

**This essay was awarded first prize at Hamden Middle School for the creative way in which the student communicated her definition of a hero.**

### **Defining A Hero**

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Every night I prayed for the same thing, a hero. I have been going through some tough times at this point in my life. My father just died of cancer, my mother lost her job, and I am left with no place to live. I have nothing, but the clothes on my back. On top of it, I am slowly running out of hope. I need my hero to be selfless. I need my hero to be ingenious. Last, I would like my hero to also be responsible. So every night I pray to god to bring me a hero, with three traits.

I am staying in a shelter with my mother. My mother says that, "it can only get better from here, so don't lose hope." It's just so hard to think positively, at such a hard time in my life. I wonder if I have the strength to go on. Every night I bend down at my bedside, place my hands together, and pray for my hero. Every time I pray, I like to focus on one quality that I would really like my hero to have. So, tonight when I pray, I pray for my hero to be selfless. I need someone who will sacrifice everything to help my mother and me. I need someone who will help me, and not worry about their life or let their personal problems get in the way. I need that! I need to feel that still, where I feel protected and safe.

Another week has gone by, and still no sign of my hero. Just like every night, I bend down next to my bed and pray. This time I pray for my hero to be ingenious. I know it is a lot to ask for, but I need someone who is original, and who can figure a way out of this mess. Or, just someone smart enough to help me see that my life isn't as bad as it seems sometimes. Someone to give me hope again, because I am running low. I need a hero to be ingenious.

My hope of a hero is dwindling. Is it true that a hero exists? Or is that only in books? That can't be true! I believe that anyone can be a hero. So, just like every other night, I bend down next to my bed, and pray for a hero. This time though, the quality that I pray for my hero to have is to be responsible. I want someone who will take ownership for their actions. I want a hero who will make the right choice, not only for just him, but for the safety of everyone. Being responsible means, knowing the correct thing to do, or the correct way to get out of a situation instead of just taking the easy way out. That is why I want my hero to be responsible.

I laid on my bed thinking of the things to be grateful for, and it only made be

sadder. I wasn't asking for money, a house, or my dad's life back, just a hero. I believe everyone needs a hero at sometime in their life. I continued to wait.....! Then, as I was laying there thinking, I realized I am wasting all this time waiting for a hero. Why should I be waiting for someone to come and save my life! I should just be saving myself. I can be my own hero. I am selfless because, I would do anything in my power to save me and my mother. I may not be ingenious, but I bet I am smart enough to think of a way out of this, if I used the time that I just sat around waiting for a hero. I know that I am responsible enough to make the right choice in a situation to protect my mother and me. All heroes have to save themselves before they can save other people. I finally realized that all along, a hero was inside of me. I believe there is a hero inside of everyone; they just have to realize it. My definition of a hero is someone who is selfless, responsible, and someone brave enough to make the effort to save themselves or someone else, without worrying about falling, but knowing that they can always get up.