

The End of Your Life Book Club

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Will
Schwalbe

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You don't have to be in a book club to be touched and inspired by this generous, warm-hearted account of a son helping his mother through her last year of life with the help of books. Former teacher and refugee worker, Mary Anne Schwalbe, had always been close to her son, Will, who was an editor and worked in publishing. Not only did they constantly share books and recommend titles to each other, but they also had many discussions--some heated--about these same books.

After his mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Will spent a lot of time with her in hospital waiting rooms before her doctor visits and chemo treatments. On one of those trips they decided to pass the time by exploring the same books. "But how can we have a book club without food?" Mary Anne asked.

But *The End of Your Life Book Club* is so much more than analyzing contemporary literature *À deux*. Will also chronicles his mother's illness, her acceptance of her forthcoming death, and the effect these changes had on the family.

In one chapter Mary Anne and her husband revisit her favorite foreign city, London, where she lived as a young student. The book that mother and son shared that month was *Felicia's Journey* by Will Trevor. In another section, Mary Anne, Will and his brother discuss Russell Banks' *Continental Drift* while sharing a table with Mary Anne's birthday-bash barbecued pig. Will had stayed awake the night before regretting that he had encouraged his mom to read such a depressing book, but at the party, he heard her recommending it to many people. **[Read more »](#)**
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