



**C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*: A Study of Good Versus Evil
through a Christian Allegory**

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Abstract

C.S. Lewis' Christian allegorical fiction, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, is set in the legendary realm of Narnia and examines the issue of good vs evil. The White Witch's harsh authority, which represents evil, is contrasted in the book with Aslan's just and selfless leadership, which represents Christ. The victory of good over evil is mirrored in Narnia's transition from perpetual winter to a thriving spring. Lewis creates a story that appeals to both children and adults by incorporating moral and spiritual lessons into an exciting story through rich imagery, symbolism, and approachable prose. The novel's enduring influence as a literary masterpiece and a reflection of Christian doctrine is facilitated by its structure, omniscient narrator, and use of legendary elements.

Keywords: Christian allegory, fantasy literature, White Witch, Narnia, symbolism, imagery, redemption, omniscient narration.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis presents a Christian worldview through a mythic tale. It takes place in Narnia, a world of magic. In this world, virtually every fairy tale or mythic creature imaginable comes alive. But unlike other fantasy novels, such as the realm of *Harry Potter*, Narnia is another world, a separate creation from ours. In Narnia, what one would call "magic" is simply part of the created order. The mythic elements are used as a vehicle to tell a bigger story, not to promote falsehood in the real world. "This is no thaw," said the dwarf, suddenly stopping. "This is Spring." (122)

The novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is a fantasy, largely because of the setting which goes back to medieval age. It depicts people who live close to the land, fight using bows and arrows and swords, and are ruled by kings and queens who live in palaces. Mythical creatures populate it, not only the stock characters of today's fantasy world like

centaurs and dwarves, but more mythological characters too, like minotaur's and dryads. Interestingly, Narnia has no human population, but prophecy states that it needs to be ruled by four human beings, two male and two female two “sons of Adam” and two “daughters of Eve,” as the characters constantly remind.

Lewis had a love for mythology and imaginary tales from his youngest days. He wrote stories about a mouse world in which adults were the threatening forces of discipline; his elaborate construction of these alternative worlds gave him a sense of "momentous joy," one that he associated with the grand fantasias of Wagner and Teutonic legend. Later as an Oxford don and an atheist, he was still dabbling in his beloved myths and legends when his colleague J.R.R. Tolkien encouraged him to see the world's “mythical” aspects as Christian in origin. When C.S. Lewis was sixteen, he had a strange vision. It wasn't a spiritual vision or a great artistic vision or some kind of prophecy. It was just a mental picture - a picture of a Faun, a mythical half-man half-goat, carrying an armload of packages and sheltering himself with an umbrella as he walked through a snowy wood. This strange but innocent image would stay with Lewis for decades until his chance encounter with some children who had been evacuated from London during World War II.

Lewis was interested in the evacuees and what it might be like for children to be uprooted from their homes and sent into a strange, unknown world. Moreover, he himself had been sent away to several boarding schools as a child and an adolescent, and his memories of them were unpleasant.

“The Chronicles of Narnia”, though an imaginative story has some historic background. In 1940, Hitler turned his attention to London and its nine million people to invade Britain. Part of Hitler's reason for attacking the city of London was to destroy business and commercial targets. But Hitler also wanted to destroy the morale, or spirit and hopefulness of the British people. On September 7, 1940, the first bombers arrived to drop “incendiary bombs” on the London docks. Incendiary bombs are bombs used to start fires. This was the start of the Blitz-lightning war. The Blitz fell upon all of London. Countless shops, offices, churches, factories, docks and homes were destroyed. Due to

these more than 800,000 schoolchildren were sent away from London during the War to live in safety in the countryside, along with more than 100,000 teachers and helpers and more than 500,000 children under school age, who left with their mothers. The Blitz is the reason the four Pevensie children were sent away from London. Their mother felt they would be safer in the country, away from the bombing of the city. Little did their mother know that the four children would leave one war behind, only to find themselves fighting in another kind of war altogether.

