

**IDENTITY CRISIS EXPERIENCED BY BEN DAY IN**

***DARK PLACES* NOVEL**

**THESIS**



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of an identity crisis during adolescence can vary, including career, political, religious, relationship, achievement, sexual, cultural, interests, personality, and physical problems experienced by people.

The importance of addressing any problems of identity crisis during the adolescent period is emphasized by the consequences of an identity crisis, which can affect the next stage of psychosocial growth. Adolescents who do not resolve their identity crisis will reach a stage known as identity repudiation. It is a state in which they do not fully comprehend who they are and have difficulty determining what they want. Furthermore, adolescents who cannot resolve their identity dilemma effectively are at risk of developing a negative identity. Many who are involved in negative identity can threaten society because they can do something adverse, like criminalities, removing themselves from society, and doing any other risky behaviors (Larasati, 2017, p. 4).

There are some literary works, especially in novels, where identity crisis started from the explanation mentioned above. One of them is *Dark Places* by Gillian Flynn. This novel tells the story of the Day family, consisting of 5 people named Pattie, Ben, Michelle, Debby, and Libby Day, who were victims of a sadistic slaughter in one night. All of them got killed except Ben and Libby. The researcher paid more attention to Ben Day that plays an important role and has several flashback stories about himself that are detailed. The researcher focused on Ben's story, not Libby's. The researcher decided to choose Gillian Flynn's *Dark Places* because of her interest in one of the characters in this novel, Ben Day. Ben had a lot of pressure and social problems in his adolescent years to deal with,

whether from his family, girlfriend, or close friends. From that case, Ben Day is starting to show an identity crisis.

The findings of this study are expected to raise awareness of the problem of adolescent's identity crisis. If readers come into contact with adolescents, they will know how to deal with them and what to avoid. It can also be knowledge that parents with adolescent children can put into practice so that they know how to help and assist their children in achieving their goals.

There have been several studies that examined Gillian Flynn's *Dark Places*. There is research by Whenny Trijayanti (2016). The study raises the issue of anxiety that is suffered by one of the characters in the *Dark Places*. The second is Andhika Wahyu Rustamaji (2020). This study examined the woman's struggle. The third is Sandi Rodan (2018). This study examined the impact of the psychological childhood trauma that affects the main character in the childhood to adult using the psychoanalysis approach. The fourth is Susan Panca Lina (2020). This study examined Toni Morisson's *The Bluest Eye* and focused on the identity crisis of Pecola.

However, most of the previous studies discussed the problem faced by the main character, Libby. This present study is different from the previous research with the same novel title because the researcher used the theory of identity crisis to analyze Ben Day, who is not the first main character, and none of the previous studies research this topic.













study is different in psychology and literature. Psychological elements manifest as characters in drama or prose in literary plays perceived as psychological phenomena (Endraswara, 2003, p. 96). Psychology deals with human beings in conflict with one another, and literature depicts and writes and reads these individuals. Human psychology is inordinately nuanced and can be approached in several ways (Purnama, 2015, p. 9). From those statements, the readers can understand that psychology and literature have a close relationship to each other since the fictional or literary work uses real life to deal with the imagination of human beings, such as their difficulties and the state of life, to create the character of the story in it. Therefore, psychoanalysis is used to study human behavior.

## **2.2 Erikson's Concept of Identity**

Erik Erikson is interested in psychosocial theory, which examines and learns how social factors such as society, community, and history affect an individual's identity. Furthermore, he was motivated to learn more about the relationship between an individual's identity and social circumstances because he had personal experiences with social problems that influenced the formation of his identity. His interest in a more profound analysis of the issue of human identity made him successful in writing several books including *Society* (1963), *The Life Cycle Completed* (1982), *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), and *Identity and the Life Cycle* (1959), *Childhood*. These books talk about how human identity developed.

Erikson (1980, p. 109) considers identity a collection of distinguishing characteristics or human individuality cultivated through social interaction. As an ego-psychologist, Erikson's discussion of identity leads him to conclude that there is ego identity. Ego identity is described as a constant sense of sameness within oneself selfsameness and the ability to communicate with and give meaning to others in one's immediate community in a genuine way (Erikson, 1980, p. 94).

