



Perelandra

C.S. Lewis

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The second novel in Lewis's science fiction trilogy tells of Dr Ransom's voyage to the planet of Perelandra (Venus).

In the second novel in C.S. Lewis's classic science fiction trilogy, Dr Ransom is called to the paradise planet of Perelandra, or Venus, which turns out to be a beautiful Eden-like world. He is horrified to find that his old enemy, Dr Weston, has also arrived and is putting him in grave peril once more. As the mad Weston's body is taken over by the forces of evil, Ransom engages in a desperate struggle to save the innocence of Perelandra...

Perelandra Details

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From Reader Review Perelandra for online ebook

Charles H says

Perelandra is the second of C.S. Lewis's space trilogy. In that universe, it is the name of the planet Venus - a beautiful sinless planet with life at its dawn. Perelandra is a passionate and fierce ocean world with awesome storms, golden sunlight, millions of floating islands, and critters to inhabit them. On Perelandra live only two sentient creatures: the King and the Queen. They rule the world as Adam and Eve. A philologist named Ransom is sent from Earth as God's representative with an unknown mission. When he arrives, he finds the queen alone and soon another guest from Earth arrives. It is the devil's representative--the age old serpent in the form of another man. Thus begins a battle between Ransom and the Devil over the soul of the Queen. The fate of Perelandra hangs in the balance...

Manny says

"James, does the name 'Perelandra' mean anything to you?"

"Yes, I believe so. Poetic name for the planet Venus. Inhabited by two analogues of Adam and Eve, living in a state of prelapsarian bliss. All sounds rather pleasant."

"Very good, James. However, we've received intelligence that SMERSH have infiltrated an agent, who is going to try to tempt the Eve-analogue. We want you to stop him."

"Well, as a boy, I always did enjoy stealing the odd apple."

"Don't be flippant, James."

"I find it's the most effective way to prevent Original Sin."

"Hmf. That's as may be. You'll need to see Q before being mysteriously transported through the aether."

"I look forward to finding out what he's cooked up this time. Please give my regards to Moneypenny."

"I will. And James?"

"Yes?"

"Good luck."

Anyway, that's how I'd have done it. But C.S. Lewis had his own ideas.

Nicholas Kotar says

Whatever you might think of the quality of the currently popular fantasy books, comic books/movies, and long-form TV offerings, one thing is for sure. Dark and grim is king right now.

Of course, judging by the news, there are good reason for this. Things are not going so well in places like Ukraine, Syria, Iraq. This election is more a cheap reality show than the choosing of the leader of the free world. Suicides and drug use are on the rise. There are few heroes to look up to, and most of our writers are doing a decent job giving creative expression to a general sense of purposelessness and tension.

C. S. Lewis lived in a time that was perhaps even more uncertain than ours. World War II, the loss of almost an entire generation of men in England, the rise of both fascism and communism--I could go on for a while. But instead of merely reflecting the ugliness around him, Lewis was bold enough to imagine what it could have been like if the ugliness was cut off at its root.

Perelandra is just this kind of exploration. In this second of Lewis's so-called "Space Trilogy", Ransom (a protagonist loosely based on J.R.R. Tolkien) travels to Venus. This planet is younger than earth, and in terms of spiritual history, the fall of man has not happened. Not yet. Ransom finds himself the only person capable of preventing a man possessed by the devil from subverting a second Eve (this one with green skin).

The language in this book is lush, the imagery fantastic. The philosophy is compelling without being preachy. The conflict is real, and the danger of man's moral fall has never been more convincingly rendered. This is one of my top ten books of all time, in any genre.

I share this book with you today, because tonight is the conclusion of the three-part soap opera known as the "Presidential Debates" (even though there is nothing either presidential or "debate" about any of them). Instead of depressing yourself any further, read this book. I urge you to consider how far we have fallen, and how the lesson of Venus can perhaps help us all remake ourselves and our country in a more positive image.

Check out all my reviews at <http://www.nicholaskotar.com>

Liam Degnan says

2.5 Stars .

So here's a fun fact: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien were the best of friends (Lewis even dedicated The Screwtape Letters to Tolkein). Lewis wrote this series because of a contest him and Tolkien had, in which one of them agreed to write a trilogy about Space Travel, while the other would write a trilogy about Time Travel. For Lewis, this series was the result . . . Tolkien, unfortunately, never actually finished his book on Time Travel haha.

