



Metaltown

Kristen Simmons

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Metaltown Kristen Simmons

Metaltown, where factories rule, food is scarce, and hope is in short supply.

The rules of Metaltown are simple: Work hard, keep your head down, and watch your back. You look out for number one, and no one knows that better than Ty. She's been surviving on the factory line as long as she can remember. But now Ty has Colin. She's no longer alone; it's the two of them against the world. That's something even a town this brutal can't take away from her. Until it does.

Lena's future depends on her family's factory, a beast that demands a ruthless master, and Lena is prepared to be as ruthless as it takes if it means finally proving herself to her father. But when a chance encounter with Colin, a dreamer despite his circumstances, exposes Lena to the consequences of her actions, she'll risk everything to do what's right.

In Lena, Ty sees an heiress with a chip on her shoulder. Colin sees something more. In a world of disease and war, tragedy and betrayal, allies and enemies, all three of them must learn that challenging what they thought was true can change all the rules.

An enthralling story of friendship and rebellion, *Metaltown* will have you believing in the power of hope.

Metaltown Details

Date : Published September 20th 2016 by Tor Teen

ISBN :

Author : Kristen Simmons

Format : Kindle Edition 385 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Science Fiction, Dystopia, Steampunk

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From Reader Review **Metaltown** for online ebook

Paula Stokes says

This book wrecked me. It's a slow-burner with a lot of world-building and character development, but the plot has plenty of twists and turns and action, too. I really respect the way Kristen Simmons can write a dystopian novel that presents a totally fictional world that contains so many elements relevant to the real world. Class differences? Labor disputes? Environmental destruction? Endless war? These elements resonated so much with me and Simmons never resorted to becoming preachy or overtly political in her storytelling. She just put it all out there for readers to think about and I'm still thinking.

U.S. readers can enter to win a signed copy on my blog right now. Ends Feb 28, 2017.

Jen Ryland says

Way back when, I read Kristen Simmons **Article 5**. I looked up my review, which said (in short) loved the story world; didn't love the romance.

Well, in the immortal words of Yogi Berra: déjà vu all over again. I thought **Metaltown's** story world was really well-crafted. I'm not sure if this book is supposed to be alt-history or sort of dystopian-futuristic, but it takes place in a bleak, gritty world that feels turn-of-the-century industrial and post-apocalyptic all at once. Food and clean water are scarce, people are hungry, a lot of kids have been orphaned, and the poor work long hours in unsafe conditions. There's a war raging and one of the main employers is a huge weapons factory.

The story is told from the points of view of three characters: Colin, a boy who along with his (female) friend Ty, work on the factory line. Then there's Lena, the daughter of the owner of the weapons factory. The characters were a sticking point for me. I never really warmed up to either Colin or Lena, and thus wasn't all that enthralled by their slow-burn, rich girl/poor boy romance. I really liked Ty, but as soon as Colin went all google-eyed over Lena, she was kind of left on her own and ... let's just say that wasn't good.

Does this book have a love triangle? Not technically, but I didn't love the triangular dynamic of the supposedly nice guy who all but ditches his loyal female friend to chase around after another girl. It wasn't a love triangle, but it did feel to me that one character gets left out in the cold. The book tried hard to make me like Lena, with her mean father and abusive brother. I did feel sorry for her, but for some reason I just didn't connect to her (and I usually secretly love poor little rich girl characters.)

If you like gritty, industrial settings, you should definitely try at least a few chapters of **Metaltown**, which will give you a good feel for the characters. I did like the story world quite a bit, even if I only liked one of the characters (view spoiler)

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Thanks to the publisher for providing a free advance copy of this book for me to review.

Mayim de Vries says

When I started Metaltown I was expecting a standard YA dystopia with all the tropes typical for the genre. Nothing outstanding, just **your classic Novel Recommended by the Author of Much Better, More Famous Book** (well, in this case we talk about Sara Raasch who penned Snow Like Ashes so I am not so sure about the last part).

Anyway.

