

Looking for Alaska

John Green

Speak

Fiction

221 pages

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Be Ready For The Unexpected

Looking for Alaska is one of those books that once you pick it up, you won't be able to put it back down. John Green, a well-known author of many young adult fiction novels, wrote *Looking for Alaska*. Green won the Michael Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature for this novel. Green is also the author of *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Paper Towns*, *An Abundance of Katherines*, and *Will Grayson Will Grayson*. This author writes an outstanding yet unique story that includes friendship, romance, and adventure, three things that make a book interesting and exciting.

Miles "Pudge" Halter, a typical high school boy, is unhappy with his social life while living in Florida. Even though Miles is not the type of guy that makes friends easily, he decides to spend his junior year at Culver Creek Boarding School in Alabama. Living all of his life in Florida, Pudge was never familiar with alcohol, smoking, and especially with girls, all things with which most kids at boarding school were very comfortable with. Culver Creek introduced a new and interesting life to Pudge.

When Pudge first laid eyes on Alaska, he knew she was his first love, "but I barely heard him because the hottest girl in all of human history was standing before me." Having never spoken to a girl before Alaska Young, he was at a loss for words. Pudge was speechless standing in front of the girl who he immediately fell in love with.

It was 8 o' clock in the morning when the head of the school, the Eagle knocked on Pudge and his roommates dorm room. Right in that moment they were scared they had been caught for a prank they did earlier, and they were going to be expelled. But when the words "You're not in any trouble. But you need to go to the gym now" came out of the Eagle's mouth they figured that the teacher, Dr. Hyde, had passed away. Assuming this was the incident, the two of them made their way down to the gym with little concern. However when Dr. Hyde, walked into the gym, confusion bombarded their heads.

Why were the boys called to the gym? If they weren't in trouble for the prank, what was going on?

Green's use of suspense is a strength that he practices throughout the novel. *Looking for Alaska* is formatted unusually and in a matter different than other books. The first 135 pages include a countdown before each chapter, but the reader doesn't know what the countdown leads to. Green most likely does this to make the reader think about the major event that is going to happen, and he makes the reader want to continue, never putting the book down. Having a countdown of days every

few pages keeps the idea that something important is going to happen present in the readers mind. Green has a strategy of building anticipation, making the plot become more and more thrilling.

Green is very talented in creating realism between the reader and the characters in the novel. Character description is one of the many strengths that Green demonstrates in his writing. I feel connected to Pudge and Alaska just simply by reading words off of paper, but it is Green who draws in attention from the reader, forming a bond between the reader and the main characters. Green establishes an impressive picture in the reader's mind just through his use of words. The novel creates such a legitimate feeling it seems as though it could be real life. "My responsibility is to try to tell true stories. To me a true story is always hopeful, but never simply, uncomplicatedly happy." Green uses character description throughout the novel including small and vivid details about each character. If it weren't for the details Green included, the connection between the reader and the characters wouldn't be so forceful.

John Green is an author who exhibits very few weaknesses. In *Looking For Alaska*, one of these weaknesses is that the beginning of the novel can be slow moving. Green waits until a little more than halfway through the book for the climax to occur. Up until the climax, the novel is a little slow and not a lot of action takes place, which is why the second half of the book is where the attention of the reader is significantly stronger.

If you have a love for romance, mystery, and adventure *Looking for Alaska* combines those genres into one shocking and unpredictable story. The novel has a life-changing plot that most teenagers would be able to find interesting and realistic. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking for a read that has a different and unique plot. Green's novel was definitely a fun and intriguing read. The characters in the book are so relatable that any reader would be able to feel like they truly knew them in real life.