

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

*Up at the Villa* is a classical romance story that tells how a young beautiful widow is caught between three men. It is a fictional novel that was written by William Sommerset Maugham and published for the first time in 1941 by Doubleday Publishers in England. *Up at the Villa* was also later published by Vintage Publishers. Currently, *Up at the Villa* is uploaded on many blogs and can be downloaded in various file formats from websites like <http://www.mymaughamcollection.blogspot.com>.

The novelette *Up at the Villa* was written by William Sommerset Maugham during his journey across Europe because of the outbreak of World War I. William Sommerset Maugham was born on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1874 in the British Embassy in Paris. His father, Robert Ormond Maugham, worked for the Embassy in France. He died when William was ten years old. After his father's death, he went to live with his uncle in Whitstable, Kent.

Maugham became a medical student after an education at King's School, Canterbury and Heidelberg University in Germany. He wrote his first novel *Liza of Lambeth* in 1897. It was sold well and he decided to leave medicine and dedicated himself to being a writer full time. He continued to write *Lady Frederick* in 1907 and achieved fame. In 1908, he had four plays running simultaneously in London.

He became an even more renowned novelist when he successfully published *Human Bondage* in 1915, followed by another successful book, *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919). He also improved his reputation as a fine short story writer of *Rain and The Trembling of a Leaf*. He also had great success with his films such as *The Circle* (1921), *East of Suez* (1922), *The Constant Wife* (1926) anti-war, and *For Services Rendered* (1932). In his later years Maugham wrote his autobiography, *Summing Up* (1938) and other works of fiction such as *Up at the Villa* (1941), *The Razor's Edge* (1945), *Catalina* (1948) and *Quartet* (1949). He died in 1965.

The following is a summary of Maugham's novel *Up at the Villa*. Mary Panton is a young widow age 30 who comes from Britain. She had an unhappy marriage with a gambler then he suddenly and tragically died, bringing her more misfortune. After her husband's death, she moves to Italy to stay in a Villa in uphill Florence. Leonard is the owner of the villa and lends it to Mary's father who then allows his daughter to live there. Edgar Swift, who is in the Indian service like his father had been, asks to get married to Mary because he has loved her since she was nine years old. He is Mary's father's friend. At night, Mary and Edgar received a dinner invitation from Princess Sar Ferdinando in the restaurant. Mary comes alone without Edgar because he must report to be Governor of Bengal in India. Before leaving Mary, Edgar declares his love to her and waits for the answer until he is back from India.

During the dinner, Princess Sar Ferdinando and her partners are disturbed by music being played by the violinist. He plays very bad, far

inferior to the usual violinist who play sat the Restaurant. Mary gives him ten lira anyway, despite his performance. Mary then meets Rowley Flint, a young Englishman, and starts to make private conversation. After the Dinner, Princess asked Mary to drive Rowley back to his hotel. During their journey, they talk to each other but things change quickly when Rowley Flint professes his love to Mary followed by a marriage proposal, but she quickly rejects him because it is only their first meeting.

She drives her car directly to the villa but when she goes to open the door, there is a man standing inside. She is surprised to see that it is the violinist from the restaurant. His name is Karl Richter, an illegal immigrant from Austria and now a beggar in Florence. He is desperate because he has no money to eat. Mary and Karl go inside of her villa and enjoy the meeting. They enter Mary's room and they begin to explore the mutual desire growing inside of each of them. It is going beautifully before Karl Richter suddenly professes his love to Mary and asks her to be his wife. She swiftly rejects him and he immediately kills himself with her revolver.

Mary then calls Rowley as soon as possible to help her throw away the corpse. When Rowley arrives at her villa, they go to the hill and throw away the corpse without thinking of the consequences in their haste to forget their deed. As far as they are concerned, nothing happened last night. The next day, Edgar Swift comes back from India. He comes to the Villa, demanding her answer to his proposal. Unfortunately Mary rejects him because she does not want burden Edgar. He goes back to India and continues his career. Suddenly

Rowley arrives. He asks Mary to walk around with him. He continues to insist on marrying Mary until finally she accepts his marriage proposal.

