Exploring Persephone Fraser's Trauma in Carley Fortune's *Every Summer After*

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Abstract. This study focuses on the causes, effects, and healing process of the psychological trauma that Persephone "Percy" Fraser in Carley Fortune's *Every Summer After* endured. This study employs qualitative text analysis to investigate Percy's emotional journey through a psychological approach grounded in Bessel van der Kolk's and Shira Assu's theory. According to this study, Percy's betrayal of Sam Florek is the root cause of her trauma, which results in feelings of guilt, anxiety, emotional detachment, panic attacks, and compulsive repetition. Returning to Barry's Bay marks the beginning of her healing, as self-forgiveness, emotional confrontation, and reconnection aid in her recovery, identity restoration, and trust building. The study finds that trauma not only causes emotional pain and behavioral changes but also physical symptoms.
Keywords: Trauma, Cause, Effect, Emotional Healing

INTRODUCTION

Life is a challenge. Small ones, such as daily stress, and big ones, like losing loved ones, financial problems, or illness. Some challenges come from personal experiences, while others come from society, including poverty, discrimination, and others. In difficult cases, these challenges lead to mental health conditions, like depression or trauma. The problem is defined by a relation between the subject and objective situation in the environment (Dostál, 2015). In other words, a situation becomes a problem not just due to its inherent difficulty, but also because of how an individual perceives and engages with it. The situation may be challenging for one person but not for another, depending on their knowledge, experiences, cognitive abilities, and emotional state.

Trauma is a major problem that affects people deeply. It changes how they think, feel, and relate to others. According to Keesler et.al (2024), trauma may occur because of a harmful incident or series of events that are emotionally disturbing or life-threatening. Zoromba et.al (2024) also state that trauma is a term commonly used in the field of psychology to describe the psychological and emotional response to a distressing or disturbing event. This variance frequently relies on elements including individual coping mechanisms, the presence of a support system, and personal experiences. Furthermore, trauma can be influenced by a person's traits, peer relationships, community influences,

and larger sociopolitical circumstances in addition to being the consequence of chance events.

The issue of trauma can be found in the novel *Every Summer After* by Carley Fortune. Carley Fortune's *Every Summer After* is a novel that explores love, nostalgia, and second chances, but beneath its romantic surface lies a deeper theme: the impact of trauma on personal growth and relationships. Trauma in the novel manifests in various ways, particularly through emotional wounds, regret, and the struggle to move forward after painful experiences. The story follows Persephone Fraser (Percy) and Sam Florek (Sam), whose past is shaped not only by love and heartbreak but also by the lingering effects of trauma that influence their actions and decisions.

One of the central forms of trauma in *Every Summer After* is emotional trauma caused by regret and lost love. Percy and Sam's relationship, once filled with innocence and deep affection, is shattered by a mistake that alters the course of their lives. Percy, in particular, carries the weight of this mistake for over a decade, unable to fully move on from the guilt and pain of losing Sam. The novel highlights how emotional trauma can trap individuals in the past, preventing them from embracing new opportunities for happiness. Trauma plays a significant role in shaping the characters and emotional depth of Every Summer After. Whether through heartbreak, regret, or betrayal, Percy and Sam experience deep emotional pain that affects their choices and relationships. The novel explores how trauma lingers, how people cope in different ways, and how healing is possible through acceptance and love. In doing so, Every Summer After offers a heartfelt exploration of how past wounds shape who we become, and how, with time and courage, we can find a way back to happiness.

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the following problems:

1. What are the causes of Percy's trauma in Carley Fortune's *Every Summer After*?
2. What are the effects of Percy's trauma in Carley Fortune's *Every Summer After*?
3. How does Percy heal her trauma in Carley Fortune's *Every Summer After*?

Referring to the statement of the problem above, this study aims to achieve several objectives. First, it seeks to describe the causes of Percy's traumatic experience in Carley Fortune's Every Summer After. Second, it aims to explore the effects of that trauma on Percy's emotional and psychological well-being. Finally, the study intends to explain how Percy copes with and manages her traumatic experience throughout the narrative.

