

# JOHN GREEN

BOOK CLUB GUIDE

**INCLUDES DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS FOR:**

*Turtles All the Way Down*

*The Fault in Our Stars*

*Paper Towns*

*An Abundance of Katherines*

*Looking for Alaska*



# PRAISE FOR *TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN*

“This novel is by far his most difficult to read. It’s also his most astonishing. . . . The friendships in Green’s novels are stirring and powerful. They’re one of the reasons we show up to read them . . . surprising and moving and true.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

“The dialogue is snappy and sophisticated, and the characters invested with a sensibility, articulateness and aspirational range of reference that are so appealing to intelligent young readers.”

—THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“Green expertly communicates the confusion and pain of Aza’s invasive thoughts, the way they spin out of control and their inescapable hold on her. But there’s also a neat depth to the way *Turtles* explores the definition of happy endings, whether love is a tragedy or a failure, and a universal lesson for us all: You work with what you have.”

—USA TODAY

“It will pluck the strings of those in tune with it. It will resonate with, and comfort, anxious young minds everywhere. It might just be a new modern classic.”

—THE GUARDIAN

“Funny, clever, and populated with endearing characters.”

—ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

★ “In an age where troubling events happen almost weekly, this deeply empathetic novel about learning to live with demons and love one’s imperfect self is timely and important.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, STARRED REVIEW

★ “A deeply resonant and powerful novel that will inform and enlighten readers even as it breaks hearts.”

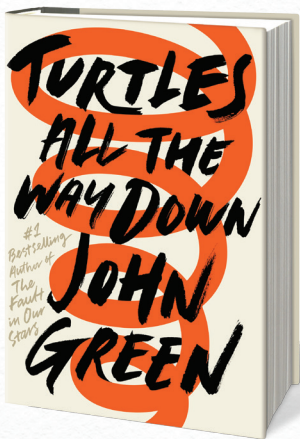
—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL, STARRED REVIEW

★ “Superb.”

—BOOKLIST, STARRED REVIEW

# TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN

978052555360 • \$19.99 (\$25.99 CAN)



"It's quite rare to find SOMEONE who sees the SAME WORLD you see."

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**#1 bestselling author John Green returns with his first new novel since *The Fault in Our Stars*!**

### **SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD AZA NEVER INTENDED TO**

pursue the mystery of fugitive billionaire Russell Pickett, but there's a hundred-thousand-dollar reward at stake and her Best and Most Fearless Friend, Daisy, is eager to investigate. So together, they navigate the short distance and broad divides that separate them from Russell Pickett's son, Davis.

Aza is trying. She is trying to be a good daughter, a good friend, a good student, and maybe even a good detective, while also living within the ever-tightening spiral of her own thoughts.

In his long-awaited return, John Green, the acclaimed, award-winning author of *Looking for Alaska* and *The Fault in Our Stars*, shares Aza's story with shattering, unflinching clarity in this brilliant novel of love, resilience, and the power of lifelong friendship.

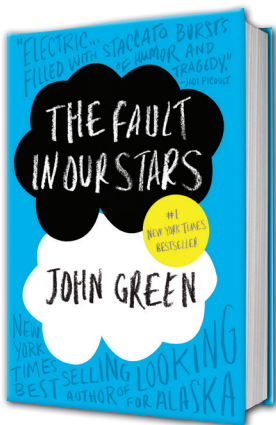
# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Turtles All the Way Down* is told in the first person. Why do you think this choice was made?
2. What does Aza mean when she says, “You think you’re the painter, but you’re the canvas”? How does this statement influence your perception of this story? Do you ever feel a similar way?
3. Aza describes her lunch table as “a long-running play on Broadway,” describing Mychal as “the Artsy One” and Daisy as her “Best and Most Fearless Friend,” relegating herself to “the Sidekick.” How does this description shape your view of Aza as a protagonist? What title would you give yourself among your group of friends?
4. How does the motto “Break Hearts Not Promises” relate not only to Daisy and Aza, but to all characters in the novel?
5. Davis and Aza both feel like their names define them. Think about your name—what do you think it says about you?
6. When explaining her childhood friendship with Davis, Aza says, “I mean, anyone can look at you. It’s quite rare to find someone who sees the same world you see.” Is there a person in your life who you think sees the world like you?
7. In the beginning of *Turtles All the Way Down*, Daisy says, “Everyone remembers you Holmesy... it’s not a value judgment. I’m not saying you’re good or generous or kind or whatever. I’m just saying you’re *memorable*.” What do you think makes Aza memorable? People in general?
8. When Aza says, “Whether it hurts is kind of irrelevant,” Davis declares it to be a pretty good life motto. How does this come into play throughout the novel? Do you agree or disagree with the statement?

