



Hunger

Jackie Morse Kessler

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“Thou art the Black Rider. Go thee out unto the world.”

Lisabeth Lewis has a black steed, a set of scales, and a new job: she’s been appointed Famine. How will an anorexic seventeen-year-old girl from the suburbs fare as one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse?

Traveling the world on her steed gives Lisa freedom from her troubles at home: her constant battle with hunger, and her struggle to hide it from the people who care about her. But being Famine forces her to go places where hunger is a painful part of everyday life, and to face the horrifying effects of her phenomenal power. Can Lisa find a way to harness that power — and the courage to battle her own inner demons?

Hunger Details

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From Reader Review Hunger for online ebook

Donna says

I don't normally set expectations for things because if whatever it is doesn't live up to those expectations, you have no one to blame but yourself. So outside of reasonable expectations, I don't go into things like, say, most books, all ramped up for it thinking it was going to be something great. Usually. Unfortunately I did that with this one and, sad to say, my expectations were not lived up to. My bad.

I guess going in the concept I had brewing of an anorexic girl as Famine was beyond what this story provided. And that's okay, but I wasn't all that impressed with where it went. And I do think that's thinking outside of my original expectations of it.

Lisabeth is anorexic and for some unknown reason, Death knights her into Famine to spread the doom piece all over the world. Her outward battle with her new-found powers and the bitch that is War blatantly mirrors her inner struggle with her eating disorder. I get that. But I couldn't help but feel that the story was missing something.

The writing's pretty good and it helped that the story was short so I zipped through it pretty quickly. I liked how Lisa's problem is portrayed in conjunction with her friends that want to help her and her "friend" that enables her. It's a good dynamic. But tied in with being Famine, I just felt the connector was a little flat.

Lisa goes from petulant denial that's she's anorexic to fully accepting the fact that she's anorexic in only a matter of pages but there wasn't really any big revealing action that caused that epiphany. One moment it was denial and the next she was kind of going over herself as Famine and the word just sort of fell into her thoughts. And she was okay with that. I didn't like that.

But the lack of a 'why' was what really turned me away from the story. Death kind of latched onto this sick girl, gave her these crazy powers, all to teach her a lesson? Why? It just seems like such an infinitesimal thing for such an infinite being to do and the explanation for it wasn't anywhere near what I felt it needed to be in order to properly explain that why. At the end of the book Lisa isn't suffering from Special Child Syndrome. She doesn't differ from any of the other thousands of anorexics in the world. So why her? That question wasn't answered for me and that really bothers me.

Overall it's a decent book. I liked all of the characters and the situations they were put in but I just didn't feel it was strong enough to carry the premise. There were a few too many holes in a very interesting topic for me (the Horsemen) that were left unexplained. I honestly don't know if I'm going to venture further into the series as it comes out. If I don't have anything in my pile to read, maybe because I wasn't uninterested. But I'm not itching to grab the next book.

Raechella says

I deem it unnecessary to be forlorn if you are plumpish or whatsoever, as long as you're not excessively fat. Trust me; looking healthy is much better than looking sickly. Do you even think you'll look good without enough flesh or curves to fit into your clothes?

According to statistics, In the United States alone, it has been estimated that 8 million people have an eating

disorder—7 million goes to women while the remaining 1 million goes to men. One in 200 American women suffers from anorexia, while 2-3 American women suffer from bulimia. An estimated 10-15% who suffer from anorexia or bulimia are males and nearly half of the population personally know someone who suffers from these illnesses. How much more if you sum up every country? How did we come into that?

During the earlier times, being plump suggests wealth while a gaunt figure otherwise suggests poverty. As generations passed, the way people see themselves changed extraordinarily. Today, the stirring influence of the media alone seemingly impinges upon its audiences the emphasis of perfection—by that, we interject the notion of being thin.

So, what does eating disorder have to do with this Horseman?

Lisabeth Lewis, our protagonist, suffers from anorexia. Death appointed her as Famine, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Famine hauls her to places where hunger is at its gravest. Amidst the ghastly ramblings, Lisa eventually realizes how she foolishly emaciated her physique when there are innumerable people famished, starving, and without the same privilege as hers. This understanding instigated her to seize Famine's power to alleviate the sufferings of these people.

