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LENS 1: Reader-response

YALit

February 7, 2012

***King of Shadows***

In *King of Shadows,* Cooperconnects modern day to Shakespeare’s time of the Elizabethan era. Nathan Field, known as Nat, is forced to deal with emotions that he has been holding in for quite some time. Not only does Nat deal with his feelings, but also his passion of the performing arts. When Nat dwindled into a “dream”, his body, mind and soul went with him into another realm of Shakespearian time.

While reading *King of Shadows,* I felt as if I was acting as Nat. I connected to his character on a strong emotional level. Nat lost both of his parents, one due to natural causes and the other a horrific incident of suicide. Slipping into Shakespeare’s time, Nat somehow traded places with a Nathan Field of that era, giving him the grand opportunity of working and getting to know the infamous idol of his, William Shakespeare. Reading *King of Shadows* I felt Nat’s longing to have a father figure in his life. I also felt how he bottled up his emotions, keeping everything inside, and not letting anyone in. Nat had a very strong connection to Shakespeare, not only from acting out his work, but I believe Nat looked up to him and connected with him on a level that he hasn’t connected with anyone since his parents died. Shakespeare had a kind heart, and Nat felt that. Nat desired to live with Shakespeare forever, sustaining the father figure that he grew to be for Nat.

My parents divorced when I was five, in turn leaving my mother with sole custody of one of my brothers and I, and my dad with custody of my eldest brother… splitting our, what was a, close family. It was very hard for me since my family was so close. Not only did I lose my dad, but my one of my brothers too. I was still allowed to visit every other weekend, but it never felt to be enough. I feel as if I missed out on that strong father-daughter connection. I have lived with my dad for the past six years, and I still feel robbed of that connection that kindles when a child is young. My dad and I are two very different people, and it’s hard to connect with him on an emotional level. He doesn’t say “I love you” like most parents do, the last time he did was when the doctor thought that he may have prostate cancer and he was afraid of losing his life. I keep my emotions to myself as Nat did. My way of coping with emotions is to merely forget them and surround myself with various other things that keep my mind far away.

As Nat longed for the connection with Shakespeare, I long for that connection with my own father. I think there are many young adult learners that have had divorce in their family, and may be able to relate to Nat’s character as I did. Young adults can also relate to the concept of death and the emotions that come with it. Nat is on an emotional roller coaster throughout the story. We all go through various emotions that life throws at us, this makes the story so relatable to the reader.