This study focuses on analyzing Persephone "Percy" Fraser's trauma and her journey toward recovery in *Every Summer After* by Carley Fortune. The study explores the emotional and psychological effects of her past experiences, particularly about love, heartbreak, betrayal, and regret. It examines how these experiences shape her personality, relationships, and decision-making throughout the novel. However, this study has several limitations. First, it focuses solely on the main character, Persephone Fraser, without analyzing other characters who may also contribute to the development or resolution of trauma in the narrative. Second, the study is confined to textual analysis of the novel and does not incorporate clinical perspectives or a wide range of external psychological theories, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of trauma. Lastly, the study concentrates on personal and relational aspects of trauma, without addressing broader societal or cultural influences that may shape the character's experiences and responses.

Theoretically, this study is expected to be beneficial for other researchers who want to conduct the same study. Since the study is a literary study that uses a psychological approach, they can learn how to apply psychological theory in a literary study. Practically,

this study is also expected to help the reader of this thesis to be aware of the people living around. There might be people living around them who experience trauma because trauma can happen every day and to anyone. Traumatized people always see the world as full of dangers and terrifying places. Thus, they need support from other people. The support might help the traumatized people cure their trauma.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Study

The first study, a 2018 thesis from the University of 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, analyzes Megan's trauma in The Girl on the Train and how she copes with it. The second, a 2022 journal from the same university, examines the PTSD symptoms and triggers experienced by Billy Pilgrim in Slaughterhouse-Five. The third, a 2021 thesis from UIN Malang, examines Cadence's psychological trauma in We Were Liars, identifying causes like accidents, family conflict, and memory disruption. The fourth study, published in 2020, investigates personal and collective trauma in Hosseini's Sea Prayer through flashbacks and emotional responses. The fifth, a 2014 analysis, studies how main characters in Staub's Scared To Death recover from PTSD after terrifying events. Despite these insightful works, none focus on trauma within contemporary romance fiction or explore trauma caused by heartbreak, betrayal, and regret, gaps that this study on Every Summer After aims to fill.

Definition of Trauma

Trauma is described as a stressful event that presents tremendous challenges to coping and adapting (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005:196). After a stressful event, individuals usually experience confusion and feelings of helplessness (Saja & Marsih, 2023). In other words, the traumatic event significantly affects the person's life. When someone experiences a trauma, it could make likely to have mental health problems (Wahyono & Dewi, 2024). This is especially if it is not supported to manage the trauma, or if it happens continuously over a long period of time. It is impossible to avoid the types of mental issues. Additionally, trauma makes it harder for a person to perform everyday tasks. Trauma can also affect a person's ability to trust others and build healthy relationships (Bell et al., 2019). When someone experiences a traumatic event, they may develop a heightened sense of caution, making it difficult to feel safe around people, even those who mean no harm.

The Causes of Trauma

Trauma often arises from deeply emotional and memorable events, and even if someone may not be fully aware of it, its effects can be felt for a long time. Shira Assu (2023) explains that loss and regret, the loss of a person or an important opportunity, bring deep feelings of guilt and remorse, causing these emotions to linger in the subconscious mind and influence a person's behavior. Additionally, betrayal and broken relationships shatter a person's sense of safety and trust, often leading to fear of commitment and a tendency to repeat unhealthy relationship patterns as an unconscious attempt to heal wounds. Another factor is repressed memories, where the mind hides traumatic memories to protect itself, but these memories still influence emotions and trigger avoidance of trauma-related things, as well as repetition compulsion, where someone unconsciously repeats painful scenarios from the past, such as forming new toxic relationships.

The Effects of Trauma

In his book titled *The Body Keeps the Score (2014)*, Bessel van der Kolk explains how trauma affects both the mind and body (Kolk, 2014: 21). Trauma has far-reaching effects, physical, emotional, mental, and behavioral. Physically, it can manifest as chronic pain, headaches, or muscle tension even in safe situations. Emotionally, it often takes the form of anxiety, depression, shame, or numbness. Trauma also damages interpersonal relationships, as victims find it difficult to trust others, and behaviors such as social withdrawal, avoiding trauma triggers, substance abuse, or aggression may occur. All of this demonstrates that the effects of trauma permeate daily life and disrupt an individual's overall functioning.