The book was pretty decent. The premise was brilliant, but the execution wasn't that great. Surely, the cover was inevitably irresistible and the blurb was greatly appealing. However, this isn't really an apocalyptic novel albeit the presence of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse—more into teenage dilemma.

Regardless of Hunger being the first book in the series, I have read Rage first. Apparently, this has got more depth than the second book but still wasn't moving enough. I am quite convinced that Kessler delved more into the effects of the eating disorder with Lisa physically, which robbed her from her personality. Certainly, anorexia affects the body, but it would have been better if Kessler also explored what it was doing with her personality. You don't get to know who Lisa really is throughout the whole book despite being the protagonist. Some elements in addition, were far-fetched to be convincing. For instance, Lisa was in sheer denial that she has anorexia but momentarily accepted her role as Famine. And no one seemed to notice her losing weight other than her best friend, not even her boyfriend and her parents. One more thing, why has she become anorexic? Too many loopholes remained unpolished.

Even the side characters don't have enough appeal to be remembered. They were just there to keep the story going—coming in and out of the picture just to say there were side characters. War also, just keeps popping in and out in certain scenes just to scare and annoy Lisa. Death is an amazing character, though. He is humorous, charming, and dreamy. A little more fleshing out—he would've been perfect.

Don't get me wrong, I don't want the world to end yet, but aren't the Horsemen the harbingers of the Apocalypse? They were called those for a reason but it seemed like here, they were just entitled to be one, not literally the agents of the aforementioned Doomsday.

Probably the problem is that this is too short. If written longer, the story would've been stretched far more, and perchance would be better.

On with the good points. Notwithstanding the incessant rants, I still did not hate this book. There were still certain points that I relished—the message about loving your body, that is. Everybody has flaws, yes, and there are really times, if not often, that when you look in the mirror, you will not love what you are seeing. It may be the zits on your face, your bulging stomach, your huge thighs, or you are not tall enough. Just like

Lisa being obsessed with her weight, each one of us is also obsessed with our imperfections, whatever that is.

Choosing Famine as a distraught teenager, one who suffers from anorexia was a creative and an imaginative maneuver with these types of themes.

Again, a decent read. It gives a different spin to the original Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and doesn't shy away from its tough subject matter.

Mike Mullin says

Insane genius in a slender paperback. I read it at one sitting and cried my way through the end of chapter 17 and most of chapter 18. If those bits don't make you cry too, you may not be a parent or child. Easily ranks with *Before I Fall* and *You* as one of the best books I've read this year.

Kristen says

I am confused as to the overall arc of this series. And I am confused by Death telling our main character that she can die or be Famine and then when she doesn't want to be Famine anymore he just lets her out of it and she doesn't die. Maybe I missed something (although it would be hard to do that given how short the book was).

This book was not what I expected. It was a trip through the mind of someone with an eating disorder. Although it wasn't as horrible as I would have expected (especially after seeing at the end that the author says she suffered from an eating disorder when she was younger) it to be - for a story trying to convey some of the horrors of an eating disorder.

Again, I am lost as to what the overall purpose of the series is. Some series have one story arc without smaller stories which are solved in each installment (think Alyson Noel's immortal series) and some have stories within the stories (think Harry Potter or Percy Jackson). Here, I have no idea what the overall story arc is. And, to boot, the individual story was confusing and inconsistent. I was taken back by Lisa's ability to reject the post as Famine and then simply go back to life as usual. Seems like we really didn't accomplish much.

The writing at times was excellent. The character of Death was really quite amusing. But this was overshadowed by the times where the writing was the opposite of excellent and the plot holes. We don't know what the Rider is supposed to do. Is the series supposed to be about bringing the Apocalypse? It would be a natural conclusion given the title of the series and the fact that, you know, we have the Four Horsemen here. But, I don't get the sense that this is the case. It appears that we are supposed to guess that there simply must always be a Rider. But I don't know. I would like to see where this story arc is going.

It's hard to say much about a book so short. Given my issues, I am a little bummed that I just spent \$8 for a book that (i) was almost as short as this review, (ii) really doesn't seem to give me any clue as to where the series is headed, and (iii) really gives me only one character that I like and that character happens to be Death.

I am already half way through with Rage and am sad to say it seems to have the same trend. But, I will reserve final judgment until I am finished.

