



**BOOK REVIEW OF *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA THE LAST BATTLE***

**WRITTEN BY C. S LEWIS**

**A FINAL PROJECT**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

I state truthfully that this project is compiled by me without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2 and S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, I ascertain that I do not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 6th August 2015

Nenden Lovenia Bunda

## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 1:5

**This thesis is dedicated to Cornelis Labuem**

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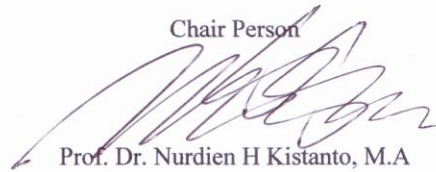
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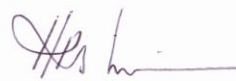
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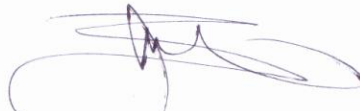
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary work can be divided into several different types such as novel, poem and drama. Each of type has its own readers with specific reason why they like novel, poem or drama. One of the most interesting genres that we ever read is children's literature. Children's literature presents magical and attractive story and becomes our favorite things during our childhood. The story in children's literature can always amaze us in past, present, and future time, at the same time it can also teach us about moral values.

However, children's literature itself is not as simple as what people think. People often misunderstand about the concept of children literature in which it refers to a book that they can read easily. In children's literature the writer needs to give an attractive story in order to make the readers interested to reading the book. *The Chronicles of Narnia, The Last Battle* is a good example of children's novel. It contains fantasy that will attract children. The novel has a different and unique story that also able to be read by the older readers.

Fantasy fiction novel like Narnia, *The Last Battle*, is well known since the first book published internationally. The novel has its worldwide popularity because of its Christianity background and interesting plot. *The Last Battle* was first published in 1956 in United Kingdom. *The Last Battle* is one of seven series fantasy novel that written by Clive Staples Lewis called *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Clive Staples Lewis or simply known in the literature world as C.S. Lewis, is a writer and scholar. Born in Belfast, Ireland on November 29th of 1898 he is best known for his Christianity texts and his famous fantasy series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. C.S. Lewis has been interested

with the fantasy world from a very young age where he used to play with his brothers and create the imaginary land of Boxen that filled with magical creatures and heroic tales which still became something that they will always share many years after.

Graduated with a focus on literature and classic philosophy from Oxford University, he was awarded in a fellowship teaching position at Magdalen College in 1925. He then joined a group of writers and intellectuals called The Inklings together with his brother, Warren Lewis, and J.R.R Tolkien. This is how he began to re-embrace his faith as a Christian and wrote a book. Lewis started to publish the seven books that are consisted of “*The Chronicles of Narnia*” series during the 50’s. He began the series in 1950 with the release of the first book “*The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*”. The success of the book continues as he wrote the other Narnia series, *The Magician Nephew*, *The Horse and His Boy*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage of The Dawn Treader*, *The Silver Chair*, and *The Last Battle* as the last book of Narnia’s series.

In 1954 he joined the faculty of Cambridge University as a literature professor and married an American English teacher, Joy Gresham in 1956. After experiencing heart trouble in 1963, Lewis resigned from his teaching position at Cambridge and passed away in Headington, Oxford on November 22nd 1963. Lewis wrote more than 30 fiction and nonfiction books during the course of his career.

Similar with the tittle, *The Last Battle* is the last book of its series. The novel tells us about an adventurous story of Eustace Clarence Scrubb and Jill Pole, old friend of Narnia, who asked to save the land of Narnia from the Calormene in the last days of Narnia by the Great Lion, Aslan. In *The Last Battle*, several plays from the previous books also appear to help Scrubb, Pole and Tirian to fight for the freedom of Narnia and to against the False Aslan. Narnia’s writer,

According to his biography, Clive Staples Lewis has been interested with the fantasy world from a very young age where he used to play with his brothers and create the imaginary land of Boxen that filled with magical creatures and heroic tales. Lewis started to publish the seven books of “*The Chronicles of Narnia*” series during the 50’s.

