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The Bar Code Tattoo



Synopsis

The first book in the exciting Bar Code series. Individuality vs. conformity. Identity vs. access. Freedom vs. control. The bar code tattoo. The bar code tattoo. Everybody's getting it. It will make your life easier, they say. It will hook you in. It will become your identity. But what if you say no? What if you don't want to become a code? For Kayla, this one choice changes everything. She becomes an outcast in her high school. Dangerous things start happening to her family. There's no option but to run . . . for her life. Individuality vs. conformity. Identity vs. access. Freedom vs. control. The bar code tattoo.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up - It's 2025, and the thing to do on your 17th birthday is to get a bar code tattoo, which is used for everything from driver's licenses to shopping. Kayla, almost 17, resists because she hates the idea of being labeled. Then the tattoos begin to drive people to commit suicide, Kayla's father among them, and she soon finds out that the markings contain detailed information about their bearers, including their genetic code. When the government, controlled by a corporation called Global-1, makes the tattoo mandatory, Kayla joins a teen resistance movement and falls for a gorgeous guy, unaware that he's a double agent. She discovers she has some psychic ability and

has confusing visions of future events. Forced to run away after being implicated in her mother's accidental death, she eventually joins other resisters hiding in the Adirondack Mountains, finds romance with an old friend, and learns to harness her psychic powers to fight Global-1 and fulfill her visions. Like M. T. Anderson's *Feed* (Candlewick, 2002), this novel examines issues of individuality versus conformity and individual freedom versus governmental control. Because it also deals with the ethics of enhanced genetics and cloning, it tries to cover too much territory and relies too heavily on coincidence and far-fetched plotting. *Stick with Feed*. - Sharon Rawlins, Piscataway Public Library, NJ Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Voice of Youth Advocates (April 1, 2005; 0-439-39562-3) In 2025 America, everyone is getting the bar code tattoo on their wrist, containing financial and medical information. After sixteen-year-old Kayla Reed's father commits suicide and her best friend's family members are forced to move after receiving their bar codes, Kayla joins the resistance group Decode and refuses to get her tattoo when she turns seventeen. Readers encounter many cliffhangers as Kayla survives a house fire, escapes the hospital before getting tattooed, is accused of murdering her mother, hitchhikes to the Adirondacks, and wanders the wilderness sick with fever and desperate to avoid corporate and government enforcers and double agents her age. After joining a camp of resisters who are developing psychic abilities in response to the changing social and cultural environment, Kayla regains the strength to fight another day. The science fiction angle of the corporate/government powers using bar codes to weed out the unfit and uplift those with the least genetic flaws for future cloning is complemented with a discussion of how credit cards were the seeds of consumer tracking. A subplot of the elderly being euthanized in hospitals to save insurance costs is equally disturbing. Mixed in with such thought-provoking substance are some distracting subplots. A romantic triangle between Kayla and two classmates seems forced and used only to heighten suspense and move a plot that is already progressing well, and the conclusion involving people quickly evolving psychic abilities is under-explored. Teens will enjoy this book with its intriguing cover and suspense but might find the ending unsatisfying. -Julie Scordato. *School Library Journal* (February 1, 2005; 0-439-39562-3) Gr 6 Up-It's 2025, and the thing to do on your 17th birthday is to get a bar code tattoo, which is used for everything from driver's licenses to shopping. Kayla, almost 17, resists because she hates the idea of being labeled. Then the tattoos begin to drive people to commit suicide, Kayla's father among them, and she soon finds out that the markings contain detailed information about their bearers, including their genetic code. When the

government, controlled by a corporation called Global-1, makes the tattoo mandatory, Kayla joins a teen resistance movement and falls for a gorgeous guy, unaware that he's a double agent. She discovers she has some psychic ability and has confusing visions of future events. Forced to run away after being implicated in her mother's accidental death, she eventually joins other resisters hiding in the Adirondack Mountains, finds romance with an old friend, and learns to harness her psychic powers to fight Global-1 and fulfill her visions. Like M. T. Anderson's *Feed* (Candlewick, 2002), this novel examines issues of individuality versus conformity and individual freedom versus governmental control. Because it also deals with the ethics of enhanced genetics and cloning, it tries to cover too much territory and relies too heavily on coincidence and far-fetched plotting. Stick with *Feed*. -Sharon Rawlins, Piscataway Public Library, NJ Copyright 2005 Reed Business Information. Sarah Applegate (KLIATT Review, May 2005 (Vol. 39, No. 3)) In a book not far from the headlines What if people began to get bar codes tattooed on their arms for identification, for credit card purchasing, for movement around the country, for getting a job? This is the premise of *The Bar Code Tattoo*, a story about Kayla, a high school student who is beginning to get suspicious of what the bar codes are doing to her world. Her friend's father can't get a job, people are losing their homes, alienating their families and committing suicide, and she knows it is somehow connected to the bar codes. She joins a group working against the codes and against Global-1, the corporation behind the codes, and soon is inspired to fight the bar code--and to fall in love! In the end, Kayla finds herself unwittingly on the lam, separated from her friends and family but knowing in her heart that she is doing what is right. This is a great book, one that reminded me of one of my favorites, *Feed* by M.T. Anderson, though a little less futuristic. It would be an excellent tie-in to discuss contemporary issues of proposed US I.D. cards and civil rights, as well as corporate domination and centralization of ownership. Students will enjoy the multilayered story lines and some students will recognize the similarities to the book of Revelation, which, if you read the author's note, inspired the title. A frightening book. Category: Paperback Fiction. KLIATT Codes: JS--Recommended for junior and senior high school students. 2004, Scholastic, 252p., \$5.99. Ages 12 to 18. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

