



The Soldier and the Siren

by Cat Johnson

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a 2500 word contemporary military romance free read

After having his heart torn out by a Dear John letter while deployed, David returns home without much hope of things getting better. Then he heard her voice and his whole world changed.

The transport touched down with a bump and a squeak of rubber against tarmac. This was it. He was home. Stateside once more, but for perhaps the first time in his decade-long career in the Army, David couldn't have cared less.

What did it matter whether he was in Afghanistan getting shot at or home? She had pierced his heart completely. As accurately as if she'd been wielding a sniper's weapon, and all from thousands of miles away. He felt the outline of the folded letter in the pocket of his cammies. A five-year relationship, ended by one piece of paper and four heart wrenching words. "I've met someone else."

Maybe the Army should hire Jan. She could take out half the Taliban and probably Osama too by breaking them so completely they'd wish they were dead.

The door swung wide and the smells of the airfield rushed inside the cabin as the members of his platoon sprang into movement around him. They gathered possessions and lined up in the aisle, brushing past his elbow and jostling for position, all anxious to push toward the exit. David remained seated. What was the hurry?

"Sergeant?"

He looked up at the word and realized that though he had no desire to get off this plane, the guy sitting next to him trapped in the window seat did.

"Sorry." David stood. He couldn't hide on the plane forever.

Before descending the metal stairs, he glanced at the waiting family members, some holding banners, others waving flags. Women. Children. His treacherous eyes scanned the faces. Who the hell was he looking for? She wouldn't be there. So why was his pulse pounding?

Stupid.

Eyes firmly lowered, he planted his well-worn combat boots on the steps. Once on the ground, he made a beeline to the pile of bags. He pawed through a few, all identical except for the names, until he found his. He hefted the heavy weight onto his shoulder and walked quickly past the happy, tearful

reunions.

Wives and girlfriends leapt into their loved ones arms. Children called out "Daddy".

Stoically keeping his attention downward David didn't look up again until he'd reached the sidewalk where he'd have to find a payphone to call a taxi. He'd turned his cell phone account off for the deployment. He'd be happy to have it back on again but that would have to wait until tomorrow. Right now, he needed a cab, a shower, and his bed. Food would probably have to be in there somewhere as well, not that he had an appetite.

Grabbing the receiver, David pushed the buttons for information. He didn't know the number or even the name of the local taxi company. He'd always had someone waiting for him. Boy, how things changed.

Absently, he glanced at an ad for some local talk radio show plastered next to the phone. He was waiting for the operator to come on the line when a minivan pulled up.

One of his guys, smiling wide and face covered in lipstick, looked out the passenger window. "Sergeant. Do you need a ride?"

"Nah, I'm good. I can just call a cab."

The door swung open and the younger soldier jumped out. "No need. You're on our way. Really, it's no problem at all."

Before he could protest his bag was thrown in the trunk and David was stashed in the back between two car seats filled with tiny clones of his team leader. David had planned on having kids himself one day. When the hell would he get around to that? Thank God he hadn't had them with Jan.

As the van pulled up to the bachelor housing on base, he sent up another thanks that he'd never moved in with her either or he'd be homeless tonight as well as alone. He sighed and directed his attention to saying the proper thanks to the happy family of four who served as the painful reminder of what he didn't have.

Just a couple of hours later, he felt like a new man. Or at least a less broken one. A nice hot shower could solve a

number of ills. So could a good cold beer, or six. He shoved the half eaten pizza, still in its box, on the bare shelf of the fridge. That was one benefit of having no food at his place. There was plenty of room. While he was in the fridge, he grabbed the last beer out of the cardboard six-pack holder on the shelf above.

Maybe after this he'd be able to sleep. Though the quiet was starting to get to him. After being surrounded by his guys twenty-four hours a day for six months, being totally alone was disconcerting.

David switched on the radio next to his bed and scrolled through the stations. He landed on a talk radio show. The woman's voice was soothing. Sultry and warm. He left that on. In nothing but his PT shorts, he lay down on top of the smooth bedspread and closed his eyes, willing peace to come.

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"Another?" The bartender, rag in hand, paused in his wiping of the bar top directly in front of David.

"Yeah, sure. Thanks." He pushed his empty bottle closer to the man and reached to grab another peanut out of the bowl to his right.

"Mind if I steal a few of those?"

The voice stopped David's hand in mid motion, its tenor so familiar he would know it anywhere. It was the voice from the radio. The one that had lulled him to sleep as certainly as a lullaby.

Almost fearful to look and find the exterior package didn't match the image he'd conjured in his mind while listening to her, he turned his head in her direction. "Help yourself."

Relief flooded him. He needn't have worried. She was all he'd imagined and more.

Chestnut hair pulled into a messy knot at the back of her head begged his hands to pull it down so he could feel it against his skin. Her smile, as warm as her voice, was punctuated with dimples on either side.

No, she wasn't perfection. The crinkles that appeared in the corners of her eyes when she smiled would probably be airbrushed out of a picture if she was a model, but he liked

them. They made her more real.

“Thanks.” She popped a few nuts into her mouth while continuing to size him up. “I haven’t seen you around here before.”

David felt his pulse speed. He may have been out of the dating world for a few years, and out of the country for a few months, but he knew the look of a woman who was interested.

Swallowing hard, he tried to play it cool. Meanwhile, between that sultry voice and the way she kept looking at him, he was so aroused he could happily take her right there on top of the bar.

“I’ve been away.” The bartender plunked his beer down. David said thanks and glanced in her direction. “Drink?”