9. Compare and contrast the idea of “I think therefore I am,” and “I am not my thoughts.” Can these two statements coexist? Why or why not?
10. Russell Pickett plans to leave his entire fortune and estate to his pet tuatara. Why does he prioritize his pet over his kids? What significance does the tuatara play in the novel?
11. What does Davis mean when he says, “Being vulnerable is asking to get used,” when he’s talking about the reward money for his father? Do you agree? Why or why not?
12. Aza describes her thoughts as many things—knotted loops, spirals, light-swallowing wormholes, and never straight lines. How would you describe your own thoughts?
13. Davis gives a \$100,000 reward to Aza and Daisy for not giving the photo of his father to the police. If you were in Aza and Daisy’s position, would you accept the money? Why or why not?
14. Discuss the dynamic of Daisy and Aza’s friendship. Is it on even ground? How do they support each other?
15. Discuss the nature of Aza and Davis’s relationship. Did you expect a real romance to develop? Why or why not? How do you feel about how it progressed?
16. Based on the anecdote Daisy shares about the phrase “turtles all the way down,” what does the title of this book mean to you?

# THE FAULT IN OUR STARS

HC: 9780525478812 • \$19.99 (\$23.00 CAN)  
PB: 9780142424179 • \$12.99 (\$14.99 CAN)



"Some infinities are **BIGGER** than other infinities."

## ABOUT THE BOOK

### DESPITE THE TUMOR-SHRINKING MEDICAL

miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.

Insightful, bold, irreverent, and raw, *The Fault in Our Stars* brilliantly explores the funny, thrilling, and tragic business of being alive and in love.

