

The character of miles halter in looking for alaska

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



In John Green's *Looking For Alaska*, Miles Halter proves to be an unreliable narrator. His emotions tend to cloud how he sees his crush, Alaska, especially after her death. As a result of grief, Miles romanticizes his relationship with her, thus altering the truthfulness of his perspective. He is not a strong-willed character and this is evident in social settings and conversations with others, as well as Miles' sheep-like relationship with the Colonel. Throughout the novel, his passivity is proven further in the face of Alaska: "If people were rain, I was drizzle and she was a hurricane," (49, Green). Miles will never be the force of nature Alaska was, lacking her assertiveness and self-confidence. However, his introspective nature and introversion are positive aspects of his character. Miles's mind considers the grey areas, where nothing is rigid or clear, prevalently when it comes to who Alaska was. This mindset contrasts greatly against the Colonel's black and white views of the world, where people are either good or bad, he likes someone or he doesn't. The Colonel assumes a fatherly role towards Miles, however brash his comments are: "And if she were here, we both know that she would still be Jake's girlfriend and that there'd be nothing but drama between the two of you—not love, not sex, just you pining after her and her like, 'You're cute, Pudge, but I love Jake.'" (20, Green). Miles is exposed to Alaska's selfishness and lack of consideration here and his opens open to the people in his life who do care for him, as much as he does for them. This helps him preserve in life and to die. In his own way, the Colonel assists Miles in overcoming the loss of Alaska, an event that haunted and consumed his psychological and physiological state of being.

Many philosophical concepts, setting, and symbols are explored in *Looking For Alaska*, allowing the protagonist to abandon his grief-stricken, romanticized notion of Alaska. The Old Man, who lectures in World Religions class, inspired thoughts of morality and afterlife in Miles. He questions existence itself and this is enhanced by his introspective natures, most specifically after Alaska dies. Through internal monologues, Miles is able to move beyond his immediate grief of Alaska's death to make some realizations about her, death, and himself. As a result of his conclusions about Alaska, he abandons his naive version of her character and continues caring about her: " I will forget her, yes. That which came together will fall apart imperceptibly slowly, and I will forget, but she will forgive my forgetting, just as I forgive her for forgetting me and the Colonel and everyone but herself and her mom in those last moments she spent as a person." (136, Green). And it doesn't matter to him—he loves her for who she was, for who she is to him. That realization might be worth the pain of grief after all.

Miles' character development is additionally relayed through the symbolism of cigarettes and the smoking hole, and John Green's message. Cigarettes are used as something more than an object of self-destruction and social acceptance. The secretive nature of smoking embodies rebellion, implying Alaska's true nature as she is the one who exposes Miles to cigarettes. Following her death, he uses smoking as a way to cope and feel closer to her. The Smoking Hole is where he leans on Alaska after realizing his parents are leaving for thanksgiving and where Miles ends up thinking after he and the Colonel have their big fight. The last time the characters are seen at the

Smoking Hole, they each throw a cigarette in the water, a ritual for Alaska. Overall, this setting is not only a symbol of rebellion, it connects the characters. John Green shows the reader how powerful teenage friendship, love, and grief are without making teenagers seem small and their situations dramatized. This is displayed through Miles when he works through his grief following Alaska's death and forgives himself for letting her go. Love, rebellion, and awkward encounters occur throughout the novel, setting a tone of humour, lightness, and reflectivity. This mood is spoken into existence by Miles' introspective personality and passive role as an insecure character. Deep philosophical questions are explored in the context of his life; what suffering is, why one suffers, and how one retains hope within their personal labyrinth of suffering. Green's novel forces us to confront our own suffering and to examine what is true about the love we have for our friends. Green prompts the reader to question what is at stake when one is mourning, and to consider the physical and psychological impact that grief imparts on us.