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# The Moon By Night (Austin Family)



## Synopsis

In *The Moon By Night*, we find the Austin children—Vicky, John, Suzy, and Rob—unhappy at the prospect of leaving their beloved Connecticut house and moving into an apartment in New York City. In order to cushion the change, the Austin parents decide to take the whole family on a trip to California to visit Uncle Douglas and Aunt Elena. They'll drive out to California, camping along the way, and avoid hotels as much as possible. There is a great deal of care spent getting just the right equipment for the trip, and off the family starts. It is a marvelous trip—different, exciting, fun. But the trip also brings problems to everyone in the family, and especially to Vicky when she meets Zachary. He's a troubled and troubling boy who, against the wishes of her family, attaches himself to Vicky. How Vicky meets the challenges of the trip and of her interest in Zachary and in another boy, Andy, who becomes Zachary's rival, make up the body of this warmly appealing story of family life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Austin family spends the summer on a cross-country camping trip...Vicky, now 'almost 15,' tells the story, and the reader feels a strong personal identification with the thoughts and emotions of this age group through her story." --School Library Journal

Vicky Austin is filled with uncertainties about everything. Her parents call it Vicky's "difficult year."

But fourteen-year-old Vicky is not so consumed with her problems that she can't enjoy the exciting adventures of her family's summer cross-country camping trip. In the course of their travels Vicky meets Zachary, an intriguing but troubled boy who latches on to Vicky. And still another boy, Andy, altogether different from Zachary, soon becomes his rival. Far from the comfort and security that the family has always known, and in spite of the trials they encounter on the road, the Austins enjoy each other and the sights from the Atlantic to the Pacific and back again. And for the first time Vicky feels the mixed emotions of friendship and love. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

This was a great book in the "Meet the Austins" series by Madeline L'Engle. I bought it for my grandchildren. They had already read it, but enjoyed having their own copy!

I have this series of books in both hard cover and kindle version. I have read and reread them ever since I was quite young.

Fabulous series.

I love Madeleine L'Engle's books. She is easy to read and her stories are warm, inspiring, and entertaining. I would recommend her to everyone.

My Granddaughter was enthralled.

Introducing my daughters to Madeline L'Engle's books has been so much fun. We have had lots of great bedtime rainy day reading!

I think it's very hard to find a book by L'Engle that is bad. And this book just furthers that point along, it is very very good for being a young adult novel. There's just so much information and wisdom packed into the series that it's hard not to like them. The Moon By Night is the 2nd book in the "Meet the Austins" series. I've read all the books out of order and as stand-alones (A Ring of Endless Light was perhaps my most favored book through my teenage years) and it's never really bothered me or kept me from enjoying the book. That being said, I always do recommend reading books in order. This particular book has the main character Vicky as a fourteen year old going on a camping trip with her family. Along the way she meets the exciting and terrible Zachary Gray who dazzles her and frightens her all at the same time. Her family doesn't approve of the friendship, but quietly lets

her sort things out as she is trying to grow and figure herself out at this point in her life. And the camping with her family too brings them a sort of closeness and respect that makes her appreciate them more. Vicky is a great character. And she's so great because she's real and she reminds me of myself at that age. It's hard not to feel special in a family as unique as hers, and even more difficult is learning to appreciate yourself for who you are. She also has a natural appreciation and innocence about her that is refreshing. So even though her teenage years are happening during the 60's in this book, she feels like she could be your best friend in any time period. Zachary I'm not as fond of, but I don't think he's supposed to be a likable character. Girls are attracted to the troublesome dark type of guys and he fits the bill for that. I've been guilty of falling for a few guys like that myself until I realized I much prefer a sunny personality. Her family seems close-knit and while there is one sexist comment in regards to her father preferring that women don't wear pants, I excused it as the time period of the book and tried not to dwell on it too much. The plot is simplistic. It's a camping trip with a family and a somewhat love story. But what I think really makes this book stand out is that the theme of growing up is predominant in it. It could allow someone the same age as Vicky to really relate with her and get inside her head. And that's what makes it a valuable read. The writing is good, although there is quite a bit of religion incorporated into the book and I got tired of it in parts, but there was also a lot of poetry thrown in and I did appreciate that. I'm not much of a poetry person but L'Engle always seems to find poems that fit perfectly into her books. A very good read, as is the rest of the series. I highly recommend all of the books for *Meet the Austins* and some of L'Engle's other works as well. *The Moon By Night* Copyright 1963 255 pages Review by M. Reynard 2012

I discovered *The Moon by Night* in a high school library. After devouring it, I was hooked on Madeleine L'Engle. I love all the introspective passages from Vicky's viewpoint. Her thoughts hook me from the very first page: "Indoors there was excitement and confusion and I guess a lot of happiness. I was the only one who seemed to be unhappy because nothing would ever be the same again. Up to a few days ago my life had been all of a piece, exciting sometimes and even miserable, but always following the same and simple pattern of home and school and family." From this point onward, Vicky faces the confusion of change starting with the decision of her parents to move the family to New York. Then there's the fact that her Uncle Douglas and Elena have gotten married. There's also the fact that Maggy, who by the point has lived with the family for two years, will now move in with Uncle Douglas and Elena. To cushion all these changes, the Austin parents decide to take the family on a camping trip to California to visit the newlyweds. Along the way, however, Vicky

encounters even more changes, starting with the car that sped through their campgrounds. As the car passed "something was flung out of the window and shattered against the side of our station wagon with a sound like an explosion." This event leads to showdown with a gang, along with questions about stereotypes: Should the Austins be frightened by teenagers? Or should they resent Tennessee, the state in which this gang appeared? With the introduction of these questions, Madeleine L'Engle sets the stage for the arrival of troubled boy Zachary Gray. Through him, Vicky is forced to deal with the reality of evil and therefore questions about God's part in it. Being a teenager facing my own first doubts when I first read this book, I found great comfort in Vicky's conversation with her Uncle Douglas about faith. Since then, I have spent much time sorting through my questions about God. Oh, and I have also thought a lot about the nature of love, a topic that is naturally a large part of books for young adults. Yet I don't know if anyone ever truly has all the answers about faith and love. For that reason, even as an adult, *The Moon by Night* still resonates with me.

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