Erikson also argued in "The Problem of Ego-Identity" *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* (1956, p. 66) that social circumstances play a significant role in forming a long-term pattern of "inner identification." In other words, how a person performs his or her position in society and how society identifies the individual can have a significant impact on how an individual develops their true sense of self. Furthermore, identity can be acquired, created, and evolved depending on one's position in a given social situation and how one communicates with others. In conclusion, Erikson's concept of identity is how social circumstances affect the discovery of a person's identity.

### **2.3 Erikson's Psychosocial Development**

There are eight stages of psychosocial or human development to build the personality. Eight stages of human development are also known as "eight stages of man." Every single stage characterized by identity development starts from childhood. The children in adolescence will experience the conflict that generates a crisis called an identity crisis that occurs when facing their lives. Erikson (1978, p. 27) said that "All the earlier conflicts can, therefore, be seen to hit and be



role confusion. The researcher only focused on the fifth stage because the character analyzed in this research are a teenager aged 15, which means he is currently in stage five, adolescence. Here is an understanding of identity versus role confusion:

### **2.3.1 Identity versus role confusion**

This stage occurs at the age of puberty, around 12-18 years of age. At this point, adolescence seeks a sense of self and personal identity through an intensive exploration of their interests, behaviors, and values. Adolescents discover who they are, what they want to be, and what others expect of them. They begin to consider their future career and their relationships with peers in their family, school, and community. Since adolescents experiencing psychosocial tension want to explore and discover their true sense of identity and morality, it is critical to always provide a supportive atmosphere with ongoing guidance (Santrock, 2010, p. 23).

In the table above, it is written that the critical event of the identity versus role confusion stage is a social relationship. In *Dark Places* novel, Ben was 15 years old, which means he was currently on this stage, and indeed he had many relationships with some people at this age. In this research, the researcher described how Ben interacted with people and found out whether Ben managed to get the goal from this stage or vice versa.

If Ben managed to find himself at this stage, he would get a good outcome or goal, namely fidelity. However, on the contrary, failure to find an identity













for assessing identity that considers three aspects of functioning: occupational role, beliefs and values, and sexuality. He also defined four distinct identity statuses that people progress through as their identities evolve.

## 2.5 James Marcia's Identity Statuses

The stages of the life cycle often have a list of benefits achieved by completing the phases. The virtues acquired during adolescence are identification and competence for the fifth stage, which is especially appropriate for this study. In Erikson's definition, identity plays a part for the first time between 13 and 19. He portrays late adolescence as a crucial time in one's life because it marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is the first time societal and teenage standards collide, forcing the person to commit to a career and ideologies. Erikson's works and thoughts attracted many other scientists. Some continued Erikson's thoughts, one of which was James Marcia, who came out with his identity status theory.

James Marcia developed his theory about adolescent identity formation on Erikson's basic concept of the life cycle. He reiterates that identities are often established in the light of social and interpersonal relationships (Marcia, 2002, p. 199). He also exaggerates the role of adults in adolescent identity formation as a "position of generativity, of caring for, of assisting in the 'grow'" of their society (Marcia, 2002, p. 199). As a result, it is the adult's responsibility to provide a rich atmosphere for adolescents to allow this capacity to 'grow' as an individual.



their best. Diffusions are confused and isolated at their worst, filled with feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness. (Kroger & Marcia, 2011, p. 35).

People with identity diffusion may or may not have gone through a crisis period; his defining characteristic is a lack of commitment. They have not settled on a profession and are not concerned about it. Even though they might discuss a chosen profession, they appear to have little understanding of its daily routine and give the impression that the option could be quickly abandoned if better opportunities occur elsewhere. They are either uninterested in ideological debates or adopt a smorgasbord approach. Each viewpoint seems equally valid, and they are willing to sample from each (Marcia, 1966, p. 551).

