

Introduction

“Some infinities are bigger than other infinities....There are days, many of them, when I resent the size of my unbounded set. I want more numbers that I’m likely to get....gave me a forever within the numbered days,” –John Green. This quote from *The Fault in our Stars* you can assume that the main theme of this story is love, however John Green explores other themes such as isolation, mortality and courage. This book’s genre is classified as a romance, though it is so much more; with all the plot twists and unexpected developments this book could very well work as a mystery, not a traditional one however. This book tackles all the heavy issues relevant to everyone’s world. No matter who you are or where you are from you will inevitably deal with death and have to find a place where your courage will come from when faced with a serious situation.

Plot Mapping

Right off the bat you are placed in Hazel Lancaster’s perspective in her world of hospitals and support groups. She is a sixteen year old girl, who has had to deal with a fatal thyroid cancer since she was thirteen. Taken from school for obvious reasons, such as spending a great deal of her time in and out of her hospital, her parents make her attend a support group for cancer patients in and out of remission. On our first trip to this support group the story begins to emerge with the introduction of Augustus Waters, a charmingly handsome cancer survivor. He takes immediate interest in Hazel and the two soon form a strong bond and romance inevitably starts to bloom. They both share a common obsession with an unfinished book and its author. Using Augustus’s *Genie Wish*, which is the novel’s version of *Make a Wish*, the two travel to Amsterdam, the author’s home, and it is revealed that Augustus has relapsed; his life threatening bone cancer has come back with a vengeance. Even though their relationship is doomed to end in sadness, as it has from the beginning; Hazel and Gus continue their relationship. Augustus’s condition gets worse and worse until he finally stops fighting. Hazel is devastated even if his passing was not a shock. She finally makes peace with his death when the after mentioned beloved author shares a letter that Augustus wrote to him about Hazel. In the letter he tells Van Houten, the author, about how much he loves Hazel and begs for the answers that he failed to deliver to them in Amsterdam. Reading this letter, Hazel makes peace with Augustus’, as well her own, inevitable fate. The mystery in this story in as soon as you open it up you are met with Hazel’s unfortunate set of circumstances, and anyone would immediately jump to the conclusion that the book will end with Hazel’s death. Hazel constantly refers to herself as a, “grenade” further emphasizing this theory. Towards the end of the book the reader is left in suspense, half hoping that the suffering ends soon and the other half not wanting it to end. The sub-plot of the novel is Isaac, a supporting character, coming to terms with his cancer ridden life. He loses his long term girlfriend, because in order to beat out his eye cancer he must undergo a sight-stealing surgery. Much like Hazel, he loses his best friend, and he too must learn to cope with life post-Augustus.

Character Analysis

Augustus Waters, main character and romantic interest/partner in crime of Hazel Lancaster, is described as an attractive, tall All-American boy who is very perceptive and sometimes a

little pretentious. His greatest disappointment in life is that he never got to leave his mark on the world. Even in video games he would always go for the heroic death that saves the school of children. In the beginning of the story he is the most vivacious, just *alive* person in Hazel's life. No matter what everyone else calls him; Hazel always addresses him as Augustus, using his name in a reverent manner. As his health dwindles and his larger than life personality starts to fade, Hazel begins to call him Gus (his nickname) further accentuating his change throughout the story. He is constantly thinking about metaphors and the deeper meaning of everything, suggesting that he desires life to be more than it actually is.

Motifs and themes

A common theme that pops up during the story is isolation. Hazel, as mentioned before, often refers to herself as a grenade. This is a defensive mechanism of sorts when she feels that she has made a lasting impression on someone so as to remind herself and the person in question that she was not made to last, bit afraid of commitment she is. Video games, oddly enough, plays a huge symbolic role in this novel. It makes sense though, poor cancer ridden teenagers who only want to make the most of their life but are being held down by, well, their own life would undoubtedly seek out all the things that would never be available for them, and video games offer all the opportunities they are missing out on. The characters play them when their own cancerous cells hold them hostage in their homes. Cigarettes are mentioned throughout the book and Augustus consciously uses them for a metaphoric effect. The way he put it was, "You put the killing thing right between your teeth, but you don't give it the power to do its killing." He felt so helpless against his fight against cancer, because cancer is essentially your own cells trying to kill themselves so using cigarettes to sum up all his cancerous problems and not lighting it is his way of controlling at least some form of the disease that's killing him.

Critique of author

The author's purpose for writing beautiful, depressing book was to entertain his audience as well as tackle some really important issues that everyone will have to deal with and slipping them into this generation earlier on. John Green undoubtedly accomplishes his goal with this moving story, describing what life would be like if you really did live life like tomorrow would be your last, which for the characters it was. In this situation a person would begin to see life how it should be summed up; the little perfect moments and not taking anything for granted. Through Augustus' character, who was always looking for the deeper meaning, it would have some people begin to do the same in their own life, wondering if that balloon the little kid let go was let go on purpose so the balloon would be free to explore the world or if it was let go in some psychotic balloon release plan. While a lot of the assumptions Gus makes are farfetched, it does sort of open the flood gates for over-analysis of life around you. For Green, with this book for evidence, it seems as though he feels that life and the universe around us does all of these wonderful a terrible things just to let people know who is in charge. "I believe the universe wants to be noticed. I think the universe is improbably biased toward consciousness, that it rewards intelligence in part because the universe enjoys its

elegance being observed." Through this quote it would not be a big jump to the conclusion that he is a realist, expressed throughout his novel.

Analysis and evaluation of the book

Who doesn't love a tragic, timeless romance? Even if that isn't your thing necessarily this book would still have something for you. Not only does this book pack an emotional punch (I'll admit that I cried a couple of times during.) but all of the issues addressed by the characters hold a profound amount of logic. After reading this book, I promptly recommended it to all of the people I know who enjoy reading. This modern tale supports almost all of my own beliefs over just about every subject that was mentioned. However, sometimes a rose is just a rose and in this story I feel like Gus would have analyzed that poor rose to death. I cannot say that I've had any experiences that would be able to relate to this novel. One time I did have a chance meeting with a charming guy, but when that day ended so did the contact I had with him, and I think that's about as close as my life relating to the book as it gets.

Conclusion

In my own opinion as an avid reader, this is great on every single level that it could possibly hit. In every story there is normally a small weakness here and there, but when it comes to *The Fault in our Stars* I just can't seem to find any. The characters are believable, along with their actions and reactions. Everything is plausible. Setting is in tune with the rest of the story. The book as a whole is very *real* in the sense that it is completely credible and very well could happen, or has happened. At the end of the book Hazel does finally get the answers that she wanted from the stubborn author through him telling her about his real life experiences that inspired the book revealing the ending that the book lacked. Hazel and Isaac go on to continue their normal lives, and how the rest of their lives played out is entirely in the readers hands. So if you want challenging, inspired book then I will suggest this one highly. The book already has a huge fan base and even has a movie coming out this summer. I strongly believe that this is one of those books that people need to read just too simply experience it.

Citation

- Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York: Dutton, 2012. Print.