



## My Side of the Mountain

*Jean Craighead George*

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**My Side of the Mountain** Jean Craighead George

Terribly unhappy in his family's crowded New York City apartment, Sam Gibley runs away to the solitude and danger of the mountains, where he finds a side of himself he never knew.

## My Side of the Mountain Details

Date : Published April 12th 2004 by Puffin Books (first published 1959)

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Author : Jean Craighead George

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## From Reader Review My Side of the Mountain for online ebook

### karen says

on the other side of the hatchet/island of the blue dolphins spectrum is this book. its not about the necessity of living in the wilderness, but more of a baby-walden choosing to live in the woods, with the pompous philosophy stripped away. its exciting to learn about the ways people can compensate for the privations this kind of living imposes, but knowing he can, say, go to the library any time he wants to kind of undermines any tension this book could have. its a fun read, and has several useful facts and things to remember like proper ventilation when you are living in a tree trunk, and i can see how little boys would totally dig it. but whats with that ending?? i just say no to that.

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### Bruno Manning says

Hey Folks! This one's for kids. You were expecting Muir?

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### Wanda says

#### \*\*\*Wanda's Summer Carnival of Children's Literature\*\*\*

This was one on my favourite novels as a youngster and it was a pleasure to revisit it. It is a completely unrealistic fantasy about a young boy who runs away to the ancestral land in the Catskills mountains and who proceeds to learn how to live off the land for a whole year.

First let's point out the obviously unreasonable plot points—a young boy runs away from a large New York family and no one comes after him. Not until Christmas, several months into the adventure, does his father show up to see what he's doing. Adults along the way help him to get there and keep his secret instead of turning him in. No matter how successful his venture, they should have been intent on returning him to his family and getting him back in school. Sam is very much a Gary Stu character. He is able to train a falcon by reading about it in a book, seems to be surrounded by careless hunters who helpfully “lose” deer that they have shot, and has more of a taste for cat tail roots and flower bulbs than most young men of my acquaintance.

Despite all of those fantasy elements (or maybe because of them) I really got into this book as a kid. I loved the idea of living in a tree, of having a falcon as a companion, learning to live with friendly racoons and weasels. I was a farm child, so I could at least experience the local wildlife (weasels, ground squirrels, hares) somewhat like Sam, and that was enough for me.

This book really spoke to my early love of nature. I don't think I ever thought of it as a “how to” guide, I recognized the fantasy aspect. (And I think that most children do recognize the fantastic elements of things, whether adults give them credit for it or not).

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## Jerrit 811 says

Jerrit Schramm

2-2-09

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My Side of the Mountain

The story "My Side of the Mountain" is, of the most part, one of those classic stories about wilderness survival. The main character, Sam Gibley is your average teenage boy who has big dreams and a wild imagination.

The story starts out when a teenage boy living in New York City isn't very happy about living in the city. He had a plan to run away to the Catskill Mountains but it never really got off the ground. But after a day gone badly, he decides its time to leave the bustling city life for a more peaceful life in the mountains. With only a pocketknife, a ball of cord, forty dollars, and some flint and steel, he plans on living by himself and off the land. After arriving in the mountains, he finds that it is way different and more difficult than he imagined. Even though he has a large shelter made out of a dead oak, its still way more difficult to survive, that is until deer season comes along. When deer season first starts, it's just another thing that happens until a wounded deer dies almost right next to his shelter and hee decides to hide the wounded deer. "But deer season only comes once a year", he thought to himself, "What am I going to do the other portion of the year." But soon after, he meets an animal that will soon become his friend that will help his survival expedition worth while and a whole lot easier.

If this review contained anything more, the entire story would be ruined. When it all comes down to it, this story is perfect for those who love suspense in a survival reality book. The genre of this book is a little confusing because it's a fiction because of the characters but at the same times its nonfiction because it demonstrates survival techniques that could be useful. I rated the book a five because this was one of my favorite books that I've ever read just because I love books on survival or about the wild.

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## Mimi says

Everything was white, clean, shining, and beautiful. The sky was blue, blue, blue. The hemlock grove was laced with snow, the meadow was smooth and white, and the gorge was sparkling with ice. It was so beautiful and peaceful that I laughed out loud. I guess I laughed because my first snowstorm was over and it had not been so terrible after all.

