

## ‘A Wrinkle in Time’ Can’t Smooth Its Bizarre Fabric

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 8, 2018 - 6:08pm

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Although I am an admirer of Oprah Winfrey, it’s unfortunate that the best way to describe “A Wrinkle in Time” – with her role as goddess problem solver – is Worst. Episode. of. Oprah. Ever. The film, based on a novel from 1962, caves into effects over cohesiveness or story.

Director Ava DuVernay, with only her second major narrative film, may have bit off way more than she could chew, with a complex web of settings, CGI effects and bizarre uses of it all. The story was secondary and barely there, made worse by the silliness of the characters and the actors portraying them. The main setting is an alternate universe, and the souls that populate it were all misplaced and miscast. Oprah joins two other goddesses, played by Reese Witherspoon and Mindy Kaling (“The Office”). All three didn’t work for separate reasons... Oprah’s persona was too close to the outsized presence of her real life, thus devolving into parody, Witherspoon felt like she had no idea what her character was about, and Kaling played the role as if she was drugged. This all adds up into an unintentional laugh fest, not helped by the presence of Chris Pine, Zach Galifianakis and Michael Peña, all woefully miscast. Oh yeah, and the film is kind of dull – even for kids – except for the unpremeditated guffaws.

Dad Murry (Chris Pine) is an astrophysicist, who is closing in on a alternative form of traveling through the universe, and is aided in this effort by his academic wife (Gugu Mbatha-Raw). Just as they are adopting another son, Charles Wallace (Deric McCabe), Dad disappears into an inter-dimensional parallel universe (I hate when that happens). His daughter Meg (Storm Reid) never accepts his fate, and has issues at school four years later.



The Cast Pines for Chris Pine (center) in ‘A Wrinkle in Time’

*Photo credit: Walt Disney Pictures*

But Charles Wallace stumbles upon a solution. He sees three goddesses who populate the same inter-dimensional setting as their Dad. Mrs. Whatsit (Reese Witherspoon) is first to appear, followed by the quote-spouting Mrs. Who (Mindy Kaling). The two follow the leading goddess-traveler, Mrs. Which (Oprah Winfrey), who appears in gigantic form. She leads the kids into the dimensional travel – along with their buddy Calvin (Levi Miller) – and it is up to Meg to figure out how to get to their father.

Initially, it shouldn’t have been Mrs. Whatsit that started the journey, it’s always Who that’s on First (rim shot). And Oprah’s character Mrs. Which sounded like “witch” so even the goddesses’ names were giggle-inducing. The main reason Ms. Winfrey was not the right choice was that her character was so omnipresent and “Oprah like.” It immediately started the unintentional laugh parade, especially when she appears as a giant (get it, giant in the industry). Later, she starts doing talking points that were straight out of an Oprah Show episode. It was all hard to take seriously.

Reese Witherspoon also provides some hilarity by turning into a giant flying monster, complete with her signature sharp chin. It was the stuff of a dream after eating too much ice cream and falling asleep watching “Legally Blonde.” Mindy Kaling, who has a very sharp comic style, is sleepy and weird in her disconnected interpretation, she may have been self medicating. Zach Galifianakis portrays a character... I kid you not... called the Happy Medium, but even he couldn’t make hay out of it.





Save Me Giant Oprah! Mrs. Which Leads the Way in ‘A Wrinkle in Time’  
Photo credit: Walt Disney Pictures

Director DuVernay proved her talent in “Selma,” but here we can feel the overworked nature of the product. Each scene is played against production design that had to take months of painstaking planning... DuVernay couldn’t yell action and understand what was going to happen. It seemed also that the film was longer and edited severely. It abruptly ends, for example, with no lead-in to the conclusion. The whole film suffered from a lack of background, things just happened because the story demanded it, without depth or feeling.

But at least the generations of kids who will watch this in the future can get a glimpse of misguided celebrity casting from 2018. They will ask their robot nannies to keep replaying it, so they can once again experience the giantess called Oprah. You get a star, and you get a star, and you get a star...

*“A Wrinkle in Time” opens everywhere on March 9th, in regular, IMAX and 3D screenings. See local listings for IMAX/3D theaters and show times. Featuring Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, Mindy Kaling, Chris Pine, Zach Galifianakis and Storm Reid. Screenplay adapted by Jennifer Lee and Jeff Stockwell. Directed by Ava DuVernay. Rated “PG”*



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