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## **OF WORDS & MUSIC - Lynda Fitzgerald**

Five-Star

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Women's Fiction

Atlanta, Georgia – Present Day

Learning that her long missing daughter Elizabeth has died is shocking enough for Lilah Kimball, but the real surprise is finding out she has a twelve-year-old granddaughter named Bethany. With both her parents now dead, Bethany is awarded to the care and temporary custody of Lilah. It's something neither wants.

Lilah was raised to always defer to men, and when she married, she let her husband control her life. Their only daughter rebelled at the confinement and left home soon after becoming an adult. Though deep down Lilah missed her, she put on a front of stodginess that carried her through her husband's death and her son taking over the family business. Her only real friend is Marabet, her housekeeper. The thought of bringing into her household a child she doesn't know scares Lilah, but Marabet persuades her, telling her to give Bethany a chance.

Bethany would rather stay with the neighbor who cared for her after her mother died, certainly not with a woman as formal and unlovable as Lilah Kimball. Still missing her mother, Bethany retreats into a world of her own, going through her mother's diaries as she learns more about Elizabeth's life growing up. At first, Lilah leaves Bethany alone, but gradually, pushed some by Marabet, she reaches out to try to get to know her grandchild before she has to make that fateful decision to let her go...

Tense and emotional, *OF WORDS & MUSIC* is the story of Lilah learning how to live again, while Bethany discovers a grandmother she's never known. Lilah's cold attitude toward Bethany seems heartless until readers begin to understand how Lilah was taught to keep her true feelings in check. Prodded by Marabet, Lilah forces herself to change her life, mostly in hopes of not having to deal with the "issue" of Bethany. Meanwhile, her son Charles, who is as cold as ice, encourages Lilah to get rid of Bethany. One can sense that Charles sees a rival in Bethany, though it can't be for affection, since he treats everyone with disdain, including his wife. Soon, Lilah is on a mission of her own, redecorating her bedroom and throwing herself into a task she truly and finally enjoys. As she spreads her wings, she comes to the realization that Bethany is her daughter's child. Her own flesh and blood. Their relationship is one that grows slowly, helped along by shared enjoyments, such as playing the piano. But as the summer progresses, will their burgeoning friendship be enough to keep Bethany living with Lilah?

While Lilah comes across as unlikable in the beginning of Lynda Fitzgerald's *OF WORDS & MUSIC*, she will soon become sympathetic for readers who will hope that the right decision is made on behalf of the beguiling Bethany. A shocking twist toward the end throws their lives into turmoil, but Ms. Fitzgerald has woven a charming climactic ending for Lilah and Bethany. It's one reason to keep on reading *OF WORDS & MUSIC* and makes for a feel-good tale that will last for a while.

Patti Fischer