

THE CHARACTERIZATION OF AMANDA COLLIER IN NICHOLAS SPARKS' *THE BEST OF ME* (2011)

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Abstract

People can learn human characterization by reading a novel since all characters reflect real-life human characteristics. The study aimed to describe the characterization of Amanda Collier as the female main character in Nicholas Sparks' *The Best of Me* (2011). By employing qualitative data analysis from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, the present study incorporated the data collection, data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing into a simultaneous, interactive process that was conducted repeatedly to build the research's trustworthiness. It was revealed that as the main character, Amanda Collier was mainly described as a pretty school girl that made her popular at her school. When she grew up, was also described as a beautiful woman. Amanda Collier was rich and had a college education. Amanda Collier had strong curiosity and she was brave and impulsive. Furthermore, she was also described as generous because she made time to volunteer in a hospital to take care of children with cancer. From this study, it is implied that while enjoying the romance, readers of Nicholas Sparks' *The Best of Me* can also learn various good characters reflected in Amanda Collier's characterizations.

Keywords: characterization, main character, novel

INTRODUCTION

Nicholas Sparks is a well-known American writer. He has written about twenty novels, some of which are adapted to film (Krisanta, 2016). One of his bestseller novels is *The Best of Me*, which was published in 2011. It is a romance novel about Dawson Cole and Amanda Collier, who had different social statuses. Dawson was a member of the Cole family who was known as a criminal family in the town. They were the lower class. Unlike Dawson, Amanda was a member of the Collier family. Collier was an upper-middle-class family. They were rich, their house was big, and they owned businesses in the town. According to Siahaan & Arianto (2015), middle-class people have higher social status than lower classes. As members of the upper-middle-class society, Amanda Collier's parents looked down on Dawson and refused to support the relationship between Amanda Collier and Dawson Cole.

In his website, Nicholas Sparks explains that a "what-if" scenario inspired the novel to explore an alternative life for Amanda Collier, who was trapped in her middle-class life. The alternative story was "what if Amanda Collier rejected the middle-class norms and married the man he loved, but came from the working class" (<https://nicholassparks.com/stories/the-best-of-me/>). The novel became a romantic novel with such inspiration, focusing on the intense love between Amanda Collier and Dawson Coles, which kept going strong even though they were separated for twenty years. The romantic genre of the novel interests many readers, making the novel a bestseller. The novel was adapted into a feature film in 2014, although it should be noted that a film adaptation would never be the same as the novel (Donaldson-Evans, 2009; Suwastini, 2014).

Academically, the novel has gained the interest of researchers. Wicaksono (2015) reviewed the novel and traced the novels' intrinsic elements to understand the novel in general. Aprilia (2015) conducted a study on the characterization of Amanda Collier by implementing psychoanalysis. By tracing Amanda Collier's speech, behaviors, and physical gestures, the study traced the psychological reasons that affected Amanda decisions in her life. Putri (2018) studied the theme of love in the novel and tried to determine what type of love was developed between Amanda Collier and Dawson Cole, since they were not married but they sacrificed for each other. Djakaya (2017) was more interested in analyzing the characterizations of Dawson Cole in Nicholas Sparks' *The Best of Me*. For Djakaya, it was essential to focus on how Dawson Cole's characters were affected by the different father figures in his life from the perspective of analysis. Such a point of view can provide a deeper understanding of the characters (Setiawan et al., 2021; Suwastini, Asri, et al., 2020; Widasuari et al., 2020). Mandey et al. (2019) took a feminist perspective to read the novel in order to trace the feminist ideologies included in the novel, which may raise awareness about feminist values among readers (Anggawati et al., 2018; Suwastini, 2013; Suwastini et al., 2018; Suwastini, Banjar, et al., 2020).

