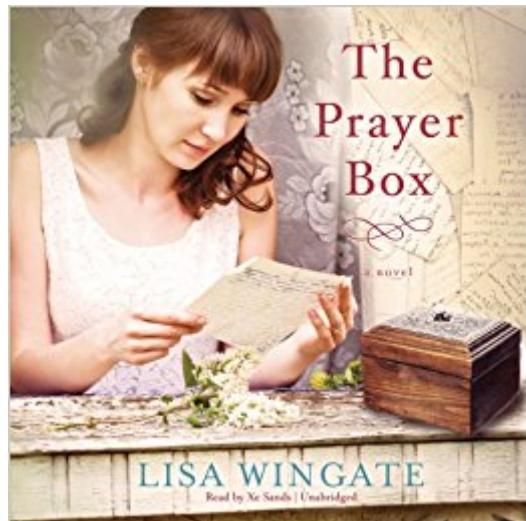


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# The Prayer Box: A Novel



## Synopsis

[Read by Xe Sands] A young woman, an old woman, and the story of a lifetimeâ | When Iola Anne Poole, an old-timer on Hatteras Island, passes away in her bed at ninety-one, the struggling young mother in her rental cottage, Tandi Jo Reese, finds herself charged with the task of cleaning out Iola's rambling Victorian house. Running from a messy, dangerous past, Tandi never expects to find more than a temporary hiding place within Iola's walls, but everything changes with the discovery of eighty-one carefully decorated prayer boxes, one for each year, dating from Iola's youth to her last days. Hidden in the boxes is the story of a lifetime, written on random bits of paper -- the hopes and wishes, fears and thoughts of an unassuming but complex woman passing through the seasons of an extraordinary, unsung life filled with journeys of faith, observations on love, and one final lesson that could change everything.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

\*Starred Review\* On the run from a powerful, abusive ex-husband, Tandi Jo Reese finds refuge in a deserted caregiverâ ™s cottage on Hatteras Island. The locals assume that sheâ ™s there to take care of the main house, and they offer her friendship and support. Hiding from a wealthy criminal is a harrowing endeavor, and things are especially difficult for Tandi, since she has two children. Tandi then discovers the unusual heritage left behind by the deceased owner of the big house, Iola Ann Poole, who kept a prayer box for each year of her life. As Tandi reads the contents of each box, she is inspired by Iolaâ ™s rich life and absolute faith. But Tandiâ ™s road to faith and trust is not an easy one. She still has the tendency to choose the wrong kind of man, and her teenage

daughter's rebellion is out of hand. With a careful eye to detail and a beautiful, lyrical style reminiscent of those of Mary Alice Monroe and Patti Callahan Henry, Wingate vividly sets Tandi's struggles in a once beautiful Victorian mansion now falling to ruin and guarded by a cranky cat in a small town recovering from the ravages of a hurricane. --Shelley Mosley --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

"I am in awe of Lisa Wingate's talent. She strikes the heart and turns my gaze toward heaven's door. The Prayer Box is a masterpiece of story and skill." --Debbie Macomber, #1 New York Times bestselling author "A book that transcends simple hope and healing while capturing the heart of the reader. Tandi's story is an enchanting take on family ties, redemption, and of allowing oneself to be swept up into a river of grace regardless of one's past. And, in the end, perhaps it's also a testament to the fact that maybe, sometimes, you really can go home again." --Karen White, New York Times bestselling author "Lisa Wingate writes with grace, beauty, and so much heart." --Sarah Jio, New York Times bestselling author "Tenderly woven. Skillfully threaded. A grab-your-heart story about faith, the healing power of love, and how both are often found in unlikely places." --Charles Martin, New York Times bestselling author "Lisa Wingate is a remarkably gifted storyteller. Her novels both captivate and cradle you, and The Prayer Box is Lisa at her finest. Tandi's extraordinary journey of healing and hope on Hatteras Island is a mesmerizing thrill and a joy you'll want to savor. However, beware, you will not be able to put this story down!" --Beth Webb Hart, bestselling author of Moon over Edisto "Masterful . . . At times both sweet and sad, soul-warming and heartbreaking, the accessible writing style and attention to detail serve to enrobe readers in the love poured into weaving together the lives of Iola and Tandi in a meaningful, rich way. Relatable characters and vivid portrayals of events both current and historical create an enchanting, memorable pilgrimage into the fullness of faith and love." --Publishers Weekly "With a careful eye to detail and a beautiful, lyrical style reminiscent of those of Mary Alice Monroe and Patti Callahan Henry, Wingate vividly sets Tandi's struggles in a once beautiful Victorian mansion now falling to ruin and guarded by a cranky cat in a small town recovering from the ravages of a hurricane." --Booklist (starred review) "Two-time Carol Award winner Wingate has written a moving and inspiring story with interesting female characters and a colorful Southern backdrop. A good option for fans of Nicholas Sparks and Mary Alice Monroe." --Library Journal

"The Prayer Box" deserves every accolade heaped upon this amazingly well written book. As the reader follows the life of an escapee from an abusive marriage, through her discovery of she truly is,

all while uncovering the life of a woman whose quiet philanthropy benefited everyone around her, Lisa Wingate's story sparkles like bits of seaglass dangling in a suncatcher. The reader becomes immersed in the daily struggles of Tandy Jo, her son, J. T., and daughter, Zoey to the point of forgetting this is a novel and not real life. This story moves into the reader's imagination taking up residence as it stirs memories long since forgotten. "The Prayer Box" by Lisa Wingate should be savored like haute cuisine, cherished like a dear friend, and returned to like coming home. This book is a keeper.

