

ME BEFORE YOU

by Jojo Moyes

Synopsis of the Author

Jojo Moyes (*born 4 August 1969*) is an English journalist and, since 2002, a romance novelist and screenwriter. She is one of only a few authors to have twice won the Romantic Novel of the Year Award by the Romantic Novelists' Association and has been translated into *twenty-eight languages*.



Life and early career

Pauline Sara-Jo Moyes was born on 4 August 1969 in Maidstone, England. Before attending university, Moyes held several jobs: she was a typist at NatWest typing statements in braille for blind people, a brochure writer for Club 18-30, and a minicab controller for a brief time. While an undergraduate at Royal Holloway, University of London, Moyes worked for the Egham and Staines News. Moyes won a bursary financed by The Independent newspaper which allowed her to attend the postgraduate newspaper journalism course at City University in 1992. She subsequently worked for The Independent for the next 10 years (except for one year, when she worked in Hong Kong for the Sunday Morning Post) in various roles, becoming Assistant News Editor in 1998. In 2002 she became the newspaper's Arts and Media Correspondent.

Writing career

Early in her writing career, Moyes wrote three manuscripts that were all initially rejected. With one child, another baby on the way, and a career as a journalist, Moyes committed to herself that if her fourth book was rejected, she would stop her efforts. After submitting the first three chapters of her fourth book to various publishers, six of them began a bidding war for the rights.

Moyes became a **full-time novelist in 2002**, when her first book ***Sheltering Rain*** was published. She continues to write articles for The Daily Telegraph.

Moyes' publisher, Hodder & Stoughton, did not take up the novel *Me Before You* and Moyes sold it to Penguin. It sold six million copies, went to number one in nine countries, and reinvigorated her back catalogue resulting in three of her novels being on the New York Times bestseller list at the same time. Moyes would later write two sequels starring Louisa Clark, the protagonist of *Me Before You*: *After You* in 2015 and *Still Me* in 2018.

In 2013, it was announced that Michael H. Weber and Scott Neustadter had been hired to write an adaptation of *Me Before You*.

In 2016, the film adaptation *Me Before You* was released and the screenplay was written by Moyes.

Moyes now looks back on those first seven novels written prior to *Me Before You*, and how it was discouraging to have seven novels in the market that were not doing well. After *Me Before You* took off, Moyes says that "people turned to the backlist" (those first seven books) and began purchasing and reading them as well, giving Moyes a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Bibliography

Moyes' works are *Sheltering Rain* (2002), *Foreign Fruit* (aka 'Windfallen') (2003), *The Peacock Emporium* (2004), *The Ship of Brides* (2005), *Silver Bay* (2007), *Night Music* (2008), *The Horse Dancer* (2009), *The Last Letter from Your Lover* (2010), *Me Before You* (2012), *Honeymoon in Paris* (2013) ebook, *The Girl You Left Behind* (2013), *One Plus One* (2014), *After You* (2015), *Paris for One* (2016), and *Still Me* (2018).

I. Settings

(TIME)

The story all started ***Year 2007*** (Introducing the second main character's life before the tragedy. Will leaving his girlfriend, Alicia, in bed and heading out the door for his job as a high-powered financier. Will decides not to take his motorbike, because the rain is pouring hard). Meanwhile, on ***Year 2009***, is the lapse when the main character of the novel is being introduced, working at a café.

(PLACE)

Involving this story, the main setting is in ***Smalltown, United Kingdom*** (UK). The said location is also said to be Louisa Clark's home town.

There are also minor settings where some of the scenes within the narrative took place. This includes ***The Butter Bun Café*** (where Louisa works for six years, since her younger sister Katrina challenged her to immediately find a job in just 24 hours), the ***Job Centre*** (in which Lou desperately hunts out for another occupation after several failed attempts and luckily bumped into a money-maker employment), ***island of Mauritius in Africa*** (where Louisa takes Will as a part of their travelling

trip), *Dignitas in Switzerland* (a Swiss-based assisted suicide organization facility), and *a café in Paris* (said to be Will's most aspired and favorite place, as well as where Louisa ended up after following the instructions written in Will's letter).

II. Characters

- ❖ **Louisa (Lou) Clark** - The main protagonist of the novel, a 26-year-old woman who is talented, cheerful, and creative. She has been wasting her potential in her small hometown because she feels responsible for taking care of her mother (Josie), her father (Bernard), and her sister, Treena. She is also stuck in a long-term relationship (6 years) with her fitness-obsessed boyfriend Patrick, as the story ascends, their relationship becomes duller.
- ❖ **William (Will) Traynor** - is the second main character of the novel. An intelligent, adventurous, and wealthy 35-year-old man. In the midst of his high-stakes, thrill-seeking life as a financier, Will suffers a pedestrian-motorcycle accident that leaves him paralyzed in a wheelchair, sweeping away all his will.
- ❖ **Camilla Traynor** - Will's mother who has a strained relationship with her son. Camilla has a cold exterior that hides the immense pain she has felt ever since her son had his accident. Her job as a magistrate also gives her a unwelcoming outlook on life. Camilla's greatest fear is losing her son, so she hires Lou to make sure that doesn't happen.
- ❖ **Steven Traynor** - Will's father who was mostly absent from his children's lives; Camilla Traynor blames him for destroying their family. He wants to divorce Camilla.

- ❖ ***Katrina (Treena) Clark*** - Louisa's younger sister who is a single mother, with her son Thomas. Treena works at a flower shop. She has always been regarded as the most intelligent sibling. Even though the sisters have always been competitive, fighting over who gets the spotlight, they support each other.
- ❖ ***Patrick*** - Louisa's boyfriend who works as a personal trainer. He is obsessed with sports and diet, most of the time pursues Lou to engage in sports and entrepreneurship but sadly, she often finds it not suitable for her.
- ❖ ***Nathan*** - Will's nurse and caretaker who is also his friend. Nathan cares for all of the health issues that Will's paralysis has caused. He has a no-nonsense demeanor and a sarcastic sense of humor that matches up with Will's own personality.
- ❖ ***Bernard Clark*** - Lou's father. Fifty-five years of age. A lifelong factory worker who is unfortunately unemployed from his job for the first time. This results into major financial problems for the Clark family. But after some time, Mr. Traynor hired him a position at the castle.
- ❖ ***Josephine (Josie) Clark*** - Lou's mother. A woman who takes great pride in keeping her house spotless clean and in caring for her two daughters, Lou and Treena, and her grandson, Thomas. Josie endlessly supports Lou, though she cannot tolerate Lou's involvement with Will's personal plan.
- ❖ ***Alicia Dewar*** - Will's ex-girlfriend who marries his colleague and best friend, Rupert. She is beautiful and delicate, but lives her life according to the standards of upper society.
- ❖ ***Georgina Traynor*** - Will's sister who lives and works in Australia.
- ❖ ***Rupert Freshwell*** - An old friend of Will from work. He marries Will's past girlfriend, Alicia.

- ❖ **Frank** - Louisa's previous employer and owner of the Buttered Bun café, where she worked before meeting Will.
- ❖ **Thomas** - Louisa's young nephew and the son of her sister Katrina, a single mother.

III. Plot Summary

(Year 2009) Louisa Clark, 26 years of age, lives with her working-class family and lends a helping hand in providing extra income, for her father is struggling when it comes to finding a decent job as well as fulfilling their family's needs. Lou never wanted to leave her job at the Buttered Bun. After six years, she felt secure in the routine of making tea and chatting with the café's regulars. But when her boss closes the business, she loses her job.

Desperate, Lou goes to the Job Centre and after multiple failed attempts, is luckily offered a unique employment opportunity which is to help care for Will Traynor, a successful, wealthy, and once-active young man who developed *quadriplegia* in a pedestrian-motorcycle accident two years earlier.

Will's mother, Camilla Traynor, hires Louisa despite her lack of experience, having high hopes that with Lou's optimistic and active persona, he will be able to live a brighter life. Louisa then meets Nathan, who is Will's nurse/medical assistant, and Will's father, Steven Traynor, a high-class businessman whose marriage and relationship to Camilla is going downhill.

(Year 2007) A few years earlier, Will was a major corporate player who bought and sold companies for obscene profits. He had his fortune upon his palms, having his life at its peak. But suddenly it was all shattered glass after a speeding

motorcycle crushed his spine. Paralyzed from the neck down and even unable to feed himself, Will's life as he knows it is over — unwilling to embark on a new start.

Louisa feels unsettled by her new environment, especially her client, but the position pays a lot more than her waitressing job did and her family doesn't hesitate to remind Lou that she has few options otherwise, so the 26-year-old stands still with being an immobilized man's caretaker in exchange for what she predominantly came for, 'excellent' money.

At first, Will bears a grudge on Louisa's very presence. When he destroys a table of framed pictures, Louisa tries to repair the damage. Furious, he lashes out, "It would be nice—just for once—if someone paid attention to what I wanted. Me smashing those photographs was not an accident". Yet, the blowout is a turning point. Louisa stops trying to second guess Will's decisions, but also refuses to tolerate the brunt of his frustration.

Louisa and Will's connection starts out rocky due to his bitterness and resentment over being disabled. Ignoring everything since the verge of his loss. Over time, the light gets dimmer, turning out that Will's ex-girlfriend, Alicia, and best friend Rupert disclose that they are getting married.

Lou is conditioned to putting herself last. Her parents never hid the fact that they considered Louisa's younger sister, Treena, to be the more intelligent sibling. Patrick — Louisa's boyfriend of six years — is a self-absorbed personal trainer concerned only with his performance in the next triathlon, obsessed with sports. Patrick pursues Lou to get on the tracks but sadly, she isn't just fit for an athlete's shoes.

On the other hand, As she and Will grow closer, he convinces her that she deserves more respect from everyone in her life, including herself. Still, Lou has her reasons for wanting things to stay the same as they have always been. In return, Will gradually becomes more outgoing and liberal as they part experiences together.

In the middle of something, Lou overhears the conversation of Camilla and Steven, learning that Will is set to go to Switzerland, to an assisted suicide facility, Dignitas, up until six months since Lou's employment. Moved by what she heard, Louisa conceals knowing about Will and Camilla's agreement. However, she confesses to Treena, and together they develop ways that will help convince Will to abandon his death wish, with this she sets out to show him that life is still worth living.

She starts exploring technologies that can give him more autonomy and looking for outings that he might find appealing. Each for the other's sake, Louisa and Will push beyond their comfort zones and, in turn, change each other in ways that neither could ever have anticipated.

Louisa continues seeing her longtime boyfriend of 6 years, though they eventually break up due to her relationship with Will. Meanwhile, Lou's father loses his job, causing more financial difficulties. At the end of the rainbow, Mr. Traynor offers Mr. Clark a position.

Louisa realizes that Will is trying to help her secure her freedom from her family. The two attend Alicia and Rupert's wedding where they danced the night away. Will tells Louisa that "You know Clark, you are pretty much the only thing that makes me want to wake up in the morning."

Lou convinces Will to go on a holiday with her, but before they can leave, Will is rushed into a hospital, diagnosed with near-fatal pneumonia. Louisa cancels the plans for a fast-paced vacation. Instead, she takes Will to the island of Mauritius, off the coast of Africa.

The night before returning home, Louisa tells Will that she loves him. Will utters and sets his heart on owning up something, but she admits that she already knows about his plans with Dignitas. Will voices out the mere fact that his time with Lou meant everything to him and that it was special, but he cannot bear to live in a wheelchair anymore. He will be following through with his plans, his mind was completely unshakeable.irate and hurt, Louisa flees and does not speak to him for the remainder of the trip. When they return home, Will's parents are pleasantly astounded by his good physical condition and overlooking smile. Louisa, however, resigns as his caretaker, and Will's peers eventually took their deepest breath and accepted the thought of him ending his own life.

On the night of Will's flight to Switzerland, Louisa visits him one last time. They agree that the past six months have been the best in their lives. He dies shortly after in the clinic, and it is revealed that he left Louisa a considerable inheritance, meant to continue her education and to fully experience life. The novel ends with Louisa at a café in Paris, wearing her favorite bumblebee black and yellow-striped thighs , reading Will's last words to her in a letter, that tell her to 'live well'.

As inspiring as it is heartbreaking, *Me Before You* is Jojo Moyes's international bestselling breakout novel — and the captivating tale of two people whose improbable romance sets them both free.

IV. Conflict

There are two types of conflict regarding 'Me Before You': Man Vs. Man and Man Vs. Self.

- ❖ **Man Vs. Man** — this sets out when most of the characters' relationships and connections start to be faulty and problematic causing aftereffects to the stand of the lead roles. Marking as some of the significant examples are Mr. and Mrs. Traynor's decision on Will's plan for suicide and Will and Lou's bitter argument over the same matter. Both had some initial outturns but all ended up defective against Will's stone hard determination.
- ❖ **Man Vs. Self** — comes at the part of Will, Lou, and Camilla. As the three consults and at the same time opposes their selves on dealing with critical viewpoints and issues. Will marked a dot meaning the end of his drastic despair since he got into the accident, as we can observe, his settlement was not influenced by his peers. This prompted the environment to change for him as a sign of respect and acceptance.

V. Theme

Me Before You teaches us significant lessons worthy of keeping throughout our lives, ones that will help us be a better person, especially to ourselves:

"Be thankful for what you have and appreciate the little things."

