

JENNA'S STRUGGLE TO FIND THE REASON WHY HER MOTHER LEFT HER IN PICOULT'S *LEAVING TIME*

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ABSTRACT: This thesis discusses a novel entitled *Leaving Time* by Jody Picoult. The analysis focuses on Jenna, the main character in the novel. She is a thirteen-year-old teenager who struggles to find out the truth about why her mother left her. The purpose of this thesis is to find out Jenna's struggle to find the truth of why her mother left her in Picoult's *Leaving Time*. This study uses the qualitative descriptive method and examines the intrinsic elements that describe Jenna's life when she is with her mother, after losing her mother and her struggle to find the reason why her mother left her. When Jenna is still living with her mother, her life is full of happiness. After her mother has left her, she has to experience a life that a teenager her age would not normally do. Her struggle to find the reason why her mother left her makes her learn that if we think about someone we have loved and lost, we are already with them.

Keywords: mother, struggle, the intrinsic elements

INTRODUCTION

Mother is the heart of the family. The heart in the body is an essential tool for a person's life. If the heart stops beating, the person cannot go on with their life. This allegory concludes that the position of the mother is the central and crucial figure in the performance of life. The importance of a mother is seen especially since her child is born (Gunarsa, 2000: 64). Mother is an extraordinary person for every child. Mother is a woman who becomes a role model, the most friendly, brave, and patient woman. Mother is also someone whose place can never be replaced by

anyone. The child who was abandoned by her mother when she was young had a hard time understanding the situation well. She may wonder why mother isn't around or why her mother left her. She will feel lonely, especially when she recalls memories with her mother.

The issue of mother and child is never lost in the works of Jodi Picoult, as well as *Leaving Time*, her latest work which was just published last year also mentions the same thing. Jenna Metcalf is the main character in *Leaving Time*. Jenna is a girl who lost her mother mysteriously, and her father is in a psychiatric ward due to a mental

breakdown. Alice Metcalf is Jenna's mother, and she is a research scientist specializing in elephants in Botswana. Thomas Metcalf is Jenna's father, the New England Elephant Sanctuary owner. Jenna felt abandoned when she was eleven. She missed her mother, but she didn't know what to do about it. At thirteen, Jenna scours databases of missing persons, reads scientific journals of elephant researchers, and enlists the help of a psychic and former detective who investigate Alice's case. Jenna's life is filled with struggles to find the reason why her mother left her. Her inspiring story teaches us to keep trying and survive with optimistic hope. In this study the researcher will examine the intrinsic elements contained in Picoult's *Leaving Time* to describe Jenna's struggle to find the reason why her mother left her. The intrinsic elements are the elements that make up the literary work itself. These factors make a literary work exist as a literary work that people actually find when we read it. The combination of various intrinsic elements is what makes a tangible novels or, conversely, when viewed from the point of view of us readers, these

elements (story) will be encountered if we read a novel. Novel has a view of intrinsic elements, and they are: theme, plot, setting, character, point of view. According to Aminuddin (2002:83), "The definition of a literary storyline is generally a series of stories formed through a particular phase of an event, until it produces a story presented by an actor or actress."

The struggle is an effort made by a person or group of people to achieve something desired through a process and obstacles faced in the community environment. Struggle in one's life is very necessary in the life of a human being who lives in this real world, so it can say that you have to fight or try to achieve the desires or ideals to be completed, both in the field of material and immaterial (Sudusiah, 2015:11).

Erich Fromm (2005:24-27) in his book *Love Art* states that love is primarily a member and not acceptance, and members are the highest expression of ability. The most important members are human, not material. Love always contains certain basic elements: compassion, responsibility, attention and awareness. This thesis is objectively

to describe Jenna's life when she is with her mother, her life after losing her mother, and her struggle to find the reason why her mother left her.

METHOD

The design of this study is a descriptive qualitative. Descriptive studies are studies that ask questions about the nature or distribution of variables. This includes the description of the variable, but not the operation. Of course, the descriptive study declares something, so this study measures only what is already there. The method used in this analysis is descriptive, as the details used in the analysis are not in the form of numerical equations, but in the form of terms and phrases. A method for describing the status of the object under study is used to describe things that are central to the research object. This study will provide descriptive information which will then provide a description and exposure that researchers carefully interpret to report on the research form. The data for this research is taken from the novel written by Picoult entitled *Leaving Time*. Quotation, dialogue and narration from Picoult's *Leaving Time* is

used as a reference in answering the research problems. The data analysis technique applied in this study is identifying the data collected based on the narrative or sentence in Picoult's *Leaving Time*, applying the concepts of intrinsic elements on the discussed topic in this study and drawing conclusions based on all the results of the analyzed research data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Jenna Metcalf is the main character in *Leaving Time*. She lost her mother mysteriously. Alice Metcalf is Jenna's mother, and she is a research scientist specializing in elephants in Botswana. Thomas Metcalf is Jenna's father, the New England Elephant Sanctuary owner. Jenna's father is in a psychiatric ward due to a mental breakdown. Jenna felt abandoned when she was eleven. She missed her mother, but she didn't know what to do about it. At thirteen, Jenna scours databases of missing persons, reads scientific journals of elephant researchers, and enlists the help of a psychic and detective. The theme of this novel is love and loss.

