

Reviewer Username: Anonymous

School: Valencia High School

Grade: Sophomore (10th Grade)

Book Title: Shatter Me

Book Author: Tahereh Mafi

Rate 1-5 (1-Lowest to 5-Highest) – 2.5

Shatter Me revolves around a young lady by the name of Juliette, who's touch has the power to kill. We first find her in isolation, kept locked up due to her dangerous gift. As apparent from the writing style in the first few chapters, living in isolation has affected Juliette severely and she is not in her right state of mind. The world outside her cell has suffered extreme environmental devastation and has been taken over by an organization called The Reestablishment, which promises a new beginning for Earth in exchange for cooperation on the part of the population. Juliette is soon thrown into a world in which she must watch her every move and cannot be sure of who to trust.

Shatter Me is not the best book I've read, but not the worst either. The first half of the book is pretty slow and rather difficult to get through. The second half is rather engaging, however there are several elements in it that would have worked far better if they were introduced in the first few chapters. I feel like the premise of the book is a little simplistic; there is only so much you can do with such a deadly power. They do begin to build on this extraordinary gift at the very end of the book, which sets up well for following books. This is understandable, but it makes for a first book with a rather weak plotline. Juliette could have been an interesting protagonist, but even after she left isolation she continued to let herself be defined by her circumstances. She did develop as a character over the course of the book: at the end she showed that she was capable of making her own decisions, however hard they might be. The other characters such as Warner and Adam are mostly defined in relation to Juliette, not necessarily people in their own right. However, it does seem that their characters will be expanded on in following books. In terms of plot, the 'plot twists' and high points were rather predictable and consequently not a strong point. The coupling of a protagonist with an inhuman gift and a dystopian setting sets up the novel nicely, but the author did not follow through with a solid plotline.

If you have the time and the patience to get through the first half of Shatter Me, I would recommend this book. The characters and interpersonal relationships have potential, and since it is the first book in a series it is understandable that it is not the most interesting; it has to create an entire world for use in following books. I also appreciate that it does not try to be similar to other dystopian young adult literature. The writing style, approach, setting and plotlines are quite different from other novels in the same genre. Overall, Tahereh Mafi's Shatter Me is a rather mediocre novel with an interesting premise but relatively weak characters and plot.