



Outback Promise

Maggie Bolitho

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Tragedy. Betrayal. Hope.

After losing their only child, Roslyn and Grady Balfour's lives are destroyed, shattering their perfect marriage. When Ros discovers Grady's infidelity, it sets their love on a destructive downward spiral. Grady hopes that three months together camping will rekindle what was lost so long ago.

Attempting to repair their broken marriage, Ros and Grady set out on a journey of self-discovery and redemption deep into the Australian outback. Packing resentment and bitterness along with them on their quest, the couple struggles with what they've lost. Forced to battle the challenges of the other travelers along with the dangers of the harsh outback, their only chance for survival lies in facing the secrets of the past. Will Ros and Grady find a way to hold onto each other when everything else has fallen apart?

Outback Promise Details

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Author : Maggie Bolitho

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Dianne says

Maggie Bolitho is at Tome Tender with a great read and a wonderful Giveaway! Enter to Win a \$10 Gift Card

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Marriage is give and take, love and loss, joy and sorrow. For Ros and Grady, the past six years have been a living nightmare after the death of their only child. As their marriage crumbled, their grief became a twisted wall of concertina wire between them; to touch it could be to slice old wounds open. When infidelity is added to the mix, their inner turmoil erupts with a volcanic force that they both struggled to contain. Lies, deceit, guilt and a supreme failure to communicate become a festering wound neither knows how to heal. In a last ditch effort to revive their dying relationship, they embark on a three month camping trip to the heart of Australia that will lay bare every buried secret, sorrow, accusation and sin. Will they be able to rebuild what was lost or will they find it is time to move on, separately in order to re-enter the world of the living?

Outback Promise by Maggie Bolitho is a heart-wrenching and dramatic tale of loss as two people realize they are destroying the bond that brought them together out of guilt, anger and hurt. Will having only each other to rely on, in a world foreign to their urban existence give them the strength to finally be honest and accept that bad things happen, but what a person does with the memories is the key to re-enforcing the vows they took so long ago.

Ms. Bolitho has created an often dark and painful story, seen through the heart of Ros as she struggles with her own issues, her husband's distance and the things she can never have again. Meet two people damaged by life as they forsake their life partner out of need and sense of loss. Extremely well-written, even-paced this is a story to savor. There is no rapid-fire action, no over-the-top heroics, just two characters who have been flayed open, looking for healing by stripping away all of their familiar trappings and conveniences, forcing them to get back to basics in more ways than one. Powerful, insightful and brutally realistic, life holds no promises for a happily ever after, but happiness and acceptance must come from within. Highly recommended, character-driven reading.

I received this copy from Maggie Bolitho in exchange for my honest review.

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marlin1 says

This book was an utter surprise. I'm not sure what I was expecting but what I got was a book that spoke to me.

Rosalyn and Grady's marriage started to fracture the day their 4yr old son was killed by a hit and run driver, Grady was seriously injured in that accident as well. Ros tried hard to cope but she also found out at the same time that they were heavily in financial debt. Trying to piece life together while losing her son and Grady retreating from her, she threw herself into her love of gardening. On the surface it looked like Ros and Grady were coping with their loss but deep down they couldn't reconnect.

Six years later Grady wants to have a big talk, expecting the worse that Grady wants to leave the marriage, Ros is surprised when he suggests a 'lap of the country together'. This is something he's always wanted to do but not her dream.

This story is told in two timelines, 2003 - the day of Cadel's death and beyond and 2009 - the present and it's slips easily between these two sequences.

Maybe this book appealed to me so much as I'm in the same age bracket as Ros and Grady. I empathise with how fragile a marriage can be, it needs commitment, compromise and understanding, and also as a family we are bush campers from way back. So every detail of their trip I could understand and laugh at, from their big 'Trakka' camper trailer to the horrors that can await you at certain camping stops and the beauty you find along the way.... Ah Maggie, you did that very well and I was with you every step of the way.

But this book is also about forgiveness and reconnection. To decide to forgive is easy, the act of forgiving is harder.

Also at the back of the book is a legend of Aussie language and idioms. I chuckled to myself when I realise how many would have been in the book and the language we take for granted.

A very enjoyable read, thank you to Netgalley and the Publisher for a copy to read and review.

Mens Rea says

What this book is about:

In this book, we follow Ros (Rosalyn), a 45 year old woman who is married to Grady. Grady has asked his wife to join him on a 3-month adventure on the outback of Australia and she reluctantly agrees. This journey is meant to heal past wounds that this couple has, due to the death of their 4-year-old son, 6 years ago. Since then nothing has been the same for them and their relationship is falling apart day by day. Are they going to come back from the outback stronger or is their marriage doomed?

