



Lighting the Way Home

E.M. Lynley , Shira Anthony

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A Delectable Novel

World-class chef Joshua Golden is homesick for Paris before he even arrives in New York, but he'll endure it—his parents need him to help run the family restaurant while his mother recovers from surgery. Running a place so far beneath his talents is bad enough, but bad turns to worse when Josh discovers his former best friend and lover, Micah Solomon, is living at his parents' house with his ten-year-old son, Ethan.

For ten years, Josh has done his best to forget how Micah shattered his heart into tiny pieces. Now Micah's back, fresh out of prison, and helping out at the restaurant. Micah may not be the kind of sous chef Josh is used to, but he is more helpful and supportive than any of the other employees. But Josh finds it hard to keep his distance when, time after time, Micah proves himself a better man than Josh thought. Reluctantly, Josh realizes there is more to Micah than his lousy life choices... but that doesn't mean Josh is ready to forgive him.

Lighting the Way Home Details

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From Reader Review Lighting the Way Home for online ebook

Pixie Mmgoodbookreviews says

3 1/2 Hearts

Review written for MM Good Book Reviews

<http://mmgoodbookreviews.wordpress.com/>

This story is part of a series but can be read as a stand-alone. Josh comes home to New York for the first time in five years, his parents need him to help with their restaurant while his mother recovers from surgery. Josh gets a shock though when he discovers his ex-best friend and lover living at his parents' house along with his ten year old son, and that the ex-con is working at the restaurant as well. Micah made some bad choices in his life and regrets them, making things up with Josh is not easy to do, but he tries to show the man he has changed. Can Josh ever find it in himself to forgive Micah for the hurt he suffered?

This story is about forgiving the past and starting anew and opening your heart to love. Josh has been a high flying chef in Paris, returning home to New York to help with his parents' restaurant isn't what he really wants, but it gives him the chance to see what he has really been missing for the past several years, after running away from the pain of his heart. Micah made many mistakes when he was younger and he has paid the price, but the person who he hurt the most, Josh, has never given him the chance to prove himself, now he has that chance.

I found this story to be interesting with the twisting emotions that Josh goes through and with self-realisation as he looks at himself and what he has missed out on. The story is from Josh's point of view so we see everything through his eyes, he is quite unforgiving of his ex-best friend and at first I couldn't understand why he was acting like such brat, but then you discover they really were lovers for a very short time. It was hard to be too sympathetic with Josh though because he came across as self-serving for most of the book, Micah on the other hand isn't trying to prove anything other than he is truly a good man who lost his way a bit, I really liked his character and was rooting for him to get through to Josh and make Josh listen to him.

The storyline was good and the food descriptions were mouth-watering, I liked how Micah and Josh finally connected, with the entire truth being brought out in the open and that Josh was more forgiving than he seemed. I also liked the fact that Josh took a step back and had a look at his own actions over the years and he accepted his own faults. The two of them coming together was hot and you can easily see how good they are together. The secondary characters are great and add a wonderful family feeling.

I will recommend this to those who love forgiving the past, great characters, great family, rediscovering love and a happy ending.

Jan says

I really enjoyed this book. Nice slow-building rediscovery and relationship between the main characters and a wonderful look at their Jewish traditions. We don't get to know all of Micah's secret until near the end, and

while I thought I knew what it would be, I was still surprised.

I want to know what happens next for these guys! Sequel, please!

The supporting characters were great and I loved that the recipes Josh cooked were included.

If you like friends-to-lovers and reunited/second-chances stories, I really recommend this. Foodies will also enjoy all the cooking scenes.

Wendy Ann says

Reviewed for Hearts On Fire Reviews

The title for this book “Lighting the Way Home” is very fitting for multiple reasons. Not only does it describe the underlying storyline about one soul finding his way back home (literally, as well as figuratively, to his long lost love), but it also describes the setting for the book which takes place around the time of Chanukah/Hanukkah within a very traditional Jewish family. I was very pleasantly surprised with the richness of Jewish culture, language and tradition incorporated into this book which even goes so far as to include the actual recipes for many of the food dishes described in the story!

Much of what we learn of the history between Josh and Micah is done through flashback memories. The story is told from Josh’s perspective. As much as he tries to paint Micah as the bad guy, the one who consistently messed up and went to prison for his mistakes, Josh was actually the character that I had a hard time warming up to. For most of the book, I really didn’t see Josh as someone who was possibly heartbroken and suffering – he primarily came across as self-centered and ignorant. He did manage to largely redeem himself in the end when he finally pulled his head out of the sand and paid attention to things other than himself. Micah, on the other hand – loved him! The same can be said for the secondary characters as well. They really helped round out the story and make it richer with all of the family dynamics.

