

Introduction

Every character in a story plays a significant role in shaping the narrative text. Although a novel may feature many characters, sometimes one character captures the spotlight of the story because they portray some special characteristics. This kind of characteristic appears in the character of Queen Charlotte in the *Bridgerton* novel series. Her special characteristics make her become a popular character even though she is a side character in the series. The characteristics show Queen Charlotte as a resilient yet sweet person who cares for everyone around her.

In response to Queen Charlotte's popularity, Julia Quinn has released a spin-off of her popular *Bridgerton* novel series entitled *Queen Charlotte* (2023). Taking Queen Charlotte's point-of-view, this novel serves a different perspective from Quinn's previous series, which is the Bridgerton family point-of-view. According to Frank (2014), exploring different points of view in narrative settings can help to understand the character's experiences, beliefs, and values. Later, it can connect to strengthening a deeper understanding of how the character deals with their problems. Therefore, understanding different points of view can enrich our knowledge and perspective. For this reason, this novel is very interesting to be studied.

The story explores the problems in the marriage of Queen Charlotte and King George, which is an arranged marriage. Among aristocrats, marrying for love is just a fairytale. In that era, societal factors tightly controlled their marriage because it was crucial for them to maintain their noble rank identity (Schutte, 2014). Marriages were seen as a means of acquiring land, increasing social status, and strengthening political connections (Payling, 2001). In the context of aristocratic families, where power dynamics and social status play a significant role, families and the court play a crucial role in selecting a potential spouse. Consequently, neither Queen Charlotte nor King George could to choose whom they wanted to marry.

The novel shows how a seventeen-year-old girl, Queen Charlotte, is forced to marry a man he never met, King George. The one who forced her to marry him is her brother, Prince Adolphus, because he signed a betrothal contract

with Great Britain. The reason why he signed the betrothal contract was because he knew that the alliances between Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Great Britain could benefit their kingdom. Besides, because Great Britain's influence is more prominent than Mecklenburg-Strelitz, he cannot reject the betrothal contract that they offer to him. If he refused the contract, he could make enemies with the most powerful nation in the world. In this position, he could not have a choice rather than to accept the marriage proposal.

Since her brother sent her to England, she knew her marriage would be more than a personal union. She was aware her marriage would have significant political and economic implications for their kingdom. She understood that this marriage was a strategic move to strengthen her family's position and secure powerful alliances, even though she would have to sacrifice herself. This realisation burdened her heavily because she had to navigate her personal feelings while fulfilling the expectations and pressures exerted by her family and the country.

Furthermore, after being the Queen of England, she still cannot navigate her own life. Being elevated to the highest position in the country does not mean she can express her desires and passions. Queen Charlotte's life became more complex than before because all of the members of the monarchy and the court tried to dictate her life. They can easily exert power to tell her what to do or not do. They can exert power over Queen Charlotte because they feel the betrothal contract, they had made only benefited her kingdom. In contrast, Great Britain did not benefit from this marriage other than getting a woman to marry.

Even though power relations have been extensively studied, there is a lack of research focused specifically on power relations within aristocratic marriages. Furthermore, existing research primarily examines older novels, leaving a gap in analysing how these dynamics are depicted in more contemporary literature. The study aims to fill the gap by analysing how power is exercised within an aristocratic marriage in a relatively new novel, using qualitative textual analysis. Based on Foucault's theory, the study considers the idea of power is deeply embedded in discourse, which shapes the gender roles in marriage. The study also gives a better understanding of the novel and the power issue in a setting

of aristocrats' marriage. The study seeks to address how power is exercised in the novel.