The very first reason on why I chose *The Last Battle* of Narnia as my final project simply because it is a favorite book of mine since my childhood. The last book of Narnia’s book series also won an annual Carnegie Medal from the Library Association as the year’s best children’s book by a British Subject which absolutely makes the book worth to be read. It brings the reader to fantasize every story line that appears in its book and definitely a good novel to read. Because of those reasons, I choose *The Last Battle* as my final project.

## **2. SUMMARY OF *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA, THE LAST BATTLE***

Narnia is a magical place that people may not ever imagine would ever be existed before. It is a place where animal speaks like human, mythological beings exists and where the wildest adventure begins. Human brought to Narnia for several times since Jadis the white witch rules the kingdom. This time old friends of Narnia, Eustace and Jill brought to Narnia by The Great Aslan since the Land is stirred and upset again.

The story of *The Last Battle* begins with the appearance of a sly ape named Shift and a simple minded donkey named Puzzle who lived up to the west beyond Lantern Waste and close with the great waterfall of Narnia. As Puzzle is a simple minded donkey, Shift easily take advantages from him by ask him to do many things as he ordered him to do. He persuaded Puzzle to wear a lion’s skin and pretend to be The Great Aslan to fool the Narnians. When a false Aslan roams the land, it confuses many Narnians since the False Aslan commands them to do

many uncommon things like works with the Calormenes and cut down the talking trees for lumber.

Tirian, the last king of Narnia, and his unicorn Jewel warned by Roonwit the Centaur about the False Aslan. It turns out that Shift, Ginger the talking cat and Rishda Tarkaan a warlord of Calormene is responsible for all the problems. Tirian who investigates it with Jewel caught and tied to a tree after he accuses the ape of lying. However the King does not lose his faith by asking for Aslan's help and gets a vision of people from other world though he does not know who they are. As the helper arrives in Narnia they release the hostages including Puzzle and release a group of dwarfs from the Calormenes on their way back to Narnia. Unfortunately, it is not goes well since none of the dwarfs wants to help them because their faith in Aslan has been vanished. Surprisingly one dwarf named Poggin return to them and decides to fight for Narnia.

Narnia is in a chaotic time now as what, Farsight, the Eagle reported. Roonwit the centaur died in a battle field, Cair Paravel fallen to the Calormenes, and the worst of all Shift still makes another rumor about the False Aslan. The Ape reports that Aslan and the Calormene god Tash is the same creature called Tashlan. The war between the loyal Narnian and Calormenes cannot be stopped. Tash, The Calormene god, tries to kill the remaining Narnians but the High King Peter, King Edmund, Queen Lucy, Lord Digory, Lady Polly, including Eustace and Jill appears and banishes Tash.

When the war is over, they sit in a green field. Tirian's curiosity leads him to ask how they come to Narnia and why Susan is not present. The Pevensies (Peter, Edmund, Lucy) says that the reason of Susan's absence is because she does not believe in Narnia anymore and think it as a childhood game and fantasy. They eat from a grove trees near them and realize at last where

they are. People that are not loyal to Aslan believe that they are stuck in a stable dark and act accordingly. While for people that are loyal to Aslan, they see Aslan suddenly comes. He calls and orders Father Time to end the world of Narnia and takes all creatures who believe him into his own country. As The Great Lion leads them to the Garden, he explains what happened to them in the real world and said that they died in a railway accident. Susan's final fate becomes a mystery in the last book of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

### **3. REVIEW OF *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA, THE LAST BATTLE***

In the review point, I present the strengths and weaknesses of *The Last Battle*. Based on the review, there are a lot of reasons why *The Last Battle* can be a recommended novel for the reader. As a literary work it has some interesting points to attract the reader to read the novel like its cover, title, conflict, plot and moral value. The review describes those points of the novel by classifying them into two parts: the strength and weaknesses of the novel.

#### **a. The Strength of C.S Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia, The Last Battle***

##### **a.1. Novel Appearance**

C. S Lewis's *The Last Battle* is an interesting novel since the very first time its reader sees the novel. The cover of the novel delivers a good impression which might drive the reader to buy it. Here, Jewel's appearance that standing above the sky full of stars, simple proposition of its title and a nice choice of color gradation show magical side of the novel that presented by Lewis in *The Last Battle*. As it is shown in *The Last Battle*'s cover, unicorn represents the character of Jewel and it gives a little explanation about what this novel all about. The novel is also gives illustration of condition that happens in the story line, therefore the reader will have a depiction of its characters and situation.

## **a.2. Plot**

*The Last Battle* is a fast read novel, it require only a few dedicated hours to turn from page to page. With only 210 pages and a language that easy to understand, it makes the last series of Chronicles as a good novel to read for people from many various ages. Later on, though the novel consists of several allegorical meaning but it brings a new light to the reader since there is no complicated words appears in the novel.

In the last day of Narnia, far up to the west beyond Lantern Waste and close beside the great waterfall, there lived an Ape. He was so old that no one could remember when he had first come to live in those parts, and he was the cleverest, ugliest, most wrinkled Ape you can imagine. (Lewis: 1956:1)

The Narnia Chronicles series gives a perfect adventurous and exciting fantasy plot for children. While for the adults it imparts powerful spiritual meaning that written in the book. Basically, Lewis tells the story of how everything happens in the last day of Narnia. His further explanations of how Narnia comes to an end and his interesting concept of universalism that is shown in the novel become interesting parts that attract the reader. Last but not least. Lewis's writing style and prose is simply amazing.

Furthermore, Lewis puts several conflicts which make the novel is worth to read. It has a lot of cliffhangers and makes the reader always want to know what is going to happen next in his book. The story has a lot of unexpected events in it, especially after the unexpected arrival of another old friend of Narnia besides Eustace Scrubb and Jill Pole. In its story, the land welcomes the return of three Pevensie children Peter, Edmund and Lucy that appear from the previous books (*The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, Prince Caspian, The Voyage of The Dawn*

*Treader and The Silver Chair*). Polly and Diggory Kirk from *The Magician Nephew* and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* book also re-appear to help the Narnians. Furthermore, Susan's absence because she does not believe in Narnia again become another surprising plot that given by Lewis in *The Last Battle*.

### **a.3. Moral Values**

In addition, this book brings many emotions that wrapped in a book and it is clear to see that the connections between characters are so real. The connection between King Tirian and Jewel is one example of real connection and emotion in *The Last Battle*. Lewis incredibly captures their relationship as an intense and close friendship. Another example that is shown in the novel is Jill and Eustace. Their close friendship that pictured since the first time they met in *The Silver Chair* and the way Lewis explain it all is so wonderful.

...I'm Eustace Scrubb and this is Jill Pole, said the Boy. And we were here once before, ages and ages ago, more than a year ago by our time, and there was a chap called Prince Rillian, and they were keeping this chap underground, and Puddleglum put his foot in- (Lewis:1956:57)

Lewis simply shows it by capturing several moments that happened there.

This last chapter of *Chronicles Narnia* has rich conflicts. It had a range of many feelings. Sometimes it bring us to feel melancholy, exciting and yet happy at the same time. Conflict in *The Last Battle* begins with the appearance of Shift who has an evil plot to trick the Narnians into making, Puzzle, the donkey to use lion's skin and act as Aslan, Narnia's king. Shift fooled the Narnian and Puzzle. Furthermore, he forces the Narnian to do many horrible things that they actually do not want to do in the name of Aslan, The Great Lion. Things getting worse when

Shift tell people of Narnia that Aslan and Tash is the same being. Some believe it as Aslan's order, but some says that Aslan will not ask them to do such things like that to His people. The issue of the false Aslan and his orders spread quickly. As the King hears the issue, he starts to feel suspicious on why many Calormenes cut the talking trees and use it as a lumber. This story reached its peak when the war between the Narnians that is loyal to Aslan against those who no longer believe in Aslan begin.

