

The Grief and Loss Influence on Personality Changes in the Children's Book "The Heart and The Bottle" by Oliver Jeffers

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Abstract

The Heart and The Bottle is a children's book that tells the story of a girl who has a lot of curiosity. She often spends her time exploring the world with her father. However, she suddenly has to face the grief of her father's death. The objective of this research is to find out how grief affects the main character's personality change. This research will be studied by using the descriptive qualitative method. The main data source is from the narrative in the book The Heart and The Bottle. Based on the findings, it is known that the personality change of the main character occurs gradually. At first, she began to lose interest in what she liked all this time due to the feelings of grief that still lingered over her. At the end of the story, the girl finally begins to open herself up and return to her true self again.

Keywords: Grief, loss, personality change, children's book

Abstrak

The Heart and The Bottle merupakan sebuah buku anak yang menceritakan tentang seorang gadis Perempuan yang memiliki rasa penasaran yang banyak. Ia sering menghabiskan waktunya dengan menjelajahi dunia Bersama ayahnya. Namun tiba-tiba ia harus menghadapi kedukaan atas meninggalnya ayahnya. Objektiif dalam penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana kedukaan memberikan pengaruh pada perubahan kepribadian tokoh utama. Penelitian ini akan dikaji dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Sumber data utama adalah dari narasi yang ada dalam buku The Heart and The Bottle. Berdasarkan hasil temuan, diketahui bahwa perubahan kepribadian dari tokoh utama terjadi secara bertahap. Pada awalnya ia mulai kehilangan ketertarikan atas apa yang ia sukai selama ini karena perasaan duka yang masih menyelimuti. Namun, di akhir cerita, gadis tersebut Kembali membuka dirinya dan Kembali ke jati dirinya yang sebenarnya.

Kata kunci: Kedukaan, kehilangan, perubahan kepribadian, buku anak

INTRODUCTION

Grief is a natural emotional response to a loss. The loss could be the death of a loved one, the severance of a relationship with a loved one, or the loss of a job. The feeling of grief often comes suddenly and cannot be avoided by the person experiencing it. Someone who is faced with grief will definitely experience several stages. Based on Kubler Ross's theory, there are five types of stages faced by someone who is facing grief. These stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kübler-Ross's, 1969). Denial and shock people to cope and make survival possible. Denial helps them to face their feelings of grief (Kubler Ross, 8). Anger is strength and it can be an anchor, anger gives temporary structure to loss (Kubler Ross, 15). Bargaining changes overtime, we may start bargaining for our loved ones to be saved. Later, someone may even bargain that he might die instead of our loved one (Kubler Ross, 20). If grief is a process of healing, then depression is one of many necessary steps along the way (Kubler Ross, 21). Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being all right or okay with what has happened (Kubler Ross, 24).

The theme of grief is not uncommon in literary works. The fact is that grief is inherent in our daily lives. Sooner or later, we will all experience the situation. In addition,

the different responses shown by someone who experiences grief can make an interesting literary work. Literary works that carry this theme have the aim that people who have experienced such situations can feel better because they are not the only ones who have experienced it.

One literary work that carries the theme of grief is a children's book entitled "The Heart and The Bottle" by Oliver Jeffers. This book is a work of fiction that tells the story of a little girl who has a great sense of curiosity. The little girl is very curious about everything in this world, starting from the stars in the sky and also about the ocean. She often shared her head full of curiosity with her father. She was always excited every time she discovered new things and her father always accompanied her for that. However, there came a time when his father was no longer in his sight. There is no longer anyone who will accompany her to find new things in this world. the little girl is currently alone. There was no longer a figure she could exchange ideas with about her curiosity. Since this incident occurred, the little girl who was usually always cheerful then showed a change. She seems to have become another person.

The object of this research is the main character in the children's book 'The Heart and The Bottle' by Oliver Jeffers. The problem to be studied in this research is about how grief and loss play a major role in the personality change of the main character in the children's book entitled 'The Heart and The Bottle' by Oliver Jeffers. Regarding to the problem, this research will explain how the influence of grief and loss in changing the personality of the main character in the children's book entitled 'The Heart and The Bottle' by Oliver Jeffers.

