



**ROMANTIC LOVE AS DEPICTED IN  
*TO ALL THE BOYS I'VE LOVED BEFORE* BY JENNY HAN**

**A THESIS  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Sarjana Degree Majoring Literature in English Department  
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly confirms that this thesis entitled “Romantic Love as Depicted in *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before* by Jenny Han” is written and compiled by herself without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and diploma degree of any university. The writer also states that she does not quote any material from other publications or papers except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, June 2020



Feriska Natasya Safira

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*“What is not started will never get finished.”*

**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

*“If you don’t go after what you want, you’ll never have it. If you don’t ask, the answer is always no. If you don’t step forward, you’re always in the same place.”*

**Nora Roberts**

*This thesis is dedicated to  
Myself, my beloved family, and those  
who give me the motivation to keep going.*

## APPROVAL

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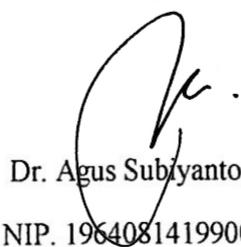
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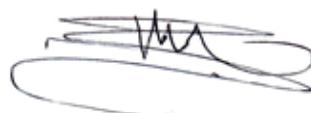
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The writer is fully aware that this thesis is still far from being perfect. Therefore, all constructive comments and suggestions will be very much appreciated to make it better. Finally, this thesis is expected to be useful to anyone who wishes to learn about romantic love.

Semarang, June 2020



Feriska Natasya Safira

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## **ABSTRACT**

*To All the Boys I've Loved Before* is a young adult novel about a girl whose love life is about to go crazy because her secret love letters are exposed to all of her crushes. This paper discusses the romantic love between Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky in the novel. The writer aims to identify how romantic love is depicted in the story and how it affects the characters. The method used in this study is contextual method by analyzing the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the story. The data of this study are collected using library research. In analyzing the intrinsic elements, the writer uses character, conflict, and setting. As for the extrinsic element, the writer uses psychological approach in Triangular Theory of Love by Sternberg. The result of this study shows that the relationship between Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky is a romantic love, since both characters portray the elements of love, as well as the components of love.

**Keywords:** *romantic love; elements of love; teenager; intimacy; triangular theory of love*

## **ABSTRAK**

*To All the Boys I've Loved Before* adalah sebuah novel remaja yang mengisahkan tentang seorang gadis yang kehidupan cintanya berubah menjadi kacau setelah surat-surat cintanya terbongkar pada semua lelaki yang disukainya. Penelitian ini membahas mengenai cinta romantis yang dialami oleh Lara Jean dan Peter Kavinsky di dalam novel. Penulis bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana cinta romantis digambarkan dalam novel dan bagaimana hal tersebut mempengaruhi para karakter. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kontekstual, yang dilakukan dengan menganalisis unsur intrinsik dan ekstrinsik dalam cerita. Data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan menggunakan kajian pustaka. Dalam menganalisis unsur intrinsik, penulis menggunakan tokoh, konflik, dan setting. Mengenai unsur ekstrinsik, penulis menggunakan pendekatan psikologi dengan Teori Segitiga Cinta dari Sternberg. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa hubungan yang dialami Lara Jean dan Peter Kavinsky adalah cinta romantis karena kedua karakter menunjukkan elemen-elemen cinta dan komponen-komponen cinta.

**Kata kunci:** *cinta romantis; elemen cinta; remaja, keintiman; teori segitiga cinta*

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of Study**

Literary works come up with different kinds of genre. According to Holman, genre means a term that indicates the different types of literary works based on its form, technique, or subject matter (1972: 239). In general, literary genre can be classified into: poetry, drama, fiction, and non fiction. Unlike non fiction which is presented based on facts or reality, fiction is purely created from the imagination of the author. One of the most popular fictions is romance. Since the sixteenth century, the meaning of romance has gone through many transformations, from a heroic story of men in a war to a love story that is full of melodramatic plot. Regis defines romance novel as "... a work of prose fiction that tells the story of courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines," (2003: 19). Indeed, the meaning of romance in here is related to love that is experienced by the characters.

It is interesting to read something about love because it makes us feel alive. One of the oldest yet the most inspiring books of love is *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm. Fromm mentions that every human being's deepest anxiety is the fear of being separated and isolated (1995: 7). Thus, love stands for the ability to overcome the fear. Love itself appears in many forms, and one of them is romantic love. Generally speaking, romantic relationships appear between two individuals who are attracted and attached to each other. Both individuals initially long for union in order to overcome their separateness (1995: 42).

In this paper, the writer chooses to analyze the novel *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han because it depicts romantic love that happens between the two individuals. This novel was adapted into a film later in 2018, directed by Susan Johnson and it received an overwhelming public response. Portraying romantic love with a slight addition of comedy, this novel offers a more realistic approach to a relationship than other teenage romance novels which mostly portray some melodramatic love. What makes the novel even more interesting is the fact that the characters still use papers in expressing and communicating their feelings instead of other modern media. Notes, love letters, memos are the ones particularly used by the characters, which makes the story even more lovely. In this case, Jenny Han brings back the traditional love letter through the character. Moreover, the story is not simply about a girl confessing her love to some boys, but rather a journey of a girl finding out her true self and true love. By analyzing the story, the writer aims to describe how romantic love is represented in the story, not to mention its impacts on the characters as well as the elements of love contained in the story.

## **1.2. Scope of Study**

In this study, the writer will analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel. In analyzing the intrinsic elements, the writer will use character and characterization, conflict, and setting. Meanwhile, in analyzing the extrinsic element which is romantic love, the writer will use Sternberg's *Triangular Theory of Love* (1986) that consists of intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Other extrinsic elements include the impact of romantic love, in which the writer will use

Ben-Nun's *Romantic Love – Characteristics and Effects* (2017), and also the elements of love, in which the writer will use Fromm's theory of love in *The Art of Loving* (1995).

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the elements of love contained in the story?
2. How is romantic love depicted in the story?
3. What are the impacts of romantic love?

### **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To explain the elements of love contained in the story.
2. To describe how romantic love is depicted in the story.
3. To explain how romantic love affects the character.

### **1.5. Similar Study**

In order to prove the originality of this study, the writer provides a previous study of the same object. Despite its popularity in the novel industry, there has not been a lot of research regarding the novel. Genia Chrizziara Dharmawan (2018) wrote a thesis entitled *Struktur Alur pada Novel “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” Karya Jenny Han*. In her thesis, she analyzed the plot and the structure of the plot in the story using qualitative-descriptive method. The result of her research shows that the plot consists of beginning, middle, end, and the structure of the plot consists of

action plot, pathetic plot, maturing plot, testing plot, reform plot, revelation plot, and education plot. Thus, a different approach of study is conducted in this research to avoid plagiarism. In this case, the writer wished to identify and present her findings regarding the romantic love and its impacts to the characters.

### **1.6. Methods of the Study**

The writer uses close reading and contextual approach in this study by analyzing the intrinsic and extrinsic element of the story. Close reading implies reading the text further in order to find various meaning of the text (University of York n.d.). The term contextual comes from the word “context” which according to Beard means the conditions which contribute to a text’s making by the writer and to its reception by the reader. Rather than focusing on the content of the text, context is more concerned with the factors that form the text (Beard, 2001: 6). As for the intrinsic elements, the writer will analyze the character and characterization, conflict and setting in the story. These three elements will further explain the situation of the characters. For the extrinsic element, the writer will analyze the romantic love in the story using Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love. To prove the romantic love between the characters, the writer collects many evidences from the dialogues and events of the story. The evidences contain the aspects of Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love: intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. The writer will also explain the impacts of romantic love supported by Ben-Nun’s study of Romantic Love as well as the elements of love included in the story using Fromm’s Theory of Love.

In collecting the data, the writer uses library research method. George mentioned that library research includes recognizing and finding sources that give accurate data or personal/ expert opinion on a research problem which is the vital part of any other research method (2008: 6). The origin of the resources come from media, such as printed book, electronic book and journal. This method helps the writer to collect opinions and references from the experts, which will qualify the eligibility of this research.

## **1.7. Organization of the Writing**

This paper consists of five chapters, which includes Introduction, Author and Her Work, Theoretical Framework, Analysis and Conclusion.

### **1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

The first chapter mentions the general idea of the paper and the reasons why the writer chooses *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* as the object of the study. Other things that are mentioned in this chapter include the objective of the study, the research problems, the method of the study and also the previous study of the same novel.

### **2. CHAPTER II: AUTHOR AND HER WORK**

This chapter covers the information about the author of the novel *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* and the summary of the novel.

### **3. CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter contains the theories that will be used in analyzing the novel. Intrinsic and extrinsic elements are the basic elements that will be further discussed in this

study. For the intrinsic elements, the writer uses character and characterization, conflict and setting. As for the extrinsic elements, the writer uses psychological approach based on Triangular Theory of Love by Robert Sternberg and Theory of Love by Erich Fromm.

