

# Hopelessness and Faith: A Critical study of John Hart's *The Last Child*

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**Abstract-** Literature is a body of texts that portrays human emotion, perception, tradition, and history. It also serves a larger community by both defending and criticising cultural standards, which helps people accept and understand different cultures and customs more. Knowledge is provided by speech and the methods in which history is written down in manuscripts. The novel *The Last Child*, a small girl goes missing, and her twin brother searches for her desperately. According to psychology, young toddlers may think they are insurmountable because no one ever forces them to fail. People learn things through reading John Hart's writings. He describes one such youngster in his book who, in the absence of his parents, cannot be tempted by anything. And the strong bond that the kids have with their parents serves as the foundation for his story. When his parents can't find him, *The Last Child* loses all of his hopes and sorrow.

**Indexed Terms-** Affection, Accused, Attachment, Psychology

## I. INTRODUCTION

John Hart's *The Last Child* was published in 2009. The story revolves around a young girl who goes missing and her twin brother's desperate hunt for her as their world comes crashing down. According to the New York Times, two of Hart's numerous best-selling books include *The King of Lies* and *Down River*. Prior to converting to full-time writing, he worked as a banker, stockbroker, and criminal defence lawyer. The main character of the story is a thirteen-year-old boy named Johnny Merrimon. Prior to his twin sister Alyssa going missing while making her way home on foot, he used to regard himself as leading a charmed existence in the suburbs of North

Carolina, equipped with everything a young man could want. Jack, Johnny's closest buddy, claims to have witnessed her getting into an enigmatic car. After a year, the cops have diminished and there has been no sign of her. Johnny's once-ideal existence is in ruins. His mother Katherine neglects the child who is still alive because she is unable to deal with the loss. After Katherine accused Spencer of being to blame for Alyssa's leaving because he was supposed to pick her up from school that day, Spencer left.

The family no longer occupies the house. Katherine relocated with her new partner, the wealthy and influential Ken Holloway, in order to bury her sadness. She also struggles with alcohol and drug abuse. She continues to stay even though Ken is a terrible man who mistreats both Katherine and Johnny because he gives her the medications she needs, deliberately drugging her to make her submissive. Holloway's wickedness leaves Holloway feeling powerless to fight it because he has effectively ruled the neighbourhood.

Johnny seemed to be holding out any hope that Alyssa might still be alive. He also has determined plans of his own, including riding his bicycle while carrying a map of the local child predators, keeping a watch on potential suspects in the region, and following up on leads. On sometimes, Jack will go with them. Son of a police officer, Jack often feels inferior to Johnny. Detective Clyde Hunt is still investigating. He has been fascinated with both the Merrimon family and Alyssa's absence. He puts in long hours at work and has feelings for Katherine, who has maintained her beauty despite lately succumbing to drug and alcohol addiction.

Hunt puts the case above his family and his relationship with his teenage son deteriorates, his

wife leaves him. Hunt recognises that Johnny is undertaking his own research and gives both Johnny and his mother his card so they can get in touch with him if they need anything. They hardly seldom do that, and they might think he has already been unsuccessful in finding Alyssa. When Johnny skips class to hang out by the river one day, things start to go wrong. Given his complete lack of supervision, absenteeism comes naturally to him. A man's body is flung over the brink during an auto accident on the bridge above. He nearly survives as he lands next to Johnny and delivers his swan song. Johnny leaves the site believing the man has been killed because of what he knows when he came discovered the kidnapped female. But soon after, he runs into someone dangerous.

A large black man named Levis Freemantle recently escaped from jail. On the other side, Freemantle proves to be a generous giant. In response to what he believes to be a divine instruction, he takes up Johnny and stops him from running. He experiences frequent voice hearing and an inexplicable mental disability. There is an unforeseen connection between Levi and Johnny. Johnny hears him say, "Life is a circle. John interprets life in various ways, in his opinion. His views are portrayed in the following quote, "Life is a comedy," Jack said but there was no smile left. His mother was scared religiously born again and taking no prisoners. She was on Jack all the time with the threats of hellfire and damnation. He played it off, but the cracks showed. (Hart 94).

