

**Lloyd Alexander's**  
***The Castle of Llyr:***  
**A Discussion Guide**

**By David Bruce**

**Dedicated with Love to**  
**Hartley Bruce**

**Lloyd Alexander's *The Castle of Llyr*:  
A Discussion Guide**

**by David Bruce**

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## ***The Castle of Llyr*, by Lloyd Alexander**

### **Preface**

The purpose of this book is educational. I enjoy reading Lloyd Alexander's *The Castle of Llyr*, and I believe that it is an excellent book for children (and for adults such as myself) to read.

This book contains many questions about Lloyd Alexander's *The Castle of Llyr* and their answers. I hope that teachers of children will find it useful as a guide for discussions. It can also be used for short writing assignments. Students can answer selected questions from this little guide orally or in one or more paragraphs. Of course, I don't expect teachers to use every question, but to simply select some questions that the teacher would like to use.

I hope to encourage teachers to teach Lloyd Alexander's *The Castle of Llyr*, and I hope to lessen the time needed for teachers to prepare to teach this book.

This book uses many short quotations from Lloyd Alexander's *The Castle of Llyr*. This use is consistent with fair use:

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## **Introduction to Lloyd Alexander's *The Castle of Llyr***

### **Who is Lloyd Alexander?**

Of course, Lloyd Alexander is the author of *The Castle of Llyr* and the other books of the Prydain Chronicles. He has written many, many well-loved books of children's literature.

An excellent source of information about Lloyd Alexander comes from this website maintained by Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers:

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-alexander-lloyd.asp>

In the article on this website, Mr. Alexander talks about his early life:

My parents were horrified when I told them I wanted to be an author. I was fifteen in my last year of high school. My family pleaded with me to forget literature and do something sensible such as find some sort of useful work. I had no idea how to find work useful or otherwise. In fact I had no idea how to become an author. If reading offered any preparation for writing there were grounds for hope. I had been reading as long as I could remember. Shakespeare, Dickens, Mark Twain, and so many others were my dearest friends and greatest teachers. I loved all the world's mythologies; King Arthur was one of my heroes; I played with a trash can lid for a knightly shield and my uncle's cane for the sword Excalibur. But I was afraid that not even Merlin the enchanter could transform me into a writer. (kidsreads.com)

Fortunately, he became a writer, and fortunately for fans of the Prydain Chronicles, which are set in a land loosely based on Wales, he loved mythology. Mr. Alexander says

about writing, “It was as if all the hero tales, games, dreams, and imaginings of my childhood had suddenly come back to me” (kidsreads.com).

Mr. Alexander identifies the special concern in his writings:

My concern is how we learn to be genuine human beings. I never have found out all I want to know about writing and realize I never will. All that writers can do is keep trying to say what is deepest in their hearts. If writers learn more from their books than do readers, perhaps I may have begun to learn. (kidsreads.com)

### **What is the Prydain Chronicles?**

The Prydain Chronicles is a series of books that Lloyd Alexander has written about the mythical land of Prydain, which resembles Wales.

In the Prydain Chronicles, the main character, named Taran, grows to adulthood. These are the books in the series:

*The Book of Three* (1964)

*The Black Cauldron* (1965; a Newbery Honor book)

*The Castle of Llyr* (1966)

*Tarn Wanderer* (1967)

*The High King* (1968; A Newbery Medal book)

The Newbery Medal goes to the author of the most distinguished American contribution to children’s literature in a certain year. Runners-up are given Newbery Honor status.

In addition, Mr. Alexander wrote a prequel to the Chronicles of Prydain:

*The Foundling: and Other Tales of Prydain* (1973)

Mr. Alexander died on May 17, 2007.

### **General Comments on *The Castle of Llyr*:**

- We have the power to change. We can grow and become better people.
- We see altruism in action. Caring for other people is a good quality.
- We see that a person can make a mistake and misjudge another person. However, good people admit when they are mistaken.
- A person can be too proud and greedy. This can lead a person to become evil.

### **Philosophical Underpinnings:**

- Children's Literature can teach (it is didactic).
- Good and evil exist.
- We can choose whether to be good or evil.
- We can choose to be altruistic.
- People can grow.
- VIPs (such as kings and princes) need to be worthy of their high position in life, rather than simply be born to it.
- Working together in a group can be more important and more efficient than going it alone.
- Children can be heroes.

### Definitions:

“Prydain” is the medieval word used by the Welsh for the island of Britain.

**Note:** Of course, I am relying on the teacher to make this material age-appropriate should the teacher use any of the material in this discussion guide. Also, of course, it is important for the teacher to make reading this children’s novel enjoyable. Let us remember what Lucy Mangan, a Guardian columnist and a person who loves to read, wrote about Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Michelle Magorian’s *Good Night. Mr. Tom*, “But as someone who still cannot fully enjoy *Pride and Prejudice* for the ghosts of annotated underlinings that still appear before my GCSE-affrighted eyes 20 years on, I beg you — please, please offer Magorian’s masterpiece to your readers before their teachers do, and let them feel the joy.”

Source of Quotation: Lucy Mangan, “No 34: Goodnight Mr Tom by Michelle Magorian (1981).” Guardian (UK). 12 June 2009

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/jun/13/book-corner-goodnight-mr-tom>>.

### Cover Photograph:

If you bought a print copy of this discussion guide (most people simply download it for free, which is fine by me), you have noticed the cover photograph by Pavel Losevsky, a Russian photographer. No photograph can ever match the visual images we create when we read a book, and the girl in the cover photograph will match few readers’ conceptions of Eilonwy. Obviously, I like the photo quite a lot, having paid money to use the photo on the cover page. However, you may show the photo to your students after they read the novel and ask if anything in the photo does

not match what we read in the book. Students may suggest these things:

- Eilonwy's bauble is golden, and the crystal ball of the girl in the photo is not golden.
- Eilonwy's hair is red-gold, and the hair of the girl in the photo is probably not as red-gold as we imagine Eilonwy's hair to be.
- Readers can wonder whether Eilonwy would be wearing bright nail polish. Certainly, Eilonwy as she appears at the beginning of the novel would not, although Eilonwy when she is under the control of Achren very well might.

