



Once Burned

L.A. Witt

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Captain Mark Thomas's world has been tossed on its head: A long overdue but still unexpected divorce. A promotion out of left field. Last-second orders to a ship where careers go to die. As the dust settles in his new home, he barely recognizes his life, but he sure recognizes the loneliness creeping in.

Diego Ramírez wants nothing to do with the military or its men. Not after the Navy burned him both literally and figuratively, costing him his career, his health, and ultimately his green card. Now working illegally in an Anchor Point bar, he keeps the military and its personnel at arm's length.

But after a single moment of eye contact across the bar, Mark and Diego can't resist each other. As a one-night stand quickly turns into more, Diego knows he's playing with fire. Now he can stick around and let things with Mark inevitably fall apart, or he can run like hell and wonder what might have been. One way or another, Diego knows he's about to get burned. Again.

50% of the author's royalties from this book will be donated to charities supporting US military veterans who have been deported or are at risk of deportation.

Once Burned Details

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Author : L.A. Witt

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From Reader Review Once Burned for online ebook

JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

Review by The Blogger Girls.

Another solid installment! This one is a bit different from what I was expecting. While the other books carried some important themes, this one had a more serious tone and tackled another important issue – military who, for some reason or another, fail to follow through with obtaining citizenship leaving themselves vulnerable to deportation. I had no idea this problem existed, as I assumed you had to be a citizen in order to serve. But, apparently, such is not always the case. It would seem that serving in the military should garner automatic citizenship, but, as with most everything else, there are others who don't share that idea.

Anyhoo, here, we have Mark, recently divorced and relocated to a new position of leadership extending his military career. While out exploring his newfound relationship status and deciding to check out the sights, Marc heads to the High & Tight where he meets and is immediately attracted to hottie bartender, Diego. Unfortunately, Diego has a no-hookups with military men rule, which puts a wrench in things. But it doesn't take long for Diego to reverse his decision and make a move.

Now, these guys have amazing chemistry. But, Diego has sound reasoning for his rule, and that, coupled with the many other things he is dealing with, hold him back. He really opened my eyes seeing how he had to live, day to day in fear of losing his job, of being found out by the wrong people and being deported, living with his injuries and PTSD while not being able to get the care he no only earned but deserved, also for the same fear. Through it all though, Diego and Marc's relationship grows. The no-military issue, aside from the obvious reasons, was heartbreaking as well. It was easy to understand how difficult it was for Diego to be involved on any level with someone who was in, with it being right there, everything the military was to him and took from him. Thankfully, the relationship becomes more important, but not before they go through some bumps in the road.

It takes a while for Marc to fully comprehend Diego's situation. Once he does, he does everything he can to help. I really liked these guys together and could just about hear Diego's sexy talk. Important issues aside, this was a really nice love story with a bit of romance thrown in as well. It was another solid installment to the series, and I can't wait to see what happens next and what new tidbits I can learn in the process!

Love Bytes Reviews says

4,5 heart review by Tori (Vicki)

Oh yea! Diego gets a story....

We met Diego in Going Overboard, the fifth book in this series. He is best friends/former fuck-buddies with Dalton (from book 5), and I was very curious about his backstory. We are told that he doesn't date Navy men, which is what caused his breakup with Dalton, before they really had much of a start. It seems like Diego could easily have fallen for Dalton, if only he could have gotten past the no Navy rule. Now we find

out WHY he has this rule. Diego was in the Navy, but was injured, and while he was recovering, he was kicked out, and lost his ability to apply for citizenship. He's now working under the table, barely keeping himself fed, and still trying to send money to his family. He is barely recovered from his injuries, and has some serious PTSD. He's unable to go to a doctor or hospital since he can't afford to pay for it, and although he has benefits coming to him from the Navy, including care at a VA hospital, he's afraid to go in case they realize he's not a citizen and deport him. Basically he's a mess!

Then we have Mark. Mark is very recently divorced, career Navy, recently promoted and posted to a ship that is stationed at Anchor Point. He contributed to the downfall of his marriage by cheating on his wife, both with women and men, and has a healthy fear of commitment. He was going to retire, but when he was given the promotion about the time of his divorce, he decided to just keep going. He gets settled in his new house in Anchor Point, and decides the best thing to do is go get laid! Not having been with a man for awhile, finding some random stranger for a quickie seems like a good plan. He finds the local gay bar, the High-&-Tight, and off he goes.

Where he sees the hot bartender and settles in for some flirting. Only to be turned away, because the guy wants nothing to do with a Navy man! Oh but wait.... maybe he does.

