



## From Out in the Cold

*L.A. Witt*

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Neil Dalton's foundation is already cracking. Grief, guilt, and PTSD have ruled his life since a terrible crime tore his world apart last year, and he's dreading a holiday visit with the family he simultaneously needs and resents. Then someone from his past shows up and rattles that shaky foundation right out from under him.

First a war nearly destroyed Jeremy Kelley, then his family threw him out when he needed them the most. Now he's barely holding on emotionally. He spends his last dollar to get to Chicago and prays his former best friend won't leave him out in the cold.

Neil and Jeremy spend the holidays with Neil's family in their hometown of Omaha. They struggle to deal with families, flashbacks... and feelings that haven't even begun to fade since their last failed attempt at more than friends. As they try to repair their fractured psyches and rebuild damaged bridges, they rely on each other more than ever, but they can't deny the mutual attraction that's existed since before they were both emotionally battered and scarred. If they couldn't make it work back then, how in the world can they pull it off now?

This book was previously published and has been lightly revised.

## From Out in the Cold Details

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Author : L.A. Witt

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## From Reader Review From Out in the Cold for online ebook

### **Caipi says**

I've read this book for the Bingo challenge category tear-jerker and yes, it definitely fits this category.

On a cold evening in December, Neil finds his former best friend Jeremy unexpectedly on the steps to his apartment building. Five years ago they drunkenly spent the night together and the awkwardness between them on the next morning caused a break in their friendship.

Jeremy, chilled to the bone, hopes that Neil will help him. He just left the army after eight years deployment, then his family threw him out and now he travelled with his last dollar to Chicago to find Neil.

Neil is at the moment not in a good place in life himself, grieving his boyfriend and trying to work through a trauma. But when he learns that Jeremy is broke and also suffers from sever PTSD, there's no question that he'll take him in.

They both have to deal with nightmares and flashbacks, and life is definitely not getting easier when they spend the holidays together at Neil's not very gay-friendly parents.

A very sad, emotional book, but there's also a lot of hope, love and forgiveness.

4,5 stars

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### **Josy says**

Huh... I thought this book would be a total winner for me but sadly it wasn't.

I didn't hate it. BUT I didn't love it either.

Okay, there were parts that I hated. Like really hated. Jeremy's family was the absolute worst! Like they all deserve a special place in hell worst. I was raging mad when Jeremy talked to them.

And there were parts I didn't get. Like Neil and Jeremy's relationship. They have been childhood friends and once both guys realized they were gay, they hooked up (not a spoiler, it's in the blurb). And it went wrong for whatever reason. I never understood why and it was never really explained. Now they are in each other's lives again and after much "I want him", "I can't have him", "I don't want to ruin our friendship", "But I want him so much" from both guys, they live their HEA. Okay, this is simplified but that's how it felt. I just didn't get it. They obviously had a connection in their childhood but after not seeing or talking to each other for several years, there wasn't much left of it. At least I didn't feel it. There's lust and attraction but for me, there wasn't much beyond that. They were just beginning to build this connection/friendship again. They were tentative and didn't talk much but all of a sudden they profess their love and live happily ever after.

Seriously, both guy's thoughts were all over the place. And I get it. I really do. After what they have both been through, it's no wonder that they can't think straight. But that's also why the "I love you" came out of nowhere for me. They were still dealing or just beginning to deal with what had happened to them and amidst all this stuff going on, it felt like they both wanted/needed this relationship to not fall apart, to have a lifeline, to have something to hold on to. And for me, it felt like they were remembering the feelings they

once had for each other and were trying to project them into the here and now. 'Reminiscing' is the word that comes to mind.

I'm not saying that there wouldn't have been a chance of them being able to build this connection again but here it was way too fast and therefore not believable.

The PTSD and grief were handled well IMO and I liked that the author pointed out with how much crap people have to deal with when they leave the military and war behind.

The narration of the audiobook was good but the alternating POVs sounded too similar so it was sometimes difficult to know who of them was speaking.

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*Read as part of my EuroPrideCon reading challenge: to read new-to-me-authors before the convention (<https://europridecon.jimdo.com/>).*

## **Martin says**

Another beautiful Christmas novel about two troubled guys dealing with PTSD (one because of a terrible tragedy in his past, the other because of his military time in Afghanistan/Iraq).

Neil and Jeremy have been best friends all their life. They grew up together, went to school together and even shared their stumbling attempts at sex together. The sex part they even tried twice. But both times, they felt an awkwardness between them that eventually cost them their friendship.

