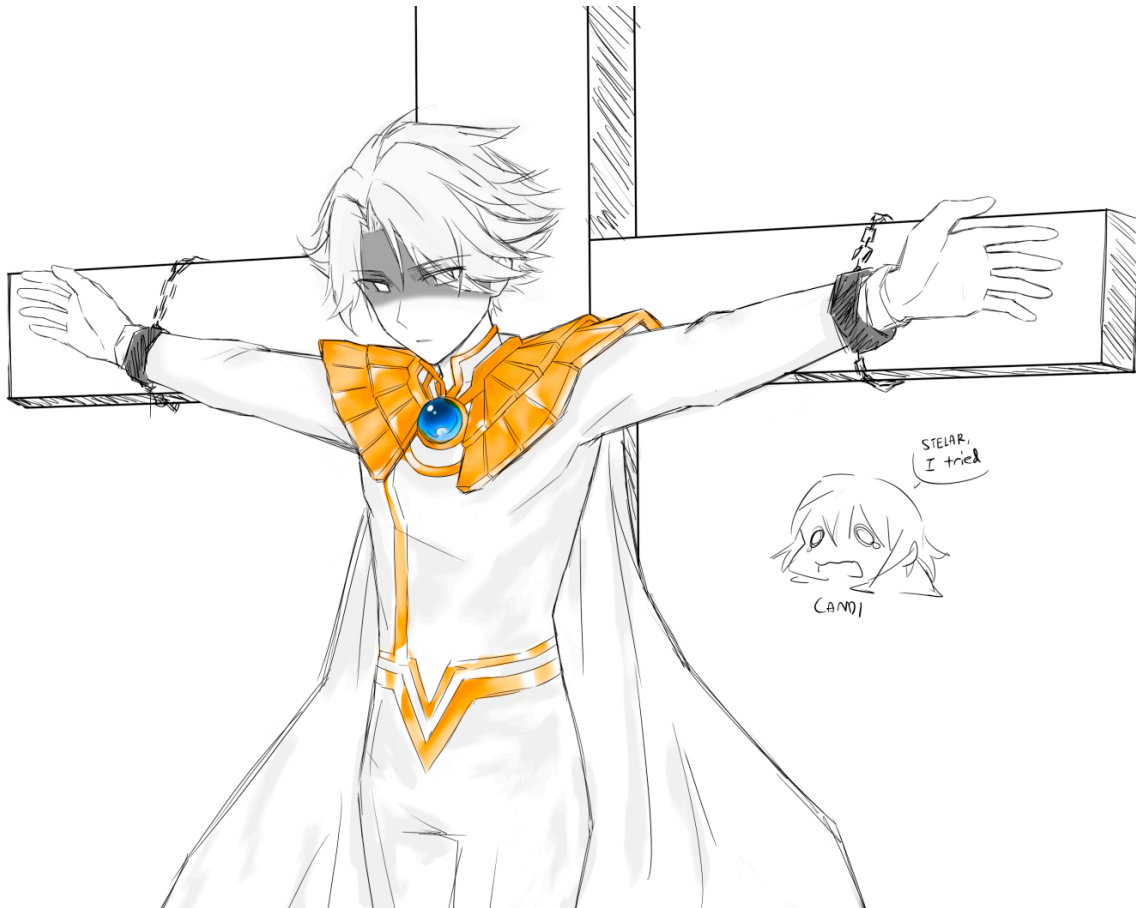


Nice is literally Jesus.



(sketch done by Candi, coloring done by me, stelar)

"nice is jesus doc is the best doc i've ever read"
-a smile fan

"It made me cry and helped me find religion"
-random LL glazer

Little side note: This is not a Nice character analysis (maybe a little at the end) but more a deep look into what role Nice plays in the narrative. I have been working on this since episode 21, and meant to publish it after episode 22, but Ahu's episode preview made me hold onto it for a bit.

CHAPTER 1 - THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY

I hated Nice.

I'm not even joking, for a short period of time I really grew to resent him. I felt like I lost the character I loved. I felt betrayed. Tricked. Deceived. And mislead. I felt like I had to go on a path to rediscover myself to go on with my daily life. But on this journey I found one final answer that honestly ties everything together and explains everything and makes me rest at peace.

Nice is Jesus.

Nice was written and created to die for everyone's sins. Literally. Looking back on it, it is actually comical how much the poor dude has to take to make the other characters shine or push them forward or be a key character in their development.

The show gained a lot of attention because of its shock value in the first three minutes of the show, sacrificing one of the assumed poster boys immediately. It surprised many people and it was an insanely strong hook, because Nice, a character, with no lines, no screen time, close to no characterization, made us understand in under 30 seconds of showtime that being a hero is a messy job and that a deep dive into this thematic is something we can expect from this show. It set up interest. Some people even got invested in the mystery of the pretty white haired boy who died. Wanted to know more.

Nice is where the story began and he sadly won't be there for the end. You know how X talks about everyone being just a pawn in this game? Well Nice is by far the biggest pawn for the other characters. Let's take a deeper look at what he did for the other heroes.

CHAPTER 2 - EVERYONE'S FOIL

Disgusting.

A Sacrifice for Queen



I'll keep this one short but Nice was just one of many characters to demonstrate Queen's power. The more people were caught up in it the more aura for Queen.

But that is not why I'm putting Queen here. This might seem small and insignificant to some but the stare that Queen gives Nice feels huge for a character that has been characterized so little. It is very vague why she is giving him that look, if it is even anything personal, maybe it is just her resting-bitch face and she didn't mean anything by that. But for a large amount of the community it could only mean one thing: She was looking down on Nice. And people applauded her for it and some would even go as far to "thank nice" for enabling Queen to make that expression.

Among Murderers.

A Sacrifice For E-Soul and Ghostblade



This is also kind of minor in parallel to Queen but in a different way in that they did not directly even interact.

E-Soul killed for "his" justice.

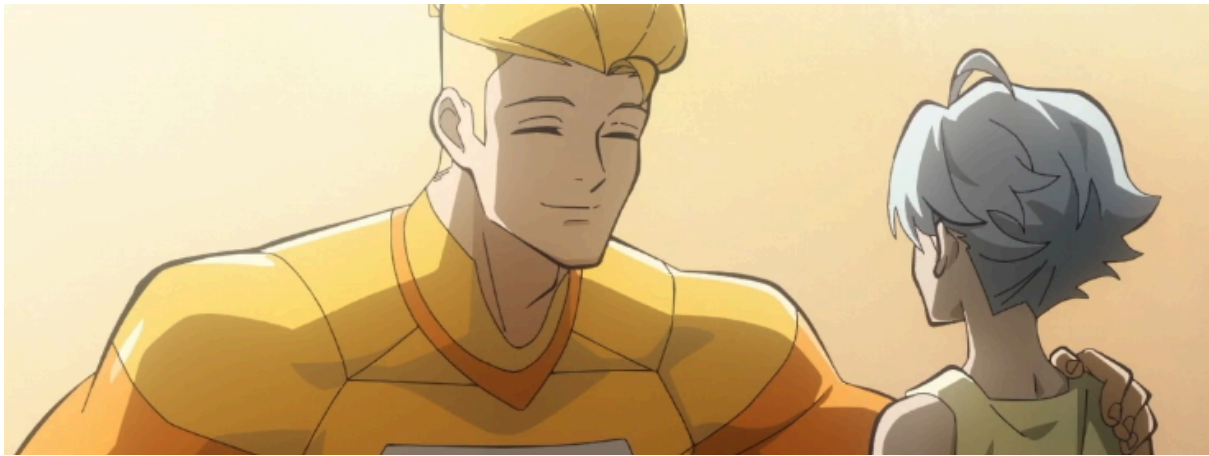
Ghostblade killed because he doesn't know better.

Nice intended to kill to rise up as a hero.

For many people, Nice was the worst of the characters with confirmed kill counts (despite not even really having a confirmation that Nice killed) but it set out for people to rank Nice as morally the worst hero, gaining even more negative attention being called a fraud.

