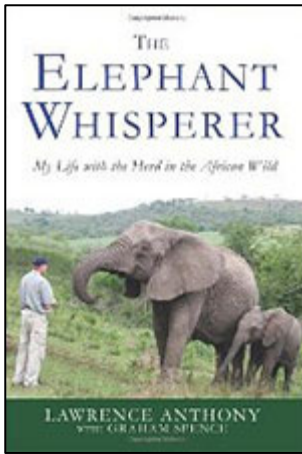


## Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- August 2011



Some of you might have noticed that I like books about animals. When I look back at the reviews I've done---well, let's say it's a dead giveaway. Because of this, people recommend animal books of all types to me, both fiction and nonfiction.

This time the recommendation was made by my son Brian, who had returned from a three week trip to southern Africa that included four nonhunting safaris. (If I didn't love him so much, I could possibly get a bit jealous at times but we won't go into that.)

Elephants have always been a favorite in our family. Brian found *The Elephant Whisperer* in an airport bookstore in Johannesburg, the book is readily available here in the States.

I have to tell you that I couldn't read this book fast enough. Lawrence Anthony, the author and adventurer of this story, owns a game reserve in Zululand. When Anthony is offered a herd of rogue elephants, he has a choice: take them immediately or they will be shot.

He set to preparing a boma, a strongly fenced (as in brilliant-elephant-escape-proof) enclosure complete with an electrified fence. It had to be large enough for the elephants to hide in, to roam around in, and hopefully to settle in and call home. A large project for anyone, but easier for someone with great wealth. Which Anthony did not have.

Enter the distraught elephant family, headed by Nana, the matriarch, whose job it was to protect and provide for her family. In order to survive, Nana, along with the other pachyderms, had learned the hard way to not trust humans.

Thus, the first task was for them to learn that Anthony was a friend. Throughout the book I was always amazed at the creativity and patience it took to accomplish the rapport with, and saving of this herd.

I knew elephants are highly intelligent, but I learned that they can reason, plan and communicate both within their group and across great distances. Some people say that elephants never forget. This story certainly showed all that and plenty more.

Reading *The Elephant Whisperer* taught me more about conservationism in Africa, tribes and tribal needs, but the enthralling elephants were the stars. Learning body language fascinates me, so you can guess how I enjoyed the lessons Anthony learned. I hope you like this story as much as I did.

Now I have some exciting news. My contemporary novel, *One Perfect Day*, is being brought out in a mass market edition (more commonly known as paperback) and is available in bookstores after July 26th. If you haven't read the story, I hope you'll pick up a copy at your local bookstore.

Enjoy the rest of this swiftly passing summer and until next time,

*Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine*