



# Absurdity And Identity Development: A Thematic Study Of The Selected Texts Of Fredrik Backman, Matthew Dicks And Rachel Joyce.

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Absurdity and identity development are two fascinating themes that can be explored in-depth through a thematic study. Absurdity refers to the sense of the irrational, meaningless, and chaotic nature of existence. It questions traditional notions of purpose, logic, and order. Examine how characters or individuals in different works struggle with the absurdity of life, their search for meaning, and their responses to the absurdity they encounter. Explore how absurdity challenges established social, cultural, or moral frameworks, often leading to a breakdown of traditional norms and values. Discuss how this breakdown impacts characters' identities and their understanding of the world. Identity development focuses on how individuals form and shape their sense of self over time. This theme often explores the influence of various factors, including social, cultural, and personal experiences, on an individual's identity. Examine how social and cultural factors, such as family, society, and community, shape and influence individuals' identities. Discuss the conflicts and tensions that arise as individuals navigate these external influences while seeking to establish their unique sense of self. Analyze the internal conflicts, self-reflection, and personal growth that contribute to identity development. Explore how characters or individuals confront challenges, question their beliefs, and ultimately discover their authentic identities. Discuss how intersecting identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, or class, intersect and shape an individual's overall identity. Examine how these intersecting identities can lead to complex and multifaceted experiences of identity development.

My research intends to analyse the identity development and absurdity of the main characters and their situation that made them develop over the period of time and certain situations that made them question the very existence of their being and in turn made them discover what was lying deep within them. Not a lot of research has been done in this area, if we are to take these three books into account. Absurdity and identity development are compelling themes that can be explored in depth through a

thematic study of the novels *A Man Called Ove* (2012) by Fredrik Backman, *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) by Matthew Dicks, and *The Unexpected Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) by Rachel Joyce.

*A Man Called Ove* (2012) by Fredrik Backman, Ove's rigid adherence to rules and routines, his humorous encounters with modern technology and bureaucracy, and the sense of the absurd in his experiences of loss and grief. Ove's identity crisis after retiring, his transformative journey through unexpected relationships, and the significance of his community in shaping his sense of self. According to the critic Linda Hitchcock *A Man Called Ove* (2012) is a literary gem that offers Christmas cheer earlier than expected. This outstanding debut book, which takes place in Sweden, catches the spirit of moving storytelling and immediately becomes a beloved favourite that wants to be read again and again. The book, written by a renowned Swedish writer, first introduced us to the 59-year-old grumpy Ove through a highly recognised blog. Henning Koch, a renowned Swedish novelist, screenwriter, and editor, expertly translates this best-selling masterpiece into English. Get ready for a magical encounter unlike any other. Each chapter of this beautifully written book unfolds a tapestry of memories and crucial experiences that have moulded the mysterious Ove. We see the traumas and struggles in his life that have made him bitter as the narrative smoothly progresses, and we are astounded by his unwavering fortitude and capacity for acceptance. Ove's personal life story eventually comes into focus, illuminating the complexity of his character as it is seamlessly entwined with the introduction of new characters and the development of the plot. *A Man Called Ove* bravely explores significant, widely applicable subjects. It confronts the depths of loss, the terrifying spectre of isolation, the crippling weight of self-doubt, the unstoppable march of time and its toll on body and mind, and the terrifying sensation of time. But at its core, this literary masterpiece is a glowing monument to the strength of love and the extraordinary beauty found in accepting both the pleasures and quirks of life.

*Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) by Matthew Dicks, the premise of an imaginary friend narrating the story, blurring the line between reality and imagination, and the absurd situations that arise from the collision of the real and imaginary worlds. The protagonist's exploration of his identity as an imaginary friend, his struggle to define himself outside of his role, and his growth as he learns about the complexities of human emotions. According to the critic Ernst VanBergeijk We meet an elementary school-aged youngster with a very amazing spirit in the uplifting Max Delaney story. Max, who falls somewhere on the broad autism spectrum, is a young person whose bravery knows no bounds. His loyal companion, Budo, is certain that Max embodies bravery at its highest level. And why? for no other reason than Max valiantly faces the intimidating environment of school every day. The course of Max's life is one that is unpredictable and lacking in understanding. Budo, his devoted imaginary companion, turns into his compass as he struggles to understand a reality that frequently escapes him. As Max's dependable companion, Budo guides him through the complexity of the neurotypical world, supports his decision-making, and warns him of any impending risks. Budo is a seasoned veteran, unlike other imaginary pals who go when their children get older and no longer need their company. During kindergarten or the first few years of primary school, the majority of imaginary friends normally say goodbye. However, Budo finds himself wondering deeply about the end of his own existence. When will Max get to the point where

