CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Stories about heroes have been told for many years and countless generations (Berens, 2010:9). The concept of "hero" has persisted throughout history and culture, from the god-like ancient figures Achilles, Hercules, and Odysseus to the superheroes of comic books like Spiderman, Superman, and Captain America. Stories of heroes are frequently told to an audience of adults and children to amuse and inspire them. When it comes to real life, heroes can emerge in various forms and contexts. They can be ordinary people who perform extraordinary acts of bravery in critical moments, such as firefighters rescuing people from burning buildings, or bystanders intervening to stop a crime. Heroes can also be individuals who dedicate their lives to serving others, such as humanitarian workers or activists fighting for social justice. However, heroism is not solely defined by acts of physical valor. Moral courage, resilience, and the willingness to stand up for what is right, even in the face of opposition, are equally important aspects of heroism.

Heroism phenomenon is also reflected in literary works. One of the literary works that reveals the act of heroism is Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* published in 2019. In the novel, the protagonist, Pippa Fitz-Amobi, or Pip for short, embarks on a quest reminiscent of classic detective heroes. Like the classic detectives of mystery fiction, Pip possesses keen observational skills,

deductive reasoning, and a strong sense of justice. However, what sets her apart is her relatability as a teenage girl navigating the complexities of adolescence while grappling with the weight of solving a murder mystery. The novel follows the story of Pip, a determined high school girl, as she encounters the challenges of investigating through an unauthorised investigation to learn the truth about the closed case of Andie Bell, who was allegedly murdered by her boyfriend, Sal Singh, who then commits suicide. As she delves deeper into the case, she uncovers startling evidence that suggests Andie's murder may not have been as straightforward as it seemed. With the help of her friend Ravi Singh, Sal's younger brother, Pip navigates through a web of lies, secrets, and misleading clues, risking her safety in the pursuit of justice. The novel skillfully combines investigative elements, suspenseful twists, and a narrative style that keeps readers on the edge of their seats through innovative storytelling, which are the basics of what makes a good whodunnit genre. A 'whodunnit' genre typically revolves around a mystery where the central question is "who committed the crime?". This makes the readers engaged in piecing together clues alongside the protagonist to uncover the perpetrator's identity.

In a 2020 Branford Boase Award interview, Jackson discussed the unique challenge of featuring a teenage girl as the central 'detective'. Rather than viewing it as a hurdle, she sees it as a strength with vast potential. Jackson highlights Pip's resourcefulness in turning everyday tech into crime-solving tools due to her limited access to police resources. She also emphasizes how Pip's ability to exploit others'

underestimation towards her becomes a powerful weapon against the adults involved in the case.

The writer is interested in analyzing Pippa Fitz-Amobi's evolution into a detective hero in Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* for several reasons. Firstly, it explores contemporary heroism in young adult literature, examining how societal values shape portrayals of heroism. Secondly, it dissects themes of agency, empowerment and identity through Pip's transformation, offering insights into moral complexities. Lastly, it contributes to understanding detective fiction by analyzing Pip's character development and narrative impact, highlighting the genre's ability to engage with social and ethical issues, especially adolescents grappling with issues of identity, morality and empowerment. Therefore, this research explores the reasons behind Pip's emergence as a hero in the novel, the heroic investigative journey she undergoes examined through the 12 stages of Christopher Vogler's Hero's Journey, and lastly, the impacts obtained after her heroic transformation.

1.2   Research Questions

1. What are the causes of Pippa Fitz-Amobi's becoming a hero in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*?

2. What are the stages that Pippa Fitz-Amobi goes through to be a hero in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*?

3. What are the impacts of Pippa Fitz-Amobi's passing through the stages to be a hero in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*?

1.3   Objectives of the Research

1. To analyze the causes that make Pippa Fitz-Amobi a hero in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*.

2. To analyze the stages that Pippa Fitz-Amobi goes through to become a hero in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder.*

3. To analyze the impacts of Pippa Fitz-Amobi passing through the stages to be a hero in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder.*

1.4   Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is to examine both the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of Pippa Fitz-Amobi's journey to becoming the detective hero in the book *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson. The intrinsic elements highlight the character and characterization of Pip, the conflicts she undergoes throughout the story, as well as the setting of the narrative, whereas the extrinsic elements highlight the causes and impacts of the stages of Vogler's Hero's Journey that Pip goes through to eventually become a hero at the end of the story.

1.5   Previous Research

To demonstrate originality and expand this research thesis, the writer has reviewed and concluded previous research related to the novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson.

The first previous research is an article review entitled *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder & The Power of Narratives* by Luke W. Henderson published in 2021. This review explains how the novel captivates readers with its thrilling plot, following Pip, as she endeavours to clear Sal Singh of the murder of Andie Bell. It praises the novel for its well-paced mystery and unexpected twists. Beyond its gripping narrative, the review highlights the novel's exploration of how narratives can unjustly influence lives, illustrated by the town's wrongful accusation of Sal. It also discusses narrative logic and societal biases that shape perceptions of guilt.

