

= Ivy Valentine =

Isabella Valentine (????? ? ?????? , Izabera Barentain) , commonly called Ivy (?????? , Aiv?) , is a fictional character in the Soul series of video games . Created by Namco 's Project Soul division , she first appeared in the original Soulcalibur and its subsequent sequels , later appearing in various merchandise related to the series . She was voiced in Japanese by Yumi T?ma between Soulcalibur and Soulcalibur III , Kanako T?jo between Soulcalibur Legends and Soulcalibur : Broken Destiny , and Miyuki Sawashiro in Soulcalibur V ; in English , she was voiced by Renee Hewitt in Soulcalibur II and Lani Minella for the remainder of the series .

The illegitimate daughter of undead pirate Cervantes de Leon , Ivy was raised by a noble family until her father became obsessed with the cursed sword , Soul Edge , leading to his death and later her mother 's . Desiring to destroy the sword , she creates a segmented , animated blade , only to become Soul Edge 's pawn and learn that it intends to use her as its next host . After an attack by Cervantes results in the loss of her soul , Ivy uses a temporary artificial one to keep herself alive , and continues after the blade .

Since her introduction , Ivy has been well received , considered both an attractive and strong female character by various sources . She has also been included on various countdown lists regarding sexy video game characters . Scholastic studies have examined the character in the context of the series and video games in general , as well as when compared to other video game related sex symbols such as Lara Croft . Her role as a sex symbol has also been discussed by said sources and the media . Some argue that her appearance goes " too far " , while others feel it helps to define her character .

= = Conception and history = =

As a character introduced in Soulcalibur , Ivy 's weapon , a " snake sword " designed to be unique amongst the other weapons in the game , was selected before other elements of the character . Her design and concept were then built to revolve around it , starting with gender , then physical measurements , and lastly background details . After her appearance and movement were fleshed out by a concept artist , her character was rendered as a 3D model by a design team that worked solely on her , and then animated mostly by Naotake Hirata using motion capture to create her in @-@ game movements , with Yasushi Shibue designing the animations for her throws , and several animations created without the use of motion capture for positions difficult for the actors . During this phase the team additionally worked with the Soulcalibur story creators , refining the character 's own role in the plot as needed throughout development .

During development many alternatives for Ivy 's design were considered , including a male ninja , a mummy , and a little girl , while the weapon remained constant , varying only in size . With Soulcalibur II , the development team chose her as their favorite character from the previous title . Producer Hiroaki Yotoriyama felt that her fighting style was not perfectly expressed in Soulcalibur , and focused on Ivy from the start of the project to make her more " uniquely lethal " . Namco has called Ivy one of the three most popular characters in the series in North American markets , alongside Taki and Nightmare . Soulcalibur V producer Hisaharu Tago emphasized this as a reason for the character 's inclusion for the game , additionally citing her fighting style and role in the game 's storyline .

= = = Design = = =

Ivy appears as a tall , large busted woman with short , white hair . A bluish @-@ purple leotard covers her torso and arms , with patches of the fabric removed to expose her cleavage and various parts of her abdomen . Similar leggings cover her legs midway below her thighs , connected to the leotard by garters at golden metal bands at their peak . A sleeve of the same material covers her right arm and hand , while armor covers her left arm , hand , and shoulder . A smaller pauldron covers her right shoulder , while high heels cover her feet , and a white glove covers her right hand .

The left shoulder pauldron incorporates the Tudor Rose , a traditional heraldic symbol of England , while the plates of the armor were designed to resemble the links of her sword . A mask covering the right side of her face and eye were also considered but abandoned after the initial character concept . While her design has been altered slightly as the series has progressed , the concept has remained consistent throughout the series , with the exception of the removal of the glove in later designs . Ivy stands 1 @.@ 79 m (5 ft 10 in) tall , making her the series ' tallest female character , and with a bust measurement of 100 cm (39 in) also the bustiest , though this was an aspect that the developers felt they had overdone by her appearance in Soulcalibur IV .

Ivy 's alternate character designs in the games are a contrast to her primary designs , with the secondary from Soulcalibur to Soulcalibur III consisting of countless attire of either blue or red pants , vest , and jacket , with white boots covering her feet and her hair combed back . In Soulcalibur II , a tertiary alternate design was added consisting of a red leotard and gloves with gold trimming , with red stockings on her legs ; in addition , a fourth design resembling her appearance at the conclusion of Soulcalibur was considered , incorporating a cloak and the symbol of caduceus on the front of her leotard cupping her breasts , but was unused . In Soulcalibur III , a long , rose @-@ themed dress with hat and veil was used as a tertiary alternate , one of several considered designs . For Soulcalibur IV , a similarly themed black dress was used as her sole alternate design for the game .

Some versions of the original Soulcalibur arcade game censored Ivy 's default costume by covering her bare skin with a lavender catsuit . With Soulcalibur IV , Ivy 's look on the promotional artwork was modified on the English website to hide her undercleavage , leading to suspicion of censorship in the American release of the game . When asked about the censoring , director Katsutoshi Sasaki stated he had heard of nothing of the sort having taken place . When released in North America it was shown that no actual censorship had occurred within the game .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In video games = = =

As introduced in Soulcalibur , Ivy was raised by the Valentines , a noble family in London , England . Ivy 's father became obsessed with the cursed sword Soul Edge , and worked himself to death . Her mother died shortly afterward , and revealed to Ivy that she was not their biological daughter . Becoming an alchemist , Ivy learned of her father 's obsession and decided to destroy Soul Edge . She created an animated , segmented sword , bringing it to life by unknowingly summoning Soul Edge 's current host , Nightmare , and was convinced to become one of his servants without realizing he wielded the blade she sought . After learning the truth , and that her real father was the sword 's previous host Cervantes and her to be its next , she departed . Continuing her quest to destroy the sword in later games , Ivy was attacked by Cervantes and her soul consumed in Soulcalibur IV . Using an artificial soul to keep herself alive , she acts as a teacher to younger warriors when the sword re @-@ appears years later .

Ivy also appears in the prequel Soulcalibur Legends , allying herself with the protagonist Siegfried , and shares an understanding with another of his allies , Lloyd Irving . In Soulcalibur : Broken Destiny 's " Gauntlet " storyline , a side story set after the events of Soulcalibur IV , Ivy assists the character Hilde and her party develop a cure for her father 's ailment . When told that Cervantes ' soul would be required as payment , they attempt to renegotiate , only for Ivy to use the protagonist 's back as a chair while repeating her terms .

Designed as a weapon with the longest reach in Soulcalibur , Ivy 's sword Valentine consists of several smaller blades linked together by a chain , able to take either broadsword or chain whip forms . These forms are represented by different stances Ivy can use in the series , altering many of her attacks for each and applying different uses to either form of the weapon , with some , such as Spiral Lust , a component of an existing attack . In addition to these the sword can also have the segments be split apart , in which case they will attack the opponent in different ways before recombining on the sword 's chain . Due to her variety , Ivy has been noted as being able to attack

from any range , however she has also been described as difficult to properly use unless utilizing a range the opponent is weakest at . However , attacks such as Ivy Brambler allow her greater variety in range , and allow for chaining into other attacks upon a successful strike . Other attacks , such as Summoning Suffering and Calamity Symphony , involve grappling with the opponent to damage them , though utilize complex controller inputs that require them to be utilized in tandem with other moves . With the Xbox Live release of Soulcalibur , due to its complexity the former was utilized for an achievement .

= = = Promotion and merchandising = = =

Ivy was featured amongst other characters for Soulcalibur II 's arcade flyer , and has been featured in other printed advertisements for games in the series . She has also appeared on the cover on every Sony @-@ based console game in the series , as well as Soulcalibur Legends for the Nintendo Wii . She is also visible on the white Xbox 360 Soulcalibur IV arcade joystick alongside Hilde and Siegfried , and the box art for Korean distributions of the lilac @-@ colored PSP . In addition , the character has been used to demonstrate the graphical features of both Soulcalibur IV and its follow @-@ up title , Broken Destiny in a tech demo and promotional flyer respectively . Ivy was also featured alongside Siegfried in a manga adaptation of Soulcalibur Legends printed in the Japanese sh?nen Kerokero Ace ; the manga , written in a humorous tone , used a running gag of Siegfried 's annoyance that Ivy was significantly taller than he was .

Several action figures and figurines have been made bearing Ivy 's likeness . Following the release of Soulcalibur , a resin kit by Kurushima was released , alongside a figurine by Kyosho . Epoch C @-@ Works released a 1 / 12 scale Ivy action figure of in a set of three for the title as well , featuring equipable weapons . In August 2003 , Todd McFarlane Productions released an Ivy sculpture amongst a set of five based on Soulcalibur II . The immobile figure was modeled after her primary outfit and stood six inches tall with a base and retracted sword . Yujin released a four inch tall figurine based upon her Soulcalibur II artwork as part of their " Namco Girls Series # 5 " line of gashapon figurines . A twelve inch tall immobile PVC figurine modeled after her Soulcalibur III appearance was released by Enterbrain in September 2008 , using a white version of her outfit and extended sword ; a dark blue outfit for an " international color " version of the sculpture was also produced .

= = Reception = =

Although commonly cited as one of the most difficult characters to play as in the Soul series , Ivy has received a great deal of positive reception and has been described as one of the series ' most " staple " and " stalwart " characters . From her Soulcalibur II appearance , Ivy was nominated in G4 's 2004 G @-@ Phoria awards show under " Hottest Character " , alongside Vanessa Z. Schneider and Rikku ; she was also a character in their 2005 " Video Game Vixens " awards show , winning in the category of " Kinkiest Accessory " . Several other " Top Ten " lists have also featured Ivy in similar context , including those by Team Xbox , Machinima.com , and Spike TV . In 2009 , she was featured on the cover of French magazine Ig alongside other female video game characters as one of the top heroines of gaming .

Ivy was cited in the book " Disconnected America " as an example of Soulcalibur II 's contrast to titles including Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter in terms of a comparable real @-@ world experience . Play magazine called her one of the " finest females in all of 3D fighting " , adding of the characters in the series she was the one they enjoyed playing as the most . She placed second in IGN 's " Soulcalibur : The Top Ten Fighters " article , which stated " Few , if any , Soul fighters so aptly sum up what the series is about as Ivy Valentine . " IGN also included her in their list of guest characters they would have liked to have seen for Super Smash Bros. Brawl , and in their " Top 50 Chicks Behaving Badly " list , describing her as " a pain in the ass , but she 's got a tight one , so she 's okay by us " . Gamespy named her one of the " 25 Extremely Rough Brawlers " in video gaming , praising the brutality of her fighting style and weapon . Tom 's Games named her one of

the fifty greatest female characters in video game history , stating that as " an anti @-@ hero who frequently clashes with other Souls , Ivy is a fascinating character for a fighting game " . UGO.com placed her sixteenth on their list of the " Top 50 Evil Women " , noting her role as an antagonist in the first Soulcalibur while adding that it could be " difficult to truly appreciate [her] villainy " due to her attractiveness , and adding that her appearance and attitude made her " a feared competitor " . In 2013 , Complex enlisted the 20 best characters from the series , ranking her the seventh best character .

Ivy appeared several times in GameDaily 's " Babe of the Week " series of articles , including as a stand @-@ alone article and at eleventh place in their " Top 50 Hottest Game Babes " article . They later named her amongst other female characters in the Soul series as an example of a strong and iconic female character in video gaming . The New York Times felt her appearance came from the same " Goth cyberaesthetic [...] that gave us The Matrix " , one they felt was already becoming outdated . UGO.com ranked her eighteenth in their " Top 50 Videogame Hotties " article , stating " However much she instills fear in our hearts , we revel in the opportunity to stare at her from the safety of our television sets . " In later articles , they named her one of the top eleven girls of gaming at number ten and one of the top eleven video game heroines at number eight , stating " What can you say about a chick that carries a whip ? If you 're talking about Ivy from the Soul Calibur series , you could say she 's pretty intimidating . "

= = = As a sex symbol = = =

Ivy 's appearance and demeanor have been a focus of discussions , with her commonly compared to or described as a dominatrix , and has been noted both as the series ' sexiest female and one of the " most beautiful women in gaming " . She has been displayed in various third @-@ party media , her likeness appearing in material including magazine swimsuit issue pin @-@ ups , periodicals such as Play 's annual " Girls of Gaming " series , and pornographic d?jinshi . Advertisements have also focused on her visual appeal , such as Sega 's television commercial for Soulcalibur 's Dreamcast port . Other media facets have made comparisons between her and Lara Croft in terms of attractiveness , or depicted them as rivals alongside other female characters in a similar context . Other sources have used her as a standard for a character archetype , comparing later created female characters to her design and appearance . Studies on video games have noted Ivy in the subject of games " growing up " , discussing the increasing popularity of " video game babes " and the reactions of men and women towards them .