he doesn't require Budo's unfailing backing and direction? The emotional relationship between Max and Budo is explored in this story, which also highlights the young boy's incredible resiliency in the face of the mysterious complexity of his environment. It poses significant issues on the fine line between imagined company and a person's changing requirements.

*The Unexpected Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) by Rachel Joyce, Harold's spontaneous decision to embark on a pilgrimage without proper planning or equipment, the chance encounters and unpredictable events he experiences along the way, and the absurdity of life's uncertainties. Harold's pilgrimage as a catalyst for self-discovery and reflection, his questioning of past choices and relationships, and the exploration of his identity through encounters with diverse individuals. According to the critic Carl L. Batnag The book's messages and narrative strength really came to the fore in the last chapters. The accumulated effects of Harold's numerous mishaps, adventures, and unexpected detours started to become apparent. It progressively increased, like a slow-burning discovery, creating a pulsing energy that reverberated within. Despite choosing a less beaten path, Harold's transformational adventure gave him fresh life. Finally, after a transformative journey, he understood the tremendous significance of Maureen in his heart. A glimmer of something important survived the ups and downs of their turbulent recent years and was just waiting to be rekindled. Sometimes we are reminded to treasure the exquisite beauty found in life's most straightforward moments by an 87-day voyage. The journey served as a catalyst, inspiring Maureen to rediscover herself. It gave her the freedom to follow her own path of introspection, revealing hidden dimensions and rekindling the soul's dormant spark. The reader saw the transformative effect of Harold and Maureen's individual journeys as the story came to a close. The narrative emphasised the value of embracing the profound beauty found in the everyday and enjoying the intricate fabric of life's nuances via their experiences. Be prepared to be affected by a tale that encourages us all to value the wonder and simplicity that exist all around us every day. A magnificent literary work, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* gradually revealed its depth and poignancy. A guy in his sixties performed what at first seemed to be a humorous act, but it quickly evolved into a deep voyage of self-discovery that taught him important truths about the meaning of life. In order to properly appreciate the beauty that lies beyond, one must embrace both the commonplace and push themselves outside of their comfort zones, as Joyce expertly illustrated. In addition to its exploits, the book also explored personal issues like unhappy marriages, mental health awareness, mortality, and the certainty of death. It continued to grow until it became a subtly stirring story that delicately examined the intricacies of life, embracing both its joys and tragedies. It provided as a painful reminder that part of living is accepting all of life's ups and downs, as well as the beauty and ugliness that are entwined with the human experience. Joyce crafted a tapestry of emotions into this succinct yet potent story, inviting readers to consider their own lives and find comfort in the delicate balance between light and shadow. Get ready to be affected by a piece of literature that shows us the beauty in the everyday, the power of moving outside of our comfort zones, and the inevitable necessity of accepting life's complexities.

By comparing and contrasting these novels, a thematic study can examine how absurdity is portrayed in different contexts and how identity development unfolds under various circumstances. Key points to explore include the characters' reactions to absurd situations, their growth through self-reflection, the influence of relationships and community, and the intersectionality of their identities. Analyzing these themes across the novels offers a comprehensive understanding of the human experience, the challenges of navigating a sometimes-irrational world, and the continuous journey of self-discovery and personal growth.

## Chapter one

In this chapter I will talk about the background of the writer whose book I have taken up for my topic namely, Fredrik Backman and his book *A Man Called Ove* (2012). Along with the background we will also delve into the summary of the book which has been taken up for research purpose in the field of absurdity and Identity development, in this chapter we will also be looking at the text namely, *A Man Called Ove* (2012) by Fredrik Backman and talk about how the book deals with the topic of Identity development and absurdity.

