



The Marine's Embrace

Beth Andrews

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If only he had something to give her...besides love

He's only looking for a room and a fresh start, but Zach finds more than he'd bargained for when he checks into Fay Lindemuth's bed-and-breakfast. The single mom intrigues him with her quiet strength and gentle beauty. He knows he should keep his distance from Fay and her young sons. Not only is she still hung up on her ex-husband, but as an ex-marine, Zach Castro has no idea what he can offer them. No matter how much he begins to feel for her...

The Marine's Embrace Details

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From Reader Review The Marine's Embrace for online ebook

Angela Crockett says

I enjoyed this story. I got an autographed copy of this super romance and I had been saving it for one of those. . . blah days. I ended up putting it in the car for dr. appointments and travel reading. What can I say poor Fay had been through so much but I started the story wanted to shake some sense into her. I knew she was struggling with wanting, needing her ex to be back with her and the boys (been there, done that) But apparently the ex was a user and knew how to string her along. Don't you hate men that prey upon the weaknesses of their women?

Then there was Zach trying to make a new start. Losing his arm and leg in Iraq, Zack can see Fay's struggle. All the things that he would want to avoid, two small boys and their mother struggling is just what he needed to find what was missing in his life. Great story. A real heart warmer.

Kate Vale says

A part of the In Shady Grove series, this story focuses on Fay Lindemuth, the manager of her brother's B&B. Fay is still battling her poor self-image and desire to get back with her ex-husband, a real sleazeball. When Zach Castro shows up, the bastard Bartasavich brother, she doesn't quite know what to make of the wounded veteran, now missing an arm and a leg. Her younger son is certain he's a monster, and her older son is challenged by him, but what about her? Attracted? She can't be. After all, she still wants to get back with her ex-.

But that's not healthy, a conclusion she is loathe to confront or accept--until Zach's comments suggest that she has more strength than she realizes, that she can be her own person. But how can Fay become what she has never believed about herself? If you shy away from stories that deal with difficult issues such as depression, don't read this book. However, if you are challenged to come along with a character who feels all too real and human, this is the summer read for you. And that handsome Marine with a heart of gold isn't bad either.

Susan says

Good book, with unusually realistic look at depression and its effects on a person's entire life. We first see Fay as she has awakened from sleeping with her ex-husband, to find that he is attempting to sneak away. She is rather whiny, begging him not to go, and wondering what she did wrong. Shane is cold, making excuses, and leaves without even a nice word. Fay doesn't understand his actions, since she's so sure that they are going to get back together. Shortly after that, she begins to descend into a funk, but has to pull herself together to take care of her boys.

At this point I really wanted to shake her, smack her, tell her to open her eyes. Shane is only using her, and she can't see it. However, we do start to learn that Fay has a real problem with self esteem and depression, and I began to feel a bit sorry for her. Though I still wanted her to wake up and see the truth, I could see that it was going to be a struggle for her.

Zach has come to Shady Grove to try to get his own life back together. He lost an arm and a leg in the Marines and is trying to figure out what comes next. One of his half brothers lives in Shady Grove, and Zach

gets a job working for him. His relationship with his half brothers has been a bit rocky, as Zach is the illegitimate one. He holds great resentment against his father because of the way his mother was treated. I liked the way that he and Kane came to an understanding, with Kane treating Zach as any other employee. Zach's independence comes through when he refuses the apartment over the pub, and instead looks for his own lodging. He ends up at Fay's B&B.

Their initial meeting is a little rough. Fay thinks he looks dangerous, with her imagination off and running. Zach thinks she's a bit flaky, but eventually accepts a room. Then he witnesses a visit (more like a confrontation) from her ex-husband's pregnant fiancée. She's in shock and he helps her out, but realizes that she has more issues than he thought. He figures that, even though he's attracted to her, it's better to stay away from her. Even so, he again comes to her aid when he witnesses her trying to gather the courage to confront Shane while being fussed at by her best friend. I liked the way that he stepped in and rather than telling her what to do the way everyone else does, tells her what her options are and that what she does is up to her and no one else.

