



## Inspection

*Josh Malerman*

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**Inspection** Josh Malerman

**Boys are being trained at one school for geniuses, girls at another. And neither knows the other exists--until now. The innovative author of *Bird Box* invites you into a tantalizing world of secrets and lies.**

J is a student at a school deep in a forest far away from the rest of the world.

J is one of only twenty-six students, who think of their enigmatic school's founder as their father. And his fellow peers are the only family J has ever had. The students are being trained to be prodigies of art, science, and athletics, but their life at the school is all they know--and all they are allowed to know.

But J is beginning to suspect that there is something out there, beyond the pines, that the founder does not want him to see, and he's beginning to ask questions. What is the real purpose of this place? Why can the students never leave? And what secrets is their father hiding from them?

Meanwhile, on the other side of the forest, in a school very much like J's, a girl named K is asking the same questions. J has never seen a girl, and K has never seen a boy. As K and J work to investigate the secrets of their two strange schools, they come to discover something even more mysterious: each other.

In *Inspection*, the masterful author of *Bird Box* crafts a sinister and evocative gender equality anthem that will have readers guessing until the final page.

## Inspection Details

Date : Published March 19th 2019 by Del Rey Books

ISBN : 9781524796990

Author : Josh Malerman

Format : Hardcover 400 pages

Genre : Horror, Fiction, Thriller

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## **From Reader Review Inspection for online ebook**

### **Zoeytron says**

Copy furnished by Net Galley for the price of a review.

Experiments do not always come to fruition in the way that is expected. This is a whole new twist on the concept of Parenthood. The dreaded daily Inspections, checking for disease and rot. If there is any sign of spoilage, the Corner awaits. The Corner hums and croons and sometimes it rumbles. What goes on behind that door?

I applaud this author's fresh ideas, how he eschews the formulaic recipes and has yet to use a cookie-cutter. I loved Bird Box and also really liked Unbury Carol. Unfortunately, I couldn't gain much traction with this one. A little too YA-ish for my taste, but that may add to the appeal for plenty of others.

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### **Chelsea Humphrey says**

I think I'll be keeping this one brief, as I don't want to spoil anything and I am a middle of the road reviewer for this book. As others before me have stated, this one is a super slow burn, which isn't bad, but I think keeps the books from feeling as sinister as it could. I completely agree with Dennis's recommendation that fans of suspense that are a bit squeamish of straight up horror may really take to this story. The ending was epic, and 100 points to Malerman's Hogwarts House for all the creativity with this story. Seriously, it was incredibly imaginative and highly unique.

*\*Many thanks to the publisher for providing my review copy.*

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### **Jennifer says**

★★★½

In my opinion, Josh Malerman has a very abstract way of storytelling, and with all abstract art forms, it is open to interpretation. Although Inspection is more of a straightforward story once you have all the information, there are still some interesting concepts that lay underneath.

Because the mystery component is dependent on the reader having zero information about the plot line, I must refrain from incorporating any sort of synopsis into this review. But the themes I took away from my reading experience say plenty: trust and obedience, misinformation and power, and the absolute necessity for authority to be questioned...and inspected.

In this book, the literal horror may not begin until the final 5 percent of the book, but the overall story in itself is indeed horrifying. Innocent coming of age collides with a karmic level of authoritarian impeachment

any good educator would be proud (and scared) of. What's your favorite letter of the alphabet, folks? Check it out.

**Thank you to the following for permitting me access to an advance reader's copy (ARC) of Inspection. This generosity did not impact my honesty when rating/reviewing.**

**Source:** NetGalley

**Author:** Josh Malerman

**Publisher:** Random House Publishing Group - Ballantine, Del Rey

**Genres:** Horror, Mystery & Thrillers

**Pub Date:** March 19, 2019

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### **Michelle says**

1-1.5 stars.

A husband and wife duo decide to live out a "thought experiment" where 26 boys and 26 girls are kept in separate towers in the Michigan wilderness. It is their hypothesis that if each sex is raised independently of each other and without knowledge that the other exists, the "genius" that will come as a byproduct of this upbringing will far outweigh the controversial nature in which this experiment was conducted.

Where to begin? I'm going to be quite blunt. This book was awful. I mean, really, really awful. I would absolutely have abandoned this after about 25 pages had it not been an ARC and by the author of "Bird Box". My expectations were very high because "Bird Box" was amazing. The book begins with the reader being plopped into this bizarre world where naked boys are led single file into a room where one by one they go through an "inspection". Grown men use magnifying glasses and dogs to quite literally inspect the boys for anything out of sorts. It is creepy, but you feel confused because as you continue reading you feel like you just started watching Game of Thrones or something equally complex in the middle of season 4. You have no idea what is going on, who people are or why these kids are being held here. At around 50%, enough clues have been doled out, but at that point I could have cared less. There was nothing in the story to make me feel anything about the plight of these boys. Then the girls are introduced to the story and you just rehash the same crap from their perspective. Oh and did I forget the make out scenes? With 12 year olds? Who just discovered the opposite sex exists and that their whole world is a lie? Of course there were make out scenes! Why wouldn't there be? It's the most logical thing on the planet when being confronted with the reality that you have no idea how you came to be in this place, why you weren't told there is an entire world past your building and you've been lied to your entire life.

