

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Forgiveness is a conscious decision to let go of resentment and anger towards someone who has hurt you. It is a process that involves changing your feelings, attitudes and behaviors that can show compassion and generosity to the person who wronged you. It can be difficult to forgive someone because of the emotional pain, anger and betrayal that can accompany the offense.

*Reminders of Him* (2022) is a romance novel written by Colleen Hoover in 2022. Since her literary debut in 2011 (she self-published her first novel), Colleen Hoover has become one of the most prolific and successful novelists of the new millennium. Hoover, or CoHo, as she is known to her fans, has redefined the romance genre with complex characters facing deep emotional dilemmas, a perennial fixture in the New York Times and Amazon bestseller lists.

*Reminders of Him* (2022) is both a conventional romance and a reinvention of the genre. The novel explores themes of protagonist redemption, love and the complexity of human emotions. As protagonist, Kenna tries to gain forgiveness and trust, she meets people who influence her journey, including Ledger, a man with ties to her past. The story is both heartbreaking and emotional, showing Hoover's emotional depth and character development.

Kenna Rowan, 26, returns to her hometown near Denver after spending five years in prison. She is determined to have a relationship with her four-year-old daughter, Diem Landry. The story offers elements of the romance genre: the hesitant

movement towards new love of those hurt by previous relationships, and the affirmation of hope as the characters to find their way to a new beginning through their friends and family.

However, Kenna is not really a typical romantic heroine. She was in prison for a drunk driving accident that killed the only man he ever loved - Scotty Landry, Diem's father. Diem is now being raised by Scotty's parents, Grace and Patrick Landry. In exploring the dynamics of grief, the complex psychology of forgiveness and the heroic struggle for a second chance, the novel tries to cope with guilt and self-doubt and shows how a broken heart can find its way back to life and love again.

In this study, the researcher will analyze the struggle of the protagonist in seeking for forgiveness to regain the custody, trust, and love. The novel reflects the emotional weight of protagonist's experiences and the challenges she faces in her quest for redemption. The novel highlights the excess of guilt, pain and desire, as the protagonist navigates past mistakes and the desire to reconnect with her daughter. The reason why the author chose the title is because the story in the novel is dominated by the protagonist's struggle to get forgiveness from the people around her. She continues to do everything she can to regain the custody of her daughter.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

Statement of the problem in this study focuses on the way protagonist's struggle in seeking for forgiveness. The writer formulates the research questions as follows:

1. What are the impacts of past event on the protagonist's emotional journey in seeking for forgiveness in Colleen Hoover's Novel *Reminders of Him*?

2. What are the protagonist's ways in seeking for forgiveness in Colleen Hoover's Novel *Reminders of Him*?

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

The objectives of this study are to analyze what become the research problem in this study. They are as follows:

1. To analyze the impacts of past event on the protagonist's emotional journey in seeking for forgiveness in Colleen Hoover's Novel *Reminders of Him*.
2. To describe the protagonist's ways in seeking for forgiveness in Colleen Hoover's Novel *Reminders of Him*.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

A scope must be made in doing study or research. It is used to direct to research on the subject matter specifically. Therefore, the research just focuses on the analysis of the impacts of past event on the protagonist's emotional journey and protagonist's ways in seeking for forgiveness. The impacts of past events on the protagonist emotional journey that the author analyzes are distress and low self-esteem, lack of healthy relationship, and socially isolated (unable to connect to others). The ways protagonist's ways in seeking for forgiveness are confession, and apology.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Practically, this research is expected to provide additional understanding of English literature students from the novel through psychological studies.

Theoretically, this research is useful for the readers to understand the novel *Reminders of Him* as the source of knowledge, and to find out the impacts of past event that protagonist faces in seeking for forgiveness. And also the protagonist's ways to get the forgiveness from people around her. This study is also useful to enrich the researches in literature, especially in using psychological approaches in the view of social psychology to analyze about the struggles in seeking for forgiveness from people that being hurt.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Protagonist**

According to Minderop (2005: 2), The character can also be a person, a community, a race, a mental and moral attitude, the quality of reasoning, famous people and characters in literature. In a work of fiction, the character can be interpreted as a representation of a human being. Through his behavior, traits and descriptions, the author portrays a character who deserves attention, love and support. The main character in a story is usually known as the protagonist, the character who opposes him is the antagonist.

