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Red Queen



Synopsis

Victoria Aveyard's internationally beloved #1 New York Times bestseller is now in paperback! Mare Barrow's world is divided by blood—those with common, Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Mare is a Red, scraping by as a thief in a poor, rural village, until a twist of fate throws her in front of the Silver court. There, before the king, princes, and all the nobles, she discovers she has an ability of her own. To cover up this impossibility, the king forces her to play the role of a lost Silver princess, and betroths her to one of his own sons. As Mare is drawn further into the Silver world, she risks everything and uses her new position to help the Scarlet Guard—a growing Red rebellion—even as her heart tugs her in an impossible direction. One wrong move can lead to her death, but in the dangerous game she plays the only certainty is betrayal. This sweeping story of palace intrigue, class hierarchy, and deception will keep readers hurtling along, desperate to find out Mare's fate. Her honesty and determination, quick wit, and no-holds-barred attitude will surely make readers fall in love with her.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mare Barrow is a Red. In Norta, this means that she's a normal human being, poor, and needs to scrape a living for herself and her family through thieving and general servitude. Reds are seen as the lowest of the low by Silvers, who have magical abilities that are highly esteemed in the country. Mare and her family and friends despise Silvers, who treat Reds like dirt and have Reds fight an unending war with a neighboring country for them. When circumstances for Mare send her right into

the path of royals, she ends up discovering that she has magic abilities - and thus, is made a noble who is set to marry the second of two princes so that the reigning royal family can keep an eye on her. Meanwhile, an uprising is gathering through the country, and Mare has to figure out who she is and where her loyalties lie. This one was hard to review because on one hand, I found the story very compelling, but on the other hand, there were lots of little things that I just couldn't get into. I've broken them down below.

Things That Frustrated Me:

The heroine: my biggest frustration with this book was the lack of character development in Mare. I didn't feel like I went on a journey with her as a character at all - she was kind of sassy and funny, and she clearly had some cool abilities...but that was it for me. I didn't feel like I knew her at all by the end of the book because she was the same person the entire way through. That was hard for me to connect with.

The romance: There were (count 'em) THREE love interests for Mare in this book. None of them really go anywhere big, but it just felt like every friggin guy in the book was into her. The hardest part about that is that there is an obvious choice - I genuinely thought that one guy was better than the others, and that just makes for a love triangle (or square?) that's unsatisfying.

The writing and the "I've Read This Before" feeling: There would be moments that I was really into the writing and then I would get pulled out of it by just a few too many cliches. Here are some examples: "I'm standing on the balcony a full ten seconds before I realize it's raining, washing me clean of my boiling anger." To me, this is just obvious writing - because there could have been a better description of the character's anger or the rain or just the fact that she was being cooled down by the rain...but it just ends up lost in cliché. "This is the world I'm trying to bring down, the world trying to kill me and everything I care about...I've never felt smaller than I do now, with the great bridge looming above us. It looks ready to swallow me whole." Again, the writing feels very obvious. I feel like I've read this line before - "bring down" "never felt smaller" "swallow me whole" - it feels a little tired.

The tropes: The problem with obvious writing is that if you have a story that relies on a lot of tropes (poor girl who's special and different; prince who is not thrilled about being prince and just wants to be normal, world that is separated into classes that needs to be overthrown), you can guess what's going to happen, and your mind tends to wander. And because of that, every scene starts to feel predictable, and you notice every trope for what it is, instead of the trope extending beyond just a trope. It's frustrating because I couldn't help but notice and compare this book to a ton of other YA books (I thought of *The Selection*, *Divergent*, *Hunger Games*, even *Harry Potter* while I was reading), and the book never went beyond or did anything better or different with those tropes.

Things I Liked:

The world-building and concept: I liked how the Silvers and Reds were divided and how there was hierarchy even among the Silvers - there were higher and lower houses and they each had