So Diego breaks his rule and goes home with Mark for a bit of fun in the sack. The two proceed to fuck like bunnies, each getting what they need out of their relationship. But as things progress, Diego's story comes out, and the hidden care-taker in Mark comes out. Back and forth they go for a bit, it seems like they'll get it sorted out and become a functioning couple, only for Diego to get cold feet and back off. Mark tries to help, and only makes it worse in Diego's eyes. We see Diego breakdown and have a massive panic attack, and Mark helps him through it. We see them watch football together, go on an overnight trip, and have some really good times together. But it's all tempered by Diego's reluctance to commit, and Mark's fear of fucking up a relationship.

I'll stop there, you'll have to read the book to find out what happens!

I read the first couple of books in this series and liked them, LA Witt is one of my favorite authors, and she is a Navy spouse so when she writes a book about the Navy you know it is authentic. When I found out I was getting to review this 6th book, I binge read the three in the middle I hadn't read yet, so I went in to this one all up to date on the series. I will say that this was my favorite! My only issue with it, and I noticed the same trend in earlier books was the repetition of a theme. In this one it was Diego's anti-Navy stance, and Mark's conviction that he's bad at relationships. Both of those issues were harped on a little too often for my taste. But otherwise I loved this book! On the surface it seems like just about book about a military man trying to have a relationship with someone not in the service, but once we learn about Diego's plight it took on a whole different feeling. I was very disturbed by Diego's story, and was heartbroken to understand that it really happens. I see in the blurb that the author is donating half of her royalties to charities that will help deal with this, which means I'll go buy this book when it comes out.

As I said, LA Witt knows her military, and I have continued to learn from her books. I really appreciate her accurate descriptions of military life, from the standpoint of the service member, the former service member, and the partner/spouse of the service member. This series of books covers all of it. Some are lighter in angst, this one is not! Diego's stress and anxiety was difficult to read, and I was stressed right along with him. I love it when a character's emotions affect me like that. I loved Diego, and I was so happy when he finally let his barriers down with Mark. I liked seeing Mark's transition throughout this book, as he begins to care for Diego emotionally. I loved the physical relationship between them, the sex is obviously hot at first, and remains so, but as they become emotionally connected it gets even better.

I loved this book! Great characters with some good back stories, great sex, an engaging plot, and an ending that was exactly what I wanted for these two. I didn't like what I learned about yet another way we let down our veterans, but I liked that I learned about, if that makes any sense. I appreciate that the author brought it to our attention, even though I hated knowing that it's real. Definitely my favorite book of the series. Yes, these can be read as standalone books, but books five and six tie in together with Diego being in each. Book five was my second favorite, so I recommend reading that one as well. I can't wait to see what the next book brings us! If you have read the others, obviously you have to read this one. If you haven't read any of them, pick this one up and give it a try! If you are in to books about military characters, you'll love it.

This book was provided for free in exchange for a fair and honest review for Love Bytes. Go there to check out other reviews, author interviews, and all those awesome giveaways. Click below.

Vanna says

3.5 stars! ?I have read all the previous Anchor Point books and especially loved the first few.. hot and angsty. The plot for this one was a little different and put the Navy in a little bit of a negative light since their mistake was the reason for Diego's "undocumented" status. The pain and anxiety someone like that goes through was portrayed very well, on top of that he also had PTSD to contend with.? In his world of living day to day walks in Mark, recently promoted and newly transferred to Anchor Point. What starts is just a "fuck-buddy" type of a relationship, but neither is able to keep to the rules and soon they begin to spend more time together including almost every night. However, the uncertainty of Diego's status and health keeps him on the edge. ?

The story is a little high on anxiety but the passion between the two is quite a treat.? For readers who are following the Anchor Point series, this is another enjoyable addition to the collection. ?

Christi Snow says

My Review:

Wow...what a really tough subject matter to tackle, but L.A. Witt did it beautifully. This book was wonderful...as is the entire series. Every book, every setup, and every couple are completely different, but I love them all.

This book is about Diego, an illegal who's scraping by, under the table as a bartender at the local gay bar. He spent 8 years in the Navy and got screwed when he got hurt on his last deployment...which sent his entire world and stability into a downward spiral.

Mark is coming off a fairly 'good' divorce. He and his ex are much better as exes than they ever were as spouses. Navy life definitely didn't do them any favors over the years they were married. But now Mark is in a new town with a new job as XO on his ship. It's an all-new world, and he's not real settled into exactly what that means.

