The Evil Stepmother

Max Holley, Morgan Irons, & Rachel Rose.
Per. 3
All throughout history there has been this metaphorical evil step parent figure who's main objective is to ruin their new stepchildren's lives to boost their own. This character is a stereotypical shadow character, who's insecurities play a large role in why they ruin their new families lives. In many examples the wicked stepmother or father is trying to obtain money/inheritance or power from their stepchildren. They hate their new stepchild and anyone who is affiliated with helping them. In almost every case the stepchildren eventually overcome their new step parent's wicked ways.
Symbolic Significance in Literature

The Old English word Steop is where the term "step" originates from, which means "related by marriage rather than blood". Step is also associated with bereavement or loss, and when used to describe a step-mother, it is often thought of as one step removed, second best, or stepping into someone else's shoes.

The evil step-mother represents many things:
- A fear of change. Replacement.
- A fear of powerful women.
- The juxtaposition between youthful beauty and old wicked age.
- A suspicion of scheming, sabotage, or other evil deeds.
"But the step-mother said, 'No, Cinderella, thou hast no clothes and thou canst not dance; thou wouldst only be laughed at.' And as Cinderella wept at this, the step-mother said, 'If thou canst pick two dishes of lentils out of the ashes for me in one hour, thou shalt go with us.' And she thought to herself, 'That she most certainly cannot do.'"

From "Cinderella" by the Brothers Grimm.
Example of Archetype

'But she could not get her big toe into it, and the shoe was too small for her. Then her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut the toe off; when thou art Queen thou wilt have no more need to go on foot." The maiden cut the toe off, forced the foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's son.'

From "Cinderella" by the Brothers Grimm.
In this 1987 film there is a rare example of an evil stepdad. When his new stepdaughter foils his plans of having the ideal picture perfect family, Jerry Blake goes back to his old ways and attempts murdering his new family.
The Parent Trap

This modern movie is a perfect example of the evil step-mother archetype. When faced with a new mother figure, completely opposite of their birth mother, they are desperate to get rid of her. She is portrayed as a villain and mocked, and put through serious trials.