#### **4. CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS**

The fourth chapter, also known as the main part of the study, discusses both the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the novel. It presents a detailed dicussion regarding character and characterization, conflict, setting, the depiction of romantic love and its impact and also the elements of love in the novel.

#### **5. CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION**

The last chapter contains the conclusion of the analyses presented in the previous chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### AUTHOR AND HER WORK

#### **2.1. Biography of the Author**

Jenny Han is an American author born on September 3rd, 1980 in Richmond, Virginia. All of her childhood life was mostly spent there with her Korean parents. She graduated from the University of North Carolina and later earned her master degree in Creative Writing at the New School.

Started off her career by writing children's book called *Shug* (2006), Han spreaded her wings to jump into the young adult genre. Some books such as *I Capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith, *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes, and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro are the ones that have biggest influence in Han's works, both in young adult and children books.

*To All the Boys I've Loved Before* is a young adult romance novel that is inspired from Han's own experience when she was a teenager. It eventually comes up with two more series following the first book, making it a trilogy. The series won the Young Adult 2015-2016 Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature. Other trilogies of Jenny Han are *The Summer I Turned Pretty* and *Burn for Burn*.

Upon receiving positive reviews from the readers, *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* was finally adapted into a movie in August 2018. The movie itself became a big hit after it was released in Netflix. Famous actresses and actors, such as Lana Condor and Noah Centineo were picked as the casts in the movie. For the surprise, Jenny Han also had a brief appearance during the movie.

At the present time, Jenny Han stays in Brooklyn, New York, dedicating her life to work on her new novels. Most of her novels are inspired by things that happen around her, which is why she can write almost in any place.

## **2.2. Summary of *To All the Boys I've Loved Before***

Lara Jean, a sixteen-year-old teenage girl, had experienced puppy love for more than once at her early age. She had a crush not only on one boy, but five in total. However, she was too shy to confess it to them, so she wrote all her feelings in a letter addressed to each of them, and kept the letters in a hat box, given by her mother who had passed away.

Several years had passed, and nobody had any idea about the letters until one day, someone deliberately sent them to the addressees. Panicked, shocked, not knowing what to do, Lara Jean tried to explain that it all happened in the past to all the boys who had received her letters. One of them was Josh, her sister, Margot's ex-boyfriend, who had been friends with her since childhood. Another one was Peter, her friend, Genevieve's ex-boyfriend, and also her first kiss. This was how the love story began. Lara Jean wanted to clear up misunderstanding and showed Josh that she was over him, while Peter wanted to make his ex-girlfriend, Genevieve, jealous, so Peter and Lara Jean made an agreement—pretending that they were dating.

Lara Jean knew that she had fallen for Peter ever since he kissed her by accident a long time ago, but she only kept her feelings inside the letters. Also, she did not feel the need to confess her love, since Peter dated Genevieve the day after that kiss. However, during their fake relationship, both Lara Jean and Peter started

to develop actual feelings for each other and become intimate both physically and emotionally.

Ever since the relationship started, Peter always made her feel special. They went to school together, hung out together after school, wrote letters for each other at school, made cookies together, and engaged in other romantic activities. Peter also showed his protective side whenever he was with Lara Jean and he made her do things she had never done before. Before they even knew it, they were already in love with each other.

On the day when they went to a ski trip, Peter confessed his feeling to Lara Jean. It was surprising for her since she had always thought that Peter still loved his ex, Genevieve. Although Lara Jean was confused at first, it did not take long for her to finally be able to regain her courage, admitting her feelings. Despite their romantic history with their past significant other—Lara Jean liked Josh, and Peter was with Genevieve, this became the start of their actual relationship.

Their relationship went smooth until the hot tub incident. Rumors spread that Lara Jean had sex with Peter when all they did was just a kiss, and it made her angry to Peter since he did not try harder to deny the rumor. Lara Jean was so embarrassed being everyone's gossip, and the whole thing also ruined her image as a girl, so she decided to walk away from Peter in order to calm herself. A few days later, Peter came to apologize but it got even worse after Josh came between them. He and Peter had an argument over Lara Jean, and Margot accidentally found out that Lara Jean once had a crush on Josh. Margot blew up at Lara Jean and everything became a mess. Lara Jean broke up with Peter and her sister was

mad at her. However, the two sisters eventually made up, and this time, Lara Jean decided to write another love letter for Peter.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. Intrinsic Elements**

##### **3.1.1. Character and Characterization**

Character refers to any person, figure, inanimate object, or even animal that takes part in a story. According to Abrams, characters are the people with human qualities, such as morality, intellectuality, and emotion by referring to their dialogues and actions (1999: 32-33). Meanwhile, Holman defines character as the figure that is concisely described as a type, representing certain qualities of an individual human being (Holman, 1980: 76).

There are two important types of characters which will be discussed further in this paper: dynamic character and static character. Dynamic character is a character that changes throughout the story due to some circumstances or situation. In his book, Holman asserts that dynamic character is the one whose character has altered due to the actions committed by the character itself and that the intention of the work is to show the outcome of the actions toward the character (Holman, 1980: 76).

Unlike dynamic character which changes over time, static character refers to the character that does not have significant changes throughout the story. According to Perrine, a static character is a similar kind of individual toward the beginning and the end of the story (1988: 69). In fact, a static character shows no sign of development within its character.

Characterization, according to Holman, is the way the author presents the imaginary character as something that appears real to the reader within the limit of the fiction (1972: 90). He also asserts that there are three basic methods of characterization: (1) the direct presentation of the character by the author through direct exposition or action, (2) the presentation of the character by the action of the character itself (3) the portrayal from inside a character (Holman, 1972: 91). Similar to Holman, Meyer also states that characterization is the method in which the author brings the character into life, as if it truly exists (2011: 64).

A story with a good characterization often reveals its protagonist as round and dynamic, a character with complex personality traits and a character that undergoes several changes due to some circumstances throughout the story. Characterization is the portrayal of people in a fiction. Primarily, there are two types of characterization: direct characterization and indirect characterization. The former one deals with the explicit way of characterizing a character by directly telling the personality of the character within the story. On the other hand, the latter one or the implicit way of characterization includes showing the reader the personality of the character through the character's speech, thought, and action (Baldick, 2001: 37).

### **3.1.2. Conflict**

Conflict is one of the aspects in plot that occurs within the character. It may happen externally or internally. Holman states that besides holding a meaning as the protagonist's struggle against a person or a thing, conflict also includes some motivation that can be accomplished from it (Holman, 1980: 98).

#### **3.1.2.1. Internal conflict**

Internal conflict is a conflict that occurs internally within the character. It may include the inner conflict related to a person's mental state or feeling. Meyer asserts that conflict can appear internal within the character in a form of moral or psychological issue that should be settled by the protagonist (1990: 46).

#### **3.1.2.2. External conflict**

External conflict refers to the conflict in which a character is faced with problems from outside, whether it be a person, nature, or a group of people. According to Meyer, external conflict describes how the major character is faced with a contradictory situation between him and other characters, society, nature, or all of them (Meyer, 1990: 46).

### **3.1.3. Setting**

Setting includes the spatial, temporal, and social circumstances of the events in the story. Setting itself is defined as the circumstances of the story's event which include time, place, and social background that grow within the characters (Meyer, 2011: 115).

Setting, in most literary works, also becomes a significant aspect in understanding the meaning of a character's particular action or behavior. It may reflect the character's state at some point.

### **3.1.3.1. Setting of Time**

Setting of time refers specifically to the details of time of when the story takes place, including the year or even the season. Holman describes it as the term of when the event occurs, for instance the era or the season (Holman, 1972: 491).

In many cases, the author may as well correlate the setting to the myth of the season, in which the season reflects to the character's physical state. According to Frye, all process in life is done repeatedly in a cyclical movement, just like season. Summer can be associated with cheerfulness, the spirit of life or the peak of someone's life (Frye, 1971: 188). On the other hand, winter holds negative meaning, such as disappointment or death (Frye, 1971: 237).

### **3.1.3.2. Setting of Place**

According to Holman, setting describes the detail of the location, including geographical aspects, such as topography, scenery, and physical arrangements of the surroundings (Holman, 1972: 491). The setting of place often contributes in adding the atmosphere of the story, for example a horror story is associated with its dark and old place.

### **3.1.3.3. Setting of Social Environment**

Setting of social environment refers to the common circumstances of the characters, including religious, mental, moral, social, and emotional states which occur to the

characters (Holman, 1972: 491). It also deals with the social system that surrounds the character which often changes from time to time.

### **3.2. Extrinsic Element**

#### **3.2.1. The Elements of Love**

Fromm, a German-American psychologist, divides love into several kinds: motherly love, brotherly love, erotic love, self-love, and love of God (1995: 36). Each of them has different object of loving. However, no matter what the object is, love has some essential characteristics which represent how deep the love is. Fromm stated that love requires the ability to actively take part in the activity of loving, whether it is care, responsibility, respect, or knowledge (Fromm, 1995: 26). These are the fundamental elements in all kinds of love. If one is able to love, that person is capable of giving, instead of receiving.