A protagonist is the main character in a story, play, film, or other literary work and is the driving force of the plot. Protagonists are often the emotional core of the story and are central to the plot or conflict. The protagonist is always accompanied by the main motivation and a concrete goal. It is important to note that the protagonist of a novel can be unique (only the main characters).

There are many types of characters, but the main character is the one that attracts the most attention of the audience and becomes the focus of the viewer's attention. This character also has the most scenes. Secondary characters are those who create the situation and cause conflict for the main character. Characters are generally divided into two categories, namely the protagonist and the antagonist.

#### **2.2 Seeking Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a conscious decision to let go of anger and resentment towards someone who has hurt you. Forgiveness means willingly putting aside any resentment

toward someone who has done wrong, wronged or hurt you, or harmed you in some way. Forgiveness doesn't just mean accepting what happened or stopping being angry.

Forgiveness is the balm that heals wounds and commitment to relationships. Practically everything important psychological relationships, people get hurt. Without healing the wounds, relationships will fall apart quickly. However, a lot relationships last. We argue that such patience is possible because people can forgive the pain they suffer, ask for forgiveness for the injuries they cause and receive any forgiveness that is offered to them.

According to Sandage et al. (2000, p. 22), "asking for forgiveness is a motivation to accept moral responsibility and attempts at interpersonal repair after relational injury in which man is morally culpable." It involves awareness and interpersonal action. Research forgiveness plays a tremendous role in interpersonal relationships between couples (Kelley et al., 2005) and relations between countries from a sociopolitical point of view (Neto et al., 2007) because they lead to the reunification between the conflicting parties involved and to the restoration of damaged relationship. Riek, Luna, and Schnabelrauch (2014) stated that the determinants of excuse overlaps those of excuse, as the proximity to relationship, responsibility and seriousness.

Witvliet, Ludwig and Bauer (2002) found that being forgiveness after asking for forgiveness led to an increase in basic and moral emotions. Anger, resentment, lack of compatibility and openness they were related to the inability to apologize (Chiaromello et al., 2008); in turn, seeking forgiveness reduces anger and leads to forgiveness (Stouten et al., 2009). Guilt (Riek. et al., 2014) and shame were identified as reasons, and lack of responsibility and the belief that the victim deserved the harm

were obstacles to apology (Harter, 2012). Mindfulness training has been found to increase apologetic attitudes and behaviors in young adults (Jeter et al., 2017).

### **2.2.1 The Impacts of Past Event in Seeking for Forgiveness**

There are three impacts of past event on the protagonist's emotional journey in seeking for forgiveness. According to Sanage et al., (2000) those who do not apologize may experience distress and low self-esteem because they lack the skills to maintain healthy relationships, socially isolated and unable to connect with others.

#### **2.2.1.1 Distress and Low Self-Esteem**

People who cannot or will not seek forgiveness when they inflict harm are at risk for poor relationships in part because they are less likely to receive forgiveness from a partner and because they are less likely to grant forgiveness when hurt or offended (Davidson & Jurkovic, 1993). Furthermore, people who cannot or will not seek forgiveness when they injure another person may risk negative social feedback (Weiner et al., 1991), social isolation, and other negative interpersonal consequences that contribute to poor self-esteem and subjective distress (Baumeister et al., 1998).

Significant changes were observed on levels of forgiveness, stress, and mental and physical health symptoms over time, with an increase in forgiveness leading to a decrease in stress and mental health symptoms (All Saints Dayet al., 2016). Distress is a negative state of emotional, physical, social or spiritual pain or suffering that can cause a person to feel overwhelmed, anxious or worried. This feeling can occur when we have not apologized or received forgiveness from someone after making a mistake.

Low self-esteem is a lack of confidence in oneself and one's abilities and is characterized by a negative view of oneself and life. People with low self-esteem can be extremely critical of oneself, feeling incompetent, unlovable or inadequate. They may also fear making mistakes or disappointing others, use negative words to describe themselves, feel shy or anxious around others, believe they are inferior to their peers, and underestimate or ignore their positive qualities. Low self-esteem can negatively affect a person's health and relationships and make them more vulnerable to other mental health problems.

