

Morgan Clute (Grade 8, Olmsted Falls Middle School, Olmsted Township, OH)

Level II Third Place Winner

Letter to author John Green concerning his novel, *The Fault in Our Stars*

Dear John Green:

Hello, my name is Morgan, and I am from Olmsted Falls Middle School in Olmsted Township, Ohio. I am writing to you about your novel, *The Fault in Our Stars*. This book taught me so many new things about life and about people. It taught me to live life to the fullest; not to let anyone stop me from doing what I'm driven to accomplish, and that age is truly just a number. I really did feel like I was part of this story so thank you for that.

Being that living life to its fullest means different things to different people, we just have to look at the way it is interpreted by others. Before reading this book my life consisted of me taking the safe road, me being afraid to take any risk because with my luck the risk wouldn't land me safe at home without a scratch. After I read this book and watched the movie adaptation, I realized that life on the safe road was not the life to live. I learned that a full, filled life is a life that not many people get to go through. Those people are stuck on that safe road with nothing to really make of themselves. Mr. Green, because of you, I know that a life with no regrets is really the best kind of life. I jumped off that road and I'm glad I did. If I never would have, I probably would still be that girl who was terrified to even think about trying something new.

Hazel Grace Lancaster taught me that age is just a number. She showed me that you can be young and still worry about your own death. Before I read this book, I thought that I was the only one who worried about this. My parents would always tell me that I had nothing to worry about, that I was just a kid and that death was something that only grown-ups should be concerned with. But the thing is, what if, one day, I wake up and I get really sick—or the next day, I don't even wake up at all? I was always so worried to do anything because I didn't want anything to happen. Hazel showed me that even with the worrying at a young age doesn't mean that you can't do anything anyone else can do while still having that on your mind. I mean, look at Hazel and Augustus, for example: Gus got his driver's license and Hazel went to college. Even with this I guess they taught me more than age is just a number—they also taught me that you shouldn't let anyone or anything hold you back from doing something that you really want to do.

Your book really showed me what the meaning of life really is. It showed me that life is just a word to describe something that has a heartbeat, but the word live is a word that not everyone really gets to experience. When I was younger, I always used to think that a book could never really impact upon someone's world. I used to believe that when teachers said, "You will become a part of the book," it was just a ploy to get us to read. When I read *The Fault in Our Stars*, I didn't want to put it down, and I really did feel part of the book. I was able to relate to so many of the characters and their thoughts. I fell in love with them which for me doesn't happen because I'm not what you would call an avid reader. I normally hate books—but not yours. People say I have no feelings, that I have no emotion towards anything, and I guess to some extent that's true (I have my reasons), but when Guess died I actually felt as if a knife had pierced my heart. I actually cried (I really surprised myself).

After reading your book, I had a larger perspective on life and the world. I was even able to learn more about myself as a person. I learned that I really can change for the better by living outside the box and trying new things. I learned that even though I may not be a reader, I still can fall in love with characters and with a book from time to time. So, I guess I'm saying, "Thank you." Thank you for opening my eyes, for allowing me to actually enjoy something that I never could before. Thank you for the little things that I don't even think you know that you do for people, like changing my life, encouraging me to want to be a writer, and for showing me what the true meaning of life really is. I hope to be a great writer one day, to write a book that is strictly realistic and make my readers fall in love. As Gus said, "I'm on a roller coaster that only goes up."

Sincerely,

Morgan Clute