# UNFOLDING THE CAUSES OF LYDIA LEE'S SUICIDE IN CELESTE NG'S EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU

## **THESIS**



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#### **ABSTRACT**

Sari, V. A. (2021). *Unfolding the Causes of Lydia Lee's Suicide in Celeste Ng's Everything I Never Told You.* English Department, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Advisor: Sufi Ikrima Saadah, M.Hum.

Keywords: suicide, interpersonal theory of suicide, new criticism

This thesis aimed to know the personality of Lydia Lee and unfold the causes of her suicide in a novel entitled *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng. Two problems proposed in this study were 1) how is Lydia Lee's personality described in the novel *Everything I Never Told You?* and 2) what are the causes of Lydia Lee's suicide in the novel *Everything I Never Told You?* 

This study employed a qualitative method. To analyze how Lydia Lee's personality described in the novel, the researcher used New Criticism theory. Whereas the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide was used to analyze the causes that trigger Lydia Lee committed suicide. The researcher gathered phrases, sentences, and dialogues to be analyzed to answer the problems.

The result showed that Lydia's personality was a pathetic girl who became a restrained girl trying to fulfill her parents' wishes because she did not want to be left by them. Lydia was a closed girl that also had insecurity. She was such a dependent girl toward her brother and had an impulsive attitude. The other result was unfolding the causes of Lydia's suicide, which were: 1) thwarted belongingness (lived in an alienated family and had no friends), 2) perceived burdensomeness (failed to fulfill her mother's expectation to be a doctor, failed to fulfill her father's expectation to be popular, broken-hearted because of Jack, and knowing her father's affair), and 3) Lydia acquired the capability for suicide. Knowing the risk factors and causes of someone who committed suicide might help the researcher and the reader to be more caring and prevent the same cases from happening in the future.

#### **ABSTRAK**

Sari, V. A. (2021). Mengungkap Penyebab Lydia Lee Bunuh Diri di Novel Everything I Never Told You Karya Celeste Ng. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Pembimbing: Sufi Ikrima Saadah, M. Hum.

Kata kunci: bunuh diri, teori interpersonal bunuh diri, kritik baru

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kepribadian Lydia Lee dan mengungkap penyebab bunuh dirinya dalam novel berjudul *Everything I Never Told You* karya Celeste Ng. Dua masalah yang diajukan dalam penelitian ini, yaitu: 1) bagaimana kepribadian Lydia Lee digambarkan dalam novel *Everything I Never Told You*? dan 2) apa penyebab bunuh diri Lydia Lee dalam novel *Everything I Never Told You*?

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Untuk menganalisis data tentang bagaimana kepribadian Lydia Lee digambarkan dalam novel, peneliti menggunakan teori Kritikisme Baru. Sedangkan teori Interpersonal Bunuh Diri digunakan untuk menganalisis penyebab yang memicu Lydia Lee melakukan bunuh diri. Peneliti mengumpulkan frase, kalimat, dan dialog sebagai data yang akan dianalisis untuk menjawab rumusan masalah.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepribadian Lydia adalah seorang gadis menyedihkan yang menjadi gadis terkekang yang selalu berusaha memenuhi keinginan orang tuanya karena tidak ingin ditinggalkan oleh mereka. Lydia adalah gadis tertutup yang juga memiliki rasa tidak aman terhadap sekitar. Dia adalah gadis yang sangat bergantung pada kakaknya dan memiliki sikap impulsif. Hasil lainnya adalah terungkapnya penyebab bunuh diri Lydia, yaitu: 1) tidak punya rasa memiliki (tinggal dalam keluarga terasing dan tidak punya teman), 2) beban yang dirasakan (gagal memenuhi harapan ibunya untuk menjadi dokter, gagal memenuhi harapan ayah untuk menjadi populer, patah hati karena Jack, dan mengetahui perselingkuhan ayahnya), dan 3) Lydia menguasai kemampuan untuk bunuh diri. Mengetahui faktor risiko dan penyebab seseorang melakukan bunuh diri mungkin bisa membantu peneliti dan pembaca untuk lebih peduli dan dapat mencegah kasus yang sama terjadi di kemudian hari.

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#### **CHAPTER I**

#### INTRODUCTION

## 1. 1 Background of the Study

Suicide is an act of intentionally doing self-injury to the point dead as the result (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2018, p. 1). World Health Organization (2019, p. 7) reports that every year, there are approximately 800,000 people die by suicide. It means there is a single person dies by suicide every 40 seconds. Suicide becomes the top twenty death factors along with breast cancer, malaria, homocide, or war (p. 7). Meanwhile, Ivey-Stephenson et al. (2020, p. 47) states that after unintentional injuries, suicide is the second most cause of death among youths in age 14-18-year-old. With this fact, it should become an important thing to be paid attention to. Yet, the exact reason an individual committed suicide is unknown. The knowledge and awareness about the factors and causes that trigger people committed suicide might have a significant impact in preventing the same case in the future.

Not only happen in the real world, but suicide also exists in the literature. Some of the novels that use suicide as their themes are *A Long Way Down* by Nick Hornby, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Nina LaCour's *Hold Still*, Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending*, and Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*.

This study uses Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* to be studied because this novel contains many issues such as suicide, feminism, racism, and dysfunctional family. Yet, the suicide issue becomes the main focus to unravel the

problems owned by the main character. So it is a strong reason to choose this novel to be studied. Moreover, Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* was firstly published in 2014 and wins several awards. In 2014, this novel won Amazon's #1 Book of 2014. In the following year, this novel won Winner Massachusetts Book Awards 2015 and then grabbed the American Library Association's Alex Award 2015, and many more.

Everything I Never Told You tells about the missing of a sixteen-year-old girl named Lydia Elizabeth Lee, who was later found dead in a lake near her residence. Several investigations had been conducted to unfold the mystery of her death. The result showed that Lydia Lee died caused by asphyxia by drowning. Later on, it was concluded as an act of suicide because nothing has proven that it led to foul play. Lydia's family cannot believe Lydia would do such a thing considering she had a beautiful life and a supportive family. Little did they know, Lydia hid many things that she never told them, which in the end drowned her.

Several studies had been conducted and brought suicide as their topic. The researcher found some studies that have the same theme as this study. The failure of suicide could be a turning point in someone's life to regain their motivation to live (Aljannah, 2015). Conversely, suicide became the gateway to run from someone's life problems (Muttaqi, 2016). Through the sociological approach, the study breakdown factors of someone did an egoistic suicide (Indriyani, 2019). On the other hand, a couple of studies had discussed the *Everything I Never Told You* novel in their studies with different focuses. Those studies discussed the marginalization showed in the novel (Chen, 2017), James' negotiating identity

(Kirana, 2018), sexual ambiguity depicted in the novel (Ma, 2018), family ethics in the novel (Shen & Yang, 2018), Lydia's identity crisis (Shen & Zhai, 2019), and the dysfunctional family that influences Lydia's psychological state (Kairunnisa & Ariyani, 2020). All those earlier studies have not discussed how individuals handle problems with the external causes that trigger them to commit suicide.

Based on the several previous studies mentioned and the gap founded above, the researcher found an idea to conduct a study about suicide in *Everything I Never Told You* novel. The present study aims to unfold the causes that trigger Lydia Lee committed suicide. New Criticism theory is used to analyze the personality of Lydia Lee to know how she handles the problems in her life. Whereas the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide is used to analyze the causes that weigh her down to the point she decided to end her life.

#### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

- 1. How is Lydia Lee's personality described in the novel *Everything I Never Told You*?
- 2. What are the causes of Lydia Lee's suicide in the novel *Everything I Never Told You*?

With those questions, this study has two objectives, they are:

- 1. To describe how Lydia Lee's personality is described in the novel *Everything I Never Told You*.
- 2. To describe the causes of Lydia Lee's suicide in the novel *Everything I*Never Told You.

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

There are many advantages given by the study of *Everything I Never Told You* novel, for either the academics in the literary world or the public general. For the academics in the literary world, both theoretical and practical advantages could be taken. Theoretically, a broader understanding of how character and characterization theory is applied in analyzing the novel is expected. This study uses the interpersonal theory of suicide to unravel the causes of an individual who committed suicide.

The researcher hopes that this study will raise awareness about the danger of suicide for the common readers. Hopefully, by knowing the personality and causes of an individual who committed suicide in this study, the readers would be more caring toward the society around them and themselves, to be precise. More than that, the researcher hopes that the readers could practice the lessons learned of this study to prevent the same cases happen in their society.

## 1.4 Scope and Limitations

The researcher only focuses on Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* to collect the data to be analyzed. The data were taken from the narration, dialogues, and conversations among the characters in this novel. Furthermore, the researcher sets the limitation of this study in Lydia Lee's attitude and how she thinks in answering the first statement of the problem. While for the second statement of the problem, the limitation is the burden hold by Lydia Lee that drowning her to death.

## 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Unfold : Reveal something.

Cause : Reason or motive for something to happen.

Suicide : An intentional act did by someone to end their life.

A Pathetic Girl : A girl who has a miserable life experience.

A Restrained Girl : A girl who does not have freedom to do things like she

wished.

A Closed Girl : A girl who rarely interact with people and tends to keep

her thoughts and feelings for her own.

An Insecure Girl : A girl who cannot freely interact with people because she

feels unsafe regarding the quality inside herself or the

outside factors.

A Dependent Girl : A girl who relies on someone else continuously.

An Impulsive Girl : A girl who does not think about the effect of her attitudes.

## 1.6 Research Method

There were several major elements in the research method explained below.

## 1.6.1 Research Design

The present study used library research to focus on a literary work entitled Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng. The writer used a qualitative analysis method to analyze the object. Yin (2011, p. 9) stated that the qualitative research method aims to gather and present data from various sources as evidence of the study. This statement is supported by Creswell (2009, p. 164) that said the data collected by the researcher would be interpreted in this qualitative research method. This qualitative method aims to describe and analyze situations or events related to psychology, especially the character's personality and the causes that trigger her to commit suicide.

#### 1.6.2 Data Source

In this study, two types of data sources were used by the researcher. First, the primary data source used is a novel written by Celeste Ng published in 2014 entitled *Everything I Never Told You*. Second, the secondary data source used were books, articles, journals, internet sources, and previous studies related to this research issue or topic.

#### 1.6.3 Data Collection

In the process of collecting the data, the researcher followed the steps below:

- The researcher read the novel repeatedly to get a great understanding and a complete overview of the novel.
- 2. Then, the researcher collected the data that support the topic, which were Lydia Lee's personality and the causes that trigger her committed suicide. The data collected were in the forms of dialogues, narrations, and phrases.
- 3. After that, the researcher classified the data based on the statements of

problems and related theory to answer the questions.

## 1.6.4 Data Analysis

To conduct the analysis, the researcher followed several steps below:

- First, the data collected were classified and coded to answer the statement of the problems.
- 2. Second, the data classified to answer Lydia Lee's personality were analyzed and interpreted using New Criticism theory.
- 3. Third, the data classified to answer the causes that trigger Lydia Lee to commit suicide were analyzed and interpreted using the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide.
- 4. Last, the researcher concluded the result of this study in the conclusion section.

#### **CHAPTER II**

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 New Criticism

Tyson (2006, p. 136) says that New Criticism is a theory to interpret certain text, which the core resource of proof is a literary work. New Criticism asks the readers to do critical reading to understand it. The focus in New Criticism theory is the text itself. It has no relation with the external elements of the text, like the historical background of the author or the historical events that happen when the author wrote the literary work. In New Criticism theory, the readers can focus and analyze the intrinsic elements of the literary work such as the character and characterization, the plot, settings, and theme. The New Criticism theory is used to answer the first statement of the problem, which is about Lydia's personality in the *Everything I Never Told You* novel.

#### 2.1.1 Character

Holman (1985, p. 74) says a character is a concise, descriptive piece of the person who shows some definite quality. Abrams (1999, p. 32) supports that characters are the persons put in literary works who have some qualities such as specific moral, intellectual, and emotional. In a short story, usually, there will be a primary and secondary character. The primary character is the main character who leads the story to be developed, whereas the secondary character is the supporting character who is less developed.

Besides primary and secondary characters, the character also has other

classification, such as flat and round characters. Flat characters are those who don't experience emotions. Conversely, round characters are eager to chase their goals and have emotions toward anything that happened. In a story, the main character who has a purpose in achieving something is called the protagonist. The protagonist could be a hero or even an antihero. In opposite, the antagonist is the villain or the character who tries to oppose the protagonist achieving their goal.

## 2.1.2 Characterization

Holman (1985, p. 75) defines a characterization as "a form of the imaginary person so that they exist for the reader as real within the limits of fiction." In another sentence, characterization is the way or methods the writer used to develop the characters in their stories. The foundation of good fiction is character creating. It means that a novel will not be built if there is no character in it. Therefore, usually, the authors have their ways to create or present the characters. There are two methods that the writer used in character creating phase, they are direct and indirect. In a direct characterization, the writer of the story tells the reader directly who the character's personality is. Whereas indirect characterization is where the writer "presents the characters talking and acting and leaves the reader to infer the motives and dispositions that lie behind what they say and do" (Abrams, 1999, p. 32). So, the researcher can know the personality of a character through its act, attitude, sentences and also from the author's direct explanation in narrations.

## 2.2 Psychology of Literature

Wellek and Warren (1997, p. 75) say that psychology of literature means "the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature." They also explain that psychology will always be in the literature (p. 79). Gillespie states that psychology could be used as a useful tool to enhance the understanding and appreciation of literature (2010, p. 43). It is supported by Dobie that states psychological approach could be used to understand the characters in the literary work (2012, p. 53).

One of the issues in the psychology of literature studies is the personality problem which tends to commit suicide when an individual facing unbearable pressures in their life. The theory that could be used to analyze this issue is the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. In this research, the psychological approach, especially the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide is used to answer the second statement of the problems which is about the causes of Lydia's suicide.

## 2.2.1 The Causes of Suicide

The causes of suicide are the reasons or motives of an individual committed suicide. To be able to unfold the reasons of suicide, the writer uses the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide as the tool to analyze the data.

#### 2.2.1.1 Interpersonal Theory of Suicide

This theory is proposed by Van Orden et al. in 2010. The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide is proposed to explain the unexplained facts about suicide and increase understanding of the causal of suicide. It has a foundation which is "...

people die by suicide because they can and because they want to" (Van Orden et al., 2010, p. 8). In short, the theory proposes that there are three main causes of an individual committed suicide, that are thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and acquired capability for suicide. Meanwhile, the risk factors of suicide are "... mental disorder, past suicide attempts, social isolation, family conflict, unemployment, and physical illness" (p. 3). Other risk factors associated with lethal suicidal behavior are "... agitation, hopelessness, and sleep disturbances" (p. 6). So, if these three main causes and the other risk factors of suicide experienced by people, those will trigger people to commit suicide.

## 2.2.1.1.1 Thwarted Belongingness

Thwarted belongingness is the psychological state where the feeling to belong to a certain group or community that someone failed to be gained. It has relation with social connectedness. The social connectedness has a crucial association with suicide because this variable is an observable indicator in which a basic human psychological need is unfulfilled. The unfulfilled need to belong is the specific interpersonal need involved in the desire for suicide. Van Orden et al. (2010, p. 10) stated that "there are two dimensions of interpersonal functioning that are posited to comprise thwarted belongingness as loneliness and the absence of reciprocally-caring relationships." One relationship could be recognized as a healthy relationship that meets the need to belong if it has a positive feeling and occurs in a supportive context.

Thwarted belongingness is a psychological state and not a fixed trait. It is influenced by both interpersonal and intrapersonal factors. "These include an

individuals' actual interpersonal environments, activated interpersonal schemes, and current emotional states" (Van Orden et al., 2010, p. 10). Thwarted belongingness could cause suicidal ideation when the perceptions of burdensomeness followed this situation. However, a chronic feeling of loneliness could lead an individual to commit suicide because "... a meaningful and mutually supportive connections are completely absent" (p. 12). So, the thwarted belongingness which is including the lonely feeling could trigger an individual to commit suicide.

#### 2.2.1.1.2 Perceived Burdensomeness

Perceived burdensomeness is a psychological state where an individual believe that their existence are meaningless and only give the burden toward people around them. Perceived burdensomeness embraces two dimensions of interpersonal functioning, 1) the belief that one individual has many flaws that become a burden or liability to others and 2) continuously has self-hatred (Van Orden et al. 2010, p. 12). Those who perceived burdensomeness may think that they are a burden for others or say, "I am useless" or "I hate myself." The liability factors may look like being stress by unemployment, stress from incarceration, being homeless, having a serious physical illness, and thinking that they are expandable, unwanted, or burdens on others. Meanwhile, self-hatred factors including low self-esteem, do self-blame, shame, and agitation (p. 13). Some of the risk factors of suicide are "family conflict, unemployment, and physical illness" because those are the types of negative life events (p. 12). So, the unbearable feeling of burden could trigger an individual to commit suicide.

## 2.2.1.1.3 Acquired Capability for Suicide

According to the theory, an individual could die by suicide if they lose the fear to do things related to suicidal behaviors, while in fact, the human's system basically prepared to fear suicide because suicidal behaviors threaten survival instincts (Van Orden et al., 2010, p. 15). It could be said that those who die by suicide had came to the psychological state that they lose the fear of death. One individual could gradually lose the fear of suicide when they are coming at the state of 1) lowering the fear of death, 2) raising the physical pain tolerance, 3) having a habit of doing self-harm, 4) having painful and provocative experiences such as the previous suicide attempt. In other words, an individual could acquire the capability to commit suicide if they had used to exposed to the pain and had a habit to do self-harm, for example consuming drugs until being overdose and cutting the vein. However, an impulsive act of suicide could finish one's life, for example, jumping from a bridge or crashing themselves into a fast-moving vehicle. As stated, "impulsive individuals have higher levels of acquired capability for suicide, and it is this consequence of impulsivity that elevates risk for suicidal behavior" (p. 19). So, those who are exposed to painful experiences and impulsive behavior could have a high possibility to commit suicide.

#### 2.3 Previous Studies

The literature review has a crucial part in a study. Before conducting the research, a researcher needs to comprehend the previous studies related to their issue. This comprehension will help them get the insights and understanding of those issues then by that, and they can develop it into a complete study. The writer

finds six previous studies that examine Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* novel. They are Chen Yan-qiong (2017), Jeannita Kirana (2018), Yihang Ma (2018), Yuan Shen & Ting Yang (2018), Yuan Shen & Jinyue Zhai (2019), and Arinda Kairunnisa & Latifah Dwi Ariyani (2020).

First, a paper by Chen Yan-qiong entitled *A Brief Analysis of Marginalization in Everything I Never Told You*. This study discussed the marginalization in the novel, which used Robert Park's Marginal Man theory to analyze the data. The results show that there are several marginalizations in the novel. They are: ethnically marginalized, marginalized because of the characters' gender, "... some of them are marginalized because of their marriage condition, and some of them are marginalized because of their sexual orientation." (Chen, 2017, p. 2).

Second, a thesis conducted by Jeannita Kirana entitled *Negotiating Identity* in the Novel of Everything I Never Told You examines James Lee's domination strategy and negotiation strategy in trying to fit in American society. This study uses the identity concept by Stuart Hall to answer its research questions. The results show that James Lee practices domination strategy such as denying his family background speaks English fluently and marrying an American woman. He also practices a negotiation strategy by having an affair with a Chinese girl and eating Chinese food.

The third previous study is a journal article by Yihang Ma entitled *Sexual Ambiguity in Everything I Never Told You*. This study is about gender studies and in light theories of masculinity. It focuses on Nath Lee's sexual identity. The

results show that Nath was experiencing some struggles within himself regarding his true gender identity vagueness.

The fourth previous study is an article by Yuan Shen and Ting Yang entitled *Family Ethics in Celeste Ng's Everything I Never Told You*. This study mainly analyzes the ethical issues in the novel from the perspectives of conjugal ethics, parent-child ethics, and sibling ethics. The results show that the importance of family ethics showed in the novel. The study shows that to maintain the relationship between the family members, they should communicate actively.

The fifth previous study was written by Yuan Shen and Jinyue Zhai entitled *Lydia's Identity Crisis in Everything I Never Told You*. This study aims to analyze Lydia's struggle of her identity crisis in her social, family, and campus life environment. Erickson's self-identity and personality theory are used in this study. The results show that Lydia lacks self-awareness and has an identity crisis because of her situations and the pressures given to her.

The sixth is a study by Arinda Kairunnisa and Latifah Dwi Ariyani entitled *The Psychological State of Lydia as A Child of Dysfunctional Family in Celeste Ng's Everything I Never Told You.* This study aims to reveal the portrayal of dysfunctional family and Lydia's state of mind as the child of this family. This study used the Dysfunctional family concept and Freud's psychoanalysis to analyze the data. The results show that Lee's family was reflecting the dysfunctional family caused by the authoritarian parents. Meanwhile, Lydia's psychological state of mind is shown by her dependency and the fear of being abandoned.

From the explanation of the six previous studies above, all of them have used Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* novel as their studies. However, none of them have analyzed Lydia's personality and causes that trigger her committed suicide. In addition, none of them have used New Criticism combined with the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide as their theories in their studies.

Therefore, the researcher decides to research *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng using New Criticism and the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide.

#### **CHAPTER III**

#### **ANALYSIS**

This chapter consists of the analysis presented by the researcher based on the data found in the novel. The analysis is divided into two as the research questions stated before. The first main topic is analyzing Lydia Lee's personality. In this part, New Criticism is used to analyze the data. While in the second main topic, the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide is used to break down the causes of Lydia Lee's suicide.

This study analyzes *Everything I Never Told You* novel, which tells about a Chinese-American family who lived in the 1970s and struggled to be accepted in American society. At that time, a mixed-race marriage rarely happens and was opposed. Their mid-child, Lydia Lee, who also their favorite, was found mysteriously dead. The police investigated to unfold the cause of Lydia's death and lead them to conclude that she committed suicide.

## 3.1 Lydia's Personality

Lydia Lee is the second child of a mix-race couple, James Lee and Marilyn Lee. James Lee is a Chinese descendant who was born in America, whereas Marilyn is a pure American. James and Marilyn were married at 1958 and it was an illegal act in the US because the legalization of interracial marriage was just decided in 1967 (Aldridge, 1978, p. 356). That was why this family was frequently being looked down on and received several acts of racism.

Lydia Lee has two siblings, Nath as her older brother and Hannah as her younger sister. Among the three, Lydia is the most favorite child of their parents. It is because Lydia has physical appearance and blue eyes which like Americans, making James expect Lydia to be accepted by her friends. Meanwhile, Marilyn expected Lydia to pursue Marilyn's dream that she could not reach. By knowing Lydia's personality, the researcher can understand how Lydia handles things and problems in her life. Not only that, but the researcher can also know the internal causes of why she committed suicide.

#### 3.1.1 A Pathetic Girl

Lydia is a pathetic girl because she has trauma related to her mother leaving. It was caused by the unforgettable and traumatized experience she had when she was five years old. Marilyn left Lydia, Nath, and James to pursue her delayed dream. A woman who becomes the center of the family was gone, making the entire family collapsing. James lost her spouse. Meanwhile, Nath and Lydia lost their all-can-do figure.

Lydia had nothing to keep her mind off the mother-shaped hole in her world, and with Nath distracted by *docking adaptors* and *splashdowns* and *apogees*, she noticed something: the house smelled different without her mother in it. Once she noticed this, she could not stop noticing. At night she dreamed terrible things: she was crawling with spiders, she was tied up with snakes, she was drowning in a teacup. Sometimes, when she woke in the dark, she could hear the creak of the sofa springs downstairs as their father turned over, then turned again. Those nights, she never fell back asleep again, and the days grew sticky and thick, like syrup. (Ng, 2014, p. 72)

The quotation above shows how Lydia was suffering when her mother left.

Lydia lost the person she loved. As a five-year-old kid, Lydia had experienced a significant loss that made her entire family lose balance. Lydia cannot distract her

mind from Marilyn's leaving. The situation worsened because her father was busy with work, and Nath had a new thing to be learned. It was understandable that Lydia thought she was alone because her father and sibling did not pay attention. Not to mention the mystery of why her mother left. All those thoughts gathered and made her having bad dreams and sleepless nights. Van Orden et al. (2010, p. 6) stated that one of the risk factors of someone committing suicide is sleep disturbances, including nightmares.

Besides going through the sleepless nights, Lydia also tried to find why her mother left her. Although James had told her that it was not her fault, deep down Lydia's heart, she knew that it was caused by Lydia and Nath's naughtiness till her mother was angry and left them. Lydia's misunderstanding worsened when she found a cookbook with some handwriting notes inside. "What mother doesn't love to cook with her little girl? Beneath that: And what little girl doesn't love learning with Mom?" (Ng, 2014, p. 86). Lydia did not understand the meaning of those sentences. However, Lydia was sure that her mother left because she was disappointed with Lydia and Nath.

A great loss experienced by Lydia's family had left a wound and trauma to them, especially Lydia. Lydia wished her mother to return to her family. Lydia set promises to fulfill everything that was said by Marilyn when she came back.

Lydia can no longer hold the emptiness caused by Marilyn's leaving.

If her mother ever came home and told her to finish her milk, she thought, the page wavering to a blur, she would finish her milk. She would brush her teeth without being asked and stop crying when the doctor gave her shots. She would go to sleep the second her mother turned out the light. She would never get sick again. She would do

everything her mother told her. Everything her mother wanted. (Ng, 2014, p. 87)

The quotation above is proof that Lydia made a new promise for her mother. Lydia is scared and trauma to be left alone by her mother. She wanted her mother to come. She promised to fulfill every wish that her mother has. Lydia vowed to become a good girl who did not need a second sentence to do her mother's command. Lydia promised never to refuse her mother's wishes. When Marilyn finally returned home, Lydia was so happy and thought her return was because Marilyn heard her promise. So since that day, Lydia began holding her words. She would always fulfill Marilyn's wish to keep Marilyn beside her. Lydia did not want Marilyn to leave again because she has traumatized to be left.

That most important word: tomorrow. Every day Lydia cherished it. Tomorrow I'll take you to the museum to look at the dinosaur bones. Tomorrow we'll learn about trees. Tomorrow we'll study the moon. Every night a small promise extracted from her mother: that she would be there in the morning. (Ng, 2014, p. 94)

The quotation is proof that Lydia has the trauma of being left by her mother. Lydia cherishes the word 'tomorrow' because that means her mother will be there for her. It means her mother would not going anywhere to leave her anymore. To get that word of 'tomorrow,' Lydia should ask many things from her mother. She tried so hard to make her mother happy by being obedient and question many things as if she was interested in those things, even though that was not true.

Lydia is a pathetic girl who has trauma which caused by the leaving of Marilyn is a kind of family conflict. In sync with Van Orden et al.'s (2010, p. 3) statement, the great potential risk factors for suicide are family conflict, social

isolation, mental disorder, past suicide attempts, physical illness, and unemployment. Other than that, the risk factors of someone committed suicide are hopelessness, agitation, and sleep disturbances, including nightmares. Lydia became a pathetic girl because she was experiencing family conflict and nightmares. These two risk factors affect how Lydia handles problems in her life, which finally trigger Lydia to suicide.

#### 3.1.2 A Restrained Girl

Lydia is a restrained girl unbeknown to her parents. Lydia tried so hard to be obedient and fulfilling everything that her parents want although she did not want to. It was because Lydia is the favorite kid in her family. Both James and Marilyn showered her with their love and attention. "But Lydia, defying genetics, somehow has her mother's blue eyes, and they know this is one more reason she is their mother's favorite. And their father's, too." (Ng, 2014, p. 8). This quotation shows that Lydia becomes James Lee and Marilyn Lee's favorite kid because she has blue eyes. Lydia is like the center of the Lee family, which holds all the expectations from their parents. Lydia knew well that both her parents put lots of expectations on her shoulders, and she is the only one who can make them happy.

So every time her mother said *Do you want*—? She had said yes. She knew what her parents had longed for, without them saying a word, and she had wanted them happy. She had kept her promise. And her mother had stayed. Read this book. *Yes.* Want this. Love this. *Yes.* Once, at the college museum, while Nath had pouted about missing the star show, she had spotted a nugget of amber with a fly trapped inside. "That's four million years old," Marilyn whispered, wrapping her arms around her daughter from behind. Lydia had stared until Nath, at last, had dragged them both away. Now she thought of the fly landing daintily in the pool of resin. Perhaps it had mistaken it for honey. Perhaps it hadn't seen the puddle at all. By the time it had

realized its mistake, it was too late. It had flailed, and then it had sunk, and then it had drowned. (Ng, 2014, p. 168)

The quotation above shows that Lydia realized what her parents wanted. Lydia knew that by make their wishes came true are the real things that make them happy. Lydia was also has promised to grant everything that her mother wanted so that she would never leave Lydia anymore. Thus, when Marilyn asked Lydia to read some books, Lydia did. When Marilyn gave Lydia some exercises about math, she solved them. Lydia became an obedient kid to make her parents happy.