Four children named Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy go to the country to live in the large, mysterious house of an old Professor during the London air raids. One rainy day, the children take the opportunity to explore the house, peeking into spare bedrooms and old passageways, until Lucy, the youngest, pauses to look into a large wardrobe sitting in an empty room. She crawls past the long fur coats and finds herself standing in the middle of a forest. It is night, and snow is falling, though in London it is summer. She walks toward an iron lamppost and, thinking it is strange to come to a lamp-post in the middle of a wood, is met by a very surprised faun.

This faun, confirming that Lucy is a human girl, or a “Daughter of Eve,” invites her for tea, snacks, stories, and music in his cozy little cave. She trusts the faun and follows him, staying with him for what seems like many hours. Suddenly, she exclaims that she must be getting back, and the faun, Mr. Tumnus, begins to cry. He explains that he is in the service of the evil White Witch, who has cast a spell over Narnia so that it is always winter, yet never Christmas. Narnia is the name of the world into which Lucy has stumbled, a world that stretches from the lamppost to the eastern sea. Mr. Tumnus, however, decides to save Lucy, and leads her quietly back to the lamppost. She flees through the wardrobe door, and, tumbling out, cries that she is alright. For her brothers and sisters, however, no time has passed since they had last seen her. Lucy excitedly shares with them the news about Narnia, but when they check inside the wardrobe, they find that it is quite ordinary.

The next rainy day, while the children play hide-and-seek, Lucy crawls back into the wardrobe. Edmund, seeing her disappear, follows her and finds himself standing in the middle of a wood on a winter day. He reaches the lamppost, calling out to Lucy, when a

sledge pulled by reindeer comes to a halt. A lady in white fur with a gold wand and a crown announces that she is the Queen of Narnia and asks Edmund who he is. When she realises that he is a human boy, or a “Son of Adam,” she invites him to sit with her in her sledge, and conjures for him a warm drink and, at his request, a box of Turkish Delights. As Edmund eats the Turkish Delights, she tells him to return with his brother and sisters to her house, which she points out between the two hills in the distance. She leaves him at the lamppost, still craving more Turkish Delights. Lucy finds him and is excited that he has made it through; together, they tumble out of the wardrobe, and Edmund tells Susan and Peter that they had been pretending to be in Narnia. Lucy runs away and cries, and Susan and Peter, worried that Lucy has gone mad, go to talk to the Professor. The Professor, to their surprise, asks them why they do not believe Lucy’s story, since logic suggests that she is telling the truth.

One day, the housekeeper gives the children strict instructions to keep out of the way while she leads a tour group through the house, which is quite famous. As the children are playing, they suddenly realise that they are about to run right into the group. All four rush into the empty room, and into the wardrobe. Within moments, they find themselves standing in the wood. Peter apologises to Lucy for not believing her, and Edmund gives away the fact that he had been lying about previously having been in Narnia, angering Peter. Lucy leads the group to Mr. Tumnus’s house, but when they arrive at his door, they find that he has been arrested. A red robin leads them to Mr. Beaver, who takes them home, where Mrs. Beaver has prepared dinner. Mr. Beaver explains that Mr. Tumnus has been arrested and has probably been turned into stone at the Witch’s house. In the meantime, he has received word that Aslan is near and that they are all to meet him the next day at the Stone Table. After some time, Lucy realises that Edmund has gone, and Mr. Beaver expresses his belief that he has gone to the White Witch. They hurriedly prepare for the journey to the Stone Table and spend the night in an old hiding-place, waking in the morning to the sound of bells. Father Christmas has come, a sign that the Witch’s spell is turning weak. He presents gifts to each of them, as well as a wonderful tray of tea.

Meanwhile, Edmund makes his way through the cold night to the Witch's house and discovers a courtyard of stone statues. He is let in and tells the Witch that his brother and sisters are at the Beavers' house, and that Aslan is coming. The Witch is astonished and sends her wolves after the Beavers and the children, ordering her sledge to be prepared. Edmund realises that he is to be given no more Turkish Delights and begins to feel that he has made a big mistake. He is ordered into the sledge next to the Witch, and after traveling through the cold, they come into view of a small party celebrating Christmas morning in the wood. The Witch turns them into stone; when Edmund tries to stop her, she slaps him. The coming spring has made it impossible for the sledge to continue any further, so they begin walking. Edmund's hands are tied tightly behind his back.

