



Anomaly

Krista McGee

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Thalli has fifteen minutes and twenty-three seconds to live. The toxic gas that will complete her annihilation is invading her bloodstream. But she is not afraid.

Decades before Thalli's birth, the world was decimated by a nuclear war. But life continued deep underground, thanks to a handful of scientists known as The Ten. There they created genetically engineered human beings who are free of emotions in the hope that war won't threaten the world again.

Thalli is an anomaly, born with the ability to feel emotions and a sense of curiosity she can barely contain. She has survived so far by hiding her differences. But then her secret is discovered when she's overwhelmed by the emotion of an ancient piece of music.

The Ten quickly schedule her annihilation, but her childhood friend, Berk—a scientist being groomed by The Ten—convinces them to postpone her death and study her instead. While in the Scientists' Pod, Thalli and Berk form a dangerous alliance, one strictly forbidden by the constant surveillance.

As her life ticks away, she hears rumors of someone called the Designer—someone even more powerful than The Ten. What's more, the parts of her that have always been an anomaly could in fact be part of a much larger plan. And the parts of her that she has always guarded could be the answer she's been looking for all along.

Thalli must sort out what to believe and who to trust, before her time runs out.

“. . . the first in what has the potential to be a fascinating trilogy of general appeal. McGee’s simple narrative belies the novel’s complexity, a factor that will make this intriguing book accessible to a wide variety of teen readers.” —*Booklist*

Anomaly Details

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From Reader Review Anomaly for online ebook

Megan says

[which was a modern retelling of the Ruth & Naomi story (hide spoiler)]

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

Recommended for: religious readers who like their Bible with a side of plotless dystopia. If you are one of the aforementioned, then just skip reading this review, it'll save you some time and you won't have to waste any more effort in leaving me a rage-filled and profanity-laced comment.

Like a moth to a flame, I am drawn to the word "dystopia."

Like a moth to a flame, I almost always get burned.

Did I say dystopia? I meant Joel Osteen. At least it wasn't Glenn Beck, but still, that's not saying much. The premise and blurb was vague enough to give me pause, but what did I say earlier about moth and flames? I just can't resist a dystopian, in the hopes that this time, maybe the flame will turn out to be an LED light or something equally innocuous. I was wrong. Stupid, stupid me. As I scanned the blurb and got somewhat interested, I forgot to glance at the sidebar, where the categories are listed. Then I would have seen this book listed under the "Christian" category. Then I would have known better than to waste my time.

My review on this book will be biased, mainly because I am not a religious person. But that's what a review is for, right? **It's a subjective opinion, it's not fact.** Someone reading this book may be heavily religious. They will undoubtedly love the fact that the book started with a quote from the Bible, and they will love the heavily religious intonations and messages throughout the book. I am not one of them. That is why my review will be biased. I do not appreciate religion being shoved down my throat. I do not have a problem with religion in general. I believe it has its place in society, and I don't have a problem with it in books. I just prefer books without an *overwhelmingly religious message*, and **make no doubt, this book is extremely preachy.** I've read books where characters are Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Church of Cthulhu (ok, not that one), etc...but those books differ from this one in that they:

- 1. Have a plot**
- 2. Are well-written**

This book is neither. It feels like the author built a dystopian society based of a hatred for science and a love for religion, without a clear idea for a storyline. That is not my only reason for giving this book a low rating. The plot was full of holes, the dystopian society is not well-built, the characters completely fail to evoke any sort of emotion or empathy within me. In fairness, the background cast for this book are intentionally unemotional, the post-Nuclear war world in which they live is based on rationality and lack of emotion, but that's not the case with our "anomaly" of a main character, nor that of her love interest. They are, for lack of a better word, quite human with all the accompanying gross emotions, but I just find them extremely bland. Their love is bland, their emotions lacking, their personality underdeveloped and lacking in any sort of complexity. The premise is already lacking in credibility, and Thalli herself is an unconvincing heroine. A lacking-in-every way Musician who is destined for A GWEATER PUPOSE BY THE DESIGNER.

""The Scientists designed you to be a Musician. And you are a beautiful Musician. But the Designer has plans that go beyond that. He has chosen you.""

