

**FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF OF THREE MAIN CHARACTERS
IN ASHLEY WOODFOLK'S *THE BEAUTY THAT REMAINS***

THESIS

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG

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THESIS

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Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang,

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2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**Five stages of grief of three main characters in Ashley Woodfolk’s *The Beauty That Remains***” is my original work. I do not include materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, June, 15, 2026

The researcher



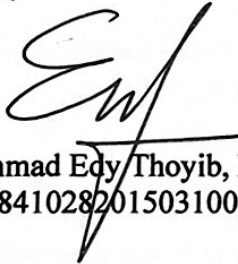
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MOTTO

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, 'Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.’”

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

"They said, 'Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.'"

(QS. Al-Baqarah 31-32)

DEDICATION

To my beloved parents:

Bapa Ishak and Mama Nur,

I dedicate this thesis with my deepest love and gratitude.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah SWT, whose mercy, guidance, and blessings have given me strength to complete this thesis. Peace and blessings are also upon Prophet Muhammad SAW. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

1. My beloved parents, Bapa Ishak and Mama Nur, for their endless prayers, love, patience, and sacrifices. Thank you for raising me, educating me, and giving me the chance to continue my study until university level. This thesis is a small form of my gratitude for everything you have given to me.
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4. Myself, for continuing even with complaints, doubts, and tiredness along the way. Thank you for not stopping and for choosing to finish what had been started.

May Allah SWT bless everyone who has supported me in this journey. Hopefully, this thesis can be useful for readers and future researchers.

ABSTRACT

Faisal, Ahmad (2026) Five Stages of Grief of Three Main Characters in Ashley Woodfolk's *The Beauty That Remains*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Muhammad Edy Thoyib, M.A.

Key Words: Grief, Five Stages of Grief, Psychology of Literature, *The Beauty That Remains*

Grief is a psychological and emotional response experienced by someone after losing a loved one. This issue is also represented in literary works, one of which is the novel *The Beauty That Remains* by Ashley Woodfolk, which describes the grief experiences of three teenagers after the death of someone close to them. This study aims to analyze the grief experiences of Autumn, Logan, and Shay using the Five Stages of Grief theory by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler, which consists of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This study uses literary criticism with a literary psychology approach. The main data source for this study is the novel *The Beauty That Remains*, while the research data are in the form of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narratives that show the grief experiences of the three main characters. The results of the study show that Autumn, Logan, and Shay experience all five stages of grief, but their responses appear in different forms and are not always linear. Autumn's grief is characterized by disbelief, anger, regret, sadness, and acceptance of life changes after Tavia's death. Logan's grief is influenced by guilt, unfinished love, and the loss of the ability to write songs after Bram's death. Meanwhile, Shay's grief is related to her identity as Sasha's twin, panic attacks, symbolic attachment, and feelings of twinlessness. This study concludes that the grief in the novel is personal and complex.

مستخلص البحث

فيصل، أحمد (٢٠٢٦) المراحل الخمس للحزن لدى الشخصيات الثلاث الرئيسية في رواية «الجمال الباقي لأشلي وودفولك. أطروحة بكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية في مالانج. المشرف: محمد إدي ثويب، ماجستير.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الكلمات الرئيسية: الكلمات المفتاحية: الحزن، المراحل الخمس للحزن، علم النفس الأدبي
The Beauty That Remains

الحزن هو رد فعل نفسي وعاطفي يمر به الشخص بعد فقدان أحد أحبائه. وقد تم تناول هذه المسألة للكاتبة أشلي وودفولك، التي *The Beauty That Remains* أيضًا في الأعمال الأدبية، ومن بينها رواية تصف تجارب الحزن التي يمر بها ثلاثة مراهقين بعد وفاة أشخاص مقربين منهم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل تجارب الحزن التي مر بها أوتوم، ولوغان، وشاي باستخدام نظرية المراحل الخمس للحزن لإليزابيث كوبر-روس وديفيد كيسلر، والتي تتكون من الإنكار، والغضب، والمساومة، والاكتئاب، والقبول. تستخدم *The Beauty That Remains* هذه الدراسة النقد الأدبي مع نهج علم النفس الأدبي. مصدر البيانات الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو رواية بينما تأتي بيانات البحث في شكل كلمات وعبارات وجمل وحوارات وسرد، *The Beauty That Remains* يظهر تجارب الحزن للشخصيات الرئيسية الثلاث. تظهر نتائج الدراسة أن أوتوم، ولوغان، وشاي يمرون بجميع مراحل الحزن الخمس، لكن ردود أفعالهم تظهر بأشكال مختلفة وليست دائمًا خطية. يتميز حزن أوتوم بعدم التصديق، والغضب، والندم، والحزن، وقبول التغيرات الحياتية بعد وفاة تافيا. يتأثر حزن لوغان بالذنب والحب غير المكتمل، وفقدان القدرة على كتابة الأغاني بعد وفاة برام. في حين يرتبط حزن شاي بهويتها كتوأم ساشا، ونوبات الهلع، والتعلق الرمزي، ومشاعر فقدان التوأم. تخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن الحزن في الرواية شخصي ومعقد وغير خطي.

ABSTRAK

Faisal, Ahmad (2026) Five Stages of Grief of Three Main Characters in Ashley Woodfolk's *The Beauty That Remains*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Muhammad Edy Thoyib, M.A.

Kata Kunci: grief, Five Stages of Grief, psikologi sastra, *The Beauty That Remains*, Ashley Woodfolk

Duka merupakan respons psikologis dan emosional yang dialami seseorang setelah kehilangan orang yang dicintai. Persoalan ini juga direpresentasikan dalam karya sastra, salah satunya dalam novel *The Beauty That Remains* karya Ashley Woodfolk, yang menggambarkan pengalaman duka tiga remaja setelah kematian orang terdekat mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengalaman duka Autumn, Logan, dan Shay dengan menggunakan teori Five Stages of Grief dari Elisabeth Kübler-Ross dan David Kessler, yang terdiri dari denial, anger, bargaining, depression, dan acceptance. Penelitian ini menggunakan kritik sastra dengan pendekatan psikologi sastra. Sumber data utama penelitian ini adalah novel *The Beauty That Remains*, sedangkan data penelitian berupa kata, frasa, kalimat, dialog, dan narasi yang menunjukkan pengalaman duka ketiga tokoh utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Autumn, Logan, dan Shay mengalami kelima tahap duka, tetapi respons mereka muncul dalam bentuk yang berbeda dan tidak selalu linear. Duka Autumn ditandai oleh ketidakpercayaan, kemarahan, penyesalan, kesedihan, dan penerimaan terhadap perubahan hidup setelah kematian Tavia. Duka Logan dipengaruhi oleh rasa bersalah, cinta yang belum selesai, dan kehilangan kemampuan menulis lagu setelah kematian Bram. Sementara itu, duka Shay berkaitan dengan identitasnya sebagai saudara kembar Sasha, panic attack, keterikatan simbolik, dan perasaan menjadi twinless. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa duka dalam novel tersebut bersifat personal, dan kompleks.

TABLE OF CONTENT

THESIS	ii
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP	iii
APPROVAL SHEET	iv
LEGITIMATION SHEET	v
MOTTO	vi
DEDICATION.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
مستخلص البحث.....	x
ABSTRAK	xi
TABLE OF CONTENT	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the Study	1
B. Problem of the Study	6
C. Significance of the Study	6
D. Scope and Limitation	6
E. Definition of Key Terms	7
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	8
A. Psychology of Literature.....	8
B. Grief	10
C. Five Stages of Grief	12
CHAPTER III RESEACH METHOD.....	19

A. Research Design.....	19
B. Data Source.....	20
C. Data Collection	20
D. Data Analysis	20
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	22
A. Autumn’s Grief Response.....	22
B. Logan’s Grief Response.....	37
C. Shay’s Grief Response.....	52
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	80
A. Conclusion	80
B. Suggestion.....	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	86

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a foundation for research. This chapter begins with Background of the Study which describes grief as a response to death, its depiction in literary works, and its relevance to the novel *The Beauty That Remains* by Ashley Woodfolk. The Problem of the Study formulates the main questions of the research. Significance of the Study explains the contribution of research to the study of literature, especially in understanding grief through the theory of Five Stages of Grief from Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler. Scope and Limitation explains the limitations of grief-focused research experienced by the three main characters in the novel through Five Stages of Grief. Finally, the Definition of Key Terms explains the important concepts used in this research.

A. Background of the Study

The loss of a loved one is a significant and profound emotional experience that affects individuals in various ways. Grief refers to the feelings a person experiences when experiencing loss, expressed through thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Grief reactions vary, as it is a personal experience shaped by the social and emotional context of the loss itself (Neimeyer, 2001). Stroebe & Schut (1999) states that grief is an emotional response to the loss of a loved one through death. Death itself is inevitable, mysterious, and mysterious. Bauman (2003) stated that death is the most reliable and certain human experience. Death is incomprehensible and beyond the comprehension of the human mind. People have various ways of coping with death, some by experiencing and witnessing the deaths of others, and others by reading fictional stories and describing how death feels (Nurjanah, 2021).

Grief doesn't just occur in real life; grief is also widely represented in literary works. Literature is a creative activity and art form that reflects the realities of life. Literature itself represents human actions and behavior in everyday life (Ramadhan & Rohanda, 2024). Literature depicts the human soul and helps us understand others. Although often considered unimportant and not comparable to other fields such as law or economics, literature focuses on teaching human values. As a humanities field, literature combines several disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, and religion. Literary works are an inseparable part of human life itself. Setiawati & Rohada (2020) state that someone can use literary works as a tool to express their feelings or thoughts.

Loss is often represented in literary works as an important experience that shapes conflict, character development, and the overall meaning of the story. Using narrative as its vehicle, literary works present the event of death as more than just an incident; they also present how characters perceive, interpret, and respond to the loss. Literature can be an important tool in understanding grief's experience, because readers not only see the fact of loss, but also the emotional process that reinforces it. Literary texts can provide a picture of the experience of loss, not only recording the event of death but also constructing the meaning of grief through the narrative and emotional conflicts of the characters (Ruhe, 2024).

The Beauty That Remains (2018) is a Young Adult novel by Ashley Woodfolk that centers on the experiences of three characters with loss, from Autumn, Logan, and Shay (Woodfolk, 2018). All three characters experience the death of a loved one, but each experiences their loss differently. These differing

experiences make this novel significant for study, as grief is not represented through a single character, but through three emotional experiences unfolding within a single narrative. The analysis of these three characters is significant not simply because they are the main characters, but because each presents a complementary form of grief experience, illustrating how loss is interpreted and experienced differently.

The Beauty That Remains offers a powerful perspective on how to examine the grief experienced by each character in greater depth. Each character experiences loss through death in different situations, such as accident, suicide, and illness. Therefore, the context of the loss also influences each character's emotional state. More importantly, the novel demonstrates that grief is not a single or uniform response. Analyzing the three characters together allows this study to understand how the experience of grief is more fully represented through each character's emotional development.

Grief experience of the three main characters in this study is understood through the Five Stages of Grief theory by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005a). This theory is used because it provides a clear framework in understanding how individuals respond to loss through certain emotional stages. Although Kubler Ross's theory is often understood as a sequence of stages of grief, in its use, each individual's grief experience does not always appear completely or occur rigidly and sequentially. Therefore, this theory is relevant to use to read the

grief experiences of Autumn, Logan, and Shay, because each character shows an emotional response that develops through different events in the story.

Several studies have explored representation of grief in literary works using theory Five Stage of Grief as an analytical framework. Studies by Nurjanah et al., (2023) on *A Grief Observed* and Wijaya et al., (2023) on *The Shack* both show that the grief stage can be used to read the emotional development of the character after experiencing loss. Then, Nurul (2025) demonstrates through *Tony Takitani*, shows that grief is individual, so not all stages have to appear completely in the experience of losing a character.

A similar approach is extended to different narrative media, as seen in Nindiani & Sari, (2025) who analyzes grief in the series *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, Pilomonu et al. (2024) who examines emotional loss in Joji's *Ballads 1*, and Novia & Widianingtyas (2023) which focuses on the process of 5 stages of grief on a burn song from Hamilton, these studies show that Five Stage of Grief theory is not only relevant to written literature, but can also be applied to reading grief representations in various narrative forms. In the context of Indonesian literary and cultural studies, research by Sisca, (2022) and Muslimah et al. (2025) also applied the Five Stages of Grief in identifying the emotional response of the character to loss.

Meanwhile Ratcliffe & Byrne (2022) and Bovalino (2022) Bringing a different perspective by positioning grief as a meaning-forming experience influenced by personal relationships and narrative experiences. This view means that grief can not only be read as a series of emotional stages, but also as an inner

experience that develops in the context of the story and the relationship between the characters. Previous studies provide an important basis for this research, both in the use of Five Stages of Grief theory and in the understanding that grief in narrative texts is always related to the personal experiences of a particular character or subject.

From previous research, it can be seen that Five Stage of Grief theory has been widely used to analyze grief in various literary works and narrative media. However, most of this research focuses predominantly on identifying the stages of grief in a single character or subject. As a result, readings of grief tend to be limited to identifying the emotional stages that emerge, without examining how grief develops contextually within the storyline.

This study takes a different approach by analyzing the grief experiences of the three main characters in *The Beauty That Remains*. These three characters are important to study together because this novel constructs a representation of grief through three different experiences of loss within a single narrative, the results of which can also vary for each character. By analyzing Autumn, Logan, and Shay simultaneously, this study can not only identify the stages of grief they experience but also show how each stage emerges, develops, and is interpreted within the context of the events experienced by each character.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how the three main characters who lost their loved ones due to death in the novel *The Beauty That Remains* are seen through the perspective of the Five Stages of Grief by Elisabeth Kubler Ross & David Kessler. By focusing on Autumn, Logan, and Shay, this study attempts to

explain how the grief response of each character develops throughout the story, as well as how the stages of grief are represented through the emotional responses and experiences of loss of each character.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on the Background above, the researcher formulates a research question on this study is: How do the three main characters experience Five Stages of Grief on death of the loved ones in Ashley Woodfolk *The Beauty That Remains*?

C. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to contribute to literary studies, especially in the analysis of grief experiences in literary works. First, this research can be an academic reference for literature students in applying the theory of Five Stages of Grief from Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler in analyzing the emotional experiences of characters in dealing with loss due to death. Second, this research is expected to enrich the understanding of how grief is represented in literary works through the stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, as well as how these stages are present and develop in the context of the story. Third, this research is also expected to help readers and literary researchers in understanding the grief experiences experienced by the characters in the novel *The Beauty That Remains* in more depth.

D. Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on the grief experienced by the three main characters in Ashley Woodfolk's *The Beauty That Remains*: Autumn, Logan, and Shay. These characters are chosen because they all experience the same form of loss, namely the death of a loved one, although their relationships with the deceased and the contexts

of the deaths are different. Their grief responses are analyzed through Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler's Five Stages of Grief, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This study is limited to how grief is experienced and expressed through the characters' dialogues, actions, and narratives in the storyline. It does not discuss the characters' clinical psychological conditions or the recovery process beyond its relevance to their grief responses.

E. Definition of Key Terms

1. Grief

In this study, grief refers to the emotional response experienced by individuals after losing a loved one, as represented through the thoughts, feelings, and actions of characters in literary texts.