And in return, Lydia kept her own promise: she did everything her mother asked. She learned to write the plus sign, like a little stunted *t*. She counted on her fingers every morning, adding up over the cereal bowl. Four plus two. Three plus three. Seven plus ten. Whenever her mother stopped, she asked for more, which made her mother glow, as if Lydia had flicked on a light. She stood on the step stool over the sink, aproned from neck to ankle, and pinched baking soda into a jar of vinegar. "That's a chemical reaction," her mother said, and Lydia nodded as the foam gurgled down the drain. She played store with her mother, making change with pennies and nickels: two cents for a hug, four cents for a kiss. When Nath plunked down a quarter and said, "Bet you can't do that one," their mother shooed him away. (Ng, 2014, p. 94)

That quotation shows how Lydia tried hard to be obedient by fulfilling everything that Marilyn asked. Meanwhile, James also wished Lydia to blend in with her society and make some friends, and she tried it. Even though she knew well that she is the kind of difficult person to socialize with and has a trust issue toward her surroundings, Lydia tried it.

Lydia made all her parent's wishes forcefully. Lydia was like putting her parent's will first rather than hers. It affects her mind because she became a restrained person who did not have free will. Lydia lived a life that she did not

want. She had no freedom to do things as she wanted. It made her became stress. Orden et al. (2010, p. 6) stated that a stressful life was associated with an increased risk for lethal suicidal attempts. Linear with that, Lydia's personality, which is a restrained person, was also contributed to triggering Lydia's suicide.

## 3.1.3 A Closed Girl

Lydia is a person who tried hard to make her parents happy by being obedient and fulfilling everything that they wished her to do or have. This situation worsens because Lydia has a closed personality who was not straightforward about her feelings and thoughts. Although Lydia is her parents' favorite kid, most notably her mother's, Lydia never tells Marilyn about her problems and what commonly happens between a mother and daughter. "But she'd felt as if she'd found a locked door in a familiar room: Lydia, still small enough to cradle, had secrets. Marilyn might feed her and bathe her and coax her legs into pajama pants, but already parts of her life were curtained off." (Ng, 2014, p. 9).

Marilyn thought that she is the one who knew Lydia well, but in fact, Lydia still hid secrets from her. It showed when Marilyn tried to find the reason why Lydia was leaving home and missing. Marilyn realized that Lydia hid something from her that she never knew. Even when Marilyn attempted to find some hints from Lydia's diaries she gave each year, Marilyn did not found anything. All those diaries are blank.

The key is missing, but Marilyn jams the tip of a ballpoint into the catch and forces the flimsy lock open. The first page she sees, April 10th, is blank. She checks May 2nd, the night Lydia disappeared.

Nothing. Nothing for May 1st, or anything in April, or anything in March. Every page is blank. She takes down 1976. 1975. 1974. Page after page of visible, obstinate silence. She leafs backward all the way to the very first diary, 1966: not one word. All those years of her daughter's life unmarked. Nothing to explain anything. (Ng, 2014, p. 50)

The quotation above shows that Marilyn did not find anything when Marilyn tried to find the answers to Lydia's missing through her diaries. Marilyn gave Lydia a journal each year, expecting Lydia to write down all her secrets there. However, Lydia did not write anything. She is a typical person who keeps her feelings and thoughts for her own. She even did not trust the books of diaries to tell about her feelings and thoughts.

Your cookbook, Lydia had said. I lost it. Marilyn had been thrilled, had considered it an omen: her daughter had read her mind. Her daughter would never be confined to a kitchen. Her daughter wanted more. It had been a lie. She flips the pages she has not seen in years, tracing her mother's pencil marks with her fingertip, smoothing the pockmarked pages where she had cried all those nights, in the kitchen, alone. Somehow Lydia had known: that this book had pulled on her mother like a heavy, heavy stone. She hadn't destroyed it. She had hidden it, all those years; she had piled book after book atop it, weighting it down, so her mother would never have to see it again. (Ng, 2014, p. 152)

The quotation above also indicates Lydia's closed personality. The cookbook that Lydia said she lost turned out to be hidden by her all along.

Marilyn had just known that Lydia lied to her. All this time, Lydia hid it somewhere that people never knew it. It is like a foreshadowing of Lydia's psychological state. Her parents always think that Lydia never has a problem because they did not see it. Lydia just covers it from them. Lydia put her problems deep down and covers them with fake happiness to make her parents feel okay.

Besides tending to keep her feelings and thoughts alone, Lydia also tends not to speak her own will. She tends just to follow the command of other people to make them happy. Lydia was always doing things that others wished her to without knowing that it was something that Lydia dislike. This kind of personality ruined Lydia almost at everything in her life. The low openness to confess her feelings and a stressful life are a great combination of triggering Lydia's suicide.

#### 3.1.4 An Insecure Girl

As a child born from a mixed-race family, Lydia experienced insecurity toward her society outside of her family. It was because before 1967, mix-race marriage was uncommon and illegal (Aldridge, 1978, p. 356). Even the Americans still cannot accept other races lived in America, let alone the Chinese. James Lee experienced first-hand bullying because of his Chinese identity. On his first day of elementary school, a girl asked him what was happened with his eyes, slanted and different from America's ordinary people. He did not know that that question was a kind of verbal bullying. That was a kind of racism act. As time passed, James became more used to bullying toward him.

Part of him wanted to gather his son into his arms, to tell him that he understood. Even after almost thirty years, he still remembered P.E. class at Lloyd, how once he'd gotten tangled up in his shirt and emerged to find his pants missing from the bench. Everyone else had already dressed and was stuffing gym uniforms into lockers and lacing shoes. He had tiptoed back into the gym, hiding his bare thighs and calves behind his knapsack, looking for Mr. Childs, the P.E. teacher. By then the bell had rung and the locker room had emptied. After ten minutes of searching, mortified at being in his undershorts in front of Mr. Childs, his pants were revealed under a sink, legs tied around the U-bend, dust bunnies caught in the cuffs. "Probably just got mixed up in someone else's things," Mr. Childs had said. "Hurry along to class now, Lee. You're tardy." James had known it was no

accident. After that, he had developed a system: pants first, then shirt. He had never told anyone about it, but the memory clung. (Ng, 2014, p. 60)

That quotation is proof that James Lee was being bullied in his school year. He was a minority and weak. His friends liked to tease and bully him because James had no power to fight them. Consequently, James could only learn from the bad experience he had and prevented it from happening again.

Nath and Hannah Lee have also experienced the act of racism from people. When they were at the grocery, a woman asked them if they were Chinese and pressing her eyes to make her eyes slanted. The other day, Nath got embarrassed in front of many people in the swimming pool because of his racial identity.

Then an older girl—maybe ten or eleven—shouted, "Chink can't find China!" and the other children laughed. A rock formed and sank in James's belly. In the pool, Nath paused, arms outstretched on the surface of the water, uncertain how to proceed. One hand opened and closed in silence. (Ng, 2014, p. 59)

The quotation above is proof that Nath was also harassed because of his racial identity. It was when he was a boy and swam at the public swimming pool. At first, Nath was doing well. However, the children around him started to bully and harass Nath because he was Chinese. These unfortunate experiences also affected Lydia. She knew that her family frequently become the center of attention. It was not in a good way but in a bad way instead.

Every time you saw yourself from the outside, the way other people saw you, you remembered all over again. You saw it in the sign at the Peking Express—a cartoon man with a coolie hat, slant eyes, buck teeth, and chopsticks. You saw it in the little boys on the playground, stretching their eyes to slits with their fingers—*Chinese—Japanese*—

look at these—and in the older boys who muttered ching chong ching chong ching as they passed you on the street, just loud enough for you to hear. You saw it when waitresses and policemen and bus drivers spoke slowly to you, in simple words, as if you might not understand. You saw it in photos, yours the only black head of hair in the scene, as if you'd been cut out and pasted in. You thought: Wait, what's she doing there? And then you remembered that she was you. You kept your head down and thought about school, or space, or the future, and tried to forget about it. And you did, until it happened again. (Ng, 2014, p. 120)

The quotation above describes the racism and bullying that Lydia experienced. Because of this, Lydia distanced herself from her society. She was also become insecure and suspect everyone would bully her. Lydia pushed her friends that tried to be friends with her. She thought that they would mock her. She felt that they were not sincere with their offers.

Would they have been kind to her or mocked her? She would never know. She would say no to birthday parties, to roller-skating, to swimming at the rec center, to everything. Each afternoon she rushed home, desperate to see her mother's face, to make her mother smile. By the second grade, the other girls stopped asking. She told herself she didn't care: her mother was still there. That was all that mattered. In the years to come, Lydia would watch Stacey Sherwin—her golden hair braided, then ironed flat, then feathered—waving to her friends, pulling them toward her, the way a rhinestone caught and held the light. She would see Jenn Pittman slip a note to Pam Saunders and see Pam Saunders unfold it beneath her desk and snicker; she would watch Shelley Brierley share out a pack of Doublemint and breathe in the sugarspearmint scent as the foil-wrapped sticks passed her by. (Ng, 2014, p. 103)

The quotation above clearly shows that Lydia pushed everyone away from her. This condition was because she has insecurity and trust issues in her society. Lydia was afraid that her friends were not sincere. She was scared that they would bully her because she was different from them. This insecurity affected Lydia's social life, which made her friendless. Van Orden et al. (2010, p. 5) said that numerous social

isolation, including loneliness and social withdrawal, is associated with an increased risk for lethal suicidal behavior.

### 3.1.5 A Dependent Girl

Lydia was friendless. The only one that she has was her brother, Nath.

Nath was always ready to be her mate while eating in the school cafeteria because she has no one to be with except him. Nath was always prepared to be her mate in bus benches on their way to and from school because Lydia uncomfortable and distrust everyone except him. Nath even becomes her comfort zone when her mother scolded her.

