



A Full House: An Austin Family Christmas

Madeleine L'Engle , Mary Chambers (Illustrator)

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The Austins have a full house on Christmas Eve when fate brings them a new mother and a young woman who is expecting.

A Full House: An Austin Family Christmas Details

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Author : Madeleine L'Engle , Mary Chambers (Illustrator)

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Manybooks says

While I usually do both much enjoy and appreciate Madeleine L'Engle's writing (and actually even have no issues with the fact that her religious philosophy, her Christianity tends to shine through strongly and clearly in most of her novels and shorter fiction), I have never really enjoyed A Full House: An Austin Family Christmas all that much (mostly because Christianity as a faith, as a belief system is just a bit too overt, is a trifle too strongly presented, and the parallels to the Nativity much too obviously and heavy handedly shown for my own and personal liking).

And thus, although I do not generally have issues or qualms recommending Madeleine L'Engle's oeuvre to non Christians, and even to Atheists, this here short story is really rather too much and too overtly Christian to recommend without reservations, as especially the superimposed parallels between the Austins' former babysitter and the biblical story of Mary and Joseph (and their trials and tribulations before Mary gives birth to Jesus) are just too intense and in one's proverbial face. Not a terrible story by any stretch of the imagination, but definitely much too potentially preachy for me, and a bit too lacking in nuance and character development (and for all intents and purposes, A Full House really does tend to rather feel and read somewhat and even overmuch like a Christmas Eve or Christmas Day homily or sermon, a fact that I personally would consider acceptable and even laudable in its place, in church, but NOT so much in a short family type of story about Christmas as a season). Two and a half stars (and definitely only recommended with major caveats)!

Now regarding Mary Chambers' accompanying illustrations, while they are descriptive and provide a generally sweet mirror to and for Madeleine L'Engle's presented narrative, they are in fact a bit too gaudy and bright for my personal tastes and likes (and while A Full House is often described as a picture book, for me, Mary Chambers' illustrations are really more to be seen as decorative trims than an integral part of the storyline, and thus, finally, I also would tend to consider A Full House more an illustrated chapter book for older children than a suitable offering for the so-called picture book crowd, with the rather heavy themes and moralising also rendering A Full House as perhaps more acceptable for older children and young teenagers).

Melody says

I had to get this through InterLibrary Loan. It's a vignette of a Christmas Eve at the Austin's house, told through Mrs. Austin's POV. It is primarily concerned with (brace yourselves) the redemptive power of love. I know, I know, what a surprise from L'Engle.

The illustrations by Mary Chambers are quite charming, and the story snuggles into the Austin canon without a ripple. The only false note, for me, was the line where the pregnant babysitter's mother was referred to as "no better than she should be".

Shelby Letner says

Just read it if you've read the other Austin stuff.
