

Group 3:
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Children and YA Literature Class Paper Analysis on A Long Way Down

Reading this book really did kind of break my heart when thinking about the reality of death that this book portrays. Many of us see death as a once in a while thing, we see it as obscure and something that we don't have to really consider or pay much mind to, but in this book, it brings up the idea of it being a reality, a cycle, something that people have to look over their shoulder for every day and ensure that they aren't the next one on the menu for death to grab up. For many parts of the world, this is the reality, death is their world and they have to face it head on just to follow in the footsteps of a loved one or a family member that also tried to challenge death in order to reclaim their freedom. In fact, on page 40 of long way down it quoted "began to pray that he wouldn't go to jail, that he wouldn't get letiticia pregnant, that he wouldn't die." This quote is truly powerful because it really shows the limited avenues and life that the people of this community are strung to. These are the worries that the mother has for her son Shawn, she has to pray that doesn't happen, indicating that it is a common thing and she later on even warns Will as well, because this is the harsh reality, the world that they are forced to live in an repeat over and over again

It is painful in fact to think about how we at times can be wasteful of our opportunities, ungrateful to the God given blessings in our life's, thinking that our lives are wrecks because one small thing doesn't go our way when in another part of the world, people are hoping to escape the death cycle and limited world that they have to face. In fact, on page 147 of long way down, the book states "Thought that when the door would open, the smoke would rush out. But instead it became a still cloud trapped in a steel cube. This use of imagery is powerful because the smoke represents the death, the pain, the agony, the sorrow that they have to face that many people say on the daily "This time will pass." This is the reality that they once again face. In a place where they are pushed to fear and worry about tomorrow, not being able to enjoy the day but think about survival for tomorrow. The narrator Will his even shown carrying a gun on him in order to protect himself and get revenge, that just has to speaks volumes about how condense the cage of smoke is in their lives, that it doesn't fade away nor leave the bubble they are in, but it circulates till the passengers fall victim to it.

On page 116 of Long Way Down Will quotes "or at least try to do my best impression of Shawn which was his best impression of Buck". This stuck out to me because it gave an impression of a cycle, or a fate being passed down. The gun that Will has for instance was the gun that was given to Shawn before he died which was given to Shawn by Buck before he was presumed dead. It is like a passing of the torch of death in which their fate is presumed sealed as they inherit it. A cycle of death that is passed on but isn't removed from that steel cage or bubble of a world that they lie in. It gives emphasis to the title name and what the Author is emphasizing in the message. It truly is sad once again to think about, to have one's fate wrapped around in a merry go round for others to have to be coaxed to join as well. In fact, to even add on to how natural the term death is within their society, on page 28 of long way down it quotes "And the next day, kids would play mummy with it". This is crazy for me to even think about, as the kids

are able to just play where the death happened, unshaken, unfazed by the event that just had occurred, as if it was an average tuesday that they had just witnessed and have grown so used to that experience, that fate that had come upon shawn. It truly is sad to see that this really is a reality for many people, something that I witness once in a while and rarely have to even think about, it is an everyday experience, a constant reality that haunts to the minds of kids from various parts of the world, to the point where they even feel led to keep a gun on them at night in order to feel safe. It truly does break my heart and makes me feel guilty for all the times I looked down on my life because of petty things when this is the experience that kids are born and raised in, hoping that they could just make it to the next day.