



**BOOK REVIEW OF *ONE DAY*
WRITTEN BY DAVID NICHOLLS**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states truthfully that this project is compiled by her without taking the result from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, the writer ascertains that she does not take the material from other publication or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 10February 2015

Istyani Dhea P

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Sometimes I feel like giving up, then I remember I have lot of motherfuckers to prove wrong – **Dea**

I've learned that you can't please everyone. So don't even try it. It's a waste of time trying to make everyone like you. Just be you. I've learned the hard way and in the end, some people are just so full of hate that no matter what you say or do, they will always have something to say. They will never like you. – **Megan Fox**

Every morning you have two choices: continue to sleep with your dreams, or wake up and chase them. – **Anonymous**

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved mother and family.

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The writer realizes that this thesis is still far from perfect. She, therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this thesis better.

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The Writer

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ABSTRACT

This book review analyzes the strengths and weakness of David Nicholls's *One Day*. *One Day* is a novel that tells the story about a man and woman who actually loves each other, but they never shows it up for about 20years because of their prestige feeling. This review explores the strengths and the weakness of David Nicholls's *One Day* by inspecting elements namely characters, setting, and conflict. To review the novel, the writer use intrinsic theory such as characters, settings, and conflict. In addition, the writer use close reading method to analyze this novel. I choose this novel, because this novel has strengths that make it as a good reading. The strengths inside the novel are characters and conflict. In this novel each character has a different characteristic and is highly contrasted, it makes the story more exciting and not boring. On the other hand, the conflict is so strong in this novel. The way Nicholls explains the conflict could make the reader feels what exactly the character's feel. Even having weakness, this novel is not less the value to be a good reading. *One Day* is recommended novel to read, because there are many interesting parts of the story that we can enjoy from this novel.

Keyword: characters, setting, conflict, strengths, and weakness.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a piece of writing that expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings and attitudes toward life. In addition, literature, which has many similarities to the use of history and philosophy, helps the reader to understand the attitudes, behaviors, thoughts and habits of others in life. We cannot deny that it is the media of communication (Wellek and Warren 1956: 89).

We could find so many kinds aspects that we could express through our literary works. One of it is love. As we know, love is something that could make us crazy, happy, sad, laughing, crying, etc. Maybe, someone out there cannot live without love. Love is the most important feeling that we could have. Yet, there are so many people who still cover their love feelings because they are too shy or too prestige to say it.

One of the literary works that have a story about love is a novel by David Nicholls entitled *One Day*. This novel was published on 11 June 2009 in United Kingdom. Because so many people love the story of this book, Nicholls decided to adapt his book into a film which was released in August 2011. This novel tells about a famous handsome man named Dexter and the ordinary girl named Emma who just graduated from their college. Emma already knows who Dexter is and she has been falling in love with him before, yet Dexter didn't know about Emma's love feeling. They become best friends since they have failed having sex before, right at night after their graduating ceremony. Dexter is typical of a man who loves party and spent his money to have a fancy dating with girls. Different from Dexter, Emma just works in pizza restaurant, writing, and doing normal things. Actually Dexter has the same feeling with Emma, but he never shows it up and always denies his love by looking for and sleeping with so many girls, in order that he could have one right girl to marry. But finally, Emma and Dexter show their feelings and they decide to get married.

Through this novel we could find so many intrinsic elements. This makes me interested in discussing the story of this novel. Dexter's behavior makes me curious about what actually has happened to him until he covers up all of his feelings to Emma. To know deeper about that novel, I would like to explore about the strengths and the weakness of this novel entitled *One Day* by David Nicholls.

1.2 Biography of David Nicholls

This biography about David Nicholls is taken from the official website of David Nicholls (http://www.davidnichollswriter.com/about_david). David was born in 1966 in Eastleigh, Hampshire. David lived in North London with his partner Hannah and two children. David attended Toynbee Comprehensive School, and attended Barton Peveril Sixth Form College, before going to the University of Bristol in 1985 to study English Literature and Drama. Having graduated, and keen to pursue a career as an actor, he won a scholarship to study at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York, before returning to London in 1991. There he worked in a number of bars and restaurants before finally earning an Equity card. He worked sporadically as an actor for the next eight years, appearing in plays at Battersea Arts Centre, the Finborough, West Yorkshire Playhouse and Birmingham Rep. In between jobs he worked as a bookseller at Waterstones, Notting Hill.

