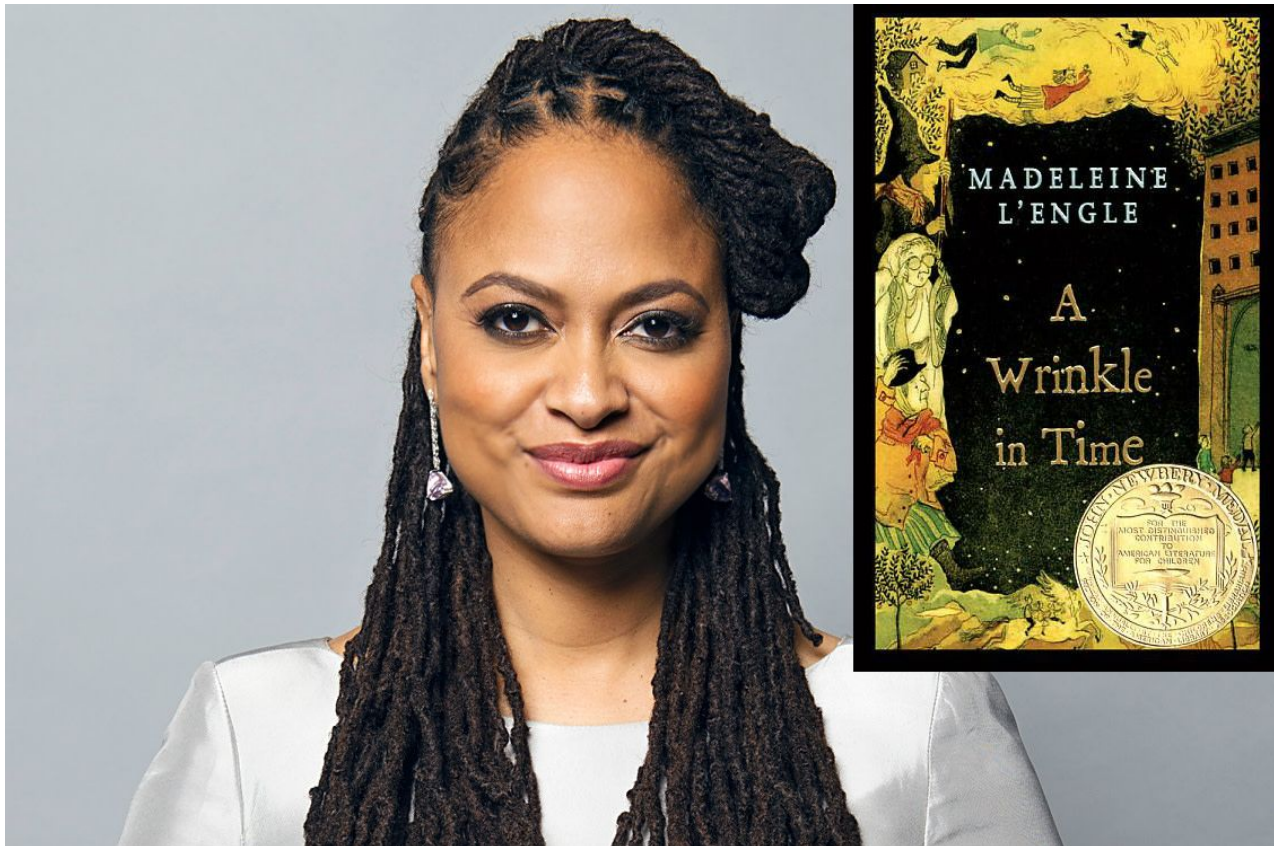


# Battle Of The Brains: How 'A Wrinkle In Time' Gives Us A Blueprint On How To Tackle Racism With Intellect



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Frank Capra, the acclaimed old-Hollywood director once said: "Film is one of the three universal languages, the other two: mathematics and music." It's this universality that has for ages made film an ideal platform for showcasing the heaviest past and current issues facing humanity. I have certainly found myself provoked and convicted during film screenings in good ways, forced to face my own beliefs, judgments, and experiences.

