

Chapter Charter: Questions to Guide Your Reading



These questions will help you think about the important parts of each chapter.

Chapter 1

- What do Meg Murry's actions tell you about her? How does Meg feel about her family?
- How is Charles Wallace different from most five-year-olds? Have you ever met an unusual child like Charles Wallace?
- How do we know that Mrs. Whatsit is odd—but friendly?
- Does ending the chapter with the tesseract make you want to read on? If so, why?
- What does Mrs. Murry's treatment of Mrs. Whatsit tell you about Mrs. Murry?

Chapter 2

- Why does the school principal, Mr. Jenkins, want Meg to accept that her father is never coming home? Should Meg believe him? Why? Why not?
- In what ways are the twins Sandy and Dennys different from the rest of the Murry family?
- Why do the twins think Meg has so much trouble at school?
- What does Mrs. Who say to Meg that lets us know that something is about to happen?

Chapter 3

- How is Calvin's home life different from Meg's? How is his school life different from Meg's?
- What does Mrs. Murry mean when she says, "... just because we don't understand doesn't mean that the explanation doesn't exist."
- What is a "willing suspension of belief"? How does having a willing suspension of belief help Mrs. Murry?
- What are the hard questions that Calvin asks about Meg's father?
- Are you surprised when the children go off with Mrs. Who, Mrs. Whatsit, and Mrs. Which? Why do they go off with these strange women?

Chapter 4

- Why does Mrs. Who like to quote? Do you think it is an effective way to communicate with the children? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Calvin is asked to go on the journey with Megan and Charles Wallace?
- How would you react if you were taken on a surprise journey to another planet?

Chapter 5

- What does the children's experience in a two-dimensional planet tell you about tesser travel?
- During their journey, the children learn about the Dark Thing. What do you think the Dark Thing really is?
- Who are some of the famous people mentioned as fighting the Dark Thing? What do they all have in common?

Chapter 6

- Why is the Happy Medium's worst trouble "getting fond"?
- Describe the planet of Camazotz.
- What characters have you met through reading other books and stories who also have magical qualities like Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which?
- What do the children learn about the people of Camazotz? How do you know?

Chapter 7

- Charles Wallace says that they can't make decisions based on fear. Do you agree? Explain.
- When the man with red eyes tries to take over the children's minds, whom does Meg scream for and why?
- What mistake does Charles Wallace make when he meets the man with red eyes?

Chapter 8

- Charles Wallace seems well and happy, just as the man with red eyes says he is. How does Meg know that Charles Wallace's mind and heart have been taken over?
- Describe what life is like on Camazotz. How is it different from your own life? Is anything the same?
- How do they keep people from suffering on Camazotz? What do you think of this idea?
- What do you think IT is?

Chapter 9

- Why does Charles Wallace want to take Mrs. Who's spectacles from Meg?

- Do you believe, as Meg does, that Mr. Murry will really save them? Why or why not?
- Explain the phrase “like and equal are two entirely different things.” How does this idea help Meg?

Chapter 10

- Why is Meg so sick after escaping from IT?
- What are Meg’s feeling about her father, brother, and Calvin after escaping from IT? Do you think she should feel this way? Explain why.
- What do you think of Mr. Murry’s reasons for not rescuing Charles Wallace? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?

Chapter 11

- What would you do if you suddenly met up with three aliens?
- What is it about the beast that convinces Meg to trust her? What are the some of the things that let you trust someone?
- Why do you think Meg finally trusts the beast?
- Why is the name Aunt Beast a good one for this alien creature?
- Why do the time travelers have so much trouble explaining Mrs. Whatsit to the creatures on Ixchel?

Chapter 12

- Why doesn’t Meg hug Mrs. Whatsit when she appears on Ixchel?
- Why does Meg have to be the one to go after Charles Wallace?
- How does Mr. Murry help Meg on the journey back to Camazotz?
- What gift does Mrs. Whatsit give Meg for her journey back to Camazotz? What is Mrs. Which’s gift?
- What does Meg have that IT doesn’t have? Is this something she can use in other situations? If so, how?

Plot: What's Happening?



"What could there be about a shadow that was so terrible that she knew that there had never been before or ever would be again, anything that would chill her with a fear that was beyond shuddering, beyond crying or screaming, beyond the possibility of comfort."

—*A Wrinkle in Time*

A *Wrinkle in Time* is about the journey of three children to find a missing man, and perhaps help save the universe.

Twelve-year-old Meg Murry is having problems at school. She is bored with schoolwork and doesn't seem to fit in with the other kids. Meg has ten-year-old twin brothers, Sandy and Dennys, but she's closest with her five-year-old brother, Charles Wallace.

Meg's father has been missing for some time, and she is worried about him. Some people think that Mr. Murry abandoned the family. But Meg and her mother believe that Mr. Murry is doing

important government work and, for some unknown reason, can't return to them.

