



The Scars I Bare

J.L. Berg

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I am a man adrift...

Born the son of a fisherman, I had a predestined purpose. The ocean was my life until one fateful day... it wasn't. After an accident at sea ripped away my love of the water, I was left with nothing.

Until she arrived in our sleepy town.

Cora Carpenter was my nurse those first few days after they'd dragged me from the water. She'd seen me at my worst. She'd been there when I lost my arm. When I lost everything.

That was three years ago.

Now she's everywhere and I can't get her out of my head. I see pain in her eyes. The kind of pain that leaves deep scars. I also see truth and beauty and passion. After all these years of wandering this little island town in search of something, I think I may have found exactly what I'm looking for.

But am I what she needs? Can two broken hearts make a whole?

The Scars I Bare Details

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From Reader Review The Scars I Bare for online ebook

Jackie Kiwibooknerd says

Advanced Readers Copy Courtesy of Author.....)

With so many books out on the market place today, we are hardly spoilt for choice. Yet in my opinion the good ones are still far and few between. However this author is definitely one who falls into the wonderful category, as all her books are beautifully written and leave you wanting more even when they are finished.

The Scars I Bare is the second book in the series, and we were introduced to Dean in the previous book. He was on the ferry that fateful day when things went so wrong and he was left having to have his arm amputated. The book picks up 3 years after that horrific day and Dean is still having a hard time moving on. He has not been back to work on the boats and is not the same man who he was all those years ago.

Cora Carpenter is a single mom to a very cute and clever 5 year old little girl named Lizzie (who I might mention completely steals the show). She moves to Ocracoke Island after one of her patients 3 years ago told her all about the little island where he lived. Dean is both shocked and elated to see Cora after all these years as he had started to fall for her while she was his nurse in the hospital, only to find out she was married. Now she is divorced and he decides fate has handed him a second change.

Both Dean and Cora have scars in the inside after all they have endured in their lives. Can they put it behind them and move on, or will the past always define who they are.

I loved this book from start to finish and I cant wait till we get the next book in the series.....Thank you Jennifer for another great story!!!!

Michell Hall casper says

I am loving this series. I love small town reads. And J.L Berg does a great job at giving you that small town feel. I was so excited when Berg said we were going to get Dean's story. My heart broke for him in the first book. And I wanted him to get his HEA. LOL! He may have to fight for it. And it may come in a package. But it will all be worth it in the end. Berg gives us all the feels in this book.

Kim says

4.5+ stars

I could not wait for Dean's full story after meeting him in The Choice's I've Made. He broke my heart and continued to do so in this one. One incident took everything from him--some of his abilities, his livelihood, self worth, and nearly his life. Years later he is still lost, lonely, and looking for something...but not really living.

Cora was a nurse to him in the hospital three years ago and made a big impression on each other. But she had her own seemingly perfect life and turned down his advances. He went back to his old life on the small island of Ocracoke, but felt like he did not have a place anymore.

But now Cora has moved to his hometown to work for his best friend. All of a sudden she is back in his life with her smart, sweet, daughter and he is in danger of losing his heart again. But Cora is now as broken as he is and skittish, guarded untrusting, and fearful.

Dean used to be the funny, easy going guy until he lost his way and became broody and bitter. He wasn't sure what he was looking for, but she starts bringing him back to life. Cora has been living a lie and camouflaging her problems for a long time. She feels like an empty shell. She and her daughter were in need of a new start and she has some issues she needs to finally face. She is a bit unorganized and scattered, but she has a big heart and lives for her daughter.

They are two lonely, broken people just trying to find their way. The old attraction and connection flares. They give each other things that both had lost and feared they would not find again...hope...and trust...and a chance at a better life. They are starting to find themselves again, find purpose, empowerment, a sense of family, and the potential to move forward.

But there will be challenges. They've both got issues, and they have things that could interfere. They'll have to be brave, to overcome their fears, and be ready to fight for a future if they really want a chance.

I loved this story, this couple, this kid, getting more of Molly and Jake, and this whole small town island setting. I connected emotionally with the characters especially through their journal and blog entries. And I loved how they perceived the perfectness of each other despite their flaws and scars. Their backstories were difficult and heartbreaking, and their issues were complex. But despite the intense feelings and painful situations, it was also funny, sweet, and romantic. It makes you believe that there really are people put in your life for a reason and that timing is everything. This was captivating, heartfelt, emotional, inspiring, and I devoured every page. I am looking forward to returning to this island for Millie's story next.