The only thing you need to know about **Metaltown** is that it is most definitely **NOT** a dystopia; instead, **you get a book about social justice, child labour, workers' rights and solidariTY.**

And that there is nothing extraordinary about it, except for **Ty – a girl as strong as the ideas that drove her.** I loved Ty all the more for the fact that she reminded me of a **real-life Ty – Anna Solidarity aka Anna Walentynowicz.** The very woman who created the peaceful social movement that brought down the Communist regime (and was NEVER recognised for it, screw you Lech Walesa).

Now, this is probably something **they do not teach you during your courses on feminism, so buckle up and listen closely:**

In 1950 Anna Walentynowicz enrolled in a welder course and was sent to Gdansk Shipyard. **She quickly became a frontrunner** making 270% of the norm, which is a huge thing in the communist economy. Her photos were taken to the newspapers and she became a **celebrity.**

Anna the Welder <3

However, she soon gave up the communist party membership and joined the Women's League. As an activist of this organization, **she began to lobby for the workers' rights.** It was when her trouble with the Public Security Office started.

Over time the **hard work of a welder ruined her health.** However, she resigned from the possibility of obtaining disability pension and re-qualified for the crane. In 1968, when she was demanding to explain the embezzlement of money from the welfare fund, **a first attempt was made to throw her out of work.** In her defense, the entire unit crew stood up.

During a workers' protest in December 1970, Anna Walentynowicz was preparing meals for strikers. **She was always there – in the centre of all things.**

Anna the Caring <3

In 1978 she became **one of the co-founders of the Polish Free Trade Unions (FTU).** She acted openly. Her apartment was the FTU's main contact point. This led to more severe **harassment from the Security**

Service: 48 hours detentions, constant revisions, a threat of dismissal. Anna has been under constant **surveillance by over 100 officers and secret associates of the Security Service** (in 1981 they were even planning to **kill her by poisoning** her!).

On August 8, 1980, **after thirty years of exemplary performance of her duties, five months before she hit the retirement age, Anna Walentynowicz was fired from the shipyard under disciplinary charges.** The decision of the management **triggered a strike on August 14, during which Solidarity was created.** Two days later dozens of workplaces had joined the protests; **50 thousand people stood in defence of one woman.** The first postulate of protesting workers was the restoration of Anna Walentynowicz to work.

As you know – they won a victory much bigger than they dreamed of.

Anna the Feminist <3

So read the Metaltown for a 3-star entertainment, but even better, read up about Anna or watch this documentary about her.

And then do your best to continue her legacy.

Old Anna at the (derelict) Shipyard where she had beaten the Communist regime:

joey (thoughts and afterthoughts) says

I had high hopes for this story not because of its comp titles (steampunk Newsies meets Les Mis) but because it felt like such a me-story (gritty dystopian setting, multi-POV, ragtag bunch o' fellas trying to overthrow via. shenanigans). And if I'm being honest, the world building is probably my favourite aspect to this book.

The biggest hurdle was the slow build-up -- by which I mean it took 250 some-odd pages for something exciting to happen. I can handle slow pacing but given the nature of this story, I needed a more triggering hook to keep me excited re: action and conflict.

Final thought: I'm also not sure the two female leads in Metaltown would pass the Bechdel test (~~because Colin's magical penis dons a wizard hat~~).

-- Full review pending.

Hannah Greendale says

Crooked men run *Metaltown*, an industrialized city where children are exploited for labor. If the children want rights and proper pay, they must rise up in rebellion and fight for what they deserve.

In this dystopian society, people are divided into three classes: the working poor of Metaltown; the educated but struggling middle class of Bakerstown, and the wealthy elite of the River District. Clean water is scarce. Most food is genetically engineered from synthetic substances, released to the public after having been tested for safety by whatever poor fools have landed themselves in prison. And war rages outside the city.

The most intriguing aspect of the book is Metaltown, a city where plumes of smoke blot out the sun and poor children work sixteen hour days in dangerous conditions. But Metaltown is underdeveloped and rarely described, overlooked in favor of paying attention to the love triangle of three teenagers who take center stage in this story.

The characters suffer from a serious lack of *want*, which made for a story that felt aimless at times. Of the three protagonists, the most dynamic character is the one forced to question every aspect of the life she's always known, while the other two remain one dimensional throughout. Ty spends so much time grinding her teeth it's a wonder she has any teeth left. Colin is the token hot guy: *The girl giggled, maybe at them, maybe just to flirt with Colin. Girls were always losing their heads around him.* And Lena's actions are driven in equal parts by a need to impress her father and a need to impress the hot guy.