In fiction, he has written three novels; *Starter for Ten*, *The Understudy* and *One Day*. I choose *One Day* because this novel has a good love story and easy to understand. The feature film version of *One Day*, directed by Lone Scherfig, began production in July 2010, with Anne Hathaway, Jim Sturgess, Romola Garai, Rafe Spall, Jodie Whittaker, Ken Stott and Patricia Clarkson. At present, David is writing his fourth novel, as well as working on a feature-film version of Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Dexter and Emma spend the night together following their graduation from Edinburgh University in 1988. They talk about how they will be, once they are 40. While they do not become romantically involved completely, this is the beginning of their friendship. Emma wants to improve the world and begins writing and performing plays, which remain unsuccessful, while Dexter travels through the world, drinking and hooking up with women. Eventually both move to London where Emma becomes a waitress in Kentish Town at a Tex-Mex restaurant, while Dexter becomes a successful television presenter.

While there are various attempts from both sides to start a relationship, something has happened stopping Emma and Dexter from getting together. While they have relationships with other people, they stay as best friends, both secretly longing for the other. They are drawn closer through a holiday together and the death of Dexter's mother.

Emma breaks up with her boyfriend, Ian, after realizing that she is having relationship with someone she doesn't love. Meanwhile, Dexter falls on drinking and drug problems and watches his career collapse. The friendship between Emma and Dexter grows more and more difficult, after Emma is constantly hurt by Dexter who attempts to hide his feelings both from her and himself.

At the wedding of Emma's former roommate, Emma and Dexter meet again. Emma admits that she wants Dexter to be back as her friend. At this time Dexter has fallen in love with another woman, Sylvie, who is pregnant with his child. At this reunion, Dexter invites Emma, who is disappointed by the situation, to his wedding.

Emma tries to overcome her problems and begins to write, while Dexter is unemployed and overwhelmed by his role as a father after his divorce from Sylvie who is having an affair. After realizing this, Dexter and Emma have sex for the first time. They do not get together and Emma leaves to go to Paris in the hope of writing a sequel to her first successful children's novel. When Dexter visits her in

Paris, he learns that she meets someone and likes him and for the first time admits his feelings to her. After talking about their relationship, Emma chooses Dexter.

Finally Emma and Dexter decide to be in relationship and they are happy together, with planning to marry next point, because Emma wants to have a child. The couple find themselves frustrated by the failing attempts to have a child. However, Dexter is able to open a deli-cafe and finds himself on his way back to be successful again. On the anniversary of the day they meet after graduation and the day they get together, Emma and Dexter have an appointment to see Deli Cafe. While on her way there, Emma got a bike accident and died. The upcoming year, Dexter travels together with his daughter to Edinburgh where he and Emma meet and they climb the same mountain together that Emma and Dexter climbed 19 years ago.

CHAPTER 3

DISCUSSION

3.1 Cover



David Nicholls chooses to use this cover, which depicts a man and a woman who seems to want to kiss each other for a reason. Nicholls wants to show that this novel tells the story of two people who love each other for 20 years but cannot be together because of the prestige that exists in each one. The orange color in the cover, symbolizing about enthusiasm, friendship, business achievement, career, success, health of mind, justice, endurance, excitement, fast motion, something that grows, interest, and independence.

3.2 Intrinsic Analysis of *One Day*

3.2.1 Characters

Character is one of the important elements in a literary work. In a novel, character is created by the author to complete the composition inside the story of a novel. “A character in a novel or play is not real human being and has no life outside the literary composition however well the illusion of reality has been created by author” (Taylor, 1981: 62). Taylor means that all of the characters that we see do not mean that they did antagonist for real in their real life. The characters of *One Day* to discuss are;

3.2.1.1 Dexter

Dexter Mathew is one of the main characters in *One Day* by David Nicholls. In this novel, shown that Dexter is kind of man who likes to explore the

sexual life, likes to having a one night stand with many girls. This statement was written on the novel page 10 when he was thinking about his future, “He hoped to be successful, to make his parents proud and to sleep with more than one woman at the same time”. (2009: 10). As an artist, he must be working with so many people especially girls. He meets a lot of different girls every day. Because he is typical person who likes flirting with girls, he definitely can’t handle his desire to be around of many girls. Every day he has to have interaction with them. That makes Dexter easily falls in love with those girls, but not the real love. He just wants to sleep with those girls, having sex for one night, gives them money, then gone.

