

The Magician's Nephew Study Guide

The Magician's Nephew by C. S. Lewis

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Overview

Lewis remarks that *The Magician's Nephew* "is a very important story because it shows how all the comings and goings between our own world and the land of Narnia first began." He had no trouble with the idea that life might exist on other planets, and before writing *The Magician's Nephew*, he had written three science fiction novels about what life on other planets might be like: *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Lewis imagines the creation of a new universe, and part of his purpose is to speculate on what might happen in a new creation. He borrows from the accounts of the Creation in the Bible, but he shows significant differences, especially in Digory Kirk's averting the Fall that Adam and Eve did not. Digory resists temptation and does not eat of the fruit. This does not mean *The Magician's Nephew* is a religious tract; it is a fun, exciting adventure among three worlds and is more humorous than serious.



About the Author

Clive Staples Lewis was born on November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Ireland, son of Albert James and Flora Augusta (Hamilton) Lewis. As a small child, he decided that he wanted to be called Jack, perhaps taking the name from a friend's dog. He was known as Jack to his friends throughout the rest of his life. On April 21, 1905, Lewis and his family moved to a large house named Little Lea. This house was oddly designed, with the interior walls not matching the exterior walls, so that there were numerous nooks where Lewis and his older brother could get between the walls. In these hidden places, they would play games. The house had rooms that were unused, and in these rooms Lewis would sit with a stack of sandwiches and a stack of books and spend a day working through them. Little Lea became the model for the professor's house in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Lewis remembered his mother as being somewhat remote, perhaps because she had been seriously ill through much of his early life. She had breast cancer, and it was discovered too late for surgery, and medical science of the time had little else to offer in hope for a cure. On August 23, 1908, she died; Lewis himself was sick at the time and did not understand why she did not check in on him that night. The loss of his mother was a source of grief for the rest of his life.

Lewis's father Albert was desperately depressed by his wife's death, and it was all he could do to keep up with his work as a solicitor in Belfast, where he was noted for his eloquence. Albert became withdrawn and sad, and he grew remote from his sons, who were also grieving. As was typical for middle-class families of the time, Albert sent his sons away to "public schools" (they would be called "private schools" in America). The adult Lewis remembered these schools mostly with loathing. The first school he attended was run by a madman who loved beating boys and would do so for no reason at all. Other schools proved equally brutal; at one or two, bullies were allowed to beat up anyone they chose without reprisal or discipline from the adults running the schools. It is no wonder that Lewis called these places "concentration camps" and that he despised most schools throughout his life. This loathing appears in *Prince Caspian*, where a girl and a teacher are liberated by Aslan himself from miserable schools.

Lewis blamed his father for his miseries because his father had been the one to send him to such awful places. Yet, his father did him a great favor when he persuaded a favorite but retired teacher from his own days in school to tutor Lewis. Perhaps Albert recognized in him great potential that was not being developed in schools. The teacher was William Kirkpatrick, with whom Lewis went to live in 1914. Kirkpatrick was a great logician as well as a great teacher, and he taught Lewis how to reason and how to debate logically; this training would make Lewis one of the most intimidating public debaters of his day, and it would be reflected in his carefully reasoned theology.

Lewis loved Kirkpatrick and renames him Digory Kirke, the professor of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the boy adventurer of *The Magician's Nephew*, and the kindly man of *The Last Battle*.



World War I began in 1914, and so when Lewis went to attend college at Oxford in 1917, he found it to be a mostly empty place because many of the students had been drafted into the army. As an Irishman, Lewis was exempt from the draft, but he volunteered to join the army anyway. England was desperate for troops, especially junior officers, so Lewis went through a quick officer training program and was sent to the front lines in 1917. While training, he made friends with Paddy Moore, and they made a pact with each other that if one died but the other survived, the survivor would care for the other one's family. Lewis's family was not really in need of care. Lewis's older brother Warnie had become an officer in the navy and was on his way to a fine naval career, and his father Albert was a successful solicitor. But it was Paddy who was killed; after the war, Lewis took into his home Paddy's mother and sister, and he cared for the mother, called "Minto," until her death a couple of decades later.

Lewis, an officer, was horribly wounded in combat while standing at the front-line trenches, talking with his sergeant. A German shell blew apart the sergeant, sending shrapnel and bones through Lewis's body.

He would spend the remainder of the war, and some months afterward, recuperating at hospitals in England. It is from his experiences in World War I that he draws on for the depiction of combat and soldiers in "The Chronicles of Narnia." The war may have been the source of the terrible nightmares that plagued him for the rest of his life and that are reflected in the account of the Darkness in *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader,"* although his mother's premature death is also a possible source.

Lewis had decided that there was no God when he was young, perhaps fourteen years old. When he returned to Oxford, he became an outspoken advocate of atheism.

He was an outstanding student and eventually became a member of the faculty, teaching literature to undergraduates. He also helped form a club called the Inklings, which met at his Oxford home. A number of Christians were part of the club, most notably J. R. R. Tolkien, a Roman Catholic.

As Lewis recalled it, at age thirty, he had a moment of revelation and while riding a bus, he realized that his arguments against the existence of God were nonsense and logically insupportable. He thus believed that there was a God. In 1931, while on a trip with Tolkien and another friend, Lewis had a profound religious experience in which he abruptly became Christian. He would later say that he came to this belief partly from his love of mythology and that he regarded Christianity as the one "true myth" because Christ's resurrection was historical fact.

During the 1930s, Tolkien would read chapters from the books he was writing—*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*—to the Inklings. Tolkien's reworking of ancient northern European mythologies captivated Lewis, and he was inspired to begin a book of his own in 1938: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. He worked on this book throughout World War II. Because the Germans were bombing London and other British cities, children were sent from the cities to live in the country, and Lewis took in many of these children. Few of them realized that he was the world-famous C. S. Lewis, who



made radio broadcasts about God and religion and whose writings on religion were read the world over. The children liked him, perhaps because of his kind behavior, perhaps because he told them stories. Some of these stories formed the basis of books in "The Chronicles of Narnia," and the children, especially the girls, taught him much about their capacity for courage.

After the war, Lewis finished writing *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and he was inspired to write another novel about Lucy, Peter, Susan, and Edmund—the Pevensie children. This book was *Prince Caspian*. In a burst of creativity, Lewis wrote "The Chronicles of Narnia" over a few years, most likely finishing them, except for revising, by 1950.

To maximize sales and thereby profits, his publisher brought out only one volume a year, which allowed Lewis time to tinker with them until the last one was published.

At first, critics deplored Lewis's taking time from his important literature for adults to write what they considered to be unimportant writings for children. Given the brilliance of the novels of "The Chronicles of Narnia," such an opinion seems baseless.

Even so, there are still people who believe anything written for young readers is automatically unimportant.

On the other hand, children loved Lewis's books. By 1956, he was inundated with letters from children who loved Narnia and wanted to tell him so. He would awaken before dawn just so he could read and reply to letters before breakfast; he tried to send a reply to every child who wrote to him. In America, public libraries had to keep several copies of each volume in stock because of the demand to check them out. By 1960, people were calling the novels "The Chronicles of Narnia" because they are told in a first-person voice, which sounds like a storyteller recounting (chronicling) history for his audience.

During the 1950s, Lewis suffered from a bad heart. He was a heavy drinker and smoked sixty-six cigarettes a day, but the harmful effects this could have on hearts were not as well publicized in those days as they are now. His brother Warnie retired from the navy and came to live with Lewis at the Kilns, his home in Oxford since 1930.

Adding to his physical stress was his commute by train to Cambridge. Lewis's advocacy of Christianity had offended atheists at Oxford University, and his popularity with the students and with a large body of readers made others envious, hindering the promotions he deserved. Cambridge University, on the other hand, saw an opportunity to add a great literary scholar to their staff and gave Lewis many of the honors that he was due. In those days, a train ran directly between the two universities, and Lewis would make the commute both ways many times in a week, although he had sleeping quarters at Cambridge.

Lewis had another reason to be concerned about his weak heart. He had fallen in love. An American poet, Joy Gresham, twenty years younger than he, had fled to England with her two sons to escape an abusive husband. A generous man, Lewis found them



housing and even paid for the sons' schooling. Gresham could swear as well as any man, which Lewis liked, and she shared his passion for literature. They fell deeply in love but did not marry at first.

When Gresham was diagnosed with cancer, Lewis most likely felt the same desperation caused by his mother's death from cancer. Under English law, Gresham had to pay for her own medical care because she was a foreigner; the costs of her care were very high, even for a successful author such as Lewis. Thus, Gresham and Lewis had a civil wedding ceremony in secret, making her eligible for free medical care in England because she was married to a British subject. Occasionally in accounts of Lewis's life, one may find the claim that the marriage was one of convenience, that Lewis, who loved his bachelor life, married only for the sake of helping Gresham. This is not true; Gresham's son Douglas recalls his mother and Lewis having a passionate relationship long before the wedding. Douglas (as cited in A. N. Wilson's *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*, 1990) says that he saw Gresham and Lewis's physical affection himself. They were in love.

When Gresham's cancer went into remission, Lewis was overjoyed, even though he began to suffer from osteoporosis (loss of bone density). For several years, Gresham, the boys Douglas and David, and Lewis lived together at the Kilns. When Gresham fell ill again, and she seemed certain to die, she and Lewis had a hasty religious wedding in the hospital. Gresham recovered enough to take a trip to Greece with Lewis and friends, but she died soon thereafter.

Her death on July 13, 1960 devastated Lewis, who had a crisis of faith, which he worked out by writing *A Grief Observed* (1961). Determined not to become remote from David and Douglas, Lewis included them in his grief. Openhearted and open-minded, he consulted a rabbi about where to buy kosher foods and how to observe David's spiritual needs when David decided he wanted to follow his mother's ancestral faith, Judaism, rather than her actual faith, Christianity. Douglas remembers Lewis with great affection, referring to Lewis as his real father.

Warnie remembered that in late 1963, Lewis had said that he thought he had done all that God had set for him to do. On November 22, 1963, after writing letters in the morning, Lewis fell in his bedroom and died, heart failure the most likely cause of death. His death was little noted because of the assassination of President Kennedy in the United States, which also occurred that day and dominated the news media for weeks.



Plot Summary

The sixth book in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series by C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* is in fact a prequel to *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and tells the tale of the creation of Narnia and how evil was introduced into this magical land. Seen through the eyes of two children, Digory and Polly, the story weaves through several different worlds and examines the differences between good and evil hearts.

Digory Kirke and his ailing mother move into the London home of Letty and Andrew Ketterly, who are brother and sister. Digory soon meets Polly, the young girl who lives next door, and they begin spending a great deal of time together. They decide to try to get into the empty house that is attached to their row houses. Misjudging the distance, they wind up in Uncle Andrew's study, where they see Yellow and Green Rings laid out on a table. Uncle Andrew offers one of the Rings to Polly and when she touches it, she vanishes. Uncle Andrew explains that the Rings are made of magic dust and the Yellow Rings have the power to take someone to another world, while the Green Rings should bring that person back. Because Polly does not have a Green Ring, Digory goes after her with another Ring.

Digory finds Polly in the Wood between Worlds, a transition place from which a person can access other worlds through the Rings and the pools of water. They decide to explore and find themselves in Charn, an empty, cold world, where nothing is living. Wandering around, they come to the Hall of Images, which is full of seated people in robes and crowns. A golden bell and hammer sit in the middle of the room, with a warning about ringing the bell. Digory rings the bell before Polly can stop him. At the end of the room, the most beautiful and fierce woman, Queen Jadis, awakens. While the building is crumbling around them, the trio makes their escape. The Queen tells the children that she spoke the deplorable word, killing off all of the people of Charn, in an effort to wrest power away from her sister. The children use the Rings and try to escape without the Queen, but she manages to grab hold of them, taking her with them when they travel back to the Wood between Worlds, and then to London.

In London, the Queen, or the Witch as she is now called, confronts Uncle Andrew. She decides that she will take control of their world. Uncle Andrew calls her a cab and they depart. Later, they return amid chaos. A crowd of people and policemen are chasing the Queen, who has stolen jewelry and the horse and carriage that she is now driving. Digory and Polly realize that they must get her out of London. They use the Rings again. This time, Uncle Andrew, the Cabby, the horse, and the Witch accompany Digory and Polly, all joined in the journey through touching each other when the Ring was used.

The group finds themselves on solid ground, surrounded by darkness. They begin to hear a Voice singing. Gradually, the darkness fades, and the landscape emerges. The Voice continues to sing. As the song changes, more and more things begin to appear. The group sees that the Voice is coming from a big, shaggy Lion, who is walking in slow



arcs toward them. The Witch becomes frightened and throws part of a Lamp-Post at the Lion before running away. The children and Cabby continue to watch in awe.

Soon, trees, flowers, and animals spring from the earth. The Lion chooses some of the animals, and the others wander away. Digory, Polly, Cabby, and Strawberry the horse, follow the Lion, Aslan. Digory wants to ask Aslan if he has something that can save Digory's mother. They hear Aslan charge the animals with protecting and taking care of the land, Narnia. When they catch up, Aslan identifies Digory as the boy who brought evil into Narnia. Aslan also brings Cabby's wife to Narnia and tells them that they will be the king and queen. Finally, Aslan turns Strawberry the horse, into a winged horse named Fledge.

Aslan asks Digory to go to the garden at the top of the hill and retrieve one of the apples from the tree at the center of the garden. This will help to protect Narnia from the Witch. Digory and Polly climb on Fledge and the three fly toward the garden. Soon, it starts getting late and the trio decides to stay in a valley for the night and continue on in the morning. They hear something as they are falling asleep but cannot find anything. The next morning, they fly to the garden. A fence surrounds the garden and the gates contain the warning to only take fruit for others. Digory alone goes in and finds the tree with the silver apples. As he turns to leave, he sees that the Witch is also there. She is eating one of the apples, her face a deadly white. Digory runs toward Fledge and Polly outside the garden. The Witch almost catches him, trying to convince him to use his Ring to return to London with the apple. The Witch says that it will save his mother. Digory is tempted to do so but chooses to bring the apple to Aslan. Fledge, Polly, and Digory fly back to Narnia.

