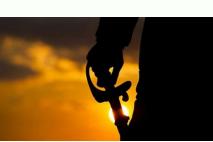
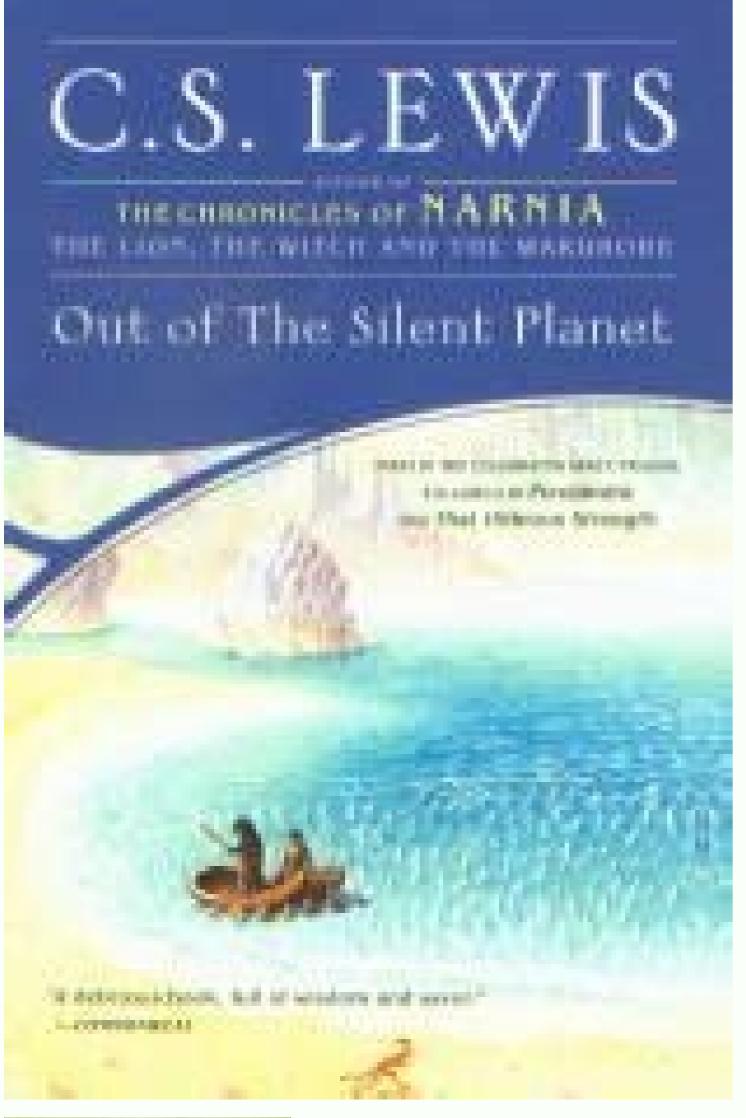
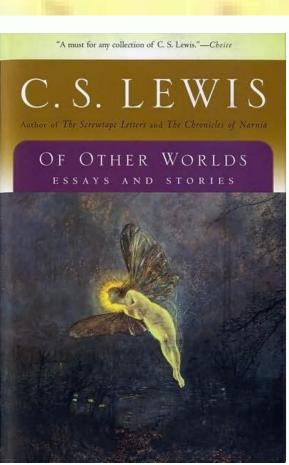
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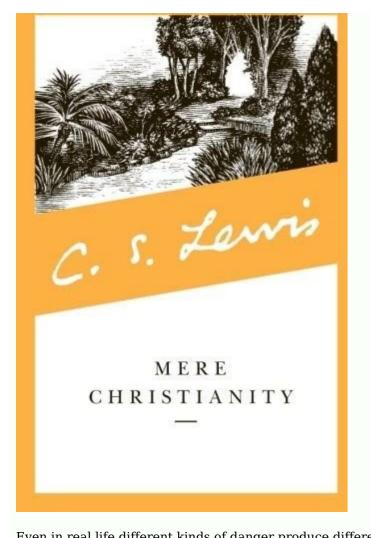
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Even in real life different kinds of danger produce different kinds of fear. The more imagination the reader, the more he will do for himself. But now, something must happen, and after that something else. There is hope for a man who has never read Malory or Boswell or Tristram Shandy or Shakespeare's Sonnets: but what can you do with a man who says he 'has read' them, meaning he has read them once, and thinks that this settles the matter? The intolerable pressure, the secret here is largely the style, and especially the style of the dialogue. A mature palate will probably not much care for crême de menthe: but it ought still to enjoy bread and butter and honey. That is one of the functions of art: to present what the narrow and desperately practical perspectives of real life exclude. S. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the ebook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the ebook. He is the first writer to discover what 'other planets' are really good for in fiction. That is just the trouble. But it will be quite a different story. But it would have been better not to have chosen in the first place a story which could be adapted to the screen only by being ruined. Mole is very snug in his subterranean home, but what was he living on? In reading that chapter of the book curiosity or suspense about the escape of the heroes from their death-trap makes a very minor part of one's experience. 'The yellowish-white metal that gleamed in the crack between the lid and the cylinder had an unfamiliar hue. Let us, however, try to see clearly what kind of pleasure it is: or rather, what different kinds of pleasure it may be. At the moment when she runs up the Jolly Roger, what exactly does this do to the imagination? For I suspect that a very hasty assumption has been made on this subject. The immediate issue of death would drive the contemplative object out of his mind: he would have no interest in the many degrees of increasing cold lower than the one which made his survival impossible. The choice is based on the fact that the real toad's face with a fatuous grin on it. In saying this I am not attempting to criticize The Three Musketeers. And in the later horrors, excellently as they are done, we lose the feeling of it. But part of the secret is that the author (like Kafka) is recording a lived dialectic. I do not find that it does so. And in the same way the whole story, paradoxically enough, strengthens our relish for real life. But I am pretty sure that I am not absolutely alone. The real theme may be, and perhaps usually is, something that has no sequence in it, something other than a process and much more like a state or quality. The tables in his forecourt were 'marked with rings that hinted at beer mugs'. Though I saw the trenches before Arras I could not now lecture on them so tactically as on the Greek wall, and Scamander and the Scaean Gate. The grand idea of finding Atlantis which stirs us in the first chapter of the adventure story is apt to be frittered away in mere excitement when the journey has once been begun. If he had said simply that something which the educated receive from poetry can reach the masses through stories of adventure, and almost in no other way, then I think he would have been right. But to make it doubly clear I will add another. But why should the characters be disguised as animals at all? I am sure that my own inability to like it is in me a defect and a misfortune. Notice here the corollary, 90-105] [first edition] Date first posted: 24 October 2014 Date last updated: 24 October 2014 Project Gutenberg Canada ebook #1212 This ebook was produced by Marcia Brooks, Mark Akrigg, Stephen Hutcheson & the Online Distributed Proofreading Canada Team at Publisher's Note: Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected. The disguise is very thin, so thin that Grahame makes Mr. Toad on one occasion 'comb the dry leaves out of his hair'. The total lack of atmosphere repels me. Not till the curiosity, the sheer narrative lust, has been given its sop and laid asleep, are we at leisure to savour the real beauties. It takes the whole story to build up that strange blend of renaissance luxury and northern hardness. Title: On Stories Author: Lewis, C. If that is what is meant by Romance, then Romance is my aversion and I greatly prefer George Eliot or Trollope. In the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, Boccaccio and others developed an allegorical theory of Story to explain the ancient myths. You will find that they can be neither. In some folk-tales we meet giants who are not dangerous. But the fact is that what is said to be the most 'exciting' novel in the world, The Three Musketeers, makes no appeal to me at all. You can die of cold between Russian Poland and new Poland, just as well as by going to the Moon, and the pain will be equal. As the humour and homeliness of the early chapters, the sheer 'Hobbitry', dies away we pass insensibly into the world of epic. Its badness proves very little. But he may also, I believe, be receiving certain profound experiences which are 'mere stories'--books, that is, which concern themselves principally with the imagined event and not with character or society--nearly everyone makes the assumption that 'excitement' is the only pleasure they ever give or are intended to give. This excursion into the preposterous sends us back with renewed pleasure to the actual. We do not enjoy a story fully at the first reading. I should like to be able to believe that I am here in a very small way contributing (for criticism does not always come later than practice) to the encouragement of a better school of prose story in England: of story that can mediate imaginative life to the masses while not being contemptible to the few. Thus I; and then came the shock. To put it at the very lowest, I know that something else comes in for at least one reader--myself. But if I am right in thinking that there is another enjoyment in Story besides the excitement, then popular romances, such as the American magazines of 'scientifiction' supply, we often come across a really suggestive idea. I asked him whether he were sure that he was not over-emphasizing and falsely isolating the importance of the dangers, which are plentiful, here count for nothing: it is we ourselves and the author who walk through a world of spiritual dangers which makes them seem trivial. The 'Redskinnery' was what really mattered. You would find cold, hunger, hardship, and danger; and after the first few hours they would be simply cold, hunger, hardship, and danger as you might have met them on Earth. Knowing that the 'surprise' is coming we can now fully relish the edge of the cliff. How were they delivered in the Wild Wood? The whole quality of the imaginative response is determined by the fact that the enemies are giants. If the author's plot is only a net, and usually an imperfect one, a net of time and event for catching what is not really a process at all, is life much more? His Tormance is a region of the spirit. He remembered the breathless excitement with which he had read the passage, the agonized suspense with which he wondered whether the hero would wake up in time or not. This is, no doubt, an accident in the sense that all the lines which suggest the resemblance are really there for guite different biological reasons. But the Story itself, the series of imagined events, is nearly always passed over in silence, or else treated exclusively as affording opportunities for the delineation of character. Then ask yourself whether what you have been feeling is simply suspense. A man really in Bedford's position would probably not feel very acutely that sidereal loneliness. What finally convinced me of this distinction was a conversation which I had a few years ago with an intelligent American pupil. In most of them the very steps taken to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy actually bring it about. In some such books, and for some readers, another factor comes in. We saw it close and enjoyed the plumage. Granted the story, the style in which it should be told, the order in which it should be disposed, and (above all) the delineation of the characters, have been abundantly discussed. He reflects that in stories of this kind the first chapter is nearly always the best and reconciles himself to disappointment; Tormance, when we reach it, he forbodes, will be less interesting than Tormance seen from the Earth. [End of On Stories, by C. Those forms of literature in which Story exists merely as a means to something else-for example, the novel of manners where the story is there for the sake of the characters, or the criticism of social conditions--have had full justice done to them; but those forms in which everything else is there for the sake of the story have been given little serious attention. In such a scene as my friend had described, take away the feathers, the high cheek-bones, the whiskered trousers, substitute a pistol for a tomahawk, and what would be left? Meals turn up; one does not even ask who cooked them. Other grand ideas--home-coming, reunion with a beloved--similarly elude our grasp. In order to prevent this from happening he is exposed on the mountain: and that exposure, by leading to his rescue and thus to his life among strangers in ignorance of his real parentage, renders possible both the disasters. It is the second injustice which I am most anxious to remedy. Aristotle in the Poetics constructed a theory of Greek tragedy which puts Story in the centre and relegates character to a strictly subordinate place. But the author has no expedient for keeping the story on Atlantis--or is it better to leave the word to work on its own? I know the geography of Tormance better than that of Tellus. Yet, after all, the best moments of it come in the first half. I am rather suggesting what those whose work will in any case be a romance should aim at. Extra-terrestrial had no meaning for most of the whole story. You cannot, except at the first reading, be really curious about what happened. Mr. David Lindsay, however, succeeds while writing a style which is at times (to be frank) abominable. I can never remember a time when it was not, however, apparently thought this tame. I think the convention a silly one. It may not be 'like real life' in the superficial sense: but it sets before us an image of what reality may well be like at some more central region. No doubt if sheer excitement, then a rapidly changing series of two risks (that of being burned alive and that of being crushed to bits) would be better than the single prolonged danger of starving to death in a cave. Now remember the chapter called 'Mr. Bedford Alone' in H. In the hurry and scurry of his escapes the poetry of the basic idea is lost. [Clive Staples] (1898-1963) Date of first publication: 1947 Edition used as base for this ebook: London: Oxford University Press, 1947 ["Essays Presented to Charles Williams", pp. And I must confess that the net very seldom does succeed in catching the bird. If I am alone in this experience then, to be sure, the present essay is of merely autobiographical interest. It may be asked why anyone should be encouraged to write a form in which the means are apparently so often at war with the end. For I wanted not the momentary suspense but that whole world to which it belonged--the snow and the snow-shoes, beavers and canoes, war-paths and wigwams, and Hiawatha names. They are like children in so far as they have no responsibilities, no struggle for existence, no domestic cares. The bird has escaped us. Who kept them clean? It must be admitted that the art of Story as I see it is a very difficult one. Dangers, of course, there must be: how else can you keep a story going? But I am hardly suggesting that anyone who can write great poetry should write stories instead. It is, of course, no good asking him. I was once taken to see a film version of King Solomon's Mines. But perhaps this is not very likely. This does not mean that I think them of equal literary merit. I believe the effort to be well worth making. There is no recipe for writing of this kind. Shall I be thought whimsical if, in conclusion, I suggest that this internal tension in the heart of every story between the theme and the plot constitutes, after all, its chief resemblance to life? Does anyone believe that Kenneth Grahame made an arbitrary choice when he gave his principal character the form of a toad, or that a stag, a pigeon, a lion would have done as well? What its central difficulty is I have already hinted when I complained that in the War of the Worlds the idea that really matters becomes lost or blunted as the story gets under way. You cannot tell even by reading the story for yourself. The elements which it excludes are precisely those which give the untrained mind its only access to the imaginative world. Mr. Roger Green, writing in English not long ago, remarked that the reading of Rider Haggard had been to many a sort of religious experience. But because he is inarticulate we must not give judgement against him. For the purpose of killing Mr. Bedford 'the infinite and final Night of space' is almost entirely otiose: what is by cosmic standards an infinitesimal change of temperature is sufficient to kill a man and absolute zero can do no more. Wiseacre! In the only sense that matters the surprise works as well the twentieth time as the first. Every episode, every speech, helps to incarnate what the author is imagining. G. Charles Williams had the same advantage, but I do not mention his stories much here because they are hardly pure story in the sense we are now considering. If you try to rewrite the book with all the characters humanized you are faced at the outset with a dilemma. That the man who has heard that noise in the canon--'He could not think what it was. The story does what no theorem can quite do. 'Over me, around me, closing in on me, embracing me ever nearer was the Eternal. The ordinary enemy may easily be made just as lethal as the pirate. But that is just the point. That airless outer darkness is important not for what it can do to Bedford but for what it does to us: to trouble us with Pascal's old fear of those eternal silences which have gnawed at so much religious faith and shattered so many humanistic hopes: to evoke with them and through them all our racial and childish memories of exclusion and desolation: to present, in fact as an intuition one permanent aspect of human experience. I am not at present discussing that. Apart from these three attempts the subject has been left almost untouched, and this has had a curious result. But perhaps the most remarkable achievement in this kind is that of Mr. David Lindsay's Voyage to Arcturus. Belief is at best irrelevant; it may be a positive disadvantage. Whether in real life there is any doctor who can teach us how to do it, so that at last either the meshes will become fine enough to hold the bird, or we be so changed that we can throw our nets away and follow the bird to its own country, is not a question for this essay. If so, nothing can be more disastrous than the view that the cinema can and should replace popular written fiction. When you see an immature or uneducated person devouring what seem to you merely sensational stories, can you be sure what kind of pleasure he is enjoying? Nor is this merely because actual hardship and danger shoulder it aside. But in other ways it is the life of adults. Indeed--and this really made me feel as if I were talking to a visitor from another planets. But if we were concerned only with the question whether Mr. Bedford will live or freeze, that idea is quite beside the purpose. He substituted a subterranean volcanic eruption, and then went one better by adding an earthquake. Can it be an accident that Wordsworth was in the same places when he heard 'low breathings coming after him'?) The dangerousness of the giants is, though important, secondary. Morris in the Well at the World's End came near to success-quite near enough to make the book worth many readings. They go where they like and do what they please, they arrange their own lives. It is the quality of unexpectedness, not the fact that delights us. The point has often been misunderstood. And is there not good occasion both for awe and bewilderment? You may, if you please, say that Rider Haggard's effect is quite as 'crude' or 'vulgar' or 'sensational' as that which the film substituted for it. It does not cross his mind that a man-a mere man like the rest of us-might be a pirate at one time of his life and not at another, or that there is any smudgy frontier between piracy and privateering. These proud, reckless, amorous people create themselves and the whole atmosphere of their world chiefly by talking. But so, in real life, the idea of adventure fades when the day-to-day details begin to happen. That monstrosity, that uncouthness, hangs over the whole thing. But when we are concerned with the 'something else' this is not so. They want to have again the 'surprise' of discovering that what seemed Little-Red-Riding-Hood's grandmother is really the wolf. The Hobbit escapes the danger of degenerating into mere plot and excitement by a very curious shift of tone. The point is that it is extremely different. I believe on the testimony of others that it is a capital story. It means, I grant you, that if we are beaten there will be no quarter. In that way the life of all the characters is that of children for whom everything for granted. The threat launched in the opening paragraphs of his best stories is seldom fulfilled in any identifiable event: still less is it dissipated. Art, indeed, may be expected to do what life cannot do: but so it has done. Ruined, at least, for me. I tried to put my thought into words. It is partly a division of books (some stories can be read in different ways). The landing on Circe's island, the sight of the smoke going up from amidst those unexplored woods, the god meeting us ('the messenger, the slayer of Argus')--what an anti-climax if all these had been the prelude only to some ordinary risk of life and limb! But the peril that lurks here, the silent, painless, unendurable change into brutality, is worthy of the setting. the infinite and final Night of space.' That is the idea which has kept you enthralled. The only imaginative works we ought to grow out of are those which it would have been better not to have read at all. But where excitement is the only thing that matters kinds of danger must be irrelevant. It all means nothing to me. It might be expected that such a book would unfit us for the harshness of reality and send us back to our daily lives unsettled and discontented. Jack the Giant-Killer is not, in essence, simply the story of a clever hero surmounting danger. In Mr. Badger's kitchen 'plates on the dresser grinned at pots on the shelf'. It is the whole image of the utterly lawless enemy, the men who have cut adrift from all human society and become, as it were, a species of their own--men strangely clad, dark