

## 4 SIGNATURES

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### ABSTRACT

This study is accomplished to assist the readers of the graphic novel project that is created to understand more about the elements in the graphic novel 4 Signatures. The purpose of this graphic novel is to educate people about the psychological aspects, what cause it and the results, and to support those who have similar psychological problem.

Using the theory of Revenge and Child Abuse, this graphic novel will show the story and the attitudes of the main character cause by psychological problems. The awful result whether it is emotional, verbal, or physical done toward other people by the character helps the readers to understand more of what to do to someone with similar psychological problem and to avoid such psychological problems.

**Keywords:** Graphic Novel, Revenge, Child Abuse

### INTRODUCTION

As a person who has a deep interest in comic and novel. I have decided to make a graphic novel. Basically, graphic novel is a novel presented in sequential picture. However, this difference has made significant change to the attitude of the market. Graphic novel becomes very popular among many people in the world especially for those people who cannot enjoy reading books with too many words. This also applies to me and that is why I am interested in making graphic novel. First, I am interested in making graphic novel because I am much more comfortable making a graphic novel than making anything else. I used to doodling a lot, especially in the high school. This is my advantages when I work with this project. Second, graphic novel has promising target market. Nowadays the popularity of graphic novel starts to arise, especially since many publishers promote the graphic novel intensively according to Griep in Reid (2013). It helps the graphic novel gain the popularity. In that sense then I tried to follow the flow and make it in form of graphic novel, hoping that it will be easier later for this work to be accepted in the market. Finally, I also realize that movie and comic also become common media and well accepted media in the society. However considering my background of study in English literature, I prefer to do graphic novel.

My work *4 Signatures* is a creative work in the form of graphic novel that tells reader the story of a man who wants to take revenge toward his family. It is inspired by a Japanese literature work entitled *Golden Boy* by Egawa Tatsuya (1992) a manga or Japanese comic which is later adapted into six episodes of Original Video Animation (OVA) and a graphic novel called *Diabolic Lover* (Zexcs, 2013). *Golden Boy* and *Diabolic Lover* inspired me in a way of building the atmosphere and creating the characters. *4 Signatures* main idea is coming from *Golden boy*, a Shonen or boys manga about a 25 year-old, genius, eccentric young man who decided to live his life by travelling and trying every jobs. On that journey, the young man meets many women and helps them solve their problem. Despite being disliked by the girl because he is eccentric and sometimes considered as a pervert, the man is able to leave such a good impression. An idea pops up then: What if I make a dark version of *Golden Boy*? This question is the starting point of my idea that later I explore more into a story where the main character is a bad man.

Then, for the development of the element in the *4 Signatures*, *Diabolic Lover* (Zexcs, 2013) is used. This work because it is a partly a novel, it has a quite thick of element in characterization that later inspires me to create each characters in my story. For example, *Diabolic Lover* is a story that revolves around five men with one girl. Each of those men has a very unique characteristic and traits that is affected by their childhood. On my story I have four women and one man, who in a way I create their past as bitter as possible so I can explore more about their past. Why should it be the combination of four women and one man? Some consideration is that it is to show the reader which one is the dominant. Like in the *Diabolic Lover*, even though we know that basically man is more dominant than woman, the author still emphasize that differences by putting 5 men so

that the characteristic of a helpless woman will be strong. Therefore, based on that formula, an idea emerges. I reverse the order into 4 women and 1 man to reverse the dominant power. I also add the element of blood relationship between the main character and the antagonist which is cannot be found in the *Diabolic Lover*.

In this work there will be an element that I consider based on the fiction works that influence me for example, *Golden Boy*. First person point of view will be my choice to tell this story based on some consideration.

According to fictionwriting.com first person point of view is a point of view in which an "I" or "we" serves as the narrator of a piece of fiction. The narrator may be a minor character, observing the action, as the character Nick does in *The Great Gatsby*, or the main protagonist of the story, such as Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*. In addition, a first-person narrator may be reliable or unreliable.

Because there will be many events that surprise the main character, it is better to prevent the reader from knowing anything other than what the character already knows. To reach this goal it is better to use first person point of view because the narrator is the main character, reader knows what he knows only.

The plot technique that will be in this novel is a flashback. Because the need to explain each of the past situation of the characters it is better to use flashback to help the readers understand the relation of cause and effect.

