



An Eagle Named Freedom: My True Story of a Remarkable Friendship

Jeff Guidry

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“A hauntingly beautiful story of rescue and rehabilitation....[A] gorgeous tale of redemption.”

—Susan Richards, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Chosen by a Horse*

“I could not put this book down.”

—Stacey O'Brien, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Wesley the Owl*

In the tradition of *A Lion Called Christian* and *Alex and Me* comes *An Eagle Named Freedom*, Jeff Guidry's remarkable story of how he rehabilitated a severely damaged bald eagle back to health—and how the majestic bird later inspired the author to triumph over cancer. Animal lovers and readers fascinated by the spiritual ties between animals and humans will not soon forget this beautiful, inspiring true tale of an extraordinary friendship.

An Eagle Named Freedom: My True Story of a Remarkable Friendship Details

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From Reader Review An Eagle Named Freedom: My True Story of a Remarkable Friendship for online ebook

Wisteria Leigh says

An Eagle Named Freedom[return]My True Story of a Remarkable Friendship[return]by Jeff Guidry[return]Harper Collins[return]978-0-06-182674-0[return][return]Jeff Guidry is a volunteer at the Sarvey Wildlife Care Center in Washington State. He is also one of the best advocates for the injured animals who reside there. His philosophy is simple, to care for and rehabilitate each animal so that they can be released back to their home-the wild. At the center they educate by teaching, Wild and tame are not the same. He believes that taming an animal diminishes their freedom and they become a prisoner, condemned to a life confined. [return][return]Freedom is a baby eagle when she arrives at the shelter. Her injuries are so extreme, she will never fly again. With the help of her devoted caregiver Jeff, she is able to fly while in his arms. This is the story of a special bond, a bond of souls between the human and a wild one, a beautiful Bald Eagle who would one day be called Dream Flyer. Freedom becomes his wings when is diagnosed with stage 3 non-Hodgkin s lymphoma. Treatment is grueling, painful beyond words yet through it he is able to focus on the time he shares with his true friend, Freedom. [return][return]My heart is so deeply touched by this story. It is honest and genuine. Reading about the author s battle with cancer is certainly difficult and will dredge up memories no doubt with most reader s own personal and family experiences. What I enjoyed about his story is his positive focus and use of visualization to project the future. His relationship with the wild ones and his work at the Sarvey Center is full of humorous anecdotes and he shares the special life he lives with the reader. He teaches you that we are a part of the world and we have forgotten how to communicate with the wild ones. It is up to us to learn to listen again. [return][return]If you love animals as much as I do, this book is a must read, yet be prepared to drop a few tears-it s unavoidable. [return][return]More information can be found at, HYPERLINK "http://www.sarveywildlife.org" www.sarveywildlife.org.

James says

Listened to on CD. A wonderful book!

Maria says

This book is so much more than a story about an eagle named Freedom. It is a story about the importance of taking care of our planetmates (animals), and it is a story about how they can take care of us. The author discusses the value of respecting all creatures for what they are, and what they are is more than some object flying or running around out in the wild. Those with a scientific mind may be frustrated with the absence of the anthropomorphism discussion in the book, but this was not intended to be a scientific story. This book is not concerned with the scientific facts of how animals and humans bond, it just shows that it can be done and the benefits obtained by all parties by doing so. The author does not advocate humans running out to the forest to grab a bear, squirrel, eagle, or some other wild animal to bond with. In fact author discusses the importance of letting animals stay in the environment they are best suited for, which is in the wild. In some regrettable circumstances, however, this is just not possible. It is in these times, when helping animals in crisis, the bonding can occur and our lives will be forever changed. This is a fantastic book about the benefits

of helping those we share the planet with.

Kristen says

This book has gotten a lot of publicity, which is probably the only reason I read it. I had a feeling I wouldn't like it before I ever started it, and I was right. It is a nice enough story on the surface: man bonds with eagle, and survives cancer. However, since that wouldn't exactly lend itself to a 200 page book, they had to throw in so much anthropomorphic nonsense that I found myself rolling my eyes after most pages. I wish the author could have just let Freedom express herself as an eagle without trying to assign her emotions and motivations that she simply did not have. A couple of caveats with my review, though... I've been a falconer for 20 years and have trained dozens of raptors, including eagles. Also, I am completely against the whole concept of wildlife rehab. So... without those two facts influencing my reaction to the story, I might have enjoyed it more. As it was, it was a struggle to finish it.

