

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Following is the reading schedule for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. If you wish, you may take notes during the reading and use those notes on quizzes. **Spoiler Alert:** please note that we may be discussing plots from the other books in Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*.

We will be working up to the last day of class, so slacking off is not suggested. This book is a fairly easy read, and there are pictures, so the readings should not be too strenuous. You will be writing one short paper in conjunction with this book. Your paper will be a minimum of one page long (double-spaced, 12 points, times). I will provide you with a number of prompts. You may hand in your paper at any time, so if you want to "get it over with," there are prompts that will require only a minimal amount of reading.

Some paper specifications (rubric attached):

- Papers must be formal. These are not reflections: they are analyses, so no "I."
- Papers must include a quote (properly cited).
- Papers should have an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Thursday, May 19 **Pages 1-45**

Monday, May 23 **Pages 47-107**

Wednesday, May 25 **Pages 109-158**

Friday, May 27 **Pages 159-206**

Prompts

1. You have been introduced to the four children: Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy. What do their names mean? Why do you think that Lewis selected these names? Given what you know of these names, what might these characters do (or not do)?
2. Both Lucy and Edmund meet strangers, and neither one of them seems very concerned with "stranger danger." How are their encounters similar and/or different? Speculate as to why this might be.
3. After completing the second reading assignment, you should have a better understanding of the four children. Select any one and analyze the character. What is he/she like? What are his/her strengths? Weaknesses? What might his/her purposes be in the book?
4. There are two distinct settings in this book: WWII England and Narnia. Compare and/or contrast them. What do they have in common? How are they different? What is Lewis stating through these settings?

5. The lines between good and evil are pretty clear in this book. Which creatures, seasons, moods, events, and symbols are evil and which are good? Why?
6. This book has a lot of Christian parallels within it. What are some of them?
7. Although children (and adults) may adore *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, it has received some seriously negative criticism from other writers, namely Phillip Pullman, author of the popular series *His Dark Materials*:

There is no doubt in my mind that it [Narnia] is one of the most ugly and poisonous things I've ever read. Why the Narnia books are popular with children is not difficult to see. In a superficial and bustling way, Lewis could tell a story, and when he cheats, as he frequently does, the momentum carries you over the bumps and the potholes. But there have always been adults who suspected what he was up to. His friend Tolkien took a dim view of *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe*, particularly disliking Lewis's slapdash way with mythology: 'It really won't do, you know!' And the American critic John Goldthwaite, in his powerful and original study of children's literature *The Natural History Of Make-Believe* (OUP, 1996), lays bare the misogyny, the racism, the sado-masochistic relish for violence that permeates the whole cycle.

Do you agree or disagree with Pullman? Why?

8. Do you think that Lewis manipulates his young audience into swallowing (usually unknowingly) his Christian message? Is this something that an author can/should do?