Will makes us realize that the little things in life are actually big things, such as being able to walk to places and live freely without any limitations. You

don't always realize just how lucky you have it until a life-changing event happens, which is exactly what happened to Will. Everyone has bad days, but sometimes we forget that there are people who have it much worse than us.

As what is indicated in the story itself:

"Live boldly and have no regrets - Just live."

While Lou is happy settling with a simple life, Will pushes her to become more active as he once was before he became quadriplegic. There are so many amazing opportunities to take advantage of and it's up to us to seize every moment. Will teaches us to take every chance you get in life because some things only happen once. We shouldn't regret the actions we take in life, rather we should appreciate the lessons they have taught us. As one saying goes, "You Only Live Once" (YOLO).

"Love is not all about holding on, sometimes love is more on letting go."

In order to experience love, we have to put ourselves out there and be vulnerable. This is not the easiest thing to do, but when we open our hearts to one another just as Lou and Will did, it can change everything. Despite the difficult time that Will was going through, it was Lou's love that inspired and motivated him to get up every morning. The greatest gift we can give to someone is loving them through the good and the bad and being there for them when they need us the most.

"You only get one life... it's your duty to live it as fully as possible."

- Will Traynor

VI. Reflection

There are so many things in life that can go wrong. We think that we know what we want, we spend a long time searching for our purpose, we try to find someone to make sense of why we are on this earth. But the truth is - we're going to mess up a lot. We're going to have a hard time finding the perfect job, the perfect life, the perfect love. But if we take each moment as it comes - if we LIVE - the journey of getting to where we need to be will be rewarding.

Me Before You, formed from the greatest of thoughts of Jojo Moyes, is a story upon realistic application towards the value of life. This novel taught us that when there is love, there must also be acceptance and sacrifice. Keeping your loved one clutched in the chains of your own selfishness would be your last decision to make — if you want a long-term relationship.

If you truly love someone, you are not only able to hold on but also you should be able to accept him/her for who he/she is and give freedom towards what he/she wants to do in life. Get rid of selfishness, simply be happy for what makes the one you love happy, it must be a mutual feeling, the same smile.

Furthermore, some parts of the novel is not merely isolated from a sense of trust, applying in into real-life situations: "He knows what he is doing, it's a heavy burden to carry and maybe it's much better to let him go, out from the cage of paralysis. She eventually adapted to that thought, she now knows what she is going to do for him, although it's difficult, she also realized that trusting him will be the best decision — allowing him to take flight to a scenery of freedom."

On the other hand, we have been moved by this story's idealism of letting go and moving on. Sometimes, no matter how much we try to avoid it, life hurts us. The very nature of being human is to feel, to experience life, and with that comes the receding tide and flow of pleasure and pain.

The pain we experience in life can come in many forms and from many avenues. Often however, it isn't the actual pain that ends up hurting us the most in life, but rather our insistence on holding onto that pain.

How often in life when we perceive that someone has hurt us do we ponder over the things they did or said? How much do we like to blame and shame them, all the while wasting our precious energy on thinking about the past? It is almost as if we feel as though we are punishing that person by thinking nasty, negative thoughts about them or by choosing to hold onto what happened. But in truth we know that we are hurting ourselves in this process. The past is dead. Thinking about it will not change it.

The key to letting go of a relationship or a painful past experience is that you have to face what has happened, accept that you can't change it and then move on. Once you're able to move on and close old doors, inevitably new doors will open up, better opportunities will arise and, most of all, you'll have a better story that moves you forward, instead of holding you back. Start writing your new story today!

Ultimately, the most important relationship you must save is the one you have with yourself.

Me Before You, even from the first time you heard it, predominantly stresses out an idea out of being selfish. "It must be me first! Me before you!" as

what most of the readers take up. But to clear this matter squeaky clean: According to Moyes, "Well it's a deliberately vague title, but in my head it's 'who we were before we met the other.'" Highlighting the change happening between two individuals, how both of them changed each other.

The bottom line is *love does change you*, because it can and it will, choose the right path and realize that the good path is the right kind of love. Embrace it at full speed ahead and always remember who you are on the way there. Never let love define you, instead let it shine through you.

Love. Change. Accept. Repeat. A sequence of how love works on us, interesting as it is, life doesn't leave you hanging, thrill after thrill. Before ending this report, we've got a challenge for you. Explore. Go find ***the person who is pretty much the only thing that makes you want to get up in the morning***, find ***the person who will help you become a whole new person***, and most importantly, discover ***what really makes life worth living***. And don't you dare forget, ***LIVE BOLDLY***.

GROUP 1

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