This story was quite hard for me to follow. Even though I liked it and I did think that it was well written and meticulously paced, there was one big wall that stood before me while I tried to go through this book. The story is narrated from Ros's point of view. This allows us, the readers, to understand her thoughts and feelings through many different situations. But also we get to experience a marriage from a wife's side. A marriage where two people have experienced such an unthinkable loss that they have changed in an irreversible degree.

The death of their only child has broken two people that were so strong together and cannot realise how weak they are apart. This book is about forgiveness and moving on, two things that seem impossible in times like this but maybe they are not. It was so interesting looking through the eyes of a middle aged woman and seeing her husband and how she chooses to respond to him. How a woman can love her husband and support him, take care of him and also accept him.

And that's the reason I had trouble following the story. I am only 23 years old. I cannot really understand how it is to be in a marriage or to have lost a child. I felt like I caught a glimpse of a relationship but I could never get to the core of it and feel it for myself. I couldn't experience almost anything of what Ros and Grady were feeling because it felt so far away. But the fact that I did enjoy this story, shows me that Maggie

Bolitho did a very good job presenting and building her characters through hard, unimaginable times.

Another part of the book that I found very entertaining and quite interesting was the trip part that Ros and Grady took. They met some weird characters, dangerous, generous, funny and sad people. That's real life. Everybody has their own story and their own burden to carry. When you go on an adventure you are sure to meet some strange and unusual individuals that will stick with you for a long time, giving you small life lessons and changing you bit by bit.

This is a well written book. The author explores her characters, mainly Ros, in depth and doesn't rush her story to the end. Instead, she took the time to build the past and present of Ros and Grady and plot a journey with exciting but also dull moments. Because a journey is not constantly an adventure and even small, everyday-life scenes came together and integrated nicely with the whole story.

This is an adult fiction book and it's still not my time to completely understand a story about a marriage, but I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys adult fiction and character development in a book.

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.
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Claire - The Coffeeholc Bookworm says

Things weren't doing well between husband and wife Grady & Rosaly Balfour. Their only son Cadel died six years prior to the story, and from then on, the couple's relationship slowly went down the drain. Suspicions arose, secrets abounded, flirting and extra-marital activities ensued until the couple finally decided to have "The Talk". In the Outback, together for ninety days. In the Outback, where they could relive old memories and re-asses their relationship. Will there still be hope for two shattered hearts?

I swear I look ugly when I cry and this book just made me uglier because of all the tears that came out of my eyes. Seriously, from cover to cover, I was engulfed in an ocean of tears, sobbing uncontrollably and wishing I could stop the time so I can ease the pain in Rosalyn and Grady's hearts. I know they are only fictional characters in a book but, god, I felt them. I pictured them as real people. I couldn't stop but feel their pain.

Outback Promise is perhaps the saddest book I've read to date, but the story is full of emotions and lessons, so you wouldn't regret reading it. It is a story about family, love, death, betrayal, financial crisis, acceptance and forgiveness. Plus, the way the story was written was so beautiful and lyrical, I couldn't help but admire Maggie Bolitho. She's a really good & prolific writer! Hands down, mate!

Irene says

An amazing book with some wonderful descriptions, so much so that it feels as if you are walking in Ros's shoes for the whole journey. It's a travelogue of a 3 month trip into the Australian outback, it's harsh beauty, the dangers awaiting the unwary traveller. Then there is the devastating loss of their 4 year old son 6 years ago in a crazy accident. This trip will decide whether Ros and Grady will stay together. I couldn't put this book down - just wonderful. What a talented lady Maggie is and I can't wait to read more from her! Many thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for the ARC.

Melinda says

Incredible heartfelt story. Bolitho's writing is absolutely lovely. Her words capture Rosalyn's profound grief of her child, the demise of her marriage along with flashbacks of her abusive mother. Using the forgiving and punishing elements of the brutal Australian Outback serves as the perfect setting. Bolitho delves into Rosalyn's pain, fear, denial, regrets and the acknowledgment of this and more makes this story painfully beautiful. I rooted for this couple from the start, suffering severe starts and stutters added to the depth and compelling nature of this couple.

Bolitho masterfully penned an emotional read, you are invested from the start, you feel the pain, the depth of sorrow. Have your tissue box handy and prepare yourself for an emotional rollercoaster ride, quite a compelling journey. Outstanding piece of work from Maggie Bolitho, looking forward to more from this gifted authoress.

Terry Tyler says

4.5 out of 5 stars

Reviewed by me as part of Rosie Amber's Book Review Team

I liked this book a lot. Maggie Bolitho has the sort of innate gift for the written word that makes my editing/critiquing hat fall off unnoticed, allowing me to just read and enjoy, which is, of course, the best way.

Outback Promise is about the marriage of Ros and Grady. Six years after their four year old son, Cadel, was killed in a tragic accident, their marriage has faltered, and they decide to go on a three month trip across the Australian Outback to 'find each other' again. This story was not one that immediately appealed to me as the subject matter of a family losing a child is possibly the last I'd want to read about (I am childfree and like to read for escapism, mostly!), but the Outback aspect appealed a great deal, as it's something I'd love to do. I was pleasantly surprised. The first half of the book follows one of my favourite structures: alternating chapters between past and present, to show how the characters got to where they're at now. I didn't find the bits about Cadel's death and Ros and Grady's subsequent pain to be something I had to wade through at all, as I'd feared; Ms Bolitho's writing is clear and spare, never wordy or contrived, and it was actually very moving.

The Outback trip starts approximately half way through and at first I feared that I was about to read pages and pages of emotional zig-zagging, but it picked up quickly, with two notable highlights: a ghastly couple called Nestor and Max who they met at one campsite (I loved them, a terrific piece of writing, they were drawn so perfectly I could actually see them!), and an encounter with a couple of poachers.

I very much enjoyed reading about the trip; I would have liked to read more description about the landscape and how they reacted to it, but that's only personal preference; the book is about the marriage, after all. My favourite characters tended to be the secondary ones, but they all 'worked'. I didn't particularly warm to Grady, and only a little more to Ros, who I found a trifle self-absorbed, though this isn't a criticism of the book; Ros is a woman with much 'baggage', and she began to understand herself better as the story came to a close. There was one incident near the end that really spoke to me. Grady had been out on a boat with friends, she'd stayed behind because she suffered from seasickness. Afterwards she was expecting him home

and wanted to do the romantic dinner thing, but he stayed in the pub, having a rip-roaring time with his friends. He wanted her to join him, but she said no, because it didn't fit in with her idealistic image of how their evening would be. I wanted to shout at her, "Go! He wants you to be there, think about what he wants and be spontaneous!" ~ because Grady didn't want a 'romantic' meal, he just wanted her to join him.

I was completely absorbed in the story all the time I was reading this book, and would recommend it to anyone who enjoys a well-written, contemporary, relationship-based drama. I'll certainly read more by this author.

Jeannette says

Description:

Rocked first by the death of her only child, and then again by the discovery of her husband's infidelity, Ros and Grady travel to the middle of Australia - the Red Centre - to find what lies at the heart of their marriage, and face secrets she too has kept to herself.

My thoughts:

Outback Promise starts with some very powerful writing describing the tragic death of Ros and Grady's son. I was emotionally invested in the story straight up, however the camping trip the couple takes slowed the pace and at times I did struggle to read on.

The baggage carried by Ros and Grady was definitely in need of unpacking and I kept reading for this reason. Their relationship needed to be opened up, and the trip (several years after the loss of their son) was intended to make this happen. While I enjoyed reading the various travel tales that randomly occurred during the couple's camping trip, I failed to see these scenes directly helping the couple's marriage and therefore contributing to the characters' growth.

I wondered how Ros and Grady would learn from the events in order to start talking to each other. Over time their Issues trickled to the surface and, as a reader, I was somewhat rewarded.

If the original pace of the story and my emotional investment in the character's heartache, had continued throughout the book, I would have enjoyed the journey more. That said, I did appreciate the travel stories as I am a full-time grey nomad - one who hopefully will not meet some of the characters created for Outback Promise.

Georgiann Hennelly says

Grady and Rosalyn's marriage started to fall apart after their four year old Son was killed by a hit and run driver. Grady was also seriously injured in that accident. Ros tried to cope but she found out at the same time that they were heavily in debt. Trying to survive the loss of Her Son and Grady retreating from Her she threw herself into her love of gardening. On the surface everything seemed fine between them but in reality they just couldn't connect. Now six years later Grady wants to have a big talk Ros is expecting the worse but he

suggests a tour of the country camping in different spots this has always been his dream but not her's. But she goes along on the three month trip across the Australian Outback to try to reconnect with her Husband and save their marriage. I very much enjoyed reading about the trip and the different people they met a very well written contemporary relationship-based drama. I received a free copy from Net galley in exchange for an honest review.

Cai says

Tonight's review is incredibly hard for me to write. Just like the book was to read. Unless you have read this book, it's not what you are thinking. In fact, I am sitting here playing with the photo editing for the picture, trying to think of how to say this.

Ros survives a abusive mother to find safety in Grady. After moving to Australia, she has a wonderful marriage with Grady. Even after their miscarriage, even after the birth of their son Cadel leads to emergency hysterectomy, they are soul mates who belong with each other, like two jigsaw pieces, made for each other. Until a tragic accident takes Cadel's life and leaves Grady hospitalized for months.

Eventually Ros finds herself feeling quite alone in an empty house with her memories. Slowly the wonderful relationship they had disintegrates leaving them with a shell of what use to be. Ros discovers they are nearly bankrupt, has an emotional affair, shuts herself off emotionally from Grady, leading to Grady having an affair.

One day, Gray proposes to embark on his dream journey... Camping in the Australian Outback. Ros isn't a huge fan of camping but agrees in hopes of saving her marriage from ending. 3 months in the outback, what could possibly go wrong?

I suppose it is time to rip off the bandaid (just like this book does) and get into the review.

I could not read this book for more than a chapter at a time until I got about 85% of the way through the story. It was too emotionally draining. I thought being a mother would make me tougher. I mean I went through 9 horrible months of pregnancy, if I could survive that, then I must be super tough. WRONG.

Becoming a mother has created a vulnerability that I never foresaw. I never realized how much a child suffering harm would affect me. The death of Cadel, affected me in a huge way. I honestly only kept reading this book because the wonderful Tess Woods and Renee Conouly had rated it 5 stars.

This book was so well written. It was one hell of an emotional rollercoaster, switching between the events surrounding the accident and the present. I felt Ros' pain throughout the entire book. There was not one moment when she didn't seem real. I could relate to both Grady and Ros and see why they made the choices they did.

Outback Promises teaches a lesson in cherishing what you have now, in this moment. It teaches you not to take your loved ones for granted. It shows that everyone has different ways of processing things and that communication really is key. The issues the couple face, are caused by both of them and I find that refreshing and realistic. Too many books these days bash men with all the blame falling on the male antagonist.

Bolitho does such a good job at demonstrating the reality of it all. Greif, love, relationships. I love that the trip isn't all smooth sailing and that they meet so many obstacles and continue to overcome them.

I really wanted to rate this book 3 or 4 stars purely because of how emotionally draining it is. But it is not fair to blame a wonderful piece of writing for my vulnerabilities. It is definitely a 5 star read. There is absolutely nothing to warrant anything less than 5 stars.

If you pickup this book, don't say I didn't warn you!

I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Renee says

After ten years of marriage, Ros and Grady are stuck in a rut. Grady's solution is to put their relationship into 4wd, literally. Ros has never been interested in camping, but decides to pull her head out of the sand and tackle the harsh outback of central Australia, with Grady. Will Ros and Grady be able learn to communicate again and recover their relationship?

Ok, so I might have overdone it a little with the 4wd references, but I needed some light hearted relief after the emotional rollercoaster I went through reading Outback Promises. It is told between two timelines - the day Ros and Grady's son was killed, and the current day where they are embarking on an a grey nomadesque trip through central Australia. (Go away spell check, I can make up words if I like). Being a mother and wife, I found many of the scenes confronting and emotionally touching - or more like emotionally punching. I loved the familiar Australian setting, and always get excited when a character visits the town I live in.

I found Ros likable and relatable, I can be a bit naive and avoid conflict too. I loved seeing her strengthen and grow throughout her journey. I didn't take to Grady straight away, but by the end, I loved him too.

I received this book free from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Lily Malone says

I've been reading Outback Promise on and off, for the last two or three weeks on recommendation from a friend, WA author, Tess Woods.

Right from the beginning I knew this would be a difficult book for me to read. Ros and Grady Balfour lost their little boy Cadel after a tragic accident early in the book. I knew the main characters' son died, and I have two boys, aged 8 and 6. I knew I was in for an emotional read based on that alone.

Outback Promise kept me engaged throughout, although I can't claim that the book at any stage (until the very end) had me glued to the Kindle to keep reading, keep reading. I thought the ending was brilliant - really well done.

Otherwise, it was always more than enough to keep me turning the page, but not in the frenetic sense that I couldn't put the book down.

Something I loved about Outback Promise was the setting. In 1999 I did an 'around Australia' trip with my now-husband, our trusty Pajero and a tent. We were on the road from start to finish for 6 months and we visited many of the places described in this book, including Boraloola, Uluru, Kings Canyon, Wilpena Pound, Litchfield National Park, the Painted Desert, and Darwin.

