



## The Road Leads Back

*Marci Boudreaux*

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## **The Road Leads Back** Marci Boudreaux

Kara Martinson and Harry Canton weren't exactly high school sweethearts, but they did share one night neither will ever forget. Twenty-seven years later, Harry surprises Kara at an art gallery opening and discovers he left her with more than just memories when he went away to college. Desperate to connect with the family he never knew existed, Harry convinces his son to move to Stonehill—and pleads with Kara to come, too.

Kara hasn't stepped foot in their hometown since the day she was sent away to a home for unwed mothers. Now Harry's back in her life and as they put together the pieces of his parents' betrayal, old heartaches start to feel anew. She wants to be near her family, but returning to Iowa means facing some things...and some people...she isn't quite ready to.

Can Harry convince her to forgive those who betrayed her so they can embrace the future they were robbed of so long ago? Or will the pain of the past be too much for Kara to overcome?

## **The Road Leads Back Details**

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Author : Marci Boudreaux

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Genre : Romance, Womens Fiction

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# From Reader Review *The Road Leads Back* for online ebook

## **Sheri says**

*The Road Leads Back* by Marci Boudreaux

This is the story of Kara and her adult son Phil, who is (also) a young father. Phil's Father Harry was never part of his life. Actually Harry did not know he had a son for 27 years. Kara is reunited with Harry and they try to form a family relationship.

Beautifully written, the situations they all go through are real. Not everything goes smooth for them. They are faced with many challenges, for Kara and Phil, it is getting to know Harry. For Harry it is accepting the fact he is a Father & Grandfather. Add an adorable grand-daughter and my heart melted.

*The Road Leads Back* is a heart-felt story of unconditional love, family bonding, relieving the past and (trying) to create a good future. I highly recommend to those who love a great read.

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## **Bette Stanek says**

Wow, this one gets a little intense at times. It's full of family relations gone bad, regrets. and trying to rebuild relationships. Kara's perspective is the one that is most dwelt on, but you do get insights into the reasoning of other major players.

Kara ended up pregnant the night she lost her virginity at a graduation party. When she told her parents, they kicked her out of the house and told her never to return. She sat for hours on the front porch, giving them time to cool off and change their minds. They never did. Not knowing where else to turn, Kara goes to Harry's house to let him know. Harry's mother is the only one she finds at home. Elaine, Harry's mother, convinces that Kara that it would be better if she goes to a home for unwed mothers and let Harry finish his college education so that he can support her and the baby. Kara, after being assured that Elaine will take care of everything and let Harry know, decides that what Elaine says makes a lot of sense. Trusting Elaine, Kara heads to Oregon to have her baby and wait for Harry to come get them. Only he never comes. Obviously, Harry doesn't want her and their son. It isn't until 27 years later that Kara learns of Elaine's betrayal.

While this is a quick read, it deals with the effects of decisions made in haste to be regretted later. Lives are changed forever based on one little decision. The consequences are far reaching.

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## **Stacy says**

I received an ARC of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my unbiased opinion.

Kara and Harry had crushes on each other throughout high school but were both too shy to make their move until the night of graduation, when they spend a night together that leaves Kara pregnant. Upon hearing the news, Kara's parents throw her out and tell her never to come back, so Kara goes to Harry's house for help. He has already left for college, but Harry's mom promises to help Kara. She sends Kara to a commune with

the promise that after Harry has graduated college and is in a position to provide for his family, he will come for Kara and their child, but in reality, Harry's mom keeps the baby a secret.

Flash forward 27 years - Harry has never forgotten Kara and often wonders what happened to her, so when he sees a flyer for her art gallery opening, he can't resist going and hoping to reconnect with her. After finding out about the existence of their son and his mom's deceit, Harry invites Kara; their son, Phil; and Phil's daughter, Jessica, back to Iowa to live with him.

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone looking for a feel-good story. Harry is just about the perfect man. My only complaint with the book is that at times, scenes seemed to end abruptly/jump ahead in time by a few days before I was expecting them to be over.