This wouldn't be so incredible if Thalli was capable, but she's not. She has emotions (GASP!!!!). She rebels. She talks too much. She's a good musician. She's less boring than the other rational characters in the book; she's still ridiculously uninspiring and untalented in any way. Her purpose as given by God far overreaches her actual capabilities, which amounts to zero.

Thalli and Berk are rice cakes bland. Egg white bland. Salt-free bland. I'd compare them to brussel sprouts, but the bitterness of those oh-so-beloved vegetables give them more character than our monotonous, flavorless, and insipid Thallium (Thalli) and Berkelium (Berk).

(In the future, children will be named after the period table elements. I am not kidding. It's a good thing they're a small underground society, there aren't that many elements...)

So the premise: futuristic world, at least 40 years in the future. The United States, actually, the world, isn't really a world anymore. Billions have been killed by a Nuclear War. The remaining members of society (we're never given a clear idea of how many survived) moved underground into Pods (the word PODs + dystopia seems to be a bad combination, I should make a note for myself for future reference so I can avoid these books) where children are not conceived in the natural way, but somehow were just bred into existence without parents (again, never explained). Everyone seems to be white, nobody is gay, it's not an adequate representation of the world (even a small surviving population of it) as it is now, and even more inconceivable in the future, when presumably the world will be much more diverse. No such diversity here. Children are segregated by age, there seems to be 28 in Thalli and Berk's Pod C, and they're the 4th generation of Pod after the Nuclear War. It seems to be a tiny, tiny society, but we're never given a clear idea of how many survived. Not very many, if we're just going by the number of Pods.

Even so, the scientists are determined to extinct the human race, it seems. Whenever a child in one of the Pods has an illness, he or she is eradicated. For example, one of Thalli's friend has some yellow mucus leaking from her nose. BOOM, time to die, bitches!

I don't know about you, but where I live, it's called a nasal drip resulting from a cold, and that shit usually goes away on its own. Brilliant scientists save humankind...and are defeated by the common cold virus. Oh yeah, totally believable.

This society is ruled by 10 scientists who have outlawed emotions. They figure, emotions and conflict caused the Nuclear War in the first place, so CLEARLY THE THING TO DO NOW TO REBUILD SOCIETY IS TO ENFORCE SELECTIC GENETIC BREEDING AND OUTLAW EMOTIONS IN THE INTEREST OF PEACE AND SCIENCE.

There is such a backhanded commentary on science in this book. On the one hand, science is seen to be the salvation of the surviving human race. On the other hand, scientists are made to be evil villainous creatures who all but walk around twirling their moustaches and cackling evilly. They perform nefarious experiments. They are robotic. And for a bunch of doctors and Ph.Ds, they do the dumbest fucking things. Seriously? You expect people to believe that people don't die natural deaths, nor do they age?

The writing is lackluster, emotionless. Just because the characters are meant to be rational in a science-based dystopia doesn't mean the writing has to be dull, but it truly is in this book. I really can't tell you how forgettable and confusing the plot is. It jumps from place to place, intertwined by Thalli's meeting with a

man named John whose only job, it seems, is to preach to her and tell her about God, the Designer. I'm not making a joke about the preachiness of this book. The Designer this, the Designer that, the Designer is love, the Designer will correct all wrongs. Science is not the way. Etc...There is little rhyme nor rationality within the majority of the book's plot, but John's existence seems to serve the purpose of serving as a mini-sermon in between every other chapter.

'''God sent his Son, Jesus, into this world to save the world,' John says. 'The world rejected him. They killed him.'

'I can identify with this Jesus.'''

Whatever you say, Thalli.

Update: I'm going to add half a star because I used the sheet of paper on which I took notes for this book to kill a spider on my wall.

Tressa (Wishful Endings) says

3.5 stars

What I thought:

When I signed up for this tour I didn't realize that this was in the Christian Fiction genre. I thought it was just going to be a YA Dystopian. It turned out to be both, so it's a good thing I like Christian Fiction. It's the first time I have read this type of book and it was an interesting mix.

The whole premise was also different. The world has basically faced an apocalypse, which is nothing new, but in this story a community survives under ground in a scientific living space and pods that were set up for just such a scenario. Then the following generations are engineered to not feel things or think specific things. Those that somehow still retain these characteristic, even though engineered not to, are called anomalies. Thalli is just such an anomaly. Because of this she has feelings she shouldn't, developing friendships when she shouldn't, and possibly something more with one young scientist. There are other things driving the plot, such as the agenda and issues among the scientists and a new threat to their survival.

I actually really liked Thalli, although I think she took too many risks by not hiding her feelings enough. On the other hand, I think that would be difficult to do every single day for all of her seventeen years. I also liked Berk, who is very smart, kind, and loyal. The other characters were also interesting. I was surprised that we only see mainly two scientists through the whole book, one more than the other. However, this made a little more sense at the end.

The religious content did seem a little unrealistic and I think someone who doesn't normally read Christian Fiction or who isn't Christian may be turned off by this, so I would recommend it to those who enjoy this genre. There really aren't that many Christian Fiction books that aren't Historical or Contemporary Fiction, so I'm glad that this author decided to write a dystopian. I think there is definitely a market for it in Christian YA.

Overall, it was an interesting read, one I ended up liking. I am actually quite curious to find out what happens in the second book, which comes out next year.

Content: Clean

Source: Copy received from tour host. This did not affect the opinions shared in my review in any way.

Zac says

Synopsis:

Thalli has fifteen minutes and twenty-three seconds left to live. The toxic gas that will complete her annihilation is invading her bloodstream. But she is not afraid.

Thalli is different than others in The State. She feels things. She asks questions. And in the State, this is not tolerated. The Ten scientists who survived the nuclear war that destroyed the world above believe that emotion was at the core of what went wrong—and they have genetically removed it from the citizens they have since created. Thalli has kept her malformation secret from those who have monitored her for most of her life, but when she receives an ancient piece of music to record as her community's assigned musician, she can no longer keep her emotions secreted away.

Seen as a threat to the harmony of her Pod, Thalli is taken to the Scientists for immediate annihilation. But before that can happen, Berk—her former Pod mate who is being groomed as a Scientist—steps in and persuades the Scientists to keep Thalli alive as a test subject.

The more time she spends in the Scientist's Pod, the clearer it becomes that things are not as simple as she was programmed to believe. She hears stories of a Designer—stories that fill her mind with more questions: Who can she trust? What is this emotion called love? And what if she isn't just an anomaly, but part of a greater design?

My Review:

Wow! *Anomaly* was such an amazing read. Definitely a new favorite of mine in the dystopian genre!

I honestly found no fault in this book. Characters were amazingly real, the plot was unique and a breathe of fresh of air from the cliché plotlines in most of today's dystopias, and the setting, though very scientific, was believable and intriguing.

Thalli was undoubtedly my favorite character. Not because the story is told from her POV, but because her growth as a character was so inspiring and real...and heartbreakingly real. The best part was watching her learn more about the Designer (God) and trust in Him in everything she did.

I immensely enjoyed the light romance between Thalli and Berk. It was sweet, without being steamy or obsessive.

Though there wasn't much action in the book, I was on the edge of my seat through the whole book. I felt like I myself stood next to Thalli as she endured everything that happened! My heart raced through the majority of *Anomaly*.

The last 30 pages, I'll admit, made me frown. I had no idea how it would end, and I hadn't prepared myself for what was to come. All I can say is...wow. MAJOR CLIFFHANGER...But it was so awesome! And I don't have the second book! Aah!

Thank you, Krista McGee, for writing this book. It absolutely blew me away. Anomaly takes second to The Hunger Games on my list of dystopian favorites.

Very highly recommended!

C.B. Cook says

...

Wow.

So... I don't read much dystopian, simply because all of the dystopian books I want to read, I don't have. BUT this went on sale a while back and I actually had money on Amazon *cue gasps* so I got it. And boy am I glad I did!!!