## **b. The Weaknesses of C. S Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia, The Last Battle***

### **b.1. The Need to Read The Previous Novels**

Apart from its plus points and number of strengths, *The Last Battle* also has several weaknesses spot. If we give a closer look to Lewis's work it could be seen that there is something missing in his work. As a matter of fact, the storyline in the novel is indeed an easy and beautiful story to understand. However, the author amazing story with its internal-external conflict and flashback-forward plot can make the readers confuse with the story line even though the language and vocabularies is easy to understand. Later on, since this is a series novel so it makes the reader who never read any of Lewis's Chronicles novels feel confuse with the appearance of several characters that re-appear in *The Last Battle* can. There is also a character that in *The Last Battle* could actually be an interesting part of the story but, Lewis does not give further explanation about him. Emeth for example, he is a character that turn to fight for Narnia even though he is a Calormene man.

### **b.2. The Racist Naming of The Character**

As we all know, *The Last Battle* made in the 50's. It is an era when racism becomes one of major issues to talk about in the whole world. Unfortunately Lewis puts several words or



names its character with some word that sound racist even for children. The word “darkies” as he refers to the Calormenes and appears several time in the book should not appear in any of children’s book. The Calormenes here is a group of people who lives in a place called land of Calormene. They do not believe in Narnia and Aslan but tend to against the Narnian in every single occasion. People of Calormene are pictured as lack of intelligence barbarian and easy to affect especially by Shift-the ape. When Shift and the false Aslan ordered them to cut the talking trees, they agree to cut it which then make King Tirian curiosity raise and find why they do that. Here in Narnia the talking trees are also beings, so that it is an obvious crime to cut or kill them. Because of that reason, it might create a concept on children’s mind that every people who have dark skin are bad. Some people that read *The Last Battle* claims that it is quite racist because the author put the word darkies there. The “darkies” becomes debatable since Lewis never gives any further explanation about this case even after his death on November 22nd 1963 in Headington, Oxford.

### **b.3. Small Explanation about Characters’ Point of View**

In the last book of *Chronicles Narnia* we can see that there are no clear personalities between characters. Here, every character in *The Last Battle* speak with one voice, that of the narrator. It is unfortunate that Lewis does not give clear character’s point of view in its novel. Besides giving emphasis on the theme of the story, showing character’s point of view will also make the reader understand the story better and in order to know about every efforts that they are facing to free the land from Shift and the Calormenes.

#### **b.4. Unexpected ending**

The ending of the story is another weakness of this novel. At the end of the story, C.S Lewis writes that there are only three Pevensies that can enter Narnia again. Peter, Edmund, Lucy including their parents can enter the land once again and live there eternally. The fact tells us that it is only Susan that cannot enter Narnia because her faith in Narnia is vanished. It says that she chose make up and boys. She thinks that Narnia is only her childhood's fantasy and memory which she would not believe again. The way Lewis explains how they enter Narnia is quite shocking too. He writes that all Pevensies dies in a railway accident. Moreover, he does not give further explanation of Susan's feeling after the accident that happens to her family. It will be better if Lewis puts some explanation on how Susan's face it and her reaction towards the accident. Somehow he makes the story incredibly amazing but he forgets to put some minor details that might become a plus point in *The Last Battle*.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

*The Last Battle* is a novel that talks about a never ending adventurous story of Narnians and people from another world that believe in Narnia. In its story, Lewis' bring a plot that can make its loyal reader feel curious. *Chronicles of Narnia* have brings him to get his name worldwide and his major success. He reaches his popularity when he writes *Chronicles of Narnia* series in the 50's. The story in this last book of Narnia is a final book of how everything happens in the last days of Narnia. Furthermore, even though *The Last Battle* is clearly a great novel, but the reader should give more attention whenever they read the novel. Here are several strengths in C.S Lewis's novel *The Last Battle*. The first one is the novel appearance, it give good impression which might drive the reader to buy it. The next thing is *The Last Battle*'s plot gives a perfect

adventurous and exciting fantasy plot to the reader. The novel also brings many moral values about friendship, trust and leadership that shown in the book's story line.

Despite from the novel's strengths that are found in *The Last Battle*, weaknesses of the novel also found in its novel. Since The Chronicles of Narnia is a series novel, the reader need to read Narnia's previous books in order to fully understand the story line. Another weakness is that unfortunately Lewis puts and named its character with some words that sounds racist. The small explanation from the characters point of view becomes another weakness in the novel. The last is the unexpected ending of *The Last Battle* makes the loyal reader feel disappointed with the ending.

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