

The background features a network diagram with white nodes and lines on a purple-to-pink gradient. The nodes are connected by thin white lines, forming a complex web. Some nodes are larger than others, and the overall structure is somewhat irregular and organic.

Rated

Written by Melissa Grey

Published by griefconvention

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Rated

Rated

By Melissa Grey

Rated R

Societies thrive on order, and the Rating System is the ultimate symbol of organized social mobility.

Rated

Rated R Rules

The higher it soars, the more valued you are. The lower it plummets, the harder you must work to improve yourself. For the students at the prestigious Maplethorpe Academy, every single thing they do is reflected in their ratings, updated daily and available for all to see.

Rated

Rated R Age

But when an act of vandalism sullies the front doors of the school, it sets off a chain reaction that will shake the lives of six special students -- and the world beyond.

This book is 1 part cheesy teen drama, 1 part group of misfits banding together, and 1 part technological dystopia. If you were to mix Fahrenheit 451 and The Perfect Score (2004), you'd have a good idea of what to expect.

In this society, everyone is rated based on a myriad of factors, but those who perform the best at things deemed socially acceptable are obviously at the top. This affects - and is affected by - all aspects of one's life. For example: the head of multiple clubs, daughter of a doctor and an engineer, and shoe-in for valedictorian is rated very high. She not only does well herself in school, but her parents' careers also solidify her good rating. She is one of six POV characters of different backgrounds who all get notes from an unknown jester. The message that the jester sends comes to them in different ways, but is the same nonetheless: The ratings don't matter.

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Between my first reaction at the synopsis (which was that this reminded me of a very specific episode of "Community") or the first few chapters where we are introduced to the characters and setup (which reminded me of "American Vandal" season 2), or just the fact that all our characters inhabit archetypes we're very familiar with (Breakfast Club is the most obvious example that comes to mind), it was hard for me to stop comparing this to other media. And that, I think, sums up my reading experience.

This story was completely fine, but also something I am very familiar with. Because of that I think that younger YA audiences will get a lot more out of this than someone like myself who has seen stories like this in almost every iteration imaginable.

It was an easy read that was never too challenging nor too boring, but with very few highs or lows. And even while it reads like something I've seen dozens of times, there was some diversity between the races, ethnicities, and sexualities of our main six, which is pretty much necessity in 2019.

Will I remember anything specific about it past this week? Probably not. But I wouldn't steer someone away from this book if they were interested in it either.

tw: disordered eating & food fixation, alcoholic & abusive parents, family member with cancer

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Rated

...more

Rated

Rated G

Actual Rating: 3.5 out of 5 stars

Recommend: If you like character driven stories

Review:

I received an arc of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions expressed are my own.

Right, so I was really looking forward to this book because 1) I love Melissa Grey and 2) this book sounds amazing. When I got my greedy little hands on it I squealed and dived right in, but sadly, it did not live up to my expectations.

I will say, this book has a lot of things going for it Actual Rating: 3.5 out of 5 stars

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I will say, this book has a lot of things going for it for me. I like how it has multiple Points of View from characters who are very different from one another in personalities and backgrounds, which adds to the depth of the story as a whole. I like how the story has real world issues, from a character dealing with an eating disorder, another living in an abusive home, one struggling under pressure, another filling a parental role, and one just showing what it means to be on the fringes. The book also showcases different forms of relationships, from familial, romantic, and friendly. Plus, there are even LGBTQ characters in the main cast.

I honestly really enjoyed the characters separately, their struggles, and then I really enjoyed them together and how they fit.

That being said, the reason I didn't absolutely love this book is because of pacing and, well, there are a lot of parts I feel weren't really covered enough for me to understand, and thus care about. In the book, the beginning starts off as all beginnings with the framework of the plot and the characters, which is fine, I enjoyed that, but at about the middle things went for a loop. All of a sudden, there is a HUGE pacing issue. One minute I'm with this character figuring out this big thing and then BOOM! Some serious time has passed and I'm in a different place and time with a different character, and more than that, some how, at some point, all the other characters have figured the Thing out too? I mean, I'm not saying I needed a step-by-step breakdown of all of them figuring it out, but it definitely threw me when it went from none of them having a clue, to one pair figuring it out, then all of them just know.

