

# Creating the Perfect Villain Workshop

## Part I: Start with the Hero

The hero in this story is a 12-year old Navaho Indian boy named Kurt Moonwalker. Kurt lives in New Mexico in the Navaho Nation with his parents. He's off school for the summer and is learning to make silver and turquoise jewelry with his father and uncle.

His great-grandfather, Will Morningstar, was part of the Code Talkers project during World War II. Several Navaho Indian men were recruited for the Army because so little was known about the Navaho language. The Indians created a set of code words for military terms that they could use to send and receive messages that the Japanese could not understand. The Japanese never broke the Code Talker codes. Will taught Kurt the Code Talker language since it's no longer used by the military.

Kurt respects his Navaho heritage, including the stories and myths about the tribe's origins. The Navaho are known as "The People." There are gods who help them in bad times. Once there were evil beings known as Anaye (Ahn-ah-yee), described as either monsters or giants who were unfriendly to humans.

Kurt is shunned by some of the other boys in his village who tease him about the old Navaho ways. Making jewelry is for sissies, they say, and all this talk about gods and demons are tales for babies. As for Code Talking, that's as ancient as the old myths.

This provides a good base for our story. As the author, you need to decide what Kurt really wants to do.

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## Part II: What is the hero's challenge?

Let's say he wants to protect his family and the Navaho people as a whole. You need to construct a threat that Kurt has to deal with. That threat will come from your villain, although the villain may not be revealed until later in the story. It may start out as a mystery that Kurt has to investigate. The reader will be learning along with Kurt, which keeps the story exciting.

Not everything has to be supernatural. The villain could be pretending to do something supernatural, like nearly all of the Scooby-Doo mysteries.

- A real estate developer wants to move some ancient Indian graves to build a new casino.
- A sleazy distributor wants to cut into the Navaho jewelry business by selling his own cheap stuff from China. Kurt overhears the distributor discussing his plans, and the distributor is using Code Talker language.
- A Hollywood producer wants to make a movie about the ancient myths of the Navahos, but he wants to make it a comedy and poke fun at the stories that Kurt and his family revere.

Or you could go with the supernatural—this is a children's book, so anything is possible.

- A landowner wants to steal the oil recently found on the reservation, and he uses a black magic spell to bring some of the Anaye to help him.
- One of the Anaye has returned and his planning to bring more of them back into the world to attack The People for their role in banishing the Anaye.
- Some of the Navaho's ancient enemies in the Ute tribe have summoned a rival god to attack the Navaho. Kurt finds out that his mother is actually the daughter of White-Shell, one of the Navaho goddesses, and Kurt is now involved in this battle of deities.

**Write down what Kurt's challenge will be in one or two paragraphs.** (These are just suggestions to get you going. Expand one of these, or come up with your own!)

Great! Now go on to the villain character development sheet, where you will create a villain that can create the havoc needed to keep Kurt on his toes.

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## **Part III: Villain Character Development**

As a rule, you should spend a lot of time writing down everything about your character: name, age, family members, whether they floss their teeth, eye color, what TV shows they like, and so on. When you are writing your book or story for real, take the time to do all of that. Write down what your character would say if you interviewed them. There are many resources available to get you thinking about character features.

Since we don't have a lot of time in this workshop, I want you to focus on some of the most important traits of your villain.

**What is your villain's name?** (You can come back and fill this in later if the other questions help you with this. Be sure that you do fill it in before time is up!)

**What does your villain want? What is his/her plan?**

**What makes your villain "human?" Is there anyone or anything that your villain genuinely cares about?**

**What made your villain decide to turn to evil?**

**In what ways is your villain smart?**

**In what ways is your villain flawed? (Besides being evil.)**

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## Summary

Your villain should be the perfect foil for your hero. Villains are often more exciting than the heroes, because they have fewer rules on how they should behave. But that very challenge keeps us rooting for the hero to win out in the end.

Understanding the villain helps us understand the hero better. I hope this workshop helps you be the best hero you can be in your own life!