

Me Before You Study Guide

Me Before You by Jojo Moyes

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Plot Summary

"Me Before You" by Jojo Moyes is a novel about a vibrant and energetic young man who lives in the United Kingdom and has most of his life still ahead of him. He lives it with enthusiasm, both in business and in his personal time, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, scaling the cliffs in Yosemite, California, and trekking through exotic locations like Kenya, China, and even recreating in Mauritius.

Will Traynor is a go-getter in every sense of the word until a motorcycle hits him as he is about to get into a taxi. The result leaves him a quadriplegic. For two years, he endures physiotherapy, uncounted doctors visits, bouts of pneumonia and constant pain. He stoically puts up with the indignities that surround his new life in which every action requires someone else's help. He loses much more than his mobility. He also loses his home, unable to stay there as it is not wheelchair accessible. He loses his girlfriend, and even though part of that is because he shuts her out of his pain filled, and chair locked life, he still misses her. Finally, resigned to the new circumstances of his life, he tells his parents that he would like to schedule an appointment with Dignitas in Switzerland to enlist the help of a specialist to put an end to his non-stop suffering. At first horrified, his parents fight his decision, but when Will tries to take his own life by making use of a nail sticking out and scraping it across his wrists until they are in ribbons, they reluctantly relent, but only on the condition that he give them an addition six months. He agrees.

Soon after, his mother hires a second caregiver to help with Will when his primary caregiver, Nathan is not there. Louisa Clark is recently unemployed, twenty six years old, and has no experience in this field, but she is a pleasant and bubbly human being with a positive attitude, and Camilla Traynor is praying that she will get through to her son when no one else has been able. Of course, she has no idea that her primary job description is to keep him from attempting suicide again, in the beginning, but she inadvertently overhears a conversation that reveals the truth and devastates her. In fact, the news is so disturbing to her that she gives her notice effective immediately. Camilla begs her to return, and she does but only under one condition. She asks that they support whatever she is willing to attempt to do to change Will's mind, providing it doesn't adversely affect his health. The Traynor's agree. What follows is a learning curve for Louisa as she discovers how difficult it is to do most everything as a quadriplegic, and determined to be successful, she soldiers on, taking Will on short outings at first, and culminating in a paradise vacation to Mauritius where she confesses she loves him and tells him that they can have a good life together. It is a job that almost appears to take more than it gives, and although she wouldn't trade knowing Will for anything else, Louisa loses her long standing boyfriend, and is without a job at the end of it. Still, what she gains is an eye opener as well, and she comes away from her experience stronger, more confident, and more adventurous.



Prologue: 2007 and Chapter 1: 2009

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"Me Before You" by Jojo Moyes is a novel about a vibrant and energetic young man who lives in the United Kingdom and has most of his life still ahead of him. He lives it with enthusiasm, both in business and in his personal time, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, scaling the cliffs in Yosemite, California, and trekking through exotic locations like Kenya, China, and even recreating in Mauritius.

There are twenty two messages waiting for Will when he turns his Blackberry back on after a night with Lissa. Mick greets him downstairs with the news that it is raining 'cats and dogs' and he reluctantly peels off his leathers and tosses the keys to his motorcycle to him. Rupert calls as Will is hailing a cab, and unable to hear half of the conversation over the traffic, he tells him to get Cally to put the information on his desk, promising to be there in ten minutes. A screeching sound followed by a horn takes his attention and as he looks back, he sees something coming way to fast in his direction. His eyes register the sight of a leather glove, a shocked face behind a helmet and then an explosion. Then nothing.

Lou arrives home to find her father on the sofa with his arm deep in the cushions trying to retrieve Lego for her five year old nephew, Thomas, who watches him intently. Her grandfather is working on a Sudoku and her mother offers them both a cup of tea. Lou and her boyfriend Pat had been planning a vacation, but plans change when Lou discovers Frank is closing the cafe she works at. With three months severance pay, she goes home in shock and out of work. Her parents discuss the limited job options available to her, worried for their future as well as hers, dependent on her income as much as she is. Lou goes to the athletics club and joins Patrick for his last few laps the next day, and he reminds her that she needs to find a new job as soon as possible. He suggests that she put on a suit and go to the Job Center, and tells her that he'll cover the cost of the holiday until she can repay him. She applies for Jobseeker's Allowance, and does a brief shift at a chicken processing factory, which gave her nightmares followed by two days of training as a home energy adviser. That is followed by two weeks at a fast food chain before she is offered a job as a pole dancer which she refuses. Her last opportunity is as a care assistant located less than two miles from her home for a quadriplegic.

Prologue: 2007 and Chapter 1: 2009 Analysis

Will Traynor hates leaving Lissa to go to work, but turning his Blackberry on in the morning, he sees twenty two messages waiting for him. The rain forces him to take a cab to work, and he manages to flag one down while talking to Rupert and trying to decipher the most recent crisis over the sounds of traffic. He promises to be there in ten



minutes, but before he can get into the cab, he turns and is hit hard enough to turn off the lights.

Louisa is the kind of young woman who likes to work, and when she arrives at the Buttered Bun where she has worked for the last six years to discover Frank is closing for good, she is shocked. Her father doesn't take the news well either, knowing that without an income, Louise will go from helping out to being a financial burden which is something they can ill afford. Her longtime boyfriend Patrick and her had been planning a vacation, and tells her that he'll pay for her share until she is working again. He suggests she not waste time finding employment however, and she heads to the Job Center. After filing for Jobseeker's Assistance, she is forced to endure a series of demeaning jobs until she is offered a job as a care assistant for a quadriplegic. She is more than a little bit reluctant to accept the position, but is unable to refuse and continue to receive benefits. When she gets home and tells her parents, her father jokes about the double punishment of first being disabled, and then winding up with a care assistant like Louisa.



Chapters 2 and 3

Chapters 2 and 3 Summary

Lou would have just worn something from her closet, but her mother insists she borrow a suit from her to make a good impression on her job interview. The skirt is tight, making her gait awkward as she walks to Granta House on the other side of Stortfold Castle. She is greeted by Camilla Traynor, the patients' mother. They go into a huge, elegant room where they sit down, and Lou hears the unmistakable sounds of seams ripping. Using her jacket to cover as much of her torn skirt as possible, she answers Mrs. Traynor's questions, trying the occasional joke which falls on a poker face. Of the many questions she is asked, the one that throws her is the question about her career aspirations. Convinced that without experience, aspirations, or the ability to come up with a decent reason that Mrs. Traynor should hire her that she has no chance of being hired, Lou is stunned to find herself accepting the job when it is offered. She is told to report the next morning and goes home without so much as meeting Camilla's son and her new charge. At the table that night, her father, sister and even Patrick tease her relentlessly, but all are pleased that she is once again gainfully employed, despite the fact that the job is only to last for six months.

The next morning Mrs. Traynor gives her a tour of the annex, show her where the car keys are, and then introduces her to Will and to his full time care giver, Nathan. She impresses upon her the importance of not leaving Will alone, and after Will almost terrifies her with his impression of a drooling, groaning, shrieking invalid, she leaves Lou with him and Nathan. Nathan explains the medication schedule, and shows her where everything is kept, giving her a set of keys to the cabinet. Giving her a folder with all of the information she requires, Nathan leaves as well, promising to return at noon to deal with Will's catheter. Lou tries to engage Will in conversation, but he is short, and hostile. Within an hour she is texting her sister, telling her that her patient hates her. She is reminded of how important the job is to her mother and father as well, and told to get a grip. Deciding to take a page from her sister's attitude, she vacuums, and dusts, and then tries once more to engage Will in conversation. She offers to take him on a drive in the country, but he declines. She offers to bring him his computer, but that is met with more animosity. Finally, he tells her that the best thing she can do is to resist the urge to 'chat' with him. Later, she talks to Treen about it, who along with the rest of her family, encourage her to be patient. Then Treen admits her intentions to return to school, and her hopes that their parents might be able to help out a bit financially. Lou realizes that she can't let them down.

Chapters 2 and 3 Analysis

Louisa sees herself as an ordinary, plain sort of woman. She has a personal style which her father teases is 'character' while her mother refers to her as an 'individual' - mostly her way of admitting she doesn't understand the way her daughter dresses. Lou tends



to speak her mind. Her mother insists she wear a suit and loans her one but since Lou is larger, the suit strangles her on the way to the interview at Granta House. Camilla Traynor takes her into a drawing room and begins the interview when Lou's skirt begins to come apart at the seams. She has difficulty concentrating on the questions put to her and that discomfort continues as she admits she's never been a caregiver before. She has only a vague notion of what a quadriplegic is. Camilla explains, and the rip continues. Camilla asks why she left her former employment, and stumps Louisa when she asks what her personal aspirations are. Louisa realizes she has no idea. All in all, Lou doesn't think she could have made a worse impression, and is stunned when Camilla hires her on the spot, telling her to be there at eight the following morning. When Lou gets home, she is teased about the aspects of her new job and patient.

The next morning Mrs. Traynor shows her around what was formerly the stables, converted into an annex for Will. The orientation is brisk and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that Will is never left alone. Lou is given instructions and then introduced to Nathan and Will. Immediately Will begins to keen and moan, letting out unearthly sounds. Mrs. Traynor stiffens and begs him to stop while Louisa fights her instincts to run, and introduces herself. He surprises her by straightening up, his features relaxing as he says good morning. Nathan gently chastises him and then shows Lou where everything is. He admits that she will have to be somewhat thick skinned to survive. Then he leaves, promising to be back at lunch. Will greets Lou with a stony silence. She offers him a cup of tea but he refuses everything, and it is only minutes before Lou retreats, texting her sister that she is sure he hates her. She cleans for a while, and notices the photos on a built in shelf that reflect his life before his accident. At lunch, she calls Treena again telling her that she isn't sure she can cope and Treena immediately reminds her that the family cannot afford for her to simply give up when the going is difficult. Realizing the truth in that, Lou returns to the house and imagines how Treena would handle Will, with little more success. He shoots down everything she offers, usually adding a snide comment. Finally he suggests that she swallow her normally chatty personality around him. That night, she talks to Treena again, who admits that she wants to return to college, and will have to take a loan to do so. As such, she wouldn't be working or contributing financially to the family for the foreseeable future. In fact, she might even require help from them. She begs Lou to keep it together, and Lou realizes she simply has no choice - at least for the next six months.



Chapters 4 and 5

Chapters 4 and 5 Summary

Louisa manages to get through the first two weeks, enduring a barrage of unkind and sharp comments from Will regarding everything she did, or didn't do. One morning Mrs. Traynor arrived with guests for Will. She offers them coffee, noticing that Mrs. Traynor seems more tense than usual. The reason is clear when Alicia and Rupert announce their intention to marry, apologizing to Will. Later, she joins Patrick and the Triathlon Terrors' at the Kings Head where she describes her day. He and his friends sympathize. Then Patrick announces his intention to attempt the Xtreme Viking Triathlon. The next day is a difficult one for Will. While he is resting, she begins to sort out the broken frames to see which ones could be fixed, earning her his ire once more. His barrage finally offends her to a point where she is unable to remain silent, and she tells him he is behaving like an arse. He stops and turns back to her, and tells her he doesn't really want her there, but Lou reminds him that he isn't her employer and she really needs the money. Showing a bit of understanding and surprise, he asks her politely to return the photos to the drawer and leaves.