men with ear-rings, men with a history which they know and we don't, lords of unspecified treasure buried in undiscovered islands. In each chapter we think we have found his final position: each time we are utterly mistaken. But children do not always like them, nor are those who like them always children; and to enjoy reading about fairies--much more about giants and dragons--it is not necessary to believe in them. The Well at the World's End--can a man write a story to that title? Not only have they been despised, as if they were fit only for children, but even the kind of pleasure they give has, in my opinion, been misunderstood. If a man loves wine and yet hates one of the strongest wines, then surely the sole source of pleasure in wine cannot be the alcohol? We kill--but not the same fox. (Notice that Gawain was in the north-west corner of England when 'etins aneleden him', giants came blowing after him on the high fells. To some people this will have seemed simply grotesque. It is, of course, a good test for every reader of every kind of book. That 'simple but sustaining meal' of 'bacon and broad beans and a macaroni pudding' which Rat gave to his friends has, I doubt not, helped down many a real nursery dinner. Yet I think the test has a special application to the matter in hand. Of its many sins--not least the introduction of a totally irrelevant voung woman in shorts who accompanied the three adventurers wherever they went--only one here concerns us. You could spare none of them. We grasp at a state and find only a succession of events in which the state is never quite embodied. But I, remembering the great moments in my own early reading, felt quite sure that my friend was misrepresenting his experience, and indeed leaving out the real point. As I have admitted, it is very difficult to tell in any given case whether a story is piercing to the unliterary reader's deeper imagination or only exciting his emotions. It was not sorrowful nor joyful nor terrible. Our fears are never, in one sense, realized: yet we lay down the story feeling that they, and far more, were justified. It is foretold that Oedipus will kill his father and marry his mother. It is even better the second time. I myself would strongly disagree with it if 'religious' is taken to mean 'Christian'. There may come a point at which fear is so great that such distinctions vanish, but that is another matter. Consider, again, the enormous difference between being shut out and being shut in: if you like between agoraphobia and claustrophobia. There are indeed three notable exceptions. I am not sure, on second thoughts, that the slow fading of the magic in The Well at the World's End is, after all, a blemish. He had never cared one brass farthing for it. I happened to remark to a man who was sitting beside me at dinner the other night that I was reading Grimm in German of an evening but never bothered to look up a word I didn't know, 'so that it is often great fun' (I added) 'guessing what it was that the old woman gave to the prince which he afterwards lost in the wood'. But they still affect us in much the same way. My pupil is a very clear-headed man and he saw at once what I meant and also saw how totally his imaginative life as a boy had differed from mine. His favourite had been Fenimore Cooper whom (as it happens) I have never read. There is not a moment's rest from the 'adventures': one's nose is kept ruthlessly to the grindstone. It is here that Homer shows his supreme excellence. It is quite easy to contrive a story in which, though the enemies are of normal size, the odds against Jack are equally great. Perhaps we should not blame him. He succeeds because his real theme is, like the plot, sequential, a thing in time, or quasi-time: a passionate spiritual journey. Nor are the marvels in good Story ever mere arbitrary fictions stuck on to make the narrative more sensational. They are, despite their free use of the supernatural, much closer to the novel; a believed religion, detailed character drawing, and even social satire all come in. He builds whole worlds of imagery and passion, any one of which would have served another writer for a whole book, only to pull each of them to pieces and pour scorn on it. The logic of a fairy-tale is as strict as that of a realistic novel, though different. Such stories produce (at least in me) a feeling of awe, coupled with a certain sort of bewilderment such as one often feels in looking at a complex pattern of lines that pass over and pour scorn on it. under one another. All that happens may be delightful: but can any such series quite embody the sheer state of being which was what we wanted? It was like the rock speaking'--that this man should be later in danger of mere murder is almost an impertinence. The greater the danger and the narrower the hero's escape from it, the more exciting the story will be. The children understand this well when they ask for the same story over and over again, and in the same words. And death would be simply death in a nursing home at Sheffield. There must be a pleasure in such stories distinct from mere excitement or I should not feel that I had been cheated in being given the earthquake instead of Haggard's actual scene. R. Your breath shortens while you read it. There are also fears which are not of danger at all: like the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, though innocuous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hideous, insect or the fear of some large and hid Koshtra Belorn than about those recorded in Hakluyt. In King Solomon's Mines the heroes were shut in: so, more terribly, the narrator imagination, where the fear does not rise to abject terror and is not discharged in action, the qualitative difference is much stronger. One sees, yet does not quite see, the regularity. Can he find a series of events following one another in time which will really catch and bring home to us all that we grasp at on merely hearing the six words? But it does sometimes succeed. If some fatal progress of applied science ever enables us in fact to reach the Moon, that real journey will not at all satisfy the impulse which we now seek to gratify by writing such stories. At the end of Haggard's book, as everyone remembers, the heroes are awaiting death entombed in a rock chamber and surrounded by the mummified kings of that land. And here, I expect, we come to one of the differences between life and art. To that extent the book is a specimen of the most scandalous escapism: it paints a happiness under incompatible conditions--the sort of freedom we can have only in childhood and the sort we can have only in maturity--and conceals the contradiction by the further pretence that the characters are not human beings at all. And in our own time Jung and his followers have produced their doctrine of Archtypes. And I knew that what I wanted from them was not simply 'excitement'. Thus we lose one theme but find another. Suppose there is no disappointment; even so--well, you are here. Turn it into music and you will feel the difference at once. To be stories at all they must be series of events: but it must be understood that this series-the plot, as we call it-is only really a net whereby to catch something else. It was great and strange. Only degrees of danger will matter. No book is really worth reading at the age of fifty-except, of course, books of information. But it was at least entangled in the net for several chapters. Wells's First Men in the Moon. Till then, it is like wasting great wine on a ravenous natural thirst which merely wants cold wetness. If a man sensitive and perhaps over-sensitive to Romance likes least that Romance which is, by common consent, the most 'exciting' of all, then it follows that 'excitement' is not the only kind of pleasure to be got out of Romance. And I do not think it unimportant that good work in this kind, even work less than perfectly good, can come where poetry will never come. The man in Peacock thought that he had disposed of 'surprise' as an element in landscape gardening when he asked what happened if you walked through the garden for the second time. It is an image of the truth. Excitement, in this sense, may be defined as the alternate tension and appeasement of imagined anxiety. But that could be contrived without piracy. They are, in fact, to the young reader almost as mythological as the giants. Another very large class of stories turns on fulfilled prophecies--the story of Oedipus, or The Man who would be King, or The Hobbit. In the example of King Solomon's Mines the producer of the film substituted at the climax one kind of danger for another and thereby, for me, ruined the story. To those whose literary experiences are at all like my own the distinction which I am trying to make between two kinds of pleasure will probably be clear enough from this one example. Surely, surely, I thought, the sheer excitement, the suspense, was not what had kept him going back and back to Fenimore Cooper. The real nerve of the romance is laid bare when the hero first goes to look at the newly fallen projectile on Horsell Common. Are they to be adults or children? The titles of some stories illustrate the point very well. The experienced reader, noting the threats and promises of the opening chapter, even while he gratefully enjoys them, feels sure that they cannot be carried out. But never will he have been more mistaken. Mr. de la Mare also succeeds, partly by style and partly by never laying the cards on the table. I do not think so myself, but on that point we may agree to differ. The ludicrous quasi-human expression is therefore changeless: the toad cannot stop grinning