



# The Unhappening of Genesis Lee

*Shallee McArthur*

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## **The Unhappening of Genesis Lee** Shallee McArthur

Seventeen-year-old Genesis Lee has never forgotten anything. As one of the Mementi—a small group of genetically-enhanced humans—Gena remembers everything with the help of her Link bracelets, which preserve memories perfectly. But Links can be stolen, and six people have already lost their lives to a memory thief, including Gena's best friend.

Anyone could be next. Which is why Gena is less than pleased to meet a strange but charming boy named Kalan who claims that they've not only met, but that Gena knows who the thief is.

The problem is, Gena doesn't remember Kalan, she doesn't remember seeing the thief, and she doesn't know why she's forgetting things— or how much else she might forget. As growing tensions between Mementi and ordinary humans drive the city of Havendale into chaos, Gena and Kalan team up to search for the thief. And as Gena loses more memories, they realize they have to solve the mystery fast.

Because Gena's life is unhappening around her.

## **The Unhappening of Genesis Lee Details**

Date : Published November 18th 2014 by Sky Pony

ISBN : 9781629146478

Author : Shallee McArthur

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Science Fiction, Dystopia, Fantasy

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## **From Reader Review The Unhappening of Genesis Lee for online ebook**

### **Jenni Elyse says**

I thought The Unhappening of Genesis Lee was a bit frustrating at times, but I still enjoyed it. It had a very intriguing and interesting premise that kept me reading to the end.

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### **Shallee McArthur says**

Well, I wrote it, so I kinda love it. :)

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### **Mackenzi says**

I was totally caught off guard by how much I loved this one. It's so creative! I have been craving something new and different in YA fantasy/scifi and this one totally fits the bill. The world is so different than anything else I have read, and so vivid and creative. Gena is a narrator worth hanging out with, and the examination of memory, emotion, and the many complicated things that go along with it is stellar and moving. A must-read for fans of The Giver. And also just people who appreciate good books.

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### **Molly Mortensen says**

#### **Summary:**

In a world where people wear their memories in beads, someone is stealing them.

(Yep, that's it one sentence tells you all you need to know. Sound good?)

#### **Set Up:**

The Mementi (people with memories in beads called links) founded the city of Havendale so they would have a place to belong, since they are ostracized in the outside world. However, in Havendale the Populous (what the Mementi call normal people) are only able to have menial labor jobs and are looked down upon.

The company of Archon was founded to use the Mementi's intellect and skills to make the world better for them through the creation of new technologies. Since every Mementi has stock in Archon, they all have plenty of money, where all of the Populous in the city are poor.

#### **Okay, a little more summary:**

Genesis Lee is a Mementi living in Havendale. She's trying to discover who's behind the Link thefts when she runs into Kalan, a populous boy who may be the only one who can help her.

## **My Review:**

Some would consider this a dystopian, and though the city of Havendale has a dystopian feel to it the plot is really more mystery.

At first glance this book has a really strange cover, but after reading it, it totally makes sense, (Gena is in ballet and dreams of being an astronaut.) and one of the themes of this book is about her being who she really is instead of who her parents want her to be.

## **The Good:**

The Mementi had a cool culture, they're always polite (because no one wants someone to have a bad memory of them) and they wear lots of covering clothing since one touch with another Mementi can transfer memories. Thought really went into what it would be like for those who could never forget. I like the whole Mementi can absorb knowledge into their brains thing. (Reminded me of the Matrix.)

The history behind what created the Mementi made sense, so often in a book like this the author has a cool concept, but the explanation of how this world came to be is lacking.

**The romance** was sweet, no instant romance here, it was gradual and well done. I liked both of the main characters, especially Gena. She got so strong over the course of this novel. The minor characters were well done too, but this novel was mostly about Gena and Kalan.

This book was surprisingly deep at times when talking about what memories one would want to forget and keeping all of your memories to deal with them properly.

There were several twists and I didn't guess any of them except the last one, so it was a good little mystery. **Unhappening had a good ending** too, (I'm not saying happily ever after or not, since most of you know I'm a fan of that and I wouldn't want spoilers.) I mean that everything was wrapped up. I don't know if this will be a series, but if it's not I'm happy with that.

## **The Not As Good:** (Since none of these things are really bad)

There are a couple of little editing mistakes, like when they were listing off names one was mentioned twice as though the first time hadn't happened, and there's a little annoying thing that happens to contradict what was already said in the end, but that could've just been the character's doing. Neither of these things took away from the book though and this was an arc.

