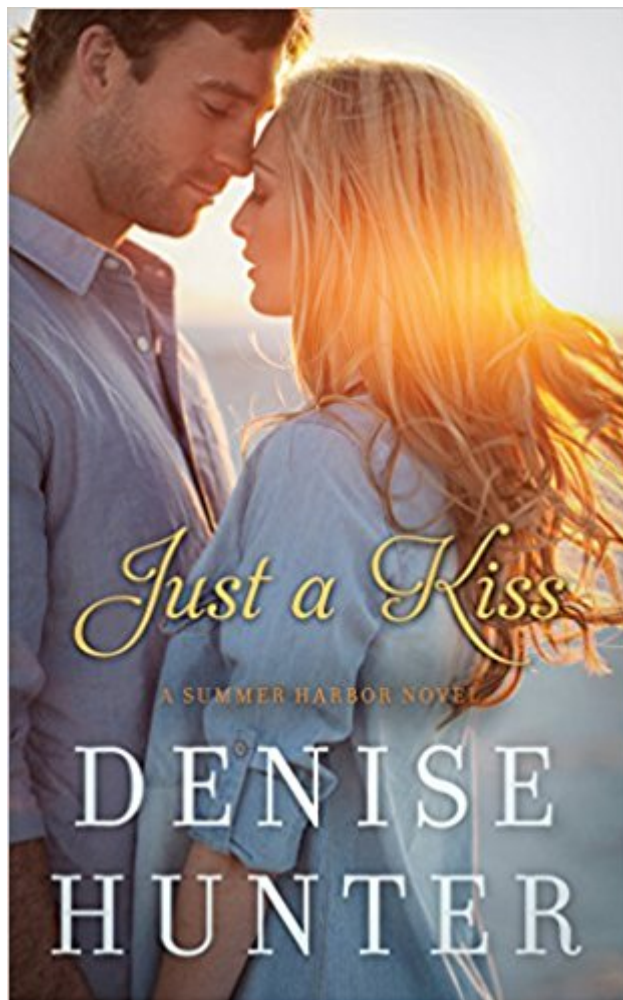


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## Just A Kiss (Summer Harbor)



## Synopsis

Riley Callahan's plans to reveal his secret feelings for his best friend are ruined when his life is drastically altered in Afghanistan. Watching the love of his life falling for his brother was enough to send Riley straight to boot camp. But over a year later, he's officially a marine, and Beau and Paige are no longer an item. When Riley's tour in Afghanistan is up, he intends to confess his feelings to Paige and win his best friend's heart once and for all. But all that changes when an IED takes the life of a comrade and leaves Riley an amputee. Now he's heading home, injured and troubled. His plans to win Paige are a distant dream. She deserves so much more than the man that's left. All he can do now is put some healthy distance between them. But upon his return he discovers his family has arranged for him to stay with Paige. Paige is a nurturer at heart and happy to take care of her best buddy. By all appearances he's adjusting miraculously well to his disability. But as the days pass, Paige begins to see that the smiles and laughter are just a mask for the pain he's hiding. He has nightmares and mood swings, and his unwavering independence keeps him from accepting help from anyone, including her. To make matters worse, her job is in serious jeopardy. The animal shelter that she's poured her heart into has lost its funding, and she has three months to come up with the money needed to save it. As the weeks wear on with the two in such close proximity, Paige's feelings for Riley begin to shift into uncharted territory. Why is she suddenly noticing his corded arm muscles and the way his lips curl at the corners? Will she be able to deny her feelings for another Callahan brother? And will Riley let his heart heal so he can let Paige in?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Hunter balances the dark side of love and war with a winning combination: realistically exploring the role that faith plays in healing, deftly creating a potent romance, and giving significant space for the lively and lovable supporting cast of Summer Harbor friends. Fans will be sad to see the Callahans say goodbye, but this tale of recovery and bravery is a fine parting gift." PUBLISHERS WEEKLY "If you like well-done stories featuring war heroes that steal your heart, give this book a try. Although it could be read as a stand-alone, this third book just might be the best in the Summer Harbor series. Hunter's latest will tug heartstrings as it features a hero that has come home from war a broken man and a heroine who sees beyond his injuries. The characters and their struggles feel authentic and the relationship dynamics are complex. Beautifully done, this is a story to cherish." ROMANTIC TIMES --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Denise Hunter is the internationally published bestselling author of more than 20 books, including *Dancing with Fireflies* and *The Convenient Groom*. She has won The Holt Medallion Award, The Reader's Choice Award, The Foreword Book of the Year Award, and is a RITA finalist. When Denise isn't orchestrating love lives on the written page, she enjoys traveling with her family, drinking green tea, and playing drums. Denise makes her home in Indiana where she and her husband are raising three boys. You can learn more about Denise through her website [DeniseHunterBooks.com](http://DeniseHunterBooks.com) or by visiting her FaceBook page [atfacebook.com/authordenisehunter](https://www.facebook.com/authordenisehunter)

