



The Promise of Pierson Orchard

Kate Brandes

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Long before fracking ever came to Minden, Pennsylvania, the fissures in the Pierson family were developing into major fault lines.

Green Energy arrives, offering the rural community of Minden the dream of making more money from their land by leasing natural gas rights for drilling. But orchardist, Jack Pierson, fears his brother, Wade, who now works for Green Energy, has returned to town after a twenty-year absence so desperate to be the hero that he'll blind their hometown to the potential dangers. Jack also worries his brother will try to rekindle his relationship with LeeAnn, Jack's wife, who's recently left him. To protect his hometown and to fulfill a promise to himself, Jack seeks out his mother and environmental lawyer, Stella Brantley, who abandoned Minden--and Jack and Wade--many, many years ago.

The Promise of Pierson Orchard Details

Date : Published April 22nd 2017 by Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing

ISBN : 9781942545514

Author : Kate Brandes

Format : Paperback 286 pages

Genre : Womens Fiction, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Promise of Pierson Orchard for online ebook

DJ Sakata says

My Rating:

4.5

Favorite Quotes:

While he'd never seen one for sure, ghosts roamed the orchard. Maybe it was his great grandfather who'd planted the first apple tree, or his grandfather who'd expanded the operation, checking on the progress of the work they'd started. Or his dad, who probably thought Jack wasn't upholding the Pierson reputation. Nothing had ever been good enough for that man.

I finally realized what Rose already knew – all we needed to be happy was to show up for each other... Acceptance and forgiveness. That's how love grows.

My Review:

The Promise of Pierson Orchard was a relevant, powerful, and dramatic story loaded with family pressures and heartbreaking losses. The characters' tension practically vibrated from my kindle as I could clearly sense the profound importance of how the various events occurring in the story were impacting each of them. The weight of their fatigue, despair, and devastating disappointments was palpable. The author's word skills cleverly depicted the heaviness of the years of regret and guilt carried by each. I was absorbed by the complicated tale and was quickly lost in Ms. Brandes's well-crafted and emotive story. The storyline and writing were captivating and relevant and while the characters were complex, damaged, and frustrating at times, I cared about them and flinched and held my breath more than once while intense scenarios played out. I had tremendous sympathy and admiration for the long-suffering Jack, the unfortunate and obstinate man seemed to have been cursed with adversity yet he continued to labor, battle, and persevere. My poor heart feels battered and bruised, my next read needs to be of the comedic variety.

Cindy Roesel says

THE PROMISE OF PIERSON ORCHARD by Kate Brandes & GIVEAWAY

18 Apr 2017 ~ Cindy Roesel ~ Edit

Small town America, struggling with compromise.

Place and home are just a couple of the topics explored in Kate Brandes' novel, THE PROMISE of PIERSON ORCHARD (Wyatt-MacKenziePublishing). Everyday people are already dealing with complex lives before fracking comes to the small community of Minden, Pennsylvania and the townspeople stand to risk losing the land they love.

Cracks are already deep in the Pierson family, when after twenty years, brother Wade swoops into town hoping to make everyone rich off the land his brother Jack has been tending to for the past two decades. THE

PROMISE of PIERSON ORCHARD alternates between the points of views of the two brothers and LeeAnn, Jack's wife who recently left him, and now Wade shows interest. Boundaries are constantly being pushed to the breaking point.

Kate Brandes's writing is subtle, but clear and fast paced in juxtaposition to the patterns of a small town. Jack, LeeAnn, Wade and Green Energy, as well as the arrival of the brother's estranged environmental lawyer mother, growing conflict eventually comes to a point of finality, and a resolution where nobody is really a winner.

Brandes' tackles issues of "abandonment, identity, loneliness, love, personal choice" – so many, only a talented writer like Brandes could successfully navigate the landscape of THE PROMISE of PIERSON ORCHARD. I enjoyed being out in the orchard with Jack and LeeAnn. I had no idea what complexities go into being a orchardist ... and the huge amount of work.

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About Kate Brandes

An environmental scientist with 20 years of experience, Kate Brandes is also a watercolor painter and a writer of women's fiction with an environmental bent. Her short stories have been published in The Binnacle, Wilderness House Literary Review, and Grey Sparrow Journal. Kate is a member of the Arts Community of Easton (ACE), the Lehigh Art Alliance, Artsbridge, the Pennwriters, and the Women's Fiction Writers Association. Kate lives in a small town along the Delaware River with her husband, David, and their two sons. When she's not working, she's outside on the river or chasing wild flowers.

