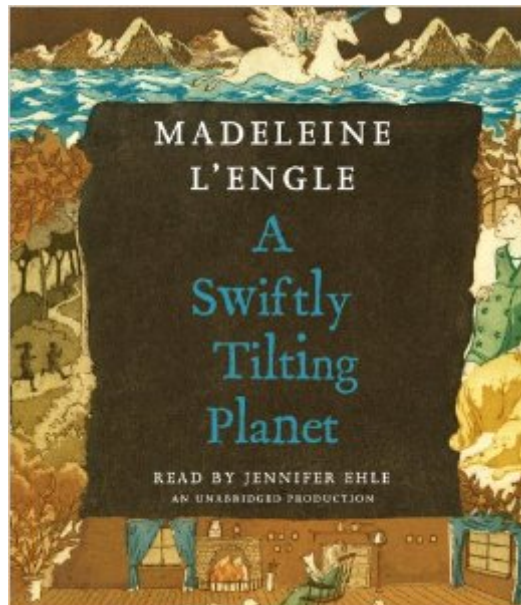


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# A Swiftly Tilting Planet (Madeleine L'Engle's Time Quintet)



## Synopsis

In this companion volume to *A Wrinkle In Time* (Newbery Award winner) and *A Wind In The Door* fifteen-year-old Charles Wallace and the unicorn Gaudior undertake a perilous journey through time in a desperate attempt to stop the destruction of the world by the mad dictator Madog Branzillo. They are not alone in their quest. Charles Wallace's sister, Meg--grown and expecting her first child, but still able to enter her brother's thoughts and emotions by "kything"--goes with him in spirit. But in overcoming the challenges, Charles Wallace must face the ultimate test of his faith and will, as he is sent within four people from another time, there to search for a way to avert the tragedy threatening them all. "L'Engle's gifts are at their most impressive here." --*Publisher's Weekly* From the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read *Wrinkle in Time* when I was 11 and thought it was the best thing I'd ever read. *Wind in the Door* and *Swiftly Tilting Planet* were published when I was an adult. I liked *Wind in the Door*, but it didn't have the "agic" of *Wrinkle*. When I picked up *Swiftly Tilting Planet*, I thought that I would enjoy it, but it wouldn't be up to par with *Wrinkle*. Boy was I wrong! *Planet* was the most magnificent book I've ever read. I'm 46 years old and have read thousands of books over my lifetime, including all of Madeleine L'Engle's titles. This story is so inspirational, suspenseful, frightening, heartbreaking and joyful. It's just the best. I use *The Rune* when I need a little "igher power" in my life as well as

traditional prayers. I recommend it to everyone. It may be complicated for some children, but Ms. L'Engle doesn't write down for anyone. It can be a joyous experience for the imaginative child and adult as well. I think I'll sign off and go read it again right now.

This is perhaps my favorite book in L'Engle's famous "Time Quartet." Set a decade after the events of the previous book, *A Wind in the Door*, Meg Murray and Calvin O'Keefe are now married and she is pregnant when he is sent overseas one Thanksgiving. She takes her mother-in-law to her family's home for the holiday, but the mood of the celebration is shattered when the President calls Mr. Murray with dire news: the Central American dictator Mad Dog Branzillo has gotten his hands on a nuclear arsenal, and his fingers are stroking the button. A cryptic rune uttered by Mrs. O'Keefe sends the 15-year-old Charles Wallace on a quest through time itself on a desperate search for the link between Calvin's family and the Might-Have-Been that he has to change to save the world. Although this is, like I said, my favorite of the Time Quartet, it's safe to say it wouldn't be as good a book without the previous two. L'Engle tries to make the story self-contained, but there's very little in this book in the way of character development, she relies heavily on readers' conceptions of the characters from the previous novels to drive this story forward. The book is also very episodic -- Charles Wallace goes within various people at various times, and with each of them he experiences a lifetime. The book almost reads like a series of interconnected short stories linked through the framing sequence of Charles trying to stop Branzillo. As a result, there are multiple antagonists and protagonists alike, giving the book a very epic, far-reaching feel. This is, like I said, my favorite of the Time Quartet -- I just wouldn't recommend reading it by itself.

A lot of the reviews begin with the reviewers' stories of when they first read the book. Like them, I discovered "A Swiftly Tilting Planet" when I was very young, and I still love it. It is the kind of book you can read again and again as you grow up. Each new time it is read it can reveal new layers of meaning. When I first read it, I thought it was just an adventure story with a unicorn (a really great adventure story, of course). Then I began to see how it took a stand for love and against apathy. In the plot, Charles Wallace has to fight the Echthroi (evil forces). Writing this story was Madeleine L'Engle's own way of fighting the Echthroi, which really exist. Through her story, she warns us about not letting the "Might-Have-Been's" haunt us; she asks us to take a stand "in this fateful hour" against the "powers of darkness." If this is too mystical for some of you to stomach, then you probably have not entered this author's world, which, like the Christian world, is teeming with angels and demons. In this world, everyone must choose sides. This is a book that children should have on

their bookshelves. It may be a little too heavy for them at first, but as they get older, the layers of meaning will begin to become apparent to them. I have given all my younger cousins copies of Madeleine L'Engle books for their libraries. That is one way I know of teaching them how to care about the past-present-future of the Universe.

I am a mom with two bright boys, ages 8 and 11. My husband and I read this book to the 11 year old, but I also read it to myself. In this book, the protagonist travels back and forth through time to change history to try to prevent a catastrophe. The changes must be very subtle to avoid paradox. The story line is complex because the reader must keep track of many generations of two branches of the same family. The story is very suspenseful because bad spirits are constantly trying to kill the protagonist, or prevent his success. The book has good points and bad points. On the good side: 1. The book presents a peace loving and anti-racist point of view; 2. It also makes a fascinating exploration of historical rumors that when British colonists first arrived in the southern part of the US they found a tribe of Welsh-speaking Native Americans with some Caucasian features; and 3. I enjoyed the complexity, but you really had to pay very close attention, or you got lost -- like my husband did. On the bad side: 1. I did not like the idea that, starting from two brothers, the descendants of the bad brother would be bad and the descendants of the good brother would be good over several hundred years and a large number of generations. Each person makes his or her own destiny and decisions of right and wrong. It's not a very good message to send kids that a person's goodness and badness are determined by some ancestor so long ago. This is the sort of attitude that leads to perpetual war in the Balkans. 2. There was one very disturbing sequence about a critical character being severely injured and ultimately dying as a result of child abuse. This portion was really not appropriate for small children. In sum, though this is an interesting, enjoyable book, I disagree it is appropriate for ages 9-12. It would be better for teenagers.

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