

**NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN J.D. ROBB'S *BONDED IN
DEATH*: A TZVETAN TODOROV PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS**

THESIS

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THESIS

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MALANG

2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state the thesis entitled “**Narrative Structure in J.D. Robb’s *Bonded in Death: A Tzvetan Todorov Perspective Analysis***” is my original work. I do not include any material previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby. If there is any objection or claim. I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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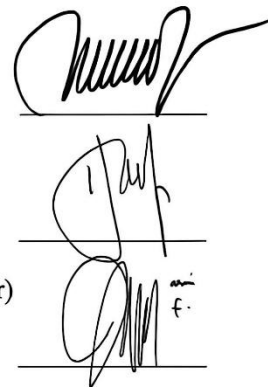
This is to certify that Muhammad Hamdan Zulfan Mukhtarom's thesis entitled **“Narrative Structure in J.D. Robb's *Bonded in Death: A Tzvetan Todorov Perspective Analysis*”** has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sasta* (S.S) in Department of English Literature.

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MOTTO

“Sing paling larang dudu asile, nanging perjalanan kanggo nggayuhe.”

The most valuable thing is not the result, but the journey to achieve it.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved father and mother, Ahmad Syaiful Mukhtarom and Lilik Farida, who always supported and encouraged me at every step of my journey during college. For all your sacrifices, both of you, may Allah reward you abundantly.

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The researcher is aware that this thesis still needs improvement and has weaknesses in several aspects. Therefore, criticism and suggestion for improving this work are welcomed. Hopefully, this thesis will benefit both the researcher and the reader in general.

Malang, June 10th, 2026

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ABSTRACT

Mukhtarom, Muhammad Hamdan Zulfan (2026) Narrative Structure in J.D. Robb's *Bonded in Death*: A Tzvetan Todorov Perspective Analysis. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Hafidhun Annas, M.Hum.

Keywords: Narrative structure, Crime fiction, Literary criticism, Bonded in Death

The study discusses the narrative structure in the novel *Bonded in Death* by J. D. Robb using the narrative structure theory of Tzvetan Todorov. This study is motivated by the importance of understanding how crime fiction not only becomes a crime story, but also builds meaning through narrative structure patterns. Therefore, this study aims to uncover how Todorov's theory can explain the development of the plot and can be a tool to help the investigative process in the novel. This study uses a structuralism approach in the framework of literary criticism. The main data source is the novel *Bonded in Death* (2025), with data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and narrative quotes that are relevant to the five stages of Todorov's narrative structure. Data collection techniques are carried out through intensive reading, marking, and data recording, then analyzed based on a five-stage narrative classification. The results of the study show that the five stages are structured chronologically in the novel and play an important role in moving the storyline. The atrial stage to resolve the disruption is the most dominant stage because it contains the investigation process in uncovering the perpetrators of the crime. In addition, Todorov's narrative structure proves to serve not only as a plot former, but also as a framework that reflects and supports the investigative narrative in crime fiction.

ABSTRAK

Mukhtarom, Muhammad Hamdan Zulfan (2026) Narrative Structure in J.D. Robb's *Bonded in Death*: A Tzvetan Todorov Perspective Analysis. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Hafidhun Annas, M.Hum.

Kata Kunci: *Struktur naratif, Fiksi kriminal, Kritik sastra, Bonded in Death*

Penelitian ini membahas struktur naratif dalam novel *Bonded in Death* karya J. D. Robb dengan menggunakan teori struktur naratif dari Tzvetan Todorov. Kajian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pentingnya memahami bagaimana crime fiction tidak hanya menjadi cerita kriminal, tetapi juga membangun makna melalui pola struktur naratif. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana teori Todorov dapat menjelaskan perkembangan alur serta dapat menjadi alat pembantu proses investigasi dalam novel tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan strukturalisme dalam kerangka kritik sastra. Sumber data utama berupa novel *Bonded in Death* (2025), dengan data berupa kata, frasa, kalimat, dan kutipan naratif yang relevan dengan lima tahap struktur naratif Todorov. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui pembacaan intensif, penandaan, dan pencatatan data, kemudian dianalisis berdasarkan klasifikasi lima tahap naratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelima tahap tersebut terstruktur secara kronologis dalam novel dan berperan penting dalam menggerakkan alur cerita. Tahap upaya mengatasi gangguan menjadi fase paling dominan karena memuat proses investigasi dalam mengungkap pelaku kejahatan. Selain itu, struktur naratif Todorov terbukti tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai pembentuk alur, tetapi juga sebagai kerangka yang merefleksikan dan mendukung narasi investigasi dalam crime fiction.

المخلص

مختروم، محمد حمدان زولفان (٢٠٢٦) بنية السرد في كتاب ج. د. روب "مرتبط في الموت: تحليل سردي لتسفيتان تودوروف". أطروحة البكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة الإسلام المولانا مالك إبراهيم مالانغ. المستشار حافظ عناس، ماجستير في الهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بنية السرد، روايات الجريمة، النقد الأدبي، مرتبط بالموت

في هذه الدراسة، تناقش البنية السردية في رواية "مرتبط في الموت" لج. د. روب باستخدام نظرية البنية السردية لتسفيتان تودوروف. تستند هذه الدراسة إلى أهمية فهم كيف أن أدب الجريمة لا يصبح فقط قصة جريمة، بل يبني أيضا معنى من خلال أنماط هيكلية السرد. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى كشف كيف يمكن لنظرية تودوروف أن تفسر تطور الحبكة وأن تكون أداة تساعد في عملية التحقيق في الرواية. تستخدم هذه الدراسة نهج البنيوية في إطار النقد الأدبي مع منهج النقد الأدبي. المصدر الرئيسي للبيانات هو رواية "مرتبط في الموت" (2025)، مع بيانات على شكل كلمات وعبارات وجمل واقتباسات سردية ذات صلة بالمرحلة الخمس لبنية سرد تودوروف. تجرى تقنيات جمع البيانات من خلال القراءة المكثفة، والتعليم، وتسجيل البيانات، ثم تحلل بناء على تصنيف سردي من خمس مراحل. تظهر نتائج الدراسة أن المراحل الخمس منظمة زمنيا في الرواية وتلعب دورا مهما في تحريك القصة. المرحلة الأذينية لحل الاضطراب هي المرحلة الأكثر سيطرة لأنها تتضمن عملية التحقيق في كشف مرتكبي الجريمة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يثبت هيكل سرد تودوروف أنه لا يعمل فقط كأساس للحبكة، بل أيضا كإطار يعكس ويدعم السرد الاستقصائي في أدب الجريمة.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five subchapters: the background of the study, the problems of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

In recent times, complex crimes involving hidden motives, disguises, and conspiracies have increasingly appeared in the news and social media. In this context, fictional narratives have great potential to bridge criminological research with a deeper understanding of criminal motives. Therefore, with the ability to reveal criminal motives, fictional narrative representations can contribute and serve as a reflective tool that reveals the dimensions and phenomena of human criminal behavior (McGregor, 2021). Criminological fiction can thus be understood as a form of literature that not only displays the beauty of language, but also represents social reality and human behaviour through complex narratives and characters.

Likewise, crime fiction still falls under the concept of literature as a medium for representing human experiences and social realities. Crime fiction is not only a source of entertainment, because its narratives have the power to shape public perceptions of crime and the justice system, often blurring the line between fiction and reality (Morisetty, 2025). Through the depiction of imagination, language, and narrative structure, literary works provide space to construct various human

behaviours, including motives and actions. In addition, it is important to discuss how such criminal behaviour is constructed.

In the context of the United States, crime rates are still a frequent occurrence in everyday life. Kesuma & Fahadayna (2023) argued that the phenomenon of violent crime in the United States continues to be an important issue, with gun ownership and socioeconomic inequality being factors associated with high rates of violent crime. This could be a factor in how writers are inspired to create works with a crime fiction theme. One example of a novel with a crime fiction theme is *Bonded in Death* (2025) by J. D. Rob. This novel illustrates how crime can be used as the basis for a complete and structured work. It begins with a murder case, followed by the investigation conducted by the main character, Lieutenant Eve Dallas, and ends with the arrest of the perpetrator. During the investigation, Eve faces many challenges, ranging from terror that evolves into a bomb threat to other assassination attempts targeting specific individuals. This novel emphasizes the bonds of loyalty, past trauma, and the struggle to uphold justice amid the threat of terror.

This can be seen that literary works are the result of human imagination or expression which is developed and then applied to written and oral works, whether based on feelings, thoughts, or experiences. Referring to Damono's perspective, Annas (2022) argues that literature presents a depiction of life and reality. As a product of human thought and everyday experience, literature reflects various aspects of human life and serves as a medium for documenting social realities and transformations in human life. Not only that, in literature there are definitely

characters that influence the fictional object. As stated by (Piper, 2023), the main way in which fictional narratives can shape themselves is through a series of actions carried out by the characters.

Additionally, literary works serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as a medium for revealing readers' diverse understandings and ways of thinking. This relates to the process of representation, which serves as a link between concepts and the language used to convey meaning to readers (Rahayu, 2016). Literature also has a significant influence on cultural identity and social awareness in contemporary education, especially in relation to various traditions such as Indonesian literature (Wahyuni et al., 2024). Therefore, a structural approach using Todorov's narratology theory can help us see how important narrative structure is in shaping meaning and the reality of life in literary works. Todorov (1971) explains that every narrative work basically moves with a stable situation which is disrupted by some force or action, leading to a new state of equilibrium.

Basically, *Bonded in Death* (2025) is one of the latest series in the In Death novel series by J.D. Robb, a detective fiction series featuring criminal, psychological, and moral elements. J.D. Robb is the pen name of Nora Roberts, an American author known for her works that combine elements of mystery, romance, and social criticism in their narrative structure. In *Bonded in Death*, the main character, Lieutenant Eve Dallas, returns and faces a series of mysterious deaths. Through this investigation, Eve faces a dilemma between justice and humanity. Supporting characters such as Roarke, Eve's ambiguous husband, and Peabody, her

loyal partner, add depth to the story. With a flowing style and emotional connections, the author presents a detective story that is not only suspenseful, but also highlights the conflict between values and humanity in modern society.

Therefore, the researcher argue that this topic is important to analyze, because novel readers can view novels as organic entities that organize similar ideas about the crime fiction genre through their intrinsic elements. With this approach, researcher is more likely to focus on the overall meaning of the text. This novel analysis focuses on how each intrinsic element relates to one another. Moreover, through Tzvetan Todorov's perspective of narratology, *Bonded in Death* can show how the movement of narrative structure from the narratological paradigm, the dynamics in *Bonded in Death* reflect the structure of human life that constantly moves from equilibrium to disruption, until a new equilibrium is achieved. This pattern of change is in line with Todorov's idea of narrative structure as a reflection of the dynamics of human life. Todorov (1973) states that "The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighbouring genre, the uncanny or the marvellous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event." This statement emphasizes that the core of every narrative lies in the ambiguity and tension between order and chaos, between the rational and the uncertain.

Several studies have applied Tzvetan Todorov's narratological framework to analyze narrative structures in literary works and films. *First*, one study that directly uses Todorov's theory is a thesis by Davu (2023) that analyses P.D. James'

novel *The Children of Men* using Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure. The study found that Todorov's five narrative stages form the plot and represent the characteristics of the dystopian subgenre through the development of the main character, Theo. *Second*, Ananta and Andini (2024) used Todorov's five-stage model of equilibrium, disruption, recognition, repair, and new equilibrium to analyze the film *The Fallen Angel*, an adaptation of Dazai Osamu's novel *No Longer Human*, which shows that Todorov's structure can explain the development of plot and character motivation in cinematic form.

Third, similar research was conducted by Fatmawati (2023), who analyzed Edgar Wright's film *Last Night in Soho* using Todorov's theory and found that the disruption stage was the most dominant phase, showing how narrative imbalance drives the psychological development of the main character, Eloise. *Fourth*, research by Lulu'il Maknun and Agus Sulton (2024) examined Raditya Dika's film *Hangout* using Todorov's narrative structure, which consists of a beginning, middle, and end. *Fifth*, in literary studies, Mare (2022) examined Fince Bataona's novel *Lamafa* using Todorov's three-stage structure of initial equilibrium, disruption or conflict, and final equilibrium and found that the fragmented narrative form was caused by the use of the first-person point of view with the presence of the main character's memory.

Sixth, research by Ikhwan (2025) also applied Todorov's theory, developed by Nick Lacey and Gillespie, in Rintik Sedu's novel *Pukul Setengah Lima*, finding five main components that form an irregular but still related narrative pattern. *Seventh*, Setiadi (2025) extend Todorov's theory to the realm of communication by

analyzing the identity crisis of the character Po in the film *Kung Fu Panda 3*. The results of this study classify the scenes into the five stages of Todorov's narrative structure and show that the restoration of equilibrium represents the resolution of the main character's psychological conflict. *Eight*, the study entitled *A Mirror of Saudi Social Reform analyzes the narrative structure* in Haifaa al-Mansour's films as a representation of social change in Saudi Arabia. This study shows that the disruption of the initial balance in the film's narrative reflects patriarchal traditions and modern social reforms, leading to a stage of restoring balance that represents the negotiation of women's identities in the context of social and cultural transformation (Fikriyah & Muassomah, 2025).

Ninth, research by Hemalatha & Ramya (2025) apply Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory in analyzing Rebecca Ross's novel *The Queen's Rising*. This study identifies the movement of the story from the equilibrium stage to disequilibrium until the formation of a new equilibrium through political conflict, identity crisis, and character maturation. The findings show that the restoration of equilibrium not only serves as a resolution to the conflict, but also represents the moral and emotional growth of the main character. *Tenth*, Taqwani & Supsiadji (2025) analysing the narrative structure in Megg Shaffer's novel *The Wishing Game* using Todorov's theory combined with a psychological approach. The results of this study indicate that Todorov's five stages of narrative structure shape the psychological dynamics of the character Lucy Hart, especially in the process of forming her maternal identity. The restoration of balance in this novel reflects the reconstruction of the main character's identity.

Based on previous research, it can be concluded that Tzvetan Todorov's theory of narrative structure has been widely used to analyse various literary works and films. However, most previous research has focused on novels and films that highlight psychological aspects, identity transformation, and social and cultural change. Meanwhile, the application of Todorov's theory to contemporary crime fiction novels that emphasize the criminal investigation process is still relatively limited. Furthermore, previous research has not extensively explored the dominance of a particular narrative stage in shaping the overall structure of a story. For example, Fatmawati (2023) found that the disruption stage was the most dominant in the film *Last Night in Soho*, but no research has examined the dominance of the repair or restoration stages in crime fiction novels. In fact, in crime fiction, the process of restoring balance through investigation, uncovering facts, and solving the case is often the most prominent part of the plot.

Most studies related to J.D. Robb's work focus on themes, ideologies, and moral representations in other *In Death* series, while the aspects of structure and narrative stages that build the resolution in the story have not been widely studied. In fact, the main strength of this novel lies in its complex plot structure and character development, which follows the pattern of equilibrium, disturbance, recognition, restoration, and new equilibrium as described in Todorov's narratological theory. The journey between the elements of crime, investigation, and moral recovery in *Bonded in Death* makes it an interesting subject for narrative structure analysis.

Therefore, this study employs a structuralist approach and aims to explore how Todorov's five narrative stages are manifested in the novel *Bonded in Death*,

in order to reveal the patterns and structures that shape the overall meaning of the story. Including differences in research objects, focuses, and methods of data analysis, this study is expected to fill the gap in previous research by highlighting the application of Todorov's theory to contemporary crime fiction, as well as providing insight into how narrative structure contributes to the psychological and dramatic effects in the novel *Bonded in Death* (2025) by J.D. Robb.

B. Problem of the study

Based on the description of the research background, the researcher focus on this research by presenting one main research question:

How does Tzvetan Todorov's Narrative Structure Theory uncover the progression of criminal fiction in J.D. Robb's *Bonded in Death*?

C. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide insights for other researchers who are interested in conducting research that analyzes Tzvetan Todorov's five stages narrative structure, especially in the crime fiction genre. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that the application of a structure-focused narratology theory can provide meaning. In addition to contributing to and enriching knowledge of this theory, this study also explores the plot in greater depth from the reader's perspective.

D. Scope and limitation

This study is limited to analyse the narrative structure in J.D. Robb's novel *Bonded in Death* (2025). The researcher uses the structuralism approach, especially focuses only on the five stages of Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure in order to identify how the plot develops from a stable state to a resolution. The analysis is limited to the textual narrative in the novel and does not cover other works in the In Death series or its adaptations.

E. Definition of Key Terms

The key terms in the study include:

1. Structuralism

Structuralism is an approach that understands literary and cultural phenomena through the relationships among elements within a system, rather than as isolated or independent entities (Culler, 1998). This is aligned with the view that the meaning of an element or experience cannot be fully understood until it is placed and viewed as part of a related structure (Hawkes, 2003).

2. Intrinsic Elements

Intrinsic elements are the combination of structures that make up a literary work itself. It is the combination of structures that causes a work to be called a literary work (Nurgiyantoro, 2009).

3. Narrative Structure

Narrative structure refers to the organized framework that shapes the sequence of events in a story. According to Todorov (1971), narrative

structure consists of a progression from an initial equilibrium, a disruption of that equilibrium, recognition of the disruption, an attempt to repair the situation, and finally the establishment of a new equilibrium. It explains how a story moves from stability to instability and back to stability through conflict and resolution.

4. Crime Fiction

Crime fiction is a literary genre that focuses on criminal acts and the investigation process involved. The narrative in this genre moves from the introduction of the crime to the investigation process and the revelation of the perpetrator, which means that the investigation process becomes the key plot of the story. Crime fiction is defined as a popular literary genre in which crimes are introduced and investigated, and the perpetrators of the crimes are revealed. Repetitive roles such as detectives, victims, criminals, and supporting characters become key factors in the narrative of the story (Bruno et al., 2025).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter includes several subsections containing the theoretical framework of this study. These subsections provide an in-depth explanation of the approaches and theories that form the basis of the idea for this research title.

A. Structuralism

Structuralism is an approach introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, who a Swiss linguist. According to Saussure (Saussure, 1959), structuralism stems from the idea that meaning in a sign system can only be understood through the relationships between its elements. In literary studies, structuralism emphasizes analysis of the internal structure of the literary work itself, how elements such as plot, characters, setting, theme, and point of view are interrelated and form a unity of meaning.

Furthermore, literary works can be used as a medium for analysis through the application of structuralism. Elements such as narrative, characters, conflict, and plot structure can be understood as a whole, rather than separate entities (Ghosh, 2016). This makes the structuralist approach a strong theoretical foundation for narrative analysis, especially when the research aims to analyze the narrative structure and patterns in a story.

Fanani (2013) emphasized that the concept of signs in Saussure's view is arbitrary, which means that the relationship between the signifier and the signified

is not natural or direct, but rather formed through social agreement. Therefore, the meaning of a language can be understood as the result of the relationship between elements in the sign system, not derived from a single element in isolation. This view confirms that the main principle of structuralism is to make the internal structure of a text the center of analysis, so that literary research needs to focus on patterns, regularities, and relationships between elements of the text in order to reveal the formation of meaning as a whole.

In the literary context, Structuralism is one of the important approaches in the field of literary criticism. This approach can help researchers understand or view literary works as structures composed of several interconnected elements that can form a complete meaning. This is because each element has no meaning when standing alone, and is actually determined by all other elements involved in the situation. The true meaning of an entity cannot be understood unless that entity becomes part of a whole (Chinade, 2012.)

Furthermore, structuralism in literary criticism is more focused on the content of literary works, where meaning can be formed. This view emphasizes that the meaning of a text does not automatically emerge from the experience of the reader or the interpretation of the author, but is created through the relationship between the elements that make up the text as a whole. In other words, there is an understanding that every structure is built from elements that come together as a whole by following certain rules or codes. In this case, these elements give rise to meaning thanks to their interrelationship with one another within a particular structure (Nugraha, 2023.)

Therefore, it can be said that structuralism in literary criticism focuses on the text in a literary work itself. Specifically, it attempts to analyse the intrinsic elements within the text, which are the elements that construct meaning from within the fiction itself. These intrinsic elements include themes, plots, characters, settings, and points of view. These are the elements that one will actually encounter when reading a literary work. Thus, the harmony between these various elements can bring a fictional story to life (Ningsih et al., 2022.)

B. Intrinsic Elements

Intrinsic elements are the combination of structures that make up a literary work itself. It is the combination of structures that causes a work to be called a literary work (Nurgiyantoro, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that the analysis of intrinsic elements emphasizes the view of how a literary work is created, because the focus is on the text of the literary work itself. According to Nurgiyantoro (2009) in his book, the elements refer to the following below:

1. Theme

According to Nurgiyantoro (2009), determining the theme is the same as determining the whole meaning of a literary work. In many ways, the theme “binds” the presence or absence of certain events, conflicts, and situations, including various other intrinsic elements, because these things must support the clarity of the theme that is being conveyed. This indicates that the theme of a work of fiction must be derived from the story as a whole.

2. Plot

Plot is an important element of fiction, and many people consider it to be the most important element of all. This actually makes sense, because the clarity of the plot really determines how well the reader understands it (Nurgiyantoro, 2009). Stanton (1965: 14) states that plot is a story containing a sequence of events, but each event is only connected by cause and effect, one event causing or resulting in another event, or it can be said that plot is a series of events that occur in a story and have causality. The elements of plot include exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution/denouement.

3. Characterization

Characterization is closely associated with plot development, as the progression of the plot is driven by the actions and interactions of the characters and further revealed through the sequence of events within the narrative. Therefore, characters may be understood not only as the actors who participate in the story, but also as representations of particular personalities, traits, and behavioral characteristics that shape the overall narrative (Nurgiyantoro, 2009).

4. Setting

The setting can also be referred to as the backdrop, an element that functions in terms of place, time, and the social environment in which the events described take place. The setting provides a concrete and clear picture of the story. This is important in order to give readers a realistic impression, creating a certain

atmosphere that seems real and true (Nurgiyantoro, 2009). This makes it easier for readers to let their imaginations run wild.

C. Tzvetan Todorov's Narrative Structure

Tzvetan Todorov is a literary scholar from Bulgaria who discovered an interesting idea about narrative structure. Todorov views texts as a collection of structures. Just like narrative writers, narrative readers read texts according to their stages or structures. Todorov formulates three stages of narrative structure, namely equilibrium, which is the beginning of the story; then, disruption, when equilibrium is disturbed by problems or crimes; finally, equilibrium 2, when the disruption is resolved and equilibrium is restored (Eriyanto, 2017). This means, according to Todorov, that narrative is what is said or formed, because narratives generally consist of chronological sequences such as motifs, plots, and causes and effects, so that each narrative produces a structure from beginning to end.

In addition, Todorov's narrative structure has also been refined by experts Nick Lacey and Gillespie. They refined Todorov's narrative structure into five stages. The refinement begins with the stage of disturbance and ends with equilibrium. The improvements include an increase in disturbance, recognition of disturbance and climax, and efforts to resolve the disturbance. Thus, there are a total of five stages in Todorov's narrative structure as refined by Lacey and Gillespie, namely five stages of narrative structure:

1. Initial Equilibrium

Almost all stories usually begin with a regular, stable, and balanced situation, where the characters' lives are normal and free from conflict. Todorov (1973) refers to this stage as the initial equilibrium, which is the starting point of the plot before changes or disturbances appear in the story. This view of the situation can be called the equilibrium point at the beginning of the narrative. For example, the beginning of the story tells of a farmer in the village who is depicted as a prosperous man, with healthy animals that are growing and developing well, in line with the farmer's expectations.

2. Disruption of Equilibrium

The next stage is disruption, which is when a situation that is calm, normal, and balanced is shaken by a disturbing event. This disruption is usually caused by a certain action or the presence of a character that can destroy the peaceful, normal, and balanced situation. Todorov (1973) explains that at this stage, conflict or chaos arises, changing the original situation into one of instability, thereby driving the story forward. For example, the second stage in the narrative of a farmer can be marked by the emergence of a disease outbreak among his livestock (situation/event), as well as the presence of criminals who want to steal or poison the livestock (character action).

3. Recognition of the Disruption

According to Todorov (1973), this recognition is an important moment because the main character understands the cause of the conflict he is facing. This stage often coincides with the peak of tension or the climax of the plot. So, at the recognition stage, the disturbance appears to be greater and has a more extensive impact than in the second stage. The characters begin to realize that there is a disturbance in their lives, so that its impact can be felt by the characters. In the farm narrative, this is shown when many livestock animals have begun to contract disease, or when a criminal manages to steal more livestock, causing a major disturbance that disrupts the entire story.

4. Attempt to Resolve the Disruption

The repair stage is indicated when the main character attempts to restore the disturbed balance. However, this is usually followed by a stage that depicts failure. Todorov (1973) explains that this stage includes various actions or efforts made to resolve the conflict and restore the situation to its original state. These efforts form the core of narrative development in a literary work. For example, in the farm narrative, this stage depicts the hero struggling to find a medicine that is suitable for the disease of the livestock or conducting an investigation to try to find the thief of the livestock.

5. New Equilibrium

The final stage is a new equilibrium, which is when the disturbance has been successfully resolved and a new equilibrium has been created, or the situation has returned to normal, orderly, and balanced. Todorov (1973) asserts that this balance differs from the initial state because the characters undergo changes or learn from the conflicts they have experienced. An example from the farmer's story is when a farmer has successfully found the right medicine for his livestock's illness, or when a farmer has successfully caught the livestock thief, and the situation has returned to being safe, normal, orderly, and balanced. The ending of the story may be happy or tragic, but it still shows that life continues in a new order.

D. Crime Fiction

One of the most popular genres in literature is crime fiction, which commonly focuses on criminal acts and the investigation process. This genre centres on the main conflict, which is a violation of the law, triggering a series of narrative events, including the investigation process, the search for truth, or the restoration of social order. This is in line with Priestman (2003) explanation that the study of crime fiction, especially detective fiction, traditionally Studies of detective fiction or mystery fiction continue to emphasize the role of detectives and the author's fair treatment of clues. So, it can be said that crime fiction makes the investigation process a key structural element in the narrative. The focus of this genre is not solely on

the end result of revealing the perpetrator, but on the process of arriving at the truth through logical reasoning and the management of clues.

In some works of crime fiction, the resolution of a case has a symbolic function as a form of restoring order. The process of uncovering the crime and identifying the perpetrator serves as an element to restore the previous order in the story. Priestman (2003) states that the narrative patterns of crime and detective fiction have embedded themselves deep in contemporary consciousness, meaning that the narrative structure of crime fiction, which moves from disruption to clarity, has become a widely recognized and accepted pattern.

Moreover, the structuralist approach plays an important role in the analysis of the crime fiction genre, where elements such as plot and narrative structure consciously emerge with their distinctive characteristics. As emphasized by Scaggs (2018), crime fiction is a genre that consciously highlights elements of its plot and narrative structure. Therefore, understanding crime fiction depends not only on the content of the story, but also on the structural patterns that shape and regulate its narrative meaning.

And one of the most influential contributions to structuralist analysis in crime fiction was made by Tzvetan Todorov. In his analysis, which is considered one of the earliest studies of crime fiction, Todorov identified two stories within this genre, particularly in detective fiction. Todorov states that crime fiction basically consists of two stories: the first is the story of

the crime, and the second is the story of its investigation (Scaggs, 2018). These two layers of the story run simultaneously and are interrelated, where the crime story forms the backdrop for the conflict, while the investigation story serves to reconstruct and explain the events logically.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher describes the method used in this research. These include research design and data sources, data collection, and analysis. The readers can find out the process by the researcher in conducting this research.

A. Research Design

The type applied in this research is literary criticism. Basically, literary criticism aims to investigate and discover new knowledge from literary phenomena scientifically by following existing systematic procedures. Wellek (1978) states that literary criticism is the study of concrete literary works with an emphasis on their assessment. Not only that, literary criticism is useful for evaluating and interpreting literary works using the lens of literary theory. The phenomena discussed are represented in literary works, and therefore, are specifically analyzed through literary criticism (Rahayu, 2022). In conducting literary criticism, the researcher uses a structuralist approach, specifically Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure, to analyze how the narrative structure and intrinsic elements in J.D. Robb's novel *Bonded In Death* is interconnected.

B. Data Source

The data source is the most important factor in determining the data collection method to find out where the data object is obtained from. The data source in this

study is a novel titled *Bonded in Death* by J.D. Robb, which is the 60th novel in the *In Death* series published in 2025 by ST. Martin Publishing Group. The novel contains 23 chapters with 313 pages. The main data studied by the researcher include words, phrases, clauses, dialogs, sentences, and narratives contained in the hard file novel *Bonded in Death* by J.D Robb.

C. Data Collection

The researcher took several steps in collecting data from the novel *Bonded in Death* (2025) by J.D Robb. First, the researcher read the novel in depth to gain a complete understanding of the plot. Then, the researcher reread the novel to gain a deeper understanding. Finally, the researcher underlined words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs relevant to the research topic and noted several points for data analysis.

D. Data Analysis

In addition to reading and highlighting relevant quotations from *Bonded in Death* (2025), the data were analysed through textual analysis using Tzvetan Todorov's theory of narrative structure as an analytical framework. The data analysis process was as follows:

1. Classifying the collected textual evidence into Todorov's five narrative stages, as proposed in *the poetics of prose* (Todorov, 1971.)
2. Interpret the relationships between the five narrative stages to reveal how the story progresses from initial equilibrium to restoration.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an analysis of data from J.D Robb's novel *Bonded in Death* to answer the research questions. This chapter consists of two subsections. The first section discusses how Tzvetan Todorov's five-stage narrative structure is manifested in the novel. These five stages are a state of equilibrium, a disturbance of equilibrium, recognition of the disruption, an attempt to resolve the disruption, and a return to a new equilibrium.

A. The Narrative Structure in J.D Robb's *Bonded in Death*

As Tzvetan Todorov proposed, every literary narrative necessarily has a structure. These five narrative stages are a state of equilibrium, a disturbance of equilibrium, recognition of the disruption, an attempt to resolve the disruption, and a return to a new equilibrium. A narrative text is definitely formed from a series of events. All of these events are inherently interconnected or related, producing a story that can have its own meaning (Nurgiyantoro, 2009). Writers do not simply create narratives arbitrarily or randomly. They have certainly arranged a sequence of events when presenting a narrative text to their readers, so basically a story is understood as an organized sequence of events, not a collection of isolated events (Chatman, 1993).

Therefore, in crime fiction, the narrative structure essentially mirrors the course of the investigation itself. Crime fiction writers design intricate plots,

maintain narrative tension, and employ various techniques to keep their stories alive and interesting (Sokhibjonovna, 2025). The plot is structured in stages, beginning with the crime itself, followed by the process of gathering clues and conducting the investigation, and culminating in the revelation of the truth. That is the reason why narrative structure can aid the investigation process.

The narrative structure of the detective genre has unique elements, consisting of the crime, the investigation, and the resolution. This structure is adapted into novels or films (Fathan Fadhlullah et al., 2026). Moreover, the organization of clues and the investigation process are crucial elements that drive the reader to interpret and imagine the fictional story. Every element in the story, from characters and events to clues, is arranged in an interconnected pattern. Similarly, the narrative structure helps readers more quickly understand how the detective story progresses. It begins with equilibrium, which in this novel is the opening of the story, which is the early life of Lieutenant Eve Dallas, followed by a disruption in the form of a murder case, recognition of the disruption through a unique sign found, an attempt to solve the disruption through an investigation process, and finally a new equilibrium after the arrest of the perpetrator, which leads to a new chapter in the lives of the characters.. Thus, the researcher analyses the narrative structure of the novel titled *Bonded in Death* based on this theory:

1. A State of Equilibrium

This stage represents the beginning of the narrative. It is typically characterized by a normal, orderly, and balanced situation, which can also

be described as the starting point of the plot (Todorov, 1973). This state of equilibrium remains unchanged until a disruption occurs that is strong enough to potentially disrupt the normal, orderly, and balanced situation.

The researcher found very limited information, particularly on the one page in the first chapter of novel. This happen because the opening section of the novel immediately focuses on the main conflict, namely the murder of Giovanni Rossi, so the initial setting, background, and brief introductions of the character. Even though, this stage is also a crucial one in crime fiction, as it provides an introduction to the story before any disruptions or conflicts arise. So, even though this equilibrium stage only contains a brief initial introduction to Lieutenant Eve Dallas.

Researcher found that the narrative balance in the novel *Bonded in Death* begins in Chapter 1 especially in page 5. The plot focus on the life of the main character, Lieutenant Eve Dallas, a professional detective who has solved many cases. However, this novel opens with the short story of Giovanni Rossi. But the most important part that emerges and can be included in this stage is the introduction of the brief situation and condition of Lieutenant Eve Dallas' life before moving on to the disruption stage:

Datum 1

Lieutenant Eve Dallas slept quiet, slept deep in the big old four-poster beside her husband, with the cat curled against the small of her back.

If she dreamed, the dreams stayed quiet, too.

She didn't hear Roarke rise for the day, awakened by his personal internal clock.

The sound of his shower brought a waterfall into her sleeping mind, its waters blissfully warm and as wildly blue as Roarke's eyes.

They swam there together, bodies sleek and naked. Wet, his mane of black hair gleamed in the moonlight, that full moon dazzled on the water, and into the wonderful wild blue of his eyes.

When she swam under the warm, clear water, the sand below lay smooth and pure white.

And when she rose up, he reached for her. Their legs tangled and locked together as their mouths met, and the pleasure shimmered through.

Something bit her ankle.

She woke with a jolt, with her communicator buzzing (p.5)

The quotation above depicts a stable initial state in the life of the main character, Eve Dallas. She is depicted sleeping peacefully beside her husband, in a safe and comfortable environment. There is no indication of conflict, threats, or disturbances related to the criminal case. This situation demonstrates the normalcy that forms the basis of the narrative before the disturbing event occurs. In Todorov's framework, this state serves as an initial point of equilibrium that will develop in subsequent stages.

Furthermore, the stability of life is also evident emotionally. Roarke's presence as a husband reflects the harmony in Eve's personal life. Dream scenes depicting their intimacy reinforce the impression that the characters are in a peaceful and unstressed psychological state. This representation of intimate and pleasant relationship suggests that in the equilibrium stage, the main character is not in a crisis. Therefore, the narrative constructs a picture of an orderly and harmonious life before the disturbance occurs.

However, towards the end of the data, signs of a transition to the next stage begin to emerge. "Something bit her ankle. She woke with a jolt, with her communicator buzzing" serve as early indicators of the disturbance. Although this disturbance does not fully explain the main conflict, this

section can still be categorized as the equilibrium stage in Todorov's structure. Thus, from the quotation above the data is included in a state of equilibrium stage.

2. Disruption

This stage is the second stage of the narrative structure. At this stage, the situation begins to be disrupted by various conflicts or undermined by certain characters' actions or presence. Therefore, these disruptions have a significant impact on the story as a whole. The researcher found that the stage of disruption of balance in *Bonded in Death* begins in Chapter 1, specifically on page 3.

The disruption of balance begins when Giovanni Rossi is lured into a trap by his taxi driver and killed inside the limousine using gas. In this stage, the narrative demonstrates the emergence of a disturbance that directly disrupts the previously stable state. While the equilibrium stage characterized by calm and order, in this quotation, a drastic change occurs through a deliberate criminal act of Giovanni Rossi begins to notice something unnatural in the air, which then indicates that he is threatened. This awareness triggers a defensive reaction, but the situation is already under the control of the perpetrator. Thus, the initial equilibrium is disrupted by the presence of the killer's power, the limousine driver. Rossi is trapped by his driver inside the limousine with all windows and doors locked. This specific event is described in the following quote:

Datum 2

A little sleepy from the trip, the wine, he sat back, closed his eyes. And, drifting just a bit, caught the taste of something in the air, something that wasn't the flowers in the vase, the wine in the glass.

He was a man over seventy, retired for nearly a decade, but training kicked in.

He bolted up, dropping the glass, spilling the wine.

But the window didn't open, the door refused to budge. Levering back, he kicked viciously at the privacy shield, but it held.

It took only a few minutes for him to slip into unconsciousness, barely that much again to die.

The driver took his time, enjoying himself, humming along to the music he'd programmed as he watched Rossi's death on the small monitor. He knew exactly how long the gas took to debilitate a man of Rossi's size, how long it took to kill. He'd been trained, after all, in the art of war.

For the next steps, he lowered the rear right window a half inch, engaged the fan so the gas would slowly filter harmlessly away.

After it cleared, he pulled into a garage of a house he'd purchased over a year before. His mission required patience, and he'd honed that virtue over decades in a cage.

A cage Rossi had played a part in locking behind him.

He got out of the car, and from the trunk removed a breathing mask. A precaution, as he'd given the gas time to dissipate. (p.3)

This disruption is not accidental, but rather deliberate. The data above indicates that the perpetrator understood the duration of the gas's action and the strategy for avoiding detection of the murder. This indicates that the disruption in this story is not simply a sudden event but the result of careful planning. In Todorov's framework, the disruption stage is often marked by actions that create imbalance in the narrative world. Here, the imbalance arises through the murder, carried out using a method premeditated by the perpetrator.

Moreover, the victim's powerlessness reinforces the disruption is function as a narrative turning point. Rossi attempts to escape the room are thwarted because the doors and windows are locked, and the security barrier

is impenetrable. Within the narrative structure, this condition represents the collapse of a previously stable order. The rapid occurrence of deaths demonstrates that the disruption of this murder case has reached a serious level

On the other hand, the perpetrator's actions also emphasize the presence of disruption as a key structural element. The narrative, which depicts the perpetrator acting calmly, even enjoying the murder process, suggests that the imbalance has been consciously produced. From the quotation above, we can see that the initial incident or conflict in this story is a murder. Giovanni Rossi, who had only intended to come to New York to accept an invitation from an old friend, ended up being killed in a limousine using poison gas. And this is the reason why this incident has such a big impact on the subsequent stages of the novel. Not only that, the disruption stage is also a crucial point where the core of the crime fiction journey begins. Without disruption, or in the case of this novel, a murder, the story might not be able to continue. Because without a disruption, there would be no investigation, no search for clues, and no arrest of the perpetrator.

In addition, the plot of J.D. Robb's novel *Bonded in Death* focus on the main character, Lieutenant Eve Dallas, as she investigates a murder case. After analysing the novel's narrative structure, the researcher identified a disruption when Giovanni Rossi was murdered. This murder can still be classified as falling within the disruption stage. This stage highlights the

brutality of Rossi's killer, who lured Rossi into accompanying him, got him into a limousine, and killed him with poison gas.

3. Recognition of the Disruption

This stage is the third stage in the narrative. It begins when the disruption in the second stage is realized to be expanding and becoming increasingly prominent. This stage also marks the point at which the disruption in the narrative reaches its climax. Moreover, in the narrative structure of a crime story, at this stage the main character has already begun to be disturbed by the disruption. The researcher found that the recognition of the disruption stage in *Bonded in Death* begins in Chapter 1.

In this novel, the characters in the story begin to acknowledge that a serious disruption has occurred. In this excerpt, this recognition occurs through the official identification process by the police. The recognition of the disruption begins when Lieutenant Eve arrives at the scene of the incident and finds Giovanni Rossi's body. The interesting and unique point is about this murder case is that Lieutenant Eve's business card was tucked into Giovanni Rossi's hand, with a unique code on the back of the card. This stage is crucial for determining the actions of detective must take to guide the investigation forward. This is shown in the quotation below:

Datum 3

"Officer Mitgy. My partner, Officer Blane."
"We've got the nine-one-one caller in the patrol car," Mitgy continued.
"He states he spotted the vehicle, and curious, knocked on the driver's side door, then opened it. Upon seeing the body in the back, called it in. He admits he waited in hopes there might be a reward."
"He's a little stoned, Lieutenant," Blane put it.
"He appears mildly impaired," Mitgy corrected. "We responded at zero-four-ten. Took the caller's statement, then opened the rear door of the vehicle and determined, visually, he is deceased."
"And has your card in his hand."
Eve frowned at Blane. "My card?"
"Lieutenant Eve Dallas. Homicide. NYPSD. Cop Central. Your badge and 'link numbers."
"That's correct. We determined something was printed on the back of said card, but would have disturbed the body by removing it to read fully."
"Here lies the dead Wasp," Blane said. "There's more after that, but we couldn't be sure what (p.9)."

And on the back of the card says:

***HERE LIES THE DEAD WASP.
 HE JOINS FAWN, HAWK, RABBIT.
 XII ARE NOW VIII.
 SOON THERE WILL BE ONLY I. (p.4)***

From the information above, Lieutenant Eve realized something was odd about the murder victim. The statement that the victim has been visually determined dead (“determined, visually, he is deceased”) confirms that the death is not only assumption, but a confirmed fact. This acknowledges the disruption in the narrative world. The victim was given a business card with a code name written on the back. This wasn't just ordinary information, but rather unique information that made it seem as if this case was indeed something Lieutenant Eve had to solve. Furthermore, the code name behind it made this case intriguing. And this is why Eve continued this disturbance to the next stage, which is the investigation process. This process could allow Lieutenant Eve to determine the next steps, such as uncovering the

perpetrator's intention in placing the card and revealing the perpetrator's motive behind the murder.

Furthermore, the presence of Eve Dallas's ID card in the victim's hand reinforces the recognition stage. The discovery of the card is not simply a detail, but rather an indication that this event has direct implications for the main character. In Todorov's structure, this stage is often marked by the emergence of new information that changes the previous situation. The writing on the card, which suggests a specific message, indicates that this incident was not an ordinary incident, but rather one with a symbolic motive or message. Thus, the recognition of the criminal nature of the event becomes increasingly clear.

Therefore, the quotation above strongly represents the recognition stage, as it includes an explicit acknowledgement of the death and the identification of suspicious elements (the card and the message). This stage serves as a bridge to the next stage, specifically the attempt to repair, which will be realized through the investigation and the search for the perpetrator.

4. Attempt to Resolve the Disruption

This stage is the fourth stage in the narrative structure. It begins when the identified disruption is addressed or begins to be resolved in order to restore the initial balance (Todorov, 1973). This stage is typically marked by the main character's actions to counter the disruption they face. Therefore, the researcher observes that the longest process is the

investigation conducted to identify the perpetrator and determine the actions that must be taken. Moreover, this stage of recognizing the disruption is a process that can play a vital role in providing initial clues that can then guide how information regarding the disruption is resolved.

However, as this stage progress, it also serves to keep the reader interested. As indicated by the data listed above, this stage is characterized by Lieutenant Eve becoming aware of the disturbance and launching an investigation. Researcher found that the attempt to resolve the disruption stage in *Bonded in Death* begins at the end of Chapter 3 and concludes around Chapter 20. This stage begins when Lieutenant Eve Dallas's investigation process. The autopsy results for the murder victim, Giovanni Rossi, have been released and explained by Dr. Morris (Chief Medical Examiner Morris)

Datum 4

*"Poisoned?" Eve walked to the body laid out on the slab.
 "No. No poison in the wine. In fact, a very fine vintage. He was gassed."
 "Gassed?"
 "The lab will have to confirm and identify, but he didn't ingest poison. He inhaled it. And he knew."
 Morris, in his gentle way, laid a hand on Rossi's head. "He fought. His knuckles aren't just bruised and scraped. He has some breaks. He fought hard."
 "Gassed," Eve repeated as she studied the body. "So the passenger area was completely sealed off? And gas... through the air vents. The AC?"
 "Again, that's for others to determine. I can only tell you his mouth, his throat, his nostrils, his lungs, and so on indicate he inhaled what killed him. My findings indicate it took less than four minutes for him to lapse into unconsciousness, during which time he fought to live. In under five minutes, he lost that battle (p.28)."*

*No bribe this time, Eve noted because she saw the interest in his dark, beady eyes as he gestured to a screen where she saw formulas, symbols. Something that looked like a three-legged pyramid.
 "Okay, what is it?"
 "Phosphine."*

*"And what is it?"
"Jesus, Dallas. It's your freaking murder weapon. Colorless, odorless for the rats and all, technical grade, they added shit that made it stink. What you got here's a mix of pure phosphine with some CO₂ that agent's to take down the flammability point. The pure shit'll go off. It can self-ignite (p.30).*

From the quotation above, the narrative begins to demonstrate an attempt to understand, analyze, and respond to the disruption that occurred previously. Within Tzvetan Todorov's framework, this stage is marked by the emergence of character actions to restore balance, where the characters begin to investigate and find solutions. In this excerpt, the restoration effort is carried out through forensic processes and scientific analysis of the victim's cause of death.

First, the identification that the victim was not poisoned by drinking, but by gas, represents a crucial step in the problem solving process. Medical and forensic explanations regarding the installation of the toxic substance and the duration of death provide information for the investigation. Second, the discovery that the victim resisted before dying strengthens the victim's attempted actions. The wounds on the victim's body indicate a struggle, indicating that this was not a passive death but rather the result of a deliberate criminal action. In this stage, the main character and his team begin to gather evidence to construct a reconstruction of the incident. This process represents the narrative's attempt to restore order through information gathering, evidence analysis, and identification of crime patterns.

Third, the disclosure of the type of chemical compound used as the murder weapon clarifies the technical dimension of the conflict. Explanation of the characteristics of this type of substance indicates that the perpetrator possessed specialized knowledge and careful planning. It can be seen that the autopsy results indicate that Giovanni Rossi died from exposure to a gaseous toxin, specifically phosphine gas. This gas is extremely dangerous, colorless, odorless, and is typically used to kill rats and similar pests. Even more interestingly, the gas cylinder is labeled as having been manufactured in 2024.

Datum 5

“And that's recent, but the canister itself isn't going to be. It's dated 2024, and it's an old-school device. So's the remote (p.32).”

2024. Thirty-seven years death had waited. Had the killer kept it all that time? Hidden away somewhere until he carefully drew the skull and crossbones, rigged the trigger?

Phosphine fumigation. Kill rats, pests. Wasps = pests.

*“Saved it for you. Specifically you? Like crimes isn't going to hit.”
She'd run them anyway, but it wouldn't hit (p.47)*

It eventually became clear that the gas weapon was an old one or had been deliberately stockpiled, and that the murder had been planned for a long time.

Still within the attempt to resolve the disruption, presents an active effort to gather additional information to understand the motive and context of the crime. After the victim's death, the story focus shifts to a more in depth investigation, primarily through interviews with the victim's wife and background research of victim. In Chapter 4, Giovanni Rossi's wife (Ms.

Rossi) had arrived in New York to view her husband's body and agreed to be interviewed by Lieutenant Eve Dallas. Then Eve Dallas recounted the basic timeline of the death of victim. After learning the details of her husband's death, Ms. Rossi began to explain her husband's background in Chapter 5.

Datum 6

*"As part of a team."
 "He liked best to be in a team," his widow said.
 "He was part of a team, in the Underground, during the Urban Wars?"
 "Yes. He was very dedicated."
 "And the names of his team members?"
 "I can't answer. He never spoke of them, not by name (p.52)."
 "There was one more potential source, and though she tried to find a way around it, it only took a glance at her board. She didn't look forward to this particular consult, but Summerset had served as a medic and she suspected more in Europe during the Urbans.
 He could give her, if he didn't blow her off, an in-person perspective.
 He had a woman friend who'd done covert work. Possibly she could try to tap Ivanna Liski for information. Again, possibly, she would know if the security company Rossi worked for was indeed a front.
 Something happened in the spring of 2026. Maybe one of them knew more about that (p.63)."*

The quote above is very interesting because it can assist Lieutenant Eve's investigation. From Mr. Rossi's wife's statement, there is a unique fact that Mr. Rossi was a member of the Underground team, which was formed during the Urban Wars. Recalling the Underground era, Eve remembered her housekeeper, Summerset, he and one of his friends (Ivanna Liski) had been members of the team back then, so they must have some interesting information regarding the Urban Wars.

Ms. Rossi have statement about her husband's involvement in a team during the Urban Wars broadens the case from a simple individual murder

to a possible connection to the victim past. The fact that she was very dedicated to his team, but never named any team members, suggests a gap in information that remains unsolved. This gap presents a challenge for the investigation, reinforcing the need to find more sources. In this stage, the narrative emphasizes the data collection process as part of a systematic effort to restore order.

Eve efforts to contact individuals with medical experience or involvement in covert operations indicate that the investigation is beginning to move toward the origins of victim. The potential for a connection between the murder and the victim's background suggests that resolving the disturbance depends not only on physical evidence but also on mapping social and historical relationships that may be linked to the murder.

Moving on to Chapter 7, Lieutenant Eve finally meets Summerset in her house. Eve begins by asking Summerset a few questions, and Summerset answers them and provides all the information he has to assist Eve's investigation. This includes the origins of how The Twelve was formed, as well as an explanation of who its members are:

Datum 7

I was a medic." Then he shut his eyes. "Old habits die hard. I was a medic," he repeated, "and worked with Gio, and others, for the Underground. In the last few years of the wars, we made a team of twelve (p.81.)

The Twelve, each with our skills, our purpose. We made a unit, forged a bond of the sort nothing, I think, but war can forge."

"What did he do? Rossi?"

"His work was cyber and communications. In the last few years we had a base, deep below a church. Fully equipped and operational."

"Why Wasp? Code name?"
 "We only referred to each other by code names. This was our protocol. He was Wasp, as he could find his way through any crack, and sting before you knew he was there."
 "You have all the names. Who was Rabbit?"
 "Sylvester Farr-colonel, retired. He was the only professional soldier in The Twelve. The de facto leader. He was about the age I am now, so older than the rest of us. He died peacefully. Fifteen years ago. Nearly sixteen now."
 "Hawk."
 "Leroy Dubois. A mechanic also skilled with explosives. He died in 26."
 "Fawn."
 "Alice." His hand reached up, drew the chain from under his shirt, and the wedding ring it held. "Alice Dormer. She was my wife."
 Eve knew love, and understood, as Rossi's widow had said, it could and did outlast death.
 "I'm very sorry. I'm sorry I have to dredge it all up, but I do. Your wife was with the Underground?"
 "Fawn, we called her. She looked so gentle, and was, had been. Gentle, harmless. And she was fierce. She was a teacher, and we met when I came to her school, after the terrorists had bombed it. She was hurt, bleeding, but the weeping was done for her. She wouldn't stop, wouldn't stop digging, and pulled those young, broken bodies from the rubble (p.82)."

Before Summerset had finished his story, something caught Eve's attention. It was the cause of his wife's death; he explained that she had died because of the betrayal of one of the members of the Twelve.

Datum 8

"She died on May 18, 2026, with Hawk-with Leroy Dubois, one of us."
 "Who?"
 "We called him Shark, and he proved well named. Conrad Potter: He was a cop, one who'd been in the military, in intelligence. He was a traitor who betrayed his comrades for money."
 "Was?"
 "He died. Not then, and not by my hand. Wasp found him first, and broke some fingers fighting him. Was stabbed, had ribs cracked, but like Alice, he wouldn't stop. Gio wasn't a fighter; not a hand-to-hand man, but he found him first."
 Slowly, Summerset sipped more brandy.
 "He might have killed Potter. Possibly, though he wasn't a killer. But I stopped him. I thought, this is for me to do. It's for me to kill the man who killed my Alice, killed the mother of our baby. Who killed my friend."
 "What stopped you?" Roarke asked.
 "Alice. In my mind, her voice in my head. So clear, as if she stood with me. 'Let him live, let him live a long life without his freedom. Let him live with the shame, with blood on his hands. Death's too quick. Let him pay, moya lyubovna, every hour of every day of every year.'"

"She was gentle and fierce, a teacher who became a warrior. So for her, I let him live. They tried him in The Hague, and there were more war crimes uncovered. He had so many deaths on his hands. He died in prison, but after decades."

"When? When and where did he die?"

"On the third of November, 2056, in the prison they call Five Hells, in Manchester (p.83)."

In the quotation above, the narrative demonstrates a developing of the investigation by delving into the victim's history and the network connected to him. Eve no longer simply examines physical evidence but also explores the background of the victim's past secret organization, "The Twelve," and the internal relationships of its members. This process reflects an attempt to understand the roots of the conflict that may be related to the motive for the murder, so that the disturbed narrative balance can be reconstructed through an understanding of the historical context.

The revelation about the formation of The Twelve during the war suggests that the disturbance in the story has deeper roots than a single murder. The group was formed based on shared skills and goals. At this stage, this information serves to higher the scope of the investigation, as the investigation now focuses not only on a single perpetrator but also on the group structure that may have underpinned the conflict. Thus, the narrative moves from the criminal event to an analysis of the network of past relationships.

The story of Alice Dormer's (Fawn) death and Conrad Potter's betrayal deepens the complexity of the conflict. The element of betrayal expands the dimension of disruption, but in this section, the narrative serves

to clarify past events. The revelation of war crimes and the lengthy sentences suggest that the legal system is finally playing a role in addressing these crimes. In the attempt to resolve stage, this information helps establish context and possible connections between the group's past and the murders under investigation.

Moreover, the explanation of code names such as Wasp, Rabbit, Hawk, and Fawn demonstrates that the identities of the group members were secretly and organized. This code system suggests internal discipline and specific communication protocols. Within Todorov's structural context, the revelation of these identities helps investigators construct a map of the relationships between the characters, which is crucial for understanding possible motives for revenge or past conflicts. This stage reflects the process of information reconstruction aimed at addressing imbalances by uncovering hidden truths.

In additionally, this section expands the investigation by revealing the history of The Twelve, the identities of its members, and the betrayal that forms the emotional backdrop and potential motives. This information helps build a deeper understanding of the network of relationships that may be linked to the murders. Summerset introduces all the members of The Twelve: Marjorie Wright (Chameleon), Cyril Snowden (Cobra), Alice Dormer (Fawn), Summerset (Fox), Leroy Dubois (Hawk), Harry Mitchell (Magpie), Iris Arden (Mole), Ivan Draski (Owl), Ivanna Liski (Panther), Sylvester Farr (Rabbit), Conrad Potter (Shark), Giovanni Rossi (Wasp).

And after finding out this fact, they continued their story about the explanations given by the other six members of the Twelve, and upon learning of the tragedy involving Summerset's wife, Lieutenant Eve felt that there was something strange about the deaths of Shark or Conrad Potter. Lieutenant Eve contacted the prison where Potter was serving his punishment and died:

Datum 9

"Your information is correct. Conrad Potter, housed in this facility since August of 2026, died on November third of 2056 from gliomatosis cerebri, previously undetected."

"And what is that, exactly?"

"A brain tumor, Lieutenant. It's noted in his file he refused any and all cancer vaccines, which is his right. He was found unresponsive in his quarters, taken to our surgery, where he was pronounced. His body was scanned, the tumor-one of extensive growth-discovered."

"He was pronounced, on-site. Witnessed?"

"As with any death, I viewed the body, signed off, and as the deceased had no family, ordered the cremation."

"I'd like to speak with the prison surgeon regarding the death."

"He was attended by Dr. Martin J. Pierce. Dr. Pierce is no longer on staff (p.102). "

From quotation above, the narrative demonstrates further investigative steps to verify the facts and test the consistency of previously obtained information. After Eve discovers a possible link between the past death and the current case, she checks directly with the institution responsible for Potter's information. The prison's confirmation of Conrad Potter's cause of death provides specific and documented medical information. The explanation that he died of gliomatosis cerebri, a previously undetected brain tumour, serves to clarify suspicions raised during the investigation.

The described of administrative procedures, such as the examination of the body, the signing of documents, and the decision to cremate, demonstrate that the death was handled according to established standards. These details are important in the narrative context because they demonstrate the existence of a formal system that legitimately manages deaths. However, from an investigative perspective, Eve still seeks further clarification by requesting to speak with the patient's attending physician. This action demonstrates an analytical and cautious approach to ensuring there are no hidden irregularities.

However, the absence of the attending physician from the current staff adds complexity to the investigation but does not necessarily change the death's status to suspicious. On the contrary, this section shows that the investigation process is in the information testing and data comparison phase. Although, the information from the prison was accurate, Lieutenant Eve wasn't so quick to believe it. In Chapter 9, Lieutenant Eve suspected that the prison guards or the prison doctor was in on the conspiracy:

Datum 10

"You don't believe him." Whitney said. "Do you believe Warden Meedy conspired with Potter in his escape?"

"I believe he viewed the body, signed off, and ordered the cremation, I don't believe the body he viewed was, in fact, deceased. There are medical methods to simulate death. The doctor, Martin J. Pierce, resigned only a few weeks afterward. I can find no record such an individual existed. I strongly suspect Potter bribed Pierce to aid him in faking his death."

"With what?" Tibble asked.

"Potter was reputed to have amassed funds, weapons, supplies before his capture and imprisonment."

*"It's difficult to access those from a prison."
 "Sir. He had over thirty years to figure out just how to do that. I believe he found a way, conspired with Pierce. With his take, Pierce then wiped his data, his records, his existence, and created another identity (p.111)."*

In the above context, the narrative introduces the possibility of medical methods that can simulate death, which significantly increases the complexity of the case. The use of technically based arguments demonstrates that solving the problem relies not only on intuition but also on investigative logic. This is characteristic of the attempt-to-resolve stage, where the protagonist attempts to construct the most coherent explanation based on the available evidence.

The hypothesis of bribery and collaboration between Potter and Dr. Pierce suggests that the investigation has entered the realm of conspiracy. In this stage, the narrative demonstrates how the imbalance may have been caused by identity manipulation and the erasure of traces. And after going through the entire investigation process, Lieutenant Eve finally discovered the truth that Potter was indeed still alive. This was confirmed in Chapter 12 when Feeney (Electronic Detective Division) presented the findings regarding the prison doctor:

Datum 11

*"I got Mason James Pettibottom aka Martin J. Pierce."
 "Seriously? He went with 'Pettibottom'?"
 "I figure he wanted to keep his initials. Maybe he had some shit monogrammed. He's living it high in Costa Rica. Got himself a big-ass house, a big-ass boat, a fancy car. Damn good background and ID. Don't know as I could've done better myself."
 "Give me a visual."
 "Coming. Had some face work, got a snazzy goatee. But it's him."
 When the ID shot came on her 'link, she nodded. "Yeah, it sure as hell is." She shoved the 'link at Roarke (p.148).*

This narrative suggests that the investigation has successfully identified a suspect previously believed to be dead. This is evidenced by the discovery of Mason James Pettibottom's new identity, Martin J. Pierce, which strengthens the hypothesis that the death was staged. Visual confirmation through photo identification becomes crucial evidence in the process of solving the disturbance. When Eve confirms that the individual is indeed the same, the depiction of a luxurious life in Costa Rica reveals the consequences of the crime.

The narrative suggests that the suspect managed to escape and establish a new identity with financial support. Structurally, this information broadens the understanding of the scale of the crime and clarifies that the disturbance in the story involves more than just murder, but also escape and disguise. Therefore, the identification of the surviving perpetrator and the use of a false identity are crucial elements in unravelling the chain of events that led to the disturbance. This is shown where there are indications that Potter's data was manipulated with the assistance of a prison doctor (Dr. Martin J. Pierce.) Next, we move on to the findings of Feeney's investigation in Chapter 13:

Datum 12

"The driver-and I'm convinced along with you it was Potter. The face, the back of the hands. Hands will show age."

"A mask? But-"

"More than a mask. A process. Time-consuming, expensive, meticulous process. The material-a silicone base has to be blended and formed, thinned and shaped. Measurements must be exact. The machine required to do this, as well as the tinting, is easily ten thousand. The mask is then carefully

applied, smoothed, adjusted. If all this is done correctly, painstakingly, it can look quite real for a limited amount of time.

"It doesn't breathe," he explained. "They've yet to formulate a material that does. And it won't feel like skin. While it has the appearance, once you magnify and begin to analyze, it doesn't."

"It could change his face, take the years off?"

"It could, yes, for three or four hours. Five at the very most. After two, discomfort would be an issue."

"He wouldn't take it off in the limo. Too risky."

"And your sweepers would've found traces of it, flaking off during removal. (p.163)"

From all quotation above, it is clear that Potter is indeed the main perpetrator of this mysterious murder. Therefore, the entire investigative process serves as the main character's process of uncovering the truth and identifying the perpetrator. This process falls under the attempt to resolve the disruption stage, as Lieutenant Eve Dallas consciously conducts the investigation, or in other words, the main character has consciously realized that there is something strange about this murder case. At this stage, it is revealed that the investigative process involves researching the victim's background, which turns out to be connected to the perpetrator, identifying the perpetrator's motive, and ultimately uncovering evidence that Potter can be identified as a suspect in the murder.

Next, in the last part of chapter 13, all the members of the Twelve had gathered at Lieutenant Eve's house. While they were chatting, Marjorie Wright's phone rang because her cousin (Darlena) was calling. Marjorie answered it, but Summerset ordered her to turn off the video. The gist of the conversation was an invitation for several members of the Twelve to have lunch together at a restaurant called Chez Robert. However, because the call

seemed suspicious, they immediately reported the incident to Lieutenant Eve:

Datum 13

"My cousin Darlena Corning rang me up." Iris stepped forward. "It certainly sounded like Darlena. I blocked video, and on her end she complained her 'link wasn't working properly. That wouldn't be unusual. She and her husband, Roger, live in New York. She said- Well, I made sure the conversation recorded, so. (p.170)"

The narrative above continues to demonstrate an active response to a possible new threat related to the main case. Following the previous series of investigations, a potentially suspicious situation emerges through a phone call directed to one of The Twelve's members. The immediate reporting of this incident to Eve indicates that the investigation is ongoing and attempts to prevent further disruption.

The recording of the conversation demonstrates the steps and strategies used to gather evidence. Within the narrative context, this action reflects an awareness that disruptions stem not only from past events but can also arise in the form of new manipulations or traps. By recording the conversation, the characters attempt to verify information and maintain the security of communications. Suspicion of the content conversation also demonstrates that the investigation has reached a heightened level of vigilance. The planned meeting at the restaurant could be part of a new criminal pattern, requiring further analysis before conclusions are drawn.

Thus, this section emphasizes that the conflict resolution process is not complete but continues to evolve through investigative actions and

communication between the characters. Lieutenant Eve rushed to track down Marjorie Wright's cousin (Darlena) and confirm whether it was indeed not Darlena who had called earlier. When Lieutenant Eve met with Darlena and interviewed her and her husband, they admitted that Darlena's phone had gone missing a few hours earlier and she hadn't found it yet:

Datum 14

"My 'link. How odd you'd ask. I misplaced it sometime today. So annoying. I honestly think someone stole it!"

"She's always misplacing her 'link," Roger said.

"Maybe we could help with that. Do you remember where you last used it?"

"I do! I had brunch today with a dear friend at Czarina's. Their blinis are lighter than air! Another dear friend rang me up just as I was going in. I arranged a salon date with her for... How can I remember! It's on my 'link! Then I set the 'link down on the table. Or put it back in my bag. I'm not sure. But when I changed bags for our dinner, it wasn't there!"

"We'll see what we can do. We appreciate the time. (p.173)"

After realizing this, in chapter 14 Lieutenant Eve decided to follow the caller's instructions, who was clearly not Darlena. Lieutenant Eve believed the caller was Potter, so they followed his orders, which were for three members of the Twelve to have lunch at Chez Robert. The night before the meeting, Lieutenant Eve rushed to check the conditions and situation inside the restaurant. They were certain that Potter had something planned. And sure enough, upon inspecting all areas of the restaurant, they found something amiss in the kitchen, where a bomb had been planted, controlled by remote and equipped with a timer:

Datum 15

"That's not a word I like when attached to a bomb."

