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Destination And Perseverance In Wendelin Van Draanen's The Running Dream

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Abstract

Wendelin Van Draanen is an American writer and award winning author of children's and young adult fiction. The cardinal themes of her novels are transformation, gender, love, perseverance, family, courage, prejudice as well as lies and deceit. "The Running Dream" which was awarded American Library Associations Schneider Family Award for its "expression of the disability experience". The Running Dream is about Jessica Carlisle, a runner who becomes a disabled person due to an accident. She loses one of her legs and spirals into depression in trauma. She has given a temporary prosthetic leg. She finds that she has never lost her passion to achieve. Jessica starts to re-discover her abilities to run and compete. She trains hard for the race and accomplishes her destination. She is an embodiment of perseverance. Ultimately, she believes that her success draws the attention of people with disabilities and encourage people to see them as a successful person than a disabled one. Thus, the female protagonist overcomes the hurdles to achieve her destination through perseverance and determination.

Key words:

Prosthetic, embodiment, hurdles, cardinal and accomplish.



American Literature is very distinctive as it expounds the basic characteristics of all kinds of literature such as characters, plots, settings, images and themes. Wendelin Van Draanen explores the virtues of human beings in most of her works. *The Running Dream* is a sensational novel about a young girl named Jessica Carlisle's passion to achieve in running. "Jessica is a runner, who has accomplished a personal record in the four hundred meter's at a track meet. 'I am a runner. That's what I do. That's who I am. Running is all I know, or want, or care about.'" (6) Due to an accident the right leg of Jessica dissipates. Even though Dr. Wells assures that she can recuperate from the physical disability very soon. Jessica is both in despair and desolate. 'I try to think of good things, but somehow negative thoughts creep in. They take root so easily. Like pesky weeds in a delicate garden.'" (256)

The predominant theme of the story is a girl's destination to become a runner and her perseverance to climb the ladder of success. Jessica's friends and family members, play an inevitable role in her life to make her life adaptable to the circumstances. "Everywhere I go, I feel like the elephant in the room". (99) Yet, she execrates them. Darkness enters into her life.. She engulfs in physical and mental agony. "I cry myself back to sleep, wishing, pleading, praying that I'll wake up from this, but the nightmare always awaits me". (3) Meanwhile, the loyal friend, Fiona organizes Jessica to go school.

Jessica's mother is a symbol of endearment. She motivates her daughter to overcome the torments in her life. Dr. Wells suggests her to affix a prosthetic leg. Later, Jessica attains self-confidence from the videos of runners with specialized prosthetics. 'Right now Jessica sees her life as sixteen years of Spring that is interrupted by a sudden deep freeze'. (237) Abruptly, Coach Kyrö informs her that they have gathered twenty thousand dollars, with the help of truck team and anonymous donor to purchase a prosthetic leg. Jessica experiences infuriate, when she runs on the new prosthetic leg. 'God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can'. (9)

Jessica learns that perseverance is the only equipment to attain her goal. Even with Mr Hank and Coach's assistance, she finds it hard to overcome the emotions of imbalance



and grief . Rosa Brazzi, is a girl who suffers from cerebral palsy but her mind is as sharp as a razor . she favors Jessica to upgrade in doing math's. Their friendship remains as a source of strength and enjoyment in Jessica's life. It changes Jessica's attitude towards life. Jessica tries to run by pushing the wheelchair . "She is emphasized to practice running on the track and streets. This race has made me believe that there's nothing I can't do .This is my new starting line"(332).

Destination embolden her to strive hard to succeed in her attempts. 'Your determination is all that's left.'"(16) Jessica has a strong determination to achieve in admist of her fragility . She has improved her mileage with the wheelchair to eight miles a day. On the day of final race ,her "legs burn but there's still power in them"(325). The reporter asks what is in her mind while she runs ,Jessica responds "This is not me instead of her condition .That's all anybody with a disability wants (306) . The novel picturesque the how a young athletic vanquishes the miseries of her life to accomplishes her destination through perseverance.

Disability need not be an obstacle to success. But overcoming the challenges and developing confidence is significant and stupendous success. As a society, it is prime duty to allow disable people to experience a life they deserve. "Hard things are put in our way , not to stop us , but to call out our courage and strength" .Thus , the author explores how the female protagonist overwhelms the hurdles towards her destination through perseverance.

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