

The Declaration *by* Charlotte Parry, Gemma Malley



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Reviews of the *The Declaration* *by* Charlotte Parry, Gemma Malley

Beabandis

I will start off stating that yes this is another Young Adult book (series), but I seriously wouldn't let that stop you from reading this book. The setting is in the year 2140 and we have this amazing drug that extends our lives. Want to live forever? There's just one catch, to do so you must agree to sign The Declaration and give up your right to have children; have a child unlawfully and your child becomes known as a "Surplus". "Surplus" children are all that live in Grange Hall (and others like it around the world). The children are taught to be assets and to serve the adults on the outside. Surplus Anna tries to find her place in this world and does so until a new boy arrives: Surplus Peter. Peter lived his life in the outside world and he rebels what they are teaching the children at Grange Hill, it isn't long before Anna finds herself intrigued.

Loved, loved, loved this book the next two in the series ARE on my "to get" book list. What intrigued me at first about the book was a review on Amazon that compared it to: "A Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood (a story I really enjoyed), and I must say I agree that in principle this book is very much so like "Handmaid's Tail". So many people become upset about the kids having to read "Handmaid's Tale" in HS (although these same parents would let their kids read The Twilight series or even the PC Cast series, which can get steamy, just trying to put some perspective on it), so if we HAD to go for an alternative I wouldn't hesitate to recommend "The Declaration". As a matter of fact I would have no problem with allowing my 11 year old son to read it, I have already recommended it to him. The story line is gripping, and the characters draw you right in. I was sucked right in and this time my racing to read the book had nothing to do with "getting it over with", I just couldn't wait to see what happened next.

In no way do I think this book should be labelled as yet another Young Adult book (let's face it we all read them sometimes, Harry Potter anyone?!) to do so IMO limits it. The series isn't a huge hit so it won't be one that everyone is clamoring for, I sad thing if you ask me (and you did since you're reading this). It really is a great "cross-over" book (middle school and up).

Vudomuro

There's honestly no book more enjoyable to me right now, than a good dystopian novel. Perhaps it's because of my obsession with politics and where our world is going, but something about these dark, dystopian thrillers has always done it for me. I love classic dystopians, and I'm always on the search for more novels to add to the list.

The Declaration is quite a different approach to YA dystopian fiction, but boy is it fun! Anna doesn't know her last name. Anna doesn't know much about herself, other than that her parents broke the declaration and had a child without permission of the government. Therefore, due to their selfishness, she is a Surplus and will spend the remainder of her life paying for their crimes. She lives in a home for surplus children, a home that is dedicated to training them in the ways of servitude to serve those who are legal. Those that are as nature intended. Those who will live forever.

These are Anna's beliefs, and she holds them dear. She knows her only way to escape the home and to find any semblance of comfort in life is if is elevated from the status of Surplus Anna, to the status of Valuable Asset Anna. Then she'll likely go to a good home that will keep her in work until her last day. And then, another Surplus comes in. An older Surplus. A Surplus that is Anna's age, which is something unheard of. Usually, Surpluses are found when they're young, almost never is a pre-teen aged Surplus found, and even more rare is a teenaged, nearly adult surplus. So when Surplus Peter walks into her life, she's immediately put on edge. He disrupts every thing about the Surplus group home, and he is disrupting every part of Anna's life. But why is he there, and how does he know things about Anna that she herself has never known? And why does he tell her that everything she has ever known in her life, is a lie?

The premise of The Declaration is that humanity has discovered the fountain of youth, and that through regular medications that regenerate cells, they keep sickness and aging at bay. But through this sudden availability of everlasting life, the government has realized they're using all of their resources because the planet is over populated, hence the Declaration was written forbidding anyone who signs up for immortality from having children. Only, sometimes those who don't sign the Declaration and never choose anything but a natural life are also forbidden from reproducing.

I have to admit, I was iffy on The Declaration at first. I wasn't sure how the author would pull off the immortality aspect of her novel, but she did! It's a very plausible and believable route for our scientific community to take. Who doesn't want to live forever? And with scientist splicing genetics and turning chicken embryos into feathered alligators (or some such insanity like that - believe me, it was in my news headlines this morning about the chicken embryos with alligator snouts) it's reasonable to think that somewhere out there, someone is playing with DNA strands and cell regeneration... Stem cell research anyone? Taken into consideration some of the major breakthroughs in current scientific journals and guess what, cell regeneration and some miracle pill that grants longer lives sounds like it could happen in the next couple of centuries. And what will happen then? The Declaration! And how the public would react to a continuously growing population? Surpluses don't seem like an unfeasible route. So as I read through, it struck me as being a very scary prospect for the future and in a way, it was hard to take as a fictional work.

The characters were complex, and deep and very geared towards their personal believes. I found them to be strong and inspiring, as any main character in any dystopian novel should be. Anna's transition from the mindset of a well trained Surplus to a rebellious, independent thinker is gradual and confusing and everything it should be. She rebelled against her negative thoughts, and her sudden desires to escape the life of a Surplus as if being enslaved to the "legals" for the rest of her life was more desired than a true life of freedom. It's not until nearly the end of the book before we really see the seeds of doubt Peter plants in her mind blossom into more. It's a dark read, but yet at the same time appropriate for young adults and adults alike. I didn't read this thinking, "Wow, this is a great YA novel." I read it more as, "Wow, this is a great novel! And I could recommend it to my friend's kids! They'd really enjoy it too!"

I suggest give it a go, and I'll be reading the sequel shortly!

Reviewed for myvampfiction.com

JUST DO IT

Even though the main characters are young teens, the majority of the book doesn't scream "kid book". There is a lack of gore and detailed violence, and the "romance" (more on that soon) is very tame, which makes this suitable for the young reader. But there's plenty of concepts that appeal to adults too.

I liked Anna as a character- she was more fleshed out than many I've read. However I felt the author could have done a lot better with Peter. He straight away comes across as the righteous "I'll save you" type, without any of the shortfalls that are required to balance a character.

Likewise, the romance could have used some work. This was the only part of the book that I felt was firmly grounded in "kiddy world". The romance is idealistic and happens much too quickly, with implications that Peter had already fallen in love with Anna before they'd even met. What's more than that, Anna apparently can 'do no wrong' in Peter's eyes.

The book wraps up in a way that I didn't realise it was the first part of a series. I'll be reading the others.

Yellow Judge

I loved this book. It's a quick read if you're someone like me, who can sit down for a few hours and finish a 400 page book. It's different than all the other books I've read, which are usually action packed. This book held it's action in suspense, and left you wondering what will happen next at the end of every chapter.

I've read it twice now, and I'm able to pick up on little details that hinted at things (not gonna spoil), which I hadn't picked up on the first time through.

However, my favorite part was the end. What happens is so unique and jaw-dropping that you'll never expect it coming. The twist is amazing and it's hands-down one of my favorite reads. I definitely recommend this book to anyone that likes to read.

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