

**The Merit of English Section**  
**Junior Division**

**Name of Winner: Choi Hai Tung Hazel**

**Name of School: St. Paul's Convent School (Secondary Section)**

**Book Title: It Ends With Us**

**Author: Colleen Hoover**

**Publisher: Simon & Schuster**

“It Ends With Us” by Colleen Hoover is a fictional romance novel about the life of a girl named Lily. The story explores topics of domestic abuse, love and jealousy. It talks about why the abused suffer in a cycle of abuse because it is difficult for them to leave the abuser that they loved dearly. They choose to swallow the pain because they don’t want to ruin their abuser’s careers or reputation. The apologies and excuses that the abusers make for themselves seem to justify their actions and the abused keeps hoping that their abuser would change for them and the situation would get better.

Lily opens her floral shop in Boston after graduating from college, and meets a neurosurgeon named Ryle. Fate makes

them cross each other's paths again and again, and they finally fall in love with each other. Just when things are going a bit too well, Ryle physically abuses Lily for the first time. Lily grew up in an abusive household, witnessing all the terrible things her father did to her mother. The Lily who once swore to never be like her mother and forgive a man that mistreats her becomes the very own person to forgive Ryle and allow him to hurt her not only once, but thrice. Lily also meets her first love, Atlas, again and she can't help but reminisces her time with Atlas. When Lily finally gathers the courage to leave Ryle, she is struck with the devastating news that she is pregnant with Ryle's child. Atlas provides Lily with undying support and help while she recovers from the damage Ryle has done to her. Lily divorces with Ryle, but they still share the responsibility of raising their daughter together, and the story ends with Lily running into Atlas on the streets after not seeing each other for one and a half year.

“It Ends With Us” has an extremely sophisticated plot. Each character or incident is brilliantly linked together by the author, which explains why the characters act the way they do and why it sometimes is so difficult for them to make decisions. The book easily brings readers into the world of the characters. It is as if we are watching Lily grow throughout the story, seeing how relationship with Ryle and Atlas develops respectively. This makes it extra heart-breaking to see Ryle shatter the trust he has built up with Lily as he lays his hands on her for the first time. And it is equally lovely to see her return to the love of her life, the one that she is destined for. There is a special connection between the characters and the readers which makes the book very unique.

This book is so engaging because it reflects stories in real life. It somehow explains the doubt of many of us: why do so little victims of domestic abuse ask for help? Thousands, or perhaps millions of stories similar to Lily’s are happening every day.

But how many of them will actually do something about it or leave the cycle of domestic abuse? The author depicts the pain of knowing that your beloved one is the one that hurts you the most. The abused never spoke up, because they want to give their abuser a second chance, maybe a third or a fourth, because they don't want others to worry about them, because they truly believe that their loved one will change for them, but just to be disappointed and defeated again.

Different from typical romance novels, the book has a devastating plot which destroys both the characters and the readers completely. It made me think that there is no such thing as a 'fairy tale' or 'happily ever after'. When everything is going well, there will certainly be some unpredictable challenges, completely destroying your plans and leaving you in a mess. Meanwhile, when you think your life cannot get any worse, endless bad things will happen to you. Life is just so unpredictable. Feelings of sadness and hopelessness can often

overcome us, but it is certain that if we don't do anything about our situation, nothing will get better. The most important thing is to prioritise ourselves and fight for our happiness. Sometimes all it takes is for us to take the first step and our lives could change.

All in all, 'It Ends With Us' is a book that inspires me a lot. While I'm reading, I would constantly think about what I would do if I were in Lily's situation; and whether I could be as brave as her to look for the things that I treasure in life. This book will definitely remain as one of my favourites and I cannot wait to read it again.

(2 pages, 793 words)