When he first appears, he is in bed with Emma, that written on the page 9 on the novel. Girls are a big thing in Dexter’s life and he always has a new girl to go for a date with. Dexter’s lifestyle is completely the opposite of Emma’s, and he drinks far too much – “he has become someone who goes to wrap parties” (2009: 40). There are many references to his drinking problem and although this is not pin pointed straight away, there are several episodes in the book where it becomes apparent that alcohol is over coming his way of life.

By doing that, Dexter could be so proud by himself. Actually he does that because he wants to look for the right girl to be his wife. However he is totally wrong. In fact, all of the girls who want to be close with Dexter are just because they want Dexter’s money. Dexter’s will to pleasure feeling makes Dexter be as a protagonist character in this novel.

3.2.1.2 Emma Morley

Emma Morley is one of the antagonist characters of David Nicholl’s 2009 novel *One Day*. Emma is depicted to be the brainy of the two and the most straight-laced. She is described as wearing thick rimmed, black NHS glasses and has mousy brown hair. Emma’s character is built up mainly through her job and her personality.

Emma’s life is also depicting as being quite sad and lonely. She does not have many friends or boyfriends. The only friend that she thinks she has is Dexter,

but then he does not really want to spend any time with her. As it says on the novel, “In the bathroom, Emma wiped the crescents of toothpaste from the corner of her mouth and wondered if this was all terrible mistakes. Here she was, after four romantically barren years, finally, finally in bed with someone she really liked, had liked since she’d first seen him at a party in 1984, and in just few hours he’d be gone. Forever probably.” (2009: 11). The readers often feel sad for her but as the story moves on they see that she makes something of her life and changes it around. She is a very determined woman who cannot take no for an answer and knows what she wants. Emma makes mistakes, struggles with regret and the realization that no matter how much she wants it and works for it maybe the dreams she had when she was younger will never come true but she is also smart, independent, strong and kind. It is all part of what makes her human.

As a best friend, Dexter almost tells every single thing about himself to Emma, either love story or his everyday life. It was shown with the sentence “and he wanted to share all this excitement with Emma, introduce her to new possibilities, new experiences, and new social circles; to make her life more like his own” (2009: 39). As a good friend, Emma always tries to hear the Dexter’s story. She just wants Dexter happy by her hearing his story. She does not want Dexter to notice that she has a hidden feeling to him. However in the deepest heart of Emma, she has a feeling to inhibited Dexter to get his pleasure. That’s why, I said, that Emma is an antagonist character in this novel.

3.2.1.3 Sylvie Cope

Sylvie Cope is the love interest of, and first wife of Dexter Mayhew. She falls in love with Dexter after his fall from fame, and seeks to build a life with him, but she is concerned about his unemployment and his drinking. In this novel, it is shown that Dexter falls in love with Sylvie because he thinks that Sylvie is different from other girls. Sylvie comes from a rich family, educated, and intellectual. We could say that Sylvie is different from Emma. As in the novel said “she is beautiful of course, but in a different way from the others – not lads-mag-bubbly like Suki Meadows, or trendy-beautiful like Naomi or Ingrid or Yolande,

but serenely, classically beautiful.” (2009: 141). She is not a good listener and does not like joking, Sylvie more use her logic than her feeling. Nevertheless, the two marry when Sylvie becomes pregnant. At the end of the novel, they are divorced.

3.2.2 Setting

Setting is an element in fiction that supports the situation in a whole story. Setting is needed in every part of story, because it is background for the story. It shows clearly about what kind of condition inside the story. Potter says, “The actions of the characters take place at some time, in some place, amid some things, these temporal and spatial surroundings are the setting” (1967: 27). According to the explanation, setting is about environment surrounding the characters in the story that characters have. It may be the physical location, time, or other environment. This part does not really support the strengths and weakness of the novel, but I would like to still explain, because settings are include to one of important part of intrinsic element in literary works.

3.2.2.1 Setting of Time

Set across England in the 1980s and 90s, *One Day* is a story of two unlikely friends that is told one day at a time, on the same day each year. The basic premise of *One Day* is to capture a snapshot in the lives of Dexter and Emma and this is achieved by dropping in on their lives one day out of every year from 1988 to 2007. The setting of time from this novel is always shown right above the story in every chapter. This task is made easier by Dexter and Emma conveniently bumping into each other on rather too many St. Swithin’s Days to be entirely plausible due to their leading such different lives.

