

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Marriage means interaction and communication and sharing. If these processes are at maximum, a couple may be said to be truly married. But if they are at a minimum and both partners use the marriage relationship to satisfy only personal aims such as sexual fulfillment or economic support, there is little to keep the marriage together when conflict threaten it. Thus a pivotal point in understanding success in marriage is to understand means of achieving this togetherness in all aspects of the relationship (Peterson 238). In *The Cricket on the Hearth*, John Peerybingle, the main character of the story, and his wife, Mary, were lack of sharing, and each had a different way of how to communicate their love to each other. This didn't seem to bother them much, as they tried to avoid any conflict, until one day John threw suspicion on Mary's sincerity, as she had an intimate conversation with a Stranger, on the days before their first wedding anniversary day. John became angry and planned a cruel act upon the Stranger. However, before John could do his plan, the Cricket came out into the room and stood in a Fairy shape before him, showed him his guilt, adjusted his false, unfair judgment on his wife and renewed their marital love relationship.

The early months and years are very important for marriage adjustment. Patterns of adjustment are established that tend to be permanent through married life (Peterson 239). If one has a wrong adjustment upon his spouse from the early stage of their marriage, this will basically remain in his mind and affect the way he treats her. In the story, John Peerybingle's experiences with the Cricket Fairy had changed and renew his relationship with his wife, and this will surely remain long through his marital life. Thus, through this study, the thesis writer wants to analyze the significance of the Fairy in renewing John's relation with his wife.

The author whose work is to be analyzed is Charles Dickens (1812-1870). Most of Dickens' active life was spent during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). Dickens is the typical Victorian novelist. He is perhaps the greatest humorist that England has ever produced. He is not only the most famous of the Victorian novelist, he is the most typical. The Victorian novelists are all unique, but no Victorian novelist and no novelist of any period are more sensationally unique than Dickens.

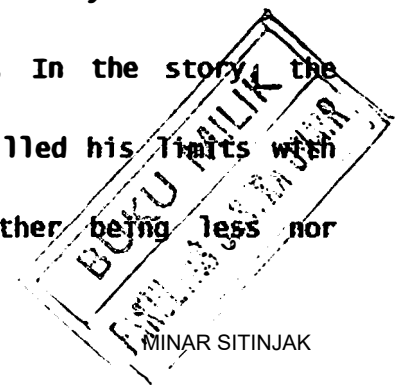
It is here we come to the secret of Dickens' success. He is a fantastic genius writer. A fantasy must refer to reality, and Dickens' figures derive their life from the fact that they do reveal a certain aspect of life. Yet even his imaginative genius is not enough to account for Dickens' extraordinary popularity. Imaginative genius

can make a writer admired, but it cannot make him loved. And Dickens is above all loved (Cecil 54). Dickens is a great writer and an independent radical. He always has a cheering message. His message in his works, which has always been imprecise because almost anybody cared to make it, while attention was focused more sharply on his private life and personal character (Fielding 22). He wants to emphasize the facts that "this is an excellent world; that some errors which are caused by thoughtlessness can be easily remedied by a little human sympathy" (Long 493). Also, he is well known with his unique kind of fiction and his unique relationship with his readers as can be seen from his style of fairy tales (Walder I). His readers seem to be involved in his stories when they read his works. The background in Dickens' stories is also more important than his stories. After doing the close reading, the writer found this characteristic plainly stated in *The Cricket on the Hearth*, which is full of the description of the houses and the continuous chirp sounds of the cricket.

The Cricket on the Hearth is of one volume of The Christmas Books published in 1852. Dickens' *Christmas Books* contains five short stories: *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, *The Chimes* in 1844, in 1845 came *The Cricket on the Hearth*, in 1846 *The Battle of Life*, and *The Haunted Man* in 1848 completed the book. The *Christmas Books* with the five stories were published together in one volume in 1852.

In this study the thesis writer will only analyze one out of the five short stories that is *The Cricket on the Hearth*. Compared to other stories of the same volume, such as *A Christmas Carol*, *The Cricket on the Hearth* is less familiar to the ear of contemporary readers. However, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, until the turn of the century, was the most popular of the *Christmas Books* to Dickens readers. It had been dramatized and given a musical setting before *A Christmas Carol* being popular and filmed, but I think *The Cricket on the Hearth* is the best of the five. The singing match between a teakettle and a cricket on a carrier's hearthstone, in which the latter comes out ahead, gives its name to the book: "to have a cricket on the hearth is the luckiest thing in the world." (Barnhart 290)

Concerning *The Cricket on the Hearth*, Hollington in his *Dickens and the Grotesque* wrote, "The other Christmas Books are much less interesting productions. While all of them almost contain grotesque (strange) moments and touches, only one of them, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, develops a sufficiently coherent satiric purpose to be worth commenting up." (Hollington 160) *The Cricket on the Hearth* is a much gentler story and, in Dickens' own time, was the most popular of the Christmas Books. The sweet sentimentality in the story had commended it so strongly to the Victorian middle class. In the story, the problem did not seem to arise. Here Dickens filled his limits with natural persons, whose characteristic were neither being less nor



exaggerated. The result is a story of unusual sweet proportion (Dickens x). The other reason why the writer chooses the story is that its humors and emotions belong to common people and have outlasted the goblins. The story had the cricket himself as its humble and miniature narrator who reported the story on passion. After doing the close reading the writer also found that, though written around Christmas, the story contain less religious objects, and not as abundant as in *A Christmas Carol* or *The Chimes*.