Following the lead from the previous studies, the present study is also focused on analyzing Nicholas Sparks' *The Best of Me*. Like the study conducted by Aprilia (2015) and Djakaya (2017) the present study was focused on the characterization of Amanda Collier. However, different from Aprilia (2015), the present study is focused on the intertextual analysis of Amanda's characterizations, without employing psychoanalysis. And unlike Djakaya's (2017) study, the present study is focused on the characterizations of Amanda Collier, not Dawson Coles'. A slight departure is also marked in this study by focusing only on the positive characterization of Amanda Collier, placing her as the female main character who was also the object of love for the male main character, Dawson Coles. This study is expected to provide more thorough descriptions of Amanda Collier's positive characterizations, which can benefit students of literature about how a character is revealed and developed. The study results are also expected to bring forward the values reflected through Amanda Collier's positive characterizations.

METHOD

This study was conducted in qualitative design, following the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014) to analyze the data. The research subject was a novel entitled *The Best of Me*, written by Nicholas Sparks, published in 2011 by Grand Central Publishing in the United States of America. This novel consists of 333 pages which divided into 23 sub-chapters and an epilogue.

The method of data collection was through reading and note-taking, where the researcher acted as the main instrument, supported by notes and tables. To clarify the units of analysis, the novel's narrative was first segmented into plot sequences following the segmentation technique proposed by Bordwell & Thompson (2008). In this segmentation, the narrative was divided based on the major events revealed by the plot. A sequence covers an event. A sequence can have several subsequences. A subsequence consists of an incident that composes the event in the corresponding sequence. The reading was conducted several times. In each reading, the characterizations of Amanda Collier were marked and recorded. During the analysis, the recorded characterizations of Amanda Collier were then categorized. Each characterization was supported by proofs in the form of a description excerpted from the novel. The excerpts were then elaborated to display the data comprehensively to allow trustworthy conclusion drawings.

Following the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles et al. (2014), the data collection, the data condensation/categorization, the data display, and the conclusion drawing were conducted simultaneously. It means, while the data collections were conducted repeatedly, the data were condensed and categorized. Based on the categorizations, the data display was conducted while the data collection and the data condensation were kept repeatedly going to make sure all the data from the novel were recorded and categorized consistently. The conclusion was continuously drawn and revisited along with the repeated data collection, data condensation, and data display.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to reveal Amanda Collier's positive characterizations in Nicholas Sparks' *The Best of Me* (2011). After repeated readings of the novel and simultaneous data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, it was revealed that Amanda Collier was described as pretty, educated, brave, curious, and generous.

Amanda Collier's Characterization as Pretty

Prettiness is the physical attractiveness of a person. Pretty women tend to be treated more positively in daily interactions than less attractive individuals (Lorenzo et al., 2010). As the character that captivated the main character's love, Amanda Collier was generally described as beautiful. The description of her good looks appeared in subsequences 4a, 7a, and 14b.

Subsequence 4a introduced Amanda Collier as a beautiful, rich, and popular girl at school. One of the descriptions of Amanda Collier as beautiful and popular can be observed in the following excerpt from subsequence 4a.

“He always thought she was pretty, but he wasn’t alone in that. She was popular, the kind of girl who sat surrounded by friends at a table in the cafeteria while boys vied for her attention, and she was not only class president but a cheerleader as well.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 1, p. 27)

The above excerpt was taken from Dawson's Cole impressions of Amanda Collier. According to Dawson Cole, Amanda Collier was considered pretty by most of the students. Amanda's beauty had made her popular, and other students always wanted to be with her. Dawson Cole also mentioned that Amanda Collier was a class president and cheerleader. The most generic criteria for a cheerleader are beautiful, well-built, and flexible, while a class president should be popular among the students. Thus, by mentioning that Amanda Collier was a cheerleader, Dawson Cole agreed with the general opinion of his high school friends that Amanda Collier was beautiful and popular.

In subsequence 7a, Dawson Cole met Amanda Collier as an adult after being separated from her for twenty years since their high school. Physically, Amanda Collier was revealed to have an attractive appearance, as shown in the following excerpt from subsequence 7a. Compared to her last meeting with Dawson Cole, Amanda Collier was described as more beautiful, with her blonde hair and blue eyes.

