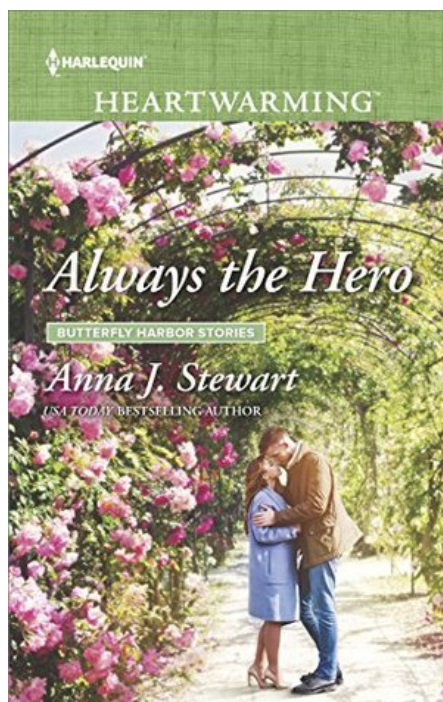




Always the Hero

Anna J. Stewart

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He never relied on anyone but himself...

But he needs her now!

Butterfly Harbor deputy Matt Knight wants two things: to date Lori Bradley and the chance to adopt Kyle, a troubled teen. Wounded in Afghanistan, Matt knows he can't move forward anchored to the past. But once he regains the guarded hotel manager's trust, will his need to protect those he loves cost him a future with this extraordinary woman?

Always the Hero Details

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From Reader Review Always the Hero for online ebook

Lynn Brooks says

4 1/2 STARS!

It's always a joy to visit Butterfly Harbor! A close-knit community where neighbors help each other and life is idyllic is everyone's dream ... but even ones as kind and good-hearted as Butterfly Harbor have their drama. Lots of familiar faces fill the pages of the next installment in this series. We get to join in the fun of planning the big Monarch Festival to benefit the town while we follow along in Matt & Lori's fledgling relationship to see if it's cut out to last or flounder. Great story!

Deputy Matt Knight is interested in two things ... a relationship with Lori Bradley and adopting troubled teen Kyle Winters. In order to be in the right mind-set to offer Lori the person that she deserves by her side, he backed away and internalized some problems he needed to figure out. She assumed he no longer wanted to date her when he stopped calling and returning texts. Now Matt has to scramble to make it up to her and hope she'll give him another chance!

Lori Bradley knows she has her own issues in life, but she didn't just imagine that Matt was pulling away from her. When he explains the details, she has to decide if she's willing to start fresh with him again, and makes it clear she can't tolerate secrets. Things are going well ... until another secret arises that makes her doubt Matt ... and herself ... even more!

Kathleen says

Always The Hero is a tender contemporary romance story of overcoming past emotional baggage, insecurities, and personal trust issues in order to get a chance at finding true love.

From the day that Army Veteran/ Sheriff Deputy Matt Knight and Assistant Hotel Manager Lori Bradley meet there is a strong connection and mutual attraction between them. But Matt and Lori both have past emotional baggage along with trust and insecurity issues that stand in the way of the development of their budding romantic relationship. When Matt and Lori team together in the planning of the annual Monarch Festival held in their small coastal town of Butterfly Harbor, their relationship is put to the test, but a sense of community spirit from their families, friends, and neighbors help this couple overcome the obstacles in their way in order to get a chance at finding love.

Author Anna J. Stewart weaves a wonderful tale full of pain, angst, drama, humor, and tender romantic moments that easily draws the reader into Matt and Lori's story. The slow building development of their relationship makes this heartwarming story worth the read, as their connection is put to the test by serious personal issues in their lives. You can't help but feel for both Matt and Lori as they struggle with their past emotional baggage and personal issues, and cheer them on as they embark on a personal journey of discovering love.

Always The Hero has an intriguing cast of characters who are realistic, flawed, and easy to relate to; witty dialogue and engaging interactions; a small coastal town setting rich in description that makes you want to visit; and a compelling storyline that will take you on a hauntingly beautiful journey where you will experience the full gamut of emotions.