I’m a strong believer in second chances especially where matters of the heart are concerned, so the storyline resonated with me from that perspective. In the case of Josh and Micah, I truly believe they were destined to be together. I’m so happy it worked out that way, but really wish that Josh had been a bit more understanding, sympathetic, and well, more like the best friend he supposedly had been when Micah needed it most.

I don’t mind a HFN ending, but this one left me feeling vaguely disappointed. We never really get to see Josh and Micah on their own (they were both staying with Josh’s parents) and we never get resolution to the question of Micah’s legal future beyond a ray of hope. The fact that I wanted to know these things meant I was invested in the story, but I felt as though I was left dangling more than expected.

Despite being part of a series, this book stands completely on its own. Not only was it enjoyable, but educational as well!

Jennifer says

This book was a combination of my 2 favorites genres- gay romance and cookbooks! I didn't know about the cookbook part until the end but it was a great surprise. Joshua was actually preparing a dish and the author was describing it so well, I was trying to figure out how to make it myself. Then I get to the end and there's the recipe! I also love how in depth the author went with the Jewish religious practices.

Lisa The Novel Approach says

I really enjoyed how these two finally settled their differences, especially with the help of Josh's parents, who are just a couple of well-intention meddlers.

Even though these two finally have a HEA, the ending left a question that I would like to have answered which, hopefully while I continue to read further into the series, EM will answer somewhere in a future story.

See the entire review at The Novel Approach: <http://thenovelapproachreviews.com/20...>

Crissy Morris says

3.75 stars

Review originally written for Joyfully Jay

When Joshua Golden received word that his mother was having surgery and he was needed to help run the family restaurant, of course he went. His family needed him. Two weeks in NYC to take care of the business while his mother is recovering can't be that bad. Then he can fly back to his life in Paris. But he hasn't been home in a decade, running and hiding from ghosts of his past. One in particular – Micah Soloman.

Micah was Josh's childhood best friend, and eventually the lover that broke his heart. Essentially, Micah was the reason Josh left home for Europe, only to return when there's an emergency. For the past ten years, Josh has done everything in his power to forget about the man that broke his heart. And he was fairly certain he'd succeeded until he walked into his parent's house and came face to face with Micah.

Micah's past is riddled with mistakes, the biggest being prison for drug possession, but he's now raising his ten year-old son and helping take care of Josh's parents. And worst of all he'll be working with Josh as an assistant at the restaurant while Josh is in town. Josh has a hard time reconciling the Micah he knew ten years ago with the changed man before him. And as they work together to keep the family restaurant running and taking care of his ailing parents, Josh finds it hard to hate Micah as much as he wants to.

As the end of his time at home looms nearer and Josh learns more about Micah and his past, Josh begins to question the choices he made. Now he has to decide whether to keep running away from his pain, or to hope for the best and run towards the man who hurt him in the first place.

Lighting the Way Home is part of the Delectable series and a collaborative effort of both E.M. Lynley and Shira Anthony, and judging from this book, these authors mesh very well. While this book is part of a series, it is written as a standalone novel, so the books can be read in any order.

I really liked this book. I had a couple issues with the story, but overall it was a good read. It's a friends-to-lovers-to-enemies-to-lovers type of story. It's a story of misunderstandings and reconciliation. It's full of conflict and confusion and longing that takes readers on an emotional rollercoaster ride. But it's worth it.

I didn't really like Josh at the beginning. He played the victim well and took it out on everybody around him, including his parents. He let his past hurts dictate what he became, and he became a self-absorbed arrogant jerk. Honestly, I didn't really start liking Josh until I was well over halfway through the book. He had his moments; he wasn't all bad, but he's easier to handle towards the end of the book. This story is Josh's journey of maturing and forgiveness. He is an immature, self-serving character, but that only adds conflict to this story that was well worth the brattiness. And in the end, he becomes a better man, more humble (not completely humble), more understanding, more supportive. I really liked him by the completion of this book.

Micah is one of the highlights of this tale. I'm disappointed that the story was only written in Josh's viewpoint. I think it would have made a world of difference to combine both Josh and Micah's points of view. Alas, that did not happen. But I still love Micah. He's patient and kind and caring. He's incredibly nurturing, forgiving, and self-sacrificing. He's a great friend, a wonderful father, and an incredible person all around. He doesn't let his past mistakes (and he has plenty) define him. He's the imperfect, yet perfect hero of this story.

The religious aspect of this book is beautiful. I don't know a lot about Jewish culture and traditions, but the way the authors brought it to the forefront was amazing. Chanukah, mitzvah, the shul, Mi Sheberach, the Jewish community – it's all so well written, respectful and awe-inspiring. I really enjoyed the inclusion of religion and tradition in this story.

