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Deadpool our Favorite Antihero

We like the heroes, we secretly love the villains, and we can openly adore the antiheroes; they give us a happy middle ground between hero and villain, while also fulfilling their needs before they think about others and appeal to our more selfish side. Antiheroes appeal to the complexity of the human mind, we like violence, but we also like heroes. One antihero sticks out to a lot of people today, comic book readers or not, Deadpool. Deadpool is a good guy as much as he denies it, the reader knows it and it makes it more okay to like someone who is a villain but is also a hero.

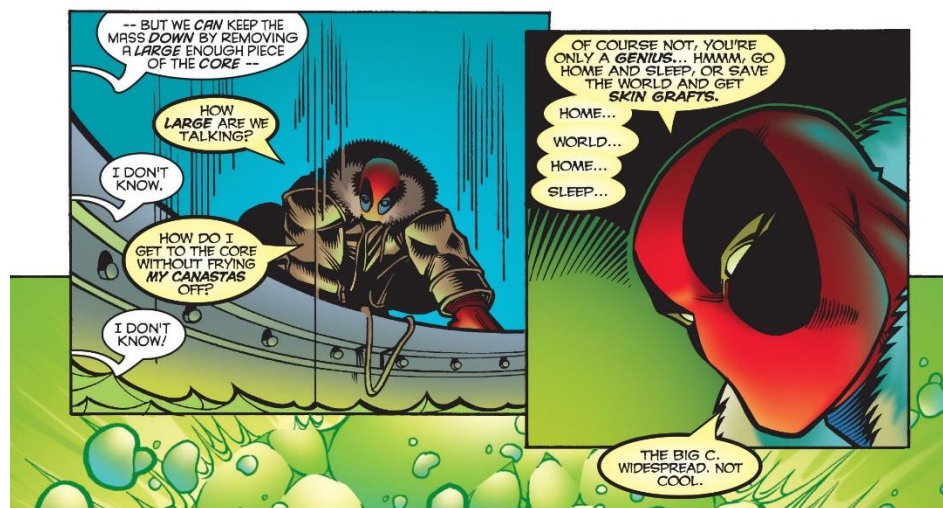
Before we can know what an antihero is, it is important to know what makes a hero. In The book *The Power of Comics*, Duncan and Smith tell us of many common superhero tropes. They tell us that “antihero[s] typically lack one or more of the qualities associate with the heroic ideal” (198). Deadpool fulfills most of the qualities of a hero, what he mainly lacks, is a strong moral compass, as he does what is good for himself before he thinks of others. Antiheroes like Deadpool are not the typical heroes that we are used to. Deadpool will do what it takes to fulfill his job or mission, even if it means killing people, unlike our typical heroes like Batman and Superman who will not kill anyone.

Deadpool is a middle ground between villains and heroes. Langley writes in his article *Why Do Supervillains Fascinate Us?* that supervillains appeal to our selfish needs and our secret

desires; however, it is not socially acceptable to associate ourselves with characters like the Joker. It is more socially acceptable to associate ourselves with Deadpool, because while he may be violent, he has a strong sense of duty. Antiheroes accurately reflect society and people more accurate than superheroes. The idea that a superhero like Superman will come and save us from our problems is too farfetched. However, if the standards of the superhero are lowered and we can see and hope further than an antihero can solve our problems. They can tackle issues like war, terrorism, and civil rights in a more tangible manner than a superhero can. They can go outside the law and society if they need to, to save society.

Deadpool does what is good for him, but at the end of day, he does what we expect a hero to do. Things like this appeals to our selfish nature, but also appeals to our good heart. When it

came to fulfilling his contract, he wanted to just do his job and be done, he did not care about what would happen to people, or even who hired him in



the first place. However, he found out that people would have cancer because of him, he did all he could to prevent it. In these panels from Kelly's *Deadpool*, we can see Deadpool struggling with saving half the world or not from spreading cancer, as a real villain would have let it happen. He goes in to stop it, even with many uncertainties of how big the core is, or even how to do it. We can see Deadpool make his decision based on his moral ground and sense of duty, and based on his backstory that he – and his mother who died from cancer – had cancer.

