

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses four components, the background of the research, the statement of the problem, the objective of the research, and the significance of the research. The background of the research describes the context prior to the research being conducted. The statement of the problem articulates the issues concerning the subject. The objectives of the research outline the aims of the study. The significance of the research explains how this study can contribute to the world of literature, particularly popular literature.

#### **1.1 Background of the research**

The existence of popular literature remains sought after and continues to develop to this day. Popular literature encompasses a variety of genres that attract readers' attention, one of which is detective stories. The detective genre is one of the most in demand literary genres due to its ability to create suspense and puzzles that invite the reader's curiosity. The detective genre encompasses a variety of intriguing variations, each offering a unique experience for readers. There are mystery stories that invite readers to deduce the perpetrator of the crime, as well as noir tales replete with moral dilemmas and a dark atmosphere. One subgenre that has attracted attention is hard-boiled detective, which developed in the 1920s and is known for its hard-boiled detective characters, full of sarcasm, and operating outside the boundaries of the law to uncover the truth. In hard-boiled stories, the setting used is usually dark and full of social violence, where detectives or other investigative figures face complex moral conflicts. The Hard-boiled detective formula is a term based on the popular literature, which is a continuation of mystery genre. A piece of literature can be referred to be popular literary work if the theme, style of presentation, and writing adhere to a common pattern. (Adi, 2011 p.14).

The distinctive feature of the genre is the presence of mysterious conflicts that must be resolved, where investigation or the process of solving puzzles becomes the core of the story. According to Saricks (2009 p.196), Mysteries are constructed around a puzzle. The author provides clues to the solution, but also obscures some information so that the mystery cannot be solved too easily. Along with the detective, you are drawn into the puzzle in an attempt to solve it.

In detective stories, authors often use various storytelling strategies to arouse curiosity and keep readers following the storyline. This strategy is one way to create tension in the story. The detective often employs narrative strategies to cultivate curiosity and provide a deeper reading experience. This genre is kind of modern version of crime stories. This feature not only enables readers to appreciate the story but also functions as a detective in helping them comprehend the plot. Saricks said, the solving of a crime, usually a murder, drives the plot, and the detective, along with the reader, sorts through the available clues to discover the solution (Saricks, 2009 p.198) .

Detectives or other investigative characters are frequently used to uncover complex crimes or puzzles. Detective stories are not a new form of literature. Since ancient times, humans have been drawn to tales involving puzzles, mysteries and crimes, and to the process of solving problems through reasoning. Haycraft (1941 p.4) states puzzle stories, mystery stories, crime stories, and stories of deduction and analysis have existed since the earliest times and the detective story is closely related to them all.

Therefore, the detective formula is a narrative structure that serves as the main foundation for the detective genre, with a primary focus on the investigative process carried out by the detective and the resolution of the crime. This formula provides a framework that allows writers to create well-structured storylines, where each element, such as clues, conflicts, and revelations, plays a crucial role in leading the reader towards a satisfying resolution. As stated by Cawelti, The detective formula is arguably the most effective fictional structure

devised for creating the illusion of rational control over life's mysteries. It has served a variety of purposes, including intellectual play and witty escapism. (Cawelti, 1976 p.137). in this context, the detective formula not only functions as a tool to build tension and intrigue but also as a medium to explore various aspects of life, both intellectual and practical.

Hard-boiled detectives are known for the tension that is a central element in the narrative development of their stories. Tension arises from a variety of sources, from physical threats that threaten the detective's safety, to moral dilemmas that force her to choose between justice and personal safety. In addition, the investigative process often does not follow a linear path, filled with changing information, deceit, and ambiguity that causes the meaning of truth to constantly shift. All these elements create an uncertain and stressful atmosphere, forcing the protagonist to maintain his integrity amidst the temptations of power and violence. For the reader, this kind of tension not only enhances the dynamics of the story but also strengthens emotional involvement and curiosity about the development of the case and the fate of the detective herself. As such, suspense is not just a flavour enhancer in the story, but the very foundation that drives the narrative while reflecting the complexity of the world the character faces. The literary Purpose of conflict is to create tension in the story, making readers more interested by Leaving them uncertain which of the characters or forces will prevail (Stanton, 2007).

*A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson is one of the novels that combines detective and mystery themes with a fresh and relevant approach for young readers. This novel has received various prestigious awards, including the *Best Children's Fiction Book of the Year at the British Book Awards (2020)* and *the Amazing Audiobook for Young Adults from the American Library Association (2021)*. It was also nominated for the *Goodreads Choice Award for Young Adult Fiction (2020)* and made the shortlist for the *YA Book Prize (2020)*. Furthermore, *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* was recognized as one of the best books of 2020 by Barnes and Noble.

Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* is considered part of popular literature due to its display of the main characteristics of popular fiction. According to Gelder (2005, p. 20), popular fiction is produced and consumed for entertainment, is formulaic, and is often based on a specific genre. These characteristics are evident in Jackson's novel, which follows the typical pattern of a mystery: a murder is presented, the protagonist investigates, and a clear resolution is reached. The language is simple and accessible, making the novel widely readable for both teenagers and young adults. The focus is not on aesthetic achievement but on engaging readers emotionally through tension and suspense. This aligns with Gelder's (2005, p. 40) explanation that popular fiction emphasizes affective engagement rather than reflective distance, unlike canonical literary works.

Additionally, the novel demonstrates the close relationship between popular literature and the logic of the publishing industry and market. *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* was widely published, became an international bestseller, was translated into various languages, and was even adapted into a television series. This phenomenon underscores the novel's position as a cultural commodity, which is consistent with Gelder's (2005, p. 38) explanation that popular fiction functions within a framework of mass production geared toward economic interests. Thus, Jackson's novel's success demonstrates that popular works serve not only as entertainment, but also as cultural industry products worthy of further study.

*A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* can be categorised as part of the hard-boiled detective story tradition, as its narrative and characterisation display the distinctive characteristics of hard-boiled fiction that differ from classic detective stories. Classical detective stories, as exemplified by the works of Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, typically portray detectives as rational professionals who maintain emotional distance and emphasise logical deduction to solve mysteries in relatively safe environments. By contrast, in this story, Pip Fitz-Amobi plays the role of an amateur detective who is directly involved in a dangerous case and

faces threats, intimidation and life-threatening situations. This reflects the essence of the hard-boiled genre, in which detectives are surrounded by tension and real threats, with an emphasis on courage and action rather than intellectual deduction. Furthermore, the plot not only focuses on solving puzzles, but also reveals the harsh social realities of drug abuse, the corruption of power and toxic relationships within a small community. Consequently, this work aligns more closely with the hard-boiled tradition, emphasising suspense, action, and the exposure of the dark side of social life. This is fundamentally different from the more sterile, logic-driven narrative patterns of classical detective stories.

This novel offers a fresh take on the classic hard-boiled detective story, making it accessible and appealing to a younger audience. While classic hard-boiled stories typically feature tough, cynical male detectives, this novel centres on Pippa Fitz-Amobi, a courageous teenage amateur sleuth who braves the dangers of the criminal underworld. The typical setting of a large, crime-ridden city is replaced by the seemingly peaceful small town of Kilton, which harbours gossip, corruption and dark secrets. Jackson incorporates contemporary media such as school project notes, interview transcripts, text messages and news articles, giving the novel a documentary-like feel that is lacking in classic hard-boiled works. Additionally, elements of young adult fiction, such as teenage dynamics, romance, social pressure and the role of social media, are integrated with the characteristic tension of hard-boiled fiction to create a fresh reading experience. While the ending still features threats and violence, it emphasises justice over the moral ambiguity typical of the hard-boiled tradition.