Rated

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Rated

Then, another scene and another big thing is happening. It made me feel like I was missing chunks of the story because I just wasn't understanding how time was passing in the way it was. Worse, because of these seeming missing pieces in time, it made the plot feel like it was missing rushed, which messed with the story big time. The beginning was a nice pace and set up for the story, but then it all started feeling rushed and thrown together.

Second, I didn't like how we're told about this Ratings thing that controls everyone and who invented it, but we're never given much of a backstory on it. We're never told why it came to being or why it was put into place around the country. I didn't understand the HOW for this system, so it made me unsure of the WHY it was in place or WHY I should care about it and how it affects the characters of the story. Further, I didn't understand completely how it worked. I mean, anyone could give or take a point from you, which sounds dangerous considering how these ratings affect lives. In fact, in the story we see this danger come into play, but that just further shows the folly of the system in the story. If I could take a point from someone just because, what's to stop me? Honestly, it sounds like some random person could spend their days just giving negatives for no reason other than boredom.

Really, the story isn't bad! I like the characters, the banter, and Melissa Grey's writing! I did enjoy reading this book and the twist at the end and I am looking forward to the sequel, but I also found some serious issues with it that really affected my loving this book.

I do think this would be a good, fun, easy read if you like character driven stories, so I do think you should give it a shot when it comes out! ...more

7/10

Rated

Rated R Meaning

4.5 stars

ARC was provided at BookCon by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

I really didn't expect to like this book, if we're being honest. It was being pushed out at BookCon for free and I took it because there were a lot of them. However, I really ended up liking this book. The character dynamics were so well done and the plot was really engaging. To be quite honest, the ending was cliffhangery and I hope there's more to come.

3.5 stars - review to come

Rated

Rated Pg

“Good grades mean good ratings. Good ratings mean a good college. A good college means a good life.”

I had such high hopes for Rated, so when I got my hands on an advanced copy, I tore right into it. It started out really well...

The Concept

The concept did what all good dystopias should: made me stop and ponder the path we are on as a society and whether or not this is our inevitable future. As an educator, I found myself examining my own reactions to students. Am I rating them already? How is “Good grades mean good ratings. Good ratings mean a good college. A good college means a good life.”

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The Concept

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That being said, I can’t say it’s a terribly original concept when, without fail, every person I told about this book replied, “Oh, that’s like that one episode of Black Mirror.”

The Characters

Melissa Grey does do an excellent job of painting the anxiety that is caused by the ratings system and uses it as a solid basis for character development.

“Wood’s eyes cut to them, picking the source of the sound out of the crowd with uncanny precision. Without missing a beat, he tapped on the face of the device on his wrist, once, twice, then swiped down on the screen. A subtle vibration against her wrist alerted Bex to a shift in her rating. She looked down at her own smartwatch.

The display lit up. The number had changed. A glowing 91 stared back at her, and her stomach seized at the sight of it. One minute into the semester and she’d already been docked a point because her best friends couldn’t keep her mouth shut.”

From the first moment we meet Bex, it is clear that ratings factor into her every decision. As we learn more about Bex, as with the other characters, we see that the ratings are only what’s driving her on the surface. (view spoiler)[Below that, Bex and Hana need approval from their parents. Noah and Javier

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are striving to take care of their siblings. Chase just wants to survive. And Tasmin! well! (hide spoiler)]

Throughout the book, the characters played as realistic. They all had lives and problems that didn't feel forced. I really appreciated how

The Writing

I really enjoyed Melissa Grey's writing style. There was something about it that was pleasant in its stark matter-of-factness. Examples given:

“For forty dollars, Tasmin would shuffle her deck and deal the cards, reading the fortunes of anyone with enough money to pay. If she likes them, she's make it interesting. If she didn't like them, she'd make it really interesting.”

