

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Study Guide

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis

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Plot Summary

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe begins as four siblings (Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy) arrive in the country to escape the dangers of London in World War II. Taking refuge with the middle-aged (and unnamed) Professor in his big, rambling house in the country, they are initially excited by the opportunities for fun and play they discover. One day, while exploring the house, Lucy accidentally finds her way into a wintry countryside completely unlike England, particularly because she's met there by the playful Mr. Tumnus, who tells her she's in the land of Narnia and invites her to tea. Later, however, he sadly confesses that he's under orders from the powerful White Witch (who rules Narnia and who has made it eternal winter, but never Christmas) to betray any human visitors to her. Lucy convinces him to let her go, and she returns through the wardrobe to the house, where she is surprised to learn that although she feels she's been away for hours, she's really only been gone a few minutes. She's also upset when the others, particularly Edmund, ridicule her story.

Sometime later, however, Edmund also finds his way into Narnia, where he meets the White Witch. Bribing him with sweets, and strangely intrigued by the fact that he has a brother and two sisters, she convinces him to come back as soon as he can and to bring his siblings. On his way back he encounters Lucy, who is excited that someone else has shared her experience, but whose joy turns to sadness when Edmund, giving in to his nasty side, tells Peter and Susan he and Lucy were only playing.

Eventually, all four siblings find their way into Narnia, and Peter calls Edmund out for being a liar and for hurting Lucy's feelings. Edmund nurses a deepening resentment for Peter as the four children discover that Mr. Tumnus has been arrested by the Witch's wolf police, and then are given shelter by a pair of friendly Beavers, who tell them that things are about to change in Narnia: the mysterious and powerful lion, Aslan, is "on the move" and will soon set things right.

Edmund slips away from his siblings and the Beavers and goes straight to the Witch, who reacts with fearful fury at his reference to Aslan and prepares to intercept him. Meanwhile, Edmund's siblings and the Beavers flee to where they are to meet Aslan, and eventually encounter him in the company of several large and powerful allies. Serious conversation between Aslan and Peter is interrupted by an attack by two of the Witch's wolf police, one of which is killed by Peter and the other of which escapes.

The next day, after her attempt to sacrifice Edmund for his treachery is interrupted by an attack of Aslan's allies sent to rescue him, the Witch arrives for a conference with Aslan. After the conference, Aslan reveals that he has made an arrangement for Edmund's life to be spared. That night, Lucy and Susan walk with the somber Aslan on his way to keep the arrangement. They watch in grieving horror as the Witch first humiliates him and then takes his life in place of Edmund's. The next morning, however, Aslan returns to life, and leads his army into combat with the Witch and her allies, eventually defeating her.



The novel's final chapter reveals how Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy are all made kings and queens in Narnia and how their rule of several years ends when, in pursuit of a magical Stag, they find themselves drawn back into England ... only a few seconds after they originally left.



Part 1, Chapters 1 and 2

Summary

This allegorical fantasy novel is the story of four British children who accidentally make their way (through a magical entrance in the back of a wardrobe) into a magical land, get caught up in a war, and emerge as kings and queens. As the children deal with both joy and despair, the narrative explores important parallels with the story of Christ, as well as themes of betrayal and loyalty, and the power and value of gifts.

Chapter 1, "Lucy Looks into a Wardrobe"

Taking refuge from the bombings in London, four children (Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy) are evacuated to a large house in the country. The house's owner, referred to only as the Professor invites them to make themselves at home. The children become excited about all the possibilities for exploring and playing in the large, rambling house, but Lucy feels just a little frightened. The next day, the children's plans to explore the gardens around the house are disrupted by heavy rain. So, they explore the inside of the house. At one point, as her siblings go on ahead, Lucy lingers in a large empty room, intrigued by the wardrobe there. When she opens its doors, she discovers it's full of fur coats. Since she loves the smell of fur, she steps inside. She leaves the door open "for she knew that it is a very silly thing to shut oneself in a wardrobe.". She goes further and further into the wardrobe. She is surprised not only by there being no back, but also because she finds that she's walking on snow in a clearing surrounded by trees. The clearing is lit by a lamppost. Shortly afterwards, a strange person drops the packages he's carrying when he is surprised by seeing Lucy.

Chapter 2 – "What Lucy Found There"

Conversation between Lucy and the Faun reveals that the land into which Lucy has ventured is called Narnia, and that it is eternal winter there (but never Christmas) as the result of a magic spell placed on it by the White Witch. More playful conversation reveals that all humans are thought of as "Sons of Adam" or "Daughters of Eve." When Mr. Tumnus invites Lucy to join him for tea, she hesitates at first, but eventually agrees. She is surprised to discover that Mr. Tumnus' home is very warm and comfortable. As he tells her stories, feeds her well, and plays music for her, she starts to fall asleep. She wakes herself up, however, aware that she's been gone a long time and that her siblings will be wondering where she is. To her surprise, Mr. Tumnus starts crying, eventually confessing that he has been commanded by the White Witch to catch any human visitors and hand them over to her. As he weeps with worry over what will happen to him if he doesn't, Lucy gives him her handkerchief and comforts him, saying that the Witch doesn't have to know that he didn't do as he was told. He agrees, saying that now he's actually met a human for the first time, he can't do as the White Witch asks. He walks her back to the lamppost clearing, where he asks to keep the handkerchief. Lucy lets him as she hurries back through the door of the wardrobe



(which she had left open). She jumps back out into the large empty room, shouting for the others to come find her.

Analysis

This first section of the narrative introduces the principle human characters (Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy), as well as the circumstances in their lives that set the story in motion and the actual beginnings of that story. Within that general introductory framework, there are several points to note. These include some clear definitions of character (in particular the leadership of Peter and the curiosity and warmth of Lucy, both of which play key roles in the unfolding of the narrative), an engaging sense of mystery (found mostly in the descriptions of the room in which the wardrobe is found, and of the wardrobe itself) and, perhaps most importantly, the introduction of Narnia - the climate, the mythic/fairy tale sort of people that live there, and above all, the unexpected, magical sensibility of the land itself. In short, these chapters vividly, clearly, and economically establish both story and style, but do so with an engaging warmth, simplicity, and eye for the telling detail.

Other important elements of this section include several references to people, situations, and objects that play key roles later in the action. Perhaps the most significant is the reference to the White Witch, who is later revealed to be the novel's primary antagonist. Other similarly notable elements include the references to Mr. Tumnus being arrested and to Lucy's handkerchief, both of which foreshadow later events, as well as the introduction / development of the narrative's friendly, soothing tone.

Discussion Question 1

Should Lucy have been sensible and turned back as soon as she realized she was some place other than in the back of the wardrobe?

Discussion Question 2

Is there a particularly magical house that you remember - a grandparents' house, perhaps? Describe some of the adventures you had there. If there wasn't such a house in your past, describe some of the adventures you imagined when you were a young child.

Discussion Question 3

Lucy and Mr. Tumnus make friends very quickly. Describe a situation in which you made friends in a similar way.



Vocabulary

Shaggy, splendid, wireless (n.), mothballs, enormous, powdery, inquisitive, melancholy, mantelpiece, jollification, bawl, lull, cloven.



Part 2, Chapters 3 and 4

Summary

Chapter 3, "Edmund and the Wardrobe"

When Lucy jumps out of the wardrobe, she runs to find her siblings so she can reassure them she's back. Convinced she's been away for hours, she's very surprised (and eventually upset) to learn that as far as they're concerned, she's only been apart from them for moments. The sometimes-nasty Edmund is particularly sharp in his comments, and Lucy runs off, bursting into tears. Over the next few days, Edmund continues to be nasty, and Lucy comes to question whether her experience actually happened. On another rainy day, however, as the children play hide and seek, Lucy goes into the wardrobe to hide. Edmund sees her and follows her in, determined to make fun of Lucy for her fantasies about the land beyond the wardrobe. Instead, he is surprised to find himself in exactly the same situation – in the wintry land of the lamppost. As he calls out for Lucy, he hears sleigh bells and sees a large sleigh come up to him. It is drawn by two reindeer and driven by a dwarf. It carries a beautiful lady. The lady refers to herself as a Queen and haughtily demands to know what he is.

