



And Both Were Young

Madeleine L'Engle

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Flip doesn't think she'll ever fit in at the Swiss boarding school. Besides being homesick for her father and Connecticut, she isn't sophisticated like the other girls, and discussions about boys leave her tongue-tied. Her happiest times are spent apart from the others, sketching or wandering in the mountains.

But the day she's out walking alone and meets a French boy, Paul, things change for Flip. As their relationship grows, so does her self-confidence. Despite her newfound happiness, there are times when Paul seems a stranger to her. And since dating is forbidden except to seniors, their romance must remain a secret. With so many new feelings and obstacles to overcome in her present, can Flip help Paul to confront his troubled past and find a future?

And Both Were Young Details

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From Reader Review And Both Were Young for online ebook

Anna Smithberger says

This was very sweet. Definitely reads like book from early in an author's career, but still worthwhile.

Julia says

2.5 stars - I love me some Madeleine L'Engle, but apparently all L'Engle are not created equal. But this is one of her very first. Wrote this for me to remember, s/o to anyone else who may read this

Payal Jain says

This book was absolutely divine!

L'engle did Switzerland justice and there was some amazing character building. I adored the friendship between Paul & Flip. . . It was the stuff legends are made of. :)

This is one book that's gonna stay with me.

And I don't care that it's summer. I wanna get me some hot chocolate and go stargaze!

Monica Edinger says

Well, I would have given it five stars when I read it over and over and over when I was around twelve. (I even tried to copy out the library copy, but gave up after a few chapters. In those times and place, I didn't think you could buy books. Living in East Lansing, Michigan circa 1964, you couldn't very easily.)

Margaret says

And Both Were Young is good as boarding school stories go and has a sweet, quiet romance, but I don't think the part of the plot which has to do with Paul's history works very well with the rest of it. I mean, the wartime amnesia thing is fine and interesting, but not the mysterious stranger part. Anyway, I do like the convincing way in which Flip grows from shyness to confidence during the course of the book, and of course I pretty much always like boarding school stories.

Valerie says

What girl doesn't fantasize about going to a Swiss boarding school, having a dashing artist father, a mysterious and beautiful mentor/teacher, and a dark, brooding forest boy to fall in love with?

Bethany says

Simple & Sweet

Emmie says

A coming of age story, a boarding school in the Swiss Alps, mystery and romance, Madeleine L'Engle...can it get any better?

"She began to feel the sense of wonderful elation that always came to her when beauty took hold of her and made her forget her fears."

Lisa Vegan says

Not my favorite L'Engle but still worth reading. About a teenage girl whose mother has died who gets sent to a Swiss boarding school and her adjustment to her new life: her relationships with a new boy, her teachers & fellow students at the school, her father and his girlfriend. I love L'Engle's flawed but gifted girl characters. A lot here that rang true, especially how an adolescent girl might feel when a father dates after the mother dies.

Important to read the reissue with Madeleine L'Engle's poignant note about how when she originally published this book, writing about death and sex had to be toned down, and how with the edition reissued/published in the 1980s she was able to make it more as she'd originally envisioned.

Angie says

I think this may have been the last Madeleine L'Engle book I read (for the first time) as a teenager. And for some reason it holds a sort of distinction in my head because of that fact. I, like most other readers I know who love her books, got in on the whole thing with *A Wrinkle in Time*, moving on to the other Murry and O'Keefe family books and then the Austin family series and so on from there. I must have been somewhere around ten or so when I first read the Time series and by the time I got through all the others and worked my way around to her standalones I was a bit older. Although one of my very favorite things about her body of young adult work is that there are so many connections between them. And while *AND BOTH WERE YOUNG* is probably one of the most standalone of them all, for the discerning reader there is a very lovely, very oblique reference to its main character in L'Engle's much later novel *A Severed Wasp*. Interestingly, I don't think I ever realized just how old this book is. Originally published in 1949, it was actually her first young adult novel. Incidentally, my copy features the old 1983 cover. But a lovely new hardback edition was just released on Tuesday and, as it is one of my very favorite of L'Engle's books, I wanted to highlight it here while I convince my local bookshop to order a copy into the store.

