

C. S. Lewis is Not Dead

by

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EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS – DAY

It's bright and sunny. Students walk around in the far distance. Happy inspirational guitar music plays. In big blocky text, the words C.S. LEWIS IS DEAD appear on screen, then the word NOT printed in red appears above the word dead.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

Students are sitting in their seats chattering, but nervously. Their hands fidget with their fresh pencils and new notebooks. Focus on JOHN WHEATIE, the perfect eighteen-year-old Christian guy. The students are quieted when PROF ANDERSON, a forty-year-old man in a suit, enters the room.

PROF ANDERSON

I'm Professor Anderson, and this is Philosophy One Five Zero. Let's waste no time, and get started. C.S. Lewis once wrote, "What distinguishes man from the other animals is that he wants to know things."

I often wish that I could meet that author, but we all know I can't because of these five simple words: C.S. Lewis. Is. Dead.

From among the students, John's hand darts up.

JOHN WHEATIE

I can't say that. I'm a Christian.

PROF ANDERSON

(confused)

You can't say... what?

JOHN WHEATIE

What you said about C.S. Lewis... I can't.

PROF ANDERSON

(walking to him)

What's your name?

JOHN WHEATIE

John Wheatie.

PROF ANDERSON

And you can't say that C.S. Lewis is dead?

JOHN WHEATIE

I can't.

PROF ANDERSON

That's unfortunate.

JOHN WHEATIE

Why don't you let me defend the antithesis? I'll use the first five minutes of the next three courses to present my case.

PROF ANDERSON

No. That's not how college works.
(turning back)
Open your textbooks to page six!

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS STREET – DAY

A car pulls up and parks on campus. Inside we see ALICIA, a young blond college girl, wearing a Gryffindor scarf over her mouth. Her FATHER, in the driver's seat, is decked out in his own Harry Potter gear. Other Potter toys and trinkets sit on the dashboard and hang from the rearview mirror.

ALICIA'S DAD

Have a good day.

ALICIA

(harshly)
I'll try.

ALICIA'S DAD

Oh, Alicia. Look, I know it's hard to live in the world of the muggles. They seem happy, but of all these people, there's no one who understands good literature.

Harry Potter is the only series
worth your time.

Alicia stares straight ahead, pouting, without answering.

ALICIA'S DAD

I only insist on this because I
love you. You know that, right?

ALICIA

Yeah, sure dad. Bye.

Alicia opens the door and exits the car, and
the car drives out of sight. As she walks
toward campus, she pulls off the scarf and
stuffs it in her backpack.

INT. CAFETERIA – NIGHT

John and Alicia get their dinner standing in the food
line.

JOHN WHEATIE

I have a professor that's saying
something I don't believe in.

ALICIA

Well then, the answer is simple.
Drop the class.

JOHN WHEATIE

I don't know. I just feel like
C.S. Lewis wants me to defend him.

ALICIA

Look, I just really need you to
focus on me right now. Do you want
to stand up for what's right, or
have a girlfriend?

John pauses, weighing the options. With a condescending
sigh, she walks off.

INT. LIBRARY – DAY

An ASIAN STUDENT sits at a table covered in books and
papers. John walks by with his backpack on one shoulder
when the Asian stops him.

ASIAN STUDENT

You are in my philosophy class,
correct?

JOHN WHEATIE

Yeah, I'm John Wheatie. Nice to
meet you.

ASIAN STUDENT

Why are you saying what you are
saying?

John slides his backpack down to the floor, sits
across from the Asian and smiles.

JOHN WHEATIE

Well you see, some people say that
C.S. Lewis died in nineteen sixty-
three. But... I think of him as my
friend. And he's just as alive as
you or me. I just don't want to
disappoint him. No matter what
anyone else says.

The Asian looks at him, utterly confused.

JOHN WHEATIE

I've gotta go, but if you ever
have any questions, come talk to
me.

ASIAN STUDENT

(hesitant)

Sure.

