

Character Interests and Endings by Clare Lauren Kelly

I am not really sure why, but there is part of me that wants to continue the little essay before this one and focus specifically on a few characters that I found to be really interesting for one reason or another. So I'm going to say right now that this really is not going to be a serious essay or something that talks about life lessons or another topic like that, unless of course my brain just takes control of my fingers while I'm typing this and runs off on its own. Unfortunately that is something that my mind tends to do from time to time. Now back to topic, for this I will probably talk a bit about the characters' ending and my thoughts on that, but I am not going to focus on what happens to them at the end since I want to focus a bit more on the character and their part in the story.

Since the ones I am going to focus on here are characters who might typically be considered to be bad guys, they don't have the best ending, for the most part I think all of the ones I'm going to talk about here die. But for them, there is also the part of me that thinks their ending wasn't quite fitting for the part that they played in the story and the bits of development that happened for their characters. So this introduction might not have made much sense, but I'll try to simplify it here for anyone to understand more than what might be pieced together from my little bit of rambling. I am going to focus on a few characters I found interesting and well played by actors whose ability I respect, and the focus will be on what about the character caught my attention, observations I made, opinions, thoughts and of course whether or not they had an ending that felt right and wasn't done stupidly.

So before I start, I will do my best to not have spoilers that are huge, even if most of the shows or films I am going to be talking about are on the older side and it is not the plot of the story that I am focusing on for the most part.

The first one I will get into is one that has stuck with me for multiple years and is a combination of a character I found interesting, an actor who I think is very good in the roles he plays, and an unsatisfactory ending for the character. The character is one that many might not really pay too much attention to or notice all that much, unless they are paying more attention to everything that happens and are able to recognize the character when he pops up. Since the actor has some pretty distinct facial features it isn't all that hard to recognize him, for me at least, and

he does play more of a part than most of the other characters that might be classified as the henchmen, in addition to having some distinctive things he wears or does in the scenes he appears in throughout the story.

In the lovely film *The Dark Knight Rises* I found Barsad to be a character that caught my attention throughout the film when he made an appearance, either as someone speaking a few words to a high ranking soldier on a bridge or commissioner Gordon, or as one of the characters who was there in the background providing support or standing behind Bane. For those who do not know him by name, that is not something you should feel bad about because the character is never actually referred to by name at any point in the film which I found to be somewhat funny, and is named only in the credits. So if you know of the actor and are able to recognize him, staying to watch the credits or looking the film up later like me to see the cast list will be how you learn Barsad's name. Honestly they didn't even have to give him a name, he could have just been called Bane's lieutenant or something like that, but I am glad that he was given a name whether or not it was actually used in the film.

For the people who are not able to recognize the actor, hopefully one of the following details will help you figure out who I am talking about as the first character in this essay I wish had been given a bit more attention and/or a better ending. A character that, in my own opinion, made the film a little better and added something that other characters may not have been able to add for the story and how things go. Barsad seems to be a very loyal follower of Bane, someone who has most likely been by Bane's side for many years, who could have been a member of the league of shadows and was excommunicated along with Bane, someone that has earned the trust of his leader enough to have become Bane's second in command. This is never said in the film, but you can kind of guess based on the part that Barsad plays and the way that he typically ends up on screen, since only someone who is really trusted and skilled would have the role that Barsad did in the plan for Gotham. And if the character had just been another throwaway soldier following the bad guy around, then he wouldn't have appeared in so many scenes or actually had a small variety of dialogue.

It might not seem like he was the most important character, and I will admit that his role wouldn't have had the biggest impact on the storyline as other characters like John Blake or

Roland Daggett. But Barsad still plays a part in the storyline and it would not have felt the same in some moments without Barsad there to do what his part was, as well as there seeming to be a bit more of an impact by having the smaller things Barsad did all done by the same character instead of by many different characters who appeared only once each. Each time he appeared on screen and performed a role either in a physical way or with dialogue, it could have been a bunch of actors each taking a part, but having one actor be the one doing all those smaller things makes him more noticeable, and adds to the movie in my opinion.

