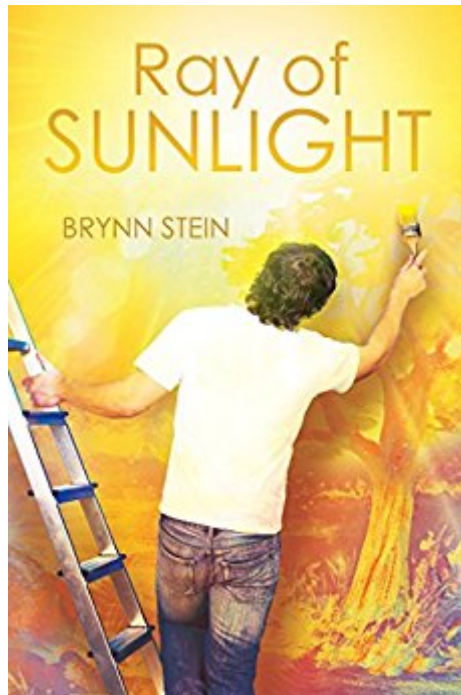




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Ray Of Sunlight



Synopsis

Russ Michaels has his whole life ahead of him but no plans beyond dropping out of school as soon as he turns eighteen. He's been in and out of juvenile detention for the last four years and thoroughly expects to end up in an adult penitentiary at some point. He hates life and everyone in it, especially this latest community service that he earned in lieu of juvie yet again. CJ Calhoun has big plans. He wants to bring joy and happiness to sick and injured children for as long as he can by performing as a clown. The problem is, he has stage-four cancer and a horrible prognosis. When circumstances throw these two polar opposites together, they find they have more in common than they imagined. CJ discovers Russ's talent for art and arranges for Russ to create a mural in the hospital foyer, which leads to a tentative scholarship to the Art Institute. As life changes in ways neither of them could have expected, Russ must work harder than ever to better himself as CJ struggles with his deteriorating health.

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Customer Reviews

Ray of Sunlight tells the story of Russ, whose issues in the past have earned him community

service. He's angry, sarcastic and is resistant to everything and everyone right at the start of the story. As we slowly get a picture of his family life, including step-dad Allen, who is essentially a monster, a know-it-all step brother and a mom who seems to have passively given the reigns over to Allen and supports him 100%, we can maybe understand how Russ's bad actions have become a product of his environment. But he gets a change of pace when he starts work at a children's hospital, and meets CJ, who he first sees in clown garb performing for the children. However, CJ isn't just a performer, he's also a cancer patient at the hospital. Slowly but surely, Russ builds a rapport with CJ and the positive boy gets Russ to open up a little and re-discover his love of drawing. I loved watching Russ grow as a character, and his budding friendship with CJ is a delight to read. Unfortunately, CJ's cancer is always hanging in the background and the diagnosis isn't favorable. That doesn't get CJ down, and his attitude not only affects Russ, but step-brother Pete, who comes to play an important role in the story as well. CJ is that ray of sunlight in Russ's life, and as the novel progresses, we watch Russ evolve and open up while cancer treatments slowly eat away at CJ. Stein does a magnificent job of portraying how a person at random can touch your life forever. That's certainly the case for Russ, who discovers possibilities he never knew existed thanks to CJ. The story doesn't sugar-coat the experiences CJ is going through, or any of the adorable but hurting kids in the hospital. Balanced with the humor and levity is homophobia, love and loss. If you're looking to experience a young adult novel that tackles tenderness and sorrow in a well-crafted story, I absolutely recommend Stein's "Ray of Sunlight" and look forward to seeing future works.

I read a lot but this is the first time I post a review. The writing, emotions, character development and energy of this book is amazing. This truly is both a happy and sad story - a story about real life, real love, a story about gain and loss both beyond measure, a story that touches and changes people. I wouldn't recommend it if you are after an easy read or fake plots. This book is raw and beautiful, perspiring energy from every page. This book is deep rooted with emotions and well developed characters. The author doesn't waste time with irrelevant descriptors of scenery, instead all attention is focused on people, on humanity, humility and the inevitability of reality. We all need 'a' Sun in our lives and hopefully you'll read this book and get touched by 'his' rays. I know I was. Five stars out of five.

This is truly a coming of age story which is so heartfelt. It tugs at your emotions in so many ways. I really can't write more, as to spoil it, but Brynn takes you on an emotional journey. If you're looking

for sex, it's not here. If you want a beautiful story, definitely read away. This author really brings characters alive in a close and personal manner.

I enjoyed this book very much. The characters seemed to come to life and made you care for them.

Snarky teenager with an attitude headed down the wrong path gets community service. Kicking and screaming (practically) he goes *À la* meets the boy of his dreams and turns his life around. Yep, we've read that one before. Except, we haven't, not quite like this. Author Brynn Stein tells this story from the point of view of Russ (Mr. Snark himself), and manages to bring a unique perspective to this trope. Through his eyes we see how one person (and lots of little people) can slowly worm their way into a bitter and hardened (though young) heart and not so slowly effect that change for the better. And of course, love, the great equalizer and the great catalyst of life is the biggest force at work. CJ (we'll call him Mr. Catalyst) really seems too good to be true but of course he isn't. He's got flaws like everyone else, but he's a sweetheart, more positive, loving and giving than anyone in his circumstance should be. He's a clown performing for and helping sick kids when he's so sick himself *À la* it's no wonder Russ fell, and fell hard. Their story is one of love and courage, of strength and growth. Of course, logically, I knew this wouldn't end well, and as I watched Russ mature and grow, as I watched their love blossom, my heart began to ache for the sadness that overshadowed everything. Still, I smiled and laughed at the funny, poignant and tender moments. I was angry when things went wrong. Happy when they went right. And when the inevitable occurred, well, sad as it was, it was just so beautifully written. I don't cry easily, but the tears, they did fall. Angst doesn't get me there sadness does. Is this an HEA? Not exactly. But Russ does find his own way, and his love for CJ, that never dies. True to the title, CJ really was and is his Ray of Sunlight. Usually when I think of epic love I think of love that transcends all, through years and hardships and just about everything two can stand. I think of lovers starting young and ending old. It was actually this author's first book "Through the Years" that last gave me that epic feeling. But what if the lovers were young, didn't transcend, didn't last ages and beyond, but the love did? Who says young adults can't have an epic love? Brynn Stein has found her niche; she pens that epic love

that grabs you by the heart and makes you feel ever so deeply. I find myself wanting to read more, much more of her work. I absolutely loved Russ and CJ, and I highly recommend them and this book. I also highly recommend you have some tissues next to you when you read; you'll need them. ** I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review through <http://www.mmgoodbookreviews.wordpress.com> **

I don't know how to put what I'm feeling into words. I'm no good at this. I was looking for a good cry and by golly, I got it. Brynn is an artist. A Damn good artist. She brought out feels that were so deeply hidden that I had to stop reading so I could get myself under control. Wow!!! This book is truly amazing and beautiful and gut-wrenching. CJ is such a beautiful character. Russ was totally polar opposite of CJ. He was filled with anger and didn't care about getting into trouble. CJ had some kind of magic in his soul that Russ started feeling. Together? The most beautiful, tragic, heartfelt story I've read in a very long time. Very beautifully written..Brynn, you rocked my soul to its core and shredded my heart. Thank you!

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