

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

As living creatures, humans cannot be separated from love. Love brings meaning, fostering growth, and gives purpose to lives. Living without love can lead to a sense of emptiness and isolation. People describe love differently since everyone's personality and attitude are different, and everyone has their way of treating people they love or care about. Some people find long-lasting and deep connections with others, while others may have temporary feelings of affection. The diversity in how people describe and experience love reflects the complexity of human emotions.

Falling in love is an emotional roller coaster at any age, but it is especially tough for teens. The physical and mental development of teenagers is happening at levels that have not been experienced when a baby. Generally, every teenager goes through a growth spurt, gains secondary sex features, and changes their appearance from kid to adult. Hormonal changes are significantly associated with high sensations of sexual desire and falling in love. Falling in love takes time to adjust to all those diverse emotions, mood swings, needs, and desires. Nonetheless, teenagers have the opportunity to experience psychological growth through their romantic relationships as they learn about themselves and other people, they can

gather experience, manage their emotions, and develop intimate skills. They also learn to encounter new risks and challenges.

Love stories between teenagers are considered an exciting topic in literature. Teen literature frequently revolves around love, relationship, and romance, because these topics are relevant and emotionally relatable to many young readers. Furthermore, many teenagers' lives revolve around romantic relationships. Young adult fiction that explores these topics can offer readers a sense of validation, understanding, and escapism. In young adult literature, love triangles became a familiar story conflict. Love triangles are popular among teenage readers because it allows them to explore a wide range of familiar and relatable feelings, such as jealousy, infatuation, and loyalty. This kind of story can be found in the novel entitled *The Summer I Turned Pretty*.

First published in 2009, *The Summer I Turned Pretty* is a young adult romance novel by American author Jenny Han. She is a famous New York Times and international best-selling novelist. Following the first book, it becomes two more series, resulting in a trilogy. Another famous trilogy by Jenny Han is *To All The Boys I've Loved Before*. Jenny Han's books have already been published in over 30 languages and earned over ten million copies worldwide. Also, this novel was adapted into a TV series by Amazon Prime Studios and premiered in June 2022. The novel won the American Library Association's Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature in 2010.

The story of this novel is about a teenager named Isabel Conklin, or Belly, who is in a dilemma because of love. She likes to spend every summer with her mother, Laurel, and her brother, Steven at Laurel's long-time friend Susannah Fisher's beach house. The house is located in Cousin Beach. There are two sons of Sussanah named Conrad Fisher and Jeremiah Fisher. Belly had a childhood crush on Conrad and has always been friends with Jeremiah. However, this summer, she is about to turn 16, and both brothers begin to notice Belly's transformation into a beautiful young woman, after only treating her like a younger sister. Along with time, Belly wants to make them jealous by going on a summer fling with a boy she has known since grade school, named Cam. One night, Jeremiah confesses his feelings for her, but she tells him that she wants his brother. This summer, Conrad becomes more withdrawn than usual and treats Belly like a child, which is hard for her to understand. Conrad and Jeremiah fight, and their mother arrives looking suddenly frail, Conrad and Jeremiah are aware that their mother's cancer has come back. On the next day, Belly and Conrad share a kiss, but their relationship cannot be pursued due to the circumstances. Months later, over the Christmas season, Conrad visits Belly in Boston. He comes at midnight, and she steps outside to meet him. Belly is finally happy with Conrad, and she feels that each summer of her life has led up to this point.

The theme of love is the central element in *The Summer I Turned Pretty* novel. The story explores Belly's experience of first love and the

emotional intensity that comes with it. Her feelings with both brothers are complex and the presence of Cam messes her emotions in young love. Each of them represents different aspects of love and connection for Belly. Belly's inner turmoil leads her to realize her true love is for Conrad. This realization comes after a sequence of events and conflicts that help her understand her desires and the love she needs.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. How does Belly view the efforts of Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam in showing their love for her?
2. How does Belly respond to Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam's efforts?
3. How does Belly's relationship with Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam represent the concept of Robert J. Sternberg's types of love that influence her life?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To explore the different efforts of Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam in showing their love for Belly, including their intentions, behaviors, and emotional expressions.
2. To understand Belly's reactions towards Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam's efforts.

