



# **A Year of Absence: Six women's stories of courage, hope and love**

*Jessica Redmond*

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*A Year of Absence* follows the lives of six women whose husbands, all members of the U.S. Army's First Armored Division based in Germany, deploy to Iraq in April 2003. A young lieutenant's wife comes dangerously close to alcoholism. Marriages are pushed to the breaking point by the constant strain of fifteen months apart. Each morning the women anxiously scan the headlines, wondering if they still have a husband, if their children still have a father. Some form friendships that become their lifeline. Others somehow find courage despite their isolation. Through tearful goodbyes, long-awaited communication from the front, and joyful yet troubled reunions, *A Year of Absence* captures what life is like for many families of deployed soldiers: the ever-present fear of death, the pressures of single-parenthood, and the strength and comfort that come with the support of close friends. *Book excerpt* Jena was strolling home from walking the dog when she noticed an official U.S. Army car carrying two soldiers in Class A uniforms heading toward her street. She felt her pulse quicken and, without meaning to, she started doing the math. If the soldiers stopped at her building, there was a one-in-twenty-four chance that Adam was dead. If they stopped at her stairwell, it was one-in-eight. Don't come down here, she prayed silently. Please let it be somebody else.

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