When the Beavers and Peter, Susan, and Lucy arrive at the Eastern Sea, where they find the Stone Table and Aslan, the great lion, Aslan asks where the fourth has gone, and Mr. Beaver explains that Edmund has betrayed them to the Witch. Peter is then shown the castle of Cair Paravel, where there are four thrones waiting to be filled. Suddenly, they hear cries. The Witch's wolves have arrived, and Peter, in a show of courage, kills the leader by striking him in the heart. In appreciation for this act of bravery, Aslan makes Peter a Knight.

Edmund, meanwhile, is exhausted from the walking. He and the Witch come to a halt in a valley, where she ties him to a tree and prepares to kill him. At that moment, there is a commotion, and Edmund faints. The Witch and her dwarf escape. but Edmund is saved by Aslan. In the morning, he walks with Aslan, and they share a private conversation. When they return, Edmund tells his brother and sisters that he is sorry, and they all forgive him. The Witch then seeks an audience with Aslan. There is discussion about a deep magic that requires traitors such as Edmund to be handed over to the Witch. Aslan, however, takes her aside and reaches an agreement, one that no one dares ask about. The Witch goes, and the rest set up camp for the night.

During the night, Susan and Lucy have trouble falling asleep, feeling that something horrible is about to happen. They notice Aslan walking into the wood and

decide to follow him. He realises that they are following him, and they walk together to the Stone Table, where Aslan tells them that they must hide. They watch as he approaches the evil group, led by the Witch. He is tied down, and the Witch kills him with a knife. In the silence that follows, the two girls approach the dead body and begin to weep. As the sun rises, however, they hear a loud crash: the Stone Table has been broken. They find Aslan alive, and very real. He explains that there is another magic, deeper than the one the Witch knows, a magic from before the dawn of time. It allows the one who dies in the place of a traitor to come back to life. The two girls climb onto him, and Aslan leaps through the country to the Witch's house, where he jumps over the wall into the courtyard. Once there, he brings all of the stone statues back to life including Mr. Tumnus.

Having organised themselves to battle the White Witch, the group quickly proceeds to a narrow valley, where Peter, Edmund, and Aslan's army are fighting the Witch and her followers. Aslan pounces on the Witch and kills her, winning the battle. Edmund is injured, and Peter explains to the others that Edmund was the one to destroy the Witch's wand. Lucy uses her Christmas present, a little bottle full of the juice of fire-flowers from the sun, to restore him. Aslan instructs her to tend to the others, as well. Edmund's health condition improves and is better than ever before. Aslan makes him a Knight.

There is a celebration at Cair Paravel, and the prophecy comes true: the four thrones are filled by two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve, and Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy each grow in renown. They rule Narnia fairly for many years, until one day, as they hunt for the White Stag in the Western Wood; they come upon a lamppost. It strikes them all oddly, like something from a dream. They move beyond it, and suddenly the trees become coats, and they tumble out of the wardrobe in their old clothes. The housekeeper and the tour group are just passing by in the hall.

The children tell the Professor the story in order to explain why four of the fur coats from the wardrobe are missing. He believes their story entirely and assures them that one day they will see Narnia again. He repeats what Aslan said to them as they had

assumed their thrones: they will always be kings and queens of Narnia.

The major theme of *The Lion, the witch and the Wardrobe* is the nature of good versus evil. The story is centred on good and evil. Good and evil is made to clash within the morals of people. The novel compares good and evil in many ways, where it is constantly being represented in the setting. The story allows the weather and environment to dictate the nature of what is good and evil. There is the battle of good and evil taking place in the Narnian atmosphere- seasons, settings and the animals. The conflict between good and evil is also demonstrated by the various conditions as well as the situations that are presented to the characters.