3. To find Belly's relationship with Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam represents Robert J. Sternberg's types of love that influence her life.

#### **1.4 Previous Study**

The writer finds that nobody has explored the topic of love in *The Summer I Turned Pretty* novel. After thorough research, the writer has found a study that uses the same novel as the object of the study. The study is an essay written by McClelland and published in 2023. The title of the essay is "The Commercialization and Imposed Voices of Femininity in *The Summer I Turned Pretty*". McClelland uses a feminist approach and primarily concentrates on the social phenomenon of how the commercialization of femininity and the enforcement of common heteronormative relationship narratives are depicted in novels and television show adaptations.

*The Summer I Turned Pretty* novel is widely popular in the industries, but there has been limited research conducted on the novel itself. Related studies that support and contribute to the development of the topic are also presented by the writer. The study is an undergraduate thesis written by Safira and published in 2020. The title of the study is "Romantic Love as Depicted in *To All The Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han". The results study indicate that the type of love romantic relationship existed between the two main characters since they both portray the love components of Robert J. Sternberg's theory.

From previous research above, although the first previous study observed the same object of research, this present study focuses on the love relationship between the characters in the novel using a psychological approach. Meanwhile, the second previous study employs the same theory and approach, but this present study uses a different novel and involves several characters. Thus, no study particularly examines how the love exploration of a female character in the novel *The Summer I Turned Pretty* with three male characters according to Robert J. Sternberg's theory of love.

### **1.5 Research Methods**

This study employs library research and a psychological approach to analyze the relationship between the characters in the novel *The Summer I Turned Pretty*. Library research involves gathering data or information that can assist the analysis of this study. According to George, library research: “entails identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/ expert opinion on research questions, which are required components of all other research methods at some point” (2008, p. 6). The study employs two data sources: primary and secondary data. The primary data for this study is taken from the novel *The Summer I Turned Pretty* by Jenny Han. The secondary data is from many sources, including books, articles, previous studies, the internet, and other materials that could support the primary data.

Furthermore, *The Summer I Turned Pretty* novel is analyzed using a psychological approach. A psychological approach can be used to discuss the internal and external elements of the novel. According to Wellek and Warren, a psychological approach is “the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of creative process, or the study of the psychological types and law present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology)” (1993, p. 75). This study is more focused on the psychological types applied in *The Summer I Turned Pretty* novel. The psychological approach aims to provide a greater comprehension of the characters' behavior and focuses on the personality traits of Belly, Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam. The analysis particularly examines how each character expresses their love in different ways.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

To ensure that the discussion flows following the topic, the writer will set the limitations. The study focuses on the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements include the narrative aspects to understand the story structure. It covers character, characterization, setting, and conflicts. Additionally, the extrinsic element is used to examine the love relationship that grows between Belly and the other three boys (Conrad, Jeremiah, and Cam) by using Robert J. Sternberg's theory of love.

## 1.7 Writing Organization

This study is categorized into four chapters, the four chapters are as follows:

### 1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The introduction features the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, previous study, scope of the study, and organization of the study.

### 2. CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains the theories that will be used in analyzing the novel. It employs conflict, setting, character, and characterization as the intrinsic elements. The external elements focus on the love relationship between the main characters and the types of love from each character.

### 3. CHAPTER III: EXPLORING BELLY'S LOVE RELATION WITH THREE BOYS IN JENNY HAN'S NOVEL *THE SUMMER I TURNED PRETTY*

This chapter contains an analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of Jenny Han's *The Summer I Turned Pretty* novel. The analysis will refer to the theory in chapter two.

### 4. CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the conclusion of the analysis presented.