

Minamoto Sakura

Zombie Land Saga

Art By Eddie Song



KONSHUU

vol. 55 #5  
MAPPA

# THIS ISSUE'S FEATURED SERIES!

## ANIME RECOMMENDATION **DOROHEDORO**

Although *Dorohedoro* is best experienced in its original black and white artstyle by Q Hayashida, MAPPA's anime adaptation does excellent work in bringing the gritty world of Hole to life with color while maintaining the balance of chaos and silliness the series is known for. Enjoyers of gore and body horror in anime and manga are sure to get a kick out of *Dorohedoro*, but even if you may not be able to stomach such violence, the gripping story and ensemble cast of lovable killers are sure to keep you engaged.



Winter 2020, MAPPA  
Directed by Yuuichirou Hayashi  
12 episodes



Fall 2017, MAPPA  
Directed by Keiichi Sato  
11 episodes

## ANIME RECOMMENDATION

### **INUYASHIKI** (**INUYASHIKI: LAST HERO**)

One of the better adaptations of Hiroya Oku's works, though the CGI can be often distracting. Looking past the animation though, the story of *Inuyashiki* offers a unique perspective from a decrepit old man unfairly cast away from society. Yet, the main character still fights for the sake of humanity and offers hope in this nihilistic setting. As per usual with series written by Oku, there are a few disturbing scenes full of graphic violence, so just be aware of that.

# ATTACK ON TITAN: IMPROVING UPON PERFECTION



**JOSÉ CUEVAS**

5th Year, Intended EECS and Theater  
Rest in peace potato girl

Writer

Even though most people have changed their minds and suddenly dislike *Attack on Titan* now, I still enjoy it greatly. Called *Shingeki no Kyojin* in its original Japanese language, *Attack on Titan* has always been a series that intrigued me. From the breathtaking mysteries to the uniquely interesting setting, to the oh-so satisfying sakuga animation, the series has an appeal unlike no other. Yet, the one aspect that I enjoy the most is one that arguably emerged within the newest, more controversial seasons.

First things first though, I should explain the characters. Initially taking place within a harsh world stuck between walls, lead characters Eren Yaeger, Mikasa Ackerman, and Armin Arlert reflect the setting well. Hardened by their surroundings, the characters hardly smile or do much that would embody any sort of levity. One could complain that this limits the series' emotional range, but it's realistic; because the characters take things completely seriously without breaking into comedic relief, the audience is prompted to do the same. I believe this is part of why the series is very effective, because while there are occasional gags like the endearing potato girl, they don't distract from the maturely written series. In a way, it reminds me of *Game of Thrones*. Whereas *GOT* took somewhat lighter and childish fantasy series and made them very adult and serious, *AOT* did the same, but with the often immature genre of anime.



Beyond that is the absolutely epic soundtrack. Fully stuffed with bangers, the first few seasons of *Attack on Titan* have music that emphasizes the bombastic, world implicating nature of the events being shown. Hiroyuki Sawano is an absolute GOATed legend, with a lot of his absolutely impeccable resumé coming

from this series. Whenever I heard the "Sawano Drop", as it's called, within any given scene, I popped off every time. There's really not much to say on this topic, frankly. The music of *Attack on Titan* is stellar.

Unfortunately, as soon as the animation got slightly worse with the switch from Wit Studio to MAPPA, I've seen a lot of fans completely drop the series, decrying that it got worse. I reject this notion. *Attack on Titan*, if anything, improved with its last few seasons in a way to where I could barely call it the same show. I love the action of the series, but what really gets me is the moral ambiguity of newer *Attack on Titan*. There's far more uncertainty in the characters' morals with the more recent seasons of *Attack on Titan*. Even the main character, Eren Yaeger, is not immune to this. In any normal story, the main character is supposed to be the moral center. Frankly, it's just expected. *Attack on Titan* completely deconstructs this notion by having a main character who is not only morally complex, but almost reprehensible in his ideology.

Furthermore, the focus on politics is really interesting. Instead of having characters just fight, the series now focuses heavily on people discussing their ideologies. Heck, in a given episode, you're now probably more likely to see dialogue 90% of the time rather than action. In this way, I feel like *Attack on Titan* really grew up with me, as it posits very deep questions regarding the meaning of life and whether or not genocide is good. Just as the series previously subverted the typical clichés of anime by not having much comedy with its characters solemn all the time, both seasons of *Attack on Titan: Final Season* manage to be something wholly new. I've never seen an anime tackle politics, much less in the way that *AOT* does.

