

HEROES, MONSTERS AND VILLAINS



DIVS

Achilles bust (relief)

Marvel teaser trailer.

The Joker (Heath Ledger)- Batman, The Dark Knight 2008

MYTH

1. A traditional story, typically involving supernatural beings or forces, which embodies and provides an explanation, aetiology, or justification for something such as the early history of a society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon.

Myth is strictly distinguished from *allegory* and *legend* by some scholars, but in general use it is often used interchangeably with these terms.

2. **A** A widespread but untrue or erroneous story or belief; a widely held misconception; a misrepresentation of the truth. Also: something existing only in myth; a fictitious or imaginary person or thing.

2. **B** A person or thing held in awe or generally referred to with near reverential admiration on the basis of popularly repeated stories (whether real or fictitious).

LEGEND

1. The story of the life of a Saint.

2. A collection of saints' lives or of stories of a similar character. **the Legend**, spec. a medieval collection of saints' lives written by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, in the 13th century; now usually called **the Golden Legend** (*Legenda Aurea*), the name popularly given to it in the Middle Ages.

3. A story, history, account.

4. **a.** An unauthentic or non-historical story, esp. one handed down by tradition from early times and popularly regarded as historical.

HERO

1. *Antiq.* A name given (as in Homer) to men of superhuman strength, courage, or ability, favoured by the gods; at a later time regarded as intermediate between gods and men, and immortal.

The later notion included men of renown supposed to be deified on account of great and noble deeds, for which they were also venerated generally or locally; also demigods, said to be the offspring of a god or goddess and a human being; the two classes being to a great extent coincident.

2. A man distinguished by extraordinary valour and martial achievements; one who does brave or noble deeds; an illustrious warrior.
3. A man who exhibits extraordinary bravery, firmness, fortitude, or greatness of soul, in any course of action, or in connexion with any pursuit, work, or enterprise; a man admired and venerated for his achievements and noble qualities.
4. The man who forms the subject of an epic; the chief male personage in a poem, play, or story; he in whom the interest of the story or plot is centred.



Herbert Draper- Lament for Icarus,1889

Pallas Athene- Gustave Klimpt, 1898

Beowulf battles Grendle's Mother- John Howe, 2006

Atlas- Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1520-23

George Frederick Watts- Sir Galahad ,1860

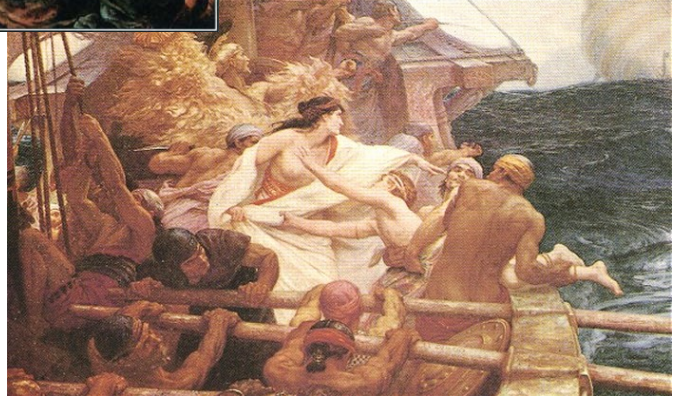


Herber Draper- Ulysses and the Sirens, 1909

John William Waterhouse- Ulysses and the Sirens, 1891

Circe had warned Odysseus of the dangers of the singing creatures who lured men to their death on the rocks around their island. She advised him to avoid them but said that, if he really felt that he must, he should have his men plug their ears with beeswax and tie him to the mast to keep him from escaping.

Odysseus had his men do so. As they passed the island, the three Sirens began to sing beautifully, promising him wisdom and knowledge of past and future. Enchanted by their song, he struggled and tried to break free, but two of his men bound him even more tightly until they passed beyond the island.



Jason and the Golden Fleece-

Herbert Draper- The Golden Fleece, 1904

The leader of the [Argonauts](#). Jason was the son of Aeson and of Polymede, Being the eldest son of Cretheus, his father Aeson should have become king of Iolcus when his grandfather died, but Aeson's half-brother Pelias seized the throne. The Centaur, named Cheiron, brought up Jason.

An oracle told Pelias that an Aeolid with one sandal would one day bring about his death. Jason appeared to fulfil the oracle appearing with one sandal. Jason claimed the right to rule Iolcus. Pelias tricked him into fetching the Golden Fleece, which was within Aeëtes' possession, in Colchis. According to Pindar, Jason was 20-year of age, when appeared with one sandal.

