



Stay

Melinda Minx

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I've made a lot of mistakes—a decade and a half of scars and ink.

I've hurt. I've killed.

But those aren't the mistakes keeping me up at night.

Leaving her was the worst decision of my life.

But I'm back now, and you better fcking believe I'm staying this time.**

MASON

I've been through three wars, but winning Sophie Sinclair back will be harder than any battle. She was the one good thing left in my life, and I abandoned her.

She's furious with me. Even after fifteen years. She looks at me like she wants to kill me. Hell, I'm pretty sure she *does* want me dead.

If she wants me dead, she can get in line. Front and center, where I can see those big doe eyes and freckled cheeks. Besides, she wouldn't be angry with me if she didn't still want me, right?

Just a few weeks. That's all I need, because I have a habit of getting what I want, and I want her.

SOPHIE

I came back to Tuckett Bay to take care of my Dad. The last thing I expected—or wanted—was to see Mason Steel again.

He was my first crush, my first kiss, my first...*everything*.

He walks into the room chest first, and there's enough heat in his blue eyes to melt straight through my cold shoulder. His insufferable smirk gets my heart pounding just like before, but there's no way in hell he deserves a second chance—no way I should even consider it.

One month. That's all he gets. I've got a job waiting for me back in Boston, so what the hell. Maybe watching Mr. Action Figure try to win me back over for the next couple weeks is just the thing I need.

Stay Details

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From Reader Review Stay for online ebook

Suzanne Radcliffe says

Stay is about Mason and Sophie. In high school, they had a passion-filled relationship, albeit short-lived. It was 2001 and right when things were getting really good, 9/11 happened. Mason's younger brother, Eric, enlisted to make the terrorists pay. Mason felt it was his duty to also enlist to make sure Eric stayed safe. Unfortunately, Eric was hit by enemy fire right in front of Mason and died in his arms. Mason's guilt over Eric's death led him to believe he wasn't good enough for Sophie, wondering how he would be able to keep her safe. He ended up staying overseas and not returning home, not even for his parents' funeral. He never wrote back to Sophie after Eric died, effectively abandoning her and breaking his promise to return to her.

Now, fifteen years later, his latest tour is up and he's headed back to his hometown on a mission - to win Sophie back. Sophie dug into her studies after Mason abandoned her, becoming a Ph.D. in pharmacology research. After years of hard work with no breaks or vacations, she burnt out, broke it off with her boyfriend, and went back to stay with her dad and unravel.

When they see each other again, it doesn't seem like fifteen years have passed. They both feel it. But Sophie has promised herself to make Mason feel the pain she did. How long will she hold out? What lengths will Mason go to to win her back? You'll have to read to find out. I liked this story, told in dual POV's. Some chapters went back to their high school relationship and Mason's time in Iraq. It was filled with sweet romance, steamy sex scenes, anger, tragedy, and a great storyline that made me not want to stop reading until I found out what happened.

ViolinVixen says

Mason and Sophie were high school sweethearts for a short, but very intense stretch of time. They both fell hard and fast. Mason was Sophie's first kiss, first boyfriend, first time everything. Then 9/11 happened and Mason's brother felt compelled to enlist immediately to find purpose in life and defend his country from terrorists. Mason, always looking out for his little brother and used to cleaning up his messes, decides that he needs to stick by his brother's side and enlist as well.

The young men head off to basic training and Sophie is left with promises of letters and his safe return to her arms. They keep in touch for about a year after he leaves, but then she stops hearing from him completely. It's like he dropped off the face of the earth. He didn't even come home on leave for his own parents' funeral. He just kept re-enlisting until they wouldn't let him anymore.

Now it's been 15 years since Sophie last saw her first love. She's still nursing her broken heart and she's very angry with him, but when she sees him in person, her body reacts differently than her brain. She still feels so attracted to him and the electricity between them is still there. Sophie isn't ready to forgive him, but with some persistence on Mason's part to get back the only girl he's ever loved and some meddling matchmaking by her father, Sophie gets the push she needs to move forward.

