

Isp – the middle passages essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In our lives, we are always reaching out to connect with others. We are naturally and constantly searching for love and friendship. We only have a short time here on Earth, and we strive to share it, to go through all of life's experiences with a few close and completely essential people. In her novel "The Girls", Lori Lansens shows us the importance of connection in our lives, using thorough characterization and an effective plot element to tell an incredibly realistic story while illustrating our need for connection with other human beings.

Lansens' two main characters are Rose and Ruby, a pair of craniopagus twins (joined at the head). Because they share an essential vein, they can never be separated - they have a strong physical connection as well as a strong emotional one. As a result of their situation, it is necessary for Rose and Ruby to co-operate, especially when their personalities contrast as much as they do. Rose is intelligent and a writer. She also enjoys sports. Ruby likes television and celebrity gossip, and is particularly interested in a band of Natives known as Neutral Indians.

Although the sisters may occasionally argue and get mad at one another, they love each other deeply despite their differences and are always there for each other no matter what. (Literally.) The girls are raised on a farm by their adopted parents, Aunt Lovey and Uncle Stash. Aunt Lovey is a sensitive, caring woman who falls in love with the girls as she takes them to the Toronto Sick Kids' Hospital just after their birth. Above all, she despises self-pity and wants her girls to lead full lives. She challenges them because she believes that their conjoinment will ensure their survival rather than hinder it; their connection is their strength and makes them remarkable.

Aunt Lovey herself also has an essential connection with her husband, Uncle Stash - the author makes a direct comparison between the couple and the conjoined twins: In spite of their imperfect union, their different interests and language and culture, Uncle Stash and Aunt Lovey shared an essential vein and should never have been separated. Aunt Lovey had passed away in a car accident, leaving Uncle Stash empty and lost. Rose believes he could have willed himself to die there while kissing his wife's cheek. However, he passed away an entire, torturous week later. Lansens also uses an important plot element to further emphasize the connection between the girls.

At the age of thirty, Rose and Ruby are expecting their deaths due to a swelled vein in Rose's brain which could burst at any time. Such is the strength of the sisters' connection that Ruby will use a syringe of Tatrax to end her life when the vein bursts in order to die with her beloved sister. She does not blame Rose for her shortened life, but rather, appreciates the time on Earth that they've shared together. Rose returns this dedication and love in kind, her love growing throughout the novel: on the first page, she writes (for she is the fictional author of the book), " I'd live a thousand lives as me, to be loved so exponentially." On the last page, however, she adds, " One more change I might make [to the beginning of the book] is to say that I wouldn't live a thousand lives, but a million to infinity, to live the life I've lived as me.

" Ruby believes in reincarnation, and in her words: "...Rose is in all my visions and dreams about lives I've lived.

“ Although their impending deaths create new and challenging struggles for the girls, they traverse them together and their sisterly relationship grows through their troubles. Together, and with each other’s support, they learn how to accept and cope with both life and death. Their connection makes them extraordinary and ordinary, for all humans must connect with each other in order to survive. Lori Lansens writes a stirring tale about connection on levels physical and emotional, a connection so strong that it may even transcend life itself.