

## Main character's inner conflict in Brian Khrisna's *Kudasai*: freudian psychoanalysis

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### Abstract

This article aims to portray the inner conflict that Chaka, the main character in Brian Khrisna *Kudasai*, experienced. Chaka's decision to leave his girlfriend and marry another woman caused him a strong regret leading to inner conflict when he meets the long-lost lover. The unexpected meeting put Chaka into a dilemma of choosing the past or maintaining the present. This study employs a psychological approach with Freudian psychoanalysis as the theoretical basis. With the descriptive qualitative method, the analysis maps the cause, the conflict point, and the effect on Chaka's life. Chaka underwent an inner conflict due to his decision to leave Anet, his girlfriend, to marry Twindy. The conflict reaches its point when Chaka faces two choices: being with the dying Anet or the pregnant Twindy. Chaka's failure to resolve his inner conflict causes him deep depression ending with his death.

### Keywords:

*inner conflict; dilemma; traumatic experience; Kudasai, psychoanalysis*

### Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan memotret konflik batin yang dialami Chaka, protagonis dalam *Kudasai* karya Brian Khrisna. Keputusan Chaka untuk meninggalkan pacarnya dan menikah dengan wanita lain membuatnya sangat menyesal yang berujung pada konflik batin saat bertemu dengan kekasih yang telah lama hilang. Pertemuan tak terduga itu membuat Chaka dilema memilih masa lalu atau mempertahankan masa kini. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikoanalisis Freud sebagai landasan teorinya. Dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif, analisis memetakan penyebab, titik konflik, dan pengaruhnya terhadap kehidupan Chaka. Chaka mengalami konflik batin akibat keputusannya meninggalkan Anet, pacarnya, untuk menikah dengan Twindy. Konflik mencapai titik ketika Chaka menghadapi dua pilihan: bersama Anet yang sekarat atau Twindy yang hamil. Kegagalan Chaka untuk menyelesaikan konflik batinnya menyebabkan depresi berat yang berakhir dengan kematiannya.

### Kata kunci:

*konflik batin; dilema; pengalaman traumatis; Kudasai, psikoanalisis*

## Introduction

*Kudasai* is Brian Khrisna's second novel after *This is Why I Need You*. Both books were published in 2019, with the former in January and the latter in December. *Kudasai* was firstly posted on the writing platform *Wattpad* before it was published by Media Kita. The novel centers its story on Chaka, who was trapped in an unhappy marriage with Windy, an architect with an alpha-female personality (Vania, 2020). After two years, Chaka accidentally met Anet, the one he left to marry his wife. Anet's presence brought back all regrets and guilts, putting Chaka in a dilemma between returning to Anet or surviving the marriage.

Any previous discussions about Brian Khrisna's works only centered on *This is Why I Need You* (Dwiyana, 2021; Wardani, 2021). Dwiyana (2021) examined the main character's psychological condition, while Wardani (2021) investigated the violence and discrimination toward the female character of the novel. This recent study, thus, offers another perspective in reading Khrisna's other work, that is, the inner conflict in Khrisna's *Kudasai*.

Concerning the issue of inner conflict, many researchers have discussed such an issue. Within the year 2022, for example, the researchers found at least 28 studies that focused on the main character's inner conflict in various Indonesian fiction. Many of them employed Freud's psychoanalysis (Maemunah & Apriyanti, 2022; Putri & Ridwan, 2022; Sinatrya & Gharizah, 2022; Tarigan et al., 2022; Tarsinih & Vidiandini, 2022) though one used Adler's individuality psychology (Razzaq et al., 2022). Furthermore, many of those studies did not focus solely on the inner conflict, like Sidiqin et al. (2022), Sinatrya & Gharizah (2022), and Tarsinih & Vidiandini (2022), who related the issue to the literature and language teaching in high schools. Herawati et al. (2022) related the inner conflict with religious values, while Tarsinih & Vidiandini (2022)

discussed the inner conflict of many characters along with other intrinsic elements.

Considering those previous discussions, the researchers argue that all of them only describe or classify the inner conflict that the characters experienced. Yet, none of them addressed the very root of the inner conflict and how the character deals with it. Thus, the present study offers an overall analysis by providing the cause and effect of the main character's inner conflict.