I was gifted a copy.

Follow Me: Reviews by Tammy & Kim (Rachel and Jay) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Bookgasms Book Blog says

I've been (im)patiently waiting for Dean's full story since meeting him in *The Choices I've Made* and I knew, I just *knew* I would absolutely adore this beautiful, broken man.

Dean is trying to live life—one that's significantly altered after that horrible ferry accident. He knew who he was and what he wanted, but that all changed three years ago and now . . . now, he's still working his through his injury and trying to figure out his place in the world. He's feeling a bit adrift. A bit lost. Hoping to find his way.

Same as Cora Carpenter. She's trying to make a fresh start. Trying to find a new normal and make a home for her daughter and herself. Ocracoke, Virginia seems to be the perfect place to make this happen. Especially since it was so highly recommended, by Dean of all people.

As Cora and Dean work to figure out themselves and their wants and needs, will they find a way to the happily ever after they both deserve. And will they make it together?

Honestly, there isn't one thing I didn't adore about *The Scars I Bare*. Not one damn thing. I loved both Dean and Cora. Loved their back stories. Loved how their romance developed and how they brought out the best of each other. And their sexy times. Swoon. But some of the best times were Dean's interactions with Cora's daughter. Ovaries really don't stand a chance.

I am so anxious for Aiden's book next in *The Lies I've Told*. Man, Aiden and Millie . . . this is going to be a fun one! ~ Missy, 4.5 stars

Vanessa (nessreads) says

ARC kindly provided in exchange of an honest review

4.5 "Dean Sutherland claimed my heart" Stars!!!

Ever since I read *The Choices I've Made* I needed more Dean. I needed and wanted more of his story. And I was over the moon ecstatic that I was getting my wish. *The Scars I Bare* was every bit emotional. It's a story about two broken souls who need guidance. It's a story of growth and finding that light within that has been extinguished, but is still there wanting to burn.

Dean Sutherland has seen better days. The once lively and happy-go-lucky guy has lost his spirit. An incident three years ago took more than just some of his abilities. It also killed the man he once was. And now, years after that unfathomable accident, Dean is still lost and alone within himself, and barely living.

Cora Carpenter's life is nothing as it seems. She puts on a façade so she doesn't have to deal with her problems. The once happy and full of life woman is anything but. But she tries her hardest and mostly because of her daughter, Lizzie. There's nothing Cora wouldn't do for her curious and way too smart for her age daughter. And when things aren't great in Cora's life there's a certain green-eyed patient that gives her a slice of happiness, even though she knows nothing can come of his advances. So, each go their separate ways. Cora to her anything but perfect life. And Dean back home, to the small island of Ocracoke.

Cora and Dean are two lonely, and broken people just trying to find their way. The connection they had towards each other three years ago is obviously present. They get to know each other and an easy friendship blossoms. With the help of the other, Cora and Dean slowly start getting back pieces of the people they used to be. They give each other hope. And the trust they find in each other and the trust they help each other gain back was so pure and beautiful. And Dean and Lizzie's relationship, cue the tears. I loved the way he was with her, it was so adorable. I just loved everything about these three. I couldn't get enough.

The Scars I Bare was an emotional and beautiful story. I also liked that we got to catch up with Jake and Molly. It was great to see what those two were up to. I can't wait to get back to this small island and get Millie's story.

Chris C - A Midlife Wife says

Touching and sweet romance.

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The Scars I Bare is heartbreaking in many ways and touching in many other ways.

To say that I could identify with the main character, Dean, is an understatement. My husband went through the exact same thing (different body part). However, the author nailed so many of the emotional aspects of this injury. The anxiety, the mood swings. The emotional feelings of losing their worth and their belief in their manhood was depicted so well.

I could identify perfectly with the way Dean felt lost without direction. His connection to Cora was deep and heartfelt. The author crafted the story with the beautiful depth of emotion and tied these two characters together well.

The story has a lot of emotions tied to it. From her need to gain footing after a divorce to his need to take care of her and have that family connection, you end up with the major feels; both happy and sad.

