

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE JOYS OF LOVE

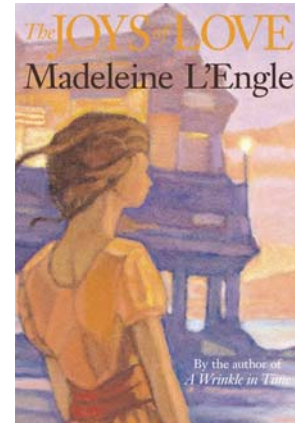
by Madeleine L'Engle

Reading Level

Grades 7 up

About the Novel

During the summer of 1946, twenty-year-old Elizabeth is doing what she has dreamed of since she was a little girl: working in the theatre. Elizabeth is passionate about her work. She's never felt so alive. And soon she finds another passion: Kurt Canitz, the dashing young director of the company, and the first man Elizabeth's ever kissed who has really meant something to her. Then Elizabeth's perfect summer is profoundly shaken when Kurt turns out not to be the kind of man she thought he was.



Moving and romantic, this coming-of-age story was written during the 1940s. As revealed in an introduction by the author's granddaughter Léna Roy, the protagonist Elizabeth is close to an autobiographical portrait of Ms. L'Engle herself as a young woman—"vibrant, vulnerable, and yearning for love and all that life has to offer."

"I loved this book! This is the kind of book that you read . . . and when you are done, you sigh and feel satisfied."—A YALSA YA Galley Teen Reader

Discussion Questions

1. The book evinces the world of the 1940s. Discuss the details that identify the period. Compare and contrast the story's setting with today's world.
2. Identify the themes of the book. Which ones are specific to the period? Which ones are timeless? Discuss why.
3. Elizabeth is a strong character, determined to follow her passion for the theatre despite her aunt's plans for her. Can you understand her aunt's intentions? Do you feel Elizabeth is right or wrong to follow her heart? Why?
4. There are two men in Elizabeth's life: Kurt, the charming heartbreaker, and Ben, who may be less razzle-dazzle but has more good qualities. If Elizabeth came to you for advice about which man she should choose, what would you tell her? Why?
5. In the introduction, Léna Roy, Ms. L'Engle's granddaughter, divulges that the character of Elizabeth is largely an autobiographical portrait of the author as a young woman. Does this information affect how you perceive Elizabeth? In what way?

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About the Author

Madeleine L'Engle (1918–2007) was the author of many books for children and adults. She was perhaps best known for the Time Quintet, especially *A Wrinkle in Time*, which won a Newbery Medal, and her books featuring the Austin family, including the Newbery Honor Book *A Ring of Endless Light*.

For more information on Madeleine L'Engle:

Web sites:

www.fsgkidsbooks.com

Includes a biography of the author and additional information about her books as well as excerpts.

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