Heather says

This book read like a very bad after school special or Lifetime movie of the week. The narration was overly preachy. I couldn't help but think it was meant to be a collage essay on the pitfalls of eating disorders, the hunger in the world, and how wasteful humans are when it comes to food. But, with the added element of sci-fiction.

Lisabeth Lewis was one of the most annoying characters. I include the Four Horsemen in that statement as well. Kurt Cobain as one of the horsemen took this book to a laughable level. I had quite a few mental eye-rolls.

I think it must have been a slow publishing week for new books or something, because this book was awful. There was way too much detail about bowel movements and the removing of clothing during that process. I really could have done with out that part of the story or most of it actually. I think Kessler tried to portray the ugly-side of anorexia with these graphic details; however, there is a way to elude to certain ideas with out spelling it out for the reader. That's what our imaginations are for.

Jackie Kessler tried to add a bit of humor to a very serious topic, but it didn't come off very well. Sorry. I'm surprised that is a second book in the works. I hope the second book isn't has bad. For once, I have no interest in reading another book in a series...

Rachel Caine says

I got tremendously lucky and had an opportunity to read an advance copy of HUNGER. I can say without exaggeration that I *loved* this book. It was fierce, uncompromising, fun, shocking, private, painful and beautiful, and I feel very privileged to have seen it early.

Jackie's written a book that is as intense as anything I've ever had the good fortune of reading, and I think that in addition to being a great book, this is also a very personal book, full of raw power.

I wish I'd written it.

Sesana says

Hunger is almost like two books in a small (180 page) package. There's the paranormal fantasy with a somewhat unusual premise, and then there's the YA issue novel. They only barely come together as a whole, and it's the issue aspect that makes this book worth reading.

Lisa is anorexic, and in denial. Her turning point comes when Death (here cast as essentially Kurt Cobain) gives her the job of Famine. Yes, the Horseman of the Apocalypse. It was this fantasy aspect that I felt was a

little weak. It's a great premise (and it isn't overdone!) but so much isn't explained at all. The ending is hurried and isn't properly explained enough to be consistent with what went before. This is aside from how uncomfortable it is to see a privileged white girl get her enlightenment in third world countries. (Also, unnecessary. Hunger is a major problem in America, too.) If I were just judging this book based on the fantasy storyline, it'd be three stars, at best.

But that isn't the whole of the story. The real meat here is Lisa's experience (she isn't struggling, not really. she's given up) with anorexia. She calls it the Thin Voice, the running commentary on how many calories she's consumed, how long it'll take her to work it off, and just how worthless she really is. (*Hershey's Kisses, it whispered. Twenty-five calories each.*) It's suffocating enough to read, and it doesn't take long to see what it does to her. There's also a painfully graphic scene of a bulimic purging. (In a note at the end, the author mentions her own struggles with bulimia.) It's all terribly real. I also appreciated that the end made it very clear that Lisa's recovery was ongoing and wouldn't be easy.

As a book about an eating disorder, Hunger is realistic and effective. 4.5 stars, easily. It's the fantasy aspects that are a little weak. I'll be reading the rest of the series, and hoping for more in that department.

Alyssa says

"My job?" Lisa said as Death helped her to her feet. She was a seventeen-year-old high school junior in the suburbs; she didn't have a job.

"Thou art Famine, yo," Death said. "Time to make with the starvation." (pg49)

Realistic but unique? Funny but dark? *Hunger* sounds promising right?

It does – Kessler's book certainly has an exciting premise. The basic overlay of 2010's popular debut is simply a twist that incorporates teenage eating disorders into the biblical myth of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse. For contemporary and fantasy readers alike, this tiny story seems like the perfect manuscript.

Hunger is about a young lady battling the third most common "sickness" amongst teens in America: anorexia. Sure, there was some Death and War and Pestilence involved, but all in all, that sentence pretty much sums up the book.

I'll start with the good things before I begin complaining: the positions and scenes Kessler created for Lisa very accurately demonstrated the monster that is the popular condition amongst teens. She did so very well and with lots of description. Although having been schooled on eating disorders since I was nine years old, Kessler put the condition into a real perspective and into a real-life place, actually giving me more information and understanding towards the subject than any textbooks I've read. The prose was decent and the idea was unique. This could have been an okay book.