The Good

This world is small... in this book, at least. It was delicately, extraordinarily developed, and I absolutely loved it. Or hated it. Not sure. But Krista McGee did an AMAZING job with this world, and the characters. The characters were just awesome. I didn't fangirl over any of them like Jace and Kyrin in the Ilyon Chronicles, but they were really interesting, especially Thalli. Poor, poor Thalli.

THAT ENDING, THOUGH. I mean, I REALLY REALLY NEED THE NEXT BOOK. (view spoiler)

The Bad

Some of the stuff was a little farfetched, even for a dystopian, and the romance was a little flat to me. Mostly physical and feelings, nothing "real" or amazing. Some of the sciency stuff is a little confusing, but not too bad.

The Ugly

Some touchy-feely romance, but nothing more than kissing. Quite a bit of violence scattered throughout, but not too bad.

Overall, this is a GREAT read, and I really liked it, and I'm TOTALLY reading the next book. As soon as I can get my hands on it, that is...

Hannah Rodes says

Anomaly by Krista McGee

Anomaly was a very intriguing read for me. Krista McGee is one of my favorite contemporary authors so I was eager to start into Anomaly. I was not disappointed. I really liked Anomaly. (Disclaimer: I am writing this review three month after I read it. So, it will be short)

The Good.

The Plot was intriguing and kept me interested. The Ending freaked me out! I mean it almost—she almost—*rapid hand motions*

The Bad.

I didn't necessarily like Thalli. She was okay, just not an outstanding heroine. And there was a love triangle! I HATE love triangles! It's my bookish pet-peeve. I would rather bend my favorite book's cover than read one. More. Love triangle. *screams* (Okay, let's not get to crazy. I do despise love triangles though)

Libby May says

Yay for Krista McGee again! I like this book a lot. Although the second to last scene was very confusing and I'm still not clear on what happened in the computer and how it would help to solve the oxygen problem, but I'm fascinated by the characters and the way that simulation was possible.

Can't wait to read the next book. :D

Lizzie says

Wow! A Christian Dystopian? Yes please! I really did like this book, although it wasn't the most fast paced it was still very much enjoyable, there were lots of plot twists, and many similarities to Divergent, I found. If you're a Christian and you're wanting a YA Dystopian where you don't have to worry about there being anything negative in them, this is a fantastic book. Can't wait for the next one!!

Lisbeth Avery {Domus Libri} says

Before I start the review, I want to make it clear that my review will be biased and I will not attempt hide this in any shape or form. I am not the intended audience for this novel (deeply, devout Christian teens). Despite how naïve this may be, I do not believe that religious novels should only be read and appreciated by religious people. I have read novels written to and by people of many faiths and have enjoyed some of them. I've seen that the main issue of these sorts of books is not the presence of religion but the fact that the authors seem to make religion a singular focus in a book that does not call for it. Dystopias, such as Anomaly, should not have God as the main focus.

Despite the genre, books should always have strong characterization and an engaging plot, not to mention being well-written. Anomaly has none of these three things. The characters are pitiful cardboard cutouts that

bear little to no resemblance to actual people. The main character, Thalli, is the one of the only characters that actually has emotions yet it would be impossible to tell had it not been for her constant reminder of how superior she was. One of the supporting characters', John, only purpose in life is to preach to Thalli. The plot was one dimensional and boring. At all times, I felt like someone was shouting into my ear '*religion over science*'.

Anomaly had a strong beginning, as far as dystopias go. It's set in a futuristic world, destroyed by a nuclear war. Thalli's society lives underground and is ruled by ten scientists. These scientists have genetically designed human beings to have no emotions, since they believed emotions were the downfall of civilization and the reason for the war. Not much background is given for the book nor any concrete world building. It seems like everyone is white, cisgendered, and heterosexual, though. Not that sexuality matters because neither romance nor sex occurs in these Pods (is pod the current dystopia buzzword?).

It wasn't perfect, but it was engaging enough. If the book continued the way it started, it could have easily gotten a decent 2.5 - 3. But alas, it was not meant to be and around 100 pages in, the dreaded preaching came in.

Religion is totally okay in books, I am completely fine with it. However, I cannot tolerate preaching in novels. The main reason I couldn't enjoy Warm Bodies was because of the overwhelming feelings of being lectured to. I cannot stand that. I don't want a book where I feel physically uncomfortable reading it because there isn't a page where a character isn't preaching about God.

