

Ada Lamarr's Character Development in Beth Revis's *Full Speed to a Crash Landing*

Ramadhina Ulfa Nuristama^{1✉}, Sufi Ikrima Sa'adah², Masna Hikmawati³

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya¹

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya²

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya³

✉ ramadhina.ulfa.nuristama@uinsa.ac.id

Abstract:

This article aims to examine the character development of the main character, Ada Lamarr, in *Full Speed to a Crash Landing* by Beth Revis. The focus of this study is on the changes in the characteristics of the main character, which are identified in the attitudes, behaviors, and traits of the main character. This study uses a qualitative research method. The New Criticism theory is applied to examine the characters, characterizations, and character development. Data were taken from the novel through a close reading process, then identifying the initial and final characteristics of Ada Lamarr depicted in the novel. The collected data are analyzed using the theory, and a conclusion is made. The results of the analysis show that Ada Lamarr experienced changes in her characteristics on her journey to complete her space mission. Initially, Ada is depicted as a tough and independent figure. Still, realizing the many dangers and obstacles in completing her mission, Ada becomes more tolerant and cooperates with others. This is inseparable from her mission, which is very close to danger. This character development certainly helps strengthen the theme in the novel; in completing a dangerous mission, the main character must adapt to other characters so that the mission can be accomplished.

Keywords: *behavior; attitude; independent; cooperative; character development*

Abstrak:

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk meneliti perkembangan karakter tokoh utama, Ada Lamarr, *Full Speed to a Crash Landing* by Beth Revis. Fokus dari kajian ini pada perubahan karakteristik karakter utama yang diidentifikasi dalam sikap, perilaku, dan sifat karakter utama. Kajian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif. Teori New Criticism diterapkan untuk mengkaji tokoh dan penokohan serta perkembangan karakter. Data diambil dari novel tersebut dengan proses close reading, lalu mengidentifikasi karakteristik awal Ada Lamarr dan karakteristik akhir Ada Lamarr digambarkan di dalam novel tersebut. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan teori, lalu disimpulkan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Ada Lamarr mengalami perubahan karakteristik di dalam perjalanannya menyelesaikan misi luar angkasanya. Awalnya Ada digambarkan sebagai sosok yang tangguh dan mandiri, kemudian dengan menyadari banyaknya bahaya dan rintangan dalam penyelesaian misinya, Ada menjadi sosok yang lebih toleran dan bekerjasama dengan orang lain. Hal ini tentu tidak terlepas dari misinya yang sangat dekat dengan bahaya. Perkembangan karakter ini

tentu membantu menguatkan tema dalam novel tersebut bahwa di dalam penyelesaian misi yang berbahaya, karakter utama harus beradaptasi dengan karakter lain supaya misi bisa terselesaikan.

Kata kunci: perilaku; sikap; kemandirian; kerjasama; pengembangan karakter

INTRODUCTION

Beth Revis's *Full Speed to a Crash Landing* (2024) is a modern science fiction book that has quickly become a fan favorite. It was named an Amazon Editors' Pick and made it onto Literary Hub's list of the Best Sci-Fi and Fantasy Books of August (Revis, 2024; Amazon.com). This is the first short novel in the *Chaotic Orbits* series. It tells the story of Ada Lovelace, a brilliant space scavenger who embarks on a perilous journey through a futuristic universe filled with high-stakes adventure and subtle romance. The novella's fast-paced plot and engaging main character make it a compelling subject for literary analysis, particularly in examining how character development propels the story forward and deepens its themes. This study examines how Ada Lamarr's character evolves during a perilous space mission. This provides the trilogy with a strong foundation.

Character development is one of the most crucial aspects of effective storytelling, as it enables readers to connect with the story and its themes on an emotional level. In genres like science fiction, where the main characters often face impossible problems, a character's growth can make a story much deeper and more relatable. In his important book *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), E.M. Forster divides characters into "flat" and "round" types. Round characters can change and become more complex (Forster, 1927). Ada Lamarr, as shown in *Full Speed to a Crash Landing*, seems to have the traits of a round character because she changes from being tough and independent to someone who welcomes working with others. This change not only grabs readers' attention, but it also emphasizes the story's themes of adaptability and working together, making her an excellent subject for a detailed literary analysis.

