

The Stone Angel Margaret Laurence

The culmination and completion of Margaret Laurence's celebrated Manawaka cycle, *The Diviners* is an epic novel. This is the powerful story of an independent woman who refuses to abandon her search for love. For Morag Gunn, growing up in a small Canadian prairie town is a toughening process – putting distance between herself and a world that wanted no part of her. But in time, the aloneness that had once been forced upon her becomes a precious right – relinquished only in her overwhelming need for love. Again and again, Morag is forced to test her strength against the world – and finally achieves the life she had determined would be hers. *The Diviners* has been acclaimed by many critics as the outstanding achievement of Margaret Laurence's writing career. In *Morag Gunn*, Laurence has created a figure whose experience emerges as that of all dispossessed people in search of their birthright, and one who survives as an inspirational symbol of courage and endurance. *The Diviners* received the Governor General's Award for Fiction for 1974.

A Study Guide for Margaret Laurence's "The Stone Angel," excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Novels for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Novels for Students* for all of your research needs. In this celebrated novel, Margaret Laurence writes with grace, power, and deep compassion about Rachel Cameron, a woman struggling to come to terms with love, with death, with herself and her world. Trapped in a milieu of deceit and pettiness – her own and that of others – Rachel longs for love, and contact with another human being who shares her rebellious spirit.

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Through her summer affair with Nick Kazlik, a schoolmate from earlier years, she learns at last to reach out to another person and to make herself vulnerable. *A Jest of God* won the Governor General's Award for 1966 and was released as the successful film, *Rachel, Rachel*. The novel stands as a poignant and singularly enduring work by one of the world's most distinguished authors.

Truly a classic by one of Canada's finest authors Ten-year-old Sal is disappointed when she and her parents spend Christmas at her grandmother's house, instead of at home, like they did before Grandpa died. In order to pass the time, Sal explores the contents of an old trunk. Searching through the old photographs she comes across a little girl's winter coat, tries it on, and finds herself transported into the past where she makes an unexpected connection to her heritage and her grandmother. This model tale of time travel was one of Margaret Laurence's few forays into children's literature and has remained a favourite of children of all ages. New art by the original illustrator makes this a beautiful book for Christmas and for all seasons. A special treat for Margaret Laurence fans. From the Hardcover edition.

The essays collected in this volume offer a range of different approaches to the significance of the work of Margaret Laurence, historical, feminist, descriptive and thematic, in which critics from Europe, America and Canada offer assessments of this 20th century novelist.

In *Hagar Shipley*, Margaret Laurence has created one of the boldest, most memorable characters in Canadian fiction. Raise according to the stern virtues of her pioneer ancestors, Hagar Shipley leads a life of uncompromising pride--a pride which sustained her during a stormy marriage, but which lost her favourite son. As her story unfolds we are given vividly etched descriptions of Hagar as a young girl in a remote prairie town; of her now estranged

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husband; of John, her outgoing son; and Marvin, the son she never loved. And now, with her life nearly behind her, Hagar makes a bold, last step towards freedom and independence, and in the Process gains a deeper understanding of the meaning of acceptance.

“[A] jewel of a debut . . . abundantly satisfying.”—Jia Tolentino, *The New Yorker* A witty, intelligent novel of an American woman on the edge, by a brilliant new voice in fiction—“the glorious love child of Ottessa Moshfegh and Sally Rooney” (*Publishers Weekly*, starred review) As an adjunct professor of English in New York City with no hope of finding a permanent position, Dorothy feels “like a janitor in the temple who continued to sweep because she had nowhere else to be but who had lost her belief in the essential sanctity of the enterprise.” No one but her boyfriend knows that she’s just had a miscarriage, not even her therapists—Dorothy has two of them. Nor can she bring herself to tell the other women in her life: her friends, her doctor, her mentor, her mother. The freedom not to be a mother is one of the victories of feminism. So why does she feel like a failure? Piercingly intelligent and darkly funny, *The Life of the Mind* is a novel about endings: of youth, of professional aspiration, of possibility, of the illusion that our minds can ever free us from the tyranny of our bodies. And yet Dorothy’s mind is all she has to make sense of a world largely out of her control, one where disaster looms and is already here, where things happen but there is no plot. There is meaning, however, if Dorothy figures out where to look, and as the weeks pass and the bleeding subsides, she finds it in the most unlikely places, from a Las Vegas poolside to a living room karaoke session. In literature—as Dorothy well knows—stories end. But life, as they say, goes on.

