



It's
A
Deal!

Azul Ashengrotto, Jade and Floyd Leech

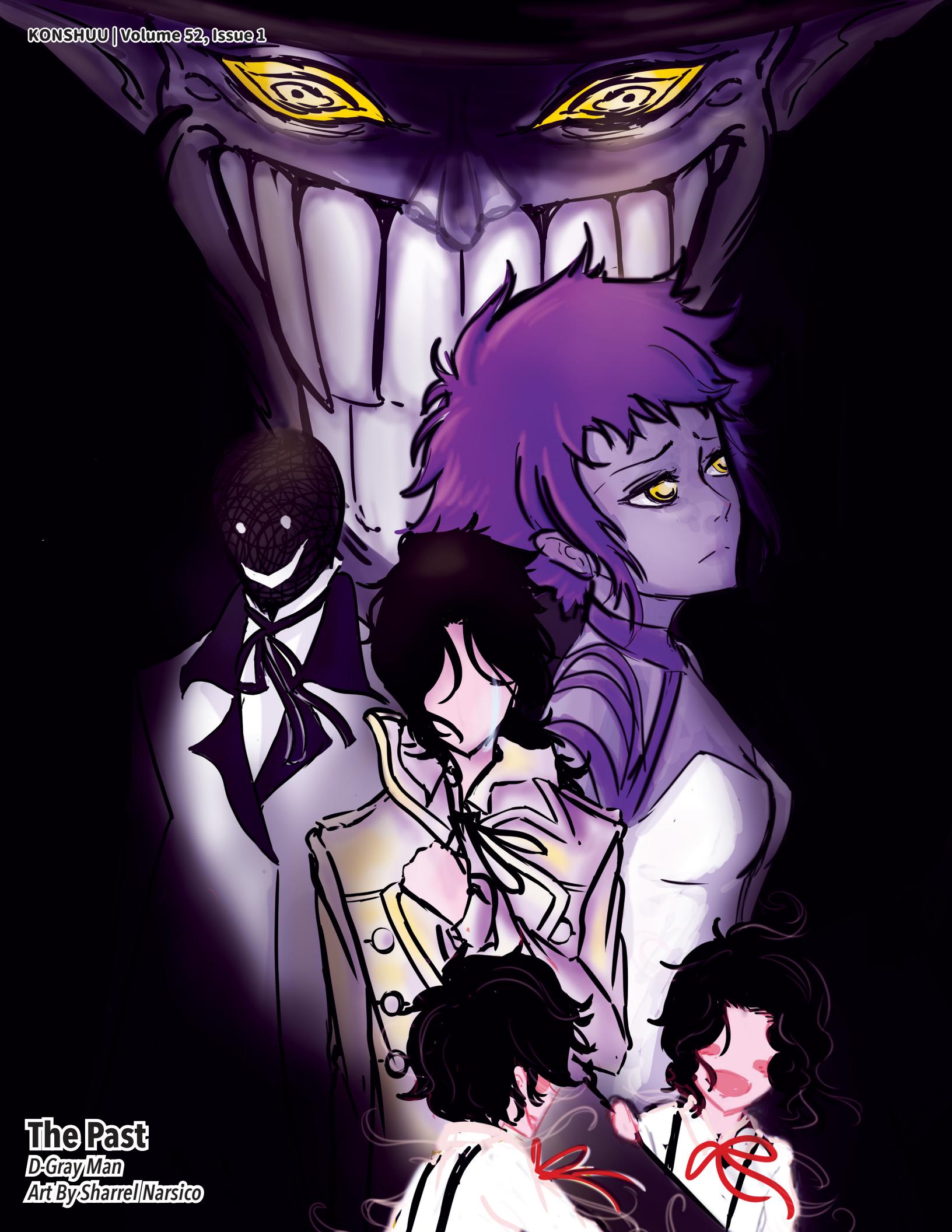
Twisted Wonderland

Art By Kate Bushmareva

KONSHUU

vol. 52 #1

Villains



The Past

D.Gray-Man

Art By Sharrel Narsico

WELCOME TO THE NOAH FAMILY



SHARREL NARSICO

3rd Year, MCB Pathogenesis

Was gonna write about *Katekyo Hitman*, but then realized all the "villains" aren't really villains, imo.

