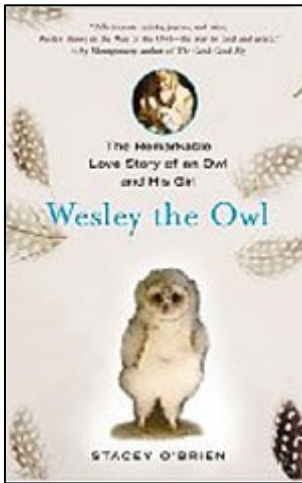


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- February 2010



I love it when I find a book that I can tell everyone about.

If I like a book, I tell a few people and pass it on...but this one is different. I want *everyone* to read and enjoy it. I hope those I tell, tell others.

I found *Wesley the Owl* in a little bookstore in Gualala, CA, a tiny town on the northern California coast. The baby owl on the cover leaped out and grabbed me, saying "you have to read me." The tag line says, *The Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and his Girl*. How could I resist that? So I brought it home.

Thus I met a four day old barn owlet with nerve damage in his wing, who went home with a young woman named Stacey O'Brien, an assistant in the research facility at CalTech. This is their story of nineteen years full of love and caring, joy and adventure. Stacey refers to *The Way of the Owl*.

Through the years, she fed him 28,000 mice, which she bought in bulk. Wesley shared her home and her life, and through both her research observations and her daily journal entries, the reader learns more about the complex life of owls than any scientific paper could ever teach.

Stacey is not only a scientist, but an excellent storyteller. Throughout this book I was enthralled and intrigued by the intense bond that can grow between a wild creature and

a human being, each teaching each other and opening new vistas of possibility for understanding. I laughed and cried and reread parts and stared at the pictures wishing for more.

I will read this book again, which is something I rarely do. So many books to read, so little time, relatively. I would love to interview Stacey, and hear more stories about Wesley, because I know she had to pick and choose which ones to put in her book and after nineteen years together, I'm sure she has more to tell.

Even writing about this book, I can't quit smiling. So what encouragement do I have for writers from this experience? Writers must be readers. Writers must go out of their way to be exposed to all kinds of writing.

Read anything that catches your attention. Read all kinds of fiction, non-fiction, memoirs, history, self-help, cook books. Stephen King in his book on writing absolutely grabbed my heart when he said, "A good writer writes four hours a day and reads for four hours a day." Ah, that would be bliss.

Join a reader's club so you can talk about the things you have read. Find other readers and get together to talk about what you are reading. Throw in some poetry now and then. Read children's books. Read children's books aloud to children. Read aloud to your spouse or other family members. There is magic both in reading to someone else and being read to.

We are so blessed in this country to have an unlimited wealth of books to read. No one tells us what we can read and what we can't. So haunt the library, exchange books with friends and relatives, scour thrift stores and garage sales.

My to-be-read book stack (if I collected it in one place) would be taller than I am. I always have several books going at once, mostly in different genres. A novel or two, a devotional, a business book, self-help and of course, research for my writing.

That's it for this month. The best way to use this yucky weather is to curl up with a good book, a hot drink, a comfy chair, and read. Then send me a note and tell me what you've enjoyed! You can use my contact form right here on my web site.

Until next time,

Happy February, and Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine (who is happily putting the finishing touches on another book---for you to read.)