



Return to Glory

Sara Arden

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In Glory, Kansas, the best bakery in three counties may not only bring together ingredients for sweet treats, but be the place where—through the powerful mix of friendship, community and a well-stocked kitchen—a wounded hero can forge a forever kind of love.

Jack McConnell's back in the hometown he left behind five years ago, battle-scarred and feeling like half a man. But Betsy Lewis only sees the hero who saved her life and set her heart on fire. Now she's burning to save his life in return. She'll use every trick she's got up her sleeve, from her generous natural assets to her talent for baking, to coax Jack out from the bottom of his whiskey bottle.

At first, Jack responds to Betsy like any red-blooded man would. He's always denied his attraction to the innocent girl he used to know, but he's returned to find Betsy's grown into a full-on woman with strength enough for both of them. Until Jack realizes the only way to conquer his demons and be worthy of the hero's mantle she's pinned to his shoulders is to save Betsy one last time—from himself.

Return to Glory Details

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From Reader Review Return to Glory for online ebook

Home. Love. Books. says

To read this review and others like it check out my site at www.homelovebooks.com

I love a good small town romance, nothing like everyone knowing everyone, and more than that everyone knowing everyone else's business, makes for some interesting situations for sure. This book appealed to me not just because of the small town aspect but also because of the returning military member, I do love a good military romance.

So what I liked most about this book was Sara Arden's portrayal of Jack. Jack is a returning military member, and like a lot of the military who returns from war, he did not come home in one piece. Jack has to overcome not just the physical effects of war but also the psychological. I think it can be really hard to have a character with PTSD, especially since unless you have been there yourself, it's not really something that is easy to describe. I thought that Arden did a really good job with it though. Jack has some serious PTSD issues, and right off the jump in this book the reader is confronted with those issues, Jack contemplates committing suicide, which was both hard to read while at the same time making me really want the character of Jack to come out on the other side of this disorder intact and happy.

I really liked Betsy. It can be really hard on the loved ones of people who are suffering from things like PTSD, so it takes quite the person to voluntarily come into a situation where the relationship isn't really established to begin with. I loved that she was just completely unwilling to let Jack give up, she made him confront his issues, and wanted to help him every step of the way. I liked that Betsy was realistic about the situation, not just assuming she could help him without getting any professional help, I loved that (I don't like when characters assume their love can heal everything, it's just not realistic).

Overall I thought this was a really good romance. It does tackle some heavy issues, but it was really sweet watching Jack's evolution. I did think that towards the end of the book the story started to kind of slow down and not be as compelling, but it was still a good read, easily recommended.

Kay says

Jack is a wounded veteran with issues. He has seen his share of violence and death. He suffers from PTSD and he feels like his life is not worth living. Betsy has always held a torch for Jack and when he returns to Glory, she is determined to save him from himself. She pushes him to his limit in hopes of getting him out of his darkness. Jack tries to fight it and his walls slowly crumble as he begins to confront his demons.

This is a 2nd chance love and I thought it was good. I liked how Jack and Betsy both had flaws and a past that was hard to face. I enjoyed reading their journey through finding each other again as well as overcoming their personal battles. The sexiness was fun and the reader can truly feel their connection coming off of the page.

I do feel like there wasn't anything too different within this small town romance that I haven't read about before. The story mainly takes place within a couple of houses, Betsy's bakery and the VA support group. I would have liked to get to know the town more where we would actually meet more of the people in Glory.

However, I do see potential in this contemporary romance series and the author has some secondary characters set up nicely for future books.

*ARC provided by Harlequin HQN via Netgalley

Mary says

Betsy has been in love with Jack, her brother's best friend, since she was a young girl. When he comes home wounded from war she's determined to make him well again using any means that will work. Jack is determined to make her see that he's not the man for her.

Sara Arden's descriptions of the wounded warrior, Jack, seemed completely believable. I also bought into the way Betsy felt about him both when she thought they had a future and when she didn't. The heartache was palpable. Their story is an emotional one that is further charged by their feelings for each other. Be prepared for some very spicy scenes!

The town of Glory is intriguing. Arden hints at the occupations of a few former military that I can only imagine will figure into future books of the Home to Glory series. It's a charming town where the citizens have each others' back. I look forward to my next visit to Glory, Kansas. Recommended to fans of contemporary, small town Romance.

