

Return to Spinner's Inlet

Don Hunter

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Don Hunter's short story collection *Return to Spinner's Inlet*, about life on an island in British Columbia, celebrates what holds people together.

Though these are lighthearted stories, the collection begins and ends with funerals, in between which the community assimilates newcomers, including two young men with community ties who arrive on the same ferry and the friend of a recent transplant who arrives from Kabul. An exchange teacher from New Zealand tries to set up sporting matches, and the grocer's granddaughter is trained to take the village doctor's place when he retires. Meanwhile, a housewarming party turns into a talent show run amok, and an artist who wants to leave her husband is convinced to stay.

It emerges that Spinner's Inlet has a reputation in British Columbia: a speaker invited to give a lecture decides not to come after learning about the town's antics. Still, a sense of community spirit comes through the town's quirky characters who're grounded in tradition. Residents squabble with each other in newspaper editorials and tease one another in Banksy-inspired art. If they cheat or lie, they are met with kind and honest consequences.

As the book progresses, town events bring citizens face-to-face. They vote in elections, share their talents at an event honoring Scottish heritage (even if they aren't Scottish), and chip in to help a girl fulfill her dream of attending acting school in New York. They also gather around their elders, relying on their counsel and wit. Despite all differences, shared experiences unite the unlikely tribe of Spinner's Inlet.

Return to Spinner's Inlet is a smile-inducing microcosm of modern society and an antidote to partisan division that's full of humor and family love.

MARI CARLSON (September / October 2019)

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