

## We Stan Well-Written Villains

Do I really have to say how much I love villains? I'm going to be honest; nothing is better than reading or watching a well-written villain/antagonist come to life on paper or screen.

I'll be covering both villains and antagonists. I say antagonists since they aren't always the villain. Take Zuko in the later episodes, he becomes more antagonistic than villain and goes through a redeeming, something I am so excited to talk about. One of the reasons why I love villains is because of that trope.

**1: Cool motive, still murder.** I love that line from Brooklyn Nine-Nine because it just encapsulates how I feel about sob stories. This is not to say that you shouldn't give your villain a sob story, I do it. (Though let me say, there's just something about villains who do shit because they can with no real reason that's



just ... yes.) The trick is to not make it seem like you're trying to sway the audience to totally change their mind, because then it feels forced. When I was writing Saren from Dragon Racer, I made sure the reader can hate him just as much before as they do now. I also made him unapologetic to a point. He's sorry that it was you who got caught up in it, but that doesn't mean he wouldn't do it again or to another person. He had a reason and to him, that reason is justified. Biggest thing here, have your villain leave off with a 'I'm not asking for forgiveness' vibe. Don't give them a sob story and then expect everyone to immediately go, "oh, they're totally justified now for killing those fifty people." If people want to hate, let them hate. Give your readers room to make up their own minds.

**2: Villains are still characters.** I'm going to use a series I love to death but have an issue with the villain ... Avatar the Last Airbender. That damn show is just \*chefs kiss\* but Ozai is a horrible villain. A character is a person, a person has both flaws and strengths. Even a psychopath is charming and can be sweet and intelligent, these are strengths. These strengths might even help keep loyalty within the ranks or help with persuasion. Ozai ... does he even have a strength which in this context means a positive. Like he seems like your run of the mill doomsday villain. "I want to take over and that's about it. I also

abuse my children on the weekdays, torture my runaway, 'held against her will' wife, and plan to kill children because hey, why not. They fucked with me indirectly and these fire-bending hands are rated E for everyone." I'm sorry but your resume is weak, son! So, give your villains those good traits and the negative ones.

**3: You exist, so I kill you. Oh shit, he works for me?** I. Hate. This. If your villain is the type to kill off his henchmen for no reason, then he shouldn't have henchmen. Who works for a guy like that? Your villain kills off Bob because he raised his hand during the meeting, no that's a toxic relationship sweetie, blink twice if you need help. Your villain kills off Bob because he sent a Level 3 henchmen against a Level 13 protagonist that they can't even think about capturing, yea still no. Bob! Get out of there! Your villain kills Bob because it helps the villain reach their goal. Whelp, sorry Bob, it's been fun. We get it, your villain is evil. That doesn't mean he needs to go around slicing necks because he didn't have enough sugar in his coffee. Especially if they need to grow an army. Obviously not.

**4: For a villain you sure do suck/are OP.** This comes in two forms, either your villains sucks ass and we have no idea how he's even the leader or he's way too powerful, like what. I'm talking no weakness in sight and we're spending half the movie trying to figure out how the hero will ever defeat them. Magneto is killable. Sauron is thirsty for that ring and without it, well he can't handle that. Making a villain whose only capable of dying on a blood moon by a character with two different colored eyes, a missing hand, and a speech impediment ... that's just not fair. But at the same time that sounds like it could be a hilarious Monty Python kind of story ... Don't make your villains suck or make them OP, moving on ....

**5: Is this what they call a plot twist? No, villain.** Gossip Girl being Dan Humphrey or Hans wanting to kill Anna and take over Arendelle (or however you spell that god-forbidden place) or Evelyn from Incredibles 2 (like what the fuck was her plan and motivation. It made zero sense). Wait, let me not forget Callahan from Big Hero Six, oh shit was he just horrible. These, and more, make no sense. This is what they call a twist villain and more often than not, they suck. Why? Because most of the time the twist is just 'bleh' and their motivation and plan sucks ass. One of the best that I can think of is Stinky Pete in Toy Story 2, I didn't see that crap coming. One, because Stinky Pete was more antagonist than villain most of the movie, and two, the movie had already kind of set up a villain. Stinky Pete became the villain purely because of Woody not wanting to do what he says. Everything he did lined up with his character and wanting to go to Japan, so looking back it made sense. You have a 'oh, that makes sense'

moment. The ones above, don't have that. You don't look at Callahan's character and then his villain side and say 'ah, that makes sense' ... because it doesn't ... The quickest way to mess up a twist villain is by doing everything within your power to make your villain unsuspecting in every part of the plot. Because when it comes time for them to be suspicious, we're like, "nope, you cheated. That makes no sense." Honestly, just give me the obvious rich guy.