The Cricket on the Hearth tells story about John Peerybingle, a carrier, and his much younger wife, Dot. They are a happy couple although Tackleton, who himself is about to marry the young May Fielding, throws suspicion on Dot's sincerity. This suspicion appears to be verified when an eccentric old stranger takes up his abode with the Peerybingles and is discovered one day by John, changed his appearance into a bright young man by the removal of his wig, in an intimate conversation with Dot. By the fairy influence of the Cricket on the hearth John is brought to the decision to pardon the stranger, who is actually Edward, their old friend, the lover of May Fielding. The writer has observed that John's suspicion upon her had brought him to a cruel thought to kill that man, and as John was ready with his gun to kill the man, the household fairies appear before him, and helped him to see the matters clearly. Hence, the writer is interested

in analyzing the significance of the Fairy in changing John's judgment upon his spouse and his marital love relation with her.

B. Statements of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the thesis writer intends to analyze the significance of a fairy in the development of John's relation with his spouse in *The Cricket on the Hearth*, which are summed up as follows:

1. How is John's early relation with his spouse?
2. How does John go through the dreamlike supernatural experience with the fairies?
3. How does his experience give effect to his relation with his spouse?

C. Objective of the Study

1. To reveal John's early relation and love to his spouse.
2. To show the process when John goes through the dreamlike supernatural experience with fairies.
3. To explain how his experience give effect to his relation with his spouse.

D. Significance of the Study ✕

This study attempts to analyze the role of the fairies in the process of the main character's struggle in mind that implies through the stories, and results in the development of the main character's relationship with his spouse. When people experience confusion in his life, because the things happening out of what he has expected, it may lead him to doing something appropriate and cruel. To deal with such a person, a good word or advice from friends are sometimes just not enough to help him in a proper time. Through this study the writer wants to show that the dreamlike supernatural experience, which might be variety on its manifestation on different people, can be the best way to change one's mind when there is no one by his side to tell him his wrong-doing. The writer hopes this study may also help the readers to understand more about the works of Dickens, especially his short stories which are as important and interesting as his novels.

E. Scope and Limitation ✕

To make this study effective, the writer find there must be some limitation on the analysis. This study will focus on the discussion on *The Cricket on the Hearth*, which has the most descriptive criticism and explanation to the sake of this study. To support the description the writer will limit on the intrinsic elements, i.e. those which build up a story, such as plot, character and setting, and regardless

all kinds of external elements. Those elements of characterization, plot and setting help to gain the brief description of the story.

F. Theoretical Background

In analyzing the problem in this study, the writer uses the objective theory, which is a theory that regards the literary work as an object that has an independent existence and is used for analyzing the work as a self-sufficient entity. This theory sees a literary work from its intrinsic elements, as setting, character and plot; therefore the thesis writer will also employ the intrinsic approach, which also covers plot, character and setting.

G. Method of the Study

This study is based on the library research, which is a process of finding related information to help the writer direct the analysis. The main source of the study is the story itself, *The Cricket on the Hearth*. First of all, the thesis writer chooses a topic for her thesis. In the next step she collects all information concerning the work analyzed. After doing the close reading, she analyzes the intrinsic elements of the story, which consist of plot, character and setting. Soon after, she looks for any relevant theoretical books, encyclopedia, critics on Dickens, dictionaries and reading references

that are needed to support her analysis. These sources are collected altogether and the writer works within it for an accurate analysis.

H. Definition of Key Terms

- **Fairy:** Small imaginary being with supernatural powers, able to help or harm human beings. (Hornby 306)
- **Fairy shape:** In a beautiful, small and delicate shape (Hornby 306)
- **Love:** The idea of *love* in a marriage is defined by Burgess-Wallin as the inner feeling of affection, rapport, and attachment (Peterson 245).
- **Relation:** way in which persons are united, or the effect, which they have on each other. (Hornby 711)
- **Supernatural:** Something that is not controlled or explained by physical laws (Hornby 868).

I. Organization of the Paper

This study will be divided into five chapters. The first is Introduction, the second is Theoretical Framework, the third is the analysis of the story and the fourth is the Conclusion of the whole analysis. In the last pages of this thesis, the synopsis of the story, bibliography, and the biography of Dickens will also be concluded.

CHAPTER II

THEORITICAL BACKGROUND