



## A Promise to Remember

*Kathryn Cushman*

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## **A Promise to Remember** Kathryn Cushman

When a car accident kills two teens from opposite sides of the tracks, the aftermath threatens to tear a community apart. On one side, Melanie Johnston - a grieving single mother - is convinced her son will be forgotten. On the other is Andie Phelps, a reserved woman who retreats even further into herself with grief.

These two sympathetic characters fight her own way through grief and pain - sometimes wisely and sometimes with choices that have the power to divide family, church, and even their small, seaside town.

## **A Promise to Remember Details**

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## From Reader Review A Promise to Remember for online ebook

### **Kim Bakos says**

I loved how this book made you feel empathy for two people on opposite sides of the same issue, showing that things are rarely black and white and a simple as we think.

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### **Margaret says**

#### **Forgiveness**

I admit, when I started this book, I really didn't think it would have much substance. I apologize to the author because I was very wrong. Having read this book I cannot remain unchanged. I want to seek the peace that Melanie and Annie found amidst their struggles. The story while sad, demonstrates the importance of forgiveness. Not only of those who have wronged, but ourselves as well. I highly recommend this book for an enjoyable, thought-provoking read.

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### **Deborah Robb says**

When it comes to book club selections, I always look in the back before I begin to see if they chose a book that has "suggested questions" and I skim them. This time I only read the first question and stopped because the question put in my mind I would be picking sides and I didn't want to start off with that in mind or any other leading questions.

The book itself starts off a bit gloomy with the death of two teenage boys through a car accident. You never learn more of the accident other than one had been drinking but wasn't intoxicated and one car was mangled and it was hard to even identify the body.

There is Melanie Johnston, a single mother working to support her son Jeff and daughter Sarah. She is outraged by the accident and loss of her son, determined that he will be remembered and leave behind a legacy, she files a lawsuit. In her grieving, looking for answers and ultimately trying to keep her daughter from the backlash of the lawsuit, she ends up attending her children's church. She finds support there and some answers. She works as a price checker and her job ends up providing some challenges due to the lawsuit.

Then there is the other mom, Andie Phelps that is grieving the loss of her only child, Chad. Her husband is so busy with work that she doesn't see much of him and they don't communicate much. They are wealthy and she is able to spend much of her time working on raising money for charities, helping at a soup kitchen, and painting some. While they are dealing with the loss of their son, they both have the burden of guilt for things they did or didn't do with their son.

Through the grief of these two families, the impact of the lawsuit on them and the community, you are able to see the affect that comes from their two worlds colliding. The end talks more of faith, forgiveness and then some. There is the tied-up happy ending (as happy as it can get) for the book. Definitely a good read.

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### **Radella says**

Ever since buying a Kindle, I've been reading a lot of books that I wouldn't have given a second thought to. But who am I to say no to a free book? This one really surprised me.

Two women from opposite sides of the track are bound together in a tragedy- a car accident that takes the lives of both their sons. Through the deaths, each women learns what it means to be a strong Christian.

Andie has it all on the outside- a nice house, a husband and good friends, and attends the right church. She has her hand in several charities and fundraisers. But she sees herself as to blame for her son's death- if only she had been a better mother. She has long abandoned the one thing that she took pleasure in- painting- in order to live up to her husband's expectations. He is desperately trying to close a deal that will solve some financial difficulties Andie knows nothing about. Since the death of their son, they are in a slow decline, tearing the marriage apart through lack of communication

Melanie is a single mother, trying to hold her life together for her daughter's sake, after the death of her son. While her children attend church, she wants nothing to do with it. In her anger and pain, she decides to file a wrongful death lawsuit against the other family. She just wants her son to be remembered. Through the lawsuit that steals the imagination of the court of public opinion long before it actually goes to court, she learns that forgiveness and kindness are more difficult.

Yes, it is a Christian book, and forgiveness certainly plays a starring role, but it doesn't come off as preachy. It is more about the raw emotional journey that happens when loved ones die unexpectedly- the things that can go wrong, and the things that ultimately can make a person stronger.

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### **Nenette says**

For a freebie, this turned out well beyond my expectation. I'm giving it 5 stars because it drew out all kinds of feelings and emotions from me while I was reading it - such a feat considering that I had plenty of breaks in between my reading times. Being a mother of teenagers, I can only imagine the pain that both Melanie and Andie went through. Losing a child is the worse thing imaginable, I don't think any other pain can measure up to it. But through all this pain, the book offered redemption. Others might frown on the religious tone of the book, but as a Christian, it was an essential element for me. Reading the book was like listening to a moving testimony - beats any theoretical sermon any time!

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### **Tomi says**

I will be the first to admit that Christian fiction is not my favorite genre, but the story line for this book intrigued me. And the story was traveling along well, until all of a sudden everything was resolved perfectly and tied up in a neat little package. No reason, none of the characters developed enough to cause this change. Really disappointing Pollyanna story.

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## **Lee Simpson says**

### **Very touching story**

This is a very heart warming and touching story. It is very wonderfully told, showing both sides of the story.

