



## True Hero

*Susan Owensesby*

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Ally

On the run, with no one to turn to,

I'm doing all I can to stay alive, protect myself, and my little boy.

I left everything behind, determined to start over and give my child a normal life.

I have rules. Rules I have to follow. Rules that keep me alive.

1. Keep my head down.

2. Keep life simple.

3. Trust no one.

That definitely includes retired Navy Seal Jonah Bradford. He's completely off limits.

It doesn't matter if he wakes up the woman inside of me.

I can't be that woman anymore. No matter how much he makes me wish I could.

Jonah

Giving up my career to run the family business wasn't an easy decision. Once a SEAL, always a SEAL.

Yet, I've adjusted. I like my life, but something is missing.

One look at the freckle-faced beauty working at the local diner and I know exactly what it is.

But, I'm alive today by following my instincts and everything about Ally is setting off alarm bells that scream she's trouble.

I don't care. I want her.

The problem is she won't give me the time of day.

That's okay. I like a challenge.

I just have to uncover all of her secrets and end the fear that keeps shining in her eyes.

Operation Ally is underway.

## True Hero Details

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## From Reader Review True Hero for online ebook

### Ann Marie says

A debut novel by Susan Owensby.....

Scars, we all have them in some form or another. A physical scar or maybe even mental scars. Scars can run deep, they can be ugly. They can define a person or they won't. Sometime scars make us better because they remind us of what we were, maybe what was and will never be again.

Two people, both scarred in many ways, wanting to find love wanting to be loved and wanting happiness. Can two people who are scarred find this? Can they look past all the physical and emotional trauma?

Well, in this truly amazing love story you will find that these two people who are deeply scarred physically and emotionally can find a piece of that heaven they so desperately wanted with each other. Let me introduce you to Jonah and Ally. Jonah is an amazing character in this thrilling story. A man of his word, a serious man who wants love and a family an ex-Seal who came home to help run the family business. \*Sigh ladies.....(your next bbf right here)

Ally, sadly has not had it easy in her young life. She keeps going for her son. The light of her life, the one she focuses on keeping safe from the abusive past she is desperately trying to out run. Moving away, changing identities, it's been a long road and it's a road that sadly right now has no exit. This character is funny, cautious and a lot like the real everyday women working in the real world supporting a child on her own. Her son Sam is absolutely the most adorable character!! You will love him!

From laughing out loud to my heart in my throat several times, holding my breath and crying for Ally while cheering her on.....the emotions I felt reading this were at times tense and I LOVED it!

There are so many great characters that you get to meet in this amazing thriller, From Fran and Frankie to Shane and Michelle. And many more in between. I felt like I knew this little town. In the end I had not one question, well maybe about Shane and Michelle \*wink lol. For a first time book, hands down PERFECT Susan Owensby. PERFECT! Looking forward to many more reads from you!!!!

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### Karlita | Tale Out Loud says

Actual rating: *2.5 out of 5 stars*

Ally, on the run from his abusive husband, was able to settle and have a quiet life in a small town where she was able to find comfort from Frank and Frannie, someone she considered a family. But even after three years of getting help from an organization that acquire new identities for her and her son, paranoia was her constant companion. She felt that wherever she went, there was a cop car sitting, always watching them.

She thought ex-Navy SEAL, Jonah Bradford, could be the perfect man who would protect her and her son; "*a true hero*". He was running their family business, Bradford Securities and what could possibly go wrong? But what held her back was her role of being a mother first and foremost, and the impending danger that will surely happen if she wouldn't let her guards up. While Jonah, having the SEAL instincts knew that there was

something off with Ally. He always thought that she was nothing but scared and he was eager to find out what was she hiding.

I couldn't say that I love the story. When I read the prologue, I thought, "*Hey! This must be good.*" but the moment I started reading the first few chapters, I couldn't help but cringe with what looked like **insta-love**. When someone said "*Can I keep you forever?*" and fell in love instantly which is very unlikely and unrealistic, how would you feel? Okay, I get it and maybe the author just want to sound funny but I didn't get why Ally and Jonah have to call each other "Freckles" and "Mr. Dreamy Eyes"?

I also felt distracted because the dialogue between the main characters were uncomfortable and a little forced. The story never flowed smoothly for me. The only thing that kept me reading this was the built up suspense that was there even before the awkward paces.

To be honest, my favorite character was Tom, the villainous husband that showed so much energy that creeps through the cracks within the slow-burn moments. Though I know that he will comes back eventually, I waited because his character was what made the story engaging.

