



The Border

Kim Fielding

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Injured in a war that has stretched on for years, Sergeant John Peterson guards a lonely border. Aside from passing contact with railshop captains, the only person he sees is the enemy: the man who guards the other side of the border. A bad fall places John's life in the other soldier's hands. He's wary of his rescuer, First Lieutenant Thomas Fellowes, but over time he finds himself drawn to his new companion. Both soldiers carry the war in their souls, but they might find peace in each other.

The Border Details

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From Reader Review The Border for online ebook

Heller says

Part of the Mended anthology and my favourite read of it so far.

Set in a different world in a country ravaged by what seems like a civil war. East vs West. The story centers around two opposing border guards who are separated only by a strip of dirt they call no man's land. There's an accident and one guard crosses over to help the other and so begins a tentative friendship between enemies. Like all of the stories in this anthology this is short but damn this is a good read. I finished it and immediately wished it was longer because I didn't want it to end.

Makhda says

Ann says

After reading the author's story in Stitch I knew I would like this one. She writes the moody atmosphere so well, it becomes another character in the book. This particular story had so few characters in it, so the setting and the *feel* were just as important as John and Tom.

My favorite line:

"The explosion that wracked his body this time was every bit as strong as the one that ruined him - but this one put a few of the pieces back together."

Christy says

What's the saying about war making strange bedfellows? In 'The Border', Kim Fielding's short story, that's exactly what the author has crafted. Two men guarding their sides of the border, with barbed wire and a small patch of no man's land is all that separates them. The war that changed their nation into two, the Eastern and the Western halves, has left everything decimated.

John, a sergeant for the West, has been posted at this tiny way station hut in the middle of nowhere to monitor the rail ships traffic as they come and go. His partner, so to speak, is across the no man's land on the Eastern side. They do not speak. They do not interact. They are enemies. Until the day John falls from his roof trying to repair a shingle and Tom, being neighborly, patches him up and helps during his convalescence. It's hard to view someone as an enemy when they look just like you, share the same horror stories of war, lost loved ones, and are just trying to survive every day. Comfort, friendship and love grow from those commonalities and John and Tom realize they're far more alike than they are different.

A beautiful love story. Thank you, Kim.

NOTE: This book was provided by Dreamspinner Press for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews.

Xing says

Good, but not great.

Being a short story, the sparse world building made it difficult for me construct a suitable environment in my head. At the same time, readers are then forced to focus attention on characters John and Tom as they become acquainted with one another through an accident. It was short, sweet, and a good choice after reading something emotionally heavy.

Leanne says

A perfect little gem of a short story.

Distilled, beautiful writing, awesome world-building and more character depth in 52 pages than I have read in quite a while.

Highly recommended.

Sandra says

2.5 stars My rating isn't because I think this was bad. In fact it was good. A very good first chapter, and a good HFN ending... but where is my middle? I'm all for short stories, and this had the appropriate bare bones essentials of set-up. Specific enough that we understand the world/war that's going on, but vague enough that it could be anyone/anywhere.

I liked how Tom was building a garden in no-mans land so they could both harvest and enjoy it. I liked how they were both so lonely and isolated. I liked how it touched on the effects war has on those fighting it, when all they want is a reprieve and are just waiting for some politicians to agree so things can move forward. I liked how they were enemies but could barely remember why. It's a wonderful premise and those parts are very well done. Lastly, I liked the set-up of Tom nursing John back to health. But there wasn't enough of that for me to feel the connection and affection between them grow (instead it felt like, "you like guys? Hey, me too! There aren't any other options, wanna do it?"). It was only a few days, right?

I loved the story set-up, but needed more time. Even if John had watched Tom for longer in the beginning, maybe if they silently started sharing the garden and other supplies yet still never talking... *then* John's fall, it would have been a more realistic transition for me.

But, a lot of other people loved it. So maybe this one just wasn't for me.

Received from the publisher in exchange for an honest review, reviewed for Hearts On Fire

Adam says

Dear Ms. Fielding,

I would like to request a sequel. I am willing to compromise on the length.

That is all.

Signed,
Adam

P.S. very well done.

Serena Yates says

There have been a lot of senseless wars in our planet's history, and this story looks at the consequences of one such conflict on two men who used to fight on opposing sides. All we know is that John is a Westerner, and Tom is an Easterner. And that is all we need to know, other than the fact there is currently a truce, and they are still guarding their respective sides of the border as if the war were still going on. Sound familiar?