The uniqueness of this novel lies in its innovative narrative format, where the story is conveyed not only through conventional narration but also includes interview transcripts, investigative notes, maps, and evidence collected by the main character, Pippa Fitz-Amobi. With this approach, readers feel as if they are participating in the investigation process, making the reading experience more interactive and immersive. Another uniqueness of this novel lies in the adaptation of the hard-boiled detective formula in the context of modern teen

fiction, which is rarely found in works with similar themes. Furthermore, this novel combines complex themes such as legal injustice, societal prejudice, and corruption with the perspective of a teenager, creating a balance between the joys of youth and the seriousness of the cases faced. The plot, filled with red herrings and unexpected surprises, further builds tension and keeps readers intrigued until the end. The setting of the seemingly tranquil small town of Little Kilton, which harbours many secrets, also enhances the mysterious atmosphere of the story, making a fresh and engaging work among similar genre novels. it a fresh and engaging work among similar genre novels.

In compiling this research, the researcher felt it necessary to conduct a review of previous studies which contained the same discussion and the same objects, therefore the author needed to at least present some research which felt was similar to what the author discussed in this research.

The first research is a thesis entitled *Hard-Boiled Detective Formula in The Movie Knives Out (2019)* by Ariati Maraya (2024). This research aims to discover the roles of the main characters portrayed in the movie and how the hard-boiled formula applies in the movie *Knives Out*. This research used John G. Cawelti's theory of main characters in the hard-boiled detective formula: the detective, the victim, the criminal, and those involved in the crime. The action pattern of the hard-boiled detective formula was the detective as a hero, suspense and threat, a modern city as a background, the role of women, and changing meaning. the writer found four that consist of a detective as a hero, one in suspense and threat, two of a modern city as background, four in the role of women, and the last five in changing meaning. The writer concludes that the movie *Knives Out* (2019) fulfils and applies all patterns of action in a hard-boiled detective formula from Cawelti's theory (Maraya, 2024).

The second is a thesis untitled *The classical detective formula in Agatha Christie's Murder on The Orient Express* by Nurazni (2021). This research explores the application of the classic detective formula in Agatha Christie's



Murder on the Orient Express, utilizing Edgar Allan Poe's theory as a framework. The study investigates how the classic detective formula is presented in the novel and examines the structural phases involved in the discovery of clues. The results indicate that the novel incorporates four essential components of the classic detective formula, as defined by Poe. These components include the crime situation, a pattern of actions that includes six phases of detective introduction, presentation of the crime and initial clues, investigation process, announcement of the solution, explanation of the solution, and the denouement. The characters and their relationships, which include roles such as detective, victim, criminal, and those affected by the crime but unable to resolve it, as well as the setting, that play a critical role in shaping the narrative (Nurazni, 2021).

The research entitled *The Diction Used in the Novel on the Reader in a Novel A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson* written by Soraya Balqis, ummah fardilla Aulia and Wahyu indah mala Rohmana (2024) . The focus of this study is to examine how the author's word choice affects readers' comprehension and emotional connection to the narrative. The research thoroughly analyzes the novel's language using a qualitative approach and a descriptive case study method, paying special attention to the use of diction from the standpoint of meaning, which encompasses both denotative and connotative features. According to the study, the author's use of language is not only suitable for the genre but also successful in eliciting specific emotions and reactions from readers. For example, connotative diction adds layers of cultural and emotional importance that enhance the story and increase reader participation, while denotative diction offers straightforward, literal meanings that make it easier for readers to follow the plot and comprehend the mystery's factual aspects (Balqis, 2024).

The research titled the article *Feminism Perspective in A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Angela Aprilyani Putri and Restu Arini (2024). The study examines the feminist themes in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*, with a special emphasis on the character of Pippa Fitz-Amobi, the

story's resolute and intellectual protagonist. The feminist theory of Rosemarie Tong, which makes a distinction between liberal and radical feminism, is used as the theoretical basis for the study. In order to comprehend how feminist principles are portrayed and executed in the novel, the researchers employ a qualitative descriptive approach to closely analyze the narrative, focusing on Pippa's conversations, actions, and inner monologues. The results show that Pippa exemplifies important aspects of liberal feminism since she actively pursues her studies and personal objectives without letting gender-based constraints or social expectations stand in her way. In addition, the study reveals elements of radical feminism in Pippa's persona, specifically in her defiance of patriarchal systems and conventional gender norms (Putri & Arini, 2024).

