

“The Fault In Our Stars” Essay

Prompt: Write a letter to John Green, telling him what you think of his Author’s Note.

Author’s Note:

“This is not so much an author’s note as an author’s reminder of what was printed in small type a few pages ago: This book is a work of fiction. I made it up.

Neither novels nor their readers benefit from attempts to divine whether any facts hide inside a story. Such efforts attack the very idea that made-up stories can matter, which is sort of the foundational assumption of our species.

I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.”

Dear John Green,

Bethany Davis

First, I would like to commend you upon the book, “The Fault In Our stars”, for it is a wonderfully, entertainingly written novel. I am writing a letter to discuss and offer comments upon the author’s note written for this book

A task that I never particularly enjoy is that of trying to find fact in fictional literature. Analyzing every single sentence in an attempt to expose some hidden secret of life is futile. There is nothing as such in any fictional novel and it is not written to show universal knowledge. It is done to have readers interpret the story in their own way, and build their own connections with characters. Hence why there are so many ‘fan fictions’ and controversy upon character relationships. However, I feel that Hazel’s behavior contradicts your insistence that “Neither novels nor their readers benefit from attempts to divine whether any facts hide inside a story.” (Green).

Hazel, protagonist and witty female, is absolutely in love with a book, fabricated for the purpose of the overall story, called “An Imperial Affliction”, by Peter Van Houten (an antagonizing character). This book is not, as she most strongly comments upon, about cancer. It is about someone’s life, and that person so happens to have cancer. I do agree with her, there is a large difference. There is also a large difference between her stance on the idea of what constitutes fictional literature, and yours. Hazel’s top questions throughout the book were: what will happen when I’m not here, and is it even worth the time having social interactions if it will only hurt people in the end? I am unsure if we have similar or different thoughts as to how, and if, these questions were answered, but I do believe that there is something that all readers picked up. Hazel looks for answers within “An Imperial Affliction”: “I understand that the story ends midnarrative because Anna dies or becomes too sick to continue, but you said you would tell us what happens to everybody, and that’s why we’re here, and we, I need you to tell me.” (page 190) This is what she told Peter Van Houten when she had the opportunity (not so much privilege as the story continues) to meet him. Hazel is in a situation such that there is not a whole lot of time left, and the amount is uncertain. This is something communicated at the beginning of the story by something Hazel states: “Admittedly, my Cancer Miracle had only resulted in a bit of purchased time” (page 26). This is the reason as to why she desperately desires the ending of the story. She needs to make sure that those she knows, mainly her parents, will be able to continue onwards with their life and be happy instead of delving into the misery of the loss of a child. Hazel has continually referred to herself and situation as a grenade. Not only will she go down, but she will take others with her. It is something she is incredibly worried about. Therefore, is Hazel not looking for fact within that story? Believing that if she read the ending that ‘should have been there’, then she could understand what it will be like for those close to her?

I myself wholeheartedly agree with the author's note. It is not about fact, it is about opinion. That is what readers should look for and develop. I have heard many discussions upon fictional novels and the participants talk as if what they are stating is fact when it really is not. It is what has been interpreted and seen through the audiences' eye. I was pleased to see that, even if it was not what you meant to convey in such a message, there was an attempt made at distinguishing the two ideas.