



It's Always Been You

Jessica Scott

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"The sparks of attraction lead Ben and Olivia into distinctly unprofessional situations, while Olivia has to navigate the scars of her own past...a pleasant and gratifying read." ~Publishers Weekly

She plays by the rules . . .

Army Major Olivia Hale believes in following the process for one simple reason — the rules are simple and clear. And she'll fight to the death to bring those who break those rules to justice. But when she runs straight into Army captain Ben Teague, she finds herself tempted, for the first time in her life, to break those rules.

. . . and he's about to break every one of them...

Company Commander Ben Teague has a way of getting under people's skin — he's a smart ass but no one cares more about taking care of his troops than he does. He's got a low tolerance for the bureaucratic rules that keep him from doing his job. When a trusted friend is brought up on charges, Ben is ready to risk his reputation and his career in his defense.

When everything Ben believes in is exposed to be a lie, he'll turn to the one person he last expected. And the rules she believes in just may save them both — or damn them both to hell.

PRAISE FOR IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOU

"4 stars! Scott has a special way of writing a realistic, inspiring and emotional story that readers will lose themselves in. The characters are authentic and genuine."?RT Book Reviews

"Ms. Scott does a great job bringing hope in the midst of this chaotic Army life. I am always intrigued and entertained with each book she writes. Well done, Ms. Scott." ~ Under the Covers

"Book Hangover. Huge book hangover. I think it has to do with the fact that I don't have a Jessica Scott novel to look forward to, to read in the next couple of months...Ms. Scott combines the reality of military life and tempers it with incredible passion. She takes serious and current issues within the military and gives us a peek into that world and I want more. Like...now. I want Gale Sorren's book...like yesterday." ~ Mandy | Straight Shootin Book Reviews

"Jessica Scott is one author who knows how to make my emotions go haywire whenever I read her books. She creates characters that I feel for and loves automatically because of their struggles and strengths. She manages to put characters together that help each other in some way." ~ Franjessca | Book Lovin Mamas

"I cannot praise Jessica Scott's Coming Home series enough. I have raved about each book in this series. Jessica Scott combines military careers, civilian life, people with very real problems, and trying to build happy lives in situations that are very hard for those they love...It's Always Been You by Jessica Scott is another powerful book in the Coming Home series." ~ Smut Book Junkies

"Once again, Jessica Scott is able to deliver on the terrible effects that war has on soldiers. Only she can get inside our heads and make us feel the terrible emotions that the soldiers are subjected to. I find her writing to

always be thought provoking and her storylines to be exciting. I highly recommend this amazing story and really anything by JS! Another hit!" ~ Ramblings from This Chick

It's Always Been You Details

Date : Expected publication: March 18th 2019 by Jessica Scott (first published March 31st 2015)

ISBN :

Author : Jessica Scott

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary Romance, War, Military Fiction, Contemporary, Military Romance

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From Reader Review It's Always Been You for online ebook

Mandy says

Book Hangover. Huge book hangover. I think it has to do with the fact that I don't have a Jessica Scott novel to look forward to, to read in the next couple of months. After I finished this one, I spent the evening going through the other books, reminiscing, if you will. I adore this series. I'm like a freaking broken record, I know, but I'm going to keep saying it as long as it applies. Ms. Scott combines the reality of military life and tempers it with incredible passion. She takes serious and current issues within the military and gives us a peek into that world and I want more. Like...now. I want Gale Sorren's book...like yesterday. :)

For the rest of the review: Straight Shootin' Book Reviews

Copy for review provided by NetGalley in exchange for a fair and honest review.

The Book Queen says

I know that when I pick up one of Jessica Scott's novels, I will be entertained, I will feel the characters' pain, and I will crack a few smiles. It's simply a given! And while It's Always Been You did live up to those expectations, I will admit that it's probably my least favorite book in the series so far. However, that is NOT to say that I disliked the book, or that it's terrible. It's not; it's still really, really good!

For some reason, I just did not connect as much with Ben and Olivia as I did previous couples. I'm not sure why, exactly, and perhaps it could be purely due to my current mood while reading this, or due to the fact that I read books 3 and 4 within the last two months. Sometimes I can get series burn out by reading the books too close together.

I enjoyed the peek into Ben's new position, and how much work it entails. I'll admit that, yes, I do sometimes get lost in the line of command and who is who, but that is not Scott's fault. If anything, she makes it easier to understand compared to some military romances I have read. The simple fact is I'm not in the military, so no matter how many books I read, I will never know the inner workings of it. :)

Like with every other book, Scott managed to grab my heart and twist it, more than a few times. I wondered if Ben could fit into his new role, if Olivia could begin to heal from her own past. I wanted to give them both a hug, considering everything they've been through. I was worried about Escoberra and Zittoro, too. And of course I still worried about Reza. Now I'm curious about Sorren and Foster.

It's Always Been You is another solid installment in an amazing series! Even if it's not my "favorite", it is still a damn good read; I can't stop recommending this series enough! Remember, they are best read in order,

but once you start, you won't be able to stop. There's a certain crack in Scott's writing, and I'm a happy addict.

4 STARS!

~ * ~ * ~

For my full review, including favorite book quotes, please visit my blog, TBQ's Book Palace.

TheBookQueen

Pat says

I've been searching my brain trying to think of an adjective I haven't already used in reviewing the Coming Home series. Ms. Scott's books make you feel anger, tears, and laughter. Most of all, she shows us how love can be found in the most difficult places, between two people who are often at odds with each other. And it all works!

Full review can be viewed on The Book Queen's Blog on March 4th.

Franjessca says

Full Review posted at Book Lovin' Mamas

I will continue to say it...Jessica Scott is one author who knows how to make my emotions go haywire whenever I read her books. She creates characters that I feel for and loves automatically because of their struggles and strengths. She manages to put characters together that help each other in some way.

I give this book 4.5 moons and recommend it to readers out there that enjoy reading contemporary romance. If you enjoy military reads, this is the book for you too. Because of Jessica Scott, I need to read contemporary military romance right now. I'm way too addicted thanks to her Coming Home series.

Tammy says

I loved the relationship that developed between Ben Teague and Olivia Hale. Their story will pull at your heart strings, because you will be angry with them, then sad, and then happy again.

They both have painful pasts that they try to keep to themselves, but as their feelings develop between them, you see how perfect they are for each other. They help each other face their demons and that makes their love for each other that much stronger.

I loved their story!

Marlene says

Originally published at Reading Reality

I think that what makes Jessica Scott's Coming Home series so marvelous is that it doesn't artificially glorify the practice of war. Her soldiers are doing what they all feel is the absolutely necessary job of defending their country, but she doesn't turn the firefights into gun-porn.

Her stories are about the emotional costs to the men and women who fight. It's about the demons they face both on and off the battlefield. She also takes care to tell the story of just how difficult it is to be the one waiting at home.

It's Always Been You is the story of two people who are fighting their own personal demons as they struggle to do their jobs. It's a job that Major Olivia Hale, an army lawyer, believes in a little too much, and that Captain Ben Teague isn't sure he still believes in at all.

Because of a shake-up, an entire battalion command has been reassigned and Ben Teague finds himself in command of a unit instead of pushing a desk. Because that shake-up is due to charges of all sorts of malfeasance, there are a lot of bad apples that need to be weeded out of the entire command. People who are not fit to go back to war, whether due to disciplinary issues or drug addictions.

Olivia Hale is attached to the battalion to expedite all the separations from service as the units begin intensive training for a deployment in eight months.

Ben Teague feels like he is punishing men that he used to fight beside; men who used to be good soldiers before too many deployments and too many drugs screwed them up. He wants to do right by his men, whether or not he's doing right by the army.

Ben and Olivia butt heads from day one. Her duty is to process some of his soldiers out. He feels that his duty is to take care of his men.

