

Book Review of *the Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom

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Abstrak

Novel "*The Five People You Meet in Heaven*" merupakan salah satu buku terkenal karangan Mitch Albom selain "*Tuesday with Morrie*". Novel ini menceritakan kisah seorang veteran perang, Eddie, yang bekerja memperbaiki dan mengawasi setiap alat di sebuah taman hiburan bernama Ruby Pier. Ia mencoba menyelamatkan seorang gadis kecil dari sebuah kecelakaan salah satu wahana di taman hiburan tersebut yang tiba-tiba jatuh. Sesaat kemudian Eddie terbangun dan menemukan dirinya berada di akhirat di mana ia bertemu dengan lima orang yang secara signifikan mempengaruhi hidupnya. Penulis menggunakan metode membaca cermat untuk menemukan pesan yang terkandung dalam buku, kelebihan dan kekurangan dari novel ini. Di dalam novel ini terdapat banyak nilai-nilai pembelajaran yang dapat kita ambil seperti memaafkan, pengorbanan dan cinta sebagai kelebihan novel. Pengarang memberikan banyak detail dalam penulisan, hal ini dapat menjadi kelebihan sekaligus kekurangan. Dengan banyak detail yang diberikan pembaca dapat mengerti yang digambarkan pengarang namun juga dapat membuat pembaca mudah bosan. Dari segi penokohan, penulis menganggap bahwa tokoh Eddie sangat menarik karena kisahnya dapat dijadikan pembelajaran bagi pembaca yang berpikir memiliki kehidupan yang membosankan. Dalam final project ini penulis berusaha menganalisis buku ini sehingga dapat menjadi referensi sebelum membacanya.

Kata kunci: surga, pengorbanan, cinta

1. Introduction

The Five People You Meet in Heaven is one of literary novels written by Mitch Albom, author of the number one bestseller *Tuesday with Morrie*. This novel is the one with good figurative language that explores the unexpected connections of our lives, and the idea that heaven is more than a place. The reason why the writer choose this book as final project is because the writer

thinks that this book has good messages dealing with faith and death, and how everything you do affects someone else. Book is one of the best media to spread messages. Through this book we can learn how to respect your life and others. There's no random act in this world, we are all connected in this life. The book entitled *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is another great book of Mitch Albom. The story in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* tells about Eddie,

an old, wounded war veteran who had lived a common life. His job was fixing rides at a seaside amusement park which unfortunately led him to a tragic accident that killed him when he tried to save a little girl from a falling cart on his 83rd birthday. He awoke in the afterlife, where he learned that heaven was not a destination. It is a place where your life is explained to you by five people, some of them you knew, others may have been strangers. One by one, from childhood to his time as a soldier and later to his old age, Eddie's five people explained their connections to him on earth, illuminating the mysteries of his "meaningless" life, and revealing the haunting secret behind the eternal question: "Why was I here?" . From literature aspect, this book is a great book. The writer thinks that *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is another Mitch Albom's masterpiece. Mitch shows his level as a world class bestseller writer. So the writer tries to review this book, to improve his skill on literature project. The writer can learn a lot from this book, because this book is a good book.

2. Objective

From the title you could probably figure out that there are five people you will meet in heaven. Five people who will give you a lesson that we should be proud of what we have achieved because everything that we have done has a meaning even if it was a failure. This book uses figurative languages and many descriptive sentences that touched my feelings, I was amazed how simple language can make me feel involved while reading this book.

- 2.1. To give summary of *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*,
- 2.2. To give review on *The Five People You Meet Heaven*, especially to give the explanation of who the five people is and the purpose of this people is.

3. Biography of The Author

Mitchell David Albom was born on May 23, 1958 in Passaic, New Jersey. Albom is not only a best-selling author, but also a newspaper columnist for the Detroit Free Press, radio host for ABC and WJR-AM in Detroit. Albom grew up in Philadelphia, PA and attended Brandeis University, where he graduated with a degree in sociology. He then attended Columbia University for his Master's Degree in journalism and business administration. Mitch Albom wrote seven other books, including the bestseller, *Tuesdays With Morrie* (1997). His other works include *Live Albom I* (1987), *Live Albom II* (1990), *Live Albom III* (1992), *Live Albom IV* (1995), *"BO"* (1989), which is the autobiography of former University of Michigan football coach Bo Schembechler, and *Fab Five* (1992), which is a story about the University of Michigan's men's basketball recruits who became starters as freshman, during the 1990's. *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* was published in 2003. Aside from writing novels, Albom has also been deemed the #1 Sports Columnist in the Nation by the sports editors of America. He received over 100 writing awards from National Sportswriters and Broadcasters Associations, Headliners Club as well as many others. His work also appeared in publications such as Sports Illustrated, GQ Magazine, The New York Times, USA Today, and TV Guide.

4. Summary

The novel opens at Ruby Pier on Eddie's 83rd birthday. Eddie worked as a maintenance, sometimes he was called as Eddie Maintenance. And that was the sort of work that Eddie did: spread grease, adjusted brakes, tightened bolts, checked electrical panels. He went about his normal routine until one of the rides broke. Eddie gave his partner, Dominquez, instructions on how to fix the ride. One of the carts broke free from the ride and fell to the pier. Eddie jumped out of the way and tried to push a little girl out of the cart, so that the girl would not get accident. Eddie did not get out of the way in time and the little girl was killed by the falling cart.

Eddie traveled to heaven and met his first person, the Blue Man, his real name was Christened Joseph Corvrlzchik. He was called the Blue Man because his skin was blue, a side effect of the silver nitrate. When he was child, he went to a chemist, looked for something for his nerves and the chemist gave him a bottle of silver nitrate. It was later considered poison. When it failed to work, the Blue Man took more that silver nitrate until her skin when from the color of ash to blue. After that accident the factory he worked for dismissed him. He was jobless until he saw a group of carnival men and he decided to join the carnival. His life as a commodity began.

The Blue Man informed Eddie that he was going to meet five people in heaven whose lives he has somehow affected. The Blue Man told Eddie how he was indirectly responsible for his death. When Eddie was a child, he and his friend were playing with a ball that bounced into the street. Eddie ran into the street to get the ball. Meanwhile, a man practiced his driving with a car that he borrowed from a friend. Ford Model A which was driven by Blue Man. The Blue Man terrified that he would hit the boy and

he drove carelessly. The car skidded, the tires screeched. The boy, Eddie, ran safely back out of the street and disappeared, but the Blue Man was still thinking of how close he came to tragedy. His heart beat fast, adrenaline forced his heart to pump harder and his heart was getting weak. The man felt dizzy. His anxiety caused him to drive recklessly and hit another car, which killed him. The Blue Man taught Eddie his first lesson, in which that event were not randomly happened and lives intersected for a certain reason.

After this lesson, Eddie found himself back on a war ground, when he fought during WWII. War was his call to manhood. There, he met his second person in heaven, his former war Captain. During WWII Eddie fought in the Philippines with his captain and a few other soldiers were taken as prisoners of war. Eddie learned many things during the war. He learned to ride a tank, he learned to cross a rope bridge with several equipment on his shoulder. He learned how to take a prisoner, although he never learned how to become one. Then one night, on a Philippine island, his group came under heavy fire and they scattered. Through a juggling act, Eddie was able to distract the captors so he and the other prisoners could kill them and escape. When they left the camp, they decided to burn it down for revenge. Eddie swore that he saw a small shadow crawling in the flames and ran after it. The other soldiers tried to get Eddie out of the fire; however, he was so insistent that he saw a child in the fire that made him kept trying to get in the hut. The Captain did not want Eddie to die, or to leave him behind, so he shot him in the leg so the others could get him out of the fire. This is how Eddie got the injury that made him very depressed for the rest of his life.

The Captain taught Eddie the second lesson of sacrifice. Eddie found out that the

Captain died trying to make sure the path was clear for the rest of his men to cross. He said that he sacrificed Eddie's leg to get him out of the fire alive, and also that he sacrificed his own life to save the lives of Eddie and the soldiers.

Eddie then found himself in a mountain range. He found a single diner at the bottom of the mountains and through the window he could see his father sitting at a table. He met Ruby who told him that it was her name in which the pier is named after. She showed Eddie a horrifying scene where Mickey Shea almost hurt his mother; Eddie's father saw what happened and chased Mickey Shea to, possibly, kill him. Mickey fell off the pier into the sea and Eddie's father saved his life. This is the night where Eddie's father caught pneumonia which later killed him. Ruby allowed Eddie to see that his father was being loyal to one of his best friends. Ruby taught Eddie to let go of the anger he had for his father. Eddie did this by visiting him in the diner and telling him "*It's fixed*" (Pg.144).

Eddie blinked and found himself in a room whose doors lead to different wedding receptions. Eddie walked through the different receptions and met his fourth person, Marguerite. She and Eddie talked for a long while, as this is the first time they reunited since her death. For his fourth lesson, Marguerite taught Eddie about the power of love. She stated that even though people passed away, their love did not die. Marguerite told Eddie that she loved him even after her death and that true love stayed forever.

The final person Eddie met in heaven was a young Asian girl, named Tala. Tala explained to Eddie that he killed her in a fire. Eddie realizes that he had seen a child in the burning hut in the Philippines during the War. Tala's skin suddenly marked with burns and scars. Eddie washed her free of all

her burns and injuries from the fire. For his last lesson, Tala allowed Eddie to see that his place in life was to be at Ruby Pier keeping the children safe.

5. Review

5.1. Theme

The Five People You Meet in Heaven focuses on the relation of all our lives. Throughout Eddie's journey through Heaven meeting his five people, he learns that everyone is connected in some way or form in life experiences even if they were not the ones who met the person, but is the one related to that person. "*Each of us was in your life for a reason. You may not have known the reason at the time, and that is what heaven is for. For understanding your life on earth.*" (Pg.35).

The book also explains the effect and the relation of one event to another, all connected in some way. The first, third and fifth person Eddie met in Heaven got their place in his line-up for reasons that Eddie did not realize at the moment of the incidents how there were two sides that when brought together brings the full clear explanation. Like Blue Man said, "*There only needs to be some quietly powerful glimpses of life's everyday meaning: the meaning of persons and events, of the impact that we have on so many others without even knowing it.*" (Pg.39)

5.2 The Strengths of *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* Values in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

There some values in *The Five people You Meet in Heaven*. Five lessons that we can learn. First there are no random acts in life. Eddie learned from the Blue Man that there were no random acts in life and that all lives connected in some way. The Blue Man's death exemplifies this

theme: If Eddie's ball had never gone into the street, he would not have chased after it, running in front of the Blue Man's car and the Blue Man would have never become so anxious about almost hitting Eddie and gotten into an accident and killed.

Second, lives are sacrificed to save others. During WWII Eddie's Captain sacrificed his life for the sake of the three other soldiers. As they escaped in a vehicle, The Captain got out of the vehicle to inspect the land and ended up getting killed by stepping on a land mine. Had the Captain not been willing to get out and survey the land himself, all four would have driven over the landmine and killed themselves.

Then, forgiveness and letting go of Anger. Eddie hated his father for ruining his life. Even after his father's death, Eddie could never seem to let go of the anger he held towards his father; in fact, Eddie was so angry with his father after his death, that it seemed to still ruin Eddie's happiness. While in heaven, Ruby taught Eddie to let go of his anger and to forgive his father.

Last, the power of love. Although Eddie was miserable throughout most of his life, his love for Marguerite was the one thing that made him happier. After she died, Eddie felt extremely empty without her. When he met Marguerite in heaven she explained to him that, even after her death, she always loved Eddie. Eddie learned that although life ends love endures.

Theme

The theme in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is very interesting for the reader, especially those who are lack of respect for life and less of gratitude. Eddie as the main character in the story, has complicated life and he hates his life. There are some characters in the story that give us lesson and Mitch Albom can arrange a great plot and story with those characters.

Language

Mitch Albom's word selection strengthens the story in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. He also gives details description. Mitch Albom shows his quality as a world class writer by using great writing techniques.

5.3 The Weaknesses of “*The Five People You Meet in Heaven*”

The Writing Techniques

Mitch Albom uses great writing techniques in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, but unfortunately that technique that gives more details cause difficulties for the readers, especially for the general reader and can make the reader bored. They need to read this book more than once so they can catch the message and meaning from this book. The techniques used in the novel are stream of consciousness, interior monologue.

Personal Opinion

The writer considered *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* as one of the best books ever. This book is very interesting to read, for its high quality. The main point that makes this book great is the story and the character. Mitch Albom can bring readers feel their world and atmosphere from this book. *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is not the only book with life theme that is why this book can bring the readers inside the story and feel the story like they are the characters inside the book. Mitch Albom tells every stage of Eddie stage of life, and give extras “Today is Eddie's Birthday” to give more description about Eddie's experience of life and characters. Actually the main point of this book is on five people that Eddie met.

For academician and people who are interested in social life, this book is a

simply awesome book. The story contains so many interesting things; it can be found a lot of great analysis of this book. My favorite sentence in this book “*Sometimes when you sacrifice something precious, you’re not really losing it. You’re just passing it on to someone else. You lost something but you gained something as well. You just do not know it yet*” (Pg.94). Based on that sentence readers can know that we do not have to be fear to lose something that we love. Everything happens for the reasons. If we lost something, we will get something else better. There are a lot of lessons that the reader can get from this book. For them who are interested in social life. There are so many things they can get from this book for references. Mitch Albom can dig the characters in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* to the extent that it makes the story interesting. The readers will not be confused about the characteristic. The writer thinks that the only confusing part to them is the plot.

From the story and plot, this book has a strong characteristic, simple, quite interesting, but not confusing theme and setting. With 196 pages, it is easy to keep the readers interested to finish this book. Actually the book is proper for everyone if they can see this book from many perspectives. This book was written to represent his aspiration, and a lot of wisdom, so he wrote this book in details. Eddie is a Mitch Albom representation to tell the world about his feeling, to make the readers know that we should respect our own life although we feel that you lost and your life is uninspired. That is all what Mitch Albom wants the world to know. From a wider perspective, this book brings messages and full of lessons and hope.

6. Conclusion

The writer thinks that *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is one of the greatest novels. This novel causes an effect not only in literary world but also in real life. Mitch Albom as the author of this book successfully gives the reader other perspective of life, lessons. Eddie as a representation of someone, who thought that his life was meaningless, played his role greatly.

The readers may feel like that Eddie is real, as if he is really alive in this world. This novel is not based on true story, but this novel is even more real for some people who has uninspired, bored life.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven is a best seller book and Mitch Albom becomes true internationally famous. It makes *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* known as Mitch Albom’s other best book in addition to the *Tuesday with Morrie*. The readers get so many informations and teach us that heaven is where we finally learn what our life is about.

In *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* the readers can see some moral message in this book. The writer concludes that five people depicted throughout this book give the lesson about life, sacrificed, forgiveness, love and letting go. Mitch Albom shows the readers that experience is the best teacher. Eddie is an example of how meaningful your life is. *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is not only a best seller book, but also a messenger. Life, sacrificed, forgiveness and love messenger to a better life in this world.

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