

“Five Feet Apart” leaves readers emotional

“Human touch. Our first form of communication. We need that touch from the one we love, almost as much as we need air to breathe. I never understood the importance of touch, his touch... until I couldn't have it.”

Seventeen-year-old Stella Grant has cystic fibrosis, a life-threatening disorder that damages the lungs and digestive system. Despite her out of control lungs, she likes to be in control of every other aspect of her life. That explains why it's full of routines and boundaries. She has been in and out of hospitals most of her life, and the one thing she has made sure to do her whole life is to keep herself away from anyone who can ruin her chances for a lung transplant.

That becomes a problem after she meets Will Newman, a rebellious and charming teen with the same illness as her. Will couldn't care less about the treatments for his Burkholderia Cepacia, a more severe form of cystic fibrosis that took him off the lung transplant list. All he wants to be in control of is getting out of his clinical drug trials and the hospital.

They must stay six feet apart at all times, no exceptions. The only way for them to stay alive is to stay apart, but they have an instant connection. As their feelings intensify, so does their desire to break the rules and embrace their feelings for each other. Suddenly being six feet apart doesn't feel like protection. It feels like punishment.

This book immediately grabbed my attention with its intricate cover and the fact that it is a young adult fiction, which is one of my favorite genres. Rachael Lippincott wrote a well plotted and well written book. The storyline was captivating

and kept me from putting the book down.

I knew that Will and Stella were doomed from the start because they are not able to touch each other and this makes the book bittersweet. The last few chapters are heartbreaking, as I was expecting.

The story is told in alternating perspective between Stella and Will and I enjoyed both perspectives. These perspectives taught me multiple things about cystic fibrosis.

At the beginning of the book Stella seemed like a headstrong girl who always wanted to get through her illness and live but later it gets revealed that she was ready to die all along until her older sister Abby died. We find out that Stella has survivor's guilt and that the only reason she is trying so hard to live is that she feels her divorced parents will fall apart if their only remaining child dies. Will believes that there is no hope for him and instead of being in a hospital, he should be out exploring the world. After he meets Stella, he realizes that he wants to live. He starts doing his treatments and enjoying life at the hospital.

I really liked the character development in this book. At first, Will seemed like a sarcastic rebel, but as I got to know him, he became more of a complex character with a soft interior. Stella learns to live a little and not always be consumed by her treatments. Both these characters learn from each other and become better people after their experiences with one another.

Five Feet Apart is soon to be a major motion picture starring Cole Sprouse and Haley Lu Richardson, and directed by Justin Baldoni. I can't wait to see the movie when it comes out March 2019.