“Like him, she was wearing jeans, and as he started toward her he noticed the way her turquoise blouse deepened the color of her eyes.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 7, p. 86)

A pair of jeans is known to be a casual clothing item. Nevertheless, the words "*the way her turquoise blouse deepened the color of her eyes*" imply that Amanda chose her clothes well. She knew how to accentuate her natural beauty even though she dressed casually.

When Amanda grew up into a woman, her beauty was enhanced from her younger version, as described in subsequence 14b. Below is an excerpt from subsequence 14b.

“Her blond hair caught the late afternoon light like burnished gold, and her blue eyes were electric even at a distance. But as he continued to stare, subtle differences slowly came into focus. Her face, he noticed, had lost the softness of youth. The angles of her cheekbones were more visible now and her eyes seemed deeper, framed by a faint tracing of lines at the corners. The years, he realized, had been more than kind: Since he’d seen her last, she’d grown into a mature and remarkable beauty.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 4, p. 39)

The excerpt above describes Dawson's impression upon his meeting with Amanda after years of their separation. Amanda was described as having beautiful blond hair with bright blue eyes. Although the years had caused Amanda to lose the softness of her youth, her beauty was enhanced through the following word, "...her cheekbones were more visible". Furthermore, the words "*faint tracing of lines*" at the corner of her eyes made her beauty look mature since the trace of lines belongs to people who have aged.

The result was in line with Aprilia (2015), who found a similar characterization of Amanda Collier in terms of physical characterization. The excerpt of subsequences 4a, 7a, and 14b are the proofs of Amanda's beauty, namely her physical beauty, such as her blond hair, blue eyes, and cheekbones, and Amanda's popularity as the class president. Amanda's beauty was not only based on Dawson's personal impression but also her position as class president.

Amanda Collier as an Educated Person

As Amanda Collier and Dawson Cole met as high school students, it is clear that Amanda Collier was an educated person. Furthermore, she was also the class president, a position responsible for organizing students' activities. After high school, she went to college for further education. The description of Amanda Collier as an educated person can be observed in subsequences 4a, 4f, 5a, and 12a.

Subsequence 4a showed that Amanda studied in a high school in Pamlico country, and she had a plan to continue her study at the university. Along with the description of Amanda as a beautiful, rich, and popular girl, Amanda's acceptance in the university is also mentioned.

“That spring, she'd received notice of her acceptance to Duke, a dream of hers since she'd been a little girl.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 1, p. 14)

The excerpt above is an introduction to Amanda's educational background. Duke refers to Duke University, which is known to be one of the best schools in the country. Duke is often to be mistaken as a part of the Ivy League due to its excellent quality. Therefore, Amanda's acceptance in the university also emphasized her character as an educated person.

The university that Amanda attended is mentioned in subsequence 4f, as what can be observed in the following excerpt.

“What he didn't know was that he would not see or speak to her again. The following week Amanda moved into the dorms at Duke University, and a month after that Dawson was arrested.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 4, p. 14)

As the continuation of her acceptance into Duke University, the second line in the excerpt above explains that Amanda continued her education at Duke University, signaled by her moving to the dorm. This event happened after her break up with Dawson Cole. Despite her broken heart and the force from Dawson to continue her study, Amanda kept pursuing her education, showing her commitment to her education.

In subsequence 5a, Amanda Collier was described to realize that the education she had was meant to be useful for something beyond a housemaker.

“She liked to think she was more than just a wife and mother. She'd gone to college to become a teacher and had even considered pursuing a PhD, with thoughts of teaching at one of the local universities. She'd taken a job teaching third grade after graduation... and then life had somehow intervened.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 5, p. 19)

The first sentence in the excerpt above shows Amanda's intention to be productive beyond her role as a housemaker. It is supported by the second sentence explaining Amanda's educational background and her intention to further her education. The second sentence also explains Amanda's professional choice to be a lecturer at the local universities. The third sentence, "*She'd taken a job teaching third grade after graduation...*" further highlights how Amanda had selected a job that was linear to her educational background.

Amanda had a college educational background because her parents could fulfill her educational needs. In subsequence 12a during Dawson Cole's and Amanda Collier's trip to Morgan Tanner's office, Amanda Collier recalled her ambition to go to Duke University.