I won't spoil the ending, but do yourself a favor and save yourself the time. This is a slow burn for no gain.

Thanks to Netgalley, Random House, Ballantine Books for the opportunity to read this e-galley and provide an honest review.

Publication date: April 23rd

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### **Carol says**

## **4 BIG-TIME STARS FOR ORIGINALITY!**

Like so many, I love, love, loved **BIRD BOX**, (*both novel and movie*) enjoyed **THE HOUSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE** and **UNBURY CAROL**, and now after reading **INSPECTION**, one thing I know for sure is....with Josh Malerman, you **never** know what you're going to get!

"They deserve the truth."

Malerman sets the stage by introducing the reader to a bizarre school of trusting young teens (*with letters for names*) living in a secluded world of strict laws and fear of disease. One must **ALWAYS** stay clean and **NEVER, EVER** become spoiled rotten or consequences could be fatal.....with a trip down to T.H.E. C.O.R.N.E.R.

Daily morning **INSPECTIONS** are invasive and bare all, but innocence turns surprisingly **dark** when suspicions bring about dangerous adventures that expose a shocking world of lies.

I prefer the even **darker**, more suspenseful (**BIRD BOX**) side of Malerman, but sign me up for whatever he dreams up next!

\*ARC provided by Random House Publishing House Ballantine via NetGalley in exchange for review\*

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### **Carrie says**

Ok, so I'm probably one of the few readers out there that actually has not yet read Bird Box. I've certainly wanted to after seeing tons and tons of readers that loved it and now going on to make it to the screen with a major actress like Sandra Bullock. So when seeing that Inspection by Josh Malerman was coming out I wanted to beat the masses and read the next hit first...well....not so much.

Inspection really feels more dystopian than horror which to me shouldn't be a bad thing as I love a good dystopian read too but only when the creativity of the world is blended well with plenty of action and intrigue. Inspection had the creativity but seemed to stall out there with an incredibly slow pace which leads to me losing interest and not becoming invested.

The idea behind Inspection of having boys named with all the letters of the alphabet and raised by D.A.D then finding out about girls in a separate location and their M.O.M. had potential. The whole thing gave me a bit of a Maze Runner vibe so I had high hopes but instead finished with more of a bah humbug feeling than excitement. I won't let this deter me from trying Josh Malerman again but Inspection was only so-so to me.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.com/>

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### **Cody | cody'sbookshelf says**

I bought this thing for full price on release day. I should've known better, maybe, but after having a good

time with *Unbury Carol* I thought it'd be safe. Nope. I was wrong.

(No I'm not reviewing this. I'm angry.)

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## **Sadie Hartmann Mother Horror says**

Right now is a great time to be Josh Malerman.

The success of the Netflix Original, *BIRD BOX*, based on his horror novel of the same title, is staggering. I'm not at all surprised. Great books make great movies. Everything that is excellent about the film, is due to the fact that Malerman's story is a sweet set up for a film adaptation. I \*felt\* that book in a very tangible way so it was so cool to see that translated to the screen by people in the industry that respected Malerman's work and honored the story.

During the maelstrom of the movie buzz and Bird Box memes, I received, *INSPECTION* in the mail.  
(thanks Del Rey & Josh)

I went into this novel totally blind (not blindfolded though, I wanted to SEE)

I actually only read the synopsis right when I was ready to read it. I was excited to learn that this story could be Malerman trying his hand at a coming of age tale! To me, *INSPECTION* sounded like a dark fantasy with horror undertones and a coming of age theme and that is exactly what it was but SO MUCH MORE as well because absolutely no author working today shares Josh's imagination.

This book is totally original.

It's almost alien in origin because everything is so completely unexpected.

Broken up into acts, Act one is the set up and an introduction to Malerman's world building. At first blush, you're tempted to be overwhelmed by all the newness. Young characters are identified as letters of the alphabet, special words are capitalized to signify importance (I kept track of these in a notebook), phrases are repeated, some adults have acronyms for names, I mean, this isn't lazy reading. Josh Malerman wants you sitting up in bed with your reader-engagement turned on. I got a real sense that I wasn't going to be spoon-fed some sloppy drama but that there was some serious intentionality going on.

