

Analytical Essay Samples

Sample Written Analysis—*All Thirteen*

(Quadrant 1)

All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team, by Christina Soontornvat, **tells the story of** an inspiring rescue mission. It all begins on June 23, 2018, when the Wild Boars soccer team and their coach decide to explore the Tham Luang cave in northern Thailand. The team loves adventure and being outdoors together; they are enticed by the cave's tight spaces, hairpin turns, and serene environment. In the massive, dark cave the boys have "a sense that [they] are a very tiny part of a very large universe" (p. 17). After traveling three miles into the cave, the boys decide to turn back but are surprised to find turbulent water blocking the way forward. The cave has flooded, and the boys are trapped! When the boys do not come home, their parents alert the local rescue organization. The organization does not have the right equipment to get through the flooded narrow passages. Eventually, a British cave diver, Vern Unsworth, and the Thai Royal Navy SEALs arrive on the scene. **At the first plot point**, the rescuers must face the fact that they do not have the skills or equipment to reach the boys, and they must call in more help. They are immovable in their faith that the boys are alive and will be rescued.

At the beginning of the story, the author creates a mood that is dramatic, suspenseful, and haunting. Even though the reader knows how the story will end and that the boys will be rescued, she creates a feeling of dread as the soccer team travels deeper into the cave. When the boys reach the Sam Yaek junction, they decide to go farther and turn left. Instead of turning back when they find a pocket of water, the boys wade across. Eventually they reach the "Hidden City" where past adventurers have carved their names into the wall. "Even with the roaring wind, the room is lovely, in an eerie, haunting sort of way" (p. 18). When they finally decide to turn back, water blocks their way forward. **Will the Wild Boars dwell on the darkness or will the hope of rescue be the light that cuts through the darkness?**

(Quadrants 2 and 3)

As the rain continues to fall, the US Air Force arrives, and together they brainstorm several solutions to the problem, which is that they must urgently find the boys and provide them with food, water, and medical care. One option is to drill a hole into the mountain, but they have no idea where the boys are located. Another option is to pump water out of the cave, but the pumps can't seem to keep up with the monsoon rains. A third solution is to look for alternate entrances to the cave, but each shaft proves to be a dead end. Sending divers into the depths of the cave seems impossible. The best cave divers in the world are called in. The British cave divers are determined to find the boys and get them out, but they must wait for conditions to improve. Even though the boys are starving, they refuse to give up hope. **At the midpoint**, the sump divers make it past the Sam Yaek junction, and hope returns to the rescue team. **The rescuers remain faithful and immovable in their mission.**

On the tenth day of the rescue operation, the sump divers dive as far as they can and are relieved to smell a sign of human life. They find the boys "emaciated—like walking skeletons" but alive (p. 133). The boys wonder when they will be able to leave the cave and if the men have food. They are hungry. The divers leave them flashlights and the promise that they will return, but the truth is that they have no idea how they will get the boys out of the cave. "Every option for rescuing the boys has problems" (p. 136). After one of the Thai Navy SEALs dies, the rescue volunteers

become even more determined. A thorough rescue plan is made to get the boys out of the cave before the oxygen levels get too low. **At the turning point**, the plan is presented to Minister Paochinda, and he orders the plan to be carried out despite the risks.

Throughout the story, the author uses the uniforms and tools used by the rescuers **as symbols of** faithfulness, loyalty, strength, and courage. The rescuers stay strong in their determination to get the boys to safety, even when that means sacrificing their own comfort and safety. No matter the risks, the rescue team “is going to give the impossible a shot” (p. 176). They use special diving equipment, guidelines, stretchers, ziplines, and rafts as life-saving instruments. The water that flooded the cave and trapped the boys inside will now provide the way out. Water is used as a symbol of both imprisonment and breaking free.

(Quadrant 4)

Soon after the plan is approved, the sump divers order full face masks for the boys that will allow them to breathe normally. Because panic is a diver’s worst enemy, the boys will be sedated so that they sleep through the entire rescue operation. The sump divers will dive them out, with support divers along the way to swap air tanks and give medical checks. Once they reach Chamber 3, the Thai Navy SEALs will carry the boys the rest of the way out of the cave. **At the final plot point**, the first four boys are transported by rescue divers through the cave and arrive at Chamber 3. When the first four boys come out of the cave alive, the rescuers are encouraged, but they still have eight children and five adults to bring out. The rescue team works tirelessly to bring everyone out of the cave alive, even as the rain starts up again. “They got them out alive—all thirteen” (p. 211). **At the resolution**, the boys make a full recovery and return to school. They promise the world “we will be good kids, just like everyone wishes us to be” (p. 218).

All Thirteen is a quest **story** that recounts the true events of a perilous rescue mission. Volunteers from all over the world come together with one unifying goal, “finding the kids and getting them out” (p. 99). Across the story, the mood changes from an eerie, haunting atmosphere to one of hope. **The message of the story is** that hope and faith give us the strength to overcome the impossible. The Wild Boars remained hopeful that they would be rescued, and the rescuers stayed faithful to their mission; in the end they both were the heroes of this inspiring real-life story.