

# VIOLET MARKEY'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN JENNIFER NIVEN'S ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES

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**Abstract.** The object of this research is the novel entitled *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven. This study analyzes one of the main characters of the story, Violet Markey, and the discussion focuses on her character development. There are three objectives of this research. The first is to describe the portrayal of Violet Markey as round character. The second is to describe the conflict faced by Violet Markey. The third is to reveal Violet Markey's character development. The writer uses intrinsic approach because this research focuses analyzing the internal elements of the novel and uses descriptive method design. The data source of this research is Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places*. The data are quotations from the novel that support the analysis. The writer finds out that Violet's is a round character because she shows a change in character from closed, dishonest, fearful, guilty, uncreative, unsociable, and frustrated to being happy, brave, motivated, imaginative, gregarious, and open minded person. The writer also finds out that Violet experiences an internal conflict, because she has to choose between continue living as she used to be or to living by punishing herself. After conducting the analysis the writer finds out that the conflict faced by Violet Markey has influence her character development, Violet shows changes from character deterioration to an character improvement. The result of the research is Violet's character development is affected by several factors and Theodore Finch is the biggest influence in her character development.

Keywords: character development, characterization, conflict.

**Abstract.** Objek penelitian ini adalah novel berjudul *All the Bright Places* karya Jennifer Niven. Studi ini menganalisis salah satu karakter utama cerita, Violet Markey, dan pembahasan berfokus pada pengembangan karakternya. Ada tiga tujuan dari penelitian ini. Pertama, mendeskripsikan penggambaran Violet Markey sebagai tokoh bulat. Kedua, mendeskripsikan konflik yang dihadapi Violet Markey. Ketiga, mengungkap perkembangan karakter Violet Markey. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan intrinsik karena penelitian ini berfokus menganalisis unsur-unsur internal novel dan menggunakan metode deskriptif. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah novel *All the Bright Places* karya Jennifer Niven. Data berupa kutipan-kutipan dari novel yang mendukung analisis. Penulis menemukan bahwa Violet adalah karakter bulat karena dia menunjukkan perubahan karakter dari tertutup, tidak jujur, takut, merasa bersalah, tidak kreatif, menyendiri, dan frustrasi berubah menjadi orang yang bahagia, berani, termotivasi, imajinatif, suka berteman, dan berpikiran terbuka. Penulis juga menemukan bahwa Violet mengalami konflik internal, karena dia harus memilih antara melanjutkan hidup seperti dulu atau hidup dengan menghukum dirinya sendiri. Setelah melakukan analisis penulis menemukan bahwa konflik yang dihadapi Violet Markey telah mempengaruhi perkembangan karakternya, Violet menunjukkan perubahan dari penurunan karakter menjadi peningkatan karakter. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah perkembangan karakter Violet dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor dan Theodore Finch merupakan pengaruh terbesar dalam perkembangan karakternya.

Kata kunci: pengembangan karakter, penokohan, konflik

## INTRODUCTION

Character is an important element in literary works such as in short stories or novels. Character is established not just by the words used to describe actions, mannerisms, gestures, or appearance, but also by interactions (Browning and Elmes, 2015: 93). When reading a novel, the reader's feelings will arise and they see stories about the lives of each character in the novel. The author writes a novel not only to create feelings of pleasure to the reader but also to convey a message about the events and actions of the characters in the novel. The characters are created by the author in their literary work show the reader that everyone has differences type of character such as temperament, feelings of belonging or sense of humor. This is the way the author gives characterization to their characters. According to Grolier (1977: 291), characterization is a unique feature of fiction forms such as short stories, novels, plays, and narrative poetry.

The novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven is a young adult novel that tells a story about the life of two teenagers named Violet Markey and Theodore Finch who are struggling with mental health issues. They have their own struggles with mental health issues. Theodore Finch suffers from anger problems since childhood. When growing up, Finch is always obsessed with his own death. Violet Markey is described as a girl

who used to be a popular girl at school but she turns into a gloomy girl after being a survivor of a car accident that takes her sister's life.

The writer decides to analyze the character development of Violet Markey because according to the story Violet Markey's character is unique and develop after she becomes a survivor. There are many opinions about the definition of a survivor. Some people think that being a survival person is something they should be grateful for because they are survived an incident that could have taken their life. But there is also an opinion that being a survival person is not easy. Like what happens to Violet Markey, she is a survivor of the car accident that takes her sister's life. After the incident, feelings of guilt fills her mind. She feels she does not deserve to live because her sister has died.