How to Heal the Trauma

Bessel van der Kolk, in his 2014 book The Body Keeps the Score, emphasizes that treating the mind and body is necessary for trauma recovery. The healing process for trauma must involve both the body and the mind, as trauma is stored in both the body's memory and the brain. He emphasizes that trauma victims cannot fully recover until they are willing to reconnect with their bodies and emotions. Van der Kolk recommends mind–body connections, such as yoga, mindful movement, and deep breathing, to release physical tension and rebuild trust in physical sensations. Additionally, discussing trauma in a safe environment, such as therapy or with a trusted friend, helps victims rebuild trust and reduce emotional isolation. He also stresses the importance of nervous system regulation through meditation and breathing exercises to calm the body's stress response, thereby creating emotional balance and resilience.

METHOD

This study uses a psychological approach to explore the inner emotional world of Percy, the main character in Every Summer After, and understand how her past trauma influences her thoughts, feelings, and actions. Psychological analysis can be divided into the psychology author, the psychology of the character in the story, and the psychology of the reader (Wellek and Warren, 1949:95). In this study, the focus is specifically on the psychology of the character, as it aims to uncover Percy's emotional responses and coping mechanisms as she navigates the consequences of her past decisions. Moreover, this approach helps to examine how unresolved emotions, such as guilt, regret, and longing, affect her present relationships, particularly with Sam.

This study uses qualitative research. Qualitative research is an iterative process that achieves improved understanding within the scientific community by making new, significant distinctions as researchers move closer to the phenomenon being studied (Aspers and Corte, 2019:139). Qualitative research aims to investigate the significance, context, and complexity of a particular issue. It often involves gathering non-numerical data through techniques such as content analysis.

The data source of this study is the novel Every Summer After by Carley Fortune, which contains psychological elements. This novel was originally published by Berkley in 2022 and consists of 291 pages. The data in this study are quotations from the novel that support the topic being discussed. These quotations are carefully selected based on their relevance to the psychological aspects of the main character, especially those that reflect emotional tension, internal conflict, and mental processing. Moreover, the novel is rich in descriptive language and introspective narration, which provides valuable insight into the character's psychological depth. The use of expressive and reflective passages allows the writer to analyze thoughts, emotions, and behavior patterns in a meaningful way.

The data collection process begins with thoroughly reading the novel, then highlighting relevant passages about Percy's trauma. These excerpts are later selected and categorized based on their relevance to the research questions. Finally, the data analysis unfolds in four stages: first, identifying the traumatic events in Percy's life; second, analyzing how these events impact her emotional and psychological well-being; third, examining how Percy progresses toward healing; and last, drawing conclusions that connect these insights.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Causes of Trauma

a. Loss and Regret

While she was in Toronto for work, she suddenly gets a call from Charlie, Sam's younger brother, informing him that Sue (their mother) had passed away. Percy is shocked and remembers that back at Bary Bay's he had a good relationship with Sue. She confirms to Charlie that he will come to Sue's funeral. At Sue's funeral, she meets Sam.

> "Sam, I'm so sorry," I say, my voice cracking. I'm so raw with grief and regret that I can't stop the tears that roll down my cheeks. And then Sam is holding me again, whispering, "Shhh," into my hair while he moves one hand up and down my back. (Fortune, 2022: 49)

The quotation above shows that not only regret but also grief, for the time that has passed, for the love she lost, and possibly for the self she lost in the process. After following Sue's funeral process until it is over, at the same time, Percy remembers her mistakes and tries to explain how she feels. "I want to make it better. 22 I want to fix things. But I don't know what to say to do that right now. Please just give me a little more time." (Fortune, 2022: 88). The quotation shows her regret and vulnerability, showing that while she is prepared to accept responsibility for her acts, the extent of the suffering she caused equally overwhelms her. In addition to asking for forgiveness, her request for more time demonstrates her desire to regain the emotional fortitude and mental clarity necessary to face her history head-on. It's an honest, real moment that demonstrates how regret may cause someone to become indecisive about what to do.

