

Book Review of Nicholas Sparks' Safe Haven

Nama, Maygananda Putriyani

Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Diponegoro Semarang

Project akhir ini menganalisis novel *Safe Haven* karya Nicholas Sparks. Tujuan dari penulisan project akhir ini adalah mengetahui kelebihan dan kelemahan Novel *Safe Haven*. Penulis menyimpulkan bahwa kelebihan novel ini terletak pada karakter tokoh, setting tempat dan simbol. Sedangkan kelemahan novel *Safe Haven* ini terletak pada rangkaian cerita dalam novel yang lambat dan beberapa bagian cerita yang diulang-ulang.

Kata Kunci: karakter, setting tempat, simbol

Introduction

Safe Haven (2010) is a novel written by Nicholas Sparks. It is a story about a woman who suffers from traumatic experience due to her abusive husband. She manages to escape to a safe place and find happiness in that place. The woman wants to start a new life even though the shadow of the past will always haunt her.

The main goal of this book is to find a true happiness. The book tells that people will find a way in solving their problem. The purpose of reviewing *Safe Haven* is to review both the strengths and weaknesses of the novel.

Discussion

Review of the Book

This chapter shows the strengths and the weaknesses of *Safe Haven*. The writer will describe the intrinsic elements of the story, such as characters, setting of place and symbol. Characters, according to Abrams (Nurdiyantoro, 1981:20), "are people who are raised in literary narrative or drama, which is interpreted by the reader who has certain moral qualities and tendencies as are reflected in the words and action." Characters are the most important elements of every story. In this story, there is one main character and three supporting characters. The main character is Erin or Katie, who suffers from her husband's abusive behavior. The first supporting character is Erin's husband named Kevin, a police detective who treats Katie

abusively. The second supporting character is Alex, a widower with two kids. Alex is also a man whom Katie falls in love with. The third supporting character is Katie's friendly neighbor named Jo. She comes to learn what Katie's problem is and gives support to Alex and Katie's relationship. In this book the characteristics of these four characters will be explained.

Erin is an obedient wife. She works hard trying to be a better wife for her husband, but she is always hit by her husband without any reason or because of a simple problem.

Another characteristic of Erin is brave. She loves her husband, but her husband's behavior put her in dangerous situation that makes her want to escape and find a safe place. She runs away without being afraid of the future risks that could be happen when Kevin knows about her action.

Erin is also a smart woman. She does not call the police to tell what her husband does because her husband is a policeman. It can be assumed that it is useless for her because the police officers may not believe her. Meanwhile, when she is running away, she uses a new identity. She changes her name, from Erin to Katie. She also changes her appearance, such as cutting her hair short and changing the colour her hair from blond to brown. She is also pretending to be a pregnant woman. This all is done in order to avoid his husband, Kevin.

The first supporting character is Kevin. He is an abusive husband and a drunker, a condition that makes Kevin's mental is un controled. Kevin has a psychological illness since he likes to beat his wife and gets very angry but then suddenly changes his mood and says that he loves her wife and hates to hurt her wife.

Kevin is a smart person. He is a detective police, so he can notice something is going wrong or when he is eager to find something. It can be shown from the way he thinks and acts to find his wife, Katie.

The second supporting character is Jo. She becomes Katie's counselor. She also gives support to Katie's relationship with Alex. By the end of the story, Jo reveals that she is Katie's imagination. Actually, this character is Carly, the spirit of Alex's late wife, and only Katie that can see her figure as real.

The last supporting character is a widower named Alex. He is a man who treats Katie as a special person; he is a man who Katie is feeling comfortable to be with. She likes to share her story with him since he is also a good listener and she can finally trust him to tell him more about her past story. He accepts her no matter what happens with her before. He wants Katie to trust him that he will always make her happy.

Another characteristic of Alex is that he is a good father. After his wife died he has to take care of his kids by himself and Alex does good job in doing that.

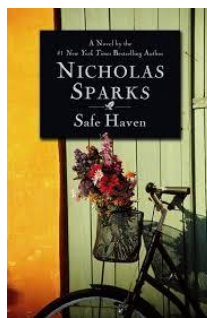
According to Abrams (Nurgiyantoro, 1981:175), "background or setting is the sense of place, time relations and social environment where the events narrated." Something happens in this novel where we can find many places, times relation and social environment which support many important events in this story, so that the story can be understood easily and setting can help in giving more detail for the story.

In this story, the setting of place is clearly identified. It is in the Southport where Katie moves in. The setting of place of this story is located in a peacefully small town at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, right where it met Intracoastal. It is a place with sidewalk and shade of trees around there. We can clearly imagine about the place and the situation in which it could lead the reader to get the real atmosphere of the story. The second setting of place is the cottage where Katie leaves in.

Another strength of the book is that it has an unpredictable ending. The reader may be surprised with the character of Jo. She is being Katie's counselor. However Jo actually is

the spirit of Carly, the late wife of Alex. Katie finally realizes that Jo is not real that she is just her imagination even she believes at first that Jo is real and she is not her illusion.

Symbol is another important element of the story. Symbol is figure out the story that is not stated expertly. The symbol of this story is the cover of the book. There is a colourful flowers in the basket. The flowers describe that life as beauty as flowers but it has many colours that reflects life has many circumstances like happy, falling love, sad, heart broken, fear. As Katie's story in this book with her complex problem.



The weakness in this novel is the story line between one event to another goes to slow and some parts are told repeatedly, it can be seen in the story where Katie always retelling about her abusive husband, so it makes the reader bored and they do not read the whole novel. The reader may skip some pages on the novel. The author should makes the story more concise without diminish the important point of this story.

Conclusion

Safe haven is one of novels written by Nicholas Sparks. He is a successful American author with great sense of writing that could bring some of his works to be adapted into movies including this novel. In this book there are many positive messages that can be taken to the reader, such as how not to give up and find a way in solving the problem in life.

The most interesting part of this story is the characters of this book; there are some life lessons and positive messages that can be seen in the main character and the people

around the main character which is motivating to the reader. The unpredictable ending is being one of the strengths of the book that can make the readers surprised. Whereas there are some parts of the novel's content that is boring and being the weakness of the novel.

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