

## EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IN DANIELLE STEEL'S NOVEL *FINE THINGS*

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### Abstract

This qualitative study delves into the portrayal of emotional intimacy in Danielle Steel's novel, *Fine Things* using Robert Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love as a theoretical framework. The research method involved textual analysis of excerpts from the novel, focusing on instances of emotional intimacy depicted among characters. The literature review section provides a comprehensive overview of Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love, emphasizing its three components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. The analysis highlights the importance of emotional intimacy in various types of relationships, emphasizing its role in fostering closeness, understanding, and trust. The discussion section presents findings from the textual analysis, showcasing excerpts that illustrate the complexities of emotional intimacy among characters in the novel. Examples include moments of vulnerability, communication, and affection shared between romantic partners, family members, and friends. Key findings reveal the nuanced portrayal of emotional intimacy, ranging from expressions of love and support to instances of conflict and betrayal. The conclusion drawn from the analysis underscores the profound impact of emotional intimacy on individuals and their relationships, highlighting its role in shaping the dynamics of love, loss, and personal growth depicted in the novel. Implications of this study extend to a deeper understanding of emotional intimacy in fictional narratives and its relevance to real-life relationships. By applying Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love to literary analysis, this study contributes to the on-going discourse on the complexities of human emotions and intimate connections portrayed in literature.

**Keywords:** emotional intimacy; relationships; triangular of love

### 1. Introduction

*Fine Things*, penned by American author Danielle Steel and released on February 1, 1987, stands as a compelling romance novel that garnered international acclaim for its unique narrative structure. Presented entirely through letters, emails, instant messages, and newspaper articles, Steel employs an epistolary format to craft a captivating tale that resonated deeply with readers worldwide.

At its core, *Fine Things* delves into the timeless themes of love, loss, resilience, and personal growth. The narrative centers around Bernie Fine, a talented young architect seemingly blessed with success in every aspect of his life—career triumphs, a loving relationship, and a promising future. However, tragedy strikes, plunging Bernie into the depths of despair and challenging him to confront his innermost emotions while navigating life's tumultuous terrain.

Throughout the novel, Bernie grapples with the complexities of grief, embarking on a poignant journey of self-discovery and renewal. As he rebuilds his shattered existence, *Fine Things* illuminates the profound importance of family bonds, enduring friendships, and the indomitable resilience of the human spirit. Moreover, the narrative explores the interplay of ambition, sacrifice, and the relentless pursuit of happiness amidst adversity, offering readers a poignant reflection on life's inherent struggles and triumphs.

Central to the narrative is the theme of emotional intimacy, which permeates the relationships depicted within the story. From the tender bonds shared between romantic partners to the unwavering support of familial ties and the comforting embrace of friendships, *Fine Things* underscores the profound significance of human connection in navigating life's joys and sorrows.

In essence, *Fine Things* emerges as a heartfelt exploration of the human experience, characterized by its rich emotional depth, relatable characters, and a resounding message of hope and perseverance. As readers immerse themselves in Steel's masterfully crafted narrative, they are invited to embark on a transformative journey of love, loss, and the enduring power of the human spirit.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Components of Triangular Theory of Love

The Triangular Theory of Love, introduced by Robert Sternberg in 1986, posits that love, while a universal human phenomenon, manifests diversely across cultures (Beall & Sternberg, 1995). Sternberg (1996) delineates various perspectives on love: as a fantasy leading to happily-ever-after, an appreciation of physical attractiveness, a game or sport, a mystery shrouded in secrecy, or a tumultuous yet enduring battle.

Love, deemed a fundamental psychological and physiological necessity, encompasses emotion, cognition, motivation, and volition, garnering significant attention in social psychology over recent decades (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Sternberg, 1986/97/98; Sternberg & Grajek, 1984). According to Sternberg (1986), the theory asserts that love comprises three interdependent components: intimacy (at the apex), passion (to the left), and decision/commitment (to the right).

Achieving enduring love, termed ideal love, necessitates a harmonious balance of these components (Baron & Byrne, 2003). However, Sternberg (1996) notes the vast array of narratives shaping individual conceptions of love, complicating its understanding. While consummate love arises when all components align, it rarely persists consistently.