5 years later, both guys run into each other again. Only by then, life has fucked them up pretty thoroughly. Neil is suffering from a terrible trauma that shattered his world to a point, where his therapist is the only person between leading a somewhat functioning life and a complete breakdown. Between his nightmares and flashbacks, Neil dreads nothing more than spending Christmas with his homophobic parents who expect him to keep 'the gay' to himself. So he shuts up and keeps an important and painful part of his life from his parents.

When he suddenly finds a huddled figure on his doorstep and realizes it's his former best friend asking him for help, he knows it's more than he can handle on top of everything else that's going on in his life. But when Neil learns that Jeremy is just as broken as himself, he invites him along to spend Christmas with his family.

2 hurting gay guys and a set of homophobic parents is enough to turn this Christmas into a true celebration (if you can see my sarcasm here).

Neil and Jeremy really touched me. I found the setting a bit heavy at first. Two guys suffering from severe PTSD, having nightmares and flashbacks that were triggered by the smallest things. How could they ever make it together, right?

But I absolutely loved how each guy provided a strong shoulder to the other, helping him through his very own hell, with the other guy being the safe anchor keeping him in the here and now when the flashbacks took over their minds.

There were some beautiful and powerful scenes in here, like their visit to the bridges in Madison County. That moment drove me to tears.

**N. D. & J. K.**

**No date. No cutesy little heart or anything like that. Just our initials. And maybe it was ridiculously sentimental, but as we walked back toward the car, I couldn't help being happy there was one place in the world where the two of us would always be, one way or another, together.**

I totally enjoyed this novel!  
5 stars and to my list of favorites!

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**SheReadsALot says**

I, ah...I, um...liked it?

I think I might have.

\*ponders\*

I didn't hate it. That's a step in the right direction, I guess?

I thought it was going to be some angsty, epic, PTSD, sexual tension between damaged men. And it was just a drawn out (should have been) novella.

Neil is suffering from not being able to come out to his family and share a traumatic event that has been driving him crazy...literally. And I get his sense of guilt but he took it to an extreme at times. And he helps an estranged best friend off the street in December, recently retired soldier Jeremy. Jeremy's family disowned him upon arrival home due to being gay. :(

That part was done well. And the PTSD attacks. Jeremy being so open about his issues, so quickly...I didn't buy. And he and Neil's...whatever you call it. They barely talked to each other about their actual feelings for one another. It went from bullshit filler talk straight to "I love you".

I felt like Charlie Brown and Neil & Jeremy were Charlie Brown's teacher:

*Wah, wah, wah, wah.* For reals.

I was not a fan of Neil and Jeremy's dialogue (or their relationship). I enjoyed the alternating 1st POV, you don't know how many times I've wished a couple of books did that. However, it's not enough of a saving grace for me. I did like Jeremy mostly. Neil, I'm beginning to become apathetic to. I'm not going to even pinpoint why this book was closer to meh for me.

And the epilogue?

WTF was that? Where's my shovel to muck through that BS?

Really?

Everything ends so cookie cutter?

*Really?*

I like the spotlight brought to the people who serve in the military and the aftermath that can effect so many lives. It was the best part. The friendship theme wasn't bad, even the boinking part wasn't bad.

But that last 15%...

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### **Debra says**

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**<http://www.amazon.com/From-Out-Cold-L...>**

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### **Chris says**

Okay so I liked this but I didn't love it. This story had all the makings for a beautiful m/m romance but it just didn't take off until 80% - it was slow and hard to read but it had a thread of hope and I hung to that as I read. I think I just got lost in some parts.... and that is unusual for me

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## **Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says**

Another L.A. Witt Kindle freebie! 6/30/15!

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## **Mandy\*reads obsessively\* says**

I think your enjoyment of this story really depends on how much 'romance' you want and how well you deal with two MCs with serious mental health issues, this is more of a love story and less of a romance, at least to me.

I found it a heavy read with serious and dark issues, but it wasn't depressing for me, and I only teared up at one point in the story, and that's the mother in me wanting to take Jeremy's parents and shake some sense into them and give Jeremy a big hug and the family he deserves.

The story is told from alternating POVs which worked well for me.

Jeremy is a war veteran out of a job, out of a family, down on his luck, suffering from PTSD ( those initials never seem strong enough for the trauma it is describing) he shows up on Neil's doorstep needing help.

