

Prince Caspian

by C. S. Lewis

Overview

Plot

A year after the events of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the four Pevensie children are summoned again to Narnia to find that many ages have passed since they were kings and queens, and Narnia has fallen under the rule of the Telmarines, led by evil usurper Miraz. They arrive just in time to help young prince Caspian lead his band of loyal “Old Narnians” in a rebellion to restore the land to its rightful people.

Conflict

Can Caspian and his friends free Narnia from Miraz’ oppressive rule? (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Society) Will the Pevensie children trust in Aslan’s directions or strike off on their own? (Man vs. Self, Man vs. God) Will Caspian gain the maturity necessary to lead his people? (Man vs. Self, Man vs. Nature)

Setting

The mythical land of Narnia during a rebellion against Telmarine oppressors.

Characters

Prince Caspian, the Telmarine; the talking lion Aslan; English children Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie; Caspian’s uncle Miraz, the usurper; various talking beasts of Narnia.

Theme

Coming of age; Faith; Good vs. Evil

Questions About Structure: Setting

(1) Where does the story happen?

As with all Narnian tales, this story affords teachers an excellent opportunity to discuss the literary “frame” with their students. A frame is a literary device wherein multiple settings are couched one within another. Whereas most stories have but one setting to discuss and, as a result, produce little conversation beyond routine rehashing of obvious answers to obvious questions, a frame provides an element of intricacy and depth to a story which increases the complexity and oftentimes the significance of the plot. *Prince Caspian* illustrates this principle admirably, taking place in three separate settings, each one nested within another: modern-day England, the home of the Pevensie children; “modern-day” Narnia where Caspian struggles against the Telmarines; and “ancient” Narnia, land of Caspian’s nursery lessons and the Pevensie children’s former glory. Since Lewis intends to follow both Caspian and the Pevensie children as protagonists, he ties each set of characters to a unique initial setting; Caspian to Narnia and the Pevensies to England. While the Pevensies intend to aid Caspian and therefore Caspian’s conflicts affect the children, they carry with them the memories of two different worlds and their struggle to reconcile the two creates a singular conflict entirely their own. Thus, the frame acts as an organizational tool for the author and an aid to young literary analysts trying to decipher plot and choose protagonists.

Prince Caspian begins in London, England, at a train station. There the Pevensie children prepare to part ways for a school term. Suddenly, they are pulled in to Narnia and find themselves in the ruins of Cair Paravel. As they explore the remnants of their former Narnian glory, the children stumble upon a gruesome scene. Below the ruined castle, there flows a swift river. On the rough surface of the water, the children see a fisherman’s skiff bobbing to and fro, captained by two nervous looking Telmarine soldiers. Between the two guards sits a dwarf, trussed and muzzled, but struggling still for freedom. As the children watch in horror, the soldiers prepare to toss their unfortunate captive overboard. Susan reaches for her familiar weapon, the bow which Father Christmas gave to her in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and in an instant the soldier holding the dwarf shrieks as Susan’s arrow pierces his shoulder.

He and his captive tumble overboard and his terrified companion dives for cover, swimming to the other shore for safety. The children fish the dwarf out of the river, dry him off, offer him apples, and ply him with questions about this remarkable near-death experience.

At this point in the story, the dwarf, an Old Narnian named Trumpkin, takes over the tale, recounting the adventures of a young Telmarine named Caspian who was destined to become the champion and leader of the Old Narnians. Trumpkin relates Caspian's adventures (and his own as well) up to Trumpkin's meeting with the young Pevensies. In so doing, he transports readers to Miraz's palace in the Telmarine capital and inserts yet another setting into this rich story. The intricacy of this introduction builds the story conflict and, in addition, affords a natural opportunity for parents to discuss the importance of setting with their students.

(1.b) Does the story happen in the country or the city?

Caspian's tale (as related by Trumpkin the dwarf) starts in a splendid castle in the heart of the Telmarine city, but through the early events of the story the action moves to the forest and the ruins of Old Narnia.

(2) When does the story happen? (2.e) At what time of life for the main character does the story happen?