Aided by the goddesses Hera and Athena, Jason had ship called Argo built and gathered heroes to join in the adventure. At Colchis, Jason received help from daughter of Aeëtes (Aeetes), Medea. Medea was the powerful sorceress, whom Hera and Aphrodite made fall madly in love with the young leader. Together they escaped with the Golden Fleece. After long journey and hardship, Jason and Medea were married and returned to Iolcus. In Iolcus, there are several accounts of Pelias' death, caused by Medea, when Pelias had Aeson murdered in prison.



According to ancient authors, Laocöon was a Trojan priest of Poseidon (note, however, that some sources claim that he was instead one of Apollo's priests). In mythology, Laocöon was the brother of the hero Anchises and son of Capys. One of our best sources for the story of Laocöon is found in Virgil's *Aeneid*. In this epic tale, the Roman poet Virgil describes the dramatic scene in which the Trojans discover an enormous Wooden Horse standing outside the city of Troy. The prescient priest Laocöon warns against bringing the gigantic Horse into Troy in a famous speech:

"O my poor people,
Men of Troy, what madness has come over you?
Can you believe the enemy truly gone?
A gift from the Danaans, and no ruse?
Is that Ulysses' way, as you have known him?
Achaean must be hiding in this timber,
Or it was built to butt against our walls,
Peer over them into our houses, pelt
The city from the sky. Some crookedness
Is in this thing. Have no faith in the horse!
Whatever it is, even when Greeks bring gifts
I fear them, gifts and all."

(Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book II, 59-70) Immediately after saying these words, Virgil has Laocöon hurl his spear into the flank of the Wooden Horse. However, this gesture was to come back to haunt Laocöon. For soon after this incident, while the priest is sacrificing to his god Poseidon, a pair of giant sea serpents emerge from the sea and envelope both Laocöon and his two sons (this tragic scene is immortalized in the aforementioned Hellenistic statue - see the gallery page below for details and an image). The Trojans interpret this grotesque punishment as a sign that Laocöon offended the gods - either Athena or Poseidon in particular - for attacking the Wooden Horse. In the end, the Horse is brought into Troy, which is a fatal mistake and seals the city's doom.



Walter Crane- Lady of Shallot- 1862

John Atkinson Grimshaw- The Lady of Shalott- 1878

John William Waterhouse- The Lady of Shalott- 1888

"**The Lady of Shallot**" is a Victorian [poem](#) by the [English](#) poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892). Like other early poems— "Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere," and "Galahad"— the poem recasts Arthurian subject matter loosely based on medieval sources.

The first four stanzas describe a pastoral setting. The Lady of Shalott lives in an island castle in a river which flows to Camelot, but little is known about her by the local farmers. Stanzas five through eight describe the lady's life. She has been cursed, and so must constantly weave a magic web without looking directly out at the world. Instead, she looks into a mirror which reflects the busy road and the people of Camelot which pass by her island. Stanzas nine through twelve describe "bold Sir Lancelot" as he rides past, and is seen by the lady. The remaining seven stanzas describe the effect of seeing Lancelot on the lady; she stops weaving and looks out her window toward Camelot, bringing about the curse. She leaves her tower, finds a boat upon which she writes her name, and floats down the river to Camelot. She dies before arriving at the palace, and among the knights and ladies who see her is Lancelot.

MONSTER

1. Originally: a mythical creature which is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms, and is frequently of great size and ferocious appearance. Later, more generally: any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening.
The centaur, sphinx, and minotaur are examples of 'monsters' encountered by various mythical heroes; the griffin, wyvern, etc., are later heraldic forms.
2. Something extraordinary or unnatural; an amazing event or occurrence; a prodigy, a marvel.
3. A malformed animal or plant; (*Med.*) a fetus, neonate, or individual with a gross congenital malformation, usually of a degree incompatible with life.
4. A person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman; a monstrous example of evil, a vice, etc.
5. A creature of huge size.
6. *U.S.* An extraordinarily good or remarkably successful person or thing



Medusa- Caravaggio, 1590

Gorgon/Medusa from Clash of the Titans, 1981- Sculptures created by Ray Harryhausen and photo still from 1981 Movie

Grendle from Beowolf

Odilion Redon- Cyclops, 1895

Sir William Blake Richmond- Sleep and Death Carrying the body of Sarpendon into Lycia, 1875-6



Maggi Hambling- Minotaur Surprised while eating 1986-7

Richard Patterson- Painted Minotaur, 1996-7- Patterson takes miniature toy figures then smears them with paint and then photos the toy with different backgrounds. The photos then have extra paint and pigment added. The resultant photo is then meticulously painted for a final image.

