

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

This undergraduate thesis discusses the hierarchy of human needs proposed by Abraham Maslow, as reflected in the novel *Twisted Lies* (2022). The concept of human needs plays a significant role in understanding individual motivation and development. Humans have a wide range of needs that must be fulfilled in order to lead meaningful lives and achieve growth. Every individual is driven by their needs that later shape their actions, behaviour, and decisions. Analyzing these motivations provides insight into human behaviour and character development. The portrayal of human motivation and its psychology is often captured in literature, particularly through the characters that embody and represent human traits. Theorists such as Abraham Maslow have attempted to explain the motivations and behaviour of humans by proposing the hierarchy of human needs. He divides the range of needs into five segments: physiological needs, safety needs, the love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Within this framework, Maslow highlights that the lower needs must be met before the higher needs become a person's central motivation.

This thesis examines the portrayal of Stella in the novel *Twisted Lies* (2022) as she navigates Maslow's hierarchy of needs, showing how she achieves a

meaningful life by gradually fulfilling her needs. At the beginning of the narrative, Stella is depicted as an introverted, shy social media influencer who also works at a fashion magazine and is deeply passionate about fashion. Faced with uncertainty over an anticipated brand collaboration, Stella enters into a fake dating arrangement with her landlord, in an effort to increase her social media presence. What begins as a practical arrangement, however, gradually exposes Stella to a series of conflict that shape the trajectory of her fulfillment throughout the narrative. Despite the difficulties she encounters, Stella is able to navigate herself and become what she is capable of becoming.

What makes Stella a particularly compelling subject of the analysis is that her process of fulfilling her needs is not linear as she went through multiple pressures and predicaments that surround her, such as the pressure to perform on social media, her family expectations, the threat of her stalker, her insecurities and internal turmoil, and also her ambitions. Each of these forces influence her progression through Maslow's hierarchy, making her journey that is complex. Despite that, Stella is able to grow and navigate herself throughout the narrative as she gradually climbs the hierarchy of needs, offering a clear portrayal of her efforts to fulfill them. Furthermore, Stella's character is shaped by her inner struggles, and the circumstances surrounding her make her a fitting subject for the study. Moreover, her journey portrays psychological development, as described through the fulfillment of needs in Maslow's theoretical framework.

Based on the theory of literature proposed by Wellek and Austin Warren (1949), the study of literature can be approached from two perspectives: the intrinsic and the approach to literature. In this study, the intrinsic approach, the narrative elements, focus on character and characterization, setting, and conflict. While the approach refers to the theoretical framework proposed by Maslow, the hierarchy of human needs, is applied to analyze the fulfillment of the character Stella throughout the narrative. In order to describe the findings, this study employs a qualitative approach by Mary W. George, in which the findings of this study will be presented in words. Furthermore, this study applies library research as a method of data collection, which is further divided into two: the primary and secondary sources. The primary source of this study refers to the novel *Twisted Lies* (2022), while the secondary sources consist of related materials such as journals, books, and articles online that support the analysis.

The analysis of this study comes into three stages. The first stage analyzes the novel's intrinsic aspects, such as the description of the character and characterization, setting, and conflict in the novel. This point provides the conceptual base for analyzing the character's description through the usage of the intrinsic aspect. The second point presents the psychological approach of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in Stella throughout the narrative. In the third point, the analysis focuses on the relation between the intrinsic aspects and the fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs. Through this structured analysis, the study aims to highlight how Maslow's theoretical

framework is reflected, further shaping the character's motivation and growth throughout the narrative.

## **1.2 Scope of the Research**

This study examines the development of the character Stella from the novel *Twisted Lies* (2022). The study combines intrinsic analysis, namely the character, characterizations, settings, and conflicts, and a psychological approach, which is the hierarchy of needs proposed by Maslow, which are the physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization.

## **1.3 Research Problems**

In this study, the writer formulates the research problems as follows:

1. How are Stella's character and characterizations, settings, and conflicts?
2. How does Stella fulfill her needs hierarchically?
3. How are Stella's characterization, settings, and conflicts relate to her fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs?

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

In line with the problems above, the objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

1. To analyze Stella's character and characterizations, settings, and conflicts.
2. To analyze the fulfillment of hierarchy of needs reflected through Stella.
3. To analyze the relation between Stella's characterization, settings, and conflicts to her fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs.

## 1.5 Previous Studies

In conducting this research, it is important to review previous studies that are relevant to the topic as they give insights into character analysis, particularly through Maslow's hierarchy of needs theoretical framework, which has been applied in earlier studies. The following previous studies are presented in order of their relevance to the current study, beginning with those closely related to the subject and the framework employed in this study.

The first previous study is a journal article entitled "Obsessive Love Disorder Portrayed Through male Main Character in Ana Huang's *Twisted Lies* Novel" by Amalia (2024), which examines the same literary work as the present study, *Twisted Lies* (2022), by analyzing Christian's obsession towards the main character. His obsession is portrayed from his belief that the female character is the ideal partner, his delusional jealousy, and his excessive way of keeping her close. This obsession comes from his previous abandonment experience, which ultimately leads to isolation.

