

Passages

Reading Level 6



Title: A Swiftly Tilting Planet

Author: Madeleine L'Engle

Sample From The Book

It was not unusual for Mr. Murry to receive a call from the President. Over the years he had been consulted by the White House on matters of physics and space travel; other conversations had been serious, many disturbing, but this, Meg felt, was different, was causing the warm room to feel colder, look less bright.

"Yes, Mr. President, I understand," Mr. Murray said at last. "Thank you for calling." He put the receiver down slowly, as though it were heavy.

Dennys, his hands still full of silver for the table, asked, "What did he say?"

Their father shook his head. He did not speak.

Sandy closed the over door. "Father?"

Meg cried, "Father, we know something's happened. You have to tell us - please."

His voice was cold and distant. "War."

Meg put her hand protectively over her belly. "Do you mean nuclear war?"

The family seemed to draw together, and Mrs. Murry reached out a hand to include Calvin's mother. But Mrs. O'Keefe closed her eyes and excluded herself.

"Is it Mad Dog Branzillo?" asked Meg.

"Yes. The President feels that this time Branzillo is going to carry out his threat, and then we'll have no choice but to use our antiballistic missiles."



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