



Fractured Hymns

A.M. Arthur

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Still firmly in the closet at the age of thirty, Ethaniel Shockley is content leading a solitary—if lonely—life working on a construction crew with fellow military vets. After a tragic worksite accident leaves two of his friends dead, Ethaniel returns to his family home to recuperate from a spiral leg fracture and severe Post Concussive Syndrome. He may be lucky to be alive, but he hates the independence he’s lost.

Matthew “Angel” Garrett has worked at Shockley Stables for three years, content to muck stalls and polish saddles, and to be as unnoticeable as possible. Except for weekly church outings, he avoids going into town so he doesn’t see The Look. The Look that says “I know you went to prison for killing a man.”

A chance conversation with Ethaniel gives Angel hope that maybe he can have a friendship with the gorgeous Shockley sibling he’s crushed on for years. But the more time they spend indulging in their shared love of music, the clearer it becomes that they both want more. Ethaniel sees a kindred spirit in Angel, whose soul is just as fractured from his time in prison as Ethaniel’s is from war. But Angel has another, deeper secret that haunts him—one he’s positive will destroy this new song with Ethaniel before it’s even written

Fractured Hymns Details

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From Reader Review Fractured Hymns for online ebook

Christine says

I rarely give a book 5 stars but this one hit all the points that make a book unforgettable.

2 tormented souls brought together by a good woman's love and beliefs.

Meep says

I needed a break after reading this before formulating a review. It's so angsty, like Arthur had to tick of every trigger on the list in this one story. Far too much going on.

It's well written, there's interesting characters and I enjoyed seeing Ethan and Angel bond. Got completely lost over who was who in the family, but it didn't seem to matter much, most aren't fleshed out anyway, it was more the feel of a busy family. There were moments I liked.

For the most part I enjoyed reading this despite rolled my eyes as the angst started building up and the cynic inside me bleated 'what more angst?' Angel's 'secret' instead of making me empathise got a reaction of 'haven't you thrown enough at him?' (the answer to that is decidedly no!) some behaviours didn't make full sense to me regarding the returned son, but the absolute killer for me was the epilogue; there's an extra punch thrown at the end that was a step beyond what I could handle, it wasn't needed. For Reader's-sake paste on a happy ending and go torture some other characters. Why do that? Why?

The epilogue killed the book for me, I'd have given it an extra star and moved happily on to some fluff, we'd done the angst, the heart-break, the angst, the drama, the angst - I was ready for the pretty glow of happy-ever-after and instead.. nope, no, there's another blow. No thanks.

Oh and God is here throughout.

Annika says

I started reading this book late last night and way past midnight I had to force myself to put it down and get some sleep. This is a book that you will easily find yourself reading cover to cover in one go. Only to end up wanting even more of Angel and Ethan. I loved every single page of this book and highly recommend it.

Two men hiding from the world and never letting anyone in. Both broken and haunted by their pasts and both of them too afraid to dream of something better.

There was a lot going on in this book, many heavy subjects to deal with, but for me it worked. I loved everything about this book, from the plot and all the characters. And I just wanted to wrap Angel and Ethan up in a hug, a gentle one for Ethan though.

I adored Angel and everything he was and felt for all that he'd gone through in his life, constantly being let down by people that should've loved him and been there for him. Never daring to dream or wish for something better. My heart ached for the boy he was and wished for some true happiness to finally come his way.

"I never used to dream past my next sip of orange soda, or think about the world outside Shockley Stables."

Ethan, a war vet wanting nothing more than to get away from the death and destruction also had the worst of luck when a construction accident took his friends and left him broken again with a new set of injuries and disabilities on top of his previous PTSD.

There were also a lot of family drama in this book, but for me it worked. It was credible. You treat and judge family different than stranger and hope for recovery and changes, is eternal. It's easier to forgive and offer second and third chances or hide from the truth staring back at you. Unfortunately no one can hurt you as deeply as family.

Something I found refreshing with this story was that, even though there were many traumas in the past, for them both, this book focused on the present and where they were at that moment. Sure past horrors were mentioned, but more in passing and never in any detail. This might irritate some, as the past is never really dealt with or resolved, but that is not what this book is about. It's about finding yourself and being part of the world again, about trusting the new foundation and the people around you and accepting the person you've become. The past is still there and a part of them, but not defining who they are anymore.

"He was still a little bit broken, and that was okay. Everyone was, in some way or another. And despite their jagged edges, he and Angel fit in the most perfect of ways."

Ashley says

This is my first book by this author and it's insta-love which I don't like but it worked here for these guys. Angel and Ethan were strong, amazing men who dealt with a lot of pain and loneliness and deserved love and happened to find it with each other.