##### **3.2.1.1. Care/ Concern**

The first element of love is care, which means the active interest in which we are involved in the life and development of the ones we love (Fromm, 1995: 21). Hence, it is implied that care lies automatically within someone's heart towards the person he loves. For instance, it can be seen how caring a mother is to her child. The way she nurtures her child shows that the concern of a mother to her child is pure and unconditional. In romantic cases, being such a caring person to the loved one is not something unusual. It can easily be seen that if we love someone, we will naturally care about the person as we are involved in his life.

### **3.2.1.2. Responsibility**

The second one is responsibility, which refers to the ability to respond to a person's need whether it is expressed or unexpressed. Responsibility is not something that comes by force, but within ourselves. Being responsible to the loved one is done voluntarily, without hoping for anything in return. In other words, it is a completely deliberate act. It is indeed our reaction to the needs of another person, and in this case, the way we react shows how responsible we are. Responsible may transform into domination and possessiveness if there is no respect for the other person, which is the third element of love (Fromm, 1995: 22).

### **3.2.1.3. Respect**

The next one is respect, or in other words means the concern that the other individual ought to develop as a human being. In this case, there is no exploitation in loving someone. Respect refers to how we can see an individual as the person is, not to mention the awareness of his unique personality. Ideally, every person wants the loved person to grow and become the best version of him by his own will, without any intention to do it for their own sake (Fromm, 1995: 22).

### **3.2.1.4. Knowledge**

The last element of love is knowledge. It is the one which does not remain at the outskirts but enters to the center. Knowledge is merely possible to happen once we can get beyond the concern of ourselves and see the other individual in his own terms. For example, knowledge may take place in the ability to know that someone is upset, even though the person does not show it quiteley (Fromm, 1995: 23). As a

matter of fact, a person longs to know the secret of the other person. There are some ways to find out the secret, and one of them is by love. In the act of loving, of union with the other person, it gives the individual the knowledge of the other person which will answer his quest. Within in the act of entering the other person, one may actually discover himself, discover them both and discover man (Fromm, 1995: 24-25).

### **3.2.2. Triangular Theory of Love**

According to Sternberg, an American psychologist, love consists of three components: intimacy, passion, and decision or commitment. These three components (intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment) happen to interact with each other and may result in different kinds of love.

#### **3.2.2.1. Component of Love: Intimacy**

Intimacy can be defined as the sense of unity occurring in relationships, including the feelings which evoke the warmth of an affectionate relationship (Sternberg, 1986: 119). Sternberg and Grajek identify ten aspects that contribute to the presence of intimacy: (1) the determination to support the welfare of the cherished one, (2) experienced joy with the cherished one, (3) high respect for the cherished one, (4) having the option to rely on the cherished one in the midst of hardship, (5) common understanding with the cherished one, (6) sharing of one's self and one's belongings with the cherished one, (7) received emotional encouragement from the cherished one, (8) the act of giving emotional encouragement to the cherished one, (9) deep interaction with the cherished one, and (10) appreciation of the cherished one (1984:

345-356). Intimacy can also be shown in the act of showing one's anger, hate, and lack of inhibition to the other person (Fromm, 1995: 42).

### **3.2.2.2.Component of Love: Passion**

Passion means the desire that may trigger someone to experience attachment, such as physical attraction, sexual consummation, and other phenomena in relationships (Sternberg, 1986: 119). Sternberg states that the components of passion take place in the form of arousal that leads to the experience of passion. In this case, sexual needs, as well as self-esteem, nurturance, affiliation, dominance, submission, and self-actualization become the primary aspects that exist in passion (2006: 185).

The sexual needs can be shown by a person's interest in another human being. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev argues that the basic pattern of sexual desire can be drawn in attractiveness. The attractiveness may differ between female and male, as they have different perspective towards the term attractive, whether it goes through the vision or hearing (1997: 6). Fromm also stated that love is a form of activity, in which envy, jealousy, ambition, and greed are the kinds of passion (Fromm, 1995: 17).

### **3.2.2.3. Component of Love: Decision/ Commitment**

Last but not least, the third aspect of Triangular Theory of Love is decision/ commitment. It refers to the decision that a person makes to love someone and the struggle to commit to the relationship for the time being (Sternberg, 1986: 119). There are short term and long term commitment. The short term one means the action of deciding that a person loves another individual, whereas the long term one means the commitment of a person to maintain the love for the a long term (Sternberg, 1986: 122).

In romantic relationships, the love is lacking in decision/ commitment. In fact, the decision and commitment aspect do not definitely go together. Some people may commit to a certain relationship without admitting their love to each other. Marriage becomes the representation of one's long term commitment to love a person throughout his life (Sternberg, 1986: 123). Meanwhile, another theory of love said that love basically ought to be an act of will, of choice to commit one's life to that of another individual (Fromm, 1995: 44).

### **3.2.3. Form of Love: Romantic Love**

*Table 9-1 Taxonomy of kinds of triangles of love*

Type of Love	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
Non-love	No	No	No
Friendship	Yes	No	No
Infatuated love	No	Yes	No
Empty love	No	No	Yes
Romantic love	Yes	Yes	No
Companionate love	Yes	No	Yes
Fatuous love	No	Yes	Yes
Consummate love	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: *Triangular Theory of Love* (Sternberg, 1986: 123)

From the components of love explained above, the relationship between two individuals establishes a form of love. Sternberg classified love into eight kinds. Each kind has different combination of components of love.

Romantic love is the form of love that is resulted from the combination of intimacy and passion, and lack of decision/ commitment (Sternberg, 1986: 124). One can decide to love a person without being committed to an actual relationship, and *vice versa*. The couples are usually committed to the short term, as the intimacy and passion components play the bigger parts. The couples who experience

romantic love tend to have strong physical attraction towards each other and also a deep connection in their relationship. They are still at the stage where a long term commitment is yet to be decided.

According to Fromm, erotic love is the closest type of love related to the romantic relationship between two romantic partners. Unlike motherly love and brotherly love which are given to all human beings universally despite their status, erotic love stands for the exclusiveness of one person's love for the other person (Fromm, 1995: 43). Two persons are united and becoming one is basically what erotic love is.

As stated before, love requires the ability to actively take part in the activity of loving, whether it is care, responsibility, respect, or knowledge (Fromm, 1995: 21). In this case, the two partners must be able to learn how to love and be loved, or in other words, giving and receiving. Giving oneself to another person does not necessarily imply that he gives up his life to that person, but rather to give what is alive in him; it can be happiness, attention, comprehension, awareness, humor, and other lively expressions (Fromm, 1995: 19). One important aspect in erotic love lies in the act of will, which is the decision, judgment, and promise to commit one's life to the other person (Fromm, 1995: 44).

Given the two views regarding romantic love, it can be concluded that both theories have quite similarities in terms of aspects of love. Some of the aspects in Fromm's theory, such as care and responsibility are included in Sternberg's component of intimacy. Both theories point out that love lies in the fact that there is an attraction between two unique individuals.

One more fundamental factor of love lies in the act of will or commitment which is present in both Fromm's and Sternberg's. It appears that no matter how strong the love is, if there is no commitment in the relationship, it will be incomplete. Commitment here means the willingness to commit one's life in the relationship and maintain it for long. Without commitment, a person may be trapped in the same cycle: being attracted by someone, being in love passionately, being attacked by boredom as one has known the other person very well, experiencing conflicts with the other person, and finally seeking for a new love again (Fromm, 1995: 80).

Love, strictly speaking, is a never-ending challenge; it certainly is not a place to relax, but to move, develop, work together; indeed when both people are faced with conflict or harmony, happiness or sadness. It is important to notice that the two individuals encounter themselves from the essence of their presence, that they are also united by being one with themselves, instead of escaping from themselves (Fromm, 1995: 80).

### **3.2.4. The Impacts of Romantic Love**

According to Ben-Nun in *Romantic Love—Characteristics and Effects*, romantic love has several effects on the person who experiences it. He defined romantic love as a motivational state related with a longing to enter or keep up a close relationship with a particular other individual (2017: 25). That being said, it is no wonder that the couples who are in love tend to be affectionate to each other. In fact, studies show that the brain activity increases which involves reward, motivation, and emotion regulation during the time when two persons are in love. The “feel-good”

chemicals inside the brain are released, which make the couples become so intense with each other. Research reveals that the early stage of romantic love is an advanced form of mammalian drive to seek after favored mates. It has been stated that it was a goal-oriented motivational state, instead of feeling, which explains why the early stage of romantic relationship influences behavior significantly (Fisher et al, 2010: 51). Experiencing emotions such as easily excited, lively, and euphoric is an obvious sign that a person is head over heels with their partner. That is why lovebirds are called “blinded by love” as they are actually madly in love. Some of them even lose the ability to properly sleep and eat because they are too focused on their partner.