One of Gena's friends has conveniently hacked almost every system in the city. I wish it had been Gena with this ability and a little more explanation was given, but the hacking wasn't just used as an easy get out of jail free card.

In the middle of the book there are lots of Christian beliefs talked about, the love interest Kalan is Christian. Sometimes this can get a little preachy, but it was okay here, just another part to a character not the author trying to convince the readers of his/her beliefs.

I didn't 'feel' her panic attacks, but it was a fine attempt. I was afraid she was going to go with the PTSD is cured instantly thing, but she didn't, so kudos!

**The Bad:** Gena insulted fedoras. Fedoras are cool! (Now I sound like the 11th doctor, but still.)

**Would I recommend this book? Yes! Would I read something else by this author? Yep.**

**Point of View:** First (Gena)

**Predictability:** 2 out of 5 (Where 1 is George RR Martin (If the characters make a plan or think about the future I know it isn't going to go that way.) And 5 is Cinder (where I guessed what was going to happen long before it did, but it was still a great book.)

**Source:** Edelweiss

**My Rating:** 7/10 Stars

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### **Luise says**

This book has an interesting construct of a future society. I don't think I read about externally stored memories before, so it was nice to experience something new.

The story was quite exciting, never got boring and had some great turns and not too predictable revelations.

I also liked the characters. Especially the fact that Genesis is not one of those awful teenage-heroines that tend to make only stupid decisions. On the contrary, her actions mostly made sense.

The ending was a little too hmm... not really open... 'not enough' maybe. Could have been a little more, I guess.

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### **Cali Bakker says**

What a fantastic read! The characters felt real and the plot/conflict was interesting and thought provoking. Definitely a book to read when you have binge reading time because you will not want to put it down!

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### **Benni says**

Review: <http://bennitheblog.com/bookbiters/th...>

The Mementi are a group of humans descended from genetically-altered ones who remember everything. Their memories are stored in "Link" beads that touch their body.

Seventeen-year-old Genesis "Gena" Lee is out partying one night when someone steals a Link from her beset friend, Cora, robbing Cora of her last two years and inflicting psychological damage. As Gena looks into the matter more, she discovers someone else seems to be stealing her own memories without ever touching her

own Link beads. She will have to solve this mystery of the memory thief before she loses all her memories.

At around the 30% mark, I was ready to declare *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* a DNF, which I do not do often—at least not after investing the time to read almost a third of a book. Although the teenage protagonists take some precautions to guard their Link beads—for example, Gena hides her beads under her gloves, the precautions are still unsatisfying. After all, Gena wears some of her beads on what amounts to a friendship bracelet crafted from her best friend, Cora (I'd be stringing them on titanium steel or something really sturdy, and certainly something made by professionals instead of a teenager). Cora herself, at least for their one night out, wears her beads braided into her hair. I hate to blame the victims here, and while Cora's daring display isn't without a point—it represents a certain naïve, teenage sense of indestructibility—I couldn't help feel that our characters were being dumb just to move the plot forward.

Speaking of superpowers, I also felt that the Mementi were lacking. Instead of the oft-used trope, Cursed with Awesome, the Mementi seemed Blessed with Suck. Sure, they can remember everything, but since their memories are stored in the Link beads, and missing such beads can lead to lost memories and psychosis, I'll stick with my boring Populace genes and keep my memories in my unreliable head. When it's so easy to refer to the Internet for answers (not that it's always reliable), a perfect memory seems less valuable than it may have been decades ago.

Despite being annoyed at the above, I decided to just finish the book, and I'm happy to report, it paid off. The book turns around at approximately the 40% mark, and delivers a lot of interesting twists and turns, and insight into why the talents of the Mementi may be admired. For one, Mementi memories can live on via the Link beads even when the Mementi are dead—this provides a measure of immortality (please note that the following quote is from an ARC and is subject to change):

“This is our cemetery,” I said, my words echoing. “The memories of those we love are stored here with their ashes after they die.”

*The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* also demonstrates how fragile our lives can be, however, when so much of our lives is dependent on memory. Not just our own, but how others perceive us.

Even with all the interesting questions raised, this book could have unraveled a lot of its progress with a typical happy ending. Instead, however, *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* is not afraid to explore our deepest fears; it refuses to hand us any easy answers. It also trusts in human perseverance enough to make us work for what we want. It's just hopeful enough and cynical enough to make this one of the more interesting young adult reads released this year.