If you are looking for a hopeful and heartwarming love story that follows the unexpected journey of two people who learn to let go of their pasts and open themselves up to a healing and loving relationship, then Always The Hero is the story for you!

Disclaimer: I received a copy of the book from the author/publisher in exchange for my honest review and participation in a virtual book tour event hosted by I Am A Reader.

<https://jerseygirlbookreviews.blogspot...>

Louise Pledge says

I loved "Always the Hero" for several reasons. First was probably because it was a delight to revisit my old friends in Butterfly Harbor. Some writers wait a year or more in between series contributions till we have to wrack our brains to recall just who the characters are or what happened to them in the past. 2. The story reenforces the fact that beauty is on the inside, not on the packaging. 3. I was impressed with the author's knowledge of plants, as I love to garden, too. 4. I felt comfortable reading something with no offensive language or sex. And last, but not least, the plot was so engrossing that it took me away from the depression I've been experiencing and left me feeling a lot more positive.

Thank you, Anna Stewart!

Babs says

Matt and Lori have been seeing each other off and on and Matt has come to terms with his missing limb from his days in the military. Now he is trying to adopt a teenager, Kyle, whom he has taken under his wing. Now they are saying Kyle needs a woman figure in his life. Can Matt Convince Lori to be that woman?

Lori has her own issues. She has a tough childhood and deals with it every day. She lets people walk all over her and she has a slow self esteem.

Can these two come together and help each other?

I enjoyed all the characters they were so down to earth and easy to relate to. These people could be in your neighborhood.

Great story and people you would like to hear about again.

I voluntarily read a copy of this book.

Candy Laine says

As we follow all the deputies in the Sheriff's Department at Butterfly Harbor, we learn more about the characters who reside in this charming little town. This time we're peeking into Matt and Lori's lives. Matt is a relative outsider, who came to town to start afresh after his discharge from the services. Lori came to live in Butterfly Harbor after the death of her younger brother when she was barely a teenager. Although her

grandparents were supportive, she's not had an easy childhood. Battling with peer cruelty and her extra weight, she's built a wall around her self. Matt has no intention of getting involved with anyone, but ends up wanting to adopt a young teenager with a troubled past. Having Lori as his girlfriend would strengthen his adoption case, but he doesn't want to take advantage of her. It's a beautiful story dealing with everyday crisis and how both parties respond. Sometimes love is not enough, specially when it is difficult to trust. Wonderful book from Anna...as always.

Rachael says

After being hurt in the past, and most recently by Matt, Lori doesn't trust his motives when he suddenly wants to start dating again. Matt definitely messes up several times and has to start at square one to earn her trust all over again. I love that through the ups and downs, Matt's feelings for Lori never waver. He truly loves her for the wonderful person that she is. I really enjoyed their sweet love story, especially the ending. As always, it was fun catching up with the residents of Butterfly Harbor. I can't wait for Kendall's story!

I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary Advance Reader Copy.

Gale says

Always the Hero is about two people who have such high standards for themselves that they forget that they need – and the word ‘need’ really covers their whole reason for being – in order to move forward in the world and with their lives. Both Matt Knight and Lori Bradley are vulnerable while strong characters that truly need to learn to open themselves up before they can move on from their pasts. There were times when I felt that both of ‘em needed a slap upside the head but at their very basics, they are the most kind, and loving, and vulnerable people. Matt is a Sheriff’s deputy – and we met him in the previous stories – but he is also a returning veteran who was wounded during his service. Believe it or not, he truly has accepted his missing limb but still has residual “issues” that are in his current life. He’s a good soul, someone who will keep his word and promises to the exclusion of all else but mostly you always know you can count on him. And Lori...she has had a difficult childhood and carries the scars of her growing up years with her every single day. She truly doesn’t believe in herself and she lets the world walk all over her but we get to watch and read all about her, let’s call it metamorphosis, and how she changes throughout the story. I loved her relationship with Matt – when it was on course – but the ups and downs are what made it loving and touching and special. And Matt’s determination to take Kyle into his life and under his wing? Gah, it will touch your heart. I’ve been reading the entire Butterfly Harbor series and really do love knowing the other characters (from previous stories) and how they interact with “current” characters but the book is a standalone. You should read the others, though, because they are all good, and different, in their own way. I read this book straight thru in one evening because it caught my attention and held on until I finished. I recommend it as it will truly warm your heart.

