

## An Analysis of Revenge in Ian Mc'Ewan's *Nutshell*

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this study is to find out the main character's revenge portrayed in the novel, the factors that causes revenge, and how the main character takes his revenge. This thesis uses revenge theories by Baron, Byrne, and Branscombe to analyze revenge as a form or behavior of act of someone repaying the actions of other in hopes of getting a better feeling. In completing the analysis, the writer used descriptive-qualitative research method by Miles and Huberman which represents all data in forms of words and sentences. Based on the analysis it can be found that this novel portraying the revenge by the main character stop them from escaping the city. The revenge in this novel carried out by the main character is very unusual and unexpected, yet very logic. Usually, people will try to hurt the other parties who hurt them, but in this novel, the main character go with different approach, by arriving to the world early than it supposed to be, resulting the mother and uncle failed to escape the police officer.

**Keyword:** *Revenge, Murder, Revenge Analysis*

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### 1 Introduction

Emotion is part of our body and mind psychologically. And as psychology it is, it can control and affect our actions and feelings. For instance, if we are happy, we smile; if we're sad, we cry; and if we're annoyed, we get angry. And every each of these can affect our actions towards people. If someone hurt or treat us like we are nothing, we could be angry and that could lead to revenge, and that could lead to violence. Unpaid Worker Wreaks Revenge on Newly Built Hotel. (Newser, 2019)

When we read newspapers or watch the news on TV, we see so many bad events including theft, murder, robbery, abduction, and of course, rape cases. These are just some indications and impact of modern people's psychological problems. Every minute in this big world countless cases

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happen. And most of those cases above's motives are revenge. In this thesis, the writer wants to focus on revenge.

Literature is a work of art. Every one of them is general, yet at the same time special, Wellek and Warren interpret the sentence by explaining that every literary work has distinctive characteristics but also has the same characteristics as other works of art. Some of the distinctive features of literary work itself are "*literature*" is everything written and printed, literature also as an imaginative work, containing thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the creator (Wellek and Warren, 1989: 15).

Though, literary works are divided into three categories by Plato and Aristoteles, which are; poetry, prose, and drama. Aminudin, (2002:66) stated that prose is a story that is carried out by certain actors with character, background and stages and a series of certain stories that depart from the results of the author's imagination so as to forge a story.

Novel is one of many kinds of literary works which is built by some elements. The function of those elements is to support the purpose and the meaning in the novel. Theme is one of the elements. Novel mostly uses many kinds of themes, such as romance, war, history, education, revenge, etc. In McEwan's novel, *Nutshell*, there is some interesting theme to be discussed. It is revenge.

Revenge is an act of someone who commit an act of payback to whom who hurt that person to achieve the feeling of satisfaction. Revenge is also an act that controlled by emotion. In order to analyze emotion, we need to use psychological approach. Psychology and literature have their own relation. According to Jatman (1985: 165) literature and psychology does have rules that closely, indirectly and functional. Indirectly, both of literary and psychology have the same object, which is human. In functional, psychology and literary have relationship because to study the psychological state of another person, the difference in psychology is the symptoms are real, whereas in literature are imaginative.

The author, Ian Russel McEwan, under the pen name *Ian McEwan*, born in England, 21th June 1948. McEwan began his career writing sparse, Gothic short stories. His first two novels, *The Cement Garden* and *The Comfort of Strangers* earned him the nickname "*Ian Macabre*". These were followed by three novels of some success in the 1980s and early 1990s. His novel *Enduring*

*Love* was adapted into a film of the same name. He also won the Man Booker Prize with *Amsterdam*.

In this thesis, the writer performs a literature analysis of a literary work, entitled *Nutshell*, written by Ian McEwan. The novel was published in 2016 and is set in 2015. Interviewing McEwan for *The Wall Street Journal*, Michael W. Miller explained: "The idea for the extremely unusual narrator of Ian McEwan's new novel *Nutshell* first came to him while he was chatting with his pregnant daughter-in-law. 'We were talking about the baby, and I was very much aware of the baby as a presence in the room,' he recalls. He jotted down a few notes, and soon afterward, daydreaming in a long meeting, the first sentence of the novel popped into his head: 'So here I am, upside down in a woman.'"