Artist

SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILER

If you haven't seen or read *D.Gray-Man*, here's a mostly spoiler free article for when you finally do decide to pick up the manga. (*cough* you should read/watch it *cough*) I typically draw for *Konshuu*, but there's typically only one reason for me to write, and that's this show.

In an anime filled with nonsensical circus-themed demons (akuma), we can almost certainly know what that's going to involve. One, there's probably going to be will power level-ups; two, people are most likely going to suffer and die, and—most importantly for this issue—three, there's going to be some horrible bad guys.

And the Noahs fit into that last expectation perfectly. Collectively, they control legions of akumas, and each of the fourteen have their own set of powers that correspond to their title in the family. They've twisted bones and limbs, tortured some poor souls, forced people's deepest and darkest secrets out because they needed to pressure someone to come with them, and made grieving people meet their bloody ends at the skeletal hands of their deceased loved ones. They've even got their hands messing with politics to incite wars to their favor.

It should come as no surprise then that such gruesome and heartless acts would be reflected in the relationships within the Noah Family. It's the nature of their possessed beings to inflict agony. Family Genocide by one member of the family is just the average for superhuman demons like them.

But the Noah Family is startlingly the opposite. Barring that one person, the family we meet in the beginning of the manga and all throughout the series show readers that the Noahs aren't the classic evil villain group I had expected them to be.

When one of their own goes down, the whole family weeps.

Literally. And it was even noted in the manga that they had wanted to collect their fallen member's body (I assumed that it would be to give it a proper burial amongst people who loved them) from exorcist territory. This desire to see a family off might have to do with the fact that after their devastating loss in the great war against Innocence, three days of flood coated the Earth. It would have been impossible for them to bury fallen friends and family then—something that very likely could haunt them seven thousand years into the present. (Or I'm just overreaching).

Moreover, they have a strong supportive community. If one of their own brings a problem or a task to the table, the whole family will work on it. For example, Road had summer homework to finish, but not enough time to do it. All of the Noahs present summarily ended up doing the homework with her.

Ultimately, the Noah Family's tendency to acts of cruelty do not beget how they treat those they consider to be part of their side. Their every interaction is fun to read, especially with their own chaos on just about everything. In fact, the whole manga is a blessing. Seeing the Noah Family is just one more reason to go read the manga.

And here we've come a full circle. I was just feeding you more information to get you to read *D.Gray-Man*. Mufufufufu.





WHY WE LOVE VILLAINS



NEIL FRYDENTAL

2nd Year, Undeclared

I like SAO :(

Writer

SPOILERS FOR MY HERO ACADEMIA

Having a compelling villain can often elevate a series to a level that it wouldn't have been at otherwise, and if this great villain is balanced with a great hero or heroes, then all the better. But what makes a compelling villain compelling? Well, there are lots of different reasons to love a villain, but today I'll be looking at 3 big ones, each with a corresponding villain as an example.

To begin, let's start with a major one: sympathy/empathy. Make the villain a sad sap with a depressing backstory and even the most egregious deeds become pitiable, understandable—maybe even excusable. Now, this describes, like, a looooooot of villains, but specifically I want to talk about Twice from *My Hero Academia* because he's a spectacular example of it being done well. Unlike the rest of the League, he's not a villain by nature. He just wanted friends to enjoy life with and protect, and the League were the ones—the only ones—that accepted him, and they did so with open arms, Himiko especially so. Given that and his sad past, he's already easily pitiable. But then when you see how troubled and guilty he feels over his screwups that hurt the League? About how recruiting Overhaul led to Magne's death? About trusting Hawks, the mole? He's completely torn up over it, and it's absolutely heartbreakingly tragic. Yes, he's a hypocritical amoralist gangster who's happy to brutally stab some nameless hero to death if they threaten his friends, yet we can't help but feel for him. It's just amazing writing.



Next up, since the *Jujutsu Kaisen* anime's right around the corner, I thought I'd talk about Getō, one of the great villains of the series. And no spoilers, don't worry. Beyond the basics (y'know his high intelligence and cool techniques), Getō, like Twice, has his own sad backstory, and it fuels his desire to achieve his goal no matter the cost. And even before you learn what those things are, his magnetic confidence and determination draw fellow characters to ally with him and readers (soon to be watchers) to like him. And then once you do learn what they are, he's even more likable than before! However, what distinguishes Getō from a character like Twice is that he has ideals above the simple want to protect one's friends, and while you probably disagree with those ideals (as do I, as a moral absolutist), there's at least a logical basis for them that informs his actions. Alongside Sukuna and Mahito—among others—Getō is one of many compelling villains *Jujutsu Kaisen*'s offers, so I hope you check out the series!