But I can't help but love that Capra mentions math in the same breath as film and music. While I felt more drawn to what I considered "the arts" growing up, there was one book that finally made me admit I maybe didn't hate math. That book was Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle In Time* and its protagonist, Meg Murry, was the math-loving outlier who taught me that embracing the universal beauty of math was actually embracing something representative of both my touchy-feely artistic side and practical academic mind.

## Now, Disney Is Moving Forward With A Vibrant Live Action Adaptation Of The Story



Ava DuVernay and Storm Reid

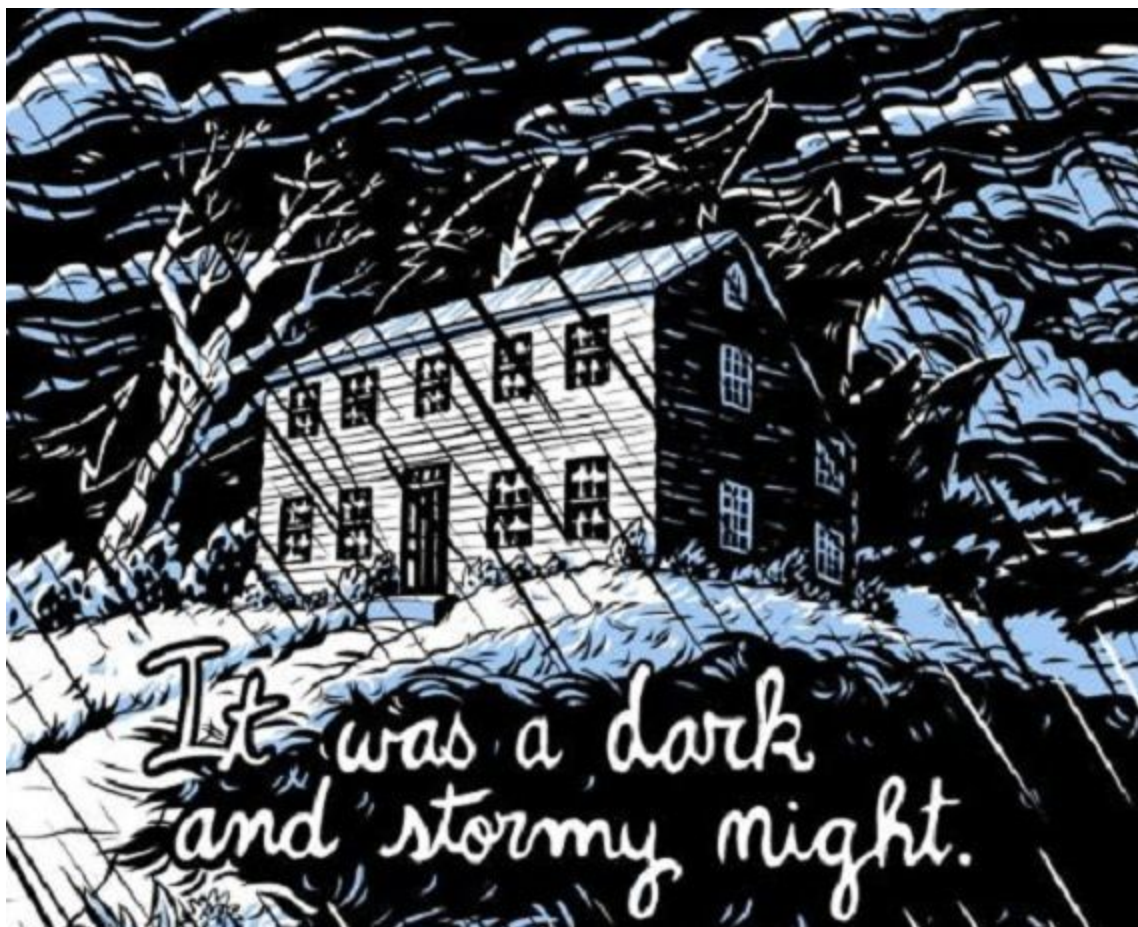
I'm beyond excited to watch as Ava DuVernay, a director I not only admire but who is both female and black, is being given the chance to direct this important book to film for Disney. She's also being given a budget of over \$100 million, a first for a female director of color, and the freedom to make her cast multi-racial. [The part of Meg was given to Storm Reid](#) (*Twelve Years a Slave*, *American Girl: Lea to the Rescue*) and she's joined by Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, and Mindy Kaling as the three witch-like mentors guiding Meg and her brother and friend on their journey.

