



Surrender My Heart: A Second Chance Romance

L.G. O'Connor

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Do you remember your first love in high school? What if you never stopped?

For decades, Katherine "Kitty" McNally has secretly loved John Henshaw, the man lying shot and unconscious in the hospital bed next to her. Then again, maybe not so secretly. Those closest to her, including her soon-to-be ex-husband, have suspected it for years. Their story ended with a gunshot wound the last time, too. Life seems to have taken her full circle, but only the dead know the secrets she still keeps.

Detective John Henshaw fell in love with his "Kat" the moment she became his geometry tutor in high school. When they graduated, he thought their future was sealed. Wrong. Enter life's nonstop curveballs. The worst two moments of his life were the two times he lost Kat. After thirty-five years and one failed marriage trying to forget her, he can't escape the fact that he's never stopped loving her. Maybe it's just his ego, but he could swear he sees a spark of love in her eyes every time she looks at him. That's what keeps him in the New Jersey town that holds his most painful memories. That's why he accepted his place decades ago as a family friend to the McNally sisters.

As John recovers from his hospital stay in Kitty's care, they slowly rediscover each other. This is Kitty's last chance to confront her past and rekindle their love--if John can forgive her once he learns the truth.

Surrender My Heart: A Second Chance Romance Details

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From Reader Review *Surrender My Heart: A Second Chance Romance* for online ebook

Jeanne says

This is a great story about not even second chances, but third! The story is told from both Kitty and John's points of view and goes from the present where they are in their 50's to the past where they are in their teens. It takes quite a while to get all of the secrets and lies out in the open, but is very cathartic for everyone once it happens. I think John is a lot more understanding than most. He has had to watch the woman he loves with another man for decades, not exactly by his choice. I think Kitty's mom could have used a kick in the read several times, but thankfully Kitty had her Aunt to help her along the way. Really good read.

ErinMickC says

I've been a fan of O'Connor's books for quite some time, and Kitty and John's story has been weighing on my heart for a couple of years. The wait is finally over and I loved indulging in *Surrender my Heart*. This book is different than most romances I've read in that it covered both the beginning of our hero and heroine's journey in high school and their present-day love story 30+ years later. Although my heart ached for most of this book as Kitty and John worked through their affections and past, in the end, it was worth the emotional upheaval.

JoRead says

Adding this one to my TBR because I just read book 1 in the series and my mind is still reeling from last night when I finished it and I really want to know what's going on with these two and I just don't think I can live in peace until I know! =D

Miriam says

When you have a chance to find out if there is still something there, do you take it? But is the chance enough to lighten the shadows that have haunted you for years?

In the case of Kitty and John, yes, the chance, the risk is completely worth it. Their romance started years ago. It was abruptly cut short due to outside forces, but the lingering feelings they experienced at such a young age stayed with them throughout the years. Some could say that their failed marriages attested to the love they had for one another. Some would argue they just weren't invested enough in those relationships. But, honestly, how invested can one be when their heart does, is, and always will, belong to another?

Coming home was a blessing and a curse for both. They could stand on the precipice and see a future together, finally, if only the past wasn't so dark. Wasn't willing to stay in the past. What you don't know can't hurt you, right? Or however that saying is. Trouble is, it can. No matter how much time passes, when the past comes knocking and demands acknowledgement, the future can't begin until the past is dealt with.

This story is, surprisingly, heavy. The overlapping timelines, the jumps between past and present, create an ocean of murky waters that need to be overcome to reach the shores of happiness. Ms. O'Connor is a new-to-me author. I haven't read any of the other stories in this series. But this story was worth reading.

Kitty and John's transition from teens in love to adults still in love is beautiful to watch but not without white knuckles and anxiety. Theirs is a well-written, well-developed, highly-detailed story that will demand much from the reader but also give much in return. The happy ending was a long time coming, and I don't mean the length of the book, and it was satisfying to see them stand together at the end, hand-in-hand, hearts belonging to one another, ready for a future that should have been theirs all those years ago.

Received from publisher for an honest review

Laila Viking says

This story has a bit of everything. I like that. It is a romance love story and I liked it very much. Emotional and loving story. Tissues flying around at the end.

Well written story with a nice storyline and plot. I like that the characters and how they develop. A passionate and emotional read with twists.

It is written in dual POV which gives the reader much more of the thoughts and feelings of the main characters. There is passion, hot scenes and lots of chemistry in this amazing story.

