Module 3 Workshop: Build a Character Who Can Carry a Whole Story

What this is

This is a guided workshop built from Module 3: Character Development.

Most writers think they are stuck on plot. Often, they are stuck on character.

Because plot is what happens. Character is why it matters.

Today you will build a character with enough contradiction, desire, and pressure to generate scenes without you forcing them.

What you will walk away with

- A character built from sparks + memory + archetype (not a list of adjectives)
- A clear want / fear / contradiction triad
- A first-pass voice sample (dialogue that reveals what they avoid)
- A relationship pressure point (who makes them worse, who makes them braver)
- One drafted scene (or a scene plan) where these elements collide

The promise (and the honest limitation)

In 90 minutes, you will not create a complete character bible.

You will do something more useful. You will create a character who starts behaving.

In the full Creative Story Mastery program, Module 3 takes this further with deeper exercises across memory, archetype, place, dialogue, and relationships, then shows you how to integrate them into a repeatable system.

Workshop structure

1) Welcome: character is the heartbeat

Write this at the top of your page: *Plots may impress in the moment, but readers remember characters*.

Now, the three questions you will keep returning to today (from Module 3):

- What does this person want?

- What do they fear?

- What contradicts them?

If you can answer those, you can write.

2) Spark capture: the character arrives as a fragment

Module 3 begins with the truth writers often forget: characters do not arrive fully formed. They arrive as sparks.

Choose one spark source:

- a gesture you have seen in real life

- a contradiction (kind but cruel, brave but avoidant)

- a line of dialogue you overheard

- a recurring image from a dream

- a role you cannot stop thinking about

Write 12 quick lines:

- 4 physical details (specific, not generic)

- 4 behavioural tells (what they do under pressure)

- 4 private truths (what they would never admit)

Name them (working name is fine).

3) The triad: want, fear, contradiction

This is the engine.

Fill these in:

- Want: What do they pursue on the surface?

- Fear: What are they protecting themselves from?

- Contradiction: What makes them unpredictable, human, and difficult?

Now write one sentence that binds all three: *They want , but they fear , and the contradiction is ___.*

If this sentence feels alive, you are holding a real character.

4) Archetype, modernised

Module 3 uses archetypes not as clichés, but as pressure roles you can bend and subvert.

Choose one archetype:

- Hero

- Mentor

- Trickster

- Shadow

Modernise it (based on Module 3 exercise approach): Place them in a modern setting (airport, hospital, café, Centrelink queue, rehearsal room).

Write 6 lines:

- How do they perform this role in public?

- Where does the role crack?

- What do they do that surprises you?

5) Memory: the past is not backstory, it is gravity

Module 3 treats memory as shaping force.

Write one memory fragment (5–7 lines):

- the moment they learned a rule about the world

- the moment they were embarrassed

- the moment they lost something

Then write: *Because of this, they now...*

This is where behaviour starts making sense.

6) Voice: dialogue reveals what they avoid

Module 3 insists voice is not just what they say, it is what they cannot say.

Write a 12-line conversation:

- Your character wants something.

- The other person blocks them.

- Your character never names the real need.

After you write it, underline:

- the line where they dodge

- the line where the truth leaks out

7) Relationships: friction makes character visible

Choose two relationships:

- Pressure relationship: who brings out their worst?

- Anchor relationship: who brings out their better self?

Write one sentence for each: - *With , they become because ___.*

Now choose one and add a secret:

- *The thing they will not admit about this relationship is…*

8) Integration: The Character Web

Module 3's integration work is where the character becomes three-dimensional.

Map your character across six dimensions (Module 3):

- spark

- memory

- archetype

- place

- dialogue

- relationships

Draw links showing influence.

Then choose one collision point and write a scene prompt: *In [place], [archetype-role] tries to [want], but [relationship] triggers [memory], and the dialogue avoids the truth until…*

If you have time, draft 250–500 words. If not, stop at the prompt.

9) Close: the taste, and the next step

You have built a character who can generate story. Not because you forced plot. Because you built pressure.

Your 24-hour task: Write a 500–1,000 word scene using your collision prompt.

If you want more (and you probably do): This is the surface layer of Module 3.

In the full Creative Story Mastery program, you go deeper into:

- building characters through repeatable exercises (not inspiration)

- integrating memory, archetype, place, dialogue, and relationships across multiple drafts

- creating characters who remain consistent, surprising, and emotionally true

You do not need to invent a person. You need to uncover them.

Materials

- Timer
- One worksheet or a single Google Doc
- Two coloured pens (useful for the Character Web links)

Accessibility options

- Speak answers into a voice note, then transcribe
- Use bullet points instead of paragraphs
- Work in 3-minute bursts, then stitch the fragments together