

Toxic Parent in *A Thousand Perfect Notes* by C.G. Drew

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18860/lilics.v1i1.2719>

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How to Cite: APA Style 7th edition

Submission

Track:

Received:

27-03-2023

Available online:

28-04-2023

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the portrayal of a toxic parent in C.G. Drews's novel, A Thousand Perfect Notes, explicitly focusing on the mother's role in forcing her child to become a pianist. The research addresses two main objectives: the first is to describe the forms of toxic parenting exhibited by the mother in the novel, and the second is to explore the effects of toxic parenting on the child's character in A Thousand Perfect Notes. To achieve this, the researcher applied Dr. Susan Forward's theory of toxic parents from 2002, utilizing a psychological approach for analysis. In addition, the study utilized a psychology-focused literary criticism approach, focusing on the character's parenting style. The findings revealed several forms of toxic parenting depicted in the book, including insufficient parenting, controlling behavior, verbal abuse, and physical abuse. The main character, in particular, experienced the impacts of these toxic parent characteristics. The study's analysis shed light on the effects of a toxic parent on a child, as portrayed in C.G. Drews's A Thousand Perfect Notes.

Keywords: toxic parent, psychological approach, parenting style

INTRODUCTION

Both literature and psychology are closely related fields that delve into the complexities of the human psyche. While literature explores human behavior through the lens of fiction, psychology investigates the underlying causes of human actions. This symbiotic relationship between the two disciplines enhances literature's ability to skillfully present characters and their emotions, offering valuable insights into various psychological phenomena (Emir, 2016).

In literary analysis, psychology plays a vital role by directing readers' attention to the mental and emotional states of the characters (Cuddon, 1999). One such approach, psychoanalytical criticism, focuses on human behavior and cognition, revealing deeper meanings within literary works (Wellek & Warren, 1963). Both psychology and literature delve into interconnected topics, such as society, environment, achievement, desires, and

relationships (Aras, 2015). Among these topics, the family holds particular significance in psychological theory, as it exerts a crucial influence on shaping individuals (Tyson, 2006).

Family relationships have a profound impact on a child's psychology, making the manner in which children are raised a crucial factor in their character development. Parenting styles, reflecting family interactions, can either positively or negatively affect a child's growth, demonstrating typical relationship patterns within the family (Newman, 2011). These familial connections extend their effects to a child's attitudes, morals, intellect, and emotions (Stack et al., 2010).

Excessive parental control and overprotectiveness can hinder a child's opportunities to develop confidence and skills. Parenting styles, encompassing parents' thoughts, feelings, and actions related to child-rearing, significantly influence a child's overall development. Excessive parental control, as shown in studies, can impact a child's psychological growth (Clarke, 2013).

Over recent years, toxic parenting issues have emerged, causing discomfort in family relationships for many children. Toxic parents tend to exert excessive control, overprotection, and involvement in their child's life, making the child feel trapped by their parents' moods. Notably, toxic parenting lacks empathy, leading to frequent criticism and scarce appreciation, resulting in feelings of depression and negative impacts on the child's mental health (Gaba, 2020).

Another type of parent, identified by Baumrind (1971), places high demands on their child while shirking their responsibilities, often neglecting the child's emotional needs. Such toxic parents may display unloving behavior disguised as love, rarely offering comfort, respect, or appreciation for the child's positive actions, but heavily punishing mistakes (Forward, 2002). This dominant behavior significantly influences a child's development, denying them autonomy and choice in their own life (Forward, 2002).

Toxic parents exhibit excessive control and criticism towards their children, often resorting to abusive behavior if their expectations are not met (Forward, 2002). The impact on a child raised by such parents is profound, leaving them feeling unlovable, unprotected, frightened, uncomfortable, and worthless. This is evident in the characters portrayed in C.G. Drews's novel, *A Thousand Perfect Notes* (Forward, 2002).