3.2.2.2 Setting of Place

University of Edinburgh in Scotland is where the story begins, the meeting between Emma and Dexter as they celebrate their graduation. Also instances where they spend the night together in the Emma's apartment, then ended it as the beginning of their friendship that already mentioned in the novel - "He exhaled through his nose and shuffled up the bed, taking in the shabby rented room, knowing with absolute confidence that somewhere in amongst the art postcards and photocopied posters for angry plays there would be a photograph of Nelson Mandela, like some dreamy ideal boyfriend." (2009: 10). After that, we knew that Emma works as a waiter in a Mexican restaurant in London, and Dexter traveling around the world. Mostly, Nicholls took the setting place in London, which as we know is David Nicholls own domicile. Besides London, Nicholls also writes Paris as the setting of Emma and Dexter meeting place where they starts their relationship as lovers, not as a friend anymore.

3.2.2.3 Social Setting

Social setting in this novel we can see from the life of Emma and Dexter who live in different environments. In the beginning of this novel shown that Emma comes from an ordinary family, in contrast to Dexter is arguably derived from the all-sufficient families. Dexter's friendship society also a bit posh and they are popular. After graduating from Edinburgh University, Emma work in a restaurant to earn money even though Emma does not like the job. While Dexter work as a well-known TV presenter with a very luxurious lifestyle. He is surrounded by many beautiful women. Drinking every day and having sex become a routine for Dexter. It is proven by "He needs company..... He could call Naomi, but she'll be with her boyfriend, or Yolande but she's filming in Barcelona, or Scary Ingrid but she has said that if she sees him again she'll rip his heart out...." (2009: 66)

In the middle of the story, Nicholls wrote about the marriage of Dexter and Sylvie. In that part we could see that their status social is totally different with the story in the beginning of the novel. Dexter, who just got fired from his job, getting

married with Sylvie, a girl who comes from a rich family, and have her own job. This shown, that Dexter is from lower class or maybe middle class, and Sylvie from high class social.

Also different with the ending of the novel, the part when Dexter meet again with Emma and decided to get married. In that part we could see that they already in the same social status, Emma in the middle class, as same as Dexter. Emma has been a writer in Paris – “The second one’s a sequel. That’s how imaginative I am. I’m about three-quarters of the way through.” (2009: 189)

In the family, Dexter has a mother named Patricia Clarkson who was diagnosed with cancer. His mother did not like Dexter became a famous TV presenter, as well as his father, Ken Stott. His father and mother were disappointed to Dexter because his society brought Dexter being a bad guy. His mother and father wanted to see Dexter become a success person that could make them proud.

3.2.3 Conflict

Conflict is also important in literary works. It makes the story develops in its own way and comes into an interesting part. Potter says as quoted by Dita, “The term conflict is familiar; it is the result of an opposition between at least two sides. Just as it takes two to make an argument, it takes two opposing people or forces to produce conflict basic to a plot” (2011: 25) Conflict is about disagreement. This disagreement exists between at least two sides, and it becomes a problem as said by Perrine: “conflict is a clash of action, ideas, desires, or wills” (1988: 42). It means that conflict appears because of the difference in each individual’s way of life. People have their own process in life, which sometimes does not match with one another.

In this novel, there are Emma and Dexter who came from the same University which is Edinburgh University. Emma already fell in love with Dexter since she saw Dexter for the first time in the University, until finally they decided to be best friends right in the night of their graduation day. So many things happened between Dexter and Emma in this novel. The conflict started when

Dexter turned being a bad guy and have a bad lifestyle. Dexter's mom who have a cancer really disappointed with the changing of Dexter, as same as his father. As Dexter's father says on the novel, "Dexter, if you ever come and see your mother in this state again, I swear, I will not let you into the house. I will not let you through our door. I will close the door in your face. I mean this." (2009: 78). Dexter is a bad guy because he is supported by his job and because of his social background. We saw that Dexter work in an adult TV show and meet a lot of different girls also friends that have a bad lifestyle. So that, Dexter easily change became a bad guy.

Next conflict is when Dexter got fired from his job, which is a well-known TV show presenter;

"No, Dexy, they just don't feel they've cracked a way of conveying the piquant romance of computer gaming to a late-night TV audience. The channel thinks that they haven't got the ingredients quiet right, so they're cancelling the show and change with the different presenter" (2009: 134).

In that time he has to married with a woman who already pregnant his child. And he has nothing, because he does not have a job anymore. Because of Dexter's condition, she is having affair with another man. Sylvie is having affair with another man because Sylvie needs a financial support for herself and her child. Her affair is way richer than Dexter. There is no solution for that conflict, and ended up with divorce. After that, Dexter who already being a good guy after married with Sylvie back to his bad lifestyle again because he is feeling slumped. Dexter tried to call Emma, because he start to realize that he needs Emma and he never found a girl like Emma who is he actually need.

