

## Side Dish & Contest with author Christine Lemmon

June 29th, 2010 by Malena Lott

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### LONG STORY SHORT

By Christine Lemmon



#### How Long Does it Take?

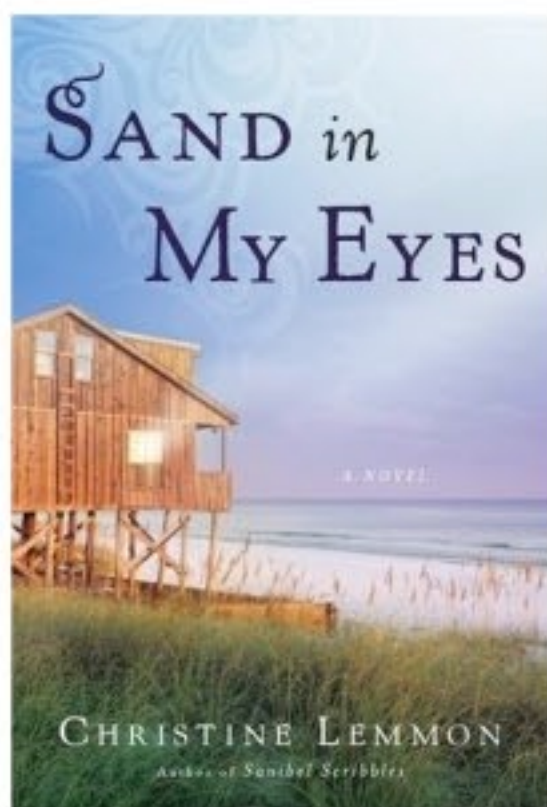
"To an ordinary person, washing a pan is simple. But for a mother, who is also like a ringmaster in a three-ring circus, doing dishes is more hair-raisingly difficult than swallowing fire."—an excerpt from the book *Sand in My Eyes*

I'm often asked how long it takes for me to write a novel. If I were living a life of solitary confinement—in a convent or prison cell—I might crank one out in a few months. The reality is that I live in a noisy little house on stilts with three children, a husband, too, and the truth is, I can hardly wash a sink of dishes without getting interrupted ten times. Sometimes I go into the kitchen spinning like a top, dizzy from their demands and forgetting why I went in there in the first place.

When I got the inspiration for *Sand in My Eyes*, ideas came fast and furious and I could see the characters, plot and story unfolding as a panorama in my mind. It would be a silly little story about a mother so overwhelmed that hardly was she seeing the beauty around her. I scribbled it all down in crayon on a coloring book, and then told my husband the good news—that all I need is two hours every single morning before the sun and kids rise and I could have this story written in two weeks!

Also at this time my sister was training for the Chicago Marathon and I thought as she wakes early to run, I will wake early to write and by the time she runs the marathon, I will have written my novel. Well, she ran the marathon. And she ran it again the next year, and the next. And guess what? I was still writing my novel.

Here's what happened. Our landlords needed us out—writing postponed—they wanted to sell the house we had been renting, the one on Sanibel that inspired me immensely. Settled at last in a new rental, I set my alarm for five in the morning only to discover my laptop had died. It took me three months to afford a new one. Here we go again, I set my alarm to start writing this story and my son decides to wake along with me. This new routine (me on a coffee high hoping to write while watching *The Wiggles* instead) lasted for days until I decided to write in our pantry (also our laundry room) where my son couldn't find me. From my new hideout I could hear my husband telling him, "Mommy went to work. She'll be back when the sun comes up."



The writing in the pantry was going fine until one morning I found myself tiptoeing to the bathroom to vomit—pregnant with our third. I wish I could say it was glamorous, but I wrote big chunks of *Sand in My Eyes* from the bathroom floor with the fan on to tune out the 'beautiful chaos' that was my family on the other side of the door. I didn't like writing in the bathroom but if I left and headed for the pantry, the boys would intercept me and my writing session would end.

I also experienced clusters of intense three-day headaches during the writing of this book. And my mom was diagnosed with cancer. Fear woke me in the middle of every night and had me twisting and turning through the fiery forest filled with worry. A writer needs sleep, and so does a mother. I considered giving up my story about the overwhelmed woman no longer seeing the beauty to life. But faith kept me going. I had to believe my inspiration was real. I had a choice.

I could either let life get in the way of my writing or I could allow life to enhance my writing. I chose the latter and created characters in my story to help comfort me through. At times, while writing it, I felt as if the older me was talking to the younger me, telling it's all just a phase, and one day you'll wake and your house will be quiet and clean but your children grown so you might as well now—in the midst of the chaos—feel the beauty all around you.

So how long does it take to write a novel? More than two weeks is all I'll say!

"Everything in life takes a certain amount of work. If you think getting what you want in life is easy, then you may as well walk over to your neighbor's yard and steal one of her flowers when she isn't looking, because life isn't easy, nor is growing a garden, but once you start recognizing the pests and learning how to control the weeds, and all the other basics there are to learn, then the effort you put into your gardening becomes more pleasurable."—*Sand in My Eyes*

For more on Christine Lemmon and her books, visit: [www.christinelemmon.com](http://www.christinelemmon.com) or find her on Facebook and Twitter.

Book babes: [BUY THE BOOK HERE.](#)

### CONTEST!!!

7 days 'til *Sand in my Eyes*: Great Beach Bag Giveaway by Christine Lemmon

Between today and July 1 when *Sand in my Eyes* releases, I am giving away some of the best beach books of summer!

Pre-order Christine Lemmon's new book, *Sand in my Eyes*, from Amazon now, email your receipt to [jlemmon@gmail.com](mailto:jlemmon@gmail.com) with subject line **Beach Bag Giveaway**, and you'll be entered to win a beach bag full of 7 fabulous new summer beach reads including *Seven Year Switch* by Claire Cook, *The Island* by Elin Hilderbrand, *Fly Away Home* by Jennifer Weiner, *The One That I Want* by Allison Winn Scotch, *The Opposite of Me* by Sarah Pekkanen, *The Nobodies Album* by Carolyn Parkhurst and *Thin Rich Pretty* by Beth Harbison.

**Added bonus: I'm throwing in a sweet pair of women's Oakley sunglasses and a \$50 Amazon gift card for even more reading fun.**

- Previous Entry: [Meet Savannah Martin and her Author](#)
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Book End Babes is Girls Night Out meets great reads, celebrating books and girlfriends. With real-life chapters around the country, we'll feature 4 Top Picks each month, share

book reviews, recipes and prizes to start a reading revolution. The reviewed books are typically supplied by the publisher, though reviews are not guaranteed.

BEBabes was founded by author Malena Lott. Our group blog features a dozen book babes. If you'd like to start a BEBabes chapter, click the envelope button below to contact me!



### GUEST AUTHORS IN AUGUST

- August 7th – Lisa Unger/*Fragile*: Q&A & Giveaway
- August 14th – Jenny Nelson/*Georgia's Kitchen*: Q&A & Giveaway
- August 21st – Holly Christine/*Tuesday Tells it Slant*: Q&A & Giveaway
- August 23rd – Jane Porter/*She's Gone Country*, Review (I'm reading now)
- August 28th – Jane Porter/*She's Gone Country*, Q&A & Giveaway



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