Josh grabs his bag and leaves. Immediately
the Asian picks up his phone and dials a
number.

ASIAN STUDENT

(in Chinese, with subtitles)

Hi, Dad.

ASIAN DAD (V.O.)

(in a different Asian
language, with subtitles)

Hello, Son.

ASIAN STUDENT

I just met a crazy student who's trying to prove that a dead author is alive.

ASIAN DAD (V.O.)

That's weird. You should definitely stay away from him.

ASIAN STUDENT

I agree. He seems really odd.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS STREET – DAY

Alicia stands on the side of the road, with her scarf over her face, and her phone out texting. Her dad's car pulls up.

ALICIA'S DAD

So, how was your day?

ALICIA

Good, I guess.

As she steps in, her phone falls and slips onto the floor of the car. Her dad sees it and reaches for it.

ALICIA'S DAD

Here let me get-

He stops when he sees what is being played on the phone. Alicia frantically tries to take it back from him, but it is too late.

ALICIA'S DAD

Is this an audiobook of... Narnia?

For a moment they look into each other's eyes. The father in disbelief and shock, and the girl in sorrow and guilt.

ALICIA'S DAD

Say that Harry Potter is the only book series worth reading!

Alicia tears off her Gryffindor scarf, and throws it on the floor.

ALICIA

No! I've started to read The
Chronicles of Narnia, And they're
really good books!

Sorrowful music swells and drowns out the sound of their
yelling.

ALICIA'S DAD (Unheard)

Get out! Get out!

The father slams the car door shut, then turns to his
side and cries uncontrollably. Alicia, weeping, kneels
down against the car door from the outside and pounds on
it, begging her father to take her back.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

Footsteps. Professor Anderson comes down the hall and
enters the classroom. To his surprise, John Wheatie is
standing in the front of the room giving a presentation.

JOHN WHEATIE

To which Mark Twain responded,
"The reports of my death were
greatly exaggerated." Which means
he had it right, and the media...
had it wrong.

PROF ANDERSON

What are you doing?

JOHN WHEATIE

I'm just trying to prove-

PROF ANDERSON

No! I said no! Sit down! We're
having class!

JOHN WHEATIE

Why do you hate C.S. Lewis?

PROF ANDERSON

I don't hate C.S. Lewis.

JOHN WHEATIE

Why do you hate C.S. Lewis!

PROF ANDERSON

Fine! I'll admit, I don't particularly like him. I think his writings are a little overrated. (Especially by that one Christian college in central Kentucky.)

JOHN WHEATIE

How can you dislike someone, if they're dead?

A moment of silence. The two stare each other down. Then Asian student stands up, arms at his side, and musters his courage.

ASIAN STUDENT

C.S. Lewis is not dead!

ANOTHER STUDENT stands up as well.

ANOTHER STUDENT

C.S. Lewis is not dead.

One after the other, the students stand up and repeat the same phrase. Until finally, every last student in the room stands triumphantly. Shocked and angry, Professor Anderson storms out of the classroom.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS STREET – DAY

Barging open a door out of a brick building, Professor Anderson stomps furiously toward the road.

On the road, in a car, an AMERICAN PASTOR and an AFRICAN MISSIONARY sit fussing with the ignition key. The car makes STALLING NOISES.

AMERICAN PASTOR

Why won't this stupid car start?

He tries once, then he tries once more, then finally he gets it to work.

AMERICAN PASTOR

Ah. There we go.

AFRICAN MISSIONARY

God is good, all the time.

The pastor places his arm around the seat beside him, looks through the rear windshield, then puts his foot down on the gas.

The car lurches forwards, not backwards, just as Professor Anderson is crossing the road.

CUT TO BLACK

We hear a loud THUD.

AFRICAN MISSIONARY (V.O.)

Oh dear. I hope he was a Christian.

An AMBULANCE SIREN fades in from a distance.

AUDIO FADE OUT