

Red Queen Study Guide

Red Queen by Victoria Aveyard

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Plot Summary

“Red Queen” is a young adult fantasy novel by Victoria Aveyard which follows how seventeen-year-old Mare Barrow’s discovery that she, a peasant-born Red, has the special powers of the elite ruling Silvers and changes the course of her country’s future. When the novel begins, Mare is a lowly peasant pickpocket of the Red-blooded class in the country of Norta. The Reds carry out most of the dirty work of the world, ruled over by elite Silver-blooded humans with special powers and ability. Mare hates the Silvers.

Mare and her family, like most Reds, barely manage to scrape by. Her three brothers are off at war. Her sister Gisa is apprenticed to a seamstress and is the primary source of income for the family. Mare assists with money earned from pickpocketed items. Her father is a heavily-disabled war veteran. Mare’s best friend, Kilorn, is nearing the age of conscription when he must go off to fight. This breaks Mare’s heart. Mare, herself having been arrested numerous times for petty crimes, knows her fate will soon be the frontlines as well. She decides to meet with Will Whistle, a member of the underground black market to see if he can offer help.

Will introduces Mare to Farley, the leader of an underground group called the Scarlet Guard. Farley says she will help Mare and Kilorn escape conscription, ferreting them away to safety, for the price of two thousand Crowns. Mare has limited time to obtain the money. She accompanies her sister Gisa to work in Summerton, where the Silver royals and elites hold their summer court, intending to land a big score. However, a terrorist attack back in the country’s capital puts Summerton on edge, and Reds are rounded up across Summerton. Gisa is caught attempting to pickpocket and has her hand crushed in punishment. She can no longer work as a result. Unable to face her family, Mare does not go home right away.

She ends up near a pub, where a man of about nineteen or twenty named Cal—evidently wealthy by his clothing and manners—speaks to her. Cal feels badly for Mare and promises to do what he can to help her. Soon after, Mare is stunned to learn that she has been taken on to work in the Royal Household. She is also amazed to see the Royal Family in the palace. There is King Tiberias the Sixth; his second wife, Queen Elara; their youngest son Prince Maven; and the eldest son and heir to the throne from Tiberias’s first marriage, Cal (who will become Tiberias the Seventh upon assuming the throne).

The Queen’s trial gets underway at the palace, where girls from the most elite Silver families, from the age of fourteen and up, compete in a demonstration of their power to win the hands of the princes in marriage. The most powerful girl is Evangeline, from the House of Samos. She has the tremendous power of controlling, reshaping, and manipulating metals. She uses this power to shake the viewing boxes of the attending Silver families and the Red servants, causing Mare to fall. As Mare falls, she emits a massive shield of lightning which protects her. She is instantly seized and brought before the Royals.



The king and queen do not know what to make of a Red with Silver powers. A cover story is decided upon, where Mare will portray the orphan daughter of a slain war hero, raised in poverty by a Red. In exchange, Mare's brothers will be brought home from the war, and her family will be taken care of. Mare reluctantly agrees. It is then announced that Mare will marry Prince Maven, while Evangeline will marry Prince Cal.

Mare is in disbelief. She has hated the Silvers for so long that she cannot imagine living among them. She is put into a strict schedule of learning how to be a lady, and how to wield her power. She begins meeting with Julian, brother of the dead queen, who recognizes Mare is something different, though he doesn't know exactly what. He tells her that not all Silvers are bad, and warns her that anyone can betray anyone. As time passes, Mare develops romantic feelings for Cal and for Maven, though she tries to keep hating them. She ultimately comes to join the Scarlet Guard in order to make things right for the Reds and to end the ongoing war. Surprisingly, Maven joins her, telling her that it is time for change.

Mare and Maven agree to become part of a coup to seize the king and force reforms. Mare attempts to use Cal's feelings for her to get him to turn against his father, but he will not do so. He orders troops after the Scarlet Guard instead. Cal's troops capture Mare and Maven, and bring them before the king and queen. The king says that both must be killed, but the queen will not allow this. She uses her powers to force Cal to kill his own father. Maven reveals himself as a traitor, having used Mare to help him destroy the Scarlet Guard and become king on his own. Mare and Cal are then sentenced to death, but manage to escape when they are aided by the Scarlet Guard. As the novel ends, Mare vows to kill Maven.



Chapters 1 – 6

Summary

Chapter 1 – Seventeen-year-old Mare Molly Barrow hates how crowded First Fridays are in the summer in her town of Stilts, Norta, but takes advantage of them to pickpocket. The buildings of Stilts are all built on stilts, for in the spring some of the ground is underwater. Mare's three brothers, Shade, Bree, and Tramy, have gone off to war against the Lakelanders. Mare also has a younger sister, fourteen year-old Gisa. Mare has not heard from Bree and Tramy in over a year. Mare meets up with her friend, orphan Kilorn Warren. Kilorn's father was killed in battle, and his mother abandoned him. Mare's own father was seriously injured in the wars, but survived, losing a lung and a leg. Mare and Kilorn head to the arena.

There are two classes of people: Silvers, who are the elite, and Reds, who are everyone else. The Silvers enjoy things no one else does, such as electricity and ice in the summer. Silvers have their own special seats in boxes in the arena. A Feat is unfolding in the arena, in which Silvers fight one another more a demonstration of their magical abilities and special powers. Feats were originally meant to execute Reds, but evolved into Silver matches in order to demonstrate power and instill fear to keep the Reds in check. The two fighting include Cantos Carros from Harbor Bay, and one of the members of the local governing Welle Family, Samson Welle. Kilorn loves the Feats; Mare hates them. Cantos gains the upper hand, but Samson—whose power is whispering, a form of mind control—wins the day. It is a rare and dangerous power.

Chapter 2 – Mare's family lives in a small house on stilts. They scrape by. Upriver is Summerton, where the King holds summer court at his summer palace. Gisa works in Summerton as a seamstress apprentice. She will one day earn a good living selling goods to the Silvers. Mare's house flies a yellowed flag with three red stars, one for each brother off fighting. Mare's mother and father do not like her pickpocketing ways, though they know she is doing it for the right reasons. A letter arrives from Shade, currently away from the Choke, the central battleground between Norta and the Lakelands. Shade and Tramy are being assigned to a new warship on the lake. That night, Kilorn tells Mare his master has died, and he can't find work. As a result, he is being sent to war.

Chapter 3 – The war has been going on for almost a hundred years, launched for control of resources including food and water. Lakelander Silvers lead Lakelander Reds against Norta Silvers and Norta Reds. Mare, who is also fated to being drafted to fight, suggests running away with Kilorn. Kilorn does not believe it is possible. Mare believes it is possible by way of the black-market trade network. Mare goes to see Will Whistle, an elderly member of the black market who brings Mare to meet with Farley of the Scarlet Guard. Mare explains she wants passage for herself and Kilorn to safety. Farley agrees to do so in two days' time provided payment of one-thousand Crowns each is



received by then. It is a steep sum, enough to feed an entire family for more than a year. Mare has no choice but to agree.

When Kilorn learns of the deal, he believes all hope is lost. That night, Mare wakes Gisa up from sleep, asking her for help to keep Kilorn from being conscripted. Gisa, who has a crush on Kilorn, agrees. She brings Mare with her to Summerton in disguise. There, she is amazed by the wealth and opulence of the Silvers. She is also sickened by it since the Reds have so little. She thanks Gisa for dealing with the Silvers to help support the family. Gisa then heads to Sella's shop to work, while Mare goes to pickpocket.

Chapter 4 – Mare begins to navigate the city, keeping her eyes out for black-uniformed Security, surveillance cameras, and any weaknesses she can exploit. On a television screen, Mare watches a news report which informs the audience of a terrorist attack in the capital on government buildings on West Archeon, including the Royal Court, Treasury Hall, and Whitefire Palace. Mare feels happy to see the Silvers are not invincible, but is also mad that so many Reds are fighting their war. The terrorist organization responsible for the attack is the Scarlet Guard. It is then that Farley herself interrupts the broadcast with a message demanding Reds be recognized as human, that a Red dawn is rising, and that a new war is coming against the Silvers from within.

The city erupts in chaos as Reds are rounded up, and Mare rushes to Sella's. She meets up with Gisa, and they rush for the gates. As they run, Gisa pickpockets a cloner Silver, who multiplies himself to stop Gisa. Security guards appear and crush Gisa's sewing hand in keeping with the law.

Chapter 5 – Mare cannot face her family that night. She runs for hours, coming to pickpocket outside an inn as drunk men leave. One man, about twenty years old, well-dressed and not drunk, catches Mare. His name is Cal. Instead of turning her in, he gives her a silver Crown. She introduces herself, and the man apologizes for the way that Mare must live. Mare tells him not to feel sorry for her. He promises to help her get a good job. At home, Mare finds her father outside, attempting to fix the house's electricity. Mare manages to reconnect it. Mare's dad tells her not to tell her mother about his going outside after dark, otherwise her mother will think he is on the road to recovery when recovery for him is impossible. Inside, Mare rereads her brother's letter to discover he used the phrase "red as the dawn," meaning he is a member of the Scarlet Guard.

Chapter 6 – Security and a royal Red servant named Ann Walsh arrive at the Barrow household at dawn to bring Mare to Summerton. Ann is a native of the Stilts, knowing Tramy and Bree from years before. Mare has been summoned to fill a serving post in the Hall of the Sun for the king himself. Mare is stunned. In Summerton it is the day of the Queenstrial, where the girls of the High House families, the Silver elites, assemble in the Spiral Garden for dinner to be presented for selection as the next queen. She watches as the families of the girls assemble. Among them is Samson Merandus.



At last, Tiberias Calore the Sixth, King of Nortia, Flame of the North, makes his grand entrance. The Queen enters next, wearing the same colors of Samson's house. With them are members of the Sentinel, an elite body guard unit trained since childhood to protect and defend the king. The king presents the two princes. There is Prince Maven of the House of Calore and Mandus, son of the current queen. The second prince is Tiberias the Seventh, heir apparent to the throne and son of the late queen. Mare is stunned. Cal is Tiberias the Seventh, the man who saved Mare and got her the job.

Analysis

"Red Queen" is a young adult fantasy novel by Victoria Aveyard which follows seventeen-year-old Mare Barrow's discovery that she, a peasant-born Red, has the special powers of the elite ruling Silvers changes the course of her country's future. When the novel begins, Mare is a pickpocket, set in her ways, consigned to her fate, and very bitter against the world, especially against the Silvers. The Silvers, she believes, are all evil, and are the reason why she and millions of others live in poverty. Although she has experienced much of the real world, Mare hasn't experienced everything, and what she has experienced has been determined wholly by her life in the Stilts. The potential for growth is clearly there, and through it, the theme of Coming of Age becomes essential to the story.

Mare is not the only Red to hate the Silvers. Many Reds across the kingdom hate the Silvers. In each country, this is also the case. With such discontent being so widespread, the environment is ripe for revolution. There are already extensive underground networks and organizations, such as the black market, which undermine Silver authority and law. Mare's encounter with Farley of the Scarlet Guard is not incidental but instead central to the plot of the novel as the reader will come to learn. That a group like the Scarlet Guard could exist at all is proof that the potential for revolution is real. Here, the theme of Revolution is subtle but will only grow stronger as the novel progresses.

Love also becomes a prominent theme early in the novel. Love will come to take two primary forms: romantic and familial. Both will be essential to events as they unfold. It is clear to the reader from the start that Mare has tremendous love for her family, including her three brothers away at war, and her mother, father, and sister at home. Mare's status as a small-time crook and pickpocket owes to her desire to help provide for her family, which scrapes by. She risks her freedom and her life in order to make sure her family has enough to get along. It is a testament of her love for them. Likewise, Gisa's determination to see herself through an apprenticeship will make her one of the few Reds who can earn a good living and which will help out her entire family in the process.

Mare also deeply worries about how her family will get along without her when she herself is sent to the front. This becomes an even greater concern when Gisa's hand is crushed while trying out of familial love to help her sister pickpocket a Silver. As a result, a significant portion of the family's income is cut off since Gisa is no longer able to work. This devastating turn of events is worsened by news from Kilorn, Mare's best friend,



that he himself is going to be sent to the front since his employer has died. It is through Kilorn, and threats of the front, that the theme of Romantic Love first appears.

While Mare and Kilorn are best friends, it is clear that Kilorn seems to have feelings for Mare that are stronger than friendship. This will be borne out in subtle ways by the end of the novel. Mare, however, does not seem to have any romantic inclinations towards Kilorn, unless she hasn't realized them, yet. Her desire to make it possible for her and Kilorn to run away together can be seen not merely as an attempt to get out from under the control of the Silvers, but as unrecognized feelings for one another. Whether anything more will come of this remains to be seen.

In her despair over Gisa's hand being crushed, the increasing financial instability of her family, and her failure at saving Kilorn, Mare cannot bear to return home. She ends up near an inn, where she meets a young man named Cal. Cal is dressed well, but sympathizes deeply with Mare's situation and the situation of Reds in general. He promises to help her, and to Mare's surprise, she later learns that he is the heir to the throne of Nortra. Cal's genuine kindness has endeared Mare to him. It is clear the two have a connection of some kind, because Mare's surprise at seeing Cal is not only shock at his position, but is brought about again by the kindness he has shown her as a Silver.

Mare reminds herself that Cal is a Silver, after all, someone she is supposed to hate. Yet the simple encounter between Mare and Cal is enough to shake the foundation she has so carefully constructed. The prospect for growth through coming of age can be glimpsed here, but so too can the theme of War. Mare reminds herself that, while most Silvers do not see action on the front, and while most of those Silvers who do see action on the front are kept in relative safety, it is the Reds who are doing the fighting and dying. War, the front, and forcible conscription become a background theme to Mare's unfolding story but will come to be a dominant theme by the end of the novel.

Discussion Question 1

What are Mare's thoughts and feelings toward the Silvers when the novel begins? Why does Mare think and feel this way about the Silvers? Do you believe her attitude toward them is justified? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Gisa attempt to pickpocket a Silver? What happens as a result? How does Mare react to this? Why? Do you believe she is justified in her reaction? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 3

Why do you believe that Mare is so stunned to discover that Cal is Prince Tiberias Calore the Seventh, heir to the throne of Norta?

Vocabulary

obliterated, solemn, inevitable, subsequent, iridescent, conscription, preening, harried, prerogative



Chapters 7 – 12

Summary

Chapter 7 – Mare is still in disbelief that Cal is Prince Tiberias the Seventh. Queenstrial is proclaimed, and Lord Provos is summoned by the king to transform the Gardens for the Queenstrials with waterfalls and pools. Each of the Silver girls begins to appear, some as young as fourteen. The girls demonstrate their special powers and abilities to be matched with the princes to produce even more powerful offspring. These abilities are very diverse and immensely powerful, stunning Mare. Rorh, from the House of Rhambos, who can shatter stone. Heron, from the House of Welle, can grow trees and set them on fire. Evangeline of the House of Samos is the crowd favorite. She controls metal, using it like ammunition from a gun. She then begins to shift the boxes in which the Silvers watch, causing panic and causing Mare to fall.

As she falls, electricity surges around her, creating a shield to protect her from injury in her fall. Enraged, Evangeline sends metal shards at Mare, who stops them when she puts up her hands, from which lightning shoots out. The king orders the Sentinels to seize Mare, but it is Cal who manages to capture her.

Chapter 8 – Mare has nightmares about her family and The Choke, and wakes up in an iron cage facing Queen Elara. She causes Mare pain simply through touch. She can also see Mare's dreams. Elara says that Mare's existence is an impossibility, and that she has no idea what Mare is exactly because Mare is a Red. The only thing keeping Mare alive is that her display of power was witnessed by hundreds of elite Silvers. Lucas Samos, a guard, is then assigned with 12 other guards to bring Mare before the royal family. The king contends that Mare is both Red and Silver, a dangerous combination with unimaginable consequences.

The King decides that Mare will have to hide in plain sight under a fabricated story. Mare will become the orphaned daughter of dead war hero Ethan Titanos of the Iron Legion, the princess of a lost High House raised by a Red soldier. She will marry Prince Maven. Maven is stunned. Cal explains the marriage will pacify unhappy Reds, who can look up to a Silver raised by Reds but seated with the Silvers, rather than to Red terrorists. Elara explains that Mare will be instructed in all required of a princess to make Mare suitable, and any false steps will be paid for dearly. Mare asks that her family be treated well, her brothers brought home, and Kilorn barred from conscription. The king readily agrees.

Chapter 9 – Mare becomes Lady Mareena Titanos, daughter of Lady Nora Noll Titanos and Lord Ethan Titanos of the Lost High House of Titanos. She is made to look the part, but will not allow her earrings—traditional symbolic gifts of brothers off to war—to be taken from her. Cal comes to see Mare and apologizes for all that is happening to her. Mare, obviously feeling angry, tells Cal he must take care of her family for as long as he can. He promises to do so. Mare asks Cal if he is sorry for stopping her escape, but he



says by preventing her escape he saved her and her family from a far worse fate. Cal tells her she can—and must—do what she is about to do. Lucas is made Mare's principal bodyguard and guides her through the palace. Mare recounts in her mind the story of her parents, Nora of the House of Nolle who could wield lightning, and Ethan of the House of Titanos, who could explode things by touch.

Chapter 10 – Mare begins to realize that there are many more divides in the world instead just one between Silvers and Reds. Mare comes before the royal family and an assembled audience. The king explains that Mare's appearance is miraculous. She is officially introduced as Lady Mareena Titanos, daughter Ethan Titanos by Queen Elara who gives the constructed backstory. The Queenstrial girls are shocked to learn that Mare will be marrying Maven. Cal then moves forward to announce his betrothed, Evangeline of Samos.

Mare can see the hatred Evangeline has for her. In a private moment, Evangeline calls Mare "little lightning girl" and threatens to kill her if she gets in the way. The king announces that rebelliousness cannot take hold, and that Mare and Evangeline will help maintain balance against the Scarlet Guard. At the following feast, Mare and Maven talk. Maven says that, although he had no one in mind, younger princes get to choose their wives. Mare says she has no sympathy for him or Cal, and Maven responds that she is right, that no one should feel sorry for them.

Chapter 11 – As the feast ends, toasts are made. Volo Samos, Head of House Samos, who owns and operates the iron mines from which all guns come, toasts his daughter. To be proper after dinner, Cal escorts Mare to her rooms, while Maven escorts Evangeline. Mare is startled to discover security cameras in her room. They are not apparent, but she can sense them. She asks if this is not normal. Cal responds that it isn't to his knowledge. Mare responds that nothing is normal about her anymore.

Chapter 12 – Mare's training begins. Mare's schedule is determined from morning to night. Evangeline mocks Mare for having to take a Protocol class with Lady Bess Blonos. Queen Elara announces that lunch will be with the Queenstrial girls and their mothers, who will be around for the next few weeks until the Parting Ball. At that point, the royal family will return to the capital. After Protocol lessons, Mare heads to lunch in the Glass Terrace.

There, she meets Sonya of House Iral, and Elane of House Haven. They are suspicious and cold toward Mare. Mare then meets Lady Ara, Head of House Iral. She is a former spy from the war, known as the Panther. She finds it strange that Mare has brown eyes, while both her parents had blue eyes. Mare responds that she is different in many ways she doesn't even yet understand. Maven promises to speak to his mother about Lady Ara's rudeness. Mare realizes she is warming up to Maven a little bit, but reminds herself that he is one of them, not a Red.



Analysis

Mare's disbelief that Cal is actually heir to the throne continues in this section of the novel, continuing to feed the theme of Coming of Age. She comes to learn a lot about herself because of Cal's effort to secure work for her at the palace. Mare comes to discover that she herself has special abilities, just like the Silvers, something she did not know before. This increased self-awareness expands Mare's curiosity and confidence about herself, things she had little interest in before.

Mare's time spent with both Cal and Maven, the latter of whom becomes her betrothed, also shakes her foundations. Everything she thought she knew is subject to challenge and doubt. This includes her assumptions about the Silvers. Despite what Mare had previously believed, they are not a unified group of cold and callous people. Cal alone proves that this is incorrect, and Maven provides even more evidence to this point. She begins to warm up to Maven even. Mare realizes that there are even divides among the Silvers, as can be seen by the cutthroat way many of the families compete with one another to gain access to the Royal House, or to gain a better standing in society.

Indeed, Mare's public self-discovery throws the upper echelon of Silver society into an uproar. The Royal Family moves fast to impose a cover story to make it appear as if Mare is merely a Silver war orphan raised by a Red family. That the Royal Family would have to concoct such an elaborate ruse underlines the idea that Silver society is fractious at best, and unstable at worse. Likewise, Mare's existence endangers the existing social hierarchy in general, between the Reds and the Silvers. It is not just the status quo among Silvers that needs to be protected, but the status quo among the Red and Silver classes. Subtle hints of the potential revolution even among the Silvers themselves can be detected.

Revolution comes one step closer to fruition through a series of terrorist bombings perpetrated by the Scarlet Guard, including in the city capital itself. Mare's sudden appearance seems a political Godsend to the Royal Family. Mare's cover story is not only to placate fears and anger among the Silvers, but to pacify restless Red citizens. A Silver, raised as a Red and ascending to Silver status, can be seen as something not only of a Cinderella story, but echoes the American idea of the self-made individual. Through Mare's own talents and powers, she has been elevated to the very top of society. Reds, theoretically, will be happy that one of their own is in a position of such power. The king hopes this will stop rebelliousness from taking hold.

While all of this is going on, Mare continues to learn more about the prince brothers, Maven and Cal. Through them, she is reluctantly coming to understand that leadership, that ruling, is not merely about luxury and enjoyment, but is about expectations, responsibilities, critical traditions, and sound decision-making. Mare does not feel sorry for Maven, however, that he is not allowed to choose his own bride; but she is slightly moved by Cal's promise to watch out for her family. Merely the fact that Maven has expressed some kind of emotional feeling, and that Cal has taken it upon himself to



watch out for a Red family, does not sit well with Mare. Indeed, her response to Maven's talk about marriage is more an automatic response than pure hatred.

Discussion Question 1

Why do the members of the Royal Family concoct an elaborate backstory to shield Mare's true identity? What do they hope this will do?

Discussion Question 2

What does Mare slowly begin to learn about the Silvers as a class of people? What effect does this have on Mare? Why?

