

# The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

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## About the book

This fantasy-cum-allegory of Christ's passion, set in the Second World War, was first published in 1950 and rapidly became a modern classic of children's literature. It was followed by six more titles that together form *The Chronicles of Narnia*, named after the fictional country in which the adventures occur. Its characters range from talking animals to classical Greek and Norse mythology and even Father Christmas. The book has been dramatised for television and turned into a film. It is a fantasy adventure that stands in its own right, and may be used without reference to its religious parallels.

The story starts when a family of four wartime evacuees are sent away to escape the London air-raids. They arrive in a large historic house in the heart of the country, in the care of a kindly old professor.

They soon explore and, while investigating a large wardrobe, Lucy enters Narnia, where it is continual winter, but never Christmas. She meets a faun who befriends her, then admits his intention to give her up to the White Witch who put Narnia under its icy enchantment.

When Edmund later discovers Narnia, he meets the White Witch, who tempts him with empty promises. Back in the house, he denies having been there, upsetting truthful Lucy. At last, they all arrive in Narnia, where family loyalties are divided. So begins the good-versus-evil battle.

Aslan the lion arrives, to whom the children are introduced later by their new friends, the Beavers. Edmund, still trusting the Witch, betrays Aslan, but the lion's good magic is already thawing the frozen world. Edmund is about to be killed for disloyalty when Aslan's army intervenes

and Aslan takes his place. Like Christ, he is tortured, humiliated and killed, but comes back to life. The White Witch is defeated in a battle fought, among others, by Peter and his reformed brother.

Peace is restored to Narnia, as Aslan brings petrified creatures back to life. The children become monarchs and rule long and wisely into adulthood. One day, they come across the way back into the wardrobe and return to their childhood lives at the very second at which they had left.

## About the author

Clive Staples Lewis was born in Belfast in 1898 and died in 1963 (on the same day that President JF Kennedy was assassinated). He won a scholarship to Oxford in 1916 where his friends included JRR Tolkien, whose influence was a factor in Lewis becoming a Christian in 1931. Later, they both were members of a group calling

themselves The Inklings, who met to discuss story plots and progress.



### Facts and figures

**Title:** *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

**Author:** C.S. Lewis

**Original illustrator:** Pauline Baynes

**First published:** 1950

**Series:** Part of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a seven-book series. It is chronologically the second book, but was the first published. Television: adapted into a series first in 1976, and again in 1988.

**Film:** adapted in 2005 by Disney Pictures, followed by *Prince Caspian* in 2008 as part of *The Chronicles of Narnia* series.

**Audio:** one audio book, and three radio plays on CD.

**Theatre:** adapted in 1984, and staged at London's Westminster Theatre, and again in 1988 by the Royal Shakespeare Company among others.

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