



THE AVENGERS

WHO WILL BE THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE AVENGERS?
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES?!

 POWER MAN	 SPIDER-MAN	 WOLVERINE	 DAZZLER	 HAWKEYE
 IRON MAN	 INVISIBLE GIRL	 DAREDEVIL	 ANT-MAN	 THE HULK
 THOR	 SHE-HULK	 BLACK WIDOW	 SCARLET WITCH	 SILVER SURFER

MIGHTY

A 2ND STORY STUDY GUIDE
INSPIRED BY THE ORIGINAL STORY BY TIFFANY MOTEN



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome to our study guide.

We are a collective of story-makers and story-lovers committed to building a more empathetic world by sharing one great story at a time. We believe in the unique power of sharing one's personal story.

This guide takes a closer look at a true story told by a real person.

Tiffany Moten's *Mighty* is a story of how our childhood heroes can inspire us to take action, and how these heroes sometimes help us find the strength we didn't know we had.

Inside this study guide, you will find activities, an interview with Tiffany, and historical and contextual information that will add to your understanding of her story. On our website you can find additional resources and related learning standards.

To use this guide in any capacity, please start by listening to Tiffany's story, available on the 2nd Story website at 2ndStory.com/studyguides.

Happy listening! Happy learning!

The 2nd Story Collective

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START TALKING.

2nd Story uses **true, first-person stories** as an entry-point for conversation. After listening to Tiffany Moten's *Mighty*, use the following questions for a guided discussion.

GROUP AGREEMENTS

When sharing personal narratives, stories, and sensitive information, we begin by establishing the following agreements with participants. Before beginning your discussion, we recommend going over the following group agreements. When finished, ask them, "Do you agree?" and then have them collectively and vocally respond with "I agree."

1. What is learned here leaves here. What is said here stays here.
2. Take care of yourself.
3. Practice equity by sharing the floor.
4. Stay curious.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are there moments that feel familiar to your life? Why or why not?
- What is something new you learned from Tiffany's story?
- Why is it important to you to find someone or something to look up to?
- Why are role models important in youth development?
- What does Kimberly Hart represent to Tiffany?
- In the story, Tiffany's friends make a hurtful accusation. Why is this an important moment for Tiffany? What does their accusation imply?
- Why does Tiffany turn towards a fictional character to face a real life situation?
- How does Tiffany find her strength?
- What experiences have you had in your life that parallel Tiffany's experience in the story?

THE POWER OF THE SUPERHERO

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE PREVALENCE OF SUPERHEROES

Especially in recent years, with the rise of Marvel Cinematic Universe, superheroes have become one of the most pervasive themes in fiction. Beyond the joys of watching beautiful people save the world from eccentric villains, there may be other reasons we, as a society, enjoy these types of stories.

One theory suggests that superheroes have taken the place in our minds that Greek gods held centuries ago - the incredibly powerful, yet flawed, beings that protect us in times of need.

Since their creation, superheroes have also acted as conduits for representing excellence in under-appreciated groups. Superman is an immigrant (a literal "alien" from another planet), Spiderman is bullied by his peers, the X-Men and their fellow Mutants are shunned by the greater society because of their differences despite having no control over their development, and so on.

To see oneself not just as a hero, but as a superhero, is a powerful force for an audience.

NEW TO SUPERHEROES?

RECOMMENDED VIEWING

SPIDER-MAN

Spider-Man (2002) & Spider-Man 2 (2004)

Features a cartoonish Willem Dafoe and a note-perfect Alfred Molina as the Green Goblin and Doctor Octopus respectively.

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (2018)

An animated masterpiece, diverse in its cast, breathes new life into an old origin story.

X-MEN

X2: X-Men United (2003)

An X-Men story where the villain hates mutants because his own son is one. Contains many themes wherein mutants act as a metaphor for queer folk, and succeeds better than expected.

X-Men: First Class (2011)

Looks at the origin of the X-Men, with stark sequences of Erik Lensherr/Magneto's experiences as a young Jewish boy in the Holocaust.

BLACK PANTHER

Black Panther (2018)

Exquisitely designed and directed, *Black Panther* uses Wakanda as a vehicle for Afrofuturism and Black excellence. Especially notable for featuring several extremely capable female warriors and a villain with some *very* compelling points.



