

# **Perelandra Study Guide**

**Perelandra by C. S. Lewis**

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# Plot Summary

Perelandra by C.S. Lewis is the second book of Lewis' Space Trilogy. In this account, Dr. Ransom battles the Dark Force on a new planet, facing the strongest, most destructive force known to man, temptation. The future of all mankind rests in his ability to prevent the Black Archon from causing the downfall of man. In many instances throughout the whole book, we are shown characteristics of the eldila, The Voice, and Maledil that correspond to angels, Christ, and God the Father. There are many parallels to Biblical accounts, both of the fall of mankind and the temptation of Jesus by Satan. The difference in this account is that the object being tempted, The Green Lady, does not succumb as Eve did. She overcomes, as Jesus did, but comes close to falling. Though The Green Lady parallels Eve and Jesus, she is really not the ruler of the land. Neither is her King. There is a Voice that communicates with Ransom from time to time that is parallel to Jesus. The Voice tells Dr. Ransom his name is ransom, also, indicating He is Christ, and Ransom will serve in the same capacity as Jesus did, ransoming the population of Perelandra. Even the doctor's name foreshadows what is to come.

Dr. Ransom previously visited Malacandra (Mars) which, according to the narrator, forever changed him. He met the eldila (angels) and seemed to have an ongoing relationship with them. He has now been ordered to go to Perelandra (Venus) for a purpose he does not know at first, but soon discovers. He prepares for his journey by summoning the narrator and having him help with the journey. The narrator places him in a strange, coffin-like box, and the Oyarsa of Malacandra becomes the emotive force that propels him to Perelandra.

On Perelandra, Ransom floats on a surreal floating island. He soon meets The Green Lady, who is destined to be the mother of mankind. However, she is "young" and must become wise about things to become older. They immediately develop a close friendship. Ransom is nurtured in this utopian, though strange, land. Ransom learns much from The Lady, and in turn teaches her much. Ransom's peace is soon shattered, however, by the appearance of Professor Weston, who arrives in a space ship.

Weston, whom Ransom saw on Mars, appears, is disarmed, and then they begin a lengthy philosophical discussion. During this discussion, Weston reveals he has changed his purpose in life. He is on a quest to find true spirituality, though his idea of what that means differs drastically from Ransom's idea. He reveals his pride when he tells Ransom he is the greatest scientist of all time, and has knowledge and understanding about life no other human can claim. This pride will soon lead to his downfall.

The following morning Ransom awakens to discover the devastation of a beautiful life form on Perelandra. He finds one of the fairy-like frogs he admired just days before, lying ripped open, mutilated, but still alive. He tries to kill it in an attempt to put it out of its misery. He soon finds he causes it further pain, and he is unable to kill it easily. He feels a great sense of disgust and misery at his need to attempt the kill. He soon finds many more of the frogs in the same shape.



Ransom soon finds himself directly opposing Weston when he discovers Weston trying to convince The Lady to move to the Fixed Land, which is forbidden by Maleldil (God). He tries to convince her that obedience sometimes means disobedience. He says The King really wants her to disobey him to show her strength.

Weston soon transforms into a hideous creature Ransom realizes is the Evil One, the Un-Man, as he calls him. The creature has overtaken Weston's body. He battles with the creature, both physically and mentally. The battle starts off as a sort of competition between them for the loyalty of The Lady. It soon escalates into a battle of wills, fighting for their very lives.

Ransom escapes the clutches of the Un-Man, but is soon drawn back into the battle in an attempt to save The Lady. He is approached by The Voice, which is the Maleldil, or God, of Perelandra. He attempts to avoid battling the Un-Man because of his belief that he is too weak. However, The Voice convinces him he is the only hope, the ransom, for all of mankind against the Un-Man.

A battle with the Un-Man ensues, with the two going into darkness, a cavern, a fiery pit, and ultimately, Ransom conquers him and throws him into the fiery pit. He is barely alive and has to stay in the limbo he finds himself in for some time to recuperate. He eventually does get out of the limbo, and goes on to meet Tor, the King, and Tinidril, the Queen. He learns they are to be the beginning of a new mankind and they will one day go to earth and redeem his planet.

Ransom is sealed back into the coffin-like enclosure and transported back to earth. The narrator and Dr. Humphreys are waiting for him, to help him return and to regain his health. He has been gone a whole year.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

Perelandra by C.S. Lewis is the second book of Lewis' Space Trilogy. In this account, Dr. Ransom battles the Dark Force on a new planet, facing the strongest, most destructive force known to man, temptation. The future of all mankind rests in his ability to prevent the Black Archon from causing the downfall of man. In many instances throughout the whole book, we are shown characteristics of the eldila, The Voice, and Maledil that correspond to angels, Christ, and God the Father. There are many parallels to Biblical accounts, both of the fall of mankind and the temptation of Jesus by Satan. The difference in this account is that the object being tempted, The Green Lady, does not succumb as Eve did. She overcomes, as Jesus did, but comes close to falling. Though The Green Lady parallels Eve and Jesus, she is really not the ruler of the land. Neither is her King. There is a Voice that communicates with Ransom from time to time that is parallel to Jesus. The Voice tells Dr. Ransom his name is ransom, also, indicating He is Christ, and Ransom will serve in the same capacity as Jesus did, ransoming the population of Perelandra. Even the doctor's name foreshadows what is to come.

The narrator begins the account by describing his strange journey to Dr. Ransom's house, after being summoned by Ransom. He has an internal battle with his fear on the way. He knows his friend has been communicating with the eldila all year since he left Mars (Malacandra). His fear is of meeting an elidila, which he reasons he eventually will, and the possibility he will be caught up in the same mission as Ransom. This does eventually happen. The internal battle the narrator shares with us might lead us to believe he is deranged. He doubts his friend, while at the same time acknowledging there is no purer person he knows. He also sees facial expressions in the things around him. He speaks of not liking the expression of the dark road he must go down. He even doubts his own sanity, saying he might be going mad and just does not realize it, as some who go mad think they are sane and others are going mad.

The narrator tells us he feels in his approach that he is approaching something good, almost holy. He knows his friend communes with eldila, or angels. However, he also tells us he senses evil in the very place he is going to meet the good. The narrator tells us the eldila are not human, Martian, or even organisms. They seem to occupy space, but they do not really. The space they seemingly occupy are just points in time to them. We learn the narrator's watch has mysteriously stopped so he has no sense of time.

He finds the house empty when he gets there. He discovers a strange, weird colored coffin-like box. He fights extreme fear, battling darkness he cannot overcome as he is unable to get a match to light. After struggling for some time, stumbling over what he comes to realize is one of the eldila, fearing the darkness with a strange dread, Dr. Ransom appears to him. He speaks for a moment with a voice; they converse in a language unfamiliar to the narrator, though not really in voices, but rather just a sense of communication. This makes the narrator jealous and somewhat angry.



Ransom tries to reassure the narrator by explaining the miraculous nature of his impending journey, and the possible reason for it, but in fact increases his friend's great dread. Ransom cannot assure him of his eventual return to earth and his safety.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

The scene set in this chapter indicates the focus of the entire book. It is all about the miraculous nature of Ransom's journey to another planet. Lewis goes to great length in this chapter to show the confusion between what is natural, thus scientifically provable, and the supernatural, which sometimes is also scientifically provable, he indicates. The great dread the narrator feels in travelling to Ransom's house, especially since he has no idea why he was summoned, foreshadows the great hardship that will ensue. The narrator goes into great detail about the eldila, even though he does not really have any idea they play a role in why he was summoned. His sense of dread causes him to feel he will have to battle with them at some point.

The comments by the narrator about fearing being drawn into something he does not want to be involved with, including elidila, foreshadows the battle between Ransom and the Force that recruits him to battle the Un-Man, strongly against his wishes. However, as the narrator states in this chapter, Ransom finds out later that sometimes man has no control over his destiny. The narrator arrives to a darkness that symbolizes the evil (darkness) Ransom will face on Perelandra.

The stopping of the narrator's watch corresponds to the loss of a true sense of time on Perelandra. Time does not count there, and the events are revealed so rapidly that the year there seems to only be a short few days. He tells us he knows who Ransom considers Maledil to be (God). This is just one more indication from the beginning that Ransom's battle is not to be with flesh and blood, but with spiritual beings.

The narrator attempts to explain the communication he senses going on between Ransom and the spiritual being, which he only sees as a strange pillar of light. This is the first we see of the internal monologue that is in fact a dialogue between Ransom and spiritual beings. This first communication we see is the way Ransom communicates with the beings throughout the story.

Lewis here inserts a footnote about early writings about spiritual beings and how we do not really see or hear them, but merely sense them. Though this is a factual quote from an early scholar, it is the way we see Ransom relating to the beings throughout the novel.



## Chapter 2

### Chapter 2 Summary

In chapter two the narrator and Ransom have a long, philosophical talk over a "last" meal, as they prepare to launch Ransom on his journey. They discuss a lot of issues with language. Both men are 'philologists,' studying languages and craving to understand all they can about them. Though the narrator has no knowledge of the Old Solar language, Ransom assures him language will not be any problem for him. Language is the least of his worries. Ransom became well-versed in that language when he visited Mars the year before. He explains to the narrator the language he is speaking of was once the common language, but the "great tragedy" erased it completely. Ransom further attempts to explain to the narrator how the battle with the evil he is to meet is different from the strictly moral battles they are accustomed to. This one would involve a physical presence. He received that information from the eldila who "communicated" it to him.

When the narrator indicates he wants to wait to launch the coffin until the Oyarsa returns, Ransom informs him Oyarsa has been there all along, invisible. The narrator locks the naked Ransom in the box, and then it just is not anymore. He does not see it launch or disappear. It just no longer exists. He then closes up Ransom's house and returns to Oxford with a great sense of dread, that he may never see his friend again.

