

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Stephen Chbosky

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Fiction

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The Perks of Being Isolated

By Rachel P.

Imagine looking into the lives of humans from a different universe. It would be quite a perplexing yet interesting point of view. Furthermore, if you ever existed in that world, you may feel ostracized and bewildered in a place where you do not know how to survive.

This is the exact feeling Stephen Chbosky, the author of the compelling novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, portrays through the character Charlie, a timid yet open minded fifteen year old boy who writes letters about his life throughout the novel.

In his first few letters, Charlie seems to be emotionally shy and self-contained; however, as he progresses through high school, he confronts many different experiences that alter his views and thoughts. While carrying the burden of his past secrets, Charlie deals with the typical teenage life of books, romance, drugs, smoking, and drinking. He learns to live with and like others in the real world rather than isolating himself. Because he is different, he is able to see how high school students act and grow as young adults.

Over time, Charlie realizes that life is not all about maintaining an image or trying to fit in, but more about being himself and finding his identity. Unlike his old friends, who ignore him and act all tough in front of other people, Charlie remains the way he is at all times. Through his insight about teenage life, young adults who are pressured to act differently can connect to the

novel. He sees that those who are untrue to themselves are missing out on life and that he doesn't need to change who he is to enjoy his social life at school. As a result, Charlie matures into an outgoing person with a new attitude about socializing and overcoming problems which are personas most teenagers have trouble conquering.

However, all of these aspects of Charlie's personality are only developed through Chbosky's inclusion of turning points. After capturing the audience with the hook and slowly boring them with small anecdotes, Chbosky utilizes plot twists, known as the climax, to swerve the readers' attention back into the novel. He crams these twists into a short epilogue toward the end, leaving the readers wanting to read more and pondering about the resolution of the book. Furthermore, Chbosky evidently shows the development and growth of Charlie as a young adult through his overcoming of obstacles in his life.

In addition, Chbosky's choice to write in a very simplistic, clear-cut language not only provokes interest in the audience's minds, but it also makes the book easier as well as comforting to read. "He's a wallflower" and "You see thins. You keep quiet about them. And you understand" are just few examples of the uncomplicated writing Chbosky uses. Rather than combining short sentences, Chbosky decides to chop up the sentence into fragments. From this, the readers can think deeper into the morality and meaning of the book rather than having to take time to analyze the language and story itself. The quality of the novel is definitely better with the basic writing style because it gives the reader a sense of the author's voice and tone. Accordingly, this allows the audience to interpret the author's thoughts and to understand the book even more.

While in my opinion, Chbosky most definitely succeeds in attracting the reader and creating a fascinating plotline, he might have been targeting adults and teenagers only. Through a gruesome event, he portrays the changes in Charlie's personality as well as his life and how it affects him forever. He recalls this memory as, "I kind of figured out that everything I dreamt about my Aunt Helen was true. And after a while, I realized that it happened every Saturday when we watched television". For young adults who read this, it may not be so alarming considering that they have most likely been exposed to topics like sexual harassment. However, it can and will cause a loss of innocence and utter shock in young children who decide to pick up this novel. Never ceasing to impress us, Chbosky didn't forget to include a life lesson from this horrific accident. He was able to prove that under the pressure of growing up with a dark secret, it is still possible to learn numerous principles through more arduous situations in the future. Furthermore, he showed the people grow by overcoming these obstacles.

Likewise, similar plots are evident in his other works like *The End or Something Like That* and *Not Exactly A Love Story*. Both novels involve a character with a difficult past that learns how to move on and gain insight from their life experiences. Through these stories, Chbosky certainly shows his area of strength and his style of writing.

Not only does Chbosky express a touching story, but he also teaches the audience about good morals such as being true to themselves and finding their identity. These topics catch many people's eyes and permit them to seek their true self. Because he is able to create these deeper meanings behind his mesmerizing story and find a creative way of engaging his readers, this novel, without a doubt, is a must-read.