Forsaken By His Choice.

A Sacrifice For Smile.



I think Smile is a very interesting one, because as much as a key person he is for Nice, this also works in the reverse in a way. Of course you could say it isn't necessary, but showing the impact Smile has on people over his long career, how much positivity he tried to emit, a lot of it is communicated to us through Nice. It is Nice's flashback where we see once again how popular Smile is with kids, and it is Nice's current state where we see Smile still being the same supporting mentor, only hoping for other people's success and giving him advice. It is a very short but still rather powerful moment for those two and helps to characterize especially Smile a bit better, that at the very end, he is just a very upstanding guy trying his best to be a hero with positive influence, no matter who.

Which sadly, all comes to an end, because of Nice's indecision. It is almost frustrating how Smile believed in the best of Nice when he thought he was going to support him. Which actually even made Nice change his mind, but it still backfired. This ends up with Smile showing him one last heroic act and how his choice will always be to protect others, making him a very beloved character in the community, in contrast to Nice, who has long lost his way and has been turned into an indecisive wimp in comparison.

Weak Determination

A Sacrifice For Dragon Boy.



Nice used as a contrast continues to be a trend. I didn't really touch on it above but the Nice we see in the Dragonboy arc is very different from the one we see in the Ruins Incident. To me it really feels like the writers chose to exaggerate a side of Nice to underline how different he is to whoever he is supposed to shadow. In this case, we have Dragonboy, a very showy, violent, loud and proud person. While Nice was also shown to be rather violent

and even almost psychopathic in the ruins incident, those traits have all been retracted and we now just see a little insecure boy who has lost his way. This makes Dragonboy stand out even more and makes us see how far Dragonboy is taking his goal, while Nice seemingly changed his mind at the last second. I think this arc was all about how far someone's determination can take someone. While Dragonboy seems to be able to withstand all of the negative pressure and believe in his actions, while Nice crumbles under it. Nice hesitates, causing Dragonboy to easily overpower Nice in their fight and also climb the rankings, while Nice stagnates.

Redirection Of Rage.

A Sacrifice For Shang De.



Continuing the trend after Dragonblade this is the other character where Nice plays a key role to characterize someone. Nice in this case takes the role of showing us Shang De's desperation to execute revenge for the murder of his son. His treatment of Nice shows us how deep he has fallen and is probably barely thinking straight at this point, only motivated by hatred with no regard to anyone around him, utilizing any tool he can get his hands on. The way Nice reacts to Shang De shows us just how cruel Shang De has become.

The Right To Express Yourself.

A Sacrifice For X.



As if it wasn't enough that Smile saved Nice, he also has to be saved by X. I just want to point out, this is the first time we see X meddling with something by his own choice and actually got a scene that lasted longer than three seconds of his power. So Nice (together with Smile and Dragonboy) are a part of the catalyst for X. I also wonder if Nice actually experiencing X's power, seemingly being the only one not frozen in the "3D dimension" will play a bigger role. But honestly that is not the point I'm trying to make. Point is Nice was used to show us X's power.

And since I like the word contrast and narrative so much I also want to highlight the scene where both of them confirm that Smile is dead. Nice breaks down, clearly showing his emotions on his sleeve. But X is not allowed to do that. He has to keep his identity hidden and can't give any possible hints away (which he ends up doing anyway by grabbing the necklace). I think X's somber expression next to Nice's screams of agony made for a very haunting scene. Despite Nice clearly overtaking the visuals and sound, X's lack of expression while silently holding onto Smile's necklace almost leaves a bigger impression and makes us wonder, what exactly is running through his head.

You Don't Deserve To Be A Hero.

A Sacrifice For Loli.



As many people are aware, Loli was never a very popular and liked character. Her episode ratings on IMDb are the lowest, not because the episodes were bad, but simply because people didn't like the character.

