

Black panther:
t'challa is more than a
superhero



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A hero is made up of many traits. His/her strength, character and intelligence among so much more. It is often said in superhero films that, "with great power comes great responsibility." This saying can be interpreted in many ways. A lot of characters that eventually become superheroes mostly do so because they feel a sense of responsibility towards humanity. Spiderman (or Peter Parker) for instance becomes a superhero because of the loss of his uncle, and he partly feels responsible because he could've prevented it. Ironman (or Tony Stark) becomes a superhero because he feels responsible for the deaths caused by the weapons he manufactured. These characters were not initially selfless and hero-minded. They were selfish and self-centered people. A tragedy in their life made them want to help others.

In the superhero film Black Panther by Ryan Coogler, T'Challa is the son of a king and next in line to the throne. His entire life, he has been instilled with knowledge, strength, and duty to become the king and guardian to Wakanda as Black Panther. T'Challa becomes king after his father's death. He's sworn to protect the people of Wakanda. As the superhero Black Panther, he is not in conflict with himself about his past, and he's not in search of any atonement like most heroes. Many superheroes are driven by the choice to do good and maintain peace wherever they go because they feel a sense of guilt for their past. Their actions despite noble could be argued are to make up for their mistakes in the past. T'Challa is different on that end as well. He's a good person who believes in doing the right thing. As the guardian to Wakanda, he protects and serves as its leader. He is not doing good because he feels like he has to atone. He is genuinely a hero to his people.

In the film, when the main antagonist (Killmonger) arrives in Wakanda to challenge the protagonist for the throne. T'Challa does not hesitate to accept the challenge because asking it is his duty to be the first line of defense against any threat to his people. When he is faced with the dilemma of whether to protect the entire world or Wakanda, he chooses Wakanda because his people depend on him to safeguard them. By the end of the film, though the antagonist has challenged his ideologies on how to rule Wakanda, he is still has a duty to protect his people first. T'Challa is not just a hero because he does not protect out of responsibility or guilt but by the sheer will and duty to his people. As T'Challa is faced with the moral dilemma that all superheroes are faced with, his outweighs each and every one else's. T'Challa is conflicted about how his father ruled. The mistakes are not his to bear. He has no guilt whatsoever, but he does feel a sense of responsibility to do better than his predecessors.

T'Challa has three versions of himself: he is king, Black Panther and a man. All these parts of him come into play every time he has a tough decision to make. When he becomes King, his first order of business is to subdue an old Wakandan enemy to safeguard his legacy and that of his predecessors. He wants to prove that no challenge is too tough for him. When he is challenged by M'Baku (Winston Duke) for the throne, he has the right to kill him and subdue his enemy, but he cannot bring himself to kill M'Baku, so he spares him. This works out in his favor when M' Baku saves him from death. His good deeds turned out to help him in times of need. When he decides to reach out to the rest of the world and share Wakanda's technology, he sees the wrong his predecessors did and wants to enrich and improve the lives of

the people of color outside Wakanda. He's a sympathetic and efficient leader.

The man behind the titular Black Panther is a King of a nation, and sometimes he will have to do things that will prove to be morally challenging. As his father tells him, " You are a good man, with a good heart, but it's hard for a good man to be king" (Coogler, 2018). A superhero has a self-given responsibility to anyone and everyone who needs help. As a king, he has to put his people first and sometimes it will come at the cost of putting other people in harm's way. This might prove to be an impossible choice for T'Challa because he has goodness in his heart. As long as the interest of the world aligns with Wakanda, he's at peace to rule. The real challenge might come when he has to choose between his people or the rest of the world and that will be his undoing. In the film, he is yet to be faced with this challenge.

References

Coogler, R. (Director). (2018). Black Panther [Motion Picture]. Marvel Studios,