Heart of a Stranger, originally published in 1976, is a travelogue chronicling Laurence's

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geographical journeys to many lands and places. She notes "I saw, somewhat to my surprise, that they are all, in one way or another, travel articles. And by travel, I mean both those voyages which are outer and those voyages which are inner."

WINNER OF THE STELLA PRIZE The lives of three women weave together across centuries in this dazzling new novel. Sarah, accused of being a witch, is fleeing for her life. Ruth, in the aftermath of World War II, is navigating a new marriage and the strange waters of the local community. Six decades later, Viv, still mourning the death of her father, is cataloging Ruth's belongings in Ruth's now-empty house. As each woman's story unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that their choices are circumscribed, in ways big and small, by the men who seek to control them. But in sisterhood there is also the possibility of survival and a new way of life. Intricately crafted and compulsively readable, *The Bass Rock* burns bright with love and fury—a devastating indictment of violence against women and an empowering portrait of their resilience through the ages.

In *Writing Grief*, Christian Riegel argues that the protagonists in Margaret Laurence's books achieve resolution through acts of mourning, placing this fiction within the larger tradition of writing that explores the nuances and strategies of mourning. Riegel's analysis alludes to sociological and literary antecedents of the study of mourning, including the tradition of elegy, from Derrida and Lacan to Freud, van Genep, and Milton.

Based on an Athabaskan Indian legend passed along for many generations from mothers to daughters of the upper Yukon River Valley in Alaska, this is the suspenseful, shocking, ultimately inspirational tale of two old women abandoned by their tribe during a brutal winter famine. Though these women have been known to complain more than contribute, they now

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must either survive on their own or die trying. In simple but vivid detail, Velma Wallis depicts a landscape and way of life that are at once merciless and starkly beautiful. In her old women, she has created two heroines of steely determination whose story of betrayal, friendship, community and forgiveness "speaks straight to the heart with clarity, sweetness and wisdom" (Ursula K. Le Guin).

In fourteen sweeping and sublime stories, five of which have been published in *The New Yorker*, the bestselling and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Known World* shows that his grasp of the human condition is firmer than ever. Returning to the city that inspired his first prizewinning book, *Lost in the City*, Jones has filled this new collection with people who call Washington, D.C., home. Yet it is not the city's power brokers that most concern him but rather its ordinary citizens. *All Aunt Hagar's Children* turns an unflinching eye to the men, women, and children caught between the old ways of the South and the temptations that await them further north, people who in Jones's masterful hands, emerge as fully human and morally complex, whether they are country folk used to getting up with the chickens or people with centuries of education behind them. In the title story, in which Jones employs the first-person rhythms of a classic detective story, a Korean War veteran investigates the death of a family friend whose sorry destiny seems inextricable from his mother's own violent Southern childhood. In "In the Blink of God's Eye" and "Tapestry" newly married couples leave behind the familiarity of rural life to pursue lives of urban promise only to be challenged and disappointed. With the legacy of slavery just a stone's throw away and the future uncertain, Jones's cornucopia of characters will haunt readers for years to come.

A finalist for the National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award,

here is an evocative novel about female friendship in the glittering 1980s. Alison and Veronica meet amid the nocturnal glamour of 1980s New York: One is a young model stumbling away from the wreck of her career, the other an eccentric middle-aged office temp. Over the next twenty years their friendship will encompass narcissism and tenderness, exploitation and self-sacrifice, love and mortality. Moving seamlessly from present and past, casting a fierce yet compassionate eye on two eras and their fixations, the result is a work of timeless depth and moral power.

Vivid, evocative, moving, *The Stone Angel* celebrates the triumph of the spirit, and reveals Margaret Laurence at the height of her powers as a writer of extraordinary craft and profound insight into the workings of the human heart. Margaret Laurence's most celebrated novel introduced readers to one of the most memorable characters in Canadian fiction. Hagar Shipley is stubborn, querulous, self-reliant, and, at ninety, with her life nearly behind her, she makes a bold last step towards freedom and independence. As her story unfolds, we are drawn into her past. We meet Hagar as a young girl growing up in a black prairie town; as the wife of a virile but unsuccessful farmer with whom her marriage was stormy; as a mother who dominates her younger son; and, finally, as an old woman isolated by an uncompromising pride and by the stern virtues she has

inherited from her pioneer ancestors.