Swedish novelist Fredrik Backman is renowned for his moving and thought-provoking books. He was born in Stockholm, Sweden, on June 2, 1981. With the release of his first book, *A Man Called Ove* (2012), Backman's writing career attracted considerable notice. Backman held positions as a columnist and blogger prior to becoming a novelist. *A Man Called Ove* (2012), which he initially self-published, quickly became well-known thanks to positive word-of-mouth recommendations. The book, which centers on a cranky and lonely elderly man, quickly rose to fame around the world thanks to its unique blend of sensitivity, humour, and melancholy themes. Backman continued to create books after the popularity of his first one, including *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry* (2013), *Britt-Marie Was Here* (2014), and *Beartown* (2016). Backman's skill at developing incredibly human characters was once again on display in these books, which also explored themes of community, love, friendship, and personal development. Backman's works have been translated into numerous languages into a wide range of tongues, enabling his tales to be read by people all around the world. His writings, which capture the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and the strength of empathy and compassion, have struck a chord with readers all around the world. Backman has written novels as well as novellas, such as *The Deal of a Lifetime* (2017) and *And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer* (2015). His capacity to concisely express powerful emotions and investigate existential issues is further demonstrated by these shorter works. Fredrik Backman still writes and uses his stories to engage readers. His writings have won accolades from critics and been made into popular stage and screen plays. He is one of the most adored authors of the modern era thanks to his distinctive style, which mixes warmth, humour, and reflection.

Fredrik Backman's novel *A Man Called Ove* was released in 2012. It depicts the tale of Ove, an elderly man who lives alone and in a Swedish neighbourhood. Ove has a track record for being cranky and temperamental and is noted for his rigid devotion to rules and rituals. The plot develops when Ove's world is upended by the arrival of new neighbours Parvaneh, her husband Patrick, and their two young girls. Ove finds himself attracted into their life despite his initial reluctance and grudgingly gets involved in numerous neighbourhood issues. These conversations gradually peel apart the layers of Ove's complicated personality and traumatic past. The reader discovers Ove's intense love for his late wife Sonja as the story goes on, as well as the gap she left in his life. Ove's early childhood, his difficulties, and his connections with Sonja and his best friend, Rune, are seen in flashbacks. These flashbacks shed light on Ove's personality and the events that moulded him. Grief, loss, friendship, and the strength of human ties are among the themes explored in the book. Ove's interactions with Parvaneh and the other residents of the neighbourhood shake up his narrow perspective on the world and soften his at first icy demeanour. The narrative highlights the value of empathy, comprehension, and second chances. Its blend of pathos and humour has made "A Man Called Ove" famous. It depicts Ove as a gruff but lovable figure with a tender and compassionate heart underneath his harsh demeanour. Ove's past and present are deftly combined in Backman's narrative to create a touching and heart-warming story. For its compelling characters, emotional nuance, and study of timeless issues, the book won a lot of praise. With its heart-warming tale of resiliency, redemption, and the transforming power of human connections, it quickly became a global bestseller.

While *A Man Called Ove* (2012) primarily explores themes of compassion, friendship, and the power of human connections, it also touches upon the theme of absurdity and its impact on identity development. The cliché of the cranky old man or the rule-follower is embodied by Ove's character. But as the plot develops, these prejudices are challenged and dismantled, making the ridiculousness of preconceived ideas clear. Ove's identity develops through his relationships with people, and he violates the expectations that have been placed on him. Ove's ludicrous circumstances serve as a springboard for development and change on a personal level. Ove's strict worldview is put to the test by the humorous incidents and unexpected circumstances, which make him face his own limitations. This incremental understanding results in the growth of a more complex and sympathetic identity. The novel emphasizes the futility of pursuing perfection and the importance of accepting flaws. Ove's character first holds himself and others to absurdly high standards, but as a result of his contacts with flawed people, he comes to value and accept the defects that make people human. As Ove learns to accept his own flaws and let go of his compulsive need for control, this trip helps him build his own identity. Ove encounters a variety of people in his neighbourhood, exposing him to other viewpoints and lifestyles. Through these partnerships, he learns that identity is moulded not only by one's individual traits but also by the bonds and relationships one has with others. Ove's sense of self is challenged by the absurdity of these interactions, which allows him to develop a more accepting and compassionate identity.

