

5. The Magician's Nephew Discussion Group

Week	Date	Reading Assignment	Chapters Discussed
Wk 1	Nov 5	Chs 1, 2, 3	1. The Wrong Door 2. Digory and His Uncle 3. The Wood Between the Worlds
Wk 2	Nov 12	Chs 4, 5, 6	4. The Bell and the Hammer 5. The Deplorable Word 6. The Beginning of Uncle Andrew's Troubles
	Nov 19	No Meeting	
Wk 3	Nov 26	Chs 7, 8, 9	7. What Happened at the Front Door 8. The Fight at the Lamp-post 9. The Founding of Narnia
Wk 4	Dec 3	Chs 10, 11, 12	10. The First Joke and Other Matters 11. Digory and His Uncle Are Both in Trouble 12. Strawberry's Adventure
Wk 5	Dec 10	Chs 13, 14, 15	13. An Unexpected Meeting 14. The Planting of the Tree 15. The End of This Story and the Beginning of All the Others
Wk 6	Dec 17		

...In the third region
 VENUS voyages...but my voice falters:
 Rude rime-making wrongs her beauty,
 Whose breasts and brow, and her breath's sweetness
 Bewitch the worlds. Wide-spread reign
 Of her secret sceptre, in the sea's caverns,
 In grass growing, and grain bursting,
 Flower unfolding, and flesh longing,
 And shower falling sharp in April.
 The metal copper in the mine reddens
 With muffled brightness, like muted gold,
 By her fingers form'd....

From "The Planets" by C.S. Lewis

"We are to shine as the sun, we are to be given the Morning Star. I think I begin to see what it means. In one way, of course, God has given us the Morning Star already: you can go and enjoy the gift on many fine mornings if you get up early enough. What more, you may ask, do we want? Ah, but we want so much more— something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves—that, though we cannot, yet these projections can, enjoy in themselves that beauty grace, and power of which Nature is the image. That is why the poets tell us such lovely falsehoods. They talk as if the west wind could really sweep into a human soul; but it can't. They tell us that "beauty born of murmuring sound" will pass into a human face; but it won't. Or not yet. For if we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day *give* us the Morning Star and cause us to *put on* the splendour of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth as prophecy. At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness

and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get *in*.”

C.S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory”

That is why I think this Grand Miracle is the missing chapter in this novel, the chapter on which the whole plot turns; that is why I believe that God really has dived down into the bottom of creation, and has come up bringing the whole redeemed nature on His shoulders. The miracles that have already happened are, of course, as Scripture so often says, the first fruits of that cosmic summer which is presently coming on. Christ has risen, and so we shall rise. St. Peter for a few seconds walks on the water; and the day will come when there will be a re-made universe, infinitely obedient to the will of glorified and obedient men, when we can do all things, when we shall be those gods that we are described as being in Scripture. To be sure, it feels wintry enough still: but often in the very early spring it feels like that. Two thousand years are only a day or two by this scale. A man really ought to say, “The Resurrection happened two thousand years ago” in the same spirit in which he says, “I saw a crocus yesterday.” Because we know what is coming behind the crocus. The spring comes slowly down this way; but the great thing is that the corner has been turned. There is, of course, this difference that in the natural spring the crocus cannot choose whether it will respond or not. We can. We have the power either of withstanding the spring, and sinking back into the cosmic winter, or of going on into those “high mid-summer pomps” in which our leader, the Son of Man, already dwells, and to which he is calling us. It remains with us to follow or not, to die in this winter, or to go on into that spring and that summer.

C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*

Chapter Thirteen: An Unexpected Meeting

1. What do Polly, Digory, and Fledge find when they arrive at the island? How would you describe it? How is it different from Charn?
2. Who takes the fruit? What is its effect? How does Digory avoid taking the fruit the first time?
3. How does Digory avoid taking it the second time? How does Jadis tempt him?
4. What memory comforts Digory even as he wonders if he has done right by his mother?
5. What does Lewis have to say about “love”?

Chapter Fourteen: The Planting of the Tree

1. Upon returning the apple to Aslan, how has Digory changed? How have King Frank and Queen Helen changed? How has Uncle Andrew changed?
2. What does Aslan do with the apple? What becomes of it?
3. What does Aslan tell Digory about Jadis and about the outcomes if he had taken the apple to his mother?
4. What does Lewis have to say about “love”?

Chapter Fifteen: The End of the Story and the Beginning of All Others

1. Before going back, Aslan warns the children. What does he say?
2. What is it like for Digory and Polly as they return to earth? What does the memory of that event do for them the rest of their lives?
3. What does Digory do with the apple? What effect does the apple have on the room -- on his mother?
4. How does Aunt Lettie describe Mabel’s behavior after getting well?
5. How does the story end...or does it?