



BOOK REVIEW OF *THE CLOCKWORK THREE*

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW J. KIRBY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is the piece of writing valued as a work of art, especially novels, plays and poems. Novel is one of literary works that tell the reader a story which consist of plot, character, theme and conflict.

Novel also has many themes such as Romance, Heroic and Friendship. Many authors use friendship as the main theme in literary works. One of those is depicted in Matthew J Kirby's *The Clockwork Three*.

The Clockwork Three is a fictional novel about three children; Giuseppe, Hannah and Frederick. Giuseppe wants to go back to Italy but he has to get a lot of money for the ticket. Frederick needs a clockwork man head to complete his clockwork man and Hannah tries to find Mr. Stroop treasure to support her family economy.

The novel is written by Matthew J. Kirby. He was born in Utah, but with a father in the Navy, he lived all over—Rhode Island, Maryland, California, and Hawaii. Matthew J. Kirby is majored in history as an undergraduate at Utah State University. He then went on to earn MS and EdS degrees in School Psychology. He was critically acclaimed and award-winning author of the middle grade novels *The Clockwork Three*, *Icefall*, *The Lost Kingdom*, *Infinity Ring Book 5: Cave of Wonders*, and *The Quantum League* series. He was named a *Publishers Weekly* Flying Start. He has won the Edgar Award for Best Juvenile Mystery, the PEN Center USA award for Children's Literature, and the Judy

Lopez Memorial Award. He is a former school psychologist, and currently lives in Utah with his wife and three step-kids.

The Clockwork Three is an interesting novel to be reviewed because through this novel we can feel the struggle of the protagonists to solve their problems. This novel also teaches us how friendship can help to solve our problem. The writer also thinks that this novel has several strengths and weaknesses that can be described in the following chapters.

2. SUMMARY

The Clock Work Three is a novel written by Matthew J Kirby. The story is about three children; Giuseppe, Frederick and Hannah. With different backgrounds, they try to help each other to solve their own problems.

Giuseppe is a street musician from Italy who found a green violin from the bay. Everyday, Giuseppe secretly plays his green violin and collects money for his padrone, Stephano, and saved the rest of it to buy ticket to Italy. Frederick is an orphan who apprentices in Master Branch's clockwork shop/workshop. He secretly works on a clockwork man that will allow him to be free from his apprenticeship. Hannah has supported her entire family by working as a maid in the Gilbert Hotel ever since her father was struck with apoplexy.

At first, they did not know each other, but after passing through various events, they know each other. Giuseppe first met Frederick when he helped Frederick beaten by two street musicians. Then after that, Frederick knew Hannah when she and her employer, Madame Pomeroy, ordered clock in the Master Branch workshop. Hannah, who was in Mr. Stroop grave, met Giuseppe who was hiding his green violin. They all then met in front of Hannah's apartment and started their friendship. They promise to work together to solve their problems.

Hannah who wants to help her family economy, tried to find Mr. Stroop treasure. However, another problem came when her father needed money for the medicine, so she decided to steal the Madame Pomeroy's necklace. Helped by

Giuseppe and Frederick, Hannah's necklace problem successfully resolved and Madame Pomeroy forgive Hannah.

Then Hannah, Giuseppe and Frederick tried to find Mr. Stroop treasure. Hannah went to Mr. Twine's house and asked about the treasure. Mr. Twine explained that the real Mr. Stroop treasure was the Mc. Cauley Park. When he was alive, Mr. Stroop gave a lot of money to Mr. Twine for extending the legacy of Mc. Cauley Park, so the park did not get demolished. Mr. Twine offered Hannah the money, but she did not want the money. Hannah respected Mr. Stroop's dream. Satisfied with Hannah's answer, Mr. Twine promoted Hannah as a Head Maid replacing Miss Wool.

Another problem comes from Frederick. Frederick, who wants to make a clockwork man so he can become clockwork master, cannot complete the head of his clockwork man. Assisted by Hannah and Giuseppe, he infiltrates to the Archer Museum to learn clockwork man head (Magnus Head). In Archer Museum, Hannah found a piece of golem and kept it for herself. Almost caught by the museum guards, Frederick bring the Magnus head home.

Frederick pairs the Magnus head to his clockwork man body and its start moving. Clockwork man run into the city. Frederick, Hannah and Giuseppe pursue the clockwork man. While searching for the clockwork man, Giuseppe captured by Ezio because he has problems with Stephano. Frederick and Hannah cannot help him. After Giuseppe brought by Ezio, Frederick and Hannah find the clockwork man. Clockwork man says it will help Giuseppe. After helping Giuseppe, they

returns to the Master Branch workshop. Hannah confessed that she put the piece of golem that she found in museum into the clockwork man so, that it can move.