I also like Ally as a mother. She's brave enough to stand for what she knew was right and putting her son above all else. Even she have gone through a lot, her character showed that being a mother, you will do everything for your own child no matter what.

Though I've read something like this before, overall, the story was okay.

**\*\*\*Thank you to NetGalley, Xpresso Book Tours and Susan Owensby for providing me an eARC in exchange for a fair and honest review!**

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### **Charlotte Stanley says**

True Hero is a gem that hopefully will not remain hidden. This story has it all – laughter and love, tragedy and triumph, lightheartedness and ratcheting tension. It is the perfect mix, and the steam factor is just right. The author builds a slow burn that has readers yearning for that first kiss nearly as much as the characters themselves. And the author has the readers not only rooting for the love affair destined to develop, but also longing for justice for Ally. I loved the characters. They were so colorful and realistic, from the Hero and Heroine (and Ally is no small h Heroine, she is the real deal), to the villain, to the secondary cast.

I am an avid reader and I love when I have the opportunity to find a new author to fall in love with. I have been savoring the book True Hero by debut author, Susan Owensby. The indie author world often surprises me with good stories and sometimes it even surprises me with great stories. True Hero is truly a great story. It is a realistic love story, filled with humor and suspense, featuring beautifully flawed characters that endear themselves to you with their believable personalities. I rooted for this couple. I laughed, I cried, I sighed and I shouted at the characters. My heart was broken and healed within the covers of this book. This may be Susan's first book, but it shouldn't be her last. She has a gift that I am confident will get better with each published book. I can't wait to see what she comes up with next.

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### **Carol Craig says**

This is a new author for me but one I will continue to read. *True Hero* is a romance story where the heroine(Ally) is hiding from an past abusive marriage and is fighting her desire for a hot hero.( Jonah). There story is makes you laugh and cry.

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### **Valeen Robertson (Live Thru Books Blog) says**

*True Hero* is a beautiful, emotional story. Ally has had a shitty life up to this point. She married young, to an older man, who ended up abusing her so badly that she finally went on the run, fearing for her and her son, Sam's life. 3 years later, she's settled in Wordly, a small town that she has come to call home. She and her son have made themselves a family with Frannie, Frank, Bella, and soon, Jonah and his family and friends involved with his security company.

Jonah is a retired Navy SEAL who has had his eye on Ally for 3 years, since she moved to Wordly. But, ever since an embarrassing incident when they first met at the diner she works at, she won't give him the time of day. Jonah is determined to get to know Ally, though. He knows she's scared of something, and he's bound and determined to figure out what it is, and protect her and Sam. As they ease into a relationship, Ally finally opens up to him and allows him to be the hero she and Sam have been praying for.

But, what I love is that while Jonah may truly be a hero, he is a SEAL after all, Ally is the true hero. She saved herself and wouldn't give up, even when she felt as if she couldn't go on. She knew she had a whole family of people waiting on her who loved her and would be absolutely devastated if she gave up on herself. She showed strength that not many people would have.

Kudos to Susan Owensby on her debut novel. I am looking forward to more from her, perhaps Shane (Jonah's brother) and Michelle? Now that would be a match!

*I received an ARC through NetGalley for an honest review.*

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### **Kindling Micky says**

An interesting debut from Susan Owensby that held lots of potential. This was a tale of abusive husband and a woman, Ally on the run thanks to an organisation that provided new identities. Most of this book takes place 3 years later where Ally is settled in a town but remains vigilant and isolated with her son.

EX-SEAL Jonah has been trying to catch Ally's attention for a few years but she isn't open to this. Jonah was a very likable character and I did enjoy the chemistry between these two. Sometimes the narrative felt simplistic and there was an element of things being a bit too insta-love for my liking. Nevertheless, I did feel gripped by this tale of suspense until about 75% when it all became a bit too brutal. The narrative is utterly graphic and felt almost too much for what had passed in the previous 75%. Because of the very graphic

nature of the description, I feel I have to mention that this book will be a trigger for some readers. The wrapping up of events was too convenient in the end for me.

I really liked the first half of the book, but the second half wasn't as strong and turned me off the characters and story somewhat.

A copy of this book was provided by the author in return for a honest review.

Reviewed for Jo&IsaLoveBooks Blog.

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### **Sara Oxton says**

True Hero by Susan Owensby a fantastic five-star read and a great debut book. True Hero the first book in the True Hearts series, but it is a standalone novel, as well as her debut novel, and what a debut, it's fantastic and shows a talent for writing like she has been doing it forever and this is her one hundredth book not the first. This author writes a subject that not many will like, as it does cover the issue of domestic violence but it's done in a very mature and honest manner. The writing is caring and beautiful, I am always a little uncomfortable with domestic violence as it hits to close to home, but this book, made me realise how strong women who come out the other side are including myself.

