



Equilibrium

Lorrie Thomson

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In the year since her husband died, Laura Klein's world has shifted on its axis. It's not just that she's raising two children alone--fact is, Laura always did the parenting for both of them. But now her fifteen-year-old daughter, Darcy, is dating a boy with a fast car and faster hands, and thirteen-year-old Troy's attitude has plummeted along with his voice. Just when she's resigning herself to a life of worry and selfless support, her charismatic new tenant offers what Laura least expects: a second chance.

Darcy isn't surprised her mom doesn't understand her, though she never imagined her suddenly acting like a love-struck teen herself. With Troy starting to show signs of their father's bipolar disorder, and her best friend increasingly secretive, Darcy turns to her new boyfriend, Nick, for support. Yet Nick has a troubled side of his own, forcing Darcy toward life-altering choices.

Exploring the effects of grief on both mother and daughter, *Equilibrium* is a thoughtful, resolutely uplifting novel about finding the balance between holding on and letting go, between knowing when to mourn and when to hope, and between the love we seek and the love we choose to give.

Equilibrium Details

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Author : Lorrie Thomson

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From Reader Review Equilibrium for online ebook

Christa says

I didn't really know what to expect from this book when I picked it up, and I was very pleasantly surprised. I thought it was a great book. It tells the story of Laura Klein, whose husband committed suicide a year ago after a long struggle with mental illness. The effects upon Laura and the couple's two children, Darcy and Troy, are severe. As they struggle to get past the grief, they all face challenges. Darcy is dating a troubled boy, Troy's attitude has suffered, and Laura is interested in her new tenant, Aidan, an emergency room physician.

I loved the characters in this one, and the storyline was touching and poignant. It kept me interested, and I was rooting that all would turn out well for this grieving family.

J.H. Trumble says

I was lucky enough to get my hands on an advance copy of Lorrie Thomson's debut novel, and wow, I was blown away. It's actually been a few weeks since I finished the book; I wanted to take some time to think about it before I posted a review. *Equilibrium* is definitely a novel that will appeal to any woman who found love a struggle, but chose to love anyway. From the first page, I was sucked into Laura's world. Revisiting her husband's slow, destructive spiral was painful, but seeing those mental health issues resurface after his death . . . scary. Thomson captured Laura's fear with such detail and depth that I felt fearful myself.

Thomson writes with such authority and grace. She's an author to watch. One more thing--read this book!

kim says

I was first drawn to this book by the cover and the cover blurb...."Life is a balancing act..." Then I read the synopsis and knew this was a book I had to pick up!

Laura Klein is a widow with two teenaged children. One year ago, her bipolar husband committed suicide, and the family is still struggling with the after effects; not only the affects of his suicide, but also the affects of watching him battle his illness for many years. Laura always has in the back of her mind that the illness may have been passed on to her children, Darcy and Troy, and doesn't quite realize that her children share this same fear. Darcy is fifteen and going through a rough time. She becomes involved with the new boy, Nick, a 'bad' boy, and together they test Laura's boundaries. Troy is a thoughtful and quiet thirteen year old. As the anniversary of her husband's death approaches, Laura realizes that the money is running out, and before long she will need to find a job. So when her friend suggests she get a renter, she agrees to rent her husband's former studio apartment to a young and attractive emergency room doctor, who quickly becomes more than a tenant.

The book started out a little slow, especially with the telling of Laura's history with her husband; how they met and their struggles with his illness. But the story picked up steam rapidly. Towards the end, there was even a bit of suspense involving Darcy and Nick. The book spent a lot of time on the relationship of Laura

and Darcy, and their feelings. I would have liked to have seen a bit more of Troy and what he was thinking and feeling. Sometimes he was 'just there' in the background, not really doing much to move the story along. I also would have liked to have learned more about Darcy's friends, Cam and Heather, and where their friendship with Darcy was headed at the end of the book. And I REALLY would have liked to have known more about what happened with Nick. He may have been my favorite character in the book; a 'typical bad boy' but underneath it all, a good, but very confused, kid.

This would make an excellent book club selection. There is plenty to discuss with subjects ranging from mental illness to abuse to tough teen issues like drugs, alcohol, and sex. There are also questions at the end of the book to help guide your discussion.

My Rating: ★★½ 3-1/2 Stars

SOURCE: I received a copy of this book through TLC Book Tours in return for an honest review!

Lisa says

It's hard to believe this was the author's first book. It was really good. I didn't want to put it down, read it in 2 days. Sad, compelling, had to laugh at Darcy's laughing reaction at something, this was hilarious to me for some reason. Happy in parts as well, this book had tons of emotions going on in it. I will definitely look for her next book.

