

# Discussion Guide

*Perelandra*, chs 5–8



## OPEN

“What you have made me see,” answered the Lady, “is as plain as the sky, but I never saw it before. Yet it has happened every day. One goes into the forest to pick food and already the thought of one fruit rather than another has grown up in one’s mind. Then, it may be, one finds a different fruit and not the fruit one thought of. One joy was expected and another is given. But this I had never noticed before—that at the very moment of the finding there is in the mind a kind of thrusting back, or a setting aside. The picture of the fruit you have not found is still, for a moment, before you. And if you wished—if it were possible to wish—you could keep it there. You could send your soul after the good you had expected, instead of turning it to the good you had got. You could refuse the real good; you could make the real fruit taste insipid by thinking of the other.”

- *Green Lady to Ransom*, ch 5, p. 59



## ENTRY

1. Have you ever found it difficult to enjoy a good experience because it wasn’t the good that you were expecting?



## RECALL

1. What reason are we given for why the green lady on *Perelandra* has a human form, unlike the furry and apparently beast-like form of the hnau of *Malacandra*? *ch 5*
2. Describe the prohibition given to the Green Lady? What might be the reason for this restriction? *ch 6*
3. What is the change that happens to Weston during his conversation with Ransom? *ch 7*
4. What is the Un-man’s goal with the Green Lady, and how does he go about trying to achieve it? How does Ransom interpret this? *ch 8*



## ANALYSIS

1. What does the Green Lady mean by her understand of joy as accepting whatever good Maleldil sends rather than clinging to one’s own expectations? *ch 5*
2. How does the Green Lady relate with the beasts of *Perelandra*, and how do they relate to her? What kind of image of authority is Lewis portraying? *ch 6*
3. What is the reason for the change in Weston to the Un-man? What do you think is the relationship now between the Weston that Ransom once knew and the Un-man he is now observing? *chs 7–8*
4. What are the methods and strategies being deployed for the temptation of the Green Lady? What is the role of the imagination in her temptation? *ch 8*



## DIVING DEEPER

But soon Ransom saw broken water coming rapidly towards them. A moment later and the sea beside the island was a mass of the large silver fishes: spouting, curling their bodies, pressing upon one another to get nearer, and the nearest ones nosing the land.... The Lady seemed to take a long time in selecting two of them. But the moment she had done so the others all fell back for a few yards and the two successful candidates wheeled round and lay still with their tails to the shore, gently moving their fins. “Now, Piebald, like this,” she said, and seated herself astride the narrow part of the right-hand fish. Ransom followed her example.... A moment later they were gliding out to sea at about six miles an hour. The air over the water was cooler and the breeze lifted his hair. In a world where he had as yet only swum and walked, the fish’s progress gave the impression of quite an exhilarating speed.... He noticed with interest that the whole school of rejected fish were still with them—some following, but the majority gambolling in wide extended wings to left and right.

“Do they always follow like this?” he asked.

“Do the beasts not follow in your world?” she replied. “We cannot ride more than two. It would be hard if those we did not choose were not even allowed to follow.”

“Was that why you took so long to choose the two fish, Lady?” he asked.

“Of course,” said the Lady. “I try not to choose the same fish too often.”

- ch 6, pp. 66–67



## REFLECTION

1. How have you experienced the temptation to cling to an expected good rather than embracing the waves sent by Maleldil? Do you find any wisdom in the Green Lady’s example of faith in her maker that can encourage or challenge you? How so? [chs 5–6]

“The fruit we are eating is always the best fruit of all.”

“There have been eldila who did not think it a joy,” said Ransom.

“How?”

“You spoke yesterday, Lady, of clinging to the old good instead of taking the good that came.”

“Yes—for a few heart-beats.”

“There was an eldil who clung longer who has been clinging since before the worlds were made.”

“But the old good would cease to be a good at all if he did that.”

“Yes. It has ceased. And still he clings.”

She stared at him in wonder and was about to speak, but he interrupted her.

- *The Green Lady and Ransom*, ch 6, p. 71

2. The Un-man’s temptation to the Green Lady revolves around visions of independence, greatness, and nobility. How in your own life have you tried to balance the competing goods of dependence and independence, ambition and contentment, nobility and humility? [ch 8]

“But you remember we are not to live on the Fixed Land.”

“No, but He has never forbidden you to think about it. Might not that be one of the reasons why you are forbidden to do it—so that you may have a Might Be to think about, to make Story about as we call it?”

“I will think more of this.”

- *the Green Lady and the un-Manch*, ch 8, pp. 89–90