Only 2/3 into the book now and enjoying very much. I was already to give The Prayer Box a review with pleasure early on. Lisa Wingate writes like you are there or want to be. Already recommended to two friends for a great summer read. .and a book I would recommend to my two married daughters. Easy to read, each person is memorable and strong in character. . not just a bunch of people to fill a chapter to get to the next place. Must get back to my page now and read. Can't wait to see what is going to happen next..but not in a hurry to get to the end! Because, as with all good books becoming like friends, it is sad to close the back cover to begin another search for the next great read.

**WARNING--**This might have a tad of spoiler in the first paragraph, but I hope not. A feel-good story, eventually. Tandi is a serial victim, a product of an extremely dysfunctional family. She believes herself to be unworthy of anything good, and is constantly putting herself in abusive relationships. She discovers prayers written as letters to God, written by an elderly woman, recently deceased. Through reading these prayers, and from the newly-forged friendship of neighbors, she transforms into a woman of strength. I seldom read novels of this genre, but I found myself emotionally invested in her well-being. (Of course I wanted to smack her a few times in the beginning when she was being so irritatingly needy.) There's a surprise at the end of the story that I didn't see coming. I do recommend this book.

I found this ebook on for free after a friend's heads-up and had heard Lisa Wingate's name before but had never read her books. But boy was I glad I did. The Prayer Box was an enjoyable, truth-inspiring read. Each chapter left you turning the pages--not out of dread, but out of concern. The heroine struggled with real issues and overcame thanks to a town outcast. No spoilers here, but the twist at the end brought tears to my eyes. Lisa's writing is descriptive and well-crafted and the letters from Iola contained some jaw-dropping prose--absolutely amazing imagery combined with

poignant truth. I recommend this book for the reader who is looking for great writing and a heart-warming story to enjoy. There are elements of faith in it, but very tastefully handled so as not preach at the reader. Lisa--great job!! On the same day, I also downloaded Tidewater Sisters which is an accompanying novella. I'm looking forward to continuing to follow along with these characters I've come to care for.

Tandi Reese needs a hiding place, but she never expected it to come in the form of Lola Anne Poole's rambling mansion on the Outer Banks. Yet when tasked with cleaning out Lola's house after the older woman dies, Tandi discovers a story that will lead her to stability, faith, and new hope. Tandi is a complex and engaging protagonist and narrator. Much like a real person, there are things to like about her, such as her intelligence and resilience, and things you hope will change, such as her hands-off parenting and tendency to glom onto men who do anything but appreciate and love her. Perhaps that's why it's so gratifying to see her form a sisterhood with the Seashell Shop women, get to know Paul Chastain, and build a life on Hatteras after the definition of a troubled life. Lola, for her part, is a compelling deuteragonist. In fact, she made me wish Lisa Wingate wrote historical fiction, because her story is just as interesting as Tandi's. Her prayer box letters are touching and filled with deep faith, despite her own travails, such as being banished to a convent school for her mixed-race heritage. Because Lola's part of the novel is epistolary and not as consistent as Tandi's, I felt like I missed out on getting to know this character, but it wasn't a turn-off because the historical and contemporary stories mesh together well. Lisa rounds out her story with other well-drawn characters such as Paul, a man who doesn't fit the stereotype of a romantic hero but is the kind of guy Tandi needs, and Zoey, a daughter who is deciding whether to follow her mom's path or believe she can be and do better. Finally, I like that the Christian element of The Prayer Box, while present, is not overpowering. You can safely presume Tandi will find faith, but her journey feels authentic, not clichéd. Saying the Sinner's Prayer and going to church, Lisa hints, won't fix everything for Tandi. What will, is finding God--and Christ in Him--and believing who He says she is and always was. I love how Lola, through her prayer box, had an opportunity to teach Tandi this.

I know Lisa from Facebook, and her Huckleberry Reports brighten my days. But, Oh My Goodness. What a wonderful book. A woman discovering herself, struggling to raise her children in a safer and happier way than she herself came up. A beautiful old house with secrets. A community of loving and caring people. So comforting, so encouraging, so invigorating! You will love this book, I know. I

can't wait to find more of Lisa's work. What a blessing.

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