



## Mikhail

*Lauren Smith*

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**A dragon never leaves his hoard unguarded. His heart is another matter.**

The second eldest in an ancient line of Russian dragon shifters, Mikhail Barinov had one job: protect one of the family hoard of jewels. Distracted by the English virgin queen Elizabeth, who was as dazzling as she was devious; he lost everything. Five centuries of exile later, news that a construction crew has unearthed a massive trove of gold and jewels sends him racing to London, determined to steal back his family's treasure... and his honor.

Professional gemologist Piper Linwood can't wait to bury herself in her newest project, evaluating a hoard of Elizabethan-era treasure. But both her life and career are threatened when a mysterious, brooding man with a dangerous smile — and an even more dangerous kiss — snatches the lot.

Unwillingly swept along for the ride, Piper discovers Mikhail is no mere thief. And the dragon on his back is more than a tattoo. It's a living, breathing extension of a bad boy she's finding harder and harder to resist. But his heart is a treasure she can never own... because to save her career, she'll have to betray his trust.

## Mikhail Details

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Author : Lauren Smith

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## From Reader Review Mikhail for online ebook

### Bookgasms Book Blog says

Oh my goodness. Many of you know that shifter romance is one of my absolute favorite guilty pleasures—but dragon shifters are at the top of that list. Seriously. There's something so hot (pun intended) about the prospect of human mortality and fire breathing dragon mixed together that just works for me. And oh does it work for me in this awesome *Brothers of Ash and Fire* series.

*Mikhail* is the middle brother who was banished from Russia 500 years ago because he lost the family hoard of jewels he was supposed to bring back to the family. Over the centuries, the hoard was lost and no one knew where it was—until now—and Mikhail is bound and determined to steal it back!

But there's just one little problem—Piper Linwood, the gemologist assigned to document and evaluate the treasure. And while she's falling for the dangerous, brooding, sexy AF Mikhail, she somehow needs to save both her career and Mikhail, no matter the cost.

I loved the connection between Mikhail and Piper, that there was their instant connection—their mating. But there was so much more between them—an almost instant trust. Which was why the devastation potential was so real when Piper needed to “fix” what happened. And then there's Mikhail's relationship with his brothers. Fun, brotherly awesomeness. I can't wait until we have Rurik's story next month—he's been quite the enigma! ~ Missy, 4.5 stars

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### Claire Robinson says

4.5 - **"You are a treasure beyond my reach."** Stars!

The second book of Lauren Smith's *Brothers of Ash & Fire* series, brings us exiled Barinov brother; Mikhail's story.

I really enjoyed this book, and the way the author wove real history (with the theft of the Cheapside Hoard) not to mention English royalty with the telling of Mikhail's story, and the reasonings behind his exile to the Cornish coast away from the rest of his family. We start back in 1559 and move to modern day England, because as you all know Dragons are virtually immortal.

***He was content to be an outsider... forever.***

The Hoard has been discovered and is currently doing the rounds on show in London for the rich and wealthy and those few that have enough of a fortune to consider bidding on the items when they come up for auction. Piper Linwood as a gemologist is more than happy to travel to the UK to offer insight into the jewels and even attempt to put value on them as an aid for sale. Little does she realize that she will end up being involved them being stolen again, and by Mikhail as the rightful owner.

**"Sometimes a bit of pain intensifies the pleasure..."**

The connection between the pair is pretty immediate, with Mikhail realizing he has been given a second

chance at finding his one true mate, can he convince Piper of his intentions though, especially as his actions basically make her the prime suspect in aiding in the theft of the jewels.

**"Maybe you aren't so bad."**

A quick read, the story also moves along at a steady clip, the author introduced a few new characters and offered a few new avenues in the story direction that I am hoping will be explored further in future books. I look forward to Rurik's book and to seeing who the author decides to pair him up with.

ARC generously provided by the author in exchange for the above honest review.

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### **Sissy's Romance Book Review says**

Mikhail by Lauren Smith is book Two in the "Brothers of Ash and Fire" series. This is the story of Mikhail Barinov and Piper Linwood. Mikhail is a dragon who once took his family jewels and was tricked into giving them to the Queen who he knew was his mate. But she tricked him and kept him hostage until her death. Once freed Mikhail became a distant and vowed to get the jewels back. Now all those years later he has found them but they are to be auctioned off. Piper is in charge of the jewels along with her best friend. When she meets Mikhail she finds him very attractive and hard to resist. Mikhail too finds Piper hard to resist and believes she might be his second chance at a Mate...but he's been betrayed once before by a woman. Mikhail tricks Piper into helping him take the jewels and he takes her too...but can she trust him? Will Mikhail let his heart love another?