Cheryl says

Butterfly Harbor is one of my favorite small towns, so I’m thrilled to visit again, this time for Matt and Lori’s story. As a woman who’s struggled with her weight most of her life, I embrace romance tha features both women and men who are trying to overcome obstacles that are roadblocks to their happiness. I hesitate to label them damaged. I prefer to say that Lori and Matt are challenged in putting aside past

injuries...his physical from his military service, hers psychological from bullying and a distant, negative mother. But while they can't seem to repair their own souls, each is the perfect balm for other. While their relationship isn't without it's misunderstandings, Matt and Lori are just as cute and sweet as can be! With each book, Stewart brings more depth and richness to the Butterfly Harbor and its citizens. I loved this one and can't wait to visit again.

Jan Coad says

I love returning to Butterfly Harbor it's my favorite series by Anna J. Stewart. Deputy Matt Knight is working hard to adopt a troubled teen and he also would like to pursue a relationship with Lori Bradley.

A difficult childhood left Lori with low self-esteem. Wounded in the military has left Matt with demons of his own. Their budding relationship is troubled by both of their baggage.

The characters are well developed and draw you right into their lives. It's also nice to get an update on the characters in the town who rally around Lori and Matt and help them find all the answers they need.

Highly recommended series - one of my favorites.

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

Can I just say first of all – three cheers for a plus-size heroine!!! Oh goodness how I relate to Lori and her body image issues. Her body image issues are in great part due to past hurts, and my heart broke for her. I also loved that, while her size is an issue for Lori, it's completely a non-issue for Matt. Only once does he address it in his inner thoughts and only as it relates to his acknowledgment of her insecurities. To him, she's absolutely beautiful no matter what her clothing size. We never feel that Matt is attracted to Lori in spite of her size (I hate it when books take this approach); rather we know he loves her for who she is as a complete package – personality, dreams, heart, and looks.

Now... lest we think Matt is the good-to-be-true perfect romance hero ... he has several faults. Don't get me wrong – he's hot. And swoony. But I spent a large chunk of the book wanting to purse whomp him. As much as his heart is in the right place, he doesn't always execute those good intentions very well. And because those poorly executed good intentions usually hit right in the most sensitive parts of Lori's heart (remember those past hurts i mentioned?), she is the one who ends up getting wounded all over again. Nevertheless, let's not write Matt off just yet – there's still quite a bit of the hero in him...

Bottom Line: Anna J. Stewart delivers a sweet romance with well-developed characters and a layered plot. Butterfly Harbor is definitely a place you'll want to visit and thankfully you are instantly taken there through the pages of this book. Swoony romance, a tender theme, and a community working together equal a plot that gives you full engaged from start to finish!

(I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary copy of this book)

first seen at Reading Is My SuperPower

Suzie says

I've come to really enjoy the Harlequin Heartwarming line with it's sweet and clean stories, many of which are set in small towns. Always the Hero just might top that list of favorites.

I appreciate that Anna J. Stewart's heroine isn't your typical runway model/Olympic athlete/movie star stereotype. Nope, Lori Bradley is what I like to consider fluffy. She has some weight as well as some self-confidence issues.

Yet, Matt Knight sees past her outward appearance to Lori's kindness and good heart. Don't get me wrong, Matt's not perfect. He makes some huge mistakes—ones that made me want to shake some sense into the man—but he knows Lori is special.

This was my first visit to Butterfly Harbor and I was welcomed right in to the small town determined to put the past behind it and become something beautiful. Small town politics and a major festival add a fantastic backdrop to this book.