The next day, Frederick accompanied by Hannah head to the hospital for asking about Frederick mother. Frederick wants to reveal who is his real mother's identity. Apparently, after the nurse told him, Frederick knows that his mother is a good person and friendly and she died of tuberculosis. Frederick is satisfied after he find out who is his mother.

Meanwhile, Giuseppe who is in Master Branch workshop receive a letter from Stephano, it says, "If he does not come to the Old Rock Church and handed a green violin, Stephano would kill Reverend Grey." Without thinking, Giuseppe rushed to the Old Rock Church. Evidently, Giuseppe is framed by Stephano. When Giuseppe arrived, Ezio beat him and tie him beside Reverend Grey.

Soon afterwards, Frederick, Hannah, Master Branch, Madame Pomeroy and her bodyguard, Yakov, came to help Giuseppe and Reverend Grey. Yakov immediately beat Stephano. After being release, Giuseppe is invite by madam Pomeroy to go to Italy with her. Giuseppe is very happy because he can return to his hometown. At the end of the story, Hannah and her family have lived well off, Frederick has become an expert clockwork maker, and Giuseppe has return to Italy.

3. REVIEW OF MATTHEW J KIRBY'S *THE CLOCK WORK THREE*

3.1 Strength of Matthew J Kirby's *The Clock Work Three*

Several strengths can be found in this novel. First, the characters in this novel. According to Abrams (1998:32) "Characters are the person represented in a dramatic and narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual and emotional qualities by inference from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it –the dialogue- and from what they do – the action". In *The Clockwork Three*, three charming characters; Giuseppe, Hannah and Frederick can make the reader interested to read the novel.

Giuseppe is a kind and brave boy. He always stands up for his friends, it is states in quotation below:

He did not bother to raise his collar or lower his head. He was tired of being afraid. The streets were mostly deserted, and he walked with purpose and speed toward the Old Rock Church. (Kirby, 2010: 363)

In quotation above, Giuseppe shows his brave. He headed to Old Rock Church to save Reverend Grey, Even he know it is a trap sets by Stephano.

Hannah becomes the lovely girl character in the novel, she is strong, optimistic and strong-willed girl.

"There's nothing down there," Giuseppe said. "It has to be!" She kept digging. The hand on her back again. "I don't think so." Hannah stopped. She pulled up and learned away from the opening she had made in the earth. " Maybe it's just buried deeper," she said . (Kirby, 2010: 212)

Hannah is very optimistic about Mr. Stroop treasure. When she finds a clue about the treasure in the park, Hannah dig the soil in the park. Although she was dig deep enough and did not find anything, she was not desperate and continued to dig.

Frederick is the oldest character among the protagonist. He is smart, he becomes the boy who solve the problem with his intelligence.

“Well, Madame Pomeroy is very wealthy and well connected. There will undoubtedly be a number of her acquaintance at the opera this evening”.
(Kirby, 2010: 110).

The combination of those three characters, make the reader comforts when reading the novel.

The next strength in this novel is the combination between technology and mythology. In the beginning of the novel, the author gives the reader the “technology” with Frederick and his clockwork man. shown in quotation bellow:

He had the rough dimensions and measurements in mind but would only know the piece once he found it, and when he did find it, the clockwork man would be nearly complete. (Kirby, 2010: 13)

Then in the middle of the story, the author shows the reader about mythology. The quotation below proves the mythology that shown in the novel.

A Golem, child. A man made of clay and brought to life by the spells of Jewish rabbis and mystics. (Kirby, 2010: 36)

Golem is the mythical creature from Jewish mythology. According to Collins (1993:1) “It is a humanoid made by man from clay and water, with incantation and spells”. As a mythology, many literary works uses golem as a character such as Isaac Bashevis Singer's *The Golem* and *The X-Files*. There is also a character named Golem in J.R.R. Tolkien's classic series *The Lord of the Rings*. Today, there is even a golem museum in the Jewish Quarter of Prague.

After that, the author combines technology and Mythology when Hannah put the piece of golem (Mythology) into the clockwork man (Technology), that shows in quotation below.

She kissed the piece of clay, leaving a wet spot, and wedge it inside the chest, away from anything that looked like it might turn or spin or more.
(Kirby, 2010: 296)

The outcome of the combination is the clockwork man starts to move and become alive because of the piece of golem. It shows in quotation below:

Then, without warning, it leaped from the table and vaulted up the cellar stairs in two leaps. (Kirby, 2010: 297)

The author makes the story more interesting to read by combining technology and mythology. The story of the novel is became richer because this combination of two things.

Another strength of the novel is interesting style of writing. The author distinguishes the story of three protagonists. In chapter one, the author tells the story

about Giuseppe. Then in chapter two, the author tells about Frederick and Hannah rises in chapter three. The author keeps that order of the character emergence in the story until the end of the novel. First, is Giuseppe, second story is Frederick and Hannah becomes the last. The writer thinks that it is the good way to distinguish the point of view of each character, because the novel has three protagonists, so the reader does not confuse while reading it.

The last strength is the strong relationship among the three protagonist. The bond that build by Giuseppe, Hannah and Frederick in the story make the novel more interesting to read. Moreover, the problems they encounter in the novel, instead of making a split, even make them more solid. Because of this strong relationship, they can solve their problem in the novel. This value of relationship is good lesson for the reader.

3.2 The Weaknesses of Matthew J Kirby's *The Clock Work Three*

In every work, there are also weaknesses that can be found in this novel. The first weakness is uncommon term, which used in the novel. The author do not give footnotes or enough explanation about the uncommon word. This term often confuses the readers, because there is no further explanation about the terms. The example of this uncommon term is *padrone* as shown in the quotation below:

Padrones were the only criminals taking refugee here. (Kirby, 2010:8)

There is no explanation of the word “padrone” until the end of the story. The uncommon term will make the reader wonder about the meaning. The writer

suggests the reader when they find uncommon term; they can search the meaning of the term on the internet or dictionary.

Next, there is no translation or explanation of foreign language. One of the protagonists, Giuseppe, is the Italian boy. When he met the other Italian boy, Pedro, he talked in Italian language.

Pietro, "he said, and started wailing." *che cosa faro?*. (Kirby, 2010: 9)

In the quotation above, the word "*che cosa faro?*" is Italian language, and no translation or explanation about it. Since it is an American novel, it is difficult to read when a foreign language with no translation appears in the novel.

The other weakness is the inconsistent of the writing style of the novel. At the beginning of the novel, the author clearly writes the foreign word.

Tu Sei Giuseppe?" the boy sniffed and wiped his nose with the back of his sleeve. (Kirby, 2010:9)

Then in the end of the novel, the author change the style of his writing, as stated in quotation below.

you can't go,"Pietro said in Italian". (Kirby, 2010:376)

The author write the explanation that Pietro speak Italian rather than write it in Italian word like in the beginning of the novel.

The last weakness is fuzziness setting of time in this novel. In *The Clockwork Three*, the author never tells to the reader the exact time the story is taken. From the beginning of the story, the author never mentioned the setting of

time in the narrative or dialogue of the character in the story. Setting of time in the novel is importance, because the setting of time make a border inside the reader mind. For example, in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of The Rings*, the setting takes place in a past based loosely on Anglo-Saxon Europe. This means that swords, lances and castles are fair game. However, the reader do not imagine about helicopter, phone or digital watch inside the storyline. Since the author of *The Clockwork Three* never writes about the setting of time in the novel, the reader is difficult to imagine and make a border about the world in the novel.

4. CONCLUSION

Matthew J. Kirby *The Clockwork Three* tells about three children in the same city with different background. Giuseppe is the street musician who wants to go back to his hometown in Italy, but he has to escape from his padrone, Stephano. Frederick is the orphan boy who became an apprentice in Master Branch workshop. Frederick wants to become the clockwork master. Hannah, a maid in the Gilbert Hotel has to work to support her family economy because his father is struck with apoplexy. Through unexpected circumstances, they became friend and realize that each other can solves the others problems.

As a literary work, this novel has strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of this novel are character, combination of technology and mythology and distinguish the plot based on the point of view of the character. *The Clockwork Three* has great characters like Giuseppe, Frederick and Hannah that well depicted in the novel. The combination of technology and mythology on this novel is very interesting because it makes the story become richer. The way the author distinguished the plot based on the point of view of the character can make the reader comfortable while reading the novel. The relationship of the protagonist character became the last strength. It make the novel have a value to learn for the reader.

The weakness of the novel are there is no further explanation about the uncommon terms and there is no translation or explanation of foreign language. The fuzziness of setting of time and inconsistent of writing style are also became the weakness. The author use term like padrone in the novel but there is no explanation

about it. The lack of explanation is also occurs when foreign language appear in the novel. The author shows inconsistent when in the beginning of the novel, the author writes the foreign language without any explanation, but in the end of the novel, the author explained foreign language in English. In general, Matthew J. Kirby *The Clockwork Three* is a good novel to be read. Both young readers and adults can read this novel.

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