

Exploring The Complexity Of Human Emotions In Shaun David Hutchinson's *We Are The Ants* And Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*

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Introduction:

Author Shaun David Hutchinson is the creator of the book *We Are the Ants*. The story focuses on the character of Henry, who is a teenager leading a not-so-normal life. He occasionally gets abducted by aliens, and one day he gets informed that the world is getting destroyed and he is the only person who can stop it by pressing a button. It might seem like an easy choice to many, but to Henry, it is not. Henry has a rather pessimistic view of humans and life, and understandably so because, till now, life has only offered him suffering and he has been traumatised by the people around him. He was getting bullied in school, his boyfriend died by suicide, his father and best friend abandoned him, and his mother was turning into an alcoholic, so he wasn't sure if life was really worth living or if humanity deserved to be saved. Throughout the novel, he goes through this dilemma of whether to press the button or not. His depressing life takes a turn when Diego enters it. After which Henry goes through an inspiring journey of finding himself, gaining his self-worth back, battling his insecurities, understanding humans better, and learning the importance of life.

Shaun David Hutchinson is the author of the book *We Are the Ants*. His other famous works include *At the Edge of the Universe*, *The Past and Other Things That Should Stay Buried* and *The Apocalypse of Elena Mendoza*, etc. And all these are just a few of Shaun David Hutchinson's many works for young adults. He also wrote the memoir called *Brave Face*, which provide details about his coming out experience as teenager and also gives detail account of his battle against depression; he also edited the anthologies *Violent Ends* and *Feral Youth*; and edited a collection of stories called *Violent Ends*. In *We Are the Ants*, Henry is offered the option to save the world. When he was thirteen, aliens decided to kidnap Henry Denton; he has no idea why they did it, and he has no idea why they keep stealing him out of bed and snatching him away. He is unaware of the reasons why the

world is about to die or why the aliens are giving him the chance to stop the approaching catastrophe by hitting a large red button. Still, they have. Additionally, they have only given him 144 days to decide.

Henry has been hurting and going through a tough time ever since his boyfriend Jesse's suicide. He eventually loses all desire to live and even begins to blame himself for the suicide. He has no one to turn to as his family has their own problems and is unaware of Henry's troubled life, and he also doesn't have any friends left after cutting ties with his best friend Audrey. Henry is fed up with his life, as he believes that after Jesse's death, he has no purpose or reason to live anymore, and he also questions the worth of life in general. But his worldview soon gets challenged when he encounters Diego Vega, who is quite a mystery himself. After being with Diego, a positive shift in Henry occurs, and he learns a lot about himself. Gradually, Henry's thought process becomes more optimistic. But before saving anyone else or the planet, Henry must be able to save himself first, so he goes on a journey of healing and overcoming his past traumas. Passivity best describes the character of Henry. Henry is just passive about everything. He is indifferent even to dying or getting bullied. He has walls built around him. He has a pessimistic outlook, and he deliberately doesn't allow himself to be happy because he somehow blames himself for Jesse's suicide. His experiences constitute the bulk of the book. Along the course of the novel, Henry slowly starts learning more about himself, grieving, and life. Henry's character development moves him from despair and apathy towards humanity's fate to love and a desire to make every day count. Henry's subtly changing attitude is made possible by the story's primary conundrum—the end of the world and his part in it. His family and friends also play a big part in it. As the cliché goes, "time heals all wounds." And true to that, time is indeed a great healer, and Henry also experiences this. Every character in the novel is well developed and has their own story to tell, which is what makes the novel more interesting. Hutchinson presents very realistic and flawed characters in the novel to which everyone can relate because, at the end of the day, nobody is perfect and everyone is going through something. The novel gives a very profound message that life is like a seesaw; there are always ups and downs in life. There are bad days and bad people, but one fact shouldn't be forgotten: there are many good people and good days as well, so nobody should focus too much on only one side of the coin.

In the end, this book is about more than just love and loss; it also gives out a message about striving to stay motivated and appreciating individuals in your life. The characters in the novels are flawed. Some of the characters do questionable things in the novel, but that's what makes the characters relatable as they depict the reality of humans and how everyone has their own flaws as everyone is imperfect. Watching people's layers develop allows us to see them in a deep and nuanced way that is not possible in real life. Even those who shy away from genre reading will be able to get into the novel because the science fiction component is subtle enough.

