



New Rules of High School

Blake Nelson

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I had thought there was a lot of freedom being a good student, being trusted, being given special privileges, but that was nothing compared to the freedom I felt now. Once people gave up on you, once people wrote you off, now that was freedom.

Max Caldwell is tired. He's tired of having a "perfect" girlfriend, he's tired of worrying about college applications, and he's tired of always doing what he's supposed to do. So for the first time, dependable, reliable Max steps back from his Mr. Perfect, straight-A life to see what happens when he lets go for a while. He learns quickly that his new approach to life won't bring all the answers, but it sure raises a lot of interesting questions. This fast-paced novel introduces a fantastic cast of characters, from downtown Goth kids to preppy suburbanites, seen through the eyes of a seventeen-year-old who's trying to figure it all out.

New Rules of High School Details

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Author : Blake Nelson

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From Reader Review New Rules of High School for online ebook

Quintend says

The saying, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover has to be taken into consideration on this one. The cover with a teenager and the title might make people think that this is a story of a teen going through issues with police or his/her family. No, that's not the case here. This is the story of a junior/senior in high school (Max) that who has issues with girls, siblings, friends, family, even school. The book starts him out as a junior, but by the end he is a senior about to graduate. Max is a senior in high school ready to be the star newspaper editor. He later finds that a psycho girl stalks him and gets on the newspaper as the star columnist. That is his biggest issue but he overcomes more and more challenges as the story goes on. I strongly recommend this for a teen who just wants a good laugh or just wants to be full of joy.

Amy says

New Rules of High School started out strong and then it felt like Nelson just gave up.

It follows Max through his senior year of high school. Max is the editor of the school paper, the perfect student, perfect son with a perfect girlfriend. One day he decides to break up with his girlfriend for no clear reason, but that it just didn't feel right anymore - which is fine. Then he starts hanging out with downtown club kids, getting drunk and crashing his car, and losing his virginity to a girl he doesn't even like.

It almost felt like the boy version of Nelson's "Girl" - which was my favorite book through high school. Except girl is fully formed and follows the characters through their relationships and struggles until Andrea, the main character comes to a new understanding about herself.

In New Rules I think Nelson wants this to happen - characters are introduced - but they never go anywhere. It's unclear why we're supposed to assume certain characters have had any impact on Max because it doesn't seem like they have much of a relationship. There wasn't any character development. I feel like what he was trying to get across is that things that happen in high school don't matter so much once you leave high school. Max's life seems to be self-destructing and his parents keep telling him he's ruining all of his chances for a good college and a good life. But it doesn't build to that or show us how Max comes to understand that. It just ends in what feels like it should be the middle of the book and then he tacked an epilogue on the end that was a little contrived and said basically that two years later everything worked out and things that happen in high school don't really matter anyway.

TheSaint says

Why would anybody just break up with his girlfriend in the car on the way home from school. A girl who he loves?

That is exactly what Max (and all his friends) are trying to figure out. Max is kind of an over-achiever, destined for an Ivy League school and a perfect life. So maybe that's why he messes up so bad during his senior year. Blake Nelson wrote *The New Rules of High School*, so I was hoping for a great read, and it was entertaining, but after his novel, *Girl*, this one seemed kind of a let-down. Still, definitely worth a read, even if only to try to figure out what and where things are in the Portland setting.

Kat says

Not anything particularly extraordinary or clever, but another offering by Blake Nelson of a fairly authentic glimpse into the teenage experience.

Reader says

Max Caldwell is tired of being a perfect son and a perfect student. He goes from focusing on perfection to focusing on having fun, any way he can find it. As he life begins to come apart, his new way of living actually comes together. This book has some mature themes and content. I think readers will relate to how it is easy to lose your way in life, especially during the teenage years. You begin to question who you are, wonder why you are living and acting a certain way, and thinking about how to make life more exciting. Max makes some poor decisions (including driving through his parents' garage door) but with each bad decision comes a valuable lesson.

Ascher Lallas says

The book I just read was called *The New Rules of High School* by Blake Nelson, the genre of this book is fiction. This book is about a guy named Max Caldwell he is a high school and is very smart. He is in some AP classes and has straight A's, he is dating a girl named Cindy. They are the relationship that everybody wants to have, she's perfect and so is he. This book is mainly about Max and his high school years, it shows the transitions he goes through and how he handles them. It also shows the problems that a teenager would typically have and how it changes him for the good and for the bad. I find this book very realistic to what a typical teenage life is like. There are so many good things about this book, it's funny, it's romantic, it's sad and it's so realistic. The only criticism I have for this book would have to be that it is pretty lengthy, which is not a horrible thing because I could never get enough of this book. The main theme that I got from this book was that you can always change and being perfect isn't always good. I have no connection to this book because I don't know of anyone that is perfect. I think that this book shows why you don't want to be perfect, Max is perfect at the beginning of the book but then as the book progresses you can see that he is very tired of being perfect and wants to "let go". After Max makes the decision to "let go" he goes overboard. Which makes sense because he never knew when to stop. The teenagers that are not perfect don't have the feeling that they need to let loose because they live their life loose. This is why I don't think that teenagers should always be perfect because in the long run it's only going to hurt you, not help you. This book is made for the teenager because it shows us how you don't want to be perfect.

Alison says

I'd actually give this 3.5 stars! I'm working on reading all of Blake Nelson's books (because I was one of those Sassy-reading wanna-be-riot-gals who loved his book *GIRL* and found it life-changing). While I might have found Max's transformation or growth at the end to feel a bit rushed, (after a generally slow-paced re-telling of his senior year), I still find Blake Nelson to be so talented at creating realistic teenage voices and lives. Also, how could I not love the elements of running a newspaper, (since I used to work for a real one, and since I would've been the type to work on my school paper if my tiny rural IL high school would've had

one)! I found the very-very-end, (involving Lydia, and what Max eventually comes to think about her), to be quite endearing.