Sternberg (1986, 1997, 2006) further elucidates that the components interact to form seven distinct types of love, with "non-love" representing their absence. The intimacy component typically underpins various relationships, while passion primarily

characterizes romantic bonds, and decision/commitment varies widely (Sternberg, 1986: 120).

## **2.2 Intimacy**

Sternberg (1986) defines the intimacy component of love as encompassing "feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships," which essentially give rise to warmth within such relationships, predominantly stemming from emotional investment. The term "intimacy" originates from the Latin "intimus," denoting 'inner' or 'innermost,' suggesting a deep connection that facilitates bonding across various levels and is integral to healthy relationships.

This component of love tends to exhibit stability over time, albeit subject to some degree of control, with individuals' awareness of it fluctuating—sometimes recognizing these feelings towards others, while at other times remaining unaware (Sternberg, 1986). Moreover, while intimacy plays a moderate role in short-term relationships, its significance amplifies in long-term ones, often eliciting a moderate psychophysiological response (Sternberg, 1986).

Lewis (1978) outlines three primary dimensions of intimacy. Firstly, it involves mutual disclosure of personal information fostering empathetic understanding, extending beyond mere self-disclosure. Secondly, it entails a positive attitude towards the other, expressed through warmth and a desire to benefit them. Additionally, intimacy entails affectionate communication, whether verbal, through gestures, or sexually. These feelings represent a subset of those within the intimacy component and are not all necessary for experiencing love (Sternberg, 1986).

While intimacy is a vital aspect of relationships, it is not the sole enduring element. Passion and commitment also play significant roles. For many couples, peak intimacy coincides with sexual intimacy, symbolizing trust and vulnerability. While distinct, intimacy and sex are closely intertwined, with a fulfilling sex life often stemming from emotional closeness and shared experiences. However, sharing emotions can be challenging, especially for men conditioned to suppress feelings.

### **2.2.1 Emotional Intimacy**

"Emotional intimacy can be defined as the willingness to establish a deeper connection with your partner through actions that express feelings, vulnerabilities, and trust," explains Sanam Hafeez, a neuropsychologist in New York City and a faculty member in Columbia University's clinical psychology Ph.D. program. Emotional intimacy is a profound emotional connection characterized by mutual understanding, trust, vulnerability, and effective communication. It often manifests as the feeling of being "in sync" with someone else. For some individuals, emotional intimacy involves seeking support from a friend or partner when feeling angry or upset. It may also encompass making dedicated time to sit down with another person to address sources of distress or disconnection in the relationship. The skills associated with emotional intimacy include being self-aware, fostering mutual trust, creating emotional safety within the relationship, adopting a non-judgmental attitude, displaying empathy, acceptance, willingness, and most importantly, embracing vulnerability. The absence of emotional intimacy may be indicated by factors such as insufficient time spent together, limited communication, or a lack of engagement in each other's lives. If your partner frequently avoids sharing important updates about their life, it could signify that your relationship needs attention and care.

Overcoming these challenges can be difficult, especially for individuals who have experienced past hurt. Fear of emotional intimacy may be influenced by low self-esteem or trust issues. If you struggle with self-worth, it can be challenging to believe that someone else would genuinely desire closeness with you. Emotional intimacy is the profound closeness and connection shared between two individuals who feel safe and secure in each other's presence. It extends beyond mere physical "closeness" and revolves around the concept of being truly seen, known, and understood by a partner, involving a deep exploration of each other's inner selves.

People often avoid emotional intimacy due to underlying fears of judgment or rejection. Individuals who are deeply afraid of these feelings may instinctively steer clear of forming intimate connections with others. Other fears, such as a phobia of being touched, can also contribute to issues related to intimacy

### 3. Research Method

Qualitative research methodology is employed in this study, utilizing data primarily sourced from the novel, *Fine Things*, focusing on clauses and sentences pertaining to emotional intimacy. These qualitative data are interpreted through textual analysis rather than numerical measures (Creswell, 2013). Following Herbert's conceptualization of library research as a means to gather ideas, theories, and reported empirical findings (1993: 43), supporting data for this study are gathered from various scholarly sources, including books and websites.

