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Cartoon Yourself The Easy Way In Photoshop

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Posted by [Pat](#) on February 5, 2014, filed in: [Tutorials](#)

In this Photoshop tutorial, we will turn a photo into a cartoon. You can use this technique to create an avatar for yourself, to see what you'd look like as a cartoon or to have fun turning your friends and family into cartoons.

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Cartoon Yourself The Easy Way In Photoshop

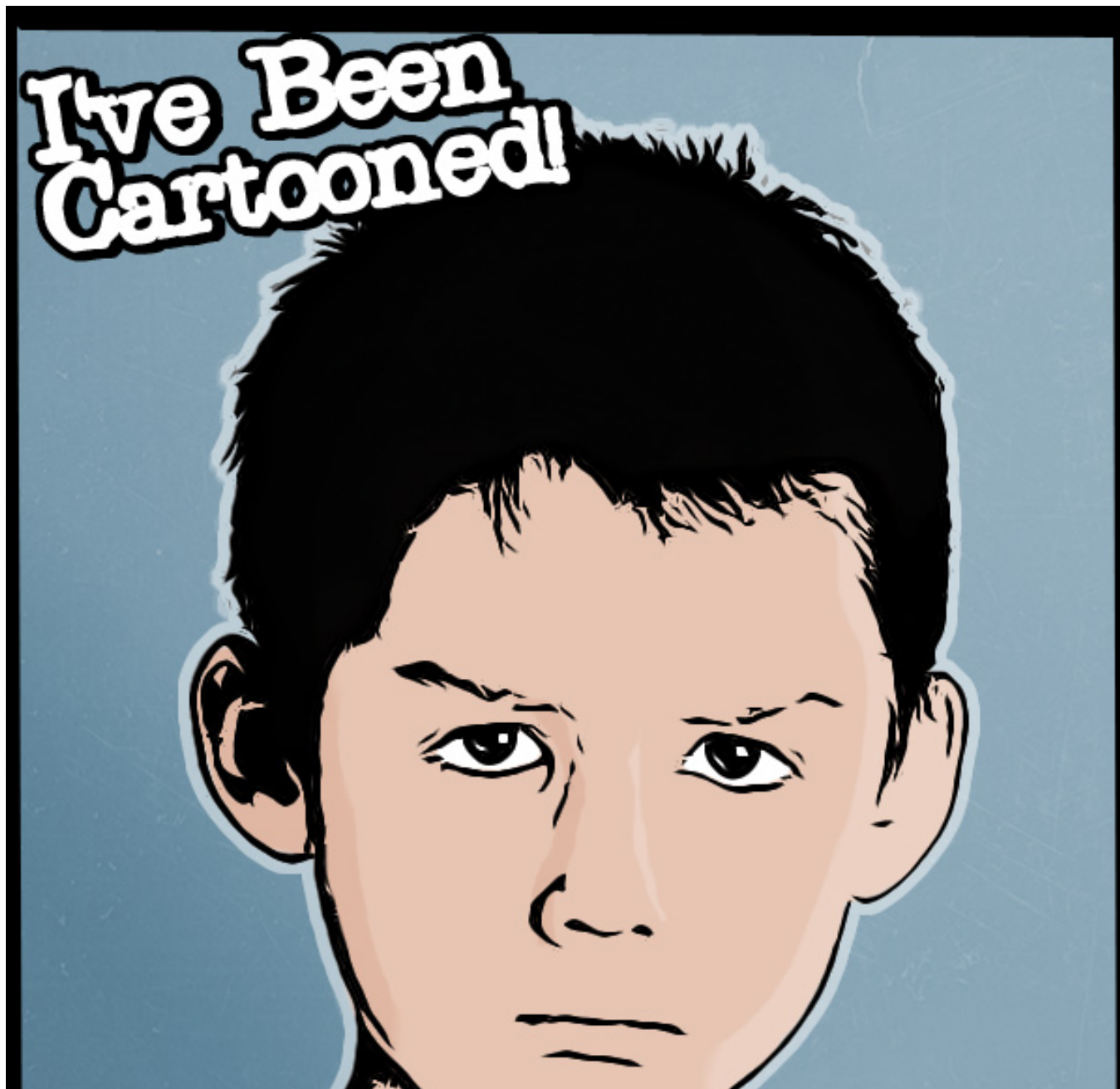
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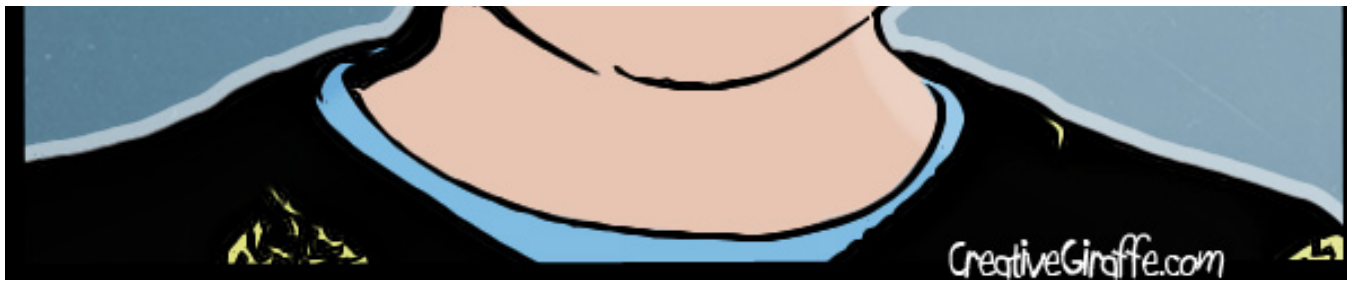
Some tips to achieve success with your own photos: choose a photo that is similar in size to this one in the tutorial or you'll have to adjust some of the filter settings. Use a photo with a light background that is not too busy and finally, use a photo where you don't see dark contrasty shadows on the face.

