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Young Adult Literature

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Looking For Alaska Review

Looking For Alaska is yet another well-known novel written by John Green. Published by Dutton Juvenile on March 3, 2005, the book was awarded the Michael L. Printz Award in 2006. *Looking For Alaska* was John Green's first body of work, with *The Fault In Our Stars* being his big breakthrough into mainstream young adult literature. The first time I read *Looking For Alaska* it wasn't my favorite, but I think I was too young to really understand or relate to the characters. The second time around, I appreciated it, and found some parts worth highlighting. I would now recommend that anyone that enjoys young adult literature should read it.

Looking For Alaska follows the life of Miles "Pudge" Halter, a teenager from Florida who travels to Alabama to attend a boarding school. Pudge is quickly absorbed into a close-knit group of friends: Chip, Takumi, and the one and only Alaska Young. Pudge is fascinated with learning a person's last words, and when Alaska learns of this, she tells him Simón Bolívar's last words: "Damn it. How will I ever get out of this labyrinth!" Alaska and Pudge make a deal that if Pudge can figure out how to get out of the labyrinth, she will find him a girlfriend. Although Alaska is successful in finding Pudge a girlfriend, Pudge is only focused on Alaska.

The novel is very easy to follow and broken up into two parts. It features scenes that made it become one of the most challenged books of 2015, and still continues to be challenged today. Personally I don't believe that *Looking For Alaska* should be on the "frequently

challenged” list, or any books for that matter. The book deals with sex, underage smoking and drinking, and profanity- all things that teenagers will be exposed to. This book is easy for teenagers to relate to, and trying to ban the book is doing more harm than good. By banning a book, you will only make a teenager want to read it more. With topics like sex, drugs, and alcohol, many times there is no room for conversation, just isolation. Refusing to talk about something and acting like it doesn’t exist should not be an option.

One of my favorite lines from the book was a quote from *As I Walked Out One Evening* by W. H. Auden: “You shall love your crooked neighbor/ With your crooked heart.” Fairly early in the book, Alaska shows this quote to Pudge, who had no idea who Auden was. Little did I know that this quote would be brought up again at the very end of the book when Pudge finally understood how to get out of the labyrinth of suffering. In a way, the book has a positive ending despite the circumstances. Pudge finally has his answer to the labyrinth of suffering.

Looking For Alaska is a must read for someone interested in young adult literature. The characters and the experiences they go through are very relatable and can help a reader understand why they may be feeling a certain way in their own life when grieving someone. “The only way out of the labyrinth of suffering is to forgive” stuck with me. Pudge recognized Alaska’s faults, and realized that everyone around him has many flaws, but he also realized that *he* has many flaws.

