



King's Cage

Victoria Aveyard

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The #1 *New York Times* bestselling series!

In this breathless third installment to Victoria Aveyard's #1 *New York Times* bestselling Red Queen series, rebellion is rising and allegiances will be tested on every side. Perfect for fans of George R.R. Martin's Game of Thrones series.

Mare Barrow is a prisoner, powerless without her lightning, tormented by her lethal mistakes. She lives at the mercy of a boy she once loved, a boy made of lies and betrayal. Now a king, Maven Calore continues weaving his dead mother's web in an attempt to maintain control over his country—and his prisoner.

As Mare bears the weight of Silent Stone in the palace, her once-ragtag band of newbloods and Reds continue organizing, training, and expanding. They prepare for war, no longer able to linger in the shadows. And Cal, the exiled prince with his own claim on Mare's heart, will stop at nothing to bring her back.

When blood turns on blood, and ability on ability, there may be no one left to put out the fire—leaving Norta as Mare knows it to burn all the way down.

And don't miss *Broken Throne: A Red Queen Collection*, featuring three brand-new novellas and other exclusive content, coming in April!

King's Cage Details

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From Reader Review King's Cage for online ebook

P says

Too many fillers. Boring writing style. Disintegrated storyline. Dull characters. Flat villain.

King's Cage is a bipolar book. Everything is swung up and down all the time, especially the characters being unstable and intermittent. I'm beyond disappointment and frustration, even though I didn't expect anything at all before reading, I still feel as if this book is a waste of my time. If you think Glass Sword was terrible, you would be terribly wrong because this book was ten times worse that I couldn't be so sure whether I was reading a book or a screenplay.

“I've been broken too many times to break again.”

King's Cage has its loop since the beginning: one, the description of the scene, and two, the description of the costumes, and three, the character progresses their own stories. Then it's back to the first step again and again. One and two and three. One and two and three. UNTIL THE END OF THIS BOOK. It keeps repeating without changing the tactic of narrating the story. I haven't known how dull Victoria Aveyard's writing style is until now. Her writing is getting worse and worse compared with Red Queen. She wrote this book like doing a screenplay and had no idea how disastrous it was for the gap between chapter 28 and chapter 29. The action scenes are the worst of all. They're scattered; hell, this isn't a comic that you can skip the scenes because you have illustrations to substitute it. A novel needs details to complete actions and a story needs skills to weave it carefully, not just putting a piece of them and you call it a novel. Yet VA does that all the time. She skips the scenes incessantly I wanted to stop reading many times if it wasn't for the cost that was worth my three meals, perhaps four.

However, I can conclude this book into one paragraph below.

(view spoiler)

“To stand in front of a person who is your whole world and be told you are not enough. You are not the choice. You are a shadow to the person who is your sun.”

3 Stars for Red Queen for its awesome plot and setting. 2 Stars for Glass Sword because I didn't like Mare at all. She was such a brat in that book and her character made everything awful. And 1 star for King's Cage.

This book is utterly terrible, in my opinion. It is a black void of space with the story floating around and is impossible to grab. The worst book I've ever read in almost two years. Oh! and the ending is forced, too. I couldn't believe that would happen, whether the author intended to do it this way since the beginning or not, she should have been more elaborate.

0 for the story and 1 star for shirtless Cal and his abs.

I don't care who Mare will end up with. Cal ? Meh ! Maven ? I feel nothing for him. Kilorn ? I'm not surprised at all. Or she will probably die at the end of this series. Yet It doesn't bother me any.

“You aren’t alone.” The hope in his eyes cuts deeply. “You have your crown.”

More at <https://goo.gl/HwfSIJ>

Kisses A says

Minor Spoilers Ahead!!!!!!!!!!

So guys this was one of my favourite series but this book just made me so upset. I hate it!!!! I feel to laugh in Mare's face at the end. Bitch. I am so happy that that happened! I think that's one of the only positives. Oh and these are just my taught and opinions ;)

So I finally decided to do a proper review.

I gave this book 2*. I won't lie the first half was enjoyable. The sarcasm was on point and I loved the whole weird feelings and relationship between Mare and Maven. It was interesting and reminded me so much of Unravel Me that it just broke my heart.

The whole plot with Cameron and Cal and crew was just a yawn fest for me.

However I finally realised what people mean about Mare. My eyes was finally open to see how she is a self centered bitch. Everything must revolve around her or else she will find a way for the plot to become so. For example Maven stayed away from Mare for like about a month and because she was bored and felt as if he was not paying her any attention she made it her duty to get his attention. Its ridiculous. Why does the author goad on readers in a certain direction and just totally do the opposite by the end of the book? Why give me hope? I can understand if you don't fool readers and tell them about one thing but then and stick with that. Then there is no reason to get angry. But when you make me feel one way and then just snatch it away???? Just for fan reaction I get angry and pissed.

Anyway so the plot pretty much was non existent. You can skip this one really and go on to book 4.

Surprisingly I liked Cal better in this book than the last. I totally understand why he did what he did. Once again Mare cough*ass* tries to make him feel bad. Cal is so much more than the author makes him out to be. He reminds ma a bit of Chaol though.

I just have a bad feeling that Maven will die in the next book. I hope not. I really do. At this point I can just

read an entire book from his perspective. My heart broke for him in this book. Such a strong character. I feel so sorry for him. Why can't Maven just be happy and get a good ending? Is it too much to ask???? Maven is a character who needs time and his character needs to be fleshed out properly so that he can be understood and not misread. Come on Victoria. You can do better. (view spoiler) Gonna say this now: if book 4 turns out the way i hope then i will totally try to look pass the sheer stupidity of this one. Anyway let me stop my rambling for now. May or may not read the last book.

Edit.

For the Mare & Maven shippers

(view spoiler)

Edit (taught before reading)

my link text. **Guys the books trailer!!!!!!Maven!!!!!!Agggggggghhhhhbfhskkd**

Lets remind ourselves of how sexy Maven is!

The shadow of the flame. He is certainly ablaze, but darkness eats at his edges. Bruise-like splotches of black and blue surround eyes bloodshot with silver veins. He has not slept. He's thinner than I remember, leaner, crueler. His hair, black as a void, has reached his ears, curling at the ends, and his cheeks are still smooth.

Maven!!!

Edit

Guys! Tomorrow!!! Despite what happens that's that. I am going into it with low expectations, because when I go in in the highs everything is just awful if I expect too much and that has happened a lot especially with Throne of Glass series for me. Good luck everyone!

I need the time to sapped up to Feb 7th! I don't think I can wait any longer! The suspense is killing me!!!!

Update

A snippet

Knowing it's what he wants to see, I let the tears of frustration overwhelm and fall. He tracks their paths with hunger

I know Maven still has feelings for Mare.

Edit

It has a cover!!!! And its a crown made of BONES!!!!

A bag of mysteries, this book!!!

All Will Burn...

Edit

Title!!!! We have a title KING'S CAGE!!!!

No no. No no!!!!
This. Can't . Be!!!!
I need my Mavey ship to sail!!!

Pang says

3.5 Stars... So politic and sh*t this wrench my gut.

What can I say? This series kept more and more like a dystopian fiction, more than being high fantasy. However, I like this one a bit better than *Glass Sword* due to politic game, more Maven, and because THIS ONE GAVE ME MANY FEELSSS *angry* *giddy* *angry* *giddy* and then *wrathhhhhh*, not made me all bored like GS!

1. CAI & MARE and Politic attitudes.

I *love* that the characters are not totally *black* or *white*. There are what they are because of how they been raised, their family background, and whatever around them.

Cal & Mare, as much as I'm frustrated of how different attitudes of Cal and Mare are (and we know they love each other!) but they just didn't get along well about their politic thoughts. *love* bicker* *love* bicker* *ugh* BUT in other way, it's interesting for me to see how they insist on what they believe. (Not like some Soup Opera 'Oh I love you, I will give up my revenge and choose to be with you' boo)

Cal is Silver, been born and raise like a Silver. Mare is new blood (but her heart is Red) Their issue and scene is just SO WHATTT?!?!???? (view spoiler) But I don't judge them. I don't think Cal or Mare is right or wrong. They always remind me of two sides (in my society) in politic days. **Silver aka. Superior one & Red aka. Inferior one** that's why I understand them both. *Except if I read this in politic days, I might be RAGEEEE at one of them here because I pick a side* Hahahaha but now no I like them both.

