



## El sermón de fuego

*Francesca Haig , Manuel Mata Álvarez-Santullano (Translator)*

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Cuatrocientos años después de un apocalipsis nuclear, los humanos viven en un mundo sin tecnología donde los recién nacidos son siempre gemelos: uno de ellos es físicamente perfecto, el alfa; el otro sufre algún tipo de deformidad, el omega. Este mundo es de los alfas y los omegas viven marginados en asentamientos aislados. Sin embargo, cuando un gemelo muere, también lo hace el otro. Precisamente por este motivo, Cassandra es confinada por orden de su hermano Zach cuando este se convierte en un destacado líder del Consejo. Su intención es garantizar su propia seguridad mientras planea un mundo en el que los omegas no puedan ser usados contra sus gemelos. Pero Cass es un tipo especial de omega: no tiene anomalías físicas, es vidente. Siempre ha habido rumores de una resistencia omega organizada y aunque Cass desea unirse a los rebeldes, no puede evitar preguntarse qué pensarán ellos cuando descubran quién es su hermano. ¿Acaso es la única que cree que alfas y omegas pueden convivir en paz?

## El sermón de fuego Details

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# From Reader Review El sermón de fuego for online ebook

## Kathylill says

In short: Good world building, good writing but unappealing characters.

I can understand why this book has already been optioned by Dreamworks for a movie. The world building is quite unique and fascinating and the author has done a great job describing it from Cass' point of view, an Omega seer. As a reader you really get a feel for the post-apocalyptic world the characters are living in.

At first the book took off great but and the story was told well, the pacing was just right but then, during the second half of the book I lost interest. The story progressed very slowly, started to get repetitive and dragging. After the escape from the Keeping Rooms Cass and Kip are always on the run, traveling through the post-apocalyptic landscape and the only change is traveling on horseback, walking by foot or sailing on a boat. But really everything is just a long suffering on the road. Francesca Haig may be a good writer but Cormac Mc Carthy she is not. There are some plot twists that I could see coming from a mile away.

One of the main problems I had with the novel is the characters. Cass and her male counterpart/love interest Kip are just so unappealing. She has this "holier than you" attitude and kept repeating her opinions like an annoying chant. As a character she is not really progressing or changing. There is no "Aha"-moment. From start to end she remains the same. Kip is not a warrior. He is saved by Cass, has no memory of who he is (or his twin) and his character has no hero attitudes either. Instead of fighting he would rather stay hidden as a farmer or some such thing. The romance between those two left me cold. I didn't get it at all.

I will be reading the second book. The world was really rather interesting.

On a side-note: I don't get why this is considered Young Adult. Cass is 22 or 23 years old for the most part of the story (13 when she is separated from her twin, 6 years living in the omega farming colony, 4 years of being held captive in the Keeping Rooms).

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## Justine says

Not quite a 4, but more than a 3 so I'm rounding it up.

The Fire Sermon is a debut novel about a post-apocalyptic world in which everyone is born with a fraternal twin. One twin is the alpha, and one the omega. Every omega twin is marked by a physical deformity of some kind while the alpha is not. Rarely, an omega twin will be born with no physical deformity, but will instead have some psychic power as a seer. The twins are linked for life however, and when one dies, so does the other.

A social structure has developed such that omegas are treated as outcasts and made to live separately from the alphas. They are given poorer lands, not allowed to marry, and are generally treated very badly by alphas. The alphas would just go ahead and get rid of the omegas if they could, but of course they can't do that without harming other alphas.

The story centres around an omega seer named Cass and her alpha twin Zach. Cass longs for a world where everyone can just get along, but Zach wants to rise to power in the current alpha society. You can already see where this is going, and it isn't anywhere good.

What makes the story here a bit different is that instead of just imagining what it would be like if we were all linked together by a common thread, these people have to live it. It actually hasn't made a bit of difference in terms of how they treat each other, as they still manage to create and oppress a lower class even while each person is inextricably linked to each other to the point of death (which really, you would think would make for some eye-opening moments for these people, but apparently not).

Still, Cass maintains her vision of a united society, and I have to respect that. There was something more I wanted out of this book, and to be honest, I'm not quite sure what it was. I liked the story well enough, but for some reason I couldn't get too emotionally invested in it.