"Yes, well... my dad went to Duke, I grew up hearing about Duke, I watched Duke basketball on television. I guess it was pretty much etched in stone that if I got in, that's where I'd go. And it ended up being the right choice, because the school was great and I made a lot of friends and I grew up while I was there.

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 7, p. 90

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The excerpt above describes Amanda's ambition was rooted in her family background. She intended to join the same university where her father went. Moreover, she also talked about considering Duke university as the right place to develop herself: "*because the school was great and I made a lot of friends and I grew up while I was there.*" This statement proves that Amanda was benefitted from her education, from which she became a more mature and wiser person.

Amanda was an educated person who can be seen in her achievement during high school and acceptance into a top university. Her intention to become a teacher also highlighted her devotion to education. This is also strengthened with her intention to pursue a doctoral degree, although she decided to put down the plan. Her consistently positive attitude toward education from childhood to womanhood shows that she was a lifelong learner.

Amanda Collier's Brave Characterizations

Bravery is the ability to deal with pain without fear. It usually requires people to act impulsively without too much thought (Kinsella, Ritche & Igou, 2017). In line with this statement, Amanda was also described as a brave woman. Amanda Collier's brave characterizations can be observed in subsequences 4d, 10b, 17c, and 24b.

People's motivation to be brave varies greatly depending on their situation (Kinsella et al., 2017). It also happened to Amanda. The novel's storyline showed that Amanda had different motivations that supported her to be a brave woman. The subsequence 4d describes Amanda's bravery against her parents because they disapproved of her relationship with Dawson. It is described in the excerpt below.

"The hostility surrounding them only drew Amanda and Dawson closer together, and when Dawson began to take her hand in public, Amanda held tight, daring anyone to tell her to let go."

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 1, p.32)

The excerpt above explains the early relationship between Amanda and Dawson. As a Collier, Amanda's family was known to be wealthy and powerful. Meanwhile, Dawson Cole came from a family which had been convicted of everything from assault and battery to arson, attempted murder, and murder. Therefore, although Dawson Cole was nothing like his family, Amanda's parents were against their relationship. Her friends also began to withdraw from her after they knew that Amanda was with Dawson. However, Amanda did not care. The words "*Amanda held tight, daring anyone to tell her to let go.*" informs that not only Amanda ignored others' opinions, she also dared to challenge those who were against her relationship with Dawson.

Amanda Collier was a stubborn teenager that challenged her mother's authority. Subsequence 10b included a description of how Amanda made the decision for herself, as shown below.

"If her mom told her to stay close, Amanda would wander off. The first chance she got; if she told Amanda to wear something pretty, Amanda would skip down the steps wearing something from the back of the closet."

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 6, p.123).

The subsequence 10b showed that Amanda was brave against her mother. She did what she loved and wore what she wanted. It indicated that she acted impulsively without being influenced by her mother. The excerpt above where Amanda always did the opposite of what was being told. For example, "*If her mom told her to stay close, Amanda would wander off.*" The second line of the excerpt also highlights Amanda's impulsive behavior for "*wearing something from the back of the closet*" to upset her mother. These details entail how Amanda consistently spoke for her choice and beliefs.

Amanda's bravery was also identified in subsequence 12a during her trip with Dawson Cole to Morgan Tanner's office. They caught up with each other's stories, including reminiscing their past relationship. The following excerpt shows Amanda's bravery.

"She smiled before taking a sip of her coffee. "Do you remember when we drove down to the coast when Hurricane Diana was coming? How I kept begging you to take me, and how you kept trying to talk me out of it?... But you took me anyway. Because I wanted you to. We could barely get out of your car, the winds were so strong, and the ocean was just... wild. It was whitecaps all the way to the horizon, and you just stood there holding me, trying to convince me to get back in the car."