This study employs the New Criticism theory to examine the character development of Ada Lamarr. This is a formalist approach that focuses on closely reading the text itself to find meaning in its language, structure, and characterization. John Crowe Ransom wrote about this idea in *The New Criticism* (1941), stating that it focuses on the work as a self-

contained aesthetic object, excluding elements such as the author's life story or historical context (Ransom, 1941). Using New Criticism, this analysis aims to demonstrate how Revis shapes Ada's transformation through her choices, interactions, and reactions to the problems she encounters on her mission. This method of analysis ensures that the novella's textual elements are examined in a focused manner, providing a clear view of the subtleties of Ada's character arc.

The main point of this article is to discuss how Ada Lamarr's personality changes in *Full Speed to a Crash Landing*. The study employs a qualitative research method based on close reading to examine Ada's early traits, such as her toughness and independence, and how she evolved over time to become more accepting and helpful. Not only does this change make her character more interesting, but it also supports the main idea of the novella, which is that you often need to be able to adapt and work with others to finish dangerous and complicated missions. This study employs New Criticism to examine these changes. The goal is to help readers understand how character development enhances the themes in modern science fiction literature.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs qualitative research to examine how Ada Lamarr's character evolves in Beth Revis's *Full Speed to a Crash Landing* (2024). Close reading is the primary method used. This is a careful and interpretive reading of the text to figure out its deeper meanings and literary structures (Richards, 1929). Close reading allows the researcher to delve deeply into the novella's story elements, such as how the plot unfolds, how characters interact, and how descriptions evolve, enabling them to identify and analyze the protagonist's changing traits. Data collection means carefully writing down things like dialogue, actions, and narrative descriptions that show how Ada Lamarr changed from being a tough and independent person to one who was more accepting and willing to work with others. This process involves reading the text several times to make sure all the important details are captured, and then organizing the evidence to show changes in Ada's thoughts and actions. This method provides a comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of Ada's character development, focusing on textual details. This fits with the qualitative approach's focus on

depth of interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Then, the data collected are examined to see how these changes support the novel's main theme of being flexible in high-stakes situations.

LITERARY THEORY

The analysis is based on the ideas of New Criticism, a literary theory that emerged in the mid-20th century, which posits that texts should be studied for their own sake, prioritizing their formal elements over considerations such as the author's intent or historical context (Ransom, 1941). New Critics, such as Cleanth Brooks, argue that a work's meaning is inherent in its structure, language, and images, and that close reading is the most crucial aspect of understanding it (Brooks, 1947). Using New Criticism on *Full Speed to a Crash Landing*, this study looks at how Beth Revis uses literary devices like characterization, dialogue, and narrative structure to show Ada Lamarr's character arc from a lonely, tough space scavenger to a team player who changes to meet the needs of her dangerous mission. The analysis does not make guesses about what the text means based on outside factors; instead, it gets its ideas directly from the novella's narrative techniques and character portrayals. This method works exceptionally well in understanding how Ada's change supports the story's themes of flexibility and collaboration in the face of adversity. It achieves this by ensuring that the conclusions are grounded in the text's aesthetic and structural qualities. The New Criticism approach is ideal for this study because it focuses on the text. It provides us with a straightforward way to examine the details of Ada's growth and how they fit into the larger story goals of the novella.

DISCUSSION

Ada Lamarr is a strong main character in Beth Revis's *Full Speed to a Crash Landing* (2024), the first novella in the *Chaotic Orbits* trilogy. Her character development, though limited by the novella's short length, emphasizes the story's themes of adaptability and working together. This analysis employs the New Criticism approach, which focuses on closely reading the text's intrinsic elements, such as dialogue, actions, and narrative structure (Ransom, 1941), to examine how Ada evolves from a clever, independent space scavenger to a more open-minded and cooperative person. At first, Ada is portrayed as a clever loner who

uses a distress signal to board the government salvage ship Halifax, for reasons that are not immediately clear. Her use of a hidden recorder earring and a high-tech Jaxon jetpack shows that she is independent and innovative, and her sarcastic and funny personality makes her seem like a secretive person who is only interested in her gain (Revis, 2024). Ada's character is named after Ada Lovelace and Hedy Lamarr, both of whom are recognized for their intellectual contributions beyond their public personas. Ada's character is complex, and her actions and interactions reveal this complexity as the story unfolds, setting the stage for her transformation.