It's the sort of story that teaches us good vs. evil is an intellectual battle, one that will be won with the mind rather than with fists. All of this is excellent news, but more than simply providing us with some great on-screen diversity, L'Engle's *A Wrinkle In Time* is a uniquely excellent vehicle for navigating the overarching and deeply-rooted problem of racism in our modern society. The story may seem like sci-fi nerd-love for kids, and it is, but it's also fundamentally about true intelligence being for the greater good, the kind that embraces uniqueness and practices empathy. It's the sort of story that teaches us good vs. evil is an intellectual battle, one that will be won with the mind rather than with fists.



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The opening line to 'A Wrinkle in Time'

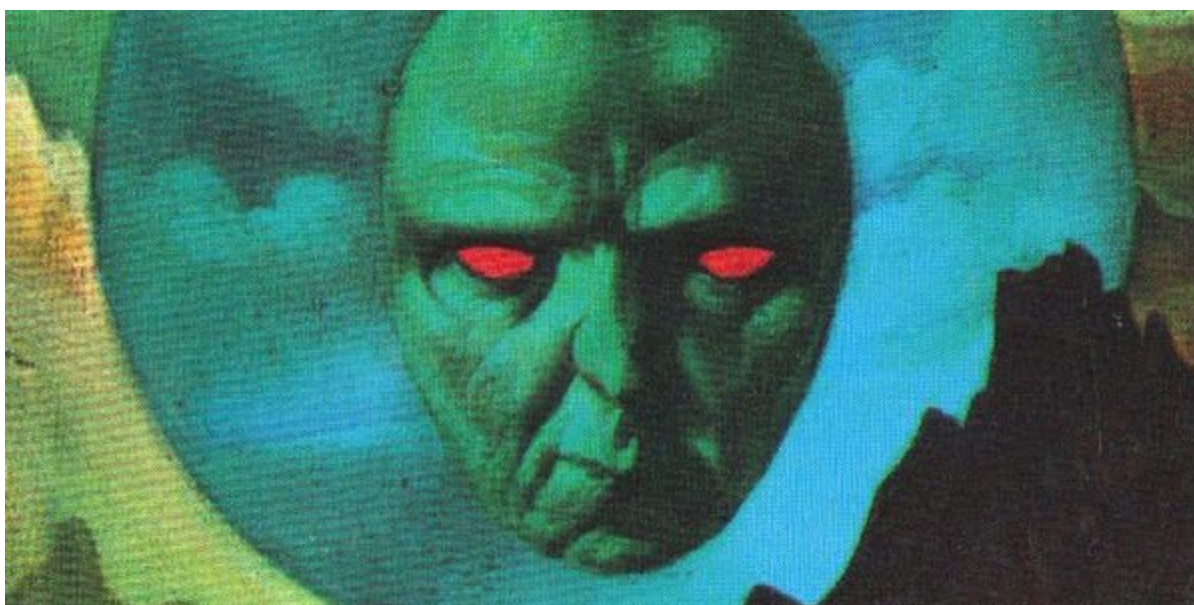
## What Is The Story Of A Wrinkle In Time About?