The analysis centers on exploring the theme of emotional intimacy within Danielle Steel's novel 'Fine Things.' The abundance of data necessitates careful organization and meaningful synthesis. Data reduction involves the selective, focused, and simplified abstraction of information, transforming raw data from written field notes or transcriptions. This process not only enhances manageability but also ensures that the data are intelligible and relevant to the research questions at hand.

### 4. Discussion

The researchers methodically analyze the data to delve into the intricacies of emotional intimacy. This involves exploring a spectrum of intimate experiences, ranging from sharing one's deepest and most personal feelings with another person to discussing mutual aspirations for the future. Additionally, the analysis delves into the significance of open communication channels, including conversations about concerns and worries, such as navigating stressful events at work, and the subsequent comfort derived from sharing such experiences.

Furthermore, the examination emphasizes the importance of nurturing emotional bonds through attentive listening and daily sharing between partners. This continuous investment in communication fosters a deeper understanding and connection, contributing significantly to the development and sustenance of emotional intimacy within the relationship.

Data 5: But she was shaking her head. And she didn't kiss him good night as she walked to the door." I don't ever want to get married, Bern. It's not my bag. I want to go to California when we graduate and just hang out for a while." He could suddenly just imagine her there.....in a commune. "What kind of life is "hanging out?" It's dead end!" She shrugged with a smile. "That's all I want right now, Bern."

Their eyes held for a long time. “Thanks anyway for the ring.” She closed the door softly as she left. (P:16. 1987) Sheila and Bernard.

Sheila is articulating her stance on marriage, expressing her reluctance to tie the knot. Her vision of the future entails a life of freedom in California, engaging in activities that bring her joy. She clarifies her relationship with Bernard, describing it as emotionally fulfilling and intimate, yet lacking in commitment.

Data 6: “I’m just as smart as you are, I’ve got just as much guts.... My grades just as good... the only thing I don’t have is that piece of skin hanging between your legs and who gives a damn anyway?” he was horrified, and even more so when she gave up ballet. She kept with a Russian, but she talked a lot about Che Guevara now. And she had taken to wearing combat boots, and accessories she bought at the army surplus store... (P:17. 1987) Sheila and Bernard

Sheila emphasized that there was no disparity between herself and Bernard, regardless of his gender. She asserted that they shared equal rights and capabilities. In fact, she remarked that the only distinguishing factor was their genitalia. Sheila sought validation for her perspective on life, expressing a deep-seated fear of being stifled by marriage despite her genuine love for Bernard. She communicated these sentiments openly, without reservation, although they understandably caused hurt and emotional resonance for Bernard.

Data 7: “We have so little time alone...” She pouted so perfectly, and he loved making love to her. She was the most exquisite women he had ever seen, and sometimes he just stood staring at her as she put her make up or dried her hair or got out of the shower, or walked at the door carrying her portfolio. Somehow, she made one want to freeze frame and just stand there gazing at her. (P:32. 1987) Bernard and Isabelle Martin

Bernard's profound admiration and love for Isabelle are unmistakably evident. He perceives her as the epitome of beauty, figuratively considering her the most captivating woman he has ever encountered. There are moments when he finds himself transfixed, simply watching her as she applies her makeup, captivated by her presence. It's no surprise that he constantly yearns to be near her, desiring to express his love through physical intimacy and closeness.

Data 8: He found her on a yacht, moored nearby, making love to the producer from Hollywood on the deck as Bernie stood for an instant staring at them, and then hurried away with tears in his eyes, realizing something he had hidden from for a long time. She wasn't just a great lay and beautiful girl, she was the women he loved, and losing her was going to hurt him. (P:33. 1987) Bernard and Isabelle martin

Bernard's deep affection for Isabelle led him to envision a future together, culminating in marriage. However, his hopes were shattered when he unexpectedly discovered her in an intimate encounter with the film producer who had offered her a contract. Overwhelmed with heartbreak and betrayal, tears welled up in Bernard's eyes as he grappled with the emotional turmoil he had long suppressed.