Basically, though, the book was boring. For such a short novel, I certainly felt it dragging ass. In fact, instead of it feeling like it was a 177-paged book, I felt that number was tripled – information and pieces detailing anorexia is one thing whereas describing how it felt to be cold and what happened while Lisa took a shit (she really included that) wasn't needed and didn't make any improvements to the story. I understand that anorexia does things to the human mind and that it can often confuse and meddle emotions – I also understand that Kessler needed to prove that Lisa was, for lack of a better term, *sick*, by tossing in her confusions and her dizziness and her constipation. I get it. I fucking do. But like I said: I've been schooled on the subject for near forever, as have the majority of those for which this novel is geared towards. I *know* anorexia. I *don't* know Lisa. Kessler, by including so much information on how the sickness was affecting

the human body, and not Lisa specifically, made anorexia define Lisa instead of what should have been Lisa's character.

Because truly, by the end of the novel, I didn't know a single thing about her. You could say that the condition had taken all of Lisa's personality away because it was overcoming her – it's not possible, but sure, you could say that. I'd just question you with two comments: do the deadly ill like to be known as only the sick, and wouldn't somebody notice a change in Lisa if the sickness had been taking away her personality? (I felt like I lost IQ points for even writing that.)

Everyone who cared about Lisa (her friend Suzanne aside; I'll get to her later) would have noticed something, right? For one, you'd think they'd notice her weight loss – baggy clothes can't hide everything, darling. I mean Lisa's boyfriend, who had been dating her for a year, must have either zero intelligence – did he not notice that their “special” talks had ended/Lisa's mumbling responses/her boniness when touching her ‘when the mood struck him to be amorous’ – or zero feelings for Lisa – he noticed and just doesn't give a shit. How could a boyfriend who sees his “baby” everyday – I talk to mine more than once and would damn him if he called me that– be completely oblivious to her disappearing personality? How could Lisa's father – who was just “oh, so cute” – not realize all of Lisa's incredibly particular weight-loss machineries on the basement floor? How was it that only Suzanne noticed something different in Lisa and was the only one to act on it?

It's either Lisa had no personality in the first place (which isn't even possible) or Kessler's decided that anorexia now defines a person. Wasn't the point of this book to announce that it was what was on the inside that counts? Wasn't it? Where's the inside in Lisa?

So to sum up the issue at hand: Lisa had no personality, a missing quality that made the novel totally unrealistic and boring to me as a reader. Unrealistic because the ending isn't likely; boring because it was like reading about a brick wall.

Another thing: you'd also think that *Hunger* would focus on getting Lisa to understand her condition and on her getting/receiving help. In a book this tiny, you'd have to start off doing that incredibly early on. You'd also think that in doing so, Lisa would grow a little as a person, would change, would become something different. Although I'm not denying (view spoiler) that making Lisa into Famine was a total character-flip, I'm admitting that by the end of the book, I still don't know a thing about Lisa and how it was even possible for her to change the way that she did. If the book had been longer and there had been more space to bring Lisa-the-Person back as wonderfully as Kessler brought in Lisa-the-Anorexic, *Hunger* would have made me starving for more.

I wouldn't recommend *Hunger*, if you're looking for a novel - if you're looking for a description of anorexia, then let me know and I'll even hand my copy over to you. I just wouldn't consider this a well written product of fiction.

1.5

Ebehi says

Rating: One and a Half

Frankly, I think I wasted my time with this book. The premise seemed so interesting and after I read about it on a book blog, I decided to check it out at the library.

I like the way the author was able to get inside Lisa's head to show us how her mind worked. I found it very believable and easy to relate to. There was also a message, albeit not very strong, against eating disorders and such.

But what was wrong?

Well, first of all, I was irked by the author's intrusions. She would insert these seemingly philosophical sentences here and there. For example, Lisa would be in the middle of a thought then the author would pop in with her "wise words" that were obviously not Lisa's. It also made it difficult to decide whether or not to take the book seriously because there was this underlying humor that jarred with the unwanted insights that the author insisted on giving.

Secondly, I was dismayed at the size of the book. I mean, this book has eating disorders, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and travels to exotic lands! How could it possibly be so undernourished (pun intended)? The author didn't take enough time to flesh out her one-dimensional characters and strengthen her message. Instead, we got all these points where Lisa repeated the same thoughts about her dad or her mom or her friends all the time that just got annoying and took up book space.