2. Five Stages of Grief

The Five Stages of Grief is a conceptual model proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler that classifies emotional responses to loss into five categories: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005)

3. Grief Responses

Grief responses refer to the forms of emotional expression of characters towards loss, such as denial, anger, deep sadness, or acceptance through the narrative, dialogue, and actions of characters in the novel.

4. Main Characters

The main characters refer to the central characters in the novel *The Beauty That Remains*, namely Autum, Logan, Shay, who are the focus of analysis because their experiences of grief are central to the narrative development of the story.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a theoretical basis for the research. This chapter begins with a discussion of the Psychology of Literature as a general framework for research. Next, this chapter explains the concept of grief and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler's Five Stages of Grief which is used as the main framework to analyze how the three main characters experience grief in response to death. Then, this chapter also discusses some supporting concepts related to grief to support the analysis of the emotional experiences of the main characters as depicted in the novel.

A. Psychology of Literature

Psychology and literature are closely and functionally related. The goal of psychology and literature is human life. Literary psychology seeks to clearly understand the psychological structures found in literary works. Literary psychology views literary works as the result of an author's creativity, utilizing language as a medium and immortalized for aesthetic purposes. Literary psychology plays a role in analyzing a literary work by operating from the psychological perspective of the literary work, whether from the author, characters, or readers. Literary psychology views literary works as containing human life events played by factual characters (Barry, 2009).

There is a direct relationship between literature and psychology, meaning that both literature and psychology share the same starting point: the human psyche. Understanding the theory of literary psychology can be achieved in three ways: first, by understanding psychological theories and then conducting an analysis of

the literary work. Second, by first establishing a literary work as the object of research, then determining psychological theories deemed relevant for use. Third, by simultaneously identifying the theory and the object of research. With literary psychology, the other aspects of a literary work can be understood proportionally.

Studying literature is essentially the same as studying humankind from a deeper perspective. Readers' responses to literary works are inseparable from their individual psychological states. (Wallek & Warren, 1956) argued that the term literary psychology has four possible meanings: 1. the study of the psychology of the author as a type or as a person; 2. the study of the creative process; 3. the study of the types and laws of psychology applied to literary works; and 4. the study of the impact of literature on readers. Thus, literary psychology serves as a theoretical basis for analyzing the emotional experiences of characters in literary works, including experiences of loss and grief responses.

The psychological approach in this research, apart from being a general framework, also has a function as a basis for analysis to read the emotional dynamics of the characters more specifically. What makes this important, grief does not only appear as a theme, but as an inner experience that makes the character's way of understanding loss. Therefore, the use of Five Stages of Grief theory becomes relevant, as it facilitates conceptual categories to identify the forms of emotional responses that appear in the text.

A number of existing studies have shown that the Kübler-Ross model is still widely used as a framework for understanding emotional responses to loss, although it is not understood as a linear stage (Avis et al., 2021; Purba et al., 2025).

Thus, the psychological approach allows the analysis not to stop at the depiction of the event of loss, but also to explore how emotional responses are formed, changed, and interpreted by each character in the context of different experiences of loss.

B. Grief

Grieving begins with the word grief, which means the simplest meaning of sadness. Grief can be interpreted as a feeling of sadness that results when an individual is faced with the event of loss, namely the death of a loved one or loved one (Hilberdink et al., 2023). Grief can also be described as an emotional response that occurs in individuals from a stressful loss situation due to death or the loss of someone who has a strong emotional bond with the one left behind (Sanstoso & Muagiri, 2024).

Complex emotional responses due to grief can also be represented by the loss of loved ones or things more than from sadness and suffering. Grieving and grief have the same root, but in terms of use differ in terms of the emotional context and process. Grief refers to the feelings of sadness and distress caused by loss. Meanwhile, grieving is a natural and complex process of responding to loss, involving emotional, physical, and social consequences. At its core, both are synonyms that refer to deep grief over loss (Guldin & Leget, 2024)

There are several definitions of grief. Grief is the intense emotional suffering that accompanies the experience of losing someone (Kirsh et al., 2014). Traditionally, grief is defined as an emotional process whose ultimate goal is to sever ties with the deceased so that the sufferer can "live again". Klass, (1996) defines grief as the active process of constructing an internal representation of the deceased, which is a normal part of the grieving process. Colin Murray also adds

that grief is a normal emotional reaction to loss, requiring time and social support to recover (Shafter, 1972).

Another, Santrock 2018 in Salsabila (2025) explained that grief is a complicated emotional situation that includes various conditions such as emotional dullness, uncertainty, insecurity arising from separation anxiety, despair, sadness, and loneliness caused by the loss of a loved one. In line with that, Chiambretto in Salsabila (2025), stated that grief is a feeling of hopelessness and sadness followed by a sense of helplessness and defeat, and followed by symptoms of depression, apathy, the appearance of feelings of loneliness in individuals, to the loss of meaning in activities related to people who are now gone.

Then, Guldin & Leget (2024) also explained that grief is a deep longing felt by individuals for the person who has left them followed by pain, emptiness, numbness, struggling hard to find meaning, and living life as it was before the loss occurred. When a person experiences a psychological condition with deep suffering and at the same time, many difficult emotions appear, such as sadness, heartache, suffering, pain, distress, and misery that originate from a sense of loss is also included in someone who experiences grief (Richardson, 2023).

According to Averill (1968), one thought says that we will go through three phases of grief, after we lose someone we love, namely surprise, despair, and recovery. Then, grief can affect 4 aspects, physical aspects, mental aspects, social aspects, and spiritual aspects. The physical aspect is what is experienced by each individual and is different. There are symptoms of headaches that often hurt, often brood, weak core bodies, and tightness. In the mental aspect itself, it can be seen

with the feelings that arise in them are very different. Then, the social aspect, can be seen from the social attitude carried out. For the spiritual aspect, it can be seen from the various feelings of prayer that arise in individuals.

So, it can be said that grief is an intense and deep emotional reaction, suffering experienced by an individual due to a loss event such as the death of a loved one. The experience of grief varies from person to person, influenced by various factors, such as your relationship with the deceased, the meaning of the loss, and the context in which the death occurred. Essentially, grief is an adaptive response essential for recovery.

C. Five Stages of Grief

The Five Stages of Grief were first introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book, *On Death and Dying*. Initially, the Five Stages of Grief were applied to explain the emotional responses of terminally ill patients facing the reality of their own death. Thirty-six years later, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, along with David Kessler, expanded the understanding of the Five Stages of Grief to the experience of grieving after the loss of a loved one, which is presented in *On Grief and Grieving*.

The Five Stages of Grief in *On Grief and Grieving* are responses to loss. They are not meant to organize the complex and messy emotions of grief into rigid categories. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain that no response is exactly the same, just as there are different forms of loss. The Five Stages of Grief are better understood as a framework for identifying the possible emotions present in the grief process.

The Five Stages of Grief consist of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) also explain that the Five Stages of Grief do not progress linearly. A person does not necessarily move sequentially from denial to acceptance, and not everyone experiences all stages completely. The stages may alternate, overlap, recur, or appear stronger in one individual than in another.

1. Denial

Denial is a stage in the grieving process that helps individuals cope with the initial impact of loss. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain that denial in the context of grief is often misunderstood. While in *On Death and Dying*, denial was initially used to describe a terminally ill patient's response to the reality of their own death, in *On Grief and Grieving*, denial is directed at the experience of the bereaved after the loss of a loved one. Denial does not necessarily mean that the individual is completely unaware of the death. Denial in bereaved individuals is more symbolic than literal (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). This means that a person may know the truth, but emotionally cannot yet fully grasp that the person will not return.

In this stage, individuals may experience shock, numbness, disbelief, or a state of emotional paralysis. Loss impacts the world, making it feel meaningless, and life becomes difficult to comprehend. Kübler-Ross and Kessler refer to denial and shock as helping us to cope because they help individuals cope when the pain of loss feels overwhelming. Denial also serves as a psychological defense mechanism that temporarily distances the individual from the pain of loss.

Denial can also arise through questions, inquiries, or thoughts that indicate the individual is still trying to understand the reality of death. A grieving person

may question the reality of the loss. Kübler-Ross and Kessler point out that denial often manifests through questions about reality, such as, "Are they really gone?" These questions indicate that the individual's mind is trying to accept reality, but at the same time, they are not yet fully able to accept the certainty that the loss is permanent.

In the experience of bereavement, denial can also be present subtly, even though someone has taken actions that appear to be aware of the loss, such as attending a funeral or engaging in activities after the death of a loved one. The individual knows the person has died, but the feeling persists that they are only gone, can still be contacted, or may return. As denial begins to fade, the individual begins to face the reality of the loss more clearly. At this stage, questions about how and why the loss occurred and the feeling that the loved one will not return become more real. This process can be interpreted as the beginning of healing as the individual begins to accept the reality of the loss, although other emotions such as anger, bargaining, and depression may emerge. Denial in grief is not a permanent rejection, but a protective stage that helps the individual move slowly toward awareness of the loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005).

2. Anger

Anger is a stage in the grieving process that occurs when an individual begins to confront the consequences of loss. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) state that anger does not have to be logical or valid. This means that a grieving individual can feel angry even though they rationally know that death cannot be fully controlled. Anger can be directed at themselves, others, doctors, family, the

environment, the deceased, or even God. At this stage, the individual begins to feel that the loss was unfair, should not have happened, or happened too soon.

Anger in grief also does not exist in isolation but is closely connected to deeper pain. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) emphasize that "underneath anger is pain." Therefore, anger can be seen as a form of emotion that masks sadness, panic, hurt, loneliness, or feelings of abandonment. Grieving individuals may be angry because they feel they didn't have enough time with the deceased, because they couldn't have prevented the loss, or because they must continue living in a world that has lost a loved one. Anger can be part of an individual's way of coping with the intensity of a loss that hasn't yet been fully accepted.

Anger is also described as an emotion that can temporarily fill the void caused by loss. When an individual is lost due to grief, anger can become something to hold onto, despite its painful nature. Kübler-Ross and Kessler call it anger has no limits, as anger can move in various directions and resurface during the grieving process. Anger can also transform into guilt when directed at oneself (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005).

3. Bargaining

Bargaining is a stage in the grieving process where individuals attempt to negotiate the reality of loss, both consciously and unconsciously. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain that bargaining can occur before and after a loss. Before the loss, it often manifests as a plea for the loved one to be saved. However, after the loss occurs, bargaining can emerge in the form of "if only" or "what if" thoughts. Through such thoughts, individuals imagine alternative possibilities that could prevent death or change events that have already occurred. Bargaining not only

involves direct bargaining with others or God but can also be an internal process where individuals seek possibilities that could lessen, delay, or cancel the pain of loss.

In the bargaining stage, individuals often become trapped in the past because they imagine how things could have been. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) state that guilt often accompanies bargaining, because "if only" thoughts cause individuals to blame themselves and imagine things that could have been done differently. A grieving individual may constantly think about possibilities such as if they had acted sooner, made a different decision, or prevented the loss. Bargaining here becomes a temporary way for the individual to escape the painful reality that a loved one is truly gone. Therefore, bargaining can also be interpreted as an individual's inner effort to cling to past possibilities and seek temporary solutions to the pain of loss.

4. Depression

Depression is the phase in the grieving process when someone begins to experience a profound loss. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain in *On Grief and Grieving* that after bargaining, a person's attention shifts to the present, no longer imagining and negotiating the loss, but rather experiencing it directly. In this phase, a person will experience feelings of sadness and loss due to the actual loss of a loved one. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) also state that grief is not a sign of mental illness, but rather a normal emotional reaction to experiencing profound loss.

In the depression phase, after experiencing loss, a person will face daily life differently than before. Normal activities will feel heavier, emptier, and less

meaningful. A person may continue to perform routine activities, but the sense of loss becomes an emotional reason to carry them out. This occurs because the loss begins to linger in a person's consciousness, thus making life seem more meaningful without the deceased. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005a) state that depression is an appropriate response to a great loss because the loss of a loved one creates a profound sense of sadness.

A person experiencing depression will also withdraw from social life and experience persistent, lingering sadness. Kübler-Ross and Kessler suggest that this condition is characterized by a person being left in a fog of intense sadness (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this state, a person questions whether there is any reason to continue living after experiencing loss. Depression causes a profound sense of loss. The realization that a loved one isn't coming back deepens the sadness.

Although it can be difficult, depression in grief shouldn't always be understood as a condition that must be immediately eliminated. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) state that grief in grieving should be given space because it becomes part of the healing process. In this phase, a person is no longer weak or unable to accept reality, but is instead facing a profound loss that may have previously been characterized by denial, anger, or bargaining. So, depression can be interpreted as a phase when someone begins to truly realize the impact of loss in life and slowly learns to accept the fact that life must go on even without the presence of a loved one.

5. Acceptance

Acceptance is the phase in the grieving process when a person begins to accept the physical loss of a loved one. In *On Grief and Grieving* Kübler-Ross &

Kessler (2005) state that acceptance is often misunderstood as a state where someone feels okay with the loss. However, acceptance does not mean someone is happy with the loss or has completely recovered from the grief. Acceptance is more about recognizing that the loved one is physically gone and that this reality has become a permanent reality.

In this phase, a person learns to live in a new reality after the loss. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) state that this reality is a new norm, a new living condition that should be accepted and lived. A person begins to realize that life before the loss cannot be fully maintained. Roles, relationships, habits, and the way an individual lives can change due to the loss of a loved one.

Acceptance also does not occur suddenly. The process in this phase occurs gradually, as a person begins to adapt to the loss and finds ways to survive. A person may begin to have more good days than bad, reconnect with new people, or begin to engage with life. However, this does not mean that the deceased has been replaced or forgotten.

Therefore, acceptance can be defined as a person's ability to live with the reality of loss. In this phase, a person is not required to view the loss as something good, but begins to acknowledge that life has changed and must continue. Acceptance is not the end of love or memories for the deceased, but rather a form of adjustment to the new reality after loss.

CHAPTER III

RESEACH METHOD

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this research. This chapter decrypts the research design and describes the approach used in analyzing the novel. Also, this chapter describes the source of the data and the types of data collected. In addition, this chapter describes the data collection procedures and data analysis steps used to examine the grief experienced by the three main characters through Five Stages of Grief theory based on textual evidence and story context

A. Research Design

This research uses literary criticism as a research design in analyzing the grief experienced by the three main characters in the novel *The Beauty That Remains* by Ashley Woodfokl literary criticism can be understood as an artisanal and systematic analytical activity to read, interpret, and evaluate literary works. According to Gillespie (2010), literary criticism is a disciplinary activity with the goal of describing, analyzing, and interpreting the meaning of literary works through a theoretical approach. In this study, literary criticism it is used to analyze how grief is presented through the narrative, dialogue, and actions of the novel's main characters. The analysis focused on three main characters, namely, Autumn, Logan, and Shay, using Elisabeth Kubler Ross's Five Stages of Grief theory as the main framework to understand how each character experiences and expresses grief over the death of a loved one.

