

The Character Analysis of the Heroine in *Gone Girl* — A "Perfect" but Crazy Army

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ABSTRACT

American writer Gillian Flynn's third novel *Gone Girl* has won numerous praises from the literary world and the media. The book also made Flynn one of the best-selling authors in the United States. In 2014, the famous Hollywood director David Finch put this suspenseful masterpiece on the screen. This paper analyzes Amy, the main character in the novel from the perspective of perfectionism, and discusses that Amy's crazy behavior was caused by her parents' perfectionism education during her growth. Undoubtedly they should bear the primary responsibility for the whole tragedy.

Keywords: *Lost lover, Perfectionism, Character analysis, Root cause.*

1. INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF PERFECTIONISM

Perfectionism is a psychological characteristic that profoundly affects one's personality. They tend to set unrealistic high standards for themselves or others in life, and are unable to accept mistakes such as personal appearance, housework or work, and are too paranoid about completeness, purity and goodness (Strickand, 2001). At the beginning of the 20th century, some foreign scholars began to study perfectionism. In recent years, perfectionism has also received extensive attention from domestic scholars. Perfectionists are depressed, indifferent, rebellious, vindictive and aggressive. When you cannot resist the will of your parents and have to obey them, you will become obedient to them. You will lack self-discipline and follow the rules on the surface. Once the external constraints disappear, you will indulge yourself. In recent decades, studies have explored the reasons of the development of perfectionism and found that overambitious and overly demanding parents are the culprits. Before discussing the causes of this tragedy, the plot of the story will be briefly introduced.

2. THE STORY

Gone Girl tells the story of an attractive, witty fashion men's magazine columnist, Nick, who met

an intellectual beauty Amy at a dinner party while working in New York City. Amy was smart, congenial, and "perfect" was the word to describe her. Perfect Amy and handsome Nick fell in love at the first sight and they fell in love quickly and became a couple. Amy was the model for the bestselling book, "the Amazing Amy," written by her parents, a couple who were winners in marriage and life. Nick and Amy were happily married and in love with each other, just like Amy's perfect parents. But not for long, due to the economic depression, Nick and Amy have been unemployed, and then they learned that Nick's mother was in advanced stage of cancer, and his father suffered from dementia, so Nick decided to take Amy back to his hometown near the Mississippi River. But this was an unacceptable fact for Amy who has been living in a prosperous metropolis. Back home, Amy used her savings to open a bar for Nick, but the business was bleak. Marriage was not as perfect as they had originally imagined, and the plain days continued in the state where they complained about each other. To keep their marriage fresh, Amy and Nick played a city-wide scavenger hunt on their anniversary every year. Nick was not interested in the game but had to cooperate. On their fifth wedding anniversary, Nick came home from the bar to find Amy missing. Later, Nick called the police and did media publicity, but there was no clue to Amy. Clues from Amy's diary pointed the suspect

to one person, Nick. He was pushed into the center of the public and became the target of public criticism. Amy's highly intelligent, perfectly laid-out plan showed Nick's inability to get out of the way, punishing Nick to pay the heavy price of his depravity and betrayal. Nick was initially confused and anxious, but in the end he managed to move the public and soften Amy's heart by using the media to make a short, warm film, wearing a tie and a watch that Amy had given him. Amy decided to go back to Nick. In order to achieve her goal, with a knife Amy killed her lover who had been attached to her and took her in. She made up a story and came back into the spotlight, making the story seem to have a perfect ending. She announced she was pregnant so that Nick could never escape from her control.

3. AN ANALYSIS OF THE HEROINE, AMY

Amy was born into a perfect family with loving parents. Her parents created the perfect character, the wonderful Amy. The best-selling book series was based on Amy. Since childhood, she has been surrounded by the aura of "perfect Amy", not only the spokesperson of her parents' books, but also the image ambassador of "amazing Amy". Her resume was flawless. "Amy was smart; Amy was beautiful; Amy was successful; Amy was a good wife and mother; Amy had a happy family." Real Amy was unable to separate from this fairy tale character. Only "perfect Amy" was welcomed by everyone and could be loved by her parents, so she began at an early age unconsciously to play a "perfect" Amy. After meeting Nick at the banquet, she began to play her most familiar role: an intellectual beauty mixed in the New York cultural circle. In order to win Nick's love, Amy acted as the cool girl Nick liked. After getting married, she played the role of the perfect wife in everyone's eyes and had a perfect marriage. But she found that in a long and intimate marriage, she could no longer be "perfect as ever". Getting around day and night, arguing with each other, the tiredness between husband and wife were enough to turn a loving couple into a hostile family, so Amy frantically gave her husband a lesson, and then returned to the public vision, continued to run the "perfect family", and continued to play her "perfect Amy."

The real Amy was not the perfect blonde wife. Only Nick knew she was a monster. She was a fat, foul-mouthed, gluttonous, ugly woman; she was a master in disguise, and could be watertight and invulnerable; she was a cunning, dark, bloodthirsty

devil who took advantage of other people's weaknesses and was willing to kill. In the month that she disappeared, her true nature was revealed, a terrible, chilling person. Amy never had a chance to be herself in front of the public and her parents. In the eyes of others, she would always be the beautiful and intelligent. "I will put on whatever personality liked by everyone." Amy was poor. She had never been truly loved, and she could only get it by means of control, even if it was false, but for her it was worth it. So anyway, the mask couldn't be taken off and the show must go on.