You also may want to ask why Eilonwy should appear on the cover. After all, she does not appear in very many chapters. One answer is that she is constantly talked about in the novel, and the heroic act she performs in the climax of the novel may be the most heroic of all the heroic acts that Taran and the companions perform in the novel.

### Author's Note

• **How is this book, the third volume of the Chronicles of Prydain, different from the previous volumes?**

Mr. Alexander mentions two main differences:

- 1) “*The Castle of Llyr* is, in a sense, more romantic than the previous chronicles — Taran is noticeably aware of his feelings toward Eilonwy” (7).
- 2) “And it is sometimes more comic — for example, the utter despair of the companions in trying to cope with the well-meaning but hapless Prince Rhun” (7). Note: “Hapless” means unlucky.

In addition, the characters are older than in the previous two chronicles. In the Prydain Chronicles, Taran and Eilonwy go from being children (although both would probably hate to be called children) in *The Book of Three* to being a young man and a young woman of marriageable age in *The High King*. We can even call *The Chronicles of Prydain* a *bildungsroman* (character novel) in which the main characters develop from childhood into adulthood. In *The Castle of Llyr*, Eilonwy appears to have attained puberty.

• **Does *The Castle of Llyr* contain important themes?**

Yes, it does, and Lloyd Alexander wants it to contain important themes. He writes that “the adventure should contain something beyond the fairy-tale elements of a magic golden bauble, a vengeful queen, a mysterious castle, and rivals for the hand of a princess. The nature of fantasy allows happenings which reveal most clearly our own frailties and our own strengths” (7-8).

The themes include leadership. Taran, of course, is a good leader. Prince Rhun, who will be a King one day, needs to

become a good leader. He is aware of his haplessness at the beginning of the novel, but he develops some impressive good qualities by the end of the novel.

Another theme is altruism. During the novel, more than one character will have to decide what to do: put him- or herself first, or put others first.

Another theme is good versus evil. The most important decision any of us can make, in my opinion, is whether to be a good person or to be a bad person. Some of the characters in this novel have made the right choice, while other characters have made the wrong choice.

Heroes, including child heroes, appear in this novel. We have child heroes in real life. Often, the heroism lies in knowing when to call 911 and in knowing how to give the emergency-call operator the information that he or she needs to send help. See the appendix titled “Child Heroes” for real-life examples.

### • **Is *The Castle of Llyr* set in Wales?**

Yes and no. “Prydain” is a medieval word for Britain, and some of the important geography in *The Chronicles of Prydain* is based on medieval Wales. For example, Lloyd Alexander writes that “Mona, background for *The Castle of Llyr*, is the ancient Welsh name for the island of Anglesey” (8). However, Lloyd Alexander writes that “this background is not drawn with a mapmaker’s accuracy. My hope, instead, is to create the feeling, not the fact, of the land of Wales and its legends” (8).

### • **Can an adult enjoy reading the Prydain Chronicles?**

My answer, of course, is yes. C.S. Lewis pointed out that we must do some things, we ought to do some things, and we want to do some things. The things adults must do include paying the bills. The things adults ought to do

include exercise. One of the things that C.S. Lewis wanted to do was to read fairy tales. He said that as long as the things we want to do don't conflict with the things we have to do and the things we ought to do, then go ahead and do them.

Comedian George Carlin got old chronologically, but he stated that “the richness of memory, the richness of acquired and accumulated experience and wisdom, I won't trade that. At 67, I'm every age I ever was. I always think of that. I'm not just 67. I'm also 55 and 21 and three. Oh, especially three.”<sup>1</sup> If we are like George Carlin, one of our ages is the perfect age to read the Prydain Chronicles. I see no reason to give that age up — even if our chronological age is much greater than what other people consider the perfect age to read the Prydain Chronicles.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: David Hochman, “What George Carlin Told Me About the Afterlife and What He'd Like on His Tombstone.” Huffingtonpost.com. 23 June 2008 <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-hochman/george-carlin-on-heaven\\_b\\_108723.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-hochman/george-carlin-on-heaven_b_108723.html)>.

## Chapter 1: Prince Rhun

### • What do we learn from the very first paragraph of *The Castle of Llyr*?

This is the first paragraph of *The Castle of Llyr*:

Eilonwy of the red-gold hair, the Princess Eilonwy Daughter of Angharad Daughter of Regat of the Royal House of Llyr, was leaving Caer Dallben. Dallben himself had so ordered it; and though Taran's heart was suddenly and strangely heavy, he knew there was no gainsaying the old enchanter's words. (9)

The main thing that we learn is that Eilonwy will be leaving Caer Dallben, her home, where she has been living with her friends: Taran, Dallben, and Coll.

We also learn that Taran is upset by Eilonwy's leaving. We can guess that the two will be apart.

Finally, we learn something about Eilonwy's genealogy and heritage.

### • What are the genealogy and heritage of Princess Eilonwy?

We learn (or this is a reminder of what we have learned from previous books in the Prydain Chronicles) that Eilonwy is a princess and her mother was Angharad. We also learn that her grandmother was Regat. Eilonwy's family is a royal family: the Royal House of Llyr. The castle of Llyr will be the ancestral home of her royal family.

Lloyd Alexander's *The Foundling and Other Stories* includes a story about how Eilonwy's mother and her father (Geraint, a commoner) met and married.

• **How many belongings does Princess Eilonwy have?**

Princess Eilonwy has few belongings.