2. More MAVEN and his complicated character

Love this one of how it gave me many pages of Maven (which is my favorite parts among all). Gosh how I love his character. **This boy is broken, complex, and interesting.** We saw how he love Mare, have soft spots for her, BUT He is still wicked and cunning (Not bad turns good in sudden just because of loooovve) Whatever, **He love her in his poisonous way & Their tension IS the BEST!** Goshh *His Love. Her Hatred. Just wrench my gut! My Heart bleed and I'm in pain.*

So it comes to my complaint... ARE TWO BOYS LOVE HER NOT ENOUGH!!!!???? In *Glass Sword*, I remember I felt sorry so much for Killoin. and I pray, I PRAY that my favorite boy **Maven** will not love

Mare like Killon does. Then I read *King's Cage* and what I got? Gosh *He love her*, love so much. **His confession made my heart giddy and hurt cuz I'm afraid to know the end.** As much as I'm happy at every scenes between Mare and Maven I read, but it still prickles my heart cuz I know in every breath that in Mare's heart, she hates him. She will never love him as loving his brother.

Stop. Just stop torturing my heart. Stop playing with my feelings. I don't know.. it's like Mare and Maven more get along together in terms of their inner personality, but just because she thinks he is evil so she insists every bit in herself to not feel for him. Damn. It would be very interesting to see them as Silver King & Red Queen together.

That's what all. TALK BOOK WITH ME BELOW PLEASE!

Rachel E. Carter says

"You ask how much of it was me," he whispers. "Some. Enough."

DEAR MARE, STOP PICKING THE WRONG BROTHER.

Warning, spoilers abound, do not continue with this review unless you have read the book.

First of all, I CALLED IT. I KNEW that we'd be getting lots of Maven and seeing the boy behind the villain's mask in this one. And PRAISE THE BOOK GODS, I'm so glad Victoria didn't let me down. She gave us all those moments we hoped for, the explanation, the moments of fragility, the tension, everything... She gave me a beautiful, tragic, tormented villain who fell in love with the wrong girl.

...I say wrong because Mare does not deserve this ~~Darkling, this twisted Warner~~ of a king. Her reaction to his kiss, during the vulnerable tenuous moment between the two was what finally convinced me to give up on their love story (whereas in *Shatter Me* you could pick up on something in Warner & Juliette's kiss, here there's nothing. It's gone, alright, I get the message. Mare feels nothing but disgust, it's a "violation of the worst kind" -she's in control and she'll never pick the villain). While I have never felt the spark between Mare and Cal (yup, even in this book including *that* scene), she's never going to be Maven's. That's fine, I'll take him. Mare doesn't deserve him, even though Maven is more like her than Cal will ever be.

This is a boy who was crippled from birth by an evil woman so terrible he doesn't know what thoughts are his. I just want him to have a happily ever after. But there is none. This boy is darkness incarnate and I have a feeling he's going to end up doing something noble to save Cal or Mare or his people in the next (final) book (to redeem himself the only way a villain can) and I just can't cope.

The first book is still my favorite, but King's Cage gave me so many beautiful twisted lines. Victoria is a master of powerful prose, and she delivered some exceptional ones --as you might expect, my favorite ones were *his*.

"Love makes you weak. And she's right. I learned that before I even knew you."

"I'm not a fool, little lightning girl. If you're going to play in my head, I'm going to play in yours. It's what we're good at."

.... I could try to write a review of this entire book, but let's be honest, I read it for Maven and I don't have the heart to write everything up because I'm in mourning for a ship that will never sail.

(yes, I realize Maven does not have blonde hair but this gif fits perfectly)

#teamMaven

Virginia Ronan ♥ Herondale ♥ says

As promised here I go with my review!

First of all: I loved King's Cage and didn't want it to end! *fangirl squeee* After the fast-paced Glass Sword I was really looking forward to find out what would happen to Mare and the book definitely didn't disappoint me. Book three basically picks up where Glass Sword left off and our poor heroine is still kneeling in front of Maven.

The first two-thirds of the book deal with Mare's captivity and the torture her life has become, the last third is about her return to the Guard and the fight against the now combined forces of Norta and the Lakelands. Well so much about the storyline and general plot, now we're heading straight for the fun stuff! XD

Considering the fact Mare is in captivity for almost the entire book you'd really think that it would be boring to read about her experiences. But NO! There definitely was nothing boring about her situation and even though there is no fast-paced action like in the second instalment you still have to remind yourself to breathe. I'm sure now you're asking yourself why anyone would stop to breathe while they are reading a book and the answer is simple: The intensity of King's Cage literally chokes you! It takes away your breath and leaves you gasping for air and it gives you all the pleasant shivers you've been craving for but never realised you wanted to feel! XD The atmosphere of this book is just breath-taking and sometimes I was forced to stop reading because I found myself unable to deal with another chapter. (Yes, the book was that good!!!) The conversations between Maven and Mare were nothing but awesome (the breakfast and the bathroom scene before the wedding! OMG the bathroom scene killed me!!!) and I definitely want more of them! So please Victoria let them meet again, let them be at each other's throat and speak the bitter truth! They are equals in every possible way and I want them to finish what they've begun! XD God, I so can't wait to read the fourth book!

"More Silent Stone," I mumble, saying the words like a curse. The polished orbs of my wearable prison gleam. "You must be running low by now."

"Thank you for your concern, but the supply is well in order."

"What's so funny?"

"How many times have you tried to kill me?"

"Just the once."

Refreshing honesty between those two. *lol*

He stares up at me. "Those who know what it's like in the dark will do anything to stay in the light."

"Don't act like we're the same."

"The same? No." He shakes his head. "But perhaps ... we're even."

"Even?" Again I want to tear him apart. Use my nails, my teeth to rip his throat. The insinuation cuts. Almost as much as the fact that he might be right.

Okay, enough of the plot and straight to the characters! Even though Red Queen is a YA series and therefore is kind of supposed to have a good protagonist I can't say that I truly love any of the main characters (Well, except of Maven. I love Maven to bits and pieces! *lol*) and I think this is exactly the reason why I like those books so much. There are no stereotypes, all of the players are neither good nor bad, they all have their flaws and problems and if anything they are neither white nor black. They are all different shades of grey which actually makes the book even more appealing! Well, at least for a reader like me. ;-)

Mare: The little lightning girl has grown in the third book and questions everything and everyone. She's no longer the naïve girl she used to be and she finally seems to realise the many mistakes she made. I kind of disliked her for being so selfish in the first two books but now that she's forced to spend her time with Maven her character actually gets a chance to develop and to think about everything that has happened. I loved to see how much she grew and I really hope the end of King's Cage won't destroy everything she has become.

The true question eats at my brain. What Maven is really asking. Would you give up your ability, would you trade your power, to go back? I don't need time to figure out an answer.

"No," I whisper.

Cal: Argh! I don't like him! He's exactly the opposite of Mare and where she managed to develop "Your Highness" still stayed the same. Never in my entire life have I met such a cowardly character and I really dislike him for being unable to choose! I mean seriously how hard can it be? Silvers: betrayed him, wanted to kill him in the arena, chased him and stripped him of his title. Made him a rebel and decided to believe that he murdered his own father. Guard: took him in and saved his life, let him live with them and gave him food, clothes and a purpose. They even tolerated him in their midst and tried to be kind to him. Tough decision, right? Yet Cal still refuses to see the truth and sticks to the old ways! Yep, I don't like him and I truly doubt this is going to change in the next book.

"Promise me. Promise you won't leave. Promise you won't go back. Promise you won't undo everything my brother died for."

His low sigh washes across my face.

"I promise."

Cal you stupid, incorrigible and stubborn moron! *grumbles* Guess unlike Maven you're no man of your word...

"I'm doing what my brother never could. Cal follows orders, but he can't make choices. You know that as well as I do."

Damn right, Maven! That's Cal's behaviour in a nutshell! XD

Maven: I hate, I loathe, I despise him so much! I hate him! I love him! I actually love him because I hate him so much!! Oh my god! Victoria what did you do to me?!? He's the villain and I'm supposed to detest him, but I can't! Because he's just so hurt, so tortured, so driven by what he feels for Mare. He's like poison that sneaks into my mind and makes me want to love him. Gosh! I know exactly how Mare feels! XD Victoria you're killing me! I think I'm going to die if I read more about him, but please, please, please write more about him in the next book! *lol*I know I'm not making any sense but I want more of Maven! More of that beautiful, cruel, corrupted, cunning, destroyed, relentless and shattered soul! XD Please! *making huge puppy eyes*

"I think you may have a bit of an obsession where Cal is concerned. Are you going to blame that on your mother too?" It was meant to be a joke, but to Maven it is anything but. His gaze wavers, only for an instant. A shocking one. In spite of myself, I feel my eyes widen and my heart drop in my chest. He doesn't know. He truly doesn't know what parts of his mind are his own and what parts were made by her.

"Never breaking eye contact, Maven slips the flamemaker bracelet from his wrist. It's slow, deliberate, methodic. I hear it hit the floor and roll, silver metal ringing against the marble. The other quickly follows. Still watching, he leans back in the bath and tips his head. Exposing his neck. At my side, my hands twitch. It would be so easy. Wrap my brown fingers around his pale neck. Put all my weight into it. Pin him down. Cal is afraid of water. Is Maven? I could drown him. Kill him. Let the bathwater boil us both. He dares me to do it. Part of him might want me to do it. Or it could be one of the thousand traps I've fallen for. Another trick of Maven Calore.