Chapter 4, "Turkish Delight"

The Queen (whom the reader understands is the White Witch) questions Edmund further, making him warm with a hot drink and feeding him his favorite food – Turkish Delight. She is very interested in several things he has to say. He says that he is human and that he has come through "a door to the World of Men." She is very interested to learn that he has two sisters and a brother. As Edmund finishes the Turkish Delight, the White Witch convinces him to bring his siblings to meet her at "her house," just beyond the two hills on the horizon. When Edmund asks to have another piece of Turkish Delight, the Witch says he can have more when he brings his siblings to her house, adding that when he does she will make him a King and that he'll be able to eat Turkish Delight all day long. She also tells him to not listen to anything his sister (Lucy) says she's heard about her, particularly from Fauns, since they are not to be trusted. Finally, the Witch guides Edmund back to the clearing with the lantern and leaves him there to find his way back home, reminding him again of both the Turkish Delight and the necessity of bringing his siblings back with him. Shortly after she leaves, he's rejoined by Lucy, who is excited that he has found his way into Narnia. She goes on to say that she's just had lunch with Mr. Tumnus and that he's told her more about the White Witch. She's looking forward to bringing Peter and Susan into the adventure, too. Edmund, who is becoming sicker by the minute because of eating so much Turkish Delight and because he's realized just who gave it to him, tries to tell Lucy that Fauns can't be trusted and that the White Witch might turn out to be a very good person. However, Lucy doesn't believe him. They hurry back through the wardrobe.



Analysis

In this section, the novel introduces one of the narrative's most intriguing elements – the fact that no matter how long someone has spent in Narnia, they return to England only moments after they left. This aspect of Narnia's magic reappears only twice – in the following section, when Edmund and Lucy return from their mutual visit, and, most significantly, at the end of the novel, when all four children, having grown into adulthood in Narnia, return to England the same age as when they left. Aside from making the experience of being in Narnia even more intriguing and magical for the reader, there is the sense that this aspect of the story can also be seen as reflecting the narrative's exploration of the relationship between inner (spiritual) journeys and outer (physical) existence.

Another key element developed in this section is the portrayal of Edmund's nastiness, which is important for two reasons. The first is that it places him, more vividly than the other characters, at the beginning of an important journey of transformation –from being bratty and selfish to being compassionate and selfless. The second is that his nastiness sets up and defines the conflict between him and Peter. Edmund's resentment of Peter's anger in turn triggers Edmund's obstinate determination to punish Peter and the others by turning them over to the Witch. Also, in terms of Edmund, it's intriguing to look for a moment at Turkish Delight – a very sweet, rich, candy made of gelatine, flavorings, and other additives that very often leaves the person who eats it wanting more, in the same way as the Witch's promise of power and status leave Edmund wanting more.

Perhaps, the most important element introduced into the narrative in this section is the actual physical presence of the White Witch, whose power, greed, and evilness are subtly, yet clearly, portrayed. Both the reader and Edmund know that she is not an essentially good person. However, the reader does not fall under her spell like Edmund does.

Discussion Question 1

Why is the reader more inclined to believe what Mr. Tumnus says about the White Witch than believe what the White Witch says about Mr. Tumnus?

Discussion Question 2

Did Peter do the right thing in speaking as angrily as he does to Edmund? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

What is the author's symbolic meaning when he makes a point of saying Edmund is getting sicker and sicker from eating so much Turkish Delight?

Vocabulary

Batty, hoax, spiteful, sneer, jeer, imaginary, grope, sulk, sledge, gild, scarlet, dominion, snappish, naiad, dryad.



Part 3, Chapters 5 and 6

Summary

Chapter 5, "Back on This Side of the Door"

When Lucy and Edmund find Susan and Peter again (the latter two thinking again that only moments had passed), Lucy happily tells them that she and Edmund had both been to the land beyond the wardrobe. But Edmund, who has always had a nasty streak in him, says they both had just been playing. Lucy runs off in tears, and Peter speaks angrily to Edmund. Dismayed at how badly his plan to humiliate Lucy has gone, Edmund becomes quiet. The next day, Peter and Susan visit the Professor to ask his advice about what to do about Lucy. The Professor dismisses their suggestion that Lucy is going mad and makes them realize that of Edmund and Lucy, the latter is more likely to tell the truth. When Peter questions whether what Lucy is saying about the land beyond the wardrobe can possibly be real, the Professor reminds him that real can mean a lot of things. He again suggests that Lucy could be telling the truth. The doubtful Peter and Susan leave him in his office, their worries unresolved.

A few days later, the Professor's housekeeper is guiding a group of tourists through the famous old house. Remembering that they were told to stay out of the way when such tours were taking place, the four children struggle to stay ahead of it. But "whether it was that they lost their heads, or that [the housekeeper] was trying to catch them, or that some magic in the house had come to life and was chasing them into Narnia" they end up in the wardrobe room, with no place to escape but into the wardrobe. The four of them hurry inside and leave the door slightly open ...

Chapter 6, "Into the Forest"

Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy soon discover that they have found their way into Narnia. Lucy accepts Peter's apology, they all decide to explore, and Susan suggests that they borrow some of the fur coats to keep warm; the four children set off into the forest. Edmund remembers the directions he got from the White Witch and impulsively speaks about going towards the hills, but realizes that he's made a mistake when Peter angrily comments that he (Edmund) had said he hadn't been there. Edmund remains quiet as Lucy suggests they visit Mr. Tumnus and then leads them to Tumnus' home, where the four children are surprised to discover that the place has been ransacked and Tumnus taken prisoner by the Queen's chief of police. Lucy tells what she knows about the White Witch, and convinces the others that they have to find and help Mr. Tumnus. In spite of being frightened by what has happened, Peter and Susan agree. As they try to figure out how to start, a robin appears and seems to want them to follow it. As they do, Edmund goes along, but later suggests to Peter that their plan has several problems: that they really don't know who in this situation is telling the truth, that they don't know where they're going or how to get back, and they don't have any food.



Analysis

The Professor appears only briefly here and for another brief scene at the end of the novel, but he is both vividly and quite memorably portrayed, partly because of his sensible wisdom, partly because of his open-mindedness, and partly because he is in a significant way quite mysterious. He seems to know something about the situation being described by the children that he's not telling, a situation that, it could be argued, clearly relates to his previous experiences in Narnia. In some ways, he is one of those very welcome characters in children's / young people's literature: a wise, sympathetic, compassionate adult.

Meanwhile, there are several other important elements in this section. These include the intensification of the conflict between Peter and Edmund (which leads to future developments in the plot, starting in the next section), all four of the children making their way into Narnia (which is, arguably, the real start of the novel's primary plot), and the discovery that Mr. Tumnus has been arrested. Two important pieces of foreshadowing (Mr. Tumnus' fear and the reference to Lucy's handkerchief) pay off at this point.

In the final moments of the chapter, the author very intriguingly juxtaposes a positive image of hope and possibility (the robin) with the more negative and pessimistic attitudes and commentary of Edmund. This placement of contrasting images, one next to the other, can be seen as an echo of a key aspect of the narrative's central conflict – the negativity associated with the White Witch juxtaposed with the ultimate possibility and hope represented by Aslan. This, in turn, can be seen as a representation of the Christ/Satan conflict which is at the centre of the novel's metaphorical conceit.

Discussion Question 1

Do Peter and Susan really believe and/or trust the Professor when he tells them they should trust Lucy?

Discussion Question 2

Is it really possible, as narration suggests, that the magic of Narnia reached out into the real world and shaped events so that the four children would inevitably find their way into the wardrobe?

Discussion Question 3

The four children could have been led to the Beavers (in the following section) by any sort of bird. Why do you think the author chose to make this particular bird a robin?



Vocabulary

Superior, snigger, aback, disposal, reliable, permission, sightseer, camphor, filthy, suitable, prig, brisk, char, crockery, occupant, chatelaine, harbor (v.), fraternize, enchantment.



Part 4, Chapters 7 and 8

Summary

Chapter 7, "A Day with the Beavers"

The robin leads the four children to a dense part of the forest, where a movement in the trees catches their eye and makes them nervous. Just as they're thinking they should try to find a way home, a large Beaver appears and beckons for them to follow him further into the forest. In spite of Edmund's warnings, the four children follow the Beaver deep into a quiet grove, where he warns them to be quiet because even some of the trees are "on her side," and proves that he is a friend by showing them the handkerchief Lucy left with Mr. Tumnus. Mr. Beaver tells them that Tumnus learned that he was to be arrested and gave him the handkerchief in case Lucy ever came back to find him. Mr. Beaver then suggests that the children join him and his wife for dinner, and they'll make a plan for rescue.

Finally, he whispers what appears to be a big secret, "Aslan is on the move." At the sound of the name, each of the children feels a different response and follows Mr. Beaver to his dam, built across a stream that seems to have been flash frozen in mid-run. Edmund notices that the dam appears to be only a short distance from the two mountains that the White Witch said he had to head toward. As Peter helps Mr. Beaver catch some fish, Lucy and Susan help the friendly Mrs. Beaver prepare the rest of the dinner. Finally, after the hungry children have had their fill and Mr. Beaver has lit his pipe, he sits back in his chair and begins to speak.