Lastly, there's Satō of *Ajin: Demi-Human*. To sum up Satō in a sentence, he's basically an immortal John Wick who loves video games and fights. Unlike Twice or Getō, he's not likeable because of any redeeming character qualities—he's a straight sociopath—but he's such an unbridled violent badass that that doesn't even matter! He's just an unstoppable force of pure murder, and it is a joy to watch our protagonists struggle to try to bring his reign of terror to an end. Will they succeed? I don't know—watch and read *Ajin*!

In conclusion, there are lots of reasons to love villains, from feeling for them to their interesting ideals to their absolute badassery, but at the end of the day, them being compelling is often just as—if not more—important to a story than the hero being so, so let's appreciate writers when they give us a good one :).

TAKING THE FIRST NAPKIN



NICHOLAS WONOSAPUTRA

2nd Year, Intended MCB Neurobiology

AC/DC - Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap

Writer

is determined by the one who takes his or her own napkin first."

-Funny Valentine Ch.61

Valentine's philosophy of "taking the first napkin" can be paraphrased to mean "those who make the first move shall decide the course of history." To an extent, this assertion makes sense, and the amount of time and effort Araki dedicates to Valentine's speech helps give the impression that Valentine is inherently in the moral right.

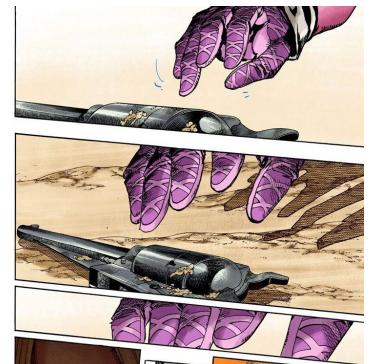
SPOILERS FOR JOJO STEEL BALL RUN

Hirohiko Araki's *Steel Ball Run* is widely considered to be the legendary mangaka's magnum opus, and is praised for being a cut above the other *JoJo* parts in terms of emotional and believable character writing, stylish and visually provocative imagery, and carefully constructed themes of redemption and rebirth. Afterall, this masterpiece is the culmination of Araki's seventeen years worth of storytelling experience, and comes right off the heels of *Stone Ocean*, which is a part that Araki tried to creatively experiment with, but was pressured by *Shounen Jump*'s editors, and even readers, to stray from his original vision.

With this newfound creative freedom and a ludicrous amount of experience creating some of the most iconic and memorable villains in all of manga, Araki is able to create one of the most compelling villains in all of *JoJo*: Funny Valentine.

In the *Steel Ball Run* universe, Funny Valentine is the 23rd President of the United States, and the secret sponsor for the Steel Ball Run race. This blonde, donut-haired man in a pink suit has stolen the hearts of readers through his sheer confidence and unwavering principles. His deep patriotism, catalyzed by the gruesome fate of his father, drives Valentine to seek the Corpse Parts in order to grant the United States everlasting prosperity.

"Suppose that you were sitting down at this table. The napkins are in front of you, which napkin would you take? The one on your 'left'? Or the one on your 'right'? ... The correct answer is that 'It



This impression is the reason behind the belief that Valentine is the hero of *Steel Ball Run*. This belief is reinforced by the fact that Valentine shares more traits with that of the stereotypical hero, namely his selfless attitude and bravery in the face of adversity, while Johnny Joestar is selfish, begrudging, and filled with murderous rage.

However, Valentine is undoubtedly the villain of this story, as his unabashed patriotism hides a significant amount of hypocritical egotism. While a pure utilitarian can understand why Valentine ruthlessly sacrifices hundreds of lives—many of whom are his beloved American citizens—for the greater good, there is no plausible ethical justification for his unwarranted advances on the young Lucy Steel. On top of that, the crux of his plan—the power of all the corpse parts combined—is extremely unethical. The ability Valentine gains from the corpse, known as Love Train, only brings prosperity to the country by redirecting all misfortune and suffering to everywhere else in the world. This is on a whole other level than Valentine's "America First" isolationist policies; Love Train ultimately preserves all of the good in the world for a small, designated group of people, and the world having these naturally occurring inequalities does not justify this sanctioning of prosperity.

So no, Valentine isn't the hero, but he sure is the villain, and a damn interesting one at that.



