



Promises

Belva Plain

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With her three children, beautiful home, and loving husband, Margaret Crane is a woman others would envy. Adam's job has cushioned them nicely over the years, and it should be a time of contentment, rewards, of new challenges together. But lately Adam has been working too late, too hard, at the office. Margaret is sure it's just the rumored takeover of his company--until she meets Randi, The Other Woman...

Meanwhile, Nina, the orphaned cousin the Cranes raised as their own daughter, is reveling in New York. She thinks she's found Mr. Right in Keith, a brilliant investment banker. But Keith has a secret he has not shared with Nina. All he asks for is time...and patience. And as Nina clings to stolen weekends with Keith, Margaret plays dutiful wife, trying to ignore warning signs of her own failing marriage. A rift has developed between the two women who have loved each other as mother, daughter, friends. Keith is not welcome in Margaret's home. And Nina herself is the other woman...

Promises Details

Date : Published April 7th 1997 by Dell (first published January 1st 1996)

ISBN : 9780440216872

Author : Belva Plain

Format : Paperback 464 pages

Genre : Fiction, Romance, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit

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Kim says

I found a lot of this book so irritating. Adam and his selfish affair. His lack of parenting. Also, I couldn't see why things had to be quite so hard for Margaret. Such as losing her home - she had very wealthy friends - why didn't they get together and buy her house and rent it back to her? Her pride wouldn't have had to suffer as it would have been an investment for them. Also - why didn't someone (Adam, friends) take the dog instead of it going to strangers? I got tired of listening to Adam and Randi's story - so depressing and predictable. I enjoyed much more Margaret's journey.

Jane De vries says

It is a recommended read for someone BEFORE an extra marital affair. Couldn't put it down.

Joanne says

A vacation read that traveled to UT, ID and WY. It is the story of a couple married for many years. The husband decides to have an affair and the family becomes dysfunctional. The Ozzie and Harriett family unit becomes prey to current lifestyles. There is a happy ending for one of the partners! This was a good book, but I've read others by Belva Plain that I loved (more of the historical type). Cover is different from the one listed.

Virginia Markhart says

This book touched me deeply. I HATE adultery. Then why couldn't I put this book down, adultery was the main theme. The book explored the deep emotional wrenching caused by adultery and divorce. Adultery is an insult to the entire family. Margaret and Nina, aunt and niece. Margaret is married to a man who is having an affair, and Nina is having an affair with a married man. The ugliness of their situations was painfully honest, made for difficult reading. The shattered home and the upheaval of the lives of the children. Just heart wrenching. I like the way that both women were strong enough to move forward with their lives and learn from their painful experiences.

Angie says

I first read this book in 1996 when it was a new release. The characters are those you love to hate, each of them for different reasons. I have begun reading this again because I wasn't sure of the ending. I have been amazed at the emotions it has set off in me this time around! (I wasn't married the first read!)

Adam is WEAK I just want to slap him!! Randi so manipulating and conniving. Margaret too innocent.

It is definitely an emotional page turner for me (although at times I don't want to read on b/c I know what is coming). It makes me glad that I grew up with the intact marriage of my parents and now have a happy marriage of my own. Thank goodness all men aren't like Adam!!

SPOILER AHEAD!!!!

Do all of her books end in suicide??? This is the 3rd one I've read lately and they have all ended with the male character killing themselves! If this is the case, I do not want to read another!!

Naomi says

I couldn't put it down!

This novel was about every wife's worst nightmare – the ex-girlfriend comes back into the husband's life. It's a roller coaster, and a good one!

Belva Plain has an unusual writing style of direct characterization and slightly archaic dialogue that would normally put me off a book. But her plots are so riveting and the characterization and dialogue work well, somehow. The stress and intensity of the drama are always rewarded with a satisfying ending. I'm normally a sci-fi and mystery girl, but Belva Plain is one chick-lit author I can't resist.

Alexis-Morgan Roark says

No comment. Too depressing. Read the other reviews.

Sheila Judson says

Margaret has planned her whole life around Adam. Just before marrying right out of college he has an affair but Margaret never has a doubt about their life together. The world revolves around their marriage and their children. What Margaret cannot see is that Adam has never really grown up and taken responsibility for himself and his feelings. Adam finds himself superior to the world and when his old girlfriend pops into his life again, he puffs up with esteem and jumps into the affair head on. After all, he's not really hurting anyone if they don't know. As the story unfolds along with their marriage Margaret and her children have to face the harsh reality of divorce and all that entails.