Data 9: She apologized when she got back to their house, but it wasn't for several hours. She and the producer had talked for a long time afterwards, about her goals, what she wanted out of her life, and what her relationship with Bernie meant, what he offered her. The producer had been fascinated by her and told her as much. And when she got back, she tried to tell Bernie what she felt much to his dismay. "I can't live in a cage for the rest of my life, Bernard... I must be free to fly where I need to be," he had heard it all before, in another life, with combat boots and a duffel bag. "I take it to represent a cage to you?" ... (P:33. 1987) Bernard and Isabelle martin

Isabelle Martin finds herself grappling with a whirlwind of emotions upon discovering that Bernard has uncovered her affair with the producer. Despite her deep affection for Bernard, she remains ensnared by her ambition to pursue an artistic career facilitated by the producer's connections. This inner conflict underscores her reluctance to fully commit to a marriage with Bernard. The revelation not only devastates Bernard, who had cherished hopes of building a life with Isabelle, but also plunges Isabelle into profound sadness as she confronts the repercussions of her choices.

Data 10: "I thing I've misunderstood out relationship, Isabelle." She nodded at him, looking even more beautiful, and for an instant he hated her. "I think you have, Bernard." And then, the knife to his heart. "I want to go to California for a while. "She was totally candid with him. "Dick says he can arrange a screen test at a studio" she spoke with an accent that melted hi heart. "And I would like very much to do a film there with him." (P:34. 1987) Bernard and Isabelle martin

This statement vividly portrays the depth of Bernard's emotional devastation as he comes to terms with the harsh reality of Isabelle's betrayal. For Bernard, the acknowledgment of this betrayal feels like a sharp knife piercing his heart, leaving him shattered and profoundly wounded. Meanwhile, Isabelle's candid admission of her desire to pursue opportunities in California adds another layer of complexity to the situation. She remains transparent with Bernard about her intentions, revealing her plans to venture into the world of cinema with Dick, her lover. The allure of a promising screen test arranged by Dick, coupled with his captivating charm and heartfelt demeanor, further complicates Bernard and Isabelle's already tumultuous relationship dynamic.

Data 11: "May you always be as happy as you are right now, Liz?" She brushed away her tears and smiled down at Jane. "Your mom sure looks good, doesn't she?" "She does," Jane gazed at her mother admiringly. She was the prettiest lady she had ever seen. Liz felt her breath catch and her heart pound as she squeezed Jane's hand tight, and the little girl looked up at her as they exchanged a smile. It was a big day for both of them. (P:68. 1987) Liz and Jane

Liz holds onto hope and silently offers prayers for a brighter future following her marriage. The emotional floodgates open when she witnesses her daughter Jane's radiant happiness on her wedding day, a joyous occasion that surpasses anything Liz had ever

envisioned. Amidst the whirlwind of emotions, the heartfelt compliments from her friends regarding her beauty serve as a profound source of support, resonating deeply with Liz and affirming her sense of self-worth.

Data 12: ‘He’s a very nice man, and he likes you a lot, Jane.’ It seemed the smartest thing to say and the only thing she could think of. ‘I like him too.’ But her eyes she wasn’t quite as sure as she had once been. Things had gotten complicated over the summer. And she instinctively sensed the seriousness of their involvement. ‘How come you got out with him so much?’ (P:96. 1987) Liz and Jane

Liz bares her soul to her daughter Jane, sharing her most intimate and personal feelings in the hopes of garnering understanding. With sincerity in her voice, she expresses her deep love for Bernard and her desire to build a future with him. Moreover, she confides in Jane her aspiration to be a devoted and complete parent, emphasizing her commitment to their relationship as mother and daughter despite the changes marriage may bring.

Data 13: ‘I love him sweetheart...’ ‘Why? I mean why do we have to marry him? We were Okay just us.’ ‘Were we? Didn’t you ever wish we had a day?’ The sobbing stopped, but only for a moment. ‘Sometimes. But we did okay without one.’ And she still had the illusions of the father she had never known. (P:97. 1987) Liz and Jane

Jane exclaimed with heartfelt joy, expressing her elation at the prospect of having a father figure in her life. She shares how Bernard consistently demonstrates his affection for her, filling her with a sense of warmth and security. This emotional bond between Bernard and Jane fosters a profound happiness for both mother and child, as they anticipate the prospect of a more fulfilled life and the realization of a complete family unit.

