



# **BOOK REVIEW OF JULIA QUINN'S *AN OFFER FROM A GENTLEMAN***

## **A FINAL PROJECT**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer states truthfully that this project is compiled by himself without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any universities. In addition, the writer ascertains that he does not take the material from other project or someone's work except for the references mentioned.

Semarang, 13 November 2014

Martantyo Adhie Pramono

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*Bertakwalah pada Allah maka Allah akan mengajarimu. Sesungguhnya Allah Maha Mengetahui segala sesuatu.*

**(QS. Al-Baqarah:282)**

*Pekerjaan hebat tidak dilakukan dengan kekuatan, tapi dengan ketekunan dan kegigihan.*

**(Samuel Johnson)**

Success is always accompanied with failure.

**(anonymous)**

This paper is dedicated to  
My beloved parents and friends

# **APPROVAL**

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Finally, I expect that this final project will be useful to the readers who wish to learn about the meaning of love and family.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	i
PRONOUNCEMENT	ii
MOTTO AND DEDICATION	iii
APPROVAL	iv
VALIDATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
ABSTRAK	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Writing	1
1.2 Purpose of Writing	2
1.3 About the Author	2
CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY OF <i>AN OFFER FROM A GENTLEMAN</i>	3
CHAPTER 3 REVIEW OF <i>AN OFFER FROM A GENTLEMAN</i>	6
3.1 The Strengths of the Novel	6
3.2 The Weaknesses of the Novel	9
CHAPTER 4 <i>CONCLUSION</i>	11
REFERENCES	

## ABSTRAK

Book Review ini memiliki dua tujuan yaitu menjelaskan kelebihan dan kekurangan yang terdapat dalam novel *An Offer from a Gentleman* karya Julia Quinn. Kekuatan dari novel ini terlihat dari tema dan karakter. Tema yang dimaksud adalah kisah cinta antarkelas sosial yang terjadi pada Benedict Bridgerton dan Sophie Maria Becket. Kekuatan novel dari sisi karakter mengacu pada sosok Sophie yang sangat kuat dan tabah dalam menjalani kehidupannya serta Benedict yang merupakan sosok pria idaman bagi semua wanita dan memiliki sifat yang tangguh untuk memperjuangkan cintanya. Kelemahan novel yang dikaji dalam book review ini adalah cerita di dalam novel itu sendiri. Cerita dalam novel ini terlihat mirip sekali dengan cerita yang telah ada sebelumnya yaitu cerita Cinderella. Selain itu, novel ini juga diterbitkan berseri, sehingga pembaca perlu membaca novel selanjutnya untuk mengetahui kelanjutan ceritanya.

Kata kunci: cinta, kelas sosial, tema, karakter, nilai-nilai

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background of Writing

In general, each person makes a family as the most convenient place to share a lot of things. One example, when someone gets into trouble, family is the right place to ask for a solution. However, sometimes not all families give comfort to each member of the family. Sometimes, the family has created more problems in the lives of family members.

Family category is not only based on blood relationship, but also by status of one another, such as marriage, adoption, and so on. However, many families those are only based on status, which do not give comfort among family members, such as, the status of the relationship between stepmother and step child who is generally not harmonious.

*An Offer from a Gentleman* novel tells Sophie's life in her family and society. Sophie is an illegitimate child of a nobleman having difficulty in living her life. She is forced to work as a servant because her stepmother does not like her. One day, Sophie meets a guy, a son of a nobleman, named Benedict. They fall in love and Sophie asks him to marry her legally. Nevertheless Benedict cannot marry Sophie with a reason that nobility is not allowed to marry with someone from the lower class. Finally, Benedict marries Sophie after a long explanation about who the Sophie really is.

### 2. Purpose of the Writing

The purpose of the writing is:

1. To give explanation about the strengths and weaknesses of the novel.

### 3. About the Author

Julie Pottinger or known as Julia Quinn is an American historical romance author who was born in 1970. She grew up in New England and California. She majored in Art History at Harvard University. After graduated, she decided to attend medical school. A few weeks after she was accepted in medical school, she launched her first two novels, *Splendid* (1995) and *Dancing At Midnight* (1995). She postponed medical school for two years when she wrote two more novels.

By the time she finally enters Yale School of Medicine to realize her dream of being a doctor, three books had been published. After a few months studying medicine, she left medical school and decided to become an author. Some of her famous novels are *Brighter than the Sun* (1997), *The Viscount Who Loved Me* (2000), *An Offer from a Gentleman* (2001) and *On the Way to the Wedding* (2006). Pottinger lives with her husband, Paul Pottinger, in The Pacific Northwest area of the United States. < <http://www.walmart.com/ip/462989#About+the+author>>

## CHAPTER 2

### SUMMARY OF *AN OFFER FROM A GENTLEMAN*

*An Offer from a Gentleman* is a book which tells a story about a young girl named Sophie Maria Becket, the illegitimate daughter of Richard Gunningworth (Earl of Penwood) and his servant. Sophie is discarded by her grandmother in the garden of Richard's house in London when she is three years old. Sophie has a happy life, but everything changes when her father decides to marry when she is ten years old. Her father's future wife is Araminta. She has two daughters named Rosamund, eleven years old, and Posy, ten years old. Araminta and Rosamund often misbehave to Sophie while Posy does not, but she cannot do anything.

When her father passed away because of heart attack, her father gives a last will to Araminta if she takes care of Sophie until the age of twenty years old, he would provide income to six thousand pounds a year, but Araminta makes Sophie as an unpaid servant.

Sophie really likes reading *Lady Whistledown* (one page of newspapers) circulating around where she lives. One day she reads that the masquerade will be held at the house of Bridgerton. She wants to attend the party, but she knows that she would never come. Night after Araminta and her two children go to the party, all of the servants make Sophie like a beautiful princess and she has to go to the party secretly. She goes by train horses. At the party, she meets Benedict Bridgerton, the second son of Bridgerton Family, who asks her to dance. Benedict tries to know her identity, but Sophie does not want to tell him. The midnight gong is heard, Sophie runs and leaves Benedict on empty stairs. Luckily, he still holds one of her gloves with the initial, SLG, and the family symbol he does not know. The next morning, Benedict searches that girl all over the towns, but he does not find.

Araminta knows that Sophie comes to the party and then chases her away. The next morning, she goes off outside London. Sophie works at the house of Mr. and Miss. John Cavender as a servant. At a party, Sophie is almost raped by Philip Cavender, the son of Mr. and Miss. Cavender, along with his drunken friends. Benedict, who is present at the party, helps her and led her straight to his cottage. At that time, Benedict does not know that Sophie is a girl from the last masquerade. In the cottage, Sophie takes care of Benedict who is sick. A few days closer to Sophie, Benedict feels that he is starting to like Sophie. They try to have sex, but rejected by Sophie because she does not want to have an illegitimate child, like herself.

Benedict brings Sophie to his mother's house to work as a servant. Sophie is well received and all family members assume that Sophie is part of their family. Benedict's family is an ideal example whom all the people want to have. They are rich, down to earth, and always care among the family members. It is not what Sophie gets from her family. Until one day, finally, they are having sex in Benedict's private house, not far from his mother's house. Benedict asks her to be a mistress, but she does not want the same fate like her mother. Sophie wants to get married legally, but Benedict cannot marry her because a half of his heart still for that girl from the last masquerade and also there is one reason again, a nobleman should not marry a servant. If a nobleman marries someone from lower class, he would not be received by society.

Benedict, finally, knows who Sophie is. He knows when she plays a game with his cousins. He sees Sophie plays with one eye closed. Sophie is the girl he is looking for. Sophie tries to explain everything. After a big fight, Sophie decides to go out from the house. However, she instead meets Araminta and immediately takes Sophie to the police station. Sophie is jailed on charges of the theft. Araminta says to the police that Sophie steals her brooch. Benedict and his mother who hear the news directly go to the police station. In the police station, Sophie tells everything about her life, how she becomes the daughter of Earl of Penwood, how Araminta hates her since the first day they met, how Araminta treat her when the earl passes away, and how she

turns to be a servant. A few hours later, Posy comes and says that Araminta's brooch is in her cupboard. Finally, Sophie can get out from prison because she does not make any mistakes. At home, Benedict promises to marry her within three days. Seven years after marriage, Benedict and Sophie have three children and they live happily.

## CHAPTER 3

### REVIEW OF *AN OFFER FROM A GENTLEMAN*

#### 3.1 The Strengths of the Novel

*An Offer from a Gentleman* has the strengths in terms of theme and characters. The theme of this novel is a love story between Sophie and Benedict and describes the family values. The strengths are as follows.

1. The first strengths of this novel is reflected in theme. Perrine (1988:90) says that the theme of a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. The theme of this novel is romantic love story. This novel tells a love story between Sophie and Benedict. Their love story becomes interesting because this occurs between social classes. Sophie, who is an illegitimate child, never thinks to fall in love or has a boyfriend until she finally meets Benedict, a son of nobleman. She is aware of herself who only comes from a lower class. At first, Benedict doubts to marry Sophie because if a nobleman marries a person from lower class, he will be into gossip and shunned by many people. The difference of inter-social class prevails in England at that time. In some cases, this still happens until now as quoted below:

"But," Violet added, "I would caution you to consider what you are doing. Love is, of course, the most important element in any union, but outside influences can put a strain on a marriage. And if you marry someone of, say"—she cleared her throat—"the servant class, then you will find yourself the subject of a great deal of gossip and no small amount of ostracism. And that will be difficult for one such as you to bear." (Quinn, 2001:226)

However, the difference of inter-social class does not seem a reason for them to love each other. They fight everything to reach their love. Benedict is brave to make his decision to marry Sophie with all risks.

1. This novel gives strong characters overview, especially in Sophie and Benedict. According to Wellek and Warren (1989:286) character consists only of the words by which it is described or into whose mouth they are put by the author. Julia Quinn describes Sophie as someone who deserves to be emulated. She faces all of her problems in her life steadfastly. When Araminta misbehaves against her, she never hates Araminta as quoted below:

Sophie's feelings for Araminta could best be categorized as "extreme dislike," but even so, she never would have described the older woman as stupid... (Quinn, 2001:263)

Sophie also has an affectionate attitude. She takes care of Benedict when he gets sick.

Sophie waited for a quiet moment, then darted her hand out to touch his forehead. It was on fire.

She chewed on her lower lip as she tried to decide what to do. She had no experience nursing the feverish, but it seemed to her that the logical thing would be to cool him off... (Quinn, 2001:96)

If there was one thing Sophie had learned in her days as a housemaid, it was that most households were run in essentially the same way. It was for that reason that she had no trouble at all finding spare linens to replace Benedict's sweat-soaked sheets. She also scavenged a pitcher full of cool water and a few small towels for dampening his brow. (Quinn, 2001:97)

The other character is Benedict Bridgerton. Benedict is a handsome, rich, romantic, and humorous man.

Benedict Bridgerton had been everything she'd read in Whistledown. Handsome, strong, debonair. He was the stuff of a young girl's dreams, but not, she thought glumly, of her dreams. (Quinn, 2001:50)

He is struggling for two women who are actually the same. They do this only to find his true love. At first, he falls in love with a woman from the last masquerade. Until he meets Sophie, he feels the same feeling but he still keeps his heart for the first one. However, he realizes if those two women are the same and he finally reaches his love.

