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An Unlikely Hero

In James Thurber’s “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty,” Walter Mitty is a hero for coping with living in a harsh, dull world through living his fantasies in daydreams. For example, when Walter Mitty is driving Mrs. Mitty to town for errands , “You’re driving too fast!” said Mrs. Mitty ( James Thurber 1), Walter Mitty is daydreaming that he is flying a Navy hydroplane resulting in him speeding, “Full strength in No.3 turret ”, shouted the Commander (1). Living a monotonous life compels Mitty to dream of adventure such as flying a Navy hydroplane. Because in reality friends of Mitty view him as a boring and an incompetent individual, Mitty reverts this by dreaming his adventures that serve as inspiration to many. In addition, when Mitty drives “past the hospital” (1), Walter Mitty dreams he is a world famous surgeon operating on the “Millionaire banker, Wellington McMillan” (1). Mitty rids his stigma of incompetence through dreams that give him confidence in reality. He realizes his desire to become a lifesaver because of his dream of saving people’s lives. Furthermore, Walter Mitty hears a newsboy “shouting something about the Waterbury trial.” (2), and “Walter Mitty raised his hand briefly, and the bickering attorneys were stilled. ‘With any known make of gun,’ he (Mitty) said evenly, ‘I could have killed Gregory Fitzhurst at three hundred feet with my left hand,’ ” (2), and dreams he is a witness of that trial. Mitty dreams of the trial because he realizes his yearning for respect and fear in the actual world. Characteristics such as respect and fear would be traits for the ideal hero that Mitty is trying to achieve in reality. Walter Mitty’s unique ability to dream enables him to project himself as the ideal hero to many.