



2010

The Unidentified

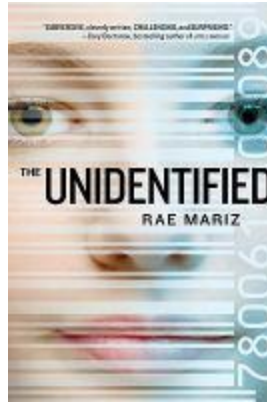
Debbie Barr

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Mariz, Rae. *The Unidentified*. Balzer and Bray, 2010. ISBN 9780061802089. \$16.99. 304 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Science fiction;

Subject: Identity--Juvenile fiction; Schools--Juvenile fiction; Corporate sponsorship--Juvenile fiction.; Books--Reviews;

In the not-too-distant future Katey (or Kid) is playing the Game. Once the government could no longer pay for public school, corporate sponsors took over and established a new kind of school, one where trending, popularity, and style aren't just part of the social sphere--they're everything. When Kid witnesses what looks to be an act of rebellion against the system, she finds herself dragged into a conspiracy started by the Unidentified and getting "branded" by some major sponsors, sending her to the top of the popularity list. As things escalate, Kid and her friends are threatened by rebels and sponsors alike as they try to figure out what's going on. In the end they discover that the Unidentified stunt was just another gimmick by a corporation. But what started as a PR move turned into an awakening for Game players, one that might someday take down the Game for good.

Rae Mariz has written a surprising debut, perfect for the new generation of always-connected teens. Conversations between characters take place not only in real life, but on the "network" (much like Twitter), as well as through texting. The dialogue felt fresh and real, perfect for a future where social media and gaming seem to have replaced normal education. Though not everything is perfectly resolved at the end, there is hope for the characters' futures, making it a satisfying read. *The Unidentified* would be a great fit for fans of other technology-heavy dystopias, such as Scott Westerfield's *Uglies*.

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