I received a copy of this book and am voluntarily leaving a review.

Kilby Blades says

I love a great second chances story and John and Kitty's tale was as heart-wrenchingly realistic as it was escapist. Torn apart as teenagers by external forces, John and Kitty never stop wondering whether the adults in their lives really knew best, or whether hopes for what could have been had stronger rooting than the sheer optimism of youth.

O'Connor gives us a masterful depiction of interloping parents, real-life obstacles that come in John and Kitty's twenties and thirties, and a third important factor that has killed many promising relationships: bad timing and dumb luck. Despite all of this, she pulls off a satisfying resolution that shows us how two people can find their way back to one-another, even after half a lifetime has passed.

"Surrender My Heart" is the third in L.G. O'Connor's "Caught Up in Love" saga, which follows a family of strong, dynamic women on their paths to lasting love. All three books are standalones within the series.

Marlene says

Originally published at Reading Reality

Just as with all of the books in the Caught Up in Love series, be sure to bring tissues when you read this one. If you can get a cat to curl up in your lap for the extra comfort and snuggles, that would probably be good, too.

Like the previous books in this series, Caught Up in Raine and Shelter My Heart, the romance in this book is definitely a three-hankie special, as is all the drama that surrounds Kitty and John and the romance that was meant to be – but mostly never was.

In ancient history, when John Henshaw and Katherine McNally were in juniors in high school in the late 1970s, Katherine was one of the geeks and John was on the football team. Their worlds should never have collided, but John needed math tutoring to stay on the team, and Kat needed the money.

It was either a match made in heaven, a scenario out of Romeo and Juliet, or a little bit of both. It was certainly love at first sight. But John lived in what passed for the barrio in Summit, and Kat's family owned a house where the rich folks lived.

Nothing about that situation was exactly as it seemed. John's mother was Cuban, and even though he looks "white" he's Hispanic and proud of it. Also not a dumb jock – he just missed a lot of school because of a family crisis and needed a bit of help getting back up to speed in trigonometry – and who wouldn't?

Kat's family may live on the rich side of town, and her mother certainly postures as if the family can trace their ancestry back to the Mayflower, but the fact is that they are barely keeping their heads above water because one of Kat's aunts is in a lovely but expensive care facility, and most of their income goes for her upkeep. Kat really does need the money.

What she doesn't need is the way that her mother treats John, as if he weren't worth scraping her shoes. Her mother does everything she can to push them apart, while her other aunt, Vera, does everything she can to help them together.

It all goes smash at graduation, not that it hasn't been heading there for a while. Their relationship ends but it is never really over, and in spite of failed marriages on both sides, neither of them really moves on.

Their 35th high school reunion is coming up. It feels like they have one last chance to grab the happy ever after they denied themselves all those years ago. But only if they can finally let out all the truths they've both been holding back. Truths that will either bring them together, or tear them apart forever.

Kat can't keep herself from betting on the latter – and she might be right.

Escape Rating B-: I loved Caught Up in Raine, and really enjoyed Shelter My Heart, but while in the end I liked Surrender My Heart, I also have some mixed feelings.

It may be that I felt some of this book a bit too deeply. When I read Caught Up in Raine, I got caught up in the older woman/younger man romance because the author did it so very right. I was Jillian's age when I met my husband, and we have a similar age gap. Much of Jillian's situation, minus the baby, felt real and right.

On the other hand, Kat and I are contemporaries. I was in college when Kat was a junior and senior in high school, so my memories of that time are very similar to hers, albeit in much different circumstances. The way that the late 1970s WAS felt so familiar.

But the romance between John and Kat, and the sheer level of angst and melodrama in their on again, off again relationship and history, sometimes seemed a bit over the top. John's situation, while it had some pretty sucky aspects, was relatively straightforward. Kat's on the other hand, had so much going on under the surface that it could have fueled several soap operas for months.

While the story is set in the here and now, we see their past in long flashbacks from both of their perspectives. John certainly has his own issues, but he mostly seems like a young man with his head on straight, in love with a marvelous girl whose mother is a complete bitch.

Kat's side of the story is heavy with foreshadowing, to the point where there's so much shadow that everything drags a bit. The reader knows the hits are coming, and is even able to guess what at least some of those hits are, so there are points where the reader, or at least this reader, was just waiting for her to get on with it already.