Kay says

I read this book a while ago. Belva Plain has always been a favorite of mine. Her writing is beautiful, it has a way of pulling me in. I love the old-fashioned tone of her characters. I don't think I've read one book of hers that I didn't at least like. (RIP Belva Plain).

Promises is a book about a man named Adam and a woman named Margaret, who have been together since youth (their mothers already planned their marriage long before they did). The book opens with a problem: Adam, who is away at college, is having doubts about marrying Margaret because he has met another girl named Randi who has him completely mesmerized. (POSSIBLE SPOILERS AFTER HERE, though I will try not to spoil much) - Randi decides to leave Adam for another man (a wealthier man) and that is that. Adam goes forward with the marriage. Then, the book fast forwards to years later, Adam and Margaret are happily married and have children. Everything seems to be wonderful, Belva Plain evoking, through her writing, that lovely sense of family (sitting around the piano, books being read, family meals etc.). Then, while away together for their anniversary, Adam runs into Randi once more. It is here where we are taken into Adam's emotional tailspin as he goes from ignoring the persistent Randi, to wondering about her, to actually seeing her "just for old times sake" - to a full-fledged affair. I like the way it's written, because you can actually see how the affair begins, even though you hate it, and Randi, you can see how it happens, and then how Adam finds himself in a predicament, something he didn't think he would be in. Margaret, an old-fashioned level headed woman, starts off submissively fearful of losing Adam but she grows a lot through the book. My only qualm about the novel is the Nina story. I didn't like it and found myself skipping through it (though it does relate to the Adam and Margaret story).

Kerri says

This book is about two women. One woman is married and being cheated on, and in a separate relationship, her niece is the "other woman."

This book is a bit different from some romance novels. Some books treat divorce as a glitch, and then everyone gets over it and is better off. This book shows divorce for its very ugly side, and the disastrous effects for the children.

Laura Beasley says

Good story but slow pace. Very true to life. Book full of emotions--love, betrayal, sadness, hurt, bitterness and so much more. A couple separate after 15 years of marriage due to the husband's adultery. How this split affects Margaret and Adam and their 3 children. The support of friends during this difficult time. Well written book. Lots of characters as in most of Belva Plain's books but much easier to keep up with each one. Enjoyable read even though sad at times.

Mary says

Margaret Crane is a woman many others would envy. With her comfortable home, handsome husband, three beautiful children and rewarding teaching career, Margaret has the perfect life. She and Adam, her husband, have also raised an orphaned cousin, Nina, since her early childhood and she is now a successful young decorator in New York City. And yet...Adam is constantly working late at the office; long hours and too much stress Margaret attributes to rumors of a big company takeover as Adam draws away from her and his family. Then she meets Randi, The Other Woman.

Meanwhile, Nina is reveling in her life in New York City and her relationship with Keith, a brilliant investment banker who might not be all that he seems. As Nina clings to stolen weekends with Keith, Margaret plays the dutiful wife and tries to ignore the widening cracks in her marriage.

As both Margaret and Nina face heartbreak choices in their lives, a rift develops between these two women who have loved each other like mother, daughter, friends. I truly enjoyed this book and give it an A+!

Kristy says

This was the first Belva Plain book I've read. I found it in a box of old books and I have no clue where it came from. It's a good story. Although you start to hate, I mean really hate, a couple of the characters you can appreciate the storytelling. You start out with a "perfect" family and the man of the house decides he's not happy. Especially after he meets an old flame from college. You can probably see where this is going.

Shirlene says

Margaret and Adam had grown up together both the children of single mothers, Jean and Isabella. She had a young, orphaned cousin, Nina. Margaret had fallen in love with Adam at 15. She was preparing to get married after Adam's college graduation but was afraid that something was wrong. Adam had grown distant and postponed the wedding to give himself time to adjust to his new job in Elmsford at one of the busiest computer companies in the state, Advanced Data Systems.

Adam had been sleeping with Randi for the past 18 months. He was studying for finals when Randi told him that she was pregnant. Adam wanted to marry her. Randi told him she was having an abortion and marrying an older man from California. She wanted to travel and see other places. Adam was very angry and hurt. He decided to go ahead with his plans to graduate, take the job offered him and marry Margaret.