Connect with Kate

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On Kate's website, you'll find suggested questions for book clubs. Kate believes, "there are parallels between nature, painting, and writing." She shares some of her beautiful original pieces on her website.

Jill Anderson says

I'm so glad I was able to read an ARC copy of this book! The author did a great job of showing both sides of many areas in this story. I learned a lot about fracking, and the pros and cons of people allowing it on their land.

The story also portrays a family torn apart by secrets, misunderstandings, and things we can't control in life. I liked the family dynamics plot twists that didn't take the easy/normal way out (I won't say more since I don't want to spoil the story.) Filled with life-changing decisions, dreams and regrets, their story will stick with you.

Kathleen says

The Promise of Pierson Orchard hooked me from the start, and didn't let me go until I finished the book. The author skillfully weaves together a story about fracking (and its complex environmental and economic implications) with one of broken relationships and redemption. I'm a sucker for a love triangle, and I was immediately drawn into the one at the heart of this book featuring LeeAnn, her moody, fight club-inclined husband Jack, and Jack's brother Wade, who left town 20 years ago and just returned as the face of a large energy company. The Promise of Pierson Orchard will give you something to think about, and characters to

cheer for.

Elise Hooper says

This engaging family drama set amidst a larger community conflict kept me turning the pages. The environmental conflict at the center of *The Promise of Pierson Orchard* makes this novel a timely reminder of why love and family bonds must conquer all.

Caryn says

Full review, giveaway, and guest post on my blog: <http://www.thebookwhisperer.org/2017/...>

Sandra Hutchison says

I was worried that this book that about the arrival of fracking in a small Pennsylvania town and its effects on an already fractured family would read like propaganda. Thankfully, it doesn't. (Although, okay, the head of the energy company does come across as a smooth bastard.) Brandes writes well and is particularly good with the rural setting and the small town characters. (I'd vote for Elzer!) She slips some education about fracking and orcharding in without getting didactic about it. I read with pleasure throughout, but I'd say this would be an especially satisfying read for those who enjoy the tying up of many threads in a highly dramatic climax.

I received this book through a contest on the Tall Poppy Writers Facebook page.

Jenni Walsh says

Kirkus Reviews described this book as "...an eloquent portrait of a small town struggling with compromise." This is very true, but I latched onto the family element of this book. Brandes tells the story through the POV of two brothers, the woman they both love, and the mother that left them as young boys. The portrait she created of this small family, as they too struggled with compromise, was well done, emotional, and heartfelt. Their motivations, passions, and fears were evident on the page, and I held my breath during the last few chapters to see how their stories would end.

Stephanie says

Jack's family life began crumbling early in his childhood. When Jack and his brother Wade were four and five years old, Jack's mother walked out on the family due to severe depression. Later in his youth, their father died in a hunting accident. Not long after that, Wade disappears. Jack is left to run their apple orchard by himself. Jack marries a neighbor, LeeAnn and after eight years of infertility, their marriage falls apart. Then, Wade returns along with his new job at Green Energy with hopes to reconcile his past and help out the

town. Wade is selling land leases for Green Energy to frack for natural gas in the abundant shale deposits of his hometown of Minden, Pennsylvania. The quick money is a big draw for many of the families and businesses who have seen their town dwindle since the coal companies left. However, Jack is worried about the effects of fracking on the land, his orchard and LeeAnn's organic apple trees. He makes the decision to call in his mother, Stella, now an acclaimed environmental lawyer to get some perspective on the issue. With Wade, Jack and Stella all back together there will be more be more explosions than just the hydraulic fracturing.

As an environmental scientist, I appreciate pertinent environmental issues featured in contemporary fiction. The Promise of Pierson Orchard expertly incorporates the slowly leaking and infiltrating toxins of the hydraulic fracturing with the disassembling relationships within Jack's family. The characters are definitely the focus of the story. The writing switching between the point-of-view of Jack, Wade, LeeAnn and Stella giving an intimate look into each character's back story and reasoning, making it easy to see everyone's beliefs and why they were convinced they were doing the right thing. The shorter chapters also made for quick reading and a build of suspense as secrets were revealed. I was most impressed with the author's ability to come up with a compromise solution for the town and the hydraulic fracturing. While the dangers of fracking and its many consequences are highlighted, Stella's character is able to come up with a solution that includes fracking done a better way in order to help the community and family that she left behind. With a heart-pounding and surprising ending, The Promise of Pierson Orchard provides an engaging and thoughtful read.

This book was provided for free in return for an honest review.

MM Finck says

Fini! The last quarter is TENSE!!! The hits keep coming! (I love that my copy came with seeds to grow my own zinnias! :) How cute! I'm totally doing it.)

