

CONFLICTS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN RACHAEL LIPPINCOTT'S *FIVE FEET APART*

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Abstract: The purpose of the research was to reveal the conflicts of the main character in Rachael Lippincott's novel "Five Feet Apart". The author uses a qualitative method to this research. This study can be classified as a library research because the data were collected through reading the novel and reading some books, dictionary, journals and internet which are related to the topic. The novel can be categorized as the primary source and the other sources can be categorized as secondary sources. In analyzing the data, the researcher used psychological approach because it is very close with human life, such as feeling, thoughts and desire. The result showed that there are 2 kinds of conflict that appear in this research, internal and external. Internal conflict about how Stella's mind thinks about her genetic rare disease, while the external conflict discusses about how Stella Grant faces many people around her to struggle against cystic fibrosis (her disease).

Keywords: *Conflict, Five Feet Apart, Psychological Approach, Literature*

INTRODUCTION

Humans are creatures created in the most perfect form (Rorintulus et al, 2022). They are equipped by the sense that makes them different from other creatures, as Abraham Lincoln speech in Gettysburg Address, "All men are created equal". The reason why the novel *Five Feet Apart* by Rachael Lippincott is interesting to study is because there are several life lessons that can be drawn from this work, including that we are

reminded to be more grateful and give meaning to the life we live. Many people who are unfortunately have to suffer from rare diseases but they can more grateful to make sense of life (Onthoni, Rorintulus & Lolowang, 2022).

The reason why this work is important to study is besides adding insight into rare genetic disease, this work also teaches us to always be optimistic about every problem we face. Some people should be grateful to be born healthy, and some people should still be grateful because they are given more instincts to keep breathing, to survive against dangerous genetic diseases.

According to Barstain (Mutaqqi, 2016: 5), "Conflict is controversy that cannot be prevented. Kumaunang, Mogeia & Rorintulus, (2022) mentioned that Conflict has positive and negative impact. People have different character, from language and attitude. Depend on what and how people face it, because every people have a different character".

Five Feet Apart is basically a work that aims to provide an understanding of rare genetic diseases, which is wrapped in the love story of the two main characters, namely Stella Grant and Will Newman. They are both patients with a very rare genetic disease, namely Cystic Fibrosis. The disease causes the mucus in the body to become thick and sticky (Takamuntu, Wuntu & Rorimpandey, 2022). This condition makes the respiratory tract disturbed and also decreases lung function so that it requires additional oxygen to suffice the oxygen in the body.

Not only that, fellow sufferers of Cystic Fibrosis must maintain a minimum distance of 1.8 meters or 6 steps away. Bacterial infection among sufferers is a big risk. One touch between two CF (Cystic Fibrosis) sufferers is at risk of killing them. Will was someone Stella had clearly to stay away from. The only way to keep them alive is to keep their distance. However, being separated by a distance felt like a punishment to them, because of the feeling of love that had grown between them.

In general, what they experienced is expected to be able to make more people aware of the meaning of life, survival, and gratitude. In this phase of life, each of us will feel the lowest point in our life. In the end, the most important thing is how we respond

to this to keep getting up and fighting for ourselves, and those around us (Tatipang, 2022).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conflict

According to (Sigar & Rorintulus, 2020) and Luken (2003) that "*conflict is a struggle againsts opposing forces, occurs when the protagonist againsts an antagonist, or opposing force*" (Pardede, Selly and Desmalia, 2021: 20). While Gordon and Kuehner (1975) say, "*conflict is an internal or external struggle between main character and an opposing force*" (Learning & Jones, 1972: 13). Devito (1995:381) said that "*conflict is an interaction called communication between individuals with one another; undeniably it will cause conflict on different levels*" (Janis, Mister and Delly, 2021: 68).

From some of the experts explanation above, it can be concluded that conflict arises as a result of several qualities. Physical, intellectual, cultural, religious, and other distinctions might exist. Conflict has become commonplace in every society. We may infer that no one has never experienced conflict in this world. Even for the conflicts he has with other people around him or with himself. Conflict will never truly end until the community itself perishes.

Character differences also occur in the novel *Five Feet Apart* where the main character (Stella Grant) who suffers from a rare genetic disease called as "*Cystic Fibrosis*". She has to spend part of her life undergoing treatment in a hospital and she's also involved in several internal and external conflicts that appear in her life.

In a story, there are two types of conflict: internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict is a fight a character has with an outside power; the outside force can take many different forms. Internal conflict, on the other hand, is a fight that goes on in a character's head.

a) Kinds of Conflict

- Physical Conflict

The struggle between man and nature that manifests physically or essentially in the main character. When a character struggles against an outside force, it creates a physical conflict, a sort of external conflict.