The novel tells the story of Beck Keverich, whose single mother, the Maestro, forcefully pushes him to become a pianist, driven by her own passion for the instrument. Despite her ambitions for Beck, she disregards his feelings and desires. Beck is subjected to strict daily piano practice at home and faces punishment, including physical abuse, for even minor delays. His mother enrolls him in various piano lessons and competitions, constantly threatening and belittling him instead of offering encouragement. The constant abusive treatment takes a toll on Beck's self-confidence and self-worth, leaving him feeling unloved and worthless.

Upon analyzing *A Thousand Perfect Notes*, the researcher identifies a noteworthy issue regarding the parenting style depicted in the novel, particularly toxic parents, and its impact on a child's psychology. To explore this issue further, the researcher adopts Dr. Susan Forward's theory on toxic parents from 2002, using a psychological approach. Understanding how parents treat and educate their children significantly influences their development, making this study relevant and intriguing.

Previous research has examined conflicts in literary works using psychoanalytic criticism, such as Marfiah's study on the characters' personalities (2017) and Hidayah's

exploration of character interactions to face internal conflicts (2018). Additionally, Hartanto's study delved into the effects of child abuse on a child, employing Sigmund Freud's tripartite model in psychoanalytic criticism. Furthermore, Septiadi's research focused on character personality analysis using Freud's theory in a literary work (2018). Drawing on these previous studies and employing a psychological approach, the researcher aims to fill the gap by exploring the highlighted issue of the parenting style in the novel, particularly toxic parents, and its impact on a child's psychology.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a literary criticism since it aims to analyze a novel. By employing the method, this study used the data from C.G. Drews's *A Thousand Perfect Notes*. The researcher applied the psychology of literary criticism as a literary approach focusing on the character's parenting style. Literary works deal with human thought, expression, motivation, and behavior (Wellek, 1963). This study focused on toxic parents in a child by applying Dr. Susan Forward's theory of toxic parents. The method must describe the research approach, the subjects of the study, the research procedure, the materials and instruments utilized in the study, and the data collection and analysis processes in a concise manner.

The data source is *A Thousand Perfect Notes* by C.G. Drews. Orchard Books published the novel in 2018. The researcher used the story's dialogue, act, and narration as the data of analysis. The e-book version is downloaded from www.hachettechildrens.co.uk. The data are taken from the novel in the form of words, phrases, and sentences related to the issue of a toxic parent. Therefore, the researcher used the data collection techniques by following some steps. First, the researcher read the whole chapter of *A Thousand Perfect Notes* novel to understand the story. After that, the researcher re-read the novel carefully to understand the story's content and find the data related to the study's problems. The last step is categorizing and classifying the data based on the forms of a toxic parent and the effects on the child.

To analyze the data, the researcher did some steps. First, the researcher collected the data by taking notes from the novel *A Thousand Perfect Notes*, which related to toxic parents. Second, the researcher observed the collected data that can be analyzed in this study. Third, the researcher classified the data based on the research questions. Fourth, the researcher analyzed the data based on the theory of toxic parents. Finally, the researcher drew a conclusion which suitable for the research.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The Forms of Toxic Parenting Portrayed in C.G. Drews' A Thousand Perfect Notes

The novel *A Thousand Perfect Notes*, penned by C.G. Drews in 2018, delves into the concerning theme of toxic parenting. The story revolves around Maestro, a renowned pianist and mother of two children, Beck and Joey. After suffering a stroke and losing her career, she fixates on her children becoming successful pianists, notably Beck, as the piano holds great significance in their family. Ignoring their dreams and desires, she imposes her ambitions upon them. The mother resorts to harsh words and physical punishment to push Beck to fulfill her aspirations. This chapter explores the issue of toxic parenting experienced by the characters in the narrative.

Based on the story above summary, the researcher identifies several characteristics of the toxic parent theory proposed by Dr. Susan Forward in the mother's character. These include insufficient understanding of her children's needs, being overly controlling, resorting to verbal abuse, and employing physical punishment. The gathered data reflect these aspects of the mother's behavior in the story.

