

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

The Last Song is one of the most favorable novel by American author Nicholas Sparks which was originally scheduled for release on 8 September 2009 by Grand Central Publishing. The novel set in the 21st century, at Wilmington, North Carolina. *The Last Song* is Sparks's fourteenth published novel (fifteenth published book). This novel then becomes movie with the same title "*The Last Song*". The movie is directed by Julie Anne Robinson and the movie is distributed by American Touchstone Pictures. *The Last Song* is about love between parents and their children. The novel presents the major characters of the novel, they are Veronica Miller usually called Ronnie, Will Blakelee, a beach volleyball player, Steve Miller (Ronnie and Jonah's father), Kim Miller (Ronnie and Jonah's mother), and then Jonah (Ronnie's younger brother).

Nicholas Sparks is one of the world's most beloved storytellers. All of his books have been New York Times bestsellers, with over 89 million copies in print worldwide, in over 50 languages. The second of three children, Nicholas Sparks was born in 1965 in Omaha, Nebraska. Nicholas graduated from Notre Dame in 1988 with a degree in finance and married his wife, Cathy in 1989 and

their five children: Miles, Ryan, Landon, and twin Lexie and Savannah. Sparks wrote one of his best-known stories, each of Nicholas's novels has ranked as an international bestseller. After the Notebook, additional novels followed in rapid succession, including *Message in a Bottle* published in 1998, *A Walk to Remember* published in 1999. After that, it came *The Rescue* published in 2000, *A Bend in the Road* published in 2001, *Night in Rodanthe* published 2002, *The Guardian* and *The Wedding* published in 2003. Sparks co-authored *Three Weeks with My Brother* with his brother, Micah in 2004 and then returned to solo works with *True Believer* and *At First Sight* in 2005, *Dear John* in 2006, *The Choice* in 2007, and *The Lucky One* in 2008.

The Last Song is a novel that tells about at eighteenth Ronnie Miller from broken home family, her parents divorced and her father moved to Georgia three years prior. After that the parent's divorce she becomes a rebellious. Ever since, Ronnie has refused to talk with her father and once a classical piano child prodigy under the tutelage of her father, Ronnie now ignores to play the piano. Ronnie has been received in Juilliard School since she was young, but she refuses to attend because she hates her father. After graduation, her mother sends Ronnie and her younger brother, Jonah to spend the summer with her father, Steve. Her father is a former Juilliard School professor and concert pianist, lives in Tybee Island, the small beach town in Georgia where he grew up, working on a stained glass window for the local church to replace the one the church lost in a

fire. According to the local's environment, it was her father who had set fire to the church one night.

After arrival, Ronnie becomes miserable, defiant, and defensive toward all those around her. Including a popular handsome boy, Will Blakelee, whose introduction involved crashing into her during a volleyball match. She shrugs him off and meets Blaze, an outcast who lives with her boyfriend Marcus. Then, Ronnie discovers a Loggerhead Sea Turtle nest at the beach near her house and while protecting it, she meets Will again as a volunteer who work for the aquarium. After a night of staying up to defends the turtles with Will, she discovers he is deeper than she belived, and begins to have feelings for him. As Ronnie falls in love with Will, she also manages to form a better and stronger bond with her father.

Later the day, the turtle eggs hatch and her father collapses with a coughing seizure that evening. Ronnie immediately has Steve rushed to a hospital and realizes that he had been diagnosed with cancer long before her summer visit and why her parents marriage has fallen apart. She decides to start spending more time with her father since he is unlikely to survive any longer. Around the same time, Ronnie and Will get into a confrotation because Will confessed that Scott had actually set fire to the church, but he had never confessed. Leading a slow life she tries to fill in the three years of ignoring her father into a couple months. She continues working on his piece of music (titled

“For Ronnie), because her father’s hand could not finish. When she finally plays the last chord, she looks up to see that her father had died while listening to her play and is heartbroken.

At the ending of the novel, Ronnie decides to share with them the song she helped finish. Before she sits down to play, sunlight shines through the stained glass window. Ronnie is packing up her dad’s stuff when she sees Will standing outside, she goes outside to see him and Will apologizes to her for everything that had happened and Ronnie forgives him. Will surprises Ronnie by revealing that he will be transferring to Columbia in order to be with her.

