

My sisters keeper

Literature



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However, during the court trial, it was also the same sisterly love that made her pursue the lawsuit against her parents for medical emancipation. During her testimony in court when Campbell asked her as to who convinced her to file a lawsuit, she replied, “ Kate.” (p. 449). She recalled the time when she saw Kate holding pills, purposely to end her life (p. 460). Then, at one time, Kate convinced her not to donate her kidney by making her imagine a life where she could join hockey, go to any college she wants without having to worry about her sick sister (p. 462). Following her sister Kate’s advice of not donating her kidney, she thought of filing a case against her parents for medical emancipation.

Secondly, parents’ love for their children is a value very much evident in the novel. Sara loved Kate so much that she was willing to do everything for her daughter’s sake even to the extent of representing herself and her husband in court against her own youngest daughter’s claim for medical emancipation. Brian had been a very loving and supportive father to Anna by making her stay with him in the fire station for a couple of days as court hearing commenced. Before the hearing, Brian sympathized with her daughter Anna and vowed to take side with her, allowing her not to donate her kidney. Yet, during the trial, he burst into tears, expressing his wish for Anna to donate her kidney to save Kate’s life. That’s how strong his love was for Kate. In another incident, we also see Brian as a very loving father to Jesse when he discovered that Jesse committed arson in an elementary school near their house as all the clues were pointing to him. Yet, Brian kept it as a secret out of love for his son. This incident touched Jesse so much that he straightened up his life and later on he became a policeman (p. 499).

Thirdly, impairment of one or more children leads parents usually to have an

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idealized or negative view of the child (Family Systems Theory). In the novel, Sara and Brian had this idealized view of their child Kate, giving her more attention compared with their other children. Basically, the reason was that Kate needed medical attention the most, making other children feel less loved.

Fourthly, commitment to family members is apparent in the novel. When Julia was assigned as a guardian by the judge, she tried to discover how Anna would relate to her family, and how family members would deal with each other. Based on her initial findings, Anna loved her family that much that she was torn whether or not to continue her lawsuit.

However, that same family love made Jesse show some kind of emotional distance. Having known that he could not be a donor of blood, tissue, or anything for his sister, he resorted to drug addiction and arson. He detached himself from his family by living alone in a room isolated from their house but within their compound. These illegal activities became his escape to forget his sister's terminal illness.

Fifthly, open communication where there are trust and understanding is a secret ingredient to happy family life. Had Sara and Brian talked to Anna openly and feel her pulse, then a lawsuit could have been avoided. Ana could have been alive by then. It takes clear and open communication to keep the family intact.

Open communication also paved the way for Julia and Campbell to be reunited after Julia had discovered the real reason for Campbell's non-appearance on their dinner date, i. e. vehicular accident which damaged his brain, causing his occasional seizures.

Family systems theory is very much evident in the novel. Bowen, who

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introduced the family systems theory, suggests “ that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from one another, but rather as a part of their family, as the family is an emotional unit.” Anna’s behavior was influenced by her sister’s Kate whom she dearly loved; Brian’s, on the other hand, was also shaped by his love for his family; Sara’s actions as a mother were called for out of strong love for Kate, and this same love she expressed for Anna upon learning her death.

Similarly, Bronfenbrenner’s (1990) ecological systems particularly the microsystem are very much present in the novel. “ Microsystem refers to the first layer in the ecological system by which the child has direct contact with like family, school, and immediate environment which affects the development of the child. Bronfenbrenner believes that the primary relationship needs to be with someone who can provide a sense of caring that is meant to last a lifetime” (Paquette and Ryan, nd).

Anna, Kate, and Jesse acted in different ways due to the influences of the micro-system, their family, school, and friends. Kate felt very much loved and in the end, made her dream come true by becoming a dance instructor. Jesse after all his foolishness came to his senses and realized how much his parents loved him, thereby, making him the best policeman ever who became the number one drug buster.

The novel is truly moving and very inspiring. It’s a good read for families to strengthen more their relationships with each other. Parents will learn so much about child-rearing, on how to show their love to their children while it is not yet too late. They do not have to wait for the time that they can no longer embrace their children and say to them how much they love them just

like what happened to Sara in the novel, regretting the time she missed showing how much she loved Anna.