



The Road and Beyond

Marilyn Brant

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THE ROAD AND BEYOND is the expanded book-club edition of THE ROAD TO YOU by New York Times & USA Today bestselling author Marilyn Brant. This novel contains not only the completed original story set in the late 1970s, but it also includes the brand-new present-day tale of Aurora, now a mature and married woman with two adult sons, who must confront her worst parental nightmare.

One Disappearance Had Been Enough To Last Her A Lifetime...

Aurora Gray is no stranger to tragedy. In the summer of 1976, when she was just sixteen, her world turned upside down when her big brother Gideon and his best friend Jeremy disappeared. For two years, there's no word from either of them. No trace of their whereabouts. But then, shortly after her high-school graduation, she unexpectedly finds her brother's journal and sees that it's been written in again. Recently. By him.

There are secret messages coded within the journal's pages and Aurora, who is unusually perceptive and a natural puzzle solver, is determined to follow where they lead, no matter what the cost. She confides in the only person she feels might help her interpret the clues: Donovan McCafferty, Jeremy's older brother and a guy she's always been drawn to...even against her better judgment.

The two of them set out on a road trip of discovery and danger, heading westward along America's historic Route 66 in search of their siblings and the answers to questions they haven't dared to ask aloud. The mystery they uncover will forever change the course of their lives.

...But Now It Was Happening Again

Decades later, in the summer of 2014, fifty-four-year-old Aurora receives a terrifying phone call—her adult son Charlie is missing—and this news inevitably brings the memories of her adolescent years rushing back. Haunting recollections she'd hoped to keep buried.

Were the choices she'd made in her youth responsible for her son's disappearance now? And how on earth can she find him—quickly—so that she might be able to prevent the trauma of the past from repeating itself?

The Road and Beyond Details

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Author : Marilyn Brant

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From Reader Review *The Road and Beyond* for online ebook

Caroline F says

I chose this novel as part of a 'Read a New Genre' challenge.

So, I chose Women's Fiction (WF) genre and Marilyn's novel for my challenge. WF is not a category I would normally veer towards, as I feel that they are usually more literary in style in contrast to what I've grown used to reading. NA fiction is often gritty, raw and direct, and also fairly short reads. From what I understand about WF, the woman is the star of the show, and it's about her emotional development and her journey of self-discovery throughout the story. The stories are usually life-affirming and portray a strong element of female empowerment.

I read this wonderful novel in a day! The story pretty much sucks you right in from the beginning. It was extremely well-written, featuring some beautiful turn of phrases, with emotional depth and clever crafting. It's essentially a thrilling, well-thought-out mystery with an organic love story. The female protagonist, Aurora, is very intelligent, highly intuitive, and has a finely-tuned perception of human behaviour. This story may be largely about Aurora, but Donovan (her male companion in this story), in no way takes a back seat. He is stoic, protective and a quiet alpha. Aurora has had a long-time crush on him and finds him virtually unreadable and guarded. He himself takes an emotional journey in this story.

In 1978, Aurora is a quiet, inconspicuous teenager on the cusp of adulthood with a maturity beyond her years. She's an observer of the world and its inhabitants. Her life has essentially been on hold since her brother's disappearance; her future unsure. Donovan is five years older, ex-army, and back in their quiet backwater town to look after his mother. He is somewhat closed off and wary of Aurora because he has always had the measure of her, ever since she was a kid, and sees her true character and the remarkable young woman that she will eventually become. There is a certain tension between the two characters, which develops into something more, during their quest for the truth about their respective brothers' disappearance, following a trail of coded clues, mystery and mortal danger.

In 2014, Aurora's own son has gone missing. We find her drawing parallels with past events to help her through her ordeal of dealing with her son's disappearance, and finally understanding the difference between being a sister and being a mother of a missing loved one.

In 2020, Aurora is about to embark on another significant journey and looking back at past events, again, and seeing how they changed her.

Aurora's intrinsic character remains unchanged throughout the novel. She is courageous, sensible, determined, organised, and watchful. She lives her life guided by a strong moral compass, always searching for the truth. In 1978, her discovery of her brother's journal pushes her to take a leap of faith and brave the unknown, even though it takes her outside of her comfort zone and away from her home and safety.

A genre is only as fantastic and exciting as the author who writes it, and this novel has everything that a WF novel should have. A quote from the book: "The piper had called us, and we'd chosen our path. In that expectant space between silence and melody, our trip began." Marilyn Brant is the piper and I've started my trip into the world of WF. Thanks so much for the opportunity to read this amazing novel. It's one of my Top Reads this year!