The novel gets a lot of opinion from the readers. One of them is opinion from sunnyhunny saying that “*The Last Song* by Nicholas Sparks is a phenomenal novel, not only because of the incredibly heart-warming love story that it tells, but also because of the thoughtful yet relatable plot that the romance is woven into. This book is about love of all kinds. It is about love between couples, love between family members, and even love between enemies” (http://www.teenink.com/reviews/book_reviews/article/200283/The-Last-Song-by-Nicholas-Sparks/). Another opinion is from Gymbabe (2010) saying that “Yet again, amazing review! I already intended to read this book, since I love Nicholas Sparks, but if I hadn't, you would have made me want to read it! Very well-put and intriguing. I’m sure it’s an excellent book”

(http://www.teenink.com/reviews/book_reviews/article/200283/The-Last-Song-by-Nicholas-Sparks/).

The Last Song is an interesting novel, there are four reasons why the researcher is interested to analyze this novel. The first is the researcher wants to know the character and characterization of the novel especially character of Ronnie Miller.

The second reason is attractive setting. This novel shows the past and present setting time and place perfectly. The setting place is at Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina.

The third reason is *The Last Song* novel tells dramatic among child, parents, and someone. It is a precious novel that is favorite by Ronnie Miller.

And the last reason is parents divorce that becomes the main issue of the novel is reflected well.

The researcher decides to use a developmental psychology approach to analyze the novel because the theory is appropriate with the theme of novel. So, the researcher gives the title of the research paper: **THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS DIVORCE ON THE CHILD PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN NICHOLAS SPARKS' *THE LAST SONG* NOVEL (2009): A DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

The Last Song is one of Nicholas Sparks best novel. There is no literature review for the novel version, but the movie version has one. The previous researcher of *The Last Song* movie is Mahfudho (2013) *Growth of Veronica Miller's Personality in Julie Anne Robinson's The Last Song Movie (2010): A Psychoanalytic Approach*. In her research, she concluded that the power of love change hatred, misunderstanding causes hatred, and hatred ends in regret along with the growth of Veronica Miller's personality.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the research background above, the major problem of this study is "How is the influence of parents divorce on the child personality development in Nicholas Sparks *The Last Song* novel?"

D. Limitation of the Study

In this research, the researcher focuses this research on The Influence of Parents Divorce on The Child Personality Development in Nicholas Sparks *The Last Song* novel using a developmental psychology approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To describe the novel based on structural elements of the novel.
2. To analyze the influence of parents divorce on the child personality development based on a developmental psychology approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

The researcher hopes that her research on *The Last Song* novel has benefits. The benefits that are expected from this research are:

1. Theoretical Benefits

The result of this study is expected to be able to give contribution and information the development of the knowledge, an academic reference by other researchers to conduct further research and particularly the literary studies on *The Last Song* novel.

2. Practical Benefits

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the researcher study on the novel *The Last Song* with a developmental psychology approach.

G. Research Method

There are five elements that support in research method, they are:

1. Type of the study

In this research, the researcher applies qualitative research because there is no need statistic data. The data sources are library, internet and literary data. Its purpose is to analyze using developmental psychology approach. The steps to conduct the research are as follow: (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and finally, (5) determining technique of data analysis.

2. Object of the study

The object of the study is the influence of parents divorce on the child personality development in *The Last Song* novel by Nicholas Sparks. It was analyzed by using a developmental psychology approach.

3. Type of Data and Source

The types of the data of the research are text and document. The sources of the data used in this research are categorized into two namely primary data and secondary data:

a. Primary Data

It is taken from the novel *The Last Song*.

b. Secondary Data

It is taken from the material and data related to the study. The sources are books in library and internet.

4. Data Collecting Method

The method to collect the data is by note-taking. The researcher involves some required steps:

- a. Reading the novel.
- b. Identifying and marking the point of the novel.
- c. Determining the major character that will be analyzed.
- d. Taking notes of information in both primary data and secondary data source.

- e. Arranging the data into several parts based on classification.
- f. Analyzing the data of research on developmental psychology approach.
- g. Drawing conclusion based on the analysis data.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The researcher uses developmental psychology and applies a descriptive approach. The steps taken by the researcher in analyzing the data are as follows, the first is analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel. The second step is analyzing the data based on a developmental psychology. Focus will be paid on the influence of parents divorce on the child personality development.

H. Research Paper Organization

The research paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is introduction, which consists of the background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefits of the study, research method, and research paper organization. Chapter II includes comprises of underlying theory involving notion of developmental psychology, the perspective of developmental psychology, notion of parents divorce, the perspective of before and after parents divorce, and theoretical approach. Chapter III deals with structural analysis of the novel and discussion. Chapter IV deals with the structural elements of the novel and discussion. Chapter V presents conclusion and suggestion.