It suddenly made sense. Only twice in his life had he felt this inexplicable, almost mystical attraction to a woman. He'd thought it remarkable, to have found two, when in his heart he'd always believed there was only one perfect woman out there for him.

His heart has been right. There was only one. (Quinn, 2001:233)

2. This novel shows family value to the readers. It can be seen from the comparison between Benedict's family and Sophie's family. Benedict's family is an example of the ideal family. This is evident from the attitude among the family members. When Benedict leaves from home for over a week, his mother always asks to his brothers or sisters where Benedict is. It will be done by a mother because she is worried about her child's condition. The relationship between Benedict and his brothers and sisters are also good. They always stay together for a cup of tea in the afternoon and do chatting and joking with each others. They also always pay attention if there is a family member who looks sad or has a problem. This is a family should do as quoted bellow:

It was sad, really, she thought as she sat down on her bed, her hands still torturing a hopelessly mangled handkerchief. For all her inner turmoil over Benedict, she'd liked living in the Bridgerton household. Sophie had never before had the honor of living amongst a group of people who truly understood the meaning of the word family. (Quinn, 2001:240)

It is different from Benedict's family, Sophie does not get attention from her family. After her father passes away, her stepmother makes her as unpaid servant. Her stepmother does not like her and really hates her. She should not treat Sophie so even though Sophie is just her stepchild.

Sophie looked away for a moment, not wanting him to see the pain that she knew must show in her eyes. She had always wanted a family. In fact, there was nothing in life she had ever wanted more. Her father had never recognized her as his daughter, even in private, and her mother had died at her birth. Araminta treated her like the plague, and Rosamund and Posy had certainly never been sisters to her. Posy had occasionally been a friend, but even she spent most of the day asking Sophie to mend her dress, or style her hair, or polish her shoes ... (Quinn, 2001:32)

3.

## 2. The Weaknesses of the Novel

*An Offer from a Gentleman* also shows some weaknesses. The weaknesses are seen from the novel and the story. The weaknesses are as follows.

1. The weakness of the novel is seen from the beginning. It is reflected in the author's writing. The author writes this story like Cinderella's story. This novel begins with a woman who lives with her stepmother and stepsisters. They often misbehave against her. Someday there is a party will be held, she decides to attend. In a party, she meets a son of nobleman, Benedict. When midnight comes, she should go home before her stepmother and stepsister go back home. The difference is in Cinderella's story she leaves her glass shoes, but in this novel she leaves her gloves. Even though its story is the same only in the beginning, it is important because Cinderella is a famous story. Everybody knows it and maybe for some readers it will be boring at the beginning.
2. The another weakness is seen from this novel. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th Edition (2005:1039), novel is a story long enough to fill a complete book, in which the character and events are usually imaginary. The author makes this novel as a series novel. This becomes a weakness because a story written by the author is not fully completed. The author does not give a specific story at the end, so the readers cannot know what happened after the ending of the story. The author writes the continuance of the story in the next novel. The readers should read the next novel to know it. For some readers who do not really like reading, this will be hard to read because it will take their time to read the novel until the story finish.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

*An Offer from a Gentleman* is a novel which tells a love story between Sophie Maria Becket and Benedict Bridgerton. Sophie, an illegitimate daughter of Richard Gunningworth (Earl of Penwood) has a happy life, but her life changes after her father passes away. Her stepmother hates her and makes her as unpaid servant. At a party, she meets and falls in love with Benedict, a son of nobleman. Their love is stunted by inter-social class distinction. They struggle everything to reach their love. After facing all of the problems, finally, they can get married and live happily.

This novel has strengths and weaknesses. The main strength is about theme. The theme of this novel is about love story. This theme becomes interesting because love story happens between lower class and upper class society. This novel also shows family value which is good for readers. The main weakness is about the story itself. For some readers, when they first read this novel, they will know that this story seems like Cinderella's story. However, this novel is good to be read by readers because readers can get an interesting love story and know how a family should be.

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