



**MALIN REED'S COPING STRATEGIES IN  
SEARCHING FOR HER MOTHER IN JO BAKER'S  
*THE MERMAID'S CHILD***

**A THESIS**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for S-1 Degree Majoring Literature in English Department,  
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer confirms with honesty that she compiles this thesis by herself without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer would also like to ascertain that she does not cite any material either from someone's paper or other publications except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Melinda Damayanti

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Seek help through patience and prayer; and truly it is difficult except for the humble-minded.”

– **Quran (2:45)**

“There will always be reward for those who spread kindness to every living thing.”

– **Muhammad SAW**

“Never give up on what you really want to do. The person with big dream is more powerful than the one with all facts.”

– **Albert Einstein**

*I sincerely dedicate this thesis to my dearest family  
and friends, who always give me the endless love  
and become my number one support system  
in accomplishing this paper.*

**APPROVAL**

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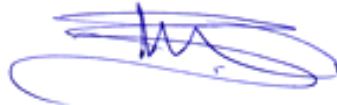
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As the accomplishment of this thesis, the writer realizes that this thesis is far from the word perfect. Therefore, the writer will be glad to receive any constructive criticism, suggestions, and recommendation to make this thesis better. The writer hopes that this thesis can become a useful reference for readers who are in need of searching for related terms of study.

Semarang, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, the writer discusses a novel written by Jo Baker entitled *The Mermaid's Child*. The purpose of this study is to analyze the use of coping strategies by the main character in *The Mermaid's Child*, Malin Reed, in search of her mother. The writer uses the combination of library research and psychological approach of literary analysis in conducting this study. There are two aspects that will be analyzed that are the intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspects of the story. The intrinsic aspects analysis will be focused in analyzing the characters, conflicts, and settings of the novel. Meanwhile, the extrinsic aspects analysis will be focused in analyzing the kinds of coping strategies used by the main character in the novel and several aspects related with its use by using the theory of coping strategies. The findings show that the main character in the novel, Malin Reed, uses several kinds of coping strategies in search of her mother. There are eight kinds of coping strategies used by Malin Reed in search of her mother, namely positive reappraisal, accepting responsibility, distancing, escape avoidance, self-control, planful problem-solving, seeking social support, and confrontive coping. Coping strategies that are used by Malin Reed become her way to reduce her stress and to solve her difficult situation in her journey searching for her mother.

**Keywords:** Malin Reed, *The Mermaid's Child*, coping strategies, struggles.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Literature is an important feature which has a function to entertain society and to expand knowledge in entertaining ways. Furthermore, as defined by McFadden, literature is used by community as a way in defining their history through the works that put forward the artistic qualities rather than the aesthetic qualities which he sees as a canon consisted of works in language (1978:56). Literature becomes the media in conveying the history of a particular community towards its members through the works that give the depiction of the history itself. Literature has three main genres, those are, prose, poetry, and drama. In prose, there is novel which can be defined as a real or fictional story that originates from the author's imagination by observing the reality that occurs around him or her. According to Kennedy and Gioia, novel is a literary work in the form of prose which has a book-length story where the author intends to make a feeling as if the readers are experiencing the events happened in the story when they read the novel (2007:275).

There are various kinds of themes in novel that are used by the authors to depict various aspects of life and one of them is struggle in life. Struggle in life becomes one of the popular themes in novel that is usually used by the authors to depict and to show the readers various kinds of struggles that a person has to be

done in living a life. *The Mermaid's Child* is a historical fiction novel by Jo Baker that is originally published in Great Britain by The Random House Group Limited in 2004 which was also published in the United States by Vintage Books in 2015. The main theme of this novel is about struggle in life being done by a young orphan girl who is the main character of the story.

*The Mermaid's Child* tells about the struggles and long journey of a young girl named Malin Reed in finding her unknown mother that she only knows as a mermaid according to the information given by her father before his death. She decides to search for her unknown mother not long after the death of her father. Without considering the hard time that she is going to be faced in her journey, she decides to leave her house and starts her journey in finding her mother without any useful clues. She keeps going from one place to another. She also moves from one workplace to another since she cannot stand the difficult condition she has to face while working at her workplaces. Since always experiencing hard time in her long journey of searching for her mother, Malin uses several kinds of coping strategies in order to reduce her stress and to solve her difficult situation.

In this study, the writer is going to focus on the use of coping strategies by the main character in *The Mermaid's Child* by analyzing the kinds of coping strategies used by the main character in the novel and several aspects related to the use of those coping strategies which cover emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping.

## 1.2 Research Problems

1. What are the characters, conflicts, and settings in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*?
2. What are the emotion-focused coping strategies used by Malin Reed in search of her mother in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*?
3. What are the problem-focused coping strategies used by Malin Reed in search of her mother in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the characters, conflicts, and settings in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*.
2. To analyze the emotion-focused coping strategies used by Malin Reed in search of her mother in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*.
3. To analyze the problem-focused coping strategies used by Malin Reed in search of her mother in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*.

## 1.4 Previous Studies

There is no specific study in the form of thesis regarding Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*. As far, the writer only found one credible article published in an official journal that contains a work review of the novel. The article is entitled "The Seductive Sea" and written by Phyllis McNulty which was published in the Fortnight Magazine edition September 2004 page 27. The article consists of five main points which contain reviews on several aspects of the novel. In the first point, the reviewer gave opinion that the novel is mainly questioning and

exploring women's position in a patriarchal and constricted society. The second point tells about the anarchic side owned by the main character of the novel, Malin Reed. The third point tells about another male oppression found in the novel that is being done by Jebb towards Malin Reed. The fourth point tells about the struggles and the good ability of Malin Reed in adapting herself to every difficult condition she has to face during her journey in searching for her mother. The last point of this review contains the reviewer's impressiveness about the novel and a conclusion that women can actually survive in any conditions without depending on men. It is proven by Malin Reed who can survive alone that makes it rejects the traditional woman's place in the patriarchal society.