Sam told Charlie (and indirectly Anita) about what happened, or at least hinted at it, as Percy recently found out. In addition to her embarrassment from the past, she feels vulnerable and degraded since she is now aware of how deeply her actions impacted Sam and the larger group of individuals in their lives. She is already struggling emotionally from attempting to make amends and seeing Sam again, and this new weakness, which others are aware of, pierces her even more.

> "You told him?" I whispered. "About last summer?" I swallowed back the lump in my throat and faced Sam, not caring about how much of me he could or couldn't see. "Yeah, not about all of it. But he sort of cornered me after Christmas Eve at your place, after he heard you talking about Mason and the bracelet. … "Great. It wasn't enough to be rejected the first time around, now your brother and Anita know, too." I sucked in my breath, feeling the nettle sting of tears. (Fortune, 2022: 184) .

The quotation above shows that Percy deals with her past suffering being made public. She believes her loss has been reopened and made public, and the humiliation associated with her past with Sam is increased since it is no longer private. Its reappearance traumatizes her regret.

b. Betrayal and Broken Relationship

She made the terrible choice to sleep with Sam's older brother, Charlie, while she was in that emotional trough. It was a confused, rash attempt to numb her 26 sorrow and deal with what she thought was the end of her relationship with Sam, not out of love or desire for Charlie.

> "I slept with Charlie," I say to Sam, barely registering that he's just told me he loves me. He's silent. "I'm so sorry," … "Sam?" He doesn't move. "It was a mistake," I tell him, my voice shaking. (Fortune, 2022: 259)

> The quotation above shows that the moment when everything between Percy and Sam fractures is the emotional center of their broken love tale. Percy makes her own confession that she has a sexual relationship with Sam's brother Charlie, just as Sam declares his love. There is no more unfortunate timing. Betrayal destroys what ought to be a lovely moment of vulnerability and reconciliation. There is a wave of heartache and shame following Percy's admission. She knows she must be honest, so she doesn't even completely take in Sam's statement of love, which she has probably yearned to hear. The ensuing hush is intolerable. Sam freezes in agony, shocked. Percy is overcome by the repercussions of her error after witnessing his response. As she attempts to explain, her voice trembles, but it's obvious that there is no simple way to make her actions seem less serious.

The return of Percy to Barry's Bay for Sam and Charlie's mother's burial. For the first time in years, she and Sam are together. A magnetic attraction still exists between them in spite of all the time and suffering. They reminisce about their close relationship from the past and share moments of laughter and old comfort. For a moment, Percy lets herself believe as though nothing has changed and that she is close to him once more. But she's thrown back into reality just as fast.

> And just as fast, I remembered what I'd done and who I'd done it with, and the color drained from my face. Sam rushed to go on. "Not today. Or this year. Not until you're thirty, if that's what you want. But marry me." … "I can't," I whispered, biting back tears. (Fortune, 2022:257)

The quotation above shows that when Percy's happiness and nostalgia cross with her suppressed guilt. The room seems to be emptied of its oxygen as she recalls what she did: she slept with Sam's brother Charlie. She experiences shock and self loathing. It's important to remember who she affected and how severely, not simply the act itself. Percy can no longer compartmentalize her remorse at this pivotal moment. Feeling that connection and being close to Sam once more only intensifies the hurt caused by the betrayal. It's a period of emotional upheaval: from optimism to shame, from warmth to destruction. It reveals how Percy's previous mistake still haunts every step of her comeback and foreshadows the impending disclosure.

c. Repressed Memories and Avoidance

Returning is not simple. Too many memories of laughing, first love, and the one night that altered everything are stored in the town. The people she left behind, particularly Sam, are more important than the location alone. *"You came home." I squeeze my eyes shut. I came home. (Fortune, 2022: 49)*. The quotation shows that Percy finds it difficult to remain emotionally present, even after being reunited with 31 Sam. When faced with overpowering emotions, her natural reaction is to shut down and close her eyes. Avoidance and suppression are shown in this pattern, particularly when returning to emotionally charged situations or places.

Before everything fell apart, they used to spend every summer together in the same place, discussing literature, dreams, and their futures. Now, they are seated together again. With good reason, Percy is nervous. She betrayed Sam by sleeping with his brother, Charlie, in the summer, and she hasn't talked to him since. The intervening years have been characterized by sorrow and quiet. The weight of everything left unsaid is nearly too much to bear now that we are finally face to face. *"I'm not sure where to start," I laugh, nervous. How do you even begin after so much time has passed? (Fortune, 2022: 53).* The quotation shows that Percy's inability to express her life during the years she was separated from Sam suggests that she is not processing her emotions. Her apprehensive laughter and hesitancy reveal a desire to ignore the emotional truth of the time they lost as much as the facts.

By acting as though it doesn't exist, Percy sidesteps the true problem, which is her sadness and guilt, which just makes the emotional impact worse. *We didn't talk about Sam, and when we were together, I felt like I could see past the haze I'd been stumbling through for months. (Fortune, 2022: 265).* The quotation shows that after their breakup, Percy avoids talking to Charlie about Sam, which is obviously an example of emotional avoidance. She briefly gains clarity by avoiding talking about him. This implies that Percy employs avoidance as a temporary coping strategy for unprocessed pain.

d. Repetition Compulsion

Percy has emotionally distanced herself from the painful consequences of her behavior, especially having an affair with Sam's brother, Charlie. She maintains a distance from others and utilizes humor, sex, and brief relationships as diversion.

> So I enjoy spending time with men, and I appreciate how sex gives me an escape ladder out of my mind. I like making men laugh, I like having company, I like taking a break from my vibrator once in a while, but I don't get attached, and I don't go deep. (Fortune, 2022: 8).

The quotation above shows to protect herself from emotional vulnerability, Percy engages in casual relationships. To avoid having the kind of intimacy that could reignite earlier scars, she repeats this routine. Her past with Sam continues to dominate her present, as seen by her use of closeness as an escape.

Percy is making an effort to control her expectations and protect herself from disappointment. She wonders if their relationship was based on comfort rather than love, serving as a temporary haven for Sam after the death of his mother. She convinces herself that even if she longs for something more, she can accept it, even if it hurts, because at her heart, she still wants to be there for him, even if he no longer loves her as much as he used to. *And maybe that's all this morning was for Sam, comfort in his darkest hour. I could be okay with that, I tell myself, if that's all it is, if that's all he needs from me. (Fortune, 2022: 226).* The quotation shows that Percy gives herself emotional support without boundaries or clarity, returning to previous practices rather than confronting unresolved feelings head-on. This demonstrates that she hasn't broken free from the cycle of emotional reliance that led to her last collapse.

2. The Effects of Trauma

a. Physical Symptoms

As she returns to Barry's Bay and gets ready to see Sam again after a twelve year absence, Percy's trauma shows up in her body. The pain and guilt she has attempted to conceal return with a vengeance, and her body responds by racing, breathing, and blurring her vision, demonstrating how deeply the events of the past still affect her. This moment

demonstrates that losing Sam left her with lasting pain and that her emotions are still very real, even after all this time.

> "I can't seem to find enough air to reply, and my heart is beating so rapidly I can feel it pulse against every inch of skin. Maybe this time it actually is a heart attack. I might die. Right now. I try to breathe, but the edges of the room are going fuzzy. … I bend over, trying to catch my breath, then crumple onto my hands and knees. (Fortune, 2022: 206).

The quotation above shows that she suffers a panic attack. She physically collapses to the ground, indicating that her unresolved trauma makes it difficult for her to handle stressful situations. The emotional pain she has been bearing is reflected in her body, demonstrating the profound impact her history still has on her now.

