

## Depiction of domestic violence in Nicholas Sparks' Safe haven: A feminist approach

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### ABSTRACT

The study examines how the novel Safe Haven discloses several representations of woman as well as relevant gender-related issues that we are recurrently facing today. The dissection is made complete through the approach of feminist criticism particularly using Duluth model by Pence & Paymar (1993) and the three phases of Efforts in Development in Women's History by Showalter (1977) as references to descry multiple representations of the character as a woman, the role of domestic violence depicted in the story, and the impact of domestic violence to the main character. A feminist analysis of the novel reveals various themes such as domestic violence as an effect of gender inequality, domestic violence as a motivation to rebel the abuse, and domestic violence as an effect of male extreme imbibition of alcohol. This analysis invites the readers for a feminist perception by highlighting the representations of the female character and dilating the violence, and gender patterns that led to domestic violence to women.

*Keywords: domestic violence, gender-related issues, qualitative, Philippines*



## INTRODUCTION

In the recent years, studies about the relationship between literature and the issue of gender equality have emerged as a formal field of study. Such studies have been formalized under the umbrella of feminism, a popular literary approach that examines the ways in which literature reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women.

Feminist criticism is difficult to define because it has not yet been systematized as a single critical perspective. Its several shapes and directions vary from one country to another, even from one critic to another. The premise that unites feminist critics is the assumption that Western culture is fundamentally patriarchal which created imbalance of power that relegated women and the social structure that enforces the same gender and sexuality norms as reflected in religion, philosophy, economics, education, and literature. These feminist critics work to expose such ideology to change the idea that the worth of everyone, regardless of the gender, can be fully realized and appreciated.

Although the feminist movement stretches back into the nineteenth century, the attempt of reading literature through a feminist lens began to develop in the early 1960s. The world of literary is polychromed with the establishment of this new literary lens which is still formalizing its definition. Even though it is still developing, multiple studies about feminist criticism have been carried out for several years.

Some researches and literatures in many parts of the world presented studies with the use of feminism as a criticism to different kinds of violence exerted to women, explicating women's social status as recurrently powerless compared to male force and power.

In Britain, United Kingdom, Mirza (1997) asserted in her book *Black British Feminism: A Reader*, the perks of being a 'black' woman as being 'rationalized'; a process of consciousness that results to the color of one's skin as a defining actor of one's identification. Moreover, as a racialized group, black British women have been for so long denied for the privilege to speak that challenged their conscious negation from discourse - what Spivak (1988) termed as 'epistemic violence.' Thus, affirming that this idea should be eliminated not only in Britain but throughout the whole world.

In the Philippines, Papilito-Diaz (2013) presented an essay that used feminist critical discourse and its principles along with theories on speech act and context, and feminist legal theory in analyzing the discourse of rape trials to classify the relationship between power and gender in courtroom interrogations of witnesses in the province of Iloilo, Western Visayas. The essay resulted to features of discourse such as repetition, reformulation, agency, and presuppositions in questions as a function to discursive practices or strategies of the lawyers and judges to control over the witnesses.

Even though several studies have been done using feminist criticism as a lens for analyzing works, there is still a lack of studies concerning the portrayal of women's inferiority embedded in literature through the act of violence that cataclysmically results to constant widening records of battering.

Since feminist criticism believed that the imbalance of power within women was basically evident in Western culture, this research primarily studied a novel from a Western culture with a Western author. Furthermore, with the constant propagation of the inferiority of women nowadays, especially the act of domestic violence to a female family member, this research is conceptualized to designate the acts of barbarity and help this vehemence lessen in the real world.

Domestic violence is a prominent recurrent dilemma until the current days. It is an epidemic exertion of force affecting individuals who unfortunately experience this behavior, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. It is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior that is only a fraction of a systematic pattern of dominance and control. It can be exerted by both male and female, however, with the prominence of male exertion of domestic violence, this study focuses on the battering executed by the husband to the wife. And as an effect to this male vehemence, women may be physically injured and emotionally disturbed.

Domestic violence has been a subject in films and literature. For instance, in *Safe Haven*, as the fiction novel dissected in this study, has an irrefutable wide readership worldwide. According to WorldCat (2016) library, the said book is held in 2,242 libraries. Furthermore, Goodreads (2008) affirmed the novel as the 6th placer out of Nicholas Sparks' best 23 books of all time. With the novel's wide number of readers worldwide, the film adaptation released in 2013 also made a big hit in mass audiences.

Thus, with the novel's extensive readership, the outcome of this study aims to accomplish a great impact to its mass readers and hopefully interests further endeavors. Mostly, this research hopes to thoroughly determine and classify the depiction of domestic violence embedded in the literature and its impact to the characterization of the female character.

Moreover, this research aims to contribute the readers of the novel, especially in terms of providing awareness and advocacy in the prevention of domestic violence to both men and women, as reflections may occur internally and one may apply it in the real world.

### METHOD

This research used qualitative method employing textual analysis to describe and analyze the specified literary work. Textual analysis describes the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts which particularly means that it includes selecting the types of texts to be studied, acquiring appropriate texts, and determining which particular approach to employ in analyzing them (Frey et al, 1999). In other words, the analysis and interpretation of this study only absorbed the interiority of the contents in the literary work, regardless of the structure, background of the author, and so on. The texts are analyzed using the frameworks of feminist literacy criticism.

The source of data of this study is the fiction novel entitled *Safe Haven* by Nicholas Sparks. The book was published by the Grand Central Publishing, a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc. in 2010. Specifically, the source of data focused on the narratives and dialogues that portrays the act of domestic violence experienced by the main female character. In particular, the selection of the needed narratives and dialogues are those which describes the depiction of domestic violence.

This study only dissected one novel in the approach of feminist lens. Concretely, this study is demarcated to the elucidation of Nicholas Sparks' (2010) novel, *Safe Haven* using feminist criticism as a framework of analysis. The scope of research is limited to include the causes, occurrences and effects of domestic violence that is only asserted in narratives and dialogues.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Representation of the Character as a Woman in the Story*

The first step to a feminist analysis is to describe the interaction of the characters and the way elements of a text are assigned meaning within the relationship. The representation of the female character in the novel, *Safe Haven*, is depicted in several ways:

The definition of the female character's physical attributes. According to Ibinga (2007), the emphasis of physical delineation or portrayal of female characters is significant because it may convey images of women reflecting male stereotypes, especially in situation's where the woman's body becomes the central interest of the representer, neglecting other aspects of women's lives. As a result, this research provided and explicated the physical attributes of Katie (as she changed from her real name Erin), the main female character in the novel. Her physical attribution is depicted as it continuously changed as time passed by:

**Her short hair was chestnut brown; she'd been dyeing it in the kitchen sink of the tiny cottage she rented. She wore no makeup and knew her face would pick up a bit of color, maybe too much. She reminded herself to buy sunscreen, but after paying rent and utilities on the cottage, there wasn't much left for luxuries. Even sunscreen was a stretch. Ivan's was a good job and she was glad to have it, but the food was inexpensive, which meant the tips weren't great. On her steady diet of rice and beans, pasta and oatmeal, she'd lost weight in the past four months. She could feel her ribs beneath her shirt, and until a few weeks ago, she'd had dark circles under her eyes that she thought would never go away. (p. 7)**

Originally blonde, Katie dyed her hair into dark brown in order to continuously live a covertly life in a new place inhabited by new faces for her. Working at Ivan's restaurant made Katie continually tanned since it was located near a sea. Moreover, Katie also lost weight for months since she had a meager amount of money from the fact that she was an escapee. Her physical description in the narrative explicated that the female character at that point of time looks as if stressed and broke.

**Katie's face had gotten slightly sunburned, and the waves of radiant heat made her skin sting. (p 9)**

Because of her hardwork at Ivan's, Katie had gotten tanned from the sunburn. This definition is a proof that she certainly worked hard so that she is able to supply her basic needs while saving the leftovers to her coffee can savings for future uses. The female character didn't have time to take care for her looks anymore.

**She was too attractive to go unnoticed. She was in her late twenties, he guessed, with brown hair cut a little unevenly above her shoulder. She wore no makeup and her high cheekbones and round, widest eyes gave her an elegant if slightly fragile appearance. (p. 24)**

**And of course she was pretty, despite the bad haircut and plain-Jane attire. (p. 52)**

The male character in the novel clearly depicts the female character as extremely pretty and attractive even if she wears no make up; has a poor haircut; and a styleless attire to beautify her; and yet she remains beautiful and elegant with her round wide eyes and high cheekbones. Katie's appearance is depicted to Alex as fragile and strained because of her looks.

**At the register, he realized that up close she was even prettier than she'd been from a distance. Her eyes were a greenish-hazel color and flecked with gold, and her brief, distracted smile vanished as quickly as it had come. (p. 24)**

The male character, Alex, continuously recognized Katie's beauty as he closely watched her. Her appealing greenish-hazel streaked with gold eye color and her quick and seemingly abstracted smile seemed to send a message to the receiver that something was certainly bugging her inside.

**She'd changed in recent weeks. She had the beginnings of a summer tan and her skin had a glowing freshness to it. (p. 52)**

In her beginning stage at Ivan's restaurant, Katie's physical appearance was described as obtaining pale and swarthy complexion, but as weeks passed by, she modified into bloomy tanned. It can be inferred that she had also began to

physically, emotionally and mentally adjust to the new place, to the new people, and to the new situations.

**He pictured her on the beach, her chestnut hair fluttering in the breeze, her delicately boned features, and eyes that seemed to change color every time he saw them. (p. 107)**

From the above excerpt, the male character, Alex, defined Katie's physical profile as he imagined her chestnut hair dancing in the breeze while walking by the seashores. Also, he described her having delicately boned features which may explicate that she can be easily broken and pleasing to the senses in many ways.

*Women as weaker sex.* Women nowadays are continuously viewed as a weaker sex compared to men. Johnson (1988) recounted on her book *Strong Mothers, Weak Wives: The Search for Gender Equality*, that male dominance is reflected in the tendency for males to hold more positions of overriding authority in a society. Women are not necessarily less powerful than men, but men tend to hold the kind of power that is considered legitimate, or Max Weber defined it as "authority." Male dominance is also expressed in expectations that in a marriage the husband should exercise authority over his wife. In the novel, Katie felt that weakness and subordination to her husband since he frequently expressed male dominance inside their house and their marriage.

**"And she loved him! In the beginning, he was so sweet to her. He made her feel safe. On the night they met, she'd been working, and after she finished her shift, two men were following her. When she went around the corner, one of them grabbed her and clamped his hand over her mouth, and even though she tried to get away, the men were so much stronger and she didn't know what would have happened except that her future husband came around the corner and hit one of them hard on the back of the neck and he fell to the ground. And then he grabbed the other one and threw him into the wall, and it was over. Just like that. He helped her up and walked her home and the next day he took her out for coffee. He was kind and he treated her like a princess, right up until she was on her honeymoon." (p. 71)**

Katie's emotional description above about how he met her husband suggests that even though she tried her best to escape a gang of men that were going to sexually assault her, she wasn't able to escape since men are depicted to have stronger abilities. However, Kevin, a then-stranger at that moment, helped her to get away from them. A depiction of men as a stronger sex is embedded in this specific narrative since without him, the female character will not be saved. It also posits that women are susceptible to premature evaluation. As a continuity to the scene above, Katie continued to explain the life and the escaping she had in amidst of the abuse:

**“My friend tried to get away twice. One time, she came back on her own because she had nowhere else to go. And the second time she ran away, she thought she was finally free. But he hunted her down and dragged her back to the house.” (p. 71)**

Since Katie didn't trust anyone in the beginning part of the story, she covered up her identity by using a 'friend' that she knew who had previous experiences with such abuse. It is explicated in her dialogue that she tried two times to escape but because of Kevin's good detective characterization, he was able to find her easily and even forcefully tried to drag her back to their house. These instances are the probable causes of the widening of the abuse, allowing the male character to be stronger and making the female character weaker in the relationship.

**She said nothing. Couldn't say anything. Couldn't breathe. She bit her lip to keep from screaming and wondered if she would pee blood tomorrow. The pain was a razor, slashing at her nerves, but she wouldn't cry because that only made him angrier. (p. 152)**

Tragically, after the exertion of physical abuse, Katie, the female character have to covertly endure the pain so as not to enrage her husband further, which may lead to further abuse. This excerpt actually validates the notion that women are depicted as a weaker sex since stifling her emotions and keeping the pain to herself is the only thing she can do and fighting against him is unattainable.

**Erin had been afraid of guns, even before he'd placed the Glock to her head and threatened to kill her if she ever ran away again. (p. 168)**



For over two centuries, there have been women who have escaped the conventional gender roles by picking up guns. In doing so, they become armed icons. Paradoxically, to succeed with the public, famous armed women had to embrace stereotypes and expectations (Browder, 2006). However, Katie, the female character in the novel, acted opposite from the kind of women Browder (2006) described from the preceding narrative. It was not a result from a traumatic event where his husband threatened her with a Glock, a kind of gun that his husband legally owned since he was a detective. Actually, it was an ingrained trait of her that depicted her as a weakling in the preceding plot of the abuse.

**“Must be nice,” he grunted, “to wake up every day knowing you can do whatever the hell you want to do whenever you want to do it.”**

**“Is there anything special you want for dinner?” she asked, pretending not to have heard him. (p. 183)**

If there’s any line that would best describe the portrayal of women’s inferiority to men, this dialogue will be the perfect fit for the subject. The stark depiction of the female inferiority is seen in the above excerpt showing Katie serving his husband Kevin despite the arrogance of his “grunt.” Moreover, the absence of negative response or complaint from Katie actually suggests that such “set-up” in their relationship is acceptable. So as to avoid extensive arguments and not to aggrandize the husband further, the female character chose to “let it pass” by pretending not to hear his remark. Inferiority complex is doubtless one of the causes of the present moral restlessness and dissatisfaction among women (Leuba, 1926). It can be inferred that the woman in this line is pellucidly inferior since she is weak and powerless within the marriage.

**She’d laughed behind his back. Her and the man, whoever he was. He knew there had to be a man. She couldn’t make it on her own. (p. 273)**

The scene is an aftermath of the female character’s successful abscond. It is perspicuous that the male character perceives his wife as weak since he thought that she couldn’t escape and hide successfully without a help of a man. He positively anticipated that a man was certainly involved since she couldn’t make it on her own. Clearly, it is a sign of discrimination. The following lines seemed proportioned to this perception:

**Kevin saw the jeep coming and raised the gun. He began firing, but the jeep kept coming toward him. He leapt out of the way as the jeep roared past, but it clipped his hand, breaking all the bone and knocking the gun somewhere into the darkness.**

**Kevin screamed in agony, instinctively cradling his hand as the jeep careened forward, past the burning wreckage of the store, skidding on the gravel and crashing headlong into the storage shed. (p. 320)**

The above excerpt depicts a scene where Kevin, who was about to shoot Katie, got his hand hit by a jeep driven by Alex who came in to save her. The sign of women's weakness is apparent in these lines since it depicted that a woman definitely needs even a slightest help from a man so that she can get away from another man's abuse.

By the means of comparability of the terms fragile and vulnerable to weak, the narratives and dialogues asserted clear descriptions of fragility and vulnerability of the main female character. Nonetheless, the narratives and dialogues below provide women being emotionally wounded by men and their perceptions about them.

**...and in the weeks that followed her first two visits to the store, she'd become something of a regular. Though still quiet, she seemed less fragile, less nervous, as time had gone on. (p. 25)**

Katie's fragile manners are caused by the domestic violence she experienced prior leading her to be destined in Southport. The cited narrative above are filtered through Alex's point of view; Alex noticed how fragile Katie was even though the two of them were not close and intimate yet. Thereupon, Katie's fragility caused by her abusive past with Kevin in such a way that she is depicted as "fragile" and "vulnerable." This is further supported by the following excerpts below:

**With his words, she inhaled sharply and lowered her head, her shoulders heaving up and down. The sound of her anguish made his throat clench with anger at the life she'd lived and sadness because she was still living it. He wanted to hold her, but knew that right now, at this moment, he was**

**doing all she wanted. She was fragile, on edge. Vulnerable.  
(p. 157)**

The excerpt above described the scene after Katie sorrowfully narrated to Alex the abusive past she had with her husband. Apparently, the female character is enormously affected and still hurt even though she has already escape the life that was a metaphor of a prison.

**He tilted his head and she leaned up to kiss him, her eyes still shut. When she pulled back, she wiped her face with her fingers and pulled close to him again. As he pressed against her, she could feel him getting excited. She knew how her vulnerability turned him on. (p. 181)**

The female character as a vulnerable woman is further developed from the above excerpt. The line “she knew how her vulnerability turned him on” (p. 181) actually glorifies the representation that a woman can only draw favorable attention from man if she’s vulnerable. The scene is after Katie pretended to act *lovey-dovey* towards her husband before he went to the two-day trial in Marlborough. Such act of false intimacy was just actually a part of her escape plan to leave him doubtless and unsuspecting. The point of view of the narrative is owned by Katie, therefore, she perceived herself as vulnerable but, in this instance,, she took it as an advantage and opportunity to deceive him and accomplish her plan.