Tracy~Bayou Book Junkie says

Copy provided to Bayou Book Junkie by the author/publisher for my reading pleasure in hopes of an unbiased opinion, a review was not a requirement.

A.M. Arthur was one of the first authors I discovered when I started reading the m/m genre and she's one of my favorites, but the last couple of books by her, while they've been well-written books, I just either haven't liked and/or connected with one or both of the MC's. I didn't have this problem with Fractured Hymns' MC's. I loved and connected with both Ethan and Angel. Ms. Arthur took two fractured young men in Ethan and Angel, and brought them together. Two men who I really believed were meant to love only each other. This

book is kind of instalove, which most times doesn't work for me. It worked for Ethan and Angel. The chemistry and love they shared comes off the pages at you. They fit together perfectly like pieces of a puzzle.

The storyline was interesting. The story held me captive and I devoured this book in no time. It's well-written and paced well. There were also a couple of curveballs thrown in there I never saw coming. This book takes you through a rollercoaster of emotions. It's packed with sadness, heartbreak, fear, anger and frustration along with tender sweetness and love. Highly recommended!!

Jo * Smut-Dickted * says

It hit the right note for me completely - though it was not perfect. It made me emotional - from the heartache that Angel went through to Ethaniel's healing needs this is angsty and hurt comfort on steroids...I liked best the family component - and the hidden depths of the guys sorrow and pain.

Mirjam says

"...the deaf will hear, the dead will live again, the lame will leap...."

This story had great potential and I am sorry to say it did not meet up to it. There is just too much going on: PTSD, PCS, prison, HIV, abusive childhoods, anger management issues, sexual assault, man slaughter, kidnapping and death.

Oh, and a lot of religion in here too. Church goers, choir, God's plan for all of them.

Please, if you have not read the book but plan on doing so, do not open the spoiler. I tried to do a review but found it difficult to do so without revealing all that is happening.

(view spoiler)

F. says

A beautiful story with an unexpected tearspiller at the end.

Katrina Passick Lumsden says

Well. That was... Emotional.

I'm all for angst. Really. It has its place, especially in stories of homosexuality. But the thing is, did there have to be *quite so much* drama? I'm going to give you some significant spoilers here, so read on at your own risk...

Ethaniel is a veteran with PTSD who's plagued with guilt over shooting an innocent woman in Afghanistan, as well as survivor's guilt after he and his friends fall through a roof and he's the only one to survive. The accident left him with a broken leg and post concussive syndrome, so he gets blinding migraines if he reads, watches TV, or has an emotion, and throws up if he's jostled too much or... Eats.

So let's recap that: several forms of guilt, two post disorders, can't eat, constant pain, constant guilt... Oh, and he's in the closet. Only his mom and sister-in-law know he's gay.

Angel was taken in by Ethaniel's parents and put to work as a stablehand after Ethaniel's mother heard Angel singing in church and found out he was living in a halfway house after spending three years in prison for killing his drug-addicted mother's abusive boyfriend. His mother didn't stand up for him, of course, but at least the judge took pity on him so he only had to spend a year being someone's prison bitch instead of the rest of his life.

And it was only a year because that's how long it took for Angel to get caught up in a scheme concocted by some inmates and guards to get rid of Angel's protector by stabbing him with an HIV-infected needle. Only Angel got stabbed with it instead.

Yes, that's right - the curly-haired, silver-voiced Angel who only wanted to protect his neglectful mother was sent to prison to be sexually assaulted and infected with HIV.

But now life is looking up for Angel. He has his job, Ethaniel's parents treat him like part of the family, and now he's got Ethaniel to talk to. So they strike up a friendship/crush/friends with bennies relationship, only to have the entire thing threatened by the return of Ethaniel's brother, Daniel, who spent nine years in prison for nearly beating a man to death in a bar fight.

Daniel ends up assaulting and nearly sexually violating Angel, and when the truth of that encounter comes out, Daniel is thrown off the family homestead. He visits for holidays, however, and on one such occasion, his wife (who still lives with Ethaniel's family along with the couple's daughter, Sarah) asks Daniel for a divorce, at which point Daniel hits her and calls her a whore. Ethaniel and his family intervene and throw Daniel out (again), but Daniel manages to get one more solid lick in as he steals one of his brothers' trucks

and kidnaps Sarah.

Who lets their grown son back around their family after he tries to rape a man, trips him down some stairs, kicks him in the head, leaves him for dead, and not only doesn't deny it, but feels no remorse for it? This is a man who has, by all accounts, never taken responsibility for his actions, always blames others for his problems, and oh yeah, *already spent nine years in prison for nearly beating a man to death*. By all means, let's let him hang around and have access to his young child.