Finally, there were the plot holes big enough to stick my size 9 feet through. There were too many questions raised that the author didn't bother to answer. Like, why exactly was Lisa chosen to be Famine? An explanation was sort of offered but it was begging the question. What exactly did the Horsemen do? And the climax. Oh the climax. It stunned me. I was utterly flabbergasted because I could see it coming but I had been inwardly begging the author not to do this, and I cringed when she still did. The end was dull and didn't come as much of a surprise but there was no sense of completion or accomplishment after reading this book.

I'm very dissatisfied because it seemed to have so much promise and potential, yet the writer didn't bother doing more than scratching the surface. And her statement against anorexia wasn't bold enough and seemed wishy-washy at times.

Oh, and I did not like Death even though we were *obviously* supposed to.

Half a star for the cover.

Tina says

Original review at One More Page

I cannot imagine myself having an eating disorder. I love food too much, and I can't imagine not eating. Of course, when I lost all the extra weight, I was careful to follow my nutritionist's advice and keep myself well-fed to keep my metabolism up. I guess I'm blessed enough not to be too conscious of how fat/thin I look, and that I had good friends and people around me who always kept me in check.

But that doesn't mean that I have never had encounters with any eating disorder. I had some friends back in college who had eating disorders. One had bulimia and we had to do intervention for her to help her out, while the other had an eating disorder that was neither bulimia or anorexia (I think it's called Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified), where she always thinks she's fat even if she wasn't (if she was fat, then *I'm* an elephant) and she would swing from binging and purging to eating normally and exercising like crazy. Thankfully, these friends are better now, so it wasn't as extreme as the one I read in *Hunger*.

Now, *Hunger* is a pretty unique book. I've read some contemporary YA with eating disorders involved, but never in the context of an urban fantasy novel. For one thing, I only know of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse from watching *Charmed* (Season 2 Episode 21), and they give me a kind of creepy impression being harbingers of the apocalypse. I also didn't know these four horsemen actually had a Christian origin as they were from Revelations! *facepalm* I had no idea what to expect about this novel, except maybe get a bit freaked out at the references to the apocalypse.

Surprisingly, I enjoyed it. It's not an apocalyptic novel, despite the presence of the four horsemen -- it was more of a novel about an girl suffering through an eating disorder. I was very annoyed at Lisa for most of the novel because she *is* sick, but she won't admit it. I wanted to yell and scream at her for thinking that she was fat -- there weren't many descriptions of her in the book, but I knew for a fact that she wasn't fat. I know that she was doing more harm to her body than good by not eating and exercising like crazy. I was both frustrated and sorry for Lisa because she won't listen to her friends and yet she really, really needs help.

Who knew being Famine could change that? Lisa being Famine was the key for her to realize that while she was starving herself because she felt fat, there are people all over the world who would die to have the food she has available for her. It was kind of hard for me to understand how famine could be a good thing, how it could help, but the author managed to execute it well in a way that made sense. I liked how Lisa's story turned out -- it wasn't a story of destruction really, even with all the apocalypse, but a story of redemption for Lisa.

I'd also like to say that I'm relieved that there's no paranormal romance involved in this book! For a moment there I thought Lisa would fall for another horseman, but I'm glad she didn't. Not only would that be creepy, but that would totally destroy how the story was set up.

There were some stuff I found myself nitpicking on that didn't make me *love* this novel. There were times when the point of view shifts, like the sudden use of "our" and "we", and it was kind of jarring to see shifts like that while reading. Example:

She opened her mouth to say she most certainly did not, and never mind that he looked familiar because she'd never seen him before, not really, when suddenly it clicked. Humans have a race memory, or if you wanted to get Jungian, a collective unconscious -- the feelings and experiences that we as a species have learned throughout the ages. In our souls, we recognize the angels and demons that walk among us, as well as the Old Ones who fall in between those categories.