This is the beginning of an interesting relationship. Zach is drawn to her in spite of her problems. They become friends, with Zach connecting with her sons and being the kind of example their father isn't. He and Fay become workout buddies, as he helps her see that exercise can help with her moods. All the time, we see how close Zach is getting to her, and how much he starts to care. Fay is getting closer to Zach also, and his influence helps her break the cycle with Shane. Her feelings for him start to grow, but she's not sure that she can believe what she feels is real. She gathers the courage to make advances to him, but then panics the next morning and pushes him away. I ached for Zach because he cared so much and her reaction hurt him badly. I loved that it was the pregnant ex-fiancée that pointed out to Fay what an idiot she was being, and that if she wanted Zach she was going to have to go after him. I enjoyed her big moment at the end and seeing the beginnings of the woman she could be, and the one that Zach has seen all along.

I really liked Fay's sons. Like most kids, they are pretty adaptable, and they soon accept Zach just as he is. There are several really great scenes as they interact with him in their own styles. I also loved seeing how he treats them when they're being obnoxious little twits.

I did not like Maddie at all in this book. She treated Fay like she was an idiot and kept telling her what to do instead of supporting her. I liked seeing Zach tell her off, and Fay finally stand up to her. It was an eye opening experience for Maddie.

Harlequin Books says

Miniseries: In Shady Grove

Donna Repsher says

I received an ARC of this title in exchange for an honest review and here it is: 3 stars.

This is the first novel I've read by this author, and one of the titles in her Shady Grove series. This installment is about Fay Lindemuth, who is managing her brother's bed and breakfast inn, raising her two young sons, trying as hard as she can to get her ex-husband, Shane, to return to her, all while battling a severe case of depression and anxiety. Having experienced both conditions firsthand, the author did a fairly good job of portraying the convoluted and delusional thinking and the cognitive dissonance, panic attacks,

self-blame, fear, need to hide, need to pretend, need to cling, and the tendency to withdraw into oneself, experienced by those dealing with a depression/anxiety disorder--a condition no one but those who have experienced it can fully comprehend. This novel comes as close as anything I've read on the subject to making the reader feel and understand this disorder. While I find this commendable, I think the author went a little overboard, which, rather than making the reader understand Fay's emotional state, made her come off as pathetic rather than sympathetic.

We first meet Fay's ex-husband, Shane, as he's creeping from her bedroom in the wee hours of the morning, hoping to get away before Fay wakes up. She's clinging to a marriage that ended years earlier and blaming herself for the fact that her husband is a lying, womanizing cheater, one who is still using Fay for sex and money, and making her believe the lie that he wants to get back together and mend their marriage, while ignoring the fact that he has absolutely no relationship with his own two young sons. He's a manipulative bastard, and, although her friends and family keep reminding her of that fact, Fay desperately clings to the hope that all will be well, and what she really needs is to grown a backbone.

Into Fay's life walks wounded, double amputee, Zach Castro, who is missing most of his right arm and right leg. He's the illegitimate son of the wealthy Bartasavich family, and he's only recently been released from a rehab facility, coming back to Shady Grove to ask for a job at bar owned and operated by his half-brother while trying to figure out what to do with the rest of his life. Not wanting to be a burden, he decides to stay at the bed and breakfast rather than with any of his family members. He's attracted to Fay the moment he first sees her, and so begins his attempt to teach her how to deal with her issues of depression and self-doubt, because he's been through his own type of hell dealing with his own injuries, both mental and physical.

While I liked the original concept of each of these two wounded characters try to help heal each other and coming to terms with a reality neither of them ever expected, I found that the pace of their relationship developed so slowly and ponderously, that I became so tired of Fay's histrionics that I couldn't understand what Zach saw in her and I began to lose patience with her and with the story, which, after slowly dragging on, winds up so quickly at end of the novel that it felt rushed. While I commend the author's attempt to explore and tackle this difficult subject, I felt that the pacing of the story was inconsistent.