In the year since her husband died, Laura Klein's world has shifted on its axis. It's not just that she's raising two children alone--fact is, Laura always did the parenting for both of them. But now her fifteen-year-old daughter, Darcy, is dating a boy with a fast car and faster hands, and thirteen-year-old Troy's attitude has plummeted along with his voice. Just when she's resigning herself to a life of worry and selfless support, her charismatic new tenant offers what Laura least expects: a second chance.

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Exploring the effects of grief on both mother and daughter, *Equilibrium* is a thoughtful, resolutely uplifting novel about finding the balance between holding on and letting go, between knowing when to mourn and when to hope, and between the love we seek and the love we choose to give.

Linda says

What an awe inspiring story! You meet a family that struggle through the suicide of the dad. Laura Klein, shelters her children against the truth about their dad, and smothers fifteen year old Darcy who is at the

tender yet rebellious age of learning to be an adult, while her son. Troy fears that his dad's sickness will be his own.

Kristine says

Original review can be found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

I unexpectedly received a copy of this book in the mail from Kensington and for that I will give my honest opinion. Thank you!

This is a beautiful story of one family who is learning how to cope in the aftermath of their husband/father's battle with mental illness and his suicide one year earlier. The story centres around Laura and her daughter Darcy and the pages are filled with emotion, guilt and uncertainty as they try to move on with their lives.

Laura is trying to figure out how to move on when her entire life was spent caring for her husband, worrying whether he was taking his meds and trying to be the voice of reason. In the back of her mind is the concern that her children may end up with the same mental illness. Her life has been about taking care of others with no thought for herself. Her struggle becomes more complicated when she starts to have thoughts that she thought were buried forever about her new tenant.

Darcy is also struggling with life without her father. They shared a special bond and she harbours some guilt over his death. At the same time she finds herself with the typical trials and tribulations of a teenage girl when a new boy comes into her life. Outwardly she appears rebellious and cold but inside she is struggling with her feelings of sadness, anger, hurt and betrayal.

I thought that Thomson penned a beautiful and heart wrenching story of how mental illness can impact not just the person living with it but also the network of people surrounding that person. She was able to effectively get the enormous range of emotions to resonate on the pages. I was easily able to empathise with the characters in the book. The emotions felt honest and realistic. It was a very solid read.

Barbara White says

What a wonderful debut--and a thought-provoking page-turner about a family struggling to deal with the stigma of suicide and the legacy of bipolar disorder. I love fiction that chips away at the stereotypes of mental illness, and I was thrilled that the author focused on the genetic component. (I do have a family member with bipolar.) Despite the dark subject matter, however, this is a very hopeful read. The characters are all fabulous, but I think Darcy is my favorite. She's so unexpected. I loved her voice and the decisions she makes. She's a wonderful combination of troubled teen, grieving daughter, and old soul. I can't wait to see what Ms Thomson writes next!

Amy says

Laura Klein is two-for-three when it comes to saving her husband's life. That one time she missed, things didn't turn out so well.

Now it's a year later, and Laura is adjusting to widowhood and being a single mother to her teenage children. She struggles with missing Jack; sometimes she aches for him, and sometimes she feels pure rage. He was bipolar and didn't take his meds regularly. He made Laura do everything, including keep him alive. He was selfish, and Laura can't quite bring herself to admit that.

Her fifteen-year-old daughter Darcy is also struggling. Darcy was a Daddy's Girl, and while she doesn't quite blame Laura for Jack's death, she also doesn't forgive her, either. She wants him back, despite him clearly being selfish with her as well. She is a girl in a tremendous amount of pain and grief.

Troy, the thirteen-year-old son whom Jack left behind, chooses to mourn by not remembering anything good about his father. As we discover, Troy didn't have many happy memories. Jack was not a particularly good father to his son; he seemed to parse out what decent parenting he did to Darcy alone.

Into the Kleins' lives come two men who will change everything.

The first is Nick, Darcy's ne'er-do-well boyfriend. Nick has his own issues, including an abusive father. That he loves Darcy is not under question. He does. He even takes care of her in his own way. But as each character - Darcy's friends and her mother - warn her about him, Darcy digs her heels in every deeper. They don't know the Troy whom Darcy knows.

Then there is Aidan, an emergency room doctor in his late twenties, who rents out Jack's old writing studio. Aidan is described as movie star hot, and we know it's only a matter of time until he and Laura discover each other.

Nick and Aidan shake up the Kleins. Nick both protects and threatens Darcy, as Aidan does Laura. The danger Nick poses, however, is far greater than Aidan. He could break Darcy's heart - or worse. Aidan, on the other hand, could be proof that Jack was not a good man, that he was cruel and selfish and weak. Nick's threat is primarily physical; Aidan's emotional.