If only McGee had more skill in writing, this book may have been saved. But, sadly, her writing is as bland and lifeless as her plot and characters. It's emotionless and boring. She has little skill in the art of storytelling.

Anomaly was an extremely disappointing way to start the new year with. I can't say I'll be reading any of McGee's books again, nor any subsequent books in the Anomaly series.

Shantelle says

4.5 stars! I really, really liked *Anomaly* by Krista McGee, and am super excited to finish the ANOMALY series! This is a Christian dystopian/science-fiction tale (which I love!) It's intriguing, raw, unique, and thought-provoking. There's also a heartfelt, beautiful journey to finding truth.

The dystopian world, the characters, the plot ... all so well done. I definitely had the *feels* while reading *Anomaly*. It drew out my emotions and made me think about what the world would be like without emotions. Without free will. Without the ability to question or fight back.

I can hardly wait to reconnect with Thalli and her friends and continue this mind-boggling, futuristic story!

Tonina says

For me, *Anomaly* was true to its name, in that its sheer level of terrible landed it on my extremely rarely used "too-awful-to-finish" shelf.

A YA dystopian? Sure, I'll give it a whirl. A YA dystopian that beats me over the head with the author's particular brand of religion and is more than a little short on character development, believable worldbuilding, and plot? Pardon me while I Hail Mary the book like there's five seconds left in the Super Bowl and I'm Tom Brady trying to finish off a dramatic comeback.

I ran across this book in July while perusing my library's new YA ebook purchases. There were already quite a few people on the hold list, which piqued my interest, and the blurb looked okay at first glance, so I signed up for it. I waited nearly three months for my turn to arrive. Today I was notified that the book was finally available to me. Excited, I downloaded it. And that's when I discovered that this book treats people like they're heathen tent pegs that can be forced into the desired position on religion if hit hard and often enough with a Christian hammer.

Now, I'd like to point out that I'm not knee-jerk hating on this book. In the past, I've enjoyed certain stories that included or were based on religious themes and elements, Cynthia Hand's *Unearthly* series being a prime example. However, *Anomaly* contains a ton of evangelical Christian messages and biblical quotes and not a whole lot else - like characters that are sufficiently developed for the reader to give a rat's ass about them, or a coherent plot. To me, the MC, Thalli (yes, the kids in this book are named after elements from the periodic table, because Evil Scientists), was about as interesting and appealing as a bowl of cold oatmeal. She's supposed to be this huge danger to the Pod where she lives BECAUSE SHE HAS EMOTIONS AND NO ONE ELSE DOES, OH NOES! But she doesn't do much of anything, so it was hard for me to take that portrayal at all seriously. Now, I will freely admit that I couldn't make myself finish this book (an **extremely** rare event for me), so it's possible Thalli becomes a dynamic and fascinating character by the end. It could have happened. For all I know, it *did* happen. I'm just going to say I doubt it.

What's more, the contemptuous portrayal of science and scientists is extremely disturbing. Yeah, scientists, those evil jerks. What have they ever done for the world? It gets even worse when Thalli encounters a plot device man named John who tells her about the almighty Designer. And of course, we're talking about a very evangelical-friendly Christian version of said Designer. From that point on, we're on our way into Preachytown by way of the Science Is Bad line, and it's one hell of a fast ride.

To be fair, I shouldn't have assumed the book would be an entertaining read on the basis of a generic blurb and a long waiting list at my local library. That was stupid on my part, especially considering that I live in an area that's home to a large evangelical college. However, there are plenty of ways to include religious ideas and elements in a story effectively. Unfortunately, this book uses none of those options. Instead, it shifts quickly from storytelling into preaching and stays there, with an occasional jump into proselytizing for variety. But the true deal-breaker for me was the overwhelming impression I received that it was a vehicle for evangelical Christian messages first and an actual story a sad and distant second. If you want to preach, fine, but be up front about it. Don't encapsulate your message in a hollow shell of a YA dystopian in a ham-fisted attempt to make it more palatable to teens and to attract more readers. Just be honest about your true purpose.

