



The Lightbringers

H.C.H. Ritz

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The New United States in 2074 is a superficially utopian society that dictates positive thinking. Privately, millions of people struggle to hide their inability to ‘think perfectly.’

A desperate nobody, Gaylen Andrews, finally visits the nation’s secret underground of depravity in hopes of finding a cure for his mental torment. He is caught up in a government sting in which he is nearly captured, only to be rescued and recruited by a secret “terrorist” group that works to undermine the government and restore freedom and individuality.

In the group’s efforts to pull off their biggest mission yet, they are repeatedly betrayed and attacked. Gaylen must find his inner strength and heroism to strike a blow for freedom of thought and his own sanity.

The Lightbringers Details

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From Reader Review The Lightbringers for online ebook

Kaylin says

It's the late 2000's and New America has sealed its borders. Life is perfect for everyone and if it's not, no one says anything. Accidents, crime and natural disasters are all covered up. If you're sad or something has gone wrong in your life, it's obviously your fault for not thinking positively enough. That's how life is "aboveground".

I really liked the setting of The Lightbringers. I liked the message and the emotion that came through this short, bittersweet novel. What I didn't like was the constant language, mostly the f word, that came almost solely from one of the book's coarser characters, Nick. I understand that it was supposed to shock you as the character Gaylen was shocked and show you the contrast between the people aboveground and the people living underground. It was a bit too heavy handed for me, though, and distracted from this otherwise very enjoyable novel.

Ashley says

I received this book through a First Reads giveaway from the publisher, Grey Gecko Press. Thank you!

I'm really torn on this book. I liked the premise, the action was great, I just felt like it was a little rushed and could have been a little more polished.

This description of the book didn't quite catch all it was about. While Gaylen is a prominent character in this book, there's so much more going on. The society in which Gaylen starts is one where people are told their thoughts dictate what happens to them. If they think positive thoughts, nothing bad will ever happen. Bad things only happen if they bring it on themselves. Gaylen is suffering from depression after his wife and daughter leave him and is starting to realize that this positive thinking theory doesn't exactly work. A coworker notices something is amiss and suggests the underground to him.

When Gaylen first goes underground he is initially thrust into an overly violent community with the belief that you have to give in to the darkness, commit horrible dark acts, and that's the only way to control it. After he gets caught up in a sting, the Lightbringers finally come into the picture. He is saved by them and becomes part of their "terrorist" group.

While Gaylen is working with the Lightbringers, there's a parallel story going on involving Nick (the boss of the first underground group Gaylen encounters) and his family. It's all very mafia/mob like. The two story lines converge briefly part way through the book and then crash together at the end.

I felt the first underground society was overly violent, and without much cause. Although, given the way the book ended, I can see how that set up was useful. I REALLY felt the aspect of Nick's family was left really open ended. I have no issue with reading between the lines to find the hidden meaning, but a lot of time was spent going after Nick's family then it ended quite abruptly. We never really found out what the feud was all about or what was really going on.

As I said in the beginning of the review, I really liked the premise. This genre is my favorite and regardless of the holes I did enjoy it as a quick read. I just think I would have enjoyed it more if more time had been spent building up the characters, their relationships, the details, etc. with the Lightbringers instead of creating more questions with the side plot.

Eirian Houpe says

This was a very disappointing instance of when an excellent concept totally failed to deliver.

The pace was far too fast to allow anything to make sense, and while I accept that there are times a writer needs to 'tell' in order to avoid getting too bogged down in unnecessary detail, in the execution of this novel there was an excess of telling so that as a reader you felt like you were on a roller coaster, flying around a breakneck curve with no frame of reference, and nothing to draw you or hold you into the car.

The characters – almost without exception – are unsympathetic, or so poorly drawn as to leave the reader feeling so apathetic about that that things that should have shocked or disgusted went past without any emotional response whatsoever.

I fear the author was using the shock approach far too much in what could have been a very through provoking novel if it had been written in a different, more measured way.

Deb says

The Lightbringers is a thought provoking read that makes you think seriously about whether or not this could really happen. Definitely an interesting read. It could have been used a little more work to make it a 5 star read. It was still enjoyable. I'd recommend it to anyone who is interested in the idea of a dystopian society in our not too distant future. Is it possible? You tell me.

Disclaimer: I received this book as an early review copy.

George Wright says

The Orwellian level of constant surveillance and thought control in this book is enough to make anyone living in Oceania blush.

Remember Nineteen Eighty-Four's torture scene in Room 101? Now image if a group of freedom fighters had kicked the door in and rescued Smith from O'Brien's thought control - That's what you have with THE LIGHTBRINGERS.

Get your copy before this book is banned by THE NEW AMERICA, and MADAME PRESIDENT'S legions of 'Feel Good' Operators come knocking on YOUR door!

Jacqui Lademann says

Did you like 1984? What about Divergent? You'll love this.

