To prepare him for ruling Bechuanaland, Seretse studied law in London where he met, fell in love with and married Ruth Williams. In the film, when he proposes to Ruth, he says:

"I have a responsibility to return home to my people, but I will never achieve anything worthwhile if I leave my heart here."

On their return to his homeland, he is told by tribal elders that people no longer want him to rule. He gives a speech to his people:

"I am told that you no longer wish for me to honour my duty as your king because of the colour of the wife I have chosen. I am ready to serve you because I love my people. I love this land but I love my wife."

He is later exiled by the British government and in reaction, he states:

"I belong with my people."

Upon his return to his country after his exile he says:

"It is time for us to create a new nation, for us to be the masters of our own fate."

Seretse argues in the film:

"Race must have no bearing on equality and justice."

George Williams is prejudiced against black people—an attitude not uncommon at the time. In the film, when describing Ruth’s sister Muriel’s work at the London Missionary Society, he says:

"She is only trying to convert them."

Consequently, he has a strongly negative reaction to Ruth’s plans to marry Seretse:

"It won’t happen. How many wives do you think he has? You disgust me, marrying a black. You’ll bring insults and shame on our family. I can’t see you again."

Nevertheless, as time goes on his views soften and when Ruth returns to England with her first child following Seretse’s exile, George and his wife are there to greet her, standing by Seretse’s side.
When he hears of Seretse and Ruth’s marriage via a letter from Seretse, he firmly opposes it. When Seretse introduces Ruth in the film, he states:

"O VER TWO DECADES OF PREPARING YOU TO BE OUR KING AND THIS IS HOW YOU FACE ME. A WHITE WOMAN BY YOUR SIDE. ... YOUR GRANDFATHER HAD NO OPTION BUT TO ALLOW OUTSIDERS TO RULE US BUT YOU BRING THIS ONE TO RULE OUR TRIBE OUT OF CHOICE! ... I AM BEGGING YOU TO RENOUNCE THIS WHITE WOMAN."

Tshekedi played a key part in Seretse’s exile after Seretse refused his uncle’s original demand to renounce his right to rule:

"H O N O U R Y O U R K IN G D O M , D O N ’ T B E L I T T L E YOUR PEOPLE."

However, after seeing the impact that Seretse’s exile was having on Bechuanaland, Tshekedi put aside his views and eventually supported the marriage for the common good, helping Seretse return to unite the country.

During WWII Ruth joined the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force and served as an ambulance driver. The efforts of women during the war helped liberate them and started to give them more social freedoms. Following the war, she lived and worked in London where she met and fell in love with Seretse Khama. Despite facing strong objections from her parents, members of the public and her government, she was determined to marry him. She says in the film:

"I’VE MET THE MAN I WANT TO SPEND MY LIFE WITH"

Once the couple were married and moved to Bechuanaland, she expresses her surprise at the scale of the negative impact their relationship is having:

"WE’VE MISJUDGED THIS HAVEN’T WE?"

Ruth was a strong figure of unity during her time in Bechuanaland. For example, she refused to use the whites-only hospital and gave birth in the village hospital. In the film, Ruth addresses Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Britain during her husbands’ exile:

"T E N T H O U S A N D O F M Y H U S B A N D ’ S P E O P L E FOUGHT THE WAR FOR YOU. ... YOU HAVE BETRAYED MY HUSBAND AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE TEN THOUSAND MEN. YOU HAVE CAUSED GREAT HURT AND YOU HAVE CAUSED GREAT ANGER AMONGST A PEACEFUL PEOPLE, AND MR. CHURCHILL, I’M WITH THEM AND I WILL REMAIN WITH THEM ... BECAUSE THIS IS MY HOME."

#AUnitedKingdom
#PowerofUnity

These cards are based on the film’s key characters and all speech is taken directly from the film. They are designed to represent the different views at the time.
In the film, it is Muriel who introduces Ruth and Seretse to one another, as Muriel knows Seretse from The London Missionary Society. Muriel doesn’t oppose the wedding, however she does warn Ruth:

“FATHER WILL HATE HIM ON SIGHT. HE IS CLEVERER THAN HIM AND HE’S BLACK.”

Muriel was concerned about the treatment Ruth was receiving from her parents, the public and the press and encouraged Ruth to rethink the marriage:

“FATHER WON’T SPEAK TO YOU; YOU ARE CALLED NAMES IN THE STREET. DO YOU SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING? RUTH, YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVE SERETSE BUT YOU DON’T HAVE TO DO THIS. YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO SAY NO TO HIM.”

But, when Ruth married Sereste, the sisters remained close and Muriel was a pillar of support for the couple.

Like many of the people in Bechuanaland, Naledi is initially displeased about Ruth’s marriage to her brother fearing that it will have negative consequences for Bechuanaland. In the film, she says:

“WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO DO THIS TO US AND TO YOURSELF—BE SOMEWHERE AND BE SOMETHING THAT MAKES NO SENSE TO YOU? LET HIM GO. WE NEED HIM MORE THAN YOU.”

However, as a result of Ruth’s positive actions trying to fit in with the family and the people of Bechuanaland, as well as fighting for unity, Naledi’s original views change. She became a firm supporter of the marriage and Ruth (along with the majority of the people in Bechuanaland).

Naledi plays a key role in helping Ruth to understand the country and make it her home. She is present when the ladies of Bechuanaland come to visit Ruth at her house and explains that,

“They are thanking you for walking the road with them.”

It is also Naledi that encourages Ruth to speak up and address Winston Churchill when she says:

“You have a voice, use it.”
Tony Benn had been shocked and disgusted by racial separation when he had witnessed it in southern Africa as an RAF Officer in 1944. Throughout his career he spoke out about racism for several causes. He was a strong supporter of Seretse’s and Ruth’s marriage and fought against the Labour government (which was his own political party) for Seretse to be allowed to return to Bechuanaland. He set up the ‘Seretse Khama Defence Council’ to raise awareness of the issues.

In addition, Tony Benn played a vital part in helping to secure Bechuanaland’s natural resources for the people of Bechuanaland. In the film, he asks the government to publicly confirm that the resources would remain with the nation’s people.

“Having deprived the Bangwato people of their King, can the Commonwealth Under-Secretary assure the House that the Bangwato people will still have a say in the running of their affairs...with particular reference to the use of their land for mineral exploitation?”

Seretse and Ruth’s second son was named Anthony in honour of Tony Benn.