

Stories from the Field

Editor's Note: *Stories from the Field* invites readers to share a story about young adult literature. This section features brief vignettes (approximately 300 words) from practicing teachers and librarians who would like to share their interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators around young adult literature. Please send your stories to jbach@lsu.edu.

The Case of the Crumpled Pages

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The case of the crumpled pages began early one Monday morning. I returned from the weekend, arms weighed down by the YA novels I recently purchased for student enjoyment. This particular week, I purchased several John Green titles; I recently had the pleasure of discovering *Looking for Alaska* and couldn't wait to delve into the pages of *The Fault in Our Stars*, a book that promised to be another fantastic read.

After I shared each of the new titles with my students, Katie (a pseudonym) approached me and asked to borrow *The Fault in Our Stars*. Despite my secret desire to be the first to savor this text, I passed the book along to Katie and anticipated her review.

A few days later, Katie returned the novel. "I'm sorry," she whispered with her head tilted ever so slightly downward, "But I think I might have damaged your book a little. I can buy you a new one if you'd like."

I examined the book and noticed the ever-so-slightly crumpled pages near the back. "No, no. It's totally okay. Thanks for telling me," I responded as I placed the book on top of my desk.

That evening, I found time to begin the much-anticipated story. Sure enough, it wasn't long before I, too, was near the conclusion of the story. As I rested on my couch, unable to stop reading, my eyes began to fill with tears. Suddenly, I found myself crying onto the very crumpled pages Katie had previously mentioned. Our tears began to blend, further crumpling the delicate pages.

When I returned to class the next day, I made sure to show the book to Katie. "I, too, crumpled the pages," I shared.

"Only the best stories have crumpled pages, Mrs. E," Katie responded with a smile. "Those are the books that really speak to your heart."

Our Readers Share a Memory about the ALAN Conference

Name: Heather Stanich

Affiliation: NCTE, ALAN Member

Memory:

Thanks to Dr. Cindy Bowman, I have enjoyed ALAN. She taught me about ALAN in 2006. A lover of books and a passionate teacher, Cindy, you are missed but not forgotten. RIP.

Name: Helene Halstead

Affiliation: Burney Harris Lyons MS (Teacher)

Memory:

Mentors: They draw you in, they push you in, they

make it happen. Thank you to my ALAN mentor—Anne Mcleod—for “getting” me to my first conference.

Name: Crag Hill

Affiliation: Washington State University

Memory:

500 educators teared up listening to Stephen Chbosky telling the story about the girl who was planning to commit suicide until she read *Perks*, Philadelphia 2009.

Name: Harry Brake

Affiliation: NCTE, ALAN, National Writing Project

Memory:

Being the “literary messenger” for our school in Mexico City was exhilarating, texts from my students, such as “I want your life,” proved meeting authors a dream!

Name: Wendy Glenn

Affiliation: Past ALAN president; University of Connecticut

Memory:

There are few things more rewarding than looking on proudly while your students chat with the authors they adore—while navigating free snacks on a napkin.

Name: Jackie Bach

Affiliation: TAR Coeditor

Memory:

Thanks to the person who loaded video recordings of the speeches from the 2011 conference onto my laptop so I could share them with my students back home.

Name: Catherine Balkin

Affiliation: Owner/Publishing Consultant/Author
Appearance Coordinator at Balkin Buddies at www.BalkinBuddies.com

Memory:

I will always be grateful for being elected to be on the ALAN Board at what seemed a low point in my career.