Discussion Question 3

How does Evangeline seem to feel about her role as queen-heir-apparent, especially in relation to Mare? Why does Evangeline hate Mare so much so soon? How does Mare feel about Evangeline?

Vocabulary

monstrosity, patriarch, hierarchy, farce, predicament, rudimentary, impassive, demure, sullen, ornate



Chapters 13 – 18

Summary

Chapter 13 – The instructor who teaches histories to Mare knows who she really is, but promises not to tell. He has the power to have the cameras in his rooms turned off. Mare's entry to the palace as a Red, and her sudden transformation into a Silver, has caught his attention. The instructor reveals himself as Cal's uncle, Julian Jacos, Head of House Jacos, brother of the late queen. Julian explains that Mare has more power than she thinks, that she can be an instrument for good, controlled change, unlike the Scarlet Guard who are too much too fast for most people. Julian tells her that words can lie. Julian tells Mare that thinking all Silvers are evil is as wrong as thinking all Reds are inferior. Julian goes on to say that Mare is proof Reds and Silvers can be equals, and that he, too, wants to understand just what she is.

Days pass with the same schedule. At a luncheon, Mare grows angry when Silver women begin insulting the living conditions of the Reds. Mare points out that living in such conditions would make servants of anyone. Queen Elara interjects, saying that Mare is currently studying with the best tutors so she will adjust properly. The conversation shifts to the war and the Scarlet Guard. A scarred female colonel, Macanthos, wants to know what will be done about the rebels. Queen Elara counters that Macanthos is giving the Red rebels too much credit. Mare knows the queen is lying.

Working with Julian, Mare comes to realize her powers come out only in times of stress or danger, and that a trigger cause must be found so that Mare can use her powers at will. Mare remembers feeling resigned to her fate, to being at peace when her powers activated. When she does so again, she comes to be able to control her powers again. She is able to wield and hurl a lightning ball. As the days pass, she continues to refine her skills with Julian's help. He realizes that, while other Silvers can manipulate with their powers, Mare can actually create with her powers. He believes that Mare is not Red or Silver, but something more. This terrifies Mare, who flees into the rain. She is stopped by Sentinels, but the Sentinels are ordered away by Maven. She explains she is overwhelmed. Maven explains he feels like his brother's shadow. He sees that Mare is homesick and wants to fix it.

Chapter 14 – Maven brings Mare to Cal so he can bring her home for a visit. Cal thinks it is a bad idea, but agrees. Mare hugs Maven in thanks. Mare notices that Cal has many scars and bruises, and that his room is full of armor, weapons, and books on war. In plain clothes, Cal leads Mare through the palace. Cal will pretend he is a fellow worker with Mare, with a leave pass for the night. He then travels with her on a motorcycle he built himself. He explains he goes out not to drink, but to be among the people. As a king, he won't have the luxury to be selfish. As a king, Cal knows he must serve the people, so he goes out to be among them to know them. He says the world is in danger, and kings must do all they can to keep everyone safe.



Cal goes on to explain that there is no region in which Reds and Silvers are equal. If Nortia made Reds equal, enemies, as well as allies, would attack and destroy Nortia. Mare wonders if Nortia might not be the beginning instead, but Cal is unable to respond. At Mare's home, Mare invites Cal inside. Her family is thrilled to see her, but her father and brothers are suspicious of Cal. Mare is stunned to learn that her brother Shade was killed before the discharge orders came through. Mare secretly suspects the Silvers found out Shade was in the Scarlet Guard. Mare, enraged, pulses with lightning, popping lightbulbs. Kilorn arrives to calm Mare down.

Everyone is in disbelief. No one understands how it is possible for a Red to have Silver powers. Mare reveals her betrothal to Maven, and pretends Cal is actually her bodyguard. The family swears to secrecy. Gisa tells Silver she has a gift, and not to waste it. As they leave, Cal says he is sorry because he didn't know about Shade. On the way out of the Stilts, Mare visits with Will. There, she meets one of Farley's men, Tristan, and learns that the Scarlet Guard knows all about what has gone on at the palace. They also know that Cal, waiting outside, is a Silver prince. Mare explains she wants to be a part of the Scarlet Guard. She is brought into the fold. Yet, Mare finds it hard to view Maven and Cal as enemies. Kilorn catches up with Mare, telling her not to go. When he tries to stop her, Cal threatens to intervene, and Kilorn relents. Kilorn announces he will go and find Farley.

Chapter 15 – In the morning, Mare's servant mouths the words "Rise, Red as the dawn" to her. Mare discovers her schedule has changed and that she will now be Training. Lucas explains that the strongest of soldiers can be broken in Training, and that not everyone can be at the front for long because it wears on people. Mare asks how Reds can always be at the front, to which Lucas responds that Reds are meant for such things. Mare is enraged. Lucas, now formal and cold, says he doesn't have the luxury of asking questions, and neither does Mare. Training is full of teenagers, including Evangeline, Sonya, and Elane. Mare seeks out Maven. Maven asks about the visit the previous night, which Mare explains.

Rane Arven is the instructor for Training. He has the power to prevent others from using their powers. Mare and the others run laps, having to avoid a shifting wall and obstacles thrown in their way. Arven then has Mare demonstrate her ability to wield lightning on targets. Mare is proud of herself, but Arven says nothing about it. After Training, Mare meets with Julian, who is working with book-bound lists of Red war dead. Julian reveals his power: the ability to control others. Julian reveals he and his sister were from a low house, and his sister and the king married for love, not through Queenstrial. Before his sister could ever work to change things, she died. Julian wants to change things too but knows they take time. He tells Mare not to get in over her head.

Chapter 16 – There is a blackout that night in the palace. Mare's servant, Ann Walsh, brings Mare to see Farley in the nearby woods. She is stunned when an agent named Holland arrives with Maven, who has joined the Red Guard. He explains he is disgusted with the ongoing war, with inequality, and all the death he saw at the front. He explains that while Cal saw honor and loyalty, he saw foolishness and waste. At the front, Maven



befriended a Red named Thomas, who treated him like a real friend. He saw Thomas die.

Farley then reveals the bombings are merely to get attention, but to show the country a defecting Silver prince and a Red with special powers will be the drop of water to break the dam. They will be the face of the revolution. Mare, however, worries about the innocent people who will be caught in between. Farley has her eyes on the Parting Ball. Mare tells Farley she must not let Kilorn join, but then Kilorn steps forward from the shadows. Kilorn tells Mare that what he is doing now is to save her.

In Training, Mare reveals to Cal she is horrible at dance etiquette while Maven and Tirana of House Osanos prepare to spar in a match. Tirana wins. Cal and Mare remind him he needs to outsmart, not overpower people like Tirana. Elane is then challenged by Sonya, a match which Evangeline enjoys watching. Cal is then matched against two girls, easily defeating them. It makes Mare believe that Cal's heart is black. Evangeline then challenges Mare.

Chapter 17 – Mare opposes the match between Mare and Evangeline since Mare has had comparatively little training. Evangeline and others begin to mock Mare. Cal and Maven come to her defense. Mare accepts. Cal whispers to Mare, telling her she is faster than Evangeline and that she cannot let Evangeline see her bleed. The match begins. Evangeline gains the upper hand by forming a metallic spider, which cuts Mare's face. Before anything can continue, the spider erupts in flames and Mare is pulled away by Maven so her hair covers her bloodied face while Cal confronts Evangeline.

Maven brings Mare to see Julian. Julian tells Maven to find Sara Skonos. Maven angrily agrees. Mare can see Julian and Maven hate each other. Maven returns with Lady Skonos, who heals Mare. Mare can see that Julian may be in love with Sara. Queen Elara appears, telling Mare to take more care in Training because Red blood is hard to clean up. Mare says Elara has Red blood all over her hands. Elara then turns on Mare, threatening her never to speak that way again. Maven orders Mare back with the others, while he stays behind with his mother.

Mare meets with Cal, who explains a new unit is going to the front: an all-Silver disguised as Reds, who will serve alongside the Reds. They will be called the Shadow Legion. Mare's performance at Queenstrial gave him the idea. Oliver, a windweaver, explains that Cal will personally be leading them into battle. Though Mare has come to dislike Cal, the thought of him potentially dying scares her. Mare realizes there is no black-and-white, but only gray in the world. That night, Cal comes by her room to teach her to dance.

Chapter 18 – Cal brings Mare to a secluded chamber to teach her how to dance. Mare questions how appropriate it is, but Cal says he is doing Maven a favor. Cal explains that Julian, Sara, and his mother were all close until his mother died. Cal was only a year old when that happened. Mare suggests talking to Sara about it. Cal says Sara



can't speak, and then says he doesn't want to talk about it anymore. He leaves, telling her he'll practice with her again the following night.

On her way back to her room, Mare runs into Maven, who appears suspicious of her late night activities. He puts a hand on her cheek, savoring her warmth. Maven unhappily reveals he has met with Farley, giving up the names of four important people now marked for assassinations: Reynald Iral, Ptolemus Samos, Ellyn Macanthos, and Belicos Lerolan. The death of Macanthos will truly wreck the war effort, meaning that the king will not want to let Cal go to war.

The next day, Mare asks Julian about the past queen. Mare explains that he hates the king because he couldn't save the queen; and he hates the new queen for cutting out Sara's tongue for something said. Julian confirms his love for Sara. Julian warns Mare that she can trust no one, that anyone can betray anyone, and that she is someone else's pawn. That night, dance lessons continue. Mare can only think of everything else going on. Cal admits that sometimes, he wishes he didn't have to be king. Cal tells Mare he'll miss her, but Mare backs away, saying it is inappropriate and knowing secretly that he is her enemy. They then kiss.

Analysis

As the novel continues, Mare's time spent with Julian become essential to her development and critical to the theme of Coming of Age. Julian is vastly intrigued by Mare, largely because she appears to be a mix of Red and Silver, and what exactly she is defies any logical or apparent explanation. Mare begins to study and train with Julian, not only befriend him, but coming to learn more about herself, the Silvers, and the world at large. Julian becomes a vital source of wisdom, understanding, and context for Mare, and he continues to challenge her preconceived assumptions about the world.

Julian himself defies Mare's assumptions about the Silvers. Julian tells her that believing all Silvers are evil is just as wrong as believing that all Reds are inferior, but Mare goes to demonstrate, simply by virtue of existing, that Reds can indeed be equal to Silvers. Prejudice is something that exists among all people, including Reds. Mare's own prejudices have been holding her back from truly developing as a person. As she lets go of her prejudices, and continues along the path to coming of age, she and Julian make great discoveries about her abilities and what she can and cannot do.

Julian and Mare come to realize that Mare is neither Red nor Silver, but something much more powerful. While Silvers have the ability to manipulate and wield their powers, Mare actually has the ability to create her power. She does not have to rely on things that already exist. Here, a kind of symbolism can be seen in that Mare's power is one of creation, not necessarily one of the use or destruction of what exists. Mare's role, the reader begins to understand, will not be to destroy the existing world, but to help create a better one. Destruction and hatred are no longer totally compatible with Mare. She realizes there is more to life than such feelings.



