



# C.S. LEWIS AND THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

If we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their Finest Hour.'

—Winston Churchill, House of Commons, June 18, 1940

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
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The novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* opens with these three sentences:

Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy. This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from London during the war because of the air-raids. They were sent to the house of an old Professor who lived in the heart of the country...

## IMAGINE...

living in a big city and being told one day that you are being sent away. You don't know to where, or for how long, and neither do your parents. You're being sent away because your city is going to be bombed.

You'll be heading to a place in the country where you've never been before, staying with people you've never met. You don't even know whether they like children! You have a small lunch sack, a gas mask, and a postcard ready to send home to tell your parents where you are. If you're lucky, you'll get to stay with your brothers and sisters.

To all your worried feelings, add the threat of war and the fear of attack, and you might be a bit closer to feeling what Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy probably felt standing on a train platform in London, England, waiting, with thousands of other British children, to travel into the unknown.



Movie artist's concept of the bombing of London.

In 1939, with war about to break out between England and Germany, the British government expected major attacks by air on all of Britain's cities. Children were evacuated from the city to the safety of the countryside, where bombing would probably not occur. (Evacuation means "moving people away from danger.") Evacuations began September 3rd, 1939—the day England declared war on Germany. A total of 827,000 school children were evacuated, along with 103,000 teachers and helpers. 524,000 more children under school age went with their mothers.

In the countryside, children were usually met by *billeting officers* (*billet* means "to provide housing for") who took them to foster homes, as did volunteers from the Red Cross and other organizations. These adults assisted children with the care and attention they needed. Children went to foster homes on farms, in cottages, and in mansions (where their care might be left to the servants).

C.S. Lewis himself must have been very moved by the evacuations of children, because he and his brother also took several London children seeking safety from the bombing into their country home.

The fantastic experiences that Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy have once they arrive at the old Professor's house in the country, and the powerful lessons they learn about themselves, are the two most important ingredients of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe's* magic—

...MAGIC BASED ON REAL LIFE.



These government posters urged citizens to take action to protect children.



## MAKE YOUR OWN STORYBOARD

Now you know how C.S. Lewis came to imagine the story of the four Pevensie children's evacuation from London, which begins their journey to Narnia. How do you imagine C.S. Lewis and his brother, Warner, received the children who actually came to live with them in the country during the evacuation of London? How would you film the scene if you were making a movie about C.S. Lewis? Put your knowledge and imagination to the test by creating a **storyboard**.

Storyboards help filmmakers think about how their movies will look, scene by scene. Each panel of a storyboard can be thought of as a filmed moment or shot.

Storyboards are usually drawn in pen or pencil. But if you don't draw or don't like to, you can use cut-out photos from magazines. Your drawings don't have to be fancy. You can use basic shapes, stick figures, and simple backgrounds. You may want to draw out your scenes on index cards before drawing them onto your storyboards, so you can play around with the order of the scenes if you need to.

### Here is some language used with storyboards:

- **CLOSE-UP SHOT:** A shot in which there is very little room between the person and the camera. The person's face will usually look very big in a close-up shot.
- **LONG SHOT:** A shot in which there is much distance between a person and the camera, so that the person in a long shot will look very small.
- **LOW CAMERA SHOT:** A camera angle that looks up at the person, making him or her look important and powerful.
- **POV SHOT:** A shot seen from the point of view of a character in a scene.
- **PAN:** A steady sweeping movement from one point in a scene to another. Good for showing where a scene is taking place and often used at the beginning of a scene.

Storyboards can answer questions like these:

What characters are in a frame of the movie, and how do they move?

How does a scene begin? How does it end?

What are the characters saying to each other? Are they saying anything?

Where does a scene take place?

### Storyboard a scene of children coming to stay with C.S. Lewis in his country home during the war.

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