Phillipa Hunter, better known as Flip (oh, how much I love this), never wanted to leave her father and her Connecticut home to come to a Swiss boarding school. That was her father's new "friend" Eunice's bright idea. Since her mother passed away, Flip has grown even closer to her artist father and the idea of leaving him and attending a foreign school among a host of strange other girls terrifies her. But her father is bound for China to draw and Eunice is traveling with him instead of Flip. And so Flip tries to hide her trembling and put on a brave face for her father's sake. But boarding school is just as alien and difficult as she feared. Though the girls hail from all over the globe, Flip finds it hard to fit in. Long-limbed and lacking in coordination, she watches her fellow students from the sidelines and prays for the year to be up soon. The one bright spot in the gloom is her art teacher Percy--a young woman who seems to understand Flip's solitude and need to filter her kaleidoscopic emotions through some sort of creative act. Then one day out exploring further than she ought to be above the school grounds, Flip runs into a young man named Paul. Paul lives with his father in a small cottage not far from the school. These two dispossessed young teenagers form a friendship and, in the process, find the kind of acceptance and understanding in each other that they've been searching for.

Flip is the kind of foot-in-her-mouth, arms-and-legs-everywhere protagonist that I connected with instantly as a teen reader. I loved her for her haplessness and the way that she just kept on stumbling through her outer coating of awkward to a place where she could voice her thoughts and experiences so that someone else could see them and appreciate her for who she was. In my eyes, that made her admirable--that drive to keep going despite the many misconceptions and deliberate slights of those around her. That was what was so hard for me at that age, and I like to think I drew a little strength from watching her try and fail and try again and succeed. It helped that her interactions with Percy were so poignant, particularly in the wake of having lost her mother and being without her father. The other girls at the school were especially well done as well. At first you think they will be mere stereotypical characterizations, the way Flip almost expects them to be, but they each emerge from their initial roles to play an important part in Flip's development. And then there's Paul. Lovely Paul. He has long reminded me of Jeff Greene from *A Solitary Blue* and a kinder, less destructive Zachary Grey. Yes. You will fall in love with Paul just as much as Flip does. And the even more gratifying thing is that the story is not just about Flip's journey to self-discovery, but Paul's as well. It's not all the way he fills her needs, but how she fills his as he has an unusually dark past that he is rather successfully steadfastly refusing to deal with until Flip comes along. This is an eternally sweet and moving book. Like so many of L'Engle's books, I turn to this one when I want to be reminded that the world and the people in it can be beautiful despite the darkness.

Meaghan says

This was apparently quite daring when it was originally published in the 1940s, so much that it had to be bowdlerized. But it seems awfully tame to me. I read the original (non-bowdlerized) version and find myself wondering just what they felt they needed to cut out. The whole "mysterious stranger lurking around" subplot seemed pretty truncated to me.

Nevertheless, this was a good book. It does a good job portraying the claustrophobic, almost incestuous boarding school atmosphere (I would have HATED it) and it's also interesting to see Philippa mature from a painfully shy, sulky and rather whiny girl to a stronger, more independent and mature person as the months go on. And all the topical stuff of the post-war period was well integrated into the story.

Anna says

This made me want to go to a Swiss boarding school with stick-up-the-ass rules and a bunch of kind of snobby girls.

Julie S. says

(3.5) A sweet coming of age novel. Middle grade level, I think? The characters were charming, the dialogue a little unrealistic for teenagers, but I still liked it. Just because I didn't give it four+ stars doesn't mean it wasn't good. (Yes, Mom, I'm talking to you. ?)

Deborah Markus says

Just a wonderful story, set shortly after World War II.

Philippa Hunter, a timid, artistic teenager, must attend a Swiss boarding school while her father, a professional painter, travels Europe. Philippa ("Flip" to her family) knows this year is going to be horrible. She's never been able to make friends – she's awkward both socially and physically, more so than ever thanks to a kneecap shattered in the car accident that killed her mother the year before. She's always clung to her family, and now she's going to be on her own for the first time in her life.

Spoiler alert: The girl who's convinced she has no courage at all finds enough to perform a truly heroic act for the sake of someone she cares about. The unpopular girl becomes one of the best-liked kids in her class, not by getting a spiffy new haircut and attitude but by sharing her artistic gifts. The klutz finds a sport she can enjoy and excel in. The motherless girl who's never talked to a boy in her life finds friendship and more in a young man who teaches her that being able to remember a lost loved one is a precious gift.

