

Interests for Discussion by Clare Lauren Kelly

I am going to start off by saying that this is in no way meant to be anything other than me rambling on for a bit about something that I find interesting or think about from time to time. Maybe a little more than from time to time since this is something I often find myself to be thinking about or analyzing in different ways, but it isn't like this is the only thing I ever think about or something like that. So don't expect some deep touchy-feely story here, because this is not going to be that, or at least I have no intention of it being like that. Who knows where my head will take it.

Some things are always a guessing game, I don't even know what I'm going to do or how I will react at times and I don't think that it is necessarily a bad thing since you don't have to be able to predict everything you'll do in order to exist as a person or live a good life. I will say that knowing to some degree how you would react to certain things or in some different situations is a good thing since it will help you in life and make things easier, knowing what pushes which buttons or even what buttons you have is good. You just don't have to know each and every little trigger, button, reaction and so on, so don't think that something is off with you for not knowing that completely.

Back on topic, I have thoughts that pop up in my head and then they don't leave until I take time to figure it out or think about it to various degrees of depth. Or talk it through with someone else, which can lead to some pretty interesting and fun discussions with the unfortunate person who happened to be there and fell victim to the chaos of my mind. And to be honest, a lot of the time it has something to do with the plot and characters of tv shows, films and books or something to do with an actor that I find interesting. I recommend checking out a website called TV Tropes, it is cool to look up films and shows you like on there because the site breaks down the characters, plot and more into different tropes and explains what the trope is. You can see the common tropes used in all different kinds of films and shows and I like where the characters are broken down into their tropes. Always fun for me to read.

For whatever reason, those are things that keep my brain occupied a lot with new ideas or topics to think about or other ways that some scene could have been written to change the impact it has on the one watching. Or breaking down characters and scenes into the different parts,

taking note of all the details and little things that when put together make the character or scene what it is. It is common for me once I find a new actor that I admire for their ability to bring their characters to life, to go down a bit of a rabbit hole with films and shows they have been in. I'll watch the ones I can that sound interesting and then break down the characters and things simply because for whatever reason, that is something that I like doing that keeps me entertained. So here is this one thought I had that I decided would be written here to be shared on a bigger scale than I normally would share any of the random thoughts that pop in and out of my head all day long no matter where I am.

Why does the hero always have to win and the villain die or go to prison? Seriously, why. Just because the character is the hero of the story doesn't mean that he should be the one to always win in the end and then ride off into the sunset to carry on with his life or get married to the girl. And if the hero kills the villain, there are almost never any consequences for the hero for killing another person, and him being the hero who killed the villain is not a good enough reason for me. Killing is done by both sides, yes, but the hero often works for some company and even if there is typically killing in that line of work, the hero should not always get off scot free. After all, he is supposed to be the good guy and the good guy should not be doing all the same things the villain is doing and then still be called a hero after it all. Even police officers have to be investigated after firing their gun and killing someone while on the job, no matter how bad the person they shot was or if that person was about to shoot the police officer or someone else. It is to make sure that the person they killed was posing an immediate threat or was doing something that justified them getting shot by the police, to make sure that the police officer didn't just shoot the first person they saw who matched the description they had been given. That is just how it goes, and I don't have much of a problem with it.

And I need to be clear that I am not saying that the villain should always win in some way. I'm not saying that the hero should lose and then the villain is able to carry out his plan that kills half of the world, that is not at all what I mean so do not take this the wrong way or twist my words around. I think that when the stakes are smaller, it would be more interesting if the villain did win a little and get away with it.

Not sure how many people have seen the 2018 film *Skyscraper* but I will use this as an example since it was one of the more recent films that started me on this rabbit hole I ended up in with the villains maybe winning a bit in the end. Spoilers ahead obviously, but I'll try to keep them to a minimum as much as I can. Basically there is this giant skyscraper and the main character is there to review the safety of that building and some stuff happens that ends up with him trapped in the building when it is on fire. There is also a group of mercenaries inside the building with him who are looking for something that they want, and they are willing to kill, injure, and set the building on fire with them inside of it to get it. Typical plot for that kind of action story with that kind of hero.

The main villain of the story is a man called Kores Botha and he leads the group of mercenaries who are after something inside the building. Spoiler warning once more, I am not going to give away big things in the storyline but if you aren't as observant and able to notice patterns in films and shows as me then it might spoil something so I am sorry if something does get spoiled. Not that it will spoil the movie as a whole or any good parts, it is a somewhat smaller thing that I think most people, if not all, would have seen coming since it is kind of normal for this type of film.

Also, don't feel bad if you were not able to make the connections I can, honestly I have spent way too much time watching and analyzing shows and films, and I like to write stories so I have an unfair advantage. My memory is also a bit weird where I remember a lot of details and bits of story and plot that I don't really need to remember, but for some reason my brain decided that it was going to hang on to whatever bit of information it found to be more interesting than some other bits. I got a lot of random knowledge, too much, but back to what I was saying.

In the story, Botha dies at the hands of the hero, I won't say how but it is kind of fitting I guess, and the how isn't what is important for what was going on in my head. Why did Botha have to die at all? Botha didn't have to die in order for the hero character to win since Botha only wanted something that was inside the building, and from what you piece together he didn't originally intend to kill a lot of people, if any, in there in the first place. There are people that were in the building who weren't supposed to be there when it all started, the building wasn't

actually open to the public yet so the people inside were minimal, which means that Botha wasn't interested in mass casualties.

It isn't like Botha was going after a big ass bomb that he wanted to set off which would cause immediate death and havoc on top of what already happened in the story. Having Botha get the thing he wanted and get away would not have ruined the story and the hero still could have saved the day and lived. Yeah there would have to be a new ending for the story than what was used to make it so Botha could get away with what he came for without killing the hero and the people the hero protected, but there are ways it could happen.

It would not even have to be something that the hero does directly to avoid being killed. It could have been something as simple as the window of opportunity for getting away safely was closing due to the fire in the building and the response to that, the police and fire department workers all around the building as well as the crowd of people watching. So Botha decided he would rather get out of there with what he came for and not waste more time hunting the hero or other characters that were there. Since he had gotten what he had come for, there was no need to keep wasting time on other things since the fire in the building obviously attracted a lot of attention and getting what he wanted wouldn't matter if he died or was caught by the police. Botha was a mercenary, not a full blown psycho who just wanted to kill people, cause pain and suffering or wreak havoc on the world.

Now this is definitely a bit of a skewed perspective since I really liked the character of Kores Botha as well as the actor who played him, who I knew from another film he played a great character in. So yes, there is some motivation in this for me of not wanting Botha to die since I liked his character and found the guy to be interesting with his personality, mannerisms and the character development that happened. But that isn't a bad thing. I thought the character Botha was well written and played wonderfully by the actor so it only makes sense that I would like it if he lived in the end, and got away no matter whether or not his death was a fitting one and not something stupid. You never really want the character you found interesting to die no matter how much they might deserve it, since something about them made you want to watch more of them doing things.

If Botha had just been shot in the head after everything that happened in the film and everything that the audience had seen him doing, that would have just taken away from the story's conclusion. And pissed me off. I really don't like when a character dies in a way that just doesn't really make sense or is not as intense or fitting as it could have been depending on what the character's part in the film was. Doesn't even matter if I like the character or not, a death that is not fitting and that doesn't make sense for a character that was more than a throwaway goon just really bothers me for some reason.

Or when there is a character who played a big part and the audience doesn't know what happened to them at the end, like it is hinted that they might be killed or implied that they were imprisoned, but there is nothing really confirming it. A character that was developed to some degree who actually played a part in the story impacting the plot in some way, deserves more than a vague mention of what might have happened to them in my opinion. Most likely this bothers me more than some because I like to write stories and pay attention to what happens in books, films and shows to get new ideas that can be used in my own little stories. You can learn a lot from paying attention to what goes on in the plot of something, you notice similarities and patterns which are always interesting. Well, it is always interesting to me at least, I don't know about anyone else.

The other big example that was in my head for a good chunk of time is from a film that might not be as well known to a decent amount of people since it is a French film, and depending on what you like to watch it won't be everyones cup of tea. Which truthfully, can be said about quite a lot of different shows and films. It is called *The Emperor of Paris* and if you do end up watching it, don't watch it dubbed in whatever your native language is, dubbing in my opinion takes away from the film. It was written and acted in a specific language so that is the language that it should be watched in, the performance of the actors does not feel the same if you watch a dubbed version. That is my opinion at least and I do not mind watching a film or show and reading the subtitles, for me I am able to enjoy it better that way almost all of the time. If you have your reasons for watching dubbed, go ahead, I personally think that there is some of the original performance that gets lost when you watch something that has been dubbed. Anyway, back to why that film is an example that was sticking in my head, and yes like with Botha I do

follow and enjoy the work of the actor who played the character, and I did like the character he plays in this film who died in the end so again, my perspective on this is a bit skewed but I know and accept that.

The character Nathanael de Wenger is a criminal who is not afraid to get his hands dirty, to get in a fight or to kill whoever is in his way when needed. The film is based on an actual person who is of course the main character and the hero, nothing wrong with that I suppose the hero character is interesting enough for most people. In the end as Nathanael is one of the villains of the story, he dies at the hands of the hero in a way that is very fitting, since he is killed in the exact same way he killed someone else a bit earlier in the film that was close to the hero. So yes his death was expected and it was a fitting one, but did he really have to die? The hero of the story could still have been the hero in the end without Nathanael dying, of course some things would have to change in the story but that is to be expected when changing something like that. Also, even with it being based on a real person, there were some parts that were changed for dramatic effect and so on, something that does happen in movies based on real life.

Personally I had wished that the character of Nathanael had been able to live and get away somehow to start up his life as a smart and dangerous criminal leading a gang in another city. Again I am a bit biased since I found the character to be a lot more interesting than the hero character, and I do know the actor from other roles he has played wonderfully. If the actor does not do a good job, then it doesn't matter how good the writing is, because it just won't work. The actor is the one that makes the character feel like someone you would really meet on the street and the lines seem natural and realistic when you watch it, the one who embodies the character and brings them to life. The writing is the guide, and the actor uses the guide to bring the words and the character to life.

So yeah I am not going to lie that this may have all just come from me being sad that the characters I found interesting died, but it made me think about how in most shows or films with a clear hero and villain, the villain normally will die by the end. And if they don't die they get locked away forever in some prison while the hero character moves on with their life to go live happily ever after or fight and beat the next villain that is written into their story. No matter how much damage the hero might have caused over the course of the story they go on to live the rest

of their life happily for the most part. There are a lot of other characters who could be considered villains or at least bad guys in many different films, shows and books that I wish didn't end up dying or locked away, and I'm sure that there will be quite a few more I find in the future. I mean there are quite a few others in my head right now, it would just take way too many pages to write them all out and I'm sure most people aren't interested in hearing about each and every character I think deserved to have a different ending.

There is always some interesting story to get sucked into which I am totally fine with, my life is relatively boring, not much happens which I am basically okay with, so these stories always make me happy for a while after finishing them. But forget that, back to heroes and villains and why the hero should not always beat the villain completely and get praised for it or whatever happens for the hero.

The hero should not always win completely like that, have the villain get away with something in the end if their overall plot was not something horrible like blowing up the world or flooding a city and killing everyone there. That is the plan of a villain that should not win in some way or get away at the story. But the hero shouldn't always win, period. The hero is human, unless they are a hero in some supernatural or sci fi thing because then they might be some race other than human. But no matter the race of the hero, they are not a perfect being and I don't think that they should be portrayed that way because everyone has some qualities or beliefs that are not necessarily good, and they all have their weaknesses. Even Superman can be beaten with the right tools after all. Some villains just want money or some specific object that they need for some reason that isn't world ending, so why do they have to die giving the hero an ending that is full of glory and praise for them.

So this was just one of the random things that came to mind when watching different films, and like I said I know that there are a lot more examples that can be given of times when it might not have been the worst thing for the villain to win a little. I'm curious if you all, whoever is reading this, are able to come up with any examples yourself of a villain or bad guy that you think should have maybe lived and won a little.

Like with me, I'm sure that in the examples you think of the character is one that you liked or found interesting, and there is nothing wrong with that since I am in the same boat as

you there. When a character is well written and interesting, the last thing I want is for them to die since there is a lot more that could have been done with them. Yes there are times when the character does need to die for the sake of the plot or something else like that and while I will be sad about it, I do understand since I write my own little stories and characters do die to get the ending you want. But not all bad characters always need to die or get locked up to get the ending that the writer wants to get.

Don't worry about what other people think of you when you have an interest or an idea you want to explore on your own or discuss with others. There are a lot of times where I look back on a conversation I had with someone and wonder what in the world was going on with me in that moment, and hoping the person I was talking with wasn't bored or annoyed with me. I do tend to ramble on a bit when talking about things I am interested in or want to discuss to see other people's thoughts. Be yourself and be curious, curiosity can always be a good thing. Who knows, maybe you'll figure out a possible career path from a discussion you have with someone, or you could make some good new friends and more.