

Dear Madeline L'Engle,

Around four years ago I was a child, proven true by how I had denied it. Four years ago I was young and unaware of the full extent of who I was and what I could do. Nearly four years ago I was persuaded, after a fiercely whispered argument in the stalls of the local library, to read Newberry Award winner *A Wrinkle in Time*. That grudgingly accepted decision motivated me to read and reread again an author's books over the next four years, during which I grew to eventually become the person I am today.

I sit here now, wondering how I could possibly translate into words how I have altered, and how I appreciated that ground-breaking book that sparked life-changing ideas. Can I express the way one person can stimulate another person to rethink their life, question their values, provide for them the comfort and reassurance of seeing Mrs Whatsit attired in her usual display of mangled scarves and hats? Never before had I longed to live in a story, embrace a character as myself and experience tessering through the Black Thing, or hear the voices of the beasts on Uriel raised in song. Even today, four years later, I pick up that book and smile-- Meg and Calvin are still there, the tesseract hasn't moved, Charles Wallace isn't full-grown and out of his room that Meg and Calvin's oldest daughter would temporarily use. How can someone possibly communicate these emotions of the heart using Microsoft Word? But if there is something that you have imprinted on me, it is to hope. If you can win such devotion from a reader, I can try to describe in what ways I have been influenced.

When I first picked up this book, I was transitioning from school to home-school, suspended somewhere in the middle; I was discovering myself, not who others thought I was. In *A Wrinkle in Time* I was not alone-- Meg was in an awkward position, Calvin was shining behind the barrier that kept him from being his true self, Charles was so extraordinary that people labeled him "not quite bright." I could always look to *A Wrinkle in Time* to suck the poison out of my day and be immersed in a world where I wasn't the one burdened by problems. My emotions intermingled with those of the characters, but whether that was because I was engrossed in my reading or simply being myself, I didn't know. I did know it was my escape into the unknown, to a world where the limits of my world didn't restrain me. The ideas posed there sent my mind into shock, and only when I recovered was I fully able to grasp them; I began asking "what-if" questions.

But the most dramatic change I've recognized is that I *want* to write. By recording my way of interpreting a spring breeze, the smell of the fallen leaves in autumn, or the feel in the air when I would be suspended from a chairlift one winter evening, I have not only come into a greater awareness of my surroundings, but probed deep into myself where I can behold those emotions raw. I have come to know myself better than I could have comprehended.

I want to thank you for being the person who encouraged me to question myself and the world (and the universe). For giving me a soft place to land after a hard day; I can only say in so many words how comforting seeing that dust jacket was. I was given a chance to reconsider who I was and who I would become. For giving me much more than just a childhood memory to look back upon as an adult, I attempt to summarize my vast appreciation. Never, in all my life, has a book not only won over my heart so swiftly, but has inspired me to read virtually all the young adult fiction a single author has ever written. I thank you, as truly and purely as possible, for putting your thoughts on paper, for posing the big questions, for revealing the joy and anguish of being human in a way that a child can understand during a first encounter.

Thank you again,
Kristen Soforic