Percy considers how much emotion she has carried since splitting from Sam, showing the way that how it has impacted her. She continues to feel remorseful about the way their relationship ended, indicating that she has not yet recovered or moved on. Heartbreak is just one aspect of the long-lasting effects. They affect all aspects of her life, affecting her feelings, ideas, and behavior. *It was like my body was covered by the lead blanket they make you wear for an X-ray. (Fortune, 2022: 112).* She says that to confront that she is actually can't move on. The quote above illustrates her regrets.

b. Emotional Impact

After a 12-year absence, Percy is making her way back to Barry's Bay. Since the weekend that everything between her and Sam altered, she hasn't seen either Sam or his brother Charlie. Percy considers the past at this point. She recalls how her relationship with Sam, the boy she loved, was ruined one Thanksgiving weekend. She holds herself responsible for the breakup because of something she did. She bears the emotional burden of that incident for more than ten years. Now, all the emotions and remorse come flooding back as she gets ready to face Sam and Charlie once more. *It's been twelve years since I've seen Charlie. Twelve years since that catastrophic Thanksgiving weekend when everything between Sam and me fell apart. When I tore everything apart. (Fortune, 2022: 9).* As shown in the quotation above, she makes a decision or mistake that affects her connection with Sam and her close relationship with his brother, Charlie, for a long time. She always places the blame on herself, illustrating how shame permeates every aspect of her existence.

She is caught between fear (terror) and hope (anticipation), fearing that too much has been shattered to mend and hope that there may yet be something left between her and Sam. This is the reason her head hurts. It shows her emotional sensitivity and rawness as she revisits her past without knowing what she will discover. *It's like I've woken from a twelve-year coma, and my head throbs in anticipation and terror. (Fortune. 2022: 23).* The quotation above shows that when Percy finds out she must go back for Sue's burial, her first reaction is one of extreme dread and horror, highlighting how profoundly difficult it is for her to face her past. She was deeply traumatized by her past. For twelve years she had tried to escape, but now she had to face it again.

c. Problem Relationship

As she returns to Barry's Bay, Percy evaluates her failing relationship with Sebastian candidly. She remembers her efforts to keep the relationship going, thinking she is giving it a genuine opportunity. In the hopes that she may finally experience the connection she is meant to have, she takes the formalities of dating seriously. But she knows deep down that she is emotionally cold. Her heart is not really in the relationship, despite the fact that she is physically there. She is unable to ignore Sebastian's observation of her lack of

interest at the end of their relationship. She acknowledges that she hasn't really cared about anyone she dated following Sam, in addition to not caring much for Sebastian. *I thought I was doing a good job of giving the relationship a real chance, but in the end Sebastian recognized my indifference, and he was right. I didn't care about him. I didn't care about any of them. (Fortune, 2022: 8).* As shown in the quotation, Percy admits that she has become emotionally distant. After her separation from Sam, she has been trying to establish 50 serious relationships like an adult. The fact that she has repeatedly said, "I didn't care," shows how emotionally detached she has grown since her breakup with Sam. Percy is unable to become emotionally committed in new relationships or vulnerable because of the protective barrier that her trauma has developed. Additionally, her inability to interact with people in an authentic manner demonstrates a detachment from herself. Chat is taking place between Percy and her close friend Chantal. Chantal is one of the people Percy tends to avoid since she struggles with her emotions. For years, especially after Sam crushed her heart, she has surrounded herself with barriers. Even with those closest to her, Percy frequently refrains from talking about her feelings. Percy struggles to trust individuals and let them in, which keeps her from genuinely relating to others, as Chantal understands. "You do understand what it means to have friends, right?" (Fortune, 2022: 25). The quotation shows that how Chantal challenges Percy to face her incapacity to allow others into her emotional realm after seeing through her barricades. This question demonstrates how Percy's prior hurt with Sam and her family has impacted her profoundly, making it challenging for her to build honest, lasting connections.

