



**Representation of A Strained Relationship and It's Effect In B. A.
Paris's Behind Closed Doors**

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Abstract:

There are number of new trends are emerging into the world of literature, but now a days psychological thriller is considered as one of the best trend of literature. So aim of present paper is to focus on psychopathic behavior caused to strained relationship, mental stress, psychological abuse, untold family secrets, hidden dark things as well as domestic violence in the novel 'Behind Closed Doors' by B. A. Paris. It explores hidden traits of psychopath husband Jack, negative effect of his childhood upbringing, which caused to abuse his own mother and wife, male domination, his estranged behavior with his wife as well as his pathetic end. The entire novel based on psychopath character Jack and his instigation to reenact the same incidents in his life.

Keywords: *psychopath, strained-relationship, mental stress, psychological abuse, gender violence, untold family secrets.*

Main Text:

A novel 'Behind Closed Doors' by British author B. A. Paris is one of the best seller psychological thriller. Here B. A. Paris lights on fake and strained relationship of newly married couple Jack and Grace as well as psychological abuse. Mostly relationships are very important for human life to live happy life, as they provide us companionship, love security, physical and emotional support .A relation bound with belief, respect, communication, honesty bring pleasure for us. But relationships which are free from above qualities, how do create mental stress, psychopathic personalities,

domestic violence; furthermore background for criminals, possessing sadism, masochism and sadomasochism is the core of paper. There are number of issues created by Paris in the novel.

Everyone comes across a couple Jack and Grace feels that, what a perfect couple! What a perfect marriage! Everyone falls in love with them, but in real, there is strained relationship behind closed doors. Though they are married, at nuptial night they both are not together. Grace worries a lot for him and calls him, but he doesn't respond her call. After some times, she gets shocking and unexpected message from her husband,

“Don’t be so hysterical , it doesn’t suit you. Some things come up. I will see in the morning.”(Paris’s Behind Closed Doors; page no.72)

Here begins series of twisted incidents and many times Grace asks herself ‘ Is he same man to whom I met before?’ She herself finds perfect explanation for his sudden change of character, she feels that, might he has lost his job. Jack doesn’t manage to negotiate about his job and then Grace asks,

“What happened?” he said

“Dream is over. I haven’t lost my job. Grace do you realize, what you have done, do you realize , that you have sold your soul to me. Especially Millie. ”(Paris’s Behind Closed Doors; page no.84)

Such statements of Jack expresses, that he is one psychopath and to reenact the activities in his childhood, he has deceived Grace, who has innocent sister Millie, having Down Syndrome.

There are also incidents of domestic violence in the novel. Domestic violence means, it is mistreatment given to partner to control him/her physically, emotionally, verbally, sexually as well as psychologically. Grace as well as Jack’s mother and Millie are victims of domestic violence in novel. Jack’s father used to hit his mother. He was very young that time and was afraid of his strong and powerful father. Some sentence, such as

“As the father dragged her down to the cell to be locked in with rat.” (Paris’s Behind Closed Doors; page no. 97)

As a psychopath, Jack also doesn’t allow her to escape and hits on her head again

and again and murders. Millie sister of Grace also becomes victim of Jacks domestic violence. She tells Grace that, “He pushed me Grace! At the wedding house, Jack pushed me very hard, like this! Jack hurt me, broke my leg.”(Paris’s Behind Closed Doors; page no. 164)

Domestic violence is the main issue in the society, as it reflected in literature. Grace , heroin of novel continuous victim of such violence. She tries to escape from her husband, who shuts her mouth and drags her out of bathroom and back to the bed.

The total story of novel is based on psychopath character named Jack, who does possess all eccentric qualities and responsible for such strained relationship. Dr. Sana Jarrar in her article ‘A Psychological Reading of B. A. Paris’s Behind Closed Doors’ published in International Journal of Language and Literature (Dec.2018, vol.6,pp 222-225) states that,

“Freud’s theory establishes an intrinsic connection between masochism and sadism being active and passive aspects for single perversion(1950d, pp150-159). He emphasized , receiving and inflicting pain during intercourse being a common type of perversion and is an outcome of incomplete development in early childhood.”

The features of sadomasochism are seen in Jack, as he inflicts pain upon his wife Grace. He locks her in his house, limits her contacts. He doesn’t allow her freedom. An incident from novel declares him psychopath-

“Soon the sound of his mother’s scream coming up through the floor boards became music to his ears, and the smell of her fear the richest perfume.”

He brings a dog at home, named Molly; but when they go to Thailand, intentionally he doesn’t keep enough food and water for that and it dies of dehydration. He always keeps an eye on his wife, blackmails her every time by taking name of Millie, she has no her own email id , mobile. She leaves her job. Everyone considers, they have no secretes to each other. His behavior with Grace reveals he is bastard but outward he has wonderful manners.

It also reveals the untold family secrets. Jack is very successful lawyer and maintained good relationships with his friends. No one ever doubted upon him and his behavior towards Grace. Everyone thinks, it’s very lovely and cute couple, but there are untold secretes behind closed doors. No one know, except Grace that, Jack , her husband, a successful lawyer is a psychopath, a murderer. As he was very young, he killed his own mother and sent his father jail. Jack, who has wonderful manners, outside perfect liar, with no love, attachment and mercy. His discussion about court case with Grace reveals that, how much merciless he is-

“Do you know what the best part of my job is? Sitting opposite all those battered women and imagining , it was me who had beaten them up. And the photos, all those lovely photos of their injuries....”(Paris’s Behind Closed Doors; page no.281)

On another side Grace also becomes criminal, which is another untold family

secrete and unrevealed truth of this relationship.

Such psychopathic characters get inspired in negative way by their problematic surrounding and create a background for other common as well as criminals. Grace is a gentle, elegant and merciful lady has a sister Millie, who has Down-Syndrome. Her sister Millie is everything for her. She adores her. She is also an ordinary woman, dreams a better life with her partner Jack, who has promised her to take care of her sister Millie. Jack, having wonderful manners at outside, is a psychopath. His marriage with Grace is a perfect lie and creates psychological abuse, mental stress, male domination as well as total gender violence. All things create background to be a criminal, changes psychology of common man and provokes him/ her to act in negative way. Same situation happens with Grace, -

“I knew, I was going to have kill him, whatever the consequences, because getting away from him would never be enough. I reckoned that eight of the pills would have more or less the same effect on him, but that sixteen wouldn’t be enough to kill him outright.” (Paris’s Behind Closed Doors; Page no.247)

Such behavior of psychopath becomes responsible for number of causes such as, strained relationship, psychological abuse, mental stress, violence, male domination and finally leads to be a criminal, just like as Grace. It remains as an untold family secrete. Grace had no option except killing to Jack;

because though Jack was lawyer, his case was gone case; because of unresolved issues or traumas during his early development.

Finally, having faced so many traumas ,Grace at the end gets ready to murder Jack, which can be seen to be an act of reenactment. She wanted to recreate her past experience and recreate the same punishment for Jack.

Conclusion:

Behind Closed Doors by B.A. Paris is one of the best psychological thriller, reveals the story of a psychopath named, Jack. Story begins very smoothly with a perfect golden couple but twist comes when Grace realizes that her husband is a psychopath and he desires to inflict pain others. The tendency of her husband creates complications in her life with number of issues such as psychological

issues, domestic and gender violence, mental stress...etc., which finally lead to be a criminal for Grace, who murders Jack and tries to get rid from him.

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