HILARIOUSLY BAD VILLAINS: SAO EDITION



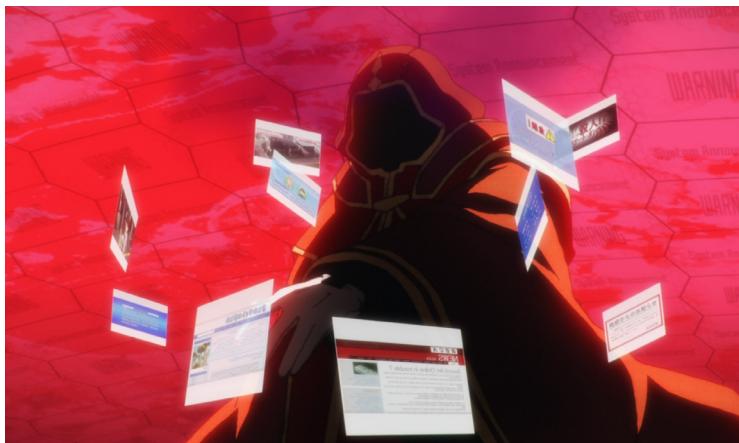
ERIK NELSON

3rd Year, Mathematics and Music
Two years worth of oh god oh fu...

Writer

SPOILERS FOR SWORD ART ONLINE

It's become pretty cliche to bash *Sword Art Online*. So I'm really sorry I had to do this, but since I couldn't think of any good villains that haven't been analyzed to death, I decided on bad villains. I pretty much instantly thought of SAO, since the primary villain of the Aincrad arc was one of the most memorable, in my experience, in how underwhelming he was. Since I'm not well versed in SAO lore I'll just give my own subjective, uninformed account of how SAO's villain impacted me when I first watched the show.



The first we see of Kayaba Akihiko is a dark figure in a hood announcing to the players that if they die in the game they die in real life. This actually isn't a bad start. We don't know his intentions or anything about him except that he's apparently a diabolical maniac. As far as villains go, we're off to a good start. For the majority of the rest of the arc, we don't learn much else about him; he's just looming in the background as the perpetrator of the set up of the entire arc. At some point Krito figures out that another player, Heathcliff, must be cheating, and is therefore probably the game's creator. This is the beginning of one of the worst endings to an arc I have ever witnessed. First of all, the entire premise of the game was that if they reached level 100 and beat the final boss, they would get out, and so I was ex-

pecting level 100 to be the show's denouement. But apparently the writer, Reki Kawahara, got bored and decided to end it at level 70 something. Why? Who knows. But anyway Krito deduces that Heathcliff is actually Kayaba. How? Basically, Krito is so OP that he tried a move that's impossible to evade, and Heathcliff evaded it. Therefore he must be cheating. As ridiculous as that sounds, it's consistent with in-universe canon where Krito is so OP it's transcended mere humor into post-ironic whatever. Anyway, Krito calls out Heathcliff and they fight, Krito loses, then Asuna dies, then Krito dies. Then decides to just not be dead anymore. How? I have absolutely no idea. Death is just a scratch for Krito.



The final part of this ending was by far the most hilarious. Krito beats Heathcliff after deciding to come back to life, the game starts falling apart, and they finally meet Kayaba. I was convinced that they were going to explain exactly what Kayaba wanted from this elaborate experiment. I thought I was going to get answers about this mysterious world I had experienced for 14 episodes or whatever. Krito even asks him "why." I was waiting in anticipation for the brilliant tying up of this arc, but what I got was either transcendently deep, insanely good trolling, or anemic squitter only the likes of Reki Kawahara could pen. Kayaba literally forgot why he did it. Maybe this is Kawahara throwing in some existentialism or something, but I doubt it. He might be a world class troll, but given his record, it's more likely that he's just a terrible writer and knows it.

So that was the story of one of the worst villains in anime. It just happened to be SAO. Sorry to any SAO fans out there.

Staff Picks:

FAVORITE VILLAIN

KIREI KOTOMINE

FATE SERIES



THEO RAI

He's just an absolutely horrible, terrible, irredeemable, and evil man. Yeah, there are villains I like better, but Kirei is the only one I respect as an actual Villain.