“He smiled at Noah, and Noah had stumbled over his words, and the sound of it had sent a frisson of pleasure through Javi's body. It was one thing to know his smile was appreciated by thousands of people he would likely never meet, but it was a whole other thing entirely to know that it was appreciated by one person in particular.”

Ok, so what's wrong with it?

Stories need this tiny detail called conflict. It is clear from the beginning of the book, and continues to be clear for a while, that the central conflict will be the group's mission to find out who is responsible for the graffiti and the notes and, ultimately, dismantle the rating system. That's just how YA dystopias work. (view spoiler)[Don't get me wrong, I am all about mixing it up and not following what is expected. If this were an adult dystopia, I would expect a 1984 style ending where the system wins and everyone remains oppressed. That didn't happen either. Instead, about a...” of the way through, there was a sudden and jolting change in the central conflict. The concern became not dismantling an oppressive system but taking down one overly powerful mean girl.

The initial and should-be-central conflict reappeared in the epilogue where the graffiti artist was revealed and basically asked, “So! should we do this thing?” Everyone agreed, and theoretically, sometime in the nearish future, they dismantled the system. It felt a bit like a seed left for a sequel that I have no desire to read. (hide spoiler)]

Thoughts as a Teacher

Unfortunately, I can't picture many of my students enjoying this book. The action moves very slowly, often rehashing the same events and timeline from six different perspectives. It's a great read for character, but young readers that are driven to books simply for character development are few and far between.

Final Thoughts: Bitter Bean Juice

Rated

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Rated

“Hana paid for her iced coffee and sipped at it. The taste made her cringe. Cream and sugar would have made her forget that coffee was, at its core, just bitter bean juice.”

“She sulked away to sip her sad bean juice at the last small table left unoccupied in the cafeteria.”
Thanks, Hana. Coffee really is just gross.

...more

Source: ARC

Even though it’s been 11 years since the publication of the first Hunger Games book, avid YA readers might have mixed feelings about dystopian novels. Is it time for them to come back (like the vampire revival)? Or do dystopians still feel like “jumping on a fad”? Interestingly, Rated by Melissa Grey somewhat skirts the question. It’s a dystopian, presumably inspired by the Chinese social credit system that has been making headlines, but the focus in many ways is not actually on the world building; rather, the book shines through its characterization. Source: ARC

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The book has six protagonists, six teenagers who attend the same elite prep school in a world where everyone has a rating. (If the book is jumping on a fad, perhaps it’s the multiple POV heist novel fad begun by Leigh Bardugo’s *Six of Crows*.) The point, of course, is that rating people is bad. It leads to anxiety over scoring the perfect rating. It leads to segregation in society, as some places like hospitals, grocery stores, etc. are only open to those with high ratings. It leads to corruption as people try to game the rating system. And, of course, the protagonists begin to realize there is something wrong with their world and start to come together to do something about it. That’s just how YA dystopian novels work.

Yet, even though technically the plot is focused on the dystopian element of the rating system and how to bring it down, that part of the novel always seemed to be in the background to me. This is partially because the world building is haphazard and under-developed. For instance, it’s impossible to say when the book takes place. One would guess decently into the future, based on the fact a lot of things have happened, from the implementation of the rating system itself to the banning of a number of classics, etc. That stuff takes time, particularly to be accepted as normal. However, one of the teen’s parents has videos of his own old high school games on VHS. That implies this book takes place about a decade into the future, max, which feels off to me.

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The rating system itself is also not well-explained, a major whole in a book that takes the system as its premise. How the system actually works is revealed in bits and pieces, and I'm still not clear on it. What can you be rated for? Who can do the rating? (I thought only authority figures could rate for a long time, until it was revealed peer-to-peer rating is a thing, which is treated as "less than" a rating from a teacher, yet affects your rating in exactly the same way.) And if people you don't know personally can rate you from seeing you online or watching you skate in a competition, why do the characters only experience rating drops of a point here and there? If 1000 people are watching you run an online video game, why would only two of them rate you? After reading the whole book, I still have a lot of questions.

