

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *Specials*
AUTHOR Scott Westerfeld
PUBLISHER Simon Pulse
COPYRIGHT 2006
PRINTING 2007

This is the third book of the trilogy that chronicles the evolution of Tally Youngblood. In the first two novels, Tally goes from ugly to pretty and now she has become a special. That means she has been enhanced with greater senses and strength and is working for the evil Dr. Cable who runs Special Circumstances.

On the positive side, Tally is back with her friends Shay and Zane but Zane is still suffering the effects of taking only one of the two pills meant to cure the brain lesions that are part of the pretty operation. This creates the reason Tally defies Cable and even Shay during the mission they have been assigned - to track runaways to some other city.

As it turns out, Diego is the other city and they do not have the major separation of uglies and pretties and free thought is encouraged. In fact, specials are illegal in Diego. This causes serious problems for Tally and in the end Tally's city declares war on Diego which sets up the dramatic conclusion.

I liked this book a lot and it certainly was more action-packed than the second novel. Westerfeld wraps up the story well, even if the final few pages are a little clichéd and preachy (Not near as bad as say Stevan Segal was in *Deadly Ground* however) but the message is clear - humanity cannot be molded or controlled for very long, and the earth needs to be protected.

There is a fourth book in this universe called *Extras* and from the preview in the back of this book it appears to be about different characters. Overall this is a good series of books, geared at young adults but worth reading by any science fiction fan. They are short reads and the pace is brisk. Get them for your kids but read them yourself.

Rating  ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