



Annison's Risk

Paul McCusker

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"This was supposed to be a fairy tale, but it's turning into a nightmare!"Squeezing farther beneath the musty porch of her house, Maddy Nicholaivitch is sure she's found the perfect hiding place. But as she inches closer to a strange glow of light, her senses reel when she finds she has just passed into an utterly differently place and time! Gone is her familiar town of Odyssey!

In this exciting land, a conquering king is ascending the throne. And he's about to marry a Princess that Maddy has seen before in her dreams. The princess, along with the captain of the guards, are secret followers of the "Old Faith" in the Unseen One,

But in the name of loyalty, the king's most trusted advisor has hatched an evil plan to stamp out the "Old Faith" forever. Can Maddy help save a kingdom from the tyranny of a wicked man? Or will she pay the price for her own growing belief in the Unseen One with her very life?

Annison's Risk Details

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Author : Paul McCusker

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From Reader Review Annison's Risk for online ebook

Shali says

Funnily enough, I had just finished reading the book of Esther before picking this up, earlier this afternoon. A favorite Bible story of mine, it soon became apparent that Annison's Risk was its parallel.

Even though it's written for children, I found it interesting and absolutely charming. I had read it before, when I was younger, but couldn't remember anything about it, so it was like reading it for the first time all over again.

Maddy is the main character; a young girl who is an avid reader (and believer) of fairytales, she's constantly looking for adventure. When she finds herself in a different world, she's more than ready for her fairytale to begin. Her dreams of a princess requesting her help send her straight to Annison (Esther). It's up to them to save the believers of the Unseen One (God), from the evil trying to destroy them.

I found it adorable. Clearly written for a younger audience, it's still enjoyable for older readers.

Rachel Mingle says

Annison's Risk is the exciting continuation of Paul McCusker's Adventures in Odyssey Passage Series. Maddy is transported from her world to Marus to the time of Princesses and Kings. She finds herself in the palace with a princess who believes in the Unseen One along with a few other secret believers and a King who does not believe. Maddy became a part of the story and the reader is made to feel like they are right there in the middle of Queen Esther's story too.

Elizabeth says

Passages: Annison's Risk is a good retelling of the book of Esther for young readers. In the book, Maddy is playing hide and seek when she finds herself in another world: Marus. She befriends Annison, who has just married the king of Marus and while living with the princess, she overhears a sinister plan by Lord Hector, who is one of the king's advisors. After Annison finds out about the plot, Maddy is used as a message-bearer between Annison and her adopted father, Simet. In order to save an entire race of people, Annison, Maddy, and Simet must risk their lives and work together to save their people from Lord Hector. But, will they succeed? This is a great book for kids because not only does it tell a popular story from the Bible in a manner that a child will understand, but it will also captivate their attention will doing it.

Emily says

Annison's Risk, by Paul McCusker, is the story of 12 year old Maddy who travels to another world as she has always dreamed. But all is not well in the country of Marus. The new king's right hand man I hatching several evil plots and it's up to Maddy, Queen Annison, and Simet to stop him. How will they succeed when

it's becoming apparent that this is not a fairytale as Maddy had hoped?

Annison's Risk is a cute children's story that brings the story of Esther to life. It is not exactly the same as the book of Esther in the Bible, but it shows much of what she experienced the way a child might see it.

One thing I didn't like about the retelling is that the author downplayed the risk the queen took. In this story, the Annison found a way around the rule that no one may enter the king's presence unless invited. Instead of going straight into the king's presence, Annison arranged to "accidentally" come across his path. Otherwise the story is essentially the same but with Maddy playing the key role of messenger and spy.

In this story, God, or the "Unseen One", used a child with little faith to boost the faith of others and herself. It is a manmade part of the story yet something God might do considering His character.

Annison's Risk is told in a way children can understand and brings the story of Esther to life.