In any case, I'll be reading the next book to find out what happens next - I may be more invested by then.

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## **Emma says**

A grudging 3 stars.

Dystopian fiction is a hook that gets me every time. Judging by the prevalence of this kind of story recently, I'm not alone in that. I think we sense this modern world we live in is a fragile one, unsustainable or riven with cracks that just need the slightest pressure to fracture the whole. We're desperate to know 'what happens when it all falls apart?'

The greater premise of this story is one that addresses this question. Characters talk of 'the Blast', seemingly a nuclear explosion that ruined the earth well before the story takes place. It has affected the landscape and the very nature of humanity. Now every birth is that of twins, one 'perfect', one with some kind of deformity, yet inescapably linked. If one dies, so does the other.

Great. All well and good. But. This is where the premise gets a little muddy for me. I know people can be arseholes but if my life depended on the wellbeing of another person, I'm not about to let them wander off into the great beyond to suffer some kind of starvation/subsistence living, or be worked like an animal on a refuge, or locked in a cell to waste away. I can understand these Omega twins being negatively defined culturally but any ill health could kill you. It would be in your best interests to at least make sure they aren't going to drop dead before their time.

Aha you say, the plot answers this problem. Yes, I suppose. Tanks. Not a unique answer (please refer most recently to the Matrix). Never mind that there is a supposed fear and ban of technology did to 'the blast'. Never mind that people who have not been using much technology have managed to build cryo chambers. Anyway, it's all part of a greater crackdown on the 'lesser' twins.

Into this steps the main twins of the story. One 'perfect' but evil, the other just as perfect (no physical deformities for her) but with visions and a conscience. She wanders around for the story complaining about her visions. She meets two guys, falls for both. Still, she seems to be the only one in the whole world that understands the stupidity involved in having outright warfare between two groups that inevitably kills one from each camp. It seems like a backwards version of that bit at school when two captains got alternate

choices to pick for their team...right, I'm going to kill this person and hope nobody important on my side dies... Good plan.

Maybe the author will take this forward and improve upon it. I think I needed to understand why the Omega twins were treated in such a poor fashion despite the idiocy of it. I can't get behind a story where the underlying premise feels shaky to me from the beginning. At the moment I can't see where it's going and to be honest, I don't really care. By the end of this book, the writing had already faltered and the characters are just not interesting enough to make me continue.

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### **Anna (Enchanted by YA) says**

So much potential, yet this book fell flat.

Now, I'm writing this review for myself as much as anyone because I want to figure out where everything went wrong.

Nothing particularly sticks out to me as the reason that I gave *The Fire Sermon* only 2 stars – there wasn't anything which immediately put me off like insta-love or infodumps etc. Quite the opposite really, I found there were things which could have pulled me into the story – the thing is *they didn't*.

Everything was *so... impossibly... slow...* that whenever something of interest happened it was dragged out until it felt unimportant and I lost the initial spark of hope that the story would pick up. So much of it was spent running from one place to another without any climax. From a critic's point of view I could admire Francesca Haig's writing, but as someone looking for a good read; not so much. To be honest *I was bored*. My attention kept drifting to the most menial things and my eyes would roam over words but skip more.

Reading became a chore and all I wanted to do was finish. Books don't have to contribute on a major scale to your life for them to be good; they could simply take you away from it for a few hours or be an enjoyable read. *The Fire Sermon* did none of these things for me.

The concept (learned through the synopsis) drew me in and it was reading about it that didn't hold. It also didn't help that the characters were very one-dimensional with unimpressive arcs that felt unnatural. If some of the characters didn't exist, there would have been very little difference to everything as a whole (this includes one of the main protagonists, Kip, whose name I had to look up even though I finished the book less than a day ago).

In the end, I have to come back to my original point: there was potential here for a mind-blowing story but alas it was not.

Posted on: <http://enchantedbyya.blogspot.co.uk/>

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### **Sarah says**

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to HarperCollins UK, HarperFiction/Blue Door and NetGalley.)

*“I’m on my way to achieving something big. I can’t let you get in my way.”*

This story had lots of potential, but it didn’t quite fulfil it for me.

Cass was a strong character, and she held up well against the threat of the alphas and the situations she was put in. Kip was also a likeable character, and the pair worked pretty well together.