Aside from this article, there are also ten different studies of coping strategies in ten different objects that will be used as the additional previous studies for this study. The first study is an article written by Elaine Chase et al (2006) which analyzes the kind of coping strategies used by orphans, vulnerable children, and young people who are affected by HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe. The second study is an article written by Cynthia L. Smith et al (2006). The study is examining coping strategies and coping efficacy of children and its relations with parent socialization, child adjustment, and familial alcoholism. The third study is done by Ganesan et al (2018) which analyzes the relationship between stress and the use of coping strategies among undergraduate students. The fourth study is written by Melih Astarlioglu et al (2011) which examine the factors that led the use of coping strategies by employees as the way to face job insecurity. The fifth

study is an article written by Kweku Esia-Donkoh et al (2011) which analyzes the kind of coping strategies used by students at Winneba Campus of University of Education in managing their stress. The sixth study is an article written by Carlos Freire et al (2020). The study is examining the existence of different profiles of university students based on how they combined different approach coping strategies (positive reappraisal, support seeking, and planning) and determining the existence of differences in general expectations of self-efficacy between those coping profiles. The seventh study is a thesis written by Gregory A. White (2008) which analyzes the stress levels and the coping mechanisms among male freshman Football and Soccer athletes. The eighth study is a thesis written by Obiora Emmanuel Iyi (2015). The study is analyzing the major stressors for nurses and the most effective management and coping strategies as contained in literature. The ninth study is an article written by Dr. Christopher Yaw Kwaah and Gabriel Essilfie (2017) which examines the causes of stress and coping strategies adopted among distance education students at College of Distance Education in the University Of Cape Coast. The tenth study is an article written by Generoso N. Mazo (2015). This study is determining the causes of stress, the effects of stress, and the stress coping mechanisms of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students in the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City.

By the explanation of the eleven previous studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that an analysis of coping strategies in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child* has never been done before. Therefore, there is a gap of these previous



studies that can be deeply analyzed in this study that is the use of the coping strategies by the main character in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child* which is going to be focused on the emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping.

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

The writer is going to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of novel in this study. For the intrinsic aspects, the writer will analyze the characters, conflicts, and settings of the novel. As for the extrinsic aspects, the writer will analyze coping strategies used by the main character in the novel in searching for her mother by using coping strategies theory.

### **1.6 Writing Organization**

#### **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

The first chapter consists of six sub-chapters which are background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization.

#### **CHAPTER II THEORY AND METHOD**

The second chapter consists of two sub-chapters which are theoretical framework and research method. The first sub-chapter consists of two aspects that are the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of novel. In the intrinsic aspects, there will be the theory of character and characterization, conflict, and setting. Meanwhile in the extrinsic aspects, there will be the theory used in analyzing the novel that is coping strategies theory. The second sub-chapter contains the explanation about the methods used in conducting the study.

### **CHAPTER III ANALYSIS**

The third chapter contains the writer's analysis of the novel to answer the research problems mentioned in Chapter 1. The analysis uses the theory that is discussed in Chapter 2.

### **CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION**

The fourth or last chapter of the study contains the summary and statement to conclude the study after analyzing the novel.

### **REFERENCES**

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORY AND METHOD**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1.1 Intrinsic Aspects**

###### **2.1.1.1 Character and Characterization**

According to Potter, there are two classifications of character that are protagonist and antagonist (1967:70). Protagonist is a character that becomes the main focus in the story and is important in leading the action happened in the story since most of the stories will relate to his or her life. Meanwhile, the antagonist is a character who acts as the opponent of the protagonist. In a literary work, character needs characterization as a way to give the description of the important details of the character. While character is a person who will run the story, characterization is the process in creating the character (Gill, 1995:127). According to Abrams (1999:33-34), there are two classifications of characterization that are direct characterization (telling method) and indirect characterization (showing method). Direct characterization is a method in which the author straight forwardly describes the characters through the narration that includes the character's personality, physical appearance, psychological aspects, social condition, and so on. Meanwhile, indirect characterization is a method in which the author only gives several hints to the readers about the character's acts and talks, and then the author will let the readers interpret by their own what the character is like.

### **2.1.1.2 Conflict**

Stanton distinguishes conflict into two categorizations that are internal and external conflict (1965:16). Internal conflict is a conflict that happens between a character with him or herself. It is mainly related to the psychological aspect of a character. Meanwhile, external conflict is a conflict that occurs between a character with something outside him or her. It can be a character with another character, his or her surrounding community, and his or her environment.

### **2.1.1.3 Setting**

Setting is a description of the time, place, and social condition of the story in the novel. According to Kennedy and Gioia, there are three types of setting that are setting of place, setting of time, and setting of society (2007:112). Setting of place is a set of information that explains about where the story in the novel takes place. As for the setting of time, it plays a role in giving the readers an understanding of the time in which the story occurs. Meanwhile, setting of society focuses on the conditions of society, culture, and traditions of the community in which the story takes place.

## **2.1.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

### **2.1.2.1 Coping Strategies**

According to Lazarus and Folkman, coping is defined as constantly changing behavioral and cognitive efforts with the aim to be able in managing specific internal and external demands that are exceeding the person's ability to manage the specific demands (1984:178). Coping has two main functions called problem-

focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping is altering or managing the environment and mainly the problem that become the cause of distress. Meanwhile, emotion-focused coping plays a role in organizing the emotional response towards the problem. Lazarus and Folkman (1988) distinguish eight groups of coping strategies that are planful problem-solving, confrontive coping, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, self-control, positive reappraisal, escape avoidance, and distancing. Two of the scales (planful problem-solving and confrontive coping) have mainly problem-focused functions. Meanwhile, the next five scales (accepting responsibility, self-control, positive reappraisal, escape avoidance, and distancing) have mainly emotion-focused functions. The last one scale, seeking social support which appraises emotional and informational support, can serve both functions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:468).

#### **2.1.2.1.1 Emotion-focused Coping**

There are various forms of emotion-focused coping found in literature. The strategies such as minimization, selective attention, distancing, positive comparisons, and avoidance are cognitive processes that aim to lessen the emotional distress and are originated from research and theory on defensive processes which are used in every type of stressful encounter. Emotion-focused coping becomes the way to maintain optimism and hope, to deny both implication and fact, to refuse acknowledging worst thing, to act as if what happened did not matter, and so on (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984:150-151).

