

Lesson 12

What motivates the villain? Why is he or she evil or antagonistic?

Malcoth has a love of power and of being able to control others, but it is coupled with extreme paranoia. He is terrified that someone might end his rule, and thus comes down harder and harder on the Asharian people to try and break them. His ultimate goal is to return to his homeland at the head of a conquering army, but he is not yet strong enough for that.

How can the Symbol of Dread be made more terrible?

Asara could be made more terrible by making it the staging ground for Malcoth's new armies, which are preparing to conquer the rebellious Asharians and the surrounding nations.

What terrible revelation or secret might the Villain discover and/or reveal?

The villain might discover the secret place where the young king was hidden, and focus an assault on that area. He might even place a price on the king's head!

How does the villain escalate the stakes?

1. He places a price on Sam and the King's head, making them wanted for a horrific murder committed by militiamen.
2. He begins to unleash monstrous beasts onto the land, mindless creatures that, enraged with pain, seek to destroy anything that moves. He orders the arrest of the revolutionaries for these attacks, saying that they are seeking to destabilize his rule. Nobody really believes this, but there are many who are unscrupulous enough to try and claim the reward.
3. He sends out several legions of highly trained, merciless Skadi warriors, who meet the vastly outnumbered revolutionary force in a siege battle.

In what ways does the villain demonstrate opposition to the Hero's Positive Ideal?

1. He lies to blame them for others' and his crimes.
2. He tortures captured revolutionaries for information and then has them hung as traitors.
3. He holds Sam's father captive, and seeks to destroy everything the Sam holds dear, to depress and anger him into making rash decisions.

Write a scene in which the villain does something dreadful to the hero.

I stared up at the sunset to the East, wondering what had so frightened Johnathon. The old man was murmuring under his breath, and his eyes seemed unfocused. I grabbed his arm.

“Master John?” I asked. “What is it?”

His eyes focused again. “Something is coming.” he said, his voice shaking.

I stared at my normally brave teacher. I wondered if this was some sort of test, if he was going to conjure up something for me to fight. He looked at me, and seemed to sense what I was thinking.

He shook his head. “This isn't a test, Sam. I can feel something evil in the air. We need to get back to camp. Get Marc.”

I shivered in the cold wind. His words were making me uneasy, but I couldn't see or hear anything.

Perhaps his magic gave him a sixth sense about things. I ran to find Marc, who was sleeping under an

oak trees, covered by fallen leaves. I shook him awake.

“What is it, Sam?” he asked, seeming to sense something was going on.

“No time.” I said. “We need to move.”

We emerged from the forest and I stared off the edge of the cliff where we had been practicing. I couldn't see anything, but I had to trust John. He was striding away from the cliff, his plain brown robes billowing around him.

“Get back into the forest, you fools!” he cried. “I can feel it!”

We ducked back into the forest, and broke into a trot, then a run. Marc buckled on his armor as we ran, lagging behind us a bit. He looked just as bemused as I felt. Johnathon, on the other hand, kept looking behind us every minute or so.

Finally, I heard something. A sound like a low roll of thunder in the distance. John nearly jumped out of his robes. “I hoped I was wrong.” he mumbled under his breath, just loud enough for me to hear it. Marc and I exchanged looks.

“What is going on, Master John?” I asked, a bit irritated as well as quite scared. “What is following us?”

“You'll see in a moment.” snapped John. “If we can hear it, it's almost caught up with us.”

We broke out of the forest, and saw the camp before us, tent upon tent in a huge field. I stopped, thinking we were safe now, but John charge ahead. “Raise the alarm!” he yelled. “We're under attack!”

Soldiers in various stages of eating supper dropped their bowls and reached for their weapons. The king and his advisor, Hanson, burst out of their tent as a shadow swept over the field. I looked up into the face of a creature who had never been more than a fairy tale for me.

A dragon. More than twenty feet long, it dwarfed the soldiers who stared up at it. Huge tusks jutted from its lower jaw, and teeth as long as my arm were visible as it rolled back its lips. Johnathon threw his staff at the dragon, the tip magically elongating to strike at it, but the dragon knocked it aside with its tail.

Then, as I watched in stupefied horror, it lunged for the king. Hanson, an enormous man, thrust his pike at the monster, and drove it into the beast's chest. Howling, the dragon grabbed Hanson in its mouth and threw him across the camp, where he landed in a crumpled heap.

“To me, Sam!” John cried. The soldiers were beginning to snap out of their stupor, and arrows and spears begin to fly at the dragon, most bouncing off its armored chest but some lodging there. One arrow punctured its eye, and the dragon roared in pain, swinging its head from side to side, knocking the king off his feet. He lay there, in the dragon's new blind spot, just feet from its jaws.

Johnathon grabbed my arm and I began feeding him energy for a spell. The dragon was suddenly twisted by high winds, pushed away from the king and driven with a huge force into a copse of trees. I fell to the ground, drained, and Johnathon fell to his knees next to me. The dragon let out a noise like a drowning rat, and heaved itself out of the woods, ripping its wings to shreds in the process. The soldiers charged and began to stab it into the ground. It's bloody head turned towards us, and it began to inhale.

John grabbed me and heaved me out of the way as a huge stream of fire burst from the dragon's jaws, hitting him in the chest and knocking him down. I screamed, and with strength I didn't know I had left, forced the dragon's head to turn to stone. The dragon died with a gloating expression on its disgusting face, its head dropping to the ground, its neck snapping under the pressure.

I crawled to John, and grabbed his arm. He was still warm, but stiffening. I looked at his chest, and could see the dragon had burned a hole right through him. His cold dead eyes looked up at me, and his face was locked in a final grimace. I collapsed on top of him and blacked out, unable to stay awake any longer.