



## **It Had To Be You**

*Kathryn Shay*

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## **It Had To Be You** Kathryn Shay

Kathryn Shay spent five years riding fire trucks with a large city fire department, eating in their firehouses and interviewing hundreds of America's Bravest. Read one of the novels that resulted from her intense relationship with firefighters!

"Kathryn Shay loves firefighters, and if you didn't love them before, you'll love them after reading some of her books featuring firefighting heroes and heroines." Judith Arnold, Romance Writer

Army veteran Beckett Sloan is just trying to make it through the day. After having spent twenty years in the service, he was given an opportunity to join the fire department in Hidden Cove, NY, on an elite crew called the Rescue Squad. There's one catch. He has to attend a support group for firefighters, police officers and veterans with PTSD, a malady which caused the breakup of his marriage and the estrangement of his son. At the first session, he meets Lela Allen, a former army medic, who's divorcing her army husband because of his inability to manage his own post traumatic syndrome. Though Lela and Beck are attracted to each other, they resist it. When both their children show symptoms of PTSD, common in kids of sufferers, a lasting relationship between Lela and Beck seems doomed. But fate has other things in mind for them, for their children and for two veterans of war whose experiences are also featured in the book. With the backdrop of a modern fire department and exciting fire scenes, this highly charged emotional drama will bring tears to the readers' eyes as everybody struggles through this untenable situation.

## **It Had To Be You Details**

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# From Reader Review It Had To Be You for online ebook

## Kim says

Lela is a trauma nurse with a background of army medic in Afghanistan. She met her husband there while he was serving as a supply officer. The ravages of war wear heavily on those that serve and their families and her marriage did not survive the PTSD her husband has and refused to get help and the effects on her four year old son living with a father with the condition. Beck Sloan now retired Army Colonel who has been hired by the Hidden Cove Fire Department and because of his PTSD condition he has been assigned to attend a counseling group for PTSD and family members group. The condition has claimed his marriage and his relationship with his ten year old son is suffering and his son is acting out at school. It is at the meeting that Beck and Lela meet and due to their jobs, friends, and connection to PTSD their paths keep crossing. This book delves in the heavy subject matter of war veterans with PTSD and those people that love them.

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## Amanda (Hootie) Clark says

\*\* DNF @ 83% \*\*

I'm mad at myself right now because I never mark a book DNF once I've gotten this far in a story. It's almost like getting tackled at the one yard line to give up with only 57 minutes (according to my kindle) left in the book but once I reach my bullshit threshold, it can't be helped.

I became a huge fan of the Hidden Cove Firefighters series a few years ago and over the past two weeks I have been re-reading the series to get familiar with the characters in order to finish the three books left in the series I have put off until now. The setup is as follows, Beckett Sloan is a former Army Captain who served time in Iraq and upon returning from the war suffers from PTSD attacks. His are so bad they incapacitate him and take him out of the realm of reality and back to the trauma associated with his syndrome. He's lost his wife and his son is estranged due to his illness but he's managed to pick himself up and become a firefighter in Hidden Cove. Lela Allen is an ex-army trauma nurse with an ex husband who suffers from PTSD and a son who has witnessed his father's brutal flashbacks which has left the little boy skittish of men. Beckett and Lela form a bond during a PTSD trauma group meeting which slowly develops into something deeper and the two can't stay away from each other or fight the feelings building between them. Lela doesn't want to subject her son to another man with PTSD symptoms so they agree to stay away from each other but when their sons become close friends it's a challenge to keep their promise.

This isn't an easy story, there's a lot of moving pieces and I knew to some extent what I was in for when I started but here's where I was pushed to put the book down indefinitely. So Beckett and Lela grow close the more time they spend together and of course they share a bond with the PTSD thing and that their kids are friends. It's so painful to ignore what their feeling that they give themselves 2 days to act on their feelings and then they promise to stay away to do what's best for Lela's son. For two days they make love and profess their deep love and have some amazing moments that had me hopeful they could make this work. They both start dating other people in an effort to try and move on but I was still hopeful that they would wake up and try to work around the issues plaguing them. When a tragedy occurs that affects Lela and her son it throws the story into a tailspin of melodramatic proportions. Not even three weeks after they've professed their love to each other they start screwing other people. WHAT THE F\*\*\* IS THAT????!! I mean, I get human

emotion and how hurtful it is to not be with the person you're in love with but the reasoning behind why they were kept apart was just ludicrous.