She got down with him, twisted to look under the table. "Timer, right? Set to go off in thirteen hours, thirty-six minutes, forty-six seconds and

counting. Give them time to sit and settle, maybe order a drink, wait for the cousin. How the hell did he get past the team and set this a half hour later than he'd said in the first contact?"

"He set the timer remotely. And there's a backup to detonate by remote."

"Well Jesus. Fuck. Get out of there. I'll bring in the bomb squad."

"No need, give us a minute. (p.183)"

From the quotation above, it can be seen that when they were guarding the restaurant, they found a bomb that had been installed and controlled by a remote. Not only that, the bomb was also activated using a timer. The discovery of a bomb with a timer and remote control indicates that the perpetrator had a well-thought-out plan. In the narrative context, this narrative expands the scale of the disruption, as the threat is no longer limited to a single victim but targets multiple members of The Twelve simultaneously. This situation forces the protagonist to act quickly as part of a strategy to restore balance.

Eve's immediate response to requesting assistance from the bomb disposal team demonstrates an institutional mechanism for dealing with the crisis. However, the dialogue, which includes "no need" and requests for more time, indicates that the defusal process was carried out in a controlled and coordinated manner. In Todorov's structure, this stage reflects a concrete effort to eliminate the source of the disruption before further damage occurs. In other words, the narrative demonstrates a direct effort to shift the situation from an active threat to a safe one. Furthermore, they managed to thwart Potter's plan by deactivating the bomb and planned to arrest Potter the next day during the meeting. And before the operation was launched, that night

they obtained stronger evidence that Potter was the perpetrator, because the ashes buried under Potter's name turned out to belong to another inmate.

(Chapter 16):

Datum 16

"Chatter off. The target is Conrad Potter. The remains purported to be his are not, but the partial remains of another inmate. Dr. DeWinter confirmed this morning. The prints on the explosive device have been confirmed as his. Potter is seventy-eight. Caucasian male, five-ten. At the time of his imaginary death, one hundred and sixty-three pounds. We don't have his current face. (p.201)"

After that information came to light, the suspicion that Potter was the perpetrator of this crime became even stronger. In chapter 17 Eve had already taken action and devised a strategy to catch Potter, searching every room and floor of the building surrounding the restaurant. That allowed Potter to witness the deaths of his friends and capture the moment, just as he had witnessed Rossi's death. However, during the attempt to catch Potter, Lieutenant Eve's team failed to apprehend him, and he managed to escape:

Datum 17

*"5C's clear," she responded. "Sorry to interrupt," she said, then stopped on her way to the door.
 "What other one? You said you had another one?"
 "Another one what? Oh right, person coming in. The lady."
 She gestured to what Eve remembered was the main bedroom just as a woman came out....
 She yanked out her badge. "Where the hell is he?"
 "Well, for heaven's sakes! Mr. Brockstone should be on his way up to view this apartment." "Where is he now?"
 "On his way up, didn't I just say?"
 "3-C. Son of a bitch! All teams, all teams. Subject is in the building, 3-C. Cover the exits. I'm heading down."
 She pulled open the door just as Peabody turned to run for the stairs.

As the Realtor stepped out of the bedroom in 5-A, Potter stood by the window. "Five, four, three, two, one!"

For an instant, his heart was full of joy, of triumph. He even pumped a fist in the air.

And nothing happened.

No blast of sound. No one on the street stopped, no cars braked at the sound of an explosion. No one ran screaming out of Chez Robert.

Furious, he jabbed the remote in his pocket.

Nothing.

And in that next instant, as fury turned to fear, he knew.

They'd set him up. Somehow.

He ran.

He flashed back to the night, decades before, when he'd been forced to run. His legs didn't move as fast now, but they wouldn't take him.

They wouldn't take him. He'd kill them all first.

Eve pounded down to three with Peabody on her heels. The door to 3-C hung open.

"Clear it, clear it fast. Black suit," she shouted at her team as she and Peabody cleared. "Box him in. He's running."

And so did she, down the steps as Santiago and Carmichael ran up.

"He didn't come this way. He didn't come out the front," Carmichael told her.

"Clear the basement level!"

Alarms went off.

"Fire exit. Goddamn it."

She launched herself over the railing, hit the floor, then streaked toward the back. She looked right, left, and saw him running across the intersection at the end of the block.

She shouted orders, locations, directions as she raced through rain that had decided to come back with a vengeance.

Though she had to dodge umbrellas and people who weren't looking where the hell they were going, she cut the distance in half before he looked over his shoulder and spotted her.

Then he did exactly what she'd feared. He pulled out a gun.

She felt the impact of the bullet on her shoulder, a light punch. And kept going.

Her own weapon in hand, she was still yards away when he planted, changed tactic.

With a wild grin he aimed not at Eve but at two women, oblivious as they walked arm in arm under an umbrella and chattered away.

She was fast, but not as fast as a bullet. With no choice, she flung herself in front of the women. She felt the impact again along her ribs, and a quick, hot sting as the women, shrieking, fell on the wet pavement.

One of them wrapped an arm around her leg and started screaming for help. For the police.

"Lady, lady, I'm a cop. I'm in pursuit."

And losing him, losing him in the rain. (pp.217-219)"

The above quotation is the longest data because the narrative demonstrates the efforts to apprehend the perpetrator and directly halt the

threat. After a strategy was formulated and the location was monitored, operational action was carried out in a coordinated manner. However, the failure to apprehend indicates that the process of restoring balance has not been fully successful, so the narrative tension reaches its peak before the final resolution. The attempted siege of the building and the surveillance of every floor indicate that the investigation has evolved into a full-scale operation. These actions reflect the response to the previously identified threat. Within the narrative structure, this phase is part of the disruption resolution process, where the protagonist attempts to close off all possibilities for the perpetrator's escape. However, the failure to apprehend the suspect indicates that the imbalance has not been fully controlled.

The scene of the bomb's failed detonation and Potter's emotional reaction reinforce the shifting power dynamics in the story. When the bomb plan fails, the narrative demonstrates that the perpetrator's strategy has been foiled. The moment of realization that he has been framed is the turning point in Potter's anger. The chase outside the building, including the use of weapons and Eve's decision to protect civilians, demonstrates that the restoration of balance is achieved by upholding the principles of law and public safety. The act of protecting innocents demonstrates that the ultimate goal is not simply to apprehend the perpetrator but also to minimize the damage.

In systematically, this section marks the peak of tension before the transition to the final resolution. Potter's escape indicates that the conflict is

not yet fully resolved, but Eve and her team's actions represent an attempt to end the threat. Then, in Chapter 18 after a failed attempt to arrest Potter, Potter manages to escape. Upon arriving home, he becomes even more furious and seeks revenge, but it turns out Potter has other plans:

Datum 18

"Potter had taken the next step in his plan even while Eve debriefed her team at Central....

He took what he needed to the garage, to the car, then drove out once again in the rain.

Driving carefully, he hummed to himself. He'd scouted the area before when selecting the best dump spot for Rossi. It hadn't suited that need, but would suit his current purpose very well....

Then, positioned in the wet gloom at the side of the building, he saw his target.

Alone, splashing along in puddles, wearing a bright yellow mac. A red backpack, and some sort of case-musical instrument-in his hand.

Leaning heavily on the cane he'd brought as a prop, Potter stepped into view.

"Young man? Could you help me?"

Potter put on his most harmless smile as the boy glanced over.

"Oh! There she is now!"

As the boy turned his head to look where Potter pointed, Potter jabbed the pressure syringe on the side of his neck.

With barely a sound, the boy went limp.

Potter simply took his weight, kicked the case into the alley. He rolled the unconscious boy into the trunk, slammed it shut.

Pleased, flushed with success, he began the drive back uptown. He calculated the boy would be out at least two hours, giving him plenty of time to do what he needed to do (pp 245-246).

From the quote above, it can be seen that after Potter felt he had failed in his first mission, which was to bomb the restaurant where the Twelve had been. Potter finally launched a revenge plan by kidnapping a boy named Davin, the kidnapping was carried out with the intention of using it as a threat to force the Twelve to surrender. Because the balance has not been restored, and the narrative instead continues with the perpetrator's threat. After failing to capture, Potter does not stop, but instead continues

his criminal plan. This indicates that the disruption in the narrative structure has not been resolved and is still actively developing.

The scene where Potter approaches a new victim in disguise demonstrates the use of manipulation strategies to gain an advantage. He exploits the victim's situation, appearance, and trust to carry out his actions. This action indicates that the disruption is not spontaneous, but planned and repeated. The use of a drug and kidnapping demonstrates that Potter's goal is not only to survive capture but also to maintain control over the victim's situation.

Overall, this section emphasizes that despite the failure of previous capture attempts, the investigation continues and the conflict becomes more complex. The latest crime demonstrates that the balance of the narrative world is still disturbed. Then in Chapter 20, Potter sent a video showing David being threatened with violence to Lieutenant Eve and the other members of the Twelve:

Datum 19

Eve Dallas. The computer-generated voice jumped a bit. Listen carefully. This message is for you. It is for Mole, Panther, Chameleon, Owl, Magpie, Cobra, Fox. All who remain of The Twelve, all of whom are responsible for the imprisonment and death of Shark.

The time has come to pay. The time has come to choose. Will you hide behind the false musk of hero, or show yourselves to be the cowards you are?

The video unblocked, and she saw the boy.

"Jesus Christ, he's got a kid. On-screen."

She heard the others come in, heard the exclamations.

Quiet!" she ordered.

"Tell them your name," Not comp-generated now, but the hollow sound of computer-disguised.

"I'm-I'm Devin. Devin McReedy."

"How old are you, Devin?"

"Nine. I'm nine."

Eyes on the screen, Eve used the keyboard to run Devin McReedy, age nine, New York. And saw the Amber Alert.

"What's going to happen to you, Devin?" "You-you" Tears tracked his face. "You're going to kill me with the gas, so I can't breathe and I die. I don't want to! Please. I didn't do anything bad! I was just-"

"Devin? Remember what we discussed. Say what I tell you, no more. Or I'll have to hurt you. Again. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. I understand, sir."

"Now, what has to happen so I don't kill you with the gas? So you don't die?"

"Somebody has to take my place. Um, um. Owl or Mole or Fox or ... I can't remember all the names. I can't!"

"Or Chameleon or Cobra or Magpie or Panther. Or Eve Dallas. And what will happen when one of them takes your place?"

"I can go home. You promised, I can go home and you won't hurt my mom or my dad or my brother."

"How old are you again, Devin?"