**"DAMN NEAR GENIUS."**

—*TIME Magazine*

**MILLIONS OF COPIES SOLD**

**#1 New York Times Bestseller**

**#1 Wall Street Journal Bestseller**

**#1 USA Today Bestseller**

**#1 Indie Bestseller**

**TODAY Book Club Pick**

***TIME Magazine's* #1 Fiction Book of 2012**

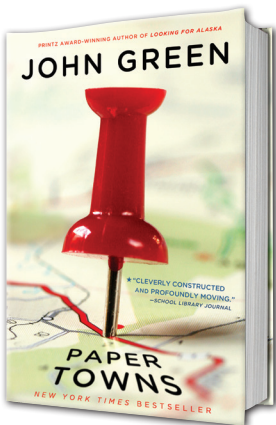


## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. During a disagreement regarding Hazel's attendance at Support Group, her mother tells her, "Hazel, you deserve a life." Consider the irony of this statement. Why is Hazel so resistant to attending her Support Group? Though she doesn't acknowledge it, what might be some of the benefits of her attending?
2. In what ways does Augustus's introduction to Hazel's world complicate matters for her? How does their relationship profoundly change her life?
3. Augustus inquires about Hazel's background and tells her, "Don't tell me you're one of those people who becomes their disease." In what ways do Augustus, Hazel, and Isaac fight to keep cancer from defining who they are? How do they work to prevent it from consuming all aspects of them?
4. Though they are intended to inspire and motivate, why does Augustus find humor in his family's posted "Encouragements"? What can readers glean about him based on his reaction?
5. Though her all-time favorite book is *An Imperial Affliction*, Hazel shares that she doesn't like telling people about it because "there are books so special and rare and yours that advertising your affection feels like a betrayal." What do you believe she means by this statement? Do you agree? Have you ever had a personal connection with a work of art? If so, what was it about the work that "spoke" to you?
6. Hazel shares that through his novel, Peter Van Houten is the only person who understands what it's like to be dying and not have died. What is it about his perspective that makes Hazel feel so connected to this author?
7. Why does Hazel feel so desperate to find out what happens beyond the ending of *An Imperial Affliction*? What does this indicate about her need for understanding about what comes "after"?
8. Compare the parent/child relationships in the story: Hazel and her parents and Augustus and his parents. To what extent are the relationships of these characters shaped by the world around them? To what extent do their relationships shape that world?
9. After hearing Augustus state that he fears oblivion, Hazel tells him, "... even if we survive the collapse of our sun, we will not survive forever." How does her pragmatic understanding of the frailty of humanity help her remain grounded?
10. Considering Hazel's and Augustus's perspectives, in what ways is *The Fault in Our Stars* a story about things that have been lost? What does each of them find along the way?

# PAPER TOWNS

HC: 9780525478188 • \$18.99 (\$21.00 CAN)  
PB: 9780142414934 • \$10.99 (\$14.99 CAN)



"If you don't  
**IMAGINE,**  
nothing ever  
**HAPPENS**  
at all."

## ABOUT THE BOOK

### QUENTIN JACOBSEN HAS SPENT A LIFETIME

loving the magnificent Margo Roth Spiegelman from afar. So when she cracks open a window and climbs back into his life—summoning him for an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows. When their all-nighter ends and a new day breaks, Margo has disappeared. But Q soon learns that there are clues—and they're for him. Embarking on an exhilarating adventure to find her, the closer Q gets, the less he sees the girl he thought he knew.

#1 bestselling author of *The Fault in Our Stars*, John Green crafts a brilliantly funny and moving coming-of-age journey about true friendship and true love.

**#1 New York Times Bestseller**

**Winner of the Edgar Award**

**USA Today Bestseller**

**Publishers Weekly Bestseller**

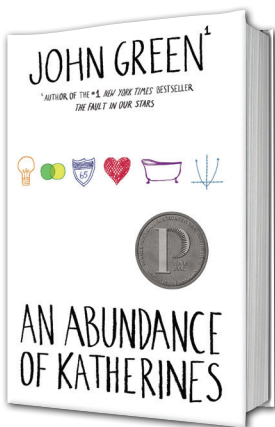


## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When Margo and Quentin are nine they make a horrible discovery, and respond in very different ways. Quentin says, "As I took those two steps back, Margo took two equally small and quiet steps forward." Do these descriptions still apply to the characters when they reach high school? When the story ends? What changes?
2. Describe Q's best friends. Where do they fit into the caste system of Winter Park High? If you had to choose one of these characters as your best friend, who would you pick and why?
3. When Margo disappears, she's always been known to leave "a bit of a bread-crumbs trail." What clues does Margo leave for Quentin? How are these different from clues left previously?
4. Discuss what Q finds in the abandoned mini-mall and how the book contributes to both the plot of the story and to what he ultimately learns about Margo and himself.
5. The definition of a "paper town" changes many times in the book. Describe the evolution of its meaning. How does it relate to the mystery? To the themes of the book?
6. With which character's version of the "real" Margo do you most agree?
7. Q's parents describe people as "mirrors" and "windows." What does this mean? Do you agree with this metaphor?
8. Q comes to this conclusion: "Margo was not a miracle. She was not an adventure. She was not a fine and precious thing. She was a girl." Discuss.
9. Discuss the last line of the book, how it relates to the rest of the story, and what it ultimately says about Margo and Q's relationship.
10. Do you think the characters Margo targets for revenge get what they deserve? Does Lacey deserve to be included?
11. When Margo disappears after her outing with Q, it's not the first time she's seemingly vanished for a long period. Describe Margo's other adventures and note any common threads between the trips. What makes her disappearance after her night with Q different from the others?
12. Which philosophy of life do you most agree with: Margo's Strings? Whitman's Grass? Or Q's Cracked Vessel? Why?