distinctive features. I enjoyed getting into this world through Mare's eyes - as a Red, she really doesn't know much about it, and it's both interesting to see it develop and to see her thoughts on it in her unique position. The princes: There are two, and they are both interested in Mare romantically. To me it felt very obvious who the superior prince was, but I liked that they were well-rounded and different enough that they kept me guessing on their true natures. I felt like I knew more about them than I did about Mare by the end of the book. Julian, the elderly wizard Silver who has Mare's best interests at heart and is awesome: This is a classic fantasy trope, but damned if I didn't really like Aveyard's version of the mentor. I especially liked the detail of how his skin was like the parchment that he read so much of, his abilities, and his secretiveness about his own life. The villains and layered secondary characters: I'm not going to tell you who the villains are because that's complicated, but I liked how many of them there were, and how much they all influenced and encroached on Mare's life. I also liked how a lot of the characters in the novel weren't all black-and-white - some of the people who were supposed to be "good" weren't exactly the nicest or best people, and EVERYONE in the novel lied in order to get what they wanted. It's a dark view of life, but it worked. The fast pace and the action: This is probably the first fantasy book I've read in a long time that I haven't put down because it had too much exposition or description and not enough action. The action scenes are pretty explosive, and the pacing moves quickly to bring the action to head. The Final Word: Red Queen is a very enjoyable, if derivative, fantasy read. Brimming with action and classic speculative fiction tropes, this is a good book for younger teens new to fantasy or looking for a book with magic to devour like popcorn. I wanted more depth in writing and character, but there's no doubt that I had fun while reading.

I've read this book last year, as soon as it popped up on Edelweiss, and honestly, it was one of the best books I've read in 2014. As I sit here today, trying to wrap my mind around its sheer awesomeness and put together a somewhat coherent review, I get ridiculously excited all over again, just thinking about the plot, the complex word-building, the insane plot twists and just how visually stunning and breathtakingly magnificent the whole story was. I really, truly loved Red Queen!! I've been putting off writing my review. I didn't trust myself not to go on an embarrassingly childish rave fest. And here I am, nearly half a year later, still under Red Queen's magical spell. What can you do? Some books are just THAT awesome. The one at the center of it all is Mare Barrow, an unimportant little Red. Mare lives in a world divided by blood, in which the Silver-blooded Royals hold all the power (both literally and metaphorically speaking) and the Red-bloods are nothing more than poor, lowly servants. The Silvers have supernatural powers, the Reds do not. At

least that's how it's always been and what the Silvers want everyone to believe. When Mare discovers she has an ability of her own, her entire world gets flipped upside down. She finds herself thrown in the middle of intrigue-fueled Silver court, forced to play the role of a long lost Silver princess and betrothed to Silver King's son. With the Scarlet Guard becoming more and more aggressive, the full-on rebellion is fast approaching. The fate of the entire kingdom depends on the choices she'll make. And one bad decision can lead to a massacre... Red Queen is a fast paced, breathless kind of read. A true edge-of-your-seat story. Intrigue filled, action packed, twisty and highly dramatic, it's a real page turner. Impossible to put down. I really loved the world Aveyard created. It was dark and dangerous, but also oddly beautiful and enchanting. It's a world where old clashes with new. We have a Royal court with richly decorated interiors, stunning gowns, sumptuous bedrooms and deadly dungeons, but we also have modern technology, electricity and gadgets. It's a curious and completely fascinating mix that makes for a fantastic background to the intensely gripping plot line. And the plot really is phenomenal. The conflict, the intrigue, the secrets and betrayals and all the heart pounding emotions - Red Queen has it all. The writing is top shelf quality, very atmospheric and engaging. There are many twists, many painful decisions to make, some downright heartbreaking plot developments.. It's all well thought out and devised with surgical precision. The characters might seem stereotypical and one-dimensional to begin with, but as the story progresses and as we get deeper into the sticky swamp of politics, social injustice, power-struggle and multi-layered deception, we begin to see just how complex they really are. People lie and manipulate, back-stab and use others to achieve their goals. It's hard to tell who to trust, who tells the truth and who plays a dangerous game. Almost everyone wears a mask and before you know it, it's too late. I would like to tell you that absolutely everyone will love Red Queen as much as I did, but that is obviously not possible. I've read some reviews, and the opinions differ quite drastically. It's always like that with well-marketed, hyped-up books, though, so you just have to give it a try and see for yourself if this is a book for you. If you like dramatic, high-intensity, twisty reads, cliffhangers and jaw-dropping surprises, chances are you will love it. If, however, you are bothered by love triangles (even though, in my opinion, Red Queen doesn't have a typical love triangle at all), you might be iffy about it. It doesn't help that the marketing strategy here is comparing this book to YA blockbusters such as The Hunger Games or The Selection (missed comparisons in both cases), as it gives people certain expectations and invites them to draw parallels between books that have virtually nothing in common with each other. Like I said, though, it's best to give it a try and see for yourself. I really hope you'll love it just as much as I did!

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