

You've heard of the Seven Deadly Sins. You've seen the four Greek virtues. And there are myriad other lists throughout history that define humanity's positive and negative character traits. But how often have you seen them applied to actual characters? We thought it would be a truly polarizing—and entertaining—experience to slap an entire season's worth of vices and virtues on those characters we love (and love to hate). So go ahead. Pull out the best and worst your creations have to offer and lay it on *thick*. But remember to **keep things PG-13**. After all, too much of a good thing is, well, a bad thing. Note: This is a reference sheet only; check the Season Themes page on GoHavok.com to verify which months are open for submissions and which are closed.

COWARDICE / COURAGE

Here in America, July is the month we celebrate independence. But Freedom isn't for the faint of heart. It requires courage. This month, show us brave amateur sleuths bringing fearsome murderers to justice. Convince a cowardly service droid to stand up to a deadly battle bot. Heck, it's even the perfect opportunity for a timid toadstool to team up with a towering Tasmanian oak to overcome a horde of gluttonous goats. Not too gluttonous though. That's a different month.

LAZINESS / DILIGENCE

As summer comes to an end, most of us are tempted to kick back and soak up the rest of the sun's rays before the days get shorter and the air gets colder. But this is no time for apathy! So, kick that sloth into high gear as he learns to appreciate the value of a hard day's work at the local zoo. Light a fire under that retired, overweight prizefighter by pitting him against a genetically enhanced assassin. Or just teach that twenty-something gamer the power of zeal by transporting him into the armor of his favorite video game knight and requiring that he practice daily to survive the boss battle and get home again.

PRIDE / HUMILITY

Pride comes before the fall, but this fall we want you to show us the exciting side of humility. Throw cocky millionaires headfirst into the humble lives of blue-collar heroes. Pair a meek sidekick with a mighty superhero and see who really saves the day. And don't hesitate to feed a world-champion sumo wrestler a slice of humble pie. Again, not too much humble pie though. Gluttony isn't until November...

RAGE / PEACE

While some parts of the world see the Halloween season as one filled with wrath and ruin, others see it as a time for patience and tranquility. Thankfully, in this month's theme, we're looking for both. Show us the redemptive spirit of a vengeful... well... spirit... when he takes haunting advice from a friendly ghost. Give a barbarian berserker a chance to stop and smell the roses. There may even be time to push peaceful monks over the edge by sending a vexing door-to-door salesman to their Himalayan monastery.

GLUTTONY / TEMPERANCE

The best way for Americans to celebrate Thanksgiving Day is to stuff themselves like a turkey, right? Well, gluttony may be fun, but it also comes with consequences. Without self-control, even the most renowned war hero will drown himself in the bottle and never return to the battlefield. Even the most powerful world-eating celestial being will lose his appetite for destruction. And yes, you can now have all the gluttonous goats you want and feed that sumo wrestler all the humble pie that he can handle.

SELFISHNESS / SACRIFICE

If there was ever a time to contrast greed and generosity, it would be during the Christmas season. It's during this time that the richest pirate on the high seas must learn the importance of a little charity. And a devout demon hunter must learn that it doesn't matter how many evil souls he captures if he's unwilling to lay down his own. Even an envious elf can learn the reason for the season when he gives Santa his last candy cane.

WE NEED ALL FIVE MAJOR GENRES

Havok receives a lot of fantasy submissions. We love fantasy, but we also love science fiction. And mystery, thriller, and humor. In fact, because of the lower submission volume for mystery, thriller, and humor categories, your submission may have a better chance at publication if it fits those genres.

TIP #1: You can *still* write a fantasy or science fiction story while targeting mystery, thriller, or humor. Take your fantasy (or futuristic) character and setting and center your story around a mystery, a question, an unknown. Or make the situation life-threatening and thrilling. Or give your characters a humorous personality or put them in a hilarious situation.

TIP #2: The Vice & Virtue theme offers many options suitable for all five genres. Here are some ideas to spark your imagination:

- *Mystery:* Who is leaving generous anonymous gifts on the senior apartment balconies?
- *Science Fiction:* A hard-working asteroid miner wins the company lottery and quits her job only to discover sloth isn't all she thought it would be.
- *Humor:* A thrifty pennypincher goes on a spending spree to get back at a cheating soon-to-be-ex.
- *Thriller:* A brave superhero encounters something that reduces him to panic.
- *Fantasy:* A gold-loving dragon learns to share their hoard.

TIP #3: You don't need to include both the vice and the virtue in your story. Feel free to focus on *just* the vice, or *just* the virtue. However, contrasting the two can make a powerful story, so it's totally up to you!

TIP #4: Take your first idea and then brainstorm how to make it even *more* intense, *more* exaggerated, *more* emotionally impactful. Go for a visceral reaction in the reader, leave them with a lasting memory. (Just remember to keep it PG-13.)

TIP #5: We love straight up stories that show why a virtue is so noble and why vices are so destructive—but we also like stories that explore the complexities of the human condition. Illustrate the pitfalls of taking a virtue so far it becomes a vice (like working hard at the expense of precious family relationships). Show us the deceptive nature of some vices, how they hide behind a mask of virtue (like self-righteous generosity hiding a prideful heart).

Using the season themes to inspire you, send us a story that fits any of the following daily flash genres:

MYSTERY MONDAY: From cozy to crime scene, start your week off with a bit of mystery. Creep through downtown foggy London Town, spy on secret agents at a midnight meeting, catch up with an old friend who may or may not be a cat burglar, or just figure out who stole your homework before the last bell rings. It doesn't have to be a classic mystery with detectives, clues, murder, or theft. If it's mysterious, uncertain, or unknown, take us on a journey through the dark and shine a bit of light on the hidden—and maybe even startling—truth.

Sub-genres: Amateur sleuth (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*), cozy/whodunit (Agatha Christie), crime (*The Departed*), legal/medical (*A Few Good Men*), noir (*Blade Runner*), police procedural (*Silence of the Lambs*), professional sleuth (Sherlock Holmes), supernatural (*The Woman in Black*), psychological horror (*Sphere*)

TECHNO TUESDAY: As your week hits its stride, don't be afraid to ask, "What if..." What if NASA really is covering for the aliens? What if your new cell phone comes with a free brain implant? What if a radioactive spider gives you superpowers? What if time travel vacations are a thing of the past? With Havok, even the mysteries of the universe aren't too great to explore over your morning cup of coffee.

Sub-genres: Hard sci-fi (*The Martian*), soft sci-fi (*Spider-Man*), military (*Starship Troopers*), space opera (*Star Wars*, *Dune*), steampunk (*The Time Machine*), cyber/bio/nanopunk (*The Matrix*), voyages extraordinaire (Jules Verne), gothic (*Frankenstein's Monster*), dystopian (*The Hunger Games*)

WACKY WEDNESDAY: Halfway done, and who couldn't use a little humor over their lunch break? Well, embrace the lighter side of Havok as you laugh your stress away, 1,000 words at a time. Whether you're running alongside a hilariously unfortunate private eye, hitching a ride across the galaxy, helping a kid defend his home from Christmas burglars, enjoying a "sick day" with a high school adventurer, or going on an epic quest to find a holy grail, you can rest assured that your adventure will be anything but serious.

Sub-genres: Forget 'em! What would Wacky Wednesday be with a bunch of rules? If it's funny, lighthearted, and downright entertaining, you're hitting the mark.

THRILLER THURSDAY: As your week races to a close, get caught up in some heart-pumping excitement. Run down a terrorist before time runs out. Infiltrate a secret society before they collect the last relic. Untangle a sociopath's plot before he pins the whole thing on you. Take down a crime boss before he takes you down. And do it all before your kids wake up from their afternoon nap.

Sub-genres: Action (*James Bond*), adventure (*Indiana Jones*), conspiracy (*The Da Vinci Code*), crime (*Die Hard*), medical (*Outbreak*), man vs. nature (*Jaws*, *Twister*)

FANTASY FRIDAY: TGI fantasy! Now, sit back and drift into another world filled with high elves, amateur wizards, magic wardrobes, suave vampires, and gun-slinging monster hunters. With Havok, there's no limit to how far the story will take you as you kick your feet up and usher in another fantastic weekend.

Sub-genres: Fairy tales (*Cinderella*), horror (*Dracula*), high fantasy (*The Lord of the Rings*), low fantasy (*Harry Potter*), magical realism (*Midnight in Paris*), medieval (*A Game of Thrones*), portal (*The Chronicles of Narnia*), urban/paranormal (*The Dresden Files*)