The image below is what we will be creating. Ok let's start!



Night Scene!

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Step 1

Grab the picture below, this is the image we will use for this tutorial.

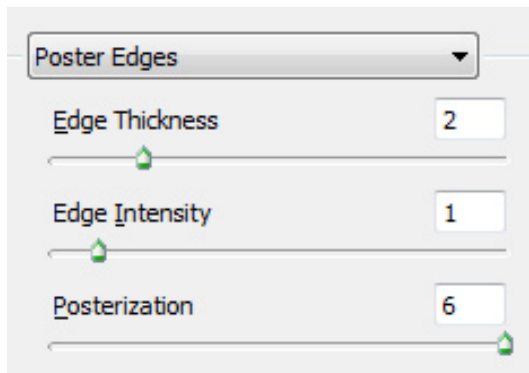




Step 2

Now to add a black line around his face and facial features, we will add a POSTER EDGES effect to the image.
(Filter > Artistic > Poster Edges)

Enter the settings you see below. Note that if your photo is different in size, you may have to play with the settings a little to get a similar result.



This is how it looks now:



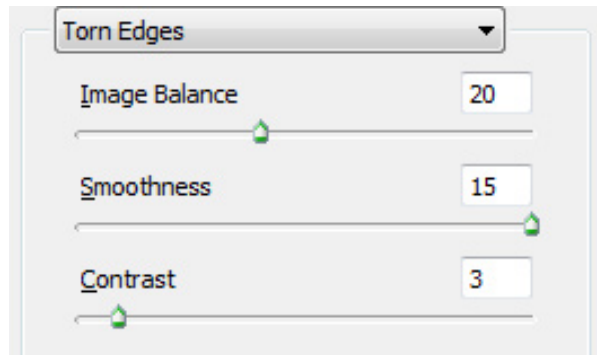


Step 3

Now add a TORN EDGES effect to our image. (Filter > Artistic > Torn Edges) BUT before you do, make sure on the Tool palette that the **color Black is above the color White** as this filter will use those colors.



Now enter those settings for Torn Edges. Note that here again, depending on the size of your image, you may have to play with the settings to get a satisfactory result.



This is how it should look like now.





Step 4

Now use a small White Paint Brush, with a Hardness of 100% and start cleaning up his face. Paint over any black dots or lines that are not attached to anything. You can also smooth out some lines if you want.

This is how it looks like now.





Step 5

Now let's use the Topaz plugin Clean to smooth out the lines. If you don't have it already, you can download it

[HERE](#) and use it completely free for 30 days.

Once the plugins are installed, go to Filter > Topaz Labs > Topaz Clean and then on the left side, choose the preset 'Cartooned'.

This is how it looks now with the smoother lines.