The book Game On : The History and Culture of Videogames cited Ivy as an example of realistic character design affected by " the Japanese ' deformed ' aesthetic and the global influence of cartoon animation " , noting she made characters such as Lara Croft look " positively monastic " by comparison . Race , Gender , Media : Considering Diversity Across Audiences , Content , and Producers used her as an example of most female characters in video games , describing her body and clothing as being created solely for the viewing pleasure of players , often males . Rachael Hutchinson , Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Delaware , described her sexualized appearance and behavior as devices used by the developers to emphasize her above @-@ average height compared to other female characters in the title as " deviant " , justifying " social and cultural expectation regarding the female form " in the process . In an article on Kotaku , Gamasutra 's Leigh Alexander used Ivy as a primary example of video game representations of the ideal male and female versus the real world and the concept that " sex sells " , noting the unconscious appeal of such a character to represent oneself as in a game .

Reception of the character 's sex appeal has been mostly positive , though with a share of criticism as well as her design evolved through the series . Joystiq bemoaned her appearance in Soulcalibur IV , describing it as an extreme in lieu of games such as Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball and noting that while a full redesign was unnecessary , " At least [Dead or Alive] keeps its breasts in context . " MSNBC described her attire as " the pinnacle of preposterous " , noting that while it revolved around her femme fatale design , it appeared physically painful and made little sense to wear into combat . Former GameSpot editor Jeff Gerstmann described the alterations to her

appearance for Soulcalibur IV as unnecessary , stating " boobs are awesome , but there 's a line . Ivy is over this line . " GamesRadar content editor David Houghton described her alongside similar characters as " festering adolescent wank @-@ fantasies " , adding directly regarding Ivy " [t] his is not female empowerment " . The subject was later brought up again at the 2011 PAX East convention , in which an all @-@ female journal panel led by The Escapist 's Susan Arendt agreed that while the character was strong and difficult but rewarding to master in the original Soulcalibur , she was reduced to " a nice ass bouncing around the room " in later games .

In contrast , British magazine CVG cited her appearance in Soulcalibur IV as appealing , stating " Ivy ... we like because she barely wears anything . Yes , we like videogame girls . " IGN in their " Babes of Soulcalibur " article noted that while her outfit pushed the line even by game standards , they had no actual complaint towards that aspect of the character . Team Xbox emphasized that while her appearance played a factor in her allure , her fighting skills and unique weapon were significant as well , adding that " Ivy never disappoints in a swordfight " . Leigh Alexander in an article for GameSetWatch noted that while characters such as Samus Aran served as " bastions of dignity " , characters such as Ivy filled an important role in video games too , stating " [i] t looks like Ivy ? s back is set to snap ? but she ? s a game character ; she ? ll be fine . Why not just enjoy it ? " The Escapist noted that the character 's behavior and sex appeal defined the character rather than serving as an extraneous aspect , stating " Ivy 's oversexed dominatrix demeanor perfectly compliments her confident , punishing move set . " UGO.com repeated the sentiment , noting in their " Top 11 Girls of Gaming " article " Soul Calibur 's mega @-@ bombastic whip @-@ wielding hottie isn 't the only babe in the game , or even the best @-@ endowed ... but her combination of sultry moves and revealing outfits shoots her up the charts . " In an examination of feminist viewpoints regarding women in gaming , comedian and writer Liana Kerzner cited Ivy as an example of misperception of an empowered female character , noting that when compared to characters such as Wonder Woman the latter was considered a positive character for being " empowered " despite sharing similar exposing outfits and physical builds . She further went on to state that the character was interesting for having " to fight her own flawed battle with no help from anyone " , and that women passionate about gaming had more in common with the character : " aggressive , intimidating , combative , and scrabbling through life by sheer will , armed with homemade weapons " .