After twelve months, Oyarsa again appears to the narrator and tells him to go to Ransom's house and be ready for his return. He takes Dr. Humphreys with him and together they receive Ransom back to this world. Ransom is fine except for an extreme tiredness and an injury on his heel that will not stop bleeding. He quickly takes a shower then sits down to tea with Humphreys and the narrator, and begins to tell the story of his past year. He talks all day and well into the next night.

In this chapter, we see Ransom both launched on his journey and returned after a year away. It spans the whole 12-month period of the book. This chapter is much like a summary of what will be spoken of in the remaining chapters of the book, which detail Ransom's struggle on Perelandra.

It is during this chapter that the first, and only, reference is made to Lewis as the narrator—Ransom addresses him by name.

### Chapter 2 Analysis

In this chapter we see lots of interesting language, even some self-made words. There are a lot of plays on word meanings. We see both the beginning and the end of the story. In explaining to the narrator, Ransom says his battle is no different than our own daily battle with the evil ones, though it has reached a new phase. This new battle will





be of a physical nature. Perhaps he is unknowingly speaking of a parallel to the reign of evil on earth.

In explaining the universal language being destroyed through a tragedy, he parallels the Biblical account of the confounding of language due to the building of the Tower Babel. In that story God causes the people to not be able to understand each other any more.

The hemorrhage on his heel parallels the blood shed by Christ in the Bible, shed as a ransom for mankind, just as Dr. Ransom sheds his blood in the battle against evil. Just as the Bible predicted that the devil's seed would bruise the heel of Jesus, Ransom's heel is injured by the Evil, the Un-Man, on Perelandra.

The whole chapter plays on language. The eldila, seen as pillars or points of light, are referred to as photosomes, which is literally interpreted as "light body."

When Ransom explains to the narrator he must be ever ready to come to him when he again descends to the earth, we see the first parallel of Ransom to the Christ (ransom). Just as Christ will come back again to earth, and we must be ever ready, Ransom is cautioning the narrator to be ever ready.

The narrator wants to wait, he says, until the Oyarsa appears before launching Ransom on his journey. Ransom tells him the Oyarsa has never left them, but has been there all the time. This further points to the Oyarsa (Maledil) as God/ In like manner, God is always with us, though unseen.



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

This chapter begins with the description of Ransom's landing on Venus. From this point on, the story is told as it happened to Ransom. The narrator indicates it is difficult to describe, because, as Ransom said, it is too definite. Words are too vague to describe what he experienced. In the very first few minutes of his landing, we see Ransom experiencing all sorts of physical delights, from smells, sights, to temperatures and exquisite pleasure in his surroundings.

Ransom is exposed to a prolific range of sensations, both pleasant and what was called "violent" though they were only mildly unpleasant, such as a blinding light. He speaks of not feeling guilt at all, a total absence of it, but having such an extreme pleasure in the things surrounding him that he expects to feel some degree of guilt as he would have felt on earth. He tells us of such exquisite pleasure as he could not even imagine. The pleasure causes a great hunger and thirst in him for more, yet a feeling of being totally satiated. Ransom is bombarded with light, warmth, coolness, colors he is unable to describe, exquisite pleasure, fear, and a barrage of sensations that he indicates could not be described with the language we have available. The word pleasure, described as a sensation Ransom has only just truly met, is capitalized, indicating a reference to a deity.

The attempt at describing the sights on Perelandra is so obviously inadequate. In describing what he sees, he uses a description then tells us it does not really look just that way, but that is the closest he can come to telling us what it is like. Perelandra parallels the Biblical account of Heaven. They can each only be described in earthly terms, yet neither are earthly. Lewis indicates words are too slow to adequately describe what is occurring to Ransom. Towards the end of the chapter, he tells us that, due to the slowness of words, it appears all these sensations have taken a long time, but have in fact described only five minutes of Ransom's journey.

During the journey, Ransom is unconscious, and only wakes upon entry into the atmosphere of Perelandra. He finds himself engulfed in some slimy substance, traveling faster than he can describe or imagine.

For the first couple of hours or so on Perelandra, Ransom is regaled with intense, and intensely pleasant, sensations. He experiences a taste so wonderful that he chooses not to repeat it. He senses a solitude, that he is the only being on the planet, yet it is a pleasant sensation. He sees and explores the system of floating islands of which the planet seems to be comprised. A thunder storm occurs beyond anything ever experienced on earth, a rain consisting of mythical-appearing animals.

The day ends with the descent of total and complete darkness. At one point Ransom feels panic that maybe he is on an uninhabited planet. Yet, the thought is fleeting



because of the pleasure he has experienced. He has a sense of all being well, which drives out fear.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

The descriptions Ransom gives for his first sighting of the forest, of smells that create a new hunger and thirst, a "longing that seemed to flow over from the body to the soul" foreshadows the attempt of the Evil One to overcome the Queen of Perelandra, in order to cause the fall of the population of Perelandra. In the narrator's explanation of this taste being something over which "wars would be fought and nations betrayed" we see the symbolism of what evil causes.

Though there is mention of time, we might wonder if the passage of time is not accurately sensed by Ransom. So many experiences occur, and passages from light to dark, plus the thunderstorm and its passage and the discovery of so many items, all could very well point to a period of time out of proportion to what Ransom believes.

The description of unconsciousness, then awakening to a world only adequately described as heavenly, might well parallel the death and resurrection experience man is expected to experience. Also, the description of his "awakening" on Perelandra could very well parallel a birth or new birth experience.

The sense of well-being Ransom keeps experiencing in spite of any fear or adverse sensation might well relate to the Biblical concept of the "peace that surpasses all understanding," a perfect peace that drives out all fear. He is about to experience a horror that is unimaginable and indescribable, so needs that peace to face it.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

In this chapter, Ransom awakens after his first night of sleep to the sight of a dragon. He is convinced the dragon is a rational creature. It is a most wonderful looking creature, but also dangerous looking. When it walks away and then returns to him, he feels his is mad to stand and wait for it, in case it is unfriendly. In fact, however, it is unaware of him, convincing him it must be an "irrational" creature.

Ransom finds himself not-so-gently nudged by the creature toward a special plant. This plant is another treat for the eyes, and emits a sweet, exquisite liquid that awakens Ransom in a way he had never been awakened before. He then sets out to find the food he had the day before. He finds instead a berry. Some with dark red centers are so appealing, Ransom wants to go back and pick only those. But, the inner adviser forbids it. This adviser has spoken to him twice before, Ransom informs us.

After awaking from a period of time totally alone on a strange planet, resting on a floating island, in a land so strange he cannot adequately describe it, he sights a creature on a far floating island. The island turns out to be a fish with a green projection on it, which Ransom decides is a human-like man. A swarm of strange fish, birds, and "his" dragon are all traveling toward the figure. As he gets closer, he sees what he thinks is a green man, but turns out to be a green lady, attended by a court of creatures. When the lady does not speak, but merely laughs at him, he first wonders if he has been sent to rescue an idiot, then wonders if it is not this creature that is mad, but he himself. He doubts his very sanity, as all his senses are bombarded with skewed sights, strange creatures, and the lone green lady.

When Ransom attempts to communicate with the Green Lady, he finds that, although they speak the same words, the comprehension of his words is lost to the new being. He determines this being is not mythological, but also not human. It is a creation of nature, he decides.

Ransom attempts to establish contact with the Green Lady, but when he says he comes in peace, she just asks what peace is. He wastes a few moments admiring a beautiful aroma and ends up missing her island, spending another night alone, doubting his sanity.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

In the beginning Ransom experiences pleasures that quench his hunger and thirst, and which are exquisitely beyond anything he has ever experienced. While his hunger and thirst are quenched momentarily, he indicates these pleasures cause a hunger and thirst beyond anything he has ever experienced and nothing can quench these intense



feelings. This is a foreshadowing of the great temptation the Un-Man is about to use against the innocent Green Lady, and even Ransom himself.

Ransom constantly questions his sanity. The things he is experiencing are so bizarre when compared to what he is used to that he thinks he may be mad or drunk, yet he knows he is not.

Just as Satan in the Biblical account leads Eve to a forbidden fruit, the dragon creature nudges Ransom toward an exquisite fruit that is ultimately forbidden to partake of a second time.

One might wonder how Lewis is able to describe such strange events if not from some drug-induced delusion. Ransom himself questions his sobriety after being drenched by the sweet liquid and finding it difficult to walk.

Ransom makes an interesting observation about what makes humans human, and what makes animals animal. He appears to believe being human involves more than just being a rational being, but one with some awareness of those around it.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

In chapter five, Ransom finds he is on his island and it has drifted adjacent to the Green Lady's. He wishes to come over to her island and is granted permission. He is aware she and he are both naked, but is not bothered by it or tempted. Instead, he is somewhat awestruck by the creature. What might be considered strange on his planet is considered beautiful here, and viewed so by him. He is fascinated with the innocence of this creature. She claims to be older (in wisdom) than she was the day before. She is fascinated with what he reveals to her about his world, just as much so as he is by hers. The Green Lady is amazed at first that she can be so enthralled with her King and his joy, yet still be just as enthralled with Ransom and his wisdom. She states they are so unlike, yet so alike in that they are so intoxicating.

In explaining death to the Green Lady, Ransom makes it seem so appealing that the Green Lady calls his world lucky to be able to experience it. He tries to explain to her it is not a good thing. She asks him how it can not be a good thing to move toward Maleldil. He realizes her purity and innocence are so very fragile. Such a thought fills him with fear. Then, he says, it changes to adventure.

