



What makes a  
Character “Good”?

# RECAP FROM LAST WEEK

- ▶ Stories can be used as engaging ways for authors/storytellers to express their points of view to others
- ▶ The classic story structure introduces characters and setting, puts forth a conflict, and then builds to resolving the conflict

# INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Over the course of the next month, you will be crafting a short story
- ▶ The central *conflict* of this story will be a character who you think is a morally good person overcoming a difficult situation

# BRAINSTORM

- ▶ Think of people or characters that you consider to be “good” characters (heroes)
- ▶ We are thinking about morally good, not interesting; the Joker or Lady Macbeth might largely be considered interesting characters, but not morally good individuals
- ▶ **Activity: Write down as many qualities as you can that these characters/people possess (focus on descriptors more than actions)**

# GROUPSTORM

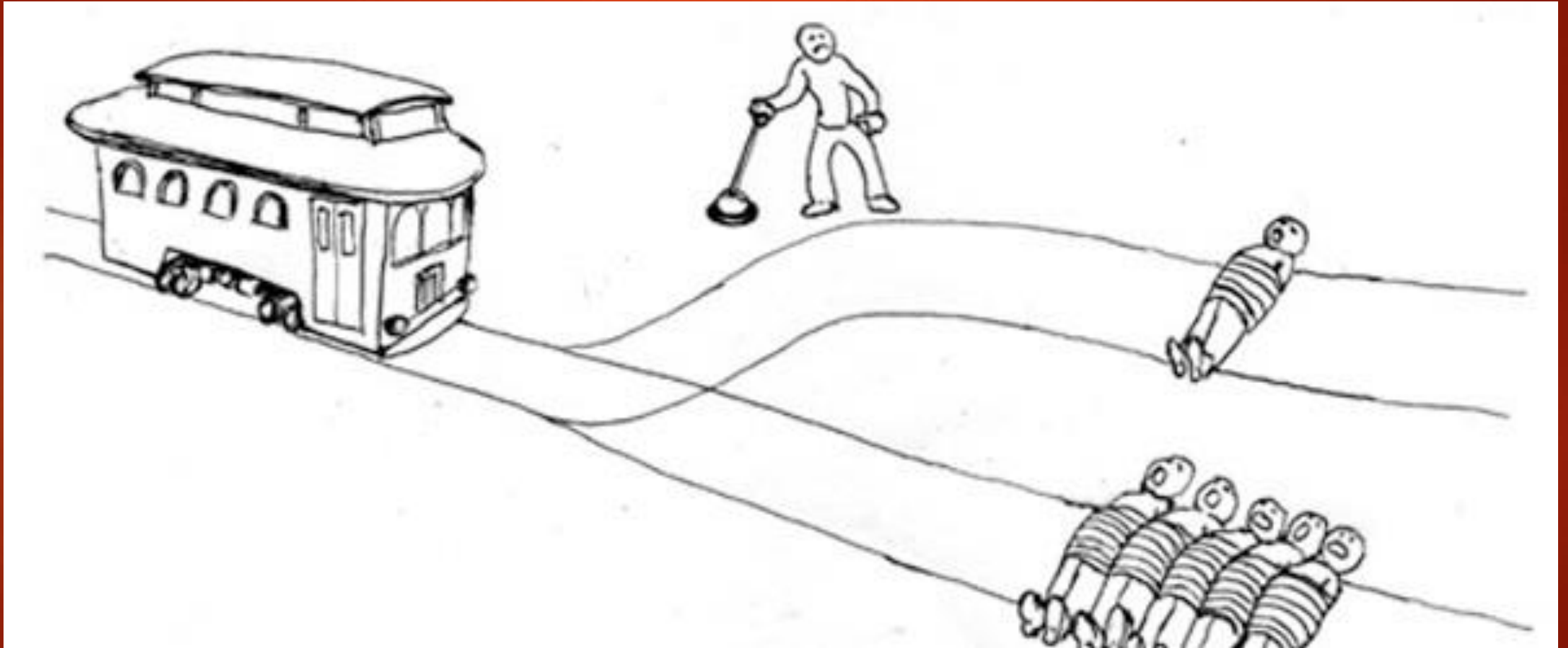
- ▶ Spend 5 minutes as a group combining your lists to answer the question: if you were writing a story together, what qualities would the hero possess?
- ▶ Elect a spokesperson to a) present your list, b) discuss what qualities were most shared, and c) discuss what qualities were different or debatable

# DISCUSSION!

- ▶ Why might someone else in the class have different views on morality than you do?
- ▶ Do you think that your views mostly stay the same over time or mostly change?



# THOUGHT EXPERIMENT 1: THE TROLLEY PROBLEM



# THOUGHT EXPERIMENT 2: THE LARGE MAN MODIFICATION





# THOUGHT EXPERIMENT 3: THE SURGEON AND THE HOMELESS MAN



# MORAL DILEMMAS

- ▶ Moral Dilemma: a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two courses of action, either of which is morally distasteful
  - Your short story will consist of a character making a difficult decision to overcome a moral dilemma

# ACTIVITY

- ▶ Go to the class site and choose a moral dilemma that you find difficult
- ▶ Using the voice of what you believe to be a morally good character (think back to your original list), write a paragraph of their *inner monologue* as they make their decision. Include a resolution to the dilemma (what did they do?)

# EXAMPLE

- ▶ **EXAMPLE: The Robin Hood Robber**
- ▶ You witness a man rob a bank, but instead of keeping all of the money for himself, he donates much of it to a local orphanage. You know this orphanage has been struggling for funding, and this money will allow the children to receive proper food, clothing and medical care. If you report the crime, the money will be taken away from the orphanage and given back to the bank.



► *I've got to turn him in*, I thought. I picked up my phone and dialed in the local police number. I stared at the number, but couldn't bring myself to hit send. I couldn't stop thinking about those orphans. It might not be the best way for them to get money, but if it helped give them food, warmth, and a fighting chance at a better future, I couldn't be the person to prevent that. If I made that phone call, it would make the world a worse place. I put down my phone.

- ▶ I gave out a long sigh, but I knew what I had to do. Did I want the orphanage to have that money? Of course I did. But I also don't want to live in a world where people can steal whatever they want as long as the money is going somewhere they *think* is good. If there aren't laws and consequences, the world can get real chaotic real quick. It didn't feel good to make that phone call, but I knew that, in the end, justice is the right thing for society. Later that week, I gave a hundred dollars to the orphanage. It wasn't close to what they had gotten taken away from them, but it was honest money that came from an honest place, and I think that's worth more.



# EXPECTATIONS

- ▶ Inner monologue written in the voice of a character
- ▶ Resolution to the dilemma
- ▶ Justification for the resolution
- ▶ Proper spelling and grammar