



A Marine for Christmas

Beth Andrews

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Growing up in her perfect sister's shadow wasn't easy. Especially because JC Montgomery had been in love with Liz's boyfriend for as long as she could remember. Brady Sheppard, a guy who thought of her as only the kid sister. But that all changed when Liz married somebody else and Brady ended up in bed with JC. It was like a dream come true. Except now JC's pregnant. And Brady's a wounded marine, so it's going to be difficult for him to get down on one knee and tell her she's his reason for living.... But he will.

Because she still believes in Santa Claus.

A Marine for Christmas Details

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Lizzie says

This was a well done, realistic story featuring the worst characters ever, leaving me on the fence how to rate it. To be clear upfront, protagonist JC rapes her sister's ex, who is blackout drunk the night of her sister's wedding. He initiated a kiss but she is sober, had been asked to bring him safely home, and knows he is in no place to consent, much less offer her the fairytale romance for which she so clearly hopes. She and the rest of her family then spend the rest of the book talking about how Brady 'got her pregnant' and wasn't stepping up! She even lays the blame for the absence of birth control on Brady, despite being sober to his very drunk the night in question.

Her sister Liz is a piece of work, selfish and cowardly, in love with her new husband but intent on keeping Brady on the hook as her high school sweetheart who must always carry a torch and may never again love as he did with her, certainly not with her unimpressive chubby little sister.

JC, equally selfish and a scary rapist, is supposed to be an object of empathy because she self-sabotages out of pain for being compared to skinny, smart Liz her whole life. I wanted to shake her out of her fantasy of Brady suddenly loving her and incidentally marrying her and removing from her the responsibility of being a self-supporting adult.

Brady is a mess and deserved better. His family is loving and supportive- I would happily read more about his sequel-bait brothers. But I was offended by JC's ridiculous belief that she had 'healed' Brady with her love. Ick.

The whole mess was engrossing and felt very real- a struggling vet with a drinking problem, competitive dynamics between sisters who have been labeled the success and the loveable loser, the unplanned pregnancy. But I certainly could not believe in a sustainable, mature relationship between JC and Brady after she abused his trust so horribly, when he was so vulnerable.

Sally says

Brady is a troubled soul, injured whilst on a mission in Afghanistan and then to receive a letter from his finance to say that she no longer loves him and its over. That was over two years ago and now the love of his life is getting married and he is there to watch it. Drowning his sorrow in whiskey seems to be the only way to numb the pain, after all there is no hope when all dreams have been broken.

JC is the little sister of the woman who broke Brady's heart. Trying to help him back to his home after refusing to leave the wedding was a bit of a task. JC has always had a crush on Brady and when he kisses her after making sure he gets home in one piece she wished he was thinking of her not her sister. A stupid mistake leads to consequences that they both have to face. JC accepts that she will never be loved by Brady like she loves him and refusing to get his help is the only way to stay in control.

This is a quick easy read that has so many emotions and most of them are coming from a very sexy, broken marine. Really enjoyed this story, so much so that I couldn't put it down. This story is heartfelt and each character has issues that they have to overcome and when is the best time to do that? Christmas of course!!!

Ana says

J.C. has been in love with her sister's boyfriend for a long time. And when Brady reached for her - she slept him, and like it usually happens in Harlequin land, she got pregnant. She has some issues and insecurities, mostly because her sister was always the prettier, more successful one in the family. It doesn't help that Brady is still in love with Liz, the sister.

Brady had some rough times. First the his fiancée sent him a Dear John letter while he was in Afghanistan, then he was badly injured by a land mine that killed a friend of his. He is suffering from PTSD and is using alcohol to deal with flashbacks and nightmares. He is seriously messed up.

J.C. and Brady are okay characters, but J.C. did put up with a lot of Brady's baggage. And Brady was occasionally an ass. But he had good moments when I almost loved him, until he does something incredibly stupid and hurts J.C. (which happened a couple of times).

But the worst thing in the book was Liz. I hate her. Her attitude toward J.C. and the way she more or less minded Brady and J.C.'s relationship. "How could he love you when he's still in love with me?" - that isn't the exact quote, but the way I understood her stand. And the way J.C. let Liz manipulate her is annoying as well.

Brady, although far from perfect, is the one who really made an impression on me.

Rating:

3.5 stars

Kellison says

2.5 Stars.

It's...weird that the hero, Brady, had dated—was even engaged to—the heroine's sister. And I could never really get over the fact that he called Jane her sister's name the first time they slept together. Also, Liz, the sister, sort of sucked most of the story. She's selfish and entitled and superior. She actually wrote a Dear John letter to Brady while he was deployed to Afghanistan and then hooked up with another man the next day—way before he would have received the letter. Classy, honey.

In addition to all of this, the initial hookup between Brady and Jane made me a little uncomfortable. It was so impersonal. And then his reaction when she tells him she's pregnant? But then he uses her to soothe his PTSD, which I am glad somebody eventually gets him some help for. But the whole situation seems unsustainable; Jane's family is angry at him for coming to Liz's wedding and then for being a jerk to Jane once she is pregnant (and I guess for assuming he slept with Jane to get back at Liz, though this theory is all kinds of insulting to Jane since it implies she's only attractive to him as a tool for revenge and also implies that Liz isn't over him though she just married someone else); Carter, Liz's new husband, can't stand Brady—though I never quite understood this because, dude, you're the one who stole Liz from him, he never did anything to you except date and propose to her first; and then there is the little factor that days before

declaring his love for Jane, Brady was still shouting that he'd always love Liz. Yeah, I'm just not seeing this HEA working out long term for everybody.

Lenora Wilson says

Wow

This book was/is amazing. Brady and J.C. Were incredible. They didn't start off in the typical way that most people beginning a relationship start. My heart broke for both of them. J.C. was always living in her sisters shadow. Never feeling like she enough. Always second best. And to be honest Brady didn't help that case for a while. But like in real life you really can't appreciate anything until it's gone.

Christine (KizzieReads) says

I can't root for a couple, when the entire book is filled with him wanting her sister after she dumped him, and his continuing to tell her that he doesn't want her or their baby. For one, why would anyone want to be with their sister's ex after they had been together for 12 years?? That is disgusting. Or with someone who continues to tell you he doesn't want you? Sorry, but no. Not going to happen. I can understand that he had PTSD, which is a bad, harsh thing to have. He wasn't rude because of it, he drank because of that and to rid his mind of his ex. His ex was a piece of work as well. She didn't want him, but she didn't want anyone else to have him either, and thought she was above her sister in all things. Even bashing her to make herself feel better. Just a bad book all around.

Rebecca says

8.9/10

This is absolutely the best harlequin books I have ever read. And I am not being over dramatic. I think I have only ever given these books a max of 4 maybe one other 5 stars, but this was truly phenomenal. no necessarily for the writing entirely but the emotions it evoked in me. The plot was so intense and raw, with several emotional sub plots going on, relationship wise and internally. My heart hurt reading this. It's that feeling you get when you are watching a movie, and a character just dies, but you don't cry the most for the death, but for the pain the other people are suffering from it, their tragedy. (maybe it's just me like that, who knows) That's how it made me feel. the emotion was so vivid and maybe it's because I am an extremely emotional person or whatever but this hit me to the core. It was real and dealt with every aspect of life, that isn't something harsh and vile. Jealousy, pride, independence, insecurities, shame, regret, fear. All of it was handed to me in this book.

Each of the characters had unique characteristics, some I'd idnt necessarily favor but that how it goes right? there is always one character you hate or strongly dislike because there has to be some diversity. Jane was a strong female lead and I admired how independent and selfless she was, even if she did make hopeless decisions at times. But that's a good thing too. at least she has hope in somethings, whereas Brady was the opposite but he made up for it in the end.

This was a fantastic hook that I would definitely recommend. only problem was that this was cut short. maybe around 190 pages at most. Still definitely worth it!

M.J. Fredrick says

Would be 5 stars because I LOVED it, but the conflict was huge and the resolution not so much.

Anne Dirty Girls' Good Books says

This book really exceeded my expectations. The characters were realistic and I quickly liked both of them. I enjoyed that there were no big secrets or misunderstandings. The conflict came from the main characters and their families.

Both of the main characters had a lot of growing up to do and you got to see that happen slowly through the book. That was enjoyable and not rushed.

My only hesitation is that both characters had some pretty big issues to come to terms with, but their resolution seemed to come too easy and too late in the story for me. (view spoiler). However, I still really enjoyed the book overall. Another reminder for me of the gems there are to be found with Harlequin!

shms says

This sucked me in. The quality of writing was so good that even though I didn't like the h, until almost the end it was only after I finished the book that I realised that the quality of writing that makes it real and that it was exactly what I was supposed to feel.

The resolution was difficult to swallow as I just couldn't buy the 'I'll always love her' (the sis), to 'I love you'. It gave me whiplash. Upto that point I was riveted.

Booklover says

hhmmm what do i say ,50% liked it but also 50% disliked it

Brady -J.C loved them but Brady was horrible to J.C through the story only in the end he comes to her ,hated J.C for being such a doormat,she should have made Brady run a little

Liz she was not bitchy but she was jealous n mean towards J.C in some scenes

But basically the story is about how Liz is confused about her feelings but eventually realises she loves her hubby Carter n goes for counselling

Brady ,my heart went out to him ,he is suffering from PTSDpost-traumatic stress disorder and has lost his friends in blast how he has nightmares but eventually accepts in the ned to take help n in respect to J.C must say Idiot who kept holding onto the past not letting it go n hurt J.C worst ways,i would have loved to see Brady grovel n ask for forgiveness ,the forgiving n acceptance of Brady by J.C was rushed in end

but overall book is good

Vintage says

I should have listened to Preeti. It wasn't that this was awful, just not that good.

We're told that the heroine is in love with the hero who was engaged to her older sister. Getting ditched then losing fellow Marines in an ambush and major PTSD has made the hero very, very bitter.

H causes a scene at the sister's wedding, and the h is dispatched to handle him. Drunk as a skunk, they have sex and you know what happens when you have sex in a Harlequin! Unless you want to get pregnant.

Not much to say except the heroine balances between handling the H and his full bore rejection and caving.

The sister is a piece of work. She sent the H a Dear John letter a year ago, but won't let go. Basically wants her cake and eat it too when she warns the sister off the man who will be the father of her child.

NOT a Christmas story.

Laura Beth says

Mixed feelings about this one. Not the alpha male stepping up to the plate that I thought it was, but a broken man trying to heal. Sometimes a whinny male drowning his sorrows in drink. So 2.5 stars for the book.

Nikki says

Not exactly an upbeat Christmas read. But I liked the heroine who, I wish, could have had more strength found through her situation. She just kept getting pushed around by everyone. Her moods/decisions shifted based on how everyone else felt, so it was hard to root for her all the time. The hero made, I'd say, 3 too many mistakes? Just repetitive and didn't try to fix anything till the end so he wasn't worth rooting for. The sister was all over the couple and wouldn't give anyone any peace, she either needed to be in the story less or be the main villain she didn't make sense how she was.

Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

This is not a Christmas read. (Should come with the warning)

Hmmm not a bad book or story per se.

But neither does it fall under my idea of a romance novel.

Not with the more beautiful, more accomplished sister, more selfish, more everything sister hogging much of the book, even getting a pov and definitely a hea of her own.

The once pudgy h has played second fiddle to her older sister all her life. The book didn't have to continue the tradition. So a sloppy seconds tale with the H still besotted with his ex is not my trope at all. The H/sister have been 'in love with each for half their lives'. My mind kept going to the question of how many times they must have had sex. The figure keeps growing exponentially in my head.

The book begins with the sad, mad, drunken H crashing his ex-fiancee/her sister's wedding and upsetting both the families. And then gets the h pregnant on the very same day. There would be no h-H if not for that pregnancy and I can say that very emphatically. (I hate when authors use pregnancies to ease their way) The H-ow do not really resolve their 'thing' till the very end and I wasn't happy about it. The h would have done much better to stay away from him. Those family dinners would always cause uneasiness and doubts, no matter how much they think things have been resolved.