Aslan instructs Digory to throw the apple toward the river. After Digory does this, they go to the coronation of Cabby and his wife. When they look toward the river, a tree is quickly growing where Digory has thrown the apple. Aslan says that the Witch will not come near this tree and so it protects Narnia. Aslan tells Digory to pick an apple from this tree for his mother, for it will cure her.

Aslan returns Digory, Polly, and Uncle Andrew to London. Digory gives his mother the apple, and by the next morning, she is better. The children bury the Rings and the apple core in the back yard. A tree grows from the core. Digory's father writes that he is coming back from India, so Digory, his mother, and father move back to the country.

Later, when the tree is blown down, Digory has a wardrobe made out of the wood. Years later, other children use this wardrobe to reach Narnia.



Chapter 1 The Wrong Door

Chapter 1 The Wrong Door Summary

The story takes place a long time ago, when a grandfather was a child. In London, there lives a girl named Polly Plummer. Polly lives in a long row of houses that are all joined together. One morning, she is in the back garden, when a boy scrambles over the wall from the garden next door.

The boy introduces himself as Digory. Digory has lived his whole life, so far, in the country, but his father is now away in India, and his mother is ill. They've come to live with an aunt and a mad uncle. Digory's uncle has a study on the top floor of the house, and Digory is never allowed to go up there.

This is how Polly and Digory come to know each other, and they begin to meet almost every day. Because the summer is one of the wettest and coldest there has been for years, the children are often driven indoors. Polly has discovered a cistern and a dark place behind it, through a door in the box-room of the attic of the house, and she shares this secret with Digory. Polly has used the bit of tunnel as a smugglers' cave, putting old packing cases, bottles, and various treasures up there.

Digory thinks that the tunnel runs the entire length of the row houses. Polly says the house beyond Digory's has been empty for a long time, and they both think that it might be haunted, although they don't say this to each other. They decide to try to get in. They measure how long Polly's house is, and then decide that if they double that, they'll know when Digory's house ends and the empty one starts. They step from rafter to rafter, at last coming to a little door in the brick wall. They push the door catch around and look into an attic, which is not deserted but furnished. Polly steps into the room. The room is furnished as a sitting room, with shelves of books and a fire burning in the fireplace. On a table is a wooden tray with pairs of Yellow and Green Rings. The Rings are very bright.

Polly notices a faint humming sound. It is a nice and musical tone, but so faint that Polly could hardly hear it. Polly calls Digory in, telling him that no one is there and asking what he thinks the Rings are. While they are talking, the high-backed chair in front of the fire turns around, and a man rises from it. It is Uncle Andrew. The children did not go far enough in the tunnel and are in Digory's house, in his Uncle's forbidden study.

Uncle Andrew shuts the door behind them before Polly and Digory can escape. Uncle Andrew tells them that he is delighted to see them, because he wanted two children. Uncle Andrew is in the middle of an experiment and wants the children to help him. Uncle Andrew asks Polly if she would like a Ring. Uncle Andrew would be delighted to give her a Yellow Ring right now, but he tells her he can't give her a green one yet. Uncle Andrew urges her to try on a yellow one. Digory yells for her not to touch them, but he is too late. As soon as her fingers touch the Ring, she vanishes from the room.



Chapter 1 The Wrong Door Analysis

The beginning chapter of *The Magician's Nephew* offers several insights into the broader narrative of the work and its connections to the other books in the Narnia series by C.S. Lewis. The first paragraph places the story in a time long ago, before the events of the other stories. Lewis also writes that this is an important story in the series that he is writing, because it shows how Narnia began. Although this book is the sixth book in the Chronicles of Narnia, and the second to the last book in the series, the events in the story take place before any of the others.

Lewis introduces the reader to several main characters in the opening chapter. Polly and Digory meet and begin to spend time together, exploring and playing. Digory has recently moved from the country, because his father is out of the country, and his mother is dying. Digory will be haunted by his mother's health throughout the novel and, in part, the adventures that follow in the book take part because Digory thinks he might be able to somehow save his mother. Digory and his mother are staying with Uncle Andrew and Aunt Letty, who are brother and sister. Uncle Andrew is a selfish, creepy old man, who is also afraid to test out his own creations. When Polly and Digory accidentally wind up in his attic study, he holds them hostage until he is able to trick them into using the Rings, even though he doesn't know what consequence that will have for them. Although Uncle Andrew is not the most evil character in the novel, his selfishness contrasts throughout with Digory, who, although he makes mistakes, has good intentions and a good heart. They provide an almost constant example of the struggle between good and evil, one of the main themes of the book.



Chapter 2 Digory and His Uncle

Chapter 2 Digory and His Uncle Summary

Digory screams in horror that Polly has disappeared. Uncle Andrew clasps a hand over Digory's mouth, telling Digory that they don't want to upset Digory's mother. Uncle Andrew's experiment has worked, and Polly has vanished out of this world. Uncle Andrew tells Digory that he has sent her to another world. Digory's godmother had given Uncle Andrew a secret box before she died, but he did not burn it as she had requested. Uncle Andrew didn't open the box for a long time. He found that the box was from the lost city of Atlantis. Uncle Andrew also began studying magic and so he came to have an idea of what was in the box. The box contained something that had been brought from another world when this one was just beginning. The box contained dust from another world and Uncle Andrew realized that, if he could only get it into the right form, the dust might draw people back to that world. Uncle Andrew made the Yellow Rings, but he thought that the Yellow Rings would send any creature that touched it to that world, but they wouldn't be able to get back. Later, he made the Green Rings. Uncle Andrew wanted to send someone into the Other Place so that he could find out what it was like, but he didn't want to go himself.

Uncle Andrew tells Digory that someone needs to go after Polly, with two Green Rings, one to bring the person back and one to bring Polly back. Digory realizes that Uncle Andrew will not go after Polly himself and that Digory will need to go. Uncle Andrew tells Digory that the Rings only work when they touch the skin, so if Digory carries them in his pocket, nothing will happen until they touch them. Uncle Andrew thinks that the Green Rings will get them back to this world but doesn't know for sure.

Digory is angry with Uncle Andrew but knows that he has to go after Polly. "Then he buttoned up his coat, took a deep breath, and picked up the Ring. And he thought then, as he always thought afterwards too, that he could not have done anything else" (pg. 27).

Chapter 2 Digory and His Uncle Analysis

The second chapter tells the reader more about why Polly has disappeared after she touched the Yellow Ring. The Rings are magic. Uncle Andrew has constructed them from dust that came from the lost city of Atlantis. Uncle Andrew's selfishness and evil desires are again revealed when he relates how he promised to destroy the box but didn't, instead using the material to create the Rings. Uncle Andrew is smart and crafty in creating the Rings, but he is also afraid and self-interested. Uncle Andrew is willing to sacrifice Polly and Digory, but not willing to do the same himself. Because he doesn't know how the Rings really work or what will happen once they are used, he could be sending Polly and Digory to a dangerous place or to a place from which they can't get

return. Yet Uncle Andrew doesn't care. Uncle Andrew only wants to satisfy his own curiosity, at the expense of others.

The chapter aptly begins the comparisons between Digory and Uncle Andrew. Although they are related, the two are very different. After Polly has disappeared, either Uncle Andrew or Digory could have gone after her. Yet, Uncle Andrew forces Digory to be that person. Digory knows that he has to do what is right, despite knowing the dangers and knowing that he might never see his mother again. The comparisons between the two will continue in later chapters, particularly when the characters watch Narnia's creation, and help to explore the themes of good and evil.



Chapter 3 The Wood Between the Worlds

Chapter 3 The Wood Between the Worlds Summary

Digory immediately vanishes, and everything becomes muddled. The next thing he knows, there is a green light coming down on him from above and a darkness below. Digory thinks he is in water, and he feels himself rushing upward. Digory's head comes out of the water into the air, and Digory scrambles onto the shore. Digory notices that he is not wet or panting for breath from being under the water. Digory is by the edge of a small pool that is surrounded by woods. There are other pools as far as he could see, and the woods are very much alive, even though he can't hear or see any birds, insects, or animals.

Digory has half forgotten how he had come there. Digory is not thinking about Polly, Uncle Andrew, or even his mother. Digory notices a girl lying at the foot of a tree nearby. The girl tells him that she thinks she has seen him before, and he agrees. The girl thinks that she has been there a very long time. They try to figure out how they know each other. They see a guinea pig with a Yellow Ring attached to it. They realize that each of them has a Yellow Ring on their fingers, as well. At the same moment, they remember where they came from and what happened that got them there.

They think that if they jump in the same pool, it will bring them back to London. They shut their eyes and jump. There is a great splash, but when they open their eyes, they are still in the woods, and the pool of water they are standing in is only a few inches deep. Digory realizes that they are still wearing their Yellow Rings and so they must change Rings to get home. They put the green Rings on, but before they jump, Digory cries that he wants to see what is in the other pools. Digory thinks that the woods are just an in between place between worlds and that each pool represents another world.

Polly says that she doesn't want to try another pool until they've made sure that they can get back to the old one. Digory reminds her that if they go back right away, Uncle Andrew will catch them and take the Rings away. Polly suggests going part of the way back so that they'll know, and they can quickly change Rings at the last minute to get back to the woods. Digory has to go along with Polly, because she refuses to explore further until they know they can get back. They put on the Green Rings and jump into the pool. This time, it works, and they move back toward the old world. They see Jupiter and the rows and rows of houses in London, and then the walls of the houses. Uncle Andrew starts to come into view but before he becomes totally clear, Polly shouts to change the Rings. They do, coming back out in the woods.

Digory starts to pick a pool to leap into to take them to another world, but Polly stops him, telling him that they need to mark the pool that will take them back to their old world. Digory cuts a long strip of turf. They try jumping into another pool but only get



their feet wet. Uncle Andrew has had the wrong idea about the Rings. The yellow ones are not "outward" and the green ones "inward" at all. The stuff in the Yellow Rings have the power to draw one to the woods, while the stuff in the green ones is trying to get out of the woods to its own place. The children do not quite realize this and talk about what might be the problem. They decide to put on the Green Rings and jump in the new pool to see if that works. Digory counts down, and they jump.

Chapter 3 The Wood Between the Worlds Analysis

Polly and Digory land in the Wood between the Worlds, and they begin to realize that this place is a stepping-stone to other worlds. The woods almost cause them to forget London and their lives there. This is the first of several places that Polly and Digory will encounter, using the pools to jump into other worlds.

This chapter also presents a contrast between Polly and Digory that will be important later. Although it was Polly who first vanished from London, she did so without knowing that the Ring would take her out of that place. Here, Polly's caution and wariness contrast to Digory's wish for adventure and exploration. In his excitement, Digory almost causes the two to lose which pool will lead them home. It is only Polly's thinking and reminder to Digory to mark the pool to home that keep them from losing the way.



Chapter 4 The Bell and the Hammer

Chapter 4 The Bell and the Hammer Summary

Polly and Digory rush down through darkness and a mass of vague shapes. Suddenly, they feel themselves standing on something solid. A moment later, everything comes into focus. The first thing they notice is the light. It isn't sunlight or electric light or like any other light they had ever seen. It is a dull, red light. The children stand on a flat, paved surface in a courtyard surrounded by buildings. This place is as quiet as the Wood between the Worlds, but it is a different kind of quiet: dead, cold, and empty.

Polly wants to leave, but Digory insists that there's not a point to finding a magic Ring that will take them to places if they are afraid to explore once they are there. They move into one of the big, arched doorways and look in. The door leads to a vast hall. They cross it, walking carefully. They find themselves in another courtyard. The place seems to have been deserted for hundreds or thousands of years. Polly and Digory go into another doorway, up a flight of steps, and through a number of vast rooms. There are no living things, not even ants, spiders, or other insects that one would expect to see in a ruin.

Digory begins thinking of going back to the warm, green In-between place, when the two children come to two large doors. One door stands ajar, and they go in to look. The room is full of people, all seated and still. They decide that the people in the room can't be real, for there is no movement and no sounds of breath. Polly is interested in the magnificent clothes the people are wearing: robes of all colors, crowns, and precious stones. Digory tells her that there must be magic in the room, because the clothes have not rotted away at all. Digory also thinks that the people are nice. Polly agrees, because the faces of the people look nice, kind, and wise. However, after they walk into the room a bit more, the faces begin to look a bit different: solemn and crueler. The last figure is a woman, more richly dressed than all the other people, and more beautiful. Digory wishes he knew the story behind the room and the people.

In the middle of the room is a square pillar with a little golden bell hanging from a golden arch. Beside the arch is a little golden hammer. Polly looks on the pillar for writing and finds some. Although the letters are strange at first, gradually, Polly and Digory begin to understand. The writing says something like:

"Make your choice, adventurous Stranger;

Strike the bell and bide the danger,

Or wonder, till it drives you mad,

What would have followed if you had" (pg. 50)



Digory thinks that now they have to ring the bell or forever wonder what would have happened if they had. Polly doesn't think they should do it. Digory sees that Polly is moving her hand toward her pocket to get a hold of the Yellow Ring to take her back to the In-between place. Before she can get to it, Digory grabs her wrist. With his other hand, he grasps the hammer and strikes the golden bell.

