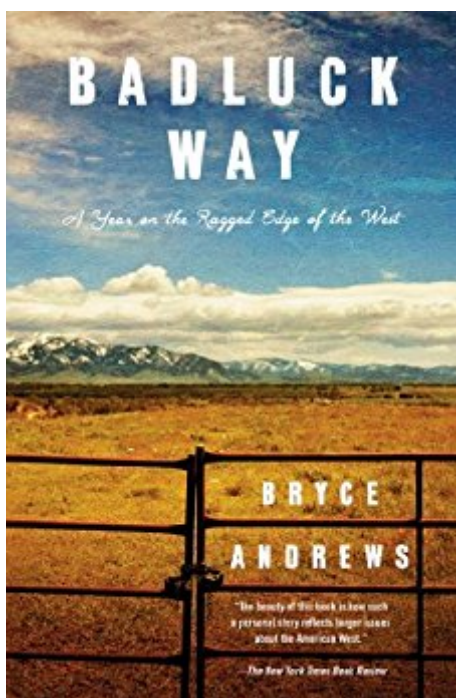


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# Badluck Way: A Year On The Ragged Edge Of The West



## Synopsis

“Much more than a coming-of-age story, > is an important meditation on what it means to share space and breathe the same air as truly wild animals, and the necessary damage that can occur when boundaries are crossed” (Tom Groneberg, author of *The Secret Life of Cowboys*). In this gripping memoir of a young man, a wolf, their parallel lives and ultimate collision, Bryce Andrews describes life on the remote, windswept Sun Ranch in southwest Montana. The Sun Ranch’s twenty thousand acres of rangeland occupy a still-wild corner of southwest Montana—a high valley surrounded by mountain ranges and steep creeks with portentous names like Grizzly and Bad Luck. Just over the border from Yellowstone National Park, the Sun holds giant herds of cattle and elk amid many predators—bears, mountain lions, and wolves. In lyrical, haunting language, Andrews recounts marathon days and nights of building fences, riding, roping, and otherwise learning the hard business of caring for cattle, an initiation that changes him from an idealistic city kid into a skilled ranch hand. But when wolves suddenly begin killing the ranch’s cattle, Andrews has to shoulder a rifle, chase the pack, and do what he’d hoped he would never have to do. Called “an elegant memoir” by the >, *Badluck Way* is about transformation and complications, about living with dirty hands every day. It is about the hard choices that wake us at night and take a lifetime to reconcile. Above all, > celebrates the breathtaking beauty of wilderness and the satisfaction of hard work on some of the harshest, most beautiful land in the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Loved, loved, loved, this memoir by Bryce Andrews. It was such a treat to sit next to Bryce when he was flying to Seattle for several book signings, sometimes coincidences just seem to happen. In my case, find myself a confirmed book addict with a deep love of everything country and my adopted state of Montana. Of course there was no question that I would download his book on my Kindle. Bryce truly has a gift with words. If you've ever wondered what it is like to live and what goes on, on a working ranch in Montana, he paints a vivid picture of the ups and downs of a year of his life on the Sun Ranch, just outside of Yellowstone Nat'l Park. My grandson wondered why my book was so engrossing, I invited him to sit with me while I read the chapter I was reading. After a few sentences he was as hooked as I was, he closed his eyes with the observation, "Grandma, I can see a picture in my mind as you read this book". Hope you download or purchase this book, and you enjoy as much as I did. It is one that will remain in my library.

The well written story of a young man spending a year working a cattle ranch in Montana. Andrews gives a glimpse into the life of a ranch hand, but also captures the conflicting interests facing ranching in the west of conservation, economics, development, and tourism. Not sickly sweet like some authors who romanticize nature, the writing is clean and makes you want to enjoy a sunny day outdoors in the west. Recommended.

I own a cabin in a development just North of the Sun Ranch. I have been inside the lodge and on the ranch. Except for his not knowing that what he calls the "mounds" on the North end of the ranch is really a glacial moraine from Wolf Creek. The ice in the area during the ice age was over 5,000 feet thick. The Madison River has many different shelves that show how large the river was during the melt. Many granite boulders are rounded by the water all along the benches to the river. Some of that history would have been helpful.

It is tough to gain objective knowledge about how the reintroduction of gray wolves to the Greater

Yellowstone Ecosystem is going after nearly two decades have passed. I have encountered park rangers who do public presentations about wolves that clearly fall in the category of absolute wolf advocacy; their presentations are often unbalanced and ignore the impact of wolves when they move onto private land. I have listened to both the pro-wolf crowd expound ad nauseum about the right of the animal to exist unmolested anywhere it chooses to do so and to the equally committed anti-wolfers who want them extirpated once again. This book presents a fairly objective view of wolf impacts on a single ranch located in the upper Madison Valley. For anyone seeking to better understand the conflicts and controversies that permeate the reintroduction issue, this is a must read. Andrews' writing is excellent and even if the reader has no interest in the wolf issue, this book has great value in offering a glimpse into the lives of modern day ranchers in the Northern Rocky Mountains and plains. As one reads Andrews' words he or she can almost feel the sting of the cold wind in the valley as seasons change. The reader can almost smell the smells of vegetation, see the lines of migrating elk drifting through aspen stands, or hear the far off low howl of a wolf as it patrols the reaches of its territory. The wild majesty that is the Madison River Valley drips from the pages. This book has so much good to offer the reader. Andrews never expresses his opinion or pins down his personal position on the conflict and this is certainly a major strength in his writing.

In the memoir of a modern ranch hand "Badluck Way," Bryce Andrews is a rancher with a moral code and an environmentally informed conscience. Andrews is a smart writer, terse and vivid. Through his pen we feel the big, beautiful and unforgiving West, and the daily struggles of today's calloused ranch hand. I anticipated from "Badluck Way" a love sonnet to the land and the herd. What I got was that, plus Andrews' unexpected empathy: for the cattle, for nature, and most of all for the wolves. His unflinching respect for the wolves comes across powerfully, as does his discomfort with how the ranching business affects them. Mixing wolves and ranching creates conflicts, both in nature and his inner voice. Andrews digs deep to unearth pain and truth without hesitation. His deep sincerity adds color and weight to a compelling, unique view. I'd recommend this book to those who want a fresh picture of a complex modern cowboy.

Beautifully written. Set on a sprawling cattle ranch, Andrews presents a balanced view of the position of ranchers, hunters, and environmentalists. He respects the position of predators in an ecosystem, the wolves, as well as the requirements of the beef industry. A trained environmentalist and a hardworking ranch hand, Andrews describes the anguish he experiences when wolves begin killing cattle on the ranch. No matter what your view is regarding wolves and ranching, I encourage

you to read this thoughtful book.

Bryce does an awesome job of comparing and contrasting the dynamics - who has rights to what space? Is there room for both cattle and wolves? Can two alpha predators share the same space? And how many ways are there, really, to destroy and rebuild a fence? The visual images are spectacular...from sweaty, hot afternoons, to sunsets, blizzards, death, life, and living. As a very small participant in some of the original research that led to the reintroduction, I don't think any of us ever dreamed that the wolf would be so successful...in our own lifetimes! Great read - for people on both "sides" of the great western wolf debate... Well worth reading!

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