### **2.5.2 Identity Foreclosure**

Adolescents in the foreclosure did agency status have made commitments to those personalities, but only after a limited amount of experimentation (Crocetti *et al.*, 2013, p. 11). A closer look at their identity reveals a reluctance to pursue alternate identities sincerely. In a foreclosed identity situation, a person is more likely to choose an identity and profession based on chance (Luyckx *et al.*, 2010, 343). As Kroger & Marcia (2011, p. 35) said, foreclosures may appear to be as powerful and self-directed as successes. Their position, however, has a brittleness to it and thus an underlying fragility. They must retain their defensive positions and refute or misinterpret disconfirming details due to their difficulty in seriously considering alternatives.

A foreclosure subject is characterized by the fact that he or she has never been through a crisis but expresses dedication. It is difficult to say where their parents' aspirations for them end and where their begin. Their personality has a certain rigidity; one gets the impression that if they were put in a situation where parental ideals were nonfunctional, they would feel highly threatened (Marcia, 1966, p. 552).

### **2.5.3 Identity Moratorium**

Adolescents with a moratorium identification status go through a period of reflection and discovery. During this period of contemplation, they have minimal commitments to identity and are often conflicted between multiple identities to which they could make commitments. Moratoriums are trying to figure out who they are. They are vivacious, engaging, conflicted, and sometimes exhausting to be around. Moratoriums are frequently extraordinarily morally sensitive (Kroger & Marcia, 2011, 35).

The moratorium subject is in a state of crisis. They are preoccupied with issues that are often described as an adolescent. Even though their parent's desires are still vital to them, they attempt to strike a balance between them, society's demands, and their abilities (Marcia, 1966, p. 552). The process of reflection in a moratorium is likely to result in one of two outcomes. The first is that once a secure life commitment has been chosen, the individual moves on from a moratorium status (Adams *et al.*, 2006, p. 84), or the second is that the person









The storyline in this novel is a mixed plot. Thirty years after the murder, someone asked Libby to prove Ben's innocence, but at first, Libby refused because she already believed Ben was the murderer. Libby may believe that Ben was the murderer of her family because at his 15 years old, he was a weird person, and he showed a lot of negative traits. Unwittingly, Ben's behavior at the age of 15 was only the characteristics of a teenager facing an identity crisis, but no one in his family recognized and could help. Ben's behavior had nothing to do with the murder incident.

Ben was a loner at the age of 15 and only had two close friends, the Muehlers brothers. He worked part-time as a janitor at his school. However, Ben changed when he met a girl who was his girlfriend, 18 years old Diondra. From Diondra, he also met Diondra's cousin, Trey. Since Ben knew Diondra, his life has changed quite a bit. Supported by the state of the house that makes Ben unhappy, he has another place to play, but it leads to more negative things.

From Trey and Diondra, Ben knew and joined a gang belonging to Trey, which of course, contained teenagers who were older than him. The gang usually gathers in a warehouse every day. Ben constantly felt different social interactions considering he did not have that many friends. Trey taught Ben about satan sacrifice, which leads him to kill random animals and introduce him to narcotics. At the same time, Diondra taught Ben about alcohol and sex. The most obvious thing here is the lack of a family role in interacting with sensitive and easily influenced adolescents. So that Ben felt more free and comfortable outside













Ben and his mother did not talk much because Ben was so irritable, so his mother tried not to oppose Ben's. From the quotation above, his mother did not try to talk about it, but she assumed her positive thoughts. According to her, Ben changed his hair color because he was tired of being teased by his friends about his hair since childhood and maybe until now, so Ben wanted to end it by changing his hair color. However, his mother was unfortunate and offended because the red hair was descended from her.

After the dyed hair incident, Ben left the house, notifying him that he would return. Instead, he went to school to do his part-time work as a janitor. While he was doing his job usually, he heard negative news about himself abusing an 11 years old girl. It hit him terribly, and he felt the pressure again. As stated in Flynn (2009, p. 55) "He headed down the stairwell and toward the back door as a pack of upperclassmen brushed past him toward the parking lot, his hair feeling hot under the black hair, **imagining what they were thinking –freak.**"

The quotation above shows that even though Ben had changed his hair color, he was still worried about what people think of his new black hair. He had no confidence at all. Therefore, Ben had no sense of self-worth, leading to him being a self-hatred individual. He also believed that because of anyone's rejection about anything in him. He cannot see himself in a positive light, or to put it another way. Because no one ever talks nice things about him. It made him feels like a hateful person.