The title of the work takes the element of number four (4) because it has some significant meaning. First, it represents the four women that become the obstacle of the main character. Second, it is based on a practice known as Tetrophobia, a practice of avoiding number four (4). For some Asian four (4) is considered as a bad number because pronounce death. Japanese pronounce 4 (four) as "shi" which is the same pronunciation as death. In Chinese this number sound similar to the word "siwang" which is also mean death. That is why some people avoid number 4, (Parls, 2012). More importantly, because of that background the use of number 4 (four) can strengthens the bleak atmosphere of this work.

*4 Signatures* is adopting revenge as the main theme. Revenge is something unique an interesting issue to talk. It is interesting because revenge is a basic, an instinct for human in order to survive (Bloom, 2001). It is unique because it is personal; the development and the cause are different for each person. Because of that, there are many options to develop the story based on revenge theme. By choosing revenge as the theme, I want to tell my readers who happen to have the same problem or feeling like the characters in the story, that revenge is something that closed to us and about the side effect of revenge

*4 Signatures* explore some psychological aspects:

1. What will a person with painful past do when he/she found a chance to take revenge? Like the main character in the story when he found a chance to take revenge after knowing the truth (half of the truth) about himself
2. What are the effects of revenge to a person? Like the after effect of the feeling on the main characters

4 Signature aims:

1. To show what a person with painful past will do when he/she find chance to take revenge.
2. To show the irrational acts that they do for revenge.
3. To show the result of taking revenge, both physically and mentally.

This work takes a lot of daily life practices and elements. It is believable in a way because it is what a human is capable of. The example of the problem that the characters show is something that we can find in everyday life. Each of the character is created in a way so it can represent one or more aspect of the reader life. I only wish to show what revenge can bring or do to one's life and hope the reader can learn something out of it

Since the main cause of revenge act of the characters in *4 Signature* is based on the childhood problem that affects the mental and behaviour or psychology, I will use the theory of child development and psychology of revenge in this story to explain the reason of my characters action scientifically.

## Psychology of Revenge

Elster 1990, p.862 in Bloom (2001), defines revenge as something that people do in order to make somebody suffer because you have him/her suffer. Here in revenge, the goal is to return the pain that somebody inflicted on him/her.

As stated by Carlsmith in Price (2009), rather than providing closure, revenge does the opposite. Taking revenge keeps the wound open and fresh, because revenge comes at a price. The satisfaction or pleasure of taking revenge is temporally and it instantly disappeared. Instead of helping a person move on with his/her life, revenge can leave a person on the situation that remaining unhappy because the wound is permanent.

I will use this as the base for explaining the condition of the main character after taking his first victim. The main character felt unsatisfied and uneasy because his wound still open. Then he misunderstood this feeling by taking more victims until in the end he is wounded even deeper and reached mental breakdown.

## Child Abuse and Revenge

Revenge needs something as the trigger. In the *4 Signatures*, the trigger is coming from bad childhood experience from the main characters. This bad childhood experience is coming from a cause called child abuse

Basically what is concludes as child abuse:

Any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that result in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm is define as child maltreatment. This child abuse can lead into several actions, one of them is revenge. (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2003).

As stated by Don Dinkmeyer, Jr., Ph.D., NCC (1997), Co-author of *the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)*, also co-authored numerous educational programs), and a retired psychologist also a diplomate in Adlerian Psychology (North American Society of Adlerian Psychology – NASAP) Gary D. McKay, Ph.D (1977) in the book *Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)* on the child abuse and revenge section, “A child who mistreated tend to take revenge when they grew up. Provided by some example of some behaviour, the extreme action is to do the same action they experienced”

Most of the characters in *4 Signatures* are mistreated child so when they are grows up they become someone psychologically unstable and have a tendency to do a bad things

## METHODOLOGY

Watching and reading main sources and additional sources from book and movie will help me to create and build my character and setting. In this case I watch *Diabolic Lover and Golden Boy* twice or more because they give me a chance to analyze the element of fiction in those two animations, in particular the plot and the characterization that they used. Because my story mainly about revenge and childhood past, this work will have a bleak atmosphere and plot, therefore I need additional works as references. I watch some works that have a dark atmosphere such as an anime called *fate/stay night, fate/zero*, and also some *Batman* comics. From those works I learn what kind of language and things needed in order to create despair and dark situation.

