

**PORTRAIT OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN VANESSA WYE IN
NOVEL MY DARK VANESSA****Farah Rasfia Putri**

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Abstract

The study aims to identify the forms of sexual harassment experienced by the main female character, Vanessa Wye, then the data will be searched using reading and recording techniques. After successfully obtained, the collected data will be discussed using descriptive-qualitative methods. So that in the end, this research will produce forms of violence or sexual harassment experienced by Vanessa Wye. Cases of sexual violence and abuse of children and women are very alarming crimes. Every year many victims experience sexual abuse. This phenomenon is also illustrated in the novel *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell. The novel tells the story of a sexual relationship between a 15-year-old student named Vanessa Wye and Jacob Strane who is already her 42-year-old English teacher, presented from the perspective of an adult Vanessa Wye who is 30 years old. The researcher chose the novel because it was the research theme to be discussed. In this study, researchers used Kelly's theory which explains the forms of sexual harassment which are divided into 3 parts, namely Visual, Verbal, and Physical. Using the theory and mimetic approach.

Keywords: Novel; Abuse; Sexual.**INTRODUCTION**

No human being should suffer for the evil committed by another human being. The world is supposed to be a safe place for all creatures living in it, but the fact is that there are so many people who have no conscience and have the heart to commit crimes even against someone they have known for a long time (Simatupang, 2017). Crimes that occur in this world are very diverse, ranging from minor to severe crimes. One of them is violent crimes or sexual harassment. Not only occurs in adults, but sexual abuse can also occur in minors (Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner, & Hamby, 2014).

Child sexual violence or abuse is a crime that includes all sexual activity committed with minors (Shelton, Eakin, Hoffer, Muirhead, & Owens, 2016). When someone commits a crime of sexual abuse of a child, they have committed a crime that can have a long-term impact on the victim (Potter, Howard, Murphy, & Moynihan, 2018).

Based on data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection from 2022 until September 20, 2022, at 12.00 WIB, there were 17,150 cases of violence with 15,759 female victims and 2,729 male victims. Ironically, various cases of abuse

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occur in children, both in public spaces of schools and even in homes that are supposed to be very safe spaces for them.

According to Tuliah (2018) The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection conveyed ironic news stating that there are many victims of sexual abuse cases that occur in Indonesia both women and men and among them there are also children who are victims who even these crimes occur in environments that should be safe places for them such as homes and schools.

According to Faisal (2021), in cases of sexual violence or abuse in the period 2018 – 2019 perpetrators of sexual abuse that occur in children are someone who should provide protection, and education and be a good example figure for them.

Retno Listyarti as Commissioner of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission stated that most perpetrators of sexual violence or abuse against children are teachers and school principals. A figure who is always near children when they are in school and should be able to provide knowledge and be a good example becomes a perpetrator of sexual violence or harassment (Kitzinger, 2015).

The phenomenon of violent crimes or sexual abuse in children is also illustrated in the novel *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell. The novel tells the story of a sexual relationship between a 15-year-old student named Vanessa Wye and Jacob Strane who is already her 42-year-old English teacher, presented from the perspective of an adult Vanessa Wye who is 30 years old. Although the storyline is presented from the point of view of adult Vanessa Wye, *My Dark Vanessa* also presents a flashback storyline from the point of view of young Vanessa Wye when she was 15 years old.

The language used by Kate Elizabeth Russell in this novel is very easy for readers to understand, although some parts of the story seem not too important to tell, Kate still manages to portray how disgusting a teacher becomes a perpetrator of sexual harassment and harassment of her female students. The sexual harassment case in this story is also described very clearly by Kate, so based on the problems previously determined by the author, *My Dark Vanessa* was chosen to be the object of research. The author is interested in studying the novel in a study entitled *The Suffering of Vanessa Wye in My Dark Vanessa Novel by Kate Elizabeth Russell*.

The plot is a series of several events that are interrelated with each other and background the complete story of a literary work. This section is important because the continuity between one event and another must be clear so that the storyline can be easily understood by the reader. Based on opinion of Stanton and Kenny in Nurgiyantoro (1998) states that the plot is a sequence of events contained in a story.

In a literary work, characters can be humans, animals, or other objects following the theme raised by the author in writing the literary work (Wulandari, 2020). Of course, characters play a very important role in a literary work because a character is a subject who experiences an event and moves the storyline in a literary work (Aeni & Lestari, 2018).

Characterization or characterization refers to the characters possessed by the characters, this is a very important factor in a literary work (Susi, Nurachmana,

Purwaka, Cuesdeyeni, & Asi, 2021). This is necessary to make each character in a story have their characteristics and make the story presented in a literary work more alive.

According to Colier in Fathanah (2021) states that sexual harassment is often considered a deviation in behavior because it forces someone to engage in sexual activity. Sexual harassment includes acts such as touching a vital limb in a graphic manner that makes the person feel uncomfortable.

According to Archie Sudiarti Luhulima in Siswanto (2022) states that sexual harassment is a crime related to sexuality, especially related to the sexuality of men and women.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, researchers used descriptive–qualitative methods. Qualitative research is used by researchers because in this study understanding the problems contained in the object of research does not require quantification. Descriptive data in the form of written or oral will be generated from qualitative research, the data is the result of the object of research observed. Murdiyanto (2020) describes the qualitative approach as a method that has a research focus on social phenomena and human problems with a research and understanding process based on methodologies that study these things.

While the descriptive research method is a research method that aims to describe, describe or describe accurately the data for research material that will later be analyzed by researchers. According to Whitney in Rachmatulloh (2017), this research method is a method used to find facts with the right interpretation.

The author uses a mimetic approach in this research. According to Abrams (2014), the mimetic approach is an approach to assume that a literary work is a reflection or representation of real life. This reflection or representation of life arises due to imitation and a mixture of imagination by the author with the reality that exists in life. In this approach, there is a view that a story outlined in a literary work by the author is a portrait of a life that he saw before.

The data collection techniques used in this study are reading techniques and recording techniques. The reading technique is data collection by reading the whole and repeating the story in the novel *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell to find data that is relevant to the formulation of the problem in this study. While the recording technique is data collection by recording data that has previously been determined at the reading technique stage. According to Nurfatimah (2020), the reading technique is a data collection technique by repeated reading which aims to find data contained in the object of research, while the recording technique is a data collection technique by recording data in novels needed in the research process. This is done to make it easier for researchers to carry out the data analysis process. After all the data has been collected, the researcher will analyze and describe it.

The data analysis technique used by researchers in the study entitled *The Suffering of Vanessa Wye in the Novel My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell is a theory of data analysis techniques owned by Miles and Huberman. Based on the theory of Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2019), data analysis is carried out during data collection and after data collection is complete and is carried out in a certain period. In this data analysis technique, 4 stages will be passed by researchers in processing the data that has been collected, namely:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the classification of forms of sexual harassment according to Kelly, examples of these forms of abuse were found in the novel entitled *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell experienced by the main female character named Vanessa Wye. When she was still in her teens, Vanessa Wye was not fully aware of it by her sexual harassment committed by her English teacher named Jacob Strane. Here are the forms of sexual abuse according to Kelly in the novel *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell:

1. Visual

He brings it over, the cover still hidden. I grab it as soon as he sets it down. Flipping the paper back over, I see a pair of skinny legs in ankle socks and saddle shoes, a pleated skirt ending above two knobby knees. In big white letters across the legs: Lolita (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on this data, Jacob Strane who is Vanessa Wye's English teacher gave her a reading book recommendation. The book recommended by his teacher is a book that tells the story of a father who falls in love with his 12-year-old daughter. *Lolita* is very clear about the story of an old man who falls in love with a minor, Jacob Strane recommends this book to provide a visualization of an old man's relationship with a minor that can present the idea that this kind of relationship is normal.

2. Verbal

He begins to tell me what I used to be: "Vanessa, you were young and dripping with beauty. You were teenage and erotic and so alive, it scared the hell out of me" (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on this data, Jacob Strane conveyed his thoughts about Vanessa Wye whom he used to see when Vanessa was in her teens to Vanessa Wye who was already an adult. The data above shows that Jacob Strane had very inappropriate thoughts. A teacher describing one of his students with the word "erotic" is very inappropriate. This explains that all this time Jacob Strane looked at Vanessa Wye with sexual desire.

"You know what I'd like to do right now?" he asks. His word flow together more than usual and he sways as he points the cigarette at me. "I'd like to find you a big bed, tuck you in and kiss you good night" (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on the data, Jacob Strane is seen watching Vanessa Wye with sexual desire. Jacob uttered a sentence full of explicit sexual meaning. As a teacher, of course, this is not a natural thing to do. Jacob said that he wanted to take control of Vanessa's body and kiss her. What Jacob Strane said is included in verbal sexual abuse.

"Ok? Ok. Ok." There's some muffling like he's moving the phone from one ear to the other. "I want you to say 'I love you, daddy'". I feel my lips move and static fills my head, white noise so loud, I barely hear the sound of Strane's heavy breathing and groans (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on the data, Jacob Strane and Vanessa Wye made a phone call. At the time of this phone call, Vanessa and Strane were at their respective residences. Initially, the phone call only contained Vanessa Wye and Jacob Strane who exchanged news about their activities during the school holiday period. But suddenly Strane asks the motive of the clothes worn by Vanessa and asks her to

take off her shirt. Vanessa refuses to do this and lies to Strane that she has done it. Vanessa thought it was just a strange request made by Strane, but apparently, Strane suddenly asked Vanessa to say the phrase 'I love you, daddy' which was very inappropriate for a student to say to his teacher. It can be seen from the data above that Vanessa really didn't like it but was still forced to do it.

