

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Stephen Chbosky

MTV Books; Media Tie-In edition (2012)

Reviews

- [NPR](#) ("Your Favorites: 100 Best-Ever Teen Novels." 7 August 2012): "In a thought-provoking, coming-of-age novel, teenager Charlie struggles to cope with the complex world of high school. He deals with the confusions of sex and love, the temptations of drugs and the pain of losing a close friend and favorite aunt."
- [Common Sense Media](#) (1 February 1999): "Teens who love *The Catcher in the Rye* will find this to be an excellent sequel of sorts. Charlie shares Holden's overwhelming sensitivity -- and struggles with psychological issues -- and readers will find themselves quickly feeling sorry for the protagonist and worrying about him throughout his transformative journey. There's lots of mature content here, from sexual material to Charlie's repressed memories of being abused; parents may want to read along with their teens so they can help them with any questions. Alternately, Simon & Schuster has a reading guide that can help them think through some of the plot points and deeper issues."
- [Indie Bound](#) (1 February 1999): "The critically acclaimed debut novel from Stephen Chbosky follows observant "wallflower" Charlie as he charts a course through the strange world between adolescence and adulthood. First dates, family drama, and new friends. Sex, drugs, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Devastating loss, young love, and life on the fringes. Caught between trying to live his life and trying to run from it, Charlie must learn to navigate those wild and poignant roller-coaster days known as growing up. A #1 New York Times bestseller for more than a year, an American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults (2000) and Best Book for Reluctant Readers (2000), and with millions of copies in print, this novel for teen readers (or "wallflowers" of more-advanced age) will make you laugh, cry, and perhaps feel nostalgic for those moments when you, too, tiptoed onto the dance floor of life."
- "*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a timeless story for every young person who needs to understand that they are not alone. A bright light in what can be a dark time. And just for the record, I saw the movie adaptation four times. Read the book first. You'll never forget it."
—**Judy Blume**
- "Once in a while, a novel comes along that becomes a generational touchstone. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is one of those books, a story so effortlessly told, with characters so truthfully rendered, you can forget just how beautiful the writing actually is. So I'm here to remind you: Chbosky is not just a great storyteller, he's a master of his craft."
—**R.J.Palacio, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Wonder***
- "Twenty years after its initial publication, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is somehow more resonant, more *relevant*, than ever. This is the mark not just of a good book, but a classic one."
—**Gayle Forman, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *If I Stay* and *I Have Lost My Way***

Awards

- [ALA Best Fiction for Young Adults 2000](#)
- [ALA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults 2002](#)
- [ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers 2000](#)
- A #1 New York Times bestseller for more than a year

Response to challenges

- [Intellectual Freedom Blog](#): The Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association (1 October 2010): "The Perks of Being a Wallflower was one of the most frequently banned or challenged books of 2009. For example, the book was challenged on a Wyoming, Ohio high school district's high school reading list for its frank descriptions of masturbation, sex, drugs, and suicide. While juniors and seniors at the Hidden Valley and William Byrd high schools in Roanoke, Virginia can read the book, freshmen and sophomores must have parental permission to check it out.

...in a win for the freedom to read, the library board of the West Bend Community Memorial Library in Wisconsin voted 9-0 to keep the book in the library's young adult section. Despite the four-month-long effort of West Bend Citizens for Safe Libraries to move young adult books with sexually explicit passages to the adult section and label them as containing sexual content, the library board refused to remove, relocate, label, or otherwise restrict access to them."

- [Eric Vo and Record-Journal for the Associated Press](#) (12 April 2015): "The entire book is a blueprint for survival. It's for people who have been through terrible things and need hope and support," Chbosky explained. "The idea of taking two pages out of context and creating an atmosphere as perverse is offensive to me — deeply offensive."

"In the past, Chbosky said, he would try to write letters to the parents to explain why he wrote the book and why it has value.

"I try to reach out to them to let them understand that I didn't write this book to appeal to the lowest common denominator. I didn't write this book to be explicit at all," he said. "I wrote this book as a blueprint for healing. I wrote this book to end the silence."

Young people have written to Chbosky saying the book or movie saved their lives.

"These were young people who were so isolated and misunderstood and they saw my movie or read the book and it gave them enough hope to keep going," he said. "... Because I have that experience and because I know that's true, I'm always wondering where's the next kid because that kid is out there. It's happened too many times over the last 15 years to be a coincidence."

- [National Coalition Against Censorship](#) (24 April 2015): “Good news: After weeks of controversy, Stephen Chbosky’s celebrated young adult novel *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* has been reinstated in the high school English curriculum in Wallingford, Connecticut ... the Wallingford school board said that the decision to remove the book absent any educational rationale was “both educationally and legally suspect,” and it flew in the face of the district’s own guidelines...”