Mrs. Traynor blames Louisa for the broken photos. Then Will berates her for trying to sneak carrots into his meal when he'd asked for no vegetables. Not wanting any more food, he asks her for tea instead. Nathan comments that he seems happier of late, talking more and tells her that Mrs. Traynor had even heard him laughing. It gives Lou a perverse kind of pleasure to hear it. She and Will settle into a routine of sorts, with Lou mostly the butt of his jokes, but now in an almost pleasant way. He even invites her to watch an occasional movie with him. He is stunned when she admits she's never seen a film with subtitles, and insists that she watch one with him which she thoroughly enjoys. That leads them to deeper conversations, and he asks her more intimate questions about her personal life, and about Patrick. That Friday, she helps Nathan get Will to the hospital, nervous about it to the point of almost being sick. She waits in the outer office with Nathan until he finally suggests she go and get coffee. When she returns, he is gone, and she searches for them, finally finding them not quite ready to go. Will is just getting help to put his shirt on, and Louisa is shocked to see the scars, livid and red across his wrists that could only have been made one way.

Chapters 4 and 5 Analysis

The first two weeks pass and Louisa gets better and better at keeping a blank expression on her face, saying as little to Will as is necessary, and missing her job with Frank even more than she would have believed possible. She missed having someone look glad to see her in the morning, and the comfortable conversations of the customers with each other and with her. She kept reminding herself that it was only six months. A visit from a former co-worker, Rupert, and his ex-girlfriend Alicia leaves Will in a particularly foul mood after the announce their betrothal and reluctant to go back into



the room after his company left, Lou busies herself in the kitchen. She finally goes in with a basket of logs for the fire to find the room empty. Then she hears the sound of breaking glass from the bedroom. Fearing the worst, she hurries to the room to discover he's used a walking stick to sweep his collection of photos to the floor. Not one remained. Finally, Lou asks him if his chair can get a puncture, adding she wouldn't know where to put a jack. A brief flicker of amusement crosses his face and she goes to get the vacuum. The next day is difficult, and brings the atmosphere between Lou and Will to a head. She speaks her mind, telling him how she feels and finally comes to a sort of understanding.

Though her job earns her some grudging respect at home, but to Mrs. Traynor, it seemed that Louisa was the most incompetent and irresponsible thing on the planet. She had a way of saying things with a pained expression and Lou tries to keep her own face neutral. Will continues to berate her until one day she finally snaps back at him. From then on, their relationship changes to one where she takes his comments, but feels free to fire a few back at him now and then and he seems to respect her more for it. Even Nathan and Mrs. Traynor notice a subtle shift in his attitude for the better, and the idea that she is helping pleases Lou. He even asks her to watch occasional films with him, to her surprise. That Friday, she drives Will and Nathan to the hospital for a regular check up and for the first time she uses the lift. It is a nerve wracking experience, and she is glad when she manages to get them there in one piece. As they are almost ready to go, she enters the exam room a bit early and catches sight of his wrists which bear the marks of a man who has attempted suicide. It deeply disturbs her.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Lou is surprised when Will's father greets her on the morning following the first snow fall. He tells her that Will isn't good. It is Nathan's morning off. Lou takes off her shoes and coat, aware that Mrs. Traynor is in court that morning, and goes in to check on Will. He is sleeping, so Lou busies herself and when by 1pm he still hadn't woken, she knocks loudly to get his attention. He needs to change position, and tells her how to help him commenting that her hands are freezing. She realizes how hot his skin is and he admits he is a bit dizzy. She gets him a painkiller and leaves when he asks her to. When she checks on him again, he is pale, and doesn't answer her so she touches his face and he flinches. He insists he's fine, but she is about to call Mrs. Traynor when Nathan arrives and she quickly tells him what is going on. Nathan berates her for not knowing that he is unable to regulate himself and explains what needs to be done and why. Nathan shows her how to clean and replace the dressings on his catheter, and tells her she may need to repeat it all later, but that he is available by phone. She stays in his room and reads, unwilling to leave him alone after that. At five she gets a text from Mrs. Traynor asking if she can stay as there are not trains. She agrees immediately and calls her family and Patrick to let them know. Nathan calls, and is relieved that she is staying. At just after eight, Lou gave him a drink, and helped him change sides, and then asks her to stay and talk to him. At his request, she sings him a song her father used to sing to her when she'd had a nightmare and he tells her that her whole family is crazy. Then they talk about her clothing fetish. Then, after he finally dozes off, she lays down a foot from him and sleeps as well until the sound of her name wakes her. Mrs. Traynor leaves the room and Lou follows. explaining that Will had been sick and she didn't want to leave him. She is full of questions that Louisa has no idea how to answer, but is saved when Mr. Traynor shows up and claims that the intercom might not be working correctly. There is no mention of the fact that he is wearing the same clothing as he had the day before. Louisa can't look at him, simply agreeing to call Mrs. Traynor should anything of that nature happen again.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The snow comes suddenly, and catches everyone off guard. Mr. Traynor tells her that Will isn't well, and is still in bed, complaining that the agency nurse who substituted on Nathan's morning off was barely there for a few seconds. Oddly, he does the same thing, seemingly eager to pass the responsibility on to someone else. Lou borrows a pair of Will's clean and dry socks, and goes in to see him. He is fast asleep, so she leaves him to rest. Now and then, she checked on him as she did her chores. She wakes him once, and he asks for her help to change his position. When she touches him, he comments on how cold her hands are and for the first time she realizes how warm he is. She worries that she might not be doing the right things for him. She gives him a painkiller, and he tells her to leave. At lunch, she looks in on him, noticing his



color is wrong. She calls his name but he doesn't answer, and doesn't wake until she gently touches his face. Then, startled, he tells her he is fine, but she can see he isn't. She is ready to call Mrs. Traynor when Nathan shows up. One look tells Nathan that Will is in trouble. He shows Lou what to do furious with the agency nurse that missed his condition earlier, and it takes almost an hour with a fan and cold cloths to bring Will's temperature down to a level that was okay. She stays in Will's room after Nathan leaves, reluctant to leave him alone even while he slept. She reads in the silence and at five she gets a message asking her to spend the night, which she immediately agrees to do without even thinking about it. She tries to reach Mr. Traynor via the intercom, but he doesn't answer and when Nathan calls at seven, he tells her that Mr. Traynor often stays away when his wife doesn't make it home. He promises to be there first thing in the morning. Later, Will wakes and they spend a while talking more normally than ever before, learning a bit about each other in the process. She even tells him about some of her favorite things. She is woken in the morning when Mrs. Traynor finds her sound asleep on the bed beside Will. She is peppered with questions about her proximity, and lack of contact when Will was sick. When she begins questioning whether she had contact with Mr. Traynor, Lou has no idea what to say, remembering that Nathan had told her not to mention Mr. Traynor's absence. He saves her with a timely arrival, and she manages to make an exit wondering if Mrs. Traynor noticed that he was wearing the same clothing as the night before. She can't look at him as she leaves the room.



Chapters 7 and 8: Camilla

Chapters 7 and 8: Camilla Summary

Spring arrives suddenly. Louisa spends the night at Patrick's, but he is too tired to have much interest in her physically, and she is still awake hours later, frustrated. Mrs. Traynor hires cleaners to spring clean the annex and tells Will that he and Lou can take tea outside in the garden. Before they go back inside, she convinces him to allow her to shave him and give his hair a trim. The proximity to him is incredibly intimate, and she enjoys touching him, but when she realizes it, she begins to feel awkward. Then he watches a movie while she trims his hair. She is getting a mirror to show him his new look when his sister Georgina arrives and begins a shouting match with Will, calling him selfish. Mrs. Traynor sends her out to lunch after Will introduces them and by the time she returns, Nathan is there and Georgina is nowhere to be seen. The difference in Will's demeanor is palpable. Lou busies herself with laundry, inadvertently overhearing Georgina and her mother and learns that Will has not only tried to take his life, but has entered into an agreement to do so at the end of Louisa's term of six months.

Camilla talks to Steven about Will and his decision. Though he'd agreed to give them six months, Steven is fairly sure that he won't change his mind. Camilla still sees Will as the child he was, as well as the adult he'd become, and can hardly believe that she agreed to his terms. She asks Steven what he thinks of Louisa, and he admits that Will seems to like her, even mentioning her in conversations with him. She remembers when Will had first brought it up, insisting that he didn't want to live with no prospect of recovery. He felt his request was perfectly reasonable. It wasn't until Will attempted suicide himself that she finally realized that he would proceed one way or the other. It takes two weeks but then she finally agrees, provided he wait six months.

Chapters 7 and 8: Camilla Analysis

Lou spends the night with Patrick, and misses the sex life they used to enjoy before he became marathon man. Though his body might be sexier, it seems he uses it less with her than ever. She wonders if he'd prefer one of the hardbodies he trains beside each day, despite his assurances to the contrary. Will and Lou talk more, and she gets to know him better. She discusses her relationship with Patrick and in return, he answers some of her questions about Lissa. She learns a great deal about Will, learning how pain shapes his life. He asks about her unusual taste in clothing and she suggests he consider a shave and a haircut. He agrees and she begins by shaving him. As she goes along, she realizes how intimate this kind of contact is. She is enjoying being this close to him. After the shave is finished, he encourages her to continue with his hair, so she does, trimming it as he watches a movie. When she goes to get a mirror an argument erupts. A woman berates Will for being selfish, asking how he could consider such a thing. Lou returns and Will introduces her to his sister Georgina. Georgina is livid and Mrs. Traynor suggests Louisa take her lunch. By the time she returns Georgina is gone



and Nathan has arrived. Will is withdrawn again and there is no trace of the playful and relaxed atmosphere that existed before her arrival. She busies herself and inadvertently hears the reason for Georgina's outburst. Will is planning to go to Dignitas when Louisa's six month term of employment expires. The gravity and finality of his decision is overwhelms her.

Camilla and Steven discuss Will's decision, as they have many times, and Steven seems convinced that there is little likelihood that he will change his mind. Camilla can hardly bear to think about it, and still wonders how he managed to get her to agree to the terms Will wanted. Snapshots of him throughout his life play out in her mind. She thinks about how Steven was more of an absent father that her son tried hard to impress and resents his attitude now. He watches her, and for a moment she almost thinks he will take her in his arms, but then the moment passes and she realizes that as a result of his indiscretions it is unlikely that they will ever get there again. He turns away from her and prods the fire until she is gone. Camilla remembers how he finally convinced her to agree. It took her finally understanding that he would find a way, and that it could be much more unpleasant for him.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

Louisa doesn't sleep that night, thinking about the last two months and seeing them through different eyes. The next day, Will is even more animated than usual, acting as though he wanted to spar with her and disappointed when she doesn't join in. He points out that now clean shaven, it will have to be kept up, and asks if she minds. Then he finally asks her what's wrong. She doesn't answer and he apologizes for his sister's behavior. She leaves her resignation behind at the end of the day, knowing it is all she can do. When she gets home, a small crowd is outside, entertained by the neighbors who are loudly fighting about his infidelity as his wife tosses all he owns outside. Lou hardly notices when Mrs. Traynor pull in and walking up she asks if they can talk. Louisa gets into her car and she asks why she gave her notice without warning. Lou admits that she'd heard them talking and wants no part of it. Mrs. Traynor asks her to reconsider telling her that she actually cheers Will up and they are hoping to change his mind. Reminding her that she signed a six month contract, she barely contains herself as she asks Lou to consider over the weekend. Lou goes into the house without giving her an answer and Mrs. Traynor sits in the driveway for eleven minutes before leaving. Katrina comes up to Lou's room almost immediately and at first Lou refuses to talk to her, but Katrina persists and Lou finally tells her the truth. After some consideration, she tells Louisa that the answer is simple. All Lou has to do is change Will's mind.