Love is a series of emotions and actions that are characterized by intimacy, passion, and dedication. It includes care, protection and affection. Love can be associated with happiness, sadness, and even gratitude. It can evoke the greatest smile, followed by tears of great joy. When you love, you give everything you have. The mind tells us that what it feels can never be infinite. When a child is shown love, the only option is to return the feelings they have experienced.

Jenna's struggle to find the reason why her mother left her is proof that Jenna really loves her mother. She is still looking for her after a decade. She never forgets her mother. She cares and is willing to sacrifice to be able to meet her mother again.

The novel *Leaving Time* uses the combined flow plot. The story begins with Jenna telling about her life after her mother disappeared. Jenna tells about her visit to Hartwick House to meet her dad. Hartwick House is the name of the psychiatric facility where Jenna's father lives. Then in the next chapter, Alice tells about the observations that she is making to understand elephants.

This story uses the first-person point of view. There is more than one character who tells the story in this novel. Alice's point of view tells more about her past research and career development until she met Thomas Metcalf and fell in love with him. Meanwhile, Jenna tells from her perspective as a thirteen-year-old girl who is smart and has a strong memory. From Jenna's point of view, the plot guides the reader more through the forward story.

Several place settings tell the story of Jenna's life. First is the New England Elephant Sanctuary in Boone, New Hampshire, which was owned by Thomas Metcalf, where he saved numerous elephants. At this elephant sanctuary, the primary event of the homicide of Nevvie happened. Jenna spent the prior three years of her life at this sanctuary. Most of Alice's memories had this elephant sanctuary as a backdrop. Second, the Hartwick House is the name of the psychiatric facility where Jenna's father has lived for ten years.

Jenna's Life When She Is With Her Mother

From the start of a child's life, the mother is the most important figure of attachment. Mother is also someone whose place can never be replaced by anyone. Jenna's life when she is with her mother in *Leaving Time* is described by the objects she received from her mother, memories of playing at the elephant sanctuary, and an incident that caused her father to get hurt while protecting her. A moment that made Jenna feel the love of her parents. Jenna's parents are scientists who studied elephants. They live in their father's elephant sanctuary. Since childhood, Jenna has spent more time with her mother. Her father was always busy taking care of the elephant sanctuary and all his research on elephants. Sometimes he also makes a long journey to find donors to find the cost of maintaining the elephant sanctuary.

But then two days ago, when I was restacking my mother's notebooks, a bookmark fell out of one. It wasn't a bookmark, really. It was a dollar, origami-folded in the shape of an elephant. (Picoult, 2014: 28)

From the quotation above, an origami-folded in the shape of an elephant is a favorite object from her mother. Jenna can remember her mother with her hands flying over the dollar, creasing and folding, dipping and turning, until Jenna stopped crying and began to stare at the little toy made for her. Jenna keeps everything related to her mother.

Even though it was only three years of living together with her mother it was very memorable for Jenna. They have been through a lot of fun things together. Jenna really hopes that she can find her mother and be able to live together again.

Jenna's Life After Losing Her Mother

Parent-child relationships are an important part of their physical and emotional development. If parents are not nearby or spend time with their children, it can lead to poor emotional development and behavior. These negative emotions towards a child include depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, worthlessness, or anger. Absence of parents can also lead to social relationship issues due to trust issues. Jenna's life after losing her mother makes Jenna feel lonely. Jenna

missed the beautiful life she had ten years ago. When the complete family still accompanies his little steps in the elephant sanctuary. Raised by her grandmother firmly, Jenna grew up to be a smart girl, as it is described in *"I can tell you about my new bedrooms at my grandma's place, which had a big-girl bed-my first."* (Picoult, 2014: 16). Jenna's grandmother took good care of her, even though their relationship was not very close. Her grandmother is not very happy when she talks about the past, especially about her mother. Though Jenna wished they could talk about her mother. Her grandmother had all the memories she didn't have because her grandmother lived with her mother for eighteen years, whereas Jenna was only with her mother for three years.

