



2018

Looking for Alaska

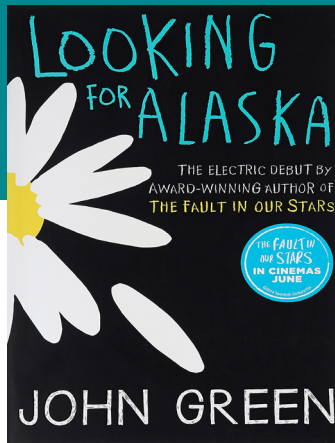
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Book Review

Looking for Alaska

Miles “Pudge” Halter enrolls at Culver Creek Boarding School after going through the motions for year after year. It’s here that he meets the Colonel, Takumi, Lara, and Alaska. Despite working hard to get good grades, the group throws themselves into smoking, drinking, and pulling off epic pranks. But as the group grows closer, secrets come out. After a night filled with too much alcohol, Alaska and Miles finally seem to be getting somewhere, but all that comes to a halt when Alaska drives off, drunk, and is killed in a car accident. Miles and his friends can’t seem to function without Alaska’s spunk and leadership, and they can’t understand why such a young and vibrant life could come so haltingly to a close. As the school year finishes up, Miles and his friends work to pull off the most epic prank in honor of Alaska.

John Green’s first novel is startlingly real. Despite Alaska being the titular character, this story is really about Miles. Miles’s characterization really drives this entire novel—his growth, his challenges, and his struggle to grasp the tragedy of Alaska’s death. Green’s careful description of Alaska’s time with Miles brings their relationship to life, which makes Alaska’s death all the more tragic. Yet it’s Green’s description of Miles’s struggle with the grief of losing Alaska, their friendship, and (perhaps most horribly) the what-could-have-been of their budding romance that truly shines in this novel. The writing and overall story are good, if not amazing. But the questions that this book raises about youth, life, grief, death, and friendship are stellar.

*Contains severe language and severe sexual content.

Author

John Green

Illustrator

Reviewer

Abigail Packard

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

221

Year

2005

Publisher

Dutton Books

ISBN

9780525475064