

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Horror story is “a fictional narrative (usually in prose) of variable length (but tending to be between 2,000 words and 100,000 words or more) which shocks or even frightens the readers, and/or perhaps induces a feeling of repulsion or loathing” (Cuddon 388). The story usually revolves around murder, suicide, torture, fear and madness; or about supernatural occurrences such as vampires, ghost, demons, exorcism and similar topics (388). One certain writer who explored the wide topics of horror story in his works is Stephen King.

Stephen King is a famous American writer who is known for his horror stories, such as *The Shining* (1977), *It* (1986), and *Misery* (1987). King’s horror stories put his readers into the world he creates, “He creates engaging characters who you want to root for and puts them in situations where they have to fight to stay alive” (“Stephen King Novels”). He is adept in making the reader curious about what will happen in the story with his plot. (“Stephen King Biography”). He often uses a what-if outline in the plot of his novels. The main character is

placed in a certain uncommon situation so that the readers will keep asking about any possibilities as a result of the what-if situation. “The most interesting situations can usually be expressed as a what-if outline” (“Stephen King: How to Write”).

Misery, the novel I have chosen to analyze in this thesis, revolves around the fictional author Paul Sheldon, a best-selling writer who has an accident and later is saved by Annie Wilkes, a self proclaimed number one fan of Paul. The situation seems safe as Annie nurses Paul, but it gets worse when Paul finds that she is psychologically unstable and over-affected by his best selling novel. The suspense intensifies as she imprisons and demands him to write the novel that suits her taste. In the process, she constantly tortures Paul to the point when she cuts his leg.

As the most outstanding literary element in this novel is its plot, I choose to analyze the elements of plot. Plot is “the sequence of incidents or events of which a story is composed” (Perrine 43). Certain elements of plot are used to trigger the reader’s curiosity and keep him wondering. The first element is suspense, “the quality in a story that makes the readers ask ‘What’s going to happen next?’ or ‘how will this turn out?’” (45). Suspense urges the readers to read more in order to find out the answers to these questions. The second element is surprise, “the quality that gives an unexpected result or answer for the suspense” (49). Surprise occurs when the outcome of certain incidents is different from the readers’ expectation. The third element is artistic unity,

. . . a condition of a successful literary work whereby all its elements work together for the achievement of its central purpose. In an artistically

unified work nothing is included that is irrelevant to the central purpose, nothing is omitted that is essential to it, and the parts are arranged in the most effective order for the achievement of that purpose. (“Artistic Unity”)

Statement of the Problem

The problems that are going to be analysed in this thesis are:

1. Which parts of the story act as suspense in the novel?
2. Which parts of the story act as surprise in the novel?
3. How is the artistic unity in the novel constructed?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the above problems, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show the suspenses in the novel.
2. To show the surprises in the novel.
3. To show how the artistic unity is presented in the novel.

Method of Research

I use the library research in writing my thesis. First I read Stephen King’s *Misery* as the primary text. I also read some data from the library and the Internet to support my analysis. Then I draw the conclusion of my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters preceded by the Acknowledgements, the Table of Contents, and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis.

Chapter Two is the analysis of the elements of plot of Stephen King's *Misery*. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. Finally, the thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the synopsis of the novel and the biography of the author.