The Green Lady explains to Ransom that she is not "aware" of the things of his world in the normal sense but that Maleldil has given her the knowledge. She does not really understand it, but knows she is drawing closer to an awareness that involves his world. They have a philosophical discussion about how clinging to one good to the exclusion of one they are meant to experience is a bad thing. It appears she is explaining temptation, though she is not aware of what temptation is, and has not, up to this time, experienced it.

The Green Lady explains to Ransom the creatures of old, before the fall of man, will cease and all future beings will be like his kind. He is saddened by this.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

The convoluted conversation Ransom has with the Green Lady reveals she is innocent, yet is being fed information and thoughts by Maleldil himself. In this, she is wiser than Ransom and all of humankind. We discover she, like Eve before her, the mother of Ransom's mankind, is to become the mother of all inhabitants of Perelandra. Her telling of wanting one good thing, but being turned from this by another good thing parallels temptation, the thing she will face soon.

When the Green Lady speaks of being "older" because of the new knowledge Ransom gives her, she is really describing a loss of innocence. Ransom is fascinated by her innocence, but soon becomes frustrated with her when she understands what he is explaining.



Ransom says he has trouble determining who is talking, when he is only talking with the Green Lady. The Green Lady indicates that Maleldil puts thoughts into her own thoughts. The lack of understanding is obviously from being unsure if the Green Lady is speaking for herself, or if she is speaking for Maleldil (God).



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

We see, in chapter six, Ransom being introduced to the unique mode of transportation on Perelandra, which is riding on fish, when he and the Green Lady travel to the Fixed Land. He learns the Green Lady and the King have been forbidden to dwell on it. They may walk on it and visit it, but not sleep on it. Ransom tries to explain his world as a Fixed Land, and the Green Lady tries to explain her world, but neither is very successful. They understand each other's words, but not the concepts. The Green Lady is so new to many concepts that they mean nothing to her. For example, the words 'corner' and 'millions,' mean nothing to her.

While exploring the Fixed Land, Ransom sees Weston approaching in the water in his space ship. He knows Weston actually killed a being on Mars. He is afraid the act will be repeated, but with all the inhabitants on Perelandra. When he tries to warn the Green Lady to escape she is startled and falls into his arms, her mouth open to speak. Weston finds them this way and assumes the worst, since both are naked and appear to be embracing and kissing. Ransom attempts to explain how far his feelings are from what they would be on earth in a similar circumstance.

Ransom and the Green Lady have a discussion about how hard it is to carry out a command by Maleldil, the one of avoiding the Fixed Land. The Green Lady, the naïve one, shows an uncanny wisdom in explaining that if one does something out of love, it is not hard. She says it is not hard to do what Maleldil asks because she loves Him and wants to please him.

Ransom falls in love with the Fixed Land because it is most like his homeland. He realizes the Green Lady is forbidden to stay there, so he must as well leave, since she is the heart of his mission somehow. He faces his first real temptation on Perelandra when he wishes to stay and hold on to this good thing.

Ransom becomes resentful that he is expected to single-handedly (he believes) withstand this battle with Weston. He rants about his being a mere mortal, when the task requires a spiritual being, an eldila.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

When Ransom first sees Weston approaching, he fears physical harm to the inhabitants of Perelandra. How little is he aware of the great danger laying ahead, one with a physical component, but with a spiritual component that far surpasses the physical.

The Voice argues with Ransom about what his mission is on Perelandra. The argument Ransom gives The Voice is parallel to the one Moses has with God in the Biblical account when he is appointed to be a savior to the Israelites. With The Voice equating





Ransom with his own name meaning ransom, we see Ransom is indeed to be a savior, but more closely aligned with the Biblical account of Jesus Christ than that of Moses.

The innocence of Ransom and the Green Lady, both naked and unaware of it, parallels the state of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before their fall. Just as the devil exposes Adam and Eve to temptation and loss of innocence, Weston does so with the Green Lady.

Ransom's anger at having to face the evil Weston parallels Moses' pleading he is unable to face the task at hand. Just as God provides a means for Moses, he provides for Ransom.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

In chapter seven, Ransom and Weston get into a philosophical discussion about the meaning of life, the destiny of man, and what the ultimate purpose of man should be. Weston claims a greater knowledge than Ransom or any other being. He tells Ransom he has finally arrived at the epitome of wisdom. He claims with pride to be the wisest man of all time. He has arrived at the point all men strive for, he claims. Weston claims he is the Force, both Devil and God. He claims to be the spirit that directs all mankind. He is the Devil pushing mankind forward toward God, whom he also claims to be.

Suddenly, Weston's body is seized by a strange fit, with voices not his own exuding from his body. Ransom panics and disarms him, throwing the firearm deep into the sea. Weston's body vomits vilely, twists and twirls in an inhuman manner. Ransom is very scared, and is angry that this was his only purpose for coming to Perelandra, to face this pitiful human being.

Ransom realizes he is hungry, and rues the decision to stay on the Fixed Land. It appears barren, and he is trapped on it with the creature Weston has become. He fears for his life, and suffers the pangs of hunger and thirst. When he returns from throwing the gun in the sea, he addresses Weston, only to receive silence in return. Weston's last utterances are pleas to Ransom to not let 'them...' and then he is silenced by the strange seizure. Ransom anticipates a sleepless, fearful, and hunger-filled night. He regrets ever setting foot on the Fixed Land and decides that if he lived on Perelandra he would not need to be forbidden to come here, he would never set foot on it again.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

As are many good things in Ransom's world, the Fixed Land he so desires, believing it to be perfect, is only later found to be barren. It will not meet his needs. This is a foreshadowing of the barren state of the King and Queen. Yet, it is this Fixed Land they are ordered to populate with offspring. They are to bring forth a new humanity on this barren land. It will indeed be perfect in time.

In the philosophical discussion between Weston and Ransom, we first see the pride Weston possesses, his great belief that he is the wisest man of all time. It is this pride that allows the Un-Man to overtake his physical body. The first indication of this happening is when Weston falls into some strange seizure, though Ransom does not understand it is a spiritual seizure, not a physical one.

The claims of Weston to be both Devil and God, good and evil, the completion of all mankind, is indicative of the Christian belief that there is good and evil in all. Further, it is the purpose of Christianity to strive to escape the evil and go toward the good.

Weston, speaking for the Un-Man, says he is both. Here we see the untruths the devil is capable of making seem so true, just as he does with Eve in the Garden of Eden.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

In chapter eight, Ransom awakens to find Weston apparently gone from the entire island, much to his consternation. How could such a sick man leave, and take provisions with him? He goes looking for food and Weston. He finds food, but not Weston.

Ransom discovers a fish waiting to transport him to the floating island where he hopes to find the Green Lady and protect her from whatever Weston has in mind. He finds the island, but not the Green Lady, and almost immediately falls asleep. He awakens again to the voices of Weston and the Green Lady. Though the voice of Weston sounds like Weston, Ransom realizes it is different, that someone or something else is speaking through Weston. The voice is trying to convince the Green Lady to disobey her orders about the Fixed Land, reasoning with her in riddles and circles about what true obedience means, and that the King is letting her have freedom to choose whether or not to obey him, thus giving her permission to disobey. In this is true obedience, he reasons. He tries to make her believe that in talking with him and Ransom she has become so much wiser and the King wants her to use that wisdom to decide for herself if she will obey or not. This is the King's will, the Weston-thing argues. Ransom sees the fallacy in his arguments, but does not know how to convince the Green Lady.

The voice in Weston tries to convince the Green Lady that she should become more like the women from his world, to seek their wisdom. He also attempts to convince her this is what Maleldil ultimately wants, giving very convincing arguments about why this is true.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

In this chapter we first see the efforts of the Un-Man to tempt the Green Lady. The temptation is a simple one, harmless according to the Un-Man, yet as many temptations are, will mean destruction of everything good in Perelandra. Though the Green Lady is the innocent one, she resists with a strength that indicates the Un-Man is struggling against more than just her. Though his arguments sound somewhat logical, they are in fact very illogical. The Green Lady's arguments, though out of ignorance and youth, thwart the arguments of the Un-Man's with a true wisdom, one born out of ignorance of any evil.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

Ransom first sees destruction on Perelandra. He finds the beautiful frogs he was so fascinated by ripped apart while still alive. He struggles to kill one to put it out of his misery and then finds many more. He follows the stream of destruction to where he finds Weston methodically tearing them apart while alive. He realizes it is not really Weston, but Weston's body overtaken by an evil entity. As he approaches he realizes the Weston-thing is again conversing with the Green Lady.

The Bent One, or the Un-Man, who possesses Weston's body, is still trying to convince the Green Lady to inhabit the Fixed Land. His convoluted arguments are designed to continue to try and convince the Green Lady that obedience means showing disobedience. He attempts to convince her the Maleldil cannot tell her to make up her own mind, but that is what He wants her to do, to decide on her own to disobey Him. That is what she needs to do to get smarter, or older, as he calls it, and be more like the smart women from his world. He claims Maleldil has only made this rule so the Green Lady can break it, thus pleasing him.

Ransom tries to enter the argument and convince the Green Lady the Un-Man is trying to mislead her to disobey to serve his own purpose. During the exchange between the Green Lady and Weston as the Un-Man, Ransom begins to doubt his own wisdom. The Un-Man says through disobedience by the eldila (angels) Maleldil was made to come to earth and to create man. This was a good thing, he says. Ransom almost falls under the spell of the Un-Man. He recalls all the changes that have occurred in his world fought by man, changes that turned out to be good. He almost succumbs to the arguments by the Un-Man, but realizes at the last moment what is happening. He realizes and tells the Green Lady that just because the earlier disobedience turned out good does not mean it was good. He tells her Maleldil takes bad things and turns them into good.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

In listening to the Un-Man's arguments in an attempt to answer them for the Green Lady and prevent her fall to temptation, we find Ransom almost comes to believe those very fallacies. This parallels the great temptation of Jesus Christ by Satan soon after his baptism. Since baptism is a rebirth, and Ransom coming to Perelandra is a sort of rebirth (the emerging from the box-like thing is similar to a birth), we can further justify this parallel. We see the great slyness of the Un-Man in his attacking both the Green Lady and Ransom in the areas of their greatest weakness.