Chapter 8, "What Happened after Dinner"

Mr. Beaver reveals that Mr. Tumnus has probably been taken to the White Witch's castle and turned to stone like so many of her other prisoners. He says the only hope of rescuing Mr. Tumnus is to meet with Aslan and trust in him to "settle" the Witch. Mr. Beaver also reveals that Aslan is a powerful Lion. He is "the son of the great Emperor Beyond the Sea." As such he is powerful and unpredictable, He (Mr. Beaver) has been told to bring the four children to meet him at a place called the Stone Table. Mr. Beaver then speaks of two important prophecies, one that foretells the end of the Witch's rule and one that foretells of two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve sitting on the four thrones at the Narnian palace of Cair Paravel. He also reveals that the Witch is not human, but she is, in fact, descended from giants. Suddenly, everyone realizes that Edmund has disappeared. Mr. and Mrs. Beaver instantly prepare to leave, but much to the surprise of the children, they are not going to search for him. Mr. Beaver reveals his belief that Edmund has left to betray them to the White Witch, becoming even more certain of that belief when Lucy confirms that Edmund has, in fact, been in Narnia before and has never said what he did there or whom he met. Mr. Beaver says that the Witch is likely to be there soon. There is no time to waste in getting away.



Analysis

Several very important elements are introduced in this section. The first is the appearance of the Beavers, who are notable for several reasons. They are the first of Narnia's talking animals that the children encounter. They are also the first true allies all four children encounter. They are providers of several very important pieces of information. That information includes the revelation of what happened to Mr. Tumnus, the revelation of the thrones at Cair Paravel and the prophecies associated with them, the revelation of the Witch's ancestry and, most importantly, the revelation of Aslan's impending arrival and identity. Aslan's arrival is easily the most important of all the many pieces of information, in that it sets up the novel's main conflict between what might be most easily described as the forces of good (Aslan) and evil (the Witch). The differences in the children's reactions to the mention of Aslan's name are noteworthy. They are very telling about the characters of the various children and their eventual relationships with Aslan.

Meanwhile, there are several important instances of foreshadowing in this section, including the reference to the Stone Table and the references to people who anger the witch being turned to stone.

Discussion Question 1

In what ways do the various reactions of the children reflect both their identities and their eventual relationships with Aslan?

Discussion Question 2

What do you think is the significance behind the author choosing beavers to be the children's first allies?

Discussion Question 3

What do you think is the significance of the author's detail about the way in which the river at Mr. Beaver's dam has been frozen?

Vocabulary

Festoon, hatchet, snug, oilskin, mortar, marmalade, contentment, shudder, stratagem, peddler, prophecy, treacherous.



Part 5, Chapters 9 and 10

Summary

Chapter 9, "In the Witch's House"

The narrator identifies the point at which Edmund slipped away from the Beavers' house and then describes his cold, lonely journey through the woods. As he travels toward the Witch's house, he reflects on what he's doing. The colder that he gets, the more he blames Peter for his discomfort. Eventually, as the full moon illuminates the landscape, he arrives at the Witch's castle, which is built with many pointed towers. As he goes into the courtyard, he discovers it's full of statues, including one of a lion and one of a giant. He imagines that the lion is Aslan and thinks that he was foolish to be frightened of it. Nevertheless, he keeps his distance as he goes into the castle in search of the Witch. When her Head of Security (a talking wolf) takes Edmund to her, she is at first angry that he hasn't brought the others with him. As he explains, she becomes calmer. Then, she becomes agitated again when he tells her that he's heard that Aslan is on his way. She hurriedly orders her sled to be prepared.

Chapter 10, "The Spell Begins to Break"

Back at the home of the Beavers, and as everyone fusses at her to hurry, Mrs. Beaver quickly prepares packs of supplies for everyone. They soon set out across country, Lucy becomes increasingly tired. Eventually, Mr. Beaver leads them to a hiding place, a small cave where, in the past, beavers have hidden in times of trouble. There, the small party spends the night, waking to the sound of jingling bells. Mr. Beaver hurries out to see what's causing the sound. Although Lucy is worried that he might have gone into danger, he hurries back with good news and urges the others to come out and see. Everyone is surprised to discover that Father Christmas (Santa Claus) has arrived, and Mr. Beaver suggests that the Witch, who had made it always winter but never Christmas, is starting to lose control. Lucy is somewhat surprised at how serious she feels when she meets Father Christmas. She is even more surprised when he gives her and the other children their gifts. Lucy receives a dagger and a magic healing cordial; Susan receives a bow and arrow and a horn that will magically summon help. Peter, who is told that his gifts are not toys but tools, receives a sword and shield. Father Christmas then produces a wonderful breakfast for them, proclaims that Aslan is on the move, and disappears just as the others are sitting down to eat. A short time later, the party prepares to move on.

Analysis

The first point to note about this section is the detail, mood, and atmosphere with which the author describes Edmund's journey to the Witch as cold, lonely, dark, and miserable. This is particularly significant when juxtaposed with the very different mood



and atmosphere with which the author describes the journey of the other children – warm, in a group, bright, and increasingly happy. Another intriguing contrast between these two chapters and the two experiences they portray is the difference between the people encountered. Edmund encounters a hostile wolf and the White Witch, while Peter and the others encounter Father Christmas.

Other important points to note in Chapter 9 include the references to the statues of the Lion and the Giant and the celebration of Christmas. The latter functions on two levels. First, it is a sure sign, as Mr. Beaver says, that the White Witch's power is fading. On another level, it dramatizes the already intensifying, and powerfully looming, conflict between Aslan and the Witch. Finally, elements introduced in this section are the gifts given by Father Christmas to the children. Both the event and the gifts themselves are among the most vivid manifestations of the novel's thematic interest in gifts. Each of the gifts plays an important role in both the climactic battle between the armies of Aslan and the Witch and its aftermath.

Discussion Question 1

In what ways do the mood of the various journeys and the qualities of the people encountered on those journeys reflect the spiritual positions of the characters on those journeys?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the spiritual value and/or metaphoric meaning of each of Father Christmas's gifts to the children, particularly Peter's weapons, Susan's horn, and Lucy's cordial. What positive quality does each represent?

Discussion Question 3

What would you say is the most significant gift, in terms of a lesson or belief or experience (as opposed to a thing or object) you've been given?

Vocabulary

Reckon, dunce, spire, turret, courtyard, venture (v.), noble, satyr, centaur, threshold, abide, snug (adj.), bramble, shiver, curtsy, sluice, quiver (n.), cordial, sheath.



Part 6, Chapters 11 and 12

Summary

Chapter 11, “Aslan is Nearer” At the Witch’s castle, Edmund is disappointed when the Witch doesn’t immediately make him a Prince, and is even more disappointed when he gets only bread and water to eat instead of more Turkish Delight. Meanwhile, the Witch sends a pair of wolves to the Beavers’ house (where, narration reveals, they find the house empty and the tracks of its inhabitants concealed by fresh snow), and plans to make her way to the Stone Table. Taking Edmund with her, she makes her increasingly laborious way through snow and ice that becomes increasingly soft as the air and the sun become warmer and warmer. Just as Edmund is becoming deeply uncomfortable, he and the Witch discover a happy party of animals celebrating Christmas. The Witch, furious at the discovery that Father Christmas has been there and given the animals gifts, turns them into stone and berates Edmund for standing up for them. At this moment, Edmund has his first attack of conscience (see Quote 12). The Witch quickly resumes her journey, but her advancement is slowed by the speedy return of spring – rivers begin to run again, grass begins to appear from beneath the snow, and birds begin to sing. The Dwarf driving her sledge says that what’s happening “is Aslan’s doing”, and the Witch threatens to kill anyone who mentions that name again.

Chapter 12, “Peter’s First Battle” As the Witch and her companions are slowing down, so too are Peter and the others, but for different reasons. Having realized that the Witch will not be able to move as quickly without snow for her sledge to travel on, they take a moment or two to enjoy the new spring bursting up around them. Eventually, they arrive at the Stone Table, an ancient table made of rock and with mysterious, unreadable writing carved into it. There they first encounter Aslan in the company of several animals and forest spirits. He welcomes them and, after assuring Lucy that everything that can be done will be done to help Edmund, he sends Lucy and Susan into a nearby tent to be cared for by the female tree spirits. He then takes Peter some distance away and shows him the castle by the sea (which the reader knows to be Cair Paravel) where he and his siblings are to rule. Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of Susan’s horn. Peter and Aslan rush back to the Stone Table, where they see Susan, Lucy, and the other animals being attacked by a pair of wolves. Peter, despite an attack of nervousness and at Aslan’s urging, rushes in and kills the wolf attacking Susan. As the second wolf flees, Aslan sends eagles and centaurs after it. After reminding Peter to always clean his sword, Aslan knights him with it, naming him “Sir Peter Fenris-Bane”.

