Deep End Of The Ocean Essay, Research Paper

The Deep End of the Ocean was a universal story of traumatic loss and its effects on individuals and families. Penguin Group published The Deep End of the Ocean by Jacquelyn Mitchard in New York, N.Y. in 1996. The book was compelling, heartbreaking, touching, and wonderfully written. Once one picked this book up, putting it down would be impossible, it will keep one up until all hours of the night. It was fiction and in some senses, realistic fiction. Even though when one thought about it, the possibilities of it truly occurring, was slim. Beth the mother, Pat the father, Vincent the eldest son, Ben the middle child, and Kerry the youngest made up the Cappadora family of five. The event, which changed the course of everyone s lives forever, took place in Chicago. Originally the family lived in Madison, but chose to move to Chicago. It was very hard for Beth to move there after the kidnaping. Chicago was where the Cappadora family restaurant was and where Beth and Pat s family lived. It was also the place where Ben was found. Chicago was a place of endings and a place of beginnings. Beth was a dynamic character. She was not the best parent before the kidnaping. She favored Ben over Vincent and Kerry, and would not deny it. Beth loved them all, but liked Ben more because he was easier to love. It seemed like she would always take the shortcut if it were at all possible. Beth lost nine years of her life when Ben was kidnaped. She went through life like a robot, in motions, and with no feeling. It had hurt her even to think about Ben for a full minute. Because of this, Beth had built a structure of life where she never had to think about Ben. If she let the structure move, even an inch, everything would come tumbling down and not let her escape. Beth was not a real mother to Vincent or Kerry after the kidnaping. She did do the best she can, though it wasn t much. All Beth could bear to do, was her work as a photographer, and even that was in mechanical motions. When Sam entered their lives again, Beth was rejuvenated. She woke up from a nine-year sleep.Vincent was the one who let go of Ben s hand. He told Ben to Get lost. Vincent was just being a child, sick of holding his little brother s hand, while his mother was off having fun. It was not his fault. It would take a long while for Vincent to realize this. Ben was lost for nine years and Vincent carried this memory unconsciously for that time. It was not until Ben reappeared that this memory surfaced to haunt Vincent. Vincent was angry at the world all his life. He could never quite figure out exactly who it was he was mad at and never tried. Vincent had always wanted to obtain and retain his mother s love. Beth had always tried to prove her love to Vincent before Ben was kidnaped, but Vincent would always hold back. After Ben was gone, she stopped trying. When Vincent was young, he was resentful, impatient, and unforgiving. None of this changed until Ben came back into their lives. Vincent was a dynamic character. When Ben returned, Vincent remembered how things happened when Ben was kidnaped. He remembered that he let Ben s hand go and that he told him to Get lost. Vincent was mad at himself and felt guilty because he felt like Beth blamed him. Vincent was pleased when Ben was found, but he did not express it.Ben was the son who was kidnaped at age three. When Ben was a child, Beth had nothing bad to say about him. He was patient, accommodating, had good humor and faith, and he was the opposite of Vincent. Ben was a dynamic character. Ben was kidnaped but thankfully not tortured or harmed, he had a happy childhood. Ben was brought up as Sam Karras, by a mother and father figure. The mother, Cecile was the one who kidnaped him. She was mentally ill and got so sick that her husband, George had to take care of Sam himself. After all of the police work and searching Beth was the one to find Ben. At first Sam did not understand what was going on. All he knew were the parents with whom he grew up. The Cappadoras were strangers to him. After getting to know the Cappadora family, Sam still wanted to be with George. He did not say anything because he did not want to hurt the Cappadoras. Out of the whole family he felt the most attachment to Vincent. Sam went from being polite to the family, to genuinely loving the family and wanting to be with them. This only happened after the pressure was gone and he could breathe on his own. Pat was the brick and foundation of the family. He held up everything while Beth was off in her own world of semi consciousness. Pat was a static character. Pat s motto was Everything is going to be okay, or else. Pat gave up on Beth throughout the nine-year struggle, but never on anyone else in the family, including Ben.Kerry was the youngest child. She did not have any memories of Ben. She was not even a year old when Cecile kidnaped Ben. Kerry was a static character. She did not understand why Ben did not want to live with them and why he did not love them. Throughout her life she was happy and unaffected by the surrounding publicity and tension in which she grew up. Kerry grew up without her mom completely there. She got a real mom for the first time when Ben returned home. Kerry received two complete people at once.Candy was a static character. She was a detective and life long friend to the Cappadoras. Candy brought them through all of the body identifications and the trauma that surrounded the life of every Cappadora. She was the stone protecting the brick. George, the foster father was a static character. Cecil, the foster mother was a static character. Cecil was the mentally ill kidnapper. Ben was kidnaped at Beth s fifteenth high school reunion in Chicago. Vincent was in charge of holding his hand. Vincent let go and told Ben to Get lost. Ben was not found for nine years. The family went through turmoil and tornadoes. Beth was not all there in the head, during the duration of those nine years, to her husband, children, or family. Vincent grew up yearning for his mother s love and became a delinquent. Pat tried to hold the family together. Beth and Pat stopped genuinely living in a marriage. They only coexisted in the household. Beth could not move on and would not let anyone move on without her. Deep inside, Pat blamed Beth for losing Ben that fateful June day in 1985. After five years of staying in Madison, they moved to Chicago. Beth did not want to do this, but she felt guilty for holding them back all of those years. She had been a lousy wife and she owed him and the kids. Four years later a boy knocked on the door. Kerry answered it. Beth followed her, when she saw the boy s face, she almost fainted. Beth was gripping for furniture to hold her up. She recognized the boy, BEN! Beth asked Kerry the boy s name and where he lived. The boy s name was Sam Karras and he lived two blocks away. Beth took pictures of the boy and showed them to Candy. When Vincent came home, the cops were sitting around the table. Beth got up to ask Vincent if he had ever seen the boy. He said that he had watched him play street hockey after school, he didn t know why, he was just drawn to him, and he did not know it was Ben. Beth then asked him how long he had noticed Sam. Vincent had been watching him since they moved to Chicago, four years! Beth never went out of the house and Pat was always at the family restaurant. They had been oblivious to their own son, down the street for four years.Sam was brought to the Cappadoras, where he was known as Ben. Sam had been staying with George, whom he thought to be his father. The Cappadora family had a hard time calling him Sam. Whether it was memory or deliberate, no one ever knew. The kidnapper was a woman Beth and Pat had gone to school with. Cecile, was mentally ill and had just lost a baby a few weeks before she kidnaped Ben. At the time she genuinely thought that Ben was hers. George was never the wiser. Sam stayed with the Cappadoras for three months, he was polite but not happy. Sam had been sneaking out at night and going to his old bed at George s house. Beth and Pat found out and sent him to his room. Sam told them that he didn t know why he couldn t live with George, he had tried to live with the Cappadoras for three months, and he was sorry. Beth was sad and Pat told him that it was too bad, he was their son, and he would live there.