3. Fisik

Then Mr. Strane's knee touches my bare thigh, right below the hemline of my skirt. With his eyes still on the poem and the tip, his pen followed the line. His knee nestles against me at the seminar table. At first, I assume he doesn't realize... I wait for him to recognize what he's done, to see where his knee drifted, and whisper a quick "sorry" and shift away, but his knee stays pressed into me (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on the data, Jacob Strane attempted to make physical contact with Vanessa Wye. Strane is seen pretending to focus on Vanessa's poetry, while on the other side, the knees of her legs try to get closer to Vanessa and touch her thighs. At first, Vanessa thought that Strane did not do that on purpose, she waited for Strane to change positions and say the word 'sorry' to her. However, instead of apologizing and moving away, Strane pressed his knee on Vanessa's thigh even more. The physical contact made by Strane made Vanessa feel very uncomfortable so finally, Vanessa started first to shift her position and at that time Strane also changed her position a little away but still did not say the word 'sorry'.

Watching my face, his fingertips slide up my leg and keep sliding until they brush the crotch of my tights. Reflexively, my legs clamp together, trapping his hands "That was too far" he acknowledges. I shake my head, and relax my legs "It's okay". "it's not okay" his hand slips out from under my skirt and he slides like liquid out of his chair and onto the floor. Kneeling before me, he lays his head on my lap and says, "I'm going to ruin you" (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on the data, Strane tried to touch Vanessa's sensitive area. Vanessa's bodily response very clearly shows that she is uncomfortable with what Strane is doing to her. Strane realized very clearly that what he was doing was the wrong thing. However, instead of getting angry, Vanessa said that it was okay for her, even though it was very clear that her body's reaction was to refuse.

The data shows how powerful Strane is so that he can do this to Vanessa and make Vanessa dare not refuse him for fear that he will hurt Strane's heart. Although Strane realized that what he did to Vanessa was wrong, he didn't stop there. Strane rests his head on Vanessa's lap and says that he will "destroy" Vanessa, which is what she means to be sexually suggestive.

"Oh!" I say. "Ok! Wow. Ok." Small, stupid words. When he takes my wrist and guides my hand to it, I say them again. "Oh! Ok!" he closes my fingers around it, and I know that I'm meant to do the up-and-down stuff and my hand immediately starts pumping away, dutiful as a robot, disconnected from my brain". When he guides my hand away from it, I worry he'll ask me to use my mouth next and I don't want that, I can't do that, but instead he says, "Do you want me to fuck you?" It's a question but he's not asking (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on the data, without Vanessa's consent, Strane pulled Vanessa's hand and told her to hold her reproductive organs. Strane asks Vanessa to engage in sexual activity using her hands. Vanessa couldn't resist and ended up doing it like a

robot with a blank mind. During this time, Vanessa's mind was filled with worry, she was afraid that Strane would ask her to do something crazier. Vanessa was worried that Strane would ask her to do this using her mouth. Although Strane realized from the beginning that his behavior toward Vanessa had gone too far, he still did this to Vanessa without asking for her consent first. When Strane pulls Vanessa's hand away from her reproductive organs, Strane asks Vanessa "Do you want me to you?", but Vanessa realizes it's not a question because in the end even though Strane asks Vanessa, the final decision remains with Strane. The data shows again how Strane has power over Vanessa's body and is a manipulative figure.

He tries to push in, his thumb digging hard into my pelvis. It won't fit. I start to tear up, but he doesn't stop. Just says I'm doing great as he keeps trying to get it in. he tells me to breathe in and out, and when I exhale, he thrusts hard and pushes a little farther inside. I start crying, really crying, still, he doesn't stop (Russell & Gummer, 2020).

Based on the data, Strane, who previously invited Vanessa to visit his house and said that the two of them would just sit on the couch and watch a movie together, turned out to be lying. While at Strane's house, he forced Vanessa to engage in sexual activities as shown in the data above. Vanessa, who at that moment looked very uncomfortable and cried, was ignored by him.

Strane, who noticed Vanessa was crying, did not stop and instead continued the activity and praised Vanessa by saying that she did very well. Strane thinks that teenage girls like Vanessa are very easy to lie to, so Strane manipulates Vanessa and gets control of her. Based on some of the data presented above, there are several forms of sexual harassment committed by Jacob Strane to Vanessa Wye which are divided into 3 parts based on the theory presented by Kelly.

CONCLUSION

Literary works often raise stories related to or describe problems that occur in real life. Cases of sexual violence or abuse are certainly not new cases, there are so many human beings, both men, women, and children who are victims of these crimes. The phenomenon of sexual violence or abuse that occurs in children and women is also illustrated in the novel *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell. The novel tells the story of a sexual relationship between a 15-year-old student named Vanessa Wye and Jacob Strane who is her 42-year-old English teacher, presented in the perspective of 30-year-old adult Vanessa Wye.

Although the storyline is presented in the point of view of adult Vanessa Wye, *My Dark Vanessa* also presents a flashback storyline from the point of view of young Vanessa Wye when she was 15 years old. The language used by Kate Elizabeth Russell in this novel is very easy for readers to understand, although some parts of the story seem not too important to tell, Kate still manages to portray how disgusting a teacher who becomes a perpetrator of sexual harassment and harassment of her female students. The researcher chose the novel because the storyline presented was following the chosen discussion theme. By using Kelly's theory which explains the forms of sexual harassment which are divided into 3 types, namely Visual, Verbal, and Physical.

Researchers have identified the forms of sexual abuse committed by Jacob Strane on the female lead Vanessa Wye in the novel *My Dark Vanessa*.

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