**She was afraid to close her eyes because every time she did, Kevin reappeared. She saw the smears of blood on his face and shirt, his wild eyes. Somehow, he’d tracked her down; somehow, he’d found her. He’d come to Southport to take her home or kill her, and he’d almost succeeded. In one night, he had destroyed the fragile illusion of security she had managed to construct since she’d arrived in town. (p. 328)**

It was clear that Katie felt the trauma after they have escaped the burning house and then Kevin suddenly appeared, an image of a monster, as being described by the novel. Clearly stated, Katie displayed fragility in the narrative since she thought to herself that it was impossible for Kevin not to find her fragile illusion of safety and security she had built in Southport. The idea of her fragile illusion and her awareness that Kevin will track her down even if she had tried her best to

hide from him are evidently facts that Katie portrayed fragility and weakness even if the scene above was after Kevin's death.

**The more time she spent with Alex, the more she had the sense that he knew far more than he was letting on, and it frightened her. It made her feel naked and vulnerable and it was part of the reason she'd avoided going to the store at all this week. She needed time to think, time to decide what, if anything, she was going to do about it. (p. 110)**

Since one of Katie's goal in residing Southport was to live secretly and solely, after meeting Alex and realizing her deepening feelings for him, she also thought that the more time she allowed herself to spend with him, the more naked she felt as if she was opening herself to him. Katie was having second thoughts on forging a connection with him for fear that she might get hurt. Nonetheless, the gradual plot of the story ended with Alex and Katie as a couple, therefore, Katie knew in herself that she was after all, vulnerable and she let it happen.

**Kevin stopped, panting and feeling ill. As she'd rounded the corner, her profile had flashed in the bright light and he thought again that she was beautiful. She'd always reminded him of a delicate flower, so pretty and refined, and he remembered that he'd saved her from being raped by thugs after she left the casino and how she used to tell him that he made her feel safe but even that hadn't been enough to keep her from leaving him. (p. 287)**

Kevin's metaphorical use of delicate flower as a comparison to Katie pellucidly depicted that he viewed her as fragile and vulnerable. A delicate creature tends to be easily broken, damaged, injured, and hurt, thus, comparing this to Katie made her also to be easily broken and injured. Additionally, the fact that Kevin thought of how he had saved her after being closely raped by gangsters which made her feel safe, and the realization of how it didn't stir her to stay were significant factors that Katie, was depicted as fragile and vulnerable.

Another woman's conduct as an indication to women as a weaker sex is the act of being subservient and ready to please men's desire and preference. The female character, as a woman depicted in the novel, actuated obedience and overruled by her husband without emitting complaints and resistance to alleviate his acts of abuse so not to aggravate him.

**At home, she rubbed her arms to stay warm. The house was old and frigid air wormed its way through the window seams and beneath the front door. The bathroom floor was cold enough to make her feet ache, but Kevin complained about the cost of heating oil and never let her adjust the thermostat. When he was at work, she wore a sweatshirt and slippers around the house, but when he was home, he wanted her to look sexy. (p. 148)**

Subservience to her husband is clearly embedded on these lines as Katie adhered to his repines not to adjust the thermostat to a more satisfactory state thus disregarding her own welfare. The female character also posited traits of women as ready to please men's desire. A typical person usually wears loose clothing that is comfortable at home but the female character in this novel had to wear an attire "to look sexy" just to please his husband at the expense of her own comfort. The excerpt below supports further the idea that the female character is subservient to her husband:

**She sat across from him at the table because he liked them to have breakfast together. (p. 178)**

To sit across a person that you have come to loathe is something that Katie had to painstakingly go through just because Kevin "liked them to have breakfast together" (p. 178). Thus, it was never Katie's choice to dine in with her husband but since she was portrayed to be weak and submissive in the preceding parts of the novel, it logically followed that she has indeed tolerated this set-up.

*Women as optimistic even after tragic experiences.* Frankl's (1985) tragic optimism (TO) posits that one can remain optimistic in spite of tragic experiences. Frankl's (1985) notion agrees to the female character's demeanor since in the novel, most of the dialogues and narratives expound that women continually find circumstances and people with hope and trust that goodness will overrule even after they have experienced major tragedies in their lives.

The main female character in the novel underwent a long-term abuse from her husband and unpleasant issues with her parents' recurrent arguments as they died when she was still nineteen with the fact she was the only child. Despite of that uncongeniality, Katie, the main character continuously aimed for good things to happen ahead.

**Crickets and frogs sounded in the evening, and she thought again that this place had felt right, even from the beginning. It felt safe, as if it had somehow been beckoning to her all along, promising sanctuary. ...as she stepped out of the house and into the sunshine and headed toward the store, she thought to herself, *This is home*. Drawing in a deeply scented breath of hyacinth and fresh-cut grass, she knew she hadn't been happier in years. (p. 18)**

After escaping the land of Dorchester, Katie's past hometown and the place where her tragic past had all occurred, she then transferred to Southport to start a new life independently. She currently viewed the uncrowded Southport as her safe haven which was far away from the place where she got abused and from her abusive husband. Despite her frequent anxiety, she felt safe in her new abode even though she knew that her husband would not allow any barriers to stop him from searching her and getting her back home.

The new place provided her a surge of hope and the introduction of a new female character—a female neighbor—puts Katie's situation to a better perspective. The new character named Jo became a source of comfort for Katie while the latter was struggling to hide her true identity and protect herself from getting attached to other people.

**For some reason, she felt that there was more to Jo than met the eye, something... trustworthy, even if she couldn't explain it. (p. 17)**

**She felt happy and safe and thought again how enjoyable the evening had been.**

**She had a friend, a real friend, someone who laughed and made jokes about the stars, and she wasn't sure if she wanted to laugh or cry because it had been so long since she'd experienced something so easy and natural. (p. 68)**

A real friend is a companion one can trust and lean on at all times, and Katie found that kind of friendship with Jo which eventually made her feel happy and safe. After achieving a real friend in her bogusly new safe abode, she got to know a man who was different from the kind of men she knew and the kind of husband she had. Despite her goals to never get attached with anyone, especially with a

man, Katie, found herself getting attracted to a man named Alex. As she continually thought of him as:

**He was different, she thought, from the men she'd met in her past, different from anyone she'd met before, and as the conversation rambled on, any vestiges of the nervousness she'd once felt began to slip away. (p. 94)**

With her feelings for Alex getting stronger, her anxiety and trust toward men eventually vanished. The following excerpt below shows how optimistic and hopeful she is toward Alex:

**...her instincts told her that he was a man she could trust. That no matter what she told him, he would support her. That he would guard her secrets and never use what he knew to hurt her. It was irrational and illogical and it went against everything she'd promised herself when she'd moved here, but she realized that she wanted him to know her. She wanted him to understand her, if only because she had the strange sense that he was the kind of man she could fall in love with, even if she didn't want to. (p. 110)**

Katie never wished to fall in love after the failure of her marriage with her husband, but with Alex's entrance in her life, everything that she believed suddenly fell apart. The excerpt below reveals her undeniable feeling of attraction to him:

**There was another force at work here, something she'd been trying to deny. She was attracted to him more than she wanted to admit, . . . He was the kind of man she knew she could fall for, and the notion frightened her. She wasn't ready for that. Not yet, anyway. Then again, she heard a voice inside her whisper, maybe she was. (p. 124)**

The hard feelings she had for a long time suddenly decimated because of Alex. This excerpt depicts a female character who was once misused to suffer savagely and fall with extreme pain still enables her to stand up and fall again, but this time, to the right person who can doubtlessly catch her as she falls.

**...when she looked up at him, it was suddenly easy for her to imagine that her fears were pointless. That he would love her no matter what she told him, and that he was the kind of man who loved her already and would love her forever. And it was then she realized that she loved him, too. (p. 137)**

After examining Alex, she eventually realized that he was the kind of man who she can certainly trust because she felt his genuine affection toward her. As a result, she latterly admitted that she had also felt the same way—disclosing the trust she had locked and protected for so long—she was ready to give in to him. In addition to this notion:

**But gradually, over the next couple of weeks, she felt her fears ebb. . . The days passed with easy spontaneity, untroubled by shadows from her prior life. She couldn't help it: she trusted him. (p. 175)**

Incrementally, Katie learned to give off her trust to Alex as they spent more time together resulting to the deepening of her feelings towards him. With Alex, she became incautiously impulsive without being haunted by her deplorable past.

**She marveled at the way Alex was able to make each of them [Alex's kids] feel like the center of attention. There was a tenderness in the way he treated them, a depth of patience that she hadn't quite expected. As the afternoon wore on and the clouds began to drift in, she found herself smiling at the thought that for the first time in many years, she felt completely relaxed. And not only that, she knew she was having as much fun as the kids. (p. 94-95)**

This scene is located in the beach where Katie spent quality time with Alex and his two kids, Kristen and Josh. Apparently, the excerpt shows, from the perspective of Katie, the positive qualities of Alex concerning his relationship with his two kids. The words “tenderness” and “patience” highlighted in the excerpt stand out as opposite to Katie’s husband and father. This instance enabled her to feel true happiness at the moment without subconsciously reminding herself of the frightening past and the unsure future she may have with this new people in her life. Additionally, at that precious moment she continuously felt that unusual happiness:



**The kids found it hilarious, and Katie couldn't help giggling as well, and she felt a sudden, unexpected surge of hope. Despite the tragedy they'd all gone through, this was what a happy family looked like; this, she thought, is what a loving family did when they were together. For them, it was nothing but an ordinary day on an ordinary weekend, but for her, there was something revelatory about the notion that wonderful moments like these existed. And that maybe, it would be possible for her to experience similar days in the future. (p. 103)**

The text evidently provides the sudden feeling of her unexpected surge of hope that she least expected because all she wished was to escape from her husband. For her that kind of happiness was such a bonus gift that she thought it as a non-existent in the reality and as an outcome, the sudden unforeseen wish of keeping this happiness in the future years of her life struck at her. Lastly and frankly, in the last part of the novel, Erin or Katie had accepted the fact that:

**She'd fallen in love with Alex and she'd fallen in love with the children and she already knew that she couldn't imagine a future without them. It was time to go home, she thought, it was time to see her family. (p. 343)**

Katie, without hesitations, has finally come to the conclusion that she would spend the rest of her life with the man and the kids she loved which she has treated as her own family.

The cited narratives and dialogues above depicted how the female character chose to open her heart to hope, love and trust again to the new people she met despite of the tragedies she had gone through and the negative ideas about families she had held. However, the narratives and dialogues below reveal that the female character continually believed her husband's promise not to hurt her again in amidst of the recurring violence before she was able to escape:

**"Because at one time you loved him. Because you believed him when he promised it wouldn't happen again. Because he gradually grew more violent and controlling overtime, slowly enough that you felt like he would change until you finally realized he wouldn't." (p. 157)**

Alex stated these words to Katie after she revealed her dark past to Alex. Her weakness paved a way for the violence to persist. Alex consoled her that it was because she loved her husband too much that she thought he would change for the better. Katie was blinded by her love for him. She had to forego her husband's acts of violence because she believed in him.

**“I loved you!” She sobbed. You promised me you’d never hit me again and I believed you! I wanted to believe you!”**  
(p. 186)

It was evident in her words that the female character really loved her husband; she believed him when he said before that he would never hurt her again and she always wanted to believe him as far as he will continually promise it over again but she knew that those promises would always fail so she finally decided to leave him.

*Women as denial and deceptive.* People have learned to associate deception on women more than on men (Lerner, 1993). However, Lerner (1993) asserted that different words and phrases evoke varied images of deception, as they connote a range of implications about intention and motivation, and the seriousness of harm done. In either case, we have more words to describe the nuances of how we deceive each other than to describe how we love. Lerner (1993) also emphasized that deception is not a “woman’s problem” or even a uniquely human phenomenon, for that matter. Asserted in the novel, female characters tend to portray acts that drive them to pretend and deny their motives and their true feelings:

**“What’s his story, by the way? I take it he’s divorced, right?” [Katie]**  
**“You should ask him.”**  
**“Me? Why would I want to ask him?”**  
**“Because you asked me,” Jo said, arching an eyebrow.**  
**“Which means, of course, that you’re interested in him.”**  
**“I’m not interested in him.”**  
**“Then why would you be wondering about him?”**  
**Katie scowled. “For a friend, you’re kind of manipulative.”**  
**Jo shrugged. “I just tell people what they already know, but are afraid to admit to themselves.” (p. 45)**

The dialogue above shows an exchange of conversation between Katie and her friend Jo. Katie first raised a question to Jo about Alex being a widower out of her curiosity since she was a newbie in the area. However, instead of answering directly, Jo gave a tricky answer spilling out that she should ask him herself sensing that it was obvious that she liked him. It was clearly a tease for her to admit but instead of conceding to her initiation, Katie denied that she was not into him inferring that it was just a curious question. Then, Jo manipulatively fessed up that she already knew her interests to him even if she won't confirm it. The dialogue below further proves Katie denying her feelings for Alex:

**Jo tapped the note. “I guess that means he’s as interested in you as you are in him.”  
“I’m not interested in him!” (p. 74)**

Jo suddenly recognized a bicycle leaning against the tree outside Katie's house amidst their heart-to-heart talk. As they went outside to check it, they found a note indicating that it was from Alex. In the dialogue above, Jo pellucidly teased Katie. In return, Katie recurrently denied her credence that she is interested with him.

**Katie swallowed, suddenly feeling as if she were observing herself from across the room. She could see herself sitting at the table with Jo, and when she began to speak, her voice didn't seem to be her own. “I had a friend once. She was in a terrible marriage and she couldn't talk to anyone. He used to hit her, and in the beginning, she told him that if it ever happened again, she would leave him.” (p. 70)**

The excerpt above is Katie's response after Jo initiated a roundabout question that prompted Katie to state what was really going on with her life and her past. However, instead of directly confessing about her life, Katie referred to herself as a “friend” in her conversation with Jo. While this act maybe considered an act of pretension, one can interpret this as Katie's defense mechanism to keep her private life secret because she has trust issues.

**In the silence Jo continued to hold her gaze. “Your friend has a lot of courage,” she said quietly.  
Jo gave her hand a squeeze. “I think I'd like your friend. I'm glad you told me about her.” (p. 73)**

In the novel, Jo was not clearly described as neither a spirit nor Katie's figment of imagination but the plot of the novel leads to a reader's insight that Jo was actually Alex's deceased wife as revealed in the novel's resolution. Jo, in the novel, plays the role of a character that gives assistance to the female character, the typical and modern version of fairy godmother who knows the female character's struggles. In the previous dialogue, Jo said that she liked Katie's "friend" even though it can be gleaned from the narrative that she was aware that Katie is actually referring to herself.

**"Did I say something wrong?" he asked.  
She shook her head without answering. Alex stared at her, wondering what was going on. His suspicions about her past surfaced almost immediately.  
"What's going on, Katie?"  
"Nothing," she insisted, but as soon as the word came out, he knew she wasn't telling the truth. In another place and time, he would have followed up with another question, but instead, he let it drop. (p. 99)**

Another act of denial is shown in this excerpt. Alex, just like Katie's husband, is also a detective. Katie is shown in this excerpt as someone cautious with her answers. Alex is shown to have understood Katie's anxiety and did not press her further after she replied with "Nothing." It was clearly a denial and her purpose was because she didn't want to tell anyone about her tragic past.

**Kevin had yet to return and her heart was beating fast as she slipped her jacket and gloves back on. She left the salon while Rachel was still talking to her. Next door, at Radio Shack, she asked the clerk for a disposable cell phone and a card that allowed her twenty hours of service. (p. 146)  
She opened the door of the salon and went back inside. She slipped off her jacket and gloves and waited by the register. Thirty seconds later, she saw Kevin's car turn into the lot, angling toward the salon.  
There was snow on her jacket and she quickly brushed at it as Rachel came toward her. Katie panicked at the thought that Kevin might have noticed. She concentrated, urging herself to stay in control. To act natural.  
"Did you forget something?" Rachel asked.**

**Katie exhaled. “I was going to wait outside but it’s too cold,” she explained. “And then I realized I didn’t get your card.” (p. 147)**

The scene above was part of Katie’s escape process. It was obvious that she left the salon suddenly because she had an arrangement with Radio Shack about a cellular phone and a card that she ordered. She pilfered a small amount of time before Kevin would come. When Katie went back at the salon, she pretended that she only stayed there while waiting for Kevin’s arrival in order to put up a show for him. She also shammed to Rachel that it was too cold outside to wait and she forgot to get her card. Thus, Katie displayed a wise character in this part and deceptive at the same time.

**“Just a little bit longer,” she said, her tone neutral, pretending that nothing had happened. She’d learned that if she acted angry or hurt, it only enraged him. “I have to finish the steaks and then dinner will be ready.” “I’m sorry,” he said. He swayed slightly. She smiled. “I know. It’s okay. It’s been a hard few weeks. You’ve been working a lot.” (p. 153)**

Another portrayal of deception is enacted here by Katie. The scene above was an aftereffect of Kevin’s physical abuse to her. Even though Katie was harmed and felt extreme pain, she managed to act as if nothing happened to deceive her husband. She acted that it was okay, pretending that she understood him because he has been in to a lot of pressure lately from his work. It can be inferred that her purpose for this deception is to dwindle his rage and exertion of abuse at the moment.

**“I love you,” she said. (p. 154)  
In the bedroom, he was snoring within minutes, oblivious to Katie’s silent tears, oblivious to her hatred of him, her hatred of herself. (p. 156)**

Katie’s line in page 154 referred to Kevin. This is not the only time she expressed this statement to him, and the particular line above was correlated to the line in page 156. It was apparent that Katie’s words of affection and love were only disguises to deceive him when in fact she really hated him because of his ill treatment to her that resulted to her hatred of herself also.