YOSHIKAGE KIRA

JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE

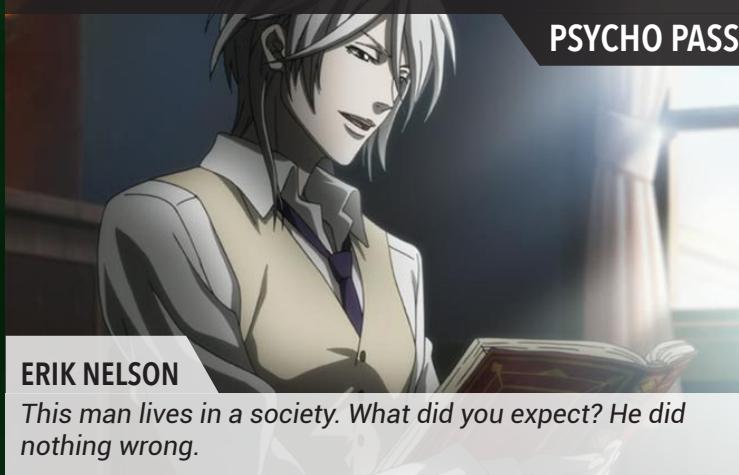


TAMMY LEE

My name is Yoshikage Kira. I'm 33 years old. My house is in the northeast section of Morioh, where all the villas are, and I am not married. I work as an employee for the Kame Yu department stores, and I get home every day by 8 PM at the latest. I don't smoke, but I occasionally drink. I'm ...

SHOUGO MAKISHIMA

PSYCHO PASS

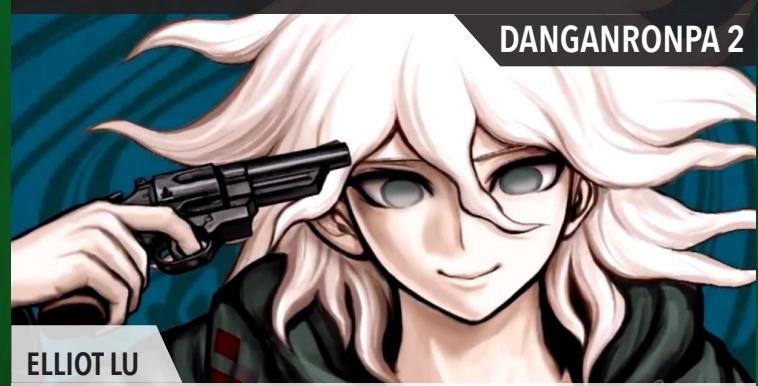


ERIK NELSON

This man lives in a society. What did you expect? He did nothing wrong.

NAGITO KOMAEDA

DANGANRONPA 2



ELLIOT LU

I just think he's neat. Also he was well-intentioned, but did everything wrong. That's why he was a fun antagonist!

IZAYA ORIHARA

DURARARA!!

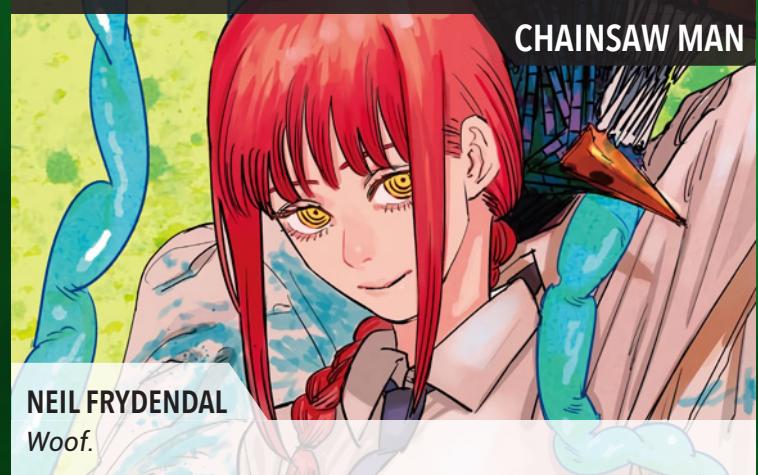


KATE BUSHMAREVA

What's better than a villain who's so sympathetic that you have to like them? A villain who's so unsympathetic that you have to like them, of course. That's why Izaya's such a fun antagonist; he has no tragic past, no grand motivations, and does things just because he loves people and manipulating them.

MAKIMA

CHAINSAW MAN



NEIL FRYDENDAL

Woof.

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Weekly Virtual Game Nights:

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Kristoph Gavin
Ace Attorney
Art By Athena Chen