When they first met, Lewis was a staunch atheist, and Tolkien a devoted Roman Catholic. As a direct result of his discussions with Tolkien, Lewis was later converted to Christianity. More than that, ***he became what many consider to be the greatest Christian Apologist of all time*** , and it was his Christian faith that became the point of influence for all of his main works of fiction and non-fiction alike - including the Chronicles of Narnia.

I have read almost everything that Lewis ever wrote. Narnia was my first experience with fantasy when I was

very little. His non-fiction books like *Mere Christianity* and *The Abolition of Man* are a huge part of the reason I came to understand my own faith. *The Great Divorce* completely changed my life. He was a voice of reason where all of the other voices in my life spoke of empty religion. He showed me a God that I could know, rather than a God that I just had to try and appease. I committed to searching and finding the truth, and I found so much beauty as a result.

And it's with that much love that I can tell you these books are by far his worst haha. Lewis has a way of communicating ideas through fiction that is just not present in these books. He spends more time preaching to the reader through his characters than he spends delivering the story - you'd think this would make his message clearer, but the actual result is a bad story and watered down arguments and philosophy. It does not work at all.

This book tells the story of a man named Ransom who travels to a world where The Fall has not yet occurred. He witnesses and interacts with the Green Lady, who is the equivalent of Eve in the Garden of Eden in this world, free of and pain and evil. And then he has to watch as Weston (the villain of this story) comes in to corrupt her. And he has very little power to do anything about it.

It is actually a great concept, which is why I kept the 2.5 Star rating where it is. The points in the book where I could get into the story, and understand what was happening, were excellent. But they were so few and far between that it was spoiled for me. The majority of this book is dialogue in which Ransom preaches to you as the reader, or argues with Weston about good and evil, and it makes for some of the weakest presentations of ideas (in my opinion) that Lewis ever wrote. Ransom is not even a likeable character, so that made it even worse for me.

In seeking to create a world in this book that was entirely perfect, it seems like the reality of what was happening in this story was lost on me. None of it felt real - which is how I hope to feel when reading any type of fantasy or fiction, and that is extremely unfortunate. Had a lot of potential, but was definitely an unfortunate let-down. I tried continuing through book three, but I think I'm going to put these books down for good.

I still love Lewis. I'll just have to pretend these ones don't exist haha =].

Angela Blount says

A classic piece of speculative science fiction, drawn with a deep theological bent.

"...and it will seem to you the master movement. And the seeming will be true. Let no mouth open to gainsay it. There seems no plan because it is all plan: there seems no center because it is all center."

Lewis strikes a balance between continuation and stand-alone in this, the second book in his space trilogy. Unlike the first book, *Out of the Silent Planet*, he doesn't pay tribute to the style of H. G. Wells--and rightly not. Aside from the carry over protagonist (Ransom) and the beefed-up threat of the first book's antagonist (Weston), there's actually little about this book that resembles the first. And the explanations offered of past events leading up to this interplanetary voyage are enough to allow for one to begin here, if they so desire. Still, I would recommend reading them in order—if only to help you appreciate what grew out of that first work.

There are so many philosophical layers to the complexity of this book. The nature of good and evil, perceptions of time, perceptions of “self”, innocence, temptation, mythology, tribulation, sin, and free will—to name a few of the concepts so thoroughly wrestled with in this unabashed snake-in-the-garden allegory. While sometimes a bit long-winded, the approach the author chose to take provokes a fascinating perspective.

The scenario Lewis posed here is disconcerting on so many levels. The Perelandra version of Eve has such a naive and alien perspective, it's strangely entertaining to hear Earth men attempt to explain anything to her in a way she would be able to comprehend. How DOES one explain the concepts of death and evil to a creature who has never seen or experienced either of these in any capacity? (Seriously, if you figure that out, let me know—I'm groping my way through parenthood over here.)

To put it bluntly, this book stretched the limits of my brain. And I can't possibly resent it for that.

"The gods have no commerce here. How then do we know of them? It comes, they told him, a long way round and through many stages. There is an environment of minds as well as of space. The universe is one--a spider's web wherein each mind lives along every line, a vast whispering gallery where ... though no news travels unchanged yet no secret can be rigorously kept."

