

Fictional Minors in Mainstream Media & Fan Content

How you are most comfortable engaging with fiction?

Actual Minor 100% Reality

Where does it fall?

In the US, child pornography (CP) law protects actors too. Nude or simulated sexual scenes with actual minors can sometimes fall under an "artistic merit" exception to obscenity law.

Kayfabe, celebrity image & persona (unfiction)

Where does it fall?

Whether an actor is portraying themselves or a character, it's the actor's real age that determines whether sexual images of them are legal and broadly considered ethical by fans.

Fictional minor character portrayed by actual minor actor

Where does it fall?

Many fans draw a line at explicit fanart of a character that is recognizable as the minor who depicts them on screen.

18+ Cosplay, roleplay & fansons of a fictional minor

Where does it fall?

In the US, adults who act as minors in lewd cosplay (such as "sexy Alice in Wonderland") are not breaking CP law, though websites, venues and fan communities may have their own policies.

Fictional minor portrayed using a photorealistic render

Where does it fall?

Photorealistic renders of minors could be classed as CP if sexually explicit. Fans also generally don't consider it OK to base explicit artwork on real minors.

Fictional Minor 100% Fiction

Where does it fall?

Fiction and non-photorealistic art cannot be CP in the US, but there are cases where they have been prosecuted as obscenity. Fans are divided on whether explicit art of fictional minors is OK.

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Noah Schnapp

Actual minor (15) who works as an actor. Actor in Hollywood known for his role as Will Byers in Netflix's "Stranger Things".

Publicity photos of celebrities who are minors sometimes appear to be sexualizing their subjects.

Hulk Hogan & Rick Ross (Kayfabe & Celebrity Persona)

Actual adult who portrays a fictional adult character full-time and "never breaks kayfabe".

Terry Eugene Bollea (Hulk Hogan) and William Leonard Roberts II (Rick Ross), are media personalities. Hulk Hogan picks high-profile fights and Rick Ross raps about life as an illegal drug dealer.

Coraline

Actual minor actress who was voice cast to portray a fictional minor character.

Coraline is a fictional minor voiced by actress Dakota Fanning who was 15 during the animated film's production.

Roleplay

Individual (actual minor or adult) who acts in the role of a fictional character.

Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) is often one's introduction to live action role play (LARP). Individuals create character sheets and improvisationally act out adventures known as campaigns.

The Sims

Actual minor or adult videogame player who creates fictional minor or adult characters.

"The Sims" is a life simulation game that gives players the power to create and control simulated people.

Michael Cera Morty Smith

Fictional minor character (14) imagined in the likeness of an actual minor actor (15).

Michael Cera, 15 during the production of "Arrested Development", is often cited by fans as a hypothetical live-action casting option for fictional character Morty Smith from the popular Adult Swim cartoon "Rick and Morty".

BTS (Public Persona)

Actual minors who embody the celebrity image (personas) of fictional minors. BTS Signed contracts with BigHit Entertainment at ages 15 (RM), 17 (Suga), 16 (J-Hope), 13 (Jungkook), 15 (V), and 16 (Jimin).

The Bangtan Boys (BTS) are a highly publicized K-pop band with global reach who embody their public personas full-time.

BTS Fans are known to create real person fiction (RPF) of their personas utilizing public information.

Harry Potter Trio

Fictional minor characters from the book series (ages 11) portrayed by actual minor actors (11-12 at time of casting; now 30-31).

The Golden Trio is a popular name for the three main characters of the massively popular "Harry Potter" series. Originally marketed to a middle-grade target audience, "Harry Potter" is often cited by fans as their threshold fandom.

Stranger Things

Fictional minor characters portrayed by actual minor actors.

Unlike "Harry Potter" or "IT", where the book existed prior to the movie, "Stranger Things" exists solely in film media.

Fursonas (Furry Persona)

Individual (actual minor or adult) who creates a fursona or an original furry character (OC).

The concept of sonas began in the furry fandom. Furrries are known to create fursuits for their fursonas. In addition to original art and fiction, furrries will utilize their fursona to participate in fandom roleplay, cosplay and more.

Cosplay

Actual minor or adult individual acting as a fictional minor or adult character.

Individual who acts within the role of a fictional (minor or adult) character.

Cuphead "Cupsonas"

Fan (actual minor or adult) who creates a fandom sona (cupsona) or original character (OC).

Cupsonas are a popular way for fans to create fictional self-insert characters that exist in the same universe as the 2017 video game "Cuphead". The main characters of Cuphead are fictional minors and many cupsonas follow this design.

Self-Insert

Individual (actual minor or adult) who creates fictional content using a self-insert character.

Self-insert is a fictional representation of an individual which tries to accurately reflect the individual's in real life (IRL) character. Also known as Y/N and /Reader (slash reader) fiction.

Ellie (The Last of Us)

Fictional minor character (15) whose voice was cast by an actual adult (36).

Unlike animation, Ellie is a fictional minor who has been rendered using photo-realistic graphics (CG animation).

In 2013, actress Ellen Page claimed that NaughtyDog studios had modeled the character using her likeness.

Lolicon & Shoutacon

Actual adult voice actor who is cast in the role of a pubescent or pre-pubescent fictional minor character.

The lolicon (loli) & shoutacon (sho) may refer to either the genres (Black Butler) or the character (Kanna Kamui from "Miss Kobayashi's Dragon Maid") these characters are often depicted as pre-pubescent or pubescent fictional minors who are often in sexually suggestive or explicit scenarios.



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This infographic is not intended as legal advice, but is an attempt to visualize and clarify the nuance within discourse surrounding the topic of minors and fiction.

This infographic is also not focused on copyright, trademark, privacy or libel law.

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