

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## The Silver Chair

by  
C.S. Lewis

### Book Information

C.S. Lewis, The Silver Chair  
Quiz Number: 639  
HarperTrophy, 2002  
ISBN 0-06-447109-8; LCCN  
257 Pages  
Book Level: 5.7  
Interest Level: MG

Prince Rilian escapes from the Emerald Witch's underground kingdom. Book #4

**Topics:** Adventure, Escape; Fantasy/Imagination, Misc./Other; Series, Chronicles of Narnia

### Main Characters

Aslan a talking lion who is a force of good and who calls Jill and Eustace into Narnia to free the Prince

Eustace Scrubb a young boy who returns to Narnia and, along with Jill, frees Prince Rilian from an evil spell

Glimfeather a talking owl who takes Jill and Eustace away from the King's castle and brings them to the Marsh-wiggles

Jill Pole a young girl who leaves her school with Eustace and enters Narnia; she bravely carries out the task given to her by Aslan

King Caspian the Tenth the good King of Narnia who sails to ask Aslan who his successor should be, since his son, Prince Rilian, is missing

Lady of the Green Kirtle (Queen of Underland) an evil sorceress who enchants the Prince and the Earthmen of the Deep Realm; she uses them to carry out her plan of conquering Narnia

Lord Drinian the King's chief friend, who accompanied Prince Rilian to the place of his mother's death and saw an enchanting woman, but failed to tell the King immediately

Prince Rilian the son of King Caspian, who disappeared from Narnia ten years before; he is enchanted by the Lady of the Green Kirtle until the children find him

Puddleglum a pessimistic but loyal Marsh-wiggle (a frog-like creature) who accompanies the children while they search for the Prince

### Vocabulary

**bivouacked** residing in a temporary shelter  
**cairn** a memorial made of stones  
**centaur** a mythical creature having the head and trunk of a man, but the body and legs of a horse  
**mail** small overlapping metal rings, loops of chain or scales that form a flexible armor that resists penetration by swords  
**muff** to blunder or botch things  
**scullery** the chore room near a kitchen

### Synopsis

Jill Pole and Eustace Scrubb attend a school in England called Experiment House, which is overrun with bullies. Eustace describes to Jill a place outside of this world he had visited before, and they decide to ask Aslan the Lion, the ruler of the world to enter it. The bullies interrupt their plea and Eustace and Jill scramble up a hill, open a door, and find they are on a bright mountaintop. Jill and Eustace argue by a cliff, and Eustace falls but is saved by the breath of Aslan, who blows him to the land of Narnia. Aslan charges Jill with the task of finding the lost Prince, who is the son of the King of Narnia, and bringing him home to his father. He gives her four Signs to look for along the way: First, Eustace will see an old friend and must greet him; then, they should travel north to the ruined city of ancient giants; when they find writing on a stone, they must do what it says; and finally, they will know the Prince because he will be the first to ask them to do something in the name of Aslan. He warns her to not be fooled by appearances. Aslan then blows Jill to Narnia to join Eustace.

Jill lands next to Eustace near Cair Paravel, the castle of King Caspian the Tenth, who is departing by ship to ask Aslan who his successor should be, since his son has disappeared. The King is an old man, so Eustace does not recognize him as the young friend with whom he sailed on his last trip to Narnia. Soon, however, a talking owl named Glimfeather tells them the King's identity. The owl then takes them to the castle where Jill tells Eustace

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## The Silver Chair

by  
C.S. Lewis

---

about the Signs. Jill realizes that if she had told Eustace earlier, he would have been able to contact the King before the King set sail. That night, Glimfeather takes them to an owl meeting where he tells them how King Caspian's wife died and the Prince disappeared. Glimfeather and another owl then take Jill and Eustace to the Marsh-wiggles to help them on their journey. They meet Puddleglum, who agrees to accompany them, and they set off towards the north. Along the way they encounter giants at play, a suspicious black knight, and a beautiful woman who directs them to seek refuge in the castle of Harfang. They also encounter a snowstorm while scrambling over barriers, and Jill falls into a maze-like trench that has no outlet. They finally arrive at Harfang and are greeted hospitably by the giants who occupy the castle. When the group awakens the next morning, they find an overnight rain has melted the snow over which they had traveled and has revealed the ruins of a city and the words, "UNDER ME" carved in stone. Once again they realize they had missed the Signs. They secretly leave the castle, for they discover they were intended to be the food for the giants' Autumn Feast. The giants spot them, but they escape through a crack, entering the Deep Realm under the earth, which is inhabited by a sad army of Earthmen. The Earthmen escort them to the sitting room of the Queen of Underland who, at the time, is away. The black Knight greets them, though, and tells them of the Queen's virtues. The three adventurers quickly realize that the black Knight and Queen are the same pair they had met on their journey. The Knight explains that he undergoes a strange transition once a day in which he must be bound or he will do horrible things. The children and Puddleglum witness this transformation and, when the Knight asks to be freed in the name of Aslan, they recognize the fourth Sign and cut his bindings. The Knight destroys the silver chair that held him and, with its destruction, remembers he is Prince Rilian. The evil Queen enters before the group can get away and attempts to cast a spell on them. Puddleglum bravely foils the spell, and they destroy the Queen.