The Insufficient Parent

According to Forward (2002), 'the insufficient parent' can be categorized into various characteristics. These include parents who cannot meet the child's basic needs, those who struggle to show affection and attention to the child, and those who fail to shield the child from emotional harm.

Parents who cannot provide the basic needs of food for the child

The story tells about how the Maestro treats her children. It showed that she is very ambitious to make her children be pianists, especially Beck. Somehow, she should have fulfilled her obligations, such as giving her children food. Some of the data shows that the Maestro does not fulfill the right of the child to give food. The data is as follows;

Beck breaks off the piece abruptly, frowning. Is it just a tantrum about the TV, or is Joey unleashing her energy after being home with her mother for three days? It is dark outside, past when they should have eaten dinner – he is not playing 'acceptably' yet – so maybe Joey is having a hungry meltdown.

Still.

He hates to hear his sister cry.

Beck nudges his bedroom door open and creeps into the hall. He can Smell bratwurst sausage and garlic and caraway. So clearly, dinner is happening, just not for him.

'I DON'T WANT TO,' Joey hollers.

Beck strolls into the kitchen, trying to look nonchalant. He gets a glass from the cupboard and pours himself water.

'Mind your tone with me, Göre,' the Maestro snaps.

Brat? What happened to darling and sweetie, her usual terms of endearment for her favorite child? It scares Beck.

She sits at her table before a plate of sausage, mashed potato, and sauerkraut, her arms folded. At first, Beck thinks she must be whingeing about the food. However, then the Maestro points towards Beck's open bedroom door and the corner of the shiny Steinway piano.

'It is a privilege to play the piano,' the Maestro says. Beck clutches his glass and forgets to drink.

'And to be a Keverich is to play,' she says. 'To play music is to learn discipline and have direction and purpose. You are no kleines Kind anymore.'

Joey's face is as red as the Maestro's. 'No!' she shouts. 'I hate it. I don't wanna play all day, I want to be a chef and a mermaid and—'

'Nein. You will learn.' The Maestro stabs at her sausage. She sees Beck, and her fierce eyes land on him. 'Have you finished your practice?' Her tone is sharper than the sauerkraut.

'No,' Beck says. 'I just – I'm hungry ...' I want to rescue Joey from you. 'Food is for those who play well.' The Maestro throws her cutlery down and

risers. 'That goes for you too, Johanna. If you refuse the piano, you refuse dinner.'

Joey drops her pink plastic fork. 'I hate the piano. It is not quiet and mean. Moreover, I hate how Beck plays when I wanna sleep.' She hiccups. 'I will not play the mean piano. No, no, NO.' (pp. 129-130)

The narration above is from Beck's point of view. The data shows that the Maestro has a rule for Beck to play the piano for hours a day. There is food once Chopin is acceptable. As the Maestro said to Beck, 'Food is for those who play well.' It also went to her sister, Joey. She cannot get the food if she refuses to play the piano. The Maestro said that playing the piano is a privilege. As a result, there is a requirement for her children to get food, even though Beck said he was hungry. It means the Maestro did not provide for the children's basic needs. She only focuses on her own business as she said, 'And to be Keverich is to play.' A child has the right to be fed by their parents without any requirement (Forward, 2002). Other data shows that the Maestro does not give food to the children.

However, she is not. At midday, she leaves for the bus to do some jobs in town – probably eating out, too, since there is no food in the house, and she never seems to go hungry like he and Joey have to. She commands Beck to practice hard, with the "or else" lingering in the air before she goes. (p. 96)

Children have the right to be clothed, sheltered, fed, and protected. The data shows the point of view of Beck that the Maestro did not care to give food to her children (Forward, 2002). In the narration, Beck said that the Maestro probably eats outside because she never seems hungry like him and her sister. She even needed to provide the food in her house for her children and only focused on her ambition as she commanded Beck to practice hard before leaving.

Parents who cannot provide the basic needs of clothes for the child

The Maestro concedes and puts it back. 'What you need, Sohn, is a haircut.' He likes his hair, though, the way it looks like an electrified steel scourer. Moreover, he cannot imagine the Maestro paying for a barber and clothes, which leaves her to do the trimming and – basically, no. It is weird enough clothes shopping with her. Her rage has burned to embers, and, yes, the smolders are ready to flare, but they can walk through the shops without imminent fear of doom. It is his uncle that's done this. Jan Keverich.

It makes no sense since the Maestro seemed to hate him and his success enough to leave Germany in the first place – but maybe the thought of home, of shooting Beck to stardom, of finally succeeding, makes her happy.

Happy? He should wait to throw that word around so quickly. Happy August.

Not-destroying-something-momentarily is the Maestro.

'I don't need a haircut,' Beck says. 'It's the Keverich trademark.' The Maestro grunts. 'Well stop sulking and go find a shirt.'

A shirt to replace the one smudged with blood.

Beck half wishes he could just wear it, prove something, and use this money to buy a fat steak and an ice cream sandwich for once. Instead, the Maestro chooses to notice he is grown and decides to do something about it.

The Maestro shakes out a black button-down shirt. 'Great,' Beck says. 'Buy it and let's go.'

The Maestro squints at it and picks at a piece of fluff. 'The quality is rubbish. And not – not ...' She glares at the clothes, searching for the word. 'Not enough.'

Enough for what? To prove they are not dirt poor?

For the first time, Beck wonders if she wants him to look nice in front of his uncle because she is ashamed. Of all of them. (p. 107)

The data shows the point of view of Beck. He said that it felt weird to shop a cloth with her. It was a rare thing. It happened because the Maestro will bring Beck for a private piano lesson with her brother, Jan Keverich. Jan Keverich was the leading pianist on the earth. According to Beck, this rare moment happened because she was ashamed of all of them; as Beck said in the narration, 'For the first time, Beck wonders if she wanted him to look nice in front of his uncle because she was ashamed of all of them.'

Parents who cannot give affection and attention to the child

He does not want to do this again. He is going to be late. 'Mutter, please, I have got school.'
Beck snatches a glance at the clock.
Her hand flashes out of nowhere and slaps his face. The shock of it sends him a step backward. He always forgets how he needs to remember and can move. (p. 14)

Instead of giving a hug or kiss before her child went to school, Beck was punished each morning. She does not care if Beck late goes to school because everything is about the piano. Beck's point of view said that Maestro did not accept any excuse and punished her child. At this moment, she shed the coffee in his uniform before he went to school. Beck begged his mom not to do that, but he got slaps on his face. From the data, the researcher concluded that the Maestro cannot give affection to the child. Instead of giving affection, she treated her child with violence. Other data shows that the Maestro cannot give affection to the child;

What will she do? They are a street from the bus station, and they pass the gate of a city park with huge, heavy branches. Shadows hug their shoulders. The Maestro stops. She jerks free of Joey – who stumbles back, tired, surprised – and the Maestro turns on Beck. He opens his mouth, but what is there to say? She has height on him, strength, and weight. Somewhere there is a man who is Beck's father, and he must have been a skinny bean because Beck sure did not inherit his mother's physique. She shoves him against the park gate with a clang. The air goes out of him. Joey whimpers.

The happening above happened after Beck's shows in the piano contest. A child needs to be appreciated (Forward, 2002). Instead of appreciating him after the stage, no matter what, she punished him. The data showed that the Maestro cannot give affection to her child.

Parents who cannot protect their children from emotional harm

'You understand the importance of this contest, Mein Sohn?' The Maestro grips his elbow and pulls him to a quiet corner of the room. Her accent is thick. She is stressed. 'You will not let me down.'

