

BOOK REVIEW OF THE NOVEL *SAFE HAVEN* BY NICHOLAS SPARKS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Novel *Safe Haven* that is chosen by the writer is a novel that has theme of love. Based on the intrinsic elements of novel, character is one of the important elements in a novel. Because of the character, the story could run and seem more alive. Therefore, the writer of this paper focuses on the life of the main character in the novel *Safe Haven*. Based on the description above, the writer determines a title **Book Review of the Novel *Safe Haven* by Nicholas Sparks** as his final project report.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

The writer determines just two problems in order to be more focused in discussion.

1. To give summary of the novel *Safe Haven*.
2. To explain the strength and weakness of the novel *Safe Haven*.
3. To give personal opinion about the novel *Safe Haven*.

1.3 About Nicholas Sparks

Nicholas Sparks is a famous author in the world. Nicholas Sparks is a famous author in the world. He had written many novels such as *The Notebook* (1996), *Message in a Bottle* (1998), *A Walk to Remember* (1999), *The Rescue* (2000), *A Bend in the Road* (2001), *Nights*

in Rodanthe (2002), The Guardian (2003), The Wedding (2003), True Believer (2005) and its sequel, At First Sight (2005), Dear John (2006), The Choice (2007), The Lucky One (2008), The Last Song (2009), Safe Haven (2010), The Best of Me (2011), and The Longest Ride. All of his books were bestsellers in New York. His novels have been translated in many languages. He also made film adaptation of his novels. All of his film became grossing films.

2. SUMMARY of *SAFE HAVEN*

Katie is a mysterious woman who is 27 years old. Katie moves to Southport, North Carolina. She starts working at Ivan's restaurant. In Southport, she lives an isolated life and covers her real identity. She has a neighbor named Jo.

Alex is the owner of the store in Southport. He is a widower. He has two children named Josh and Kristen. He becomes attracted to Katie because Katie regularly comes to the store. One day, Josh almost drowns when he is fishing. Then, Alex tries to rescue Josh while Katie tries to calm Kristen. After this incident, Alex and Katie realize that they love each other. At one time, Alex knows the real identity of Katie. Then, Katie tells Alex her real identity. Her real name is Erin. She moves to Southport because she gets violence from her husband named Kevin. She deliberately hides her real identity to avoid Kevin's pursuit. Alex tries to keep her secret.

Kevin is a detective. He tries to find Katie. He finds Katie at Southport. At night, Kevin burns Alex's house while Alex is not at home. In Alex's house, there are Katie, Josh and Kristen. But they succeed to escape from the burning house. Alex comes to the house and takes Josh and Kristen to Katie's house while Katie fights Kevin. After that, Alex returns to his burning house to attack Kevin. But Kevin can escape from Alex and Katie. Then, he drives to Katie's house. Katie becomes afraid because the children are in her house. Then Katie and Alex go to her house to save Josh and Kristen. Finally, Katie

kills Kevin with Kevin's gun. However, before Kevin dies, he has time to hit Alex with a crowbar.

After the incident, the safe containing the letters is not broken. Alex gives a letter to Katie. Then Katie reads it in her house. However, before she reads it, she sees Jo's house and realizes that the house is empty and no one ever occupies. Then she reads the letter that the letter is written by Alex's late wife named Carly. Carly's nickname is Jo. So, Jo is Carly's spirit. Carly wrote the letter to the woman with whom Alex falls in love. The letter contains that she requested to keep Alex and her children. Finally, Katie goes to Alex's house and while she is standing in front of her house, she sees Jo standing and waving her farewell in front of Jo's house.

3. REVIEW of *SAFE HAVEN*

3.1. The Strengths of *Safe Haven*

The strengths of the novel *Safe Haven* are theme and character.

3.1.1 Theme

Theme is divided into two categories. The first is major theme and the second is minor theme. The major theme of *Safe Haven* written by Nicholas Spark is affection while the minor theme is forgiving each other.