This book is classified as a dystopian science fiction novel, but it might have been more suitable in a historical fiction category.

Metaltown is a fine read, but there's nothing new here.

Sara Raasch says

Les Mis meets the Newsies.

Prepare to be destroyed, basically.

Rebekah says

Full review to come...

Carina Olsen says

I had been so excited to read this book for ages. As I adore Kristen. And I thought this one seemed so amazing. Then I was lucky enough to win an ARC of it, and now I have finally gotten to read it. But oh. I have so many thoughts about it. And most of them are not good. At all. Sobs. I'm just angry. I'm so, so angry.

I'm giving this book two stars. I had hoped to rate it higher. But it was impossible. I had so many issues. Sigh. But I also feel like this book could have been amazing. The writing is gorgeous. The plot was exciting. And Ty was perfection. But Colin and Lena ruined this book. Ugh. And I'm simply very bitter about it.

I'm going to have a lot to say about this book. And I'm not going to be very positive about it. I'm also going to be sharing a whole bunch of spoilers, so this is my warning to you about that. I cannot write this review of

mine without mentioning all the parts that bothered me. Because those parts are still bothering me. I need to get them out of my mind. I need to forget about this book. And I need to do it now. Sigh. Though I will be getting the hardcover. And I will be keeping my precious ARC of this book. Because it is gorgeous. And I do love this author. But yeah. This book was not a favorite of mine. And I would not re-read it. Not ever. So glad it is a standalone. Which I just about never thinks about any books. Sigh. But yeah. This one was just bad. Ugh.

Honestly, though, I could have loved this book a whole bunch. Because the writing is gorgeous. And I liked the plot a whole bunch. This world was amazingly done. I loved reading about metaltown and how people were doing there and all those poor people and the war and ahh. I thought those parts of the book were amazing. And I loved Ty so goddamn much. But I felt like she wasn't treated right. This should have been her book. But it wasn't. Three point of views. One chapter each. Yet Ty got the smallest parts of it.

Final warning. I'm going to write a very spoilery review. I will share details about the ending. I will share details about the romance. So yeah. If you do not wish to know, don't read more. Shrugs. But at the same time, I wish I had known before reading this book. Sigh. Because I went into it expecting to love it a whole bunch. And so I was disappointed. But even so. I couldn't have loved this. I just couldn't. And so I have so many things I wish to share about it. Ack. If I can find the words. I shall try my best. It won't be positive.

This book is told from three different point of views. There is Colin and Ty and Lena. I thought I liked Colin at first. He and Ty have been friends for four years now, they are always together. He is seventeen, she is fifteen. He seemed okay. But hahaha. Then Colin sees Lena. And he falls in love with this rich girl right away. He starts pushing Ty away. He keeps choosing Lena instead of her. He is being such an asshole towards Ty. He forgot about her all the damn time. Friends don't do that. They do not. Ugh. He was bad.

And sigh. Lena. I wish I could say I loved her. But I did not. I found her chapters to be the most boring. She was such an boring girl. Spoiled rich kid. And not even a nice girl. The way she was thinking about Ty, when she had only seen her a few times, it was not okay. Hmph. I mean, sure, Lena has a mean father and an abusive brother. Whatever. I sort of felt sorry for her at times, but not much. Because I did not care for this girl. She came between Colin and Ty; ruined their friendship. Hmph. Did not like one bit.

And then there is Ty. Ah. She was my most favorite part of this book. I loved her so much. I thought she was the main character. But the moment Lena enters, Ty gets pushed in a corner. We don't get to read much about her at all. And I am so pissed off. Because Ty was the most amazing girl. Kind and sweet and loving. She had just started having a crush on Colin. And I shipped them so hard. But he never saw that. He kept calling her his best man. Wtf. That bothered me so much. Ty was the sweetest girl. Grrr.