It retells William Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*. *Hamlet* is a well know revenge-themed story. A revenge theme is always bitter-sweet. Revenge is an emotion that triggers humans to act. Humans most likely will act revenge to get back to people who hurt them. There are many ways to do an act of revenge, and many types of them. Some people will commit revenge instantly after they get hurt, and some will plan for many years to get back to someone hurt them perfectly, flawlessly. According to evolutionary psychologists, revenge serves three adaptive functions (McCullough, 2008). First, the mere possibility of revenge deters potential transgressors. Individuals with reputations for being vengeful are less likely to be victimized because the potential costs are high. Second, if a transgression does occur, revenge deters further harm by penalizing wrong-doing. Finally, revenge fosters cooperation by preventing individuals from taking advantage of the work carried out by others (free-riding). Each writer has their way to construct the plot, point of view, etc. But in this case, Ian took a brave step in retelling the story in his way. The story is from the point of view of an unborn child. The uniqueness of this story is it is narrated by a fetus.

This novel is very interesting since, well, it is narrated by a fetus, which a human-will-be, who doesn't even yet have a body. But even though he doesn't have a body yet, he already has an ability to comprehending the outside world through conversations that he can hear also through his mother's biological responses to various events, including when her mother is having sexual activity with someone. Imagine the pressure and disturbance that he felt. Until there is some point where the narrator tries to hang himself with his own umbilical cord. But unfortunately, he failed and the story goes on.

The revenge motive can be seen in the narrator's characteristics. At the beginning of the novel, the reader automatically knows that the narrator is wiser than most grown-ups. He also discovers his mother, Trudy, has a plan to murder his biological father, John later on. Trudy and John are married but live separately. The only reason she would kill him is simply for taking his money. He also knows that Trudy has a lover, Claude, who helps her success her plan to kill John and ironically, also his uncle. One day, when Claude came to visit Trudy's house, which John doesn't know where the location is, and they are having sex. Being realized of the current situation, the narrator takes on dislike on Claude automatically, because he feels that Claude is betraying his father for having an affair with his mother, Trudy. Later on, they are making plans on how to kill John. Knowing this, the fetus feels anger and swears to get revenge, as soon as it born. Even though he has never met his father, he still respects his father. But because right now he is a fetus, he can't do anything to deter both of them.

After hearing Trudy's and Claude's conversation, he learns that those two are planning to poison John by putting anti-freeze in one of his smoothies. And in order to cover their tracks, they are planning to plant items in his car that would lead the police to believe John had committed suicide, and to pose as John at the smoothie shop by wearing his hat, making potential investigators believe that John had bought the smoothie himself. Later on, the inspector pay them both a visit and ask them questions regarding John's death. Trudy states that John is struggling from depression and chose to end his suffer. Hearing that, the inspector believes her and went to searching for evidence on the crime scene and found that there are no even single fingerprint left, not even John's. The inspector wonder how could he poison himself without touching the bottle? But Trudy and Claude said that he probably wore gloves while he did it. The inspector pretends to believe them and went with the flow. Until she finds the important key to the puzzle. The fact that Trudy has the gloves. The inspector gives order to put Trudy and Claude to arrest. And in the same time, the narrator is born, happily filled with glory.

The writer interested in the story of a fetus that wants to avenge his father, even though they have never met before. That is why the writer wants to analyze Ian McEwan's novel entitled Nutshell. In this study, the writer wants to analyze this novel, which can show the revenge desire that felt by a fetus. Therefore, the writer interested in finding the revenge motive in this novel from England.

## 2 Research Method

This analysis is using a qualitative descriptive method based on Miles and Huberman (1994) in Sugiyono's book entitled *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (2014: 247-252) as the technique to analyze this novel. Qualitative descriptive method is a method of analysis by describing and analyzing the data then giving some interpretation and explanation.

In analyzing this research, there are three steps involved; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

### 1. Data Reduction

The first step in analyzing qualitative data involves data reduction. Data reduction means summarizing, choose the basic things, focusing on important things, look for themes and patterns (Sugiyono, 2014:247). First, the writer collected data related to revenge motive in Ian McEwan's *Nutshell*. Then the writer transcribed the data. Irrelevant data which were not related was discarded.

### 2. Data Display

The second step is data display. A display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and the action (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In the process of the reducing and displaying the data, it was based on the formulation of the research problem. The formulation of research problem are:

- 1) How is the narrator's revenge motive portrayed in the novel?
- 2) What are the factors that cause revenge portrayed in the novel?
- 3) How did the main character take revenge in the novel?