Step 6

Now what we need to do to be able to paint underneath the black lines is first, Select the entire image, Copy and then click on the CHANNELS tab.

On the Channel tab, at the bottom of the channel panel, click on the small icon represented by a page being lifted, this one is called 'Create a New Channel'.

Once the ALPHA channel is created, click on it and PASTE our image on it.

Now we will need to INVERT our image so the contour is white and everything else is black. (Image > Adjustments > Invert)

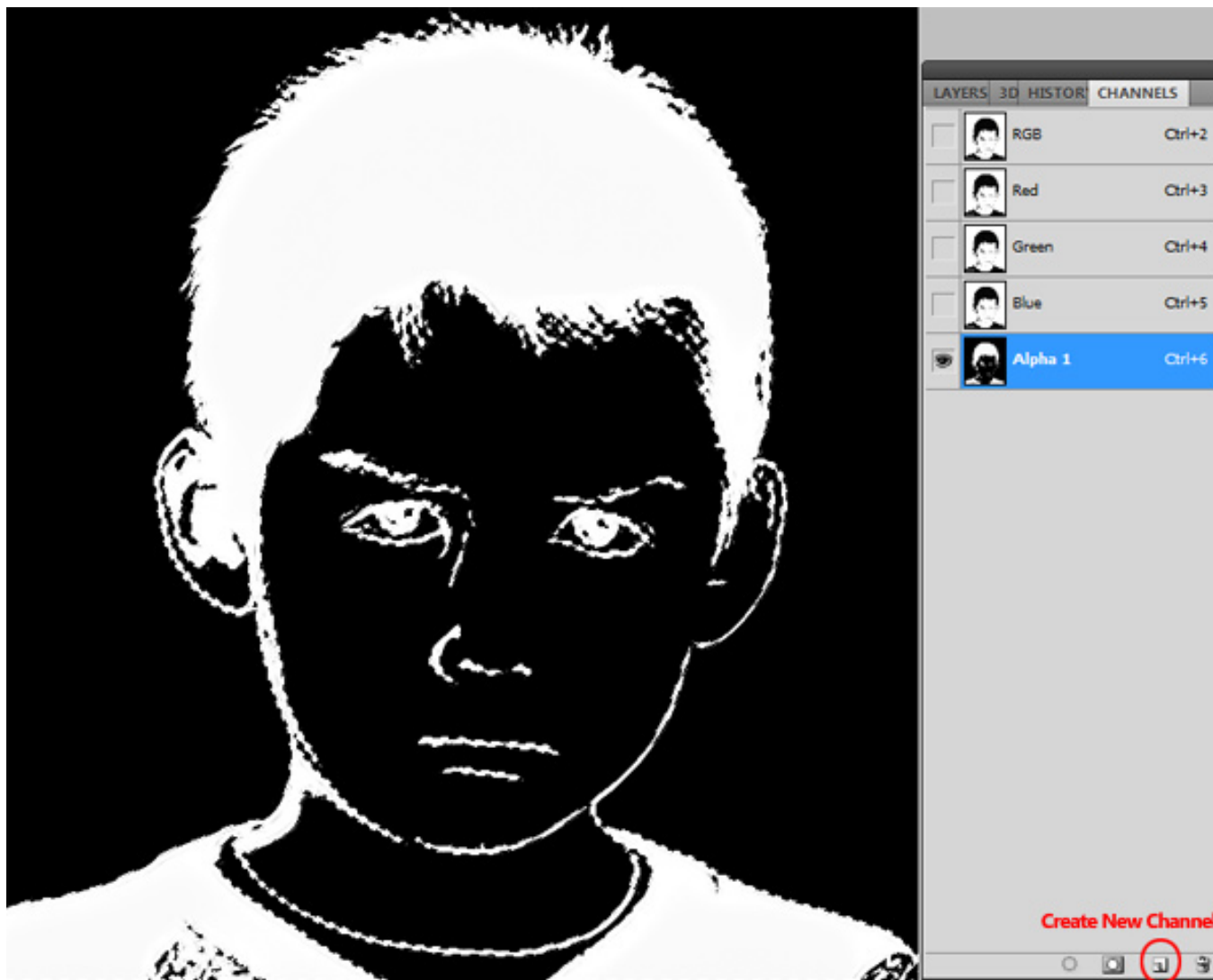
Once that done, CTRL+CLICK (Cmd+CLICK) on the Alpha channel to create a selection around anything that is white.