**“You know what you need after you’re finished in court?” she asked. “A night out. We should get dressed up and go out to dinner. You’re off on Friday, right?”**

**“We just did that on New Year’s,” Kevin grumbled, sopping up more yolk on his plate. There were smears of jelly on his fingers.**

**“If you don’t want to go out, I can make you something special here. Whatever you want. We can have wine and maybe start a fire and I could wear something sexy. It could be really romantic.” He looked up from his plate and she went on. “The point is, I’m open to whatever,” she purred, “and you need a break. I don’t like it when you work so hard. It’s like they expect you to solve every case out there.” He tapped his fork against his plate, studying her. “Why are you acting all lovey-dovey? What’s going on?”**

**Telling herself to stick to the script, she pushed back from the table. “Just forget it, okay?” She grabbed her plate and the fork clattered off it, hitting the table and then the floor. “I was trying to be supportive since you’re going out of town, but if you don’t like it, fine. I’ll tell you what—you figure out what you want to do and let me know sometime, okay?” She stormed over to the sink and turned the faucet on hard. She knew she’d surprised him, could feel him vacillating between anger and confusion. She ran her hands under the water then brought them to her face. She drew a series of rapid breaths, hiding her face, and made a choking sound. She let her shoulders heave a little.**

**“Are you crying?” he asked. She heard his chair slide back. “Why the hell are you crying?”**

**She choked out the words, doing her best to make them sound broken. “I don’t know what to do anymore. I don’t know what you want. I know how big this case is and how important it is and how much pressure you’re under...” She choked off the final words, sensing his approach. When she felt him touch her, she shuddered.**

**“Hey, it’s okay,” he said grudgingly. “You don’t have to cry.”**

**She turned toward him, squeezing her eyes shut, putting her face against his chest. “I just want to make you happy,” she stammered. She wiped her wet face on his shirt.**

**“We’ll figure it out, okay? We’ll have a nice weekend. I promise. To make up for last night.”**  
**She put her arms around him, pulling him close, sniffing.**  
**She drew another rasping inhale. “I’m really sorry. I know you didn’t need that today. Me getting all blubbery for nothing. You’ve got so much on your plate already.” (p. 180-181)**

Since Kevin was a detective, he was assigned to investigate an on-going case that will be held on a court in Marlborough for two days. Meanwhile, Katie took the opportunity to plan the escape. The line “Telling herself to stick to the script” clearly defines that Katie was putting up a show for her husband. To make it more realistic, she acted sentimental by expressing she is saddened by her husband leaving. Her acts of crying would make her husband unsuspecting of her plan. This suggested that women are very clever regardless with the risk through displaying pretentious acts towards men just to attain the specified purpose.

*Women as emotional.* Fischer (1993) reviewed a large amount of empirical research on sex differences in emotions which lead to the conclusion that the general idea that women are more emotional compared with men are some of the stereotypes and generalizations about women. Moreover, after studying groups of men and women, Kelly and Hutson-Comeaux (1999) found results demonstrating that overreactions to happy and sad events were more characteristic of women in the interpersonal context, but were more characteristic of men in the achievement context. Therefore, women tend to display more sensitivity or emotional instability in critical and tragic moments than men.

Different kinds of emotions can be categorized. Gross (2007) recounted the description of deeper list of emotions distinguished by Shaver et al. (2001) in his edition of *Handbook of Emotion Regulation, First Edition*, which are classified into a short three structure, the primary emotion, secondary emotion and tertiary emotions. The primary emotions include love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness, and fear. These six primary emotions are corresponded with varied secondary and tertiary emotions. Below are some cited narratives that depicts women as emotional with regards to the kind of emotions associated:

**“Do you have any dry beans?” she asked.**  
**“I’m sorry,” he’d answered. “I don’t normally keep those in stock.”**

**As he bagged her items after his answer, he noticed her staring out the window, absently chewing her lower lip. For some reason, he had the strange impression that she was about to cry. (p. 24)**

**Katie could feel the pressure of tears behind her eyes and though she tried again to stop them, she felt them sliding down her cheek. Jo was motionless across the table, watching her without moving. (p. 71)**

The narrative on page 24 narrated that Katie almost cried after simply knowing that dry beans were not available on Alex's store but in fact she felt the sudden surge of unexplained anxiety because of her abusive past. Meanwhile, the scene in page 71 happened after Katie fessed up to Jo the torments she experienced with her husband's abuse through using a 'friend' instead of directing herself. Apparently, she expressed emotions associated with sadness as the primary and secondary emotion and misery as the third and most specific emotion.

**“It’s getting there,” she said. “It’s a work in progress. And best of all, it’s mine, and no one’s going to take it away.”  
He looked over at her then. She was staring out over the gravel road, into the grassy field beyond.  
“Are you okay?” he asked. She took her time before answering. (p. 128)**

The scenario was Katie and Alex's discourse after he complimented her house that it was already in its better shape and felt homey. Katie, instead of answering with a simple notion, ascended her emotions while displaying happiness and pride to be specific as a kind of emotion.

**This is what it feels like to really love someone, she thought, and to be loved in return, and she could feel the tears beginning to form. She blinked, trying to will them back, but all at once, they were impossible to stop. (p. 137)**

It is pretty obvious in the cited lines that Katie feels extreme happiness after her realization of experiencing a true love. The tears beginning to form in her eyes are definitely signs of joy and amazement since she was from a failed and abusive marriage. The emotions she showed off were apparently love as the primary emotion and longing as the secondary and tertiary emotion.



**It took a few minutes before she was finally able to stop crying. Her eyes were red and puffy. “I’m sorry I told you all that,” she said, her voice still choked up. “I shouldn’t have.” (p. 157)**

Katie’s dialogue expressed her emotions of sadness and agony to be specific. The reason is due to the fact that she hasn’t yet moved on from her tragic past because she was still sadly living in it, that’s why every time she narrated the whole story over and over again, being emotionless was impossible for her.

**Jo acknowledged her point with a reluctant nod. “You’re right. It’s not my concern—and I’m crossing some important boundaries here. But I really do think they’ve been through enough. And the last thing I want for them is to become attached to someone who has no intention of staying in Southport. Maybe I’m worried that the past is never really in the past and that you might decide to leave, no matter how much sadness you leave in your wake.”**

**Katie was speechless. This conversation was so unexpected, so uncomfortable, and Jo’s words had definitely thrown her emotions into turmoil. If Jo sensed Katie’s discomfort, she pressed on anyway.**

**“Love doesn’t mean anything if you’re not willing to make a commitment,” she said, “and you have to think not only about what you want, but about what he wants. Not just now, but in the future.” She continued to stare at Katie across the table, her brown eyes unwavering. “Are you ready to be a wife to Alex and a mother to his kids? Because that’s what Alex wants. Maybe not right now, but he will in the future. And if you’re not willing to make a commitment, if you’re only going to toy with his feelings and those of his children, then you’re not the person he needs in his life.”**

**Before Katie could say anything, Jo got up from the table as she went on. “It might have been wrong of me to say all this, and maybe we won’t be friends any longer, but I wouldn’t feel right about myself if I didn’t speak plainly. As I’ve said from the very beginning, he’s a good man—a rare man. He loves deeply and never stops loving.” She let those words sink in before her expression suddenly softened. “I think you’re the same way, but I wanted to remind you that if you**

**care about him, then you have to be willing to commit to him. No matter what the future might bring. No matter how scared you might be.”**

**With that, she turned and left the bar... (p. 200-201)**

Jo, as a woman, also exhibited emotions. After inviting Erin or Katie on a pub, Jo spilled these words out without hesitation. It is apparent that Jo expressed her sadness as the primary emotion, sympathy as the secondary emotion, and dismay as the tertiary emotion to Katie who was not sure of a long-term relationship with Alex and his two kids. She was undeniably affectionate to them and thought about their concerns and feelings if one day Katie would just leave them hanging and sad because of her dobiusness of staying.

**They were the only people she missed from Dorchester and she wondered how Larry was doing. They were her friends when she had no one else, and she wanted to tell Larry that she was sorry for his loss. She wanted to cry with him and talk about Gladys and to tell him that because of them, her life was better now. She wanted to tell him that she'd met a man who loved her, that she was happy for the first time in years. But she would do none of those things. Instead, she simply stepped out onto the porch and, through eyes that were blurry with tears, watched the storm tear leaves from the trees.**

**“You’ve been quiet tonight,” Alex said. “Is everything okay?”**

**“A friend of mine passed away,” she said. She handed him a plate to dry. “I knew it was coming, but it’s still sad.” (p. 254-255)**

The act of grief after a beloved passes away is usual, and women do. In the lines above, Gladys Feldman, one of her trusted friends in Dorchester, died. Even though she has expected it long ago to happen, the sadness was still unescapable. According to the narrative above, she wanted to console Larry, Gladys’ husband, to alleviate the grief they are both feeling inside and wanted to thank them for she owe them her new life. Lucidly, she vented her sadness and grief.

**“But I’m not Katie, either!” she snapped before turning toward him. “Don’t you get that? I stole that name from people I cared about! People who trusted me.” She stared at**

him, feeling the surge of tension from earlier in the day, recalling with fresh intensity Gladys's kindness and pity, her escape, and the nightmarish years with Kevin. "Why can't you just be happy with the way things are? Why do you have to push so hard for me to be the person you want me to be rather than the person that I am?"

He flinched. "I love the person that you are."

"But you're making it conditional!"

"I'm not!"

"But you are!" she insisted. She knew she was raising her voice but she couldn't seem to stop it. "You have this idea of what you want in life and you're trying to make me fit into it!"

"I don't," Alex protested. "I simply asked you a question."

"But you wanted a specific answer! You wanted the *right* answer, and if you didn't get it, you were going to try to convince me otherwise. That I should do what you want! That I should do everything you want!" (p. 258-259)

Gladys Feldman's death doubtlessly affected Katie's disposition. In the narrative and dialogue she had with Alex above, it was clear that she was affected by her grief. She manifestly expressed aggravation to Alex saying that she pressured him to the kind of woman he wanted her to be when in fact it was not his real intention. Due to Katie's distress with the death, she unconsciously took it out on Alex making her express her anger as the primary emotion, rage as the secondary emotion and aggravation as the tertiary emotion.

*Women as affectionate to kids.* Without the feeling of hesitancy and awkwardness to help and express subjectivity, female characters in the novel naturally show off affection to the two children, Kristen and Josh. Also, the citations of lines are provided to show women are affectionate and act as a confidante to kids.

Wikinson and Grill (1996) represented ways of sharing affection to others. They enumerated direct relational statements, positive verbal statements, self-disclosure, listening, staying in touch, nonverbal expressiveness, touch, sexuality, aggression, gifts, food, favors, service, time together, and access rights. Assuredly, any kinds of these ways of showing affection are exploited by Katie to the two kids:

**Her easy demeanor and open expression spoke of an affection for children, and his first thought was that he'd glimpsed the woman she once had been and could be again, given the right circumstances. Kristen, too, seemed to notice something different about the woman, because after she left, Kristen had told him that she'd made a new friend and that her name was Miss Katie. (p. 25)**

Katie, as a woman, was doubtlessly affectionate to the five-year old Kristen, Alex's daughter. Her qualities of easy demeanor and open expression lead her to be tenderhearted with children. The discernment wouldn't be true if Kristen had not noticed it from the first time she walked in their store. She even considered Katie as a friend.

**"Hi, Miss Katie," Kristen called out, popping up from behind the register. "How do you think my doll looks?"**

**"She's beautiful, Kristen," Katie answered. "Is that a new dress?"**

**"No, I've had it for a while. But she hasn't worn it lately."**

**"What's her name?"**

**"Vanessa," she said.**

**"Did you name her?"**

**"No, she came with the name. Can you help me get her boots on, though? I can't get them on all the way."**

**Alex watched as Kristen handed Katie the doll and she began to work on the soft plastic boots. She handed the doll back and asked, "How's that?"**

**"Perfect," Kristen said. "Do you think I should put a coat on her?"**

**"It's not that cold out."**

**"I know. But Vanessa gets cold sometimes. I think she needs one." Kristen's head vanished behind the counter and then popped up again. "Which one do you think? Blue or purple?"**

**Katie brought a finger to her mouth, her expression serious.**

**"I think purple might be good."**

**Kristen nodded. "That's what I think, too. Thanks."**

**Katie smiled before turning away... (p. 29-30)**

Women, with their stereotypical traits as sweet and open expression, enable them to be amicable to children. In the excerpt, Katie is depicted to be friendly and

interested with Kristen. She is shown to be affectionate and playful with kids. Katie did not show any sign of argument, awkwardness and reluctance in talking to Kristen with her toys and even sensed the happiness talking to her thus, displaying woman as affectionate to children.

**And of course, Kristen was there, too. Suddenly he felt like a terrible parent again, because he saw that his little girl was crying and afraid and needed him, too, even though she was nestled in Katie's arms. (p. 33)**

The excerpt above shows Alex's perspective after he rescued his son Josh who fell into the water while fishing. He also saw his daughter Kristen "nestled in Katie's arms" after the incident. In this scene, Katie did not hesitate to console Alex's daughter. Further:

**Kristen was sitting beside him, her eyes still red and puffy. She'd asked Katie to stay with her for a while, and Katie had remained at her side, holding her hand even now. (p. 34)**

Alex saw his daughter Kristen still clinging to Katie even after both children had changed into dry clothes. Here in this excerpt, Katie is depicted as more than willing to offer her time and comfort to a terrified child. Her gestures of "nestling," comforting, and pacifying a frightened child are highlighted here through the eyes of Alex. Such depiction of Katie glorifies the idea that females should be nurturing and comforting.

**"It was scary. One minute, I was talking to Alex, and when I saw what was happening on the monitor, I guess he noticed my expression because in the next instant, he was racing past me. He moved through that store like lightning, and then Kristen saw the monitor and started to panic. I scooped her up and followed her dad. By the time I got out there, Alex was already out of the water with Josh. I'm just glad he was okay."**

**"Me, too." Jo nodded. "What do you think of Kristen? Isn't she just the sweetest thing?"**

**"She calls me Miss Katie."**

**"I love that little girl," Jo said, drawing her knees up to her chest. (p. 43-44)**

In the above excerpt, Katie recounted the incident when Josh fell into the water and her experience dealing with it. Katie's dialogue showed her affection for Kristen because instead of leaving her behind while going out from the store, she tenderheartedly picked her up. Her affection to Josh was also displayed when she said she was glad after knowing he was okay. Katie clearly portrays a woman with strong affections and care for the children. On the other hand, Jo also showed expressions of affection when she responded to Katie that she was also glad to know that nothing bad happened to him. Additionally, Jo calling Kristen as the "sweetest thing" while adding that she loved her with the genuine gesture of drawing her both knees up to her chest clearly expressed fondness and tender attachment to the child.

**She [Kristen] held up the coloring book. "What do you think of my picture?"**

**"It's pretty. You're doing a great job."**

**"Thanks," she said. "I'll give it to you when I'm finished."**

**"You don't have to do that."**

**"I know," she said with charming self-assurance. "But I want to. You can hang it on your refrigerator."**

**Katie smiled and stood up. "That's just what I was thinking."**

**"Do you need help shopping?"**

**"I think I can handle it today. And that way, you can finish coloring." (p. 49)**

Wikinson and Grill (1996) included positive verbal statement as a way to share one's affection to another. Specifically, positive verbal statements include compliments. Transparently, it is portrayed by Katie when she complimented Kristen's drawing. Kristen, feeling her sincerity and kindness decided to give it to her but Katie resisted first because it may probably impose the child. However, Kristen's insistency impelled Katie to eventually accept it to make her feel that her coloring was worthy to be hung up publicly on a refrigerator to avoid a feeling of disappointment and neglectfulness from Kristen. Katie also expressed acknowledgment and encouragement to Kristen when she demurred from helping her in shopping so that she will be able to finish her coloring. In addition to this notion:

**“Miss Katie!” Kristen cried, sounding almost panicked. She stood, brandishing the picture she’d colored. She’d already torn it from the book. “You almost forgot your picture.” Katie reached for it, brightening as she examined the picture... “This is beautiful,” she murmured. “I can’t wait to hang it up.”**  
**“I’ll color another one for you the next time you come in.”**  
**“I’d like that very much,” she said.**  
**Katie rolled up the picture, making sure not to wrinkle it, and then tucked it into the bag. (p. 56)**

Kristen’s sweet disposition definitely matched Katie’s affection to kids in the cited narratives. Once more, she complimented Kristen by saying that her coloring was beautiful making her excited to hang it up on her refrigerator. Also, after Kristen said that she’d color for her again, she responded with encouraging words saying that she liked the idea. Furthermore, her gestures of handling the picture with care and considerately placing it in her bag are clear signifiers that she is affectionate with the child and rewards worthiness to its effort.

**“How do you like school? You’re in kindergarten, right?”**  
**“It’s okay. I like recess best. We have races and stuff.”**  
***Of course*, she thought. Since they had arrived at the beach, he’d barely stopped moving. “Is your teacher nice?”**  
**“She’s really nice. She’s kind of like my dad. She doesn’t yell or anything.”**  
**“My mom used to come with us out here, you know.” [Josh said]**  
**“She did?”**  
**“Yeah, but she died.”**  
**“I know. And I’m sorry. That must be hard. You must miss her very much.” (p. 95-97)**

Katie again showed her affection to Josh when she asked him how was his schooling, knowing that he was in kindergarten as well as asking him how was his teacher. They were indeed simple questions but they represented the message of interests she always had for Josh as a kid. Furthermore, she also flaunted her affection through her sympathy towards her mother’s death and the understanding that she knew he missed her to such a great degree.

