



**BOOK REVIEW OF NICHOLAS SPARKS'  
*MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE***

**A FINAL PROJECT**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
for S-1 Degree in Literature  
in English Department, Faculty of Humanities  
Diponegoro University

Submitted by:

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**2017**

## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

I honestly state that this final project is arranged by myself without taking any results from other research of all degrees in any universities. In addition, I establish that I do not take and quote the materials from other publications or someone else's work, except for the sources mentioned in the references.

Semarang, Agustus 2017

Fajri Estu Tirta. H

## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

“Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today.”

– James Dean –

*This final project is dedicated to my beloved parents.*

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I realize that this final project is still far from being perfect. Thus, I will be pleased to receive any constructive criticism and suggestion to make this book review better.

In conclusion, I hope that this final project will be useful for the readers who are interested in reading fiction novels about sad romance, especially teenagers.

Semarang, Agustus 2017

Fajri Estu Tirta. H

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

A novel is one of literary works that attract readers of various ages and backgrounds. *Novel* is a work of fiction, it is a story drawn out of the writer's imagination. *Message in a bottle* is a famous novel that has one of the international best-selling based on famous author, Nicholas Sparks. The writer believes that this is a great novel to be read. This novel narrates a story of a divorced woman, she found her husband having an affair. Although she is not willing to continue living alone, she still goes on with her job as a columnist, as well as raising her child alone. One day she found a message in a bottle. There, on the paper, written a man's desire for his beloved woman, but the woman has passed away. A further story for this novel is written in the summary and author's biography.

This novel is very interesting to read for young people, because the storyline is good and very touching. Indeed, the story in the *Message in a Bottle* mostly about sad romance, but behind the story implied some motivation for people to stay strong and continue living no matter how hard life is. Nowadays, many phenomena of broken hearts lead to suicidal thought/behavior is one of the moral value that the writer can take from this novel. This is why the writer think this novel is suitable for young people. In this novel, there are also intrinsic and extrinsic elements that are interesting to discuss. Intrinsic aspects such as theme is a major idea contained in a story

including in a work of writing. Characters is someone who becomes the actor/actress in the novel and settings is a description of the events contained in the novel. There is also extrinsic aspects. It will discuss the author of a novel and some moral values in it. These intrinsic and extrinsic aspects will be discussed in review section.

## CHAPTER II

### SUMMARY & THE AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

*Message in a Bottle*

*Nicholas Sparks*

As stated in Nicholas' official website, nicholassparks.com, Nicholas Charles Sparks was born in Omaha, Nebraska on December 31, 1965. All of his books become *New York Times* bestsellers, with over 105 million copies sold around the world, in more than 50 languages. Nicholas Sparks lives in North Carolina. He contributes to various national charities as a major contributor to the Creative Writing Programs (MFA) at the University of Notre Dame. He provides scholarships, internships and fellowships every year. He also spent four years coaching track and field athletes at the local public high school. Nicholas Sparks wrote one of his best stories, *The Notebook* at the age of 28. It was published in 1996 and followed with the novel *Message in a Bottle* (1998), *A Walk to Remember* (1999), *The Rescue* (2000), *A Bend in the Road* (2001), *Nights in Rodanthe* (2002), *The Guardian* (2003), *The Wedding* (2003), *True Believer* (2005) and its sequel, *At First Sight* (2005), *Dear John* (2006), *The Choice* (2007), *The Lucky One* (2008), *The Last Song* (2009), *Safe Haven* (2010), *The Best of Me* (2011), and *The Longest Ride* (2013) as well as the 2004 non-fiction memoir *Three Weeks With My Brother*, co-written with his brother

Micah. His eighteenth novel, *See Me*, published on October 12, 2015. His newest book, *Two by Two*, was published in October 4, 2016.

The story of *Message in a bottle* begins when Theresa Osborne, a columnist for the Boston Times, found a bottle on the beach. Inside is one of the most touching love letters Theresa has ever read. Apparently, it is a letter from Garrett Blake to his lost love, Catherine. Theresa shows the letter to her friend and editor, she talked them to publish the letter in her parenting column in the Boston Times. The reaction of the readers is overwhelming. Theresa returns from vacation to pile of letters. She got many phone calls from people who want to know more about it. Theresa is fascinated with the letter and decides to do some research on that message in bottle. Theresa takes all three letters to her editor and together they use the information in the letters to locate Garrett Blake. As time goes by, they meet, care for each other and fall in love each other. The conflicts begin when they are arguing, Garrett found her letters to Catherine at Theresa's apartment. Garrett got angry. He felt it was a private thing that should not be known, especially the public media.

At the final chapter, Theresa just gave up on their relationship. He feels Garrett is still overshadowed by Catherine. Theresa finally chose to move away from Garrett. Garret Blake dies due to an accident involving a storm but not before sending her a message in a bottle.

## CHAPTER III

### REVIEW OF THE NOVEL

The writer would like to discuss a few important things of this novel. After reading, the writer found a lot of points that can be reviewed in this novel. The points are about the strengths and the weaknesses of this novel. In the following sections, the writer will describe those points. In a novel there are intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. The first intrinsic aspect that the writer wants to discuss is the theme.

Theme is a major idea contained in a story including in a work of writing. Theme is derived from the Latin language, *thema*. According to Perrine (1988), Theme is a way that is seen by the reader to know the story in writing. Stories in writing will be more delivered well when choosing an interesting theme. The writer wants to show that the main theme in the novel of *Message in a Bottle* is sadness. From beginning till the end the story tells of the sadness experienced by the characters. Only a small portion in this novel has romance and happiness scenes. This sadness began when reading a letter from Garret Blake to Catherine, his beloved wife. A letter written by Garrett to his wife contains a very deep feeling to his beloved wife who passed away. It can be seen from the following quote,

“...Without you in my arms, I feel an emptiness in my soul. I find myself searching the crowds for your face—I know it is an impossibility, but I cannot help myself...” (A letter to Catherine. Sparks, 1997)

This sadness was strengthened when Garrett wrote a message to Theresa before he left forever. It can be seen from the following quote,

*“...Thank you for coming into my life and giving me joy, thank you for loving me and receiving my love in return. Thank you for the memories I will cherish forever...”* (Sparks, 1997:356)

Characterization is the way the authors describe the story based on its essence, physical characteristics, the environment in which it lives, and how it acts. According to Kenney (1966: 33), Character is the mental and moral qualities that make a person or a group different from other. Morner and Rausch define character simply as “a person in a literary works” (1991:31). Character can be said as fictional actors/actress in a fictional story that has a natural human nature, which means that the characters have a life. Theresa Osborne is a main character in this novel. Theresa Osborne is a columnist for the Boston Times. She is smart, earnest, kind, high confidence and loving personality. It can be seen from the following quote,

*“She didn’t know exactly, but he did exist, and one of the things she had learned early in her life was that if you discovered something that made you tighten inside,...”*( Sparks, 1997:61)

The second character is Garret Blake. Garrett Blake is a independent, obstinate and loyal husband. He was abandoned by his wife that he loved so much. At that moment he wrote a letter to his wife and then it is placed in a bottle, in a vast depth of sea, with all the hope inside, and flew in the Ocean, unfocused, and finally the bottle was stranded on the beach of Chatham. The letter was discovered by Theresa, she dropped her tears by the contents of the letter in it. Garret still feels traumatized

because he still cannot move on with Catherine but on the other hand, he really loves Theresa. It can be seen from the following quote from his father Jeb Blake,

*“ ... But I know exactly what you’re going through. You’ve gotten so caught up in being alone that you’re afraid of what might happen if you actually find someone else that can take you away from it.”* (Sparks, 1997:252)

In a novel there is an element that must exist that is setting, all the things that setting of story from start to finish. There are three important points in the setting; place, time and social setting. The story’s of setting of *Message in a Bottle* setting in Boston and Wilmington in 1997. Boston is the setting for Theresa Osborne's office, Boston Times as columnist. Meanwhile, Wilmington is where Garrett Blake lives and where he works as a diving instructor and sailor.

### **3.1 Strengths of the novel**

The first strengths of this novel is word selection. As we know that in the novel usually uses a language that is difficult to understand and sometimes uses the language of literature. But not with the novel by Nicholas Sparks, he uses a word that is easy to understand so that the reader has no difficulty understand it. Because according to the writer opinion, in his way of creating an easy-to-understand novel it's easier for the reader to capture what the author wants to convey the intent in the story. Moreover, the novel is intended for young people, so the readers, especially young people can understand the meaning and meaning. So the story can be well conveyed by using common words.

The second strengths of this novel is the plot illustrated well. The plot of the novel *Message in a Bottle* is using chronological plot. Because the story presented undergoes a step forward that result in the future. Novel *Message in a Bottle* begins when she found a bottle in which a letter appeared. First time taking it, Theresa was very enthusiastic. After he picked up the bottle, it was clear that the letter paper he had found was very long. Theresa shows the letter to her friend and editor, she is talked into publishing the letter in her parenting column in the Boston Times. Theresa success to get information about a man named Garrett, they meet, care and fall in love each other. Until the distance becomes a problem between them. And then Garrett found her letters to Catherine at Theresa's apartment. Garrett got anger, he felt it was a private thing that should not be known, especially the public media. By the end of the novel, Theresa just over theirs relationship. He feels Garrett is still overshadowed by Catherine, his wife who passed away. Theresa finally chose to move away from Garrett. Garret Blake dies due to an accident involving a storm.

In this novel there are lots of griefs, message in a bottle from Garrett to his beloved wife is already the first sadness in this novel that made the reader touched. In that message, Garrett revealed all the longing he felt for his beloved wife. It can be seen from the following quote,

*“...You and I had talked about what would happen if we were forced apart by circumstance, but I cannot keep the promise I made to you that night. I am sorry, my darling...”* (Letter for Catherine. Sparks,1997)



Next grief comes from Garrett Blake. When Garrett still sad about losing his wife, father Jeb Blake advises Garrett. It can be seen from the following quote,

*“...You’ve gotten so caught up in being alone that you’re afraid of what might happen if you actually find someone else that can take you away from it.”*  
(Sparks, 1997:252)

### **3.2 Weakness of the novel**

The first weakness of the novel can be found at the end of the novel. Most of the readers can guess the end of the story in this novel. At the beginning of the story it was mentioned that Theresa divorced and became a single mother, and then Garrett wrote the message in a bottle to her beloved wife who had found the message found by Theresa on the beach. When Theresa and Garret meet and fall in love, the conflict approaches them because Theresa feels that Garrett has not been able to move on from his wife, Catherine. At the end of it they are not together because the end of the story, Garret passed away when he tries to save people when a storm breaks out. Before the accident. Before it happened, Garrett tries to apologize to Theresa and express his feelings for Theresa by writing a few letters to Theresa.

*“...I know I am not perfect. I’ve made more mistakes in the past few months than some make in a lifetime. I was wrong to have acted as I did when I found the letters, ...”* (Sparks, 1997:348)

*“...Oh, Theresa, I am sorry, so very sorry, that I ever hurt you. I am coming to Boston next week with the hope that you find a way to forgive me...”*  
(Sparks, 1997:350)

That quote is an apology from Garrett after what he did to Theresa. It can be seen that the ending of this novel can be predicted by the reader because from the beginning to the end of the story mostly tell sadness, practically sad romance.

The last weakness of the book is lack of romance. The story of the novel Message in a Bottle tells of a woman who fell in love with the man who wrote the message in a bottle and then they fell in love with each other. Only in that section there is a romance scene in this novel when they love each other. But most of these novel stories start from beginning to end, leading to sadness and deep sorrow. The authors feel it will be more interesting if more romance scene added in this novel

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

*Message in a bottle* is a novel authored by an American Writer by Nicholas Sparks who is a famous author for his best-selling work and lots of his made the film version. The message of this story to the reader is that we have to value our life and hold on to people who cherish us. The story also contains elements of comedy, such as the typical story of Nicholas Sparks. The funny character in this story is Deanne, a 58-year-old middle-aged woman, a close friend of Theresa. Although the writer does not think it is a happy ending where Garret's character has to die, but there's an important lesson behind this story. Just a matter of imagination, I hope Theresa Osborne's figure really exists. So it is with Kevin and Deanne. Unfortunately, all this is not real unfortunately this is just a fictional story.

It can be concluded that in a novel there are strength and weaknesses. It depends on the reader's point of view. After reviewing, the author gets some strengths and weaknesses of this novel. The strength of this novel is the author capability to select words and the amount of grief and sadness in its story. The predictable ending and lack of romance scenes are the weakness of this novel. Although this novel has some weaknesses, the author strongly recommends this novel to be read because it can motivate us to treasure the people that cherish us in the present, and also to grasp every chance that we have given before it is too late.

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