We get to know a bunch about Ty. And I loved that. But. One night she gets attacked. Almost raped. We learn that she has been raped before. Sort of. It is never mentioned again or mentioned for real, and that was annoying. She sees Colin the same day; she's all beaten up. He is angry. Thinking about going after the guys. But then Lena walks in the door. And then he forgets all about Ty and that she was attacked. Goddamn it. This boy was the worst boy I have read about in a long time. I'm so upset about it. Asshole.

And then Ty gets hurt for real. A work accident kind of thing. Acid marks all over her face. One of her eyes are blind. She feels so ugly. And never once does Colin tell her it's okay. Never once does he tell her she looks good. Not. Once. I am so angry. He was a shitty friend. Always. Ty deserved better. She was the best friend. And hurting. All the time. He didn't care for her one bit. I'm so angry about it. Which is why I did not like this book. Sigh. Ty wasn't written fairly. She should have been the star of the book. Sigh.

I guess that Colin also had issues. With his mom being sick and whatnot. But I didn't care all that much, after he started treating Ty that way. He was just an asshole. There is just so much I want to say about this book. Sigh. I haven't mentioned the plot yet. Colin and Ty live in Metaltown. A poor city where they have to work at a weapons factory to live. Yet they work all day, no breaks, almost no money, and ahh. They had such awful lives. All the people did. And I loved reading about it. And the other characters.

I sort of knew that this book would be based a bit on Les Misérables. But I did not know that the story of the three main characters would be exactly the same. Damn. It was annoying. I mean, I loved Les Mis, the movie. But I would never want to read about a love triangle like that. Never. In a way, this wasn't a normal love triangle, but at the same time it still was. And I hated it. I hated it oh so much. I just feel so disappointed. I had such high hopes for this book. I thought the romance would be amazing. Sigh.

But no. The romance was not good at all. Colin and Lena were both awful people. Ty was the best. And Ty got no romance at all. Colin and Lena did not fit together at all. I don't get why they fell in love with each other right away. Ugh. I just. I loved Ty so much. And she was treated so badly all the time. At the end of the book, there is a big fight. Ty goes looking for Lena, because of Colin. And Ty ends up getting killed. And being in pain all alone for a long time before dying. I'm so goddamn angry about it all. Uuugh.

Ty deserved so much better. And I just. I cannot deal with it. This book sucked. Okay, fine, I did love parts of it. I loved Ty. But I'm so angry. That ending was shitty. Oh, and there is a family secret that is about Ty, and her parents. Hahaha. I guess that would have been very exciting. If she had not died. Grrrr. So angry. Ty deserved more. I just. I now wish to forget about reading this. Which makes me so sad. I really did wish to love this one. But I couldn't. Not after how Ty was treated. Not after she died too. Ugh. So sad.

Okay. I have now written way too much about this book. Yet I still feel like I could write so much more. Ahh. But I will not. I just. I did not love this book. I loved parts of it, yes, but not nearly enough. I do want others to read it, though. I need to know if I am the only one who feels this way. Sigh. Metaltown is all kinds of gorgeous. I just wish the inside were just as awesome. Also, do let me know if you read my whole review, with all the spoilers. I just couldn't stop writing about this. Sigh. I wish it had been different.

This review was first posted on my blog, Carina's Books, here: <http://carinabooks.blogspot.no/2016/0...>

Tez says

NOTE: I first published this review as part of the group "My Favorite Things" column on Speculative Chic, 6th February 2017.

Some stories have more resonance if you read them at a particular time.

I didn't plan for Kristen Simmons's Metaltown to be my first read of 2017, but that's when my library copy arrived. The novel felt instantly familiar, as it fits the classic underdog plot. But instead of a feel-good story, Metaltown is dark and dystopian - and not everyone gets a happy ending.

Mostly the story rings true because it shows how to create change.

Ty and Colin work in the small parts section of a manufacturer. There are no health benefits, and they often aren't paid in a timely manner, enough, or at all. A workplace accident leads to acid burns and a lost job. Ty has nothing left to lose - she's now an unemployed, homeless orphan, and even her best friend Colin seems to be slipping away from her. And so Ty does what she can lead a "press", a workers' strike, against the manufacturer.