# AN ABUNDANCE OF KATHERINES

HC: 9780525476887 • \$18.99 (\$21.00 CAN)  
PB: 9780142410707 • \$10.99 (\$14.99 CAN)



"You can LOVE  
someone  
SO MUCH,  
but you can never love  
people as much  
as you can  
MISS THEM."

## ABOUT THE BOOK

### WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONSHIPS, COLIN

Singleton's type is girls named Katherine. And when it comes to girls named Katherine, Colin is always getting dumped. Nineteen times, to be exact. On a road trip miles from home, this anagram-happy, washed-up child prodigy has ten thousand dollars in his pocket, a bloodthirsty feral hog on his trail, and an overweight, Judge Judy-loving best friend riding shotgun—but no Katherines. Colin is on a mission to prove The Theorem of Underlying Katherine Predictability, which he hopes will predict the future of any relationship, avenge Dumpees everywhere, and finally win him the girl. Love, friendship, and a dead Austro-Hungarian archduke add up to surprising and heart-changing conclusions in this ingeniously layered comic novel about reinventing oneself.

**Michael L. Printz Honor Book**

**Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist**

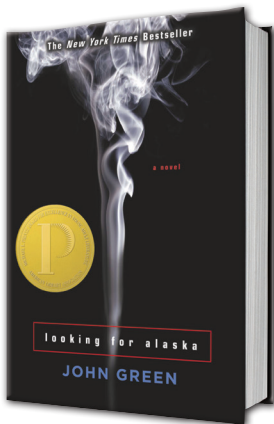
**New York Times Bestseller**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Colin spends most of the story devising a formula to predict romantic success. If it worked, would you use it? Why or why not?
2. John Green uses footnotes throughout the book. How does this change the way you read the story? Did you interact with the text in a different way? How?
3. *An Abundance of Katherines* is written in the third person. John Green's first book, *Looking for Alaska*, is written in the first person. How does the difference impact the book? Do you prefer one over the other? Why? Why do you think the author made the decision to try a third-person voice in his second book?
4. What does Colin learn about storytelling? Why is this important? How does this change his understanding of his past and current relationships?
5. Do you agree that Colin was always the dumpee? Do you think he was ever responsible for the breakup?
6. What purpose does anagramming words serve for Colin? In what ways does this activity connect/isolate him from others?
7. Throughout the novel, readers witness the complexities of the various relationships among the characters. Consider whose relationship seemed the most similar to one of your own personal relationships. What about it reminded you of your experiences?
8. Lindsey tells Colin, "How you matter is defined by the things that matter to you." Do you agree with her assessment? Why or why not?
9. After a moment of self-actualization, Hassan tells Colin, "I'm a not-doer." What does he mean by this assessment of himself? Why does he pledge that he will change? Consider passivity in others; are there times that this can prove to be hurtful or harmful? Offer some examples.
10. While desperately trying to fix his theorem, Colin cries, "Eureka. I figured something out. The future is unpredictable." Though most people would find this observation obvious, why does Colin's understanding of this fact prove to be so profound? In what ways does this discovery signify the evolution in Colin's understanding of the power of story?

# LOOKING FOR ALASKA

HC: 9780525475064 • \$18.99 (\$21.00 CAN)  
PB: 9780142402511 • \$10.99 (\$14.99 CAN)



"We need never be  
**HOPELESS**  
because we can never  
be irreparably  
**BROKEN.**"

## ABOUT THE BOOK

The award-winning, genre-defining debut from John Green,  
the #1 international bestselling author of  
*The Fault in Our Stars*

**BEFORE. MILES "PUDGE" HALTER IS DONE WITH HIS** safe life at home. His whole life has been one big non-event, and his obsession with famous last words has only made him crave "the Great Perhaps" even more (François Rabelais, poet). He heads off to the sometimes crazy and anything-but-boring world of Culver Creek Boarding School, and his life becomes the opposite of safe. Because down the hall is Alaska Young. The gorgeous, clever, funny, sexy, self-destructive, screwed up, and utterly fascinating Alaska Young. She is an event unto herself. She pulls Pudge into her world, launches him into the Great Perhaps, and steals his heart. Then...

