

What is love?

Read the text about the book 'My Sister's Keeper.'

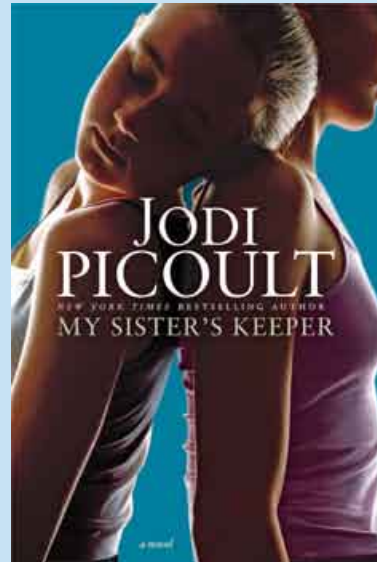
It has been made into a film. If you want, you can watch the movie trailer on YouTube.

Anna isn't sick, but you might think she was. By the age of thirteen she's had more operations, transfusions¹ and shots² than you can count, so that her older sister, Kate, won't die from the leukaemia she's had since she was two. Anna has known for a long time that she wasn't an accident like most children. She was born for a very specific reason ... so she could save her sister. She is a perfect match to Kate and she's the only one who can give her what she needs. Today they want a kidney³. Tomorrow they will want something else. This puts her life at risk, too. Nobody has ever asked Anna if it's OK to take from her to give to Kate. Now she has decided to sue⁴ her parents for the right to her own body.

Like most teenagers, Anna is trying to discover who she really is. She is thin with hair the color of dirt and freckles⁵ on her face. It's easy to not notice her. She used to play hockey, but a coach doesn't want a player who has to miss practices and games when her sister is sick. Anna never got to be a kid and she doesn't know who she is without her sister. Maybe people are nice to her only because she's the girl with the sick sister. If Kate had been healthy, maybe she wouldn't even be alive. Anna dreams that she's been cut in so many pieces and can't be put back together again.

Kate and Anna are close⁶. They fight like all sisters do, but Anna is Kate's only friend and Kate is Anna's only friend. Who wants to be friends with a girl who is dying or a girl who always has to leave and help her dying sister? Of course Anna doesn't want to lose Kate, but she wants a chance to live, too. She must choose herself or her sister. Kate's death would be the worst thing that happens to her but also the best. Even if she wins, she doesn't.

This is the story of a family that is trying to save the life of a child. But when it becomes more important than the other children's problems, each person must explore what it means to love someone, to be a good parent, to be a good sister and to be a good person. As Anna says: there is always a winner and a loser. For someone to get, someone else must give.



¹transfusion [trænz'fju:ʒn] – Infusion • ²shot [ʃɒt] – Spritze • ³kidney ['kɪdni] – Niere • ⁴to sue [su:] – verklagen • ⁵freckle ['freckl] – Sommersprosse • ⁶to be close [kləʊs] – sich nahe stehen

1 About Anna

- Make a list of things you learn about Anna and her life.
- What do you think Anna's dream in paragraph two means? How does she feel about herself?

 **2 What is love?**

Choose one of the following statements and discuss it with a partner. Decide if you agree or disagree with it and use the story as an example. Then share your ideas with the class.

Love is when you care more if someone lives than you do about yourself.

If parents put one child at risk to help another, they do not love both children equally.

When you love someone, you will do anything to keep them with you.

 3 Real talk: A disagreement

- a) Anna and her mother disagree about whether she should continue to help Kate.
Make notes on arguments for Anna and for her mother.
- b) Now write a dialogue between Anna and her mother.

Lösungen

Lösungsvorschläge Seite 1

1

- a) Anna is thirteen years old. She was born because her sister needed someone who could help her get well. Anna has always given Kate what she needed but now she doesn't want to any more. She used to play hockey but had to stop because she was always in hospital when Kate needed something. Anna loves her sister and wants her to live, but she also wants to be like other children who play hockey and have friends. She wants to be her own person, not just part of her sister.
- b) Her dream means that she feels like her parents and her sister are taking pieces of her and she can't be a whole person.

Lösungsvorschläge Seite 2

2

Individuelle Schülerlösungen

3

- a) Mother: Anna only person who can help Kate; if Anna doesn't help Kate, she will die; Anna not a good sister if she doesn't help Kate; Anna doesn't love her sister enough; only thinks about herself; not important that Anna gets to be a normal kid, more important that Kate lives.
Anna: painful; risk of becoming sick or dying; it's her own decision because it's her body; she will not be able to do what other teenagers do; won't have friends; won't be able to play on a hockey team; Kate will probably die anyway; sometimes love means letting go.

b)

Mother: Anna, you must help your sister because she's dying. You're the only one who can help her.

Anna: I know, Mom. I don't want her to die, but I'm afraid of becoming sick myself or even dying during the operation.

Mother: That won't happen. The doctors say it isn't very dangerous. But even if you are sick for a while, isn't it more important that your sister lives?

Anna: But it's my body and my life. That's important, too. Nobody asked me if it was OK.

Mother: We couldn't ask you when you were younger. And we thought you would want to help your sister. You're very important for her.

Anna: But what about me? I can't do the things I want to do because I'm always at the hospital. I want to be a normal teenager.

Mother: How can those things be more important to you? How will you feel if she dies? You won't be able to enjoy your activities because you'll know you could have helped your sister.

Anna: I know. It's not an easy decision. But I don't think Kate wants me to just be there to help her. I think she wants me to be happy. And she's going to die anyway.