#### **2.2.1.2 Lack of Healthy Relationship**

Healthy relationships are characterized by mutual respect, trust, honesty and open communication. They also include the ability to compromise, solve problems and maintain independence. A healthy relationship refers to a good relation with the people around you whereby there are no instances of quarrel or disagreements over given issues. Not every person in the society knows how to maintain healthy or good relationship with the people around him or her and this is the reason you find that there very many broke relationships in the society. (Harry, 2008)

Lack of healthy relationship can mean that the relationship is unhealthy, harmful, and has a negative impact on a person's well-being. One of the characteristics of the unhealthy relationship is anger. It can arise because someone has done something wrong or hurt someone, making the person unable to forgive the person who hurt him. Lack of trust, respect, communication or support can mark these relationships.

### **2.2.1.3 Socially Isolated (Unable to Connect with Others)**

Social isolation occurs when a person has little or no social contact, relationships or support from others. Structurally, it can be defined as a lack of social interaction with family, friends, neighbors or society in general. Social isolation can have a serious impact on mental and physical health, quality of life, longevity and mortality. It can be compared to other well-established risk factors, such as smoking, obesity and physical inactivity.

According to Vangelisti and Perlman (2006, pp.485-500), social isolation is a subject concerned with the objective characteristics of a situation and refers to the absence of relationships with other people, that is to say, they believe that persons with a very small number of meaningful ties are socially isolated.

Then, Nicholson suggested a definition of social isolation as “a state in which the individual lacks a sense of belonging socially, lacks engagement with others, has a minimal number of social contacts and is deficient in fulfilling and quality relationships”. However, Nicholson also insists that there are a few distinct concepts of social isolation, which are lack of social integration, social engagement and social networks. As a result, Nicholson suggested considering those distinct concepts when determining social isolation.

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### **2.2.2 Protagonist's Ways in Seeking for Forgiveness**

In psychological models, forgiveness is generally understood to involve cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes that occur in a person who has been offended or hurt (i.e, a victim) by an offender. In forgiveness, the victim overcomes unforgiveness and takes a stance of compassion and love toward the offender even though such love is undeserved (Enright & Human Development Study Group, 1991). Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1996) posited a 4-step process for seeking and receiving forgiveness (uncovering, decision, work, and outcome).

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Weiner, Graham, Peter, and Zmuidinas (1991) suggested that victims view people who confess their wrongdoings more positively than people who offer excuses, especially when confession is offered without prior accusation. In the accounts literature, little attention has been given to the psychological variables affecting the person who is offering the account or, in our application, the person who is seeking

forgiveness explicitly or implicitly (through confession, apology, or offering restitution).

### **2.2.2.1 Confession**

The study of “account giving” and impression management has differentiated four categories of accounts: denial, excuse, justification, and confession (which is more commonly known as confession and also includes apology; see Schonbah 1985). In the latter three types of accounts, the untoward act is admitted, but the perceived cause of the action and acceptance of personal blame varies. Denial of responsibility in an excuse can be accomplished by blaming the act on external cause (e.g., economic conditions or peer influence) or on internal factors over which the actor has no control (e.g., mental or physical illness), whereas justification can be gained by appealing to higher moral principles. In neither case, however, is blame accepted. On the other hand, the act of confession assumes both the acceptance of responsibility and personal blame. The acknowledgement of sin also may be accompanied by reparation (restitution), although it is equivocal whether this is necessary component of confession.

Concerning on the goal of confession, it has been well-documented that the impression management techniques listed above can be effective in defusing anger and increasing pardon (Kremer & Stephens, 1983; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi & Riess, 1981; Weiner et al., 1987). Doing confessions actually result in forgiveness from others and decreased personal guilt after doing wrong things. Confession is the acknowledgment of sinfulness in public or private, regarded as necessary to obtain divine forgiveness.

### **2.2.2.2 Apology**

Maintaining relationships with other people after being hurt by them is one of the biggest challenges in relationships. Interpersonal transgressions are conceptualized as stressors that involve stress responses of victims, and forgiveness is one of many coping strategies for psychological distress. Not forgiving and dwelling on an injury increases stress and can lead to anxiety, anger and depression (Worthington & Wade, 1999). Forgiveness allows people to overcome the negative effects of interpersonal stress, as well as to restore and improve close relationships (Braithwaite et al., 2011; Fincham).et al. , 2004; Karremans and Van Lange, 2004; McCullough et al. , 1998). People can participate in one of two types of forgiveness: judgmental or emotional (Worthington et al., 2007).

