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Red Queen

Abigail Packard

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Book Review

Title: Red Queen
Author: Victoria Aveyard
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Publisher: HarperTeen
Publication Year: 2016
ISBN: 9780062310644
Number of Pages: 416
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Dependable



Review

Mare is a Red in a world where silver-colored blood marks citizens of Norta with superhuman abilities (controlling fire, water, minds, etc.) and red blood marks the ungifted, lower class. Mare tries to rob a young man named Cal after learning that her best friend is going to be conscripted unless they find money to pay off a group of Red rebels called the Scarlet Guard. Cal catches her, but takes pity on Mare and secures a job for her in the palace. While she is serving the Silver nobility, she falls into an arena's electric shield. Instead of being electrocuted, she demonstrates her own impossible ability: she can control electricity. The royal family—including, surprisingly, Cal—try to pass her off as a Silver, raised by Reds and now returned to Silver society. She is betrothed to Maven, Cal's younger brother, and begins her training. She discovers that Maven is working with the rebels and that he wants to use Cal to overthrow the government and put the Scarlet Guard in control. When Cal chooses his father over Mare, Maven's mother forces Cal to behead his own father using mind control. Maven then betrays both Cal and Mare and sentences them to die for their crimes. But Mare shows her ability and bleeds red for all the world to see and they escape.

Victoria Aveyard's writing is exciting if somewhat cliché. The main plot line of the story is thrilling, with many unexpected twists and turns. However, there are some serious flaws in the character development. We never really get to meet Mare on a deeper level. She's a stereotypical female protagonist with a fiery personality, unexpected special abilities, and more love interests than she can keep track of. Her motives are definitely lacking; her main motive being her friendship with Kilorn which we never really get a good look at. Her relationships with Maven and Cal are superficial and stilted and don't explain her emotions and actions. Cal and Maven themselves are also underdeveloped. The setting itself was confusing with hints of technology and unexplained history that point to this being a dystopian novel, but no clear indication is given of where or when the story is taking place. Overall, a fast-paced read that was interesting but unsatisfying due to the many holes that are left unfilled.

*Contains mild language and mild violence.