I'm not sure if it's a writing technique, but to me, it felt a bit awkward, like it could have been written better. Also, the switching from Lisa to Lisabeth throughout the story was kind of confusing, up until I realized that whenever Lisabeth was used, it is from the POV of Famine or the horse. This is very minor, but I also felt like Lisa's parents could have been named better -- Simon and Sandy felt too much like brother and sister to me. ^^

But that's just me nitpicking, as I said. *Hunger* is still a pretty good book, one that pleasantly surprised me. It's a pretty quick read, and there's also a story from the author at the end that made me appreciate the story even more. I'm looking forward to *Rage*, the second book in this series, this time about self-mutilation and War.

Hunger will be out on October 2010 from Harcourt Graphia. A portion of the proceeds of the book will be donated to the National Eating Disorders Association. Much thanks to NetGalley for the advanced reading copy ebook!

AtenRa says

"Thou art Famine,yo."

How can you not love a book that has that line in it?It's impossible!

When I first read Hunger's summary, I thought that that is the book for me.I love the Four Horseman/Apocalypse/Harbinger stories and I was so excited to read this,I can't even tell you!To be honest, I was expecting it to be more to the paranormal/supernatural side and it-surprisingly-wasn't, and thank God for that because I find that the matter it approaches is way more important than any paranormal story, however good.

Anorexia and bulimia are diseases.If you're thinking of losing weight by not eating or by throwing up what you eat, you are sick and you should immediately seek help.That's an undeniable fact.No way around it, no loopholes, no excuses.Lisa,the lead, is sick.Kessler herself,was sick for a short period of time and through her amazing writing,we are witnessing Lisa's slow and painful demise.I am not even going to dwell on the myriads of negatives aspects of being anorexic or bulimic.The one-chapter,"ritual" ,of Lisa's friend stuffing herself with anything she can find and then forcing herself to lose it was shocking, to say the least,and if that doesn't make you want to even reconsider doing something resembling that, I don't know what will.

But,in the end,Lisa found herself and through her eye opening experience as Famine, she learned first hand about misery and poverty and finally,actual hunger.It was not easy,of course.Even in the end we see Lisa struggling to eat, even though she knows it's the right thing to do, it's what she HAS to do to help people in need, and I loved how Kessler used Lisa's compassion for others as a way to make her start eating again.She was not able to care about herself because she neither understood nor believed that anything was wrong with her , but she could still care about others, and that was enough to save her.

That being said, there is also a fun side to this book.Difficult to believe,but it's true!You can't help but crack a smile at Kessler's clever humour and witty one liners, a very welcome change to the otherwise gloomy and depressing content.I mean, come on!Death playing "Come As You Are" on his guitar?Awesome!

The only problem I had with Hunger was its length.It was so short!I would like some more character development, especially War.And basically I wanted more material to read,more printed words,please!

So, even though Hunger left me wanting a lot more pages to gnaw at, it was an amazing start to a series and to all of you teens out there who don't even like paranormal:you should read this book,regardless! Looking forward to Rage, coming out Spring 2011!!

Note:A portion of the proceeds of Hunger will be donated to NEDA(National Eating Disorders Association) so go buy the book, you guys!

Torzilla says

Hunger is a compelling tale that eloquently captures the mindset of a person suffering from an eating disorder. From page one I found myself captivated by the text, unable to put it down to eat. There's something almost ironic about admitting that.

Readers are introduced to Lisa, the new Famine. I've always been interested in the Horsemen of the Apocalypse. They're one of those concepts that are fun to talk about, but nobody every really explored further, much to my chagrin. When I heard Larissa Ione and Jackie M Kessler were both writing novels exploring the horsemen, I squealed. Then to read Hunger early? It pretty much made my month.

So Lisa has a problem: she's anorexic. She doesn't believe she is. She also doesn't believe that she's the new famine. Except... she keeps randomly spotting her office's symbol, and there's this weird phantom horse eating her mother's plants in the garden. Even so, our young heroine still does not believe the dream she had... of Death.

The plot itself was so unique I had no idea what would happen next. Would Lisa die? Would she accept her job and eventually come to terms with her problem? I loved the fact that Jackie kept me guessing until the very end. What made it even better was the huge plot twist. And then the next twist. Oh, and that final battle? Awesome.

Death has got to be one of my favorite characters and I cannot wait to read more about him in future books. He's so... un-deathy. Despite him being the grim reaper, I would--without hesitation--want to give him a high five if I ever met him (assuming I didn't die by doing so). He bestowed a sense of levity within the tale with his goofy comments. Plus, to have Death act like that? It never gets old.

