



# The Silver Chair

Study Guide by Carol Clark



For the novel by  
C. S. Lewis



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## Synopsis

While attending a nasty school where they are bullied, Eustace Scrubb and Jill Pole suddenly find an escape into Narnia. As Eustace attempts to explain Narnia to Jill (Eustace had already been to Narnia in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*), they become separated through Jill's careless actions. Jill meets Aslan, who tells her they have a task to accomplish and gives her four signs to memorize and repeat to help them accomplish their task.

Unfortunately, almost as soon as Jill is reunited with Eustace, they bungle the first sign and so miss meeting Eustace's friend, King Caspian. They learn that Caspian's son Prince Rilian vanished 10 years ago, and this is Aslan's task—to find him and return him to Narnia. With the help and companionship of a very gloomy Marsh-wiggle, they set out to find the prince, but they soon find themselves forgetting to repeat the four signs and so make their journey and their task much more difficult than it needs to be. And when they are captured and led away to a deep underground kingdom, it looks as if they may have failed completely at Aslan's task.

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dump,” the boldfaced words are all adjectives describing the shoe or the dump. Find these sentences in Chapter 6 and fill in the blanks with the missing adjectives.

*Word Bank*

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springy	shallow	pale	wise	solemn	mouldering
winter	old	desolate	noisy	good	rocky

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11. It was a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ stream, and even Jill was not wet above her knees when they reached the northern bank.
12. It was \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ ground for walking, and a day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ sunlight.
13. The balustrade had apparently been covered with rich carvings, of which some traces remained; \_\_\_\_\_ faces and forms of giants, minotaurs, squids, centipedes, and dreadful gods.
14. “Well, children,” she said, “you have a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ guide with you.”
15. Before them lay a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ plain: beyond it, further mountains capped with snow.

**Understanding the Story:**

*Landscape:*

Match each definition with its term, by placing the correct letter on the line.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 16. _____ cairn     | a. place where a river is shallow                                  |
| 17. _____ gorge     | b. cliff with a vertical or overhanging face                       |
| 18. _____ moor      | c. narrow steep-sided valley, often eroded by water                |
| 19. _____ precipice | d. heap of stones set up as a landmark or monument                 |
| 20. _____ ravine    | e. open wasteland, often overgrown with heather                    |
| 21. _____ shoals    | f. narrow cleft with steep rocky walls through which a stream runs |

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### **Questions:**

1. What advice does the Lady of the Green Kirtle give the three travelers? What is the result of talking with the Lady and does it make the journey easier or harder? Why?
2. According to the Lady, how do the giants of Harfang compare with the giants of Ettinsmoor? Do you think the Lady's opinion is accurate? Why or why not?
3. Why does Puddleglum not want to go to Harfang?
4. What promise does Puddleglum extract from the children? Why do you think he makes them agree to this?
5. Why does Puddleglum try to get the children to stop and look around the flat hill before they come to Harfang? Why do the children ignore his request?

### **Thinking About the Story:**

6. How does Puddleglum provide comic relief in the midst of the tension of arriving in Harfang? Besides being humorous, what effect does this have? Do you think the Marsh-wiggle was merely acting, as he later claims?
7. Again and again, Puddleglum steps forward during their difficult journey and takes the lead whenever things get dangerous or difficult, speaking first. What

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does this tell you about his character? Find at least one occasion where he does this and describe it here.

8. The author speaks in an aside directly to the reader twice in the last pages of Chapter 8. Locate the one when they are discussing windows and doors, and the one on the last page of the chapter and copy them here. How does this technique help you, the reader, feel as if a storyteller is telling you their story?
9. What do the children and Puddleglum discover in the kitchens as they wait to sneak out? How is this confirmed by what the king yells as they escape?
10. How does this knowledge make Jill feel as the hounds close on her?
11. *Onomatopoeia* (ON-uh-mah-tuh-PEE-uh) is the naming of something by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it. For example, “ding dong” represents the sound of a doorbell ringing. In the examples below, underline the onomatopoeia words; then tell what sound is imitating.
  - a. “Jill could hear them howling and blubbering and boo-hooing like great babies even after the place was a mile behind.”
  - b. “Te-he-he! Beddy-bye, now.”
12. An *idiom* is an expression that does not literally mean what it says but has an understood meaning. For example, if we say someone is “spinning their

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wheels,” we mean that they are not getting anything done, not that they are literally spinning wheels. Idioms may be peculiar to a particular country or area of a country.

Some idioms are underlined in the sentences below. Write what the words mean literally, and then write what we understand them to mean in the context (surrounding words) of the sentence.

- a. “I say,” whispered Scrubb to Jill. “He may be a wet blanket, but he has plenty of pluck—and cheek.”
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. “Jill wished she wouldn’t keep on clicking her tongue and saying things like “Oh, la, la! Ups-a-daisy!” and “There’s a duck” and “Now we’ll be all right, my poppet.”
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. “I don’t know as I mightn’t have forty winks,” said the giantess.”

### **Dig Deeper:**

13. Near the end of Chapter 8, Puddleglum reminds Jill and Eustace that “Aslan’s instructions always work: there are no exceptions.” Read Proverbs 3:1–6, 13:13; Luke 11:28; John 15:10; and 1 John 5:3. Summarize the following “instructions” we have from God. How is this similar to the children and Puddleglum needing to remember to follow Aslan?

## The Silver Chair Study Guide Answer Key

### Chapters 3–5

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. hale; 2. fusty; 3. venomous; 4. distraught; 5. feeble; 6. physis; 7. extent; 8. bastioned; 9. solemn; 10. victuals; 11. ruinous; 12. mantle

#### *Understanding the Story:*

*Narnian Creatures:* 1. fauns: creatures with human form and the ears, tail, horns, and legs of a goat; 2. satyrs: woodland creatures that are part human and part goat; (Note: in Greek mythology, satyrs were part human and part horse; in Roman mythology and art, the satyr was pictured as part human and part goat.) 3. centaurs: creatures with head, trunk, and arms of a man, and the body and legs of a horse.

*Narnian Ships:* 4. forecastle: (usually raised) seaman's quarters in the forward part of a ship; 5. poop deck: raised deck at the stern of a ship. 6. bulwarks: solid structure above the level of the main deck, for protecting goods and people on deck.

*Structures in Narnia:* 7. c; 8. e; 9. a; 10. b; 11. d

#### *Questions:*

1. People at Experiment House have not heard about Adam and Eve. The Bible is not read or studied there, therefore they have no knowledge of what a Son of Adam or a Daughter of Eve might be. The dwarf is asking if they are human.

2. Eustace pays no attention to what Jill is trying to tell him because he is annoyed with her about having fallen off the cliff. He also tells her to stop talking so he can hear the speech being given. Jill assumes he had arrived much earlier than she, but Eustace had actually arrived only a very short time ahead of Jill. Eustace does not recognize Caspian as an old friend because Caspian has aged so much.

3. So many Narnians have been lost while trying to find Prince Rilian that the king has decreed that nobody should go to look for him. Trumpkin will carry out the decree of the king to the letter and will not let Jill and Eustace go, if he becomes aware of their plan.

4. While riding with his mother in the northern part of the kingdom, Prince Rilian goes off a distance from the Queen in order to let her rest undisturbed. A venomous snake bites the Queen and she dies within 10 minutes. In the following month, Rilian frequently goes off in search of the snake, to kill it. One day, while accompanied by Drinian, Rilian sees a beautiful lady who motions to him to come toward her, but then she disappears. The next day, Rilian goes off on his own once more and is never seen again.

5. The Narnian air is bringing back to Eustace a strength he had won when he sailed the Eastern Sea with Caspian.

6. Eustace knows that Caspian has previously subdued the giants in war and that they pay tribute to the Narnian King. Puddleglum seems uncertain as to whether the giants will allow the children to pass through their lands without harm.

7. The other Marsh-wiggles tell Puddleglum he is too flighty and doesn't take life seriously enough. He is too full of bobance and bounce and high spirits. A journey up north just as winter's beginning, looking for a Prince who probably isn't there by way of a ruined city that no one has ever seen will be just the thing to cure his high spirits. If that doesn't steady a chap, they don't know what will.

#### *Thinking About the Story:*

8. Answers will vary. Jill has been thinking about everything going on around her and observing the