

# Sam spade – character analysis essay sample

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The mystery and the crime in are obviously paramount in the development and success of a good crime fiction novel, but another key concern must certainly be the protagonist. Especially in hard-boiled fiction, where the detective is your eyes to the unknown world in which the novel is placed.

Dashiell Hammett has constructed Sam Spade in a way so the protagonist has become a feature of the book, rather than merely a medium for the transfer of clue and information in this novel. The reader is given the chance to venture in Spade's mind and inner thoughts, Hammett cleverly allows Spade to express his values, fears and opinions to the respondent and in turn allowing them to associate, trust and relate to him. In bringing the reader closer to the protagonist Hammett has subliminally lured the reader closer to the crime, the suspects and the victims and ultimately dragged them deeper into the noir world in which Sam Spade resides.

Sam Spade, the detective-protagonist is aware that his best efforts are ultimately futile, to the extent that the corrupt urban environment will inevitably undercut and outlast his heroic attempts to see justice done, this sense of Spade wanting to achieve greater justice implies to the reader that Spade is essentially good and is resistant to the hostile world which he had devoted his life to combating. Raymond Chandler labels Hammett's character of Spade as a cynical, tough individual who maintains his code of honour in a world tarnished by deception and betrayal at all levels of society.

In *The Maltese Falcon* Spade is described as the "blond Satan." Whilst his objective and inner good is clear to the readers, other characters struggle to see Spade in his true light, and describe him as a wild and unpredictable

man, and his motives are never quite clear This could be attributed to the fact that he is continually distancing himself from people and avoiding relationships, except in his relationship with Bridget OShannessy in which Hammett subverts the typical genre expectations by implying the chance of a long term relationship between her and Spade. Spade opens up to Bridget with lines such as Dont worry, Im scared as well Spade is a tarnished hero, not bound by conventional rules and ties placed upon us by society, he shares an uncompromising and fatalistic view of the world, he is the man America needed to bring plausibility back to crime fiction, he would pursue crime through the dark, rain-soaked streets of American cities rather than the well-kept lawns of English country houses.