

Sunday Entropy List: 3 Favorite Video Game Villains

written by Entropy | March 30, 2014



Let's talk villains. Video game villains. In the journey of the hero, there always has to be opposition, a trial where the hero proves themselves. Whether it's the Bowser's or the bad game mechanics, there's always something to be overcome. Digital tribulation binds generations of gamers, sore thumbs and bursts of rage tying gamers across chautauquas of triumph. Who are Entropy's favorite villains? The sampling proves both a conundrum and a revelation.

Byron Campbell

"Wait, is anti-villain a thing? The villainous equivalent of an anti-hero, or somebody who is a villain only because of the role they serve in the story. Maybe these are more antagonists than villains; in any case, they would dominate my most memorable villains list.

1. Venat (Final Fantasy XII): FFXII's narrative was nuts because it had all of the hyperbolic symbolism that makes me love the series, but it also tromped all over moral grey zones (it's been frequently described as Shakespearean, not just because of the pseudo-Elizabethan dialogue). Case in point, Venat, the main "villain," is actually a heretical, Promethean god whose goal is to wrest control over human destiny from the immortal gods and put it into the hands of humans themselves. Naturally, he gets squashed like a cockroach in the end. Quote: "What claim does Gerun have on history's reins...seated on throne immortal, rent from time?"

2. Andrew Ryan (BioShock): Another idealist who's only a villain because of his "ends justify the means" attitude. In BioShock, Andrew Ryan is a skilled and charismatic orator, and nearly all of the player's encounters with him take the form of recorded public speeches or simply drawing implications based on the current state of his city beneath the sea. The actual "boss fight" is memorably anticlimactic. A. Ryan preaches Randian Objectivism, though a few video-game-like wrenches are thrown into his plans after the discovery of an organic compound that allows people to modify their physical capabilities on-the-fly. Quote: "I came to this place to build the impossible. You came to rob what you could never build – a Hun gaping at the gates of Rome. Even the air you breathe is sponged from my account."

3. GLaDOS (Portal): This is going to be on everyone's lists, isn't it? The HAL 9000 of our day, GLaDOS spawned the "tutorial hates you" trope that's now a mainstay in indie games. Essentially the only speaking role in the original Portal, GLaDOS is deliciously sadistic, two-faced and manipulative. It's worth dawdling during the final boss fight just to hear her increasingly desperate (but still robotic) pleas for mercy. She even has her own theme song. Quote: "Please be advised that a noticeable taste of blood is not part

of any test protocol but is an unintended side effect of the Aperture Science Material Emancipation Grid, which may, in semi-rare cases, emancipate dental fillings, crowns, tooth enamel, and teeth.”



Cole Cohen

My favorite video game villains are my younger sisters, who beat me every time we play multi-player games together.

Berit Ellingsen

3: Sydney – from Vagrant Story

Sydney is the antagonist in Vagrant Story, one of the few games in addition to Final Fantasy VII to receive a full score by the reviewers in Famitsu, Japan's leading game publication. Game play and story telling just clicked together in this complex, dark tale painted in muted Renaissance colors and dramatic chiaroscuro lighting, making Sydney a memorable villain. Unusually, in this game most of the female characters wear full clothing, while most male characters are semi-naked or in skirts.

2: Sephiroth from Final Fantasy VII

Sephiroth is the main antagonist and final boss in the world's most sold and probably most beloved RPG, Final Fantasy VII. The story and characters aren't terribly complex, but developer Square Enix hit a truly archetypal and operatic spot with this game. As any proper villain, Sephiroth comes with his own musical theme. His legendary hair and sword reveal his roots in Kabuki and Japanese folklore.

1: Pyramid Head from Silent Hill 2

Pyramid Head, or The Red Pyramid, wins the top spot because he's the villain of the video game that's made the deepest impression on me, namely Silent Hill 2. Pyramid Head is not the most charismatic of villains, but his extremely close relationship with the protagonist and their beautifully symbolic final fight makes him an easy choice. Many other games, such as Dragon Age Origins and Heavy Rain, have a much stronger overall story than the games listed, but have had forgettable or run of the mill antagonists, and even final bosses.



Carla Gannis

Below find my 3.

The High Priest of the DomZ was actually at the top of my list b/c Jade made

her way into my artwork back in 2007-8, but then I queried Google to provide me with the collective conscious's perspective on which of my 3 villains are most popular.