The second previous research is an undergraduate research thesis entitled *The Diction used in the Novel on the Reader in a Novel A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson* by Soraya Balqis, Ummah Faradila Auliya, and Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana written in 2024. This research thesis describes the types of diction found in the novel. It explains how the author effectively communicates meaning through diction, enhancing reader engagement and aligning with the contextual demands of the story. Through detailed data analysis, the research underscores the significance of diction in shaping the novel's plot and thematic elements, demonstrating its critical role in conveying the story's essence to the audience.

The third previous research is an article review entitled *Holly Jackson's A Good Girl's Guide to Murder review: Crime case and documentary connoisseurs, this one's for you* by Dajah Saul published on The Maroon blog in 2023. This review explains how the novel engages readers with its gripping murder mystery plot centred around a seventeen-year-old protagonist, Pip. Despite some unrealistic elements, the novel captivates with its quick-witted protagonist and fast-paced storytelling, making it an enjoyable read in the murder mystery genre.

The fourth previous research is a journal review entitled *Kim's Land of Unread Stories: 'A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Kimberly Cook published on the Marquette Wire blog in 2022. This journal explains how the reviewer appreciates Pip's character and the journal entry format that helps to visualize the mystery.

The fifth previous research is a journal review entitled *Writing from the Stone Soup Blogs: A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Jeremy Lim June published in 2023. This journal praises the novel as a masterful, suspenseful murder mystery that evolves from a tranquil beginning to an intense, action-packed investigation. It highlights the realistic emotions, balanced narrative structure, and relatable motives.

The sixth previous research is an interview with Holly Jackson, author of *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* conducted by Beth Bartholomew on the blog BookNest in 2020. In this interview, Holly Jackson explores her writing process, character development, and inspiration for the sequel. She enjoys the character arcs, especially Pip's, and explains her planning method using revision cards.

The seventh previous research is an interview entitled *Holly Jackson on Murder, Writing and Crime Fighting*, conducted by Kate Oldfield on the blog United by Pop in 2019. This interview discusses Jackson's inspiration from true crime podcasts, her meticulous plotting process, and her love for mystery genres. Jackson shares her favorite characters to write, offers advice for aspiring authors about perseverance, and hints at future thrillers focused on mystery and suspense.

The eight previous research is an article review entitled *Book Review: A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Devon Trevarrow Flaherty published on The Starving Artist blog in 2023. This review explains that the novel is a gripping young-adult thriller that skillfully blends traditional and modern elements, using an engaging epistolary format with notes and interviews. Although some plot points may stretch believability, the novel is praised for its suspenseful and entertaining narrative, making it a strong start to an intriguing trilogy.

The ninth previous research is an article review titled *Book Review – A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson* by Stephen Writes, published on the Stephen Writes blog in 2020. This review praises the novel for being a captivating murder mystery that grips readers from start to finish with its engaging writing and intricate plot. The novel's use of mixed media elements and detailed character development enhances its appeal, making it an exceptional read that balances suspense with thoughtful exploration of serious themes.

The tenth previous research is an article review entitled *Review: A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Giselle, published on the Giselle Reads blog in 2024. This review highlights the novel as one of the favorite reads of the year, praises for

its captivating mystery that hooks readers from the start. The plot is believable with unpredictable twists, making it a bingeable book that can be enjoyed by adults, despite being a young-adult novel.

The difference between the previous research mentioned above and this research is based on the topic discussed. This research is the first of its kind that focuses on the development of the main character, Pip, as she becomes the later-acknowledged hero in the story. While the Hero's Journey theory has been widely applied in literary analysis, most studies utilize Joseph Campbell's framework rather than Christopher Vogler's adaptation.

The research centres on the reasons why Pip becomes a hero, what stages she goes through to get there, using Vogler's Hero's Journey theory, and the effects of her heroism on her and the story. By doing this, the writer hopes that the research can shed light on an aspect of the novel that has not been explored before and open the door for future discussions about Holly Jackson's work.

1.6   Writing Organization

This research is divided into the following chapters:

CHAPTER I   INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains six sub-chapters: the background of the research, research questions, objectives of the research, previous research, scope of the research, and organization of the writing.

CHAPTER II   THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter contains a review of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks that are utilized to help understand how stories are depicted in the novels.

CHAPTER III   **DISCUSSION**

This chapter is central to the research as it discusses the novels in detail and presents the findings. The analysis of the findings and data will be guided by the theories introduced in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER IV   **CONCLUSION**

This chapter provides an overview of the research's entire content.