



Merle's Door by Ted Kerasote

I'll admit, I'm a sucker for any book on the subject of dogs, but this book was different. On the cover, under the title it says "Lessons from a Freethinking Dog". That blurb is what really caught my interest. I had to find out what a freethinking dog was!

Ted Kerasote knits a story from where he meets young Merle, a golden retriever mix, while rafting the San Juan River in Utah to his death at age 14. What makes this story different from others I have read is that the author allowed himself to understand the mind of Merle. The book is heavy on research of wolves and excerpts from books written by others on the subject of dogs. Honestly, I skimmed most of that. I was only interested in "the story".

The story takes place in Kelly Wyoming. Ted, besides being a writer, is an avid hiker, hunter and skier. His tales of skiing Teton Pass, hunting for elk (Merle LOVED hunting for elk!) up Gros Ventre Canyon and "bagging" peaks were made all the more interesting to me having grown up in Jackson Hole, a short distance from Kelly.

Money was no hurdle when it came to Merle's health care, and for some readers this might not sit well. Most of us, no matter how much we love our dogs, do not have the resources to pay for special veterinary care that could extend lives. Still, I found Ted's dedication to Merle's physical and mental health in the later stages life extremely satisfying. It was obvious how much he loved this dog. I thoroughly enjoyed reading Merle's Door and recommend it to anyone who has loved and lost a dog.