Ben's traits that he likes to hurt himself are also included in an identity crisis because he does not know yet exactly how he will solve a problem. He had many questions about how he will solve a problem. He did not like interacting with people, whether his own family or friends, so he did not have a place to pour out his feelings to vent with hurting himself to get calm and satisfaction because he was very anxious about what he was going through. Self-harm is considered as a continuation of self-hatred that has been discussed before.

#### 3.1.4. Feeling Useless

The fourth identity crisis showed by Ben is feeling useless. Useless, according to Collins Dictionary, is "having no practical use or advantage." So, if someone feels useless, they feel bad because they cannot help someone or achieve anything. The researcher found some evidence of Ben's uselessness.

As previously written, Ben only has one vehicle that allows him to go everywhere doing his activities, just a single bicycle. "He hated that he had to bike places like Opie going to the fishing hole. **He hated that he couldn't drive.**" (Flynn, 2009, p. 58). Ben's mother owned a car that was not luxurious, but Ben had no power over it. 'Ben hated that he could not drive' shows that Ben wanted to be able to drive a car like an average teenager who can and should drive a car. Because according to Witmer (2019), about legal driving age in Kansas City is 14 years old learner's permit, 16 years old restricted license, and 16,6 years old full license. Ben, who should have been learning since the age of 14, did not get any



Ben had a part-time job as a janitor at his school. Because he was a loner, he liked to do his job when school hours were over and school was getting quiet. He did not like to meet and interact a lot with people. Saturday was a day that he would not choose because the wrestling team had the gym on that day. He said “It was just too lame holding a mop when all these blocky, muscled, loud guys were waddling around, spitting chaw on the floor you just cleaned and then looking at you, half guilty, half daring you to say something.” (Flynn, 2009, p. 95).

Ben's personal description of the wrestling team, such as 'blocky, muscled, loud guys,' reflects Ben's sense of insecurity because he looked at him, unpopular, quiet, no friends, it was very much reversed with his school wrestling team, who were popular men. Besides, the researcher assumed that he had done his job once on Saturday and met a wrestling team that did not appreciate his job, so he avoided taking the job on Saturday. 'half guilty, half daring you to say something' Ben knows their faces are like 'daring you to say something but did not dare to take it', because he knew the ending of it, he did not want to be bullied anymore. He was insecure and felt useless compared to the wrestling team.

Erikson claims that identity confusion can manifest itself in the form of a 'negative identity at times. This crisis makes the adolescent feel inadequate, depersonalized, and alienated. They have a profound sense of futility, disorganization, and aimlessness (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981, p. 127). So that feeling useless is also one of the identity crises experienced by Ben because, according to the explanations above, he realizes that he could not drive a car, he became





clothes, and he did not give Ben the slightest chance to choose clothes that suit his taste.

'He wasn't sure if guys should let girls buy their clothes, wasn't sure if it was cool or not.' showing Ben's confusion about this, he was actually hesitated to accept gifts from Diondra, considering the prestige of men is very high, and this role should not be reversed. However, Ben could not reject it.

Even though Ben is embarrassed to receive Diondra's gift, he always did what Diondra wanted. Diondra liked Ben in black, including his hair. "When she looked up and saw his black hair, she gave him a giant happy smile and thumbs-up 'Awesome.' And Ben felt a little better, not as stupid. 'I told you it'd look good, Benji' And that was it." (Flynn, 2009, p. 197). When Ben heard that Diondra liked him in black, the writer concluded that this was the initial reason for Ben's dispute with his mother. Ben immediately rushed home to dye his hair black. Ben felt that he wanted to make Diondra happy with the simple things he could afford because he could not buy all black clothes, so he dyed his hair black. There was no problem with this case. After all, they both do it happily because they love each other. However, Ben looks powerless because he has no voice and cannot be the real him in front of Diondra.

