



The Birds of Pandemonium

Michele Raffin

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“Michele Raffin has made an important contribution to saving endangered birds, and her book is a fascinating and rarely seen glimpse behind the scenes. The joy she gets from her close relationships with these amazing animals and her outsized commitment to them comes through loud and clear in this engaging and joyful book.” —Dominick Dorsa, Curator of Birds, San Francisco Zoo

Each morning at first light, Michele Raffin awakens to the bewitching music that heralds another day at Pandemonium Aviaries—a symphony that swells from the most vocal of over 350 avian throats representing over 40 species. “It knocks me out, every day,” she admits.

Pandemonium Aviaries is a conservation organization dedicated to saving and breeding birds at the edge of extinction, including some of the largest populations of rare species in the world. And their behavior is even more fascinating than their glorious plumage or their songs. They fall in love, they mourn, they rejoice, they sacrifice, they have a sense of humor, they feel jealous, they invent, plot, cope, and sometimes they murder each other. As Raffin says, “They teach us volumes about the interrelationships of humans and animals.”

Their stories make up the heart of this book. There’s Sweetie, a tiny quail with an outsize personality; the inspiring Oscar, a Lady Gouldian finch who can’t fly but finds a way to reach the highest perches of his aviary to roost. The ecstatic reunion of a disabled Victoria crowned pigeon, Wing, and her brother, Coffee, is as wondrous as the silent kinship that develops between Amadeus, a one-legged turaco, and an autistic young visitor.

Ultimately, *The Birds of Pandemonium* is about one woman’s crusade to save precious lives, bird by bird, and offers insights into how following a passion can transform not only oneself but also the world.

“Delightful . . . full of wonderful accounts of bird behavior, demonstrating caring, learning, sociability, adaptability, and a will to live. Its appeal is ageless, her descriptions riveting, and her devotion to the birds remarkable.” —Joanna Burger, author of *The Parrot Who Owns Me: The Story of a Relationship*

“A remarkable book. Reading about the birds of Pandemonium will make you laugh and cry; it will make you see more clearly the need to take care of our planet; and it will confirm that one person with a passion can make a difference.” —Jeff Corwin, nature conservationist and host, Animal Planet

“*The Birds of Pandemonium* touched me deeply . . . This book is about reconnecting with the nature of birds, and the nature of ourselves.” —Jon Young, author of *What the Robin Knows*

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