



Letters from Home

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Librarian's note: Alternate cover edition of ASIN B00GETKXAI.

An Army doctor, Lena Rodriguez has always been too busy with school or the Army for romance. But the letters she received during deployment have captured her heart. Back home for the holidays, she awaits Christmas morning to meet the man who has turned her life upside down.

When Zack Benson watched his best friend's sister Lena leave for Afghanistan, he knew he had to tell her he loved her. So he sent her anonymous love letters. Now that she's home, he realizes he's made a tactical error. Lena has fallen for the man in those letters but still thinks of him as a brother. He has to convince her otherwise because if he succeeds, he'll get the best Christmas present ever. But if he fails, he could lose her for good.

Letters from Home Details

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Author : Beth Rhodes

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From Reader Review Letters from Home for online ebook

Dee says

Review Copy Provided by Publisher

Ever since I read about Steven Spielberg's War Letters, I've been fascinated by books, both romance novels and non-fiction that feature war letters. So when I saw this one in the list of ARC reviews, I was intrigued. Unfortunately, while the premise was good, the story just didn't quite work for me. Novellas are hard for me because invariably I end up wanting more. In this instance, I felt like the author had a good idea – the secret admirer writing letters – but tried to cram too much into the 80pg(ish) novella. I think it would have worked better as a long story where the characters could be more developed.

That being said, I had some issues with the age of the characters – Lena is supposedly an Army doctor, but as far as I can figure, she is only in her mid-20's (maybe late-20's at the most). The timing just doesn't work – 4 years undergrad, 4 years of med school. And no mention of her med school within the story line, only her undergrad was mentioned – which kind of just struck me as weird. IMHO, her being a medic (enlisted) would have been more believable and also done away with what would have been fraternization if Zack had remained in the military (as he was enlisted and her an officer). But that is just my military experience speaking out...for anyone not familiar with the military, it probably wouldn't be as noticable.

I do think that the author has potential and i'll be interested to see what she writes in the future – I'm just sorry that this one didn't quite work for me. Overall, I gave it 2.5 stars.

Joel says

Lots of passion and twists

Ms. Rhodes recommended this book for me to read as my first romance and I am glad she did. She's a terrific storyteller. The story has a huge and unexpected twist that boosted this to 5 stars for me. A great read!

BookLover says

This was an okay read for me. Why Zach continued to keep his identity as the "love letter writer" a secret after he started pursuing Lena romantically didn't make a lot of sense to me. There were also too many gaps in between plot developments. It was like reading a story in fast forward.

Calatasde says

WOW! This one was a very cute story.

Elena aka Lena is an army Doctor. She left her hometown for the army. In the same time after she left home, she received a lot letters. And this captured his heart. Returning home for holiday the letter man and

Lena is going to meet on Christmas Morning.

Zack is so in love with his best friend's sister. He was in love in a long time and he had to tell her how he feels. So he sends her letters. Now she's home and he's so afraid that he could lose her forever.

Now he has to make his move quick and right. Because she has another man who wants her.

This book was like a first was cute. It's my favorite Christmas story too. The writing was right and it's not complicated. Also it was quick read so yes I did finish in 1 hour. I loved how Zack thinks. I loved how Lena is responsible. Also I loved how ... well I loved everything!

Shelley Chastagner says

This was a really fun quick read. I liked the taste we got of Lena's large Catholic, Hispanic family. Her over-protective older brother Mike was great. The only thing that wasn't made clear was WHY it took Zach so freakin' long to tell Lena he wanted a relationship with her. They grew up together yada, yada, but really? The woman has gone through college, medical school and joined the military with a tour of duty under her belt. They even spent some of her time in the military working together and he didn't have the guts to start something then? Maybe I missed it and it will be clearer when I read through it again in the future. Overall the story line was entertaining and all of the characters likable.

Adult read

Romantic Reads and Such says

I'm a sucker for these stories of friends-to-lovers and this one was super sweet. There are so many complications that stem from moving yourself from an honorary member of the family to potential love interest and Zack has decided that his feelings for Lena make it worth the effort. I loved how he seduced her with anonymous letters but didn't realize how effective it was until she came home. Now he has to battle not only her brotherly feelings for him but her romantic feelings for her mystery man. I really liked the fact that they started to act on their relationship before she found out his true identity because it meant that their feelings had a stronger base than whatever ideas she had about her writer.

Letters From Home is a delightful, light romance – full of warmth and humor. With irresistible characters, realistic dialogue and genuine emotions, Strasser delivers an enjoyable holiday treat.