The feeling of anonymity of that camping life, and the coming and going of campers who can bare their souls over an evening meal and drink and feel like life-long friends, then disappear next day never to be seen again, felt very familiar.

If I call the 'ending' the scenes in Darwin - then this is where the book became brilliant for me. This is where the two characters really unload all the emotion that has been buried between them for six years, since the death of their son. That includes the husband's betrayal, but also the wife's betrayal (as her husband saw it). The emotional context of Outback Promise is excellent. I could feel for all the characters involved and understand all the perspectives put forward.

It was only at the end that I cried, during description of the video trailer Grady had put together. This is where the empathy in me as a mother of young boys came to the fore.

I thought Outback Promise was brilliantly written. Very well edited - I can turn a blind eye to mistakes in e-books but you won't have to with this one - it's really well done.

4.5 stars

Brenda says

When Grady Balfour asked his wife Ros to accompany him on a three month camping trip through outback Australia she just didn't think she could do it. Ros hated camping – but she also knew it had been a lifelong dream of Grady's. The past six years had been hard on them both – the loss of their beautiful four year old son in a hit and run accident; an accident which had almost taken Grady's life as well – meant their lives had changed irrevocably. Nothing would ever be the same; and since Ros had discovered his affair, she wasn't even sure she wanted to try with their marriage.

But something made Ros say yes to Grady; the happiness they had both had before Cadel's birth and during his short life were the best years of her life. Surely it was worth working on it together to discover if their love was strong enough to overcome the obstacles they'd been through?

The journey would test the limit of their fragile relationship – and as they slowly settled into life on the road; meeting strangers in campsites, the challenges of setting up camp, the heat and the sheer desolation of the vast outback; both Ros and Grady knew they had a long way to go if the trust was to return. Could they do it? Would they do it? But as they travelled through the red dirt, spinifex and mud after the deluges of rain, the grief and secrets still ate away at them both...

I thoroughly enjoyed *Outback Promise* by Aussie author Maggie Bolitho. This is my first by this author and I was very impressed. Deeply emotional, heart wrenchingly sad at times, it was also filled with hope and love. Well-crafted characters, flawed and never perfect make this novel an excellent read, and one I have no hesitation in recommending highly.

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for this copy in exchange for my honest review.

Suze Lavender says

Ros and Grady lost their young son Cadel. They've been mourning for six years and life is tough without him. A hit-and-run driver took Cadel's life and Ros and Grady have been heartbroken ever since. Now their marriage is under pressure. Grady has done something that hurt Ros very much and she doesn't know if she can forgive him. When he suggests a three-month camping trip she agrees. Ros wants to see if wounds can be healed.

Ros and Grady are traveling through the Outback together while they're used to life in the city. On their journey they meet new people, they make friends and enemies and they find themselves in fantastic and horrible situations. Will this bring them closer together or drive them further apart and are Ros and Grady ready to face their problems?

Outback Promise is a beautiful and moving story about two people who have lost the most precious person in their lives. They're lost after the accident. Maggie Bolitho describes their situation with such sensitivity that I had to cry while reading some of the scenes. My hearth ached for Ros and Grady. She deals with this topic in such a gentle and understanding way while the story is raw and honest at the same time. I liked the contrast and think it worked very well. Even though the main characters have been through a lot the story is never too heavy. There's also hope and plenty of beauty.

The camping trip through mostly wilderness and remote areas was very thoroughly described. I could picture the stunning surroundings and the people Ros and Grady meet on their journey so well. I could almost taste the food and feel the joy, anger and fear. For me that was the best part of the book. Maggie Bolitho knows how to make her stories come to life. I think Outback Promise is amazing. It's a unique story with a difficult topic which is captivating, gripping, emotional, honest and absolutely brilliant.

Sharon says

Ros and Grady's marriage has been in tatters since the day their gorgeous little son was taken from them in a hit and run car accident six years ago. Attempting to get through each day was a challenge, but somehow they had to find a way to move forward.

When Grady suggested they go on a camping trip for three months, Ros was very reluctant as it was the last thing she really desired to do. Could this travelling journey around the Australian outback bring the couples love they once had for one another back or was it too late?

A heart wrenching story of loss, love and relationships which will take the reader on a roller coaster ride of emotions. Aussie author Maggie Bolitho has written a very entertaining book and the description of the outback throughout this book are simply breath taking. I have no hesitation in highly recommending this book to anyone who loves a great read.

With thanks to Netgalley and publishers for my copy to read and review.