**From the waitress stand, Katie peered out at the deck and then turned back again, staring as Alex and the kids followed the hostess to an open table near the railing. Kristen smiled and waved as soon as she saw Katie, and hesitated only a second before scooting between the tables and hurtling directly for her. Katie bent down as the little girl threw her arms around her.**

**“We wanted to surprise you!” Kristen said.**

**“Well, you did. What are you doing here?” (p. 114)**

Kristen’s extreme sweetness and comfort to Katie were just instances of the upshots of her affection to them. It is also evident when Katie purposely acted animated to interact with her. Also, Katie expressed her interest to her when she didn’t welcome her with a sarcastic or rude greeting but with a sweet willingness.

**For the next few minutes, she took orders and cleared plates from other tables, delivered a couple of meals, and finally returned with the basket of hush puppies.**

**“Be careful,” she said. “They’re still hot.”**

**“That’s when they’re the best,” Josh said, reaching into the basket. Kristen reached for one as well.**

**“We went butterfly hunting today,” she said.**

**“You did?”**

**“Yep. But we didn’t hurt them. We let them go.”**

**“That sounds like fun. Did you have a good time?”**

**“It was awesome!” Josh said. “I caught, like, a hundred of them! And then we went swimming.”**

**“What a great day,” Katie said sincerely. (p. 116)**

Katie’s willingness and fondness to serve them was clearly manifested. In addition, she expressed her care for them by simply saying that they have to be careful with the hot basket of hush puppies so it won’t hurt them. Furthermore, Katie’s modest questions and comments also described her interests with their simple yet fun day explicating her great interests for the kids.

**Kristen particularly loved spending time with Katie. When the four of them were walking together, Kristen often reached for Katie’s hand; when she fell down in the playground, she’d begun to run to Katie. While it warmed Alex’s heart to see those things, he always felt a pang of**



**sadness, too, because it reminded him that he could never be everything that his daughter needed, no matter how hard he tried. Still, when Kristen came running up to him and asked if Katie could take her shopping, Alex couldn't say no. Though Alex made a point to take her shopping once or twice a year, he tended to view it more as a parental duty than an opportunity for fun. By contrast, Katie seemed delighted by the idea. After giving Katie some money, Alex handed her the keys to the jeep and waved from the parking lot as they left. (p. 229)**

The narrative above partly recounted that a child, especially a little girl, will always look for a mother's caress no matter how the father had done his best to provide his children's needs and wants. Kristen is apparently fond with Katie's company since Katie, as a woman, was represented as affectionate to kids. When Kristen requested for something to do, Katie was always ready to go with the flow to join her in whatever she wanted as long as it didn't harm Kristen. For example, as cited above, they went shopping together for fun.

**“And then one day, Joyce showed up.” He looked at her. “Have you met Joyce yet? Works a few afternoons a week including Sundays, older lady, talks to everyone? Josh and Kristen love her... she showed up one afternoon, maybe around five or so, and she simply told me that she was going to take care of the kids while I spent the next week at the beach.” (p. 78)**

Joyce is another female character in the novel. She is an old lady who helped Alex since the days he had gone through an emotional wreck after his wife died. Joyce also displayed affection to the kids whereas she volunteered in taking care of them. Though her actions towards the children were not completely provided in the novel, it is guaranteed that she took good care of Josh and Kristen since they both “love her.” Alex didn't define it as just a simple likeness but he emphasized it as a deeper emotion, defined as love or strong affection for it was a reflection from her attitude to them.

**“Miss Katie!” she cried. “I found some really pretty ones!”  
Katie bent lower. “Can you show me?”  
Kristen held them out, dumping them into Katie's hand...**

**He took a few steps down the beach, watching his son diving in and out of the waves. As Josh popped back up, Alex cupped his mouth. “Hey, Josh?” he shouted. “I’m going to start the coals, so why don’t you come in for a while.”**

**“Now?” Josh shouted back.**

**“Just for a little while.”**

**Even from a distance, he saw his son’s shoulders droop. Katie must have noticed it as well, because she was quick to speak up.**

**“I can stay down here if you want,” she assured him.**

**“You sure?”**

**“Kristen’s showing me her seashells,” she said. (p. 87-88)**

Katie once again displayed her affection with the two kids in the novel. Her reaction after Kristen bragged her the beautiful seashells she found, Katie instantly requested her to present it and let her see, explicating that she is interested in the simple concerns of the children. Additionally, after Josh’s fishing incident from falling off the water, Alex had to double check him since the scene was located on a beach. However, instead of being indifferent as Josh showed gestures of dismay, she immediately initiated to look for him while accommodating Kristen as well, implicating that she felt the empathy for Josh.

**Katie was a natural with children—whether helping Kristen feed the ducks at the pond or playing catch with Josh, she always seemed to fall effortlessly into rhythm with them, by turns playful, comforting, rowdy, or quiet. In this way she was much like Carly, and he somehow felt certain that Katie was the kind of woman Carly had once spoken about. (p. 172-173)**

Carly, Jo’s real name, in the novel, is Alex’s deceased wife. It is apparent that Carly and Katie both felt the tender affection towards the kids, especially for Katie since she was not blood-related with them. The narrative manifested that Katie was naturally playful and fond with children whether what kind of activity it is. She didn’t have to try hard to accompany them. A factor that proved women are really affectionate with kids.

**When the movie ended and Katie leaned forward to turn it off, Josh raised his head and let it fall to the couch. He was too big for her to carry, so she nudged his shoulder, telling**

**him it was time for bed. He grunted and whined before sitting up. He yawned and rose to his feet and, with Katie by his side, staggered to the bedroom. He crawled into bed without complaint and she kissed him good night. Unsure whether he needed a night-light, she kept the light in the hallway on but closed the door partway.**

**Kristen was next. She asked Katie to lie beside her for a few minutes, and Katie did, staring at the ceiling, feeling the heat of the day beginning to take its toll. Kristen fell asleep within minutes, and Katie had to force herself to stay awake before tiptoeing out of the room. (p. 299)**

The affection is clearly manifested in the narrative. Katie did not just leave the kids in the couch or harshly wake them up, instead she gently pushed Josh's elbow to tell him to sleep in the bedroom because carrying him was an improbable thing to do. It can also be inferred that Katie's sweetness with the kids is not just a portrayal or just a show for Alex because according to the narrative above, Katie left Josh a good night kiss and was even concerned with his preference in terms with the light and lying beside Kristen for minutes while forcing herself not to sleep though she was really tired, she had done all of those actions even without anyone watching, especially Alex, proving that her love and care for the two kids were undeniably genuine.

*Women and their share of foodwork and housework.* Beagan, et al. (2008) presented a study that women continue to do the lion's share of foodwork and other housework, they and their families appear to perceive this division of labor as fair. This study agrees with this study since the novel depicted the female character as someone who frequently cleans their house and orderly serves the household meal.

**She scrubbed the bathroom until it sparkled; she washed the ceiling with a damp cloth. She wiped the windows with vinegar and spent hours on her hands and knees, trying her best to remove the rust and grime from the linoleum in the kitchen. She'd filled holes in the walls with Spackle and then sanded the Spackle until it was smooth. She'd painted the walls in the kitchen a cheery yellow and put glossy white paint on the cabinets. Her bedroom was now a light blue, the living room was beige, and last week, she'd put a new**

**slipcover on the couch, which made it look practically new again. (p. 10-11)**

The house described in the excerpt above embodied the new home she has newly resided in Southport. Her orderliness is clearly represented between the narrative on how she exerted great effort and resourcefulness in making the house look not just clean but also new and refreshing to the eyes which truly depicts that women, even if not commanded, are eager to clean and freshen the house.

**In her previous home, she'd had a pretty wooden serving board and a silver cheese knife with an engraving of a cardinal, and a full set of wineglasses. She'd had a dining room table made of cherry, and sheer curtains in the windows... As horrible as her life had been, she'd loved assembling the pieces of her household... (p. 64)**

Katie's previous home pointed out to the house she had with Kevin in Dorchester. The narrative evidently narrated that the said prior house was arranged in an organized manner with standardized and arrayed materials and the fact that she always loved to assemble and settle it all frequently.

**If Erin had been here, the mantel would have been dusted and the magazines would have fanned out on the end table and there wouldn't have been an empty bottle of vodka on the couch. If Erin had been here, the drapes would have been opened, allowing the sunlight to stretch across the floorboards. If Erin had been here, the dishes would have been washed and put away and dinner would have been waiting on the table... (p. 164)**

The point of view from the narrative above are from Kevin. As he examined their house, it was as wrecked as his life after Erin/Katie had left. He thought that if she was there, things were supposedly arranged so that the overall place had looked clean. It included the mantel, the magazines, the couch, the curtains, the dishes and prepared dinners were already in its orderly particular positions. As a conclusion, women certainly do the largest part of the housework and foodwork. Additionally:

**Erin had been gone since January. Now, his house was messy and dirty and he had to do his own laundry... There**

**were no home-cooked meals or candles on the table. Instead, he grabbed food on the way home and ate on the couch. Sometimes, he put on the television. Erin liked to watch HGTV, the home and garden channel on cable... (p. 168)**

It is conclusive that without Erin/Katie, their house was really messy and dirty since she did all the household chores. Without her, no clothes were laundered and there were no home-cooked meals with romantic candles on the tables, making the house and him a misery. Further, it can also be derived that Erin/Katie is certainly initiative to do the household chores since she loved watching HGTV or home and garden channel on the television that comprises shows which displayed tips and ways on how to be clean, resourceful, and orderly with the house.

**“What are you going to do today?” he asked. He used his fork to cut another piece of egg. Chewing.  
“I was going to do the windows and the laundry,” she said.  
(p. 178)**

Cleaning the windows and doing the laundry are simple chores to do but they greatly add to the cleanliness and orderliness of the house. So before Kevin went to work, he apparently asked her about what she would be doing that day, Katie responded that she was up to cleaning the house. In addition:

**After Kevin went to work, she cleaned the windows and put fresh sheets on the bed. She vacuumed, dusted, and cleaned the kitchen. (p. 182)**

It is simply represented in the excerpt above that after Kevin went to work, Katie didn't just sit and relax in their house. She cleaned the windows, the kitchen, the bed, and the floor, parts of the room that are dusted. Typically, this household chores are the usual things women have to accomplish.

**She ironed two of his shirts and brought the suit bag and suitcase in from the garage. She set out clean socks and she polished his other pair of black shoes. She ran the lint brush over his suit, the black one he wore to court, and laid out three ties. She scrubbed the bathroom until the floor was shiny, and scrubbed the baseboards with vinegar. She**

**dusted every item in the china cabinet and then started preparing the lasagna. (p. 184)**

Their marriage also signifies that one's possessions is also another's. The representation of his shirts, socks, pair of black shoes, suit, and three ties are apparently cleaned and well-arranged by Katie because Kevin was assigned to a two-day trial in Marlborough at the moment, so Katie had to prepare his things for him. Also, her work didn't stop there, she continuously cleaned the bathroom, the baseboards, the china cabinet, then prepared lasagna for their dinner.

*Women as assumptive.* Female characters in the novel are depicted as assumptive individuals. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (1831), assuming is thinking that something is true or probably true without knowing that it is true. Women tend to exert greater degree of assumptions especially when the latter displays actions and utter words that have hidden meanings and those meanings are being derived by the female receiver as what it is.

**“Because everybody lies. It’s part of living in society. Don’t get me wrong—I think it’s necessary. The last thing anyone wants is to live in a society where total honesty prevails... People will tell you most of the story... and I’ve learned that the part they neglect to tell you is often the most important part. People hide the truth because they’re afraid.”**

**With Jo’s words, Katie felt a finger touch her heart. All at once, it seemed hard to breathe.**

**“Are you talking about me?” she finally croaked out.**

**“I don’t know. Am I?”**

**Katie felt herself pale slightly... (p. 69)**

In the narrative and dialogue above, Jo uttered a statement that didn't specify a particular person; she was clearly pointing out to people which have certain reasons behind hiding the truth, especially because of fear. After hearing Jo's words, Katie felt a sudden feeling of guilt assuming that Jo's words were meant for her. She assumed that Jo was indirectly referring to her, making her nervous since her goal was to live in Southport covertly without anyone knowing her dark past. When Jo further asked if she really was pointing out to her, Katie's tautness filled her mind with great assumption that perhaps Jo had already knew her darkest secret.

**“It was a family day.” [Katie said]**

**Jo considered that. “It sounded like the two of you spent a lot of time talking.”**

**Katie leaned back in her chair. “I think you wanted it to be a date.”**

**“Why would I want that?”**

**“I have no idea. But ever since we’ve met, in every conversation, you bring him up somehow. It’s like you’ve been trying to... I don’t know. Make sure I notice him.” (p. 104-105)**

Subsequent from Katie’s narration about the beach event she had with Alex and his kids, Jo continuously teased Katie with him. Katie finally noticing her ceaseless teasing, affirmed that it was truly a family day but Jo wanted it to be called “a date.” Moreover, she finally stated her assumptions that every time they casually chat, Jo usually brings him up suddenly out from nowhere in their topics suchlike making her recognize him.

**“How do you know so much about me? Who told you?” she demanded, her mind racing, trying to piece it together. There was no way he could know those things. It wasn’t possible. She hadn’t told anyone.**

**Except for Jo.**

**The realization was enough to leave her breathless and she glanced at the cottage next door. Her neighbor, she thought, had betrayed her. Her *friend* had betrayed her— (p. 129)**

Another portrayal of Katie as being assumptive is cited above. Her dialogue was uttered after Alex spilled his suspicions that she was married once and her husband was trying to find her leading Katie to tensed disposition. Katie thought that it was impossible for him to know the truth since she hadn’t told anyone except for her friend, Jo. That’s when she assumed that it was Jo who gossiped her personal information, and that Jo had betrayed her.

**In the awkward silence that followed, Katie found herself recalling their first conversation about Alex.**

***Did you two ever see each other?* she remembered asking Jo. *Yes, but maybe not in the way you’re thinking,* Jo had answered. *And just so we’re clear: it was a long time ago and everyone has moved on.***

**At the time, she'd assumed that it meant that Jo and Alex had dated in the past, but now...**

**She was struck by the obviousness of the conclusion. The counselor Alex had mentioned, who had seen the kids and consulted with him in the aftermath of Carly's death—it must have been Jo. Katie sat up straight. "You worked with Alex and the kids, didn't you? After Carly died, I mean." (p. 200)**

According to the scene above, Katie displayed acts of assumption twice. Firstly, in their preceded conversation, she assumed that Jo had an unfinished romantic relationship with Alex from the past because of how Jo frequently talked about him in their conversations. Secondly, after realizing and compiling all the thoughts and information, Katie had turned her anteceded assumptions to a new one that Jo became the counselor of Alex and his kids aftermath of Carly's death, thus, the citations above proved that women are assumptive.

*Women as complimenting.* In a study conducted by Johnson and Roen (1993), it was found out that women made significantly greater use of compliment intensifiers and personal referencing than men did. By the means of several theoretical perspectives, they found that in using compliments to structure discourse, women more often framed the text with both opening and closing compliments. This dissertation agrees with Johnson and Roen's (1993) article since female characters, in the novel, often displayed acts of compliments towards another woman or a man. The female characters send various purposes and functions for their compliments to the receiver.

**"That's up to the DA. Higgins is good, but you never know. Preston has a shyster lawyer and he's going to try to twist all the facts around."**

**"I'm sure you'll do fine. You're smarter than he is." (p. 179)**

Since Kevin was assigned to a hearing of a case held in a court from Marlborough, Katie displayed her support for her husband through saying that he is smarter than the pettifogger lawyer from the latter group. Katie is certainly genuine with her words since she have always known that Kevin was a very good detective. Although he was abusive, he had solved different kinds of criminal acts, and the fact that she found it hard to escape from him since his suspicions and investigations always lead to resolutions.



**In the silence Jo continued to hold her gaze. “Your friend has a lot of courage,” she said quietly.**

**“No,” Katie said. “My friend is scared all the time.”**

**“That’s what courage is. If she weren’t scared, she wouldn’t need courage in the first place. I admire what she did.” Jo gave her hand a squeeze. “I think I’d like your friend. I’m glad you told me about her.” (p. 72-73)**

With the fact that Jo already knew Katie was only pretending in using a friend that experienced domestic violence when she really referred to herself, Jo comforted her because she was feverishly crying while narrating the experiences. She consoled her through a compliment that her friend was courageous. Katie seemed herself as frightened every time, Jo, on the other hand, admired and complimented her “friend” once more as truly courageous after using the fear as a motivation. Jo also added that she would like Katie’s “friend”] and the bravery she held for so long while thanking her for telling her story.

**“Do you think she would have liked me?”**

**“Yes,” Jo said. “I’m sure she would have loved you.” (p. 248)**

Taking into consideration that Jo was actually Alex’s deceased wife (Carly), the above excerpt actually shows us that Jo actually approved of Katie for Alex. In this excerpt, Jo gave Katie a positive compliment in response to Katie’s question of whether Alex’s deceased wife (which was actually Jo) “would have liked” Katie.

