



# What makes a villain, a *good* villain

## Introduction

A movie is only as good as its characters. You may have an eight-digit budget, an amazing cast, and a top-the-line CGI or animation team, but if your characters are bad, the chances are no one will bother watching your movie for the second time. But usually, only two people in the film must be great characters to get people interested: the main protagonist (the story's main hero) and the main antagonist (the story's main villain). I am writing this because some people just don't understand the importance of a good villain in a story. The villain pushes the main character to his/her limit. The villains' traits, goals, and effects in the story are reasons people will come back to watch.

I will explain four kinds of human villains that are commonly seen in modern media. The twist villain, full villain, misunderstood villain, and anti-hero villain. Each of these provides a different tone to the story.

## Twist villain

The movie usually introduces twist villains to the audience as a regular character but introduces themselves as the true villain by the end. These characters typically play a significant role in the story before then.

### Good example

King Candy, from the Disney movie Wreck-It Ralph, is a good example of this. Close to the film's end, King Candy reveals himself to be Turbo, a rogue video game character that profusely destroyed other games. King Candy is a good example of a twist villain because of the subtle suspicious signs hinting at his inner facade throughout the movie.

### Bad example

A bad example of a twisted villain is Dawn Bellwether from Disney's Zootopia. Dawn Bellwether barely had any relevance in the story aside from a single scene that only reminds the viewer that she exists. Her reason for being a villain came out of the blue, and the movie provided no hints that she was a villain. She wanted prey and predator to always be contending with each other, which was stupid when you think about it seeing that she was one of the prey.

### How to avoid

To avoid making a "bad" twist villain, try to include the villain in the protagonist's adventure. This will result in the audience including the villain in the story as a major character, not just some minor character who turns out to be bad. Another thing you can do is add subtle hints in the movie toward the reveal of the villain. If this is done right, it will raise suspicion about the villain, and the audience will love it once the villain is revealed because he is a relevant character.

## Irredeemable Villain

An irredeemable villain is a villain that, as the name suggests, can not be humanized nor forgiven by the characters in the story or the audience. These villains don't think twice before committing evil deeds. And in some cases, even seem to find said deeds amusing.

### Good example

Jack Horner from Dreamwork's Puss in Boots: Last Wish is a good example of a full villain. Jack Horner was born into a rich family with loving parents and no problems whatsoever for his whole life. So, because he could, he decided to try to take every bit of magic in the world for himself. He abused multiple magical creatures, stole magical items, and brutally sacrificed all his henchmen in completely pointless ways all to accomplish his selfish goal. He was fully aware he was doing evil things; he just didn't care. He is such a horrible villain that the audience loves him as a character. Similar to how the audience of The Dark Knight likes the Joker. He's iconic, funny, and only does what he feels like or wants.

### Bad example

A bad example, however, of a full villain is King Magnifico from Disney's 100th Anniversary movie Wish. King Magnifico starts as this chill guy, granting the wishes of the people he sees fit and letting people live in his kingdom without paying taxes. Overall, he was a great leader. Suddenly, King Magnifico started to become evil for no reason in particular. King Magnifico then began to do evil deed after evil deed until ultimately being trapped in a magic mirror. You might think that this seems similar to Jack Horner, just doing evil for fun. The difference is that Jack Horner had a clear goal to control all magic for years, while King Magnifico's motivation for turning evil doesn't seem to make any sense. It's so confusing that it came to the point that the only reason King Magnifico turned evil was for the sake of the plot.

## How to avoid

To avoid creating villains like this, you should allow the villain to go wild with their evil acts. The less justifiable it is, the better. Next, keep the villain consistent. If the villain has a trait that defines him/her, don't stray from it. This would make the villain seem to be unaffected by their evil acts. Another thing to do is keep them smart. If the villain makes a dumb decision for the sake of the plot, the value of the villain goes down dramatically. For example, Jack Horner didn't try to make a trap for the main characters by keeping their friend alive. Nope, he just immediately tries to shoot him in the face. Finally, give the villain a clear goal. A villain without a goal is just a misfortune to the hero.

## Misunderstood villain

This character is forced into a life of crime because they are trying to please or help someone, or don't know they are committing them. In most instances, one can sympathize with this kind of villain because of their obliviousness to what they are doing or their resolve to accomplish an honorable goal.

## Good example

William Baker, more commonly known as Sandman from Spiderman: 3, is a great example of a misunderstood villain. William's daughter was sick, and he needed the money for medical purposes. This led him to a life of crime, which got him into fights with the local hero, Spiderman. He gets money in the quickest and easiest way possible- stealing. You, the viewer, know that Sandman is doing the wrong thing. But you can't stop wanting Sandman to have a happy ending of his own.

## Bad example

A bad misunderstood villain, however, has means that cannot be justified by the end that they fight for. There is no movie or series I know of with this kind of villain, but there is a great example on YouTube by a guy named “Steven He” who made a perfect example of a ["bad" misunderstood villain](#). The villain in the video has the dumbest reasons for committing crimes, to the point of absolute absurdity.

## How to avoid

To avoid making a bad misunderstood villain, make sure that the villain's motivations (or the collective brain cell count) justify his/her actions throughout the movie. If these things are not followed, the villain would look like an evil guy making excuses for their crimes, not misunderstood. Another thing that your villain should do is to prioritize their motivation if they have one. If they are not truly evil, they will focus on their motivation and ignore everything else unnecessary.

## Anti-Hero Villan

An anti-hero can easily be confused with a misunderstood villain. An anti-hero is a villain that follows their ideas of “justice” and “the right thing to do.”. These villains come up with unconventional ways to bring about justice.

## Good example

An example of this is Eddie Brock, more commonly known as Venom from the Venom movie and most Spiderman shows and movies. Venom is an alien with a symbiotic relationship with Eddie. Venom needs to eat large amounts of fresh meat to stay alive and stop himself from eating his host/Eddie. Eddie provides him with this by allowing him to eat any wrongdoers, regardless of the crime. In

Eddie's eyes, a person killing someone or stealing a chocolate bar receives the same sentence. Death. Having their way of doing things and core beliefs creates character depth for the villain, visualizing the ideals and morals of the character through actions for the viewers.

### How to avoid

I don't think there is a bad way to create an anti-hero. An anti-hero villain can be a true hero, a true villain, or remain the same by the end of a movie. It all depends on them. The only way you can make a "bad" anti-hero is to make the character as insufferable as possible to the audience.

### Conclusion

To avoid making a bad villain entirely, you must think about him/her as an important character, not just a walking, talking punching bag for the hero. The villain is crucial for the development of the protagonist and other characters, changing the hero for better or worse. And while the main protagonist is progressing, the villain can too. Another thing is to give them a clear goal and make the villain's actions, personality, and beliefs fit that fit. A story is only as good as its characters, and the villain should always be no exception.

## Works Cited

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