



Westport

J. Barrie Paulson

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Joe, a Godly man, the sea captain of the Mourning Dove, a 70-foot salmon troller takes on parolees to help rehabilitate them. Joe fears he may have met his match when Clancy, a PO brings him Max. A parolee, convicted of murder one at 16 served hard time for 13 years. Joe is reluctant but willing to try. Gus, his first mate, is very skeptical. Although proud of his crew, it saddens Joe none consider God as any kind of a priority. Still, he feels God has brought them aboard for some reason and this is good enough for him. Over two hundred trollers, all ages and sizes, cross the bar early with the expectation of a good day of salmon fishing. Midday, a sudden storm comes upon the Mosquito Fleet and many do not return to the small fishing village on the Washington Coast. Quint, Commander of the Coast Guard Small Craft Station at Westport, plays an integral part in the life saving part of the story. Also Joe's good friend, Quint tries to console Joe when several close friends are lost in the storm and with his rough relationship with a new girlfriend, Nina. Max, just released from McNeal, a maximum security prison, meets Clancy at a halfway house. Max can't believe he's going to be on a fishing boat. Clancy warns him it's either the fishing boat or back to prison he goes. Joe meets Nina, a new waitress at Pelican Pete's, a favorite eatery of Joe's. An extraordinary woman, he becomes smitten. Joe's amazed at the instant attraction between them, but from the start Nina is standoffish and mysterious. Witnessing her late husband's bloody death, she has been living a destructive lifestyle. Later Joe learns a psychologist diagnosed her as having PTSD. Although Joe realizes it's a difficult illness, he feels nothing is impossible for God. Max meets Gretchen at the Mutineer, the main saloon on the wharf. Because she's very voluptuous and is attracted to him, Max becomes infatuated. Even though he doesn't like fast women, Max can't get Gretchen off his mind and visits her often at Pelican Pete's where she's a waitress. Although Max relays he's been in prison, he's afraid to tell her that he was convicted of murder one. Daniel, a cook at Pelican Pete's meets with Max. Max's old cellie, connected to a Mexican Cartel, has told Daniel about him. Daniel wants Max to help him take over the Dove for a drug drop. Max says okay to the plan because this means he'll have chance at some real freedom. There's rough waters on shore between Joe and Nina. She hears Joe was in prison for manslaughter something he forgot to tell her. Even though Joe was much younger, Nina feels betrayed and not able to trust him anymore. After she breaks up with him, she withdraws and is even more suicidal. When Gus is killed trying to save Max from a foolish greenhorn mistake, Daniel takes Gus's place. Joe is apprehensive but needs a full crew for the Dungeness Crab Season that opens soon. On another outing, a rogue wave comes at the Dove. When the boat drops several feet, Max falls overboard. In a rough sea, there's much doubt they can bring Max back in. Joe prays. The sea calms. Max is saved in a miraculous way. The time comes to take over the Dove, but Max is not sure he wants to go through with it. Something has changed Max. More attached to Joe and the crew now, he doesn't want any harm to come to them. Also scuttling the boat seems to upset Max more than before. Although the take over is smooth, when the drug drop comes into play, a huge surprise overwhelms everyone on board including Joe. A sea story loaded with action, adventure and romance it also brings in the historical, which intertwines throughout. Westport's Life Boat Station and lighthouse dates back to the early 1800s which offers much for the historical buff. Many surprises come at Joe from every direction. Whether he can weather the many storms is guaranteed to keep a reader's attention to the end of this unique action-packed adventure.

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