

Red Queen

Victoria Aveyard

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Mare Barrow's whole life has been dictated by the colour of her blood. All Reds are destined for lives of poverty, servitude or conscription into the front lines of a deadly war. With shining palaces and luxurious lifestyles, the Silvers might as well be a world away. But when her family's future is destroyed in a desperate grab for freedom, Mare finds herself working in the Royal Household, surrounded by the very people she has come to despise.

Red Queen was a thrilling, fast paced and action packed novel. The Silver's abilities were interesting and complex, adding a unique flavour to the story. In a dystopian setting, the main theme of the story is the fight for expression, liberation and equality. But instead of the standard rebellion story, Aveyard weaves in a unique spin by displaying a second perspective, from the position of power. The Silver palace is heavy with political secrets, games and deceit, that add intrigue and mystery to the plot. Although the writing is not lyrical or poetic, the concise descriptions and simplistic style is both refreshing and stunning in its raw clarity. In addition, the characters' deep flaws bring them to life on the pages, from Mare's pure will to survive and Cal's tendency to take the easier way out.

While the plot and characters had so much potential, the book did fall short in many areas. The story falls back into the familiar YA tropes present in so many other novels. Mare has a unique, strange ability that makes her "special", and a snarky, but moderately irritating personality to go with it. When she stumbles upon two possible love interests she is blinded by her emotions for them, constantly obsessing over the right choice. Not only are these features common in many other stories, they felt like exact copies of other books and plots. There was limited to no worldbuilding, so it was difficult to understand the context of the story. In the end, the story had an interesting premise, but didn't contain enough originality or explanations to expand on these ideas. Red Queen would be best for ages 13+ as it contains some mature content.

Recommended Titles:

The Selection (The Selection #1) by Kiera Cass

Throne of Glass (Throne of Glass #1) by Sarah J. Maas

The Princess Trials (The Princess Trials #1) by Cordelia Castel

Mistborn by Brandon Sanderson

Rebel by Marie Lu