He did not mind this permanent state of eclipse: every evening, Lydia rapped at his door, silent and miserable. He understood everything she did not say, which at its core was: *Don't let go*. When Lydia left—to struggle over her homework or a science fair project—he turned his telescope outward, looking for faraway stars, far-off places where he might one day venture alone. (Ng, 2014, p. 100)

The quotation above shows that Lydia sought comfort in Nath when she was in a terrible state. Nath was the only one that she thought could understand her. She could share her sadness even though they do not talk about it. Lydia became dependent on Nath. She was afraid to be left alone to face all those expectations from her parents. Because of this dependency, Lydia tended to be possessive toward Nath. When Nath was accepted to Harvard University, knowing she would be left alone if Nath went to the university, Lydia hide the letter of acceptance so that Nath would not knowing this fact. By hiding it, Lydia hoped that Nath would not go out of their house and left her alone.

For the past few weeks, Nath had checked the mail every afternoon, even before he said hello to their mother, sometimes before he took

off his shoes. Lydia could feel him aching to escape so badly that everything else was falling away. Last week, at breakfast, Marilyn had leaned Lydia's marked-up math homework against the box of Wheaties. "I checked it last night after you went to bed," she said. "There's a mistake in number twenty-three, sweetheart." Five years, a year, even six months earlier, Lydia would have found sympathy in her brother's eyes. I know. I know. Confirmation and consolation in a single blink. This time Nath, immersed in a library book, did not notice Lydia's clenched fingers, the sudden red that rimmed her eyes. Dreaming of his future, he no longer heard all the things she did not say. (Ng, 2014, p. 102)

The quotation above shows that Nath has changed. He became cold toward Lydia. Nath did not give Lydia sympathy as he used to when she needed him the most. Lydia tried to seek comfort in him, but Nath was thinking about his future instead. This situation made Lydia more afraid of imagining Nath left her alone. That is why Lydia tried hard to hide that Nath was accepted at Harvard University to prevent him from going away.

Ever since that summer, she had been so afraid—of losing her mother, of losing her father. And, after a while, the biggest fear of all: of losing Nath, the only one who understood the strange and brittle balance in their family. Who knew all that had happened. Who had always kept her afloat. (Ng, 2014, p. 168)

The quotation above shows that Lydia was afraid to be left alone. She was scared that her mother would leave her again. She was worried that her father would not be happy and left her. Lydia was afraid that she would lose Nath, the only place she could share her misery. The dependency of Lydia has turned her to be someone who cannot live alone. This condition is getting worse when in social life, she did not have any friends. This kind of situation might trigger someone to commit suicide, which is lacking a sense of belonging.

# 3.1.6 An Impulsive Girl

Van Orden et al. (2010, p. 19) said that an impulsive person "have higher levels of acquired capability for suicide, and it is this consequence of impulsivity that elevates risk for suicidal behavior." Lydia has an impulsive personality. She tended to do something without planning it. During the story, Lydia showed many impulsiveness acts. When she was five years old, she read the cooking book brought by her mother. Lydia read some sentences about the mother and daughter relationship and accused herself of her mother's missing because of her bad attitude. Thus, she hid that book so that her mother would not reread it. Once her mother returned, she lied to her that she lost the book somewhere.

On another event, she knew that the necklace her father gave her was chosen by his mistress. Lydia was so shocked and angry. She put off that necklace from her neck. One day Lydia knew that Hannah wore that necklace and furious at her. She even slapped Hannah.

With a loud crack, her hand struck Hannah's cheek, knocking her back, snapping her head to the side. Then she looped her whole hand through the chain and twisted, hard, jerking her forward like a dog on a choke collar. *I'm sorry*, Hannah began, but nothing emerged except a soft gasp. Lydia twisted harder. Then the necklace snapped, and both sisters found they could breathe again. (Ng, 2014, p. 160)

The quotation above shows that Lydia impulsively slapped Hannah because she was angry knowing Hannah was wearing a necklace from their father's mistress. Lydia thought that something from a woman who tried to ruin their parents' marriage should not exist in their house and their life. Lydia did not hate Hannah for wearing that. Instead, Lydia wanted to protect her sister from something that unwanted.

Lydia was not only impulsive toward her family but also towards her friend. A few months before Lydia's suicide, she has been friends with Jack.

Although they lived in the same neighborhood, they never closed before. Until they retook the class that they failed, they started to be friends. Jack even taught Lydia to drive his car.

Lydia, who was always kept by her mother and told not to get close to her male friends, started to feel strange in her heart. Indeed Lydia had tended to try something new, including experiencing her first love. Lydia had a crush on Jack. She was happy when finally she could experience the typical thing that happened to almost every teenager. However, with her impulsiveness, Lydia did not carefully count her actions. She was reckless. Lydia even started to smoke.

She had never kissed anyone before, and it was—though she didn't know it—a sweet kiss, a chaste kiss, a little-girl kiss. Beneath her lips, his were warm and dry and still. Beneath the smoke, Jack smelled as if he had just been out in the woods, leafy and green. He smelled the way velvet felt, something you wanted to run your hands over and then press to your face. In that moment Lydia's mind fast-forwarded, the way movies did. Past them clambering into the backseat, tumbling over one another, their hands too slow for their desires. Past untying the knot at the nape of her neck, past the peeling away of clothing, past Jack's body hovering over hers. All the things she had never experienced and, in truth, could barely imagine. By the time Nath came home, she thought, she would be transformed. That evening, when Nath told her everything new that he had seen at Harvard, everything about the new and fabulous life he was already beginning, she would have something new to tell him, too. (Ng, 2014, p. 164)

The quotation above shows that Lydia is the one who initiated kissing with Jack. She knew that Jack had a bad record and bad image. Jack was known to be a playboy who was frequently having sex with different girls. Lydia knew that Jack did all those things in his car backseat. However, Lydia suddenly asked Jack to

have sex with her. She did that without minding the effects. She just followed her emotions. It clearly shows how impulsive Lydia was.

This impulsiveness also happened when Lydia went to the lake the night she died. At that time, she was furious and could no longer bear the problems that haunted her all this time. Lydia tried to unravel the problems one by one. "She knew at last where everything had gone wrong. And she knew where she had to go." (Ng, 2014, p. 167). That quotation shows that she thought it all started from the lake years ago when Nath saved her from drowning.

That night, she went to the lake alone. In the darkness, she was sitting on the dock and contemplating her life which she thought so messy. Lydia is unable to swim. However, that night, Lydia pushed herself to manage swimming in the lake in a completely dark environment. "She looked down at the lake, which in the dark looked like nothing, just blackness, a great void spreading beneath her. It will be all right, she told herself, and she stepped out of the boat into the water." (Ng, 2014, p. 170). That quotation shows how impulsive Lydia is. She did not think further about what she would do. That impulsive action was only made her die.

### 3.2 The Causes of Lydia's Suicide

In this section, the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide is used to analyze the data found. These three causes that trigger someone's suicide are 1)

Thwarted Belongingness, 2) Perceived Burdensomeness, and 3) Acquired

Capability for Suicide. However, the main reason of Lydia suicide is the ambition to seek recognition. James Lee who was not accepted by his school mate and

society because of his racial identity, has the ambition to be accepted by being an American wannabe. Marilyn who lived in an era where a woman was charged to do house chores has the ambition to be different. She wanted to be a female doctor but she could not achieve it. So, Marilyn passed down her dream to Lydia. Nath who shadowed by Lydia for a long time, wanted to be recognized by her father. Nath enlisted his name into Harvard University and left Lydia. Lydia who did not want to be left by her family, whose own wishes were tended to be restrained, projected her wish to make her family happy, especially her parents by fulfilling their wishes. She was so focused on her parents' wishes till she forgot to prioritize her own. She ignored her lack of skill of socializing till made her had no friends. Lydia wanted to be recognized as a good girl in front of her parents who always make them happy and content. However, those attitudes should be paid by Lydia because she lost herself gradually. She cannot run the life she wanted and fully drove by her parents' will. She even left by Nath, the only person she could rely on. This made her exploded and did an impulsive act by drowning herself in a lake.

## 3.2.1 Thwarted Belongingness

Human is a social creature that surely needs to socialize with others. Not only that, but human also needs connectedness with people around them. In other words, human needs to be accepted by others. Human needs to belong to an individual, family, or even some groups. The lack of belongingness would lead to the increasing of death desire. This term refers to thwarted belongingness.

## 3.2.1.1 Lydia Lived in an Alienated Family

Lydia Lee is the second child of a Chinese-American couple married in 1958, where a mix-race marriage was ilegal (Aldridge, 1978, p. 356). This family is alienated because they rarely interacted with the neighbors. They do not have close relatives. Not only friends and neighbors, but they also do not communicate with their big family. It affects Lydia because she felt odd to live with her main family and not have a big family.

Both James Lee's parents, Lydia Lee's grandparents, have already died because of sickness. While from Marilyn Lee's side, pathetic relationships were separate them. Marilyn's father left to live with another woman when she was young. And when Marilyn was about to marry James Lee, her mother did not give her permission and blessing. She said that Marilyn and James' wedding is wrong. It was something that should never happen. But Marilyn was fighting her love for James and refused to cancel her wedding. By then, she and her mother never communicated until Marilyn's mother's death in 1966.

By then she had not spoken to her mother in almost eight years, since her wedding day. In all that time, her mother had not written once. When Nath had been born, then Lydia, Marilyn had not informed her mother, had not even sent a photograph. What was there to say? She and James had never discussed what her mother had said about their marriage that last day: it's not right. She had not ever wanted to think of it again... (Ng, 2014, p. 53)

That quotation shows that Lee's family had never communicated with Marilyn's mother since their wedding. It also affected Lydia, who never knew her grandparents. She never knew how their grandparents look like. She never got the love and how it feels to be accepted by her grandparents. She thought that she belonged nowhere except to her alienated main family.