We read:

On the spring morning set for Eilonwy's departure, Taran saddled the horses and led them from the stable. The Princess, looking desperately cheerful, had wrapped her few belongings in a small bundle slung from her shoulder. At her neck hung a fine chain and crescent moon of silver; on her finger she wore a ring of ancient craftsmanship; and in the fold of her cloak she carried another of her most prized possessions: the golden sphere that shone at her command with a light brighter than a flaming torch. (9)

Her belongings are few and will fit in a small bundle. Some of her most precious belongings are heirlooms: "a fine chain and crescent moon of silver" (9), which is an emblem of the House of Llyr, "a ring of ancient craftsmanship" (9), and "the golden sphere that shone at her command with a light brighter than a flaming torch" (9). This last item, of course, is what she calls her bauble.

Note: A bauble is an item of trifling worth, although Eilonwy values it highly, as I would guess most students (and adults) would.

• **How does Dallben say goodbye to Eilonwy?**

Dallben is courteous, and he tells Eilonwy that she "will always have a place at Caer Dallben" (9-10). He also explains why Eilonwy needs to leave Caer Dallben for now.

**• Why is Princess Eilonwy being sent to the Isle of Mona?**

In Chapter 1, we read:

Dallben, whose face was more careworn than usual and whose back was bowed as though under a heavy burden, embraced the girl at the cottage door. “You shall always have a place in Caer Dallben,” he said, “and a larger one in my heart. But, alas, raising a young lady is a mystery beyond even an enchanter’s skill. I have had,” he added with a quick smile, “difficulties enough raising an Assistant Pig-Keeper.

“I wish you a fair voyage to the Isle of Mona,” Dallben went on. “King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria are kindly and gracious. They are eager to stand in your family’s stead and serve as your protectors, and from Queen Teleria you shall learn how a princess should behave.” (9-10)

Princess Eilonwy needs to learn to how to behave the way a princess should behave. Since Dallben cannot teach her that, she needs to go to the Isle of Mona to learn that from Queen Teleria.

A woman is needed to teach a girl things that the girl should know.

**• Princess Eilonwy is an interesting thinker. What is her reaction to being told that she needs to “learn how a princess should behave” (10)?**

Eilonwy makes the point that because she is a young lady, she cannot act any other way than the way a young lady acts. This reminds me of this anecdote: Choreographer Bella Lewitzky is her own person. When Rose Eichenbaum was ready to take Ms. Lewitzky’s photograph for her book

*Masters of Movement: Portraits of America's Great Choreographers*, she asked her if she needed to fix her hair or put on lipstick. Ms. Lewitzky replied, "No, I'm fine as I am." And when Ms. Eichenbaum told her to be herself for the photograph, she replied, "I don't know how to be anyone else."<sup>2</sup>

Dallben, of course, is saying something different. Eilonwy needs to learn to act the way a young lady or a princess ought to act. The way that we act and the way that we ought to act are sometimes different things. We may try to do the right thing, but instead do the wrong thing.

Eilonwy does not dress particularly well at this point. One thing she needs to do is to dress better.

**• What does Taran say at first about how he feels about Eilonwy's leaving Caer Dallben?**

Taran says a few things:

"She never stopped talking for a moment," Taran said gloomily. "Now, at least, it will be quieter in Caer Dallben."

"That it will," said Coll.

"And less to worry about. She was always getting into one scrape or another."

"That, too," said Coll.

"It's for the best," Taran said. "Eilonwy is, after all, a Princess of Llŷr. It's not as if she were only an Assistant Pig-Keeper." (11)

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Rose Eichenbaum, *Masters of Movement: Portraits of America's Great Choreographers*, p. 31.

The first things that he says about Eilonwy are negative, but we soon find how he really feels.

**• Does Taran have a bit of an inferiority complex?**

Note that Taran has a bit of an inferiority complex. He thinks of himself as “only an Assistant Pig-Keeper” (11).

One theme of *The Castle of Llyr* is social status. Eilonwy is a princess. Taran, so far as we know, is a commoner. (Taran does not know his parents’ names.) We definitely know that he is an Assistant Pig-Keeper.

**• How does Taran feel about Eilonwy? What does he tell her about the way he feels?**

Taran says, “I shall miss her” (12).

Unfortunately, Taran does not tell Eilonwy that even though Coll strongly hints that he should.

**• How will our heroes get to the Isle of Mona?**

They will sail there. Coll will accompany Taran and Eilonwy as far as the ship. Then he will leave them. Taran will make sure that Eilonwy reaches the Isle of Mona safely. Then Taran is supposed to return to Caer Dallben.

Although I am referring to these characters as heroes, which they most definitely are, a better word to refer to them may be “companions.”

**• First impressions are important, although they can be misleading. What is our first impression of Prince Rhun?**

This is what happens when Taran and Eilonwy first see Prince Rhun:

They cantered down the slope and dismounted at the water’s edge. Seeing them, the sailors ran a

plank out from the vessel to the shore. No sooner had they done so than a young man clambered onto the plank and hastened with eager strides toward the companions. But he had taken only a few paces along the swaying board when he lost his footing, stumbled, and with a loud splash pitched headlong into the shallows. (13)

One word to describe Prince Rhun is “hapless,” which means luckless. We can say that it was bad luck for him to fall into the sea from the plank.

We also read:

Taran and Coll ran to help him, but the young man had already picked himself up and was awkwardly sloshing his way ashore. He was of Taran’s age, with a moon-round face, pale blue eyes, and straw-colored hair. He wore a sword and a small, richly ornamented dagger in a belt of silver links. His cloak and jacket, worked with threads of gold and silver, were now sopping wet; the stranger, however, appeared not the least dismayed either by his ducking or the sodden state of his garments. Instead, he grinned as cheerfully as if nothing whatever had befallen him. (13)

Other words to describe Prince Rhun are “awkward” and “cheerful.” Being cheerful is a good quality. He may have bad luck occasionally, but he does not let it affect his spirits. It is better, in general, to be a cheerful person than a sad person.

We also read:

“Hullo, hullo!” he called, waving a dripping hand. “Is that Princess Eilonwy I see? Of course! It must be!”