In physical confrontation, a man is typically at odds with nature. A guy ascending a mountain, a lady battling to survive in a hurricane, or a man battling an army of ants on his plantation may all be depicted in such a tale. This type of fiction primarily appeals to readers' emotions nearly exclusively.

- **Social Conflict**

Conflict in which one person battles another is referred to as social conflict. For instance, two ladies vying for the same man's hand in marriage; two men vying for the same position; a detective set against a criminal; and a youngster at odds with his father.

- **Psychological Conflict**

Man struggles with himself, his conscience, his guilt, or simply tries to decide what he/she is going to do. This is known as psychological conflict or internal conflict. A woman struggling with the sequences of a lie she told, an unmarried pregnant girl trying to decide between having an abortion, giving her child up for adoption, or raising him alone are just a few examples of the types of characters we might see in such a story.

The attachment, worry, jealousy, rage, disagree, sadness, love, unlike, hope, arrogance, pity, and happiness in this case are the main character's psychological problems.

b) The Cause of Conflict

When we connect and communicate with people, conflict is something that we humans are fairly accustomed to. Conflict arises when there is an unbalanced mindset on the issues in life that originate from our actions to those of our surroundings. Cause of conflict is the way the author in starting a story and who will direct the purpose of the story. The author makes one or several character in a

certain situation in a story. This figure makes choices or takes actions that may have an effect on the problem's immediate or long-term resolution in the future.

The Effect of Conflict

We are all accustomed with conflict in daily life. We interact with others daily and speak with them. Therefore, in order to build relationships, we must communicate and adjust to others. When we engage and adapt to others, conflict will always arise since we cannot ignore the varied viewpoints found in the environment.

Conflict offers several impacts to the individual, such as despair, frustration, rage, uncomfortable, anxiety, and so on. Conflict's outcome is influenced by its root cause. In stories or in real life, it has joined a string of related events.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher uses a qualitative approach to this research. This means that the data in this study are not in the form of numbers, diagrams, or formulas, but in the form of words or quotes. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) said : "*Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in form of words or picture rather than numbers. The written result of the research contains quotations from data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation*"(Firstnov, Wowor and Rinny, 2019: 3)

Therefore, the conclusion of the statement above is that the researcher collected some data from several books related to the topic. This research includes literature research because the data collected from novels and other related books.

In this study, the sources used were primary and secondary sources. The researcher uses *Five Feet Apart* novel by Rachael Lippincott was published in November 2018 with 288 pages as primary source. The secondary source the researcher was watching the movie to get a clearer picture of the novel. Analysis data in the form of words, definitions, quotes, statements or dialogues that can support this research. The data will be analyzed based on the type of oppression and its impact, then the results will be presented descriptively. In other words, the researcher analyzes the data according to the topic and then presents the results in a narrative.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Every human in the world have their conflict. Many conflict exist to changed human to think that every conflict cannot be solved. Facing every conflict maybe made someone fell difficult and make them sad. So, human should solved their conflict by their on way. Being a human, we have different viewpoint to showed their conflict. Sometimes conflicts come from inside or outside. From inside we can called it Internal conflict and from outside is External conflict.

So, we will discuss about Internal and External conflict. Refers to Stella Stella Grant and Will Newman. They are both patients with a very rare genetic disease, namely *Cystic Fibriosis*. The disease causes the mucus in the body to become thick and sticky. This condition makes the respiratory tract disturbed and also decreases lung function so that it requires additional oxygen to suffice the oxygen in the body.

Internal Conflict

Internal conflict occurs inside of a character's mind. According to Nurgiyantoro (2013), *internal conflict or psychological conflict is the conflict that occurs in the heart or soul of a person or the characters in the story* (Rahaningmas & Insani, 2018). When a person is faced with a personal challenge and is unsure of how to proceed, internal conflict will result. The primary internal conflict is typically experienced by the main character or protagonist, according to Nurgiyantoro.

When someone facing a problem and made them has many conflict, mind and soul are an important tool because these are causes dilemma or emotional pains. Usually when a human is facing the conflict, sometimes they bring their feeling along pass the challenge. Overwhelmed with many feelings like sadness, depression, guilt, shame or fear, these emotions become so common and constant.

"It's not like I don't want to go. It's just, quite literally, a matter of life or death. I can't go off to Cabo, or anywhere for that matter, and risk not coming back. I can't do that to my parents. Not now." (P.3)

As it can be seen that how Stella's thought about her disease. She imagined if she is death, it makes her parents sad or depression . She tried to revert by her disease and

makes her parents happy and she can do things like other normal people. Stella is an optimist person.