Barsad appears in the very first scene of the film when the doctor is handed over to the CIA along with the three tied up men in hoods. Barsad is the man who speaks to the CIA man, and also the one who drives the vehicle they were all in before reaching the plane. Next, you see Barsad on the balcony of an apartment with his Barrett M107 long range sniper rifle, shooting the SWAT team who are chasing the mercenaries that had just been backup for the deal with Selena Kyle to get the fingerprints of Bruce Wayne. Directly after that, he is down in the sewers when the police commissioner is dragged down there to see Bane, Barsad comes in behind the mercenaries carrying his sniper rifle, then later hands Bane the tracker that gets put in the jacket of the man Bane shoots. Then Barsad is also the one who talks to the high ranking soldier after the stadium and bridges have been blown up, he says that Gotham will be blown to hell if a single person crosses the bridge while smiling to prove his point. And back to the bridges and stadium getting blown up, Barsad is there as well, following Bane out onto the field and staying in the background behind his leader with his rifle.

Then later when they are freeing the inmates from the prison with Bane giving his big speech, Barsad is seen inside the prison with the other mercenaries, and he is carrying duffle bags filled with firearms and other weapons for the inmates they are freeing. There is more Barsad does later on in the film, but those are the more noticeable times he pops up towards the start of the story to hopefully help you figure out who it is I am talking about here without you needing to go look him up on Google. Though you can still do that and find some pictures, articles and more about him so I recommend it if you're curious because there are theories that Barsad was meant to be a version of Deadshot. The sleepy eyed mercenary, who has a somewhat confusing accent with how it changes a bit throughout the film when he talks, with armor

piercing sniper rounds on the front of his bullet proof vest, a red scarf wrapped around his neck, and a fixed blade knife in its sheath attached to the straps of his vest on the left shoulder. There are three firearms that he carries and uses, a pistol and two rifles, one of which is the sniper rifle that I mentioned earlier, and of course the fixed blade knife on his vest.

I would have loved to see a little bit more of Barsad throughout the film, or having the opportunity to get to know even a little bit of his background like where he is from, how he first became involved with Bane, how he became Bane's second in command or other things like that. It would also have been pretty cool to get to see Barsad using his Barrett M107 more, that's the sniper rifle, I think it would have been cool to see more scenes with Barsad sniping people or keeping watch from the top of some building while Bane was down below. Having Barsad act as the lookout, the overwatch, the eyes in the sky would have been pretty cool, especially if there was a moment shot from the point of view of Barsad looking down the scope of his rifle, watching all those below him.

Now I admit that this could also be mainly because of my interest in firearms, the fact that I was a target sports instructor and would love to get the chance to see someone shooting a sniper rifle in person, or even get to shoot one myself. I do tend to be drawn to the characters that are snipers, and even if there are other reasons for why those characters are the ones that stand out to me more, wanting to see someone shooting a long range rifle or wanting to shoot one myself is a big part of it. I am biased in some ways I guess you could say, when it comes to the characters I enjoy in films and shows, I know that about myself and accept it. Barsad had the knife strapped to his vest as well, which would have been cool to see him use since it was there in plain sight, and presumably it wouldn't have been there if he didn't know how to use it to some degree, especially with him being a sort of mercenary. I mean he could have at least used it to cut some rope or the zip ties restraining someone.

But on to the main thing that got me for Barsad in this wonderful film before it is time to move on to the next character for this essay. In the end of the film when all the chaos is happening before the bomb goes off with the different sides fighting and the good guys trying to find the bomb to disarm it, Barsad is by Bane's side at the start before they are separated in the fight. Some things happen, a lot of fighting on different levels, and Barsad is going as protection

with the second main villain who is hidden that I will not name, even if I would hope most people know who I am talking about because of how amazing this film and series are. When Barsad is climbing up into the tumbler to follow after the second main villain, he gets hit by a bullet and falls from the tumbler to the ground where he presumably dies, along with many other minor, background, or somewhat more important characters. I don't think this should have been Barsad's end, since he was an important character to a degree and was higher up in leadership for those following Bane, and since it looks like the bullet hits him in the chest. Where he is wearing a bulletproof vest.

