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**Children Literature: We Are the Ants**

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### **Children Literature: We Are the Ants**

Many young adults suffer from various challenges that drive them to depression, and without proper guidance, they are likely not only to mess their lives but also the lives of people around them. The book "we are the ants" by Shaun David is an illustration, through the main character Henry, how the feeling of losing a loved one can lead to social challenges within the lives of young adults. Also, the author clearly shows how the youths who are usually faced with a challenge to dare in life may face obstruction from society from achieving their desires. It is only through sharing life challenges with close friends that make them make the right life decisions. Henry is always ashamed by his schoolmates, who refer to him as a space boy due to his frequent abduction by the sluggers, and his family life, together with the death of his boyfriend Jesse, makes him sad and depressed (Hutchinson, 2016). This paper, therefore, explores how love and alienation as some of the factors that young adults who are in their prime time of exploration have to endure to achieve their dreams, as brought out in the book "We are the ants" by Shaun David Hutchinson.

Most young adults usually show more affection towards their loved ones than older adults, and therefore the absence of their loved ones can lead to them being traumatized. As Andrade et al. (2015) argued, due to their tendency to be more affectionate towards their loved ones, the absence of relationship partners can cause emotional deprivation in young adults that require close observation to get out over the whole issue. The death of his boyfriend Jesse makes Henry look at life as something not worth living, and over and over again, he contemplates pressing the red button to finish the world. Being a young adult, he feels that his life is doomed when his boyfriend took his life because maybe he had a feeling that life can only continue only when he is around his boyfriend. Thus, he finds it difficult to get his mind over the death of Jesse

to the extent that he gets depressed. Being that such situations require those close to the affected individuals to help him achieve new life, Henry lacks support from the closest people. Besides, at school, he is bullied and despised by fellow students who refer to him as a space boy. Nobody is there for him at home because his mother is overstretched at work, the grandmother has a mental disease, while the brother is *I do not care* college dropout who is soon becoming a teen dad (Hutchinson, 2016). Those around him fail to show him love and consequently making him feel hated and depressed. However, the story of love later changes as Henry gets new companions who help him decide that even though there exist many life challenges but one thing for sure, life is worth living. The meeting of Diego, who sexually gets attracted to Henry, Audrey, and his brother's girlfriend Zooney, gets advice that makes him start thinking and acting selflessly about life. This shows that when one is shown affection and love, they begin to think and act rationally as they get out of their depression and start leading a better and meaningful life.

Alienation is another factor brought out in the book "we are the ants," It is a clear depiction of how young adults may get alienated from normal life in society in their pursuit of being what they want to be. Henry is so mindful that he usually dreams of being one of the greatest scientists with the greatest science innovation. Henry is periodically abducted by aliens who give him an ultimatum of 144 days to decide whether to press the red button, which will make him sweep humankind or save the world (Hutchinson, 2016). Simultaneously, his love for science makes his Chemistry teacher Ms. Faraci entice him with extra credit for his love of science. His obsession with innovation earned him the nickname the space boy from his schoolmates. Young adults often face challenges in chasing their ambitions because most of their thoughts are geared towards achieving in life. As a result, this frequently makes them alienated from the rest of society and makes them feel different from society. Even though the book does

not tell us whether Henry pressed the red button or not, it is clear that after Henry had consulted his friends about the whole issue, he felt that life was worth living. The change of perception about life by Henry shows the young adults that they should pursue their ambitions but do it regarding the societal norms and must not think of alienating themselves from the rest of society to achieve their dreams. Young adults must embrace friends in their pursuit of achieving their dreams.

Conclusively, the theme of love and alienation from self and society, among others, are some of the clear themes brought out by the author of "We are the ants." As Ifeagwazi et al. (2015) clearly said, human beings' survival solely depends on the power of love, intimacy, and relationships, and therefore their spirituality, physicality, and emotions so depend on love for survival. The lack of love due to the death of Jesse and the family, which is absent in his life, made Henry alienated from the rest of the society. When someone loses a loved one understandably, he must be grieved, and this requires the close members of the families of the grieved individual or the close friends to step in and help the individual out. This something that lacked for Henry was why he got depressed to the extent of not seeing the worth of life. The book brings how the obsession with love and ambition can ruin the lives of young adults. Therefore, it is important for family and close friends to rescue the affected persons through proper and appropriate advice to them. Truly, love conquers all, as illustrated in the book how Diego and Henry met and how Diego had to fight Marcus because of the love he had for Diego.

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