B. Data Source

The object of this study is Ashley Woodfolk's novel, *The Beauty That Remains*. This Young Adult novel was first published by Penguin Random House in 2018 and served as the primary source for this research (Woodfolk, 2018). The data in this study consists of text excerpts taken from the novel, including narrative, dialogue, phrases, and expressions that represent the characters' emotional responses to loss. These excerpts serve as the primary data analyzed to examine the representation of the experience of grief.

C. Data Collection

In this study, the data were collected through a systematic reading of literary texts to obtain relevant data. First, the researcher thoroughly read Ashley Woodfolk's novel, *The Beauty That Remains*, to understand the plot, characters, and context of the loss experienced by each main character. Second, the researcher carefully reread the text and mark and note sections of the text related which shows the grief experienced by the three main characters. Third, the data that had been marked and recorded, were grouped based on their relevance to the stages of grief in Elisabeth Kubler Ross's Five Stages of Grief theory, while still taking into account the context of the event and the development of the story.

D. Data Analysis

In this study, the data analyzed through several steps adapted to the literary criticism approach and the research focus. First, the researcher identified and collected text excerpts that show the grief experienced by the three main characters, Autumn, Logan, and Shay, in the form of narratives, dialogues, and actions related to the experience of loss. Second, the collected data were read and understood based

on the context of its appearance in the storyline, so that each data is not analyzed separately from the events behind it. Third, the data is grouped based on the Five Stages of Grief theory.

At this stage, grouping was carried out by paying attention to how the emotional responses of the characters appear in the story, without directly detaching them from the situation and the development of each character's grief experience. Fourth, each data was analyzed by using textual evidence and theoretical concepts to explain how the character experiences certain stages of grief. Fifth, the results of the analysis are then compiled based on each main character to show how their grief develops throughout the story through different stages.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the grief response experienced by the three main characters in the novel *The Beauty That Remains* by Ashley Woodfolk. This analysis focuses on Autumn, Logan, and Shay, who experience grief after losing their loved ones through death. Each character is discussed separately to show how their grief response emerges through narrative, dialogue, and action in the story. The discussion was prepared based on the theory of the Five Stages of grief by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

A. Autumn's Grief Response

Autumn is an Asian-American teenager who has to deal with deep grief after her close friend, Tavia, dies in a car accident. Tavia herself is Hispanic. Autumn and Tavia's relationship itself is more than just friendship. Autumn considers Tavia an important figure in her life. They grew up together, celebrated birthdays together, played in the backyard together, and were always present in each other's lives. In their friendship group which contains 5 people, Autumn and Tavia are inseparable, the closeness of Autumn and Tavia feels more special, can say that it is like having a group in the group. Tavia's death was a hard blow to Autumn, she lost her beloved best friend, more than that, she had lost a figure who had been an important part of Autumn's daily life.

Tavia's death caused Autumn to experience a profound grief process in her life. In this process, Autumn exhibits five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In the denial stage, Autumn's response is seen through

her disbelief at Tavia's death and her efforts to continue to feel as if Tavia is still present in her life. In the anger stage, Autumn vents her anger at those she perceives as related to Tavia's death. In the bargaining stage, Autumn shows regret through "if" and "what if" thoughts that imagine other possibilities if the loss could have been changed. In the depression stage, Autumn begins to feel deeper sadness, emptiness, and pain as Tavia's absence becomes more apparent in her daily life. Ultimately, Autumn enters the acceptance stage when she begins to realize that her life has changed after Tavia's death and begins to learn to accept this reality as part of her life.

1. Denial

After Tavia's death, Autumn's denial is first seen in the opening chapter of Autumn's story, when Autumn is still trying to contact Tavia via Hangouts after learning about Tavia's death. This data is before the main narrative of Autumn begins, which plot-wise, this part is the starting point to see how Autumn's grief is depicted in the story. Through the message, Autumn is not yet able to accept Tavia's death as a true reality. Autumn still considers Tavia as her best friend who can read her messages, reply to them, or call her back. The communication pattern via Hangouts also shows that Autumn still maintains the communication habits she previously had with Tavia when she was alive. What is in:

I just saw you yesterday.
There's no way this is real. It can't be.
I keep waiting for you to call."
Tavia may not be on Hangouts right
Now. She'll see your messages later (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 7).

The data above demonstrates Autumn's denial, which emerges directly through her verbal expressions. The sentence "*I just saw you yesterday*" indicates

that Autumn still clings to her closest memory of Tavia the day before, making Tavia's death seem impossible for her to accept. This denial is further clarified in *"There's no way this is real"* and *"It can't be."* These two sentences demonstrate Autumn's explicit denial of the reality of what is happening. Autumn tries to convince herself that Tavia's death cannot be true.

The sentence *"I keep waiting for you to call"* also supports Autumn's denial. Autumn's anticipation of Tavia's return call indicates that Autumn still views Tavia as someone who can return to her daily life. Her death doesn't make Autumn aware that their communication has been severed. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, denial in grieving doesn't always mean someone truly doesn't know that a loved one has died. Denial in the bereaved can be more symbolic than literal. Here, Autumn is actually beginning to come to terms with Tavia's death, but emotionally isn't yet able to accept that Tavia's communication and presence have been permanently cut off (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005).

2. Anger

After Tavia died, Autumn's grief also grew from a sense of loss, turning into anger. In the context of the plot, this data appears when Autumn is talking to Dante about the changes in her life after Tavia's death. Before mentioning Perry, Autumn first describes how she hates riding the bus without Tavia, being at school without Tavia, constantly texting Willow, looking at photos of Tavia, and listening to certain songs to ease her sadness. This context suggests that Autumn's anger did not arise suddenly, but developed from a sense of loss that was constantly present in

her daily activities. After this sad discussion, Autumn again mentions Perry, the person she associates with the night of Tavia's accident.

For Autumn, Perry was the figure most associated with Tavia's death because on the night of Tavia's car accident, Perry's house was the place Tavia was heading to. Autumn has always avoided Perry since that incident Perry always reminds her of Tavia's loss. On the other hand, Perry always tries to communicate with Autumn, which makes Autumn feel uncomfortable. At first, the anger did not explode immediately, Autumn first showed it through her refusal to talk to Perry.

What is in:

"I know Perry's sad.
He's been in love with you since we were eleven. But God. I can't talk to him.
Especially since he's the whole reason you were even in your car that night. I hate
talking to anyone lately who isn't Dante. Or you (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 90).

Here, Autumn's anger towards Perry remains pent up. The line *"I can't talk to him"* suggests that Autumn is choosing to distance herself from Perry because the loss of Tavia makes it difficult for her to cope. This anger is further clarified by the line *"He's the whole reason you were even in your car that night."* Here, Autumn begins to blame Perry for Tavia being in the car that night. The anger she harbors in that moment hasn't yet manifested as an emotional outburst, but rather as suppressed anger directed at Perry. Autumn realizes that Perry may also be grieving, but her own pain makes it difficult for her to view Perry neutrally. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, anger in grief does not always have to be logical or valid (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). Therefore, Autumn's anger toward Perry does not need to be read as an objective judgment that Perry is truly responsible for Tavia's death (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). Then, it reflects how grief pushes

Autumn to direct her pain toward someone connected to the loss. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) also state that underneath anger is pain. In this context, Autumn's blame toward Perry reveals the pain behind her anger. Perry becomes the target of her anger because he is tied to the night Tavia died, and talking to him forces Autumn to face the loss she is still unable to process calmly.

Autumn's anger then develops into more open accusations when she confronts Perry directly at the beach party. This data emerges after Autumn becomes increasingly unable to cope with the loss of Tavia in seemingly normal social situations. At the party, Autumn sees people still gathered as if nothing has changed, while for her, everything feels different without Tavia. Perry's presence in this scene is a major trigger because Perry not only reminds Autumn of Tavia, but also of the night of the accident when Tavia was on her way to Perry's house. Because of this, Autumn's anger, which had previously only manifested as avoidance, begins to transform into direct accusations. What's in:

And I can't talk to Perry-I can't even look at him-without feeling like you'd still be here if you'd never fallen in love with him.

When I start sobbing into my gritty hands a minute later, both Dante and Perry try to help me up. Instead of reaching out for either of them, I crawl away from your brother and scream at your ex.

"She was coming to see you!" I shout to make Perry get away from me. I don't say your name, the way he always does, but I can tell by his face that he knows I mean you. "She wanted to get back together!" is what I yell next.

"Autumn, don't," Dante says. But I don't listen. We're all at this stupid party as if everything is normal, so I might as well tell the truth. Perry looks at me with something close to hope in his eyes, and it just makes me angrier. I don't want him to feel hopeful. I want him to hurt too. "She wanted to get back together," I say again, anger seeping into my low voice. "And she died on her way here, to your beach. To your house." (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 205-206).

Here, Autumn's anger shifts from silent rejection to direct accusation. The sentence *"I can't even look at him"* suggests that Perry's mere presence is enough to cause pain. Autumn also wonders if Tavia didn't like Perry, perhaps she'd still be

here. Autumn's mind searches for a possible explanation for Tavia's death. Autumn's accusation becomes clearer when she shouts, "*She was coming to see you!*" This sentence indicates that Autumn directly links Tavia's death to Perry. The line "*to your beach. To your house*" clarifies the direction of Autumn's anger, believing Tavia's accident wasn't accidental, but rather because she wanted to see Perry. Here, Autumn's anger emerges as an attempt to shift the burden of loss onto herself. Her overwhelming pain becomes the impetus for Autumn to make Perry feel the pain too.

Autumn's anger peaks when Autumn no longer associates Perry with Tavia's death but instead directly accuses him of causing it. This is evident in:

I'm stumbling, and still kind of sobbing, and by then, other people start to notice. Dante picks me up and throws me over his shoulder when I won't start walking on my own, and I hit his back, but he won't put me down. As he carts me away, I look back at Perry one last time. In a voice that sounds nothing like my own I screech, "She's dead because of you!" (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 207)

The sentence "*She's dead because of you!*" shows Autumn's most open anger. Autumn here truly states that Perry is the cause of Tavia's death. In "*a voice that sounds nothing like my own*" also supports that anger has made Autumn feel like she has lost control of herself. The voice comes from pain that has reached its peak. Here, Autumn's anger is in the form of anger that explodes in the form of direct accusations. According to Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005), underneath anger is pain. Thus, Autumn's outburst toward Perry reveals a pain she can no longer contain. Perry becomes the target of her anger not because of a rational analysis of Tavia's accident, but because Autumn connects Perry with the night of Tavia's death and with the reality that Tavia will not return.

3. Bargaining

Bargaining Autumn appears when Autumn begins to rethink the night of Tavia's accident through various possibilities that could have prevented her death. This data appears when Autumn and Dante are at a place related to Tavia's death. Autumn sees items left by others for Tavia, such as flowers, photos, and small objects as a form of memorial. This situation makes Autumn realize that many people have given Tavia farewell, while she feels she has not yet left anything truly for her friend. In this situation, Dante begins to blame himself, saying that the accident would not have happened if he was driving. Dante's response then prompts Autumn to mention various other possibilities that have also been haunting her. This is evident in:

"If I had been driving, this never would have happened," he says. He squats down beside me and clenches his jaw, his fists. "If I had been driving-" he starts again, but I cut him off.

"If I had gone to the party. If you had gone to the party. If she hadn't gone to the party. If it hadn't been icy. If she'd taken a back road..." I stand up, and even though I've felt so strong since I woke up this morning, tears are falling like heavy stones from my eyes all of a sudden. But maybe this is strength. Maybe holding on to all the circumstances I couldn't control was the weak thing to do.

"If she'd been listening to something else on the radio. If she'd looked up a second earlier. If she hadn't been going so fast!" I yell. I keep going. "If she and Perry hadn't broken up. If they had never dated. If Perry had been at the party. If she had just waited until the next day, or called him or called you or called me!"

The number of ifs and what-ifs are infinite, and I keep listing them-trying to convince myself or Dante, or maybe you, that I'm sorry; that life and death are random; that we can't control anything except how we deal with it all now- until Dante stands up too. Because I dreamed about you all night, and something about hearing you again so clearly has assured me that this is true: It wasn't my fault or Dante's or Perry's. Or even yours. Your brother grips my shoulders so I'll stop, and I do. He swallows hard, then nods like he gets it. (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 290-291)

The data shows bargaining through Autumn's repeated use of "if." In this scene, Autumn imagines different possibilities that might have changed the result of the accident. She thinks about whether the death could have been avoided if she had gone to the party, if Dante had gone, if Tavia had not gone, if the road had not

been icy, if Tavia had taken another road, or if Tavia had contacted someone before leaving. These repeated possibilities show that Autumn is not only expressing sadness or disappointment. She is mentally returning to the night of the accident and trying to find a point where the event could have been changed.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, Autumn's response can be understood as bargaining, because bargaining after loss can arise through "if only" or "what if" thoughts (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this stage, a grieving person often imagines that life could return to normal if a past situation had occurred differently. Therefore, Autumn's bargaining need not be understood as direct bargaining with others. The bargaining in this data emerges as an internal process as Autumn negotiates with the past, with guilt, and with the pain of Tavia's death.

This data also indicates that Autumn's bargaining is related to guilt. The sentence *"If she had just waited until the next day, or called him, or called you, or called me"* shows that Autumn imagines the possibility that she, Dante, Perry, or Tavia's own decisions could have changed the outcome of that night. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain that guilt often accompanies bargaining, because "if only" thoughts lead individuals to seek out things that could have been done differently. Thus, Autumn is not simply mourning Tavia's death, but is also trying to find possibilities that could make it seem explainable, preventable, or controllable.

However, the ending of this scene is also significant because it shows Autumn's bargaining power is beginning to weaken. After listing various possibilities, Autumn realizes that *"the number of ifs and what-ifs are infinite"* and that she continues to mention them to reassure herself, Dante, or even Tavia. This

realization shows that Autumn is beginning to understand that no single possibility can truly change the reality of Tavia's death. When she finally thinks that *"it wasn't my fault, or Dante's, or Perry's. Or even yours,"* this data indicates that Autumn is beginning to stop placing blame on any one party. Thus, this scene can still be classified as bargaining because its central response is a series of "if" and "what-if" about the past, but the ending shows that the bargaining process is beginning to lose its power.

4. Depression

Autumn's depression emerges as the reality of Tavia's death begins to enter her daily life in a more painful and ongoing way. This data emerges at the beginning of chapter 13 through a message Autumn sends to Tavia on Hangouts. At this point, Autumn is no longer in the initial phase of receiving news of Tavia's death. Instead, Tavia's death has been going on for some time, and Autumn has begun to live her days without her best friend. However, old habits involving Tavia still linger in Autumn's life. Therefore, when Autumn subconsciously searches for Tavia's name on her phone, the moment shows that Tavia's loss appears not only as an initial shock, but as a recurring sense of loss in her daily routine.

I forgot you were dead this morning.
I woke up, and while I was still a sleepy haze, I reached for my phone and looked
for your name. When I remembered, I couldn't breathe."
Tavia may not be on Hangouts right
now. *She'll see your messages later* (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 162).

The data shows Autumn's depressive response through the painful return of reality. The sentence *"I forgot you were dead this morning"* shows that Autumn's old habit of looking for Tavia still remains in her daily life. When she wakes up in a sleepy state, her body and mind automatically search for Tavia's name on her

phone, as if Tavia were still part of her ordinary routine. However, this moment does not only show an old habit. It becomes depression when Autumn remembers that Tavia has died and that the communication she expects can no longer happen.