In fact, I felt like I was reading this book for my Freshman lit teacher, Mr. Emmett who taught his class all the signs of good storytelling like, mood, story arcs, narrative, symbolism and foreshadowing...yes! All those things! Pay attention Reader--Josh Malerman is \*doing\* something here.

Moving into Act 2 was so exciting because the focus turned to the young protagonists. There was some great dialog and character development here and I was thankful for it. Also, some important themes are set in place in Act 2 that will carry through the rest of the book and then BLOW YOUR MIND as the conclusion begins to unfold.

And then from about the middle of the book to the end--I was SPELLBOUND.

What a strange, insidious, magical, beautiful story this was.

There's nothing like it and there will never be anything quite like it again. This is, at its core, a cautionary tale. It tackles some big themes of Love and Loss. Hope. Fear. Oppression. Revenge. Uprisings. Passion.

The human spirit.

Unquenchable desires.

Nature vs. Nurture.

Raising children.

Freedom and Restraint.

I could write an essay. I really could.

But this is one of the first reviews and all the reader discovery needs to be yours.

I'm just here to tell you that I loved this book and you should preorder it. Now. Don't forget.

Releases in April.  
(I hope they make another movie)

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### Kaceey says

Once again I find myself branching out into the dystopian world. How could I possibly resist the latest release from Josh Malerman. I absolutely loved his previous release of *Bird Box*.

While *Bird Box* rests comfortably on my favorite shelf, this one just fell a bit shy of reaching that status for me.

An ingenious premise that promised an explosive mind-blowing read. But I just couldn't quite let go and be taken there. While I really liked it...I just can't say I loved it as much as *Bird Box*.

There are two groups of children being raised completely separate from the other. The Alphabet boys and the Letter girls. Neither group is aware of the others' existence. All raised to reach their full potential without the distraction of knowing that there's another sex alive, well, and being raised just 3 miles away.

The book began just a bit slow for me, but I was eventually deeply drawn into this world of Letter Children. But the ending left me wanting more. I haven't heard of a follow up...but a girl can dream!

I do recall I felt the same way with *Bird Box*. I wanted more! Is that Josh Malerman's sneaky style? I believe it is. Will it stop me from reaching for his next release? Not a chance! Already looking!

A buddy read with Susanne! Thank you Susanne for reading this one with me!

Thank you to NetGalley, Random House Publishing Group Ballantine and Josh Malerman for an ARC to read and review.

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### Sylvain Neuvel says

Malerman gives a master class in mood-building with this deliciously creepy coming-of-age story. I don't want to spoil anything because you need to savor every line, but I'd call it *Dead Poets Society* as directed by Tim Burton. Sounds good, doesn't it?

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### Holly B says

*Original, Zany and Perplexing...*

From the author of *Bird Box*, this novel completely threw me for a loop. A mesmerizing cover and a promising premise had me diving in with high expectations.

From the first chapters I was aware of something dark and secretive going on with this group of boys duped "the alphabet boys". They are living in a tower at a remote location as part of an "experiment". These boys are being raised to become the worlds best in science, engineering and math.

While I enjoyed the creative idea, I felt it lacked the suspense and tension that I was craving. I was interested in finding out more about what was happening at the "*Parenthood*" , but parts were repetitive and all the kids with the letter names became confusing. Although there is a nice plot turn towards the end, it happened a bit late in the game for me.

Thank you to NG and the Pub for my review copy. This book releases on 4/24/19

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### **Kendall says**

This was my first book by Josh Malerman and was ecstatic to get this approval!

I have heard amazing things about Bird Box... and I'm pretty sure I'm about the only person in the world that hasn't read Bird Box yet haha ;).

What happens when parents keep their children away from everything? The alphabet boys are being raised by D.A.D. and his staff members. The boys are very smart and only know what is being "taught" to them at school. The boys fear diseases like no ones business! One of the boys J is starting to mature even more and ask questions. What could possibly go wrong?

This book was a serious slow burn for me. I put it down multiple times in the beginning and had a hard time picking it back up. Finally... the story picked up and was crazy at the end. I gave the author absolute kudos for his creativity! I definitely will have to say this is something that I've never read before!!

I would say that this is a steady 3 star for me due to the slow pace of the book. I think this would be fantastic for a book group to read together. I was intrigued throughout the story and it kept me turning those pages to see what would happen with the alphabet boys.

Huge thank you to Random House Publishing Group Ballantine and Netgalley for the arc in exchange for an honest review.

Publication date: 3/19/19

Published to Goodreads: 1/31/19

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### **Emily says**

After having more discussions with people after this book was released, I'm more frustrated by it than I already was, and I think my experience was closer to 2? instead of 3?.

This is a difficult review to write since I have really mixed feelings on Inspection. I enjoyed some parts of it, and was quite annoyed by others.

Even if I don't always love the outcome, Josh Malerman always has creative concepts for his books. I was intrigued by the synopsis of this book, and a fair amount of the story was mysterious and held my attention.