Christian Fiction Addiction says

Minutes into the first few pages of "Anomaly", I knew I was in for trouble...that there was no way I'd be putting this book down any time soon! Krista McGee has created a fascinating futuristic world, a post-nuclear war age where science rules the day, and feelings and spirituality have been genetically removed from human DNA. I loved the idea of Thalli, a character who doesn't fit the mold but instead questions why

things are the way they are, and feels things on a deep level. She is a wonderfully unique character with her love of music, her emotions and creativity, the way she discovers a Designer at work around her, and I simply couldn't read enough about her! Indeed, Krista has created a winning combination of characters as a whole, and has given them life such that readers will soon feel like they are friends. The story is full of twists and turns that kept me racing through the pages as I sought to discover what was real and what was not.

Yet the novel has also caused me to think about the nature of life on a deeper level, about what truly makes us human, and about our own efforts as a society to scrub God out of the equation and create our own morality and rules and meaning in our life. "Anomaly" shows the danger of stepping into God's shoes, and it does so in a wonderfully entertaining manner.

I, for one, am highly anticipating the next addition to Krista McGee's clever series. I highly recommend this wonderful addition to the world of dystopian fiction, and award it 5 out of 5 stars.

A review copy was received from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. I was in no way compensated for this review.

Alyssa says

5 Stars!

Goodreads Synopsis:

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Seen as a threat to the harmony of her Pod, Thalli is taken to the Scientists for immediate annihilation. But before that can happen, Berk—her former Pod mate who is being groomed as a Scientist—steps in and persuades the Scientists to keep Thalli alive as a test subject.

The more time she spends in the Scientist's Pod, the clearer it becomes that things are not as simple as she was programmed to believe. She hears stories of a Designer—stories that fill her mind with more questions: Who can she trust? What is this emotion called love? And what if she isn't just an anomaly, but part of a greater design?

Review:

I finally got to read *Anomaly*, and after finishing I can't believe I waited so long to read it. Krista nailed it! At first I wasn't sure if I would like this or not, because I don't read sci-fi/dystopian very much. But Krista has made me a fan. Krista has created such an interesting world, called The State. And to be honest, I didn't care for Krista's last book, so I was very cautious when I opened *Anomaly*. Although I did love *First Date!* I love how Krista wove in Christianity, and Thalli's struggle to believe. And can we just talk about the romance! It was so sweet and tender nothing unnecessary or inappropriate, so thank you Krista for great

romantic story. There wasn't even a kiss between Thalli and Berk, so we're just going to have to wait for that. The character Berk, I love him, how he wants to protect Thalli and tries to help her while she is being "tested" on by the Scientists. Krista pretty much created the perfect man, at least in my opinion. Anomaly now has a permanent home on my bookshelf. I can't wait for Luminary (#2) to release in January.

For fun here's a few quotes from the book that I love:

1. "Oh, Thalli. How do I define love? It is the Designer's greatest gift to us. It gives us a small glimpse of who he is, how he feels about us."

-Conversation between Thalli and John.

2. "They fear those emotions because, unchecked, they can lead to other emotions---jealousy, anger, betrayal." "So they were right to create us without them?" Most of us. "No." John closes his eyes. "the solution is not to remove your feelings." "Then what is the solution." "The Designer is the solution."

-Conversation between Thalli and John.

Oh, and something else. This is the first fiction book I have ever highlighted in. These quotes are just so good!

Review on my blog: <http://literaryandlace.blogspot.com/2013/01/luminary-by-krista-anomaly-book.html>...

Sierra Faith says

3.5 stars! I really didn't connect with Thalli..... I don't know why! Excited to read the next book in the series though.

Jeann (Happy Indulgence) says

DNF - A religious novel under the guise of dystopian fiction. Last thing I want is to be preached to in my reading time.

Also, the writing was terribly difficult to get into, stunted sentences, pretty much skimmed all the way to 27%. When the mentions of God and the Church came out, I decided that was that.

Received this book from Netgalley as part of a blog tour, but chose not to take part in it.