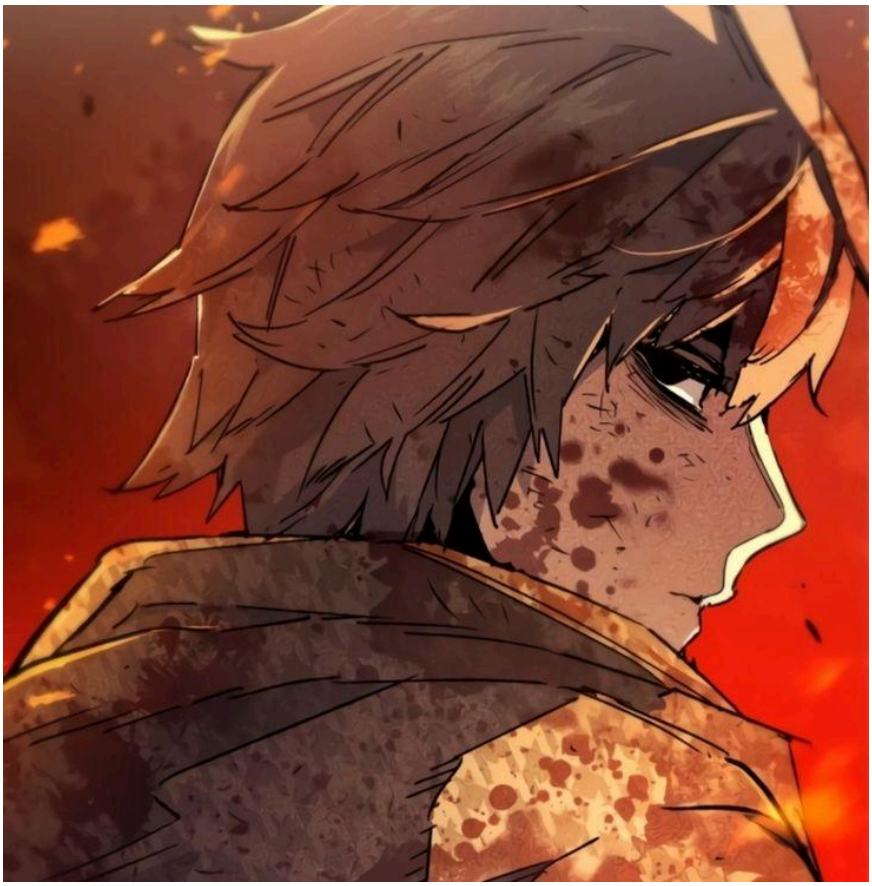
Ijin Yu Writing Analysis



Introduction and Backstory

Ijin is shown as an individual who spent most of his life in the field of combat, barely having any form of social interaction outside of that. When he was 9, he was in a plane crash that not only ended the lives of his parents, but caused him to lose his memories. He was founded and raised by “The Camp”, a program made by Iron (a global military corporation), dedicated to turning around 1,000 recruits into deadly mercenaries. For five years, he was forced to survive grueling training conditions, being bullied and tortured by other members of the camp, and being put through war zones. He eventually became the best number in the camp, earning the title “001”. However, he began to defect from the camp due to not wanting to kill a mother and her child. The camp tried to kill him off, only to be nearly eradicated by 003. He continued to work as a mercenary for another five years until he met Major Kang Hamchan, who traced Ijin’s family and returned him home.

Altruism and Utilitarianism

Altruism is the principle and practice of concern for the well-being and/or happiness of other humans or animals above oneself. Utilitarianism is a theory of morality that advocates actions that foster happiness or pleasure and oppose actions that cause unhappiness or harm. Despite the “survival of the fittest” mentality The Camp had, Ijin never truly adopted this way of thinking, even during his time as a number. This is all because of the help he received from the other numbers, such as 005 and 008. He goes out of his way to help others, even those who try to harm or kill him or those he cares for. This is even reflected through his occupation as a bodyguard, someone tasked with the protection of another person. During episode 29, it tells about how Ijin tried to save Shin Yuna’s father, Shin Inguk, after hearing him talk about his daughter. He even accepted and completed his request to give an apology to his daughter.

“What Family Feels Like…”

This is one of the main examples of Ijin’s humanization. Ijin spent his entire life fighting for either his own survival or the survival of others. He never had someone put his life and safety before their own, without any concern for their own lives. However, after seeing things like the mother protecting her child from before, he began to wonder what family was and its importance to people. After seeing Dayun shouting for him to run, as well as crying when she saw him bleeding, he began to understand how families look after each other, each when their own lives are in danger.

Guilt and Trauma

He has flashbacks and nightmares of his former life as a number and mercenary, often of the harsh conditions, bullying from peers, or the lives he’s taken. He also does things from questioning if he deserves the right to be in a relationship with someone due to the lives he’s taken, to even blaming himself for the deaths of most of the numbers, even though he didn’t kill a single one. During episode 77, he talks about how he just wants to be with his family and is only worried about the life he has now, while also thinking about a past battle. He wants to escape his past and leave it behind.

“It’s okay to cry if you’re sad.”

This is where, in my opinion, we get to see the best of Ijin’s humanization. These chapters tell us about how he was saved by Lucas, the chief of the mercenary village Ijin stayed in, and the beginning of Ijin’s mercenary days in general. Throughout chapters 161 and 163, Ijin acted like a machine, only focused on his survival and the survival of those within the mercenary village. After hearing that the chief, the man who saved and raised him until he found his actual family, died and he heard his final words through Major Kang, he began to cry for the first time,

something which left him confused and shocked. It was the first time he lost a loved one that wasn't a comrade from The Camp.

Mad Dog

In my opinion, Mad Dog is basically a foil for Ijin, a man who upholds the ideals of The Camp. Where Ijin sees the Numbers as family, Mad Dog merely sees them as weapons to be used by himself and Iron. After Ijin left a scar upon his face, he became obsessed with making Ijin suffer as much as possible before killing him. He uses Dayun and Grandpa Yu as hostages to force Ijin into a trap against Forest agents. When that didn't work and the other numbers came in, he threatens to have Ijin's sister killed if he doesn't kill the numbers. However, Ijin hesitated, which led to him before captured by the other numbers. Before being killed, Mad Dog talks about how surprised he is that the Numbers could still trust one another, despite the hellish conditions of The Camp, even questioning 002 on how they are able to do so.

"She's like family to me…"

The idea of family is was a concept he struggled to understand before returning to Korea, and after understanding it, it's a concept that he greatly values. In episode 99, when 005 is eating dinner with Ijin and his family, he talks about how she helped him during his life as a number. After dinner, he continues his point by saying how he could have died at any moment during The Camp, but he knew he could count on them to watch his back. This has remained consistent in both his past and future interactions with other numbers.

Ijin and Alice

Both were the best in an organization training them to become the best mercenaries possible and both have young siblings that they want to protect at all costs. The only difference between them is that Alice doesn't share the same level of Altruism as Ijin does. While Ijin was helped and taken care of by some of the numbers, Alice was coerced into being a Forest Agent, while also having to watch her own back at all times. When the numbers saved her and her brother, she even questions if they were going to use him as a hostage to use her as well. While Ijin is willing to help nearly anyone, friend or foe, never caring about being harmed for people he met hours ago, Alice is usually concerned about herself and the people she cares about, mainly her younger brother. This is not to say that she's selfish, but less likely to trust others than Ijin is.