

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the portrayal of the protagonist in The Penny, I would like to draw some conclusions. There is a young fourteen-year-old girl named Jenny Black, who undergoes a horrible condition in her house, supposedly the safest place for her. However, she is sexually, mentally and physically abused by her own family members, especially her father. This novel shows that Jenny is the victim of a collateral abusive pattern in her family, because the cycle of abuse can run further to the next generation. Jenny's grandfather abuses her father, and her father abuses her even worse. Moreover, the situation becomes worse because her mother and her sister cannot do anything to help her. Jenny's mother who is supposed to take care and protect her children, blinds herself from what her husband has done to their own daughter. The result of this condition is a kind of trauma, which later affects and shapes Jenny's characteristics.

From the analysis, I find that the protagonist, Jenny, is a round and dynamic character. In the beginning of the novel, she is portrayed as an irreligious girl, she has little knowledge about God. When someone mentions God, she understands it in an earthly understanding by measure things with what she

already known. However, there is a point that makes Jenny's characteristics change. That is, when one day she is on the way to watch a Grace Kelly movie, she picks a penny on the asphalt, which causes a series of events that leads Jenny to a personal relationship with God. From that moment, Jenny starts to accept God in her life and understand the need of forgiving in a purpose to be healed and to break the pattern of abuse in her family to reach a better life.

Jenny is also described as a self-conscious girl. She always lives under Jean, her sister's shadow. Physically, when comparing herself to her sister, Jenny feels as if her sister has everything that she does not. Moreover, Jenny's father's bad treatment makes her feel ashamed and worthless. However, in the end of the novel Jenny becomes a confident person. She values herself more and she can prove that she can do something right when she takes a decision to go against her father to stop the abuse.

Being abused also makes her become a distrustful girl. The traumatic experiences that she has undergone in her family make it difficult for her to trust other people, including herself. However, thanks to Miss Shaw and Aurelia, Jenny starts to trust other people. Jenny's being an introverted girl because of having been abused and bad treatment of her father drifts herself away from socializing and making friends. However, Jenny's trust in God's unconditional love affects her relationship with other people and she turns into an extroverted girl. Now Jenny has a lot of friends and people like her.

Based on the analysis above, there are some things that can be concluded. Firstly, one's characteristics can be shaped by traumatic experiences. Then, the trauma itself can affect one's personal and social life. Moreover, the condition

will become worse if there is no support from family and society. In Jenny's case, she has to undergo the horrible condition of being abused by her family member, and she has to face it on her own. It also becomes worse because it affects Jenny's personal and social life. However, the condition changes when Jenny earns support from Miss Shaw and Aurelia. It is proven that support from other people can help one to overcome a problem.

I believe the main issue of this novel is Christianity and the need to forgive. In Christianity, one can be healed from his / her past trauma by forgiving those who have hurt them. Thus, my second conclusion is that one's life can be changed totally when that person accepts God and forgives those who have hurt them. One cannot rely on his / her own power, and without forgiveness, one cannot be free from any pain, any trauma and any pattern of abuse. In Jenny's case, when she makes a decision to accept God and forgive her father, she is able to stop the abuse in her family and be cured from her past traumatic experience.

In my opinion, the story seems alive and real. It is because the condition itself is based on the author's own experience and I find that a lot of people have also experienced it. For some people, abuse in the family is a common thing, especially when it is done by parents to their children, because there is a misconception that it is usual for parents to discipline their children by hitting or slapping them. Different from hitting and slapping, raping is less common to happen, because society believes that incest is prohibited. However, now adays there are a number of incest and raping cases in many families. That is why, the

condition in the novel seems real because what happens to Jenny has also happened in real life.

I also find an interesting thing in the novel, which is the use of a penny to represent or symbolize God's messages. Often I find that God uses simple things to give messages and clues. He also works in the smallest details such as a familiar coin of penny, which everyone can easily find on the street or anywhere. In the novel, it is described that Jenny's life does not suddenly change after she accepts Jesus. Jenny's father does not stop abusing her and Jesus does not suddenly appear and rescue her. However, Jenny's faith grows slowly together with her hope of a penny. She believes that on the day she finds that penny, she simultaneously finds God's unconditional love and hope that He can change her life into a better one.

Personally, I admire the character of Jenny and her struggle to reach a better life. Although her life seems so horrible and gloomy, but as a fourteen-year-old girl, she can successfully face all her problems. The process and development of Jenny's characteristics makes the protagonist seem more human. I, as a Christian learn from the protagonist that God will always answer my prayers even though it might not be in a way or time that I expect to. Many people give up before God has the opportunity to answer their prayers. However, Jenny as the protagonist shows that even though God lets her wait longer, He gives her the strength to survive. Another valuable thing that I learn from the protagonist is to forgive sincerely one who gives most pains and trauma in her life. In my opinion, the messages of the authors are successfully delivered to the readers. Everyone

has his / her own problems, hatred and struggles. However one must be able to forgive and trust God to help and solve the problems.