Conflict becomes the cause of Violet's character change. Many things have changed in her life after the car accident. She seems angry with herself and has a hard time accepting the fact that her sister has gone. The focus of this research is the character development of Violet Markey that is revealed through conflict, especially the internal conflict experiences by Violet Markey. There are three problem statements formulated i.e how is the portrayal of Violet Markey as round character?, what conflict is faced by Violet Markey?, and how does the conflict faced by Violet Markey?

This study will discuss the theory of characters and characterizations. A character is someone who leads the plot of the story, while characterization refers to how each character is described or illustrated by the author in the story. As Browning and Elmes state in *Perspectives on Literature* that there are two types of character, Flat and round character (2015: 93). Round characters are often more fully developed through how they are depicted, the dialogue they use, and the responses they engage in to conflicts or events in the text (Browning and Elmes, 2015: 94). Similarly in *Aspect of the Novel* by E.M. Forster states that round characters are capable of surprise, contradiction, and change; they are representations of human beings in all of their complexity (1927: 5). E.M. Forster also states that flat character can be summed up in a single sentence and acts as a function of only a few fixed character traits (1927: 4).

To identify how the description of a character is very important to know the characterization of each character. In Perrine's *Literature: Structure, Sound & Sense* by Thomas R. Arp and Greg Johnson states that the author presents their characters either directly or indirectly (2009: 104).

Referring to the problem statements mentioned above, there are three objectives in this study i.e. to describe the portrayal of Violet Markey as round character, to describe the conflict faced

by Violet Markey, and to reveal Violet Markey's character development.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method because the data analysis is presented descriptively. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982) descriptive qualitative research is descriptive where data is collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. The writer uses an intrinsic approach because this research focuses on the analysis of the plot and the character of the novel. According to *Theory of Literature*, (Wellek and Warren, 1977) intrinsic approach concerns with interpretation and analysis of the works of literature itself.

There are three steps of data collection procedure in this study i.e. the writer reads the data source, namely the novel *All The Bright Places*, the writer collects data related to character, characteristics, character development and conflict, and the writer classifies the data based on the topic of analysis.

The writer takes three steps in this research. The first is the writer reads and reviews the novel *All the bright places* to determine the topic as the main focus of research. The second is the writer collects several relevant theories to support the evidence or findings. The third is after collecting and analyzing the evidence, the researcher uses theory to support the answers to the research

questions. After analyzing the novel and applying the theory, the researcher creates a research conclusion.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Portrayal of Violet Markey as Round Character**

Violet Markey is the second child of the family of James Markey and Sheryl Markey. Violet Markey's life can be said to be perfect because she has a family that always supports her and she is a popular high school student. She has a sister named Eleanor Markey. Eleanor is Violet's sister and best friend who has always been her support system.

However, things have completely changed after the accident on Fifth April Violet and Eleanor had a tragic car accident that has killed Eleanor. That incident makes Violet very sad because she has lost the person she love very much. The car accident also made Violet feel guilty because Violet has chose that route to go home.

### **Deterioration of Violet Markey Character**

It has been more than nine months since the car accident that has killed Eleanor but Violet still grieving over the car accident and keeps blaming herself for her sister's death. Every day Violet only count the days until graduation so she can quickly leave Indiana and all the bitterness about her sister's death.

Violet's character shows changes after the car accident that has killed her sister.

Violet shows that she turns into closed, dishonest, fearful, guilty, uncreative, unsociable, and frustrated after her sister has died. Violet does not want to tell her parents about anything anymore. She will lie to cover up her true feelings. She still can not bring herself to drive by car. She always feels guilty for her sister's death and feels unworthy of a happy life because she has survived the accident. Violet becomes uncreative because she feels that her desire to write has disappeared with Eleanor's death. Violet also moves away from her friendship. Violet feels that she is responsible for her sister's death and feels that her life has no meaning anymore. It is shown in the following quotation.

“It was my sister’s birthday. She would have been nineteen.”

“Shit. I’m sorry.”

But that is not why. The why is that none of it matters. Not school, not cheerleading, not boyfriends or friends or parties or creative writing programs or...” She waves her arms at the world. “It’s all just time filler until we die (Niven, 2015: 36).

Because of all the guilt and burden she has on her mind, Violet does not know what to do when it comes to her sister's birthday. Violet is so desperate and makes herself does not realize that

she is on her way to the bell tower and does not know what she wants to do on the ledge of the bell tower.

### **Improvement of Violet Markey Character**

The condition slowly changes for the better after Violet meets Theodore Finch. Finch is also a Bartlett High School student. He is in the same class as Violet in Geography. He is also in the bell tower when Violet is up there. Finch finally helps Violet by giving her instructions to get back and making a scenario as if Violet is the one who helps Finch not to jump.

What happens at the bell tower makes Violet make a friend with Finch, even though Finch and Violet have different social status at their school. Violet is more popular whereas Finch is a weirdo in the school. Violet never treats Finch the way others do. They become closer when they have to do a project in Geography class together. Violet finds that the ways Finch treats her are unusual but special. Then Violet shows there is an improvement in her character. She shows that she begins to live each day with happiness, bravery, motivation, imagination, and openness.

Violet feels Finch is the only person who can understand and accept her for who she is. Violet also becomes braver when Finch manages to convince her to drive a car for the first time since the accident. Violet feels that Finch's presence can give her motivation to

develop herself. Finch's presence also influences Violet to be more creative. Finally Violet is able to accept the fact that the deaths of Eleanor and Finch are not her responsibility and she has accepted their deaths. It is shown in the following quotation.

When they try to interrupt me, I talk louder. "We can't go backward. We can't change anything that happened. I can't bring her back or bring Finch back. I can't change the fact that I sneaked around to see him when I told you it was over. I don't want to tiptoe around her or him or you anymore (Niven, 2015: 193).

The descriptions above show that Violet is a round character as well as a developing character. As E.M. Forster stated in *Aspects of the Novel*, that round characters are capable of surprise, contradiction, and change. Similarly in *Perspectives on Literature* by Browning and Elmes which states that dynamic characters have a significant epiphany. Violet shows the surprise or significant epiphany when she is able to accept the reality of the loss of her loved ones, Eleanor and Finch.

### **The Conflict Faced by Violet Markey**

The text tells that Violet Markey experiences a car accident that has killed her sister. When Eleanor is still alive Violet feels that she and her sister are the perfect combination to live a perfect life.

It makes it very difficult for Violet to face the fact that her sister has died. This leaves Violet with two choices of ways to continue her life after her sister's death. The choice is whether she has to continue living as she used to be or she has to live by punishing herself because she feels responsible for her sister's death.

Violet turns into a solitary girl. She moves away from her surroundings. Violet is starting to stop doing the things she likes. Violet thinks she is the cause of the accident that has killed her sister. It makes her feel guilty. Violet feels that she does not deserve to be happy. Violet also hurt herself by using Eleanor's glasses. Eleanor's eyes are worse than hers. Violet put on Eleanor's glasses after her sister's death, hopes that she can be like Eleanor and be able to see what Eleanor sees. She also wishes she can be both Violet and Eleanor so that no one is missing Eleanor, especially herself. It is shown in the following quotation.

I have a headache. Probably from the glasses. Eleanor's eyes were worse than mine. I take the glasses off and set them on the desk. They were stylish on her. They're ugly on me. Especially with the bangs. But maybe, if I wear the glasses long enough, I can be like her. I can see what she saw. I can be both of us at once so no one will have to miss her, most of all me (Niven, 2015: 18).

From the description it shows that Violet is experiencing an internal conflict. She is faced with two choices of how to continue her life after the death of her sister. Will she be able to continue living as the Violet used to be or will she not be able to face the reality of her sister's death and continue her life by punishing herself.

### **How Violet's Conflict Influence Her Character Development**

According to the conflict that Violet Markey has experienced which is described in the previous sub chapter, Violet experiences internal conflicts. These conflicts certainly influence Violet's character development. Violet shows that after her sister's death she continues to live her life by punishing herself by stopping doing the things she likes, staying away from her surroundings, feeling she does not deserve to live happily, feeling she has betrayed her sister, and she is forcing herself to be like Eleanor.

These behaviors are behaviors where Violet shows the deterioration of her character. Things start to change when Theodore Finch comes into Violet's life. During her time with Finch, Violet finds beautiful things even though these beautiful things come from something unexpected. Finch with all his simplicity and unpredictable behavior is able to make a special impression on Violet. Violet feels that Finch is the only person

who can feel her pain. Finch has managed to get Violet to talk about her broken feelings after her sister's death. While working on their Geography assignment, Finch takes Violet to places that are ordinary but have a lovely impression. Besides that Finch treats Violet very well, and that makes Violet feel special. This makes Violet begin to find happiness that can significantly improve her.