"Our mythology is based on a solid reality than we dream: but it is also at an almost infinite distance from that base. And when they told him this, Ransom at last understood why mythology was what it was--gleams of celestial strength and beauty falling on a jungle of filth and imbecility."

Lewis' worldbuilding is superb. Everything about Perelandra (Venus)—its dense cloud-cover being observable but impenetrable during Lewis' time—is imagined with such a lush and vivid foreignness. Massive floating landmasses that move and writhe along with the oceans, a plethora of familiar-yet-not plant and animal life, and sensory experiences that go wildly beyond the limits of Earth. Those hoping for the awe of being immersed in a new and different planet are unlikely to be disappointed.

One of my favorite aspects, oddly enough, was Lewis' marvelously creepy depiction of Weston's possessed state. (It's never really made clear whether he's been possessed, or if his previously dead body has essentially been reanimated by a being of pure malevolence.) From the not-quite-right mannerisms to the keen persuasiveness to the sadistic impulse for senselessly maiming and destroying... I was more than unsettled on several occasions.

His take on evil in general is gripping. The idea that this devil/demonic force can sound intelligent and utilize intellect as a means to an end, and yet has no interest in intelligence outside of using it as a tool, rings an eerily true feeling note.

Favorite Quotes:

***All that is made seems planless to the darkened mind, because there are more plans than it looked for. In these seas there are islands where the hairs of the turf are so fine and so closely woven together that unless a man looked long at them he would see neither hairs nor weaving at all, but only the same and the flat. So with the Great Dance. Set your eyes on one movement and it will lead you through all patterns."*

***We have learned of evil, though not as the Evil One wished us to learn. We have learned better than that, and know it more, for it is waking that understands sleep and not sleep that understand waking. There is an ignorance of evil that comes from being young: there is a darker ignorance that comes from doing it, as men by sleeping lose the knowledge of sleep."*

**"Am I then seeing only an appearance? Is it not real at all?"*

"You see only an appearance, small one. You have never seen more than an appearance of anything--not of Arbol, nor of a stone, nor of your own body."

Squire Whitney says

Interesting tale, dampened for me by too much physical description

Alana says

When I was a senior in high school, I decided to do my author paper on C. S. Lewis and choose to specifically emphasize this book. Of the three books in the space trilogy, this one would be my favorite. I love how Lewis takes a look back at what the garden of Eden might have been like while still avoiding being allegorical. I love how he throws in huge theological truths in a more understandable story form. There are points where I would differ from him theologically, but that does little to detract from all that I learned from this book.

David Mosley says

Read in the following years:

2007

2010 (January 31)

2012 (23-25 April)

2013 (29-31 March)

2014 (2-6 August)

2015 (19-27 August)

Douglas Wilson says

Great. Also read in January of 1990. And also read in April of 2009. Also read in January of 1985. Also read in July of 1980. Listened to it again on audio in 2015.

Kat Hooper says

Originally posted at FanLit.

Perelandra is the second volume of C.S. Lewis's SPACE TRILOGY and I liked it even better than Out of the Silent Planet, its predecessor. Cambridge professor Dr. Elwin Ransom is back on Earth and has told his friend Lewis about the adventures he had on the planet Mars and the supernatural beings he met there. When Ransom explains that there's an epic battle between good and evil, that the planet Venus is about to play an

important part, and that he's been called to Venus to do some unknown task, Lewis begins to worry about his friend. Yet he decides to help him get to Venus anyway, so Ransom goes and eventually returns to tell his tale, which Lewis has transcribed for us.

Venus is gorgeous — a lush conglomerate of archipelagos where the land floats on top of the water, so that walking on it is like walking on a waterbed. The sky is full of stunning colors that Ransom has never seen before; exotic trees delight the eye and yield delicious fruit. Other than the strange but friendly animals, Ransom seems to be alone in this world — until he sees a beautiful naked woman waving from a neighboring island. When he finally meets her, he discovers that evil lurks in this seemingly perfect world.

If you were able to ignore the Christian allegory in *Out of the Silent Planet*, you won't be able to do so in *Perelandra* — it's a parallel version of humanity's awakening in the Garden of Eden and Eve's temptation to sin. Evil is trying to gain a foothold and Ransom suddenly realizes what it would mean to bring "the knowledge of good and evil" into a sinless paradise. Ransom discovers that the Biblical admonition to resist temptation may be a spiritual truth on Earth, but at this time on Venus it's a real physical battle and he has been sent to fight it, both with words and fists.

