

Delirium by Dana Alexander

They won't understand me.
I don't expect them too. How could I?
How can I expect anyone to understand
me when I don't even understand myself.
I know they say that starting over is a good
thing because no one knows who I am,
where I have been, or what I have been through.
Dad says I can re-invent myself. But what if I can't?
Dad says that no one needs to know. It can be our secret.
But it's going to come out eventually, I can't hide forever.
It's a part of me.
It's a part of who I am.

Commented [1]:

First person narrative allows for the reader to not only hear the story from someone's point of view, but also allows the reader to hear the protagonists thoughts and internal struggles throughout the novel. This technique is used throughout all 3 of the novels.

Commented [2]:

Internal Thoughts and Fears
used in: The Perks of Being a Wallflower, The Fault in Our Stars, and Thirteen Reasons Why.

Chapter 1

Today is not only my first day of my freshman year of high school, but also my first day at a new school in a new town. My Dad decided that after the events that had happened this past summer, we needed to move. It was time for us to move on with our lives and in order to do so, we needed to move out of our small town in Pennsylvania. I understand why we needed to leave, because if we didn't, our past would haunt us. I could not live in that house anymore without thinking about her every second of every day. Not that I don't still continue to think of her, and what she did, all the time, but being out of that house, out of that small town, already makes me feel better. As if living in that house and recounting every moment spent with her wasn't hard enough, but what was worse, was the whispers of our neighbors, the stares Dad and I would get in the grocery store, or at the park, or worse of all, when people would ask us about it. There was no escaping it.

Honestly I don't really mind that we left. It's not like I had any real friends back at in Pennsylvania anyway. It's not that I was ever really picked on or made fun of by my classmates, but I was alone. In complete isolation from everyone and everything going on. I know I am shy and that I keep to myself, but if people knew from the start what I was going through, they might have understood my silence. Maybe they could have helped. Probably not. I don't think anyone could have helped. It wasn't fixable.

Commented [3]:

First year of High School:
Perks of Being a Wallflower

High School Student:
13 Reasons Why
A Fault in Our Stars

Commented [4]:

New home / Setting never named:
Thirteen Reasons Why

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Perks of Being a Wallflower takes place in Pittsburg
Pennsylvania

Commented [6]:

Who is "her"?
Technique used in The Perks of Being a Wallflower. Leaves the reader wondering who the narrator is talking about and what events happened that revolve around this, clearly, very important character.

Commented [7]:

Characters in all three novels are in complete isolation from society, not just physically (like in A Fault in Our Stars) but mentally, emotionally, and socially isolated as well.

Commented [8]:

Character traits (shy and keep to self) of all 3 protagonists within Perks of Being a Wallflower, Thirteen Reasons Why, and A Fault in Our Stars.

Commented [9]:

Internal Struggle, contemplation, contradictions and stream of consciousness.

Chapter 2

I am hoping that picking out my outfit is going to be the hardest part of my day, but I know that's an unrealistic expectation. I will admit that having the body of a 13 year old boy makes picking out my first day of school outfit a lot more difficult than most would imagine. I know I am only 14 years old and that I can't expect puberty to set in right away, but when I look at other girls my age, I feel as though my body has some serious catching up to do.

After about sixty different clothing options, I settled for my favorite pair of faded blue skinny jeans, which seem to be the only pair of skinny jeans on earth that actually hug my stick skinny chicken legs. I threw on my bright red, beaten down, favorite pair of converse, and a simple Rolling Stones tank top. I know that this will not match the floral dresses and sparkly "first day of school" outfits that the other girls will be wearing today, but I have never been one to fit in. And hey, I am comfortable in this outfit, and today is a day where I need some type of comfort. As I began to brush my wavy brown hair into a low pony tail, I heard my Dad calling for me from the kitchen:

"Haylie James get down here before your breakfast gets cold!"

Dad's infamous first day of school breakfast! My favorite.

As I entered the kitchen, there he stood. The most important person in my entire life, my father. With his bald head glimmering from the ceiling light, he turned to me with a big smile and said, "Ah, there's my beautiful girl!" like he did every single morning before work.

"Eat your breakfast missy, we have to hurry up and get you to your new school!" he said.

"I know, I know! I was working on my outfit, I've gotta look good so I can impress all my new friends," I said with a sarcastic tone.

After we quickly shoveled our breakfast into our mouths, we were off. Dad was driving me to school today because it was my first day and he wanted to make sure I "settled in okay" before leaving for work as the town's newest police officer.

There it was, Charlesville High School, my new hell for the next four years.

Chapter 3

So far my day had been going pretty uneventfully. I had been called to the front of each of my classes and introduced by my teachers as "Haylie James Jones, the new girl". I had eaten lunch by myself (which was completely embarrassing but not out of the ordinary for myself), and had not really spoken to any of my new classmates throughout the day. Although my day had been lonely, I was used to being alone. And to be honest, I didn't really mind it. I realized that my life in my new school was going to be very similar to my life in my old school. I would only speak during class when called on, and I would only speak to my classmates when forced to. Or at least

Commented [10]:

Hazel Grace (Protagonist) from A Fault in Our Stars is described as having a similar body type. This creates a lack in self confidence which is a common theme among Young Adult Literature.

