

Earlsdon Literary Magazine 173

The newsletter of the AVID Readers Group, based at Earlsdon Library

Next meeting: Thursday 12th February 8pm

Venue: Earlsdon Library

Book for discussion: *Some Kind of Fairy Tale* — Graham Joyce

“I recommend you read it with tissues.”

Our January Book

Me Before You — JoJo Moyes

‘Never judge a book by its cover’ we’re told, usually when referring to people rather than actual books. In the case of this edition of *Me Before You*, however, the phrase was very apt. Many of us were almost put off by the chick-lit-like cover and accolades but fought on and were rewarded with a book that was a joy to read.

Me Before You is about Will, a quadriplegic, and his carer Louisa. It explores their relationship with each other and their families. Will was an able-bodied high-flying businessman until being hit by a motorcycle when crossing the road. Lou worked in a cafe till it shut and, as the breadwinner of the family, she was forced to find another job.

Lou soon finds that Will intends to end his life in six months and is determined to try to change his mind. Will meanwhile warms to Lou and sees that she has huge potential to do more with her life, but has just never had the opportunities. As the story develops, their understanding of each other deepens but the resourceful Lou still struggles to fully comprehend Will.

The story is written mainly from the point of view of Lou and occasionally from that of some of the other characters.

Virtually all the Avid Readers liked this character-based book a lot. We liked the way it was written, the chapter layout and the way the characters were developed. It’s a clever depiction of differences in social class. It gives an insight into the suffering and challenges faced by a quadriplegic, albeit that many of them are unique to the individual. It cleverly challenges the reader to try to see the other person’s point of view and how they are feeling. There are happy moments, sad moments and a good dose of humour mixed in throughout: it’s not just about the ending of life.

Although the main story is about the plight of Will and his relationship with Lou, there’s also a lot about Lou’s family and her fitness-fanatic of a boyfriend. Readers were left wondering how the book would end pretty much until the last couple of chapters and the ending was very well written with Will remaining in control, just as he had been before his accident.

Ted Richards

Next month we will be reading:

The Cider House Rules — John Irving

The date for discussion of this book is Thursday 12th March.

What to read next

This month's author

Jojo Moyes is author of a dozen books and it was only when looking her up to write this that I realised I had read something by her before. In my defence, it was only one and it was in 2004 or 2005. *The Peacock Emporium* is definitely chick-lit and I remember little about it. It is, however, still on my shelves, so it must have been halfway decent or it would have been [bookcrossed](#) long ago. Her latest, *The One Plus One*, is due in paperback soon and has had good reviews but the tagline is 'a captivating and unconventional romance about two lost souls meeting in the most unlikely circumstances' so sounds like it will be a better match for its cover.

Christmas presents

In our January meeting someone asked what books we were really looking forward to reading. Here's the list – I'm hoping the readers will eventually write to tell us about them and if they were as good as they had anticipated:

- *The Strange Library* – Haruki Murakami
- *A Child's Child* – Barbara Vine
- *Revival* – Stephen King
- *The Iron King* – Maurice Druon
- *Lamentation* – C.J. Sansom

The Iron King is the first in a series called *The Accursed Kings*, published in France between 1955 and 1977, and are historical novels set in the 13th and 14th centuries. They are also the books which inspired George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* series, so that might give you some idea whose Christmas stocking that one was in. If you'd like to try matching the other books to their expectant readers ...

Book Club Blushes

(Number 2 in an occasional series)



If you're going to

get a colleague to read the book for you;

then make sure that

you fix a time for them to tell you about it before the next group meeting!

If you have any other reviews or recommendations, tales of literary events, or anything else you think other AVID readers would find interesting, please send them to Catherine Fitzsimons cathfitz5317@yahoo.com.



What's On

The *Ah! Love! Poetry Festival* takes place on **Saturday 7th February** between **10:30am and 4pm** at **Central Library**.

The day is split into two parts. The first section, until 1pm, will be in a meeting room and is a poetry workshop on the theme of 'East meets West' with an opportunity to make Valentines' gifts. From 2pm there will be discussion and sharing in the careers area. The event is free. For more details, email Contact@acornhats.co.uk



Poet Ian McMillan (from Radio 3's *The Verb*) and cartoonist Tony Husband ('The Keith Richards of Cartooning') are touring with an event called *A Cartoon History of Here* which is billed as a fast-flowing, rapid rafting adventure in which two top funny men reflect on local stories and legends. They are at **Nuneaton library** on **Monday 23rd February** and at the

Library of Birmingham on **Tuesday 24th February**, starting at **7pm** on both evenings. Tickets for Monday are £6 (concessions £4) and available from Nuneaton library: telephone 0300 555 8171 or contact jandawson@warwickshire.gov.uk. Tickets for the Birmingham event are £10 and can be booked through the [Library of Birmingham website](#).

Sky Academy Arts Scholarships

Five UK and Irish artists aged 18-30 will be selected to win a £30,000 bursary each, plus mentoring support, to take their creative practice to the next level.

Applications are open to artists working in the following fields:

- Performing arts
- Dance
- Music
- Visual arts
- Creative producing
- Creative writing – including playwrights, novelists, graphic novelists and poets (but not film or TV scriptwriters)

We're supporting candidates through a series of online Q&As on project budgeting and scholarship application queries.

Find out more and apply online by 5th March 2015 at www.ideastap.com/sky

Also, *HighTide* are now accepting playscript submissions for production at their 2016 theatre festival: <http://bit.ly/MrEm4k>