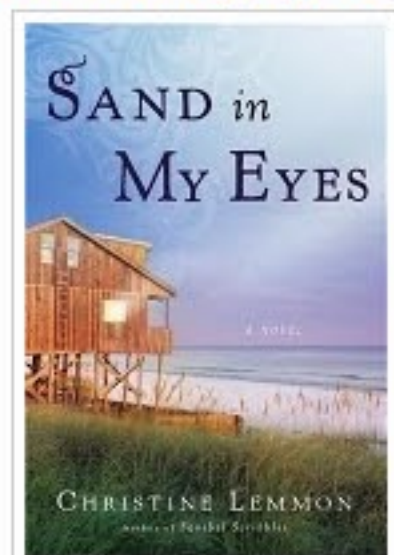




MONDAY, JULY 19, 2010

Sand in My Eyes by Christine Lemmon



I don't know how she did it, but author Christine Lemmon, must have chatted with a fly on my wall. The next time I sit on my kitchen floor as my kids swirl around me, I won't feel so alone. Her depiction of the chaos of motherhood in her book, *Sand in My Eyes*, is dead-on honest. She skillfully rips off the band-aid of domestic bliss to reveal a raw and itchy truth. This is the story of Anna Hott and her varied relationships with her husband, her

children and a wise neighbor who becomes a trusted mentor (and her creative inspiration); a great read for women in all stages of life. If you're not familiar with Christine or her work, perhaps this informal Q&A will shed some light on this literary talent:

Your portrait of motherhood is dead on. Is it reflective of your own experience or a creative vision based on stories of chaos?

I wrote *Sand in My Eyes* while a stay-at-home mother of three little ones and I remember running through my house, responding to their needs, feeling more like a chicken with its head cut off than the organized, neat freak, showered woman I once was. Getting myself, my newborn and my three- and five-year-old boys all dressed and out the door each day was my biggest accomplishment. Hardly could I find time to fold laundry and it would form mounds that the boys jumped in.

I love how this novel is so realistic, but I think readers who are not mothers may think, "There's no way motherhood is really this traumatic." Respond.

Before I had children, I had a confidence to me, a knowing that one day, when I do have children, I am going to keep my bathrooms clean, my children dressed so cute, and read them stories and paint pictures with them. No one told me it could be so hard, that motherhood would give me an indescribable joy in exchange for who I was as an individual, and that the accumulation of it all, of worrying, caring for, responding to their every whimper, oh, and all the housework and grocery shopping, the cooking of things they do not like and cleaning, would turn me into a completely different person—a mom!

I've often tossed around the idea of writing a letter to my younger self, which, in a way, is how I see the relationships between the characters Anna and Fedelina. If you were to chat with the Christine of 20 years ago, what are the top three things you would tell her?

1. Everything you are experiencing in life now is going into the making of the woman you are becoming
2. Don't worry so much about all the little jobs you have to take here and there when first out of college. In a roundabout way, our detours play significant roles and are still bringing us to where we are meant to be.
3. I love you! You are a unique and beautiful person and I love you for being you! Don't try to change or be someone you aren't.



All of your novels take place on Sanibel Island, FL. How has this location become a character of sorts? For those of us who have never been there, describe it in 5 words.

Sanibel as an island in my books is symbolic for any time or place a woman spends a moment to herself to think her own thoughts. Often we go through life hurrying from one destination to the next but sometimes we need to stop and anchor, refuel, revive.

Sanibel in five words: tropical, sanctuary, seashells, paradise, bliss

I've always thought that mothers who are writers (or writers who are mothers) have a unique advantage in that their domestic bedlam becomes literary fodder. Have you found writing to be a coping mechanism of sorts when it comes to motherhood?

I have found motherhood and creativity to be very compatible. I often get most of my ideas while outside with my children at the beach, the park, or as we bike ride. But then I must hold my ideas in until night when they are sleeping and I can write. Then, writing becomes my own selfish time. It's a two-hour chunk of quiet time in which I can hear my own thoughts, but more importantly, express what is on my mind. It's adult conversation with my own characters who say what I want them to say, do what I want them to do, and often, tell me things I need to hear. I do believe I create characters that help pull me through specific stages of life that I am in. Life does enhance writing and much of what I encounter goes in a roundabout way into my writing.

POSTED BY TIERNAN AT 9:28 AM

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ABOUT ME



TIERNAN

I am a mother of three precious angels, wife to a wonderful

husband, daughter to amazing parents, oldest sister to incredibly giving siblings and a real-life princess in my mind. I am also a small business owner and freelance writer. Email me at cotimckay@yahoo.com.

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