



# Shelter Me

*Catherine Mann*

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## **Shelter Me** Catherine Mann

From *USA Today* bestselling author Catherine Mann comes this beautiful, heartwarming novel about a returning military officer, the daughter of his fallen commander, and a very special dog with a mission. For fans of Jill Shalvis and Susan Mallery.

**Nestled in the sunny fields of Tennessee lies the McDaniel family's Second Chance Ranch Animal Rescue. Two new arrivals are on their way, but only one is the four-legged kind.**

Staff Sergeant Mike Kowalski wants only one thing after he gets home from Iraq: to sleep in a king-sized bed with clean sheets. But first, he has to hand off his fallen commander's dog, Trooper, to his family without handing off his heart to Sierra...

Sierra McDaniel needs a break. Her family life is crazy, and when she's not mucking out kennels, she's slogging through grad school. Sierra certainly doesn't want another dog, especially one that reminds her of her father. And she definitely doesn't want to see Mike with that charming smile of his...

But Trooper has a mission of his own. Before too long Mike is moving to the ranch to lend a hand—and hoping for his own second chance with Sierra.

## **Shelter Me Details**

Date : Published August 5th 2014 by Berkley

ISBN : 9780425269886

Author : Catherine Mann

Format : Mass Market Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance, War, Military Fiction, Animals

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## From Reader Review Shelter Me for online ebook

### Arlena says

Title: Shelter Me

Author: Catherine Mann

Publisher: Berkley

Reviewed By: Arlena Dean

Series: Second Chance Ranch #1

Genre: Romance

Rating: 5

Review:

"Shelter Me" by Catherine Mann...

From USA Today bestselling author Catherine Mann comes this beautiful, heartwarming novel about a returning military officer, the daughter of his fallen commander, and a very special dog with a mission. For fans of Jill Shalvis and Susan Mallery.

"Nestled in the sunny fields of Tennessee lies the McDaniel family's Second Chance Ranch Animal Rescue. Two new arrivals are on their way, but only one is the four-legged kind.

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But Trooper has a mission of his own. Before too long Mike is moving to the ranch to lend a hand—and hoping for his own second chance with Sierra."

What I liked from "Shelter Me"....

I hesitated a bit before I picked up this read after reading what this novel was about but I am so glad that I did. I will say this author really knows how to write a script that puts the reader at ease with the subject line. Let's just say this was a story that involved the whole McDaniel family. From the father, [fallen commander], his father (the grandfather), wife, daughter, son, dog and a dear friend of the family. You will find from the read that this is a military family their has been a death [a dear son, husband and father...with the surviving family members have to endure quite a lots pain before this story will end. A dear friend [Mike]to the family has brought home a dog [Trooper] that had belonged to this fallen commander. Why, because Mike had promised to do so. It seems like this dog was a reminder of a dog that had once been owned by this fallen commander. Only when Mike had done his job with delivering Trooper to this family he they will see that this family needed his help. With Mike being on leave what could he do but help especially since this would possibly put him closer to Sierra since they had broken up with much earlier before his time over seas. I will let you in on a secret... I even teared up while reading some of this good read. This author really works her magic in showing how each one of these family members were desperately in the need of his help and yet didn't Mike also need help? Also this author even gave thoughts of that of the dog Trooper...yes of what Trooper was thinking from the read. Now, you know dogs can't talk or can they?

The primary and secondary characters were all richly developed as they seemed to come alive on the pages with each scene and conversation being so complete and special. Also those hot, steamy scenes from a certain couple was off the chart...well done. I don't want to give too much away but I will say this was a excellent and yes it's a military read. So be prepared for some real issues that can happen and you will find it interesting in how they are handled. Will they be fixable? You will just have to see for yourself. "Shelter Me" was somewhat long read but nothing was over done. When this author brings it to a close at the end of the read all will be wrapped up...well except one situation that will have you wondering.... but you will have to read the next series to find out what that was. Would I recommend "Shelter Me?" YES and Yes!

