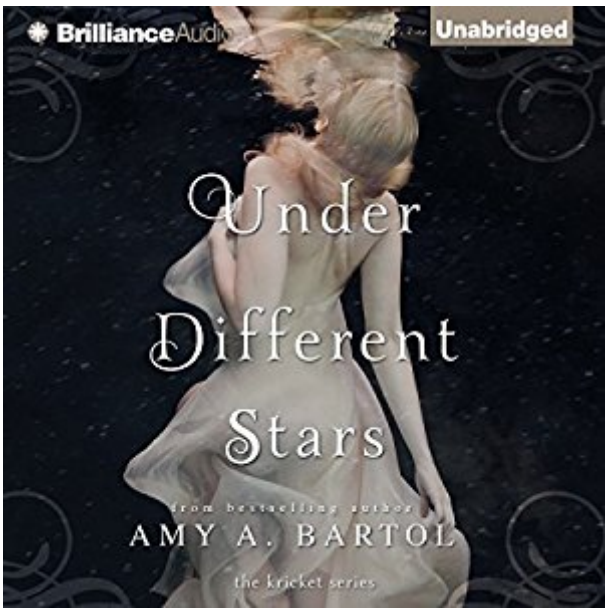
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Under Different Stars: The Kricket, Book 1



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Synopsis

Winner of four 2014 UtopYA Awards, including Best Book of the Year and Best Sci-Fi Book of the Year. Kricket Hollowell never wished upon stars. She was too busy hiding in plain sight, eluding Chicago’s foster care system. As her eighteenth birthday approaches, she now eagerly anticipates the day she’ll stop running and finally find her place in the world. That day comes when she meets a young Etharian soldier named Trey Allairis, who has been charged with coming to Earth to find Kricket and transport her to her true home. As danger draws close, he must protect her until she can wield the powers she cannot use on Earth... and he soon realizes that counting a galaxy of stars would be easier than losing this extraordinary girl. Kyon Ensin knows the powerful depths of Kricket’s gifts - gifts he’ll control when he takes her for his tribe and leads the forces that will claim Ethar and destroy his enemies, starting with Trey Allairis. Now, Kricket faces the most difficult choice of her life: whether to wage a battle for survival, or a fight for love.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I don’t read a lot of YA that isn’t recommended to me by others because I tend to dislike a large amount of the common tropes that seem to be in every YA novel ever.I wish this one had been different. Let me start by saying that the actual prose was solid, it was simple but it wasn’t awkward or clunky. I never felt that the narration was talking down to the reader or treating them like they were stupid. I also found myself not hating Kricket, even if I felt like the author betrayed her more often than she helped. I love the idea of tackling the difficulties of being a kid who grew up in the pathetic excuse of a ’foster’ system, and having a biracial lead could have been so powerful. Kricket

is smart and ferocious, she doesn't like being used and often lets her independence get in the way. She is treated with a bit of special snowflake syndrome - I'm willing to look over it since she had actual faults and most of the 'special' was forced onto her by others (but really platinum blondes aren't really that rare, 5'10" is not short by any average, the college she was looking at offers scholarships and housing for foster kids and I'll get to the most beautiful thing in a bit) - but I felt like she had an honestly solid base character. I don't mind female characters who are tough and self dependent especially when it gets them into trouble when it needs to.That said, for whatever horrible reason the author decided that it was completely okay to oversexualise Kricket to an absurdly creepy point. The only men who weren't interested in her were gay. Everyone else wanted a piece of her because she was just so beautiful they just couldn't help themselves. No one had any difficulty touching her - even after the author stated in lore that touching was something that was not acceptable between casual friends or with strangers. What's worse is when the boys weren't fighting over her bra and panties, they were using magical x-ray glasses to scan for her virginity. I can't even begin to talk about how creepy and wrong it is and how Kricket feels violated but it's instantly dropped and forgotten. I don't even know where to start my rant on this, because this is aimed at TEENAGE GIRLS. Why are we still writing and pretending like there is any way to tell if someone is a virgin or not?? Why are we still acting like it's okay to attach any value to something so pointless, and why do we insist on writing fantasy that is so incredibly sexist? I was beyond disgusted that it was brought up more than once and held over her head, it's beyond gross. On top of this, there is this suffocating romance that should not have even been included.The lead male Trey pulls her around, forces her gaze, continuously reminds her that she's small and weak and female and she needs a man to protect her (a sentiment that is echoed by every other male around her). He is constantly yelling at her and derailing her, invalidating the way she thinks and speaks because it's not 'ladylike'. He kidnaps her and then spends the first half of the book saying he isn't and telling her that the other side were the ones who were going to hold her prisoner. His side was just going to punish her. He gets ridiculously over protective of her almost instantly, and at SEVERAL points he strips her down while she's unconscious. His role in the plot to be a man who protects invalidates Kricket's own characterization at several points and honestly, there is no sense in writing them into a romance.What little plot there was could have been actually interesting, a little typical but it could have been so much more than it was. This book felt like a set up but it did very little world building aside from a few info dumps every few chapters. So much of the plot was interrupted by Kricket being treated like a piece of meat for literally every male character in the book. The universe could have been cool, some cross between Victorian and the ultra modern but it was so heavy in archaic

