

# **A SEPARATE PEACE** **THE RIGHT BOOK FOR** **CHARLIE?**

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**A Presentation by Peter Zettl**



# 1

## DESCRIPTION OF THE BOOK

- a. Quick overview and critiques
- b. Short summary

# 2

## CONNECTION TO CHARLIE

- a. Positive and negative aspects
- b. Similarities between the two books

# 3

## WAS THE BOOK WELL CHOSEN?

- a. Did the author pick the right book?
- b. Conclusion

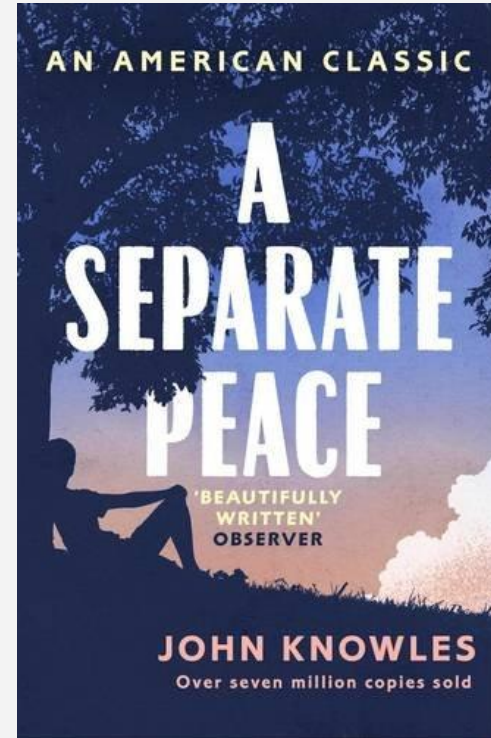
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**Description of the book.**

# quick overview & critiques

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- written by John Knowles, published in 1959
- novel, genre: realism
- set in The Devon School in New Hampshire in 1942/43 (WW2)
- main characters Gene Forrester and Finny
- 3,6/5 on “goodreads”
- 50% of readers on Google gave it a “thumbs up”



## short summary

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- Gene jumps from tree into river as dare
- jump off tree again, but Finny falls and breaks leg (no longer sports)
- Finny wanted to be in olympics, now convinces Gene to go
- Finny breaks his leg again
- accidentally killed during leg surgery

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**Connection to Charlie.**

# positive aspects & negative aspects

## positive aspects

- guilt of ruining Finny's life/making it harder for him
- Gene's jealousy of Finny and the feeling of guilt as a consequence of jealousy
- Gene is very insecure/an overthinker
- haunted by past
- Finny as the genuine, understanding and honest best friend
- setting (in educational institution)
- Gene identity crisis
- inner enemy
- aspect of doing sports
- having to go to hospital

## negative aspects

- aspect of war
- historical period in general

# similarities between the two books

## The Perks of Being a Wallflower

- one academic year (summer 1991 to summer 1992)
- 1. Charlie no friends in high school
- 2. makes friends (Sam, Patrick, etc.)
- 3. big argument causes conflict
- 4. problem gets “solved”
- 5. Charlie separated from his friends
- cover guilt and childhood trauma
- Charlie good student in high school
- seasons symbolize mental state
- Charlie in hospital various times

## A Separate Peace

- one academic year (summer 1942 to summer 1943)
- 1. Gene no friends in Devon School
- 2. makes friend (roommate Finny)
- 3. Finny's accident & surgery
- 4. able to come back to school
- 5. Finny dies, Gene goes to war
- cover guilt and trauma
- Gene elite student at Devon School
- seasons symbolize overall situation
- Finny in hospital various times



3

Was the book **well chosen?**

# Did the author pick the right book?

## pro arguments

- Yes, because connection to brother
- Yes, because Gene shares many traits with Charlie -> Charlie can identify with him -> gives him someone to relate to (doesn't feel as weird and special)
- Yes, because Charlie learns about coping with grief and guilt

## contra arguments

- No, because historical period irrelevant
- No, because it might make him more insecure and overthinking

# Conclusion

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- it is the right book for Charlie
- gives him someone to identify with
- helps him with learning how to cope with guilt
- feels connected to brother
- feels less uniquely weird/like something is wrong with him
- supports character development



# Sources

[https://www.buecher.de/shop/ab-14-jahren/a-separate-peace/knowles-john/products\\_products/detail/prod\\_id/10619506/](https://www.buecher.de/shop/ab-14-jahren/a-separate-peace/knowles-john/products_products/detail/prod_id/10619506/)

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/5148.A\\_Separate\\_Peace](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/5148.A_Separate_Peace)

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/separate/>

<https://youtu.be/D0all9eSw7M>

"A Separate Peace" by John Knowles