Without further ado, and without stopping even to wring out his cloak, he bowed so low that Taran feared the young man would lose his balance; then he straightened up and in a solemn voice declared: “On behalf of Rhuddlum Son of Rhudd and Teleria Daughter of Tannwen, King and Queen of the Isle of Mona, greetings to the Princess Eilonwy of the Royal House of Llyr, and to — well — to all the rest of you,” he added, blinking rapidly as a thought suddenly occurred to him. “I should have asked your names before I started.” (14)

Other words to describe Prince Rhun are “polite” and “friendly.” These are good things.

Chances are, Prince Rhun is undergoing puberty. Lots of children who are going through puberty go through an awkward stage. This may be annoying occasionally, but it is nothing to worry about seriously.

#### • How does Coll take his leave of Eilonwy?

We read:

Coll embraced Eilonwy. “When we see you again,” he told her, “I doubt we shall recognize you. You shall be a fine Princess.”

“I want to be recognized!” Eilonwy cried. “I want to be me!”

“Never fear,” said Coll, winking. He turned to Taran. “And you, my boy, farewell. When you return, send Kaw ahead to tell me and I shall meet you at Avren harbor.” (15)

Coll obviously is fond of Eilonwy. He is complimentary when he says that she “shall be a fine Princess” (15). The words “I doubt we shall recognize you” (15) are a social

pleasantry not meant to be taken seriously, although Eilonwy does take them seriously.

**• Is Prince Rhun a good leader on his ship? How do you know?**

Prince Rhun's awkwardness is on display while he is on the ship. He nearly drops his sword into the sea, but fortunately Taran catches it (16). When Prince Rhun tries to steer the ship, he is unable to.

We read:

Although the Prince made no further attempt to steer the vessel, he climbed atop the platform where he called out orders to the crew.

“Lash up the sail!” Rhun shouted happily. “Steady the helm!” No seaman himself, Taran nevertheless realized the sail was already tightly lashed and the craft was moving unwaveringly through the water; and he very shortly became aware that the sailors were quietly going about their task of keeping the ship on course without paying any heed whatever to the Prince. (17)

Of course, Prince Rhun's sailors ignore his orders and go about doing their job competently.

Did you know that some guide dogs do much the same thing? Here is an example:

Jessica Stam, legally blind and aged 25 in July 2005, owes her life to her guide dog, Joan, a two-year-old yellow Labrador retriever, who engaged in what is called “intelligent disobedience,” which is disobeying the owner when there is a good reason for disobeying the owner. Jessica and Joan were walking together when Joan suddenly stopped even though Jessica wanted to continue

walking forward. Just then a car came down a driveway. Jessica said, “The woman didn’t see us. She said, ‘Oh, my God, I am so sorry.’ Joan saved my life. With just my cane, I would have been road kill.” Jessica, who lives in Eustis, Florida, is grateful to have Joan. She said, “There’s so much I can do now that I couldn’t do before. I was always nervous even when I would go to the grocery store. I would knock over displays. Joan stops and goes around it. She stops for obstacles. She looks to see what’s there.” The guide dog also has another advantage for Jessica, who said, “The general public is much more sensitive to a handicap when you have a guide dog. With my cane, most people would avoid me. I hated it. I felt self-conscious. There’s nothing I can’t do now, except drive. I really have that much self-confidence.” She added, “Before, I used my cane, and now it’s so much different. It’s so much easier to have my dog. Joan is just perfect. She is my miracle.”<sup>3</sup>

Here is an example of someone declining (in a nice way) to work with a leader:

Violinist Bronislav Huberman would not rehearse with conductor Pierre Monteux. Just before a rehearsal, he would send Mr. Monteux a telegram saying, “You know it, I know it, the orchestra knows it; I will see you at the concert!” Actually, Mr. Huberman was correct. He, Mr. Monteux, and the orchestra had worked together so much that they knew the music they would perform together, and so the concerts always went well.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Rosalind Jennings, “Guide dog a ‘miracle’ for owner: Jessica Stam’s Labrador retriever, Joan, protects the legally blind woman from danger while also making her more approachable to strangers.”

*Orlando Sentinel* (FL). 29 July 2005

<[http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2005-07-](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2005-07-29/news/LGUIDEDOG29_1_jessica-stam-guide-dogs-joan)

[29/news/LGUIDEDOG29\\_1\\_jessica-stam-guide-dogs-joan](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2005-07-29/news/LGUIDEDOG29_1_jessica-stam-guide-dogs-joan)>.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Doris G. Monteux, *It’s All in the Music*, pp. 145-146.

However, personally I think it's a good idea to rehearse with the orchestra and the conductor.

• **What does Taran think of Prince Rhun?**

Taran's opinion of Prince Rhun is harsh:

"Prince of Mona indeed!" he muttered. "He's no more than a — a princeling, a clumsy, muddle-headed baby. Commanding the voyage? If the sailors listened to him, we'd be aground in no time. I've never sailed a ship, but I've no doubt I could do it better than he. I've never seen anyone so feckless." (17-18)

Dictionary.com gives two main meanings for "feckless":

- 1) "ineffective; incompetent; futile"
2. "having no sense of responsibility; indifferent; lazy"

Source:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/feckless>

Date Accessed: 1 October 2011

Of these, Taran has the first meaning in mind. We have no indication that Prince Rhun has no sense of responsibility or is indifferent or is lazy.

Taran looks at Prince Rhun's deeds when he judges him. Taran is looking at the consequences of Prince Rhun's actions, which can be annoying.

However, Taran considers Eilonwy to be annoying at times. And Taran frequently annoys Eilonwy; those are the times when she decides not to speak to him — for a while.

Of course, Eilonwy is charming as well as occasionally annoying.

• **What does Eilonwy think of Prince Rhun?**

We read:

“Feckless?” answered Eilonwy. “He does often seem a little dense. But I’m sure he means well, and I’ve a feeling he has a good heart. In fact, I think he’s rather nice.” (18)

Eilonwy’s feelings about Prince Rhun are more positive than Taran’s. She considers his character and his motives.

