Chick Lit Central

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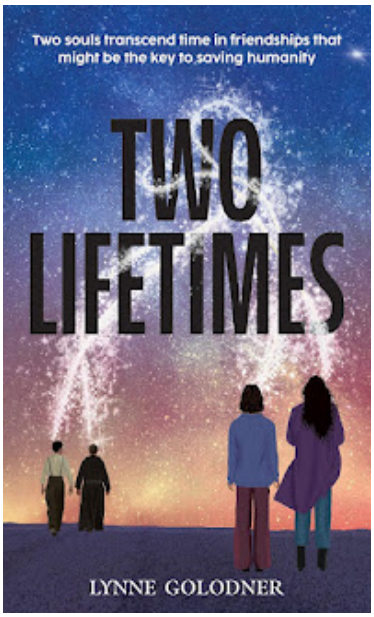
Monday, November 2, 2026

Book Review: Two Lifetimes

By Melissa Amster



Two friends. Two lifetimes. One unfinished promise.

On the first night of Hanukkah, a brick crashes through the window of Adara Cohen's home, breaking a sacred, defiant night of celebration. Inside, three of her children are badly injured. Outside, a small Midwestern community is forced to confront the repercussions of an act of hatred that echoes a bloodstained past.

For Adara's closest friend, Lily Sullivan, the attack awakens more than anger.

A devoted Catholic, Lily begins to experience vivid dreams that feel like impossible memories: fragments of Nazi-occupied Poland, a Jewish boy moving through danger, and a Catholic priest making a promise that will be felt far into the future.

As Lily throws herself into stamping out hatred in her hometown, she becomes increasingly convinced her life—or her soul—is bound to Adara's.

But some histories do not stay buried. They repeat. They reshape the future. Because some souls are destined to break the patterns of the past—if not in one lifetime, then in the next…

A sweeping, emotional novel set across dual timelines in modern-day Michigan and the Holocaust in 1940's Poland, Two Lifetimes *is testament to the enduring power of human connection, a celebration of interfaith friendship, and a poignant reminder to learn from history's mistakes.*

Since I loved *I Love You, Charlie Tanner* so much (reviewed here), I was thankful to get an early opportunity to read Lynne Golodner's latest novel, *Two Lifetimes*. This novel is highly relevant to current events and is written in dual timelines. In the present, a Jewish family is dealing with the aftermath of a targeted antisemitic attack. In the past, a priest is tasked with helping a teenaged Jewish boy get to safety during the Holocaust.

This was an interesting story overall. I felt caught up in everything that was happening, both in the past and present. I cared about all the characters and wanted to see a good outcome for everyone. The descriptions brought the story to life so well and I felt like I had a front row seat to everything going

on. I could even feel the cold of the snow. There was a lot of intensity throughout this novel and the emotions came through clearly. One of the hardest parts, emotionally, was reading about the decisions made for survival during the Holocaust, as far as who got to leave and who was left behind.

I did have a few concerns, however. I felt like the characters in the past had it easy, all things considering. They had all these connections to help them get to safety instead of having to just wing it and not be caught. The way the connection worked seemed a bit forced and it would have been fine if the chapter about that had been left out so we could make our own conclusions. Finally, I didn't feel comfortable with the antagonist in the present placing the blame on one of the family members. The act of violence seemed disproportionate in that respect. I thought it was interesting how some people cared more about the antagonist's welfare than that of the victims'. That felt true to real life events too (and more than just in cases of antisemitism).

Overall, this was a thoughtful novel and I appreciate that Lynne wrote it. She put a lot of love into this story and it showed. Definitely a worthwhile read!

Movie casting suggestions:
Adara: Dianna Agron
Lily: Odette Annable
Ben: Ben Feldman
Piotr: Thomas Doherty
David: Jason Maybaum

(Trigger warnings below. May contain spoilers.)

Thanks to Lynne Golodner for the book in exchange for an honest review.

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TW: Child gets serious injury, bullying, death of parent, toxic relationship with parent, death at a young age