The Green Lady desires to know the ways of the wise, and the Un-Man promises it to her if she will merely listen. Ransom wants to understand how the great pains of war and progress in his own world lead to good things. The Un-Man seems to have a logical

answer for both. Ransom realizes the evil he is beholding in the thing that has overtaken Weston is evil beyond all he has ever known. He compares this evil to innocence because it has become so strong as to no longer struggle to be evil. It just is, like innocence is, also not strived for. Though Ransom is confused at times by the twisted logic of evil, he does eventually find reason and does not succumb to the beliefs the Un-Man wants him to.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

When the Green Lady dismisses Ransom and the Un-Man because she needs rest, Ransom sticks close by the beast. He realizes he needs more rest than the Green Lady does, and the Un-Man needs none at all, so he often awakens to find the other two deep in conversation. Each time the Un-Man is telling the Green Lady about women of his acquaintance who overcome great oppressions and come out much the wiser, while the men are portrayed as being dumb and plodding.

Ransom sticks close to the creature that has overtaken Weston's body. From time to time he gets glimpses of Weston's spirit, crying out for relief from the darkness he is in. At first he pities the state Weston is in, but soon realizes it was Weston's pride and human weakness that caused him to be taken over by the Un-Man. He comes to see Weston as evil, as well.

As the Un-Man gets close to convincing the Green Lady to obey him and not Maleldil, Ransom rants at her, telling her she cannot choose for the King or Maleldil what they want. The creature responds the King does not know he wants to be free, that the Green Lady will have to force him to be free. Sometimes freedom must be forced on one, the Un-Man declares.

Ransom comes to realize the Green Lady is only considering the disobedience because of her love of the King, Maleldil, and her unborn children. He hopes that as long as the pleas of the Un-Man are only a small drop in her mind, he has some hope. Her intentions are good, and she surely must come to see the evil in the Un-Man.

He awakens one morning to the Un-Man and the Green Lady joyously dancing around in robes made of the feathers of the beautiful birds on Perelandra. The Un-Man is doing all he can to get the Green Lady to succumb to pride, one of the great temptations of man, so he can convince her to disobey in order to 'grow' as a woman, to become as wise as the women he has told her about. He gives her a mirror with which to see and admire herself. He is trying every avenue to grow pride, the downfall of men throughout the ages, in her.

## Chapter 10 Analysis

The robes in chapter ten, and the destruction of a creature of nature to make them, parallels the garments of animal skins God makes for Adam and Eve in the Biblical account. God makes the garments for Adam and Eve after they lose their innocence. These robes are being used to tempt the Green Lady, as the Un-Man tries to instill the sin of pride in her. We see the Un-Man pulling out all stops, using whatever logic, or illogic, he can come up with to try to overcome the good and innocence the Green Lady

possesses. Though her innocence should have made her an easy target, that same innocence makes it impossible to get to her through the baser desires of humankind.

When we see Ransom almost being overcome by the logic of evil, we see what a powerful force evil can be. The very illogic of evil seems logical when presented from a biased viewpoint such as the Un-Man uses. This very thing explains how temptation can overcome even the strongest. Only the Green Lady's innocence prevents her from succumbing to the evil influence. She cannot fathom the things Evil is proposing.





# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Ransom "argues" against his fate as the ransom, or savior, for Perelandra. He argues with The Voice. He comes to realize he is not expected to do anything miraculous, just to do his best. He is not the one fighting evil, but The Voice, Maleldil, is fighting through him. He does not have to be miraculous to win. He realizes an awful truth, that all he has to do is kill the body that was once Weston. The Un-Man has overtaken Weston's body. Ransom remembers from the Biblical account that the evil spirits fear being cast into nothingness. He realizes the Un-Man was only able to overtake Weston because of the moral weakness Weston experienced. If he, Ransom, kills Weston's body, the Un-Man will be sent back to the pits of hell because he will have no dwelling on Perelandra.

After a brief "argument" with The Voice, Ransom comes to see the inevitability of his destiny. He must do this thing, for it was predestined before all time. He asks himself who is there better able to do this task. If not he, he asks, then who. Only he has the opportunity to fight the Un-Man on Perelandra. He suddenly realizes he is indeed going to fight the Un-Man on the morrow. The Voice at this time arranges for him to have uninterrupted sleep, by putting the Un-Man into a deep sleep. Perhaps this is what gives Ransom the ability to face his fate the next day.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

Ransom struggles within himself as to whether the battle with the Un-Man is a physical one or a spiritual one. He decides the Fall of Man in Eden is not a forerunner for the Perelandra battle, so cannot possibly prepare him for it. Things are totally different. He realizes he must physically fight the body that used to be Weston's in order to vanquish the evil dwelling within. This is repugnant to him, but not as much as being killed in the horrible manner he would suffer at the hand of the Evil One.

As Ransom fights his fate as the savior of all Perelandra, he realizes that being a savior does not mean possessing a great goodness like he previously believed was required, and which he realizes he does not possess. It merely involves giving the best he has to give. The Voice instructs him in the fact that their names, Ransom, and their mission, are parallel. We see Ransom as a son of The Voice when he realizes he is known as Ranolf's son, a word that means ransom. As The Voice says his name is also ransom, we can see how Ransom would be his son, thus this great mission.

The Voice causes a great sleep to fall on Ransom and all of Perelandra. This leads ultimately, after the Un-Man's destruction, to the population of Perelandra by the Green Lady and the King, much as the sleep of Adam led to the creation of Eve and the population of Ransom's world.



# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Ransom awakens early to begin his mission. He becomes aware that all creatures on Perelandra are experiencing an unusual sleep, probably caused by The Voice. He believes The Voice does not want them to be tainted by the sight of the extreme bloodshed and violence about to take place. He finds Weston/the Un-Man and begins his battle. The Un-Man, using Weston's body, quotes the Aramaic phrase Christ cried from the cross, mocking Ransom's dependence on Maleldil. They go head to head for some time, neither winning over the other. Ransom realizes they are two men of somewhat equal strength, as he is fighting Weston's body, not anything else. After some time, Ransom suddenly sees the Un-Man for what he is, losing sight of the fact he is grappling with Weston's body, and suddenly is overcome with an intense hatred, one that is righteous in nature. This hatred gives him an advantage over the other, because he is so intent on destroying the Un-Man that inhabits Weston's body that he is unaware of his own discomfort or anything else, just the impending destruction. This causes the Un-Man to take Weston's body off into the woods in retreat. He realizes he has met his match in Ransom's fury.

Ransom pursues the Un-Man in Weston's body, which moves as if there were no injuries nor any sense of pain. He realizes the Un-Man has probably relegated all his pain onto the remnant of Weston's consciousness, thus freeing himself. He feels an intense sympathy for Weston, which leads to a renewed hatred to a degree he cannot fathom. He continues to pursue the Un-Man even through the ocean, both traveling on one of the seahorse-like fishes. The sea creatures are not under the same strange sleep afflicting the rest of Perelandra. A flock of birds and a school of fish follow the Un-Man throughout the night so Ransom does not lose track of him. It is unclear why the sea creatures are awake and all of Perelandra is asleep. This is possibly because the battle takes place on the shores of Perelandra and deep within the belly of a cavern.

## Chapter 12 Analysis

It is only by Ransom's great, intense hatred of the evil in Weston's body that he develops a willingness to destroy it. It is a hatred borne out of the realization of an evil beyond any he has known. He is aware of this intense hatred, but not repulsed or guilty about it as he might have been in his own world. He recognizes the righteous nature of this new hatred. Though he did not believe himself capable of destroying a man's body, he realizes this is the only way to eliminate evil. It is not Weston's body, anyway, because it has been overcome with evil.

The necessity of destroying evil through death might well parallel the need for the Savior to shed his blood to save mankind from the Biblical account. Certainly, the

overtaking of a man by the essence of evil parallels what happens to mankind when they are tempted and endorse evil.



# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary

Ransom passes the night, sleeping on the fish, and awakens the next morning to see the Un-Man still ahead of him. Suddenly, he is aware of the lack of anything around him other than the fish he is riding on. All the birds and the other fishes have disappeared. It is as if only he and the Un-Man are left to battle against each other.

Ransom begins to doubt the existence of Maledil, and that he is really on a spiritual mission. He wonders why it matters if Perelandra is protected for the king and queen. He thinks maybe he is just an infinitesimal speck in the scheme of time, and that the things he knows about Eden are not precursors to his mission here. He is so exhausted from trying to fathom his purpose, and if he really has a spiritual mission, that he falls asleep again.

After dozing awhile, Ransom hears Weston calling to him and coming toward him. He realizes Weston is back and the Un-Man is gone when Weston begins to philosophize to him about the lack of God's influence except on a superficial nature. He is very aware of death and what it means. He explains death as a non-existence of sorts, but of an awareness of that blackness and aloneness. Thus, Ransom realizes Weston has experienced this very death. When he pleads with Ransom to help him avoid that death and prevent "them" from taking him again, Ransom realizes Weston is relegated to this death whenever the Un-Man takes over his body. He suddenly finds himself experiencing the terrible, unfathomable darkness Weston has been trying to describe to him. For a brief time, the darkness overwhelms him, then he is aware of Weston again. He pleads with Weston to pray and repent his sins.

