

Scythe (Arc of a Scythe)

Author: Neal Shusterman

Reviewed by: Owen Broadwater, 12 years old

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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This book is set in a dystopian future in which humanity is run by a super-computer called the Thunderhead. Consequently, everything is executed with extreme efficiency, there is no government or crime, and no one dies. In place of natural death, the Scythedom was formulated to curb population growth by way of killing off people at random. It was determined that the taking of lives was an act that should be left to humans, so the Thunderhead was not allowed to interfere with Scythes in any way. The Scythedom is much like the current world, with everyone maneuvering for power, despite the fact that such parts of life are nonexistent in the rest of the world. The protagonists are Citra and Rowan, two teenagers that are chosen to be a Scythe's apprentices even though they did not desire a Scythe's life in any way.

In *Scythe*, the author writes it so that the reader feels remarkably connected to the plot twists and inner turmoil of the main characters. The concept of Scythes causes the reader to reflect upon our world, and what they would do in the characters' positions, sometimes without conscious thought because of how involved the reader is in the story. What I love about the author is that he found a way to involve the inner thoughts of secondary characters, as well as the main ones. This serves to involve the reader even deeper inside the story like they are a character in a movie. This book is good for readers who want a stimulating plot concept. The idea of a perfect world with socially accepted killers makes the reader contemplate the necessity of death. The complexities of the Scythedom are guaranteed to make the reader examine their values and morals. Furthermore, the troubles of the general population are fascinating, as it brings to light how people need to live life to its fullest and discover a venture that works for them personally. The concept of the narrative, a dystopian world with Scythes, is what really sets the book apart and compels you to keep reading.

The primary letdown was that the author did not execute the character development of Citra and Rowan well at all. The additional layers that might be added to the story if the author had created more fluctuating characteristics of characters are missing. Overall, this dystopian book is very influential, and the themes examined encourage mindful thinking. It would make an excellent book for readers who enjoy such literature, though the advanced writing and violent plot points make this book inappropriate for those under 12.

Recommended Titles:

- Suicide Game by Haidji
- The Testing by Joelle Charbonneau
- The Leaving by Tara Altebrando
- Age of Order by Julian North
- The Maze Runner by James Dashner