

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Humans have to fulfill their needs to be satisfied, but struggles might prevent them from reaching fulfillment. The rationale is that humans naturally have to face struggles in life. The struggles can come from different aspects of human life, like in love life or interpersonal relationships. To work on fulfilling their needs, humans need to identify their struggles and categorize them according to the needs or aspects of life that those struggles are related to. The categorization helps to recognize which needs should be worked on first so that humans can satisfy themselves and develop into actualized individuals.

The progression of actualizing oneself by fulfilling the hierarchy of needs and facing struggles related to them is reflected in a novel entitled *Cackle* (2021) by Rachel Harrison. It is a relatable novel about individual development in one's life. The novel has 293 pages and is divided into 25 chapters. Published by Berkley Books in 2021, *Cackle* is a novel that contains conflicts that many people can relate to. Hence, psychological elements play an important role in the story, making the novel relatable to the general readership.

The novel tells a story about a woman who has to face her struggles and after she resolves all of them, she develops into an actualized woman. In the novel, Annie Crane breaks up with her long-term boyfriend, Sam, because Sam thinks their relationship is more like a friendship than a couple. The breakup pushes

Annie to move out of New York because she can not afford to live there without the financial help from Sam. She moves to a small town named Rowan while being heartbroken and scared because she has to live by herself, not knowing anyone in the town.

Annie starts to face some struggles and they keep appearing as the story progresses while she tries to adapt living in Rowan. All of them are related to different aspects of Annie's life. For instance, bullying, loneliness, and inferiority. The struggles that she has to work on are the reflection of the five needs in the hierarchy of needs. Thus, her struggles can be categorized into five needs, namely physiological needs, security and safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. Categorizing the struggles into five human needs means that Annie fulfills her need and develops as a character each time she faces a struggle related to it. Therefore, the analysis of the fulfillment of her hierarchy of needs can describe Annie's struggles for self-actualization and how she changes as a character.

The individual development to self-actualization becomes the reason to conduct this study. In *Cackle*, the novelist wants to convey a message related to Annie Crane's individual development. Annie Crane is a woman who has just broken up with her long-term boyfriend. In her 30s, her life should start over due to the breakup. She must move out of town while being friendless, single, and inferior. Nevertheless, Annie becomes an example of a self-actualized woman.

How Annie transforms herself can be described through the fulfillment of her hierarchy of needs as these needs work as a guide to see how Annie develops

and struggles to actualize herself. Based on the aforementioned self-actualization, this undergraduate thesis is conducted to describe Annie Crane's fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs to illustrate her struggles for self-actualization. In general, this study illustrates the fulfillment of Annie Crane's five hierarchy of needs to discuss her struggles for self-actualization. In particular, this study points out Annie Crane's most significant achievement in life which is becoming a self-actualized woman who can realize herself to be everything that she can be.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study, these are the research questions that are formulated:

- 1.2.1. How is Annie Crane characterized in Rachel Harrison's *Cackle*?
- 1.2.2. How does Annie Crane personally develop seen from the fulfillment of her hierarchy of needs in Rachel Harrison's *Cackle*?
- 1.2.3. How does Annie Crane's characterization relate to her hierarchy of needs in Rachel Harrison's *Cackle*?

## **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

Based on the research questions, these are the objectives of the study:

- 1.3.1. To describe how Annie Crane is characterized in Rachel Harrison's *Cackle*.
- 1.3.2. To describe how Annie Crane develops herself seen from the fulfillment of her hierarchy of needs in Rachel Harrison's *Cackle*.
- 1.3.3. To describe how Annie Crane's characterization relates to her hierarchy of needs in Rachel Harrison's *Cackle*.

#### 1.4. Previous Study

The object discussed in this study is relatively recent, so the writer has difficulty finding previous studies related to it. Albeit that, the writer found an interview conducted by Jarvis in *Spooky Evenings* talking about *Cackle* with the novelist, Rachel Harrison. In the interview, Harrison says that she is inspired to write a story that is fun and whimsical but still grounded in reality. Based on that, she intentionally created *Cackle* as a novel that leans on how one can find confidence in pursuing their self-discovery journey. Hence, psychological condition and transformation become an important point of the story. In addition to the interview, the writer also found many book reviews related to *Cackle*.

“Book Review: ‘Cackle’ by Rachel Harrison” written by Quinn Keaney on *What Is Quinn Reading?* talks about the contrast and dynamic between Sophie and Annie in *Cackle*. In doing so, Keaney highlights Sophie's characterization and how feminism, especially about female rage and womanhood, is brought off in the story.

“Review: *Cackle* by Rachel Harrison” written by Krys on *Here's the Fucking Twist* mentions the feminist aspect of *Cackle*, particularly Sophie's characterization that reflects the value of feminism. Besides, the reviewer also talks about Annie's fear of the unknown as a result of her heartbreak.

“Kate's Review: ‘Cackle’” written by Kate on *The Library Ladies* discusses the female friendship and self-discovery theme in the story. The review mentions that *Cackle* is a book about finding oneself and how two different women can be happy in each other's company.

“Book Review: *Cackle* by Rachel Harrison” written by Carrie on *Smart Bitches Trashy Books* mentions that *Cackle* is a feminist book about friendship that also contains a psychological exploration of liberation and control. Carrie mostly highlights the toxicity surrounding Annie’s friendship with Sophie and the psychological aspect that this book has, emphasizing that Annie might experience undiagnosed psychological conditions.

“*Cackle* by Rachel Harrison (Book Review)” written by Nils Shukla on *Fantasy Hive* describes how the novel explores the theme of fear, like fear of a particular animal and fear of independent women. In addition, it also talks about relationships and self-discovery. Shukla highlights that one can survive in life with one’s inner strength despite all the good and bad things that happen.

“Book Review: *Cackle* by Rachel Harrison” written by Aina on *Read by Dusk* talks about self-growth and friendship between two women who struggle through different issues related to their inner self.

“Book Review: *Cackle* by Rachel Harrison” written by Sam Tyler on *SFBook Review* discusses the heartbreak and the effects of breakup, which many can relate to. Aside from that, Sam mentions that *Cackle* also explores the existence of judgment and trust in society and any kind of relationship, including friendship.

“*Cackle* by Rachel Harrison - Book Review” written by Jen on *Books on the 7:47* talks about the empowerment aspect of the novel, especially about a woman's transformation and growth. In her review, Jen points out the importance

of living for oneself, having freedom, and finding inner strength to live life to the fullest.

“*Cackle* by Rachel Harrison [book review]” written by Kaili Taghon on *Owl Book World* talks about the plot hole in *Cackle* and how the book lacks suspense and twists despite it being a horror novel. Hence, Taghon mentions that she personally found the novel boring and confusing.

“*Cackle* by Rachel Harrison (Review by Caitlin Winkler)” on *The Gloss Book Club* talks about the contrast between Annie and Sophie. In addition, Winkler also mentioned that *Cackle* is a novel revolving around feminism and the journey to self-love.

All of the book reviews mentioned above do not discuss the specific topic analyzed in this study, which is the hierarchy of needs. Hence, the study on Annie Crane’s hierarchy of needs is conducted to describe her struggles for actualization and how develops to be an actualized woman in Rachel Harrison’s *Cackle*.

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

In this study, the main focus is the major character, Annie Crane. Hence, she is the only character analyzed comprehensively in this study. In addition, this study also analyzes the relevant intrinsic and extrinsic elements of *Cackle* by Rachel Harrison. The intrinsic elements covered in this study are character, characterization, and conflict, whilst the extrinsic element is the hierarchy of needs portrayed in the novel, namely physiological needs, security and safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization.

The analysis of Annie Crane's hierarchy of needs functions to describe Annie Crane's struggles for self-actualization in Rachel Harrison's *Cackle* so that her development from a woman has low self-esteem and a people pleaser tendency to an independent, confident, authentic, and autonomous woman can also be illustrated.

### **1.6. Organization of Writing**

This study consists of four chapters, and those are:

#### **Chapter I: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, previous study, scope of the study, and the organization of writing of the study.

#### **Chapter II: THEORY AND METHOD**

This chapter describes the theory used to analyze the object of the study. For the intrinsic elements, the theories included in this study focus on character, characterization, and conflict. On the other hand, the extrinsic elements focus on the hierarchy of needs proposed by Abraham Maslow.

#### **Chapter III: DISCUSSION**

This chapter describes the analysis of the object of the study according to the background of the study and research questions. Hence, it has three stages that focus on talking about Annie Crane's characterization, the fulfillment of her hierarchy of needs, and the relation between her characterization and hierarchy of needs. The theories described in Chapter II are applied to analyze the object of the study as well.

**Chapter IV: CONCLUSION**

This chapter consists of the conclusion according to the analysis in Chapter III.