The scenery also creates a visual impact of what is good and what is evil. In the beginning Narnia is known as a winter land that is cold and white from snow. The wintry, frost filled weather also represents the reality of a harsh environment and a sense of ruthlessness. This could also symbolise the struggle to come and the possibility of facing severe hardships. The dull, colourless and icy land of Narnia gives the impression that the land is lifeless and had no vibrancy. It is winter at all times, but the jolly season and Christmas holiday never arrive. The dreadful stark white winter of Narnia represents the ruling of the White Witch. The witch is immensely evil and powerful. With her magic wand she is able to turn any living being into lifeless stone statues, which is another way that evil is represented in a stone-cold way.

Narnia is a wonderfully mystical place that can ignite the power of good and evil through the environment and weather conditions. When the witch was in control the weather was a cold snowfall that gave her the ability to ride and travel on her sledge with ease. However, when the lion gained control, the climate was shifted warm enough to cause the snow to melt and make the witch unable to travel on her sledge. The particular condition of the weather in Narnia demonstrated to the reader an idea about the source of power was good or evil.

Seasons play a very important role in the course of action in the novel. The Witch imposes an enchanted, eternal winter on Narnia, symbolising a dead, stagnant time. Nothing grows, animals hibernate, and people crouch around fires rather than enjoying the

outdoors. Nearly every human being has a visceral negative reaction to winter, even when it is a normal length. The Witch's winter destroys the beauty and the life in Narnia. There is a pristine appeal to woods blanketed in snow and frozen waterfalls, but our overall impression is one of a barren, empty land. The season of winter represents that Narnia has fallen under an evil regime. As snow falls, so does the land of Narnia. The Witch's snow hides all traces of Aslan, the Monarch of the mystical realm. Narnia is undoubtedly bleak and grim.

It is wondrous when spring occurs, when Aslan arrives in Narnia. It is obvious that Christmas occurs before spring can come, because Christmas is the birth of Christ. It is Christmas that signals hope for mankind. With the birth of Christ, the hope of new life is given. Spring follows Christmas and all of a sudden, the woods are completely alive flowers are blooming, springs and brooks are chuckling, birds are singing, and delightful smells waft past on gentle breezes. This is no ordinary spring. just as the Witch's winter was no ordinary winter. The spring is just as enchanted as the winter, only now Narnia is experiencing the epitome of life rather than death.

The brilliant style of C.S. Lewis in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* enables the readers of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy the world that the book creates. C.S. Lewis can be called the Hemingway of children's literature. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is an amazing book that allows to escape into an imaginative adventure. C.S. Lewis has achieved this by using a series of different devices such as imagery, symbols, and double meanings. He also successfully pulls the readers into the adventure by allowing the adventure to relate to the readers using characters that undergo the adventure themselves. The characters Lucy, Susan, Edmund and Peter learn things about themselves that they would never know without the experience of the story. C.S. Lewis uses this imaginative style of writing to draw the reader in and not let him go.

The children learn these intended messages on a sub conscious level; adults can look at Aslan, the Christ figure who died for the sins of others. The White Witch, the embodiment of evil that must be overcome; the wardrobe, the gate to a new world; the lamppost, a guide to enlightenment; the animals, representing the qualities needed

to overcome adversity and grow with change; and at the cycle of life, represented by the light of the moon and the change of the seasons.

In *Imagination and the Arts of C.S. Lewis*, Peter J. Schakel says:

Becoming absorbed in the atmosphere of the Narnian world with its fascinating mixture of paradise and imperfection, animal and human, adult and childlike [qualities] - being enabled to live imaginatively in that world for as long as the book lasts, is one of the powerful appeals of Lewis' stories(61)

Even though C.S. Lewis uses imagination in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, his focus was not on creating another fairy tale but actually following the pattern of the gospel. He uses the enchanted world of Narnia as a parallel to the world that exists but that the reader does not see. C.S. Lewis then uses the symbol of Aslan to represent Jesus himself. "You have a traitor there, Aslan," said the Witch. ... "His offense was not against you." ... "Who will give him their blood?" said the Witch. ... But Edmund had already been forgiven." (138) He does this by showing the reader how Aslan was without sin, just like Jesus.

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