



Ashley Coleman

Challenge #7- Exploring Gender

2/26/22

Isaiah Dunn is My Hero By: Kelly J. Baptist

Character: Isaiah Dunn is a 10 year-old, whose family struggles to regroup after the father dies suddenly. His dad was a writer who left behind a notebook that Isaiah reads for comfort. In his father's stories, Isaiah is cast as a hero.

- What personality traits and behaviors show us that this character conforms to gender stereotypes?
 - Isaiah loves writing poems but he has written many poems in a year. The only people that know he writes poems are his parents.
 - Isaiah loves the idea as a “superhero” like how his dad has written stories about him depicting him as one.

“ I thought it was cool that he wrote about me as a superhero”.

“If he knew I’d know to be a hero for real, and that’s why he wrote the stories he did”.
 - Isaiah had to step up to be the man of the house after his death. In the book there are some moments where Isaiah feels he has to provide for his family and has to support them financially as well.

“ But she’s wrong. I’m worrying about getting a job right now”.

“ I know the prize money isn’t as much as first place, but will still help”.

- Isaiah does not like to express his emotions and he tries to avoid talking about them at point. This can turn into a stereotype of not being able to show emotion because that can be a sign of weakness.

“In the future, we really need you to say something”.

- What personality traits and behaviors show us that this character rejects gender stereotypes?

- Isaiah to read and write poetry. This is not a trait that is really not given by a male character.

“For some reason, I like poems. Nobody knows that except Mama and Daddy, and maybe Charlie”.

- Isaiah is passionate about having financial support for his family and to be able to take on the father figure role. Sometimes Isaiah is the one that takes care of his younger sister in place of their mother.

“Mama lays in bed all day, which means I have to look out for Charlie”.

“ I help Charlie wash up and put on her pj’s, and then I put on mine”.

When they were living in the Smoky Inn Isaiah would watch Charlie while mama drank in the bed.

- While Isaiah was working at the barbershop and winning prize money, he still had that feeling that he was not able to support his family.

“ She doesn’t have that money anymore. And I don’t have my money anymore, or I could’ve saved us. I could be the superhero that his dad wrote about. But I’m not that.

- How do others respond to this character? Do their responses help the character conform or reject the gender stereotypes?
 - Charlie (Isaiah's little sister) helps him to influence his identity as a hero in the book set of the time. She admires her older brother.
"Yeah, She says. Isaiah Dunn is my hero".
 - Isaiah's mom supports and questions his identity as a provider. She understood why Isaiah wanted to provide for his family but he just a young boy. All that responsibility shouldn't be all on him.
"I'm very proud of you", Mama says. "You're an amazing big Brother and the best son I could ever want and have."
 - Rock (Isaiah boss) at the barbershop. His boss think that he is so focused on working to make money to provide for his family.
"It's not your job to be your dad. You being Isaiah is enough to make her proud, and your dad would be proud too."
- How does this character contribute to or change a social construction of gender?
 - Isaiah gives the readers hope and a story that changes the general stereotypes with men and younger boys. He gives insight to learning to express your emotions. Isaiah doesn't like showing emotions like when he cries he hates it and it's hard for him to communicate when things are hard. When Isaiah writes his poems that help him to express his emotions in his poems. Also, that helps me to deal with things that are going on around him. In books male characters are represented emotionally strong and that doesn't show their feelings.

- Which gender stereotypes are most frequently reinforced by characters in books, and why?
 - In most books the stereotypes starts to follow female characters and how they are family oriented. Also, how they have great relationships and friendships. In most novels men are the heroes and the women are very supportive. That's because mens always the one that provides for the family while women are the ones that nurtures others. After reading this book, Isaiah has shown that those stereotypes are not real, a male character can be a provider and nurturer. He provided for his family and supported, help raise his little sister.
- Which gender stereotypes are most frequently resisted by characters in books, and why?
 - The most frequently resisted by a character is the female in novels to imagine strictures on her real life. Men are encouraged to become men in both novels and life. Women are forced to rise above being a woman. Women strive to be more man-like and are condemned when they are on male characteristics aggression, ambition, etc.
- How do you wish young adult books were different in terms of how they contribute to the social construction of gender?
 - I wish that young adults books were different about social construction of gender because they try to put responsibility on one gender and how that one gender is supposed to be and do for others. Gender role socialization begins at birth and continues throughout the life course. Our society is quick to outfit male infants in blue and pink, even applying these color-coded gender labels while a baby is in the womb.