The protagonist of Andy Weir's book Project Hail Mary is Ryland Grace, who one day awakens on a spaceship with two dead crew members as the only survivor. He has amnesia and is unable to remember who he is, why he is in this location, or how he got to this spaceship. He gradually comes to the realisation that he was sent on a suicide mission, disregarding his choice to rescue the world, and is essentially the final chance of humanity as his memory slowly returns. He meets Rocky, an alien from a different star, while travelling. As it turns out, Rocky's planet is experiencing the same issues as Earth, and they both decide to cooperate. This book is organised with linked flashbacks of the main character, Ryland Grace, from before the launch and the present-day circumstances surrounding the time spent on Hail Mary. A job offer from the UN to prevent the end of the world that could be brought on by a specific solar event is suddenly made to science instructor Ryland. A new Ice Age on Earth will eventually result from an extraterrestrial organism devouring the sun's energy, according to the findings of space exploration.

Eva Stratt is the head of Project Hail Mary, and she is given all the responsibility related to it, including creating a task force of highly qualified people who will be sent to space on the mission Project Hail Mary to save Earth and the whole of humanity. But the catch is that this is a suicide mission, and no one can be a part of it. She had to search for candidates with a particular gene that would allow them to endure a four-year coma until they arrived at the Tau Ceti star, a star that is immune to the coma-inducing radiation. Hence, she doesn't have any choice left other than to choose from the qualified few who have that specific gene. And it turns out that Grace is one of the few people with the rare gene. Thus, she forcibly sends Grace on this mission.

Four years pass, and Grace finds himself in a spaceship. When he wakes up, he has no memory of who he is or how or why he is in a spaceship. He also finds two dead bodies next to him. Gradually, his memory starts coming back to him in parts, and he later realises that the corpses were his fellow crewmen. He soon realises that he is sent on a mission to save them, and thus he starts looking for the solution. As his spacecraft continues to move, Grace gradually comes across an alien spacecraft. He names that spacecraft Blip-A. Although he gets terrified by the thought of meeting an alien, it also excites him. The idea of being the first human to connect with an alien thrills him. He makes various attempts to communicate with the alien, and he eventually succeeds. He comes face-to-face with an alien. The alien looks different from what Grace imagined. The alien's looks can be defined as those of a massive spider because he resembles a spider a lot, except for his size and the fact that it doesn't have eyes, unlike spiders. The alien offers Grace information about himself. He says it is from a different solar system called the 40 Eridani solar system. He further states that his planet is also facing the same issue related to astrophage. And it turns out he is also the only survivor in his spacecraft, as the rest of the crew died along the way.

Soon they start talking more, and a bond between them gradually develops. Together, the two explore and address the astrophage issue, and Grace gives a name to Eridian and calls him Rocky. Rocky then makes a commitment to provide Grace with enough fuel to return to his planet. They soon discover the solution to their problem, and the answer lies in a chemical Grace calls Taumoeba, which eats Astrophage particles and stops their destruction. This is the answer that will save both of their planets. After the discovery, Rocky provides Grace with knowledge about the Taumoeba and also fulfils his promise by providing fuel to Grace so that she can return safely to his planet, and they part ways. But on his way to earth, Grace learns that Taumoeba is harmful to Rocky and that it can even kill him before he arrives on his planet and saves others. Thus, Grace makes a tough call; he decides to transfer the data and supplies back to earth and go back to save Rocky. He takes this decision despite knowing that it will result in his demise as he cannot survive on planet Eridian.

Grace learns that Taumoeba can harm Blip-A as well, which will kill Rocky before he can save his home planet as Rocky is on his journey home. He makes the decision to transfer the supplies and data to Earth and then come back to save Rocky and Eridian. He completes his job, but he is aware that it will result in his demise because he cannot exist on the planet Eridian.

The timeline of the book jumps ahead, and it becomes clear that Grace is securely residing on the Eridian planet in a region that has been created artificially to mimic Earth. He now has all the advanced tools he can use to go back to earth, and if he wants to, he can return anytime, but he continuously delays doing it. Grace teaches young Eridians about science as the book comes to a close.

