

Finding Harmony

Alyssa Roat

Hope Bolinger

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A talented vocalist and a frustrated worship team leader find love through music in Alyssa Roat and Hope Bolinger's lighthearted romance novel.

The Vine Community Chapel's worship team needs help with its lineup. Elijah, its new leader, invites Liv, a freelance piano teacher, to participate in hopes of staving off the congregation's complaints. And then Elijah and Liv join a community cooking class together and bond over their shared interests. They team up for an independent music festival competition, too.

The story employs gentle humor in its depiction of the divisiveness within Elijah's modern Michigan church—much of it stirred by a member whose discontent about the music's quality is tied in to his willingness to tithe. Liv and Elijah also face challenges typical to single people in their twenties. Further, Liv is pressed upon by family problems, and has difficulty saying no to requests; she often overextends herself. And Elijah has concerns about the worth of his role and is reluctant to express his opinions about healthy boundaries within the church. Both learn to dig into their strengths and work together, resulting in uplifting turns. Faith meets need in the course of the story, and Elijah and Liv find mutual joy in harmonizing.

Treatments of the colorful subculture of the worship hall, in which there are hip band members, competing tensions, and desires to appease others, play into the story. Set against this backdrop, the romance itself is a focused and compelling one whose duo pursues their art without compromising their standards. Their music is an integral reflection of their desires. When they learn to place hope in what's unseen, inspiring changes become possible.

In its sincere depiction of love's early stages, *Finding Harmony* is an entertaining foray into church relationships and the restorative power of song.

KAREN RIGBY (July / August 2022)

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