ARC provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest and fair review

Mayas says

Oh, I truly enjoy Elena and Zack's story. It was light, romantic, and awe-inspiring. This is a must-read holiday theme with a military theme as well.

Maria says

Christmas day is always a magic day. But for Lena Rodriguez, a doctor and a soldier who has never had enough time for love, it may be even better. Because this Christmas she is going to meet her soul mate, the man who won her heart through some love letters she received during deployment. The only problem is that she has no idea whom he is! Can a love blossomed thanks to some beautiful, romantic letters become real? Yes. If that man happens to be the person you have wanted to be with since you were a child.

I enjoyed reading this story. I thought that the plot was engaging and the characters were likeable. I especially loved the Rodriguez family and the bond between parents and siblings. It was really lovely to witness their banter and the love each of them showed for the others. But there were also some things that I was not too fond of. Such as an event that occurred right before the ending that left me speechless! I was savouring the sweet, lovely part of the story and I was sure nothing bad would happen. I was ready for the most romantic ending ever... and instead something terrible happened! Luckily, a happy ending was required and I expected it, because this was a Christmas story and it had to be that way. So in the end I accepted what happened and the way it happened.

If you like contemporary books and do not mind a little spice and a few steamy moments in your reads, "Letters from Home" is the book for you!

Note: There is the description of one intimate scene, though not overly descriptive.

Rating: 3.5 out of 5 stars.

Cocktails and Books says

This review was originally posted on Cocktails and Books.

This book was reviewed by a member of the review staff at Cocktails and Books. The name of the reviewer can be found under the post categories.

Anna Marie says

There is nothing that makes me more stinkin' mad than an author who writes a book with 'LETTERS' in the title that contains *NO* letters. You LIED to me! Here I am, wanting to read the correspondence that makes the woman fall in love with this man, and there are sentence-long excerpts TWICE in this book... and that's it!

Worse, the author doesn't develop characters or relationships. We're thrown into this HUGE Mexican family with siblings and friends and people coming and going (who are never described at all)... and we're supposed to just accept the mess and go with it. That's not writing!

More, the author's ideas are completely disjointed. The story doesn't flow, it's like trying to read broken English... but more along the lines of broken thoughts. Because of the choppy writing, lack of description of places, lack of description of characters, and lack of relationship development... it's just NOT a good read.

The premise *sounded* good. Brother's best friend who grew up as part of the family always liked her, she

joined the Army so he writes to her anonymously from home and she falls in love with him, now she's home and he's going to declare himself.

But even that! He declares himself BEFORE the big reveal several times, and then the big reveal is a dud, because ((spoilers not worth keeping secret)), and... and... it's a convoluted MESS. With no characterization, no description, not plot development, no LETTERS...!!!!

Mad. You've made me angry. Take this crap back to the drawing table and flesh it out. Make your readers *FEEL* something, for pity's sakes.

Teresa says

This was a sweet quick read. I liked the characters. I even shed a few tears. What can I say? I'm a sap.

Lauren ♥ Inked in Chapters says

You can read this and other reviews at [Madison Says](#)

2.5 Stars

Zack Benson has been in love with Elena Rodriguez for... um... forever? He just hasn't ever gotten up the balls to tell her and when he FINALLY decides to do it, she's stepping onto a plan headed for Afghanistan. After graduating medical school, Lena joined the Army, and was on her way to her first deployment. I guess what they say is true, timing is everything. Zack gets this bright idea. He'll send her one letter for each month of her tour. By the time Lena comes home she's head-over-heels for her secret admirer. Of course Zack didn't sign the letters... *eye roll* He just sent them off and figured he'd deal with the aftermath when she came home. He asked her to meet him at a gazebo on Christmas morning. Now Lena has to decide if holding on to "letter boy" is worth it when Zack obviously has feelings for her and is standing right in front of her.

No more reliving the past. She wanted an adult relationship of mutual trust, commitment, and affection, in the present day. She wanted to move beyond the past. She had fallen in love with the man in those letters. The man who had spoken to her of his dreams and desires – his desire for her.

Silly girl. How could she not see that Zack and the letter writer are the same person? At first it's like she doesn't even contemplate it. She just assumes he only thinks of her as a friend/sister and writes him off completely. There were a few times when my heart literally hurt for the poor guy. Of course, he could have just admitted to writing the letters sooner and saved himself a whole lot of worry/heartache. I understand fearing rejection, but at some point Lena would find out anyway, might as well just speed up the process. Of course, if he did that it would have turned this novella into a very short story.

He wanted to hear her whisper his name and say that she loved him. But she'd fallen in love with the letter guy, who was only a part of him. The silly romantic part ...he should have taken more time to swear or tell a dirty joke or two.