The first impact of romantic love is that it can bring happiness to the person who experiences it due to a series of positive events related to being in romantic love. Since this romantic relationship plays a part in someone’s particular happiness, this growing form of happiness is likely to be joined by the experience of positive events associated with the romantic relationship. The result shows that being in a romantic relationship improves someone’s particular happiness by means of positive encounters (Ben-Nun, 2017: 26-27). So, it is no wonder if someone feels happier when receiving gifts or messages from their special one compared to other people.

Following that, romantic love can also affect friendship quality both positively and negatively. Intimate exchange, co-rumination, support, and compromise are recognized as the processes through which romantic relationships affect the quality of friendship. Some positive beliefs include greater intimacy,

encouragement, compromise, and less co-rumination, while the negative beliefs are quite the opposites: greater co-rumination and less encouragement (Ben-Nun, 2017: 65). In other words, if the friendship experiences the positive outcome, the two friends are more likely to be closer and supportive to each other. In contrast, the negative outcome is that the other friend would feel less intimate and less supportive to the friend who is in a relationship.

The next one is romantic love can cure a person's loneliness. As it tends to bring happiness, the people who are deeply engaged in a romantic relationship are less lonely when it comes to companionship. It is said that the higher the romantic love and friendship, the lower someone experiences loneliness (Ben Nun, 2017: 69). With the presence of the loved one, it is obvious that a person would feel connected and less alone. Connected here means that an individual feels secure and emotionally attached with the other individual. Fromm stated that every person experiences the fear of being alone, and the act of physical union is one way to overcome the feeling of separateness (Fromm, 1995: 42).

Last but not least, romantic love can also cause grief when the separation between the two lovers occurs (Ben-Nun, 2017: 27). There are always ups and downs in every situation in life. Committing into a relationship means that both persons are ready to get hurt. So, when it comes to a breakup or separation, an individual cannot help but feel sad, knowing that their love for each other is over. For some people, the grief may result in depression and other negative feelings, which are the opposite feelings of the early stage of relationship.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1.Intrinsic Elements**

##### **4.1.1. Character and Characterization**

###### **4.1.1.1. Lara Jean Covey**

Lara Jean Covey is one of the major characters, and the protagonist of the story. Her point of view is used in telling the entire story. She is a sixteen-year-old girl with Korean gene from her mother side and American gene from her father side, making her a half Korean and half American. However, her Korean look is more dominant since she resembles her mother. “...and we look more Korean than white. At least Margot and I do; Kitty looks most like Daddy,” (Han, 2014: 9). She likes to wear cute and vintage clothes, like heart-patterned sweater with pom-poms and floral babydoll dress, and also braid her hair (Han, 2014: 84).

Aside from being the protagonist of the story, Lara Jean is also a dynamic character. At first, she seems too dependent on her older sister Margot as Margot has always taken care of everything ever since her mother passed away. She cannot imagine her life without Margot, knowing that her sister has always been her support system and a figure that fills the role of a mother. “I don’t know what I would have done if Margot hadn’t been there. Even though Margot is only two years older than me, I look up to her more than anybody ... She’s been an organizer from the start,” (Han, 2014: 9). So, when Margot leaves for college, she cannot help but feel utterly miserable (Han, 2014: 12). However, being apart from Margot

creates some changes in Lara Jean's life. She gradually becomes more responsible and independent as she has to take control of things at home, replacing her sister.

Lara Jean is described as a girl who easily falls in love, given the fact that she has many crushes during her high school life. She likes to write love letters as a way of explicitly expressing her feelings to the boys whom she adores, since she has always been a shy girl. She never actually has any intention to send the letters to the addressee, as she always keeps them right away after she finishes writing, inside the hatbox her mother gave her. Pouring out all her feelings through writing sets her free from her all-consuming love. Five people whom she had crushes on are Peter Kavinsky, Josh Sanderson, Lucas Krapf, Kenny, and John Ambrose McClaren. Each person brings pleasant memories to Lara Jean which makes her fall for them. However, only Josh and Peter play the dominant roles in Lara Jean's love story.

These are ones I've written. There's one for every boy I've ever loved—five in all ...Every secret thought, every careful observation, everything I've saved up inside me, I put it all in the letter... My letters are for when I don't want to be in love anymore. They're for good-bye. Because after I write my letter, I'm no longer consumed by my all-consuming love (Han, 2014: 3).

Lara Jean is a person who would avoid getting in unpleasant situation but also spontaneous at the same time. Upon finding out that all her crushes receive her love letters, she seems panic at first because those letters are not meant to be seen by anyone. However, she manages to control the situation by avoiding the boys who get the letters, especially Josh who is her sister ex boyfriend and also her old crush. When she realizes that she cannot escape from the situation forever, she immediately creates a situation in which she kisses Peter all of a sudden in order to

make Josh believe that she is over him (Han, 2014: 58). In fact, her spontaneity marks the beginning of her love journey as she then continues to play pretend as Peter's girlfriend to save her face from Josh. Peter and Lara Jean make a deal to pretend to be in a relationship for each other's sake: Peter wants his ex-girlfriend, Genevieve to be jealous, and Lara Jean wants to erase misunderstanding between her and Josh.

Lara Jean is an introverted person. In the beginning, she is viewed as a typical nerd girl at school who never steps out of her small world as she finds no reason to get out of her comfort zone. She neither has a lot of friends nor goes to parties. The only people she can rely on to are Margot, Josh, and Chris. Her free time is mostly spent at home, indulging in her hobbies: reading books and baking cookies. Chris, her old friend with the opposite personality knows exactly how boring her life is (Han, 2014: 14). These activities show that Lara Jean is indeed an introvert, referring to The Analytical Psychology theory by Carl Gustav Jung. According to Sommers-Flanagan in *Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories in Context and Practice* (2nd ed.), introverts tend to have smaller circle of friends and enjoy spending time alone (2012: Ch. 3A, 12). The fact that she prefers expressing her love in writing also indicates that she is an introvert. Nevertheless, Lara Jean becomes a more outgoing person as soon as she gets to know Peter. The letter incident becomes the starting point which changes Lara Jean forever, because after that, she decides to step out of her comfort zone and becomes a whole different version of Lara Jean.

I never knew it before, but I think maybe all this time I've been invisible. Just someone who was there. Now that I'm Peter Kavinsky's girlfriend, they're wondering about me ... I am now a Mysterious Girl. Before I was just a Quiet

Girl. But becoming Peter's girlfriend has elevated me to Mysterious Girl (Han, 2014: 88).

Lara Jean is such a humble soul. In the quotation above, it can be seen that Lara Jean, who used to be unpopular is now famous among students in her school, due to her amusing role as Peter's girlfriend. Even so, she does not turn into an arrogant person after she gets famous. Although she initially seems not yet ready for the fame, she gradually learns to adapt with the situation and makes more friends. As stated before, she does not make a lot of friends at first. However, as she gets to know Peter and his friends, she starts getting along with them and experiences sense of belonging in a group. "As we walk to his car, I let my hair fall in the face so he doesn't see me smiling. It sure is nice being part of a group, feeling like I belong," (Han, 2014: 111). In fact, Lara Jean, who does not hang out so much, used to be nobody at school and is afraid to take risk, now becomes quite the opposite. She is being a more open person. That being said, with Peter, she gets to experience a positive character development and also a romantic love life which she has never felt before.

Lara Jean is an optimistic girl. No matter how bad it can be, she always has a positive mindset. It is almost like she knows that things can turn even worse but rather than being swallowed in her negative assumption, she chooses to think of the bright side of the situation. It happens once when the letters get sent out and one of the recipients is Josh, who is no other than her best friend and also her sister's ex boyfriend. There is nothing worse than being labelled as a traitor by her sister and becoming awkward with her best friend. Her optimistic side pushes her to cope with the situation by coming up with a plan to avoid Josh in case he actually gets the

letter and surrounding her thought with probability like what if Josh does not receive the letter. “My mom always said optimism was my best trait. Both Chris and Margot have said it’s annoying, but to that I say looking on the bright side of life never killed anybody,” (Han, 2014: 55). In this case, the author uses direct characterization to describe Lara Jean since it involves other character’s explicit opinion to Lara Jean.

Another characterization of Lara Jean is that she is a good girl. She never cusses, cheats, drinks, smokes cigarettes, goes out on Friday night, or even has a boyfriend. This dialogue by Lara Jean is an example of indirect characterization. “I’ve never cheated or gotten drunk or smoked a cigarette or even had a boyfriend,” (Han, 2014: 9). Before Margot leaves, Lara Jean also likes helping her sister as a volunteer at the nursing home. Judging from the way she acts, it seems apparent that she is not a troublesome girl in spite of her age. Her world is pretty much caved under the stone. Instead of going out, she prefers baking a cake at home and does her scrapbooks. Peter once complains about her aloof personality, which is clearly the opposite of his personality. “You hate cussing. You like to bake. You stay at home on Friday nights. Wow, I’m dating my granny. Gross,” (Han, 2014: 114). However, after her encounter with Peter, she becomes more open to new things, such as attending a party, joining ski trip, and hanging out with boys.

