

**COPING WITH GRIEF IN KATHLEEN GLASGOW'S NOVEL  
*HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE DARK* (2019)**

**Thesis**

**Submitted as Partial Fulfilment of Requirement to Obtain  
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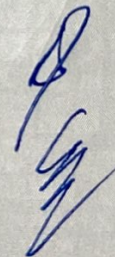
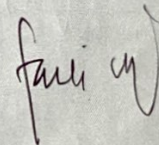
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## ABSTRACT

**Putri, Sarifia Larasati.** 2023. Coping with Grief in Kathleen Glasgow's Novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019). Thesis. English Department Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.

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The purpose of this analysis is to expose the issue of coping with grief in novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019). It explores the issue of coping with grief which is experienced by the main character while she is experiencing grief. This analysis is text-based interpretation based on the concept of coping mechanism theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). It is also aimed to reveal how the main character copes with the grief. This analysis uses fictional devices such as character, plot, and setting that contribute in revealing the issue. The result of this analysis shows that the main character copes with her grief through two ways, problem-focused coping by seeking for social support and emotion-focused coping by distancing self from stress triggers, doing escape avoidance, and accepting responsibility.

**Key words:** *grief, coping mechanism, coping with grief*

## ABSTRAK

**Putri, Sarifia Larasati.** 2023. Coping with Grief in Kathleen Glasgow's Novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019). Skripsi. Departemen Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

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Tujuan dari analisis ini adalah untuk mengungkap isu cara mengatasi kedukaan yang dilalui oleh tokoh utama di dalam novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) ketika sedang dirundung duka. Analisis ini merupakan interpretasi berbasis teks berdasarkan konsep teori coping mechanism yang dikemukakan oleh Lazarus dan Folkman (1984). Analisis ini juga bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana tokoh utama mengatasi kedukaannya. Analisis ini menggunakan perangkat fiksi seperti karakter, plot, dan setting yang berkontribusi dalam mengungkap suatu isu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh utama mengatasi kedukaannya melalui dua cara yakni, melalui *problem-focused coping* dengan mencari dukungan social dan *emotion-focused coping* dengan menjauhkan diri dari pemicu stress, menghindari masalah, dan menerima tanggung jawab.

**Kata kunci:** *kedukaan, coping mechanism, mengatasi duka*

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Padang, Januari 2023

The Researcher



Specially dedicated to my beloved father and mother

BUDHI ANTORO

SARIFAH

To my beloved family and friends

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background of the Research**

Living as a human being will certainly go through the ups and downs in life. Hard times is unavoidable. The hardship can come in any aspects as like finance, health, relationship, and so on. When adversity strikes, it can make people feel powerless, stressed out, and anxious (Robinson & Smith, 2023). Humans may be wracked by a lot of tough, conflicting feelings, overcome with intense grief over what they have lost, or unsure of how to carry on with their lives. Humans also have a tendency to feel a complete loss of control over their lives and a sense of helplessness over the potential outcomes in the future. While there is no way to avoid the hardship in life, there is way to accept and deal with the bad or unpleasant things that happen which named coping mechanism.

In order to deal with the hardship, humans tend to activate their coping mechanisms. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated that coping is defined as continuously modifying cognitive and behavioral attempts to manage certain stressful internal and/or external demands. Humans employ coping mechanisms as coping methods when confronted with stress and/or trauma to help manage challenging and painful emotions. Furthermore, coping refers to how people perceive the stressful state and circumstance, as well as their efforts to deal with the problem. It does not

emphasis whether the coping is successful or not; it only addresses the efforts

After studying a substantial amount of coping research, Matheny et al. came at a similar conclusion. They defined coping as any effort, whether healthy or unhealthy, conscious or unconscious, to avoid, neutralize, or mitigate pressures or to endure their effects as generously as possible. This term draws attention to one thing: coping techniques aren't always beneficial and healthy (Baqtayan, 2015). There are times when people utilize coping methods that lead to further problems. One illustration is a person who embezzles funds to face personal financial issues. (Baqtayan, 2015). Therefore, efforts to manage demanding circumstances must be incorporated into definitions of coping, regardless of the outcome. This suggests that no method is considered to be inherently superior to all others.

The terms *coping mechanism* and *stress* are inextricably linked. According to the definition of stress, it is an uncomfortable condition of mental and physiological agitation that people experience when they perceive a harm to their safety or well-being. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Additionally, stress is a common response to pressures from day-to-day life, but it can turn harmful when it interferes with daily activities. Stress alters nearly every physical system, affecting how people feel and act. (American Psychological Association, 2022). In order to learn more about stress, it has been divided into three categories depending on the stressor,

which is the cause of the stress. The first is Cataclysmic Stressor. This term describes a sudden occurrence that significantly affects both an individual and a society at the same time, such as a war or a natural disaster (such as an earthquake or a hurricane). The second is Background Stressor. Background stressor, sometimes known as "daily troubles," is a result of ordinary concerns. This stressor is seen as a minor issue, but it persists. As a result, it may interfere with daily lives and result in negative stress for people, such as having a lot of duties, feeling alone, and having arguments with their spouse, family, and other people. The third stressor is Personal Stressor. This stressor impacts individuals and might be unpredictable. However, it has a significant impact and calls for a lot of coping, much as dealing with life-threatening illnesses, losing a job, being divorced, losing a loved one, and other similar situations. Due of the absence of support from those who suffer the same fate, personal stressors are much harder to overcome than cataclysmic stressors.

Grief is categorized as one of the *stressor* which is named Personal Stressor. Since it is unpredictable, grief as well as another personal stressor needs more efforts for someone to cope with. Grief is inevitable. It can come to anyone and anytime. Mostly, grief comes all of sudden without any reminder, which often makes people shocked and deny it. The term grief refers to the state of death or loss of someone or something. Grief is such a feeling when someone or something you love is taken away. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022), grief is a term used to

describe the intense, acute sadness that is brought on by or as a result of loss. Grief is the agony experienced after a significant loss, most frequently the passing of a loved one (American Psychological Association, 2022). Common grief symptoms include physical aches, separation anxiety, perplexity, longing, excessive past pondering, and fear of the future. Due to the immune system instability, self-neglect, and suicidal thoughts that often accompany intense grief, it can be fatal. Regret for something lost, guilt for a thing done, or sorrow for one's own misfortune are other ways that sadness might appear.

The loss of an important person is one example of grief that may occur to someone's life. There is as much grief as the way people deal with it. There are people who are less capable of overcoming grief, but there are also people who manage to deal with it. People who are not able to deal with it will result in anxiety, stress, trauma, and so on. According to Dowdney L (2005), it is a devastating, irreparable loss that leaves a person feeling very distressed when a parent or sibling passes away during adolescence. The majority of grieving teenagers struggle with self-esteem concerns, sleep disorders, anger, impatience, and other behavioral problems (Silverman & Worden, 1992). The psychological adjustment that follows parental loss is most frequently accompanied by depressive symptoms. Teenagers who have lost a parent are more likely to experience significant depressive episodes and internalizing disorders. In addition, kids who have lost a parent or a sibling are more likely to experience the

same mental health problems (Harrison, L & Harrington, R, 2001). On the contrary, for those who succeed, they will be able to accept the problems of life that befall them as a real reality and should be faced with grace, which will eventually lead to the acceptance of themselves.

People frequently deal to the loss of a loved one in different ways. People express their grief over loss in different ways and for varying lengths of time. It may be damaging to define or judge someone else's grief, especially in the early stages of mourning, because every person and every loss experiences grief differently (Zisook & Shear, 2009). The different reactions experienced by different people depend on their personalities, histories of bereavement, cultures, upbringings, and relationships with the deceased. There is no such thing as a proper or improper method to handle grief. Some people may communicate their feelings and emotions in an open way. On the other side, some people will decide to keep their thoughts, feelings, and emotions to themselves While some people are able to get over their sense of loss quickly, others will need a lot of time to recover.

Additionally, there is the earlier research by Gabriela Ajeng Cahyaning Puspitajati titled *Maria's Stress Coping in Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes on coping with stress*. The researcher, in this research, focuses on the way the character copes with the stress which is divided based on the effects of the stress in the main character's life; eustress and distress. Eustress is viewed as a form of healthy stress with positive



consequences (Donatelle, 2003). Distress, or negative stress, is seen as the opposite of eustress. This type of stress results from negative situations and has negative consequences (Donatelle, 2003). While the earlier research gives the perspective of coping mechanism from the effect of the stress; eustress and distress, the research of coping mechanism in Kathleen Glasgow's novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) focuses on the cause of the stress; personal stressor.

The phenomena that discuss about coping with grief can also be found in literary work written by Kathleen Glasgow entitled *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019), one of the *New York Times* bestselling novels. She was inspired to write *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) since grief is the kind of thing that is still taboo for people to talk about, since it is very personal. By writing this novel, she hopes that grief will have more concerned because all human being, without exception, have to go through grief. This novel was published in New York in 2019. This novel talks about *Tiger*, a 16 years old girl, who loses the most important person in her life: her mother. She must endure a tragic loss that completely changes her life. *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) offers an intriguing look at sorrow in all its expressions and how it's okay to live with it.