(Spoilers ahead) I quite liked the first half of this book. It's actually more unnerving than a lot of other dystopian novels since it's very, very close to life right now. The idea that people would get tattooed with a bar code that contains all their ID and financial information is sort of the direction we're going now: paperless, efficient... I'm not a conspiracy theorist and I love me my debit card and internet shopping, but this novel, only a step or two down the path we're on, actually gave me pause. I liked it

so well, in fact, that I found myself wishing the author weren't writing for a young adult audience; the book could have been fleshed out and expanded and would probably be appreciated by readers of all ages. A little more depth would have done it justice...but that's not to say that I wasn't enjoying reading it as it is. And then around the middle of the book, it got a little too bizarre. First I could overlook the extremely rapid move from nebulous oppression to characters who just happened to stumble on the malevolent new world order of genetic modification and cloning and wholesale slaughter of the imperfect. I could even overlook the wildly implausible escape by a girl too stupid to know that email could be tracked and who kept managing to stumble across friends and enemies while traveling and hiding out in a huge region. (One coincidence is fine. Lots of them tell me that the author is getting lazy.) Well, I guess I didn't overlook these things so much as suspend judgment until I could see where it was going. Where it went was a step through a trans-dimensional portal and into the Celestine Prophecy. Suddenly humans fighting the bar code have evolved virtually overnight into superior beings with funky mental powers. And never mind that I was disliking the protagonist more and more; she starts out asserting that she despises those girls who put on an act just to nab a boyfriend, and then turns into one of those very girls. I mean, a character that unaware of herself and that judgmental without even a nod to the irony in her own new love isn't terribly likeable. (You can almost hear her whining, "but you don't underSTAND how real this is!") The problem, I think, is that the initial appeal of this book was in its realism. Its potential for predicting reality. And if the author had just put down the hash pipe and held off her new age conversion for a hundred pages or so, this book would have been quite good. And that almost-awesomeness actually makes me dislike this book more than I would have if it had just started out all weird. Instead, it's like a bait and switch. Meh. I'll give it two stars since the beginning was good and the length meant I only wasted a few hours of my life. But all the shaking-my-head-in-disgust keeps me from giving it any more than that.

This book was amazing when I read it years ago. Reading it now, it's still good; however, some of the parts don't flow well enough or I felt like I was cheated on details. I still would recommend this book because of the ethical issues discussed and the sci-fi (:

I really appreciated the quick shipping and protective packaging of the book! It was great quality and I love the story. It's one of the first books I read when I started going to school in 8th grade and my favorite teacher, Ms. Burke had us read this and create an analysis. I recommend this book for teens and adults 12+ and it's great for creative writing and philosophical projects.

This is sci fi that's realistic in that it focuses on issues we deal with today. Most notably, the main concerns of this novel are globalization including GMO food, Internet use and hacking, genetic code detection and modification, and the gradual disappearance of cash money, all of which lead to sprawling government invasion of privacy and manipulation of people's lives. It's not literature but it's very thought-provoking. I'll be looking to read the sequels.

I enjoyed this book. It was realistic and I could see how we could eventually move in the direction this book takes. That said, I lost interest at times. The fact that the government in the USA is wiretapping places without warning makes the message in this book flare to life. If people could keep tabs on us, it'd be a very scary world indeed. We'd lose all of our rights, and would be at the mercy of whoever had control over the information they had on us. That's what I kept thinking through out this book: that it could happen, if it hasn't already. Do I recommend this book? Yes and no. It's not a horrible book, it's got a good message and was for the most part interesting. Then again, I wasn't emotionally invested as much as I get with an AMAZING book. I suggest you try a sample & see what you think of that 1st.

I just read the book in about 10 hours. As a fan of Utopian/Dystopian/Social fiction, I was intrigued when I heard about it. It is geared to younger readers, which may explain the sometimes superficial approach to a very involved background. I grew more aware as I neared the end that the book was always meant to be serial in nature. That's not a terrible thing. If you enjoyed taking the author's journey by the end of the book, you won't mind buying the sequels. I'm not certain if I will continue, because I could almost see actors and actresses from "Gossip Girl" playing the parts of the story's teens, and I don't even watch "Gossip Girl." A lot of concepts are thrown around, with genetic modification, cloning, and totalitarian control by a non-government organization representing the bad side, and an odd but interesting Paganism-meets-evolution neo-culture representing the good side. If individuality versus collectivism is a theme, there is a schism in the theme, since the opposing sides appear to both be heading toward a collectivist end. The bad guys represent a fascist enforcement of conformity while the good guys are ascending into unified spiritual/philosophical beings. All in all, the book was worth the read, and was an easy read. It's kind of like watching a show for the pleasure of it, rather than for its ability to make you think too hard. That's not meant as a negative. Filet mignon and Big Mac, "Citizen Kane" and "Sorority Boys," and "Brave New World" and "The Bar Code Tattoo" are all enjoyable, according to mood and purpose.

It was okay. The beginning really grabs you. The author does a good job of setting up a believable dystopia. However, the plot has all the subtlety of a drunken frat boy. Everything that you think is going to happen, happens. Evolution doesn't respond to politics within the same generation. I didn't find any of the characters particularly compelling. This book would have benefited from at least an extra 100 pages, if not being split in two.

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