The bell gives out a sweet note. Instead of dying out, the note goes on and on, growing louder. Soon, the sound is mixed with another, which first sounds like the roar of a distant train, and then it sounds like the crash of a falling tree. Great blocks of masonry begin to fall around them, and the walls rock. Then everything becomes quiet again. Digory comments that it is over now, but he has never been more mistaken.

Chapter 4 The Bell and the Hammer Analysis

The world the children land in from their jump into one of the other pools is unlike any that they have seen before. Digory feels as though it is dead and empty. Unlike their own world, they find no people or other living things. As Digory and Polly will discover later in the book, Charn is an old world, on the verge of destruction. As such, it presents a stark contrast to the beginnings that will occur in Narnia and to the young world of London with which the children are familiar. This dichotomy between creation and destruction revolves around Charn and Narnia, illustrating the differences between good and evil. Charn symbolizes death and destruction throughout the novel, while Narnia symbolizes life and creation. This is later mirrored in the characters of the Witch, symbolizing death and evil, and Aslan, symbolizing life and goodness.

Digory's curiosity and rashness combine to place the children on the brink of unexpected and troubling events. Digory convinces Polly that they need to explore Charn, even though it might be dangerous and neither are particularly at ease or happy there. Then, he chooses to ring the bell with the golden hammer, even though the warning clearly indicates that doing so might place the two of them in danger. Digory's curiosity about what will happen exceeds his fear of the unknown. Although Polly tries to stop him from ringing the bell, illustrating again her cautious nature, Digory manages to ring the bell anyway. In this sense, Digory is like many individuals, struggling between good and evil and not always making the right choices.



Chapter 5 The Deplorable Word

Chapter 5 The Deplorable Word Summary

The children are standing, facing one another by the pillar where the bell hangs. They hear a soft noise at the end of the room. The last person, the beautiful woman, is rising from her chair. They realize that she is very tall and that she must be the queen from her crown, robes, and the flash of her eyes. The woman asks them who has awoken her, and when Digory tells her that it was he, the woman questions this, since he has no noble blood in his veins. Polly tells her that they came from another world, by magic.

When the sound of falling masonry begins again, the Queen tells the children that they should leave the palace. The Queen takes the children by the hands. Polly thinks that the Queen is a terrible woman and that they can't let her know about the Rings. The Queen leads them into a long corridor, and then through many halls and courtyards. They can hear other parts of the palace collapsing.

The three go through a pair of heavy doors, after the Queen said something to make them open. They find themselves in open air, looking at the landscape spreading out below the terrace upon which they are standing. The sun is red, and Digory feels that it is much older than his sun. There is also a single star. The land below them is a vast city, with temples, pyramids, and bridges. The Queen tells them that the city is Charn, a great city, and asks if Digory's uncle rules such a land, since he used his magic to get them there. The Queen tells them of the city, and how she blotted out the city. The Queen says that her sister drove her to do it, because her sister would not yield her the throne, so the Queen ended the city with her magic. When Polly questions her about using her magic on the people of the city, the Queen replies that they were her people, and their only use was to do her will. The Queen cast strong spells on the hall of images, and the force of the spell was that the Queen had to sleep among them until someone came and rang the bell.

The Queen tells them that they must be going to their world. Polly dislikes the Queen, and Digory is now beginning to think that he's seen enough of her. Neither child really wants to bring the Queen back with them. They want to get away from her and go back. They try to discourage the Queen from wanting to go with them, but she insists that with her beauty and magic, their world will fall at her feet soon enough. The Queen believes that Uncle Andrew must be a king and thinks that he will give her his throne, at the very least. The Queen becomes angry and releases the children's hands. Polly shouts to Digory to grab the Rings, and they both plunge their hands into their pockets. As soon as they touch the Rings, they are rushing upward, toward a warm, green light.



Chapter 5 The Deplorable Word Analysis

Digory's choice to ring the bell puts the children in the middle of what will become a struggle between good and evil, a central theme in the book. The Queen rises from her seat in the Hall of Images, brought alive by the ring of the bell. The ringing of the bell also causes the ultimate destruction of the city when it begins to crumble around the trio. The children are forced to go with the Queen while they escape the tumbling buildings.

The Queen symbolizes death, destruction, and evil within the story. Through the Queen's story of the fate of Charn and its inhabitants, Lewis presents the Queen as evil and selfish. The Queen chose to destroy the city and all of the living things in Charn in order to wrest control from her sister. When Polly questions the Queen about how she could kill all of the people, the Queen responds that the people were only there to serve her. The people are little more than pawns to her, only good when they could perform some service for her. Their destruction and her casual attitude about it illustrate the Queen's disregard for others and her own high self-regard. Polly immediately senses the Queen's evilness and wants to prevent her from following them to the Wood between the Worlds or to London.



Chapter 6 The Beginning of Uncle Andrew's Troubles

Chapter 6 The Beginning of Uncle Andrew's Troubles Summary

The children arrive back in the Wood between the Worlds, but they are not alone. The Queen had managed to grab Polly's hair and so she is with them in the Wood. The Queen looks different here: paler, stooped, and less beautiful. Once the children make her let go of Polly, Polly yells to Digory to change Rings and jump in the home pool. The Queen begs them to let her come with them. Digory feels sorry for her, but Polly makes him plunge into the home pool. When they do so, Digory feels something catch his ear. When they arrive in Uncle Andrew's study, the Witch, or Queen, is with them. The Queen has regained her strength.

Uncle Andrew stares at the Witch and then bows and looks frightened. Polly thinks that both Uncle Andrew and the Witch have the expression or look of a wicked Magician. Uncle Andrew is thinking that his 'experiment' with the Rings is turning out much more successful than he would have liked, because he liked to leave the dangers to other people. When the Witch asks whom the magician is who called her into this world, Uncle Andrew stammers. The Witch answers that she will allow him to be her servant. The Witch tells him to get her a chariot or flying carpet that can bring her places and that tomorrow, she'll begin her conquest of the world. After Uncle Andrew leaves to get a cab. The Witch takes no notice of the children. Polly says that she must go home, and Digory makes her promise to come back.

In the meantime, Uncle Andrew staggers down the stairs from the attic study, his heart racing. Uncle Andrew pours himself a drink and changes clothes into his best frockcoat. Uncle Andrew looks very silly in his new clothes. Uncle Andrew is forgetting how much the Witch scared him earlier and is focusing now on her beauty, imagining that the Witch will fall in love with him. Uncle Andrew goes downstairs and sends the housemaid out to get a hansom. Uncle Andrew finds Aunt Letty in the drawing room, but she refuses to lend him any money. Just when Aunt Letty is expressing her disbelief that they have a visitor in the house, the door flings open, and the Witch stands in the doorway.

Chapter 6 The Beginning of Uncle Andrew's Troubles Analysis

The Queen/Witch manages to follow the children first to the Wood, and then to Uncle Andrew's study by grabbing hold of them when they transport themselves. One of the important things to notice is that the Queen is now referred to as the Witch. While in



Charn, she held the title of Queen. Outside of that world, she becomes signified with her actions and evilness instead. Instead of being called by an esteemed title, she is now called by a title meant to evoke fear, trickery, and evil. The Witch's actions, attitude, and character do not change; she is still the same person that she was in Charn. By leaving her world, however, she is named what she is, rather than by an undeserved title. This further illuminates her role as the symbol of evil within the story. While a Queen can be either benevolent or mean, a Witch is generally thought of as evil and frightening.

In a number of ways, *The Magician's Nephew* presents a continuum of goodness and evil in its characters. Although the reader has not yet been introduced to the supreme good character, other variations of goodness and evil are already present in the characters. While the Witch and Uncle Andrew both exhibit a great degree of selfishness, this chapter illustrates the differences between them. The Witch is evil, caring only for herself and wanting only to rule over everything. Uncle Andrew, while also selfish, comes across as more of a bumbling, fearful man. Uncle Andrew has taken advantage of the children, but he does not possess the evil powers and mind of the Witch.

Digory, while rash and curious, is not like the Witch or Uncle Andrew. Digory clearly cares about Polly and his mother, wanting to protect both of them. These contrasts will continue in the chapters to come, as Lewis explores the struggle between good and evil, not only between people but also within individuals themselves. This theme continues the focus on the struggle between good and evil that has also been a part of the other books in the series and which helps tie the books together.



Chapter 7 What Happened at the Front Door

Chapter 7 What Happened at the Front Door Summary

The Witch demands her chariot, and Uncle Andrew cowers in her presence. All the thoughts he had about her loving him vanish. Aunt Letty tells the Witch to leave. The Witch flings out her arms and says some horrible sounding words, but nothing happens. The Witch realizes that her powers of turning people to dust are not going to work in this world. The Witch lunges forward and catches Aunt Letty, throwing her across the room. The housemaid appears and tells Uncle Andrew that the hansom has arrived.

The Witch and Uncle Andrew go out the front, while Digory comes running down the stairs. Aunt Letty is not hurt, since she landed on the mattress she had been mending. Digory thinks about what to do. The Witch is loose in London, and he must somehow get her back to her own world and out of this one. It seems, though, that the only thing he can do is to wait for them and hope that they come back. If they did, Digory thinks he will rush out to the Witch and put his Yellow ring on her. This means that he has to watch the front of the house so he doesn't miss them if they come back. Digory wonders how Polly is doing.

Polly has arrived home half an hour late for dinner, and her shoes and stockings are wet. Polly's parents ask her about this. Polly tells them that she was with Digory and got her feet wet in a pool of water. Polly says that the pool may have been in a park. Polly's mother thinks that she had gone off, without telling anyone, to some part of London, jumping into puddles in some strange park. Polly's mother tells Polly that she won't be able to play with Digory anymore and sends Polly to bed for two hours. While Digory is looking out the window for the witch, Polly is lying in bed.

During Digory's watch, a woman stops by with some grapes for Digory' mother. Digory overhears his aunt and the woman talking. Aunt Letty says that the grapes are lovely, but they'd have to be from the land of youth to help Digory's mother now. Digory suddenly thinks that maybe there is something in one of the other worlds that could help his mother get better. There has to be a Land of Youth somewhere. Digory forgets about watching for the Witch and reaches into his pocket just when the sound of galloping reaches him.

First, the hansom comes, with the Witch standing on the roof, swaying when the hansom rounds the corner with a wheel in the air. The Witch is driving the horse from the roof. When the hansom crashes into a Lamp-Post, the Witch then leaps on the horse's back. A second hansom follows, with a fat man and a policeman in it. A third hansom carries two more policemen. About twenty people follow it on bicycles, and finally, there is a crowd of people on foot behind the people on bicycles. Out of the ruins of the first hansom, an old man, who Digory supposes is Uncle Andrew, gets out.



The fat man rushes out and yells that the Witch stole things from his shop and gave him a black eye. The Witch wheels the horse around so it is facing the crowd. The Witch has a long knife, and she is cutting the horse from the hansom. Digory tries to get into a position where he will be able to touch the Witch. A man in a bowler hat appears and says that it's his horse upon which the Witch is sitting. The Cabby tries to talk the Witch into getting down, but the Witch yells at him to unhand the horse, because she is the Empress Jadis.

Chapter 7 What Happened at the Front Door Analysis

Just as she did in Charn, the Witch causes trouble in London. Only the fact that her powers do not work here prevents the Witch from killing Aunt Letty and probably many others. The Witch believes she has the right to rule this world, just as she did Charn. The Witch steals jewelry, a horse, and its carriage. Even though a crowd and police chase her, the Witch is oblivious to them, deeming all of the individuals beneath her and not equal to her power. The Witch again causes chaos and destruction, something that she causes wherever she goes. As the ideal type of evil, the Witch is wholly evil and destructive, with no good within her.

In listening to Aunt Letty and the woman who stops by with the grapes, Digory gets the idea that maybe he can help save his mother with something from one of the worlds to which the Rings can take him. Digory's thinking again illustrates his concern for his mother. Rather than thinking about what he could find for himself in one of the other worlds, he thinks about his mother. In many ways, this concern will continue to drive his actions, and his idea that, perhaps, something can be found to help his mother points to later events. The search for a cure will further illuminate Digory's own struggle between good and evil.



Chapter 8 The Fight at the Lamp-Post

Chapter 8 The Fight at the Lamp-Post Summary

The Witch stretches out and grabs the cross bars of the Lamp-Post, snapping it off. The Witch brandishes it toward the crowd. Digory thinks that this might be his chance so he darts toward the horse and the Witch. Polly is suddenly beside him. Digory tells her to hold on to him and that she will have to manage the Ring. The Witch is bashing the policemen with her new weapon. Digory grabs the Witch's ankle, but she hits him, and he loses his grasp. Finally, he gets a firm grip and yells to Polly to touch the Ring.

In an instant, the angry voices of the crowd silence. They come out in the wood: Polly, Digory, the Witch, Uncle Andrew, the horse, and the Cabby. The witch once again turns pale in the wood. The horse steps to one of the pools to get a drink and, because they are all still touching each other, Polly looks at Digory and says, "Greens!" The party sinks into darkness again. They find themselves standing on something solid, but it's very dark. The Witch says it is an empty world, a Nothing. The Cabby tries to keep them all calm and begins to sing a hymn. Uncle Andrew corners Digory and tries to get him to slip the Ring on his finger so that the two of them can get out. The Witch hears them. Digory says that he will not leave Polly or the Cabby and horse in a place like this.

In the darkness, a Voice begins to sing. It is far away from the group. It is the most beautiful sound Digory has ever heard. Others join the Voice. The blackness overhead is suddenly filled with blazing stars. "One moment there had been nothing but darkness, next moment a thousand, thousand points of light leaped out - single stars, constellations, and planets, brighter and bigger than any in our world" (pg. 99). The Voice grows louder, but the other voices in the sky grow fainter. Down near the horizon, the sky begins to turn gray. A light wind stirs, and the sky grows paler. Shapes of hills begin to appear.

