

Discussion Guide

Perelandra, chs 9–12



OPEN

If the attack had been of some more violent kind it might have been easier to resist. What chilled and almost cowed him was the union of malice with something nearly childish. For temptation, for blasphemy, for a whole battery of horrors, he was in some sort prepared: but hardly for this petty, indefatigable nagging as of a nasty little boy at a preparatory school. Indeed no imagined horror could have surpassed the sense which grew within him as the slow hours passed, that this creature was, by all human standards, inside out—its heart on the surface and its shallowness at the heart. On the surface, great designs and an antagonism to Heaven which involved the fate of worlds: but deep within, when every veil had been pierced, was there, after all, nothing but a black puerility, an aimless empty spitefulness content to sate itself with the tiniest cruelties, as love does not disdain the smallest kindness? What kept him steady, long after all possibility of thinking about something else had disappeared, was the decision that if he must hear either the word Ransom or the word Nothing a million times, he would prefer the word Ransom.

- *ch. 9, p.106*



ENTRY

1. Have you ever encountered a form of evil that stood out to you not due to its power or its apparent attractiveness, but due to its sheer senselessness?



RECALL

1. Describe what Ransom saw with the trail of mutilated frogs. How does this encounter shape his understanding of the Un-man's character and motivations? *ch 9*
2. What is the difference between the Un-man's tactics with the Green Lady and those with Ransom? *chs 9-10*
3. What does Ransom learn from Maleldil about how his approach needs to change to protect the Green Lady from Weston / the Un-man? *ch 11*
4. How does Ransom finally attempt to put an end to the ongoing attempts of evil on Perelandra? What stirs up Ransom's hatred, and how does he direct it? *ch 12*



ANALYSIS

1. How does Ransom's gradual understanding of the Un-man shift his understanding of the nature of evil, especially when comparing the drastic change in behavior when the Un-man is with the Green Lady and when he is not? *chs 9-10*
2. Why do you think the Un-man changes his strategy with the Green Lady from using logical arguments to telling stories? What is the result of his engaging her imagination? *ch 10*

3. How does the Ransom's conversation with Maleldil change his understanding of the nature of the conflict between good and evil? What are his objections to this growing revelation, and how are they answered? *ch 11*
4. How do both Ransom and Weston employ violence in their struggle? What makes their use of violence distinct? What makes it similar? *ch 12*



DIVING DEEPER

It was fortunate that something so horrible should be so obviously out of the question. Almost, but not quite, Ransom decreed that whatever the Silence and the Darkness seemed to be saying about this, no such crude, materialistic struggle could possibly be what Maleldil really intended. Any suggestion to the contrary must be only his own morbid fancy. It would degrade the spiritual warfare to the condition of mere mythology. But here he got another check. Long since on Mars, and more strongly since he came to Perelandra, Ransom had been perceiving that the triple distinction of truth from myth and of both from fact was purely terrestrial—was part and parcel of that unhappy division between soul and body which resulted from the Fall. Even on earth the sacraments existed as a permanent reminder that the division was neither wholesome nor final. The Incarnation had been the beginning of its disappearance. In Perelandra it would have no meaning at all. Whatever happened here would be of such a nature that earth-men would call it mythological. All this he had thought before. Now he knew it. The Presence in the darkness, never before so formidable, was putting these truths into his hands, like terrible jewels...

The terrible silence went on. It became more and more like a face, a face not without sadness, that looks upon you while you are telling lies, and never interrupts, but gradually you know that it knows, and falter, and contradict yourself, and lapse into silence. The voluble self petered out in the end. Almost the Darkness said to Ransom, "You know you are only wasting time."

- *ch 11, pp. 122–123*



REFLECTION

1. How do the different strategies of temptation presented by the un-Man throughout these chapters relate to the ways you have experienced temptation? How does temptation in *Perelandra* resemble the "bent" good, as the Oyarsa of Malacandra explained about Weston in *Out of the Silent Planet*?

As long as this was but one drop, so to speak, in the sea of her mind, he would not really succeed. Perhaps, while it remained so, she was protected from actual disobedience: perhaps no rational creature, until such a motive became dominant, could really throw away happiness for anything quite so vague as the Tempter's chatter about Deeper Life and the Upward Path. The veiled egoism in the conception of noble revolt must be increased. And Ransom thought, despite many rallies on her part and many setbacks suffered by the enemy, that it was, very slowly and yet perceptibly, increasing. The matter was, of course, cruelly, cruelly complicated. What the Un-man said was always very nearly true. Certainly it must be part of the Divine plan that this happy creature should mature, should become more and more a creature of free choice, should become, in a sense, more distinct from God and from her husband in order thereby to be at one with them in a richer fashion.

- *ch 10, pp. 113–114*

2. What do you think of Ransom's gradual revelation of the struggle with good and evil from a purely moral to involving even a physical conflict? Do you think Ransom is right to fight the Un-man / Weston? Is this ever applicable in our lives? What are the dangers on either side of this kind of decision?