What if she didn't love the rest of him?

Eventually Lana finds out that Zack is her secret admirer only to have the unthinkable happen. Slightly depressing... I promise you that the story ends in a HEA. Although it's upsetting, it's not heart shattering.

There isn't much to say about this novella. It's basically a story of unrequited love – only it's not all at the same time. Lena and Zack have both had feelings for one another. Zack has just finally decided enough is enough and stepped up to the plate... slowly, and with extreme caution, but that's more than I can say for Lena. I had a hard time connecting with her character. I was on board with her being a hard working military woman – very independent; both physically and emotionally stronger than her family members think. But beyond that, I felt nothing for her. And while Zack was a very sweet man, that's ALL he was to me. I couldn't get past the fact that he wouldn't just tell her. TELL HER ALREADY!

This is a sweet, fast, easy holiday read. Something to pick up in between your wrapping or on a cold night as you curl up with a warm blanket in front of the fire. If my ARC didn't have a glitch where every "fl" or "fi" combination was absent from words, I probably would have enjoyed it even more. Using context clues to figure out the correct word in the sentence got old after a while. I'm sure that will be a non-issue when it comes to your copy, but I just needed to vent. It made me a little crazier than I already am. :) *Letters from Home* was my first run in with Bethanne Strasser, and while I wasn't blown away, I wouldn't count her out just yet.

Jennifer says

3 Stars

This was a cute (and quick) holiday read featuring a military heroine who receives mysterious love letters while overseas. I really liked both main characters and most of the side characters especially the heroine's family. I'm not dying to read more in the series, but I might if they go on sale someday.

Jessica says

I'm a big fan of unrequited love and when I came across the synopsis to Bethany Strasser's *LETTERS FROM HOME*, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to review it.

Character development is difficult in a novella because you're limited with what you can do and Strasser gives us strong characters. Lena is a doctor in the United States Army and likes to keep busy. She can come off a little too strong and at times I didn't like her, but it's easy to understand why she acts the way she does. Then we have Zack who missed his opportunity to tell Lena how he feels! I liked Zack and he's honorable. He's had to make some tough decisions, but he's made them and is ready to move on with his life. We have a variety of secondary characters who play a role include Lena's family. I liked her family and I really enjoyed how Strasser incorporated them into the narrative.

While I liked Strasser's *LETTERS FROM HOME*, I was never shown why Lena was special. Why did Zack carry a torch for her all these years? We're told they've been friends since Zack moved into the area and grew up with her brother, but we aren't given any details regarding their friendship growing up other than Lena's family accepted him. I would have liked that because it would have added a little more depth to their relationship. Also, we're told they couldn't be together because Zack is considered family. I can understand the hesitation especially since everyone knows Zack, but if he was okay to hang out with then surely he'd be

okay for Lena to date? As for the premise, it's cute and old fashioned regarding courting someone via letters. I just have to wonder how Zack really went about it. I mean Strasser does explain how the letters were set up, etc, but how much did Zack disguise of their history in those letters to Lena? Could she not have recognized the handwriting? These questions kept popping up and wouldn't let go. Maybe in the end, Lena did know it was Zack, but didn't want to believe it was him.

I don't want to give spoilers, but my favorite two scenes involved both Zack and Lena. I loved the homecoming party her family gives her. Lena zeros in on a possible suspect for the letters and really liked Zack's reaction when he realizes who it is. Then of course, the scene when Lena realizes who sent her the letters had me cheering.

Overall, LETTERS FROM HOME is a cute novella. I can easily see this being adapted for TV and maybe shown during the holidays. If you're looking for a heartfelt romance, then Bethanne Strasser's LETTERS FROM HOME is something you'll want to look at.

This review and more are posted at Literary, etc.

Cheryl Sanders says

Someone was writing Lena anonymous letters from home, while she was deployed, and she was falling in love with him. He vowed to tell her who he was Christmas morning at the park. Zack has known Lena and her family for 25 years. He is her brother Mike's best friend. He's also the one writing the letters. She's on leave for the holidays and while she's home, Zack is making every effort to show her how he feels. She still doesn't know he's the anonymous one or at least that's what he thinks. Wait until you read about what happens on Christmas morning. SHOCKING!!!

There was so much love between Zack and Lena. Zack waited so long for her and never thought of giving up. This story was well written and unfolded perfectly for the amount of pages it contained. It's a sexy, romantic, feel-good Christmas story. I loved it! Thank you Bethanne Strasser for writing such a wonderful story set around the Christmas holiday. I definitely look forward to reading more from this author.

I received a copy for an honest review.