**“My mom used to show Erin the scrapbook she’d put together about Katie... She was always so patient with my mom. She’s a sweet woman. You’re a lucky man.” (p. 250)**

Another female character in the novel that exemplified giving off compliments is Karen Feldman, a daughter of Erin/Katie and Kevin’s elder neighbors, Larry and Gladys Feldman. Karen enumerated to Kevin how Erin/Katie had helped her parents in their households as they hung out together. She complimented Erin/Katie’s good qualities and also complimented Kevin’s luck of having a great wife like Katie.

**“He’s [Kevin] got a nice car. I saw it when you were waving. What is it? A Mustang?” {Rachel said] (p. 141-142)**

A further evidence that proved women as complimenting is exhibited by another female character in the novel named Rachel. Rachel was a hair stylist in a salon where Katie met when she got her hair done. Rachel, unlike other female characters indicated above complimented human qualities, but she admired and complimented that her husband got a nice car when she saw them outside the salon.

The fact that it was not only Erin/Katie who displayed complimentary address but also portrayed by other female characters in the novel certainly exemplifies that women tend to give off compliments more.

#### *Role of Domestic Violence as Played in the Novel*

The second step to a feminist analysis as indicated in the matrix is to define the role of domestic violence in the narratives and how it affected the circumstances and the characters. Additionally, Duluth model, as a framework, is applied to this section since feminist criticism underlying domestic role tends to understand the acts of men in using violence to exercise power and control. The role of domestic violence as played in the novel, *Safe Haven*, is portrayed in several ways.

*Domestic violence as an effect of gender inequality.* Sen (2001) affirmed that the afflicted world we live in is characterized by a deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between men and women. Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world. It is a collection of disparate and inter-linked problems. In the novel, the female character had clearly experienced this predicament from her husband. The narrative depicted unfair and ill treatment to women that clearly signifies gender inequality. Further, women are seen to be prone to physical and emotional abuse as an effect of their inferiority to men.

**“He always apologized, and sometimes he would even cry because of the bruises he’d made on her arms or legs or her back. He would say that he hated what he’d done, but in the next breath tell her she’d deserved it. That if she’d been more careful, it wouldn’t have happened. That if she’d been paying attention or hadn’t been so stupid, he wouldn’t have lost his temper. She tried to change. She worked hard at**

**trying to be a better wife and to do things the way he wanted, but it was never enough.” (p. 71)**

The dialogue provided above clearly portrays domestic violence as an effect of women’s inferiority to men which eventually opens to physical and emotional abuse. The female character in the novel suffered physical abuse as indicated by the bruises on her arms, legs and back. Furthermore, McCue (2008) accounted that direct insults through calling her stupid, etc. is an act of perpetrating emotional abuse. The male perpetrator apparently emitted taunting words to the female victim by calling her careless, inattentive, and stupid. As a result, this ill treatments cued her to be a better wife and her acceptance to always do the things as she was told off by the husband, greatly exemplified the superiority of men inside the house.

Another factor of domestic violence as an effect of gender inequality is the subservience of women. This is exemplified when women are depicted to be always “at hand” to please other male characters. Male characters overstepped the female’s decision and preferences. These acts of subservience result to the female character being emotionally abused because her personal preferences are forsaken while following her husband’s orders and selfish choices.

**Back at the station, Katie thought her hair looked okay, but it was hard to tell when it was wet. It had to be right or Kevin would notice. Rachel combed Katie’s hair straight, getting out the tangles. There were forty minutes left. Rachel stared into the mirror at Katie’s reflection. “How much do you want taken off?”  
“Not too much,” Katie said. “Just enough to clean it up. My husband likes it long.” (p. 144)**

Apparently, even the style of her hair is controlled by her husband explicating that the female character is being emotionally abused by him. The excerpt shows that even the physical attributes of Katie is controlled by her husband. In the novel, Katie had to obey her husband’s preference (with regards of her hair) because otherwise, he would instantly punish her.

**“How much is it?”  
Rachel told her and Katie dug into her purse. She pulled out the money she needed, including the tip. “Could I have a receipt?”**

**“Sure,” Rachel said. “Just come with me to the register.”  
The girl wrote it up. Kevin would check it and ask for the  
change when she got back in the car, so she made sure  
Rachel included the tip. She glanced at the clock. Twelve  
minutes. (p. 146)**

The excerpt above shows a stark example of how domineering the male character is over the female character. Here, Katie had to ask a receipt after getting her hair done because it was a proof of the exact bill to be presented to her husband. The lines “She glanced at the clock. Twelve minutes.” signifies that she has to be conscious of her time as she only had twelve minutes left before Kevin arrived. Such portrayal clearly exemplifies that even her time on salon, a time for herself, is still controlled by her husband.

**Money was tight and Kevin would be angry if she spent too  
much. Their mortgage took nearly half his salary, and  
credit card bills consumed another chunk. Most of the time,  
they had to eat in, but he liked restaurant-type meals, with  
a main course and two side dishes and sometimes a salad.  
He refused to eat leftovers and it was hard to make the  
budget stretch. She had to plan the menu carefully, and she  
cut coupons from the newspaper. When Kevin paid for the  
groceries, she handed him the change from the salon and  
the receipt. He counted the money, making sure everything  
was there.**

**At home, she rubbed her arms to stay warm. The house was  
old and frigid air wormed its way through the window  
seams and beneath the front door. The bathroom floor was  
cold enough to make her feet ache, but Kevin complained  
about the cost of heating oil and never let her adjust the  
thermostat. When he was at work, she wore a sweatshirt  
and slippers around the house, but when he was home, he  
wanted her to look sexy. (p. 148)**

The clarity of Kevin’s domineering act is narrated in the specified excerpt above. Since Kevin did not allow Katie to work, their household needs were shouldered by him. In return, she had to handle their budget and plan their menu properly and deliberately. However, Kevin liked restaurant-type meals and hated eating leftovers which made the costs larger and the budgeting difficult. Moreover, Kevin consistently displayed acts of distrust towards Katie on money matters. For

instance, although they did the groceries together and even paid them himself, he still asked for the receipt and counted the change to make sure it was all appropriate. Furthermore, Kevin complained about the high cost of heating oil, so even if Erin suffered from cold, she couldn't protest to adjust the thermostat at all. Her subservience to please him is also evident in the narrative since she had to dress and look sexy because it was his preference. The perpetrator's acts clearly correlates with McCue's (2008) study which indicated the typical pattern of emotional abuse such as ignoring the victim's feelings and preferences.

One of the causes of women's inferiority is man's excessive egocentricity and self-acknowledgment. This idea agrees to Stagnerr's (1977) study that egocentrism is one of the factors that are considered cognitive biases which fosters violence at both individual and group levels. Each is characterized as a lack of empathy or an inability to see reality as it appears to others. He provided evidences indicating that violent behavior is associated with egocentric thinking. In the novel, Kevin practiced these traits that made predicaments to Katie's part. It is clearly cited on his point of views cited below:

**He never made her work, either, and she didn't know how good she had it. She didn't understand the sacrifices he made for her. She was spoiled and selfish and it used to make him so angry because she didn't understand how *easy* her life was. Clean the house and make a meal and she could spend the rest of her days reading stupid books she checked out from the library and watching television and taking naps and never having to worry about a utility bill or mortgage payment or people who talked about him behind his back. (p. 208-209)**

Kevin thought that not making Katie work will pamper her and make her happy. He thought of her as spoiled and selfish because she disregarded all the sacrifices and efforts he thought he endured for her and this made him so angry. However, he never asked her if she felt great satisfaction of that *easy* life he thought he had given her. Doing household chores are never easy and tiresome. Also, he made mention of her pastime as "reading stupid books"; Kevin said that Katie never have to worry about bills and actually displayed himself as the most pitiful.

**She was afraid of guns and always asked him to lock his up when he finished his shift, which he did.**

**But it wasn't enough. He could buy her a house, furniture, and pretty clothes and take her to the library and the hair salon and it still wasn't enough. Who could understand it? Was it so hard to clean the house and cook dinner? He never wanted to hit her, only did it when he had no other choice. When she was stupid or careless or selfish. She brought it on herself. (p. 261)**

A further disportment of egocentricity and excessive self-acknowledgment is showed off by Kevin in the given narrative above. He apparently took all the blame of the abuse to Katie, claiming that she deserved it because it was all her fault. He thought that he had done everything to please her, from keeping his guns as she requested, his provision of their house, furnitures, her pretty clothes, taking her to the library since it was her hobby and letting her hair done, but it was never enough to make her stay. He even called her adverse words such as stupid, careless and selfish which are all indicative factors of emotional and mental abuse.

**She thought she could hide forever, but he was a good detective and he'd found her. *I'm coming*, he thought to himself. *I know where you live and where you work and you won't get away again.* (p. 262)**

Kevin's excessive self-acknowledgment and pride are additional factors of mental and emotional abuse. He thought that Katie could not hide away from him because he prompted to himself that he was a good detective and that he could discern her easily. This exemplifies that men tend to degrade women's strengths and abilities that are of no level to men, as being depicted in the narratives and it was true since her escape only lasted for a short time as he successfully found her secret abode.

*Domestic violence as a motivation to repel the abuse.* At some parts of the story, it unveiled that the female character endured and allowed the abuse for a long time. However, she didn't let it happen perpetually since she found tactics and ways in planning her escape until attaining them successfully. Seith (1997) examined in her study that some women who are victims of domestic violence found it necessary to flee to another country in order to gain protection from such abuse. Seith's (1997) review correlates with this study since the main female character found escaping as the only way to repel the abuse. As a result, it molded the female character as resourceful which means breaking free from the chain of fears, from weak to independent, and from coward to courageous. The proofs are indicated in the narratives and dialogues below:

**“She started to steal money from his wallet. Never more than a dollar or two, because otherwise he would notice. Normally, he locked his wallet up at night, but sometimes, he would forget. It took so long to get enough money for her to escape. Because that’s what she had to do. Escape. She had to go someplace where he would never find her, because she knew he wouldn’t stop searching for her. And she couldn’t tell anyone anything, because her family was gone and she knew the police wouldn’t do anything. If he so much as suspected anything, he would kill her. So she stole and saved and found coins in the sofa cushions and in the washing machine. She hid the money in a plastic bag that she put beneath a flowerpot, and every time he went outside she was sure he would find it. It took so long to get the money she needed because she had to have enough to get far away so that he’d never find her. So that she could start over again.” (p. 72)**

Escaping may be one factor of weakness, but if it’s the only option one can have regarding the situations around, it becomes a factor of bravery, especially if one have successfully accomplished it. A successful escape from the cautious eyes and sensitivity of a good detective as a husband is an element of a wise and clever wife. Katie clearly exemplified this element since she had to steal small bits of money from his wallet and hid it safely so that he wouldn’t notice it; she had to do the plans carefully and independently since she had no one to depend on; and she had to display craftiness and patience to achieve her plan one day.

**Kevin had yet to return and her heart was beating fast as she slipped her jacket and gloves back on. She left the salon while Rachel was still talking to her. Next door, at Radio Shack, she asked the clerk for a disposable cell phone and a card that allowed her twenty hours of service. She felt faint as she said the words, knowing that after this, there was no turning back.**

**He pulled one out from under the counter and began to ring her up while he explained how it worked. She had extra money in her purse tucked into a tampon case because she knew Kevin would never look there. She pulled it out, laying the crumpled bills on the counter. The clock was continuing**

**to tick and she looked out at the lot again. She was beginning to feel dizzy and her mouth had gone dry...**

**When the phone was free, she jammed it into her jacket pocket along with the prepaid card. The clerk asked if she wanted a bag but she was out the door without answering. The phone felt like lead, and the snow and ice made it hard to keep her balance.**

**She opened the door of the salon and went back inside. She slipped off her jacket and gloves and waited by the register. Thirty seconds later, she saw Kevin's car turn into the lot, angling toward the salon.**

**There was snow on her jacket and she quickly brushed at it as Rachel came toward her. Katie panicked at the thought that Kevin might have noticed. She concentrated, urging herself to stay in control. To act natural. (p. 146-147)**

A further act of craftiness, skillfulness and resourcefulness is showed off by the female character as stated in the narrative above. The scene was after she got her hair done in the salon. It can be inferred that Katie tried hard to convince Kevin to go that particular salon since the Radio Shack, a store that sells disposable cell phones, was nearly located there. While reminding herself from the minutes left before Kevin came back, she was acting terrified yet still skillful and in control while taking the clerk's instructions and other details to be taken from her. Also, she continuously displayed her craftiness when she came back from the salon, and asked for a receipt as she saw Kevin outside watching her, portraying a role as if nothing happened.

**Katie slipped her jacket off and reached into the pocket. She had, she suspected, a couple of minutes and she hoped it was enough. After peeking in the living room, she hurried to the sink. In the cupboard below, there was a box of SOS scrubbing pads. She placed the cell phone at the bottom of the box and put the pads over the top of it. She closed the cupboard quietly before grabbing her jacket, hoping her face wasn't flushed, praying he hadn't seen her. With a long breath to steel herself, she looped it over her arm, carrying it through the living room toward the foyer closet. The room seemed to stretch as she moved through it, like a room viewed through a fun-house mirror at a carnival, but she tried to ignore the sensation. She knew he'd be able to see**



**through her, to read her mind and know what she'd done, but he never turned away from the television. Only when she was back in the kitchen did her breathing begin to slow. (p. 148-149)**

Katie continuously displayed acts of resourcefulness and craftiness through the accomplishment of her escaping process. Unraveling her anxiety that Kevin had secretly noticed her as she sensed, she peeked at him but he continually remained unaware. She tried hard to hide the disposable cell phone she bought while trying to craftily act appropriately even though he was not looking, she maintained to be careful to give him no suspicions at all because she knew she was still at the rock bottom of her plan, ready to be failed again.

**After Kevin went to work, she cleaned the windows and put fresh sheets on the bed. She vacuumed, dusted, and cleaned the kitchen. As she worked, she practiced lowering her voice so she could sound like a man. She tried not to think about the cell phone she had charged overnight and put under the sink. (p.182)**

**When he left, she stood at the window watching as his car reached the corner. As soon as he turned, she walked to the phone, dizzy at the thought of what was to come next.**

**When she called the phone company, she was directed to customer service. Five minutes passed, then six. It would take Kevin twenty minutes to get to work, and no doubt he would call as soon as he arrived. She still had time. Finally, a rep got on the line and asked her name and the billing address and, for purposes of identification, Kevin's mother's maiden name. The account was in Kevin's name, and she spoke in a low voice as she recited the information, in the voice she'd been practicing. She didn't sound like Kevin, maybe not even masculine, but the representative was harried and didn't notice.**

**"Is it possible to get call forwarding on my line?" she asked...**

**"Yes," the representative said. She heard him beginning to type. It was a long time before he spoke again. He told her the extra charge would show up on the next bill, which would be sent out next week, but that it would still reflect the full monthly amount, even though she activated the**

**service today. She told him it was fine. He took some more information and then told her it was done and that she would be able to use the service right away. She hung up and glanced at the clock. The whole transaction had taken eighteen minutes.**

**Kevin called from the precinct three minutes later.**

**As soon as she got off the phone with Kevin, she called Super Shuttle, a van service that transported people to the airport and bus station. She made a reservation for the following day. Then, after retrieving the cell phone, she finally activated it. She called a local movie theater, one that had a recording, to make sure it worked. Next, she activated the landline's call-forwarding service, sending incoming calls to the number of the movie theater. As a test, she dialed the home number from her cell phone. Her heart was pounding as the landline rang. On the second ring, the ring cut off and she heard the recording from the movie theater. Something broke free inside her and her hands were shaking as she powered off the cell phone and replaced it in the box of SOS pads. She reset the landline. (p. 183-184)**

Although Katie was patient for the right time of her actions as a part of the plan, she didn't miss any opportunities to grab and stay focused on the goal. That's why after Kevin left for work, she used those times alone to practice lowering her voice to sound like a man. Then the other day, she called the phone company about how to access forwarding calls trying to sound like a man, as if she was Kevin. Since Kevin always checked on her through frequent calling on landline while he was on the precinct, she thought that forwarding calls was the only way to answer him when she was out through the disposable cell phone she had bought. After the transaction with the phone company and Kevin's call, she then dialed Super Shuttle, a van service that transports passengers to airport and terminal as she made a reservation, successfully activating the call-forwarding service and finally resetting the landline so the whole transaction will be erased and will be untracked by Kevin as soon as he find out. As a conclusion, the female character pellucidly depicted resourcefulness, skillfulness and craftiness to gradually repel the abusive life she had been enduring for a long time.

**With the scissors, she began to chop savagely at her hair.  
Four inches of blond hair fell onto the garbage bag.**

She cut and cried, and when her hair was all the same length, she pulled out the hair dye from its hiding place behind the sink. Dark Brown. Then she got in the shower and wet her hair. She tilted the bottle and began massaging the dye into her hair.

Carefully, she applied mascara to her eyebrows, darkening them. She added bronzer to her skin, darkening it. She dressed in jeans and a sweater and stared at herself. She cleaned the bathroom scrupulously, making sure no hair remained in the shower or on the floor.

She wiped the sink and counter down and tied up the garbage bag. Last, she put eyedrops in, trying to erase the evidence of her tears. She had to hurry now. She packed her things in a duffel bag. She went to the back porch and dug out the money from beneath the flowerpot. The cell phone from the kitchen. And finally, the identification she needed to start a new life, identification she'd stolen from people who trusted her.