Lorrie Thomson tells her story from Laura's and Darcy's points of view. We feel Laura's frustration at not being able to help Darcy, just as we feel Darcy's toward her mother. We remember what it was like to be fifteen and in love for the first time, and we experience Laura's sadness, confusion, and hopefulness.

Thomson's writing is not always clear or fluid, but she tells a strong tale. She makes us care about Laura, Darcy, and Troy, and she does a fantastic job representing the conflicting feelings that families of those who commit suicide.

A solid debut from Lorrie Thomsen.

Thanks to NetGalley for the preview.
Published on cupcake's book cupboard
@VivaAmaRisata

Ellen Gullo says

I finished *Equilibrium* in two days.

Lorrie Thomson's writing style is grace and beauty. Her words flow seamlessly to allow self-reflection and meditation on the deeper issues of life with no threat of carb overload. This debut novel is not cookie cutter writing, but an exciting glimpse of what is certain to be an enduring and successful career of a gifted storyteller.

Reeka (BoundbyWords) says

As seen on my blog:

The ultimate betrayal. A family thrown into turmoil after a selfish choice, the result of a lifelong sickness. I've read books about loss, but not many about characters that *chose* to leave their families, that chose suicide as the solution to end their pain. I feel like *Equilibrium* was a poignant look into the aftermath of such a loss, a family at the edges of grief, even after a year. However, I feel like the book lacked some character-building, so as a result, I couldn't sympathize with their pain as much as I could have.

Equilibrium was told from 2 points of view, Laura, the widowed mother, and her 15-year-old promiscuous daughter, Darcy. Along with Laura's 13-year-old son, Troy, the 3 remaining family members of Jack Klein are still feeling his loss in a huge way, even 12 months later. Laura is conflicted with the exhaustion she felt from dealing with Jack's bipolar disorder, and the empty spot her husband left behind in her heart. Add the mix her constant fear of her children developing their father's sickness, and Laura is close to the breaking point. Help comes in the form of a new tenant, Adian, the man who rents out her late husband's studio apartment, the one Jack used to tirelessly write his novels. An unlikely connection spurs between Aidan and the Klein family, one that begins to heal each member from the inside out.

I tried to grasp an early connection to one of the main characters in *Equilibrium*, but failed to do so without some force. The story line was touching, and tragic, but I was more motivated to read on mostly due to small moments of excitement, rather than the feel of the book, as a whole. I was drawn to Darcy, and her endless need to push the limits. She was reckless in way that made sense, considering her loss-her pain more clearly etched into her actions. With Laura, and Troy, I felt like their outbursts were planned, predictable, and without thought to what it was actually related to. The author's thoughts seemed scattered, the writing, and tenses, were confusing at times.

Aside from that though, the story line moved in a direction that made sense. The characters were likable enough to for you to lend some investment into their stories, and the ending was one that would satisfy the "happy ending" aficionados. If you're looking for a quick read, but one that has a slightly deeper effect on the senses, *Equilibrium* is definitely one you should check out.

Recommended for Fans of: Contemporary Fiction, Romance, Women's Fiction.

Normandie Fischer says

I thoroughly enjoyed Lorrie's debut. I've had some experience with bi-polar individuals, and she handled the guilt and sorrow of suicide realistically--and with hope.

Christine says

I was lucky enough to win an autographed copy of *Equilibrium* from the author as part of a Goodreads giveaway. I am primarily a thriller reader, but occasionally like a change of pace with a good women's fiction/literary fiction book. One thing I insist on is that my women's fiction reads have substance; *Equilibrium* did not disappoint. This novel is an excellent effort by first time writer Lorrie Thomson.

This story focuses on the fallout onto the immediate family when a man with bipolar disorder elects to end his own life. I am a newly retired physician, and it was clear to me that Ms. Thomson did her research on bipolar disorder. I found the storyline to be very believable; this family could easily be my neighbors or your neighbors. The character development, not only of the protagonist Laura (the widow), but of her two children, her daughter's love interest and her own love interest was superb. I felt for all of them. The writing was for the most part excellent. The pacing, which really picked up in the last few chapters, was very good up until the very end. The main reason I gave 4 stars instead of 5 stars is that I thought the ending was rushed. I wanted more detail on how the resolutions of multiple issues actually played out instead of just being told that they did; I would have welcomed another 50-75 pages for that.

Will I read Ms. Thomson's next book "What's Left Behind"? YES. I look forward to reading more novels by this very promising debut author.