Mare's anger and hatred also melts away the closer she grows to Maven and Cal. Indeed, romantic feelings—the precursor to love, thematically—begin to appear. Mare's romantic feelings for Maven come about due to his apparent kindness, and his desire to want to change the world. Mare's feelings toward Cal come at first from Cal's sense of honor, and his kindness. He is not merely an instrument of law or war, but is also quite human. This can be seen in the dance lessons that occur between Mare and Cal, and between the stolen kiss they share.

Love is softening Mare's heart in conjunction with the understanding that her powers are a creation. When she and Maven both join the Scarlet Guard, Maven conclusively demonstrates to Mare that he is someone she can trust and rely upon. She also comes to realize that she no longer wishes death on the Silvers. Indeed, she and Maven both want to find a way for the revolution they both know is coming, to be bloodless. Here, Revolution becomes a strong theme as the potential for it has become tremendous through Maven's defection.

Revolution, however, is never a safe thing. Farley contends that blood must be spilled in order for the revolution to have any real chance of succeeding. Mare and Maven do not like this idea but realize that Farley is right. For Mare to have attempted to avert bloodshed belies the fact that she is no longer the person she was just a few weeks before when the novel began. She has come to truly accept that not all Silvers are evil, and that war or revolution is never easy for anyone involved.

Mare puts her trust in Maven, Farley, and the Scarlet Guard to carry out plans for revolution. Maven himself assembles a list of high-tier targets, people without whom the government would at least temporarily cease to function. Maven's targets are nothing more than a hit list for the Scarlet Guard but provide the avenue for greater change.

As the reader will note, pure manipulation and destruction are inconsistent with Mare's own powers of creation. Likewise, the reader will remember Julian's pointed warning that anyone can betray anyone. Here, the seeds of the theme of betrayal are sown. Nevertheless, Mare almost struggles at certain points to reawaken her hatred for the way things are in order to align herself with the Scarlet Guard and their intended plans.

Discussion Question 1

When Farley speaks of revolution, Mare and Maven contend that they hope it will be bloodless, or as bloodless as possible. Why? What has changed in Mare for her to want a safe revolution?

Discussion Question 2

What does Mare learn through Julian about prejudice and the Silver class? How does this affect her attitudes toward Cal, Maven, Silvers in general, and the revolution? Why?



Discussion Question 3

Why does Cal oppose revolutionary talk of equality between Reds and Silvers? Can his defense of the status quo be justified? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

aversion, deplorable, animosity, patronizing, merciless, quavers, intensify, ruinous, morose, secluded, impeccable



Chapters 19 – 24

Summary

Chapter 19 – The night of the Parting Ball arrives. Maven tells Mare that what must be done, must be done or there will never be any change. At the ball, the king compliments how ladylike Mare has turned out. Mare meets Ptolemus, head of the Archeon city guards and one of the intended targets. Mare also sees Reynald Iral, cousin of Sonya, who is a financial genius. Colonel Macanthos will not be an easy target, due to her courage and her cunning. Belicos Lerolan is a diplomat who serves in Piedmont. He is a father and is warm and friendly. It causes Mare to feel bad for what is going to happen to him. Maven reminds her that everyone who is going to be killed is a parent and that sacrifices must be made. They then dance while everyone watches. Afterwards, Kilorn explains that everything is in place, and heads off. Four shots then ring out.

Chapter 20 – Everyone screams, including Mare. She shuts off the lights. The Sentinels rush to remove the king and queen from the ballroom. As people rush from the room, Mare sees the body of Reynald, and trips and falls to come face-to-face with the body of Macanthos. Mare ends up with blood all over her hands. Cal rushes to her side, helping her up. Cal orders Lucas to bring Mare to safety. Cal then leads the Sentinels after the assassins. As Lucas brings Mare away, a bomb goes off. It isn't part of the plan. Mare wonders how many children have just been needlessly killed. She remembers that anyone can betray anyone.

Lucas brings Mare to Maven in an underground bunker where all the civilians are headed. Maven reports to his mother and father that the Scarlet Guard is responsible. Elara blames the king for what has happened; the king blames her for what has happened. Elara declares she will now have a word with the Red servants. Cal appears, angry and enraged, his uniform covered in Red blood. Cal brings Mare, Maven, and Evangeline to the dungeons, where Walsh, Tristan, Kilorn, and Farley are imprisoned, wounded and bloody. Cal demands Mare explain Kilorn's presence. Mare says all she wanted to do was to get Kilorn a job.

The king leaves punishment up to Cal. Cal has Sentinel Gliacon turn Farley's blood to ice to make her talk. Ptolemus appears, having survived the assassination attempt. Ptolemus uses the metal bars of the cell like spears to kill Tristan. When Ptolemus turns his sights on Kilorn, Mare intervenes, using her powers to stop him. She says the prisoners must be kept alive to talk. Maven encourages the king and Cal to go and comfort the people. The king agrees. Evangeline calls Cal weak. Cal reveals there are at least ten dead, including two children. Many more are injured. Before his audience, the king declares that revenge will be had. It terrifies Mare.

Chapter 21 – Mare goes to see Julian. Julian reveals the attack is now being called the "Sun Shooting." Mare wants Julian to use his powers to convince the guards to set the prisoners free. Mare confesses her involvement. Julian is hurt and angered, telling her



she has gotten in over her head. Julian says his sister's death was called a suicide. Julian, however, knows she was murdered. He quickly comes up with a plan which will require a magnetron and blind cameras. Back in her room, Mare calls on Lucas to bring her to the kitchens. On the way, Julian uses his powers to control Lucas to bring them to the dungeons.

However, the Sentinels guarding the prisoners, including Glicon, are wary of letting Mare, Julian, and Lucas near the dungeons. Mare insists, promising to repay the guards as she grows in power. The guards give Mare and the others five minutes. Mare immediately asks Kilorn, Farley, and Walsh about the bomb. Farley insists the bomb was not their doing, and that their other attacks were not intending to kill anyone. Mare then has Julian force Lucas to use a magnetron to force the bars of the cell open to let the prisoners out. Calling the other Sentinels down, Julian brainwashes them to not remember the events of what happened. One suspicious Sentinel manages to shoot Mare, but Julian instructs a healing Sentinel to heal Mare. Julian puts all the Sentinels into a sleep. As the prisoners escape, Walsh tells Mare she hopes Mare will one day be queen, the Red queen. Farley says they will meet again. Kilorn tells Mare this is not their end.

Chapter 22 – Maven reports the escape of the prisoners to Mare in the morning. Maven explains he has been helping to direct his mother's interrogations, meaning that he has helped to keep the queen away from Mare. Maven also reports there was no bomb. When Cal used his fire power, he accidentally hit a gas line, causing the explosion. It is being reported as a terrorist bomb, however. Mare realizes the Queen is turning the Scarlet Guard into monsters so not even Reds will want to stand with them. Cal appears. He is enraged because his unit is not being sent to the front anymore. Cal now intends to work with Ptolemus in Archeon to destroy the Scarlet Guard. It chills Mare.

The entire court, meanwhile, is returning to Archeon. Julian will not be returning, but going to do archive work in Delphie. He tells Mare she will have a gift waiting for her in the capital. They then hug and part ways. Sailing back, Maven reports that the Sentinels on duty during the escape are being sent to the worst part of the front lines. He also reports that Red blood was found in the dungeon, and it is being analyzed in a database to determine to whom it belongs. Mare says the blood is hers. Maven kisses her and vows to protect her and to enlist the help of someone else who can as well. They are interrupted by Cal, who looks hurt and angry. He says the queen has requested that Mare join her on the viewing platform as they head past the Stilts.

Mare sees the entire population of the Stilts has been forcibly assembled to watch the royals float past. It is meant to be a show of the royals' strength and power. Reds are forcibly assembled the entire way back to Archeon. They float past beautiful silver country estates in River Row, and the polluted world of Gray Town's factories. Archeon draws near. It is more a fortress meant for war than a city meant for peace.

Chapter 23 – On the way to the palace, Maven points out city highlights. The Bridge and East Archeon are for common Silvers. West Archeon, perched on a cliff, is for the King, the court, and the High Houses. Maven explains the entire country could be run there



from Caesar Square. Whitefire Palace looms in the distance. A barracks can also be seen in which Cal's Shadow Legion is drilling. The royal family passes into the War Command, the headquarters of the country's military efforts. Mare is forced to give a televised speech, condemning the terrorists and praising the goodness of the king. Mare is forced to speak about new laws going into effect, such as new curfews, doubled security, and lower draft ages. Conscription waivers for up to five family members will be granted for information leading to the capturing of Reds, or the prevention of Red attacks.

In her new room, Mare finds a giant framed map from Julian, along with a book hidden behind it. In the book is a written message from Julian, detailing 27 executions (including Shade's), caused by friendly-fire deaths, in the Death Legion. Julian has studied the blood types of these 27. They match Mare's, meaning there are others like her. Julian has found numerous other such living people. These people must be protected and trained, Julian writes, before someone else finds them and kills them.

Cal meets up with Mare. Mare is not happy to see him. He wants to know why she is so angry with him. She is angry at his treatment of the prisoners. Cal says it was necessary. Mare tells Cal he has the power to change everything. Cal says he thought that once too, but to change things would lead to more bloodshed, and he will not allow it. He reveals that he helped cover Julian's escape the night of the breakout because Julian is his uncle. Yet, he will also hunt down Julian if ordered. Cal reveals that, with Mare out in the public eye, her existence as a Red has been destroyed—including her blood date—at Maven's suggestion.

Chapter 24 – Mare explores Whitefire Palace and begins a series of outings and meetings with the public. Mare carries Julian's list with her everywhere she goes. A small boy gives Mare a scrap of paper, saying she dropped it. The note reads, "Hexaprin Theater. Afternoon play. The best seats." Mare gives the note to Maven who orders that they be taken to the theater. In a private box during the show, a compartment in the ceiling opens up through which Mare and Maven climb. They take a ramshackle train south to the island City of Ruins, Naercey. It is being made ready for Red refugees. The island is protected using radiation markers to give the impression the area is contaminated, so Silvers stay away.

Mare reveals the list of names, urging the Scarlet Guard to find them all. They worry it will take too long. Mare then suggests a coup d'etat, in which a small group takes control of a government. A small group could target the King, and force him to meet their demands. The only problem would be Cal's 5,000-man legion. Maven believes if given the choice between the crown and Mare's life, Cal would choose Mare's life. Mare realizes Cal is in love with her. Farley thinks pinning the revolution on teenaged love is nonsense and can't believe it. Kilorn says he can.



Analysis

As the novel continues, Revolution becomes the dominant theme. Previous terrorist attacks committed by the Scarlet Guard are targeted toward buildings, but the attacks of the night of the Parting Ball target people. As Mare wanders around the ball prior to the attack itself, she realizes that not all of those about to be killed are necessarily deserving of it. For example, Lerolan the diplomat is a warm, genuine family man. Mare realizes what his death will do to his family, creating heartache and fatherless children.

No revolution is safe. Violence and bloodshed often rule the day. The rising of the Scarlet Guard and their Red dawn will be one founded in bloodshed and death. Mare herself has done something incredibly dangerous and detrimental to the cause by sympathizing with those whom the revolution is meant to overthrow. Mare alternates between hate for Cal and the Silvers through this section of the novel and between romantic feelings and compassion toward Maven and many of the Silvers. Indeed, later on, the reader comes to realize that Kilorn himself has feelings for Mare, feelings which, as of now, are unrequited.

