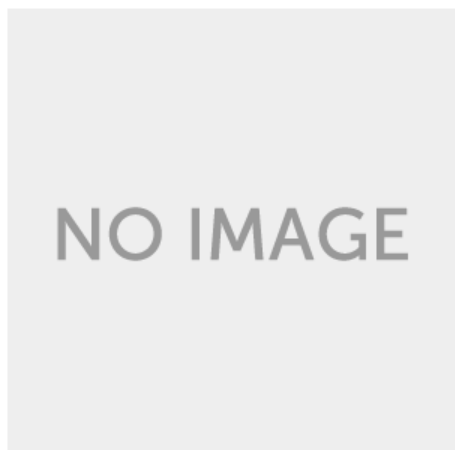


## Blessings (Paragon Softcover Large Print Books) by Belva Plain



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**Author:** Belva Plain

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## Reviews of the Blessings (Paragon Softcover Large Print Books) by Belva Plain

**Jediathain**

This is a review of Blessings by Belva Plain. In glancing through other reader reviews, most of them appear to be about a book with the same title written by Anna Quindlan. The book begins with Jennie Rakowsky and Jay Wolfe are going to be married. He is an attorney, a widower with three small children. She is also an attorney defending and helping abused women and children. Jay Wolfe comes from a traditional upper class family with very definite standards. Jennie was raised by poor

parents, holocaust survivors who immigrated to the USA.

Jennie has been convinced by Jay and his parents to defend the Green Marsh a natural wet land and lake near where Jay's parents live, against developers who want to build condominiums and the land.

When Jennie was 17 going to college she met Peter Mendes, 18, whose parents are very traditional wealthy, stiff-necked, people, snobs. Jennie and Peter fall in love and she becomes pregnant. She ends up at a home for unwed mothers and gives their daughter up for adoption.

Jennie has not told Jay or his parents about her daughter, Jill Miller, 19, who appears unexpectedly at her door wanting to get to know her mother and father. Jennie is terrified and does not want to have anything to do with Jill. Jill's father also shows up.

Jay finds out about Jill, Peter, and the relationship with Jennie breaks up. Jay feels he cannot trust Jennie because of her hidden past.

This is a very entertaining story, which I rate along with Daybreak and Whispers, also written by Belva Plain. It is a keeper and I highly recommend it.

#### **Taun**

This is one of the best books I've read in a while. I have a fairly high standard -- after all, what could possibly beat "To Kill a Mockingbird"? Blessings is full of wonderful, complex characters yet retains a soft edge.

#### **Gelgen**

After a few starts and stops, I finally gave my full attention to Anna Quindlen's Blessings and was determined to finish. Although the beginning failed to hook me, once I reached the meat of the story, there was no turning back. A story of an elderly woman, a convicted felon, and an aspiring young doctor whose lives all come together as a result of the unexpected appearance of a child.

The setting of the novel, Blessings, a rural family retreat, is not only idyllic in location, but also a domicile of familial dysfunction, both past and present. Through careful unveiling, Quindlen highlights the tragedy associated with truths withheld over generations.

What was refreshing was the life, revitalization, and perspective of the female protagonist, Lydia. While philosophizing about life itself, she explains the tragedy of young death, the shock of middle-age death, and the inevitability of elderly death, how herstory, in essence, revolves around the loss of others. In addition, kudos to Quindlen for allowing the younger male and female in the novel to have meaningful interaction without the presence of romance.

For the purposes of book club, a picnic lunch near a creek much like Lydia shared with Benny and Sunny as adolescents complete with bacon sandwiches, peanut butter cookies, and a big Ball jar of lemonade may be the perfect conversation starter.

#### **Xava**

This is such a beautiful story. I could not put this book down so I stayed up and read it from cover to cover.

The story begins with a baby being abandoned late one night by a teenage girl and the father of the baby. The baby is dressed in a flannel shirt with a hair clip on its umbilical cord and left by the garage in a cardboard box.

The box is then found by Skip, a house hand. Skip has never been around children much less a baby. He takes the newborn in as his own and the story begins. He becomes attached to the baby and

raises it as his own... all the while keeping it a secret. We are then swept along as Skip learns to care for the baby and ends up dedicating his life to the baby. (I don't want to give up to much information on the baby.)

The name of the estate where the baby is left is called "Blessings" ... owned by an eighty-year-old wealthy woman named Lydia Blessings. As the story continues we learn the secrets of Lydia Blessings and her family ... AND, there are many secrets! The characters are richly written ... you will find yourself bonding with many of them as you learn their secrets. BUT, be prepared for some tears ... keep the Kleenex close at hand.

There are many "BLESSINGS" in this story. You will not be disappointed with this novel. It is a must read.

### **Folsa**

After "Black and Blue" and "One True Thing," Anna Quindlen overcame the naysayers and proved she was a first rate novelist.

I so wanted to like this one, but she has simply missed the mark. If she wants to be the Margaret Atwood (or even the Carol Shields) of New Jersey, then she is going to have to explore characters more deeply than she has done here. A ne'er do well guy transformed into Alan Alda and an ice queen dowager turned into a Christ figure -- all over a deserted a baby in a box -- just doesn't get it. I felt obligated to finish this novel, only in hopes it would suddenly kick in. It never did. Perhaps this is what the father in "One True Thing" had put together, but instead drank himself out of writing.

While there are flashes of brilliance, turns of phrases, and insights, the cohesiveness and inspiration of her first two novels is missing here. She does display an array of descriptions of the sounds bugs make, but to what end, I do not know. Beyond that this is either a lazy effort, or writer's block, or perhaps some contractual obligation to get something out there.

Anna Quindlen has a lot of years and a lot of skill, and for me she is hitting .667, being successful two times out of three. That she struck out here does not mean she will not get back on track. I will buy and read her next book, but she needs to raise her game.

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