Being an outcast is also caused by the lack of good relations this family has with their neighbors. They never join parties or events held by the community around their neighborhood. The fright of being looked down on and refused was the main reason why this family minimizes their interactions with their neighbors. This condition is shown when they are mourning at the funeral of Lydia.

Slowly the chairs fill with some of Nath's classmates, with juniors and freshmen he finds vaguely familiar but doesn't really know. Even the neighbors, as they file in, feel like strangers. His parents never go out or entertain; they have no dinner parties, no bridge group, no hunting buddies or luncheon pals. Like Lydia, no real friends. (Ng, 2014, p. 41)

The quotation above proves that the Lee family did not have close relatives and friends, even neighbors. The only two neighbors who they knew, although not well, were Vivian Allen and Janet Wolff. Vivian Allen is a single lady who babysits the Lee kids when their parents go somewhere, while Janet Wolff is a single parent who has Jack Wolff as her son. Jack Wolff has the same age as Nath, but they never get along because Jack was well known as a bad boy. Because of these, practically Lydia, Nath, and Hannah have no friends around their neighborhood.

#### 3.2.1.2 Lydia Had No Friends

Although Lydia has blue eyes like an American, her identity as a mixraced child can still be seen through her skin color. When she was in kindergarten, she rarely has friends. Lydia was always anxious and skeptical when some of her classmates asked her to play together. She thought whether their invitations were sincere or just wanted to make her a joke. Would they have been kind to her or mocked her? She would never know. She would say no to birthday parties, to roller-skating, to swimming at the rec center, to everything. Each afternoon she rushed home, desperate to see her mother's face, to make her mother smile. By the second grade, the other girls stopped asking. She told herself she didn't care: her mother was still there. (Ng, 2014, p. 103)

That quotation shows that because of Lydia's suspiciousness, she always refused her friends' invitations. Moreover, she prioritizes her mother beyond other things. She will be doing anything to make her mother stay and never leave her family anymore. And a result of Lydia's passiveness in making friends, slowly, her classmates stopped to ask her to go with them. This attitude of Lydia continues until her high school year.

The fact that Lydia had no friends is different from her parents' perception. They thought that Lydia has close friends because they frequently saw Lydia talked with someone through the telephone. They also asked about the condition of Lydia's friends to her. That is why Lydia's parents confidently mention some of the names they thought of Lydia's friends when the police need to investigate Lydia's missing.

When the policemen have gone, Marilyn and James sit down with a piece of scratch paper. The police have suggested they call all of Lydia's friends, anyone who might know where she's gone. Together they construct a list: Pam Saunders. Jenn Pittman. Shelley Brierley. Nath doesn't correct them, but these girls have never been Lydia's friends. Lydia has been in school with them since kindergarten, and now and then they call, giggly and shrill, and Lydia shouts through the line, "I got it." Some evenings she sits for hours on the window seat on the landing, the phone base cradled in her lap, receiver wedged between ear and shoulder. When their parents walk by, she lowers her voice to a confidential murmur, twirling the cord around her little finger until they go away. This, Nath knows, is why his parents write their names on the list with such confidence. (Ng, 2014, p. 15)

That quotation above proves that Lydia has no friends in school. She has lied to her parents that she has a close relationship with some of her female friends. She made scenes as if she gets along with them, but it was just a lie. Lydia did not get close with them. Only Nath knows this truth. It is also relevant to the result of the police investigation that said Lydia barely has friends. The quotation is, "We've talked to a number of Lydia's classmates and teachers as well. From what we can tell, she didn't have many friends." (Ng, 2014, p. 70).

The fact that Lydia had no friends shocked her parents. It is shown in the quotation below when Lydia's parents deny the police' question of whether Lydia is a lonely girl. Marilyn, Lydia's mother, argued that Lydia was busy so that she cannot make friends. She stated that Lydia worked hard for school and had a lot of homework to be done. It is as stated in the quotation below.

"She was so busy," Marilyn interrupts. "She worked very hard in her classes. A lot of homework to do. A lot of studying." She looks earnestly from one policeman to the other, as if afraid they won't believe her. "She was very smart." (Ng, 2014, p. 71)

Despite Marilyn's denial that Lydia has no friends, James, Lydia's father, understands how it feels to be different and shunned by friends. He had been in her shoes when he was in his high school year. He was also rarely had friends because no one wanted to befriend him. Although Marilyn denies it, the fact says the other way. It is relevant with the statements from people that the police have investigated.

The day is cloudy, but he leaves the light off, as if the dimness will soften what he's about to read. From Karen Adler: *She seemed lonely.* She didn't really hang out with anyone. From Pam Saunders: She didn't have a lot of friends, or even a boyfriend. I don't think the boys even noticed her. At the bottom: Lee's physics teacher, Donald Kelly, remembered her as the lone sophomore in a class of juniors, noting,

"She worked hard, but of course she stood out." Beside the article, a sidebar: Children of Mixed Backgrounds Often Struggle to Find Their Place. (Ng, 2014, p. 123)

In Middlewood's High School, Lydia is the only female student who has an Oriental face. The other student, who also Oriental, is Nath, Lydia's older brother. Lydia also does not get along with her other female friends. She has always been with Nath anywhere. When she got a break time, she would go to the canteen and sat beside Nath. Not like the others students who were chatting and laughing with their groups, Lydia made the distance. It also goes on when Lydia went home. She would sit inside the bus and kept a seat for Nath. When other students asked her whether a seat beside her free, Lydia would answer that she was waiting for Nath. This sibling relies on each other to survive in their school life.

But Nath's seen Lydia at school, how in the cafeteria she sits silent while the others chatter; how, when they've finished copying her homework, she quietly slides her notebook back into her bookbag. After school, she walks to the bus alone and settles into the seat beside him in silence. (Ng, 2014, p. 16)

Nath is the only friend that Lydia has. She always seeks comfort in Nath. When she got a lot of pressure from her parents, she will go to Nath. When she gets scolded by her mother, Nath will comfort her and encourage her to be okay. This condition is getting worse when Nath got the acceptance letter from Harvard University. Nath is accepted to be a student there, which means he will leave their house and live away from Lydia. Lydia even dared to hide and ripped the letters to prevent Nath from knowing that he is accepted not to go out from the house, as stated in the quotation below.

Dear Mr. Lee, she read. We look forward to you joining us on campus April 29th–May 2nd and have matched you with a host student for your visit. She knew it had been coming, but it had not seemed real until now. The day after her birthday. Without thinking, she ripped the letter and envelope in two. And at that moment, Nath came out of the kitchen. (Ng, 2014, p. 138)

The fright to be left by Nath has made Lydia desperate. It makes sense because Nath is the only friend that she has. He is the one who understands her even she doesn't talk about it. Nath understands only through her eyes. He is the one who makes Lydia survive and hold on to keep fulfilling their parents' desires.

Lydia is a person who has no friends in school. She is an introvert and did not socialize well with her schoolmates. The only friend she has is Nath, her older brother. "In contrast, marriage, children, and greater number of friends/family are associated with decreased risk for lethal suicidal behavior." (Van Orden et al., 2010, p. 5). So it could be said that many friends owned by someone will decrease the risk for lethal suicidal behavior. In Lydia's case, she has almost no friends in her life. Thus, it makes sense that the deadly threat of suicide is increasing.

#### 3.2.2 Perceived Burdensomeness

One of the causes that trigger an individual to commit suicide is perceived burdensomeness. Individuals could think that they are a burden to people around them and has self-hatred because they think they are useless. In this novel, Lydia Lee is the second child of the Lee family who became the center of their family's attention. A sad fact that Lydia should accept is that she was the most favorite kid of their parents, and by that, Lydia Lee also received many expectations, yet she failed to fulfill them when she was alive.

#### 3.2.2.1 Failed to Fulfill Her Mother's Expectation to Be a Doctor

When Marilyn Lee was young, she enlisted to college, specifically in a science major. She was so ambitious to become a woman doctor. Marilyn was so intelligent and eager to learn. She even became the only girl in a class full of boys. At first, her friends and her lecturer underestimated her ability to learn and survive in science class. They said that girls should learn home-making, not learning about science in the laboratory. But she proved them wrong by being the highest scorer in their class. Just by then, her friends and lecturer stopped underestimating her.

"A baby," Marilyn said to James, over and over. "Our baby. So much better." By the time they were married, Marilyn would be only three months along, and it wouldn't show. To herself, she said, You can come back and finish that last year, when the baby is older. It would be almost eight years before school would seem real and possible and tangible again, but Marilyn didn't know that. As she left the dean's office, an indefinite leave secured, she was certain that everything she had dreamed for herself—medical school, doctorhood, that new and important life—sat poised for her return, like a well-trained dog awaiting its master. Still, when Marilyn sat down at the telephone table in the dorm lobby and gave the long-distance operator her mother's number, her voice shook with each digit. As her mother's voice finally came over the line, she forgot to say hello. Instead she blurted out, "I'm getting married. In June." (Ng, 2014, p. 35)

The quotation above shows that Marilyn's pregnancy while still in college finally stopped her dream of being a woman doctor. She stopped studying and married James right away. Until she has Nath and Lydia, she still had not finished her study. When she decided to go back to college, her ambition was stopped again by her third pregnancy. It was Hannah in her bum. By this, Marilyn practically cannot pursue her dream as a woman doctor. That is why she wants

Lydia to achieve her dreams. Marilyn wants Lydia to have a better chance and support rather than she had.