Their conflict is embodied by two cases. One is of a soldier who just needs one more month to qualify for his G.I. Bill benefits. He's a meth addict who may never rehab enough to take advantage of those benefits, but Ben wants to give him hope.

The other case is that of Ben's First Sergeant. The evidence all points to the man having beaten his teenaged daughter. Ben is certain that the evidence isn't the entire story. He can't believe a man he served with could ever have hurt the daughter he loves.

But Olivia is haunted by one case, just like this one, where Ben's unwillingness to investigate his fellow soldier resulted in a devastating family tragedy. She can't let this case go.

The more that Olivia and Ben argue about the fate of his men, the more that they realize they need each other to help them through the intense responsibility involved in both their positions. Even though it's a bad idea, they can't resist each other. Then the tragedy strikes that Olivia feared all along.

Escape Rating A-: The contrast in their beliefs makes Olivia and Ben an explosive combination. He has pretty much stopped believing in the Army, and she is burning herself out because she believes that she can

make a difference.

I wish we knew more about Ben's relationship with his mother-the-Colonel. Her influence, and her lack of warmth toward Ben (or seemingly much of anyone after the death of Ben's father) appears to be part of his lack of faith in the Army as a whole. Ben fears becoming just like her, and that is part of what makes him not want to take a command. He has seen too many commanders who either become too distanced from their soldiers, or who enjoy being "the man in charge" but don't understand how responsible they are, how much they need to take care of, the soldiers in their unit.

Ben is as overwhelmed by that responsibility as Olivia is by her need to fix everything.

While the reader is aware of the case that haunts Olivia, I would love to know more about where she came from. She reminds me of Emily Lindberg in *All For You*, she's not career military but she's on a mission to make a difference.

The love story starts slowly in this one. Ben and Olivia start out at opposite sides of every case. At first, they get together as stress relief, and they both absolutely need one. As the story progresses, it takes them awhile to figure out that they belong together. She helps him settle into his responsibility and he helps her let go when she needs it.

Just as in all the stories in this series, they are marvelous together, after they get past the rough patches. If you love military romance, start this series with *Because of You*. Because all the stories are so damn terrific, you'll be glad you did.

Michelle [Helen Geek] says

02/26/2014 --

Overall Rating = 5 Stars

Book Cover / Book Blurb / Book Title = 4 / 0 / 1 = 2.5 Stars

Writer's Voice = 5 Stars

Character Development = 5 Stars

Story Appreciation = 5 Stars

Worth the Chili = 5 Stars -- [\$2.99 on Amazon]

Smexy [HEAT] Rating = Mild

289 pages

This book will be released March 4th, 2014

I'm not sure what more I can say about Jessica Scott's writing skill that I've not said before. She really is amazing. She gives us very well written stories. We love her characters because they are real people struggling to make sense of life. She writes what she knows; today's Army.

This is the 5th book in the *Coming Home* series, but each book stands alone. You can read one or all. I've read most of them and can't wait to read the others.

When I read Jessica Scott, I know I'll feel. Her stories always pull strong emotion out in me. In these books, she provides the reader a glimpse at some very real LIFE situations for our returning war veterans and how our military leaders deal. These situations run the gamut; life altering injury [loss of limb, disfiguring scars],

PTSD and other trauma related mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, personal relationship issues, etc. In each book, she takes us to a dark place, but by the end, we have such a sense of hope. She demonstrates to us that as bad as things can get, they can also change for the best. You've heard the saying, "sometimes you have to hit the bottom to start working your way up again." This is at the very heart of each story. The underlying message is HOPE.

I loved Ben. He has so much heart. You want a man like him in your corner. The men in his command are very fortunate. He understands how complicated life can be. Sometimes, all you can do is give someone a hand up. What they do with it, you can't control, but you have to be willing to try. Ben was willing. Olivia is perfect for him.

I could go on and on, but I won't. I really like Jessica Scott and her stories. I look forward to a very long and happy relationship :)

Note: These are books I'll read again with characters I won't soon forget. I'm putting them all in my favorites list.

