

Main characters are typically the most dynamic, well-developed, and multi-dimensional characters in literature. They have strengths and weaknesses, friends and enemies, motivations and conflicts, and intricate character attributes like loyalty, courage, and respect. At first, it may seem that *My Side of the Mountain*, a novel by Jean Craighead George, only has one main character, named Sam, around whom the story is written. However, Frightful the falcon is equally dynamic, well-developed, and multi-dimensional as Sam, making her an essential part of the development of the plot. Throughout the story, Frightful is depicted as a loyal, courageous, and respectful character, much like Sam.

Frightful As a Loyal Character

When Sam first adopts Frightful, he never expects that she will be more than just a companion. However, as she grows older, Frightful demonstrates her loyalty to him in three key ways: as a provider, as a protector, and through her devotion to Sam. Sam comes to rely exclusively on Frightful's hunting skills for his survival. *"I had noticed a lot of rabbit tracks earlier, and followed them over the muddy earth as best I could. I kicked up a rabbit, and... Frightful dropped out of the sky and took it"* (George, 1991, p. 152). Another way Frightful shows her loyalty to Sam was as a protector and guardian. *"...Frightful was my ears as well as my eyes. She could hear things long before I"* (George, 1991, pp.72-73). Frightful's devotion to Sam is clearly evident in the quote that follows when he thinks she has chosen to migrate for the winter: *"The air was now brisk and Frightful was gone. I was sure she had suddenly taken off on the migration... And there she was; she had caught herself a bird. She didn't intend to leave..."*(George, 1991, pp. 91-92).

Frightful As a Courageous Character

Another quality that Frightful's character possesses is courage. Whenever Frightful warns Sam of danger, she stays by him and is courageous. She doesn't fly away to save herself from the

dangerous situation. "...as we passed one of the hemlocks near the grove, she pulled her feathers to her body and looked alarmed..." (George, 1991, p. 136). Nowhere in the book does Frightful fly away because she is scared for her own life. The only times when Frightful flies away are to catch prey for Sam, or to distract a hunter so that Sam can have the deer that the hunter had shot. "I watched the hunter track his deer. Then of all things, it [the deer] jumped the stone fence and fell dead... He [the hunter] was going off at an angle. Then, good old Frightful! She saw the man and screamed.heaven knows what he thought she was, but he turned and started in her direction..." (George, 1991, p. 102-103).

Frightful As a Respectful Character

Frightful unquestionably demonstrates respect for Sam throughout the story. When Frightful catches prey for Sam, she respectfully guards it and does not eat it until Sam feeds it to her. This quote is a perfect example: "Out of the sky ...would dive my beautiful falcon. On the ground she would cover up her quarry...She never touched it until I came and picked her up. I would go home and feed her..." (George, 1991, p. 114). In addition, Frightful always answers Sam's call no matter where she is: "One day at I whistled for Frightful. I had no food and she wasn't even hungry, but she came to me anyway. I was thrilled..." (George, 1991, pp. 62-63).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Frightful is an essential character in the story *My Side of the Mountain*. Without Frightful, the story would be lacking in development and dimension. The author's portrayal of Frightful as a multi-faceted and dynamic character possessing the virtues of loyalty, courage, respect make her equally as essential as Sam is to the story.

Bibliography

George, J.C. (1991) . *My Side of the Mountain*. New York. Puffin Books.