Analysis

The first point to note about this section is the detail, mood, and atmosphere with which the author describes Edmund’s journey to the Witch in Chapter 9 – cold, lonely, dark, and miserable. This is particularly significant when juxtaposed with the very different mood and atmosphere with which the author describes the journey of the other children



– warm, in a group, bright, and increasingly happy. Another intriguing contrast between these two chapters, and the two experiences they portray, is the difference between the people encountered: Edmund encounters a hostile wolf and the White Witch, while Peter and the others encounter Father Christmas.

Other important points to note in Chapter 9 include the references to the statues of the Lion and the Giant (references that foreshadow the important role that each of the reanimated statues plays later in the novel after Aslan has freed them) and the celebration of Christmas. The latter functions on two levels: one, it is a sure sign, as Mr. Beaver says, that the White Witch's power is fading. On another level, it dramatizes the already intensifying, and powerfully looming, conflict between Aslan and the Witch. The last, and perhaps most important, elements introduced in this section are the gifts given by Father Christmas to the children. Both the event and the gifts themselves are among the most vivid manifestations of the novel's thematic interest in gifts (see "Themes/Motifs"), with each of the gifts playing an important role in both the climactic battle between the armies of Aslan and the Witch and its aftermath.

Discussion Question 1

What is the metaphoric / symbolic significance of the Witch not giving Edmund more Turkish Delight when he arrives at her castle?

Discussion Question 2

In what way might the Stone Table be connected to the novel's metaphoric relationship between the story of Aslan's sacrifice and the story of the sacrifice made by Jesus?

Discussion Question 3

Given the author's intention to draw parallels between Aslan and Jesus, what does Aslan's friendship with animals and nature spirits suggest that the author is saying about the relationship between Jesus and nature?

Vocabulary

repulsive, enormous, overtake, gaiety, vermin, gluttony, indulgence, traitor, pitiful, skid, jolt, celandine, snowdrop, vicious, chirrup, alight, larch, birch, laburnum, transparent, kingfisher, thicket, glade, hawthorn, pavilion, crimson, rampant, bane



Part 7, Chapters 13 and 14

Summary

Chapter 13, "Deep Magic from the Dawn of Time"

The Witch brings her journey to an abrupt halt, and as Edmund collapses with exhaustion, he overhears the Witch and her Dwarf make plans that he (Edmund) doesn't quite understand. He knows enough, however, to realize that the Witch and the Dwarf are about to perform some kind of ceremony under less than ideal circumstances. The conversation is interrupted by the sudden arrival of the wolf that had fled the battle at the Stone Table. He urges the Witch to hide. Instead, she tells the wolf to summon all her allies and prepare to fight. After the wolf has gone, the Witch and Dwarf make a decision. Edmund becomes frightened as the Dwarf ties him to a tree and the Witch starts sharpening her knife. The implication is that he is to be killed. The Witch's preparations are interrupted by the arrival of the animals and beings sent after the wolf by Aslan. Together they free Edmund and take him back to Aslan, but the Witch and the Dwarf have escaped thanks to the Witch's use of magic. Back at the Stone Table, Peter and his sisters wake up to news that Edmund has been rescued. They go to find him and see him in deep conversation with Aslan, who then presents him to them. Shortly afterward, the Dwarf appears and asks if Aslan will consent to giving safe passage to the Witch so they can talk. Aslan agrees, and as his animals growl uneasily, the Witch approaches, announcing that because Edmund is a traitor and because of an ancient Deep Magic, Edmund must be sacrificed by her or Narnia will end. Aslan goes off with the Witch and has a long conversation which no one can hear. When the conversation finishes, Aslan announces that Edmund has been freed. As everyone looks on with wonder, the Witch asks for assurance that the bargain just made (which is not revealed) will be kept. In response, Aslan roars loudly, and the terrified Witch runs off.

Chapter 14, "The Triumph of the Witch"

In the aftermath of his bargain with the Witch, Aslan leads his group of followers away from the Stone Table which, he says, will have another purpose that night. As they travel, he gives Peter directions as to how to plan for the upcoming battle with the Witch. When Peter comments that Aslan will surely be there himself, Aslan says that should not be counted upon and continues his instructions. Camp is set up. Then, after a quiet evening and meal, Lucy and Susan go to bed. However, they are uneasy and unable to sleep. They get up, look through the camp, and discover that Aslan is leaving. For a while they are unnoticed as they follow him, his manner sad and quiet. Eventually he notices them and allows them to not only walk with him, but to walk with their hands in his mane. Eventually, he arrives at a grove of bushes near the Stone Table. There he tells them to wait if they must, but for no reason should they let themselves be seen or caught. He then walks toward the table where, much to Lucy and Susan's increasing sadness and horror, he is set upon by the Witch's army, humiliated, shaved, tortured,



bound, and, eventually, laid upon the Stone Table to be killed. Before she strikes, however, the Witch taunts him, saying that his sacrifice has been in vain. Once he is gone, nothing will stop her in her plan from killing the four human children and preventing the Cair Paravel prophecy from being fulfilled. Then, she raises her knife.

Analysis

The events of Chapter 13 are in many ways a preamble, a prologue, or a setup for the events in Chapter 14. While it is something of a surprise when, in their first meeting, Aslan and the Witch engage in conversation rather than a battle, there is the sense that the moment has been carefully contrived by the author in order to engage the reader in the greatest possible amount of suspense. In other words, the reader (like the children and the animals) are taken completely by surprise by this turn of events, triggering an intense curiosity in both about what's going to happen next. Meanwhile, it's particularly interesting to note that throughout both these chapters, not only does Edmund remain silent, but narration is also silent on what is going on in Edmund's head and heart.

In purely structural terms, it could be argued that the confrontation between the Witch and Aslan in Chapter 14 is the book's climax – the point of most intense confrontation between the protagonist (Aslan) and the antagonist (the Witch). Granted it's not much of a confrontation, given that Aslan is essentially surrendering himself to her, but it is certainly a point of intense feeling, power, and confrontation for the Witch.

Chapter 14 is the point at which the narrative of this story and the narrative of the Christ story intersect most closely. The moment of Aslan's sacrifice and the moment of Christ's sacrifice parallel each other in almost every possible way, except one. Christ's allies, most notably the man who became Saint Peter, deserted him throughout his time of trial. Aslan's allies, in the form of Susan and Lucy, do not abandon Aslan.

Discussion Question 1

Write what you think might be the conversation between Edmund and Aslan. Then, write what you think might be going through Edmund's mind when he sees Aslan talking with the White Witch.

Discussion Question 2

Why does Aslan agree to talk to the White Witch?

Discussion Question 3

What is it about Susan and Lucy that make them decide to accompany Aslan on this journey?



Vocabulary

Yew, thicket, minotaur, ghoul, brute, mantle, grave (adj.), shrill, scepter, treachery, forfeit, encamp, siege, ogre, incubus, wraith, gibber, muzzle, rabble, pact, appease.



Part 8, Chapters 15 and 16

Summary

Chapter 15, "Deeper Magic from the Dawn of Time"

In the cold stillness after Aslan's apparent death, Lucy and Susan cower in their hiding place as the Witch and her army disperse. After a few moments, they come out of hiding. As they weep heavily, they do their best to clean up Aslan's mutilated body, but they are unable to untie the ropes by which he's been bound. They rest in silence awhile. As dawn begins to break, they are at first shocked and disgusted to see that swarms of mice are crawling all over him. Soon, however, they realize that the mice are gnawing at the ropes to cut them apart. Susan and Lucy help. Eventually, the ropes fall off the body. By this point, the sun is starting to rise, and the land and sea are more visible. Stiff and cold, Susan and Lucy move away from the table and walk about a bit to stretch their legs. As they're looking down at the distant Cair Paravel, they hear a large CRACK from behind them, and are almost afraid to look and see what's happened. Eventually they do, and they are shocked to see that the Stone Table has broken in half. Aslan's body is gone. They are at first angry that the Witch's army has returned, but then are happily shocked when Aslan speaks from behind them! He has come back to life, and he convinces Susan and Lucy to believe that it has happened. He says there is an even deeper magic than the Witch understands. For awhile they run, play, and wrestle. Then, Aslan realizes that they have someplace to go. He urges the girls to climb on his back. He races across Narnia with them, eventually arriving at the Witch's castle where he leaps over the wall and lands in the courtyard of statues.