Kris says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book! What a fascinating story! When Maddy crawls under the porch she finds herself in a different world – one that has 2 moons – in the land of Marus. Marus has just been taken over by Palatia and the King of Palatia is going to marry a most beautiful Maruian girl, Annison. Through a series of events Maddy finds herself helping Annison. I loved this retold story of Esther! And especially enjoyed the descriptions of the clothing worn, the strange hair styles and the king's inability to play golf well!

Athelas Hale says

(I have just realized that, though I read these several years ago, I didn't mark them as read on here. So, in case your jaw just hit the floor, I did *not* read the entire series in one day. :p)

Alisha L. says

Each of the Passages books starts out with Jack Allen and Mr. Whittaker (characters from the Adventures in Odyssey radio show) finding a manuscript written in a school notebook written about a child (or children) from Odyssey ending up traveling to an alternate world called Marus (in a style similar to The Chronicles of Narnia books). The Passages stories are retellings of real Biblical stories, but this time in the fantasy world of Marus where the stories are written with a new perspective and with new twists.

Book #3 in the Passages series, "Annison's Risk", is based on the story of Esther. It illustrates the power of our participation in God's plan. In the book, Maddy Nicholaivitch is hiding under the porch of her house while playing a game of hide and seek with her friend when she all of a sudden finds herself in the fantasy world of Marus. As she's trying to figure out where she is, she sees the soon to be queen of Marus, Annison, who Maddy is surprised to see is the same woman who was asking her for help in her dreams. By why does Annison need help and can Maddy help her?

Out of the first three Passages books, "Annison's Risk" is probably my favorite. I remember loving these books when I read them as a preteen 9+ years ago and I still love them now! Paul McCusker has done a wonderful job of creating the world of Marus and retelling Biblical stories in a new way in a new world. While it does help to know something about Adventures in Odyssey (I'm a fan of the show myself), it is not necessary to have listened to the show before. The books can still be understood without any previous knowledge of Odyssey. The books do have some violence and deaths in them, though, so I would recommend them with the books' first editions age recommendation of 10 & up. I have enjoyed reading this series and I would definitely recommend it.

Celena Janton says

My children and I are hooked on the Passages series! Each book is about different children throughout different time periods in Odyssey's history who end up finding themselves in another world (reminiscent of Narnia). The world, Marus, parallels the bible in which each book is a bible story come to life, though with a very different setting and intriguing twists. This book tells the story of Queen Esther (Annison) with a fairytale/fantasy twist. A little girl, Maddy, finds herself in the middle of the story helping Annison. These books also have a hint of mystery--each "manuscript" (a.k.a. book) was written by a mysterious author. Whit and his friend wonder who wrote them and how many children ended up having an adventure in Marus. Each book begins with their investigation and their discovery of a new manuscript. I haven't read the last 3 books but I must say that even I, as an adult, can't wait to see where the mystery leads! Plus, reading this book made my children want to read the book of Esther again and compare the two stories. A great motivation to dig deeper into God's word! My 3rd graders love these books, and so do I.

Lisa says

I think this series gets better and better. Annison's Risk retells the story of Esther as a young girl from Odyssey winds up in Marus during a regime change. Maddy believes she's there to help the queen have a fairy tale ending to her love story. What she discovers about her role there is far more important in her life and the lives of key members of the king's court.

Each of the Passages stories is introduced and concluded with scenes of two men trying to find the source of these stories, written in plain school notebooks. The pieces are starting to come together in this story. I'm sufficiently hooked to want to keep reading and find out the source.

The books are recommended for 10 and up and are creatively told so that the Bible story is recognizable but new truths can be learned from them.

Ellen says

This is my favorite of the Passages series so far. In this book, we find Maddy whose parents escaped the horrors of the communist revolution in Russia. Maddy herself is far from serious, finding her constant escape in fairy stories and princess dreams of true love. When she is transported to the world of Marus, she thinks she has somehow found her own dream come true and seeks to help a beautiful princess find her own true love. What she learns is that real love is deeper than the fluff of fairy tale and duty sometimes demands

sacrifice. I look forward to book four.