• **How important is it to be born well?**

We read:

“An Assistant Pig-Keeper,” Taran snapped. “Yes, that’s to be my lot in life. I was born to be one, just as the Princeling of Mona was born to his rank. He’s a king’s son and I — I don’t even know the names of my parents.”

“Well,” said Eilonwy, “you can’t blame Rhun for being born. I mean, you could, but it wouldn’t help matters. It’s like kicking a rock with your bare foot.”

Taran snorted. “I daresay that’s his father’s sword he’s got on, and I daresay he’s never drawn it except to frighten a rabbit. At least I’ve earned the right to wear mine. Yet he still calls himself a prince. Does his birth make him worthy of his rank? As worthy as Gwydion Son of Don?”

“Prince Gwydion’s the greatest warrior in Prydain,” Eilonwy replied. “You can’t expect everyone to be like him. And it seems to me that if an Assistant Pig-Keeper does the best he can, and a prince does the best he can, there’s no difference between them.” (18-19)

Being born a King's son would be nice, of course, but what is more important is what you do. No one can pick his or own parents, but everyone can choose whether to be a good person or a bad person. All of us should try our best to be a good person. And if any of us happen to be born a prince or a princess, we should try to be a good prince or a good princess. And if any of us should be an Assistant Pig-Keeper, we should try to be a good Assistant Pig-Keeper as well as a good person in other ways, such as being a good friend.

• **What do we learn about Eilonwy's bauble?**

We read:

Eilonwy took out the golden sphere. In her hands it began to glow and its rays shimmered over the black water.

"I say, what's that?" cried Prince Rhun, who had clambered down from his platform.

"It's my bauble," said Eilonwy. "I always carry it with me. You never can tell when it will come in handy."

"Amazing!" exclaimed the Prince. "I've never seen anything like it in my life." He examined the golden ball carefully, but as he held it in his hand the light winked out. Rhun looked up in dismay. "I'm afraid I've broken it."

"No," Eilonwy assured him, "it's just that it doesn't work for everyone." (20)

This will be important later. Eilonwy's bauble always works for her, but it does not work for everyone. In other words, occasionally someone else can get Eilonwy's bauble

to glow and cast light. At the moment, the bauble will not work for Prince Rhun.

**• What does Taran dream at the end of Chapter 1? Why do you suppose he dreamed that?**

We read, “Taran, already vexed beyond endurance, stretched out on the deck as far as possible from the slumbering Prince. When Taran slept at last, he dreamed the companions had never left Caer Dallben” (20).

Taran, I believe, would like to be at Caer Dallben with Eilonwy and to have never heard of Prince Rhun.

**• What are Prince’s Rhun’s bad points?**

Prince Rhun is awkward and ineffective.

**• What are Prince Rhun’s good points?**

Prince Rhun is polite and cheerful. If Eilonwy is correct, he has a good heart and is nice.

## Chapter 2: Dinas Rhydant

### • What is Dinas Rhydant?

Dinas Rhydant is a stronghold and a city on the Isle of Mona. On a high cliff on the Isle of Mona is located the palace of King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria of the House of Rhuddlum.

### • What is the Isle of Mona?

Prince Rhun and his parents, King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria, live in the stronghold of Dinas Rhydant on the Isle of Mona.

We read:

The vessel sped closer to the crescent-shaped harbor of Dinas Rhydant, with its piers and jetties, its stone sea wall and clusters of ships. Steep cliffs rose almost from the water's edge and on the highest of them stood a tall castle. From it, the banners of the House of Rhuddlum snapped in the breeze. (21-22)

### • What did Coll say in Chapter 1 that Taran now finds to be true?

In Chapter 1, we read:

“It may be,” replied Coll, smiling, “we know least what we treasure most. But we will have more than enough to keep us busy when you come back, and you will learn, my boy, there is nothing like work to put the heart at rest.” Taran nodded sadly. “I suppose so,” he said. (12)

Many people find work to be a great relief when their hearts need easing. My mother died during finals week at Ohio University. I welcomed the grading of my students' final papers because it kept my mind off my mother's

death. Other people, such as actress Mary Tyler Moore, have answered all sympathy cards and letters that they have received when a loved one died, and they were sorry when all cards and letters had been answered.

• **Why does Taran’s heart need easing?**

Taran is certainly becoming closer to Eilonwy and liking her more. He knows that he will miss her when he leaves her behind on the Isle of Mona.

• **What mishap does Prince Rhun commit when he returns the salute of the Captain of the Guards?**

We read:

The Prince of Mona, drawing his sword to return the salute of the Captain of Guards, did so with such a sweeping gesture that the point snagged in Taran’s cloak.

“I say, I’m sorry about that,” cried Rhun, curiously examining the long, gaping slash his blade had caused.

“And I, too, Prince of Mona,” Taran muttered, vexed at Rhun and embarrassed at the impression his torn garment would make on the King and Queen. He said no more, but shut his lips and desperately hoped the damage would go unnoticed.  
(22)

Of course, we see here another example of Prince Rhun’s clumsiness. We also see another example of his politeness — he apologizes to Taran.

• **What first impression on you does King Rhuddlum make?**

We read:

The procession passed through the castle gates and into a wide courtyard. Shouting a glad “Hullo, hullo!” Prince Rhun hurried to his waiting parents. King Rhuddlum had the same round and cheerful face as Prince Rhun. He greeted the companions cordially, repeating himself a number of times. If he was aware of Taran’s torn cloak, he showed no sign, which only added to Taran’s distress. When King Rhuddlum at last finished talking, Queen Teleria stepped forward. (22-23)

King Rhuddlum has the same politeness and the same type of face as his son: Prince Rhun. Some of the politeness may include deliberately not noticing Taran’s torn cloak; however, it is possible that he simply does not notice Taran’s torn cloak. When someone is a good actor and deliberately does not notice something, you can’t tell whether they really did not notice something.