"My lung capacity soon dropped to 35%. And now, much more than the fever and sore throat, having to undergo therapy here at the hospital for the next month"(P.11)

Despite having cystic fibrosis, often known as CF, which is a terrible ailment, Stella was never convinced that she would pass away any time soon. No one knows if she will survive her catastrophic disease or how long she has left to live. It demonstrates her hope that perhaps in the future she would be able to carry out all activities without having to stop to consider her condition because she is totally recovered.

*"New lungs can come in at any moment, so I've got to be ready!
" I say the words like I believe them wholeheartedly. Though after all these years I've learned to not get my hopes up too much."(p.8)*

The researcher discovered that Stella exhibits some optimism in the monologue passage above and considers her hope of receiving new lungs so she may live happily with her new lungs. Stella keeps assuring herself she would recover completely.

"There has been a lot of faking since the most absurd divorce ever. 22 After six months, they are still unable to even look at one another. It makes me incredibly long to hear his voice for some reason. I touch on his contact information and almost dial his number when I quickly decide against it. Since I never call on the first day and the Afflo Vest causes me to cough a lot, he could get worried. He continues to text me every hour to see how I'm doing. I wish to save my parents any concern. I can't. It would be better to wait till morning. (P.25)

Furthermore, the passage from Stella's monologue that was just quoted above also describes a deliberate trait of Stella. For some reason, she says, it makes me really desire to hear his voice. It describes a situation when a woman is missing her father but did not want her father to worry about her situation when she wanted to call. Since Stella stated that she didn't want to bother her parents, it has been her goal. I can't.

Stella does not want to increase her parents' concern about her. Stella cares deeply for her divorced parents and strives to keep them from worrying about her health.

"Our bodies make too much mucus, and that mucus likes to get into our lungs and cause infections, making our lung function de-teriorate."

Cystic Fibrosis sufferers who experience a drastic decrease in lung function require a Transplant. However, Transplantation cannot cure completely, it can only give the sufferer more time to live. Whatever happens in the future, Stella is still optimistic that by undergoing every treatment with a tub, she can get a transplant to at least live longer

External Conflict

External conflict is a conflict that comes from outside of the character (Talumepa, Rorintulus & Lolowang, 2022). According to Nurgiyantoro, external conflict is a conflict between a character and something outside him or her, perhaps the natural environment or human environment (Rahaningmas & Insani, 2018). Nurgiyantoro states that, the main external conflict is experienced and caused by a contradiction between characters, in the form of the main protagonist character and the main antagonist character.

"We can't get too close to each other. For cystic fibrosis patients, crossinfection from certain bacteria strains is a huge risk. One touch between two CFers can literally kill the both of them." (P.11)

Cystic Fibrosis sufferers should not be near each other. For patients with cystic fibrosis, infection resulting from crosses between different types of bacteria is a big risk. One touch between two Cystic Fibrosis sufferers is dangerous to kill them. They must be at least 6 feet or 1.8 meters apart from each other.

Stella : Letting your friends borrow your room for sex is disgusting, so, no.

Will : You don't like sex?

Stella : No, I like sex. I like sex. Sex is fine.

Will : Fine isn't exactly a ringing endorsement, but I'll take some common ground where I can get it.

Stella : We have nothing in common.

Will : Ooh, that's cold. (Five Feet Apart, 09:31-10:14)

Stella's and Will's different point of view about sex., Both of them are arguing about sex. The argument arises after Stella heard the conversation between Will and his friend. Will was jokingly offering his hospital bedroom to his friends for having sex, but that utterance makes Stella angry and disgusted. Stella's temper gets higher because Will was uttering his sentences in a sarcastic and offended way.

Stella: So, Will. He's a CFer, then?

Barb: A CFer and then some. B. cepacia. He's part of the new drug trial for Cevaflomalin. You contract that and you can kiss the possibility of new lungs good-bye. So, stay away."

Stella: "The trial?, what are his odds?" I start to say, looking over at Barb

Barb: "Nobody knows. The drug's too new."(P.24-25)

Will is a patient with Cystic Fibriosis as well as Burkholderia Cepacia. He's part of a trial of the drug Cevaflomalin. Burkholderia Cepacia is a type of bacteria that can be considered the same as a death sentence for people with Cystic Fibriosis, lucky to be able to live a few more years. Stella and Will are fellow Cystic Fibriosis sufferers who have to keep their distance from each other so that there is no bacterial cross infection that can harm them both.

Will point at the drawing behind Stella, a beautiful picture of lungs, flowers pouring out of the inside, a backdrop of stars behind them.

Will : "Now that is art." I pull my laptop closer to me, realizing what it means. "Healthy lungs! That's brilliant. Who did it?"

She looks back at it, pausing.

Stella : "My older sister. Abby."