She had rehearsed the scenario in her head a thousand times, and she moved fast. Most of the neighbors were off at work: she'd watched them in the mornings and knew their routines. She didn't want anyone to see her leave, didn't want anyone to recognize her.

She threw on a hat and her jacket, along with a scarf and gloves. She rounded the duffel bag and stuffed it beneath her sweatshirt, kneading and working it until it was round. Until she looked pregnant. She put on her long coat, one that was roomy enough to cover the bump.

She put on a pair of sunglasses, and on her way out the door, she turned on her cell phone and set the landline on call forwarding. She left the house through the gate at the side. She walked between her house and the neighbors', following the fence line, and deposited the garbage bag in their garbage can.

Snow had begun to fall again. By tomorrow, she knew, her footprints would be gone... In the distance, she saw Super Shuttle's blue van round the corner and her heart pounded in her chest. Just then, she heard the cell phone ring.

"What took you so long to answer?" he demanded.

**“I was in the shower,” she said. “What’s going on?” The van was pulling over to the curb, the driver craning his neck, looking for her. “I hate to do this, but can you call me in a few minutes? I still have conditioner in my hair and I want to rinse it out.”**

**She let him hang up before she pressed the button on her phone. Then she walked out of the diner and hurried to the van. At the bus terminal, she bought a ticket to Philadelphia...**

**Rather than waiting at the terminal, she went across the street to have breakfast. Money for the shuttle and the bus ticket had taken more than half of the savings she’d collected during the year. At the booth, someone had left a newspaper and she forced herself to read it. Kevin called her while she was eating and when he told her again that the phone sounded funny, she suggested that it was the storm.**

**An hour from Philadelphia, her cell phone rang again. She cupped the phone and talked to him. Before he hung up, he promised to call her before he went to bed.**

**She arrived in Philadelphia in the late afternoon. Passengers got off the bus and she hung back, waiting for all of them to leave. In the restroom, she removed the duffel bag and then went into the waiting room and took a seat on a bench... Finally, after buying a map of the city, she stepped outside. Three hours later, she’d finally found a place to sleep. (p. 186-192)**

After Kevin had gone to the two-day trial he was assigned in Marlborough, Katie also simultaneously started her escaping process. She tried to modify her physical appearance so that their neighbors and other acquaintances wouldn’t notice her and her plans will not be in vain in case Kevin asks them. She cut her hair and colored it dark brown, she darkened her eyebrows and added bronzer to her skin so she would look tan and different, she carefully cleaned the bathroom to leave no strands of evidence, she got her things and needed accessories, and she covered herself and placed her duffel bag contained with her things beneath her shirt so she looked pregnant and unnoticeable. Katie even acted craftiness rather than signs of tensions when Kevin called her until she successfully arrived in Philadelphia without anyone and even Kevin knowing and found a place to temporarily stay over. The whole scenario luminously depicted the cleverness and

resourcefulness of the female character even if her emotions would sometimes impose her, but she remained in control to accomplish.

*Domestic violence as an effect of male extreme imbibition of alcohol.* One of the causes of domestic violence includes male extreme imbibition of alcohol (Pence and Paymar, 1993). In the novel, the husband tends to exert abuse to his wife when he is under the influence of inebriation. This notion is proven by the cited scenarios provided below:

**“One time, when she woke up in the middle of the night, she found him standing over the bed, just staring at her. He’d been drinking and holding the gun again and she was too scared to say anything other than to ask him to come to bed. But that was when she knew that if she stayed, the husband would eventually kill her.” (p. 72)**

The husband was apparently drunk in the scenario above. Katie was just sleeping until she woke up to find Kevin holding a gun again while staring at her — probably his thoughts were in turmoil and have been negatively thinking about Erin. It is clear that it was an abusive act, holding a gun while staring at the counterpart while drunk can lead to disastrous events if uncontrolled. That’s why she had to act calm as if nothing was wrong while that instance motivated her to save her life and escape.

**He pulled the bottle of vodka out again and set it beside his glass on the counter before moving behind her. He stood, watching over her shoulder as she diced the tomatoes... She could feel his breath on her neck and tried not to cringe as he placed his hands on her hips. Knowing what she had to do, she set the knife down and turned toward him, putting her arms around his neck. She kissed him with a little tongue knowing he wanted her to, and didn’t see the slap coming until she felt the sting against her cheek. It burned, hot and red. Sharp. Bee stings.**

**“You made me waste my entire afternoon!” he shouted at her. He gripped her arms tight, squeezing hard. His mouth was contorted, his eyes already bloodshot. She could smell the booze on his breath, and spittle hit her face. “My only day off and you pick that day to get your damn hair done in the middle of the city! And then go grocery shopping!”**

**She wiggled, trying to back away, and he finally let her go. He shook his head, the muscle of his jaw pulsing. “Did you ever stop to think that I might have wanted to relax today? Just take it easy on my only day off?”**

**“I’m sorry,” she said, holding her cheek. She didn’t say that she’d checked with him twice earlier in the week if it would be okay, or that he was the one who made her switch salons because he didn’t want her making friends. Didn’t want anyone knowing their business.**

**“I’m sorry,” he mimicked her. He stared at her before shaking his head again. “Christ almighty,” he said. “Is it so hard for you to think about anyone other than yourself?”**

**He reached out, trying to grab her, and she turned, trying to run. He was ready for her and there was nowhere to go. He struck fast and hard, his fist a piston, firing at her lower back. She gasped, her vision going black in the corners, feeling as though she’d been pierced with a knife. She collapsed to the floor, her kidney on fire, the pain shooting through her legs and up her spine. The world was spinning, and when she tried to get up, the movement only made it worse.**

**“You’re so damn selfish all the time!” he said, towering over her.**

**She said nothing. Couldn’t say anything. Couldn’t breathe. She bit her lip to keep from screaming and wondered if she would pee blood tomorrow. The pain was a razor, slashing at her nerves, but she wouldn’t cry because that only made him angrier.**

**He continued to stand over her, then let out a disgusted sigh. He reached for his empty glass and grabbed the bottle of vodka on the way out of the kitchen. (p. 151-152)**

According to the narrative, an act of physical abuse was exerted by the male character to the female character while he was drunk in alcohol. Katie was simply preparing their meal while he suddenly approached near her. She thought he wanted to cuddle so she acted as if giving in to please him, however, instead of appealing him, he gave her a hard slap and a holler claiming that she wasted his only day off by getting her hair done and doing the grocery. Kevin then physically knocked her, hard and fast-forward, made her fall on the floor while emotionally abused her by saying she was always selfish as he towered over her. Sadly, the

only thing she could do was silently cry and remain speechless while enduring the pain before he left her.

**The first time was a little less than a year after she was married, after he'd beaten her while she was cowering in the corner of the bedroom. The bills had come in and he was angry with her because she'd turned up the thermostat to make the house warmer. When he'd finally stopped, he'd grabbed his keys and headed out to buy more liquor. (p. 194)**

It can be derived that Kevin was drunk before beating her while she was bending in the angle side of their bedroom because the last sentence stated that he "headed out to buy more liquor." It is safe to infer that he might be drunk at that time because of the indicated word "more." The cause of the abuse was narrated that he got mad of the high cost of the thermostat since Katie had adjusted it to warm their house.

**He poured a glass of vodka, finished it, and poured another before walking through the empty house. His heart ached because Erin wasn't here and if she suddenly showed up at the door, he knew he'd apologize for hitting her and they'd work things out and then they'd make love in the bedroom. He wanted to hold her and whisper how much he adored her, but he knew she wasn't coming back, and even though he loved her, she made him so angry sometimes. A wife didn't just leave. A wife didn't just walk away from a marriage. He wanted to hit and kick and slap her and pull her hair for being so stupid. For being so damn selfish. He wanted to show her it was pointless to run away.**

**He drank a third and fourth glass of vodka.**

**It was all so confusing. The house was a wreck. There was an empty pizza box on the floor of the living room and the casing around the bathroom door was splintered and cracked. The door would no longer close all the way. He'd kicked it in after she'd locked it, trying to get away from him. He'd been holding her by the hair as he punched her in the kitchen and she'd run to the bathroom and he'd chased her through the house and kicked the door in. But now he couldn't remember what they'd been fighting about.**

**He couldn't remember much about that night. He couldn't remember breaking two of her fingers, even though it was obvious that he had. But he wouldn't let her go to the hospital for a week, not until the bruises on her face could be covered by makeup, and she'd had to cook and clean one-handed. (p. 169-170)**

Clearly manifested in the narrative, drinking alcohol did not at first affect his thoughts to be abusive towards Erin/Katie. He even felt the sadness, sorry and thought affectionately of her but gradually that tenderness faded away as he thought of wanting to physically abuse her again for leaving. He even remembered what he had done to Erin and the wounds he gave her but not the reason behind, proving that he was not on his normal state anymore.

**Kevin bit his lip and tasted blood, hating her, wanting to kick and punch her, wanting to throw her down the stairs. He took another sip from the bottle next to him, rinsing the metallic taste from his mouth.” (p. 263)**

**“The car was close and he staggered to it. Grabbed the vodka and drank and tried to think like Erin, but then he was at the barbecue holding a burger covered in flies and everyone was pointing and laughing at him.**

**Back to the car. Bitch had to be somewhere. She'd watch gray-hair die. Watch them all die. Burn in hell. Burn and burn, all of them. Carefully, he climbed in and started the car. He backed into a tree as he was trying to turn around, and then, cursing, tore out on the gravel, spinning rocks...**

**Tonight. Tomorrow. Tomorrow night. He'd stick the gun in her mouth, aim it at her breasts. *Tell me who he is*, he'd say. *I just want to talk to him*. He'd find gray-hair and show him what happened to men who slept with other men's wives. (p. 297)**

It can be derived from the two different scenarios above that because of the husband's extreme imbibition of alcohol, he imagined forceful physical abuse to his wife. In the first scene, if they were together by that time, he would violently hit her through kicking, punching, and throwing her down the stairs because it was all he thought of. On the second scene, his loath towards her and the man he saw clinging with her was obvious since he wanted them to die, and burn in hell. He even imagined himself placing the gun to her mouth and aiming it at her



breasts while asking about that other man she's having an affair with. Thus, explicating that the male character's inebriation to alcohol is one of his motivations to exert domestic violence to the female character.

**Kevin raised the gun, pointing it at her. "I just want to talk to him, Erin."**

**Katie got to her feet. Kristen and Josh clung to her, fear etched on their faces. Kevin's eyes were feral, his movements jerky. He took a step toward them, almost losing his balance. The gun swung back and forth. Unsteady.**

**He was ready to kill them all, Katie realized. He'd already tried to kill them with the fire. But drunk, very drunk. Worse than she'd ever seen him. He was out of control, beyond reason. (p. 315)**

From imagination to reality, though he wasn't sticking the gun to her mouth, but it was still pointed at her and had asked that he wanted to talk to Alex. By seeing his state, Erin/Katie knew he was ready to kill them because he was extremely drunk and out of control.

**Alex was released the next day, and the sheriff visited them at Joyce's to get their formal statements. He told them that the alcohol content in Kevin's blood was so high that he'd effectively poisoned himself. Combined with the blood loss he'd suffered, it was a wonder he had been conscious, much less coherent to any degree. Katie said nothing, but all she could think was that they didn't know Kevin or understand the demons that drove him. (p. 330)**

After the police's autopsy of Kevin's corpse, they found out that he has intoxicated himself with extreme alcohol on his body as well as his excessive blood loss. The statement proves that Kevin's actions that night, from burning Alex's house since Katie and the kids were sleeping there, to pointing his gun aiming to kill them, to violently abuse her once again, and fighting against Katie even though he was jerky and weakened was impelled by the intoxication of alcohol to his body organs.

*Impact of Domestic Violence to the Main Character*

The third and last step to a feminist analysis with regards to domestic violence is to indicate the impact and effects of domestic violence to the characterization of the main character by examining if the abuse maintained her to remain submissive or motivated her to courageously fight. The impact of domestic violence to the female character in the novel, *Safe Haven*, is delineated in respective ways.

*Domestic violence as a causation for the victim's physical injuries.* Physical injuries are the most evident effects of domestic violence since it is noticeable by the eyes and can be easily perceived by the thought of the witnesses. In the novel, the the female character as a victim suffered from various physical injuries.

**It took her almost a minute to summon the strength to get up. When she started cutting again, her hands were shaking. The kitchen was cold and the pain was intense in her back, pulsing with every heartbeat. The week before, he'd hit her so hard in the stomach that she'd spent the rest of the night vomiting. She'd fallen to the floor and he'd grabbed her by the wrist to pull her up. The bruise on her wrist was shaped like fingers. Branches of hell.**

**Tears were on her cheeks and she had to keep shifting her weight to keep the pain at bay as she finished dicing the tomato.**

**The oven was ready and she put the baking sheet in and set the timer. When the heat hit her face, she realized her skin was still stinging, but she doubted that he'd left a mark there. He knew exactly how hard to strike and she wondered where he'd learned that, whether it was something that all men knew, whether there were secret classes with instructors who specialized in teaching such things. Or whether it was just Kevin. (p. 152-153)**

The scenario was clearly an aftermath of the male's exertion of physical abuse to the female character. It explicated the pain Katie endured after Kevin hit her back intensely. She also remembered how she spent the night a week ago puking because of the pain in her stomach that Kevin had dreadfully hit while she savagely fell on the floor and he just grabbed her by her wrist leaving finger-shaped bruises on it. Also, after she opened the oven, the heat stung her face but she knew it didn't leave a mark so that people wouldn't easily notice their business.

**It was Sunday morning, the day after she'd had her hair done. She peeked in the toilet for blood, sure she'd see some after she peed. Her kidney still throbbed, radiating pain from her shoulder blades to the backs of her legs. It had kept her up for hours as Kevin snored beside her, but thankfully, it wasn't as serious as it could have been. (p. 177)**

The preceding narratives had stated that after Katie went to the salon and grocery, Kevin emotionally and physically abuse her that resulted her to pee blood, her kidney throbbed and her shoulders and legs immensely pained. Though the injuries were not serious as it could have been, the victim still endured an intense agony of pain and emotional damages.

**...and naked, she stared at herself in the mirror. She fingered the bruises on her ribs and on her wrist. All of her ribs stood out, and dark circles beneath her eyes gave her face a hollowed-out look. (p. 186)**

As Katie examined her body, she saw the proofs of his abuse which were the bruises on her chest and wrist. He made sure to wound her on some parts of her body that could be hidden and covered by clothes so that no one would notice them. The stress she had endured resulted to weight loss that stood out her ribs and dark circles on her eyes due to restless and sleepless nights with Kevin.

**Bruises mottled her face and arms, and her knee was swollen to almost twice its usual size... (p. 327)**

The physical injuries attained by the female character cited above are the last ones as aftermaths of the abuse since the bruises on her face, arms, and swollen knees resulted from her last fight against Kevin before he had reached his death in front of her. Thus, the except being cited are evidences that domestic violence leaves scars, bruises, and injuries which can be physically impermanent but are emotionally haunting endlessly until a full recovery is attained.

*Domestic violence as an antecedent to self-blaming of the abused.* Cascardi & O'Leary (1992) found while studying numbers of battered women that amidst and after the perpetration of violence, women's depressive symptoms increased while their self-esteem decreased as they blamed themselves for causing partner's violence. The female domestic violence victim in the novel agrees to Cascardi &

O'Leary's (1992) study as she exerted unfortunate traits and emitted self-incriminating words in describing herself to others.

**Deep in her heart, she wasn't sure she deserved to be happy, nor did she believe that she was worthy of someone who seemed... normal.**

**That was the dirty secret associated with her past. Not that she'd been abused but that somehow she felt that she deserved it because she'd let it happen. Even now, it shamed her, and there were times when she felt hideously ugly, as though the scars that had been left behind were visible to everyone. (p. 133)**

After realizing Alex's deepened feelings for her, Katie also realized that she didn't deserve him. She even described him normal from her with a normal and simple life compared to her who had a tragic past life. Also, she was ashamed of herself for letting the abuse happen for a long time, claiming that she deserved that and the fact she felt disgusting and ugly to everyone with the scars that marked on her body.

**"No." She shook her head vehemently. "I'm saying all this because I do want to see you and it scares me because I know deep in my heart that you deserve someone better. You deserve someone you can count on. Someone your kids can count on. Like I said, there are things you don't know about me." (p. 136)**

Katie referred these lines to Alex because she saw herself as untrustworthy and undeserving of his love and for the kind of man and his family was, underestimating herself. They were too perfect for her eyes and she thought that if she partakes with their lives, she might destroy that perfect life they had built and maintained because of her dark past and other circumstances that might come and haunt for her, she didn't even know the real her anymore and the future to come for her.

**Katie hated to stare at herself in the mirror but she didn't have a choice. (p. 141)**

The brief excerpt greatly defines how Katie sees herself as someone hideous. It included everything about her, her physical appearance and her coward attitude

as she sees it. The scenario happened wherein she was at the salon getting her hair done, thus, indicating that the main character degraded herself after the abuse.

