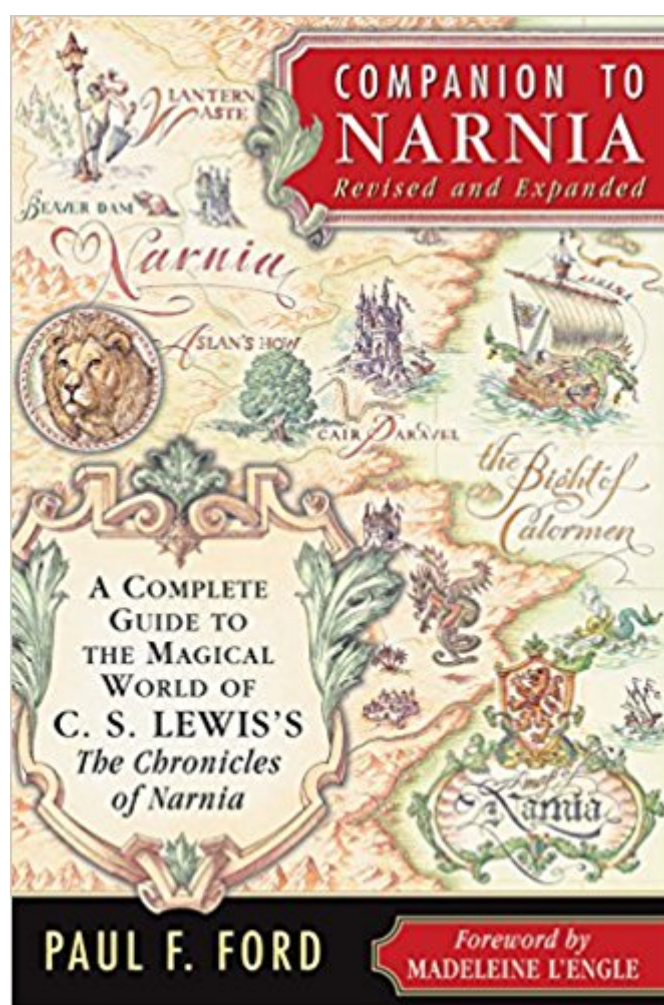


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# Companion To Narnia, Revised Edition: A Complete Guide To The Magical World Of C.S. Lewis's The Chronicles Of Narnia



## Synopsis

Step into the Wardrobe This peerless companion has served as an adventurer's passport to the land of Narnia for twenty-five years and was used by the cast and crew of the major motion picture *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. From Aslan, the Great Lion, to Zardeenah, the mysterious lady of the night, this comprehensive, accessible book contains hundreds of alphabetically arranged and indexed entries covering all the characters, events, places, and themes that Lewis brilliantly wove into his timeless and magical world. For readers of all ages, this is the perfect guide for the enchanted world of C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Clear prose, accurate scholarship, plentiful cross-references and charming illustrations.” (Los Angeles Times) “An exceptional reference work.” (America Magazine)

This peerless guide has served as an adventurer's passport to the land of Narnia for twenty-five years. From Aslan, the Great Lion, to Zardeenah, the mysterious lady of the night, this comprehensive and accessible companion contains hundreds of alphabetically arranged entries covering all the characters, events, places, and themes that Lewis magically wove into his timeless and magical world. We are giving this comprehensive handbook a facelift just in time to be the perfect companion to the Narnia movie coming out in Christmas 2005. We are updating all the

references, adding a new foreword in addition to Madeleine L'Engle's original invitation to the book, simplifying the reference system, lowering the price, and creating a new package that will help tie it to the movie. These improvements should help this standby sell for the next twenty-five years.

As other reviewers have stated, this is an excellent guide for adults who have already read the Narnia books. It would be a great resource for people such as Sunday School teachers or other Christian educators who can simplify the information to make it more accessible for children. Because of the price-point to which this book is targeted, it is printed on relatively low-quality paper and in a relatively small type font, so for those reasons I downgraded my rating from a 5-star to a 4-star. Otherwise, I recommend it for all those who desire a better understanding of the Narnia series.

Mr Ford does a fantastic job covering the Chronicles. This exhaustive resource is detailed, on point, and sprinkled with the author's opinion only slightly and when appropriate. His in-depth knowledge of Lewis and other sources is one of the most remarkable features that the reader can observe from this book. Mr Ford has done his research! He also approaches the Chronicles with respect and from a Christian angle, which does justice to Lewis' writings. This is a superb "companion" to any Narnia fan, and I couldn't recommend it enough.

For anyone desiring a deeper understanding of the symbols and theology of the C S Lewis' Narnia series, this book is For you. It is the bible of Narnia theology, with interesting facts of Lewis history. It is fabulously detailed and indexed- the perfect reference book for wanting to know the meaning of a certain phrase or nuance.

If you liked the Narnian series as a child- revisit it as an adult with this companion and understand the literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical levels. There is so much more to appreciate in CS Lewis' depth and wit.

This is a great reference book if you want to look up quick facts about anything in the Narnia novels. It can be enjoyed by the avid Narnia fan or for the casual observer who wants to know a little more after seeing the films.

Paul F. Ford's "Companion to Narnia: Revised and Expanded" (as it proclaims on the cover) is the

latest, longest, incarnation of a handbook to the C.S. Lewis stories, first published in 1980, and revised over the years to various degrees; some editions being rather dramatically larger than their predecessors. Good to begin with, it has become even better, if a little unwieldy (growing from 315 pages to 558). In all of them, there is a great deal of information assembled from the seven "Chronicles," Lewis' correspondence, and thematically and factually relevant passages from his other writings, both Christian and academic, with inconsistencies, thematic developments, and a host of other issues considered; the later the edition, the fuller the references, and the more considered the evaluation -- with the exception of one offshoot, under a new title, mentioned below. If you have somehow missed the recent publicity (for the new motion picture version of one of them), the "Chronicles of Narnia" are a set of seven short fantasy novels, written for children in the late 1940s and early 1950s by C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), then an Oxford Don better known to the public for his writings (and BBC talks) on Christianity, later Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge. (Even some otherwise theologically unsympathetic observers, like A.L. Rowse, felt that Lewis was passed over for an Oxford Chair for being TOO Christian -- as others, like Lewis Namier some years earlier, had been neglected for not being Christian at all -- to the Other University's benefit.) The stories are often described as allegories, a characterization with which Lewis was unhappy. Since his first extended work on Christian topics was "The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism" (1933), and his first great academic work was "The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition" (1936), and Lewis started writing the "Chronicles" while working on allegorical texts for the massive "English Literature in the Sixteenth Century" (1954; including a long chapter on Spenser's "The Faerie Queene"), he has to be granted more than ordinary authority on the subject, without even raising the vexed critical issue of authorial intent. Lewis seems to have poured into the books everything that he enjoyed, especially as a rather lonely child after his mother's death (an event which echoes in several of the volumes): Classical and Norse mythology, talking animals, magic, medieval romance and renaissance epic, and Victorian and Edwardian fiction (Sherlock Holmes and E. Nesbit's Bastable children get mentions; but the influences of H. Rider Haggard and William Morris are clear, too). And, by his own account, originally without his intention, basic Christian doctrines, the evidence of his conversion as an adult to the religion he had rejected in childhood, came rushing in to take over the plot. And that is where allegorical elements do come in; not consistently, as in Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" or its Tudor and medieval predecessors, but clearly. Mr. Tumnus is a Faun, not a cipher for, say, "Man's Animal Nature" -- but Aslan is not just a lion; although it is important on more than one level that Aslan is a Real Lion. Lewis's long-time friend Tolkien immediately

complained of the first story, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," that it was (to summarize) a chaotic hodge-podge; and, as a devout Catholic, Tolkien wasn't at all happy that (a rather vague and generic) Christianity had been injected into the mess, instead of kept implicit. But there it was, right alongside little adult jokes, like that book on "Nymphs and Their Ways" in the library of a Faun! And, of course, Tolkien often said he didn't like (extended) allegories. Few other readers have been so picky (or, I think, so precise and acute); although some despise the books for being Christian, period, and, naturally, not every reader has enjoyed them. As a youngster, I recognized, and by-passed, the Christianity (not MY religion), but found it unobjectionable. Indeed, it seems it is so general and so unobjectionable as to draw the ire of some self-described Christians, eager to assign the author and all his works to Hell for deviating too far from their exclusive, highly specific, versions of The Truth. I think it is obvious that the "Chronicles" can be read, and enjoyed, as fantasy adventure novels; with an explicit moral tone, and theological underpinnings about which the author was honest, and not particularly obtrusive. And which I think add a logical rigor to the unsystematic flow of invention. Lewis' method of writing (or complete non-method, in Tolkien's eyes) produced loose ends, and the more one looks at the books, the more puzzles emerge, some intended, some accidental, all inviting solutions. In Ford's "Companion" we now have 500+ pages of identifications, explications, and unresolved problems. Great fun for those who love the books already, and a valuable resource for anyone who needs to get up to speed, and answer questions NOW. And, unlike some critics, pro and con, Ford is well-informed on the doctrinal side. The significant changes in the "Companion," and the occasions for them, are described in the "Preface to the Fifth Edition," which is worth reading with care. The bulk of each of the editions is a sort of "Dictionary of Narnia," short (and a few long) articles on the characters, species, places, topics, etc., in alphabetical order, with extensive cross-references. Some of these have acquired a set of notes on critical disputes, giving alternate points of view, bibliography for books and articles, and quotations from letters to Ford. The point of view is pervasively, but unobtrusively, Christian; Ford recognizes what Lewis was talking about, and tries to make the issues clear to the reader. But he (mostly) avoids using explanations as an occasion to preach. The various editions of the "Companion" have also served as an indicator of the multiplication of editions of "The Chronicles of Narnia" (the Third was in fact issued as a companion to new American edition; and the Fourth was the reluctant herald of another -- see below). The current version replaces page references to specific British and American hardcover editions with chapter and paragraph numbers, which are a little harder to use, but consistent (or enough to be useful) between the diversity of versions generated over the decade since the Fourth Edition. The Fifth Edition was published alongside a "lite" version, a "Pocket

