



Sandpiper Cove: A Hope Harbor Novel

Irene Hannon

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Faith plays a central part in the romance, reminding readers that not every poor man is what he seems.

Within a genre known for its traditions, Irene Hannon takes risks with *Sandpiper Cove*, a heartwarming and hopeful Christian romance.

Adam Stone is an ex-con, bruised and shaken from a devastating early life. He lives in a small, dilapidated house near the beach on the Sandpiper Cove. Meanwhile, Lexie lives with her mom and holds a position of authority as a longtime Hope Harbor resident, widow, mother, and police chief.

Lexie will not attend church; Adam cannot find his way without it. A spate of vandalism forces them to work together and find ways to redeem not only themselves, but the people around them.

Characters are well-constructed and rounded out. They do not simply fall in love; they also do the difficult emotional work of forgiving themselves and the people they have loved in the past.

Though much of this book revolves around redemption, Adam and Lexie's romance is still central. They fight their attraction, each cognizant of the strange match that they make. Romantic tension is conveyed with their physical awareness and sidelong looks, and their emotional and intellectual connection comes through too.

Hannon also takes the time to establish Hope Harbor and its myriad citizens, from the wise owner of the taco truck to the bantering clergymen and the bullying teen. These strong supporting characters remind fans that they have seen this town before, in other novels, and help to generate excitement. Supporting characters also help Lexie and Adam to become fully fleshed out, their lives placed in the context of local history, all of which affects the way that they perceive their burgeoning relationship.

Though Hannon alternates between Lexie's and Adam's interior thoughts, language remains crisp and brisk throughout the novel, encouraging a one-sitting read. Of course, faith plays a central part in the story as well, reminding readers that not every poor man is what he seems.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (May/June 2017)

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