3.1.1.1 Affection

Affection is a feeling of love from people to other people, friend, God, and family. It can be described by action, verbal, and sacrifice.

The first affection comes from Erin Tierney (Katie) for Kristen when Kristen sees her father trying to save Josh from drowning.

Kristen was sitting beside him, her eyes still red and puffy. She'd asked Katie to stay with her for a while, and Katie had remained at her side, holding her hand even now.

..."And also, thank you for taking care of Kristen..." (Sparks, 2012: 34-35)

From the quotation above, it shows that Erin (Katie) gives affection by action, even though there is no relationship between them. She tries to calm the panic and fear of Kristen by staying and holding her hand. At that time, Kristen also gets protection from Erin (Katie). So, she feels safe.

The next affection comes from Erin (Katie) for Kevin when he tries to shoot Josh, Kristen, and Alex.

"I used to love you," she said. "I married you because I loved you."

"You wouldn't let me drive or have any friends and you kept the money and made me beg you for it..... I was your wife and I loved you!"

"I loved you!" she sobbed, ... (Sparks, 2012: 358-360).

From the quotation above, it shows that Erin (Katie) gives affection by verbal. It can be shown that there are words "I love you" more than one which Erin (Katie) has said. Erin (Katie) really loves her husband even though she gets over protection from him. Therefore, she feels uncomfortable. She wants to get freedom from Kevin. Erin (Katie) says "I love you" to explain and make Kevin believes him that she will not betray him.

3.1.1.2 Forgiving Each Other

The theme of forgiving each other in the novel *Safe Haven* has contributed not too much to the story but it is important to be discussed. The incident starts when Jo talks to Erin (Katie) about Alex and his kids in the bar. Erin (Katie) feels angry with Jo because Jo cares about them and expresses her worries to Erin (Katie). Therefore, Erin (Katie) thinks again about it and realizes that there are some important things about herself. She is not worried about that incident again and forgives Jo. Forgiving each other is about forgetting someone's misbehaviour in the past and thinking positively about them.

..."It's okay," she said. "I wasn't mad."

Katie touched her arm. “I appreciate the apology, but it’s not necessary. You actually made me realize some important things about myself.” (Sparks, 2012: 268)

From the quotation above, it shows that Erin (Katie) has forgiven Jo. The words “appreciate the apology” and “wasn’t mad” prove that forgiving each other needs calm heart and respect for other people’s goodwill. Erin (Katie) also thinks positively. It can be proved with the word “realize”.

3.1.2 Character And Characterization

Character is the main element in the story. It can be described with his or her characterization; based on physical conditions, psychological conditions and social circumstances.

1. Erin Tierney (Katie)

Based on physical conditions, Erin Tierney (Katie) is described as a woman that her age is twenty-seven years old. She has chestnut brown short hair and wears no makeup. Therefore, Kevin Tierney can not identify Erin when he looks for Erin in Southport. Before she goes to Southport, her real hair is blond and long. It is described directly by the author and conversation with other character.

Her short hair was chestnut brown; ... She wore no makeup and knew her face would pick up a bit of color, may be too much.

She was twenty-seven years old, a former long-haired blond with no real friends.

“My hair isn’t naturally brown. I’m really a blond.” (Sparks, 2012: 3,8 and 231).

To describe the character can use psychological conditions including characteristics, mentality, hobbies, and ambitions. Based on psychological condition, Erin (Katie) has many characteristics. She is kind, intelligent, charming, humorous, independent, patient, sweet, and gentle. The characteristic of Erin (Katie) is described directly by the author and the reaction of other characters.

“I think you’re intelligent and charming, and that you’re a person with a kind heart....You’re independent, you’ve got a good sense of humor, and you show surprising patience with children....”

He shouldn’t have hit Erin because she was sweet and kind and gentle and she didn’t deserve to be pinched or kicked (Sparks, 2012: 135, 136, and 244).

2. Kevin Tierney

Based on psychological condition, Kevin has many characteristics. He is patient, diligent, and loyal. The characteristics of Kevin are described directly by the author and conversation with other characters.