The dangerous setting of the novella has a significant impact on Ada's character arc. The crashed ship Roundabout is located on a protoplanet that is unstable, experiencing earthquakes and lava rivers. This makes it hard to do things alone. Ada works with crew members like Magnusson to obtain an external drive containing nanobots crucial for restoring the Earth's environment. She uses sign language to get around the dangers of the planet. This need for teamwork represents a shift from her initial approach of being a lone wolf, as the hostile environment forces her to rely on others to survive and thrive. Her choice to copy the drive's data instead of stealing it outright and to ensure the Roundabout crew could escape safely shows that she is starting to see the value of working together, even though her primary goals are still her own. When viewed through the lens of New Criticism, this environmental pressure reveals how the setting of the story transforms Ada, aligning with the novella's theme of adaptability in high-stakes missions.

Ada's changing relationship with Rian White, the government agent in charge of the Halifax crew, makes her character development more interesting. There is much suspicion between them at first, but Ada uses charm and flirtation to keep control of her secret mission. Library Journal (2024) describes their interactions as "epically flirtatious," suggesting that there is a chemistry between them that makes Ada less guarded. As they work together to overcome the mission's problems, they develop a mutual respect that may be strengthened by romantic tension, as shown by the kiss they shared. Ada's willingness to discuss the drive's importance with Rian shows that she is becoming more open, which is a notable change from her previous secretive behavior. Her internal struggle, which is evident in her thoughts about wanting to be friends with the crew but disliking their toasts, makes her more relatable and

adds depth to her character. These interactions, although limited by the novella's fast pace, demonstrate how Ada is becoming more capable of trusting and connecting with others, even as she maintains her independence at her core.

Ada's change is significant to the story because it reinforces the book's main point: that one needs to be able to adapt and work together to succeed in dangerous, high-stakes missions. By the end of the novella, Ada's actions demonstrate a complex balance between her independence and newfound acceptance. Her decision to protect the crew and her clever copying of the drive's data demonstrate that she is no longer only thinking about herself and is now considering others as well, which aligns with the story's focus on teamwork. Some readers find Ada's "extra-ness" or childish narration less interesting, while others like her wit and resilience (Goodreads, 2024). Reviews suggest that the novella's brief length hinders the development of characters entirely. Still, Ada's story arc adds depth to the story, making her a strong main character whose growth fits well with the story's themes of trust and adaptability in a futuristic setting. Ada's change, as seen through the lens of New Criticism, reveals how elements such as setting, dialogue, and character interactions converge to tell a story of personal and thematic growth, setting the stage for further development in the *Chaotic Orbits* trilogy.

CONCLUSION(S)

In conclusion, Beth Revis's *Full Speed to a Crash Landing* has a great character arc for Ada Lamarr. She goes from being a lonely, clever space scavenger to a more helpful and open-minded person, which makes this high-octane science fiction novella even better. Using New Criticism, which focuses on closely reading the text's intrinsic elements, this study has demonstrated how Ada's growth is closely linked to the perilous environment of a volatile protoplanet and her evolving relationships with the Halifax crew, particularly the government agent Rian White. The dangerous environment, which includes earthquakes and lava rivers, forces Ada to go beyond her initial independence. For example, she uses a distress signal and high-tech tools, such as a Jaxon jetpack, to work with crew member Magnusson to retrieve a critical drive. Her relationship with Rian, which is both flirtatious and respectful, is growing stronger as they trust each other and face challenges together. This shows that she is more

open than she used to be. This change in Ada's character not only makes her more interesting, but it also reinforces the book's central ideas of adaptability and collaboration in solving complex problems. The novella's short length may limit Ada's development, but her arc remains an important part of the story, illustrating how people can grow even in the most challenging situations. As the first book in the *Chaotic Orbits* trilogy, Ada's journey lays a strong foundation for more exploration of her character and the series' changing story. Readers can look forward to seeing how her new balance of independence and teamwork will affect future missions.

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