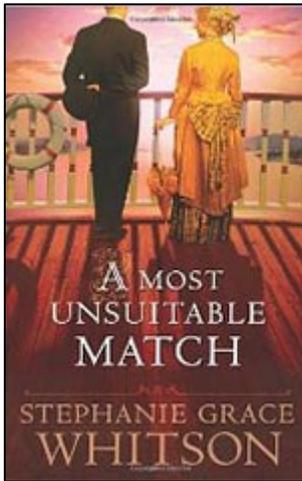


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- September 2011



What a way to usher in September in Tehachapi! Wild fires and evacuations on Labor Day weekend. I now know at least part of the pain of saying goodbye to a house. I say “only part”, because our house was still here when we returned. My heart aches for those who lost everything. Loss of that magnitude--of your house and home--causes continuing grief as you look for something and realize it has burned. Fire and water are two things that go where they will in spite of our best efforts.

All the action around here makes writing a book review an interesting proposal. But with all the calamities in the story I read, (including some on a riverboat voyage and at a fort in early Montana), I guess I'm really staying in the same mind set.

This month's book is *A Most Unsuitable Match* by Stephanie Grace Whitson. When we first meet the lead character, Miss Fannie Rousseau, she's already getting in to trouble, not wanting to marry the man her father chose for her. Then she runs away from home, traveling west to uncover a family secret, and she coerces a steam boat captain to take her on her voyage. Meeting Mr. Samuel Beck did not bode well for our heroine, but then, neither did a sinking ship.

I couldn't put this book down, and read into the early hours in spite of my noble intentions of one or two chapters a night! I should have known better. All Stephanie's books do this to me. She writes historical fiction that combines romance, adventure, mystery, and danger, researched with exquisite care.

Her expertise in quilts and the fabrics of the day adds an extra element to her stories, as does her knowledge of human nature and history. Faith always weaves strong strands through the lives of her characters, too.

A Most Unsuitable Match includes questions for discussion groups, and this would be a fun book to discuss. Miss Fannie will appeal to readers of all ages and is the epitome of a strong-willed heroine who tries to do what is right, only to go about it in the wrong way. Readers will be cheering her on and sometimes crying along with her. I know I did.

Thanks, Stephanie for a great read.

Now that fall is coming on rather quickly, I hope you all can take time to enjoy the changing of the seasons, as crazy as they've been this year.

With the change of seasons comes a new series from me. My next book, *Valley of Dreams* introduces a new heroine, Cassie Lockwood, trick rider and sharpshooter of Wild West Show days. Cassie's adventures to find her father's dream valley kept me writing fast to discover what would happen next. And---is there a man for her in God's plan for her life? Or must she be content with her trick riding horse Wind Dancer, the buffalo bull, George, that she raised from a calf, and her shooting skills that parallel Annie Oakley's? We shall see. I'm writing the next book in the series to find out.

Until next time,

Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine