelming rush of emotion. Looking from left to right, I can’t help but hope that one day, I’ll reach that same sense of fulfillment, that same stage of life. It feels like nostalgia meeting my future self.

I suddenly feel like my sixteen-year-old self again, hanging out with her best friend, driving all over town late at night, without a care in the world. It isn’t envy. It’s softer than that. I watch them with tenderness, through eyes that remember exactly what those moments felt like.

And then there’s my sister

In many ways, she becomes the bridge between both sides. Ironically, she represents my twenties, hardworking, unsure, trying to figure out who I was and what I wanted to do with my life (still don’t, lol). A time shaped by heartbreak, job changes, and some of the most formative transitions I’ve experienced. Those years led me, piece by piece, to who I am today.

The moment begins to feel cinematic, like one of those movie scenes where time slows down and the background noise blurs. Everything in front of me moves in slow motion. I begin to question myself: Am I at a crossroads in my life? I'm seeing my past on one side and my future on the other, while my present self feels suspended somewhere in between, stuck in a kind of limbo, unsure of which path to take next.

While I admire and reminisce over the nostalgia to my left, I can't help but feel hopeful for the future on my right. That realization feels pivotal. I still want more out of life. The limitations I've faced, the bad cards I've been dealt, don't mean I can't achieve my dreams, goals, or aspirations.

I'm no longer the confused twenty-year-old following a path out of obligation, doing what I thought I was "supposed" to do just to survive. I'm in a season where choices matter more, where the future feels close enough to touch.

Yet for so long, I held onto the belief that because of the limitations placed on me, I had no choice but to play it safe, to play the long game, follow the rules, be a perfect little pawn in systems that felt bigger than me. That so-called golden cage I believed I was trapped in? Maybe it kept me stuck in a victim mentality. I told myself I couldn't step out of line, that I couldn't risk losing the only things tethering me here, my livelihood, my family, the only place I've ever known as home.

But something shifted in that dessert shop. That moment demanded my attention. It asked for space, honesty, and authenticity. Lately, the fog has been lifting. Intentions and dreams I placed on the back burner are stirring again. When something is meant for you, it doesn't let you rest. It gnaws softly, persistently, until you listen. So I ask myself: Will I live earnestly, as the person I'm meant to become? Or continue performing a version of myself I've outgrown?

The FaceTime call ends, pulling me back into the present.

From the left, I hear, “We can take my car.” From the right, “We’re going abroad next month.” Both groups continue with their lives, moving forward in their own directions. And there I sit, between past and future, with quiet contentment, lingering realizations, and the remains of my dessert. It reminds me that sometimes the smallest moments ask the biggest questions of us.

So take that class. Write that article. Take up space. Start that small business. Don’t let fear stop you from fully enjoying your life. Who cares if it’s “just” a hobby or a side project? You’re being authentic. You’re being honest. You’re growing into a version of yourself.

The truth is, there's never really a perfect time to start something. If you won't take the leap, the universe will push you anyway, even if you're not ready, because you're meant to grow, to be seen, and to take up space.

VISIONS is a perfect example of that for me. I’m just a girl who loves her hobbies and wants to build a community around them. I have a passion for this, and even if no one in the world ever stops to read a single word or take a second look at this project, I know that one day I’ll look back with pride, not because of recognition, but because I’ve been growing into the person I’m meant to be and in the end, that’s what really matters.

Closing note

This issue was supposed to be published in March, but like most things, life happened, and I had to take a step back from it for a while. At the time I first wrote the story, nothing drastic had changed in my life, but I had a nagging feeling. Something that pulled at my heartstrings. Looking back, I realize that perhaps the story was a foreshadowing of where I am currently.

*My life has done a complete 180 since then, and it came at me fast. I realized I had no choice but to bet on myself. It became one of those "it's now or never" moments. I didn't have anything else to lose, so I finally said, "f*** it, let's act on our dreams for once." Who knows where I'll be tomorrow?*

The irony? Believing in myself is something I've never been particularly good at and am still trying to work through. Yet here I am, having made one of the biggest decisions of my life based entirely on faith in myself.

It's not easy navigating life when it feels like you have little control over where it's taking you, especially when you're trying to figure out who you are outside of the things that once restrained you. Sometimes all we can do is trust ourselves enough to take the next step with what little we have. If there's anything I hope you take away from this issue, it's that growth rarely happens when we're comfortable. Sometimes we have to take the leap before we feel ready.

If you've made it this far, thank you for taking the time to read through my work. I truly hope you enjoyed it and found something that resonated with you along the way.

I hope you enjoyed this issue, and as always, let me know your thoughts.

Until next time,

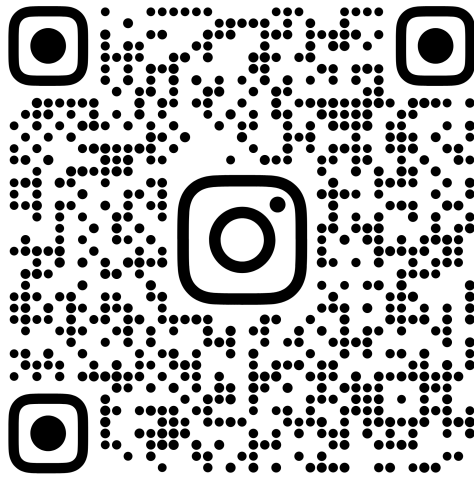
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