Kimberley Jones-baczski says

This book was amazing....I won this book through the Goodreads contest...I read it in two days because it was that good...I'll be honest, before winning this book I never knew of Marilyn Brant. With this book I seen the inside cover of all of the other books that she has authored...She is one of my new favorites...I must say you ROCK Marilyn...I felt like I was on the adventure with Donovan and Aurora (love the character names btw)!!!! I was kept on the edge of my seat and could not wait to get through one page to the next to see what happened. This was definitely one of those novels that I would put the book down and had to come back to reality being that one becomes emerged into the story with the characters!!!! Can not wait to get my hands on some of her other books :D

Karen Laird says

The Road and Beyond more than tells the original The Road to You from the point of view of looking back thirty plus years in the future, in reflection. A second story line is added in the current day setting that reverberates every bit as much with the angst, mystery, and fingernail biting as the original story. This time, though, instead of the reader just seeing the pain and despair of the sister as she once again relives the mystery of the wild summer thirty some odd years ago, she also rips the reader's heart out with a mother's added layer of grief and despair as she desperately tries to locate her missing son.

All the old feelings and memories of the protagonist's youth came bubbling up like Old Faithful's Geyser. How could she face the new emergency without allowing the fears and memories of the past taint her thinking and the decisions she must make. Once again the loss and the aloneness threatened to overwhelm her in the darkness of the night.

Once again she has to go back and relive and remember the worst years of her life. The most heart pounding summer of her youth threaten to overwhelm her as we, the reader are dragged along on a wild ride across the United States in a hot ride with a hotter hunk who simmers with sex appeal and everything a young eighteen year-old's heart and hormones could ever dream of while they try to locate information about their brothers who have been missing and declared dead for two years. His simmering silence and her smart mouth make for banter that keeps you laughing and wondering. The mysteries that meet them at every curve of the road, throws danger and risk in their way that no innocent backwater young lady should ever have to face. With every turn of the page you wonder if they will survive or if they will find the answers the want to hear.

With the addition of the current day over-lay story line, The Road and Beyond was a whole new book.

Blogging Under The Shade Tree
<http://ShadeTreeBlogging.blogspot.com>
Shade Tree Book Reviews
(A Facebook Community Page)

Sheila Majczan says

4.5 stars

Well, here I am barely able to see through my tears! I had read the shorter book, *The Road to You* last year and then won a copy of this expanded version in a raffle on a blog.

There are two missing persons' mysteries going on in this story, told from a mother's viewpoint looking back some 30 years and also relating her present day trauma. AND I was also asking myself, "Who is her husband? Did she ever marry Donovan?" We are not really told that until the end, as the author continues to refer to "her husband" in talking about the second/later mystery.

The tale is full of angst and one must really concentrate to keep all the clues, the names, the aliases, etc. straight. There are lies to Aurora's parents, excuses made at work to get time off and a journal whose words, dates, and symbols only a code breaker could unravel. And, like the protagonists, you just can't trust anyone. Witness faces that seem to look familiar and voices that have accents but what are we hearing under that "false" accent? And then there is the lingering angst of a first crush, not forgotten, and the sexual chemistry going on between Aurora and Donovan (or is it just on her side?) while they spend days and nights in each other's company, trusting no one and having only each other with whom to share "everything".

The "mob", motorcyclists tailing them, arson, murders, explosives, no bodies or unidentified bodies, spliced together movies, suppressed news of interest and post cards from along Route 66...all making for a page turning story to draw you in.

Does Gideon, one of the missing, ever come home? - The answer to that is what made me sob. But I am a mother and the position is a unique one and some children just don't realize that the strings are never really cut.

There is a Q&A at the end as well as a list of the songs loved or hated by our protagonists. You younger readers may have to download some of the best music ever to get feel for the times.

Betty says

The Road and Beyond is an expanded version of the previously released *The Road to You*. Aurora is only sixteen years old when her older brother, Gideon and his best friend, Jeremy disappear. Although most people think that Gideon and Jeremy died, Aurora is not convinced. She has always been very perceptive and more of a watcher than participator. But even Aurora is shocked when she discovers her brother's diary. She knows it wasn't there before and it has entries after he had allegedly died. She decides to follow the clues in the diary and find her brother. Jeremy's brother, Donovan, finds out about her plans and insists upon going. So begins their journey. And, there's another story told from Aurora's perspective years later as a mother whose son is missing. A very well-written book that will keep you turning the pages. With thanks to the author, Marilyn Brant, who graciously provided me with a copy.

Marijayne Stegman says

So enjoyed this expanded version of the *The Road to You*. Would recommend reading the original first, then after a short time picking this one up. If I hadn't read the first the new chapters in between would have potentially given too much away. Loved the ending. So perfect. And loved reading Aurora and Donovan's story again. This might have to be one of those books I revisit every so many years just because the story is so great.

Marilyn Brant says

I'm really pleased about the release of the book-club edition of my romantic mystery this September! *The Road and Beyond* contains all of the text from *The Road to You* but, in between each of those original 1978-era chapters, there is now an additional parallel story about Aurora's life in 2014.

This expanded version (with 50+ brand-new pages) was written particularly for those readers who enjoy dramatic women's fiction and who, perhaps, wanted to read about one of my favorite themes: How the events from our youth shape the the decisions and perceptions we have of our lives and our relationships several decades later.

For all who decide to pick up this edition of the story, I truly hope you'll enjoy it!