It's all good, though. The police catch up with Daniel, haul him back to prison, and Sarah is returned home. Ethaniel and Angel have come to grips with their respective handicaps and health issues, their guilt, and Ethaniel has come out to his father and been accepted. All is right with the world.

Cut to the epilogue; it's one year later, Christmas time again, and the family matriarch, the one who always did right by her children, took Angel in, accepted Ethaniel and loved him unconditionally... Is dead.

Yes. Because PTSD, PCS, abusive childhoods, prison, HIV, anger management issues, sexual assault, and kidnapping weren't enough, let's kill off the one character holding these sad sacks together in the first place.

Oh, and don't forget to throw in some rather heavy-handed references to faith and God and "His" plan for our lives.

Arthur has written some books I've really enjoyed, but this? This was a bit much.

Natalie says

Anytime I read an A.M. Arthur, I know there will be a higher than average level of angst, often from multiple events. This one did have its share, considering what Ethan (Ethaniel) had been through and what Angel had experienced. I still liked it for the most part since I do enjoy hurt/comfort stories. I couldn't get too emotionally invested in them though. With Daniel, the black sheep, returning home, and all the issues with Jillian, Sarah, Mom and Dad and more trauma for Angel, it was a bit confusing. It seemed like the romance, as well as Angels problem, didn't have enough focus or page time. It was very low steam, which was fine, except an issue they were facing together could have been a better developed part of the story. It kind of got lost.

i also can't calculate how much of my enjoyment was curtailed because of the somewhat religious theme. My eyes tend to roll and glaze over when "faith in god" is a highlight. My atheism colors my attitude but that's my personal issue, not any lack of the authors skills. It's still solidly written, has some heartwarming family themes and appropriate retribution for the bad guy. It was also part of a large, multiple author giveaway promotion and I appreciate the author's participation.

Nerea says

Beautiful story and the MCs are really likeable <3 specially Angel!! Poor boy is adorable. I wanted to protect him at all cost!

BUT help me! This book is angsty af o_o From the start to the epilogue!!! :(*sad*
3,5*

Chris says

This was a feel good story - Angel had been wrongfully hurt and damaged for years and finally found a level of peace working for a family on a ranch . Ethan was hurt in a roofing accident and still carried PTS nightmares after being in the army so he came home to recuperate. Little did he know he'd meet Angel and through all the pain, the sun began to shine. They were lovely together and their chemistry had a vulnerability to it - very sweet.

Susan says

Books by A.M. Arthur are always a hit or miss for me. I'm glad to find out this one was a hit. It wasn't perfect, but overall I really did enjoy it.

This had sweet hurt/comfort, which is my crack.

Working as a contractor Ethaniel falls through a roof. He survives, but two of his friends do not. He is now suffering from PCS, Post Concussive Syndrome. He gets dizzy a lot, cannot stomach most foods and he walks with a severe limp. That's why he moves back to his parents' ranch. His mom and dad welcome him with open arms, but Ethan isn't so sure how his parents or his siblings will respond to the fact that he is gay, so he decides to stay in the closet.

But he has a very hard time not giving himself away once he meets one of the stable hands, Angel. Angel has been working at Shockley Stables for the past 3 years, but before that he was in prison for 3 years, for killing a man.

Angel is shy, stutters, and cannot stand The Look. The look people give him once they find out he killed a man. The fact that it was his mother's abusive boyfriend doesn't seem to matter to some people.

Ethan and Angel grow very close in a short period of time. Both broken souls, they seem to recognize some of that in each other...

I found the ranch with the entire family living together to be a bit suffocating at first. But when Ethan felt more at ease around his family, I started to like them a bit more.

I also really liked the villain and how things were handled with that. It felt real, the struggle how to treat a family member when he's violent. He's still their son/brother, even though he is a bad person.

This was a very nice hurt/comfort story without much relationship angst. The relationship could even be

described as a bit cheesy at times, but hey, I like cheese.

Christelle says

3 solid stars for this hurt/comfort story (yes, you heard right : it's AM Arthur with a very low level of angst).

Ethan is an ex-military and ex-construction worker, suffering from PTSD and a bad leg fracture which left him a bit incapacitated. So much that he had to go back living with his parents in the family ranch. There, he spends more and more time with one of the employees, Angel. Angel has had a real crush on Ethan for a long time, but his past made him wary and staying out of the way of people.

It's a slow burn, the MCs are likable and it had a "homely" feel I enjoyed.

Thank you so much, Mado, for this gift from the three wise men ;-)

Louan says

3.5 ??
