

**Reading John Green in Nerdfighteria:
Issues of Authority, Accessibility, and Reader Fandom in *The Fault in Our Stars***

John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* is popularly regarded as a tragic story of love and friendship between two young people with cancer. Yet the novel also functions as the story of two young readers whose romance begins with a shared infatuation with the same novel, namely the fictional *An Imperial Affliction*. Much of the action in Green's novel then unfolds around the characters' effort to meet the fictional novel's notoriously reclusive author, Peter Van Houten, and their struggle in the face of his abuse and rejection. In contrast to the misanthropic Van Houten, author John Green has cultivated a robust interpersonal relationship with his readers, particularly through his Vlogbrothers YouTube channel and various social media platforms. *The Fault in Our Stars* was, in fact, written during Green's rise in online popularity and is admittedly informed by his relationship with his fan-community, the Nerdfighters. With this paper, I place these two manifestations of the reader-author relationship, one fictional, one highly mediated but real, in conversation with each other. Specifically, I explore how John Green uses new media platforms to discuss his novel with fans, to guide them in the reading experience, and to provide them with insight into authorial intent, even as he dismisses its value. At the same time, I trace how he uses the novel to explore issues and anxieties around his relationship with young fans, particularly in relation to accessibility and the illusion of intimacy created by online proximity. Working at the crossroads of young adult literature criticism, fan studies, and theories about digital culture, I seek to provide insight into the ways in which novels and digital media for youth inform and engage with each other and to use Green's novel as a lens through which to view the complex relationship that has emerged between authors and adolescent readers in the digital age.