*My Side of the Mountain*, written by Jean Craighead George in 1959, is a survivalist story about a boy who runs away from home to live in the Catskill Mountains, and he not only survives but thrives in the wilderness. The story begins with Sam Gibley already in the mountains preparing his humble tree abode for the first snowstorm. He discusses in detail some of the challenges he's faced so far and his fear of the storm and not knowing what will happen after. Then gradually, he talks about his life in New York, his family, and how he came to the Catskills.

It's not hard to see why this book won so many literary awards and has been a staple on reading lists for children ever since it was published. The writing is clear and descriptive, the adventures are fun and fascinating, Sam is a likable character who adapts easily to the wilderness, and various supporting characters are hilarious. They add much needed comedic relief to Sam's narration.

This book was and still is a very special book to me. It introduced me to the beauty of the natural world and made me appreciate nature and wildlife. I had only seen the Catskills in pictures at that point, but Jean Craighead George's sweeping descriptions breathed life into those mountains. The sky and trees and streams and even the grass came to life right before my eyes, and everything about the wilderness was just so beautiful, so full of color and life.

Review at <https://covers2covers.wordpress.com/2...>

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### **Adam says**

Ughhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.....

Why do they make so many survival stories for children, and then force us to read them in school?

There are so many other wonderful genres that are not about overcoming the elements and proving to yourself that you can accomplish anything.

I would argue that the same message can be found in a lot of literature that doesn't require me to read about how some kid survived in the woods for X amount of years/months/whatever.

I can't even remember the particular details of this novel, but I'm positive I read it. The second I saw the name and the author I cringed.

I have no doubt that even within this genre, there are superior novels. I've read them. "Hatchet" springs to mind, and if you've read my review of "Hatchet", that's not saying much.

PLEASE, if you are a teacher and you are thinking of teaching this book, RECONSIDER!

There are so many novels out there, you can surely pass on this one and spare the children.

PLEASE SPARE THE CHILDREN!

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### **Kailey (BooksforMKs) says**

I am certainly not an outdoorsy person, but I loved this book so much! What an adventure to live off the land all alone in the woods!

The writing is charming, Sam's character is full of pluck and resourcefulness, and I was completely involved in every little woodsy adventure.

The author is a master at bringing an emotion to the forefront of the story with just a few simple words, and making the reader care desperately what happens next. The story flows from one chapter to the next as Sam settles into his new wilderness life and learns how to survive independently.

The best parts were when Sam interacted with other humans. His emotions run very high then, either wanting them to go away, or being confused about his own need for human contact and conversation. There is the fear of discovery, that he will be forced back into society, but also the fear of being alone for too long. I love how Sam makes his own society though, with the creatures of the forest.

I loved this book from start to finish! Just brilliant, beautiful writing!

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### **Calista says**

I saw the movie as a kid in school, but I never read this book. I remember liking this story of the movie. Reading this as an adult is a bit of a weird experience. I know Jean wanted to make it possible for Sam to be able to live in the woods for a year, but let's face it, what parent or parents are going to let their kid run away and not try and find them. It's 4 months before the father comes looking to make sure he at least wouldn't freeze to death and have food. The mother doesn't do anything, call the police, freak out, nothing.

It is not really a very natural experience. I can see the story from a kids perspective as exciting and great, but the parents should have hunted him down way soon to know that he even could live off the land without starving.

Another thing, for a 12 or 13 year old boy, he really knows how to cook on a professional level. He is using advanced techniques and he knows all the wild edibles which I could see he learns that. How did he learn all these plants in NYC? Simply from a book?

During the preface we learn this is Jean's wish fulfillment story from her childhood of actually running away. It's too bad she couldn't have made the character a girl back in the 50s, but I think she was afraid girls wouldn't want to read that, or boys either.

I could set all these thought down and I really was engrossed in this little story of surviving in the woods on your wits. It was lovely and I loved frightful and Baron. It was a charming story, but how she got there and some other pieces of the story didn't work. I can still really enjoy this. There are amazing tips for surviving in the wilderness and I hope I remember them.

