

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Research

Parents are everything for children. Since the children are born into the world, the parents are the only closest figure for the children, who will love and cherish their children and also accept the children as they are, especially mother. However, although the bond between mother and child is the strongest bond between parent-child relationships, there are also mothers who do not care with their children or it can be called as an abnormal relationship.

There is another case reflected the abnormal relationship between mother and child where the mother acts like a normal mother who really loves her child, but actually what the mother calls love is not a real love. The mother really treats her child well but at the same time also hurts her child by adding poison to her child's meal or suffocating her child or another way to fake her child's illness, then the mother will go to the doctor and make up a story about how her child turns to be sick like normal parents who bring their sick children to the hospital although the real cause of her sick child is her own deed.

In 2015, the current issue related to the abnormal relationship between mother and child was reported in Missouri, United States. It was about a mother who wanted her child to be sick and a child who wanted her mother to die. The mother named Dee Dee Blancharde said that her daughter named Gypsy Rose Blancharde had various diseases, starting from chromosomal defects, muscular

dystrophy, epilepsy, severe asthma, sleep apnea, leukemia, brain damage, and eye disease. All of it happened since Gypsy was a child. Someday, Gypsy wanted a freedom because Dee Dee always forbade her to have friends until she met her online boyfriend. As the time going, Gypsy found that her mother always faked her illness, which was then suspected by doctors as Munchausen syndrome by proxy, she cannot hate her mother but she just wanted her mother to go away from her life. Therefore, Gypsy asked her boyfriend to kill her mother, she was happiness but at the same time she was worried about her mother's death. At the end, Gypsy and her boyfriend admitted their crimes and were sentenced for 10 years in prison. Gypsy stated that finally she could live like a normal woman and she was happier in prison than living with her mother (Dean, 2016).

In 2017, another case of the abnormal relationship between mother and child was reported in Denver, United States. A 7-year-old daughter named Olivia Gant became viral when she uploaded status about a to-do list before she died. Her mother named Kelly Renee Turner said that Olivia had a very rare disease called *neurogastrointestinal encephalomyopathy*, a fatal disease that weakened the organs of body. Before Olivia died, she gained many attentions from public. She was become an honorary chief in police department and an honorary firefighter. She also got donations from public before her mother took her to the hospital, stopped giving her food by feeding tube and she died after a long struggle to cure her disease. After Olivia died, there was a criminal investigation because the result of Olivia's autopsy became unclear. The

medical officials did not find any related causes of the disease that Turner claimed. The doctors who handled Olivia also said that they did not find any fatal diseases in their diagnoses like what Turner claimed. Turner also claimed that Olivia had a sudden attack of disease like epilepsy, but she asked the doctors to pump up her daughter with medicine even though the doctors had already said many times that Olivia did not have the disease Turner stated. Turner was found that she forced the doctors to sign a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) form, which means whenever Olivia was in critical condition, the doctors should not do any rescues to save Olivia's life. The result of investigation stated that Turner deceived the public servant who gave charity to Olivia, the Medicaid insurance for Olivia's medical bills, Olivia's funeral payment, and then she was also accused for doing child abuse towards Olivia, she lied that her other daughter had cancer though the medical record did not state her other daughter had any diseases. Therefore, according to Olivia's autopsy result and all crimes that Turner committed, the investigators concluded that Turner had Munchausen syndrome by proxy and was arrested in the Douglas County jail (Walsh, 2019).

The current issues explained above relates to the story of novel written by Stephanie Wrobel which titled *Darling Rose Gold*. Stephanie Wrobel also wrote story about the abnormal relationship between mother and daughter. She wrote it as fiction story related to the case of Munchausen syndrome by proxy. She was inspired to write it because she learned about Munchausen syndrome by proxy from her best friend who was a psychologist. She did her own

research about the case of Munchausen syndrome by proxy and found it interesting if she could write a story about that. Although the novel was fiction, Stephanie Wrobel succeeded to deliver that the mother had Munchausen syndrome by proxy and there would be a plot twist where the daughter took revenge on her mother with the same case as her mother did. Besides, she also succeeded to bring *Darling Rose Gold* which was also as her debut novel to be the USA today bestseller novel and was nominated for the Edgar Award 2021 in Best First Novel category. Stephanie Wrobel made it such an amazing debut novel because she built two complicated characters that really left much impression for the reader.