The second previous study is an undergraduate thesis entitled "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs of the Main Character in Kathleen Glassglow's *You'd be Home Now*" by Zharfana (2024). The study analyzes Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs through the main character in *You'd be Home Now*. The undergraduate thesis adopts the same framework and intrinsic elements as the current study, including character and characterization, conflict, and setting. The results conclude that Emory, the main character, is able to fulfill her needs despite facing struggles in a certain stage.

The third previous study is an undergraduate thesis entitled “Hierarchy of needs of the Main Character in Kate Dicamillo’s *The Magician’s Elephant*” by Putri (2025). The study analyzes the main character in *Magician’s Elephant* while also employing the same framework and intrinsic elements as the current study. The main character, Peter, is described as able to fulfill his needs within his own capacity and with the help of others around him. The outcome of Peter’s fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs is that he experiences satisfaction and personal growth.

The fourth previous study is a journal article entitled “The Hierarchy of Needs Analysis on Brianna Jackson in *On the Come Up* Novel by Angie” by Alaydrus, Valiantien, and Fatimah (2024). The study applies a similar method research and theoretical framework. This study further analyzes the characteristics of the self-actualization stage to determine the degree of the character fulfillment. It is revealed that Brianna is able to fulfill all of the needs except self-actualization, since she is missing many of the characteristics.

The fifth previous study is a journal article entitled “Exploring Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs in *Pollyana* Novel” conducted by Virginia and Satria (2022). The study reveals that the physiological, love and belonging, and self-actualization needs are fulfilled. However, the remaining needs such as safety needs and esteem needs are not met.

The sixth previous study is a journal article entitled “Hierarchy of Needs Analysis of the Main Character of a Novel Entitled *Flawed* by Cecilia Ahern” by Ronnie and Hellystia (2020). The results conclude that Celestine is able to fulfill her

needs within her capacity and with her family's support. It is further analyzed that among the fifth hierarchies, the love and belongingness stage is the most prominent as it frequently occurs.

The seventh previous study is a doctoral dissertation entitled "An Analysis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the Main Character Gary Johnson in Hit Man (2023) Movie by Richard Linklater's" written by Jefri and Elfiondri (2026). This study aims to analyze the main character needs and the characteristics of self-actualization. The study concludes that the character Gary is able to meet all of his needs and portrays the characteristics of self-actualization.

The eight previous study is a journal article entitled "The Fulfillment of Hierarchy of Needs of Elinor in the 'Sense and Sensibility' Novel by Jane Austen: A Study of Humanism Psychology of Abraham Maslow" written by Ghozali (2020). The findings of this study met the four needs of Elinor from physiological needs to the esteem needs. However, her self-actualization need cannot be confirmed as it was not reflected in the novel.

The ninth previous study is a journal article entitled "An Analysis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Need in the *Great Gatsby* Novel by Franciss Scott Fitzgerald's" written by Bahuwa (2018). The results conclude that Jay Gatsby cannot fulfill the safety needs and also love and belongingness needs. Such hindrance further prevents him from achieving his self-actualization stage.

The last previous study is a journal article entitled "Sophie's Needs in *Rooftoppers* Novel by Using Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Human Needs"

written by Yunadi, Kuncara, and Valiantien (2020). The focus of this study is divided into two, which is the portrayal of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the novel and how the main character fulfills it. The study concludes that Sophie manages to fulfill all of her needs despite her fear. Additionally, her process of fulfilling these needs is reflected through her indirect characterization.

From the previous studies above, it can be seen that researchers applied Maslow Hierarchy of Needs in analyzing characters from various literary works. In contrast, the first previous study done by Amalia (2024) examines the same literary work as the present study, *Twisted Lies*, by analyzing Christian's obsession with the main character. Although there are certain similarities with the previous studies, such as the framework, literary work, intrinsic elements, and method used, there is a distinct gap with the current study. The present study addresses the research gap on the character Stella, further shows how psychological needs are shaped by contemporary pressures such as her need to perform on social media, her stalker's obsession, her family pressure, and her inner struggles. Furthermore, the current study presents an analysis of her intrinsic elements, namely the character, characterizations, settings, and conflict, with her fulfillment of the hierarchy. Therefore, this study offers a different analytical focus on how modern psychological struggles are represented through Stella's experiences in the narrative and how she fulfills her hierarchy of needs.

## **1.6 Organization of the Writing**

This study will be divided into following chapters:

**CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of six sub-chapters, which are the background of the study, scope of the research, research problems, objective of the study, previous study, and the organization of the writing.

**CHAPTER II RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter contains theories, namely the intrinsic elements, the approach and also the research method of the study. The intrinsic aspects focus on the narrative elements, while the psychology approach refers to Maslow's framework, hierarchy of the human needs.

**CHAPTER III RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses the chosen topic based on the data found in the novel. The results are divided into three parts. First, it analyzes the female character, Stella, in the narrative. Second, it examines the portrayal of Maslow's hierarchy of needs presented through the main character. Third, discusses the relations between the character's character and characterization, conflicts, and settings and her fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs.

## CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study, summarizing the findings of the analysis.