#1) Lela doesn't want to subject her son to another man who has PTSD, I get that. What I don't get is why the hell she didn't get her son some damn HELP so he could get better with his trust issues with men. There's another thing, he has issues trusting men but he seems to get along with her new fuck buddy doctor? Which is it Shay? He doesn't like all men or just Beck? Honestly it felt like a cop out to keep the couple apart.

#2) The main focus of the entire series has centered on a particular fire department psychiatrist (Jack Harrison) who helps the firefighters and their families cope with painful events that affect their mental health. He started a group for people who suffer from PTSD or have dealt with someone who suffers from it. I couldn't figure out why Lela didn't approach Harrison about helping her son and get to the root of why he felt the way he does. It's understandable that he witnessed Beck having an episode and it scared him but why in the ever-loving HELL didn't Lela get her kid HELP??? It's driving me INSANE at the moment!

#3) Beck and Lela PROMISE to stay away from each other and for three weeks (while they're porking other people) they've only caught glimpses of each other in passing but during a chance meetup at the local firefighters kids camp where they come face-to-face with each other and their current bed-mates they're both thrown into pits of jealousy and longing. UGH! Somebody shoot me. Please! This is where I dropped the book and walked away. They see each other at the camp, realize they've both been banging other people and when they both get home with their partners, turn their sexual advances away respectively because they don't feel it's right to fuck while thinking of each-other. WHAT!?! Am I on planet earth right now? What the fuck has changed in the three to four weeks since they started sleeping with other people up until now? Am I seriously supposed to believe that they haven't thought of each-other ONCE in all the times they've slept with who they are with now???? That Beckett hasn't put his penis inside his new lover and thought "Hmm, this feels wrong because I'm in love with another woman but Oh well. It's in there now!" or that Lela hasn't thought "Gee, I wish this was Beckett pounding into me from behind but what can ya do?". GRRR! What alternate universe does Kathryn Shay think we live in? They're in love with each other, giving their private parts away to different people and this ONE SINGULAR MOMENT IN TIME is supposed to be different for them? I call bullshit. I just can't believe that this moment was the first time they allowed themselves to think that they were moving on in EVERY sense of the word and finally set in that they've both made steps to get over the other person.

I'm very disappointed with *It Had To Be You* because it didn't feel like a true Kathryn Shay Hidden Cove book. So many of the elements that made the first half of the series remarkable to me were overlooked or left out all together to make this book more dramatic than it needed to be. What could have been solved by some therapy sessions and open communication between the two main characters was side-stepped to create something so over the top it pissed me off. This was soap opera style drama. Even for a Kathryn Shay novel. Especially when Lela falls down in the shower and starts crying because she knows Beckett has been sleeping with another woman. How stupid is this bitch anyway? Because she's been having sex with someone else too! Ugh. I need to stop focusing on this issue but I was really hoping they wouldn't take it so far with other people before realizing they really loved each other and tried to make it work. I guess that's my main problem. They didn't even try! So I'm supposed to believe that they magically fix everything wrong with their relationship in the 15% I had left to finish? No way. I didn't feel like there was enough time to rectify all the issues surrounding this couple. I'm not even sure this review makes sense because I was so frustrated by this book I started drinking immediately. I recommend reading the first 3 books in this series and the novella's called "America's Bravest" but after that don't bother with the rest of the books. Thankfully this nightmare won't cast a bad light on the other books for me but it has made me not even want to finish the rest of the series. I'll just take my love of the other characters and their stories and remember them fondly.

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## **Pam says**

Katheryn Shay has a way of using her background with firefighters to write exceptional detailed stories that engage your emotions. *It Had To Be You* is an emotionally sensitive story about some veterans that have returned from war & are having troubles adapting back to real life. This story shows us the power of PTSD, the troubles getting through it and the effects on the family members.

Lela Allen is nurse who was overseas as an Army medic. She met her husband there but left the service. She is in the middle of divorcing her husband to protect their son from his fathers inability to handle his PTSD. She is attracted to a firefighter, Beck, until she finds out he also struggles with PTSD although he is going to counseling for help.

This story is far from a typical romance. A lot of the story is involved with explaining PTSD & the struggles to deal with it. The long lasting effects on the children is something that is rarely mentioned. These characters & their stories will stay in my hearts for a long time. This was a very emotional HEA! Keep your tissues close!

