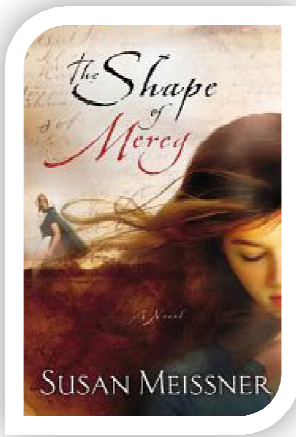


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- December 2014

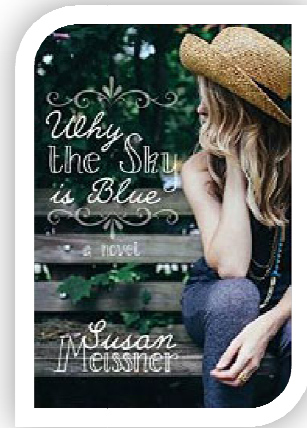


As we reach the end of December, how about starting off the New Year revisiting a previously-read author? I'm suggesting that because I have been reading through Susan Meissner's impressive list of books, and becoming more enthralled with her writing all the time.

I read her beginning books years ago and loved her writing then, I didn't continue to follow what she was doing. So when I picked up two of her books at the Mount Hermon Writers Conference last spring, I was glad to go back to reading her work. I read Susan's three Rachel Flynn mysteries and wanted more. Rachel Flynn is an attorney specializing in protecting children and families. Rachel is not supposed to be solving these crimes, but her rare sense of intuition throws her into the mayhem of mysteries. I wanted more after reading *Widows and Orphans*, *Days and Hours*, and *Sticks and Stones*. What? No more in the series? How disappointing.

So I went looking on the internet and discovered Susan's standalone titles. *The Shape of Mercy* is a contemporary novel with a sub-story set during the witch hunts of Salem in the seventeenth century, which led to the burning and death of many falsely convicted women, most with no foundation of evidence short of several young girls' scary claims. The book weaves between a female researcher in modern America transcribing the diary of one such accused witch, and its author, Mercy by name. The book was engrossing. Hard to believe such things really happened, yet history teaches us they did. Reading *The Shape of Mercy* was uncomfortable. Could those kinds of things happen in our world today?

At the same time I downloaded *Why is the Sky Blue*, because the title intrigued me. The *Shape of Mercy* is very good but this story is superb. A happily married mother of two children is abducted, raped and almost killed. If that is not bad enough, she discovers she is pregnant and her husband says he cannot love a baby conceived by a monster. She refuses to abort the child, thinking since she has miscarried several others; the odds of carrying this one are not good. How does a loving family of faith handle something like this? Finding adoptive parents seems the only solution, but then what? Forget the baby girl was ever born? Bury the feelings and pretend it never happened?



Susan Meissner explores the deepest fears, feelings, and faith of normal people caught in a horrendous situation. Her writing is deliciously descriptive and haunting at times. I wondered what would I do in a situation like that? Choosing to trust God in all things is hard for us no matter what the situation. A mother's love is central to this story, and a beautiful example of God's love with no strings attached. How hard it is to love like that. Which of her books will I read next? I'm not sure. But I hope you enjoy and appreciate Susan Meissner's writing, too. Her characters and stories will haunt you, so be prepared.

Meanwhile, *A Harvest of Hope*, book two in my new Song of Blessing series, releases in the spring. You can always find more information about my upcoming books on the Coming Soon page of my web site, and Facebook is my favorite method of contact, too, so come visit me. I wish you all a Happy New Year full of adventures, love and the joys of reading and writing.

Until next time, *Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine*