

CHAPTER III

LAURA'S CHANGING CHARACTER IN ANGELA LAMBERT'S *THE CONSTANT MISTRESS*

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on analyzing the data. It will answer the research problems. The analysis is grouped into two parts. The first part, the researcher will analyze the plot. Plot is used to find the sequence of the story. The second part, after knowing the plot in the story, the researcher will analyze the changing character of Laura as the main character in the novel. In analyze the changing character of Laura, the researcher relies on the characterization of Alterbern and Lewis that have been described in chapter two, the data of plot is based on the researcher found that described above of a novel *The Constant Mistress* plot understanding.

3. 1. Plot

3.1.1.Exposition

The exposition of *The Constant Mistress* presents the main character named Laura King. The woman aged forty four which has a successful carrier in business and also with men. Although never married yet, she has been an active and emotionally fulfilled life.

Laura King was forty-four when she was told that she had only about a year to live: two at the most. Her existence had provided lavish opportunities for love and work and although she knew she was privileged, she had never felt particularly lucky, let alone humble. Laura took charge of her own future at an early ages. (Lambert 15)

In that time, in aged forty four she suffered of hepatitis C. the Moreover, Laura's condition had first made itself known before Christmas. Her face looked pale, her body felt sick and weird. It is culminated, where her pulse bounced fast. She thinks it is only because a tire condition of business effect, stress and overwork. She came to the doctor to get the information about what happened to her body.

For a few days she had felt extreme weakness and exhaustion. (Lambert 16)

She consulted to a doctor to find out what happened to her health. Laura checked up in the hospital and stay of few days in there. From the diagnosis, Laura was forced to get bed rest in the hospital to find out the illness result.

Rafe's doctor has been summoned. He sped to her side, lifted her eyelids, felt her pulse, took her blood pressure, tested her hemoglobin level. (Lambert 16)

Her doctor consultant, Mrs Ripa informed the diagnosis about her illness. She had convinced her that there was no a mistake in the diagnosis. She also informed clearly that the test result is about the fixed diagnose that Laura has suffered hepatitis C. And that time, Mrs Ripa repeatedly said and make it sure about it.

'I have discussed your case with my colleagues and—as you know—we analyzed two spare batches of blood samples as well as a PCR, a liver biopsy and antibody test.... I sent the second sample to a senior colleague at another hospital; a world expert. He confirm my diagnosis.' (Lambert 17)

'... the *whole* truth. Hepatitis C has invaded your liver,' she said. (Lambert 18)

The result of her illness is clearly that she suffered Hepatitis C. Mrs Ripa noted the fact in her folder and generally she gave her patient time to get used to the idea of their on imminent death, allowing the truth to sink in gradually. But she recognized to Laura a brave and kindred spirit, able to bear life's realities head-on. She described to Laura a briefly information about hepatitis C and what kind of virus that caused it and the solution for get a well condition.

‘At worst, you have about a year to live. At best, two or even three.’
(Lambert 18)

The quotation above, told that the effect of Laura illness is caused the death. The exposition of *The Constant Mistress* is summarized that Laura suffered from hepatitis C and only has a year to live.

3.1.2. **Complication**

The complication in *The Constant Mistress* found in some stage which will taper to the climax. If in exposition told about Laura as the main character who is suffered hepatitis C and caused her death, in complication continued with she is shocked and does not believe of her illness. The doctor gave the suggestion a liver transplant to her to get recovery herself but she refused it. To spend a year time left in her life, she has a privately choose what she want to do.

‘Could there be a mistake?’ she asked to her consultant, Mrs Ripa.
‘perhaps you have mixed up something milder with whatever it is you say I have—Hepatitis C—or even mistaken me for someone else? Could the samples have been swapped accidentally?’ (Lambert 17)

The quotation above is defined that she is shocked and does not believe what happened to her health since she got the information about hepatitis C that caused her only has a year to live, at best two or three years if she did a liver transplant. She thinks it is very terrific news means that she has no longer time to spend with because hepatitis C invaded her liver and she cannot refused anything about this truth.