The last research titled *Suspense dalam Les Frères Rico karya George Simenon* by Muhammad Khusnul Hanif (2021) uses the theories of narrative point of view and suspense as its analytical framework to examine how suspense elements are constructed through the series of events experienced by the main character, Eddie Rico. This study explores the progression of tension within the narrative by analyzing key linguistic data such as words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs related to suspense. The research divides the story's suspense-building process into multiple phases, highlighting how successive events contribute to increasing the reader's sense of anxiety and curiosity. The findings reveal that George Simenon skillfully arranges interconnected events in Eddie Rico's life to create a coherent and escalating tension, effectively engaging the audience throughout the story. Furthermore, the use of a particular narrative point of view allows readers to closely experience the protagonist's psychological state, thereby intensifying the effect of suspense. The research concludes that the novel's suspense is not merely a result of isolated incidents but rather the cumulative outcome of carefully structured events that maintain the readers' emotional engagement until the story reaches its climax and resolution. This study contributes valuable insight into the narrative techniques



used in classic detective fiction and enhances understanding of suspense as a fundamental tool in literary storytelling.

This study has a different focus compared to previous studies. While many other studies tend to analyse aspects of character, diction, or feminist perspective, this study specifically explores the application of the hard-boiled detective formula in Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*. In addition, this study highlights how the formula contributes to creating suspense in the story through elements such as investigation, detective characters, and crime solving. With this approach, this study offers a new contribution in understanding the application of Cawelti's theory in the narrative structure of modern detective novels.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of research above, the following question were formulated:

1. What aspects of the hard-boiled detective formula are applied in Holly Jackson *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*?
2. How does the element of hard-boiled detective formula build tension in *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson?

## 1.3 Research Objective

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researcher is intended:

1. To find out aspect the hard-boiled detective formula applied in *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson
2. To Explore how the element of hard-boiled detective formula in *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson builds tension in the novel.

#### 1.4 Research Significant

The research aims to make both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of genre literature studies, especially in the realm of the hard-boiled detective genre. This analysis deepens our understanding of how elements of the hard-boiled detective formula formulated by Cawelti are applied to contemporary novel narratives, such as Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*. The study also provides insight into the adaptation and evolution of the hard-boiled detective genre in the context of modern literature, including how elements such as suspense, investigative process, and detective characters are processed in works aimed at young adult readers.

Practically, this research is useful for readers, writers, and teachers of literature who are interested in the incorporation of genres in literary works. In the end, the researches hopes that this research will be beneficial for those who need it as a reference or reading material to better understand the mystery genre.

#### 1.5 Definition Key Term

In this section, the researcher aims to share and explain ideas to form the foundation of this study. These concepts serve as the main orientation and reference to understand the points in the context of this study, thus avoiding misunderstandings in the discussion.

##### 1. Formula

The formula is a recurrent pattern or standard structure used in literature to create works of literature. Plot, character types, themes, and stylistic characteristics are examples of components that are frequently repeated in different works within a particular genre or tradition.

##### 2. Detective Formula

The detective formula is the genre's narrative framework, which primarily focuses on the detective's investigation and the

conclusion of the crime. In order to identify the criminal and comprehend the motivation behind the crime, this genre frequently entails the process of solving a mystery through the collection of clues, questioning of suspects, and assembling of evidence. Usually, the story is structured around the detective's work. Classical detectives and hard-boiled detectives are two types of detective formula, each with unique traits.

### 3. Hard-boiled Detective

Hard-boiled detective stories usually feature a protagonist surrounded by danger and filled with suspense. Alongside showing how clues are discovered, these stories often include action scenes that keep readers on the edge of their seats. This style is a particular branch of American detective fiction that started in the early 1920s. It's recognised for its gritty realism, often depicting violence and a darker atmosphere than earlier detective tales. These stories tend to explore a world full of corruption and betrayal, where characters aren't always clear-cut heroes or villains. Unlike classic detective stories that focus mainly on logical deduction, hard-boiled fiction mixes mystery with gritty action, involving fights and morally challenging decisions that the protagonist must face.

### 4. Tension

Tension in hard-boiled detective fiction arises not only from external conflicts such as murder, betrayal, or threats, but also from inner conflicts within the main character.