I received a digital review copy of the book via Edelweiss, courtesy of Sky Pony Press.

Review: <http://bennitheblog.com/bookbiters/th...>

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**Jessica (Goldenfurpro) says**

This and other reviews can be found on [The Psychotic Nerd](#)

*I received an ecopy of this book via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.*

### **MY THOUGHTS**

There are so many great things about this book!

The most interesting aspect of this book definitely has to be the idea.

This book revolves around a society where people's memories are kept in Links, which are beads that people generally wear as necklaces or bracelets (as the memories only stay with you if you touch/wear them). This allows them to remember everything vividly. These people are called Mementi. Then there's Populace, who are, essentially, average people. Their memories are kept in their brains are, therefore, thought to be dumber and many live in poverty because they cannot get the Mementi jobs.

Meanwhile, a thief is stealing Links, leaving the victims without any memory of who they are. And it is thought to be Populace, because Mementi are obviously too nice to do that to one of their own.

See how unique this idea is! I've never read a book anyway like this and I was amazed in how much thought was put into this society. And that's not even all if it! There's so much more in the book that I can't tell you about! And the mystery involved in the story, along with the unhappening, kept me glued to the pages.

Besides the amazing storyline, I loved the characters. Specifically I loved how our main character Gen, changes throughout the book. I also loved Kalan, who is such an amazing, nice guy. Another pro: There is very little romance! So, the storyline actually dominates the book!

My only issue with this book is how strange and crazy this book got. I'm sorry if I'm being vague, but no to spoilers! I don't know why, but I begin to lose interest towards the end of the book, mostly because I thought things were taking a weird turn. I was also not a fan of Gen's parents. Her parent let her have her own opinions and care also about how it reflects on them. They also go way too far in this book!

### **IN CONCLUSION**

If you're looking for a very unique, original book with a bit of mystery, look no further! This was such an interesting book! Sure, I had issues with the end, but it's still a really great book!

I will definitely be on the lookout for more by this author!

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### **Karolyna says**

You know that feeling when you're walking and you think you see a shiny toonie but when you go to pick it up it's actually a bolt or a button and you just feel this overwhelming sense of disappointment? *YA WELL THAT'S ME MY FRIENDS.*

Where do I even begin with this book of overwhelming disappointment? Not only was the plot so *basic* and so predictable, but Genesis Lee (the MC) was annoying to the point of "shove my head in the oven" in Glory O'Brien's History of the Future. Like wow. I didn't think this book would let me down so hard. The whole story idea behind the book sounded amazing, but little did I know that this book would turn out to be trash.

So let's start off with our MC, Genesis Lee. Not only is she an annoying, selfish, stupid brat, but she's also a character with absolutely zero qualities. Other than the fact she's lost her memory like 4 times throughout the book, which was annoying as fuck if you ask me, but the reader was also forced to believe that she was some kind of special diamond and that everything that was going on in her world was because of her, which news

flash, it wasn't.

Honestly, getting eaten alive by an anaconda would have been more pleasant than to deal with Genesis Lee's shit. A pineapple would have figured out the plot 700 times faster than it took for her to figure it out. And just like in Treasure Island all the characters were so bland and I literally couldn't even give half a shit for any of them. If the book ended with a nuclear bomb falling on their city and wiping away the entire population, I would have been as happy as a child on Christmas morning. This book was torturous.

To be honest, the only reason I gave this book 2 stars was because there was like 2 pages that talked about the Bible and that was lit and there was also a mention about a crow and who doesn't love crows? Honestly, why wasn't the whole book about that crow. A Bible reading crow..... Guys I might have just discovered something.....

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### **Tanja (Tanychy) St. Delphi/James says**

Review also posted at [Ja ?itam, a ti?](#)

Welcome to the typical day in my life, when I'm just browsing Edelweiss/NetGalley and suddenly I see a pretty cover and why wouldn't I download it! Right, so yeah week as I am I go for it. I did that countless times and (oops) I did it again with this book. I found *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* one day at Edelweiss and well here I am writing a review for it.

First element in this story that grabbed me was the whole eidetic memory idea which was always fascinating to me. Now imagine a world or maybe even future where world is developed that much that people actually have the capacity to have internal but also external memory connected to you by technology. Seems freaky and it is for me. It'd be amazing to remember all the good things from life, but there are also bad ones. I do appreciate my brain as it tends to forget about bad things often enough. Like I said freaky and scary but at the same time we never know what future brings.