1. Depiction of Dual nature of human in the novels

Some people believe that humans are inherently evil, and some say humans are good by nature. English philosopher Thomas Hobbes seems to lean towards the theory of humans being evil, as he believed that humans are selfish beings who only think of themselves and also like to dominate others, but Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau holds quite the opposite opinion. He believed that humans were inherently good, but their surroundings and growing capitalism corrupted them. This debate about the inherent nature of humans is constant and is even talked about to this day. According to Hobbes, humans are selfish and only think about themselves; they are like machines void of any feelings, and to some extent, this might be true. In *We Are the Ants*, it is hard to sympathise with a character like Marcus, who often crosses the line between human and monster. He constantly bullies Henry in public, but in private, he wants to hook up with Henry. He takes advantage of Henry's vulnerability and, in a way, manipulates Henry into continuing their abnormal and toxic relationship. For him, his reputation is his first priority, and thus he continues to bully Henry in school in spite of their secret relationship. Just because he wants to appear 'cool' in front of his peers. His feelings towards Henry can't be classified as 'love' or 'like'. For him, Henry was no more than a possession that was 'his' to control and manipulate and who was at his beck and call; thus, when Diego enters Henry's life, Marcus grows incredibly jealous. He couldn't accept the fact that Henry was no longer his possession, and he has now started to stand up for himself. Henry no longer listens to everything he says, and this makes Marcus livid. In the end, he ends up doing something so

horrible that it rightfully raises a question about his humanity when he tries to force himself on Henry. But just because of people like Marcus, humans can't be labelled as 'evil'. In the same novel, there is a character like Mrs. Faraci, who has been nothing but kind to Henry throughout the journey. She supports Henry against bullies and also encourages him to grow academically. There is another character in the novel who has been kind to everyone throughout the story; that is, Charlie's girlfriend Zooney. She accepts Charlie for who he is and eventually becomes one of the reasons behind Charlie's positive change. She gets along with Charlie's family and treats Henry with kindness. Throughout the novel, Henry couldn't understand why a girl like Zooney was with a person like his brother because, to Henry, Zooney was too good for someone like his brother.

According to American psychologist Philip Zimbardo, "The line between good and evil is permeable, and almost anyone can be induced to cross it when pressured by situational forces." (Zimbardo). In both novels, the concept of this duality of human nature is explored. Humans are capable of great evils, but they also project goodness in them, and many times the situation and surroundings they are in become a defining factor for the way they behave. In *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson, this concept of duality is projected through various characters. The character of Charlie in the novel can be taken as an example. Charlie is the brother of the protagonist, Henry. Towards the beginning of the novel, he comes across as a mean, irresponsible, inattentive elder brother who doesn't show any affection towards Henry and who, instead of helping Henry from bullies, himself plays a big part in Henry's bullying. He doesn't leave any chance to bully Henry, and in fact, it turns out that he is the reason Henry gets bullied brutally in school. Charlie was the person who first spread the rumour throughout the whole school about Henry's claim of being abducted by aliens, due to which the kids in school started brutally teasing and bullying Henry and named him "Space Boy" as a way to tease him. Henry initially has a rather negative opinion of his brother, and when Charlie announces that he and his girlfriend Zooney are expecting a baby, Henry is not ecstatic about this news because, to him, Charlie was an irresponsible and mean bully who was not mature enough to take on the role of a parent. He doesn't understand what Zooney sees in Henry. But as the story progresses, Charlie's character goes through a drastic change. After getting the news of becoming a father, Charlie transforms into a responsible and mature adult who takes full responsibility for Zooney and the unborn baby. He stops studying, quits college, and instead starts working in hopes of providing for his family. He

stops bullying Henry and starts defending him instead. Later in the novel, one can see him becoming a mature individual who starts showing his care towards Henry and also encourages him to defend himself against his bullies.

Diego is another character in the novel who showcases the complexity of humans. Diego, to Henry, is no less than a life saviour. After meeting Diego, Henry starts to rethink his pessimistic view of life and starts to look at it in a more positive manner. Because of Diego, Henry starts to believe again in humanity. Diego is introduced in the novel as a friendly, fun-loving, genuine nice guy, but gradually it gets revealed that Diego is not an angel who does no wrong but very much a human. Like any other human, Diego has his own dark side. He is no saint. As it turns out, he went to jail once for assaulting his father. He also assaults Marcus towards the end of the novel. But the novel raises a very important question: what is truly considered to be a 'good' human? Because violence is morally considered a sin, but Diego uses violence against his abusive father in order to defend his mother, and he uses violence against Marcus because of the attempted rape of Henry by him, it is rather ambiguous to put Diego into the category of a "bad" person for what he did. He is like any other person who has different sides to him, including a dark one as well.

