

**Book Report of *Dogs and Goddesses*
by Jennifer Crusie, Anne Stuart and Lani Diane Rich**

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Abstrak

*Penulisan tugas akhir “Resensi dari *Dogs and Goddesses* karya Jennifer Crusie, Anne Stuart dan Lani Diane Rich” bertujuan untuk memberikan sedikit ulasan tentang karya tulis dari ke tiga pengarang. Penulis memutuskan untuk membedah novel *Dogs and Goddesses* karena karya sastra ini merupakan karya sastra dari tiga pengarang yang mempunyai berbagai penghargaan atas karya mereka masing-masing. Sebuah novel pastinya mempunyai kekurangan maupun kelebihan, hal tersebut dapat dilihat dari segi pemilihan warna pada sampul hingga isi cerita dalam novel tersebut. Resensi ini bertujuan untuk mengulas kelemahan-kelemahan ataupun kelebihan-kelebihan yang ada pada novel tersebut. Kelebihan-kelebihan dari novel tersebut adalah sampul yang menarik, tokoh yang kuat, tema yang sangat baik, dan gaya penulisan. Sedangkan kelemahan-kelemahannya adalah penggunaan istilah asing tanpa penjelasan, kemunculan dari terlalu banyak tokoh, penggambaran dari banyaknya hubungan seksual dan senjata yang biasa. Melalui resensi ini, pembaca dapat memahami sekilas tentang isi dari isi cerita, kelebihan dan kekurangan dari novel tersebut dan mengetahui sedikit tentang ke tiga pengarang tersebut beserta dengan karya-karya mereka.*

Kata kunci: Novel, Kelemahan, Kelebihan.

1. Introduction

Novel is one of the literary works in literature. Everyone can write down his/her story on it as a documentary of life. Moreover, novel also tells about a real story or fiction which happens in the present, past, or future. By reading a novel, people do not only know about the information of an event which has happened in the

story but also experience the impacts that will influence their minds about their present reality or their future.

Based on the explanation, the writer chooses a novel to be reviewed for her final project. The novel is entitled *Dogs and Goddesses*, and written by Jennifer Crusie, Anne Stuart and Lani Diane Rich. This is a fantasy fiction novel with multiple co-author which tells about the

descendants of Mesopotamian goddesses. They are Abby, Daisy and Shar. The story begins when they come to the Kammani Gula Dog Obedience Course or the dog training class with Kammani as the leader, known as the goddess of Mesopotamian. The writer finds that the story is interesting to be analyzed, so she decides to reveal the strengths and the weaknesses of this novel.

2. Objective

The writer has some purposes in writing this final project:

2.1 To give a brief review on the novel *Dogs and Goddesses* written by Jennifer Crusie, Anne Stuart and Lani Diane Rich.

2.2 To explain the strengths and the weaknesses of the novel *Dogs and Goddesses* written by Jennifer Crusie, Anne Stuart and Lani Diane Rich.

3. Biography of The Authors

1. Jennifer Crusie

Based on www.jennycrusie.com (27 December 2012), Jennifer Crusie was born in 1949 as Jennifer Smith in Wapakoneta, Ohio. She chooses to honor her maternal grandmother by writing under her grandmother's maiden name, Crusie. She has spent much of her life and currently resides in Ohio. She has two master's degrees, the first master's degree is from Wright State University in Professional

Writing and Women's Literature and the second is a master of Fine Art in Fiction from Ohio State University.

She has written more than 15 novels, which have been published in 20 countries. She is the bestselling author of *Tell Me Lies* (1998), *Crazy for You* (1999), *Welcome to Temptation* (2000), *Fast Women* (2001), *Faking It* (2002), *Bet Me* (2004), *Agnes and The Hitman* (2007) and *Maybe This Time* (2010).

2. Anne Stuart

Based on www.annestuart.com (27 December 2012), Anne Stuart is a grandmaster of genre. She was born as Anne Kristine Stuart on May 2nd 1948 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Her first book was published in 1974 by Ballantine Press. She has written over 100 novels. Her awards in Rita Awards Best Novel, include *Banish Misfortune* (1986), *Falling Angel* (1994), *Winter's Edge* (1996) and her best novels series among others include *The wicked House of Rohan Series* (July 2010-June 2011) and *the Ice Series* (2005-2011).

3. Lani Diane Rich

Based on www.amazon.com (September 3th 2012), Lani Diane Rich is the bestselling author of several novels including; *Ex and the Single Girl* (2005), *Crazy in Love, A Little Ray of Sunshine* (2008), and *Wish You Were Here* (2008), *Dogs and Goddesses*

(2009) , a collaborative novel written with romance icons Jennifer Crusie and Anne Stuart. She lives with her family in Southern Ohio. She also writes magical romance under the name Lucy March. She teaches online writing classes through her website, www.storywonk.com.