The public response of *Up at the Villa* is both positive and negative. Catherine from England said that she generally likes William Somerset Maugham's writing. *Up at the villa* is really more of a novelette, a very short story, and quick read. Whatever you call the story, she still considered *Up at the Villa* is enjoyable. Jessica from Chicago said that *Up at the Villa* is a story written in simple and short language, with characters that come alive with dialogue and sentiments reflected in the worst human nature in a melting pot of circumstances. It is just a novelette, designed for quick and easy read over a 48 hour time period or thereabouts. The characters are one dimensional, Edgar is a hero, Rowley Flint, the money gentleman and Mary is the ideal wife. She did not believe Maugham's books would have been best sellers today but she can certainly tell that they have a timeless attraction to them, probably because of their portrayal of human nature, which can always be surprising. Both Catherine and Jessica felt passively about the novelette.

There are also negative responses. First, Margaret from England said that it is the only Maugham story that she had ever read that she nearly disliked. The story is a psychological suspense where a woman picks up a stranger out of the kindness of her heart. It seemed like an old clichés story. She disliked the portrayal of the main characters. The relationship set up at the end of the book just looks abusive to her and she did not care for Maugham's attitude toward his female protagonist. Next, Jay Carr said on the Boston

Globe that there is nothing grand or sweeping in *Up at the Villa*. It is mediocre. The setting in Tuscan is not appropriate and it needs to be more glorious.

*Up at the villa* was also filmed by the great director Philip Haas in 2000. It was produced by Geoff Stier and the screenplay was written by Belinda Haas. The *Up at the Villa* movie was distributed by USA Films which released it on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2000 with a 115 minute running time. The cast is Kristin Scott Thomas as Mary Panton, Anne Bancroft as Princess Sar Ferdinando, James Fox as Sir Edgar, Derek Jacoby as Karl Richter, and Sean Penn as Rowley Flint.

There are four reasons for choosing this novel. The first reason is the characters of this novel especially Rowley Flint. He has strong characteristic. He is a young Englishman who loves Mary very much. He never feels discourage in his quest to get Mary's love even after Mary rejected him over and over. His love for her is always constant regardless of whether or not he will be accepted by her or not. His persistence finally leads to Mary accepting his love.

The second reason for choosing the novel is its setting in Tuscany, Italy. Italy is a beautiful place for a budding romance. William Sommerset Maugham comes from England but he felt that Italy was a more idyllic setting for this particular story. A love story in Italy is a popular trope and can be imagined and described easily by the readers.

The third reason for choosing is Maugham's writing style, made apparent in his diction. The language of this novel can be understood easily by the readers. *Up at the Villa* is a romance novel published 1941 but the writer chooses special words to deliver the romantic atmosphere. The special words can be shown most clearly through the conversation between the characters. The author also includes the Italian language to make the story feel as if it is authentically taking place in Italy.

The last reason for choosing the novel is that the story *Up at the Villa* inspires many young men and women to be careful in choosing his or her spouse. The main idea of this story is Mary struggling with her conflict of choosing the proper husband. Considering equal social status in choosing spouse is an extremely important criterion in Victorian England and it is also reflected in William Sommerset Maugham's *Up at the Villa* (1941).

Base on the explanation above, the researcher proposed to conduct a research entitled "THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS IN CHOOSING SPOUSE REFLECTED IN WILLIAM S. MAUGHAM'S *UP AT THE VILLA* (1941): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH".

## **B. Literature Review**

*Up at the Villa* (1941) is a romantic novel which is written by William Sommerset Maugham. As far as the researcher is concerned, there is no literature review related to the *Up at the Villa* (1941) novel. The researcher also had searched at least among university in Central Java such as UNS,

UNNES, UNDIP, UNWIDA and some universities in Yogyakarta such as UGM, UIN, UNY but unfortunately there are no literary reviews regarding this topic. However, the researcher also searched on the internet to find more literature reviews but unfortunately there are no literature reviews concerning this study.