The sentence *“When I remembered, I couldn’t breathe”* becomes the strongest part of this data. In this moment, Autumn is suddenly confronted with the fact that Tavia is not coming back. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler’s perspective, depression in grief appears when the reality of loss settles more deeply and the grieving person begins to feel the emptiness of life without the loved one. They explain that depression after loss is not a sign of mental illness, but an appropriate response to a great loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). Autumn’s inability to breathe shows that the awareness of Tavia’s absence is emotionally overwhelming for her.

Therefore, this data can be classified as depression because the main emphasis is not only on Autumn’s temporary forgetting, but on the painful realization that follows it. Since this moment occurs after Autumn has been living with Tavia’s absence for some time, the data no longer only shows an initial disbelief toward death. Instead, it shows how the loss has become a repeated and painful part of Autumn’s daily life. The old habit of looking for Tavia’s name becomes a trigger that brings Autumn back to the reality of loss. When she remembers that Tavia is dead, the absence becomes concrete and physically painful. In this context, Autumn’s grief is shown through the heaviness of living in a world where Tavia is no longer reachable, even though Autumn’s daily habits still move toward her.

Autumn's depression is also apparent when she begins to state directly that Tavia is gone and will not return. This data appears when Autumn is with Dante, then suddenly feels short of breath and is unable to control her emotions. She tries to get out of the house, runs to the backyard without a coat and shoes, then cries near a large tree. This data also shows that Autumn's sadness is no longer just an old habit directed at Tavia, but has become a more real awareness that her life has truly changed after Tavia's death. This situation is seen in the following quote:

He pries my hands away from the tree and pulls me toward him, and for a second,
I fall against his chest and bunch the fabric of his shirt in my fists.
“She’s gone” is what I say whenever the tears slow enough for me to use my voice.
“She’s gone, and she’s never coming back. How is it possible that she’s never
coming back?”
I think about never calling you again. About never seeing another movie with you.
About how we’ll never share another secret (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 166).

This data demonstrates Autumn's depression through the painful realization of the finality of Tavia's death. The sentence *"She's gone, and she's never coming back"* shows that Autumn is beginning to truly realize that Tavia is no longer in her life. However, this realization cannot yet be called acceptance, as Autumn does not say it calmly or ready to accept the reality. Instead, she says it while crying, her body shaking, and feeling like she can't breathe. Thus, this statement further demonstrates that the reality of the loss is beginning to hit Autumn emotionally.

The question *"How is it possible that she's never coming back?"* also shows that Autumn is still deeply affected by the reality. She knows that Tavia is gone, but she is unable to comprehend how life will go on without her best friend. From the perspective of Kübler-Ross and Kessler, depression in grief arises when the loss begins to deepen and the reality that a loved one is not coming back becomes increasingly real (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this passage, Autumn is no

longer simply coping with the news of Tavia's death, but is beginning to experience the direct impact of the loss on her relationship, habits, and future with Tavia.

Autumn's thoughts of *"never calling you again," "never seeing another movie with you,"* and *"never sharing another secret"* intensify her depression as she begins to realize the concrete forms of loss. Not only has Tavia died, but she will also no longer be present in the conversations, shared activities, and secrets they used to share as close friends. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain that depression after loss is not a sign of mental illness, but rather an appropriate response to a great loss. Therefore, Autumn's sadness in this excerpt can be understood as a natural response to a profound loss that she is beginning to fully experience.

5. Acceptance

Autumn's acceptance begins to emerge when she realizes that her life is no longer the same after Tavia's death. This data appears at the beginning of chapter 28 through Autumn's message to Tavia on Hangouts. From the context of the plot, this part occurs after Autumn has gone through various previous grief responses. At this stage, Autumn is still writing to Tavia, so her grief has not completely disappeared. However, Autumn's way of viewing the loss begins to change. She is no longer trying to return her life to the way it was before Tavia died, but begins to realize that the changes are part of her life now. This is seen in:

“Everything is different without you here. Especially me.
But I’m starting to think that maybe that’s okay”.
Tavia may not be on Hangouts right now. She’ll see your message later
(Woodfolk, 2018, p. 308).

This data demonstrates Autumn's acceptance through her awareness of the changes following Tavia's death. The phrase *"Everything is different without you*

here" demonstrates that Autumn is no longer denying the reality that life without Tavia is indeed different. She recognizes that Tavia's loss has changed the world around her, including the way she lives her days. This awareness is further strengthened by the phrase "*Especially me,*" as Autumn not only sees changes externally but also acknowledges that she herself has changed after losing her best friend.

The most significant part of this data is the sentence "*But I'm starting to think that maybe that's okay.*" This sentence does not mean Autumn is happy or no longer experiencing grief. Rather, it indicates that Autumn is beginning to make room for the changes occurring within herself. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance does not mean someone feels "okay" with the loss, but rather begins to accept the reality that a loved one has physically left and learns to live with this new reality (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). Thus, Autumn begins to demonstrate acceptance because she no longer completely resists the reality that her life has changed after Tavia's death.

This data also shows that Autumn's acceptance coexists with grief. Autumn continues to text Tavia, so her emotional connection with her isn't completely severed. However, Autumn's approach to that relationship is different. She's no longer simply waiting for Tavia to return or wallowing in the pain of loss, but is beginning to understand that she can change and survive in a world without Tavia's physical presence. Therefore, Autumn's acceptance in this context isn't a form of forgetting Tavia, but rather a process of adapting to a new reality while still carrying the memory of her best friend.

Autumn's acceptance then develops as she begins to make decisions that guide her own future. This data emerges near the end of the story, when Willow discovers that Autumn is still using Tavia's email as a place to talk to her deceased best friend. At first, Autumn is reluctant to delete Tavia's email account because she feels she still needs something related to Tavia. However, Willow then creates a new email account and suggests that Autumn try writing to her when she wants to talk to Tavia. In the context of the plot, this section shows a significant shift in Autumn's grief. She is no longer simply maintaining her old relationship with Tavia in the same way, but is beginning to open up to the possibility of building a new relationship and life.

I swallow hard and nod slowly. I promise to try. Then I finally tell Willow I want to go on the trip with her this summer. She asks my mom for her credit card, and we book our tickets to London and Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam.
So, I may not be sending any more emails to you. Earlier today might have been the last time I type your email address, but I won't let it be the last time I write your name (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 315).

This data demonstrates Autumn's acceptance through her willingness to try new ways of coping with Tavia's loss. The phrase "*I promise to try*" shows that Autumn hasn't completely broken free from her old habits, but she's beginning to move on from the grieving methods she'd previously maintained. Autumn's decision to go on vacation with Willow is also significant, as she previously resisted having fun when Tavia was gone. By accepting Willow's invitation, Autumn begins to acknowledge that her life can still go on, even though Tavia is no longer physically present.

The phrase "I may not be sending any more emails to you" shows that Autumn is beginning to recognize the limits of her old relationship with Tavia. She understands that continuing to email Tavia cannot continue to be the only way to cope with the loss. However, Autumn's acceptance doesn't mean erasing Tavia from her life. This is emphasized by the phrase "but I won't let it be the last time I write your name." This sentence shows that Autumn still wants to preserve Tavia's memory, but in a different way. She no longer holds on to Tavia as if she can still respond to her emails, but rather embraces Tavia as a part of her memories and life.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance doesn't mean someone feels okay with the death of a loved one. Acceptance means accepting that the person has physically passed away and beginning to learn to live with a new reality (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Autumn demonstrates acceptance because she begins to adjust to the fact that her relationship with Tavia can no longer continue as it was before Tavia's death. She still loves and remembers Tavia, but begins to change the way she maintains that relationship.

The passage following the quote also reinforces Autumn's acceptance. When Autumn writes "*A+T Forever*" on the asphalt, her action shows that she hasn't forgotten Tavia, but has begun to place her in a different form of memorial. Thus, Autumn's acceptance isn't the end of grief or the end of her bond with Tavia. Acceptance emerges as a process as Autumn begins to live again, accepting Willow's support, making plans for her future, and continuing to carry Tavia's name in her life.

B. Logan's Grief Response

Logan himself is also a teenager, he experienced grief due to the death of his ex-boyfriend, Bram. Logan, he was a band kid, he was a former vocalist who was quite famous at his school. Logan created many songs, which became favorites among his schoolmates. They had actually broken up for months, about six months but for Logan, Bram was an important figure in his life. Bram was Logan's first love. Logan met Bram for the first time when Logan became Bram's study friend, from the closeness of study friends, their relationship developed into a relationship. Logan was with Bram for nine months, so Bram was a big part of his life. Logan knew everything about Bram he was obsessed with Bram. In fact, all the songs Logan created were for Bram. His obsession and love for Bram brought out his hidden talent, Bram was the first person to hear Logan's voice, and since then, Bram encouraged Logan to be more serious about music.

Bram's death caused Logan to experience a rather complicated grief process in his life. In this process, Logan showed five stages of grief, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In the denial stage, Logan was not ready to face concrete evidence of Bram's death. In the anger stage, his anger emerged along with pain, confusion, and guilt. In the bargaining stage, Logan was dominated by regret for not having the opportunity to apologize and repair his relationship with Bram. In the depression stage, Logan lost the ability to write songs and continued to be haunted by memories of Bram. Ultimately, Logan entered the acceptance stage when he dared to go to Bram's grave and conveyed feelings he had previously been unable to express.

1. Denial

Logan's denial is evident through his avoidance of Bram's funeral. In the context of the plot, this data emerges when Logan finally decides to go to Bram's grave after previously planning it in a counseling session with Gertrude. Before leaving, Logan watches a video of Bram, bringing Bram's face and voice back emotionally to his mind. The trip to the grave then makes Logan remember the day Bram was buried. On that day, Logan actually knew that Bram had died, but he was unable to face the most tangible part of Bram's death, namely seeing Bram's body buried. In a flashback, Logan said:

The sky is overcast when I step outside, and by the time I get to the cemetery, it's foggy as hell. I feel like I'm in a goddamned horror movie with a really uncreative director, but I'm grateful for the clouds. If it was sunny, that would feel all wrong. I didn't come to the cemetery the day they buried Bram. the funeral was hard enough, and i knew watching his body disappear would seriously fuck me up. so i skipped it. i snuck out of the church and away from my parents. i called Aden and got drunk in his dorm room while i was still wearing my suit. i lied when he asked why i was all dressed up (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 317).

This data shows that Logan's denial manifests itself in the form of avoiding the reality of Bram's death. The sentence *"I didn't come to the cemetery the day they buried Bram"* demonstrates that Logan chose not to be present at the moment when Bram's death became truly concrete. He did attend the funeral, but he was unable to witness the burial process. The phrase "watching his body disappear" is central to this data, because for Logan, seeing Bram's body disappear would have made Bram's death no longer just news or an event he knew about, but a physical reality he had to face directly.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, denial in grief does not necessarily mean someone truly does not know that a loved one has died. In the context of the bereaved, denial can be more symbolic than literal (Kübler-Ross &

Kessler, 2005). This aligns with Logan's response, as he does not deny the fact that Bram has died, but rather avoids the elements that would make the loss feel final. By staying away from the funeral, Logan distanced himself from the reality that Bram's physical existence had ended.

Logan's actions after leaving the church also reinforced this form of denial. He went to Aden's room, got drunk, and lied about why he was wearing a suit. These actions indicate Logan was trying to distract himself from the immediate situation surrounding Bram's death. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain that denial and shock help individuals cope with loss slowly because denial and shock help us to cope. In this context, getting drunk and lying are not the essence of denial, but rather Logan's way of distancing himself from the pain that would arise if he were to actually face Bram's funeral.

2. Anger

Logan's anger begins to emerge when he speaks with Bram's mother, Ms. Lassiter. In the context of the plot, this data emerges after Logan continues to avoid things related to Bram, including Bram's family and other people's questions about their relationship. Bram's death not only makes Logan lose someone he once loved, but also forces him to face a relationship that is not truly over. Before Bram died, their relationship had ended painfully, and Logan still harbors mixed feelings of love, anger, disappointment, and loss. Therefore, when his mother asks Logan to speak with Ms. Lassiter, the emotions he has been holding back begin to emerge.

Eventually, Logan's mother got him to talk to Bram's mother again. His anger began to show as he spoke with her. In the conversation, Logan could no

longer hide his feelings. He was not only sad that Bram was gone, but also angry because the death felt unfair and difficult to understand.

"Th-that's not what I meant," I stammer. "I meant to say ... " And my lips start to quiver a bit. I look up, and my mom is staring at me, like she's done something wrong. Like she regrets making me take the phone. And I desperately want to toss out some smartass comment, but I can't. I'm too busy trying not to cry right here on the cold tiles of the kitchen floor. So I just stand up and walk away from her. I go down the hall and lean against the door to my dad's study. I clench my teeth so tightly that my jaw starts to hurt.

"I meant to say ... this fucking sucks. Excuse my language, Ms. Lass, but it does," I say, slipping into what I used to call her when I went to her apartment every day. When Bram and I were crazy in love. "I mean, why did something so messed up have to happen to Bram? He was one of the good ones, you know? He was ... better ... more ... "

But I don't know what he was better or more than. I just know that he was. Then I'm crying, and it's so damn pathetic (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 62).

The data demonstrates Logan's anger, which emerges through harsh language, physical tension, and questions about the injustice of Bram's death. The phrase *"this fucking sucks"* demonstrates Logan's inability to calmly express his grief. This expression is not only an expression of sadness, but also anger at a situation he finds so devastating and unacceptable. Previously, Logan felt false when using the phrase "your loss," because for him, Bram wasn't just something he'd lost, but a real person someone he once loved and now truly gone.

Logan's anger is also evident in the question, *"Why did something so messed up have to happen to Bram?"* This question demonstrates that Logan views Bram's death as unfair and difficult to understand. He calls Bram *"one of the good ones,"* but is unable to complete his sentence when trying to explain why Bram is *"better"* or *"more."* Logan's inability to complete the sentence demonstrates that his anger is mingled with a loss too profound to explain rationally.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, anger in grief doesn't always have to be logical or valid. They explain that anger does not have to be logical or valid (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Logan does not direct his anger at a specific person, but rather at the circumstances surrounding Bram's death, which he felt were unreasonable. He is angry that Bram, someone he considered good and meaningful, had to die before the relationship and his feelings were truly resolved. Thus, Logan's anger arises as a response to a loss that feels unfair.

Furthermore, Kübler-Ross and Kessler also explain that underneath anger is pain (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). This is evident when Logan's anger eventually turns into tears. The harsh words he utters are not simply an expression of anger, but Logan's way of expressing the pain he cannot bear. In this context, Logan's anger demonstrates that Bram's death left him not only with sadness but also with feelings of injustice, confusion, and hurt because he lost Bram before he could emotionally resolve their relationship.

Logan's anger is also evident when he begins to search for someone to blame for Bram's death. This information emerges in Logan's conversation with Yara, as they discuss the guilt surrounding Bram's death. In this scene, Logan realizes that his anger isn't directed at just one person, but spreads across multiple parties he links to Bram's injuries and death. This is evident in:

I look at Yara, wishing I could blame every bad thing that happened to Bram on her. And part of me does blame her. But no more, I guess, than how much I blame myself or the guy in the video. The trolls, the drugs, or Bram himself (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 184).