#### **2.1.2.1.1.1 Positive Reappraisal**

Positive reappraisal is being done by always thinking in a positive way with the aim to develop oneself to be a better and stronger person. Persons who do positive reappraisal will always think in a positive way and take the wisdom of everything that happened to them, never blames others, also make a gratitude for what they still have. By using positive reappraisal, there will be a decrease in distress, especially anger and disgust, and an increase in positive feeling, especially in happiness, pleasure, and confidence (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:472).

#### **2.1.2.1.1.2 Accepting Responsibility**

Accepting responsibility is being done by doing self-introspection and raising awareness about the cause of the problems faced and trying to put things as they should. Persons who do accepting responsibility often lecture and criticized themselves for what has happened (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:468). However, they will accept everything that happened to them and try to adjust to the conditions they are involved in. They realize that they are the ones who bring the problems to themselves, so they have to solve those problems by themselves.

#### **2.1.2.1.1.3 Self-Control**

Self control is being done by regulating both feelings and actions. Persons who do self-control will always think in a careful way before doing something and avoid doing something in a hurry. They try to keep their feelings to themselves and never let others know how bad their conditions and feelings are (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:468).

#### **2.1.2.1.1.4 Distancing**

The purpose of distancing is preventing persons to be shackled by their problems. Persons who do distancing can be seen from their attitudes by ignoring the problems they are faced and even try to forget their problems as if nothing has happened. However, distancing might sometimes fail in reducing distress and might lead to the increase of distress in the case that the problem being faced is serious and needs to be handled immediately (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:473).

#### **2.1.2.1.1.5 Escape Avoidance**

Escape avoidance is being done by avoiding the problem at hand. Persons who do escape avoidance can be seen from their attitudes in trying to avoid their problems and trying to seek for something that can be their way in forgetting their problems such as by doing something they like. They wish that the difficult situation they are faced would go away sooner and try to release their feeling by drinking, eating, using drugs, and/or smoking (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:468).

#### **2.1.2.1.1.6 Seeking Social Support**

In emotion-focused coping, seeking social support is being done by seeking emotional support from outsiders. As the example, the persons who seek for emotional support will accept sympathy and understanding from someone outside their family.

#### **2.1.2.1.2 Problem-focused Coping**

Problem-focused forms of coping are used when the problems being experienced and the difficult conditions being faced have the possibility to be changed.

Problem-focused efforts are directed at making alternative solutions, illustrating the problem, choosing among them, weighting the costs and benefits of the alternatives solutions, and making an action (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984:152).

#### **2.1.2.1.2.1 Planful Problem-Solving**

Planful problem-solving is being done by making certain efforts to change the conditions being faced by making an analytical approach to solve the problems. Persons who do planful problem-solving will make a good planning and have an intention in changing their lifestyle so that their problems can slowly be resolved. Planful problem-solving is associated with more positive emotion and less negative emotion since there will be a better feeling after persons turn to the problem that become their cause of distress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:473).

#### **2.1.2.1.2.2 Confrontive Coping**

Confrontive coping is being done by trying to change the conditions being faced by taking actions that are categorized as risky actions. Persons who do confrontive coping will solve their problems by doing things that are contrary to the given rules without considering the considerable risk they have to take. They tend to fight until the end for what they really want (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988:468).

#### **2.1.2.1.2.3 Seeking Social Support**

In problem-focused coping, seeking social support is being done by seeking support from outsiders, whether in the form of information or tangible assistance. The assistance that they get can be in the form of physical and non-physical.



## **2.2 Research Method**

Research method or method of the study is a way in conducting a study by gathering information and data regarding the topic that will be studied then continued by analyzing the information and the data that have been obtained by using particular methods of analysis.

### **2.2.1 Data and Data Source**

In this study, the writer will analyze the use of coping strategies by the main character in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*, Malin Reed, in search of her mother. Therefore, the data used in this study are the entire story of Malin Reed's struggles and long journey in finding her unknown mother in *The Mermaid's Child* which are in the form of sentences, especially the statement and dialogue of the characters and the author's description about the story.

### **2.2.2 Method of Collecting Data**

In collecting the data, the writer uses library research method. According to George, library research is a form of research methodology that is conducted in structured manner with various tools, techniques and rules so that various kinds of sources might be found in the collecting process (2008:1). By using this method, the writer will gather a number of sources related to the topic that will be studied.

### **2.2.3 Method of Analyzing Data**

In analyzing the data, the writer uses psychological approach of literary analysis that focuses on the psychological aspects of a character. According to Rohrberger and Woods, psychological approach is an approach that mainly focuses in

explaining the psychological aspects of characters in the story which are related with characters' imagination, capacity for creation, complexity of thought as well as behavior, and the expression of mind through actions, symbolic words, and thoughts (1971:13-14). In this study, the writer uses coping strategies theory as the psychological approach to analyze the psychological aspects of the main character in Jo Baker's *The Mermaid's Child*. Coping strategies theory will be used to analyze the kinds of coping strategies used by the main character, the events and the other characters' involvement that cause the use of coping strategies by the main character, and the effectiveness of the coping strategies used by the main character in reducing her stress and solving her difficult situation.

## CHAPTER 3

### ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Intrinsic Analysis

##### 3.1.1 Character

##### 3.1.1.1 The Protagonist

##### 3.1.1.1.1 Malin Reed

The protagonist character of the story is an orphan girl named Malin Reed. She is the main character of the story in which the story focuses on her struggles through long journey to find and meet her unknown mother who is a mermaid according to the information given by her father before his death.

I, however, will tell you the truth, in all its untidiness, to the best of my ability and recollection; I promise you that much. Unfortunately, I can make no promises about either my ability or recollection. My memory isn't perfect; I know myself to be a partial, limited and uncertain thing; and I can't help but see, cast over every event... (Baker, 2015:4).

In the novel, Malin acts as the narrator of the story. As shown by the quotation above, she is an unreliable narrator. She is categorized as an unreliable narrator since she is a protagonist who becomes the main storyteller, but she tells a story with a lack certain degree of credibility. However, it is not that she is insane, deluded, or an evil, but it is caused by her uncertainty to recollect all of her memory in a perfect way. Despite her lack of ability to recollect her memory, she tries her best to tell the readers every event she has experienced during her journey in searching for her mother.