That done, click back on the LAYERS tab, Create a New Layer and Fill the selection with the color Black.

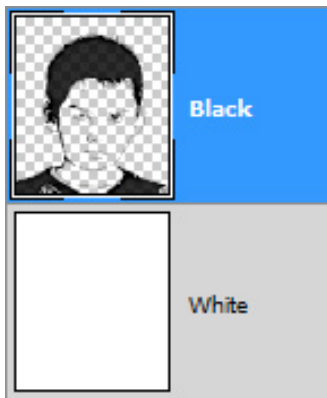
Then right below, create a New Layer and fill it with the color White. (deselect first)

What we did here is to separate the black and the white so we will be able to paint below the black lines.

This is how it looks when working with channels.



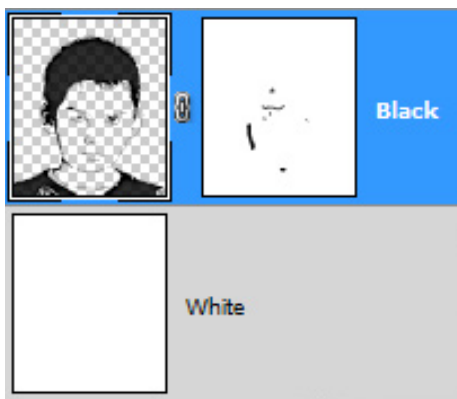
And this is how it looks on the Layer palette.



Step 7

At this point, we can do some cleaning up again by adding a Layer Mask (click small icon illustrated by square with circle inside at the bottom of the layer palette) to the “Black” layer and erase with a small White Paint Brush, Hardness 100%, anything that you don’t like, I for example, smoothed out the thick black line defining the left cheek. Note that you can simply use the Eraser if you want here, the benefit of using a Layer Mask is to work in a non-destructive way so we can modify things later without issues.

This is how it looks now.





Step 8

Now let's add some colors.

Under the "Black" layer, create 3 Layers on which we will be applying the colors.

First layer, you can use this color #e7c5b3 to color the skin.

Second layer, color the shirt.

Third layer, use white to color the eyes.

This is how it looks now.



Step 9

Now let's add some shadows and highlights to the boy's face.

Create a New Layer on top of the layer stack and call it 'Shadows' and then another right above and call it 'Highlights'.

Let's first add shadows and to see what we are doing, reduce the 'Shadows' Layer Opacity to 50%. Then use a Black Paint Brush with a Hardness of 100% and a size of maybe 90px and start to trace a shadow on his left side like you see below and on the 'Highlights' layer, do the same thing. Then use a smaller brush and trace some highlights and shadows on both side of his nose. Use the Eraser to fine tune the highlights/shadows around his nose.

This is how it looks.





Step 10

Now change the Layer Blending Mode of the 'Shadows' layer to SOFT LIGHT and lower the layer Opacity to 30%.

Change also the Layer Blending Mode of the 'Highlights' layer to OVERLAY and lower the layer Opacity to 20%.

Now we don't see any black or white paint going over the edge of the face but that's because the background is white. Since we want to add color to the background, we will have to erase anything that spill outside of the face.



To do so, select the "Black" layer (the black contour of the face) along with the 3 "color" layers, DUPLICATE them and then MERGE the duplicated layers.

Now on that layer, use the MAGIC WAND TOOL with a Tolerance of about 25 and click the background. Then go to Selection > Modify > Expand and expand the selection 1px.



Now hide that layer since we don't need it anymore and go on the 'Shadows' Layer. Now INVERSE the selection and create a Layer Mask. Automatically, you will see on the Layer mask that inside the selection, the boy, is white and the background is black. Black on a layer mask hides whatever is there, which is what we want.

Now do the same exact thing for the 'Highlights' layer.



This is how it looks now.