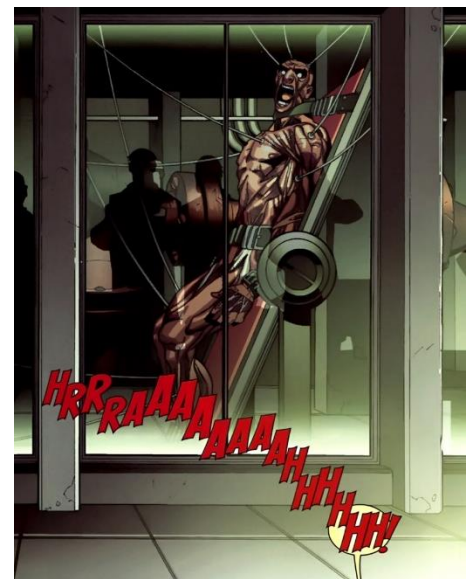
Deadpool is a complex character and cannot be fully profiled by one comic book. If we truly want to learn about why we love Deadpool we should look at other comic books. We can



learn things about his character that makes us truly appreciate him as a character. In these panels from Way's *Deadpool* No. 26, the reader learns that Ghost Rider cannot kill Deadpool because he does not think Deadpool has done anything wrong; this speaks to his character as Deadpool may kill lots of people, he is a good guy, even though he does not see himself as a hero. In the images, here we can see Ghost Rider as he is about to give his Penance Stare to Deadpool. When Ghost Rider does this, the book puts the reader in Deadpool's shoes, as it is all seen through a first-person perspective. The reader does not see Deadpool committing any sins, but rather a man in a hospital looking for a cure and being introduced to the Weapon X program. At the end

of the memories, the reader gets to experience Deadpool's pain and see it through his eyes. Deadpool is not reliving his sins, or seeing how he wronged people, but how a government wronged him. We can

see that Ghost Rider sees that Deadpool has not committed any sins; and what we see through Deadpool's eyes, we can feel sympathy for Deadpool and like him even more.



Looking at Deadpool interacting with Spiderman, in Hastings' *Deadpool Annual* No. 2, they once switched costumes, when Spiderman was not able to do his heroic duty because of his injuries. However, Deadpool never looked at Peter's face and never learned his identity in turn

because he knows what a superhero's secret identity means. Deadpool knows that if he, or anyone else, knows Spiderman's identity, the person behind the mask will be endangered, his family will be in harm's way, and what he stands for may no longer exist.



He understands

what it means to be a superhero, and he respects it. When the two swapped costumes, Deadpool never killed anyone because he did not want to associate killing with Spiderman and ruin his reputation. His respect for other superheroes, their lives, and reputations, furthers our respect for Deadpool.

Deadpool - while doing what he wants - also has a strong sense of duty. He does not like to see innocent people hurt, but rather only bad guys. The image below is an insert of Deadpool



talking to a young woman who is about to commit suicide, from Duggan's *Deadpool* No. 20. This comic book was

written after Superman did a similar thing with a young girl in another comic book; all Superman had to do was say a few words and that was the end of it. Deadpool knows he is not a hero like Superman who can make the person turn around with a few words; but even with his mask on, through his eyes, when he narrows them, he shows that he cares and he tries to help this girl all

he can. At the end of the story, he takes the girl to a hospital to get help because he knows he cannot do much to help her although he did stop her from jumping. In this comic book, Deadpool still uses his freedom as an antihero to beat up some thugs, and even steals a motorcycle, however, it is what he is doing that makes us appreciate him even more. Everything that Deadpool does is to help the young girl; while not like Superman, Deadpool shows the readers they can help someone who needs help, by just being there, and being themselves – they do not need to be Superman to save a life.

It can be hard to say why we like a character, because they are cool, or they are funny is not enough of a reason when trying to make it tangible. However, now we can possibly see why we like characters like Deadpool. Antiheroes appeal to the complexity of the human mind, we like violence, but we also like heroes. Deadpool has the freedom of a villain and does what he wants, but has the sense of duty like a hero. I can go on and put even more examples of why Deadpool is a hero, or at least displays heroic qualities, despite what his character claims. While Deadpool was first introduced as a villain, he has become an antihero, one of the most beloved, and one of the most common people that people cosplay as at conventions.

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