4. Summary

God and Goddesses is started with a yellow flyer of The Kammani Gula Dog Obedience Course which is distributed to the house of the Three; Abby Richmond, who has just arrived in her grandmother's coffeehouse, Daisy Harris, a web code writer for the humanities department, and Shar Summer, a history professor at Summerville College. They decide to attend the obedience class with their dogs. In the obedience class, they meet Kammani, a Mesopotamian goddess who tries to gather her seven priestesses or the descendents of seven priestesses and makes the people come to her and rule them. Moreover, she gives a tonic to them which makes them realize that their dogs can talk after the class. Then they make friendship after that class. Moreover, they give a name "Dogs and Goddesses" to Abby's coffeehouse.

Apart from their problems with Kammani, they have several problems with their personal lives in addition to the fact that they can talk to their dogs. First, a love story between Abby and Prof. Mackenzie, a mathematic professor, Daisy and Noah, a dog

trainer or freelance and Shar and Sam, a Mesopotamian god. Then, they find that they are the descendents of Kammani's seven priestesses. Moreover, they know that their coffeehouse and the auditorium in Summerville university are a part of Mesopotamian temple in which Kammani lives before her sister, Istar, banished her to endless sleep and destroyed her temple.

The conflict begins when Kammani tries to rule the people in the world by her old way. Kammani uses a swarm, plague and floods to make the people faithful to her, which she used to attack the Kamesh, Mesopotamian people. After knowing that the coffeehouse is a part of the temple, Kammani orders Mina, one of her faithful descendants, to destroy it. Then Mina tries to burn the coffeehouse in the night. Unfortunately Gen, one of the descendants sees Mina and tries to catch her but she fails. From that moment, the three can use their weapons of their power to handle the burning coffeehouse.

After the death of Vera, one of the descendants and knowing that Kammani makes some disasters around them, and tries to burn the coffeehouse, the three try to make Kammani goes back to her world. They find some informations to banish Kammani: Sam's information about Kammani, Abby's note of Granny B about the pattern of Kammani temple and Noah's information about a Wortham, his cousin who wants to banish

Kammani. An hour before sunrise, the three, their lovers and their dogs come to Kammani's temple to banish her. They use their power. Abby uses her bowl of amber light, Daisy uses her clicky pen to make spiral of amber light and Shar uses a sword to banish Kammani. Kammani kills Sam again when he is trying to stop her and turns Mina to be a dog.

In the end of the story, Sam has been risen by Shar's power, and they live together with Wolfie and their five new dogs (Milton, Umma, Bikka, Mina and Mort). Abby lives with professor Mackenzie and her dog, Bowser. Daisy lives with Noah, Bailey, and Squash, Vera's ex dog. Kammani has been banished by the three in somewhere without her power and memory.

5. Review of the Book

After reading *Dogs and Goddesses*, the writer realizes that this novel is interesting. There are some strong points found by the writer. However, apart from the strong points, this novel also has some weak points. Therefore, the writer will describe the strengths and the weaknesses of the book.

5.1. The Strengths of the Book

The first strength is the exciting cover of *Dogs and Goddesses*. The colour of the cover and the shadows of the three women can stimulate the readers to read this book. The

shadows of the three women describe the three main characters of the story. Moreover, the dominant colour of this book is orange, the meaning of which matches with the story. According to www.beading-design-jewelry.com (9 September 2012), the colour orange refers to friendship, adventure, and sexuality, which are used as the characteristics of the three women in the story line. The relationship among the three (Abby, Daisy, Shar), who always share their happiness and problems represents a very good friendship. For example, when Abby feels sad because her lover leaves her after they have sex, Daisy and Shar sympathize with her and they hug Abby then cheer her up. The experience of the three to banish the Mesopotamian goddess, represents adventure, for example: the three banish the Mesopotamian goddess who brings disasters in their place. The sex scenes of the three with their lovers represent sexuality. For example; Abby who has never been interested in sexual relations becomes interested in having sex after meeting her lover, Prof. Mackenzie.

Furthermore, the second strength of *Dogs and Goddesses* is its strong characters. This book has strong characters because it has multiple co-authors. The authors of the book are three women who are the bestselling authors of the romance novels. The three characters are

described differently in physical appearance and behavior. They make the three characters with different ages, lives and problems. Moreover, they give different ways to each main character to handle the dogs which have different characteristics. One example is when Mina, one of the priestesses' descendants talk to Kammani about The Three who are the most powerful among the priestesses.