"IT'S MORPHIN' TIME"

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THE MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS

In August 1993, the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* hit American television screens for the first time. Five "teenagers with attitude" in the fictional California town of Angel Grove were recruited by the alien Zordon to fight off the evil witch Rita Repulsa. With powers granted from Zordon's Power Coins, these teens gain a variety of superpowers and the ability to morph into spandex-covered, color-coded Power Rangers. While the story of the Power Rangers follows the now-well-known superhero formula, the details behind it are unique within themselves.



Despite having run for nearly thirty seasons, with twenty different series, the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* franchise is only partially the American teen show we know it to be. Every single Power Rangers series has been adapted from a Japanese series in the *Super Sentai* franchise. Effectively, any scenes of the Rangers in full costume, complete with helmets/visors that cover their faces, originated from the Japanese show. Saban Entertainment (the company behind *Power Rangers*) films new scenes of the Rangers out of costume as every-day teens and dubs new dialogue over the fight scenes. While the Power Rangers have become household names and a worldwide phenomenon, Saban has given very little international credit to *Super Sentai*, leaving many viewers unaware of the show's Japanese origin.

Throughout its history, the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* has been beloved both for its unique combat sequences (steeped in Japanese monster film tropes) and its diverse and relatable team. The original Power Rangers - a team of five - was quite racially representative for a superhero show of its time; only two of the five ranger (the Red and Blue Rangers) were white men, with one white woman (Pink Ranger), one Black man (Black Ranger), and one Vietnamese woman (Yellow Ranger). While simply listing races/genders oversimplifies the potential depths of diversity, the show nonetheless has always had a somewhat inhomogeneous cast throughout its run. When the series was rebooted as a film in 2017, the writers took this to heart, further diversifying the cast racially, as well as adding in mention of the Rangers' varying sexual orientations and neurodivergence.



For anyone interested in experiencing today's Power Rangers, the most recent series is airing as *Power Rangers Beast Morphers*, an adaptation of the *Super Sentai* series, *Tokumei Sentai Go-Busters*.

FUN FACT:
OVER 900 EPISODES HAVE AIRED SINCE
MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS
PREMIERED IN THE U.S. IN 1993.

THE HERO IN ME A CONVERSATION WITH TIFFANY MOTEN

BY MAX SPITZ, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR



So, tell me a little about yourself.

Where are you from?

What do you do?

I am from the south suburbs of Chicago. I went to the University of Illinois in Champaign Urbana and graduated with a degree in journalism. Not too long after graduating, I realized I didn't want to write for a newspaper or magazine. I felt

boxed in, so I pivoted into the PR/Marketing industry.

Currently, I work for a Marketing agency called Momentum Worldwide; we specialize in creating influential events for brands.

How do you identify as an artist?

I identify as a writer, but it took me a while to get there! I'm sure many artists go through a period of not feeling "good enough" to identify as an artist, but writing is part of who I am. It's my passion, so I am a writer.

What role does story and storytelling play in your life?

As someone who works in marketing and PR, I have to imagine quite a bit!

It plays a large role in my life. At work, storytelling is how we sell our ideas; it's how we create these larger than life events (even virtually). Even more important than that though, storytelling has allowed me to cement certain experiences in my life. Putting words on paper is like creating my own personal movie, highlighting all the good and all the lessons learned from the bad.

Why was it important for you to tell this story?

I told this story because I think it's a badge of honor to conquer a fear and this was a huge fear for me. I won't be bullied in any aspect of my life. I will stand up for myself, no matter what.

Your experience with bullying is central to this story.

What does it mean for you to look back on that moment as an adult?

I think this moment was pivotal and influences how I move through life. I'm not the type of person to ignore or avoid something that is bothering me. I confront it head on, and I think that's because of this moment and the relief I felt after I confronted the situation.

I'd love to talk about that scene in your story. What happened after you fought back?

The bully got suspended and, to be honest, she and her friend didn't really ever stop bullying me. It never got physical again and they definitely lightened up, but I was able to go toe to toe with them. I no longer felt like they had the upper hand. They knew if they were going to come after me they needed to expect to get something back.

You latched onto the Power Rangers, specifically Kimberly, almost immediately. What do you think made her character so interesting to you?