When the attacks are carried out, three of the four intended victims are taken. There is an incredibly symbolic scene in which Mare literally comes face-to-face with one of the dead, seeing firsthand the consequences of revolution. Mare realizes that her hands are covered in the blood of the dead, both literally and figuratively. Actions have consequences, and revolution can easily mean death. While Mare may have had no love for the dead Silvers, the fact that human lives have ended in part because of her actions shakes Mare deeply. It is evidence of Mare's continually evolving character, and her coming of age.

It is, ironically, Maven who comforts Mare by taking the very utilitarian approach that killing some will be necessary for the greater good. While Maven may have originally demonstrated his concern about violence being used, he now seems to have either been resigned to the fact that it must be used, or has come to approve of the fact that it must be used even against his own kind. That a Silver should betray other Silvers reflects upon Julian's assertion that anyone can betray anyone, and that a Silver should betray other Silvers demonstrates just how ripe Norta is for revolution. Here, betrayal begins to emerge as a strong theme, one which will have severe implications by the end of the novel.

Back in the city capital, Mare and Maven continue to meet with the Scarlet Guard. Mare herself initiates the next plan by calling for a revolution at the uppermost levels—a coup d'état—which will limit bloodshed and bring about reform by targeting the king himself. Mare's desire for such a move is evidence that she is indeed no longer the same person she was even several days before. Her understanding that not all Silvers are bad, and her face-to-face encounter with the dead have reaffirmed in her mind the need for creative opportunities for change, not sheer destruction.

However, Maven's defection and betrayal not only of other Silvers, but even of his own family, appears to hit a serious snag. Cal, older, wiser, and heir to the throne, has been



recalled to Archeon with his 5,000-man Shadow Legion in lieu of the terrorist attack. Rather than being away on the front lines, Cal now presents the biggest obstacle of all. Whereas Maven's loyalty to the Silvers is nonexistent, Cal's is impregnable. Maven believes that Mare may be able to sway Cal through the manipulation of Cal's romantic love for her, but Mare believes this is impossible. She believes nothing, not even love, can sway Cal from his duty and his loyalty. To Cal, betrayal would be worse than death.

That Maven would have Mare attempt to prey upon Cal's feelings for her is also disturbing to the reader. Here, the idea that no revolution is safe also comes back to the fore through romantic love. Lives aren't the only things used or lost in revolutions –but so too is love. Maven's purely mercenary tactic of urging Mare to appeal to Cal's heart is evidence of just how far Maven is willing to go to betray those he loves to see the revolution through. This serves as an ill-omen for the final chapters of the novel.

Further, Julian's discovery that there are others like Mare both comforts and disturbs Mare. This is especially true when she learns that Shade is just like her and has been killed for it. Despite Maven's unnerving ease in dealing with revolution and betrayal, Mare entrusts him and the Scarlet Guard with Julian's list of individuals like her. Hundreds of such individuals taken together could very well be a tidal wave which would be unstoppable. It would change everything forever. The Scarlet Guard, however, believes this would take too long. They want quick action. They decide on Mare's idea for a coup.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Mare have second thoughts about the assassinations to come at the Parting Ball? What happens to Mare immediately following the assassinations? How does this affect her?

Discussion Question 2

Whereas Mare seems to be less and less inclined toward a bloody revolution, Maven seems more and more inclined toward it. Why does this appear to be the case? How does Mare respond to Maven's assertion that some must die for the good of all others?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Maven believe that Cal can be swayed to the side of the Scarlet Guard? Why does Mare believe this will not happen? Who do you believe is correct? Why?

Vocabulary

chortles, magnetron, audible, fathom, saber-rattling, surreptitiously, decrepit, coup d'etat



Chapters 25 – Epilogue

Summary

Chapter 25 – On the way back to the palace, Mare tells Maven she feels nothing for Cal. Back at the palace, Mare discovers to her horror that Ann Walsh has been captured in the old underground tunnel system by Cal and Ptolemus. Before she can be forced into revealing secrets, Walsh dies by suicide pill. Speaking later, Cal says he wishes things could be different. Cal tells Mare that Julian believed Mare was like his mother, Coriane, used to be. Early the next morning, Mare and Maven prepare for the coup, taking a spot near the War Command. Farley gives Mare an earring from Kilorn. Putting the earring in, Mare draws red blood.

The bridge connecting West Archeon to the rest of the city explodes. Cal's legion is ordered to assemble. Cal arrives, putting his men to work at once. Mare seeks him out, telling him he could save them all by turning his legion against the king and forcing changes to be made. Mare asks Cal to save her. Cal suddenly realizes she is responsible for everything going on. He becomes enraged, knowing that many innocent people have died because of the Scarlet Guard. He realizes the rebels are in the drains and orders his troops into the sewers. Mare is full of hate for Cal, arguing that countless Reds have needlessly died under the reign of the Silvers. Mare and Maven are arrested. Mare realizes she has forced Cal's hand, and made him a monster.

Chapter 26 – As Mare and Maven are led away, she can hear gunfire and screaming from the sewers. Mare and Maven are brought before the king and queen. The queen probes Mare's mind, finding the truth of everything. Maven admits to being a part of things. The king believes Maven has been turned by Mare. The king wishes to execute Maven. Cal opposes the idea, but knows there is no other way. The queen opposes going that far, and uses her powers to keep both the king and Cal in check. Arven the instructor, also present, refuses to intervene, for he is clearly on the queen's side. Cal realizes that his mother did not commit suicide, but died by Elara's hand. Arven takes hold of Mare while Maven melts his shackles.

The true plot is revealed: Mare has been used to get at the Scarlet Guard, and to make sure that Maven, not Cal, becomes king. It is Queen Elara who made sure everything could unfold. Elara then compels Cal to stab the king. Cal pleads with Elara, but Elara does not care. As the king dies, he tells Cal he knows it is not Cal that is killing him. With the king dead, Maven and his mother wail wildly, accusing Cal of killing the king. Mare grabs Cal, telling him to run. They are quickly surrounded by hundreds of Cal's own men, their loyalty broken by the staged murder. Captain Tyros then has Cal and Mare arrested.

Chapter 27 – In prison, Cal reveals he very nearly chose Mare over his father. He explains their deaths will be slow and painful. Mare is still stunned by Maven's actions. Mare hopes that her execution and the spilling of her Red blood will show the world who



she really is. Cal thinks it won't make a difference. Mare realizes that Maven has the list of all the people like her, and that he will hunt them all down. Mare realizes she has been used. Cal asks her how it feels. Mare says she didn't do all this to hurt him, and that not everything was a lie. Mare worries about her family.

Maven then appears, wearing his father's medals. He explains that Cal would never have been strong enough to rule, that he would have been overthrown. Mare angrily tells Maven she thought he was better than Cal. She tells him that his father loved him. Maven says it is a lie. He asks if Mare chooses Cal over him now. She tells him she chooses no one. Maven reveals that anyone associated with Mare in any way, shape, or form, has been put to death. Mare spits in his face. Maven then leaves.

Mare and Cal will face execution in a public arena. Neither will have armor; Mare will have no weapons. Cal promises to protect her as long as he can. Among those slated to die that morning is Lucas. Lucas now knows he has been used, and tells Mare she is like all the other Silvers. He is then executed. Arven has force Mare's powers to stop working. In the arena, videos are played which reveal the kiss between Mare and Cal, and many other stolen moments. The footage makes it seem as if Mare and Cal conspired together to kill the king. Maven announces the crimes against Mare and Cal to the audience. These include deception, treason, terrorism, and murder. Maven pronounces execution. Five incredibly powerful Silvers then enter the arena to carry out the sentence, including Evangeline and Ptolemus.

Chapter 28 – Cal tells Mare to stay behind him as long as she can. As Cal attempts to wield fire, he and Mare both realize that Arven is limiting Cal's potential. As he battles four of the five, Stralian, a Silver with the power of invisibility, goes after Mare. Mare plunges her fingers into his eyes. Evangeline screams that Cal was supposed to be hers. In a rage and whirl of flying metal, the injured Stralian is killed. As a Silver named Rhambos attempts to kill Mare with a spear, she ducks. The spear kills Arven. Mare's powers are freed. Maven, in a panic, orders his troops to shoot Mare. She gains the upper hand against Evangeline, who flees. The others are overcome, but Cal will not kill Ptolemus.

As Mare looks up, she realizes Maven has ordered the arena emptied. Only Maven remains, along with thousands of soldiers. Cal pulls Mare out of the way as a sudden lightning streak comes down from the sky, scattering the soldiers. Mare realizes it is her doing. But her energy is quickly used up. As the soldiers close in once more, gunfire rings out against the soldiers. Mare and Cal then suddenly fall through darkness and land in water far below.

Epilogue – When Mare regains consciousness, she realizes she is on the Undertrain with Cal and Farley. Mare is amazed the Farley and Kilorn have survived. She is stunned to see Shade alive as well. He reports their whole family is safe. Mare pleads with everyone to let Cal go, but Cal speaks before anyone else, saying that he knows they won't. Mare reveals that Maven knows about the others like her and Shade. Mare says they can't let Maven find them before the Guard does. Kilorn says it won't happen. Mare realizes that, although she and Cal are not enemies now, they are no longer



friends. The only thing they have in common is hatred for Maven, and Mare vows to kill Maven.

Analysis

Betrayal and Revolution go hand-in-hand as themes by the end of the novel. The Scarlet Guard's attempts at a coup d'état focused solely on the governing section of West Archeon—Caesar Square—is reminiscent of the July 20th Plot to assassinate Hitler and end German participation in World War II. By controlling Caesar Square, the Guard can control the country. By seizing Hitler's Berlin, the entire extent of German-controlled territory could be brought underfoot. The Scarlet Guard rallies itself, waiting in the sewers for word to attack.

The revolution begins with the blowing up of the bridge to West Archeon, making accessibility highly difficult. The only major obstacle between the coup and the Scarlet Guard is Cal and his Shadow Legion. If they cannot be won over, the revolution will fail in its tracks and Mare and Maven will be arrested and executed as traitors. Mare, fully committed to a bloodless revolution, cruelly attempts to use Cal's romantic love for her as a weapon against him. It almost works, as Mare later discovers, but Cal's sense of honor and loyalty to his king and country far exceed anything romantic love could ever make possible. The revolution is halted in its tracks by Cal's commitment to duty.

However, the true revolution has just begun. The reader will remember Julian's warning that anyone can betray anyone. This bears true when Maven and Queen Elara betray the king and Cal. The entire Scarlet Guard revolution was a cover for Maven and Elara to carry out their true purpose: to eliminate the revolution, to overthrow and kill the king and the heir-apparent, and to put Maven on the throne. Maven's betrayal is staggering not only to the king and to Cal, but to Mare as well. Maven's callous and cold nature becomes apparent as his true nature with his talk of bloodless revolution earlier in the novel being a thin disguise.

It is yet another lesson that Mare has been forced to learn as she comes of age: anyone can betray anyone. In the past, Mare understood that she was a pawn in a game for the Royal Family to keep order; now, she realizes that she was a pawn in a far larger game with different rules. Her romantic feelings toward Maven are now gone, and the only thing she and Cal share now is a mutual hatred of Maven. However, Mare contends to Cal that not everything that happened, and everything she told him, was a lie. This lays the groundwork for possible future romance between the two in sequels to the novel.