Conflict is a disagreement between an individual with another for a particular purpose. Wellek and Warren (1949, p. 225) called the conflict "dramatic" and referred to a fight between two balanced forces and implies both action and counter-reaction (Harjani et al., 2018). In the context of literature, conflict is an important element in developing a plot in a work of fiction. A good plot in a literary work must at least have a series of conflicts that are no less good and interesting (Nurgiyantoro, 2015; Nurhidayati, 2017).

Conflict arises because there are emotions in every human being. When these emotions react to the social environment, it creates inner conflict (Juidah et al., 2021). Inner conflict can be very influential on the behavior of a human being (Wahyuni, 2017). Starting from this inner conflict then, a new personality emerges. In addition, inner conflict presented in a literary work can then affect the substance of the work (Ristiana & Adeani, 2017).

Every human being is dominated by the unconscious mind (Darma, 2004). In the discipline of psychology, traumatic experiences in the past are able to form new personality symptoms in the future. The discipline that raises that argument is known as psychoanalysis, pioneered by Sigmund Freud (Urmeneta, 2008). The unconscious mind greatly influences the pattern of human personality. The image that is commonly used is of an iceberg in the ocean. The small and visible tip of the iceberg on

the surface of the sea is described as the conscious mind, while the large and invisible body of the iceberg is described as the unconscious mind.

Freud divided the structure of the human personality into three parts, namely (1) the id, (2) the ego, and (3) the superego (Abraham, 2017; Milner, 1992). The id can be understood as a natural human impulse that gives rise to its desires without limitations. While the superego is an encouragement to the norms or laws of society with various limitations and considerations, the ego is a balance between personality structures that intersect. According to Freud, these three parts are owned by every human (Diana, 2016; Sari et al., 2018).

Various things such as desire, obsession, revenge, and conflict are strong drives for the id. Inner conflict is the fruit of the unconscious mind that is dominantly owned by humans, especially regarding traumatic events in the past. Starting from this inner conflict, someone may have a new personality. The new personality, which tends to be different from the old, is an absolute product of the unconscious mind of past tragedies. According to the psychoanalytic perspective, a person's future character is determined by events in his past. This perspective, thus, serves as the theoretical basis for analyzing the main character's inner conflict in Khrisna's *Kudasai*.

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory to help read the inner conflict of the main character in the novel. The qualitative descriptive method is an analysis that produces data in the form of words or pictures as a description that is not limited to data but includes analysis and interpretation (Aminuddin, 1990). The relationship between literature and psychology through the lenses of psychoanalysis appears in the behavior, obsessions, desires, dilemmas, and conflicts experienced by characters in literary works, in this

case, Chaka in Brian Khrisna's *Kudasai*.

## Result and Discussion

Chaka is the main male character in Brian Khrisna's *Kudasai*. He was twenty-nine years old and had been married for two years to Twindy, a successful architect. Chaka was a good cook and managed a café, which Twindy's father owned.

Chaka's marriage life was far from a harmonious one. One of the reasons might be because they married out of love, "[k]ami sudah dua tahun lebih menikah, tapi alasan kami menikah tidak sesederhana karena cinta. Bukan. Bahkan kami tidak pernah saling kenal sebelumnya" (we've been married for more than two years, but the reason we did it was not as simple as we've been in love. No. We haven't even known each other before) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 20). Both Chaka and Twindy even had to leave the ones they loved. Chaka sacrificed his relationship with Anet, his girlfriend, and Twindy had to break up with Aldi, her boyfriend (p. 50).

However, the unwanted married that Chaka and Twindy had to live on, gradually became bearable. Both started to feel for each other, "[s]etahun lebih aku hidup sama kamu, hingga akhirnya rasa itu perlahan tumbuh. Rasa yang awalnya gak suka, lama kelamaan hilang dan berganti jadi suka. ... aku yang sekarang, Chaka yang sekarang, adalah Chaka yang sayang sama kamu" (more than a year since I've been living with you that the feeling started to grow. I might not like you before, yet, the feeling gradually changed. ... the me right now, the Chaka right now, is the one who loves you) (Khrisna, 2020, pp. 51–52).

Unfortunately, the relationship that started getting better wavered when Chaka accidentally met Anet at his café.