Looking for something to do, he heads to the local gay bar to check out the scene. It's been a while since he hooked up with a guy and after his divorce, the idea of something different is good.

Both Mark and Diego have an immediate connection...to the point where Diego ignores his personal rule about 'no Navy guys'.

Because of Diego's history, there is a lot of things sitting out there waiting to be roadblocks for these two. Not only is Diego really embittered toward the Navy, but he has the threat of deportation hanging over his head all the time. He's also battling PTSD and the injury to his leg...neither of which can improve because of his illegal status, Diego can't seek medical help. He's in a huge downward spiral with no obvious way out. I had no idea how the author would fix this all for these two guys.

But in the end, she did it and I loved how the book turned out and the journey the author took us on to get there. It was a gorgeous story and even more amazing...1/2 of the author's royalty will go toward soldiers who are facing the same future as Diego (something that should NEVER happen to those who have willingly put their lives in the line of fire for our freedom!!!!)

I received a complimentary copy of this book in return for an honest review.

Lelyana says

I haven't read the first five books in this series, so when I read this book, I was a little worried about the previous characters. Yeah I found and met Dalton, it was like a spoiler to me, LOL.

But okay, Dalton and Diego didn't work out. Then came Mark. Apparently they have that 'chemistry', (cough), you know what I mean.

So one night leads to another, and 'suddenly' Mark and Diego couldn't say goodbye and getting addicted to one another.

But yeah, while Mark's previous life and the divorced didn't really bother in this book, Diego's problem with the Navy and his impending deportation made a gap for their relationship and their dreams to be together. Glad that Mark finally could abuse his power for Diego (hey, sometimes power is good for some reason).

The epilogue was kinda seal the deal between them, I hope Mark wouldn't do the same thing to Diego the way he did in his past marriage, because 'that' is a big deal for me.

Maybe this time, Mark will settle down for Diego only. True love, anyone?

This one is fun, the angst wasn't too heavy IMO. So yeah, read this book!

Avid Reader says

Once Burned (Anchor Point #6) by L.A. Witt

4 stars

M/M Military romance

Triggers: War injuries, discrimination, PTSD, Bi relationship

I was given this book for an honest review by Wicked Reads.

Mark and Diego are an opposites attract type couple when they first meet. Diego is trying to stay under the radar because despite how he was wronged by his country and the military, he wants to be in the US - he

wants to be able to support himself and send money home to his family.

Mark is picking up his life and moving forward. He was married and now him and his ex wife are much better friends than they were a couple. It was refreshing to see such a healthy relationship come out of an unhealthy one.

Mark and Diego had a more friendship chemistry - I didn't really get heat from their relationship. However, they were great at distracting each other. I wish they had more chemistry, but watching their relationship develop over time was also something that added to the story a lot.

I liked how Mark and Diego took risks throughout, both for themselves and each other. I think that showed their level of commitment. Overall, this was a good story about redemption, love, loss, acceptance and allowing yourself to believe that there is good out there.

Cee Brown says

•*~)4.5 stars

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(,•' (,•' **Nothing ventured, nothing gained.**

Mark's life changed with his divorce. Finally free to openly explore the other side of his sexuality should have been the icing on the cake. Yet, it all came with another set of issues...a move into management when he should have been thinking of retiring. A move across state. Falling for a man who wanted nothing to do with his kind.

When life handed you lemons...

He should have ran, fast. But no matter how hard he tried, Diego's one night stand was becoming more. Now he found himself thinking in future tense and doing things he had promised never to do. Too many failures and too many issues clouded his life, but Mark was like the sun bursting through the clouds. **"Losing Dalton had made me rethink my hang-ups about the military, but it was Mark who had me wanting to actually make peace with my past."**

L.A. Witt's continuous sequel in the Anchor Point series just pulls you in to see how these men fall, hard. I am still enjoying the series and look forward to many more. After all, who doesn't love a man in uniform?

I voluntarily and honestly reviewed this book without bias or persuasion from the publisher through Netgalley.

Barb ~rede-2-read~ says

ARC provided by the publisher through Net Galley in exchange for an impartial review.

I expected an Anchor Point story about a Naval officer finding romance. But this was not a typical MM romance, nor was it quite like others in this series. The author brought a very important issue to the forefront

in this one. I was shocked to learn that members of our armed forces can be deported after having served. And, this includes combat veterans!

