

C.S. Lewis
The Chronicles of Narnia
The Last Battle



THE CLASSIC BBC RADIO 4 FULL-CAST DRAMATISATIONS

C.S. LEWIS

C.S. (Clive Staples) Lewis, or 'Jack' as he was known, was born in Belfast in 1898. He was educated at several schools in England, going away to the first just days after his mother died in 1908.

Throughout his childhood, Jack made up stories. At around the age of eight he wrote a play called *The King's Ring*, about the reign of King Bunny 1st, and went on to write a complete history of the land where the play was set.

In 1917 Jack went to Oxford University, but his studies were interrupted by the First World War – from which he was sent home wounded. He returned to Oxford in 1919 and, after successfully finishing his studies, stayed on as a tutor. One of his friends during this time was J.R.R. Tolkien, who would later write the fantastical tales *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Jack himself wrote many books for adults, but it wasn't until much later in life that he first decided to write a story for children. The first Narnia book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, began with an image that Jack had kept in his mind since he was a teenager – that of a faun carrying packages through the snow. Meanwhile, the adventures of Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy were partly inspired by real-life evacuee children who stayed at

Jack's house near Oxford during the war. Interestingly, his first choice for the children's names was Ann, Martin, Rose and Peter!

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe was published in 1950, by which time Jack had already written another two Narnia stories – *Prince Caspian* and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Next came *The Silver Chair*, followed by *The Horse and His Boy*.

Fascinated by the difference in time between our own world and Narnia, Jack wrote some of the books in a different order to the events which they portrayed. An example of this is his sixth, *The Magician's Nephew*, which details the early history of Narnia and is intended to be read before all the others. Finally, the aptly named *The Last Battle* is the concluding story of seven. Bounding through each book is the magnificent Aslan, the all-powerful lion who befriends and protects the land of Narnia – and the children who visit it.

C.S. Lewis, who died in 1963, once said of his children's books: 'I wrote the stories I should have liked to read. That's always been my reason for writing.' More than fifty years after the first book was published, millions of children and adults continue to share his taste, and the magic of Narnia still captivates and thrills all those who go there...

The Last Battle

Many Narnian years have passed since Eustace and Jill helped ensure the Royal line. But when they are jerked back violently into this strangest of lands they find the present King in danger and Narnia facing its darkest hour.

With a stupid and gullible donkey posing as Aslan and the devious ape, Shift, in charge, confused talking beasts and dwarves are allowing themselves to be sold into slavery in neighbouring Calormen. The once peaceful world of Narnia is moving towards destruction, until Eustace and Jill join forces with King Tirian and the noble unicorn Jewel to help the remaining loyal subjects stand fast against the powers of evil and darkness. Together they must fight The Last Battle and decide the future of this once glorious kingdom.

The concluding adventure in this amazing series moves heart-stoppingly from disaster to triumph as the forces for good make their final stand against evil.

THE RECORDING

The Last Battle

WRITTEN BY

C.S. Lewis

FIRST BROADCAST

BBC Radio 4

2 March 1997

NUMBER OF EPISODES

Four

LAST BROADCAST

23 March 1997

ILLUSTRATION

Line work by Pauline

Baynes (1956) supplied by

Harper Collins.

Colouring of line work by

D'Israeli (2000)

CAST & CREDITS

Dramatised by Brian Sibley

Professor	Maurice Denham
Puzzle	Timothy Spall
Shift	John Sessions
Tirian	Paul Rhys
Rishda	Philip Jackson
Eustace	Marco Williamson
Jill	Victoria Shalet
Peter	Tom Piccin
Edmund	Peter England
Lucy	Ellie Beavan
Aslan	Stephen Thorne
Reepicheep	Sylvester McCoy
Mr Tumnus	Norman Bird
Polly	Mary Wimbush
Jewel	Chris Pavlo
Roonwit	Keith Drinkel
Ginger	Janet Maw
Poggin	Christopher Scott
Farsight	Hugh Dickson
Emeth	Kim Wall

Music by Peter Howell

of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop

Produced by John Taylor