This data shows that Logan's anger doesn't have a single, fixed target. He wants to blame Yara, but at the same time, he also blames himself, the man in the

video, the people who hurt Bram, the drugs Bram used, and even Bram himself. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, anger in grief can move in many directions because anger has no limits (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005) In this data, Logan's anger emerges as an attempt to give direction to a pain he hasn't yet fully understood.

Logan's anger also shows that Bram's death has complicated his feelings. He not only lost Bram but also carried with him feelings of jealousy, past relationship wounds, and guilt. Kübler-Ross & Kessler (2005) explain that underneath anger is pain. Therefore, Logan's anger in this data cannot be separated from the pain that arises from losing Bram and because their relationship is not truly finished emotionally.

Logan's anger also arises when music rekindles his feelings of loss for Bram. Plot-wise, this occurs while Logan is rehearsing with Aden and Nico. Initially, music makes Logan feel empowered, as the stage and songs are an important part of his life. However, when Aden begins playing the melody of Unraveling Lovely, Logan's feelings change. The song connects with Bram and reminds him of his unresolved relationship, loss, and pain.

So they don't know that these few bars of music are crushing my heart, like it's in a garlic press.

"Cut it out," I say, but they don't hear me because they're playing so loud. I say it again a little louder. "Guys, cut it the fuck out." They keep playing, (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 238-239)

The data suggests that Logan's anger stems from the song bringing back the pain he's been trying to suppress. The line, *"These few bars of music are crushing my heart,"* demonstrates that music is no longer neutral for Logan. The song reminds him of Bram and all that he's lost. Because Aden and Nico don't understand

the song's significance to Logan, they continue playing, while Logan becomes increasingly unable to control his emotions. Logan's anger then escalates into physical action when he can no longer contain his feelings.

and I am not okay. I'm the least okay that I've been in a while. I don't want to still feel like this; I thought I was done feeling like this. I don't want them playing a song that belongs to me, Rohan, and Dante. That song being played live reminds me too much of all that I've lost. I kick the mike stand, and it slides across the floor. They finally stop playing (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 239).

The lines *"I am not okay"* and *"I thought I was done feeling like this"* indicate that Logan feels the grief he thought he had begun to control resurfacing strongly. He is not only angry because his friends played the song, but also because it reawakened the lingering sense of loss he still felt for Bram. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, anger in grief is often related to underlying pain. They explain that underneath anger is pain (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this scene, Logan's act of kicking the mike stand demonstrates that this pain is expressed as an angry outburst.

So, Logan's anger in this scene manifests not only through harsh words from *"cut it the fuck out,"* but also through physical actions. The mike stand becomes an object through which Logan channeled the anger that ultimately stemmed from his loss of Bram. Music, which had previously been a source of strength for Logan, becomes a trigger for grief because it reminds him of the unresolved relationship and loss. Therefore, this data shows Logan's anger as a response to pain that suddenly reappeared through the song related to Bram.

3. Bargaining

After Bram's death, Logan tried to find his channel again. After seeing Bram's videos on his online channel, Logan was reminded of his memories. The

video brought Bram back to Logan's mind. When he saw Bram's face and read people's comments about him, Logan felt even more lost. He missed Bram as the person he loved, and he also remembered their relationship that ended before Bram died. In that situation, Logan conveyed an honest message from him that he had been holding back, and Logan knew, it was too late to convey it.

So I click inside the comment box and stare at blinking cursor. I feel like he deserves at least one honest message, even if it's too late for him to read it. Bram's green; and gold-flecked eyes, his big hands, and his deep voice fill my head. I think about kissing him and about more than kissing him. I try to count how many times we said "I love you" to each other. And then I think about the thing I'm always trying to so damn hard not to think about. Our Break up. His face. The last words I ever said to him. I swallow hard. I type out three tiny words, and I let them fly before I lose my nerve. I'm so sorry (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 28-29).

In his words, Logan is still deeply tied to guilt and regret towards Bram. The line *"he deserves at least one honest message"* shows that Logan actually still has something he needs to convey to Bram. Even though Bram can no longer read the message, Logan still wrote it because he hasn't finished with his past. The message is Logan's way of dealing with something he couldn't fix while Bram was still alive.

Logan's memory then turns to *"Our breakup. His face. The last words I ever said to him."* Here, Logan shows that what hurt him the most wasn't just Bram's death, but also the way their relationship ended. Logan keeps remembering Bram's face and his last words, and that moment continues to haunt him. In this case, Logan, who is deeply haunted by the past, tries to return to his past, thinking about the possibility that if he had said something different, maybe things would have turned out differently.

Logan's apology in *"I'm so sorry"* shows regret that can no longer be expressed directly. Logan wrote the message because he needed a way to channel

his guilt. The apology also expresses Logan's desire to fix something that can no longer be changed. After writing the message, Logan presses his face into a pillow and hates everyone, especially himself. Logan here reinforces that Logan blames himself for what happened between him and Bram. In the bargaining stage according to Kübler-Ross (1969), a grieving person can be bound by feelings of guilt and the desire to return to the time before the loss occurred, where Logan is still trying to convey something that Logan should have said before Bram's death closed off that possibility. Logan's bargaining here also doesn't appear explicitly through expressions like wanting to change the situation, like what if or something like that, but Logan's bargaining appears through regret over the last words he ever said to Bram. In his regret, Logan is still tied to the possibility of the past that actually happened. Logan's desire to apologize after Bram died shows that he is trying to repair the relationship that has been closed by death.

4. Depression

Logan's depression begins when Bram's death begins to affect a crucial part of his life: music. This information emerges when Logan is in Aden's room trying to write a new song for their band. Plot-wise, this scene takes place after Bram's death becomes a constant presence around Logan. Although Logan has tried to build a new musical environment with Aden, his thoughts continue to return to Bram. Music, which was previously Logan's outlet for self-expression, has become difficult because almost his entire creative process is still tied to Bram. Logan said:

He walks back to his bed and quietly strums his guitar along with the music, and I give him a small smile. This song, a new one I'm trying to write, has had me stumped for a solid three weeks. When Bram died, so did my ability to write. Aden's patient with me, though, because when we met at a show a few months ago, I was turning out some okay stuff (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 20).

The data demonstrates Logan's depression through the loss of the ability to do things that were previously important to him. The line "When Bram died, so did my ability to write" shows that Logan experienced Bram's death not only as the loss of a person, but also as the loss of a part of himself. Writing songs was Logan's way of understanding and channeling his feelings, but after Bram's death, that ability ceased. This indicates that Logan's grief had entered a personal part of his life.

Logan's condition is also evident in the statement that the new song left him *"stumped for a solid three weeks."* This three-week blockage indicates that the loss of Bram was not just a momentary event but a continuing disruption to Logan's life and creative process. He was still with Aden and still trying to make music, but his mind wasn't truly present. In this context, Logan's depression is manifested through his inability to return to activities that previously gave him direction and identity.

From the perspective of Kübler-Ross and Kessler, depression in grief arises when the loss begins to deepen and makes one's life feel empty or difficult to live. They explain that depression after loss is not a sign of mental illness, but rather an appropriate response to a great loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). Logan's response fits this concept because Bram's death left him without the drive to write, something that had previously been a major part of his life.

Logan's depression is also apparent when he comes to Bram's apartment and is confronted with objects that remind him of Bram. This data emerges when Yara invites Logan to Bram's house on Bram's mother's birthday. At first, Logan refuses because he has long avoided Bram's house and his family. However, after finally arriving, Logan is again confronted with a space that holds many memories of his

relationship with Bram. The apartment is not just an ordinary place, but a space that makes Bram's loss felt again through objects that Bram has touched, owned, and used.

The memory makes my heart beat like crazy, so I stumble away from the fridge. I go into the bathroom to take a piss before heading back to the living room. But before I even catch my reflection in the mirror, I spot something on the sink that stops me dead: Bram's green toothbrush.

Logan's emotional response became clearer as he looked at the toothbrush while hesitant to touch it.

I step farther inside the bathroom and close the door and keep watching the toothbrush; like if I look away, it will disappear. I put down the lid on the toilet and sit. I pick it up, and as I hold it in my hand I start to cry. Because...Fuck. Before I leave, I flush the toilet, even though I didn't piss. After the toothbrush, I rejoin everyone else in the living room, afraid of being destroyed by another random thing he touched or owned or used (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 176-177).

This data demonstrates Logan's depression through his emotional response to Bram's toothbrush. The toothbrush isn't a large object, but for Logan, it holds a very personal connection to Bram. When Logan looks at it, he sees not only an object left behind, but also traces of Bram's life, still present in the apartment. The line *"I pick it up, and as I hold it in my hand, I start to cry"* indicates that Logan is unable to contain his grief when the small object reminds him of the physical and emotional connection he once had with Bram.

Logan's depression is further clarified through the line *"afraid of being destroyed by another random thing he touched, owned, or used."* The word *"destroyed"* indicates that Logan's grief is not light. He feels extremely fragile, as if another object associated with Bram could destroy him again. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, depression in grief arises when the reality of loss is felt more deeply and brings with it a heavy emptiness and sadness. They explain that

depression after loss is not a sign of mental illness, but rather an appropriate response to a great loss(Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005).

Logan's depression also became apparent when he realized that Bram's death had taken over almost his entire life. This data emerged after a rehearsal with Aden and Nico, when Aden began to worry about Logan's drinking and apparent lack of genuine concern for the band. During the conversation, Aden also revealed that Logan still loved Bram. This statement prompted Logan to reflect on himself and realize that over the past few months, his thoughts had been constantly returning to Bram and his death.

I think about the last few months. How consumed I've been. My life has revolved around Bram's death like the duller planets revolve around the sun. Everything about Bram was like an undeniable force while he was alive. Even now he still has a hold on me like gravity.

I've been trying to stop myself from picturing Bram's eyes, from imagining his smile, from wanting every piece of him. But I can't-I never could-so Aden must be right.

This kind of longing has to be love.

I'm in love with a boy who hasn't been mine to love for half a year. A boy who belonged to his mother and Yara, Nico and no one, all at the same time. A boy who left a gaping hole in my life when he dumped me and who carved an even larger one right through everything when he died (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 243).

This data demonstrates Logan's depression through the realization that his life has become centered around Bram's death. The sentence "*My life has revolved around Bram's death*" shows that since Bram's death, Logan's thoughts and feelings have continually returned to that loss. Bram has not only become a person from the past, but also an emotional center that continues to draw Logan back to grief. This is reinforced by the comparison "*like gravity*," which indicates that Bram's influence remains powerful and difficult to let go.

Logan's depression is also evident in his unsuccessful attempts to stop thinking about Bram. He tries to stop himself from imagining Bram's eyes, his smile, and everything about him, but he admits he is unable to do so. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, depression in grief arises when loss becomes more deeply embedded and forces an individual to confront the void left by the deceased (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, the loss of Bram exists not only as a memory, but as a longing that continues to plague Logan's life.

The phrase "*a boy who left a gaping hole in my life*" is at the heart of Logan's depression. This sentence demonstrates the profound void Bram has left in his life. The wound had been there since their relationship ended, but Bram's death deepened it because Logan no longer had a chance to mend their relationship. Thus, Logan's depression manifests itself through a sense of emptiness, constant longing, and an inability to move beyond the impact of Bram's death. Logan's grief not only makes him sad, but also makes his life feel like it revolves around a loss he can't let go of.

5. Acceptance

Logan's acceptance begins to emerge when he finally decides to go to Bram's grave. This information emerges near the end of the story, after Logan has gone through various grief responses that have caused him to avoid anything directly related to Bram's death. Previously, Logan had not attended Bram's funeral because he couldn't bear to see Bram's body buried. However, after undergoing counseling sessions with Gertrude, Logan begins to take steps to confront the reality he has been avoiding. His decision to go to Bram's grave alone shows that Logan is

starting to be willing to face the reality of Bram's death directly, even though it remains painful.

I lace up my shoes, and my eyes are instantly wet because it hits me that I'm going to Bram's grave. Gertrude and I planned this little field trip during my last session, and even though I'm not supposed to go alone, I don't really want to go with Yara or Nico. I don't want to ask my parents. And I don't want to put it off any longer (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 317).

This data shows that Logan's acceptance doesn't come from a state of calm or sadness. His eyes immediately water when he realizes he's going to Bram's grave. However, the phrase "*I don't want to put it off any longer*" indicates a significant change in Logan. He realizes that he's been putting off facing Bram's grave because it would make Bram's death feel real. By choosing not to put it off any longer, Logan begins to move from avoidance to the courage to face the reality of loss.

Then, when he arrived at Bram's grave, Logan didn't immediately calm down. Instead, he was confronted with something he had been avoiding: concrete proof that Bram was dead. Logan stared at the grave for several minutes, reading Bram's favorite quotes, his name, his birth date, and his death date. The things written on Bram's grave made Bram's death no longer just a bad memory, but a reality that stood before him.

I stare at it for a few more minutes, reading Bram's favorite quote, his name, and the day he was born. The day he died. I didn't think I would cry, but I feel that annoying tightness in my chest anyway. He's gone, and here's the proof. There's no denying it now (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 318).

The line "*He's gone, and here's the proof*" indicates that Logan is beginning to acknowledge the reality of Bram's death directly. Bram's grave serves as physical proof that Bram is truly gone. Unlike Logan's previous avoidance of the funeral, in this section he no longer shrinks from the evidence. He still feels suffocated and wants to cry, but he no longer denies the reality before him. The line "*There's no*

denying it now" makes it clear that Logan realizes his avoidance is no longer sustainable.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance doesn't mean someone is okay with the loss. It means beginning to accept that a loved one has physically left and that this reality is permanent (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Logan demonstrates acceptance because he begins to confront the physical evidence of Bram's death. He no longer simply knows that Bram is dead, but begins to accept that reality through direct experience at Bram's grave. Thus, Logan's acceptance remains accompanied by pain, but the pain no longer completely causes him to avoid it.

After Logan realized that the grave was concrete evidence of Bram's death, he didn't immediately leave. Instead, he approached the tombstone and touched its surface, as if trying to face Bram one last time. However, Logan couldn't speak to the tombstone as he would to Bram. He also didn't sing the song he had written. Instead, Logan placed the paper containing the song he had just composed on it and held it against a rock. This was Logan's way of conveying the feelings he hadn't had the chance to express directly to Bram. Logan also said:

I said what I needed to say. I gave it to the person who needed to have it.
It's all I can do, and even though it will never be enough, it fucking has to be
(Woodfolk, 2018, p. 319).

This data demonstrates Logan's acceptance through his awareness of the limits of what he can still do. The line *"I said what I needed to say"* indicates that Logan finally found a way to convey the feelings he previously couldn't express directly to Bram. Meanwhile, the line "I gave it to the person who needed to have

it" indicates that the song became a form of emotional closure for Logan, even though Bram couldn't read or hear it directly.

The line *"It's all I can do, and even though it will never be enough, it fucking has to be"* is the core of Logan's acceptance. He realizes that his actions will never be enough to bring Bram back, repair their relationship, or erase his guilt. However, Logan begins to accept that this is all he can still do. In this context, acceptance means accepting his limitations in the face of Bram's death. Logan no longer forces himself to fix something that cannot be fixed, but begins to learn to release the feelings he has been holding in through a symbolic act at Bram's grave.