Some people usually drink coffee, read newspapers, exercise in city parks, and others do their hair or watch the weather forecast. Jenna would put on her clothes every morning and then go to her computer, as it is described in *"I spend a lot of time on the Internet, mostly at www.NamUs.gov, the official Department of Justice website for missing and unidentified persons."*

(Picoult, 2014: 20). A routine that an eleven-year-old should not be doing. Jenna has started looking for her mother by regularly checking sites on the internet. She is hoping to find some good news about her mother. Alice Metcalf was not on the list as someone who had died, but that was not informative enough. She could live, or she could live under a different identity. She could die and go unidentified. Children who lose a mother figure tend to have difficulty relating to other people. They lack the necessary social skills and lead to a lack of trust. Because she has felt left out, ignored, or hurt by those closest to her. So, if someone else gets close to her, they will think negatively and distrustfully, like "Why did they ask me to be friends?" or "What do they want from me? Jenna doesn't have the confidence to befriend anyone. There's only one friend she trusts, and she can tell about her mother, as seen in her statement: *"I did have one friend at school, once, who sort of understood. Chatham Clarke was the only person I ever told about my mother and how I was going to find her"*. (Picoult, 2014: 18). One day Chatham stopped coming

to school. When Jenna called the house, no one answered. Jenna cycled there and found a For sale sign there. She could not believe that his friend would leave without a word, especially since he knew that scared Jenna so much about her mother's disappearance, but it just got harder and harder to defend herself as time went on. Jenna felt left out again after Chatham Clarke left without saying goodbye. For the second time, Jenna felt left without explanation, a breakup that she never expected to happen in her life again.

Without the support from family and friends, Jenna does not give up trying to find out more about her mother. She tries to contact Virgil Stanhope, the investigator on the case that leaves one woman dead and another injured at the elephant sanctuary. While in a laboratory testing DNA from a strand of hair that was evidence at the crime scene, Virgil commented, surprised by how teenagers are now responding. Jenna says that it is because she lacks parental guidance, as seen in her statement *"Blame it on my upbringing. I had a profound lack of parental guidance."* (Picoult, 2014: 148).

The role of parents in children's education is unequivocal that they are the primary and first educators. First, because they are the ones who provide teaching, education, whatever it is for the first time. It is in their hands clearly to give influence and direction and what to be. Main because they are the ones who have the responsibility, obligation, and power to make what kind of child. Jenna only lived together with her parents until the age of three. Troubles that occurred ten years ago caused her mother to disappear and her father to have a mental disorder. There is not much Jenna can learn from her parents in such a short period.

Jenna's Struggle To Find The Reason Why Her Mother Left Her

The struggle is an effort made by a person or group of people to achieve something desired through a process and obstacles faced in the community environment. Struggle in one's life is very necessary in the life of a human being who lives in this real world, so it can say that you have to fight or try to achieve the desires or ideals to be completed, both in the field of material and immaterial. The struggle in life has

no age limit, Jenna is a thirteen-year-old girl who has started her struggle to find the reason why her mother left her. There are four kinds of struggle as Jenna do to find the reason why her mother left her, and the detailed discussion is below:

a. Struggle To Accept The Reality of Life

In accepting a fact of life, some people will find it quite easy, but others also find it very difficult to accept it. Maybe the cause is based on regret, disappointment, rejection, or just an empty wait for something better for those who find it difficult. Failing to accept reality often makes our lives uneasy. Not many of us experience stress after facing a harsh reality that their minds and minds have not accepted. Life is not always about happiness and free from all problems. We need to accept and realize that struggle will always be a part of the reality of our lives. No life goes on without a sacrifice.

No matter how small it is, sacrifices will always be needed. Jenna kept thinking about her mother who had disappeared even though it had been

ten years. She sacrificed her teenage years to struggle to find the reason why her mother left her. Jenna reads an article in People magazine about a sixteen-year-old whose mother reopens the unsolved murder of her mother and how—the murderer is brought to justice. Jenna was starting to think that she lacked the money and resources she could have with determination, and that very afternoon, Jenna decided to give it a try. For the most part, Jenna was dismissed or pitied by the people she approached. The Boone Police Department refused to help her. First, because Jenna was underage to work without a guardian's consent. Second, her mother's case is over ten years ago, and as far as they were sure, the related murder case had been solved—it had been decided and the cause of death was accidental. The New England Elephant Sanctuary is completely disbanded, and the only person who can tell Jenna more about what happened is Jenna's father—he can't even accurately give his a name or day of the week, let alone details about the events that led to his mental breakdown.