Soon it is light enough for everyone to see each other's faces. The Cabby and the children appear to be drinking in the sound of the Voice. Uncle Andrew does not like the Voice. The Witch hates it, for she knows that the magic in this world is more powerful than hers is. The Voice rises, shaking the air, and as it swells, the sun rises. Digory thinks that this sun is younger. Its beams shoot across the land, and the group can see that they are in a valley, surrounded by mountains, lower hills, and a river. "The earth was of many colours: they were fresh, hot and vivid. They made you feel excited; until you saw the Singer himself, and then you forgot everything else" (pg. 101).

The Singer is a lion: huge, shaggy, and with its mouth open in song. It is about three hundred yards from the group. The Witch and Uncle Andrew agree that this world is terrible, and they want to leave. Uncle Andrew tries to get Digory to put on the homeward Ring again, but Digory yells that if anyone comes near either him or Polly, they will vanish without the others. The song from the Lion changes.



Chapter 8 The Fight at the Lamp-Post Analysis

The children use the Rings to bring themselves, the Witch, Uncle Andrew, the Cabby, and the horse to a new world. In the beginning, it is dark and empty. Yet they begin to hear a Voice. Gradually, the world begins to change, light appears, followed by the landscape. The changes that occur in the world represent a creation. From an empty, nothing world, creation appears. Creation and life is an important theme within the book, contrasted with the destruction and death of Charn. The Lion, or Aslan, creates life in Narnia, just like the Witch destroys life in Charn. This represents, in one sense, the circle of life, birth, and death. Yet there is also the sense that Narnia is very different than Charn, offering a land that will be perpetually young, through Aslan.

The contrast in the characters and the theme of good and evil are again evident in how they respond to the Voice and to the sight of the Lion. Polly, Digory, and the Cabby are drawn to the Voice and appear to be drinking in the Voice. Their goodness responds to the goodness in the Voice and the world. Uncle Andrew and the Witch respond negatively. They dislike this world as much as the children are enthralled with it. The evilness and selfish desires of Uncle Andrew and the Witch cause them to fear and dislike the Voice and the world.



Chapter 9 The Founding of Narnia

Chapter 9 The Founding of Narnia Summary

The Lion paces to and fro, singing his new song. It is softer than the song before. While he walks and sings, the valley grows grass, and then trees and flowers. With each turn, the Lion approaches the group. Polly is beginning to see the connection between the music and the things that are happening around them. Polly feels that all the things are coming from the Lion.

Suddenly, the Witch steps out toward the Lion. The Witch flings her iron bar at him. The bar strikes the Lion between the eyes and glances off. The Lion continues, neither slower nor faster than before. The Witch shrieks and runs off into the trees. Uncle Andrew turns to do the same, but he trips over a root and falls on his face. The children do not move. The Lion pays no attention to any of this, passing so close to them that they could have touched his mane.

Uncle Andrew tries again to get Digory to touch the Ring and take them all home. Digory, however, wants to stay and see what happens. Digory sees something and calls Polly. The iron bar that the Witch had thrown is now growing up from the ground, a perfect model of a Lamp-Post. It is lit, coming up as a young Lamp-Post. Uncle Andrew begins to brag about finding this magic world when everyone used to laugh at his magic. Uncle Andrew wants to use this land to gain money. Polly tells him that he is just like the Witch. Digory asks if they think there is anything here that might help his mother. Digory decides to ask the Lion.

Digory comes to the edge of the wood. The Lion is still singing, but the song has changed again. It is wilder, making one want to run, climb, and shout. The grassy land bubbles and begins swelling into humps. The humps move until they burst, and from each hump an animal is created: dogs, stags, birds, elephants, and others. Digory can no longer hear the Lion, but he can't take his eyes off of it. The animals do not seem to be afraid of the Lion. Soon, the cab-horse trots up and joins the other animals. The Lion goes among the animals, touching noses with some of them. The animals he touches come to stand in a wide circle around him, while the ones he doesn't touch begin to wander away.

The Lion stares at the animals. The Lion opens his mouth but no sound comes out. The Lion breathes in and out. Then the deepest and wildest voice the children have ever heard says: "Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beasts. Be divine waters" (pg. 116).

Chapter 9 The Founding of Narnia Analysis

The contrast between Uncle Andrew and Digory appears again. While Uncle Andrew is afraid of Narnia and the Lion, wanting to return to London, Digory refuses to take him



back there. Digory is interested by the Lion, wanting to listen to his voice and watch him create. Their motives are also different when considering Narnia. Uncle Andrew immediately thinks that he could use Narnia to become rich and famous. Digory immediately thinks that the Lion might be able to help his mother. Digory's thoughts are not of himself, but wanting to help another. Their reactions once again illustrate the theme of the struggle between good and evil. While they are both faced with the same situation, each chooses to respond in a different way. Digory responds with goodness, wanting to help his mother and enjoying the start of creation. Uncle Andrew responds with evil desires, wanting to exploit Narnia for his own fame and fortune.



Chapter 10 The First Joke and Other Matters

Chapter 10 The First Joke and Other Matters Summary

Out of the trees, gods and goddess of the woods, along with Fauns, Satyrs, and Dwarfs step out. Out of the river, the river god and his daughters rise. They all answer the Lion, telling Him that they hear and obey. The cab-horse, Strawberry, also speaks. The Lion, Aslan, speaks again: "I give to you forever this land of Narnia. I give you the woods, the fruits, the rivers. I give you the stars and I give you myself. The Dumb Beasts whom I have not chosen are yours also. Treat them gently and cherish them but do not go back to their ways lest you cease to be Talking Beasts. For out of them you were taken and into them you can return. Do not so" (pg. 118). They reply that they will not. Aslan chooses some of the animals and other creatures to be a part of his council. Aslan says that they must think about keeping Narnia safe, because although it is less than five hours old, evil has already entered.

Digory says again that he has to talk to Aslan about his mother. Cabby says that he will go with Digory and Polly. The three step toward the assembly of animals, who do not notice them at first. The animals do not know what they are but suppose that they might be lettuce. Cabby talks to Strawberry. Strawberry says that he has a faint feeling of living somewhere before Narnia, and he gradually remembers the rest. Cabby asks if Digory can ride on Strawberry, because Aslan is getting further away from them. Strawberry agrees, and Cabby hoists Digory up onto Strawberry's back.

The animals then see Uncle Andrew beside the river. They decide to go investigate. To Uncle Andrew, it looks like a whole host of dangerous animals are coming straight for him, because he hadn't heard them talk, and he missed the whole point when Aslan spoke. "And the longer and more beautifully the Lion sang, the harder Uncle Andrew tried to make himself believe that he could hear nothing but roaring. Now the trouble about trying to make yourself stupider than you really are is that you very often succeed. Uncle Andrew did. He soon did hear nothing but roaring in Aslan's song....And when the beasts spoke in answer, he heard only barkings, growlings, bayings, and howlings" (pg. 126). When the animals turn toward him, Uncle Andrew runs for his life. The animals chase, and soon some are ahead of him. They line up in a row and bar his way, while others hem him in from behind. Uncle Andrew stands, trembling. The Bulldog asks Uncle Andrew if he is animal, vegetable, or mineral, but Uncle Andrew only hears a growl.

Chapter 10 The First Joke and Other Matters Analysis

Uncle Andrew does not understand the Lion, as he has convinced himself that he can only hear roaring. Uncle Andrew also cannot understand the animals when they answer



the Lion and when they try to speak to him. Uncle Andrew's fears and badness blind him to the beauty and goodness in the Lion, Narnia, and the animals. The path he has chosen for himself creates a situation where he is separated from the creation that is happening. Uncle Andrew's perceptions of the situation are very different than the reality, because of his inability to see what is happening. When the animals turn to him, he fears for his life, because he has not heard them talk but has heard only growls and roars. The animals are only curious about him, wondering what exactly he is. Uncle Andrew, however, thinks that they are going to hurt him, because he only sees them as dangerous animals.

Aslan, the Lion, tells the animals that evil has entered Narnia. This evil is the Witch whom Digory brought into Narnia. Although he didn't do this on purpose to destroy or harm Narnia, the result is the same. The Witch represents danger for Narnia, even though Aslan's powers are greater than hers are. In this chapter, again, the Witch represents evil and destruction. The Witch's presence in Narnia means danger and struggles, particularly within the other books in the series. Here those troubles are foreshadowed by her presence in the newly created land.



Chapter 11 Digory and His Uncle Are Both in Trouble

Chapter 11 Digory and His Uncle Are Both in Trouble Summary

The animals know nothing about clothes and so they think that each of the humans are just another kind of something. Uncle Andrew tries to talk to the Bulldog, but the beasts can't understand him anymore than he can understand them. Uncle Andrew faints. The Warthog says that Uncle Andrew must be a tree, after all. The Bulldog sniffs him and says that it's certainly an animal. The animals talk about what Uncle Andrew is: a tree or some kind of animal. The Elephant tries to make him stand, but he only collapses back to the ground. Because the majority thinks he's a tree, they decide to plant him. They debate about which end of Uncle Andrew is the branches and which the roots. Luckily, they plant him right side up, and when they are finished, the ground comes up to his knees. They think that he looks withered, and the Elephant sprays water on him from its trunk. Uncle Andrew wakes.

Strawberry, with Digory on his back, is trotting after Aslan and his small group. When they stop, Digory slides down and stands before Aslan. Digory asks Aslan if He will give Digory some magic fruit to make his mother well. Aslan looks at his councilors and says that Digory is the boy who did it, making Digory worried about what he had done. Aslan asks Digory to tell the others how the evil Witch came into Narnia. Digory says that he brought her because he wants to get her out of his own world and thought he was taking her back to hers. Digory tells the story of how he and Polly were tricked into using the Rings and how he woke the Witch. Digory thinks that he has spoiled any chance of getting help for his mother.

Aslan speaks, but not to Digory. Aslan says that the Evil that will come from this is still a long way off and that, as the Son of Adam brought it into this world, he will also help heal it. Aslan asks Cabby if he knows him. Cabby says that he feels that they've met before sometime. Aslan asks Cabby to live in Narnia. When Cabby says that he is married and can't leave his wife, Aslan sings a note and Cabby's wife appears. Aslan tells Cabby and his wife that they will be the first King and Queen of Narnia. They will rule and name the creatures and protect them from enemies. Their coronation will be held shortly. Aslan welcomes Polly and asks if she has forgiven Digory. Polly replies that she has.



Chapter 11 Digory and His Uncle Are Both in Trouble Analysis

The experiences of Uncle Andrew and the animals provide a humorous, but interesting segment of the chapter. Uncle Andrew is still fearful of the animals, fainting in terror when the animals try to talk to him. Uncle Andrew can still not understand them, because he has blinded himself from this. In doing so, he has also kept the animals from understanding him. Uncle Andrew's choice of not accepting the Lion and of living his life in a selfish manner creates this situation. The animals, meanwhile, are curious about him, not quite knowing what he is. One can imagine how a strange object dropped in the middle of a group of children might elicit the same kind of experimentation. The animals, as they have just been created, do not have the experience or knowledge levels that they might have in the future. As such, they behave and think like small children, trying to figure out a problem. Untouched by evil, they are innocent and questioning in a pure manner.

Aslan announces that Digory has brought evil into Narnia. The evil that Aslan speaks of is the Witch, who ran off several chapters ago. The Witch is now loose in Narnia and has the ability to cause harm. Aslan also states that Digory will help heal this evil, foreshadowing the events in the remaining chapters, because Digory will travel to help protect Narnia from the Witch. Although Digory did not intend to do this, his choice of ringing the bell, in spite of the possible danger, now has consequences with which he must deal. Realizing that Aslan could help his mother, Digory despairs, thinking that Aslan will never help him now.



Chapter 12 Strawberry's Adventure

Chapter 12 Strawberry's Adventure Summary

Aslan asks Digory if he is ready to undo the wrong that he has done to Narnia. Digory asks again about his mother, but Aslan says that He needs to think of Narnia and protecting it from the evil Witch. Aslan wants to plant a tree in Narnia that she won't dare approach, to protect Narnia from her. Digory agrees, although he doesn't know how this was to be done. The Lion stoops his head and gives Digory a Lion's kiss.

They look off to the West. The Lion tells Digory: "Now the land of Narnia ends where the waterfall comes down, and once you have reached the top of the cliff you will be out of Narnia and into the Western Wild. You must journey through those mountains until you find a green valley with a blue lake in it, walled round by mountains of ice. At the end of the lake there is a steep, green hill. On the top of that hill there is a garden. In the center of that garden is a tree. Pluck an apple from that tree and bring it back to me" (pg. 143). Aslan then asks Strawberry if he'd like to be a winged horse and renames him Fledge. After the Lion has given Fledge his wings, he asks if Fledge will carry Digory to the garden for the apple. Cabby's wife suggests that Polly might like to go too.

Fledge, Polly, and Digory set off. Narnia lies spread out below them. They fly out of Narnia to the West. When the sun begins to set, Fledge says that his wings are getting tired and that there's no sign of the valley of which Aslan talked. Fledge suggests stopping somewhere for the night. They come down in a valley. Fledge eats grass, but Digory and Polly have nothing for dinner. Polly finds some toffee in her pocket. There are nine pieces, and Digory suggests that they each eat four and plant the ninth one, remembering how the Lamp-Post grew out of the ground. The children lean against Fledge to sleep.

Polly hears something. They scramble to their feet to investigate. Polly thinks that she sees a tall, dark figure gliding away, but they catch nothing. They lay down with Fledge again and sleep.