ARC provided by the author and Forever (Grand Central Publishing) via Netgalley in exchange for a honest review.

Saly says

Rating 3.5 stars

Kudos to Jessica Scott because she is one of those rare authors like Pamela Clare who can make the world and characters they are writing for alive, all because of their own know how of that world. I absolutely adore how she doesn't shy away from depicting the ugly politic filled side of the army, the toll of war in this book.

Captain Ben used to be a believer once, protect his country, do good but now he can't muster up that belief anymore so his being asked to take on the mantle of leadership doesn't go down well with him but he has no choice. I loved this aspect of the book, Ben slowly taking charge and dealing with some major issues, the drug abuse of a colleague and accepting that he couldn't chase away someone else's demons yet giving that guy a chance to have a future. What did frustrate me was his blindness to the fact that a colleague was too far gone and could be guilty of harming his family.

Major Olivia Hale know how to pick her battles, she has been in the army long enough to know how thing work. She has scars from her upbringing and seeing Ben support his man doesn't sit right with her. Honestly, I liked how the book was so realistic in depicting army life, war and even the slow romance, I just wished we could have seen Ben and Olivia together a little more.

Lara says

Pacing is even slower than in previous books. No mention of the guys from the beginning of the series save for Reza. And while the situation with Escoberra wasn't 100% what it looked like, it was still pretty standard stuff. (I liked how *Army Wives* handled this situation more.)

And I really didn't like Olivia telling Ben he couldn't let his past with Escoberra cloud his judgement when she did the exact same thing.

Sophia says

A shiny 'by the book' military lawyer and a captain who has no desire to command square off in this latest installment of the Coming Home Series. I met the two lead characters for this story in the previous series installment. Both caught my attention and I found the idea of a romance getting up between them a mighty entertaining prospect. It was definitely that- and then some- which I have come to expect from this author and her books. I never close one of her books feeling disappointment; only pleasure- sometimes bittersweet, but still pleasure. Jessica Scott isn't afraid to show us some reals with our feels and I like that in a military romance.

The story opens shortly after the end of the last book (yes that's a hint to read in order) when the battalion starts cleaning house. Several new command duos are given their chance to take over the reins and clean up their newly assigned companies. Captain Ben Teague is given Bandit Company and he has no desire to lead. Experience has taught him not to like what happens to people when they are given command and he feels that he will do an even worse job than anyone. It doesn't help that they have been saddled with Major Olivia Hale, a lawyer on a crusade whose first mission is to go after a guy that Ben owes his life.

Olivia isn't impressed with the smart butt captain who is reluctant to do his job and seems to just want to protect his buddies instead of those who are the true victims. Escoberra abused his child and she doesn't care how many medals he won; she is getting him away from that family so they'll be safe. There are so many other situations in these commands that need to be dealt with too and she plans to watch all these commanders like a hawk to make sure that justice is served. Captain Ben Teague draws her attention and keeps it with his casual regard for the rules and soft heart for his guys. It's his heart and that darkness in his eyes hinting at past pain that stays her hand to show a bit of patience and maybe give him a chance. The Escoberra case eats at her though. Oh Ben might trust this one and she feels a little bad for the disillusionment that he'll experience over it all, but she will do the right thing. She enjoys for the first time what it's like to not always be alone, but she is terrified to take that final step of trust so she draws back at a crucial time and it causes a wedge of her own making between her and Ben.

Ben has earned a little trust from the buttoned up Olivia and he now has a really good First Sergeant. Wisecracking, good coffee, cookies, and conferring with Olivia get him through his days. He still has no desire to do what he is doing, but he slowly lets the weight of command settle on his shoulders. So much is a burden and he can't fix it all, but he learns that he can make some situations a little better. At the end of the day, it is to Olivia that he turns. They start up something tentative and he knows she is holding back on sharing her past. He has a painful past too and he understands until she pulls back and puts up walls. He's been down that road with someone before and this time he won't be the guy standing there hurting and begging to be let in.