And the bullet that hit him was from a pistol not at that close a range, so while I do not have a lot of knowledge when it comes to bullet proof vests or the specific type Barsad was wearing, I do not think that shot would have killed him. Not if it had the plates in it that make the vest bulletproof to begin with, which I hope he would have given that he is a mercenary and is a trained fighter, who presumably would have been in combat before. Given how skilled he was as a sniper that is in the one scene we see, as well as the fact that Barsad seemed to act as Bane's right hand man. Barsad could have at least been shown being taken prisoner at the end by the police officers or the military who come in after to try and bring peace or order to the city. There is more that could have been done with Barsad, and he could have been called by name at least once in the film which would have been nice, but as written above there are a few reasons why I wish he had been given a bit more of a part and what other things could have been cool to see with his character to make him stand out a little more.

Since technically with two main villains, I guess you could say that Barsad was the secondary antagonist of the film, unless you count Crane of course who is fantastic in the few scenes he has in this film. Got to love Crane's court and the little bit you get to see of his character there with how he is different or similar to how we saw him in the past two films, well done Cillian Murphy as always, and for playing the good doctor so wonderfully.

On to the next character people, I hope I haven't lost everyone to this random and not very deep or useful essay, that will now move to focus on the second character that I think deserved a bit more, or a little better. The show I will now switch over to is called *Six* and it came out in 2017 with two seasons. The character that caught my interest appears only in the second

season so again, I guess there will be some spoilers ahead. The main bad guy of the series is mentioned in the first season if I remember correctly, and he is referred to as the Prince. He is a fantastic character played by an equally fantastic actor named Nikolai Nikolaev, who really brings his characters to life no matter what sort of person they are.

The one that caught my interest other than the Prince, is one of the Prince's very loyal men, a former member of the Russian special forces, also known as Spetsnaz operators. Now unlike Barsad, this character is actually addressed at times or referred to by his name, which is nice and makes things a bit easier when looking them and their actor up later on, something I tend to do with characters that catch my attention. Fyodor was very close to the Prince and could have been considered his right hand man or his second in command given how obviously loyal Fyodor is to the Prince, and the fact that the Prince seems to see this, and recognizes it later on in the season. Literally says to another character that he knows Fyodor is loyal, which is something that shows the one watching that these two characters have known each other and worked together for some time. There is clear trust and loyalty between them, and while we might not know why or where it came from, we know it exists.

The first time that you see Fyodor he is running with the Prince and a group of other men who, along with Fyodor, are surely very loyal to their boss and are acting as guards for the Prince while out and about. Then while in their group some things happen and one of the men didn't do his job of making sure the area was clear and secure, which leads to the Prince holding up the pistol belonging to the man and asking a very simple question. And that in turn, leads to Fyodor taking the pistol and shooting the previous owner dead before letting his arm relax and fall back to his side, pistol pointed at the ground, waiting for his next orders.

There was no hesitation in killing the man who failed the Prince, a man that Fyodor was sure to know fairly well after having most likely worked closely with together under the Prince. There was an order given by the Prince, an opportunity one could say, and Fyodor immediately acted on the implied orders to make sure what his boss wanted happened. This is the loyalty of Fyodor, and it only continues as the show goes on and he appears more in ways that might not really seem to mean much, but the important part is that he is the one that keeps showing up, the one with the Prince. Fyodor is loyal, and the Prince knows that.

Fyodor appears in four episodes over the course of the second season, and it is clear that he is close to the Prince who is a bit of a recluse who is very cautious about when he goes out, where he goes, and who is around. Which if you know the show, does make sense. So for Fyodor to be one of the men that travels with the Prince and is by his side, that shows the audience that he is a character that to some degree, matters. What bothered me, is that while he did have a decent amount of screen time for a smaller role, and was played by an actor that did a very good job in my opinion, is that he only had a few what I'll call fighting scenes.

There are firefights in the show, which makes sense for the type of show it is, and Fyodor is first shown with the Prince as a member of his protection detail before killing a man that failed. The camera focuses on Fyodor when he takes the pistol from the Prince and shoots a man. Then there are a couple other scenes where Fyodor is armed with a pistol or rifle and uses it in a firefight, or he at least has it out while protecting the Prince, but the best scene is towards the very end when he uses a DShK heavy machine gun to shoot at hostile helicopters. Which is an awesome moment that I like to go back and watch from time to time.

Essentially I think it would have been interesting to get to see him in a fight more, since when the hero characters of the show hear that the Prince's personal guard is made up of former Spetsnaz operators they all seem less than enthusiastic at the idea of having to fight them. Which means that Fyodor and the other members of the Prince's guard are sure to be formidable fighters, so I feel like it would have been cool to see them in more firefights, knife fights, or fistfights.

And what gets me even more, much like with Barsad, is the way Fyodor dies at the end of his time on the show. While storming a tunnel with a group of men in order to get to the Prince, Fyodor is running down a hill with a rifle along with other men, and when he gets in closer to the tunnel he is shot in the head by a soldier, one of the good guys of the show, and dies there instantly. Which felt like a very stupid and unfitting ending for a character that is so loyal to the Prince, and who is also said and somewhat shown to be a trained and skilled fighter. As well as a cold blooded killer. Even if he still died in the end, his death could have been made to be a little more fitting for who the character was meant to be, especially with the faith the Prince had in him. Sure Fyodor can still die, but have him die by taking a bullet aimed at the Prince, have him

die shielding the Prince from falling debris with his body, die shielding the Prince from an explosion or something along those lines. Even a minor character deserves a fitting ending that acknowledges the role they played.

I will briefly talk about a character who caught my attention and still had a decent role, but who I thought could have been used a little more, and again mainly it is my bias because I found them cool and interesting. In the action comedy film *The Machine*, a film based on a story of a supposedly real life event of the comedian Bert Kreischer, there is a Russian character called Alexei played by German actor Robert Maaser. He is one of the antagonists of the film, and while he is not really the main antagonist, he does play an important part in the story, and has some fun scenes. Including one wonderful fighting sequence that was funny in the right ways given who he was fighting, and also impressive with how it was put together and how it showed the differences in the two men, the two “characters” which I put in quotes for a reason that will hopefully be understood for those who know the movie and the story behind it. Which would be too much for me to explain here, so look it up if you’re curious. Search comedian Bert Kreischer, Russian Mob story, you’ll find it on YouTube.

The character was interesting and had good screen presence along with a fantastic wardrobe, including some great jewelry and quite a few very fitting and well drawn tattoos all over his body, including the neck. I just wish his ending had been a bit different. Since he was a villain, even if he wasn’t the main villain, it makes sense that he doesn’t get the happy ending, even with it being a little confusing that the one I saw as the main on screen villain does get the happy ending. I guess they could be considered a more in the grey character, but whatever you want to call them, Alexei is not the one who gets the happy end, his end is not really revealed exactly which kind of bothered me.

More that it is left to the imagination of the viewer, something that some people might enjoy, while others prefer a bit more detail or a more set ending for the different characters who had more of a role than just as a background character or henchman to be beat up. I typically like when there is a more definite ending, like them being killed, put in jail, or something similar, I don't like to be left hanging with little to go on. No matter, the film was funny enough to watch and Alexei still got some good scenes and lines in there, along with a fantastic action sequence

that showed off the actors athletic ability and background. It is also an action comedy, with comedy being one of the main focuses of the story, and there are some really good performances from some wonderful actors as well.

On to the next character, and this will be the last one I talk about in this essay even though there are definitely a lot more that I could talk about, this essay is long enough as it is now and I haven't started on the final character. I'm thinking of four characters already off the top of my head that I could continue on about in this essay.

Now for the final character. There is a movie series that is relatively popular and has been going on for a number of years, and the specific film I will be talking about is the 2019 film *Charlie's Angels*. In the film, it is about what you would expect from a movie in that series made in 2019 with slightly more realistic action and stunts, with all the fashion, girl power and more that is typical from the *Charlie's Angels* movies. The character that caught my attention in this film was played by the always wonderful and often creepy as hell Jonathan Tucker, who brought to life Mr. Hodak, the assassin who could also be considered the right hand man and primary enforcer of the main villain of the movie.

Hodak is first seen near the start of the film in a cafe where he is sitting off to one side typing away on a typewriter with a large jacket hung over his shoulders, and his arms not in the sleeves. Dressed fashionably in nice pants, dress shoes, a collared button up long sleeve shirt and a vest, often with a suit jacket, Hodak stands out and blends in with the crowd with his clothing and the tattoos most noticeable on his neck and hands. And the awesome rings he wears on both hands, something I will nearly always notice mainly due to my penchant for wearing rings on most of my fingers.

Throughout the film, much like the Creepy Thin Man from two previous *Charlie's Angels* films, Hodak stays mute throughout nearly the entire movie other than one single word of dialogue near the very end of the story. Like the Thin Man though, he is not entirely silent and while he doesn't let out any skin crawling and ear piercing screams of joy and excitement, he does still make sounds in reaction to physical strain and so on. Like near the end where his ear gets bit hard enough to draw blood, and Hodak lets out a startled and annoyed sound at the sudden attack, followed by him moving his bloody fingers away from his ear and putting them in

his mouth while staring at the girl who just bit him. Creepy. Anyway enough of being sidetracked there, back to what I was saying.

There are those who say Hodak wasn't as good a character as the Thin Man, that he was just like a blank faced terminator or something similar, that he was a not well written character based on the more developed and well known Thin Man. Which, I mean when you stop to consider that the Thin Man was in two movies while Hodak was in one, yes that does make a bit of sense that the character who had more scenes probably was more thought out and more developed. But I do not agree with the people who say that Hodak was emotionless or blank faced, and that he didn't stand out other than his tattoos and the nice suits he wore.

They are entitled to their opinions of course and I hold nothing against them, and I can actually somewhat see things from their point of view, so I don't fault them for not interpreting things I saw the way I did. We all process, see, and interpret things differently after all, influenced by how we grew up and the things we have learned, situations we have been in and what we have as our interests and hobbies. Life influences how we see things. We are products of our environment after all.

The first thing I am going to focus on is how I saw Hodak as a character, why I found him interesting and so on, and while there might be some spoilers, I will try to keep them to a minimum as far as the main storyline and plot twists go. Hodak is not a huge guy, not overly tall or muscled in a somewhat ridiculous way, the actor stands at five foot ten inches and he is well muscled, but it is in a way that you can see without it looking over the top. He is muscled in a way that fits his height, muscled arms and chest but not in a bulky way, a sleek body I guess you could say if that makes sense to you. If not, I don't know, look up a picture of Jonathan Tucker as Hodak or something if that would make you feel better to know what I'm talking about, maybe this little rant will make more sense.

So, Hodak. He is not going to be intimidating just for his size physically, but it is a combination of the clothing he wears, the tattoos and jewelry he wears, and the way Hodak acts, the way he carries himself that caught my attention and makes him stand out and intimidating to a degree. Hodak is someone who carries himself with confidence, and it is a quiet confidence that is only reinforced by the clothing, tattoos and jewelry.

There must have been training to some degree that the actor went through for the role in order to use the firearms he does during the film and look as comfortable with them as he does, and that also adds to what drew my interest. It is believable that Hodak is an assassin, a skilled one at that, and it is easy to see him as a real threat in a way that is not over the top or ridiculous, and the way he fights feels more real, unlike it was in the older *Charlie's Angels* films most of the time. Don't get me wrong, the Thin Man was an interesting character and fun to watch in the scenes he was in, but I saw him more as a comedic character than an actual threat to the main characters most of the time.

The Thin Man was skilled and could be considered a mercenary or an assassin, but other parts of his personality were played up a lot in order to create a character that made a lasting impression who was fun to watch on the screen because of how strange and unhinged he seemed at times. Hodak kept my attention in part because of the skill he had, it was believable to me when he fought and used firearms or drove a car while using a firearm, yes I feel like he should have won more or caused more damage to his opponents in the fight, but hey they are the "heroes" so they have to win in the end.

Then there is the emotion I feel the need to call attention to after reading some comments about Hodak being emotionless and other things like that, comments comparing him to characters from action films that are literal robots and saying that he wasn't a good character because he was just another emotionless character causing chaos and fighting the heroes. Hodak is not emotionless, he is just not overly expressive most of the time. It is not easy to catch emotions for everyone I guess, unless you are really paying attention and specifically looking for them, or you have some experience with reading body language and facial expressions, because that is where Hodak's emotion is shown. Or maybe it is all just in my head, but from watching other things the actor has been in, I feel like he can be very expressive in his eyes and facial features or body language, so I guess I was looking for it.

