

A nine villages and
even beyond... that
was



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A tragic hero, according to famous greek philosopher Aristotle, is someone who makes a bad choice that inevitably leads to his/her own destruction because of one's own characteristics. To clarify, a tragic hero is someone who is noble in their town, has a tragic flaw, experiences a reversal of fortune, comes to a realization of their tragic flaw while attempting to make things right, and finally informs the reader to not do what they did.

These characteristic can be seen all throughout literature and are apart of some of the greatest literary works of all time. A notable book called Things Fall Apart written by Chinua Achebe tells the tragic tale of a man named Okonkwo and his life in Umuofia. According to what information Achebe have given to the reader, one can conclude that Okonkwo is a tragic hero because all the characteristics of a tragic hero apply to him. Okonkwo fits the first characteristic, being noble in the town, because he is known in his town for his great wrestling skills, is known for being a hardworking man, and was chosen as one of the people to talk with Mbaino village about the murder of a girl from Umuofia. A quote from the book proving this point further states, " Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond... That was many years ago, twenty years or more, and during this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan." (Achebe 3). This excerpt from the book clearly shows that Okonkwo was known for his wrestling and achievements throughout the town, ultimately giving him fame. Hence, this shows that Okonkwo is a tragic hero because he is has acquired the first characteristic of being a tragic hero; to be known and noble one's town.

Furthermore, Okonkwo has also obtained the characteristic of possessing a tragic flaw. This tragic flaw is being quick to anger and being afraid of being seen weak like his father. He shows this flaw throughout the book, specifically when Okonkwo beat his second wife and when Okonkwo kills Ikemefuna because he did not want to seem like a coward. To justify the indicated further, the book reads, " Okonkwo's second wife had merely cut a few leaves off it to wrap some food, and she said so. Without further argument Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping." (Achebe 45) , and " As the man who cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away.

He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, ' My father, they have killed me!' as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak.

" (Achebe 68). This shows that Okonkwo's anger and fear contributed to his tragic flaw because these actions cause Okonkwo to be more irrational and taint his noble character. Hence, this shows that Okonkwo is a tragic hero because he also has the second characteristic of being a tragic hero; having a tragic flaw. Additionally, Okonkwo fits the third characteristic of being a tragic hero, as a result of his actions putting him into a bad situation.

Okonkwo ends up accidentally killing Ezeudu's son, resulting in Okonkwo and his family being forced into exile for seven years as punishment.

An excerpt from the novel proving that Okonkwo contains this specific characteristic of being a tragic hero states, " Okonkwo's gun had exploded

and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart... It was against the earth goddess to kill a clansman and a man who committed it must flee from the land. The crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female, because it had been inadvertent. He could return to the clan after seven years." (Achebe 122 -123). This quote proves that Okonkwo has shown another characteristic of being a tragic hero because his being exiled also is like when a tragic hero experiences a reversal of fortune.

Okonkwo's life was going fairly well, until this incident happened and his life totally changed.