Chapter 16, "What Happened about the Statues"

Lucy and Susan watch with increasing wonder and joy as Aslan breathes on each of the statues, starting with the lion (that Edmund was afraid of in Chapter 9) and brings them back to life. Soon the yard is full of animals, dwarfs, and tree spirits that Aslan has awakened. He then calls for the house to be searched, and all the statues there are also brought back to life, including Mr. Tumnus, who has a happy reunion with Lucy. Aslan then tells the reawakened giant (also last seen in Chapter 9) to break down the gate, which he does with his club. Aslan, the children, Mr. Tumnus, and all the rescued statues rush out of the courtyard. With the help of some excellent tracking by some hounds, they find their way to the battle between Aslan's army and the Witch's, where Peter and the Witch are fighting hand to hand. The witch is no longer using her wand. Aslan, the giant, and all the other reborn statues join the battle.

Analysis

The revival of Aslan is next in the novel's series of climaxes. It is an even greater and more significant point of emotional intensity than his death in the previous section.



Before the narrative gets to that point, however, the author includes one of the most moving pieces of writing in the book. First, there is the description of Susan and Lucy's shattering grief and sadness. Then, the author describes the sunrise and Aslan's body being freed by the mice, with its barely suppressed hum of impending joy, release, and freedom. The language used here is gracefully evocative not only of the new life about to erupt from Aslan and of the new hope being experienced by Susan and Lucy, but also the new hope in the book's metaphoric inspiration. Meanwhile, a more forceful expression of that same hope can be found in the destruction of The Stone Table, which can be seen throughout the novel as a representation of old ways of believing, acting, and connecting both sacrifice and redemption that, with the resurrection of Aslan, become no longer valid.

Echoes of both the breaking of the Stone Table and Aslan's rebirth are found in the re-awakening of the statues (including Mr. Tumnus) in Chapter 16. In the same way as the table of stone cracks down the middle and falls apart, the stone of the statues is melted into flesh by Aslan's breath, clearing the way for both life and hope to be renewed. There are several amusing little vignettes, or small scenes, in this section, the lion's giddy happiness at being referred to as one of "us lions" by Aslan and the giant's well-intentioned but ultimately pointless use of Lucy's handkerchief. Both are moments of idiosyncratic charm and delight in the midst of the larger rush of joyful freedom surging through the narrative and into the climactic, triumphant battle with the Witch at the end of the chapter.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the symbolism of the time of day that Aslan revives.

Discussion Question 2

What are the parallels between the scene at the Stone Table after Aslan revives and the scene in the courtyard with the statues?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the symbolism of the Stone Table and what happens to it.

Vocabulary

Vermin, skirl, vile, specter, fondle, incantation, quiver (v.), romp, briar, cavern, battlement, grate, prodigious, indigo, plumage, joyous, fusty, ransack, saccharine, standoffish, gibber.



Part 9, Chapter 17

Summary

Chapter 17, "The Hunting of the White Stag"

Narration reveals that Aslan joined Peter in fighting the Witch and in killing her. After seeing her death, the rest of her army fled. As Peter and Aslan congratulate each other, Peter reveals that the battle turned as the result of Edmund fighting his way through her soldiers to the Witch and breaking her wand. When she learns that Edmund has been seriously wounded, Lucy pulls out the gift she got from Father Christmas and gives him a few drops. When Aslan reminds her that there are others who need her help as well, she is at first impatient, wanting to see whether her cordial has worked on Edmund. When Aslan speaks firmly to her, she apologizes and starts healing some of the other wounded, while Aslan restores those whom the Witch turned to statues before Edmund broke her wand. Meanwhile, the narrator reveals that Edmund has been restored to full health. That night, Aslan produces a feast for the army, and they rest before beginning a two day march to Cair Paravel. On the day after they arrive there, Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy are crowned kings and queens.

Over the years, the children all grew up into strong, very different adults – King Peter the Magnificent, Queen Susan the Gentle, King Edmund the Just, and Queen Lucy the Valiant. They ruled Narnia wisely and well. Narration also describes how one day they learned of the return of the White Stag (first referred to in one of the stories Mr. Tumnus's tells Lucy – see Chapter 2) and set off in pursuit of both the Stag and the wishes it purportedly offers to those who catch it. As they pursue the Stag, they travel further and further into the wilderness, eventually coming upon the lamppost that Lucy saw when she first came to Narnia. Because it's been so many years and because their lives are now so different, they don't recognize it. However, Edmund has a dim memory of seeing it before. When he says so, the others do as well. While they're all intrigued by the possibility of exploring further, Susan suggests caution. She thinks that they should return to Cair Paravel. But, Peter and the others are intrigued by the adventure of going on into the woods.

As they go further into the woods, the Kings and Queens remember more about the lamppost. They find themselves going through coats instead of trees. Then, they find themselves falling out of the wardrobe. They are back to being themselves when they left England. They are wearing their old clothes.

Surprised and apologetic, they go to the Professor to explain why four coats are missing from the wardrobe. Much to their increased surprise, the Professor accepts their explanation, telling them not only that it's unlikely they'll get back to Narnia the same way, but also that it's NOT unlikely they'll go back someday, probably when they least expect it. "Once a King in Narnia," he says, "always a king in Narnia" – exactly what



Aslan said. "And that," the narrator comments, is the very end of the adventures of the wardrobe ... but it was only the beginning of the adventures in Narnia."

Analysis

The first point to note about this section is that the description of what happened in the fight between the two armies (Aslan's and the Witch's) takes place after the fact - that is, after the actual battle. This suggests that the author wanted to leave the details of the battle to the reader's imagination. The second point to note also relates to the battle - specifically, Edmund's actions in confronting the Witch. Here he acts independently in a way he has never done before - yes, under previous circumstances (getting into the Witch's sledge, leaving the others at Mr. and Mrs. Beaver's) he acted independently, but where in those cases he acted from selfish motives (i.e. greed, a desire for power and statues), in this case he acts with complete selflessness. Here it's interesting to note the contrast between his actions and Lucy's in the battle's aftermath - see "Discussion Question 1". And finally, there is the coronation of the children, a moment which brings the book's main narrative line - the destruction of the White Witch - to a close. See "Discussion Question 2".

The novel concludes with the narrative of a particular event in the children's adult lives, a piece of writing that might effectively be described as an epilogue, given that it takes place a certain distance of time after the conclusion of the story and shows a specific, story related incident in their lives. The first point to note here is the characters' names. Then, there is the reference to the lamp-post, important to note because it appears both at the end and at the beginning of the children's adventures. The technical term for this is "bookending" - in the same way as bookends, placed at the front and back of a row of books, keep that row of books in order, so do images, moments, or elements such as the lamp-post appear at the front and the back of a story. Finally, there are a couple of important elements of foreshadowing, but not of elements of the current book. Instead, there are foreshadowings/references to future books in the series, "The Chronicles of Narnia". The first is Susan's reluctance to explore beyond the lamp-post, a moment that foreshadows her (lack of courage? lack of adventurousness? lack of faith?) in continuing to believe in Narnia as an adult in the real world like the other children who had adventures there. The second is the Professor's reference to both Narnia and the prospect of going back. This not only indicates he's wise about life (i.e. that echoes and/or effects of experiences sometimes show up when one least expects them), but more importantly that he's wise about Narnia, again a foreshadowing of his appearances in later books in the series.

Discussion Question 1

Contrast Edmund's actions during the battle and Lucy's after the battle is won - Edmund's actions embody one characteristic, while Lucy's embody its opposite. What is that opposite, and how do Lucy's actions reflect and/or mirror the novel's themes?



Discussion Question 2

What is significant about the coronation of the children? What narrative/story element, repeated as a motif throughout the book, is realized here?

Discussion Question 3

What is the significance of the children's adult names - King Peter the Magnificent, Queen Susan the Gentle, King Edmund the Just, and Queen Lucy the Valiant? What is it about their actions, reactions, and characters up to that point that gave them these names?

Vocabulary

Revelry, lurk, alliance, valiant, courtier, consort, quarry, foreboding.



Characters

Lucy

This character is the youngest of the four children who make up the quartet of central characters in the novel. She is the first to find her way into Narnia, the most excited about being there, the most enthusiastic visitor, and is both the softest hearted and the strongest willed. For example, when Mr. Tumnus tells her what he's been asked to do by the evil White Witch, she simultaneously comforts him and displays a determination to not be taken prisoner. In the same way, she refuses to be manipulated into recanting her story about Narnia when challenged and doubted by her brothers and sister.

