

When I was asked to write a little about my pleasure reading for 2005, I was, at first, at a loss as to what I might say. After 126 books and over 50,000 pages I certainly couldn't say 'Well this is my favorite'. Too many genres, and too much fun.

Then it occurred to me, really my favorite thing this year involved my 26 year old son. We were separated by divorce when he was very young, and the years I consider the most formative for teaching the absolute joy of reading to a child was lost for me. It isn't possible to instill that on weekends, no matter how hard one half of a broken parent duo try. Therefore by the time I received custody when he was 12, it was too late. Don't misunderstand, he could read, but he took no joy in it. It was work. Drudgery. My heart was broken. I didn't surrender, but no matter what I suggested he would read it by rote, without expression, imagination or joy.

When he was a senior in high school I suggested my favorite fantasy trilogy to him. *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever* by Stephen R. Donaldson. I admit, it was a bit of a test on my part. He would have to have imagination, empathy, a strong moral anchor, and the ability to immerse himself in the books to enjoy and understand their complex message. Traits I believed Denise and I had given him.

Nothing happened. The books gathered dust. He graduated and moved away. Eight years went by. I stopped mentioning the books to him. He was hurt and required surgery to heal. While convalescing, wonder upon wonder he told me he thought he'd have time to start the books. Uh huh, I thought.

He started the first novel. He called almost daily. 'Dad this is intense', excitement in his voice. I opened my books and read with him so when he call we would be within pages of one another. 'Don't tell me what's happening dad, but how do you pronounce this?' 'Can you believe that!' 'I can see *The Land* dad!'. Joy, excitement, that 'Can't put it down feeling' all came this year to my son, and through him to me. I saw *The Land* again, through his eyes, felt the disgust, the evil, and the power of righteousness and goodness through his feelings. Finally, I knew in my heart that he was truly reading for pleasure. It isn't drudgery for him anymore, and I've got to say for me it feels damn good.

So, after the 126 books, it was actually re-reading a paltry three that brought me the most joy this year. Funny how that works.

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