'I will not,' Beck mutters. He feels smothered by stuffy backstage air, the deluge of hairspray to keep the Keverich curls controlled, and the yards of material in the Maestro's gown from her glory days.

'Your time to prove yourself has ended,' the Maestro hisses. 'When you step on that stage, you represent me. I played these pieces when I was your age. Your uncle and I –' she makes a slight noise of disgust since she usually avoids talking about her brother, who is still famous and accomplished back in Europe and therefore annoying – played these pieces until they became legacy. If your schreckliches Spielen disgraces me, I will not stand for it.' Her voice lowers to a deep growl. 'And there will be consequences. Do you understand me?'

Couldn't she say 'good luck, and remember to have fun!' and then promise ice cream no matter what?

Instead, Beck imagines the slaps – or worse, something happening to Joey. Why does she have to demand that he become her?
'Ja,' Beck says. Thanks for the pep talk.

The first pianist is shown onto the stage in thundering applause. Then music – perfect music. Flawless with feeling, grace, and the intricate detail of a lifetime of practice. Beck stands with the Maestro and the fidgeting Joey and tries to find his music again—his safe place.

The Maestro's fingers dig into his shoulder, her voice a knife in his ribs. 'Prove to me you are worth something.'

The role of a parent is not only to provide for the child's physical needs, but they also have to provide for the child's emotional needs. Besides their physical needs, the child has to be respected, appreciated, and valued, which develops their self-respect (Forward, 2002). The data tells that the Maestro registered Beck to join the piano contest. Before the stage, Beck was threatened by the Maestro. The Maestro said some phrases that made Beck feel insecure. She said phrases such as, 'If your schreckliches Spielen disgraces me, I will not stand for it.' Alternatively, 'And there will be consequences.' Do you understand me?' Beck told in the narration that she intimidated him before the stage instead of saying 'Good luck' or promising an ice cream after it.

The Controller

The Maestro is overly in control of her child. She forced him to play the piano for hours and did not accept any excuse. She also forbids Beck from making a friend because it will distract him (as the data will show below) and does not allow the child to decide in life. The following data shows that the Maestro controls them;

'I want the best for you, Sohn,' the Maestro says. Please. She wants what is best for herself. The Maestro continues, 'I want your music, I want you, to mean something in this world. Your uncle is coming on tour to our country soon, and you will play for him. Amazingly. You Will. 'It is nearly an excellent pep talk. But his uncle? More mountainous expectations for him to fail? Great.

'Play,' she commands. 'Play the Chopin. Play it right.' So he does. (p. 83)

The dialogue of Beck's mother shows that a child's point of view has not listened. She used the word 'I want the best for you' behind her desire. His mother was concerned about her dream rather than Becks. She forced him to be a pianist like her. Beck refused it, but he was defenseless. The following data shows that the controller demands the children do and does not care about their emotions;

He hates these pieces the Maestro demands he learns. (p. 9)

The Maestro demanded that Beck learn the piano. Beck did not want to be a pianist. Instead, he wanted to be a composer. The controlling parent directly tells a child what to do and demands them to do things without giving them an option. Other data shows that the Maestro overly control the children's life and future;

He disappears back into his room and dissolves into the piano. He has an entire folder of études to learn, not just any études but the ones the Maestro grew up performing to international acclaim. It is especially torturous because he cannot play them as she did. However, she has it stuck in her mind that she must. Moreover, he has to be better than her. Since she can no longer play, he suspects that her goal is to make him into her so the world doesn't forget Ida Magdalena Keverich's name and her genius playing. (p. 31)

The narration of Beck's point of view describes that his mother did everything for herself. Beck did not have the option to decide his interest, his desire, and his future. He did not want to be a pianist, but his desire was not noticed. The controller expected perfection from a child. It made him fear.