4. AMY'S HOME SCHOOLING

Amy is a cognitively impaired, role-obsessed player, a willful, irresponsible "monster". Who was responsible for this Amy? Her parents, no doubt, as words in the book say, "Nick looks at Amy's parents and thinks darkly, 'yes, you created this monster and set her free to harm the world.'" Amy was born in a family environment with excellent economic conditions. Her parents loved each other, and they were popular authors. The perfect couple had high hope for their only child, Amy, to be the perfect good girl. Developmental psychology believes that babies are not self-aware until they reach the age of 1, when they are taught by their parents to recognize their own features, limbs and gradually become aware of themselves. When children do not have the ability of self-evaluation, they will take the lead in using the evaluation of their parents or other important relatives to complete their self-cognition. Therefore, it is not false that parents are the first teachers of children. The child's self-consciousness is subtly influenced by parents. Amy's self-cognition error was mainly the failure of parents' education. Since birth, Amy's parents have instilled in her the sense that she was "the perfect Amy," choreographing her life and creating the wonderful, charming, all-powerful "amazing Amy". In the comics, Amy became a cello prodigy at the age of ten. She was in the college volleyball team. The magic Amy got married and so on. This "amazing Amy" was one step ahead of Amy in her life, reflecting what her parents expected of her. Amy's mother was a paranoid. In the film, when Amy went to the wedding party of "amazing Amy", her mother accused her of wearing the wrong color dress when they met. Then Amy's father appeared, and Amy hid behind Nick. These small details could show that parents who were supposed to be close didn't get along with Amy. Nick summed it up by saying, "I like your parents a lot, but they are jerks." Amy's

parents were serious, intimidating and manipulative, and Amy's childhood, arranged and forced by them, was irresistible and filled her with fear of them. All this sowed too much anger for Amy.

5. AMY'S REPRESSSION, BETRAYAL AND RESISTANCE

Amy's parents wanted her daughter to live like the character in the comics, and wanted her to become a celebrity, but it was counterproductive. Amy in life has been living under the shadow of "amazing Amy", making her feel that she was Amy, but not Amy, leading to split personality. Under her parents' strictness, Amy's unfinished self has always been suppressed. She didn't like her parents and the amazing Amy in the eye of the world, so she always confronted them in her own way. Amy in life gave up the cello when she was ten years old; she had no dogs; she dropped out of the school team when she was a freshman; she was not married. Amazing Amy was great, but she was not. When Amy chose her partner, she chose a common boy from the Midwest who came from an ordinary family. One of the reasons why Amy chose Nick was also the biggest betrayal of her parents. From an early age, Amy was forced to obey and control by her parents, so she hated being controlled. Amy's ex-boyfriend Desi could talk to her about the impressionism, and quoted the scriptures in French. It seemed that they were more suitable. Having been robbed on the way to play disappearing, Desi extended a helping hand to Amy and took her in. But Desi was strong controller. Amy couldn't control such a man. She was afraid of being transformed, just as she was afraid to live in the shadow of her parents. So after seeing Nick's tender short film on TV, she killed Desi.

6. AMY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HER PARENTS

Amy and her parents used each other. Amy's parents made the ordinary, flawed, but real Amy into a perfect, wonderful, amazing Amy and sold it to the public. They never thought about their daughter's feelings, thinking it was for Amy's good. That was how Amy got the house and the trust fund. Although she resented her parents and was jealous of the wonderful Amy, she had to cooperate with their arrangement to please them. At the wedding reception for the amazing Amy, for example, the father said, "Tonight is very important to your mother. If you could talk to a few journalists and bloggers about Amy, that would be great. People

want to hear you." At the party, mother first picked on Amy's clothes and then said, "You know how you could make your father happy." It was chilling to think that Mona, the heroine of *Sweet Home of Hell*, The protagonist Mona, with the face of an angel, calmly killed and separated the corpse, which made people shudder at the thought. Amy and Mona's adult behavior was largely influenced by parenting. For example, her father would not like it, so Mona asked her husband to mow the lawn because he paid for the house they lived in. The furniture store couldn't hire Mexicans because my father didn't like it. When her husband finally asked her about her childhood, she broke down and said she would kill him if he asked again. From a psychological point of view, human mental injury is closely related to the experience of childhood.

7. CONCLUSION

Winston Churchill once said: "Perfectionism equals paralysis. The pursuit of perfection can only lead to disability." Parents who pursue perfection too much may cause great psychological pressure on their children. The child's growth process will inevitably have some flaws and mistakes. If parents don't allow some mistakes and flaws to happen, and blindly demand perfection, they can't really understand the child and know the child. The child is very likely to become rebellious, and this piece of jade may be destroyed by you. As the saying goes, "Blemishes do not cover up", parents should focus on the advantages of the child, timely praise, and enhance the child's self-confidence. Don't demand perfection and let the child grow healthily and happily.

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