The storyline in this was okay, and the world building was good, but the pace really let the story down for me. I liked the idea that every birth produced an alpha and an omega, and that the omegas were kept separate, and I thought that this was done pretty well, especially given the twist that if one died the other also died... (although why would you let your omega twin be treated like poo if their death would cause your death??)

The ending to this had a couple of twists that I didn’t see coming, and a couple of unexpected deaths.

6 out of 10

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## **Karen says**

This review was done by **KissinBlueKaren**

This story follows the synopsis pretty well. The Fire Sermon definitely has Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* feel to it. In the far future, after a nuclear apocalypse, the survivors carry a genetic abnormality. Every baby is born a fraternal twin, one boy one girl. One twin is “normal” (Alpha), the other twin has a congenital abnormality (Omega) and is born sterile. In rare instances, the Omega has psychic ability and no physical abnormality. Every twin is linked even though they are separated as soon as the Alpha is identified. When one dies the other one dies as well. Cass is an Omega that has the gift of sight. Because she had no obvious abnormality, her and her twin weren’t split until much later than most twins. All Omegas are sent to live with their own kind s Alphas don’t have to remember that they exist.

In this story Cass (Omega) is sent to live with other Omegas in a village far from her home. Her abnormality makes her an outcast, even among other outcasts. The story starts with Cass being captured and thrown into prison for her and her twin’s protection. Her Alpha twin has risen to power in society and he can’t take a chance that something might happen to her (ergo him).

I honestly didn’t see how things might change for Cass. Locked up in solitary confinement for four years she gets really crafty. I loved how she got away and what she did next. Of course, she finds a boy, Kip, and they pair up to change the world. Things are pretty bleak for these two throughout most of the story. I really liked both Cass and Kip. I thought Cass was well fleshed out and I loved how she stood by her principles. Kip was really reliant on Cass and I found him to be a hard person to pin down. He seemed pretty devoted to Cass,

which is pretty sad for him. I liked Cass and Kip together, although I didn't think it was a swoon worthy romance. I think they helped each other in a lot of ways.

I loved the world building in this story. The author gave me enough details to outline the scenes but it was still vague enough for me to imagine my own world. I doubt two people reading this book would imagine exactly the same world. This world is dark. Cass and Kip have no safe haven in the world. There are towns of Alphas that would kill them on sight and then dreary Omega settlements surrounded by vast expanses of land off limits due to nuclear fallout. The world is dark.

I liked the complexity of this world a lot. The good guys (Omegas) verses the bad guys (Alphas). Killing a bad guy will kill a good guy too. The Alphas come up with all sorts of inventive to keep those Omegas safe and out of the way. There are real problems with this society. It seems like Cass is the only one who sees that the solution is simple. Ugh!

This was a really inventive story. I am hooked now and so ready for the sequel The Map of Bones.

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### **May says**

FASCINANTE.

De lo mejor que he leído este año.

¡Os hablaré de él la semana que viene en el canal [www.youtube.com/mayrayamonte](http://www.youtube.com/mayrayamonte)!

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### **Jessy MelodyofBooks says**

Irgendwie ist meine Rezension gestern erst verspätet online gegangen, hier für alle noch mal der Link :)  
<https://youtu.be/YxN0Pzb7Cyk>

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### **Andrea Izquierdo says**

Está bien el planteamiento, pero la historia tiene algunas lagunas. Por lo demás, me ha gustado.

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### **Cindy says**

Ursprünglich erschienen auf meinem Blog Piranhapudel: <https://piranhapudel.de/das-feuerzeic...>

In letzter Zeit hört man oft, dass Dystopien auf dem absteigenden Ast und eher unbeliebt sind. Ob es also Glück, Zufall oder ein Risiko ist, dass der Heyne fliegt-Verlag dennoch die "Feuerzeichen"-Reihe übersetzt: Ich freue mich sehr darüber, so viel darf schon mal gesagt sein. Obwohl ich die Übersetzung an einigen Stellen recht holprig fand, wird diese doch im deutschsprachigen Raum hoffentlich viel Aufmerksamkeit auf die Bücher lenken. Zwillinge sind für mich immer ein spannendes Thema, Francesca Haig hat es zudem auch noch mit dystopischen Elementen vermischt, die ein unglaublich tolles Konzept bilden. "Das Feuerzeichen" ist zwar stellenweise ein etwas langatmiger Jugendroman, kann aber dennoch neben dem kreativen und

beängstigenden Setting eine faszinierende Geschichte bieten.

Die post-nukleare Welt, in der die Zwillinge Cass und Zach leben, wurde durch eine riesige Explosion zerstört. Technik und Elektronik sind seitdem tabu und gehören nur noch in das beängstigende Vorher. Einige Zeit nachdem die Überlebenden sich ihre Welt wieder aufgebaut haben, wurden plötzlich nur noch Zwillinge geboren, immer ein Junge und ein Mädchen. Jeweils eines der Babys hat einen Makel, in den meisten Fällen einen körperlichen. Mal fehlt eine Gliedmaße, ein anderes Mal hat das Kind mehr als zehn Finger. Dadurch hat sich nach und nach eine neue Gesellschaft gebildet, die sich in Alphas und Omegas aufteilt. Die missgebildeten Omegas haben kaum Rechte, werden durch ihre vermeintliche Verbindung zur nuklearen Katastrophe regelrecht gefürchtet und doch sind sie absolut notwendig; denn wenn ein Zwilling stirbt, geht es dem anderen im selben Augenblick genauso. Die Protagonistin Cass hat keinen sichtbaren Makel, sondern ist eine Seherin. Aus diesem Grund dauert es viele Jahre, bis ihre Eltern herausfinden, welches ihrer Kinder ein Omega ist, damit sie dieses in eine der heruntergekommenen Omega-Siedlungen schicken und ihr Alpha-Kind fördern können. Ihr Bruder Zach, der schon lange die Ahnung hat, dass er auf keinen Fall der Omega ist, kann mit der Demütigung, noch nicht wie alle anderen Alpha-Kinder gesplittet worden zu sein, kaum leben und versucht alles, um sich ein eigenes Leben zu erkämpfen.

Cass selbst ist eine Protagonistin, die mich zweigespalten zurücklässt. Ihre Seherfähigkeiten machen einen großen Teil ihrer Persönlichkeit und ihrer Handlungen aus. Dabei ist die Art, wie sie diese Fähigkeit einsetzt oder wie die Visionen zu ihr kommen, auf eine vielseitige Weise dargestellt. Manchmal träumt sie von etwas, das in der Vergangenheit passiert ist, oder von etwas, das erst noch geschehen wird; andere Male funktioniert ihre Gabe wie eine Intuition, die ihr zuverlässig zeigt, was sie tun muss. Wieder andere Male tappt sie hingegen vollkommen im Dunkeln. Welches davon zutrifft oder warum es so funktioniert, wird nicht näher erklärt. Leider kommen durch Cass' Visionen und ihre Intuition einige Längen zustande. Manchmal hatte ich sogar das Gefühl, dass sie zugunsten des Plots zu Höchstleistungen auflief — oder eben nicht.

Die weiteren Charaktere, wie Cass' Bruder Zach und solche, die sie im Verlauf der Geschichte kennenlernt, habe ich ebenso interessant empfunden. Einige Personen verhielten und entwickelten sich für meinen Geschmack etwas zu extrem, auch wenn dies durch die Umstände gut begründet wurde. Dennoch hätte ich mir hier stellenweise etwas vielschichtigere Persönlichkeiten gewünscht.

Francesca Haig hat mit dem ersten Band "Das Feuerzeichen" einen Trilogieauftakt geliefert, den ich aufgrund des Settings unbedingt weiterempfehlen möchte. Das System der untrennbar verbundenen Zwillinge ist genauso spannend, wie es klingt, und daraus entwickeln sich natürlich ebenso interessante, aber auch krasse politische Systeme und Intrigen. Als Leser wird man hier von der mal mehr, mal weniger starken Seherin Cass durch die Geschichte geführt, erlebt alles aus ihrem Blickwinkel, der durch ihre Sehergabe noch mal interessanter wird.

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## **Bookdragon Sean says**

This has such an excellent start that I was immediately drawn into the fascinating story. It's set in a post-apocalypse world that has been destroyed by a catastrophic event, called the Fire Sermon, which has killed thousands of people. In the aftermath of the blast the only children that are born are twins. One is perfect, the Alpha, and the other is deformed, the Omega. They are separated at birth, when their categories are usually known, and are forced to live apart. The Alphas live like kings whilst the Omegas live in perpetual poverty, except in some rare cases, like this one, when the defect isn't always visible.