John has been at his post for so many years he can hardly remember time before. But the scars from his damaged leg are there to remind him, as are his failed ambitions to become an architect. His job is to inspect railships passing the border with cargo and people, but there aren't many of them and so he has lots of time to read - and to think. It is lonely past, and even though the Eastern guard is right across the fence, John never thinks to talk to him. They are enemies, right?

All that changes when John falls from the roof of his guard's hut while trying to repair it and "the Easterner", or Tom, comes to his rescue. Turns out Tom used to be a medic, but wanted to be a farmer. This and many other details are revealed as the two ex-enemies start to talk while John heals. The slow process of building trust, thinking about some hard truths, and discovering what's really important is beautifully described and I loved watching both men become human again as they turned their backs on being soldiers.

If you like enemy-to-lover stories, if you enjoy a moral message that makes you think packaged in a nicely unspecific setting, and if you're looking for a read that will make you smile and fill your heart with hope, then you will probably like this short story.

NOTE: This book was provided by Dreamspinner Press for the purpose of a review.

Ami says

Set in an alternate universe where a country is separated due to a civil war (?) between East vs. West,

Sergeant John Peterson guards an isolated border. He's lonely -- his only 'friend' is when a mail ship comes to ask for his stamps in the logbooks. The only other person he sees is the 'enemy', who guards the other side of the border.

Until one day, John has a terrible accident when he falls under the ladder. And the enemy, First Lieutenant Thomas Fellowes, is the one helping him.

This was such a gorgeous story, albeit short. However, even when it was short, Kim Fielding knew how to pack a punch! I thought the friendship between John and Thomas came naturally -- two people isolated at the border of a country, where the peace talks even happened in the center, far away from where they were.

My heart just went out for these two characters. Sure they were enemies but that only meant that they used different colors in their uniform. Underneath it all, they both the same. Two men who fought war (that was not theirs) and suffering nightmares at night.

I loved how Thomas gently made John see the hope ... from the moment Thomas decided to make the no-man's-land as his (later theirs) garden, I just knew that he was the right person to break John's walls.

This was a tender lovely story and I loved every page of it.

~☆~Doni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

4.5 call-it-home stars

And this is how you write a novella, ladies and gentleman. This story had more depth and character development than some books four times its length.

Kim Fielding's *The Border* is about war. Love. And hope.

Set in an unspecified future during yet another vague, ravaging war (is there any other kind?), *The Border* packs an emotional punch.

John and Tom are on opposite sides of the war, opposite sides of the border. They are enemies. Until Tom plants a garden, and saves John's life.

Deeply moving, gorgeously written, and full of evocative, heartbreaking details about two men living a lonely, isolated existence, this novella will break you a little.

Savor some real coffee and a square of dark chocolate, open a window, be happy.

John and Tom come to realize they can believe and reap their harvest. They can build.

Because there's always hope.

And love doesn't care about borders.

MLE says

A really sweet, and lovely romance. I liked seeing how the characters grew closer, and learned to trust each other. I thought the garden was a nice metaphor, and really worked well for the setting.

John The Cosmic Wanderer says

Love it! Short but full of emotions. I did not want the story to end. Kim Fielding just amazes me!

Adrienne -kocham czyta?- says

First off: absolutely adorable cover!

And good little story too; it was sweet and gave a glance into a world in the midst of war, and especially into the world of two "enemy" soldiers who have scars for each other to heal.

I didn't get too emotionally involved because it seemed a bit short and John's narration felt distant to me, but I liked reading it and recommend it. It goes by quickly and is worth it :)

Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says

The Border is a sweet, feel-good, quick read from Ms. Fielding about two guys stuck in a war they don't even know why they're fighting anymore who form their own personal truce while guarding the border between East and West.

John should've been a builder and Tom should've been a farmer and would've been were it not for this incessant, godforsaken war. Both have experienced the horrors of war and have the internal and external scars to verify as much. Both are just trying to survive under miserable circumstances. Both are lonely and tired. One is cynical to the other's hopeful optimism when an accident brings them together and bridges the divide between East and West making them just two largely forgotten soldiers protecting a border however they see fit.

Ms. Fielding is excellent at wrenching emotion from her readers. There just wasn't enough page time for a bond to form between me and these two characters. I found the worldbuilding to be lacking as well. Aside from those two quibbles, it was a nice read which is something I've come to expect from this author. Great for a Sunday comfort read maybe with some cocoa.
