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A PLACE TO COME HOME TO

By Melody Carlson

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## ***Dedication***

In loving memory of my grandfather,

**Orvil H. Haga,**

A man who could “do anything” and

took time to make me feel important

## ***Whispering Pines Novels***

Start with *Someplace to Come Home To*, then read the complete series by Melody Carlson:

*A Place to Come Home To* (Book One)

*Everything I Long For* (Book Two)

*Looking for You All My Life* (Book Three)

*Someone to Belong To* (Book Four)

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The *Whispering Pines Novels* are available in

all A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) popular eBook formats.

A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1)

## One

Maggie scanned the words on her computer screen again—it sounded too good to be true. And usually that meant it wasn't. Her journalist's sense of skepticism kicked in as she called A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) out to Skip in the cubicle next to her. "Listen to this one, Skippy. *Dream job in a dream location. A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) Wanted: experienced and motivated newspaper writer/editor to manage small-town paper in Central Oregon. Benefits include but not limited to: tall pine trees, snowcapped mountains, peace and quiet...*"

"Where do I sign up?" asked Skip.

She laughed. "And while you're at it, I have a bridge I'd like to sell you."

Skip leaned over the divider and pointed his pencil at her accusingly. "Haven't you ever been a dreamer, Maggie? I'll A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) bet there's an old-fashioned idealist hiding beneath that cynical reporter's crusty exterior."

She just shook her head and sighed. "Idealists don't survive in L.A., Skippy. At least not for long."

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He grew thoughtful for a moment. "Maybe you're right. I'm still a newcomer here." Maggie watched as disappointment washed over his face and suddenly felt guilty for spoiling his youthful illusions. Maybe she was a little jaded.

"Sorry, Skip. I probably felt like that once too, but I suppose my brass ring has gotten a little tarnished-looking over the years."

He smiled A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) and nodded towards her computer. "Any luck in your Net-search for a fledgling reporter who's willing to become a slave for peanuts, or are you just surfing for the fun of it?"

"Nothing much yet." She A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) glanced at her watch. "Actually, I better call it quits. I promised Spencer that I'd start coming home before dinnertime this week."

"What a concept. Which reminds me, I'm running late too. See ya tomorrow."

Maggie returned her attention to her computer screen, but before exiting the ad A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) section she stole one last look to see exactly where this "dream job" was located. Pine Mountain, Oregon. How interesting. She read the address again just to be sure. Pine Mountain... now that induced A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) some wonderful childhood memories.

Her family had spent several summer vacations on Silver Lake, just outside of the small town of Pine Mountain. Her dad's partner had lent them his A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) cabin up there, a rustic affair made from hand-hewn pine logs and complete with a stone fireplace that smelled like real wood smoke. She'd almost forgotten that short but happy era. Even now it seemed like a time and place out of some juvenile book she'd read long ago.

Places like *that* couldn't really exist. But even if it was only imaginary, wouldn't it be great to go there, if simply for a moment. How she would savor the clean fragrance of sun-warmed

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pine needles and the peaceful sound of water lapping gently against the dock on a hot summer's day—things she had taken for granted during their summer vacations. Suddenly she recalled how she and her brother would traipse through the little tourist town of Pine Mountain in search of an ice cream cone—two enormous scoops of the wildest flavors dripping down the side of the cone in the summer's sun. But the friendly shopkeepers hardly seemed A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) to notice the A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) sticky faces or grimy camp A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) clothes and dusty tennis shoes. How unlike the immaculate designer shops in L.A. where everyone and everything looked squeaky clean and perfect—at least on the exterior. Did places like Pine Mountain really still exist?

She A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) blinked at the clock, remembering her promise to her son, and shut off her computer. Determined to start this week out right, she had to hurry if she wanted to fix a real dinner tonight. She'd even gone to the store during her lunch hour for fresh pasta and a few other ingredients she hadn't seen in her cupboards for months. Perhaps a feeble effort on her part, but when A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) she'd learned from a teacher friend that Spencer was hanging with some kids who were A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) not his A Place to Come Home To (The Whispering Pines Series Book 1) old sports pals, she'd grown concerned. And according to the same teacher these were the kind of kids rumored to have gang connections.

Naturally, Spencer denied all this, insisting that just because some of his friends dressed differently the paranoid teachers assumed they were “gang-bangers.” Not wishing to engage in another useless argument, Maggie had held her tongue, hoping that he knew what he was talking about. And after all, he had always been sensible and dependable, always more mature than his peers. But at the same time she was haunted by the memory of how Phil had always said that kids who imitated gangs— “wannabes”—could be just as dangerous as the real thing. Maybe even more so. Oh, if only Phil were still alive. He'd surely know how to deal with this.

## **A Place To Come Home To The Whispering Pines Series Book 1**

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