In conclusion, *Attack on Titan: Final Season* gets a bad rap for being a less fulfilling sequel, as some say it betrays the original conceit of *Attack on Titan*. Yet, in my view, it's all the better for doing so. I love the interesting sakuga action of the original series, but the complex political dynamics regarding whether or not using giant flesh creatures to kill an entire race is not only interesting, but also intellectually complex. Like many, I was sad when potato girl died, but I think that represents the true disconnect that later *Attack on Titan* is now establishing by removing even the last remaining aspect that could be tied with anime. *Attack on Titan* didn't get worse. In fact, it improved by becoming even more serious and less immature in terms of removing the inherently uninteresting part of the anime genre, thus deconstructing it into something wholly new.

# IF YOU LIKED ATTACK ON TITAN, YOU MIGHT LIKE...



**MITCHELL MADAYAG**

2nd Year, Intended Japanese and Economics  
TEEKYUU!!!

**Editor-In-Chief**

Despite being one of the younger anime studios out there, almost turning 11 years old at the time of me writing this, MAPPA has already amassed quite the repertoire of well-known shows such as *Jujutsu Kaisen*, *Attack on Titan*, and *Zombie Land Saga*. It's likely that the aforementioned anime have become big favorites among western fans who have gotten into anime over the past few years, and I expect the highly anticipated *Chainsaw Man* to do the same. Yet, it may be surprising to most to see the infamous *Teekyuu* as one of MAPPA's earliest works. Contrasting its name, *Teekyuu* is less about *庭球* (tennis) and more about surreal comedy full of quick pace gags. The series is almost as old as MAPPA itself, first debuting in 2012, following only a few months after *Sakamichi no Apollon*, MAPPA's first anime. But despite being part of MAPPA's history, *Teekyuu* was left out of the studio's 10th anniversary key visual, though it's most likely due to a change in license since studio Millepensee took over the animation after *Teekyuu*'s third installment. However, I still find amusement in *Teekyuu* appearing as the one odd entry sticking out of the more mature series MAPPA has adapted.

*Attack on Titan Final Season Part 2* has recently concluded, so while we wait for the true final installment to wrap this franchise up for good, why not look back at MAPPA's roots and give *Teekyuu* a try? It'll also make it a lot easier for you to understand my gripes with this cursed series, which I will discuss in the next paragraph. So please, go ahead and give the first season of *Teekyuu* a watch before you continue reading this article. It won't even take up much of your time as each episode is only 2 minutes long, or 1.5 minutes if you skip the intro. I'll even be courteous enough to provide a YouTube link to the first episode [here](#) and the entire first season [here](#). Even if you have already seen it, give it another go. It would be an easy rewatch to add to your MAL, AniList, etc...



Alright, done? Great! I hope your brain isn't fried enough to drop this article, let alone this issue. As you would expect, the animation of *Teekyuu* is choppy, purposefully acting as a low-effort jab to its low-effort quality. Nonetheless, the poor animation wasn't that much of a deterrent to my viewing experience as it really couldn't get any worse by that point. Funny enough, starting from season 4, the animation actually improves thanks to studio Millepensee. The lines are a lot cleaner and the action became more fluid, which made me long for the original MAPPA artstyle at times. Millepensee would later go on to use their incredible experience animating *Teekyuu* to remake the infamous 2016 *Berserk* anime, so thank MAPPA I guess.



One of *Teekyuu*'s trademark traits is the regurgitation of jokes the show rapidly hurls at the viewer. There is rarely ever a moment of rest as the producers made sure to make every second count in the 120 seconds allotted. However, the humor itself is boringly repetitive as Oshimoto Yuri constantly acts as the tsukkomi to her three dumbass senpais and this style of Japanese comedy essentially continues throughout all nine seasons. I will say that I did indeed laugh at least a few times per season, as the random humor eventually got the better of me sometimes, but in the end, I didn't really find *Teekyuu* to be all that funny. My overall negative reception is likely due to me not understanding whatever obscure references appeared, if any at all, as well as the jokes getting lost in translation. It's also possible that the jokes just aren't that well written to begin with.

Yet, out of all the characters in *Teekyuu*, Takamiya Nasuno struck me as the most interesting of the bunch. As opposed to the physics-breaking chibi Shinjou Kanae or the panties-eating pervert Bandou Marimo, Nasuno embodies the caricature of a super rich girl disconnected from the societal norms of the lower class. The humor revolving around her is more calm and controlled, and usually devolves to Nasuno buying her way out of any situation through money. Her gags are less surreal than that of her fellow senpai, which only makes them slightly more funny or slightly less unfunny depending on how you look at it. Nasuno would actually get her own spinoff anime in 2015, titled *Takamiya Nasuno Desu!*, that carries the same style of humor, only with Yuri's younger brother, Oshimoto Youta, acting as

the tsukkomi this time. The justification for this spinoff makes sense to me, since Nasuno did consecutively win fourth, third, second, and first place in the fabricated *Teekyuu* character popularity poll. There is also another *Teekyuu* spinoff, *Usakame*, which focuses on the rival tennis team who are more sophisticated than the original *Teekyuu* girls. *Usakame* features 4 minute episodes instead of the usual 2, allowing time for a slower stream of jokes and even an ending theme. However, I found *Usakame* to be just as dull as the rest of the *Teekyuu* franchise sadly.



The extremely short length of each *Teekyuu* episode may seem enticing to binge and quickly add to your anime list, but trust me, it's not worth it. I would know best, being the masochist who watched every single episode, special, and spinoff of *Teekyuu* to date in one single sitting. This isn't that difficult of a task to boast about, but it was arguably the longest and most grueling seven hours of my life. I kept telling myself that I should stop and try another day, but I believed that if I did, I wouldn't bother watching the rest of *Teekyuu* anyways. I persevered and kept my eyes and ears glued to the screen, absorbing every incoherent joke which eventually melded together into one single blob. It all felt like one crazy fever dream that I was left empty by the time I was done with the *Usakame* special. However, I can't quite call myself a *Teekyuu* aficionado yet until I read the original manga, but I'll preserve whatever is left of my sanity for a little while longer. Apparently, a *Teekyuu* stage play adaptation existed once, which genuinely makes me curious as to what that looked like, but with its discontinuation, this cursed stage play will forever be lost in history. Good.



If I had to say one good thing about *Teekyuu*, it would be that I unironically like listening to some of the openings. We are only exposed to a condensed 30 second version in the anime, but if you ever look up the full versions, you'd be in for a treat. Particularly, season 2's "Menimeni Manimani," season 4's "Fattoshite Tougenkyou," season 8's "Nihongo Wakarimasen," and "Ougon no Kinderera" from *Takamiya Nasuno Desu!* appealed to me the most and have been added to my exercising and driving playlists. As someone who isn't very versed in using appropriate music terminology, I can't exactly explain why I like them, but I can at least say that the fast tempo gets me moving so I don't want to stop, matching the spastic pace of the show. It's worth noting that the voice actors sing the openings themselves, which makes the song composition more impressive in my opinion. In addition to my listening pleasure, I also got some personal enjoyment using the soundtrack of *Teekyuu* and its spinoffs as counterpicks in *Anime Music Quiz* for a short period of time until my friend banned the "Tennis" tag.

The birth of the *Teekyuu* anime is probably the biggest mistake MAPPA wishes to forget. Luckily, MAPPA really had nowhere to go but up after producing three whole seasons of this meh series, and it's likely a good thing they gave up the adaptation to another studio. Anyways, I mostly wrote this article to give a short rant on the *Teekyuu* series and possibly more so to revel in the opportunity in getting some of you to watch it. Regardless, *Teekyuu* is such a peculiar show to me that it's often hard to forget about it, despite its many glaring flaws. I even catch myself longing for a season 10 at times. Perhaps I don't completely hate this anime after all.



## THE 2 CENTS

**How has your experience in Konshuu been so far, having joined only a month ago? What goals do you have in mind now that you're in Konshuu?**



**Eddie Song**  
New Konshuu Artist



**Willow Otaka**  
New Konshuu Artist



**Celestino  
Morate**  
New Konshuu  
Graphic Designer

I feel like *Konshuu* constitutes a pretty friend environment in which I can feel comfortable expressing my interest. And my goal right now would simply be trying to create more art for the issues.

Since I joined a month ago, I've been pleasantly surprised by *Konshuu's* community. *Konshuu* is an avenue to convey love for anime with likeminded people, and I love being surrounded by students who enjoy anime just as much as I do! In the future, I hope to continue making contributions to *Konshuu* through my artwork and improve my art as the years go by!