The Scars I Bare is a wonderful introduction to this author for me. I am looking forward to reading many more of her books. She captured my attention with this book that showcases her understanding to the ups and downs of a true, sweet romance and how to write a touching and sexy novel.

\* copy received for review consideration

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## **Jo - \*\*\*.★Reading Is My Bliss★.\*\*\* says**

Dean Sutherland was first introduced in the first book of this series. He was the victim of a horrendous, tragic accident that changed his whole life. He is not the same person anymore, physically and mentally. His life has been difficult the last few years but he is slowly adjusting to his new life, making steps to the way things will be from now on.

Cora is on the run, well not in the illegal sense, she is escaping her past and trying to put distance between herself and her ex-husband. She has recently taken up a job offer to work as a nurse for the local doctor on Ocracoke Island in North Carolina. This is the fresh start she needs, not just for herself but for her daughter Lizzie.

When Dean was in hospital recovering from his accident several years ago, Cora was his nurse. They became friends but he was made aware, by her, that she was married and therefore off limits to him but it didn't stop him from being friends with her, although it was much more than that for Dean. He always looked forward to seeing her each day and most days she was the only good thing he had to focus on. He never dreamed he would see her again.

Cora knew that Dean was from Ocracoke and I think she was hoping their paths would cross again. Her need to escape her broken marriage was the main reason for moving to this isolated community but

secondary to that was a strong desire to see him again, even if it was just to see how he was doing now. Not surprisingly, that sweet connection they made is still there and maybe now the timing is right for them?

This story is not just about Dean and Cora though, dear wee Lizzie is the other important person in Cora's life. This child is like a walking encyclopedia, she loves to discover interesting facts and information about the most random things and then shows off her expansive knowledge to anyone who happens to talk to her. She quickly endears herself to Dean.

If anyone deserved happiness it is these two but like anything worth having, they are going to have to fight for it and learn to trust in each other. I enjoyed this second book in the By the Bay series.

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## AJ says

*“Someday, you’re going to realize your life didn’t end ... Someday, you’re going to look past those wounds and scars that ripped open your body and realize you have more to give, more to live, and more to love.”*

### 3.5 stars!

I really enjoyed this book. With a gorgeous yet tormented hero, and a heroine who is a strong yet damaged single mother, this is a sweet, heartfelt love story between two broken people, and a gorgeous story of healing from the past and finding happiness

You could easily read this book as a standalone, but be aware that you will be missing some of the backstory and context that takes place in the first book in the series – *The Choices I've Made*.

We were introduced to Dean in the first book and saw him go through a trauma which left him scarred inside and out, and I was so excited to see that we would be getting his story in full. It's been three years since the accident that changed his life, and in the present day - and through his past journal entries - we get to see just how much it has altered him, how lost he feels, and how hard he is finding it to find his new normal.

*I thought I could go back.*

*Back to my life.*

*Back to normal.*

*But what is normal now?*

Cora is a single mother who is newly divorced and starting a new life for herself and her young daughter. She is also scarred from all that she's been through, and her life is a bit of a mess as she's keeping some pretty significant secrets, but she has high hopes for her move to the small island of Ocracoke, starting with a new job with none other than Dr Jake Jameson (hero of book #1).

Dean met Cora while he was in hospital recovering from his injury. She was his nurse and he fell for her in a big way, but she wasn't available, and her absence from his life felt like another loss. So when she shows up on his island, he is both stunned and excited, knowing that this may be the second chance he never thought he'd get. But he can see that she's been through hell and is also struggling to find her place.

*I didn't know what had happened to Cora in her life since I'd been her patient, but I recognized wounds and battle scars, and the woman who stood in front of me was bathed in them.*

This is such a gorgeous story. Dean and Cora are gorgeous together, with great chemistry. Obviously there are issues there that they need to deal with, but the drama is handled well, and they don't let their baggage get in the way of them getting to know each other again. Instead they slowly open up and help each other to heal, and though they have their back and forth, it's all understandable and their love story is functional, sweet, emotional and sexy. It moves at a great pace, and I was easily swept up in it all.