sexism that there was never any time to explore it.I’m too frustrated to even go on at this point. The author did a terrible job at writing what could have been a really amazing book. I am so sick of YA authors falling back on age old tropes that need to die out already, they are overdone and frankly disgusting. I am so sick of seeing fantasy and scifi universes being riddled with sexism, especially with female leads. It’s been done to death and frankly I don’t see why it’s included. Kricket literally has magical hair and powers but women in the universe are just objects to be married.If this book had spent more time on the plot and honest character developments and had fought against typical YA tropes it would have been so much better.

*I received a free copy of this title in a Goodreads giveaway. All opinions given here are my own*I didn’t love this book, but I didn’t hate it. I enjoyed that Kricket was a foster child from a harder place than many people ever experience, but I thought that could have translated better into who she was as a person. This could have developed into a very interesting and character driven coming of age story, but it just didn’t quite manifest.Kricket’s inner monologue indicated that she had hardened her heart, but she didn’t seem all that hard-hearted to me, as she started to trust her captors far too easily. As a foster parent myself, perhaps I’m just more familiar with the trust issues these kids have and the attachment issues that follow, so it was very disconnected for me. Also, her naivete was unsettling. She would not have been that ignorant of how to play games she faced in her "home world." Foster children are survivors, and while she might have not known the details and specifics of the games being played, there is most often a well honed knowledge of how to play them.I did not like the male-domination that drove the majority of this book. While Kricket herself seemed to be a feminist, as the reader, I could never quite tell when her feminism would manifest and when she would play the victim in need of saving.Another aspect that I didn’t quite understand was the complete fascination with her body. Kricket’s body is lusted after constantly. And she is naked more than once in the presence of her love interest, but, perhaps because it is a YA novel and not an adult novel nothing happens. Most concerning for me (especially for an audience of young female readers) is that one of these times she actually falls asleep fully dressed in the arms of her love interest and awakens completely naked and lying next to him in bed. He is fully dressed, but explains that he cut her clothes off because it "...looked uncomfortable." This reeks of taking advantage of a sleeping woman and all my hackles rose, but Kricket is not appalled or offended or scared...Instead,"Was it hot?" I ask between kisses. "Cutting it off me?"Are you kidding me?!?! Was this supposed to develop sexual tension? Yuck...that whole scene. Yuck.Overall, I didn’t hate the story. I might read more in the series, but I won’t search it out. If I come down to needing something

to read and there aren't any better options available in the library, I may pick up the second book...we'll just have to see.For conservative readers: See above...

Kricket has been skilled at evading caseworkers for a while now and not far from her eighteenth birthday, she longs to be free to find or make her own home. She knows she is different but isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t sure why until two different groups of big guys come and try to take her with them. She doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t understand why they all seem intent on taking her somewhere. It doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t help that all one leader does is lie while the other insists she must come back with him to face punishment for her crimes.I really enjoyed this book and I canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t wait for the rest of the books in this series especially since she spent quite of the book building KricketÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s story as well as world building. I think Bartol did a much better job making Ethar real and relatable than Premonition, though many of the names she gave things seemed a little obvious. I mean Ethar is really just a jumbled mix of the letters of Earth. There are so many other words that have roots to Earth words that it seems there must have been some sort of connection between the two to share some language similarities.There are so many questions created in this book and not many answers. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m excited to see where this series goes. I really enjoyed the guys in this book and way they related to each other felt very real. They not only answered to Trey as a superior officer but you could tell they respected him and would follow him anywhere. I really enjoyed the journey that not only Kricket takes, but the guys as well. I love how Kricket herself quietly earned respect and devotion. I hope there is a lot more Trey, Jax, and Wayra in the next book!![...]

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