But she can't do it alone. One person can't be the entire movement in order to create real change. Ty needs the entire small parts section - and other sections, too - to band together in the press. If everyone stops work, the manufacturer will be forced to employ and train more workers. That will make it more difficult for the company to fill the order for their products. This will be bad for business, so the manufacturer has something to lose unless they agree to the workers' demands.

Can one person make a difference? Maybe. But there's strength in numbers, and we can't expect one person to shoulder all the responsibility. We each need to find our personal tipping point; what we're willing to risk for the greater good. We must PRESS BACK.

Metaltown is a timely read that I won't soon forget.

Jaime Arkin says

Omg so stinking good you guys!!! And Kristen Simmons be proud, you had tears welling in my eyes at that one part!!!

Full review to come but Simmons has created an amazing and raw story of perseverance ... A story of friendship and family and fighting for what you believe in. Definitely get this on your must read list immediately!

Full Review - 9/11

Metaltown is a raw and gritty story of perseverance, a story of friendship, family and fighting for what you believe in, no matter the cost.

In Metaltown, as long as you keep your head down and do your work, you should be fine. Told from three very different perspectives, Simmons tells a story of a group of kids who are determined to fight for what is right. Ty, at fifteen, has been surviving on her own for so long she struggles to put her trust in anyone else, Colin, who convinces her that he's worth that trust, and Lena, a girl from the other side who wants to fix the problems and change the world her family has helped create.

I'm just going to say it right now. This book is not about a potential romance... so please get that out of your mind before diving in. IS there a romance... sort of. Colin is definitely interested in Lena, but there are so many outside things happening that a true romance isn't what this story is about and it's such a minor part of the story that it would have felt out of place if it became a big part of the story. Are there unrequited feelings for a character? Yes. And that's all I'm going to say about that.

I love the dark, gritty world that Simmons has created in this story, it's scary, it's unpredictable and I felt like I was right there next to these characters fighting for their rights. Ty is the scrappy, tough girl who isn't going to stand on the sidelines and let people wrong her. She's had a rough life, and it's gotten worse more

recently. Colin loves Ty... like a sister, or one of the guys. He's struggling to help his mom make ends meet and keep his brother out of trouble and he certainly never expects to become the face of the rebellion, but he does. And Lena... she's struggled to get her father to see her worth, to get him to see that she wants to be more than some man's wife. When she meets Colin and Ty she sees the despicable things that are happening to those who are working for the companies her father runs and she wants to help change them.

Together these three unlikely partners are ready to 'pressback' against the evils of the city and face the consequences that choice may bring.

If you love stories of revolution and hope this one is for you! With captivating characters and a story that you will be completely engrossed in, you won't want to put this one down until you turn the last page.

Thank you to the publisher for an early copy in exchange for my honest thoughts.

Erin Arkin says

Dear Kristen Simmons...you get me, okay? I loved everything about this book and that's even though you made me cry.

Full Review:

If I haven't told you this yet, you are going to want to add *Metaltown* by Kristen Simmons to your to be read list/shelf. I am fairly certain I hit every single emotion while reading *Metaltown* and I can't even tell you everything. There are so many things that I loved about this book and I am fairly certain that I won't be able to give it the justice it deserves in my review – I'm a rambler when I really enjoy a book. Nevertheless I will do my best and definitely try not to spoil anything.

At its heart, this story is about standing up for your beliefs, family and friendship. And when I say family...that doesn't always mean the family you are born to, it can also be the people you choose as your own. The characters at the heart of this story are Ty, Colin, and Lena. They all have different backgrounds but ultimately end up together fighting for a better life for all.

Metaltown is a place where factories make all the rules and they are really only interested in making a profit. Regardless of the conditions, most people fight for a place on the factory lines because if you don't work, you end up on the streets. If you are living on the streets, you could end up dead so working, no matter what your age, is the only way people can survive. If someone can provide value, they are used however the factory foreman sees fit. The Brotherhood is there to support the workers' rights and is led by Jed Schultz but it is easy to see that Schultz is really only looking out for himself.

