The Portrayal of A Woman’s Resistance Against People’s Cruelty
Seen from Social Oppression Theory

FINAL PROJECT
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement of the Degree of
Sarjana Sastra

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2019
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F-LIB-081
THE PORTRAYAL OF A WOMAN'S RESISTANCE AGAINST PEOPLE'S CRUELTY
SEEN FROM SOCIAL OPPRESSION THEORY

THESIS

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of the Requirement of the Degree of
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Introduction

A. Background of study

Dangdut has been one of Indonesian’s favorite music genres. Dangdut which was once well-known as low-class people’s music, now has developed into high-class music with countless lovers from different social backgrounds. This phenomenon is seen when many actors sang along with one of the most famous dangdut singers, Via Vallen in Indonesian Choice Award on April 2018.

It has been one of the most famous public secret that dangdut singers make a lot of money by singing and dancing. The new comers in dangdut entertainment make around 20 until 50 million rupiah (for each performance). For those seniors in dangdut entertainment, they are able to make money up to 300 million Rupiah for each performance. The opportunity of dangdut singers do not only come from singing.

Unfortunately, some people, selfishly misuse the opportunity to get as much money as possible by exploiting their underage daughter to support their family daily needs. Some of their parents stand to dress their underage female children with inappropriate outfit in order to get a good feedback from their event management without worrying about their daughter. Early in 2018, 32 cases of child trafficking and exploitation had found in Indonesia. One of the cases associated with underage female dangdut singer in Bali. In 2012, a case which was correlated with dangdut and underage female children exploitation with initial name S who was 15 and a sixth-grade student was being forced to sing as a dangdut singer in a café every single night.

The case of a teenage girl initialized JT in 2006 who was being exploited by her own father inspired this story. This story was written to show that our country is still unaware of oppression and any parties can undertake it. This literary work will be focusing on Social oppression side
B. Research Question

a. How could social oppression (exploitation) occur in a family life?

b. How some more powerful parties could influenced the subordinate ones to do what the power holders want them, to do?

C. Objectives of The Study

The writer aims to write a story that was inspired by the life of teenage dangdut singer initialized J.T who was said that she had been exploited by her biological father in 2006. The writer wants to emphasize the social oppression that happened in family life of this story, the potential suspects of social oppression, the kinds of reason.

D. Significance of The Study

The writer expects to minimize the exploitation number of underage female dangdut singer. The writer desires that the readers could take the moral value from the short story as well as to increase the awareness of child exploitation, social oppression and the impacts of child exploitation. The writer desires to mention that family, which is the first community that we have been in since we were baby, can be one of the site of social oppression.
E. Methods and Procedure

Since the underage dangdut singer exploitation case is pretty rare, the writer will only use one method to gather the data. The method is going to be a library study. The writer is planning to do a library research via internet, by finding some journals which are related to the theory that the writer’s going to use. Furthermore, In order to get deeper information about the related theory, the writer would find the related cases about dangdut and child exploitation.
Theoretical Framework

A. Review of Related Theory

Social oppression could happen anywhere. Even in the most developed country, some groups could feel they had been oppressed by other particular groups. Social oppression refers to a situation when a group or individual who has less power is being intimidated or dominated by their society or some particular groups who own more power than them. In other word, social oppression means a group dominates on other group in order to achieve benefits from the oppressed group. (Heldke and O’Connor 1)

“those attitudes, behaviors, and pervasive and systematic social arrangements by which members of one group are exploited and subordinated while members of another group are granted privileges” (Bohmer & Briggs 155).

Social oppression has a wide meaning compared to other types of oppression. In other words, social oppression has more scope than other type. Social Oppression incorporated by several forms of oppression regarding to the social hierarchies. It consists of class, race, even gender and ability oppression. (Weber)

Gender oppression is defined as one of the types of oppression that usually happen in the daily life of human being. Gender oppression itself is a situation when women or girls are being oppressed because of their gender. Women are disadvantaged in order to give someone benefit due to the stereotype that has developed in some countries that women are in a lower position than men.

“Gender oppression is the individual acts of abuse and violence, patterns of power and control, and systems of abuse and violence perpetrated against women and girls due to their gender.” (INCITE! 5). 

5
Oppression and social class system in society has a strong correlation. In society, class oppression is a discrimination by social status. The definition of class itself extremely diverse. Class can be defined as something which has correlation with economy, gender, race and ethnicity. (Jean Ait Belkhir 9)

B. Review of Related study

Social oppression is not something new in the world of human being. The study about social oppression has been made by thousands of people in this world in order to support the theory. One of them is the study that was been held by Walter Rodney in 1966. He chose African slavery as his main focus to find the oppressed side from the life of African slave’s life in Guinea.

As the theory of Social oppression has mentioned that social oppression is a situation where one party who has more power exhaust as many benefits as they can form, Walter’s study serves some details according to the social oppression case in his journal study. One of them is the injustice way from the one who has higher level treated the servant new born baby compare to the way they treated the babies’ parents differently because they thought the servant new born babes were more beneficial.

“on the upper of Guinea Coast, too, the servants born in the household and were distinguished from the individuals who were recruited from captives of war, or from those pledged and not redeemed” (Walter Rodney, 1966, p.432).

Not only in Guinea, many cases related to social oppression also occurred in Indonesia. One example of the social oppression case took place in Batam, Sumatera. three people who distribute prostitutes was arrested over allegedly exploited two underage children who were reported missing to work as a dangdut dancer for 2,000 rupiah per session. The case of child exploitation in Batam, has a few similarities to the story that the writer will be working on. The similar parts are:
1. The girls who are being exploited is still underage.
2. The salary that they achieved for themselves is below the standard.

**Story Prototype**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Asma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hair</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Singing, and dancing</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>characteristic</td>
<td>Innocent, rebel.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hair</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lips</td>
<td>Thin, wide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Education</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Special skills</td>
<td>Brainwashing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. characteristic</td>
<td>Arrogant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Ceceng (Asma’s boyfriend)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Lips</td>
<td>plump, wide</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Never went to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Special skills</td>
<td>Flirting, convincing someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>characteristic</td>
<td>Crafty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Kang Yayat (Asma’s boss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hair</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Build &amp; complexion</td>
<td>Short, thin, tan complexion.</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Lips</td>
<td>Thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Special skills</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>characteristic</td>
<td>Crafty</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Asma’s Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>Short, neat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Build &amp; complexion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lips</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Special skills</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>characteristic</td>
<td>Loving</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Bunda (Asma’s step mother)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>Covered with hijab</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Build &amp; complexion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lips</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Special skills</td>
<td>Teaching, taking care an institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>characteristic</td>
<td>Loving, supportive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Point of view : Third person point of view

Setting :
   a. Place : The place of the story will be taken in Sukabumi, West Java. and Tasikmalaya, West Java.
   c. Feelings : Mix (happy and sad)

Plot :

- INTRODUCTION

1. after Asma’s performance, her boss suddenly introduced her to a guy. Her boss said that the guy liked her performance and wanted to know more about her life.

2. After their first meeting, they started to frequently met each other.

3. Her mother figured out something has been going on her daughter lately, after she found out that her 15 year-old-daughter starts dating a 28 year-old-married-guy her anger couldn’t be held. She started to violence her daughter who worked as a dangdut singer in a coffeeshop to support her family.

4. Asma told her boyfriend about what happened in her house, she asked her to take her to somewhere for a day to run away from her family.
- RAISING ACTION

5. Ceceng, her boyfriend took that moment as a great opportunity to take her from her family. He took Asma’s virginity first (because he thought that if Asma isn’t Virgin anymore it’s easier for Ceceng to doctrine Asma’s brain to leave her family). Asma asked if she wanted to leave her family, would him leave his wife?

6. The day she lost her virginity, Ceceng said something to her about her family that use her as a money machine. She didn’t want to believe what Ceceng had said, but everything seemed so clear to her that her mother only needed her because she was a good money machine.

8. Flashback to the moment when her mother asked her to drop out from her school because she could not pay the tuition fee-her mother convinced her to start working as a dangdut singer in a small coffeeshop in her village to help her mother and her new family.

- CLIMAX

9. Yayat brainwashed Asma to leave her family for his own good

10. She decided to leave her family and left a goodbye-letter for her family

11. Tutut was very angry after she found a letter that Kang Yayat had told her the truth about her step father, Kang yayat threatened to send her to jail for exploited Asma. Tutut was not a smart or educated person, she was afraid of the threat so she decided to stop.
- FALLING ACTION

11. Asma was arrested in a raid in the place where she work

12. Asma was interrogated by the police officer

13. Her biological father came to pick her up with her step mother, and he told everything about the fact that he still give child support

14. Asma was asked whether she wanted to move to Tasikmalaya with her father or not. She asked her boyfriend, and her boyfriend dumped her.

CONCLUSION

20. Her stepmother tried to convince her to go back to school

21. (Flashback) She met an old woman in a nursery house that told her about her life that almost the same as her, and that woman advised her to go back to school.

22. She decided to go to school, her step mother was preparing her breakfast

23. (flashback) Her father was ready to sleep, and then he had a conversation with her step mother to send her back to school.

24. Asma was studying for a test, her friend came. They both laugh and eating cassava chips together.
Summary

Asma was a fifteen-year-old girl. She had to drop out from school when she was twelve because of financial issues. After school, she started to replace her mother position as a dangdut singer in a night café. The night café was the beginning of her love journey. She met her married boyfriend, Ceceng. Their relationship was fine, until Asma’s mother found out that her daughter had a relationship with Ceceng who was married.

Asma’s mother was so mad with the fact that her daughter was dating someone. She wanted Asma for her and her husband only and then she started to abuse her. After her mother’s abusive behavior, Asma asked her boyfriend to take her away for a day from her family. That moment, her boyfriend took an advantage of her, he took her virginity away from her so he could keep her for him.

One day her boss told her that her mother and her stepfather only used her to get money. She was so mad, and decided to leave her family and start a brand new life with her boyfriend, Ceceng. Until one day she was arrested in a raid in her workplace because she was still underage. Her life suddenly changed after that raid. She met her biological father who still care for her. She met her step-mother who was very kind and loving. Her step-mother was the one who always support her to go back to school for a better future. Her life was good, although her boyfriend left her with her money that she made.
A Soundless Melody

A teenage girl was standing in front of a large mirror in a four times three changing room that looked more like a neglected storehouse. She gazed at the reflection of her body that was wrapped in a shocking pink bustier, exposing her short and curvy body. A drop of water fell down from her almond shaped eyes to her cheeks she was crying for her ugly face. Crazy smudged mascara ruined her beautiful eye-makeup. She was holding a small container box of white powder that almost fulfilled a half of the box. She brushed her soaked colored cheeks with her palm, she put on some powder on her dark skin to conceal her flaws and apply her favorite lipstick as the other girls did in her hometown. Her eyes turned dark when she looked at her face in the mirror, then her vision moved to her hair’s reflection. She glanced at her midnight hair as if it was the most precious thing she had ever had in her life.

“Asma! Come here!” a voice suddenly shouted her name, surprising her as she was still holding the powder box, making its content scattered to all over her hands, “someone is dying to see you, darling,” the voice continued.

She opened her mouth, as both of her eyes were rolling from her hands to another direction, "I am coming, Papi," she put back the bright yellow powder box to the dressing table as she was busy to brush her hands that were covered with the spilled powder.

It was her first time to hear someone sounded so excited to meet her. Her hands were freezing and she could hear the thrilling sound of her own heartbeats playing while she was walking through a dark hallway in her workplace. She rushed into an open terrace area and then she saw a guy with long legs that covered with a shabby black jean and her Papi or what people usually called him as Kang Yayat. The guy was sitting right beside her boss. He smiled to her, as his shoulders were leaning on a bench. His hair was dyed red and looked very kinky, it seemed like he had not brushed it for more than a year.

Suddenly, Kang Yayat’s laughter filled in the silence of that night, “Asma, here is that person who’s crazy for you,” said Kang Yayat as he tapped on that guy’s shoulder, with a big smile stayed on his face.

She sent a warm smile clumsily as a greeting, “Nice to meet you, A,” she said as she waved her hands softly.
“Okay I will leave you two,” her boss said as he winked his left eye to Asma, “enjoy your time together.”

They sat on a wooden bench in silence, they hardly opened their mouth. The sound of crickets was ringing loudly, added more awkwardness on that night. Luckily, the stars shone brightly like a glitter that sparkled in a black painting canvas.

“Your performance was perfect, Asma,” said the guy with his husky voice, breaking the awkwardness between them.

Asma raised her eyebrows, with a widened smile on her face, “Thank you, A…” she stopped as she caught at the guy’s eyes whose hands was busy rolling his empty mineral bottle, but his eyes did not stop staring at hers.

The guy rolled his glazed eyes, stretched out his large hands, showing off his over-tanned complexion. “My name is Ceceng, Neng Geulis,” he widened his smiled and chuckled at her.

Asma felt her stomach was tickling like there was a million of butterflies flew around inside her body for the very first time in her life. She closed her mouth tightly, her eyes were goggled, tried to hold her laughed but she could not contain her exploding joy deep inside her heart. It was so unreal to her hearing a guy told her that she was beautiful.

“Ah you’re so cheesy, A,” she answered as she laughed to Ceceng’s cheesy joke.

***

A red-haired guy was sitting in a lounge at a dimly lit night café, he was wearing a very basic red T-shirt with a little bit of flower touch as its decoration. He looked at his watch, and he wiped his face. He looked at his surroundings, the smell of smoke from cigarette filled in his lungs. there was plenty of lady-killer dancing with their girls as they were holding a cup of drink. He bent his mouth, as he was enjoying the jarring live music that made his heart beating more faster than usual.

“A Ceceng, sorry for making you waited so long,” said Asma as she pulled a chair for herself. When she moved her figure, a very flowery smell diffused in the air that made Ceceng almost sneezed.
Ceceng sent a wide smile, undeliberately showing off the gap of his teeth to the girl in front of him. Her eyes were red and she had a pair of eye bags. *She must be a hardworking girl.* He mumbled inside his heart.