I am so in love with this series! I can't wait for the next Barinov brother's story!

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### **♥ WishfulMiss ♥ says**

Sometimes I really can't help myself, even knowing it probably isn't gonna end well. After reading Grigori's story, I knew that Mikhail would most likely have OW drama. If not physically present, the OW would at least be a nagging memory for him.

And I was unfortunately, right on the money.

Mikhail is the middle brother who was banished from his home after losing his family's treasure. Well it turns out that Mikhail had found his mate, in the Queen Elizabeth in 1559. She ends up tricking him and stealing the treasure while having him imprisoned.

Now in present time, the horde of jewels have been uncovered and being publicly cautioned off. Mikhail sees this as his one chance to right his wrong and plots to steal it back.

Piper is the curator who is part of the team that is examining the jewels and Mikhail plans to use her to help him get his treasure back.

There were aspects of the story that were really amazing and those parts I really liked. Mostly it was the magic and power that dragons in this author's world contain. The strange jewel that turns Piper into a dragon was a seriously cool scene. The little facts about the human and dragon parts cohabitating one body was also pretty awesome. The romance, on the other hand was not my kind of thing. The same blurred lines in book

one, are very much present in book two.

The whole virgin thing and how dragons go crazy for one - not cool and I still feel it undermines the importance of their mates. In Mikhail's case, I really hated reading his thoughts about his OW.

“You are my queen,” Mikhail replied, his voice turning husky. The scent of her body lulled his inner dragon into a heady state of submission. He wanted to growl in pleasure and rub himself against her. She was untouched, the virgin queen, and Mikhail knew that was a dangerous thing to be around. A dragon was drawn to maidens; the purity in them was as bewitching as an uncut gemstone. Their scent alone could drive a dragon to sweet madness.

The fact that Mikhail was very much in love with his first (unofficial but still official?) mate, Elizabeth. Huge romance killer the way he was always thinking of her was such a turn off!

He'd thought he would long for Russia, but in fact he did not miss his homeland. Not when he looked at this woman. England felt right, and Elizabeth... She was his true mate. And when a dragon mated, it was forever.

He'd spent the last year in England and the last six months falling in love with England's virgin queen.

Even then, broken and defeated as he was, his heart grieved the loss of his once-intended mate. For a dragon's heart is the strongest thing about him. His love and his loyalty could last centuries, even beyond death.

I mean it was a pretty big deal how much he cared for her after being rejected and imprisoned for 44 years and somehow he still ends up excusing her betrayal and forgiving her.

He'd had long years to think over what she'd said to him, and in the end she had been proven right. Though she had learned the truth, she had been powerless to do other than what she had. As a queen, she could not act upon her desires and what she wanted, only what she must do for her people.

Not only does he still think about her and hold her in his heart, his dragon does too! Even after meeting Piper! I hated that he was using her to forget about Elizabeth and double hated that he had to convince his dragon to recognize Piper as his new mate.

“She is the key. The closer I get to her, the farther the past is pushed away. The dragon can't fight her forever.”

Which begs the question, is Piper really Mikhail's mate? Or is it just the fact that she's a childbearing virgin the only real draw? The author tries to tell us (after it gets shoved down my throat how much Mikhail loves and still mourns/grieves for his "beautiful Gloriana", that although she was his mate, she never opened herself to him, like Piper does. Thus making Piper special but by then it was too little, too late.

Which might have convinced if I could have select amnesia and forget his mood killing obsession with his first mate and if Piper wasn't so needy. Because again it begs the question, if Piper had been a confident, non-repressed and experienced woman (and not so desperate for a man) would Mikhail have still claimed her? Or would he have used her shameless like he had originally planned?

See, this stuff in a romance? Just no! It makes it hard to buy into their HEA. I need to feel that the MCs fall in love because their H/h are special and that they can't live without the other. Piper forgives Mikhail and is too understanding of the whole Elizabeth thing but fine, she chooses to be that way and it makes her happy. My problem is how am I supposed to believe Mikhail didn't just settle for Piper because she was willing to overlook his deception, pretty much turned the other cheek about him still being in love with his first mate and of course, because she was conveniently still a virgin?

Yeah, I don't hold out much hope that his "I love you" is everlasting. Especially since his whole story pretty much proves that mates can be replaced. Dragons live for a long long time, so if you wait it out, some other poor sap will step in and bam, you get another shot at a mate. This doesn't really scream special to me.