OH. MY. GOD! That scene killed me and it describes Maven so well! XD

Evangeline and Elane: Oh well, I certainly didn't expect that one! It was nice to see Eve has some sort of a heart though. ;-)

Cameron: I still dislike her and think she's as incorrigible as Cal. In her case she at least has the excuse that she is a whole lot younger and more inexperienced than the prince, yet she still seems to have a better judgment than him. So yes, she certainly is shrewder than Cal. XD Then again who isn't?

Farley: I think that's the only thing I didn't like about the book. I mean come on! The woman just gave birth to a little girl and is already back in the fight? Solder through and through? Seriously? Are you kidding me, Victoria? I know no mother that would leave her new-born baby with its granny and run straight into a fight. I really think that was more than just unrealistic. Not to mention that giving birth is definitely no walk in the park. *lol* Yeah they have awesome healers; I'm aware of that, but still! As a mother it kind of rubbed me the wrong way. XD Just saying!

Since this was the only thing I didn't like the book still gets five stars and I can easily recommend it to everyone who's eager to read it! I'm sure you won't regret it. ;-P

Cara says

The face of Universal Studios executives every time Aveyard says the movie is in development with them

despite it's been five years, the producer has had two box office bombs (one that devalued the stock price of Lionsgate), and they've so obviously passed over the movie rights like dodging a bad box office nuclear bomb:

Mare, I'd argue, is the central character who let this series down. Not just how insufferable she is but how Aveyard scrambled to reassign the ethnicity of the character halfway through the series – in one of the most shameful acts of commercialistic tokenism I've pretty much ever heard of. I've noticed that trend a lot lately, YA authors wanting to be heralded and championed by their readers as inclusive and diverse —*cough* Carve The Mark *cough*cough* — so they think, I'll toss a black person in it as a main character. Yeah. That'll totally do it. When confronted about the fact Mare's sister, Gisa, is white, Aveyard's uninventive response was that she was white but Mare was dark-skinned because... genetics—BOOM! And OK, yeah, it could happen between siblings but on the most unrealistic genetic odds; odds that someone, who is supposed to be a screenwriter in the age of the cynical movie-goer, would have to know that no one is EVER going to buy that excuse. You can just see a movie audience over on Rotten Tomatoes doing an eye-roll as I speak.

In a post Oscars so White world that excuse is just so lame that it doesn't even warrant a response, so I'm quickly going to disprove what Aveyard is saying by Book Trailer 1 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UbsN...>) and Book Trailer 2 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCeR_...). You'll notice in these trailers both the actors playing Mare are white, which doesn't make sense as Epic Reads is owned by Aveyard's publisher; they would have had firsthand knowledge and contact with Victoria about Mare's ethnicity. And with the number of times she's appeared on their segments, she hasn't raised anything about the trailers being racially inaccurate with anyone. Now Mare's skin is always self-consciously talked about at pretty much every possible occurrence in Glass Sword and King's Cage. I can just picture Aveyard hammering at her keypad going: I HAVE HISPANIC CHARACTER. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS!!!!

And here is where our problem lies. Commercialistic tokenism. Honestly, one author I give props to is Cassandra Clare. (Give me a sec to explain.) I don't really like her writing at all but her characters and their sexualities and nationalities were always unashamedly out in the open and organic, woven into the DNA of the characters. (Not an afterthought.) I've asked myself this question a lot, the question that if they show a person of colour isn't that good on its own merit no matter how crap it is or how manipulative that is? I'm going to say at least they tried. But it still annoys me that characters of colour written by people of colour are more often than not hidden behind the bookshelves of characters of colour written by white women. And the idea of Mare in a movie studio that I love just gives me chills – if you thought Bella's dialogue was bad wait until you get a load of the way Mare speaks.

And the f/f relationship. What an effrontery to us lesbian women everywhere that was. It felt forced, stunted, plastic. Aveyard appeared on numerous sites toting the fact that she had a lesbian relationship, specifically to draw attention and enumerate the fact. And this draws me to the reason why I've increasingly become adrift to YA author's charm of late, who feel that every act of including someone different than they are, someone who is not white, someone who is not straight, is cause for a celebration, a congratulatory pat on the back. They pause when they announce stuff like that, as if they're expecting adoring applause to drown out the noise around them. I feel more like I've been checking my watch, tapping my foot impatiently for YA authors to arrive at the party with the rest of us literati, and now they're here I'm forced to pretend that I enjoy their company. Now they're acting like the life of the party despite the fact that it's two hours late, we've all gotten seriously drunk and eaten all the food, we're getting our coats on – and are walking out the door.

This series, like its botch attempt to complete the laborious chores of being “diverse”, is an afterthought.

Ben Alderson says

REVIEW TO COME AFTER RELEASE DATE!

Andreea Pop says

4.5 Stars

“Somewhere in the distance, somewhere in my bones, thunder rolls.”

If *Red Queen* was a game of charade and *Glass Sword* was a game changer, then *King's Cage* is a reincarnation of the two, manipulation and war and survival and politics woven into its essence, but on a whole other level. No longer a hide and seek playground, but a chessboard where powerful masterminds control kings and queens and princes and princesses and many, many pawns to fight for the ultimate trophy - the throne of Norta. Organized chaos that was delicious to watch unfold.

Glass Sword ended with a jaw-dropping twist that meant the focus in this continuation will transfer to the dynamic between Mare and Maven. I stopped comparing Maven and The Darkling a long time ago and rightfully so -- whereas with The Darkling I always felt an inkling of hope for redemption, with Maven there is only the clinical dissecting of his behavior and attitudes that give no room for such innocent naivety. What brought me emotionally to my knees was not the revelation that he really is a pawn through and through, even after his mother's death, but that he is aware of it and he accepts his damned fate, molding to the villain persona by his own accord. He is a four-gear system that runs on hate, anger, fear and twisted love. Maven is a victim and you cannot help but feel pity for him. The what ifs of what he could have become without Elara's interference are a stark reminder that monsters are made, not born.

“The pain makes you stronger. Love makes you weak.”

Maven's obsession with Mare is another side-effect. It's honestly so sad to watch his inability to change and to love normally. His mind is perpetually assaulted by paranoia and loneliness, continuously eating at his ghost of a soul. He astounds through his cunningness and cleverness, many underestimating him. But he is his mother's son, after all, and the legacy leaves behind both scars and advantages. Mare is the one that knows him best and they use each other to survive a royal cage that, paradoxically, suffocates them both.

Mare Barrow goes through her biggest character development yet. Our heroine grows so much, even through trauma. I love that, despite the fact that she has been put through hell, she doesn't let herself get sucked into the void. She still smiles, she still loves, she doesn't lose hope. Her sparks, even though kept away in tangible form, reside inside herself and allow her to live. And I loved the fact that she is portrayed in fear lots of time -- it doesn't make her weak, on the contrary; the fear brings out her deepest survival instincts, giving her a shot of winning the battle against greater opponents that loom over her shoulder. Much like Maven. And goddamn it, she fights, with her mind, with her body. She fights to not become a skeleton trapped in a prison,

mentally and physically.

I also adored her demeanor towards Maven, taking advantage of his weakness for her, but always trying to bring him on the right path. Their dialogue is beautiful, mirroring two broken souls, trying to outsmart each other. They find refuge in one another, no matter how twisted and toxic. And Mare, at least, finally gets a clearer picture about this plague of a boy.

“She was his hurricane, and every nudge pulled him deeper into the eye of the storm.”

May I please fangirl about Cal? This romantic, strong, intelligent, caring, naive, hot, intense, good fucKING SILVER PRINCE THAT TAKES THE WRONG DECISION AND CANNOT CUT THE CRAP OF THOSE WHO WANT TO USE HIM AND CANNOT KEEP HIS PROMISES. Sorry. That must have been a bit harsh. But it's the truth. I honestly love him to bits. His love for Mare turns me to a blubbering mess. His hope for Maven is crushing. His friendship with Kilorn warms my heart. But fucking hell he's still Prince Tiberias the Seventh and his identity bites everyone in the ass, especially himself. AND HE'S A GODDAMN STUPID IDIOT. Okay, I'm done ranting.

“It's not his fault the lightning girl loves him, and he must bear the curse that love brings with it.”