Ty really is my favorite character in this book. I don't know what it was about her but from the first page of introduction to her, I loved her. She is not perfect...not even close and she did some things I didn't agree with and ultimately put her in a bad position but I could understand where she was coming from and why she did what she did. Ty has been on her own for quite a while and when she vouched for Colin, they became linked like family. Even though Ty has Colin, she is still very independent and tries to be as tough as she has to be to survive. Underneath all the clothes and her toughness though, she really is just a young girl who has been dealt a bad hand.

Colin doesn't have things easy either but he hasn't always lived in Metaltown and he has a family. For me, Colin is the optimist. He believes there has to be something better and the factory workers can influence change. He is always looking for the good in people and a way to make things better. Simply put, he wants something more than what Metaltown has to offer. Colin values loyalty and cares about his family and if there is one thing he wants most, it is to protect the people he loves. I love this about Colin and I can't fault him for his decisions...even if I didn't like them all the time.

Lena is a Hampton...as in Hampton Industries which owns the factory that Ty and Colin work in. She has a very different life from Ty and Colin but things are easier. Yes, her family is rich but she is abused by her brother and not allowed to do anything her father doesn't approve of. Her argument to be more involved in the factories is what puts her into the mix with Ty and Colin and it is also the catalyst to the rest of the story. Lena is smart and as she begins to dig into how her father and brother are running the factory, she realizes just how bad things are for the workers.

When something horrible happens to Ty at the factory, her ability to work is put at risk and when Lena is the one to kick her off the line, Ty is even angrier than usual. The factory and the Hamptons have become the face of all of her problems and this is important because all three of these characters become key players in the press for workers' rights and Ty has issues including Lena in everything. Not only is she a Hampton and he cause of most of her problems (in her mind) but she is also taking Colin away from her. When the group decides not to pledge to the Brotherhood and instead start the Small Parts Charter, Lena pledges right alongside everyone else.

In their push to make changes, the group decides to show up to the factory and not go in and this is where things start to get out of control. I am not going to say all the things that happen here but this is the turning point in the story where the press back becomes real and there are real consequences to the decisions the group makes. It is also the catalyst to the rest of the story...which I can't say anything about really because I don't want to ruin it.

What I will say is this: Kristen Simmons can tell a great story. Not only is the world well developed but the characters are all so different. I really just wanted to hug each and every one of them (even though Ty probably wouldn't have let me) and the second I finished the book, I couldn't stop thinking about the book which to me, that is a sign of a great story. I'm pretty sure I hit on every emotion while reading this book and I can't even tell you how much I both love and hate Kristen Simmons for making me feel ALL the things. Ok...I don't really hate her for it but there's this part – when you read it you will see what I mean.

Well – there isn't much more I can tell you about this book because in all honesty, you should read this to experience the whole thing. Like I said, I am sure my review doesn't do this book any justice and if you take anything from this at all, just know that you need to read this book. It should be on your TBR (if it isn't already) and it should be read as soon as you can possibly get it into your hands. After reading all of Kristen Simmons' books I can tell you, I am never disappointed and her books are immediately put onto my wishlist when I hear she has a new one coming out. If you are looking for a story that will pull you in from the very first page and holds onto you long after the book is finished, this is the book for you!

Thank you to the publisher for the review copy!

Rebecca McNutt says

Metaltown has been on my to-read list for quite some time, and I can definitely say that it's nothing short of incredible. This dystopian tale brings readers into a polluted industrial nation, where three unlikely young friends decide that it's high time they question the ruthless factory-run society they live in. Sort of as if *Six of Crows* and the 1995 film *The Mangler* were combined, *Metaltown* brings together many themes and genres, from steampunk to environmental to young adult, and it does so in an explosion of imagination and intelligence.

Brittany (Brittany's Book Rambles) says

Review to come soon!

Alyssa says

Win a copy of *Metaltown*!

Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog

Metaltown by Kristen Simmons

Publisher: Tor Teen

Publication Date: September 20, 2016

Rating: 4 stars

Source: eARC from NetGalley

Summary (from Goodreads):

Metaltown, where factories rule, food is scarce, and hope is in short supply.

The rules of *Metaltown* are simple: Work hard, keep your head down, and watch your back. You look out for number one, and no one knows that better than Ty. She's been surviving on the factory line as long as she can remember. But now Ty has Colin. She's no longer alone; it's the two of them against the world. That's something even a town this brutal can't take away from her. Until it does.

Lena's future depends on her family's factory, a beast that demands a ruthless master, and Lena is prepared to be as ruthless as it takes if it means finally proving herself to her father. But when a chance encounter with Colin, a dreamer despite his circumstances, exposes Lena to the consequences of her actions, she'll risk everything to do what's right.

In *Lena*, Ty sees an heiress with a chip on her shoulder. Colin sees something more. In a world of disease and war, tragedy and betrayal, allies and enemies, all three of them must learn that challenging what they thought was true can change all the rules.

An enthralling story of friendship and rebellion, *Metaltown* will have you believing in the power of hope.

What I Liked:

I'm a huge, huge fan of Kristen Simmons' books, but I was slightly nervous before reading this one. The synopsis sounds love-triangle-y, doesn't it? Plus I read a review written by a very disappointed friend, who made some valid points that I had a feeling would bother me. But when I read the book, I found that I didn't have those same issues, and that I really enjoyed the story. Folks, *Metaltown* is a heart-pounding and truly heartbreaking story, and it was definitely worth the read.

Metaltown follows the lives three teenagers, two living in Metaltown, one living in the River District. Colin and his family didn't always live in Metaltown, but they do now, and they work in the factories with terrible conditions and awful pay. You mess up, you're fired. Colin and Ty are best friends. Ty is a street-smart orphan, earning her keep just like Colin and so many other underage children with no rights. Meanwhile, Lena Hampton, daughter of Josef Hampton who owns all of the factories, is living a rather cushy and rich life in the River District, a life so different and so privileged. But not all that glitters is gold - even Lena's life is filled with cruelty. The Hamptons' lifestyle depends on the factories producing weapons for the war. But when certain events occur, the workers of the Small Parts factory decide that they've had enough. A spark turns into a wildfire, and the rebellion begins. But will Lena side with the workers? Will Colin put aside his personal duties for the benefit of everyone? Will Ty accept her fate?

I'm going to be honest - typically I do not enjoy books that follow more than two people. In this book, we get three third-person POVs - Colin's (whose is first), Ty's, and Lena's. This practically screams love triangle (I'll get to that later, but don't worry), and messiness. But Simmons did a really great job in writing the three POVs, and telling the story using each voice. She kept the story flowing at a great pace, and every chapter (which was a POV switch) tied in well with the overall plot. It was clear that each chapter was strategically written from that specific person's POV, and made sense.

Colin's POV is first, and I like to think of him as the "main" protagonist, even though all three are "main" protagonists. Colin is protective, extremely loyal, and very selfless. He works to support himself, his parents, and his brother. He stands with the workers, and for the workers, even when the workers themselves wouldn't band together. Colin is a natural leader, with so much charisma and charm. I adored Colin so much.

Ty is a hardcore spitfire of a girl. She's so tough and so strong, and she goes through so much in this book. Out of all of the characters, I think Ty had it the worst. She suffers a terrible injury, and then loses her job at the factory, and then has nowhere to go. She and Colin look out for each other, and are family to each other. I liked their friendship - it seemed fairly platonic on both sides. I like how protective Ty was of Colin, and how protective she was of other workers too. Ty isn't as obviously selfless as Colin is, and she does have her survival-of-the-fittest moments, but Ty is always trying to help the factory workers. Always.

Lena... it took me a bit to warm up to her. She's the stereotypical spoiled brat, the princess of the kingdom. What makes things worse is that she has no idea of the conditions of the factories, the lack of pay, lack of medical care, etc. But she wants to get involved in the family business, which is how she ends up on a tour of the Small Parts factory. Lena is so naive in the beginning of the book, which is why it was hard to like her. But I did end up liking her; she could be any of us - born in privilege, sheltered all her life, somewhat brainwashed. But Lena is her own brand of strong - she discovers many truths for herself (about the factories, the war, her father, the company). She learns to fight back, to stand up, to choose. I like Lena and I like the development of her character. Her character development is the most obviously progressive (not that the other two do not have great character development!).