It has been previously stated that Lara Jean is as a protagonist. She has been going through many conflicts throughout the story, and she also experiences changes within her life. Starting from her letters get sent out, her old friend comes as an enemy, her sister’s complicated love story, and her romantic love experience

with the most popular guy at school—all those conflicts revolve around her. As she encounters those problems one by one, her high school life goes from ordinary to extraordinary. Her character is shaped through the way she acts on certain situations, including when she decides to have Peter Kavinsky as her fake boyfriend. The romantic love that she experiences eventually changes her perception of love, and also develops her personality, making her a dynamic character.

#### **4.1.1.1.2. Peter Kavinsky**

Peter, also known as Peter K, is a typical handsome boy in school, whose charm is inevitable to any girl. Since the whole story is told entirely from Lara Jean's point of view, the image of Peter is described to be almost like a perfect guy. Lara Jean explains in her letter how she really adores his handsome face. He joins the lacrosse and basketball team at school, meaning that he is quite athletic and muscular. Other body features mentioned by Lara Jean in her letter are that he is tall, and has unfairly long lashes (Han, 2014: 47-48). All these qualities lead him to be a popular guy in school.

He has the look of a Handsome Boy from a different time. He could be a dashing World War I soldier, handsome enough for a girl to wait years for him to come back from war, so handsome she could wait forever ... Peter's kind of wholesome good looks feel more like yesterday than today (Han, 2014: 27).

Unlike Lara Jean, he likes stepping out of his comfort zone, meeting new people, and has an outgoing and adventurous personality. He goes to parties, has a wide circle of friends, and most importantly, he is not afraid of being different. Lara Jean also mentions in her letter that Peter's confidence is what she likes the most about him. He is not embarrassed to sing solos and dance when other boys prefer

joining the band and orchestra, and he does not mind being partners with the alienated guy in class (Han, 2014: 48). Extraverts love the idea of socializing with people regularly, have a lot of friends, and feel recharged by social interaction (Sommers-Flanagan, 2012: Ch. 3A, 12). Those activities that Peter engages in suggest that he is an extroverted person. That being said, Peter's personality is very much different compared to that of Lara Jean. His presence does affect Lara Jean when they play a role as a couple since she has to be able to keep up with his way of living and environment.

Walking into this party with Peter Kavinsky, I can't help but feel a sudden rush of pride. He's here with me. Or is it that I'm here with him? ... It must be nice to be him. So at ease, so comfortable with himself, knowing that people are waiting for him, like Peter's here, now the party can really get started (Han, 2014: 118).

From the quotation above, the readers can perceive that the image of Peter as a popular guy is very apparent. Lara Jean is strikingly amused by how Peter can liven up the whole situation in an instant. Throughout the story, there is not much development on Peter's character, meaning that he can be classified as a static character. His aura is naturally appealing as a guy, even though his character stays the same. From the beginning of the story, he is already described as a generous guy who genuinely cares about girls. There is one incident when Lara Jean damages her car and Peter stops to offer his help by calling Triple A for her, to which she refuses politely because she already calls Josh (Han, 2014: 26).

Peter's generous trait is also shown when he offers Lara Jean a ride to school since he knows that her car is being fixed. Despite his typical lazy appearance, he is willing to wake up early in order to pick Lara Jean up. "Peter laughs. "You're so

awk, Covey. Your car's in the shop, right? So how about I pick you up for school?" (Han, 2014: 83). The author uses indirect characterization to describe Peter Kavinsky as it mostly portrays his actions and speech. Beside offering help, he is also generous when it comes to food. Just like any romantic guy would do, he does not let Lara Jean pay for her yoghurt, and he often treats her with her favorite donuts (Han, 2014: 110).

Even though the character of a popular guy is somehow associated with bad attitude, it does not work for Peter, as he is indeed a very respectful guy. After breaking up with Genevieve, he respects her decision and never insists on getting back together with her. Although Genevieve seems to be annoying, always chasing after him, he still treats her patiently and does not talk bad about her. Also, he never for once forces his own will to anyone, including Lara Jean. He even agrees to make a contract about the things that he and Lara Jean should and should not do as a couple. The relationship he has with Lara Jean is not real, so he knows his limit and decides to save the intimacy part for Lara Jean's future boyfriend who will actually love her.

"Sure. We'll save some stuff for you to do when it's the real thing and not for show."

I'm touched. Who knew Peter could be so thoughtful and generous?

"Like, I won't pay for stuff. I'll save that for a guy who really likes you," (Han, 2014: 76).

Peter is also described as a gentleman who always pays attention to small things. The act of showing his attention to Lara Jean by putting her first in many situations just shows how gentle he is as a man. While Peter gets out of the hot tub, he immediately gives Lara Jean a hand and wraps his towel around her, drying her

off (Han, 2014: 203). He also helps her with her coat, constantly gives her compliments, and checks if she enjoys spending time with him. Although many people label him as a player, he never for once treats Lara Jean as if she is unworthy.

Another characterization of Peter is as a protagonist. It can be seen from his actions toward the main character, Lara Jean. As the story goes by, Peter is mainly involved in all things related to Lara Jean. From being her first kiss to being her first boyfriend, Peter is always there by her side. Not only does he care about her, he is also close with Lara Jean's family, such as her sister Kitty and also her father. He offers Kitty a ride to school and enjoys spending time with her, doing silly things (Han, 2014: 149). He knows how to act in a situation, so it is no wonder that Kitty likes him aside from his fun personality.

#### **4.1.2. Conflict**

##### **4.1.2.1. Internal Conflict**

The internal conflict occurs within Lara Jean, who gradually develops her feeling towards Peter. She knows that she should not fall in love with him because she believes that Peter will eventually go back together with Genevieve and it will only hurt her in the end. "So that's that. It doesn't matter if I like him or not, because he doesn't like me back. It's kind of silly to feel so disappointed about something you only just realized you wanted, isn't it," (Han, 2014: 165).

Before Peter, Lara Jean also has issues with boys. She is afraid to be committed to a person, and afraid to be hurt by them in any way. It can be seen from the dialogue below which explains her main reason as to why she rejected Tommy, a boy from her school who asked her to go to homecoming.

I guess I said no because I was scared... It's scary when it's real. When it's not just thinking about a person, but, like, having a real live person in front of you, with, like, expectations. And wants ... Even when I liked a boy so much, loved him even, I would always rather be with my sisters, because that's where I belong (Han, 2014: 123).

For the young Lara Jean, being committed to a person is real scary as she has never imagined herself being with someone else other than her siblings. She always finds her sense of belonging in her family, so the reason why she refused the guy is not merely because she does not like him. However, in the end, she succeeds in overcoming her trust issue, as Peter makes her believe that romantic love does exist. She eventually learns to accept people into her life and becomes a more open individual.

Another conflict that happens within Lara Jean is that she experiences loneliness as she actually realizes that she has not made a lot of friends during her school life. Margot, her one and only support system has made her way down to Scotland. Josh, her old friend and also neighbor who has always been there for her now becomes different after receiving her love letter. She does not want Josh to start liking her because she knows Margot will be hurt if she finds out. After all, Josh has always been Margot's and she knows it too well. Lara Jean no longer has someone whom she can ask for advice beside her friend, Chris, who apparently does not care as much as Margot. She wishes that she had made more friends in the beginning, so that she would not have to put herself into trouble involving Peter K as her fake boyfriend and lie to Josh about it (Han, 2014: 62).

Slowly but surely, Lara Jean begins adapting to the situation and makes more friends as she gets closer to Peter. As soon as she learns to get out of her comfort

zone and meets new people, Lara Jean no longer experiences loneliness both emotionally and physically.

#### **4.1.2.2. External Conflict**

The external conflict starts when the letters that Lara Jean wrote are sent out mysteriously to the boys she has loved. Because of that, she has to go through a few conflicts with her friend and her sister.

##### **4.1.2.2.1. Lara Jean and Genevieve**

The first one is Lara Jean's conflict with Genevieve, Peter's ex-girlfriend and also Lara Jean's childhood friend. Their conflict is mainly caused by Genevieve who is jealous of Lara Jean ever since Peter kissed Lara Jean in middle school. Genevieve feels betrayed when she finds out that Peter, the boy whom she adores, kissed Lara Jean on the day they played at her house. This conflict does not end right away, and it even creates a much bigger space between them. The hatred becomes much clearer right when Peter starts dating Lara Jean not long after his breakup with Genevieve.

I screw up all my courage and I ask, “So why did you stop being friends with me?” Genevieve narrows her eyes at me. “You really don’t know?” ... “No.” ... “You kissed Peter that day at my house in seventh grade. You knew I liked him, but you kissed him anyway (Han, 2014: 205).

Ever since Lara Jean dates Peter, Genevieve starts being the bad character who messes with Lara Jean. Part of it is mostly caused by her jealousy toward the girl. Despite her fame, beauty, and followers, she never feels satisfied with all the things she has. Throughout the novel, she always expresses her dislike to Lara Jean and finds a way to embarrass her in public. In the end, she is still being manipulative to Lara Jean, which causes Lara Jean and Peter to breakup (Han, 2014: 205).

