

Monarch Rising

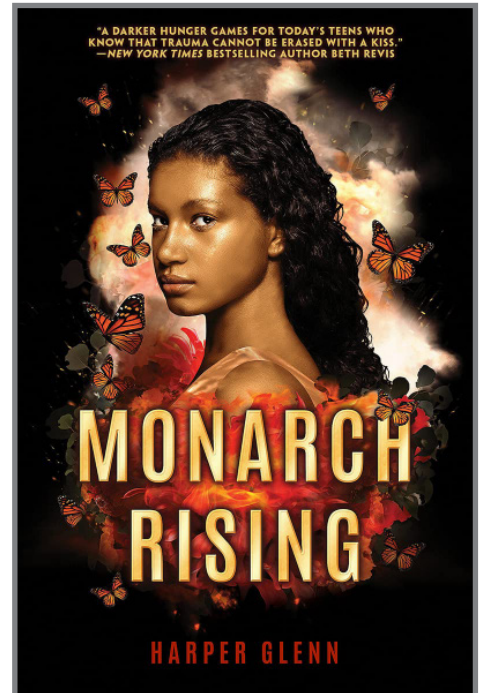
AUTHOR

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SCIS: 5453782

ISBN: 9781338741452

RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Secondary
(Violence and Sexual References)



SYNOPSIS

Today is the day Jo Monarch has been wishing on the moon about her entire life. It's the day of the Lineup, when she could be selected to leave her life in the Ashes behind. The day she could move across the mountains to a glittering, rich future.

Once Jo is plucked from the Lineup, the real test begins. She still needs to impress the New Georgia Reps at tonight's Gala, and her path forward leads straight to Cove Wells. The damaged stepson of one of the Reps, Cove has been groomed as an emotional weapon, taught that love is a tool—and he's set on breaking Jo's heart next.

When a riot breaks out back in the Ashes the night of the Gala, Jo's dreams might all go up in smoke. Can she really have everything she's ever wished for . . . when it means leaving all her loved ones behind in the fire?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harper Glenn is an author of fiction. In addition to creating literary works that unveil the psychological, sociological and economic disparities in poverty-stricken regions around the world, they love vintage books, anatomy and old cemeteries. Though born and raised in Georgia, Harper resides in Washington State. Connect with them online at harperwrites.com, [@harpwrites](https://twitter.com/harpwrites) on Twitter, and [@harperglennwriter](https://www.instagram.com/harperglennwriter) on Instagram.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
 - What can you see happening on the cover of this novel?
 - What do you think the butterflies on the cover might symbolise? Why do you think this?
 - What genre do you think this novel is likely to be?
 - What can you tell about the protagonist of this novel based on the cover illustrations alone?
 - What do the colour choices of the artist imply about the content of the novel, and in what way?
- After reading the prologue, as a class, discuss what you have learnt about the setting and characters. Think about such things as:
 - Where is this book set?
 - When might this book be set?