Since Ben knew Diondra, Ben began to be sexually active; they often had sex. Due to the high intensity of the sexual activities, Diondra became pregnant with Ben's child. When they found out, they were panicked because Ben did not have a permanent job yet. Finally, however, Diondra suggested leaving the city

with her remaining money and stealing Ben's mother's savings because Diondra was afraid that her father, a strict parent, would hear about her pregnancy.

Ben tried to think of the right thing to say. He sometimes thought he never said anything to Diondra that was just pure talking; it was all verbal elbows, arms, trying to fend off her constant annoyance, say what she wanted to hear. (Flynn, 2009, p. 249)

The sentence above shows the situation in which Ben should answer Diondra's suggestion to leave the city and steal his mother's money. However, again, he was in a difficult choice. Nevertheless, it seemed that Ben had the answer and his own opinion about dealing with their pregnancy. Nevertheless, Ben decided not to talk about it because he was responsible for Diondra's pregnancy. Moreover, he did not want to irritate Diondra more, because Diondra was a person who is constantly annoyed by a bit of thing, just like Ben, but Ben could control more when he was with Diondra.

Ben's trait towards Diondra is wrong because it makes him look weak and helpless in front of the woman he loves; his woman is more dominant. The researcher means as powerless is Ben's traits that he cannot make any decisions and does not dare to express his opinion; even though this is normal and everyone has the right to an opinion, Diondra is more powerful. The researcher considered this as an identity crisis because it looks clear that Ben is questioning the role in his life, he is a man that someday will be a husband, but he cannot act like one, as Diondra is more dominant than him.

### 3.1.6 Ben's Identity Status: Identity Moratorium

According to Marcia, the moratorium subject is in a state of crisis: he or she is seeking and actively looking for values to eventually call his or her own, as discussed in the previous chapter. To put it another way, this person is actively searching for his or her identity but has yet to commit or has only made very temporary commitments. Judging from the previous definition, the researcher found that Ben's characteristics in living his life include an adolescent experiencing a crisis with a moratorium status.

In the novel in chapter 2, Ben's mother told the story of how Ben's behavior had wholly changed to become more introverted. Indeed, Ben was previously described as a quiet and weird person, but recently Ben has become more closed and could be heard talking intensely with someone from behind his bedroom door. According to his mother, Ben did not have any other close friends besides the Muehlers brothers, but if it was them, Ben usually opened up even if his younger siblings or mother held his phone. His mother at the time suspected Ben had a girlfriend, and that suspicion was confirmed.

Before Diondra, Ben was a quiet person, weak, poor; everything terrible was in Ben. Diondra and Ben's meeting is unexpected, as the sentence from Libby's perspective, "Big fucking thanks then to Diondra for claiming him, at least in private. She'd actually hit him with her car. That's how they met." (Flynn, 2009, p. 97). That was at the summer orientation for freshmen and new kids. Ben walked from the parking lot and was hit by a car driven by Diondra. Diondra was

very angry at that time because it was her arrogant nature. Diondra cursed at Ben. However, even though Ben was the guilty one, he still apologized because Ben was lousy and afraid of people but only dared to curse in his mind. After Ben apologizing, Diondra changed her mind and was not angry any more because according to Diondra, Ben had a nice face, a kind of love at first sight, and then offered him a ride home.

From the very beginning of their meeting, Diondra has had quite a bit of influence on Ben. “‘You know what, you have a really nice face,’ and then a few seconds later, she said, ‘You wanna scam or what?’ and then they were full-on making out, which wasn't his first time, but was only his second.” (Flynn, 2009, p. 98). It describes a situation where Diondra and Ben were on their way in a car. Their first meeting shared a lot of stories and then got in a romantic situation and kissed. Even though it was Ben's second kiss, what is now is the first kiss that means a lot to Ben, with feelings. This kiss is an example of Diondra's influence on Ben; Diondra starts introducing new things for Ben, specifically, sexual matters. Ben was unfamiliar with her circle of friends. At school, he never spent time with her. Diondra was like a hummingbird, flitting in and out of the school week, sometimes showing up, sometimes not. It was enough for him to see her on weekends—own personal space, free from education constraints.