The novel *Darling Rose Gold* which is fiction genre told about the relationship between mother and daughter that did not seem like the actual relationship, which was really sacred. Patty Watts was a mother of her one and only daughter called Rose Gold. Patty was like a saint and an example of a good mother for her neighbors. She usually cleaned the residence's street and accompanied the elders to play bingo. Her neighbors knew that she had a sick daughter and she always treated her daughter carefully. Her daughter was born prematurely ten weeks earlier than a normal baby and the problem started since then. Rose Gold had jaundice and pneumonia when she was still in the hospital. When Patty was allowed to take her daughter back home, Rose Gold started to have sleep apnea issue; the condition that usually happened to the baby born prematurely and it caused the baby stops breathing for fifteen until twenty minutes while sleeping. Rose Gold's health issues did not stop after that, she

always had fever, sore throat, and serious ear infections until a pediatrician gave tubes in her ears.

The most worried problem was when Rose Gold had digestion issues and she cannot eat everything like milk or real food, just like she had allergies to every food in the earth. Every time she ate she would throw up, so the doctor and her mother agreed to give her a feeding tube. Her mother always came up with solutions for each health issues. Rose Gold's hair fell out too much, so her mother shaved it. When her eyesight got problem, her mother gave her glasses. When she fainted more often, her mother bought a wheelchair for her. All of her mother's solution made her looked like a chronically sick child and nobody doubted it, even the doctors believe her mother's assumption about her condition because the figure of mother was exactly the first person that really knew about her own child. However, after running some tests and diagnoses, some doctors found that there was something wrong with her mother's words. The doctors could not find any disease in Rose Gold's body, except too much lose weight. The doctors were suspicious about her mother's mental health, they assumed that her mother had Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, which caused Rose Gold played a role as a patient who really needed affection from others, especially medical attention.

As for the problem occurring in the novel, the mother poisoned all food for her daughter to make her daughter looked like a sick person and be hospitalized to get medical treatment, it was called Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy. Although what the mother did was really cruel, but she felt like she had

been a perfect mother who gave all her times to treat her sick daughter. Whenever the doctors were suspicious about what the mother said, the mother would go to another doctor to get medical treatment again and it continued until her daughter was sixteen years old. It stopped when her daughter in the middle adolescent. Her daughter found bottles of poison in the mother's drawer, a place where the mother hid those bottles of poison from her. Then, her daughter browsed in the Internet what function of that poison and it proved the reason why her daughter always threw up all food that she ate. Her daughter could not believe it, but she just realized whenever she was hospitalized, she never threw up the food that the hospital gave her.

Through the explanation above, the author finds about Munchausen syndrome by proxy suffered by Patty Watts in Stephanie Wrobel's *Darling Rose Gold* and chooses this novel as the object of the research because the novel told about the abnormal relationship between mother and daughter that should be a sacred relationship like normal people. A relationship that should be full of the real love, warmth, affection, peaceful, and comfortable, but unfortunately it is such a nightmare for a child who suffers a fake affection from parents. Furthermore, this case is a rare case that happened in the world and it had not been found yet in Indonesia. The case also makes people hardly find the indication of Munchausen syndrome by proxy because what the mother did really shows that she treated her own daughter well and seems like it was real although nobody knew what she secretly did to her own daughter, even the doctors find it difficult to diagnose people who suffer the disease. In

this research, the author focuses on the main character that had suffered Munchausen syndrome by proxy such as the symptoms, causes, and impacts of the disease.

The author uses psychoanalysis term proposed by Sigmund Freud in order to analyze the novel about psychology because psychology appears to be related in the world of literature. Whereas in literature there are so many kinds of field in it such as one of this research focuses about or psychology, culture, economy, and so on. Psychoanalysis will also be explained as a literary criticism for interpreting the novel that is about the kind of mental disorder in psychology. The kind of mental disorder here is Munchausen syndrome by proxy, which happens to people especially mothers who treat their children nicely but actually they fabricate illness to their own children intentionally because they think that is the perfect way to treat their children more. However, the children who received this treatment will be suffered in illness chronically and this can be mentioned as a form of child abuse. Therefore, the author conducts a research that titled “Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy of Patty Watts in the Novel *Darling Rose Gold* by Stephanie Wrobel (2020)”.

## **B. Questions and Scopes of the Research**

### **1. Questions of the Research**

Based on the focus of the research that was mentioned above, the author arranges this research through the following questions:

- a. How to describe the symptoms of Munchausen syndrome by proxy that was suffered by Patty Watts in the novel Darling Rose Gold?
- b. What causes that make Patty Watts suffered Munchausen syndrome by proxy in the novel Darling Rose Gold?
- c. What are the impacts that were caused by Patty Watts who suffered Munchausen syndrome by proxy in the novel Darling Rose Gold?

