

## **APPENDIX I**

### **SYNOPSIS**

#### **THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER**

The story begins with a quiet, sensitive, 15-year-old boy named Charlie writing letters about his life to an unknown recipient. Charlie chooses that person because he said that he heard he was nice and thought that this person would not be judgmental. He discusses his first year at high school, grappling with two traumatic experiences from his past: the suicide of his only middle-school friend, Michael, a year before, and the death of his favourite aunt, Helen, during his early childhood.

His English teacher, Mr. Anderson, notices Charlie's passion for reading and writing, and acts as a mentor by assigning him extracurricular books and reports. Although he is a wallflower, Charlie is befriended by two seniors: Patrick and Sam. Patrick is secretly dating Brad, a closeted football player, and Sam is Patrick's stepsister. Charlie quickly develops a crush on Sam and subsequently admits his feelings to her. It is revealed that Sam was sexually abused as a child, and she kisses Charlie to ensure that his first kiss is from someone who truly loves him.

In parallel, Charlie witnesses his sister's boyfriend hit her across the face, but she forbids him from telling their parents. He eventually mentions the occurrence to Bill, who tells Charlie's parents about it. Charlie's relationship with his sister rapidly deteriorates and she continues to see her boyfriend against her parents' wishes. Eventually, he discovers that his sister is pregnant and agrees to

bring her to an abortion clinic without telling anyone. His sister breaks up with her boyfriend, after which her and Charlie's relationship begins to improve significantly.

Charlie is accepted by Sam and Patrick's group of friends and begins experimenting with tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. As Charlie engages with his new friends he can control his flashbacks of Aunt Helen, who died in a car crash on her way to buy him a birthday gift. Eventually, Mary Elizabeth, a member of the group, invites Charlie to the school's Sadie Hawkins dance and the two enter into a desultory relationship. During a game of Truth or Dare, when dared to kiss the prettiest girl in the room he kisses Sam; Mary Elizabeth storms out, the rest of the group shuns him and Patrick suggests that Charlie stay away from Sam for a while. His flashbacks return.

Patrick and Brad's relationship is discovered by Brad's abusive father, and Brad disappears from school for a few days. Upon returning, Brad is cold and incommunicative towards Patrick, while Patrick attempts to reconnect with him. However, when Brad derogatorily attacks Patrick's sexuality in public, Patrick physically attacks Brad until other football players join in and gang up on Patrick. Charlie breaks up the fight, regaining the respect of Sam and her friends. Patrick begins spending much of his time with Charlie and kisses Charlie impulsively and then apologizes, but Charlie understands that he is recovering from his romance with Brad. Soon Patrick sees Brad engaging with a stranger in the park and Patrick is able to move on from the relationship.

As the school year ends, Charlie is anxious about losing his older friends—especially Sam, who is leaving for a summer college-preparatory

program and has learned that her boyfriend cheated on her. When Charlie helps her pack, they talk about his feelings for her; she is angry that he never acted on them. They begin to engage sexually, but Charlie suddenly grows inexplicably uncomfortable and stops Sam. Charlie begins to realize that his sexual contact with Sam has stirred up repressed memories of having been molested by his aunt Helen as a child.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **BIOGRAPHY**

#### **STEPHEN CHBOSKY**



Stephen Chbosky was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on January 25, 1972, to Fred, a former CFO consultant, and Lea, a tax preparer. He grew up in Upper St. Clair, graduating from the local high school. He received his Bachelor of the Fine Arts degree from the University of Southern California's film writing program in 1992.

Chbosky is a screenwriter, television writer, and stage writer. His first film, *The Four Corners of Nowhere*, which he wrote the screenplay for and also directed, it was premiered at the 1995 Sundance Film Festival, the largest independent cinema festival in the United States. The film won Narrative Feature honours at the Chicago Underground Film Festival. According to an All Movie Guide plot description written by Sandra Brennan, *The Four Corners of Nowhere* is a "humorous film [that] attempts to explain the nihilistic attitudes and terminal ennui of the X-generation." The film follows the lives, relationships, and opinions of a group of twentysomethings living in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In addition to his honours for *The Four Corners of Nowhere*, Chbosky has been recognized for other films to which he contributed.

He is the recipient of the Abraham Polonsky Screenwriting Award for his screenplay *Everything Divided*. Chbosky wrote the screenplay for the film versions of the popular stage play, *Rent*, and he was the co-editor and contributor

to another stage play, *Sexaholic*. His current project, *Fingernails and Smooth Skin*, is the story of a young couple whose longtime relationship is threatened by their foibles and infidelities. Chbosky was a participant in the Sundance Institutes Filmmakers' lab. Chbosky is the editor of *Pieces: A Collection of New Voices*, a collection of fictional short-stories, and he is also the author of a book for a musical, *Kept*.

Chbosky is most well-known in the literary world for his popular, coming-of-age novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, published by MTV/Pocket Books in February 1999. The book, which is Chbosky's first novel, follows the life of 15-year-old Charlie who prefers to observe the world around him instead of participating; this changes when he becomes friends with Patrick, a senior suffering because of his secret relationship with the high school football star, and Patrick's step-sister, Sam, for whom Charlie has an unrequited love interest. The novel, told through Charlie's notes to an unnamed stranger, follows the lives of Charlie's group of high school friends through first relationships, parties, and performances of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Chbosky never intended *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* to be a novel for adolescents; however, its focus on adolescents has caused critics to view it as such. In an interview with Marty Beckerman of [wordriot.com](http://wordriot.com) Chbosky laments that, "people can't agree to disagree, and people can't find common ground. The people who object for moral reasons cannot see the value of the book, and the people who see the value of the book don't realize why it's upsetting to more religious people." Despite the controversy, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*,

Chbosky told Beckerman that he, “[he is] very optimistic about [literary freedom in America].”

In Sally Estes’ February 15, 1999 review of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* in *Booklist* she says, “First novelist Chbosky captures adolescent angst, confusion, and joy as Charlie reveals his innermost thoughts while trying to discover who he is and who he is to become.” On March 15, 2000, *Booklist* chose *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* as one of the Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Readers, and on June 1, 2001, *Booklist* chose the novel as one of the Top 10 Gay and Lesbian Books for Youth. Chbosky is working on a screenplay for a film version of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

Most recently, Chbosky was a creator, writer, and executive producer of the CBS television series *Jericho*, which was an action drama show delving into aftermath of nuclear attacks in a fictional town in Kansas called Jericho. *Jericho* premiered in 2006, but was cancelled in 2008 at the end of the second season. Chbosky lives and works in Los Angeles, California. He is an active gay rights supporter, and he continues to work on films.