I received a review copy in exchange for my opinion

Kate Vale says

Jack McConnell is close to committing suicide after coming home from the war. In fact, this book is probably the most realistic when it comes to showing how such men can feel (or try not to) when they have yet to come to terms with who they are now compared with who they were then. Betsy Lewis is the young woman who made him promise to come back to her, which he does, but is he the kind of man she really wants? That's his question, and sometimes hers, as well, particularly when she sees that he is too like his father, who tried to drown his problems in a whiskey bottle.

How Jack begins to come to terms with himself and what he wants out of life and what Betsy learns about herself and what and who she really wants forms the bulk of this story. I could have done without Marcel and the detour to Paris and back, but it forces Betsy to ask other questions of herself when she has to call Jack and he answers her question, but only partly.

Kim says

It's hard to put into words how feel after reading this book. Sara Arden has crafted an amazing masterpiece that will rip you to shreds and the put you back together piece by little tiny piece. There are so many things that stand out in this book that it's going to be hard to identify them. Let me start with the realism. This book, while not shoving your face in it, delivers a realistic view of what some of our returning soldiers endure on a daily basis. This is not the fairy tale of the returning hero even if the town wants it to be that way. Jack comes back damaged, emotionally, mentally and of course physically. We walk through a small part of the

nightmare that he has to live with each day. We get a glimpse of what our soldiers come home with and how some of them deal with it. I loved that a session at the VA was included in this story and I hope we get to see more as the series progresses. It's so important to be reminded that just because they come home doesn't mean they leave the desert behind, some bring back more than they bargained for. I think it's also important that we get to see what the people around him see so we get a full circle view of Jack. He's good at hiding from most. The depiction of him not being able to taste....that's brilliant....that's truth and it was delivered to us in beautiful, heart-wrenching prose. If you are not affected by this then you just aren't human.

Now to the love....it's all there, every kind of love you can think of and experience is contained between the covers of this amazing tome. We are also assured that no matter the wounds love can maybe not "fix" it but it can give you the strength and courage to at least want to move forward. But...it also shows that accepting that love through all the pain isn't always the easiest thing to do but true love for each other can and does win, if we give it a chance.

Of course, the book would be nothing without Betsy. Sweet, wonderful, damaged Betsy. She suffers from what many of us do. We all believe that the fairy tale will make everything alright, will fix everything but she learns that the tapes that run on repeat in our heads can't be silenced by anyone else, that we have to silence them. She shows what I've always felt, it's so easy to be strong for someone else, it's easy to ignore our own pain and try to make everyone else's pain better, that way we don't have to look at ourselves. She was successful at that with all the people in her life but then we see her growth, her move to wanting to help herself.

There are so many ups and downs, 2 boxes of Kleenex worth for me but they were so worth it. I feel better and stronger for having met these characters and I can't wait to see what's next in Glory.

Kathleen says

Sara Arden is a "new to me" author and she has me coming back for more with her next "Glory" series book. I am a fan. This story of best friends Betsy and Jack and the love, heartache and the second chance each of them has to conquer on their return to their hometown, their fears and demons that brings them into the path of a love that was always brings them home to each other and to Glory.

Romantic Reads and Such says

Ya'll, Jack and Betsy just about broke my heart ... and I loved every page. There are moments of great beauty and moments of extreme heartache, but there are so many wonderful, ordinary moments in between.

I adored the Jack and Betsy together. They each do so much for the other and even when Jack's broken he's still got so much heart (he just doesn't realize it). I just ate up the way their relationship changed over time and it added so much more oomph to their love story to have them be such a large part of each other's lives for so long. They are sweet and touching, and troubled, and the ending just brought a huge smile to my face. It's the perfect way to wrap up their relationship.

Full review available at <http://romanticreadsandsuch.wordpress...>

(Complimentary copy provided in exchange for an honest review)

Sara Smith says

I received a free paperback copy of Return to Glory through the Goodreads First Reads program.