At the end of this novel, Mare vows that she will kill Maven for all that he has done. She also vows that she will continue to work with the Scarlet Guard, and the Guard itself determines that it will continue to pursue revolution. Mare, having learned now that not all Silvers are evil, and that not all revolutions can be peaceful, accepts that enemies may now be potentially anywhere, and that the spilling of blood will be unavoidable. This will be particularly true when it comes to Maven.



Discussion Question 1

When Mare attempts to convince Cal that he should join the Scarlet Guard for her, why does Cal almost give in? Why does he choose not to? Can Cal be commended for his decision not to turn? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Do you think it is morally right for Mare to manipulate Cal's love for her to turning against his family and his country? Why or why not? Do you believe that Mare's attempts to convert Cal can be considered manipulation? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Why do Maven and Elara seize control of Norta by killing the king, and having Cal and Mare arrested? Can their motives be justified at all? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

remorse, mourning, infiltrating, deplorable, insufferable



Characters

Mare

Mare Molly Barrow is the main character, principal protagonist, and narrator of the novel "Red Queen" by Victoria Aveyard. Mare is a pretty seventeen year-old girl and member of the Red Class who works as a pickpocket in the Stilts, Norta. Mare is devoted to her family, and is best friends with Kilorn. Despite Mare's living in poverty, she still has much to learn about the world. She hates all Silvers, and wants to see Reds made equal. Hoping to avoid military service, Mare is introduced to Farley of the Scarlet Guard. Farley promises to take Mare and Kilorn away for a staggering sum, which Mare knows will be hard to come by. She convinces her younger sister, Gisa, to allow her to accompany Gisa to Summerton to find a big score.

In Summerton, the Silvers are thrown into chaos by news reports of a terrorist attack in the capital city miles to the south. Gisa, hoping to help Mare pickpocket, is caught. She has her hand crushed for thievery. Unable to face her family, Mare does not go home. While out, she meets a young man named Cal who expresses empathy for Mare, and promises to take care of her. Mare is surprised to be hired to work in the Royal Palace shortly thereafter, and even more surprised to learn that Cal is the heir to the throne of Norta. During Queenstrial, Mare is nearly killed, saved only by her summoning of an electric shield. Her unintended and unknown powers cause her arrest, and the confusion of the Silver elite. Mare is a Red, so she should not have any special powers.

The Royal Family concocts a cover story, in which Mare will portray Mareena Titanos, orphaned daughter of a war hero, raised by Reds. It is hoped that Mare's betrothal to Prince Maven and her elevation will appease Reds, and soften support for the Scarlet Guard's revolutionary activities. Mare has no choice but to accept, and grows closer to Maven and Cal over time, developing romantic feelings for both at one point or another. She begins training and honing her powers with Julian, brother of the deceased queen, who warns Mare that anyone may betray anyone. Mare herself comes to alternate between feelings of hate for the Silvers and feelings of compassion for them because she recognizes that they are not all evil.

Mare ultimately joins the Scarlet Guard with Maven, determined to reform Norta. Yet, her experiences with the Silvers means she no longer hates them as a whole. As a result, she hopes for a bloodless revolution. This cannot be realized, however. During an attempted coup, Cal and his legion stop Mare and the Scarlet Guard. Mare and Maven are arrested. Mare and Cal are then betrayed by Maven and his mother, who kill the king and blame it on Cal and Mare. Sentenced to death, Mare and Cal are assisted in escaping by survivors of the Scarlet Guard. As the novel finishes, Mare vows to kill Maven.



Cal

Tiberias “Cal” Calore the Seventh is the son of the reigning king of Nortia and his first wife Coriane, and the heir apparent to the throne. At around the age of nineteen or twenty, he is member of the ruling Silver class. Cal is unfailingly loyal, honorable, and courageous. Cal sympathizes with the Reds but believes equality would only be destructive to the country. He hopes for gradual reforms to make their lot in life better, and spends much of his time in disguise among them, seeking to know and understand them so that he may be a better king one day. Meeting Mare in the Stilts, he arranges for her to have a job at the palace. During Queenstrial, he discovers that Mare has special powers, and works to help save her life and develop a cover story for her. Over time, he falls in love with Mare even though he is arranged to marry Evangeline Samos.

Cal comes to form a 5,000-man military unit, the Shadow Legion, which he hopes to lead into battle on the frontlines. However, terrorist attacks prevent him from doing so. His legion thus becomes key in defeating the Scarlet Guard as they attempt to overthrow the king. Cal nearly betrays his father when Mare manipulates Cal’s love for her. Cal remains loyal. However, Cal is framed for the murder of his father when Elara and Maven seize power. He and Mare are condemned to death, but escape at the last minute with assistance from the Scarlet Guard.

Maven

Maven is the younger step-brother of Cal, and the son of King Tiberias the Sixth and his second wife, Elara. Maven is a cold and calculating seventeen year-old prince who emerges as an antagonist late in the novel. He plots with his mother to overthrow his father and Cal, and cruelly uses Mare and the Scarlet Guard to help him without their knowledge. Maven pretends to become a member of the Scarlet Guard so that he may exploit them, and manipulates Mare into trying to sway Cal’s allegiance. Maven and Elara pin blame for the king’s murder on Cal, and Maven ascends to the throne. He fails in his attempt to kill Cal and Mare, but his hold on the throne remains strong.

King Tiberias

King Tiberias Calore the Sixth is the reigning Silver monarch of the Kingdom of Nortia. Tiberias is a decent and honest man who does his best to rule justly. Cal is his son from his first marriage to Queen Coriane, while Maven is his son from his second marriage to Queen Elara. Despite Tiberias’s good nature as a king, he is still hated by many Reds for preserving the status quo. He does his best to allow freedom of speech and thought to flourish, but this backfires as it helps to allow the Scarlet Guard to gain traction. Tiberias is ultimately overthrown and killed by Elara and Maven, who consider him a weak king, unable and/or unwilling to confront the Scarlet Guard in an aggressive fashion.



Queen Elara

Queen Elara is the second wife of King Tiberias the Sixth, is the mother of Prince Maven, and is the stepmother of Cal. Elara is a wicked, cold, and callous woman who is highly ambitious and unyielding. Elara and her son Maven conspire together to overthrow the king, Cal, and Mare, allowing Maven to become king. As it is later revealed, Elara—who has the power to read and influence minds—was responsible for the suicide of Queen Coriane.

Evangeline

Evangeline Samos is a seventeen year-old girl from the Silver House of Samos, has the power to wield metal, and is engaged to Prince Cal. She is the heir apparent to the queen's throne. She is cutthroat, cruel, and power hungry. She comes to hate Mare for upstaging her, and for having the gall to come out of nowhere as a rival for the affections of the princes. Despite Evangeline's cruel nature, she develops feelings for Cal, and is later motivated by jealousy and hatred of Mare for winning Cal's heart. Evangeline is among those assigned to put Mare and Cal to death, but Evangeline's powers are dwarfed by Mare's. Evangeline must flee the death match against Mare to survive.

Kilorn

Kilorn is the childhood best friend of Mare. He is an orphan whose employer dies shortly after the novel begins. Kilorn's only option is to be drafted, but Kilorn does not want to go to war. Mare arranges to help Kilorn escape, but their plans do not come to fruition. Kilorn, secretly in love with Mare, watches with bitterness as she is raised to the level of princess. He later becomes a part of the Scarlet Guard, determined to overthrow all Silvers. He is one of the few survivors of the attempting coup in Archeon.

Gisa

Gisa Barrow is the fourteen year-old younger sister of Mare. Gentle, sweet, pretty, and kind, Gisa works as a seamstress in Summerton, where she will one day earn a good living. Gisa agrees to help Mare get into Summerton to pickpocket to help save Kilorn, for Gisa has a crush on Kilorn. When Gisa attempts to help Mare pickpocket, she is caught, has her hand crushed, and is no longer able to work as a seamstress.

Julian

Julian is the middle-aged brother of deceased Queen Coriane. He has long been in love with Sara Skonos, childhood best friend of Coriane. Julian is incredibly wise and patient and helps Mare to master her skills and powers. He teaches her that not all Silvers are



bad, and that anyone can betray anyone. He later learns that Mare is not unique, that there are other people like her. He compiles a list of such people, and gives it to Mare. By the end of the novel, with the king overthrown, Julian becomes a wanted man and goes into hiding.

Farley

Farley is the leader of the underground revolutionary group Scarlet Guard. She is a tough-as-nails, no-nonsense leader whose specific ultimate objectives are unclear. While equality for the Reds is part of her goal, whether she wants to kill all Silvers, some Silvers, overthrow and/or kill the king, all varies or is uncertain through the novel. Nevertheless, she becomes a strong ally of Mare, ultimately helping Mare and Cal to escape their execution.



Symbols and Symbolism

Earrings

Earrings are worn by Mare through the novel. It is a tradition among Reds for departing brothers to give female members of their family earrings to wear in symbolic honor and remembrance of them while they are away at war. Mare's earrings are invaluable to her, for they are a direct connection with her brothers. When Mare is transformed into Mareena, the only things she is allowed to keep from her past are the earrings. Mare later wears an earring given to her by Kilorn in symbolic unity with him.

Lightning

Lightning is the power that Mare is able to create and wield. It is a power she does not know she has until she is nearly accidentally killed during Queenstrial. Mare's use of lightning catches everyone's attention, leading her to becoming a pawn in a much larger game as the betrothed to Prince Maven. Mare's lightning may have destructive ends, but her power is not like the powers of the other Silvers: Mare's powers come not from wielding elements in the environment around her, or from manipulating something that exists, but from creating something from nothing. This becomes symbolic of her intent to want to do something productive and important with the revolution, rather than the desire of others to wreak havoc and destruction with the revolution.

Map

A framed map of Nortia is given to Mare by Julian as a parting gift when the Royal Court leaves Summerton for Archeon. The framed map conceals a small book with important information inside. The map comes to stand out to Mare at several points throughout the latter half of the novel, but its true purpose is not revealed in this novel. It is possible that the map is directly related to, or somehow associated with the locations of the hundreds of human beings like Mare.

Book

A small book is carefully hidden behind the framed map that Julian gives to Mare as a parting gift upon leaving Summerton. The book's appearance gives it to be a study of relics found in Delphie, but it is truly a record of Julian's research into people like Mare. He has discovered hundreds of them, and warns her that the government has been systematically killing such people quietly for years.



Red blood

Red blood flows through the veins of the Red underclass of citizens of Norta, and other countries throughout the world. The red blood gives Mare and others like her a warm complexion, and marks them physically as members of the Red class. When Mare comes to impersonate Mareena, she must work hard and be careful never to bleed around anyone, so that they will not realize she is not silver-blooded. However, Mare's red blood also presents a mystery for Julian in how anyone with red blood could have the powers held only by those with silver blood. It becomes quickly apparent to Julian that there are many more people like Mare.

