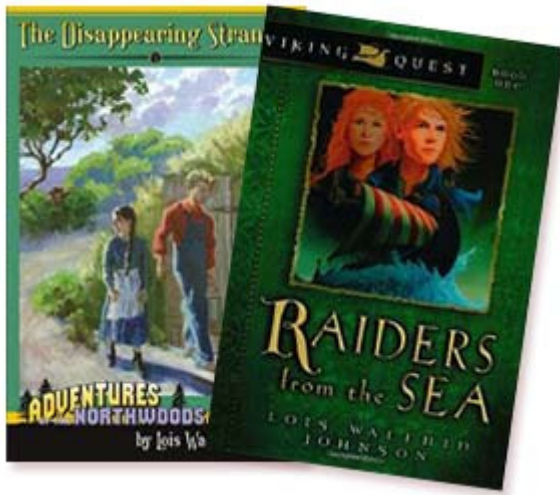


## Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- February 2011



With all these sunny and warm days this week, one would think spring is really here. Yet when you look at the calendar, reality sets in. It is just the beginning of February.

I have a need to get my fingers in the dirt and so I plan to pull some weeds in the

flower pots on my deck.

But I know there is more good winter reading time ahead. If an excuse is needed, I have a tote bag full of them. Every moment is a good time to read.

While I just finished and loved Julie Klassen's latest, *The Girl in the Gatehouse*, for this column I want to do something a bit different. There are so many great series writers, and I'm going to introduce you to one of my long, long time friends, Lois Walfrid Johnson.

I met Lois in my early years of writing—she was published way ahead of me—and I fell in love with her *Adventures of the Northwoods* series for middle readers, 8-12 year olds. The books are set in the lumber producing regions of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan in 1906 and 1907.

When Kate O'Connell prayed for a new husband for her widowed mother, she never dreamed she would end up with two brothers and a different life far from Minneapolis. Will she ever get along with her new brother, Anders and who is the stranger that appears and then disappears?

Mystery and adventure keep young readers turning the pages of this ten-book series. The first two titles are *The Disappearing Stranger* and *The Hidden Message*.

Viking tales are always full of adventure and daring and Johnson's next series, *Viking Quest*, captivates her readers. Not surprising since captives were part of the realm of Viking conquests. I learned a lot about my Norwegian heritage in reading this series and like the *Adventures of the Northwoods* books, kept turning the pages as fast as I could read, just like kids do.

*Raiders from the Sea* stars Brianna O'Toole and her brother Devin, who are captured by the raiding Vikings. While Bree is taken to Norway as a slave, Devin tries to find home and survive on his own.

I'm warning you, when you start reading these books to your younger children, you will find yourself reading ahead because you'll need to know what happens next. Those who can read for themselves will do the flashlight under the blanket trick. Hmm, think I may have tried it myself a time or two in my youth.

Lois has also written "wise" books for women and girls. You will find those listed on her website [www.LWJbooks.com](http://www.LWJbooks.com), along with how to bring her to your area as a speaker and/or writing teacher.

As I said, I wanted to do something different this month. Who knows what next month will bring? For those of you who are counting the days until the release of *A Heart for Home*, the third book in the Home to Blessing series, it is now in bookstores.

Until next time,

*Happy Valentines Day, and Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine*