

Killing Eve

Season 3



Six-Core Questions Analysis

1. What's the global genre?

Thriller > Serial Killer

Love > Obsession

Morality > Testing

Editor's note: While this is clearly a thriller (evident in the trailer, the inciting incident of death and the showdown which has Hero at the Mercy of the Villain) you'll notice that Love and Morality are present in heavy doses especially for Eve and Villanelle.

2. What are the obligatory scenes and conventions of the global genre?

Obligatory Scenes

Thriller Genre:

An Inciting Crime indicative of a master Villain. There must be victims.

In the first episode, Kenny dies which leads Eve to investigate his murder and the possible link to the Twelve. In the final scene, Konstantin tells Carolyn that his death was an accident. If that is true, then Kenny's death is not a crime indicative of a master villain.

Speech in Praise of the Villain: speech by a character, or a revelation, that praises the cunning/brilliance of the villain.

Kenny dies soon after telling Eve that he has critical information about the Twelve, which could be taken as praise of the villain - an indication of how the Twelve are watching everyone. By the end of the Season, we have no real proof of the Twelve. There are many missed opportunities to show us the power of the Twelve, assuming that they are the main villain. However, it is unclear who the villain is.

The Hero/Protagonist becomes the Victim. A scene reveals that the Villain makes his crimes personal to the Hero and the Hero becomes the primary Victim.

It's unclear who the hero or who the villain are. You could argue that Kenny's death makes the crime of the Twelve personal to Carolyn, but we have no proof that it was the Twelve.

Niko was attacked by Dasha, but Dasha is not the main villain.

Mo is killed, but it's unclear by whom, although we suspect the Twelve are involved as he was about to give Carolyn information linking Paul to the Twelve.

Which brings us back to the question: who is the villain? Paul? Konstantin?

The Hero at the Mercy of the Villain. The core event of the Thriller, the All is Lost Moment when the Hero unleashes his or her gift.

The core event of this season is in the final episode where Eve & Villanelle find Carolyn pointing a gun at Paul and then Konstantin. Carolyn shoots Paul.

However, the same problems arise here - we're not clear who is the hero, who the villain is and who is at mercy of whom - this was a weak Core Event.

False Ending (there must be two endings).

The false ending was potentially the way that Carolyn seemed to be originally holding Paul hostage but then threatens Konstantin, but then shoots Paul. However it wasn't satisfying.

Love Genre:

Lovers meet:

They meet in the bus which leads to a kiss and a head bump. What makes this a fun scene is that it's an aggressive, argumentative 'lovers' meet scene.

First Kiss or Intimate Connection

They kiss, but it's almost a surprise to them both and it's while Villanelle has Eve pinned down and while they are shouting at each other.

Confession of love

The 'confession of love' scene is fascinating, because it's also a descent into a dark morality. Villanelle and Eve are on the bridge and Villanelle remarks that they have both contributed to the death of Dascha. She says that 'most people wouldn't find that romantic. Eve responds that 'People like us' would.

Lovers break up

Eve tells Villanelle that being around her brings out her monster, and Villanelle, surprisingly tells her to turn around and not look back. Eve doesn't question it and obeys her.

Proof of love

Remember that at the end of season 2, Villanelle shot Eve in the back when Eve tried to walk away. But Villanelle has grown up since then. She is ready to let Eve walk away because she can see Eve's struggle with her internal dark side. They both walk away from each other, and it's clear that it's painful for them both.

Lovers reunite

Eve is the first to turn around, and then we see Villanelle turn around too. There is something that these star-crossed lovers share, that they cannot give up. While they don't hug or have a cheesy reunion scene (which wouldn't fit their personalities or their dynamic), it seems that they aren't prepared to give each other up yet.

Morality Genre:

A shock upsets the hibernating authentic self.

Kenny's death was the first event that rattled Eve's depressive state. But we also have Villanelle kissing Eve in the bus which seems like an even larger wakeup call.

The Protagonist expresses inner darkness with an overt refusal of the Hero's Journey call to change.

Niko was pitchforked. Instead of recognizing that she, Eve, had put him in danger, she decides to continue to investigate to find out who attacked Niko. She can't stop.

Protagonist faces an All Is Lost Moment and either discovers their inner moral code or chooses the immoral path.

There are two moments when Eve faces a moral dilemma.

- 1) When Dascha taunts her about having attacked Niko. At this point Dascha is helpful and possibly dying. Eve could have walked away, but she breaks her ribs instead in pure anger.
- 2) Later, Eve watches Carolyn on edge as she threatens to kill Konstantin. Instead of interfering, Eve is only a bystander. She is not upholding justice anymore in the form of the law, and she does not have all the information and evidence that prove that Carolyn is right.

Protagonist actively sacrifices self in service of an individual, a group, or humanity (positive) or consciously chooses to remain selfish (negative)

Eve could have pressed Dascha for more information about the Twelve but instead she injures Dascha even more.

Eve stays selfish as she chooses to turn around and not let go of what she has with Villanelle. She's not doing it to get to the Twelve, but out of love.

Protagonist faces literal or metaphorical death and either loses the battle but gains self-respect, meaning and peace; or wins the battle but loses those things.

We didn't see solid evidence of such a scene.

Conventions

Thriller

MacGuffin: This is the Villain's Object of Desire, what he or she wants.