After. Nothing is ever the same.

**Michael L. Printz Award Winner**

**Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist**

**TIME Magazine's 100 Best Young Adult Books of All Time**

**NPR's 100 Best-Ever Teen Novels Books of All Time**

**New York Times Bestseller**

**USA Today Bestseller**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is forgiveness universal? Is forgiveness really available to all people, no matter the circumstances? Is it, for instance, possible for the dead to forgive the living, and for the living to forgive the dead?
2. John Green would argue that both in fiction and in real life, teenage smoking is a symbolic action. What do you think it's intended to symbolize, and what does it actually end up symbolizing? To phrase this question differently: Why would anyone ever pay money in exchange for the opportunity to acquire lung cancer and/or emphysema?
3. Do you like Alaska as a character? Do you think it's important to like the people you read about?
4. By the end of this novel, Pudge has a lot to say about immortality and what the point of being alive is (if there is a point). To what extent do your thoughts on mortality shape your understanding of life's meaning?
5. How would you answer the old man's final question for his students? What would your version of Pudge's essay look like?
6. Discuss the book's structure. Why do you suppose Green chose this format for telling his story? How else might he have structured the material?
7. Miles tells the story in his own first-person voice. How might the book differ if it had been told in Alaska's voice or the Colonel's? Or in the voice of an omniscient narrator?
8. Dr. Hyde says, "Everything that comes together falls apart." Do you think the author agrees? How is this Zen belief explored in the novel?
9. Alaska loves these two lines from W. C. Auden: "You shall love your crooked neighbor/With your crooked heart." What do these lines mean to you and why do you think Alaska likes them so much?

# Reading RECOMMEN

## FICTION

**SISTER MINE by Nalo Hopkinson**—I love all of Hopkinson's books, but *Sister Mine* is my current favorite. It's a roaring adventure novel about sisterhood, reconciliation, and rediscovering one's (literal) mojo.

**WE ARE OKAY by Nina LaCour**—LaCour's poetic, character-driven meditation on grief and isolation made me cry like a baby. But it's also a profoundly hopeful novel, and it beautifully portrays the last days of adolescence, when "we were nostalgic for a time that wasn't over yet."

**THE INEXPLICABLE LOGIC OF MY LIFE by Benjamin Alire Sáenz**—Benjamin Alire Sáenz's novels are so tender, and so generous to the reader. *The Inexplicable Logic of My Life* is no exception. This one has stayed with me for its familial relationships and lyrical exploration of identity and loss.

**THE HATE U GIVE by Angie Thomas**—Thomas's debut novel features one of the best narrative voices in the history of young adult literature. The book explores police brutality, protest, racism, and many forms of privilege—but it is never didactic or simple. Instead, it's gut-wrenchingly real. This book will stay with you.

**PIECING ME TOGETHER by Renée Watson**—This YA novel follows one black teenage girl as she is forced to navigate the complexities of race and class and community. *Piecing Me Together* changed the way I understand human life and the role art plays in it.

**THE SUN IS ALSO A STAR by Nicola Yoon**—This irresistible love story follows Daniel and Natasha through one extraordinary day, and it manages to be extremely romantic without ever feeling sappy. With whip smart dialogue and an intricate narrative structure, *The Sun Is Also a Star* is a complete joy to read.

## POETRY

**CALLING A WOLF A WOLF by Kaveh Akbar**—Akbar finds expression for so many experiences I thought too deep and abstract for language. His poems show us the world within and without, and I can't stop thinking about them. "Time will break what doesn't / bend — even time. Even you."