“It is okay, Neng. Aa completely understand,” he answered as his hand ran through the girl’s dark hair. He stared at her, looking delighted.

Never touched by such an intimate situation when somebody’s hands grabbed hers tightly, and looked at her right in the eyes with a very bright light on his eyes, she could not help herself but felt goosebumps from her head to her toe every time she looked at him. Her heart raced faster, like a cheetah in the middle of a savannah. It had been a month since they started to meet frequently in Kang Yayat’s night café. Ceceng knew for sure what Asma felt for him just like he knew how she easily got comfortable with his presence from the way Asma stared at him with a bright light in her eyes every time she saw him.

Ceceng gazed at Asma, making her blushed cheeks became redder. He took one of Asma’s hands. “You look mighty gorgeous, Neng,” he said as he was still keeping the intimate eye contact.

Asma smiled bashfully, “Thank you, A.”

The day he revealed his marital status the first month they knew each other was like a lightning in a broad daylight for her, she felt like her heart was bombarded by a million machete every time she tried to gasp for air. She took a step back without a break from her eye-contact to the guy right in front of her. “I do not want to have any business with a married man,” she stressed to Ceceng.

Ceceng lent his hand trying to reach Asma’s hand, “Neng, please do not leave,” his eyebrows were moved away, “we have been separated from each other since a few months ago,” he added.

She did not even look at him. She tried her best to control her breathing as she clenched his fits tightly. *What if you are the one for him?* Her eyes became wider, her mouth could not be opened, no one ever told her about that but it just came across her mind so suddenly. She had heard so many stories about someone who found out his true love after they got married to the
wrong person. One of them was her stepfather who was her mother’s true love after her failed marriage with Asma’s biological father.

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Everything was as smooth as butter. Asma’s mother, Tutut smiled so happy that everything she planned years ago went perfectly. She successfully changed Asma’s mind to think that going to school was not important for women because women would always be a housewife, take care of her children and serve her husband. That was why she always shaped Asma’s life the way she wanted to be. She really hoped one day she could be a star, having a lot of money to support her life, and her husband's. That was why she would not let Asma to marry at a young age. However, she acted so weirdly lately. Asma seemed really enthusiastic to go to work. Her mother smelled something had been going on with her daughter, who worked so hard to support her family's need after her husband stopped working.

It was Sunday morning, Tutut’s hand was smeared by oil from the fried banana she held, as she was enjoying tv program and let the newscaster talk, although she was not paying attention to the newscaster.

“Excuse me, Teh,” a high voice came to Tutut’s ears, “is Asma awake?” she asked Tutut who was relaxing on her new green couch.

She looked at the person, she smiled “Eh Pita! I guess Asma is still asleep, what is happening?” she asked the girl

“I have a message from Aa Ceceng’s wife for her to stay away from her husband,” Pita said.

The fact about the relationship between her daughter and Ceceng slapped Tutut right in the face, like lightning during a clear day. Her hands were shaking and her view was blurred at that time. With no more consideration, Tutut decided to wake her daughter up. She could not think clearly, all she could possibly think was to beat her daughter who supported her family needs as hard as she could.

“Where is the Ungkluk?!” said Tutut as she tried to hold herself from breaking her own house’s door. The first time she came to Asma bedroom, she found her daughter was sleeping
with her innocent baby sleeping face. Her anger is getting worse after looking at her face whose looked so much like her ex-husband.

“I know you have a relationship with Ceceng,” Tutut screamed in front of Asma’s face and added one more slap on Asma’s right cheek.

Tutut’s voice was powerful enough to break a glass, making her daughter's heart pounded faster than usual, Asma could not speak, her vocal cords felt like had been cut out with scissors.

“Answer my question!” Anger filled her emotion. Reflexively, her hand slapped her daughter’s bare cheek, leaving red marks on it.

***

Asma was sitting at a corner of Kang Yayat’s café, she was biting her pink coloured nails. Her pupils moved to search for something that she, herself did not know. Her eyes caught a cat licking Kang Yayat’s feet, his eyes turned red, he was busy counting money, did not pay any attention to one of her best dangdut singers. A dangdut song was played in that night café, although the night café was located in the middle of a small forest, the volume was set not too loud because it was already dawn.

“Geulis, why are you here?” Ceceng asked Asma as he tried to pull a chair to sit in front of her face, “Neng, you can tell me what happened to you if you want to,” he said.

Melted by Ceceng’s gaze, the wall that she had built for so long finally collapsed. She spent 15 years of her life having no close friends except his brother whom she loved and who loved her so much. Sometimes she talked to him about how she felt to live in her parent’s house, she told him about the burden she had there. She told him about how lucky he was to be a guy who had more beautiful chances to express himself.

“A, Emak found out about our relationship. She did not want us to see each other anymore. What should we do, A?” she asked. Her hands were busy wiping the tears that fell down from her dark almond shaped eyes.

_I wish I knew the answer._ All he knew it was impossible for him to ask this young girl who was 13 years younger than him to run away with him. Deep inside-his heart, he did not want to lose her. He did not know what to do anymore except kept silent, afraid to tell her what was
actually on his mind. Next to him, Asma was gazing at him, waiting for his reaction. He scratched his head, he was not paying any attention to the girl in front of her, his eyes wandered around trying to find something.

Asma cleared her throat, breaking the silence between them. “I need to run away from my family,” she said as she saw an extreme shocked reaction from Ceceng’s face, “just for a day. I just want to see whether they care or not.”

Ceceng looked at Asma in her dark shaped almond eyes, grabbed her hands, and nodded. “Okay. let’s do it.”

***

What Asma said on Sunday night was beyond Ceceng’s expectation. He never thought that it was that easy to be her everything. He always thought that she loved her family that much, but after such a long conversation, he knew that he was a part of her life, too. Suddenly an idea to keep her for his own came across his mind. He watched a teenage girl beside him. He remembered what her father taught him to achieve what he wanted he had to be someone's part of life to be someone's everything. His eyes caught a pair of the girl’s eyes staring at them. He knew what he has to do with her that night.

He started to speak softly as his left hand ran through her wavy hair. “You know what, Neng? I think I know how to make our love last forever.” He said.

It was before dawn, inside his deceased grandmother’s house. There was no bed, only an old bale-bale that her mother bought for his grandma a few years ago before she passed away. It was before dawn when Ceceng decided to take something important from women’s part of life in their living area. He did not care if he seemed so greedy, he just wanted Asma for his own, he did not want to share her with anyone, even her own family.

“Asma, let’s live, and start a family together,” he said as he lied next to her.

Asma laughed and then turned her body. "How? You are married and I do not think your wife is going to give you permission to do polygamy?" she asked him.

