

## Delirium - a bitter disappointment

BY: MARCY PEDZWATER

When I read the inside flap of Lauren Oliver's *Delirium*, I was immediately excited; a recently published dystopian novel?

I thought to myself, sign me up. I had previously read Oliver's bestselling novel, *Before I Fall*, and I expected this book to be just as good, if not better. I was so enthusiastic about this book, when I thought I wouldn't be able to get it from the library, I almost went to Barnes and Noble and bought it for myself (something I rarely do, being a pretty cheap person).

Thank goodness the library came through and I didn't have to buy this book, because it was a bitter disappointment.

The story was slow moving until the end of the novel, there being very little action, and no real climax; the few plot twists it did have were predictably unpredictable.

The story itself was fairly unoriginal, it strongly resembled Scott Westerfeld's novel *Uglies*. Both stories have a female protagonist eagerly awaiting a surgery that they will have on a landmark birthday (for Westerfeld's protagonist Tally, it is her 16th birthday, and for Oliver's protagonist Lena it is her 18th birthday).

Their eyes are opened due to circumstances they are pushed into by a nonconformist best friend (Tally's friend Shay, and Lena's friend Hanna), which lead them to fall in love with a boy who is not a part of their society (Tally's boyfriend David, and Lena's boyfriend Alex) who changes their perception of their society, and uncover the foundation of lies it is built on. In both

books a society of rebels exists outside of their town, living in the wilderness (Westerfeld's *Smoke*, and Oliver's *Wilds*).

Nonetheless, there are some key differences between Westerfeld's *Uglies* and Oliver's *Delirium*.

One of these differences is that Westerfeld's *Uglies* is a well-written novel with a strong, sympathetic female protagonist, while in Oliver's *Delirium* the

to create a sympathetic character from the beginning, or at least give them an epiphany half way through the book that makes them less egocentric, Oliver's protagonist Lena remains shamelessly self-centered from the beginning of the novel to the very last page. To make it even worse, it seems as if Oliver expects you to care for her self-absorbed, egotistical, cantankerous protagonist.

To top it all off, while most dystopian novels leave you to think about larger ideas of morality, personality, limits, the power of the government, (think *Uglies*, *Ender's Game*, *The Hunger Games*, etc.), Oliver miraculously fails to do that as well.

Of course, it's possible I could have forgiven all of the unoriginality and tastelessness if it weren't for one line of the book that read, "Liberty in acceptance; peace in enclosure; happiness in renunciation."

Sound familiar? Maybe that's because it is dangerously close to the line, "war is peace; freedom is slavery; ignorance is strength" from George Orwell's classic novel 1984.

The only redeeming quality of *Delirium* is its appeal to teen readers.

While it's not great literature, it is captivating enough to engage a following of teenage girls, and towards the end of the novel, it becomes a fairly interesting read. Ironically enough, I find myself eager to read the sequel to *Delirium*, if only to find out what happens next. If you ignore its predictability, unoriginality, and failure to live up to its dystopian contemporaries, *Delirium* stands out among teenage literature, which may begin to explain its spot as a bestseller.



Courtesy of harperteen.com

writing is mediocre at best, and by the end of it, you might wish you had a gun so you could take out the obnoxious female protagonist. Oliver's first person writing is a carbon copy of the writing of every other 21st teen fiction author, describing the protagonist's world through the medium of a whiny, angst ridden teenager.

Her female protagonist is oh-so relatable with her mediocre looks and attitudes, but luckily she finds a boy who thinks she is beautiful and special in every way (Bella Swan much?).

However, while most authors at least have the decency

## Strategic planning process completed

BY: MOLLY BRUCE

NCSSM constituents completed the strategic planning process this year in order to create a five-year plan that will help determine the direction of the school.

The implementation of strategic planning is expected to cost \$1,597,000 in the first year.

The strategic planning process involved groups including NCSSM faculty, teachers, students, alumni, parents, and administrators.

The Strategic Planning Team reviewed and rewrote the school's beliefs and mission statement, while setting parameters for the planning process.

The Strategic Planning Team conducted surveys and research to anticipate issues NCSSM will face in the next five years, then created four objectives to address these issues.

The school then identified eight strategies to accomplish the four objectives.

An Action Team addressed each of the eight strategies. Two faculty or staff members led each team. The Action Teams created Action Plans for each of the strategies.

Senior Brenna Muldrow, a member of one of these Action Teams described her experience as, "an eye opener. I learned a lot about how the school's finances work. It's a really interesting process and I got to get to know a lot of adults I never would have met otherwise. I'm glad I had the chance to be on a team."

Each Action Team began by analyzing a strategy to determine what problems needed to be addressed.

After analyzing the strategy, each Action Team conducted research to discover what actions the school was already taking that involved the strategy.

Next, teams brainstormed results that would fulfill each strategy. Each Action Team had to reach a consensus on every phase of planning.

According to Action Team leader and Student Life Instructor Linsey Morrison, "it took a lot of time and a lot of effort, but it made the people involved have a say where the school was headed, and I think that's always positive."

Once each action team determined what the desired results were, the Action Teams wrote Action Plans.

The Action Plan was a detailed step-by-step guide for whoever would implement the results. After each Action Plan was written, each Action Team had to conduct a cost-benefit-analysis, identifying the tangible and intangible costs and benefits of each Action Plan.

For each Action Plan, the benefits had to outweigh the

costs. After each Action Plan was written and justified by the cost benefit analysis, each Action Team had to review the original strategy and ensure that their desired results and Action Plans addressed all of the strategy's concerns.

Once the Action Team finalized the Action Plan, the Action Teams presented their Action Plans to the thirty-four member Strategic Planning Team.

The Strategic Planning Team analyzed each of the Action Plans, altering and changing them before approving them for implementation.

NCSSM will begin to implement the Year One action plans as early as May of this year.

To ensure the success of the strategies, the school will conduct implementation meetings every month, and will also report their progress during staff and Board of Trustees meetings.

The first objective of the strategic planning process was to allow residential students the opportunity to have real world learning experiences at NCSSM.

The second objective was to increase the number of graduates involved in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

The third objective was to increase outreach by providing educational opportunities and resources to North Carolina teachers and students.

The fourth objective was to interact with one million students and one hundred thousand teachers with NCSSM products or services.

The first strategy was to create and diversify NCSSM's sources of revenue and resource, and also to ensure sustainable usage of NCSSM's funds.

The second strategy was to improve the Information Technology at NCSSM. The third strategy was to encourage collaboration between the school's residential and online programs.

The fourth strategy was to provide NCSSM students with more real world applications. The fifth strategy was to enhance the school's image through mediums including marketing and public relations.

The sixth strategy was to ensure that students who were accepted to NCSSM are more prepared and to make sure they have the resources available to be successful at NCSSM.

The seventh strategy was to ensure the environment at NCSSM stimulates excellence, creativity, and innovation in staff and faculty members.

The eighth strategy was to extend educational outreach of the school both in and out of state.

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