

Book Report – My Sister’s Keeper

Title: My Sister’s Keeper

Author: Jodi Picoult

i) A brief summary of the story

13-year-old Anna ‘employed’ Campbell to sue her parents for the rights to her own body. But she is expected to donate a kidney to her sister Kate, who has leukemia (a cancer of the blood and bone marrow) and is experiencing a kidney failure.

Anna is a designer baby, born to save Kate’s life, the perfect donor match for Kate. She donated genetic materials throughout her life without hesitation.

But this major surgery made her think twice. And this is her decision.

ii) Description of the character you like/dislike most

I like Anna’s father, Brain, most. Hope is what Brain had left, so he did his best in putting out ‘household fires’: Kate’s leukemia, Jesse’s troubles, Sara’s stubbornness and Anna’s lawsuit. He tried his very best to strike a balance between them and be fair to all of them and to keep the family together.

He does what his heart told him to, but not what others expected and told him to. Unlike Sara, he consider in everyone’s perspective before making decisions. Though he is not the perfect dad, he aren’t always the one in control, he did everything for his family.

iii) Comments on the storyline / ending of the story

The idea of dividing the chapters into viewpoints of various characters is wonderful. It made the emotions that the characters expressed much more direct and easier to understand, and it can also easily explain complicated feelings, like how characters cope with their personal challenges.

I think the surprising twist of the ending was heart-wrenching, Anna died in a car crash and thus saved Kate by donating her kidney, that someone had to go and Anna took Kate’s place. The ending got my tears flowing. I think the author have really researched on the topic of cancer and donor information a great deal to make the story realistic, as genetic engineering is a highly debated issue, the book clearly expressed that there is no absolute answers in this issue.

All in all, this is an inspirational and moving book, the characters and the story manipulate readers’ emotions.

iv) Reflection on the theme of the story

Various themes are found throughout the book, and there are two I reflected on.

From the Fitzgerald's family conflicts, I learned more on family and relationships. No matter how strong the bond of sisterhood was between Kate and Anna, Anna wanted a normal life; wanted to be free and not under the shadow of Kate; wanted to be appreciated for who she is, but not of a donor. No matter how intimate this sisterhood bond goes, Anna still had to make this crucial decision that could alter their lives forever and may even tear the whole family apart. Same goes for Jesse, he tried his best to gain attention from his parents, but ended up as a rebel and rejected everyone who is too close and thinks himself worthless as he's not able to help Kate.

I think as a family, trust is the basic foundation, if there's no trust, then nothing can be accomplished in the family, every single problem should be taken out and discussed, or else the household will soon fall apart. Plus sometimes, adults should step back, relax and listen to what their children have to say, what they truly want. It's not like 'they're too small to decide for themselves', but that's their own choice and opinion, adults should trust their children and try to be honest with them.

Besides, I think everyone deserved to be treasured and respected, or else people end up as a rebel or a loner. Each person should speak their own mind and follow their hearts instead of doing what others told them to. Last but not least, no one can survive alone, from time to time, you have to rely on someone, you have to seek help from others and that's what family is for.

Morality, this is one of the major themes, in the story, there were no easy answers or exact answer for who was right or wrong, no one was sure who made a better decision for Kate. Readers may empathize or criticize Sara; feel sorry or loathe Anna. But there isn't one person who can be judged for what they think is right-minded. Sometimes you do what you think is right for you and for everyone else, but every role sees things differently, as a mother, as a doctor, as a sibling....you just don't know what the right thing is.

No one can actually be rational the whole time, no matter how much you wanted to, emotions (or love) are always in the way, love might be a complicated thing, but it's also the most simple thing on earth, a simple word of love can make a mother so stubborn that she is willingly to risk everything to save her child's life, even if that's another child's life.

The life of a human being is vulnerable but strong at the same time, how willful can a person be when he wanted to hold on! That's why everyone has to learn letting go, like Sara letting go of Kate. Sometimes death is not such a horrible thing after all. We should live a qualitative life rather than a quantitative life.