Even though it freaked me out, this book has also got me amazed and really invested in the story. I really got the whole idea. Another important thing is that the romance here was so good! I loved it and how it was developed. We have had enough first meetings for the lifetime, I believe, but still Kelan and Gena had that chemistry necessary for the book.

Despite freaking me out and driving me crazy at the moments, this book still offered a really interesting idea which is nicely done. A story that I'll think about even some time after reading it.

Rating: 3.5 stars.

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### **Danielle says**

**[Read This Review & More Like It At Ageless Pages Reviews](#)**

*The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* and I are not meant to be. I thought we were. It's a young-adult sci-fi, one



of my favorite genres, with a great synopsis, a pretty cover, and high ratings. Unfortunately, it's also heavily Christian, with a saccharine ending, and not enough character development.

Gena's a Mementi, genetically enhanced humans who have perfect recall of every moment of their lives, but only if those memories are stored in Links, special wood beads worn as jewelry. Someone is stealing Links, and after a night out with friends, a mysterious normal boy approaches Gena and tells her that she knew who it was, before she lost her own memories of the night.

Kalan is my first issue with the book. While Gena got character development, though a lot of it was very surface level, all I know about Kalan is his dad's a preacher and he believes in God. He works at a garage, but does he like it? Does he go to school? Where are his friends? What does he dream of? I'm supposed to love the character as much as Gena does, but I never felt why. He's nice, sure, but maybe YA characters should stop falling in love with the first guy who helps them.

Speaking of, the mystery they're solving is a convoluted mess. It doesn't help that Gena forgets Kalan and has to start all over *three* times, which was too many. There are two feuding science companies, corrupt police, missing persons, arson... and yet, it wasn't very exciting. Except for the actual thief, all the people involved are the shady people the characters have suspected since chapter three. ((view spoiler))

I don't read Christian fiction. I don't find it enjoyable and it doesn't match my personal values, so I choose to avoid the genre. I really wish there had been some hint in the blurb or the shelving to indicate how preachy the scenes with Kalan's dad are. The rest of the book certainly has some overtones, particularly in the questions of how memories define our sense of self, but I really almost DNF'd at the protracted sermon. It didn't even add anything new. We already knew the non-Mementi didn't like the enhanced people. It read like a different book every time the character was on the scene.

*The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* isn't a bad debut, but it's not one for me. There are some good science fiction ideas: the Links, the Mementi graveyard, the Low-G dance club. I really appreciated that Gena loves astronomy and ballet. Too often "smart" characters aren't allowed to have "girly" interests, too. I liked the diversity, that she was a quarter Chinese and acknowledged that often. Unfortunately, there was just too much I didn't like to overcome.

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## **Janae says**

Long story short: fantastic story, frightening problems to face, real characters, an exciting don't-put-it-down read!

ARC to the rescue! I couldn't have waited until this book was released, anyway!

Where do I start? How about—coolest. plot. ever. And genuinely frightening. Uncontrollable loss of memory...it's your worst nightmare, but you just didn't realize it until reading this. There is nothing worse than losing your memories because it's a loss of LIFE. Time that you can never get back. It's especially fearsome when you don't know why it's happening. *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee*...the perfect title, holy cow.

And every time Gena wakes up and you know she'd forgotten things...UGH! My reader's dismay was seriously intense. It was frustrating and heartbreaking every time it happened. Have you ever wanted to talk

to the characters in a book and say, "No, Honey, lemme tell you EVERYTHING you need to know!" but you know that you can't and it drives you to keep turning the pages until you know that it's all going to be okay? Yeah. So I had a very difficult time putting this one down.

The characters were engaging. They were real, and I loved them. Plus, this was the coolest and most heart-wrenching, gut-wrenching relationship arc. Because truly, what could you do if someone you were falling for was someone you couldn't remember the next day? Or to be the forgotten one...just twist the knife, why don't you? :) No fair, Ms. McArthur. But oh! so! GOOD! Yet more reasons why I couldn't stop reading until it was done.

Definitely don't wait to read this book. And then read it again (like I did).

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### **Jessie Humphries says**

I read this book as a critique partner, and loved it. I can only imagine how much more awesomer (great CP, right) it is now that it's been through agent and editor revisions. From the fascinating and unique premise to the characters worth falling for, this book is definitely worth a read :)

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### **Valerie says**

Thank you to FFBC for providing me with an ARC for the blog tour!