So, here you go in hierarchical order based on Google results:

Coily the purple snake from Q*bert ["Coily Q*bert" About 23,100 Google results]

Majora from The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask ["Majora: The Legend of Zelda" About 21,100 Google results]

The High Priest of the DomZ from Beyond Good & Evil ["The High Priest of the DomZ" About 77 Google results]



Nicholas Grider

I'm not a gamer, can I just make mine up? I've got Rathnor, from the '98 game Bullet Vessel; I've got Complexicon, from Commodore 64 game Fasticus! and I've got "The guy with the John 3:16 sign" from Madden NFL, not sure which year.

Maxi Kim

1. The Laughing Dog, a.k.a. The Emasculator, in *Duck Hunt* (1985, NES).
2. The S & Z shaped tetriminoes, a.k.a. "another useless staircase tile" when what you really need is a vertical line, in *Tetris* (1989, Gameboy).
3. Krang, a.k.a. "the brainy half" of Shredder's odd couple, in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Arcade Game* (1990, NES).



Darby Larson

Clyde from Pacman;

angular non-accelerating gravity in Breakout;

Glass Joe from Mike Tyson's Punchout



Janice Lee

Baby Bowser (Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island)

Mother Brain (Metroid)

Giygas (Earthbound)



Mike Meginnis

1. Porky from Mother 3, who also appears as "Pokey" in Earthbound. He's a wonderful mix of sympathetic, off-putting, weird, and weirdly normal. The way his story ends in Mother 3 is perfectly chilling, ridiculous, pathetic, and painful. I loved it.
2. The Glukkons from the Oddworld games. Oddworld isn't exactly subtle in its politics (you play as a corporate slave who discovers that his company plans to sell him and his fellow Mudokons as food) or its humor (the games have a fart button) but they know how to design a race of corporate overlords that you can really hate. The loud, stupid, thuggish Glukkons (who run the company that owns the Mudokons) are bound by their business suits, their arms bundled so tightly that you would be forgiven for assuming they don't have any. This is a luxury, you see: the point is they don't need their arms. Their slaves will lift what needs lifting.
3. Dark Link, who appears in several Zelda games, but especially as he appears in Zelda II: The Adventure of Link, which I've recently managed to persuade myself is secretly the best ever Zelda game. (It's okay if I'm wrong. I'm wrong about a lot of things.) He's just your guy in shadow form. He has your guy's abilities and he pretty much uses them exactly like you do, but probably better. The best enemy in most video games is the guy who acts exactly like your guy. I like how mysterious he is. Bonus fourth option: I like Ganond in Zelda II a lot. You never fight him! He comes to life if you die. It happens in the game over screen. You have to beat him by not dying.



Joe Milazzo

Villains...

- 1) King of All Cosmos from Katamari Damacy (I wish Lacan were alive to write about this rainbow-phallus-headed hypertrophy of all the ways in which fatherhood can go bad);
- 2) The Sentinel, from The Sentinel;
- 3) Bongo, from Congo Bongo (he's just a prankster, really, and his primary victim is a colonialist... so, maybe the first video game ""villain"")



Kyle Muntz

Hey man, my villains (in no particular order):

Ravel-Planescape Torment

Akachi the Faceless Man-Neverwinter Nights 2: Mask of the Betrayer

Letho-Witcher 2



Christopher Novas

Couldn't think of favorite villains, but villains I'm most fond of from my history of gaming:

1. Eggman (Sonic games)
2. Andross/Wolf O' Donnell (Star Fox 64)
3. Sigma (Mega Man X series)



Joseph Michael Owens:

Kefka (*Final Fantasy 6*): The editors at IGN stated it pretty perfectly: "Kefka is the most beautifully realized, nuanced, off-kilter, and flat-out terrifying villain in the entire history of Final Fantasy." He's so crazy that he's terrifying. He is the Final Fantasy series' Joker, and for my money, he's an even better villain than The Clown Prince of Crime. Kefka casually brought about the apocalypse as a side-effect of his rage-lust psychosis-induced grab for power. Afterwards, he spent the days after torturing the world's survivors simply for his own amusement.

Lavos (*Chrono Trigger*): Lavos is the Devourer of Worlds. It's a parasitic alien life-form that wreaks havoc on every world it visits . . . over millions of years, moving on after the planet's ultimate destruction. In order to stop Lavos, Crono and his friends have to criss-cross both time and space. Lavos is not to be trifled with!

Grahf (*Xenogears*): One of the most underrated villains appears in one of the most underrated RPGs (possibly) ever. Grahf is the Seeker of Power, though it's something he possesses in spades. Grahf learned the ability to pass on from body to body, thus granting him a form of eternal life. He is more powerful than any other character in *Xenogears* except for Fei as when a huge part of the plotline comes together. Grahf can easily destroy gears with his bare hands and effortlessly defeats multiple omnigears (include Fei's Weltall 2 with System-Id) during the battle at Mahanon. He's a sentimental favorite and also completely badass. Grahf FTW!



Honorable mentions:

Vayne Solidor (*FF12*), Gilgamesh (*FF5*), Golbez (*FF4*), Diablo (*Diablo* series), Frank Fontaine (*Bioshock 1*), Vaas (*Far Cry 3*), M. Bison (*Street Fighter 2*), The Agent (*Chaos Rings*), Handsome Jack (*Borderlands 2*),

Eddy Rathke

Villain list:

1. Krelia: *Xenogears* is probably the greatest RPG ever made, in my opinion, and Krelia is the embodiment of destruction. More than that, Krelia, of all video games villains, feels the most alive to me. He carries a profound loneliness with him everywhere, leading him on a journey for oblivion. He longs to be god and he longs for the pain of life to end. He's complex in a way that few video game characters are, and he poses big questions for the player, turning morality into a question rather than a graded scale.

2. Ganondorf: Thinking of *Ocarina of Time* specifically, but he works across most of the games. In each game there's a new Hero of Time to save Hyrule, but there is always only one Ganondorf. I typically don't care much for simple good v evil morality, but there's just something about Ganondorf that's so deep into me. Maybe it's because I played *Ocarina of Time* over and over again as a kid adding way too much meaning to every moment, but I like to think there's something deeper in Ganondorf. The *Zelda* games have an air of childishness to them and they're set in a sort of fairytale world. If Hyrule is a simple world of gentle kindness, then Ganondorf is the immense shadow constantly cast over it, turning all that was beautiful to rot and hate. No matter how many times he's defeated, he returns stronger, more greedily. If the Hero of Time is eternal courage, then Ganondorf is a hate everlasting.

3. Kujawa: He's not who most people think of when talking bad guys from *Final Fantasy*, but he's always been my favorite. He doesn't have the reckless insanity of Kefka or the seething brutality of Sephiroth, but he has this

enormous carelessness and indifference to life. He cares for nothing and no one. While Kefka is the type to burn down the world so he can rule over the ashes, Kuja would rather just annihilate everything and everyone, including himself.



Michael Seidlinger

Top videogame villains –

-“Roguelike” style game mechanics, because I suck at videogames nowadays

-Anger, rage-quitting is a villain to online videogames

-Long cutscenes, because where’s the gameplay?

Bud Smith

1. Mike Tyson/Mr. Dream, not only was the bastard hard as hell to get to, but he knocked you out with one punch. You were required to land 600 of them to knock him down once. I only ever saw the end of the game because Nintendo Power had the code.

2. The Dog From Duck Hunt, the laughing the laughing, the maniacal laughing. I still hear it when I close my eyes. When I used to play Duck Hunt as an 7 year old, I did so with the goddamn sound off. Who didn’t try to shoot the dog?

3. Donkey Kong, the original Donkey Kong was deigned to suck all of your quarters away, every quarter you or your mom and dad ever had for you to steal. At the top of the screen, there was Donkey Kong throwing endless barrels, launching flames, etc. It was utter hell dealing with Donkey Kong, even just on stage 1, and it only got worse.



Dennis Sweeney

-does lava count as a villain? if so, a potential all-around winner, in my opinion.

-I’m thinking mostly of this old computer game Nanosaur, about the time-traveling jetpack-wearing velociraptor...I might be the only one who ever played that.



Laura Vena

Sinistar: he tormented me and my friend, kathy for years. now i have him and all the old school games set up in the back on a big screen....still can’t beat

him.



Alex Vladi

1) Shadow of Colossus: Wander (actually the character you are playing, because all he want to do is to destroy all these innocent giants in the sake of awakening of the princess. Understandable, but nevertheless? Every "win"="kill" caused remorse, but every "win" was another step to awakening until...)

2) Katamari series: King of All Cosmos. A despotic, but in some ways cute dude.

3) Wario. Just because.

