



Daybreak

Belva Plain

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The doctor's office is cool, white, sterile. But the doctor's words are searing: blood tests prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Margaret and Arthur Crawfield's beloved, dying son is not their child. Now they must face Peter's death and the shock of having a son they have never met. Grieving, yet compelled, they begin a search that will tear two families apart.

Laura and "Bud" Rice share an elegant home and two children, brilliant, handsome Tom, and cherished, chronically ill eleven-year-old Timmy. But after nineteen years of marriage, Laura's respectable husband is a stranger—and the reason for Tom's escalating involvement with a group of campus bigots. Suddenly the Crawfields enter their lives and shatter their fragile world. As the Rices' quiet Southern town explodes with hate and violence, the two families must embrace—or be destroyed by—the shattering truth.

From the Paperback edition.

Daybreak Details

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Author : Belva Plain

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Elizabeth says

An interesting book. A 19 y.o. and his parents, two sets of parents as it turns out, learn he was switched at birth. It's rare but it happens. A Jewish baby goes home with a Methodist family whose father is secretly a member of the Klan. The young man has already begun aligning himself with right wing causes. The mother is more to the left, a woman who loves and accepts everyone for who they are, no regard to race or religion. A younger son, age 11, has cystic fibrosis and is in and out of the hospital. The other baby, destined to soon be diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, goes home with the Jewish family, who are also extremely wealthy. This baby doesn't reach age 19, he does before then but died a faithful, practicing Jew. The book explores all the dynamics between the parents of different political persuasions, the young man who is anguished over learning he's Jewish plus he's in love for the first time, and the two sets of parents.

It had always been assumed the switch of the babies had been an accident, a careless mistake by a nurse. But in fact it wasn't, it was a deliberate switch. I did not see that end coming.

Karry says

I was dubious about this book; I had never read anything by the author. However, it was such a wonderful surprise. If you like twists and turns this is the book for you. It starts out with one woman and her husband, it then moves to a completely different woman and her life story and they connect in a most unusual way. Then there's another twist and yep, another twist and then there's a wallop of an event that sends the reader spinning. It's a wonderful read and I'm so glad that I jumped on the train and took the ride.

Heather says

One of the worst books I've ever read.

Jane says

I really enjoyed this book. It is the story of a young man of 19 who, along with 2 sets of parents, finds out he was switched at birth. Lots of interesting dynamics as one set of parents is Jewish and the other set has ties to the KKK. The author kinds of wraps everything up too neatly but it was a great story.

Kathy Matey says

People and prejudice

I happened to read this book when things in the news were almost like a mirror to the story in the book. People can be so prejudiced and act out at the expense of other people that are different. We are not born this way - we learn from the people close to us.

Chris says

New author for me, I will read more of her work.

Beni says

It was very good. Interesting how one young man had to deal with a significant change in his history which brought about a significant change in what he believed about himself and others.

JANET says

I REALLY ENJOYED THIS BOOK. IT HAD A LOT OF TWISTS AND TURNS AND DEALT WITH SOME VERY DIFFICLT SUBJECTS.

Sally says

This is a book which, had it not been a book club book, I would not have picked up.

Skipping and skimming skills were valuable.

What an unexpected story. Another book on my summer 2011 list covered the web of connections, this book covered how families don't know each other. I didn't like Laura at the beginning of the book.

Young love - soul mates; bigotry; KKK; family...

What would you do if you found out your baby was swapped at birth? Nuture vs Nature. I think the Crawfield tried too hard. Bud would not beleive the situation - I expected there to be a death, I didn't expect it to be Bud - It created the opportunity for Laura and Ralph. I didn't feel bad that Bud faced a brutal end; his death and the cause for his evening meetings took me by great surprise - I felt bad that Earl (the dog) was part of the tragedy. I was hard to be sympathetic of Tom. He almost deserved his girl friend's (Robbie) rejection - unjust as it was. He was a good big brother, both to his sick little brother and he grew into his new younger sister.

How'd the babies get switched? I expected it to be an unknown mystery - again never expected the source - other readers may have made the prediction...

Audrey says

First half was astonishingly enthralling. You get tightly wound... the setting parallels modern politics interestingly, and the slow tension is admirably built.

Unfortunately the resolution leaves something to be desired. Having wound the families and story lines into what looks an impossible knot, you anticipate an equally painstaking unravelling. Instead ocams razor is applied in a swift and unsatisfyingly simple slice bringing the end within fifty pages of the pivotal unveiling of one characters secret.

Wouldn't probably read again, but the build was quite satisfying, and the ending was tolerable if rather gauche.

Michelle Akers-dicken says

I very much enjoyed the story told of the two families affected by their sons being switched at birth. There were a lot of twists and turns but I thought some of them were predictable.

In the end, I feel like Belva Plain's "Daybreak" was too cheesy for today's reader (and I tend to gravitate toward cheesy!). I also don't feel like she accurately described the "youth of the 1980's". The college aged students who were significant characters spoke and thought in the lingo of the 1940's or '50's making the story less than believable, for me. I guess I also don't remember race issues being as terrible between the Christian's and the Jewish or the Nazi American's (or is it the KKK?) versus the Jewish. I grew up in the 1980's and honestly didn't know these prejudices existed. I wasn't exactle kept in the closet either!

Joshua says

Almost tossed this one, not sure what compelled me to pick it up, but I'm glad I did.

What I found was a well crafted small-town family drama about racism, prejudices, and identity. It does often take a turn toward the melodramatic, but I wouldn't expect anything less from a Belva Plain. This is definitely one of her better books,

Lynn Geth says

I have read almost all of the books that Belva Plain has written. I love the way she writes and this book is amongst her best. The story is timeless and gut wrenching. Good writing is if there is a character who is so disgustingly awful that you feel like killing them or so pitiful that it brings you to tears. That's what Belva Plain does. She makes her characters so real that they incite genuine feelings in the reader. I loved this book!

Nancy says

This really should be 3.5 stars. Not quite a 4 star book, but I really enjoyed reading it.

Marta Poludnik says

Not the kind of book I usually read but it was the only book sitting around where I was at the time. It turned out to be very different from what I expected. The story was so captivating that I finished the book in a day. Good read indeed.