C.S. Lewis, a lover of words and mythology, writes beautifully about the alien paradise of Venus and the possibility that what is myth in one world might be truth in another. He also has much to say about good and evil, sin and obedience, madness and sanity, loneliness and companionship, science and the supernatural, predestination and free will, the nature of God and man, and humanity's purpose in the universe. Some readers will accuse Lewis of preachiness, I'm sure, and that's something that usually annoys me, but though Ransom's introspections go on a little too long, I found it impossible to resist the beauty, logic, and concision of his philosophizing.

I listened to Geoffrey Howard narrate Blackstone Audio's version of *Perelandra* which is just under 8 hours long. Mr. Howard narrates rather than performs the story, which I think is suitable. I'll certainly be listening to him read the concluding volume: *That Hideous Strength*.

Julie Davis says

Just as with *Out of the Silent Planet*, I found the beginning of the book fairly uninviting. However, also just as in that book, having the audio helped me past that to the point where I was amazed at C.S. Lewis's imagination in the world of *Perelandra*. Simply astounding. I am also caught up in the story for its own sake and also, I must admit, because I keep thinking of how much J.R.R. Tolkien liked these books. It is almost a companion piece for *The Lord of the Rings*. Same deep world view, different venue.

UPDATE

This book is so different from *Out of the Silent Planet* and yet we see C.S. Lewis's vivid and inspiring imagination just as clearly. I am simply blown away by his vision of creation on Venus. For me at one point, close to the end, I kept thinking that these are almost glimpses of the sort of creativity and inspiration that we will see in Heaven. Amazing insights as to battling evil, the dance of God's creation and plan, and our part in it.

This is short of five stars only because I find Lewis's style rather heavy-handed. What I'd change I'm not sure. I think it is simply that these books would go on the theology shelf in my library while something like *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings* would go in more general reading. It is not Lewis's fault, and in fact I

now want print copies of these books for rereading, but I prefer the purer fiction style to this one.

Michael says

It is difficult to write a review about “Perelandra”. There is so much that could be said that it is hard to know where to begin. Its story is so rich, the imagery so beautiful, the underlying themes so profound and complex, its theology so full that no summary can do it justice. I would rather simply encourage everyone to read it and let each discover its joys for themselves. But since there is no reason for anyone to merely take my word for it, I will do my best to support my recommendation.

Though the characters and names are different, the story of “Perelandra” follows the basic outline of Milton’s “Paradise Lost”. Creatures made in the image of God arise on a world newly made. They live in the joy of sinless obedience until two visitors arrive from outside their world; the first to warn them of impending evil, the second to tempt them to disobey and fall. But whereas Milton’s herald is the immortal angel Gabriel, Lewis re-introduces his reluctant hero from “Out of the Silent Planet”, the very human Dr. Elwin Ransom.

There are other differences between Milton’s poem and Lewis’ novel. “Paradise Lost” is set on the Earth during the time of Genesis. Perelandra takes place long after the fall of Adam and Eve on a planet named Perelandra. Milton’s tempter is Satan in the form of a serpent. Lewis’ is the brilliant, but twisted Dr. Weston, the physicist from “Out of the Silent Planet”. But these are superficial and only thinly disguise the many similarities between these two great works of literature. It may be fair to say that just as “Paradise Lost” is a retelling of Genesis, “Perelandra” is a retelling of “Paradise Lost”.

Both Milton and Lewis dwell on what it might be like for men and women to live prior to the fall from grace. Such is the genius of both authors that they not only create a convincing image of pre-fallen humanity, they are able to communicate that image to their audience. Their understanding of what we lost in the original fall was so deep, and their longing to return so keen, that unspoiled worlds seem to flow from their pens as smoothly as ink. In one way, though, Lewis was able to do his great predecessor one better. Lewis was not constrained by the nature of Earth as Milton was. Lewis’ Perelandra is a world of many and varied delights, an otherworldly Eden. There are trees, the fruit of which are huge, shimmering, transparent orbs that burst at the lightest touch, bathing the passerby in a thrilling shower. Other trees bear fruits that are achingly beautiful to taste, both savory and sweet. There are fantastic and extraordinary creatures that rival the whimsy of Hieronymus Bosch. Perelandra is easily the most glorious world CS Lewis ever created.