I have to be so vague about my thoughts on this book because I don't want to spoil anything. My biggest issue with this book is that it's already outdated, and it hasn't even been released yet. If you've read the synopsis, then you know that boys and girls are separated while they're growing up. There's more that I can't go into, but it's completely illogical to not even address the possibility of homosexuality in this setting. Kids (even outside of this setting, even without being taught what sex is) can figure out what feels good, and could probably figure out that it would feel good if someone else did it, too. They are so obsessed with keeping boys and girls apart, but there's never any mention of what would happen if they liked each other. It's weird to pretend like it's not an option, and it threw off my enjoyment of the book. It doesn't make sense to never mention it, and it's an out of touch thought process. Gender is show in these neat little boxes, and there's no other option except to be one of two things. I hoped there would be more to the book than what the synopsis described, but I was wrong.

Some parts of this book dragged and got repetitive, but I still liked reading it for the most part. I was very interested to find out what was going on, but I didn't feel like the pay-off was enough. It felt like it could have been very sinister in the beginning, and then never really went to the horrific level that it could have. It just sort of flatlined up until the end, and then I couldn't really buy into the ending. That's all I'm going to say about it.

Overall, it was an interesting story, but I just had too many issues to fully get into it. The synopsis in my ARC called this a "sinister and evocative gender equality anthem", but I'm not sure who and what era this is supposed to be an equality anthem for, because it doesn't really work for 2019.

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## Susanne Strong says

**3.75 Stars\* (rounded up).**

**Well, that was different. In truth, I couldn't tear my eyes away!**

What can I say without giving too much away? "Inspection" is weird and wild and had a really interesting concept. The first part was a little slower for me and took a while to get into and then BAM!!, the second part took off and I was all in. The characterizations hooked me. K and B, got me and and they got me good. Reality is not what you think it is and truth well, what is the truth? Be honest and you are safe or Lie and the Corner will await. What do you think and what do you actually know? Not much!

**Let me leave you with this: Girls rule and boys drool. Baah!!**

**"Inspection" was definitely unlike any other book I have ever read. I have to hand it to Josh Malerman. He continues to think out of the box - for which I give him kudos.** There is one part of the novel I thought was unnecessary and was ultimately too graphic and for which I was forced to cover my eyes... thus I must warn people in advance.

**For those of you looking for something a little different, I suggest giving this one a try. Yes it's totally out there, completely weird and totally unlike "Bird Box" but that's the beauty of it. It's wholly original.**

This was a buddy read with Kaceey! Thanks for reading this with me Kace! It was a weird, wild ride!

Thank you to NetGalley, Random House Publishing Group - Ballantine and Josh Malerman for an arc of this

novel in exchange for an honest review.

Published on NetGalley and Goodreads on 3.10.10.  
Will be published on Amazon and Twitter on 3.19.19.

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### **Debra says**

Best laid plans and all that.....

What happens when good old D.A.D and M.O.M keep their "children" in the dark? That really is the question! J is one of the 26 Alphabet boys. They are being raised by D.A.D. and his "staff". The boys are smart, they are being raised to be prodigies. They only know each other, their school, their D.A.D. and the people who work at the school. They fear disease almost as much as they fear becoming spoiled rotten and being sent to the Corner. \*shivers\* J has always been happy with the status quo, but he like the other boys are getting older, they are maturing, and they are beginning to ask questions. Meanwhile, another school exists. A school run by M.O.M who raises 26 girls, one of whom is named K. She has questions as well.

This book was a slow burn for me. Very different from Malerman's books such as Bird Box and Unbury Carol. Kudos for him for originality and creativity. Seriously, my hat is off for him thinking outside of the box and being unique. But this was a little slow for me until, well, it wasn't. The end of the book really kicks things into high gear. What happens when people are kept in the dark? What happens when you learn about the existence of others? What happens when those you trusted kept secrets and lied to you? What happens when you learn the truth?

I do like the use of the alphabet or letters for the children. I thought he did a good job showing how the adults stayed detached. No real names for the kids- unless the letter of the alphabet constitutes as a name Reminded me of Bird Box when the children were known as boy or girl. They have an identity and yet not an identity at the same time.

This was a solid 3 star read for me. The slowness brought it down a little for me. It is thought provoking. A great book for discussion. I love the premise but would have liked more intensity throughout. I can almost see this played out as a movie. There is a sense of dread throughout the book. As a reader, I wanted to know what would happen when the "truth" came out. What happens when those who were never supposed to meet, do in fact meet? Plus, I really wanted to know how one became spoiled rotten and got sent to the Corner? What was the corner?

Thank you to Random House Publishing Group-Ballantine and NetGalley for proving me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. All the thoughts and opinions are my own.

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