This story continues with a little of what was seen in Reza and Emily's book though it shifts from the mental health issues of the battalion to its legal issues. There were so many situations that had no easy answers or reasons for existing. Ben is now learning the burdens of command and Olivia is learning that her view of the world is colored by her past and not everything is as cut and dry as she would like to make it.

Because of the character growth going on, the romance in this one takes a secondary part. The steady and gentle pacing was as engaging as a fast paced thriller. I liked being along for the interpersonal dealings during Ben and Olivia's work days and I enjoyed their slow building relationship. Their relationship had to endure some hard stuff because of who they were at work when they had opposing viewpoints and ways of dealing with things. Truly, it was amazing how it all seemed to work though it shouldn't have. It wasn't all

about the attraction and passion. Things were tough, but I loved how these were mature people who dealt with stuff even if it took a step-back moment once or twice. They got it right in the end.

From the genuine emotions looking back at him. The care. The concern.

The faith.

The love.

Ben shattered. In the darkness, in the center of her embrace, he lost a piece of himself he'd been clinging to. And found something new, something he hadn't realized he'd lost so long ago. He held her there, whispering her name in the darkness.

Loc. 4356 Ben Teague, It's Always Been You

I really loved Reza and Emily from the last book so I was glad they had strong supporting roles in this one particularly Reza. He is there for these two and is so much more at peace and grounded. I certainly hope Ben's new team leader, Soren, shows up some more. I enjoyed getting to know him a little.

All in all, it was another stellar installment in the series engaging me almost completely and I sure hope there is more to come. As I've said before, military romance lovers should definitely give this series a try.

My thanks to Forever and Net Galley for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for my honest review thoughts.

Shannan says

3.5

I enjoy reading military romances right now. Although, I liked this one, I didn't necessarily love it. I'm assuming it's because I haven't read the companion novels in the same series prior to this one. I am not sure. I actually want to go back and read the one before this one. I understood the relationship and how they needed to rely on each other and enjoyed the banter between the two. The writing is really well done. It's a good romance with troubles that they work through together which made me enjoy the book that much more. I would recommend this for those who love military romances like I do.

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

5 'keeping this short because words can't do it justice' stars!!

I wish I could reach through my computer, take you by the shoulders and look you in the eye in hopes you'd be able to see my passion for this series, because I just don't have the words that can explain how brilliant a writer Jessica Scott is.

I love everything about the way she tells a story:

They're exciting, thought provoking, poignant, and inspiring! The plot, the humanity, the heartbreaking reality of how war can destroy a person in ways that IEDs and grenades and rifles can't, and most of all I love the unwavering loyalty these men and women have to our country, to always doing the right thing no matter the cost, and to each other.

I love her honorable heroes:

This was the burden of command: to balance the needs of the army over the needs of the individual. A tightrope he had to walk alone.

I love her sassy heroines:

"Wow, you're going all caveman. I'm not sure if I should swoon or wring out my panties."

The only thing I don't love:

She doesn't write fast enough!

My sincerest 'thank you' to Grand Central Publishing and Netgalley for providing me with a copy of "It's Always Been You." In return I'm giving them an honest review.

Angela Carr (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

Ms. Scott yet again brings up critical issues in the Army. What happens when they come back from the war with physical and emotional scars? Whose responsibility is it to decide what happens to them? Upper management aka higher ranks. Just as with any establishments, this means politics, and lots of it. In this story, it certainly makes its mark. I was taken aback to what Ms. Scott reveals as the politics side of the story pans out. It brought on good points and certainly two sides of the sty. I love that Ms. Scott laid it out and made it easy to understand.

Teague takes on more responsibility and has moved up the ranks to clean up his new crew. Cleaning up in terms of weeding out the ones who do not qualify to stay and the ones who do. He knew it would be the worst kind of responsibility when some suffer from PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse and he has to decide if they can stay or get the boot. Torn between loyalty and what is right, Captain Ben Teague will need help from the very up-tight lawyer Olivia Hale. The question is, will she be on his side?

