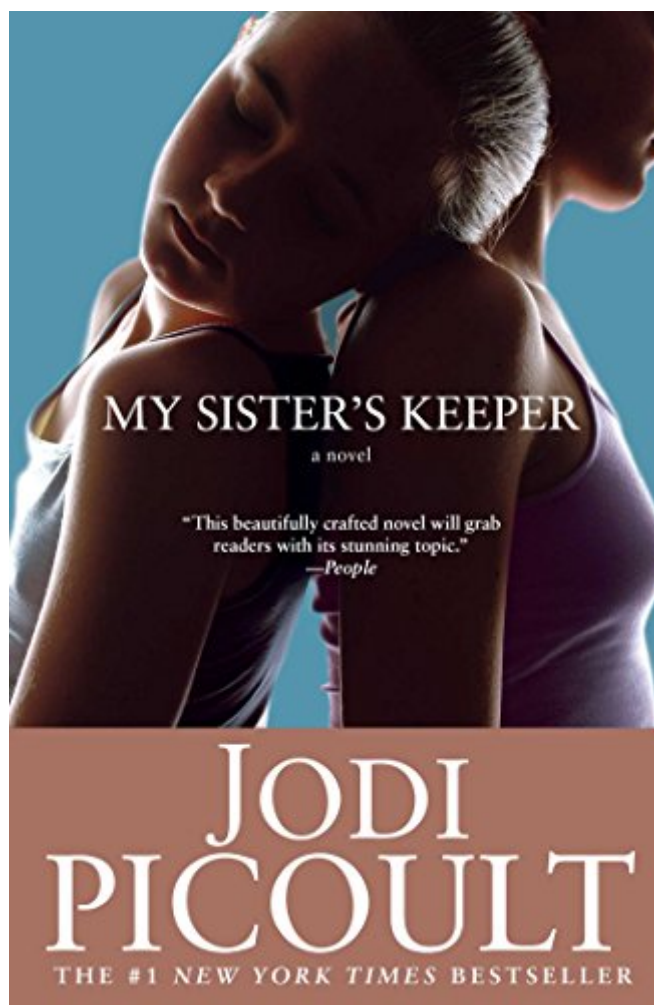


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# My Sister's Keeper: A Novel (Wsp Readers Club)



## Synopsis

New York Times bestselling author Jodi Picoult tells the story of a girl who decides to sue her parents for the rights to her own body in this powerful family drama that tackles a controversial subject with grace and explores what it means to be a good person. Anna is not sick, but she might as well be. By age thirteen, she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots so that her older sister, Kate, can somehow fight the leukemia that has plagued her since childhood. The product of preimplantation genetic diagnosis, Anna was conceived as a bone marrow match for Kate—a life and a role that she has never challenged...until now. Like most teenagers, Anna is beginning to question who she truly is. But unlike most teenagers, she has always been defined in terms of her sister—and so Anna makes a decision that for most would be unthinkable, a decision that will tear her family apart and have perhaps fatal consequences for the sister she loves. *My Sister's Keeper* examines what it means to be a good parent, a good sister, a good person. Is it morally correct to do whatever it takes to save a child's life, even if that means infringing upon the rights of another? Is it worth trying to discover who you really are, if that quest makes you like yourself less? Should you follow your own heart, or let others lead you? Once again, in *My Sister's Keeper*, Jodi Picoult tackles a controversial real-life subject with grace, wisdom, and sensitivity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jodi Picoult has masterfully covered yet another controversial topic in her novel "My Sister's Keeper." This time, young Kate is diagnosed with a severe form of leukemia. Her parents then have a baby, Anna, who is genetically selected to be a close donor match for Kate. From her birth onward into her early teens, Anna is called upon to undergo increasingly invasive and dangerous procedures to provide blood, bone marrow, and other tissues to sustain her older sister's life. Now, a kidney is needed, and Anna brings a lawsuit against her parents, claiming the right to her make own decision about what medical procedures can be performed on her. Anna's mother Sara, an attorney, decides to represent her own daughter Kate at the trial. There are some very difficult questions raised in this story. Does Anna have the obligation to risk her own health to save her sister? Do her parents have the right to make the medical decisions about Anna's donor role, and where should their loyalties lie? Where is the fine line between what is legal and what is ethical in a situation like this? There seem to be no right or wrong answers here, and the ensuing trial recounts all the physical, moral, psychological, and familial struggles that are brought to bear on the issue. Picoult paints a powerfully emotional picture of a family in turmoil. She adds additional tension to the story through brother Jesse, whose drug taking and criminal tendencies add even more burdens to an already overwrought situation. The story also includes the love/hate relationship between Anna's lawyer and her legal guardian.

Dear God, how I hated the characters in this book. I read My Sister's Keeper after reading a blurb about it. The topic fascinated me: what would a child conceived to "save" a sibling think as they grew older? Especially if the "saving" part went on and on and on. The books starts with that child, Anna, going to a lawyer to get out of her role as genetic donor on call. So far, so good. It's a soapy, Lifetime movie idea but I've nothing against a soapy story. Middlemarch and War and Peace have their soapy elements too. The problem isn't the soapiness, it's that Picoult keeps adding the soap, piling on sub-plots and adding quirks to her characters until, frankly, I wanted to kill them myself. You'll rarely find a less likable group of characters than the adults on display in this book. Campbell Alexander, the lawyer Anna hires, is standard issue "selfish, self-absorbed, morally questionable attorney who only wants to win." His quirk is that he has a service dog but HE ISN'T BLIND. Gee, I

wonder what the reason could be. Seriously, is there anyone with half a brain who can't think of the one other reason an adult would have a service dog? There must be loads because Picoult treats this as a big mystery even though every chapter from Campbell's point of view has him telling someone that "Judge" (get it, a lawyer with a dog named "Judge"? Wow.) is a service dog. I wish that Judge's service job would have been to bite Campbell on the leg everytime Campbell said the words "service dog" or at least to chomp on him whenever he was a jerk but, alas, Judge just trots around witnessing this silliness. Then there's Julia Romano, Anna's court appointed guardian and Campbell's old flame. What are the chances that these two would see each other again after he dumped her?

I am a living kidney donor, and hoped this book would raise awareness. However, it so misrepresents the medicine and ethics of living organ donation that I was completely disgusted. First of all, no one can be forced to donate organs. The ethics are very clear that the DONOR'S interests are primary, not the recipient's, regardless of a family's wishes. The transplant team grilled me very thoroughly about my motives and desire to donate, and repeatedly offered me opportunities to withdraw, right up to the last minute. If I had backed out, the recipient would simply have been told that the staff had eliminated me as a donor candidate based on medical concerns. No one would know that I simply did not want to donate, and no one would try to convince me to donate. My surgeon made it clear that he represented my interests, not the recipient's. This is all standard procedure -- the accepted ethical practices of living organ donation. It isn't easy for an adult to volunteer to donate and make it through screening, and it is almost impossible for a minor. I participated in a living donor website for years, and many who posted were minors who wanted to donate to a parent or sibling, and were refused flat out -- not even evaluated. A more honest novel might have a minor going to court to get permission to donate! Further, you don't need an exact genetic match for a kidney or solid organ, the way you do for bone marrow. The anti-rejection drugs are so good that parents, other relatives, friends or a total stranger could perfectly well donate a kidney -- no need to force a child to do it. I was a zero match for my recipient and the kidney has been going strong for years now with no problems.

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