The romance between this sweet yet insufferable young man and our dearest Mare melted my heart. The mutual support, the understanding, the goofiness, the sexiness, the courage to break stereotypes... ALL OF IT is just wonderful. **sigh**

I need to give lots of claps for one character in particular, or rather Aveyard's flawless constructing of it, making me feel something I have never contemplated in the first two books: love for Evangeline Samos. However, don't imagine something along the lines of the sudden angelic rendering of Celeste in *The One*, for instance. Far from it. Evangeline is still the quintessential bitch. But I adored how she upgraded from a mere queen-wannabe that has only arrogance, ambition and jealousy as main traits to a deeply intriguing, multi-layered and surprising anti-heroine. Again, readers can regard her as another one who was made. Made for being a queen, made for being perfect, made for her family's well being. We have her POV as well, not necessarily as a mechanism to see from a different perspective, but to offer further glimpses into a universe governed by politics, secrets, manipulation and, of course, power. Throughout it all, she remains strong as steel, kickass and terrifying, splendid when she is gradually humanized through the unraveling of her desires and fears in a manner that highlights her internal conflict: freedom and love or duty and submission?

“Be the best, the strongest, the smartest, the most deadly and the most cunning. The most worthy. And I was everything.”

As usual, the secondary characters pretty much rocked. Farley is awesome. Julian is awesome. Sara is awesome. Kilorn, we don't see as much, but he is comforting in a familiar way. The whole Samos family is pretty much badass in a disturbing way and I devoured their scenes. The Colonel, a Premier named Davidson, newbloods, Reds and Silvers alike expand the borders of what we previously knew. Old queens, new kings, ruthless princes and princesses and faraway commanders make up the backbone of the Lakelands,

Piedmont, Montfort and, of course, Norta, forging the world-building aspect.

The rhythm had some off-beats here and there. Personally, I associated them with Cameron's POV. She was a bit hard to stomach, even though she is definitely the no-bullshit type. Progressively, I learned to like her, but the reason why I cut down on the rating is partly thanks to her as well. The other motive is the fact that Mare's imprisonment to Maven, although seductive and psychologically-embedded, was slow-burning in a frustrating way, grating on my nerves for the lack of action. It was like I was simultaneously wasting away along Mare, unable to speed up the process.

The ending of this book left my heart in shambles, because I saw it coming miles away. Didn't lessen the pain though. It leaves the story at a precarious tipping point, a crossroads of a sort, with certain revelations confirming what I've been dreading: the last book will equate to death. As a dedicated fangirl, I fear for my mental stability after the next installment closes the story.

King's Cage is a great follow-up in a thrilling and exciting series. The story of this novel will have resounding echoes in the last book (ohmygodjustonemorebook). The grand, masterful blend of action and politics and romance had my head spinning, awed, and the characters infuse a unique vibe to an already mesmerizing mix of dystopia and fantasy. I cannot recommend these books enough.

ENJOY! <3

Tweebs♥? (semi-hiatus) says

"Wtf was this?" a novel by Tweebs

Out in stores this coming March. Make sure to get yourself a copy because it's slowly climbing up the **NYT** Best-sellers List and it's not even out yet. Also, this just came in.....Paramount Pictures bought rights to make this novel into a movie.

The dream cast has already been selected and, *"wtf is this"* will star:

"Mommy, why art thou torture thy self?"

"Drinking Bleach right now"

"The Lord is testing me"

"Disappoint. Disappoint everywhere "

And many more A-List Celebrities!!

Critiques are saying:

"Tweebs is goals"

"I aspire to be like Tweebs"

"Tweeps = LIFE"

For further info, contact Tweeps' publisher, "I'M DONE", at wtfwasthisshit@hotmail.com

Miranda Reads says

A Smarter girl would turn and run

To be fair...the author *tried* to warn me.

To keep this review from getting as long (and as bloated) as the book, I will focus on the three worst aspects - **the prison, the characters and the sexy scenes.**

Mare's Prison or should I say, my vacation?

The entire book consists of Mare whining about how difficult life was...It's just...come on. Really? What does she have to whine about?

I've been broken too many times to break again.

Her "prison" includes: A private bathroom, **a personal library**, meals three times a day, makeovers, fancy gowns and kingdom tours. **Sign me the f*ck up**

But like a dog starved, I'll take whatever scraps I'm given. Whatever passes for kindness in this lonely cage.

Really, REALLY Mare? **What scraps?** You were invited to be a bridesmaid at a royal wedding. *oh boo-hoo*

To top it all - Mare gets PTSD flashbacks. PTSD flashbacks after her eventual rescue. **Girl. Are. You. Kidding. Me.** Your prison is a \$500-a-night hotel stay.

The Characters or should I say, the CHARACTER??

Now, one annoying character doesn't spoil the book - unfortunately, this was not the case because **Every Character is Mare.**

I listened to the audiobook and each perspective had a different "voice" (posh for Evangeline, British for Farley and "black" for Cameron (yes, picture a stereotypical "black" accent with a hint of Jamaican.) (no one else has that accent, just the sole black girl perspective)).

Without the clear distinctions brought on by the audiobook, telling apart the characters became really difficult. Therefore, I've written a cheat-sheet for those who only have the text:

How to tell your Mare from your Mare -- 101

--Original Mare: Whiny, self-pitying garbage human. She regularly kills people and only feels "remorse" when convenient for the plot. She literally was made

into a princess-to-be but threw it all away cause she had to read a paragraph of propaganda

--Cameron: The younger, whinier Mare. She's the **token diversity character** and manages to "hate" Mare while simultaneously admiring her. She constantly refers back to her intricately braided hair...because **she's the only black character**. The author uses these "subtle hints" at her skin color *every freaking time* we are at her perspective.

--Evangeline: The older, posher Mare but with **SURPRISE SHE'S GAY** twist. This came out of the blue. It honestly feels like Aveyard threw the twist in because she needed to fill her LGBT+ quota.

--Farley: Pregnant Mare, anyone? Manages to run an entire army **while growing a tiny human** yet everyone is more impressed with Mare surviving "prison." Farley has a hardcore British accent yet no one from her hometown (or her family) has that accent. **The accent is possibly the greatest mystery of this series.**

--Cal: What would Mare be like if she was a **guy**?

--Maven: What would Mare be if she was an **EVIL guy**?

The "Sexay" Parts or should I say the wet blankets?

Now, I'm all for a little bit of a YA smooch-a-roo fest but...these scenes just had me going "ewww". Honestly, what is with authors making every boy have a unique taste? For example, Cal's mouth tasted of:

salt and smoke

and I'm hard-pressed to think of something less appealing thing to stick my tongue in. **How does that even happen?**

Then, there's the awkward bath scene. Picture this: Maven, naked in a bath, bubbles up to his ears, a bit of pre-pubescent chest hairs waving in the water...as he has a **complete conversation with Mare**.

BUT - don't worry, our demure heroine wasn't tempted to look because she's:

familiar with the male form

after living with her father and brothers. *Shudder.*

And then, just when I thought we were done with the awkward scenes...we reach... **The SEXY mud-makeout.**

Let me set the scene: It's cold, it's raining, there thick clumps of soggy mud everywhere...and Mare says, *let's make out hunkysugarbear*. Mare tosses her shirt in the mud and throws Cal's in the mud too.

Excuse me?

You're in a forest, at least throw it on a bush. Who wouldn't be pissed if someone threw their stuff in the mud? Cal. That's who. Cause he was too busy **downing a liter of salt and setting it on fire** to get ready for his big kiss.

I think I'm getting too old for this.

Audiobook Comments

Read by Amanda Dolan. Now it could be because I absolutely hated this pointless waste of paper...but I disliked the audio as well. Everything sounded so bland. Bleh.

Also, it really bugged me that when we swapped perspectives, the accents of all the other characters changed slightly. Is consistency too much to ask for?

Blog | Instagram | Twitter

Chelsea ♥Peril Please♥ says

I'm not leaving this place unless I leave behind his corpse—or mine.

Well...

No one can possibly understand how much love and adoration I have for this series. Book one and two were literal obsessions for me. I loved them so deeply that I literally took the time to annoy each and every one of my closest friends who chose to give a shit...even though 4/5 of them didn't care for this series. **I can't even count all the times throughout a year that I say the name 'Cal'.** I know for a fact that I induced many an eyeroll from everyone around me. All year long it was Cal this, Cal that, epic ending this, epic ending that....it was unforgettable, if only to me. This was my world, and I longed for it every moment I couldn't have it. And then...this.

It's almost comical. Every step I take explodes in my face. I tried to save Kilorn from conscription and maimed my sister instead. I became a maid to help my family and within hours became a prisoner. I believed Maven's words and Maven's false heart. I trusted Cal to choose me. I raided a prison to free people and ended up clutching Shade's corpse. I sacrificed myself to save the people I love. I gave Maven a weapon. And now, try as I might to thwart his reign from the inside, I think I've done something much worse.

Look, I'm clearly the weak link here. You can go to the book's page and *clearly* see that the four and five star reviews are just rolldddd in. And what the funniest thing to me is, **where the hell were these reviews for book one and two?** When I needed someone to fangirl with, when I just *needed* a fix, a quick look at a new perspective from someone who truly loved this series as much as me-where the hell were these amazing, glowing reviews? There was so much hate for the first two books that, okay, yes, were a bit cliché and a bit over the top, and even were a bit repetitive with the phrase 'lightening girl', and now people like *this* one? Okay...that last one was said A LOT, but still. My point is this: **there was no more wrong with those two books than this book**, yet the praise keeps rolling in for KC. In fact, I really wonder what made this such a success in so many people's minds?