Later that day Beth told Pat that they had to give Sam back to George. It was like the characters were reversed and they were the kidnappers now. She told him Sam was not happy. They were only hurting him. He was Sam now and not their three-year-old Ben. Beth told Pat that she would do what she had to do, with or without him. Pat said he would have nothing to do with it. Beth returned Sam to George. The Cappadora family was not happy and returned to the mental state they were in before Sam s appearance in their lives. One late night Vincent heard a basketball bouncing outside his window. He looked down and it was Sam. Vincent went down and the two boys played a few rounds. Vincent was telling him goodnight and that he would see him later, when Sam told him he was not going back to George s. Vincent was suspicious and asked if George knew about this. Sam told him yes, George knew. The two of them started to drag the suitcase to the house when suddenly Vincent dropped it. Vincent blurted out the truth about what had happened the day Ben had been kidnaped. He told Ben how he let go of his hand and told him to Get lost. Sam just shrugged it off, it did not matter to him anymore, it was over. They went inside to the house. Together they decided that they would not wake up their parents. They would wait until morning and everything would work itself out. The point of view was third person. The novel being in third person definitely had an effect. In this situation getting the point of view from everyone was necessary to see what each character saw. One could feel Vincent s pain, Beth s unconsciousness, Pat s stability, Kerry s oblivion, and Ben s confusion and struggle. The story would not have been complete if one were to only know and feel one side. The ending of the book left something to be desired. It ended without closure. It left me feeling insecure and vulnerable. When the book finished all I could think about was Where is the next chapter? At the end, the parents did not know that their child was home to stay, of his own free will. A reader would feel closure if the parents were happy and their minds were finally put to rest. Maybe the author was creating an ulterior ending to the traditional happy ending, but it seemed incomplete. The Deep End of the Ocean by Jacquelyn Mitchard was made into a movie. Usually people tend to think a book is better in all assets, compared to the movie. In this situation the movie gives the audience closure and happiness. The parents see their two children reunite at last and know that both sons long lost in different ways are back to stay. Beth and Pat are again in a real marriage, they love each other, and can be happy together. The movie s ending in contrast with the book s ending is quite superior.Ben became Sam at the deep end of the ocean. As a child, Ben had always been afraid of the deep end of the ocean. He would not even go close to the shallow end without Beth. There is no deep end of the ocean, that s the shore. And it goes on and on, all along here, for miles, you have to go out and out a long way before it gets deep(pg.59). Beth said this to Ben when he was little. Ben had gone so far into the deep end without Beth and his family that he had to return alone, with the tide. No outside help from his family could help him. The help would only push him deeper. One can go to the deep end of the ocean, but what happens is one just keeps walking. One walks until it is over ones head and one keeps walking on the bottom. If one wants to turn back it is too hard because the water wipes away all the footprints. One can never turn around and find the same way back to where one was.One can turn around. One just may not come back the same way. One must try harder to get back, than to go out. It is a long journey that one must make on their own and create their own path of belonging, and who they are. There was a deep end of the ocean. Ben had gone there, and he had not come back. They could never go there with him, or know what he had experienced, or truly understand what had made him. They could only see the result . . . he had walked out Sam Karras, a fine boy any parent would be proud to have raised; but Beth and Pat had not(pg.383). Beth thought to herself as she contemplated returning Ben to George. The person that goes to the deep end goes there alone. No one can skip the journey to the deep end and meet there. A person cannot skip the journey and the time at the deep end and travel only back to shore. No one can be a part of any of it. They can only see what happens when the person is done, when they emerge. Beth, Pat, and Vincent could not be with Sam during those times, they could only see him as they saw him in the present and go from there. They could not dwell on what he had been before he submerged. Beth did not excel in motherhood after Ben s kidnaping. The mourning overtook her and she was not able to be a mother to her other children. Beth dealt with her feelings of helplessness by giving up on life and hope. It was the easiest way for her to deal with things. Pat was the only one who kept the family together while they were falling apart. He sewed them back repeatedly, but always only temporarily. Nothing can heal them but the closure of Ben. Vincent felt guilty because he was the one who let Ben go. When Ben came back, Vincent was covert, shy, inattentive, drawn back, angry, and sad. Beth, Pat, Vincent, and Ben all went through processes of regaining life as they have always wanted, never knew they wanted, or never knew existed when Ben returned. The unspoken ancient bond forgotten between Vincent and Ben was brought out to save the family. Love was something that Vincent held onto. He yearned for the love and attention of his mother. He craved it and wished it were his, in spite of what he had done. Beth loved Ben like a child loves a puppy, uncontrollably and unquestionably. Beth wished for her past love with Pat to rekindle, as did Pat. They all wanted love in their lives. They had never had that complete love without the fifth member of the family. When Ben came home, he was confused about whom to love and he struggled. Loss is a constant in this book between Ben, Vincent, Beth, the extended family, love, togetherness, and control. Everyone in the family loses. When one person loses, they all lose and when one person wins, they all win.Never give up hope, there is always hope, never give up, life is never over, there is always tomorrow, life goes on, and it will be okay . . . eventually are all things that Pat believed in. The author was telling the readers to do exactly this. Pat followed these things in those nine years that Ben was gone. Beth did the opposite of these, frankly she gave up. This is what the author is saying not to do. By saying I believe in hope, one is saying I believe in me.