My experience in *Konshuu* has been great! I'm pretty new into anime and it has helped me with making my library of anime bigger and discovering all these amazing shows I wouldn't have known about otherwise! My goals are to find new amazing anime content to watch as well as to meet people with the same interests as me!

# ART CORNER

**What is your favorite MAPPA series and why?  
Which character(s) do you like from that series  
and what do you admire about them?**

My favorite MAPPA series would be *Zombie Land Saga* as that's the only one that I have watched. I really like how the characters never give up regardless of their previous failures.



My favorite MAPPA series is *Sarazanmai!* I thought it was a weird anime at first but I slowly came to love it as I continued to watch it. The theme of connections really struck a chord to me. I don't love any specific character (at least enough to have a favorite) but I think they are all relatable in their own unique ways. I admire that they all struggle to connect with each other despite their unique struggles.



As for my favorite MAPPA anime... I can't say I've seen any but I have read the *God of Highschool* webtoon and I found it very enjoyable! so I would go with that ^^



# ANIME STUDIOS AREN'T PEOPLE: THE CONCERNING CASE OF STUDIO MAPPA



**BLAKE MORRISON**

2nd Year, English and Japanese

The hundreds of underpaid freelance animators working for MAPPA are the true GOATs

**Writer**

I don't hate Studio MAPPA. Because of the judgemental title of this article, I want to make that clear from the start. Even if it would make for a flashy opening line, it's impossible for me to say I hate this studio, or, rather, the people who work for it. MAPPA is staffed by hundreds of employees and supported by even more freelancers, and I'm sure that most of them are nice people (especially the freelancers, who are probably excessively nice, which is to say compliant, considering how they don't seek work elsewhere despite how much, or rather how little, MAPPA pays them). The problem with MAPPA, as with most companies too big for their own good, is the people who call the shots at the top, the executives who, it must be admitted, are burdened with the ever important and tough job of managing the company and, crucially, its production schedule. I'm sure their jobs aren't exactly easy. But much like generals who volunteer their men for risky operations from an insulated war-room bunker at headquarters, MAPPA's executives have, over the better part of the past decade, tasked their staff with too intense a workload while not having to experience any of the day-to-day production labor that comes with it, all while they get to reap most of the profits from that labor.

But MAPPA's executives aren't even the ones receiving most of the revenue from their shows. At least then that revenue would ostensibly remain in the circle of the studio and perhaps lead to better working conditions there overall (unlikely, but one can hope). Instead, MAPPA, like most anime studios, albeit it stands out as an especially rotten case study of this practice, receives most of its funding from publishing companies part of what's known as a production committee. Since anime production isn't cheap (we're talking millions of dollars spent producing a cour of even the most average seasonal show), there are very few studios who can independently front the risk of their shows flopping without enlisting the aid of corporate publishers like Bandai or Kodansha. Together with various such corporate entities, anime studios create what's known as a production committee, a

joint-venture subsidiary through which publishers fund an anime production and receive a share of the production's revenue commensurate with the funding supplied... most likely disproportionately commensurate (an oxymoron, I know), but that's just the publishing industry for you. While production committees allow studios like MAPPA to minimize financial risk should their shows fail to turn a profit, they also inevitably decrease the studio's share of the profits that do turn up. A lower risk; a lower reward. But isn't this just standard practice in the anime industry? It is. Studios like Khara and Kyoto Animation, with the infrastructure and goodwill to fund their own productions without the mediation of a production committee, are the exception to the rule. It's unfortunate that MAPPA's staff is underpaid and that the studio itself doesn't receive much of the revenue generated from its own productions, but that's par for the course for the industry. MAPPA is the norm. Except it isn't.

Just last year MAPPA released around seven cours and one movie worth of anime. To compare, that same year Toei Animation, the largest anime studio there is at 819 employees as of 2021, released around sixteen cours and eight movies (all of which are close to one hour in runtime) worth of anime. Toei is already known for stretching its seemingly abundant human resources thin, so for MAPPA to have released around 35% of the anime that Toei released that year in terms of runtime (keeping in mind that MAPPA's works usually have higher production values than Toei's) the studio would have needed at least 300 employees to produce it all, right? Wrong. As of December 2021, MAPPA reportedly had 250 in-house employees, and it undoubtedly had even fewer at the start of that year. The company's current division of labor is unknown, but if it's anything like it was in 2017, with a staff of 80 among whom only 11 were animators while 26 filled other art-related positions, then there can be only one explanation for how MAPPA is able to produce so much anime with comparatively few salaried animators: the outsourcing of labor to freelancers. Many anime studios do this, but considering how much anime MAPPA produces with such few in-house staff, the studio is, like in the case of production companies, one of the most egregious examples of this practice. It's undeniable that MAPPA produces many beloved anime series, many of which are adaptations of already beloved properties, granted. I don't mean to undermine any of the quality work anyone has done under this studio. I only mean to clarify how it isn't because of the studio's management that MAPPA's staff and outsourced non-staff produce quality work but in spite of it. The next time you see someone call MAPPA the "GOAT" or something else like that, idolizing the studio in a way that unwittingly attributes the underpaid efforts of MAPPA staff and non-MAPPA outsourced staff to a nebulous corporate entity that sustains itself through ceding most of its profits to already profit-glutted publishing companies, send them a link to this article. Studio MAPPA isn't a person, and a person, say a criminally underpaid freelance animator working for MAPPA, shouldn't have their work defined solely by the name of an uncaring studio. Instead of saying "MAPPA's the GOAT," try saying "the staff of X show are the GOAT... I really wish they were paid more and overworked less, preferably not overworked at all."

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Anime production staff salaries circa 2017



**Noi**  
*Dorohedoro*  
Art By Kai Wu & Rachel Min

# FALLING DOWN THE STEPS



TONY T.

2nd Year, Economics and Data Science

Hagler beat Leonard, Whittaker beat Chavez, De La Hoya beat Trinidad.

Managing Editor

Having written about *Hajime no Ippo* on two prior occasions, any long introduction in terms of my thoughts on the franchise seems either redundant, tedious, or both. It's a fantastic series which replicates the real-life world of professional pugilism accurately, with diegetic references to boxing politics, stylistic matchups, history, and more. It suffers slightly in narrative pacing and structure. Still, this trade-off amounts in *Ippo* still remaining an engaging manga now, thirty-three years and thirteen (ten, if you exclude Evander Holyfield, Lennox Lewis, and Tyson Fury's second reigns) lineal heavyweight champions since its inception in 1989.

This is only part of the story, though. Until now, I've solely discussed *Hajime no Ippo* in its original context, serialized in *Weekly Shounen Magazine*. When shifting focus to the series' animated adaptations, these sentiments become far more nuanced. For context, *Ippo* has received three separate television animated adaptations. The first, subtitled *The Fighting*, is perhaps the most solid. Released by Madhouse and airing from 2000 to 2002, it features cel animation in a period wherein those techniques were becoming less and less prevalent. This prevents *The Fighting* from having many issues plaguing computer animation in the early 2000s; it never really uses cels to its advantage. *The Fighting* isn't particularly detailed or vibrant, both traits I'd deem core to cel animation. With an especially low dip around episode 50, the series isn't aesthetically notable outside of fun, kinetic directing during its boxing sequences.

*The Fighting* is not a terrible adaptation, as it still conveys the spirit of *Ippo* as a whole, but some aspects don't reflect the manga's meticulous portrayal of pugilism. Narratively, though, the adaptation chose perhaps the perfect segment of the series to adapt. Spanning from *Hajime no Ippo*'s start all the way to the titular protagonist's obtaining the Japanese national featherweight championship, it tells a complete story. Divorced from my complaints about the series' aesthetics, I might even say that the arc within *The Fighting*'s 75 episodes is more fulfilling than the manga's near-1400 chapter span (as of this article's first draft) with no end in sight.

The problems with *The Fighting* become more pronounced in the series' other two adaptations: *New Challenger* and *Rising*. Released in 2009 and 2013, respectively, both two-cour series again list Studio Madhouse in their credits, though *Rising* also had involvement from MAPPA. Beyond different episode lengths and *Rising* technically having an additional studio listed (though MAPPA was an offshoot of Madhouse), the most immediately obvious shift from *The Fighting* is digital animation. The original 2000 adaptation doesn't exactly live up to the

visual spectacle of most late-stage cel animation, but it still retains more visual consistency compared to *New Challenger* and *Rising*. In part owing to higher fidelity, the later adaptations of *Ippo* suffer greatly aesthetically, with their off-model animation being far more apparent. Furthermore, the directing is simply less compelling. No entry of *Ippo* is what I'd call completely undynamic, but the newer adaptations are a far cry from the standards set by the first. Rather than punctuating dramatic beats with blurs and, well, multiple frames of animation, the newer entries, particularly *Rising*, tend to shake the camera a lot whilst lingering on a single shot, adding a ridiculous amount of speed lines. Those techniques are cheap, but don't immediately ruin these series. Parts of *New Challenger* and *Rising*'s storylines are compelling enough to make their climaxes resonate. As adaptations, though, they fail. Obviously, they don't and can't live up to Morikawa George's astoundingly amazing artwork that is inconceivable for a weekly serialization. Yet still, the manga's still images are so good at conveying dynamic movement to where I'd argue they exceed *New Challenger* and *Rising* in that regard completely.