This step is done by presenting a set of information that is structured and possibility of drawing conclusions, because the data obtained during the process of qualitative research often in the form of narrative, thus requiring simplification without reducing its content. After displaying the data, a conclusion is drawn.

### 3. Conclusion Drawing/Verification

The third step of qualitative data analysis is conclusion drawing and verification. From the start of data collection, the qualitative analysis is beginning to decide what things means is nothing regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, casual

flows, and propositions (Miles and Huberman, 1944). Conclusions are also verified as the analyst proceeds. The conclusion drawing is started after the data were collected by making temporary conclusion. In other words, it can be said that the conclusion is analyzed continuously and verified the validity to get the perfect conclusion about the analyzing of revenge motive in Ian McEwan's *Nutshell*.

### **3 Result and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Revenge in Ian McEwan's *Nutshell***

Revenge is a form of behavior that the main character does in the story, as a form of act for people who betray it. If someone get hurt or wronged by other person, that person will likely do an act of revenge. In this story of *Nutshell* by Ian McEwan, the main character is a vengeful creature being. The main character is a fetus whom inside its mother's womb. It has an outstanding intelligence for a fetus. It can hear, feel, and understand what's going on outside through its mother. It lives in such a happy life, until it acknowledge that its mother having an affair with its uncle and plotting a murder to its father. Knowing this, it does everything to bring justice for its father. The story tells how the main character having its revenge towards its uncle and mother by putting them both in prison for killing its father.

#### **3.2 Betrayal in Ian McEwan's *Nutshell***

In this sub-chapter, the writer wants to give brief introduction why the main character decided to take revenge. The main character is a fetus who is inside its mother. While it is in its own amniotic sac, it acknowledge some that it can hear and feel what the mother does. But all of that leads to feeling betrayed by its surroundings. It all started when the main character acknowledge that its mother was having an affair with someone other than her husband.

"Not everyone knows what it is to have your father's rival's penis inches from your nose."(Ian McEwan, 2016: 39)

The quotation above indicates that the main character knows that its mother was having sex with another person. For a creature who loves and respect its father, knowing that its own father's rival's penis inserting its territory is irritating and bizzare. It's its own sacred place, home, and *mother*. Every other person will get angry or feel wronged if someone violate their territory, or rather a mother. The difference is, the main character is a fetus who does not have a solid body

yet, and it even cannot do anything about it. Later, he found out that “that other person” is its own uncle. It is described as follows:

“I hear him say he’s meeting his brother this afternoon. He’s mentioned this brother before. I should have paid more attention.

Claude says, ‘All his hopes up are on this poet he’s signing up.’

Poet? Very few people in the world sign up a poet. I only know of one. His *brother?*”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 50)

In the quotation above the main character already have suspicion that Claude is its uncle because it knows that its father loves only poem and he has a brother. It has no idea that his brother is Claude. After gathering all the informations, it can conclude that its mother, Trudy, is cheating from her husband, John with Claude. So the penis which entered its own sacred place is its uncle’s.

The next day, it already certain that the person its mother having affair with is its own uncle, Claude.

“Trudy is barefoot, in bikini top, and brief denim shorts that barely allow for me. Pink-framed, heart-shaped, sunglasses and a straw hat top this confection. I know this because my – my *uncle!* – asked her on the phone to tell him what she was wearing. Flirtatiously, she obliged.”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 53)

“I can begin to comprehend my situation. ... So. My mother has preferred my father’s brother, cheated her husband, ruined her son. My uncle has stolen his brother’s wife, deceived his nephew’s father, grossly insulted his sister-in-law’s son.”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 55)

Cheating is one form of betrayal, especially in a relationship. The action of cheating makes the cheated parties feel hurt, played, fooled, disappointed, and of course, betrayed. When a child see their mother or father having an affair with someone else, not only the parents feel betrayed, but the children too. Imagine when a mother having affair while the child inside her belly. It must be catastrophic experience for a fetus. The main character feels all of those knowing that “that other person” really is its uncle. The main character feels that if it is its uncle who its mother having

affair with, it could be Claude is the father. Or, Claude will add the gene into it so when it's born, it will have at least a quarter of its uncle genetic in its body. Your archenemy's genetic in your body? That idea is not enjoyable, or even comfortable to think about.

To think that its mother separating from its father and then having a romantic relationship with its uncle, and she treated both of them differently. Its mother doesn't want to be with John (the father), instead she wants to be with Claude (the uncle). And even worse, its mother choose Claude more than her own child. From this point, the main character felt betrayed by its own mother. Even though if Trudy does not want to be with John because she doesn't love him anymore, that doesn't mean that she can be having affair with Claude. Or anybody else for that matter. But a child can not understand a concept of cheating yet, can they? All they understand is their parents are there for them side by side.

Feels like that hurting the main character by knowing the fact that Trudy is having an affair with Claude, later on the main character learns that they plotting a plan to kill John and take his money with them. After they kill John and take his money, they will move to Claude's house and live happily ever after;

“Decide’

‘I’m frightened’

‘But remember. Six months ahead. In my house, seven million in the bank. And we’re placed the baby somewhere. But. What’s it to. Erm. Be?’

... As they kiss again she says it into her lover's mouth. Baby's first word. Poison.”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 67-68)

“*And ... we've placed the baby somewhere. ... Placed is but the lying cognate of dumped. As the baby is of me. Somewhere is a liar too. Ruthless mother! This will be an undoing, my fall, for only in fairy tales are unwanted babies orphaned upwards.*”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 69)

The main character hears every conversation its mother has with anybody. And it hears that Trudy and Claude are planning to kill its father, John. It also hear that Claude convincing Trudy to leave the baby somewhere when it is born. When it expect its mother oppose the idea and turn him down, in the reality Trudy does not against the idea of disposing the baby. Not only they

wanted to kill John, they also wanted to dispose the fetus simply for money? That idea is very unacceptable even for a form of a fetus. What kind of a mother that would dispose her own child just for some money? Sure, money is interesting and anyone would die for that. But it is also deceiving and some people literally die for money. Also, this is life that she will throw away. If she really dispose a fetus, that means she is killer. And she kill two people since she will kill John later. From this point forward, the fetus only wants one thing and one thing only, to stop their plan once and for all. Also from this part, the fetus more and more bear the feeling of betrayed by its mother and uncle.

“What was I in my father’s peroration? Dead. Head-first in a burial mound within his hatred ex-wife’s gut. Not even a mention, not in an aside, not even dismissed as an irrelevance.”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 108-109)

To analyze the quotation above better, we need to understand the situation first. After Trudy and Claude plotting a plan to murder John, John came to their house the next day without notice. And what makes them surprised was John was not come alone. Instead, he came with a female stranger. They let them in and all of them talked for a while, and John tell Trudy, poetically, that he is no longer in love with Trudy. That now he is in love with Elodie (the female stranger), and he knew that Trudy and Claude are in a relationship and he is absolutely fine with it. Then, he told Trudy that she should live with Claude so Elodie can move in with John in this house. Basically, John told Trudy that she move out from his house because he wanted to live with Elodie now.

But that’s just it. He only talked about their relationships and how they should do in the future. He didn’t even mention a single time about the fetus, his own son. After he knows that her mother planned to dispose it just because her lover tell her to do so, it doesn’t have any other choice but to put its hopes to its father. It hopes that at least its father will save and accept it. But reality prefer differ and that fact really hits it. Reality wanted that its father reject it self. So once again, the fetus got betrayed by another person. This time, its own biological father.

### **3.3 Justice in Ian McEwan’s *Nutshell***

When someone hurt or betrayed us, usually it is normal for us to expect justice for the other parties who hurt or betrayed us. The feeling to act something in order to the other parties to feel what we felt. That is justice. In this novel, the main character shows the feeling of justice in the near-end

of the novel. Even though the main character is unborn fetus, it already has a feeling of justice because it has been betrayed and hurt by its loved ones and surroundings.

The first quotation is when the main character does something in the name of justice to the one who hurt and betrayed it for the first time. Claude, the uncle, has been having sex with Trudy, its mother all this time. Hence, he has been marking his mark all over its territory, which is the womb. The first main character's experience in doing an act of justice is described as in this quotation below:

“...I travel a section where I know a portion of my uncle has passed too often the other way. I'm not troubled. What was in his day a vagina, is now proudly a birth canal, my Panama, and I'm greater than he was ...”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 280)

From the quotation above, the main character finally feels avenged the feeling of his defeat by getting through Trudy's vagina. The main character went through its mother's vagina that even though once it's littered by Claude. As per I already explained and stated earlier, justice is people who feel aggrieved by others will fight against parties that harm them. A person with the tendency to view things negatively in a great relationship of his chances of revenge. When the main character successfully born by went through its mother's vagina, it feels it finally cleansed it from Claude. It feels that an area of portion that its uncle used and come visit so much lately has been turned into a birth canal. It thinks that it has changed something that used to be vile, unholy and dirty become a holy place because of it. And finally, with that feeling, it has already beat Claude halfway in the term of Trudy.

While the main character is in an adventure inside its mother's vagina, for a stretch, it's deaf, blind, numb, and dumb. It hurts everywhere. But it feels more pain when it hears its mother screaming as she renders the sacrifice all mothers make for their big-headed, loud-mouthed infants.

But no, that's not the only thing that the main character beat Claude in. Later it will beat Claude again, by doing an act of justice.

The process of delivering a baby is not easy as it sounds. It could take hours to complete it. Tears, sweat, and blood, scream and shout, all of those filled the room where the main character is in the middle of delivering process. But it's all in the past now. A baby is born in a healthy condition. No cries and whimpers come out of the baby. Just a smile while it is wrapped by a blue bath towel. A blue towel wrapped around it telling us that the main character is a boy. He obviously is smiling because he is successful to postpone Claude and Trudy for leaving the city to escape. The final justice act is described in the quotation below;

“Trudy and I must have dozed. I don’t know how many minutes have passed until we hear the doorbell. How clear it sounds. Claude is still here, still hoping for his passport. He may have been downstairs to hunt. Now he goes towards the videophone. He glances at the screen and turns away. There can be no surprises.

‘Four of them,’ he says, more to himself.

We contemplate this. It’s over. It’s not a good end. It was never going to be. My mother moves me so we can exchange a long look. The moment I’ve waited for. My father was right, it is a lovely face. ...’ (Ian McEwan, 2016: 282-283)

This is it. The final victory. The main character already arrives in the world, embraced by his mother. While he is embraced by his loved mother, Claude is downstairs only to find that the police officers is already in their front door. But he has not found his passport yet, so he can’t escape by himself and leave them both behind. In the quotation above the main character admit that this is not a good end. Probably because he will go to prison as well. The main character already knew that this is never going to be a good ending after all. But he doesn’t care at all. He got his mother beside him and she will take care of him in the prison. Plus, he drag Claude with them to the prison as well, and I personally think that is a huge bonus.

‘...Even in this moment of repose, during this long, greedy stare into my mother’s eyes, I’m thinking about the taxi waiting outside. A waste. Time to send it away. And I’m thinking about our prison cell – I hope it’s not too small – and beyond its heavy door, worn steps ascending: first sorrow, then justice, then meaning. The rest is chaos.’ (Ian McEwan, 2016: 283-284)

The quotations above explains the situation after the main character is born. Turns out, it’s a boy. The process of delivery is taking too much time that Trudy can’t go anywhere beside her bed. And Claude is stuck because Trudy hid his passport just in case he was going to leave her. So Trudy force him by situation to wait for her delivery and then she will give him his passport.

In these quotations, the main character feels that he already beat Claude. His plan to stop him and Trudy to escape is almost flawlessly success. In the past, Trudy chose Claude rather than him, but now he make her choose him than Claude. He knew that if his plan success, he will not taste a sweet victory. At such age he already knew prison, and trying to imagine what its like. He hope that the room is not too small for him and his mother. Truth is, he doesn’t really care at all. Because at least, he taste the air, the warm, heaven-like mother embrace, and his worst nemesis’s

defeat. And he doesn't care whether or not he is going to prison. All he care is he defeat Claude, got his loving mother back, and put his father's murderer to prison.

### 3.4 Aggressiveness in Ian McEwan's *Nutshell*

In this part the writer wants to analyze the main character's aggressiveness in the novel. As in the theory explanation that I stated in the previous chapter, aggressiveness is a feeling to act by the cause of anger. There are two kinds of sources for anger; attack, and frustration. The main character feel frustrated because it is just a fetus and can't do anything to avenge his father's death, which is killed by his own wife and brother. The quotation is as followed:

"I'm going to kill myself. An infant death, a homicide in effect, ...

... My father's death half avenged. Half, because murderers don't hang in gentle Britain. I'll give Claude a proper lesson in the art of negative altruism."(Ian McEwan, 2016: 184)

This quotation explains that the main character wanted to avenge his fathers' death at least half of it, by killing itself. It thinks because of its condition, which is a helpless fetus who can't do anything except sit and watch in its own little paradise; Trudy's belly, this is the only thing it can do right now.

This quotation is taken from the situation where John is already murdered by both Claude and Trudy. Well, Trudy did the most job, but Claude shares the same guilt. The next day after John dead, Trudy was in remorse about what she did, she killed her husband after all. But Claude didn't even give a single care. Instead, while they both argued, he kissed her and made his move. Knowing that its father's murderer's penis about to enter its small world, it decided to take away its unformed life, hoping that it will effect in teaching him a lesson due to its uncle's reckless assault on a pregnant woman well advanced in her third trimester.

Unfortunately, as soon as the fetus start to fade, its plan failed. As soon as the main character start to fade, it fists go limp and life returns. Of course, to kill the brain is to kill the will to kill the brain. I think the main character does not have enough will to kill itself, or it's not focused enough to do that. Or maybe, it is having a second thought. About Trudy perhaps.

When Trudy and Claude wants to escape the town from the inspector, the main character feel it can't just watch its father's murderer get away. It realize that it can not do anything about it. But it has to stop. After all its turns and revisions, misinterpretations, lapses of insight, attempts at

self-annihilation and sorrow in passivity, it has come to a decision. Now is the time to act, just as in this quotation below:

“...Enough. My amniotic sac is the translucent silk purse, fine and strong, that contains me. It also holds the fluid that protects me from the world and its bad dreams. No longer. Time to join in. To end the endings.” (Ian McEwan, 2016: 274)

The quotation above describes the main character’s aggressiveness to stop Claude and Trudy last plan once and for all. It decides to break through its own cage, to distract them both, and also to postpone their activity, thinking that they need to cancel their plan to deal with the delivery. But when it thinks that its plan working, another problem comes, which is stated in this quotation below:

“From far away I hear my mother call out. It could be a shout for help or a scream of triumph or pain. And then I feel it on the top of my head, my crown – one centimeter dilated! No turning back.

Trudy has crawled onto the bed. Claude is somewhere near the door. She’s panting, excited, and very afraid.

‘It’s started. It’s so quick! Get an ambulance.’

He says nothing for a moment, then he asks simply, ‘Where is my passport?’

The failure is mine. I underestimated him. The point in arriving early was to ruin Claude. I knew he was trouble. But I thought he loved my mother and would stay with her. I’m beginning to understand her fortitude.” (Ian McEwan 2016: 276-277)

From the quotation above, it is clear that the main character wants ruin Claude’s live and stop Trudy from abandoning it. When Claude is downstairs, getting ready to leave, Trudy shout out his name to call him over to help. She is shouting in pain from her vagina being widening. She is panting, from the pain, and trying to control her breath. She is excited, because her first child is going to be born and finally out of her body. And she is very afraid, because this is her first experience in delivering a baby. In addition, she is nowhere near the hospital so there is no midwife available to help her through the process.

But its plan starting to fail when Claude does not care that Trudy is in the middle of delivery a baby. Instead, he asks for his passport and planning to leave them both here. In this point, the

main character realize it's already underestimated its enemy, thinking that he will stay with his lover during her hard times, in reality he is not. But thankfully, the goddess of fortune smile at them. Trudy already hid his passport just in case this happens. And it is happening. So, the main character can continue its plan all again.

### 3.5 Factors That Cause Revenge

Revenge is a desire; an urge feeling to act a payback for what the other parties did to someone. But the act of revenge itself have factors that triggers it. In other words, some action or event that has been done in the past could trigger the act of revenge. In this novel the revenge feeling that the main character have also have factors.

The first factor is when his mother started have an affair with his uncle, Claude.

“My uncle – a quarter of my genome, of my father’s a half, but no more like my father than I to Virgil or Montaigne. What despicable part of myself is Claude and how will I know? I could be my own brother and deceive myself as he deceive his. When I’m born and allowed at least be alone, there’s a quarter I’ll want to take kitchen knife to. But the one who holds the knife will also my uncle, quartering my genome. ...” (Ian McEwan 2016: 55)

When the main character first acknowledge the affair between its mother and his uncle, he started to feel gross, disgusted, despise and questioning himself because he thinks that he might be his uncle’s son, or at least he has his uncle’s dna in him. He also feels that because his uncle gene is inside of him, he will become more like him later when he’s born. The idea of that makes him feels want to cut himself, or at least a quarter of him. And he realize that the part he want to cut is also his uncle and he can’t do anything about it.

After feeling all of those feelings about himself, he keeps moving on thinking that he still has his father and mother eventhough they are not together. At least, that’s what he thought until Trudy and Claude planning to kill John and cast him away when he’s born.

“‘Decide’

‘I’m frightened’

‘But remember. Six months ahead. In my house, seven million in the bank. And we’re placed the baby somewhere. But. What’s it to. Erm. Be?’

... As they kiss again she says it into her lover's mouth. Baby's first word. Poison."(Ian McEwan, 2016: 67-68)

*"And ... we've placed the baby somewhere. ... Placed is but the lying cognate of dumped. As the baby is of me. Somewhere is a liar too. Ruthless mother! This will be an undoing, my fall, for only in fairy tales are unwanted babies orphaned upwards."*(Ian McEwan, 2016: 69)

The main character heard the conversation between Trudy and Claude. It's about their plan to kill John. At first, Trudy hesitated and said she's frightened. Being cunning fox Claude is, he convince Trudy to still take part in their plan to kill John by telling her how much money they will have later. But he tell her to leave the baby somewhere, as in abandon it later. It is shocking that the fact Trudy accept all of his words just by one kiss. The fact that she choose money and his lover more than her own flesh and blood. To think its own mother will disown it later when it reaches the whole new world. It is really sad and hurts. Those facts makes the main character feels betrayal even more. This time is bigger because he is hurt and wronged by its own mother, its own host of life.

"From where I am, you and my mother and the world are all one. Hyperbole, I know. The world is also full of wonders, which is why I'm foolishly in love with it. And I love and admire you both. What I'm saying is, I'm fearful of rejection."(Ian McEwan, 2016: 125)

People tend to do everything to avoid being abandoned, casted away, or being unwanted. Some will please the others, make them happy, do what they says, just to not feel all of those things. The point is, human is afraid of rejection. And that includes the main character. From the quation above, we can see that it says it is fearful of rejection. Which means, that in just a moment, its father will be killed by Trudy and Claude and left it with them later. We all know that Trudy and Claude already agreed to leave the baby somewhere. Its only hope is its father. When he's about to gone, it realize its only hope and place that accept it will be gone. And it's all because of Claude and Trudy's plan. This situation adds to why the main character take revenge later.

### **3.6 How the Main Character Take Revenge**

This sub-chapter is very interesting, since the main character is a fetus whom can not fo anything yet because it has not a solid body and can not move freely yet. Yet, it accomplished its revenge

in this story in the novel. In this part, the writer will analyze how the main character in the novel *Nutshell* take revenge.

The main character take its revenge in the end of the story. When Trudy and Claude trying to escape the police investigation, the main character decided to stop them once and for all.

“...Enough. My amniotic sac is the translucent silk purse, fine and strong, that contains me. It also holds the fluid that protects me from the world and its bad dreams. No longer. Time to join in. To end the endings.” (Ian McEwan, 2016: 274)

The amniotic sac, which is its mother’s womb that imprison it for all this time and hold it to do whatever it pleases. But it also keep it warm and comfortable. Even though, the main character thought that it will no longer stay in that place no more. It is time to leave the comfort zone and face the real world, and Claude. It is not easy for an unborn child to free its arm lodged thight against its chest, or gain movement in it wrist. But it’s done. Evolution of humanity knows and does its business. It finished its first step of stopping their plan to escape and take its revenge. And now it is ready for the next step. To end the endings. While it achieved the first step, the result is quite satisfying. Trudy immediately stop and call Claude telling him that her water is breaking.

“My mother calls out whit what sounds like a disappointed moan. ‘Oh Claude.’

‘What now?’

‘My waters. Breaking!’

‘We’ll deal with it later. On the train.’”(Ian McEwan, 2016: 275)

As the results is staying smoothly, there are always obstacles laying around. When Trudy tell Claude that her water broke, Claude decided to hold it in and keep going. He must be thinking that it is some kind of a ploy, a continuation of the argument that they had, a repellent form of womanly trouble that he’s too frantic to consider. Even though that in reality, that is not some kind of ploy, it is a real situation that needs to be handled immediately. In this point, the main character’s plan is at risk to be failed, but it doesn’t care and keep continue.