Kat's big secret was obvious fairly early on, and it's not one of my favorite tropes. To say anything else would be a huge spoiler – or maybe not if you figure it out as quickly as I did.

The contemporary parts of the story worked better for me. And I loved reading a hot romance between two adults who are in mid-life. Just because someone is over 50 (or 60) doesn't mean they are dead and/or uninterested in sex or undeserving of love. A part of me wishes that the entire story had all been told from the contemporary perspective, without so much heavy foreshadowing in the flashbacks. Your mileage, of course, may vary.

The sheer staying power of their romance is amazing, or perhaps it's the power of unfinished business. That they never got over each other felt right. They never got to finish what was between them, so they never got past their shared past. That their families mostly stayed in touch provided a level of torture that most people wouldn't go through, but John's presence in their extended family over the course of the series has made this particular story highly anticipated.

In the end, I was glad to see them let all the poor cats out of all the suffocating bags, and finally get the HEA they deserved.

In my review of *Shelter My Heart*, there was one character I mentioned as deserving her own HEA, and my hope that she would get one in some future book in the series. I'm very happy to say that Lettie Soames will get her own HEA in *Caught Up in Raven*, later this year. I'm definitely looking forward to it!

Pj Ausdenmore says

Like Jillian and Raine (in book one of the series, *Caught Up in Raine*), John and Kitty are characters who are going to stay with me for a long time. If you're looking for a contemporary romance/women's fiction hybrid featuring mature characters, a compelling story, a poignant second chance, and affirmation that a man and woman in their fifties can still create sizzle, look no further than *Surrender My Heart* by LG O'Connor. I highly recommend it.

4.5 stars

DJ Sakata says

Favorite Quotes:

Someone once asked me what I'd tell myself if I could go back in time. I wouldn't say anything. I'd be too busy kicking my own ass from here to kingdom come for making the wrong choices. For thinking life would always be as good as it was when I was eighteen.

"Great job, Kitty!" says the overly friendly instructor. "You did awesome for your first class." I give her a tight smile and try to ignore the fact that I'm saturated and most assuredly going to wake up crippled tomorrow... They barely broke a sweat and look like fresh-cut flowers in their stylish weekend wear. I hate them.

Being this close to Kat and not being able to touch her makes me feel like I'm dying of hunger in front of a locked refrigerator.

In the end, I made the best of the worst choices for all of us.

Sometimes you gotta surrender your heart and go all in. That's what I'm doing. With us. One life, Kat. That's all we've got.

My Review:

I adored this book and resented each and every interruption to my rapt perusal, and I should be ashamed to admit... I may have hissed at and ignored the ringing phone. This was my virgin voyage with L.G. O'Connor but I plan to haunt her listings from now on, she is a gifted scribe, a master storyteller, and my new favorite - even though she gutted me. The writing and storylines were simply superb, addictive, and well-crafted. I instantly fell in and remained immersed in Ms. O'Connor's emotive and richly textured writing style, which featured my favorite dual POV and covered the characters' history through three different timelines which each involved an epic, sensual, and bone-deep love for a soulmate, bad timing, family drama, betrayal, horrendous luck, and heartbreaking tragedy. Despite the sound of all that, the emotional tone was thoughtfully paced, deeply moving, and well-balanced without being overly angst. I was engaged and intrigued throughout this heart-squeezing book with the only possible improvement being a longer epilogue as I didn't want to say goodbye to the characters just yet, but I'm greedy like that.

Pat says

I received a free copy of "Surrender My Heart: A Second Chance Romance" by L.G. O'Connor through the "Good Reads First Reads Giveaway."

I enjoyed much of this wonderful book, but was surprised that I needed a tissue near the end because of a few emotional chapters.

If it were a movie, it would be rated "R" because of some frank sexuality, but most adults would not be

offended.

It is basically a modern love story throughout, but more importantly it is written by a gifted author.

Rhonda says

From heartbreak to happiness, second chance at love story

This is the first book in LG O'Connor's Caught Up in Love series that I've read. It works pretty well as a stand alone though I think reading the previous books would have made reading the book a richer experience. She does give background to the other couples journeys, but it left me wanting more. Be prepared you may be adding those books to your TBR lists.

Kitty and John have had a rocky road though there is never any doubt of their love for each other. Realistic characters with a past fraught with challenges and heartache I was so happy when they finally got their HEA in such a spectacular way. The secondary characters provided a rich background, supporting the many twist and turns of the story.

I received an advance reader copy of this book.