**• What first impression on you does Queen Teleria make?**

We read:

The Queen was a stout, pleasant-looking woman dressed in fluttering white garments; a golden circlet crowned her braided hair, which was the same straw color as Prince Rhun’s. She showered Eilonwy with kisses, embraced the still embarrassed Taran, halted in amazement when she came to Gurgi, but embraced him nevertheless.

“Welcome, Daughter of Angharad,” Queen Teleria began, returning to Eilonwy. “Your presence honors — don’t fidget, child, and stand straight — our Royal House.” The Queen stopped suddenly and took Eilonwy by the shoulders. “Good Llyr!” she cried. “Where did you get those frightful clothes?”

Yes, I can see it's high time Dallben let you out of that hole-and-corner in the middle of the woods."  
(23)

And we read:

Queen Teleria, meanwhile, had been examining Taran and Gurgi by turns. "Look at that disgracefully torn cloak! [...]" (24)

Here we have both good and bad.

*Good*

Queen Teleria is friendly and embraces everyone, including Gurgi.

*Bad*

Queen Teleria lacks tact. She does not know what not to say. She criticizes Eilonwy's clothing and Taran's torn cloak in public. The King may be tactful. If he pretended not to notice Taran's torn cloak, then he definitely is tactful. Queen Teleria also shows a lack of tact when she refers to Caer Dallben as "that hole-and-corner in the middle of the woods" (23).

**• Why does Queen Teleria call Caer Dallben a "hole-and-corner in the middle of the woods" (23)?**

Caer Dallben is not fancy. We may want to call it a small farm with a garden and a pigsty. The castle of King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria is much fancier.

Also, Caer Dallben appears to be isolated. The castle of King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria is located in a city with a port.

**• What is Eilonwy's reaction to Queen Teleria's opinion of Caer Dallben?**

We read:

“Hole-and-corner indeed!” Eilonwy cried. “I love Caer Dallben. And Dallben is a great enchanter.”  
(23)

Eilonwy tells the truth: 1) She loves Caer Dallben, and 2) Dallben is a great enchanter.

**• What things does Queen Teleria seem to most concern herself about?**

She seems concerned about these two things:

- 1) Clothing.
- 2) The proper deportment of young ladies.

We read:

Queen Teleria, meanwhile, had been examining Taran and Gurgi by turns. “Look at that disgracefully torn cloak! You must both have new raiment,” she declared. “New jackets, new sandals, everything. Luckily we have a perfectly wonderful shoemaker at the castle now. He was just — don’t pout that way, my child, you’ll give yourself a blister — passing through. But we’ve kept him busy and he’s still cobbling away. Our Chief Steward shall see to it. Magg?” she called. “Magg? Where is he?” (24)

We certainly see a concern for clothing in this passage. In addition, we see a concern for the proper deportment of young ladies. I think it is Eilonwy who is pouting, and Queen Teleria does not think, apparently, that young ladies

should pout. Later, we will see more evidence of Queen Teleria's concern for proper deportment of young ladies.

Let me point out, however, that this is why Eilonwy has been sent to the Isle of Mona: to learn to be a proper young lady.

**• Why does Magg the Chief Steward dress so well? Is this good or bad?**

We read:

“At your command,” answered the Chief Steward, who had been standing all the while by Queen Teleria's elbow. He wore one of the finest cloaks Taran had ever seen, its rich embroidery almost surpassing King Rhuddlum's garment. Magg carried a long staff of polished wood taller than himself, from his neck hung a chain of heavy silver links, and at his belt was a huge iron ring from which jingled keys of all sizes. (24)

The fine clothing indicates the Chief Steward's high rank.

This need not be a bad thing. However, it can indicate excessive pride.

**• What first impression on you does Magg the Chief Steward make? What good qualities does he have?**

Magg makes a good first impression. He seems to have these qualities:

- 1) Competence.
- 2) Foresight.
- 3) Preparation.
- 4) Courtly etiquette.

We read:

“All has been ordered,” said Magg, bowing deeply. “Your decision has been foreseen. The shoemaker, the tailors and weavers stand ready.” (24)

**Does Prince Rhun have the good qualities that Magg has?**

Prince Rhun does have good etiquette, although he is much more informal than the formal Magg. However, Prince Rhun does seem to be lacking in these qualities:

- 1) Competence.
- 2) Foresight.
- 3) Preparation.

Remember when Prince Rhun did not know how to sail a ship? If he had had the foresight to think ahead, he would have prepared himself by learning how to sail, and he would have been competent to give the sailors orders.

**• What is more important than competence, foresight, and preparation?**

Probably many things, including love. However, being a good person and wanting to do the right thing is more important than competence, foresight, and preparation.

Good people are in this world, and bad people are in this world. We hope that the good people have competence, foresight, and preparation. It is better if the bad guys, such as criminals, don't.

Seriously, we should all hope that criminals will be so incompetent that the police will catch them.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant thought having a good will (wanting to do good instead of evil) is the best thing to

have. Having a good will is more important than having competence, foresight, and preparation. A bad guy with competence, foresight, and preparation may be able to do bad things and get away with them longer. (Career criminals, however, always seem to get caught eventually.)

**• What did Immanuel Kant believe about having a good will?**

Kant believed that the only thing that is good without qualification is a good will — that is, willing rightly, willing to do the right thing in every situation. According to Kant, having a good will is important even when one cannot accomplish anything. As you can see, this differs very much from utilitarianism, which states that unless an act has good consequences, it is not good.

According to Kant, even intelligence and courage are not good in themselves; they are good only when they are used in accordance with a good will. After all, a criminal with intelligence and courage is much more dangerous than a criminal who is a fool and a coward.

