



Writing About Villains

Rayne Hall

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Create the villain your novel deserves: a fiend whom your readers will love to hate and can never forget.

Instead of cardboard evil-doers with evil laughter and stinking breath, you will develop villains with personality, ideals, feelings and conflicts. They will challenge your heroes, chill your readers, and give your novel excitement and depth.

This book is part of the Writing Craft Series: Writing Fight Scenes, Writing Scary Scenes, The Word-Loss Diet, Writing About Villains, and more.

British English.

Writing About Villains Details

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From Reader Review Writing About Villains for online ebook

Kit says

How much can you possibly get out of a book that's approximately 70 pages?

A heck of a lot more than the page count suggests. If you have some time and want to get a better grip on how to make villains work, this book is worth it. I certainly didn't regret spending my lunch breaks reading this. Actually, I probably would regret *not* reading this book.

This book goes over the difference between villain archetypes and stereotypes. What are the villain archetypes, and what you should consider to make them interesting beings instead of a cookie cutter bad guy. Some of it might not be profound, never before heard concepts about villains, but all of it is laid out in a wonderfully clean and simple way. Even if there are some ideas that aren't "new," it's nice to see these put down in a way that makes it easy to digest. There's a difference between vaguely having the idea of how a villain should be considered, and really having it laid out so that it sinks in. This book makes the villain idea floating around in the back of your head something concrete.

This book does a great job of breaking down something as complex as a good antagonist into simple sections--and these simple sections help build a complex character.

Zara West says

Another great how-to-write book from Rayne Hall. Like all her writing manuals, she takes on the topic, in this case villains, and provides clear, straightforward ways to write it better. Good for beginning writers.

Edmund de Wight says

I really like the way Rayne presents information. She is very clear in her presentation and doesn't try to pad out a point with unnecessary verbiage just to make her book look bigger. This is exactly the sort of thing you want in a book aimed at helping you understand how to do something.

I've written a lot of villains in my time between role playing games and fiction but there were a couple nice insights to the villainous world that will come in handy.

There are good examples of her points throughout. You're never left wondering exactly what she meant. So if you think villains just are psychos who laugh loudly and kill anyone that crosses them - you need to read this and make your bad guys good.... well you know what I mean. Read it. Good book on the craft.

Bryn says

I found Writing About Villains to be a mixed bag of writing advice.

Techniques for fleshing out a fully-realized antagonist were bogged down in lists of specific examples for how the "archetypes" must behave. To me, this seemed like "Don't use those moldy old cliches, use these slightly fresher ones." I liked most of the more subtle ideas for expressing characterization and motivation without needing infodumps.

WAV, like all of the Writer's Craft series I've read, also ends with many pages from the author's own fiction, ostensibly to provide examples. Again, there is no scene breakdown or discussion on the specific techniques used, so this just reads like a plug for Storm Dancer. Kirral surely seems like an evil son-of-a-bitch, but these examples given hardly present him as much more than a malicious cartoon character.

Autumn Crum says

Good information. Mostly stuff I already know but still good

Linda S. says

I loved Rayne Hall's Writing About Villians! This brief book lists villian archetypes, shows many ideas on how to portray an antagonist as a real person, not a cardboard stereotype and includes writing exercises at the end of each section. I will be using this book in the novel writing classes I teach. I recommend this book.

Katrina Garvey says

I have the most difficulty with my villain because I feel like I am always making them the same stereotypical villains. This book helped me realize that just because my villain is an evil overlord doesn't mean he can't be unique. I enjoyed her examples and assignments to really help me build my villain. I also learned a great deal about what can take away from your villain that you never think of such as making him smile too much. I am actually excited to see my villain come to life in my story and am trying to figure out how to give him more read time since I have a unique POV. So excited to learn more from Rayne!

Koen Wellens says

Writing About Villains is a book that helps you improve your villains. Do your villains need a better background story? Ever feel like something's missing for them? This book helps you with that! There are several questions you can ask that make you think about the character.

Read the full review at my blog.

Kelly Hull says

As I begin a new project, I find myself thinking about my villain. I don't want just a regular bad guy. I want

someone truly scary. Scary because he's actually lovable and inside he's dealing with his own issues and I want some part of my reader to be rooting for him in some small way. Ultimately, he will go too far as his flaws deepen, but I want my protagonist to struggle with him in the worst way.

No evil cackling laughs.

No stenchy breath, breathing down her neck.

No evil madman that's evil just for the sake of being evil.

So I went to the old trusted Amazon and found "Writing About Villains" by Rayne Hall.

I devoured this thing in about two hours. It would have been faster, but I was too busy taking notes. This is a great little book dissecting the types of villains that illuminate what not to do in order to avoid clichés and gives a breakdown of all the notorious types of antagonists. Throughout reading, I was able to develop my villain (at least in brain-storming stage) and I know exactly what I want to do...for the most part. I am struggling a bit with how I'm going to keep my bad guy charismatic while giving him the embodiment of Smother Mother (yes, he's male :)

You see, I write dystopian and I'm tired of the bad guy being the head of some evil government. I'm working on a new project that hopefully will break the stereotypes of dystopian and give a whole new spin on villains.

I would recommend this book to anyone who is having trouble fleshing out their bad guys.

Rebecca Stevens says

Not my cup of tea..

The author had some advice I was willing to take, but mainly I felt at odds with her opinion. Simply put, although it is not a bad book, I personally didn't enjoy it.

Anna Erishkigal says

Bought this a while ago and am only now getting around to reviewing it. This is an excellent step-by-step 'how to build your villain' book. It is long on pragmatic advice and writing prompts, short on boring blather, and should help pry the most recalcitrant villain out of your noggin and make him a worthy, three-dimensional adversary for your hero. I dusted it off and used some of the examples recently as a 'how to' guide for my writer's group and the writing exercises were all very helpful in a large-group setting as well as the individual one.

J.E. Feldman says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Writing About Villains by Rayne Hall because it helped to fill all of those extra gaps that I needed to fully round out the newest villains in my novel, "Strangers from Enamyre: Book Three

of the Arbedenion Trilogy." Rayne helps make sure that you don't miss the little details by listing villain stereotypes, examples of motives, what tools and trophies could be laying around their lairs, and so much more. In the first two books of the Arbedenion Trilogy, "The Dragonscale" and "Shadow Blossom," I briefly described the villain Vampire Princess Valacotayda's homes in the mountains to add to the creepy atmosphere. With the new villains coming into play, this book has reminded me to do the same for them and given examples of what would work best for each stereotype. For every chapter, she leaves an assignment that you should do to progress with your story. This is an ideal book to pick up again when you are just starting to write such a story. Rayne even goes on to talk about dialogue and tone of voice for the characters. There are even common clichés to avoid to make your story feel more original! Rayne Hall has an amazing take on how to help someone write without constricting them to her way while doing it. Love her series of "Writing About...!"

Rachel Svendsen says

Excellent advice

This book had great advice and tips on writing villains. It was super helpful and gave me lots of ideas for my current and future stories. Each chapter also ended with useful exercises to help improve your writing. Excellent resource!

De Jarous says

Comprehensive Psychological look at the villain archetypes.

Margaretha says

Great source of information! I recommend this for writers, especially those with less experience. After reading this, my villains have become a lot less fickle and much more believable.