- What is happening in this book?
- What types of people are there in this segment of the book?
- What words are used that are new to you, or have a new usage to you in the prologue?
- What have you learnt about the main character?
- Based on the descriptions in the novel, draw and colour two pictures of Moats Alley, one as it was in the before times, and one as Josephine knows it in the novel's present.
- Aunt Vye is determined that Josephine should try to be chosen at the lineup, for the chance at a better life, but Jo is not so sure that it is the best choice for her. If you were offered the chance to be part of the lineup and escape poverty at the cost of never seeing your family or friends again, would you take it? Why/why not?
 - What do you think your family's advice to you would be? Write a piece from the point of view of a teenager having to decide whether or not to be part of the lineup, setting forth both your arguments for your decision, and the counterarguments you had to consider while making it.
- It is the people in Jo's life who influence her decisions, good and bad, the most. In small groups, discuss who are the most influential people in regard to the decisions that Jo makes, what do they do and say that is so influential, and why does Jo react the way she does to their words and deeds. Use your discussion to help you create a character map, showing the different characters and how they are related to Jo in terms of her eventual decisions and her subsequent actions.
- At the start of the novel, Cove romanticises life in the Ashes and says that if he lived there he 'would know what freedom tastes like.' In small groups, or as a class, discuss what you think freedom tastes like. Use the points and arguments raised in your discussion to help you write a poem based on the quote 'I'd know what freedom tastes like'. You can choose to use Cove's experiences and original romanticisation to inspire your poetry, or you can write based on your own original thoughts and ideas.
- On a map of today's USA, try to locate the places where the action of the novel takes place in the fictional future.
- As a class, discuss the way the fictional society in *Monarch Rising* is constructed. Some things to consider in your discussion might be:
 - Who constructed this society?
 - When was this social organisation created?
 - Who controls society as a whole?
 - Who benefits the most from the existence of the Ashes?
 - Why were the Ashes created in the first instance?
 - Based on what you know of current social trends, patterns, and demographics in the USA, how feasible do you think the construction of walled or fenced borderlands filled with poverty, and total restratification of society is? Write a scenario of possible events over the next seven years that could lead to Glenn's future world being created in reality.
- Which character in the novel do you think has the most difficult time, or struggles the most in their daily lives both at the beginning of the novel, and over the course of the narrative? Is it a single person, or does your answer change as the novel progresses? Write a one to two page analysis of personal suffering within the context of their daily lives, and the different challenges at least two of the key characters have to contend with, being sure to use evidence from the text to support your assertions.
- Listen to Pachelbel's Canon in D Major. Why do you think that Elenore ends every dance lesson with it? What type of dancing can you envisage being suitable with this music?
 - Write a description of a fictional dance where this music is playing. Think about the surroundings, what type of people are there and how they are dressed, what event the dance is in honour of and how the attendees are behaving. Include as much details about this as you can in your description.
- Why do the inhabitants of the Ashes all wear red shoes?
- The world as envisioned in the novel is simultaneously a vicious dystopia and a world filled with privilege and plenty, with vast gulfs—and literal walls—between the entitled rich and the desperate poor. The author has envisioned an uprising in our near future, aimed at overthrowing the current late-stage capitalist regime we live in, but with brutal multi-generational reprisals creating a new underclass that is just as desperate as the members of the original

rebellion in 2030. As a class discuss how realistic you think a near-future rebellion in the USA is. What factors would motivate the general population to rise up and brutally overthrow the current government and install a completely new political system?

- What are the inequalities we can see in current American society, how have they come about, and what perpetuates them? What are the driving factors behind the growing discontent of many people, and how realistic do you think it is to envision a (successful!) rebellion in the near future?
- In small groups consider the future of your own society, both local and regional. What are some of the different ways that events might play out?
 - Write a one or two paragraph summary for each of three possible futures you think are plausible.
 - Make your three different futures as dissimilar as possible, and be sure to consider not just what they might be, but also how they would have come about.
 - You might prefer to present your theories of the future in the form of timelines, or as dated bullet points.
 - Share your work with the class, and as a class discuss the viability of each possible scenario.
 - Individually choose one of the futures your group has envisioned, and using the class discussion to help you refine your ideas, write a short story set in that future, accompanied by a detailed timeline outlining how that future came to be.
- At the end of the novel, Jo returns to the Ashes, while Cove has married Emily. Do you think they made the right decisions? Why/why not? What might have happened had they not made the choices that they did?
- Write a brief description of the time after the Fall Ball from the point of view of Emily.
- An overarching theme throughout the novel, is that of having to overcome childhood traumas. In what ways is overcoming childhood trauma something that both Cove and Jo have to manage to do, and in what ways are their experiences so completely different that it could be argued that they are not the same at all?
- Using charcoal pencils, sketch an image from your childhood that has had a lasting impact on you.
- When Jo says at the end of the novel 'Wealth lives in the heart of my people and our fight for survival', what do you interpret this statement to mean? As a class, discuss the different ways that this statement might be interpreted, and write a short piece arguing for your own personal interpretation. Use evidence from the text to support your assertions.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

RAE CARLYLE