To some extent, however, I found this did not really matter. The book's true strength lies in the characters. Grey wonderfully balances her six POVs to create a varied cast of characters who each have their own private struggles and character arcs. Sure, the rating system is a problem, but I was much more invested in Noah's family life and Hana's figure skating career, and Bex's quest to become valedictorian. The beauty of the book is in the individuals, not in the system they're struggling against.

For the small dramas of each character and how they deal with them, I would recommend this book. I don't think it excels as a dystopian because it didn't really make me think. I didn't get a sense this is a direction our world would actually go and, beyond the obvious, I didn't get a sense of why readers should care. Sure, rating people is bad. I get that, but the book didn't do anything interesting with that premise. I just liked the characters, and I think a lot of other readers will to, as long as they know to approach the book almost more as a contemporary about the ordinary struggles of high school students, rather than a dystopian novel.

Initial Thoughts: Interesting characterization. Less strong on the dystopian world building. It's intriguing, but there's nothing really memorable about the world building or the message, and this book is simply not going to have the impact of The Hunger Games, Uglies, Divergent, etc. Basically, it's a good read in the present, but I'm not going to remember that I read it a couple years from now. I also was not expecting this to end with the implication it might be a series. ...more

Rated

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Rated

Rated K

Title: Rated Author: Melissa Grey Pages: 319 Genre: LGBTQ, Romance, Mystery Rating: 4 out of 5 stars This is an Advanced Readers Copy. That means that this is not the final version of the book. Therefore, facts and quotes are subject to change in the published book. This is like 15% mystery, 50% romance, and the rest is about highschoolers living in this new world centered on ratings. We follow six individual students who live in this new world. From the highest score to the lowest in the school, all six students cover a range of kids. Each pair into a couple which is quite obvious but it is one straight, one gay, and one lesbian, which is great to see! Oh No's! How they all come together and solve the mystery in the end did not make sense. Hana and Tamsin didn't figure it out all but just showed up there. We got to see how one group figured it out and the other two groups just appear there. I feel this whole story needed to be fleshed out a lot more. Loved that there are six different perspectives. Very different but I wish they weren't all info-dumped in the beginning then brought together so suddenly in the end. They should have been integrated more slowly so it wouldn't be so hard for people to learn who they are. I wanted more from all of these people. If there is a sequel, I might bump this rating up to a five. Yay's! LGBTQ Love the couples, straight, gay, lesbian, all my babies! Hana and Tamsin were definitely my favorites because I feel they were the most fleshed out. Chase and Elizabeth were a hard second with Noah and Javi taking up the finish. These are great characters who meld well together and I hope you all enjoy them as much as I did! You guys know how I am when it comes to translations being included in books. Well, here is a perfect example of what you can do! "But we're your parents," her mother said in Japanese. She spoke Japanese when she thought Hana was being recalcitrant or rebellious." - ARC You don't have to use the language every time. Although you can if you want to, I know I will. But if I do, I will include a translation so that all can understand. I also want to aim/push for publishing in multiple languages. Finally, This is a great mystery/romance for young adults. I wish this book was more fleshed out and longer but I'm hoping for a sequel. I definitely suggest picking this book up! My similar recommendation for this novel would be Girls of paper and fire by Natasha Ngan. Fighting the system and coming together. Oh and lesbians. Favorite Quote "Tamsin: You're a jock in sequins." Chase: I think I'd look good in sequins. Maybe we should make it a thing." - ARC, "Goodreads", "Twitter", "Instagram", "Previous Post", "PM ...more

2.5 to 3 Stars. I couldn't decide.

Did not particularly care for the writing style. It seemed all over the place.