**“You did the right thing by leaving,” he said. His tone was soft. Understanding.**

**It took her a moment to respond. “I know,” she said.**

**“It had nothing to do with you.”**

**She stared into the darkness. “Yes,” she said, “it did. I chose him, remember? I married him. I let it happen once and then again, and after that, it was too late. I still cooked for him and cleaned the house for him. I slept with him whenever he wanted, did whatever he wanted. I made him think I loved it.”**

**“You did what you had to do to survive,” he said, his voice steady.**

**She grew silent again. The crickets were chirping and locusts hummed from the trees. “I never thought something like this could happen, you know? My dad was a drunk, but he wasn’t violent. I was just so... weak. I don’t know why I let it happen.” (p. 156-157)**

After Katie had narrated everything from her abusive past to Alex, she continuously blamed herself. Even though Alex had always comforted her that it was never her fault, she resisted and expressed culpability of herself that it was her choice to marry him and let it happen again and again and even obeyed everything he commanded. Furthermost, she even coined herself as very weak without knowing the real reason why she let it happen.

**“I hate him,” she said. “But I hate myself, too. I tried to tell you that I’m better off alone. I’m not who you thought I was. I’m not the woman you think you know.” (p. 158)**

Simultaneous to the hatred Katie felt for Kevin was also similar to the hatred she had with herself. She clearly degraded herself by telling Alex that she was not the woman he thought he knew. Why was he even attracted to her when in fact she viewed herself as an extremely unattractive woman with a hideous past still living inside her?

**“I’m sorry,” Katie murmured. “For everything.”**  
**Alex shook his head. “It’s not your fault. You didn’t do it.”**

**“But Kevin came for me...”**

**“I know,” he said. He was quiet for a moment. “Kristen and Josh told me how you helped them get out of the house. Josh said that after you grabbed Kevin, you told them to run. He said you distracted him. I just wanted to say thank you.”**

**Katie closed her eyes. “You can’t thank me for that. If anything had happened to them, I don’t know that I could have lived with myself.” (p. 331)**

The scenario happened after Kevin’s attack that led to the destruction of Alex’s house caused by the fire Kevin started. While Alex remained optimistic and blameless to Katie, she continuously insisted that it was all her fault since Kevin’s target was her and they were just unjustifiably involved when in fact they didn’t deserve the tragic aftermaths. Despite of Alex’s continuous assuring words, she still remained unworthy of the gratitude Alex had offered her for saving the kids, because she felt she was to blame.

**“Josh will be happy about this,” he said. “I just wish I could find one of Kristen’s dolls.”**

**Katie crossed her arms over her stomach, feeling tears in her eyes. “I’ll buy her a new one.”**

**“You don’t have to. I’m insured.”**

**“But I want to. None of this would have happened if it hadn’t been for me.” (p. 332)**

As the scenario continuously goes on, Katie also continuously blamed herself for the tragedy that occurred. She even initiated to buy a new doll for Kristen because she knew the little girl would be so sad and she thought that it was all because of her and all the predicaments wouldn’t happen if she had not associated herself with them so they wouldn’t be involved on Kevin’s lamentable revenge.

**She worried about Kristen and Josh. They’d be here soon; Joyce would bring them in to see their father. She wondered if they would hate her because of everything that happened, and the thought made tears sting her eyes. She covered her face with her hands, wishing she could burrow into a hole so deep that no one would ever find her. (p. 328)**

Apparently, Katie’s idea of Kristen and Josh’s sorrowful looks tormented her. She had been continually blaming herself for everything that happened. The agony

even impelled her to cry with a wishful thinking to hide herself in a deep hole so that no one would ever see her and looked at their blaming eyes towards her because she thought she was the one responsible for all of it.

*Domestic violence as a perpetration to serious traumatization.* Katie, the female victim of domestic violence, had suffered an aftermath from traumatically situations as narrated in the novel. Such lead her to be emotionally and mentally disturbed.

**Over by the sink, she washed out the coffee cups then put them back into the cupboard. The act was so familiar—putting two cups away after coffee in the morning—and for an instant, she felt engulfed by the life she’d left behind. Her hands began to tremble, and pressing them together she took a few deep breaths until they finally stilled. Two months ago, she wouldn’t have been able to do that; even two weeks ago, there had been little she could do to stop it. While she was glad that these bouts of anxiety no longer overwhelmed her, it also meant she was getting comfortable here, and that scared her. Because being comfortable meant she might lower her guard, and she could never let that happen. (p. 17)**

Subsequent to Katie and Jo’s coffee time inside Katie’s house, she washed the two cups they used until her trauma suddenly struck her. She remembered that months ago, she used to put two cups away after having coffee in the morning with Kevin. The act was so familiar that her whole body tensed, her hands trembled that she had to squeeze them together while taking deep breaths until everything came back to normal. However, her trauma had alleviated compared to what happened two weeks ago. The instance reminded herself that she should not feel too comfortable with the new place with its localites because it can be a destruction to every circumstance she had protected.

**He nodded. “I was a detective,” he said.  
Katie said nothing. Instead, she turned away abruptly, her face closing down like a gate slamming shut.  
“Did I say something wrong?” he asked.  
She shook her head without answering. Alex stared at her, wondering what was going on. His suspicions about her past surfaced almost immediately.**

**“What’s going on, Katie?”**

**“Nothing,” she insisted, but as soon as the word came out, he knew she wasn’t telling the truth. In another place and time, he would have followed up with another question, but instead, he let it drop...**

**She nodded, but he sensed a trace of lingering anxiety. He could tell she needed space, even if he wasn’t sure why. He motioned over his shoulder with his thumb. “Listen, I forgot to add more briquettes to the grill. If the kids don’t get their s’mores, I’ll never hear the end of it. I’ll be right back, okay?”**

**“Sure,” she answered, feigning nonchalance. When he jogged off, Katie exhaled, feeling like she’d somehow escaped. *He used to be a police officer*, she thought to herself, and she tried to tell herself that it didn’t matter. Even so, it took almost a minute of steady breathing before she felt somewhat in control again. (p. 99-100)**

After knowing that Alex used to be a detective (a profession similar to Kevin’s), Katie again felt the unpleasant reactions of her body and mentality. Her trauma relapsed again because Alex’s past job description reminded her of Kevin. Kevin being a detective was one of the factors that made her hard to get away from him for so long. Also, her act was certainly disturbing since Alex had noticed that something was wrong too. In return, he excused himself so that she could covertly recollect the tension marking her. As a result, Katie tried to hardly convince herself that it didn’t matter at all and it lasted almost a minute to come back to her senses.

**From there, she went first to the drugstore to buy a few things and then finally rode across town to the grocery store. She took her time, content to browse the aisles, feeling the old, troubling memories trying and failing to reassert themselves. (p. 123)**

Since Katie and Kevin used to do the groceries together, she was suddenly struck by an odd feeling when she scanned and browsed the aisles in the grocery store while the old memories and feeling tried to come back to her wherein it was her trauma that poked her.



**She was afraid to close her eyes because every time she did, Kevin reappeared. She saw the smears of blood on his face and shirt, his wild eyes. Somehow, he'd tracked her down; somehow, he'd found her. He'd come to Southport to take her home or kill her, and he'd almost succeeded. In one night, he had destroyed the fragile illusion of security she had managed to construct since she'd arrived in town.**

**The terrifying visions of Kevin kept coming back, recurring endlessly with variations, sometimes changing entirely; there were moments she saw herself bleeding and dying on the porch, staring up at the man she hated. When that happened, she instinctively groped at her stomach, searching for wounds that didn't exist, but then she was back in the hospital, sitting and waiting under fluorescent lights. (p. 327-328)**

The effect of serious trauma to the victim from the abuser is clearly depicted in the narrative above. As an aftermath, she was always terrified that Kevin might reappear even if the scene was after Kevin's death but she was still haunted by the idea of Kevin searching for her while aiming for her death. The serious trauma experienced by Katie included terrifying visions of Kevin, visions of herself bleeding and dying on her porch, or staring up at him just like she did when Kevin was holding a gun and as she awoken at midnight, she stared at him covertly terrified. However, it was all of her illusions as an aftereffect of her trauma from the abuse.

**After the sheriff left, Katie went outside and stood in the sunlight, trying to make sense of her feelings. Though she'd told the sheriff about the events of that night, she hadn't told him everything. Nor had she told Alex everything—how could she, when it barely made sense to her? She didn't tell them that in the moments after Kevin had died and she'd rushed to Alex's side, she'd wept for them both. It seemed impossible that even as she relived the terror of those last hours with Kevin, she also remembered their rare happy moments together—how they'd laughed at private jokes or lounged peacefully on the couch together.**

**She didn't know how to reconcile these conflicting pieces of her past and the horror of what she'd just lived through. But there was something more, too, something else she**

**didn't understand: she'd stayed at Joyce's because she was afraid to go back home. (p. 330)**

The most tragic scene of Erin or Katie happened in her home, it was ironic since she considered her new house as a safe haven when in fact it turned out be the place where the most tragic event in her life would happen. The tragic scene included how she had shot him that ended Kevin's life while she cried for Alex being injured as well as seeing the kids weeping and seeing Kevin die as she reminisced their rare happy moments together, even if he had abused her so bad, she couldn't deny that he had made her feel happy and safe somehow before. As a result, it caused her to be traumatized and unable to go back to her home at that instance again.

**After dropping Alex off at Joyce's, Katie finally drove back home, not wanting to return but knowing she couldn't put off the inevitable forever. Even if she didn't intend to stay there, she needed to pack up some of her belongings. Dust rose from the gravel and she bounced through the potholes before pulling to a stop out front. She sat in the jeep—dented and scraped, but still running fine—and stared at the door, remembering how Kevin had bled to death on her porch, his gaze fixed on her face. She didn't want to see the bloodstains. She was afraid that opening the door would remind her of the way Alex had looked after Kevin struck him. She could practically hear the sounds of Kristen and Josh crying hysterically as they clung to their father. She wasn't prepared to relive all of that. (p. 334)**

While realizing that avoiding her house was not an answer to her anxiety, Katie courageously went there and faced everything. Simultaneously, she continuously remember that tragic night and the faces of Alex, the kids, and Kevin at that moment. She thought she was not yet ready to relive all of that again since she was traumatized by that disastrous event.

*Domestic violence as a cause for extensive anxiety.* One of the unfortunate causes of domestic violence affecting the victim includes extensive anxiety. Asserted in the novel, the female character displayed this painful and apprehensive uneasiness of mind as she anticipates adverse consequences stimulated by her abusive past.

**No one seemed out of place and no one had come around asking for her, but there were still times when her hands began to shake, and even now she slept with a light on. (p. 7)**

Because of Katie's abusive past, it caused her to be frequently fearful and nervous about what might happen. She even thought that an old acquaintance of hers and Kevin might notice her in Southport, ask personal questions about them, and would eventually divulge it all to Kevin. Thus, the victim greatly exemplified acts of anxiety in the cited narrative.

**The constant job changing and moves had kept her vigilant, and it was there, only four days after she started, that she'd rounded the corner on her way to work and saw a car that seemed somehow out of place. She stopped.**

**Even now, she wasn't sure how she'd realized it, other than the fact that it was shiny enough to reflect the early morning light. As she stared at the car, she noticed movement in the driver's seat. The engine wasn't running and it struck her as odd that someone would be sitting in an unheated car on a cold morning. The only people, she knew, who did that were those who were waiting for someone.**

**Or watching for someone.**

**Kevin.**

**She knew it was him, knew it with a certainty that surprised her, and she backed around the corner, the way she'd come, praying that he hadn't glanced in the rearview mirror. Praying he hadn't seen her. As soon as the car was out of sight, she began to run back toward the motel, her heart hammering. She hadn't run so fast in years, but all the walking she'd been doing had strengthened her legs and she moved quickly. One block. Two. Three. She looked constantly over her shoulder but Kevin didn't follow. (p. 195)**

Even if she escaped, Katie wasn't still comfortable about her new life because she knew that Kevin wouldn't stop from hunting her down and forcing her to come back home. As a result, Katie continuously suffered the dilemma of anxiety. As cited above, she felt that the car parked in the sideway of the road was none other than Kevin watching out for her. She thought that Kevin might be hiding in his

car inside since he always did that in the salon or anywhere she'd go; he's always waiting for her inside the car, studying her. As a corollary, she instantly hid and ran towards the motel.

**The night before, she'd had wine with a friend, and now she was going to the beach with Alex and his family. These were ordinary events in an ordinary life. The concept felt alien, like she was learning the customs of a foreign land, and it left her feeling strangely elated and wary at exactly the same time. (p. 290)**

Apparently, Katie sensed the distinctiveness feeling of her new life. It was not her plan to get attached with anyone but that aim started to fall into pieces after meeting Jo, Alex, Kristen, and Josh. For her, it felt strange, euphoric but heeding at the same time because she expected that something bad would inevitably happen in the future with her and the people she has associated herself with.

**Alex continued to stare at her, holding her gaze. "You mean... what if he finds you?"**

**Katie flinched. "What did you say?"**

**"You heard me," he said. He kept his voice steady, almost conversational, something he'd learned in CID. "I'm guessing that you were married once... and that maybe he's trying to find you."**

**Katie froze, her eyes going wide. It was suddenly hard to breathe and she jumped up from the chair, spilling the rest of her wine. She took a step away from Alex, staring, feeling the blood drain from her face. (p. 129)**

Katie's reactions to Alex's suspicions clearly depicted the arousal of her anxiety because she had tried her best to conceal any information about her past but it was suddenly unveiled by him. She felt the sudden surge of fear from him.

**Katie knew that she was walking a dangerous line. Telling him about her past had seemed like the right thing to do at the time, and speaking the words had freed her somehow from the crushing burden of her secrets. But the morning after their first dinner, she was paralyzed with anxiety by what she had done. Alex used to be an investigator, after all, which probably meant he could easily make a phone call or**

**two, no matter what he'd said to her. He'd talk to someone and they'd talk to someone and eventually, Kevin would learn of it. She hadn't told him that Kevin had an almost eerie ability to connect seemingly random information; she hadn't mentioned that when a suspect was on the run, Kevin almost always knew where to find him. Simply thinking about what she'd done made her sick to her stomach. (p. 174-175)**

As clearly manifested by the narrative, after narrating and entrusting Alex every detail from her past the night before she thought about the possibility that Alex might betray her by calling Kevin in Dorchester. Katie's anxiety made her feel sick and unwell; she felt a tinge of regret upon realizing that something may go wrong. Thus, the domestic violence victim frequently suffers excessive anxiety that results to extreme cautiousness.

**She choked off the final words, sensing his approach. When she felt him [Kevin] touch her, she shuddered. (p. 181)**

Her clear manifestation of anxiety is provided as the narrative stated the feeling she had when Kevin approached and touched her; she instantly felt her body shaking out of great fear, anxious that he would suddenly hit her again.

**She sat on the edge of the bed, trembling, afraid of this place, afraid of the future, her mind whirling. She had to pee but she didn't want to leave the room. She tried to tell herself that it was an adventure and everything would be okay. As crazy as it sounded, she found herself wondering if she'd made a mistake by leaving; she tried not to think about her kitchen and bedroom and all the things she'd left behind. She knew she could buy a ticket back to Boston and get home before Kevin even realized she was gone. But her hair was short and dark and there was no way she could explain that.**

**Outside, the sun was down but streetlights shone through the dirty window. She heard horns honking and she looked out. At the street level, all the signs were in Chinese and some businesses were still open. She could hear conversations rising in the darkness and there were plastic bags filled with garbage piled near the street. She was in an**

**unfamiliar city, a city filled with strangers. She couldn't do this, she thought. She wasn't strong enough. In three days, she'd have no place to stay unless she could find a job. If she sold her jewelry, she might buy herself another day, but then what? (p. 192)**

The scenario above happened after Katie designated herself to Philadelphia, the first place she had gone before coming to Southport, North Carolina. It is clear that she felt the terrifying sense at being at the new and strange place. She even thought that leaving Kevin was a mistake and she reminisced the nice things she had back there. She also pondered that she couldn't survive there and that she was not strong to be independent as she thought. She felt the anxiety about what might happen to her after three days of temporary self-suppliance. Therefore, the female character depicted extreme anxiety and adverse anticipation of what's about to come for her.

*Domestic violence as a generative factor of a courageous and stronger woman.* Aside from the cataclysmal aftermaths of domestic violence, there are still good factors that are generated after the long-term endurance. Katie didn't allow herself to remain subordinate and submissive to the abuse, although it took long but it certainly made her braver and independent.

**“No buts,” he said, “because there are none. You see yourself as someone who couldn't get away. I see the courageous woman who escaped. You see yourself as someone who should be ashamed or guilty because she let it happen. I see a kind, beautiful woman who should feel proud because she stopped it from happening ever again. Not many women have the strength to do what you did. That's what I see now, and that's what I've always seen when I look at you.” (p. 158)**

Although Katie continuously degraded and abased herself because of her submission to the abuse, Alex always reassured her that she was a courageous woman who is brave to repel the act of vehemence against her. He reminded her that she was a beautiful woman who should be proud of herself because it was all true. Her courage impelled by her fears resulted to a successful escape because it was the only thing she thought she could do.

**On his drive home, he thought that he had never met anyone braver or stronger or more resourceful. (p. 170)**

The lines are Alex's point of view. It clearly showed off that his words of encouragement and commendation for Katie was definitely sincere because he truly saw her that way even if he was alone wandering. For him, she was truly brave, strong and resourceful. The idea was unbelievable that he'd ever met a woman possessing amazing qualities like her.