‘Believe me, Miss King, I would not be telling you unless I were sure,’ Mrs Ripa answered... because it is fairly rare, I sent the second sample to a senior colleague at another hospital; a world expert...’
 ‘No, but I’m very busy,’ Laura said. ‘When I felt tired or unwell, I assumed it was due to the stress of work.’ (Lambert 17)

For clearly information that Laura should belief it, MrsRipa explained that the result is corrected. There is nothing mistaken test about Laura’s diagnosis. Only one thing that can help her, do a liver transplant. But unfortunately, she refused it.

At worst, you have about a year to live. At best, two or even three unless we arrange a liver transplant—which is something you should start considering now.... (Lambert 18)

The doctor suggested a solution to Laura which is better she take a liver transplant, from liver transplant at least she can live two or three years. But, if Laura did nothing she only has a year left to live. Unfortunately Laura refused what the doctor’s said although this suggestion helps her life.

I definitely don’t want a transplant... nor will I change my mind...for the first of many time, *because I deserve to die.* (Lambert 19)

‘My end the word I prefer is ‘death’ but I have already discovered that few people are comfortable with it... ‘ (Lambert 41)

Laura had established herself that she was more resigned to her life and surrendered to her death. From here, Laura seems that she has no chance of spirit in her life. She feel need someone to share it. She rang Constance and told about her condition.

‘Oh, Constance, you know I had those test repeated? Well, it’s bad news... I’m going to dies—soon—oh, Coco, heavens, I can’t believe it—I’m going to die.’

‘Laura, no! now, look, I’ll come up right away. I was just about to go to the library. I’ll cancel and drive up. Be with you in an hour. Hang on me. Oh sweetheart, this is awful!’

‘Coco, don’t come. Don’t. I’ve got masses of calls to make: work and everything. People. Should I ring mother?’

‘Do you want me too? Oh let me come and be with you.’

No, Laura thought, my sister doesn’t deserve this and I have no right to impose on her. She will try to look on the bright side, suggest a second opinion, or she will insist I move in her to be looked after. I don’t want any of that. (Lambert 22)

Laura refused an effort of her sister to make her better and save. Constance try to do something to helps her. Suggest that Laura must be in best hospital.

Laura lived alone and only apart. Her mother is in Miami, and her sister has her own house with three children. From this conversation on the telephone,

Constance informed her mother in Miami about what happened to Laura. And also, her mother will take Laura to her home and suggest that in there Laura get a best hospital about a liver problem but she refused it all. Constance informed the news to her ex-husband, Paul, too. With that, came Paul one day to visited her to see if Laura was true ill.

When the secret of their adultery is closed down by their appointment, Laura began to talk confidently with her sister, Constance, and seems like there is nothing important to show her sister except being a loyal sibling in Constance's suffer about Paul left her and make her sister to be a single mother.

'Paul's left me,' she said, dry-eyed.
 'I know,' Laura answered.
 'For some reason he can't live with her... oh Laura he is my husband—their father—and we love him so much! How can we live without him? What am I to do?'
 'Wait a bit. Oh, darling... oh, Conce, I hate to see you suffer.' (Lambert 294)

Laura pretends to be a sister who cares deeply about her sibling. In fact, Laura always took Constance's place when Constance cried because of Paul or because she was so stressed. Laura would not refuse if asked to accompany Constance. Laura tried to calm her sister down and said everything would be all right, about the children, Constance did not have to worry about them.

Laura takes Paul in her home. Sleep with her and making a love in night together. It been the first repeated since nowadays they back in relationship. Laura told Paul if he is only the man in her life. She is open minded to accept Paul again because that reason, the other is because desire and Laura happy to did everything with Paul. Even if going to bed together again.

She put him to bed in the spare room eventually. He was maudlin and tried to embrace her, but even against her feeble strength he had no power. She unlaced his shoes and dragged them off his feet, pulled his trousers down—his legs were thin and sinewy, not the great tree—trunks of his youth—he urged him between the sheets of the spare bed. Grumbling, fumbling, he groped like a child towards comfort and sleep. (Lambert 312)

3.1.3. Climax

The climax is when Constance knows if the girl Paul's other lover is her sister, while Laura is in hospital before her death. It is difficult condition between them because Constance knows if Laura cheated Paul and Laura in bad situation because she must rest for her illness which is increasingly leading to her death. In this event, Paul also was in incident last night, he felt from rooftop and he has informed was died. Constance is the first person came to Laura to give that information, Constance was thought that Paul commit to suicide because he depressed from love affair. In addition, Constance at the same time cannot accept what Laura's done because the affair has caused its destruction in the past. For so long time Constance tried to find who is the girl caused Paul left her and their children. Their marriage became messy because the affair that Paul did to her. She never realized if Laura is a woman that very crime to herself as a sibling because she take off Paul in Constance's life. She never predicted it because Laura always gave attention to her since Paul left her alone and never come back again.

