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ENG 2D1

Date

Sample Grade 10 ISP Essay

The Power of Many

People do not develop in isolation. Individuals are simply too complex to be the result of one place, or person. Rather, an individual becomes the result of the many people, places, and events that they experience as they move through their lives. For example, Bryce Courtenay's, *The Power of One* shows how Peekay—the novel's protagonist—develops as a result of the many relationships in his life. In particular, the influence of three characters are especially important in his development as a young man. The first character to influence Peekay is Geel Piet who facilitates Peekay's development as a boxer, and shows Peekay that both racism and pessimism can be used to his advantage. Peekay is also influenced by his pet chicken, Grandpa Chook who teaches Peekay the value of friendship and how to survive in hostile environments. Finally, Karl von Vollenstein (affectionately called "Doc") influences Peekay to be both a better person and boxer when he sparks an interest in learning for Peekay, when he teaches Peekay not to be afraid to ask questions, and when he becomes a father-like figure for Peekay. Clearly, Peekay's development as a boxer and person is a result of the other people in his life.

Peekay's development as a boxer—and also as a human—is a product of his relationship with the first coloured man he ever met, Geel Piet. First, Geel Piet's coaching inspires Peekay to pursue his goal of being the welterweight champion in boxing. Peekay comments that he "had absorbed a great deal over the past two years and even more over the six weeks Geel Piet had

been coaching” (224). Geel shows Peekay a number of punches that he uses to defeat his opponents, becoming successful both in and out of the ring. Without Geel Piet’s influence, Peekay might not have continued with his boxing. Additionally, Geel Piet’s “colouredness” makes it possible for Peekay to be aware of the harmful effects of racism. When Peekay looks at a picture of Geel being alienated from a group of white people, he “understands with conviction that racism is a primary force of evil designed to destroy good men” (275). Although Peekay experiences racism throughout his entire life, it is the absolute unfairness of how other treat Geel Piet that leads Peekay to not just boxing, but fighting *for* “The People” of Africa. Even though Peekay is white, the people of African see him as their angel, all because of the effect that Geel Piet had on him. Thirdly, “Geel Piet [teaches Peekay] to anticipate the problems likely to occur in any situation and to review the answers to them long before disaster struck” (371). From Geel Piet, Peekay learns how to deal with inconvenient situations, which helps Peekay in his boxing because he can assess a problem sooner which helps him resolve it sooner, giving him an edge on his opponents. Evidently, Geel Piet is a major influence on Peekay’s development as a boxer and as a human being.

End of sample. Three paragraphs to follow.

Work Cited

Courtenay, Bryce. *The Power of One*. Toronto: McArthur & Company, 2008.