Lewis and Milton also focus on the female as the vector of attack. Lewis wisely avoids speculation as to why this should be. There is no indication that the female is somehow inferior to the male. It is simply a matter of fact that in the history of Earth Eve was deceived, not Adam. It stands to reason that the tempter will follow the same plan.

The last great similarity between “Perelandra” and “Paradise Lost” I want to mention is the way language is used in the temptation of Eve and her Perelandrian counterpart, Tinidril. Both authors give their tempters brilliant speeches with which to seduce their prey. They are eloquent and persuasive, flattering but not obsequious. Their arguments are successful in making that which is forbidden seem attractive and disobedience seem heroic. The tempters are so eloquent that the reader is nearly moved to agree with them.

Which brings me now to two real and remarkable differences between “Paradise Lost” and “Perelandra”.

First, unlike Eve, who's story was carved in history long before Milton lived to set it to verse, Tinidril has a champion in the form of Ransom. He is by her side, fighting constantly against the influence of Weston. It is in their subsequent philosophical battle of words and ideas that Lewis explores a powerful theme. Ransom and Weston fight on uneven ground, with the advantage going to Weston. Ransom has reason and truth on his side, but is constrained by the absolute morals of Christianity and the rules of reason itself not to stray from those ideals. Weston is seductively irrational. He is utterly immoral and can lie in any and every way, twisting and distorting the truth to suit his ends. As the war becomes hopeless, Ransom is faced with a terrible conclusion; reason alone cannot defeat non-reason. A person who is dedicated to being irrational cannot be argued out of their position. There is no example strong enough to persuade them, no beauty in reason sweet enough. In the end, for truth to win over a lie, something extraordinary is necessary. The great example of our own world is the Cross. This is reflected in *Perelandra* in a surprising way.

The second great difference is the end. Ransom is successful in overcoming Weston, and Tinidril overcomes her temptation. She, along with the Tor, the Perelandrian Adam, passes the test that Adam and Eve failed. Together they "step up that step at which [our] parents fell." Lewis takes the theme of unfallen humanity and extends it beyond what Milton conceived. He contemplates what life might have been like had we not fallen, for ourselves and the rest of creation. What would our stewardship of the world and its creatures have been like? How would our relationship with God and the spiritual realm been different? How would our transition from the physical realm to the Heaven have been different? These questions, and others like them, are asked, and answers are hinted at as the book ends with a verbal fugue that would rival the musical fugues of Bach.

"*Perelandra*" is a work of startling beauty that stings the heart of the reader. It was one of Lewis' personal favorites (one supposes it still is) and it is easy to see why. In it, there is a glimpse of Paradise that stands equal to the work of Milton and Dante. If there is any justice in the literary world, it will one day take its rightful place in the literary canon by their sides.

Y.K. Willemse says

Five stars for the world building alone. C. S. Lewis had incredible ability to put himself in a completely foreign situation. The plot was sterling too, with a stirring face off between good and evil.

Megan Baxter says

C.S. Lewis, I'm disappointed in you. And that's the first time that has happened. I don't share your religion, but it's never kept me from enjoying one of your books before. I have been in love with the Narnia books since first I read them. I enjoyed the first book in this series. I even enjoyed the start of the theological discussions in these books. And then I hated where they went.

Note: The rest of this review has been withdrawn due to the changes in Goodreads policy and enforcement. You can read why I came to this decision [here](#).

In the meantime, you can read the entire review at [Smorgasbook](#)

Kathryn says

I re-read this book (the second book in the *Space Trilogy*) for at least the second time as the September selection for my Sci-Fi Fantasy Book Club (meeting on the evening of September 11, 2012). It seems that every time I read this book (which is much more theology and fantasy than it is science fiction) that I like it more.

The main character from *Out of the Silent Planet*, Dr. Elwin Ransom, returns once again in this book; he is sent to the planet Perelandra (Venus) by the Oyrasa of Malacandra (Mars), and he suspects he was chosen not because of any merit on his part but because he knows how to speak the Universal Language. He also has no idea of why he has been sent to Perelandra. He finds on his arrival that Venus is a planet almost entirely water, save for floating islands (very flexible islands, with trees and animals, that rise and fall with the waves; not unlike mats of St. Augustine Grass), one fixed land, and one woman. She is not an Earth woman; in fact, as her conversation with Ransom makes plain, she is the innocent Eve of Perelandra, who has become separated from the King (her Adam), and is now wishing to return to his side, although she knows not where he might be. The floating islands are without doubt a paradise in every way, with fruit lowering from the trees to be eaten, the animals without fear, and the water of the seas drinkable.

Although alone, the Lady is also in more or less constant mental communication with Maledil; and if there was some doubt in the first book as to whom Maledil might be, there is none in this book; the Lady notes that Ransom's world must be especially blessed, because Maledil chose to become Man there. She has been told by Maledil to not sleep upon the Fixed Land, with no reason given for this prohibition, and is much interested in what she can understand of what Ransom tells her about his own planet.

At this point a character from the first book, the very unpleasant Professor Weston, arrives via spaceship; but it soon becomes apparent that he is now demoniacally possessed – and that the aim of the Enemy, via the physical person of Professor Weston, is to convince the Lady of Venus to break the commandment given to her by Maledil about the Fixed Land. Ransom now realizes that his mission is to do what he can do to keep the Enemy from succeeding in this aim, and that he (Ransom) is the instrument of Maledil to keep the Fall from occurring on this planet of Perelandra.

Besides being a good story, this book is quite full of Christian theology, based in large part on the author's views concerning Genesis and *Paradise Lost* by John Milton. Lewis postulates not only a Tempter, but also an ordinary (albeit good) person sent to counteract the designs of Satan. It also makes clear that Maledil is not just for Earth, but for all the universe, which is a comforting thought.

First Recorded Reading: September 11, 2000

Second Recorded Reading: April 28, 2009

This is the second book of C. S. Lewis's Space Trilogy; once again, it has less to do with Space and a lot more to do with overtly Christian theology. When I did my Book Review for the first book, *Out Of The Silent Planet*, my sister observed, "Id read second and tossed it!" I too recalled the second book as being rather overstuffed with theology, more so than one expects in a Mass Market Paperback; but on this reading, I enjoyed the book much more. Perhaps at my age I am more agreeable to overt theology in my books.

The main character in the first book, Elwin Ransom, returns once again in this book; he is sent to the planet Perelandra (Venus) by the Oyrasa of Malacandra (Mars), and he suspects he was chosen for this mission because he knows how to speak the Universal Language. He finds on his arrival that Venus is a planet almost entirely water, save for floating islands (very flexible islands, with trees and animals, that rise and fall with the waves; not unlike mats of St. Augustine Grass), one fixed island, and one woman. She is not an Earth woman; in fact, as her conversation with Ramsom makes plain, she is the Eve of Perelandra, who has become separated from the King (her Adam), and is now wishing to return to his side, although she knows not where he might be. The floating islands and the world are without doubt a paradise in every way, with fruit lowering from the trees to be eaten, the animals without fear, and the water of the seas drinkable.

Although alone, the Lady is also in more or less constant mental communication with Maledil; and if there was some doubt in the first book (*Out Of The Silent Planet*) whom Maledil might be, there is none in this book; the Lady notes that Ransom's world must be especially blessed, because Maledil chose to become Man there. Ransom, though, knows that on his world, Eve fell to temptation; and on this world, the Lady has been commanded to not live or sleep upon the Fixed Land, with no reason given for the prohibition.

Then, one of the other characters from the first book arrives at the planet, Professor Weston; but it soon becomes apparent that he is now demonically possessed - and that the aim of the Enemy, via the physical person of Professor Weston, is to convince the Lady of Venus to break the commandment given to her by Maledil about the Fixed Land. Ransom now realizes that his role is to do what he can do to keep the Enemy from fatally tempting the Lady to break the commandment of Maledil, and that he is the instrument of Maledil to keep the Fall from occurring on this planet of Perelandra.

As noted, this book is chock full of Christian theology; but I have no quarrel with it, as it postulates that God and his Son are not just concerned with this Earth, but with all of the Planets, and the Universe. We speak of the Universe; but it's rather hard for us to conceive of more of a Universe than the round ball we are sitting on; and this book makes one think outside of the Box, or the Ball, or whatever you wish to call our normal conceptions of God and His Son.

Stephen says

5.0 stars. I thought this was an AMAZING book. After liking *Out of the Silent Planet*, this novel blew me away. The theme of the book is a re-telling of the "Fall" of Adam and Eve using Venus (called Perelandra) as the setting. You can tell that C. S. Lewis was really "feeling" the prose as he wrote this and his passion for the work was evident throughout. I thought it read like lush poetry that was both powerful and emotional.

I was deeply impressed by this story and now look forward to reading the last book of the trilogy *That Hideous Strength*. One final note, I listened to the audio version of this story read by Geoffrey Howard and I thought he did a SUPERB job with the narration. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!

Trice says

Maybe it's the audio version or maybe it's the timing, but this time around - my 2nd through the book - there are some thoughts that are really connecting at every level, in particular the horror of the Unman and of the Fallen and the understanding of the joy and freedom found in obedience to the one true God.

The one thing that's bothered me so far is that in a couple places Lewis almost seems to imply that we shouldn't be pushing for greater scientific understanding, or for space exploration. This bother is balanced I think by the fact that this seems tied to the foundation for his narrative - because of the way he has set things up for this story to take place it binds him to this perspective, whether or not he would have agreed with this in our reality. He's set up a close variation on reality to talk about the Really Real.

With this series I find I need to shift my mindset to get into the story as the narrative could feel really dry - it is in the style of a scientist relaying basic facts and observations, and I find I need to get inside the voice to see what is happening and to understand the depth of the characters.

I love the Lady; and I love how Lewis' narrative is a sympathetic eye-opener into what Eve may have suffered - we don't know the details of what happened in the Garden of Eden, but we can know from our own lives that temptation and the words of the Deceiver are never as simple or obvious as they might seem in a tale told to us. I love, too, Ransom's discussion of his own name, talking about etymology and coincidence and meaning and the difference between why/how something develops and why/how it is the way it is in the Now. And to read Ransom's decision-making process is to read of real spiritual struggle, which I find reassuring somehow. How often we rationalize away Truth that we've discovered or Need that we see or possible action that we could take.

One thing I found strange is that, for all Ransom seems very aware of spiritual forces on Thulkandra (Earth), he seems almost oblivious to their reality when he is on Perelandra. In some ways this was a good reminder for how we often rationalize away our own understanding of this as well, but it seemed inconsistent somehow.

I really wish I could have heard the Inklings' discussion of this one! My, what did Tolkien think of Ransom being a philologist???

as a very minor, very peripheral note, rereading (/listening) to this now, I'm reminded of a special *Babylon 5* episode that I saw 3-4 years ago - takes place a bunch of years after the events of the series - in which the commander of B5 (it's a woman, which I don't remember clearly from the end of the series, but anyway) gets help from a priest on the station to deal with a guy they have in the brig. It ends up (spoiler alert if you're going to go out and look for this) that he is possessed by the kind of being that was known as a demon on Earth. The confrontations were pretty impressive in a certain way, and she makes this dramatic tell-all speech to explain that they know what he is and understand that he and the others like him were cast down from the physical heavens and imprisoned on Earth by the older beings for some now unknown and horrible crime. Now I'm thinking it wouldn't surprise me if Michael Straczynski (or whoever wrote these follow-up episodes) was riffing off Lewis' *Perelandra*.

Alex says

"In the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost, here goes--I mean, Amen!" --Dr. Ransom, before throwing a rock in Satan's face.

The second book in C.S. Lewis' "Space Trilogy" was overall better than the first. My one caveat for tackling this trilogy is to prepare yourself for some hardcore contemplation of Christianity and its relationship to outer space--it's definitely not for everyone, but I'm enjoying it. *Perelandra* sees Dr. Ransom traveling to

Venus (which is actually called Perelandra) at the behest of a celestial being known as Maleldil. As a young planet, Perelandra has only two sentient inhabitants who are the Adam and Eve of their world. Though Ransom isn't quite sure what he's supposed to be doing on this new planet, he soon realizes that his old nemesis Professor Weston has arrived to further his plans of conquering the planets of our solar system in the name of humanity. Also, Weston is host to The Bent One (Satan), so he's a lot scarier. A good chunk of the book covers Weston's attempts to tempt Tililandra (Venus Eve), and Ransom's attempts to foil him, all of which present interesting questions regarding the actual temptation of Adam and Eve--I like the idea of someone like Ransom, who knows what Satan is up to, trying to use his own philosophical rhetoric to try and convince Eve not to listen. A bit of a mind fudge, to be sure.