Louise Pearson says

wonderful story about the marriage of Annison to King Willem in Palatia that will unite the people of Palatia with those of Marus. The story seems like the Biblical story of Esther, for there is a good man Simet, a castle guard, who tries to protect Annison and Maddy and an evil man, Lord Hector, who is plotting to kill the King and his wife Annison. Simet is actually accused of planning to kill the king, but Maddy overhears Lord Hector plotting to poison the king. To get rid of Simet, Lord Hector persuades the king to outlaw the Old Faith. Not knowing Annison and Simet are members of the Old Faith, the king says Lord Hector can have his wish. Hector arranges to arrest the members when they meet, but they manage to escape through a secret hatchway. Who is Maddy, what is her role, and how does she get involved in helping Annison? How does Lord Hector resemble Haman in the Biblical story of Esther? In what ways is Annison like Queen Esther? Who plays the role of Mordecai? Why is Simet so protective of Annison? How are the endings of both stories similar?

Rachel says

I definitely enjoyed this book more than the previous book in this series (Arin's Judgment). It has a much better flow, plot, and storyline. This book parallels the biblical story of Esther. There is a lot of suspense in this story but it's not too scary for children. It is an easy and enjoyable read for kids.

Soleil says

Back Cover: A game of hide-and-seek takes Maddy Nicholaivitch to Marus, where she is taken in by a beautiful princess who has just married the conquering king. After overhearing the secret plans of the king's most trusted advisor, Maddy must decide if her loyalty to the princess is worth the price of her life. Based on the biblical story of Esther, "Annison's Risk" takes readers on a journey with a queen who is willing to risk her life in order to save her people. Any fan of Tolkien will appreciate this fantasy story, and with a new cover and interior graphics, it's better than ever!

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One of my favorite series, Passages, brings the Bible to life in a new perspective. In a world called Marus, kids from Odyssey are doing daily activities when they are suddenly transported into another land, with a story similar to our own. Maddy is one of these kids. As Maddy is helping Annison, Marus' new queen, she thinks she is in a fairy tale. But as things become dangerously complicated, she is soon involved in bringing information to the queen that could change the world. Maddy must decide if she will continue to have a child's mind and play games, or a mature perspective to save Marus.

I would rate this book 5 out of 5 stars.

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## **Hannah says**

Annison's Risk could almost fit under the category of a "supposal", the word coined by C.S. Lewis when discussing his Chronicles of Narnia. It is the story of Queen Esther set in a different world and seen through the eyes of a young girl from our world. McCusker has made this other world very real and I loved some of the points he made through Maddy's naivety.

While I found most of the Passages books to be more candy than meat, this one I really enjoyed and appreciated the lessons it contains.

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## **Dawn says**

Maddy Nicholaivitch was playing a game of hide and seek when she suddenly finds herself no longer in Odyssey. She soon finds herself in the court of a beautiful princess and learning about this Unseen One. When she uncovers a plot to have the king killed and informs the princess, she wonders if her fledgling faith in the Unseen One will be enough to save her.

I first read this book years ago. I grew up on the Adventures in Odyssey radio series and still enjoy listening to them as an adult. I've a few books in the various Adventures in Odyssey series over the years, but the Passages stories have been my favorite.

One of the things I love about this book, and the others in the Passages series, is that Biblical stories come to life in a fun way. This particular book is based on the book of Esther. I loved seeing Maddy figure out that she needs to put her faith and trust into the Unseen One. I also loved seeing how Annison decided to take a chance and step out on faith.

There are so many truths in these books. I highly recommend them.

I read this book for pure pleasure as part of Tyndale's Summer Reading Program. My thoughts and opinions are my own.

Recommended to fans of Narnia, Tolkien, Adventures in Odyssey, ages 8 and up, fantasy, parents

Rating - 5 stars

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