I found this collaboration refreshing. These authors have similar writing styles and write well together. I enjoyed the plot, as emotional and frustrating as it could be at times. The story itself is entertaining. There are ups and downs – luckily no crying with this one – twists and turns. And everything in Josh and Micah's life is not always as it seems, it's heartbreaking and exhilarating and frustrating and sweet all at the same time.

My biggest complaint is the ending. It just ended. Could I at least get a verdict? Please? There's this build up leading to the final scene, but it just ends. No answers, no closure to that part of the plot, nothing. After such an emotional rollercoaster, I really wanted some sort of completion, some redemption, but...nothing? It was very frustrating.

In the end, even with the abrupt ending, I really liked this book. What can I say? I'm a sucker for emotional stories with imperfect characters. I also have pretty much loved everything I've read by both of these authors in the past. This is a series that I am really enjoying. I recommend this book to lovers of reconciliation stories, enemies-to-lovers stories, lovers of family focused tales, and lovers of imperfect heroes.

Note: As a bonus, the authors have included several recipes mentioned in the story at the end of the book. I'm going to make the heck out of some latkes. *grins*

AquaScales says

This was an odd read for me. i loved the restaurant, cooking, chef parts as well as the large loving and interfering family. I couldn't get into the actual romance itself though. Something about it didn't pull me in and make me care.

Lily says

I loved this book from start to finish. The relationship between Josh and Micah showed life's ups and downs. The sacrifices one makes in the name of love and friends and family.

I'm Jewish so I could relate to many of the yiddish and holiday references. but you don't have to be Jewish to read this book. It relates to anyone.

bravo Shira and Em

Catherine says

I was enjoying this book more than most in this series, but around the 85% mark, I lost all interest in continuing. In fact, the only reason I DID continue was because I was so damn close to the finish line - NOT because I particularly cared about Micah & Josh's HEA (although getting RECIPES instead of finding out the results of Micah's hearing made me a bit ragey. I mean, what the shit is THAT?!).

Lena Grey says

Sometimes we have to leave home, get out of what feels too mundane, too ordinary, or too unthinkable. The thing is, we can't run away from our feelings. They go with us, haunting our lives, as ghostly specters of what might have been. Josh Golden and Micah have loved each other for years, but life kept interfering with their being together. Both men chose to try to run from their pain, Micah inwardly and self-destructively and Josh, literally, leaving his family and heritage behind. Micah and Josh need to re-evaluate their situations, keep the parts that nourish them, and let go of the rest.

Josh has a lot to overcome in this story before he finally finds peace with his past. It is absolutely necessary that he do so, not just for Micah's sake, but for his own. He's a whirling dervish of conflicting thoughts and feelings which threaten to tear him asunder. When Josh is literally forced to face the things he's been denying—his love for Micah, living where he grew up, his childhood, and his parents' way of life, he learns that he's not so different from the person who tried to run away all those years ago. Josh comes across as kind of a jerk until we see more of his past and the incredible pain that Micah caused when he denied his true self and deserted Joshua. Watching him resolve his feelings and sort out the parts that don't fit and more closely accept the ones which still do, is very uplifting.

Micah Solomon also has a lot to overcome, but is further in the process on understanding himself than Josh. He's tackled the demons caused by trying to be someone you are not and, to a great extent, won. This gives

him the patience to endure Josh's onslaught of anger and pain while it also gives him an opportunity to show Josh he's changed. It also helps him control the pace of their reunion by not allowing Josh to rush it. Micah has his priorities straight. He knows that it will take Josh a long time and a lot of soul-searching to reach the point where he trusts himself, much less Micah; he is willing to wait.

I really enjoyed the epicurean delights presented letting Josh's creative genius shine. I loved the relationship between Micah and his son. It acted as an important conduit between Micah and Josh by enabling them to reflect on things when they were boys, especially when it came to their religious background. For me, Judaism is a symbol representing a truly close and enduring family. It was a real treat to revisit the customs and practices of this faith. Explaining their meanings, especially with the use of candles, created a perfect background for lighting the way home. I recommend this book to those who cherish family values and believe that love is the basis for anything worthwhile.

NOTE: This book was provided by Dreamspinner Press for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews.

Taya says

Josh is arrogant and unforgiving asshole in the beginning. But through out the book you get the sense that the guy act this way to protect himself. I totally understand the concept of verbally attack someone before they ever see you cry. The title of the book is very fitting and it is about Josh's journey of returning home after running away years ago after having his heart shattered by his best friend turned lover Micah. Josh really wasn't a likable character and I never truly understood reasons about Micah's past mistake especially his drug use. I'm not sold on continually with this series but if you're looking for a story about family and second chances then this book is for you.