There's a lot to be said about *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee*. It's one of those books that sticks with you for awhile simply because our main character has the ability to remember everything with the help of her "links". But then on the other hand, because of that, plus the added romance and huge plot going on for the book, everything seems a bit disorganized and half-developed.

So before everything gets confusing, let me lay out the basics of the setting:

- The population is divided into two groups, the Mementi (people, like Genesis, that remember everything through their "links" because they're brain damaged), and the Populace, who are normal people that have normal memory.
- Due to the transfer of bad genes, some people can't hold memories in their head. That's why there are these little stones, called "links", that store the memories for them. This way, when they need to access a memory, they access it through the link itself
- If someone steals their link, they lose ALL of the memories inside that link. This becomes a huge problem in the book
- Also, apparently the Mementi can't touch each other because then they'll accidentally share memories with one another.
- And of course, **the Mementi and the Populace hate each other.**

So what exactly is *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* about you ask? Well it's about science. And deception.

And the ethics of research on BRAINS. Definitely up my alley since I'm majoring in the field. Unfortunately, it didn't really meet all my expectations, but I did like the concept of it.

Our main character, Genesis or Gena for short, lives a pretty perfect life with her family, until her friend loses one of her links while they were out clubbing. This means the last two years of her life are gone until she's able to recover her missing link. But this isn't uncommon. Apparently there is a link thief out there, and Genesis makes it her job to find out who stole her best friend's memories. She even goes as far as to team up **with a Populace boy**. gasp.

As much as I loved Genesis and her beautiful brain of permanent memories, I didn't really connect with her much. Same with the love interest, Kalan. It felt like the romance itself wasn't needed in the plot, but was just put in so that it could fit the mold of a YA. However, putting that aside, the mystery of who was behind the huge "master plan" kept me reading. There weren't any twists, but I couldn't correctly guess who the culprit was until it was finally revealed to me.

Unfortunately, there was a huge problem with *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* that really, really bugged me. And this is probably only because I know a lot about brains and neurons. Since the story takes place in **our** future, I wasn't a fan of how the Mementi came to be (if you read on in the book, you learn that it's due to (view spoiler)). The situation, and the ending itself, felt so unrealistic, because I just don't see how the scientists were able to research the Mementi brain, and come to conclusions so fast. The brain is so interconnected, that to me, it just seems extremely unrealistic. I know this is categorized as science fiction, but with the explanations so incomplete, I was left unsatisfied.

I NEED MY BRAIN EXPLANATION.

So yeah. Overall, I did enjoy *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* (such a long title haha), but I wish there was just more to it, but then less at the same time? Does this make sense? I just felt that too much was crammed into this standalone that most of it wasn't developed completely.

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## **Kaitlin says**

\*I received an e-arc of this book from the publisher in return for an honest review.

Oh, what a cool read! Set in an intriguing world and society, *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* told the story of a girl whose old life unhappens and her new one begins. This occurred both in terms of her and other people's memories and or Genesis'

personality. She grew so much in this story! She broke out of the box--the expectations her family and peers had of her--that she was held back by and became the girl she always wanted to be. I loved her journey.

The society Genesis lived in was interesting. There were two categories of people: the Mementi and the Populace. The former couldn't store emotions besides motor ones in their brains, so they stored their memories in objects (mostly in Links). They acted politely towards others and didn't touch other people if they could help it. The Populace were ordinary people. There was a LOT of hostility between the groups. It fueled a lot of the violence in the book.

I loved the forbidden romance! Genesis was part of the Mementi and Kalan was part of the Populace, so it

definitely wasn't an easy road for them, especially since Genesis' memory kept being taken from her. Nevertheless, they made a good couple. Kalan was always there for her and was able to help her break out of her shell.

I really liked Genesis. As a Mementi she grew up polite. She didn't break rules or interact with Populace. However, she was also passionate about dance and stars/space (the book cover fits her very well). She didn't show that side of herself very much before interacting with Populace, having her memory stolen, and hunting the Link thief. As her story progressed, she became more and more the person she truly wanted to be.

Genesis' investigation into the identity of the Link thief and her attempts to stop the person were pretty cool. There were some twists and turns that I never saw coming. Some shocking (sometimes sad too--I shed a few tears) turn of events happened.

Overall, *The Unhappening of Genesis Lee* was a very interesting sci-fi story. I loved Genesis' journey and I think quite a few other readers will as well!

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