Highlights





Shadows





Black





Eyes



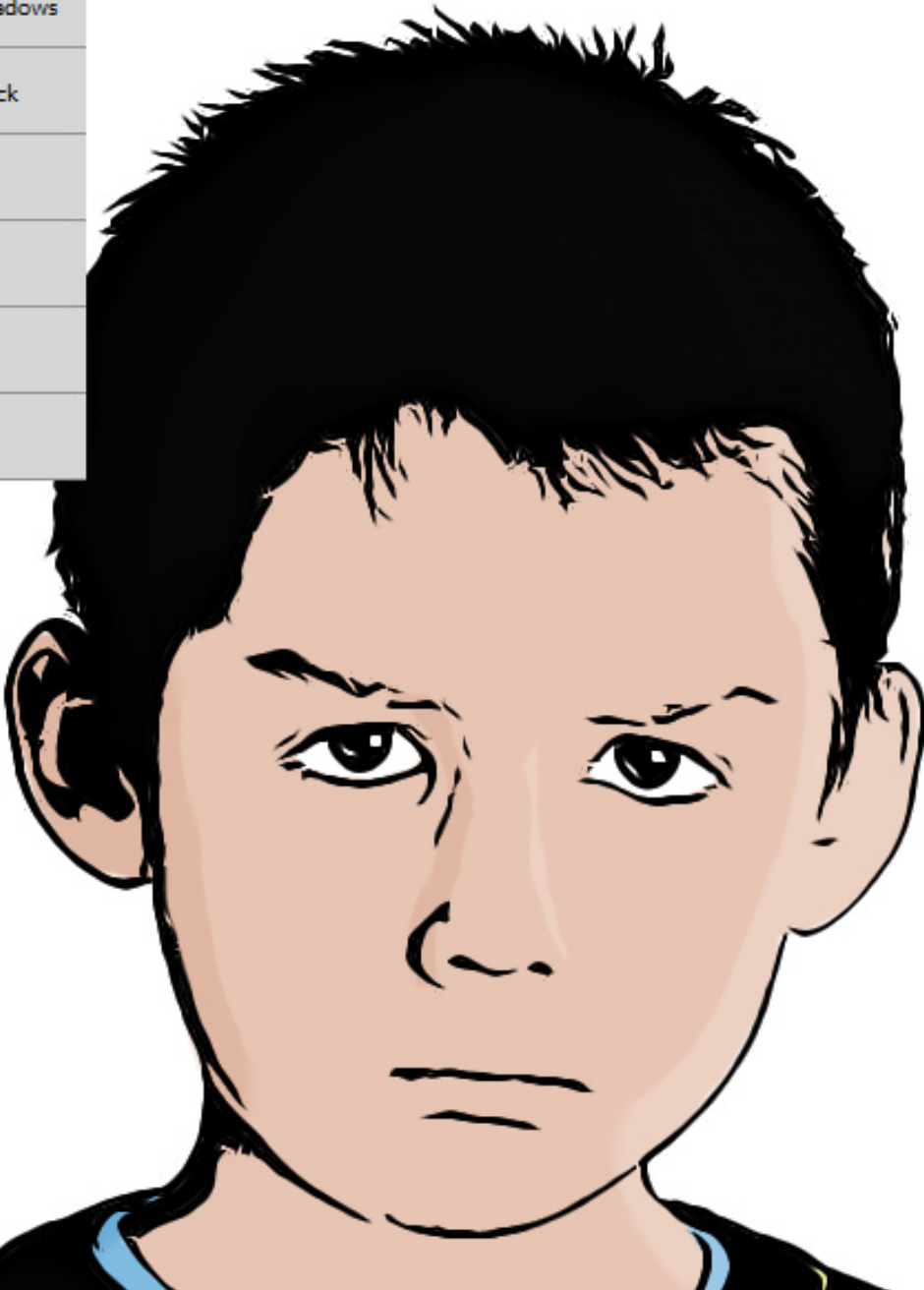
Shirt



Skin



White





Step 11

Now let's do the background. Add a New Layer under everything and call it 'Background'.

Choose the GRADIENT TOOL then on top horizontal menu, choose Linear Gradient and enter those 2 colors, #5d849a and #9cb5c3. Then click somewhere on the lower left side, drag it up and release the mouse button somewhere in the upper right side of the image.

Now right above the background, we can create a New Layer and add a White outline all around the boy like you see below. It is simple to do, just CTRL+CLICK the Layer Mask of the "Shadows" Layer, the one where the boy is white and the background is black, then go to Select > Modify > Expand and enter 4px. Make sure you are on the New Layer you just created and fill the selection with white. Then you can lower the layer Opacity to 50%.

Then you can add some black borders, a texture to the background and some text. If you do all of this, it will probably look like this.





Avatar size:



I hope you have enjoyed this tutorial, share if you did 😊

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Pat

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