“I will leave them,” he said as he stroked her tan skin, “I promise you.”
That night was a night that held title as the most sinful night they had ever spent their entire lives. There was no light that helped Asma to see Ceceng’s tan skin since his grandmother’s house was placed in a rural area with no access to electricity. The waves splashed fast and loud, added a more romantic atmosphere between them. They did not have any single fabric to cover their bodies but they were covered by their lusts. They did not mind the cold sea air, because their minds drove them to the seventh heaven, made both of their cheeks turned red, as red as a pomegranate.

***

Asma was gazing at Ceceng’s sleeping face. His mouth was a little bit opened, showing the gaps from his teeth. There was snoring sound came from inside of his mouth and his straight and red colored hair covered his forehead. That night was her biggest mistake, she regretted every single thing that happened to her was a part of the most important things from her life. However, she had to let go of the fact that it already happened, nothing could change the situation.

When the sun started to shine through the cellings of the house, she turned her head and gazed at the ceiling. Her mind kept remembering the moment when she spent with the guy. A moment when she gave everything, she had for the guy who grabbed her heart. Last night Ceceng confessed his opinion about her parents who only used her as a money machine. There was a side where she was understanding about her family’s condition situation. However, there was a side where whatever he said was true, her mother who was actually still able to work to support her family or to even sent her to school.

Suddenly Ceceng’s voice surprised her while she was thinking about her family. “Neng, What happened?” touched Asma’s cheek.

“Nothing, A. I should get ready to work,” she said and then she stood up from Ceceng’s Grandmother’s bale-bale in a hurry and picked up her clothes that lied on the floor next to bale-bale.

***
After a night with Ceceng that she would never forget, she came home and got ready while her mother was plucking her husband’s white hair. Her mother never asked where she had been the whole day. Her heart was broken into million pieces knowing what Ceceng said was true. Their family did not actually really care about her.

Suddenly, her soul was brought to the most tragic day of her life. The day when she had to give up on her dream to finish high school and work in a big and tall building. Now it was all just a dream for her. It was an impossibility for a company to employ someone who did not even finish middle school.

It was a beautiful afternoon in Sukabumi city, Asma. The Mojang Sukabumi was carrying a tote bag full of chips that she usually sold at school to make ends meet. The weather was very hot that day. Her forehead was covered by her own sweat. She just arrived at her parents’ small and shady house that felt like heaven after walking for 4 kilometers from her school. She was still wearing her school uniform, a white shirt combined with a long blue skirt. She was sitting in a bale-bale in front of her house and she stretched her foot.

Suddenly, Tutut came to bale-bale and sat next to her. “Teh Asma, I have made a decision,” said Tutut.

Tutut gasped for air. “Teh, you need to drop out of school, and start to replace my position as a singer in Kang Yayat’s café. Everything is getting more expensive, Emak and Bapak cannot pay for you and your brother tuition fees anymore,” she said to her daughter.

Asma could not hold her tears, she cried and she never cried like that before. Her heart was broken. For her, that kind of news was the worst news she had ever received.

“Emak really hopes that you will understand. We need you to help us to support our family, to send your brother to school,” She added softly to calm Asma down, “education is not necessary for women.”

Asma kept silent for a few minutes but then she forced herself to speak. “Alright, Mak,” said Asma did not move.
Tutut sent a thin smile. Her biggest dream since Asma was just a little baby finally came true. Her sacrifices had finally paid off, she would enjoy her perfect life as a mother of a dangdut star in her village.

***

It was a rainy dawn, Asma was sitting on a chair. She was not alone, her boyfriend was in sitting front of her. They were waiting for the rain to stop. They were not alone because a short and bald man in his fifties was watching them, he was also waiting for the rain. It was Kang Yayat, Asma’s boss. The only one who secretly analyzed them. He knew everything about Asma’s life pressure, but did not know what to do because he still needed Asma as a magnet in his night café.

That bald man was observing at Asma’s body language whenever she was with Ceceng, his friend’s son. She never seemed so happy, Yayat felt she found a new power inside of Asma’s eyes. Yayat knew that Ceceng was an unhappy married guy. He also knew that Ceceng was stupid for sticking with his selfish wife. As a man, Yayat was very offended because he strongly believed that men should have been respected by women. He saw that Ceceng had insulted men’s pride by being a henpecked husband to her gold miner wife.

He knew what was going on with his dangdut singer in his café. He clearly knew what kind of person Tutut was. He pitied Asma and Ceceng. That was why he kept silent. Deep inside his heart, Yayat wanted them to be happy. He knew if he could help them, he would also take more money than he was currently received since Tutut threatened Yayat that she would ask Asma to quit her job if he did not give her a part of Asma’s salary as a royalty.

While he was watching the two lovebirds talking, tapping on each other's shoulder, and laughing. After a few considerations, he knew that it was the right time to give the best advice he could ever give to someone. He believed that his decision was the best decision for all, except Asma’s family.

“How far you two planning for your future?” Yayat asked. Asma was shocked, so did Ceceng.
Asma could not think about another thing to say, her voice was unstable. “What do you mean, Papi?” she asked, followed by a nervous laugh.

Yayat laughed after he saw their shock reaction. “Asma, my darling, do you think I am stupid?” he laughed again as he tapped on her shoulder. “Tell me. I will keep it a secret between us.”

Asma was worried at the first time, then she saw Ceceng. Ceceng nodded his head, he seemed to agree if Asma told Yayat everything. “I am planning to run away from home, as you may know, my parents do not like him,” she looked at Ceceng again, “I love him, but what about my family? They need me.”

“Asma, I am fifty-six and as old as your stepfather. I know what kind of person your father is. He is crafty, he has been using you and your mother,” Yayat said, “it is too late to wake your mother up, but I know I still have enough time to help you.”

Yayat’s explanation was understandable and made sense. He did not just tell her about how her stepfather brain-washed her mother but he also told her about how unfaithful he was after he got married to her mother. She could not believe that her mother would forgive him even after she found out about his affair with another woman a few times. Yayat explanation brought her to the stage where she was already sick about her family. Since then, she promised herself not to go back to her parents’ wicked house.

***

It was her very hard decision, but Yayat’s explanation haunted her everywhere she went. She could not even look at her stepfather like the way she usually did before. She had zero tolerance for someone who cheated. For Asma, what her stepfather did was the ugliest truth she had to face in her life. He was the one who had to be responsible for her messed up life. He was the only reason why her mother stopped her dream to have a better life.

It was still dawn, no one was awake; Azan sound was heard from a mosque. Asma never prayed, her mother never taught her how to do Muslim’s pray, or to send her to free reciting Quran class in her village. The funny truth, her brother had a better life. He still went to school at
that moment, and he knew how to read or write in Arabic because he held their mother's agreement. Unfortunately, her mother always said that someday her brother would be the head of his own family, so he had to be smart.

It was the very first bravest moment of her life. The only thing she said to herself that moment was blessings that she gave to herself. She could feel happiness had been waiting for her all this time, she could feel that happiness is right in front of her. She smiled as she walked into Kang Yayat’s night café. Her boyfriend, Ceceng had been waiting for her. He could not wait to show her their new house that they rent with Asma’s savings.