Companion to Narnia," aimed directly at children likely to be reading the books for the first time. The version was "field tested" with real children, and a brief examination suggests that it is attractive, and probably very helpful. But any adult (whether as reader, parent, or teacher), and I suspect many bright children, at least by Middle School age, will want the encyclopedic complete version. (Even if many, of all ages, will skip the critical essays collected at the end). Ford pays what some may consider excessive attention to textual problems; but the differences he points out are mostly those which (as I know from experience) are likely to produce disputes between readers of different generations, or just with different printings in hand. Lewis, as noted above, wrote the books very quickly, with no real revision (with the possible exception of "The Magician's Nephew," in which he discarded the first version and started over from scratch). However, Lewis did make a number of changes for the first American editions, which Ford argues were well-considered improvements; adding literary allusions here, treating nightmare fears more seriously there. These texts (with some additions to the fairly small number of actual typographical errors) were used in the American Collier-Macmillan paperbacks of the 1970s; otherwise much less attractive than the contemporary Puffin (Penguin Books) British paperbacks (which unhappily introduced some new typographical errors to the British texts). In 1986, the American editions were revised for new hardcover and trade paperback editions, much better-looking, but with some American copy-editing changes introduced to make Lewis consistent, but also more American. (What are known to textual scholarship as the "accidents" of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.) In 1994, American editions went over to the British texts; eliminating both sets of changes, the good with the bad (or, to be fair, the apparently authorial with the unauthorized). Ford continues to protest the reversion; and offers catalogues and discussions of the former set of changes. (He also discusses the problem of reading order; that of publication, which he favors, and the currently "official" numbered order, by internal chronology. Lewis can be quoted on both sides.) Ford notes, in passing, that Lewis may have been planning a new set of revisions to be used in the Puffin paperback editions, most of which appeared after his death (in at least one place mentioned with the amusing misprint of "Duffin," which suggests the Duffers of "Voyage of the Dawn Treader"...). Lewis so rarely went back over anything he had completed (the exact opposite of the meticulous Tolkien) that this suggests that the books, and their readers, had a special place in his heart.

As a kid, the Chronicles of Narnia were my favorite book series. The magical land, dynamic characters, thrilling adventures, and engaging plot kept me reading them throughout my life. This Companion to Narnia offers a deeper look into the world. It is a quick reference list of characters,

events and places, makes it easy to look things up for your interest, or when playing trivia games. Well written, very comprehensive. I strongly recommend this book for anyone who liked the Chronicles of Narnia

Dr. Paul F. Ford's "Companion to Narnia, Revised Edition" is a wonderful resource for those who wish to have a comprehensive understanding of C.S. Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia". Everything that you come across throughout Narnia is given careful consideration, with reference to the specific page numbers in the books. I would highly recommend, to anyone who has interest in Narnia, to purchase this book. On the down-side, the actual book that I received, new from , was of decidedly poor quality. It appears to have about a half-dozen pages, in the second half of the book, that were misprinted. The lower half of these pages were originally blank. In order to rectify this problem, someone decided to physically paste the missing information onto each affected page. I suppose I would rather have the information, than not, but I wasn't exactly pleased with the condition of the book. Overall, purchasing the book would be a good investment for fans of Narnia. However, be forewarned about the quality of the book, when purchased from . It may or may not be their fault, but I normally expect a higher-quality of material than what I received from this purchase.

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