The idea is surprising to Mrs. Traynor, and Georgina simply glowers at Louisa when she asks them if they would be willing to go along with her plan. She asks Lou if she plans to take Will abroad, which had not even entered her mind, and she explains that to begin with she would just try a series of local adventures to get him out of the house and enjoying life again. Of course, if they rejected her idea, Lou told them she would probably be forced to leave. Trying to get on board, Mrs. Traynor suggests that Georgina accompany them and Louisa agrees immediately, but Georgina is already scheduled to go back to Australia, despite recent revelations regarding Will. Camilla suggests she could go along, but Mr. Traynor tells her firmly that Nathan and Louisa could manage just fine. Treena shows Lou a list that she has come up with while they wait for the runners to crest Windy Hill. Her ideas include adaptive computer hardware to allow Will a bit more independence; music concerts; or even a strip club if that is more his style, she adds with a saucy grin. Treena begins packing for her return to school and Lou approaches her mother about moving into her larger room when she and Thomas are gone. Reluctant at first, she finally agrees, but Treena is less than happy about it. A full scale argument ensues. Lou goes to the library in an effort to find things she and Will can do, noting that she has just one hundred and seventeen days to change his mind.



Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

Louisa can't believe that Camilla would agree to Will going to Dignitas. She kept cycling through all the ways she'd tried to cheer him up and the joy she'd gotten from the small victories like a laugh or a smile. She felt as though she'd been duped. The worst part is that she can't tell anyone. She hardly sleeps a wink and the next day her thoughts drift to the future again and again. At the end of the day, the answer is clear. She puts pen to paper and writes her resignation, effective immediately. Mrs. Traynor comes to see Lou almost immediately, arriving in the midst of their neighbors' domestic dispute. She asks Louisa to talk to her, and questions her reasons for quitting without notice. Offering her everything from more money to more days off, Mrs. Traynor tries to figure out what prompted Lou's resignation. Finally, Lou explains that she overheard them talking and knows about Will's intention to go to Dignitas at the end of her six month's contract. Suddenly Mrs. Traynor understands and tries to explain. Lou felt as though she was being used as a babysitter to keep Will from killing himself between now and then, but his mother assures her that wasn't the case. In truth, she'd hired Louisa in the hopes that she would be able to cheer Will up to some degree and perhaps help him to see that his life wasn't over. She begs Lou to reconsider, telling her that her son is actually smiling now and then again - something he hasn't done since his accident. Louisa goes inside without making any promises. Katrina lands on Lou almost right away, telling her she can't possibly quit. An argument ensues and at first Lou throws her out of her bedroom, but Katrina returns with an apology and a drink, and Lou finally tells her the truth. Her sister is stunned at first, but after some thought, she comes up with the perfect solution. All Lou has to do is change Will's mind, and she has four months in which to do it.

Mr. Traynor is the first one to support her idea, suggesting that despite their lack of success in getting him to engage in life again, if Louisa is prepared to try, he saw no harm in it. Prepared to leave if they rejected her idea, Lou stands her ground, even when Georgina refers to it as blackmail. Mrs. Traynor suggests Georgina go along, and though Lou is willing, Georgina tells them that her job is one she isn't willing to give up simply because of Will's mental state. She adds that it isn't fair that they suggest she put her whole life on hold for Will. Besides, she has a life, she adds. Camilla suggests she join them, but Bernard points out that to do so would make Will feel like even less of a man, and adds that they appreciate her discretion. Louisa isn't sure if he means with Will or himself. Treena helps Lou by putting together a list of things they might do, but when, feeling somewhat daunted by the whole affair, Lou displays a lack of enthusiasm, Treena doesn't speak to her for two days. Meanwhile her father fears losing his job to a cull, and the pressure for Lou to continue earning increases. Her relationship with Treena only worsens when she asks if she can move into Treena's room when she leaves, and her mother reluctantly agrees. A full scale fight follows which their father finally stops. Lou takes over the search for things they can do at the library, learning how to use their computer as she goes along.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

As spring approaches, the town once again becomes a tourist destination. When she sees Will, she announces that they are taking Nathan to the races, leaving him no choice in the matter. She adds that when her horse 'Man Oh Man' comes in, she'll buy them lunch. The outing is a disaster, beginning with the fact that they parked on wet grass which sunk inches as soon as he wheeled onto it, and continuing on to the restaurant which they hadn't paid enough of an entrance fee to sit in. Man Oh Man comes in sixth and it rains, making the trip back to the vehicle a nightmare. Lou ends up convincing a group of drunk young veterans to help hoist him and his chair back in. It is only as they are leaving that Louisa notices the paved, disabled parking next to the building. By the time they get back to the house, all are exhausted. Will is quiet and when Lou questions him, he tells her that she managed to do what everyone else did - decide what he would like and force him to do it. He hated horses, racing and the entire atmosphere, he tells her.

One day when Will asks her to put on a CD, he tells her that a friend of his is playing lead violin at the Albert Symphonia. When he discovers that Lou has never been to a classical concert, he offers her the tickets his friend sent him, and suggests she take her mother along. When she refuses, he calls her a snob, but she admits that she would be uncomfortable, feeling as though she didn't belong. When he informs her that he feels the same way everywhere he goes now, she relents, providing he takes her himself. He finally agrees, although as reluctant as she is. Not knowing what to wear, she brings three outfits over for Will and Nathan to help her decide. The first two are a bust, but the third gets appreciative comments from both of them. Nathan helps Will get ready, and she takes note of how handsome he is. The evening is a tremendous success and when they get home, he asks her to just sit with him in the driveway for a moment, and allow him to remember the feeling of being a man who has just returned from a concert with a girl in a red dress.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

Lou primed Nathan for the outing she had planned first - a day at the races, and asks him to play along which although he does gamely, is a disaster. It rains; Louisa parks in a section where access is difficult going in, and impossible coming back; her horse comes in sixth; and the entire afternoon is a series of indignities capped with the fact that their entrance tickets didn't qualify them to enter the restaurant. By the time Lou sees the disabled parking, paved and located conveniently beside the building, she is worn out by the obstacles and insufferable attitudes. She gets them home, and Will's attitude is palpable. She finally asks him what is wrong only to learn that he hates horse racing, but more importantly, that she did what everyone else did. She decided what the



cripple should do, and dragged him there without a single thought to what he might want.

Lou is reminded of when she lost her fearlessness. She was twenty, and inspired by another student who'd traveled, she'd booked a holiday to Australia. Having spent the day as a car park attendant at the castle, she and her friends celebrated by getting drunk. They met some boys who were happy to pay for drinks, and one even passed a joint around. They ended up in the middle of the castle maze after the Red Lion closed, and in her drunk and stoned condition, it was a half an hour before Lou realizes that the other girls had gone home. Much later, Treena finds her quiet and shivering in the middle of the maze, and helped her to get home. Treena never asked any questions. She just helped Lou find her clothes, held her for a while and then walked into the house with her as though nothing had happened. It marked the end of Lou's adventuring. She never wore anything remotely suggestive again, canceled her flight to Australia, and never returned to the maze. When she talks Will into taking her to a concert, she allows him and Nathan to help her pick out the outfit she should wear, and the cleavage shown is a testament to her courage.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

Lou joins Patrick at the track to let him know that she won't make the Triathlon Terrors meeting that night at the pub, agreeing to step in for Nathan. He tells her she has already missed three meetings and the next one is critical as it deals with the travel plans for the Xtreme Viking trip. He asks her what she wants to do for her birthday, and she admits her parents have already planned a dinner. Lou moves into Treena's old room and spends a full week redecorating. At work, she labors to get Will out of the house on day trips to places where he is not so self-conscious. Patrick and her family decide they'd like to meet Will and he agrees to join her for her birthday dinner at her parents' home. Her father creates a particle board ramp and the evening is a wonderful success. Will even provides a bottle of champagne for the event, and the only fly in the ointment is Patrick's attitude. He is shocked by the intimacy of her behavior with Will where feeding and care is concerned, while Lou hardly considers it anymore. Afterward Louisa and Patrick return to his house where he berates Louisa for having such a personal relationship with Will. He makes love to her that night with a determination to reveal his athleticism, and lasting for hours. When he was finished, she knew that his 'performance' was for Will's benefit. Afterward, he falls asleep and Louisa is left lying there awake. She pulls out the book that Will sent her home with and inside it finds Will's card complete with a 'birthday bonus' of ten fifty pound notes.

May is full of headlines that center around the right to die, and Dignitas - incidents where police have become involved. Lou increases the outings that she and Will take. Lou's father loses his job, and immediately registers at the Job Center, but at the age of fifty five, his prospects are slim. Lou donates the birthday money from Will to the household, but her parents immediately return it. Treena and Thomas come home for a visit and she is enthusiastic about her courses. They discuss the outings Lou has taken Will on. Lou asks Will about his favorite vacations, and he describes some of them. She admits to having once bought tickets to Australia but that she never went, and he asks her to promise him that she'll live her life a little more fully and not stay in one place for the rest of her life.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

Lou's mother misses Treena and Thomas terribly. They talk every evening, and ever each call she goes into her bedroom and cries. Lou spends most of her time either at Granta House or at the library researching activities that they might be able to do. Lou wants to help Will send out a thank you card and to her surprise, he refuses. Finally he explains that he finds it humiliating to send anything written by someone else. That inspires Lou to provide him with voice recognition software, which he actually finds useful. Three days later, Lou gets a note in the mail from Will, thanking her for her efforts. Will surprises her when he tells her he'd like to come to her family's house for



her birthday dinner, even after she tells him that she'd begged off, telling them he wouldn't attend. It seems as though whenever she thinks she has him figured out, he throws a curve at her and does the exact opposite of what she expects. The dinner is a tremendous success, and Will charms everyone but Patrick who seems intent on being somewhat confrontational, insisting that with his 'experience', he can help Will gain the mobility his doctors have assured him is gone. Will is a gentleman about it, thanking him for the thought, but knows that a lot of Patrick's conversation about mobility and triathlons is aimed at making Will even more aware of his shortcomings. When he leaves, he can't help but make a comment about how lucky Patrick is because Lou certainly gives a wonderful bed bath. Patrick is apoplectic and questions Lou about it later at his place, suggesting that Lou should sue for constructive dismissal. Then, he takes her to bed, applying himself with a vengeance as if to show her the advantage he has over Will. Lou is awake for a long time afterward.

In May there are headlines surrounding Dignitas and Lou catches Will reading them on the computer one morning, but he blanks the screen when he realizes that she is behind him. It takes her half an hour to fight down the lump in her throat. She reads the article herself later in the library and learns that under the sensationalism of the news piece, the young man involved had suffered tremendously. Lou's father loses his job, which isn't a surprise to him, but even a brave face isn't enough to find him work any time quickly. After a fortnight of searching, he applies for benefits. Lou sees Mr. Traynor in town with a red haired woman, but pretends not to see him. Will gets a wedding invitation from Alicia and Rupert and responds with indifference. Treena and Thomas come home for a weekend, bringing life to the house and their mother. In the early hours of the morning, he quietly comes into the room that Lou now sleeps in, and crawls in beside her. Lou talks to Will about the vacations he has taken and enjoyed, and he tries to convince her that she is squandering her life if she doesn't get herself out to see some of the world.



Chapter 15 and 16

Chapter 15 and 16 Summary

Louisa works on the calendar of events for Will before going to Granta House, struggling to think of things he will be willing and able to do. Will tells her about some of the things he used to do when he wasn't working, trying to inspire her to live a larger life. Two days later, Will is hospitalized because of an infection. Restless, Louisa goes to the library and looks up activities that a quadruplegic can do. She finds several chat sites, and entering as 'Busy Bee', she asks for advice, learning a great deal in the process. She reads stories of courage and humor, some of it dark, and hears of hardships and suicidal thoughts as well. Some of the advice she gets to cheer Will up is enough to make her blush, and she skips over them. One suggests that she should butt out and let Will make his own decisions, but he is widely criticized by others. Another suggests that a partner would give him reason and will to live. Will comes home pale and tired, and after a weekend of rest, she begins to encourage outings again, suggesting that she will broaden her horizons if he will accompany her. He is much more willing a participant when he believes it is for her benefit, and even joins her in a tattoo parlor, both inking small parts of themselves.

At home the sleeping arrangements become a series of musical beds. Louisa's Mum and Dad forfeit their larger room for Katrina and Thomas when they visit, sleeping on the floor downstairs and insisting it is a nice change. Louisa offers to sleep at Patrick's, but he is seldom there, and she doesn't really like his flat or sleep well there. Will offers her the use of the spare room at his place on weekends and asks about Patrick but seeing her expression, he doesn't pursue the thought. The conversation goes to his father, and the woman Louisa saw him in town with. Louisa is surprised that Will knows and he admits it isn't the first time. Every day, she continues to work on creating the kind of magic that will show Will life is worth living. She begins making lists of things that cannot be done with quadruplegics as well. She consistently goes back on line to get advice from other quads. With only two months left, she is running out of ideas. Then she goes home to find her father dressed and ready to take her Mum out for dinner. He is celebrating his new job as head of maintenance at the castle, working for Mr. Traynor. After they leave, she calls Will and thanks him. She walks to the pub, surprising Patrick and the Triathlon Terrors and as she talks to him about the sleeping arrangements on the weekends at her house, he surprises her by suggesting she take the next obvious step - move in and she agrees.

Chapter 15 and 16 Analysis

Louisa discovers that Will and Nathan have been regularly betting on what she does when she goes home, and isn't happy that they consider her free time as entertainment. Nathan is amused, saying Will wins every time, but knowing they think her life is so boring irks her, so Louisa intercepts the tenner that Will won that morning. Will talks to



her about it later, and while he understands her feelings, he explains that she is wasting her potential and ability, and though she may not see it now, there will come a day where she may regret her inactivity now. Taking him up on his advice, she tells him that she won't go alone, using it as leverage to get him out as well. They have some failed adventures, but some good ones as well that include wine tasting, going to see a singer he likes and even getting a tattoo together. Hers is a small bee and his simply says 'Best before; 19 March 2007' which makes Louisa both laugh and cry as she recognizes the date of his accident. When they were done, he asks her to find the emergency tennor he kept in his bag, and laughing says it is hers because right up until the tattooing began, he'd bet that she would have chickened out.

When Katrina and Thomas come home on the weekends, a case of musical beds begins with stripping and remaking the master bedroom, and setting up bedding on the living room floor. As Louisa is now the only breadwinner in the house, they insist she needs her rest to be able to work. Will notices her demeanor and can see she is exhausted, falling asleep during a film they are watching. She finally reveals the bizarre homelife issues, including her father's loss of job. He suggests she use his spare room. Not long afterward, Louisa is surprised to arrive home to find her father ready to celebrate his new job as head of castle maintenance. After they leave, she calls Will and asks him if her father's new job had anything to do with his father's indiscretion with the woman she'd seen him with, and he insists it was just fortuitous timing. She has trouble talking around the huge lump that formed in her throat, and thanking him again, says goodbye. Not wanting to sit in the quiet house alone, she goes to the pub and surprises Patrick. He returns the favor by suggesting she finally move in with him after he hears about their weekend bedroom shuffles. Unable to think of a satisfactory reason to turn him down on the spot, she agrees, and she tries to convince herself that it will be good.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

On the afternoon Louisa tells Will she is moving in with Patrick, a man comes to the door. Introducing himself as Michael Lawler, he announces he has an appointment with Will, and spends an hour in the living room with him. Louisa's curiosity is overwhelming, and she manages to discover his name and the location of his office before he leaves. She moves into Patrick's that night, and he shows her where she can put her things. He questions her when he sees the calendar, especially regarding the August 12th date with exclamation marks and underlined. Nathan asks if she and Will have had a fight. Three days pass before she calls Camilla and asks her to meet her for coffee and tells her about the meeting Will had. She asks if Louisa has managed to come up with any other plans, assuring her that she'll pay for anything, anywhere. The conversation ends badly when Camilla discovers that Louisa has moved in with her boyfriend and Camilla takes her leave. Will is still distant, and she busies herself with a whirlwind of cleaning until he finally interrupts her, insisting he'd like to go out, and pointing out that her cleaning is unnecessary anyway. They walk the grounds of the castle until closing, and then he takes her inside for a more private tour. He tells her about his memories growing up around the castle, and then suggests they take a stroll through the maze, but Louisa is reluctant. When he teases her, and bets her she can't get to the center and back as quickly as he could have, she decides it is time to put her demons to rest. She heads in, trying to memorize her route. Before long she is lost, and voices from the past swirl in her mind. It all comes back, and she stumbles back to the center again, and he finds her in a corner, tears streaming down her face. Telling her to take his hand, he leads her out. It takes time, but she finally reveals for the first time the events of that horrible night. Finally, having gotten it out of her system and heard someone tell her for the first time that it wasn't her fault, they head back to Granta House. She thanks him for coming to get her and he just shakes his head.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Will is quiet after Louisa tells him her intentions to move in with Patrick. Somehow, she feels as though he is judging her, and it is exhausting to be as cool and distant as he is to her. Will meets with a lawyer in private for over an hour, and later, she looks him up on line, and learns that he is a lawyer who specializes in wills, probates and power of attorney. Later, her mother cries as she moves into Patrick's although her father is supportive. Patrick and Louisa are nervous with each other at first as he shows her around. Patrick seems to have a renewed interest in sex, but Louisa's thoughts are elsewhere. Will stops making jokes about Patrick, and three days after his lawyer visits, Lou calls Camilla and arranges to meet with her away from Granta House to tell her. When she does, Camilla looks stricken and the conversation deteriorates when Lou gives her Patrick's telephone number, telling her she's moved in with him. Unaware that Louisa had a boyfriend, Camilla suggests that she could have waited before rubbing her



happiness in his face and Louisa is livid. She reminds her that she has devoted her time to Will, and has no higher priority than Will's happiness, but that she is entitled to a personal life. They go their separate ways, both angry and the conversation plays over and over in her mind as she tries to adjust to life with Patrick. The next day feelings are still strained between herself and Will, so she busies herself with in-depth cleaning until he finally stops her, telling her he doesn't care whether his fixtures sparkle. He wants to go out, and they walk the castle grounds, the inside of the castle after closing and then Will suggests the maze. When Louisa refuses, he accuses her of being afraid of leaving her comfort zone again, and challenges her to beat his old time for getting to the center and back out. Deciding it's time to put an end to the ghosts of the past that kept her from entering the maze again, she heads in, talking to herself the entire way, and counting her turns and directions. She makes it to the center, and begins to head back out, but like the first time, she quickly becomes disoriented. She can hear their voices as though they are standing beside her, taunting her and suggesting she got lost on purpose so that she could return to them. Trying to overcome her fear, she continues but finds herself back in the center, and all reason leaves her. When Will finds her, she is huddled in a corner, sobbing his name over and over. After she finally confesses the truth about her past connection with the maze, he tells her something good. The past is something that can't be changed, but it doesn't have to define her, and it wasn't her fault. Somehow, his words get through, and she takes a deep breath feeling the weight of that night slipping away.



Chapters 18 and 19: Nathan

Chapters 18 and 19: Nathan Summary

A travel agent tries to talk Louisa into taking Will to Disney World but she tells him he isn't interested in theme parks of any kind. Without hearing her, he continues to suggest SeaWorld next. She hangs up the phone as Will comes in announcing that they will attend Lissa and Rupert's wedding that Saturday. They decide to go without Nathan after Alicia confirms that a ramp can be provided upon request. Will buys a silver frame and what he calls a vile vase on line, and Louisa decides to wear the red dress that he liked on her despite the fact that Treena warns her that it shows too much cleavage. Louisa's idea of what the house will look like is so accurate that she laughs out loud as they drive up. Assuring her he plans to be on his best behavior Will does absolutely nothing to disappoint her. After the service, she gets Will a drink, and the bartender dispenses Pimms - the only drink on the menu so far. When she gets back to him, he introduces her to someone from her firm, and that opens the path for others to approach him. The only one that seems to make him tense is the new CEO of his old firm. By the time lunch is served, Louisa realizes she is feeling the effects of alcohol, and is horrified when Will tells her that a single Pimms is the equivalent of a glass of wine. He is amused and tells her to let her hair down. As the night wears on, they both relax more and more, and begin really enjoying themselves, even laughing as they watched people dance. Mary is great company, and even when Alicia comes over to thank them for coming, Will maintains his sense of humor. The highlight is when Louisa climbs on his lap and he wheels her around the dance floor, her arms wrapped around him, cheek to cheek. She even manages to convince him to take a holiday with her before the night is over.

Nathan watches the exchanges between Will and Camilla, and then Will and Louisa the next morning with great amusement. First, he notes that Will defends Louisa when Camilla starts in on her, and then he notes Will's eyes following her all the way out as she leaves to change and rest for a while. It isn't until after she is gone that he sees that Will isn't looking so good. A small alarm goes off in his head. He admits to needing his tubes changed and a slight headache. Nathan interprets autonomic dysreflexia correctly and springs into action, changing tubes and medicating, wondering if he should call an ambulance. After a while, his color returns to normal, and he continues to defend Louisa, taking the blame for being so careless with such an important part of his care. Nathan can't help but lighten up himself as he notices how Will's mind is obviously on other things, and he is sure he knows what.

Chapters 18 and 19: Nathan Analysis

Louisa is never sure why Will decides to attend Lissa and Rupert's wedding, but suspects it is just his nature to do what people least expect him to. Perhaps he was even seeking closure of some sort. Alicia is properly flustered when she learns Will is



actually coming, and Louisa realizes that she never expected him to accept. Worried that he is going to make a scene, she tries to gauge his intentions, but he promises to be in good form, so donning her red dress once again, and adding a shawl, she drives a handsomely attired Will to the wedding of his ex girlfriend to his former best friend. The afternoon and evening is an astonishing success. Will is as handsome as she has ever seen him, and as the night wears on, it is easier and easier to see the man before the chair. Without realizing Pimms is alcoholic, Louisa suddenly realizes that she is on her way to drunk and horrified, tries to sober up, but Will takes all of it in stride. When she admits she is unable to drive him home in her condition, he gives her a credit card and the name of a hotel, suggesting she book them rooms for the night and relax, so she does. Louisa gets really brave, and carefully sitting on his lap, she suggests they give everyone something to really talk about and join the others on the dance floor during a slow song. Her dress rides up her thighs and he tells her to leave it as he wheels her in circles around the floor and she wraps her arms around him, resting her cheek on his. Mary salutes them and she pulls back slightly to look at him, no longer self conscious. They even dance, and he admits that sometimes she is the only thing that makes him look forward to the day. Before she can think about it, she asks him to take a week off with her and just go somewhere. After a moment's hesitation, he agrees.

Though Camilla is furious when they return the next morning, Nathan can't help but be amused. He notices that when she starts in on Louisa, all signs of good humor fade, and he tells her to direct her comments to him. Nathan notices their conspiratorial conversation and her slight embarrassment when Will whispers something in her ear, and then Will tells her to take the day off and get some sleep. When she is gone, Nathan sees Will slump and realizes he isn't well. He admits that having had too much to drink the night before, he'd been reluctant to let Louisa touch his tubes and told her he would be fine until morning. She had barely been able to transfer him to his bed, and he'd had visions of finding her asleep in the hallway. Nathan is angry, but Will insists it was his fault, not hers. Commenting wryly on his tattoo, he sits with him until his color returns, and notices that for once it appears that there was something other than pain on his mind.



Chapters 20 and 21: Steven

Chapters 20 and 21: Steven Summary

Louisa follows Patrick as he runs, she cycles and times him. When she announces she isn't joining him for Xtreme Viking, he almost stops, but it is another mile before he asks why they can't get another agency person in to allow her the holiday. When she tells him it is because Will needs a trip he tells her that lately Will takes priority over everything, his implications clear. When she finally tells him the real reason, he relents and tells her he needs to run alone for now. She watches him disappear down the road. She gets eighty nine replies to her request for a good place to take a holiday with Will and is astonished by the variety of activities. At least six members of the chat room recommend the Four Winds Ranch in California, and excited, she prints out all the information. She shows Nathan and he admits it looks good. Even Camilla agrees but when Patrick discovers that she plans to take the trip of a lifetime with Will, he tries to forbid her. Then it is obvious to him that she's already decided, and he won't change her mind.

Steven is surprised to discover that Louisa has moved into the annex over the weekend, but whatever the reason, it is clear that Will is happier when she is around. Steven talks to Bernard Clark who tells him that Louisa and Patrick split up, and that she'd applied for a conversion course of some kind. On Sunday, she calls Camilla and I into the annex and shows us her plans for a holiday, and Will actually smiles and agrees. Steven goes for a drink with Della and tells her about the plans. She is incredibly supportive and he almost asks her how it will affect them, but she sees the look on his face and tells him not to say a word, insisting it is good news. Then Will catches pneumonia.

Chapters 20 and 21: Steven Analysis

Patrick is less than amused when Louisa tells him that she won't be coming with him to the Xtreme Viking. He accuses her of not supporting him, and sulks about the fact that the tickets have already been purchased. He tries to reason with her, but gains a new and angry momentum when he realizes that her mind is made up. Not only will he be going to Xtreme Viking alone, but his girlfriend will be on holiday with someone else in the meantime. Finally, she tells him the whole truth, admitting that this is her last chance to change his mind about Dignitas. She goes to her parents place and broaches the subject of retraining with Treena who thinks it's a great idea, and she also thinks the trip is terrific. The only one who isn't supportive is Patrick. He tries to forbid her from going, but the set look on her face says everything and he walks out of the living room leaving her sitting there.

Steven Traynor is surprised to see that over the weekend, Louisa had moved in. He thought Camilla would be angry when he told her, but she took it surprisingly well. All Will would tell them is that it was 'family issues' that prompted the move. When Steven



sees the plans for the holiday and hears Will agreeing to go, he has to admit that though he'd been reluctant at first, Louisa had only improved his life. Steven realizes suddenly that he is immensely glad she is with his son. He tells Della about the plans in motion, and she is more than supportive. She is convinced that Will's happiness is possible, and they joke around about it. Then Will gets sick.



Chapters 22 and 23

Chapters 22 and 23 Summary

Louisa gets to the hospital as soon as she hears. Will looks gray. She offers to get Camilla a drink, and later, after the consultant had come and gone, she offers to stay while Camilla goes home to change and freshen up. Grateful, she leaves and Louisa sits with Will, holding his hand quietly. He wakes just after four. Louisa is called in by Camilla who tells her Will is asking for her. She talks to him for a while, and he reluctantly admits he won't be bungee jumping with her any time soon. The words are like a fist in her stomach. She goes back to Granta House, cleans up and changes the bedding, and packs a bag for Will. Then she sits down to cancel the trip she'd planned. Nathan arrives, and they talk about Will's plans to go to Dignitas. Nathan insists that he will support Will whatever choice he makes, but Louisa isn't ready to give up. She asks him if he'll help her plan another trip the doctors can approve and he agrees.

Ten days later they are at Gatwick Airport. Louisa has double and triple checked all of the arrangements, and they embark without incident. Exhausted, she sleeps on the plane and when she wakes, they are less than an hour from Mauritius. They settle into the hotel quickly, and Louisa doesn't relax until Will starts to improve three days later. Then everything steadily improves. The hotel caters to every need Will has, almost too attentive as they spend time on the beach. Louisa spends most of her time at his side while Nathan entertains them with efforts at different watersports. Nathan even meets a fellow Kiwi native named Karen that he spends time with leaving Will and Louisa to enjoy themselves. After Nathan begins spending nights with Karen, Louisa donates her room to them and she shares with Will. The first night, a tropical storm begins, and he tells her there is plenty of room for her in the bed with him. She gets in carefully beside him and just enjoys every moment of the intimacy that has developed between them. Louisa even tries scuba diving for the first time at Will's insistence. On the last night, she lets herself go, having more to drink than usual, and tells Will she doesn't want to go home. They can hear the music from inside as they sit on the beach and she dances for him, unselfconscious. Then, sitting on his lap, she kisses him but he breaks it off quickly apologizing. She tells him she loves him and believes they can have a future together, but he stubbornly disagrees. She lays it all on the line, and his answer is no. It isn't enough. Though she'd thought he was changing his mind, he assures her he hasn't and the appointment is set. Devastated, she leaves him on the beach, calling after her helplessly.

Chapters 22 and 23 Analysis

Louisa had been off on Friday, and had gone to London to get her passport. He had seemed a bit quiet to her that night, but she'd thought nothing of it. On Saturday, she'd moved her things out of Patrick's on Saturday and then shopped for holiday needs. On Monday, she'd arrived to find the house empty. Finally a text from Nathan had come



telling her where they were. She stays at the hospital until he regains consciousness, taking over bedside watch when Camilla needs a break. Then she heads back to Granta House despondent to cancel the trip she'd so carefully planned. Nathan offers to help, but she turns him down. They talk about Dignitas, and Nathan supports any choice Will makes, despite Louisa's tears and pleas. Finally, she asks him if he will help her to plan another trip if she can find something the doctors will agree to. He says he will, but isn't sure that they can pull it off.

Louisa had outdone herself, planning a trip where Will would be able to convalesce, but as she looks at him while they are at the airport, she sees a look that makes her wonder if they are doing the right thing. In the chatrooms, Richie is the one who comes to her aid, putting her in touch with his cousin, a travel agent. When he suggests the trip he has in mind, a bell of recognition goes off and Louisa could have cried with relief. When they land in Mauritius, Will is pale and slumped in his seat, and again she wonders if she'd done the right thing. They settle him into a bed at the hotel and Nathan tells her to relax, seeing that she is near tears again. It is three days before Will begins to gain his strength, and then things get better every day. It seems as though he finally becomes himself and the constraints of the chair no longer exist. All signs point to him changing his mind about Dignitas, but on the last day, when she boldly tells him she loves him and believes they can have a good life together, he tells her that she isn't enough. In fact, he still plans to go through with his appointment with death, and that her company is the only thing that had made the last six months bearable. Then he asks the impossible of her. He asks her if she will come to Switzerland with him for his final moments on earth. Devastated, she tells him how selfish he is and how sorry she is that she ever met him. Then she leaves him on the beach and goes back to the hotel, hearing him calling her name helplessly behind her.



Chapters 24 and 25: Katrina

Chapters 24 and 25: Katrina Summary

Louisa can't even look at Will the next morning. She meets them in the lobby, leaving Nathan to pack Will's things and get him ready. It doesn't take long for Nathan to realize what Louisa's frame of mind is about, and he does his best to remain normal. Louisa refuses all attempts at communication by Will on flight home and as she expected, his parents are waiting at the arrivals gate. They tell him how wonderful he looks and even Nathan is quieter now. Bernard announces that they have a special dinner planned, and smiling Will agrees. Louisa thanks them but tells them she is going to head off. Camilla tries to change her mind, and so does Will, but trying not to cry she tells them to have a nice dinner and walks away. Camilla stops her at the bus stop, begging her to wait. Louisa turns and tells her that she can't do the last few days and will forfeit her wages for the whole month even. Camilla pales as she finally understands. Bernard almost reaches her before she collapses after Louisa tells her how sorry she is. Numb, she turns and walks away.

Katrina can't quite understand what is going on when Louisa shows up. Louisa remains in her room for thirty six hours, and finally Treena goes in and learns that Lou quit her job. Treena had never seen her sister look so sad. She climbs into bed beside her and for once doesn't have any answers for her big sister. She finally came out and walked around the castle with Treena and watching her, she realizes that her sister will strive for bigger horizons now. She mentions a letter came for her from the college, agreeing to give her an interview the following day. Louisa wants to cancel, but Treena won't let it go. She reminds her big sister that if she stops now, everything she's learned in the last six months will have been wasted. Louisa goes and Mum and Dad are thrilled to discover she's been accepted but doesn't think she can afford it. Dad tells her it will all work out and she bursts into tears, telling them everything. When Dad mentions that Steven hadn't been into work in two days, it dawns on Louisa. The date Will chose was tomorrow. Louisa goes to Treena the following day, and asks her if she made a mistake turning down the trip to Switzerland to say goodbye. Treena thinks about how she would feel if she couldn't be with Thomas - the closest she's come to loving unconditionally, and finds it unthinkable. The press gets wind of the situation, and begins to gather on the lawn, and call asking for her statement. She ignores them all. Camilla calls, leaving a message on the machine asking Louisa to call her, and she does. Treena waits till she is off the phone and then learns that Camilla begged her to come to Switzerland for Will.

Chapters 24 and 25: Katrina Analysis

Will tries repeatedly to talk to Louisa the next morning as they wait at the airport and then again on the plane, but Louisa doesn't want anything to do with him. She plugs in earphones and stares out the window. She couldn't bear the thought that her love, that their love wasn't enough for him. It was unthinkable. She can still feel his fingers



entwined with hers and has to retreat to the small bathroom where she sobs uncontrollably. She knew Will's parents would be devastated. They meet them at the airport and Louisa can't get away fast enough. She turns down the invitation to dinner with them, and even Will asks her to please come, but she still can't face him. She grabs her luggage and tells them to have a nice dinner, making her escape. Camilla catches up with her, but pales and collapses when the truth comes out. They had assumed from Nathan's emails that spoke of the wonderful time they were having, and the tanned and happy face their son presented, that he had changed his mind. The truth is almost too much for them to bear as well. Unable to discuss it further, Louisa tells Camilla she can't finish the last few days, willing to forfeit the months pay. Then she simply walks away, not even aware of where she is going.