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## Sue says

In Shelter Me (Second Chance Ranch #1) by Catherine Mann, Trooper is on his way home to his human family, and he has a mission. Help this family heal after the tragic loss of his human, The Commander (Allen) in Afghanistan. Rescued in Afghanistan and on his way to a different life, it is staff sergeant Mike's responsibility to deliver him to Allen's family, including his daughter Sierra...the woman Mike can't forget.

Having once been together, Sierra is not ready for the feelings still Mike brings out in her. She's not so sure she's ready for another reminder that her Dad is forever gone either, reminders both Mike and Trooper bring. Sierra has so much going on in her life right now from her father's death and grad school to helping out on her mother's animal rescue ranch, that she doesn't know if she can fit anything else in. Sometimes she feels like she just can't keep everything up. When Mike sees Allen's family is struggling so much, he ends up staying on the ranch for his leave to help out where he can. Sierra and Mike can't deny themselves for long, but Sierra has no desire to be another military family again. She'll take what she can now ...but will it be enough? Can she let go again?

The whole family is struggling to move on without a man who was gone more often than he was at home. There is so much going on in Shelter Me and it all interlinks and leads back to their huge loss. Shelter Me is so much more than Mike and Sierra's story. It is a story about a family who is coping, but not moving on. This is just as much the story of Lacey - Allen's wife, their son Nathan, and Allen's ailing father The General, who they struggle to keep well and safe. It is also Trooper's story, and through Trooper's eyes, Allen's story.

Catherine manages to effortlessly tell Shelter Me from numerous POV's that transition very easily from person to person. I loved how she did this, making me feel close to everyone. There is great character development and a strong sense of realism in Shelter Me. Catherine writes with great insight. At times heart wrenching, at times humorous, Shelter Me is believable with characters that will stick with you. With her talented writing, Catherine drew me in fast and deep into the lives of Allen's family. Dealing with real life issues and a family left behind from the loss of war, Catherine takes it pretty deep at times, with unexpected plot twists, all of which are very true to life.

Trooper is the real catch and the way we see the world from his POV pulled me and my heart strings in even tighter, if that was possible.

Shelter Me is very well written, with smooth progression from scene to scene that is easy to follow. Catherine took me on a very emotional journey from both ends of the spectrum in the best possible way in Shelter Me.

I'd highly recommend Shelter Me to all romance readers.

## Desere says

Staff Sergeant Mike Kolwalski only wants one thing when he gets home from Iraq, to sleep in a king sized bed with clean sheets! But before he does that he has to hand off his fallen commander's dog to his family without handing off his heart to Seirra.

Sierra McDaniel needs a break, a good long break! Her family life is crazy and when she's not mucking out the kennels, she's slogging her way through grad school. She certainly doesn't want yet another dog, especially because that reminds her of her father.

But most importantly she does not want to see Mr I'll charm you with just a smile , Mike again. Now I know you're thinking these two characters will see each other again, there will be a little bit of uneasiness and the families and friends will help to get them to get together but this is not exactly the case, you see our hero of the moment in this book is the dog!

Trooper " I am just as brave as the best soldiers of all time" has a mission all of his own, and before long Mike is moving in to the ranch to lend a helping hand and hoping for his second chance with Sierra . But will Mike win Sierra's heart again or will Trooper's most important mission yet fail miserably?

I have read many books from this author before and each time am amazed more and more ! Her books are always full of life and filled with deep emotion that slowly tears your heart to shreds with sadness and then beautifully mends it back with such happiness there is just nothing more beautiful.

Shelter me was no different, I loved the characters in this book! I felt so deeply connected to them both it was as if they were right in front of me acting out their parts and so much more than just characters in a book.

What I truly enjoyed about this read were the various relationships, not just the one between Sierra and Mike. The family and friends that stand together no matter what, the we fight everything that is unjust and if we go down we go down together element made it all feel very realistic and I felt like I wanted to be apart of this family, like even if I was not a family member I would still be helped by them no matter what, fantastic job Catherine!

I adored Trooper, so cute and so addictive to read about, and a really cool touch , some of the story lines were told in Trooper's own words. Once you start this read you will not be able to put it down, it was beautiful from start to finish.

I highly recommend this read for all fans of second chance romance reads. A message about there always being a way to make it work shines through on every page!

5/5 star review

" She wants to be left alone, but he wants to shelter her from the hurt"

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## Dorine says

**Rated 3.5 Blue Ribbons. Also posted at [TBRMountainRange.com](http://TBRMountainRange.com) where you can find more of my**

## reviews by category tags.

A ranch dedicated to animal rescue takes in a dog that awakens many emotional memories for this family who recently lost their soldier. Can a wife, a daughter, a son and their friends put the pieces of their lives back together with the help of a dog who knows what they need?

This series is unusual because it begins with the point-of-view of a dog in the prologue and continues with that viewpoint occasionally throughout the story. With more than one romance percolating in this series, as well as a variety of animals looking for a forever home, there is plenty for readers to anticipate at the Second Chance Rescue.

Sergeant Mike Kowalski breaks rules, risking his career, so that he can bring his Colonel's dog home to his family after his death. Colonel McDaniel, along with his men, adopted a stray dog in Iraq during their tour and named him Trooper after the Colonel's childhood pet. When the Colonel is killed, the Sergeant must make good on his promise to get the dog home to the Colonel's family in the U.S., at whatever cost to his own career.

Mike has a history with the Colonel and his family, especially with the Colonel's daughter, Sierra. Even though they dated and broke-up prior to his leaving for Iraq, Mike isn't sure whether he can keep his distance from Sierra, especially knowing what the family is experiencing now. A military life is how Sierra grew up but it is not how she pictures her married life to be in the future. Even less so after her father is killed.

Sierra lives in an apartment above the barn at her mom's search and rescue farm, assisting with the animals, worrying about her teenage brother and helping with the care of her dad's father, while teaching at grad school and trying to finish her degree at the same time. The family is a mess from grief as well as from the dreams of the life they had planned together for when her dad retired. Add in some contrary neighbors who don't want an animal rescue as their neighbor and there's enough emotional overload on a good day, let alone when something goes wrong. And plenty goes wrong.

Mike thought he could come home, leave the dog with the family and spend his time on leave at a hotel until he needs to move on to his next assignment. But he can't shake the dog who wants to be with the only person he knows and Mike can't watch this family fall apart without pitching in to help somehow. So he moves into the apartment above their barn to assist with repairs at the ranch during his leave, while Sierra moves back in with her family.

Can these former lovers resist each other even though they both know that their paths are in a direction that's too far off course for them to be together again?

There's a lot going on in this story so it's hard to describe without giving away the entire plot. There's a side story with Sierra's mom, Lacey, who is my favorite character in the book. She has some powerful inner struggles due to the death of her husband, whom she hasn't seen for a year by the time he dies. She feels cheated after raising her son and daughter alone while her husband served his country, only to end up alone in the end. Just when Lacey thought he'd retire and they'd finally have a life together, her husband is killed in Iraq. In addition to her volunteer animal rescue ranch and being a mom, Lacey is also an online teacher, as well as the caregiver for her husband's father, a retired General who has the beginning stages of Alzheimers. Can she hold it together when her whole life seems to be falling apart?

This series has a lot of potential. I love animal rescue stories, or veterinarian stories, and this novel has both. But, I didn't relate to Mike and Sierra as a couple. I think it's because there are at least five points-of-view in this novel, including the dog's, so I never became emotionally invested in this couple. Their story just didn't call to me the way that Lacey's confusion about her life pulled me in. But, that may also be a good thing

since this book can appeal to two different age groups of romance lovers. I like the idea of multiple points-of-view in a larger novel; I just don't think it works well for me within 319 pages because it just seemed a bit jumpy and I became confused about which character's head I was in. I don't believe there was enough page time for each perspective for me to become connected to all of them, so I obviously related to the one character who spoke to me emotionally.

The family's loss is palpable and I think their individual coping mechanisms were what kept me reading, along with the suspense from the possibility that they just wouldn't be able to cope at some point and what those ramifications would be. This book is emotional but there's enough humor sprinkled in to keep the story landing on a positive note. The ending of SHELTER ME enhances my anticipation of the second novel, RESCUE ME, so I will look forward to that, hoping to read more of Lacey's journey. If you love animal stories and like unusual circumstances surrounding their well-being, then I think you'll enjoy this eclectic combination with small town values.