Although the couple eventually gets back together, Genevieve and Lara Jean never actually go back to being friends. As much as Lara Jean tries being nice to her, Genevieve has already become a whole different person who no longer wants to maintain the friendship, which leaves their relationship on bad terms. It gives Lara Jean a lesson to be more careful in selecting friends and to stay away from a toxic person who does no good to her life.

#### **4.1.2.2.2. Lara Jean and Margot**

The other one is the conflict between Lara Jean and her older sister, Margot. When Margot finds out that Lara Jean secretly had a crush on her ex-boyfriend, Josh, she cannot help but feel betrayed although it happened a long time ago. Furthermore, she then also discovers about Josh kissing Lara Jean when she was not around, which breaks her heart even more.

There is a wall between us now, and I can feel her moving farther and farther away from me. Sisters are supposed to fight and make up, because they are sisters and sisters always find their way back to each other. But the thing that scares me is that maybe we won't (Han, 2014: 218).

Before the whole guy problem, Lara Jean has experienced another problem with Margot. The problem is mainly caused by her inability to communicate things properly, as she realizes that Margot has gone far from her. She no longer has the place to share her stories because she does not want to bother her sister, and she feels as if she has lost the figure of a sister and a friend. On the other hand, Margot also feels disappointed since Lara Jean never opens up again about her life. She considers herself unimportant because it turns out that Lara Jean is doing fine without her (Han, 2014: 221).

After several days of quarrels and silent treatment, both Lara Jean and Margot finally make it up when they realize that they actually need each other. The bond between the two sisters is very strong, so it is very unlikely that the quarrel would last for a long time. In this phase, Lara Jean becomes more mature as she attempts to finish her problem with her sister using her own way.

#### **4.1.3. Setting**

##### **4.1.3.1. Setting of Time**

The story most likely happens in the 21st century, around 2014, which is the same year as the publication of this book. It can be seen in the book that the author mentions several modern popular cultures references, such as *M&M*, *Uno*, *Nutella*, *Costco*, and other popular stuff (Han, 2014: 10).

The story begins in the last days of summer and ends in the New Year's Eve. "So now it's the last days of summer and our last days with Margot," (Han, 2014: 11). Summer in here represents the blossoming of love between Lara Jean and Peter. The two of them are reunited in high school and faced with challenges that eventually bring them together.

There are also some scenes that take part during winter, such as the one when all students go to the ski trip, including Lara Jean and Peter who make a deal to go on this event together as a couple. Winter represents sadness and disappointment. In this case, there is one bad incident that drags the couple away from each other: rumors spread that Lara Jean and Peter have sex in the hot tub (Han, 2014: 205). It leaves a big scar in Lara Jean's heart and Peter also does not do much in denying the rumor, so it eventually leads her to draw some space between them.

#### **4.1.3.2. Setting of Place**

The story takes place in Virginia, United States, considering the place mentioned, such as Richmond which is close to Lara Jean's home (Han, 2014: 62). This is an interesting fact because the author was also born in Richmond, Virginia, and currently lives in there. It can be inferred that the author's environment also plays a big role in the result of her work.

Some places that are important to note are McClaren's house, school, and the hot tub. Those places are where the romantic love between Lara Jean and Peter occurs. Lara Jean experiences her first kiss with Peter in McClaren's house. At that time, she never expected that kiss "I still remember everything about that day at John Ambrose McLaren's house ... Peter Kavinsky leaned right in and kissed me, and I was stunned ... after he kissed me, he was all I could think about for months after," (Han, 2014: 50-51). Because of that kiss, Lara Jean secretly admires Peter from then on. This is also mainly the reason she wrote a love letter to him.

Another place is school, where she and Peter mostly spend their time doing couple things, such as exchanging notes, chasing each other at the hallway, and eating meals at the cafeteria. They also begin their fake relationship which is initiated by Lara Jean kissing him deliberately to show Josh that she is over him (Han, 2014: 58). At that time, there is no turning back because what is done is done, so it becomes the start of their pretend relationship.

Finally, her real relationship with Peter takes place in the hot tub during the ski trip. Peter confesses his true feelings to Lara Jean, and soon, she bravely admits that she also falls in love with him. Both of them then share a kiss at the hot tub

“I’m sitting in the hot tub too, and my nightgown is soaked now but I don’t care ... I never knew kissing could be this good,” (Han, 2014: 203).

#### **4.1.3.3. Setting of Social Environment**

The social environment of the novel can be represented in the social status of the character’s family. Lara Jean’s family is rather considered as an upper-middle class family. She is a daughter of a father who works as an ob-gyn. As a father with three daughters, the salary of an ob-gyn is more than enough to fulfill the family needs. It can be seen that the family have two cars, and they can afford to pay for Margot’s education in Scotland. The three sisters also get allowances: Lara Jean gets \$20 a week, Kitty gets \$5 a week, whereas Margot gets a credit card as she is in charge of buying daily needs. With that amount of money, they are able to live comfortably in terms of finance (Han, 2014: 89).

As for the emotional states, Lara Jean and her sisters grow up without a presence of their mother. She passed away due to an illness, and since then, Lara Jean and her family have to live their life independently (Han, 2014: 9). Even though the sisters only have little memories with their mother, the fact that they are able to make it this far without the help of a mother is amazing.

Meanwhile, Peter’s family can also be classified as upper-middle class family since they own an antique store which has opened for so many years. He has a black Audi, which is a kind of expensive brand of a car in that era. The antique shop owned by his mother is called Linden & White which mostly sells furniture and also jewelry cases (Han, 2014: 125).

Peter lives with his brother, Owen, and his mother. Similar to Lara Jean, he also used to have complete family members, before his parents are divorced (Han, 2014: 135). Even though he no longer has a father by his side, Peter has grown up more mature than ever. He establishes a close relationship with his mother and his brother, Owen.

#### **4.1.Extrinsic Elements**

##### **4.1.1. Elements of Love**

###### **4.1.1.1. Element of Love: Care/ Concern**

The act of care or concern toward the beloved person does not necessarily have to be something big. Sometimes, it starts from a small thing, such as being a good listener. This is a very common issue found in a relationship, because a healthy relationship can be built through good communication and good listening skills. In this case, Peter is able to genuinely listen and pay attention to what Lara Jean is saying, even though she never asks him for it. “I finally look at Peter, and I’m surprised by how hard he’s paying attention; his eyes are intent and focused on me like he’s actually interested in what I’m saying.” (Han, 2014: 123).

Another act which shows that Peter cares so much about Lara Jean is when he offers her a ride to school, knowing that her car is being fixed (Han, 2014: 85). Not only does he care about her, but he also cares about her sister, Kitty. He thoughtfully offers to drive Kitty to school, even though it means he has to bring his mother’s minivan, instead of his black Audi which is a two-seater only (Han, 2014: 98).

###### **4.1.1.2. Element of Love: Responsibility**

Peter shows his concern by offering Lara Jean a ride to school because her car is being fixed due to an accident (Han, 2014: 85). This act implies both care and responsibility. As stated before, responsibility means being able to respond to the need of the loved person directly or indirectly (Fromm, 1995: 22). In this case, Peter is able to see that Lara Jean is in the need of someone's help as she cannot drive herself to school, although she does not merely express it. He then comes with an offer to drive her, even though he knows that it means he has to wake up a little bit earlier than usual. Part of him might feel guilty because he does not insist to help her when he sees her car broken on the street, so he feels the need to be responsible about it.

Another element of responsibility can be found in Lara Jean's sweet gesture to Peter. Despite her being very good at cooking, she never thinks about herself while making food. Every time there is Peter, she would never forget to make something for him. Besides avoiding rudeness, this is to show that she is able to provide the need of Peter, although he never truly expresses it.

I open up my brown paper bag and pull out his sandwich. I wrote a P on his in Sharpie so I'd know whose was whose. "Do you want a sandwich?"  
"You made that for me?"  
"I mean, I was making one for myself, too. It would have been rude to just bring one sandwich and eat it in front of you," (Han, 2014: 128).

#### **4.1.1.3. Element of Love: Respect**

Respect, according to Fromm, is defined as the way a person loves someone by showing his concern for the sake of the development of his loved one (Fromm, 1995: 22). In this novel, Peter does not change Lara Jean to be a better person. Instead, he challenges her by making her do things she has never done before.

“I hold up a hot pink reindeer. It’s glass, with an electric blue nose. “This would look great on my vanity. Will you ask the man how much it costs?” “No, but you can. It’ll be good for you to learn how to negotiate.” Peter grabs my hand and leads me over to the man in the suit,” (Han, 2014: 130).

During the estate sale, Lara Jean finds a cute stuff to buy. However, it seems expensive, and in a sale, she must be able to make an offer as much as possible. From the dialogue above, it can be seen that Peter challenges Lara Jean by telling her to do the negotiation by herself. This way, it will also make her more brave in handling such situation in the future, as Lara Jean is a very shy person. In the end, she succeeds with the negotiation and gets the stuff for free. She learns many things while she is with Peter and she starts to do things she has never done before. This act can be implied as respect since it shows Peter’s concern in Lara Jean’s development. He wants her to jump out of her comfort zone by doing the negotiation alone. The fact that he challenges her to be better instead of changing her means that he genuinely wants the best for her, but he still loves her just the way she is.

