

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Having girlfriends are vital for all women. This is because female friendships are precious for women. Whether their girlfriends are married or single, mothers or childless, they are the people where we can find our precious moments. This can be read from the quotation of the novel, which becomes the main data for the writer's research, i.e. *Thursdays At Eight*, where in one of the pages there is a quotation that states;

We can let down our hair. We can let down our guard. We can be selfish. We can crack jokes. We can be ourselves and relax. We talk, we listen, we laugh, we cry, but mostly we support and encourage one another (Macomber, 2001, p.1).

This assumes that having girlfriends may bring many advantages for women. It is supported by a critic, Heather Long who has been a freelance writer of family and community for six years, who states;

Married and single women need female friends for their coffee breaks, their girl's night out or just their morning walks. They can relate. They can talk about issues with each other that they can rarely talk with others about (2009, ¶ 3).

It relates to how women share the issues to their girlfriends freely because female friends let married women take a break from being super mom and super wife.

A critic, Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale*, explains how dependent women are not empowered women. For example; when women who are not highly educated give their opinion in a work field or any decision in the family or their environment, their voice is considered as not important because women are the second sex. The idea of women as the second sex was firstly introduced by Simone Beauvoir in her book entitled *Second Sex*, that states;

A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex, it goes without saying that he is a man. Therefore, woman must first of all say, 'I am a woman' (1949, p.25).

Therefore, both women and men believe that it (second sex) is about women's value and how women should be treated.

As it is said by UNIFEM in a human rights framework's principle (1994, ¶ 7), there is support for gender equity in decision-making from the household to the international level. It means that women have to be awake from their deep slumber and understand the true meaning of empowerment such as; women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

One thing that makes the writer interested in analysing a women's courage in this novel is because women always face trouble in a daily life for having self-development in a family and society and often feel insecure in deciding choices of their future. It can be seen when these women with their own trouble come along together and fight a good fight toward their dream, their problem, and their own weary self. For example, when Karen talks about Liz who has been encouraging about her acting career. Karen is also so grateful for the four of them meeting for breakfast every Thursday;

I like the perspective they give me, being older and all.
 What I love about them is that they're so accepting of me
 (Macomber, 2001, p.43).

It is in the character description such as Karen above that the writer wants to find out about how women are created as strong persons that allow them to keep going when everyone else gives up. It seems that women's friendship bond help them to find relief from their experiences of pain, rejection, ambition, and lost.

Another reason why the writer is interested in this *Thursdays At Eight* novel is because of its title. The title is so simple because it uses a daily language. The writer thinks of a daily activity, which is often heard a lot. This title is so friendly and it invites the writer a deeper curiosity of what happens inside the novel.

Because of the background, the writer chooses to use Feminism Approach to analyze the novel. In the approach, the writer can use Third Wave Feminism to explore and discover more about how women have been treated and also the way women do to face their present problems.

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of this study is Literature.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is Debbie Macomber's novel, entitled *Thursdays At Eight*. This study focuses on how women become such powerful individuals if they grasp themselves well, knowing what they want in life and get backup from others including what they do to others who need help although in the middle of their sorrow. So this powerful behavior is analyzed with Feminism Approach, which emphasizes the Third Wave Feminism.

1.4 Problem Formulation

Based on the background, the problem formulations of this study are:

1. What do women do in collecting support from their surrounding?
2. How strong can women be when they have the opportunity to express themselves?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze what women do in collecting support from their surrounding.
2. To show how strong can women be when they have the opportunity to express themselves.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Hopefully, this study will help students to know the power of women, especially through a friendship bond. This study would be significant for women to open their minds about what happen recently in the society and what they can change to maximize their existence in the environment.

1.7 Definition of Terms

a. Friendship

Friendship is an openness of each to the other that is found and can be seen as an enlargement of the self. The person is related to his friend in the same way as he is related to himself, since a friend is another self; and therefore, just as his own being is choice worthy for him. Friendship opens the door to an escape from egoism or belief that the rational course of action is always to pursue one's own self-interest (Wikipedia, n.d., ¶2).

b. Female Bonding

Female bonding is used to describe friendship between women, or the way in which women befriend each other. Friendships among women are stereotypically based not only on shared activities, as with men's friendship, but also on emotional sharing (Wikipedia, n.d., ¶4).

c. Feminism

Feminism is a philosophy in which women and their contributions are valued. It is based on social, political and economical equality for women. Feminism can also be described as a movement or a revolution that includes women and men who wish the world to be equal without boundaries. These boundaries or blockades are better known as discrimination and biases against gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status and economic status. Everyone views the world with his or her own sense of gender and equality (Henry, n.d., ¶2).

d. Third Wave Feminism

A direct response to the Second Wave Feminism movement, which received much backlash from various initiatives. The Third Wave accepts and embraces differences among women. Feminist leaders rooted in the second wave called for a new subjectivity in feminist voice (Walker, 1995, ¶3).

e. **Courage**

Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities because it is the quality that guarantees all others. Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen (Churchill, n.d., ¶5).