Second read August 26, 2013

Katy Beth Mckee says

So Much Baggage

There were times when I thought that Josh needed a kick in the rear. It seemed like he kept making everything about him. I was so glad to see him finally talk to Micah and deal with their past so they could be free to move forward.

Kade Boehme says

Er I suspend a lot of stuff for fiction... But why would Rina, who already had HORRIBLE sex with her gay best friend who is devastatingly in love and pining for her other GBF... Why would she marry him? Answer: she wouldn't. Fail. And quite frankly I don't give a shit how noble a guy like Micah is... if they sex was "Worst. Sex. Ever." and it had CONFIRMED your homosexuality, you would not marry said weirdo friend

and give up your boyfriend. And I was kinda made to understand Rina and Matt were married in name only and not having sex since... Well she knew he was gay and didn't want to marry him any more than he did her etc, and were kinda together for the kid, (I mean he cried in her pregnant lap over the boy he was in love with, before their wedding) so her being pissed at JOSH for "ruining her marriage" was like ... Wait what?

Let's stop writing these stories like they're set in 1985. You can do better, I've seen it. I refuse to give it a star rating but I read it all the way thru. Ugh that HFN.

Ann says

I'll write a review later. I'm going to try one of the recipes for dinner. (I love that they included recipes the characters actually cooked!)

Cryselle says

4.5 marbles

This was a peek into a fully realized society for me—part of our American life but unique and with deep flavor. It's not my background, but I wasn't lost, and I was definitely intrigued. This is life in a New York Jewish community that's accessible for those of us who aren't of that background. The community was palpable but not overwhelming; Josh and Micah fit in but not in any predictable pattern.

There's pain and longing that go way back, mixed with huge dollops of family expectation and broken hopes. And out of this potent mix, the authors bring the two protagonists through the mess into a place where they might be happy at last. Micah couldn't possibly have hurt Josh so badly had Josh not loved Micah so deeply, and the authors make us watch how tattered love can become whole again.

Individually, each author has written books that I have sunk into and enjoyed, and together EM Lynley and Shira Anthony have created something seamless and vivid. However these two manage their collaboration, it works. The style is smooth and readable, and carries the story forward.

Josh grew up in the restaurant business, but has left kosher food and all it implies far, far behind. French food, luscious enough to tempt chefs with Michelin stars, is worlds away from the homey Eastern European kosher cooking he grew up on, and it's his life now. An ocean between him and Micah, who broke his heart a hundred times over, is just barely enough. Now Josh is home to mind the store a while for his ailing parents. And Micah seems to have taken his place as dutiful son.

Watching Josh go from curled up in an emotional fetal position to open and loving is the great character arc of this book—he's arranged his life to avoid dealing with pain that's entirely in his face now. From his parents to his former lover, to the life he has and the life that he could have, Josh has to reevaluate everything. His mother and father have gone frail, Micah has a ten year old son, an ex-wife, and a prison record, and Josh is frothing at the mouth to get back to a kitchen that serves not-kosher food. It's all as far from what he once had and hoped for as he can get. All driven by pain.

Micah doesn't get any POV scenes, but that's fine because he is unrolled in small doses as Josh can cope

with him. Josh sees details as he can, and Micah is who he is, but slowly unveiled in all his complexity. Micah's hurt everyone he loves, and is working through his amends. He's a wonderful character, and in ways he's deeper than Josh is, because he's had to come to an ultimate understanding of who he is and what drives him. Fatherhood and the responsibility for another person adds to that. Ethan, his son, doesn't steal any scenes or spout pages of adorable regurgitated wisdom; he's just a ten year old who loves his father, wants to play basketball with his buddies, and accepts that his home is where his father is, not a house or apartment. He's so normal I wanted to feed him pizza and check his homework.

There are a few plot issues that one can see coming, mostly because it has to work out that way else one character or another would be a selfish sub-human (It's a roller coaster ride, sometimes I wondered—and that's a good thing!), but the "how it works out" doesn't disappoint in any way. Other issues make perfect sense after you read the passages and think a little, which adds a delightful complexity to the story. One or two instances I definitely didn't see coming but given one of the authors' legal background, I am prepared to believe entirely once it's explained.

A few plot points are left open ended rather than extend this timeline as far out as total resolution would need. I anticipate a follow-up story more than wish every loose end had been tied here. There's hope, and for where it's needed, it's enough. The rest, we're left happy.

I enjoyed this story from top to bottom, and I can only imagine how someone more steeped in Jewish culture will see plot points in greater nuance than I can. There are the familiar trappings of Chanukah, but the latkes and candles aren't the plot here: they are the sense of family and continuity. Beshert, judging from dreamy looks and secret smiles from those I asked who ought to know, has to mean more than "meant to be", but for Joshua and Micah, it's good. It's a foundation for a lifetime.

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