Data 14: And afterward as they talked in the dark, he told her what a change she had brought to his entire family. You can’t imagine what my mother was like before you came along. I swear, sometimes I hated her.’ It seemed a sacrilege to say it under her own roof, but sometimes it was true. ‘I think Jane is the one who cast the spell.’ ‘I think it’s both of you.’ And as he looked at her in the moonlight, his heart was full. ‘You’re the most remarkable woman I’ve ever met.’ (P:133. 1987) Bernard

Under the enchanting glow of the moonlight, Bernard and Liz basked in the profound joy of their union, their hearts overflowing with gratitude for the journey that had led them to this moment. They shared their deepest emotions, expressing thankfulness for the paths they had walked individually before finding each other. Their faces illuminated by the soft moonbeams, Bernard and Liz radiated happiness, their spirits intertwined in a blissful harmony that spoke volumes of their contentment and fulfillment.

Data 15: But when Liz got up and walked across the room, and saw Bernie watching her, she felt-conscious suddenly, and she pulled his shirt on and covered herself. ‘Don’t look at me ... I’m so fat I hate myself.’ ‘Fat? Are you crazy? You’ve never looked better. You’re

gorgeous!” He came over and gently fondled her behind and then let his hand drift over the cantaloupe with fascination. (P:149. 1987)  
Bernard and Liz

In the midst of her happiness, Liz couldn't shake off a tinge of embarrassment as she noticed Bernard gazing at her with affectionate eyes. Suddenly, self-consciousness crept in, and she began to scrutinize her own appearance, feeling acutely aware of what she perceived as flaws in her body. Doubts gnawed at her, whispering that she might no longer embody the beauty that had initially captivated Bernard.

However, Bernard's reassuring words pierced through her insecurities like a beacon of light in the darkness. With unwavering sincerity, he pledged his enduring love to Liz, promising to cherish her regardless of any perceived imperfections. His devotion ran deep, transcending superficialities and anchoring itself in the profound connection they shared.

Data 16: But when Bernie came back from New York, he saw the same thing she was when she arrived. How rapidly Liz was changing. By leaving her for only a few days, he got enough distance to realize just how bad it was. And the night he got home, he locked himself in the bathroom and cried into the big white towels she kept so immaculate for him. He was terrified she would hear him, but he just couldn't stand it. She looked pale and weak, and she had lost more weight, he begged her to eat, and brought home every possible treat he could think of ... (P: 207 - 208. 1987) Bernard and Liz

During this moment, Bernard was taken aback by the visible changes in Liz's appearance. Her once-vibrant figure now seemed gaunt, her eyes hollow with the weight of illness. She appeared like a shadow of the woman he had known, her vitality slowly being consumed by the ravages of cancer. The realization struck him like a blow to the chest, filling him with a profound sense of sadness.

Yet, despite the torrent of emotions raging within him, Bernard made a conscious decision to shield Liz from his inner turmoil. He understood the fragility of her spirit, and he couldn't bear the thought of adding to her burden. Thus, he donned a mask of stoicism, hiding his own grief behind a façade of strength. His love for Liz compelled him to be her pillar of support, even as he grappled with his own heartache in silence.

Data 17: You're the hero, Mr. Fine.” She leaned over and kissed him gently. I love you Liz.” “You're the best man in the world .... I'm sorry to put you through all this...” it was so hard on everyone, and she knew it. It was hard on her, too, and she hated it, but she also hated it for them, and once in a while, she even hated them because they were dying. (P:214. 1987) Bernard and Liz

Liz poured out her heart, expressing profound gratitude for the boundless love she received from Bernard. She marveled at how effortlessly he erased her worries and fears, his unwavering support serving as a beacon of strength in her life. With Bernard by her side, the weight of her anxieties seemed to vanish in an instant, replaced by a sense of security and contentment she had never known before.

Meanwhile, Bernard basked in the joy of having Liz as his partner. He felt immensely fortunate to have found such a remarkable woman, whose presence in his life brought immeasurable happiness and fulfillment. His love for Liz knew no bounds, and he cherished every moment spent with her, recognizing her as the treasure that she was.