#### **3.1.1.1.1 Malin Reed's Physical Characterization**

A few times after letting Malin know that her mother is a mermaid, Malin's father dies caused by tiredness and coldness. Malin is then ordered by her grandmother to work at the Public House which leads her to make a risky decision that is by going through a long journey in order to find her mermaid mother. Malin is still in a small age when she has to face those difficult events coming into her life. "Even at that age, small enough to swing my sandalled feet over the ferrysteps—can't tell you what age I was..." (Baker, 2015:4). As shown by this quotation, the specific or exact age of Malin is not described in the story. There is only said that she is still in a small age that she cannot even swing her sandy feet by her own. The other physical characteristics owned by Malin which are described in the story are her skin color and her hair. "I went barefoot, and my feet grew strong and hard and brown ... Like the other sailors, I tied my hair back into a queue." (Baker, 2015:101). She has a brown-skinned color as the result of the different activities she has to do while she moves from one place to another on her journey searching for her mother. Furthermore, it can be said that Malin has long hair since she has to tie her hair whenever she starts her work as a sailor.

#### **3.1.1.1.2 Malin Reed's Social Condition Characterization**

Malin is a family to Da, who is her father, and Gran, who is her grandmother. She is still being a dependent person when she lives with her family. However, she automatically becomes independent person when she starts her journey in searching for her mother since she has to provide for her own life. She becomes a

slave to Uncle George from Public House, McMichaels from *Sally Ann*, and an unknown merchant. In her village, Malin is not popular enough. “I didn’t have friends. Because I didn’t have a mother, and my father was the ferryman...” (Baker, 2015:5). She does not have close friends and becomes a loner since the other children tend to avoid her for having no mother.

### **3.1.1.1.1.3 Malin Reed’s Psychological and Emotional Characterization**

There are two different psychological states shown by Malin. When she is still living with her family at her village, she tends to be an ignorance person. “...the other children said that I was dirty, that if I touched them they’d get gibbs. Not that I wanted to touch them. I didn’t want to go anywhere near them...” (Baker, 2015:5). She does not care with the kids who always look down on her because her father is a ferryman and never considers their perspective about herself for having no mother. She chooses to ignore them whenever they try to make fun of her and never goes near them as well. Meanwhile, she tends to be a paranoid person when she goes on her journey searching for her mother. “I felt anxiety rise inside me, like sickness.” (Baker, 2015:89). As shown by this quotation, she experiences some uneasy feeling and anxiety when she goes along on Joe’s journey since she is afraid that Joe will do something bad to her the same way as Uncle George has ever done to her. There are also two different emotional states shown by Malin. She always feels rejected by the society when she lives at her village. “I was a freak. *I* was a zoological oddity.” (Baker, 2015:15). As shown by this quotation, she tends to consider herself as a peculiar child who is belong too

zoological oddity. She also thinks that she is different from other children only because she has no mother. Meanwhile, she always feels oppressed by her surrounding when she goes on her journey in searching for her mother. "...and there was nothing I could say, no confession I could make, which could get me out of the ordeal." (Baker, 2015:35). This quotation shows that Malin feels oppressed by Uncle George since she realizes that she is only his slave and she can do nothing but doing all the works Uncle George asked her to do. As for the emotional control, Malin is a person who has no temper. She always acts patiently for everything that happened to her and never takes revenge towards people who has hurt her. Malin is also a brave and strong-willed girl. It is shown by her strong will to find her mermaid mother although she has no clues. "...I swam away, straight out to sea. They would come for me, I was sure of it. My mother's people would come for me." (Baker, 2015:140). This quotation shows her brave and strong-willed side by doing a risky action that is jumping into the sea as her way to escape from *Sally Ann* as well as her way to meet her mermaid mother. She tends to fight until the very end to achieve her main purpose that is finding her mother.

### **3.1.2 Conflicts**

#### **3.1.2.1 Internal Conflict**

##### **3.1.2.1.1 Malin Reed Against Herself**

The internal conflict between Malin and herself happens when Gran orders Malin to work at the Public House. "A grey hollowness filled my chest, my throat."

(Baker, 2015:29). This quotation shows Malin's feeling right after she gets the order. She clearly shows that she feels a deep sadness inside, but she acts as if everything is okay in front of her grandmother. She also has a fight with her own mind. In one side, she does not want to work at the Public House since she knows well what kind of workplace Public House is, but in another side, she has to do her grandmother's order and she also wants to search for her mermaid mother. However, contrast with what she feels inside, in the end Malin agrees with Gran's order and decides to work at the Public House with the aim to start her journey in searching for her mother. "A new life, I thought, was opening out in front of me. I had prospects." (Baker, 2015:32). Malin convinces herself that she will have a new and better life by leaving her house and going to the new place. Although she knows that this is not going to be an easy journey, she never considers about that matters and only focuses on her strong will to find her mother.

### **3.1.2.2 External Conflict**

#### **3.1.2.2.1 Malin Reed Against Gran**

The first external conflict in the story happened between Malin and her grandmother named Gran. She is not a loving grandmother for Malin. She does not pay much attention towards Malin even before and after the death of Malin's father. A few times after the death of Malin's father, Gran orders Malin to work for Uncle George at the Public House without considering the hard time Malin will be faced in the future by working at that place.

She told me, without once meeting my eye, that I was to be off up the road to work for Uncle George at the Public, and I found that I was not surprised at all. “You’re too much for me. He’ll keep you in line, if anyone can. Bit of hard work for once, that’ll straighten you out.” (Baker, 2015:29).

The quotation above shows that Gran gives the order towards Malin by using an excuse that she cannot provide for her anymore. However, the main reason behind her order is actually caused by herself who can no longer see Malin since Malin always reminds her of Da, Malin’s father and her only son. At this point, this action cannot be considered as something proper. Malin is only a little girl and it will be too hard for her to survive alone outside. Instead of taking care of her one and only granddaughter, she prefers to put her ego over everything and ended up abandoned her own granddaughter. Furthermore, instead of becoming someone who can give affection towards Malin, Gran can only make Malin sad by the fact that she never shows her loving side towards her own granddaughter. She never knows that her action causes the next great loss for Malin right after Malin experiences a great loss at the time when her father death.