The prose here isn't as luminous as that in L'Engle's *Camilla*, but there's also no horrifying sexism. The love story makes you want to cheer. And the dialogue is terrifically funny. Also, Flip's relationship with a particular teacher reminds me a great deal of some scenes in *Jane Eyre*.

If you like the sound of a good old-fashioned young adult novel that stands up perfectly to the test of time, read this book.

Katie Avagliano says

I wish I'd thought to explore more of L'Engle's books when I was younger. I always loved a *Wrinkle in Time* but after his I suspect I would have gobbled them all up. A lovely book for 8-11 year olds (though be prepared to explain a little about the Holocaust to them, there will be questions)

Susie says

I rounded up on my star rating because I love the author. But the book is probably more like 3.5 stars. When it came out in 1949, it was probably a delight for young ladies the world over. A boarding school in Switzerland! A young man with a murky past! But by today's standards it's pretty tame. It was a lovely little story though, and I enjoyed the innocence of its characters.

Judy says

Madeleine L'Engle's career did not take off until the publication in 1962 of *A Wrinkle in Time*, which went on to win the Newbery Medal and remains her most well known book to this day. But she began writing adult novels in 1945, novels that were published but did not sell very well and quickly fell out of print. She almost gave up writing in 1958.

Had these early novels been around when I was in my teens, I would have read and loved them I am sure. Reading them now, I like them better than *A Wrinkle in Time*.

And *Both Were Young* was her first novel for young adults, published in 1949. It was revised and reprinted in 1983 and that is the version I read. In the Foreword to the revised edition, Ms L'Engle says, "When *And Both Were Young* was first published, there were a great many very simple things that could not be put in a book that was to be read by children and young adults." She goes on to mention attitudes about death and sex in those days. She says, "So the portions that are now in the book that were not in the original are truer to the original typescript than what was actually printed." Good! I did not miss anything by reading the later edition.

No matter her understandable discouragement, L'Engle's early novels are well written with more believable characters than those found in much of the fiction I have read from the 1940s and 1950s. Her female characters especially say and do things just the way actual people would.

In this novel, Flip (nickname for Philippa), has been sent to boarding school in Switzerland, just one year after her mother died. Her father, whom she adores, is an illustrator of children's books. He has a new woman in his life who "lusts after him" as Flip says, and whom Flip cannot stand. His current assignment will take him to China, a place he considers unsafe for Flip. The solution is boarding school and daily letters back and forth.

Flip is homesick, still missing her mother, angry at being abandoned, and hating the new woman; all appropriate feelings for a 14 year old girl. She does not fit in and cannot make any friends. But she is a Madeleine L'Engle creation, so figures out how to sneak away from the confining regulations at school and walk by herself in the woods. She meets Paul, who is also troubled and angry for his own reasons. Slowly and beautifully they become friends and then fall in love.

One could complain that a few too many unlikely coincidences bring Flip and Paul through their troubles to a happy ending. One could also make the same complaints about the *Twilight* series, but Madeleine L'Engle does it without vampires or werewolves, in 241 pages, and with just as much sexual tension.

And Both Were Young was reissued in hardcover by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 2010; then in paperback by Square Fish in 2011. It is for ages 12 and up. I think the book would make a lovely Christmas gift for any female teen on your list who loves to read.

Claire Monahan says

Dammit, I love Flip. I love Madeleine L'Engle, I love the idea of boarding schools, Switzerland, and French boys and girls snowed into a storm of romance, adventure, and heartbreaking loneliness. (I've also only realized that I've always had a strange attraction for the widowed father and only daughter stories. This one absolutely fills that niche.)

I've reread this book countless times now, and each read only makes me happier and sentimental for the gorgeous but grounding tales of Madeleine L'Engle. Some may say *And Both Were Young* is not her best, but for those readers who can appreciate L'Engle's work for its simplistic beauty, it certainly will prove satisfying and complete.

I'd also like to comment that since I was 12, this book has made me want a winter wedding by candlelight in a chapel in the middle of the woods. Just fyi, in case someone out there shares the same fantasy.

Moonlight Reader says

I've been doing a L'Engle read for the last year or so & decided to read this standalone in connection with a genre reading challenge - February is romance month. I previously read this book back when I was in junior high/early high school. It was originally published in 1949, which makes it one of her very early novels (it appears this was 3rd), and I probably read it around 1978.