Data 18: “No, it won’t! The cancer is going to kill her! That’s what’s going to kill her, that goddamn rotten disease that’s rotting her whole body... that’s what’s going to kill her and it doesn’t make a damn bit difference if she sits home and waits or goes to school or has chemotherapy or doesn’t or goes to Lourdes, it’s still going to kill her.” The tears rushed into his throat like a bursting dam and he turned away from his mother and paced the room. He stood with his back and her finally, looking blindly out the window. “I’m sorry.” It was the voice of a broken man, and it tore his mother and paced the room. ... (P:215. 1987) Bernard and Ruth

Bernard opened up to his mother, Ruth, his voice heavy with sorrow and frustration. He expressed deep remorse for the illness that was slowly stealing away his happiness with Liz. The looming specter of the disease filled him with anger and helplessness, knowing that it threatened to snatch Liz away from him far too soon. The thought of losing her was unbearable, inconceivable.

Unable to contain his emotions, Bernard turned away, his tears flowing freely as he tried to shield his pain from his mother's gaze. He couldn't bear to let her see the depth of his despair, yet his heartache was palpable, his silent tears a testament to the profound love he held for Liz and the agony of facing the prospect of life without her.

Data 19: Happy Valentine’s Day, everybody!” She looked happy today, and she was. She had completed something that meant a great deal to her. It was her gift to them, and herself, and to Jane. ‘It’s not Valentine’s Day!’” Bill Hitchcock announced. ‘It’s Christmas!’” Ever the wise guy and she laughed. “Nope. Today is my Valentine’s Day to you. This is my chance to tell you how much I love you.” She felt a lump rise in her throat and she knew she couldn’t let it. “I want everyone to be very quiet for a little while. I have a Valentine for everyone ... (P:219. 1987) Liz and students

Despite the shadow of her illness looming over her, Liz decided to organize a Valentine's event for her students, even though it wasn't the typical time for such a celebration. Fueled by a sense of duty and deep love for her students, she wanted to create a moment of joy and happiness for them, a memory to cherish. Her affection for her students ran deep, and she couldn't bear the thought of simply disappearing from their lives without a proper farewell. Despite her own struggles and the gravity of her illness, Liz remained steadfast in her commitment to her students, determined to leave behind a positive impact on their lives.

As she watched the innocent faces of her students light up with delight during the event, Liz found solace in knowing that, even if only for a fleeting moment, she had brought them happiness amidst the darkness of her own reality. It was a bittersweet reminder of the preciousness of life and the enduring power of love and compassion.

Data 20: And that afternoon she sat down with four pieces of paper, and wrote a letter to each of them, not long one but she told each of the people she loved how much she loved them, and why, and how much the meant to her, and how sorry she was to leave them. There was a letter for Bernie, and Ruth and Jane, and Alexander. The one to him was the hardest of all because he would never even have known her. She slipped the letters into her bible, which she kept in a dresser drawer, and she felt better after she had done it... (P:222. 1987) Liz

As Liz felt the weight of her illness bearing down on her, she realized that time was slipping away, and there were so many words left unspoken, especially to those she held dearest to her heart. With a sense of urgency and a flood of emotions, she poured out her love and gratitude to them, expressing the depth of her feelings and the significance of their presence in her life. To Bernie, Ruth, and Jane, she conveyed her profound love and appreciation, explaining why they meant the world to her and how much their support had sustained her through the darkest of days. With a heavy heart, she apologized for the pain her departure would inevitably bring, knowing that her absence would leave a void in their lives.

Wanting to ensure that her sentiments would endure beyond her time, Liz carefully penned a heartfelt letter to Bernie, Ruth, and Jane, entrusting it to the pages of a cherished Bible. In her letter, she poured out her innermost thoughts and emotions, expressing her hopes that one day they would find solace and understanding in her words, knowing that she never wanted to part from them, even in death.