The whole novel was really a character study of 6 different students who are thrust upon each other,

Rated

but the story just does not come together well. In fact, this novel is simply the introduction to the series and the main theme does not even get revealed until the epilogue....I find that to be lazy storytelling.

Not a fan of this one.

Rated

Rated M

See my full review here: <http://www.yabookscentral.com/yaficti...>

RATED follows six teens in alternating points-of-view as they navigate a dystopian future. In this society, your life is dictated by your rating. The higher your rating, the more elite your life can be with better housing, better healthcare, etc. Lower ratings can mean homelessness, a lack of employment, and problems with just about everything. The six students are at Maplethorpe, an elite school where low ratings will get you kicked out. See my full review here: <http://www.yabookscentral.com/yaficti...>

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Bex is an overachiever with many extracurriculars and no free time, but that positivity is reflected in her score. She has recently been assigned to tutor Chase, an athlete who might lose his scholarship if his score drops much lower, and who it is hinted has a learning disability. Another athlete is Hana, a figure skater who wants to win the Olympics, but she is hindered by a very severe eating disorder. She has recently connected with Tamsin, a girl who reads Tarot cards for money and has very little respect for the school- but is smart enough to keep her score just high enough to keep from being expelled.

Then, there is Noah, a loner who loves photography and his sister, who is sick and needs a bone marrow transplant. He will soon meet Javi, a professional video game player who lives with his Abuela and siblings. Javi doesn't interact much with other people his age in the real world, but that is about to change.

After a graffiti message painted on the school declares that ratings are not real, they each begin finding notes with a cryptic message on them. As the school and society seems determined to cover up the message, there appears to be something bigger going on, and the teens will have to work together to figure it out.

What I loved: The characters were all interesting and well-constructed. Despite having so many points-of-view, it was easy to follow and remember each of them- which is not an easy feat! The mystery around the messages also adds some intrigue to the plot. The strongest parts of the book were about the characters though and their diversity in thought and world, dealing with issues including mental illness (eating disorder, parent with alcoholism), poverty/elitism, parental expectations, learning disabilities, and sexuality (LGBT representation in the main characters).

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What left me wanting more: The book was a little scattered, and I think needed to either be longer or have fewer main characters so that we could focus on things a little more. There were some gaps in the plot that seemed just to come out of nowhere, to the point where I wondered if whole chapters were just missing, but I think this was done to help keep the pace faster. I also felt like the world-building was a little fuzzy. There was a lot of character-building, but we know relatively less about the world they are in, when it is, or how it came to be. Maybe this will be fleshed out in future books. Either a longer book or fewer characters to allow for a deeper plot would have helped with this also.

Final verdict: Overall, this is an intriguing and engaging YA dystopian that would be great for fans of UGLIES, ASH, and/or MATCHED. With great character building, this is an interesting start to a series, and I would be curious to read more in the future. ...more

I read an ARC, and enjoyed this one well enough. It sets up a sort of Breakfast Club-like atmosphere, delving into the lives of several disparate high school students and bringing them together for a common cause. The characters are fairly well-developed and relatable, and their interactions are engaging.

From the description, though, I expected this to be more like a Black Mirror episode. Particularly, it reminded me of Nosedive - a world where your social status is dependent on ratings, which a I read an ARC, and enjoyed this one well enough. It sets up a sort of Breakfast Club-like atmosphere, delving into the lives of several disparate high school students and bringing them together for a common cause. The characters are fairly well-developed and relatable, and their interactions are engaging.

From the description, though, I expected this to be more like a Black Mirror episode. Particularly, it reminded me of Nosedive - a world where your social status is dependent on ratings, which anyone can give you at any time for any minor infraction or upholding of social norms. I wanted it to be a full dystopia, since that's what it seemed to be getting at from the start.

It never quite reaches that level, though. While the "ratings" are clearly a metaphor for unspoken social status and all of the things that create it (grades, employment, social pleasantries, etc.), they're really just that...A metaphor for how our society already works.

