

Lunch with Lewis

Leaf by Niggle

Other arrangements could be devised according to the tastes or views of those who like allegory or topical reference. But I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.

J.R.R. Tolkien, Forward to *The Lord of the Rings*

Although Lewis loved Tolkien's work (*The Lord of the Rings* was largely written to keep Lewis quiet), that esteem was virtually never reciprocated. Almost every time Tolkien mentions Lewis's books in his correspondence it is to find fault with them, and Sayer suspects that his motives for being so critical were not entirely disinterested, that he envied Lewis's fluency. With these considerations in mind, we should not be surprised that Tolkien dismissed the Narniad; his approval would have been the more remarkable reaction.

There was in those days a tree in the road near Tolkien's house, and one day he arose to find that it had been lopped and mutilated by a neighbor. He began to think of his mythology as his "internal Tree" that might suffer the same fate. He had run out of "mental energy and invention." One morning he woke up with a short story in his mind and wrote it down.

Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*

What genre is "Leaf by Niggle"?

What does the word "parrish" mean?

What does the word "niggle" mean?

What is "the long journey" that Niggle must take?

Name the pairs of characters or voices. Who do you think they are, or what do they represent?

What sorts of jobs does Niggle do at the hospital? How does he change while there? How does he get better? What seems to have been Niggle's greatest problem?

How does it end? and what do you think

Did you learn anything? Did Tolkien have anything to say to you that you needed to hear?