Data 21: Hi, baby." She spoke in a strong, clear voice, and her eyes were bright as Jane bent to kiss her. She thought her mother had never looked more beautiful and she looked better to her too. "Hi, mommy. Are you feeling better?" "Much." She didn't even have the pain anymore. For the moment nothing hurt her. "I just wanted to tell you that I love you." "Can I get into bed with you" She looked hopeful and Liz smiled and pulled back the covers. "Sure." It was then the one saw how painfully thin she was, but her face looked as though it were filling out again. At least tonight anyway... (P:226. 1987) Liz and Jane

On that particular evening, Liz's sole desire was to immerse herself in the comforting presence of her daughter, Jane. Despite the looming shadow of her illness, she made a conscious choice to set aside her worries and focus solely on the precious moments she could share with Jane. With a determined resolve, Liz transformed her emotional burden into a warm smile, seeking to bring solace to her daughter's heart. As they nestled together, the weight of Liz's illness seemed to fade into the background, replaced by the simple joy of being in each other's company. Their shared embrace radiated a sense of peace and contentment, enveloping them in a cocoon of love and understanding. Jane, sensing her mother's need for closeness, eagerly requested to sleep beside her, craving the warmth and security of their bond.

Throughout the night, Liz and Jane exchanged tender words and cherished memories, finding comfort in each other's presence. They recounted stories from days gone by, weaving a tapestry of love and connection that bound them together in a moment of quiet intimacy. And as Jane succumbed to the gentle embrace of sleep, Liz

remained vigilant, her heart overflowing with gratitude for the precious time they had shared.

Data 22: ‘Good night, pretty one ...’ He was such a beautiful baby, and she tiptoed back to their room quietly as Bernie watched her. “You ought to get some sleep, sweetheart. You’re going to be exhausted tomorrow.” But she looked so alert and so alive and he smuggled into his arms as she whispered. And he held her and stroked her breast and she purred and told him how much he loved him. It was as though she needed to reach out to each of them, to hang on to life, or perhaps to let go of it. She just falling asleep when the sun came up... (P:227. 1987) Bernard and Liz

As Liz bid her daughter good night, she radiated a sense of vitality and joy that belied the gravity of her illness. Yet, despite her outward appearance, there lingered an unspoken understanding between her and Bernard, a silent acknowledgment of the fragility of life and the urgency to seize every moment. Responding to Bernard's tender summons, Liz retreated to his room, where the night unfolded in a delicate dance of intimacy and conversation. It was as if she sought to impart a piece of her essence to each of them, a gesture of love and connection that transcended the bounds of mortality. Their dialogue ebbed and flowed like the rhythm of their breath, punctuated by moments of profound insight and shared emotion. In the quiet intimacy of the night, they traversed the depths of their souls, baring their vulnerabilities and desires with unabashed honesty.

As the first light of dawn painted the sky, Liz succumbed to the gentle embrace of sleep, her exhaustion tempered by the warmth of Bernard's presence. In the tender embrace of his arms, she found solace and peace, her worries momentarily eclipsed by the sheer magnitude of their love. And as they drifted into slumber, intertwined in a cocoon of warmth and affection, Liz found comfort in the knowledge that, in Bernard's embrace, she had found a sanctuary from the storms of life—a place where love knew no bounds and time stood still.

Data 23: “That’s too bad. Anyway, she’ll still my kid, with or without Liz, and I imagine you’d just as soon see me got lost. And for a price, I will be happy to do that.” “For how long? Another year? Nah, it’s not worth it to me, Scott. This time I’m not buying,” “Too bad, I guess I’ll just have to go to court and get me some visitation.” Bernie remembered his promise to Liz and decided to bluff him anyway. “You do that, Scott. Do anything you want, I’m not interested.” “I’ll get lost another ten thousand. Tell you what, I’ll make you a deal. How about eight?” (P:249. 1987) Bernard and Scott

Despite the emotional turmoil stirred by Scott's attempt at blackmail, Bernard stood firm in his resolve. With a heavy heart and a voice tinged with sadness, he uttered the words that had long weighed on his conscience: "It's regrettable. Nevertheless, she will always be my daughter, whether Liz is with us or not." In that moment, Bernard made a solemn vow to honor the bond he shared with Liz, a commitment that transcended the confines of marriage or biological ties. For him, Jane's place in his heart was immutable, an indelible mark of the love that had blossomed between them over the years.

Though he grappled with the complexities of his emotions, Bernard couldn't deny the depth of his affection for Jane, a love that had grown stronger with each passing day. Despite the absence of a biological connection, their relationship was forged in the crucible of shared experiences and unwavering devotion—a testament to the power of love to transcend the boundaries of bloodlines and lineage.