Neil and Jeremy have been life long friends but the last time they saw each other 5 years ago ended in getting drunk and having sex. They haven't seen or talked to each other since.

Neil is going through his own grief and trauma, but he is in therapy which is more than Jeremy has.

I am always very grateful when an author doesn't make the deceased partner 'less' now that new love has been found, it's ok to love again, and the 'new' doesn't have to be 'better' than the lost love, just different. LA Witt did a wonderful job making that clear in this story.

Neil's parents are better than Jeremy's even if it takes them far longer to get to that point than it should, but they love their son, and it shows.

The first 50% of this book is sex-free and full of sadness, then comes the turning point, there is still a lot of sadness but there are some fun times between the guys and lighter moments when they can breath easier and see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The ending is very sweet and I was happy for them, after all they had been though to come out on the other side in such a nice way.

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## **Dia says**

3,5 \*?\*?\*?

It's my first Christmas novel this year ?

I had this freebie for a while on my Kindle and thought about trying it since it's getting colder and colder outside.

The blurb sums it up perfectly. I've enjoyed it even if it was sadder than I expected. I was super sorry for how Jeremy's parents talked to him. And on Christmas Day! This story felt pretty realistic, the PTSD and the flashbacks, the pain, the stress. I just wanted Neil and Jeremy to get together sooner. All that beating around the bush got me bored at times. But I'm giving it 3,5 stars because the last chapters and the epilogue were great! Sweet HEA ❤?

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• \* ° \*••Gwendolyn•°\*\*\*★°\*\*\*★ says

**OooOh My Gawd....out in the COLD!**

**I COULD FEEL THE COLD....**

This is an ABSOLUTELY Beautiful Love Story~of Neil and Jeramy~A Love Story Depicting Love, Hope and Destiny~

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**Enny says**

Fantastic story about two friends who both have to deal with PTSD and although the author didn't gloss any of the difficulties of dealing with it over, it was a very enjoyable read. The last chapter made me all teary-eyed.

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**Kaje Harper says**

This is a story about two former best friends, who almost became lovers but backed away from the intensity. As the book opens, they are both at a low point in life, and finally meeting up after years apart. Both have PTSD due to violence in their pasts, and this gives them a connection and an intrinsic understanding of each other that helped me believe in the fast way they came together. This book is about the healing, not the trauma, so it has painful, achy moments, but not deep angst. Some of the most emotional involved Neil's family.

One thing I liked about this book was that Neil's former partner Bruce was not eclipsed by Jeremy - he didn't suddenly become second best. Nor was he completely idealized. Neil's gradual ability to move on, especially after having someone to confide in, seemed real. I really admired Jeremy, and his understanding of other people's traumas, both Neil's and J's ex-boyfriend Matt's. Often when we hurt, we become more impatient of others, but Jeremy was compassionate. Jeremy's parents and sister were awful, and yet we hear about that attitude all the time in real life. You wonder how can a mother, a father, a sister, think like that? And yet they do. I liked the progression of attitudes in Neil's family, with gradual changes and a real reason for the change.

The two guys' POVs/voices felt a bit similar, but the fact that they had common background and common experiences made that plausible. The story moved along smoothly, and there were moments that captured genuine emotions. I expect I will reread this one someday.

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**Juxian says**

I had a very bad start with L.A. Witt's books. One of the first m/m I read was the utterly ridiculous "Unhinge the Universe" and after that I stayed away from L.A. Witt for almost two years. But this book... It had not one but TWO traumatized characters! And second chances! And Christmas on top. I had to try it.

Well... I didn't hate it. I'm quoting another review here but that's about as much enthusiasm as I can express about this book. All right, there is more to say for it. It was not boring. At least the first half of it wasn't. I actually liked the first half. Then everything kinda fell apart.

It was probably... that there was too much of everything? I mean having Neil struggling with his grief and his loneliness - and then his childhood friend reappearing in his life... it probably would've already made a book. But here we also have this childhood friend (Jeremy) having PTSD. And Jeremy's family being infernal homophobes. And Neil's family being homophobic bigots. And some drama of Neil and Jeremy having tried to start a relationship twice and failing both times. And now they try for the third time and are not sure if they want it, and what, and how... too much. It was like my emotions were pulled in too many directions - and at some moment I just stopped caring.

