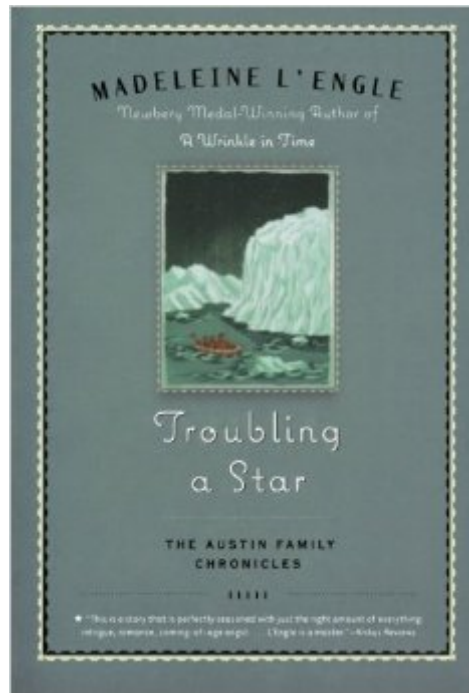


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Troubling A Star: The Austin Family Chronicles, Book 5



Synopsis

The Austins have settled back into their beloved home in the country after more than a year away. Though they had all missed the predictability and security of life in Thornhill, Vicky Austin is discovering that slipping back into her old life isn't easy. She's been changed by life in New York City and her travels around the country while her old friends seem to have stayed the same. So Vicky finds herself spending time with a new friend, Serena Eddington—the great-aunt of a boy Vicky met over the summer. Aunt Serena gives Vicky an incredible birthday gift—a month-long trip to Antarctica. It's the opportunity of a lifetime. But Vicky is nervous. She's never been away from her family before. Once she sets off though, she finds that's the least of her worries. She receives threatening letters. She's surrounded by suspicious characters. Vicky no longer knows who to trust. And she may not make it home alive.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 850L (What's this?)

Series: Austin Family (Book 5)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (89 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #573,126 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Asia #259 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical #592 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Fantasy & Supernatural

Age Range: 12 - 16 years

Grade Level: 6 - 12

Customer Reviews

I've just finished reading this a second time, so that should be some evidence of how good this book is. Although, I think "Ring of Endless Light" was better, though not too much, and that's also saying something because I think AROEL is one of the best books I've ever read. Okay, okay, I'm biased because I'm a huge L'Engle fan. But this is really a good book. It is a bit long, compared to other

L'Engle books and other YA books, but it's worth the length. I loved reading more about Vicky, and I really hope there'll be more books written about her. The other smaller characters are equally good, and I loved the new characters that were introduced almost as much as I loved seeing my old favorites again. Aunt Serena is awesome, and she seems to be exactly the kind of person who would be related to Adam. Ah yes, Adam. That's one wish I have; that we could've seen more of Adam. Maybe next book. I loved the wonderful descriptions of Antarica, and even though I had no remote interest about the southern-most continent before, this book has sparked something. One more thing I love about this book (or rather, all of L'Engle's work) is the way all her books are inter-connected in ways, sometimes such little things, but I noticed them at the second reading. For instance, the mention of "El Zarco" and the part Vespugia plays. (both from *Swiftly Tilting Planet*, which is, BTW, a great book) And, (this is a really minor thing) but I loved the mention that Esteban was descended from Welsh immigrants (remember all the Welsh people in *STP*?) and that the Vespugian dictator is named Guedder. (remember *gudder* from *STP*?) That wasn't even everything. But it just shows that this book is deep, much deeper than it first appears.

Returning to tiny Thornhill, Connecticut after living for a year in New York City, Vicky Austin discovers that she no longer fits in there. After she gets an unexpected call from Adam Eddington, a marine biology student whom she met during the eventful summer just past, Vicky finds herself developing a warm friendship with Adam's great-aunt in a nearby village. The whole Austin family reaches out to this wealthy but lonely old lady, who astonishes everyone by giving Vicky an extraordinary sixteenth birthday gift: a trip to Antarctica. Adam will be there already, working at a research station named for his uncle - an explorer who disappeared in that area. Vicky's excitement is tempered by a series of apparent warnings, as she prepares to leave for Vespugia (a small South American country in turmoil), the Falkland Islands, and finally Eddington Station. She remembers those warnings, and wishes she hadn't kept them from her parents, as her trip unfolds and one mysterious event follows after another. I was a bit disappointed that Vicky's extraordinary experiences in *A RING OF ENDLESS LIGHT*, the book before this one in the Austin Series, play no part in *TROUBLING A STAR*. We hear about her beloved grandfather's death and her budding romance with Adam Eddington when Vicky thinks of last summer, but the dolphins with whom she communicated so remarkably seem forgotten. However, this book is clearly intended to stand on its own. It does so, very well indeed, as a mystery/thriller for a young adult audience. It generates suspense and then maintains it, with L'Engle's memorable heroine Vicky Austin taking more steps toward maturity while remaining solidly in character.

I'm a college student, which I suppose means I should be reading college-type books. I do, of course, but every so often I will indulge myself in an old favorite from my adolescence. One of those is 'Ring of Endless Light,' and when I found that L'Engle had written a sequel I snapped it up eagerly. I simply HAD to know the fate of Adam (whom *I* have a crush on and am actively seeking at my school) and the pensive Vicki. I admit, it took me *three* reads to "get" the plot of this book. I'm not scientifically-minded and, to be honest, it bores me, so really, I didn't pay much attention to the nitty-gritty bits of the plot. Instead I focused on Vicki, who reminds me of myself at that age, when everything was simply *fraught* with meaning, whether it be a sidelong glance or a mysterious trunk thrown overboard. I enjoy L'Engle's writing style, which occasionally seems a bit posh, but that's coming from a fellow writer with minimalist leanings. I highly recommend Ring of Endless Light in conjunction with Troubling A Star as required reading for any teenager and/or adult looking for something a little different from the mundane soft-serve fiction offered in recent times. I especially urge all young women to read these books, because I believe it encourages logical thinking, emotional strength and curiosity in the people who need it most: girls. Thanks, L'Engle.

I'd always been a huge fan of the Wrinkle in Time series, but I was always bored with the books about the Austins until I read Troubling a Star. The Vesputia stuff always goes over my head, but besides that it's a fabulous book with great characters and tons of suspense. When I first read this book in seventh grade I became obsessed with going to Antarctica. This January, three years later, I actually went there, and it was one of the most incredible experiences of my life, and I know I'm going to go back someday because it was so, so wonderful. One of the first things I did when I got home was to search through my bookshelves and read Troubling a Star again- after all it had largely been what had inspired my trip in the first place, although I had only read it that one time three years ago. As I read it again (and all in one night) it was far more meaningful than before. I'll stop rambling now, but please please read this book because it's just awesome.

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