<http://wp.me/p20PAS-eX>

Kelli says

This book has a really cool futuristic concept and interesting characters. However, it felt more plot-driven. I wanted to get to know the characters more. I really liked the openly dueling philosophies, but I wanted more depth and complexity. This is a good story, wanting more isn't a bad thing. I might even check out the sequel. Only other issue is the ebook has no transitions or spacing to indicate a switch to new character/scene.

Stuart says

This book reminded me of George Orwells 1984

Set in 2074 New America now runs on positive thinking. Wall Screens share Happy News and people are told to ask for help if there are any thoughts which do not meet the new states Happy Criteria. President Martha led until the 2nd President Martha came to power. And if anyone cannot cope they are sent away never to be seen again except a postcard to colleagues and family saying that they have left for a stay in California.

Underground though are the Zenizens. Those who rob, steal, fight and drink. Do everything that the New American government frown upon. They are policed by the DAA a group which does not exist and are run by Zenizens as the idea you need to be a thief to catch a thief runs rife through this groups leadership.

And then there are The Lightbringers. A group of, what the New America government would call Terrorists, people who see that both groups are right....to a point. You need to be able to use both sides to see the full person and are trying to show this point of view to New America bit by bit.

A powerstruggle grows throughout the book as people begin to understand more of the feelings which are hidden from them by government and learn to deal with them. The Lightbringers learn to deal with the fact the decisions at times though wrong lead to the greater good, the zenizens learn of forgiveness and try to come to terms with it. While the government learn that secrets are not always best.

Blake Kanewischer says

An inventive book that steers clear of most of the cliches of the dystopian genre.

Lizard says

In some ways, *The Lightbringers* is like one of those young adult dystopian novels for grown ups. Although the novel is equal parts action and philosophy, it still manages never to get overly dense, making it an easy, but still thought provoking read. Ritz paints a portrait of a country desperately trying to squash its emotions, to assume the facade that everyone is happy all the time no matter what. And while on the one hand, mandated happiness seems ludicrous, there are subtle parallels to our society today. How many people have wondered at some time, whether what they are feeling is "reasonable" or "okay" for them to feel? Who hasn't, at one point or another, bottled up and pushed away negative emotions without dealing with them? It impressed me that the book managed to convey such a strong message without seeming overly preachy or becoming hard to get through.

One of the most interesting aspects to me was that the book peers into the minds of three main characters over the course of the book. These characters are dramatically different in their personalities, beliefs, and world views, and seeing the world they live in from all their different perspectives was, to me, fascinating.

Our first narrator is Gaylen, a typical member of New America, the supposedly perfect society. He has been taught all his life to think positively, and if he thinks otherwise he is a failure. Gaylen struggles with his inability to be unquestioningly happy, and as a result ends up in the underground. He is almost child-like, naive to the depravities of the underground and distressed by the fact that his world seems to have been flipped on its head overnight.

The second narrator is Nick, a boss in the underground who has not been outside in years. He is almost the polar opposite of Gaylen: selfish, gluttonous, and sadistic. He seems to revel in depravity for the sake of depravity, having no qualms about torturing or killing people.

Finally, we have John, who is (at least relatively speaking) the most normal of the trio. John works for an agency to prevent crime, and as a result is worn down and stressed rather than content and happy. He still believes strongly in the government's cause, however, so he works to that end, trying to prevent "terrorist" groups in the underground that reject illusion of perfection. As he works, he struggles with his emotions and questions where his loyalties lie.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the book. If you are looking for a pure action/adventure type dystopian novel, this book may not be quite what you're looking for (though, as I mentioned before, this book has its share of adrenaline pumping moments). If, however, you enjoy books that give you something to think about, but still focus on a plot based around action, you will likely enjoy this.

Edit: Forgot to say originally that I got a copy of this book in a goodreads giveaway.

Iggy Harrison says

I don't normally review books, so I'll try to keep it short. This story is set in a dystopian future America where the population endures conscripted happiness under a dictator president. I think this would be fantastic for a TA audience as it's really a right of passage book about the main character's evolution. Thematically it

deals with finding one's own moral center, idolatry vs. love, individuality vs. conformity, and the necessary pain for personal and societal growth. There is some sex/torture/violence, but if you'd read the Hunger Games series, this is actually a bit more mild without losing any fierceness. I found this to be a lot more accessible than similarly themed titles (as much as I love George Orwell, his philosophy is so fatalistic, and Ann Rand is slightly more positive I guess, but I always found her works to be pompous, preachy, and deluded, but that's a different review). Being an avid reader, the one complaint I would make is that it's too short. Since this is best for a young audience, I'm not sure that's a real problem. I don't want to lie and say there's a happy ending or give away spoilers, but I will say I found the climax to be surprisingly raw and fulfilling. If this book was around when I was 14, it definitely would have been a favorite. I just hope in a few years when my kids are old enough to appreciate a story like this, there'll be a sequel as masterfully penned as the first.