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 7, p. 90)

Driving down the coast during the hurricane is considered to be dangerous. However, Young Amanda insisted on going despite Dawson's rejection, which was shown from the line that Amanda said, "*How I kept begging you to take me, and how you kept trying to talk me out of it?*" Moreover, Amanda's bravery was also shown through the way she faced the hurricane. She described the hurricane vividly, implying that during the hurricane, she kept her eyes open. The words, "*...you just stood there holding me, trying to convince me to get back in the car.*" means that there was some sort of persistence from Amanda to watch the hurricane. Facing the hurricane also had something to do with the adrenaline rush in which did not bother Amanda.

Amanda's bravery was also described in her anger towards her husband, Frank. She unconsciously took her anger out on Frank for her son's accident. It was clearly explained from the excerpt of subsequence 24b as follow:

"You did this!" she screamed at him. Up and down the corridor, patients craned to peer out their open doors, and nurses froze midstride. "He shouldn't have been in the car! There was no reason for him to be there! But you got so damn drunk that you couldn't take care of yourself! Again! Just like you always do!"

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 21, p. 243)

In this situation, her bravery was influenced by her love for her son. Therefore, she bravely blamed Frank for the accident. The words *"Up and down the corridor, patients craned to peer out their open doors, and nurses froze midstride."* It shows that Amanda shouted at her husband at the hospital, in a public place. This excerpt highlights how Amanda's suppressed anger exploded, causing her to ignore the presence of other people in the hospital. The line *"But you got so damn drunk that you couldn't take care of yourself!"* shows that Amanda finally protested her alcoholic husband after years of waiting patiently for him to stop. Therefore, it signals Amanda's bravery.

This brave personality was also found in similar research conducted by Aprilia (2015). She mentioned that Amanda has a brave personality. The evidence can be seen in terms of speech and behavior, which showed that Amanda had the bravery to do something that she wanted. She was brave as she fought for her relationship with Dawson, dealt in a dangerous activity, and fought for her son's safety.

Amanda Collier's Curious Character

Curiosity is a critical motive that influences people's behavior positively or negatively (Loewenstein, 1994). Renner (2006) also states that curiosity is described as a desire for new information or knowledge. It means that people's curiosity occurs because they want to know something or get information. Amanda was presented as a curious woman since she was curious even about small things. She asked and forced in order to fulfill her curiosity. From the novel, Amanda's curiosity is presented in subsequences 5d, 7c, 22f, and 24a.

In subsequence 5d, Amanda overheard two men talked about Tuck, describing him as a crazy person. They said, *"Tuck Hostetler's still a wizard with cars, but he's sure gone crazy as a loon. Talking to his dead wife is one thing, but swearing that he can hear her answer is another."* Hearing the conversation made Amanda curious about Tuck's relationship with his. Later in sequence 7c, Amanda was described to follow her curiosity about Tuck, as shown in the following excerpt.

When she'd finally asked him about his "conversations" with his dead wife, he'd told her matter-of-factly that Clara was still around and always would be. Not only did they talk, he confessed, but he saw her as well.

"Are you're saying she's a ghost?" she asked.

"No," he answered. "I'm just sayin' she don't want me to be alone."

"Is she here now?"

Tuck peered over his shoulder. "Don't see her, but I can hear her puttering around inside the house."

Amanda listened but heard nothing other than the squeak of the rockers on the floorboards.

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 5, p. 23)

From the subsequence 5d, it can be seen that Amanda understood Tuck well, so that she wanted to make sure whether what those men were talking about was true or not. She rushed to Tuck's house and asked him about his wife. She said, "*Are you're saying she's a ghost? Is she here now?*" Amanda used those questions to get the answer to her curiosity about Tuck's wife. Then, Tuck answered, "*Don't see her, but I can hear her puttering around inside the house.*" Tuck's answer was enough to fulfill Amanda's curiosity about his wife. The fact was Tuck did not see his wife, but his wife was always around him. It was because she was his true love. Furthermore, since Tuck said he could hear her wife around the house, Amanda tried to listen. It was her effort to fulfill her curiosity about Tuck's wife. Indirectly, Amanda's behavior indicated that she would ask when she got a feeling of curiosity. Mohanty, Jena, and Pradhan (2015) state that when people get a feeling of curiosity, they will ask or find a way until their goal is fulfilled.