In this story, Diego Ramirez was injured in Afghanistan and, while recuperating, his visa expired. Yes, he should have worked on his naturalization papers sooner, but he was recovering from severe physical injuries and PTSD. Plus, he expected to reenlist so there was no rush. But due to a (now defunct) rule, he didn't pass two physical capability tests in a row—how could he while disabled from that knee injury?—so he was summarily dismissed when his enlistment term ended, leaving him undocumented. Now he can't even access his VA benefits because VA staff might alert ICE and he'll be on the way to Mexico.

Diego works "under the table" at the High-&-Tight Gay Nightclub. When the new Executive Officer of the USS Fort Stevens walks in, the attraction is two-way and immediate. Recently divorced, Mark was about to take his twenty-year retirement when he was offered the Captain's rank and assigned to this ship at Anchor Point. Always attracted to men, now that he's single, his first foray into the social life in his new town is to find a man to hook up with. But, at first, Diego reinforces his own rule that he doesn't do Navy guys. Ever. And then, while watching Mark make the rounds of the dance floor, he gives in to his attraction and allows one time.

That one time, of course, leads to many more times and before each man knows it, love is in the air. But that's not all. Several events trigger Diego's PTSD, including a scare that ICE is checking IDs where he works, and a military channel commercial that features a scene from a combat zone. The author explores the psychology of the returning vet, the implications and consequences of long-term PTSD, and the issue of how active-duty military can lose their green card and find no resources to help them get naturalized. It's a huge issue, and a great deal of the book is devoted to it. Awareness is half the battle and I appreciate the author's work to increase our understanding.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and found it difficult to put it down so that I could take care of real life issues. An interesting subject, intriguing characters, typical hot LA Witt sex scenes, and the possibility of the guys getting their HEA all kept me coming back. I highly recommend this story and it can definitely be read as a standalone if you haven't explored others in the series yet.

Lelyana says

I haven't read the first five books in this series, so when I read this book, I was a little worried about the previous characters. Yeah I found and met Dalton, it was like a spoiler to me, LOL.

But okay, Dalton and Diego didn't work out. Then came Mark. Apparently they have that 'chemistry', (cough), you know what I mean.

So one night leads to another, and 'suddenly' Mark and Diego couldn't say goodbye and getting addicted to one another.

But yeah, while Mark's previous life and the divorced didn't really bother in this book, Diego's problem with the Navy and his impending deportation made a gap for their relationship and their dreams to be together. Glad that Mark finally could abuse his power for Diego (hey, sometimes power is good for some reason).

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way he did in his past marriage, because 'that' is a big deal for me.
Maybe this time, Mark will settle down for Diego only. True love, anyone?

This one is fun, the angst wasn't too heavy IMO. So yeah, read this book!

Julie (*Happily Ever Chapter*) says

Once Burned is the 6th book in the Anchor Point series, but they can all be read as a stand alone. There is a character from the previous story that pops in now and then and is mentioned a few times, but it doesn't take anything away from the story if you don't know his story. I was really excited to read Diego's story and it didn't disappoint. I actually had no idea that some people who fought for this country and were promised citizenship for their service were later denied citizenship or deported. This was completely new to me and very eye opening.

Diego is former military and also illegally living in the United States in fear of being deported. He was injured while serving but because his visa expired while he was recovering, he can't take advantage of his military medical benefits without fear of being deported. He is living with PTSD and in pain from his injuries. Because of everything he went through with the military, he has a rule that he will not date or mess around with anyone in the military. When he meets Mark he decides to break that rule.

Mark is newly divorced and promoted when he moves to Anchor Point. He meets Diego at the local gay bar and there is an instant attraction on both sides. Initially Diego turns him down, but it isn't long before he changes his mind. The chemistry between them is sizzling, and it's not long before something that was just supposed to be a fun time turns into something more. They both have some baggage but they are willing to give it a try.

I really loved the connection between these two. I also loved that Mark's ex-wife wasn't portrayed as "the evil ex" and they were able to remain friends. It was refreshing to read and definitely different from the norm. I also liked that Mark was honest about his past mistakes and wasn't absolutely innocent either when it came to the decline of his marriage. At times, this one did seem to be a bit repetitive but I still really enjoyed the story.

* I received an ARC of this title via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own. *

Zoe says

Sensual, pensive, and timely!

Once Burned is an emotional romance featuring the recently divorced, newly promoted Captain Mark Thomas, and the wounded, disheartened Diego Ramírez as they discover that some things are worth fighting for and together they can overcome anything.

The writing is clear and precise. The characters are diligent, lonely, and skeptical. And the alluring plot is filled with flirty banter, longing, desire, doubt, angst, military politics, PTSD, compassion, support,

friendship, and love.

