

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

Based on the analyses of the portrayal of the protagonists in Kathleen Glasgow's *Girl in Pieces* and Ned Vizzini's *It's Kind of a Funny Story*, I am going to draw some conclusions in this chapter. As I have stated, the purposes of this study are to show how the authors portray the protagonists and to show the purposes of the authors in creating such protagonists.

The first protagonist that I analyze is Charlotte 'Charlie' Davis in *Girl in Pieces*. In this novel, she suffers from several mental illnesses and is portrayed as someone who is taciturn and insecure. As she is a dynamic character, she experiences changes in her characteristics. The changes in her characteristics are prompted by the support and encouragement she receives from people around her, especially from her friends. At the end of the novel, Charlotte succeeds in conquering her mental illnesses and is portrayed as someone who is communicative and self-confident.

Kathleen Glasgow portrays such a protagonist in *Girl in Pieces* with several purposes. First and foremost, she wants to convey that it is important to get and accept encouragement and support from friends when people suffer from

mental illnesses. Those encouragement and support will help them recover from those mental illnesses. Second, seeing how concerning mental health issue among teenagers and young adults is nowadays, Glasgow wants to raise the readers' awareness about it. Through the way she portrays Charlotte at the beginning of the novel, she wants people to be aware that certain characteristics may be the symptoms of someone's suffering from mental illnesses. Lastly, Glasgow wants to give hope to those who struggle with mental illnesses. She shows this through the way she portrays the changes in Charlotte's characteristics, which indicate that she has conquered her mental illnesses.

The second protagonist that I analyze is Craig Gilner in *It's Kind of a Funny Story*. In this novel, he suffers from mental illness and is portrayed as someone who is timid and pessimistic. As he is a dynamic character, he experiences changes in his characteristics. The changes in his characteristics are prompted by his staying in the psychiatric hospital. In the hospital, he realizes that professional help and medication are crucial in order to recover from mental illnesses. He also realizes that he does not want to live like the other patients there. Furthermore, during his stay there, he also gets encouragement to do his art again. At the end of the novel, he succeeds in overcoming his mental illness and he is portrayed as someone who is self-confident and optimistic.

Ned Vizzini portrays such a protagonist in *It's Kind of a Funny Story* with several purposes. First and foremost, he wants to emphasize that it is crucial to get professional help and medication for those who suffer from mental illnesses. Professional help and medication will help them overcome their mental illnesses. Second, related to his belief in the importance of professional help and

medication, he wants those who struggle with mental illnesses to reach out for help. Lastly, Ned Vizzini wants to raise the readers' awareness regarding mental illnesses among teenagers and young adults as the issue has become even more concerning nowadays. Through the way he portrays Craig at the beginning of the novel, he wants the readers to be aware that certain characteristics may be the symptoms of someone's suffering from mental illnesses.

After revealing how the protagonists are portrayed in the two novels and also the purposes of the authors in making such protagonists, I can conclude that there are some resemblances and distinction between the two novels. The first resemblance between the two novels lies on the mental state of the protagonists. Both Charlotte and Craig suffer from mental illnesses which are reflected through the characteristics they possess. Charlotte is portrayed as taciturn and insecure, while Craig is depicted as someone who is timid and pessimistic. These are characteristics that are often considered as part of the symptoms of mental illnesses.

The next resemblance lies on the fact that both protagonists manage to overcome their mental illnesses, which is reflected through the change in their characteristics. At the end of the novel, Charlotte is depicted as communicative and self-confident, while Craig is described as self-confident and optimistic. These similar characteristics show how both protagonists have conquered their mental disorders.

However, aside from the resemblances, there is also a distinction between the two novels. This distinction lies on the environment they live in when they succeed in overcoming their mental illnesses. Charlotte lives in a social

environment outside the hospital environment when she succeeds in overcoming her mental disorders. Although she stays in a psych ward at the beginning of the novel, the change in her characteristics does not occur until she gets discharged from the hospital to live in a normal social environment. Living in a normal social environment leads her to recover from her mental illnesses because in this social environment, she has friends who listen to her, give moral support, and encourage her. On the other hand, Craig lives in the hospital environment when he succeeds in overcoming his mental illness. Living in the hospital environment leads Craig to recover from his mental illness because in the hospital environment, he gets professional help and medication. Furthermore, he also gets encouragement from other patients and volunteers. If it were not for his stay at the hospital, he would not get that encouragement and he would not realize that he does not want to live like the patients there.

This distinction exists because each novel pinpoints different aspects although both novels deal with mental illnesses and the recovery from those mental illnesses. *Girl in Pieces* emphasizes that encouragement from friends is the most important aspect in the recovery from mental disorders. On the other hand, *It's Kind of a Funny Story* highlights the importance of professional help and medication in the recovery.

The different aspects each novel highlights are affected by the authors' different beliefs which influence the way they create the protagonists. Kathleen Glasgow believes that getting and accepting support and encouragement from friends is important in order to deal with mental illnesses. This is why in *Girl in Pieces*, she puts the emphasis on the encouragement and support from friends. On

the other hand, Ned Vizzini believes that people should reach out and get professional help and medication in order to deal with mental illnesses. This is why in *It's Kind of a Funny Story*, he puts the emphasis on seeking and getting professional help and medication.

Through the resemblances and the distinction, it can be inferred that anybody who suffers from mental illnesses is able to manage and overcome them either when they get support and encouragement from other people (friends, those who struggle with the same conditions, etc.) or when they get professional help and medication. After analyzing these two novels, I come to a conclusion that people who suffer from mental illnesses are able to recover if professional treatment and support from others are provided for them and those who struggle with mental illnesses are willing to accept them.

In my opinion, both *Girl in Pieces* and *It's Kind of a Funny Story* are important reads as both novels are written for consequential purposes. Both novels are two brilliant examples of literary works that focus on the representation of mental health issues. I think the representation of mental illnesses, along with the portrayals of the protagonists in both books, is on point. This is why both authors have successfully conveyed their purposes to the readers.

Having analyzed the two novels makes me see mental health issues from a different perspective. I have always believed that it is only professionals who can help someone recover from mental illnesses. However, *Girl in Pieces* makes me realize that however small our support is for those who struggle with mental illnesses, it will make a huge difference in their life and help them conquer their mental illnesses. Therefore, getting support from friends is as crucial and effective

as getting professional help. After reading the novels and doing an in-depth analysis on the protagonists, I can conclude that these two novels are written in order to give the readers a better understanding on the issue of mental illnesses and to give hope to those who struggle with mental illnesses.