Chapter 12 Strawberry's Adventure Analysis

Fledge, Polly, and Digory set off on a quest to find the apple tree that Aslan wants them to find. The apple from this tree will help protect Narnia from the evil Witch for a long time. Although Digory did not intend to bring evil into Narnia, he realizes that it is up to him to make things right. As he did earlier in the story, Digory rightly acts, even when he is not sure what the path before him holds or what he is to do exactly. Digory also does this when faced with going to get Polly after Uncle Andrew tricks her. With the exception of the incident with the bell and hammer, Digory chooses the right path of action, putting others before himself.



Their quest for the apple is reminiscent of mythological journeys that heroes undertake. Digory, the hero, has been given the task of finding the apple and bringing it back to Aslan. In his quest, like many of those within mythology, he is accompanied by several helpers, but ultimately, the quest and responsibility is his. Through this quest, Digory will either prove his goodness or embrace the evil symbolized by the Witch.



Chapter 13 An Unexpected Meeting

Chapter 13 An Unexpected Meeting Summary

Polly wakes Fledge and Digory with the news that the toffee did grow into a tree. Digory and Polly take turns bathing in the lake, and then they eat fruit from the toffee tree. They set out again. Soon, they see the valley with the lake and the green hill at the end of the lake. Fledge circles, and then lands. The children roll off his back onto the grass. They climb the rest of the way to the top. When they reach the top, they find themselves facing high gates of gold. The place is private, and Fledge and Polly realize that they can't go in.

On the gates are some words:

"Come in by the gold gates or not at all,

Take of my fruit for others or forbear.

For those who steal or those who climb my wall

Shall find their heart's desire and find despair" (pg. 157).

Digory opens the gates. Digory immediately knows which tree Aslan was talking about. It stands at the center of the garden and has great silver apples on it. Walking to it, Digory picks an apple and puts it in his pocket. However, before he puts it away, he looks at it and smells it. A terrible thirst and hunger come over him, and he wants to taste the fruit. Because there are so many, he thinks that it wouldn't be wrong to taste one. While he is thinking about this, he glances up into the tree and sees a bird almost asleep.

Digory turns to leave but stops to have one last look around. A few yards away, the Witch stands. The Witch is throwing away a core from an apple that she has just eaten. Digory thinks that she must have climbed over the wall, and he begins to see what the words on the wall meant, because while the Witch is looking stronger than ever, her face is a deadly white.

Digory runs for the gate with the Witch following him. Digory shouts to Fledge and Polly to get ready. The Witch calls that she means Digory no harm and she only wants him to stop and listen to her. The Witch says that she was in the woods with them the night before and heard them all talking. The apple is an apple of youth and life, she tells him. The apple could save him and his mother. The Witch tries to turn him against Aslan and suggests leaving Polly there and immediately going back to his world with the apple for his mother. This makes Digory see the meanness in the Witch, and he leaves with Polly and Fledge.



Polly, Digory, and Fledge fly back to Narnia. Digory doesn't speak on the way back, because he is sad and not sure that he has done the right thing. They arrive in Narnia and Digory walks straight to Aslan and gives him the apple.

Chapter 13 An Unexpected Meeting Analysis

The scene in the garden is again reminiscent of Biblical accounts and follows the creation story as the Garden of Eden story does. The fruit from this center tree is desirable, offering what Digory wants to help his mother. Yet the fruit also comes with bad consequences. Digory knows that to bring it to his mother might save her but would ultimately be a bad thing. Because the fruit in the Garden of Eden is used as a temptation, so too is the fruit from this tree a temptation for Digory. Digory has been tempted in various ways throughout the novel, and he has responded in mixed ways. Here, as part of his quest, Digory will make his choice between good and evil.

While both Digory and the Witch desire what this fruit can offer, again they choose different paths of action. The Witch chooses to eat the fruit, but she will suffer the consequences from it. Digory chooses not to eat. Instead, he brings the fruit back to Aslan like he has promised, even knowing that the fruit might be the last chance to save his mother. The Witch, although still alive, symbolizes a never-ending death after eating the apple. The Witch's evilness will continue to haunt Narnia.



Chapter 14 The Planting of the Tree

Chapter 14 The Planting of the Tree Summary

Aslan tells Digory to throw the apple toward the riverbank. After this is done, Aslan tells everyone to go to the coronation of the king and queen. Cabby, or Frank, and his wife, Helen, are dressed in beautiful clothes. After Aslan instructs some of the animals to undo the tangle they've made with some trees, the animals uncover Uncle Andrew. The beasts have tried planting him, and when he has awakened from his faint and tries to run away, the animals decide to keep him safe until Aslan can tell them what to do. They had made a sort of cage around Uncle Andrew. The animals have given him everything that they could think of that he might eat. They name him Brandy and hope that Aslan might let them keep the creature as a pet.

Now, the elephants lift Uncle Andrew out and place him at the Lion's feet. Polly asks if maybe Aslan could say something that would unafraiden him and something to make him not want to come back, because he might want to send other people to Narnia someday. Aslan says that anything he says will only come out as a roar to Uncle Andrew, but he does make him sleep.

The Dwarfs make crowns of gold for Frank and Helen. Aslan places the crowns on their heads and calls them the King and Queen of Narnia. Everyone cheers. Aslan points out a tree, which had not been there before, but which is still growing, spreading its branches out. It is the tree from the apple that Digory retrieved from the garden. Aslan tells them that the Witch has fled to the North but that she will not dare come to Narnia with the tree there. Digory tells Aslan that the Witch ate one of the apples, and Aslan replies that this is why she will not come to Narnia, because the rest of the apples are now a horror to her. The Witch has won her heart's desire: unwearying strength and endless days as a goddess, but endless days with an evil heart are a misery, which the Witch is beginning to discover.

Aslan asks about how the Witch tempted Digory to eat an apple and take one back to his mother. Digory gives up all hope of saving his mother, because giving her one would only make her miserable. Aslan continues that this would only happen with a stolen apple. Aslan tells Digory to get an apple from the tree for his mother. The apple will not give Digory's mother endless life, but it will heal her. Digory plucks an apple, and then asks to go home.

Chapter 14 The Planting of the Tree Analysis

The apple that Digory brings back from the garden sprouts into a tree. This tree will protect Narnia from the Witch for many years. Although Digory begins the problems by bringing the Witch into Narnia, he has now helped to protect Narnia from her. Because the Witch has already eaten from the tree in the garden, she will want to avoid this tree.



The tree represents life, as it will now help to continue the life of Narnia and the creatures in it.

Although Digory has imagined that his dreams of saving his mother have vanished, Aslan tells him that an apple from the tree that sprouted will help Digory's mother get well. Digory, because he chose the right course of action in regards to the apple, will now get the thing that he most desires. Had he chosen to give his mother the original apple, she would be healed but miserable. Because he chose to give the apple to Aslan, he will now be able to save his mother. Just as the tree symbolizes life for Narnia, it will also mean life for Digory's mother, saving her from her illness.



Chapter 15 The End of This Story and the Beginning of All the Others

Chapter 15 The End of This Story and the Beginning of All the Others Summary

Aslan tells the children that they do not need the Rings. They blink and realize that they are in the Wood between Worlds once more. Uncle Andrew lays on the grass, asleep. Aslan shows them a hollow in the grass, which was the pool that they jumped through to get to Charn. Aslan says that that world has ended and tells them to take warning from that although their world is not quite as bad as Charn was. The children are to take the rings from Uncle Andrew and bury them so that they cannot be used again.

The next minute Polly, Digory, and Uncle Andrew tumble into London. They are outside the Ketterley's front door, and it is exactly like they left it with the policemen and the crowd, except that the Witch, the Cabby, and the horse are gone. While everyone is looking for Jadis and the horse, no one pays any attention to the children, and Uncle Andrew could not be recognized, because of the honey on his face. They go inside the house. Digory asks Polly to get the rest of the Rings, while he goes to see his mother. Digory peels and cuts the apple for his mother who eats it, and then sinks back into her pillow to sleep.

That night, Digory buries the core of the apple in the back yard. The next morning, the doctor declares that Digory's mother has been cured. Polly and Digory bury the Rings in a circle around the spot where he buried the apple core. Already, something is coming up. Digory's mother gets better, and six weeks later, there is a letter from his father, saying that he is coming home from India. The family will be moving back to the country.

Polly and Digory remain good friends, and she comes almost every holiday to stay with Digory. In Narnia, the beasts live in peace, and the Witch does not bother them for many years. "The lamp-post which the Witch had planted (without knowing it) shone day and night in the Narnian forest, so that the place where it grew came to be called Lantern Waste; and when, hundreds of years later, another child from our world got into Narnia, on a snowy night, she found the light still burning" (pg. 184).

The tree that came from the apple core Digory planted grows into a fine tree, although its apples are not magical. When Digory is middle-aged, the tree blows down in a storm. Digory can't bear to have the tree made into firewood so he has the timber made into a wardrobe, which he puts in his big country house. Digory does not discover the magical properties of the wardrobe.



Chapter 15 The End of This Story and the Beginning of All the Others Analysis

The final chapter in the story ties up the loose ends and connects this book with others in the series. Digory's mother is cured, and his family is reunited before moving back to the country. Polly and Digory remain good friends, visiting each other often. The tree protects Narnia from the Witch for many years.

The chapter also connects this book in the series with the others. Not only has Lewis told of the creation of Narnia here, a land in which the other books take place, but he has also shown how the wardrobe came to possess its magical powers. The wood from the tree, which grew from the magical apple core, still possesses enough of the magic for later generations to get to Narnia. This account foreshadows, or connects, depending on the order in which the books are read in, the events in the other books of the series, where the struggle for good and evil will continue in Narnia with other children present.



Characters

Digory Kirke

Digory is a young boy who has moved to London with his sick mother to live with her sister and brother. Digory meets Polly one day, and the two of them begin their explorations and adventures. Digory follows Polly to the Wood between the Worlds. They go to Charn, where Digory chooses to ring the golden bell with the hammer, awakening the evil Queen. In an attempt to save London from the Queen, Digory and Polly use the Rings again and wind up in Narnia. There, Digory is given the task of obtaining a silver apple from the garden on top of the hill. Digory is tempted to return to London with the apple to save his mother, but chooses to return to Narnia with it instead. Aslan gives him another apple, which does save his mother. Lewis does not give the reader a physical description of Digory.

Of the characters, Digory is perhaps the most complex. While his motives are generally good, Digory is tempted to be selfish. At times, he is rash and acts without thinking about the consequences. Digory convinces Polly that they should explore the other pools in the Wood between the Worlds. Yet in doing so, he almost rushes off without marking the pool to get home. If it weren't for Polly's reminder, Digory would have been lost. Digory also rings the golden bell with the hammer, even though there is a sign posted by it, warning of possible danger. Digory is tempted to take the silver apple back to his mother, instead of giving it to Aslan.

Digory is also good, kind, and concerned about the welfare of others. Digory goes after Polly when she vanishes, even though he doesn't have to. Digory is concerned about his mother throughout the story, not wanting her to be disturbed, and later, wanting to find something that will cure her. Faced with the temptation of returning home with the silver apple for his mother, Digory chooses to do what he has promised and brings the apple back to Aslan. Digory recognizes that it was his actions that released the Witch and evil into Narnia and that he needs to help correct this. While he personally wants to save his mother, he realizes that his actions have a higher purpose in helping to protect Narnia, even if that means sacrificing his mother.

Polly Plummer

Polly is a young girl who lives in London with her family. Lewis does not describe to the reader what Polly looks like. Polly meets Digory in her garden one day, and they stumble into the series of adventures and worlds. Uncle Andrew tricks Polly into using the magic Ring. Polly and Digory visit Charn and unintentionally bring back the Witch with them. In an effort to rid London of the Witch, they jump into Narnia, where they meet Aslan.



Polly's character is defined by two characteristics: cautiousness and goodness. One can see Polly's caution in many points throughout the story. Polly wants to make sure that she and Digory can make it back to London when they are in the Wood, and after they ascertain this, she makes him mark the pool so that they can get back later. In Charn, she is reluctant to explore further when they enter the world, because it is cold and dead feeling. Polly also tries to stop Digory from ringing the bell in the Hall of Images, an action that could have prevented the Witch from waking. Polly's decision to take the Ring from Uncle Andrew in the beginning does not negate this characteristic, because she did not know the magic in the Ring or what taking it would do.

Polly is also, perhaps, the human character who is most good. While Digory is, at times, conflicted between good and evil, Polly seems to choose goodness when it was presented to her. Polly first recognizes that the Lion is creating the world of Narnia with His song. Polly supports the other characters and tries to help Digory in his quest to find the apple.

Uncle Andrew Ketterley

Although more selfish and mean than pure evil, Uncle Andrew presents a stark contrast to the innocence and goodness of Polly and Digory. Uncle Andrew is very tall and thin. Uncle Andrew has a clean-shaven face, a sharp nose, bright eyes, and a tousled mop of gray hair. Uncle Andrew is an old bachelor and lives with his sister, Miss Ketterley. When Digory's mother becomes sick, she and Digory move in with Aunt Letty and Uncle Andrew.

Uncle Andrew fancies himself a magician. Uncle Andrew creates the Rings and tricks Polly and Digory into using them. Yet through this action, he shows one of his defining characteristics: fear. In each situation with which he is faced, Uncle Andrew eventually becomes fearful, wanting only to save himself from perceived danger. Uncle Andrew tries to run from Aslan and tries to convince Digory to take him back to London with the Ring. Uncle Andrew does this because he fears Aslan, just as later he will fear the animals. Uncle Andrew's fear makes him blind to the goodness of Aslan and Narnia.

Uncle Andrew is also very selfish. Uncle Andrew is interested only in his own safety and desires. Uncle Andrew doesn't care that he might be sentencing Polly and Digory to danger and death when he first gets them to use the Rings. Later, he wants to use Narnia to make himself rich and famous.