Another example is Audrey's character. She abandons Henry after Jesse's death. She also uses violence and destroys Marcus's car, but she is not a bad person. She had her own reasons for doing those things. She abandoned Henry in the past due to the fact that she herself was going through a rough time. She was blaming herself for Jesse's death, and it got so bad that she started having suicidal thoughts; thus, she chose to admit herself to a mental hospital to get the needed help. Hutchinson portrays the duality in Audrey's character exceptionally well. At first, to Henry and to the readers, Audrey is a selfish ex-best friend who abandoned Henry when he needed her the most. He has a hard time trusting her again, but eventually they start opening up to each other, and slowly both Henry and the readers get to see how supportive and kind Audrey actually is. She is willing to go to any extent to defend and support Henry. The act of ambushing Marcus' car was also her way of showing her love for Henry. She did it as revenge for all the bullying Marcus and his friends did to Henry.

In *Project Hail Mary*, the character of Stratt perfectly portrays the duality of humans. Throughout the course of the novel, she makes countless morally questionable decisions, but she always has the concept of doing greater good in mind. She just wants to save humanity and the whole world, and she is willing to go to any extent to achieve it, even if she has to sacrifice anyone for it. She does many morally questionable things, which makes her appear cold and heartless. She first kidnaps Grace and forces him to do experiments on the alien cells in "Astrophage" against his will. She puts Grace in an isolated lab, and when Grace asks for the help of other scientists to do the experiment, she refuses because she doesn't want to risk the lives of other scientists in case Astrophage carries some communicable disease. Later, in order to breed "Astrophage," she decides to cover a large portion of the Sahara Desert with black panels in order to generate maximum solar energy, as Astrophage require heat to breed. She takes this decision even after Grace warns her about how "it would destroy the ecology of Africa and probably Europe". (Weir 220). She also decides to deliberately increase global warming by emitting more greenhouse gases in order to save humanity from the ice age. When warned against the morality behind this decision, Stratt replied, "I don't care about morality. I care about saving humanity." (Weir 235) Stratt illegally uses copyrighted materials and patented mechanisms, but she gives a rather justified reason, saying that the astronauts who will go on this mission to save humanity will need every kind of information for their study, and she will make sure to provide them with every necessary information possible. It would take a humongous amount of time to reach an agreement for licencing with every company, and they are running out of time, so she just refuses to waste her time on this stuff. When Grace refuses to join Project Hail Mary, Stratt forcibly sends him on this mission, even though he knows that it is a suicide mission. Although her actions are rather problematic and 'morally incorrect' throughout the novel, But her intentions are never evil. She just desperately wants to protect humanity and save the world. She herself seems to be self-aware of her wrongdoings. When Grace curses her and says that she will go to hell, Stratt readily agrees with him that she surely will, and she accepts it. She knows she will be put behind bars for all the power abuse she committed once Project Hail Mary launches, but she shrugs it off by saying, "We all have to make sacrifices. If I have to be the world's whipping boy to secure our salvation, then that's my sacrifice to make." (Weir 244)

2. Journey of self discovery

As said by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, "knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom." (Aristotle). Humans are always on a path to finding themselves, and especially in today's world, everyone is going through an identity crisis and is trying their level best to find their real selves. But the journey of discovering one's real self is never easy. And throughout this journey, there is an explosion of emotions humans go through: confusion, disappointment, sadness, happiness, epiphany, etc. The protagonists of both novels go through a journey of finding themselves and their identity. Henry of *We Are the Ants* is someone who goes through a journey of finding his real self. In the beginning, the author, Hutchinson, portrays Henry as a depressed and insecure teenager who sees no worth in himself. He frequently questions his existence as a person. He blames himself for his boyfriend's death and also for the abandonment of his family by his father. The feeling of guilt overpowers him greatly, and he starts punishing himself by not allowing himself to be happy. He silently accepts the teasing and bullying done by Marcus and his friends while also maintaining a secret relationship with Marcus, who dates him in private but bullies him in public. All of this because he somehow convinced himself that this is all he deserved in life. He pushes Diego away at first because, when he is with him, he is happy, and he doesn't want that to happen. But over the course of his journey, he overcomes his insecurities and finds his real self. Towards the end of the novel, Henry finally starts to see his own worth. He gradually accepts Jesse's death, the fact that no one was responsible for it, and that he should stop punishing himself for it. One can see a positive shift in Henry as he slowly starts to feel comfortable in his own skin and starts opening up to Diego and Audrey. In addition, he begins protecting himself from Marcus and the bullies.