**Memorable Moments:**

Eloise's transformation was the best part of this book. I loved that whole scene, it really was amazing and I did not see that coming at all.

**Would I recommend?**

Not really, although written well, the characters had flaws I couldn't get over. It was too embroiled in Mikhail's past and everything was pretty much about him and he was my least favorite character. It was definitely not safe, simply because of the constant mention of the OW. Piper was okay but I definitely felt she deserved better. Needless to say this got deleted from my kindle and I will be steering clear of the 3rd installment, like the plague.

**SAFETY INFO:** (view spoiler)

## Kat Valentine says

What another awesome tale of the hottest dragons in paranormal romance!!! Mikhail is a dragon who's hot and sexy as sin and piper is his mate. Mikhail made a mistake many years ago when he thought he had found his mate, but he was betrayed and he has sought the gems that were his family's by rights. So when they are found he goes to get them back, but he has to get through the hot sexy piper who is the gemologist who is in charge of them. Great chemistry and great characters are why Lauren Smith's dragons are a must read!!! If you love big sexy Dragon shifters this series is for you!!! This series just keeps getting better and better!!

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## Coco.V says

?FREE on Amazon today (5/14/2018)!!?

Blurb:

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## Nicola says

### 3.5 Stars.

The first book in the *Brothers of Ash and Fire* series, *Grigori*, was one of my favourites to come out of 2017, so you could say I was excited to see what Mikhail would hold in store—particularly with the story being based around the history of London's lost jewels.

***He was a dragon, so he would stay young and beautiful forever, and she was just a human. One who would grow old and die.***

This was such a book of two extreme halves for me and over the first 50% Mikhail Barinov sadly failed to come close to matching the high standards set by his brother, and whilst I loved how Lauren incorporated The Cheapside Hoard into the story, in comparison I found the story lacklustre. But, when I hit the halfway mark it was like a switch was flicked, and the story burst into life.

*A hint of the medieval badass he had been six hundred years ago crept through..."*

The injection of action and feeling that came was needed because Mikhail and Piper were simmering as opposed to sizzling in the chemistry stakes for me. But I went from being bored to devouring each page, needy to find out just how they would get their HEA.

*Ask me to take you upstairs and possess you...every part of you. I could pleasure you for hours if you wish."*

There's no question of me reading the next book in the series, *Rurik*, and I'm also intrigued to know if Randolph will have his story told as there's definitely more there I feel. As for *Mikhail*, he may have had a fairly shaky start, but in the end he came good.

*Copy received courtesy of Foreword PR for an honest and unbiased opinion.*

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## **1-Click Addict Support Group says**

Dragons and love are a great mix!

I am really enjoying this paranormal romance series! It is contemporary romance but when your leading men (or dragons) are centuries old you get the extra flavor of known history told from a very personal, and unique, perspective...

Mikhail's family is centuries old, and so is he! When he finds himself exiled to jolly old England during the time of the first Queen Elizabeth, the intrigue that follows is intriguing for more than the historical aspects! When the fallout continues into the 21st century, Mikhail is going to have to dredge up that long ago past to ensure he and Piper have a future. Piper is a strong and no-nonsense character so watching her succumb to Mikhail's natural (and supernatural) spell gives their romance that believability that makes this work. I want to believe there are dragons among us and this author knows how to make that happen.

The steam is high, the intrigue even higher which makes this romance such a treat to read! If you are a paranormal fan, this will tick all the boxes! ~Diane, 4 stars

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## **Lauren Smith says**

What I loved most about writing this book aside from the steamy romance of course, was working in a real amazing bit of history. In the early 1920s in England, there was an actual hoard of Elizabethan era jewels discovered during renovations on a shop. They found bags of pearls and other amazing gemstones buried in the dirt beneath the basement of the shop. I was absolutely fascinated by this real life discovery of 1600s era jewels and had to put that in a story! Lucky for me I was writing about dragons who happen to be obsessed with jewels. So I wrote in the "Cheapside" hoard as it is called but changed the date of discovery to present day. All of the jewels described in the book except for the Dragon Heart Stone, are actual jewels recovered from the hoard in the 1920s.

I also enjoyed exploring a darker side to dragon natures in this book than I did in the previous book in the series Grigori. With Mikhail, he's suffered much emotional trauma at being betrayed by his possible mate Queen Elizabeth and it drives his dragon to the brink of death. I wanted to show readers how deep the mate connection can be even if it hasn't been fully formed. That way when Piper manages to save Mikhail in the end, the readers will know how far these two lovers came, and what great odds they faced to finally have their happy ending. Thanks for letting me share my thoughts on the book and happy reading!!