**Reviewed by Dorine, courtesy of Romance Junkies.**

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### **Julie (Manga Maniac Cafe) says**

4/4+ stars

This book DESTROYED me and I'm not sure why. It has a HEA, great characters, and is told through multiple points of view. I think I liked all of the characters so much that I hated for it to end. At several pivotal points in the story, Trooper, the canine rescue from Afghanistan, hijacks the narration, and while I thought it was cheesy at first, his little interruptions are what did me in. He sees everything so simply, yet so wisely, and his observations of his human caretakers added a lot of depth to the story. If only we could all see life so clearly, and embrace every loving presence in our lives. I think you have to be an animal lover to truly appreciate this book, because everyone sacrifices so much for the homeless charges in Lacey's care.

I'm looking forward to the next book in the series :)

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### **WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says**

Not really what I was looking for, split romance with mother and daughter relationships getting equal time. Heavy on the emotional upheaval and everyday life of trying to move on after the death of a loved one, depression with thoughts of suicide, Alzheimer's disease, PTSD, and oddly, wildly vindictive neighbors. The quality writing you always get with Mann but slower moving and not a story I was, personally, feeling.

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### **Toni says**

The Second Chance Ranch easily lives up to its name in this heartwarming tale. The McDaniels family is adrift as they continue to cope with the loss of Sierra's father to a roadside bomb. To add insult to injury the neighbors want to shut down the Second Chance Ranch because they feel it is an undesirable element in the neighborhood. General McDaniel (Allan's father) is in mid-stage Alzheimer's and the family is struggling to cope with his declining health. While this is in theory Mike and Sierra's story, in reality it is the story of an

entire family (both blood and crafted) as they begin to deal with the loss of a crucial family member. This is a story of grief and hope and moving forward and standing on your own two feet all rolled into one: just like life. Mike and Sierra have a history which makes this a reunion story and allows the HEA to become more secondary to the family and Second Chance Ranch aspects of the story. Mike and Sierra definitely have to work for their HEA and the sparks between them are dynamic. It is the many layers that make this such an engaging and touching story.

What makes this novel truly unique is Trooper – the feral mutt rescued originally by Allen McDaniel in Iraq and brought back to the family by Mike. Trooper has a strong role in bringing this family back together and starting the healing process in earnest. He also has his own voice. Yes, you read that correctly. Several scenes are told from Trooper's point of view; and, what a POV it is. Trooper brings his own brand of humor and healing to the story and makes the entire novel richer for it.

Mann brings together a variety of engaging characters that leave the reader wanting more. Readers will want to be frequent visitors to the Second Chance Ranch and hopefully Mann will oblige. Personally I'm waiting for Lacey's (Sierra's mom) story. We see her move so far forward as she begins to move past her grief that I can't wait for her to find her second HEA. This is a must read for anyone with a strong love of animals and / or second chances.

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### **Jen says**

I'll admit, when I read the prologue and realized it was from a dog's POV, I wasn't sure this book was going to be for me. However, I knew that somewhere within it's pages was a soldier or two and I am a sucker for soldier stories.

SECOND CHANCE RANCH was a pleasant surprise for me and that canine POV ended up being one of my favorite parts! In fact, that silly dog affected me more than the humans in the story and choked me up on more than one occasion. Not that the humans aren't entertaining, they are, and this is a story of love, honor, sacrifice and hope. It also has plenty of kissing and face fanning moments, all of which were tastefully done.

I really enjoyed book and look forward to seeing where Catherin Mann takes the series next!

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### **Jess says**

Review posted: Happily Ever After - Reads

Blog rating: B+

*Shelter Me* is a story that focuses on many different relationships: (our hero and heroine) Sierra and Mike, the various members of Sierra's family, Mike with Grandpa McDaniel, Sierra's mom Lacey and the vet, Ray, her animal rescue and the neighbors and even the family dog Trooper, rescued overseas and brought to the McDaniel family as a last wish from Sierra's father, Allen, before he was killed in action. The point of view switches throughout the book between a few people, and yes we even get to hear what Trooper's thinking and I really enjoyed the pace this set for the story. It was easy to fall into and ended up being a hard book to put down.

The main focus of the story is Mike and Sierra's relationship. They dated in the past, then he left on duty and

they broke up. But now that he's back on leave and staying at the family's animal rescue to help them out and to help them grieve the loss of Allen. Being in close proximity to Sierra again, he can't ignore the feelings he still has for her. I liked how almost effortless their romance felt, in a good way. These two have chemistry and I enjoyed how their relationship progressed amongst all the madness.

Lacey is grieving for a husband who was killed a few months ago and a man that she hadn't seen for a year. She's put her heart and soul and every penny she has into making this shelter a haven for animals that have nowhere else to go and finds them good people to give them a home. Her neighbors want to shut her down, so in addition to everything else she gets thrown at her, she's dealing with the threat of having to get rid of all the rescues. She's also caught the eye of the local vet, Ray, a man who's 10 years younger than she is, but wants to be there for her during all this emotional mess she's in the middle of. Lacey's story continues to be ongoing, although we do get a hint of the direction her life takes in the epilogue which jumps ahead 10 years and I can't wait to get the details that fill in the gaps of her journey.

Rounding out the McDaniel family is the son, Nathan, a teen who's mentally and emotionally on the edge of falling into something so deep and painful and Allen's father, Joshua, a former military man himself who's suffering from Alzheimers. To say this family has already gone through so much is an understatement and now with the risk of losing their animal rescue, Mike can't turn his back on them or Sierra.

While Mike and Sierra's relationship is the main storyline, I really enjoyed all the various relationship threads that were woven throughout the story. Whether it was Mike helping Joshua through one of his episodes of believing he was back in the war and his confusion coming out of that, Lacey and Ray spending time together, Sierra and Lacey having a real conversation about what they're each going through and how they're coping (for Lacey that included a little too much to drink at night when the pain was the worst) or maybe the relationship I enjoyed most was seeing how Trooper took care of his new family, in a way that only a best furry friend can. And no, we don't any weird dog-talking moments. But Catherine Mann gives a little look into Trooper's personality, his own survival story and his "mission" to help heal this family.

I was taken from the start and enjoyed getting to know Mike and the entire McDaniel family. I can't wait to meet the dog that impacts more lives in the next book.

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## **Vickie Gerlach says**

I was lucky enough to get an advanced copy of this book... And let me tell you.... Lucky is the word indeed. I love Catherine Mann's books, and knew this one was gonna be a bit different. My dog has her own fb page, and she talks about things and people all the time... I had no idea that the dog in this book was gonna have such a great speaking role too. The way Cathy pulled that off was fantastic. The dogs thoughts and point of view were right on. He had a mission to finish.. And it wasn't gonna be easy. Being a dog lover and understanding the world of abandoned dogs, and the world of rescue, this book covered the difficult task with that exceptionally well... Showed the heart it takes to run a shelter.

Also... I am the wife of a retired Navy man... And The military aspects touched my heart deeply. What the family feels, what they go through when a loved one is deployed, how they cope when they don't come him... It tears your heart out to just think about it. Cathy was able to touch on everyone's emotions, good bad and ugly, it not only shows what it's like... It breaks your heart as you live it through the eyes and heart of this family...Fear...Strength.... Need.....and Love.... The feelings of our lives.. What makes our hearts beat... What makes our hearts break... And what makes our hearts love... It's all here... And right in the middle is this amazing dog, doing his job to help a family put the pieces back together. This book will make you laugh and cry.... And you will love every minute of it...

## **Karen says**

I won a copy of this book and I can't say enough about how good it was.. I loved all the people, and loved the dog "Trooper".. Sierra and her family have had a rough time with the loss of Sierra's father and her mother runs an animal rescue that keeps them all busy.. Her grandpa who has dementia is also living with them.. Now, Mike Kowalski is bringing them the dog, Trooper.. The dog was befriended by Sierra's dad in Iraq before he was killed and Mike thinks he should be with the family.. Some of the story is told in Trooper's "words".. Was a fast book to read as I didn't want to put it down.. A lot of love and family and I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves a well written book and loves animals..

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## **Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says**

Autry's review posted on Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

4.5 STARS

Review copy provided for an honest review

Mike and Sierra are two complex characters that have a rocky past with each other. Combine that rocky path with a military death and a dog on a mission; the fireworks are just waiting to blow!

Sierra is trying to adjust to her new life; mucking out kennels, bleaching toys, exercising animals, watching over her family. She's not sure she can handle anything else and then Trooper knocks her down, and who's there to help her back up? None other than her old flame, Mike, who has yet to get over Sierra and release his commanders dog to his family.

Mike has come from very little, raised by a Grandmother who leaves much to be desired.

Seeing the military as his only way out, he enlisted and forms a close bond with his commander, even taking holidays with the family. Upon the commanders' death, he is to return the commanders dog, Trooper, to the family, take a respite and report back.

Trooper has other plans; no way is he staying on the Second Chance Ranch. He has to get his humans together, it's clear they need each other, two pieces of the puzzle. He takes matters into his own paws and makes it happen. Fighting the attraction and chemistry is making his job hard. The emotions are running high, as pets need to be adopted or fostered, the city is attempting to close the ranch doors, nasty neighbors are taking things to far, fading memories and grief are piling up on Sierra and her family. Late night walks and battle talks are keeping the Second Chance Ranch on its toes. Mike and Sierra are learning to rely on each other and having a second set of hand to repair things on the ranch isn't bad. Mike's hands quickly find themselves on his former lover and things heat up quickly. But can Sierra imagine herself as a military wife, risking it all like her mother did? Or will she seek a safer more suitable husband? Mike has one month to help this family, and to make Sierra take the risk, and become his wife.

After reading the first time, I had to double check and make sure I had the right book. The prologue was not what I was expecting but kept reading and realized how necessary it was to make the book flow like it does. It continually pulled me deeper and deeper into the story. I thought of all the military members I know and service personnel in general. I cannot imagine living life the way they do, risking it all for people they don't even know. The bonds that people have with their animals are life changing. It's very easy to see how pets are treated like members of the family, because they are. It made me stop and grab a tissue a couple of times, I smiled and thought they have to make it, they've been through too much together to not make it. I cried...I

smiled.... I hoped.... I loved reading Shelter Me; it's hard to list everything that happens in this book without giving spoilers. Shelter Me is worth it, I am very anxious to see what happens in Rescue Me, Second Chance Ranch #2.

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### **Rachel Lacey says**

Wow. If you love romance, and you have any interest in animal rescue, then you NEED to read this book. It was so moving on so many levels. This is not a book you sit down and read all in one sitting. It's heavy, and you will cry. Probably more than once. But it's so beautifully done. I loved everything about it. This is my first book by Catherine Mann, and it definitely will not be my last!

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### **Susan says**

Wonderful book, with several relationships to focus on. The main one is the one that develops between Mike and Sierra, but there are also family relationships and one potential romance that are included. There are multiple points of view, including my favorite, the sections that are seen through the eyes of the dog, Trooper.

The story begins with how Trooper joined Colonel McDaniel and his men in Iraq, and became an important part of their lives. Then his confusion at the Colonel's disappearance, followed by his journey to America to become part of the Colonel's family,

It became Mike's mission to get Trooper to the US and deliver him to the family. It wasn't easy, as he had to sneak the dog aboard the plane, putting his career at risk. He's determined to get it done, then take advantage of his leave time to sleep and relax. His biggest worry is seeing the Colonel's daughter, Sierra, again. They had had an intense relationship before his deployment, but he had broken it off before he left. His attraction to her is still strong, but he's not the type of man she needs in her life.

Sierra has an incredibly busy life. She's going to grad school, teaching classes, and helping out with her mother's animal rescue. Since her father's death she has also been dealing with her own grief, her younger brother's increasingly bad attitude, and helping with her grandfather who is in the early stages of Alzheimer's. The last thing she wants is another dog to care for, especially one that reminds her so much of what she has lost. Having to see Mike again doesn't help.

Delivering the dog doesn't go quite as smoothly as Mike had hoped and his encounter with Sierra is somewhat awkward. It doesn't help anything that Trooper gets away from the ranch during the night and finds his way back to Mike. When he returns Trooper to the ranch, he notices that there are a lot of things that need attention, even though Sierra tries to deny that they need help. I loved the way that he insisted on sticking around to help while he was on leave.

The attraction between Mike and Sierra is still there and still strong. Both try to resist it because the issues that parted them are still there. Having grown up in the military and seeing what her mother went through with her father's frequent absences, Sierra doesn't want that life for herself. She knows that Mike plans to make his career in the military. Besides the known issue of his career, Mike has never felt that he really deserves someone like Sierra. He was raised by a grandmother who was a con artist, his teen years were troublesome at best, and he feels strongly about the differences in their educations. But he can't deny the protectiveness he feels toward her and her entire family, so he stays. I loved seeing the two grow closer as

Mike helps her through the ups and downs of her life as it has become. It was really terrific to see the way that Mike finds a way to help Lacey and Sierra with their fight to preserve the rescue. As his leave time grows closer to the end, both Mike and Sierra have to face the reality of their feelings and decide if they can find a way to be together, or if that will be the end. I loved the realistic look at their options, the potential problems, and the possible benefits.

The rest of the family and their lives as they are now added more depth and emotion to a story that was already heartbreaking at times. Lacey is dealing with the loss of a husband she loved, but who she rarely saw. She has buried herself in her animal rescue work, hoping to find peace. Instead, there is more frequently a feeling of being overwhelmed, but she's determined to push through. As the story goes on, we see more of what her life had been like, both good and bad, and how it has affected the way she feels now. Her unexpected attraction to the vet, Ray Vega, adds another layer of stress and confusion to what she is going through. At times I wanted to see her give in and take the comfort he offered, but at others I was sure it would be a mistake. I loved her self-awareness and how she eventually decided what she wanted. Lacey is also worried about her father-in-law, who seems to be losing his battle with Alzheimer's, and her son Nathan, who hasn't been handling his father's death well.

I loved her father-in-law, the General. When he was having a good day, he was wonderful to be around. I ached for him, as he knew that he was having trouble, and it both scared and angered him. It was heartwarming to see the way that Mike was able to help him through his episodes. It was especially hard to see him, Trooper and Mike as they dealt with the combination of the war movie and the fireworks, but the realism of it was incredible. I enjoyed the relationship the General had with Trooper, and how the dog tried to look out for him.

Sierra's brother Nathan was another character that was having trouble coping with the loss of his father. At the beginning he just seemed like another teenager with an attitude problem. It isn't until we get the point of view of Trooper that we see that there is something more going on. I loved Trooper's part in helping the family see that Nathan needs help, and then Mike's involvement also.

I really felt like Trooper was truly the star of the show. His views on what was happening around him were simple and direct. I loved the way that he maneuvered things so that Mike would have to stay at the ranch. I loved his memories of the Colonel and the insight they gave to his relationship with Lacey. And it was Trooper's senses that gave the first indication of the trouble that was coming with Nathan. It was great to have the epilogue done from his point of view. I loved seeing the family a few years down the road.

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## **Maureen ~Bitch Can Write A Book says**

I was lucky to get an early copy for an honest review.

4 1/2 STARS!!!

I am a big fan of Catherine Mann, her romantic suspense is a fave of mine. From the moment I saw the cover I have been yearning to read. Contemporary romance has been my go to read as of late.

Shelter Me did not disappoint. I was hooked from the beginning. I found it interesting at times when Trooper (the dog) told it from his view. It was a story of loss...and of re-birth. The insight into the military family and the amazing grit and determination that they possess at times brought tears to my eyes. This story had it all, humor, romance, and a healthy dose of real, true to life struggles. I loved how Catherine Mann took us on this journey...it was well written and a wonderful, heart warming read.

We got so much more than just Mike and Sierra's love story. We saw her interaction as a daughter,

granddaughter, and sister. We got to know her mom, her brother and I cannot wait for the next book in this series. This is a MUST read....

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