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English 1101

Critical Review of The Last Lecture

Randy Pausch’s novel, The Last Lecture, was a great book because it was inspirational. It served as an answer for his children’s future questions and a reminder to others to enjoy life while you have it. People who are going through or who have gone through similar situations are encouraged to look at their illnesses differently. They are encouraged to live the life that they have and appreciate the life that they have had. Pausch’s courage and strength can be a template to every human being, despite their background or current situation.

It was a great pick for this class and goes well with the prompts. The novel includes many important events in his life and he shares how he used his time along with his childhood dreams and how he strived to live them out. This is similar to a prompt we did in class. We were told to write “Six Songs” of us. We recalled events in our childhood just as Pausch did, even if they were embarrassing. Many of the events he included came along with advice, such as allowing your children to explore their imagination or never giving up on something that you really want.

I learned from reading the novel; I learned to always look at the bright side of a situation. Even though Pausch was dying, he was a positive person. If Pausch can be positive about a situation as major as this, I can look on the bright side of the minor situations that I face. I would recommend this book to anyone; people from any walk of life can relate to this book. Also, the style of the novel is very unique. Pausch includes pictures, the writing style is conversational, and he doesn’t always begin chapters at the top of the page. The pictures help the reader to stay engaged and to see what Pausch is talking about at that moment. The pictures also may have captions that may provide humor. Pausch writes as if he is speaking to people he knows, which I find helpful because it makes the novel a more interesting read and, in a way, you get a peek at Pausch’s personality as a result of this writing style. I also think this is the reason that he doesn’t begin all of the chapters at the top of the page, to say that “sure this is a book, but I’m also talking to you”.

The first three words that come to mind when I think about the text are motivation, strength, and family. In the novel, Pausch states that “brick walls…give us a chance to show how badly we want something” (Pausch, 79). This is motivational because it forces the reader to think about if something is worth their time and how much something means to them. A brick wall isn’t a “no”, it’s a “try harder”. Paush showed strength and his value for family when he decided to do the lecture instead of mourning his own death. He wanted to help other people instead of focus on his own situation. The lecture would also be a guide to his children to see what kind of person he was. I can relate to this novel because Pausch can help me to be more appreciative of the things that I have instead of complaining about the things that I don’t have. I think that this novel was a great read and anyone can learn something from it. It was incredibly brave of Pausch to write this book and he’s the epitome of the appreciation of life.