Will : "That's some talent. I'd love to take a look at Abby's other work!"

A strange look comes onto her face, and her voice turns cold.

Stella : "Look. We're not friends. We're not sharing our stories. This is just about doing our treatments, okay?"

The call ends abruptly, my own confused face swinging into view (P.79)

In the middle of their conversation on Video Call, Will is then fascinated to see a painting of a lung with so many flowers spilling everywhere and a background of stars that symbolize the meaning of life right behind Stella. When Will asks who made it, Stella replies that it's his sister, Abby's handiwork. But when Will wanted to see other works by Abby, a strange look appeared on Stella's face, and her voice turned stiff. Stella then tells Will that the two of them are not good friends and it's not appropriate for the two of them to share their stories with each other, they are just undergoing treatment. Then their conversation just cut off. Since Abby's death, Stella has been a bit sensitive about things that related to her sister.

Six feet away.

Will sit down and watch how peaceful she looks, her face soft and calm. But her eyes slowly open to meet mine and she stiffens.

Will : "Abby's dead, isn't she?" I blurt out, cutting right to the point. She stares at me, not saying anything.

Stella : Finally she swallows, shaking her head. "Real nice, Will. About as delicate as a jackhammer."

Will : "Who has time for delicacy, Stella? We clearly don't—"

Stella : "Stop! stop reminding me that I'm dying. I know. I know that I'm dying." she says, cutting Will off.

She shakes her head, her face serious.

Stella : "But I can't, Will. Not now. I have to make it."

"I've been dying my whole life, but then Abby died. It was supposed to be me, Will. Everyone was ready for that."

She takes a deep breath, the weight of the world on her shoulders.

Stella : "It will kill my parents if I die too."

Will : "The regimen. All this time I thought you were afraid of death, but it's not that at all." I watch her face as I keep talking. "You're a dying girl with survivor's guilt. That is a complete mind-fuck. How do you live with—"

Stella : "Living is the only choice I have, Will!"

Will stand up, staring at her. She turns, pulling on her face mask and bolting for the door. The door slams behind her.

"Stella, wait! Come on!" I take a few steps after her, wishing I could just reach out and grab her hand, so I can fix it. (P.83)

In the dialogue scene above, Will walks up to Stella in the gym, because of Will's high curiosity, he immediately asked Stella to the point about Abby, Stella's sister. Finally, Stella shook her head while venting her worries about death. She said she had to live, she had been dying her whole life and every day her birthday was celebrated as if it were her last. But then Abby died, and she said she should have died. Her parents would be devastated if she died too. Therefore, the treatment plan that she has been doing so far is not because she is afraid of death, but life is the only way to keep her parents motivated and happy.

(Stella and Will on VideoCall)

Stella: I knew it! Where's your AffloVest? You weren't supposed to take it off for another fifteen minutes. And did you take your Creon? I'll bet that's a no.

Will: "We're sorry, you have reached a number that is no longer in service. If you feel you have reached this recording in error—" Will make a fake automated voice

Stella: "You can't be trusted"(P.64)

Previously, Will had agreed with Stella that he would adhere to his treatment plan with discipline and integrity. But when Will received a VideoCall from Stella, sure enough, Stella's suspicions against Will were again correct, as Will again didn't drink creon and also didn't wear his AffloVest for 15 minutes as suggested. For the next 2 days, they always communicate via Skype. Stella had to keep an eye on a Will at all times to make sure he obeyed the rules he should have always done.

"I stand up, my heart sinking in my chest at the thought of them leaving, but I don't want to hold them up." (P.5)

Actually Stella, Camila and Mya are planning a 2 week vacation to cabo for a senior outing. But what they had planned did not go according to expectations because Stela could not participate due to the illness she was suffering from Cystic Fibrosis requiring her to stay in the hospital for treatment.

Conclusion

Five Feet Apart is a love-themed novel. The word "love" here is not only from lovers, but also from loved ones such as family and friends. Stella Grant as the main character show it in the discussion. From the discussion of the study, the researcher has concluded all kinds of conflict and how she faced the conflict to answer all the research questions of this research. The answer of the first question, the researcher found that those are some conflict that happened to the main character. The main character is Stella Grant, a patient with a rare genetic disease who feels the dilemma and pressure of the conflict she is experiencing.

Based on the results of the conflict in the novel *Five Feet Apart*, we can concluded that the internal conflict about how Stella's mind thinks about her disease, she feels a dilemma or emotional pain because if she fails to do every step, it will make her parents cry and disappointed. While the external conflict discusses how Stella Grant faces many people around her to struggle against her disease. She blamed herself for everything that happened in her life, but on the other hand, many people act likes they blamed

what Stella did. They had an argument and make Stella felt down and change her emotion.

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