Queen Jadis/Witch

In *The Magician's Nephew*, the Witch represents evil. The Witch is contrasted with the goodness of Aslan and the children. The Witch escapes in Narnia and poses a threat to this newly created land. The Witch also tempts Digory, in the garden, with the apple that could save his mother.



When the children find her in the Hall of Images, she is dressed in clothing richer than the others in the room. The Witch is extremely tall and very beautiful, with a look of fierceness and pride. The Witch's beauty strikes both Digory and Uncle Andrew, thinking that they have never seen someone so beautiful. In Charn, the Queen has great powers. The Queen/Witch uses them to destroy the city and its inhabitants in order to wrest control from her sister. The Queen regards the people that she destroys as having existed only for her use, and as such, she is not sorry at all for destroying them.

The Queen/Witch's destructiveness permeates her short time in London, because she steals jewelry and the horse and carriage. As before, she cares nothing about other people or how her actions may affect them. The Queen/Witch is interested only in using her evil powers to conquer others.

Aslan/Lion

Aslan represents the God character in the story. Aslan is a huge, shaggy, and bright Lion, who appears in other books in the Narnia series, as well. Aslan radiates goodness and protects Narnia from evil. All good characteristics are wrapped up in Aslan. Aslan is kind to the children, giving Digory a kiss and the apple that will save Digory's mother, gentle with everyone, and forgiving of Digory for bring evil into Narnia and Uncle Andrew for his selfishness.

Aslan creates Narnia by singing. Aslan walks in a wide arc around the group from London, singing and causing Narnia to spring forth. When his song changes, trees, grass, and animals appear.

Aslan is also the leader of Narnia. After he has created Narnia, he chooses some animals to serve as a council, he instructs Digory to get the apple, and he crowns Cabby and his wife as the King and Queen of Narnia. With the exception of Uncle Andrew and the Witch, the others look to him for guidance and direction. Yet he rules with a benevolent hand. There is no oppression or arrogance in him.

Cabby/King Frank

Cabby is a red-faced man who wears a bowler hat. Cabby owns Strawberry and operates a cab with the horse in London. When the children attempt to get the Witch out of London, Cabby is pulled along, because he is touching the horse.

In Narnia, Cabby presents a calming force. When Narnia is still nothingness, Cabby checks to see how everyone is, and then sings a hymn to keep everyone calm. Like the children, Cabby is enthralled with the Lion and its singing. Cabby is also a modest man. When Aslan pronounces him the King of Narnia, Cabby tells Aslan that he doesn't know if he is the right person for that honor.



Strawberry/Fledge

Strawberry is the horse the Witch steals in London. Later in the story, Aslan turns Strawberry into a winged horse and renames him Fledge. Aslan asks Fledge to take Digory to the garden for the apple. Fledge flies with Digory and Polly to the garden, and then flies them back to Narnia.

Queen Helen

Helen is Cabby's wife. Helen is a young woman with a kind, honest face. Aslan brings her to Narnia for Cabby and announces that she and Cabby will be the King and Queen of Narnia.

Digory's Mother

Digory's mother is also Aunt Letty and Uncle Andrew's sister. The mother is very sick and stays in bed all the time. When she eats the apple that Digory brings back from Narnia for her, she is cured of her sickness.

Aunt Letty Ketterley

Digory and his mother are staying with Aunt Letty and her brother, Uncle Andrew. In her brief appearances, Aunt Letty appears to be long-suffering, having to deal with Uncle Andrew, who refuses to do any work but takes her money. However, she is also a take-charge kind of woman and tough. Aunt Letty stands up to the Queen, demanding that she leave the house, and cares for Digory's mother.

Bulldog

The Bulldog first attempts to talk to Uncle Andrew and is among the group of animals that chases him. The Bulldog claims that Uncle Andrew is an animal

Elephant

The Elephant is among the group of animals that chases Uncle Andrew. The Elephant tries setting him up straight, and after he is planted like a tree, she waters him from her trunk.



Objects/Places

Uncle Andrew's Attic Study

The room is furnished as a sitting room, with books on the shelves. There is a fireplace and a high backed chair that sits in front of it. Filling most of the middle of the room is a big table, piled high with books and writing materials. The magic Rings are also on the table.

Polly and Digory accidentally enter the room when they are trying to reach the deserted house on the other side of Digory's home. Uncle Andrew makes them stay, and then tricks them into using the Rings for his 'experiment.' When the children return with the Witch, they first come to the attic room.

Charn

In their exploration of the pools, Digory and Polly land in Charn, a very old world with a big, red, cold sun. Queen Jadis destroyed all its people in a fight with her sister over Charn's control. Digory feels that Charn feels dead, cold, and empty.

Hall of Images

Within the castle in Charn, Polly and Digory find the Hall of Images, which is filled with hundreds of people, all seated and still. The people are wearing brightly colored robes and crowns. When Digory rings the bell in the room, Queen Jadis comes alive.

Narnia

Aslan creates this world. When the group, including the children, Uncle Andrew, the Witch, and Cabby arrive, the world is nothingness, dark and void. While Aslan sings, however, Narnia is created while the group watches.

Golden Bell and Hammer

Polly and Digory find these items in the Hall of Images. When Digory rings the small bell with the hammer, Queen Jadis comes alive.

Pools

In the Wood between the Worlds, each of the pools of water leads to another world. Digory and Polly use one to get to Charn, one to get to London, and another to get to Narnia. The pools of water only transport them when they use a Green Ring.



Magic Rings

The Rings are no bigger than the size of ordinary rings, but they are very bright. The stuff in the Yellow Rings has the power to draw someone to into the Wood, because it wants to get back to its own place. The stuff in the Green Rings has the power to take someone out of the Wood, into a world, because it is trying to get out of its own place.

The Wood Between the Worlds

Polly and Digory wind up here after they first use the magic Rings. It is bright, warm, and quiet. The trees grow close together, and their leaves cover the sky. There are dozens of pools of water, every few yards, as far as the eye can see. Although it is quiet, Digory feels that the Wood is very much alive.

Deplorable Word

Queen Jadis speaks this word to annihilate Charn and her sister in an effort to wrest control away for herself.

London, England

Polly and Digory live in London. When the Witch returns with them, she wrecks havoc over parts of London, stealing things, and creating a large scene outside the Ketterley's house.

The Garden on Top of the Hill

Aslan instructs Digory to go to this garden and take an apple from the tree in the center. Digory encounters the Witch in the garden, and she tempts him to take the apple back to his mother.

The Silver Apple

Digory takes one of the silver apples from the tree in the center of the garden. Digory takes it to Aslan, and they throw it by the river. A tree sprouts from it that will protect Narnia from the Witch.

The Lamppost

In London, the Witch breaks off a piece of a Lamp-Post, which she later throws at Aslan. When this piece lands, it begins to grow into a young Lamp-Post. The light shines day and night at Lantern Waste until another young girl, years later, gets into Narnia.



The Wardrobe

Digory and Polly bury the remaining parts of the apple that Digory brought back from Narnia. It grows into a tree. Years later, a storm blows it down, and Digory has the wood made into a wardrobe. Other children would later use the wardrobe to get into Narnia.



Setting

Digory and Polly live on a city block in London where all the houses share a common attic, from one end of the street to the other. It is while exploring this attic that they enter Uncle Andrew's study. The study is not particularly interesting, except that it has some rings in it that, when worn, can transport their wearers to other places. One place is the Wood between the Worlds, which is composed of trees and a scattering of pools of water. The pools seem shallow, but when a person steps in one, that person drops though onto another planet. "It's not the sort of place where things happen. The trees go on growing, that's all," says Digory about the woods, but pools that transport people to other worlds make the place seem active enough.

The world Digory and Polly first visit is Charn, a name probably taken from the word charnel, meaning a place for the dead, and Charn is virtually dead. Its immense buildings are devoid of people, except for a huge room filled with likenesses of kings and queens. It is in this room that Digory revives Jadis by ringing a bell, and Jadis turns out to be a person consumed by evil, because she murdered every living person on Charn in order to remain queen, and she seems to think it grand that she is supreme ruler of a deserted world. Eventually the pool that leads to Charn goes dry: "When you were last here [the Wood between the Worlds]," said Asian, "that hollow was a pool, and when you jumped into it you came to the world where a dying sun shone over the ruins of Charn.

There is no pool now. That world is ended, as if it had never been. Let the race of Adam and Eve take warning."

The Magician's Nephew was written soon after World War II, a war in which weapons of great power had killed millions of people. Charn may be an example of what can happen.

The most important place in The Magician's Nephew is the world of Narnia. Please note that the world is not itself called Narnia; the name Narnia belongs to the place first created in the world by Asian—a place that becomes the nation of Narnia. At first, the world is not inspiring. "This is an empty world. This is nothing," says Jadis, And it [Narnia's world] was uncommonly like Nothing. There were no stars. It was so dark that they couldn't see one another at all and it made no difference whether you kept your eyes shut or opened. Under their feet there was a cool, flat something which might have been earth, and was certainly not grass or wood. The air was cold and dry and there was no wind.

This passage is probably inspired by Genesis 1:1-2: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (King James Bible) But this empty world is about to be full of wonders. There is a great song, from which water



arises and then plants such as grass and trees; then animals burst out of the ground: Can you imagine a stretch of grassy land bubbling like water in a pot? For that is really the best description of what was happening. In all directions it was swelling into humps. They were of very different sizes, some bigger than mole-hills, some as big as wheelbarrows, two the size of cottages. And the humps moved and swelled till they burst, and the crumbled earth poured out of them, and from each hump there came out an animal.

Compare this passage to Genesis 1:24: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so."

For a short time, the world of Narnia is filled with Asian's creative power. Even coins dropped on it sprout into trees. The arm of a lamp post that Jadis throws at Asian sprouts into a new lamp post with a light that never goes out. Mountains arise to the west and a forest full of spirits arises all around, and the Great River first begins to flow.

Social Sensitivity

The Magician's Nephew can be read as a great adventure, and it is likely that the adventure is what appeals most to its readers. An undercurrent to the adventure is kindness and mercy. After Digory brings evil into Asian's beautiful new world, he is given a chance to redeem himself, and in so doing, he brings peace and freedom from evil to Narnia. This is echoed in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, in which the traitor Edmund is redeemed by Asian's sacrifice.

Each case mirrors God's mercy and generosity, because in each case Asian (representing Christ) provides a way for people who have done evil to be forgiven and to have access to life beyond death.

Literary Qualities

Part of what Lewis wanted to do in *The Magician's Nephew* was explore the Godlike creation of an entire world. Therefore, he draws on the Bible for the pattern of creation. He begins with a world that "was uncommonly like Nothing," much as "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

(Genesis 1:1) in the Bible. Genesis 1:2 says that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Lewis imagines the movement of God's spirit as a song: A voice had begun to sing. It was very far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to come from all directions at once. Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath them. Its lower notes were deep enough to be the voice of the earth herself. There were no words. There was hardly even a tune. But it was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it.

Lewis's effort, here, is to make concrete the somewhat abstract passage of the Bible and to fill in the details. After all, Digory, Polly, and others are witnessing firsthand the creation of Narnia, and Lewis needs to show his audience what they are experiencing.

The Bible's account of the creation of Earth is not always abstract. It can be vivid: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. . ."

(Genesis 1:14). In *The Magician's Nephew*, the passage is: "One moment there had been nothing but darkness; next moment a thousand, thousand points of light leaped out—single stars, constellations, and planets, brighter and bigger than any in our world." The reference to "our world" is Lewis's reminder that the world of Narnia is different from Earth, and the "brighter and bigger" objects in the sky are part of what is different.

In "The Chronicles of Narnia," the movements of stars and planets often portend important events in Narnia's world, and the centaurs are particularly good at reading the heavens, the "signs" mentioned in Genesis. Lewis also says, "If you had seen and heard it, as Digory did, you would have felt quite certain that it was the stars themselves who were singing, and that it was the First Voice, the deep one, which had made them appear and made them sing." This develops an idea from a wonderful line in Job: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

As you and I have already seen, Lewis takes the idea of "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind. . ." (Genesis 1:24) and imagines a land so fertile that animals erupt out of it. He also has a man name the animals—"You shall rule and name all these creatures, and do justice among them, and protect them from their enemies when enemies arise," Asian says to Frank the Cabby—much as God allows Adam to do in Genesis 2:19: "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field,



and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

This suggests that human beings will be dominant over the animals, and indeed only sons of Adam and daughters of Eve are allowed to be the true kings and queens of Narnia.

One way the world of Narnia differs from Earth is in how evil is introduced into the world. In the case of Narnia's world, Digory brings evil from another world, Charn, in the form of Jadis, who, like Satan, will tempt Digory in the garden. Unlike Adam and Eve, Digory resists temptation and thus avoids the fall. Paul puts the situation this way in Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." In the world of Narnia, it is Digory's obedience that allows for a magical tree to be planted to form a barrier between Narnia and Jadis, who is in the north. This is an example of fulfilling Asian's mandate, "And as Adam's race has done the harm, Adam's race shall help to heal it." Again, the Bible is echoed: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (I Corinthians 15:21). The reward for obeying Asian is as great as the penalty for disobeying God is harsh on the earth, for Narnia will know hundreds of years of freedom from evil before Jadis eventually overcomes the magical barrier and enters Narnia.



Themes

Creation vs. Destruction

One of the central contrasts in the novel is between creation and destruction, or beginning and end. This contrast can be seen most effectively through the creation of Narnia and the destruction of Charn.

When Digory and Polly arrive in Charn, they feel that Charn is dead, cold, and empty. There are no people and no other forms of life. The landscape is in ruins. The buildings often don't look very safe, and the place looks like it has been deserted for years. A red sun hangs in the sky, and Digory feels that it is much older than the one in London. It feels to him like a sun that was at the end of its life, tired of being in the sky and looking down on Charn. After Digory wakes Queen Jadis, the buildings further crumble around them. Polly and Digory dislike Charn. It has been the scene of horrific events and death. Coldness and emptiness cling to it. Later, when Digory and Polly are in the Wood between Worlds with Aslan, they find that the pool that led them to Charn has dried up and is no more. Charn has ended.