In sequence 7c, Amanda recalled the time she spent with Tuck in Tuck's garage. As it was where she spent her days with Dawson, Tuck's place also reminded her of Dawson. By spending the days there, Amanda grew curious about Dawson after they separated for almost twenty years, as shown in the following excerpt.

Still, as she looked out into the yard beyond the garage, she couldn't help wondering whether Dawson had ever felt such passion again and whether he was happy. She wanted to believe he was, but life for an ex-con was never easy. For all she knew, he was back in jail or hooked on drugs or even dead, but she couldn't reconcile those images with the person she'd known. That was part of the reason she'd never asked Tuck about him; she'd been afraid of what he might have told her, and his silence only reinforced her suspicions.

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 5, p. 29)

The line "*she couldn't help wondering whether Dawson had ever felt such passion again, and whether he was happy*" shows Amanda's curiosity about Dawson's life after they stopped seeing each other. Meanwhile, the line "*he was back in jail or hooked on drugs or even dead, but she couldn't reconcile those images with the person she'd known*" shows that Amanda tried to find the reasons why Dawson was arrested. She knew that Dawson would not hurt anybody. How she compared Dawson's kindness with the fact that he was sent to jail shows her suspicion. Lastly, "*she'd been afraid of what he might have told her,*" further emphasizes Amanda's suppressed curiosity. She had always

yearned to know more about Dawson, but she was not ready to tear her perfect memory of Dawson.

Moreover, Amanda's curiosity was reflected in the subsequences 22f and 24a. Those subsequences reflected Amanda's curiosity about Jared's condition after having an accident. It was presented below:

“When she neared the door, a nurse stood and intercepted her. “I’m sorry, but you can’t go in right now,” she said. “Why not?” Amanda asked, coming to a standstill. The nurse wouldn’t answer, and her expression was unyielding.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 21, p. 344)

Amanda's curiosity occurred when the nurse did not answer her question about Jared's condition. It was presented in the subsequence 22f from the quote, *“The nurse wouldn’t answer, and her expression was unyielding.”* It made her so frustrated. Later on, in subsequence 24a, Amanda asked one of the nurse again,

“When one of the ICU nurses passed by the waiting room, Amanda raced after her, catching her in the hallway. Voice trembling, she asked the obvious question. “No,” the nurse answered, “I’m sorry. So far, there’s no word on a possible donor.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 21, p. 352)

Her frustration continued when the nurse finally said, *“I’m sorry. So far, there’s no word on a possible donor.”* It hurt her because she was afraid of losing his child. Thus, her curiosity about Jared's condition influenced her psychology as a mother because she was afraid of losing her beloved son.

From the descriptions above, Amanda was consistently shown as a curious person. She was curious about many things, from her personal love journey to her care for Tuck and his wife and her love for her son. However, she dealt with her curiosity differently, which depended on her readiness to face the answer that she wanted to ask.

Amanda Collier as a Generous Person

The storyline of the novel clearly describes Amanda had strong connections with others. Being a volunteer and giving her affection to the other characters showed how generous she was. Her characterization as a generous woman is presented in subsequences 5a, 5b, and 5d.

Generosity was influenced by someone’s empathy (Mesch et al., 2011). Related to Amanda's characterization, she had a big empathy for other people. It was supported from the excerpt of subsequence 5a below:

“Thinking about the kids brought a smile to her face. Despite her volunteer work at the Pediatric Cancer Center at Duke University Hospital, her life largely revolved around the kids.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 2, p.37)

Mesch et al. (2015) stated that women are more likely to volunteer than men because they have different motivations and market participation. In this case, Amanda's motivation as a volunteer was her affection for the kids. The line "*thinking about kids brought a smile to her face*" indicates that she enjoys the presence of her children. The excerpt also shows that Amanda was a volunteer at the Pediatric Cancer Center at Duke University Hospital. She also enjoyed taking care of children other than her own. Her voluntary work shows her generosity, where she contributed to society.