This is a Harlequin book so be prepared for lots of graphic sexual relations between the two main characters: Jack and Betsy. Jack is back from war and is a damaged shell of a man who plays Russian roulette with his gun every weekend thinking he should've died in the war zone. He blames Betsy who had made him promise to come home. Meanwhile Betsy is feeling like damaged goods of her own since she went off to culinary school in Paris and nearly killed people with poison mushrooms.

The relationship between Jack and Betsy is hot and cold back and forth so many times that I lost count. It reads as a true struggle of a couple trying to decide if they can make it together, but they started to annoy me a bit with their indecision of not being able to get it together at the same time. I also wish they would've included at least some of the recipes that Betsy bakes in the book which sounded so delicious.

Negar Arvanaghi says

Man-baby-ha!

I like that the book starts out with them loving each other. You know those books where the main characters realize they love each other in the last 10 pages so that you're left wondering "Ok, WHY do you love each other?"? This is SO not that book. The author explores the WHY and the HOW here. The story is about how to nurture that love and keep it going in the face of adversity.

I wonder what happened to India during the war? Hopefully, she and Caleb get their own book.

The book reminded me of the movie Sabrina. If Greg Kinnear suddenly got Indiana Jones' body.

I like the idea of dating and falling in love with yourself.

They are so cute together.

Jack's survivor's guilt and PTSD is detailed nicely.

Her baking reminded me of the movie Simply Irresistible.

Betsey was officially my kind of girl on Halloween. Wish I could sew...

The end scene was so sweet.

I received an ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Lynde Shaw says

This was one of those books that had me hooked from the first page and had me staying up way past my

bedtime to finish! I'm pretty stingy with my 5-star reviews and honestly debated between 4 and 5 stars for this one, but I decided on 5 stars because as much as there was a time or two that I got frustrated with the amount of "on-again-off-again" between Jack and Betsy, the powerful emotions evoked through this story overshadowed any minor frustrations I had. There was so much emotion in this book. You can feel the love between Jack and Betsy and the problems each of them needed to overcome were real and well written. It broke my heart watching Jack suffer through his PTSD, because that sh*t's real. Our friends and neighbors are coming home and are dealing with this on a daily basis. We might want to sweep it under the rug, but it's there. Drinking, drugs, and even suicide are what families are working through each and every day. And then there are the loved ones like Betsy who can't truly understand the pain and suffering that is happening. They only want to do everything in their power to "fix" what's wrong. This was such an emotional read and a great start to a new series. I'm looking forward to the rest in the series!

ScarlettReader says

Wow, Ms. Arden writes with so much emotion that I laughed, cried, and felt my own heart breaking while reading Jack's and Betsy's story. Return to Glory is the first installment of the Home to Glory series and is a sweet, poignant story about hometown hero Jack McConnell coming back from war with serious injuries and PTSD and sweetheart pastry chef Betsy Lewis trying to move forward after career disappointment.

Jack saved Betsy's life when they were children so she is determined to save him from the darkness, but Jack doesn't want her hero worship and pushes her away again and again. Both characters struggle with anger, sadness, and eventually happiness as they ride the rollercoaster of emotions to find their own happiness. This story is an excellent reminder of learning to love yourself before you can really love someone else.

Ms. Arden does an excellent job with her characters' dialogue so that we can really feel their struggles and enjoy their triumphs. She has also created an outstanding cast of supporting characters that I hope we get to know better in future books. I am very curious about India and what happened in her past. Sara Arden is now on my list of favorite authors!

Paula Phillips says

I have to admit before I picked this book up, it wouldn't have been the type I normally go for as to me it screamed a romance novel, you know the sort that are really lovey-dovey and they have that Harlequin type feel to them. The main reason I did pick up this book was because the author Sara Arden (pen name) is an author whose other books that she used different pen names for are ones I enjoyed and I thought I am going to support this author. As I started reading it though, I was captivated and knew I was in for a treat as from page #1 the reader is captured with the main character playing Russian roulette with a gun and we have to wonder why he is doing this. We soon learn that this book is about two main characters Jack and Betsy and I have to also say that I loved the name Betsy as for her character it fitted perfectly and gave her a sort of wholesome feel. Jack has returned home from the War to the smalltown of Glory, but he is far from the same guy he was when he left those many years ago. Betsy has always loved Jack ever since she was a little girl, he has always been her hero and after a failed attempt in Paris at culinary school, she returned home to Glory and opened up a bakery. With the return of Jack, Betsy hopes to tell him how she feels and re-ignite their relationship. This is going to be one heck of a challenge though as Jack is reluctant to let anyone get