I absolutely loved this quote about the author in her author bio section: "Romance is her preferred reading and writing genre because nothing feels better than falling in love with someone new, and her husband doesn't like when she does that in real life." That perfectly sums up why I like to read romance books!

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### **Jennifer Hanson says**

The Road Leads Back is an awesome second chance romance. You can't help but love the characters and Marci's writing is extremely smooth and flows so effortlessly. You are never wondering did I miss something. She does an excellent job of developing the characters and you feel like you've known them all your life. You'll feel anger and happiness right along with the characters. The Road Leads Back just goes to show us all that nothing is ever final, there is always a second chance if it's meant to be and decisions can be over come and righted in the end.

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### **Melinda says**

This is the first book in the Stonehill Romance Series. The author has written a second book called Friends Without Benefits which I read and reviewed a couple of months ago.

The Road That Leads Back is about a family relationship that self destructed about twenty-seven years ago between Kara's parents and her when she found herself pregnant, and her parents disowned her. Harry had a one-night stand with Kara on their graduation night. Harry did not know she was pregnant or what have become of her after that night. Now 27 years later they meet again, their hurts and even their love rekindle. They both were hurt by each other and their families and friends. Can they forgive each other? Can they move past their betrayals of their families?

This is a very moving story. Unfortunately this happens in families, some families embrace the changes and are better for it, while others fall apart and hurt each other deeply. Not all families can recover and find reconciliation to have peace and a mended relationship.

My situation is different but similar to Kara's difficulties with her family. I haven't found reconciliation and suspect I never will with my dad and brothers. My mom died in 2009 without the mended relationship between us, and her death just further the separation from my family. Our roads took separate paths, but I am happy I am safe and have moved on with my life with my husband.

This is a bittersweet but hopeful story between Kara and Harry. At times their story made me cry feeling their hurts and attempts at reconciliation with the people around them. I enjoyed their story, and the author writes another book about their friends Mitch and Diane which also is a story worth reading.

Received complimentary from Juniper Grove Solutions for a honest review.

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## **LJT says**

4.5 Stars!

Sometimes a book has the power to overtake your world, and as a result, it makes you realize how precious life truly is. *The Road Leads Back* by Marci Boudreaux had that affect on me. Almost every chapter is its own intense and emotional roller coaster, which kept me on the edge of my seat. I recommend keeping a box of tissues handy, because tearing up due to happiness or sadness is inescapable.

Kara Martinson and Harry Canton shared one lustful night at the end of their high school career, and nine months later Phil Martinson was born. Due to her pregnancy, Kara's parents completely disowned her, so she turned to Harry's mom for guidance. Harry had already left for college, and his mother assured Kara that she would not only take care of her, she would tell Harry all about the baby and her whereabouts. Twenty-seven years later they meet again, and Harry is more than astonished to learn that he has a son and a granddaughter. Up until this moment, Kara believed that Harry did not care about her or their son. Overtime, they form a family.

What a powerful and heart-wrenching read. Ms. Boudreaux's amazing words drew me right into the book, and I felt like a fly on the wall with each and every high and low. Kara and Harry's grief and healing became a part of me. This isn't just a story, it is an experience; replete with deceit, betrayal, discovery and love. Kara and Harry are well-developed characters, and the author narrates their love story with an impassioned voice. The secondary characters truly add more depth to an already compelling read. There are three more books in the Stonehill Romance series and I can't wait to read them.

Complimentary copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley.

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## **Heidi says**

When one high school act of desire leads to the unexpected birth of Phil, Kara leans to the people she can and is rejected and heartbroken. Twenty-seven years later, Kara meets the father of her child, Harry, to find out he has been deceived as well. Can they bring back the family they should have all those years ago? Will Kara and Harry ever be able to forgive their parents' rejection and deception?

This heartfelt and sweet novel is written through both Harry's and Kara's perspective. The reader follows the turmoil they both experience, as well as, the love and healing both characters try to find. Their relationship is something pure and something that they have desired for so long that, as a reader, I was obviously rooting for them! One of my characters is Jessica (Phil's daughter). Her innocence and kindness was just so endearing that I wanted to get to know her!