Edmund

This character is the third oldest of the four children who visit Narnia. He is the second to find his way into the magical land, but has a very different experience from that of his younger sister. Where she finds a friend, he finds the White Witch who uses him and manipulates him. Deep down he knows that that's what he's doing, but because he has (as his brother says) a nasty streak in him, and because he wants to get back at his older brother for siding with their little sister, he continues along the path of betrayal and almost costs not only his siblings, but also several Narnians, their lives.

Peter

This character is the oldest and most mature of the four children who make their way into Narnia and are eventually crowned kings and queens. Authoritative and a natural leader, he is firm and strong, although arguably somewhat nastier to his little brother (when the latter taunts their littlest sister about her apparently imagined world beyond the wardrobe) than he might have otherwise been. Over the course of the narrative, he becomes more and more responsible and even more of a leader, in spite of having to occasionally be instructed in military tactics and battlefield etiquette. He repeatedly defends his youngest sister and other vulnerable people/animals from attack, and is portrayed as growing into the High King with the appropriate title of "the Magnificent".

Susan

This character is the oldest girl and second oldest child, in the quartet of children that discover Narnia. Although the least developed and the least complex of the four, she is, for the most part, compassionate and supportive, but only to a point – she tends to be the most cautious, almost to the level of being fearful, of the four children.



The White Witch

At the beginning of the story, this character is the Queen of Narnia. Under her rule, the land is settled deep into eternal winter without Christmas ever coming. She is cruel, manipulative, beautiful, and ultimately generally unpleasant.

Aslan

This character is the mysterious, powerful lion whose return to Narnia breaks the spells the land is suffering under, redeems one of the main children's treachery by sacrificing himself, and returns to life as the result of his knowledge of a deeper magic than the Witch knows or understands. He is portrayed as wise, strong, terrifying, gentle, powerfully violent when necessary, and transcendently compassionate. Spoken of in hushed, reverent tones throughout the first half-to-two thirds of the story, his eventual appearance brings a new sense of joy and hope to the troubled land, and to the four children who have been brought into it.

Mr. Tumnus

This character is a faun, a mythical animal who is half-man and half-goat. He is the first "person" readers meets when the first child enters Narnia, and befriends her at first with the idea that he, as he has been ordered to do, will turn her over to the White Witch. His compassion and fondness for her, however, lead him to tearfully confess the truth of his intentions and to letting her go – which, in turn, leads to his violent capture and punishing transformation into a stone statue.

Mr. and Mrs. Beaver

These characters, married talking animals, give the four children shelter and food, tell them of Aslan, and guide them to where they are to meet him. The male character of this pair is chatty and full of stories, at times impatient (mostly with his somewhat fussy wife) and at other times wisely cautious (when it comes to taking care that the children are protected). The female character of this pair is practical and nurturing, but a lot of time and effort into ensuring that the children are comfortable, well fed, and safe.

The Professor

In the real world, this character owns the house that contains the wardrobe through which the children enter Narnia. Wise, sometimes vague, realistic, and direct, his brief but important interactions with the children point them in the direction of truths that are simultaneously logical, practical, and realistic.



Adam and Eve

These Biblical characters, believed by Christians to be the first humans, don't actually appear in the narrative but are referred to frequently. Specifically, all the human characters are referred to as Sons and Daughters of these individuals.

Father Christmas

This character (known by many names throughout the world, including Saint Nicholas in parts of Europe and Santa Claus in North America) appears in the novel as a manifestation of a well-known and respected lion's increasing power.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Professor's House

This location in the country is where the four children are sent as refugees from the war, and is the novel's primary, non-Narnia setting. The wardrobe through which the children enter Narnia is located within this.

The Wardrobe

This large, old fashioned, seemingly normal piece of furniture is the entry through which first Lucy, then Edmund, then the other children enter the magical world of Narnia.

The Lamp-post

Upon entering Narnia, Lucy and the other children encounter this old-fashioned, Victorian item. It is a light in the darkness of the eternal Narnian winter, in the same way as Jesus, in the Christian teaching that the novel allegorically parallels, is the "light of the world."

Mr. Tumnus' Home

Lucy went here with Mr. Tumnus and found it very cozy. When she later brings her siblings here, this location has been ransacked.

Turkish Delight

This extremely sweet, jellied candy is Edmund's favorite treat. The White Witch bribes Edmund (successfully) with this.

The Beaver's Home

After all four children arrive in Narnia and discover that Mr. Tumnus has been arrested, their search for him is interrupted by the appearance of a friendly, talking Beaver, who takes them to this location, where they meet his wife, Mrs. Beaver, and discover the truth about Narnia, about the White Witch and Aslan, and are told about a pair of magical prophecies that, it seems, involve them. This location can be seen as symbolically representative of the safety available to those who accept the teachings and ways of Aslan (Jesus) as the truth.



Cair Paravel

This is the name of the castle by the sea. Its throne room contains four thrones, upon which two men (Sons of Adam) and two women (Daughters of Eve) will sit as kings and queens.

The Stone Table

This ancient item sits in the wilds of Narnia. Symbols and words are carved into it, but they are so ancient no one knows what they mean. An important sacrificial killing takes place on this object within the book.

The Christmas Presents

These items include food, sustenance, and less tangible things like hope. Specifically, weapons, a magical horn, and a magical cordial.

The Reanimated Statues

These result from Aslan traveling to the White Witch's castle and breathing life into cursed objects within her courtyard.



Settings

Narnia

This is the book's primary setting, a country both magical and medieval. The countryside is generally unsettled and what might be described as uncivilized, in that it is inhabited almost entirely by animals and mythical creatures like dryads (spirits of trees), naiads (spirits of water), and other fairy tale/fantasy creatures like dwarfs, fauns, centaurs, and giants.

Given the book's resemblances/references to the Biblical story of Christ and his passion, the country of Narnia can be seen as an external representation of what might best be described as an internal state of being – specifically, the essential goodness, freedom, and naturalness of the human spirit. This manifests in several ways – in Narnia's unspoiled natural beauty, in the sense that virtually anything is possible and, perhaps most importantly, in the sense that is the battleground for what is, arguably, the eternal struggle between good (i.e. Aslan, loyalty, forgiveness, compassion – Jesus) and evil (i.e. the White Witch, treachery, vindictiveness, ruthlessness – Satan).

England

England appears only in the book's first few chapters and, very briefly, in its final few pages. While the narrative's exploration and/or portrayal of the so-called "green and pleasant land" is relatively under-developed, there are two noteworthy points. The first is that early in the narrative, England is at war, which is the reason why the four children are sent into the country in the first place, the intention being to keep them safe from bombs and other dangers. In other words, England is portrayed as a world from which it is advisable if not necessary to escape.

A second and related point is that it combines with Narnia (see above) to suggest/define a metaphorical relationship between body and spirit. In other words, if the children's adventures in Narnia are a symbolic representation of a journey into / struggle with truths about themselves and about their spirits, England can be seen as a representation of the physical world they must leave behind and/or renounce, at least to some degree, in order for that inner / spiritual journey to be undertaken successfully. This, in turn, ties in quite tightly with the narrative's metaphoric parallels to the Christ story – which has, as one of its most significant components, a call from Christ to renounce the physical world and its needs, desires, and failings in order to live/pursue a more spiritual life in Him.

World War II

It's important, in this case, to note the novel's setting in time – specifically, its placement somewhere in the early-mid 1940's, the time of World War II. It's a historical fact that



during the period of heaviest bombing in Britain's cities, children like Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy were evacuated from their urban homes and sent to live in the country, where they would in theory be much safer. But it's the larger context of the war itself which is particularly noteworthy, especially when viewed within the book's Christian context.

A full and detailed examination of the causes of World War II is beyond the scope of this analysis, but essentially those causes can be traced to the actions of the so-called "Axis of Evil" – Germany, Italy, and Japan. Of primary relevance to this particular narrative are the actions of Germany, led at the time by Adolph Hitler, actions that, in the views of many historians and survivors alike, can (and have been) viewed as actions of Satan-inspired evil. In other words, Hitler and his allies in the Axis sought to control the real world in much the same way as the White Witch (whose name can perhaps be seen as an echo of Hitler's doctrine of racial purity) seeks to control Narnia. The appearance, actions, and teachings of Aslan, therefore, can be seen as a call for those determined to fight the real world evil (of Hitler and others like him) with the might and courage of the Christian faith as embodied by Aslan here.