Like I said in my pre-post after just finishing-**Its not about the teams and its certainly not about who she will ultimately choose...**or *not* choose. I just think there was so much potential for this story and it fell so so flat.

The smell of smoke gets stronger as I push on. Hope flares. Where there's smoke, there's a fire prince.

Let me start with my least favorite part of this whole book and what I had thought was a shoe in for being my *favorite*: **The extra POV**. I mean....what. The fuck. WAS that?? Cameron was not only a character that I hated more than I could ever POSSIBLY have hated Mare, but she was an absolute brat. She was grouchy. She was judgmental. And, what do I care what anyone thinks, I'm just going to say it: **She did nothing but talk shit about Cal**. FINE. It's *fine*-And believe me when I say that if this was the only problem I had with this book, I would have GLADLY handed this book yet another five-I love this series SO MUCH that I'd have wholeheartedly dealt with the self-righteous and obnoxious Cameron (to this I ask reviewers **why they love Cameron so much?** You all have hated Mare so much...yet Cameron is just Mare on crack. She calls Cal and others out...but she might be just as bad, if not worse, than Mare. So...why?) with a smile on my face. No. Believe me when I say there are far more problems than something as simple as my bias.

Nights spent curled against Cal. Forcing Cameron to join our cause. Stolen moments rereading Maven's sickening notes. Memories of who I thought the forgotten prince was. My cowardice. My nightmares. My mistakes. Every selfish step I took that led me here.
Look what you did. Look what you did. Look what you did.

For one....I've read a million and one books that are bridges to the final story, and not felt an ounce of the **boredom** I felt for this one. It's just a whole lot of nothing, if I'm being honest. I suppose there was plenty of political planning, war strike planning, and even some pretty decent action scenes, but it felt so contrived, so *forced* that I couldn't help but feel wholly disconnected.

Which is my next problem: **Do you ever feel like you're an outsider looking in?** I mean, in a way, aren't books kind of supposed to be like that? Of course we are merely the readers, simply observing our favorite characters from outside the book, rooting them on and hoping they make it out alive? Well, yes, in a way this

is correct. But, if you really think about it, how often do you ACTUALLY feel this way? The answer *should* be never. **You should never feel separated from your characters**, you should always be so fully immersed in the world that you can't tell where your fictitious book world ends and real life begins. There's a fine line here you don't want to cross, and it happened here. Not once in this series have I ever felt like the twice-removed cousin hanging out like a creeper in the back...but this book made me feel so left out, so apart from the story, that when I finally got to the part I pined for, **I just couldn't fall back into the story**. In fact, when that moment hit? I deflated like a balloon. I knew for a fact I wasn't going to love this story, no matter how much went my way. And, believe me, a ton did, all the way up to a twisted, fucked up ending. I just...simply ceased to love, to care. And this might be why **my heart is still completely shattered**.

Even now, when I am painfully his, he won't let go. I would prefer death to this cage, to the twisted obsession of a mad boy king.

And, sigh, the elephant in the room, on my end: Maven. If you look back at my reviews, you can see **I have never hated Maven**. Sure, he has been an obstacle between Cal and Mare, and this brings out the competitive juices in me. But never has there been utter hate. I even liked Maven in book one-not as her love interest, but as a person. He was never a true problem for me because, in the end, **I loved Cal so deeply that the Maven moments were inconsequential**. So, when I heard this was mostly a Maven driven book, it didn't deter me in the least. Who cares?? But I did feel that there was something icky about how he was handled. We all know he's not truly a monster. **He's a wounded boy who grew up with odd circumstances and a repulsive mother**. But we also know Victoria Aveyard's intention is not for Maven to be a love interest-she has made this more than clear. So then...why all the Maven empathy? Isn't it kind of fruitless after 30% to continue laying on the Maven mind games? **He loves Mare in the only way he can**...but even Mare can see a screw is loose. So I guess I just felt like it was cruel to Maven fans, honestly. Which is something I never thought I'd say.

I wonder if he has nightmares of the assassination attempt. Nightmares of his mother, dead by my hand. His father, dead by his action. His brother, in exile but a constant threat. Funny, Maven called himself Cal's shadow, but Cal is the shadow now, haunting every corner of Maven's fragile kingdom.

Sigh. And Mare. Oh Mare-she can make or break your love for this series....where I sit wholeheartedly in the middle. She definitely isn't someone I'd say is a favorite heroine (or even one I truly like) but I don't feel the way most readers do. She is kind of a badass, really. And yes, she has made me so mad I could throw my iPad across the room, but no, she isn't unbearable, to me. She was the best she's ever been-I can assure everyone of that. I won't get into it, but I will say this: **my biggest problem is what COULD be**. I don't know how Aveyard will end this...but I do have a problem with one outcome, and I'll leave it alone because I, quite frankly, don't want to be harassed about it. Just know, there is a super...depressing way this could end, and **I sure hope she doesn't choose to end it that way**, because it would really break my heart.

“If your heart’s not in this, you’re going to get a lot of people killed.”

He whirls, almost knocking me on my ass with the speed and force of his movement. I have seen his fire firsthand, but never so strongly as the flame blazing in his eyes.

“Cameron, my heart is quite literally in this,” he hisses through gritted teeth.

And I’ll make my normally longer than life paragraph about Cal short and sweet. **He had some extremely swoony, wonderful, amazing quotes and moments in this book**-some that I could only dream of actually happening-I was beyond ecstatic. His love for Mare (and actual declaration of it) made my soul soar and I was on cloud nine...but only to an extent. That’s as far as it went because of that ‘feeling like an outsider’ deal I mentioned earlier. I could only immerse myself so far...and that might have been the final nail in the coffin, for me: My darling baby **Cal feeling like the shell of the man he could be**. Just....OUCH.

So, I guess that’s that. A lot of ramble, but a whole lot of deep truths from me. I can only be truthful and I can only say what I feel-**there’s no room for half-truths or false pleasantries**. I liked a few things about this book but, in the end, I just wanted and needed *more*. Evangeline was a definite plus in this book, seeing as I’ve always liked her from afar (and now I adore her), but not enough to save the breaks in this story and my expectations. I’m glad people are loving this....I’m just devastated I’m not one of them.

“Then what do you want?” When Kilorn asked me that same question, it gave me focus, purpose, a clear path in darkness. “What do you want, Cal?”

He answers quickly, eyes blazing. “You.” His fingers tighten on mine, hot but steady in temperature. He’s holding himself back as much as he can. “I am in love with you, and I want you more than anything else in the world.”

I hope even Victoria can read this review and understand I have no ill intent-I will forever be a huge fan of this series and **I STILL love book one and two way more than is acceptable for my health**. It is never my intention to attack an author, to attack other people’s opinions-**I simply have to get my thoughts out, for my voice to be heard by those who care enough to hear it**. I think I’ve always been a fair reviewer, and I hope people can see that the only thing I’m trying to say in my review is this: **I’m just a girl who is obsessed with this series**, and my heart and soul hurt because I couldn’t find a connection with this story, whatever the reason. It hurts me more than it hurts anyone reading this, and I have nothing but hope for an amazing final book. And if not?? I’ll forever adore the first two books and they will always be in a prime spot on my nerdy bookshelf/shrine in our living room. I just hope people can see that-I give up on series for way less than this...yet here I sit, ready for book four and hoping for all the best. I just hope my heart doesn’t get ripped in two next year. I guess we’ll see, won’t we?

For more of my reviews, please visit:

NO one knows how painful this is for me to rate and feel this way. It has nothing to do with Maven. **It has nothing to do with my precious baby Cal**, who, by the way, I will still marry someday and who can STILL do no wrong in my eyes. And, actually, it has nothing to do with Mare. I don't care if you're team Cal, Maven, Mare, Kilorn, or Evangeline. In fact? **It had nothing to do with this hideous representation of the characters in this story, at all.**

What it comes down to? **This story sucked, plain and simple.** Boring without an ounce of inspiration, this book is nothing more than filler, extra drama, and a total bridge to the final book. And, if I'm being completely honest, I, *for once*, **don't see how the next book can be any better.**

I'll hold out hope, though. Cal is a number one BBF, and I will see this all the way to the end.

RTC.

AHHHHH CAL TIME CAL TIME CAL TIME CAL TIMMMMEEEE I CAN'T EVEN
AHFDFJKSFHKJSFHSKDJHLFKHDSFHLSDFKLSDFHSDLKJFHLSJDHFSDHFJSHDJLKFH

Me-

Finally.

Katerina says

Hello Goodreads, I'm back, already suffering from King's Cage withdrawal syndrome and more heartbroken than I care to admit.