I did feel, at times, that the conversations that were presented in the novel were a bit repetitive. I understand that when someone is in pain sometimes conversations will need to be repeated due to the healing process, but it was a little much for me. Also, I found Phil's character (27 years old) immature towards the beginning of the book. His resentment towards his mother was too much. He never went without while growing up, but he put the blame on her when his father wasn't around and the amount of moving around they did. It is understandable for some resentment, potentially, but it was somewhat annoying and bothersome to keep hearing him complain about the same thing.

The other aspect I noticed were that there were some awkward sentences throughout this book. Sometimes words would be inserted where they shouldn't be. Other times, there were missing letters in words that made me read the sentence twice to ensure understanding. This could have been the Kindle version I received, but it made reading a little frustrating, at times.

I would recommend this heartwarming novel to those who enjoy stories about healing, finding oneself, and romance.

I received a free copy of this book from the JGBS Review Library in exchange for my honest review. My opinions are my own and no compensation was received.

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### **Stephanie says**

This book was given to me for free in exchange for an honest review.

When I first started reading TRLB, I kind of didn't like it. I don't know if it was something specific or just my frame of mind going into the story.

After the first chapter or so, I began to like it more and more.

When things really started to catch my attention is when everyone moved. That right there was a shocker, but in a good way.

By the end I loved the story of having a second chance, not only in love, but with the family you never knew you had.

Being as my story is so similar, and so different, I feel a kinship with these characters.

Great job Marci, I loved this book.

(There were a few grammatical errors, and missed words. I don't believe it distracted from the story at all, so they are small enough to overlook.)

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### **Deb says**

I won this book on a Goodreads giveaway. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. The story is well written, with many unexpected twists, the relationships are complicated and true to life, with not always a happy ending, and it is a pleasurable read. I highly recommend this book.

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### **Mindy Bigham says**

\*\*I received this book free from the author in exchange for an honest review\*\*

Kara Martinson ended up pregnant at the age of seventeen. Being kicked out by her parents she turns to Harrison's mother for help. The only help she receives is being sent away to a shelter for unwed mothers. Kara knew Harry left town and with his mother's word that she will tell him she continues to write to him about his growing son.

Harrison Canton cannot forget about the one woman he loved in high school. Surprising Kara after twenty-seven years at an art gallery will turn his world completely around. Learning about a son that he never knew he had will cause tension between him and his mother that has held the secret for all these years.

Harry wants to get to know his son and make up for all the time that he was gone. Learning that he is a father and a grandfather all in one day makes for an amazing story of heartache, family issues, teenage pregnancy and overcoming the past. Harry holds his mother responsible for never telling him the truth. Kara has not seen her parents since they threw her out so many years ago. This book is full of love and trials of overcoming your past.

This book touched very close to home for me as I was a teenage mother. What Kara goes through to make sure her son has all that he needs is very touching. And when your adult child only knows that he was bounced around from place to place and to explain the circumstances to get them to understand is really amazing.

This was an emotional read for me but was very enjoyable.

My Favorite Moment: I laughed so hard when Kara seen Harry for the first time in many years.

Kara swallowed hard as the flash of a memory faded, and the man standing before her, looking as shocked as she felt, came back into view.

She downed the liquor, slammed the glass against the bar, and sighed before she announced, "I've been looking for you for twenty-seven years."

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## **Jeannie Zelos says**

The Road Leads Back, Stonehill Romance Book One, Marci Boudreaux

Review from Jeannie Zelos book reviews

Genre: Romance, Women's Fiction

Well, there's a slew of five star reviews for this story so I really expected to enjoy it, and I did but...in a kind of underwhelmed way. It's one of those that seemed perfect for me, but in practice just didn't really work. Its a good book, a great book for many, many readers, just not a great one for me.

Kara, oh how I felt for her, pregnant, abandoned by her own parents, and cruelly deceived by Harry's parents. They gave her some money, sent her away to a mum and baby unit on the other side of the country, promising to pass on letters to Harry and that soon as he'd graduated he'd send for her, but in reality told him nothing. She's struggled, living by bartering her art, clothes making, gardening, anything to keep them fed, clothed and a roof over their head. Its 27 years on now and baby Phil is grown and a dad himself.

I was pregnant at 17 – mum’s reaction “Oh no! What will the neighbours think!!” and rush upstairs to bed. The following days were constant guilt trips and trying to persuade me to get rid of or hide the baby somehow. So I understand a little of how Kara felt, but my boyfriend was with me all the way, and we’ve now been married 40 years. Poor Kara though – what happened to her happens even now, and it scarred her in ways she doesn’t even see. I really liked her strength and determination but Phil’s grown now, Harry knew nothing and yet she still holds very tightly to a grudge. She can’t get past being abandoned, and the years have simply strengthened that. There were times when she annoyed me the way she was to Phil and Harry. Then Phil, he too holds a grudge, he hated the communes, always moving, living in other people’s homes. He wanted his own room in his own house, and to have a stable home and even now that he relies on Kara to help him with his daughter Jessie he still never seems to miss an opportunity to push her about his upbringing. When she’s going through Harry’s cupboards, junking his food and giving lectures about what he should or shouldn’t be buying and eating, she was just short of being a bully in a way. I am careful over what we eat, try to go for unprocessed food, animal welfare meat and eggs and yet her stance bordered on dictatorial. It reminded me of a day out at a local animal sanctuary where every pen seemed to have a “meat is murder” sticker, or posters of horrific images of how some animals in the food industry are treated. When we ate out picnic ham ( British!)sandwiches I felt a little frisson of satisfaction, even though I agreed with many of the messages. No one wants it rammed down their throats. The coffee, hot chocolate and Ice-cream were all awful, even the kids wouldn’t eat it. I’ve had good milk substitutes but that was just foul. Cheap and nasty stuff. If you want to persuade people harassing them, and then charging a fortune for sub standard produce isn’t the way to go. Kara’s stance just brought back those memories. She’s just plain rude about what is essentially another persons choice, trying to force her choice on them. She doesn’t want it done to her, why can’t she give some respect to their feelings too?

Harry, he’s perfect. Though he was a jerk to leave Kara they way he did, and I never really understood why he went from two years of plucking up courage to approach her for a date, to that one night and then leaving. Maybe it was covered in the story but I couldn’t work it out and it was a big missing link for me. Why didn’t he try to track her down later, just to see where she is, given he was so entranced by her, and is still in love with her? That bit just didn’t add up for me.

There’s lots of going back and analysing the past, looking at it from different perspectives, and Harry is a wonderful voice of reason between Kara and Phil. I adored him. I got a little tired of Kara and Phil constantly hashing out the past, it can’t be changed so I didn’t see why they kept on, and on , and on...Jessie was an adorable child, so open and friendly, and I wanted to wrap her up. Sadly she’s going to learn far too soon how cruel people can be to anyone not the “norm”. Everyone loves babies with issues, move on ten years and they’re not so keen, when they grow into adults there’s far too many people who’d like to see them kept out of sight :-)

So overall a read that touches so many issues, a look back at the past and learning how to accept it, to live with it, to see how it wasn’t all good or bad, and to learning how to move forward. I adored Harry and Jessie, got annoyed too often at Phil in the beginning but by the end I admired him, but Kara, while I felt for her I was also angry at her many, many times. The parents? Less said the better IMO. Parents are there to support kids in an ideal world, sadly there’s far too many that don’t.

Stars: Three. A good book, but for me not a great one.

ARC supplied by Netgalley and publishers for honest review

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## **Kristin says**

Kara Martinson is a woman in her mid-30’s who has been rejected by everyone that ever mattered to her.



Except her son and granddaughter. Meeting Harrison Canton, the father of her son, at her gallery opening in Seattle to find out he never even knew about the baby. His mother had lied to him all these years. Now that she knows Harry never rejected her, it is like a chance to start over and heal all her past hurt but forgiving that kind of betrayal by her parents and her child's grandmother is not that easy. When push comes to shove, Kara's instincts tell her to run and run far despite the fact that her grown son who is also a single parent needs her to help him with his daughter with Down Syndrome.

This was a beautiful story of loss, love, pain, redemption, disabilities, acceptance and inclusion. Kara has a long way to go to be happy and whole and to be able to forgive her parents and Harry's mom. Harry says and does all the right things or so it seemed but even he has to learn how to love Kara the way she needs to be loved rather than trying to get her to fit into a certain mold that everyone in their hometown tries to make her. Kara is way to carefree and spontaneous to ever fit into any stereotype. Her granddaughter Jessica makes the story more complete by demonstrating that people with Down are very happy people with feelings and interests and abilities just like everyone else.

The characters in this story go through so much. Unfortunately, the parents in this story don't grow up as much as Kara and Harry do but at least they do and do it enough for both them and their parents. This is one of those stories that you can identify with since their lives aren't perfect just like real life but it shows you that with the right person by your side and the right view on life, you can find happiness by knowing yourself and accepting yourself and your partner the way were you meant to be.

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## **Cupcakes and vodka Book Blog says**

Title: The Road Leads Back

Author: Marci Boudreux

Reviewer: Rea Loftis

This is my 3rd book by Marci and they just keep getting better! I love that her books are adult themed, meaning the couples are adults! Real, honest to goodness mature adults. Her stories read so true to me, I'm not the age of her characters, but I can insert myself into their lives seamlessly and see a real story from the inside out.

The Road Leads Back centers around Kara, her son Phil and her granddaughter Jessica. Kara is a alternative lifestyle junkie, and it's due to her having to find her own way in life at an early age. When she was 17, she got pregnant by Harry Canton (an awkward, somewhat uptight guy from high school) and was turned out of her home by her parents. Turning to Harry's parents, they made a decision that changed the course of everyone's lives.

Twenty seven years later, Harry seeks Kara out at her art show and is shocked to find out how their lives have unfolded. There is a lot of anger, unresolved issues and hurt by all parties involved. But Kara and Harry have never forgotten each other and find a way to become a family, including Phil and Jessica.

One of the strongest themes in The Road Leads Back is forgiveness. We are only allotted so much time on his planet we call home and even less time is guaranteed with the ones we love. Do not waste days/months or years under hate and angers thumb! Forgive and let go of your pain, your life will be much fuller without carrying that heavy burden!

An added cute bonus in this story is Jessica! Kara's granddaughter, has Downs Syndrome, the lesson in acceptance and love that Marci is able to convey is inspiring!

Overall, I really enjoyed the story! The Road Leads Back gets 4 pretty pink cupcakes with unicorns on top in honor of always cheerful Jessica!

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### **Laurie says**

Family relationships are tricky and complicated. Anger and Resentment can fester for years causing deep rifts and hurt feelings, easily setting the tone for a lifetime of regret and disillusionment. Sometimes, reconciliation may be offered, but even that can be a jumping off point for more hateful conversations and even greater disenchantment.

I loved being pulled into Kara's and Harry's life as they faced old problems and struggled to make a new family dynamic. Harry and Kara desired a healthier and happier future in spite of the past betrayals and anger that held them in a choke hold so difficult to escape. This family saga is mesmerizing in the way twisted relationships are examined and how well-meaning attempts to shape those closest to us can often misfire. Kara's unconventional lifestyle and free-spirit refused to be "normalized". I found some of the outcomes surprising, off-beat, and sometimes funny. I did think it odd that there was no family conflict or school issues revolving around seven-year-old Jess. I think Elaine and Kay, especially might find it difficult to accept her condition. Though with Kara as the lioness protector of little Jess, perhaps neither woman wanted to fight that particular battle.

I thought this book was outstanding in the way it sheds light on complex and difficult family actions, reactions and raw emotions.

This book was provided in exchange for an honest review.

Reviewed by Laurie-J

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### **JoAnne says**

lovely story - makes you sad and happy!

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