The mother of Henry experiences her own process of self-discovery. She somehow loses herself once Henry's father deserts her and the rest of the family. She begins acting irrationally and carelessly. She basically loses everything—her drive, her desire, her self-assurance, etc. She lost sight of her children's needs since her grief was so intense and consumed her. She is oblivious to what is going on around her and appears unaware of her children's issues at the beginning of the story. She genuinely loves her kids, but her grief just appears to have gotten the better of her. However, she discovers along the way that the only person who can truly make her happy is herself, and that happiness shouldn't be dependent on others but rather originate from within. After Henry

explains to her that her husband's absence is not and should not be a defining factor in who she is and what she is capable of, she begins to pursue her desire once more. She understands that even without her spouse, she can manage to care for herself and her family very well. Towards the end of the novel, she learns to love herself and understands that her self-worth and confidence shouldn't depend on how other people perceive her but should instead be determined purely by her own opinions.

Diego is a character who embarks on a personal search for identity. At first glance, he seems like any other typical, upbeat kid, but that couldn't be further from reality. He is a victim of his own pain and scars. His mother was frequently beaten by his violent father. One day, he could take no more and raised his hand against his father to defend his mother, which led to a court prosecution against him for "attempted murder" of his father. The thing that pains Diego the most, though, is that his mother—for whom he turned to violence in the first place—refuses to stand up for him against his father during his trial, which leads to him being sent to a juvenile detention facility. He is so severely traumatised by the event that he develops extreme guardiness and a reluctance to disclose anything. When Diego and Henry become friends, Henry somehow learns that Diego formerly attended a juvenile detention facility, but when Diego is confronted about it, at first he refuses to talk about it. He exudes a strong sense of caution and resistance to sharing. Diego also develops an anger problem as a result of his childhood trauma. No matter what he does, he is unable to manage his fury, which at first caused problems in Henry and Diego's relationship. In the initial stage of their relationship, Diego and Henry both struggled with trust issues since Diego was hesitant to open up to Henry and Henry was afraid of Diego's anger issues and what he might do in a fit of rage. Diego, though, later becomes aware of the value of being open and inviting others in. He later understands that his previous experience cannot dictate how he lives in the present. One must eventually let go of the past in order to move on because one cannot grasp onto it forever. He comes to see that he had been depriving himself of the possibility of being happy because he felt in some way unworthy of it. He gradually begins talking about his background with Henry, which eliminates both of their misunderstandings about one another. Diego transforms from a guarded, disturbed adolescent who doesn't think he's capable of falling in love to a man who is genuinely happy and who has a lot of love and kindness in his heart. His actions towards Henry throughout the book demonstrate his capacity for passionate, unconditional love. He is the friendliest to Henry and loves him

without conditions. Actually, Diego's compassion and love were what caused Henry to change for the better. Henry starts to adopt a happier and more upbeat attitude towards himself, other people, and life in general.

The protagonist of *Project Hail Mary*, Ryland Grace, also goes through a major identity crisis. When he wakes up one day, he finds out he is in space, but he doesn't remember who he is or for what reason he was sent there. Gradually, he remembers that he is sent on a mission to save humanity, so he begins searching for the solution, and along the way, he comes across an alien, Rocky. And together, they develop a strong friendship. They both have the same goal in mind and also have a common enemy. Initially, he assumes that he must have been a self-sacrificing hero who has volunteered for this suicide mission to save humanity, but his delusion soon comes to an end when his memory finally returns to him about how he ended up in this spaceship. The reality was that he never agreed to be part of this mission and was instead forced to be sent against his will by Strat. He remembers how, when he rejects the offer of being a part of the mission, Strat straight up tells him how much of a coward he is by saying:

You're a coward, and you always have been. You abandoned a promising scientific career because people didn't like a paper you wrote. You retreated to the safety of children who worshipped you for being the cool teacher. You don't have a romantic partner in your life because that would mean you might suffer heartbreak. You avoid risk like the plague. (Weir 392)

The fact that he wasn't the 'hero' he imagined himself to be but instead was a coward disheartens him to the next level. This revelation did discourage him a little, but he didn't let it hold him back for long. He continues working on finding the solution to save the world with his partner, Rocky. Ultimately, he does find the solution, and in a way, he does turn out to be a 'hero' in the end because he sends the solution back to earth, and instead of returning home himself, he chooses to go save Rocky and Eriden by risking his own life. After all, in the end, it turns out he is not the 'coward' he himself thought he was. He learns how to be selfless and brave by the end of the novel.