because its 'grin' is not really a grin at all. He may be seeking only the recurring tension of imagined anxiety. If your villain is a giant your orchestra will proclaim his entrance in one way: if he is any other kind of villain, in another. It is not the mere increase of danger that does the trick. Nonstandard spellings (which presumably reflect the author's intent) have been left unchanged. Perhaps the pleasure of Story comes as low in the scale as modern criticism puts it. The happiness which it presents to us is in fact full of the simplest and most attainable things--food, sleep, exercise, friendship, the face of nature, even (in a sense) religion. In the works of the late E. It is as if the battle of Toad Hall had become a serious heimsókn and Badger had begun to talk like Njal. There Bedford finds himself shut out on the surface of the Moon just as the long lunar day is drawing to its close--and with the day go the air and all heat. If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file. I must now add that there is a perpetual danger of the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file. I must now add that there is a perpetual danger of the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file. I must now add that there is a perpetual danger of the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file. 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No man would find an abiding strangeness on the Moon unless he were the sort of man who could find an abiding strangeness on the Moon unless he were the sort of man who could find an abiding strangeness on the Moon unless he were the sort of man who could find at in his own back garden. Similarly in the Poet Laureate's Sard Harker it is the journey across the Sierras that really matters. If either of these conditions applies, please check gutenberg, ca/links/licence.html before proceeding. The nearest we can come to a test is by asking whether he often re-reads the same blunder? But they must (in the mood which led one to such a book) be Redskin dangers. The real Moon, if you could reach it and survive, would in a deep and deadly sense be just like anywhere else. But I think it is sometimes done--or very, very nearly done--in stories. You may like or dislike his invented worlds (I myself like that of The Worm Ouroboros and strongly dislike that of Mistress of Mistress of Mistresses) but there is here no quarrel between the theme and the articulation of the Worlds. We have just had set before our imagination something that has always baffled the intellect: we have seen how destiny and free will can be combined, even how free will is the modus operandi of destiny. Unaided by any special skill or even any sound taste in language, the author leads us up a stair of unpredictables. Yet it is guite indispensable. It will be seen that throughout this essay I have taken my examples indiscriminately from books which critics would (guite rightly) place in very different categories--from American 'scientifiction' and Homer, from Sophocles and Märchen, from Sophocles and the intensely sophisticated art of Mr. de la Mare. It is usual to speak in a playfully apologetic tone about one's adult enjoyment of what are called 'children's books'. This is what I think untrue. To construct plausible and moving 'other worlds' you must draw on the only real 'other world' we know, that of the spirit. When they cross to London there is no feeling that London differs from Paris. There are taut, quivering fears (for one split second hardly distinguishable from a kind of pleasureable thrill) that a man may feel on a dangerous horse or a dangerous sea; and again, dead, squashed, flattened, numbing fears, as when we think we have cancer or cholera. An unliterary man may be defined as one who reads books once only. I write on the chance that some others may feel the same and in the hope that I may help them to clarify their own sensations. Mr. de la Mare too has surmounted the difficulty. Are pirates, any more than giants, merely a machine for threatening the hero? The one lays a hushing spell on the imagination; the other excites a rapid flutter of the intrinsic surprisingness of the peripeteia. Here is a man who has spent more hours than he cares to remember in reading romances, and received from them more pleasure perhaps than he should. And even if we take it in a sub-Christian sense, it would meet again in religious experience if they ever came to have any. The one absurdity helps to hide the other. But let us descend to a lower instance. If you find that the reader of popular romances-goes back to his old favourites again and again, then you have pretty good evidence that they are to him a sort of poetry. Looking at the creature we thus see, isolated and fixed, an aspect of human vanity in its funniest and most pardonable form; following that hint Grahame creates Mr. Toad-an ultra-Jonsonian 'humour'. . But I think Mr. Green is very much nearer the mark than those who assume that no one has ever read the romances except in order to be thrilled by hair-breadth escapes. What really matters in this story is the idea of being attacked by something utterly 'outside'. We were talking about the books which are read merely 'for the story' may be enjoyed in two very different ways. It is astonishing how little attention critics have paid to Story considered in itself. He will, at a mere hint from the author, flood wretched material with suggestion and never guess that he is himself chiefly making what he enjoys. There is death in the camera. \* A Project Gutenberg Canada Ebook \* This ebook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. Thus, for example, Dr. Johnson, if I remember rightly, thought that children liked stories of the marvellous because they were impossible. Nature has that in her which compels us to invent giants: and only giants will do. There is a fear which is twin sister to awe, such as a man in war-time feels when he first comes within sound of the guns; there is a fear which is twin sister to disgust, such as a man feels on finding a snake or scorpion in his bedroom. Read it from the terrible moment when the first tiny snowflake startles him into a realization of his position down to the point at which he reaches the 'sphere' and is saved. A pirate is a pirate, just as a giant is a giant. And we bring back the wealth of the Indies; we have henceforward more amusement in, and kindness towards, a certain kind of vanity in real life. How many 'real lives' have nets that can do as much? 'And specially difficult in a fairy-tale,' said he, 'where everything is arbitrary and therefore the object might be anything at all.' His error was profound In life and art both, as it seems to me, we are always trying to catch in our net of successive moments something that is not successive moments something that is not successive. There is no weather. For though I had never read Fenimore Cooper I had enjoyed other books about 'Red Indians'. 'He who would bring home the wealth of the Indians'. Good stories often introduce the marvellous or supernatural, and nothing about Story has been so often misunderstood as this. He replied that he was perfectly certain that 'all that' had made no part of his pleasure. If to love Story is to love excitement then I ought to be the greatest lover of excitement alive. If that were what he wanted any other 'boy's blood' would have done as well. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. My friend described one particular scene in which the hero was half-sleeping on him from behind. A good giant is legitimate: but he would be twenty tons of living, earth-shaking oxymoron. In real life, as in a story, something must happen. It is in essence the story of such a hero surmounting danger from giants. Eddison it succeeds completely. No merely physical strangeness or merely spatial distance will realize that idea of otherness which is what we are always trying to grasp in a story about voyaging through space: you must go into another dimension. For excitement, in the sense defined above, is just what must disappear from a second reading. The re-reader is looking not for actual surprises (which can come only once) but for a certain ideal surprisingness. But that misfortune is evidence. There is no country in the book--save as a storehouse of inns and ambushes. I have seen landscapes (notably in the Mourne Mountains) which, under a particular light, made me feel that at any moment a giant might raise his head over the next ridge. I must here be autobiographical for the sake of being evidential. I have sometimes wondered whether the 'excitement' may not be an element actually hostile to the deeper imagination. If he is a rentier where is the bank, what are his investments? Perhaps the scene in the original was not 'cinematic' and the man was right, by the canons of his own art, in altering it. If the Martian invaders are merely dangerous--if we once become mainly concerned with the fact that they can kill us--why, then, a burglar or a bacillus can do as much. This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. As a social historian I am sounder on Toad Hall and the Wild Wood or the cave-dwelling Selenites or Hrothgar's court or Vortigern's than on London, Oxford, and Belfast. If he were capable of analysing his own experience as the question requires him to do, he would be neither uneducated nor immature. The trap I remember for ever: how they got out I have long since forgotten. All this, even in real life. He would, if anything, have preferred to the Redskin some more ordinary danger such as a crook with a revolver.

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