Silver blood

Silver blood flows through the veins of the Silver ruling classes of Norta, and other countries throughout the world. The silver blood gives Cal, and other Silvers like him, a pale and cold complexion. Silver blood is cold and sticky, and is proof positive of one's position in the Silver classes. During the assassination event during the Parting Ball, Mare falls to the floor, comes face-to-face with the dead, and realizes her hands are covered in Silver blood. This becomes symbolically important to Mare. Silvers bleed just like Reds do. Actions have consequences, and revolution can easily lead to death. While Mare has no love for the dead Silvers, the fact that human lives have ended because of her actions shakes her deeply.

Medals

Medals are worn in great numbers by King Tiberias, supposedly attesting to heroism, prestige, and position. Mare believes the medals are mere decorations, unearned and unwarranted, though the truth behind them is never clearly demonstrated. When the king is killed, Maven not only assumes the king's place, but also begins wearing his medals. They are now truly unearned.

Blood databanks

Blood databanks are kept by the Silvers with samples and analysis of blood from every Red born within dozens of miles of the capital. This helps the Silvers to keep tabs on the Reds, to investigate crimes, and to convict them. When Mare's blood is spilled helping Farley and the others to escape, she knows she will be caught when her blood is analyzed. However, Maven and the Queen intervene to arrest Mare's blood data record, so she cannot be implicated in the escape.



Service flags

Service flags are flown by all Red families with family members off to war. The flags are white with one red star representing each family member away. The flag the Barrow family displays has yellowed, signifying significant aging, meaning that Mare's three brothers have been away at war for a long time, probably several years.

Royal sword

A royal sword is worn by King Tiberias primarily as a mark of distinction and kingship. The morning of the revolution, Elara forces Cal to stab Tiberias with the royal sword. Cal is then framed for the murder of the king, and ownership of the royal sword passes from Cal's hand to Maven's.



Settings

Norta

Norta is a mountainous, heavily-wooded country that has been at war with the Lakelands for nearly a hundred years. There are two primary classes of people in Norta, as there are in all other countries: the upperclass Silvers, and the lowerclass Reds. Each group is further subdivided into classes. For example, there are the lowly Houses, elite houses, and the Royal House among others in the Silver stratum. Norta is governed from its capital of Archeon through most of the year, and from summer court in Summerton during the summers. A river connects Archeon to Summerton, along which rests country estates, factory towns, and impoverished communities like the Stilts, where Mare is born and raised. Discontent among Reds towards Silvers has never been higher in Norta. The Scarlet Guard is determined to exploit this discontent, while Cal is determined to find a way to stamp it out.

The Stilts

The Stilts is a small, impoverished fishing village built on the banks of the river that connects Summerton to Archeon. The Stilts is so named for all of its buildings being constructed on ten-foot stilts to avoid seasonal flooding, but to maintain a prime spot along the river. The Stilts is located ten miles downstream from Summerton, and is where Mare and her family live. It is also the home of Kilorn, and a place visited routinely by Cal in disguise in order to know the Red people he will one day serve as king.

Summerton

Summerton is a beautiful, luxurious season city ten miles upstream from the Stilts. It is where the Royal Family holds summer court, and where many of the Silver families vacation during the summer. Gisa is apprenticed to a seamstress in Summerton, where she hopes to one day earn a good living, a rare thing among Reds. Mare travels to Summerton, hoping to pickpocket a wealthy Silver to provide funds for her and Kilorn to run away and avoid being conscripted. Summerton is where Gisa has her hand crushed trying to help Mare and where Mare is later taken to work for the Royal Family. Summerton is where Mare's powers first become apparent, and it is where a false backstory and the Queenstrials are put together.

Archeon

Archeon is the capital fortress-city of Norta. The city is composed of many sections, including East Archeon for all common Silvers, and West Archeon, the seat of power, perched on a cliff. The entire country is run specifically from West Archeon's Caesar



Square, which hosts important buildings such as the War Command. West Archeon is host to Cal and his 5,000-man Shadow Legion. Archeon becomes the target for a Scarlet Guard attack, with Caesar Square and Whitefire Palace being the principal objective. Archeon is where Cal and Maven were born and raised, and is where Maven helps his mother overthrow and kill the king.

Whitefire Palace

Whitefire Palace is the magnificent home of the ruling royal family, King Tiberias, Queen Elara, and princes Cal and Maven. It is where the Royal Family holds court during the year, apart from summer. Whitefire Palace is where Mare and Maven are brought when Cal prevents their coup from occurring, and is where Elara compels Cal to kill the king. Whitefire Palace is where Mare and Cal are then arrested and ordered imprisoned for the killing.



Themes and Motifs

Coming of Age

Coming of age is an important theme in the novel “Red Queen” by Victoria Aveyard. Coming of age involves the personal, spiritual, moral, or emotional growth and maturation of an individual often based on real world experiences, events, or mistakes. In the novel, it is the character of Mare who comes of age, and her journey of self-discovery and growth both influences, and is influenced by, the overall plot.

When the novel begins, Mare has had a strong dose of the real world. A member of the lowly Red class, she has been forced to live with little in poverty. In order to help her family scrape by, she pickpockets, and has been in trouble with the law numerous times. She detests the ruling Silver classes, believing they are the source of all evil in the world and are the source of all ills that have fallen on the Reds. Mare wants the Silvers to suffer as the Reds have suffered. She has no compassion for them at all.

Although Mare has dealt with much of the harsh realities of life, and though she is justifiably bitter toward the Silvers, Mare still has much to learn and understand about herself, and about the world at large. Mare’s process of self-discovery begins with her realization that she has extraordinary powers, and she is not as powerless as she once believed herself to be. Yet, she also becomes a victim of her own powers, as the royals cannot let her go. Too much depends upon her now falling into line and adhering to the backstory they have concocted for her.

Through this time, Mare learns many important lessons, and comes to many important realizations as she grows closer to Maven, Cal, and Julian. Julian is especially instrumental in making Mare realize that not all Silvers are evil and to think of them as all evil is just as wrong as thinking all Reds are inferior. Likewise, both Maven and Cal have expressed sympathies toward the Reds. Mare also comes to learn that to grant Reds immediate equality would be a danger to Norta’s social stability, Norta’s alliances, and Norta’s war efforts. While Mare understands why change is so hard, she disagrees with the idea it is impossible. Through Cal and Maven, Mare has come to a greater understanding of things and is able to contextualize them.

Julian goes on to teach Mare many more important things, but especially to be wary of who she trusts. He explains that anyone can betray anyone. Maven joins the Scarlet Guard under the lie that he wishes to help the Reds only to turn his back on everyone, including Mare and Cal. Mare now knows it was a mistake to have trusted Maven, and it was a mistake to attempt to manipulate Cal’s love for her in pursuit of treason and revolution. These are not mistakes that Mare will make again. She has learned deeply from them. She has helped to foment revolution, but has also had events work against her by way of Maven.



She has also come to understand that revolution is never a safe or easy thing. She is a stronger, more capable person committed to revolution by the end of the novel, but she is also aware of the downside. She knows that many innocent people—Red and Silver—will end up dying as a result. It is a harrowing lesson that Mare must accept if the future is to change at all, but it is not a lesson she particularly likes. She knows what it is to live in fear of the death of loved ones. She will bring this moral and emotional viewpoint to all that she does in the future.

War

War is an important theme in the novel “Red Queen” by Victoria Aveyard. War is open combat and bloodshed between two or more opposing sides, occurring when peaceful resolution of differences is either not possible, or no longer possible, or when the needs of a nation especially in pursuit of survival necessitate war. In “Red Queen,” a war has been ongoing primarily between Norta and the Lakelands for nearly a hundred years.

Peaceful resolution to the needs of Lakeland and Norta cannot be settled. Norta needs fertile, flat farmland to feed its people; Lakeland needs access to the sea beyond Norta. Unable to come to a deal, both countries declared war on each other. The war is fought principally by Reds, who make up the bulk of both armies. They are seen as expendable troops. They are led by Silvers, who often lead from behind in safety. Not all Silvers do this, however. Some fight in the trenches with their troops, and many have even died alongside their Red units.

The war eats men up at an alarming rate. The central battleground known as the Choke has evolved into a kind of no-man’s land, where both Nortans and Lakelanders die in vain attempts to gain ground. It is eerily reminiscent of World War I. Men, and even some women, are conscripted at the age of eighteen to go and fight. Few of those conscripted return alive. Mare, and many other Red families, live with loss and the threat of loss on a daily basis.

The war is one of the many reasons that Mare hates the Silvers. The war also serves as a reason for Mare to try to find a way for her and Kilorn to flee the Stilts to avoid being conscripted. This attempt to avert going to war ultimately leads to Mare’s employment in the Royal Household, and the unfolding of the plot. In Summerton, Mare learns that Cal is training a 5,000-man, all-Silver unit called the Shadow Legion. They will dress as Reds, fight on the front lines as Reds, but will use their powers to turn the tide of the war to victory. This surprises Mare, for such a thing has never occurred before.

This plan never materializes, as the Scarlet Guard terrorist attacks on Archeon compel the king to order Cal and his unit to garrison Archeon. The Guards are promising their own war through bombings and assassinations. It becomes clear that Cal’s legion will have an even greater part to play than at the front lines as Cal personally leads his troops against the Guard. By the end of the novel, a second war is coming, an inner rebellion which will severely tax the resolve and strength of Norta as a whole.



Love

Love is an important theme in the novel “Red Queen” by Victoria Aveyard. Love exists in two forms in the novel, both familial and romantic, and both forms heavily influence events. Both kinds of love affect Mare, Cal, and Maven in different ways and to different ends.

When the novel begins, it is clear that Mare deeply loves her family. She misses her brothers dearly, wearing earrings in symbolic solidarity with them while they are away at the front. Having been in trouble with the law numerous times, Mare works as a pickpocket in order to provide additional income for her family. Her mother frowns upon this morally, but knows it is necessary for the family to survive.

Mare’s family is very close-knit as well. When Mare tells Gisa about her plans to run away with Kilorn so neither must face conscription, Gisa readily agrees to help out of love for family, and out of romantic feelings for Kilorn. (Kilorn himself has romantic feelings for Mare.) In Summerton, when things go awry, Gisa even attempts to pickpocket on her own to help Mare. However, this ends up disastrously for Gisa, who is caught red-handed and punished accordingly. When Mare is later enlisted to work at the palace, and when Mare’s true nature is later discovered and she must portray a war orphan, it is all done for love of her family. By going along with the royals, Mare has ensured not only the survival of her family, but the return of her three brothers from the front.

Romantic love begins for Mare when she meets Cal, who promises to get her a good job. Mare comes to realize soon after that Cal is the heir to the throne, but as a Silver, he is not evil. She learns this is also true of Prince Maven, to whom she becomes betrothed. As time passes, Mare warms up to both brothers. While her unfolding feelings for Cal alternate between love and hate, her feelings for Maven continue to drift steadily toward love.

But love itself becomes endangered and more than a pawn in the rising revolution. Maven knows that Cal has feelings for Mare. He urges Mare to use these feelings to turn Cal against the king and the queen. Mare plays her part incredibly well, very nearly convincing Cal to change sides, but Cal’s loyalty, sense of honor, duty, and love for his father prevent him from succumbing to Mare. Instead, he has Mare and Maven arrested.

The brotherly love Cal once had for Maven, Maven never had for Cal. Likewise, Cal insists that the king never loved him. Maven is a glad and willing participant in the murder of the king and in its cover-up. This betrays the truth that Maven probably never actually loved his father or his step-brother. This helps spur him to overthrowing the existing order of government and succession to the throne.



