

# How "A Wrinkle in Time" designed elaborate looks for main characters

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Image 1. "It was a lot of metal and silver - all these things that reflect a powerful woman," says costume designer Paco Delgado of Oprah Winfrey's character. Photo by: Atsushi Nishijima/Walt Disney Pictures

It seems fitting that media giant Oprah Winfrey plays Mrs. Which in Ava DuVernay's movie adaptation of the book, "A Wrinkle in Time." The character's abilities match Winfrey's level of influence.

There is an overall air of power that the film's costume designer and makeup team worked together to show.

"Her wardrobe was fantastic," LaLette Littlejohn, head of the makeup department, said of Winfrey's costumes. Makeup ideas can come from the clothing, Littlejohn said. "We tried to make her look as strong as possible."

Mrs. Which, along with Mrs. Whatsit (Reese Witherspoon) and Mrs. Who (Mindy Kaling), leads 13-year-old Meg (Storm Reid) and others on a journey. Their mission is to rescue the girl's scientist father (Chris Pine) from evil forces in space. The three Mrs. W's dress in elaborate outfits with heavy makeup and big hairdos. Each look represents their personalities and stories.

Here are some of their most fascinating looks and the inspiration behind them.

## **Oprah Winfrey (Mrs. Which)**

This look, one of costume designer Paco Delgado's favorites, brought gasps when Disney released the first movie trailer in July. Mrs. Which appears as a shimmering light most of the time. Delgado drew from ideas like volcano explosions and images of galaxies while dressing her humanlike form.

"It was a lot of metal and silver - all these things that reflect a powerful woman," he said. They put a special type of light-up fabric in some of the dresses to make them glow from inside, he said.

Derrick Rutledge, Winfrey's personal makeup artist who also worked on the film, designed rhinestone eyebrows for each Mrs. Which outfit. He created them by setting metal pieces and jewels on lace. Rutledge chose colors to go with Delgado's designs. Each set took about an hour and a half to make.

"I always started with the left eyebrow, and once that was done," he explained, "I'd say, 'Now I have to take a little break.' And then I would do the same for the right eyebrow."

The idea behind the cage-like structure, which Delgado described as "almost like armor," came from hoop skirts. They were structured pieces women wore under dresses in the 19th century to keep their shape.

Why don't we put that on the outside? Delgado recalled thinking. Doing that in metal would be like a protective garment, he said.

Mrs. Which's shiny makeup was inspired by her stellar nature. It was inspired by the stars.

"That's why her eyebrows were rhinestones and everything was glitter," Littlejohn said.

## **Mindy Kaling (Mrs. Who)**

Kaling plays Mrs. Who, a scholarly being who quotes famous thinkers and literature. Delgado viewed her as a "super librarian of the universe," and her garments reflected this worldliness.



"Japanese ideas or South American embroidery or African prints were basically the idea," he said. "All these different cultures in the world that she knew so well."

It's not unusual to see Kaling in crazy prints. Her character on "The Mindy Project," which ended in November, wore bright outfits.

The patterns and bold colors had become known as Mindy's look, said the show's costume designer, Salvador Perez.

Mrs. Who's makeup is more subdued than Mrs. Which's. Her painted lips, mascara-heavy eyelashes and rosy cheeks give her a doll-like appearance, somewhat like the collectible Barbies modeled after the trio.

That was the idea, according to Littlejohn, who said Mrs. Who's expressive nature led to close-up shots of her reciting poetry to Meg and her companions. The makeup team chose a less-jarring look, one that the young characters - and audiences - would like. "So I said, a doll," Littlejohn explained.

Mrs. Who's detailed hairstyle was designed by stylist Kimberly Kimble. The hairstyle copies her quilted clothing.



## Reese Witherspoon (Mrs. Whatsit)

Mrs. Whatsit is the best at interacting with the children because of her motherly nature. She transforms into a fantastical winged creature on the planet Uriel, and her dresses were made of lighter fabrics like silk.



"When she moved, everything moved with her in the wind," Delgado said. "I was looking up images of the tails of goldfish and how they were waving with the water, and butterflies and flowers."

Mrs. Whatsit has bright hair but her makeup is often just shimmery lips and matching eyeshadow.

Delgado said he worked with Littlejohn and Kimble to coordinate the looks.

They would see each other's plans and would talk out ideas, he said.

The settings affected their decisions as well. The characters went to a number of planets, each one distinct in its appearance and mood, and their looks had to fit them all.

## Quiz

- 1 Which paragraph in the section "Reese Witherspoon (Mrs. Whatsit)" BEST supports the conclusion that the appearance of the characters was highly coordinated throughout the movie?
  - (A) Mrs. Whatsit is the best at interacting with the children because of her motherly nature. She transforms into a fantastical winged creature on the planet Uriel, and her dresses were made of lighter fabrics like silk.
  - (B) "When she moved, everything moved with her in the wind," Delgado said. "I was looking up images of the tails of goldfish and how they were waving with the water, and butterflies and flowers."
  - (C) Mrs. Whatsit has bright hair but her makeup is often just shimmery lips and matching eye shadow.
  - (D) The settings affected their decisions as well. The characters went to a number of planets, each one distinct in its appearance and mood, and their looks had to fit them all.
  
- 2 Read the section "Oprah Winfrey (Mrs. Which)."

Which selection describes HOW Delgado developed his idea for Mrs. Which's dresses in the movie?

  - (A) This look, one of costume designer Paco Delgado's favorites, brought gasps when Disney released the first movie trailer in July. Mrs. Which appears as a shimmering light most of the time.
  - (B) Delgado drew from ideas like volcano explosions and images of galaxies while dressing her humanlike form.
  - (C) They put a special type of light-up fabric in some of the dresses to make them glow from inside, he said.
  - (D) Derrick Rutledge, Winfrey's personal makeup artist who also worked on the film, designed rhinestone eyebrows for each Mrs. Which outfit.

- 3 Read the sentence from the introduction [paragraphs 1-5.]

*It seems fitting that media giant Oprah Winfrey plays Mrs. Which in Ava DuVernay's movie adaptation of the book, "A Wrinkle in Time."*

Which option is the BEST definition of the word "adaptation" as used in the sentence?

- (A) analysis
  - (B) change
  - (C) version
  - (D) overview
- 4 Read the following paragraph from the section "Mindy Kaling (Mrs. Who)." Then, fill in the blank.

*Mrs. Who's makeup is more subdued than Mrs. Which's. Her painted lips, mascara-heavy eyelashes and rosy cheeks give her a doll-like appearance, somewhat like the collectible Barbies modeled after the trio.*

The word "subdued" in the sentence above tells the reader that Mrs. Who has \_\_\_\_\_.

- (A) a cheerful look
- (B) a comical look
- (C) a brighter look
- (D) a quieter look