The most interested conflict is when Dexter come to Paris for meeting Emma and tell Emma that he loves her. But unfortunately Emma already has a boyfriend in that time. As written on (2009: 191);

"I've sort of met someone."
"You've met someone."
"A man. A guy. I'm seeing this guy/"
"A guy. Right. Okay. So. Who?"
"He's called Jean-Pierre."
"He's French?"
"No, Dex, he's Welsh."

“No. I’m just surprised, that’s all.”

“Surprised he’s French, or surprised that I should actually have a boyfriend?”

Jean supposed to come to Emma’s apartment in that time. Dexter thought that his presence means nothing, and Dexter decided to come back to London and will try to forget Emma. Then suddenly Emma told Dexter that Jean wouldn’t come and Emma finally explains her feelings to Dexter;

“They smiled each other. Then, as if an idea had suddenly occurred to her, she quickly crossed the room in three long strides, took his face between her hands, and kissed him, and he placed his hands upon her back, finding the dress still unfastened, the skin bare and cool and still damp from the shower. They kissed like this for some time. Then, still holding his face in her hands, she looked at him intently.” (2009: 195).

This novel has a sad ending story. Years after Emma and Dexter get married, Emma had an accident, got crashed by bus and she died. Again, bad things come to Dexter. But Dexter could survive, and he promises to himself that he will keep his love for Emma, like forever. Their 20years love has to be remembered forever. “Then Emma dies, and everything that she thought or felt vanishes and is gone forever.” (2009: 215)

3.2.4The Strengths and Weakness

This novel has some strengths that make it as a good reading. The strengths inside the novel are characters and conflicts. The strength of Emma and Dexter's characters here are really strong. Nicholls writes with only few characters on this novel, because he wants to highlight each character on the novel. With the character of Dexter who is very stubborn, and also childish, could make the reader come to feel annoyed because of his characteristics. Meanwhile Emma, with her adult nature could make the reader indirectly admired figure of Emma on this novel.

The next strength is the conflict on the story of this novel. The conflict on this novel is very strong; love and friendship problems happened during the 20 years became one of the advantages that I highlight on this novel. Nicholls writes conflicts which are uncommon, and it is difficult to guess how the story ends. The

complexity of the relationship between Dexter and Emma make the reader more interested to continue reading this novel. I can say that this Nicholls's masterpiece is not an ordinary literary work on its day.

In addition to conflicts and characters, the writer can also say that the psychological element is also strong here. Dexter's character which is very strong in Id and weak in Superego is so different with Emma who is very strong in Superego. According to psychologists, a person who has excessive sexual preferences fits into be an artist, because an artist typically requires ideas and high creativity. Therefore he needs sex to improve their creativity. The psychological element is also shown when Dexter and Emma decided to open a bakery shop. There is also the meaning of bakery according to element of psychology. Cake and sex are same for Dexter; both of them could satisfy the biological sense of Dexter. For Emma, she decided to open a bakery shop because of her past she has been working in a restaurant that also about food.

Not only strengths of the novel, there is also a weakness that exists on this novel. The cover of this novel which is only illustrated a man and woman pictured from the side with the orange color could not make the readers interested to buy this novel. The cover may be made to have an important meaning for the novel, but for some people, they may do not care what is the meaning of the cover on this novel. Usually cover with more elements of color and images could attract more readers.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This great literary work by David Nicholls is worth to discuss for. *One Day* is a novel that tells story of a woman and man who loves each other but couldn't show their love for about 20 years and finally could be together even though the woman has to die first.

This novel has some strengths that makes it as a good reading. The strengths inside the novel are characters and conflict. Moreover, many supporting characters inside the novel build up a good plot and story.

Dexter's character reflects that so many people and a lot of readers could probably relate to him. He distances himself from all those who mean anything to him. Dexter brings a big character to the book being the complete opposite of Emma, so they complement each other quite well. His character is built up throughout the book and because of the layout of the book, the reader gets a good picture of how he is and what he is like and is someone that the readers can either relate to or sympathize with. The conflict of this novel makes this novel ends up with a tragic ending, because almost of conflicts in this novel appear with no solution. There is always conflict and another conflict that makes the readers probably confused yet like this novel.

Because so many people love the story of this book, Nicholls makes this book into a film in year 2011. The social setting, setting of place, and the setting of time is showing clearly with Nicholls in this novel. The character of Dexter and Emma also could make the reader fall in love easily with this novel.

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