

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In an era that prioritizing equality and human rights, many people are suffering from a sense of security even at their own homes. Domestic violence remains one of the most serious and persistent issues globally. Despite the ongoing movement for social progress and equality, violence in intimate relationships still remains frequently and leaves deep emotional scars that affect not only the victims but also their families and communities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence, the majority of which are from intimate partner. In Indonesia, 25,180 cases of violence against women were reported between January and October 2025, according to data from *Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak* (Kemen PPPA), reported by Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri. Among these cases, 14,795 (approximately 58.75 percent) occurred within the home, affecting 15,657 persons. The forms of violence varied, with 11,049 victims reported sexual violence, 8,533 victims reported physical violence, and 7,701 victims reported psychological abuse. Many of the perpetrators were people close to the victims, such as close partners and family members. These numbers indicates that families, which should have been a safe and comfortable place, have become one of the main places where violence and trauma occur. The image of a family idealized as a symbol of love and protection is questioned by the reality that many women are exposed to fear in their own homes. The contrast between this ideal and reality highlights the urgency to

understand not only the social and legal aspects of domestic violence, but also the emotional and psychological patterns that bind victims to abusive relationships.

Domestic violence leads to unfortunate contradictions on a personal and cultural level. In many societies, including Indonesia, it is expected for women to maintain family harmony even if they endure pain. Cultural values that value patience and tolerance often make it difficult for victims to speak up or to distance themselves from their abusers. The belief that enduring pain is evidence of loyalty encourages silence and self-blame. As a result, many victims end up in abusive relationships because of fear, economic dependence, emotional attachment, or social prejudice. They may still love their partner, believe in their apologies, and hope that the violence will not repeat itself. This emotional bond is not an expression of weakness, but rather a form of general psychological response that occurs in cycle of violence. Understanding this pattern is very important. The reason is that it explains why it is so difficult to escape, even though the victim recognizes that she is being hurt. The tension between love and violence, compassion and domination reveals deep and complex forms of human relationships and emotional dependence that can be formed in the context of violence. It also reveals how culture, psychology, and power interact to conceal and silence domestic violence.

One literary work that explores this issue is Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* (2016), a contemporary novel that portrays the complexities of domestic violence within an intimate relationship. The novel follows Lily Bloom, a young woman who strives to build an independent life after growing up in a family marked by domestic violence. After moving to Boston and establishing her own flower shop,

she begins a relationship with Ryle Kincaid, a successful neurosurgeon whose affection and charisma initially make him appear to be an ideal partner. As their relationship develops, however, Lily gradually encounters behaviors that remind her of the violence she witnessed in her parents' marriage, forcing her to confront painful memories she had hoped to leave behind. The reappearance of Atlas Corrigan, her first love, further complicates her emotional life and encourages her to reflect on the relationships that have shaped her understanding of love, safety, and self-worth. Through Lily's experiences, the novel portrays the emotional complexity of intimate relationships and the difficult choices faced by individuals who find themselves caught between love, loyalty, fear, and personal well-being.

Although *It Ends with Us* has been widely discussed as a novel about domestic violence, the relationship between the recurring cycle of abuse and the victim's capacity to exercise agency remains a significant area for further exploration. Lily's experiences raise important questions about how abusive relationships are sustained through recurring psychological patterns and how victims gradually develop the ability to recognize, resist, and ultimately break free from such conditions. Examining these issues is important because it provides a deeper understanding of domestic violence not merely as a series of violent incidents, but as a complex process involving emotional attachment, psychological manipulation, and personal agency. Therefore, this study analyzes the manifestation of the cycle of abuse experienced by Lily Bloom and examines how her agency develops throughout the novel in response to the abusive relationship.

## 1.2 Research Question

1. How is a recurring pattern of abuse represented in Lily Bloom's relationship with Ryle Kincaid in *It Ends with Us*?
2. How does Lily's individual agency develop through the support of secondary characters in *It Ends with Us*?