3. How to Heals the Trauma

a. Mind-Body Connection

Her mental and physical reactions are closely linked, illustrated by these bodily responses that reflect the depth of her internal emotional struggle. Percy internalizes her emotions instead of expressing them, and her body serves as a conduit for her suppressed suffering. This mind-body connection emphasizes how profoundly her trauma impacts every aspect of her life and how crucial emotional recovery is to regaining her physical and mental health.

> Charlie, someone Percy hasn't spoken to in twelve years, calls her unexpectedly while she is at home in Toronto. She is overcome with memories and worry the instant she hears his voice. Her heart pounding, her thoughts returning to all she has attempted to suppress regarding Barry's Bay, Sam, and the agonizing decisions she has made in the past. The shock is instantaneous and overwhelming when Charlie informs her that Sue, Sam and Charlie's mother, has passed away. I stand upright so fast I have to hold on to the arm of the couch to steady myself. (Fortune, 2022: 8)
>
> According to the quotation above, when Percy hears from Charlie, his body reacts

by becoming unbalanced and lightheaded. Her sudden physical response is a reflection of her internal conflict and demonstrates how unresolved emotional tension can appear in the body at any time. Returning to Barry's Bay and reuniting with people and places tied to her deepest pain ultimately allows Percy to face her trauma head-on.

Percy. It's a name nobody calls me anymore. (Fortune, 2022: 8). The quotation shows that hearing the name 'Percy' again makes her face the identity she has left behind because it symbolizes a long-buried aspect of herself. In her mind, it represents the repression of her true self, the version of herself that existed before suffering and regret seized control. Her physical response, standing up so fast that 64 she had to steady herself, conveys the emotional burden and the shock of recognition associated with that name.

This particular instance serves as a potent catalyst, reviving memories as well as a sense of identity. She starts to regain her identity by getting back in touch with "Percy," which signals the start of a profound, life-changing recovery.

b. Talking about Trauma

When she confides in Sam that the panic attacks began twelve years ago, she is subtly acknowledging that the heartache and remorse from their relationship are the reason they started. She makes a brief but impactful admission that betrays the extent of her suffering. This particular instance is significant because it demonstrates Percy's growing willingness to communicate and accept accountability for her actions as well as the impact they had on her mental and emotional well-being. Additionally, it demonstrates Sam's growing awareness of Percy's pain, which was caused not only by him but also by her own behavior and the years of silence that followed.

> *"Do you get them a lot?" Sam asks, brows pulled together. "Not in a long time," I tell him. "When did they start, Percy?" I blink at him. "Um . . ." My eyes flash to Charlie for a split second. "About twelve years ago." (Fortune, 2022: 207)*

The quotation above shows that for the first time, Percy makes a clear connection between her panic attacks and the psychological stress she endured following her departure from Barry's Bay. She starts to cognitively connect her persistent physical symptoms to the unresolved sadness and loss of Sam by stating the time period, "twelve years ago." It becomes a pivotal moment when she says it out loud, especially in front of him, it marks the start of her emotional processing. By identifying the source of her sorrow, she can face it more deliberately and create the foundation for more profound recovery.

> "P?" she says, groggy with sleep. "I still love him," I whisper. "I screwed everything up. And I love him. And I'm worried that even if I can get him to forgive me, I'm still not good enough for him." "You're good enough," Chantal says. "But I'm such a mess. And he's a doctor." "You're good enough," she says again. "What if he doesn't think so?" (Fortune, 2022: 267-268)

As shown in the quotation above, she is unworthy of forgiveness or affection. Her fear comes from a distorted self-perception that links making mistakes to being unlovable, not merely from the possibility of losing Sam. Another level of emotional vulnerability is shown when she expresses this worry to Chantal, a person she can trust. Percy is reminded that worthiness is unconditional by Chantal's kind yet forceful affirmation, which acts as a calming influence. This conversation marks a change: Percy may need to learn to accept compassion from both herself and people who know her, to recover, rather than relying just on Sam's forgiveness.

c. Regulating Nervous System

Returning to Barry's Bay, particularly in the presence of Sam and his family, triggers all of her suppressed feelings. She has a panic attack because she is overcome by the remorse, guilt, and unresolved anguish from the past. She loses awareness of her surroundings as the terror sets in, but she is suddenly aware of a gentle weight on her shoulders and the sound of a faint count. It's Sam. Through the worst of it, she is guided by his steady, soothing voice. He tells her to continue breathing while counting until her pulse rate starts to decrease. Because it demonstrates that their bond endures despite everything that has transpired. More significantly, Percy lets someone, particularly Sam, see her fragility and support her through it for the first time.