Gosh, what an incredible and heartbreaking world Simmons has created. It's very futuristic, a world that we

could be living in, in fifty years. Food had to be genetically enhanced and modified, but it wasn't tested because it had to be mass-produced, and many people got sick and died from eating the modified corn. Children work in factories for little to no pay (this is a current problem). Brotherhoods are bribed to keep workers happy. Water isn't clean. A war is raging. The world that Simmons has created is very authentic and real, in a futuristic way. It's a hard place to live, with so many people starving, begging, dying. Life working in the factory is miserable.

I feel like all of Simmons' books are somewhat heartbreaking, with cruel worlds and harsh conditions, the survival type of books that could easily be real, in the future. Simmons writes these themes of pain, suffering, death, and hope very well. The story is heartbreaking, but powerful. There is quite a bit of pain and death in this book, but there is also a lot of positive, strong relationship. Human resilience in the face of miserable times!

I said I would talk about the romance. I was so, so worried about a love triangle. But I quickly found that Colin and Ty are like family, and they are very platonic friends. I think Ty is very protective of Colin, but not in a romantic way. Colin and Lena are the romantic pair in this book. It's weird and cute - the poor working-class boy from the other side of the tracks and the rich spoiled princess from her castle high on the hill. I thought the romance was sweet, and fit well. It's a slow-burn type of romance, and there isn't much to the romance (much like *The Glass Arrow* - the romance is there, but there aren't many physical interactions), but I liked this.

The ending wraps up very well, yet in a heartbreaking way. I saw certain things coming, but I still felt sad over the ending. I would have liked to see how things shaped up, say, 20 years from the ending, but there isn't an epilogue so we don't know how the Great Plan ended up working out. But I can imagine it in my head!

Overall, I liked this book. I shouldn't have been so worried. No love triangle, interesting story, wonderful characters. And it's a standalone!

What I Did Not Like:

I would have loved to see more physical and romantic interactions from Colin and Lena. Lena is somewhat innocent since she's never really allowed to be around people other than her father, brother, and house staff. I would have liked to see more from Colin and Lena, getting used to being physical with each other... that sounds weird, I know. There is only one kiss in this book. There isn't any hand-holding or picking up or cuddling or anything. Maybe it isn't Colin and Lena's style. But I would have loved to see, rather than accept as true, Lena's trusting in Colin, her giving him more and more permission to be with her.

I'm not sure if that makes sense! It would have made Lena's character development more complete, and of course, there would be more in the romance department between Lena and Colin (which I am ALWAYS fine with!).

Would I Recommend It:

Be warned - this isn't a cute story, a happy story, a story that you want to read if you're in the mood for something feel-good. BUT. It's a great story about rebellions and friendships and trust and hope. I liked the story a lot and would recommend it.

Rating:

4 stars. I think my favorite Simmons book remains The Glass Arrow, but I liked this one too!

EDIT, FEBRUARY 9TH: Synopsis is updated! Eee! :D

EDIT, May 2nd:

Karen says

Click here for my full review and more from my blog, KissinBlueKaren.

Are You Team Ty or Team Lena?

METALTOWN is a YA Dystopian with a little love triangle problem. I thought Ty had a little attitude problem. Lena didn't really know any better because she was so sheltered in her fancy house. I started off liking Ty, but then I could see that she made it almost impossible to root for her. I didn't want Colin to like her either. Ty had very few redeeming qualities as the story moved on. Having the boy she loved not love her back did not make me like her. Lena wasn't perfect either, but she did have some character growth as the story progressed.

I loved the idea of poverty ridden people "pressing back" for their rights to be treated fair. METALTOWN has a common YA theme, but the dystopian twist kept my rapt attention. I liked the dark setting of Metaltown and it's neighboring Bakerstown. The street gang's constant threat paired with the fight for food and shelter left me feeling like I had been transported to another time and place.

The thing I didn't like about METALTOWN, other than my disdain for one of the main characters, was the coincidences that happened throughout the story. I also noticed we were introduced to characters and given back story only to be left wondering what happened to them later on. Although this story was almost 400 pages, there were things left out and some telling without showing. There was a whole medical/food testing thing that I would have liked to learn more about. I was very entertained while reading this story, but I do wish there were more details written in.