But do they stand a chance? So many things are working against them. Mason is haunted by the things he saw and did overseas and carries so much guilt and grief with him, that he's quite a broken man. Sophie has

never wanted to stay in their small home town and was home just temporarily to take care of her father. Her plans were to move to Boston and get a job using her doctorate degree. She won't want to be tied down to a fisherman in their small coastal town.

Will the ghosts from Mason's past and Sophie's ambitions for the future keep them apart or is their love stronger than all of the obstacles in their way?

There were a few flashback chapters to the start of their relationship in high school and also flashbacks to his time serving overseas. I'm normally not a huge fan of jumping back in time, but these chapters were really vital to understanding the beginning of their acquaintance and the trauma that he is constantly reliving from his time in service.

Great, strong and deeply developed main characters. Very hot chemistry between Mason and Sophie. So many powerful emotions throughout the book too. This book had all the feels for me.

As a side note: I loved Sophie's dad. He was a great secondary character and very important to the storyline.

Standalone. HEA. No cheating. No cliffhanger. Told in alternating, dual POVs.

I voluntarily read an advance reader copy of this book.

Bookbytch5 Janet Gray says

I voluntarily read an advanced copy, OMG loved Sophie and Mason story was a brilliant storyline, it made me cry as well. no matter how long apart they were they still loved each other. could put it down want to see how it all turned out for Mason and Sophie. A must read. another great book from Melinda. bring on the next one

Karen Durant says

Sophie & Mason were high school sweetheart until he broke her heart by joining the military & although she was prepared to wait for him, he wouldn't return her letters. Now 15 yrs later he returns home. When the 2 of them meet, the chemistry they use to share, all comes back. Sophie's still angry at Mason, but decides to let him try to win her back over for the next month as she's got a job waiting in Boston. Will Mason win her back & will Sophie allow him back in her life again?

This was a well written story which kept you reading till the very end.

Lenna Wright-Berry says

I love second chance with reunited lovers coming back together again and this was good story. But to me there is no 'wow' moments, everyone in this tiny fishing town overreacted every time someone said

something they didn't like. Rather it's a younger guy drinking before during on a boat fishing with nets in small team of people, tell the captain he jumps down your throat, even the drunk kid will jump you for saying something wrong. Sofia was always crushing on the bad boy player Mason and one day they struck a deal he helps her in society and she helps him in chemistry class. Homecoming, dating and going all the way for a while until Mason enlisted to keep his baby brother safe, and he left his love behind for 15 years. Now he's back and he will stop at nothing to get Sofia back but she hates him to the core for abandoned her without letters or visiting. Unfortunately she just gives in, I would have loved to see her put up a fight or be hard to get but not spreading eagle. Hot the heat parts it's okay until it reads like he only has so many moves and more spicy vanilla.

Told in both p.o.v and has a HEA, there are parts where Mason has PTSD, health concerns, a handful of chapters of backstory/ history all those years ago plus a chapter of how Mason baby brother Eric came to pass away dying in Mason arms.

ARC was voluntarily exchanged for a honest review

Susan says

**"I've got a hundred million reasons to walk away
But baby, I just need one good one to stay" - "Million Reasons"**

I was just beginning to organize my thoughts for this heartwarming story, when I stopped to watch Lady GaGa perform for the halftime show during this year's Superbowl. I heard her perform the song from which I quoted the above lyrics...they just solidified the beauty and impact this moving, emotional, and sexy story had on me. Ms. Minx captured in this story within this genre of the HEA contemporary romance, some of the torturous emotions our Heroes, our American Warriors suffer and deal with upon their return home. She wheedles in the storyline themes of care for aging parents...career issues...and a father's concern that his super intelligent and highly educated daughter continue to take her earned and rightful place in her field of endeavor. It's a whole lot of story...And I would sell this author short if I did not share with you the beautiful, "hold your breath", erotic scenes complete with all those yummy sexy words that make your spine (and other parts tingle)

Connie says

I received a free copy of this book and I am voluntarily reviewing it.

Loved it. It was a second chance for love, he was in ex-Special Forces, and she was a sweetheart. The characters and the plot development were wonderful. Once I started reading, I couldn't put it down. This was truly a must read book. I highly recommend this book to anyone.