3. Exploration of The meaning of life in both novels

Everyone, at some point in their lives, must have wondered about the importance of life. Why are we living? Is life even worth living? Questions like this are something every human often thinks about. For some, life holds no importance, and for others, it holds great importance. The protagonist of *We Are the Ants*, Henry, goes through the same dilemma. At first, when he gets the chance to save the world, he is reluctant to use it because his view of life and people isn't very positive due to the dark phase he is going through. His boyfriend died a year ago, he was getting bullied in school, his mother was turning into an alcoholic, and he wasn't particularly getting along with his brother, so nobody could really blame him for his pessimistic view of people and life. Throughout the novel, he often wonders if life is really worth living. And if people's lives are even worth saving, He asks the question, If given a chance, will they save the world? To each and every individual in his life. Hutchison successfully depicts in the novel the importance of life. No matter what we are going through, at the end of the day, life is always worth living. It's just a matter of fighting back and not giving up. Whenever in the novel, Henry asks the question of whether they will save the world to other characters, without fail, every single one of them answers him back with a yes. Even if their lives are a mess—Daniel has been sent to jail, Jesse's mother lost her child in a suicide, Zooey has a miscarriage—all of them still tell Henry that they will save the world. Because regardless of all the hardships life threw at them, they all truly believed that life was worth living. By the end, Henry also learns the importance of life. Life is whatever we make of it. The novel ends on an optimistic note, with Henry saying, "The universe may forget us, but it doesn't matter. Because we are the ants, and we'll keep marching on." (Hutchinon ch.48)

In the novel *Project Hail Mary*, from the get-go, life is treated as something precious. The novel is all about the survival narrative. Life is precious to every single character in the novel, and they do everything in their power to save lives. Under harsh conditions and suffering from amnesia, Grace still leaves no stone unturned in order to save the lives of Rocky, his own, and the whole of humanity. The novel beautifully showcases how, if the desire to live is strong, it can actually overpower any feelings of fear and distress that one might feel. It is also portrayed in the novel that this will to survive is not only limited to humans, as Rocky, an alien, also does everything in his power to survive and save the lives of his kind, the Eridians. Initially, when Grace refused to be

a part of this mission, it was also because he wanted to live and knew this was a suicide mission, but gradually he realised that the survival of humankind as a whole is much more important than just selfishly thinking about his own life. After which, Grace and Rocky start working together restlessly in order to save the lives of their kind by finding a solution. And they were both ultimately successful in this mission. Stratt also does all the morally questionable things throughout the novel just for one reason: the survival of humankind

Conclusion:

Humans are complex creatures who exhibit complex emotions. There are many sides to humans, and they are more than capable of feeling different emotions. Both the novels *We are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson and *Project Hail Mary* exceptional tackles the theme of meaning of life and self-discovery and also beautifully depicts the various emotions of humans as they go on their journey of finding themselves. Both novels showcase how humans are complex beings that can't be labelled as 'good' or 'evil'. Many times people do act selfishly, and they may do some morally questionable things, but humans aren't necessarily 'bad' inherently. Sometimes the situations they are in are to blame for the way they behave at that moment. As for the debate of humans being inherently evil or good, it is unnecessary because bad and good don't exist separately but are two sides of the same coin, which means if there is a good side to us, then there must be a dark side as well. The good and bad must coexist, and people must integrate both. Humans are always growing and on a quest to understand themselves. People make mistakes, but they also learn from them, and this is how they develop. Different experiences, whether positive or negative, offer a lesson and help people develop emotionally, psychologically, and physically. One should acknowledge the truth that life is not always a bed of roses. Every event in life ends up teaching us something later on; therefore, it's crucial to keep trying new things and discovering more about oneself.

Both novels tremendously handle the complex question of life's worth and provide a simple yet effective answer: life is what we make out of it; we can either choose to look at the negative side or we can focus on the good and positive side. It's up to us to give meaning to our own lives, as nobody will provide the answer to this for us.

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