**Book report - A long way down**

Vincent Webbink 4S

1. **Technicals:**

*Author*: Nick Hornby

*place and date of publishing:* London, 2005

*publisher:* Penguin Group

*number of pages: 257*

1. **Summary**

**Part 1**

The story starts when Martin is on the top of a roof in London, he’s thinking about jumping of the roof when he meet Maureen, who tells him she also wants to kill herself. Short after their meeting they see a girl running towards the edge of the roof, martin stops her by chrashing her to the ground. The girl is Jess and she starts argueing with Martin. Then also JJ appears at the roof asking them if they order a pizza. JJ then tells he also wanted to kill themselve. They all tell the reason why they want to end their lifes. Jess asks them if they want to help her looking for her exboyfriend Chas, who is at a party somewhere in the city. They all agree to go with her and they delay their suicide attempt. When the four of them are at a party they don’t feel very comfortable JJ and Maureen find Chas, he’s hiding for Jess because he’s afraid she will hurt him, she chased him with a knife several times and tried to kill him. Eventually Jess and Chas have a conversation, but Jess gets angry with him and decides she doesn’t want him back. Later that night they are at Martins house, they decide to not kill themselve and wait six weeks till valentines day. Then they will meet again and see if they still want to commit suicide.

**Part 2**

The next day there is an article in the newspapers which says that Martin Sharp and the Education Minister’s daughter were in a suicide pact with two other people. Jess’ father wants to talk with Martin but their conversation doesn’t lead anywhere. Later that they the four of them come togehter for a crisismeeting. They decide to be the guests in Martin’s morning show to tell the audience they saw an angel at the top of the roof, the angel told them not to kill themselve. By doing this they earn some money. With that money they go on a holiday to tenerife. Maureen has never been abroad so it’s extra exciting for her. The holiday starts off well and they’re actually having fun a bit. But later in the week Jess gets arrested and Martin leaves the hotel because Jess is driving him crazy. When they back in the UK the Group falls apart but they will still meet at valentine’s day on the top of the roof they first met. At valentine’s day there is another man at the roof, sitting on the edge. They try to stop him from jumping but he does eventually. The man made them realise they aren’t able from killing themselve.

**Part 3**

In the third and last part of the book Maureen and Jess are going to visit Cindy, Martin’s ex-wife. They ask her to come back to Martin but she isn’t very pleased with their visit. She tells them she has a better life now than with Martin and she won’t ever come back to him. Later on Jess decides to organize an intervention at the Starbucks, she invited people close to them to talk with them about what happend and why they wanted to kill themselve. Martin’s ex-wife, ex-girlfriend and two daughters were invited. Jess’ parents were there to talk with her. JJ’s ex-girlfriend and ex-bestfriend, a member of the band, came over from the usa. Matty, Maureens disabled son was there for her along with two nurses cause she didn’t really had someone else. The intervention ends up as a drama, they all get in a fight except Maureen who becomes friends with the nurses. She also gets offered a job at a store. JJ makes up with his friend and girlfriend and the band gets back together again. Jess has a talk with her parents and they also make things up a bit. Martin decides to better his life by tutoring kids. Ninety days after new years eve they come togheter at the roof of the tower Block. The come to the conclusion that they can have it worse and life’s not yet worth an ending.

1. **List and description of the main characters.**

Martin is a former Tv-host of a breakfast show, so he’s quite famous in the UK. His life is really messed up, he slept with a fifteen year old girl and there for he went to prison, lost his job, his wife left him and she won’t let him see his daughters anymore. So you can imagine why he wants to kill himself.

Maureen is a single mum of a disabled nineteen year old son who can’t walk or talk, she has to watch over him all the time. She is katholic and very old fashioned, she doesn’t know a lot about the World around her. She also doesn’t know a lot of people, cause she is always at home with her son Matty, she feels really lonely and it kills her that her son will never live a normal life.

Jess is a very rebellious and brutal teenage girl, she likes to insult other people.She uses drugs and she doesn’t give a fuck/care about everything around her. She is the daughter of an Education Minister, which is kind of suprising cause she doesn’t act like she is. She also has an older sister, Jen, who dissappeared when she was 15.

JJ is an American guy. The band where he sang in split up and his girlfriend break up with him. Making music was pretty much his whole life so he doesn’t see the meaning of life anymore. Despite the fact that he didn’t finished his school he is very smart and the only one of the four who enjoys reading books.

1. **An explanation of the title**

I think the title ‘a long way down’ is methaporicaly because the main characters realise that is actually a long way of deciding whether you want to kill yourself or not and that it’s also ‘a long way down’ to pick up their lives again. I think it means suicide is much more than just jumping off a building.

1. **An explanation of the theme**

The theme is obviously suicide or death, because the whole book revolves around the suicidal characters and their thoughts about killing themself and how others will react on it if they did. But I think friendship is also a theme of this book because the four really different maincharacters become sort of friends because they depend on eachother. They all have in common that they don’t want to live anymore and that seperates them from other people. They help eachother and build up a friendship whether they want it or not.

1. **A short account of the beginning of the novel**

*It’s in the summary*

1. **An explanation of the climax or te anti climax**

I think the climax of the book is that in the end none of the characters kills themself. I really expected that at least one of them would jump off the building in the end. Because in the beginning they all seemed very suicidal and depressed and later in the story the most of them still were. I think it’s nice that nobody commited suicide because it shows that you there are other ways out and that you can change your mind even when you don’t see much meaning in life anymore

1. **My opinion** I really liked the book. I think the writer did a real mixing a serious subject as suicide with humor. He uses dark humor and it was also a bit cynical. I enjoyed reading what the characters thought because they often had strange thoughts. I thought the characters were very well written. In the middle the story became a bit tedious and therfore a bit boring.