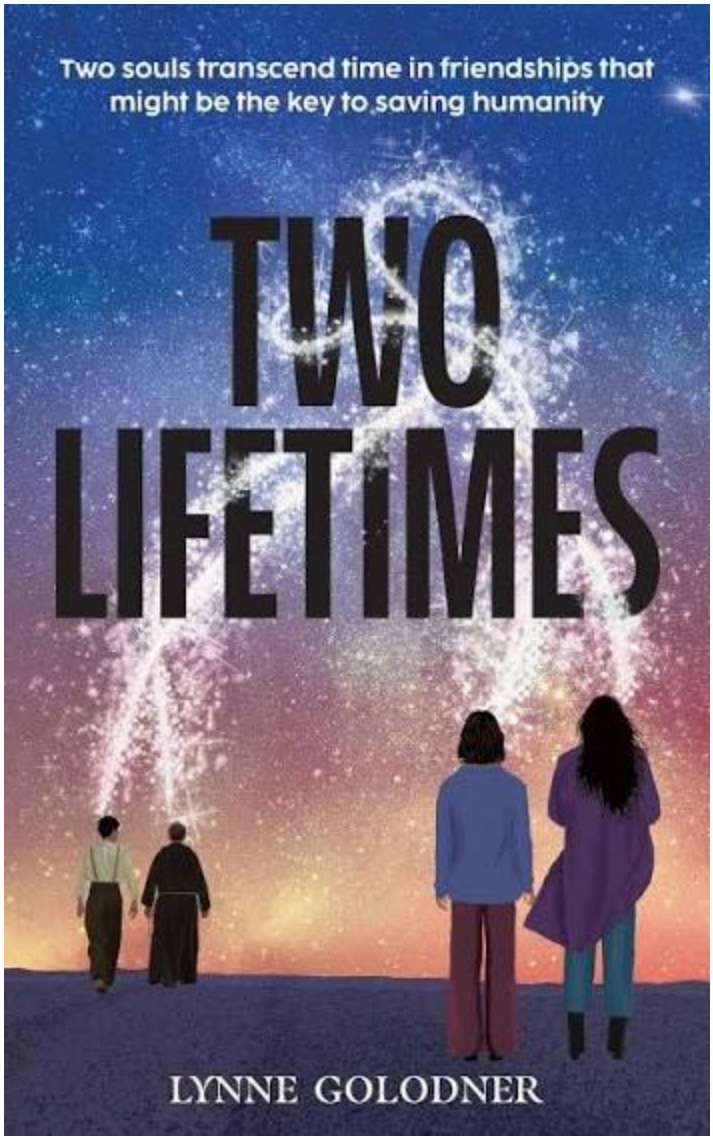
S. J. Schwaidelson: The Author Is In

Quickie Review: TWO LIFETIMES by Lynne Golodner



I received a free ARC of this book and am voluntarily leaving an honest review.

I am a great fan of Lynne Golodner's writing; her elegance and eloquence is so very present in **TWO LIFETIMES**.

Relationships are complex, complicated things, and Ms. Golodner's exploration of those often heartrending connections is beautifully constructed to allow the reader to grow alongside the characters. From the moment the living room window is shattered, the reader is drawn into a world where, like glass shards on the carpet, lives are shattered with questionable hope that they can be rebuilt. Ms. Golodner's attention to the minutiae of the moment sets the stage for the unraveling of lives in both worlds. We silently witness how two families come apart in different ways while facing the same virulent hatred in eerie synchronicity.

One of the things I love about Lynne Golodner's writing is the way she shares the innermost moments of relationships. The marriage of Ben and Adara is the kind of marriage we all want. They have grown together as their family grew. Physically and emotionally, they show us a working team. In an intimate moment, when the worst of the crisis seems to be behind them, Ms. Golodner gives us a reassuring insight into the lives of the successfully long-married. The writing is just plain gorgeous. I found myself reveling in their love. I was so relieved that they remained a united front, not always agreeing, but always having each other's back. Ben's respectful yet somehow begrudging acceptance of Lily, Adara's best friend, only enhances our understanding of his relationship with his wife.

For Esther, Piotr, and David, the slow, cautious development of their connections and ultimately Piotr and David's journey is a total slow burn. Inch by inch we discover who these people are, yet we are given no clue as to why they are even there. The reader's imagination becomes the investigative tool trying to sort out the mystery. The reader wonders about Piotr's perceived place in the world, and how he reconciles that within his role as a Catholic priest. David's arc may be more conventional, but I ached for him as the physical distance between him and the place he calls home steadily increases. And I think every reader will yearn for Esther to appear.

It is only in the last few chapters that my suspension of disbelief is truly challenged. I had trouble making the leap without hesitation. I don't want to provide spoilers, so I will only say that the few clues we had about the intertwining of both lifetimes left me wanting. I understand (as best I can) Ms. Golodner's choices, but I wished she would've used her skills to build a bit more of a framework. But that's me. Other readers might easily disagree, but isn't that what a good book is supposed to do? Stimulate conversation and maybe a little debate?

Read **TWO LIFETIMES**. I could not put it down. It's beautiful and so worth reading.

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Jewish authors, women authors

Published by SJSchwaidelson@The Author Is In

New York born and bred, living in Minnesota, I am a widow, mother, grandmother, and writer. These are the things I do well. View more posts