It was a sign, Marilyn decided. For her it was too late. But it wasn't too late for Lydia. Marilyn would not be like her own mother, shunting her daughter toward husband and house, a life spent safely behind a deadbolt. She would help Lydia do everything she was capable of. She would spend the rest of her years guiding Lydia, sheltering her, the way you tended a prize rose: helping it grow, propping it with stakes, arching each stem toward perfection. In Marilyn's belly, Hannah began to fidget and kick, but her mother could not yet feel it. She buried her nose in Lydia's hair and made silent promises. Never to tell her to sit up straight, to find a husband, to keep a house. Never to suggest that there were jobs or lives or worlds not meant for her; never to let her hear *doctor* and think only *man*. To encourage her, for the rest of her life, to do more than her mother had. (Ng, 2014, p. 92)

The quotation above shows that Marilyn does not want to make Lydia feels the same way as her. Marilyn was directed by her mother to meet a Harvard man when she was in college. Marilyn's mother always told her that woman should serve a man and family. Instead, Marilyn wants Lydia to pursue her dreams. Study as much as she can, as high as she can.

All her life she had heard her mother's heart drumming one beat: doctor, doctor, doctor. She wanted this so much, Lydia knew, that she no longer needed to say it. It was always there. Lydia could not imagine another future, another life. It was like trying to imagine a world where the sun went around the moon, or where there was no such thing as air. For a moment she considered forging her mother's signature, but her handwriting was too round, too perfectly bulbous, like a little girl's script. It would fool no one. (Ng, 2014, p. 102)

The quotation above proves that Marilyn has the ambition to make Lydia become a woman doctor. Lydia has always been trying to fulfill her mother's wishes because she has promised it to herself. When Lydia's mother wanted her to become a doctor, she put lots of effort into making it happen. Lydia even did not have the

nerve to have another dream other than a doctor. It is merely because Lydia did not want her mother to leave as she did years ago.

The bookshelf is so full of books that some are crammed in sideways at the top: A Brief History of Medicine, she reads upside down. Rosalind Franklin and DNA. All the books Marilyn had given her over the years to inspire her, to show her what she could accomplish. Everywhere, evidence of her daughter's talent and ambition. A fine layer of dust has already begun to coat everything. For a long time, Lydia had shooed her out when she came to vacuum and dust and tidy. "I'm busy, Mom," she had said, tapping the tip of her pen against her textbook, and Marilyn would nod and kiss her on the head and shut the door behind her. Now there is no one to turn her away, but she looks at Lydia's boot, tipped on its side on the carpet, thinks of her daughter kicking it off, and lets it lie. (Ng, 2014, p. 49)

From the quotation above, we know that Marilyn always pushed Lydia to learn science and motivate her that it is for Lydia's goodness. Marilyn has been buying books for Lydia to reach that goal, either for daily needs or Lydia's birthday present. The books were various, ranging from physics, biology, and the human skeleton until women scientists motivated Lydia that a woman could also become a scientist. Little did Marilyn knew, all that Lydia ever did were only to make Marilyn happy. It was not Lydia's genuine desire.

Inside Lydia could feel it: everything that was to come. One day the books would have no pictures. The problems would grow longer and harder. There would be fractions, decimals, exponents. The games would get trickier. Over meatloaf her mother would say, "Lydia, I'm thinking of a number. If you multiply by two and add one, you get seven." She would count her way back until she got the right answer, and her mother would smile and bring in the dessert. One day her mother would give her a real stethoscope. She would undo the top two buttons of her blouse and press the chest piece to her skin and Lydia would hear her mother's heart directly. "Doctors use these," her mother would say. It was far away then, tiny in the distance, but Lydia already knew it would happen. The knowledge hovered all around her, clinging to her, every day getting thicker. Everywhere she went, it was there. But every time her mother asked, she said *yes*, *yes*, *yes*, *yes*. (Ng, 2014, p. 94)

As the most favorite kid in the family, Lydia has always received all the intention and expectations. To reach their dream for the future Lydia, Marilyn taught Lydia things beyond her age could accept. Since Lydia was in kindergarten, Marilyn had already taught her about mathematics, science, and anything that lead to Lydia's curiosity toward doctorhood.

As Lydia getting older, the pressure had become more demanding and more challenging. In the high school year, her mother asked her to take the senior classes to excel. The sad thing is her scores decline. It is as if proving that Lydia can no longer hold her mother's expectation pursuing her ambition to become a doctor. Lydia can no longer bear the amount of pressure put on her shoulders.

Each test score had been lower than the last, reading like a strange weather forecast: ninety in September, mid-eighties in October, low seventies in November, sixties before Christmas. The exam before this one, she'd managed a sixty-two—technically passing, but hardly passable. After class, she'd shredded it into penny-sized scraps and fed it down the third-floor toilet before coming home. Now there was the fifty-five, which, like a bright light, made her squint, even though Mr. Kelly hadn't written the F at the top of the page. She'd stashed it in her locker for two weeks under a stack of textbooks, as if the combined weight of algebra and history and geography might snuff it out. Mr. Kelly had been asking her about it, hinting that he could call her parents himself, if necessary, and finally Lydia promised to bring it back after Christmas break with her mother's signature. (Ng, 2014, p. 101)

By looking at the quotation above, we know that Lydia had reached her maximum capability in holding her mother's ambition. Lots of homework from school, the pressure to always getting good grades, and the fright of disappointing her parents were haunting her mind. Marilyn constantly flexed Lydia in front of Mrs. Wolff, their neighbor, saying that Lydia is a genius, not knowing that Lydia was suffering in school. Lydia never had the nerve to tell Marilyn that she did not

understand biology theories such as the Krebs cycle and mitosis. That is why
Lydia was trying to hide the fact that she failed in many of her subjects. Failing at
in the science subjects will also closing Lydia's chance to be a doctor.

## 3.2.2.2 Failed to Fulfill Her Father's Expectation to Be Popular

James Lee, Lydia's father, is a pure Chinese who was born in America. He came from a low-income family. His parents worked as blue-collar workers in school, while his mother served food in the school canteen. When he was a schoolboy, he hardly had friends. He was enlisted in Lloyd school, the same school where his parents work, a free tuition special program for the school workers' children as long as they passed the test. It was an elite school where the majority of students are rich and White.

James was the first Asian student, the first Chinese student to be specific, and the only one, which in conclusion he was a minority there. Of course, many students had never met Chinese people before. James ever experienced being asked about why he has slanted eyes. Because James was different from the rest of the other students, he hardly had friends. He struggled to fit in.

Part of him wanted to gather his son into his arms, to tell him that he understood. Even after almost thirty years, he still remembered P.E. class at Lloyd, how once he'd gotten tangled up in his shirt and emerged to find his pants missing from the bench. Everyone else had already dressed and was stuffing gym uniforms into lockers and lacing shoes. He had tiptoed back into the gym, hiding his bare thighs and calves behind his knapsack, looking for Mr. Childs, the P.E. teacher. By then the bell had rung and the locker room had emptied. After ten minutes of searching, mortified at being in his undershorts in front of Mr. Childs, his pants were revealed under a sink, legs tied around the U-bend, dust bunnies caught in the cuffs. "Probably just got mixed up in someone else's things," Mr. Childs had said. "Hurry along to class now, Lee. You're tardy." James had known it was no

accident. After that, he had developed a system: pants first, then shirt. He had never told anyone about it, but the memory clung. (Ng, 2014, p. 60)

The quotation above is proof that when James was in the school year, he had experienced bullying. Just because James was the only Oriental there, he had to be teased which his classmates hid his pants. James was quiet, had no friends, clumsy, and insecure. He longed to be accepted by his friends, feel their warms, and fit in their society. James knows that he never could erase his school memories, so that he puts his expectation to be accepted in society on his children.

He did not understand why he said these things to Nath, for that would have meant understanding something far more painful: that Nath reminded him more and more of himself, of everything he wanted to forget from his own boyhood. He knew only that it was becoming a reflex, one that left him smarting and ashamed, and he glanced away. (Ng, 2014, p. 98)

James is kind of having a bad feeling toward Nath, his son. Every time he sees Nath, he remembers the young version of himself, a small boy with slanted eyes, clumsy and too short for every popular sport in school. That is why James put the expectation and his wish on Lydia. Lydia's physical appearance was more likely Marilyn, which is an American. James hoped that Lydia would be popular in school and accepted by her friends.

She slid her finger under the wrapping paper, and a squat gold and black book fell into her lap. How to Win Friends and Influence People. A bright band of yellow slashed the cover in two. Fundamental Techniques in Handling People. Six Ways of Making People Like You. At the top, in deep red letters: The More You Get Out of This Book, the More You'll Get Out of Life! James beamed. (Ng, 2014, p. 109)

The quotation above is proof that James was obsessed with making Lydia accepted by other people. He always wanted Lydia to become popular in her

school. With that beautiful blue eyes and physical appearance, which is pretty just like Marilyn, James hoped that Lydia would be different. James assumed that Lydia is confident and poise. Only after Lydia's death did James know that Lydia, too, was struggling to be accepted by her friends.

The day is cloudy, but he leaves the light off, as if the dimness will soften what he's about to read. From Karen Adler: *She seemed lonely. She didn't really hang out with anyone.* From Pam Saunders: *She didn't have a lot of friends, or even a boyfriend. I don't think the boys even noticed her.* At the bottom: *Lee's physics teacher, Donald Kelly, remembered her as the lone sophomore in a class of juniors, noting, "She worked hard, but of course she stood out."* Beside the article, a sidebar: *Children of Mixed Backgrounds Often Struggle to Find Their Place.* (Ng, 2014, p. 123)

The statement from people who knew Lydia in school was reported. Karen Adler and Pam Saunders, whom Lydia introduced as her friends to her family, did not close and knew each other. Lydia was lonely in school. She did not have friends. It was opposite to James' perception that Lydia was popular. James thought that Lydia was easy-going and friendly.