Sherin says

OMG! Wonderful, heart-wrenching and intense, Surrender My Heart by L.G. O'Connor is an emotional tale of first love, heart break and second chances!

I have been waiting for John & Kitty's story ever since I saw the sneak peak of their connection on Raine's story. Trust me, the wait was so worth it and this story is really good. Also, the cover suits the couple and just what I imagined them to be :)

The journey of Kitty and John is sure one of ups and downs and there are times when you feel like you are free-falling along with the characters in the story. I did think there might be a bigger reason for their original split, but some people are really handed the worst for no reason, or sheer stupidity.

This is one of those times where shit happens and before you can turn around to fix it, it is already too late. I don't want to give their story away, so I suggest you buy the book and read their emotional journey yourself.

**I was given an eARC by the author in exchange for an honest review.

Carla Smith says

How wonderful it is to find a writer who can produce a compelling romance where the main couple are past thirty! Kitty and John, both now older - and possibly wiser - are given the chance to see if they can rekindle the flame first ignited as high school sweethearts before circumstances pulled them apart.

A realistic story, told from alternating points of view (no-one does this better than L.G. O'Connor) the reader is invited to share as both Kitty and John wrestle with their history as well relive their shared past filled with the joyful exuberance of teenage love, as well as the sorrow when that same love is crushed by circumstances outside their control.

Anyone looking for a grown-up, intelligent romance will not be disappointed. I cannot recommend 'Surrender My Heart' highly enough.

Badass Lioness says

They are both in their early to mid 50s, which is a nice change. This allowed the story to have many layers and lots of issues to work through. His work was dangerous, and her marriage was not satisfying. But for them to have a third chance (they blew past their second chance years ago), they would have face and reveal things that they had kept secret from each other. It is in the reveal that the story becomes more, a poignant, heartbreak, and sexy mature adult romance.

This story shifts back and forth between their high school years and 2015-2016. They met when they were in high school, the nerd and the jock. However, they did not fit the stereotypes completely. He was a smart jock, and she was the rich nerd whose family was not really rich, just pretended to be. This let me know early on that this was not going to be full of cliches and stereotypes, that there would be some unexpected twists. And there were quite a few, almost too many.

There were the twins: her mother and her aunt who both shaped her decisions and her life in different ways. Then there was her sister, Jillian, who was her younger sister with her new marriage. Jillian's romance was in Caught Up In Raine, book 2, which I have not read yet, but want to! I liked how Lettie seemed to be set up for a romance of her own, I hope.

Then there were the many secrets that her mother, her husband, John, her aunt, and even she was keeping. Secrets have a way of keeping people apart and adding to the confusion, hurt feelings, and missed opportunities as was so clear in this story. It is only as the secrets are finally revealed that understanding, love, and forgiveness offer Kitty and John a true chance at love.

For me the jumping back and forth between the past and the present was a bit confusing at times. There was a lot going on, and life didn't work out as they had hoped, but the main theme, in my opinion, is getting past all of the obstacles, within and without, allowed them to finally have a life full of love and family.

Note: I received an advance reader copy, and this is my honest review. This is a new-to-me author, and I am glad to have read this book. I am looking forward to reading the other books in this series.

Pia Manning says

I knew L.G. O'Connor had written a great story the moment I began giving advice, out loud, to Surrender My Heart's main characters John Henshaw and Katherine (Kitty) McNally. It's not often I find myself entering

into one-way conversations with fictional characters, but this book is so well written that I was drawn in.

A beloved aunt's last wish to have her ashes scattered by the sea brings her two nieces to the beach. The siblings' sand filled musings fuel a series of questions about John Henshaw, the love of the Kitty's life. Their passionate relationship, begun in high school, stumbles through the years always at the mercy of unintended consequences that one faces whenever difficult choices are made. Now middle aged, they have one last chance at happiness if they can overcome secrets and unresolved conflicts.

Surrender My Heart is told in a series of masterfully written flashbacks using John and Kitty's friends and family as vehicles to slowly move the story forward. I'm usually not a fan of flashbacks as I sometimes find them confusing, however LG O'Connor's made sense, telling different versions of the same story from both of the main characters' perspectives. Although the book describes sexual encounters in explicit language, those scenes either move the story forward or allow some insight into the main characters' thoughts, motivations and feelings.

Surrender My Heart is definitely worth your time!

I received an advanced reader's copy in exchange for an honest review.