Much to the distress of young literary analysts, there are two sets of main characters in this story. While Caspian is the protagonist of the political conflict in Narnia, the Pevensie children are protagonists of a story interwoven with Caspian's. Depending on the protagonist (or protagonists) a student chooses to follow, the plot chart for *Prince Caspian* could be altered dramatically. Both Caspian and the Pevensie children, however, stand as valid options for the protagonist position. While the conflicts and climaxes will shift slightly in accordance with the protagonist chosen, both options will yield equally valuable results.

Caspian is a boy of perhaps fourteen, old enough to be a threat to his power hungry uncle, Miraz. He is also old enough to be aware of and concerned about the conflict-ridden situation between the Telmarines and the Narnians.

Peter and Susan Pevensie are sixteen and fourteen, almost too

Questions About Structure: Characters

(3) Who is the story about? (Protagonist)

Caspian is a bright, earnest young man with a strong sense of justice. Horrified to learn of his violent, power-hungry lineage, he longs to right the wrongs of his ancestors and to emulate the Narnians his own people despise. He fervently wishes that he were a Narnian, feeling a stronger brotherhood with them than he ever felt for his own Telmarine people. He strives to be a good, just leader. Though a Telmarine, he acts like a Narnian.

Lucy, Edmund, Peter, and Susan remain much the same as they were in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. Still eager, bright-eyed children drinking in Aslan and the glories of his world, they devote themselves to helping Caspian and restoring Narnia.

Here are some descriptions of the story's central characters:

Prince Caspian

Caspian is the passive protagonist of this book. Though his name is emblazoned on the cover, he doesn't actually do very much to drive the plot along. His loyal subjects, Dr. Cornelius, Trufflehunter, and Trumpkin the dwarf perform much more active roles in the plot. Caspian acts mostly as the figurehead of the rebellion. He fills the spot that the "son of Adam" alone can fill as the leader of the Narnian nation, but he doesn't act of his own volition. A self-acknowledged youth, he allows himself to be led by others more mature and experienced than he. Therefore, we will give him the title, "Passive Protagonist." He can fill the protagonist's seat just as he does the prince's seat: by necessity and with humility, but without an abundance of activity.

Caspian is the only son of the late king of the Telmarines, Caspian the IX. Since the recent and mysterious death of his father, adolescent Caspian has lived in the castle of his Uncle Miraz, the usurper king who took over the kingdom after the death of Caspian's father. Though Caspian obediently follows the orders of his uncle and learns the lessons of his Telmarine tutors, he longs for the Old Narnia that his nurse used to tell him about in stories. He is a dreamer and a curious child, eager to believe in the myths of magic, fantasy, and Aslan. Caspian remains ignorant of the strength he possesses until much later in the story. He little suspects at the start of the story that the future of the Narnian nation depends on

him. However, no young prince could be more worthy of respect and responsibility. Caspian is full of gentleness, compassion, loyalty, and bravery and as such he is an admirable “king-in-training.”

Trumpkin

Trumpkin is a red dwarf devoted to the restoration of Old Narnia. Trufflehunter, the faithful badger, speaks for Trumpkin’s faithfulness and trustworthiness to Caspian, and indeed, Trumpkin sports a multitude of admirable qualities. He is loyal, brave, principled, steadfast, and respectful of authority. He suffers from just one critical flaw: skepticism. Just as Edmund refused to believe in Aslan initially, so Trumpkin refuses to acknowledge Aslan’s existence until he meets Him face to face.

Trumpkin takes Caspian in when the prince is lost and injured in the forest. He helps Trufflehunter gather loyal Narnians to form an army and he leads that force to Aslan’s How to do battle with the Telmarines. Lastly, he sets out to meet the legendary Kings and Queens of old at Caspian’s request despite his belief that the Kings and Queens are nothing more than legends or fairytales. He embarks on what he believes will prove a wild goose chase simply because his King asked him to do so!

Peter Pevensie

Peter remains the same familiar schoolboy, older brother, and High King that readers have met in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, but in this story he gets an opportunity to flex his chivalric muscles. First, his behavior towards Miraz in their great duel showcases his good manners. When he refuses to strike a fallen, weaponless Miraz, he observes the rules of a gentleman’s disagreement and honors Miraz with his patience. Additionally, his goal in setting up the duel with Miraz supports his excellent character. He intends to intercede for all the Narnian people, offering his own blood to save all the lives that would be lost in open war. He doesn’t even know if he can win...so as far as he knows, he is really laying down his own life for theirs! Second, Peter’s behavior towards Caspian from their very first meeting is guided by compassion and selflessness. He tries at every turn to prove to Caspian that he intends only to help him not to usurp his position or authority.