“I’ll just have a sip of yours.” The woman reached right out, brazen as anything, and grabbed the longneck. She pressed it to her lips. After a long swallow that had him imagining all sorts of things, she licked her lips and handed the bottle back to him. “Mmm. Nice. Thanks.”

He drew in a deep breath and angled his body toward the bar so she wouldn’t see the growing bulge in his jeans. “No problem.”

Taking a sip himself, he debated his next move. Not that he was in charge here. She was clearly in the driver’s seat.

“So, you live around here?” Her words drew his gaze to her mouth. He seemed unable to tear his attention away from her when she spoke.

“Not far.” He also seemed unable to form sentences of more than a few words. David brought the bottle back to his lips and took another swig.

“What do you say we finish that baby up and head to your place? I’m dying to get out of these heels.”

After that statement, swallowing the beer in his mouth without choking took some doing. The expression on her face clearly said the shoes weren’t the only things she wanted to take off.

He nodded. “Sounds good.”

She plucked the beer from his hand and downed a large

swallow, nearly emptying the bottle. "Good. Let's go."

He struggled to pull a few bills out of his wallet, threw them on the bar and rushed after her as she waited by the door.

She didn't say another word, and neither did he, until he'd closed the door of his room behind them. Then her beer-scented lips were pressed against his. He'd been six months in Afghanistan without beer or women. Tonight he had both and he wasn't going to let them go to waste.

When she hopped up and wrapped her legs around him, he carried her across the room. They tumbled together on top of the unmade bed. Amid the already messy covers, they pawed at each other's clothes until nothing remained between them. As he braced above her, she pulled his hips forward and plunged him effortlessly into her warmth.

David let out a groan as long absent sensations assaulted him. She bit his chest hard while pulling him deeper. He tangled his fingers in her hair, yanked it to the side and retaliated with a bite of his own. With a moan that cut straight to his core, she angled her head to give him better access.

Feeling like a teenager again, David worked the spot below her ear until he'd left his mark. He pulled back, admired his work, then let his gaze move down her body to appreciate the rest of her. In particular, he took in the tantalizing view of where their bodies met.

He continued to thrust into her like there was no end in sight. Like he was eighteen again and he could go all night. As she cried out her pleasure beneath him, he knew she'd let him.

Her body tensed. She grabbed his hips and held him tight against her. He didn't fight it as he felt her body clutching his. He squeezed his eyes shut and enjoyed her muscles pulsing around him. When her grip eased up enough he could move again, he rocked into her hard and fast until he roared with his own release.

Collapsing heavily and breathless upon her, David laughed, his heart feeling whole again for the first time in a

while.

“Sleep now.” She stroked his hair as her voice poured warm and thick over him.

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David opened his eyes to a room flooded with brilliant morning sunlight. Her words filled the room but they had a distant quality. He turned his head and saw the radio was on. It was the source of his siren’s voice. She wasn’t there at all.

He frowned as memories crept into his head. He still lay on top of his neatly made bed in his PT shorts. Reaching down, he plucked sticky fabric away from his skin.

It had been a dream. An incredible one that had him coming in his sleep like a pubescent boy, but still just a dream.

Running a hand over his face and hair in frustration, he swung his legs over the side of the bed. The voice from radio chattered on, each syllable making his body crave more of what he apparently had never had. Her.

“We’re broadcasting live this morning from the PX. Come on down and join me. We’ve got t-shirts to give away...”

Out of bed and on his hurried way to the bathroom, he didn’t hear the rest of what she said. It was crazy, yeah, but he had to meet her.

Faster than even when he’d been under fire, David finished his shower, got dressed and was out the door. Sprinting across the post, he was out of breath by the time the radio station van parked in front of the PX came into view. He dodged around the vehicle to see a small crowd pressing toward banks of speakers and a woman seated behind a table.

Long chestnut hair, pulled into a knot at the back of her head. Dimples a man could get lost in. That voice, amplified so it filled the air and surrounded him. Defying all logic, the woman of his dreams sat before him, chatting with the crowd.

The station took a break to play some music and someone official-looking organized the visitors into a line. Numbly he got on the end, not knowing what it was for, just that it would lead him to her. Eventually, it was his turn to stand before

her. She smiled that smile that was familiar even though there was no earthly way it could be.

“Hi. You look like you need an extra-large.” She reached for a pile next to her on the table and plucked a t-shirt off the top. “Here you go.”

Blindly, he reached out and took it from her, unable to draw his gaze from her face. “Thanks.”

She smiled brightly. “You’re very welcome. I’m taking questions for when we go back on air after the break. Anything you’d like to ask?”

“Um, yeah. Can I buy you a cup of coffee or...lunch when you’re done here?” David swallowed hard, waiting for her probable rejection.

Her surprise was evident from her expression. The long pause during which she didn’t answer him didn’t bode well, yet still a spark of hope lived inside him.

Finally, she nodded. “Yeah. I think I’d enjoy that.”

A wide grin he couldn’t control and didn’t want to spread across his face, stretching from ear to ear. “Me too.”

The End...or just the beginning?

Cat Johnson is an award-winning author of contemporary erotic romance in genres including military romance, cowboy/western, ménage and paranormal. A Junior Leaguer and professional harpist, Cat has too many animals, a few very close friends and uses her laptop so much she wore the letters off the keyboard within a year. She is known for her creative marketing and research practices; consequently she owns an entire collection of camouflage shoes, a fair number of her friends wear combat boots for a living and she's the sponsor for two real live bull-riding cowboys.

Website: <http://catjohnson.net/>

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cat-Johnson/22569689927>

Twitter: http://twitter.com/cat_johnson

Blog: <http://eatsomethingsexy.com/blogs/catjohnson/>

MySpace: <http://myspace.com/authorcatjohnson>

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