METHODOLOGY

This research will be studied using a qualitative method with a narrative theory approach. The qualitative method is used because in the research, the results or data that have been discovered will be presented in written form. Narrative theory is used as a unit of analysis to study the object's actions related to the social context. In this research, the data will be taken through several stages. The first stage is to read the book in a comprehensive manner, then identify the expressed grief described in the narrative, then analyze the data that has been found with the relevant theory, and then to draw a conclusion.

FINDING(S) AND DISCUSSION

The story begins with a girl who is just like any other child. She has a lot of curiosity about all the things in the world. She also has a fondness for looking around and discovering new things. In the story, the girl always spends time with her father. She was taken to explore the world by looking at the stars, playing on the beach, and swimming in the ocean. However, suddenly she was faced with an event that she had never expected. The girl's father is no longer in his favorite chair, because he has gone away to return to the God.

As she is faced the new reality, the little girl who is usually cheerful and curious about the world begins to show a change in her personality. Her father's death has had a significant impact on her life. This could be seen from the narrative that the author has written, about how the main character's personality begins to show some differences

“Feeling unsure, the girl thought the best thing was to put her heart in a safe place. Just for the time being.” (p. 22)

In the narration above, the author begins to show the main character's response when faced with the death of her father. The girl still can't believe the fact that her father is no longer beside her. She was no longer able to show the results of her drawings, ask the questions that were in her head, and share all her wild imaginations about this world. Since she was still denying about what happened to her, she decided to keep her heart in an empty bottle. This was done so that she would no longer feel the sorrow of her father's death.

“Although, in truth, nothing was the same. She forgot about the stars and stopped taking notice of the sea” (p. 23)

Afterwards, the main character began to show a gradual change in her behavior. She became no longer interested in the stars above the sky, whereas she used to love looking at them with her father. Likewise with the ocean, where she is no longer curious about the wonders of the ocean like before when she was still accompanied by her father to explore the ocean.

“She was no longer filled with all the curiosities of the world and didn't take much notice of anything” (p. 24)

She was completely different from her old self. The girl who used to always be curious about everything in this world was suddenly not curious anymore. She no longer had a feeling of curiosity about many things. She doesn't even care about her surroundings, even if it's just to have a look around. In this part we can conclude that her personality is no longer the same as before. She seems to have become someone else.

“And it was right at the moment she decided to get it back out of the bottle. But she didn't know how. She couldn't remember.” (p. 28-29)

Then at one moment she started trying to get her heart out of the bottle. She felt it was the time to let her heart out. But her heart remained trapped in the bottle. Despite all the ways the girl tried, her heart still couldn't get out. This illustrates that deep down, she is still not fully ready to open herself up again, hence her heart is still trapped in the bottle.

“But there, it occurred to someone smaller and still curious about the world that she might know a why. And it just so happened.” (p. 32-33)

When the time was right, the girl met a little girl who was smaller than her. The little girl helped her to get her heart out of the bottle. And sure enough, the little girl was able to get her heart out of the bottle.

“The heart was put back where it came from. And the chair wasn't so empty anymore.” (p. 35-36)

After the girl put her heart back into the first place, she began to return to her lost identity. She sat on her father's chair and then started to read the book again. We can recognize that the main character has begun to accept the fact that her father is gone. She no longer avoided the sorrow she was experiencing and decided to return to being who she was before.

From the narratives above, we can see the changes that happened to the main character in Oliver Jeffers' children's book *The Heart and The Bottle* after his father's death. These changes occur gradually. It all starts with a change in her behavior where she no longer has an interest in the things that she used to love so much. These things consist of looking at the stars in the sky and exploring the ocean. In addition, she also showed changes in her personality, where she no longer had a great sense of curiosity about things in the world. She no longer likes to explore and discover new things.

CONCLUSION(S)

All of the changes that occur to the main character in *The Heart and The Bottle* book arise because of the grief that is still lingering over her. The death of her father left a huge feeling of grief and loss for her. This is because her father is a figure who always accompanies her in any circumstances. She was still not used to this kind of situation, so she began to lose her true self.

The findings of this study provide insight into how the loss of a loved one could have a huge impact on one's life in the children's book entitled *The Heart and The Bottle*. This study also provides knowledge that grief and loss deeply affect personality change. Thus, this research is expected to be useful in further research on psychological or literary aspects.

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