Eight interconnected stories reveal the world of Vanessa MacLeod and her growing awareness of, and passage into, womanhood

In this study of the Canadian novelist Margaret Laurence, recent narratological models provide the theoretical framework for a textual analysis that aims at complementing previous thematic critiques. The chief focus is on *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners*, which the conclusion then presents in the context of the other novels in Laurence's Manawaka cycle. Consideration of the published works is rounded off with genetic comparison of the novelist's typescript drafts and an evaluation of the manuscript notes kept in the archives of McMaster and York Universities. The central structural principle of *The Stone Angel* is its dovetailing of past and present scenes. Temporal arrangement, reflecting the frequency and duration of Hagar's memories, reveals the hold of memory over the central character and her attempts to suppress her fear of mortality. Hagar-as-narrator manipulates character-presentation and description to her own advantage. In a basically oppositional structure, her need for control is reflected in the neat ordering of the narrative. The verbal texture of the novel serves to establish a value system that insists on the superiority of imported culture over Western Canadian forms. *The Diviners* shares a number of narrative similarities

with *The Stone Angel*, but the latter's formal rigidity has yielded, by the time Laurence writes her last novel, to the concept of multiplicity - characters, time planes, perspectives and narrative voices (including metafictional commentaries). Textual coherence is secured via narrative strategies (including typography, generational paradigms, repetition, parallelism, intertextuality, and tropological patterning) that render the novel readable and present experience as ordered in a time of cultural flux and personal crisis.

An edited, annotated collection of funny, affectionate, and insightful letters between two Canadian literary icons.

The Stone Angel University of Chicago Press

In 1950, as a young bride, Margaret Laurence set out with her engineer husband to what was then Somaliland: a British protectorate in North Africa few Canadians had ever heard of. Her account of this voyage into the desert is full of wit and astonishment. Laurence honestly portrays the difficulty of colonial relationships and the frustration of trying to get along with Somalis who had no reason to trust outsiders. There are moments of surprise and discovery when Laurence exclaims at the beauty of a flock of birds only to discover that they are locusts, or offers medical help to impoverished neighbors only to be confronted with how little she can help them. During her stay, Laurence moves past misunderstanding the

Somalis and comes to admire memorable individuals: a storyteller, a poet, a camel-herder. The Prophet's Camel Bell is both a fascinating account of Somali culture and British colonial characters, and a lyrical description of life in the desert. "The Prophet's Camel Bell has a timeless feeling about it that sets the work quite apart from the usual books of travel and adventure in distant and exotic parts."—Canadian Literature

The film adaptation of Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, starring acclaimed actresses Ellen Burstyn and Ellen Page, and introducing Christine Horne, opens in theatres May 9, 2008. This special fortieth-anniversary edition of Margaret Laurence's most celebrated novel will introduce readers again to one of the most memorable characters in Canadian fiction. Hagar Shipley is stubborn, querulous, self-reliant, and, at ninety, with her life nearly behind her, she makes a bold last step towards freedom and independence. As her story unfolds, we are drawn into her past. We meet Hagar as a young girl growing up in a black prairie town; as the wife of a virile but unsuccessful farmer with whom her marriage was stormy; as a mother who dominates her younger son; and, finally, as an old woman isolated by an uncompromising pride and by the stern virtues she has inherited from her pioneer ancestors. Vivid, evocative, moving, *The Stone Angel* celebrates the triumph of the spirit, and reveals Margaret Laurence at the height

of her powers as a writer of extraordinary craft and profound insight into the workings of the human heart.

A novel of Africans and British, community and exile, set against the backdrop of the Ghanaian fight for independence: “A talented writer.”—The New York Times It is a time of change in West Africa, as the land known as the British Gold Coast is transformed into a new, independent nation known as Ghana. This lyrical, vivid novel follows multiple characters—a schoolteacher torn between his loyalty to his tribe and his hopes for his country’s future; a British business executive who distrusts Africans; a passionate nationalist—as they experience all the tensions of the time, the excitement, anticipation, and dread. A novel that confronts issues of race, gender, and the effects of colonialism, *This Side Jordan* is by Margaret Laurence, the author of *The Stone Angel* and a winner of two Governor General’s Awards, one of Canada’s most prestigious literary prizes. “Artistically and expertly written and constructed...unusual and noteworthy.”—Kirkus Reviews “A first novel of rare excellence.”—Mary Renault, *Saturday Review* “Highly recommended.”—Library Journal