King's Cage was the most **powerful, deep** and **contradictory** installment of Red Queen so far. The first half nearly drove me to give it three stars, it was **unbearably slow** and made me question my decision to continue this series many times. I felt like I was drowning in a swamp, trying to move yet stuck in the same place for so long I lost the concept of time. But in the end it seemed that the countless pages where nothing happened were necessary to understand the characters and set the foundations for the second half, which was undeniably **mindblowing, full of epic fight sequences and moments to elate you only to shatter you minutes later.**

"We're not a god's chosen, but a god's cursed."

Mare spends six months imprisoned, tortured, living at the mercy of a wicked boy-king who keeps her in a cage because that is the only way she'll stay with him, who uses her to serve his own ends and each day steals a piece of her and replaces it with hopelessness and anger, while the Scarlet Guard makes new allies and strives to end his reign of lies. With threats of civil war, rebelling houses claiming power and newbloods who shift the balance between Reds and Silvers, the kingdom of Norta will either be reformed or engulf in flames. For there is only one throne and two Calore sons, divided by betrayal, ambition, and a stubborn lightning girl.

"I am Mare Barrow. Not Mareena, not the lightning girl. Mare."

Who is Mare Barrow? *A self-centered hypocrite. A murderer. A traitor.* That's what I would have told you in the beginning of King's Cage. It is no secret that I am not particularly fond of Mare. In fact, a sadistic and rather cruel part of me enjoyed her tortures and her despair, all those moments when she finally felt the weight of her mistakes and rash decisions. *Who are you to judge Cal ?* I wanted to shout. *How can you possibly blame him for not taking a stand after all the horror and injustice he has witnessed when the path you follow is paved with more blood and reverse discriminations in the name of common good?* I wanted to peel off my skin every time she claimed she knew Maven so well, Maven of all people, an evil and broken boy who kept up with his atrocities even when his puppeteer was gone, while she never tried to see things from Cal's perspective. I still hate this self-righteous Mare. But thankfully, in King's Cage, she proved that she is more. And she somehow taught me that **not a single character in this series is purely evil or purely good**, the same way she learned it. I want you to remember this day, folks. The day I admitted that **Mare Barrow became a tolerable and relatable heroine**. I can't say the same about Maven, though. It is true that he wasn't born a monster, that his madness is the result of his horrible mother, and after his confessions he gained my understanding, but not my sympathy. Some choices were his. The slaughtered babies, the court manipulation, the power games, they were his. What he feels for Mare is not love, just a sick obsession. And I'm looking forward to his downfall.

"Red. Red as blood, red as fire. Red as the anger eating us both alive."

Tiberias Calore is not the flawless prince I thought he was.

And that revelation was not the result of Victoria Aveyard's efforts to twist his character to make readers love him less, like I believed at first. Don't get me wrong, he's still my favorite character, but I'm afraid I idolised him. The bitter truth is that he is not good at making decisions, like Maven, and Mare and Cameron and everyone else knew from the start. He is noble, and kind, and a great strategist, he loves Mare despite reason in a way that warms you up inside, but he has his weaknesses.

"Choose me."

I believe that what Victoria Aveyard tries to say in every sentence and every page is that **power is alluring**. A siren whose call no one can resist, regardless the colour of their blood, their rank and social status. And once you embrace power, and give in to its seductive touch and whispers of greatness, it taints you. And inevitably you lose something. Your humanity. Your kindness. Your soul. Your ideals. *Your loved ones*. Some things you can never get back. And I can't help but commend Victoria Aveyard for the way she delivers it. In King's Cage she masterfully delved into her characters' depths, she gave them multiple

dimensions and made the reader invested in *them*, besides the **intricate plot** with the **intrigue**, the **politics** and the **battle scenes** that were undoubtedly **epic**. While my loyalties are still the same, I finished it more open-minded. And that's probably the reason the ending hurt me this much. In a way, when I read this series only for the plot was better. My feelings varied from annoyed to angry, and as soon as I finished each book I didn't think about it twice. But this time, it will haunt me. Because it has torn me apart.

“Now I'm in a king's cage. But so is he. My chains are Silent Stone. His is the crown.”

On a brighter note, I cheered for Evangeline (who may or may not have been the biggest and scariest badass), I swooned over shirtless Cal and I experienced a rush of adrenaline each time a fight was described or a new conspiracy was set into motion. **If it hadn't been for the first half, King's Cage would deserve all the stars in the sky!**

Instagram | Twitter | Facebook | BookNest

Cait • A Page with a View says

I AM SO IMPRESSED RIGHT NOW. You can seriously *feel* the work that went into developing everything here. (And there aren't any major spoilers in this review, but I did drop some book quotes in... so you have been warned).

First things first: I went into this without many expectations because I loved Red Queen but really wasn't huge on Glass Sword. So maybe give this one a shot even if you didn't like the second book. I do get the complaints about Glass Sword! Mare's personality or way of handling her situation got a bit too unrelatable for me in that book (I just didn't want to sit through that much of a sulky, withdrawn narrator). Plus, it was hard to get a sense of Maven as a villain since he wasn't around much. I summed up the second book with: *"the majority of this book felt like it happened offstage or danced around any real character growth, plot development, and romance. It was mostly super depressing."*

I was shocked by how much I connected with Mare and the whole story here, though! Everything worked for me. There's a much stronger sense of unity and solidarity among the characters, too... like there's HOPE and something to get behind. The plot still felt more like Glass Sword than Red Queen, but the character growth and world were so strong that I loved it.

The story starts with Mare as Maven's prisoner, but gets wonderfully complicated as it delves into their twisted relationship. It's all just SO WELL DONE. Maven's mother literally molded his mind throughout his life to the point where he's no longer sure which parts are his own. She even turned his love for Mare into an obsession. And there's still a small part of Mare that cares about Maven (or is at least empathetic) even though she wants to kill him:

He is a monster still, a monster always. And yet I can't stop myself from listening. Because I could be a monster too. If given the wrong chance. If someone broke me, like he is broken.

Monsters are made. So was Maven. Who knows who he was supposed to be.

The story never excuses Maven's actions, by the way. Victoria Aveyard is very clear that this is not a relationship that will ever be good (or happen). So even though I don't ship Mare and Maven, I still LOVE how complicated everything is between them.

He stares up at me. "Those who know what it's like in the dark will do anything to stay in the light."

"Don't act like we're the same."

"The same? No." He shakes his head. "But perhaps... we're even?"

Stories with black & white characters or shallow villains get old for me really fast because it's unbelievable. Maven's character completely worked:

"You think I enjoy seeing you like this? he murmurs. "You think I want to keep you a prisoner?" Something hitches in his breath. "It's the only way you'll stay with me."

Even though I know what he's doing, even though I can feel his grip on me tightening, I can't stop it from pulling me under. It would be too easy to let myself drown. Part of me wants to.

So Mare's dealing with a lot of grief, loneliness, and PTSD, but the way it's carried out in this book is super realistic. She's totally broken and starts to feel gratitude to Maven for the most basic acts of humanity. Watching her grapple with everything was actually one of my favorite parts this time around. She somehow finds the strength to fight again and is a totally relatable character you WANT to support. All of her thoughts and actions make sense and she has so much growth over the course of the story:

It would be easy to stay in the dark, to drown. Slowly, I lower my hands and force myself to look at the sunlight.

And Maven's actually a really smart king and knows he has to win the Reds over to his side. I won't spoil the main plot, but the politics get awesome as we learn more about the history of Red oppression and see different kings take action on their own plans.

The other main POV is Cameron, who's still searching for her brother. She's a great character and her insights balanced the story by sharing what's happening with the Scarlet Guard and showing another side to people like Cal and Mare. Lines like "no wonder [Mare] has personality issues. No one tells the girl the truth about anything" helped me get past how the two girls acted in Glass Sword. And Cameron's observations make it even more clear how Cal refuses to actually take a stand or pick a side. He was another character with painfully realistic flaws... aaaand I suppose I thought the romance was sweet, but I'm not really here for any ship.

Ooh I almost forgot -- the ongoing theme of how we're all partially made by someone else came through even more in Evangeline's POV. (Speaking of how this book surprised me... how is Evangeline my new favorite character?! Did not expect that). Just seeing WHY she did everything and how she handles the heartbreaking situation she's in definitely made her more sympathetic. I wouldn't mind an entire book just about her!

OTHER AWESOME STUFF I LOVED:

- The acknowledgements are not messing around
- A major character turns out to be gay and it's not her defining story
- Mare's skin is straight up described as "brown" several times instead of dancing around some kind of "tan/sunkissed" vague description. The on-page PoC rep is *clear*
- the story deals with PTSD well
- **EPIC BATTLE SCENES** omg so manyyyyy
- there were still funny parts despite depressing circumstances
- less animosity between female characters

Oh, and all of the YA author shoutouts were hilarious! One line is "Caz, Brecker, with us!" and then there's a part about "Daraeus and Alexandrat are sworn allies to Bracken."