Ally Black is a woman who would give anything to save her son any more pain, she would do anything to protect him and herself from her ex-husband. After getting some help to get away she got a job in a diner and started to enjoy little aspects about her life. Everything has changed from her old life, but she can't let anyone get close to them in case they find out what she's hiding. As some secrets are too big to share, and to share a secret means you have to trust someone, and trusting people is against her rules. Rules that she lives by.

Jonah Bradford is a Navy Seal, he is retired now but that doesn't mean he doesn't still live to serve, he works for his family's security business and feels like there is something missing in his life, until one day he walks into a diner and sees her, then he knows in the pit of his stomach he has found the missing piece. All he has to do now is convince her of that, as Ally isn't interested in giving her trust or story away it is going to take some convincing.

This is a great story, you can't help but want the best for everyone involved. The only problem is once bitten twice shy, and Ally is definitely shy.

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### **Manon says**

*I was provided an ARC via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

Ally "Freckles" Black has had a hard life. Her now ex-husband was violent and got arrested for drugs and guns possession. But since he used to be a policeman and kept lots of contacts in the police department, she changed her and her son's identities and ran.

Years later, Ally works as a waitress in a dinner and that's where she met Jonah "Mr Dreamy Eyes" Bradford.

Indeed, she looked at him, dropped some stuff and told him "Can I keep you forever?" and the dude fell for him immediately.

Yep. Immediately.

After that humiliating moment, she avoids him for three years whenever he shows up the dinner but he still think of her as his and is very sure they're meant to be. (I'm gonna go puke and I'll be right back.) So, Mr Dreamy Eyes is an ex Navy Seal and now works in a security firm and after he has two conversations with Ally, when she stops avoiding him, he is very sure she is hiding something and starts investigating behind her back. Cause that's healthy...

So the book is mainly about how the men protect Ally without her knowledge and how the women take care of her son, Samuel.

I didn't like the writing at all. Beside the fact that the book was filled with so many clichés I couldn't even list them and that it seemed deeply unrealistic, fake and annoyed me to no end, the writing itself felt childish to me. It drove me insane. I also feel like it was filled with sexism.

They were lots of things like "my woman" or "I would not let you push me away." Do I need to explain why it's not ok?

Their first kiss also happened while she was unconscious, on the side of the road, with a concussion, a sprained ankle, very close to hypothermia and a huge cut in her hand. Kissing people while they're unconscious shouldn't be romanticized, there's this thing called consent and this thing called assault.....

I'm just gonna add a couple quotes that infuriated me :

"A boy needed his father."

"Damn, she colored her hair? Why? Red hair on her would look fucking amazing. I mentally shrugged thinking of how often my baby sister had changed her hair color over the years. It had to be just a woman thing."

I was just mad through it all.

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### **Teresa says**

\*\*I received a copy of True Hero from Net Galley in exchange for a voluntary and honest review\*\*

True Hero by Susan Owensby is the authors first novel and I think she could become an excellent author as time goes on so for her first book she did really well. Just some minor proof reading, less exclamation points and spelling errors but all and all I'd give it 4.6 stars.

Ally Black aka Sarah Lane is on the run from a very abusive husband who could literally outdo Satan for being mean and sadistic to both her and almost five years old son Sam/Jacob. But since he used to be a cop she doesn't trust anyone as he has friends all over. But her first problem is she ran to what I think would be the first place I'd check which is where she grew up in. Flash forward 3 years and she's working as a server in a diner run by a ex-Army Ranger, Frank, and her friend, Frannie both are loyal and of the charts completely badass. I loved both of them as they helped protect her and Sam. They very protective and loyal to both her and Sam but she's getting that feeling of perhaps she's stayed to long in one place. Little does she know that the town has a running bet of when the ex-Navy SEAL, Jonah Bradford, will ask her out. Which townsfolk will win?

Jonah Bradford traded his 20 years as a SEAL in to run his family's security business after his father's near

fatal heart attack. He's turned the business into a profitable company with the help of his little brother Shane. But he knows that there is a little bit more to the story as to why Ally won't go on a date with him. But finally she agrees but things have a way of going bad so throw in a tornado and scuzzy minons of her ex husband who's out of jail due to a technical error and in town. She willingly to with him due to threats against everything she holds dear and again he's severely abusing her. When her friends gather together to rescue her from her ex will they be in time? The most touching moment of the book is when Sam tells his mom that Frank, Frannie, Jonah, Shane, Michelle and even Brent have been sent to them as their heroes and they'll do anything to protect Ally and Sam.

