

# The Horse and His Boy

Recommended for Grades 4-8

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## **Book Summary: The Horse and His Boy**

*The Horse and His Boy* is a sequel to *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy are reigning as kings and queens at Cair Paravel, but the story begins far away from Narnia, across a wide desert in a place called Calormen. Shasta, the main character, is the son of a poor fisherman. One day, he discovers he is not the true son of the fisherman, but was found on the beach as a baby. Shasta and Bree, a talking horse, run away to Narnia. While on the road, they meet Aravis, a young lady who is fleeing an arranged marriage to an old man whom she does not love. She is accompanied by a talking horse, as well. The children disguise themselves and to travel without being discovered.

However, Shasta is mistaken for the missing Prince Cor of Archenland by some visiting Narnians, and he is quickly separated from the others. While with the Narnians, he learns that greedy Calormene Prince Rabidash wants to marry the good and gentle Queen Susan of Narnia, who definitely does NOT want to marry the Prince. Queen Susan and her party decide to fool Prince Rabidash and flee for Narnia. One thing leads to another, and Shasta quickly finds himself in the midst of a fierce battle that may decide the fate of all the northern lands.

**[SPOILER]** Shasta meets up with Aravis, Bree, and Hwin. Aravis has found out that Rabidash plans to attack Archenland, then Narnia, in an attempt to get Queen Susan back. The four race across the desert and barely make it in time. Aravis, Bree, and Hwin are taken in by a kindly hermit, while Shasta runs on ahead to warn the King of Archenland. The children and horses all encounter Aslan at one time or another. Shasta is pulled into the battle with Prince Rabidash, where Rabidash is defeated. Shasta, it turns out, is really Prince Corin, the long-lost twin brother of Prince Cor. Aslan and King Lune of Archenland both give Prince Rabidash the chance to repent and go home safely. In his pride, Rabidash refuses, and is turned into a donkey by Aslan. He returns home and is turned back into a man, but is bound to remain within ten miles of the temple of the Calormene god Tash, or else Rabidash will turn back into a donkey.

## **Author Biography: C. S. Lewis**

Clive Staples Lewis was born on November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Ireland. His early childhood was happy. In 1916, he was accepted to University College, the oldest college at Oxford University. Soon after entering school, he chose to volunteer for active duty in World War I. He served in the British Army and spent his time in the trenches in France. At the end of the war, he returned to his studies and graduated in 1925. He worked as an English teacher at Magdalene College, Oxford. He worked here for 29 years before becoming a professor of literature at Magdalene College, Cambridge. While teaching, C. S. Lewis was also writing books. His first books focused on his journey with the Christian faith and other religious subjects and were written for adults. Despite his friends warning him that writing a children's novel would ruin his career, C. S. Lewis published *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in 1950. At first this book was not very popular, but it gained popularity by word of mouth. In 1956, he married a woman named Joy and became step-father to her two boys. Tragically, she died of cancer in 1960. After her death, C.S. Lewis's own health began to fail. He died on November 22, 1963 (the same day as President Kennedy's assassination).



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## Discussion Questions: The Horse and His Boy

1. What do you think about Aravis' dismissive attitude towards the servant whom she drugged? Was she right to act that way? Why or why not?
2. What mistakes does Shasta make after he is "captured" by the Narnians? How does Aslan use these mistakes to make everything turn out for the best?
3. What are the main differences between Aravis and Lasaraleen? Do they have anything in common?
4. Do you think, as Aravis does, that Lasaraleen is silly? What good qualities does Lasaraleen show despite her silliness and selfishness?
5. Shasta shows great bravery in going back to save Aravis and Hwin from the lion. What made him brave? Do you think you would act the same way in a similar situation?
6. What do you make of Corin's quick temper? Is it an asset for a fault? Why?
7. Prince Rabidash has an uncontrolled bad temper and is very selfish and conceited. Why doesn't he try to fix this? Can people change who they are?
8. How do Rabidash's faults make things worse for him before his capture? How do they make things worse for him after his capture?
9. Do you think Rabidash was defeated by King Edmund or by his own pride? Why?
10. Why does Hwin recognize Aslan more quickly than Bree?
11. Do you think it is important to have read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* before reading this book? Why or why not?



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