The 2009 and 2013 adaptations of *Ippo* also feel narratively lacking compared to the 2000 one, which had a somewhat complete-feeling plot. As television anime based on a series that has run since 1989 and continues to run, at least as of 2022, this seems obvious. But again, *The Fighting* chose the perfect bookend spot to end. *New Challenger* and *Rising* don't feel that way. It'd be one thing if they were simply entries in long-running adaptations akin to more modern battle shounen. But due to not having any successive anime adaptations since *Rising*'s ending in 2014, the later two *Ippo* series lack impact as independent works.

None of this is to say that *New Challenger* and *Rising* are awful. Chronicling series protagonist Makunouchi Ippo's reign as Japanese featherweight champion following the original series, that narrative plotline still remains rather strong. The expanded focus on Ippo gym mate Takamura Mamoru's quest to win six divisional titles from junior middleweight to heavyweight (a journey, which, as of 2022, he has only half completed) more than emphasizes the high level of world-class boxing which Ippo only barely scratches. I would argue that, as a fan of boxing, this narrative is perhaps more engaging than *The Fighting*'s. The realism of Takamura moving divisions and fighting pugilists with wildly differing backgrounds is simply unmatched by other fictional sports media. But, as a fan of narrative, *New Challenger* and *Rising* cannot match *The Fighting*, or, well, the original *Ippo*. As a fan of animation, most sports anime completely blow them out of the water. While less compelling to me in terms of not being boxing, something like *Kuroko no Basket* completely surpasses the later two *Ippo* adaptations in this regard. Neither series are, again, abhorrent, but I'd be lying if I claimed I could see a non-financial reason for their existence. There are but few reasons to watch *New Challenger* and *Rising* over reading the manga, which is a shame, for a series that tries to truly embody something I'm a huge fan of, perhaps more so than my interest in Japanese animation.

**Staff Picks:****FAVORITE MAPPA CHARACTER****KAIMAN****DOROHEDORO**

MITCHELL MADAYAG

A very funny lizard voiced by a very funny man (*Takagi Wataru*)

**HYAKKIMARU****DORORO**

RACHEL

*Dororo* not to be confused with *Dorohedoro*

**INUMAKI TOGE****JUJUTSU KAISEN**

ERICA K.

Konbu.

**EREN JAEGER****ATTACK ON TITAN**

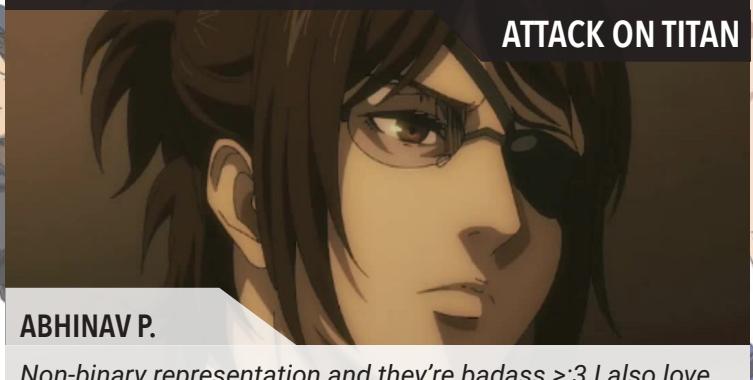
FELICITY A.

Tatake

**TAE YAMADA****ZOMBIE LAND SAGA**

NICK W.

Legendary

**HANGE ZOE****ATTACK ON TITAN**

ABHINAV P.

Non-binary representation and they're badass >:3 I also love how passionate they are in the first season when Eren asks them about everything they know about titans, but I also empathize on how they have changed in this new season.



Enta Jinnai , Kazuki Yasaka,  
Tooi Kuji, and Keppi

Sarazanmai  
Art By Willow Otaka

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