Suddenly, Weston grasps Ransom's legs, but it is not Weston. The Un-Man is back and Weston is gone. He drags Ransom underwater in an attempt to drown him. They plunge down into a crevice which Ransom is not able to surface from. His only escape, he reasons, is to drown the Un-Man. Though to have done such a thing on Earth would have been repugnant to him, he does not even have a qualm here, realizing on some level he is now involved in the mission for which he was sent, and only in destroying the Un-Man can he achieve that mission. Murder seems suddenly good.

## Chapter 13 Analysis

We understand, as Ransom does, that Weston must have been relegated to the pits of hell, a special kind of death, when he can describe the horror with such clarity. Ransom is again mortified to learn the extent of the Un-Man's evil, and makes an attempt to rescue Weston, but in doing so is again physically attacked by the Un-Man. He has either been fooled by the Un-Man, using Weston's body, or Weston has been allowed to return to his body, however briefly. It is up to the reader to decide. In all other accounts



of Weston returning to his body, he is aware of the intense physical suffering his body is undergoing. Here, the author leaves out any mention of the suffering, leaving doubt in the readers mind as to what actually is happening.

The darkness and nothingness, the worms Weston describes to Ransom correlate to Biblical accounts of Hell. However, Weston must not have truly descended to Hell, because he comes back (we think) and he does not describe any fire and brimstone. Still, his account of death cannot relate to the account of death for a person who goes to Heaven to be with God. Maybe he has "tasted death" in resting outside his body while the Un-Man possesses it. How cruel the Un-Man must be to allow this. In pleading with Ransom to save him, we see a connection to the Biblical account of the rich man who begs Abraham to go back and warn his brothers, though in that case it is impossible to go back.

The great darkness Weston describes as death, and Ransom's experiencing of it, parallels the moment of great darkness when Christ died on the cross, when God is no longer with him. Just as that period of time is brief, so is Ransom's. He then rises to become victorious over evil in the end.



# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary

When Ransom surfaces, he finds the Un-Man still clinging to him, trying to drown him. Partly out of desperation and partly out of hatred, he crushes the ribs of the body of Weston, though it is really the Un-Man. He waits and holds him down until he is sure there is no breath left. He then sits back and waits for daylight, as it is currently so dark as to have absolutely no vision at all. He waits for some time, trying to pass the time by quoting from classical literature, planning chess moves, and planning a chapter to a book he is writing. He tries many such tasks, to no avail, in an attempt to pass the time. Finally, he realizes the darkness is caused by the fact he is deep in a cavern, where no light will ever reach.

Ransom goes exploring, finding a funnel-type opening above him and managing to climb up it toward the red firelight he sees. When he gets up, he finds a deep abyss lit by a huge, extremely hot firelight. The fire warms the whole cave where he now is. After a bit, he discovers the Un-Man behind him, climbing up through the same opening he climbed moments before. A weird, insect-like creature follows the Un-Man. The Un-Man attempts to control Ransom's mind, but he realizes this and screams at them, asserting his own control. He realizes the only way to get rid of the Un-Man is to totally destroy Weston's body. He hits it in the face with a huge rock and then throws it into the great, fiery pit. It is gone forever, condemned to the pit. He decides not to harm the insect, for it is just a creature with an unusual number of legs and eyes. The insect crawls back to where it came from, not harming Ransom at all. Ransom falls into a sleep, exhausted by prolonged battle. He is not sure if he has or will survive, but can no longer stay awake.

## Chapter 14 Analysis

Again Ransom is caught in a physical confrontation that almost destroys him. He finds he is able to actually kill a being, something he has never been able to comfortably do before. He has no problems this time, though; as he realizes the great evil he is destroying. The creature keeps coming back after supposedly being dead. Ransom realizes the only way he will be rid of it is to totally destroy the body of Weston. He does this by throwing it into a fiery pit, burning red and with a heat that warms everything around. The fiery pit parallels the hell the ultimate evil calls home. We never see this evil again in the story. Only when Ransom fully realizes the extent of the evil he is fighting is he able to destroy it, just as man must realize the extent of evil he battles in order to overcome it.

When Ransom spares the insect, saying he did not know why he wanted to destroy a creature that simply had a different number of eyes and legs than himself, we see a parallel to the protection of all creatures by God, as evidenced by the Biblical account of the concern God has for the fallen sparrow.



# Chapter 15

## Chapter 15 Summary

Ransom crawls out of the mouth of the cavern and comes to rest, where he is nurtured by a special plant, and is surrounded by beautiful sights and song. He is only semiconscious, and is said to be breast-fed by the planet Venus, getting his sustenance from a beautiful plant hanging within reach without his having to pursue it.

Ransom becomes aware of his body as it heals. He realizes he has a wound on his heel that looks like a human bite. He is not aware of when or how he got the bite. However, it oozes blood continuously.

While resting and recuperating, Ransom gets bored enough to want to do something, so he carves a memorial to Weston in the side of the mountain.

Ransom struggles up the mountain he is on, struggling to get to the mountaintop. He comes to a pass he feels compelled to go through, yet repulsed at the same time. He knows somehow he is being summoned by Maleldil to travel it for some purpose. He sees an angel with a flaming sword, and knows it is his destiny to go through it. The angel is interpreted by Ransom to be an invitation by Maleldil to pass through. He does so, and sees the casket-like box he knows is akin to the one in which he was transported to this place. He suddenly becomes aware he is in the presence of two eldila.

Ransom struggles through the passage, which is a painful sort of rebirth. He emerges on the other side of the valley, feeling triumphant, yet remorseful about what happened to Weston. He reasons, however, that Weston invited the creature in because of his own great pride.

## Chapter 15 Analysis

Early in the story we read of how Ransom wonders if life could be rolled up and then unrolled in reverse. We seem to be seeing this now. First, Ransom fights evil, then struggles to get to the mountaintop where good dwells. He even faces the angel with the flaming sword, as Adam and Eve did in his world. However, the angel in the Biblical account keeps man out of the holy place. Now, the angel leads man into the holy place. It is as if life is indeed being lived in reverse order.

The injury to Ransom's heel reminds us of the prediction that the devil would bruise the Redeemer's heel, at the same time the Redeemer would bruise his head. In killing the Un-Man, Ransom smashed in his head.

In carving the memorial to Weston, Ransom recognizes his greatness as a physicist, but also that he gave up his own will to the Evil One.



# Chapter 16

## Chapter 16 Summary

Ransom manages to climb to the top of the mountain, later identified as the Holy Mountain. He senses the eldila there, two of them—Malacandra (Mars) and Perelandra (Venus). He hears them discussing him. One of them explains that his given name, Elwin, means friend of the eldila. They are without form, but engage Ransom to help them decide on a form to use in presenting themselves to the King and Queen. The two eldila and Ransom engage in a lengthy philosophical discussion, with the eldila trying to explain to him the difference between this new world's dawning and the one when his own world was formed. Ransom comes to recognize many characteristics of the eldila that have been confusing to him.

A whole group of animals suddenly appear, and together with Ransom and the eldila, and the animals, form a reception party for the King and Queen, waiting in readiness for their appearance. They arrange themselves in a special formation, in anticipation. The eldila keep themselves and the animals and Ransom on one side of the valley, with his casket waiting on the opposite side of the valley.

The King and Queen are given the "job" of populating the land they inhabit. They are given permission to inhabit all parts of Perelandra, not just the floating islands as was the case before.

## Chapter 16 Analysis

The inhabitants of Perelandra, the eldila, and Ransom himself prepare for the coming of the King and Queen. This parallels the preparation in Ransom's world for the coming of the savior to take them to a new land, with spiritual bodies. Here, however, the coming of the King and Queen will mean the coming of a new race as they populate their land. They are given the command to populate their land, much as Adam and Eve populated the earth.

Ransom's casket is waiting, the first indication he will survive and return to his world. However, Ransom seems unaware of its significance, though he does recognize it as a companion to the one he came to Perelandra in. When we see the casket, we know he is going to return home.





# Chapter 17

## Chapter 17 Summary

The King and Queen appear before the congregation waiting for them. Ransom is overtaken with the recognition of the King as the Christ. Lewis goes into great detail to explain the likeness, and the wonder at the King's lack of wounds. Wounds would be expected of the Christ on earth.

The King and Queen are given their charge to populate Perelandra and start a new world. They are given information about the whole history of mankind and introduced to The Great Dance, which is the Plan for all time. They will eventually return to Ransom's world and form a new, perfect world there. Ransom is given a miraculous glimpse of The Great Dance. The King tries to explain all that is transpiring, but with a language that cannot say it all. It is as if, again, words are too broad to explain such a limited concept.

All assembled there know Ransom's fate is to return to Earth in the casket-like contraption. They are all reluctant, Ransom included, to actually being that process. It is not that Ransom fears for his safety, but that he does not want to leave the land of Perelandra. Here he has had his greatest delights, as well as his worst pain and involvement with evil. Yet, it is a land that appeals to him. The evil has been destroyed, and he is reluctant to return to the wars and other evils on Earth.

Finally, after much delay, Ransom is placed in the casket. The lid is closed, and his "consciousness is engulfed." Hence, the story ends where it began. It has been one year since Ransom left.

## Chapter 17 Analysis

The King and Queen are given the pronouncement of their mission, to populate all Perelandra. They are given hints into how great this mission will be, and that they will have access to all the Great Dance, which is the plan of Maleldil. The King is likened to Christ, and as such is the salvation of the whole world it will become.