Overall, the theme of absurdity in *A Man Called Ove* (2012) serves as a catalyst for identity development. It challenges stereotypes, prompts personal growth, encourages acceptance of imperfections, and underscores the significance of human connections in shaping one's identity. The novel ultimately suggests that embracing the absurdities of life and letting go of rigid notions can lead to a more authentic and fulfilling sense of self.

## Chapter two

In this chapter I will talk about the background of the writer whose book I have taken up for my topic namely, Rachel Joyce and her book *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012). Along with the background we will also delve into the summary of the book which has been taken up for research purpose in the field of absurdity and Identity development, in this chapter we will also be looking at the text namely, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) by Rachel Joyce and talk about how the book deals with the topic of Identity development and absurdity.

British author Rachel Joyce is renowned for her gripping storytelling and intensely emotional narratives. She was born in London, England, on December 19, 1962. Before switching to writing, Joyce initially attempted a career in acting and appeared in a number of theatre shows. Her debut book, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, was published in 2012 and received a lot of praise and prizes. The heart-breaking tale of Harold Fry, a recently retired man who spontaneously travels across England to visit a dying friend, is told in the book. Readers all over the world were moved by this debut book's examination of human connection, atonement, and the transformative power of hope. With subsequent books like *Perfect* (2013), *The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy* (2014), and *The Music Shop* (2017), Rachel Joyce persisted in showcasing her literary talent. Her writing frequently explores complicated relationships, inner conflicts, and the transforming nature of love and friendship. Readers may fully interact with Joyce's novels thanks to the combination of vivid descriptions, well-developed characters, and a keen sense of empathy.

Rachel Joyce's book *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) chronicles the astonishing and moving journey of Harold Fry, a retired man who lives in a small English community. The work examines the importance of human connection, self-discovery, and personal atonement. Harold learns that Queenie Hennessy, an old acquaintance and former co-worker, is terminally sick and residing in a hospice in a distant area of England when he receives a letter from her. Harold is moved by the letter and chooses to reply, but he feels impelled to do something more important. He decides on the spur of the moment to travel and deliver his letter to Queenie personally, reasoning that as long as he keeps walking, she will stay alive. Harold sets out on a remarkable trip, travelling hundreds of miles on foot, without any planning or appropriate footwear. Harold encounters a variety of people and situations along the way, each of which has a significant impact on him. Harold examines his life while enduring the psychological and physical hardships of the voyage, battling unpleasant memories, regrets, and the strained relationships that have

dogged him. Maureen, Harold's wife, is still at home in the meantime and is perplexed by her husband's abrupt departure. As she wrestles with the errors and grudges of their past, she too embarks on a voyage of self-discovery. Maureen finds herself re-evaluating their marriage, asking for forgiveness, and realizing her own strength and resiliency as Harold's path progresses. A poignant examination of interpersonal relationships, the pursuit of purpose, and the transformative potential of common deeds of kindness, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) is a must read book. It explores the intricacies of interpersonal relationships as well as themes of regret and forgiveness. In the end, Rachel Joyce's book serves as a reminder to readers about the possibility of redemption and the significance of taking advantage of all the possibilities that come your way, no matter how unusual or unexpected they may appear.