Commented [11]:

Protagonists of all 3 novels are young adults around the age of 14-16, all within their first years of high school.

Commented [12]:

Hazel Grace (Fault in Our Stars) dresses similarly, not in dresses and "girly girl" clothing. Modest and does not see her own natural beauty. Another common trait among Young Adult Literature.

Commented [13]:

"Hazel Grace" A Fault in Our Stars and "Sam" from Perks of Being a Wallflower, both have brown hair and do not spend much time styling it.

Commented [14]:

Referred to by her first and middle name, just as "Hazel Grace" is from A Fault in Our Stars.

Commented [15]:

Creative license : All of the novels had a nuclear family with both parents living and supportive of their children. I decided to change this for my novel and have only one parent living and supporting the child.

Commented [16]:

Loving and Supportive father

Supportive family is a common theme among YAL books such as:
Perks of Being a Wallflower
A Fault in Our Stars

Commented [17]:

A sarcastic tone of voice is commonly used among the protagonist and other characters of A Fault in Our Stars, which is a common theme among young adults who are going through puberty and discovering their "voice" along with their new found attitude.

Commented [18]:

Reoccurring theme of isolation

I thought, because little did I know that on my first day of chemistry class, I would be forced to speak to my classmates.

“Class, this is Haylie James Jones, and she is a new student here at Charlesville! We all know what it is like to be the new kid on the block, so please give her a warm welcome!” Mrs. Rogers announced to the class.

“Haylie, would you like to tell the class a little bit about yourself?” she asked without giving me much of a choice.

“Umm, sure” I replied.

“Hi everyone” I said nervously, “my name is Haylie James. I don’t really know what to tell you other than, I am new to town and I am a freshman.”

I couldn’t think of anything to tell them because if I told them anything about myself, it would give away everything. My past, my pain, everything bad about myself and my life. I had nothing exciting to tell them, nothing positive to say about myself. I was an empty shell, numbed from this past summer and I was not ready to let anyone in.

I opened the laundry room door, anxious to find the present she had promised would be in there. And there she was, hanging from the ceiling, her feet six inches from the floor. Her face distorted, an array of pale colors. Blood around her neck where the noose had suffocated and rubbed. Scratch marks along the rope where she had struggled for air within her last few moments of life.

Commented [19]:

Suicide: common theme among the novels. Dealing with the loss of a love one, as well as tapping into suicide and mental illness.

Commented [20]:

Style: Flashback
used frequently throughout The Perks of Being a Wallflower and Thirteen Reasons Why to help explain the secrets within the main characters and to explain events that had happened prior to the novel.

My mother’s face was burned into my memory and I felt as if I was running out of air. I suddenly gasped for air and snapped back to reality. There I was, standing in front of my new class, in front of teenagers who had no idea who I was or anything about me. I felt the sweat trickling from my forehead as my hands and legs began to shake.

After a moment of awkward silence, Mrs. Rogers chimed in, “Well, okay! That was enough information for now. I didn’t mean to put you on the spot or make you feel nervous!” she said apologetically trying to divert the class’s attention away from me and my shaking body.

“Haylie, if you wouldn’t mind taking a seat next to Blake” she said as she pointed to a brown haired, blue eyed boy sitting three rows back, with an empty seat beside him.

I felt my heart almost leap out of my chest. He was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen. As I began to approach the empty seat I noticed the perfect outline of Blake’s muscles through his t-shirt and found myself looking at his arms. I embarrassingly caught myself staring and quickly looked up into his eyes and noticed a sadness within him. As I sat down beside him my heart began to race. I have not felt nothing but numbness for over 3 months now, but here I was sitting next to a boy that I had never even spoken a word to, and all the numbness disappeared.

Commented [21]:

Love interest (common theme among all three novels)

Commented [22]:

Young girl shyly and embarrassingly attracted to a male character. Feelings the young girl may have never experienced before. Common theme among YAL novels due to the change in hormones surrounding these young characters.

Commented [23]:

Recognizing that all individuals have their own problems and daily life struggles. We all have moments of sadness and hardships. Although Blake’s secrets and sadness have not been revealed at this point, this displays the common theme of realizing that we are not the only ones in life facing life struggles, and that every single person has conflicts and hardships in their lives. This common theme is relevant in many YAL novels.

“Hi” I said to him bravely, with a smile on my face. Which instantly surprised me because I cannot remember the last time I voluntarily, and happily, said hello to someone.

“Hi, I’m Blake” he said as he looked up at me. It sounded like a sad and forced hello followed by a slanted smile.

And that was it. That was all he said. We did not speak for the remainder of class, and after class ended we gathered our belongings and went our separate ways.

Chapter 4

I watched Blake hurry out the door ahead of me and as I was heading out the door I heard a very excited and enthusiastic “Hello!” come from behind me.