Mary Kubica says

A wonderful debut by Lorrie Thomson! *EQUILIBRIUM* is a lovely story that sucked me in from the very first pages, the kind of book I found myself thinking about even when I wasn't reading. I was continuously longing to find the time to read when I didn't have the time - a page here, a chapter there, because I couldn't wait to find out what was happening in the lives of Laura and Aidan, Darcy and Troy. What I enjoyed most about the novel were the characters, who I found to be entirely genuine from page 1 to the very end of the book. From their inner thoughts to the dialogue between characters, I found it to be natural and authentic. I was utterly impressed by how real these character seemed to me. *EQUILIBRIUM* is a story of love and family drama (of which, in one way or another, we can all relate), and about finding the strength and courage to overcome the hardships in our lives. A beautiful story! Looking forward to Lorrie's next novel *WHAT'S LEFT BEHIND* in August!

Jacki (Julia Flyte) says

One year ago, Laura's husband Jack committed suicide after a long battle with bipolar disorder. Laura has spent the year in a fog of grief, wrapping up her husband's affairs and helping her two teenage children to adjust to life without a father. Now, twelve months on, it's time to think about moving on. Semi-reluctantly, she agrees to lease Jack's studio to a handsome doctor. Meanwhile her daughter, Darcy, is embroiled in her first serious romantic relationship with a fellow troubled teen. The book switches between Laura and Darcy's point of view (Laura being referred to as "Mom" in the Darcy chapters) and deals with both women coming

to terms with the heritage that Jack's illness has left them with.

This is Lorrie Thomson's first novel and she was inspired in part by her own son's mental illness. The story gets you thinking about the way that someone's mental illness creates long lasting issues for their entire family. For example, Laura is continually alert to potential symptoms in her own children, which causes her significant anxiety. I did feel however that the author tells us too often what is going on in people's heads rather than giving the reader space to make connections of their own. I also never warmed to Laura as a character. She didn't become real to me in the way that Darcy did.

The writing occasionally feels repetitive or clunky. For example, this excerpt: "She couldn't help but sigh, even though it usually irritated her daughter. She couldn't help but love her daughter more than ever. She couldn't help but break into a grin and share the good news."

Nevertheless this is an easy book to read that feels very realistic and is quite thought provoking.

I received this book for review from Net Galley.

Lisa says

A year ago Laura's husband committed suicide. Diagnosed bipolar, for years Laura had juggled managing his illness, trying to get him to take his meds and his writing career with the care of their two children, home and her own almost non-existent writing.

A year on, Laura thinks they are all coping well. She has finally redecorated the studio apartment where she found her husband's body all those months before and her friends have found her the ideal tenant, a good looking young doctor, who comes with references and clearance.

So far so good but Laura still has nightmares and anxiety attacks about the day she found her husband, the day she couldn't save him and when 13 year old son starts to display some tendency towards the same illness as his father Laura's anxiety grows. Then there is 15 year old daughter Darcy; daddy's girl Darcy is perhaps the one struggling the most, headed on a downward spiral with bad boy Nick as she has to contend with her burgeoning sexuality contesting with her mother's warnings about pre-marital sex and a feeling of guilt about her father with an overpowering need to just forget.

This is a very powerful novel about the effects of mental illness and one that is written with a sensitivity and knowledge that in no way undermines either the inflicted or their family. The stigma and effects of mental illness are born by all the family not just the sufferer and even after the inflicted one has taken the decision to end his life, the lives of his family go on battling that stigma and it's effects. Laura cannot stop thinking about the chances of her children developing the illness, always on the watch for any tell tale sign. The burden his illness has placed on his children, not just because they are the talk of the town but because it meant a lot of covering up his quirks when alive and they too know that they could end up like that. And then Laura has the knowledge that no matter what she did she couldn't save him but she needs to save her children.

Caught up in grief, regret, guilt and fear, the family finally, through ups and downs and with the support of tenant Aiden find a way to move forward. For Laura that is falling in love, beginning again. For Darcy it is falling in love but knowing how far is far enough when troubled bad boy Nick takes things too far. For Troy is it finding a man that can truly be a father. For them all it is forgiving each other and their father and husband and learning things can be different.

I really enjoyed this novel and found the depiction of Jack's illness frighteningly realistic, it really does show an awareness of the truth behind bipolar disorder and exactly how it can affect family and friends as well as the person inflicted; very eye opening. I also enjoyed the honest if sometimes painful portrayal of the family. Darcy as the troubled and 'trying not to show it' teenage girl with all the angst and worries of friendships, sex and boys as well as her dad; and Troy as the geeky jock who is caught between worrying how he can ever cope without a dad and knowing that his dad wasn't much use even if he'd lived. Laura is alive as the guilt ridden, yet angry widow, coping with everyone's grief but underneath still affected by all that is going on and needing to move forward and I was very glad that she did find happiness. A very thoughtful and thought provoking book.

Thanks to netgalley for the review copy.