For the first day since Paul gone, Laura is the only people Constance share about her marriage problem, and for this, Laura becomes an understanding to her for totally. Even if Constance cried, Laura is always served a time to be available to her, beside her and tries to give her a peaceful place to share all of her suffers. Now, Laura in the hospital because she feels she will die. The climax start when Constance come to her in the hospital to keep her company, but Constance inform that Paul died because he felt from the five floor top roof in his friend house last night.

‘It was you, Laura! You were the woman he never named. Paul’s secret. All that time it was you. Dear God!’ (Lambert 341)

After Constance knows, she cannot forgive Laura. She angry to Laura but she realized Laura is in bad condition and need her to the rest of Laura’s life. It can be Laura’s last life. She feels pity to her sister, but she still cannot accept Laura’s sorry. The following day, Constance wants to know about the past of Laura and Paul. She wants to make sure if it is logic for her understanding about this terrific problem so long time. She also makes sure what the thing that caused Paul’s died.

Laura said, ‘Not since soon after Daddy died.’
 ‘But you saw him recently. He came to see you. Why?’
 ‘He wanted me to leave him the house in my will. I said no.
 ‘what else?’
 ‘He got drunk and spend the night in the spare room. He went next morning.’
 ‘what he depressed?’
 ‘Defeated, hopeless, a shambles... he’s been like *that* for the last six years.
 (Lambert 343)

Laura told Constance about her love affair with Paul long ago. But Laura did not tell to her about they often had a sex occasionally. Even while at Constance's house when she went to take the children's school, Paul and Laura had sex in their private room. She also had been pregnant with Paul's child before being aborted because their mother knew first and suggest she must abort. Although it never occurred to Laura to have an abortion on the grounds that she loved Paul so much. In the end she realizes that the child have to be aborted for the sake of their secrets that Constance is not required to know. Even their mother is the first people who know this secret for so long time ago, she never told

live only. Her expectation the days after diagnosed is about imagined the death. Her though she must learn a new hierarchy of consultants, doctors, nurses—and groom herself for the cold formalities of death.

Laura had a simple, medieval image of death: a skeletal man in black cloak, bent over a scythe.—death as portrayed in old church frescos and devotional prayer books. She had dispensed with her notion of God long ago, but you have believe in death. You had no choice. (Lambert 29)

During her sadness because of her illness, she also feel how pity her life by no one company her in this life. No father—her father was death and only has one sibling, her mother live in Miami and she live far from her family to have a work. Although she is very fulfillment life, success in relationship with men, but so far she does not have a couple for her to marry.

‘As you all know, I have never married or had children. I realize that these are supposed to give women fulfillment in their lives, and I want to assure you truthfully that I have not missed them. ... my father is dead. To whom else should I turn? My only sister, Constance, has her own concerns, and so do her children... I have no desire to take what I see as the cowardly way out, creeping back into the bosom of my much-neglected family.’ (Lambert 41)

She is woman with a pathetic condition. Because beside she has a enjoy life, but in other side she also feel nothing because of her loneliness. A common event that human must feels is like; have a husband, then a children, live with family and have a full life between beloved person behind. But at all, she cannot reach it although she is in her mid age. In that sad condition, she suddenly informed that she suffered from hepatitis C, she wants to find out someone who give her a place to keep her feel company, not lonely, have a couple to unburden her conscience.

‘Before I die I must find someone to shelter me, and unburden my conscience so that I can get on with this tiring, bloody business of facing up to death. (Lambert 47)

Laura described in exposition as success woman and filled her life with lavish opportunities. But at all, she felt to be unlucky woman. At worse yet, she has no couple that can make her life full of companies. Because she only has a year to live, she wants in her last time life, but there is no one she can share her life in togetherness.

