



**ANI'S ADVERSITIES AND RESILIENCE DEPICTED IN
*LUCKIEST GIRL ALIVE***

THESIS

*Submitted to fulfill a Partial Requirements for S1 Degree in
English Department Faculty of Humanities Universitas Bung Hatta*

**BY:
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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify the originality of this thesis which I now submit to fulfill a requirement for an S1 in the English Department Faculty of Humanities Universitas Bung Hatta. The content of this thesis is entirely my work. All assistance received in writing this thesis and the sources cited have been acknowledged within the text of my work.



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ANI'S ADVERSITIES AND RESILIENCE DEPICTED IN

LUCKIEST GIRL ALIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how resilience is portrayed through the character Ani in *Luckiest Girl Alive*. The analysis applies Grotberg's theory of resilience. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data gathered through non-participatory observation. The study identifies a total of 30 data, categorized under Grotberg's adversities outside the family: sexual assaults, school shootings, and social rejection. Adversities within the family: emotional neglect from the mother, and a lack of feeling safe at home. In coping with her adversities, Ani promotes resilience through three factors: I Have, I Am, and I Can. The findings show that the film consistently represents resilience across these three categories, demonstrating Ani's reliance on external support, her development of inner strength, and her capacity to act and problem-solve in the face of adversity. Overall, the study highlights how Ani's behavior and responses reflect resilience as both a coping mechanism and a pathway toward empowerment.

Keywords: *Luckiest Girl Alive, Adversities, Resilience*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the era of advanced technology and global development, resilience has become an important psychological concept that needs attention, especially in today's fast-changing world. Researchers note that resilience is essential for dealing with the increasing number of crises and prolonged difficulties in modern life (Chen 2). In line with this, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that 11% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed anxiety, and 4% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed depression based on US data from 2022–2023 (CDC 25). Additionally, the leading mental health challenge experienced by most youth respondents was anxiety, with 58 percent according to 2023 statistics (“Main Mental Health Challenges Faced by Youth U.S. 2023”). The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that 1 in 6 U.S. adolescents aged 12-17 experienced a major depressive episode (“Mental Health By the Numbers”). According to Azam et al. Studies also show that building resilience helps people cope better with stress and challenges, which can lower the risk of anxiety and depression. The importance of resilience goes beyond individual well-being to also support social sustainability. Resilience, understood as the capacity to adapt and thrive during adversity, is seen as necessary for maintaining both personal and social stability (240).

The connection between psychology and literature provides a strong foundation for understanding human behavior and psychological processes through narrative analysis. This approach, according to Kerry William and Joseph Kolupke,

studies literature from a psychological perspective by examining characters' motivations and the influence of their past experiences (59). It is based on the idea by Michael Murray that people make sense of their lives through storytelling, and these stories become the focus of analysis (29). Literature functions as a mirror of psychological experiences, offering insights into resilience, trauma, and coping strategies that may not be easily observed in clinical settings. The application of psychological theories to the study of literary works shows how literature can be used as a tool for deeper theoretical analysis of human behavior (Williams and Kolupke 60). This framework makes it possible to explore complex concepts such as resilience through the detailed and layered portrayals of characters in both literature and film.

Resilience, as a psychological concept, has developed over time into a broad framework for understanding how people adapt under stress. Fleming and Ledogar state that researchers have shown that resilience differs across risk situations, which supports the idea that it is a process rather than a fixed trait (7). It involves both personal and environmental factors that help individuals recover from adversity, trauma, or major life challenges. Moore's current studies explain that resilience not only allows people to overcome hardship but also enables them to grow and adapt through the experience. This view has shifted the understanding of resilience from being an inborn trait to being a dynamic process that can be learned and strengthened through different experiences. Because resilience is complex and multifaceted, it is well-suited to be studied through narrative forms, which can capture the depth of human experience (1).

Edith H. Grotberg's resilience theory offers a clear framework that groups resilience factors into three connected domains: I Have (external support systems), I Am (inner strength and personal qualities), and I Can (social and interpersonal skills). Grotberg explains that resilience is not only an individual trait but also the result of interaction between personal, social, and environmental factors. This framework is useful for analyzing characters in literature and film because it provides a structured way to see how different sources of resilience appear and interact within a narrative. The strength of the theory is its focus on protective factors that can be identified, measured, and strengthened. Grotberg also recognizes that people may rely on different combinations of resilience factors depending on their background, situation, and type of adversity. This flexibility makes the theory especially effective for character analysis, since each character may show resilience in unique ways shaped by their own experiences and resources (12).