**ORDINARY BEAST by Nicole Sealey**—Sometimes I find myself holding my breath when reading Sealey's poems. In the unforgettable "a violence," for instance, a father speaks to his daughter: "... You look just like / your mother," he says, "who looks just like a fire / of suspicious origin ..."

**COUNTING DESCENT by Clint Smith**—I love reading poetry, and this book reminded me why. It's a slim collection of powerfully observant, often heartbreaking poems. "I have always used words / to try and convince the world / that I am worth something," Smith writes.



# RECOMMENDATIONS from John Green

## NONFICTION

**THE MAN WHO COULDN'T STOP: OCD AND THE TRUE STORY OF A LIFE LOST IN THOUGHT** by David Adam—Adam's introduction to obsessive-compulsive disorder was tremendously helpful to me personally, but I think everyone could benefit from learning about this often-misunderstood mental illness.

**THE WATER WILL COME: RISING SEAS, SINKING CITIES, AND THE REMAKING OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD** by Jeff Goodell—This harrowing, compulsively readable, and carefully researched book lays out in clear-eyed detail what Earth's changing climate means for us today, and what it will mean for future generations.

**STREAMPUNKS: YOUTUBE AND THE REBELS REMAKING MEDIA** by Robert Kyncl—Anyone curious about YouTube and the rise of new media will enjoy this book. Kyncl, who grew up in a communist country with limited access to information, brings a fascinating perspective to online video. (Also, my brother and I make cameos in the book.)

**CITY OF THORNS: NINE LIVES IN THE WORLD'S LARGEST REFUGEE CAMP** by Ben Rawlence—Rawlence followed several refugees living at the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, where more than half a million people once lived. We are living amid the greatest refugee crisis since World War II, and Rawlence's introduction to life in a camp makes for riveting, heartbreaking reading. The book doesn't offer facile, straightforward solutions, but instead gives us a deeper understanding of the vulnerability and humanity of refugees.

**CITY OF LIGHT, CITY OF POISON: MURDER, MAGIC, AND THE FIRST POLICE CHIEF OF PARIS** by Holly Tucker—This history book about the first police chief of Paris reads like a thriller. After a series of poisonings among aristocrats close to King Louis XIV, a cop must navigate the complex world of court in an attempt to get at the truth. I especially loved the descriptions of life in 17th-century Paris—what it was like not just for royals, but also for everyday women and men.

**THE BODY IN PAIN: THE MAKING AND UNMAKING OF THE WORLD** by Elaine Scarry—Scarry's book is the best meditation I've ever seen on the relationship between self and pain. One of the challenges faced by those living with pain is how difficult it can be to find form and expression for the hurt; Scarry's book explores why that is, and in the process offers us a path toward greater empathy.

**I CONTAIN MULTITUDES: THE MICROBES WITHIN US AND A GRANDER VIEW OF LIFE** by Ed Yong—I highlighted a passage on nearly every page of this fascinating (and occasionally terrifying) overview of the trillions of microorganisms colonizing each of us. By cell count, humans are about fifty percent microbial, and through this book you get to know the half of you that isn't you.

An orange speech bubble with a black outline and a tail pointing towards the bottom left. Inside the bubble, the name "JOHN GREEN" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

# JOHN GREEN

is the award-winning, #1 bestselling author of *Looking for Alaska*, *An Abundance of Katherines*, *Paper Towns*, *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (with David Levithan), and *The Fault in Our Stars*. His many accolades include the Printz Medal, a Printz Honor,

and the Edgar Award. John has twice been a finalist for the *LA Times* Book Prize and was selected by *TIME Magazine* as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World.

With his brother, Hank, John is one half of the Vlogbrothers ([youtube.com/vlogbrothers](https://youtube.com/vlogbrothers)) and co-created the online educational series CrashCourse ([youtube.com/crashcourse](https://youtube.com/crashcourse)). You can join the millions who follow him on Twitter @johnngreen and Instagram @johnngreenwritesbooks or visit him online at [johnngreenbooks.com](https://johnngreenbooks.com).

John lives with his family in Indianapolis, Indiana.

