

I have decided to start with the book "Wild" by Cheryl Strayed because the first thing my husband said to me was that this was "not my style" of book. He was referring to the fact that he thought it was about hiking and being outdoorsy...and I am neither of those two things. In spite not being knowledgeable about hiking, I decided that it seemed like an interesting story about a woman who is lost after the death of her mother. I had also just lost my dad and had really not dealt with his passing due to being the mom of two small kiddos. After all, who has time to grieve when your little people have daily needs? I couldn't have needed this book more! Every description from the tag line "From Lost to Found" on the front cover described my life, albeit she had some different obstacles to overcome, but really aren't we all the same in our grief? This book was so beautifully written, with the openness of living through something you thought you might not survive. The author is so brutally honest with what she was going through and it was a moment by moment description that made you feel her pain as it was happening. I have to admit that there were moments I wasn't sure what her outcome would be but I had to know and I was cheering for her at every bend in the road. I also felt all of her depths in grief. I have never known the pain of drug addiction but I still felt her sadness and understood the need to make the sadness go away. On page 24, she says that "My mother died fast but not all of a sudden." Terminal illness is a fog of hospital rooms, doctors, therapists, medical equipment, sad and happy moments, memories and final release. There is so much happening around you that you set aside what is happening and deal with the momentum of the day and time still goes quickly. On page 127, a stranger tells Cheryl the symbolism of the feather, a corvid, and says it's from a "raven or crow, a symbol of the void...It's the place where things are born, where they begin." She further describes it as a black hole that "absorbs energy and then releases it as something new and alive." I see such a pivotal moment for Cheryl, she is to be reborn and renewed but at the moment she still doesn't see it within herself. Sometimes we need "signs" to help show us where we are and where we are headed. Do you think the hiker Doug gave it to her knowing the meaning and symbolism of the feather? In the next few pages (page 151), Cheryl reflects that "I could feel my mother's presence so acutely, her absence so profoundly, that it was hard to focus on the words." The juxtaposition of feeling the profound absence of a person while feeling surrounded by a person is real, especially when their impact on your life was so great. It is an overwhelming sensation. So, not everyone can or will hike the Pacific Crest Trail to come to terms with grief or to get their life

together but we can all experience things out of our comfort zone that help to learn about ourselves and what we are capable of. Sometimes the strength was always within us but something greater has to happen for it to expose itself.

What did you like/dislike about the books underlying view of death?

What was the point of telling the story of the horse?

Do you have a grief story? Did this book help or hurt you?

Why did you read the book? What did you get out of it?

What is your Pacific Crest Trail?

Did you like the movie version?