A famous quotation of Kant's is this: "Even if it should happen that, by a particularly unfortunate fate or by the niggardly provision of a stepmotherly nature, this will should be wholly lacking in power to accomplish its purpose, and if even the greatest effort should not avail it to achieve anything of its end, and if there remained only the good will (not as a mere wish but as the summoning of all the means of our power), it would sparkle like a jewel in its own right, as something that had its full worth in itself." (Note that at this time stepmothers were sometimes regarded as behaving evilly to their stepchildren — remember the story of Cinderella?)

**Note:** The quotation by Kant that appears here is from his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Lewis White Beck.

**• Who has a good will: Prince Rhun or Magg the Chief Steward?**

This is an important question, but we may need to answer this question later. So let us pay attention as we read and see if we can find the answer.

**• Why is Ffleuddur Fflam on the Isle of Mona?**

When you have friends, they tend to pop up, as does Ffleuddur Fflam in this chapter.

News about Princess Eilonwy has traveled far in the land of Prydain. Ffleuddur Fflam has heard that she is coming to the Isle of Mona, and so that is one of the reasons he came.

These are all of his reasons for coming to the Isle of Mona:

- 1) To see Princess Eilonwy, and he hoped, Taran, if Taran should accompany Eilonwy to the Isle of Mona.
- 2) To stop being King for a while.
- 3) To enjoy the Spring and to seek adventure.

**• Is Ffleuddur Fflam a good King?**

Ffleuddur Fflam is a King, although in real life we would, I believe, say that he is not a good King, as he often leaves his kingdom in search of adventure.

In the fantasy world of Prydain, however, his kingdom appears to get along just fine without him.

In real life, a King should stay in the Kingdom and do the work of a King. A King should leave the Kingdom only with good reason to do so.

• **Why is Doli not on the Isle of Mona?**

We read:

“Good old Doli.” The bard chuckled, shaking his yellow head. “I tried to rouse him when I first set out. But he’s hidden himself away with his kinsmen in the realm of the Fair Folk.” Fflewddur sighed. “I fear our good dwarf has lost his taste for adventure. I managed to get word to him, thinking he might come along with me for the sport of it. He sent back a message. All it said was ‘Humph!’” (26-27)

Doli will not be a part of this book, the third in the Chronicles of Prydain.

The “Humph!” is certainly consistent with the character of Doli, who seems to be ill-tempered but who really does like Taran and all of the other companions.

• **Why wasn’t Fflewddur Fflam at the harbor to greet Taran and Eilonwy?**

He wanted to be there, but the short answer is that he wasn’t invited.

Fflewddur Fflam tries to hide the truth at first — out of concern for Taran, I think, as I think he knows that Taran will not like the news that his friend was not invited to meet the ship as it carried Eilonwy, Taran, and Prince Rhun to shore. Fflewddur Fflam says that he was too busy “getting ready a song about the arrival of the Princess” (27).

We read:

“You shall hear them, old friend,” the bard assured him, “all in due course. But you can imagine I could hardly spare the time to join the welcoming procession ...”

At this a harp string broke suddenly.

Fflewddur unslung his beloved instrument and looked at it ruefully. “There it goes again,” he sighed. “These beastly strings will never leave off snapping whenever I — ah — add a little to the truth. And in this case, the truth of the matter is I wasn’t invited.” (27)

Readers of the Prydain Chronicles know, of course, that the strings of Fflewddur Fflam’s harp break when he fibs, or, as he calls it, when he “add[s] a little to the truth” (27). If it’s a big fib, all the strings break. If it’s a small fib, only one string breaks. Here only one string breaks, so it’s a small fib.

Fflewddur Fflam would have gone to the harbor to greet Taran and Eilonwy if he could have, but he really did want to work on his song. Also, since the fib was to avoid upsetting Taran, that may be another reason why only one string broke.

### • Can Fflewddur Fflam write good songs?

Note that no strings broke when Fflewddur Fflam called the song “[q]uite an impressive chant, if I do say so myself” (27). Based on the testimony of the strings, Fflewddur Fflam is capable of composing a very good song.

What is the song about? Like other epic songs, it is about heroic deeds.

We read:

“[...] We’re all mentioned in it, with plenty of heroic deeds.”

“And Gurgi, too?” cried Gurgi.

“Of course,” said the bard. “I shall sing it for all of you this evening.” Gurgi shouted and clapped his hands. “Gurgi cannot wait to hear hummings and strummings!” (27)

• **Where is Fflewddur Fflam staying at Mona? Why?**

He is staying in the stables instead of in a proper bedroom in the castle.

He was honored at first, as are all bards, but then Magg the Chief Steward had him moved to the stables when he found out that Fflewddur Fflam’s qualifications as a bard were somewhat lacking. Of course, Fflewddur Fflam did not graduate from his bard school. He plays a magic harp. Nevertheless, he can compose a perfectly good song, as we have seen.

Songwriter Tom Waits believes that songs are constantly in the air around us and we need to reach out and grab one occasionally. Fflewddur Fflam reaches out and grabs a song occasionally.

• **What opinion do you now have of Magg the Chief Steward?**

We read:

“King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria are decent sorts,” Fflewddur continued. “The Chief Steward was the one who had me turned out.” (28)

Of course, we want Fflewddur Fflam to be treated well, and Magg the Chief Steward is not treating him as well as we wish.

• **Why didn’t Fflewddur Fflam say that he is a King?**

That would have gotten him much better lodgings, but we read:

“You should have told them you are a king,” said Taran.

“No, no,” said Fflewddur, shaking his head. “When I’m a bard, I’m a bard; and when I’m a king, that’s something else again. I never mix the two.” (28)

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. What surprising fact do we learn about the shoemaker? Are Eilonwy and Taran in danger?**

We read:

“We must use the best, the best,” he croaked, in a voice much like Kaw’s. “Only that will do. To go well-shod is half the journey.” He chuckled. “Is that not so, eh? Is that not so, Taran of Caer Dallben?”