15 years later, Margaret and Adam had 3 children, Megan, Julie and Danny. Nina was all grown up and worked as a house designer for a firm in New York. He and Margaret went for a date night in NY City to see a show and they ran into Randi. They returned home and Randi came to see him telling him she was curious at how his life turned out. She told him that she hadn't married the guy from California and that she had miscarried the baby. She was moving to a neighboring town to sell real estate. He and Margaret drove through Randolph Crossing on their way to order a new desk for Danny. Adam drove through again and stopped for lunch when the desk was ready for pickup. He ran into Randi and they talked some more. He went home and found out that his family wanted to take a vacation at a campground. Nina would be joining them. Adam told them he couldn't get off work and they went without him. He went to see Randi and they began an affair that was continuing on into two years.

Nina had met someone, an investment broker named Keith Anderson. They dated for 6 months and he asked her to go to Prague with him and she agreed. While in Prague, he told her that he was married but there were health issues with his son that were preventing him from getting divorced immediately. It would happen in time and he convinced her to stay with him.

It was a year later that Nina told Margaret that Keith was married. They got into an argument and Nina refused to visit Margaret until she apologized. Margaret told her that she didn't agree with what she was doing and didn't want to see Nina hurt by her actions or the wife and children. Margaret's kids all missed her and Adam was strangely quiet. Margaret had noticed that Adam often seemed absent and he told her that he was tired from working late hours and often on Saturdays. Their sex life was now absent and Margaret

blamed his work schedule. She suspected it was another woman but she let Adam convince her it wasn't so. He was under a lot of pressure for taking on two households and living a double life.

They had a family friend, Fred, that adored Margaret and he mentioned to Adam about seeing someone who looked like him in Randolph Crossing and Adam lied to Fred about being there. Adam was now worried that Fred would mention something to Margaret and the double life was really wearing on him. Randi was putting pressure on him to leave Margaret. He took Randi to lunch on her birthday and ran into his daughter, Megan, and Margaret's cousin Louise. Megan mentioned seeing him at dinner that evening and Margaret knew the truth about the affair. She told Adam that he wasn't leaving her or the family and he tried to stay away from Randi. He didn't see her for 3 months but they were still talking. Randi told him that she still loved him and wanted to see him. Adam went to see her on Saturday and Margaret knew that he had gone. Adam told her he was leaving, packed up some things and left to be with Randi. The kids were told the next morning.

That same weekend, Keith was going on a business trip and Nina went to the airport to bring him something to eat for his trip. His wife was there to drop him off and Nina saw that she was very pregnant. She knew then that her affair with Keith was over and that he had been lying to her. She went back to work and took a sick day. Her bosses were gay partners and came to see her. They convinced her to take some time off and go home. Nina had still been talking to Adam and knew of his affair. She didn't know that he had left Margaret and Nina arrived two days after he had moved out. Margaret was glad to have her home. They talked about what Nina had been through and Nina stayed with Margaret and the kids for almost a month.

Nina went back to New York and had almost half a dozen calls from Keith. She called him at work and told him to come by since he wanted to talk. She gave him a box to pack up everything he had given her. She wanted no reminders. It gave her satisfaction that she never let him complete a sentence and had sent him on his way. She then set about getting her house in order. Keith was no longer a part of her life.

Adam and Margaret both hired lawyers and proceeded with the divorce. Danny was the youngest and liked Randi just fine. Julie, who was very good at playing the piano, quit playing and taking lessons. She spent a lot of time crying. Megan, who was 17, hated her father and refused to see him or visit. She told the others that she hated Randi for breaking up her parents. The children seemed to fight all the time now. The divorce was hard on them all.

While going through the divorce process, the family car broke down and need a new transmission. They really needed a new car but Margaret couldn't afford it. Then the roof started leaking and there were so many other repairs that became obvious that Margaret decided that it was best that she sold the home that her mother had left her because she couldn't afford the repairs. Danny had to give up his dog, Rufus, so that they could move into an apartment. The girls had to share a room and Margaret gave the other room to Danny and she slept on the couch. Fred offered to help as did Nina. Margaret determined that she would make it on her own. Danny became sullen and wasn't doing well in school. Julie quit playing the piano and the piano had to go too. Megan was furious at her father for letting all of this happen to them. Margaret was seeing the student guidance counselor for help in dealing with all of this. She couldn't afford a psychiatrist.

It was 2 years later when everything seemed to be falling apart for Adam. Randi had gotten herself pregnant on purpose because she wanted a child. The divorce was not yet finalized and Megan had been accepted into Harvard. Margaret didn't have money to pay for it. Fred offered to help. Margaret didn't want to be indebted to him and told him that she would find a way to pay him back. Fred was widowed and had money. He didn't have a family and was in love with Margaret and wanted to help. Margaret had found out that she was neighbors with her divorce attorney, Steven Larkin, and they became friends. Steven offered to take Danny to play baseball with him at a nearby park. He spoke fluent French and helped Danny with his French for school. Julie still wasn't playing the piano. She and Danny now told their father that they hated Randi. They had overheard too much of what she had said about their mother and was often disagreeable and hateful toward them. They didn't want to come see him at her house anymore.