*Bel di pintu berbunyi, menandakan ada orang yang datang. Gue yang saat itu lagi cuci piring, langsung menoleh untuk menyapa. Tapi, kata-kata sapaan yang biasanya selalu meluncur dengan mulus, kali ini*

*tersangkut di tenggorokan. Kata-kata itu berubah menjadi debaran yang jauh lebih besar ketimbang yang pernah gue alami bertahun-tahun ke belakang.*

*"Gue cari-cari muterin kota selama dua tahun, ternyata kamu ada di sini Chak," ujar cewek itu sambil berdiri di depan meja barista.*

*"Anet?" gue mendekat perlahan. "Kamu beneran Anet, kan?"*

*"Yaaah.... masa kamu lupa sama mantanmu sendiri, Chak?" sindirnya.*

(the doorbell chimed, indicating the coming of a customer. I turned to the doorway in the middle of my dish-washing to greet whoever it was. Yet, my words suddenly seemed to be stuck in my throat. Those unsaid words became heart-pounding greater than what I'd felt years aback.

"I've been searching the whole city looking for you, never thought that you'd be here, Chak," said a girl standing before the barista's table.

"Anet?" I slowly move closer. "You're really Anet, aren't you?"

"Well... you definitely forgot your ex, Chak?" she answered, making fun of my question.) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 27).

The unexpected meeting forced Chaka to tell Twindy about Anet. Chaka had to tell his wife, or Twindy would be misunderstood and put their marriage back on thin ice.

Unfortunately, Chaka could not do the same to Anet. He kept Anet from the truth that he has married to Twindy for two years. Even when he met Anet the next few days, Chaka could not deny when Anet introduced him to her colleagues as her boyfriend.

*"Siapanya Anet, nih, akrab banget? Tanya salah seorang teman Anet yang bentukannya tidak kalah seksi sama panci presto.*

*"Pacar gue, Din," jawab Anet cepat hingga membuat gue langsung menatap ke arahnya dengan pandangan kaget.*

*Mati, deh, gue!*

("Who is he, looking so close to you?" Asked one of Anet's friends, whose look was no sexier than a pressure cooker.

"My boyfriend, Din," Anet replied quickly, making me look at her shockingly.

I. Am. Dead!) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 70).

Chaka's reluctance to tell Anet the truth in their early meetings has become such a boomerang in his marriage life. Supposed he directly told Anet about Twindy right when they met at the café, all the inner conflict and tragedy might not happen. Chaka might still feel guilty towards Anet for leaving her, yet, Anet would stop waiting for him if she knew that Chaka had already married Twindy. The following discussion elaborates the cause of Chaka's guilty feeling towards Anet that leads to his inner conflict.

### The Cause of Chaka's Inner Conflict

Chaka's inner conflict started when he accidentally met his ex-girlfriend. The unresolved matter in the past made Chaka overwhelmed by guilt. At the same time, his marriage life started getting better when Twindy began to warm up to Chaka's presence. However, his guilt for leaving Anet puts him in two different choices.

The overwhelming guilt that Chaka felt for Anet was due to the nature of his leaving. He left Anet when she was lying down in a hospital room, fighting the sickness that was getting worse. Chaka decided to marry Twindy even though he knew that Anet was dying. However, Chaka never told anyone why he did what he did until he met Anet after two years.

The reason Chaka left Anet and married Twindy was because of a contract. The contract said he would be given a café with full authority to manage if he agreed to the only condition, leaving Anet and

marrying Twindy.

*"Dia bilang dia mau ajak aku kerjasama untuk mengurus salah satu kafanya, gajinya besar, dan aku bisa jadi kepala koki di kafe itu.*

...

*Bahkan dia bilang kalau aku bisa jadi pemilik kafe dan bisa mengurus semua hal yang ada di kafe itu sebebaskan yang aku mau.*

...

*Setelah aku tanda tangan, si bapak menjelaskan siapa dirinya dan persyaratan apa saja yang harus aku lakukan agar perjanjian itu rampung, salah satunya ... memutuskan hubungan dengan pacar, ..."*

(He said he wanted me to work with him managing his new café, with a big payment and a position as the main cook.

...

