



## The Rock That Is Higher: Story as Truth

*Madeleine L'Engle*

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*We are all strangers in a strange land, longing for home, but not quite knowing what or where home is. We glimpse it sometimes in our dreams, or as we turn a corner, and suddenly there is a strange, sweet familiarity that vanishes almost as soon as it comes... –Madeleine L'Engle, from The Rock That Is Higher*

Story captures our hearts and feeds our imaginations. It reminds us who we are and where we came from. Story gives meaning and direction to our lives as we learn to see it as an affirmation of God's love and truth—an acknowledgment of our longing for a rock in the midst of life's wilderness.

Drawing upon her own experiences, well-known tales in literature, and selected narratives from Scripture, Madeleine L'Engle gently leads the way into the glorious world of story in *The Rock That Is Higher*. Here she acknowledges universal human longings and considers how literature, Scripture, personal stories, and life experiences all point us toward our true home.

## The Rock That Is Higher: Story as Truth Details

Date : Published March 19th 2002 by Shaw Books (first published 1993)

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Author : Madeleine L'Engle

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## **From Reader Review The Rock That Is Higher: Story as Truth for online ebook**

### **Claudia says**

L'Engle wrote The Rock That is Higher in the aftermath of a terrible automobile accident. It would appear that the lengthy period of recuperation gave her time to muse over Christianity's place and roll in her life and life in general. L'Engle does not separate the spiritual and secular, but sees the ways in which the two are closely knit together. She sees God and Jesus as an intricate part of home, family, love and truth in the lives of believers.

L'Engle comes from a line of storytellers. She recognizes how humanity uses stories to enrich, explore, reveal, and teach. When reading and listening to stories Christians can see God in the truths that are uncovered. She makes the point that truth is not to be confused with facts. Fiction can be a wonderful vessel for truth. After all, didn't Jesus use parables to reveal truth?

While theologically I am not one hundred percent aligned with L'Engle. She graciously allows and encourages personal exploration and interpretation. Her writing gives the reader much to think about.

This book is written in a very personal style. The reader feels as if he or she is sitting across the table from the author with a cup of tea and an open family scrapbook. L'Engle reveals intimate moments from her life's experience in very poised prose. I thank NetGalley and Crown Publishing for providing me with a copy of The Rock That Is Higher in exchange for my honest opinion. I was under no obligation to provide a positive review and received no monetary compensation.

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### **Apryl Anderson says**

She doesn't so much "write" as "have a conversation"

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### **Sarah says**

Madeleine L'Engle is one of, if not my very favourite authors. This book was mixed for me. I found that she wandered more than usual and at times, I lost the thread of each chapter/essay. On the other hand, the chapter on Story as Truth is one that repeatedly made me want to stand up and cheer. Her reflections on how scripture can be true without necessarily being literal and the dangers of entirely literal thinking put into words a sense that I have always had but would never be able to articulate. L'Engle often expresses the essences of my faith in ways that I could never articulate and that is why so often, I am filled with a sense of gratitude as I read her writing.

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### **Linda Gaines says**

I liked some chapters better than others.

One favorite quote, "If we do not allow ourselves to grieve, we cannot allow God to grieve...oh surely god grieves."

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### **Rachel Murphy says**

A lovely reflection on Story, and how crucial it is to our growth, our formation, and inspiration for our lives. The main "inspiration" that L'Engle gave me here was a further prod to return to Scripture and deepen my knowledge of it.

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### **Miss Clark says**

3.5 - 4 stars

One of L'Engle's finest. Highly recommended!

PP. 56 - 57: Her description of meal time, this shared meal in so many times & various people - so beautiful and real.

PP. 106 - 107 - Complication and Peripety

"Don't we trust the Lord enough to tell him how we really feel? To question? To rail? But we must also accept that sometimes we don't hear answers."

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### **Connie says**

This book by Madeleine L'Engle is an incredible undertaking! Somehow she manages to take what appears to me to be extremely different genres and tie them all together into a well written book about the truth in story and myth. Her writing style is engaging as she shares with the reader her long held beliefs about religion. While I can't say I'm completely on board with everything she wrote, I very much enjoyed reading this book and felt uplifted by many of the comparisons and observations she shared. I also loved how her joy from a lifetime of loving Jesus shines through on each and every page.

I feel this book is definitely worthy of 5 stars.

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### **Nancy says**

I must read L'Engle's nonfiction very slowly for there is much to digest. I rarely agree fully with every point

she makes, but I always find my thinking challenged by her words and take away much that ultimately gives me clarity on matters I had not known needed her help.

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### **Dawn says**

A book of her healing intertwined with the story of faith and the importance of story.

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### **David Bjorlin says**

There's a bit of fluff between, but then there are these absolute jewels of wisdom:  
"I am using myth in its ancient meaning--that which was true, that which is true, that which will be true, that strange truth which is as elusive as home."

