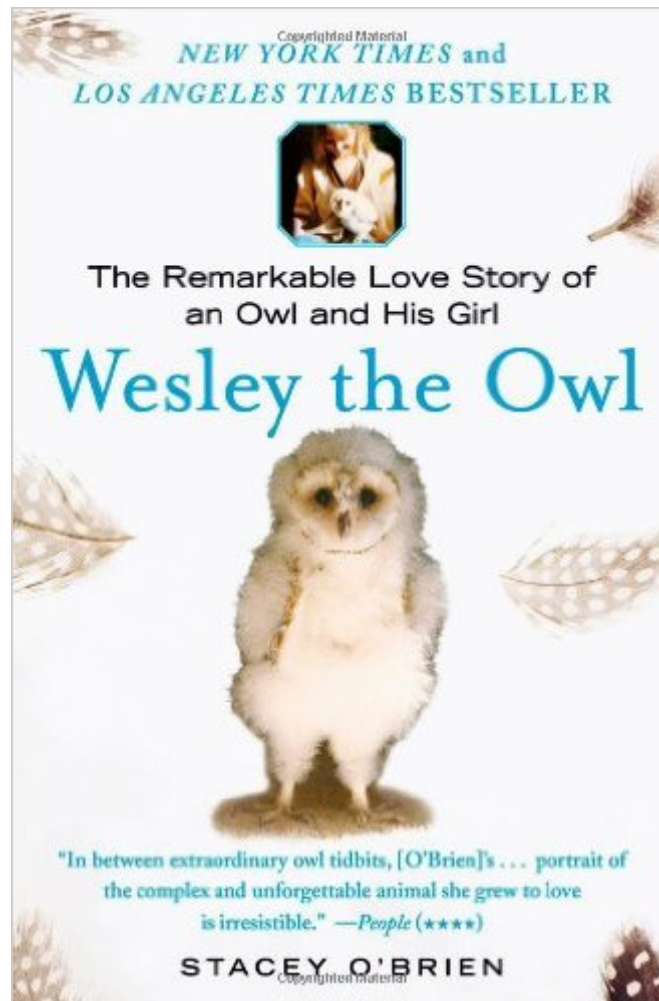


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Wesley The Owl: The Remarkable Love Story Of An Owl And His Girl



Synopsis

On Valentine's Day 1985, biologist Stacey O'Brien adopted Wesley, a baby barn owl with an injured wing who could not have survived in the wild. Over the next nineteen years, O'Brien studied Wesley's strange habits with both a tender heart and a scientist's eye and provided a mice-only diet that required her to buy the rodents in bulk (28,000 over the owl's lifetime). She watched him turn from a helpless fluff ball into an avid communicator with whom she developed a language all their own. Eventually he became a gorgeous, gold-and-white macho adult with a heart-shaped face who preened in the mirror and objected to visits by any other males to his house. O'Brien also brings us inside Caltech's prestigious research community, a kind of scientific Hogwarts where resident owls sometimes flew freely from office to office and eccentric, brilliant scientists were extraordinarily committed to studying and helping animals; all of them were changed by the animals they loved. As O'Brien gets close to Wesley, she makes astonishing discoveries about owl behavior, intelligence, and communication, coining the term "The Way of the Owl" to describe his noble behavior. When O'Brien develops her own life-threatening illness, the biologist who saved the life of a helpless baby bird is herself rescued from death by the insistent love and courage of this wild animal. Enhanced by wonderful photographs, this is a thoroughly engaging, heart-warming, often funny story of a complex, emotional, non-human being capable of reason, play, and, most important, love and loyalty. Translated into eight languages and named an Editor's Choice, this is sure to be cherished by animal lovers everywhere.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I normally choose non-fiction and, while this story is true, it almost reads like a novel. In this case, that was a strength. I like that the author started at the beginning and I didn't learn how or when Wesley died until near the end. In *Alex and Me*, it started after he died, before I cared about him or had bonded with him. I much preferred to follow Wesley's life in pretty much its actual order. I was impressed with the compassion and caring shown by the scientists with whom the author worked, and I found the details of their work very interesting. I also absolutely fell in love with Wesley - his personality, his curiosity, his sense of loyalty and fun. I was melancholy for a couple of days after I finished the book, realizing he was no longer in the world enriching it with his presence. While I don't believe the average person should take in a wild animal, I disagree with the reviewer who felt Wesley should have either been released back to the wild to die young, due to his nerve-damaged wing, or killed as a baby. How the world would have been diminished if he hadn't been alive in it for 19 years!! How much we would not have learned about owls and their intelligence and their capacity to love and learn! I don't find anything "humane" about euthanizing a baby rather than allowing a loving professional to raise it and allow it a really full life. Because the author is a professional, she was able to record information and owl communication that other scientists would never have had access to otherwise. And, not only was Wesley allowed to enjoy a full life, but the author's life was enriched by their relationship, and the lives of everyone who reads their story are also enriched by it.

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