Ben's meaning by 'own personal space' was a small apartment in Wichita that belonged to Diondra. That was the most comfortable house for Ben, and Ben spent most of his time there. However, since living with Diondra, Diondra had influenced Ben's life more. “He and Diondra in their own apartment in Wichita,

eating McDonald's and watching TV and having sex, and smoking an entire pack of cigarettes.” (Flynn, 2009, p. 60) and “The first time they'd tried to have sex, he'd been so clumsy...”(Flynn, 2009, p. 148). From that quotations, the researcher concluded that this was the first time Ben had sexual activities, with Diondra, his new girlfriend. Because from the previous quotation that Diondra was Ben's second kiss, Ben's first kiss was Krissi Kates, a 11 years old girl who was rumored to have been molested by Ben, even though it was done with their consent.

After the kiss before, Diondra influenced Ben to do something more than that, the center of sexual activity. Moreover, the sentence 'The first time they'd tried to have sex, he'd been so clumsy' shows that Ben had never done it, so he was very awkward when he was going to do it with Diondra. So, in essence, Diondra was the first girl to have had his first sexual intercourse, and Ben did it a lot after that, all with Diondra. Also, Ben was never smoked much if Diondra was not around because Ben was not a heavy smoker, but on the other hand, Diondra was, and that affected Ben's changes. This is also a new exploration that Ben has undertaken under his new acquaintance, Diondra.

Apart from their apartment in Wichita, Ben had another place to stay when he was tired and needed some relief. Still, under the influence of Diondra, this time, the one who introduced this place to Ben was Diondra's step-cousin named Trey. The place was a kind of warehouse, which in the previous analysis, the researcher named the devil worshiper place. Many friends were older than Ben because it was Diondra and Trey's crowd, not Ben's. There are so many demands there to be accepted, one of which was, as previously explained, Ben must



pregnant with Ben's child. On the one hand, they are happy and proud, but on the other hand, they were still very young to take care of and be responsible for a child. "He'd wondered at first if she was going to get an abortion. He'd said if you have the baby instead of when, and she'd completely freaked, and Diondra completely freaking was something he never wanted to see again." (Flynn, 2009, p. 246) The quotation shows that Diondra was very happy with the news of her pregnancy, and Ben also said that he is proud of the idea of having a baby. However, Ben still does not have a permanent job because he will only turn 16 years old. Diondra and Ben themselves did not plan or could not plan anything about this baby because Diondra was afraid of his father's threats about getting pregnant outside of marriage because he felt he had broken his father's promise. This shows that Ben is not yet committed to anything, and it is challenging for him to decide just because Diondra is dominant.

However, on the other hand, Ben showed little care for their baby. "Ben made a list of things they might need, and he bought some hand-me-down baby clothes at a Delphos flea market right near Christmastime." (Flynn, 2009, p. 247). Ben showed that he cares about their future baby by buying several clothes and underwear for a baby. Ben sacrificed his embarrassment by asking for help from a mother who was going to shop at the baby store to buy his groceries as well. Ben did it in order to please Diondra. Ben's actions like this show that his psychological stage is going to develop. At this stage, Ben has not shown any progress because he has not yet committed. However, what Ben did was a







He wanted to be a useful man, but he wasn't sure how to make that happen, and it scared him shitless. His dad had come back to live on the farm for a few months this summer, and Ben had been hopeful, figuring the guy would teach him something after all this time, bother to be a father. (Flynn, 2009, p. 57)

Ben felt himself a useless man. Since he was little and his parents were still together, Runner was also not a good father, just an adult man with a bad character who drank, used drugs, and loved money but was poor, also known as a lot of debt troubled man. Therefore, when his father returned to the farm for the summer vacation, Ben hoped that his father had changed because he saw Ben was a teenager and it was time to teach him something. However, what he expected was precisely the opposite. Runner did all the mechanical work by himself without any initiative to teach this boy who grew up as a teenager. Even when Ben wanted to get close to him, Runner told Ben to stay away and not bother him. He also said something like 'That is men's work,' as Ben was not a man. Of course, it made Ben angry and disappointed, like being ridiculed.

Runner's attitude above made Ben experienced an identity crisis. Without his father's help, he looked for his own identity and tried to learn things by himself, which is complex, and he got angry quickly because he hates his father because of the bad qualities that are remembered in Ben's mind.

