

‘The Poisoner’ by Gail Bell appears to be the true crime novel, depicting the puzzling mystery that is carried through the family generation. The story reveals the vicious circle stirred up by Dr. William Macbeth intended to envenom his two sons by means of ornate medicine case filled up with poisonous vials. The plot is developed in a hyper-sensible and overstrained manner as the young caring ‘healer’ is forced to escape from the harsh reality of murder efforts. The old man, being subjected to the intensified detection, splendidly avoids the trial. ‘The Poisoner’ as the true shocking autobiographical piece is the representation of the eternal mysterious idea connected with the constant investigation and analysis (Gail Bell, 3). Each of three main characters who are William Macbeth, Gail Bell and her father, behave differently and are embodied into the separate individuals with their own psychology, which provides the indissoluble line of the story.

The deadly secret tends to be the purpose of the story as the ten-year old Gail Bell tries to investigate facts to discover the concealed evidence of the case. She is serious, strong, goal-seeking and intelligent. All of abovementioned seems to resemble the real Gail Bell in her life, especially at times when she worked as English teacher in The Netherlands. Even being a small girl, Gail Bell was able to make the reasonable and sensible decisions. She was looking for the primary source that could probably serve as the evidence, solving the overall problem. Her rethinking of the global poisonous action of medicine and the desire to find its interrelation with her family tradition is more than respectful and admirable. The young girl is embodied in such a character to revisit the history of deaths as the result of poisoning, comparing her family’s case to the similar cases of Cleopatra and some other ones. This indicates that the novel is open to the discussion and interpretation.

Bell’s father is represented as the equivocal and timorous person ready to sacrifice his moral principles for the sake of his family. That is why, his actions can be easily understood and justifiable. Having buried the baleful medicine case deep in the ground, he wanted to protect his family from being accused of pernicious medicine storage that could lead to the fatal

consequences. When reading the true crime novel, the father's actions seem to be predictable as he protects not only his family, but the reputation of his ancestors. However, that is not for the sake of William Macbeth's security, but for his family's request and generally as the result of the human instinct.

Dr. William Macbeth is depicted as the main villain of the book. He puts his principles and beliefs in the forefront. Moreover, he is ready to kill, but the most terrible thing is the disability to recognize and understand how the calm, friendly and sincere healer could turn into the heartless murderer, killing his two sons and avoiding the at-trial procedure. The story deals with the problem of interrelation of sacrifice and venomous benefit. Except for this sinister interaction, the reader can observe the destruction of human mind that can be clearly defined and explained from the psychological point of view.

The suspenseful and thrilling story evokes the reconsideration of sociology in terms of humanity, psychology in terms of relationships and medicine in terms of the purpose of the poison usage. It raises the problem of either medical treatment or violent death, which makes the reader feel doubtful about the correct perception of rather complicated and extremely dubious novel. The destruction of human personality over the individual principles is not only shown directly, but also reflected from the apocalyptic point of view, implying that any benefit would face its end.

In conclusion, there should be said that this true crime novel is worth reading as the reader is definitely guaranteed to be in the indissoluble relation with the main characters. The thin feeling of the whole atmosphere is provided by the peculiarities of human perception. The ability to feel the certain situations and obstacles as delicately as it is expressed by the characters makes the reader the integral part of the entire story. Though the main plot seems to be difficult to comprehend, I would advise to read this masterpiece for everyone who got used to book analysis and is fond of true crime as a genre. It will definitely bring you much pleasure.

Works cited

Gail Bell. *The Poisoner: The Story of Family Secrets*. Paperback edition: St. Martin's Griffin p. 288. ISBN-10: 0312320132