‘When my illness was diagnosed—and it is a liver disease; not anything sexual, I do assure you—I turned to my friends to look after me. I have never been married. I have no children... I wanted to see those who loved me and whom I loved for the last time.’ (Lambert 208-209)

Laura feels loneliness. Every day since her diagnosed, everything in her life become comparison by the other events, people, and activities that she tries to appeal in her life. The atmosphere of sadness is clearly made her feel nothing and more ready to deserve to die.

‘I am dying. I am already, in a sense, on the other side. I look at the vigorous lives of you, my friends, of people in the shops and on the streets, as though already from the far side of life. I feel closer to death. Tears sprang to her eyes.

‘I am sorry. They’re not tears of self-pity—I just cry much more easily these days. Emotion is closer to the surface. I was never sentimental but now the most absurd things move me instantly to tears. (Lambert 246)

In her give up about a loneliness and the sadness of how pity her life is, Laura told to her best friend named Desmond. Desmond is really a good friend she only had. Laura often cries because she feels the illness, the reality of her life,

her loneliness, and she needs a people who can company her to spend the last of her life but she does not have them.

Tears rose to Laura's eyes. 'Desmond, I know what you're trying to do and it's generous of you, and honest, but can we talk about something else? To you on the side of life, the other side of life, all this is just speculation, a sort of psychological exercise. To me in other side, Death is the next man in my life. The last man. I've been sleeping with him for nearly a year now. (Lambert 325)

3.2.2. Laura is Stubborn and Liar in Complication

In complication, Laura has a stubborn character. She has informed that she suffered hepatitis C with the samples and second test from the laboratory unit. But she does not believe and dispute the information. She Justify her own argument that the doctor wrongly in takes the sample even though there has been in laboratory. She thought this is because she was too tired. And the diagnosed is impossible because she is just stressed. It defined in quotation below.

'Believe me, Miss King, I would not be telling you unless I were sure,' Mrs Ripa answered... because it is fairly rare, I sent the second sample to a senior colleague at another hospital; a world expert...'
'No, but I'm very busy,' Laura said. 'When I felt tired or unwell, I assumed it was due to the stress of work.' (Lambert 17)

In addition, because of the illness caused her life only a year, the doctor suggested a liver transplant. But she was disagreed to get it. She refused for the healing even though doctors have recommended thing to do.

we arrange a liver transplant—which is something you should start considering now.... (Lambert 18)
she wants to be told if she would probably live or probably die, and if the later, *when*. (Lambert 18)
I definitely don't want a transplant..., *because I deserve to die*. (Lambert 19)

‘Have you forgiven her now?’
 ‘Have I forgiven her?’ Laura expostulated faintly.
 ‘She’s the one who needs to forgive, did she but know it.’
 ‘Perhaps she has known all along and is punishing you by pretending ignorance? Sister are pretty intuitive. Maybe she’s been stringing out your torment for years. Could you forgive her for never letting you get past your guilt, having to carry the burden all this time?’
 ‘No Desmond. What I did ... was the great unforgivable thing. I’m talking about the person closest to me, the person I’ve known and loved for forty-five years. If she knew, I would *know*.’
 ‘If she doesn’t know,’ he said, ‘Perhaps you need to tell her.’
 Laura’s face contracted. ‘I couldn’t,’ she said, sounding agitated.
 ‘It may be hard for you to die until you have. Listen to me Laura. Few of our sin are as bad as we think. They usually arise from love or loneliness, jealousy, or fear. All the roots, the basic, everyone shared.’ (Lambert 328)

Laura still confuse about her dilemmas between she must told her sister or not. Although Desmond gave her a wise suggestion, she still afraid to told Constance. She thinks that her sin is unforgivable. This problem haunted her. Everyday she does not quite. In her last life she wants her sister forgive her sin. She tries to be honest in Desmond about her love affair, in other side, she also wants Constance know soon but does not know how the manner to give understand to her sister.

‘My poor sweet! What a heavy secret! No wonder you never told. But that reaction was shock. She’ll come and see you again. You are her sister. She has to. Blood is thicker than anything, even husbands.’ (Lambert 345)

Constance was angry with Laura because of the love affair. It is also justified because anyone has never told the case to her, even their mother, Laura and also Paul. So naturally she was very mad at Laura because besides this incident had been so long time, Laura had never told her.

‘It was you, Laura! You were the woman he never named. Paul’s secret. All that time it was you. Dear God!’ (Lambert 341)

