ForeWord Reviews
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GENERAL

Sea Changes: A Novel
Bill Branley
One Sock Press
978-0-9778561-0-7
Five Stars (out of Five)

On an early morning ferry from Bainbridge Island to Seattle an unexpected romance sparks between Peggy and Raoul two middle aged commuters who have prematurely lost their spouses. As the pair faithfully watches the sun rise over the Cascade Mountains each morning they awkwardly muddle through the early stages of introduction and dating as they discover both their mutual attraction and opposite personalities. As Peggy and Raoul learn more about themselves during their budding romance they are joined by a pack of fun-loving but equally confused friends and a handful of relatives dotted across the country.

As their relationship takes off environmentalist Peggy and attorney Raoul find themselves on the same coastal planning task force in spite of their opposing viewpoints. Initially taking them to Washington D.C. together the couple expands its trip to include visits to their children in the Northeast. With several false starts and unusual incidents Peggy and Raoul survive the scrutiny of their children.

The story eventually brings the characters to New Orleans immediately prior to Hurricane Katrina as they help Raoul's sister face the death of a lifelong friend. As this death renews the pain caused by their own losses the couple is forced to evacuate New Orleans as the hurricane approaches only to return weeks later to help their friends assess the devastating damage left in Katrina's wake.

Upon their return home the couple wavers back and forth between being together and apart each having his own relationship demons to wrestle. With fondness and mutual respect Peggy and Raoul eventually find common ground as they decide which direction to take their relationship.

Interestingly *Sea Changes* originally began as a fiction blog titled *Peggy Finds a Friend*. After the story gained popularity and a faithful following author Bill Branley expanded the story into a full-length novel which lovingly depicts midlife romance with all of its gifts and guile. The author does so with a compassionate flair highlighting both the best and the worst of his

lovable characters.

What is particularly refreshing about *Sea Changes* is that the author deftly weaves in his own travels and experiences as the story unfolds sprinkling in his recent trip to Maine and to the hurricane ravished New Orleans as well as his love for music and cooking.

Sea Changes is a delightful read full of realistic midlife relationship woes and triumphs. It compassionately portrays the twists and turns of a new romance as his characters sort through the challenges of everyday life. Readers will find easily find themselves enraptured by Peggy and Raoul's love story and hoping Branley will continue the story in a future novel.

Dana E. Blozis