Rachel Joyce's *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) follows Harold Fry on his journey as it examines issues of absurdity and identity formation. The story centers on Harold, a retired man in England who leads a routine existence until he receives a letter from an old friend named Queenie Hennessy telling him that she has cancer and is about to pass away. Harold resolves on the spur of the moment to walk 600 miles across the nation to bring Queenie a message of hope, hoping that his journey may somehow save her. The novel is heavily influenced by the absurdity theme. To others around him, especially his wife Maureen, Harold's choice to set out on a difficult and lengthy journey without adequate planning or preparation looks insane. Harold experiences a variety of ridiculous and surreal scenarios while walking, as well as quirky people and strange occurrences. These bizarre incidents expose the unpredictability of the universe by upending common sense and sensible expectations of life. Harold's pilgrimage turns into a metaphorical investigation of his own identity and self-discovery as he travels there. Prior to the trek, Harold had lost touch with his feelings and desires due to his routine life. But as he moves, he is forced to face his history and the decisions he made. Harold learns about himself and the value of human connection through his interactions with random people he meets along the road. Harold's identity development and personal progress are sparked by the pilgrimage. He is able to consider his connections, regrets, and decisions that have formed his life. The physical difficulties he encounters on the voyage are a reflection of the psychological and emotional difficulties he must overcome internally. Harold eventually develops a better grasp of his own strengths and flaws as he battles through exhaustion, discomfort, and uncertainty.

Harold's voyage also represents a break from the expected and accepted conventions of society and a departure from the usual and familiar. Harold starts to redefine himself and push the boundaries he had previously imposed on his identity by moving outside of his comfort zone. He is able to embrace a new sense of freedom and leave behind his past thanks to the trek.

Overall, through Harold's unusual journey, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) examines the themes of absurdity and identity development. He experiences unusual and unexpected occurrences as he travels around the nation, which causes him to go through a change that helps him better understand

himself and the world around him. The work emphasizes the notion that even the most ludicrous and implausible events may frequently lead to personal development and self-discovery.

### Chapter three

In this chapter I will talk about the background of the writer whose book I have taken up for my topic namely, Matthew Dicks and his book *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012). Along with the background we will also delve into the summary of the book which has been taken up for research purpose in the field of absurdity and Identity development, in this chapter we will also be looking at the text namely, *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) by Matthew Dicks and talk about how the book deals with the topic of Identity development and absurdity.

Author and educator Matthew Dicks is well known for his contributions to the fields of storytelling and creative writing. Dicks, who was born in the United States on 15 February 1971, has distinguished himself in the literary world with his distinctive storytelling technique and compelling narratives. Dicks graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Manchester University and later went on to the University of Hartford to receive a Master's degree in Education. He taught elementary school, where he nurtured his love of storytelling and honed his abilities to captivate his young audience. The books *Something Missing* (2009), *Unexpectedly, Milo* (2010), and *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) are just a few that Dicks has written and published. His writings frequently explore the importance of storytelling, empathy, and human connection. Dicks' skill as a storyteller is demonstrated by his capacity to create nuanced scenarios that captivate his audience and cause them to reflect on more profound issues related to life and love. Dicks is a skilled storyteller and a five-time Moth Story SLAM champion in addition to his writing profession. He frequently does performances at storytelling events where he enchants audiences with his own tales and motivates people to value the power of narrative. Dicks is renowned for having a kind and likeable demeanour, which comes out in both his writing and performances. He has a talent for developing likeable characters and crafting gripping narratives that have an impact on both readers and listeners. Matthew Dicks still writes, teaches, and spreads his passion of narrative today. In order to help budding authors and storytellers hone their art and discover their own distinctive voices, he gives seminars and presents at conferences. Dicks has made a name for himself in the literary world because to his gift for narrative and capacity to engage audiences.

The intriguing book *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) by Matthew Dicks. The protagonist of the tale is an eight-year-old kid named Max, whose strong imagination creates the character of Budo, his imaginary buddy. Budo is not just ordinary imaginary friend; he is knowledgeable, perceptive, and has a profound knowledge of the world of people. Max, who is autistic, largely relies on Budo for company and direction. Budo only exists to help and safeguard Max and is not constrained by the restrictions of reality. Budo, however, finds himself in a peculiar predicament when he learns that Max's imaginary pals frequently disappear as kids become older and cease believing in them. Budo struggles with his worry over going



missing and the potential consequences for Max. Budo sets out on a risky and emotional search for Max after he faces a dangerous circumstance and vanishes. Budo meets other fictitious pals who have been left behind, forgotten, or lost along the road. These interactions highlighted the vulnerability of imagination and the significance of connection and conviction in determining our life. A unique viewpoint on the difficulties of autism and the power of acceptance and understanding is provided by Budo's observations of Max's parents, teachers, and peers as they battle in the real world. The book examines topics like friendship, loyalty, love, and the enduring power of the human imagination via Budo's voice. The touching and thought-provoking tale *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) perfectly portrays the essence of childhood, the intricacies of relationships, and the tremendous influence of belief and imagination. Readers will be left reflecting on the relevance of the intangible ties that form our lives and the unique ways in which we connect with one another after reading this story.

