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GENERAL

Sand Pail City
Daniel Printz
Out in Left Publishing
978-0-9832892-1-0
Five Stars (out of Five)

Trouble lurks beneath the perfect-looking shiny facade of a beachfront Florida community in Daniel Printz's new novel, *Sand Pail City*.

Once a prosperous fishing village for the locals, Sand Pail City is populated with old-timers who have seen their livelihoods depleted and the character of their town changed irrevocably thanks to development schemes of longtime mayor Marshall Brickman. An ambitious politician, Brickman has his eye on the lieutenant governor's seat.

Many years prior, a prominent fisherman and vocal opponent of the community's urban sprawl perished under suspicious circumstances, causing locals to speculate that the mayor and his goons were responsible. With Bill Holly dead, outright opposition to Brickman's plans ceased, too. However, tensions still simmered under the surface.

Old wounds reopen when aimless slacker Dusty Johnson and his girlfriend come to town. Upon securing a job at a golf course, Dusty excites some of the locals because his appearance suggests he is Bill Holly's son.

Dusty and the mayor find themselves in an uneasy dance as they try to figure out how to relate to each other. The old-timers and the mayor's strong-arming cronies have their own opinions of what the two should do to each other. Suddenly, Sand Pail City becomes a very lively town indeed.

Printz expertly creates a unique town and citizens without making the village or its citizens fall victim to tired tropes. Sand Pail City itself is a vibrant community populated by locals and tourists, both of whom want the town to flourish. It has the requisite watering hole and quirky festivals, like any town trying to make a name for itself.

Because readers are invited into both the past and present of Sand Pail City, anyone with a fondness for local color will root for the city's survival. Moreover, anyone who has felt the tension between the past and future will empathize with the locals' losing battle to preserve their town. Finally, anyone convinced of the crookedness of politics will recognize the dishonesty in

the mayor's goons.

Just as Sand Pail City itself is multi-faceted, the characters themselves are not just one-dimensional heroes or villains. Despite his ambitions, Brickman wants to be well-liked and fears he may be a puppet for forces larger than himself. It takes talent to make readers cheer for a directionless character like Dusty, yet Printz succeeds in spades. Dusty's affability and need to belong render him sympathetic when circumstances spiral beyond his control. Further contributing to Dusty garnering the audience sympathy vote are the awkward situations he finds himself in with his girlfriend. Readers will also empathize with one of the mayor's cronies when he is brutally attacked in broad daylight.

Sand Pail City has an overall polished look, with its bright, attractive cover and includes a compelling summary. With a well-paced plot and meticulously punctuated text, readers will enjoy the trip to *Sand Pail City*.

Jill Allen