

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Being an orphan is a difficult condition; moreover if one has to protect his/her siblings without the parents around. As UNICEF research stated that orphans and vulnerable children are deprived of their first line of protection that is their parents. Reasons include having temporarily or permanently losing their caregivers or guardians (orphans), losing contact with their caregivers, for example street children, unaccompanied displaced or refugee children, been separated from their parents. For example, where parents are detained or children are abducted, been placed in alternative care by their caregivers. Children with disabilities or children from poor families who are placed in institutions, been kept in prolonged hospital care, for example, on grounds of health status, such as HIV status, been detained in educational, remand, correctional or penal facilities as a result of an administrative or judicial decision, children who are suspected or convicted offenders or child asylum seekers (UNICEF).

This is what the novels *A Series Of Unfortunate Events* are talking about, the struggles of Violet, a fourteen year old girl, the eldest daughter of the Baudelaires after she lost her parents. She has the obligation to take care of her twelve year old younger brother, Klaus, and her infant sister, Sunny. Although the author did not directly tell about the meaning of the struggle itself, but it can be found and understood through the events which occur in the story. The orphans

face many problems in their life including financial problem, behaviors of the people around them, their education and their everyday life.

The Baudelaire orphans are not only suffering from financial situation but they also have struggled to save their lives from people who want to hurt them. In these novels there are characters that are threatening the young Baudelaire lives; for example there is a character named Mr. Poe. He is the caretaker of the late Mr. Baudelaire's company. After the disastrous accident that caused the lost of Baudelaire's lives, Mr. Poe does not want to take good care of the Baudelaire's children, because he wants to get their legacy. Not only Mr. Poe who wants to have the Baudelaire's wealth; but also a character named Count Olaf who wants to possess their inheritance.

A Series of Unfortunate Events is written by Lemony Snicket, an American author. He was born in February 28, 1970 in San Francisco, California. Lemony Snicket is the pseudonym of the novelist Daniel Handler. *The Bad Beginning* is the first of novels in the *A Series of Unfortunate Events* there are thirteen novels of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. *The Bad Beginning* is the first edition, followed by *The Reptile Room*, *The Wide Window*, *The Miserable Mill*, *The Austere Academy*, *The Ersatz Elevator*, *The Vile Village*, *The Hostile Hospital*, *The Carnivorous Carnival*, *The Slippery Slope*, *The Grim Grotto*, *The Penultimate Peril*, and the last is *The End*. These novels have won many literary awards, such as the Colorado Children's Book Award, the Nevada Young Readers Award, the Nene Award and a 2006 Quill Book Award.

This series of novels tell about three orphans, Violet Baudelaire, a fourteen-year-old amateur inventor; Klaus Baudelaire, a twelve-year-old

bookworm; and Sunny Baudelaire, an infant with an unusual powerful teeth. They come from a rich family who has a lot of money and a big factory. After the death of their parents, Violet, Klaus and also Sunny faced very tough life, because there are many problems that are threatening their lives. The first problem is when the three kids lost their parents, their mother and father have both died in a fire accident, which has destroyed their mansion and all of their possessions.

The novels are concerning to Violet's struggle against Count Olaf villainous plans. He always searches a way to ill starred Violet and her siblings in each series of the novels with all of his assistants. In these novels, Violet do not overcome all her problems by herself, she helped by her two smart siblings to solve the impediment.

The writer does this research because the author Lemony Snicket, has different ways to get the reader's interest with the works. He writes the story which has no happy ending, which is certainly very different with other literary works. In *A Series of Unfortunate Events* the Baudelaires have almost never meet happiness since they lost their parents. These novels are created for children. They are unique because they are not like the traditional children's book such as Cinderella stories, Snow White and the Little Mermaid. Those stories only tell about the happiness and love between a Princess and a Prince. There are not many lessons about life that the children can get.

The writer uses the point of view in the New Criticism to analyze the novels and to limit the aspect. In this research, the writer is going to use the intrinsic approach of the novel. Tyson said that new criticism is focused on the individual literary work in isolation from other cultural production, New Critics

argued, but they do not provide the literary critic with information that can be used to analyze the text itself (119). So, in analyzing the novel the first important thing to understand is the text itself or the material that will be analyzed in order to get a deeper analysis and argument.

For the only way we can know if a given author's meaning is to carefully examine, or "closely read," all the evidence provided by the language of the text itself: its images, symbols, metaphors, rhyme, meter, point of view, setting, characterization, and plot which called formal element (Tyson, 137). There are three of formal elements that are used to be analyzed from a novel which consist of character, setting, and conflict. In order to get information about the struggle of the eldest sister Violet Baudelaire, the analysis will be focused on: a). Violet's background condition and setting which occur in the novels that affect her behavior in dealing with the conflicts in her life will be analyzed. b). The description of the way the setting work to create sympathy for Violet as the victim of forces beyond her control thus contributing to the conflicts that the needs of individual are often sacrificed to the demands of society.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In order to analyze the novel, the writer will start from the research question. The writer of the study would like to state a question:

How do the conflicts and settings explain the efforts of the main character to gain a better life for her siblings and herself in *A Series Of Unfortunate Events*?