Pablo Picasso- Minotaur, 1958

George Frederick Watts- The Minotaur, 1885- Watts shows the monster eagerly awaiting the virginal sacrifices which will be sent to him by sea. The painting was inspired by an article written in 1885 exposing the trafficking of child prostitutes by journalist WT Stead. The article was entitled "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon"

Etienne Jules- Ramsey- Perseus fighting the Minotaur, 1826

In Greek mythology, the **Minotaur** was a creature that was part man and part [bull](#).^[1] It dwelt at the center of the Labyrinth, which was an elaborate maze-like construction built for King Minos of Crete and designed by the architect Daedalus and his son Icarus who were ordered to build it to hold the Minotaur. The historical site of Knossos is usually identified as the site of the labyrinth. The Minotaur was eventually killed by Theseus.

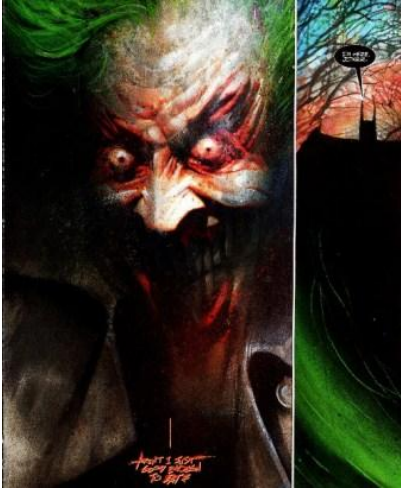
VILLAIN

Originally, a low-born base-minded rustic; a man of ignoble ideas or instincts; in later use, an unprincipled or depraved scoundrel; a man naturally disposed to base or criminal actions, or deeply involved in the commission of disgraceful crimes: **a.** Used as a term of opprobrious address.

Used playfully, or without serious imputation of bad qualities. Also applied to a woman.

1590 **SHAKES.** *Com. Err.* I. ii. 19 A trustie villaine sir, that very oft..Lightens my humour with his merry jests. **1601** *Twel. N.* II. v. 16 *Enter Maria...* Heere comes the little villaine: How now my Mettle of India? **1606** *Tr. & Cr.* III. ii. 35 Ile fetch her; it is the prettiest villaine. **1815** **SCOTT** *Guy M.* i, Jock, ye villain,..are ye lying routing there, and a young gentleman seeking the way to the Place? **1837** **DICKENS** *Pickw.* ix, 'Where's that villain Joe?' 'Here I am; but I han't a willin,' replied a voice. It was the fat boy's. **1908** R. BAGOT *A. Cuthbert* xxiii. 300 If this afternoon's post does not bring me a letter from Jim,. I shall telegraph to the young villain.

(Usually with *the*.) The character in a play, novel, etc., whose evil motives or actions form an important element in the plot. Also *transf.*, esp. in phr. **villain of the piece**.



Abel Magwitch and Miss Havisham- Katy Jackson- From *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
The Joker from *Arkham Asylum* Graphic Novel- Grant Morrison and Dave McKean
Sir Edward Burne Jones- *The Vampire* 1897
Darth Vader illustration by James Surall 1982

For some writers and readers, the villain is not only essential to the story but sometimes more important to develop than the Hero. The villain is the hero's reflection, the opposite that creates conflict in the story. The villain can also be a lot of fun to create.

The villain must be the equal antithesis to your hero. Villains are instigators of the distress that the "damsel," "dude" or "domain" find themselves in. Without a clear villain, your readers have no focus for the struggle your heroes will face.

The most important characteristic of any villain is their charisma. Charisma will make your villain unforgettable. Charisma gives the villain the possibility of charming and winning the reader's trust (as well as characters in your story). Charming villains will use this as an ally or instrument that will lead them to the completion of their personal agendas. A great example would be Dr. Hannibal Lecter; readers enjoy this evil villain even though he breaks one of the most fundamental rules of nature by eating human flesh. My personal favorite is Anne Rice's Lestat who uses finesse to win friends.

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