Peter seems the same knight and King he became in *The Lion*,

the Witch, and the Wardrobe, but he grows into his strengths in this episode. It is fitting that Peter should enjoy the spotlight for a moment, as this book recounts his very last adventures in Narnia. From this point on, Peter must take the lessons he has learned in Narnia and apply them to his life at home in England. The events of this book prove that he ready to make that transition.

Aslan

Aslan is the king of Narnia, a massive, talking lion who commands the fealty and adoration of all Narnians, both Old and New. Lewis professedly created Aslan as a “supposal” of Jesus. In other words, Aslan is what Lewis supposed Jesus would be like should He live in a place like Narnia. As a “supposal” of Jesus and not a direct allegory, Aslan’s actions cannot be directly linked to Jesus’s actions in the Bible. There are some obvious similarities, however. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Aslan’s sacrifice and resurrection was an obvious allegory. Here in *Prince Caspian*, Aslan acts more as a spiritual force than a physical one. He leads the characters to their places in the story, but avoids acting directly to influence the plot. He moves on the hearts of his followers to affect change instead of changing circumstances personally. In this way, Prince Caspian’s Aslan greatly resembles a “New Testament” God. Just as the Holy Spirit moves in the hearts of believers to incite change in the New Testament, so Aslan works spiritually, leaving the physical demonstrations of His presence to his followers.

Lucy Pevensie

Lucy Pevensie remains the same little girl we met in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. She hasn’t grown much since the last adventure, still the baby of the family and the youngest of all the kings and queens (however “Valiant” she may be). In fact, she plays exactly the same role in *Prince Caspian* as she did in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. She stands steadfast as the character of faith. She never doubts Aslan for a moment and always attempts to lead the others in following Him. Her act of faith on the way to Aslan’s How stands as her one moment in the spotlight for the book. It’s a powerful moment, though, thematically. She demonstrates true faith and also patterns an admirable response to religious persecution: regardless of what others think or say about God and the orders He gives you, you follow Him unquestioningly.

Susan Pevensie

Susan, like her little sister Lucy, plays a very minor role in this book. She is primarily a counter-example for all readers. She flaunts her “motherly” and “grown-up” qualities even more than usual, patronizing her siblings and resisting leadership of any kind up until Aslan rebukes her, saying “You have listened to your fears, child.” These words clarify Susan’s struggle in the story. She acts a self-righteous, patronizing older sister, because she’s afraid. Control and condescension feel stronger than fear. It’s rather ironic, though, that while Susan clings to adulthood as superior to childhood, Lucy uses the word “grown-up” as an insult on page 63. When Aslan acknowledges Susan’s fear and leads her back into His fold, He calls her “child.” This oxymoronic ending to Susan’s conflict emphasizes that in Narnia, childlike faith is more valuable than adulthood.

Edmund Pevensie

Edmund experienced an earth-shaking character transformation in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. In *Prince Caspian* readers get to see the repercussions of that change work themselves out in Edmund’s character. Reformed from the very bottom by his experience in the first book, Edmund has developed a healthy faith in Lucy, Peter, and Aslan. He supports Lucy when no one else believes her about Aslan. He is the second Pevensie (after Lucy) to see Aslan on the trail to Aslan’s How. In addition, he backs Peter in his notion of the duel. He trusts his siblings and his God in a way that he never did before.

Miraz

Caspian’s evil, usurping uncle should win awards for slimy villainy. Having murdered Caspian’s father in order to usurp his throne, Miraz then methodically uprooted each and every one of Caspian’s faithful supporters in court and sent them off on a wild goose chase which he hoped would end in their destruction. In addition, Miraz attempted to murder Caspian himself when his own son was born. Suffice to say, Miraz is the antagonist of this story. He opposes everything Caspian wants: life, liberty and the freedom of Narnia.

(3.j) What does the protagonist say about himself to other people?