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### **Natalie Johnson says**

All I can say is WOW! I started this book yesterday afternoon and could not put it down until I was finished! The characters were relatable and fun causing me to laugh out loud one minute and cry the next. I couldn't help rooting for Jonah and his journey to get Ally to talk to him let alone trust him and my heart ached for everything Ally had to go through. The secondary characters in the story were also likable and I hope that we see their stories in the future! Susan Owensby is a new author and one that I will be eagerly awaiting her next book! Please don't wait, read this book today – you won't be disappointed!!

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### **Mandie Rebel says**

FIrst novel from this Author. Great start to what I can see being a great series of books to read.

People go through life with secrets. Some secrets kept because of life and death.

Ally and her son have ran, created a new life for themselves and settled in a small town but something's coming to ruin everything.

Jonah ex SEAL has come home to his family and has his eye on this vibrant beautiful woman can he break through the barriers Ally holds. What's she hiding ?

Delve into the book to read about these two gorgeous people. The story has wit, sass. Sex appeal, angst and excitement .

Look forward to the next

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### **Penny Leidecker says**

Susan Owensby has given us an emotional page turner and I couldn't read this book fast enough. This debut has everything I love to read about: love, laughter, family, suspense, and a small town. I fell in love with Jonah Bradford and I understand Ally's reluctance, but I don't know how she held out as long as she did. Ally had a horrific marriage and had to endure a lot of pain and suffering to protect Sam. When she picks Wordly, Illinois as their new home, it's the best decision she made. This is where her Grams grew up, so it's the perfect choice. Frank her boss at Dine With US and Frannie, her neighbor and co-worker, are like parents to her and grandparents to Sam. I'm not going to leave any spoilers because I want everyone to read this

fantastic book. True Hero may be Susan Owensby's first book, but I hope she has plans to write more. No pressure, but I would love to read Shane and Michelle's story.

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### **Deborah says**

I'm not rating this book since it was a DNF for me and this is why.

I liked the cover, the blurb and the reviews so I went ahead and requested this. It's a story that's been done time and time again but then how many books are truly original so it all comes down to the characters and how the story is told.

Ally is a klutz, unfortunately that's not something I'm particularly fond of for example the first time she meets Jonah....

*"Hi! Welcome... my name is Ally. Can I have you forever?" .....*

*It's my karma. Karma hates me! I cleared my throat and tried one of my, I totally said that on purpose smiles and said, "May I take your order?"*

*For the love of God, he was still laughing! Talk about humiliated, I swore he was laughing so hard he snorted. Yes, actually snorted. .....*

*Just about then one of the other waitresses came up to me and whispered loudly to me, "Your skirt is sticking out of your undies, hon. This is a family place so go put your tushy back where it belongs."*

*I was mortified. I just stood there in shock. No, no, no, no, that couldn't be happening, but it was.....*

*I backed right into a waitress carrying one of those huge trays full of food and drinks. I was bathed in scrambled eggs, hash browns, and several cups of milk. The entire diner was staring at the commotion .....*

I just found it embarrassing and I started cringing, now I know not everyone will feel the same way about this but it's not for me, unfortunately that wasn't my main problem.

My main issue.

The conversations, any time any of the characters interacted with each other it felt stilted and false to the point where I started skimming the conversations to try and get through the book. Which I realised was just crazy, so I tried again and hit the same problem and decided I just had to quit.

The reviews are fabulous so I'm assuming this is a case of its me not the book.

I voluntarily read a review copy kindly provided by NetGalley.

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### **Nicole Johnson says**

True Hero is an emotional, contemporary romance about domestic abuse survivor Ally, her son Sam and Jonah, the man who wants her heart. This is an amazingly insightful story on what it takes to rise up from the pit of an abusive marriage and start over. Starting over isn't easy for Ally and Sam but she's trying her best to make a life for them. Jonah is a big, handsome, former SEAL and has wanted Ally for a long time. I loved how awkward he is during the Operation Ally phase; I found it endearing. The side characters are as important as the main ones which I have to say pleases me. I can't wait to see more of these characters. This is a wonderful story and an awesome debut.

I read an arc to review.

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### **Angelique says**

True Hero by Susan Owensby.  
A new author for me,  
And a terrific book,I could not put this one down.  
Ally the true hero in this story,is a strong,woman determined to  
do right for herself and her son and his future.  
I love a strong woman,but fell hard for the other hero in this  
book.everyone deserves a jonah in his or hers life.

Arc wash provided by netgalley in exchange for an honest review

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