

Fans hope Marvel comic book improves Native representation

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Image 1. Aaron Cuffee, of Red Planet Books & Comics in Albuquerque, New Mexico, discusses the potential that could come from Marvel Comics' effort to assemble a gallery of Native artists and scribes for "Marvel Voices: Indigenous Voices #1." The anthology will revisit some of Marvel's Native characters. Photo: Susan Montoya Bryan/AP Photo

In comic books, Native American superheroes are similar. They have special powers and talk to animals. They wear a headdress or a loincloth.

Jeffrey Veregge is in the Port Gamble S'Klallam tribe. It is in Washington state. He is an artist who draws for comic books. He said earlier artists did not learn much about Native Americans.

"They were just going off of TV and film," he said. He said that other heroes had costumes. Native people were not shown well, though.

Veregge grew up reading comic books on his tribe's land. It is near Seattle, Washington. Now, he is "living a dream." He is leading a Marvel comic book about Native stories.

Showing Native Heroes In A New Way

Marvel Comics said in August that it has gathered Native artists and writers for a new book. It is called "Marvel Voices: Indigenous Voices #1." The book will have Native characters. It will come out during Native American History Month in November.

Native comic book fans hope it changes things. They want to see Native heroes in a new way.

Veregge has drawn more than 100 covers for comic books. So he was a good person to lead the new book.

Lee Francis IV owns the Red Planet Books & Comics store. It is in New Mexico. He prints Native comics. His family comes from the Laguna Pueblo. That is Native land in New Mexico. Francis helped find Native artists for the new book.

Racist Stereotypes In Comic Books

Racist stereotypes are in comic books, Francis said. It is because the artists used ideas from TV, he said. Stereotypes are general ways of looking at people or their races. Someone might have a wrong idea about all people of a race.

Dezbah Evans likes Marvel's "X-Men." It is about young characters having trouble with their powers. They are treated badly. That seems like how America treats Native communities, she said. She is a comic book fan from Oklahoma. She is in the Navajo, Chippewa and Yuchi tribes.

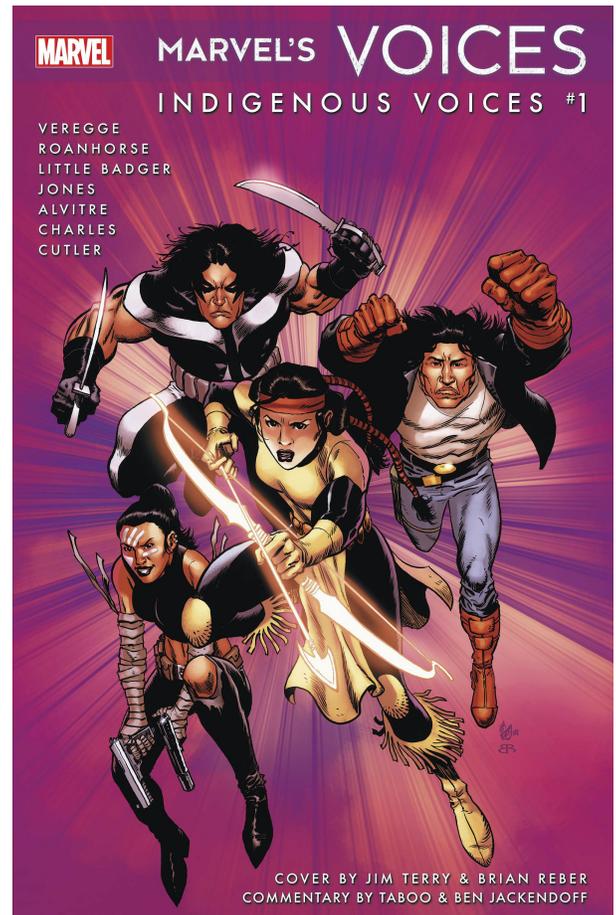
Evans is looking forward to the new book. It will have one of her favorite characters, Danielle Moonstar.

Evans hopes comic books keep expanding. They could have Native moms as heroes, she said.

Telling Kids: "You Can Do This, Too"

Veregge sometimes meets children on the reservation where he grew up. Their parents talk about his work for Marvel. He likes these meetings.

"I get to tell kids: 'I grew up on this reservation, too. You can do this, too,'" Veregge said.



Quiz

- 1 Read the section "Racist Stereotypes In Comic Books."
- Select the sentence from the section that explains WHY many comics used stereotypes of Native people.
- (A) It is because the artists used ideas from TV, he said.
 - (B) Someone might have a wrong idea about all people of a race.
 - (C) It is about young characters having trouble with their powers.
 - (D) It will have one of her favorite characters, Danielle Moonstar.
- 2 Which question is answered in the section "Showing Native Heroes In A New Way"?
- (A) How have comic books usually shown Native American characters?
 - (B) Who is Dezbah Evans's favorite comic book character?
 - (C) Why was Jeffrey Veregge chosen to lead "Marvel Voices: Indigenous Voices #1"?
 - (D) What Native tribe does Jeffrey Veregge belong to?
- 3 The author has an opinion about representations of Native people in comics.
- Which sentence from the article shows this?
- (A) In comic books, Native American superheroes are similar.
 - (B) He said earlier artists did not learn much about Native Americans.
 - (C) So he was a good person to lead the new book.
 - (D) Their parents talk about his work for Marvel.
- 4 What does the author want the reader to learn?
- (A) Comic books have done a better job than TV or movies in offering accurate, respectful portrayals of Native character.
 - (B) For a long time, media images of Native American people relied on the same oversimplified and outdated stereotypes.
 - (C) A new Marvel project aims to attract new Native fans to comic books and inspire the next generation of Native artists.
 - (D) Indigenous comic book fans are excited about a new project featuring Native characters written and drawn by Native artists.