

English 12 Prose

Scale Point: 5

Comment

This paper was awarded a “5” largely as a result of its clear organization and strong grasp of the text. This student maintains a strong focus on the question of character development. The language used is adequate. Overall, this is clearly a proficient paper.

In “Rite of Passage”, Doug Beardsley associates character development with the game of hockey. “All sports has a rite of passage; hockey is no exception. Things can happen on the ice that rank as the most significant events in a young man’s life before he reaches the age of first love.”

First, the protagonist in this story is the littler brother who, by chance, meets with his older brother as rivals at a hockey game. The little brother believes that “an initiation occurs around the time of puberty,” thus, a rite of passage. This young boy experiences two rite of passages; the first one was the moment that he had to play against his older brother in a hockey game, the second rite of passage was when Dave Ratchford and his father (who is excellent at hockey) comes to join them. The two “initiations” which the litter brother is required to pass would then include him in “a part of a larger world.” As the young boy “passed” each initiation and scored while his brother was the defender, he became “part of a larger world. The journey had begun. [he] felt [he] could go forward. [He] had come of age on the ice.”

Second, the development of the older brothers’ character was quite significant. According to his younger brother, he was “an excellent skater and playmaker...” It became an instant competition between himself and his older brother. The older brother had instructed his little brother while practicing; working on his skills; and improving on them. “I thought of all he’d taught me and what he might forget.” As the rivalry between the brothers becomes more intense, they come face to face with each other during the last moments of the game. “It was all open ice to the net until I saw my brother weaving a familiar pattern from the other side of the rink...” Miraculously, the little brother had scored against the older brother. And, as the siblings “trudged home for supper”, the little brother “recieved a new, quiet respect from [his] brother.” The older brother had attained a new respect for his little brother.

Third, Dave Ratchford and his father’s characters develop also. Dave, also known as “Scratch” and his father were also excellent hockey players. Dave was “a fierce-checking defenceman,” while his father “had all the moves” as a forward. Dave had outmaneuvered his father during the game. “.... though he had not seen the check coming, Mr. Ratchford had become one with the force of the blow at the initial moment of impact.” Mr. Ratchford know how to take a check, to absorb the hit. Dave’s father was proud of him, “& a soft smile covering his face.”

The author of “Rite of Passage”, Doug Beardsley, has illustrated several key characters who play an important role in the story; they learn lessons and become wiser. They also become “part of a larger world” and they start journeys.