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### ~\*\*Anna\*\*~ A Romance Reader says

\*4.5 stars\*

I really liked this book! I've come to the conclusion that I deeply enjoy dragon shifter romances. There's just something about the way they love fearlessly and with all their heart and soul.

Mikhail was amazing. He's alpha but not overly so. He's looking for a hoard of jewels that belongs to his family and that was stolen from him 500 years ago. In his quest he meets Piper, an American gemologist and his true mate. I loved seeing them together, you could tell they were true soulmates.

I really enjoyed the historical aspect of this story too, that included Elizabeth I. I was so intrigued by it and made this book that much more special.

Overall this was a great paranormal romance that I highly recommend to anyone that enjoys this subgenre. This was my first book by Lauren Smith but it sure won't be my last.

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### Christina says

4 Stars - 2.5 Flames

How can you NOT fall in love with these amazing brothers of Ash and Fire? I mean, come on.

Mikhail feels dishonored. Okay, his father actually exiled him for failing a mission, so I guess there's some "truth" behind it. But he hasn't returned to his home in Russia (permanently) for over two hundred years. Why? Because he can't return home without his families jewels, the hoard that was given to them back in the Elizabethan era. And now that the hoard has been found, there's no way he's letting it slip away again. At least not without reason.

Piper has loved jewels her entire life. So much so that she's become a gemologist. A huge hoard is now up for auction and she's been brought in to assess it. So when a handsome man shows up at a viewing, staring at the jewels with more than the usual interest, her curiosity is peeked. And then she really looks at him and can't stop thinking about all of the wonderful things that he could do to her. Interesting considering she's a virgin.

Mikhail was betrayed by someone he thought was his mate many years ago. His dragon hasn't really gotten over that and becomes nervous once he meets Piper. First things first. Get the jewels and THEN worry about the fact that Piper seems to be his true mate. But of course it's not that simple. The chemistry between these

two is everything you'd imagine it to be. Could the "scenes" have been a bit more for me? Sure. But it still worked. The drama behind the hoard is fascinating to read. Especially if you're able to allow yourself to mentally travel back to that time period.

This author did a wonderful job bouncing back and forth between the time periods, bringing the old in with the new. I could actually feel Mikhail's tortured soul and kept finding myself cheering him on. I'm happy that Grigori and Madelyn made an appearance as well. Oh how I love these Dragons.

P.s. - Just because this story ended, doesn't mean it's over. Keep reading, you'll be pleasantly surprised with the excerpt from the next book. Mmmmm

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### **Timitra says**

Mikhail was an awesome read filled with treachery, betrayal, intrigue, sexy times, a bit of action and adventure. I enjoyed it and I'm looking forward to reading the other books in the series.

ARC won in a contest

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### **Nadine Bookaholic says**

I really enjoyed Mikhail's story, especially after the little peek we got into his life in Gregori's book. This is the second book in the Brothers of Ash and Fire series and it can be read as a standalone, but I would suggest reading Gregori's book first because it was really good. I am a big fan of Lauren Smith's stories, whether I am reading one of her historical's or her new paranormal romances I know that they will pull me into their world and have me feeling as if I am a fly on the wall watching everything happen right in front of me.

You can see my full review as well as a #giveaway here: <https://nadineisobsessedwithbooks.blog>

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### **Vashti says**

2.5 stars and a rant, not really a review, but a rant.

This is Mikhail and Piper's book and I have to say that I really did not get the "feels" in this one. I knocked this one down to 2.5 stars because for the majority of the freaking book, the hero constantly had thoughts about his past true mate to be, Glorianna aka Queen Elizabeth 1, alrighty then!!! So apparently these Imperial Russian dragons can have more than one true mate, sorry, but I like my heroines to be top dog in their man's life. Of course him being a 2,000 year old dragon, he had to have had some liaisons I know that, but the heroine has to be his number 1, no one else and for him to have thoughts about the ow for practically the entire book just did not sit well with me. It was like Princess Diana and that douche Charles and you know who Camilla, ugghhhhh!!!!

This is one of my pet peeves in romances and I usually stay clear of these tropes. I fear that this is going to happen again in Rurik's book because his supposed true mate was murdered in book #1.

## **Leo (Queen of the Rants and the Crazy) says**

30 year old VIRGIN heroine and heroes who go gaga for virgins women. Not only the heroine but any woman that is a virgin not to mention they get more than 1 true mate it's not my ideal of romance. I felt like if the hero deflowers the heroine and if he smells another virgin he would definitely drop the heroine for that virgin. #sorrynotsorry.

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