

MAJOR WORKS REVIEW

GENERAL

1. Title- *The Fault In Our Stars*
2. Author- John Green
3. Date of Original Publication- January 10, 2012
4. Novel Type- Young Adult Fiction

STRUCTURE

1. Point of View- Hazel Grace Lancaster
2. Relationship to meaning: As a terminal cancer patient, Hazel's perspective provides insight into the daily trials that she must face and her conflicted emotions about love and the meaning of life.
3. Plot Structure
 - a. Exposition- Hazel is introduced as a teenage girl with terminal thyroid cancer. Her background, including her overbearing parents and pessimistic outlook on life, is revealed, as well as her distasteful attitude towards the Support Group.
 - b. Inciting Incident- Hazel meets Augustus Waters through their mutual friend Isaac at a Support Group meeting.
 - c. Events contributing to rising action- Hazel and Augustus spend time together, exchanging books and learning about each other's likes, dislikes, and views on life, death, and cancer as a whole. Augustus uses his Wish to provide a way for them to travel to Amsterdam and meet Peter Van Houten, Hazel's favorite author; although they are disappointed upon actually meeting Peter, they experience joyful, unforgettable moments during their trip.
 - d. Climax (Crisis/turning point)- Augustus reveals to Hazel that his osteosarcoma has returned and that he has limited time before his death.
 - e. Events contributing to falling action- Upon their return home, Hazel spends most of every day at Augustus's side, but she is unable to prevent his deteriorating condition. A few days before his death, Augustus holds a mock funeral for himself, in which Hazel and Isaac both deliver eulogies they'd prepared beforehand.
 - f. Resolution- Augustus dies, and Hazel attends his funeral and grieves for him. She later discovers a few pages that Augustus had mailed to Peter, in which Augustus states that he is satisfied with the choices he made in his life.
 - g. Other Significant Structural Elements: A quote from *An Imperial Affliction* by Peter Van Houten describes the eternal, unstoppable forces of water and time.

CHARACTERS

1. Protagonist
 - a. Name and significance- Hazel is a teenager who must endure the hardships of terminal cancer as she undergoes everyday life.

- b. Characteristics and thematic significance- Hazel has a realistic view of life and understands that she will soon die and, over time, be forgotten. Despite this, she continues to live with perseverance and dignity, and her tendency to speak her mind results in both humorous banter and arguments over deep, philosophical topics with Augustus.
 - c. Change or epiphany and thematic significance- Hazel believes herself to be a “grenade” that will blow up when she dies, consequentially injuring the people who love her, but as she falls in love with Augustus she discovers the importance of spending time with them and creating memories that they can value after her death.
2. Antagonist
- a. Name and significance- Peter Van Houten, the author of *An Imperial Affliction*, is Hazel’s idol in the first half of the novel.
 - b. Characteristics and significance- Peter is a rude, bitter alcoholic who shows little respect toward Augustus and Hazel when they visit him, refusing to answer their questions about his novel and insulting them for having cancer. However, his despicable behavior disguises his pain at the loss of his daughter, who died of cancer like the protagonist in *An Imperial Affliction*.
3. Other Significant Characters
- a. Name and significance- Augustus Waters is Hazel’s love interest.
 - b. Characteristics- Augustus is charming, intelligent, and optimistic; he fears oblivion and hopes to one day sacrifice his life for a greater cause, effectively leaving his legacy behind.
 - c. Thematic or plot-oriented purpose- After Augustus’s cancer returns, he falls into a state of despair when he realizes that his death will have no significant impact on the world. However, Hazel convinces him that he will never be forgotten by the people who love him.

SETTING

- 1. Place and symbolic significance- Indianapolis, Indiana; Hazel’s description of the typical cloudy weather in Indiana as “the kind of weather that boxes you in” represents the confinement that she feels in her own hometown due to her disease.
- 2. Time period and contextual significance- Modern time; in an age of experimentation for the cure of cancer, Hazel undergoes new treatments with the knowledge that she is only extending her lifespan, but will never be fully healed.
- 3. Time span- several months

CONFLICTS

- 1. Main conflict
 - a. type of conflict- character vs. self (internal)
 - b. values embodied in conflict (expressed as opposition—something vs. something)- Hazel vs. cancer

c. thematic significance of conflict- Hazel’s cancer prevents her from undertaking normal teenager activities, such as playing sports or, for some time, going to school, and distances her from her healthy friends and family. However, during her constant battle with impending death, Hazel learns to value the time she has left by spending it with the people she loves.

2. Minor conflicts and thematic significance

Hazel vs. Peter Van Houten- Hazel, an avid fan of Peter, is shocked and disgusted when he openly ridicules her and refuses to answer her questions, despite her traveling to Amsterdam to meet him. She later discovers that his bitterness stems from the loss of his daughter to cancer, and she encourages him to stop grieving and start writing again.

SYMBOLS AND MOTIFS (3-5)

Literal Symbol	Figurative Meaning	Relationship to Theme
The ending of <i>An Imperial Affliction</i> by Peter Van Houten	The abrupt mid-sentence ending represents the suddenness at which death steals one’s life away, leaving unanswered questions behind.	Death is unpredictable and inevitable, but one should continue to live life freely, regardless of the fact.
Cigarettes	A cigarette has the power to invoke cancer and kill someone, but by keeping it unlit Augustus refuses to give it power over him.	One is able to control what hurts oneself through the decisions and relationships one makes.
Video games	As Augustus repeatedly sacrifices himself for others in video games, they come to represent the death and legacy he wishes to leave behind.	Although one may wish for an ideal life or death, one must learn to appreciate what one has been given.

SIGNIFICANCE OF TITLE

“‘Were she better or you sicker, then the stars would not be so terribly crossed, but it is the nature of stars to cross, and never was Shakespeare more wrong than when he had Cassius note, ‘The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves’” (Green, 111).

THEMATIC STATEMENTS (2-3)

State in declarative sentence general truths this story reveals about life and/or human nature—be specific and no clichés.

One should live life freely and with passion, regardless of how limited one's time may be.

One should cherish one's relationships in times of despair.

Although one's life is limited, the relationships and memories one makes will never be forgotten.

CONTEXT

1. Historical- none
2. Biographical- Much of the story was inspired by John Green's friendship with Esther, a teenager who died of cancer in 2010.
3. Literary/Philosophical Time Period- Modern Era

5 KEY QUOTES

"All salvation is temporary" -Augustus

"You put the killing thing right between your teeth, but you don't give it the power to do its killing." -Augustus

"I'm a grenade and at some point I'm going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties" -Hazel

"This can never be enough for you. But this is all you get." -Hazel

"Sometimes it seems the universe wants to be noticed." -Mr. Lancaster