#### **3.1.2.2.2 Malin Reed Against Uncle George**

The second external conflict in the story happened between Malin and Uncle George. Uncle George is a principal tallyman and moneylender of the area where Malin lives. He is the owner of Public House which is Malin’s first workplace. Uncle George is a rude and unforgiving person who never cares with others’ suffering. The conflict between Malin and Uncle George mainly happens as the result of Uncle George’s rude actions towards Malin. “I couldn’t really blame him



for the thrashing that he gave me. He had warned me, after all. I didn't even blame him for using, from time to time, the buckled end of his belt." (Baker, 2015:39). Uncle George always gives Malin a physical abuse by caning her with his leather belt even when she only makes a little mistake. The phrase "the thrashing that he gave me" shows that Uncle George has done a series of terrible actions towards Malin whenever she makes mistake. Malin is experiencing much hard time since working for Uncle George at the Public House. This is one of the reasons that lead her use of coping strategies.

#### **3.1.2.2.3 Malin Reed Against Joe**

The third external conflict in the story happened between Malin and Joe. Joe is a stranger man who comes to Malin's workplace, Public House. He is a tactical person who is good in making others interested towards him and ended up following him. He can easily make Malin interested in him and ended up following him on his journey. The conflict between Malin and Joe happened when Joe feels that Malin is useful for him. He also wants to enslave Malin by making her as his apprentice boy in which she has to help Joe in every aspect of his works. Knowing the fact that Malin is actually looking for her mermaid mother, instead of letting Malin go and search for her mother on her own, Joe lies to Malin by saying that he knows where the mermaid is usually located. In the fact, he lies to Malin and does not know where the mermaid is usually located. "He'd told me there would be mermaids here, but there were only whores." (Baker, 2015:93). He lies to Malin as a way to keep dragging Malin along on his journey.

He had lost me. He had lost me in a game of dice. No skill, no foresight, no pattern of play: nothing but pure dumb luck with dice. He had run out of money, the money that I'd brought him, and so had placed my life on a single cast. (Baker, 2015:92-93).

Malin also discovers the fact that Joe apparently makes her as a bail in case he loses on his dice game. These facts give Malin a deep regret. She keeps blaming herself for wasting time on following a liar like Joe. The worse problem is, after Malin knows that Joe lies to her, she decides to leave him and takes a high-risk action by working in a slave ship with herself disguising as a boy. Joe plays an important role in making Malin's journey to be more complex and difficult as well.

#### **3.1.2.2.4 Malin Reed Against McMichaels**

The last external conflict in the story happened between Malin and McMichaels. McMichaels is the captain of *Sally Ann*, a slave ship where Malin works as a slave with herself disguising as a boy. He is a tight-fisted person who is willing to do anything in order to get a big benefit. He is also a type of person who does not want others to disturb his precious "thing" and willing to do anything to defend it. The word "thing" refers to one of his best workers at the *Sally Ann* named John Doyle who is also a girl. The conflict between Malin and McMichaels happened when McMichaels knows the fact that Malin and John Doyle have an intimate relationship. "He'd been watching me for days. Every time I'd turned round he'd been there, watching. Waiting for me to slip up." (Baker, 2015:104). Since then, he always tries to find a way to punish Malin. The word "watching" and the

phrase “waiting for me to slip up“ indicate that McMichaels always oversees every aspects of Malin’s works and actions in order to find even a little mistake made by her, so he can give her punishment. Once he gets the opportunity to punish Malin, he gives a very brutal punishment towards her.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “I am so sorry.”

Then she turned away.

“Take the lash,” I heard McMichaels say.

“It’s not my job,” John said.

“Nevertheless,” McMichaels said, “take the lash.” (Baker, 2015:129).

McMichaels punishes Malin by lashing her with whip, but he asks John Doyle to do it instead. Malin considers this one is worse than the one Uncle George has ever given to her. In addition, he often threatens Malin by using harsh words. Every time they meet and have a conversation, they can never get along and the conversation will always turn into offensive situation. When working at the *Sally Ann*, Malin gets much hard time caused by McMichaels. This is also one of the reasons that lead her use of coping strategies.

### **3.1.3 Settings**

#### **3.1.3.1 Setting of Place**

The specific setting of place in the story is Malin’s village that is Melling, City of Lancaster, Lancashire, England. “They buried him in the sodden earth of Melling graveyard, because ours isn’t a proper church.” (Baker, 2015:27). This quotation, which shows the location of Malin’s father grave, indicates the specific location of Malin’s village. By living at her village with her family, Malin already shows unstable psychological condition. “Birthdayless, born to a fishwoman and a

ferryman, I was, I always had been, different ... I was a freak. *I was a zoological oddity.*" (Baker, 2015:15). She always thinks that she is different from others and always does several rebellion acts such as going away from her school when the learning activities are not done yet and stealing foods from her neighbors' fields. Her actions are mainly influenced by her surrounding, especially her friends who are always bullying her for having no mother and her grandmother who never pays much attention towards Malin. Instead of crying and showing her depression, she prefers to do those rebellion acts as a way to maintain her image as a strong child who never gives up with her difficult condition.

There are also several places where Malin spends most of her time on her journey searching for her mother. The first is Uncle George's Public House which is an anchored ship. This place is prohibited to children, disapproved of by women, and possessed of an irresistible attraction for the village men. Malin suffers a lot while working for Uncle George at the Public House. "For a week afterwards it was agony. The following fortnight was painful, and I remained uncomfortable for the best part of the next month." (Baker, 2015:39). She experiences depression as shown by her uneasy feeling that is caused by the pain she has received from Uncle George who always gives her physical abuses for every mistake she made. The second is a slave ship named *Sally Ann* where Malin works as a slave with herself disguising as a boy. Malin also suffers a lot while working at the *Sally Ann*. "The flogging was worse than the one Uncle George had given me. It wiped away those scars as if they'd never been." (Baker,

2015:129). Malin shows that she experiences even more serious depression while working at the *Sally Ann*. It can be seen from her statement that the pain she has received by working at the *Sally Ann* is worse than the one she has received by working at the Public House. The third is a ship named *Spendlove* which is owned by an old librarian named Jebb who rescues Malin when she drifts on the ocean after escaping from *Sally Ann*. By sailing and living with Jebb at the *Spendlove*, Malin can finally find peaceful feeling and happiness.