C. Shay's Grief Response

Shay experiences grief after the death of her twin sister, Sahsa, who died of leukemia three months before the story begins. Unlike Autumn, Shay's grief is more developed and manifests itself in profound psychological and physiological reactions. The loss of her twin causes intense disruption to Shay's sense of self. The close twin bond makes Sasha's death more than the loss of a loved one, but also the loss of a part of herself.

The story of Sasha's death a few months earlier has affected Shay's grieving process a bit, but she's still trying to cope. But Shay knows she no longer has her twin sister, the person who was always by her side, who was her identical twin. Shay is identical to Sasha; even when looking in the mirror, Shay sees Sasha in herself. They are both also involved in a joint project, Shay and Sasha are music bloggers, and they will review local bands. Under the name Badass Music Fanatics (BAMF).

Sasha's death caused Shay to experience a profound grief process in her life. In this process, Shay exhibited five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In the denial stage, Shay still maintained Sasha's presence through memories, voices in her mind, and the habit of speaking as if Sasha were still close. In the anger stage, Shay's anger arose when songs or memories about Sasha reopened her wounds. In the bargaining stage, Shay tried to maintain her bond with Sasha through objects and symbols, such as hospital bracelets and tattoos. In the depression stage, Shay experienced panic attacks, loneliness, dark thoughts, and feelings of being "twinless." Eventually, Shay entered the acceptance stage when she began to accept help, talk about Sasha, and realized that she could still be happy even though she still missed Sasha.

1. Denial

Shay's denial doesn't always come as a direct denial of Sasha's death, but more often it's seen in the way she maintains Sasha's presence in her life. After Sasha's death, Shay often jogs to vent her sadness or thoughts that make her sad. That night Shay goes to Rohan's friend's concert, Rohan has a new band, after his old band disbanded with Dante and Logan. Rohan is Sasha's boyfriend, during the concert, Rohan wants to sing a song in memory of Sasha, Sasha's favorite song, Shay who hears it is immediately faced with a deep sense of sadness. Shay then goes home, she has a small argument with her mother, so she decides to jog to vent it all.

Shay jogged towards the hospital where Sasha had been treated. Shay was a little tired, and she decided to lie down on the asphalt. As Shay lay on the cold

asphalt in the hospital area, the feeling of missing Sasha came back strongly. The place made Shay feel like a ship lost in the middle of a dark sea. In such a state, her mind went back to looking for Sasha. The hospital was also an important place for Shay because it was where she last saw Sasha alive. Therefore, she tried to talk to Sasha in the hospital rather than at her grave.

I slow down and jog over to an empty spot in the lot. I lie down on the cold asphalt, and I feel unmoored, like I'm a ship, and the black concrete around me is the sea. While I wait for my pulse to slow, I stare up at the seagulls circling the lot-maybe they think it's a body of water. Sasha was my lighthouse, my north star, so I search for a sign of her in the dark.

Some people visit their loved ones' graves to talk to them, but for some reason, I like talking to my sister at the hospital. Maybe because this was the last place I saw her alive (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 45).

The phrase "*my lighthouse, my north star*" also indicates that Sasha is not only Shay's twin sister, but also her guide. After losing the figure she had always held onto, Shay still "*searches for a sign of her in the dark.*" This sentence shows that Shay has not fully accepted that Sasha can no longer be physically present. Shay is still looking for signs that will make Sasha feel accessible. Shay's choice to speak to Sasha in the hospital also reinforces this denial. Shay knows that some people speak to the deceased at the grave, but she chose the hospital because it was the last place she saw Sasha alive. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, denial in grief doesn't necessarily mean someone completely rejects the fact of death. Denial in the bereaved is more symbolic, as they know the death has occurred but haven't yet fully accepted that their loved one will not return (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this context, the hospital becomes a symbolic space that allows Shay to still feel close to Sasha.

Shay's denial is also seen through the batik conversation that Shay has with Sasha in the next moment when she is lying on the street in the hospital area.

"Mom's worried about me," I say out loud. "But I don't really know why.

It's Momma, Sasha says inside my head. She worries about everything.

"Yeah, but I'm a pretty good kid," I say.

You are, but she must know something else is going on.

I shake my head. "She doesn't know about me staying out late."

Because she's never there.

"Right. She knows I go to shows all the time, but she has no idea about the smoking. And I guess my grades could be better," I say. Sasha doesn't answer, but I know she agrees.

I turn my head, almost expecting to see my sister beside me, because we would lie in bed all the time and have talks like this. She always stayed quiet when I talked about school because she hadn't been in one for almost a year. I close my eyes so I can picture her as clearly as I can summon her voice.

What about the running? Sasha asks.

"Track?"

No, the flipping out. The running away? I'm sure that worries her, too.

I open my eyes and look up again. "She's never seen it happen, though."

I'm sure she wouldn't be happy if she knew about it. And it's Momma. She probably knows about it.

"I hope not." (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 45-46)

Here, Shay truly speaks to Sasha like a conversation with a normal person.

The conversation doesn't actually happen physically, but appears in Shay's head as a voice that she still recognizes very well. This is seen when Sasha seems to answer, *"It's Momma, Sasha says inside my head."* Shay here still presents Sasha as a figure who can hear and respond to her. She is no longer remembering Sasha, but building an inner conversation with her. Shay's rejection is also stronger when she turns and *"almost expecting to see my sister beside me."* This sentence shows that within her Shay still has the urge to find Sasha in real life in front of her. Shay is aware that Sasha is not really there, but their habit of talking together makes her body and mind feel as if they are still waiting for Sasha.

Shay's denial is also evident in her daily life after Sasha's death. Shay's sense of loss doesn't just manifest in specific places like the hospital, but also through small habits she used to do with or for Sasha. In this instance, Shay feels a strong sense of longing when she realizes she no longer makes toast for her twin sister. This simple habit makes Sasha's absence feel palpable, but in Shay's mind, Sasha

hasn't fully understood who she is. Sasha still feels like someone out of reach. This was evident in:

It starts then. The hungry kind of missing-Sasha that makes me feel like she's just out of reach, not gone forever, and I'm just not trying hard enough to get to her. The thing inside me that's always on edge drops off its cliff. And I don't know if it's because I'm tired or if I'll never get used to something as simple as not making toast for my sister, but as I climb onto my bike, I feel overwhelmed and alone again (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 73).

This data demonstrates Shay's denial through her perspective on Sasha's existence. The phrase "the hungry kind of missing Sasha" demonstrates that Shay's longing is not a quiet longing, but a pressing, persistent longing that demands Sasha's presence. The word "*hungry*" indicates that Sasha's loss still feels like an unmet emotional need. Shay not only remembers Sasha, but still needs her presence to feel whole.

Shay's denial is further clarified in the phrase "*she's just out of reach, not gone forever.*" This sentence indicates that Shay has not yet fully accepted the finality of death. Sasha is not understood as someone who cannot truly return, but as someone who is simply out of reach. This is reinforced by the phrase "*I'm just not trying hard enough to get to her,*" which makes Sasha's loss seem as though it can be overcome with effort. In other words, Shay transforms Sasha's death into something that feels like a distance, not a permanent end.

From the perspective of Kübler-Ross and Kessler, denial in grief does not necessarily mean someone directly rejecting the fact of death. Denial can manifest symbolically when someone learns that a loved one has died but is unable to fully comprehend that the person will not return (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005a). In this data, Shay's denial is evident through her feeling that Sasha is still reachable.

2. Anger

Shay's anger arose when the music that usually helped her feel calm instead reminded her of Sasha's final moments. This data emerged after Shay left Rohan's concert, when Rohan was about to perform a song that had been sung for Sasha in the hospital. The song brought Shay back to Sasha's memories before her coma, when she, Rohan, and her family were in the hospital room. Because the memories were too painful, Shay left the place and rode her bike home. On the way, the music did help her breathe again, but the pain that arose from the memory of Sasha turned into an explosion of anger.

The music is helping (it always does). I can breathe again, and I feel a little more in control. Even though I'm all alone, pedaling like mad down a darkened back road, when the song ends, I tilt my head up to the sky. I scream at the stars.

'MOTHERFUCKING LUKE!' (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 39)

The data demonstrates Shay's anger through her shouting, *"MOTHERFUCKING LUKE!"* The phrase isn't just a swear word, but a manifestation of Shay's rage at the illness and loss that took Sasha from her. Previously, *"Fucking Luke"* was a common phrase Shay and Sasha used when something bad happened to Sasha, as if Sasha's cancer were someone they could curse. Therefore, when Shay shouts the phrase toward the sky, she's venting her anger at a situation she can't control.

Shay's anger is also evident in the way her anger spontaneously erupts. She doesn't construct long sentences to explain her pain, but rather screams alone in the dark street. This suggests that her anger stems from emotional overload after being confronted with memories of Sasha. From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, anger in grief doesn't always have to be logical or have a clear target. Anger can be

directed at anyone or anything, because behind it lies the pain of loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay is not angry at one particular person, but at Sasha's illness, death, and the fact that she cannot bring her twin back.

3. Bargaining

Shay's bargaining began to show through her attachment to Sasha's hospital bracelet. This data emerged when Shay was at a concert and tried to use music to calm herself. For Shay, music became a way to deal with the anxiety and loss that continued to plague her after Sasha's death. However, when the music stopped, her surroundings felt too clear and heavy again. The voices of people, the light from her phone, and the noise in the room made Shay's body begin to react. In this state, the first thing she missed was Sasha's touch, because Sasha had always been the person who made her feel safe.

My palms get slick, and I instantly wish I had my sister's cool fingers to grab- she was always my safety net when the world got to be too much. Her hospital bracelet, the one I haven't taken off since the night she died, suddenly feels too tight on my wrist (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 32).

This data shows that Shay is still trying to maintain her closeness to Sasha through the hospital bracelet. Shay's desire to hold onto "my sister's cool fingers" demonstrates that when she feels panicked and insecure, her body and mind still seek Sasha as a refuge. However, because Sasha is no longer around, the only thing Shay can cling to is the hospital bracelet that was once attached to Sasha.

The phrase *"the one I haven't taken off since the night she died"* indicates that the bracelet holds significant meaning for Shay. The bracelet is not simply a relic, but a physical remnant of Sasha that she can carry with her wherever she goes. By continuing to wear the bracelet, Shay seems to be trying to maintain her

connection with Sasha. In this context, Shay's bargaining does not emerge through "if only" or "what if" statements, but through a symbolic attempt to endure the loss by continuing to carry something that connects her to Sasha.

From the perspective of Kübler-Ross and Kessler, bargaining after loss can be understood as an individual's attempt to survive between the reality of the loss and the desire to alleviate the pain (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay doesn't bargain directly with God or circumstances, but rather attempts to negotiate her loss through the hospital bracelet. As long as the bracelet remains on her wrist, Shay feels she still has a piece of Sasha she can hold on to.

However, the phrase *"suddenly feels too tight on my wrist"* also suggests that Shay's efforts to maintain that closeness are beginning to feel painful. The bracelet, which previously served as a connection to Sasha, instead reminds her of the fact that Sasha has died. Thus, this data demonstrates the beginning of Shay's bargaining, as she attempts to maintain her bond with Sasha through physical objects, even though these objects also make Sasha's loss feel even more real.

Shay's bargaining continues when Sasha's hospital bracelet goes missing. The bracelet had been a constant item for Shay since the night of Sasha's death. It made her feel like she still had something connecting her to her twin sister. However, when the bracelet disappeared, Shay felt like she had lost the last thing she had ever carried with her. Therefore, Shay's decision to get a tattoo wasn't just an impulsive act, but an attempt to replace the lost temporary bond with a more permanent mark. Shay said:

The bearded guy pushes back the curtain a second later and waves us over.
 "You pick the script you want?" he asks.
 I shake my head and roll my eyes in my friends' direction. They distracted me.

I'm afraid that if I leave here without a tattoo, every time I look at my wrist without seeing my sister's hospital bracelet, I'll feel adrift and alone. Or I'll feel what's coming on again right now, the wave of worry that overtakes me before I ... panic, if that's what they want to call it (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 117).

This data demonstrates that tattoos hold significant emotional significance for Shay. The phrase *"if I leave here without a tattoo"* suggests that Shay felt compelled to have something new to replace the lost hospital bracelet. Shay feared that if her wrist was empty, she would relive the loss of Sasha more intensely. Therefore, the tattoo became Shay's way of maintaining Sasha's presence in her life.

The phrase *"I'll feel adrift and alone"* is central to Shay's bargaining. After the bracelet was lost, Shay feared feeling adrift and alone without a mark connecting her to Sasha. This suggests that for Shay, the bracelet was not just a memento, but also an emotional attachment. When that attachment was lost, Shay sought a more permanent form of attachment through the tattoo. In this context, Shay's bargaining emerged as an attempt to negotiate the loss: she couldn't return Sasha and couldn't keep the bracelet forever, but she tried to maintain their connection through a mark that would remain on her body.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, bargaining after loss doesn't always have to manifest as a direct plea or a "what if" statement. Bargaining can also be understood as an inner process where someone tries to survive between the reality of loss and the desire to lessen the pain of that loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this story, Shay attempts to lessen the finality of Sasha's loss by creating a permanent mark that can replace a bracelet. The tattoo becomes Shay's way of keeping Sasha with her, even though she is no longer physically present.

4. Depression

Shay's depression became apparent when she felt the loss of Sasha again in a situation that should have been part of her normal life. This data emerged when Shay arrived at the gym for a track meet. Previously, Shay had felt a little better because she had managed to study, come home before curfew, wasn't late for practice, and felt like her mother hadn't cried in the past few days. However, those feelings changed when she saw a pair of twins from another team. Their presence made Shay realize again that she no longer had Sasha by her side. This is evident in:

For a few minutes today, I was happy. I was proud that I'd studied and it had paid off. I've been home before curfew every night this week, and I haven't been late to track practice once. Mom hasn't cried in the morning in days, and I'd like to think that has something to do with me. But when I step into the gym to start warming up, I see a set of twins from one of the visiting teams, and now that they're both standing right in front of me, I'm not happy anymore. I know Deedee is here, and I should be grateful. But Callie isn't, and Rohan isn't, and Mom hasn't come to a meet in forever. And seeing those girls, feeling twinless all over again, makes it impossible to ignore how not here Sasha is too (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 107).

The data demonstrates Shay's depression through a sudden emotional shift. Initially, Shay feels proud of herself for having accomplished several things well. However, when she sees the twins, that happiness quickly vanishes. The phrase *"feeling twinless all over again"* suggests that the loss of Sasha is felt intensely again. Shay not only sees two identical people but is also reminded of her own identity as a twin who has now lost her other twin.

Shay's depression became more apparent as the loss began to interfere with her physical and mental functioning. This is evident in:

I start scanning the bleachers, looking for Deedee, but I can't find her. I'm supposed to be stretching, hyping myself up, talking smack with my teammates about all the other teams. But after I can't find Deedee, I just keep staring at the

twins, and their matching faces and long, dark ponytails are making it hard for me to stay calm.

