## THE JOURNAL OF INKLINGS STUDIES

Alister McGrath, Deep Magic, Dragons & Talking Mice:
How Reading C.S. Lewis Can Change Your Life.
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The Journal of Inklings Studies Vol. 4, No. 2, October 2014

Alister McGrath, Deep Magic, Dragons & Talking Mice: How Reading C.S. Lewis Can Change Your Life. London, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2014. 225 pp. ISBN 1444750305

Few people know more about the life and thought of C.S. Lewis than Alister McGrath, who authored two recent notable works on him: C.S. Lewis - A Life and The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis. The book under review is another probe into the rich world of Lewis' thought. While the books of 2013 are suitable for people already more deeply acquainted with Lewis, Deep Magic, Dragons & Talking Mice is intended for those with little or no knowledge about him. McGrath reports that he was prompted to write the book by students who wanted to know what Lewis thought about the big questions in life (pp. x-xi). I may add that the book can also re-awaken long-buried ideas, perspectives and even longings in those who have not read anything by or about Lewis for several years, as was the case with me.

McGrath organizes this work as eight imaginary meetings with Lewis in some of his old haunts—the Eagle and Child pub, the Trout Inn, his rooms in Magdalen College—to discuss various

topics in his thought and two areas in which he excelled, i.e. apologetics (ch. 5) and his use of the imagination, primarily in the Narnia stories (chs. 3, 4). Further topics include the meaning of life, friendship, education, suffering, and a final chapter on hope and heaven.

The book basically succeeds in its namely purpose, succinctly summarize Lewis' thoughts and to give the reader motivation to explore further works. A few names are mentioned as useful background information: Feuerbach, Freud, Wells,...-men who created the Zeitgeist which Lewis then confronted. McGrath is less successful maintaining the conversational format he introduces at the beginning of each chapter, as being over a pint of beer or a cup of tea. Chapters regress to merely providing information, albeit with some pretended interaction with the reader (e.g. 'So how are we to do this? Whom should we be reading?' [127]). More description of the settings and more sensory details (Lewis' pipe

smoke, his usual attire or mannerisms) could have bolstered the imaginary situations.

A word of caution on one's purchase choices: This book is published in the US as If I had Lunch with C.S. Lewis: Exploring the Ideas of C.S. Lewis on the Meaning of Life (Tyndale 2014). Anyone acquiring one title need not acquire the other.

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