Caspian's humility and compassion for the Narnian people become evident in his response to Doctor Cornelius at the very beginning of the story:

“Never in all these years have we forgotten our own people and all the other happy creatures of Narnia, and the long lost days of freedom.”

“I’m sorry Doctor,” said Caspian. “It wasn’t my fault you know”– “How can I help?” (p.53)

Fascinated by the Narnians from the start of his young education, Caspian feels intensely the wrongs that they suffered at the hands of his Telmarine kinsmen. He longs to mend their hurts with his own apology and actions. Later in the story, he proves himself a noble, courageous prince despite his youth. When faced with a band of vengeful rebels, he hides his terror and tries to protect the only other living thing in danger – his horse, Destrier.

“Gentlemen,” said Caspian in a feeble voice, “Whatever you do to me, I hope you will be kind to my poor horse.” (p.67)

As evidenced by these instances, Caspian strives to act in a princely way.

(3.q) Is the protagonist a sympathetic character? Do you identify with him and hope he will succeed? Do you pity him? Do you scorn or despise his weakness in some way? Why?

Caspian is a sympathetic character. Though his royal lineage and political struggles are not universal, his efforts to grow up resonate with readers. He earnestly applies himself to his faults with humble determination. This quality earns him respect and admiration.

Lucy, Edmund, Peter, and Susan are all sympathetic characters as well. Laboring against their own sins, they try their best to please Aslan. In the process, they learn valuable lessons about their creature-hood. Their sin nature resonates with honest readers.

(3.m) What does the protagonist think is the most important thing in life?

Caspian is a champion of the oppressed Narnians. He wants to overthrow his tyrannical Uncle Miraz and reestablish free Narnian

government. In overthrowing his uncle, he not only achieves Narnia's freedom, but he also saves his own life. After all, due to the recent birth of his heir, Miraz sees Caspian as a threat to his young son's crown and intends to kill him at the first opportunity.

The Pevensies want to help Caspian unseat his usurper uncle. When Caspian wined Susan's horn, calling for help during a desperate battle with Miraz, the Pevensies found themselves whisked off the platform at the train station in England and thrown back into Narnia. They were the answer to Caspian's call, the messengers of aid from Aslan himself.

(3.1) Is the character a member of any particular social group? If so, what do you know about this group? What motivates this group? What do its members feel to be important?

Caspian becomes a member of the Narnian rebels. They believe that freedom, justice, and virtue are the highest goals in life. They long for liberty to live and love Aslan as they please. Though they regard Caspian as an interloper at first, they eventually accept him into their ranks.

(4) Who else is the story about? (4.a) Is there any character or group of characters that oppose the protagonist in the story? In other words, is there an antagonist?

King Miraz opposes Caspian. Though he initially allows Caspian to live and learn of kingship, with the birth of his son and heir, Caspian poses a threat. Now he combs the land for Caspian with murderous intent.

(4.b) In what way is he antagonistic? What goal of the protagonist is he opposed to?

Miraz plans to kill Caspian and so threatens the protagonist's main goal: survival! He also opposes Caspian's desire to reestablish a free Narnian nation.

(4.g) Is he reprehensible, so that none would wish to be like him?

Miraz is utterly reprehensible. Not only does he try to kill Caspian, an innocent, naïve, child, but he's also rumored to have slaughtered Caspian's father and to have sent the seven loyal lords who protected Caspian on a red-herring journey to their deaths. He is a power-hungry, blood-thirsty, tyrannical usurper.

Questions About Structure: Conflict

(5) What does the main character want?

Caspian wants: to live, to find the old Narnians, to become a good man and a leader, and to restore the fallen Narnian nation to its former glory.

The Pevensies want to help Caspian restore order to Narnia.

(5.b) Does he attempt to overcome something, a physical impediment, or an emotional handicap?

In order to accomplish all of these interwoven goals, Caspian must first win a battle of epic proportions to topple the Telmarine regime. Huge physical impediments stand in the way, the most tangible of which is King Miraz's army, a force vastly larger than Caspian's. For this reason, Caspian sounds the magical horn bestowed on Susan in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, trusting in the truth of the legend that it will bring help from afar. This help is realized in the persons of the Pevensie children.

(5.e) Is the conflict an external one, having to do with circumstances in the protagonist's physical world, or is it an internal conflict, taking place in his mind and emotions?

It is primarily an external conflict. Caspian battles real armies and his flesh and blood uncle. He also tries his best to become a good king, however, and doubts his success. His struggle between youth and responsibility weighs heavily upon him, creating an internal conflict as well.

(6) Why can't the protagonist have what he wants?

Two main obstacles oppose Caspian:

Miraz and his army stand between Caspian and his throne. This is both a Man vs. Man and a Man vs. Society conflict.

Caspian is a boy, naïve about the politics that threaten his life. This is a Man vs. Himself conflict as Caspian struggles to mature.

(7) What other problems are there in the story?

Caspian struggles not only against the Telmarine army, but also with dissent in his own army's ranks. The Narnian dwarf, Nikabrik, and his Black Dwarf kinsmen fidget and fret restlessly. Doubtful of Aslan's power or sovereignty and eager for immediate

Questions About Structure: Plot

(8) What happens in the story?

When Miraz fathers a son of his own, Caspian's tutor, Dr. Cornelius, warns Caspian to flee. The young prince obeys and, soon after, stumbles into the company of Old Narnians who discover his identity and accept him as their champion and leader. With Caspian at their head, the Narnians gather an army. They stake their claim on Aslan's How (a tunnel fortress encircling a broken Stone Table) and ready themselves for battle. The war progresses poorly from the start, however, as the Narnians stand vastly outnumbered. Caspian decides to sound Susan's legendary horn and await the promised aid. As Caspian winds the horn in desperation, the Narnians retreat into Aslan's How for a final siege. They wait with flagging faith for the arrival of the Kings and Queens of old.

Meanwhile, the Pevensie children arrive in answer to the horn. They find themselves in the ruins of Cair Paravel where they meet Trumpkin the dwarf and realize their quest. They race for Aslan's How.

(8.c) How do the interactions of the characters heighten the tension of the conflict that exists?

At this point in the story, all the characters, both in Aslan's How with Caspian and on the march with Trumpkin the dwarf, struggle with flagging faith in Aslan. The older children and Trumpkin disregard Lucy's revelation and waste valuable time as a result. Caspian and his loyal followers make the mistake of listening to Nikabrik and his reprobates and almost unleash the power of the White Witch again. All the characters, human and animal alike, must learn to trust Aslan again.

(9) How is the main problem solved?

The Pevensies, led by an ever-faithful Lucy, eventually find themselves just outside of Aslan's How. Though they have arrived at their destination at last, their quest is just beginning.

Caspian's immediate problems, those of his despairing troops and weakened army, are solved. Peter, Edmund, and Trumpkin materialize just in time to rescue Caspian from the onslaught of the White Witch's minions. Good triumphs over Evil.

Peter then steps in and attempts to alleviate the Narnian predicament. Caspian enjoys a brief respite from the crushing responsibility of leadership as Peter resumes his role as High King of Narnia. Though the children have vanquished the insidious black magic, they must now turn their attention to a formidable flesh and blood foe in the person of King Miraz.

Peter challenges Miraz to a duel to the death, intending to minimize bloodshed for both the Telmarine and the Narnian forces. Though both leaders fight remarkably well, one of Miraz's treacherous advisors murders Miraz and betrays the peace treaty! The Telmarine forces fall on the Narnians in fury and full-fledged bloodshed ensues, but Aslan is on the move.

The personified trees of Old Narnia, awakened by Aslan and eager to help Caspian, rejuvenate the Narnian army forces. The Telmarines flee in terror to Beruna Bridge...only to find it missing. While the Telmarines fought the Narnians on the battlefield, Aslan and his merry followers tore down the bridge, cutting off any chance of escape for the retreating Telmarine forces. Trapped against the Ford of Beruna, the Telmarines surrender to Peter, Caspian, and the Narnian army.

The battle won, Aslan charges across the countryside with a merry entourage, setting all the Narnian prisoners free. He returns all things to their proper places and restores order to His land.

(10) How does the story end? (10.a) After the climax of the story, did you wonder how it would end? How does it end? How are all the loose ends tied up? Were all of your questions answered?