Amanda's empathy for the other characters is shown in the subsequences 5b, 5d, and 12g. The subsequence 5b showed her affection to her children and her husband as follows:

"She took care of the house and kids, and a third child, Bea. She couldn't count the number of times that she'd cried about it and talked to him about it, exhorting him to think of the kids. Begged him to attend couples counseling to find a solution, or raged about his selfishness. She'd given him the cold shoulder for days, forced him to sleep in the guest room for weeks, and had prayed fervently to God. Once a year or so, Frank would take her pleas to heart and stop for a while."

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 2, p.42)

Taking care of her kids and her husband was one of the ways to show her affection and her generosity to her husband. In this subsequence, she took her role as a mother and a wife to her family. From her role as a wife, she tried to remind and give support to Frank, who was struggling because they lost their child named Bea. Although Frank kept being selfish, as shown in "*Once a year or so, Frank would take her pleas to heart and stop for a while.*" Amanda stayed for Frank. This sacrifice was rooted in her affection towards her children. Amanda even "*had prayed fervently to God*" to help her dealing with Frank. Her selflessness shows that she had a generous character towards her family, especially for the children.

Amanda's generosity could be observed from her affection for the other character named Tuck. For Amanda, Tuck was her old family friend who knew her love story with Dawson. At that time, Tuck let Dawson stay at his garage since Dawson runoff from his house. Amanda usually visited his garage in order to meet Dawson. Indirectly, she talked to Tuck, and they were closer like a family. It was supported from the following excerpt of subsequence 5d.

"By the end, he'd become her closest friend, and she'd come to feel that Tuck Hostetler knew her, the real her, better than anyone in her current life."

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 2, p.49)

Amanda cared about Tuck since Tuck witnessed how in love Amanda and Dawson were. Furthermore, Tuck had also become Amanda's friend who "*knew her, the real her, better than anyone in her current life.*" Later, it became the reason for Amanda's generosity to Tuck, shown in the subsequence 5d. It was clearly described from the excerpt as follows:

“But lately she’d visited Oriental and Tuck even when her mother was out of town. More often than not, she cooked dinner for him as well. Tuck was getting on in years, and though she liked to tell herself that she was simply checking in on an old man, both of them knew the real reason she kept coming back.”

(Nicholas Sparks, *The Best of Me*, 2, p.46)

The first line, *“But lately she’d visited Oriental and Tuck even when her mother was out of town,”* indicated that Amanda and Tuck lived in different towns. Thus, Amanda had to spare her time and energy to visit Tuck. On the other hand, Amanda tended to ignore her mother's warnings due to their constant disagreements. This further highlights how Amanda was careful in spending her time and energy. Although her initial relationship caused Amanda's visit, Amanda also cooked for Tuck and conversed with Tuck, who had been lonely. Visiting, cooking dinner, and accompanying Tuck were the ways Amanda has done to show her generosity.

Therefore, subsequences 5a, 5b, and 5d indicated that Amanda was a generous woman for her family and the other character. The characterizations of Amanda become a generous person in attributive by Aprilia (2015) that Amanda had a good personality. It is proved by Amanda's behavior, including volunteering in Duke University Hospital, caring for her family despite Frank's selfishness, and caring for her friend.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The Best of Me is a novel talking about the story between Dawson Cole and Amanda Collier. While previous studies focused on the analysis of Dawson Cole's characterization and psychoanalysis towards Amanda, the following study focused on the positive characterization of Amanda Collier. Amanda Collier was described as a pretty, educated, curious, brave, and generous woman as the main character. She became a popular girl at school because of her beauty. She was described as an educated woman because of her consistency in pursuing her education and constant ambition to get into the top university. Amanda was also a curious woman who knew how and when to answer the questions she encountered in her life. In addition, Amanda was also brave, which was seen from the way she stood for herself. Her generosity was shown through her care towards others despite the obligation to take care of her own family. The result implies that despite her beauty, wealth, and social status, one should value education, be kind to others, and stand for what is right. The present study only focused on Amanda's positive characterization to get a better understanding of the characterization of the novel. Further studies can be conducted to get more comprehensive descriptions of Amanda Collier. Besides, the implementation of certain critical theory to analyze this novel could highlight social issues represented in this Nicholas Sparks' novel.

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