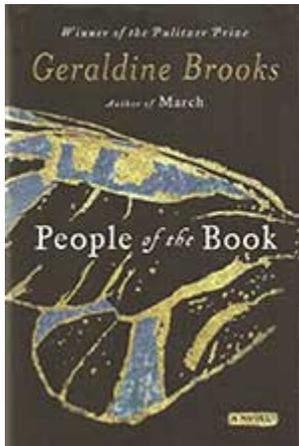


## Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- October 2008



Fall is here. I can see the leaves on my maple trees turning colors. I love the smells and feels of fall, and the harvest moon, which makes the nights about as bright as day. I hope you take time to enjoy the changes of this new season.

*People of the Book*, by Pulitzer Prize winner Geraldine Brooks, is a book of changes. In the story, we follow one woman who is a rare book expert when she is called on to repair and restore a wonderfully illustrated Hebrew prayer book. As she discovers a hair, an insect wing, salt and a wine stain in the binding, the story goes back in time to other periods of the book's life.

Jumping from contemporary times to those in the past brings a cast of fascinating characters and brief glimpses into the history the book lived through. The main character, Hannah Heath, keeps the contemporary story moving as she travels with her research and determination to understand where the book has been and how and when it was created. Or if it is all a lie.

I love books where I am totally entertained, enthralled and learn new things at the same time. *People of the Book* did all of that for me.

My reading group, The Bookies, which meets the first Thursday of the month at our local bookstore, Books and Crannies, (Yes, I know I just inserted a blurb for the group.) chose this book thanks to recommendations from another reading group. I would not have picked up the book, or probably even heard of it otherwise. That's one of the perks of a reading group; you read things you might not have. I'm glad I read this one and therefore am encouraging you all to do the same.

Research seems to be an ever present theme in many of the books I've read lately. Think of traveling to all the places this book took place—Sarajevo, Spain, London, Boston, Venice—and getting to meet experts in ancient books, visit museums, and talk with the curators and other specialists.

When you're researching for a book, you never know when a detail you find will take you in a new direction, or be the puzzle piece you didn't know you needed. I love this kind of research and admire a writer who works so hard at it, yet makes it look easy.

*People of the Book* is based on a true story and that makes it even more intriguing. What tidbit did a writer read or hear that triggered the desire to spend all the time and effort needed to write a book like this?

As a writer, you have to develop a sense of story, so that when you hear or see or read that morsel, you'll recognize it and begin the pursuit, never knowing where it will take you, or whether it will pan out or leave you in a dead end instead.

Curiosity is one of the greatest gifts a writer has. I tell people I have three little hairs on the back of my neck that start to jingle when I hear a story, or read something or see something. They are singing, "Story, story" and I better be prepared to follow up or it will be gone and I will be the loser. I write down what I know, including contact information, and in the beginning keep it in one of my many notebooks. Finding it later is a quest in its own right, but part of the adventure.

I hope you read lots, listen well, and learn to recognize when a story is about to bite you or entice you to follow. You never know in advance what the adventures will be, but I am here to tell you, your life will be richer for the experiences.

I plan to read Geraldine Brooks prize winning book, titled *March*. Maybe you'll enjoy it too.

Until then, I have a variety of books coming out this fall for both adults and middle readers. Check out my Coming Soon page for more information.

Blessings on your autumn, and until next time,

*Happy readin' and writin' from Lauraine*