Disclosure statement:

I receive complimentary books from publishers, publicists, and/or authors, including NetGalley. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Phyllis says

My review is 4.5 Stars

The characters in Always the Hero are so real!

Matt is such a great guy and makes such stupid mistakes! The very fact that he is so in love with Lori for what an amazing woman she is and then keeps withholding important things from her makes him very endearing. Not because he is withholding, but because he doesn't know how to tell her and then spends too much time agonizing over the process until it is too late! He does have such a hero's heart and is always rescuing others. My heart melts that he wants to adopt a very troubled teenager. . .

Lori is one of the kindest women and is always serving others with little thought for herself. Yet she has been crushed, by her parents and those she went to school with. She is large and has a very hard time moving beyond her own terrible self-image. She has to learn to see herself as others do so she has the confidence to trust.

The story is touching.

There are some references to events that most likely happened in the previous books in the series, but this book does stand alone. The other stories do sound intriguing from the mentions here, so it might be worthwhile to read the entire series from the beginning.

This review was originally posted on AmongTheReads.net

I would like to thank IAmAReader.com for giving me this item. My opinion and review were not influenced by this gift.

Dawn Pearson says

Matt Knight, Army veteran and now deputy sheriff of Butterfly Harbor has a big problem. His past is about to ruin his plans for the future. If only he had dealt with it sooner, but that would have meant admitting defeat. Failure. Struggling to know what to do, he can only hope that those it will affect will be forgiving and understanding. Because he's going to need forgiveness if he has any hope of fulfilling his promises.

Lori Bradley has been humiliated and hurt in the past. Consequently, she struggles with trust and self-image issues. So, when Matt reveals a detail about his past, the old fears and hurts flare up bigger than ever. Can she get over her own past and see a future with him? And, when he can't live up to her standards, will she turn her back on him and walk away, letting him risk losing everything?

What follows is a sweet story where two damaged people struggle to reconcile keeping past promises with the need for openness and honesty, all the while not pushing the other away. It's a narrow balance beam that Matt finds himself nearly falling off of more than once.

Themes covered - honesty, forgiveness, keeping promises, and personal self-image.

In the backstory, we follow the other town folk and learn more about their lives, including those from the previous Butterfly Harbor books.

Romance - PG, kissing

Language - PG / Clean

My rating - 4 stars

Valri Western says

What an emotional, sweet, tender book this was! I was so drawn into this book and felt like I was reading a book about the lives of real people! I was truly invested! Of course, these characters could BE real people because they faced real feelings and real situations and real problems. Matthew Knight is a deputy with the Butterfly Harbor police dept. He's former military who served in Afghanistan and lost part of his leg but gets around pretty well on his prosthesis. He has the opportunity to adopt a young man coming out of a juvenile detention center and really wants to do this because he grew up in a very bad environment and wants to provide this young man with a more stable home. It seems that so many things happened to Matt that weren't his fault but caused problems! I felt so badly for him!

Lori Bradley also grew up in a very bad environment and still carries many emotional scars because of it. She has some huge physical issues but I don't want to give away a spoiler! It is the main part of the story! Matt and Lori's story is so touching as they overcome so many obstacles! They are both not only trying to figure out if they belong together but also working on a huge project for the town. I LOVED THIS STORY!!!! There are a lot of people from the previous books which I loved also. So fun to catch up with them. However, if you haven't read the other books, you'll catch on! READ this book for a triumph of the human spirit and a definite smile on your face at the end of the book! You'll be glad you did!

Alexandra says

Its good to be back in Butterfly Harbour. This time its Lori and Matts turn. Matt's going to have to work hard to gain Lori's trust. A difficult childhood has left its mark on Lori. Between her mothers cruel words and some vindictive class mates. Lori can't believe anyone would want her when she is overweight. Matt sees Lori as more than how much she weighs. Matt is a veteran who now works as a deputy. All he wants is Lori and to adopt Kyle. I loved the blossoming romance between these two. Enjoyed catching up with the rest of the residents of Butterfly Harbour. They say the best things come to those who wait. In this case that's certainly true. Highly recommended for fans of contemporary small town romances.