"As I read Scripture I saw that God used strange people to do the work of Love, ordinary people who were just like the rest of us, not perfect, not morally virtuous, but people who listened to God and, often reluctantly, did what was asked of them."

"Story helps us with the questions that have no answers. I wish the Church (of all denominations) would be brave enough to acknowledge that there are questions which, during our mortal lives, are not going to be answered. There are no answers to the wonder of Creation, the marvel of the Incarnation, the glory of the Resurrection. Too many answers lead to smug self-righteousness and--even worse--to human beings, rather than God, deciding who is and who is not loved by the Maker. Can't we trust God?"

"God is constantly breaking human rules in order to offer the greater rule of love, speaking through people shunned by society."

"It is only when we are not rigid in our expectations of our communities and when our doors are wide open, that [Christ] may choose to come, with the stranger, into our midst."

"Almost everything good can be abused, but that doesn't make the original good any less good, and if it's fun, it may well be joy in the Lord and in Creation, not sin. When we deny our legitimate pleasures we are denying the Incarnation for Jesus came to affirm, not deny."

"[T]he hysterical need for a common enemy is an enemy of story. If the only way we can believe that our faith is valid is by accusing another faith of being false, then our faith is shaky indeed."

""It is easier for a single human being to be open and willing to change than it is for an institution, but if enough of us single creatures are open to God's amazing revelations, our institutions will ultimately come alone with us. Long before the church institution was ready, many individuals were willing to accept that the earth is round and is a planet circling a parent sun in one of countless galaxies. An institution, be it religious, medical, legal, or educational, tends to move very slowly, holding onto the status quo, afraid of rocking the boat, loath to accept the familiar ideas may have to be left behind. We shouldn't wait for the institutions to do the changing, but be willing to change ourselves, and if we become more open, more loving, more interdependent through the lavishness of God's love, then we can and will make a difference."

"Someone who loudly affirms Jesus as his personal Savior may be further from knowing the Lord than someone who lovingly longs to be able to do so and hardly dares, knowing the enormity of such an affirmation and the incredible responsibility it brings."

"I structure my life in the daily readings of Morning and Evening Prayer, and in the Eucharist. Then, when tragedy strikes unexpectedly, as it so often does, the framework for grief is already there."

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### **Megan Byrd says**

I wasn't sure what to expect from this book but I really enjoyed it and took a lot from it. I loved Madeleine sharing her experience with writing, talking about how she writes and why she writes. I loved the explanation of the importance and purpose of story in writing. She shared how a car accident she experienced in which she was seriously injured, affected her faith and her relationship with God as well as the stories that she learned from it.

The chapters all talk about one aspect of story as she defines it: homecoming, a family affair, affirmation of God's love, the search for truth, scripture, the Lord's prayer, community, joy, good news, a creative act, a redemptive act, and resurrection. It was very encouraging to see how her faith intersects and is interwoven with her writing and writing life. I found it very helpful as a writer and as a Christian. It's not a light read, but it's a good one.

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### **Michelle Kidwell says**

The Rock That Is Higher

Story as Truth

by Madeleine L'Engle

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Christian

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I am reviewing a copy of The Rock That Is Higher through Crown Books and Netgalley:

In this book beloved author Madeline L'Engle reminds us that story captures our hearts and feeds our imaginations. Story reminds us who we are and where we come from and it gives us meaning and directions in our lives as we learn to see it as an affirmation of God's love and truth. Our acknowledgement of our longing if the rock in the wilderness.

L'Engle draws upon her own experiences as well as tales in literature and selected scripture to bring us this

book.

I give The Rock that is Higher five out of five stars!

Happy Reading

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### **Lady says**

This is a fantastic book, full of much of the same ideas about story and myth and faith that J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis speak of. And while it's similar in thought and premise, it is still fresh and interesting; a delving into the different facets of what story can be to us rather than a reiteration of things that have been said before. The simplest lesson I draw from this book is about Christian myth. That sometimes the stories we tell are not in Scripture, may not be factual, but like other myths they can contain what J.R.R. Tolkien calls a "splintered fragment of the true light".

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### **Rachelle Sperling says**

This book is all L'Engle in style. It is insightful and rambling all at the same time. In it the author gives us a great deal of auto-biographical insight into her life and her thinking. She relates her own story to her process of storytelling. This is not a "how to" book for writers. This work is not so much about the process of creating a story as it is the process of how she lived her own story and the impact that had upon her work.

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### **E.L. says**

Not entirely what I was expecting - I thought there would be more emphasis on Story (I've been reading Tolkien and Lewis on Story lately, so that's where my mindset has been) - and instead got a gentle rambling of meditation, sometimes connected to stories, sometimes not. Still, a beautiful little book, filled with hope and faith. And the latter part does tie more into Story than the first.

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