

## Samantha's Letter

Dear Mr. Green,

Some say that love can be measured by distance. After reading your book, *The Fault in Our Stars*, I found that it is really a test of heart and effort. Hazel and Augustus constantly show their love for one another, and although they are only teens, they love one another like an adult couple would. Your book not only holds several secrets that only careful readers will discover, but it gives me hope and teaches me a very important lesson: how to love someone. Those secrets are all of the keys that must be collected in order to open the door of true love—not a relationship, not a what-stage-are-we fling, but real, irreplaceable love.

Hazel Grace and Augustus always stay together, in sickness and in health. I'm only a 13-year-old girl who has never had an illness as severe as theirs, so I have not experienced the heartfelt love that Hazel and Augustus shared . . . but I have witnessed it. My parents are my biggest role models, and it took reading your book to realize that they were showcasing the most important lesson that they could ever teach my siblings and me. They have unconditionally loved one another for the past 17 years, and every year has been better than the one before. These days, it takes a lot for two individuals to fall in love and stay in love, as the divorce rate is near 50%. I have always worried that my parents may divorce, leave, or split up on one of their "unhealthy" days, but after reading your book, I have been given a great sense of security. You demolished my fear by creating and connecting two emotionally and physically strong characters who have a passion for loving one another. I saw that my parents are those two characters, somehow as solid as foundation stones. Without needing to prove their strength, they are forever joined and living in the storybook of life.

My mom, like Hazel and Augustus, was diagnosed with cancer: skin cancer. She was rushed to the hospital and was tested by unknown people she was forced to trust. Skin cancer meant melanoma, and melanoma meant death. The beeps of machines with names so long and complicated still ring in my ears, as I sat in uncomfortable office chairs waiting to see when my family would just fall apart. I couldn't help but race to this finish line without contemplating any other outcome. All of the characters in your story at some point or another show love. My dad proved to fill that exact pattern: he never left my

### 1. Determine Criteria

For this purpose, Samantha wanted to discuss theme and personal impact rather than, for instance, literary techniques.

### 2. Identify Strengths and Weaknesses

Samantha sees the ability to create links to her own life as one of the book's greatest strengths.

mom's side and constantly showed his pure adoration towards her by keeping her updated with the rest of the family and by bringing flowers and cards to her on tough days. All of the cards seemed to never matter; it was the way my mom would light up when she saw my dad after only a few rotations of the smallest hand on a clock. It was the times that she would wake up and smile and be happy around him, even when the darkest clouds were over her head.

It brought goose bumps to my arms and made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up when I would notice these details, when I would see two people so innocently yet truly in love.

My dad never left my mom's side, and like most things, the tables eventually turned. After being rushed to the hospital, a recurring event in my house, my dad was diagnosed with shingles in his left eye causing blurry vision to the point of legal blindness, along with an amount of pain that no scale can detect. My mom's main focus became healing my dad. I had never seen someone go through so much for another person. She continuously waited with him through the 3-year process, and leaving never once came to her mind. Arrangements for my siblings and me were made immediately so that she could spend every waking hour by my dad's side. I found that in an adult relationship, this commitment is rare and valuable. In the future, when my spouse is unhealthy, I will know exactly what to do and how to handle the situation. Unlike Isaac's girlfriend who left when times got tough, my mom stayed then and will always stay because love is a promise, just as you describe on every page of the story. It is not, as some seemed to demonstrate, like an exhaled breath in winter, strongly visible at first but then dissipating over time until it simply disappears.

There are middle-school and high-school relationships blossoming all around me, and I have actually experienced one. I've learned that those relationships can be fun and bittersweet, but when you find the one, you'll know, and you will never forget him. The naive relationships lead to a certain heartbreak that time can and will heal, but if you are lucky enough to have someone who will do anything to be considered your everything, that is a true rarity. That special person will make the world seem like it is yours. They will never forsake you or purposely mislead you. They will give you those supportive compliments you need, they will understand your feelings, and most of all, they will see through any flawed imperfections and will accept you as you are.

#### 4. Gather Evidence

While this letter is more about her own life than a summary of the novel, Samantha still refers to moments from the book.

#### 5. Draw Conclusions

Samantha's penultimate paragraph draws conclusions throughout.

### 3. Consider Improvements

The nature of this assignment means that Sam will not explicitly discuss alternate ways in which the book could have been written. However, it is clear that she has read other books that are less effective, by her estimation, than Green's novel.

Before reading *The Fault in Our Stars*, I was unaware that the adoration surrounded me, but after finishing the last page, you have strengthened my understanding of love and the effect it has on individuals. Your book acted more like a friend to me than a combination of chapters, and I thank you. I'm beyond blessed to have read your book and to have been able to witness true love in action, as my parents share their little infinity and while I await mine beginning soon.

Sincerely,  
Samantha