

Stephen Chbosky,

I am writing you about your book, "The Perks of Being a Wallflower." I hadn't heard of your book until the fall of last year. It was recommended to me by my choir director. And if I'm being honest, I hadn't heard of your book or you, and I wasn't really expecting much. You took me by surprise. I have yet to find a book that I love as much as yours.

One of the first things I noticed about the book is the format that it's written in. The letters between Charlie and his mystery recipient presented an air of mystery throughout the book. Of course, at the beginning, I was sure they were meant to be for his Aunt Helen, but as I got closer and closer to the end of the story, I came to the fragile conclusion that Charlie is writing to you as a reader. You are the one he has chosen to share his life's trials and tribulations with. It makes the character so much more attractive as a reader when they allow you to see their life through their eyes. Never have I read a book in a letter format. With other books, the characters share things with you, but it's never truly a consensual thing. To me, it's always felt like this incredible violation of a character's privacy, like reading their diary. But with Charlie, it felt like he was giving me a free pass into his mind, his every thought, his emotions. It was like raw, un-adulterated trust. It was refreshing.

Another thing that I really appreciate about the book is the way I related to it, in that I didn't. I didn't relate to this book. And that might seem like a bad thing, but it's not. Because when I read it again when I'm older (and I will), I'll be able to understand it better. Maybe it's a good thing I didn't relate to it, because Charlie goes through a lot of intense stuff; Isolation, PTSD, suicide, depression. Charlie's a pretty messed up character, in the best way. His baggage is what makes you want to read more, and more. But it was amazing for me to read from a character perspective like this. Because I've never dealt with any of that stuff, and the sad part is that I probably will. But for someone like Charlie to have to deal with stuff like that is heartbreaking, and magnetic. You can't take your eyes off the page, it's like you're there with him, through everything, the ups and the downs, and everything in between. It's like a bipolar ride along.

This book makes you feel emotions you never thought you could feel, and sometimes it makes you feel numb. These are both incredibly important emotions to feel when you read a story. A good author can make you feel so happy you could just scream, but also show you ways to be a silent onlooker into another person's head, which are both beautifully portrayed in the story. So, Mr. Chbosky, I would like to say thank you. For being the only author to ever make me cry at the end of a book. For being the only author that has ever written so many characters that I have fallen in love with in only 224 pages. And lastly, and most importantly, thank you for making me feel infinite.

Sincerely,

Meredith Paul