I appreciated the fact that they created a character that loved fashion, that was an athlete, and a superhero! I saw myself in her. She wasn't a damsel in distress like so many other characters I'd seen before. She fought alongside the men, never behind them!

What types of characters do you find yourself drawn to now?

The nerd in me still loves a good superhero, I love every character in *Black Panther*. Love Leticia Lewis on *LoveCraft Country*. I guess you could say I'm still into a world full of the supernatural. Of course there are characters that are a little closer to reality, like Issa from *Insecure*. She really appeals to my awkward side.

Why do you think it is important for young people to see themselves reflected in media?

Representation matters. Seeing people that look like you in all different types of mediums makes you believe that you can do that, too. The best way to sum it up is through a quote: "You cannot be what you cannot see". Of course there are always the trailblazers that break glass ceilings; think about all the people that decided not to try because they didn't even know it was possible.

What role do you think media plays in the way we interact with and experience the world around us?

Media plays a role in everything that we do. It's a very influential piece of society and it's the reason why a lot of stereotypes and discrimination exist. Diversity should be integrated into every media production that exists because that is how the world is. It's made up of so many different types of beautiful human beings, that should be represented in all media.

What media would you recommend to folks looking for similarly empowering characters?

My favorite show of 2020 is *LoveCraft Country*. They do a great job at exploring supernatural genres while integrating history and very complex characters. They're telling stories that haven't been told and it's exciting!

On a scale of 1-10, how likely are you to watch the new Power Rangers reboot that is coming out in 2021?

If I could buy a ticket today I would!

FIVE MIGHTY MILESTONES

A FEW PIVOTAL MOMENTS IN SUPERHERO HISTORY

MARCH 1941 CAPTAIN AMERICA #1 IS PUBLISHED.

Created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, Captain America rivals Superman as the quintessentially American superhero. Dressed in the colors, stars, and stripes of the American flag, Captain America's early years revolved around him actively fighting against the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) in World War II. This origin was so steeped in the actual war occurring at the time that the cover of this premiere issue featured Captain America punching Adolf Hitler.

JULY 1966 FANTASTIC FOUR #52 IS PUBLISHED: PREMIERING BLACK PANTHER.

Black Panther, the first Black Superhero, began his career as a supporting character in many other Marvel comics. However, by 1973, his popularity led to him starring in his own story lines. One early story, titled Panther vs. The Klan, brought Black Panther to America and featured the controversial inclusion of the real-world Klu Klux Klan. In the decades since his creation, Black Panther and his home Wakanda have become a prominent example of Afro-futurism and a highlight for some of the most intelligent and powerful characters in Marvel Comics.

APRIL 18, 1938 ACTION COMICS #1 IS PUBLISHED: THE PREMIERE OF SUPERMAN.

Considered by many to be the first superhero, Superman represents the purest form of the archetypes we now associate with superheroes. Joe Schuster and Jerry Siegel, Superman's creators, workshopped the character for several decades - drawing on science fiction, adventure, and detective fiction - before landing on the hero we know today. Many aspects, such as his secret identity and powers, came directly from his creators. However, restrictions from the editors also led to archetypes now expected from superheroes - outlandish villains and no-killing codes.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1963 X-MEN #1 PUBLISHED.

While not the first superhero team (both the Justice League and the Fantastic Four predate them), the X-Men represented a unique moment in superhero fiction. Rather than choosing to be heroes, like Captain America, the superpowers in X-Men come from mutation, leading to the term "mutants." These characters gain unexpected (and often uncontrollable) abilities as they grow up, leading to fear and prejudice from the general public. Since its inception, X-Men stories have been used as metaphors for all sorts of oppressed populations, folding in diverse sexualities and races to the super-team.

AUGUST 2013 CAPTAIN MARVEL #14 IS PUBLISHED: PREMIERING KAMALA KHAN.

Kamala Khan, also known as Ms. Marvel, holds the distinction of being the first prominent Muslim superhero. A Pakistani-American teenager, her powers developed in a manner similar to the X-Men's "mutations." After many temporary team-ups with other superheroes, Khan eventually became a full-fledged member of the Avengers and has gone on to join and found other super-teams. She is also featured as the lead character in 2020's Marvel's The Avengers video game.