I felt the air fill my lungs, the sunshine warm my skin, felt the continuing solidity of the deck beneath my feet. The wood was warm and curved beneath my palms, it seemed to pulse as my flesh pulsed. I felt that I could almost see the wind, hear the watercurrents flow, taste the time of day. (Baker, 2015:171).

As shown by the quotation above, she clearly expresses that she is feeling happy and peaceful by the fact that she can finally have a great time to feel the freshness of nature without any disturbance.

### **3.1.3.2 Setting of Time**

There is no specific time mentioned in the story. However, by considering several aspects such as the use of horse and cart as the transportation mode, the use of wooden sole, gambling in all classes, and the practice of slave-trading, the writer assumes that this story sets in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. "...followed by painted caravans and wagons drawn by heavy horses..." (Baker, 2015:9). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the roads were still in the form of dirty tracks so that people usually traveled by horse. However, started from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, rich people used to ride in carriages. "These, and a pair of boys' clogs, black, nailed and laced, the wooden

soles splintery with wear.” (Baker, 2015:31). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the construction method of footwear has grown rapidly. Soles were mainly made of wood and leather. It has a very simple construction and also very durable.

### **3.1.3.3 Setting of Society**

The setting of society in *The Mermaid’s Child* is depicted from the way Malin’s family lives. Malin’s family lives under poverty with a low-income.

The cottage grew dark and cold as the sky’s blue deepened into summer, and there was never anything cooking on the range, and there was never anything to eat, not even gluey blackberry jelly or slimy mushrooms, and I never spoke to my grandmother from one day’s end to the next. (Baker, 2015:28).

The word “cottage” in the quotation above shows what kind of place Malin’s family is living in. They live in a simple cottage with only plain facilities inside it. Furthermore, as shown by the phrase “never anything to eat” in the quotation above, it shows that they do not have enough money to buy something to eat. There is nothing at all to eat, not even a simple food like blackberry jelly or mushroom which are usually made by Malin’s grandmother.

## **3.2 Extrinsic Analysis**

### **3.2.1 Malin Reed’s Coping Strategies**

#### **3.2.1.1 Malin Reed’s Emotion-focused Coping Strategies**

##### **3.2.1.1.1 Positive Reappraisal**

The first emotion-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is positive reappraisal. Malin does this coping strategy by always thinking in a positive way with the aim to be a better and stronger person.

But, I told myself, all was not lost. I could handle the work, I'd keep quiet, and I'd manage to stay on the right side of Uncle George. It would be worth it. I'd experience first-hand the after-dark masculine world of the bar room. I'd see what no other village kid had seen. (Baker, 2015:35).

The event that causes Malin's use of positive reappraisal is when she has to face the reality that working at the Public House is apparently that hard. The quotation above shows that Malin makes a positive mindset in order to make herself feeling better. She convinces herself that everything will be okay as long as she can stay quiet and manage herself to stay on Uncle George's side. Furthermore, by convincing herself that she can handle all of the works she has to be done at the Public House, she can reduce her tension and keep away her anxiety. She also makes herself feeling better by comparing the experiences that other persons or kids cannot easily get while she can get those experiences every day. By using positive reappraisal, Malin can increase her positive feeling, especially confidence, and decrease her distress, especially scare and worry.

#### **3.2.1.1.2 Accepting Responsibility**

The second emotion-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is accepting responsibility. Malin does this coping strategy by accepting everything that happened to her and trying to adjust herself to the conditions or situations she is involved in as a way to control her feeling and emotion.

And that's how things went on, day after day, with little differentiation. Mornings were spent in the brewhouse, afternoons preparing a meal from the previous night's offerings, then in the evenings I worked on the bar. (Baker, 2015:36).

The quotation above shows that Malin is accepting her difficult condition while working for Uncle George. The phrase “that’s how things went on” shows that Malin is already adjust herself to her current condition since she knows well the routine activities she has to do by working at the Public House. She tries to process Uncle George’s instructions as soon as she gets the instructions and tries not to make even one mistake so that she will not get a physical abuse from him.

The next event that shows Malin’s use of accepting responsibility is when Uncle George catches up Malin goes to the river, a place that she calls as her pool. Malin, who does not want anyone knows about her pool, asks Uncle George to get out of there. She then realizes that what she is doing is something that becomes a boomerang towards her.

For a week afterwards it was agony. The following fortnight was painful, and I remained uncomfortable for the best part of the next month. I couldn’t really blame him for the thrashing that he gave me. He had warned me, after all. I didn’t even blame him for using, from time to time, the buckled end of his belt. (Baker, 2015:39).

Uncle George gives her a severe punishment that makes her has to do much more struggles to stand the series of difficult conditions she has to face. However, she accepts everything that Uncle George does towards her and never makes any complains about it. She realizes that she is the one who brings this problem towards herself, so she has to accept the consequences. She is willing to accept everything that may happen to her as the result of her actions in making Uncle George angry towards her.



Malin also shows her use of accepting responsibility when she works as a slave at the *Sally Ann*.

I learned my knots, I learned my ropes, I learned I had a head for heights. I learned, from John Doyle's teaching and example, that there was joy to be found in a job well done, and pleasure to be gained from the quiet and proper practice of a skill. (Baker, 2015:101).

The quotation above, as shown by the phrase "I learned" which is mentioned several times, Malin tries her best to learn every aspect and method of works that she has to do by working at the *Sally Ann*. Malin clearly shows that she is trying to adjust herself to her current condition. She is also willing to accept any responsibilities for every difficult condition that she is going to face by working at the *Sally Ann*. By using accepting responsibility, Malin can always manage herself to stand the difficult condition she has to face at her workplaces by always accepting and adjusting herself to her every condition.

### **3.2.1.1.3 Distancing**

The third emotion-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is distancing. Malin does this coping strategy by forgetting her problems as if nothing has happened and refuse to think about it too much.

The boredom of my situation was so intense that if I had allowed myself to think about it, I would almost certainly have cried. So I refused even to consider thinking:. I must have drifted into a kind of stupor, and completed my daily and weekly rounds of tasks in a daze, though I can't really give a clear account of it, having not paid very much attention at the time. (Baker, 2015:36).

