

By Spencer Wieben

Fight Club by Chuck Palahniuk

Fight Club is a fictional novel that takes place in the United States in what appears to be present day. The novel revolves around the narrator, a nameless insomniac. Early on the narrator finds himself attending support groups to make himself feel better about his current state of mind, as well they help him sleep at night. However, he keeps running into a young troubled female named Marla. Like him, she is attending numerous different support groups a week, and she is interfering with his routine. Around the same time our narrator also meets up with another man, Tyler Durden. Tyler is a projectionist who puts pornographic slides into regular movies for split seconds. Soon after meeting the two of them form a group known as Fight Club. The club consists of young confused males who want to release their anger by bare knuckle fighting. This brings up the first major theme in the novel, which is males of the generation not having a real cause to fight for. So-called masculinity in the current generation really doesn't exist. These fights really mean something for these young men. For the main character being in these fights is like a medicine, it helps him sleep again.

Soon Fight Clubs start popping up all over the country. However, these Fight Clubs are no longer just about beating the pulp out of each other. They begin to form somewhat of a terrorist group known to them as Project Mayhem. The new club has its members going around their respective cities blowing things up and causing random mischief. This shows another theme of materialism. Project Mayhem in the end tries to bring society back to a more simple time where you valued life and not the materials you own. The idea of consumerism is a huge theme in the book and in a way it centers around it. The actions of Project Mayhem and their leader Tyler are what eventually lead to a huge and virtually unseen twist at the end of the novel. It leaves the reader re-reading the incidents over and over again.

Overall I found this to be a very good and well-developed book. The mindset of the characters was so detailed, that the reader really felt like they knew the characters personally. The author describes the narrator's thoughts so precisely and clearly that it makes it a very interesting read. It has some controversial ideas, however, nothing that a teenager couldn't handle. The major theme that questions masculinity is virtually untouched subject in a lot of literature and it brings up perspectives many will not have considered. There are some sexual references but with the kind of material we are exposed to on a daily basis it is very minor. This book was very hard to put down as it kept the reader always guessing and wanting more. The conclusion is what really makes the book so fantastic. Fight Club should definitely be allowed in junior high schools as well as high schools libraries. The reading isn't at too high of a level, and I believe students of many ages would enjoy this adventure. Fight Club could probably even be incorporated into an English curriculum. A very in depth character study could be done on the narrator and Tyler Durden. Overall I would highly recommend Fight Club to anyone wanting a new and different type of novel.