Jeannie Mancini says

An Eagle Named Freedom is Jeff Guidry's heartwarming, and often heartbreaking, 10-year memoir of his incredible life and bond with a Pacific Northwest American Bald Eagle named Freedom. In 1998 while Jeff is volunteering at Sarvey Wildlife Care Center in Washington State, a female baby eagle is brought in with two broken wings and is severely emaciated. She is only 3 feet tall, and weighs just 10 pounds. Jeff and coworker Kaye Baxter transfer the hurt bird to a veterinary clinic where they set and bind the wings hoping for the best. Freedom is brought back to Sarvey and undergoes months of healing. Initially showing no hope of recovery, she inches her way toward trust when Jeff shows her patience, love, and security, with his soft voice and protective care. Yet although she slowly gains her weight back, she never regains full use of her wings and will never take flight again. Sarvey's staff however is thrilled that she lived and decide to keep her for educational training, allowing Jeff to take on that task.

Jeff begins the slow process of glove training Freedom. Bird and man quickly bond, showing incredible patience, intuition, and love for each other's needs to make this attempt work. Jeff's eagle adapts easily and quickly graduates to being held with anklets and jesses. Soon this dynamic pair begin touring the local educational road-shows to educate the public about wildlife. Freedom and Jeff entertain Boy Scout troops, Native American Indian pow-wows, schools for children, and various other public awareness groups that need to learn about protecting the natural world around us.

But as life has it, good times don't usually last forever. Two years later after Jeff and Freedom are introduced, Jeff is diagnosed with type 3 non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. A lump on the side of his neck is instantly biopsied and pronounced malignant. The next 8 months are the most difficult Jeff will ever spend as he undergoes the hellish treatment of Chemotherapy that will nearly kill him. What saves Jeff's life, what keeps his flame burning and the will to live strong, is the unconditional love and kinship he receives from Freedom. This book is a tender sweet story of Jeff's deep love to heal his eagle, and the return gift that eagle hands back to him full-circle. When 8 months later Jeff's treatments show his body cancer free, he heads straight for the Sarvey center to let Freedom be the first to hear the good news. Taking Freedom out of her cage, the birds' keen insight knew Jeff was well and wrapped her giant wings around Jeff's shoulders in a loving protective embrace as if to say " we did it!"

In addition to the precious story of a man and his bird, the reader gets to enjoy many endearing stories of the other animal residents at Sarvey. Some tales humorous, some sweet, some heartbreaking, but this is not a book full of tear-jerking sadness. It is a shining light and dedication to those in the world who volunteer to keep our wildlife friends safe from harm, and assist in their well being in times of need. This memoir is about hope, never giving up, persistence to attain your goals no matter how dire life can be, and to treat our animal friends with as much love and respect we would our own family members. This is may be a short little book, but it is filled to the brim with a plentiful helping of inspiration for all of us that have a deep love and admiration for animals. An Eagle Named Freedom is written from the heart, penned well, and accompanied by wonderful color photographs of Jeff, Freedom and their friends at Sarvey. Nice story!

Diane Lepkowski says

Interesting story, but the book wasn't particularly well-written and seemed a bit author-focused. It was heavily interspersed with questionable conclusions about what the eagle was thinking and feeling (claiming to see trust in the bird's eyes, for example.)

I enjoyed some of the information on eagles and learning of the rehab facility; kudos to the author for his devotion to rehab work!