I tried to hire a private detective but learned quickly they don't do work pro bono, like some lawyers. That was when I started babysitting teachers' kids, with a plan to have enough money saved by the end of this summer to at least get someone interested. Then I started the process of becoming my own best investigator. (Picoult, 2014: 24)

From the quotation above, a detective does not provide help for free, realizing that Jenna starts looking for ways to make money. She raised the son of a teacher—Mr. Allen, who taught him math. The boy's name is Carter. The most unattractive baby she has ever met. The head is enormous, and when he looks at her, she is sure he can read her mind. Jenna plans to enlist the help of a psychic to help her find her mother. Jenna got this idea after finding a site that talks about psychics. Tarot card divination, advice on love, wealth, prosperity, and finding something lost. Serenity's name was written at the

top of the ad with a number and address. Ten dollars was the price paid for a prophecy. Looking for someone who is missing without support is hard enough to do. But Jenna didn't give up so easily, even though she was only thirteen, she was trying really hard to do everything she could to find what she was looking for. Jenna always believed that her mother is still alive. Because she had not discovered the fact that her mother had died. She continued to cultivate her passion thinking that she could find her mother.

The meaning of life is always changing, but never stops. This can be found in three ways by creating a work or doing an action, by experiencing something or meeting someone and by the attitude we take towards the inevitable suffering. Jenna puts a lot of effort into finding her mother. At the expense of his youth he worked to earn money. In her struggle to find the truth about why her mother left her, Jenna meets Serenity and Virgil. The suffering of not growing up in a

complete family did not stop Jenna from continuing her life.

Jenna could accept the fact that she had died. Jenna is able to forgive her mother who cheated on her father, which caused a tragedy ten years ago that made her lose her mother. It is human nature to be inseparable from mistakes and imperfections in deeds. However, humans were created also equipped with qualities to correct their mistakes. One of the qualities we are encouraged to have is forgiveness. Forgiveness is a noble trait, because not all humans can be proud easily to forgive the mistakes of others. Things that are not realized by everyone in their association with others are doing something, either verbally or by actions that they do not realize that have hurt the hearts or feelings of others even though it was done unintentionally. But if this is allowed it will have a bad impact on the relationship between the individuals concerned. For this reason, when we feel someone has hurt our hearts and feelings, we should not immediately get angry

with him, but look for the truth first so that the attitude we will take is not wrong so that it harms ourselves, and if this is allowed it will damage our hearts to become someone who vengeful and negative thoughts.

b. The struggle in the form of affection

Jenna's struggle to find the reason why her mother left her is proof that Jenna loves her mother. She cares and is willing to sacrifice to meet her mother again. Jenna had been through a lot until she finally found the truth about why her mother left her.

c. Struggle to get Love

After meeting her mother, even though indirectly, Jenna was able to convey what she had been hiding all this time. Even though she was disappointed when she found out about her mother's infidelity, Jenna didn't blame her. Alice never wanted to leave Jenna. She had the urge to take Jenna and run away, as seen in her statement: *"I would pick her up at preschool—and just keep driving."* (Picoult, 2014: 369). Knowing that

her mother loved her was enough for Jenna. Knowing that her mother had always loved her was enough for Jenna.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis discussed in the previous chapter, the researchers write conclusions of this research. The first part of analysis is to describe Jenna's life when she is with her mother. Even though it was only three years of living together with her mother it was very memorable for Jenna. An origami-folded in the shape of an elephant is something Jenna always makes when she misses her mother.

The second part of analysis is to describe Jenna's life after losing her mother. Jenna's life after losing her mother left her with a routine that a teenager her age wouldn't normally do. Jenna has always kept herself busy trying to find her mother. Jenna had a not-so-smooth social relationship. She only had one friend and it didn't last long enough. Jenna works babysitting to earn money so she can hire a psychic and detective to find her mother.

The last analysis is to describe Jenna's struggle to find the truth why her mother left her. Looking for someone who is missing without support is hard enough to do. But Jenna didn't give up so easily, even though she was only thirteen, she was trying really hard to do everything she could to find what she was looking for. Jenna could accept the fact that she had died. Jenna is able to forgive her mother who cheated on her father, which caused a tragedy ten years ago that made her lose her mother. Jenna's struggle to find the truth why her mother left her is proof that Jenna really loves her mother, she cares and is willing to sacrifice to be able to meet her mother again.

Jenna had been through a lot until she finally found the truth about why her mother left her. An answer that Jenna really wanted to know but was also afraid of. After meeting her mother, even though indirectly, Jenna was able to convey what she had been hiding all this time. Even though she was disappointed when she found out about her mother's infidelity, Jenna didn't blame her. Knowing that her mother loved her was enough for Jenna.

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