Throughout the book, Maleldil is used to indicate the God of all, the Supreme Being, and Creator of all. The name is also used often to indicate Jesus Christ. At times, when the minds of the Green Lady and Ransom are being controlled or spoken to by Maleldil, he is a parallel to the Spirit. In this way we can parallel Maleldil with the Trinity, a common belief of Christians.

With Ransom's return to the casket and ultimately his return to earth, we have come full circle. Ransom has been gone a whole year, but to him it does not seem as such. He experiences all life has to offer in his sojourn on Perelandra. He experiences the best of good and the worst of evil. He experiences the ultimate joy and the ultimate fear. This is

much as Christ experienced all earthly man has to experience. Again, we see Ransom as comparable to Christ.



# Characters

## Narrator (Lewis?)

The narrator is apparently the author, C.S. Lewis, as Dr. Ransom calls him by name in chapter two. He battles all sorts of demons enroute to Dr. Ransom's home. Some of the demons may be only in his head. We never really are told which are real and which are in his imagination. However, when he gets to Ransom's house, Ransom tells him he knew they would try to stop him. The narrator resists getting involved at first, but finally admits he has no other choice. He sends Dr. Ransom off on his journey, and is then contacted by the eldila when Ransom returns to earth. He and Ransom spend hours discussing language, evil, destiny, and other philosophical notions. They are both involved in academia and enjoy challenging each other. However, in this area Ransom is getting involved in, the narrator wants no part.

In retelling the tale as Ransom told him, the narrator is able to interject his own ideas and beliefs. He seems to enjoy the analogies and philosophies he is able to come up with, though attributes most of them to Ransom.

## Dr. Ransom

The whole story is really told by and about Ransom. Though the story is retold by a narrator, Ransom dictates it to him. We only experience what Ransom experiences, except for a very few places where the narrator interjects his own viewpoint.

Ransom apparently faces this challenge with no qualms whatsoever. He accepts he may not return, and sets his affairs in order accordingly. He even thinks through what his disappearance might mean to the narrator, and explains to him he left him out of the will so there will be no question of malevolence on his part towards Ransom. He thinks through the event of his return, if indeed it happens, and requests a doctor, since he is not sure what condition he might be in on his return.

Ransom parallels many Biblical characters in this account. First, he is chosen by Malelil (God) for this mission. When he actually discovers what his mission is to be, he attempts to reason he is not capable of doing it (as did Moses), argues about it, but is told his name is Ransom for a reason. He then realizes he is to be the ransom for these people (as Christ). He is to be their savior, and as such, cannot reject the job. He feels totally inadequate to the task, but undertakes it anyway.

Throughout the account, Ransom remains pure. He is put in the presence of a beautiful, naked lady, but never has any sexual thoughts toward her. His mind is too caught up, first in learning his mission, and then in pursuing it. He eats only to satiety, even though surrounded with fruits of the most exquisite nectar. He avoids violence with Weston, choosing to use his wits instead. The only violence he exhibits is toward the Un-Man, and then only to the extent needed to protect himself and Perelandra.



## **Dark Archon, Bent Oyarsa, The Bent One, Darkness, Un-Man**

All these names are for the same 'entity'—the devil. Though Dr. Ransom is the lead character, the Un-Man, or whatever one calls him, plays a significant part in the story. He overtakes the body of Professor Weston and uses it to try and tempt The Green Lady into going to live on the Fixed Land, an act forbidden by Maledil, or God. He uses all his wiles to try and convince her that Maledil really wants her to disobey him, thus showing her obedience to him, he reasons. He almost convinces her. He tempts her much as Eve in the Garden of Eden and Jesus in the New Testament were tempted. She reasons with him, but he twists everything she says to make it seem she should do what she is not supposed to do. He tries to lead her into vanity. He convinces her that if she covers her nakedness with feathers from the beautiful birds, she will be more beautiful. Ransom gets upset at the slaughter of the birds, and confronts them about it. The Green Lady pretends to believe the devil when he told her the birds just naturally shed their feathers.

The DarkArchon, or dark ruler, is evident throughout the story. Just as in Biblical times, he battles against Good. He is equally matched physically when he uses Weston's body to fight with Ransom. His spiritual strength is overshadowed by the power of the Voice (Jesus) and Malelil, who works through Ransom to conquer him. In the end he is conquered and thrown into the fiery pit. However, he is not killed, only damaged severely. This leaves the reader to wonder if Ransom will meet him again in later stories. He is vanquished for the time being, but will he revive as Ransom was able to do?

## **Maleldil, God**

This is the entity that rules all of Perelandra. It is He the Un-Man really battles, first with Weston, then The Green Lady, and ultimately Ransom himself. Ransom mentally argues with His Minions about being the savior for all of Perelandra. He is the giver of life on Perelandra. Maleldil is the parallel to the Biblical God. He is the one who has created all of Perelandra and its inhabitants.

## **The Voice, Oyarsa, Archon, God**

Oyarsa is like the Universal God. He is God of both Malacandra and Perelandra. He is the one who orders Ransom to Perelandra. He also speaks to the narrator, instructing him to go and receive Ransom back after his year of sojourn in Perelandra. He is the power over all. He is called at times The Voice (when he appears to Ransom as only a voice giving instruction), and Oyarsa (when spoken of as over all planets) and again as Archon. He is compared to God by Ransom on more than one occasion. It is against Him that the Dark Archon, sometimes called the Un-Man, or The Evil One, wages his battle. It is through the power of the Archon that Ransom is able to vanquish the Un-



Man to the fiery pit, and to find his way out of the dark valley to the land where the King and Queen are given power over all mankind.

## Eldila

The Eldila are lesser spiritual beings. They are like the Biblical angels. They are the messengers of the Archon, protectors of lesser beings (humans) against the Un-Man. They are the ones that appear to both Ransom and the narrator and instruct them in what to do about Ransom's journey.

## Tor the King

He becomes the father of all mankind upon the victory of Ransom over the Un-Man. This parallels the Biblical Adam in the Garden of Eden. Ransom is the savior of all mankind, making it possible for Tor the King to father all nations. Throughout the story, until the very end, we only hear of the King, we do not yet see him. Yet, his wishes keep the Queen from erring and going where Malelil has prohibited. It is the Queen's love of the King that makes the Un-Man's attempt at seducing her fail. Though the King is not seen "on stage," he influences the story from his position in the background. He is not seen until they meet Perelandra and Malacandra, elidila named for the planets, after Ransom's victory over the Un-Man.

## Tinidril the Queen, The Green Lady

She is the mother of all mankind. She is the one being tempted, paralleling Eve in the Biblical account. However, she never succumbs to the temptation, in contrast to Eve. She remains pure for the King. The Un-Man leaves her and battles Ransom instead. Ransom is the object of his battle from the beginning, but he chooses to attempt to gain victory by conquering the Queen, a feat that proves unsuccessful. The Queen is shown as pure throughout the story. She starts as a naïve, innocent being, naked in her innocence. She comes close to submitting to the Un-Man's warped logic, believing that in disobeying her King she will be actually obeying him. Yet, she has a wisdom that guides her throughout, and thwarts the Un-Man's power over her. This forces him to battle Ransom, which is the purpose from the beginning. Thus, in her wisdom and resistance, she helps shape the destiny of mankind.

At the end of the account, when Ransom and the two elidila meet to welcome the King and Queen as the mother and father of all mankind, Tor and Tindril are reunited and instructed in their mission as the parents of all mankind on all planets. She is instructed to go inhabit the Fixed Land with the King and mother a whole race.



## **Professor Weston**

He is merely the vehicle through which the Un-Man is able to battle Ransom in a human form. The Un-Man is unable to gain victory over Ransom, in the same way that Satan was not victorious over Christ. He meets Ransom first on Mars. He comes to Perelandra in search of the spiritual, which he claims is the whole mission of man. He claims to have achieved to an enlightened spiritual level, but is also prideful about his wisdom. It is his pride that opens the door to the Un-Man overtaking his body and soul, and almost leads to the destruction of all mankind and the world as Malelil intended it to become. It is only his weakness that allows his body to be used by the Un-Man and almost lead the Queen into temptation, and almost destroy Ransom in the ultimate battle of Good against Evil.

## **Malacandra, the eldila**

Though Malacandra is the name the planet Mars is known by, it is also the name of the eldila (angel) that protects the planet of the same name. Malacandra the eldila is one of two that welcome the King and Queen and see them to the Fixed Land. He is a spiritual being with no substance or presence. He attempts to find a presence that will be appealing to the King and Queen when they appear together at the end.

## **Perelandra, the Eldila**

Perelandra is the name of the planet Venus, and also the name of the eldila (angel) protecting the planet. He and Malacandra are the two beings that welcome the King and Queen. Together with Ransom, they welcome the King and Queen and give them instructions about inhabiting the Fixed Land and populating it.

## **Dr. Humphreys**

He is the doctor Ransom instructs the narrator to bring when the time comes for him to return to earth. Ransom has no idea what physical condition he will be in when he returns, if he does indeed return. Humphreys comes with the narrator to Ransom's home to help rescue him and nurse him back to health if need be. The only injury he has to treat is a hemorrhage on Ransom's heel.



# Objects/Places

## Perelandra (Venus)

Perelandra (Venus) is the location where the story takes place. It parallels the Biblical Garden of Eden in many ways. Its beauty is unnatural and mystical. Miraculous things happen on Perelandra. It is here that evil attempts to cause the downfall of mankind, though unsuccessfully. It therefore also parallels the Mount where Jesus is tempted by Satan.

## Malacandra (Mars)

Malacandra (Mars) is the planet where Ransom first meets the mystical creatures he will again encounter on Perelandra. It is here he learns of the Malelil as ruler of all. He also learns the Solar language on his trip to Malacandra. The creatures that inhabit Perelandra originate or dwell on Malacandra as well. It is on Malacandra that Ransom first becomes aware of the Un-Man, whom he battles in Perelandra.