“‘The three?’ Mina said, spitting the words. ‘The three who sat in the middle? They have power? That little shrimp Daisy? Old Professor Summer with her gray hair? That skinny weakling with the big dog? They’re the most powerful?’” (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009: 46)

From the text above, the authors give a brief explanation about the three. The statement “‘That little shrimp Daisy” explains that Daisy always does and says what she wants before thinking first. She is a young girl with little body and blonde hair. Her age is around 20’s and she works as a web code writer for the humanities department. She has to look after her hyperactive Jack Russel dog and tries to control him. Then, “‘Old Professor Summer with gray hair” explains that Shar is the oldest descendant of priestesses. She is 48 years old and she lives with her neurotic dachshund dog. She has to finish her grandmother’s research about

Mesopotamian goddess. The last, “‘That Skinny weakling with the big dog” refers to Abby with her Newfoundland dog. She is a skinny brunette with long hair. She has got her grandmother’s coffeehouse as an inheritance and tries to develop it.

In this book, the authors describe that the women are independent women and not always weak. For example, Kammani as a goddess has a king of Kamesh or god as her servant and Shar in the beginning is a single professor who decides not to get married before she meets Sam.

The next strength is the theme of this book. The authors write *Dogs and Goddesses* as a power of faith, friendship, and love. According to Collins Cobuild on his *Advance Learner’s English Dictionary*, “‘faith” is strong or unshakeable belief in something. The authors use a dog which is always around the women to describe about faith. Besides the dog is described as the sacred animal. In this book, the women with their dogs are like Kammani with the descendants of priestesses but the difference is that the descendants of priestesses are not faithful, while the dogs are faithful. The authors want to show the readers how to be faithful and how to appreciate it. For example:

“‘But Bailey turned and trotted back to Daisy’s feet, then barked, ‘I love you!’” at peg again, and relief flooded through Daisy.

Peg stared for a moment, then looked up at Daisy. ‘What did he say?’

‘He said he loves you,’ Daisy said.

‘What does that mean?’ Peg looked at Bailey. ‘Bailey, do you want to stay here with Daisy?’

‘Daisy’s mine!’ he barked. (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009: 298)

From the texts above the authors show the readers about the faith of a dog to his owner. When Peg, the owner of Bailey before she gives him to Daisy, wants to take Bailey back, but the dogs chooses Daisy, the new owner who loves and cares about him. Bailey chooses Daisy because she is looking after him and trying to love him. It makes Bailey faithful to Daisy.

Moreover, the authors describe how different characteristics can be gathered and made into friendship. According to www.ezinearticles.com (30 November 2012), Friendship is a personal relationship shared between each friend for the welfare of other, in other words, it is the relationship of trust, faith and concern for each other feelings. This friendship happens to the three;

“‘You devirginated?’ Daisy gaped at her. ‘And you didn’t tell us?’”...

“‘Oh, baby,’ Shar said, and got up to put her arms around Abby and met Daisy, moving in on Abby’s other side, and they held her and each other, the three of

them tightly bound together, and Daisy said, ‘You’re in our pack now,’ and something clicked through the booze and the sympathy and the grief for vera, and they looked at another, and Shar felt tears in her eyes.

“‘Here’s my plan,’ Daisy said. ‘We kill Christopher and bury Kammani in her little temple.’” (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009: 238-239)

From the texts above, the readers can feel the friendship among the three. The first quotation is about Abby, who tells about her being devirginated, and it makes Daisy and Shar shocked because Abby should tell them everything even if it is a very bad thing. Then, the second is the response of her friends who cares about each other. When Abby’s lover walks away after they have sex, Daisy and Shar sympathetic with her and try to calm her. Daisy tells Abby to kill Abby’s lover enthusiastically. It shows the reader that Daisy cares about Abby.

In this book, the readers have to struggle not only to know about what the Mesopotamian goddesses do but also to know how love happens to the women with different backgrounds of lives. According to www.urbandictionary.com (27 December 2012), Love is unconditional affection with no limits or conditions and completely loving someone. The following is an example of how Abby feels of love:

“Here’s my plan,’ Daisy said. ‘We kill Christopher and bury Kammani in her little temple.’ ‘yes,’ shar said, blinking her gaze clear again. ‘We’re going to have to find a way.’ ‘Don’t kill Christopher,’ Abby said. ‘I think I love him.’” (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009: 239)

From the text above, the readers can know what Abby feels about love. She has never loved and been loved by anyone before she meets Mackenzie, her lover. This scene is used by the authors to show the reader about the love story between Abby who is still virgin and Prof. Christopher Mackenzie who is always hungry for mathematics. Abby gives her virginity to Mackenzie even she doesn’t know Mackenzie’s feeling to her before. When Daisy says she wants to kill Mackenzie, Abby stops Daisy because Abby feels that she loves Mackenzie.