So yeah, "King's Cage" turned out to be the most brilliant title ever. Everyone's trapped in some situation or cage by one king or another (even Maven is in one of his own making). The ending was super intense and I loved it all. This series really is one of my favorites now!!

Side note: you could honestly skim Glass Sword or read a summary and still get this book.

Mia Crysler says

Me reading this book:

After one semi-intelligible novel in Red Queen and one genuine flop in Glass Sword, King's Cage was going to be 26-year-old Victoria Aveyard's Hail Mary on the series that was supposed to be the "next big YA thing" but has been a painful lesson in hype versus realistic expectation. Does it succeed in doing so: I so badly wanted to say she turned things around but she didn't – and that's putting it nicely.

Here's the thing that I'm still wondering about with Victoria Aveyard – how did things go so wrong for her? I mean, she had it all: HarperTeen and Epic Reads carefully controlled the reviews of the book by pre-leasing copies to targeted BookTubers whose opinion they could count on to be positive; the marketing campaign, if anything, was maybe too aggressive, with people hyping up Red Queen all over the place – on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram – and calling it the next Hunger Games, Divergent, Selection, and that everyone should buy it.

And we were like – Sure Thing Entitled White People! We Believe You!

I can't remember a release as advertising-intense as this since *Divergent* was out and it worked that time round so then how, exactly, did it all torpedo in Aveyard's face and not turn her into the Suzanne Collins success she was constructed to be by her publisher? The odds were in her favour. She had plenty of high-powered connections; she breezed casually straight to a publishing and movie deal with barely any effort at all; she had it all. BookTuber reviews are pretty good at swaying public opinion and masking any problems of a book by pillowing the internet with praise, so I never expected to see 1 star and 2 star reviews piling up on the main comments page.

So... what the hell happened?

I can chalk up to only a few things. The first, Veronica Roth entered the scene with the very first Hunger Games-inspired book and by the time Victoria Aveyard published that door had clearly and loudly shut. The second, Aveyard accidentally compared her work to be on par with *Game of Thrones*, an act in itself which is just setting yourself up for failure because then people are automatically disappointed when it's nowhere even close. Beyond that, I think people are just tired of reading *Game of Thrones* and *Hunger Games* knock-offs no matter how good the publicity departments claim they are. I think YA publishing is finally starting to come out of its coma and realise that they have GOT TO STOP pushing the same derivative plot before we all tear our eyes out.

And finally, Victoria is kind of... elitist... There's a line between being proud and being stuck-up and I think Aveyard crossed that line without meaning to. And in a world that is becoming incredibly impossible to separate the artist from the art, Aveyard tends to come across as elitist. Next to the release of *Red Queen* Aveyard released an article on her blog (<http://victoriaaveyard.blogspot.com.a...>) that didn't really help that image.

But her personality really became even more apparent when she started lashing out to critics on Goodreads and caused probably the biggest awkward silence in book reviewer history.

To be honest, I gave her a pass on that one because she was new and I can understand people lashing out on what people say on goodreads. But she has to understand that criticism is a part of being in the entertainment industry and I can tell you for a fact that most of the reviews on goodreads are tame in comparison to what's out there.

If you can't handle what people say on goodreads and you're a writer then man you're in the wrong industry because there are going to be people that say things much worse in the future. You shouldn't be lashing out at these people. You should be using goodreads as a practice ground. Plus a lot of criticisms from people – who weren't paid by HarperTeen to give it five or four stars – are pretty valid, and if Aveyard had listen to one or two of their comments I feel this series really could have been pulled up from its death-spiral. In

response to a lot of fair criticism, Aveyard just doubled-down and placed the blame on piracy, ARCS, and 1 star rogue reviewers which is insane because on average five star reviews outnumber 1 star reviews about 60,000 to one.

Some people were supposed to hate it because art is supposed to be subjective. It's only worth making when there's a plurality of opinions, good and bad. And it is possible that it's not quite as good as you think it is: Harper Collins is not known for having the most on-the-job editorial staff. (Check out the Continent by Kiera Drake scandal if you don't believe me.)

I'm currently completing my BFA at USC as well and just for clarity – I'm a woman – and I cannot stand it when girl screenwriters in my class go, "Male writers can't write women." And my response was, "That's funny the last script you turned in the lead character had sex with the chiselled ripped-up doctor by page three and just talked about it all the way after. Meanwhile the black guy over there had his female black lesbian throw a guy through a window on page 1."

I have a feeling Aveyard probably belongs to that clique of writers that believe because a man wrote it it should be set on fire. She's constantly bashing actors like Tom Hanks and other male screenwriters. (Don't get this one: The thing is, she's a screenwriter as well, someone who wants to work in Hollywood. Did, like, no one tell her that pissing off one of the big-name actors or people she could get a job from was, like, I don't know – a good way to never eat a hot meal ever again?)

There seems to be this growing fury and vindictive agenda of women writers pitting themselves against male writers, especially if the men catch a break. Why do that to people who don't know you and have no idea who you are and have worked probably just as hard for their big break? If there are showrunners like Shonda Rhimes then there's no excuse why no one else can be like her. And FYI, maybe there'd be more things like female producers and directors if they didn't keep immaturely dropping out of Hollywood over "creative differences".

Not to mention Kathleen Kennedy's New York Time's article a few months back that Star Wars doesn't owe men anything, which is just a cruel thing to say—why does one group's success hinge on another group's complete eradication and extinction? One of my favourite movie critics, Grace Randolph, made a very insightful and thorough video here if you'd like to see it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16OOg...>

I totally believe in sexism in the film industry but heckling people over Twitter who have gone further into the movie industry than you doesn't really do much to fix the problem. If you want to change it you have to be productive. Work towards your own success. Write the stories you want to see and hire the people you want to see. Don't knock male writers who have worked just as hard as you and perhaps harder to get their big break in the screenwriting business just because they're men.

Just had to throw that out of the way before I got into the review.

Whew! Time to get in to the novel.

I didn't realise I drifted so far off topic.

Sorry my peeps!

My major problem with this series is its glaring inconsistency. I think Aveyard is probably much suited to television than she is to blockbusters, because though she easily gets that whole laying down the track for an oncoming train element of TV writing, this same ability really destroys any cohesiveness of her novel, where she manipulates time and events on the fly to suit her writing.

There are moments where you feel she's changed the entire behaviour, attitude, and abilities of a character to service the plot and her endgame. For instance, in this book she says Mare was uneducated and how that lack of education is what keeps the Reds down in the dust, but in the first book when Shade sent a letter to her family she was the one who read it aloud.

And like Sarah J. Mass, Aveyard suffers profusely from what I call "Quotablity Syndrome". With Sarah J. Mass I think it's probably because she's accustomed to fan-fiction (sometimes fan-fiction authors are hit and miss), but with Aveyard I think her problem originates with imagining every scene spoken aloud in the teaser trailer for the movie that Universal Studios has not even talked about. By that I mean that she is constantly focused on ensuring the words and passages sound euphonic, rather really understanding what she's saying or taking a step back and realizing how dumb her character looks saying it. It's what's made Mare insufferable in both books. Here are some of my favourites from the past two books if you don't believe me:

Glass Sword:

If I am a sword, I am a sword made of glass, and I feel myself beginning to shatter.

Anyone, anything, can betray anyone. Even your own heart.

And the romance:

This is always a huge problem for female writers. I see this all the time in class and when screenwriters and authors get defensive. They go: How dare you ship my characters the novel isn't about romance! That is so sexist! And then I'm like: Dude, if you didn't want shipping to happen then why did you have the main character make out with both the brothers? Unless you suffer from amnesia or are slightly unconscious at the

helm of your laptop, you wrote that love triangle into the book Aveyard and it's too late to change it now. If you didn't want it to be about romance then don't have them kiss. Have Mare be asexual or something! Don't even bring it up! Make the brothers totally unattractive or that she's too distracted with her situation, but when Mare spends every couple of pages tripping over these boys Mary Sue-style don't expect people to not have readers ask you about the romance! You put it in your bloody book! I can see she was trying to make the novel like *Reign* from the CW, but it backfired and for some reason she's not interested in it anymore. A pure sign of ill-plotting on her part. To be fair, Aveyard's not alone. Female writers always trip themselves up on the romance. I think it's just a habit. One that Aveyard is yet to break.

My feelings on Mare: ...I got nothing...

What I imagine must be that poor rebellion's feelings on Mare at this point in the story and we're pretty much on the same page:

Yes. We get it already. You're imprisoned. After reading most of Aveyard's oeuvre I wasn't surprised to find that Mare continued being her hundred-watt-Mary-Sue old self. Aveyard has mechanized her to whine and complain every few pages, and say she is a bad-ass despite there being an enormous lack of evidence to support that theory.