Karen Sargent says

In THE PROMISE OF PIERSON ORCHARD, Kate Brandes parallels a land fractured by drilling and a family fractured by the past. As small-town Minden struggles with the decision to let Green Energy tap into the natural gas beneath the land, the Piersons are reunited unexpectedly when Jack's brother Wade and his mother Stella return after abandoning the family orchard years ago. Standing on opposite sides of the fracking issue, they are forced to face the ghosts of their past. By telling the story from the points of view of Jack, his wife LeeAnn, Wade, and Stella, Kate presents various perspectives on the fracking issue and reveals each character's brokenness. I really didn't know much about fracking before reading this, and I thoroughly enjoyed learning about it through story. I also enjoyed the details about caring for the orchard (especially when they are symbolic). I was torn about the decision the town had to make, and I felt the struggle of the characters as they each had to come to terms with their past in their own way. I wiped tears through the last few chapters, not what I expected when I started a book about fracking! But it's not just a story about the environment. It's a love story and a family drama that pulled me in by the heart. A must-read!

Leah DeCesare says

In this debut novel, Kate Brandes explores brotherhood and what it means to be a mother, a husband, a true partner in life. I learned a lot about the current topics around fracking and pipelines - on both sides of the issue. The story is touching, thought-provoking and pulls the reader through to the end wondering what will happen.

Jk says

I received a very nice paperback copy of this novel for free via the Goodreads Giveaways program and would like to say thank you to anyone who had a hand in making that happen, and especially to the author for the nice handwritten note!

This is a wonderful story about a family trying to overcome their history and a hardscrabble town trying to make tough decisions that will affect the land they love. The author did an excellent job of creating flawed and realistic characters that I really cared about as well as a strong sense of place. The setting was really another character and one that I also cared very much about and wanted to see protected. I loved the balanced portrayal of the fracking issue as well and thought it was very well handled.

Though not a genre that I usually gravitate toward, I thoroughly enjoyed it and am very grateful that I got the opportunity to read this one!

Sandi Ward says

The Promise of Pierson Orchard is a book I tore right through, on the edge of my seat as I was reading. The story was fast-paced from beginning to end. It is a family drama with heart and meaning.

A multi-generational family finds themselves conflicted as they debate the best future for their land and orchard when Green Energy offers to lease property in their town, promising financial relief, but also bringing the risks of drilling for natural gas: destruction of the land they love. I consider myself a friend of the environment, so the story appealed to me. At the same time, I appreciated that the story was not a one-sided, predictable description of the damage done by drilling. Instead, it was a balanced telling of both sides of the story. It was thought-provoking and well done.

My favorite aspect of the book was the family tension. Sibling relationships and rivalries make for very strong storytelling. Add in a love triangle, and you've got me hooked!

Jack was my favorite character. I love strong, brooding leading men. I related to his suffering and felt his abandonment (by both his wife and his mother, at different times in his life). I don't know if finding solace through violence is an exclusively American concept, but when Jack fought, I felt like I understood why he was doing it.

I was provided an advance copy in exchange for an honest review. It was a very smart, enjoyable read! I'll remember this story a long time.

Patty says

I was drawn to this book because I grew up in Philadelphia (moving to the Jersey shore when I was 12) so it brought back memories of home. I will also note before I dive into my thoughts that I am anti-fracking. Let me also note that the book is if not even handed on the issue, at least a bit balanced by showing both sides of this contentious issue.

The book takes place in a rural area where farming is a way of life. The main character, Jack Pierson, runs an apple orchard that he inherited from his father – a man who was not a caring man. His mother left early in his life and it left Jack severely emotionally stunted. His wife LeeAnn has recently left Jack because of a myriad of reasons but mostly because of his inability to understand her drive for a child. She is willing to do anything while he just didn't get how much she wanted a baby. She is also experimenting with organic apple growing which Jack doesn't understand; why change what has worked for years? And her mother is dying.

Jack has a brother, Wade, who left town after their father died (he accidentally killed him) – but he's now back in town as the representative of a gas company. He's trying to get drilling rights from the people in town so that his company can start fracking. To complete this circle, Jack and Wade's mother has established herself since her absence from their lives as an environmental lawyer – with a particular knowledge of Wade's company.

Whew!

There are a number of subplots going on in the book involving relationships past and present and Ms. Brandes does a good job of making them easy to follow. She also educates her readers without bogging them down with too much technical jargon and gives them what they need to delve further into the fracking issue if they want to learn more. Each character is unique and well developed. If you enjoy family drama with an environmental twist you will definitely find your bliss with this book.
