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Red Queen (Red Queen Series, Book 1)



Synopsis

[Young Adult Fiction (Ages 12-17)][Read by Amanda Dolan] From debut author Victoria Aveyard comes a lush, vivid fantasy series where loyalty and desire can tear you apart - and the only certainty is betrayal. Mare Barrow's world is divided by blood - those with red and those with silver. Mare and her family are lowly Reds, destined to serve the Silver elite whose supernatural abilities make them nearly gods. Mare steals what she can to help her family survive, but when her best friend is conscripted into the army, she gambles everything to win his freedom. A twist of fate leads her to the royal palace, where, in front of the king and all his nobles, she discovers a power of her own - an ability she didn't know she had. Except *—* her blood is Red. To hide this impossibility, the king forces her into 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 her new position to aid the Scarlet Guard - the leaders of a Red rebellion. Her actions put into motion a deadly and violent dance, pitting prince against prince - and Mare against her own heart.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 8 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up *—* •Seventeen-year-old Mare Barrow lives in a world where one's lot in life is determined by the color of one's blood. She was born a Red and has to make a living by pickpocketing and trying to dodge "the conscription" and being sent off to fight an ongoing war.

Mare's resigned herself to the fact that she'll always serve the Silver, a genetically gifted group of people with supernatural abilities. A chance encounter with the prince causes Mare to suddenly find herself at the royal palace as a servant, where she discovers in front of everyone that she also has a unique gift. She is Red and Silver, and could be just the spark the Reds need to rise up against the oppressive Silvers. The king and queen quickly cover up Mare's anomaly by presenting her to the rest of the Silvers as a long-lost princess and betroth her to their second-born son. Now Mare is torn between playing the part of a Silver, and helping out the Scarlet Guard rebellion. The story has touches of the usual dystopian suspects. However, it's formulaic elements are far outweighed by the breakneck pace and engaging characters. There's a bit of teen romance, but luckily the characters are self-aware enough to realize its frivolity among the story's more important plot points. A solid debut from Aveyard and a welcome addition to the plethora of speculative teen lit. --Kimberly Castle-Alberts, Hudson Library & Historical Society, OH --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Aveyard weaves a compelling new world, and Mare and the two men in her life evolve intriguingly as class tension rises. Revolution supersedes romance, setting the stage for action-packed surprises. An inventive, character-driven twist breathes new life into tired fantasy trends." --Kirkus

"A wonderful mash up of Ancient Rome and Marie Antoinette with a dash of Catherine Fisher's Incarceron and Ridley Scott's Gladiator, not to mention some of Marvel Comic's box of tricks...Exciting and original." --Sam Hawksmoor, author of the 'Repossession' trilogy "The story has touches of the usual dystopian suspects. However, it's formulaic elements are far outweighed by the breakneck pace and engaging characters. There's a bit of teen romance, but luckily the characters are self-aware enough to realize its frivolity among the story's more important plot points. A solid debut from Aveyard and a welcome addition to the plethora of speculative teen lit." --Library Journal "First-time author Aveyard has created a volatile world with a dynamic heroine, and while there are moments of romance, they refreshingly take a backseat to the action. Anticipation is already high for this debut, and with the movie rights already acquired and two sequels to come, it will likely only grow." --Booklist "Red Queen is a clever blend of 'The Hunger Games, The Selection, Graceling' and 'Divergent'." --Starburst

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 clichés. 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.

An interesting dystopian novel. The world has changed, divided into two cultures. The Silvers, descendant from gods with powers beyond anyone's imaginations. And Reds, humans, weak and powerless, slaves to the Silvers. Mare is a Red who, in a complete accident in front of thousands of Silvers, discovers that she also has powers. The royal family, in an effort to hide her Red heritage, pass her off as a member of a long lost Silver family and betroth her to the second prince. She tries, at the cost of everything, to overthrow the Silvers and free the Reds.

“Red Queen” by Victoria Aveyard is absolutely amazing!! I was definitely impressed with Aveyard's debut novel. Now I am anxious for more. Mare Barrow is the main character of this lovely story. Mare is an unimportant red or at least that is how

society looks at her. Red vs. Silver. Silver blooded people have powers or abilities were they have this extra talent they are able to do or perform. When Mare ends up randomly getting a job at the palace she accidentally finds out that she is different. She isn't just a useless Red like most Silvers think. She has her own supernatural power. Not knowing why she has this power or how, Mare ends up getting thrown into prison until the King and Queen can figure out what to do with her. The only way the Royal court can figure out how to cover up this little fiasco, is by pretending that Mare is a long-lost Silver princess. The queen then tells Mare that she will now be betrothed to her son Quince. Mare struggles with this lie she now has to live. She wants to know why she is the way that she is. I have a few thoughts. Number One. I love Mare. I thought she was a fabulous character. She is brave and loyal. She wants to keep her family safe and her friends. She doesn't like being pushed around and when she is, she finds a way to pay that person back for what they did. She joins the rebellion because she believes that is the right thing to do. Sometimes I thought Mare didn't use her head very well and I was a little disappointed, but ultimately I thought she was a great character that shows a lot of potential. I look forward to seeing what she is able to do in the next book. Number Two. This was one fast paced novel. I thought everything was zipping by. You can't just pick up this book for a couple of minutes because you will be addicted right away. It was so hard not to read this all in one sitting. Once "Red Queen" draws you in, you'll need to cancel all of your plans for the day. Number Three. This world is so amazing. I want to learn so much more. The fact that the population is divided by the color of ones blood. Silvers have these magic abilities but now a Red is popping up with an ability. Is this a one time thing or are there others? I am looking forward to book two. I think this will be a great story to explore. I will anxiously be waiting to find out what will happen next! Aveyard did a great job with "Red Queen". I thought the writing was great. I feel like Aveyard has a very unique voice so I will be looking for her in the future. Amanda Dolan was a great narrator. I thought she was a lot of fun and very entertaining. She was able to keep my attention through her entire reading. I am looking forward to more books being narrated by Amanda Dolan. Definitely check out the "Red Queen". I don't think anyone could be disappointed.[...]

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