This book was a lot more about the romance than the other 2 books. No woman on the run or woman with amnesia, just 2 people trying to figure out how to make the love thing work. Though, it always irritates me when people act like it's crazy for best friends to fall in love, like you love spending all your time with the one person who understands you better than anyone else in the world, and yet you don't think a relationship would work? Doesn't make sense. Regardless of that, I think Hunter did a good job of capturing the struggles Riley was going through after not only losing his leg, but also seeing the horrors of war. His character really felt rounded out, and the journey was a good one that focused on a lot of different things a person like that may need to go through when they come home. However, Paige felt a bit repetitive at times, and the whole Darleen scene felt a little too contrived even for a

romance novel. Paige did feel realistic, it's just that I think Hunter could've found different ways of approaching her issues or have her deal with them, honestly there did feel like the book might have needed one more read through on the editing end. In the end, though, this book did a great job of rounding out the series, and I'd love to find more by her. Lastly, and it's not a knock against the book exactly, it did bother me that the fact that Riley came out of the military disabled, and yet none of his benefits were mentioned. Like getting disability or the GI Bill, which would've helped with some of the complaints he had when trying to readjust to the civilian life. Like needing money, and not having a degree. Then again, even some veterans don't take advantage of these benefits, or even seem to realize they're available, so I can't completely fault Hunter for not mentioning these facts.

The Summer Harbor series comes to a dramatic conclusion with *Just a Kiss*. Denise Hunter is a master of romantic storytelling. She never ceases to draw me in to experience both the angst and passion of her characters. Riley and Paige prove my point. Riley has secretly loved Paige a long time. Paige's feelings for her best friend are only beginning to awaken. Riley's ready to tell Paige how he feels until tragedy strikes. They experience varied emotions, including some very painful, on their journey to honestly revealing their feelings for each other. I found myself advising them to please, just talk to each other, this can be worked out (talking to characters is surefire evidence I'm really into the book). However, it's just not as easy as it seems. Neither are willing to give up their best friend status, so they settle for leaving well enough alone. Their lack of communication, insecurities, well-meaning but misplaced decision making for others had me in knots. Add in Riley's low self-esteem and PTSD and it's a wonder they ever got things turned right side up. It makes for a complicated relationship in need of healing while dealing with issues of grief, unworthiness, doubt and fear. *Just a Kiss* is a totally believable, honest and touching account of Paige and Riley overcoming obstacles to find their happy ever after. Hunter has the brilliant ability to tell a compelling story full of charm and chemistry that tugs at the heartstrings. 4.5 stars Many thanks to Thomas Nelson Publishing for making a copy of *Just a Kiss* available for review

Denise Hunter is one of my favorite contemporary romance authors, not only have I loved several of her books but I have loved the Summer Harbor series from the very beginning! Needless to say I have been eagerly anticipating this book, and let me just say that Riley and Paige's story was totally worth the wait, as was the conclusion to Aunt Trudy and Sheriff Colton's story! I really enjoyed

getting a peek inside both Paige and Riley's heads for the first time, it was really cool to see what made each of them tick. I have found recently that I am a sucker for a best friends who have known each other since childhood and fall in love as adults storyline, and this one was fantastic, just as I knew it would be! It was totally awesome that Eden & Beau and Lucy & Zac, the main characters of the first two books were in this one a lot, having read the whole series that was a sweet treat for me, but Just a Kiss totally stands alone so never fear if you haven't read the two previous books! Though if you read Just a Kiss I'm certain it will leave you wanting to read Falling Like Snowflakes and The Goodbye Bride as soon as possible! I have to say that the faith story in this book was one that greatly ministered to me with the reminders (which I need constantly) of who I am to God and that He loves me and will never leave me! This book truly touched my heart and I definitely anticipate re-reading it in the future! I received a free copy of this book from the publisher through the Booklook bloggers review program, in exchange for an honest review. The above review is my honest opinion and all thoughts and opinions are one hundred percent my own.

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