



## The Promise of Pierson Orchard

Kate Brandes

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*“Brandes checks off all the boxes for quality fiction: the characters are well-rounded, the settings, such as the apple orchards, the crisp Silver Creek, and the rocky outcrops, are vividly described, and the plot is well-organized and crisply paced. The tension between the characters satisfyingly rises to a crescendo that’s in sync with the larger environmental crisis that threatens the town.”*

— KIRKUS REVIEWS

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Long before fracking ever came to Minden, Pennsylvania, the fissures in the Pierson family were developing into major fault lines.

Brothers Jack and Wade were very young when their mother, Stella, abandoned them and never returned. Twenty years later, Jack, who recently separated from his wife, LeeAnn, is an orchardist tending to acres of apple trees in his economically depressed hometown. What the townspeople don’t know is that they could be sitting on vast reserves of Marcellus shale, an abundant source of natural gas.

Before long, Green Energy, a fracking company, comes calling and sends in a star salesman with a few local connections: Wade.

In response, Jack reaches out to their mom, now called Stella Brantley, who’s an established environmental lawyer, and convinces her that Minden should be the next battleground for pro bono activist work. The scene is set for confrontation: between the two siblings, between them and their mother, and between the small town and a large corporation.

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An environmental scientist with 20 years of experience, Kate Brandes is also a watercolor painter and a writer of women’s fiction with an environmental bent. Her short stories have been published in *The Binnacle*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, and *Grey Sparrow Journal*. Kate is a member of the Arts Community of Easton (ACE), the Lehigh Art Alliance, Artsbridge, the Pennwriters, and the Women’s Fiction Writers Association.

Kate lives in a small town along the Delaware River with her husband, David, and their two sons. When she’s not working, she’s outside on the river or chasing wild flowers.

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