

***Through the Wardrobe Table of Contents***  
With Essay Summaries

**Introduction ~ Herbie Brennan\***

Bestselling author of *Faerie Wars* Herbie Brennan introduces the anthology by calling reading the Chronicles of Narnia a metaphor for reading (and writing) generally: one steps through into a different world and meets creatures with lives independent of one's own. He also discusses the Chronicles as inspiration to a generation of children's and YA writers.

**“Just Another Crazy Narnia Fan” ~ Deb Caletti**

Author Deb Caletti relates her life-long love of Narnia, and why the books still find an audience today a half-century after they were written.

**“Forgotten Castles and Magical Creatures in Hiding” ~ Brent Hartinger\*\***

Author Brent Hartinger uses *Prince Caspian* and its many “hidden” things, from castles to magical creatures, to explain how sometimes the most important, most magical things in life are hidden in plain sight—all you have to do is change the way you *see*.

**“Kind Edmund the Cute” ~ Diana Peterfreund\*\*\***

Author Diana Peterfreund relates her childhood crush on Edmund Pevensie (yes, the Pevensie sibling that betrays Aslan to the White Witch), discusses how C.S. Lewis demonstrated Edmund's character growth across the series, and compares Edmund with not only the other Narnian men, but her other crushes, both literary and real-world . . . including the man she married!

**“Reading the Right Books” ~ Ned Vizzini\*\***

Author Ned Vizzini uses Hollywood loglines (“a one-sentence description of a movie that draws you in”) to explain what *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is *really* about, along the way explaining what C.S. Lewis meant when he referred to the “right” books: fantasy, folklore, and children's tales . . . just like the Chronicles of Narnia.

**“Missing the Point” ~ Sarah Beth Durst\*\*\***

Author Sarah Beth Durst explains how she missed the Christian symbolism in the Chronicles of Narnia, and how it didn't affect her enjoyment of the books a bit. In the process she outlines the series' basic religious underpinnings, and suggests that what's made the books classics are the other things—all the little touches, like Talking Beasts and the lamppost, that are purely C.S. Lewis' invention.

**“The War of Light and Darkness” ~ Herbie Brennan**

Author Herbie Brennan compares the battle between good and evil in the Chronicles to World War II, outlining lesser-known details of Hitler's rise to power and discussing parallels to the White Witch's reign in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

**“Eating in Narnia” ~ Diane Duane**

Young Wizards series author Diane Duane describes the feasting that occurs throughout the Chronicles of Narnia, and shows how C.S. Lewis’ recent experiences with rationing during World War II likely affected his choice of foods and the way he wrote the characters’ responses to it.

**“Serious Action Figures” ~ Kelly McClymer\*\*\***

Author Kelly McClymer analyzes a woman’s place in Narnia. She details her response, as a girl, to how different Lucy, Susan, Aravis, and the others were from the rest of the female heroines she read about, as well as the historical context in which C.S. Lewis was writing and why these girls are strong role models still worthy of respect today.

**“In the Kingdom of Calormen” ~ Lisa Papademetriou\*\***

Bestselling author Lisa Papademetriou discusses C.S. Lewis’ depiction of Muslims in *The Horse and His Boy*, explaining mid-twentieth century England’s relationship with Islamic culture and looking at how Lewis’ descriptions are likely to be read today in terrorism-fearing American culture.

**“Going to Narnia” ~ Sophie Masson\*\***

Author Sophie Masson relates her childhood travelling between everyday Australia and magical France to the experience of reading, and particularly entering Narnia. She also gives one explanation for why many readers, like her, were disappointed after reading *The Last Battle*.

**“Prince to King” ~ Elizabeth E. Wein\*\***

Author Elizabeth E. Wein outlines Caspian’s transformation from prince to king, and discusses what that transformation has in common with Narnia’s in *Prince Caspian*: both are about knowing oneself, and about coming in to one’s own.

**“Waking Up the Trees” ~ Susan Juby\*\***

Author Susan Juby describes C.S. Lewis as an environmentalist, and interprets *Prince Caspian* as a story about the damage we can do to the world that sustains us and about the power we have to repair that damage and live in harmony with nature.

**“It’s the Little Things” ~ Susan Vaught\*\***

Author Susan Vaught uses Prince Caspian’s “little things”—Reepicheep, the Talking Animals, the Pevensie children, and young Caspian himself—to demonstrate that just because someone is younger or smaller, it doesn’t mean he or she can’t make a big difference.

**“Being Good for Narnia and the Lion” ~ O.R. Melling\*\*\***

Author O.R. Melling describes her wayward childhood and how the Chronicles of Narnia—and specifically Aslan—reset her moral compass. In Narnia, the most admired people were the ones who did the right thing, and for the first time she saw being good as more interesting and more challenging than being bad.

**“Mind the Gap” ~ Zu Vincent and Kiara Koenig\*\*\***

Authors Zu Vincent and Kiara Koenig ask, are you a Susan or a Lucy? That is, are you interested in acting grown-up or in being grown-up? Vincent and Koenig discuss the difference between being and doing, and how growing up, in Narnia and in our world, means understanding and accepting who you are.

While you don't need to have read the Chronicles of Narnia to appreciate most of the essays in this volume, pairing the essays with the text they cover will enrich their meaning.

\* You only need to have read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to understand or use this essay.

\*\* You may need to have read the book mentioned in the summary to understand or use this essay.

\*\*\* You may need to have read the full series to understand or use this essay.