

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Unabridged)

by  
C.S. Lewis

## Book Information

C.S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Unabridged)

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206 Pages

Book Level: 5.7

Interest Level: MG

Aslan, the noble lion, frees Narnia from the spell of the White Witch. Book #1

**Award:** Book Sense Book of the Year  
Award/Honorees; SLJ Best Book

**Topics:** Fantasy/Imagination, Misc./Other; Power  
Lessons AR, Grade 5; Recommended  
Reading, California Recommended Lit.,  
English, 6-8; Series, Chronicles of Narnia

## Main Characters

Aslan the great lion who offers his life to the White Witch in exchange for Edmund's, but later comes to life again

Edmund Peter and Susan's younger brother, who at first sides with the White Witch

Fenris Ulf the grey wolf who is chief of the Witch's Secret Police

Lucy the youngest child of the family, who first discovers Narnia by traveling through the wardrobe

Mr. and Mrs. Beaver friends of Mr. Tumnus and followers of Aslan, who help the children get to the Stone Table to meet Aslan

Mr. Tumnus the Faun who befriends Lucy and turns his back on the White Witch

Mrs. Macready the Professor's housekeeper who doesn't really like children

Peter the eldest boy in a family of four children who have been sent to live in the country because of the air raids in London

Susan Peter's younger sister and the second oldest child

the Professor an old man who owns the house where the children are staying and believes their tale about Narnia

White Witch the evil being who calls herself the Queen of Narnia and wants to kill the children because they are a threat to her power

## Vocabulary

**centaur** a creature with the head, arms and trunk of a man and the body and legs of a horse

**Dryad** a wood nymph

**Faun** a mythological creature that is half man and half goat

**jollification** merrymaking; festivity

**Nymph** a female spirit dwelling in woodlands and waters

**wardrobe** a cabinet designed to hold clothes

## Synopsis

Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy are brothers and sisters who have been sent to a home in the country because of the air raids in London. While exploring the big house, the youngest girl, Lucy, climbs into a wardrobe and discovers a magical land called Narnia. She meets a Faun, Mr. Tumnus, who tells her about the White Witch, an evil being who turns her enemies to stone and causes it to be winter all the time. When Lucy returns, her brothers and sister don't believe her story. The next day, Edmund also travels to Narnia and has an adventure of his own with the White Witch. She charms him with Turkish Delight and promises to make him King some day. She tells him to go and bring back his brother and sisters the next time he comes. Her real plan is to kill the children because they are a threat to her reign as Queen.

Eventually, all four children enter Narnia through the wardrobe and decide to explore. Lucy suggests they visit Mr. Tumnus, and they discover he has been taken away by the Witch. They decide to try and help Mr. Tumnus. They meet Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, friends of Mr. Tumnus, who tell them about Aslan, the King of Beasts who has returned to Narnia. The Beavers also tell the children that their appearance fulfills a prophecy in Narnia. Two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve are to rule and will destroy the White Witch. Edmund becomes very uncomfortable

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as they speak of Aslan and decides to go to the White Witch to tell her where his brother and sisters are. Mr. and Mrs. Beaver realize Edmund has betrayed them and take the other children to the Stone Table to meet Aslan.

When the children meet Aslan, they tell him about Edmund and ask him if anything can be done to save him from the White Witch. He sends several creatures to find and rescue Edmund. They find Edmund, but the Witch escapes. Aslan speaks with Edmund. Edmund apologizes for betraying them and joins them against the Witch. The Witch comes and demands Edmund's life. Aslan willingly forfeits his own life in exchange for Edmund's. A magic deeper than the Witch's magic is at work, and Aslan comes back to life. After a terrible battle, the children, with Aslan's help, triumph over the Witch and her followers. The children become Kings and Queens in Narnia, and many years pass. They forget about their lives outside the wardrobe until they pass through the woods near the wardrobe door. They travel back through the wardrobe and find only a moment has passed in their world. They look forward to other adventures in Narnia.

## Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

### Initial Understanding

When Lucy asks Aslan if anything can be done to help save Edmund, Aslan replies, "All shall be done. But it may be harder than you think." What did he mean by this?

*The children would have to fight battles against the Witch. He was going to have to die by the Witch's hand. Susan and Lucy would witness his death and be troubled by it.*

### Literary Analysis

How do the children change while they are Kings and Queens in Narnia?

*They become men and women and speak in a different style. They forget about their lives outside the wardrobe.*

### Inferential Comprehension

The White Witch wants to kill Edmund and the other children. Why do you think she was so nice to him when she first met him?

*She hoped he would lead her to the other children. She wanted to gain his confidence and trust.*

### Constructing Meaning

Summarize the part of the story in which Lucy visits Narnia for the first time.

*Lucy finds herself in a wood at night in the cold and snow. She sees a light and follows it. She discovers it is a lamp-post. Mr. Tumnus, a Faun, is there, and he introduces himself and invites her to his home for tea. His home is snug and warm. He feeds her a wonderful tea and tells her many tales. She learns of the White Witch. He confesses that he was going to turn her over to the Witch, but now he cannot go through with it. He helps her return to the lamppost, and she finds her way back through the wardrobe.*

## Teachable Skills

**Recognizing Setting** Most of the story takes place in an imaginary land called Narnia. It might be fun for the students to write about their own imaginary world. In their stories, they could tell how they reached this fantasy land. They could create their own imaginary characters and adventures.

**Understanding Literary Features** The theme of the story is good versus evil. In it, the good triumphs over evil. This theme can be found in many fairy tales such as *Snow White* and *Cinderella*. As a class, discuss how good triumphs over evil in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Divide the class into small groups and

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assign each group a fairy tale. The small groups should read the stories and identify the good and evil forces. Then they could discuss how the good overcame the evil. Students may also find it interesting to contrast what might have happened if evil had triumphed. How would the story be different? The students could rewrite the endings and act out the new stories.

**Understanding Characterization** In the story, Edmund is influenced by the White Witch's gifts and promises. As a class, discuss ways that people influence others. Perhaps students would like to share a time they were led astray by another person's promises or flattery.

**Understanding the Author's Craft** *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was told in the third person by an all-knowing narrator. Have the students choose a character from the book and tell part of the story from that character's point of view.