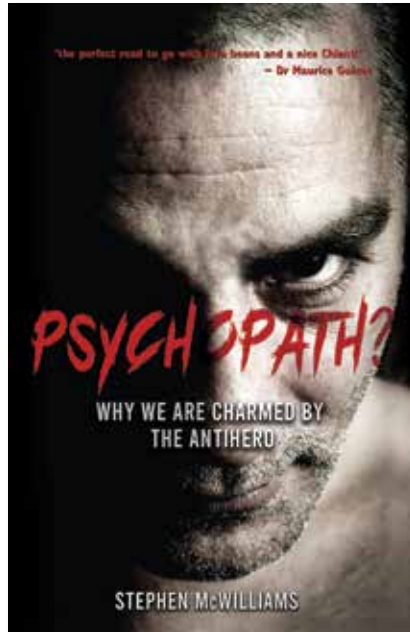


# The charming psychopath

PSYCHOPATHS are essential in fiction. They exist within the plot to present a challenge for the hero. In his book, *Psychopath? Why we are charmed by the antihero*, Dr Stephen McWilliams, explores how we are somehow seduced by fictional villains and antiheroes.

Many fictional psychopaths are deliberately dislikeable; they are the villains in almost every novel, action film or television drama. Some are absurdly comical while others are simply repulsive without any humour. But often enough it is the protagonist himself (or, less often, herself) who is psychopathic. His nefarious deeds do little to dissuade us from cheering him on; indeed, we seem quite happy to shelve our own moral compasses as we root for him to prevail. Such an antihero needs charisma if we are to remain interested in his overcoming whatever challenge the plot throws at him.

There are countless literary and cinematic examples. We are seduced by the protagonists in Tarantino and Hitchcock films. We empathise with the talented



Mr Ripley. We are so fascinated by Kevin Khatchadourian that we feel the relentless need to talk about him. We feel a thrill when Frank Underwood manipulates a naïve senator. And we positively tremble with glee at Hannibal Lecter's culinary

assertion (with regard to a census-taker who once tried to test him) that he "ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti". He inhales sharply through his teeth and sends a shiver up the spine. And yet, deep within ourselves, we find him compelling.

But how could a fictional psychopath possibly be likeable? And how does the author or director achieve the antihero's likeability notwithstanding their dirty deeds? Is it their calmness in face of danger? Is it a strange vulnerability they may possess? Do they appeal to our fascination with secrecy? Is it that they seem to take us into their confidence? Are we simply seduced by their charm? Do they appeal to a part deep within us that longs to be bad? Or do their less-likeable victims somehow make them look good? Whatever it is, something exists in the fictional psychopath that keeps us coming back for more. We just can't help ourselves.

*Psychopath? Why we are charmed by the antihero*, by Stephen McWilliams, is published by Mercier Press. ISBN: 978-1-78117-590-3

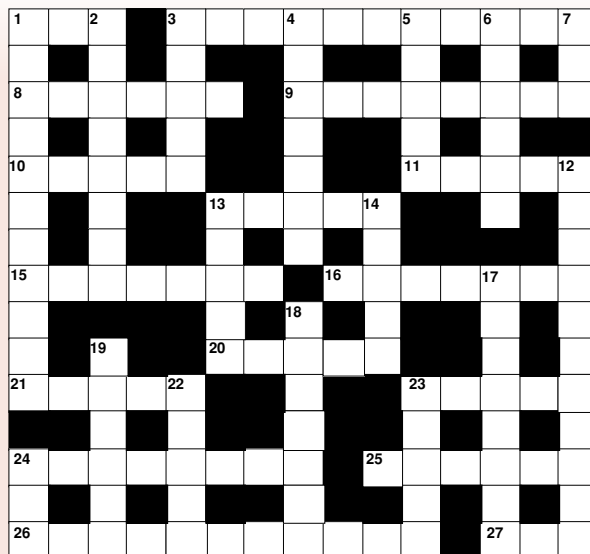


## CROSSWORD Competition



- Across**
- 1 Pull a harbour vessel (3)
  - 3 Wherein to trade company shares (5,6)
  - 8 Signalled agreement (6)
  - 9 Item of jewellery often made with pearls (8)
  - 10 Local or colloquial way of phrasing things (5)
  - 11 See 3 down
  - 13 Early rounds in a competition, as the unravelling happens (5)
  - 15 & 23a Serious conversation - between one cardiac organ and another? (5,2,5)
  - 16 Rugby No 10 (3-4)
  - 20 Wooden pin (5)
  - 21 Sudden, involuntary muscular contraction (5)
  - 23 See 15 across
  - 24 Skin tumour that may be found in a lemon, Ma (8)
  - 25 Game with pieces to be made into a picture (6)
  - 26 Childish name for a coney (5,6)
  - 27 Melody is gas! (3)

- Down**
- 1 Put them on your feet for sport on the court (6,5)
  - 2 It's a movie monster from Lodz, Gail (8)
  - 3 & 11a Huge swimmer found where palms get chopped up (5,5)
  - 4 Disposed to mistrust (7)
  - 5 Distorted, out of kilter (5)
  - 6 Marsupials are all right turning up, unfortunately! (6)
  - 7 & 12 Parisian landmark that is fit to freewheel around (3,6,5)
  - 13 Abhorred, detested (5)
  - 14 Row a boat (5)
  - 17 Totally disorientated - on land? Not a bit of it! (3,2,3)
  - 18 A sheep's 'daughter' (3,4)
  - 19 Large fish related to the swordfish (6)
  - 22 Cash (5)
  - 23 Lifting apparatus (5)
  - 24 Many old boys initially form an unruly group (3)



**October crossword solution**

- Across:** 1 Open secret 6 Blur 10 Cocoa 11 Iron horse 12 Burglar alarm 17 Adit 18 Late 19 Expat 21 Baghdad 23 Corfu 24 Arms 25 Moor 26 Tot up 28 Sandals 33 Out of date 34 Upset 35 Nore 36 Listlessly
- Down:** 1 Orca 2 Encounter 3 Slang 4 China 5 Eros 7 Larva 8 Rheumatism 9 Cheated 13 Lisa 14 Rashers 16 Blackthorn 20 Paralysis 21 Bump off 22 Alan 27 Tutor 29 Alert 30 Drupe 31 Dali 32 Athy

**The winner of the October crossword is:**  
Graham Knight  
Deansgrange, Dublin

You can now email your entry to us at [nursing@medmedia.ie](mailto:nursing@medmedia.ie) by taking a photo of the completed crossword with your details included.

**Closing date:** Friday, November 20, 2020

If preferred you can post your entry to: Crossword Competition, WIN, MedMedia Publications, 17 Adelaide Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, A96E096

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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