

THE LION, THE WITCH & THE WARDROBE Study Guide

INTRODUCTION

C.S. Lewis was born on November 29, 1898 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He spent his early childhood in an atmosphere of learning and imagination. When his brother was sent away to school, Lewis began spending more and more time reading. He found that he especially enjoyed stories about how magical things happened to ordinary children. When he was 18, he began writing stories. Although he had no children of his own, Lewis never forgot what it was like to be a child. In 1939, with Britain at war and bombs being dropped on London, as many children as possible were sent to live in the country for safety. During this period, the first of several groups of children came to live in his Oxford home. As he got to know them, he was saddened to learn how little they read and how few imaginative stories they seemed to know. Lewis recognized a need to kindle young people's imaginations with the types of magical stories he treasured as a child. It was nine years later, in 1948, that he started writing *The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe*.

BEFORE SEEING THE PLAY:

1. The play is set during World War II. What countries fought in the war?
2. The four children are sent away from their London home; they are to stay with their Uncle Digory in the country to be safe from the bombing of London. How would you feel if you were sent away from your parents?
3. Can you locate London on the map? What do you know about that city?
4. What is a wardrobe? Do you have one in your home?
5. The four children enter the fairy land of Narnia where all manner of strange creatures live. What is a fairy tale? How does it differ from another kind of story? A television story?
6. Tumnus the Faun is a mythical animal. What is a myth? Why do people make them up?
7. The Beavers that the children meet up with are cockneys. What kind of people are cockneys?
8. What is a witch? Can you name other fairy tales that have witches as characters?
9. The story of the play centers around a prophecy that involves the four children. What is a prophecy? Can anyone make one? Why are they important?
10. What is Turkish Delight? Is it something you've ever tasted?

AFTER SEEING THE PLAY:

1. Lucy is the youngest child in the family. Is it difficult being the youngest? Why do Edmund and Lucy argue so much? How does their Uncle Digory react to this arguing?
2. Can you identify something Peter does or says that suggests he is the leader of the four children? Is it difficult to be the oldest child? How is it different?
3. Why is Edmund so contrary? Do you have anyone in your family who is like Edmund?

4. Does Susan seem to take over the mother's role? Can you identify anything Susan says or does that makes her seem motherly?
5. Edmund cheats at the game of hide and seek. Why? What does this tell us about Edmund?
6. When Lucy tells them that the wardrobe is cold, Peter says it's not logical. What is logic? Are fairy tales ever logical?
7. Why can't Edmund resist the Turkish Delight? Is there any food that tempts you that much?
8. Why does the Witch want Edmund to return with the other three children?
9. Explain the prophecy of the four thrones.
10. In a song, Tumnus tells how beautiful Narnia was. Why does it always snow there now? Why is it never spring?
11. Why can't Tumnus turn Lucy over to the secret police?
12. Why does Edmund lie when Lucy tells Susan and Peter what is happening in Narnia. Why would Edmund do this to his sister? Would you ever do this to your brother or sister?
13. Why does Edmund sneak off when the Beavers tell the children that "when four humans sit on the thrones of the Castle of Narnia, the witch's reign will be finished"? How does this compare with what the Witch promised Edmund?
14. Why does Spring return to Narnia? Why does this upset the Witch?
15. Why are the children and the Beavers so happy when Spring returns? What shows this happiness in their song?
16. Why is Aslan as interested as the Witch in the four children? Is the reason for his interest different?
17. When Peter kills the attacking wolf, he is praised by Aslan and knighted. Why? Is this a sign that he is maturing? What actually is knighthood?
18. Edmund almost loses his life, but he is rescued by Aslan's army and the three other children. How does Lucy behave when they save Edmund?
19. Why can't Edmund look into Aslan's eyes? Is he feeling guilty? Have you ever felt guilty about something you did? What does reforming "from the inside out" mean?
20. Why does Aslan sacrifice himself to save Edmund? Why does the Witch take Aslan in exchange for Edmund?
21. When Aslan's army is losing the battle, why does Edmund want to turn himself over to the Witch? Why does Peter stop him?
22. Aslan comes back from the dead because, he says, there's a "deeper magic" that allows innocent people who sacrifice themselves for the guilty to return to life. How do Lucy and Susan react to Aslan's return? How would you react?
23. When they finally return to the home of their Uncle Digory, what changes have taken place in Edmund and Lucy? At the end, why does Uncle Digory say the same words as Aslan, "once a king in Narnia, a king forevermore"?

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Ford, Paul F. Companion to Narnia. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1980.

Sibley, Brian. The Land of Narnia. London: Collins and Sons and the Chronicles of Narnia Co., 1989.

Books by C.S. Lewis: Collier Books, published by MacMillan Publishing Co., New York.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA:

The Magician's Nephew - 1955

How Aslan created Narnia and gave the gift of speech to its animals.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe - 1950

How four children entered the Land of Narnia, met Aslan, killed the White Witch and fulfilled the proverb: "When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone/Sits at Cair Paravel in the throne/The evil time will be over and done."

The Horse and his Boy - 1954

How a talking horse and a boy prince save Narnia from invasion.

Prince Caspian - 1951

How good Prince Caspian and his army of Talking Beasts conquered the Telmarines.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader - 1952

How King Caspian sailed through magic waters to the End of the World.

The Silver Chair - 1953

How captive Prince Rilian escaped from the Emerald Witch's underground kingdom.

The Last Battle - 1956

How evil came to Narnia and Aslan led his people to a glorious new paradise.