Revolution

Revolution is an important theme in the novel “Red Queen” by Victoria Aveyard. Revolution involves the often-violent overthrow of an existing government, social order, or power structure in order to make reforms in, liberate, or crack down on a country. In the novel, the Scarlet Guard emerges as an underground revolutionary group determined to overthrow the reigning silver monarchs.

While the ultimate objective of Farley is never clear, her short-term goal is clear: to bring about change, to make sure the Reds receive greater rights and freedoms. The ultimate objectives of Farley, however, are never solidly outlined. Whether merely ensuring the rights of Reds is the objective, or overthrowing and supplanting the government is the objective, or toppling and killing the ruling class, or eradicating all Silvers, or perhaps something else entirely is truly unknown. Nevertheless, Mare, Kilorn, and Maven sign on to be a part of the revolution.

Revolutions are never a safe thing. The revolution begins with bombings. Innocents are killed, though Farley denies that this has happened. Mare and Maven hope that their revolution can be bloodless. Farley says this is impossible. Maven later comes to agree with this assessment, believing the spilling of blood to be necessary. He provides a list of high-level targets for the Scarlet Guard.

Assassinations follow at the Parting Ball. Mare comes face-to-face with the dead, and with the understanding that people will indeed die, including the innocent. Mare symbolically and figuratively ends up with blood on her hands. She realizes that if there is to be a revolution, there will be death, and she will be responsible for it. It is a hard lesson learned, and a truth she is forced to accept if she wants change.

Mare herself comes to suggest the next plan of action: a coup at the highest level of government, in which the king will be seized and reforms forced into action. This stage of the revolution has one primary obstacle: Cal’s Shadow Legion. Maven encourages Mare to manipulate Cal by using Cal’s love for Mare against him. Mare is nearly successful in doing so, but Cal’s loyalty, honor, and love of family narrowly win the day.

However, the actions of the Scarlet Guard shield the revolution that Maven and his mother have plotted and later unveil. The king is killed under the guise of Cal being the murderer. Maven will ascend the throne. He and his mother believe that King Tiberias was too weak, and Cal too emotional, to successfully rule the country. Maven asserts that he will be an iron-fisted ruler who will crush the Scarlet Guard, and will restore real order and balance to the country. As the novel ends, Mare and the Scarlet Guard plot to continue their own revolution. Mare personally vows to kill Maven.

Betrayal

Betrayal is an important theme in the novel “Red Queen” by Victoria Aveyard. Betrayal is the act of treason: the abandoning of loyalty towards one’s country, government,



family, home, or organization often by duplicitous means for personal or greater purposes. Betrayal is one of the worst moral and legal crimes in existence. In the novel, betrayal abounds, mostly in the person of Maven.

When the novel gets underway, Mare begins lessons with Julian. Julian cautions her about being careful to trust anyone, and reminds her that anyone can betray anyone. This can happen to anyone given the right circumstances or situation. Such is the case with his sister, deceased Queen Coriane, whispered into suicide by now-Queen Elara. Such an act is not only a betrayal of the royal family, but a betrayal of supposed friendship between Elara and the queen.

The next major act of betrayal occurs when Maven decides to join the Scarlet Guard. His true intentions for joining are masked, and will later serve as his foundation for yet more betrayals. Maven's apparent motive is that he wishes greater equality for the Reds, to improve their lots in life. Maven's betrayal here superficially comes at the expense of the Silvers: He is selecting high-tier targets for assassination. He is betraying his own kind and his own family in the process.

Maven realizes that Cal poses a serious problem to his plans (both superficial and real) and knows that Cal must either be overcome or brought into the fold. He compels Mare to use Cal's love for her to manipulate him into joining the Scarlet Guard. It is a betrayal of whatever feelings there might be between Cal and Mare that are reciprocated, and it is a potential betrayal of all that Cal holds dear. Yet, Cal's loyalty, duty, honor, and love of family and county prevent him from betraying anyone.

Maven's next major act of betrayal comes when he reveals his true purposes as the king is killed. Maven has used the Scarlet Guard to help things reach a crescendo, so that the Scarlet Guard could be destroyed, betraying his oath to them. He has betrayed and used Mare and Mare's romantic feelings for him against her by manipulating her to work for him against Cal. He has betrayed his father's trust, the legal succession order, and the moral order by participating in the plot to overthrow the king. He also betrays Cal by helping to frame him as the murderer. Maven's multiple acts of betrayal only lead to resolve building against him, with Mare vowing to kill him.



Styles

Point of View

Victoria Aveyard tells her novel “Red Queen” in the first-person limited-omniscient perspective from the point of view of main character and principal protagonist, Mare. The first-person narrative allows the reader to follow events as they unfold directly related to Mare. The reader is given intimate glimpses into Mare’s innermost thoughts and feelings, which in turn help to explain her actions in the novel. For example, when she attempts to sway Cal to betray the king, she thinks about how she is trying to manipulate him. Her thoughts become intrinsic to explaining the process as it unfolds. The limited-omniscient aspect of the narrative adds a sense of suspense and drama, as the reader only learns and discovers things in real time as Mare learns and discovers them.

Language and Meaning

Victoria Aveyard tells her novel “Red Queen” in language that is simple and straightforward. This is done for at least two primary reasons. First, the novel is told in the first-person narrative mode from the point of view of seventeen-year-old Mare, a young girl with little quality education afforded by her status as a Red. As a result, the language is fitting to her age and level of education given her characterization as a Red. Secondly, the novel is geared primarily toward an audience of young adults, so the language employed in telling the story is geared towards their age and level of education as well.

Structure

Victoria Aveyard divides her novel “Red Queen” into twenty-eight consecutive, chronological, and numbered chapters, capped by an epilogue. The simple and straightforward approach to the construction of the novel allows the reader to remain focused on the plot. Given that the world in which the novel occurs is largely unknown to the reader—from the kingdom of Norta to the classes and stations of Silvers and Reds—the simple and straightforward structure allows the reader to better navigate the unknown. The novel is intended to be the first in a series, and ends with a cliffhanger where Maven has become king while Mare and Cal have narrowly escaped death.



Quotes

But like all Silvers, they don't act out of need. They are driven by want. And what they want, they get.

-- Mare (Chapter 2 paragraph 3)

Importance: When the novel begins, Mare and the Reds live in poverty. They have very little, while the Silvers have a lot. Mare and most Reds hate the Silvers, considering them to be greedy and evil. The Silvers have all the power, and get whatever they want. The Reds have no power, and live at the whim of the Silvers.

Everything has a price.

-- Mare (Chapter 3 paragraph 37)

Importance: Mare, bargaining with Farley to gain safe passage for herself and for Kilorn, is given a price tag of 2,000 Crowns for the service. It is a staggering price, but one that needs to be paid. All things done in life, Mare knows, has a price. And not everything is measured in money. This quote serves as an ill-omen for future events for Mare, and what these future events will cost her.

He got me this job, he saved me, saved my family—and he is one of them. Worse than one of them. A prince. The prince.

-- Mare (Chapter 7 paragraph 2)

Importance: Mare's first awareness that all Silvers are not evil is the knowledge that Cal, who has given her a job and saved her family, is not only a Silver, but the heir to the throne. It is a stunning revelation to Mare, both in terms of who Cal is, and that Cal—a Silver—has willingly helped a Red.

You are not Silver. Your parents are Red, you are Red, and your blood is red," the queen murmurs, prowling before the bars of my cage. "You are a miracle, Mare Barrow, an impossibility. Something even I can't understand, and I have seen all of you.

-- Queen Elara (Chapter 8 paragraph 22)

Importance: When Mare's special powers become apparent, she throws the upper echelons of Silver society—including the Royal Family—into chaos. The queen succinctly explains the situation. Only Silvers are supposed to have special powers. Mare is not a Silver. Mare defies logic and all explanation and is therefore incredibly dangerous.

Thinking all Silvers are evil is just as wrong as thinking all Reds are inferior.

-- Julian Jacos (Chapter 13 paragraph 46)

Importance: Here, Julian continues Mare's unfolding understanding of the world as she begins to come of age. He essentially argues that any prejudice is wrong, whether it is against Silvers or against Reds. Julian quickly gets to the point, saying that believing all



Silvers are evil is just as wrong as Silvers thinking all Reds are inferior. It simply isn't true, as Mare comes to learn.

I'm going to be king one day. I don't have the luxury of being selfish.
-- Cal (Chapter 14 paragraph 59)

Importance: While heading out in disguise with Cal, Mare wonders about all the freedoms that Cal must have. Cal explains that being powerful isn't free, and that being selfish isn't something he has the luxury of enjoying. As a king, he sees his role as one of service, not ruling. To serve the people, to give them all he has, he cannot be selfish.

This world is silver, but it is also gray. There is no black-and-white.
-- Mare (Chapter 18 paragraph 37)

Importance: Mare comes to realize at last that nothing in the world is the way she thought it was. She had previously seen the world as purely good and evil, right and wrong, Red and Silver. Likewise, she had seen Silver as the dominant force in the world. Now, she knows better. Through Julian, Maven, and Cal, Mare learns that not all Silvers are evil, and that even among the Silvers, there is pain and suffering.

I just wish it didn't have to be this way.
-- Mare (Chapter 19 paragraph 57)

Importance: Learning that revolution will mean death—including the deaths of good and innocent people—Mare is stunned and saddened. Yet she also comes to sadly accept that what must be done, must be done. Her regret and reluctance is still impossible to hide, and she demonstrates it by saying that she wishes things didn't have to be that way.

Anyone can betray anyone.
-- Julian (Chapter 19 paragraph 85)

Importance: Julian gives Mare an incredibly important piece of information. It is the best piece of information she is given throughout the novel. Julian tells her to trust no one, but Mare does not listen. The person she comes to trust most—Maven—is the one who ultimately betrays her.

I must do everything I can until my blood is matched and my game is over. Until they drag me away and kill me.
-- Mare (Chapter 23 paragraph 37)

Importance: Believing that her spilled blood will lead the Silvers to her doorstep and will mean the end of her life, Mare vows to do everything she can until she is found out and killed. She knows the revolution must succeed, that she has been given an opportunity unlike anyone else in history to make change. She is courageous and determined to die in order to try to make a difference. Mare, who once called herself a coward, is a coward no longer.



When she stops, I feel dead. I want to be dead. At least I know I won't have long to wait.
-- Mare (Chapter 26 paragraph 7)

Importance: Queen Elara probes Mare's mind. Elara is able to find out the truth behind every move Mare has made and is able to see clearly Mare's role in the revolution and her interactions with the Scarlet Guard. This probing exhausts Mare, physically and mentally. She feels as if she has betrayed the cause and the revolution, even though it has been involuntary. She feels like she wants to die, but knows she will be dead soon enough for what she has done.

Maven has betrayed me. No, he was never on my side at all.
-- Mare (Chapter 27 paragraph 1)

Importance: The greatest betrayal of all in the novel comes in the form of Maven betraying Mare. Betrothed to one another, and with Mare falling in love with Maven, Maven's betray of Mare is especially vicious. Mare's heart is broken, not just from the failure of the revolution, but is broken from love lost as well. It ultimately galvanizes her to vow to one day kill Maven.