I shake out my hands because they're getting tingly, like they're about to go numb. And I know if that happens, I might lose feeling in my feet too. I can't run-not like this, because track is all about control, discipline, and focus. I stare at my sister's hospital bracelet, but I can't even focus on that. I jog over to Coach.

"I can't run," I tell him, feeling like a failure, a flake.

"What do you mean 'can't'?" Coach asks.

I feel tears fill my eyes because I don't know how to describe it. I need to run, but not in here.

Away.

"I just ... It's hard to explain," I say, but it's not just hard. It's impossible.

"Okay, Malone," Coach says, softening because he can't take it when anyone on the team cries, and he can probably tell I'm right on the edge. "Go sit on the bench. Drink some water. See if it gets any better. There are three other events before yours, so you have some time.

I go to the bench, but it doesn't get better (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 107-108).

The data shows that Shay's grief doesn't just manifest as sadness, but also affects her ability to function. Track is supposed to be a place that requires control, discipline, and focus. However, after seeing the twins, Shay loses her ability to calm herself. Her hands begin to tingle, her body becomes unsteady, and she is unable to run. Even Sasha's hospital bracelet, her usual emotional support, is no longer enough to keep her focused.

Shay's situation becomes even more difficult when she feels alone even though she is in a room full of people.

Those twins are still there, and they fist bump before one of them lines up for the first event. I twist around, scanning the sea of faces more carefully, desperately, but I still don't see Deedee. The thought that she could have decided not to come too crosses my mind. I've never felt so alone in a room this full (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 108).

The line "I've never felt so alone in a room this full" reinforces Shay's depression by demonstrating the emptiness and isolation that emerged after losing Sasha. Even though she was surrounded by many people, Shay still felt alone because the person she needed most was missing. In this context, Shay's loneliness

stems not only from not finding Deedee, but also from the presence of the twins, which made Sasha's absence even more real.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, depression in grief emerges when the reality of loss deepens and one begins to feel the emptiness, sadness, and heaviness of life without a loved one (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay's depression is evident through feelings of "twinlessness," her inability to run, feelings of failure, and the loneliness that arises in crowds. Thus, this data demonstrates that Sasha's death has disrupted Shay's life emotionally and physically, even in activities that were previously important to her.

Shay's depression also became apparent when she began to think of herself as someone who had lost her twin sister. After Sasha died, the loss not only made Shay miss Sasha but also changed the way she understood herself. Sasha was not only a sister to Shay, but also a twin who had been a part of her identity. Therefore, when Shay learned the term "twinless," the loss became even more profound. The word made Sasha's death feel not only like the loss of a loved one, but also like the loss of a part of Shay herself.

"Did you know that people who don't have twins anymore are called twinless? Have you ever heard something so horrible?" This is what I do when it gets bad. I make it worse. Sasha called it spiraling. And it's dizzying, the speed at which dark thoughts are filling up my head. Jerome hits the joint and passes it through the open door to Deedee, who has come over and put her hands on my shoulders to stop me from moving. Deedee tries to hand it off to me, but I shake my head (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 111).

The data shows that the word "twinless" has become deeply painful for Shay. It not only explains that Sasha has died, but also names the new emptiness Shay must live with. With this term, Shay is forced to recognize that her identity as

a twin has changed. She can no longer perceive herself the same way she did when Sasha was alive.

Shay's depression then became more pronounced as the sadness developed into thoughts that were difficult for her to control. This is evident in:

This is what I do when it gets bad. I make it worse. Sasha called it spiraling. And it's dizzying, the speed at which dark thoughts are filling up my head. Jerome hits the joint and passes it through the open door to Deedee, who has come over and put her hands on my shoulders to stop me from moving (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 111).

The second quote shows that Shay's grief manifests not only as sadness, but also as dark thoughts that rapidly fill her mind. The phrase "*I make it worse*" indicates that Shay is aware that her own thoughts often drag her deeper into pain. Meanwhile, the word "*spiraling*" describes the state of her thoughts, which continue to spiral, making Sasha's loss even more difficult.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, depression in grief arises when the reality of loss deepens, bringing sadness, emptiness, and a heavy emotional burden (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay's depression is evident in two ways. First, she feels she has lost her identity as a twin after encountering the word "twinless." Second, she experiences dark thoughts that are difficult to stop as the loss worsens. Thus, this data shows that Sasha's death not only caused Shay to lose a loved one but also left her feeling incomplete and trapped in deepening grief.

Shay's depression is also evident in the physical and emotional impacts that emerged after Sasha's death. This data emerged while Shay was at the tattoo studio with Rohan, Callie, and Deedee. At that time, Rohan began to inquire about Shay's condition, which appeared to be experiencing panic attacks several times. These

questions showed that Shay's grief was not only manifested as longing for Sasha, but had also affected her body and behavior. Losing Sasha often made Shay feel out of control, suffocated, and as if she were in a very frightening state.

I look up at him. "Oh God, Ro. Don't be so dramatic. It's not a panic attack. I know I'm not, like, dying." But I look away when I say that, because pretty much the opposite is true. Sometimes, when it's really bad, it feels exactly like dying (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 116)

The data suggests that Shay's condition is actually more severe than she tells Rohan. Outwardly, Shay tries to downplay the situation by claiming it's not a panic attack and that she doesn't feel like she's going to die. However, her thoughts tell her otherwise. The phrases "*pretty much the opposite is true*" and "*it feels exactly like dying*" demonstrate that Shay's grief has become a very stressful experience, even affecting her body. In this context, Shay's depression manifests itself not only through sadness, but also through fear, tightness, and an inability to feel okay after losing Sasha.

This situation became even more apparent when her friends suggested that Shay talk to someone. This is evident in the following quote:

I look at her and roll my eyes. "If you didn't, what makes you think she does?" Rohan bites his lip. "And they've been that bad since Sasha ...? " I half shrug, half nod. "Have you thought about ... I don't know. Talking to someone?" he asks. I smile and nudge him, trying to keep the mood light. "I'm talking to you, right now." Callie jumps in. "I think he means like a therapist or something." I bristle, even though I don't mean to. "I'm not crazy," I say. Rohan frowns. "Going to a therapist doesn't make you crazy." "You can't just ignore it," Callie agrees. "I'm fine. It's getting better. I aced that test. I'm not smoking anymore. I'm getting home by curfew. I'm good. I swear." But I see Deedee and Callie look at Rohan, instead of me, and I flare my nostrils because I'm so annoyed (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 117).

The data suggests Shay is trying to convince others that she's fine, even though her friends see things differently. The phrase, "*I'm fine. It's getting better,*"

sounds like Shay's attempt to mask her emotional state. She cites her test scores, quitting smoking, and returning home before curfew as evidence that she's improving. However, this evidence suggests Shay is trying to control external factors, while the loss of Sasha continues to affect her internally.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, depression in grief emerges when the reality of loss deepens and brings sadness, emptiness, and a heavy emotional burden. Depression doesn't always mean crying or withdrawing; it can also be seen when the loss makes it difficult to feel stable and secure (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay exhibits depression because Sasha's death has affected her physical condition, emotions, and how she views herself. She not only misses Sasha but also feels overwhelmed by the impact of the loss.

Shay's panic attacks don't just occur when she remembers Sasha's death. News of the loss of others can also trigger those feelings, especially when the news of that loss still feels close to the world she once lived with Sasha. While at another concert after Rohan's, Shay saw Dante, the drummer of the band Unraveling Lovely. Seeing Dante reminded Shay of the events surrounding the band, particularly the night of the Battle of the Bands, which ended badly because Logan arrived drunk. That night was also significant for Shay because it was the last show Sasha attended before she became seriously ill.

Then Shay saw Rohan approaching Dante, they were talking to each other, but there was something that made Shay curious. Their expressions were familiar, similar to the expressions that night in Sasha's hospital room. Shay immediately felt that something was wrong. Shay then pulled Rohan into a narrow hallway near the

bathroom to ask what happened. From Rohan, Shay learned that Tavia, Dante's sister had died in a car accident a few weeks earlier. The news made Shay's body react immediately, as if Tavia's death reopened the unhealed wound of Sasha's loss.

This is seen in:

I move away from Jerome, Deedee, and Callie, with Rohan's hand clutched in mine. I pull him into the narrow hall that leads to the bathrooms.
 "What the hell happened?"
 "His sister....," Rohan says.
 "Whose sister? Dante's?" I ask.
 Rohan nods. He finally looks at me instead of the graffiti-covered wall in front of us. "You remember her, right?"
 I did. She came to every UL show wearing something ridiculous: glitter-covered T-shirts, hot pink scarves, light- up sneakers from the nineties.
 "Yeah, Tavia. She always came with her quiet Asian friend, Autumn. What about her?"
 Rohan looks stricken again. He frowns. Blinks. "She died," he says. "In a car accident, a few weeks ago."
 I stare at him blankly for about two seconds. I try to take a breath, but I can't get any air. I feel like I'm floating away from Rohan, and my eyes fill with tears. The panic is so complete that the edges of my vision go blurry and then turn black. I double over and blink a bunch of times, but it doesn't help (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 150).

The data shows that the news of Tavia's death caused Shay's body to react immediately. She felt not only shocked but also lost control of her body. The line *"I try to take a breath, but I can't get any air"* indicates that Shay's grief manifested itself in a strong physical reaction. Her vision blurred, her eyes filled with tears, and she felt like she was distancing herself from Rohan. This reaction suggests that the loss of Sasha had left Shay extremely vulnerable to the news of another death that felt so close to her life.

Shay's depression became even more evident when she stepped out of the crowd and realized her thoughts were beginning to wander in a dark direction. Shay revealed:

The cold helps a little, but I don't even try unlocking my bike. I wish I could go back inside with my friends because it's not even close to curfew yet, but I can tell that's no longer an option. I wipe away my tears and try to block out the thought

that is marching through my head, the beginning of what I know will be an awful, endless spiral: *Not her too. Not her too* (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 151).

The line *"I can tell that's no longer an option"* indicates that Shay is no longer able to go back inside and continue the night as usual. The news of Tavia's death forced her to leave the situation because her body and mind couldn't cope. This demonstrates that Shay's grief has disrupted her ability to remain in social settings, even when she truly wants to be back with her friends.

The phrase *"the beginning of what I know will be an awful, endless spiral"* is central to Shay's depression in this data. Shay realizes that a single negative thought can drag her into a series of dark thoughts that are difficult to break. The phrase *"Not her too. Not her too"* indicates that Tavia's death made Shay feel like a loss all around her again. For Shay, the news wasn't just about Tavia; it also reminded her of Sasha and the reality that death can again take away those close to her life.

From the perspective of Kübler-Ross and Kessler, depression in grief arises when the reality of loss becomes increasingly severe and brings sadness, emptiness, and helplessness (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay's depression is seen through her body being unable to breathe, her vision blackening, tears, and her thoughts starting to enter an "awful, endless spiral." Thus, the news of Tavia's death rekindled the pain of losing Sasha and made Shay drown in fear, sadness, and helplessness towards death that felt constantly present around her.

5. Acceptance

Shay's acceptance began to emerge when she began to accept that she didn't have to face Sasha's loss alone. This came to light when Jerome took Shay to Rohan's

garage, where her friends had gathered to discuss Shay's situation. Initially, Shay tried to keep things lighthearted, but the conversation turned serious when Jerome, Rohan, Callie, and Deedee showed they had noticed a change in Shay since Sasha's death. They saw Shay not just as someone who was doing well, but as someone still hurting, experiencing frequent panic attacks, and struggling to cope with her own grief.

This moment was significant because for the first time, Shay was no longer completely isolated from those around her. After hearing what her friends had to say, Shay felt like crying and walking away. However, when Jerome hugged her, followed by Rohan, Deedee, and Callie, Shay began to feel like she wasn't truly alone. Her friends weren't trying to replace Sasha, but they were showing her that she still had people to support her through her loss.

"So will you get help today?" Rohan asks, borrowing a line from my favorite show. And just like that, we're all laughing.
I still want my sister desperately. I think I always will. And though the weight of this kind of love won't replace her, it might just make it so that I'm a little closer to okay (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 193).

This data demonstrates Shay's acceptance through her awareness that the loss of Sasha will not completely disappear. The phrase "*I still want my sister desperately*" shows that Shay still deeply misses Sasha. She doesn't deny the pain or pretend she's healed. In fact, when she says, "*I think I always will*," Shay acknowledges that longing for Sasha will likely always be a part of her life.

However, Shay's acceptance emerges in the phrase, "*It might just make it so that I'm a little closer to okay*." This phrase is significant because Shay isn't saying she's okay. She's simply beginning to believe that the love and support of those around her might bring her a little closer to a better state. Thus, Shay's acceptance

isn't portrayed as the end of grief, but rather as the beginning of her willingness to accept help and live with the loss.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance doesn't mean someone feels happy or completely okay after a loss. Acceptance means beginning to accept that a loved one is physically gone and learning to live with that new reality (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay begins to accept that Sasha is irreplaceable, but she also begins to see that the presence of her friends can help her cope. She no longer blocks out her pain, but instead begins to let others into her grief process.

Shay's acceptance continues as she begins to open herself to more serious help. After an intervention by her friends, Shay begins to realize that she can't continue to face Sasha's loss alone. When she returns home, Shay also begins to talk to her mother about the condition she's been hiding. This change is significant because previously, Shay tended to reject help and try to appear fine. However, at this point, Shay begins to face the possibility that she does need others to help her grieve after Sasha's death. This was seen when his mother showed him information about a support group for people who had lost a twin.

"I found something that I think might help."

She picks up her phone from the table and taps around the screen for a second. Then she places it back on the table between us. It's an email, and at the top, I see that word from my search. The heading says: Twinless Twins Support Group. Once a Twin, Always a Twin.

I feel the weight on my chest almost immediately, and it's suddenly harder than it should be to get air into my lungs. Spots appear in front of my eyes, like some kind of bad magic trick, and I'm almost certain I'm going to faint. But I try to stay calm. I try to talk to Sasha, to get her to tell me I'm okay. With her voice inside my head, we begin to talk my body out of this quickly descending betrayal of itself. Mom has never seen this happen to me, and I don't want her to see it now. She notices what's happening anyway. She stands up and comes over to my side of the table.

"Look at me," she says, but her face is full of pain, so I want to close my eyes. I want to run away from the table. I push my chair back.

"No, Shay," she says. "Look at me." I do. She takes my hand and presses it against the base of her neck. Just like Jerome did that day in the hallway, she tells me to breathe with her. I try to. And it helps.

My heart is still pounding, but my breathing is a little more even by the time she says, "I'll go with you, if you want. But I think this is something you need to do." (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 195-196)

This data shows that Shay's acceptance didn't come easily or immediately.

When she saw the words "*Twinless Twins Support Group*," her body reacted again.

Her chest felt heavy, she had difficulty breathing, and her vision began to blur. This shows that Shay is still deeply hurt by the reality of having to live with the loss of a twin. However, a crucial part of this quote is Shay's effort to remain calm. She doesn't immediately reject her mother's help, even though her body still responds with panic.

Shay's acceptance is also evident when her mother helps her breathe, and

Shay begins to accept that help.

I go to my room after dinner and take out my phone to see who was messaging me while I was talking to Mom. Dante hasn't texted me back yet. The vibration I felt was a message from Rohan.