*"And then what?" he asked.*

*"And then...everything."*

*"Everything?"*

*I nodded. "Everything. I want it all. With you."*

Adding to the wonderful dynamic is Cora's daughter, Lizzie. She plays a huge part in the story, and the adorably precocious, genius five year old is not only a gorgeous addition to Dean and Cora's love story, but she's a wonderfully developed character all on her own. I particularly loved seeing her develop her relationship with Dean. She's a true scene stealer, I just loved her.

*Lizzie organised her backpack for the tenth time. There were literally three things in there, but she was convinced it was necessary to know exactly where they were at all times.*

*How I'd managed to give birth to the female version of Sheldon Cooper was beyond me.*

I also loved the inclusion of Jake and Molly from book #1. They have some great story progression, and I really enjoyed seeing the dynamic between them and Dean. It's unusual, but they handle it well. The two boys in particular have a great friendship, and I laughed out loud at their antics and banter.

I really enjoyed this book. It's a quick, sweet and easy read, and I'm looking forward to getting to know more of these characters as the series continues.

3.5 stars.

*An Advanced Review Copy was generously provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.*

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## **Hanne says**

The Scars I Bare tells us Dean and Cora's love story. I've met both of them in The Choices I've Made. I wanted Dean's book since reading that book. Something horrible happened to him and it turned his life upside down. He hasn't found love since and he left the family company to his brother. Dean is still trying to



adjust and accept this new life.

Cora needs a change in her life and she accepts a job on Ocracoke Island. She moves there with her little daughter. Cora soon runs into Dean, a man she has never forgotten. Dean also remembers Cora from all those years ago and he's happy to see her again. Dean and Cora spend some time together and grow closer.

I really liked Cora and Dean. Dean is sweet, caring, genuine and a little closed off. Cora is smart, loving, kindhearted and caring. She's an amazing mother and her daughter is her everything. Dean and Cora are damaged. They both deserve love and I'm happy that they found an happily ever after with each other. It took some time before they became a couple, but they needed that time. They make each other happy.

I loved the secondary characters. Lizzie, Cora's daughter, is adorable and smart and loving. She wants her mommy to be happy and she immediately likes Dean. The couple from the previous book, Jake and Molly, appeared many times and it was great to see that they are still going strong. Both of them are great friends of Dean.

-- My honest review is based on an advanced reader copy of this book. --

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### **Leo (Queen of the Rants and the Crazy) says**

I'm putting this one in hold..

This hero was engaged to the heroine from book 1. His best friend's girl!. Doesn't he know the bro code? He isn't very loyal is he? You don't go after your best friend ex girl. And he's all chummy chummy with his ex too. Yeah sorry but that's way too close to be with his ex. It's bothering me.. Maybe that just me? ?

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### **~\*\*Anna\*\*~ A Romance Reader says**

Really liked it!

Dean and Cora first met while he was in the hospital after an accident that would change his life. She was his nurse and during this time he fell in love with her, but his timing was off since she's married. They meet again 3 years later and this time Cora is divorced.

Dean and Cora are two amazing people that deserve to be happy, and I enjoyed reading their journey to their happily ever after. They both need to face some demons and overcome traumas from their pasts but they do it together. The chemistry between them was off the charts and I was rooting for them from the start. Lizzie, Cora's daughter, plays a big role in this book and I am glad cause I adored her!

This was a great, sweet, low angst second chance contemporary romance, that left a smile on my face. I recommend it!

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## Jennifer says

*\* A review copy was provided by the author for the Blog Tour \**

### ~ 5 We All Have Scars Stars ~

I knew going into Dean's story that it was going to be an emotional one. My heart broke for what he endured in the first book (The Choices I've Made) when we met him. And I wasn't wrong. JL Berg brought out all the emotions in this story.

As always with a JL Berg series, I am loving this one!!! I love the characters she has given us and the storylines are unique and emotional. Her writing style always sucks me in and this was no different. This is a fairly quick read because you don't want to stop reading it.

What I wasn't expecting but that totally worked for this book, was how many scars Cora had also. Even though you couldn't see hers they were there. I think that was what made Cora and Dean a perfect couple. They learned to grow together and both had to overcome trust issues. I liked that this story was overcome with excess Drama...she added just enough to keep you turning the page. But this is truly a story about healing.

