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The Horse And His Boy (The Chronicles Of Narnia, 5)



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Of C.S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia, "The Horse And His Boy" is probably my favorite. Venturing into exotic locations, with a likeable cast and a good thriller format, this is a pretty cool fantasy that gives some insights into what the cast of "Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" were doing during that time before they returned home. Shasta is the son of a poor fisherman, and his life is pretty ordinary until a mighty Calormene (sort of a generic Mideastern civilization) Tarkaan comes to stay at his home. He overhears his father admit that he found the infant Shasta on a raft with a dead man, and the Tarkaan offers to buy him. That night, Shasta escapes with the Tarkaan's talking Narnian horse Bree, and by chance bumps into a runaway Calormene girl called Aravis, who also has a Narnia horse (Hwin). The four plan to run away to the free land of Narnia. But they run into problems when they enter the city of Tashbaan -- the rotten son of the Tisroc (emperor) is planning to kidnap Queen Susan of Narnia and marry her whether she likes it or not. What's more, Shasta is caught up by the kings of Narnia, who think he's the prince of Archenland -- what's more, the prince looks exactly like Shasta. With the guidance of the mysterious Aslan, Shasta and Aravis must keep the Calormenes from attacking Narnia. The later books in Lewis's series are probably a bit better than the first ones, literaturewise. This book introduces new and very interesting characters, as well as bringing back old ones like the kings and queens of Narnia, Tumnus, and Aslan, of course. The Christian subtext is probably faintest in this volume, and it's probably the least connected to the main storyline that runs through the series.

"The Horse and His Boy" is a bit of an oddity in the Chronicles of Narnia. It is the only book in which the main characters are natives of the fantasy world of Aslan (rather than being from ours), and is set in the era glimpsed in Chapter 17 of "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe". Shasta lives in Calormen, a very Arabian Knights sort of place south of Narnia, full of beautiful palaces, dark

skinned warriors, and citizens who quote their verbose poets and philosophers frequently. Shasta's lived all his life by the sea, treated cruelly by his "father" and made to do all the work. His humble life changes when a Tarkaan (something like a duke) arrives in town, riding a horse named Bree. Through an overheard conversation, Shasta discovers that his father isn't really his father, and that he comes from Narnia, a faraway northern country. Curious of his origins, he decides to run away to Narnia, and so does Bree (who is actually a talking horse, taken from Narnia when young, and forced to act tame). They meet up with runaways Hwin and her girl Tarkheena Aravis, (also headed for Narnia) and together they ride northwards, braving bustling cities, sweltering deserts, and a wild lion that just won't leave them alone...I struggled through this book when I was younger (fifth grade), even though I was something of a big reader. There's a lot of wordy dialogue, like the quotes of the poets, and a lot of political intrigue that a kid won't necessarily appreciate, like the motives for Rabadash's war and his flirtations with Queen Susan, which go on for quite a bit. I know I didn't really enjoy those parts back then, and kind of scanned over those chapters. There is much to enjoy though. I loved the landscapes.

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