Narnia, on the other hand, is created before the children's eyes. They first hear Aslan's song and watch the darkness turn to light and the landscape spread out before them. When his song changes, trees, flowers, and finally, animals spring forth from the earth. The children are enchanted with this, feeling safe even in the presence of a Lion. Narnia is new and alive. Despite the Witch's presence, Narnia is untouched by evil or pain. The animals all exist together in harmony and things like oppression do not exist.

Good vs. Evil

Just like part of the *Chronicles of Narnia* series, this book also examines the struggle between good and evil. This struggle can be seen through the contrasts between characters, places, and the choices that individuals make. Like the explanation of how Narnia was created, the story tells of how evil is brought into Narnia, creating a situation where good and evil will clash. This clash can also be seen in Charn, although evil has won, and in London, where people have not yet reached the evilness of Charn. While there is no great battle between good and evil in this story, the foundations for later battles are put into place by the presence of the Witch in Narnia.

Good and evil are contrasted in many of the characters. Aslan and the Witch represent the extreme ends of the spectrum. While Aslan is pure good, the Witch is pure evil, and neither acts or thinks in a way that disrupts this at any point in the novel. They are both, in some ways, ideal types of good and evil, with no ambiguity to their character. Other characters in the story fall between Aslan and the Witch on the continuum of good and evil. Uncle Andrew and Digory are also contrasted throughout the story. While Uncle Andrew is not as evil as the Witch, he is much closer to her in this regard than Digory,



who is complex, but ultimately chooses the right path to follow. Uncle Andrew illustrates the downward spiral that happens when evil takes over a person. Had Digory chosen to act in selfish ways in regard to the apple or leaving the others in Narnia, he would have become more like Uncle Andrew and ultimately, the Witch. By choosing to give the apple to Aslan and to set his loyalty with Aslan and with the other good characters, he is pulled farther in their direction. Most of the other characters, including Polly, Cabby, his wife, and the animals, are good characters, choosing kindness and love over selfishness or hate.

The struggle between good and evil can also be shown in the decisions that Digory makes throughout the story. Digory begins the story by choosing to go after Polly when she vanishes, knowing that Uncle Andrew will not save her. Yet he also chooses to ring the golden bell, knowing that it may cause danger for him and Polly. Digory's ultimate choice, however, is in the garden at the top of the hill, where he is faced with what to do with the apple. Digory can return to London with it and save his mother, like the Witch urges him to do. Digory can also return to Narnia and give the apple to Aslan, like he has promised. Digory chooses to put others before himself, again, when he gives the silver apple to Aslan, knowing that, by doing so, he will be helping to keep Narnia safe.

Temptation

Throughout the novel, a number of characters are faced with tempting situations. How they respond to these situations influences the consequences for the character and directs the storyline. Digory, Uncle Andrew, and the Witch all face situations where they can choose different paths, often one good and one evil. What they choose to do shapes their character and the environment of those around them.

Of all the characters, Digory, perhaps, faces the most temptation and choices in the novel. As such, he is also the most complex of the characters, with various, and contending, motives, feelings, and ideas. At heart, Digory wants to do what is right. Digory follows Polly into the Wood between Worlds, even though he had no part in putting her there and ultimately doesn't have to go after her. Yet he is also impulsive, ringing the bell in the Hall of Images, knowing that that action could result in danger for both him and Polly.

While Digory's character has this ambiguity to it, this is resolved in the situation in the garden on top of the hill. Digory is faced with the choice of returning the silver apple to Aslan, the choice he knows is the right one, and returning to London with the apple to cure his mother. The Witch attempts to talk him into taking the apple for his mother, but despite his heartbreak over possibly losing his mother, Digory chooses the right choice and brings the apple to Aslan.

Other characters also face temptation, but they choose very different paths than Digory. Uncle Andrew, for example, forces the children to use the Rings, even though he could have tried them out himself. Tempted by the idea of fame and fortune, Uncle Andrew tries, again and again, to put himself in a situation to have control over the Rings. The

Witch is primarily tempted by power. The Witch uses the Deplorable Word to annihilate Charn and her sister in order to wrest away power for herself. The Witch also chooses to eat the silver apple, even though there is danger attached with that. The Witch's actions not only have dire consequences for those around her, but they also make her more and more evil as she continues to choose to accept the temptation.



Themes/Characters

The Magician's Nephew features a complex interaction among its characters, but Digory Kirke is the main character. At the start of the novel, Digory and his mother are living with his aunt, because his mother is deathly ill and cannot care for him. One important aspect of The Magician's Nephew is how Digory matures from chapter to chapter. At the start of the novel, he is impulsive and determined to have his own way, even when having his own way hurts others. When on Charn, he actually hurts Polly in order to ring the bell that revives Jadis.

On the other hand, Polly, who lives down the block from Digory, is not as driven in her behavior as Digory. After all, her mother is not dying. She just wants to make friends, and crawling through the attic to the abandoned house does seem like a fine adventure, but she is too trusting of grownups.

Digory's Uncle Andrew persuades Polly to touch one of the magic yellow rings: "And immediately, without a flash or a noise or a warning of any sort, there was no Polly."

With this event, positive characteristics in Digory begin to show. For one thing, he has enough understanding of people's characters to know that Uncle Andrew is "a wicked, cruel magician." Further, he is loyal to a friend. He is quick to decide that he must follow Polly to help her. In this, he shows courage, because there is no telling what evil he might face when he touches a yellow ring and disappears. Later, he shows imagination and intelligence when he explains how the Wood between the Worlds works, comparing it to the common attic of the block of houses he and Polly have left: "It isn't a room in any of the houses. In a way, it isn't really part of any of the houses.

But once you're in the tunnel you can go along it and come out into any of the houses in the row. Mightn't this wood be the same?"

He realizes that the pools are like doors, and the worlds they lead to are like houses, a fairly profound insight.

There is a pair of villains in The Magician's Nephew: Uncle Andrew and Jadis, though Uncle Andrew, a fool, is not as thoroughly corrupt as the Queen of Charn.

In Andrew are echoed some of the characteristics of despots that may have particularly angered Lewis after World War II.

Uncle Andrew insists, "Men like me who possess hidden wisdom, are freed from common rules." This is his excuse for experimenting on Polly, and it is a cover for his actual cowardice; if he were anxious to know where a person would go after touching a yellow ring, why not go himself instead of sending a child? Uncle Andrew's justifications become even more menacing when they are echoed by Jadis.



"I, Jadis, the last Queen, but the Queen of the World," she says of herself. Her sister had led a revolt against her and very nearly succeeded, but Jadis knew "the Deplorable Word." She tells Digory, "It had long been known to the great kings of our race that there was a word which, if spoken with the proper ceremonies, would destroy all living things except the one who spoke it."

She annihilates all life on her world in such a manner. In the sheer depth of her evil, she believes ruling an unpopulated world to be better than not being the ruler, and she insists that "what would be wrong for you or for any of the common people is not wrong in a great Queen such as I."

One of the themes of *The Magician's Nephew* is the difference between practicality and good. At first Jadis speaks only to Digory: "In Charn, she [Jadis] took no notice of Polly (until the very end) because Digory was the one she wanted to make use of," however, once "she had Uncle Andrew, she took no notice of Digory. I expect most witches are like that. They are not interested in things or people unless they can use them; they are terribly practical."

For Jadis and Uncle Andrew, the price of being practical before being good results in the loss of a paradise. The world Asian creates is not particularly practical with its numerous talking animals and spirits, its great forests, magnificent rivers, and active sky, but it is beautiful, and gladdens the spirits of those who are less "practical" than Jadis and Uncle Andrew.

Uncle Andrew pays for his refusal to recognize the wonders around him with his sanity. He returns to Earth no longer quite evil, but not quite understanding anything, either. Jadis pays the more terrible price.

She defies the rules of the walled garden in the west and goes over the wall and eats the forbidden fruit. By eating the fruit, she gains eternal life—her heart's desire—but that life is forever ruined for her, because eating the fruit brings with it the knowledge of her own debased nature and miserable loneliness. She becomes Asian's permanent enemy, and the greatest single source of evil in Narnia's world. However, determined as she is to ruin Asian's creation, she can never overcome Asian's immense creative power. Being "terribly practical," she learns all the magic of the world that she can, but she also cannot imagine any power greater than what she learns.

This will contribute to her downfall in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Asian himself is a towering figure in *The Magician's Nephew*. His song brings form and shape to the world of Narnia, creating seas and lands, plants and animals. The song varies according to what he is creating, but its overall impression is one of joy and magnificence to everyone except Jadis and Uncle Andrew, who loath it. Jadis even throws a piece of a street lamp at Asian, striking the golden lion in its head. Asian pays it no notice, and it falls to the ground and grows into the street lamp that Lucy discovers in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, which will always mark the Lantern Wastes of Narnia.



In "the deepest, wildest voice they had ever heard," Asian says, "Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees.

Be talking beasts. Be divine waters." Thus, "Out of the trees wild people stepped forth, gods and goddesses of the wood; with them came Fauns and Satyrs and Dwarfs. Out of the river rose the river god with his Naiad daughters." There is laughter as well as seriousness, and Asian is a source of fun as well as duty.

Even so, Uncle Andrew hears only animal noises, while Digory, Polly, and others hear animals talking and joking. "Now the trouble about trying to make yourself stupider than you really are," says the narrator, "is that you very often succeed," and Uncle Andrew's insistence on practicality has made him very stupid, because he is determined not to understand the miraculous events occurring around him.

Asian is stern as well as joyous, and he notes that Jadis represents the introduction of evil into his brand new world, and he lays responsibility for her presence on Digory, who had revived Jadis while hurting Polly, and who had brought her to the world of Narnia. "And as Adam's race has done the harm, Adam's race shall help to heal it," declares Asian, drawing on I Corinthians 15:21, which says, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Digory reveals how much he has matured by accepting Asian's task of fetching fruit from the walled garden in the western mountains, and later shows that he has taken great strides toward manhood by defying temptation in the garden and delivering the fruit to Asian, whole.

Asian appears in every novel in "The Chronicles of Narnia," and in general he seems bigger in each. This is because the more a person knows Asian, the bigger he is to that person, and as he is known to characters in "The Chronicles of Narnia," he grows bigger. In *The Magician's Nephew*, he mentions one of his most important qualities—the willingness to take onto himself the wrongs of other. He says, "Evil will come of that evil [Jadis], but it is a long way off, and I will see to it that the worst falls upon myself." This means that at the start of the world of Narnia, Asian has already set for himself the sacrifice he will make in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where his murder at the hands of Jadis and all the evil in Narnia will start death running backwards. He can laugh with the jackdaw, he will cry with Digory over Digory's mother's suffering, and he has the courage and determination to foresee and fulfill an awful sacrifice that he must make in order to help others.



Style

Points of View

In *The Magician's Nephew*, Lewis writes in a third person omniscient perspective. The narrator is not a part of the story, although he does address the reader at several points in the story. This narrator is privy to the thoughts and feelings of Digory and Polly, in particular. The reader is able to especially see the sadness, hope, and temptations of Digory. By knowing Digory's thoughts, one can recognize the motivations behind his actions, and also how he feels about the events in Narnia.

The focus on the thoughts and feelings of Digory and Polly help to center the story on these characters and their adventures. This is important for several reasons. First, the focus on Digory and Polly helps to draw younger readers into the story. By allowing the reader to see their thoughts but by not including their ages or physical descriptions, younger readers can more readily imagine themselves as either Polly or Digory. That these characters are also younger presents a commonality with younger readers, who may not be as interested in a story about an adult going through these adventures.

Second, the focus on the younger characters in the story allows the reader to see the creation of Narnia through innocent, child eyes. Of the human characters, Polly and Digory are the most good, and as such, they are able to experience Aslan's song and Narnia's creation with pleasure and wonder. Through them, the reader can also appreciate how Narnia sprang into being and its goodness and peace. A story that focused on Uncle Andrew or the Witch, for example, would be a very different story in tone, feel, and message.

Setting

The Magician's Nephew has four major settings: London, The Wood between the Worlds, Charn, and Narnia. Polly and Digory, the main characters, live in London, next door to each other. Through magic, they and several other characters are transported to the other worlds of Charn and Narnia. In both London and Charn, much of the action is set within the confines of buildings. In London, Uncle Andrew's study is the site from which Polly and Digory are tricked into using the Rings and the place that they return to with the Witch. In Charn, the children find themselves amid great buildings, and they wander into the Hall of Images, where they wake the Queen.

In the other settings, the action takes place outside, in country-like settings, full of trees and green plants. The Wood between the Worlds is a transition place from which the children can get to and from these other worlds, through pools of water and the magic Rings. When Aslan creates Narnia, it too is an open space, full of life and talking animals. In contrast to Charn and London, Narnia is peaceful and pleasant.



The time period for the story is long ago, "when your grandfather was a child" (pg. 1). The story explains how Aslan created Narnia, a place where the other books in the series are set. In the last chapter, Lewis explains what happens after Polly and Digory return to London. Lewis also relates how, when Digory is older, a wardrobe is made from the tree of the magic apple core. Other children would later use the wardrobe to enter Narnia.

Language and Meaning

Lewis uses relatively simple language in *The Magician's Nephew*. The book targets younger readers, and as such, does not include passages that are difficult. The book also does not include any strong or vulgar language. Violence is not present in the story.