The Scars I Bare is a standalone novel, but I would definitely recommend reading The Choices I've Made first. You will get a better appreciation for the characters and what Dean had to go through before reading his story. Also you see more of Jake and Molly in Dean's story, so you don't want to spoil their story by reading this book first. This book is told in Dual POV and I thought everything flowed well. This was a well written story that will have you feeling all the "feels".

I loved meeting Dean, Cora and Lizzie (Cora's daughter) Dean and Cora are both flawed and broken but for two completely different reasons, but through their tragedies they have both lost the ability to trust. Trust in themselves. I loved watching both of them learning how to trust and love again. These are characters you will want to meet and will fall in love with.

I would 100% recommend this book to everyone who likes a love story that makes all your emotions come alive. If you are a fan of JL Berg's books then you don't want to miss out on this series. I look forward to the next book in this series to come out.

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## Carvanz says

Oh my gawd!!! I absolutely loved this book!!! It quite literally caused my heart to hurt and my gut to churn before flinging me up and away in the most amazing freefall of emotions.

Dean lost his arm three years ago in a ferryboat explosion.

During the long and painful days of recovery, he found Cora to be a bright spot of color and hope. Now he's struggling daily to find some reason as to the purpose of his life. He is rambling throughout his days without any clear destination. The locals consider him a hero but he knows the truth. He is quite broken and there will never be any coming back from that fact.

Cora has finally left her previous life behind her and is moving to Ocracoke, a small island in the outer banks.

Years ago a patient shared stories of the island and when the time came for her to make the decision to move her daughter and herself away from Virginia, it was this idyllic place that she chose. She is broken in spirit despite the front she puts on for her child.

When these two meet again things get...awkward. Each of them must deal with their own emotional and physical scars even as they yearn for more. Trust does not come easily to either of them but they slowly begin to build a relationship that has the potential to be the stuff of dreams.

I adored both Cora and Dean. Dean's pain is felt in every word of his journal entries even as Cora's blog masks her own pain and lies. They each must face their pasts, despite their fears, in order to find healing and ultimately a forever kind of love. The actions of doing so was immensely moving and gut wrenching as they both take a step forward and then two steps back before finally leaping into the future.

Lizzie, Cora's daughter, was quite a character. Not your typical 4/5 year old. She is quite literally a genius and adds depth to the story that most child characters are unable to accomplish. I loved her sheer honesty in spite of her scary intelligence.

This was a well written story that never bogged down. Filled with exemplary secondary characters, angst from mostly inner turmoil, a smattering of humor, a slow burn relationship and the most perfect HEA, this is definitely worth checking out.

It was my choice to submit this honest review of an advanced reader copy provided by the author.

Dual POV

Safety (view spoiler)

Possible triggers (view spoiler)

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### **A.BookNerd.Bookseller&Bibliophile.Blog says**

Wow! This was my first book by Ms. Berg and what a book to start!!!!

From the very first page of the Prologue, I was enthralled! Dean (yes, he has been added to my growing list of BBF's) is such a strong man. He has endured so much pain, I was silently cheering for him in my head.

Cora.....she is a very determined and strong woman to rise about the scars she bares to make a better life for her and her daughter.

The title, *The Scars I Bare*, is a perfect description of the story of Dean and Cora. I have since one-clicked the first book and a book from another series by the author.

I would recommend this book ❤️?.

Reviewed by: Dana D.

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## **Michelle says**

*ARC provided by author in exchange for an honest review*

*Whether it be physical, emotional or invisible to the naked eye, scars are a part of life that tells a story. A story waiting to be told in the right time. And in JL Berg's latest release, **The Scars I Bare**, she tells a heartbreakingly beautiful story that is layered with depth and understanding. A story that is emotionally raw and poignant and yet utterly beautiful as it sheds light on second chances and the power of love as it heals both physical and emotional scars.*

This book is one of those honest, poignant stories of life. It is not just a story of love but finding ones inner strength of acceptance and healing. It is about not letting our scars and brokenness define us. And in this story, Berg captures these sentiments as she introduces flawed and real characters who are relatable. So if you are looking for a story that sends a powerful message of second chances then I urge you to read this book as you will fall in love with Dean and Cora as they navigate their way back into reclaiming their lives and finding comfort within each other.

J.L. Berg

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