

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Fiction novel has many interesting sub genres, one of which is fictional mystery. One form of fictional mysteries is detective fiction “. . . which explicitly features a detective solving a crime” (“Mystery”). It was popular in the era between two World Wars (1920 – 1939), a period which was known as the golden age of detective fiction. A female British writer, Agatha Christie was well-known for her detective fiction during this golden age of detective fiction (Williams). Christie received several honours for her masterpieces in literature, such as the Grand Master Award from the Mystery Writer of America in 1954 and Mystery Writer of the Century in May 2000 (“John Curran: 75 Facts About Christie”).

Christie gave great contribution to literature for she wrote 75 best-seller novels. Many of her novels are always worth reading as each of them has an interesting plot which is arranged in an effective order. The events are unpredictable and the motive usually fits to human dark side, such as anger, jealousy, and revenge (Hobbs). Her famous detectives in most of her stories are Hercule Poirot, who always works together with his partner Captain Hastings, and an old yet clever woman character, Miss Marple. Her common plot in all her

novels uses the least likely suspect as to solve the murderer of the crime, which helps to build the readers' attention throughout the story.

From many Christie's books that have been published, I choose *Murder is Easy* to be analyzed in my thesis. This book is interesting due to its plot twist and also her new technique in the plot known as devious multiple murder plot which is a string of apparently unrelated deaths ("Murder is Easy"). A number of unrelated deaths occur so that it is difficult for Luke Fitzwilliam, the new detective who will solve the crime and find the murderer. *Murder is Easy* is about several unrelated deaths which happen in a small peaceful village named Wychwood-under-Ashe. The deaths make Luke suspicious at the fact that they look as if a mad person caused them. Luke as a retired policeman is interested to investigate the case. During the searching for the murderer, there is another unpredictable victim, which makes the readers keep wondering about the person behind all the crimes.

As the novel deals with an exciting and breathtaking plot, I would like to discuss the elements of plot in my thesis. According to M.J. Murphy in *Understanding Unseens*, "Plot is a carefully thought-out plan in which all events, all the actions and reaction of characters, contribute towards the forward movement of the story" (34). It consists of three elements; they are suspense, surprise, and artistic unity. Suspense is "the quality of a story that makes the readers ask 'what is going to happen next?' or 'how will this turn out?' and impels him to read on to find the answers to these questions" (Perrine 45). Surprise is "proportional to the unexpectedness of what happens; it becomes pronounced when the story departs radically from our expectations" (47), and artistic unity means

. . . the 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 I am going to discuss are:

1. What are the suspenses in the novel?
2. What are the surprises in the novel?
3. How is the artistic unity presented in the novel?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems above, 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

The method I use in writing this thesis is library research. First, I read Agatha Christie’s *Murder is Easy* as the primary text. Then, I read some references and take some data from the Internet to support my analysis of the elements of plot in the novel. Finally, I draw some conclusion from what is discussed.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters, preceded by Table of Contents and Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two deals with the analysis of elements of plot in Agatha Christie's *Murder is Easy*. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices, which contain the synopsis of *Murder is Easy* and the biography of Agatha Christie.