> There's a featherlight pressure on my shoulders. Through the mud, I can hear a voice counting slowly. … "What's happening?" someone asks. "Panic attack,"

the voice replies, then it continues counting. Eight. Nine. Ten. "Good, Percy," it says. "Keep breathing." I do. I keep breathing. (Fortune, 2022: 206).

The quotation above shows that Percy experiences a complete sympathetic nervous system reaction, which includes bodily collapse, a fast heartbeat, and fear. Her body is taken over by fear and isn't tied to control or safety. Sam starts a co regulation process by centering himself with slow counting and his voice. This somatic approach activates the vagus nerve, promoting a parasympathetic transition into serenity. Her body slowly reacts as Percy starts to time her breathing to Sam's steady pace. A feeling of mental and physical stability returns, and her heart rate drops. This exchange is a pivotal moment of trust and healing in addition to showcasing the strength of physical connection.

What's particularly significant is that Percy doesn't experience the typical physical reaction, which includes shortness of breath and pressure in her chest. This is because she lessens the power of her fear by naming it and talking openly about it. She is no longer denying her emotions or acting as though nothing is wrong. Rather, she is permitting herself to be perceived as she really is a person who is both hurting and making an effort.

"I have a bit of an anxiety thing," I say, looking back out at the road. I wait for the pressure to build up in my lungs, but it doesn't, so I keep going. "I can usually manage it. You know—therapist, breathing exercises, mantras— the basic self-care practices of a privileged white girl. But sometimes the anxious thoughts get a bit out of control." (Fortune, 2022: 226).

The quotation above shows that she acknowledges the difficulties she encounters and the coping tactics she employs by candidly identifying them, such as breathing techniques, therapy, and mantras. This openness shows emotional development and a growing awareness of her own nervous system. Talking about her anxiety without downplaying or concealing it helps her feel safer and more in control of her body while also reducing internalized shame. Her last statement, "I'm okay, though," demonstrates her fortitude and increasing self-assurance in her capacity to handle challenging situations.

CONCLUSION/KESIMPULAN

Percy's trauma is primarily caused by her betrayal of Sam Florek, her first love, through an impulsive affair with his brother, Charlie. This act not only destroys her romantic relationship but also her connection with the Florek family and her emotional foundation. The effects of Percy's trauma manifest in several aspects of her life. She experiences severe regret, low self-esteem, and unresolved guilt on an emotional level. In terms of behavior, she represses her creative identity as a writer, avoids facing the past, and distances herself from emotional closeness. She suffers from physical panic attacks, particularly when confronted with emotional triggers or when reliving her past. Percy heals from her trauma begins not with external reconciliation, but with internal self-acceptance. Her journey includes symbolic and literal actions, such as swimming across the lake, which represent a reconnection with her emotional self. Through therapy, mindfulness practices (such as deep breathing and body awareness), and honest emotional communication, she gradually regains control over her life. Her reunion with Sam, marked not by immediate resolution but by emotional honesty, reflects a crucial step toward reconciliation and personal growth.

This study shows that Percy's trauma is deeply rooted in personal emotional loss, leading to long-term psychological distress that affects her identity, relationships, and emotional stability. The study finds that trauma manifests not only through emotional pain and behavioral avoidance but also through physical symptoms such as panic attacks. Ultimately, this study concludes that healing from trauma in Every Summer After is portrayed as a gradual, introspective process that requires self-awareness, emotional vulnerability, and a willingness to confront the past. Percy's recovery emphasizes that personal growth and healing are possible when one chooses to face, rather than escape, emotional pain.

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