"Nine. I'm nine."

"At that time you will receive specific instructions. Follow them, precisely, or he loses a hand, and the price goes up to three lives. Fail, and he dies, and I take another. Payment is due (pp.259-260)

The quotation above show the conflict remains unresolved and has instead reached a more severe point, forcing a final decision. The previously strategic threats have now shifted to direct pressure on the main character and his group. By using child hostages, the perpetrators escalate the disruption and test the actions of the involved characters. The digitally delivered message with a list of The Twelve members' names indicates that the conflict has entered a symbolic and personal stage. The perpetrators not only seek revenge for the past but also force members to choose between self-sacrifice or letting innocent victims die. The use of Devin as a hostage reinforces the dramatic function of the disruption because the victim chosen is a nine-year-old child. The narrative demonstrates how the perpetrators control communication and psychologically manipulates the victim, signalling temporary dominance in the conflict.

The gradual threat of amputating hands to escalating the number of victims demonstrates a structured threat mechanism. This demonstrates that the perpetrators still have the capacity to create further imbalance, thus preventing a recovery process. Overall, this section demonstrates that the conflict has reached its maximum intensity through hostages. Although part of a series of resolution efforts, this situation confirms that equilibrium has not been restored and the disruption is still active.

The researcher found that all the data above fits into the Attempt to Resolve the Disruption stage because, in a story, this is the stage where the main character begins to navigate the conflict between opposing and defending, striving to restore the original balance or establish a new one. Therefore, in the case of stories specifically within the detective crime fiction genre, once the detective has identified the culprit, they begin the process of apprehending the perpetrator. This apprehension stage can also be described as the main character's effort to restore the situation to its original state or to an even better one.

5. New Equilibrium

This is the final stage of the plot, when all the problems or conflicts from the beginning of the story are resolved (Todorov, 1973). This stage typically begins with a situation that appears to have returned to normal, whether it's back to the way things were, improved, or even gotten worse. This stage is the core of the investigative process, where the truth has finally

come to light. It begins when the main character takes action to restore the original balance or establish a new one. In this novel, this stage begins with the arrest of the suspect Potter, for whom several pieces of evidence had already been found. His capture did not happen immediately, but rather unfolded through a series of events. Starting from the plan to trap Potter, which was successfully foiled by Lieutenant Eve, and Potter's escape, until finally Potter was caught while carrying out another plan.

So, this stage is depicted at chapter 21 until chapter 23 in the novel, when Potter is successfully arrested and found guilty, and then sentenced. The most important point is when Lieutenant Eve was able to arrest Potter as the murderer, as shown in the data below:

Cause of the threatening video sent to the twelve, Lieutenant Eve managed to get a lead and track Potter down. Lieutenant Eve immediately went to Potter's location and rescued Devin and captured Potter at his residence. This statement begins at the end of Chapter 21, as mentioned below:

Datum 20

*"Rising, he slid it into his pocket, signaled clear.
Fast, she mouthed to Roarke. Lights, to the commander.
They burst in; the lights flashed on full in the wide room with its river view. Raven-black hair sleep-tousled, dark eyes wide, Potter jerked up in bed. Dawn trickled gently in the windows as he swung a weapon toward them.
Eve's stream hit center mass, and even on low, had him jittering. The gun dropped from his hand, hit the side of the bed, then thudded to the floor.
"Police." She rushed forward. "Hands up."
Though his hands still shook, he yanked another weapon from under the pillow. Closing in, Eve struck his gun hand with her left and just batted it away. He tried to roll, and she had the satisfaction of grabbing him by the collar and hearing something rip.*

As she dragged him out of bed, he flailed. His head cracked against one side of her ribs, his trembling fist connected with the other side.

"Give it up, Potter. You're bagged." Rolling him onto the floor, she cuffed him. "Conrad Potter, you're under arrest for the murder of Giovanni Rossi, a human being. For the kidnapping and unlawful imprisonment of Devin McReedy, a minor child. For the attempted murder by explosive device of Marjorie Wright, Ivanna Liski, and Iris Arden. Boy, this is fun. For the "

"Let me take him, Lieutenant." Roarke nudged her aside. "You're bleeding again."

"What?" She looked down, saw the red seeping into the gray shirt. "Crap."

"There's more, but that'll do for now. Oh, and just a comment. Black silk pajamas? Really? Though I'm grateful you covered your tiny, useless dick so none of us have to be exposed to it."

"You ignorant bitch! You whoring cunt! You should be dead! (pp.280-281)"

After the successful arrest, Potter was taken to the police station for further legal proceedings. This moment demonstrates that efforts to restore balance have achieved concrete results through the direct intervention of law enforcement. With Potter's arrest, the main source of disruption in the storyline is functionally stopped. The raid scene demonstrates the full force of the police in controlling the situation. The pre-planned strategy is executed with effective coordination, leaving the perpetrator with no room to escape. Eve's swift arrest and handcuffing of the suspect represent the restoration of control to the previously chaotic situation. From Todorov's perspective, this is a strong indicator that the conflict resolution process has been successful.

Furthermore, the detailed reading of the charges serves as a confirmation of the crimes that have occurred. The mention of various crimes, from murder to kidnapping to attempted murder, demonstrates

that the imbalance is not merely personal but also violates the legal order. With the official announcement of the arrest, the narrative confirms that the justice system has now taken over the role of prosecuting the perpetrator. This becomes a crucial part of the mechanism for restoring balance within the narrative structure. The final dialogue, which displays the perpetrator's emotion and humiliation, reinforces the contrast between moral chaos and legal order.

Even though, Potter still displays verbal aggression, structurally, he has lost his power. His status changes from threat controller to detained suspect. In Todorov's theory, this condition leads to a new equilibrium, as the primary threat has been neutralized and the social system begins to stabilize. Therefore, this section marks the resolution of the primary conflict through the arrest of the perpetrator. Then, with the capture of the source of disruption, the previously disturbed narrative balance begins to be restored. When interviewed, Potter finally confessed to all the crimes he had committed and was given a punishment commensurate with the crimes he had committed.

Datum 21

"Conrad Potter, you have confessed, on record and of your own volition, to the premeditated murder of Giovanni Rossi, to the attempted murder of Marjorie Wright, Iris Arden, and Ivanna Liski, to the possession of illegal weapons, of banned toxic gas, of explosives. You have further confessed to the firing of an illegal weapon upon a police officer and civilians, to the drugging, abduction, imprisonment, and assault against the minor child Devin McReedy.

"You have stated the intention to commit murder if circumstances allow you freedom to do so.

"For these crimes and intentions, you will not be tried in the state of New York, or serve any sentence here. You will be extradited"

"You lose."

"You will be extradited, you festering, puss-seeping boil on the ass of humanity- (p.299)"

The quote above serves as proof that Potter has finally received the punishment he deserves for all the crimes he has committed. Furthermore, this quote could also mark the conclusion of the investigation that Lieutenant Eve has been conducting from the very beginning. It can be said that the disruption has been resolved. So, following the indictment, all the characters in the story including Lieutenant Eve and the members of The Twelve feel safe, and life can return to normal. That's why, this stage is marked by the conclusion of the investigative process, which ultimately restores balance.

Not only that, this stage can also involve the reveal of the perpetrator's motive or the arrest of the perpetrator. However, the balance achieved is not merely a return to the initial state, but can also be influenced by previous events, which provide a concluding meaning to the entire story. In this novel, this is marked by the moment when Potter is finally able to confess during an interview after his arrest and admits to all of his crimes. In addition, this stage serves as a validation, determining the story's conclusion, and ensures that all clues, conflicts, or events that have arisen previously are successfully resolved. Then the story concludes with a brief moment of intimacy between Lieutenant Eve and her husband, Roarke. This also demonstrates that the initial equilibrium has returned to normal, as demonstrated in the quotation below:

Datum 22

"After you've slept, I think you'd enjoy it. They're, as I've said, an enjoyable bunch."

"Maybe. Is he going to Italy, too?"
"Summerset?" He glanced over as he drove, noted she was nearly
under. "Of course. They were mates."
"Just you and me tomorrow."
"Tomorrow, and a few days more, you and me."
"Nice. Been busy. Miss you and me."
She dropped into sleep so he took her limp hand, brought it to his lips.
And kept it pressed there for several seconds.
You and me, he thought. Even when it's not just, it's you and me.
He drove home, where he intended to sleep with his exhausted wife
until spaghetti and meatballs (p.304)."

This ending represents the restoration of a new equilibrium within Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure. There are no longer threats, active investigations, or criminal tensions that remains is a peaceful life between Eve and Roarke. The interactions between the two emphasize the restoration of stability for the protagonists. Simple conversations, plans for spending time together, and expressions of longing indicate that private life is returning to a normal rhythm. And from the series of scenes above, it can be concluded that they finally realized that togetherness in a husband-and-wife relationship is a very important thing. In Todorov's perspective, the new equilibrium stage does not necessarily mean a complete change in the world, but rather that stability has been restored after the disruption has been overcome. This scene marks the transition from the public sphere (conflict and crime) back to the private sphere (home and intimate relationships).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the findings and discussion in Chapter IV. These conclusions provide a final answer to the research question, which is a summary of how narrative structures are shaped in crime fiction novels. In addition, the researcher offers suggestions for the future research.

A. Conclusion

The researcher found that J. D. Robb's novel *Bonded in Death* covered all five stages of Todorov's narrative structure, namely: a state of equilibrium, a disruption of equilibrium, recognition of the disruption, an attempt to resolve the disruption, and a return to a new equilibrium. In this study, the researcher found that the narrative develops systematically from a peaceful condition, through conflict and investigation, and finally reaches resolution when justice is restored. Among the five stages, the attempt to resolve the disruption is the most dominant because it contains the investigation process.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that Todorov's narrative structure does not merely serve as a framework for shaping the plot. This structure can also directly reflect the investigative process within the crime fiction genre. The disruption stage marks the starting point of the criminal case that drives the story forward. The attempt to resolve disruption stage is the most dominant stage because it involves a significant amount of investigative work. In this stage, the protagonist gathers

evidence, investigates the victim's background, and identifies the perpetrator. Next is the new equilibrium stage, which depicts concrete efforts to apprehend the perpetrator and marks the restoration of social order after the conflict has been successfully resolved. Therefore, the narrative structure in crime fiction is not merely formal but also functional in constructing the investigative narrative.

B. Suggestion

This study still has several limitations that need to be noted. One of the main limitations is the use of only one theory, namely Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory. This results in an analysis that tends to focus on structure without exploring other aspects that could be analysed in greater depth. While this theory has indeed been widely used to analyse various novels, my search for previous studies specifically on the crime fiction genre revealed that such research remains very limited. Therefore, further research is recommended to analyse other novels, particularly within the crime fiction genre, in greater depth.

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