But he was patient and diligent and he kept coming back and took more vacation days.

“And so you thought you’d hit the bars? Meet some women?”

“I’m not like that,” Kevin said tightly. “I love my wife.” (Sparks, 2012: 224 and 242).

To describe the character can use social circumstances which affect the behaviour of the character. It can be position, job, social class, and ideology. Based on social circumstances, Kevin has a bad characteristic. He is violent. He dares to do violent act because he is a police and detective. So, another policeman cannot help Erin (Katie) to press charges because Kevin has the highest position among the other policemen. The characteristics are described by the conversation with other characters.

“...Because he gradually grew more violent and controlling over time,...”

“They came to the house and talked to me. They convinced me not to press charges.”

“Kevin warned me that it wouldn’t do any good to call the police.”

“Because he *is* the police,...”He’s a detective with Boston Police Department...” (Sparks, 2012: 169 and 167).

3. Alex Wheatley

Based on physical conditions, Alex is described as a man who has gray hair. Therefore, his age is around 32 years old. Based on social circumstances, Alex is a single-parent. He is a former military. So, he is a strong father and cleverly caring his children. Alex is described directly by the author.

His hair had turned gray when he was in his early twenties,...

He'd been promoted regularly, finally retiring as a major at thirty-two.

For months after they lost her, he simply couldn't imagine ever being in another relationship,... (Sparks, 2012: 17 and 21).

Based on psychological conditions, Alex has many characteristics. He is kind, strong, caring, and smart. The characteristics of Alex are described by the author through a message from Carly (Jo) to Alex. It can be proved by the quotation. *You're kind and strong and caring and smart*; (Sparks, 2012: 256).

3.2. The Weakness of *Safe Haven*

Novel *Safe Haven* written by Nicholas Spark has a weakness. The weakness is plot.

In addition, it is interesting to be discussed even though only one weakness.

3.2.1 Plot

The readers feel confused about the plot of the novel *Safe Haven* because the author uses the flash forward and flashback plot. The story begins with the condition of Katie in Southport. Then she meets Alex. After that, they fall in love with each other. Suddenly, the plot goes back to a scene of Katie when she lives with Kevin. Then the plot goes back again to a scene of Katie when she lives in Southport.

In her first year of marriage, Kevin rarely hit her and sometimes she went for walks without him.

It was mid-June and Katie was leaving Ivan's after finishing up a busy dinner shift when... (Sparks, 2012: 196 and 212)

Based on the quotation above, the words "her first year of marriage" prove that the plot changes from flash forward into flashback. Then the words "Ivan's" prove that the plot changes again into flash forward. The words "Ivan's" are the name of the shop in Southport.

3.3 Personal Opinion

Based on the writer's opinion, *Safe Haven* is an interesting and surprising novel. The author always has surprise for the readers of this novel, for example, Jo is the spirit of Carly that is known in the end of the story. This novel also has many moral values that

the readers can get it after reading. One of the moral values is about how to make other people, especially our wife, feel safe with us. So, this novel is interesting to read because the story is similar to real life. The readers can get lessons about love and life from this novel. However, this book is not suitable for children because it contains violence.

4. CONCLUSION

Safe Haven is one of the best seller novels written by Nicholas Sparks. It tells about affection and forgiving each other as the strengths of the novel. The author shows readers about the way to give affection, as the major theme through the story. This novel also teaches readers about forgiving each other, as minor theme, and facing problems. Forgiving each other needs calm heart, positive thinking, and self-awareness for other people's goodwill. The author successfully gives surprise to the readers using characters and shows the detail of the main character using physical conditions, psychological conditions, and social circumstances. Therefore, readers can clearly imagine the character.

The plot of the novel is the weakness of the novel. The author uses the flashback and flash forward plot. The plot is always changing. Therefore, readers have to give more concentration about the story. The author conveys a message through this novel. It is about how to make other people, especially our wife, feel safe with us. The author also gives lessons about love and life through this novel.

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