

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After reading and analyzing *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver, I conclude that Lindsay Edgecombe suffers from anxiety that comes from her fear of the possibility that Juliet Sykes will reveal her secret. Therefore, she uses defense mechanisms to cope with her anxiety.

In the novel *Before I Fall*, Lauren Oliver depicts Lindsay's parents, who frequently fight, which makes her feel afraid. Oliver also portrays her parents divorces. As a result, I believe Lindsay Edgecombe has a fear of abandonment, which is her unconscious motive for her anxiety. Due to her fear of abandonment, she tends to depend on social validation, which makes her always try to look perfect. She believes that being perfect will reduce the chances of people leaving her.

Lindsay tends to reject things that she finds embarrassing. Due to Juliet knowing about her secret, which she had wet the bed several times, it makes her feel anxious toward Juliet. I find that Lindsay suffers from neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety. Lindsay's neurotic anxiety includes her anxiety about the possibility of Juliet spreading her secret, and her moral anxiety includes her anxiety about her moral values, which she questions when Juliet commits suicide due to the bullying she inflicted on her.

From the anxiety she suffers, I conclude Lindsay Edgecombe uses defense mechanisms to cope with her anxiety. I find three defense mechanisms used by Lindsay. The first is denial. Lindsay uses this type of defense mechanism to deny her contribution to Juliet's death, where Juliet commits suicide because she can no

longer bear the bullying she has done to her. The second is projection. Lindsay accuses Juliet of wetting the bed during Girl Scout camping; she also spreads this lie to everyone at school and names Juliet 'Mellow Yellow' while she is the one who wet the bed at that time. The last is reaction formation. Lindsay exchanges her fear for hatred for Juliet. She bullies and avoids Juliet at school; she also makes people hate and isolate Juliet by building a bad image of her.

Therefore, it can be concluded that unresolved issues from one's past can lead to significant anxiety, which profoundly influences current interactions and behavior. In Lindsay Edgecombe's, her past trauma rooted in her parent's conflicts profoundly shapes her current anxiety and behavior. Her unresolved fears of abandonment due to her parent's divorce lead her to build a perfect image, which triggers a defensive mechanism of bullying Juliet Sykes. This results from her need to protect her perfect personality to reduce her chance of being abandoned by people she loves. By examining Lindsay Edgecombe's behavior with psychoanalytic literary criticism, we gain insight into how past trauma can drive destructive behaviors like bullying, offering an understanding of how internal conflicts can shape anxiety and aggressive behavior. We can also see Lauren Oliver raising the issue of bullying, which is currently excessive among today's teenagers. Therefore, by understanding the dysfunctional behavior that exists and analyzing it through the lens of psychoanalytic literary criticism, we can see how literary works depict bullying behavior and what drives bullying to exist in character, so that can help us to develop more knowledge in dealing with this problem.

This research is far from perfect and has some limitations. There are so many things that can be learned and discussed in the novel *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver. Since this research discusses the anxiety that Lindsay suffers towards Juliet and the defense mechanisms she uses against her, I believe this has a psychological impact on Juliet Sykes. I suggest that future research could explore the psychological issues portrayed in Juliet. For example, consider the impact of Lindsay's bullying and behavior on Juliet's psychological condition. Further research could provide deeper insight into how traumatic experiences such as bullying may have affected Juliet's mental health and behavior, as well as how she responded to the stress. This will enrich our understanding of the psychological dynamics between characters and provide a more comprehensive depiction of the impact of negative behavior in the social context of teenagers.