The story is told through a mixture of dialog and narrative, to help describe the scenes and develop the characters. This carries the story along at a fast pace and allows for the characters' thoughts on what they are seeing to be known. In particular, when the group is watching Aslan create Narnia, the reader is shown how each character reacts to what they are seeing. Uncle Andrew spends the time trying to convince Digory to use the Rings and take them home. Cabby, in contrast, keeps trying to quiet everyone so that he can listen to the music. Digory and Polly excitedly proclaim new things that they see. The characters' interactions while Narnia is created offer a glimpse into their personalities and concerns.

Structure

The Magician's Nephew consists of fifteen chapters, and the novel moves in a linear time frame. Each chapter has an illustration at the beginning, showing some detail of the events of that particular chapter. The titles of the chapter also relate to some event within that particular chapter. The chapter titles use phrases meant to capture the reader's attention, such as: What Happened at the Front Door, The Fight at the Lamp-Post, Strawberry's Adventure, and so on.

This book is the sixth book of seven in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series by C. S. Lewis. The narrator explains that the events in *The Magician's Nephew* take place before the events in the other books, although in the series, it is closer to the end. The last chapter of *The Magician's Nephew* ties up the loose ends of the story and explain how the events in this book shape the stories in the other books. This chapter is aptly titled, "The End of This Story and the Beginning of All the Others."



Quotes

"But what she noticed first was a bright red wooden tray with a number of rings on it. They were in pairs - a yellow one and a green one together, than a little space, and then another yellow one and another green one. They were no bigger than ordinary rings, and no one could help noticing them because they were so bright." Chapter 1, pg. 9

"It was too late. Exactly as he spoke, Polly's hand went out to touch one of the rings. And immediately, without a flash or a noise or a warning of any sort, there was no Polly. Digory and his Uncle were alone in the room." Chapter 2, pg. 14

"The stuff of which both were made had all come from the wood. The stuff in the yellow Rings had the power of drawing you into the wood; it was stuff that wanted to get back to its own place, the in-between place. But the stuff in the green Rings is stuff that is trying to get out of its own place: so that a green Ring would take you out of the wood into a world." Chapter 3, pg. 39

"The last figure of all was the most interesting - a woman even more richly dressed than the others, very tall (but every figure in that room was taller than the people of our world), with a look of such fierceness and pride that it took your breath away. Yet she was beautiful too." Chapter 4, pg. 48

"In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing." Chapter 8, pg. 98

"It was a Lion. Huge, shaggy, and bright it stood facing the risen sun. Its mouth was wide open in song and it was about three hundred yards away." Chapter 8, pg. 102

"Can you imagine a stretch of grassy land bubbling like water in a pot? For that is really the best description of what was happening. In all directions it was swelling into humps. They were of very different sizes, some no bigger than mole-hills, some as big as wheel-barrows, two the size of cottages. And the humps moved and swelled till they burst, and the crumbled earth poured out of them, and from each hump there came out an animal." Chapter 9, pg. 113

"There was some dispute as to which way up Uncle Andrew ought to be put into the hole, and he had a very narrow escape from being put in head foremost. Several animals said his legs must be his branches and there the grey, fluffy thing (they meant his head) must be his root. But then others said that the forked end of him was muddier and that it spread out more, as roots ought to do. So finally he was planted right way up. When they had patted down the earth it came up above his knees." Chapter 11, pg. 133

"He knew which was the right tree at once, partly because it stood in the very centre and partly because the great silver apples with which it was loaded shone so and cast a light of their own down on the shadowy places where the sunlight did not reach." Chapter 13, pg. 158



"There, only a few hundred yards away from him stood the Witch. She was just throwing away the core of an apple which she had eaten. The juice was darker than you would expect and had made a horrid stain round her mouth. Digory guessed at once that she must have climbed in over the wall. And he began to see that there might be some sense in that last line about getting your heart's desire and getting despair along with it. For the Witch looked stronger and prouder than ever, and even, in a way, triumphant: but her face was deadly white, white as salt." Chapter 13, 159-160

"Then Polly came over the wall and they went together to the place. But, as it turned out, Digory need not have marked the place. Something was already coming up." Chapter 15, pg. 182

"For when Digory was quite middle-aged (and he was a famous learned man, a Professor, and a great traveler by that time) and the Ketterleys' old house belonged to him, there was a great storm all over the south of England which blew the tree down. He couldn't bear to have it simply chopped up for firewood, so he had part of the timber made into a wardrobe, which he put in his big house in the country. And though he himself did not discover the magic properties of that wardrobe, someone else did. That was the beginning of all the comings and goings between Narnia and our world, which you can read of in other books." Chapter 15, pg. 185

Adaptations

Lewis said that his publisher chose the order in which his Narnia books were published, and when asked in what order they should be read, if possible, he provided this sequence: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* *The Horse and His Boy* *Prince Caspian* *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* *The Silver Chair* *The Last Battle* Each novel can stand on its own, without being read in any particular order, but the sequence Lewis preferred is chronological, from the beginning of Narnia's world to its ending.

The Magician's Nephew was written after *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, so Lewis had the task of making his account of the beginning of Narnia's world match the events that would later occur in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. *The Magician's Nephew* provides explanations for the origins of the mysterious lamp post in the woods, the White Witch, the wide variety of talking animals, and the introductions of evil into Asian's young world. The Professor in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is presented as the boy Digory.

In the period between the events in *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the kingdom of Archenland, south of Narnia, is established by the younger son of King Frank and Queen Helen, and the kingdom of Calormen is established by people from Archenland. One hundred years before the beginning of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the White Witch takes over Narnia and declares herself its queen.

When the Pevensie children show up, they fulfill a prophecy that the witch would be overthrown by two sons of Adam and two daughters of Eve—that is, two boys and two girls from Earth. It is in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* that Asian makes his great sacrifice, surrendering his life for that of the traitor Edmund, and his resurrection makes death run backwards, meaning eternal life is possible for all who live in Narnia's world.

Prince Caspian is the beginning of the "Prince Caspian" trilogy within "The Chronicles of Narnia." In the novel, Caspian, who will be known as Caspian the Navigator, is introduced. Caspian is the tenth in a line of Telmarine kings; the people from Telmar, southwest of Narnia, had conquered Narnia and had so oppressed the Old Narnians that they disappeared from view. The Telmarines came to Narnia from the South Pacific of Earth. In *Prince Caspian*, the usurper Miraz has murdered Caspian's father and claimed the crown of Narnia for himself, but the Old Narnians and the Pevensie children help defeat Miraz and place Caspian on the throne, with Asian's blessing.

The miserable boy Eustace is introduced in *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader."* He is a plague on Lucy and Edmund Pevensie, as well as everybody on the *Dawn Treader* until he learns that he is a monster by actually transforming into one and thereby learns the importance of friendship. King Caspian swore an oath to Asian that he would seek out the seven faithful lords who had been banished to the east by Miraz, and he voyages across the sea looking for them, eventually sailing all the way to the End of the World



and the Last Wave, beyond which are the cliffs of Asian's Country. It is for this feat that he becomes known as Caspian the Navigator or sometimes Caspian Seafarer, rather than just Caspian X. In *The Silver Chair*, Caspian is a very old man whose son Rilian has been missing for ten years. Asian calls Eustace and a new character Jill to Narnia to find Rilian and return him to his home. Eustace and Jill team up with one of "The Chronicles of Narnia"'s most delightful characters— Puddleglum, a Marsh-wiggle, to trek through the northern wastes into very dangerous giant country and eventually plunge deep underground to a vast but very unhappy civilization. There they meet the green witch, who seems to have ties to Jadis, the White Witch.

The Last Battle has been both a sad and happy book for generations of readers. It is sad because it is the last of Lewis's "The Chronicles of Narnia." It is happy because all the favorite characters of the series are reunited in Asian's Country in perfect health, and they discover a universe of adventures without end, all with the blessing of Asian's Father, the Emperor-beyond-Sea. In *The Last Battle*, Lewis draws on Isaiah, Revelation, and letters by Paul and Peter to portray a cataclysmic battle between good and evil in which Narnia is overthrown by traitors and Calormenes, and its subjects are enslaved and murdered. When all seems lost, with even the evildoers afraid of what they have done, the demon Tash takes his lawful prey and then is banished to his own realm, and Asian begins the process whereby not only Narnia's world but the entire universe of Narnia's world dies. Yet, within Asian's Country, everything good about Narnia is preserved, better, brighter, more joyous than before, and no one is ever afraid, and miracles abound.



Topics for Discussion

1. How well does The Magician's Nephew answer your questions about the origins of Narnia?
2. Should Asian be angry at Digory? Is Digory at fault for bringing evil into Asian's new world?
3. Why does Digory not eat the fruit he picks in the walled garden? Why is it important that he brings the fruit uneaten to Asian?
4. Is Digory a better person at the end of The Magician's Nephew than he was at the start? How has he changed for the better or for the worse?
5. What can Asian do that Jadis cannot? 6. What is bad about Uncle Andrew?
7. What constitutes immoral behavior in The Magician's Nephew?
8. Why does Digory go so far as to hurt Polly in order to ring the bell on Charn?
9. Jadis seems undisturbed by the fact that she annihilated the people of Charn. Why is this so?
10. What aspect of Uncle Andrew's behavior makes the talking animals of Narnia think he is a plant?
11. Why does Uncle Andrew like Jadis?



Essay Topics

Compare and contrast the four worlds that Digory and Polly find themselves in. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

Polly, Digory, and Cabby can all understand Aslan and the other animals. Why can't Uncle Andrew? What about his personality and actions make him unable to hear?

Describe the scene between the Witch and Digory in the garden on top of the hill. Why do you think he chose to return with the apple for Aslan instead of bringing it to his mother?

Discuss the religious parallels that Lewis uses within the story. Why do you think he incorporates these? Which one do you think is most effective in mimicking the Biblical account?

With which character in the story do you identify? Why do you think you are similar to this character?

Compare and contrast Uncle Andrew and Digory. How are they like and different from Aslan and the Witch? What do you think makes Uncle Andrew and Digory different?

Why is the silver apple significant in the story? What powers does it have?

Why do you think Digory rang the golden bell? What consequences did this have for him? For Charn? For Narnia?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. How well does *The Magician's Nephew* answer questions about the history of Narnia that arise in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*?
2. Should *The Magician's Nephew* or *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* be read first in "The Chronicles of Narnia"? Why?
3. How does the creation story of *The Magician's Nephew* differ from that found in Genesis? What is significant about the differences?
4. How is Jadis "terribly practical?" Why would this be evil?
5. What events in *The Magician's Nephew* foreshadow events in other novels in "The Chronicles of Narnia"?
6. What are the examples of Digory wanting to learn in *The Magician's Nephew*?
How does his desire to learn affect his judgment?
7. How does Aslan sing Narnia into existence? What is important about creation being a song? How does the song affect events?
8. The silver apple seems very important. What does it symbolize? What does it do?
9. Write a story of your own about youngsters visiting the Wood between the Worlds and jumping into one of the pools.
10. There are wonderful images in *The Magician's Nephew* of animals erupting from the ground, of grass spreading as part of a song, of gold and silver trees growing out of coins, and of many other sights. Draw or paint pictures of any of these, trying to capture the spirit of the story of *The Magician's Nephew*.



Further Study

Beetz, Kirk H. Exploring C. S. Lewis's "The Chronicles of Narnia." Osprey, FL: Beacham Publishing, 2001. This book is intended for general audiences and covers Lewis's life and career and provides extensive details about the characters and themes in "The Chronicles of Narnia," along with original maps for all the settings and in-depth chapter-by-chapter analyses of each novel in the chronicles, as well as explanations of the biblical sources for some of the events in the novels.

Bingham, Derick. C. S. Lewis: The Storyteller.

Tain, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1999. An engagingly written fictionalized version of Lewis's life, intended for young readers.

Coren, Michael. The Man Who Created Narnia: The Story of C. S. Lewis. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994. This is a well-illustrated and well-rounded account of Lewis's life, intended for young readers.

Ford, Paul F. Companion to Narnia. 4th ed.

New York: HarperCollins, 1994. A reference book for "The Chronicles of Narnia" geared towards adults rather than young adults. It is an alphabetical listing of characters and themes, with some sharp, insightful explanations of major issues.

Gormley, Beatrice. C. S. Lewis: Christian and Storyteller. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

In this spiritual biography of Lewis, Gormley traces Lewis's development as a Christian writer. It is best suited for teenaged readers.

Gresham, Douglas. The Narnia Cookbook: Foods from C. S. Lewis's "The Chronicles of Narnia." New York: HarperCollins, 1998.

Gresham provides recipes for preparing foods mentioned in "The Chronicles of Narnia." Children should have adult supervision when they prepare the dishes.

Lewis, C. S. C. S. Lewis Letters to Children.

Edited by Lyle W. Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead. New York: Macmillan, 1985.

Lewis had an extensive correspondence with children, who wrote to him from all over the world. He made a point of replying to every letter he received, although near the end of his life he needed his older brother Warnie's help. This book is a selection from his many letters written to young readers. He is charming, and he gives serious answers to serious questions.

Sibley, Brian. The Land of Narnia. New York: Harper Trophy (HarperCollins), 1989.



Sibley finds the beginnings of Narnia in Lewis's childhood fantasies and includes some early drawings of "Animal-Land."

It is well suited to young readers.

Swift, Catherine. *C. S. Lewis*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989. This is an inspirational book that uses Lewis's spiritual journey as an example of how people can discover Christ in their lives.

Wellman, Sam. *C. S. Lewis: Author of "Mere Christianity."* Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour, 1996. This thoughtful book for young readers tells how Lewis tried to show how all Christians are united by faith.

Wilson, A. N. *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*. London: Collins, 1990. In this biography, Wilson sorts through the legend to uncover the real C. S. Lewis, explaining much of Lewis's private life as well as his public career.



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