Thus, Cass and Zach grew up together. It was never clear, to others, which one was the dreaded Omega, so they both walked between worlds. The other Alphas accepted neither and other Omegas feared a possible Alpha; consequently, the two grew up alone. Zach became resentful to his sister as he eventually leant of her seer abilities, which made her the dreaded Omega. He wanted her gone; he wanted acceptance, and only through proving his sisters deformity can he get it.

The complex relationship that developed between the twins is what made this novel exciting and original. Indeed, the novel begins with Cass narrating the story from a gloomy prison cell. Her brother put her there. She tells the story of how it occurred as she recounts her childhood, and then the novel goes into present time as the narrative catches up to Cass's present state. She dreams of escaping to an island she has only seen in her dreams; it is the only refuge for the Omegas.

The island is a safe zone for all Omegas; it is a place they can be free from the ruling of the Alphas, but never completely as the bond between the twins goes further than any other. If one dies so does the other; if one is harmed the other feels it. This creates an extremely **awkward and complex dynamic** between the two siblings. They are enemies that cannot defeat each other because if they do they will destroy themselves in the process.

### **Some fantastic ideas, but some not so fantastic story telling**

However, despite the novels excellent plot Haig's storytelling was disappointing. The ending of this novel was too strong. She wrapped up too many things and provided too much closure. This means that when going into the next novel there is only one problem left to resolve; the result is less anticipation for the next instalment. In addition to this, parts of the novel were too long and would have been more effective if they were condensed down. For example, there was a round seventy-five pages of travelling in the wilderness that could have quite easily been more like forty or so.

Also the first quarter of the novel was written in a very eloquent manner but, the rest wasn't. She had definitely spent more time polishing her prose in the early parts of the story and the result was a very tight and precise piece of writing. The rest of the story seems to lack her initial poetic touch; this made certain parts of it feel flat, again, such as the travelling parts of the book. The protagonist doesn't develop her power very much either.

In spite of my criticisms, I do feel that this series has promise. The author has some really good ideas and if she can create a steady hand with her writing style; if the characters have room to develop further and become more rounded the trilogy has potential to be something quite good. I will read the next instalment, but I do hope it's better than the first otherwise I may not read the third.

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### **Rusty's Ghost Engine (also known as..... Jinky Spring) says**

[ So basically it's set 400 years after a nuclear blast and technology and things from Before are seen as bad because of the blast. After the blast all humans were born in twins, one male and female one of them is an unblemished flawless alpha while the other is either mutated or with fault and is known as an omega and as

soon as the fa

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## **Diane S ? says**

A great premise, and a terrifying new world where the Alphas are on top, their twins, the Omegas on bottom. Loved the catch that they must protect their twins at the same time they are keeping them at the bottom of the social and ruling scale. Leads to some horrible and unique ways of keeping them safe.

Yet, this reads like a YA book, the romance between two of the Omega escapees seems trite, and some of the lightness in very dangerous moments did not ring true. It bothered me, but might not bother a different audience.

So okay as post apocalyptic books go, but not one of my favorites. Though I believe it has already been optioned for film, so, what do I know?

ARC from publisher.

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## **karen says**

the first book in any fantasy-dusted series has one job: to tell the reader what's up with this world. and this book does that, but it does so in a breathless rush that never addresses the underlying questions attached to "what's up with this world," like "how" and "why" things are this way. it's a crucial part of writing; the world-building, because without accounting for more than just the surface details, it's like listening to someone tell you about a crazy dream they had:

so, there was a blast and it destroyed the world and there's no more electricity but now every birth results in mixed-gender twins and one is always physically perfect and the other is either missing a limb, or has extra limbs & etc, and the perfect twins are known as "alphas" and given all good things, while the others are called "omegas," hot-branded on their infant-foreheads and sent off elsewhere to struggle and be poor, but not *too* poor and straggly, because the twins have a bond and if one twin dies, so does the other! if one twin is injured, the other feels it!