Randi had gotten herself pregnant and was now seven months along. She accused Adam of using their money for Megan to attend Harvard. Adam had lost his job and had a pay cut upon accepting a new one. He

and Randi weren't as well off as she had expected and had begun to nag Adam about money. She got drunk one night while having a pool party at their place even though she was pregnant. Adam called the house to talk to Julie and found out that she had left the house at 6. It was now 9:30 and no one knew where she was. Adam left in the middle of Randi's pool party and she was furious. When Adam returned home after seeing that Julie was home safely, Randi admitted to Adam that she had come to Elmsworth intent on seducing him. She told him that she didn't think it would be difficult because he was weak. She knew that it wouldn't take long for him to submit to her wishes like he had when he was in college. She hadn't expected him to take as long as he had to divorce Margaret and she resented him for supporting his children. She mentioned wanting to move out of state to keep him from having to pay child support. She was furious when he told her that he wouldn't leave his children. She told him that he had already left his children and he knew that it was true. They didn't want to be around him anymore.

Adam left the house after telling Randi that she disgusted him and he was disgusted with himself. He was ashamed by what she had caused him to do. She knew she had gone too far and tried to play it off that she had said what she did because she had too much to drink. Adam had allowed Randi to manipulate him into breaking up his family and hurting his children. They were damaged by what he had done. Adam walked out on Randi and she realized that she may have gone too far.

Adam drove by the old house he and Margaret had lived in and was disappointed to see it falling into disrepair. He drove by the school to see Margaret. She had moved on by now and didn't seem to pay much attention to him. He headed out of town and was speeding when he rammed his car into a tree and killed himself.

The divorce hadn't gone through yet so Margaret received his life insurance money. She mentioned giving some of it to Randi when Steven stopped her. He told her that she and her family needed the money and that she wasn't responsible for his mistakes. He also mentioned to her that she might think of attending medical school. He knew that she had given up that dream when she married Adam. She could afford to go now and she wasn't too old at 41. He gave her a medical book as a present and she was happy to accept it.

Margaret left Steven's office and met with Fred. She paid Fred back the money that he had loaned Megan in order for her to attend Harvard. She went home and Dan told her that Steven had called to ask her out to dinner. She went to dinner with him and realized that she was in love with him. Their dinner was interrupted by Fred who mentioned Margaret being 'this lady of mine'. Steven was telling her that he was giving up his divorce practice and going back to school to see about becoming a specialist maybe in environmental law, something other than seeing the dissolution of families. Margaret was excited for him. Fred told Steven that he would take Margaret home and she let him. She was angry at Fred for interrupting their dinner and he knew it. As he was dropping her off, he told her that he had hoped to marry her but he knew she was angry with him and that she would never accept his proposal.

She didn't hear from Steven again. She noticed the moving truck showing up his place. She walked over to observe them packing up his belongings. She didn't know what Steven thought about her relationship with Fred and wondered how their evening would have ended if Fred wouldn't have come by.

Nina came to visit a few months later and she brought up Steven. Margaret told her that she liked him but he had moved away. After hearing this from Margaret, Nina looked up Steven and called him. She told him that Margaret was interested in him. Steven asked if Margaret was still with Fred. Nina told him that she never was 'with' Fred. He told her that he would call Margaret.

Two years later, Steven and Margaret were in NY attending a party with Nina. It was a week before they were to be married. Margaret was going to college and Steven had a new job. They had gotten Danny's dog, Rufus, back. They had ordered a new piano for Julie who was once again taking lessons. Megan was a sophomore in college and had a serious boyfriend. Margaret knew that it would be awhile before Megan would proceed any further in a relationship with him but it was proof that she was still willing to get involved in with someone.

Nina was approached by someone at the party who asked her out. He mentioned having a wife and Nina interrupted him but telling him that she knew his wife and how she was old as God, homely and they hadn't

had sex in years. He was surprised by the response and he started to say something when she said that she was no married man's pickup. He walked away. Nina had learned something from her former relationship.

Kathleen says

Not my favorite Belva Plain novel. It depicts the husband as a person with zero personality and zero self control and the 'other woman' as pure evil who deliberately tempts a married man away from his family and then turns on them using only sex as a weapon. Not a very realistic scenario in my opinion.