The quotation above, as shown by the phrase "refused even to consider thinking", indicates her use of distancing as she clearly shows that she refuses to

think even a little about her difficult conditions and tries to forget about it as soon as possible. By using distancing, Malin can prevent the possibility to be shackled by her problem regarding the difficult conditions she has to face while working for Uncle George at the Public House. As a result, she can do her daily works as usual and minimize the possibility of getting punishment from Uncle George for every mistake she may make.

Having little difference with the time when Malin works for Uncle George at the Public House, Malin also uses distancing to stand her difficult condition while working for McMichaels at the *Sally Ann*.

The voyage could have gone on forever. I was ignorant of the distance to be travelled, of the speed we were making, and of signs that we were nearing land. Time itself had unravelled, the days and nights shredded by fatigue and sudden sleep into a perpetual moment, a patch of hours. Wrapped up in my misery, I noticed nothing. My tasks were completed mechanically, unthinkingly. I did not, could not allow myself to think. (Baker, 2015:132).

As shown by the phrase “could not allow myself to think” in the quotation above, Malin shows her use of distancing by not allowing herself to think about her difficult conditions while working at the *Sally Ann*. The use of distancing can keep Malin away from the possibility of pitying herself and makes her realize with the fact that thinking about her condition cannot make her stronger. By using distancing, Malin is able to survive in her workplaces although she has experienced a very difficult condition. She can also do her works as usual without any disturbance since she never thinks anymore about how hard the works that she has to do in the past.

#### **3.2.1.1.4 Escape Avoidance**

The next emotion-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is escape avoidance. Malin does this coping strategy by avoiding her problems for a while and seeking for something that can be her way in forgetting her problems. She goes to her favorite place and doing her favorite activity in relieving her stress that is by swimming in a river.

The waterfall was just a damp stain on the rock. Beneath me, bare stone sloped down to a shallow pond of algaed water. Dimly visible in its base, the pestle-stone rested, motionless. The place was dead. And I would have sank down, I suspect, on the parched moss, and put my head in my hands... (Baker, 2015:38).

The quotation above, as shown by the word “waterfall” and the phrase “sank down”, shows where Malin goes and what she does to relieve her stress that is by diving into the river and taste the fresh water. As a way to let out all of her stress and make herself feeling peaceful, she will dive as deep and as long as possible then drifting on the surface of the water. Although it is only for a while, she can relieve her stress without any disturbance. By using escape avoidance, Malin can relieve her stress and forget her difficult condition for a while. She can also find peace after the series of pains she has experienced.

#### **3.2.1.1.5 Self-Control**

The last emotion-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is self-control. Malin does this coping strategy by always keeping her pain for herself and never let others know how terrible her condition is. The first event that leads her use of self-control is when she goes along on Joe’s journey. “I wasn’t

going to complain, wasn't going to show any weakness. I wasn't going to make him regret, even for a moment, that he had brought me with him." (Baker, 2015:67). This quotation shows that Malin always keeps her pain for herself without showing it to Joe. Malin shows her use of self-control by not letting Joe know how bad her condition is. She never makes any complaints about her condition, so Joe will not regret his decision in bringing Malin along on his journey. Malin is also afraid that she will become a burden for Joe, so she keeps her pains for herself and stay as strong as possible.

The second event that causes Malin's use of self-control is when she tries to hide her real feeling from John Doyle, a captain of the foretop at the *Sally Ann*, who always helps her while working at the *Sally Ann*.

"What happened?"

"Nothing," I said.

She came up to me, stopped, searched my face a moment. "Did he beat you?" I looked up at her. *Breathe a word of this to anyone—*

"Does he know about me?"

"No," I said. "You're safe."

She breathed, reached out to touch me. I moved away. "Don't," I said. (Baker, 2015:119).

The quotation above, as shown by the word "nothing" when John Doyle asks Malin about what happens to her, shows that Malin does not want John Doyle to know about what she has been through. Malin does self-control by not letting John Doyle know about what she has to do to protect John Doyle from McMichaels' punishment, so John Doyle will not worry about Malin's condition. Malin thinks that she has to pay back John Doyle's kindness for helping her a lot

while she is working at the *Sally Ann*, so she decides to do this. By using self-control, Malin can manage to stay beside the persons who have helped her without becoming a burden for them.

### **3.2.1.2 Malin Reed's Problem-focused Coping Strategies**

#### **3.2.1.2.1 Planful Problem-Solving**

The first problem-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is planful problem-solving. Malin does this coping strategy by making certain efforts to change the conditions being faced that is by making a plan of action then followed it in order to make things work. The first event that shows her use of planful problem-solving is when Malin tries to find several clues about her mother from her father's belongings before she goes to the Public House.

I wasn't going to leave empty-handed. I took advantage of my grandmother's absence the next day and had a thorough hoke around. Da must have kept something, some keepsake or souvenir. If I could just find something that was important to him, it would give me a glimpse of the man he had been, of the stories I had lost when I lost him. (Baker, 2015:30).

The quotation above shows that Malin makes an effort to ease her way in finding her mother. The phrase "wasn't going to leave empty-handed" indicates that she plans something in order to make things easier for herself. The realization of the plan is shown when Malin checks her father's belongings in order to find clues about her mother. Unfortunately, she cannot find any useful clue that she can use in searching for her mother. However, she does not easily give up and decided to go to the Public House even though she has no clue about her mother.

The next time Malin uses planful problem-solving is when she can no longer stand the cruel slavery at the *Sally Ann*. She decides to escape from the ship by making a plan to do her escapement in the night where everyone in the ship has their peaceful sleep. "I took a breath. I dropped down into the water." (Baker, 2015:138). Malin executes her plan by jumping into the sea as her way to escape from *Sally Ann*. She realizes that working at the *Sally Ann* cannot help her in finding her mermaid mother and only makes her more suffer. In the end, driving by her belief that her mother and her people will come for her and bring her with them, she takes a risky action as her way to escape from *Sally Ann* that is by jumping into the sea.

Malin also does planful problem-solving when she lives with Jebb. She makes an effort to find where her mermaid mother lives.

