

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of The Study**

One of the biggest problems in human life is understanding the reason for human existence itself. In this modern life where the world has become more developed, humans are forced to face far more complex life. Anguish, guilt, fear, and any form of suffering result in existential vacuum or the crisis of meaning. The crisis of meaning is a psychological and social phenomena which refers to a condition where humans feel lost, disoriented, and find their life less meaningful. Frankl (1969) stated that this meaningless feeling causes humans often to be seized with feelings of anxiety, worry, frustration, stress, depression and even a desire to end their life.

Generally, there are some important aspects underlying the life meaning crisis. First, the shift of value from traditional things such as religion, kinship, and community into materialism, consumerism, and self achievement that can make people disoriented. Second is technology advancement which emphasizes social gaps and economic inequality. These can result in dissatisfaction and confusion about what is really important in life. And last, society that becomes more individualistic which then leads to feelings of loneliness and emptiness.

The crisis of meaning is not experienced by everyone and the degree of the impact varies from one person to another. Some people manage to cope with the crisis, however some others may need professional help such as counseling or

therapy to deal with those feelings of losing meaning. One of the approaches to overcome the crisis of meaning is to seek meaning through deep social relationships, identify which values are really important for one's own self, and pursue life purpose.

Will To Meaning and Logotherapy is a concept established by a holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl that can help people to find their life meaning in the midst of a meaning crisis. In humanity's search for the meaning of life, *The Will to Meaning* by Viktor Frankl has emerged as one of the most significant works in existential psychology. As a neuropsychiatrist and founder of logotherapy, he emphasized that the desire for meaning is the most fundamental force in human life. The focus of this concept is the idea that in any situation, even in tragic life, life always has meaning. Suffering that continuously occurs and is unavoidable can be turned into an achievement depending on how humans behave and take action on their life situations. Even in the darkest situations, humans will be able to appreciate their lives if they know the meaning of their lives.

Kathleen Glasgow's *How to Make Friends with The Dark* is a novel about the journey of a young girl in finding her life's meaningfulness. The main character, Tiger, is a sixteen years old girl with bullying and poverty problems. It is always the main character, Tiger and her mother against the world, but one day Tiger's mother dies then Tiger is all alone. Tiger was trapped in a long grief and remorse after the death of her mother as she was her only family and they're not on good terms at that time. The sadness of Tiger's life became worse when the social regulation forced her to live with foster parents that not all were good. Her life also

did not get any better when the government later found her long lost father and step sister. Through a long journey in finding her life meaning, Tiger managed to defeat her struggle and finally be friends with the dark.

Through the novel, the principles of logotherapy are shown, providing insight on how these concepts can be effective tools in coping with adversity and loss. In the present paper, the writer examines the tragedies experienced by Tiger that lead her into a crisis of meaning, the impact of the crisis in Tiger's life, and how the concept of logotherapy is portrayed. This research aims to explore the relevance of Frankl's theory in the current context, especially facing the phenomenon he calls 'existential vacuum', a condition of emptiness and meaninglessness that is increasingly rampant in the modern world.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

The research problems of this thesis are as follows,

1. What tragedies and loss cause Tiger to experience a crisis of meaning in life?
2. How does the crisis of meaning impact Tiger's life?
3. How is the concept of logotherapy portrayed in Tiger's journey to finding her life meaning?

## **1.3 Research Purposes**

The research purposes of this thesis are as follows,

1. To examine the tragedy and loss which cause Tiger's crisis of meaning

2. To analyze the impact of Tiger's crisis of meaning
3. To analyze the concept of logotherapy in Tiger's journey finding her life meaning

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

In this study, *How to Make Friends with The Dark* by Kathleen Glasgow will be the object of discussion. The novel was chosen because the story is about struggle and journey to find the meaning of life. How a young girl has to face multiple sad events as the result of emptiness and meaninglessness that is increasingly rampant which makes her trapped in desolation. However, the girl manages to deal with those tragedies and finally can be friends with them. The approach of existentialism by Victor Frankl called the will to meaning will be the limit line of this study. The discussion will focus on the crisis of meaning and the role of Logotherapy in the finding of the girl's life meaning. To help in analyzing the story, character and setting of intrinsic elements will also be used.

#### **1.5 Previous Studies**

The writer found several previous studies of Kathleen Glasgow's *How to Make Friends with The Dark*. First is a paper by Sarifia Larasati Putri and Desvalini Anwar entitled *Coping with Grief in Kathleen Glasgow's How to Make Friends with The Dark (2019)* that was written in 2023. This paper focuses on how Tiger activates her coping mechanism to deal with unpleasant and painful occasions.

The second is a paper entitled *Stages of Grief in Kathleen Glasgow "How to Make Friends with the Dark"* (2023) by Yohanes Kurniawan Winardi and

Audrey Eveline Subianto also uses the same object. This paper aims to break down six stages of grief that Tiger experienced including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance, and finding meaning.

The third is an interview titled *How to Make Friends with The Dark: Q & A with Kathleen Glasgow* (2019) by Elisa Zied. This interview discusses about Glasgow's experience and motivation in writing the novel.

The fourth is an interview *Kathleen Glasgow Interview – How to Make Friends with The Dark*. This interview talks about Glasgow's inspiration in writing the novel, facts about the novel, and trivia about Glasgow.

The fifth *What is left after you lose the only parent you've ever know? When Tiger's mom dies suddenly, she learns to cope with unimaginable tragedy* (2019) by Michelle Anya Anjirbag. This review discusses about Glasgow's ability to vividly show how traumatizing it is to lose a parent.

The sixth is review by Simone titled *My Thoughts on How to Make Friends with The Dark by Kathleen Glasgow* (2019). In this review Simone tell how extremely impressed she is with the book which touches a lot of emotions.

The seventh is review *Book Review: How to Make Friends with The Dark* (2019) by Madison Dearnaley. This paper talk about Dearnaley's opinion on how the novel reflects the slow pace journey of grief, no rushing or moving on before one is ready.

The eight is a review titled *A gritty, raw account of surviving tragedy one minute at a time* (2019) by Kirkus Reviews. This review focuses on Tiger's journey surviving tragedy in her life, especially after her mother's death.

The ninth is a review *Lost and Grief* (2019) by Angela Blount. This review talk about Blount's opinion on the aspects she likes and doesn't.

The tenth is *Review: How to Make Friends with The Dark #Ya Novel* by *Kathleen Glasgow* (2019) by Marti Johnson. This review discusses Johnson's impression on the novel, how he was so invented with Tiger and grieve with her. (Zied, 2019)

## **1.6 Writing Organization**

The structure of this thesis is organized into five chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction, this chapter consists of six subsections. First is Background of the Research that outlines the reasons and context for conducting this research. Second, Research Problems that formulates the research questions to be answered. Third there are Research Purposes, states what the research aims to achieve. Fourth, Scope of the Study defines the boundaries of the research. Fifth, previous studies relevant to the research topic. And sixth, Writing Organization which explains the organization and structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Theory and Method. This chapter includes the theories and methods used in the research. The writer applies intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements, The Will to Meaning by Viktor Frankl.

Chapter 3: Result and Discussion. This chapter contains the author's analysis of the main character's crisis of meaning based on the research topic and problems, focusing primarily on the cause, impacts, and how to deal with it. The analysis conduct using theory and method in chapter 2.

Chapter 4: Conclusion. Summarizes the writer's analytical findings on chapter 3.

Chapter 5: References. This chapter lists all the sources referenced in the thesis, using the appropriate citation format.