

Fairy Tale Villains: Then and Now



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Argument:

In modern fairy tales the villainous acts of the antagonist has been diluted from their original monstrous state by humanizing the villains behind them.

Why is this interesting:

- Fairy tales used to be black and white as to who was bad and who was good and through the humanizing of fairy tale villains the sides of good and bad have blurred.

Summaries:

The role of the Evil Queen in Snow White... The role of the Evil Queen was the wicked stepmother to the beautiful princess Snow White. The queen is extremely jealous of Snow's beauty and attempts to have her killed several times so that she may be "the fairest one of them all." Her envy eventually leads to her demise and she dies.

The role of the wicked fairy in Sleeping Beauty... Offended at being the only person not invited to the princess's Christening, she curses the infant to fall into a "sleep like death" in her fifteenth year. This is amended by the last of the 13 fairies who eases the curse to her sleeping for a hundred years and she will awaken by the kiss of her true love.

Premise 1:

Modern villains have been rounded out more from their original character.

The Evil Queen:

- **Grimm:** The Evil Queen is a very beautiful but proud, arrogant, wicked, and vain woman. Obsessed to remain the "fairest in the land".
- **Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarves:** The Evil Queen is cold, cruel, and extremely vain. She is madly envious over the beauty of Snow White as well as the attention she receives from the Prince from another land.
- **Once Upon a Time:** Regina Mills is a sympathetic character who is misunderstood in trying to protect herself from previous betrayal that caused her heart to darken.

Maleficent:

- **Grimm:** A wicked, cold hearted fairy who curses a baby just because she is not invited to the christening ceremony.
- **Disney's Sleeping Beauty:** The wicked fairy is personified in Maleficent, a dark sinister being who is the "Mistress of all Evil".
- **Disney's Maleficent:** This version of Maleficent is portrayed as a sympathetic character who is misunderstood in trying to protect herself and her domain from humans.

Premise 2 and 3:

The dilution of character affects how the audience views the antagonist.

The change in viewpoint causes the audience to be okay with and understand the villains monstrous acts.

The Evil Queen:

- As a young woman Regina was in a secret relationship with the stable boy, Daniel.
- One day, Regina saves a young girl on a runaway horse, only to discover that she is the king's daughter, Snow White.
- In return, King Leopold proposes to Regina, and she finds herself in a forced marriage when her mother accepts the proposal for her.
- Regina and Daniel plan on running away together, but Snow sees them together.

- Regina makes her promise not to tell, but Snow eventually tells Regina's controlling mother who confronts them both and rips Daniel's heart out before killing him.
- This causes Regina's heart to physically darken and her hatred for Snow to grow.
- When Regina finds that Snow has found her love she enacts her revenge by putting a sleeping curse on her.
- Throughout the series Regina's continued heartbreak by Snow and the others that outcast her, make her very sympathetic to the audience.
- Her love for her adoptive son, Henry, also humanizes her monstrous acts as she does a lot of them to try and preserve their relationship.

Maleficent:

- Her transformation from a cold, wicked, vengeful being; to a sympathetic character betrayed by her love, for him to reach his political goals.
- Her love is Aurora's future father and when Aurora is born Maleficent takes her revenge by cursing the child.
- Maleficent becomes sympathetic throughout the movie in the way she cares for Aurora, watching her grow up, developing a maternal affection and relationship with her.

Conclusion

Overall modern fairy tales have changed the antagonists of their stories to normalize their monstrous actions by giving them a sympathetic backstory allowing the audience to see their point of view.