I turned to see a strawberry blonde haired girl with the biggest smile spread across her face. Her long eye lashes batted up and down revealing her ocean blue eyes.

“Hello?” I said, reluctantly and confused

“I’m Sophie!” she replied. “Are you having a good first day of school?”

I was taken back and baffled that someone had actually gone out of their way to speak to me and to ask me how my day was going.

“Um, yea, it’s going alright” I replied.

“I’m sorry it took so long for me to introduce myself but I have had such an incredibly busy day! Principle Waters asked me if I could show you around the school and help you if you needed anything and I fully intended on finding you earlier, but I had a lot of things I needed to get done today. I hope you aren’t mad!” Sophie exclaimed.

“No, I’m not mad. I made out pretty okay without you” I said in a rude tone, which I didn’t intend on having. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean for that to sound rude. I just meant that I didn’t want you to feel bad or be worried” I corrected myself.

Sophie insisted that even though the school day was over she was still going to show me around the school and teach me all the “ins and outs” of Charlesville High School. As we walked around the building Sophie did most of the talking, but I didn’t mind. It was nice listening to someone ramble on about themselves and their lives, without worrying about whether or not they wanted to ask me questions about my mom or if they were just talking to me because they felt bad. I had never met someone so happy and outgoing in my entire life, and it was a nice change. She was a sophomore, just like Blake and most of the other students in our chemistry class, so she knew a lot about the school and the students within it. She gave me tips on which teachers to look out for and who to “suck up” to. She told me what foods I should and should not trust from the cafeteria, as well as which after school activities are the best to get involved in. I really enjoyed my time

Commented [24]:

Going to become Haylie’s female best friend. Making new friends is a common theme among YAL novels.

spent with Sophie because she made me feel like I could still have a chance at being normal and that there are still some genuinely nice people out there.

After giving me a tour of the school, Sophie gave me her phone number and told me that if I ever needed anything, to feel free to call her.

Before parting ways Sophie looked at me and said, “Haylie, it was very nice meeting you. I had a nice time talking with you and I hope that you had a nice time talking with me. I just want to tell you, that no matter what people tell you about me, no matter what you hear, the girl you met today is the real me. Please just don’t forget that.”

And she walked away.

Chapter 5

I spent many hours that night reciting what Sophie had said over and over again in my head. What had she meant by that? Has she done something bad that should keep me from talking to her? She seemed so nice and normal. Maybe she has problems? But who am I to judge? I have problems too, problems that are probably way worse than hers. As I laid in bed I replayed the events that had unfolded today, on my first day of school, in my head. I had survived! That was a positive, right? But what if I don’t want to just survive? What if I want to live and experience things and just be normal for once! What if I want to make friends and go to parties and have a social life! What if I want to fall in love and let someone see the real me? I survived today, yeah, but am I really alive? No one was mean to me, so that’s good. But no one really talked to me either! I want to make friends. I want people to get to know me and I want to get to know people. I want to let people in, but I can’t. If I let them in, if I let them know what I’ve been through, they will judge me. And worst of all, if they know about my mom, about her mood swings and her psychotic rampages, then they will assume that I am just like her. They will think I have a severe bipolar disorder as well. They will think I’m crazy. They will make fun of me and call me names. They will just assume, or even worse, they may even be right. But am I crazy? I don’t think so. I don’t act the way she acted. I don’t go into screaming fits at random times. I don’t change my mind constantly!

Oh my God, here I go again! Maybe I am like her! Does this count as a mood swing? Am I crazy??

I laid in bed for over 2 hours fighting with myself and contemplating the same series of thoughts that I have had every single night and day for the past eight years of my life. Ever since I started to realize that there was something wrong with my mom about eight years ago, I began to worry that maybe I will end up just like her. I fear the mood swings and the crazy fits of anger, then fits of screaming cry, then fits of pure happiness that she embraced on a daily basis. I can’t be like her. I can’t end up like her. Because if I am just like her, I will end up the same way she did, dead, hanging in our laundry room on my birthday.

Commented [25]:

Adds an element of curiosity and mystery which is commonly used. Allows the reader to Foreshadows future events.

Commented [26]:

Although the reader does not know Sophie, Blake, or Haylie’s internal struggles and events that have formed problems in their lives yet, the reader can already understand that all the characters have stuff going on in their lives that they are struggling with, much like how in real life everyone has their own personal struggles and issues that they are dealing with. This is a common theme among many YAL novels because it teaches individuals that no matter how alone we feel, everyone has things going on in their lives that they must deal with each and everyday.

Commented [27]:

Haylie’s mother suffered from Bipolar disorder. This mental illness mirrors the mental illness’s found within numerous characters from *Perks of Being a Wallflower*, as well as *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Mental illness is a common theme among YAL works.

Commented [28]:

Stream of consciousness. Inside the characters mind. Another commonly tool / style among YAL novels.

Commented [29]:

Irrational fears are a common theme among YAL. Although this may be a more extreme version than generally found in YAL works, this is a perfect representation of the internal conflicts and irrational fears felt by young adults.