WHAT MEDIA SHOWS US

We consume more media now than ever before. With worlds of all shapes and sizes at our fingertips, you would assume that there are stories for and about all sorts of folks. We naturally seek out stories we can relate to in some way, as well as stories we can escape into. But what is it about seeing ourselves on the screen (or page) that is so appealing, and so meaningful? What is the power of representation? What does it mean to have your story told - and by someone else who understands it?

REPRESENTATION IN FILM + TELEVISION

Media is often the first taste of broad stereotyping that people experience. Positive and accurate representations can fight against discrimination and provide a boost to self-image and aspiration.

When we see people who look like us in negative roles, we internalize those stereotypes/views. It's been shown that this especially affects young Black children and can harm their ability to fight off racism and discrimination. As children and teenagers, we learn by observing and modeling behaviors.

As outlined in *Social Group Stories in the Media and Child Development*, "There is evidence from college students that stereotyped media images can induce stereotype threat, in which members of a negatively stereotyped group underperform consistent with the negative stereotypes. The outcomes that are negatively impacted include academic performance, career choice, misidentification with academics, and impaired academic skill building, as well as hypertension and anxiety."

Being given positive role models allows us to more easily model positive behaviors and actions; this is especially true the more we can relate to the people we observe.

"IF YOU CAN'T SEE HER, YOU CAN'T BE HER. WITH GREATER REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE HEROES IN THE SCI-FI AND SUPERHERO GENRE, WE CAN HELP SUPERPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN."

BBC AMERICA PRESIDENT SARAH BARNETT

EARLY LANDMARKS IN REPRESENTATION

STAR TREK (1968)

Lauded for its diverse cast at the time, *Star Trek* is celebrated for having one of the earliest, and perhaps the first widely viewed, interracial kiss between Kirk (William Shatner) and Uhura (Nichelle Nichols). At the time of filming, NBC's executives wanted to remove the kiss out of fear of angering racist viewers. However, Shatner purposefully ruined every take that didn't include the kiss, thus forcing them to air the full moment. It was a landmark moment that garnered extreme support from fans.

MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD (1969)

Running from 1968-2001, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* featured countless moments of kindness and earnest morality. One specific instance involved Mr. Rogers and the neighborhood police officer, Officer Clemmons (François Clemmons). While Clemmons' position as a friend and authority in the neighborhood already broke barriers, Rogers made a very specific statement by inviting Clemmons to join him in a small wading pool. Afterwards, Rogers dried his own feet, then dried Clemmons' feet with the same towel. This moment directly targeted the discriminatory practices across the USA that did not allow Black people to swim in public pools with White people - actively breaking a color barrier.

THAT CERTAIN SUMMER (1972)

This made-for-tv movie is considered the first to deal sympathetically and honestly with homosexuality. The plot revolves around a divorced man attempting to explain his homosexuality and relationship to his son during a summer visit. This film was notable for many reasons, including its two renowned starring actors: Hal Holbrook and Martin Sheen. Both have gone on record that they found the script noncontroversial with Holbrook calling it "tame" and Sheen expressing shock that this role would be controversial when, at the time, he already had a history of playing violent criminals. While *That Certain Summer* did not feature any actual physical intimacy, it nonetheless represented a pioneering moment for LGBTQ representation.

PUT THE PEN TO PAPER

A WRITING ACTIVITY

At 2nd Story, we believe that sharing first-person, true stories has the power to change hearts and minds, and we want to know what stories are living inside of you.

We invite you to share your story. Below are several writing prompts that you can use to share a story from your own life that parallels the themes and ideas in this real-life story. Select a prompt and begin writing on the next page!

SHARE A MOMENT WHEN YOU:

- FOUND SOMEONE OR SOMETHING TO LOOK UP TO
- WERE OBSESSED WITH A FICTIONAL CHARACTER
- STOOD UP FOR SOMETHING
- LEARNED SOMETHING NEW ABOUT YOURSELF
- EXPERIENCED DISAPPOINTMENT
- OVERCAME A CHALLENGING MOMENT
- WERE SURPRISINGLY BRAVE
- FELT LIKE A SUPERHERO

KIMBERLY HART LOOKED
NOTHING LIKE ME, BUT
EVEN AS A CHILD I KNEW
THAT MY FASCINATION
WITH HER HAD NOTHING TO
DO WITH SKIN AND
EVERYTHING TO DO WITH
WHAT SHE REPRESENTED.

TIFFANY MOTEN

