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Red Queen

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Mare Barrow is a Red—part of the common, ungifted half of society that is ruled over by the Silver elite. The Silvers have abilities (manipulating elements, controlling minds, superhuman strength) and use them to enforce their rule. For the first seventeen years of her life, Mare thought she was no one special—doomed to conscription in the Silver’s bloody war on her eighteenth birthday. Until in a twist of events she unlocks a power—a power she shouldn’t even possess as a Red—that turns her life to anything but ordinary. In order to take advantage of her new found gift, the king orders Mare’s betrothal to his second son and she finds herself trapped in the Silvers’ deadly world. But with her heart being pulled by both princes and the success of the rebellion on her shoulders, Mare comes to understand that anyone can betray anyone.

*Red Queen* has a fascinating world foundation whose potential was unrealized due to poor character development. It’s unfortunate that with a society that so clearly speaks about division between the Silvers and Red, symbolically representing modern race and gender barriers, the creativity of Aveyard’s world is drowned out by her flat characters. Particularly her main character Mare who both stands as the rebellious heroine and the powerless damsel. Often with dystopian novels, the main character does have an air of naivety about the real world because they are sheltered from the truth. However, Mare has grown up in the slums and is well aware about the injustice of the war the corruption of the class system. Her helpless reaction to each situation is frustrating and distracts from the potential of the novel. For its target audience, I think most young adult readers will be satisfied with other YA elements such as the love triangle, the usurp of the rebellion, and the supernatural abilities of characters. However, this particular reader hopes to see an improvement in Aveyard’s following works.