

## **Questions:**

1. What is the summary of this literary piece?
2. What lesson does the author want to convey?
3. What is the relationship of this story to the current time?

## **Answers:**

### **1. Summary**

"Smaller and Smaller Circles" by FH Batacan is a Filipino crime novel set in the Philippines that follows two Jesuit priests, Father Gus Saenz and Father Jerome Lucero, as they investigate a series of gruesome murders of young boys in a poor community in Manila.

The novel is a combination of crime fiction and speculative fiction as it explores not just the investigation of the murders but also the social and political issues surrounding the murders, including corruption in the police force, poverty, and the exploitation of the poor. The novel also delves into the psychological and emotional toll the investigation takes on the two priests as they struggle to maintain their faith and deal with their own personal issues.

Through the novel, Batacan highlights the injustices and problems faced by the poor and marginalized in Philippine society, and the failure of the justice system to provide justice and protection for all. The novel also challenges traditional notions of justice and punishment, as the killer is revealed to have been driven to commit the murders by societal factors beyond his control.

Overall, "Smaller and Smaller Circles" is a thought-provoking and socially relevant work of speculative fiction that explores important issues facing Philippine society today.

## **2. Lesson**

"Smaller and Smaller Circles" by FH Batacan is a work of speculative fiction that teaches us several important lessons.

Firstly, the novel highlights the social and political issues that plague Philippine society, such as poverty, corruption, and injustice. Through the novel, we see how these issues affect the lives of ordinary people and how they can lead to the exploitation and victimization of the poor and marginalized.

Secondly, the novel challenges traditional notions of justice and punishment. The killer is revealed to have been driven to commit the murders by societal factors beyond his control. This raises important questions about responsibility and culpability, and whether it is fair to hold individuals solely responsible for their actions without taking into account the broader societal and environmental factors that may have contributed to their behavior.

Finally, the novel emphasizes the importance of faith and resilience in the face of adversity. Despite the many challenges they face, Father Gus and Father Jerome remain committed to their mission of bringing justice to the victims and their families. They are able to draw strength from their faith and their relationship with each other, and this allows them to persevere in the face of overwhelming odds.

Overall, "Smaller and Smaller Circles" is a powerful work of speculative fiction that teaches us about the importance of social justice, personal responsibility, and resilience in the face of adversity. It challenges us to rethink our assumptions about crime and punishment, and to work towards creating a more just and equitable society for all.

### **3. Relationship of this story to the current time**

"Smaller and Smaller Circles" by FH Batacan, despite being published in 2002, remains relevant to the current time in many ways.

The novel explores issues that are still prevalent in Philippine society today, such as poverty, corruption, and injustice. The portrayal of the police force in the novel, for instance, highlights the continuing problem of corruption and abuse of power in law enforcement. The novel also underscores the harsh reality of life for the poor and marginalized in Philippine society, where basic needs such as food, shelter, and education are often inaccessible.

Moreover, the novel's emphasis on the importance of social justice and the need to address the root causes of crime and violence is particularly relevant in the current political and social climate. As the country continues to grapple with issues such as extrajudicial killings, political corruption, and social inequality, the novel's message about the importance of working towards a more just and equitable society is more urgent than ever.

Finally, the novel's exploration of the psychological and emotional toll of investigating violent crimes is still relevant today.

The novel highlights the impact of trauma and stress on those who work in the justice system, and the need for support and care for those who are exposed to violence and trauma in their work.

Overall, "Smaller and Smaller Circles" remains a timely and thought-provoking work of speculative fiction that speaks to the ongoing struggles and challenges facing Philippine society today.