Becky says

Phew--this one was a tough one to read at times. A very realistic (or so it appears from the outside, anyway) portrayal of depression--sometimes it was all too easy to be tempted to adapt the attitude of Fay's friends and family: why can't she just leave her ex at the curb, already? Get over him and move on? OMG, especially at the beginning I just wanted to *shake* her--but yeah, I completely understand why she had to find her way to putting him in the past by herself. I loved watching her discover her inner strength (mostly) on her own--Zach helped point her in the right direction, definitely, but it was very much Fay's own struggle and triumph. Their romance is almost an afterthought to the bigger struggles they're both dealing with--her depression, toxic ex, and dependence on others; his moving on with his life after losing an arm and a leg in the Marines--but truly, that's how it needed to be. There's much more to them finding their HEA than just discovering the right person to make that journey with.

Though I'd really like to see more of them as they continue on their way--perhaps Josie could have her own book, and Fay and Zach could be secondary characters? (And that's something I never thought I'd even consider at the beginning of this one, since Josie's the nineteen-year-old Fay's reprehensible ex impregnated and then left in a hotel room far from everything she knew...but hey, right in the same town as his ex and

their two kids. Total prince...though Josie herself didn't quite seem like a sympathetic character at first. Until suddenly, she was.)

I definitely appreciated the fact that Fay's two boys weren't model children. The oldest was a bit of a mouthy brat used to getting his own way, and the youngest had a tendency to be on the timid side (though he could give his brother as good as he got when needed). It all fit with their mother's self esteem issues and struggles with depression. Underneath it all, they're sweet boys--hopefully as Fay continues to grow stronger and under Zach's positive influence they'll straighten up. They showed promise when Zach let them help in the kitchen (some of my favorite scenes, btw.)

I've gotten behind in the In Shady Grove series--clearly it's time to catch up!

Rating: 4 stars / B+

I received a complimentary copy in exchange for an honest review.

Maria says

This one was better from the wounded heroine's perspective than from the wounded hero's one. What seemed to be the hero's initial overwhelming sadness become diluted in the heroine's big issues and problems, that were depicted well but overlapped the male character. I wanted more hero and less heroine.

Mindy says

I like a slow burn romance as much as the next person but this one was so slow to take off that it felt like she had to wrap up too many loose ends in the last ten percent of the book. It was good right up till then. Then it felt really rushed and forced and the characters actions seemed out of place.

Sandravides says

This story started very interesting relationship. Zach is drawn to her in spite of her problems. They become friends, Zach connecting with her sons and Fay become workout buddies, he helps her see that exercise can help control with her moods. Zach is ex Marines with his own issues .

Books and Spoons says

Refreshingly real, strikingly honest, brutally beautiful, a study of a human mind, of depression and how it can affect a person, on all the aspects of their life.

The story got so real, it was impossible not to get emotionally involved. The actions, thoughts, and behavior of the characters got me irritated, made me laugh, made me furious, had me in tears. It was like I had to go through the same process as the characters did, of acceptance, forgiveness, learning to love again, not others, but ourselves.

And I am not saying the journey with the characters was easy, entertaining, or fun. It was amusing at times, alluring at others, but mostly it was harsh look into the deep inside, to question and to understand the reasons, motivations, and the expectations we have when we behave in certain ways.

The story took some time to get into, I was highly irritated with Fay, until more of her history was unveiled. Her best friend I never warmed up to, I just wished her manipulating ways to vanish away. I loved the kids, they were the reason for many laughs and smiles, with their authentic curiosity, loving hearts, and brave souls.

After the scene was set and the story got flowing, I gushed the rest of wishing there would have been more. After the bit slow start, the ending felt rushed, wrapped up too fast. But still, the story was complete, and the ending satisfactory, I just wished for a little picture towards the future, confirming that they made it.

There are some stories that stay with you, they manage to open up a new window in your mind, and give you a new view of the scenery. This story with its raw beauty did that for me, given lot to ponder and wonder for the days to come.

~ Four Spoons and a teaspoon on the side