In conclusion, if you have a twist villain then make it line up perfectly with the character we already understood. They should have the same traits, goals, and personality after the twist. Maybe slightly more mean, impatient, or manipulative, because the cat's out of the bag, but things should still line up.

**6: Redeem me!** Oh, who loves a redeemable villain? This girl. I seriously do love redeemable villains, mostly because they're a challenge and just so damn fun \*stares at Saren and Zillah\* Best redeemable villains off the top of my head, Catra and Zuko. Zuko, more so than anyone. Catra I'm a bit in the middle with, even though I love her, but her redemption is kinda sped up and they kind of do a 'one good deed makes up for almost destroying the world' thing with her. A bad one? Gonna be honest but, the Winter Soldier. He was redeemed because he was Captain America's friend?? ... Naw ... he still killed people. We just gonna let all that go? I mean we just saw on video him killing Iron Man's – alright. My biggest advice for redeemable characters is to let the reader make up their mind and don't force it. Also, have them give those apologies and make good on repairing and fixing. And the biggest one, show us those issues they come across. Katara made it hard for Zuko which helped us as audience members like him more when we saw how badly he wanted to help her, proving he was turning a new leaf. Catra, well her whole romance with Adora ... \*clears throat\* Show us the struggle and the wins and don't have everyone just magically say, "oh yea, you're a good guy now. GG."

**7: Challenge me you cannot, for I am you.** One thing that I think some writers fail to realize is the parallel that makes the hero to villain dynamic. The villain's and hero's goal are not always the same, but to reach their goal they must, in a way, destroy the other. That's what makes them enemies. Hero to villain is a mirror in a way. Take Killmonger and T'Challa. T'Challa is stuck in tradition though he wants to get out and help the world, Killmonger is not stuck in tradition and is all set to help the world ... just not in the best way. Professor Xavier wants mutants to be accepted and equals to humans but wants to do it peacefully. Magneto wants mutants to be respected and on top where they belong and doesn't give a damn about what humans think. Obviously, both of them can't have it their way and so they clash.

**8: It's just fiction yo.** I wanted to put this last because it's an actual big one. I'm going to use the fandom breaker here, alright, everyone get ready. You ready? You ready for this one name that for some reason always causes massive arguments? You sure? I warned you ... Anders. Not going to get too deep, if you don't know him then ... I don't know what to tell ya. For those who do, you probably already groaned. The reason I bring him up is because he's like Solas to me, another Dragon Age villain, people love and hate them both. Now, if someone came up to me and tried to tell me why they love Anders, I'm going to nod and say cool. If someone came up to me and tried to tell me why they hate Anders, I'm going to nod and say cool. That's because these are fictional characters, and no way does your feelings about them make the person feeling that some horrific human being. Now, if you came up to me and tried to tell me why Nazis are actually heroes then yea, sorry bud but you need to back away, quickly now!

Fiction. Fake. Not real. Let's be honest, if we met half of the fiction characters we loved in real life, we would scream and run the opposite way. Or at least recommend therapy.

**Bonus: The villain is the minority.** First off, the villain can be a minority. But where most movies and authors mess up is that the villain **is** the minority. There's one gay guy and guess what, he's the villain. There's one person of color and yep, you guessed it, villain. The women are few and far between. The villain, she's a woman. This is a no. Don't do it. Just, I have nothing more to say than just don't. If you look at your cast and have no one that's transgender besides the villain, that's when you scrap diversity and just make the villain look like everyone else. "But the transgender part has to do with why they're a villain." Well, then there should be other transgenders in your world. Even better, the hero should have gender dysphoria. I refuse to believe that one person amongst millions decided to rebel against society norms and embrace themselves. I don't call that a villain, I call that a hero.

... seriously, don't do it.