

Introduction

C. S. Lewis was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1898. His childhood was a sad one. When he was ten years old his mother died, and in that same year his father sent him to a boarding school he did not care for. His older brother Warren attended school with him, which proved comforting. After two years the school closed and Lewis returned to attend a school about a mile from his father's home. As a boy, perhaps to overcome some of his sadness, Lewis immersed himself in literature, particularly the stories of Beatrix Potter (author of *Peter Rabbit*), and mythology. He also loved animals; he even created his own imaginary world with talking animals called Boxen. These childhood interests followed Lewis through life and are evident in his *Chronicles of Narnia* books.

As he grew up, C. S. Lewis was an avid reader and a good student. He eventually won a scholarship to Oxford University in England. A year after he enrolled, he joined the British Army and fought in World War I. After the war ended, he returned to Oxford to study literature. He eventually became a professor at Oxford University and then the head of Medieval Literature at Cambridge College just outside of London. During his career, he became close friends with J. R. R. Tolkien (author of *The Lord of the Rings* series). Tolkien was one of the first people to read and offer Lewis comments on *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the second of the Narnia books, which was first published in 1950.

During his life, Lewis developed a reputation for being a great scholar and great defender of the Christian faith. He is considered one of the greatest Christian apologists of the twentieth century. (An apologist is one who argues in defense of an idea or belief.) In addition to writing the seven books in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series, Lewis wrote several books on the Christian faith during his lifetime. His most popular book is *Mere Christianity*, which began a series of radio addresses to the soldiers in World War II. *Mere Christianity* was voted best book of the twentieth century by *Christianity Today* magazine in 2000.

The topics and arguments in *Mere Christianity* are quite evident in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and the other Narnia books, which were written for Lewis' god-daughter. The Narnia books, though fantasy books for children, are also allegories of the Christian faith. (An allegory is a story that represents other events or ideas.) The characters and events in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* clearly detail Biblical events and characters quite familiar to you. These representations will be discussed as you read.

C. S. Lewis died at the age of 65 on November 22, 1963. Though a great figure, Lewis' death was overshadowed by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which occurred on the same day.

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. Who is the author of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*?

2. In what year was the book originally published? _____

3. How many books are there in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series? _____

4. Where does *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* fit in the series sequence?

5. Where was the author born?

6. What famous university did the author attend? _____

7. The author was a professor of literature at which universities? _____

8. Who was one of the author's best friends? What book did his friend write?

9. List two books the author was famous for writing.

10. For whom did the author write *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*?

11. What is a Christian apologist?

12. What is an allegory?

13. The author died on the same day as what historic event?

Reading Notes

air-raids	attacks by fighter-planes and bombers
row	argument
wardrobe	a freestanding closet for hanging clothes
faun	a creature with a man's body and goat's legs and horns

Vocabulary

Write the meaning of each bold word or phrase.

1. "This is very **queer**," she said _____
2. but she felt very **inquisitive** _____
3. he carried several brown-paper **parcels**. _____

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. List the children and identify the youngest. _____

2. Why were the children sent to the Professor's home in the country? _____

3. Describe the Professor's home and its setting. _____

4. What does Lucy discover as she travels through the wardrobe? _____

5. How does Lucy know she has entered a very different world on the other side of the wardrobe?