The Verbal Abuser

The verbal abuser says negatively about the child's competence, appearance, intelligence, and value (Forward, 2002). They use cruel words such as worthless, bad, stupid, and ugly. The verbal abuser uses the protective mask of education (Forward, 2002). The following data shows that Beck's mother used verbal abuse on her child;

You are an awful pianist. Your music heeds Ture. You have no talent. Why don't you play faster, better, more precise? Why do you hit the wrong notes all the time? Are you doing it on purpose as you playing badly on purpose, you worthless little— (p. 8)

Beck did not want to be a pianist and hated the piano. However, his mother forced him and frequently used cruel words to make him improve his ability. She used cruel words, such as 'bad,' 'worthless,' 'no talent,' and 'awful.' The following data shows a mother insults her child;

She sucks in a sharp breath. 'Verdammt nochmal. Johanna!' (p. 118)

The mother cursed Joey using German because she was expelled from school. She said 'Damn' in German.

The Physical Abuser

The act defines physical misapplication as the affliction of physical damages such as ridges and slashes caused by punching, biting, kicking, Etc. Nevertheless, Forward (2002) defines physical misapplication as every behavior that can cause significantly painful pain in a child, whether it leaves a sign or not. For example, the following data shows that a mother uses physical punishment.

'You are a disappointment.' The Maestro's teeth are gritted. 'You fail me on purpose, I know it, du nutzloser Junge. Mayhap my daughter will try harder to carry my legacy.'

'I do try,' Beck says. He should shut up, but – this time? This time is so, so different. 'I swear, I do. I'm just not good enough.'

'No,' she says coldly. 'You're not. You are a disgrace to my name. You play for hours a day and what do I hear? Rubbish! I'm sickened by the very sound of your mistakes. And yet you cannot do better – nein. You do not try to do better.'

Beck tells himself he does not care. He does not, does not – does not—

'I wanted a prodigy. Moreover, what did I get? You. You worthless disappointment.' The Maestro snatches her half-eaten sausage and potatoes plate and flings it against the wall. Food makes a wet splatter. Crockery shatters.

Joey scoots forward and hugs Beck's leg. 'Don't hurt him,' she whimpers. The Maestro grabs the vase of pebbles and fake flowers from the bench top. She slams that against the wall too, but does not let go, so glass bites her flesh. Blood flows. Beck backs away as shards rain across his arms. She has lost it. She is – this cannot – no. 'Go to your room, Jo,' he whispers, prying her off his leg. 'Did I say you could leave?' the Maestro screams. 'I'm sorry.' He has nothing else to say. 'SORRY IS NOT ENOUGH ANY MORE.' The Maestro is gone,

The Maestro put an expectation on her child to be her. The piano is her world, and she put her dream to her child. She could not control her emotion if she felt disappointed. From the data, it can be seen that Maestro used physical abuse to her child to express her disappointment. The physical abuser blamed all the faults on her child (Forward, 2002).

'I swear I just forgot,' Beck says. 'Please, I'll relearn it. I just need the music—'
The smack is more complicated this time, and his neck snaps forward, nearly whacking against the piano. (p. 82)

Beck's mother put an expectation on him. She did not tolerate any mistake and used physical punishment to treat a child. All she wanted was perfection. Other data shows that the maestro ex-Beck's mother put an expectation on him. Press the emotion through the physical punishment.

The Effects on Her Children in A Thousand Perfect Notes

A toxic parent makes a child lack self-esteem.

Toxic parents only focus on their physical and emotional, making the child's feelings unimportant. A child who does not get attention, affection, care, and love begins to feel invisible. Otherwise, to develop the child's self-esteem, their parent has to give their time, attention, and affection and validate their emotion. Toxic parents make a child lack self-esteem because they feel nonentity to them (Forward, 2002). The data below shows that the role of the Maestro made a child lack self-esteem.

Beck purposefully does not take note of the other kids, so their names and faces are a tangled confusion to him. He is nothing like them. He has no phone or internet and avoids sport if he hurts his pianist's hands. Moreover, considering he is forever lost in his head, his music, they have given up speaking to him anyway. (pp. 19-20)

The relationship between parent-child has a significant effect on the child's development (Forward, 2002). The interaction between them also affects how a child interacts with society. Because Beck's mother treated him like he was inadequate and useless, he worried that society would treat them like that. Above all, a child of a toxic parent is terrible at making a friend.