He'd taken a shovel, finally, and smashed them into the ground, bits of flesh splattering his arms, getting angrier, each big loose wield of the shovel infuriating him more. You think I'm such a pussy, Runner, you think I'm such a pussy! (Flynn, 2009, p. 157)

The sentence above shows how Ben was distraught and how Ben took his anger out on his father. What happened was when Ben saw his mother's barn cat drop the nest of the newborn mice and also eat some of the mice. After that, Ben took the initiative to end the rats' suffering, which was even more torturous. Ben took the shovels and beat them to the ground to death, releasing all his emotions while shouting, 'You think I'm such a pussy, Runner, you think I'm such a pussy!' to prove it wrong, he was not a coward.

Parental divorce is an important factor in achieving a child's identity. Taufikurrahman *et al.* (2015, p. 32) stated that parental divorce that occurs in a family has an impact that affects the soul and condition of the child. Children who experience obstacles in their fulfillment related to love and having parents must face the fact that their parents have divorced. As a result, children get a lousy picture of family life.

Divorce, which means separation between mother, father, and children, whatever the cause, can have a bad impact on children. Because a family is no longer intact, and generally what happens is a mother with children on the one hand and a father living alone. As a result, the child loses one of their identification figures (Rahwanto, 2010, p. 37). Exactly what happened to Ben. Since the separation of his parents, Ben has not established good communication with his mother or especially his father. Since then, he has lost a father figure who teaches him men's work. Parental separation and the lack of a father's role in a child's life can be as fatal as Ben's. It has an impact on the identity crisis shown by Ben, namely irritable and self-hurting.







knew how angry and irritable Ben was. So, the more often she asks something, Ben will be angry and uncomfortable.

The second is Ben's relationship with his three younger siblings, which we can see from the quotation "Ben hated Michelle. Ben had tolerated me, has dismissed Debby, but he'd hated Michelle actively" (Flynn, 2009, p. 287). It can be seen that their relationship is awful. Ben tolerated Libby. According to their mother, Libby was the only brother Ben conquered Ben's toughness because Libby likes to praise Ben's work or never does things that make Ben angry as other family members do. Debby and Ben's relationship was not very detailed; it was only known in the quotation above that Ben has dismissed Debby. Debby was not very active in the story.

However, there is one of Ben's older siblings, Michelle, whom Ben hated so much. Ben hated Michelle because of her nosy nature. She often went into Ben's room and kept finding items, which Ben said a privacy violation. One day Michelle found a letter from Diondra to Ben about how Diondra wanted frequent sex, teenage letters. Knowing about that, Michelle made Ben feel uncomfortable. Diondra also hates Michelle about it. She was afraid that Michelle would divulge about sexual things and her pregnancy to relatives who knew her. However, Ben tried to cover up Diondra's fears by saying that Michelle did not bring up that letter anymore.

Instead, Michelle really liked to mess with Ben, "That was a lie. Just yesterday, Michelle caught his eye, shook her hips, and said in a teasy voice, 'Hey





first is by the devil worship alley, where he meets Trey and Diondra. The second is the special relationship between Ben and Diondra.

It is evident that Ben's new group or friends significantly affect Ben's changes in attitude and appearance, because as previously explained, Ben got bullying by demon worship gangs. After all, members of the gang are, on average, around 20 years old, while Ben himself is a child who still 15 years old. Therefore, he dyed his hair black to look older, but it still did not work.

Then Ben's special relationship with Diondra also immensely influenced Ben's self-change, especially at home, where his mother was very aware of the changes. Since the arrival of Diondra in Ben's life, Ben was increasingly free to leave the house because he felt that he has a place to run away from his problems and anger. Ben spent more of his time with Diondra and Trey in Diondra's apartment. These are some of the factors that trigger Ben Day's identity crisis.

At this point, the researcher only emphasizes more clearly that beginning a new relationship is one of the causes of Ben's identity crisis. The researcher has explained how Ben's relationship with friends or new gang he knows recently through Trey, also detailed relationship about Ben with Diondra at the points of the previous discussion.







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