There are various reasons that people have for disliking her. Some people think she is too violent. Annoying. Childish. A brat. Just a cute girl (very ironic). I think you can get a very good image of what kind of people don't like her. While I do think Loli's first episode was phenomenal and did a good job building her up, her second episode took a nosedive. I personally was very neutral about her. And I think so were a lot of people.

Until Episode 20. People cheered. People were proud. People felt for her. People were amazed by her. People started making posts and comments complimenting her. Why? Because we have a convenient scapegoat that is not one of the main 10 that we can use to look like a complete fool. A character that is already dead and not relevant. A character we can show being very problematic. A character that we don't have to make sure is seen as powerful, smart, brave or any of the likes. A character that we won't care if the audience makes fun of. Yes, exactly. Nice.

It is a fact, that Loli, an unranked hero with, to be fair, an overpowered suit, was able to hold back Nice for a good while also having the best crashout in the entire series so far, made her win a lot of fans. At the cost of Nice of course. You would regularly see "fraud", "bum" etc. comments about Nice after this, and people saying how much of a "goat" Loli is after the episode. At the same time, this episode brought back a lot of hype for the show. Nice coming back got a lot of people curious, and the engagement with the show is way way higher after that episode. The official ranking votes had the highest turnout in a while again. Interactions within the fandom grew and it began to be more chaotic.

Saying Nice didn't play a big role would be really ignorant. He generated a lot of hate here that turned in a lot of hype for the other characters.

Who Am I?

A sacrifice for Ahu.



The Ahu Episode is really a rough one for Nice. This is where we truthfully get to experience Nice at his lowest and worst.

Let's maybe go a step back and look at Ahu. Ahu is an old circus dog that was almost about to be killed but got "saved" by Xin Ya to become a hero. Ahu, in accordance with his age, is rather grumpy but still goes along with.. not a lot of enthusiasm.

At this point we already know Nice's story which is almost the opposite. Nice wants to be a hero and he follows all of Shang De's commands like a good doggy. He really wants to impress his owner at all costs. And the irony here is, unlike Ahu, who got saved from death, Nice is led to his demise because of his obedience.

I just thought that was an interesting parallel so I wanted to point that out.

But yeah, unlike Episode 20 in the Loli fight, Nice here is not going for blood. He doesn't want to get his hands dirty. He doesn't even bother doing his job by himself anymore since he has Split by his side. So after making his grand entrance he leans back and watches while viewers are probably fuming how he could just stand and watch the murder of a little girl and dog. It hits even harder because how Xin Ya earlier in the episode goes to say "Heroes like Nice are probably way too busy for people like us."

Ahu having only one episode is rough. And having also to somehow stuff in Nice's end is really rough. To make things flow well within 20 minutes you need to throw out any nuances and exaggerate traits to get your point across quickly and clearly. It doesn't have to be spelled out that you want your top 10 main characters to look good while you want your narrative side characters to assist their growth. Which they underline even further by the art style. While Ahu and Xin Ya look very adorable, Nice looks like a comedic villain with no redeeming traits. How could you not cheer for the cute owner and pet to beat him? It's as easy as ABC and helps the viewer to forget Nice's tragic backstory from last episode for a bit. The feel-good chemicals that you get after Ahu gets to have his "Yang-Cheng" moment and rise about in the face of jeopardy. Maybe some people even had tears in their eyes after the little grumpy dog stands up and protects his owner from the villains that are Nice and Split. They couldn't have stuffed Ahu's rise to fame and Nice's fall to the ground in a more poetic but very forced way, together with Shang De's line that Nice is below a dog.

Ahu definitely gained a lot of fans and even rose above Loli in the rankings with his episode on the voting and Ahu fans get to enjoy dancing on Nice's grave.

The Bigger Fraud.

A sacrifice for Lin Ling.



Lin Ling is an overworked sad boy who suddenly becomes a hero and finds a lot of enjoyment in it. The issue is he is living someone else's life. Nice's life.

I think the whole story is pretty self explanatory so I don't want to go too deep into it, but more into what it tries to tell us, the viewer, the desired effect and how the audience is reacting to it.

Even before episode 20 and 21 a popular phrase has been "Lin Ling is better at being Nice than Nice." which only has been strengthened since.