The thing about that Black Mirror episode that made it so chilling was how far it chose to push that concept, how it toyed with just how easily all of it could come crashing down on your head. It created a system of ratings that was so pervasive and inescapable that it made you feel that yes, that system is clearly, deeply flawed, and I can see our society ending up that way and very much would like to stop that from happening.

Rated just feels like what we already have. I'm not convinced that the rating system here is any more pervasive or detrimental than our current societal expectations. And maybe that's the point, but if so, I would expect to have more depth to the ways in which these expectations could be loosened, worked

Rated

Rated

around, or brought down.

But there isn't really any of that. The focus is entirely, as it turns out, on just the several students' lives that we follow. There's not much substance here when it comes to actually breaking the system (unless you count (view spoiler)[cheating your way around it through hacking...which I'm not sure scales particularly well, or very closely fits the metaphor (hide spoiler)]). So it becomes sort of just a typical high school story, with a bit of a tease toward social commentary.

I suppose it's fine as a middle-grade or YA, kind of a Black Mirror Lite. But it didn't go far enough for me.
...more

Rated

Rated G Movies On Netflix

This review has been hidden because it contains spoilers. To view it, [click here](#).

i received this book as an ARC and cannot vouch for any changes that might have been applied to the finished book My first question is: will there be a sequel? This is an important question because if not, then WOW did this book under deliver. It has such a good premise, a world in which were rated for everything we do. Think about it: our world is sort of like that now. We strive for likes and views and those make us feel important and valid. But beyond the ratings premise, there was an inter
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But more to the point WHY were these students selected? headmaster wood (btw, SERIOUSLY with that reveal?) says itâ€™s because they wanted to bring together different types of people who hate the system and those who benefit from it and can help. Okay but why? Whatâ€™s the goal? Are these high schoolers supposed to change the world? If there is a larger system of people at work WHY introduce in the EPILOGUE??? I feel robbed of dither answers and actions. Which is why I ask: is there more planned for this story.

If not... Iâ€™m afraid a really great premise is thrown overboard for an easy, tied together ending, one that forces the reader to think aw how great theyâ€™re gonna do it. But what is IT?? Because the ratings are so unknown to us, outside of the fact that they donâ€™t seem to be all that fair, are we led to believe theyâ€™re just going to hack their way into righting all the wrongs? That the government wonâ€™t see whatâ€™s happening eventually? And if it IS a starting step for something greater, then the epilogue should have been 20 or 30 or 100 years later.

Ultimately the last 30 or so pages felt rushed and cobbled together. And, to be honest, thatâ€™s not the only place where there are pacing issues.

Ultimately I did love the characters and the writing, but I think itâ€™s the end and the pacing that Undid it for me. Which is disappointing because the premise has SUCH promise. ...more

E ARC provided by Edelweiss Plus

Rated

Maplethorpe is an elite academy where students can boost their ratings through academics. Since the entire society revolves around these ratings, students like Bex know that every facet of their lives needs to be carefully controlled so that they can go to good colleges and get good jobs. Bex's rating is a 92, but she is very stressed. Chase, whose father is an alcoholic and whose mother has left, has a rating that has dropped so much that he might be kicked off the team. E ARC provided by Edelweiss Plus

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Strengths: I loved the premise of this-- everything in your life depends on your ratings in everything from academics to behavior to social interactions. If students actually saw a concrete accounting of how they measured up, wouldn't they behave and pay more attention in school? Wouldn't their parents be more concerned as well? The characters were nicely varied, the romance between Javi and Noah is good, and I loved Bex and her drive to be better.

Weaknesses: I lived in Cincinnati in the 1980s, so the constant mention of Maplethorpe (albeit with a different spelling) conjured up a completely different image for me!

What I really think: This is more of a YA book and took much too long to get to the main point of the plot. I was hoping for something dystopian with a fun social twist, but this just fell short of the mark for me. ...more

Rated

griefconvention