Though her sister is known to be melodramatic at times, Katrina can't quite understand when Louisa comes home, locks herself in a room and sleeps. The family excuses her behavior at first, calling it jet lag, and attributing some of it to her break up with Patrick, but as time wears on, those reasons seem insubstantial. Treena watches her sister grieve, listens as she confesses it to the family, and then is amazed when she still defends Will. Treena is the only one who understands when her big sister realizes she may have made a mistake. The press gets wind of the situation and hounds Louisa for a story. Treena calls Patrick and gleans that he was the leak in short order, livid with him. The whole situation is almost untenable but then a phone call comes that changes things a little. Camilla wants her sister to come to Switzerland immediately, and has left a ticket at the airport.



Chapter 26: Chapter 27: Crown Prosecution Services and Epilogue: September 29

Chapter 26: Chapter 27: Crown Prosecution Services and Epilogue: September 29 Summary

Treena helps her pack but when her parents realize what she is doing, her mother forbids her to go, telling her it is immoral, could possibly affect the rest of her life, her chances of getting into college and her record. Treena supports her, and Louisa is forced to defy her parents. Her mother tells her not to bother coming back, but Dad tosses Treena his keys and suggests they leave out the back door. Whatever else happens, all Louisa can think of is seeing him. She manages to make her flight, and checks into the hotel Camilla booked for her. When she thinks of saying goodbye to Will, she throws up. In the morning she is ready early, but can't sit still so she goes down to the lobby and sees a computer terminal set up for guests. She logs on and finds Ritchie. He reminds her that there is likely no changing Will's mind, and all she can do is be there for him. He adds that afterward, she should look him up - he could use a friend like her. She agrees. When she gets to Dignitas, Will is happy to see her, and asks his family to leave them alone for a bit. She lies on the bed beside him, drinking in everything about him one last time, determined not to say anything to try to change his mind. He asks her to tell him something good, and she tells him about two people who met by chance and who changed each other profoundly. They both agree that the last six months had been the best in either of their lives. Then slowly he begins retreating from her. She kisses him, and he asks her to call in his family.

After a full investigation, the Crown Prosecution determines that given all of the circumstances involved, there will be no charges laid against any of the parties in attendance when Will Traynor willingly ended his life.

Louisa, following instructions, sits at a table on the Rue des Francs Bourgeois in the Parisian sun and first reads a letter from Treena before opening the last letter from Will. The letter gives her instructions to visit a Parfumeur and then tells her that Michael Lawler has only given her a small gift and still has a full amount to extend to her when she returns. He tells her how much she changed his life and how he hopes that his gift to her will do the same. His hope is that she lives well. A tear falls on the table, and Louisa gets up to fulfill his last request.



Chapter 26: Chapter 27: Crown Prosecution Services and Epilogue: September 29 Analysis

Louisa gets ready to go with Treena's help over the objections of her Mum and Dad. They try to forbid her, and then to convince her that she simply can't go, but Louisa has already made up her mind. When Mum realizes she means to go regardless, she tells her if she does, she can't come back - it won't be her home any longer. Despite that, she goes. Louisa's love for Will is stronger than anything else in her life ever has been, and even knowing that he was going to end his life, she couldn't stay away. She had to be there with him. She makes the plane, and checks into the hotel, falling into an exhausted sleep. Then, in the morning she rose and dressed, suddenly brutally conscious of what she was headed to do. She throws up twice, her stomach in knots, and then packs and goes downstairs to wait for the ride Camilla said she would send for her. When she sees him, she knows she made the right decision. His smile lights her heart, and she goes to him. For the next little while, his family leaves the room, and she spends as much time as she can, telling him how much he meant to her and how deeply he affected her life. He returns the sentiment and they lie together until she feels him beginning to retreat. Then he asks her to call his family in.

The Crown Prosecutor determines after a full investigation that Will Traynor acted of his own accord and was of sound mind when he chose to end his life. As such no charges will be laid against those who attended or provided aid.

Louisa sits in a cafe in Paris as instructed in the letter that came with a check from Michael Lawler. She reads his last letter there, as instructed, and in it he tells her all of the things he knew she would never have let him say to her face to face without interruption. He tells her about the account he's set up that will cover a nice home, her schooling, and living expenses while she gets it. Then, knowing her, he tells her to take a breath and accept that she gave him so much more and he only hopes to return a small amount. Mostly, he wants her to spread her wings and be all that she can - to live.



Characters

Louisa (Lou) Clark

Lou is twenty six years old. She worked for Frank for six years at the Buttered Bun until he announced that he was returning to Australia to look after his ailing father. Louisa preferred boy's clothes until she was about fourteen years old, and found her own style. Now, her father calls her a character, and her mother refers to her as an individual. She is the type of woman who speaks her mind, regardless of filtering. Small in stature, even a bit short, she has dark hair often worn up in two knots that could be described as a 'Princess Leia' look. Though she isn't what would be called plain, she certainly isn't beautiful either. She and Patrick have been dating for almost seven years, and though he calls her gorgeous, it's usually when he wants to be intimate with her. Before losing her job, she often thought that one day she and Patrick would marry and have children - likely living in a house not too far from the one she grew up in. In fact, up until that point in her life, she hadn't given much thought to what she wanted to do with her life.

Lou sees herself as somewhat mentally deficient when compared to her younger sister, Katrina. It isn't that Louisa herself isn't intelligent, but more that her sister is just so much more so. Despite the fact that she is a year and a half younger, Katrina skips two grades in school, surpassing Lou, and just generally doing everything before her. The only manner in which Lou believes she has an edge over her sister is where personal style is concerned. In that regard, she has always excelled.

Will Traynor

Will before his accident was an active, energetic man who excelled in everything he did. He had broad shoulders with a frame that clearly reflected his love of the outdoors. Clean shaven, the many photographs show him in a variety of activities including bungee jumping, skiing, and trekking through the wilderness. He was also no stranger to formal wear and the photos clearly reveal a man whose wealth afforded him the lifestyle he wanted.

Since his accident, Will had let himself go. His hair, light brown in color, was no longer neatly trimmed and his face riddled with stubble that he had no desire to have changed. His eyes were still gray in color, but now reflected a constant pain and discomfort, with the hollow look of someone who has already left the world mentally if not physically. At times, Lou thought he was the most unhappy man she had ever seen in her life.

His condition wasn't the only source of his sadness however. It was more than just being stuck in a chair. It was also the constant indignities that went along with it, and the health concerns that had to be endured as a result of it. The combination turned him into an often mean and vile sort of man with a sharp and unkind answer to any question or comment put to him. When he begins to open up a bit, Lou learns more about him



just watching. He has digestive issues that cause stomach pain; shoulder pain; bladder infections (more pain); stomach ulcers from the medications; pressure sores from too much time in any given position; headaches and a relentless burning in the limbs that he otherwise didn't feel at all. Despite all of this, he never complained.

Patrick

Patrick is Louise's boyfriend, and was named Stortfold Young Entrepreneur of the Year two years previously. Since then, he acquired partner, Ginger Pete, and together they provide personal training for a forty mile area. He is presently training for an upcoming marathon he plans to enter in the early part of March.

Patrick had originally worked in telesales, and Lou had to sometimes admit to herself that she preferred him in those days. Patrick and Louisa had met then, at a time when his favorite things included beer, sports, sex and candy bars - not necessarily in that order. He was somewhat ordinary in appearance and a little pudgier in the back end than she was, but she liked the solid way he felt. She also liked that he was protective of his mother since his father's death, and that he got along well with his four brothers and sisters. On their first date, she remembers thinking how this was a man who would never hurt her. In seven years, she had learned the truth of that thought.

Now, he had become running man. His stomach was hard and lean, and he enjoyed proving it whenever he could. He spent a great deal of time outside and his face showed the effects of weathering. Even his thighs had turned into solid muscle, but despite these somewhat sexy physical changes, their sex life had become so infrequent that it hardly existed now. He had become so obsessed with his own body that somehow he'd lost interest in hers, despite his assurances that he liked her just the way she was.

Katrina (Treena) Clark

Louisa's younger sister, Katrina has a way of making her feel stupid just by her existence. She is a sensible girl, whose intelligence had her moving up in school, first one year into Louisa's class and then to the year above her. She is eighteen months younger than her older sister of twenty six, and the only thing that she is not proficient at is putting clothing together in a fashionable way. She much preferred the classic jeans and pullover look.

Katrina is the first person in the Clark family to attend a university, but with the arrival of her son, Thomas, she'd been forced to drop out in her final year. Katrina returns to school, determined to finish her education, realizing that unless she does so, she will never be able to confidently provide for herself and her son. Though younger than Louisa by eighteen months, she is Louisa's rock, both emotionally and influentially. Her determination to succeed, and her confidence are a constant source of strength for Louisa as she copes with the issues surrounding Will, and surrounding her own life.



Camilla Traynor

Camilla is Will's mother. She is middle-aged, and elegantly beautiful. She is somewhat stiff and formal in her manner - the kind of person who could make even the most competent person become clumsy and incapable. Camilla and her husband have been married for just under thirty seven years. She has two grown children, Will and Georgina, and joined the bench when they were grown. She has been a magistrate for almost eleven years, and in that time has seen the worst of life trudge through her courtroom. Despite that, she believes in the order of law and enjoys her job as a result. To offset the worst she sees, she gardens with a bit of obsession, enjoying the optimism of new growth. When Will's accident brings him home to live in the renovated annex, she loses interest in the garden, seldom having time or energy to spend there.

Grief plays a major role in how Camilla treats Louisa during most of their association. At best, her behavior is distant and at worst, snob like and demeaning. This is something she comes to realize in the end, and before Will's death, she calls Louisa and begs her to come to Switzerland. She apologizes to her for her behavior, and understands that Louisa is the best thing that could have happened to her son. At the same time, despite how much it hurts to admit it, she realizes that there is nothing that could have been done to change her son's mind.

Steven Traynor

Will's father Steven is a gentle and calm man who oversees the castle's management ever since he retired. He had originally worked for the city, and reminds Lou of a benign landowner who keeps his hand in the affairs of the estate for something to do. He likes to join Will when he gets home at five each evening, and watch television, discussing whatever current affairs caught his attention. He is no longer faithful to his wife, often spending nights that she doesn't come home elsewhere. Camilla knows this and even at one time wonders about Louisa, but dismisses that suspicion just as quickly as it arrives.

Despite the affair that Steven is having, he remains with his wife for the sake of his son. Had Will changed his mind and decided that he wanted to live, it is entirely likely that he would have remained with his wife until Will died or became independent of them somehow. The woman he is seeing, Della, is aware of all of this, and despite it, she supports him and remains steadfast at his side. She understands the complexities of his home life, and puts no pressure on him to either explain himself or commit to her in any way. When Will goes through with his plans to take his own life, Steven leaves Camilla to be with her.

Nathan

Nathan is Will's primary caregiver. He is competent, and exudes a no nonsense air of professionalism that never wavers. He shows little interest in the minutiae of Will's



personal life, but where his health is concerned, there could be no better caregiver. He is attentive and loyal to a fault, and genuinely cares about the man he looks after day in and day out. In the time that Nathan is Will's caregiver, he comes to respect him and to love him. He recognizes his intelligence, enjoys his intellect, and still respects his rights to make his own decisions where his life is concerned. Nathan has seen Will through three separate bouts of pneumonia, and knows that despite the pain that losing Will may cause him personally, he also sees that this is the only part of Will's life that Will is able to control. He makes no effort to change his mind, and instead concentrates on maintaining a good attitude, and helping him to live with as much dignity as possible.

