

Villains

Stella's Aunt Alberta is a dreadful villain. As the story unfolds, we learn more and more about the wicked deeds she has committed throughout her life. Horrible as they are, villains are an essential part of storytelling.

Children's author, Lynda Waterhouse, describes the necessity of villains thus:

'Villains are great fun to write because they can be rude and cheeky and commit dastardly deeds. They can break the rules, be scary and blow great big raspberries at the world. (Something that a scaredy-cat like me can't do in real life). Villains make stories happen. They give our main characters something to react against. But Villains can't be all bad because where's the fun in that? They have to have a soft spot or a weakness.'

Aunt Alberta has a passion for owls and her dream is to open her own 'Owleum', filled with stuffed owls from all over the world. Whilst this is a comic idea, its inclusion makes her a little more human and believable, adding to the irony of her final demise.

Exercise

Below are some illustrations of villains from some famous children's stories. What would you describe as their individual soft spot or weakness?

Aunts Spiker and Sponge



James and the Giant Peach

By Roald Dahl, illustrator Quentin Blake

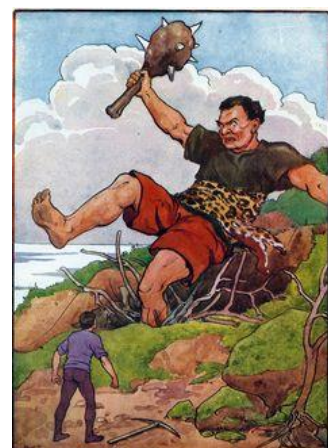
The Red Queen



Alice in Wonderland By Lewis Carroll

Illustrator John Tenniel

The Giant



Jack and the Beanstalk. Mother Goose Tales

Illustrator Margaret W Tarrant

Mr and Mrs Twit



The Twits By Roald Dahl,
Illustrator Quentin Blake

Captain Hook



Peter Pan by J M Barrie,
Illustrator Alice B Woodward

The Wicked Queen



Snow White by The Brothers Grimm
Illustrator Joseph Jacobs

Exercise 2

- Imagine you are a children's author. You need a villain for your story. Make a list of nasty characteristics that he/she possesses.
- Decide how old your villain is, where he/she lives, what do they do for fun?
- Your villain has a weak spot, something he/she is passionate about. Maybe, like Captain Hook, there is something they are scared of?
- Did something happen in their life which made them 'turn bad'? If so what?
- Write a character description of your villain.
- Draw a picture, adding labels to highlight any notable features



Awful Auntie.- Illustrator Tony Ross

Sidekicks

Aunt Alberta has Wagner her owl, as her 'Sidekick', in other words: '*another character who works with someone who is more important than they are*', and Wagner is willing to carry out the evil instructions of his mistress.

Here are a few more examples of baddies who have sidekicks:

Peter Pan: *Captain Hook and Mr Smee*



The Wizard of Oz: *The Wicked Witch of the West and her flying Monkeys*



Mr Gum: *Mr Gum and Billy William the Third*



Exercise

- Invent a sidekick for your villain.
- Your character can be an animal, a bird or a human
- Write a list of the characteristics that make your character a really wicked sidekick
- Why does your character work for your villain? Do they do it willingly?
- Draw a picture of your character with labels showing his/her meanest features.