'You suck, kid,' Beck says calmly to himself. 'So work.' Play the music on the paper. No one cares about the songs in your head. (p. 8)

Beck does not trust his ability. He mocks himself that he is not worthy. It is because his mother frequently teased him with cruel words. She insulted him by saying he was worthless and his piano sounded rubbish. She teased his competence, appearance, intelligence, and value.

Toxic parents cause childhood trauma.

Forward (2002) stated that a child who grows up with harmful parents will have trauma abuse. The children will continue with particular pain. Physical abuse to the child is enough to cause tremendous emotional damage. The impacts on the child because of parental over-controlling, overburdened by guilt, and overprotected make a child lack self-confidence and damaged self-esteem that guides them to self-destructive behavior. A child of a toxic parent has a damaging effect because they have to deny their perceptions and feelings (Forward, 2002). So, it needs a hard time to deal with it.

He has always promised to be polite to everyone to avoid being like the Maestro. (p. 25)

Most a child of toxic parent does not want to behave like their mother. The narration shows that Beck avoids being like his mother. The toxic parent does not worthy to be his role model. Other data shows that Beck is uncomfortable with his life;

What does he want?

A family. An occasional hug. To know his sister is safe. A friend. Something more than a friend?

A safe place to write his music. Which is gone gone gone ... Do not think about that right now. (p. 137)

This narration is from Beck's point of view. He rarely got affection and attention because he has parents like his mother. He wants to have a family, a friend, and a safe place to write his music because he wants to be a composer. One of the effects on Beck of a toxic parent is that he lacks attention and affection. Affection is the biggest thing he needs in childhood, but he does not get it. His mother does not provide any form of affection in his life.

It guides a child to self-destructive behavior.

The effects of the child because of parental over-controlling, overburdened by guilt, and overprotective make a child lack self-confidence and damaged self-esteem that guides them to self-destructive behavior. Beck wanted to cut off his hands because it was an essential asset for being a pianist, as his mother wished. He wants to break the Maestro's dream, but he cannot. Other data shows that Beck wants to hurt himself;

What he wants most in the world is to cut off his hands. Moreover, he would be free. Because, without hands, he is worthless to him. To the Maestro. His mother. (p. 6)

Beck imagines his desire that what if he cut off his own hands. He imagines self-destructive behavior. He feels it can make him happy because he would be free from the Maestro if he had no hands.

No. He is just not made for rebellion or risks. Fantasizing is all he is suitable for. Sick dreams of mutilation. Which hand would he even cut off? Right? Or was he left? It scares Beck Keverich – the way he thinks sometimes. (p. 7)

Beck imagined he dared to rebel against his mother, but he has not. Instead, he wished to cut off his hands because it made him worthless to his mother, and she could not

demand him to be her again. As a result, how a mother treats his son makes him depressed and leads him to self-destruct.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the main character in the novel *A Thousand Perfect Notes* by C.G. Drews experienced toxic parenting. The main character, Beck, encountered various forms of toxic parenting, including being subjected to the roles of 'the insufficient parent,' 'the controller,' 'the verbal abuser,' and 'the physical abuser.' The character's mother, the Maestro, forcefully imposed her aspirations as a pianist upon her children, Beck and Joey. Despite her previous fame as a pianist, the Maestro suffered a stroke and lost her career. This led her to project her unfulfilled dreams onto her children and resort to harsh treatment, even torture, to achieve her goals. In conclusion, the effects of such toxic parenting on the child were evident, causing them to be excessively controlled, burdened with guilt, and overly protected, leading to a lack of self-confidence and damaged self-esteem. Consequently, these factors could drive the child towards self-destructive behaviors.

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