Cinema, as an extension of literary psychology, provides unique opportunities to explore psychological phenomena through visual narrative. Film combines the depth of literary storytelling with the emotional impact of visual images, making it a powerful medium for examining complex processes such as resilience. A qualitative method for studying how people shape stories from their experiences can also be applied to cinema. Movies offer rich and layered portrayals of character development, trauma, and recovery that can be examined through psychological frameworks. The visual elements of film allow viewers to observe non-verbal cues, settings, and relationships that contribute to the growth of resilience. In addition, the structure of film enables researchers to trace resilience

over time, showing how characters use different coping strategies in response to challenges. This makes cinema an effective medium for studying resilience as a dynamic process rather than a fixed trait (Ingram 15).

Luckiest Girl Alive, directed by Mike Barker and adapted from Jessica Knoll's novel, presents a powerful exploration of resilience through the character of Ani FaNelli, a successful magazine writer whose carefully built life is shaken when she must confront traumatic events from her high school years. The film shows how Ani has shaped her adult identity around surviving sexual assault and school violence, and it reveals the resilience strategies she develops over time. By shifting between past and present, the narrative allows viewers to see both the immediate effects of trauma and Ani's long-term process of recovery and adaptation. Through Ani's journey, the film demonstrates how resilience is shaped by personal strength, social expectations, and the struggle to reclaim one's voice after adversity. This makes Ani's character an effective case study for examining how resilience can emerge and evolve in response to trauma.

The selection of *Luckiest Girl Alive* as the object of study contributes meaningfully to resilience research for several reasons. First, the film addresses contemporary issues of sexual assault, school violence, and trauma recovery, all of which are central to current social discussions and psychological research. Second, Ani's character provides a strong example of how resilience can be shaped by personal history, social pressures, and limited support systems. Third, the film's narrative structure, which shifts between past and present, illustrates resilience as an ongoing process rather than a completed achievement, reflecting the

contemporary view of resilience as dynamic and developmental. In addition, the film's recent release (2022) ensures its relevance for modern audiences and aligns with current psychological research trends. By analyzing Ani's adversities and resiliences through Grotberg's framework, this study contributes to the growing literature on resilience and offers insight into how one individual navigates trauma and recovery. Therefore, the writer decides to use "Ani's Adversities and Resilience Depicted in *Luckiest Girl Alive*" as the title of this study.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background stated above, the research questions are:

1. How are Ani's adversities portrayed in *Luckiest Girl Alive*?
2. How is Ani's resilience portrayed in *Luckiest Girl Alive*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the research questions stated above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To describe Ani's adversities portrayed in *Luckiest Girl Alive*.
2. To describe Ani's resilience portrayed in *Luckiest Girl Alive*.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study is limited in several important aspects that define its scope and applicability. First, the analysis is restricted to the 2022 Netflix film *Luckiest Girl Alive* and its transcription. The study does not include a comparative discussion of Jessica Knoll's 2015 novel, even though the film is adapted from it. By excluding the novel, the focus of interpretation remains firmly on the film's visual, narrative, and cinematic elements, such as characterization, dialogue, flashbacks, and

cinematic techniques. This decision ensures that the analysis is grounded in the medium of film, where resilience is portrayed not only through words but also through performance, images, and sound. Second, the study focuses exclusively on Ani FaNelli as the central character. Ani's adversities and resiliences are the core subject of analysis, while other characters, although significant to the storyline, are not examined in detail. This limitation allows the study to maintain depth of analysis rather than breadth. Concentrating on Ani enables a more detailed understanding of how resilience is constructed, challenged, and displayed within her personal journey. Third, the scope of the study is limited to the application of Edith H. Grotberg's resilience theory. The analysis employs her three domains of resilience—I Have, I Am, and I Can—as the guiding framework for interpreting Ani's experiences. Other psychological theories of resilience are not applied, as the study aims to remain consistent and focused within one established theoretical framework..

1.5 Significance of the Study

Based on the background and limitations stated above, the writer outlines the significance of the study into two aspects: theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to be useful in understanding the psychology of literature, particularly in enriching knowledge of how resilience is portrayed through fictional characters in film. By applying Edith H. Grotberg's resilience theory to the analysis of *Luckiest Girl Alive*, the study demonstrates how visual storytelling communicates complex psychological experiences such as trauma, recovery, and personal strength.

It also contributes to the broader field of literary psychology by bridging psychological theory and narrative structure in contemporary media.

2. Practically, this study is expected to be useful in raising awareness about the importance of psychological resilience and how individuals cope with traumatic experiences. For educators and students, this study may serve as a reference in discussions on trauma narratives in literature and film. For mental health professionals, it can offer insights into how fictional representations of resilience reflect real-world psychological processes. Additionally, this study is hopefully useful for further research on resilience, trauma, and character analysis in both literary and cinematic contexts.