

Much of the book is anecdotal, using a personal story to make a particular point. It is also rather corny and sentimental at times, and this is the main criticism one can make of the book. Randy often gets quite carried away ,talking about Captain Kirk and the Starship'Enterprise' as if it is an actual military unit, instead of just a TV show. Likewise, when he talks about the film'Rocky'. What is, in fact, acting is portrayed as a real life situation. Many of the anecdotes concerning his childhood, as well as some material about his children (p. 73) only seems to be there to tug at the heartstrings. This is a pity, since it detracts somewhat from the book.

For me, this book is similar in many respects to another called, 'Tuesdays with Morrie'(pp. 189-196) about a retired university lecturer, dying of schlerosis who is regularly visited by a former student. Again, the older man tries to impart worldly wisdom to the younger man. He exhibits stoical resignation, as the disease gets a tighter grip on his body. He maintains a cheerful and upbeat demeanour until the end, and the young man goes away with lessons learnt on how life is meant to be lived. The main differences between Morrie and Randy are that Morrie has already

lived a long and full life and has brought up a family .He is dying in old age ,whereas Randy is dying in the prime of life ,and will not see his children grow to adulthood.

You finish reading 'The Last Lecture' in a thoughtful, but not in a sad or depressed mood. Randy's 'joie de vivre', his boyish enthusiasm for life gets hold of you. You feel very strongly that you would like to have met this man. His warm and engaging personality shines through the narrative, and offsets the gloom. And there is wisdom here too. Randy puts it perfectly." Time is all you have. And you may find one day that you have less than you think."(p. 111) None of us knows when death will come to us. We simply do not know how much time we have left. Until that day we must live our lives to the full, as Randy did. But, it is Randy's courage and unselfishness, when faced with overwhelming odds, that is his most attractive virtues. His thoughts are always focused on his wife and children, and how they will fare once he is gone, never on himself. He confronts his disease head-on and forces us to count our blessings and be eternally grateful for the health we enjoy.