Okay, not completely. I hated Jeremy's family all right - and really, Jeremy's conversation with them... man, it's obvious they wouldn't spit on you if you were on fire, why are you begging for their support? Support can only be given willingly, you can't get it by whining or demanding it.

And Neil's family was just a little better. Oh yeah, they kinda realized they were wrong? So now everything is dandy? All right, I'm an unforgiving bitch... no wait, I'm not, I just don't think that saying "I'm sorry" heals all the wounds. It doesn't. Especially not the wounds that were inflicted by the people closest to you.

Well, and the part of the story that felt like a biggest problem for me was Neil and Jeremy's relationship. For one thing, I never really understood what went wrong two first times when they slept with each other. So I couldn't figure out why this time was going to be different. Another thing is... we kinda get something about Neil and Jeremy being friends as kids and getting into a lot of pranks together. But then they don't interact AT ALL for five years. And even after they meet again, they don't interact much either. There is no sense of connection between them - and every time I felt there should be, there was sex instead. Well, sometimes sex IS the connection, when a sex scene is written in such a way - but not here. I'm sorry, here sex was skippable - and I always felt disappointed with it. Like they start talking about giving them together another try, and here I'm waiting for them to talk about what can go wrong, or why it should be different from previous times, or something - something to understand them. But nope - it's just sex, and then they both say "I love you".

For me those "I love you" were coming out of nowhere.

Did you love Neil when you didn't contact him for five years, Jeremy? Did you love Jeremy when you were with Bruce, Neil? That also rubbed me in the wrong way, to be honest - Neil thinking it's all right to let go of Bruce and get together with Jeremy because he always loved Jeremy, even before Bruce... So what - was Bruce second best for him? And what would have happened if Jeremy reappeared in his life while Bruce were still alive? Sorry for asking but no matter how nice Bruce's parents are and no matter how many times the author repeats that Bruce would have wanted it... it kinda felt like Neil kept grieving just because there was no right guy around. And as soon as Mr. Jeremy Right is here, it takes Neil, like, a week to wrap up his mourning.

Oh well, and then there is the epilogue (or was it the last chapter? a year later, anyway). And that was horrible in its own way. Should be labeled as "health hazard" with how saccharine sweet it was. Almost read like a parody but was serious, unfortunately.

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### **Melissa says**

This story was ok. Kind of slow and not a lot of action, but it was a good read. It deals with tough subjects like PTSD, partner death (murder) and contemplating suicide. This isn't a light read so be ready for heavy stuff. The survivors guilt Neil suffers over the death of his boyfriend Bruce is further traumatized due to the fact that Neil's parents don't want any talk about Neil's gay life, so he kept his grief private. So, so sad.

And Jeremy's parents reject him outright when they learn he is gay and he so desperately needs his family

right now dealing with PTSD.

These two men have been friends for years and it was nice to see them turn to each other. I liked the characters, but again the story was on the slow side. Written well and I think if I had read this at a different time my rating would be different (higher).

The ending is nice and there was no big dramatic "thing" to create drama for drama sake. Love that! It ended maturely and happily.

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### **Trisha Harrington says**

This is one of those sad books that you so want to turn around and become happy. The blurb does not describe this book well enough. There are a few flashbacks but not a whole lot. The story itself is in the present but has a lot of the past twisted in. Sometimes in flashbacks other times just from a character talking about it.

The reason this book is getting 4 stars instead of 5 is because as much as I loved the story. I could not get past Bruce being brought up so much. One thing that annoyed me was Neil was afraid of replacing him or overwriting him in his life. And then the realization is that what he had with Bruce was to get over Jeremy. So it kind of made me think does that mean he was not truly in love with Bruce? After hearing so much about how he loved him, is all that being overwritten?

Normally when there is a dead partner it annoys me. For the very reason I hate the "we would have been together if he was still alive". That really just irks me because I want to read about the current romance and not about the old one, that should have still been. I understand that some people do lose the people they love, but relationships should not be dragged down by a dead person.

I loved Jeremy, he was the character I had a better connection with and I was so glad he was here. He was a great guy and I wanted to bitch slap his parents, several times. I loved how he was so supportive of Neil, when some guys would have walked away. And he helped keep Bruce's memory alive, I admired him for that. It's something I imagine was difficult for him, but he still managed to do that.

This book is difficult for me. Jeremy is the reason I am giving this book four stars, and the only reason I liked the book. He was a wonderful character and made me love this story. I loved the reunited first loves theme. Even if it did involve one of my pet peeves.

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