The ten stories gathered together in *The Tomorrow-Tamer* are Margaret Laurence’s first published fiction. Set in raucous and often terrifying Ghana, where shiny Jaguars and modern jazz jostle for eminence against fetish figures,

tribal rites, and the unchanging beat of jungle drums, the stories tell of individuals, European and African, trying to come to terms with the frightening world brought about by the country's new freedom. With the same compassion and understanding she would bring to her later fiction set in Canada, Laurence succeeds brilliantly in capturing the atmosphere of a continent and of individual men and women struggling for survival under the impact of the wind of change. On a cold January morning Susan leaves her husband alone for a few minutes and returns to find him gone. Suffering from dementia, no longer able to dress or feed or wash himself, he has wandered alone into a frigid landscape with no sense of home or direction. Lost... Over the course of one weekend, the massive search for her husband brings Susan together with Jeff, a search and rescue expert and social worker preoccupied with his young wife's betrayal. In Jeff's care is Corey, a mute eleven-year-old boy who has been abandoned by his family after accidentally setting a tragic fire. As the temperature drops and the search and rescue effort threatens to become one of search and recovery, they each confront haunting memories and difficult choices that will have an unexpected impact on their collective future... From the intersection of these three lives emerges an arresting portrait of the shifting terrain of marriage and the devastating effects of physical and psychological damage. Written in spare,

beautiful prose, *Lost* explores the lengths we will go to take care of someone, and the ways in which responsibility, love, and sorrow can bind people together. Stacey MacAindra, an ordinary woman, is fearful of and struggling to shelter her family from the world and from her own consuming emotions.

The Stone Angel, *The Diviners*, and *A Bird in the House* are three of the five books in Margaret Laurence's renowned "Manawaka series," named for the small Canadian prairie town in which they take place. Each of these books is narrated by a strong woman growing up in the town and struggling with physical and emotional isolation. In *The Stone Angel*, Hagar Shipley, age ninety, tells the story of her life, and in doing so tries to come to terms with how the very qualities which sustained her have deprived her of joy. Mingling past and present, she maintains pride in the face of senility, while recalling the life she led as a rebellious young bride, and later as a grieving mother. Laurence gives us in Hagar a woman who is funny, infuriating, and heartbreakingly poignant. "This is a revelation, not impersonation. The effect of such skilled use of language is to lead the reader towards the self-recognition that Hagar misses."—Robertson Davies, *New York Times* "It is [Laurence's] admirable achievement to strike, with an equally sure touch, the peculiar note and the universal; she gives us a portrait of a remarkable character and at the same time the picture of old age itself, with the pain, the weariness, the terror, the impotent angers and physical mishaps, the realization that others are waiting and wishing for an end."—Honor Tracy, *The New*

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Republic "Miss Laurence is the best fiction writer in the Dominion and one of the best in the hemisphere."—Atlantic "[Laurence] demonstrates in *The Stone Angel* that she has a true novelist's gift for catching a character in mid-passion and life at full flood. . . . As [Hagar Shipley] daydreams and chatters and lurches through the novel, she traces one of the most convincing—and the most touching—portraits of an unregenerate sinner declining into senility since Sara Monday went to her reward in Joyce Cary's *The Horse's Mouth*."—Time "Laurence's triumph is in her evocation of Hagar at ninety. . . . We sympathize with her in her resistance to being moved to a nursing home, in her preposterous flight, in her impatience in the hospital. Battered, depleted, suffering, she rages with her last breath against the dying of the light. *The Stone Angel* is a fine novel, admirably written and sustained by unfailing insight."—Granville Hicks, *Saturday Review* "The *Stone Angel* is a good book because Mrs. Laurence avoids sentimentality and condescension; Hagar Shipley is still passionately involved in the puzzle of her own nature. . . . Laurence's imaginative tact is strikingly at work, for surely this is what it feels like to be old."—Paul Pickrel, *Harper's*

A rollicking review of popular culture in 18th century Britain, this text turns away from sentimental and polite literature to focus instead on the jestbooks, farces, comic periodicals, variety shows and minor comic novels that portray a society in which no subject was taboo and political correctness unimagined.

In a writing career spanning nearly three decades, Margaret Laurence became one of

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the most celebrated and widely read authors in the world. In this, her final work, Margaret Laurence reveals the story of her fascinating life, the process of her writing, and the people and emotional journeys which accompanied it. She relates her experiences living in different cultures; the issues and causes she so passionately upheld; her personal battle against censorship. She also pays tribute to the three women from whom she drew important spiritual strength. Including a selection of her articles, speeches, and letters – many never before published – and photographs selected by Margaret Laurence from her personal family albums, *Dance on the Earth* is a book of celebration and exploration in which Margaret Laurence speaks openly about her place in the world as a woman, a writer, and a concerned human being.

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