



THEIR BLOOD TINGLED



Junior High Literature and Story Writing
with C. S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*



Writing^{with}
Sharon Watson



Characters

Lesson 6

Literature classes like to talk about certain types of characters, so let's do that now and get it out of the way. Characters can be labeled with more than one of the terms below. For instance, the Grinch can be labeled "protagonist" and "dynamic." You'll see why as you read through the terms.

In the terms below, I'm using the word "he" to indicate male characters, but these also apply to female characters.

Protagonist This is the main character. He's in trouble, and he has to get out of it. He has a goal in mind, but things are keeping him from reaching it. We travel the story with the protagonist. In *The Magician's Nephew*, who is the protagonist? By the end of the story, we learn that he is a character in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Which character is he there? Write your answers here:

Antagonist Generally speaking, this is the "bad guy," and often there is more than one antagonist. These characters make trouble for the protagonist, and they try to keep him from reaching his goal. In *The Magician's Nephew*, who are two major antagonists? Write your answer here:

Foil Sometimes a foil is there to give the protagonist someone to speak to at key points of the story. Dr. Watson is a good foil for Sherlock Holmes, for instance, and Polly acts as a foil for Digory. Other times, a foil exists to give a contrast to the main character. Uncle Andrew is a good foil to the Witch; he seemingly is a Magician, but she is ever so much more so. A foil may appear in the whole story or only in a piece of it.

In what way does the Witch serve as a foil for Aslan? Write your answer here:



Dynamic character This term applies to any characters that change from the beginning of the story to the ending. Ebenezer Scrooge is a good example of a dynamic character because he begins as an unhappy, mean miser and ends as an excited, generous person. Name one dynamic character in *The Magician's Nephew*:

Static character This term applies to any characters that do not change during the course of the story. For instance, Peter Pan does not change throughout his adventures. He's still the same self-centered, forgetful, youthful figure at the ending as he is in the beginning. Name one static character you find in *The Magician's Nephew*:

Christ figure A character is considered a Christ figure if he is sacrificed or sacrifices himself for others, much like Jesus Christ did for us in his death on the cross. Although there is no Christ figure that sacrifices himself for others in *The Magician's Nephew*, you can easily identify one in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Who is it? Write your answer here:



{I suppose it could be argued that Digory is a Christ figure because he believes he sacrifices his desire for his mother's healing to Aslan's desire for the apple, which quickly grows into a tree of protection. In a small way, Digory's temptation mirrors Christ's temptation to gain all the kingdoms of the world if he only will bow down to Satan. But Digory does not know he is sacrificing anything for anyone else; on his part, he's only giving up his deep desire. What do you think?}

Often there is more than one protagonist in a story, though there is always one that is more important than the others. For instance, though Polly can be classified as a protagonist, it is really Digory whose actions and goals are the strongest. Polly puts on a ring and disappears; Digory puts on a ring to rescue her. Polly says not to touch the bell; Digory reacts by striking it with the hammer out of his curiosity and stubbornness. Polly accompanies Digory in much of this story, but it is Digory who has the strongest and most desperate goal. Can you guess what it is? Write your guess here:

Literature | Authors

Although these terms about characters are important in literature classes, authors use other terms. For example, writers will call the protagonists "leads" or "heroes."

Today, the term "hero" often is applied to a male or female character. The original term for a female protagonist is "heroine," which sounds too much like the illegal drug "heroin."

Writers aim for the mind and the heart. They do this by creating **empathetic characters**. Empathetic characters are ones that we feel a connection with, that we relate to in some way. Writers make us feel empathy for their characters by doing some of these:

- Giving the character a handicap that sets him apart from others, like Spaz's epilepsy in Rodman Philbrick's *The Last Book in the Universe*. He is rejected by everyone, so we feel sorry for him. In other words, he's an underdog.
- Giving the character a wound or a scar from a past wound. We have these in our lives and can understand this in the character.



- Giving him problems in his life, as Digory has with his mother's health, his father's absence, and his move to the city.
- Plunging the character into trouble, as Digory suddenly has trouble when Polly disappears.
- Giving the character someone to take care of or watch over, as Digory, again, suddenly is put into that position upon Polly's disappearance and takes up the task.
- Giving us something to like about the character such as bravery, humor, competence, loyalty, and so on.

It is through your anxiety for the character or your empathy for him that you want him to succeed, to be happy. If you later find yourself defending him or his choices, whether good or bad, the author has grabbed your heart through the troubles the character has experienced and through the anxiety (fear) or empathy you feel for him.

Be an aware reader. Writers have the power to change your mind or reach into your heart through their stories. Their stories can change your mind about issues or even change your worldview. Therefore, it is important that you read with caution, guarding your heart, weighing your new opinions and views based on the truths of the Bible, not on what the author wants you to think or the conclusions she wants you to draw. While some conclusions may support or build up a Christian world view, as does *The Magician's Nephew*, others may not.

Next lesson: The Grinch!

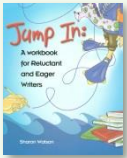
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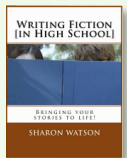
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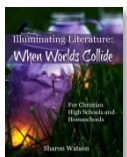
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“Right away, my daughter commented on how easy to read and friendly the format was. She liked that Ms. Watson seemed to be speaking directly to her, in a casual tone, yet it was very instructional from the very first page. I'm delighted by all the literature terms and devices she is learning.”

Linsey K. <http://www.lillepunkin.com/2015/08/review-of-illuminating-literature-when.html>

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