He even said I could be the owner of the café and manage it as much as I like.

...

After I signed the contract, the man explained who he was and the condition I had to meet, one of which ...was to break up with my girlfriend, ...) (Khrisna, 2020, pp. 246–247).

It was not until later that Chaka revealed the reason behind his decision. He signed the contract and married Twindy because Chaka needed the money to help with Anet's medical treatment (Khrisna, 2020, p. 349). Chaka thought that after some time, he could file for divorce and return to Anet (p. 254). Yet, without realizing it, Chaka started falling for Twindy and wanted to fix their marriage.

*"Aku janji, kita akan memperbaiki semuanya pelan-pelan. Dalam sebuah hubungan, memang ada kalanya kita dipaksa pergi dulu agar mengetahui bahwa gak ada tempat ternyaman selain kembali pulang kepada dia yang sempat kita tinggalkan. Aku juga gak mau, Twin, menjalani hari-hari yang gak ada kamu di*

*dalamnya."*

*"Aku juga."*

*"Kita perbaiki semua, ya?"*

*Twindy mengangguk di dalam pelukan gue.*

(I promised we would slowly fix all. In a relationship, sometimes we needed to leave to know that there would not be the most comfortable place to call home except to those we left. I did not want it, Twin, to live my day without you in it."

*"Neither do I."*

*"Let's fix all, shall we?"*

Twindy nodded in my embrace. (Khrisna, 2020, p. 288)

The marriage that was initially unharmonious slowly improved. Yet, unfortunately, it became the second cause of Chaka's inner conflict. Chaka also did not want to see his struggle for his marriage go in vain. On the one hand, the guilt from the past constantly hovered over his present life. Basically, inner conflict arises from causes that are embedded in human beings. The repressed feelings came to the surface and gave birth to a great feud in the human mind. The climax could come unexpectedly, as Chaka decided to end his life.

### **The Point of Chaka's Inner Conflict**

Inner conflict is a psychological tragedy that at least occurs when two contradictory structures in the human personality collide, in this case, the desire (id) and the moral restraint or better known as the superego (Abraham, 2017). In other words, inner conflict is a struggle between the two emotional structures of the human personality that do not reach a meeting point. This statement is affirmed by (Irwanto, 1997), who has the same definition of inner conflict. This collision also at least creates a new personality pattern for future activities.

In this case, the inner conflict appears based on



several causes and factors. It has been previously stated that, in *Kudasai*, there are at least two strong reasons that underlie Chaka's inner conflict. Chaka's insistence on resolving the affairs in the past is considered a strong desire (id) which, in the end, burdens him. Meanwhile, Chaka's marriage serves as the limiting norm (superego). On these two strong grounds, Chaka often experiences difficult situations, which are then referred to as inner conflicts.

Chaka felt confused about choosing a dark past full of unfinished responsibilities or a slowly promising future. Chaka was like standing in an intersection with Anet and Twindy needing his presence.

*"Chak.... a-aku, aku kolaps, Chak...."*

*Cukup dengan satu kalimat itu dan kesadaran gue langsung terlempar jauh, dari jiwa, dari badan gue. Gue tidak lagi mendengar kata-kata Anet yang selanjutnya, atau lebih tepatnya, tidak ada suara yang bisa gue denger lagi meski sekitar gue sedang ramai dengan berbagai kegiatan. Seolah-oleh, dunia seketika itu juga menjadi senyap tak bernyawa.*

*("Chak.... I-I, I collapsed, Chak....")*

That one sentence was enough to make my consciousness instantly thrown away, from my soul, from my body. I no longer heard Anet's next words, or rather, I couldn't hear any more sounds even though my surroundings were busy with various activities. It was as if the world had instantly become lifeless) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 336).

Anet called Chaka to tell him that she was hospitalized right after he heard the news that Twindy was pregnant. The happiness Chaka previously felt when the doctor confirmed Twindy's pregnancy disappeared after Anet's call. Chaka wanted to accompany his ex-girlfriend, but he could not leave his pregnant wife.