Crucial forgiveness is considered as the intention of the victim to control his behavior towards an offender, that is, they do not seek or avoid revenge, refrain from expressing anger, and treat the offender as a person of value. However, a simple decision to forgive cannot relieve the victim's stress. Emotional forgiveness, on the other hand, involves moving on from negative emotions toward the offender with neutral and positive emotions, which include caring thoughts and behaviors. Thus, emotional forgiveness reduces stress reactions (Worthington et al., 2019).

Apologies are generally interpreted as an admission of wrongdoing and an expression of guilt (Leunissen et al., 2013). Kirchhoff etc. (2012) identified ten elements of a complete apology: statement of apology, naming the offense, responsibility, trying to explain the offense, conveying emotions, taking into account the other's emotions and/or prejudice. , an admission of guilt, a promise of forbearance, an offer of reparation, and a request to accept an apology. Apologies are a tool to

satisfy the needs of the victim after a transgression, it is essential to seek forgiveness from the transgressor (De Cremer et al., 2011). When lay people conceptualize forgiveness, they usually cite attributes such as: the offender feels sorry or remorse, and the offender says he is sorry (Kearns & Fincham, 2004).

Forgiveness remains the belief that the victim deserves good treatment and that the abuser is a decent and kind person (Tabak et al., 2012). Therefore, the reputation of both can be repaired through forgiveness (Benoit & Drew, 1997) and the dissonance is resolved. Violations also cause cognitive uncertainty regarding responsibility for the event, the role of the offended party and the aggressor in the event, and perceptions of the incident that can be ambiguous and time-dependent (Eaton et al., 2006; Emmers et al., 2006). Canaries, 1996). When the offender apologizes, he assumes responsibility, clarifies the role of both parties in the event, and confirms the victim's interpretation (Eaton et al., 2007). Thus, the uncertainty is reduced. Apologies are also useful to reduce negative emotions, especially anger, which is central to the experience of injustice and victimization (Miller, 2001).

### **2.2.2.3 Restitution**

Apology and restitution can represent relational and restorative responses that reduce the distance a victim perceives between the injustice suffered and the desired justice (see Witvliet et al., 2008b). The reduction of this injustice gap is associated with a reduction of negative and arousing emotions, such as fear, sadness and anger that are part of unforgiveness, while increasing positive and pro social responses of gratitude, empathy and forgiveness with associated emotional and physiological changes (p. for example, Witvliet et al., 2008b). (2010, 2019).

Transgressions represent violations of the expectations of responsible interpersonal behavior, at the very least, violating the reasonable expectation that even a stranger will not cause harm. However, after a crime or other violation, the victim perceives a distance between the situation before and after the injustice, as well as between the current situation and their goal of seeing justice restored. This injustice gap is associated with negative affective and emotional responses, including fear, anger, loss of control, sadness, or bitterness, which unite in "unforgiveness" (Exline, Worthington, Hill, & McCullough, 2003).

Forgiveness involves acknowledging one's wrongs, renouncing resentment and revenge against the person responsible for the harmful injustice, and adopting a pro social orientation aimed at the authentic and positive transformation of the wrongdoer (see Witvliet, 2020). When security or circumstances prevent the open communication of forgiveness, reconciliation with the offender, or the restoration of the offender to a previous role, an authentic forgiveness process can take place again in forgiveness.(Witvliet, 2020).

Forgiveness can be evidenced by the indication that an offender is voluntarily responsible for his evil. Answers like an apology and compensate on it can signal a responsive taking of responsibility that can increase the perspective of the victim and respect the elements of empathy for the author. Meta-analytic work highlights that state empathy toward a perpetrator is a strong predictor of that person's forgiveness (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010).

David and Choi (2009) found that restitution involving financial compensation to victims of political crimes reduced unforgiveness. Witvliet et al. (2008) found that

restitution in the presence of a burglary perpetrator's remorse was associated with increased forgiveness.