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## **Lacey says**

First thoughts:

What to say...had very good imagery incorporated throughout the storyline, seeing the landscapes that were created was breath taking. The authors use of language fit perfectly into what a grieving person would say, do and feel. It felt really realistic; the characters didn't heal instantly and the conflicts that were introduced page after page would leave me in a puddle on the ground. But the author created strong characters; people I would in a wierd way idolize. Because in the end everyone has their own way of grieving and the deck they were handed was much greater than one I could envision. Something I really enjoyed was the character development, I loved to see a weak character become someone strong; someone willing to fight. And while said character was evolving a sense of their old character still shone through. The plot was exciting throughout; not of course in the thriller sense of exciting but in a sense that things kept happening, there was hardly a time the character had a breather before something new was introduced. But in essence the story was created beautifully and I loved the christian feel to it; I loved that questions were brought up and depicted how the author saw fit.

Summary:

Melanie and Andie come from two different lives. While Andie lives in luxary, a loving son named Chad and a husband who provided the "Bacon" for the house; she needn't worry about providing for her family. She didn't even have to work. But for melanie a single mom of two; Jeff and Sarah, she works at the local grocery store as a price checker. She can barely provide for her family; but she's making due. These two unlikely people are brought together by the unthinkable. Both their sons are killed in a car accident, only the kids to blame.

This story really blossoms when the accident happens and we are brought into the worlds of these two moms. We are able to see the perspective of the moms and how they deal with their loss. And while Melanie doesn't believe in God she soon is introduced to the world her son and daughter are immeresed in. Melanie questions all she believes in and perhaps see's that the greatest gift of all is "God".

As for Andie a believer of God she deals with her husband Blair, a husband who has sapped her of life and soon she learns that Art is the only way to release the tension; the pain. And while her world falls apart she will on her own and with the help of God discover that its time to stand up and be who she is meant to be.

But will the two come together and forgive the other? Or will their hatred; pain cause a ripple in their lives? Leaving them bitter and sad?

Last thoughts:

I really enjoyed this book and though I thought it ended a little too quickly, I still liked the fact that not everything was necessarily solved. I loved the writing style; the concept of the two women and the development of something beautiful. I can't wait to discover some other writings by Kathryn. This is a book for any Christian but be warned there are a lot of things brought up about God so if you feel uncomfortable reading in that kind of depth this is not a book for you. But in all I enjoyed this book and I feel a renewed sense of my faith.

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### **Dana says**

Don't read without tissues. This one was very realistic. Well written.

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### **Barbara J. Harbison says**

#### **A Promise**

I truly enjoyed reading this book. I cannot imagine losing a child and it was interesting to read how these families dealt with their son's death.

The author did a great job in showing how Christians can fail regularly in their lives but still continue to strive to act like Jesus. It is a difficult thing to do.

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### **Frau Ott says**

Teenage deaths due to a car accident. A town divided between the haves and the havenots. Faith and doubt. Promises and anger. God works in mysterious ways to save all involved. A wonderful read.

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### **Susan D Fraley says**

#### **Good read**

A little slow but overall a good read. Ending was kind of smashed, should have taken a little more time.

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### **Tanya says**

Perhaps another book that would be good for a book club. I enjoyed reading the book but I found I really, really had a hard time with Melanie. She is probably the one I should relate to the most, middle class, (I'm not a single mom), mother of more than one child, I have worked out of the home, but she drove me crazy. Maybe it is because I am so aware of the class warfare going on and the anti wealth attitude when it is someone else's money. I'm glad she turned around in the book and started to act the way her son would want

her to be. Everytime the author used a phrase similar to "A single mother doesn't have time", I wanted to climb the ways and scream. I hated it. All mom's don't have time, particularly when there are other children to take care of. Life is life.

Andie on the other hand I could understand. She seemed to have give up many things in her life, and tried to still contribute to society. She worked, in a different way. I got her grief, her only child gone, and a marriage was crumbling which is so true when something happens that impacts a family so completely. One of the things I was taught when I started to work in newborn intensive care, is how many marriages fall apart because of the stress of a sick baby, and if the child dies how much more that risk increases. This was very accurate as I watched this couples life fall apart after the death of their teenage son and the cause of that death is revealed.

I was satisfied with the ending, and it is a book that makes you think. That is after all what the author intended.

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### **Debra Slonek says**

I very much enjoyed this book. Two families' lives are entwined through a horrible accident. Each person involved reacts to this defining moment in a different and complex way. As the story evolves, there are some wonderful lessons on forgiveness. Also, no matter what kind of bad choices we make, God can work with those choices and turn them into paths which lead us to Him.

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### **Vicky Connolly says**

I can't think of anything more personally devastating than your child's accidental death. The author told the story of two teenaged drivers dying in a car accident and the agony three parents faced in the months that followed the accident: their guilt, their anger, their loneliness, their need for God, their loving friends, and the forgiveness that healed relationships.

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