## Floating islands

The floating islands make up a large part of the land on Perelandra. This was where The Green Lady, the Queen, is commanded to dwell. They are in a constant state of transition. It is here on the islands that Ransom finds the Green Lady, as well as where he begins his battle with The Evil One, or the Un-Man.

## Fixed land

This is a beautiful land that never moves, unlike the floating islands. It is a desirable land, but has been forbidden to the Green Lady and her King until Maleldil gives them permission to inhabit it. This is what the Un-Man tries to tempt her with, reasoning that the King really wants her to go there, even though he has forbidden it because the Malelil have forbidden it.

## Deep Heaven

This is the area above 'The Roof' as the Queen describes it. She has never seen it, but has been told of its existence by Malelil. In other words, she only knows of it by faith. She tells Ransom that though he can look up and see it, the inhabitants of Perelandra only know of it because Malelil has told them it exists.



## **Cavern**

The Cavern is where Ransom goes with the Un-Man and finishes the battle. It is here he is alone, battling evil for his very life. It is filled with red light and very hot, possibly suggesting a parallel to the upper limits of Hell.

## **Fire Pit**

This is the very lowest depth of the Cavern, where Ransom throws the injured Un-Man. Again, it is suggestive of the fiery pit of Hell. Ransom becomes the victor when he throws the Un-Man to the bottom of the pit.

## **Valley**

This is where Ransom wanders after he throws the Un-Man to the bottom of the fiery pit. This is possibly a parallel to the valley of death, as he is barely clinging to life. At times it appears he might not survive his traverse through this Valley.

## **Mountaintop**

Ransom escapes the dangers of the Valley and enters the Mountaintop, where he is again aware of the help he is receiving from Malelil. The mountaintop is possibly a parallel to the mountaintops in Biblical accounts where mankind often met God. Malelil again speaks to Ransom on this Mountaintop.

## **Frogs**

The frogs are mystical, fairy-like creatures, and are very beautiful. They parallel the good in mankind. The Un-man mutilates and kills them, thus wreaking his havoc of evil on innocence. It is upon first discovering these mutilated, innocent creatures that Ransom first realizes what he is up against in his battle with the Un-Man.

## **Dragon**

Though dragons are often portrayed as evil, in Perelandra the dragon is a pleasant creature, attaching itself to Ransom and seeming to mean him no harm. He often finds the dragon waiting on him after he has gone through a great battle with either his conscious or with evil.





## Fish

The fish are a means of transport in Perelandra. They travel in schools, and the whole school helps to transport and protect the inhabitants of Perelandra. It is one of these schools of fishes that transports Ransom and the Un-Man to the destination of their final battle.

## Mirror

The mirror is what the Un-Man uses in his attempt to get the Green Lady to succumb to the temptation of Vanity. He is unsuccessful in the end, but gets close enough to winning her over that Ransom becomes very worried. The Un-Man makes robes for himself and the Green Lady, and attempts to get her to be prideful about her appearance. He tries to convince her that she should follow his instructions about the Fixed Land by telling her she is like the women of his world, and they would have disobeyed the King in order to obey him.

## Feather robes

The Un-Man makes beautiful feather robes for the Green Lady in an attempt to make her fall victim to the temptation of vanity. He hopes to thus convince her that she is more beautiful than the women of his world, and wiser, and thus should go to the Fixed Land, to be smarter than they are. These robes parallel somewhat the garments of animal skins God makes Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Both require the slaying of an animal to obtain them. However, the robes are supposedly to make the natural, naked state of the Queen more beautiful, more like human forms. The garments in the Garden of Eden are to hide the nakedness due to the loss of innocence. Of course, the Un-Man has as his actual purpose to cause the Queen to lose her innocence.

## Inscription

When Ransom becomes bored while recuperating on the Mountaintop, he becomes remorseful about Weston, overcome by the Un-Man, whom he threw into the fiery pit. He carves an inscription on a stone on the mountaintop in memory of Weston. In sharing the dates Ransom carved, Lewis reveals to us the time frame of the tale being told. It is in describing the inscription that we learn for certain Weston fell under the spell of the Un-Man.

## Great Dance

The Great Dance is the playing out of all creation before Malelil. On the one hand, the eldila say the Great Dance has begun, was begun from the beginning, yet also that it

will begin at the destruction of Ransom's world, the Earth. The Great Dance is the teeming action of all creation, from vegetation to beasts to humans.



# Themes

## Good against Evil

From the very opening pages of the book, the theme of good against evil is prevalent. The story opens with the narrator struggling alone on the road to Ransom's, trying to decide if what he is facing is evil or good. Even when he decides what he is commissioned to do is good, he fights against doing it.

We see this theme throughout the story as Ransom battles the Un-Man, trying to keep Evil from overcoming the Green Lady. Evil overcomes Professor Weston, capturing his body for its own devices. Weston resists the evil force, but his pride causes him to be vulnerable and in turn be overcome.

Ransom ponders the desire to live the pleasures of life over and over, just as he wishes to drink the nectar of the beautiful bulbous growths given for his pleasure. He decides that maybe this desire to have pleasure over and over is the root of evil. Of course, he decides, the love of money is really the root of evil. But maybe the desire for money is the desire to have pleasure in life repeated over and over. Is this not the true evil, he muses?

## The Real Meaning of Life

Pondering over the real meaning of life starts when Ransom and Weston have a philosophical discussion shortly upon Weston's arrival on the planet. Weston brags about having gained wisdom that the meaning of life is not what he always thought. It is to gain and knowledge, and to become spiritual, to think only on things spiritual. Ransom argues with him, more rhetorically than anything. However, Weston insists he is the smartest scientist of all time, and has grown in wisdom to realize spirituality is the true meaning of life.

## Destiny

Destiny is a theme throughout the book. First, the narrator struggles with his own destiny on the road to Ransom's, then Ransom and the narrator discuss thoughts of destiny before Ransom is launched to Perelandra. Ransom is ready to accept his destiny, and in fact tells Ransom one must accept destiny and not fight it. Weston and Ransom discuss destiny in their philosophical talk, and Weston indicates that the destiny of mankind is to continually search for wisdom and meaning, to ultimately realize spirituality is all that matters. Ransom discusses destiny with The Voice, when he resists carrying out his destiny as the ransom for all mankind. Destiny is also a theme when the beast, the Un-Man and Ransom fight the battle to determine the destiny of Perelandra and its inhabitants. In the final moments of the story, Perelandra



and Malacandra pronounce the destiny of the King and Queen, to be the Mother and Father of all beings.

## Man's Ultimate Purpose

Weston first provokes the thought of the ultimate purpose of man in his discussion with Ransom after he first lands on Perelandra. He tells Ransom the ultimate purpose of man is to seek all that is spiritual. He states that man's purpose is not to pursue academic knowledge as he had once thought, but it is to seek to be one with spirit—to be spirit. He believes he is the only one who has discovered man's ultimate purpose, making him the smartest of all that have ever lived.

## The Meaning of Obedience

The Un-Man questions what true obedience really means. He claims true obedience involves knowing what the person in charge wants, in this case both the King and Malelil, then decide to pursue that. He claims the true meaning of obedience is not to blindly following directions, but decide what the person really wants and do it, which often means doing what one has been forbidden to do. The Un-Man says doing what the King and Malelil want, but have forbidden, is in fact what true obedience means.

Later, when Ransom mentally debates The Voice about his purpose there and his ability to carry out his orders, he suddenly realizes obedience means doing what he has been ordered without regard to his perceived ability or his ultimate destiny in performing that act. He comes to realize he indeed must obey The Voice and attempt to ransom the King and Queen, in turn saving the future inhabitants of Perelandra, whose existence depends on the salvation of the King and Queen. Only he, Ransom, can save all of Perelandra, and only through obedience to his mission.



# Style

## Point of View

Perelandra is told in the first person point of view, as if by a narrator. The reader assumes the narrator is Lewis, because Dr. Ransom names him thus in the second chapter. The story is told as if Dr. Ransom dictated it to the narrator. Most of the story, from chapter three on, is told in the third person, but as if the narrator is telling Ransom's story as he was told it by Ransom himself. In some parts of the story, especially at the beginning, the narrator intrudes on the point of view, as if it is his story to tell. This appears to be done so as to reveal parts of the story that only the narrator is aware of, and also to reveal things about Ransom that might appear as bragging if told from Ransom's point of view.

There is one brief section where the narrator and Dr. Humphrey have a discussion while Ransom is upstairs, and at the very beginning the point of view is strictly the narrator's. However, the rest of the story is told from Ransom's point of view, but in the third person as though it had been dictated.

Much of the story is told from an introspective reference point, yet there is a good bit of dialogue interspersed throughout, which serves to keep the reader focused on the story. Most of the "conversations" with the supernatural beings are not registered as dialogue, but as monologue within Ransom's mind. A lot of the monologue is thoughts of the supernatural beings implanted in Ransom's thoughts.

## Setting

Copyrighted in 1944, the date is not indicated in the novel at all until toward the end, when Ransom carves an inscription memorializing Weston, listing his date of death as 1942. Since Ransom stays in Perelandra for one year, the story must have begun in 1941. It is set in England at the beginning, but immediately moves to Perelandra, another name for Venus.

Perelandra is a utopia in some aspects. It has a beauty unsurpassed by anything else in Ransom's experience. Tastes are exquisite beyond description. The sensual impressions of Perelandra are so intense as to be overwhelming. Ransom makes the comment that the liquid which quenches his thirst is so wonderful as to cause him to have an intense thirst just to experience it. Therefore, the very thirst the liquid is quenching is intensified by that liquid.