Therefore, the researcher cannot compare this research with others research because it is the first study of *Up at the Villa* (1941). The researcher analyzes the importance of equal social status in choosing a spouse reflected in William Sommerset Maugham's *Up at the Villa* novel by using a sociological approach.

### **C. Problem Statement**

Formulating a problem statement for analyzing this novel is crucial. It helps the researcher better understand the research that will be conducted. Therefore, based on the previous background of the study, the writer proposes the problem "How is the importance of equal social status in choosing a spouse reflected in William Sommerset Maugham's *Up at the Villa* (1941) using a sociological approach?"

### **D. Limitation of the Study**

The researcher focuses on analyzing the main character of *Up at the Villa*. The problem is limited concerning on the social issue. It is how importance of equal social status in choosing spouse reflected in William

Sommerset Maugham' *Up at the villa* (1941) based on a sociological approach.

#### **E. Objectives of the Study**

In carrying out this research, the researcher formulates the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To analyze *Up at the Villa* novel based on structural elements of the novel.
2. To describe the importance of equal social status in choosing a spouse in *Up at the Villa* (1941) based on a sociological approach.

#### **F. The Benefits of the Study**

The researcher hopes that this research on *Up at the Villa* (1941) will have many benefits. The benefits of this study will be distinguished into two benefits:

##### **1. Theoretical Benefits**

The result of this study is expected to be able to give information and contribute to the development of knowledge as an academic reference by other researchers to conduct further research and particularly literary studies on *Up at the Villa*.

##### **2. Practical Benefits**

The study is expected to enrich the knowledge and experiences of the writer and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or other universities who have an interest in literary studies of the novel from a sociological approach.



## **G. Research Method**

### **1. Type of the Study**

This type of this research is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research that expresses the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed objects.

### **2. Object of the Study**

The object of the study is the novel *Up at the Villa* (1941), written by William Sommerset Maugham.

### **3. Type of Data and Data Source**

#### **a. Type of the Data**

The type of data are the words, phrases, and sentences in *Up at the Villa* (1941) by William Sommerset Maugham.

#### **b. Type of the Data Source**

There are two data sources that are needed to do this research, namely: primary data sources and secondary data sources.

##### **1) Primary Data Source**

The primary data source is the novel *Up at the Villa* (1941)

##### **2) Secondary Data Source**

The secondary data sources are from other sources related the study, such as: websites, literary books, literary criticisms, and other articles related to the novel.

#### **4. Technique of the Data Collection**

In this research, the technique of data collection is note taking, and continued by some steps as follows:

- a. Reading the novel thoroughly and repeatedly
- b. Reading the synopsis to get more understanding
- c. Reading more related references to observe the theory, data and information
- d. Taking notes of important things both of primary and of secondary data sources
- e. Classifying and determining the relevant data
- f. Browsing the internet to search for information that relates to the novel.

#### **5. Technique of the Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the researcher applied a descriptive approach. The steps taken by the researcher in analyzing the data are as follows:

- a. The first step is analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel.
- b. The second step is analyzing the data based on a sociological approach. Focus will be paid on the meaning of the importance of equal social status in choosing spouse.

## **H. Paper Organization**

The research paper organization of “analyzing the importance of equal social status in choosing spouse reflected in William Sommerset Maugham’s *up at the Villa* (1941) : Sociological Approach” is as follows: Chapter I is introduction. It consists of Background of the Study, Literary Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objective of the Study, Benefit of the Study, Theoretical Approach, Research Method and Paper Organization. Chapter II is Underlying Theory which deals with the Notion of Sociology of Literature, the Perspective of Sociology of Literature, the Notion of Social Status, the Notion of Spouse and Structural Elements of the Novel and Theoretical Application. Chapter III is represented social background of Italy. Chapter IV deals with the structural analysis of the novel. Chapter V presents the sociological analysis and its discussion. Chapter VI presents Conclusion and suggestion.