Once Burned is the sixth novel in the Anchor Point series and is not only a smoulderingly sexy read but a thought-provoking one as it tackles and highlights the injustice faced by immigrants who put their lives on the line for the American government only to be unacknowledged, uncompensated, and unsupported when injured and discharged due to a convenient loophole that doesn't recognize them as U.S. citizens.

Thank you to NetGalley and Riptide Publishing for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

All my reviews can be found on my blog at <https://whatsbetterthanbooks.com>

Fabi says

The fact that I'm reading book 6 of 6 in a series is a big clue considering I have more than a dozen unfinished series waiting their turn.

This was a simple, sweet love story until about 35% when we were let in to the hell that Diego lives with.

Someone knocked something over, and glass shattered. One of the employees shoved a shopping cart into the back of a row so it would tuck in like the others, and the metal clang almost sent me out of my crawling skin. An unhappy child shrieked, oblivious to the half-demolished Afghan village he was sending me back to.~Diego

So I'm happily reading along, feeling feelz and then...we find out what Diego's dilemma really is. I try hard to ignore it. I Google search, hoping I'm wrong. Trying desperately to find a way to suspend disbelief.

(view spoiler)

This is the WHOLE PREMISE of the story. And by 60%, even though I really like both characters, I'm starting to wonder if I can finish the book. I DO understand this is fiction. But unless I'm reading fantasy, I need the basics of the fiction to have a standing in real life.

Alright. At 62% I'm throwing in the towel.

(view spoiler)

Yup. I'm done. And I'm giving this story a low rating unless/until someone gives me proof I'm wrong about my spoilers.

I'm still IN for the continuing series because it really has been great. But this particular book does not work as is.

Review ARC graciously provided by the publisher via NetGalley

Tracy~Bayou Book Junkie says

4.5 Stars

Freshly divorced, after almost 19 years of marriage, and newly stationed in Anchor Point, a small seaside town, Mark discovers the High~&~Tight, the local gay bar that caters to military guys. There he lays eyes on the bartender, Diego, but when he asks Diego to join him for coffee, Diego turns him down.

Diego doesn't date military guys, especially the Navy ones. After 8 years of service he was discharged after being hurt in combat. While recovering, his green card expired and now he spends his life in fear of deportation, but as much as he tries, he can't resist Mark. What could spending one night with Mark possibly hurt? It quickly becomes clear to both men, one night definitely won't be enough.

I have really loved the couple of stories in this series that I've read so far, and Once Burned was no exception. Although this is book six in the series, it can definitely be read as a standalone.

While I loved Mark and Diego and I enjoyed their romance, more than anything this book made me angry. It is deplorable that a person can enter this country legally, serve this country, be injured while serving this country and after it is all said and done, because of some unfiled, or perhaps misfiled, paperwork, they have to fear deportation if they try to get a legitimate job or take advantage of the resources, like the V.A., that were rightfully awarded to them for their services. It's beyond disgusting and I wanted to scream and rage for Diego and the many others out there like him. Although, because this is fiction, everything works out in the end and Mark and Diego get their happy ending, my heart breaks for the real life Diegos out there who aren't quite so lucky.

As for the romance portion of the story, I absolutely loved it. Mark and Diego were perfect and definitely hot together. They burned up the pages of my iPad, and I absolutely adored them. They were both likable guys who you couldn't help but root for.

The story is well-written, and although it flowed pretty well, I found it just a bit slow in the middle. Even though it angered me, I loved the premise of the story and the ending was perfectly swoon-worthy! This was a great addition to the series, really enjoyable and definitely recommendable!

copy provided by the author/publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Sali Mes says

Can be read as a standalone. This is my first in this series.

Wow. A book where the mc spend time together without sex. I miss that so much in books. The guys were just hanging out on the couch in front of the tv or just in bed talking without sex.

Having a scene in a book where the couple talk, kiss and hug, like just hug for the comfort of it without it ending up in sex or even sexy or whatever sex thought in their head??! That's worth all the 5 stars in my world.

I don't know shit about US law, especially about immigration, I just know that whatever the country, whatever the law, people in power/with that power can do whatever they want.

I loved this book! Great story, awesome guys.

.Lili. says

You know, I requested this before the whole SH and Riptide mess started to unravel on March 8th. I figured I'd give it some time before attempting to read it, waited a few weeks. I couldn't get into it; I found the dialogue repetitive. I don't know if I couldn't get into it because of the writing, the whole mess that erupted, or probably both. This author has always been up and down for me.

DNF, no rating.