Ashley says

The book is mainly about a highschooler named Max who is a straight A student, debate team captain, and eventually editor of the school paper.

The first few chapters definitely capture the readers attention. Its about him breaking up with his only true love, Cindy.

Throughout the book, it tells about his life (him being the narrator.) You read about everything, his ups and downs- a basic teenager's life.

Him losing his virginity.

Him breaking his nose.

Him trying pot.

And much more.

It is a great book- one that was hard to put down!

Eliza Suluyan says

" The New Rules of High School" is about Max Caldwell, an overachiever, editor-in-chief of the newspaper, debate team captain, and a straight-A student, who has every guy's dream, Cindy, on his arm. He's tired of being "perfect" and always doing what he's expected to do. He breaks up with Cindy. He soon realizes what he's done, but it's too late. His grades start spiraling down, along with his life. This book was deep, and I hope unrealistic, for a I am attending high school next year. However, it was just a really okay book, nothing more. It just seemed kind of random to me. Max goes from being okay to losing it again within pages. Second of all, I never really understood how Max went from being annoyed by Lydia to forming a friendship with her. What I really liked about this book is that I discovered that Blake Nelson, the author, was writing about his own personal experience. It made the book so much more complex and heavy. Max's character appealed to me. It really showed how he was just a normal, confused teenager who didn't know what he really wanted. I do have mixed feelings about this book, but I think if you're a teen who's about to go to high school, this book is definitely one to read.

Cherie says

One of my fave YA books that I've read in a while! What happens when it seems like you have high school all figured out? When Max spontaneously breaks up with his girlfriend because really, they have nothing to talk about, and are just too different, he suddenly finds he needs to re-define what his rules of high school are. What about love? And the high school paper? And college applications? And family? This book is

written in the colloquial, is totally approachable, and a great fun read about one boy's last year of high school.

Petty Lisbon says

-I didn't like this book's pacing. If you read it, you'll know what I'm talking about but about 90% of the book happened at the end. I'm not saying that part had to be the rest of the book, but having it replace a lot of filler at the beginning would've been more interesting.

-The main character has a lot of random thoughts he mentions but drops later like going to therapy for anxiety or being an environmentalist.

-I feel like he is realistic as a boy for dating because he just treats women like his emotional rags instead of caring about their needs. That doesn't mean I liked reading it as it played out.

-Compared to *Girl*, that book had longer chapters and less stream of consciousness. I don't know if that had to do with authors being able to take risks with writing more back then or what but yeah. Give me Andrea Marr and her rants any day.

-They had an interesting focus for club kids but it was weirdly washed out? Not even mentioning the LGBT aspect of it was odd, especially with Drag Race being popular.

-The school newspaper setting was interesting although there were other more interesting characters I would rather read about.

Overall, it was okay but I think the main character was too in the middle to appeal to more readers than have a personality.

Marian says

Short Introduction: Max is a very focused kid and has worked hard his whole life, so it's natural that he grows tired of it his junior year. His life is going well. He's on track to become the editor of the school paper when he's a senior and his grades are good enough to get him to any college. He even has the perfect girlfriend. But all of a sudden perfect isn't as great as it once seemed. After inexplicably breaking up with Cindy one night, his world begins to change.

His best friend Kirk influences him to start hanging out with a different crowd. His newspaper staff has a lot to do with brainstorming article ideas and keeping sales up. The pressure to get into the right college is so urgent, even though there's plenty of time to figure that out. And then there's Lydia, the freshman who won't stop bothering him after a brief encounter at a party.

My Thoughts: I'm a big Blake Nelson fan and this is probably my favorite book of his. Do you know a high school student who's freaking out about life and college decisions? Hand them this book and they will immediately relate to the main character, Max.

The cool thing about Max is that he doesn't fit into a mold. He's this responsible and hardworking kid but his best friend Kirk is so different from him. He hangs out with lots of different people and participates in things that you wouldn't expect of him. Examples are him working at his uncle's flower shop during the summer or trying to get to know Jill St. John, a go green environmentalist type.

Max makes mistakes. What high school kid doesn't? But as you read about his last year or so of high school you'll find yourself entranced with his journey as he experiences new things and tries to figure life out.

Who would I recommend this to? Fans of YA

Anthony Hudson says

This was a great book, aside from the fact that it ended feeling like there should have been at least 30 pages more. The epilogue feels less like a point of closure and more like the author getting tired of writing the story and quickly wrapping up a bunch of loose-ends.

However, I somewhat appreciate the fact that there is no clear-cut resolution or climax to this story, seeing as that is, in a way, how real life happens.

I guess the plot line of this book was almost too realistic for its own good.

It's still a great read, though,

Mr. Mullins says

A believable voice for this typical overachieving boy that goes through some identity questions through his senior year. There is no great statement for or against major social issues like drugs, sex, or the environment. It has an authentic voice that tries to place himself in those questions without clearly getting an answer.

Randi Sabo says

It's Blake Nelson....what's not to like?

I am 42 and have been reading Blake since Girl was recommended to me by an English teacher sophomore year of HS. Growing up among the NYC club kids, I attached myself to Andea and her experiences of finding herself. Girl dove me into all of Nelsons works which never disappoint.

Max is at his crossroads of leaving behind his childhood and wandering aimlessly into adulthood. Nelson provides a great story for Max,his friends, and family. Another great book reminiscent of my youth.