I hope you're okay.

I am and I'm not, I guess, but I don't text him back. I message Dante again. It hurts to think that he's going through the same thing I am, but I still don't know what to say. So I just start with something simple.

I heard about Tavia.

I'm so sorry.

I think of Rohan's message, and send the same thing to Dante.

I hope you're okay.

Working on it, he replies suddenly, and those three small words make me feel so much better, so much braver. I'm working on it too.

"Shay?" Mom says. She's standing at my bedroom door. "Want to watch TV for a little while?" I smile and look down at my phone. It gives me an idea.

"Sure. And I was thinking: would you mind if I went to the support group with someone else?" (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 197)

This data shows that Shay is starting to let others into her grief process. She still wants to run from the situation, but when her mother asks her to see and breathe with her, Shay tries to follow. The line, "*I try to. And it helps,*" is significant because it shows that help from others is starting to play a role in Shay's healing process.

She's not completely stable yet, but she's starting to accept that she doesn't have to handle everything alone.

Aslo, this data demonstrates Shay's growing acceptance. The sentence "*I'm working on it too*" shows that Shay is beginning to acknowledge that she's not yet okay, but is working toward becoming better. She's no longer forcing herself to appear strong or rejecting all help. Instead, she's beginning to accept that grief is something she must face slowly.

Shay's decision to consider a support group also demonstrates acceptance. She's not entirely ready to go with her mother, but she doesn't reject the idea. When she asks if she can go with someone else, Shay indicates that she's beginning to find a way to accept help that feels comfortable for her. This shows that acceptance doesn't mean Shay can immediately cope on her own, but rather that she's beginning to create space for the healing process.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance doesn't mean someone is already okay or no longer grieving. Acceptance means beginning to accept the new reality after a loss and learning to live with it (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay still misses Sasha and experiences panic, but she's beginning to understand that she needs help to navigate the loss of her twin. Thus, Shay's acceptance is seen through her willingness to try, accept support from her mother, connect with Dante, and consider a support group as part of the grief process.

Shay's acceptance grows when she finally attends a support group with Dante. Previously, Shay's acceptance was still early and unstable, as she panicked

when her mother showed her information about the Twinless Twins Support Group. However, at this point, Shay takes the step of attending a place specifically dedicated to the loss of a twin. This decision demonstrates that Shay is beginning to stop bottling up her grief and is opening herself to a space that can help her understand Sasha's loss.

"My name is Shay," I say. "And my sister, her name was Sasha."
Dante is sitting right beside me.
We're in a rec-center community room, and we're surrounded by much older strangers. Turns out most twinless twins are older than sixteen. But everyone's been really nice to me so far (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 223).

This data demonstrates a significant change in Shay. Previously, Sasha's name often came up in situations that made her hurt, panic, or want to escape. However, in the support group, Shay began to use Sasha's name openly in front of others. The phrase *"my sister, her name was Sasha"* indicates that Shay acknowledged Sasha's existence and the fact that Sasha had died. She was no longer just talking to Sasha in her own mind, but was beginning to talk about Sasha with others who also understood the experience of loss.

Shay's acceptance was also evident when she explained her reasons for attending the support group.

"This is my friend. He lost his sister really recently, and talking to him made me feel a lot better because I felt like he understood even more than my other friends. So I guess I thought coming here would be a good next step." (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 223)

The phrase *"a good next step"* indicates that Shay is beginning to understand grief as a process she must undergo slowly. She hasn't yet declared herself okay, but she is starting to choose healthier ways to cope with Sasha's loss. Her presence with Dante also shows that Shay is beginning to accept that talking to others who

understand loss can be helpful. Thus, Shay is no longer completely shutting herself off from support, but is beginning to seek out spaces where she feels understood.

Shay's acceptance grows stronger as she realizes that the people in the room understand the form of loss she has struggled to explain.:

Everyone in this room is missing a piece of themselves in the same unbearable, unexplainable way that I am (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 223).

This data shows that Shay is beginning to find a place to understand her grief. As a twin, Shay felt like losing Sasha was like losing a part of herself. In the support group, this feeling no longer felt strange or inexplicable, because the people in the room were experiencing similar losses. They understood the emptiness that was difficult for others outside of the experience to comprehend.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance doesn't mean someone stops grieving, but rather begins to learn to live with the new reality after the loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay hasn't fully healed and still misses Sasha, but she begins to accept that she needs space, support, and other people to deal with her grief. By attending the support group, introducing Sasha, and calling the meeting "*a good next step*," Shay demonstrates that she is beginning to move toward acceptance of life after the loss of her twin.

Shay's acceptance grew stronger as she began to reconnect with the parts of her life she'd abandoned after Sasha's death. After attending a support group and opening herself up to help, Shay slowly returned to BAMF with Callie and Deedee. This decision was significant because BAMF wasn't just another project for Shay. The project also held Sasha's legacy, especially since Sasha had written reviews and gained recognition through her writings there. By returning to BAMF, Shay began

to confront the parts of her life that were still closely connected to Sasha, rather than avoiding them entirely.

The next day, I call the first BAMF staff meeting in months. Deedee shows up with chips, soda, candy, and ice cream. Callie comes with a list of all the BAMF things she's been wanting to talk to me about, and a content calendar.

"The archive link is broken," Callie says. She makes a check mark on her list of concerns.

"I think that's something that we need to fix ASAP because we get tons of traffic through people hearing about a band and then coming to search the archive."

"That makes sense," I say. I write "archive link" down in my notebook and bite into a gummy worm. It stretches out and bounces back up to my lips as I turn back to Callie.

"What's next?"

"You haven't uploaded any of the pictures from the Sunscreen show yet," Callie says.

"I was going to do it," Deedee pipes up. "But I know there's a format you like, and I didn't want it to look weird next to the other posts."

"It's okay," I say. "I've been slacking. I know I have, but that's the point of this meeting, right? To get back on schedule with everything." (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 226)

The data shows that Shay is beginning to put her life back together. The phrase "*the first BAMF staff meeting in months*" suggests that Shay has long since abandoned the project due to her grief. However, when she says "*to get back on schedule with everything*," Shay begins to show a willingness to return to her previously delayed routine. In the context of acceptance, this action is important because Shay is beginning to adjust to a new reality: Sasha is gone, but life and the things they once built must still be lived.

However, Shay's acceptance doesn't mean her pain is gone. When she revisits Sasha's past reviews, she is confronted with the reality that Sasha will never write another review.

I fix the archive link. I post a couple of photos of Olive, because she's mostly who Deedee took photos of during Sunscreen's performance. I look through all of Sasha's most recent reviews, and when I think about her not ever writing another one, the panic bubbles up in me again (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 228).

This data shows that Shay's process of acceptance is still accompanied by pain. Sasha's review serves as proof that Sasha was present, active, and played a significant role in BAMF. Therefore, when Shay realizes that Sasha will never write again, panic sets in. However, this passage still demonstrates acceptance because Shay is beginning to face Sasha's legacy head-on. She doesn't completely avoid BAMF or Sasha's writing, although it still hurts her.

Here, Shay's acceptance feels more realistic. Shay may have started to resume BAMF, but that doesn't mean she's completely strong. The realization that Sasha will never write again still shakes Shay. However, the difference lies in how Shay responds to that panic now. In this moment, Shay tries to hold on.

I look at my friends, who are riveted by the actual intervention part of the show and not paying much attention to me, and I try to control my breathing by myself. I think about Mom placing my hand on her throat, where I could feel the air moving in and out of her, and I place my hand on my own chest. Instead of running out of the room, I stay in my seat. I breathe slowly, thinking about Jerome next. There's something comforting about his soft voice; his too-big sweaters and shiny gold rings. I think I do want more with him. Maybe. I focus on all the other people I love; on all the beauty that remains. I'm grateful that I still have so much left, even though Sasha's gone. Thoughts of loud, beautiful music; banana splits; Mom and Rohan; and Callie and Deedee help me fight my way back to calm. It doesn't work completely, but it also isn't totally useless. My breathing evens out. The hot, bad butterflies go away. I touch my Sasha tattoo until I feel brave enough to pick up my phone (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 228-229).

This data is an important sign of Shay's acceptance. Previously, when panic set in, Shay often wanted to escape from stressful situations. However, this time she chose to remain seated. The line "Instead of running out of the room, I stayed in my seat" shows that Shay is beginning to learn to face her pain without immediately avoiding it. She tries to regulate her breathing, remembers how her mother helped her breathe, and focuses her thoughts on the people she still loves.

The section "*all the beauty that remains*" shows Shay's growing acceptance. Shay doesn't say that losing Sasha is no longer painful. She even continues to state that her attempts to calm down "*doesn't work completely*." However, she begins to realize that even though Sasha is gone, there are still good things left in her life: music, her mother, Rohan, Callie, Deedee, Jerome, and small memories like banana splits. This awareness doesn't replace Sasha, but it helps Shay navigate the new reality of loss.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance doesn't mean someone stops grieving or forgets the person who died. Acceptance means learning to live with a new reality after loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this data, Shay demonstrates acceptance as she begins to return to her routine, confronting Sasha's legacy, accepting that panic may still arise, but still trying to calm herself. Thus, Shay's acceptance appears to be a gradual process: she still misses Sasha, but begins to see that her life still has connections, support, and beauty remaining

Shay's acceptance reached its peak. It was at the return of Unraveling Lovely, a project she had recently been working on. The event wasn't just a music concert, but also a space to remember those she had lost. Many people wore T-shirts that read "In Loving Memory Of," including Shay and Rohan, who wore Sasha's name, Dante and Auntumn, who wore Tavia's, Logan, who wore Bram's, and Jarome, who wore his grandfather's name. In that moment, loss was no longer hidden, but brought together in a space filled with music, friends, and new possibilities.

Shay's acceptance reaches a more mature form at the end of the story, when she attends the return of Unraveling Lovely. This event is not just a music concert, but also a space that brings together memories of those who have passed away with life that continues. For Shay, this moment is significant because the music, friends, and Jerome's presence bring her back to happiness. However, this happiness does not erase her longing for Sasha. This is precisely where Shay's acceptance is seen, as she begins to accept that happiness and loss can coexist. It was evident in:

I step out onto the deck and I miss my sister. The lights twinkle in the dark and I miss my sister. I can only hear a hint of UL's first song-Rohan's first strum of the guitar ringing out strong and loud, Logan laughing into the mike, Dante hitting the drum tentatively, once, twice, three times-as I look up at the darkening sky. I'm so happy, but I still miss my sister (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 327).

This data demonstrates Shay's acceptance through her realization that happiness doesn't erase grief. The repetition of "*I miss my sister*" indicates that Sasha remains present in Shay's thoughts and feelings, even during beautiful moments. However, the phrase "*I'm so happy, but I still miss my sister*" reveals a significant change in Shay. She no longer sees happiness and sadness as mutually exclusive. Shay can feel joy from music and the people around her, but at the same time still miss Sasha.

From Kübler-Ross and Kessler's perspective, acceptance doesn't mean someone stops grieving or feels completely okay. Acceptance means learning to live with a new reality after loss (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). In this passage, Shay doesn't forget Sasha or replace her. She simply begins to accept that her life can still have happy moments, even though the loss of Sasha remains

Then, in the end, Shay also decided to start taking Jarome more seriously. Shay felt that Jarome understood her as someone who was still grieving, but also starting to open up to happiness. This was evident in:

"You liked it?" he asks. "

Yes," I tell him as my eyes well. "but I miss my sister." He doesn't look away from me. He touches my hand. "I know," he says.

I lean forward and I kiss him while music I love fills the cold air all around us. And I think I could love a boy who makes me feel so okay about being happy and sad at the same time (Woodfolk, 2018, p. 327).

This data shows that Shay is beginning to feel safe being herself, both grieving and happy. When she says, "*but I miss my sister*," Jerome doesn't change the subject or make Shay feel guilty for still being sad. Jerome's response, "*I know*," makes Shay feel accepted in a state that isn't entirely okay. This is important because Shay has often struggled to explain her grief to others.

The phrase "*happy and sad at the same time*" is the essence of Shay's acceptance. Shay begins to understand that missing Sasha doesn't prevent her from loving others, enjoying music, or experiencing new joys. She still carries the loss of Sasha, but it no longer completely stops her from living. Thus, Shay's acceptance isn't presented as the end of grief, but as the ability to live with it.

In this section, Shay begins to realize that there are still beautiful things left in her life. Music, friends, love, and memories of Sasha can exist in the same space. She still loves and misses Sasha, but she also begins to open herself to the future. Therefore, this data provides a strong conclusion for Shay's acceptance because it shows that she is not fully recovered from grief, but is starting to find a way to live with the loss without rejecting the happiness that still exists.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

This study examines the grief experiences of three main characters in Ashley Woodfolk's novel, *The Beauty That Remains*: Autumn, Logan, and Shay. The focus of this study is how the grief of these three characters is represented through Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's Five Stages of Grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The results show that these five stages appear in the grief experiences of all three characters, but they do not always progress in a linear fashion. Each character exhibits a different grief response depending on their relationship with the deceased and the circumstances that trigger the sense of loss.

Autumn experiences grief after losing Tavia, her closest friend. Autumn's grief is manifested through disbelief, anger toward Perry, bargaining through "if" and "what if" thoughts, depression when Tavia's absence is felt in her daily routine, and acceptance when she begins to accept that her life has changed after Tavia's death. Logan experiences grief after losing Bram, her former lover and first love. Logan's grief is heavily influenced by the unfinished relationship, guilt, the loss of the ability to write music, and her attempts to convey feelings she never had the chance to express to Bram. Meanwhile, Shay experiences grief after losing her twin sister, Sasha. Shay's grief is evident through her efforts to maintain Sasha's presence, panic attacks, dark thoughts, feelings of "twinlessness," and the process of accepting help from those around her.

A comparison of the three characters shows that grief in this novel is not depicted in a single form. Autumn shows grief more through the loss of a friend and changes in communication, Logan through guilt and unresolved love, while Shay through the loss of her identity as a twin and her bodily response to grief. However, all three demonstrate that acceptance does not mean forgetting the deceased or being completely free from grief. Acceptance in this novel means starting to live with a new reality while still carrying the memory and love for the person who has passed.

Thus, this study concludes that the Five Stages of Grief can be used to understand the experience of grief in literary works, as long as the stages are not understood as a rigid and sequential process. In *The Beauty That Remains*, grief emerges through the characters' words, actions, objects, music, memories, habits, and bodily responses. This novel shows that grief is a long process of dealing with loss and finding a way to live with the memories of a loved one.

B. Suggestion

This study focused solely on the grief responses of Autumn, Logan, and Shay in the novel *The Beauty That Remains*, using Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of grief theory. Therefore, future research could examine the same novel from other perspectives, such as trauma, adolescent psychology, identity, friendship, or social support. This approach could broaden the discussion, as the novel also demonstrates the role of family, friends, music, and community in helping characters cope with loss.

Furthermore, future research could also utilize other grief theories, such as continuing bonds, meaning-making, or complicated grief. These theories could help

examine how characters maintain relationships with the deceased, construct meaning from the loss, or experience more complex grief. Thus, research on this novel could provide a broader understanding of the representation of grief in literature, particularly in young adult novels.

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