

The Merit of English Section

Senior Division

Name of Winner : Chan Chon Hong

Name of School : Pui Ching Middle School Macau

Book Title : *Me Before You*

Author : Jojo Moyes

Publisher : Penguin Books

“Live well”, the last words from the novel “Me Before You”, make us reconsider the meaning of life.

“Me Before You” is a classic which tells a sad story between the two main characters, Lousia Clark and William Traynor. At the beginning of the story, Lousia suddenly loses her original job in a local cafe. Luckily, she then gets a new job as a private caregiver of William, who was once an outstanding sportsman. He was injured in an accident which left him in a

wheelchair forever. After Lousia and William have spent some time together, Lousia learns that William has decided to die through euthanasia six months later. She encourages William and hopes he can regain his confidence. Although she isn't able to change his mind about dying, they keep the good times that they have had together as their fondest memories.

Of all the characters, Lousia leaves the deepest impression on me, especially for her selfless dedication to William. She doesn't mind the disability of William. She still accompanies him regardless of his appearance, using her words and effort to comfort him, no matter what the result is. In the last scene of the story, describing Lousia a few weeks after William's death, Lousia is sitting outside a restaurant in Paris, reading a letter written by William. The letter states that Lousia has made a mark on his heart; he encourages her to live boldly, push herself forward and

not settle for anything. For me, the content of this letter is touching and moving. I was moved to tears while I was reading it. This letter does not only provide a brief conclusion to the story, but it also reveals William's inner world and finally proves that Lousia's effort is valued. Although William chooses to die, I believe that the painstaking care given to William by Lousia is irreplaceable, the time spent with William is worthwhile, and the memory they have created together is timeless. These are indeed what kept me engaged throughout the reading.

Despite these impressive aspects of the story, the ending of the story is quite miserable and heartbreaking for me. Although Lousia strives to bring William out of his hopelessness and depression, William still can't accept his lifestyle changes after his injury—staying home all day, watching the sunrise and sunset. From my perspective, the story would give

readers the opportunity to reflect on their lives if the author left the ending as a cliffhanger, not mentioning the final choice of William. Perhaps most readers, myself included, would think that William would abandon his desire to die and start a new life with Lousia. This ending would emphasize the power of love and hope, which Lousia has shown us, and it can completely change a person's mentality and mindset. It is important to hold on to our beliefs so that we can reinvigorate ourselves and others.

Despite the unexpected ending, the message which the author wants to convey to us is clear and profound—we should always live with hope and love. There can be many misfortunes and challenges in our daily lives. They sometimes make us feel frustrated and depressed. Thus, it is vital that we know how to regulate our emotions. If we always hide our feelings and accumulate a huge amount of pressure, the

consequences may be irremediable and can sometimes lead to tragedies, such as death in the story. As the novel aims at pointing out the meaning of life, I believe that teenagers, who are more impressionable, will benefit the most from reflecting on the story and William's choice. A great lesson would be the value of optimism in our life.

This novel reminds me of another brilliant book, *Life without Limits: Inspiration for a Ridiculously Good Life*. It is written by Nick Vujicic, who was born with tetra-amelia syndrome. Despite the absence of his arms and legs, he didn't give up; he still went to school as other children did; he has learnt to swim and is able to play various sports. Nobody would have expected that Nick would find his love Kanae. The love between them was said to be impossible, but they have refuted everyone's skepticism with fact. They have a blessed family, four children, and true love.

Nick beat all the odds in life and found real happiness. I would say that life is beautiful precisely because of the miracles we make out of the tragedies. We find joy precisely because of the hardships we overcome. Both books are inspiring and thought-provoking in their own ways. They make us think about our own life choices. Most importantly, they inspire us to reflect on what it takes to live a good life.