***

Tutut had just woken up from her sleep, she believed that her son had arrived at his school, and her daughter was still sleeping. It was a beautiful day, as usual, the bird was singing, and the air was cool because of the rain last night. As she slowly sipped a cup of tea on her hand, her eyes accidentally met clocks on her wall. Asma had been sleeping for so long, she usually had 6 hours of sleep, now she had been sleeping for more than 7 hours. Tutut sighed, as she held little anger in her heart for her innocent daughter who started to be a rebellious teen. Tutut understood why her daughter changed into a different person, and she did not think that it matters that much.

She opened the door of Asma’s room but she got nothing. Her daughter was not in her room. She took a step into her room and found a paper was lying on Asma’s bed. She took it and read it carefully. Tutut never went to school, but Asma’s biological father taught her how to read and write when they were still together.

Dear Emak,

I am writing this to let you know that I know exactly what happened between me, you, and your husband. I also know the fact that your husband used the money that I made to support his children and you knew it but you let him.

I felt like I was betrayed by my own family, especially by you.

So far, I tried to understand your situation so I agreed when you asked me to drop out of school.
I know it was already late for you to realize how evil your husband is, but it is not too late for me to improve my life. I do not want my life to end like you, that is why I am leaving.

Asma

She froze, could not move. Her hands were shaking. She could not let the letters go from her hands. She did not know what to do. She lost her daughter who worked for her family. She knew who should be responsible for this mess. No, it was not herself, but Kang Yayat, her ex-boss, the one who she thought was good. He was actually the one who started the fire and she was pretty sure that he would get burned by the fire he made.

***

A woman was running as she was holding a crumpled paper on her right hands, she did not mind her wet body. Thunderbolt spurred her adrenaline to go faster and faster, with a irregular breath she kept on running. Suddenly she remembered when she was nineteen. She still remembered how hard her life was when she had to decide that she had to leave her husband because of his family.

I never thought it would end up like this. She said to herself, as she was arrived at Kang Yayat’s house. “Kang Yayat,” said Tutut as she knocked on Kang Yayat’s door, “It is Tutut, Kang. I need to talk to you.”

Suddenly, someone opened the white door, and she saw a thin and short man was standing in front of her. His eyebrows were narrowed. “What happened?” he asked her with a high tone.

“Kang have you told Asma something about my present husband?” She screamed as she raised her hands, showing the letter from Asma.

He laughed sarcastically. “It was not my fault that she left you two! You only use her as your money machine,” he said, as he pointed a finger in front of Tutut’s face, "You know I have money, do not bother her or I will send you to jail for exploiting an underage children like her!"
Tutut was speechless, she never thought this would go too far. Kang Yayat was well known as the richest man in her village. He had money and power. He could send her and her husband to jail. She did not want to spend her time in jail. What about her son? He was still a teenager. He did not know anything. Since her ex-boss threatened her, she decided to let Asma free, and she had to start working to keep her marriage.

***

Kang Yayat’s night café was very crowded that evening. All tables were fully taken by people. They were busy moving their body to the sound of rhythm from the speaker. There a lot of guys in their fifties were flirting with their girls, and the voice of women while they were laughing. The atmosphere of that night was shrouded with a forbidden sting aroma from a glass bottle with maroon liquid in it, many of them enjoyed the hurly-burly atmosphere in that night café, dancing like they did not have any unpleasant burden in their life.

A man sat at the back of the stage as he was counting his money on his hands. His mouth open, showing off his yellow neat teeth to the world. “Asma, you are my star, darling.” She stared at him with a glance at her eyes, watching him while he was counting money.

A little green sparkle decorated her almond eyes, “Thank you, Papi,” doubts and fears covered her mind, slow down her brainwork. She moved her hands towards Yayat’s shoulder, “It seems like I will get a bonus,” she laughed as her hand reached a chair and pulled them.

Yayat sent a big smile to her. “Of course, darling,” he raised his hands, showing his precious small piece of paper to the girl in front of him.

That night was supposed to be one of the best starry nights that Asma ever spent since she started working in Kang Yayat’s night café. She was sitting in a chair behind the stage, facing people who seemed really enjoying the nightlife as they were holding cups drink. The light was not really good but she could see their faces turned red as they raved something bizarre. However, she felt something that blocking her heart to feel the euphoria without Ceceng around her that night.
“Everybody stay on your place!” A shout suddenly stopped the activity in Kang Yayat’s night café, the music suddenly stopped, people stopped dancing as they were staring at the sound source, no people dared to move, they were just like a dog that obeyed their owner.

“I am sorry, but what is happening here?” Kang Yayat asked, without moving he stood on his place, sweats covered his face, and his knees were shaking.

“We detected that there is a narcotics transaction in this area,” the guy came closer to where Kang Yayat was standing. He was holding a clear white paper on his right hand and its envelope on his right hand, “we have permission from our department,” he stopped right in front of Kang Yayat’s frozen body.

It was the Asma’s very first moment to see narcotics raid with her own eyes. She saw some guys were crying, asking for mercy to the police officer. Some girls worked in the same place were wriggling when they were brought to the police station. She saw the table in the place where she worked was fell to ground irregularly, the shatter of glasses was overrun the place. Asma’s feet felt like being nailed the ground where she bounded.

“Excuse me, miss. Do you mind to show your ID card?” said a deep voice that sent her shivers, it was a sound of a big tall man who stood very upright, with a thick moustache covered the gap area between his mouth and nose.

The moment she heard that voice was the moment where she lost a half of her strength to stand.“I,” she started to spoke as she tried to stabilize her voice, a teardrop of water from her eyes fell to the ground touching her barefoot, “I have not got my Id, I am still fifteen years old.”

The man’s eyes right in front her widely opened, he opened his mouth mumbling something that she could not understand. His eyebrows furrowed as he was reaching for his walkie talkie. “This is Cepi reporting that there is an underage girl working in this night café.” The police said to his friend through a walkie talkie in his hand.

***

Tik-tok-tik-tok The sound of the clock that hung on the wall, sounded like a bullet shot that was ready to paralyze her. It was screaming really loud fulfilled the silence of the police station that day. Uneasiness sorely covered them. It was already morning and the police officer
had not finished interrogating people. Many people were lying on the floor without even a thin fabric to protect them from the cold of the tile floor. Many of them were sitting as they were covering their faces with their knees. Asma was sitting on a chair. In front of her there was a police officer. Her hands and legs were shaking, the temperature of her surrounding was getting hotter.

“Calm down, Neng. I only have a few questions for you then you can go home,” a police officer in a grey and brownish uniform spoke to her with a big smile on his face. He tried to calm her down, “What is your name?” asked one of the police officers. He stared at Asma’s smudged mascara carefully.

She was as weak as a broken hearted cupid. Her muscles were really hard to move, she could barely open her eyes. “My name is Asma Pebrima,” she answered tried to stay conscious.

The police officer quickly typed her name on the office’s computer. “How old are you?” he asked again, as he carefully stared at her again.

“I am fifteen years old,” she answered fearfully.

“Your Parents name?” the police officer asked again.