*Sesekali gue diam-diam melihat ke arah Twindy.*

*Menyaksikan betapa bahagianya dia sekarang. Gue pun ikut bahagia, tapi entah kenapa kebahagiaan itu seketika menguap dengan kabar Anet terkapar di rumah sakit. Sepanjang perjalanan pulang, gue lebih banyak diam, memikirkan apa yang harus gue lakukan. Apa gue harus pergi dan menemani Anet? Tapi, Twindy pasti tidak akan mengizinkan. Kalau gue tetap memaksa, hubungan yang baru saja kembali membaik ini entah akan menjadi seburuk apa lagi. Namun, kalau terjadi sesuatu yang buruk ke Anet, gue juga tidak akan pernah bisa memaafkan diri gue sendiri.*

(I secretly looked at Twindy every now and then. Watching how happy she was now. I was happy too, but for some reason the happiness evaporated with the news that Anet was lying in the hospital. The whole way home, I was mostly silent, thinking about what to do. Should I go and accompany Anet? But, Twindy definitely won't allow it. If I kept insisting, this relationship that had just got better would somehow get worse. However, if something bad happened to Anet, I would never be able to forgive myself either) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 339).

In Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, a person has conscious and unconscious minds. The conscious mind is often referred to as the ego, i.e., the realization of the results of the unconscious mind. In contrast, the unconscious mind is divided into the id and superego. The id is the desire, while the superego is the limiting norm. In the quote above, Chaka desires to meet Anet, who is lying in the hospital. Meanwhile, the superego in him is also limited by the statement that such an act is not right because, at that time, Chaka has committed to marriage with Twindy.

Yet, Chaka finally decided to succumb to his id. The guilt he felt for leaving Anet two years before overpowered his responsibility towards Twindy. He

left to see Anet at the hospital even though Twindy had begged him not to.

*Gue tidak mengerti apa yang sedang terjadi di kepala gue. Namum, gue sama sekali tidak bisa menahan diri lagi. Entah apa yang merasuki gue, tapi akhirnya gue harus memilih.*

*Sore harinya, ketika Twindy masih tertidur, gue meninggalkan surat kecil di sebelah tempat tidurnya.*

(I did not understand what was going on in my head. However, I couldn't hold myself anymore. I did not know what got into me, but in the end, I had to choose.

In the afternoon, when Twindy was still asleep, I left a small letter beside her bed) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 354).

Unfortunately, Chaka's decision did not lead to a better situation. Chaka thought that even if he had hurt Twindy, he still could make Anet happy by being by her side. Yet, Anet's condition did not get better. After a few days, Anet died in the hospital bed.

*Pukul 02:35 pagi, Anet berpulang ke rumah Tuhan. Gue langsung roboh. Air mata gue berlinang tanpa terbendung. Gue meraung-raung di sebelah kasur tempat Anet memeluk gue sehari sebelumnya. Anet dinyatakan gagal jantung akibat akibat pengaruh bakteri TB-nya.*

(At 02:35 am, Anet left for good. I immediately collapsed. My tears flowed uncontrollably. I wailed next to the bed where Anet had hugged me the day before. Her TB bacteria has caused her heart failure, and Anet could no longer fight it) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 376).

Chaka's inner conflict did not resolve even after Anet's death. Chaka kept overwhelmed by grief for Anet's death and guilt for leaving Twindy. Even when Twindy forgave him, he could not live like before.

*Namun, setelah Anet pergi, gue benar-benar merasa*

*tidak punya siapa-siapa lagi di dunia ini. Gue juga tidak ingin membawa Twindy masuk lebih dalam dan mengacaukan hidupnya yang sudah sempurna itu.*

(However, after Anet left, I really felt like I had no one else in this world. I also did not want to take Twindy deeper and mess up her already perfect life) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 385).

Chaka's reluctance to let go of his grief for Anet puts his marriage at hazard. Twindy, who at first was willing to understand his grieving condition, started questioning his commitment to her and their baby. The climax was when Twindy collapsed and experienced bleeding. The fear of losing the baby made her blame Chaka and ask him to leave. This situation multiplied Chaka's feelings of grief and guilt which later led him to a deeper depression, resulting in his committing suicide.

### The Effect of Chaka's Inner Conflict

Generally, inner conflict can have an impact on someone who is experiencing it. Most people who have inner conflict might experience stress, hallucination, and, at worst, insanity. In the case of this study, inner conflict arises as a response to two different causes, namely past trauma that arises and responsibility for his role as a married man. Unfortunately, inner conflict can affect a person's personality in the future.