Alicia (Lissa)

Alicia, or Lissa as Will had once called her, is Will's former girlfriend. She is blond, and has pale, caramel colored skin with long legs. She is the type of woman who reeks of a sense of entitlement and expects to live the kind of life that one might imagine belonged in a magazine. She manages Sasha Goldstein's boutique in Chelsea. The first visit she makes in some time is to announce that she and Rupert are planning to get married.

In one of their conversations, Will admits to Louisa that she was high maintenance, and insecure, having traded on her looks for so long that she had little confidence that she had anything else to offer. She was exceptionally good with making a space look good however, having done most of the annex remodel when Will first moved in there. She and Will were together for eight or nine months, having met at a dinner party.

Rupert

Rupert is a friend of Will's from the days when he still worked for a living - before the accident claimed his abilities. Rupert still works at Lewins, complaining that their newest partner seems to have a work ethic that no one else can keep up with. He arrives with Alicia to announce their betrothal, and both are quick to leave once the announcement is made, adding that he hopes things improve for Will.

Georgina Traynor

Georgina, Will's sister, is a tanned young woman who has long dark hair and is beautiful - even when her temper is high and out of control. Her skin is well tanned and she has teeth so white they could be in a commercial for toothpaste. She returns from Australia for a visit and discovers her brother's plans to put an end to his life - having agreed to a six month hiatus to soothe his mother. She is livid. Georgina holds onto the bitterness she feels, although she does make the trip to Switzerland to be with Will at the end. It is a part of their relationship dynamic that has always existed.



Bernard Clark

Bernard works at a furniture factory and lives in constant fear of losing his job to the current recession. His car had been hit by an uninsured motorist two years earlier which led to the beginning of their financial collapse. When Bernard loses his job, he becomes despondent. Unable to find employment, he is forced to accept that the only one in the house working is his daughter Louisa. When a job offer is made for him to work at the castle, and working in their maintenance department, he is overjoyed. He is grateful that Will thought of him, and recommended him to his father.

The job offer isn't without merit. Bernard is a conscientious worker who takes great pride in his craftsmanship. As such, he is a perfect fit for this job, although it is never really clear as to whether there actually was a position, or a position was created in order to free Louisa from the weight of obligation to support her parents.

Josie Clark

Josie is the kind of woman who finds it hard to slow down. In fact, it almost seems as though it is a point of honor, never sitting when something could be done. She is lean, described by her husband as having less fat than found on an average hairpin. When her husband loses his job, she keeps her chin up, and focuses on ways to maintain their lifestyle. She never blames her husband or criticizes him. Supporting him faithfully, she clings to the thought that nothing could be so wrong that it couldn't be fixed with a good cup of tea.

Thomas Clark

Thomas is Katrina's son. His newest word is 'bugger' which no one will admit to teaching him. He is a rambunctious child with lots of energy, and a generally happy demeanor. He likes legos, and enjoys feeding the ducks at the castle.

Richard Grisham

Louisa's neighbor, whose wife catches him being unfaithful and promptly empties the contents of his life onto the front lawn, to the amusement of those who gather to watch and listen.

Dympna Grisham

Richard's wife, and neighbor to Louisa, Dympna discovers a younger woman wearing the t-shirt she had specially made for Richard for his birthday and promptly tosses everything that belongs to him out onto the front lawn.



Della

Della is the woman that Steven Traynor is seeing behind his wife's back. He'd started seeing her before Will's accident, and had fully intended to leave Camilla, but when the accident occurred, he couldn't do it. Della never questions Steven about their future, or if they even had one. She never pressures him, and instead supports anything that might result in Will's happiness. She doesn't know about Will's plans to go to Switzerland, and refuses to let the situation that they are in depress either one of them. She knows Steven well enough to know when he is brooding, and won't let him spend what little time they manage to get together apologizing or feeling guilty for the situation they are in. Instead, she finds ways to make him laugh, relieving some of his stress, even if for just a little while.

Leo McInerney

Leo is a twenty four year old young man who played football and suffered a million to one accident on the field during a game. His injury was severe and he often couldn't even breathe without help. He tried to end his own life twice and begged his parents to smother him in his sleep. They finally relented, allowing him to go to Dignitas.

Michael Lawler

Wearing a dark suit and carrying a briefcase, Mr. Lawler arrives at Granta House with an announcement that he has an appointment with Will. Will lets him in, and they go into the living room where they converse for almost an hour. He drives a navy blue BMW 5 - series. His office is based on Regent Street in London, and his clothes have a thread count that reveal their cost was not inconsiderable. Michael is a lawyer who specializes in wills, probate and power of attorney. Will uses him to set up his financial wishes for after he is gone.

Mary Rawlinson

Mary sits on Will's right side at the wedding of Alicia and Rupert. She is a tough old bird, in his words, who had once even climbed Kilimanjaro. She has eyes that are a piercing shade of blue and twinkle with mirth. Her face is lined with age, and she admits to being somewhat nosy. Mary is on the board of a charitable organization that helps people with retraining, and after talking to Louisa, she offers her a card with her number on it, suggesting that she call when she is ready.

Nadil

A member of the hotel staff in Mauritius, Nadil makes himself Will's unofficial caregiver whenever Nathan is not around.

Karen

A fellow Kiwi native that Nathan meets in Mauritius and spends as much time with as he can before they return to the UK.



Objects/Places

The Buttered Bun

The name of the cafe where Louisa works until Frank announces he is closing, effective immediately, and gives her three months severance pay.

Job Center

Where Patrick suggests Louise go after she loses her job at the Buttered Bun.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Claim made by those who lose their jobs.

Granta House

The name of the house Will lives in, located on the other side of Stortford Castle. It is redbricked, and is the kind of house that you could find in Country Life magazine.

Stortford Castle

Located in Stortford, it is a popular tourist attraction.

Department of Brain Cells

The way in which Louisa sees herself as deficient when comparing her mental acuity to her younger sisters'.

The King's Head

A pub/restaurant that Patrick and his friends meet in fortnightly.

Hailsbury Triathlon Terrors

The name given to Patrick and his friends who gather fortnightly at The King's Head where they discussed their latest injuries or muscle development.



Xtreme Viking Triathlon

Consisting of sixty miles on a bike, thirty miles on foot and a swim of some length in Nordic seas, the Viking is a triathlon that Patrick announces he'd like to try.

Dignitas

A facility designed for those who want to die with dignity on their own terms and at a time of their own choosing.

Spring Triathlon

One of the events that Patrick enters.

Windy Hill

The place where Louisa and Treena wait for Patrick to finish the Spring Triathlon.

Red Lion

A pub that Louisa and her friends were drinking in when she was twenty.

Flannery O'Connor

The author of the book that Louisa reads when Will is so sick, borrowed from Will's library. When he notices, he suggests she take it home and finish it.

Albert Symphonia

The hall where a friend of Will's plays lead violin.

Mount Kilimanjaro

One of the adventures Will went on at the age of thirty, climbing to Uhuru Peak.

Trou d'Eau Douce Bay, Mauritius

Another adventure Will enjoyed before his injury, and where Lou and Nathan take him as his final vacation where they enjoy beautiful beaches and Lou tries diving for the first time.



Tsavo National Park, Kenya

Another favorite trip taken by Will in his pre-accident state, where he enjoyed the red earth and wild animals.

Yosemite, California

Where Will climbed rock faces so high that he had trouble processing the scale. He tells Lou how he spent one night pinned in his sleeping bag to the side of the cliff.

Gatwick Airport

Where Louisa, Will and Nathan board a plane for their epic journey to Mauritius.

Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport

The airport where Louisa, Will and Nathan arrive for their trip to Mauritius.

Rue des Francs Bourgeois, Paris

Where Will instructs Louisa to go to open his last letter to her.



Themes

Quality vs Quantity Of Life

This is a story about a man named Will Traynor who lives the first half of his life with exuberance and abandon. He is an adventurous man with a desire to live life to its fullest, applying that enthusiasm in equal doses to both his working life and his private life. Will is a good looking man who enjoys all of the best that the outdoors has to offer. Having come from a family of some wealth and means, he is able to begin with a good education which opens the doors to a life of variety. Will has climbed Kilimanjaro, reaching the nineteen thousand foot peak of Uhuru; he has spent time at Trou d'Eau Douce Bay in Mauritius; spent time on the red earth of Kenya in Tsavo National Park; perched on the rock face of Yosemite, California; and visited Sydney, the Northern Territories, Iceland and even China. Ready and willing to try almost anything, Will is a man who knows how to enjoy his life to the fullest. Even on the day of the accident that took his mobility, he had been in the process of discussing and planning his next adventure with his girlfriend Alicia, who complained that everything he wanted to do involved either 'trekking up mountains', 'hanging over ravines', or throwing himself off something. She would have preferred to luxuriate in a Bali spa or lie around on the sand somewhere exotic.

When an accident takes his mobility, Will watches his quality of life narrow to almost non-existent. He is faced with requiring constant professional care, dealing with bouts of pneumonia and unending pain in limbs that no longer respond to his requests. He investigates the options he has, and finds they are few. In fact, life for him is an ongoing nightmare of remembered adventures. Though he could conceivably live for another ten to fifteen years with the right care, his life in his eyes has no quality. When he tries to get his parents to accept the fact that he wants to legally end his existence, they resist. They cite that life is precious in any state, and that he could conceivable life of years yet. Despondent, Will tries to take his own life. Finally, his parents understand that the vital and enigmatic son they raised is living in agony, and feels his life has no value whatsoever. Even the love of Louisa is not enough. The quantity of life is not worth it to Will if there is no quality of life.

The Right To Choose

When Will is injured so severely that life as he knows it ends, he has little left that there is any control over. In fact, that is the case with all severely disabled men and women - a fact Louisa discovers when she begins researching on the library at the computer. She originally goes on line in search of help to convince Will that his life is worth living. What she finds surprises her. Instead of the support she expected, she finds a great number of disabled people who support Will's right to make this choice for himself. In fact, they tell her in no uncertain terms that as Will can control so little of his life, she has no choice but to respect his decision and support him. It isn't up to her, and she can't



force him to bend to her desire that he continue to live. Though the idea of self directed suicide is appalling to her, she finally understands that Will has to make the choice that is right for him. All of the vacations she plans and outings she takes him on won't change his opinion of his own physical state. In fact, even the fact that she confesses her love for him is not enough to make him want to live, although he readily admits that the six months that she was in his life were among the best he'd ever known. Even though he loves her, he hates his physical situation more, and has no intention of changing his mind. Devastated, she leaves him to his own devices and hardly speaks to him on the long trip home. Once they land, she makes her excuses and leaves the Traynor's at the airport unable to face his family or him, knowing what his immediate future holds. Days later, on the day scheduled to be his last, Camilla calls Louisa to tell her that Will is asking for her, and a ticket is waiting at the airport. By then, she knows that not saying goodbye to him would be worse than the alternative, and she goes to him in his last hours, accepting his right to choose, despite her own sorrow.