She kept silent for a while, did not know what to answer. She stared at the police officer who was still staring at her carefully, waiting for her answer. “My mother’s name is Tuti,” she paused, scratching her head. She cleared her throat, trying to find a way to tell the police officer, “I have two fathers. My biological father, I believe his name is Toha Kusnadi but he separated from my mother, I live with my mother and my step father,” she answered.

The police officer opened his eyes wider than usual. His heart beat faster. He lost his control. Both of his hands felt like being nailed to the table. There was not anything else that filled in his ears except her friends typing other testifier’s answer, and Asma’s irregular sound of breath. He looked at her closely, tried to make sure.

“I think I know your father,” he said while he was moving his hands to grab his phone and started to dial a phone number.

***
A man took a step out of his mint green car. He looked tidy his hair was neatly combed sideways. His hair smelled like a flowery mint from his hair gel, and his clothes seemed really nice. It seemed to be he did not come from rural areas in Sukabumi. He looked more modern compared to other men in that area. Right behind him, there was a woman, whose smile could melt everybody’s heart. Her head was covered by her pink hijab scarf, she let her hijab fluttering gallantly added an invincible effect to her. In her hands, there was a plastic bag filled in with a lunch box, a big bottle of mineral water, and a few caplets of vitamin c.

The guy opened a door with a big smile on his face. “Excuse me, I am Toha ,” the man said, stretched out his hands, “I want to meet my friend, officer Darlan,” he added, shaking a police officer’s hand.

The police officer’s raised one of his eyebrows stared at their touching hands. “This way, sir,” the police officer guided the man to a wooden brown door near his table, fisted his hand and started to tap the brown door with his fisted hand.

The door was opened by a police officer who had a blurred name tag on his uniform. “Toha! Come in!” he welcomed Toha and the woman behind him.

“Thank you, Darlan,” he tapped on Darlan’s shoulder. His eyes were searching for the presence of a girl who sat right in front of Darlan’s desk. He froze for a little while after seeing the girl who was covering her face with her hands, she had an irregular breathing pattern. He turned his body, facing the woman who was also petrified in her place, “Honey, could you please go for her first?” he asked his wife. His hands were getting colder his vision was getting blurred.

Her wife took a deep breath, putting her hands on her husband’s face and wiped away the tears on his face. “I think It is better if you go first,” she smiled and tapped on his shoulder, trying to strengthen him.

The situation in the police officer turned into something he had never expected before. The weather was getting hotter although the air conditioner worked really well, many pairs of eyes were staring at him, confused about what was happening, curious about the reason they were crying. There were no songs, or sound from people talking to each other except the sound of the air conditioner tried its best to cool down the atmosphere.
He stepped forward, and then stopped right beside the crying girl he saw from the door. “Asma, honey,” he stopped as he bowed down his body. His right hands touched the girl’s hand, her skin was so tacky, “I am your father.”

Asma uncovered her face, her face looked very red, her eyes were also red and swollen. In the outer area of her eyes, there was a sprinkle of glitter mixed with her smudged mascara. She observed the man beside her, and without any hesitation, she hugged him and started to cry again.

***

Asma was enjoying her delicious lunch, in front of her, there were her father and her stepmother who looked nothing like her biological mother. She stared at them carefully, tried to observe them one by one.

She put her lunch box to the desk in front of her, her father and the woman next to him were still staring at her with a warm smile on their face. Both of them were holding hands like they always wanted to be connected to one another. “Abah, can I ask you something?” she asked softly.

Toha was surprised, his hands were still cold but he tried to calm his nerves down, “Sure, honey. What do you want to ask?”

Asma kept silent for a while. She stared at the broken white tiles of the police office, collecting her guts to ask her father the question that she kept since she was so little. “Why did you leave me and emak?” she wondered, holding a plastic spoon on her right hand.

Her father took a deep breath, he was gazing at his daughter’s eyes as it was something he finally could hear from his daughter. He released his wife’s hands, stood up and walked closer to Asma.

“I did not leave you two,” he said, leave a shiver on Asma’s body, his daughter’s hands were shaking, “I met your mother who worked as a prostitute when I did my research from campus. I liked her, she is gorgeous. We kept in touch for a year then I decided to marry her, without telling my parents about her past. One day my mother found out that she was a prostitute, she asked me to leave your mother. We did not know that she heard our conversation,
she ran away from us, leaving my hometown and moved here.” He explained, his voice was hoarse and getting deeper than usual. His eyes wandered to the moment he lost his ex-wife and his one and only daughter.

After she heard about the explanation, she stood up, shook her head and walked farther from her father. She crossed her hand on her chest, blocking her father and her stepmother. Her face turned red as a blooming red rose in her backyard. He walked toward her, then held her shoulder tried to hug his one and only child he had.

“But as my responsibility, I still send your Emak child support every single month.” He said to her slowly, tried to make her understand.

“What? Child support?” she turned her body around, startled by her father’s confession.

Her father briefly nodded.

Asma scratched her head with both of her hands, she tried to understand what she just heard. “If you sent her child support every month, then why do I have to work to support their needs?” she asked to her father.

“That is the part that I really do not understand,” he said to her, leaning his hand on her head and stroking her familiar midnight hair. “I was shocked when Darlan called me this morning that you are working as a dangdut singer in a night café.”

Asma looked at her father, her eyes and nose turned red again, and smiled “I am so sorry, Abah. I always thought you are a bad guy because that was what Emak told me.” She hugged him, sank her face on her father’s chest hearing her father’s heartbeat’s melody.

He hugged her back. Warm feeling run through his veins, his heart was shaking, he smiled, after several years, he finally met his daughter. “Neng, let’s live with abah,” he asked her.

She released her body, shook her head slowly. “I cannot, Abah. I live with my boyfriend, I am the breadwinner.” She told her Father, made him shocked.

The woman who happened to be Asma’s stepmother stood up from a couch and walked toward them. “Neng,” he touched Asma exposed shoulder, “I do not mean to interfere in your
personal life. but if he loved you, he would come to meet you here,” she said, softly like a sweet melody to Asma’s ears, “in my opinion, it is better for you to live with us. You can go back to school and finish it.”

Asma kept silent. she looked at her step and suddenly said, “I need to make a call first,” and then she walked to the toilet and took her phone and directly pushed the button of numbers she knew very well.

***

A strong smell of urine burst and fulfilled a small bathroom in a police station toilet. One of the best dangdut songs by Ria Amelia, SMS could be heard for the eighth times really loud. Asma was squatting on a toilet bowl as she waited for Ceceng to pick up her calls. She took a deep breath every time a voice of a woman reminded her to try to call him again later. A, please pick up my call she spoke to herself, her finger was still busy pushing phone’s buttons.

“Hello?” Ceceng’s voice popped out.

Asma smile gladly and then sighed trying to relieve from her stress. “A, I am at police station. You are planning to pick me up or something, right? Because my father and my stepmom want to bring me to Tasikmalaya,” she said.

He laughed sarcastically. “No. I do not want to have any relation with someone who had been arrested by police,” he said.

