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(Five Have A Mystery To Solve, 1978)

### **An Underdog's Adrenaline Rush**

The Famous Five Book Series truly defies the ordinary and redefines the genre of 'Mystery' as a whole, and the 20th adventure namely 'Five Have A Mystery To Solve', in particular, takes it up another notch, making it somewhat of a quintessence. This is a gem of a book for all the mystery, thriller enthusiasts and seekers out there, promising to leave behind no conundrums. Even though the story takes some time to progress due to the plethora of details it packs in, which for many could be deemed unimportant. It eventually picks up its pace and the things that would somewhat be overlooked comes into play, and as time passes, it transitions into something momentous. A few chapters might lose your attention but it ticks you back right in with another, so this issue could be considered as a minor hurdle to the overall story it portrays.

Being the 20th adventure in 'The Famous Five Book Series' to have been published in 1962 with various adaptations inclusive of a TV feature film and different editions of the same. The book follows the story of the five protagonists namely, Anne, Julian, Dick, Georgina and Timmy the dog as they embark on their 20th adventure with a 10-year-old boy Wilfred. It is a journey that is unlike any other in the past, as they set sail to an island known as the "Whispering Island". They get stranded over there and eventually it leads to the discovery of treasure that rests on the island and dangerous men whose primary motive is to smuggle off those riches. This in particular packs a punch with the inclusion of guys with guns. Even foreshadowing the

possibility of a fatality one trigger away. It all leads up to the point where they all come out of it alive taking down men, twice their size by surprise. (Blyton, 1978)

The author shows, how with teamwork and the will to survive, they all come out of it alive. The reader is taken to a dimension unlike any, where anything and everything is possible in the adventure the five have set sail upon. Their past experiences have shaped them to never give up under any distress. The five protagonists always seek thrill in every adventure they set sail upon. It has allowed them to gather all the experiences and develop a sense of judgment to counter every obstacle that comes their way. In this adventure, however, they aren't alone. They are responsible to bring out another soul alive from this journey, the young boy named Wilfred, which makes it a completely different scenario that they may have been accustomed to. As said by Thomas Paine in a letter addressed to the Abbe Raynal on the affairs of North America, which tends to explain the whole idea that led to their survival: "The mind once enlightened cannot again become dark." I was taken aback when the story reached its end, as the children made a narrow escape from a fate that one could have only imagined to end up horrifically.

The author, Enid Blyton, in particular, was known for her works sought by a limited audience. Although this might be true, she has also been known to push all boundaries which becomes evident as she had been laying down her works in a wide range of fictional novels. The inclusion of fairies and animals could have supposedly been a good read for children, but it didn't stop there. Her books seemed to pack bits and pieces of everything one could expect, from the rather infinite universe of literature. For someone who faced criticism her entire life, always being regarded as a controversial writer that could hurt the ego of many, involved in the field of literature. She never gave up her will to write and for that, she has nothing but my utmost respect. It takes a strong will and determination not to lose one's focus when one is being

regarded as sexist, racist, xenophobic in the '50s by the people. Who would've then thought that the books that were once hated would sell off 600 million copies and that her works would see various adaptations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? (Radford, 2018)

Now getting into the nitty-gritty stuff, at first, I wondered why the writer would give up way too many details about each character. It was loaded with everything and I mean everything, ranging from the character's looks to even their likes and dislikes, which seemed to divide my attention. In my opinion, a 'Mystery' genre, in particular, should not give way too many details at the beginning that could take away the essence. It all made sense when I came to know that the author wouldn't let down a reader and that all of her books were standalone. For someone who is accustomed to the author's past works will feel certain haste driving them to lose attention as everything seems to play as a record, over and over again. The author's skillset and selfless view, that every reader old or new is the audience allow even the new readers to feel at home while reading any book from the series. Being an old-time reader and follower of any author's work isn't without its perks. One will gain the ability to anticipate the flow of the story moving ahead due to certain patterns laid out over in the past writings that play out well in the upcoming iterations.

Talking about the most interesting part that played out so far in the story, and that for me was the way the character 'Anne' was portrayed. In the beginning, Anne was your typical girl who abided by the rules that were set out and she had her entire life planned already. She has been foreshadowed as the one who would never, intentionally or unintentionally want to get into any trouble. But her character gets a massive makeover or say an overhaul as the story progresses and reaches its climactic point, where she plays a vital role in getting all of her friends off the island when danger was lurking around them. This level of character progression played

out in a story is praiseworthy. I found it interesting when the underdog of the whole story in a phased manner turned out to be in the spotlight at the end. It was a nice gesture, naming the last chapter 'Anne is a Tiger' to do the character justice. I wonder why the author chose to regard a human being like a tiger? Is it because of the fierce nature of a tiger? Who knows? That remains to be unanswered to this day, and the answer must have been in the head of the author, but sadly this question remained unanswered due to her demise in 1968. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998)

'Five Have A Mystery To Solve' truly in an unbiased manner be regarded as a great read for a wide range of audience kids and teens alike. The first few chapters succeed to lay all the groundworks for the characters and the chain of events that eventually leads them to get on board for an adventure unlike any other. The mention of thrills and dangers that come up their way, past multiple means also add up to the overall content of the story being told. With that, it fairs well to be amongst my best 'Mystery Thriller' genre books, lying somewhere top in my list. While sometimes it tends to lose you, being a short novel after all never allows you to lose your hope in finishing it. The author's motive to bring out a woman from being an underdog to someone who deserves a spotlight is brilliantly presented through the immense segment of character progression.

## Bibliography

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