

Jan 17, 2013



Dear Ms Lalonde,

As you know, seeing you lent me the book, I read The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky. Perfection. I'd been wanting to read it for a while because it was getting so much hype from the movie that was coming out. Thank God for you and Kellina! When you handed it over I wasn't prepared for the impact it would have on me. It's a novel about a socially awkward freshman named Charlie. I know that sounds as bland and cliché as every other young-adult book, but it definitely isn't.

Charlie is a wallflower: someone who chooses to observe, rather than participate in life. Just like a literal wallflower, he kind of blends in with the background. Cue Sam and Patrick! These two seniors befriend him and take him on the rollercoaster that is high school. Sam, with an amazing taste in music, is Charlie's dream girl. Patrick is Sam's eccentric, gay stepbrother who doesn't let his sexual preference consume his personality.

For my passage, I chose the book's 'tagline'. The three characters are driving home from a dance in Sam's pickup. Before they near the tunnel, they pull over so she can hop in the back. Charlie, completely in the dark about what's happening, watches Sam slowly stand up, arms open.

*"When we hit the tunnel, all the sound got scooped up into a vacuum, and it was replaced by a song on the tape player. A beautiful song called "Landslide." When we got out of the tunnel, Sam screamed this really fun scream, and there it was. Downtown. Lights on buildings and everything that makes you wonder. Sam sat down and started laughing. Patrick started laughing. I started laughing. And in that moment, I swear we were infinite."*

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I know what you're thinking. *Elisha, you chose this? There were so many better quotes that you could have related to life ... like that Twinkie one. Synthesis blah blah.* Hold your horses Ms. Lalonde. I chose this passage because I can relate.

I spent this Christmas with my family in California. We were practically strangers beforehand. As an only child, stuck with my single mom, that in itself was a completely new feeling. They were welcoming right off the bat, like family is supposed to be. Not realizing it, I was like Charlie. They were my Sam and Patrick. They were cool with the awkward, quiet person I was/am. It doesn't stop there, though. That'd be a crap comparison if it did.

We were driving home from dinner with a cousin. My two other cousins were up front, trying to pick out some music. It was probably down to serious gangster rap or Ed Sheeran. I wasn't paying too much attention to them or my mom who was violently snoring. I was too busy gawking out the window. We'd just caught the end of sunset. You know how sometimes the sky turns an intense pink – almost red – just at the bottom, outlining the horizon? That was outside my window. It's like the

sun didn't want us to miss out on its exit. The rest of the sky faded out as you looked up and up.

They'd settled on a song, just before the pink had died out. I knew that intro like the back of my hand. A beautiful song called "Dare You to Move." This was the song I had on repeat on my way driving to Whitehorse. A flood of emotions washed over me: disbelief (how did they know this song?), awesomeness, anger towards my mom for making us move, gratefulness towards my mom for making us move, richness, parallelism, reminiscence, and an overall contentment. Then all at once, without any knowledge of what the other was going to do, we all started off the first verse. *Welcome to the planet*. And in that moment, I swear we were infinite. We listened to that song on repeat all the way home, just like I'd done three years before.

Based on my experience, I'd imagine Charlie felt ultimate, as if nothing could touch him. Nothing could hinder who he was and the feeling of supremacy he felt with Sam and Patrick. Not the lack of a best friend, or the looks from Susan, not even Aunt Helen. Infinite. Limitless. Boundless. I think in that moment, Charlie felt all of these. He caught a glimpse of the freedom we have as people, especially as teens. He realized that no one is forever bound to the path they're on. There are a million other alternatives. He wasn't restricted to being a wallflower. He was free to participate, maybe even go on to doing huge things. I believe this was the first time the possibility of having a group of good friends, one day kissing Sam, and forgetting the past occurred to him. The limit does not exist. I think that this moment was just a spark of hope which would later on lead to him saying, "Even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there."

You've already read it, so that rules out recommending it to you. I guess that leaves us with a rating: 17 milkshakes out of 10. I loved it. It's easy to read, but hard to read well. If you haven't seen it already, you should definitely watch the film. I saw it on the plane ride back which ONCE AGAIN BROUGHT ME BACK TO THE FEELING OF INFINITY. It stays as true to the book as a movie can. After all, Stephen Chbosky directed it! Again, thank you so much for lending me the book.

Love always,

^ DUDE SO MANY BOOK REFERENCES ASDFGHJKL