Neil Mudde says

Jeff writes an interesting account of partially his life, but mostly his work with injured animals, being an avid animal lover this speaks to me. Freedom is a bald Eagle who is found hurt, and Jeff works with him in recovery, off course in doing so he becomes very attached to this majestic bird,

Much is made of the legends the Native Americans have about Eagles, the special powers they have, the way by which the are revered, at one point in the book, and this is no doubt one of the reasons the book was written, Jeff is diagnosed with stage 3 non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, much of the book is taken up with his dealing with the horrific chemo treatment he needs to undergo, still wanting to keep in touch with his animals in the shelter. One of several stories I took note of, one day a family brought a baby bear to the shelter, not realizing they should have left it were it was, as no doubt Mother Bear had other cubs, and due to humans being around started to move them to safety, she would have come back for this specific cub, as that is their nature, the cub now had to be around humans, and eventually trained to live out in the wild, the cub was released, however Jeff often wondered and worried about its survival, after having been around humans. After many bouts of chemo Jeff was declared cancer free, throughout the story the healing powers of animals, the healing skills of native Americans comes into play, a bit overdone, as one cannot know everything, and at times it appears Jeff was not an easy patient. no matter what one believes, the fact remains Jeff remains cancer free until today.

An easy read made easier by the Harper Collins Lux larger print publication.

Karen says

One of the classic examples of man and the wild bonding, An Eagle Named Freedom is wondrously inspiring and will touch any animal-lovers' heart. It's the story of the author himself - Jeff Guidry, on his connection with a near-death eagle he finds while volunteering at a wildlife center. From that point on, the

newly named eagle Freedom, and Guidry deepen their bond transcending the boundaries of man and nature. Just as Guidry helped Freedom recover from death, Freedom was there to support Guidry on his fight against lymphoma. It's very symbolic and poignant at times, with allusions to Native American traditions and mother nature.

What makes this novel shine is simply the care and bond that exists between Guidry and the animals at Sarvey. The book doesn't simply focus on Freedom, and instead delves into stories and miracles about the other denizens of Sarvey - from the territorial mountain lion Sasha to the stories of two bears saved from abuses and harms. A colorful cast of people on Sarvey is also shown - and the beautiful thing about that is the confluence of people dedicated to supporting wildlife. Guidry is also a likable person generally, he's a bit crude and rash and with his rocker background, yet also a bit ironic. His love for nature and willingness to fight hardships adds even more points!

I think I might personally eulogize this story, because I love nature, I love wildlife, I love Mother Nature - and I guess I was fortunately? biased towards this story as well. The major themes of this novel are naturally all about wildlife and the bond of humans and the wild - something that may be difficult to read if you're particularly indifferent to nature. I, myself, think it's wonderful, it's touching to see the bond of Freedom and Guidry develop and watch step by step as they support each other through tough times. It comes across as contrived, a bit at points, and sometimes it's just apparent that the story could have been so much stronger if just edited a little more, or if Guidry was a stronger writer? That's my opinion anyhow.

I loved it, and I recommend it to all nature fans!

Jennifer says

Beautiful story about the human-animal bond and the healing power of nature.

3.5 stars

Cheryl says

An Eagle Named Freedom is a true story about a man's remarkable relationship with an eagle; but more than that, it is a glorious story about life, the will to live, and living in a meaningful manner. The narrator, Jeff, becomes interested in wildlife and eagles in particular, and begins working at a sanctuary for "wild ones" that have been injured. He is able to form relationships with some special wild animals - a mountain lion, bears, a squirrel, and raptors including Freedom, the eagle. Freedom is brought in to the refuge in a very weak state, and Jeff helps her regain her will to live. She in turn teaches him about fighting for life when he is diagnosed with cancer. The story is beautifully written, bittersweet, touching, funny and thought provoking. It is captivating -- I read it in one long evening because I couldn't put the book down. It is a gorgeous story and I hope that it will stay with me, reminding me to be a better caretaker of this beautiful world & its wild ones.

Elizabeth says

I read this entertaining and informative book for my bird club book club. I didn't learn much about eagles, but I enjoyed learning about the author's experiences as a volunteer in a wildlife rescue agency. While working there, Guidry faced serious illness and described his experiences in coping with knowledge of the

disease and in dealing with the treatment. This part of the book rang a lot of bells with me, having faced serious illness now over two decades ago.