through the walls he has put up for himself. During this book , it was a feel-good read and at one point I have to say I was like NOOOOOOOOO as I had gotten to love the progress of Jack and Betsy and in walks Marcel - the guy from her past and Paris. Not to give anymore away, I shall finish with this - if you love Southern Charm and Smalltown Romances that have a Sweet but Edge underlining problem , then Sara Arden's Return to Glory is the book for you as when you read this, you too will fall in love with Jack and Betsy and their story.

Ami says

3.5 stars

The start of a new small-town romance by Sara Arden was a pretty solid one. It also dealt quite heavy with PTSD issues, as the hero, Jack McConnell, returned to his hometown with battle scars, both physically and emotionally. The opening of the first chapter alone – Jack was contemplating to kill himself with his gun – was something I don't usually find in romance. It felt different and serious but it also presented readers with some great moments.

I admired Betsy quite a deal here – she looked at Jack, refused to let him give up on life. I loved it when she confronted Jack when he was feeling down, basically told him to get up and she would be there to help him. I thought it was admirable – Betsy definitely didn't just step back and think that love would immediately heal everything. She also thought that Jack would need help. And yes, I loved reading the part where Jack gets all the help he needed. It was heartbreak too, thinking about all those things that the ex-soldiers were experiencing after they went home from war.

However, I must admit that about the last 25% or so, the story started to feel like it was losing its steam. I mean, it never occurred to me that Jack and Betsy didn't love each other in their own way. So yes, Betsy did start loving Jack as some-kind of childhood hero – Jack saved Betsy's life from drowning – and Jack might have issues with his PTSD, but I just never questioned about them making it. Jack clearly was looking for help, Betsy clearly was willing to wait. So the push/pull that happened afterwards, including that one final issue before the happily ever after ending, felt like it dragged the story down.

But overall, I think it was a pretty solid romance.

The ARC is provided by the publisher via NetGalley for an exchange of fair and honest review. No high rating is required for any ARC received.

A Guest Review for The Blogger Girls

Danielle says

The Sweetest Thing I've read in a while...no pun intended.

This was my first time reading Sara Arden. I have read books by her other alias, but not this one. This was an excellent book to introduce me to her style.

This book is sweet. Really sweet, without being full on tooth ache. But to cut through the sweet is a lot of great heat. Both of these characters are very likeable. Something I've noticed is hard to find in romance books these days. I often don't like the heroine, but Betsy is great. She's just the right combination of sweet, naive, and feisty and smart. Not to mention, she has a fashion sense I can really support.

And Jack. Oh, Jack. Beautifully broken and damaged Jack. He's the perfect mix of vulnerable and strong. Not often are those traits written so beautifully as they are here. Jack is truly a romance book hero.

This was definitely a 5 star read for me, and highly recommended if you love a sweet and steamy story with extremely well-written characters.

Rhonda says

Return to Glory by Sara Arden (Home to Glory #1)

3 STARS

I liked the characters, the family relationships. The drama of PTSD and coming back home changed. Also dealing with dreams and facing fears. There was a lot sex scenes and talk that was suggestive.

Jack McConnell has returned to his home town. They want to welcome him home as a hero but he does not feel like a hero. Every Sat. he plays Russian roulette with his gone. He can't stand to look at himself or his new leg. Jack is a US Navy Seal and he does not know what the future will bring.

Betsy Lewis has her own bakery shop. She has loved Jack forever. She is excited for him to be home. Betsy has not been sitting at home just waiting for him to come back. She spent time in New York and Paris learning.

Caleb Lewis is Betsy's older brother. He is a cop. Caleb's two best friends from childhood are Jack and India. All three joined the service. Only Caleb came back the same. Caleb's family has welcomed both India and Jack into their family.

I like how Betsy went to the VA every Monday with her day old bakery items. She spent time there too not just dropping them off.

The setting for this book is Glory, Kansas

I do plan on reading more of this series.

I was given this ebook to read by Net Galley and Harlequin. In return I agreed to give honest review of Return to Glory.

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