I am also conducting a sightseeing toward my surroundings either people or locations. The location that I observe for example is hotel Niagara in Lawang. I chose that venue because it is suitable for dark theme, it is old building and has a bleak atmosphere, so it is matching the requirement as a background of my story. While for the people I tried to use a subject that is close to me such friends and cousin for accurate information. For example one of my friends who always had a conflict with her parents because her parents always compare her with her sisters. Observing people characters and traits helps me to create the basis to build a believable characters. By combining the trait and the personalities from the data then I create the character that fits the story.

As I mention before up to this point the readers will feel slight similarity in this work and some works. Of course it is because some works like *Diabolic Lover, Golden Boy, and Batman* also influence my work in terms of background story, settings, and theme.

In the end this work gives the reader different sensation than those works, because this works is a combination of all that works. For example even though this story gives the reader the

feel of *Batman* story, the characters here are normal being with no superpower so the problem will be solved logically.

Other uniqueness come from the setting itself. Malaya city is fictional city that actually comes from the merge of three cities name which is Malang-LAwang-surabaYA. This is not just a symbol, because in the work itself most of the place and settings will be based on real place in those three cities, only with minor modification.

Finally, what makes my work different from others is that my characters will be named in Indonesian because I found so many graphic novels tend to use European name or western name, even though sometimes the settings is in Indonesia. Due to the story plot, at first the main characters last name include foreigner name but the real last name of the main character is using Indonesian name.

## **CONCLUSION**

Here is the conclusion from the writing of *4 Signatures*. On the first part will be the lesson I learned from writing graphic novel, both personally as in the way of writing graphic novel and also from the story itself and the second part is my future plan for it.

### **Lessons Learned**

In the process of making this graphic novel script and samples, I have learned several things. However, there are three particular things that are really important for me during the process.

First of all, I have learned to overcome the challenge in writing a graphic novel script. The problem is that I was very slow in making and finishing a story especially when it came to the written form. I also have a tendency to drag and prolong the story which is inefficient. After I spent some times in making my graphic novel script and samples, I began to felt that I could write in effective way and the process became faster.

Second, how to describe images through words in details, so that the illustrator will be able to imagine the visualization for each panel. At first, I thought it was something that was very easy to be done. The truth, it is not that easy to describe those images through words. Sometimes I forgot to give a few sentences that turn out to be a crucial explanation for the image. After the process of this project I changed my point of view and realized that I have to be very detail in describing things that was why it took a lot of time to get it right.

Finally, during this process, I learned the theme that I brought into my work. Throughout this work, I now know regarding how an individual's decision distort by revenge. Through the research I made, I learned the mechanism of revenge and how it can influence human to make a decision. I believe that this kind of thing also can be a lesson for me. That is why I tried not to keep revenge and hatred in my heart..

### **Future Plans**

After finishing this work, I am planning to revise the work. As the first work that I make, I want this work to be as good as possible. Then, if it is possible, I would like to publish this work. This work also has personally encouraged me to make another graphic novel story in the future. As a conclusion, my future plan for my creative work are to revise the story, make it into a publishable work and try to make better graphic novel.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Rama Putra Smith is a smart young man and a realtor that lose his mother and his memories due to an accident. After his success as an assistant consultant in seizing and selling the land to someone wealthy he got his first call. The mysterious caller, Mr Aertz, offered him a great job to claim the Kertarajasa family land in the form of a hotel. Armed with knowledge and ability, Rama accepts the job. With the freedom to choose the method used and the assurance that whatever he did would be exempt from legal charges, Rama prepares various heinous plans to seize the hotel from the hand of Kertarajasa's daughters. But strange things start to happen when he entered the hotel. Bit by bit his past memories came back. Feeling curious, he starts focusing to restore his memories instead of acquiring the hotle by getting close to the women. On one point he reaches a decision to take revenge on the 4 women because he found out that they are involved in his mother

accident. Eventually after he takes revenge he never feels satisfied. In the end instead of healing his wounded heart he is killed by the daughters of Kertarajasa's. Later, the readers know the truth that he is the member of the family and that actually the 4 women was his stepsister that he loved.

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