SOFTWARE & TECH

What Order Do The Puppet Master Movies Go In

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Introduction: The Twisted Tale of a Franchise

For horror fans who appreciate a good dose of practical effects, creepy dolls, and supernatural vengeance, the **Puppet Master** franchise holds a special place in the genre's heart. Since 1989, audiences have been captivated by the tiny, murderous puppets animated by the mysterious life force known as the **Telos formula**. From the wise-cracking Leech Woman to the blade-wielding Blade, these pint-sized terrors have spawned over a dozen sequels, prequels, and spin-offs. However, if you've ever sat down to binge the series, you've likely asked yourself: **What order do the Puppet Master movies go in?**

The answer is not as straightforward as you might hope. The franchise is notorious for its convoluted timeline, with events jumping back and forth across centuries. Films released out of chronological sequence, alternate timelines introduced by spin-offs, and even a reboot have left fans scratching their heads. This article provides a comprehensive guide to the various orders—release order, chronological order, and a recommended viewing path—so you can enjoy the saga of Toulon's puppets without missing a beat.

Understanding the Puppet Master Timeline

Before diving into the lists, it helps to understand why the question "**What order do the Puppet Master movies go in?**" is so tricky. The franchise's core story revolves around **Andre Toulon**, a puppeteer who discovered a means of bringing his creations to life. The original film introduces Toulon in the 1930s, but later prequels take us back to the 18th century and even ancient Egypt. Meanwhile, sequels jump forward to the 1990s and beyond, sometimes ignoring earlier installments.

Additionally, there are crossovers with the **Demonic Toys** universe, a direct-to-video reboot, and a spin-off called **Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich** (2018) that completely resets the canon. To make sense of it all, we'll break the films into three main categories: the original series (including prequels), the spin-offs and crossovers, and the modern reboot.

The Films: A Complete List

Here is every feature-length film in the main Puppet Master franchise (excluding short films and documentaries), listed in release order. Note that the 2018 reboot shares its name with the 1989 original but is a standalone reimagining.

1. Puppet Master (1989)
2. Puppet Master II (1990)
3. Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge (1991)

4. Puppet Master 4 (1993)
5. Puppet Master 5: The Final Chapter (1994)
6. Puppet Master: The Game (2003 — short film, often included in collections)
7. Puppet Master: The Legacy (2003) — clip show with new framing
8. Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys (2004) — crossover
9. Puppet Master: Axis of Evil (2010) — prequel
10. Puppet Master: Axis Termination (2017) — sequel to Axis of Evil
11. Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich (2018) — reboot
12. Puppet Master: Doktor Death (2022) — spin-off focusing on a single puppet

That's 12 films total (excluding the short). But the order in which you watch them can change your understanding of the story. Let's explore two primary options.

Release Order: The Way Audiences Saw Them

Watching in release order is the most straightforward answer to "**What order do the Puppet Master movies go in?**" It follows the series as it evolved, preserving the surprises, special effects improvements, and narrative twists that the filmmakers intended for their contemporary audiences.

Why Choose Release Order?

- You experience the franchise exactly as fans did, from the original's low-budget charm to the later prequels' expanded lore.
- The first three films form a tight trilogy. Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge, released third, is actually a prequel set during World War II. Watching it after the first two gives a satisfying backstory for Toulon.
- Puppet Master 4 and 5 introduce a modern-day plot with new characters, and then the series jumps back in time again with Axis of Evil and Axis Termination.
- The crossover Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys works as a silly standalone after the original run.
- The 2018 reboot is best saved for last, as it has no connection to the earlier films.

Release Order Watchlist

1. Puppet Master (1989)
2. Puppet Master II (1990)
3. Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge (1991)
4. Puppet Master 4 (1993)
5. Puppet Master 5: The Final Chapter (1994)
6. Puppet Master: The Game (2003 short – optional)
7. Puppet Master: The Legacy (2003 — mostly recap)
8. Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys (2004)
9. Puppet Master: Axis of Evil (2010)
10. Puppet Master: Axis Termination (2017)
11. Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich (2018)
12. Puppet Master: Doktor Death (2022)

Following this list, you'll see the special effects evolve, the acting range from campy to earnest, and the lore expand in ways that make you appreciate the franchise's longevity.

Chronological Order: Piecing Together the Timeline

If you prefer your stories in sequential narrative order, you'll need to rearrange the films significantly. Be warned: chronological viewing can create plot holes because the films were not written with a strict timeline in mind. Still, for the dedicated fan asking **What order do the Puppet Master movies go in**by the story's internal clock, here is the timeline.

Chronological Timeline of Events

• Ancient Egypt — The first Retro Puppet Master (not listed above, but sometimes considered a prequel) actually came out in 1999. Wait — did we miss a film? Yes, there is also Retro Puppet Master (1999), which is a direct prequel to the original series. It shows Toulon learning the secret of life in the 1700s. For a truly chronological watch, you need to include this film. However, it was released after Puppet Master 5. Let's add it to the list:

1. Retro Puppet Master (1999) — set in 18th century France and ancient Egypt.
2. Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge (1991) — set in 1941 Nazi Germany.
3. Puppet Master: Axis of Evil (2010) — set during WWII, just after the events of Toulon's Revenge.
4. Puppet Master: Axis Termination (2017) — set shortly after Axis of Evil, still WWII.
5. Puppet Master (1989) — set in 1989, Toulon is already dead, puppets are unleashed.
6. Puppet Master II (1990) — immediately follows the first film.
7. Puppet Master 4 (1993) — set a few years after II, new characters.
8. Puppet Master 5: The Final Chapter (1994) — direct sequel to 4.
9. Puppet Master: The Legacy (2003) — a framing device set in the modern day, recounting the story.
10. Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys (2004) — takes place after the original series, but in an alternate timeline (see below).
11. Puppet Master: Doktor Death (2022) — this is a spin-off set in the original continuity? Actually, it's a standalone story about one puppet, but its placement is vague. Most fans place it after The Legacy.

Note that **Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich** (2018) is a complete reset and does not fit into any chronological order with the original series. It should be treated as a separate universe.

Important Chronological Note

The major issue with chronological viewing is that **Puppet Master III** was designed as a prequel, but **Retro Puppet Master** (released later) directly contradicts some details. Also, **Axis of Evil** and **Axis Termination** ignore the ending of **Puppet Master 5** and bring back characters who died. So don't expect perfect continuity. Embrace the chaos.

Recommended Viewing Order for Newcomers

If you are new to the franchise and wondering **What order do the Puppet Master movies go in** for the best experience, avoid the chronological deep end. Instead, follow this hybrid approach:

1. Puppet Master (1989) — Start with the original that started it all.
2. Puppet Master II (1990) — Continues the story.
3. Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge (1991) — Excellent prequel that enriches the lore.
4. Puppet Master 4 (1993) — Moves the timeline forward.
5. Puppet Master 5: The Final Chapter (1994) — Wraps up the original saga.
6. Puppet Master: Axis of Evil (2010) — A soft reboot/prequel that stands on its own.
7. Puppet Master: Axis Termination (2017) — Finishes the WWII trilogy.

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