With the destruction of the Queen, the Earthmen are

also freed from her enchantment and return to the Land of Bism, farther underground. The children, Puddleglum, and the Prince emerge from an underground tunnel into Narnia. The Prince hurries to the castle and, when King Caspian's ship returns, they greet each other momentarily before Caspian dies.

The children are taken to the mountain of Aslan where they see Caspian's dead body brought back to life and transformed into a youthful person. Aslan tells the children they cannot remain with him and must return to their world. Caspian asks if he can go also, and Aslan allows him just enough time with the children to set things right at the Experiment House. The bullies are expelled from the school and the corrupt Head of the school is replaced, which transforms Experiment House into a good school.

### Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

#### Initial Understanding

Aslan warns Jill that appearances are deceiving. How does this prove true in the story?

*Many things are not as they appear, such as in the following examples: Caspian's age keeps Eustace from recognizing him as a friend. Puddleglum's pessimistic nature keeps Jill from recognizing an able helpmate. The snow hides the ruins of the city of ancient giants as well as the words carved in stone. The Earthmen and the black Knight are actually under the wicked Queen's spell. The beautiful Lady is really a wicked Queen.*

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## The Silver Chair

by  
C.S. Lewis

---

### Literary Analysis

The narrator in the story sometimes inserts a commentary or personal judgment in the story. How is this helpful to the reader?

*The narrator uses editorial comments in several ways. For example, the narrator's comments about a character or situation helps guide the reader's response. Also, some comments fill in some gaps or explain things about Narnia so the reader can gain a better understanding of the situation.*

### Inferential Comprehension

How do the challenges Eustace and Jill face help them to grow?

*Eustace and Jill, with the help of Puddleglum, seem to grow in the spirit of cooperation by developing a sense of teamwork. They learn that tasks can be difficult but, with perseverance, obstacles can be overcome. They also witness the strength and power of evil but learn that good is even stronger than evil.*

### Constructing Meaning

The Lady of the Green Kirtle is beautiful and alluring. However, she is actually a witch who has evil intentions. What things in our world are alluring that often turn out bad for the people who get involved with them?

*Students may mention things like tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs, which seem alluring because they promise certain benefits, but in reality can cause problems. Belonging to certain social groups can be alluring because they are popular, but once in them, a person can sometimes feel trapped. Money and possessions can also be tempting, but an overemphasis on these things can be destructive too.*

## Teachable Skills

**Understanding the Author's Craft** Jill discovers the giants' intention to eat her, Eustace, and Puddleglum for their Autumn Feast. However, there are hints given before that time that indicate

something is amiss. Ask the students to review the book and find the clues that hint that the giants intend to eat Puddleglum and the children. Have the students start when the travelers meet the Lady and the black Knight and continue until Jill finds the recipe.

**Comparing and Contrasting** Many students have read other books about a fantasy world, such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Have the students choose a fantasy book and compare and contrast it to *The Silver Chair*. Comparisons could be made in terms of characters, setting, plot, and theme. Their work can be presented in a speech, book report, essay, or chart form.

**Extending Meaning** In *The Silver Chair*, C. S. Lewis uses some Biblical references, such as Son of Adam and Daughter of Eve. It might be helpful for the student to gain an understanding of Lewis's mindset and motivations for writing the Chronicles of Narnia series of books. Have them research C. S. Lewis's life and identify the connection between his beliefs and the series of books.

**Recognizing Details** During the narrative of *The Silver Chair*, the children go places and meet people and creatures they have never seen before. Have the students choose one scene in the story, or assign a scene to each student. Using the details in the narrative, have them sketch the scene along with the characters who appear. The drawings could be displayed in the classroom with a short description or quote from the text under it.