Asma bulged her eyes tried to see her phone on her right ears. “What? What about our plan to get married?” she asked him, tried to calm her nerve down.

“Innocent yet so stupid,” Ceceng smirked for the second times, “I never really had plan to marry you, I only want your money so my wife would come back with me again. So you better live with your dad, hopefully he will take care of you. Do not ever find me again, Asma.”

Tut-tut-tut

Asma covered her face with her knees, she could not hold her tears. She did not even mind the disgusting smell of the toilet. Her ears kept on buzzing, like there was a mosquito.
flying around inside her ears. *Rat-a-tat-tat.* A sound of someone’s hand suddenly knocked the door leaf.

“Asma?” A female soft voice called her name. “Is everything okay?” she asked her curiously.

Asma wiped her tears with her hands and unlocked the door. Right behind the door, her stepmother stood with a tiny smile decorated her beautiful face.

“He came back to his wife,” Asma hugged her, and continue to sob on her shoulder.

Her stepmother hugged her back, stroke the back of Asma’s exposed body, “it is okay, Asma. At least you know that he is not the right person for you,” she tried to comfort her, “now you must live with me and your *Abah,* go back to school,” she said released her body and leaned on Asma’s body, brought her to her *Abah* that was ready to bring her home to his hometown, Tasikmalaya.

***

Asma was sitting on her bed. Confusion and doubts filled her brain, her past still haunted her everywhere she went. Her eyes were staring at a school registration form, her hands were folded. *It had been a year, and Bunda always wants me to go back to school* she told herself, tried to convince herself to go back to school. Next to her, her Step mother was standing, waiting for Asma’s answer.

“*Neng,* people make mistakes,” her stepmother told her as she grabbed her daughter’s shoulder tried to calm her. “Making such a big change in someone’s life is not as easy as turning over a hand palm,” she said and kissed top of his daughter’s head, and left Asma’s room.

She looked at the back of her step mother’s body. Pain and guilty stroked her chest. Suddenly her memory brought her to the moment when her step mother brought her to a nursing house. A woman in her sixties touched her back, with a big smile on her face. The woman’s eyes were glaring at her, showing a pinch of light.

"*Geulis,*” the woman smiled at her, “how old are you?”
Asma turned her back, looking at a figure of a woman who was sitting in a wheelchair. “I am 15, Nek,” she answered as she bowed down her body a little bit.

The woman sent her a wide smile, showing her yellow stain on her teeth, and brownish flack inside the gaps of her teeth. “My granddaughters must be around your age; what grade are you in?” the woman asked her.

Asma froze, she looked at her, full of doubts. The thoughts about her stepmother who had a pretty big position in the nursery house came across her mind. She shook her head, “I just moved to Tasikmalaya a month ago, so I have not started to go to school again,”

The woman looked at her, tried to analyze her body language since she knew that she was good at reading people’s body language. “We may be just met today, but I just really want to tell you that you should be an independent woman,” she smiled softly, her eyes wandered around. “I was a bad girl, I dropped out of school because of love, but he dumped me five years after we got married because he had an affair with another woman. I had to work to support my daughter’s life, but unfortunately she made the same mistakes like I did.”

Asma looked at her deeply, sympathized about her story. She could feel her heart started to crack, like there were a million hammers hit her tiny heart continuously. “What happened to your children? How could you be here if you have children?” she asked the woman.

“My daughter did not finish her high school, but decided to elope. A few years after their marriage, her husband left her, she committed suicide right in front of their daughter, and her husband took their daughter away from me.” The woman said, her eyes glistened with tears of pain, like there was nothing that she regretted more than the death of her daughter. “Do not make the same mistakes like I did, like my daughter did. You are still so young, you still have a lot of chances.”

***

A girl was standing in front of a mirror in her room. Her room looked really large, clean, and girly. The wall was painted pink, and decorated by so many hello kitty stickers. The other side of the bed, there was an air conditioner to keep the temperature cool. The girl was staring at
herself while she was wearing a large long-sleeved white shirt with a long dark blue skirt was wrapping around her short legs. She sent a big smile to her reflection to calm down herself. Her heart beaten faster than usual, she could hear the rhythm of her own heartbeat. Dug...dug...dug. Her hands were busy covering her head with a white scarf, playing with straight pin to bind each side of the scarf.

“Asma, come on,” a woman voice suddenly shocked her while she was busy tidying her hijab. “Do not be late, it is your first day of school.”

Asma quicken her move, “I am coming,” she screamed loudly and grabbed her bag then hurry to the dining room inside her house.

In the dining room, Asma could spot her step mother was busy preparing breakfast for her entire family, in front of her step mother, her Abah was sitting, as he was reading his daily newspaper, with a cup of hot black coffee in front of him. She smiled happily, her heart started to get warm. It was that kind of situation that she never got from her Emak’s family.

“Asma, hurry! Eat your breakfast,” said her step mother as she pulled a chair for her with a smile on her face.

She looked at her step mother and smiled back to her, “Thank you, Bunda.” She said to her Bunda.

Her Bunda looked at her, spot something strange. She smiled at Asma and tap Asma’s shoulder slowly. “It is okay, Asma. Your friend will like you because you are such a good girl. Everyone wants to have a good person as their friend,” she spoke to Asma softly, looking at her eyes tried to convince her that everything would go as smooth as a car in a highway.

“But Bunda, what if they found out about my past life?” she asked her Stepmother, as she took a plate for her to eat.

“Remember about what your Abah told you, honey?” Her stepmother asked her, waiting for Asma’s response, the clock was ticking she could not wait for her reaction any longer. She smiled, “Everybody makes mistakes, do not let your mistakes stop you from achieving your dream. Hey Asma! It is time to go, come on!” she told her as she stood up from her chair, tapping Asma’s shoulder, pressing her to finish her breakfast.
Asma looked at the clock, tried to romp with the time. The ticking sound from the clock sounded louder than usual. *Today is my first day of school, I cannot be late.* She thought to herself, as she was chewing her favorite breakfast. After she finished her breakfast, she ran to her *Abah* who was still reading his newspaper, with a cup of coffee in his left hand.

“Abah” she greeted her *Abah* as she reached out her hands, she took her father’s hand and put the back of his to her forehead. “I am going to go to school now.” She told her *Abah*, and sent him a thin smile.

Her *Abah* smiled back at her. Unexpectedly, he put his hand on the top of her daughter’s covered head. “God will protect you, always, *Geulis,*” he spoke to his one only child.

Suddenly a flashback of his serious discussion with his wife came across his mind. He was in his pajamas, holding a small notes. His eyes were busy looking at the notes. He furrowed his eyebrows as his mouth was mumbling. His wife was sat next to him as she was applying her night face cream carefully.

“A,” her wife called him as she was staring at her husband who was busy checking his income report.

He raised both of his eyebrows, his eyes was still focusing on the report. “Hm?” he answered slowly.

“do not you think that it is the right time for asma to go back to school?” she asked.

He put his report on the sitting table next to his bed and stared at her beautiful wife deeply in her eyes. “I do not think sending her back to school is a good idea,” he said, “I mean look at her, she has a dark past behind her. Do you think it is good her mental health?”