In *Kudasai*, Chaka was characterized as someone who tends to put himself in danger when he has a lot of conflicting things in mind (Khrisna, 2020, p. 264). This personality was intensified when Chaka underwent inner conflict.

*Twindy tiba-tiba berteriak, membuat gue yang sedang melamun langsung menginjak pedal rem. Mobil mendadak berhenti, jantung gue berdetak kencang hingga sampai berdenging ke telinga. Samar-samar gue mendengar Twindy memanggil gue berkali-kali,*

*hingga lama kelamaan suaranya menjadi semakin jelas.*

...

*Seketika itu juga gue langsung sadar kalau posisi mobil hampir berada di tengah perempatan yang lampu merahnya sedang menyala. Lagi-lagi kebiasaan buruk gue keluar ketika sedang banyak pikiran. Gue hampir menerobos lampu merah dan hampir menabrak lalu-lalang mobil yang datang dari arah berlawanan. Napas gue tersengal. Jantung gue masih berdetak kencang.*

(Twindy screamed, making me, who was daydreaming, immediately step on the brake. The car suddenly stopped. My heart was beating so fast it was ringing in my ears. I faintly heard Twindy calling me repeatedly until her voice became clearer after some time.

...

I immediately realized that the car was almost in the middle of an intersection where the red light was on. Again, my bad habit comes out when I have a lot of thoughts. I almost ran a red light and hit a passing car from the opposite direction. My breath hitched. My heart is still beating fast) (Khrisna, 2020, p. 339).

The situation in the quote was after Chaka got a phone call from Anet, telling him that she had collapsed. Chaka, who drove Twindy home from the gynecologist, could not focus on his driving until he almost got into an accident. The good news about Twindy's pregnancy could not stop him from worrying about Anet's condition.

Chaka was desperate when Anet died. Yet, the situation seemed to get better when Twindy forgave him after he left to accompany Anet. However, when Twindy almost miscarriages and asked him to sign the divorce paper, Chaka felt as if he had reached the very bottom of devastation. At this point, his superego could no longer make him see the logic.

Chaka had felt empty inside that he just wanted everything to be over, including his life.

*Pedal gas sudah menyentuh batas maksimal. Mesin mobil sudah berdecit tidak karuan.*

...

*Bau cairan bensin terasa begitu nmenyengat di hidung. ... seluruh badan gue rasanya hancur lebur.*

...

*Orang-orang di sekitar mulai terdengar menjerit histeris. Namun, Chaka hanya diam, tidak bersuara, tidak juga ikut larut dalam keriuhan. ... Chaka terkulai.*

...

*Chaka benar-benar pulang sekarang.*

(The car had reached its maximum limit. The engine squeaked erratically.

...

The smell of gasoline stung my nose. ... my whole body felt like it was falling apart.

...

The people around began to scream hysterically. However, Chaka was silent, did not make a sound, or participate in the chaos. ... Chaka had succumbed to death.

...

Chaka was really home now) (Khrisna, 2020, pp. 428-430).

The fatal consequences of burdensome inner conflicts often occur in several cases. Someone who is not strong in dealing with psychological dilemmas might look for an outlet. Based on the quote above, it is clear that Chaka has lost his mind. He considered the ways he did were the only way. He finally wanted silence in his messed-up life, namely death.

## Conclusion

Inner conflict is a struggle between desires and limiting norms in the human mind. The point of



conflict is based on desires and norms competing for a relatively long time. The climax point for inner conflict is fatalities such as prolonged stress, severe depression, and even suicide. The inner conflict is generally based on a series of unresolved problems over a relatively long period.

Relating to this study, the inner conflict felt by the main character is based on at least two reasons. The first is the emergence of guilt and unresolved responsibilities in the past brought by the main

character's ex-girlfriend. The second is the main character's position as a man who already has a wife. These two reasons ultimately lead to inner conflict. The main character, overwhelmed with guilt and regret, was carried away by prolonged grief, triggering friction in his marriage. With the death of the former lover and the divorce, the main character ends up experiencing a complex stage of inner conflict. As a result, the main character seeks peace in life by committing suicide.

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