



Going to Bend: A Novel

Diane Hammond

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In the small coastal town of Hubbard, Oregon, your man may let you down, your boss may let you down, life may let you down . . . but your best friend never will.

Welcome to Hubbard, where Petie Coolbaugh and Rose Bundy have been best friends since childhood. Now in their early thirties, both are grappling to come to terms with their age and station in life. As they struggle to make ends meet and provide for their children and the good-hearted but unreliable men in their lives, they take jobs cooking for a brand-new upscale restaurant, Souperior's Cafe, starting from scratch every morning to produce gallons of fresh soup from local recipes. The proprietors of the cafe, Nadine and Gordon, are fraternal twins from Los Angeles with adjustments of their own to make, but Rose's warmth and the quality of the women's soups quickly make them indispensable despite Petie's abrupt manner and prickly ways. The strains of daily life are never far, however, and the past takes its toll on the women. Petie's childhood as the daughter of the town drunk—a subject she won't talk about—keeps her at a distance from even her best friend, until an unexpected romance threatens to crack her tough exterior. And despite Rose's loving personality, the only man in her life is a loner fisherman who spends only a few months of the year in town. In this fishing village, friends are for life and love comes in the most unexpected ways. As the novel draws together lovers, husbands, employers, friends, and family, each woman finds possibilities for love and even grace that she had never imagined.

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