You can eat cattails if you cook them and if you catch a tiny fish, you can use the intestines to catch bigger fish. Those are my big lessons that stand out.

I'm glad I have now read the book and I want to read the other 2 books in the series.

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### **J.G. Keely says**

I think the best thing a survivalism book can do is help to redefine your connection to the natural world and your reliance on the human. Unfortunately, even reading this book as a child, I found it to be too fantastical to be entirely enjoyable. Though George trades in Paulsen's vomit for pleasant fancy, this book at once made me want to go out and live such a free life and convinced me that such a thing would be impossible.

I read many such books as a child, and also experienced in television and film the way that life was supposed to surprise you with a sudden adventure. So I took long walks. I wandered the woods alone. I called for spirits in the river. I searched the earth for baby falcons to raise. But I never found that magical friend, that spirit, that strange and mystical adventure. Hell, I never even found anyone interesting to talk to.

The sad thing is that I still search, still look and hope, and every time two lifelong friends meet by chance at a brook, I feel betrayed. The fantasy of art has, even in its most minute dimensions, been betrayed by sallow mundanity.

So it seems again I fall to the doom of loving and hating books. Loving the world they represent, but hate failing to find it.

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### **Ellinor says**

I don't understand why this book received so many awards. I thought it was so completely unrealistic. The book is about a boy who runs away from home and decides to live in the woods on his own. Now I have read and enjoyed books of people living in the wilderness. Hatchet by Gary Paulson was one of the best books I read last year. The difference between those two is that in Hatchet the boy is forced to live and survive in the wilderness because of a plane crash. In this book however the boy decides to live and survive in the wilderness. This would be alright if it was just a kid's crazy dream. But the strange and absolutely unrealistic thing is that nobody seems to bother. People know that there is a boy living in the woods but nobody cares about it. The boy's father even comes into the forest to stay with him over Christmas and leaves again afterwards without taking his son home!

In the book it is not said how old the boy is. He could be anything from 10 to 17. If he is 17 I could understand that other people wouldn't care so much about him living alone in the woods. But one should think that his parents would be really worried anyway.

All this bothered me so much that I didn't really care about the rest of the story anymore.

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### **Willowy Whisper says**

Read this so long ago I can't really remember everything. I think I liked it! :)

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### **Jessica C. says**

People, this book was written in the late 50s, and things were a bit different back then. Trying to place it in the now does not work. Yes, there are many unbelievable parts, but it is a children's fiction book, not a survival guide. This charming story brings me back to my youth and reading other George books. Escaping the hustle and bustle of everyday life is something many of us imagine for a time. I know I did, judging from journals from when I was young. Thinking it is bad or stupid because of its implausibilities means you have lost your imagination and probably have no idea what some kids think about. perhaps it should not be forced on kids to read in school, but classics that won awards are always fair game. If you don't like them, write a new story that will get awards. And if you can't, then don't complain. The Newbery (et al.) selection committee is awesome and well qualified and does an awesome job finding the top books out of hundreds or thousands published a year.

Sorry for the rant. This book is lovely and accessible to many. Keep when it was written in context, and you should enjoy the day to day life of surviving on a mountain.

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### **Ramona says**

i really enjoyed this book. this young boy goes out on his own and uses his skill to survive. what i really liked is the fact that he WANTED to, where as, most books, he would have been lost, or forgotten. and if you

liked this,you should read "hatchet"

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### **Shiloah says**

Wow. Impressive. The knowledge of living off the land from nothing that went into this book is astounding. As a child, I always wanted to live in nature. I would never have survived like Sam. But, it's a great dream. I wished I had read this book as a child.

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### **Steph says**

I read this book several times in elementary school. I lived and died on the advice of the school's librarian, and she had convinced me to read every Newberry award winner in the library. I felt like I was reading something important every time I did.

Who doesn't want to run away sometime in their life? That's not the aspect of the book that most drew me, but what a great a way to start the story. I doubt I had many survival skills under my belt when I read the book, but heaven knows I wished I did. I was fascinated with the detailed accounts of traps and living in a tree, becoming a falconer and eating wild plants. Plus, he does it all on his own--no adults allowed.

4th-6th grade

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