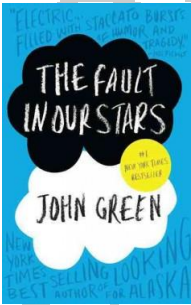




**Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons  
Teacher's Book Review**



***The Fault in Our Stars*, John Green  
Reviewed by Ms. Cosgrove, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Every once in a while a book comes around that is special and this week's book is just that. If you only read three books this year, let this one be among the three. It's a love story. Sixteen year old Hazel has met seventeen year old Augustus at a cancer support group and they bond over a book, actually a fictitious book about a teenager diagnosed with cancer who lives a happy life, called *An Imperial Affliction* by the fictitious author, Peter Van Houton. Hazel and Augustus are the kinds of people you wished you had as friends – irreverent, loyal and incredibly funny.

I loved this book for so many reasons. The characters, Hazel and Augustus, are believably smart. I have taught teenagers this funny, in my career, and I always ended up wondering who taught whom, by the end of the semester. Their response to their disease is real, as well. The book never descends into a sappy portrayal of living under such a sentence. The author doesn't talk down to the reader, either. The book is filled with allusions to philosophy, science, mathematics, and literature. The references you don't comprehend will compel you to either investigate them further or simply read on. They won't keep you from understanding the book.

So what's the book really about? Two teenagers have cancer. Augustus has been treated. His leg has been amputated and his prognosis is positive. Hazel, on the other hand has Stage IV cancer and experimental drug therapy has prolonged her life, for the time being. The book they have read has ended literally in mid sentence. Augustus has petitioned a Last Wish organization to sponsor him on a trip to Holland to meet the author who has promised to reveal the ending to them. He, of course, asks Hazel to accompany him. The outcome of this trip overseas is horrible in so many ways. They both learn that despite their efforts, so much of life is beyond their control, except for how they respond to it all. It is in our choices that we are liberated. This theme provides the hope that we, as readers yearn for in the book, and in our own lives, as well.

In the end, what terrifies these two people the most is not the suffering that accompanies their cancer, not the uncertainty that it will come back and claim their lives, but rather that their lives

will have been meaningless and that they will not be remembered. This is the fear they share and the one we, as readers, experience for ourselves as we accompany these two incredibly memorable characters on their journey together in this book. Be prepared for a roller coaster ride. You will be laughing out loud and finding people to whom you can read passages while you read this book, but you will also be grabbing tissues to dry your eyes, even the most stoic among you.