Then the last strength is the author’s writing style. There is no flashback in the story. The plot goes straight forward and the authors always tell the past story by conversations not by flashback. Then, the fonts that are used in the dialogue, are also the strength of the book. The authors use different fonts to show the different conversations between the humans and the dogs. It can make the readers recognize the conversations easily. The authors also use simple and short sentences in the dogs’ conversations. It can also make the readers imagine how

the dogs can talk by their barking. For example:

“‘We can hear dogs talk,’ Daisy said again, louder, in case Shar hadn’t heard. ‘Abby and I. You know, with words. In their barking. Words.’” (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009: 97)

“‘Let’s go,’ Daisy said.

‘Let’s go!’ Bailey yipped.

‘Bad idea,’ Wolfie whined.

‘Bite him!’ Milton barked.

‘No biting,’ Shar said to Milton, and opened the back door.” (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009: 220)

From the first text above, the authors give a clue that the three can hear the dogs talk with words by their barking. So, it makes the reader imagine that the dogs talk in words. From the second text, the readers can recognize the part of the dogs’ words. The readers can know that Bailey, Wolfie and Milton are the dogs, and Daisy and Shar are the humans from the font of conversations. This book can also give the readers some knowledge about how to look after dogs and how to understand what the dog wants. This book is also easy to read because it is not necessary for the readers to think about the flashback and the readers are able to recognize the conversations easily.

5.2 The Weakness of the Book

Apart from those strong points, *Dogs and Goddesses* has also some weak points. The first weakness is some strange terms which are used in this book. The authors do not give foot notes or enough explanation about the strange terms. The terms are not English; the authors use Mesopotamian's terms but do not give enough explanation. The readers often get confused in understanding the meaning of the terms. For example; Ereshkigal and Gilgamesh.

"Sam straightened, looking calm but serious. 'She has gone to Ereshkigal,' he told daisy, his voice kind." (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009, 227)

"'Smarter than Istar with Gilgamesh,' Shar said, and took another bite of cookie....." (Crusie, Stuart, Rich, 2009, 278)

The terms above do not have further explanation. The readers may wonder about the meaning. According to www.godchecker.com (19 November 2012), Ereshkigal is a underworld goddess of death, darkness and dust and Gilgamesh is a famous Summerian and Akkadian Hero.

Then, the authors give too many characters in this story. Some supporting characters who should be interesting, appear in the story but they are never developed. The characters just appear but do not give any contribution to the story, for example; Bun and Gen, the other

descendants of priestesses. They are the descendants of priestesses that do not show any power and just appear as the descendants who don't have their opinions and struggles. The other supporting characters appear in the beginning but disappear in the middle of the story to the end. There is no clue about their further lives.

Another weakness is that there are too many sexual scenes in the story. A sex scene can be interesting in a romance story, but if there are so many sex acts, the story will be boring and disgusting. The three main characters are described to have sex relations with their lovers too often. A sex scene is to get a power. For example; Shar even does not have magical power without having sex with her lover. The readers can't continue their reading if they do not like sex scenes. Besides, the readers can be influenced by the negative things of the story. The three and their lovers have sex without marriage. It can be a bad thing to do if the readers have a different culture which states that having sex without marriage is a taboo.

Then, the last weakness is the weapons of the three. The weapons of the three are not common and do not make sense. The three are the goddesses but their weapons are a sword, a bowl and a spiral of amber light. The sword is cool, but the bowl and clicky pen to make the spiral of amber light are not common. The authors use a bowl of amber light and a clicky pen to make a

spiral of amber light for Abby and Daisy because of their profession. It is so disappointing weapons when the readers expect more than those weapons.

5. Conclusion

Dogs and Goddesses is one of the novels which have multiple authors. It is a magnificent book that consists of some strong points, namely : the exciting cover, the strong characters, the very good theme and the writing style of this book. On the other hand, the writer finds some weak points, that is: the use of the strange terms without explanation, the appearance of too many characters, the description of too many sexual relations, and the common weapons. Although, this book has some weaknesses, it cannot be the reason for the readers who love fiction stories, especially fantasy romance, to stop reading this book.

By reading this book, the readers will know how to communicate or treat their dogs or their pets well and they can know a little about Mesopotamian myths. The book introduces about Mesopotamian myths which the reader may have never heard before. It is a good book for the readers who love fantasy romance story. So, this book is highly recommended to those

who love fantasy, romance story with a little myth inside.

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