Nice's reputation has been built up with staged fights and manipulations with fear. Shang De used every tool he could to push Nice into the top 10. And Nice of course obliged like an obedient dog. He listened and did as he was told and kept up his perfect persona. Nothing about him was real and Nice probably lost himself a long time ago but he still kept going. But despite all that, despite playing dirty and being desperate, despite all the fake glitters, Nice did not reach the top 10.

Until he finally reached it. But it was Lin Ling who did. It was Lin Ling who did what Nice couldn't. It was Lin Ling relying on his very advanced deduction skills and creativity that helped him make the leap into the top. But at what cost?

We do learn that Lin Ling does not seem to have much he holds dear to him. In a way, living out the life of someone else is all he has, except one person in his life, Moon. So him throwing out his fake persona to save the one he loves in contrast to Nice who only managed to throw out his own life left a big impression on many people.

The Lin Ling and Nice comparison are endless and they made sure Lin Ling will be held in higher regard because he made the good choices that Nice never made.

CHAPTER 3 - A GIFT FOR THE NARRATIVE THAT GIVES ON GIVING



The Sun That Became The Shadow

It is ironic that Nice's symbol is a fully filled sun, while in actuality he is the shadow for the other character's light. He pushes their narrative further and does this while also making them look better in contrast.

It is actually insane how much heavy lifting Nice is doing for this show as there would be a lot of narrative missing without him. Despite being a side character that is just made as a foil for the others, he has a strong characterization that some might like to jump and dump on because he is just too good at making other characters look better.

The Tragedy Outside The Story

For me? I just think the role he was given in the story is a tragedy and that he has way more potential than just being another character's convenient plot device.

But in a show with so many characters and so little screentime, someone has to take the L.

All in all, Nice is just a very unfortunate character who time and time again had to be made the villain, a fraud, a loser, an unpleasant person to be around, a wimp but a bloodlust psycho at the same time, a hesitating coward but also someone with anger issues, someone that people look down on and someone who leads others to their unfortunate fate. Someone who is greedy for his position but also someone who is manipulated and pressured easily. Someone who had to be saved more than once by others. Someone who can't even bother to do the dirty work on his own.

They really did make sure to pack as many negative traits as possible in one character, with some even contradicting themselves because every new arc Nice feels like a completely new person. It really feels like they tried to make the character show as many different facades as possible to be able to contrast whoever he is supposed to shadow, because he always ends up perfectly highlighting certain traits of the other characters.

Condensing

The story of Nice is a complex and messy one. I think by now we can understand why he was written the way he was now, but let's highlight another issue: he is a character that by nature needs a lot of context, scenes, nuances and background to understand how we got from A to B to C to D. We got shown his "key" moments, but not what exactly led to it and what happened in between.

We never saw his thought process. **We never got Nice just by himself.** We never saw Nice just ponder and collect his thoughts. He is always in the middle of the action and bringing another character in the spotlight. His story was never bothered to be told by someone, but he was always part of the story. He was there when the story needed him, but he was never given the spot to tell his story. We are left to puzzle the pieces together by ourselves, which a lot of casual watchers would not bother to do which will leave a rather jarring impression for the average viewer not taking a deep dive into his circumstances and motives. He is a character that could easily write the story himself, because so many things were simply left untold.

But yet, he was used for so many things at the end:

His artificial perfection contrasts Lin Lings choice to be genuine.

He is someone who is willing to kill for fame, which contrasts Loli, who stood up for justice against all odds.

His hesitation contrasts Dragonboy who believes in his path.

He is an awkward and struggling hero who is contrasting the mentoring and goodwilled Smile.

He is a criminal judged by the Queen's righteousness.

He is someone who lost his heroic roots a long time ago, contrasting Ahu who discovered that he believes that he can be a hero for Xin Ya.

Nice wasn't just a tool for Shang De, but also for Haolin to be convenient and perfect for the narrative of many of the characters. And he excelled at it, allowing many stories to be told and many characters to progress in their journey.

I will miss him.