## **2. Scopes of the Research**

In conducting this research, the author focuses on the symptoms, causes, and effects of Munchausen syndrome by proxy suffered by Patty Watts, one of the main characters that were found in the novel Darling Rose Gold through psychoanalysis proposed by Sigmund Freud. The author uses the theory proposed by Marc D. Feldman and Gwen Adshead & Deborah Brooke for the causes and impacts of Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

In addition, the author uses the diagnoses written by APA (American Psychiatric Association) in the book DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition) to get factual information of the symptoms of Munchausen syndrome by proxy. The author applies the theories above to get the overall data analysis properly. Furthermore, literature is used in psychoanalysis as a source or example to get a representation of Munchausen syndrome by proxy, so the author chooses novel Darling Rose Gold as the object of this research because it is a new published book that tells a story about the case.



## **C. Objective and Significance of the Research**

### **1. Objective of the Research**

According to the research questions that have been described previously, there are three objectives of the research as described as follows:

- a. To describe the symptoms of Munchausen syndrome by proxy that was suffered by Patty Watts in the novel *Darling Rose Gold*.
- b. To explain the causes that make Patty Watts suffered Munchausen syndrome by proxy in the novel *Darling Rose Gold*.
- c. To find the impacts that caused by Patty Watts who suffered Munchausen syndrome by proxy in the novel *Darling Rose Gold*.

### **2. Significance of the Research**

In this research, the author hopes there are benefits that can be taken by the readers. It is divided into two different parts, those are theoretical benefits and practical benefits.

Theoretically, the author hopes this research will give a contribution to the development of the literary study especially in the study of English literature. It will also help the next researchers to find ideas to develop some researches about Munchausen syndrome by proxy through the character of the novel.

Practically, this research can be used as a reference to give a contribution to society in giving a better understanding about Munchausen syndrome by proxy, so that people can apply the use of it in their understandings about the case.

#### **D. Operational Definition**

To avoid ambiguity and uncertainty, the author will describe the meaning of the important words of phrase used in this research. They are as the followings:

##### **1. Novel**

One of written works in literature that tells about series of life stories whether it based on true story or an author's imagination and non-fiction or fiction in order to entertain and give a message or moral value to the readers.

##### **2. Fiction**

In literary works specifically in novel, fiction is one of genres telling about a story based on an author's imagination.

##### **3. Elements of Fiction**

Terms that should be considered when analyzing fiction work, such as plot, character, setting, and point of view.

##### **4. Psychology**

A study of people's mental states whether it is normal or abnormal and conscious or unconscious, it also includes about people's feelings, thoughts, and attitudes.

##### **5. Psychoanalysis**

A term that will be used for explaining about an analysis of psychology in the form of literary works.

##### **6. Munchausen Syndrome**

A kind of psychological problem when someone pretends to be a sick person by faking illness in order to gain many attentions from people or get something for his advantages.

#### 7. Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy

A part of Munchausen Syndrome that a caretaker makes someone in his or her cares to pretend as a sick person.

#### 8. Symptom

Before a doctor diagnoses someone with a disease, a sign of the disease will appear, so it can simplify the doctor to examine him.

#### 9. Cause

Before suffering a disease, there will be a reason that makes someone at the current state.

#### 10. Impact

A result that was experienced by oneself or it can also give effects to another people after someone suffers a disease.

### **E. Systematization of the Research**

Systematization of the research means to present the paper in well-editing composition. The research is divided into five chapters as follow:

Chapter I Introduction explains about background of the research and reason why the author chose the research, questions and scopes of the research, objective and significance of the research, operational definition, and

systematization of the research which consists the resume of the content of the research as a whole.

Chapter II Theoretical description consists of the definition of novel, fiction, elements of novel, psychology, psychoanalysis, mental disorder, Munchausen syndrome, Munchausen syndrome by proxy, the symptoms of Munchausen syndrome by proxy, the causes of Munchausen syndrome by proxy, and the impacts of Munchausen syndrome by proxy, and relevance of the research which shows the previous researches that had been conducted.

Chapter III Research methodology involves method of the research, procedure of the research, technique of the data collection, technique of the data analysis, and data source.

Chapter IV Analysis data shows about data description in the novel, data analysis where the author analyzes all the data that the author found in the corpus data, and interpretation of the research findings.

Chapter V Conclusion and suggestion give the summary of the conclusion, which relate to the discussion, suggestion that relate to significance of the research.