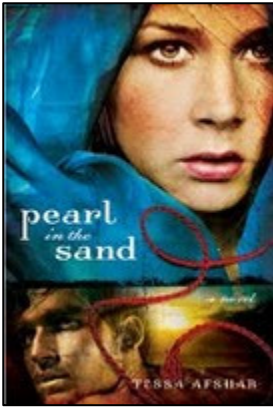


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- November 2010



Typing the word November just gave me the willies. This year is nearly over and I'm not even half done with what I had planned for 2010. Someone had better get on the ball!

Maybe I should go back and look at my goals for the year too, or is that too disheartening?

I know one of them was to read more good books. I used to feel that I had to finish every book I started, but I have learned there is no Finish The Book Police, so now I give the book away if I put it down and never got back to it.

This month I was searching for a review book, because many of those I've read for review or endorsement aren't in bookstores yet. But I've been at a retreat hosted by the Books & Such Literary Agency—a true, life changing event—and I just happened to have lunch with a group of extremely interesting women.

One the women was Tessa Afshar, who had a whopper story of her own life to tell, having been raised Muslim and converted to Christianity after her teens. Her novel is titled *Pearl in the Sand*, and tells the story of Rahab, the harlot of Jericho who is also listed in the genealogy of Jesus.

As Tessa shared her life story and talked about writing this book, I moaned, "I didn't get a copy. Do you have an extra one?" I knew I had a new friend when someone at the

dining table handed me her copy, since my column deadline was not only nipping at my heels but had chewed off my shoe.

Novels are meant to be entertaining, but some of them can teach us at the same time. This one did just that, showing the lives of both the Canaanites and the Israelites as they are entering the land God had promised them.

For Tessa the big question was, how did Rahab get into the lineage of Christ? *Pearl in the Sand* is a beautiful and powerful love story of Rahab as she learns to live in God's grace and forgiveness, as does the man whom she grows to love. *Pearl* is a multi-faceted book and I wasn't sure how Tessa was going to work it all out, but she did and I loved the story.

So what is the lesson here for writers? An old adage says, write what you know. But this book has a unique flavor, I think because Tessa was not raised on the Bible stories so many of us heard in Sunday school; therefore, she was able to look at the actual history with new eyes and from growing up with different customs, she provided her readers with an atypical perspective.

What is something that intrigues you? Makes you think questions that seem to have no answers? So what if you have to learn something new to make your idea work. Madeleine L'Engle taught herself quantum physics in order to write *A Wrinkle in Time*. I try to learn and do all the things I write about. The learning of new things is one of the challenges for writers and also one of the joys.

So what are some of your questions? Can you come up with a story around those questions? Can you get excited and set yourself down to write that story? And keep writing, until the end? I hope you can.

Until next time,

Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine