

Sand in My Eyes

Christine Lemmon

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Loss of unstructured time and personal identity often follows the idealistic marriage ceremony, making women vulnerable to automaton behavior. The mundane aspects of maintaining a household and family can override one's perception to the point of blinding her to the beauty that still exists if she would only take a moment to notice. The need to regain a "sense of self" is a trite pursuit associated with overwhelmed housewives and mothers, yet the reality of this unfortunate pattern hits a universal chord.

Sand in My Eyes explores this repeated phenomenon from an unusual perspective, allowing readers to glimpse the inner workings of a woman's soul after the passage of many years. Anna Hott was a driven New York City career woman before she became a young wife and mother who rarely had an hour to devote to her own pursuits on Sanibel Island, Florida. One week, her husband and children leave her alone to do anything she pleases. During this significant intermission she writes, stashing away a partial manuscript to scrutinize twenty years later. This activity seems innocuous and perhaps boring, but it's the exceptional man she meets while working that changes her outlook. The lifestyle she chose for the sake of conformity has never lived up to her expectations, and this disarming man leaves her even more dissatisfied.

At fifty-six years old, Anna takes out her unfinished novel and seeks closure in her life as well as a conclusion for her story. She goes to an Indiana nursing home to visit Fedelina Aurelio, the elderly neighbor who shared her simple wisdom and introduced Anna to her divorced son Liam during that infamous week of inner revelation. Within this sedate environment she rediscovers her past and herself, awakening to new possibilities.

Christine Lemmon was born in Chicago and now lives on Sanibel Island, the setting for her series of three books about women striving to reach their potential. *Sand in My Eyes* is a finalist in the 2010 National Indie Excellence Awards. Lemmon is also the author of a gift book titled *Whisper from the Ocean*.

Lemmon's novel may be a subtle reprimand to those who fail to appreciate and control their lives, choosing instead to live as cowards seeking social acceptance rather than fulfillment. Her story presents the consequences of allowing time to pass without truly living.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (July 22, 2010)

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