There are some scenes where Hodak seems to be amused with what is going on or with what those around him are saying, like he finds it funny that they are reacting the way they are, or that he knows something they don't. There is another part where he looks downright gleeful when driving his car into the car his target is in, in an effort to run them off the road and kill the

target, or create the opening he needs to kill them directly. The emotion that Hodak shows is in his body language and in his facial expressions, standing up straighter and bringing his hands forward to clasp them together in front of himself, small quirks of his lips into smirks or smiles, and with his eyes the twinkling of amusement or the look of annoyance or rage, or what in some scenes could even be worship and admiration.

Near the end of the story when the main villain is revealed, or confirmed for those who had their suspicions, by Hodak arriving with the item he had stolen for his employer, there is a lot of emotion that shows if you watch Hodak. He stands close to his employer, which might not be a huge thing, but Hodak is smiling slightly with some emotion gleaming in his eyes as he looks at his employer. Hodak is staring at his employer while they put a hand on Hodak's shoulder and tell him that he did a good job, telling Hodak "well done" for bringing the stolen goods to them and for completing other work. In response to the appreciation from his employer, Hodak looks very happy, and he is looking at his employer with what I interpreted as devotion, adoration, or possibly worship right there in his eyes. Not what I was expecting to come to mind when watching that interaction between the assassin Hodak and his employer, even if it was the first time we saw the two of them interacting together directly like that and anything could have happened since we didn't know what was normal for the two of them.

That was really interesting to me, the fact that Hodak seemed to really be impacted by the way his employer talked to him, by the praise he got and the hand on his shoulder for the work he had done. It makes sense that an assassin might not be used to personal connection and to genuine praise, and since Hodak is a character who doesn't talk, the actor had to show in the way he behaved, in his face, that the positive attention really had an impact on him.

Now I know that I am probably reading into it a whole lot more than I need to, seeing more than there might actually be, but that is part of what I do I guess, overthink things that have caught my attention and interest in some way. I really liked the character Hodak, which I'm sure is fairly obvious by now, and thought that the actor did a fantastic job with bringing him to life despite the lack of lines or background, something he is able to do with all the characters he plays. Most of these characters also happen to be off in some way, who tend to be creepy, psychos, deranged in some way, off putting and unsettling, so it seems the actor has had some

good practice with those types of characters. And he is very good with them in my opinion, making them entertaining to watch. And there is nothing wrong with that, since not everyone is able to play characters that get under your skin, that creep you out and send chills down your spine while also making it hard for you to look away.

The final thing that got me with Hodak, was his death which I won't go into a whole ton, but as an evil character of course there is a high chance he will die by the end of it like most evil characters do. His death felt stupid, not fitting to him with how his character had been built up and used throughout the story up to that point, and he could have been used a whole lot more for different parts of the plots going on. Then they had to make a pun on top of it that just felt like too much, no respect for the character they created.

I understand that the main heroes of the movie are female and that is the whole point of the movie series, but I don't think it was completely realistic for Hodak to have been beaten one on one by the female hero who had a grudge against him, especially since it was personal for her so to me it felt like she shouldn't have been as controlled as she supposedly was. From how I saw it, pure luck is what made it so she could beat Hodak in a fight in the end after he had been beating the shit out of her during their fight and beat her in the past as well when they met throughout the story, but he was the villain and she was one of the three main heroes, so of course luck was on her side.

To close this random and not very deep or useful essay for most people, other than it being a little bit of a break from the intensity and craziness of life, there are a lot of characters that could end up being more than they seem. Characters that could have been used better, or given an ending that is more fitting for the role that they played and the way their character was written and then brought to life by the actor. There is only so much time in the movie or show, that is something I understand, but the minor characters still have a reason for existing in the story, they still have a part to play, so in my opinion they should be treated with a little more respect by the writers in the part they play, as well as their end. The villains don't always need to die, and the heroes don't always need to win completely.