

The Fault In Our Three Stars

by Lynn Beighley

So there are these teenagers and they're all dying of cancer, or at least were dying of cancer, or might be dying of cancer, and then a couple of them fall in love and lose their virginity to each other, and these teens, they're all smart and charming and only a little snarky, only when the targets of their snark deserve it, and then one of them dies and it's not the one you expected to die and you're weeping because it was well-written and the characters were all uniformly loveable, because really, how can you dislike clever, kind, dying young people who want only to handle it and have a little life and be kind to their well-meaning parents who can't understand why they have to die, and do nice things for their soon to be fallen peers, and you reach the end, and you, with tears swiftly streaming from your eyes, you say, "bullshit," because it's beautiful and tragic and it's emotional blackmail and even Romeo and Juliet was less manipulative, and when you think about it, that was one conniving play, you realize, I mean really, young life cut short because all it wanted was to live, and now you're angry at both this author as well as Shakespeare, and that's terrible, because, well, Shakespeare, right, and then you wonder what emotional blackmail really means, and you think maybe Nicholas Sparks isn't that awful a writer after all, but then you wipe your eyes, get something to eat, maybe with bacon in it, and realize that yeah, you're only going to give it three stars.

