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Java Talk
(for January 24 to January 30, 2008)

Every Age Is The Best Age

The Good Enough Wild Mother and Other Mentors

During our lifetimes, we will have many meaningful mentors, and no matter who we are, or how old we are, we will also be teachers, one way or another. Often, the right teacher to appear, for the student who is ready, will turn out to be a storyteller.

I have been fortunate to have a long-standing mentor from whom I am forever learning. She is a month (and a bit) short of being nineteen years older than me, and now I am two years (plus around four months) younger than she was when we first met! Although I have many remembrances of our encounters from the beginning and along the way, perhaps the one that opened the door to our long-lasting relationship was when she said something to an audience of authors and wannabes about being wild.

In *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Ph.D. discusses the “wild mother,” which I think defines part of the relationship I have with my mentor:

“These are the women who, as soon as you see them, something in you leaps, and something in you thinks, ‘MaMa.’ You take one look and think, ‘I am her progeny, I am her child, she is my mother, my grandmother.’... They are like the fairy godmother, like mentor, like the mother you never had, or did not have long enough.... They are vastly different from the too-good mother.... Their purpose is to help you, to care about your art, and to reattach you to your wildish instincts.... She creates a forest around us and we begin to deal with life from that fresh and original perspective....”

Of course, my dear mentor is a storyteller; and a writer; and she has a Ph.D. We are also long-time friends who know about being wild.

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