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## **Liza says**

\*\*\*4.5 out of 5 stars\*\*\*

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## **Marcia Haskell says**

### **Hard to read, but worth it.**

I have come to love Kathryn Shay's books and this one is no exception. I found it hard to read because all the characters in this story are good people, who have real problems that are not of their making. The story also presents us with 2 young boys who don't understand PTSD or the consequences of the illness. As everyone strives to deal with the illness, its effects on the children and spouses, and the recurrences that are a part of the problems we see good people try to do the right thing for those they love while denying the validity of their own feelings. The individual stories do resolve themselves and I wanted to cry with relief as they did, but in between it was sometimes painful.

A good book with serious issues that fits today's world.

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## **Mariann {at} Belle's Book Bag says**

Wow...Such a well written, emotional, heart~breaking read. Just loved it. I was hooked from the start by such wonderful and lovable characters. Oh...these characters broke my heart. Beck and Lela, Nick and I felt so bad for Len. It was hard to read these characters struggle to move on with their lives and in some cases, just survive another day. It is so sad for me to think how much soldiers sacrifice and still when they come

home they suffer as well as their families. I thought that Kathryn did an excellent job portraying this.

I just loved Beck and Lela and I was so rooting for them to get their HEA together. I needed the same for Nick and Amy and I wanted it for Len so bad but that didn't happen. All of these characters had an impact on me and I thought about them long after the story was over.

This is my first time reading Kathryn Shay and I have no idea how I missed such a great author. I am a big fan now. I love the way she is able to bring her stories and characters to life. I couldn't put it down. I loved the other firefighters and cannot wait to read their stories next.

While this story was heart~breaking it was also extremely entertaining. It was so interesting to read the many different sides of PTSD from those inflicted by it, in the different stages, to their families~although after reading this book it seems all those involved with a person with PTSD suffer in one form or another.

It Had To Be You was so much more than I thought it was going to be. I LOVED Beck's character and I loved him with Lela but I could totally see both their sides about not being able to be together. Kathryn certainly put their relationship through the emotional ringer!! lol Loved the ending and cannot wait for more. I am hoping to see Beck and Lela and Nick and Amy in future books. \*crossesfingers\* I definitely felt a connection these characters.

At the end I was smiling but this book touched me so much that I had trouble letting the characters go. Definitely in my keeper pile to be reread.

Best of the Best rating!!

\*\*\*ARC provided by Kathryn Shay~Thank you so much!! :)

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### **Kristi says**

Such an emotional book to read. If you know someone with PTSD you will know why. This book was very detailed and well written. The emotions that were experienced seemed real. The choices that made were heartbreaking. The demons that were written about were intense. Yes, I did even tear up a few times. I was glad for the happy moments in the book too.

I love the fact that Beck was a former Army Captain who became a Firefighter. Lela is an ex-army trauma nurse working as a nurse at the hospital. A nice combo.

I also liked how there were multiple people involved in the book and not just a story of 2 people.

Out of all the books in the series so far this is my favorite one.

Hidden Cove Firefighters Series.

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### **Diane says**

This book was an emotional journey for me. Kathryn Shay has written a gritty and very realistic storyline about PTSD and the tragic effects it has on the sufferer and their entire family. It broke my heart to read about these characters because they represent the real life struggle of our returning military heroes who live with this debilitating disease every single day. Yes, this is a romance book but it is oh so much more. Kudos to this exceptional author.

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### **Pam says**

It Had To Be You: Hidden Cove Firefighters Series Book Five was written by Kathryn Shay. This book is just as good as the others but I am not sure if it is as long. I really enjoyed reading this book that deals with PTSD and its effect on the families of the victim.

Beckett Sloan is a firefighter who just started and is on probation for a year. He has been assigned to a Rescue company and is fitting in well. However, he is a little tired of the men in the company because they are all married and in bliss. Beck is a little jealous of them because he has divorced his wife and his son is not seeing him right now. Tommy seems afraid of him. Because it is required for him on his life, he is attending the Trauma Survivor's Group. Left on his own, he wouldn't. However, this is how he meets Lela Allen.

Lela Allen is attending the group as well only because her husband has terrible sessions with his PTSD and he will not attend. Lela met Len in the army. She was an army medic who managed not to get PTSD. Len will not get help so she has divorced him. Their son refuses to see Len as he is afraid of him. Len only sees Josh at his own parents' home with them present.