Amy says

A fabulous story that reads a bit like Marley and me, but Freedom (the eagle) does not die at the end!

It's sometimes funny -- the antics of this eagle and other animals at Sarvey Wildlife Care Center are a riot -- it's also sometimes sad -- the abuse some of these animals have suffered, the challenges faced by the people and animals in this book, but most importantly, it's inspiring -- the friendship and trust between Freedom and Jeff Guidry is unbelievable.

It reminds me of the bond created between me and my friend, Pam's dog, Abby, after Pam first got her. I had her on the floor of the passenger seat between my legs -- she had never ridden in a car before and really did not know Pam & I. I kept petting her and telling her it was going to be okay -- we formed a bond that day and it is still there 13 years later.

Note: Keep the kleen-ex close by.

Don Woodman says

An Eagle Named Freedom is the self told story of Jeff Guidry who works at a wildlife rehabilitation facility outside Seattle. While working there he encounters Freedom, a bald Eagle chick with a broken wing. She is unreleasable and Mr. Guidry forms a bond with her. Mr. Guidry develops lymphoma and his intense bond with Freedom is a source of inspiration to him during his recovery. This is the heart of the book and Mr. Guidry fleshes it out with some stories of other animals he interacts with at the rehab facility, most notably a bear cub that he raises and that is subsequently released back into the wild. [return]The work done in wildlife facilities is at once profound and prosaic. The stories of the animals and the workers who toil tirelessly and largely without fanfare certainly deserve to be told. This book will be a winner among those that like uplifting tales about animals, and about individuals struggling with and triumphing over serious illness. Who doesn't like such uplifting fare? As a veterinarian who works extensively with wildlife I was certainly able to relate personally to the tales of how working with such animals can be a humbling and deeply touching, almost transcendental experience. [return]Perhaps because of my personal experience there were the predictable passages that rankled, for example the use of the term stent when referring to an IV catheter, but by and large Mr. Guidry's tales of the wildlife rehabilitation field rang true, and for me this is where the book is at its strongest. I would have preferred for the book to have told more of the story of the wildlife sanctuary and the challenges of running such a facility. Mr. Guidry touches lightly on such issues since his focus is principally on Freedom the eagle, and to a lesser extent his own personal battle with cancer. Even here Mr. Guidry travels over this terrain quickly. He is a first time writer and his prose is straight forward. The book is a quick and easy read. The passages where Mr. Guidry describes his illness, receiving the diagnosis and then later awaiting news of whether treatment has been successful or not have a quiet power to them. Indeed how could they not, and I would be the first to acknowledge the uplifting and inspirational qualities of this story. Mr. Guidry has little desire to visit these experiences at length, however and quickly moves his tale back to Freedom. [return]I am fortunate to have worked with and to have held a bald eagle. The latent power of such an animal, even when sick is truly amazing, and the majesty of such a

creature, the awe one feels when interacting with it is difficult to convey without lapsing into purple prose, which at times Mr. Guidry does. This tendency is exacerbated by a pervading tone of new age mysticism. I myself am not one to really get into discussions of eagles as creatures of the spirit world and so on. Mr. Guidry has no such qualms. Given that during his illness Mr. Guidry used a visualization technique of Freedom swooping throughout his body and attacking his cancer and flying it away, and that he credits this imagery in part with his success in battling the disease such imagery is indeed a central part of the book.

[return]Mr. Guidry's passion for animals and their welfare is evident throughout the book, nowhere more so than when he discusses his anger at an individual who owned a cougar cub that ended up being "rescued" by the wildlife center. "I wanted to beat the crap out of that guy. I wanted to watch him die" Mr. Guidry writes. Ironically Mr. Guidry goes on to describe his interactions with the Cougar, and the ego gratification that he and others get from their interactions with the cougar. He doesn't pause to note that the things he gained from his interactions with the cougar are the exact same things the original owner was probably seeking. There is a risk of those who work in wildlife facilities developing a sense that only they should be allowed to be around exotic animals and that other people aren't knowledgeable enough and shouldn't ever be allowed to interact with exotic animals. Since ignorance is indeed exceedingly common this attitude is understandable, but it borders on a hypocrisy that is unfortunate at best. I can't tell if Mr. Guidry is guilty of this sort of misplaced self-righteousness, but a more subtle and nuanced book would have discussed these issues more adeptly. Mr. Guidry discusses them not at all.

