

The Fault in Our Stars

Written by John Green

Find out more about him at <https://www.johngreenbooks.com/>

Book Talk by Jazmin Chilin

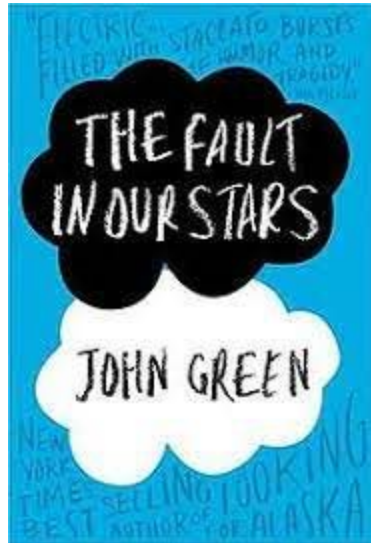
About the Author

John Green is an American New York Time Best Selling Author and successful virtual educator. He is one half of the VlogBrothers as well as co-creator of the educational series Crash Course on Youtube. Green's sarcastic, snarky sense of writing style is displayed with his young adult literature books. An Indiana native, Green moved a lot with his family. He double majored in English and religious studies with intentions on becoming a priest. However, it wasn't until he was working in a hospital with ill children that he was inspired to become an author. Serving in the hospital is also what inspired *The Fault In Our Stars*. He is known for his popular books such as: *Looking For Alaska*, *An Abundance of Katherines*, *Paper Towns*, *Will Grayson* (co-written with David Levithan), *The Fault In Our Stars*, *Turtles All The Way Down*, and *The Anthropocene Reviewed*.



Summary

The Fault in Our Stars follows the love story between cancer patient Hazel Grace Lancaster and in remission, Augustus Waters. But more importantly, it's a story on the toll that cancer can have on you and your loved ones. Hazel Grace, the narrator and protagonist, has been taking Phalanxifor, a miracle drug that despite having a low success rate, has been able to prolong her life. After facing many encounters with almost dying, she lives a rightfully bitter life, seeing nothing more than the realism around her that can be seen through the lives of any cancer patient. It's not until she decides, against her will, to attend a support group where her life changes completely. In her support group, she meets a man who not only captures her heart, but the heart of readers due to his charisma, charm, and later inescapable death.



(Both pictures are from John Green's website: <https://www.johngreenbooks.com/>)

Quotable Quotes:

<p>"The world is not a wish-granting factory" (99)</p>	<p>This quote is written throughout the book in different forms. However, the message Green is conveying can be best delivered in this sense. From this specific quote, Hazel is complaining about her and Augustus' encounter with their then favorite author, Peter Van Houten. Although the quote is</p>
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	<p>directly referencing the disappointment both characters feel towards meeting their idol (who turns out to be a bitter, old man criticizing teens for having cancer), this quote can be applied to anything. It expresses the importance of facing your own reality, and despite both characters speaking from experiences having to do with their personal battles towards cancer and all the disappointments that come with being ill, your reality is one of the things that you must still hold onto. Green is stating that one should not aim for pessimism or optimism, but realism. Looking towards your reality is the only thing that will help you get through it.</p>
<p>“I wonder, though, if you would mind answering a couple questions I have about what happens after the end of the novel. I understand the book ends because Anna dies or becomes too ill to continue writing it, but I would really like to know what happens to Anna’s mom—whether she married the Dutch Tulip Man, whether she ever has another child, and whether she stays at 917 W. Temple, etc. Also, is the Dutch Tulip Man a fraud or does he really love them?”(43)</p>	<p>This quote is said by Hazel Grace Lancaster once she is finally in front of her then favorite author, Pete Van Houten. Hazel goes through a great deal of trouble (using Gus’ only wish, convincing her parents to give her permission, risking her life, humiliation by Houten) to get these questions answered by the writer himself. Although her questions are about the characters in her favorite book, <i>An Imperial Affliction</i>, her reasoning for asking is much greater than the fictional book. Like many ill people who live every day as if it could be their last, Hazel is wondering what will happen to her loved ones when she passes. She describes both her parents as people whose lives revolve around hers. She is curious, constantly wondering what is to happen once her life is over-- more importantly what is to happen to those lives that surround her once she is gone. Like Anna’s mom, does her life continue once Anna has passed? This quote is important because the concern she has not only resembles how selfless she is, but because this question is one many people toy with today.</p>
<p>“I’m like. Like. I’m like a grenade, Mom. I’m a grenade and at some point I’m going to</p>	<p>This quote is said by Hazel as a direct result of looking up Augustus’ ex girlfriend, Caroline, online after her passing. She begins</p>