## 1.3 Purpose of the Research

1. To analyze how the recurring pattern of abuse is represented through Lily Bloom's relationship with Ryle Kincaid in *It Ends with Us*, by applying Lenore E. Walker's Cycle of Abuse theory.
2. To analyze how Lily's individual agency develops through the support and intervention of secondary characters in *It Ends with Us*.

## 1.4 Previous Studies

The First previous study is "The Analysis of Lily Bloom's Trauma in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us*" by Lidya Sarungu and Ambar Andayani (2023) This study examines Lily Bloom's trauma by applying the psychological theories from Caruth, Herman, and Pennebaker. Their research focuses on how Lily's experience of witnessing domestic violence in her childhood affects her adult life, especially her relationship with Ryle.

The second previous study is "Analysis of Moral Values Found in "It Ends with Us" Novel by Colleen Hoover" by Esi Marlina, Tahrin, and Masagus Firdaus (2024). This study focuses on the moral values presented in *It Ends with Us*. It

explains that the novel conveys important moral lessons such as honesty, courage, love, and empathy, which are essential for the character's growth. According to their research, the novel is used in the educational fields and can help to teach students these values and counter moral decline in society.

The third previous study is "The representation of domestic violence in popular romance novel *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover" by Tavallaie (2024). This study examines the representation of domestic violence in the novel and argues that violence in close relationship is depicted in a complex and sometimes ambiguous form. This study highlights the tension relationship between the romantic elements of the novel and the underlying theme of domestic violence, and shows how this complicates the perception of domestic violence. This study contributes to the discussion of whether the novel glorifies abusive relationships or is being criticized of them.

Although previous studies have provided important insights into *It Ends with Us*, but this study aims to fill a more specific gap by focusing on the fact that domestic violence is not just an isolated event but unfolds through repeated patterns. The study reveals how Lily's relationship with Ryle moves through recurring phases of tension, violence, and reconciliation that gradually trap the victim emotionally using Lenore E. Walker's "Cycle of Abuse" theory to. Beyond trauma or moral lessons, the study also reveals that Lily's resistance and determination grow slowly under emotional pressure and limited choice, rather than being formed immediately. This is related to Amartya Sen's concept of agency as awareness of one's situation and options increases. In this way, the research is important because

it explains how abuse keeps happening in a cycle, while also showing that a victim's agency is not immediate freedom, but a slow process of understanding and slowly breaking away from the situation.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the analysis of Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* (2016), particularly the portrayal of domestic violence through the intrinsic elements of character and characterization, setting, and conflict. The study employs Lenore E. Walker's Cycle of Abuse theory to examine the recurring patterns of abuse represented in Lily Bloom's relationship with Ryle Kincaid and utilizes Amartya Sen's concept of agency to analyze Lily's gradual development of agency in response to the abusive relationship. Furthermore, this study argues that domestic violence is depicted as a recurring psychological cycle that constrains Lily's ability to make autonomous choices, while her agency gradually develops through increased psychological awareness and the support of secondary characters.

### **1.6 Writing Organization**

In the writing of this thesis, the organization of the study will follow this outline:

#### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents introductory information and explanations about the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the studies, previous studies, scope of the study and writing organization.

#### **CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and research methods employed in the study. It discusses the intrinsic elements of the novel, including character and characterization, setting, and conflict. In addition, it examines the extrinsic elements, namely the Cycle of Abuse theory and the concept of agency, which serve as the primary analytical frameworks of the study. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the research method, covering the research approach, data collection method, and data analysis method used to analyze the object of the study.

### **CHAPTER III: RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This discusses the intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements of the research. The intrinsic elements discussion contains the sub-chapter of character and characterization, settings, and conflict. Meanwhile, the extrinsic elements focuses on the cycle of abuse that contains sub-chapter tension-building, acute battering, and honeymoon phase. In addition, this chapter also discusses the agency freedom and the intervention of secondary characters.

### **CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION**

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the thesis in the previous chapters.

### **REFERENCES**

The section compiles sources, which consist of books and journal articles cited in the undergraduate thesis.