

Me Before You on the StoryWheel

While readers often view [Me Before You](#) by Jojo Moyes as a love story, that is not the primary genre. Shawn Coyne's *The Story Grid* would label the global content genre as "[Status-Sentimental](#)." Rachelle Ramirez, co-author of Pages & Platforms' [Story Path](#), would label it a "Validation" genre. Whatever the label, this genre is all about choosing one's own definition of success and then living life to support that definition. Page references are from the [2012 Penguin paperback](#) edition.

StoryWheel	Me Before You
Theme	The necessity of choosing one's own definition of success and living one's life to support that definition. As Will Traynor's mother asks Louisa: "And what exactly do you want to do with your life?...Do you have aspirations for a career? Would this be a stepping-stone to something else? Do you have a professional dream that you wish to pursue?" (p.22)
Opening Image	Will Traynor, Prologue: Will emerging from the bathroom, a recent girlfriend in his bed, hair tousled from the night before, flicking through adventure travel brochures, wearing a pout ("she is probably slightly too old to pout"). (p.1) Louisa Clark, Chapter 1: Louisa walking, "counting the 158 footsteps between the bus stop and home," with the sun setting behind Stortfold Castle, its dark shadow overtaking her. (p.5)
Status Quo	<i>Live:</i> Louisa lives with her family, in a cramped bungalow, in a bedroom the size of a box. <i>Work:</i> She was a waitstaff but just lost her job and needs another. Her family depends on Louisa's income. <i>Love:</i> Louisa has a boyfriend who doesn't seem all that interested in her.
Whiff~ Inciting Incident	"Just came in. This very minute. Care assistant position." (p.15)
Debate	Louisa doesn't want to wipe old people's (or anyone's) bottoms, doesn't really want to be anything other than an ordinary girl living an ordinary life, but wants to work again.

I Gotta Go!	<p>“Yes, I said, tugging Mum’s jacket across me. “Um. Thank you. I’ll see you at eight o’clock tomorrow.” (p.24)</p>
Upside-Down World	<p>Louisa is now working, in a large home, for a posh family, caretaking a man who is a quadriplegic. Will enjoys playing games with his “minders.” Louisa believes he hates her. When she learns Will wants to end his own life (and therefore her employment), Lou’s sister Treena pushes her into taking Will on excursions that will be so wonderful he will change his mind. Treena will create the excursion to-do list.</p>
Whoa! Shake Up a Belief	<p>In a disagreement over Louisa moving into Treena’s larger bedroom when Treena moves out, Treena says, ““If you think I’m helping you now with your stupid list, you’ve got another thing coming....” (p.135)</p> <p>If Louisa is to continue the plan, she will need to learn how to use a computer. Changing Will’s mind is going to be harder than she thought. Given that her caretaking assignment is six months long and two are already gone, “I had a hundred and seventeen days in which to convince Will Traynor that he had a reason to live.” (p.137)</p>
Cling to OS1	<p>Louisa focuses completely on Will, neglecting the question of what she wants for her own life. Most of the time she believes Will still hates her but there are moments she thinks he might not.</p>
Context-Shifting Midpoint	<p>At Louisa’s birthday party in the cramped family home, both her seven-years-long boyfriend (Patrick) and her few-months employer (Will) not only attend but give her a gift.</p> <p>Patrick’s gift: “a thin gold chain with a little star pendant. It was sweet, delicate, and not remotely me. I didn’t wear that kind of jewelry, never had.”</p> <p>Will’s gift: “in my hands were two pairs of black and yellow tights. Adult-sized, opaque, in a wool so soft that it almost slid through my fingers. ‘I don’t believe it,’ I said. I had started to laugh—a joyous, unexpected thing. ‘Oh my God! Where did you get these?’” (p.181)</p>

Plan A: Change You	Louisa is still trying to get Will to change his mind, but now more because she cares about him than to extend her employment. Louisa tries a new approach to get Will to do things: she says she is following his advice to try new things and he will have to come with her. They both get a tattoo. They go on a beautiful beach vacation.
WHAM! All Is Lost	When Louisa confesses her love for Will, Will tells her, “No, Clark.” “No?” “I’m sorry. It’s not enough.” Louisa’s efforts to get Will to change his mind have failed. (p.324)
Dark Night of the Soul	After leaving Will at the airport, Louisa goes to her room and doesn’t come out for thirty-six hours. Will is going to go to Switzerland to end his life and Louisa will not go with him.
Return, Changed	“In other circumstances I suppose it might have seemed strange that I, Lou Clark, a girl who had barely been more than a bus ride from her home town in twenty years, was now flying to her third country in less than a week.” (p.349)
Plan B: Change Me	Louisa flies to Switzerland and goes to Dignitas to see Will. His family is with him. Will and Louisa lock eyes. “I was suddenly glad I had come. Not glad, relieved, Like I had excised some painful, nagging part of myself, and given it over.” (Lou pulled out her shard of glass.) Will asks his family to give him some time alone with Lou.
Dig Down Deeper	Louisa tells Will she is not going to try to change his mind. She thinks to herself, “There is nothing left for me to do. Do you know how hard it is to say nothing? When every atom of you strains to do the opposite?” Will asks her to join him on the bed. “I would do the thing he had asked for. That would have to be enough.” She lies on the bed next to him. “Hey, Clark,” he said. “Tell me something good.” Louisa does. (p.358)
Proof of Change	Following Will’s death and with his instructions, Louisa flies to Paris. At the Café Marquis, accompanied by croissants and a large café crème, she reads a letter from Will, encouraging her to, “Just live well. Just live.” Lou blinks back tears.
Closing Image	The waiter offers her another coffee, and then, because of her tears, a cognac. Louisa declines the offer, says she has things to do, and sets off “down the street toward the parfumerie and the whole of Paris beyond.” (p.369)

This shows *Me Before You* on the [StoryWheel Balance Calculator](#). It's a great example of just how widely the balance can differ across stories.