<p>blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay?” (58)</p>	<p>to scroll through her wall, reading the comments left by the people who knew her. After scrolling deeply enough, she finds pictures of Caroline and Augustus when she was slowly dying. She also finds updates written by Caroline’s parents. While having dinner with her parents, she yells this quote at her mom when her mom begins to ask about her personal life. Although Hazel seems to be taking out random frustration on her parents, her reasoning is justified. Hazel is just trying to cope with the idea of all the pain her death will cause around her. She feels as if she connects intimately with the people who surround her, she will end up hurting them because she is just waiting to die. This quote is important because even though her actions might seem immature, her thoughts and motives are not. Hazel is a character who has become very mature due to her grip of reality. She is just trying to save those who she cannot save.</p>
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The Fault In Our Stars in the Classroom

*Although The Fault In Our Stars can resonate with chapters six and four of *Adolescents in the Search For Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story*, John Green’s book can be best tied with chapter 5: Books About Facing Death and Loss. Everyone will experience death and loss in some point of their lives, whether it’s that of someone they know or even themselves. For protagonist Hazel Grace, she is forced to deal with death and loss every day, knowing that each morning she wakes could be her last. Although she ends up at one point being, “the healthiest person in the room” as she describes herself, she still inevitably faces death when her great love, Augustus Waters passes.*

Teaching Ideas in A Classroom

1. Before beginning the book, have a short writing where students write silently for 25 min about some of their biggest struggles. If students feel comfortable, encourage them to share and discuss possible similarities.

2. If possible, contact people who are in cancer remission so they may discuss how accurately John Green portrays cancer, all while creating a deeper understanding on what it is to actually live having cancer.
3. Read experts relating to major themes such as love used as healing or the unfairness of love (*A Walk to Remember* and *Romeo and Juliet*).
4. Brush up on Shakespearean—see why the title is best fit for this book

Why Should Teens Read This Novel

1. Teens should read this book because the reality of death is something that will affect everyone. This book could serve at least one student in their quest on dealing with grief.
2. Teens should read this book because it deals with real themes in life such as the unfairness of illness and star-crossed love.
3. Teens should read this because overall, it's a great book. Hazel's engaging use of narration is one that traps you from the beginning. Humor is found throughout almost every scene, even throughout the most serious part. Emotions are expressed through every page, and teens will benefit from the empathy they will acquire.

Text Complexity

Qualitative:

Lexile Range: 850 L(8th-9th Grade reading) | Readability Formulas--New Dale-Chall
Readability Index: Grade level: Grades 7 - 8 | ATOS Level: 6.5

Quantitative:

This novel resonates with Exeter Quality #2: “characters that reflect experiences of teen readers, something that is not found in much of the literary canon, especially when it comes to strong female protagonists.”

- Hazel Grace is a strong, ill teen who lives worrying about her health and the health of those who surround her. She, like many, is infected with cancer-- a disease acquired of no fault of her own, yet has to suffer as if it is. She lives in both physical and emotional pain throughout the progression of the story, worrying about her loved ones as well as her

lungs. Readers will be able to relate and empathize with her character, because it is not rare for a person to be sick let alone be terminally ill.

This novel resonates with Exeter Quality #6: “Themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth through entanglement of personal lives”

- Hazel Grace, Augustus Waters, and their friend Issac are both extremely mature for their age. Despite that none of them are eighteen, they all live their lives as if they have already lived them. Dealing with death isn't easy, but they have allowed the reality of the death that surrounds them, to mold them into the people they are in the story. They all contain complex thoughts and express them through impressive vocabulary. For example, Hazel questions her existence multiple times stating thoughts such as, ““This comment, however, leads me to wonder: What do you mean by meant? Given the final futility of our struggle, is the fleeting jolt of meaning that art gives us valuable? Or is the only value in passing the time as comfortably as possible? What should a story seek to emulate, Augustus? A ringing alarm? A call to arms? A morphine drip? Of course, like all interrogation of the universe, this line of inquiry inevitably reduces us to asking what it means to be human and whether—to borrow a phrase from the angst-encumbered sixteen-year-olds you no doubt revile—there is a point to it all.” (42) A mature thought for a teen struggling with cancer.