

The Story Behind Every Hero: *How Struggles for Power Change Lives*

We are constantly hearing about war and destruction, and the lives that are affected as a result. While some people benefit from the overthrowing of a tyrant, others are faced with devastating loss that will take years to repair. Still, anyone who has experienced a struggle for power first-hand comes out forever changed. The smaller problems that once troubled them are put in perspective. Nothing compares to the true pain, sacrifice and hardships they've seen. In this way, power struggles control our lives by forcing us to become stronger and braver than we were before.

Comment [A1]: While the opening is a bit generalized, the writer thoughtfully considers the big picture and funnels down to his/her particular BQ

Comment [A2]: Clear, argumentative claim that takes a stance and moves beyond the three-prong thesis

Harry Potter, a popular fictional character, gets his power from his courage and fighting spirit even when the odds aren't in his favor. Some people might argue that Harry's friends and family are the main reason for his success. However, he could not have defeated the Dark Lord (a powerful wizard), without the strength and experience he gained from facing other hardships. As a kid he was called "the boy who lived" because he survived an encounter with Lord Voldemort (Source A), but his parents were killed protecting him. Harry is left orphaned, with a dark past and a power-hungry adversary. He learns the hard way that the only way to survive is to fend for himself. Also, I wrote that he is "bent on avenging his parents' death" (Source A), which drives him to work hard and face his fears. Later at just seventeen years of age, Harry spends an entire year "running 'round with nothing to eat and freezing (his) backside off every night" (Source A), with the impossible mission of defeating the Dark Lord. While others with the same predicament would give up, Harry decides to persevere.

Comment [A3]: Focused topic sentence that makes a clear sub-claim

Comment [A4]: The writer smoothly addresses and refutes a possible counterargument

Comment [A5]: The writer builds off of his/her previous work throughout the year in order to analyze the BQ in-depth

through the hard times. The countless obstacles that Harry faces throughout his life shape his character, as well as his future.

In *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, witnessing a mutiny empowers a well-behaved English girl to stand up for her herself and take control of her own life. Before boarding the Seahawk, an infamous ship, Charlotte "wanted to be a lady, it was not just (her) ambition; it was (her) destiny" (Source B). On the ship she quickly realizes she "was where no proper young lady should be" (Source B), when the Captain, who she blindly obeyed, murders a sailor. Much like Harry Potter, Charlotte Doyle's life changes with the loss of a life. Charlotte is forced to decide whether to aid a despicable man and follow the status quo or break the rules and side with the Seahawk's innocent crew. Eventually she chooses to join the sailors to "show that (she) stands with (them)" (Source B). If she hadn't witnessed the death of a crew member, she never would have stood up to authority. Her new found tenacity and strength allows her to embrace a lifestyle filled with danger and hard work such as "pounding oakum into the deck, scraping the hull, standing watch as dawn blessed the sea and taking her turn at the wheel" (Source B). The Captain's heinous actions and Charlotte's true nature transform her into a rebellious sailor.

Comment [A6]: Focused topic sentence that makes a claim about the second source, although the writer could transition more smoothly/explicitly

Comment [A7]: Excellent incorporation of textual evidence

Comment [A8]: Example of strong voice/diction and balance of evidence/analysis

Mulan is the story of a young woman becoming a heroine after she joins the army; another example of empowerment from war. Initially, Mulan was seen as a disgrace to her family because she didn't fit the mold of a typical Chinese wife. She was told that she would never honor her ancestors and uphold her family tree (Source C). Yet, when the Huns attack Imperial China to gain power, Mulan seizes the opportunity to make her family proud by fighting for her country. She doesn't let her knowledge that the

Comment [A9]: The writer attempts to link this section to the previous one, though the transition could be more fluid

penalty for impersonating a male soldier is death keep her from leaving home and protecting her family and loved ones. In one scene, Mulan saves several soldiers from an attack by the vicious Huns by triggering an avalanche and rescuing her captain (Source C). This exhibit of intelligence and valor eventually gains her the respect of her fellow soldiers. After she saves the Emperor of China from the Huns most feared warrior (Source C), Mulan permanently changes people's views on the strength and ability of women. She is no longer viewed as an immature girl with no purpose; instead, she becomes a leader who inspires others. The Huns' struggle for power allowed Mulan to prove herself to the world and, more importantly, to her family.

Despite the catastrophic effects of power struggles, they also give rise to some of the world's greatest heroes. We never would have heard of George Washington or Luke Skywalker if it hadn't been for the American Revolution and *Star Wars*. The hardships that people face in their lives often lead them down the path to success, like Harry Potter who achieved his destiny, while others such as Charlotte Doyle and Mulan learned to break away from the confines of their societies and choose their own future. Wars and oppression give ordinary people the opportunity to become so much more.

Comment [A10]: Strong/clear diction

Comment [A11]: The closing line, while somewhat broad/general in the final phrase, successfully links back to the opening and considers the universality of the BQ