Most of the setting is explained in such a way as to suggest a great temptation. For example, the food and drink is so wonderful that Ransom wants more than is necessary to satisfy the hunger and thirst he experiences. He states that wanting more good than is given to one, just for the sake of wanting it, is no longer considered good. The smells of the forest are described as creating an unnatural hunger and thirst, the description of



which suggests temptation. There are many references to the perception of things in Perelandra being suggestive of temptation.

The setting, though beginning and ending in England, for the most part is the mystical, supernatural setting of Perelandra. The whole planet is mostly floating islands, not at all stable. The one stable part of the planet, the Fixed Land, is forbidden to the only inhabitants of Perelandra, the King and Queen, until the very ending of the story, after Ransom destroys the Un-Man. They are then ordered to inhabit the Fixed Land and populate it.

The flora and fauna of Perelandra are all miraculous or supernatural. The fish and birds appear to have an almost human understanding, and not only transport Ransom and the Queen, but also attempt to protect them.

Part of the description of Perelandra, the cave, mountain, and great fiery pit, parallel certain Biblical references. The cave, and the valley leading to it, seem to coincide with the valley of death and/or the temptations mankind traversed in Biblical times. The great fiery pit parallels the depths of hell, where the Un-Man is relegated by Ransom. The mountain is where Ransom goes immediately after conquering the Unman. Here he is in proximity to the protective, healing force that rejuvenates him. This seems to parallel God and His protection and healing. Many times in the Bible, mankind meets God on the mountain, just as Ransom does in Perelandra.

## Language and Meaning

Lewis indicates Ransom is a philologist, one who loves to study languages. It is obvious Lewis gets the idea from his own personality. He uses many difficult words, and some created by himself. The language is very much a part of the story. Some of the words are obscure, but so pure to the word origin as to make the word itself a beauty to behold. Some of these words and their apparent meanings are: photosome (visible body), megalomania (big headed), philological (from the view of a love of language), philologist (one who loves language), motive power (power that moves Ransom to the planet), incurable incredibility (unceasing disbelief), illimitably (without limit). These are but a few of the strange, often made-up, words Ransom uses.

Because of the use of these uncommon and made-up words, plus the use of a more academic style of writing, the story is often difficult to follow. However, the descriptions, even related in an academic manner, are so complete and so vivid as to make the strange planet believable. Much of the language, especially when referring to Biblical parallels, is so convoluted as to necessitate a second reading to fully understand what Lewis is trying to portray.

Whether or not it is intentional, many of the Biblical parallels are mixed, mixing the fall of Adam and Eve with references to things that parallel Christ and his sacrifice and salvation of mankind. Many times it appears intentional, to indicate that the Fall was counteracted by the great sacrifice of the Savior. Ransom is portrayed as a parallel to



that salvation through this sacrifice, but in attempting to relate it without that indication of "megalomania" as Ransom would call it, the metaphors sometimes get mixed.

## Structure

Perelandra begins with two chapters devoted to Ransom's plans to go on the journey. The end of the journey is also told at the beginning, when the narrator and Humphreys find the box all smashed. The story then jumps directly into the account of his journey and sojourn in Perelandra, as he is supposed to have it told to the narrator, who appears to be Lewis himself. The rest of the book is devoted to the journey and sojourn in Perelandra.

The novel is composed of seventeen chapters, the first two of which tell of the preliminary arrangements for the journey to Perelandra and the "launching." The next chapters tell of Ransom's experiences in Perelandra. Though the time covered is a whole year, the pace of the novel is so intense it seems to only cover a few days. The flow of the novel is very well organized, and fast paced. There are no places where the story drags. The reader gets to the end and realizes a whole year has transpired, meaning the battle with the Unman has to have taken several months, but is told as if it is only a few days.

There are really no subplots, but there are several underlying themes. Some of these involve the struggle to overcome temptation, the salvation of a new order of people, pride and downfall, personal responsibility, and many others involving salvation and protection by a higher power. The theme of good and evil is evident throughout the novel. These themes are so strong as to almost qualify as subplots.

## Quotes

"I suppose every one knows this fear of getting 'drawn in'—the moment at which a man realizes that what had seemed mere speculations are on the point of landing him in the Communist Party or the Christian Church—the sense that a door has just slammed and left him on the inside." Chapter 1, p. 10.

"On the contrary, it is words that are vague. The reason why the thing can't be expressed is that it's too definite for language." Chapter 3, p. 30.

"The smells in the forest were beyond all that he had ever conceived. To say that they made him feel hungry and thirsty would be misleading; almost, they created a new kind of hunger and thirst, a longing that seemed to flow over from the body into the soul and which was a heaven to feel." Chapter 3, p. 37.

"This itch to have things over again, as if life were a film that could be unrolled twice or even made to work backwards...was it possibly the root of all evil?" Chapter 4, p. 43.

"This is great wisdom you are bringing, O Piebald Man.' 'What do you mean?' 'This looking backward and forward along the line and seeing how a day has one appearance as it comes to you, and another when you are in it, and a third when it has gone past.'" Chapter 5, p. 52.

"...her absence left him not to solitude but to a more formidable kind of privacy. At first it was almost intolerable; as he put it to us, in telling the story, 'There seemed no room.'" Chapter 6, p. 62.

"Why, spirit—mind—freedom—spontaneity—that's what I'm talking about. That is the goal towards which the whole cosmic process is moving. The final disengagement of that freedom, spirituality, is the work to which I dedicate my own life the life of humanity. The goal, Ransom, the goal: think of it! Pure spirit: the final vortex of self-thinking, self-originating activity." Chapter 7, p. 79.

"But you remember we are not to live on the Fixed Land.' 'No, but He has never forbidden you to think about it.'" Chapter 8, p. 90.

"Ransom perceived that he had never before seen anything but half-hearted and uneasy attempts at evil. This creature was whole-hearted. The extremity of its evil had passed beyond all struggle into some state which bore a horrible similarity to innocence. It was beyond vice as the Lady was beyond virtue." Chapter 8, p. 95.





"Your deepest will, at present, is to obey Him—to be always as you are now, only His beast or His very young child. The way out of that is hard. It was made hard that only the very great, the very wise, the very courageous should dare to walk in it, to go on—on out of this smallness in which you now live—through the dark wave of His forbidding, into the real life, Deep Life, with all its joy and splendor and hardness." Chapter 9, pp. 102-3.

"And also, the Tempter hinted, it would be no use asking the King, for he would certainly not approve the action: men were like that. The King must be forced to be free." Chapter 10, p. 112.

"This present temptation, if conquered, would itself be the next, and greatest, step in the same direction: an obedience freer, more reasoned, more conscious than any she had known before, was being put in her power. But for that very reason the fatal false step which, once taken, would thrust her down into the terrible slavery of appetite and hate and economics and government which our race knows so well, could be made to sound so like the true one." Chapter 10, p. 114.

"It is not for nothing you are named Ransom," said the Voice. And he knew that this was no fancy of his own. He knew it for a very curious reason—because he had known for many years that his surname was derived not from ransom but from Ranolf's son. It would never have occurred to him thus to associate the two words. To connect the name Ransom with the act of ransoming would have been for him a mere pun. But even his voluble self did not now dare to suggest that the Voice was making a play upon words...'My name is also Ransom,' said the Voice." Chapter 11, pp. 125-6.

"But this is very foolish," said the Un-Man. "Do you not know who I am?" "I know what you are," said Ransom." Chapter 12, p. 130.

"...They don't say in so many words, of course, but what they're getting to, even before they die nowadays, is what all men get to when they're dead—the knowledge that reality is neither rational nor consistent nor anything else. In a sense you might say it isn't there. 'Real' and 'Unreal,' 'true' and 'false'—they're all only on the surface. They give way the moment you press them.'" Chapter 13, p. 144.

## Topics for Discussion

Lewis makes an intense play on names. Maleldil tells Dr. Ransom that He is also called Ransom (note the capitals). Discuss the significance of that name.

Compare and contrast the battle between Dr. Ransom and the Un-Man over The Green Lady to the Biblical account of the fall of man. How does the argument by the Un-Man compare to the Devil's deception in the Garden of Eden? What are the differences between that battle and the Biblical account? How do the fallacies of the Un-Man's arguments compare to the fallacy of the Devil's argument with Eve?

When Professor Weston discusses with Dr. Ransom his quest in life, and his apparent great discovery, he talks about the Force. In what way does this discussion reveal how the Un-Man is able to overtake Weston's body for his own evil purposes? Why is Weston susceptible to being overtaken by the evil force while Dr. Ransom is not?

Discuss the viewpoint of Perelandra. Why is it more effective told through the viewpoint of a narrator than it would have been if told through the viewpoint of Dr. Ransom? Though told through the viewpoint of a narrator, the reader is only shown things from Dr. Ransom's viewpoint. Why do you think this is so? What other viewpoint might have been used, and would it have been more or less effective?

What Biblical character does Dr. Ransom parallel? Give at least three pieces of evidence from the book to support your decision.

What is the Un-Man's purpose in trying to change The Green Lady's perception of what obedience really means? Why does he not just tell her to disobey The King? How did this approach to tempting her cause Dr. Ransom undue stress?

After looking at herself in the mirror, she makes the comment to the Un-Man that the fear she experiences is because of two things appearing to be one. Though she is literally speaking of her image and her person, what might Lewis have been speaking of? Why would this be fearful?

After making the decision to enter the valley past the angel with a flaming sword, Ransom says it was the holiest and the most unholy thing he had ever done. What did he mean? How can something be both holy and unholy at the same time? Was his perception accurate? Why?

What was the significance of the red, fiery pit and the fact that Ransom threw the body of the Un-Man into it? Why was he instinctively drawn away from it?