The themes of absurdity and identity development are central to Matthew Dicks' book *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* and play a vital part in structuring the plot and examining human experience. The main plot device—Budo, the novel's imaginary buddy who serves as the narrator—makes absurdity clear. The limits of reality are pushed by Budo's presence as a sentient entity with feelings, thoughts, and a unique personality, which muddles the distinction between the real and the unreal. The absurdity of Budo's existence serves as a springboard for considering the nature of reality as well as the influence of faith and imagination.

The work also explores the subject of identity development through Budo's viewpoint. Budo, a fictional character, struggles with issues related to his own identity and motivation. He thinks about his singular life and the worry of vanishing once Max, his creator, no longer needs him. In addition to trying to find Max, Budo is also on a quest to discover who he is and what makes him more than just an imaginary companion. Additionally, Budo's run-ins with other lost or abandoned imagined buddies offer more insight into identity formation. As their creators moved on from them, these figures lost their meaning and feeling of identity. The book emphasises the significant role that imagination and belief play in defining a person's identity, both for the inventors and their fictional clones. The story's human characters are likewise affected by the issue of identity development. The autistic youngster Max struggles to understand and claim his identity in a society that frequently doesn't see things from his particular point of view. As they come to embrace and support Max for whom he is, Max's parents, teachers, and friends travel their own journeys of self-discovery and acceptance. In *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012), absurdity and identity formation interact, sparking debatable issues with truth, the efficacy of belief, and the complexity of personal identity. The book encourages readers to think about how malleable and flexible our sense of self is, as well as how important acceptance and imagination are to our ability to grow as individuals and comprehend others.

## CONCLUSION

The works *A Man Called Ove* (2012) by Fredrik Backman, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012) by Rachel Joyce, and *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) by Matthew Dicks all address the issue of absurdity and how it affects the formation of identity. These works emphasize the transforming potential of accepting life's absurdities and the significant impact they can have on forming one's sense of self through the journeys of their individual characters.

In *A Man Called Ove* (2012), the title character first appears as a cranky, dogmatic person who adheres to his eccentric ideals. Ove's perspective gradually changes as he encounters a string of ridiculous incidents and encounters, forcing him to re-evaluate who he is and rediscover his capacity for empathy and connection. The absurdity of life is frequently the key to developing personally and forming sincere connections, the novel emphasizes.

Similar to this, Harold Fry makes the seemingly inexplicable decision to travel on foot to visit a dying friend in *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (2012), defying logic and social norms. Harold gains a deeper understanding of himself as he travels and runs into a number of absurd circumstances and personalities. The book examines how Harold's ludicrous trek serves as a springboard for reflection, enabling him to address unresolved concerns and, in the process, rethink his identity.

Through the eyes of Budo, an imagined friend, *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* (2012) offers an unorthodox examination of identity. Budo observes Max, his autistic human counterpart, as he faces challenges and succeeds. The absurdity of Max's surroundings and Budo's distinctive viewpoint shed light on the difficulties of forming an identity as he navigates a world that frequently rejects and misunderstands him. The book emphasizes how unconditional friendship and self-acceptance may help one shape and enhance their sense of self, especially in the face of cultural ridiculousness.

Collectively, these books show how accepting life's absurdity may lead to significant personal development and the creation of a more complex and real personality. The characters in these stories transcend their initial constraints by breaking logic and social conventions, becoming people who are more empathetic, self-aware, and connected to their surroundings. We are reminded via their stories that the quest for self-discovery frequently requires accepting the ludicrous and discovering significance in unlikely places.

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