1.3. Objective of the Study

Regarding to the statements of the problem, the aims of the analysis of the thesis is:

To describe how the conflicts and settings explain the efforts of the main character to gain a better life for her siblings and herself in *A Series Of Unfortunate Events*

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study attempts to give contribution to the study of Literature particularly in English Department of The Faculty of Humanities of Airlangga University in the case of the New Criticism that occurred in the novel. Therefore, the writer hopes that through this study. The writer also hopes that this study could encourage the other students/readers to do their own research and study toward other works, whether it is the different novel or other kinds of literary works, and try to analyze the ideas of New Criticism in that work especially the intrinsic approach of the novel. Finally, the writer hopes that she can give more information to those who want to know more about a woman character named Violet Baudelaire in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

1.5. Scope and Limitations

There are many issues, problems, events, and conflicts in discussing this novel. In this study, the writer would not analyze the whole part of this novel because it makes this study unfocused. Therefore, the writer limits this study by focusing on the three formal elements which consist of the character, settings and

conflicts of the novels. It focuses on the heroism of the woman character, Violet Baudelaire, that can be analyzed from her acts as the responses when she get in trouble and faced many problem get from Count Olaf who always tortured her and her brother and sister in this novels.

The writer will also analyze the conflicts within the family along with Violet's efforts in reaching his ideal, which has evoked several arguments among the family members. Above all, by understanding the character and the conflicts in the novels, the writer will be able to analyze Violet's effort to get a better life of the novels which is clearly illustrated through Violet's behavior and all of her conflicts in these novels. The primary sources of this study because it is an epistolary novel are the letters that are written by some characters. The other subject outside the limitation will not be considered in the process of the study analysis. In order to get a specific analysis, this study will analyze the conflicts and settings all of thirteen novels entitled *The Bad Beginning*, *The Reptile Room*, *The Wide Window*, *The Miserable Mill*, *The Austere Academy*, *The Ersatz Elevator*, *The Vile Village*, *The Hostile Hospital*, *The Carnivorous Carnival*, *The Slippery Slope*, *The Grim Grotto*, *The Penultimate Peril*, and *The End*.

1.6. Theoretical Background

The writer is going to apply the New Criticism to analyze the novels. The purpose of the approach is to analyze the elements which consist of plot, setting, character, characterization and theme. In the thesis the writer will focus on Violet's character and use the analysis of the setting and conflicts of the novels.

Besides conflict and setting, character also being the main point of the story in literature works. Gill explained that characters in any literature works have been specially created by the authors. When authors create characters, they select some aspects of ordinary people, develop some of those aspects whilst playing down others, and put them together as they please. The way they created characters finally produced fictional characters. Sometimes, the readers felt that they knew very well the character they saw in a work like it seems alive. Gill stated that the reader or the audience came to a point that there are some similarities in the literary work and in the reality (90-91). The feature that distinguishes this study from those related ones above is the use of intrinsic approach to analyze the series novel *A Series Of Unfortunate Events*. In this study, the writer uses New Criticism to explain the character, conflicts, and settings of the novels.

1.7. Method of the Study

The primary sources of the study are the thirteen novels of *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket. Close reading is used to support the analysis from the novels to start the procedures. Then, the writer uses books, journal, article, and online research to accompany the analysis. "The text itself" became the battle cry of the New Critical effort to focus our attention on the literary work as the sole source of evidence for interpreting it (Tyson, 121). The writer takes the data from books, articles, commentaries, and other printed and unprinted materials. It is done to find out some theories, journals, and the internet sources.

The writer will use descriptive analysis that relates to the analysis. Furthermore, the writer uses descriptive analysis through events and actions that are described in the novel relate to the problems statement because for New Criticism, the complexity of a text is resulted by multiple and often conflicting meaning woven through the text. New Criticism will be used in the analysis to find out how the children character named Violet, Klaus and Sunny.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

<i>Effort</i>	: Strive to overcome impediments and challenges in the Baudelaires lives
<i>Villain</i>	: Count Olaf and his assistants who is trying to torture the Baudelaire's children
<i>Setting</i>	: The environment that tortured Violet's character and psychology
<i>Sibling</i>	: Characters that has family relationship with Violet who are Klaus and Sunny
<i>Better life</i>	: A brighter future for Violet and her siblings including their financial, education, and comfort life