



Promises

Catherine Gaskin

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A magnificent saga of a woman's promise and the passion, tragedy and triumph that it brings. Black Jack Pollock inherited a fortune and married a beautiful, wild aristocrat. Shrewd, tough and unscrupulous, he was the last man to take pity on the bedraggled waif who was crushed beneath his carriage wheels. He took her home to Pelham Langley, his great house on the Yorkshire Moors. He named her Lally Leeds and she became the cornerstone of his motherless family. She was companion and friend to the lovely, wilful Margaret; she was the kindest support to the enchanting but handicapped Alice; and she was the greatest admirer of the beloved Jon - Black Jack's son and heir.

Throughout the sunlit summer of 1914 the gilded Pollock family were the toast of the town. Only Lally felt unattractive and without a name - the ugly duckling. World War 1 took the young men off to the trenches. It took Lally too, crushed but unsurprised by Jon's marriage, off to France as a VAD. It was she who first met Brock Weymouth, the dark stranger who was to play such a vital role in the Pollock family's affairs - a man with as little right to his name as Lally had to hers. PROMISES sweeps from the agonies of World War 1 to the Jazz Age that followed, from the parties and rich life of Long Island society to the severity and bitterness of the Depression, through the tragedy and disaster to the ultimate and unexpected triumph and the new destiny of Pelham Langley."

Promises Details

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JudiAnne says

In 1900, John Pollack rescued a very sick young girl from the side of the road, in Yorkshire, England and took her home to be a sister to his two children, Jon and Margaret. He wanted to do this for her because he knew if he left her where she laid she wouldn't have lived to see the next day. He adopted her and raised her as Lally. By this one act of kindness he changed the entire destiny of the Pollack family. Lally regained her health and grew up in this privileged family where she secretly made a promise to herself to always put her father, brother and sister best interests first. It was this promise that not only made her the strongest member of this family but shaped and determined her life choices throughout the novel. This is a very complicated story of family love and values. There is much drama through the story and continuing drastic things that happen to this family because of their different personalities. Their love of each other holds them together through rough times in this romantic novel of early twentieth century England.

It is impossible to go into detail about this novel without creating spoilers so I will just say that it deserves every one of the 5 stars that I gave it and even more. This novel is right up there with my favorites that I have ever read and it is amazing to me that there has not been a reprint of this wonderful novel. It is however, out of print and may be hard to come by at the library. I got the one and only copy that my library had. There are also a few copies available on paperbackswap.com and bookmooch.com

Rebecca says

I first read this as a keen 9 year old skimming through my dad's vast collection of Readers Digest condensed novels to find something interesting for the dreary winter evenings to read. I read it a few times over the years and eventually decided to pick up the full novel in paperback.

It's been a while since I last read the book so I couldn't remember the full story and of course, being the full edition, there was a lot new to me - the whole backstory of Lally's mother, for one thing. I did enjoy the reread but I don't think the condensed version was lacking in anything great from the full story, and it did feel like a very lengthy read. As an adult, I can also appreciate how far fetched the situation with Alice is portrayed, especially in those times when people with her sort of disability were locked away. That aside, the whole scene near the end with Brock and Mark Shaw was equally as far fetched, but I suppose it had to be that way. More closure on Margaret would also have been nice; a spoiled brat she may be but still one of the best characters for development and depth. Glad I now have a copy but it will be a while before I read again!

Lola Louca says

tremendous reading, Enthralling. keeping the reader anxious and anticipating - yet all the time knowing what the end would be but in no way spoiling any of the story. Brilliant.

Terri says

I'm on a Catherine Gaskin kick as you'll soon find out..... I love these old stories of family and romance in wartime England.

Rhyllis Bignell says

Sweeping family saga

This was a long and dramatic journey, filled with interesting characters, well worth reading. Lally's life, her lives and losses, from rags to riches entwined with so much history and drama.

Jennifer says

The book begs to add the question on how far do you take gratitude. Do all actions really warrant forgiveness?

Mariebell says

A romance that just breaks your heart.

Arci Rochett says

By far the best book I've ever read! The characterization is incredible, each character has a profound sentiment never thought possible to depict in a story before. Lally Pollock is a steadfast heroine, you'd think there will come a point in which she'd set out to destroy the person who destroyed her life, but NO! She is able to forgive, and miraculously move on. The fast tempo of the roaring twenties, is symbolical to how fast she was able to accomplish all she thought was precious and how quick it all ended. Highly recommend it.

Madhusudan Chokhra says

The plot is undoubtedly fascinating and vivacious. It was difficult for me to finish this because it is not the usual genre I read and it's story is sad. It is like Game of thrones, people in every next chapter are dying. The death of Jon, Jonathan, Margaret and rape of Alice are worst parts of this novel. Well it is clear after reading this novel, why Britishers or westerners are spoiled. Drinking and party are two reasons they are alive. And I am not reading any Romance and Drama genre book again.

Jade Reeve says

Tear jerker

Extremely well written, fast passed book.
Characters have a depth that draw you in.
Amazing story line that had you sucked in from the first chapter.

P. says

An excellent read, very well written. Only quibble is that death was used as a plot device too often, otherwise, and despite its length, worth a read.

Deborah George says

This has been one of my favourite books so far, i have read it over and over again. I loved Lally's strength, determination and i cried at her sadness. I first read this book over 20 years ago and it is still imprinted in my mind.

Diane Wachter says

Catherine Gaskin, RDC-M, V5, 1982, 6/83. Saga about a waif, crushed under carriage wheels, taken to live with the Laird, to love and look after his motherless children. Time spans from before WWI England to the Jazz age in America. Okay.

Kit Cat says

One of my all time favorite books!!!