I enjoyed Teague and Olivia's story. They had issues to work out including their feelings for one another and differences when it comes to work decisions. It was funny how they equally intrigued and annoyed each other. However, Teague had the worst end of the stick. He shoulders everyone's problems that he forgets about himself. He continues to battle sobriety and his future sort of scares me. He's not in the clear yet and not by a long shot, but he has Olivia to keep him straight, I hope. I'm eager to see more of his progress in the next books.

Ms. Scott does a great job bringing hope in the midst of this chaotic Army life. I am always intrigued and entertained with each book she writes. Well done, Ms. Scott.

ARC provided by publisher

♥Rachel♥ says

Ben Teague had just landed a job he never wanted being in command of men he once fought side by side with. Now he's charged with the task of weeding out problem soldiers so they don't take up the valuable training time left before deployment. Ben is torn between the army's needs and doing what he thinks is right by his men. Ben and Olivia are seemingly at odds at first, or at least that's how Ben feels, because as legal counsel for the army, Olivia is pushing to remove the problem soldiers. These are men that Ben feels a sense of duty and loyalty to even if they've fallen on hard times. But you can't save everyone especially when you need to prepare for war.

“This was the burden of command: to balance the needs of the army over the needs of the individual. A tightrope he had to walk alone.”

Olivia knows what it feels like to have the army overlook abuse, she's suffered it personally, and this weighs heavily on her when one of Ben's men allegedly assaults his teenage daughter, landing her in the hospital. Olivia is determined to protect this soldier's family from harm. Ben can't believe his man would ever do such a thing, and because of past events he's plagued with guilt over the case. Getting down to the truth is a painful experience for both Ben and Olivia, but somehow, even with seemingly opposite interests, they provide professional and emotional support for each other.

Finding a connection and falling in love can be difficult in any circumstance, but you'd think within the realm of military hierarchy it would be worse. Yet, Ben and Olivia's romance was natural and felt right. There were no huge relationship dramas, just the normal ones you'd expect between two people, each with a damaged past. Even though the circumstances of their jobs put a big strain on them personally they were able to shut some of that out and provide comfort and much needed distraction. I loved that their time together could be playful and fun, profound and emotional, and yet at the same time steamy. *Very steamy!*

Ben was a character at times, with a smart remark at every turn. His relationship with his First Sergeant Gale Sorren was funny, and I enjoyed their camaraderie. I got quite attached to Sorren while reading; thinking I'd love to know more of Sorren's story (with a HEA of course) and I just discovered his story will be told in *Homecoming*. I'm starting it next, and I hope to get a glimpse of Ben and Olivia in the future.

Jessica Scott's writing is beautiful and she made it easy to connect and sympathize with her characters thoughts and emotions. Their struggles felt very true to real life romantic struggles and I could easily relate. I felt what they felt. I thoroughly enjoyed Ben and Olivia's romantic journey which was alternately fun and sizzling hot. Their romance was also sweetly moving. A definite recommend.

A copy was kindly provided by Grand Central Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

This review is also posted on The Readers Den.

Kame says

Ben Teague has never wanted to command soldiers, but he finds himself given the task. At times he hasn't even been sure he wanted to be a soldier any more. This isn't going to be an easy command either; Ben is one of the commanders tasked with cleaning up the mess their predecessors left behind, a battalion that is battling corruption. To do this he must work with Olivia Hale, the by the book lawyer. Sure some of these soldiers have no hope, but some have Ben.

I have never seen two characters that just should be together but can't get out of their heads enough to realize it. It took a while for me to start this book. Normally when a Jessica Scott book is on my Kindle I rush to devour it, but with this one I took my time. I knew it was going to be the last in this series for a number of months; I wanted to savor it. And savor it I did.

I received this book from the publisher via NetGalley for my honest review and I have it preordered to arrive on my Kindle on release day!

Check out my complete review (with quotes) on release day 3/4/2014 at <http://tbqspersonalbookpalace.blogspot...>