“I know she has a bad past life, but do not you think about her future?”

“I already have plan for her, *Neng,*” he answered softly, “you know I am the owner of one of the biggest souvenir shops in Tasikmalaya, right? She can take over my business someday.”

His wife laughed at him, as she nodded her head. “I know that, but she will be a mother one day, do you want your child to be the same as your ex-wife?” she asked him.
He stared at his wife, his mind was wandered around to the moment he met her daughter for the first time after years. “You are right, Neng,” he said, “but she is the one who refuses to come back to school.”

“Do not worry A, I have a plan to invite her to the nursery house that I worked in, there is an old women with a bad past like her, maybe she can help us to change her mind,” she said as she smiled to her husband with glanced shown from her eyes.

***

Asma was sitting on a plastic chair in her school canteen. She was holding a ballpoint, as she was busy reading a biology book because her first biology test was going to be held tomorrow. She sat alone, no one was there to accompany her. Her stomach was a little bit hurt, but all of the food counter in her school canteen was already closed. It was too late for her to find something to eat for her lunch.

“Asma! Do not take it too serious it is just a monthly test,” her friend spoke to Asma, as she pulled Asma’s book from the table and close it. “Do not forget to eat, here is something for you to eat,” her friend threw a full bag of cassava chips for Asma to eat.

She stared at the plastic bag of cassava and smiled. She remembered about her past life when she lived with her mother and her stepfather. Suddenly her mind brought her senses to feel the heat of the fryer when her mother fried cassava chips that she sold. She could feel her skin starting to sweat, she could smell the delicious smell of the cassava chips. She gazed at her friends, her eyes were full of tears of gold. She never expected to have a better life like today. “Fatima. Do you know what? I used to sell cassava chips every single day to help my mother.” She told her friends

Fatima widened her eyes; her mouth was opened. “Really?” she asked Asma, as she hold Asma’s shoulder. “I do not believe you. Your father owns the biggest souvenir shop in Tasikmalaya,” she said as she raised one of her eyebrows.

“It is such a long story, but I have to go now. My father’s driver has arrived,” Asma raised her index finger, pointed out to a mint green car.
Asma smiled at her friends as her hands were busy organizing her books, stationery, and of course the plastic bag full of cassava chips. Could not believe with what Asma just said to her about her past job as a Cassava chips seller, her friends was staring at her curiously and watching her while she was walking towards her car happily.

**Reflective Paper**

Child exploitation in Indonesia is one of the most common problem. Since 2011, Indonesia’s government found 1,7 million child exploitation cases. Arist Merdeka Sirait, Former head of Indonesian Child Protection Commission said "Peran orang tua sekarang bobol.". Indonesian children is in a cruel situation where they are threatened by the fact that their parents who are supposed to protect them and support them are also their biggest threat for their future. Teacher is also reported as one of the suspects of child exploitation by pushing their students to force their parents to pay off their tuition fee or they will not be able to join national exam.

Dangdut and child exploitation has a strong correlation. As I mentioned in the introduction of my research, there are several cases of children who are forced to be a dangdut singer due to the development of dangdut music genre. Unfortunately, Indonesia can only
overcome eleven thousands of child exploitation cases every year. Which means, all child exploitation cases cannot be solved by 2030 because of lack of funds.

Indonesian’s unawareness of child exploitation has become one of the main reasons of why I choose the correlation between dangdut music and child exploitation. From this research and writing, I always believe that by reading all kinds of writing, people will gain more information. So from this research I really hope that people will have their awareness of child exploitation improving

Writing Process

As many people say that Challenges, failure, and words “try again” are very common in everybody’s life process, during the writing process of my short story I faced some problems. To overcome the problem, I did a lot of uncommon activities for me to find new inspiration in order to get the best result for my short story. A few things I did are; I took a ride to the places I had never been before, hoping that I would get new interesting things that would give me more inspiration. I also watched a lot of movies from different genres, and because the theme of my short story is Dangdut, I watched a movie starred by Titi kamal which called Mendadak Dangdut. The last thing that I usually do until now is listening to sad songs. In my opinion, it is easier for us who like to write to feel what other people feel, one of the way is to let ourselves to be flown by the melody of sad songs. I also stayed in University Canteen just to observe people and what they were thinking at that time. I also brought my notes everywhere I go to write down the ideas that suddenly came to my mind.

The first five paragraphs were pretty easy for me because I already thought about it for a couple days before I started to write. The next paragraphs I started to struggle with some difficulties. One of the major difficulties that I faced during the writing process is my problem with vocabularies, in my story I still use some vocabulary and description because I did not know how to explain it in English.

As someone said that our biggest enemy is ourselves, some of my problem while writing came from myself. There are moments when I lost my mood to write because I lost all of my inspiration. There were also some moment when inspiration did not come at all even when I tried
to find it. Although I watched a lot of documentaries about night life, during the writing process the hardest thing to write was to describe the night café since I never go to a night club before.

I also changed 50% of my story board plan due to a few reasons. Firstly, the reason why I changed my story plan because in my research proposal, I used Social Oppression theory to support my short story but with my old story board I felt like I was focusing on the feminism side. So I changed it from a girl who ran away from her surroundings after she figured out that she was exploited by her societies to a girl who was helped to raise after exploitation. In my story, the main character of my short story is a teenage girl because mostly child exploitation cases happen to woman. I also choose girl as my main character because I want to portray the principle of a lot of Indonesian parents that education is unnecessary for women.

Besides the changes of my story plan, I also changed the way I write my story. My supervisor and one of my friends, Alvin told me that they could not feel the euphoria of the story. At first, the way I wrote was “Telling not showing” so my supervisor advised me to make a change for some parts of my story. It was hard because to write from telling to showing, we need to have a lot of vocabulary to describe the situation so the reader could feel. I stopped writing for a week because I did not know what to write, but during that time I read a lot of example of “Showing not telling” paragraphs to inspire me.

I did two kinds of methods to collect the data for my short story. First is I use qualitative method. In my research proposal, I only mentioned this method to gather the data because I thought my time to do the research is very limited and I believe that there is no one who would admit that they are the suspect of child exploitation. So I did a lot of online library research. I read some articles about child exploitation cases in Indonesia, and its connection to dangdut. However, during the writing process, I found that library research was not strong enough. So I decided to call one of my relative who used to live so close to night life in Sukabumi. I asked him to give me some explanation so I could have an image about the setting of place, and how nightlife works in Sukabumi.

In my short story, I use third person point of view. Since my story is about child exploitation, I need to take from every point of view of the character. My story also has a lot of antagonist character that hate each other so for me by using the third person point of view, everything will be more clear so the reader will not be confused.
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- More detail explanation about the setting of place  
- Starting to write reflective journal |                        |                     |
| 10/04/2019 | - Starting to write summary of the story and acknowledgement  
- Revision on reflective journal |                        |                     |
| 11/04/2019 | - Checking the punctuation, grammar, and word choices.  
- Final retouch |                        |                     |
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References


