CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sidney Sheldon is best known today for his exciting blockbuster novels, such as <u>Are You Afraid of the Dark?</u>, <u>The Sky is Falling</u>, <u>Tell Me Your Dreams</u>, and <u>The Stars Shine Down</u>. All his novels have been international bestselling books. Blockbuster novels refer to novels which have been an unusually successful hit with widespread popularity and huge sales. Other examples of blockbuster novels are <u>The Valley of the Dolls,</u> <u>The Godfather,</u> <u>and etc.</u> Most of his novels have become major feature films or TV mini series, and there are more than 300 million copies of his books in print throughout the world. "Sidney Sheldon, a writer whose keen grasp of popular tastes fueled a string of feverishly romantic and suspenseful books that made him a perennial bestseller" (Levine and Nelson). For instance, most of the victims have relationship with the main character.

One of his bestselling novels, <u>Tell Me Your Dreams,</u> is a thriller novel which really catches my interest. It uses simple modern language as well as

Maranatha Christian University

having an exciting plot. This story tells about three female characters named Ashley, Toni, and Alette who work at the same company. After a series of brutal murders that take place on men all linked in one way or another to one of these women, we are led to an unexpected turn. Who kills these men, and why? What secrets are they hiding in their past life? It seems that each character has some deep, dark past and it becomes fascinating for the readers to see their stories intertwine. In the beginning, the police think that one of them is the murderer; still, that is not the true fact. After several investigations, all proofs indicate that the murderer is the same person, Ashley. It is said that she has a split personality. To prove that she is not guilty, Ashley gets a favour from her father's friend. Then, the process of solving the case is held at the court so as to find the real truth whether Ashley is guilty or not.

Furthermore, this novel, <u>Tell Me Your Dreams,</u> is "the story which is packed with suspense. It is based on a very realistic concept" (Jennifer). This is the interesting thing which becomes the reason why this novel is chosen as both my reading and the source of my analysis. I am certain that the main key why this novel becomes interesting to read is due to the elements of plot in this novel. These elements of plot (suspense, surprise and artistic unity) make the readers always want to read the novel.

I am curious as well as interested to analyse the suspense, surprise, and artistic unity in the novel which cause millions of readers to feel both amazed and curious to read the novel.

Based on Perrine's theory, there are three laws of plot which the novel must fulfil to be a good novel.

"Suspense is the quality in a story that makes the reader ask 'What's going to happen next?' and impels him to read on to find the answer to these questions" (Perrine 45). "Surprise is proportional to the unexpectedness of what happens; it becomes pronounced when the story departs radically from our expectation" (Perrine 47). While it is said that "(A)rtistic Unity is essential to a good plot; nothing irrelevant that does not contribute to the total meaning; nothing that is there only for its own sake or its own excitement" (Reuben).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

1. Which events act as suspense in the novel?

2. Which events act as surprise in the novel?

3. How do the suspense and surprise create artistic unity in the novel?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the suspense in the novel

2. To identify the surprise in the novel

3. To show that the suspense and surprise create artistic unity in the novel.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

I use library research for my thesis, first by reading Tell Me Your Dreams as the primary text. Second, I also read as well as compile some data from the Internet so as to support my analysis of suspense, surprise, and artistic unity of the novel. Finally, I make some conclusion from my analysis.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problems, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is the Discussion of Suspense, Surprise, and Artistic Unity in <u>Tell Me Your Dreams</u>. The third chapter is the Conclusion. Finally, the ending of the thesis is the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the Synopsis of the novel and the Biography of the author.

Maranatha Christian University