Data 24: “Oh my God...” He was terrified, What if he lost Jane to him? And he had promised Liz... Beside, Jane was like his own flesh and blood now. “Legally, you have no right to the child. Even if your wife had left a will, designating you guardian of the person, he might still have the rights to her. Nor if you can show ow unsuitable he is, you’ll probably win, unless the judge is a complete lunatic. But if you are both bunkers, or lawyers, or businessmen, he’d win it. In this case, all he can do is scare you for a while, and put the child thought a lot of trauma. (P:252. 1987) Bernard and Grossman

In a candid conversation with his lawyer, Bernard bared his soul, acknowledging the depth of his connection with Jane. Despite the absence of legal rights, he confessed that Jane had become as dear to him as if she were his own flesh and blood. Although he understood the legal complexities surrounding his guardianship of Jane, including the provisions laid out in his late wife's will, Bernard grappled with conflicting emotions. On one hand, he harbored hopes of securing custody of Jane, knowing that he could provide her with love and support. Yet, the uncertainty of the legal proceedings left him feeling overwhelmed and emotionally adrift.

As he contemplated the possibility of a courtroom battle, Bernard's mind swirled with myriad scenarios. He recognized that the outcome hinged on various factors, including his own fitness as a guardian and the arguments put forth by opposing counsel. Despite his desire to protect Jane, Bernard could not shake the fear of losing her to forces beyond his control. In that moment of vulnerability, Bernard's emotions ran raw, revealing the depth of his love for Jane and the profound impact she had on his life. With his future hanging in the balance, he found solace in confiding in his lawyer, knowing that their shared determination could pave the way for a brighter tomorrow.

Data 25: Most men can't handle a woman with a serious career. There's no point in crying over what can't be. You have to make the best of it.” He nodded. He was trying to, without Liz, but it was still so damn difficult for him, and he had finally found someone he could say that to, and who understood it. “I feel that way about Liz... my wife... as though there will never again be anyone like her.” His eyes were so sincere that it made her ache for him. “Neither was I.... (P:341. 1987) Bernard and Megan

Bernard's heartache ran deep, etched with an indelible sense of loss that reverberated through his being. The mere thought of remarrying and attempting to fill the void left by Liz's absence seemed inconceivable to him. Each memory of Liz, radiant with sincerity and overflowing with kindness, served as a poignant reminder of the profound bond they had shared. He found solace in retracing the footsteps of their time together, each cherished moment a testament to their love and devotion.

As he navigated the vast expanse of his grief, Bernard erected emotional barriers, shielding himself from the prospect of new love. The scars of loss, still tender

and raw, acted as a deterrent to the possibility of opening his heart once more. In the quiet moments of reflection, Bernard found himself enveloped in a bittersweet embrace of memories, clinging to the warmth of Liz's love as if it were a lifeline. For him, the idea of replacing her in his heart was not only unfathomable but also a disservice to the enduring legacy of their love.

## 5. Conclusion

From the analysis, it is evident that the themes of love, commitment, emotional intimacy, and personal sacrifice are deeply intertwined within the relationships depicted. Sheila and Bernard's dynamics reflect the struggle between personal freedom and commitment, showcasing the complexity of emotions involved in romantic relationships. Isabelle's conflict between her artistic aspirations and her relationship with Bernard underscores the tension between individual dreams and shared futures. Bernard's unwavering love and devotion to Liz, especially during her illness, exemplify the profound impact of emotional intimacy and support in a relationship. Liz's gestures of love towards her family, students, and even towards her own well-being, despite her illness, highlight the power of love to transcend hardship. The portrayal of Bernard's emotional turmoil following Liz's illness and eventual passing underscores the depth of grief and loss experienced in the face of profound love. His reluctance to move on from Liz's memory showcases the enduring impact of a deeply cherished relationship. In conclusion, the analysis illustrates the intricate interplay of love, commitment, sacrifice, and emotional intimacy within romantic relationships. It highlights the profound influence of these factors on individuals' lives, shaping their choices, emotions, and experiences. Future researchers may delve deeper into the nuances of these themes, exploring their implications for relationship satisfaction, resilience in the face of adversity, and personal growth. Additionally, further investigation into the long-term effects of grief and loss on individuals' emotional well-being and subsequent relationships could provide valuable insights into the human experience of love and loss.

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