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Pretties

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Editorial Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Set in a future world where cosmetic surgery is compulsory at the age of 16, **Pretties** is book two in Westerfeld's SF trilogy which kicks off with **Uglies** and concludes with **Specials** (there is also a 'companion' novel entitled **Extras**). **Pretties** charts the struggles of Tally Youngblood and her fellow Smokies as they attempt to bring down a society created to function with beings who, whilst supermodel gorgeous, are denied the chance to think or act for themselves.

Readers will find it a help to have read **Uglies** before embarking on this one; otherwise they might well spend the first half trying to work out what has gone before. Oddly enough, unravelling the past is exactly what Tally herself must do. When the book opens, Tally has become a Pretty in the New Pretty Town, ostensibly enjoying the buzz of its non-stop parties and high-tech luxuries. With the arrival of a message from her past however, she begins to remember all that is wrong with life as a Pretty: the world nothing but a source of entertainment; the future nothing but a blur. Before long she and other members of her Crim clique are in revolt once more and planning their escape.

Pretties, whilst it didn't entirely grip this reader, provides plenty of action, and a well-sustained story that should resonate with young adult readers growing up in a society which places an ever-increasing emphasis on outward appearance. Language is neatly employed too, with the techno-jargon and 'totally' slang of the City falling away as the shallow encounters of the Pretties give way to more genuine and heartfelt human interaction. In **Pretties**, Westerfeld gives us an intelligent and consistent future world with enough echoes of our own time to make it entirely plausible. And the dramatically poised ending ensures that most readers will want to read on to the end of the trilogy.

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