

The Handyman's Promise

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (6/08)

"The Handyman's Promise," is the third book in a series about handyman Ed Stephens. It begins in 1983, when Ed's partner Rick Benton is preparing to return home to him after living in Indianapolis for over a year. Rick moved away to get training in a career in real estate; now he is coming home so that he can work in his home town and continue his life with Ed. Both of them seem to love each other deeply and to be committed to their relationship.

Ed has some insecurity in regards to Rick's fidelity because of the pain and betrayal that he has seen some of his friends experience in their homosexual relationships. This is the time of the advent of AIDS, so that adds to his concerns. Still he is happy to have Rick back home. Being a gay couple is not easy in this small Indiana town. They have some experiences with intolerance and hatred. They also see their gay friends going through rough times, especially with their families. But the people that they do have in their lives that care about them are really wonderful people.

In this story, the author takes us back into the 1980s. His mention of songs that came from that era caused them to play in my head as I read. This really made me feel like I was back in that time. Also when he discusses the AIDS issue, it brought back a lot of memories for me. I worked in a hospital at that time, and the Vice President of the hospital's brother was in ICU with AIDS. I remember him getting top care, yet no one really knew how to treat him. I also remember a friend being diagnosed with AIDS. It was such a helpless feeling to know that there was nothing that could be done. These memories made Ed and Rick's story seem more real to me.

"The Handyman's Promise" tells the story of two men who want to build their lives together and share their dreams with each other. It is empowering to see them work towards their goals together and to build meaningful relationships with the people around them. I think that many couples could a lot about relationships from reading their story. I highly recommend this novel.