

The Hero Within

The dusty wall clock, forgotten near the corner of where the walls meet the ceiling, reads 12:03. With its consistent ticking filling the sleeping, dormant room, outside, the lonely street lights illuminate the dead silent suburban street. The moon was hazy with dark, heavy clouds obscuring it, casting long shadows in every direction. A stray cat tore from the darkness near the sleeping houses and flew past the brightly light window. Faint wails and grumbles trickle from the open window as the fingers of the frantic student fly across her laptop. The time 12:15 reads at the bottom right-hand corner, and with every minute that goes by, the student grows more and more fatigue and her typing pace gets slower and slower. Her eyes get heavier and heavier as she fights her drooping eyelids to stay awake and finish her paper. When the time finally reads 1:45 though, she puts her head down in defeat on the desk, being just 3 paragraphs away from completing it.

Through her window overlooking the dead silent, tranquil street, a brilliantly bright flash of light rips apart the serene darkness right in the middle of the road and darts with the flash of a comet, straight to the house. The streetlight catches a flash of a golden letter Y from the viciously fast blur, as it scales up effortlessly to the luminous window. It pops up on the window seal and... it's the same girl, mirrored exactly, except for a strange gold Y on her shirt. The mysterious Y person then suddenly starts shouting "You got this, don't give up when you're so close". The positive words fill the room with tender light, drowning all negative thoughts and quiet sobs and bounce around the girl. In response, the girl suddenly rises from her desk with newfound energy and starts up her computer again. The Y person keeps up the positive sayings

as the girl powers through the last of her paper, all the way through to the last sentence. Filled with bubbling relief, the girl stumbles to her bed and immediately falls deep asleep. The mysterious Y person smiles and disappears into the dark, silent night.

And this goes on through the quiet night and on through the days following. The mysterious Y person, dancing from person to person, every time mirroring them with the gold Y and getting them through their toughest times and fights. Whether it's the minute before the big exam that will make or break your grade, or the match that will end with you coming back with the first or second medal, Y is there giving them the encouragement and strength they channel from within. Y taps the courage and confidence everyone holds deep within and lets it flow through you and light up your darkest and hardest fight, like a strong, golden ten-foot wave at the North Shore. Y gives them the strength to endure and persevere through the ups and downs that life flings in their faces. Always in the shadows, Y helps anyone and everyone along and becoming the light in their dark times.

Heroes can come in endless, vast shapes and forms. Not all heroes wear capes and a hero to one may not be a hero to another. The hero in my story, Y, is not a real hero but rather symbolizes one. This hero is You, you are Y. Let me explain. The hero Y represents your inner strength, the power within you that keeps you going through your tough times. Y is that little voice inside your head, always encouraging and motivating you on through your toughest battles. Whether it was that last mental push to get that A, or it was the hardest, toughest match that was worth all the practice and blood, sweat, and tears, you were the one that got through it by your own strength and self will. You are the only one that can help you and whether you do that by encouraging yourself with positive thoughts or addressing your mistakes to motivate

yourself to do better, you are your hope and savior through your darkest times, you are your Hero.

By the Merriam-Webster definition, a hero can be “a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability”, “an illustrious warrior”, “person admired for achievements and noble qualities”, or “one who shows great courage”. Couldn't you and your inner strength fit that? Everyone has achievements, everyone has shown courage at doing something, and your inner strength can be whatever you make it be. It can take the form of a strong warrior, to give you courage, or your goal shining within your very grasp, to motivate you on. So take a look around. If you are your hero, then all those people are their heroes. So in that perspective, you are surrounded by heroes. Everyone has their own story, with ups and downs and how they shone through life's worst. So next time you take a walk in your neighborhood, take a good look at the heroes around you and the hero within.