How Trauma Shapes Life

Will and Louisa share more than just feelings for each other. They share a history that has one traumatic incident that changes their entire lives. For Will, the trauma is the accident. One day he is planning his next vacation adventure, and the next day he is in the hospital with no sensation from the upper chest down. The only thing he feels is constant pain and discomfort, indignity and humiliation as he struggles to cope with his new circumstances. Louisa's trauma is not as severe physically, but the scars are just as deep and affect her life as profoundly. As a young woman of twenty, she is vivacious, good looking and outgoing. She enjoys flirting, and is getting ready for her first real adventure to Australia. An encounter with some young men older than she is has her trying drugs and drinking more than she should. When she realizes that her friends have left her behind in the castle maze with the young men who are virtual strangers to her, she knows deep down she is in trouble. She asks them the way out - something that amuses them terribly, and they take advantage of her diminished state of mind. Much later, when her younger sister finds her in the maze, she is cold and huddled in the shrubbery, unable to discuss her condition. Her sister helps her to find her clothes and redress, and then cleans her up and takes her home, never saying a word to anyone, or asking her what happened. The event shapes Louisa's future however. She learns to fear the unknown, cancelling her ticket to Australia, changing her sometimes flamboyant style of dress and staying close to home where life is safe. Even her choice of boyfriend is based on the fact that she is certain he will never hurt her. Meeting Will opens her eyes, her heart and her mind to the possibilities of her life again, and though she only knows him for six months, his impression on her will last a lifetime, and open doors she thought were closed forever.



Style

Point of View

"Me Before You" by Jojo Moyes is a story about a vibrant and energetic man named Will Traynor who lives life to the fullest - right up until a collision with a motorcycle takes all of that away, and leaves him a quadriplegic. Will is the type of person who enjoys his life in every way. He enjoys traveling, and trying new things, always challenging himself to be more. The tale is primarily told by the main character, Louisa Clarke, in the first person perspective, but to properly express the feelings and opinions of the supporting characters, Jojo Moyes wrote several chapters which were each dedicated to a particular character. Louisa Clarke is hired to act as companion/caregiver for Will and is told she is only needed for six months. The first character to be highlighted with a chapter devoted to them is Camilla Traynor. Chapter eight is told from her first person perspective, and reveals her feelings about her son's injury and his plans for the future. The next change comes with chapter nineteen which is told from Nathan's first person perspective. Nathan is Will's primary caregiver, handling most of his intimate medical and physical needs. Chapter twenty one is told in the first person perspective by Steven Traynor, Will's father. He has complicated feelings about his wife, and his son because before his son's accident, Steven had intended to leave his wife for another woman. Chapter twenty five is told from Katrina Clarke's first person perspective. She is the younger sister to Louisa and a source of constant strength and support. The story finishes with chapter twenty seven, which is told from the Crown Prosecutor's point of view, and delivers his first person perspective of the case of Will Traynor who opted to end his life rather than live as a quadriplegic.

Setting

"Me Before You" is a novel set primarily in the United Kingdom, centering around the region of Hertfordshire, in the town of Bishop's Stortford. Most of the novel centers around the Stortford Castle area, with the main characters living on opposite sides of it. A great deal of the content revolves around Granta House, where Will Traynor and his parents live. While acting as a secondary caregiver for Will, Louisa Clarke plans and executes several outings in the area, not including their first foray out to the hospital in the next town for Will's regular exam. The outings she arranges include their first disastrous trip with him to the racetrack in Longfield; a forty minute drive to the Symphony Hall to see a friend of Will's who played violin; multiple trips to the castle and short drives to local areas where quiet picnics could be had; and her final attempt to change his mind about wanting to die which involved a spectacular holiday to Trou d'Eau Douce Bay in Mauritius. Louisa isn't successful in her attempts to make Will see that he can have a life, however limiting, and their final trip is one to Switzerland where Will, his family, and Louisa gather at Dignitas to say goodbye to Will as he willingly ends his life by assisted suicide. Aside from the outings with Will, Louisa joins her boyfriend and his group, called the Hailsbury Traithlon Terrors, in a local pub called the Kings



Head. The epilogue finds Louisa in a cafe on the Rue des Francs Bourgeois in France where Will instructs her to go to open his final letter to her.

Language and Meaning

Since this story takes place mostly in the United Kingdom, the language used varies from traditional North American English somewhat. Nothing is so vastly different that it detracts from the story, or makes the reading laborious, but the author, Jojo Moyes does a good job of blending descriptives that remind the reader that they are in the United Kingdom. Words like 'crisps' instead of chips; 'loo' in place of bathroom; 'arse' in place of ass; 'magistrate' as opposed to judge and conversations about cricket, to name just a few examples. While these changes are there, they are not too plentiful or overused to a degree that a person would find them a detriment to the story itself, and in fact, they add a certain flair and character to the overall composition. Conversations include subtle reminders with the use of 'bloke' or 'chap' to describe a male, and watching 'telly' instead of television, or describing a pavement as 'rubbish' meaning that it is in disrepair. There are also several references to Will's condition. He is a C5-6 quadraplegic, which means that nothing below the upper part of his chest works. There is some minor discussions regarding physio, and rehabilitation, and because of his condition, a great many challenges involved in going anywhere. Mostly, these add to the overall story, rather than detract from it, serving to draw the reader in to the challenges Will faced on a daily basis from bouts of pneumonia to the depression and anger he feels at the confinement itself.

Structure

"Me Before You" is three hundred and forty pages in length, and is divided into twenty seven chapters, not including the prologue and epilogue, which range in length from six to eighteen pages. Most of the chapters are just over ten pages long. The chapters are all simply numbered, with few exceptions. The prologue includes the year of 2007 while chapter one tells the reader that time has skipped to 2009. The next chapter to be labelled with anything beyond the number is chapter eight which has the name Camilla under it. This indicates that the chapter is written from the first person perspective of Camilla rather than the unnamed chapters which are all told from the first person perspective of the main character, Louisa Clarke. The next named chapter is chapter nineteen which is labelled Nathan to reflect the fact that it is written from his first person perspective. Chapter twenty one is labelled Steven; chapter twenty five is labelled Katrina; and finally chapter twenty seven is labelled rather lengthily with Crown Prosecution Service FAO: Director of Public Prosecutions Confidential Advisory Re: William John Traynor 9.4.2009. That chapter is written in the same first person perspective style but from the Crown Prosecutor's perspective. The epilogue is labelled with the date September 29, to reflect the day that Louisa learns Will's final wishes via a letter he left for her with specific instructions.



Quotes

"Do we really have to do something that involves trekking up mountains, or hanging over ravines?" Prologue, Pg 12

Lissa to Will on the morning of the accident that turns him into a quadraplegic.

"Well, it comes to something when the best you can all say about my new career is that it's better than hauling chicken carcasses around the inside of an aircraft hangar." Chp 2, Pg. ??

Louisa to Patrick and her family at the dinner table on the night before her first day as caregiver for Will Traynor.

"I thought - well, we thought - that it would only be right to let you know... but, well, here's the thing. Rupert and I are getting married." Chp 4, Pg 56

Lissa to Will as she and Rupert visit him for the first time in eight months and drops an emotional bomb on him.

"Look, Lou, he often... he often goes somewhere else when Mrs. T stays over in town." Chp 6, Pg 84

Nathan to Lou as he explains that Mr. Traynor is an unfaithful husband, making her complicit in keeping the secret by necessity.

"They'll have a ridiculous wedding, pop out an ankle biter or two, as you put it, buy a place in the country, and he'll be shagging his secretary within five years." Chp 7, Pg 94
Lou to Will as they sit outside and Lou tries to make him feel better about Lissa's upcoming marriage to Rupert.

"Look, you cannot hand in your notice with immediate effect and expect me not even to ask what on earth's the matter." Chp 9, Pg 117

Mrs. Traynor to Lou when she confronts her in the Clarke's driveway after she reads Lou's letter of resignation, effective immediately.

"This is a long-held desire of yours, is it, Nathan?" Chp 11, Pg 136

Will to Nathan as Louisa announces that they are going to the races that afternoon to indulge in Nathan's long-held desire to do so.

"You have no idea, Clark, how frustrating it is to rely on someone else to put your words down for you." Chp 13, Pg 162

Will to Louisa after she suggests that Will send a thank you card to his friend for the tickets he gave them to the symphony he was a part of.

"I worked ou what would make me happy, and I worked out what I wanted to do, and I trained myself to do the job that would make those two things happen." Chp 15, Pg 194
Will's explanation of how he spent his time when he was able bodied in an effort to inspire her to do more with hers.



"You know the task we're facing. And I'm just saying that I wish - given the fact he is very fond of you - that you had waited a while longer before rubbing your.... your happiness in his face." Chp 17, Pg 223

Camilla to Louisa after she learns that Louisa has moved in with Patrick.

"She'll certainly be sorry she's marrying that braying bucket of lard, anyway." Chp 18, Pg 235

Louisa to Will on the way to attend the wedding between his ex-girlfriend and his former best friend.

"Maybe this is just a panic reaction to the fact that you and Patrick have finally moved in together." Chp 20, Pg 263

Treena to Louisa after Louisa confesses she loves Will.

"There have been times when I've stayed over and he's woken up screaming because in his dreams he's still walking and skiing and doing stuff and just for those few minutes, when his defenses are down and it's all a bit raw, he literally can't bear the thought of never doing it again." Chp 22, Pg 282

Nathan to Louisa as they discuss Will's decision to end his life at Dignitas for the first time.

"You said you thought this might change his mind." Chp 24, Pg 308

Camilla to Louisa when they return from Mauritius and Louisa reveals that Will still plans to go to Dignitas.

"If you go, Louisa, you needn't come back." Chp 26, Pg 323

Mrs. Clark to Louisa, telling her that if she goes to Switzerland to see Will before he takes his own life.



Topics for Discussion

What are some of the reasons that Louisa has difficulty finding work? What is a recession? What financial class of people is a recession likely to hit the hardest and why?

What kind of jobs are Louisa offered? What does she try? Why do these jobs not work out? Why is she so reluctant to try to get the job as Will Traynor's caregiver? What assurances is she given and why does she go to the interview?

Why does Camilla Traynor hire Louisa? What skills does she possess that Camilla believes might be of help to her son? What main issues is she trying to address where her son's care is concerned?

What is Louisa's first impression of Will Traynor? What makes her continue employment there despite her initial assessment of her new employer? What is her main motivation in the beginning?

What is the injury that Will suffered? How does this affect him physically? How does it affect him mentally, and why? What is the hardest thing for him to accept?

What is the secret being kept from Louisa in the beginning? How does she discover the truth, and what is her reaction to it and why?

What secret is Mr. Traynor keeping? What happens that brings this issue to light with Louisa, and what does she do about it?

Who helps Louisa to cope with the new information she has regarding Will and his future? What solution does she come up with to keep her from giving up her employment?

How long does Louisa have, and why is time so important? What is she hoping to accomplish, and how? What steps does she take to put her plan in motion?

What is the first outing that Louisa manages to take Will on? What mistakes does she make? What issues are they faces with, beginning with their arrival? What does she learn when they return home that changes how she deals with Will, and what successful local outings do they manage to have together afterward?

What trip does Louisa arrange for herself, Nathan and Will? What events does she plan for him, and where does she get her information? What last minute issue forces her to cancel, despite the fact that Will agreed to go?

What issue does Louisa have with the castle maze? How did this event change who she became as an adult and why? What were some of the direct results of this event and what changes did Louisa make in herself at that time? What happens to reveal the truth to Will?



What long trip does Louisa manage to get Will to take with her and Nathan? Where do they go, and what do they do? In which ways is the trip a total success? How is it a complete failure at the same time, and how does Louisa respond?

What does Louisa realize that makes her go to Switzerland, despite the objections of her parents? Why don't they want her to go? How would you cope if you were Will? Can you see yourself making this decision? Why or why not?

How does Louisa's employment with Will change her life? What does he want most for her? How does he make that possible, even though he carries out his plan? Where does he send her and why?