Lastly, the plagiarism. Ah. This is a weird one. I've seen tonnes of more reviewers on Goodreads, of late, start to actually call authors out on it, which is great to finally start seeing. I think that to call something inspired instead of plagiarised is just changing the label to something more socially acceptable but it's essentially the same thing. To be clear, Aveyard's work is not a heavy amalgamation of research and historical elements deftly woven into a fantasy threat like Martin's work.

If that was the case then I wouldn't have had a problem but there were some serious moments where I felt that it was a very narrow margin between plagiarism and not-plagiarism. I was surprised to see people finally call Veronica Roth out on it since she's been pretty much immune her whole career. In Aveyard's case, I think the plagiarism is pretty baseless; to me it's not really plagiarism but rather really thick imitation of two novels: *The Hunger Games* and *Game of Thrones*, which are all heavily embedded in her work—more like plastered all over—but in the kind of way that leads you to believe she thought she could make a shit tonne of money if she only changed stuff slightly around and fed it into a book about teenagers.

I think it's sad because this act alone really destroys books when you write by someone else's voice and imagination. In class they gave us this quote that I kept thinking about:

And it's true in this day and age originality sells above all else because people are tired of the same circulating plot which is why I think I just couldn't plug into King's Cage. With King's Cage, it just can't escape the gravity of its creative influences - unlike so many other books that can take the same idea but steer it down a whole different alleyway of implications.

There were just too many uncomfortably close moments where I was thinking to myself, That reminds me of something. And it wasn't just this novel but in Glass Sword there was the very glaring Peeta and Katniss bread reference with the coin where my jaw literally hit the floor—was she honestly stealing that scene from the Hunger Games. I mean...really! Really! What is YA these days, fan-fiction? [Scene: I remember the burdened boy who gave me a silver coin when I was nothing. With that one gesture he changed my future, and destroyed his own.] I think I just can't forgive any more YA authors that steal work from the Hunger Games because I'm just fed up. Can people at least steal passages from a franchise I don't read every Christmas? It's "not plagiarism" exactly, but it's not "originality" either, which makes it just awkward for me because I can't help think on some sort of spectrum that it's not entirely "the right thing" either.

I think this series is pretty dead in the water. Aveyard might have started off aiming high but it's sunk to gliding, passionless mediocrity at this point. It's lost a lot of its original WOW-factor. What's sad about this series is what I'm finding sad about a lot of YA books these days. Good idea but poor execution and bad characters. This book, in my view, could have easily have scored a movie deal back before it was published but now I can understand why they never greenlit. First impressions are everything these days and Mare has just done too much damage to doctor at this point; and based on its sales it's doing nowhere near the numbers to power a box office solely on its brand power.

You might have heard that the movie is being made. To be clear: the movie is 'IN DEVELOPMENT' which means that Aveyard is trying to channel as much buzz as she can by telling everyone they are making it. But with there having been no news in almost three years, Universal's packed slate with Fast and Furious 8, Jurassic World 2, and a plethora of other movies lined up, I think Universal has probably passed by now. After all, Universal is one of the few companies that can challenge Disney for a seat in the billion dollar club; and I don't see them jeopardising their outstanding reputation for a YA novel when book adaptations have shown to be pretty financially unsuccessful these days (just look at how the Divergent series died – and Aveyard is repped by the same literary agency that reps Veronica Roth so there's probably that conflict of interest for the studio execs).

Can this series be saved? I honestly don't know why but I'm going to pray that the 4th book is the charm here and keep my fingers crossed. Even if this series has bombed I'll be interested to see what projects Aveyard starts in the future.

Kiki says

Actual footage of my reaction to this book:

King's Cage.

KING'S CAGE.

It's about a king in a cage but also a girl in a cage made by a king! OMG! Do you get it? Do you get the symbolism? Are you impressed yet? **Are you impressed?**

Lady, save it, please. I got halfway through this and I just couldn't do it anymore, so I ended up donating it. For that reason only it was worth £10.99. I hope the person who got this book really enjoyed it and got a lot more out of it than I did because I was spitting tacks the entire time it was in my hands.

The truth is that **this series seriously pisses me off**. Maybe that's over the top (granted, as a person, I am fundamentally over the top) but I am sick to death of books like this that are nothing but overblown cash-guzzlers. This book has nothing of value to add to the conversation and yet it thinks it does, and it has the gall to try to be "current" and "political" when it's about fucking nothing. I feel the same way about this series as I did about that *Bone Season* thing and bitch, do not get me started on *The Bone Season*. That book can see me next bloody Tuesday.

Why does this series rile me up so much? Probably because it's so unbelievably redundant, and yet it pats itself on the back for being so clever, all the time. 'Oh, look at me,' this book says. 'I'm so in tune with current events and politics and I stand up for what's right!' But you don't. You don't add anything new and you certainly don't add anything from a perspective that I'm remotely interested in. I was promised "grey" characters, and that's certainly what I got: grey, dull, empty, lifeless cardboard cutouts stumbling around an underdeveloped plot, pulling the wool over my eyes while it serves as pure filler until the last book in this series. This series was never meant to be four books - it was supposed to be a trilogy, and it should definitely have stuck to that, because what we've got here is something like five hundred pages of nothing, while the narrative shamelessly BEGS us to get on board with Mare.

I am never going to like this heroine. Ever. I don't care how hard TPTB push the narrative that misogyny is the only reason why nobody likes her. I hate Mare because she is a **shite character with shite inner monologue that I genuinely could not care less about if I tried**. I don't care how forcefully the other characters in these books try to construct a personality for her - she doesn't have one. She is a limp, wet piece of lettuce. She is a period stain on the underwear of literature. I cannot stand her, and I am not about to lie down and accept being told how I feel, as if a marketing team knows me better than I know myself. I'm not about to accept some bullshit allegation that the only reason I hate her is because she's a woman. Like?? What?? Don't. Like I said, save it. People hate Mare because she is toxic and moronic and her narration is so laughably self-serious, peppered with these cringey outbursts of "snark" or "sass" that don't come close to being relatable or entertaining.

Let me tell you something: I loathe this "spunky, sassy" thing. It is a piece of nonsense. **What woman can relate to that.** Women, please tell me if any of these heroines that have been labelled "spunky" have been relatable to you. Because to me it sounds like a lot of bullshit. It sounds like a cliché, like a patronizing mockery of women who actually *are* dryly funny, who stand up for themselves, who are clever with their humour. I am not ever going to buy this "sassy heroine" thing. Do you know what it sounds like? It sounds like the heroine is going to be dry and hilarious and outspoken. Do you know what actually ends up happening? The heroine has an unfunny, grating inner monologue, and when she cracks some lame half-joke that isn't remotely amusing, all of the male characters around her will pat her on the head, sigh, and fawn about how she's "one of the guys".

I'm not keen on Sabaa Tahir's current series, but I do genuinely like Sabaa Tahir, and when she stops writing that *Ashes in the Night* thing, whatever it's called, I will read more of her books, because she is an author who, despite all of the issues I have with her works, *never* fell into this trap. She didn't do that bloody "snarky heroine" thing. It has no place in this sort of self-serious book. That's not to say that self-serious books can't have dry, funny heroines, but they have to be written smartly, and smart is the last thing this book is. If this book is smart, then my ass, who can't even do the seven times table, is a fucking mathematical prodigy.

Here's my problem with this series: there has never been a time when it wasn't generic, and that's a given, but with my hand on my heart I can say that the first book had **promise**. It was fine and even enjoyable in parts. But you only have to look at the ratings for this series, and the dying hype, to see that along the way, something has gone seriously wrong. I don't know if the spark just died, or if marketing pressure forced the author to stretch this series into four books - but what I can tell by reading it is that **this is not even close to this author's best work**. Since posting this review, I've been heckled and hounded and cursed at, but I will not change my stance on this, as it seems more and more apparent, the more I learn and think about it: this is not a passion project. There is no fire and brimstone in the writing, storytelling, or character arcs. There has been no love and devotion put into it. It is dry, sallow, and clinical. It's depressing, but not for the reasons that it wants to be.

The more that I think about this, and the more desperate stans tell me that I'm stupid and can't read (nice try. Bye, Felicia) the surer I am that something went wrong here. Ratings for series generally go up with each book, as people who didn't like the premise or the writing drop off after the first or second book, thus the people who're going to pick up the last book are generally fans or at least keen on the series; it's very unusual to have peaks and troughs in ratings as this series does. I do wonder what happened, and I wonder why the hype was so pithy upon the release of the last book in a series that must have taken about 5+ years to write in full. So what the hell happened? This book is just such a fucking fail. It's just phoning it in and that's not good enough.

After the second book in this series, I told myself no more; but *Glass Sword* wasn't bad enough for a DNF. I got through it. But this marks never again. I would rather do that 1000 DEGREE GLOWING KNIFE thing on my own foot than read the fourth book. I would rather rub chillies in my eyes.

I mean, I think we're done here.
