

The Character and Nature of Molly Grue

In the novel, *The Last Unicorn*, we are introduced to a character named Molly Grue. Through chapters five and six she goes through many changes. Molly goes from being an outwardly crude woman to a soft, kind-hearted lady. Molly is a caring person. She is faithful to the band of men. Molly is encouraging and hopeful. These three qualities of Molly Grue will be further discussed in the essay. These three qualities prove to be a great help in finishing the quest.

When we first meet Molly Grue, she is a very old, crude, and rugged woman. The book describes Molly as being a "thin thorn of a woman" (Beagle 56), with a "pale, bony face with fierce tawny eyes and, hair the color of dead grass." (Beagle 56) She also has "sharp shoulders" (Beagle 57) and "horny knuckles." (Beagle 57) From these descriptions the picture we get is that of an old woman, who is unsophisticated, and has worked herself to the bones. You would probably think that Molly isn't a nice person. Molly is a nice person, because underneath all that skin is a woman who has compassion. Molly cooks and cares for a band of loud, crude, adventurous men, otherwise known as outlaws. Molly is extremely faithful to these men because she could leave at any time but she didn't. She stuck with them and served their every need. She feels so loyal to them that even though she complains she will still do the job. Molly has been with these men for such a long time that she has picked up some of their bad habits, and she acts like a man. Still she changed to fit in, and is still faithful to the men. When Schmendrick told the band of men how he got to their camp, "She spat on the ground." (Beagle 56) This helps us picture the rugged type of person she is, yet Captain Cully himself says that because of her environment, it is only natural that Molly was "suspicious, pinched, dour, prematurely old, even a touch tyrannical." (Beagle 57) Although Molly has few bad qualities, she is still faithful to the men and Captain Cully says, "She's a good heart, a good heart." (Beagle 57) Even Captain Cully knows that she is serving them because she is faithful.

Molly was an important part of the story. She was encouraging and hopeful of others to succeed. Molly Grue was always hopeful and jovial. Molly never had second thoughts about what she was doing and why she was doing it. She always stayed focused on the quest and she never had negative suggestions. Molly Grue had encouraged Schmendrick with his problems with magic. She said, "You have all the power you need, if you dare to look for it." (Beagle 99) She encouraged Schmendrick to the point that he saved the unicorn from the red bull. Molly could have just called him a fool, but she didn't. She believed in him all the way through to the end. Molly also encouraged Prince Lir. She told him "Lady Amalthea is not won by great deeds." (Beagle 129) Molly encourages Prince Lir, not to give up. She could have said it's not my problem but she didn't. These examples show that Molly is an encouraging person who is hopeful of everyone and wants people to succeed not falter.

Molly had shown an even stronger quality in her. That special quality that Molly developed was that she was a caring individual. She would always put someone else's problems before hers. She had cared dearly for Captain Cully and his men. Molly had cared for the unicorn. Molly said, "He'll drive her to Haggard, and no one will ever see her again, no one." (Beagle) Molly was showing great affection towards the unicorn because she cared about her. The unicorn had been turned into a human being and Molly said, "'Oh, what have you done?'" (Beagle 102) and, regardless of any danger, Molly ran out to the unicorn. Molly cared so much for the unicorn that she didn't care what was around her. She just had to get to

the unicorn to help. She put the unicorn's problem before her own. That is what a true person will do if they really care. Another example of how Molly is a caring person was when they were at the castle, and in order for Molly to stay she had to do a lot of work. King Haggard, "paused, seemingly waiting for Molly to protest, but she didn't." (Beagle 124) Molly cared so much for the unicorn that she never complained. She would do anything to help. Another example was when the group went through the clock. Molly was wondering what happened to Schmendrick. "Molly, broke in--much to her own surprise--crying." (Beagle 173). Molly said "'Never mind all that! Where's Schmendrick?" (Beagle 173) Molly truly cared for Schmendrick to the point that she fell in love with him. From these examples, Molly is truly a caring individual that always help someone.

As you can see, Molly is truly a person who is caring, faithful; and always encouraging and hopeful individual. I clearly proved with examples how each quality was truly real. Everything from serving the band of men, that proved she was faithful, to encouraging Prince Lir when he was discouraged. She was always caring for someone. All these examples easily prove that Molly Grue is a kind, caring person who is faithful and is encouraging. She never had discouraged anyone or even put them down. She was always right their to help.