Walaas says

Fell flat

This book could have been good, it had a good start of a story line but it fell off very quickly. The story just seemed unrealistic to me; a guy you love leaves for 15 years with no word and your heartbroken and pissed(rightfully so). Then he comes back and basically expects her to be available, willing, and ready; which she basically is. Oh at one point you think she'll have a back bone and give him shit but noooooo, she walks right back in with open arms. No conversation as to what happened, why, or where have you been Yada yada yada. All they seem to have between the, is good sex. Someone may enjoy this book and that is great; but for me it was definitely a let down.

Amy says

I just finished reading this book today and have to say I really enjoyed it. I found myself really caring about the characters and anxious to see what was going to happen to them. My only complaint (without giving anything away) would be that there were some pretty big events that took place that I expected to have quite an impact on everything and everyone and at first appeared that they would, but then they didn't. Even so, I did really enjoy this book. I look forward to reading more of Ms. Minx's books!

Holly says

Really awesome book. Mason's story was really moving. I also really liked Sophie, she is tough and smart. Highly enjoyed this book and recommend it. I freely reviewed this ARC.

Cheryl Graham-Petit says

Stay is an unbelievably, fast-paced, action-packed, compelling romance story with an intriguing story-line, well-developed characters, danger, heartbreak, suspense, loss, heart-wrenching moments, hot scenes, second chances, true love, and a HEA. The author pulls you into this emotional story and all you can do is go along for the ride.

I volunteered to review an advanced readers copy of this book.

Patty says

Must Read!

Second chance military romance. High school sweethearts. Can they years later reclaim what they once had? The story moves along and the characters are totally believable.

I was drawn in. Very enjoyable.

I recommend this book.

Charlotte Houghton says

i really enjoyed the book about mason and Sophie. it was a lovely story about second chances and love.

Stephanie Tynes says

"I voluntarily reviewed an Advanced Reader Copy of this book."

Holy moly! Melinda does it again. I love it when an author can just break your heart and piece it back together, page by sexy page! The chemistry was off the charts. The backstory, and depth that she goes into for these characters kept me staying up way too long reading! It was fantastic!

Sara MacRae Long says

An emotionally charged read. Endearing. Great chemistry. Sub-plots that drive the story forward. Strong, independent, and multi-layered characters with heart.

Mason Steel's battle wounds may have healed, but it took a long time for the resulting scars to shape his perspective. He realized he had made a horrible error in judgement when he didn't keep his promise to return home to Sophie after his tour in Afghanistan was complete – that is, not until 15 years later when he finally called it quits and returned to his hometown. Mason hadn't even returned home for his parents' funerals – he was, after all, a failure: he hadn't been able to protect his brother Eric from being killed in battle (the reason why he had enlisted in the first place after 9/11 was to keep him safe), and then so much time had passed after he had stopped reading and responding to Sophie's letters – she didn't deserve to be stuck with a failure. But the reader has known since the beginning that there's more depth to Mason than what he lets on – when he stands behind Sophie in school and helps her build up her self-confidence, eventually falling for her.

Mason and Sophie have a special connection, so when Mason no longer answers her letters and doesn't return home, Sophie is heartbroken, but she forces herself to move on. When Mason eventually returns to their hometown a decade and a half later than expected, Sophie – who is working at the local Crab Shack while she's caring for her dad during some reflective time between jobs – sees a ghost: Mason Steel. He has come back and joined the fishing fleet. She erects a wall and hardens herself against him, but Sophie's dad arranges for Mason to come over for dinner. He thinks it will drive Sophie to leave town to pursue a job, but is there a chance they can have a second chance?

Author Melinda Minx creates relatable characters with realistic personalities, a splash of humor, and authentic emotions and chemistry, and the storyline was believable, steady-paced, and entertaining. Mason and Sophie shared combustible chemistry, and their love was sincere, sweet, and sexy. Sophie's dad Hank was a strong secondary character who helped thread the story together, and the HEA was delightfully fun and satisfying.