Finch says that there has to be someone to push Violet harder to become the Violet she used to be. He is able to convince Violet to travel by car for the first time since the car accident. This is a significant change that Violet shows after the car accident. Months after Violet decides to stop writing, she has to accept that she is the one who has to write activities during her wanderings with Theodore Finch for Geography class. Besides that, Finch also motivates her that she is good at writing. Finch makes sure that Violet starts writing because all she needs is encouragement to start writing again.

Violet has been away from her circle of friends, it is only Finch who becomes her closest friend. He is the first person who makes her happy after the car accident. After Finch has been missing for a few days, Violet is trying to move on from her relationship with Finch. Violet is trying to rebuild friendships with her old friends as well as with her new friends.

She is able to develop friendships that will support her for the better.

Violet has improved her life a lot since meeting Finch. But she has moments blaming herself after she finds out that Finch has died by suicide. It is as if Finch knows that Violet will blame herself for his death, he asks Violet to go to the places they should have visited together for Geography class. After she visits the rest of the places that Finch has signed, she seems to find enlightenment that she cannot change everything that has happened. Violet realizes she does not need to worry about Finch or Eleanor, because they are in a better place now. Violet is finally able to accept the reality of the loss of her loved ones Eleanor and Finch. It is shown in the following quotation.

When they try to interrupt me, I talk louder. "We can't go backward. We can't change anything that happened. I can't bring her back or bring Finch back. I can't change the fact that I sneaked around to see him when I told you it was over. I don't want to tiptoe around her or him or you anymore (Niven, 2015: 193).

From the description above, it shows that Violet's character has developed since being close friends with Theodore Finch. Violet, who previously shows deterioration in her character, she continues to live life by punishing herself

by stopping doing the things she loves, stays away from her surroundings, feels she does not deserve to live happily, feels she has betrayed her sister, and she forces herself to be like Eleanor. After Theodore Finch comes into her life and helps her face everything. He helps Violet stop thinking that she is guilty, helps her to appreciate her life that is saved from the car accident, helps her to be able to see things from a better perspective, and helps her to deal with the fact that her sister has died and it is not because of her. Violet shows there is an improvement in her character. She shows that she begins to live each day with happiness, bravery, motivation, imagination, and openness. Here Violet shows that she has an epiphany when she finally able accept the fact that Eleanor and Finch are dead. There is nothing she can do to bring them back, and she realizes that she is innocent and needs to move on to live a better life.

## **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the data, the writer finds out that Violet Markey has a round character. It is shows when she turns into closed, dishonest, fearful, guilty, uncreative, unsociable, and frustrated after her sister died. Her days looks very gloomy after her sister died. Violet's life begins to change when Theodore Finch enters her life. Violet starts showing her character development, she becomes happy, brave, motivated, imaginative,

gregarious, and open minded person. This shows that Violet's character has changed from deterioration to an improvement.

The writer also finds out that Violet experiences internal conflict because she is faced with two choices of ways to continue living after her sister's death. The two choices are for her to continue her life by being the Violet used to or to live her life by punishing herself. The writer finds that at first Violet shows that she continues her life by punishing herself by stop doing the things she likes, stays away from her surroundings, feels she does not deserve to live happily, feels she has betrayed her sister, and she forces herself to be like Eleanor. Then the writer finds an improvement in Violet's character after Theodore Finch enters her life. Violet turns into a happy, brave, motivated, imaginative, gregarious, and open minded person.

It is also found that Violet's conflict influences her character development, the writer finds that the internal conflict that Violet faces has a big impact on her character. Because of the conflict she is faced, Violet shows her character's deterioration turns out into closed, dishonest, fearful, guilty, uncreative, unsociable, and frustrated. Then Violet manage to improves her character to be happy, brave, motivated, imaginative, gregarious, and open minded with the help of Theodore Finch.



The result of the research is Violet's character development is affected by several factors. Violet has parents who really care for her, she also has friends who always support and accompany her. But the most influential factor of Violet's character development is Theodore Finch. Because many changes have happened to Violet since Theodore Finch come into her life. Theodore Finch realizes that Violet needs his help, because there has to be someone who can push her harder to get her out of her bad feelings. Finch has tries to help Violet's life without thinking about himself, and he is simply able to helps Violet face everything, he helps Violet stop thinking that she is guilty, helps her to appreciate her life that is saved from the car accident, helps her to be able to see things from a better perspective, and helps her to deal with the fact that her sister has died and it is not because of her. In the end Violet is able to move on with her life without a shadow of guilt and she is able to accept reality.

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