Since we don't know who the villain is we don't know what they want.

It's very unclear what the villain wants or who they are. Instead we that

- Helene wants to keep Villanelle on staff (why?) and is willing to pay more and give her a fake promotion to keep her happy.
- We see that Paul wants to find out who stole the millions (presumably from the Twelve)

We do have clues that somebody seems to be silencing anyone who gets close to information - Kenny and Mo are both killed shortly after they make phone calls to Eve/ Carolyn with the promise of information. However this feels a little weak and the overarching desire of the villain is still unknown, and hasn't progressed since the last season.

Investigative Red Herrings: seemingly revelatory false clues that mislead the Protagonist.

Kenny's death might be a red herring if it's true that his accident was a death. But that would be a shame as it would destroy

Making it Personal: The Villain takes the Hero's fight as a personal affront and wants to not only beat the Hero but make it painful for the hero as well.

No evidence of this

Clock: there is a limited time for the Hero to act; failing to act burns precious time.

No evidence of this

Love Genre:

Triangle / Rivals: Villanelle is ready to let Eve walk away from her

Helpers and Harmers: Dascha tries to separate the lovers by attempting to kill Niko and frame Villanelle

Gender Divide: Unclear

External Need: Eve is driven by the need to solve Kenny's murder

Opposing Forces: Morality separates them. Eve knows that being near her brings out her darkness.

Secrets: They barely tell each other anything, so they hold a universe of secrets from each other.

Rituals: This convention is not always present in Obsession Love stories and isn't present in this season.

Moral Weight: Villanelle's sacrifice to let Eve go is one of the few genuinely nice things she has done. It offers her a chance of redemption.

Morality Genre:

The despicable protagonist begins at his/her worst

Eve had a mental breakdown. She seems like she has given up on herself.

Spiritual mentor/sidekick

Carolyn always seemed to be Eve's mentor, but I don't think that Eve still listens to her advice partly because Carolyn hasn't proven herself to be trustworthy. Maybe because Eve has lost a mentor, she can't make the right decisions anymore.

Seemingly impossible external conflict.

Can love be wrong? Especially falling in love with a serial killer psychopath that excites you?

How can you keep investigating if your motivation comes from your heart rather than your want for justice?

Ghosts from the protagonist's past torment him/her

Dasha.

Villanelle.

Aid from unexpected sources

Kenny's old work buddies.

Konstantin.

3. Point of View

The point of view flits between Eve, Carolyn, Konstantin, Villanelle - to the point where episode 5 (Are you from Pinner?) is almost wholly focused on Villanelle. This weakens the story arc.

p.s. Game of Throne does a good job dedicating time to develop the characters. Each scene shows choices made by the character to progress the story, so the audience understands what kind of person the character is quickly and sees the characters active in their own destiny.

4. What are the objects of desire?

Eve: Wants to bring Kenny's killer to justice and to forget Villanelle (external) and to have excitement in her life (internal)

Villanelle: Wants to get out from under the Twelve's thumb (external) and to find meaning in her life, which seems to only be possible with Eve (internal)

Carolyn: Wants to find Kenny's killer (external), and to come to terms with Kenny's death (internal)

Konstantin: Wants safety for himself and his daughter. Internal need unknown but likely to be linked to his family.

The Twelve: From this season it seems they want to keep Villanelle on staff (to continue killing and maybe something bigger in mind?). But what is the MacGuffin? We still don't know.

5. What is the controlling idea/theme?

Thriller: Lives are lost when the hero fails to sacrifice herself for the greater good.

Morality: Evil continues to exist when the Protagonist pursues selfish needs ahead of the needs of others.

Love: Love has a chance when even self-obsessed assassins can sacrifice themselves for their lover

6. What are the beginning hook, middle build and ending payoff?

Still reeling from Villanelle's attack on her from Season 2, Eve is struggling to make sense of her life. She refuses Kenny's attempt to draw her back into the investigation of the Twelve. But when Kenny is killed, Eve starts to investigate again alongside his former colleagues from Bitter Pill.

Meanwhile Eve is bargaining with the Twelve, if they want her to stay she'll need a promotion. She's a terrible manager and is still distracted by thoughts of Eve. Dascha, her new boss, kills Niko to frame Villanelle in an attempt to drive a wedge between Villanelle and Eve. Konstantin gives Villanelle her family's address and Villanelle comes face to face with her family and, rejected by her mother, she kills her and burns the house down. Niko is alive but rejects Eve; Eve responds by chasing a clue which leads her to Dasha. Eve later attacks Dasha once she realises she was behind Niko's attempted murder.

Carolyn discovers that Konstantin was at the scene of the murder. She also gets a call from Mo telling her that he has critical information linking Paul and the Twelve but is killed. In the final showdown Carolyn confronts Paul and Konstantin, and aims the gun at Konstantin. Eve and Villanelle do nothing to stop her. Carolyn decides to believe Konstantin's story that Kenny's death was an accident and shoots Paul. Villanelle decides not to run away from Konstantin, she'd rather stay with Eve. Eve and Villanelle have a romantic moment on the bridge but when Eve tells Villanelle that being around her brings out her inner monster, Villanelle tells her to walk away. But both women are too connected to leave each other, and turn around again.