Once there, there was no stopping me. I would read all night, and only stop when I heard Jebb's feet hit the deck in the morning. Then I'd stuff the book back into its place, rush up the stairs, dive into the galley and make a start on breakfast. (Baker, 2015:162-163).

The quotation above shows Malin's effort to secretly read Jebb's books in order to find some useful information about her mermaid mother. Malin has to make a plan on how to read Jebb's book without getting caught by him. She will come to the library when Jebb leaves the library and going upstairs, and she will stop her reading activity when she hears Jebb is coming near the library. Her action clearly reflects her use of planful problem-solving. She makes an effort to make things work by using her good plan. By doing this, she finally gets a

confirmation from the books she has read that mermaid really exists and information where it can be found.

The next event that leads the use of planful problem-solving by Malin is when Malin is brought by pirates to a slave market ship for sale.

I'd already made myself virtually unsellable. Now, if I could just provoke him sufficiently—if I could just make him draw that dagger from his belt. I glanced down at the weal on my arm. It was deep, red, and welling with blood. I raised an eyebrow, looked back at him. (Baker, 2015:196).

The quotation above, as shown by the phrase “made myself virtually unsellable”, shows Malin’s use of planful problem-solving by making a plan to make herself unsellable so that she can end her situation as soon as possible, although she has to die in the end. Malin knows well how hard it is to be a slave and never wants to be the one for the umpteenth time. Malin is ready for the consequences that she is going to get by doing this since she prefers death rather than becoming a slave again. By doing this, Malin is finally bought by a merchant then taken to wander in desert.

Only several days wandering with the merchant, Malin already feels tired of everything and wants to escape from the slavery as soon as possible. Knowing the fact that Cunningham, the merchant’s male slave, has a gun under his pillow, Malin makes a plan to take the gun as her way to escape from the merchant’s slavery.

I slid my hand further beneath the pillow, searching.  
 “I don’t know—I’ve never really—” he said.  
 “Because you really should figure out what you want. It’s no good just knowing what you *don’t* want—” my fingers found the cool touch of

gunmetal. I kept on talking, shifting in the bed, rustling the blankets to cover the noise and movement of my hand. My fingers curled around the smooth warm wood of the pistol butt. (Baker, 2015:209).

The quotation above shows Malin's effort to take Cunningham's gun which is located under his pillow. Her action reflects her use of planful problem-solving which aims to change her current condition which she considers as something as difficult as her previous condition when she becomes slave. By using planful problem-solving, Malin can finally get the gun and escape from the merchant's slavery. She then continues to search for her mother by heading back to the sea.

#### **3.2.1.2.2 Seeking Social Support**

The second problem-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is seeking for social support. Here, Malin seeks social support from someone outside her family that is Joe. "Can I come with you?" (Baker, 2015:60). Malin asks Joe if he will allow her to join him on his next journey. She does this as an effort to escape from Uncle George's cruelty. The social support that she gets from Joe is in the form of tangible assistance since Joe allows Malin to come along on his journey and gives her several guides as well. By doing this coping strategy, Malin can finally escape from the cruel slavery at Uncle George's Public House and continue her main purpose that is searching for her mother.

#### **3.2.1.2.3 Confrontive Coping**

The last problem-focused coping strategy that Malin uses in search of her mother is confrontive coping. Malin does this coping strategy by trying to change the



conditions she is faced by doing risky action that is contrary to the given rules.

She tends to fight for what she really wants until the very end.

Name: Malin Reed.

Age: Unknown.

Father's occupation: Ferryman.

And then, without asking me, he scratched out the words:

Engagement: to the slaver *Sally Ann*, five years.

Position: Boy. (Baker, 2015:95).

Malin takes a high-risk action by applying a job as a slave in a slave ship named *Sally Ann* with herself disguising as a boy. The quotation above, as shown by the phrase "Position: Boy", shows that Malin signs a contract as a male slave in the ship. Her action is in contrast with the given rules and is considered as high-risk action. Malin is driven by her strong will to find her mother that she is willing to do such a risky action by working in a slave ship with herself disguising as a boy. She is certain that she will be able to find and meet her mother by working at the sea. As a result, she ignores how risky her action is and never thinks about the hard time she is going to face by working there since she wants to fight until the very end for what she wants that is finding her mermaid mother.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

*The Mermaid's Child* is a historical fiction novel written by Jo Baker. The novel tells about the struggles and long journey of an orphan girl named Malin Reed in finding her unknown mother that she only knows as a mermaid according to the information given by her father before his death. She decides to go through long journey in order to find and meet her mother without considering what she is going to be faced in her journey.

By analyzing the psychological aspects of Malin Reed using the theory of coping strategies, the writer found out that coping strategies become her way to reduce her stress and to solve her difficult situation in her journey searching for her mother. There are eight kinds of coping strategies used by Malin in search of her mother, namely positive reappraisal, accepting responsibility, distancing, escape avoidance, self-control, planful problem-solving, seeking social support, and confrontive coping. First, positive reappraisal helps Malin in increasing her positive feeling, especially confidence, and decreasing her distress, especially scare and worry. Second, accepting responsibility helps Malin in managing herself to stand the difficult condition she has to face at her workplaces. Third, distancing helps Malin to survive at her workplaces although she has experienced a very difficult condition. Fourth, escape avoidance helps Malin in relieving her stress, forgetting her difficult condition for a while, and finding peace after the series of

pains she has experienced. Fifth, self-control helps Malin in managing herself to stay beside the persons who have helped her without becoming a burden for them. Sixth, planful problem-solving helps Malin to find the right way or strategy to solve her difficult situation or problems. Seventh, seeking social support helps Malin to escape from the cruel slavery in Uncle George's Public House and to continue her main purpose that is searching for her mother. Last, confrontive coping plays a role in giving her courage to take a high-risk action in order to achieve her main purpose that is finding her mermaid mother.

Coping strategies that Malin used in search of her mother play a big role in helping her to manage her stress so that she can survive in every situation she has to face in her long journey searching for her mother. It also plays a big role in helping Malin to handle her difficult situation so that she can decide what she has to do at that time and find the right solution as a way to solve her difficult situation. Coping strategies that Malin used in search of her mother have helped her a lot though in the end she cannot find and meet her mother.

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