There is an attraction between Lela and Beck which is immediate. How will they handle this? How will it affect their sons?

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### **Sassy Moms Say Read Romance says**

This story is just another in the great Hidden Cove series. With each Hidden Cove book, I fall more in love with the crew of Hidden Cove. This story was no different.

**WARNING:** This story discusses PTSD, suicide, drug use and violence.

With that warning being sad, this story is such a powerful and realistic portrayal of PTSD. It shows PTSD from both sides and how serious it really is. I really don't know how to review this story without giving away anything.

Lela is the ex-wife of a service member that has PTSD that has been able to get his symptoms manageable. She has decided that she wouldn't be involved with any one else that has PTSD.

Beck is a probie on the Hidden Cove Fire department that has PTSD, but his symptoms are manageable. However, he is forced to attend a support group for PTSD sufferers and their family members.

Beck and Lela meet at this support group and their connection is almost instant. Yet, they have their own demons to fight in order to be together. This story gives us the ups and downs of their fight.

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## Ronna says

4 stars

It Had To Be You by Kathryn Shay was a bit of a surprise for me. I have read her books in the past due to my weakness for firefighter protagonists. I have found them to be enjoyable, easy reads, which is why I picked this book up the other day during a promotion on Amazon. What I did not expect was the very serious and interesting storyline weaved in about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and how it has impacted these individuals as well as the families of returning veterans and post 9/11 firefighters.

"One out of every eighty returning soldiers kills himself on their return to society."

This is a statistic referenced in the book and vividly brought to life through the multiple characters that have to face the reasons for the statistic every day. The triggers for PTSD are not always known. And much like alcoholism or drug addiction, it cannot be cured, only managed. The book brings to light efforts, in this case Hire Our Heroes, to help those affected through initiatives that encourage appropriate employment with consideration for their condition as well as a requirement that they participate in counseling or support groups. It is common knowledge the dangers that our servicemen face, however, not much is discussed about how that danger affects them and their families. I expected fluff from this book and got some hard truth. For that, I am incredibly grateful and encourage people to read this book for the enlightenment it provides on the sacrifice so many make to keep our families safe when so often the cost is their very own families, happiness and the peace of mind we so often take for granted.

It Had To Be You is a part of Shay's Hidden Cove Series featuring the firefighters of Hidden Cove, NY. This edition is Beckett Sloan's story. Beck, as he likes to be called, served in the army for 20 years, spending extended tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Upon his return, and after several flashback incidents in which he injured his wife, damaged his home and terrified his son, he decided it best to divorce his wife, let them get on with their lives safely, and get some help. Through the Hire Our Heroes program, he was able to become a probationary firefighter serving on the elite Rescue Squad in the Hidden Cove fire department. As part of his job, he was required to attend a regular PTSD support group. The particular group he attended paired PTSD sufferers with family members of those affected, so that they could share their stories. It was in this group that he met Lela Allen, a former Army Media and current ER Nurse. Lela was attending this meeting because her now ex-husband had PTSD, and had hurt her as well. Both were now divorced and had young children that were greatly affected by the disorder. Suffice it to say, empathetic feelings and respect turn into friendship and later love, but the impact of PTSD on the safety of their significant others and children presented a seemingly unscalable wall for them to be together. While I never truly doubted the outcome it was not a clear path.

This book also features several couple that had tackled or were tackling similar issues. One particular couple, Nick, a recently returned and disfigured veteran, and his wife Amy, was particularly endearing. This book does indeed have the elements I expected – heroic figures, beautiful though flawed, always over the top in love with their matches, etc. (which got a bit too sickeningly sweet in their perfection even for me at times), it also featured hard topics like dangers of the job, death, PTSD, suicide, drug addiction, broken families and the emotional toll it all takes. So, I am giving this book 4 stars because everyone in this book is too perfect and altruistic and that got on my nerves, but it did not take enough away from the powerful message that with tweaks could have made this a 5 star read for me. Highly encourage any fans of contemporary romance



that love their protective heroes to read this book, as well as anyone that wants to better understand the complete sacrifice these heroes make on our behalf.

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**Cynthia Cirrincione says**

I enjoyed this book & would love to read about the other characters, but when I searched this author on Amazon, the listings are too confusing & I don't know which books relate to this one.

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