Themes and Motifs

Paralleling the Passion of Christ

The term “The Passion of Christ” is generally used to summarize the Bible-chronicled events surrounding the last days of Jesus Christ. Traditionally those events include his arrival in Jerusalem, his Passover meal with his disciples (generally referred to as The Last Supper), and then his arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

Aside from the event-based relationship between what happens in the New Testament and what happens in Narnia, there is a larger sense of metaphoric relationship between the two narrative lines – specifically, the relationship between the spiritual purposes of both Aslan and Jesus. The Bible states clearly and unequivocally that Jesus (referred to as “The Son of God”) came not only to Jerusalem but to humanity in general for the expressed purpose of rescuing it from the influence of Evil. It’s similarly clear and unequivocal that Aslan (referred to as “The Son of the Emperor Over Sea) came to Narnia with the specific purpose of rescuing it and its citizens from the evil influence and control of the White Witch. And finally, for both Jesus and Aslan, death is the ultimate act of rescue (i.e. sacrificing their lives in order to redeem those who have fallen under evil’s control), while their respective resurrections and rebirths represent the power of life, faith, and goodness to triumph over evil and death.

Loyalty and Betrayal

Experiences of both loyalty and betrayal manifest throughout the narrative, most often as aspects of the above-mentioned, central parallels between this story and that of Jesus Christ in the Bible’s New Testament.

A key component of that latter story is the betrayal of Jesus to the authorities by one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot. That betrayal is clearly and vividly paralleled by Edmund’s betrayal of his siblings, the Beavers, and Aslan himself to the White Witch. There are, however, two key differences between the betrayals. The first is that “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” goes into far more detail about the reasons for Edmund’s betrayal than the Bible ever goes into the reasons for that of Judas. The second is that Edmund not only survives to experience both redemption and forgiveness, but is eventually made a king. Judas, on the other hand, commits suicide and gains essentially nothing. It could be argued that Edmund’s redemption and elevation are, within the narrative’s larger Christian context, examples and/or manifestations of the Bible’s ultimate contention about Christ’s forgiveness – that those who accept His way will be welcomed into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Meanwhile, other aspects of loyalty in the narrative include the loyalty of good to good (i.e. the small loyalties of characters like the Beavers to Aslan, the larger loyalties of the country as a whole to Aslan in the face of the freedom he offers) and of evil to evil. This



latter is evident in the hungry, violent loyalty in the rush of various dark forces, including hungry and violent wolves, joining with the White Witch in her battle against Aslan ... which is, ironically, another vivid example of betrayal in the narrative. As soon as it becomes clear that she is going to lose the battle, those same forces eager to join disappear rapidly and betray their erstwhile leader.

Gifts

Several times throughout the narrative, gifts of varying degrees of size and importance are bestowed and received, with very different results depending on the intention of the giver and the state of being of the receiver. The first major gift, of Turkish Delight is given to Edmund by the White Witch as a kind of bribe, an attempt to corrupt him into doing her will. This particular gift can be seen as paralleling the pieces of silver given to Judas Iscariot as an inducement to betray Jesus Christ to the authorities. The second major gift, or in this case gifts, are given to Peter, Susan, and Lucy by Father Christmas. The third, and perhaps most significant, major gift in the narrative is Aslan's gift of redemption to Edmund, realized through Aslan's giving of his life to save Edmund's. With this gift, the true nature and metaphoric value of all the gifts become clear. They are, large and small gifts (i.e. the food and shelter provided by first Mr. Tumnus and then the Beavers) alike, examples of compassion, a key component, if not the main component, of Christ's teachings.

The Hero's Journey

Throughout history and in almost every culture, there are/have been stories of heroes leaving (or being taken) from their homes, going on adventures or quests, and returning to their homes and lives having learned a great deal about themselves, about people and the world, and often about the ways of the spirit. Researchers and analysts like Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung have documented dozens, if not hundreds, of these sorts of stories and have found certain patterns or archetypes of both character and behavior that occur in most, if not all of them – heroes, confidants, enemies, father/mother figures, wise elders, and so on. These researchers have also discovered that while the story is essentially about a physical journey, on a deeper level of meaning these narratives are actually about an individual's encounter with him/herself, with his/her identity, inner life, values, perspectives, needs, faith, beliefs, and/or loves. In other words, the outer physical quests undertaken by these characters in these stories are external representations and/or triggers of inner, spiritual journeys of self-discovery and self-empowerment. "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" is another example of a (relatively) contemporary story that follows this broad-strokes, archetypal pattern.

A key component of this narrative form is the fact that the heroes (in this case, Peter and his siblings) usually return home to share what they have learned on their journey – or, at the very least, to live new lives as the result of having been changed while on their quests. The circumstances for those returning here are common. The point of this aspect of the work is to suggest that no matter how far someone goes into their inner



psycho-spiritual lives and identities, there is still the real world to be dealt/with and/or lived in – which is, arguably, the biggest quest/challenge/adventure of all in these sorts of stories ... how to retain the magic when it's no longer an active part of life.

Redemption

One of the basic components of Christianity in general and of Christ's passion in particular, and therefore of this book's metaphoric exploration of the latter, is the concept of redemption – specifically, the idea that a person's sins, flaws, mistakes, or bad choices can be redeemed by an act of selflessness, compassion, or courage. In the story of Christ's passion, and indeed in the story of Christianity, Christ's sacrifice of his life is portrayed/seen as the ultimate act of selflessness and/or compassion, intended to redeem the entire human race (so the teachings go) from its life of sin. That spiritual narrative, that experience of faith in God and the ultimate good, and that demonstration of courageous compassion (or compassionate courage) is clearly and vividly echoed in the story of Aslan and his sacrifice to save not just one boy (Edmund) but what seems to be an entire land (Narnia) from the destructive forces of betrayal. They are also echoed, on a somewhat smaller scale, by Edmund's subsequent act of courageous and potentially fatal self-sacrifice in fighting to destroy the Witch's magic wand. There is the sense in Edmund's actions that being redeemed triggers the need to perform the same kinds of actions. This again is arguably one of the cornerstones of the Christ story, and therefore of Christian teaching and philosophy – the idea/principle that redemption in the self triggers the capacity to redeem others.



Styles

Point of View

The story is told from the third person omniscient point of view – that is, from the perspective of a storytelling narrator who has insight into the thoughts and feelings of all the characters. There are certain characters whose point of view is taken both more vividly and more often. In the early chapters, for example, the narrative shifts between focus on Lucy and focus on Edmund. In later chapters, focus shifts primarily to Lucy, with the inner lives of the other characters receiving supplementary consideration. Here it's interesting to note that rarely do any of the animal characters, including Aslan, receive the same kind of narrative attention as the human characters – in other words, narration rarely, if ever, gets into their heads and experiences in the same way as it does with the humans. This may be the result of practical considerations (i.e. that children reading the story would be more able to identify with human protagonists) or a manifestation of one of the narrative's key premises. This, in turn, can be seen as a manifestation of the Bible's contention that humans are given dominion over the animals. In any case, it is the human perspective that dominates the narrative – the inner lives of the animal characters are inferred through their actions. One last point to note in terms of point of view and/or narrative voice is that every once in a while, the author interjects a first person pronoun (i.e. "I" or "we") into the narrative. The former creates a sense of "bedtime story" about the narrative, while the latter not only contributes to the same effect but also creates a sense of kinship and/or connection between the reader and the teller of the story.

Language and Meaning

For the most part, the language of the novel is straightforward and simple. Any words of a more "advanced" vocabulary are presented unobtrusively, without calling attention to themselves and within a clear enough context that their meaning can be easily understood. There is a sense of the childlike about the piece – a "just the facts" kind of sensibility that, at times, is enhanced with a sense of both breathless wonder and reverent, graceful understatement. Ultimately, though, the novel's language is shaped and developed so as to reinforce its overall connection to / relationship with the story upon which it's based. It's clearly intended to metaphorically retell the story of Christ and His Passion, as recounted in the New Testament.

Structure

In many ways, the novel is structured in a traditionally linear, cause and effect way. Event A leads to Event B to Event C ... Character Choice A leads to Character Choice B and so on and so on, intensifying in momentum, in narrative energy, and in emotional intensity to a point of climax – in this case, the resurrection of Aslan following his



execution by the White Witch. There are a few exceptions to this essentially straightforward structure: at a couple of places in the novel, one narrative line (such as Peter, his sisters, and the Beavers) moves forward for a chapter, and then in the next, the action moves backward in time to follow what happens to Edmund at the same time. These exceptions do not, however, interrupt the work's sense of flow, but instead work well to create/define a sense of converging event and action that, in turn, builds towards that previously discussed climax. In other words, it's just like two smaller rivers (such as those that thread their way through the wilds of Narnia) joining into one larger, stronger, more powerful river (such as the one that flows past Cair Paravel and into the sea).