I'd also like to mention the note that Jackie leaves her readers after the novel has come to an end. It was moving. It actually managed to make me tear up. It is, simply put, beautiful. Thank you so much Jackie, for sharing that little piece about yourself with your readers.

I feel wrong for mentioning this now, especially after my last paragraph, but I have to say it! The cover is amazing. It's unique and it captures the idea of the book so well. I love it. I want a poster of it. Or maybe a sticker.

Overall? Hunger is a moving story. It's an eye opener. But you know, aside from all that, it was enjoyable too. I never felt depressed like some books with heavy topics will make readers feel. In fact, the ending was hopeful. It made me happy that things turned out the way they did. So if you've been anticipating this book, I am going to tell you now, chances are you'll love it. And if you're unsure about reading this? Give it a shot, if anything, it'll open your eyes about a serious problem plaguing society.

Jackie Kessler says

What can I say? If I didn't love it, I wouldn't have written it. :)

HUNGER was brewing for 10 years before I finally sat down to write it. And then it all came pouring out. It was cathartic. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did writing it.

A portion of proceeds will be donated to the National Eating Disorders Association. So if you buy this book - thank you for helping to make a difference!

karen says

five stars for **IN**tent, three stars for **CON**tent.

so the premise of this book is that an anorexic teenage girl is chosen to fill the office of Famine. yeah, Famine - as in four horsemen of the apocalypse Famine. that one. awesome, right? as someone who devoured all of piers anthony's "incarnations of immortality" books as a teen, this is right up my alley. (incidentally - for fans of that series - did you even know that a "new" one came out a few years ago that he self-published?? Under a Velvet Cloak not many people know about it, so i use this space to share.)

so i am sold on the premise.

it's the execution that troubles me.

things that make me unhappy:

-Death is played by kurt cobain.i don't have to explain why this is uncool, do i? good.

-remember what i said about the impressive swear-manipulation in *anna dressed in blood*?? this is exactly the opposite. this is punch-pulling, cutesy "cursing" that makes me hate being in the character's head. it is not that i don't like that she *doesn't* curse, it is that she overuses fake cursery. nearly every page feels like it has:

-it really was freaking cool

-how freaking awesome was that?

-and he freaking terrified her.

and it isn't like the character is talking to anyone, so - what, she just blurts out grandma-safe ejaculations in her head? for her own amusement? unlikely. if you don't have anything cool to say, don't say anything at all.

the third problem i had is how facile this is, not in its treatment of anorexia, which is better done than in many books, but in its treatment of world hunger. the idea of an anorexic girl becoming famine is a fun ironic conceit, but the "reality" of a book about a privileged white girl with her first-world anorexia traveling to distant impoverished lands to single-handedly end world hunger makes me squirm.

the anorexia parts are good, though. better than a lot of novels i have read on the topic. there is a scene where another character is going through her bulimia ritual that gave me goosebumps. it is so so horrifying. and if this had just been some extended starvation-induced hallucination where a young girl finally sees herself in a larger context of the world's problems and overcomes her own psychological disorder, that would be fine. a little trite, but not terrible.

but it's not.

so i am kind of torn about this. on the one hand - death playing a guitar and singing nirvana ditties really displeases me. on the other hand - there is a good book about anorexia buried beneath all the trappings. i will probably read the next book (it is WAR), but when the Death volume comes out, i might give it a pass.

hayden says

HUNGER makes WINTERGIRLS look like TWILIGHT . . . but worse. Just throw in a little Apocalyptic

lore and you're good to go!

It's really interesting to get inside the head of a girl with an eating disorder. Jackie really knows what she's talking about; she actually went through it herself. (Not for long, but it happened!) Overall, I just loved it, from the Famine aspects and the eating disorder aspects. I just loved the whole thing from beginning to end.

The only thing that angered me a little was how petulant and scared Lisa was acting. You're supposed to be Famine; suck it up! She seemed to cower away from the most important scenes (until the end, of course) and it kind of ticked me off to see such a weak character caving in to her weaknesses instead of trying to grow stronger.

Overall, HUNGER was fantastic, and I'm already almost finished with RAGE. Hopefully, it'll be nothing but compliments as well.