The story concludes admirably. Aslan fashions a magical door to another world and gives all the Telmarines the opportunity to walk through into a new life. He settles Caspian's lingering doubts about his heritage as well.

"You are of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve," said Aslan. "That is both honor enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on the earth. Be content."(p.233)

With these words, Aslan crowns Caspian king of Narnia.

Finally, the Pevensies rise to precede the Telmarines through

Questions About Structure: Theme

(11) What does the protagonist learn? (11.a) Is the protagonist changed in his mind or heart by the events of the story?

The events of the story ennoble and mature Caspian. He learns the true nature of manhood and royalty: humility. We see this realization displayed in his conversation with Aslan.

“Welcome Prince, do you feel yourself sufficient to take up kingship of Narnia?”

“I-I don’t think I do, sir,” said Caspian. “I’m only a kid.”

“Good,” said Aslan. “If you had felt yourself sufficient, it would have been proof that you were not.” (p.220)

Aslan, satisfied with Caspian, perceives that, though an untried boy, Caspian bears all the marks of a true king: humility, justice, and determination. He crowns him sole monarch of Narnia despite his heritage. In this way, Caspian truly comes of age.

(13) What is the main idea of the story?

Prince Caspian, like many of the Narnian tales, focuses on maturity and coming of age. Caspian struggles throughout the tale to become an honorable man. Consequently, his search illustrates Lewis’s views on the question, “What is a good man?” Lewis paints a good man as honorable, loyal, faithful, humble, confident, and steadfast. We see examples of these traits in Aslan himself (the model of goodness in the tales), in the persons of Peter and Edmund, and in the counter-example of the treacherous King Miraz. These models shape Caspian as he strives to mature.

Faith is also a driving theme in the book. Both the Narnians and the Pevensie children grapple with doubt in Aslan and his sovereignty. One of the major climaxes of the book occurs when the Narnians both young and old finally triumph in their battle to *believe*.

Lastly, the theme of Good and Evil winds throughout the plot. As illustrated in the conflicts between Caspian and Miraz, Nikabrik and the Old Narnians, and Aslan and the White Witch, this theme is universal and stands as an excellent topic for discussion.

Questions About Style: Literary Devices

(16) Does the author use descriptions and comparisons to create pictures in the reader's mind? (16.e) [Personification: Does the author represent inanimate objects as being lifelike or human? (16.f) Do things or creatures speak with human voices, expressing rational thoughts and ideas?]

Lewis utilizes personification repeatedly in his chronicles all for the purpose of cultivating the setting of his fantastic tale. By animating the rocks, streams, trees that dot his mythical landscape and humanizing the many animals that live within Narnia's borders, Lewis lends an air of whimsy to his story that enchants readers from the first. On page 62, he introduces the first of the talking animals who make up the bulk of the Narnian nation. As readers see Trufflehunter, the talking badger, through Caspian's eyes, they experience shock, wonder, and disbelief with Caspian as he attempts to reconcile his previous knowledge of animals with his current conversation with one.

A blaze sprang up and Caspian almost screamed with the shock as the sudden light revealed the face that was looking into his own. It was not a man's face but a badger's, though larger and friendlier and more intelligent than the face of any badger he had seen before. And it had certainly been talking. (p.62)

Caspian's reaction to the badger provides readers a single microcosm of experience in which to accustom themselves to the idea of talking animals as active, intelligent characters in the story. Trufflehunter is one of many talking creatures who rally to Caspian's banner to fight for a free Narnia.

Not only does Lewis bestow human intelligence on the majority of his world's animal population, he also animates the rocks, trees, and streams. On page 150, Lewis introduces the spirits of the Narnian rivers and streams, personifying them as pale nymph women and watery river gods.

Down below in the Great River, now at its coldest hour, the heads and shoulders of the nymphs, and the great weedy-bearded head of the river-god, rose from the water. (p. 150)

And on page 151, he presents the trees as a leafy, mossy, and majestic people.

All the trees of the world appeared to be rushing towards Aslan. But as they drew nearer they looked less like trees, and when the whole crowd, bowing and curtsying and waving thin long arms to Aslan, were all around Lucy, she saw that it was a crowd of human shapes. Pale birch-girls were tossing their heads, willow-women pushed back their hair from their dark faces to gaze on Aslan, the queenly beeches stood still and adored him, shaggy oak-men, lean and melancholy elms, shock-headed hollies (dark themselves, but their wives all bright with berries) and gay rowans, all bowed and rose again, shouting "Aslan, Aslan!" in their various husky or creaking or wave-like voices. (151-152)

In personifying all these familiar objects and animals, Lewis lends an element of fantasy and wonder to his world which is quite irresistible to the reader. These creatures enrich Lewis's setting.

(17) Does the author use the characters and events in his story to communicate a theme that goes beyond them in some way? (17.g) [Allusion: Does the author's reference to other works, events, or ideas serve to underscore and enrich the reader's understanding of an event or character in the story?]

Multiple times in the course of this second installment in his *Chronicles of Narnia* Lewis refers back to his previous work, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to enrich his reader's understanding of the character and background of his protagonists, the Pevensie children. In the very first page of the story, Lewis introduces us anew to our favorite four children: Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy and recaps their last adventure recounted in the first Narnian tale. This allusion is purely informational...a sort of "in-case-you-haven't-read-the-first-book-already" introduction. Again on page 50, he alludes to *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, this time not only giving the reader context for the character of the four Pevensies but also informing his character, Caspian, about the Narnian history packed into that previous story.

(17.h) Does the author provide any clues early in the story of

things to come in the plot? (17.i) Are there any hints of coming doom, disaster, excitement, blessing, or action?

Early on in Trumpkin's narrative about Prince Caspian himself, Lewis inserts an element of foreshadowing. When Dr. Cornelius and Caspian climb the winding steps of the Great Tower for an astronomy lesson on page 46, the stellar phenomenon they witness is really a hint to both the readers and the young prince himself of the coming Narnian revolution.

“Their meeting is fortunate and means some great good for the sad realm of Narnia. Tarva the Lord of Victory salutes Alambil the Lady of Peace. They are just coming to their nearest... There,” he said. “You have seen what no man now alive has seen, nor ever will see again.”(46)

Just as the stars foretell, the Narnians soon rise in rebellion against the tyranny of the Telmarines. With Caspian's help, the Narnians claim the victory which Lord Tarva heralds and experience the peace which Lady Alambil promises. This astronomical portent hints at the resolution of all the story conflicts.

(17.i) Symbolism: Does the author use any objects, persons, pictures, or things to represent an idea in the story? For example, darkness may be used to represent wickedness. Light may be used to represent truth and goodness. In the allegorical play, Everyman, the main character represents or symbolizes sinful man. The symbol of a dove represents the person of the Holy Spirit.

At the beginning of the story, Aslan's name works as a watchword in the underground, Old Narnian community. His name symbolizes the former Golden Age of Narnia with its peace, prosperity, order and mastery of evil. Old Narnians use the name of Aslan to test one another's loyalty and soft-heartedness towards Narnia. A creature's response to the mention of Aslan can reveal all of his political leanings and loyalties. This truth first becomes evident when Trumpkin and Trufflehunter question Caspian, intending to determine whether or not Caspian is trustworthy.

“Do you believe all those stories?” asked Trumpkin.

“I tell you, we don't change, we beasts,” said

Trufflehunter. "We don't forget. I believe in the High King Peter and the rest that reigned at Cair Paravel, as firmly as I believe in Aslan himself."

"As firmly as that, I daresay," said Trumpkin. "But who believes in Aslan nowadays?"

"I do," said Caspian...

"That's right," said Trufflehunter. "you're right, King Caspian. And as long as you will be true to Old Narnia you shall be my King, whatever they say. Long life to your Majesty." (66)

Having coaxed from Caspian this statement of faith, Trufflehunter wholeheartedly pledges his allegiance to the prince. In acknowledging the existence and lordship of Aslan, Caspian betrayed his respect and loyalty to Narnia and her principles, confirming in the badger's mind and heart that Caspian was a worthy heir to the Narnian throne.

Just as Aslan's name flags a loyal Narnian, however, it also draws attention to a traitorous one. When questioned about his faith Aslan, the Black Dwarf, Nikabrik, betrays himself as a rebel first and foremost and, perhaps, a secret follower of the White Witch.

"Do you believe in Aslan?" said Caspian to Nikabrik.

"I'll believe in anyone and anything," said Nikabrik, "that'll batter these cursed Telmarine barbarians to pieces or drive them out of Narnia. Anyone or anything. Aslan or the White Witch, do you understand?"

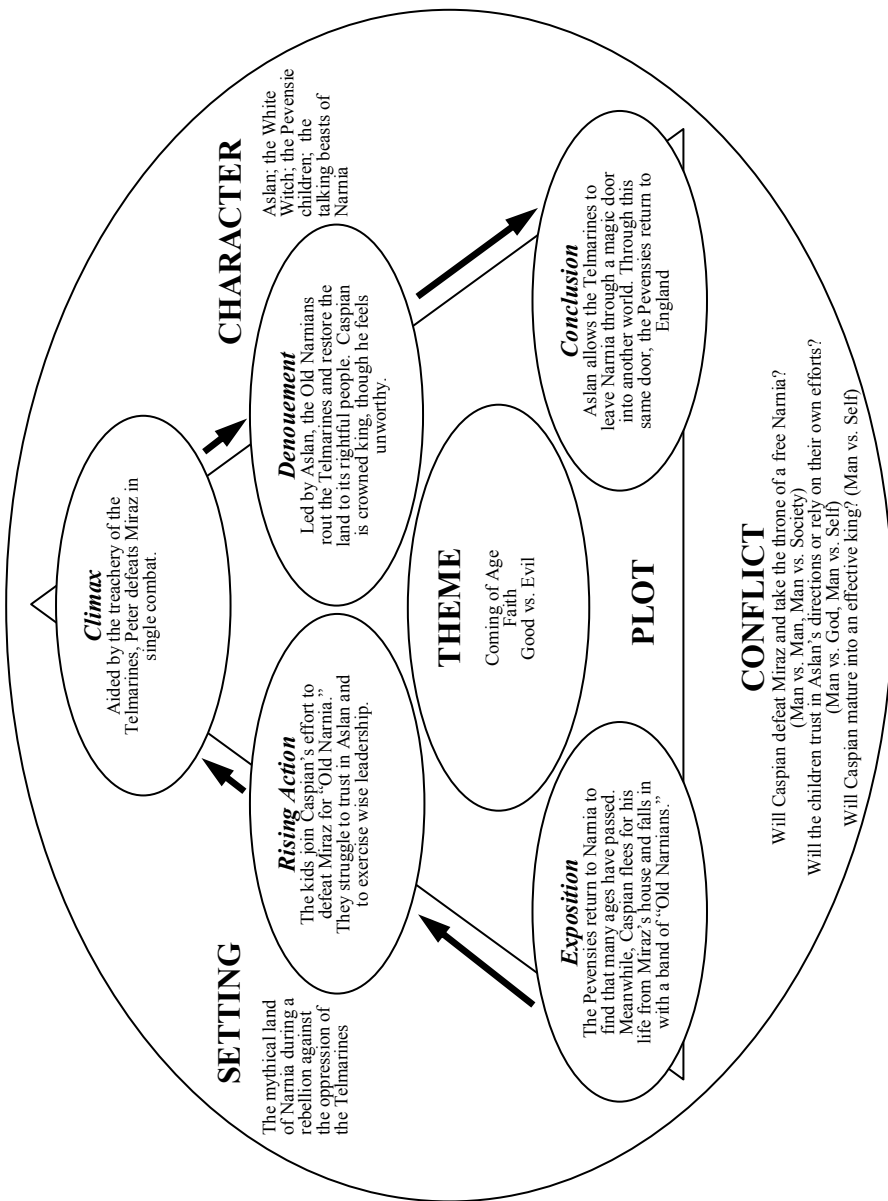
"Silence, silence," said Trufflehunter. "You do not know what you are saying. She was a worse enemy than Miraz and all his race."

"Not to Dwarfs, she wasn't," said Nikabrik. (73)

So the mention of Aslan's name flags both the loyal and the treacherous Narnians for all to see. Aslan's name is a symbol of all that Narnia stands for: peace, prosperity, order, and Good triumphing over Evil. These qualities draw the gentle, faithful Narnians and repel the rebellious traitors.

Prince Caspian by C.S. Lewis

Story Chart



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Story Chart