Across the living room, Nath put his eye to the viewfinder of his new camera, zooming in on Lydia, pushing her in and out of focus. He was apologizing for giving her the silent treatment, for shutting the door in her face when all she'd wanted was not to be alone. Lydia knew this, but she was not in the mood to make up. In a few months he would be gone, and she would be left alone to win friends and influence people and pioneer in science. Before Nath could snap the photo, she dropped her gaze back to the book, hair curtaining her face. A smile says, "I like you. You make me happy. I am glad to see you." That is why dogs make such a hit. They are so glad to see us that they almost jump out of their skins. Dogs, Lydia thought. She tried to picture herself as a dog, something docile and friendly, a golden retriever with a black smile and a fringy tail, but she did not feel friendly and purebred and blond. She felt unsociable and suspicious, like the Wolffs' dog down the street, a mutt, braced for hostility. (Ng, 2014, p. 112)

The quotation above is proof that Lydia is not a friendly person. She acknowledged herself as someone who was withdrawn and suspicious. It makes sense because since she was a kid, Lydia was familiar with strange stares from other people toward her and her family, a mix-raced family. How could a Chinese and an American marry and have kids in a society still taboo and difficult to accept that kind of family? So instead of blend in, Lydia was growing up avoiding socialize with people. Lydia is afraid the people would mock her, making fun of her, or simply refuse her present because of her identity.

James' expectations that Lydia will be accepted by her society and popular were the opposite because Lydia was difficult to socialize. Although James had bought Lydia several books about winning people, Lydia still cannot make it.

Instead of practicing the lessons from those books and getting friends, Lydia lied to her parents that she already had numerous friends.

## 3.2.2.3 Broken-hearted Because of Jack

Lydia was a lack of friends since she was in kindergarten. Both in school and house, she barely had friends. She has a neighbor who has the same age as her brother. His name is Jack. However, because Jack had bullied Nath in the past and the nasty rumors about him, who had many girlfriends, Lydia was never thought to be friend him. When Lydia and Jack got to be classmates where they both failed and had to retake the class, they started to be friends. By that moment, Lydia began to had a feeling toward Jack.

She had never kissed anyone before, and it was—though she didn't know it—a sweet kiss, a chaste kiss, a little-girl kiss. Beneath her lips, his were warm and dry and still. Beneath the smoke, Jack smelled as

if he had just been out in the woods, leafy and green. He smelled the way velvet felt, something you wanted to run your hands over and then press to your face. In that moment Lydia's mind fast-forwarded, the way movies did. Past them clambering into the backseat, tumbling over one another, their hands too slow for their desires. Past untying the knot at the nape of her neck, past the peeling away of clothing, past Jack's body hovering over hers. All the things she had never experienced and, in truth, could barely imagine. By the time Nath came home, she thought, she would be transformed. That evening, when Nath told her everything new that he had seen at Harvard, everything about the new and fabulous life he was already beginning, she would have something new to tell him, too. (Ng, 2014, p. 164)

Lydia fell in love with Jack. She was so happy because she finally had a friend and could experience love just like other teenagers. She even dared to kiss Jack and initiated to make love with him. It was the first time Lydia has done that kind of thing. At that moment, Lydia was so brave and reckless. She even did not ask Jack whether he liked her too or not. In fact, Jack wanted someone else.

It was beyond Lydia's expectation. She thought that Jack liked her because he did not bother to go out with her frequently. However, Jack liked Nath, Lydia's brother. 'He matters,' Jack said, still looking out the window. 'He matters to me.' (Ng, 2014, p. 165). Lydia was shocked and hardly processed that fact. Lydia was so ashamed of the truth and everything that she had done toward Jack. It was a day before her death did Lydia knew that Jack was gay. Those girls who Jack has dated were to hide the fact that Jack liked boys. This refusal made Lydia think that she was unwanted. Unwanted is one of the liability factors of someone committing suicide.

#### 3.2.2.4 Lydia Knowing Her Father's Affair

A week before she disappeared, Lydia joined a test to get a driver's license. Her father and Louisa accompanied her. Louisa is a 23-year-old Chinese woman who works as James' teaching assistant at Middlewood University. Lydia had just known that James had a special relationship with another woman when James and Louisa were playfully flirting with each other in the front seat of James' car. Lydia was so shocked and angry knowing this.

It had never occurred to her before to think of her father as a man with desires. Like all teenagers, she preferred—despite her very existence—to imagine her parents as eternally chaste. But there was something in the way her father and Louisa touched, in their easy banter, that shocked her innocent sensibilities. To her, the faint crackle between them blazed so hotly that her cheeks flushed. They were lovers. She was sure of it. Louisa's hand was still on her father's arm and her father didn't move, as if the caress were nothing unusual. In fact, James did not even notice: Marilyn often rested her hand on him just this way, and the feeling was too familiar to stand out. For Lydia, however, the way her father kept looking straight ahead, eyes still scanning the road, was all the confirmation she needed. (Ng, 2014, p. 141)

Witnessing something that should not happen made Lydia so angry. Her anger escalated when she knew that Louisa chose the necklace given by her father days before as her birthday present. The fact that Lydia had just known made her unfocused to answer many questions written on the paper prepared by driving license test staff. From twenty questions, she just answered five. At the same time, Lydia needs to answer fourteen questions correctly to pass the exam. By that fact, practically Lydia was failed.

Knowing her father's affair, practically Lydia experienced the family conflict that she ever had, but now in another form. Her father was a loyal husband to her mother. However, Lydia must witness that he has changed. Her father has an affair. This was such a mentally shaken fact that Lydia must accept.

## 3.2.3 Lydia Acquired Capability for Suicide

James Lee is a swimmer. He acquired any strokes in swimming. Nath Lee is also a swimmer. He had been trained by his father, James Lee, since he was a kid. However, this skill of swimming is not owned by Lydia Lee. She cannot swim. When Lydia was five years old, she almost drowned in Middlewood Lake. It was Nath who was angry and disappointed with his parents who prioritize Lydia over him. Nath thought that if Lydia was gone, he could be the only one who got Marilyn and James's attention and love. So he pushed Lydia into the lake.

More than this: the second he touched her, he knew that he had misunderstood everything. When his palms hit her shoulders, when the water closed over her head, Lydia had felt relief so great she had sighed in a deep choking lungful. She had staggered so readily, fell so eagerly, that she and Nath both knew: that she felt it, too, this pull she now exerted, and didn't want it. That the weight of everything tilting toward her was too much. (Ng, 2014, p. 98)

On Nath's second thought, he realized that he had misunderstood Lydia. Nath thought that Lydia was happy with all the love centered on her. But in fact, Lydia was overwhelmed too. Nath saw that she was so relieved when Lydia drowned to the water because she was already too tired with all the pressure she experienced. Nath knew that by this chance, Lydia could end all the pain. Nath decided to help Lydia to go up to the surface. He saved Lydia.

On 2 May 1977 night, Lydia went to Middlewood Lake alone. In the lake's darkness, she thought anything and asking why her life and her family were so wrong. Lydia asked why her life was too dependent on Nath. Then she remembered that Nath had saved her life when she almost drowned at five-year-old. Lydia thought that was all the cause. She wanted to start all over again and make a new promise to get a better life. So she rode the rowboat to go to the

middle of the lake. Lydia wanted to save her own life without depending on other people.

"She looked down at the lake, which in the dark looked like nothing, just blackness, a great void spreading beneath her. It will be all right, she told herself, and she stepped out of the boat into the water." (Ng, 2014, p. 170). Lydia knew that she could not swim, but she forced herself to jump into the water and expected the panic surge would make her able to swim into the dock. That was something that nearly impossible. The depth of the lake, the darkness of the night, and there was no one around would only make her die. That was an act of suicide. The lake was so dark and vast. Jumping into the water without having swimming skills would only kill herself.

#### **CHAPTER IV**

#### CONCLUSIONS

Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* talks about the missing of Lydia Lee, who was later found dead in a lake near her neighborhood. The police investigation's result showed that Lydia was dead by *asphyxia* caused by drowning. Later on, the police concluded that it was a suicide, which made Lydia's family refused to accept that judge because they considered Lydia as a happy girl and lived her the best life.

Several studies have been conducted using this novel but none of them analyzed Lydia's personality and causes that trigger her committed suicide. In addition, none of them have used the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide as their theory. This study aimed to describe Lydia's personality and unfold the causes of Lydia's suicide. The researcher used the New Criticism and the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide to analyze this novel.

The result shows that Lydia was described as a pathetic girl because of family conflict, which made her become restrained and try hard to fulfill everything her parents' wishes. Lydia is also described as someone who has a close personality because she tended to keep her thoughts and feelings for her own. Lydia's identity, a Chinese-American kid made her insecure because she was afraid that her environment mocked her. Thus, Lydia tended to be dependent on Nath, her older brother. Not only that, but Lydia is also described as someone who is impulsive in the act. These personalities of Lydia were categorized into risk factors for suicidal behavior.

The other results also showed that there are causes that trigger Lydia committed suicide which in line with the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. Firstly, Lydia had a thwarted belongingness caused by her conditions, who lived in an alienated family. Moreover, Lydia had no friends in her school, which made her lonely. Second, Lydia perceived burdensomeness was her parents expecting her to be a female doctor and be popular in her school, which Lydia cannot fulfill both. Moreover, Lydia also experienced a heart-breaking situation when she had a one-sided love toward Jack, who loved Lydia's brother. Lydia also knew James' affair with his teaching assistant. These two causes were also added by the capability of suicide that Lydia acquired sourced by her impulsivity. These three causes led Lydia to drown herself in a lake in the middle of the night, which causing her died. It could be concluded that the main reason of Lydia's suicide is the ambition to seek recognition.

By this study, the researcher know several risk factors and causes that lead someone to end their lives. Thus, the researcher can learn from this and start to be more caring toward people around and notice every single sign included in risk factors and causes of suicide, which the researcher can prevent suicide from happening in the future.

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