For the uninitiated, *A Wrinkle In Time* follows young teenager Meg, her athletic neighbor and schoolmate Calvin and her psychic, empathic, wise-beyond-his-years younger brother Charles Wallace, as they attempt to track down Meg and Charles Wallace's scientist father across the universe. Their father disappeared a number of years before while working on a mysterious project and they've been making do with their scientist mother. Meg is an outcast, incredibly intelligent but not much for looks or social niceties. She embraces math but hates that she is forced to do her formulas the way her teachers tell her she must instead of her own way. As a result, she's often in trouble at school, as you can see in this clip from the 2003 movie adaptation of the book:

[VIDEO]

Her brother Charles Wallace is deeply empathic, slightly psychic and much more intelligent than a child of five ought to be — a true child prodigy. They have twin brothers Sandy and Dennys who are generally liked and popular and seem to fit in better than Meg and Charles Wallace. Calvin O'Keefe is slightly older, well-liked at Meg's school, but considers himself different despite his acceptance in society. When Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which appear mysteriously with news of Mr. Murry's whereabouts, Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin take on the adventure.

## Meg And Her Brains Offer An Unintended Lesson In How To Fight Racism



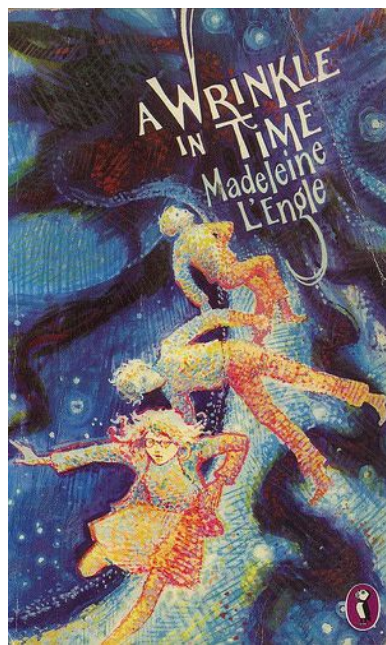
IT, evil overlord of the planet Camazotz

They travel to a few interesting places but the ultimate evil they must face is the bodiless brain controlling the planet of Camazotz. The brainwashed people of Camazotz call this entity "IT" and for a book that embraces its academically-inclined protagonists, it's incredibly intriguing that ultimately this is a story of light vs. dark, brain vs brain. There is plenty to be explored [concerning the intellectualism of \*A Wrinkle In Time\*](#), but the significance of the film's end (which I won't ruin for anyone) is one with far-reaching practicality, one that provides us with a lesson on not just how to defeat evil villains, but how to defeat more intangible evils like racism, bigotry, and deep-rooted hatred.

"Like and equal are not the same thing at all."

Meg faces her foe by immersing herself in logic and reason. She recites mathematical equations and the Declaration of Independence to keep IT from taking over her mind. When she gets to the part in the Declaration concerning equality IT attempts to thwart her with logic saying that in his mind-controlled world "everybody is the same as everybody else."

Her response both resonated with and perplexed me as a kid reading the book. She says with enthusiasm that "Like and equal are not the same thing at all!"



A Wrinkle In Time

She uses the power of this truth combined with her love for her family and the gifts and flaws only she possesses to fight IT. As a kid, I didn't fully understand the significance of such a battle. I was used to "love conquering all" in fantasy, love generally being a catch-all weapon for inhuman enemies. Now that I'm older and find myself trying to intellectualize a great number of dilemmas facing society and my place within those battles, I realize there are multiple kinds of love and the significance of uniqueness and empathy they provide are utterly essential.

Racism is often an intellectual problem.

Kids and adults alike need this lesson as often as we can get it. Problems like racism and exclusion certainly get a much-needed bolster by added diversity in movies, but that only addresses the effects of racism; it doesn't address the origin of the issue itself. Racism is often an intellectual problem (after all, it's our brains that perceive and shape our view of the world and others within it), and intellectualism is the weapon needed to defeat it. This is especially true when it's the sort of intellect demonstrated by Meg Murry, one of empathy, mindfulness, and a distinct understanding of oneself. You need to understand the self-destructive nature of hatred before you can let go of it.

If the generation at which DuVernay's *A Wrinkle In Time* adaptation is aimed will be capable of erasing racism, any chance they get to see the power of a mind thinking for itself in this way is essential — not seeing how our differences divide us, but how they are to be embraced. As Meg says in the book, "Rack your brains yourself, Meg. Don't let IT rack them."

**Did *A Wrinkle In Time* have an effect on you growing up? Share in the comments!**

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