[return]One issue Mr. Guidry does discuss quite well is the difficulty in releasing rehabilitated animals. A successful release is the holy grail of wildlife work. As wonderful as such moments are they are also excruciating for those who have to watch an animal they have raised and cared for on a daily basis walk or fly away, not knowing what fate will befall the creature. The sad reality of wildlife work is that if you're not getting your heart broken you're probably not doing it right.

[return]As a veterinarian, I was bothered by a couple of passages that caught my eye. In one section Mr. Guidry relates how he administered anesthesia to an animal while another worker conducted a medical procedure. It is all too common for non-veterinarians in animal shelter settings to lose a sense of perspective and to begin crossing the line of what should and should not reasonably be done by lay people. Generally, when such lines are crossed the people are well intentioned, and have absolutely no idea of the risks to the animals and to themselves that are occurring. Even more concerning to me was a passage where Mr. Guidry relates the tale of an animal's death. " We knew she was dying, so we didn't need the help of a veterinarian. All we could do was make her comfortable." he intones and then two paragraphs later, " She died in my arms. We were doing CPR on her." This probably will go right over the heads of most readers but is deeply disturbing to me. When an animal is clearly dying is often precisely when a veterinarian is needed. And if making the animal comfortable was the sole goal then why in heaven's name was CPR being performed? Still, these are the sorts of criticisms that will matter more to me as a veterinarian than they will to most readers who I imagine will overlook such issues with an indulgent eye towards the obvious care for animals that pervades Mr. Guidry's book.

[return]I feel slightly churlish being critical of this book since it is at heart simply trying to be an uplifting and inspiring tale that I have no doubt will be precisely these things to most people. I confess to a guilty pleasure in reading the sorts of mildly insipid emails that discuss the friendships formed between a hippopotamus and a turtle in a third world zoo, or the emails that detail the deer that visits the kitty cat daily. By I don't feel a need to read a book about such incidents. For the most part I'm good with an email. Interestingly, this story of Mr. Guidry, his wildlife center, and Freedom the owl almost certainly served as inspiration for another book I read and enjoyed, "Jackie's Wild Seattle" by Will Hobbs. That book is a kids or young teen's book about a couple of children that spend the summer with their uncle who works at a wildlife center in Seattle . The uncle has cancer, and a close relationship with an eagle. I'd highly recommend Jackie's Wild Seattle to anyone. And for those that love watching the Animal Planet channel, and the Hallmark channel I'd recommend . " An eagle named Freedom." For others it will be a moderately enjoyable quick read. Personally, I would like to see Mr. Guidry write a second book in which he describes in much more detail the day to day occurrences at the wildlife center. I suspect he has more stories to tell, and I can't help but feel that the quite power of such stories will come through more if he wasn't consciously

trying to tell a story of inspiration.

Lizw says

I want to give the story a five, and the writing a three, but this was a sheer delight to read, especially for someone who has love the birds her whole life.

Sharon says

Rock musician Jeff Guidry's memoir, "An Eagle Called Freedom," is a heartwarming and, at times, heartbreaking tale of his work at the Sarvey Wildlife Conservation Center.

Guidry develops a special relationship with Freedom, an eagle whose wings are broken so badly that she is unable to fly once they heal. He cares for her on a regular basis and they develop a mutual respect and understanding. Guidry credits Freedom, in part, for him overcoming cancer as she gave him something to live for -- the healing is mutual.

Guidry writes lovingly about other creatures at Sarvey, his friends and colleagues working to help the wild ones in their care and, in most cases, return the rehabilitated animals to their natural habitat. There are some heartbreaking moments, as special animals pass on, but the overall respect for the creatures shown by all at Sarvey show incredible empathy and concern.

Highly recommended for those who loved "A Lion Named Christian" and similar memoirs.