The issue of coping with grief is reflected by the main character in coping while experiencing grief. It is represented by the main character named *Tiger* whose mother suddenly died and puts her into misery. Since

*Tiger* does not have anyone but her mother, she lost. She does not know how to react and deal with the grief. In facing the situation, she does sort of things to distract her mind from the grief. At the end, Tiger can accept the reality because some of the coping mechanism she did.

In order to further realize how to cope with grief, this study analyzes how *Tiger*, the main character in *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019), copes with her grief while she is facing the loss of her loved one.

### **1.2. Focus of the Problem**

The novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) written by Kathleen Glasgow reflects the issue about coping with grief after experiencing the loss of her loved one. The research focuses on the way the character *Tiger* copes with her grief.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

There are two research questions to analyze the issue in the novel:

1. How does the novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) by Kathleen Glasgow expose the issue of coping with grief?
2. What are the ways the character does to cope with grief in the novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019)?

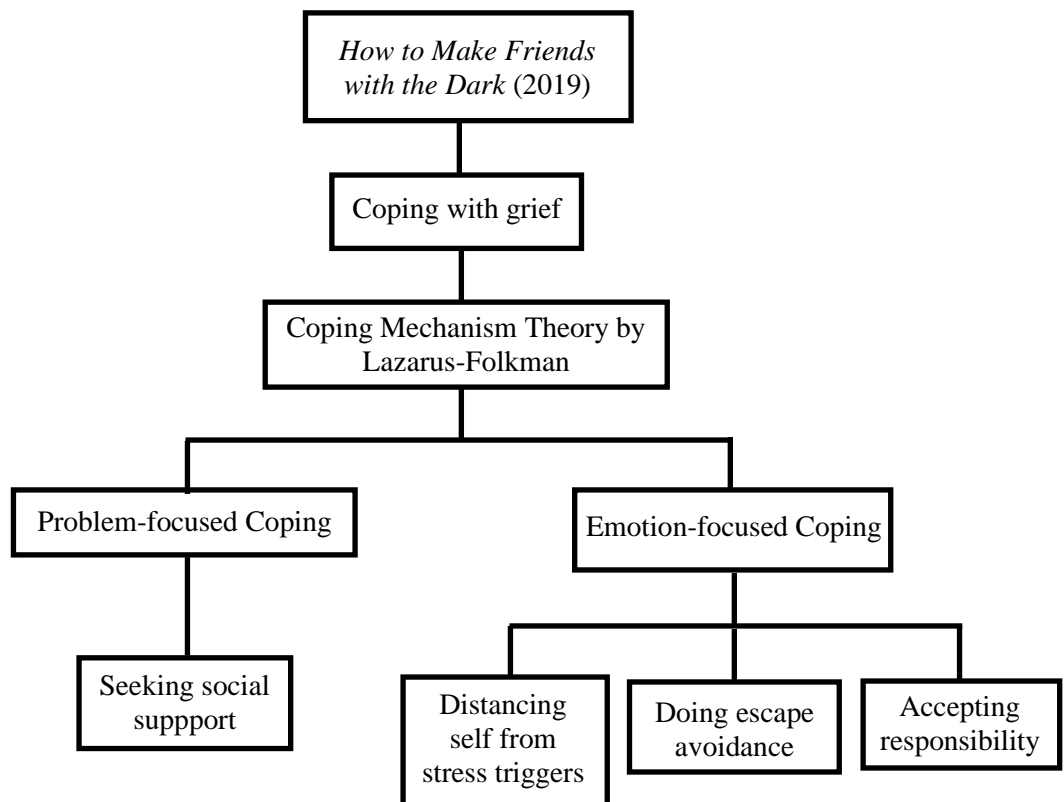
### **1.4. Purpose of the Research**

This research is aimed to see how far the novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) by Kathleen Glasgow exposes the issue of

coping with grief. Furthermore, this research analyzes the role of character, plot, and setting in novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) by Kathleen Glasgow in revealing the issue of coping with grief.

### 1.5. Conceptual Framework

Researcher creates the conceptual framework in order to show how the process of the research accomplishment. The conceptual framework is revealed as following:



This research discusses the issue of coping with grief in the novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019) by Kathleen Glasgow based on Lazarus Folkman's coping mechanism theory. In this research, coping mechanism is divided in two, problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. While in problem-focused coping it shows through seeking social support, in emotion-focused coping it shows through distancing self from stress triggers, doing escape avoidance, and accepting responsibility.