

Ally Blanton

Mrs. Graning

English 11

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*Me Before You*

*Me Before You* is a book written by JoJo Moyes and it mostly takes place at the Pembroke Castle in the United Kingdom. Two years prior, Will was in an automobile accident leaving him trapped in a wheelchair as a quadraplegic. Tired of relying on everyone else's help, and tired of all the hospital trips and medical problems that he can't control, Will decides that he is ready for all of his struggles to come to an end. He finally tells his parents that he wants to go to Switzerland and do an assisted suicide. Even though she agreed to do what he wanted, Mrs. Traynor tries desperately to find the perfect person to change his mind and make him want to live. With only six months left, she interviewed multiple people and decided on a young girl who she felt had the capability to change Will's mind. The protagonist, twenty-six year old Louisa Clark, is a bright and bubbly person who evolves through overcoming her past, learning to be with a different personality, and appreciating her life for how it is.

From the beginning of the book, Lou began to overcome her past when she went to work for Will Traynor. One of Louisa's major milestones for coming out of her shell was her getting a tattoo with Will, even though her parents didn't like tattoos, and it was on a whim. In chapter 15, Will was attempting to get Lou to try something she had never done before when he suggested she go back and get a tattoo since they passed a parlor on their way back to the Castle. When he brought up the idea, she did not want to get a tattoo but he insisted and even said he would get

one if she did, which made her get one (Moyes 212). This shows Will's interest in getting Louisa to try new things, even if it means he has to do them with her. In a similar manner, Will helps her again while she was trapped in the maze. At the end of chapter 17, Will convinced Lou to go in the maze to see if she would be able to get back out by retracing her steps, but he was unaware of the past experience she had in the maze. While she was in the maze, she started hallucinating about being drunk with the group of people she thought were her friends, and called Will for help, and he got her out and let her know that what happened in the past was not her fault, even though her sister thought otherwise (Moyes 241-248). This was a great part of the story because it was one of the few times we saw Will care for Lou, and him telling her it was not her fault made her feel better. The author uses these experiences as a way of bringing Will and Lou closer together, but also as a way of showing how much that experience affected her in the past.

One thing that was hard for Lou to get comfortable with was spending all day with someone she could not understand how to get along with because of how different their personalities were. During the time she spent at his house she tried to get closer to Will by using the same type of humor as him and watching movies together even if they sound boring. Will tells Louisa "You have to watch this film...You sit there and don't move until it is over." When the movie ended he asked her if she enjoyed it and Lou said "You're going to gloat now, aren't you?" (Moyes 64). This scene shows Will showing Lou a film she would not usually pick out on her own and yet she actually enjoyed it. Despite that, Will did not like when Lou tried to make plans for them to go out without discussing it with him. He told her "Miss Clark, my life is not going to be significantly improved by a drive around Stortfold's country lanes" (Moyes 39). Will said this only because Lou was trying to make plans assuming he would love to go. Although Lou and Will live very different lives, they both managed to help each other in their own ways.

Seeing how much Will's accident affected him not only physically but also mentally made Lou and the people around have a different type of appreciation for how her life is.

Spending almost every single day with Will, Lou saw a different perspective for how life could be. After working for Will for close to two weeks this is what Lou thought about Will's situation, "I thought he was the saddest person I had ever met. And as the days went by and I realized that his condition was not just a matter of being stuck in that chair, of the loss of physical freedom, but a never-ending litany of health problems, of risks and discomforts, I decided that if I were Will, I would probably be miserable too," (Moyes 45). Lou saying this is almost like her way of showing that she feels sympathetic for him even though he has been rude to her since they met. On the other hand, when they took their final trip together and Lou found out Will was still going to Switzerland after all they had been through, she stated she was done and would not be going with him. In her mind, that was the moment she did something for herself and not someone else. When they arrived at the airport she told Mrs. Traynor, "I'd like to hand in my notice...I can't do these last few days." (Moyes 333). Lou knew she was going to be upset but it didn't matter to her because she was doing something for herself and not for the Traynors. Considering everything she went through, she found a new appreciation for life and lived for herself.

Through the entirety of the book Lou managed to handle the comings of her past, finding ways to get along and understand Will, being as stubborn as he was, and appreciate all of the challenges brought by her life. This book demonstrates how horrible things can greatly affect people's lives if they let it happen. In summary, people should always live their lives to the fullest because nobody ever knows what is going to happen next.

Works Cited

Moyes, Jojo. *Me Before You*. Penguin Books, 2012.

Schillinger, Liesl. "Cost of Care." *The New York Times*, 4 January 2013,

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