Hunt learns that the man who was hurled off the bridge is a professor at a university named David Wilson. Police investigate his death and final statements but find no evidence linking him to Alyssa or any involvement in her kidnapping. They start to retrace his last few days in an effort to determine why he was killed and what his remarks meant. Tiffany Shore and another girl have left as well. By looking into her case, Hunt and the police come to that conclusion. They might find evidence connecting her to Alyssa, solving both crimes. Johnny is still looking into the matter, but it is obvious that there is danger because someone in this group is willing to kill in order to hide their secrets—and they might kill once again.

Hart aids in the investigation of reality. A group of paedophiles operating in the neighbourhood abducted Tiffany. One of the group members is a security guard who uses surveillance cameras to scour the mall for crooks. As he attempts to remove child pornography from his computer, he becomes aware of his own guilt. The entire ring is visible once he has been brought to the ground. Tiffany is found in a shed still alive, but these predators were unrelated to Alyssa. The discovery was that she had been struck by a car driven by Jack's older brother. In order to show respect for Jack's brother, her passing was kept a secret. Jack, who was aware of the reality, and the scholarships were forced to keep it a secret. As Johnny comes to terms with the truth, he feels duped. Contrarily, Johnny's father was not completely blameless. He made an effort to investigate Alyssa's disappearance but ended up getting too close to the network of pedophilia's secrets. Because of what he knew, he was killed and buried in a field with other children who had also been killed. Levi's ancestor Isaac was a freed slave who was once saved from being lynched by one of Johnny's ancestors. Ken escalates his abuse and issues threats of execution on Katherine and Johnny as the narrative comes full circle. After killing Ken, Levi slams the door shut and then passes away.

John Hart's exploration of pessimism and faith in *The Last Child* solidifies his reputation as a brilliant writer. Thirteen-year-old Johnny Merrimon led the ideal existence in a loving environment. Alyssa, his identical twin sister, with whom he had an unshakable bond. Before Alyssa disappeared from the side of a lonely road, he had never experienced loss. Johnny learns a year later that the person he had been taught to trust had betrayed him. Johnny is positive that Alyssa is still alive in a way that he never fully explains, even though no one else believes she is still alive.

In an effort to discover his sister, Johnny risks it all to look into the underbelly of his neighbourhood. Despite the chaos and danger, Johnny is not as alone as he seems. In addition to having a soft spot for Johnny, detective Clyde Hunt has never given up trying to find Alyssa. While he keeps an eye on the child and works to keep him safe, the hunt is forced

to intervene when Johnny finds a dangerous clue and promises to watch it.

Johnny enlists the help of his last friend and ventures into the bush to a remote location with a bloody past that dates back more than a century, unfazed by Hunt's threats or his mother's pleas. They come across a huge man there who is an escaped prisoner travelling on his own horrible adventure. They are brought to a remote location, where they discover a fact that will put both boys to the test. What they come from upends Johnny's conception of his sister's fate.

Johnny Merrimon rides his bike in perfect lines while carrying a detailed map of his neighbourhood. He knocks on certain doors and leaves others unanswered while constantly scanning the area. The general consensus is that his twin sister has been dead for a year since she was abducted, but Johnny won't let up. Investigator Clyde Hunt The repercussions of what some people regard to as an obsession are being felt by someone. His teenage son is not receiving any attention because his wife left him and left them connected. Despite the fact that his career is in danger, it is still merited. Hunt's boss, the chief of police, has started to express concerns out loud about whether he has made the Merrimon probe too personal. Hunt contends that the depressingly awful circumstance is his only focus. But in actuality, he adores Johnny. He respects the boy's tenacity and bravery. Hunt thinks to himself that Johnny should be avoided at all costs. When Beautiful is followed by a murder and more murder is forthcoming, it seems as though Pandora's Box has been opened.

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