**REVIEWS**

*No Honour in Crime’ (Ære være mine døtre)*

**Review in *Dagbladet*, 18th March 2017**

**By Lene Wold**

**Published by Kagge**

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“Lene Wold’s documentary book goes right into the current debate about honour-related violence.

**What drives a father to kill?**

**This book goes right into the current debate about honour-related violence.**

Lene Wold’s book is about a young woman who is killed by her father after her younger sister has revealed that she is lesbian.

‘*I would have cut off your hands just there,’ he says, stroking his fingers over my wrist before he smiles and emphasises that that is exactly what he would have done if he had found out that I had been together with another girl.’*

That is how Wold introduces the main male character in *Ære være mine døtre* / *No Honour in Crime*. As in a well-structured novel, the first sentence already announces the theme: the conflict between women’s sexuality and men’s concepts of honour. According to the UN, there are about 5,000 honour related killings throughout the world every year.

**It affects us too**

The events in the book happen in Jordan. But we recognise the problem from descriptions of the immigrant milieu in Europe also. Deeyah Kahn won an Emmy with the documentary film about the killing of the British-Iraqi Banaz Mahood: *Banaz. a Love Story*. And Unni Wikan aroused a lot of interest with his book, *For ærens skyld* (*‘For honour’s Sake’)* about the killing of the Swedish-Kurdish Fadime Sahindal.

Honour-related violence has come onto the political agenda again in the past week, with the Norwegian government’s action plan against negative social control, forced marriage and genital mutilation. The plan was launched the very same day as the fight against honour-related violence featured in much of what was said at the procession on Women’s Day, 8th March. A problem which many of the radical left once thought difficult to take up has now become part of the ongoing political debate.

**A murderer’s account**

Wold’s perspective is however a little different from what we usually see. It is about a lesbian girl who is killed by her father and is based on six conversations over two years with the now 64 year old man. He is called ‘Rahman’ in the book, and he tells the story of why he killed his mother when he was eleven, and his oldest daughter when he had become a grown man. In addition, he has also tried to kill his youngest daughter, who escaped with her life.

Rahman’s story is not for faint hearts. It starts at the age of ten or eleven when he watches a female classmate being stoned. When his father discovers that Rahman has witnessed a barbaric execution, father is furious. Instead of protecting the boy against father’s clenched fists, mother decides to leave the family. Father sees the separation as a disgrace, and it is Rahman’s job to re-establish the family’s honour.

The central event of his account however is the killing of his daughter Aisha, and most of the book is dedicated to the story of her short life and brutal death. This is told not only by the father but also from the account Wold heard when she met the sister.

**The sister’s story**

After escaping her father’s attempt to kill her, Amina spent 13 years in prison to avoid being killed by her family. According to Jordanian law the authorities have the right to imprison threatened women and let the criminal men go free. Amina now lives at a secret address with a new name, along with her much older husband.

Her story begins attractively enough as she celebrates her sixteenth birthday on a warm summer day many years ago. Among the company are the boy she is in love with, and a girl friend who fortunately is already married. Her sister Aisha and this young woman quickly develop a close and intimate relationship, and one night Amina discovers to her horror that they are lovers. When she confides in her mother, all hell is let loose.

Despite the subtitle, *A father’s account of killing his own child*, the book consists not only of the father’s story but also but also the sister’s. Throughout the book, Wold switches effectively between their two perspectives, prior to finally comparing the two stories with each other.

**The author’s responsibility**

When Wold reports to Rahman that she has already met his daughter, he denies her permission to use his account. The author parries this by pointing out that the story is not only his, but also the daughter’s.

Wold could also with advantage have emphasised that the story is also her own. After all, it is the author, not the sources, who have responsibility for the story.

Wold trained as a journalist at The Centre for Investigative Journalism in London and has written for *The Independent* and *The Financial Times*. This book shows her to be outstanding as a capable journalist and a style-conscious author. She has spent four or five years working on the book and documenting the story of Aisha, Amina and Rahman so far as is possible, though some parts are inevitably based on only one source.

In compiling this account, she sets their story within a larger cultural, religious and legal context. She discusses men’s honour and women’s decency. Honour can always be restored but once decency is lost, it is lost for ever, she explains. Her story shows the fatal consequences of this for two young women.

*No Honour in Crime* is a well-told account which shocks, disturbs and enlightens the reader. “

**Reviewed by Marius Wulfsberg**

**NRK radio review – quotes**

*“No Honour in Crime* is a brutal but insightful read about honour killing in Jordan. Wold has travelled rigorously and extensively and done much thorough work in compiling material from many and varied sources. The mainframe of the book, however, is made up of the seven meetings with Rahman and the one meeting with his surviving daughter …

Lene Wold’s investigation into this complex problem is thorough and penetrating. So far as possible, she allows the reader to meet people on their own terms. Some of the questions even find an answer.”

**Leif Ekle, NRK P2-cultural radio**