- wait, what? but why? and how?

doesn't matter, it is "unknown," but so anyway there's one other kind of omega and they're like stealth omegas because they don't have extra fingies or anything but they are seers who can see the future. or sometimes the present but like really far away. or the future. no one knows, it's kind of an anything goes kind of seeing and sometimes it's real and sometimes it's "maybe" and sometimes it's detailed and sometimes vague or maybe even allegorical.

- wait, what? but why? and how?

doesn't matter, it is "unknown," but so anyway there's an omega girl named cass and she's a seer and her twinsie brother zach grows up to be really powerful and to most people he would be considered evil, but she understands his emotional layers even though they have been separated for years and even though he kidnaps her and imprisons her, she's still got twinlove for him and is sure he just needs some perspective and maybe a stern talking to and then he won't be so bad and she escapes and finds a boy who's like a science project and they go on the run and kiss and try to find safety and be heroes and they meet rebels and things get complicated and cass really just wants everyone to get along and be together forever twins.

- wait, what? but why? and how?

doesn't matter, it is "unknown."

but it kind of does matter, especially since this is being targeted at the adult market. and before you start torching my lawn, i'm not saying anything disparaging about YA fiction, but we all know that there is some YA fiction that is densely plotted and richly textured and as literary as all get-out, and there's some that is more about delivering instant gratification to reluctant readers, skimping on the details so as not to frustrate a young, less-experienced reader with a limited attention span into going elsewhere for their diversions.

and this skimps on many of the details, in both the world-building and the character development. we have a romance that grows out of not much more than proximity, that sustains itself through challenging situations in the manner of YA romances where although newly met, they understand each other like a long-established couple who don't even need words to communicate and they will fight, kill, or die for each other and nothing will threaten this bond that's still sticky with novelty.

it's also philosophically superficial, finger-skimming fairly complicated social and moral quandaries in broad strokes of murder, heroism, sacrifice, without nuance, by characters who don't seem to understand the world they are in, the consequences of their linked destinies, and must be reminded of the facts, many many times, by cass.

it's an intriguing premise, but i need to know that there's a design to it, something more than "hey, listen to the weird dream i had!" the fact that the synopsis for the second book (on goodreads, at least) is the exact same synopsis as this first book is not encouraging, but i'm going to read it soon so i can read the third book and appease the gods of the gr giveaway!

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now i am one step closer to being able to read the third book in this trilogy, which i won through goodreads, foolishly assuming i'd never win. i'm coming for you, book three!

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**Sarah Churchill says**

Loved the writing - I've heard that Haig is a poet, and that definitely shows in the writing, some of it is just downright beautiful. I also enjoyed the world itself, though no real information was given about the disaster that caused this postapocalyptic world and I would have liked to know more. Maybe in book 2!

Character wise, the protagonist is likeable enough although I did find her a bit whiny, and I would have liked a little more growth from her, but again... maybe in book 2! I liked some of the supporting characters more, and especially liked the antagonists. I love a good bad guy!

Twists were great, mostly unpredictable, and as a general concept I think it's great. Pacing was a little inconsistent, but not distracting once I got past the one big slow spot.

So yeah, good and enjoyable but not amazing. I think I'm just getting a bit bored of dystopia where the society is broken/corrupt/dying... but the MC is 'different' and the only one who can change the world. It's getting a bit formulaic. In this instance everyone is born as twins, one a 'perfect' Alpha and the other a 'deformed' or in some way disabled 'Omega'. Our main character's 'deformity' is that she's a seer (kinda like a psychic). Now, correct me if I'm wrong but that's an Ability. A fairly useful ability. That's quite a big advantage she has over the rest of her kind who are hobbling around with missing limbs. She kinda lucked out there. So of course she must save the world.

Ok one last thing. To me this is somewhat of a plot hole, and it won't matter to some but it really bugged me. Alphas live a privileged life with all of the power and wealth. Omegas are shunned and kept in camps, the lowest level of society. Twins - one Alpha and one Omega - are connected to the extent where they feel each others pain and if one dies the other dies. Now, if my life were dependant on keeping my twin alive - no matter how much I'd been conditioned to despise them - I'd keep them in a frigging padded room. I wouldn't send them off to live off the land, in poverty-stricken ghettos with lice and illnesses and a high risk of malnutrition, starvation, infection and disease. Just sayin.

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