It's the kind of deep introspection into the nooks and crannies of Christianity that Lewis is often conducting, but the idea of expanding those ideas to the infinite cosmos is very interesting to think about. If you're a nerd about C.S. Lewis' other writings about Christianity and a nerd about encountering God and angels in space, this series will fill your head with interesting philosophical concepts to think about.

Mike (the Paladin) says

My favorite of the trilogy. Excellent.

The *Space Trilogy* by C.S. Lewis is a classic early science fiction read while at the same time being a more than excellent allegorical story of Christian faith. I'd say that if you aren't a Christian that won't keep you from enjoying the books. The allegory aside you will still get wonderful time tested S/F classic.

This volume gives a sort of retelling allegorically of the Genesis story, but with a difference. This book is (in my opinion) more than simply well written. It is in its way inspired. Personally I also find it the best in the (C.S.Lewis space Trilogy) series story wise.

If you have read the first in the series (Out of the Silent Planet) then you've already met "Ransom" and been introduced to the allegorical "pictures" or names used to represent God. Here Lewis takes a look at temptation and human reaction to it. He gives a view of the type of reasoning that allows us to lie to ourselves and justify actions we know to be, at best unwise and at worst wrong...even evil and deadly. He lays out a story in which we can see the the choices presented in Genesis and get a thoughtful take on them.

Highly recommended. I like the entire trilogy (each of which has it's own strong points) but I think I like this one best of the three. Just my opinion.

Fred Warren says

C.S. Lewis' Perelandra is my favorite Christian science fiction novel. It's the second book in his celebrated Space Trilogy, which chronicles the adventures of British philologist (language expert) Edwin Ransom as he travels between Earth, Mars, and Venus and discovers his fate is inextricably connected with events both physical and spiritual on all three worlds.

In Perelandra, Ransom is transported to Venus, "Perelandra," a world of vast oceans and floating islands. There he meets Tinidril, a beautiful woman, human in all respects other than her green skin, who is both

piercingly intelligent and oddly naive. And naked. Fair warning, everybody in this story is naked, but it's just a matter-of-fact thing. She resides on one of the floating islands, having been instructed by the spiritual ruler of her world to await her husband there, and under no circumstances to spend the night on the continent, the "fixed land." Ransom soon discovers he's not the only visitor. Professor Weston, an evil scientist who shanghaied Ransom onto a spacecraft to Mars in the trilogy's first book, *Out of the Silent Planet*, lands on Perelandra. He assures Ransom that he's learned from his mistakes and reformed, but he seems focused on convincing Tinidril to disobey the one restriction on her idyllic life. As Ransom attempts to counter Weston's arguments, it becomes clear that Weston is the puppet of a supernatural force that dwarfs Ransom in both strength and intellect, yet Ransom must somehow prevail if he is to rescue Tinidril and her infant world from the enslavement to evil that has already befallen Earth.

Okay, this sounds more like fantasy than science fiction. We know that there are no oceans or life of any sort comprehensible to us on Venus. In 1943, when the book was written, what lay beneath the clouds of Venus was still a mystery, and many writers thought it might be a water world. This story continues the theme of travel between planets and speculations on the nature of what life might exist elsewhere in the solar system, how it got there, and what its ultimate purpose might be, begun in the trilogy's first book and continuing into the third book, *That Hideous Strength*. In Perelandra, Lewis combines the wondering about other worlds with a very interesting question that is firmly in the realm of Christian speculation: If there is intelligent life on other worlds, how might God's plan for them be similar or different than in our experience? Lewis posits a world whose Adam and Eve have not fallen from grace, then brings a member of our own fallen race into their story as an ally in their first encounter with temptation. In the best tradition of science fiction, this speculative twist on the familiar can be both thought-provoking and illuminating. Some may find the idea of a race of beings beyond Earth, whose redemption is carried out in a very different fashion than our own, scandalous.

I thought it was some kind of awesome when I read it for the first time as a high school kid, and the scientific anachronisms didn't bother me a bit. The last couple of chapters are very powerful, stirring thoughts of what could have been and what might be.

If you've not read the book, you should. It stands alone quite well, though you may want to read *Out of the Silent Planet* first to get the larger context of the story.