Charles Wallace has made friends with a very odd lady, Mrs. Whatsit. One evening, Charles Wallace and Meg go to visit Mrs. Whatsit and her two friends, Mrs. Who and Mrs. Which. The children find an older boy, Calvin O'Keefe, near the house. Meg recognizes Calvin from school. After visiting the ladies, the children go back to the Murry house for dinner where Calvin and Meg get to know each other better. Before the night is over, Charles Wallace tells them that Mrs. Who, Mrs. Whatsit, and Mrs. Which are taking them on a trip to an unknown location.

"I don't know [where] exactly," says Charles Wallace. "But I think it's to find Father."

It's a scary trip because Meg finds herself completely and utterly alone in soundless darkness. When they arrive at their first destination, the planet Uriel, Meg discovers that they have tessered—or wrinkled—through time.

Mrs. Whatsit transforms into a white horselike creature and flies the children to a mountaintop on the planet Uriel. There she shows the children what they are fighting: a dark thing that blots out all light. It is so huge it can surround planets—including Earth. This dark thing makes everyone shudder with fear. They also learn that Mr. Murry has been fighting the Dark Thing (also called the Black Thing). To rescue him, the children will have to travel behind the Dark Thing to the planet Camazotz. Their three

guardians will be able to watch, but they will not be able to do anything to help the children.

On Camazotz, Calvin, Charles Wallace, and Meg find a town where all the houses look the same. In identical front yards, children are bouncing balls and skipping rope in unison. Each ball and rope hits the sidewalk at the exact same instant. The doors to each house open at the same time, and mothers come out at the same moment. The paperboy comes by, throwing the paper to exactly the same spot at every house. He tells the children that this is the capital of Camazotz: "Our factories never close; our machines never stop rolling. . . . We are the most oriented city on the planet. There has been no trouble of any kind for centuries. All Camazotz knows our record. That is why CENTRAL Central Intelligence is located here. That is why IT makes ITs home here."

Calvin, Charles Wallace, and Meg admit to being very afraid, but that doesn't stop them from going to the huge CENTRAL Central Intelligence Building. They are taken into a room where they find the man with red eyes, who communicates without using words. He tries to hypnotize them, but the children resist. Eventually, he succeeds in taking over Charles Wallace's mind.

The children are taken to see Mr. Murry, who is trapped in a tall transparent column. Charles Wallace tells Meg that the only way to save Mr. Murry is if she gives in to IT. At the mention of IT, Meg's skin crawls and she knows that IT is the Dark Thing, the thing that has captured Charles Wallace and her father.

Before Charles Wallace can stop her, Meg runs through the transparent glass wall and joins her father in the column. Mr. Murry is able to leave the column with Meg in his arms.

When Charles Wallace insists that they go to see IT, Mr. Murry agrees. Meg is frightened. She can feel a rhythmic pulsing coming from the building, like it was breathing for her, taking her breath away. They enter the building and are taken to a room where—lying on a dais—is a brain, an oversized, disembodied brain! IT!

Meg tries to resist IT's pulsing power. She fights to stay conscious, but can't hold out against IT and loses consciousness. As Meg slowly comes to her senses, she feels awfully cold and can't move or speak. While she can hear Calvin and Mr. Murry talking, she can't signal them in any way. She discovers they are on another planet having escaped IT—but they've left Charles Wallace behind.

Suddenly three alien figures walk toward them. They are large and gray with four arms and more than five waving tentacles on each hand. Their furry faces are featureless, with only indentations where an Earthling would have eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

When the smallest alien bends over her, suddenly Meg feels peaceful and sleepy. The aliens inform Mr. Murry that Meg, burned by the coldness of the Black Thing, is in grave danger. Mr. Murry and Calvin can't save her, but the alien creatures can. When Meg wakes up, she feels much better. The pain and cold

she felt is now just a memory. Meg calls her creature friend Aunt Beast.

The three Mrs. Ws reappear and discuss what can be done to rescue Charles Wallace from Camazotz. They say the only person who can do it is Meg. She must face IT all by herself. Meg is very frightened—the Dark Thing almost got her once! But she agrees to go.

Back on Camazotz, Meg finds Charles Wallace and tries to talk to him. Meanwhile, IT attempts to take over her mind again. Meg lets all the love inside her heart flow out to her young brother. She looks Charles Wallace in the eye and repeats to herself, I love you I love you I love you. Suddenly, the real Charles Wallace is back! He races to Meg, and in a flash they are whisked away from Camazotz by Mrs. Whatsit. In seconds, they tumble across the lawn at home. Charles Wallace clings to Meg. “You saved me! You saved me!” Mr. Murry and Calvin are there, too, both safe at home.

Thinking about the plot

- Dangerous things happen throughout the story. How does this create suspense?
- Why is it so important for the children to stay together?
- What is the most important thing that happens to each of the children?
- Are Meg, Calvin, and Charles Wallace changed by what happens to them? How?