Peter, although playing a role as a pretend boyfriend, still shows his respect towards Lara Jean. It is mentioned in the novel that Peter does not force Lara Jean when she rejects his kiss because she feels uncomfortable. Lara Jean thinks that relationships do not always involve physicality and in fact, there are many ways to let someone know that they love the person aside from using their lips (Han, 2014: 75). He is aware of Lara Jean’s lack of experience in relationship stuff and also her decisive personality in which she never crosses beyond her principle. Peter responds to her demand respectfully, and signs the contract that mentions no kissing in the relationship. He also adds that he will save all the romantic things to do later

for Lara Jean's real boyfriend. This just shows how much he respects her a woman and he does not want to take all the good thing by himself.

#### **4.1.1.4. Element of Love: Knowledge**

As for the knowledge element, both Lara Jean and Peter have known each other for a long time, although they become closer mainly due to the letter incident which marks their start of relationship. During their relationship, each one of them gains knowledge about the other person, without even realizing it. The act of loving allows them to naturally get used to each other, including the habits of the person and their favorite things.

Knowing the habit of the loved person has become the common knowledge of the person's partner as both of them are much involved in each other's life. In this case, Lara Jean knows that Peter always turns off his car engine whenever he is about to stay and talk a bit longer to her. She understands his sign and plays along by pretending to search for her keys even though they already arrive at her house (Han, 2014: 121). By noticing this small gesture, it means that she closely pays attention to him, even though Peter might be unaware of this.

Lara Jean is not the only one who knows everything about Peter. Peter who seems indifferent from the outskirt turns out to know much about Lara Jean as well. When Peter asks her for company to the real estate sale, he mentions that she will like the old stuff sold there. It surprises Lara Jean that he knows her favorite stuff when she never tells anything to him (Han, 2014: 126). This indicates that Peter has always been secretly paying attention to Lara Jean and her favorite things.

#### **4.1.2. Triangular Theory of Love**

According to Sternberg, romantic love consists of two aspects: intimacy and passion. It lacks of the last aspect: decision/ commitment. The relationship between Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky cannot be categorized as a consummate love, which includes all of the three aspects: intimacy, passion, and decision/ commitment. Throughout the novel, Lara Jean has gone through ups and downs with Peter as his fake boyfriend. The ending speaks them all: Lara Jean is not ready to be committed to anyone. After the hot tub incident, she does not instantly make up with Peter. The ending only says that Lara Jean writes a love letter to Peter, so it does not clearly picture their reconciliation, and leaves their relationship hanging (Han, 2014: 227). This means that the relationship has short-term commitment only.

#### **4.1.2.1. Component of Love: Intimacy**

Intimacy can be shown in several acts of Lara Jean and Peter which indicate their closeness to each other. Sternberg identified several aspects that contribute to intimacy, such as *experienced happiness with the loved one* (1986: 121). This act can simply be seen in the way Lara Jean and Peter exchange notes during class to each other.

And then, the one I read over and over: “You look pretty today. I like you in blue.” I’ve never gotten a love letter before. But reading these notes like this, one after the other, it feels like I have. I think I see the difference now, between loving someone from afar and loving someone up close. When you see them up close, you see the real them, but they also get to see the real you (Han, 2014: 226).

Although writing notes seems old school, both of them enjoy communicating, expressing their feelings by using notes. Not to mention these notes also become the reminder of their happiness at particular moments. There are memories of Peter’s sweet compliments, their dating appointments, and other special moments.

Aside from notes, Lara Jean also experiences joy when she is hanging around with Peter and his friends. She is genuinely a shy person, but she feels like she becomes part of group when she is with them (Han, 2014: 111).

Another aspect of intimacy is *intimate communication with the loved one* (Sternberg, 1986: 121). As the time goes by, both Lara Jean and Peter feel comfortable towards each other. Therefore, they start developing their chemistry by showing their closeness in many occasions, for example, at that night when they go to a party. Lara Jean finds all the seats are occupied, so she takes the initiative to sit in Peter's lap. She is also not afraid to do something that she considers romantic to Peter, like tweaking him on the nose (Han, 2014: 120). Although it is the first time she ever attends a party, she comfortably expresses her intimacy toward Peter.

When a person starts to develop a feeling for someone, he or she will tend to respect their loved one. It is also one of the aspects in intimacy: *high regard for the loved one* (Sternberg, 1986: 121). This act is shown when Lara Jean is waiting for Peter to pick her up as usual, and then Josh appears to offer her for a ride. As a person who always shows up in time, she can just go to school with Josh. However, she chooses to wait for Peter because she knows that he intentionally wakes up earlier just to pick her up. Waiting is the least that she can do to appreciate his effort. She genuinely shows her regard towards Peter by refusing the offer and waiting for him to come, although she hates wasting time.

Peter's five minutes late as usual. Not that I can really complain, because it's a free ride to school, and I could be taking the bus. But if I go with Josh, I won't have to rush to class, I can go by my locker, I can go pee, I can get a juice at the vending machine. But he's probably already nearly here. "Thanks, but I'm waiting for Peter," (Han, 2014: 145).

The aspect of intimacy also takes form in *being able to count on the loved one in times of need* (Sternberg, 1986: 121). One of the examples in the novel is when Peter asks Lara Jean to accompany him to pick up chairs at the estate sale. He knows that she likes antique stuff and besides, he hates going there alone. Lara Jean can actually lay in bed at home and just do the stuff she usually does, for instance cooking, but instead, she chooses to come with Peter. The same thing goes with Lara Jean. She can count on Peter to pick her up to school since her car is under reparation (Han, 2014: 83). Peter can always sleep a lot more if he does not have to pick her up, but he does it anyway. These act show that both of them can count on each other in times of need.

The next aspect is *appreciation of the loved one* (Sternberg, 1986: 121) which is mostly done by Peter to Lara Jean. He often gives her compliment unexpectedly, which makes her feel good. There is one moment when Lara Jean feels insecure before going to the party, and instead of making fun of her, he compliments the way she looks. “I don’t like the way my hair looks. “Nah, I like it. You look pretty,” (Han, 2014: 118). Another compliment from Peter can be seen every time Lara Jean cooks something for him. No matter what food it is that she makes, he would always leave a compliment for her. “These are so good,” Peter keeps saying.” (Han, 2014: 154). These compliments serve as a way to appreciate the effort that has been made.

#### **4.1.2.2. Component of Love: Passion**

Passion can take place in the form of physical attraction, sexual consummation, and other phenomena in relationship (Sternberg, 1986: 119). In the novel, Lara Jean and Peter do not immediately feel attracted to each other. Their feelings develop over

time, and each one of them has different perception of attractiveness. Peter finds Lara Jean cute in the first place due to the smell of her hair and the way she acts which trigger him to kiss her, back then in the seventh grade: “I’m not teasing. Why do you think I kissed you that day at McLaren’s house back in seventh grade? It’s why I went along with this thing in the first place. I’ve always thought you were cute,” (Han, 2014: 199). Referring to Ben-Ze’ev’s statement regarding appealingness in the previous chapter, Peter fits the theory which says that men are more likely to be attracted to vision or appearance at first.

Meanwhile, according to Lara Jean, she starts liking Peter right after he kissed her. She also finds Peter charming not only because of his look, but also his kind attitude, his brave attempt, and his courage to take risk (Han, 2014: 47-48). All those qualities seem to be the opposite of hers who prefers staying in her comfort zone. As the relationship goes on, there is a moment when Lara Jean feels actually attracted to Peter because of his adorable attitude. Although the relationship is fake, she knows that deep down, she really has feelings for him. “I smile, because it’s so cute. And for a second, just for a second, I forget. I forget that this isn’t real,” (Han, 2014: 154).

Another kind of passion is shown when Lara Jean and Peter share a kiss in the hot tub. In society, kissing is not something unusual as it is associated with love. It is a way to show one’s desire for another person. For Lara Jean who rarely expresses her emotion, the kiss is so special as she gathers all her courage to initiate the kiss. It is a remarkable moment for her to finally show her true feeling to someone, instead of running from it.

My heart is pounding like a million trillion beats a minute as I scoot closer to him. I bend my head down and press my lips against his, and I feel his jolt of surprise. And then he's kissing me back, open-mouthed, soft-lipped kissing-me-back (Han, 2014: 202).

Referring to Fromm's definition of love, jealousy can be considered as a form of passion (Fromm, 1995: 17). In the novel, there are several moments that depict jealousy between Lara Jean and Peter. One of them is when Lara Jean tells him that Josh kissed her. "Peter looks really irritated, and I'm starting to regret mentioning it. "What the hell is he thinking, kissing my girlfriend? It's fucking ridiculous. I'm gonna say something to him," (Han, 2014: 180). From this dialogue, it is obvious that Peter expresses his jealousy through his reaction after hearing what Josh did to Lara Jean. Not only that, he also never lets any of his friends mess with her. Even though their relationship is just pretending, Peter feels jealous to any guy who is close to her, especially Josh, since he used to be someone that Lara Jean adored very much. From the very start, Peter has always considered Josh as a rival, which explains why he never for once treats him good. The fact that Peter does not like seeing Lara Jean with any guy other than him, shows that Peter is romantically attached with Lara Jean deep down inside.

Another jealousy can be seen from Lara Jean's reaction whenever Peter mentions his ex girlfriend, Genevieve, and also when he makes an excuse to meet Genevieve. "They were just talking, but with Genevieve it's never *just* anything," (Han, 2014: 134). Her jealousy raises her suspicion that Peter is not over Genevieve yet. This is also what makes her hesitant at first to accept Peter's confession. She has always thought that Peter is still in love with Genevieve, when the truth is, he is only being a good friend (Han, 2014: 200).

#### **4.1.2.3. Component of Love: Decision/ Commitment**

Knowing how the story ends, it can be concluded that the type of decision contained in the story is a short term commitment. Lara Jean and Peter make a decision to love each other, but they do not commit to the relationship just yet. The open ending leaves their relationship hanging, and the next thing that can happen is that they will be reunited with the love letter from Lara Jean. If one decides to love another person completely, they will be committed to a long term commitment or marriage. The fact that Lara Jean and Peter are still high school students shows that their love is still infatuated and it will grow over time. The lack of decision/ commitment aspect is depicted in the scene where Lara Jean decides to cut ties with Peter right after he has a quarrel with Josh. She is so upset with the fact that Peter does not make much effort in comforting her and denying the sex rumor.

I stay up late just in case Peter texts again ... But he doesn't text or call. Around three a.m. I throw away Peter's notes. I delete the picture of him from my phone; I delete his number. I think that if I just delete him enough, it will be like none of it ever happened and my heart won't hurt so badly (Han, 2014: 210-211).

#### **4.1.3. Form of Love: Romantic Love**

From the components of love presented in the story, all of them result in the form of Romantic Love. It happens when the intimacy and passion components become dominant in the relationship, and there is a lack of commitment component in both sides. This type of love usually happens when the couple is still in the early stage of relationship. Although romantic love is an infatuated type of love, the couple already experiences a strong attachment to each other, and is bonded emotionally.

As for this novel, the two protagonists, Lara Jean and Peter, initially express their attraction to each other, meaning that the passion component takes place first in their romantic love. As shown in the above analysis, Peter is attracted by Lara Jean first in middle school, so he kisses her and decides to help her with the fake relationship. After that kiss, Lara Jean realizes that she has indeed fallen for Peter because of his attractive side. Both of them show their passion for each other, which then leads to the intimacy.

Following that, the intimacy component is formed after both Lara Jean and Peter have known each other well and slowly become closer. The goal of intimacy is reached when both of them feel like there is no more wall between them, and they genuinely care about each other. Aside from the intimacy and passion components, the elements of love, such as care/ concern, respect, responsibility, and knowledge also take part in their love story. The four elements are present, despite the will or decision/ commitment aspect.

#### **4.1.4. The Impacts of Romantic Love**

There are several impacts caused by romantic love between Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky. The first one is Lara Jean experiences happiness because of her romantic relationship with Peter. Being in a relationship makes Lara Jean happy as she gradually gets to know Peter and experiences some positive events as a result of being in a romantic relationship. There is one time when Peter tries to take a photo of Lara Jean out of the blue, and she is not camera ready yet, so she asks him to delete the picture. Instead of deleting it, he uses the picture as his phone wallpaper and says that she looks pretty. Even though they are just pretending to be in

relationship, the way Peter treats her always makes her happy. “Nah, I like it. You look pretty.” He probably only said it so we could hurry up and go inside, but it makes me feel good,” (Han, 2014: 118).

Another happiness can be portrayed when Lara Jean and Peter chase each other while wearing Halloween costumes, and at this point, they cannot care less when a teacher shout at them. All that matters is they look happy and they do not want the moment to end. It is an unusual thing to spot Lara Jean, a seemingly obedient student, chasing a guy in the hallway. But with Peter, she becomes so carefree as a girl. In this case, Peter surely knows how to make her happy and lighten up her mood because they have a little quarrel just a moment ago.

Peter reaches out and tickles me, and I laugh so hard I almost drop my wand ... Giggling, I run away from him, further down the hall, dodging groups of people. He gives chase all the way to chem class. A teacher screams at us to slow down, and we do, but as soon as we’re around the corner, I’m running again and so is he (Han, 2014: 147).

Next, romantic love also affects Lara Jean’s friendship with Josh. Ever since she starts dating Peter, Josh never for once encourages her for it. That results in a bigger distance between her and Josh. It is obvious that Josh does not like Peter from the very first time since Peter looks pretty much like a player and Josh does not want Lara Jean to get hurt. However, Lara Jean denies it because she knows that Peter will not do such thing as hurting her feeling (Han, 2014: 138). Upon receiving less encouragement from her best friend, Lara Jean feels that their friendship is slowly deteriorating. This suggests that the romantic love affects Lara Jean and Josh’s friendship negatively, considering the outcome.

Suddenly the easy Josh-and-Lara Jean feeling is lost. Josh is withdrawn and closed off, and I’m stinging from what he said about Peter, and it feels like

playacting to sit across from each other and pretend it's the same as the old days (Han, 2014: 160).

Being in a romantic relationship brings a new light to Lara Jean's dull life. With her aloof personality, it is no wonder that she only has a few friends beside her. Margot has always been there for her, both as a sister and a friend. But now that she leaves to Scotland to continue her study, Lara Jean gets lonely so easily. It is impossible to be friends with Josh as they used to be, after the incident where the love letters get sent out. It would be so awkward for Lara Jean to ask for Josh's advice regarding what she has to do in order to overcome the misunderstanding. She cannot count on Chris either, as she always comes and goes whenever she likes. Later, when she gets closer to Peter and his friends, she feels less lonely, and that totally changes her perception of them, whom she considers as bad boys at first. They turn out to be really nice to her, and Peter also happens to be her new source of happiness when both of them starts to develop feelings to each other.

Last but not least, romantic love can also bring pain and sadness due to the separation of the lovers. One major event which causes Lara Jean and Peter to break up is the hot tub incident. This one small incident ruins everything in Lara Jean; her image, and more importantly, her trust for Peter. Part of it is caused by Genevieve who is being manipulative to Lara Jean and is more likely being the one who spreads the rumor (Han, 2014: 205). Because of that, Lara Jean has to face the embarrassment for the thing she does not even do, and she has to go through a hard time—cutting her ties with Peter. It is not easy for both of them to go on. Peter is hurt because he makes Lara Jean disappointed by his fight with Josh. Lara Jean also

explicitly expresses her sadness even though she has already made up with Margot and straightened up everything.

“Why are you still sad?” Kitty asks me ... I’m about to deny being sad, but then I just sigh and say, “I don’t know.” ... “You miss Peter? Or Josh?” I hesitate. “Peter.” Despite everything, Peter (Han, 2014: 223).

However, in the end Lara Jean puts her ego aside and decides to reconcile with Peter through a love letter addressed to Peter (Han, 2014: 227). Before that, Peter also makes an effort to contact Lara Jean in order to talk and shows himself up at Lara Jean’s family Christmas party. Although there are some conflicts and misunderstanding that occur in their relationship, the couple is able to go through it. This shows that both Lara Jean and Peter are willing to fight for their love for each other which results in the true portrayal of romantic love.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

Love is something that happens naturally between two human beings. Depending on its components, love can be divided into several types. One of them is romantic love which is characterized by strong physical attraction and deep connection between the couple.

There are two main characters, namely Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky. Lara Jean is the protagonist and a dynamic character. She is a girl who easily falls in love and also an introvert. Meanwhile, Peter is an outgoing, adventurous, static character, and is described as a generous guy. As a main character, Lara Jean is faced with conflicts which come both internally and externally, such as the conflict with her inner self, loneliness, the conflict with her friend Genevieve, and the conflict with her sister Margot. The story happens in the 21th century, begins in the summer and ends in the new year eve. It takes place in Virginia, United States. Both Lara Jean and Peter come from the upper-middle class family.

From the novel, it can be concluded that Jenny Han's *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* portrays a romantic love between two characters, Lara Jean and Peter since all aspects of romantic love are present in their relationship. Four elements of love that can be found in the novel are care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge. Triangular Theory of Love's main aspects that contribute to the development of their relationship are intimacy, passion, and short-term decision in which romantic love is resulted from.

The romantic love also gives some impacts to Lara Jean and Peter's lives. Both of them experience happiness as well as sadness throughout the relationship. It affects Lara Jean's friendship and more importantly, the relationship brings colors into her life. She indeed becomes a better person as she deals with many obstacles during her relationship with Peter. Even though they deal with some conflicts and misunderstanding, both of them are able to solve it and reunite in the end.

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