Meanwhile, it's important to note that throughout much of the novel, particularly its latter half, its structure echoes that of the Biblical narrative upon which it's based – specifically, the story of Christ as told in the New Testament of the Bible.



Quotes

People who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time. If the children had ever thought so, they were cured of it now. For when they tried to look at Aslan's face they just caught a glimpse of the golden mane and the great, royal, solemn, overwhelming eyes; and then they found they couldn't look at him and went all trembly.

-- Narration (chapter 12 paragraph p. 103)

Importance: This quote portrays the experience of the children the first time they meet Aslan, the description suggesting, within the novel's overall thematic context, that the first encounter with the powerful combination of joy and strength would, and perhaps should, feel the same way.

The coats were rather too big for them, so that they came down to their heels and looked more like royal robes than coats when they had put them on.

-- Narration (chapter 6 paragraph 44)

Importance: In the comment about "royal robes", this quote foreshadows how the four children become kings and queens later in the narrative.

...on the first evening when [the professor] came out to meet them at the front door he was so odd looking that ... Edmund (who was the next youngest) wanted to laugh and had to keep on pretending he was blowing his nose to hide it.

-- Narration (chapter 10)

Importance: This quote foreshadows the nasty, unpleasant side of Edmund's nature that gets him and his siblings into difficulties throughout most of the narrative.

It was a far larger house than she had ever been in before, and the thought of all those long passages and rows of doors leading into empty rooms was beginning to make her feel a little creepy.

-- Narration (chapter 1 paragraph 2)

Importance: The quote foreshadows the sense of mystery and magic that develops throughout the book. The reference to doors foreshadows the door into the wardrobe that Lucy, and eventually the others, go through to reach Narnia.

From the waist upward he was like a man, but his legs were shaped like a goat's (the hair on them was glossy black) and instead of feet he had goat's hoofs. He also had a tail ... he had a strange but pleasant little face with a short pointed beard and curly hair, and out of the hair stuck two horns, one on each side of his forehead ... he was a faun.

-- Narration (chapter 1 paragraph 6)

Importance: This quote describes the physical appearance of Mr. Tumnus (see "Characters"), and explains at least partly why Lucy is so surprised to see him.



He told about the midnight dances and how the nymphs who lived in the wells and the dryads who lived in the trees came out to dance with the fauns; about long hunting parties after the milk-white Stag who could give you wishes if you caught him and then about summer when the woods were green ... [and] the streams would run with wine instead of water and the whole forest would give itself up to jollification for weeks on end.

-- Narration (chapter 2 paragraph p. 12)

Importance: This quote is important for two reasons. The first is that it paints a vivid picture of both the magic of Narnia and how its eternal winter has suppressed it. The second is that its reference to the White Stag foreshadows the ending of the book, in which Lucy and her siblings, now kings and queens, follow the same White Stag in search of wishes and end up returning home.

'...she'll have my tail cut off, and my horns sawn off, and my beard plucked out, and she'll wave her wand over my beautiful cloven hoofs and turn them into horrid solid hoofs like a wretched horse's. And if she is extra and specially angry she'll turn me into stone and I shall be only a statue of a faun in her horrible house until the four thrones at Cair Paravel are filled - and goodness knows when that will happen, or whether it will ever happen at all.

-- Mr. Tumnus (chapter 2 paragraph 15)

Importance: This quote is also important for two reasons. First, it describes the punishment that awaits Mr. Tumnus if he fails to do the White Witch's bidding, indicating to Lucy and to the reader just how much danger he's in. Second, it contains two important pieces of foreshadowing - of the courtyard full of statues that the children find later in the book (statues that Aslan eventually frees), and of the Cair Paravel prophecy, which Lucy and her siblings fulfill later in the book.

She was also covered in white fur up to her throat and held a long straight golden wand in her right hand and wore a golden crown on her head. Her face was white - not merely pale, but white like snow or paper or icing sugar, except for her very red mouth. It was a beautiful face in other respects, but proud and cold and stern.

-- Narration (chapter 3 paragraph 24)

Importance: This quote introduces the White Witch, but it is notable for not actually using the name by which the narrator refers to her. It tells the reader who she is by the detail of the description alone.

Well, Sir, if things are real, they're there all the time." "Are they?" said the Professor; and Peter did not know quite what to say.

-- Peter and the Professor (chapter 5 paragraph p. 39)

Importance: This quote functions on two levels. It introduces Peter and Susan to the possibility that Lucy might be right, and it develops an aspect of the novel's theme of faith.



Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer.

-- Narration (chapter 7 paragraph p. 54)

Importance: The different reactions of the four children represent their essential initial reactions to the mystery and joy they eventually come to experience in their encounters with Aslan. They also suggest their basic characters - Edmund's duplicity and lying, Peter's courage, Susan's sensitivity, and Lucy's joy.

'When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone / Sits at Cair Paravel in Throne / The evil time will be over and done'

-- Mr. Beaver (chapter 8 paragraph p. 65)

Importance: This quote is the prophecy that governs several of the White Witch's actions and also foreshadows events later in the novel when the siblings do, in fact, become the "flesh and bone" enthroned at Cair Paravel.

[Edmund] did want Turkish delight and to be a Prince (and later a king) and to pay Peter out for calling him a beast. As for what the Witch would do with the others, he didn't want her to be particularly nice to them - certainly not to put them on the same level as himself - but he managed to believe, or to pretend he believed, that she wouldn't do anything very bad to them ... [but] deep down inside him he really knew that the White Witch was bad and cruel.

-- Narration (chapter 9 paragraph p. 72)

Importance: This quote indicates the conflict within Edmund - on the one hand, his selfishness and pettiness, on the other hand his sensitivity to, and awareness of, the true nature of the Witch.

Some of the pictures of Father Christmas in our world make him look only funny and jolly. But now that the children actually stood looking at him they didn't find it quite like that. He was so big, and so glad, and so real, that they all become quite still. They felt very glad, but also solemn.

-- Narration (chapter 10 paragraph p. 86)

Importance: This quote is important for two reasons. It reinforces Mr. Beaver's suggestion that the appearance of Father Christmas is a significant strike against the Witch's power. Also, it suggests the power of the joy, happiness and goodness he brings, power particularly important when facing evil and, as the book thematically contends, the necessity of infusing faith with both joy and strength.

It seemed so pitiful to think of those little stone figures sitting there all the silent days and all the dark nights, year after year, till the moss grew on them and at last even their faces crumbled away.

-- Narration (chapter 11 paragraph p. 94)



Importance: This quote marks the awakening of Edmund's conscience.

... there they saw Aslan and Edmund walking together in the dewy grass, apart from the rest of the court. There is no need to tell you (and no one ever heard) what Aslan was saying, but it was a conversation which Edmund never forgot ... 'Here is your brother,' [Aslan] said, 'and there is no need to talk to him about what is past.'

-- Narration (chapter 13 paragraph p. 111)

Importance: The quote implies two thematically significant things. Edmund has confessed and Aslan has forgiven him. The concepts of both confession and forgiveness are essential to Christian faith which the novel is metaphorically exploring.

I hope no-one who reads this book has been quite as miserable as Susan and Lucy were that night; but if you have been - if you've been up all night and cried till you have no more tears left in you - you will know that there comes in the end a sort of quietness. You feel as if nothing was ever going to happen again ... hours and hours seemed to go by in this dead calm ...

-- Narration (Fifteen paragraph p. 128)

Importance: This quote is important first because it's an example of the author's narrative voice. Also, it echoes the sense of watchful, numb despair that the Bible hints at in its commentary on the Christ story.

'We have a long journey to go. You must ride on me.'

-- Aslan (Fifteen paragraph p. 134)

Importance: This line is metaphorically significant, in that it is one of the book's many symbolic parallels with the teaching of Christ and Christianity. People who believe in and follow Christ also have a long journey. Christ, in his words and deeds, suggests that they too can ride (rely) on Him.

But at last the ransacking of the Witch's fortress was ended. The whole castle stood empty with every door and window open and the light and the sweet spring air flooding in to all the dark and evil places which needed them so badly.

-- Narration (chapter 16 paragraph p. 140)

Importance: The description here simultaneously echoes other events that have illustrated the end of the Witch's power and the ascendance of Aslan's, and also foreshadows the Witch's imminent death and Aslan's ultimate triumph.

Once a king or queen in Narnia, always a king or queen in Narnia".

-- Aslan (chapter 17 paragraph 148)

Importance: This quote sets up events in most of the subsequent books of the so-called "Narnia Chronicles," books in which Peter and his siblings, as well as other human rulers, return to assume their royal places in the Narnian kingdom.