**“You’re not emotionally scarred. You’re tough. You’re a survivor. It’s actually kind of sexy.” (p. 176)**

As Katie continuously degraded her self-worth, Alex also continuously reminded her as a tough woman and a survivor that made her sexy and attractive. Thus, even with her fragile image, Katie, after being victimized by physical and emotional abuse by her most beloved person, was still seen as a courageous woman.

**The roaring of the fire was so loud, she could barely hear the sound of her own voice. Half-carrying, half-dragging the kids back out into the hallway, she saw an orange glow, barely visible through the smoke, where the entrance to the hallway was. The wall crawled with fire, flames on the ceiling, moving toward them. She didn't have time to think, only had time to react. She turned and pushed the kids back down the hallway toward the master bedroom, where the smoke was less thick.**

**She rushed into the room, flicking on the light. Still working. Alex's bed stood against one wall, a chest of drawers against another. Straight ahead was a rocking chair and windows, thankfully untouched as yet by fire. She slammed the door behind her.**

**Racked by coughing spasms, she stumbled forward, dragging Josh and Kristen. Both of them were wailing between hoarse bouts of coughing. She tried to free herself to raise the bedroom window, but Kristen and Josh clung to her.**

**“I need to open the window!” she screamed, shaking herself free. “This is the only way out!” In their panic, they didn't understand, but Katie didn't have time to explain. Frantically, she tore at the old-fashioned window lock and**

**tried to heave the heavy pane up. It wouldn't budge. Peering closer, Katie realized that the frame had been painted shut, probably years ago. She didn't know what to do, but the sight of the two children staring at her in terror cleared her head. She looked around, frantic, finally seizing the rocking chair.**

**It was heavy, but somehow she lifted it above her shoulder and heaved it at the window with all her might. It cracked but didn't break. She tried again, sobbing through a last burst of adrenaline and fear, and this time the rocking chair went flying out, crashing onto the overhang below. Moving fast, Katie raced to the bed and tore off the comforter. She bundled it around Josh and Kristen and began pushing them toward the window. (p. 311-312)**

Another experience that prompted Katie to morph into a courageous and stronger is suggested above. The narrative clearly states that although she was admittedly panic-stricken from witnessing the burning of Alex's house, she still went through the fire to rescue Alex's two children. She went through the struggle of slamming and stumbling the door while dragging the children, tearing the window lock and lifting the heavy pane, craning the hefty rocking chair above her shoulder while heaving it to the window until it gradually broke, and pushing both the kids to the window. Thus, the female character didn't only display emotional bravery but also physical strength although frantic.

**Suddenly, Katie lunged forward, pushing the gun away. It fired, the sound like a vicious slap, but she kept moving forward, clinging to his wrist, not letting go. Kristen started to scream.**

**"RUN!" Katie shouted over her shoulder. "Josh, take Kristen and run! He's got a gun! Get as far away as you can and hide!"**

**"Bitch!" Kevin screamed, trying to free his arm. Katie lowered her mouth and bit down as hard as she could and Kevin let out a ferocious cry. Trying to pull the arm free, he slammed his other fist into her temple. Instantly, she saw flashes of white light. She bit down again, finding his thumb this time, and he screamed, letting go of the gun. It clattered to the ground and he punched her again, catching her on her cheekbone, knocking her to the ground.**



**He kicked her in the back and she arched with pain. But she kept moving, in panic now, fueled by the certainty that he meant to kill her and the kids. She had to give them time to get away...**

**She ran as fast as she could... and she lay breathless on the ground again. He grabbed her by the hair and hit her again. He seized an arm and twisted it, trying to work it behind her back, but he was off balance and she was slippery enough to turn onto her back. Reaching up, she clawed at his eyes, catching one in the corner, tearing hard.**

**Fighting for her life, adrenaline flooding her limbs. Fighting now, for all the times she hadn't. Fighting to give the kids time to run away and hide. Screaming curses at him, hating him, refusing to let him beat her again.**

**He snatched at her fingers, tottering off balance, and she used the opportunity to wiggle away. She felt him clawing at her legs, but his grip wasn't good enough and she pulled one leg free. Pulling her knee up toward her chin, she kicked him with all her force, stunning him as she connected with his chin. She did it again, watching this time as he toppled sideways, his arms grabbing at nothing.**

**She scrambled to her feet and started to run again, but Kevin was up just as quickly. A few feet away, she saw the gun and she lunged for it. (p. 316-317)**

Pellucidly, the female character exerted great force to fight her abusive husband. Unlike her submission before, Katie even jeopardized her life when she approached Kevin and pushed the gun away from her and the kids. Even though she panicked as drunken Kevin continuously fought with her, she still struggled to fight him to protect the kids. He continuously hit her as she continuously fought with him, bit his arm and ran as fast as she could, clawed and tore his eyes, kicked him and reached the gun boldly even if the preceding narrative revealed that she was afraid of guns. However, in this instance, she fought for her life because she didn't want to be beaten up by him again because she was stronger and escaping was not the only thing she could do at the moment—it was fighting.

**When they reached the car, she tried to fight again but Kevin slammed her head onto the roof and she almost passed out. He opened the trunk and tried to force her in. Somehow she turned and managed to drive her knee into**

**his groin. She heard him gasp and felt his grip loosen momentarily.**

**She pushed blindly, tearing out of his grasp, and started running for her life. She knew the bullet was coming, that she was about to die.**

**He couldn't understand why she was fighting, could barely breathe through the pain. She'd never fought him before, had never scratched at his eyes or kicked or bitten him. She wasn't acting like his wife and her hair was brown but she sounded like Erin... (p. 319)**

Kevin was ready to kill Erin/Katie and he thought it was an easy thing to do. However, even if he had hit her so bad, she'd fight back in return. Kevin couldn't even understand why she was fighting, all he knew was that she submitted herself before when he physically and emotionally hurt her, but at that moment she was different from the Erin he knew before. It was because Erin/Katie became stronger and more courageous and she had shed off the "old Erin" she once had been.

**Alex skidded to a stop in front of the house and both of them jumped out simultaneously, running for the door, calling the kids' names. Katie still held the gun. (p. 323)**

As being revealed by the preceding narratives of the story, it stated that Katie was always afraid of guns that's why she would always ask Kevin to hide and keep it away from her. However, in the scenario above, Katie was holding the gun after she took it away from Kevin while Alex's house was still burning. She and Alex drove and arrived at her house searching for the kids. It clearly explicated that Katie indeed faced her fears and fought bravely not only for her life but for their lives.

**The crowbar had fallen to the side and Kevin struggled to roll over and stand. Katie raised the gun, pointing it as Kevin finally made it to his feet. He swayed, almost losing his balance, his face a skeletal white. He seemed unable to focus and Katie could feel the tears in her eyes.**

**She hated him with a rage that had been building up for years. "I cooked for you and cleaned for you and none of it mattered! All you did was drink and hit me! . . . You should have let me go! You shouldn't have followed me! You**

**shouldn't have come here! Why couldn't you just let me go? You never loved me!"**

**Kevin lurched toward her, but this time he reached for the gun, trying to knock it away. He was weak now, though, and she managed to hold on. He tried to grab her, but he screamed in agony when his damaged hand connected with her arm... He tried to push the gun toward her, but it was moving in the wrong direction, pointing down now.**

**"I loved you!" she sobbed, fighting him with every ounce of rage and strength left in her, and he felt something give way, momentary clarity returning.**

**"Then you never should have left me," he whispered, his breath heavy with alcohol. He pulled the trigger and the gun sounded with a loud crack and then he knew it was almost over. She was going to die because he'd told her that he'd find her and kill her if she ever ran away again. He would kill any man who loved her.**

**But strangely, Erin didn't fall, didn't even flinch. Instead, she stared at him with fierce green eyes, holding his gaze without blinking.**

**He felt something then, burning in his stomach, fire. His left leg gave way and he tried to stay upright, but his body was no longer his own. He collapsed on the porch, reaching for his stomach. (p. 324-326)**

Even though she was physically and emotionally injured, Erin/Katie did not hesitate to fight back against Kevin. Although she was afraid of guns as previously stated, the gun became the greatest tool she had to repel the abuse and the abuser. Browne (1987) asserted in her book *When Battered Women Kill* that female domestic violence victims murder their partners often due to their self-defense. Browne (1987) recounted a report from government commission on violence's estimation of homicides committed by women were seven times likely to be in self defense as to homicides committed by men. For the female character, it took the grandest courage of her to pull that trigger while she was emotionally bruised by her domestic experiences with her previous husband, Kevin. After Erin/Katie pulled the trigger, she becomes not just a courageous and strong woman but more importantly, she is now a domestic violence survivor.

*Domestic violence as a productive factor of a wiser woman.* One of the reversals that occurred to the victim and circumstances include a creation of a wiser and

skillful woman. In the novel, the domestic violence victim and survivor at the same time displayed this amazing character.

**But she had to be careful not to arouse Kevin’s suspicions, to play things exactly right. If she ignored the beating he had given her the night before, he would be suspicious. If she went too far, he would be suspicious. After four years of hell, she’d learned the rules. (p. 177)**

As Kevin thought of her as stupid, he didn’t know that after long years of enduring his abusive actions, it made her wiser. She had learned that she had to deliberately plan her escape to ensure that nothing would come amiss as any slight suspicion from her abuser could become a great obstruction to her well-planned goals. After experiencing the abuse, even if it savagely hurt and injured her, she had to balance the circumstances to avoid his suspicions.

**Now she saw the Feldmans only when she knew Kevin was busy at work, when she knew he couldn’t call. She would make sure no other neighbors were watching before darting across the street to their front door. She felt like a spy when she visited with them. They showed her photos of their daughters growing up. One had died and the other had moved away and she had the sense that they were as lonely as she was. In the summer, she made them blueberry pies and would spend the rest of the afternoon mopping up the flour in the kitchen so Kevin wouldn’t know. (p. 182)**

Inferable to deceptiveness but also derivable to cleverness, Katie visited the Feldmans not only to serve and help them with the meals and chores but to also steal their deceased daughter’s identity as a tool to start a new life. He never knew that she frequently visited them while he was on work because she had erase any signs of evidence before he came back home since he has disallowed her from befriending anyone. However, Katie has successfully remained cautious about these actions because she was a wise and crafty woman.

**“Hi, Kevin,” she purred. She forced herself to smile. “Why are you holding that gun? Did you come to get me? Are you all right, baby?”**

**Kevin blinked. The voice, soft and sultry, sweet. He liked it when she sounded like that, and he thought it was a dream.**

**But he wasn't dreaming and Erin was standing in front of him. She smiled as she took a step forward. "I love you, Kevin, and I always knew you'd come."**

**He stared. There were two of her now and then only one... Closer, Katie thought. Almost there. She took another step forward, pushing the kids behind her.**

**"Can you bring me home?" Her voice pleaded with him, begged like Erin used to, but her hair was short and brown and she was moving closer and he wondered why she wasn't scared and he wanted to pull the trigger but he loved her. If only he could stop the hammering inside his head— Suddenly, Katie lunged forward, pushing the gun away. (p. 315-316)**

The scenario above details the escape of both Erin/Katie and the kids from the burning house as Kevin approached them while holding a gun. If Erin/Katie instantly panicked and beseeched Kevin to throw away the gun, Kevin would have laughed at her or would have pulled the trigger. However, because of Erin/Katie's cleverness and slyness, she acted luridly while ingeniously asserting that she loves him and knew he would come to take her home. She approached him closely while pleading him to take her home and as soon as Kevin's thoughts were in turmoil, she reached the gun, pushing it away from his hands.

**At a small table outside, Katie related the account of her escape—the forwarded phone calls, the trip to Philadelphia, the everchanging jobs and miserable flophouses, the eventual trip to Southport. (p. 216)**

The provided narrative is the simplest summary of how Katie fulfilled the escape as she narrated it specifically to Alex. From the forwarded phone calls, to the transformation of a new look, to the trip to Philadelphia, to the constant changing of jobs, to the wretched motels, and to her eventual destination to Southport, all of those circumstances, she had accomplished because of her cleverness, skill, and craftiness. Therefore, Katie, as a domestic violence survivor became a fully wiser woman.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The foremost purpose of this study is to depict how the main character as a woman is represented in the story, the role of domestic violence in the novel, and the

impact of domestic violence to the characterization of the main character as embedded in the literary work. Pioneered and guided by the framework of Showalter's (1977) three phases of Efforts in Development in Woman's History as feminine phase, feminist phase and female phase and Pence and Paymar's (1993) Duluth model, this study foregrounds how the novel represented the female character and women as a whole, especially domestic violence victims, on how the battered woman felt, experienced, endured and begot in the hands of the abuser and how it cultivates awareness and consciousness among its readers. Based from the completed analysis, several conclusion can be derived from a feminist analysis on the narratives and dialogues of the novel, *Safe Haven: Representation of the Character as a Woman in the Story*

*The main character as a woman is mounted with several representations in the novel.*

The main female character's physical attributes were described in various ways that explicated her personality. Women are depicted as physically and emotionally weaker compared to men since the former displays subservience and inferiority to the latter's domineering behavior. Women remain optimistic even after experiencing bleak and tragic events as they hopefully found goodness in people, place and circumstances. This is especially true for the main female character, as she finds a real friend, a new love and a new family even after her tragic past life and failed marriage. Women are represented as deceptive and denial for several purposes such as coverture of untold stories, persuasion to attain goal, discouragement from male exertion of abuse, and alleviation from issues. Women are rendered as emotional with their facile arousal of sensitivity as they frequently expressed varied emotions to other characters. Women, with their open and amicable demeanors, are disposed as affectionate to children through genuine expressions of interests, involvement, and sympathy towards the kids. Women, as presented in the novel, did the largest part of foodwork and housework since cleaning and assembling the house and tools, washing the laundry and dishes, and preparation of meals are their overriding activities inside the house. Women are delineated as assumptive in unclear but predictable effects. Women are indicated as complimenting to others as they genuinely admire and praise the counterparts' commendable qualities. The following varied representations of women carry out the idea that female characters as a woman are delineated with many characters that affect their qualities in regards with the opposite sex.

*Role of Domestic Violence as Played in the Novel*

Domestic violence plays several roles as embedded in the novel: It is the effectuation of gender inequality since men perform male dominance inside the

house and the marriage while women exhibit subservience, submission and inferiority in general to the husband's physical and emotional abusive acts. It is the motivation to repel the abuse considering that the female character is able to create wise escape plans and courageously fights repulsive to male abuse. It is the outcome of male extreme imbibition of alcohol since the novel depicted that the exertion of domestic violence against the wife only occurred after the husband's extreme inebriation. The analysis tells us that the inclusion of domestic violence to the plot contributes to the transforming characterization of women.

#### *Impact of Domestic Violence to the Main Character*

Several effects and impacts of domestic violence to the female character are embedded in the narratives and dialogues of the novel, *Safe Haven*. This composes physical and emotional aftermaths: Domestic violence causes various physical injuries that brought sufferings to the victim. Domestic violence is an antecedent to self-blaming of the abused as the female character continuously blames and degrades herself for permitting the exhibition of violence in a long time. Domestic violence perpetrates trauma to the victim since she is emotionally disturbed constantly in associating the current situations to the akin tragic occurrence from the past. Domestic violence is a causation for extensive anxiety of the battered wife through repeated actuations of extreme terrifying that anticipates adverse circumstances in the future. However, aside from the drawback and saddening effects of domestic violence, the female character displays commendatory and positive traits as a result of the vehemence: The female character becomes more courageous and stronger, both physically and emotionally to repel the abuse by fighting for the people she loved and for her goal of freedom and happiness. As an outcome to the battering, the female character turns to be a wiser, clever and crafty woman as she constructs well-made escape plans, careful actuations of those plans, and beguilement to attain aimed purposes. In conclusion, domestic violence played a grandeur role in the story from descrying its effects to the characterization of the female character. Without the portrayal of domestic violence, the female character would not transform from being weak to independent and from being a poltroon to a courageous, crafty and stronger woman.

In this study, the researcher have sought to respond to a number of research questions such as how are women represented, what is the role of domestic violence, and to what extent does domestic violence make any impact to the main character embedded in the novel, *Safe Haven*. The findings of this dissertation have several suggestions for the ascension of further feminist studies, a literary approach that is continuously uprising as a lens. This research responds to the

expanding worldwide utilization of literary criticism and researcher to dissect literary works using feminism as lens and framework that aims to carry out gender inequality issues and stereotypes that resurfaces global knots. This study appends to the towering interdisciplinary fields of gender-related literary studies concerning with domestic violence or other women abuse. Moreover, as a corollary and continuity to this dissertation that explicated major metamorphosis to the main female character after experiencing domestic violence, further studies may surface that focuses about domestic violence as a transformative factor for the women to go from weak to stronger individual. Do women need to undergo painful and tragic experiences in order to modify themselves into a better person? With this study as a reference, further studies with such subjectivity can be expounded. This study also implies beneficiary factors to teaching such as to educate, raise awareness, and inspire active engagement from students to other students and from students to teachers regarding with gender-oriented programs, especially about domestic violence topics. The study can be a springboard for debates and discussions on gender equality and ceaseless perpetration of domestic violence. Furthermore, this study also aims and recommends a wider scale of gender study focusing on novels with wide readership since it also provides wide impact to massive readers. Suggestively, this research impels readers to read other novels written by Nicholas Sparks, other novels that contain domestic violence as the overriding issue of the plot, and further studies of actual exhibition, causation and effectuation of domestic violence regarding with the experiences of perpetrators or victims or both.

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