

## Narnia tales' Hindi version hits bookstores

The mythical kingdom of Narnia in the popular children's series "The Chronicles of Narnia" came alive Friday as a Hindi version of the book hit the stores to coincide with the release of the second movie on the series, "The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian".

The Hindi titles of the hugely popular series by author C.S. Lewis, have been published by Harper Collins as 'Narnia Ki Kahaniya' and have been translated by Neel Kamal Mani, Vaishali Mathur and Sonal Mittra.

The translations are the inaugural bouquet of the leading publishing house's foray into Hindi publishing under its new imprint, Harper Hindi.

The "Chronicles of Narnia", written in the 1950s, is set in the 40s at the beginning of the World War, when the four children are evacuated from London to escape the "Blitzkrieg" (German bombings). They are sent to live with Professor Digory Kirke in the countryside.

On a rainy day, while playing hide-and-seek, Lucy, the youngest of the four, discovers that the cupboard that she is hiding in is the magical portal to snow-covered cursed land, known as Narnia.

At a bookstore in Connaught place, 12-year-old Srinjoy Varma, a class VII student, was busy browsing through the slim colourful volume Friday evening.

"I have watched the first movie. Probably, I will watch Prince Caspian this weekend. But this is great," the boy said flipping through the pages. "The language is almost the way we speak Hindi with our friends in school," he laughed, reading stray snatches. His friend, Abhishek, purchased the set of four books priced at Rs.95 each.

"We chose the Narnia series because it is a magical series and the context is very different. The children and the character of the mythical lion Arslan cut across cultures. The series has everything that the children can relate to," Karthika V.K., publisher and chief editor of Harper Collins in India, told IANS.

According to her, the language of the translated series has a contemporary feel to it.

"We realized that the first Narnia movie was a hit. Both children and adults enjoyed it. Hence, we decided to coincide the launch of the book with the release of the film."

The publishing house has tied up with the PVR multiplexes to promote the book through the "Lucky Seat Contest". Walt Disney Productions, which produced the movie has a "free ticket contest" to attract readers. Scholastic, a school book publishing house, will market it in schools.

The publishers are targeting Tier II cities like Lucknow, Bhopal, [Patna](#) and [Ahmedabad](#) audience that have a sizeable Hindi readership.

"The Hindi section will also try to provide readers with the best contemporary writings in Indian literature and promote talented first-time authors. We will also focus on right pricing," P.M. Sukumar, chief executive officer, Harper Collins-India said.

Harper has an impressive list of translations scheduled for later this year. These include translations of Paulo Coelho's "Witch of Potebello", V.S. Naipul's "A House for Mr Biswas", Doris Lessing's novels and a collection of short stories by Geetanjali Sree.

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