“From far away I hear my mother call out. It could be a shout for help or a scream of triumph or pain. And then I feel it on the top of my head, my crown – one centimeter dilated! No turning back.

Trudy has crawled onto the bed. Claude is somewhere near the door. She’s panting, excited, and very afraid.

‘It’s started. It’s so quick! Get an ambulance.’

He says nothing for a moment, then he asks simply, ‘Where is my passport?’

The failure is mine. I underestimated him. The point in arriving early was to ruin Claude. I knew he was trouble. But I thought he loved my mother and would stay with her. I’m beginning to understand her fortitude.” (Ian McEwan 2016: 276-277)

Finally, the main character succeeded to exit the sac, just a little bit though, but it still counts. Very much counted. Because of the progress, Trudy is unable to move and they have to postpone their plan to escape the police investigation. It see the exit, has been widen by one centimeter. So there is now way it would abort its plan now. The only way is go through. But, obstacle. As it keep doing its plan, Claude being a selfish ignorant he is, he just ask Trudy where his passport is and doesn’t even give a single care about the fact that Trudy is in the middle of delivery. He just thinking for himself, for his own safety and planning to leave Trudy back. At this point, the main character understood that its plan has failed to stop them both. It maybe succeed to stop Trudy to escape, but Trudy is not the only its father’s killer, Claude too. Maybe Trudy did all the work, but Claude was the one who suggested the idea, he is the mastermind. And he also was the one who won’t let Trudy back away from the killing plan. And now Claude might slip away. But Trudy is smarter than she looks. She already hid it just in case they will be facing a situation where Claude leave her behind, and she was right.

“...she says, ‘I hid it. Downstairs. Just in case this happened.’

He considers. He’s dealt in property, he owned a skyscraper in Cardiff and knows about a deal.

“Tell me where it is and I’ll call you an ambulance. Then I’ll go.”

‘No, if I’m going down so are you.’

‘Fine. No ambulance.’

‘I’ll call them myself. As soon—’ (Ian McEwan, 2016: 277-278)

Trudy’s words is interrupted by the second contraction hence she can’t complete her sentences. This quotation above explain that Trudy has already anticipated Claude for leaving her alone. Even though he said that he will call the ambulance to help her delivery the baby in exchange for his passport whereabouts, but it seems Trudy does not trust Claude no longer. That is why she can anticipated this from the beginning. Claude’s proposition is quite concving, but nor fot Tudy, not again. She will not succumb no more. And now she is starting has Claude in her hand.

The argument between passport whereabouts and baby delivering is still going. Claude insist that he doesn’t want to help Trudy, yet he keep asking for his passport which Trudy hid. In the other hand, Trudy insists that Claude stay and help her delivering the baby or she won’t tell him where his passport is. If she is going down, they both go down. Together.

‘She recovers and says in a level voice, ‘Then you’ll have to be the midwife.’

‘Not my baby.’

‘It’s never the midwife’s baby.’” (Ian McEwan, 2016: 279)

From the way she say those sentences, she is indeed frightened, but she terrify him with her instructions. After those words, Claude finally agrees to help Trudy because he have no choice but to help Trudy. He can’t go the border because he has no passport. So he did. Naturally, the process of delivery is not short. It could take a long time. So long that the taxi, a transportation vehicle that they ordered for them to escape waited long enough that he will cancel the order and leave immediately. And in the end, the main character was born, it’s a boy. With Trudy embracing him, wrapped in a blue bath towel.

‘...Even in this moment of repose, during this long, greedy stare into my mother’s eyes, I’m thinking about the taxi waiting outside. A waste. Time to send it away. And I’m thinking about our prison cell – I hope it’s not too small – and beyond its heavy door, worn steps ascending: first sorrow, then justice, then meaning. The rest is chaos.’ (Ian McEwan, 2016: 283-284)

And finally, the end has come. The main character has succeeded in stopping his father's killer to escape the city and live a happy life. He also get his mother's love back. The love he yearn for so long. The story ends with the main character being embraced by Trudy, asleep, while the police officer is downstairs. As the quotation stated, the main character does not care if he will go to the prison and spend the rest of his life. All he care about is he has stopped his archenemy, Claude, and put him into prison. And he has his mother beside him forever now. Now, he is not afraid of the rejection anymore and ready to face the life of this cruel world. Even though the life the he will face is, *chaos*.

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