



## Quicklet on Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower (Book Summary)

By Zaki Hasan

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### Quicklet on Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower (Book Summary) By Zaki Hasan

#### ABOUT THE BOOK

Stephen Chbosky's book may be younger than its adolescent protagonist, but it has had an eventful life so far. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* has proved to be one of the most controversial novels of recent years - and one of the most popular with its target audience of teenagers. Polymath Chbosky set out to write a very different novel but found that a single line from that first manuscript kept ringing in his head: "I guess that's just one of the perks of being a wallflower." This inspired him to develop the idea and the character of Charlie, the "wallflower" of the title. Set in 1991, the epistolary novel takes us through the troubled Charlie's freshman year, and the events leading up to a horrible personal discovery that turns his happier childhood memories upside down. In 1999, MTV acquired the title. Word of mouth made it a near-instant success, with teenagers devouring its themes of angst, isolation, and ostracisation in high school.

#### MEET THE AUTHOR

Born and raised in Chicago before settling in the San Francisco Bay Area, award-winning writer Zaki Hasan is a professor of communication and media studies, and has been a media scholar and critic for more than fifteen years. He is co-author of Quirk Books' *Geek Wisdom: The Sacred Teachings of Nerd Culture*, and his work has been featured in Q-News, Illume, and The Huffington Post.

#### EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Chbosky's epistolary novel begins with our anonymous narrator/letter-writer calling himself Charlie to avoid being identified and recounting a series of events ignited by the mysterious suicide of fellow student Michael Dobson. The letters are addressed to someone who may have known Dobson, but who Charlie has not personally met. He chooses the addressee because he hears that the former had "decided not to sleep with someone even though they could have". Dobson is a cipher whose death allows Charlie to engage for the first time with his fellow pupils in a compulsory group counselling session, held by the school. Dobson

was also his only friend in middle school and the wide emotional reaction to his death makes Charlie keenly aware of the hypocritical attitude of the other students.

On the cusp of being a freshman, Charlie writes to the unknown figure about his own family and the quiet unspoken grievances he notes between them. Most poignantly, he feels even more isolated by the fact that his older brother and sister are entering into the "real world" – college and relationships respectively. Privately, Charlie still finds himself missing his Aunt Helen, who had lived briefly with the family during what he recalls as the happiest years of his young life.

## BOOK OUTLINE

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- +About the Author
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- +Key Terms and Definitions
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### **Quicklet on Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower (Book Summary) By Zaki Hasan Bibliography**

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**Desiree Grajeda:**

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