It is quite dated, but that doesn't mean it isn't also enjoyable. It is set in a Swiss boarding school, which was one of the things that fascinated me when I read it as a public school student growing up in Boise, Idaho. A Swiss boarding school seemed like one of the most exotic, interesting things ever and I frankly envied Philippa for what I perceived as a wonderful opportunity.

This time around, I enjoyed the fact that Flip was obviously an introvert, and I was interested in how L'Engle approached her introversion. Being an introvert in a boarding school would be tough - it's not a place where solitude is easily accessed. Being an introvert myself, I felt for Flip and understood her hunger to spend time alone, and didn't like the way the various characters approached her need for quiet. No one really seemed to understand, much less respect, the fact that a young woman might need to spend time alone to recharge her batteries. This rings really true, even today. Flip didn't always handle herself well, but her peers also really didn't understand her, and they seemed to expect that she would change to suit their expectations, rather than suiting their expectations to her character, which was frustrating.

The romance is extremely chaste, with some mild kissing between Flip and Paul. I also grew up skiing, which might have been another reason that this book made such an impression on me as a young woman, since a ski meet represented a major plot point in the book.

There is apparently an updated edition of the book which restored some of L'Engle's original manuscript

which had been cut by her publishers because it either referenced death or was "sexually suggestive." Set in Europe in 1946, many of the various characters are dealing with the aftermath of WWII and the Jewish genocide. More than one character has family that was murdered in the concentration camps. It is sort of astonishing to me that, given the time and the subject matter, it was considered appropriate to sanitize that topic. And, having read it, I can't actually imagine how the words "sexually suggestive" could've been applied to this book. All of the adult characters appear to be celibate, and Paul and Flip share a couple of kisses.

I don't think it has worn quite as well as some of L'Engle's other work, but I still enjoyed it. Philippa Hunter apparently makes a cameo appearance in one of the later works, *A Severed Wasp*, published in 1983.

Joy (joyous reads) says

My experience with this book is not very pleasant. I mean, it wasn't bad. No, not at all. I suppose it can be compared to when one is reading the back of a Raisin Bran box of cereal while shovelling spoonfuls of them in their mouth: it's good for you but in the end, it's no choco puffs. The thing is, I feel like I've been gipped. The blurb at the back of this book advertises **FORBIDDEN ROMANCE** in big, bold letters. And if you know me, you know that's a huge bait. Besides, it's **MADELEINE L'ENGLE!** How could you now want to read this?! Well, I did. And I'm sorry to say, it was a tad disappointing.

The writing is very odd. I suppose it reflects the era from whence the novel took place. The dialogues are very clinical, and some too formal. But again, that probably had more to do with the way people spoke at the time (post-World War 1).

This is the story of a young girl sent to a boarding school in Switzerland. Flip's father, being a traveling artist, did not want to take Flip around the world with him. So Eunice, his companion, suggested she goes to a boarding school. He's also made it a goal in life to search for all the missing kids displaced during the war. What I don't get is why his travels brought him to China when the war was centred in Europe.

Eunice, the woman who wants to replace Flip's mother in her father's life, plays the quintessential evil step mother role: very haughty, expects too much of Flip, and very critical of Flip. And I guess the reason why Flip was so against the boarding school to begin with.

In the boarding school, we see Flip be her awkward self. The girls call her "Pill" instead of Flip, and we see her stumble haplessly in every social situation. With the help of her Art teacher and her nephew, Paul, she starts blossoming on her own. We see her adapt and accept her lot in life. But while I enjoyed seeing her come of age, I was still a little confused about how old the kids were.

There was also supposed to be a romance between Paul and Flip, but to be honest, they were better off as siblings. I really wish they didn't package this book as having a forbidden romance because of two things: one, there wasn't any. And second, it was an awkward romance.

What I enjoyed about this book was the depicted life on a Swiss boarding school. Though Flip had to go through a version of bullying (aka, hazing) at first, in time, the girls eventually warmed up to her. I especially liked the shown camaraderie during Christmas time. It was gorgeously described. It makes me want to stay at home on Christmas and create our own family tradition.

Over all, I almost feel like it's sacrilege to say I didn't quite enjoy this book. I can compare it to someone listening to an aria in a monotone voice. Lifeless novel, packaged as a romance that didn't exist.
