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How Certain Relationships Affected Charlie's Life

Everyone has relationships, and people in their life that impact them positively and negatively.

In the novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky, the main character Charlie, writes letters about the events of his life. In these letters the reader learns about Charlie's life in, and out of school, as well as his friend's lives, and his relationships with his friends and family. The relationships Charlie has with his friend Sam, who teaches him how he should treat others, and how he should be treated, his teacher Bill, who encourages him throughout the novel, and his Aunt Helen, who causes him emotional trauma have affected Charlie on different ways and shaped who he is today.

Charlie's relationship with Sam taught him how to treat others, and how he should be treated. Charlie has a tendency throughout the novel to put others before himself. Sam teaches Charlie that he cannot always put others before himself. When Charlie is doing this, Sam tells him, "It's great that you can listen and be a shoulder to someone, but what about when someone doesn't need a shoulder. What if they need the arms or something like that? You can't just sit there and put everyone's lives ahead of yours and think that counts as love." (Chbosky 200). This is the first time anyone ever tells Charlie that he needs to care for himself as much as he cares for others, and not just disregard his own feelings. Sam also always makes sure that Charlie feels cared for. Sam shows this when she offers to be Charlie's first kiss, and says, "I want to make sure that the first person you kiss loves you." (Chbosky 70). Sam says this to Charlie because she does not want him to ever feel unloved. Charlie meets a lot of people who have an impact on him at school, one of these people being his teacher, Bill.

Bill is always encouraging Charlie throughout the novel. Bill makes sure that Charlie knows how smart he really is by telling him, "Charlie you're one of the most gifted people I've ever known. And I don't mean in terms of my other students. I mean in terms of anyone I've ever met." (Chbosky 181). Bill tells Charlie this because Charlie never realized his true intelligence. Bill also realizes how much potential Charlie has, and wants him to keep up what he's doing. Bill lets Charlie know this before the end of the school year by saying, "So when the school year ends and I'm not your teacher anymore, I want you to know that if you ever need anything, or want to know more about books, or want to show me anything you write, or anything, you can always come to me as a friend. I do consider you a friend Charlie." (Chbosky 181). Bill encourages Charlie to continue reading, writing, and showing him his work even though he is not Charlie's teacher anymore. The books Bill gives Charlie always provide him some comfort when he reads them. He needs this comfort when he is dealing with the emotional trauma his Aunt Helen caused him.

Charlie's Aunt Helen causes him emotional trauma even after her death. On Charlie's birthday, his mother tries to comfort him when he feels guilty about his Aunt's death, "Please don't do this to yourself Charlie. But I did do it to myself. Like I do every year on my birthday." (Chbosky 79). Charlie blames himself every year on his birthday for his Aunt Helen's death, which gradually wears down on his mental state. Charlie is also left in the hospital after traumatizing memories of his Aunt Helen sexually abusing him come back. Charlie expresses how hard this was for him by saying, "The first few weeks in the hospital were very hard. The hardest part was sitting in the doctor's office when the doctor told my Mom and Dad what happened." (Chbosky 209). This event caused Charlie to sit in the hospital not communicating with anyone for weeks after finding out what had been happening to him.

All these events have impacted Charlie. Some in positive and some in negative ways. The relationships Charlie has with Sam, Bill, and Aunt Helen have all played roles in Charlie's life, and have

changed the way he thinks. Certain people in a person's life can greatly change the way they think, or turn out in life.

Works Cited

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Chbosky, Stephan. *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*. MTV Books/Pocket Books, 1999.

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Formal Outline

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I. **Thesis statement** - These relationships have all affected Charlie in different ways and shaped who he is today

II. **Topic sentence** - Sam teaches Charlie how he should be treated and how he should treat others

a. Sam tells Charlie he can't put everyone ahead of himself.

i. "It's great that you can listen and be a shoulder to someone, but what about when someone doesn't need a shoulder. What if they need the arms or something like that? You can't just sit there and put everyone's lives ahead of yours and think that counts as love." pg 200

b. Sam kisses Charlie because Stewart's his first kiss to be with someone who cares about him.

i. "I want to make sure that the first person you kiss loves you." pg 70

*Transition sentence - He met Sam at school, where he also met Bill.

III. **Topic sentence** - Bill encourages Charlie

a. Makes sure Charlie knows how smart he is.

i. "Charlie, you're one of the most gifted people I've ever known. And I don't mean in terms of my other students. I mean in terms of anyone I've ever met" pg 181

b. Makes sure Charlie continues to do what he's doing

i. "So when the school year ends, and I'm not your teacher anymore, I want you to know that if you ever need anything, or want to know more about books, or want to show me anything you write, or anything, you can always come to me as a friend. I do consider you a friend Charlie." pg 181

*Transition sentence - Charlie often reads these books. They are almost like therapy for him. And help him escape trauma like what Aunt Helen caused.

IV. **Topic sentence** - Aunt Helen caused Charlie emotional trauma

a. Charlie blames himself for her death on his birthday

i. "Please don't do this to yourself Charlie. But I did do it to myself. Like I do every year on my birthday." pg 79

b. Aunt Helen used to molest Charlie which leads to him ending up in the hospital later on in life

i. "The first few weeks in the hospital were very hard. The hardest part was sitting at the doctor's office when the doctor told my mom and dad what happened." pg 209

*Transition sentence -

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#3

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