Taran drew back with a start. The shoemaker’s tone had suddenly rung differently. He stared down at the aged man who had picked up a piece of leather and was now shaping it deftly with a crooked little knife. The shoemaker, his face as tanned as his own materials, was watching him steadily.

Gurgi looked ready to yelp loudly. The man raised a finger to his lips.

Taran, in confusion, hurriedly knelt before the shoemaker. “Lord Gwydion ...”

Gwydion’s eyes flashed with pleasure, but his smile was grim. “Hear me well,” he said quickly, in a hushed voice.

“Should we be interrupted, I shall find a way to speak with you later. Tell no one who I am. What you must know, above all, is this: the life of the

Princess Eilonwy is in danger. And so,” he added, “is your own.” (29-30)

The shoemaker is Prince Gwydion, who, among his many other talents, is a good actor.

Prince Gwydion tells Taran that the life of Eilonwy and the life of Taran are in danger.

**• Write a brief character analysis of the shoemaker based on what you read in Chapter 2.**

We read:

The Chief Steward, taking no notice of the bard’s angry glance, bowed to Taran. “As Queen Teleria commanded, you and your companion are to be given new apparel. The shoemaker will serve you as you wish.”

Taran sat down on a wooden stool and, as Magg departed from the chamber, the shoemaker drew near. The man was bent with age and garbed most shabbily. A grimy cloth was wrapped around his head and a fringe of gray hair fell almost to his shoulders. At his broad belt hung curiously shaped knives, awls, and hanks of thongs. Kneeling before Taran, he opened a great sack and thrust in his hand to pull out strips of leather, which he placed about him on the floor. He squinted at his findings, holding up one after the other, then casting it aside. (29)

We learn:

- 1) The shoemaker is Prince Gwydion.
- 2) Prince Gwydion is a good actor.
- 3) The shoemaker looks like a shoemaker.

4) The shoemaker has a voice that croaks like the voice of Kaw, so Prince Gwydion is a voice actor, too.

5) Prince Gwydion can make shoes well. Earlier Queen Teleria said,

“Luckily we have a perfectly wonderful shoemaker at the castle now. He was just — don’t pout that way, my child, you’ll give yourself a blister — passing through. But we’ve kept him busy and he’s still cobbling away.” (24)

And at the end of this chapter, Taran sees that the shoemaker deftly handles the tools of a shoemaker (30).

6) The shoemaker, aka Prince Gwydion, is vigilant. He knows that the lives of Eilonwy and of Taran are in danger.

### **Chapter 3: The Shoemaker**

#### **• From whom is Eilonwy in danger? Why?**

At first, Taran believes that Eilonwy must be in danger from Arawn.

Note: In Welsh mythology, Arawn was the god of death. In the Prydain Chronicles, Arawn is the main antagonist or bad guy.

However, Gwydion explains that actually Eilonwy is in danger from Achren.

We read:

“There is one who would dare to stand against Dallben,” Gwydion said. “One against whom my own powers may not suffice and whom I fear as much as Arawn himself.” Gwydion’s face was taut and his green eyes flickered with deep anger as he spoke one harsh word: “Achren.” (32)

#### **• What does Taran learn from Prince Gwydion?**

Taran learns from Prince Gwydion these things:

- 1) Eilonwy is in danger from Achren.
- 2) Achren is alive, not dead, as Taran had thought.
- 3) Spiral Castle, Achren’s castle, still lies in ruins.
- 4) Gwydion sought and finally found traces of Achren.
- 5) Achren did not go to the realm of Annuvín, which used to be Achren’s realm, but is now in the realm of Arawn.

• **What skills does Prince Gwydion have as a prince?**

Prince Gwydion has many skills as a prince. He is a great leader and a warlord. As we see here, he is vigilant. After a great victory, often people would like to rest, but more work needs to be done. For example, after a war is over, homes must be found for orphans and homes must be found for refugees. Also, cities and civilizations have to be rebuilt.

In this case, Gwydion is looking ahead to how he can continue to protect Prydain. First he wanted to make sure that Achren is dead, but she is not. Now, he wishes to stop her before she can do more evil.

Gwydion keeps on working — he does the medieval equivalent of paperwork (many jobs are not done until the paperwork is done), and he does not rest on his laurels.

Movies end after a great victory, but lots of work remains even after victory is won.

• **Did Dallben know that Achren is still alive?**

Taran certainly thinks so. Dallben is another person who continues to work so that Prydain is safe.

Dallben did take some steps to keep Eilonwy safe. He told Gwydion to turn his attention to the Isle of Mona. He also passed along information to Gwydion, information that Gwydion does not reveal.

• **What task does Prince Gwydion give Taran?**

Taran's task is to remain silent.

We read:

“I cannot sit idle while Eilonwy may be in peril,”  
Taran insisted. “Is there no way I can serve you?”

“You shall serve me best by keeping silent,” Gwydion answered. “Stay watchful. Say nothing of me or of what we have spoken, not to the Princess Eilonwy, not even to Fflewddur.” He smiled. “Our eager bard saw me in the stables and luckily did not know me. Meantime, I shall ...” (34)

• **What skills does Prince Gwydion show he has as a shoemaker?**

As mentioned earlier, Prince Gwydion shows that he is these things:

- 1) A competent shoemaker.
- 2) A competent actor.

We know that he is a competent shoemaker because people at the castle like his work. We know that he is a good actor because people who know him — such as Taran and Fflewddur Fflam — don’t recognize him unless he reveals himself to them.

Here is evidence of Gwydion’s skill as a shoemaker and an actor:

“Hullo, hullo!” cried Prince Rhun, striding into the chamber. “Ah, shoemaker, there you are. Have you done with your work? I say, they are handsome, aren’t they?” he said, glancing at the sandals. “Amazingly well-made. I should like a pair myself. Oh — my mother asks to see you in the Great Hall,” he added, turning to Taran.

Gwydion’s face had fallen suddenly into lines and wrinkles; his shoulders were hunched and his voice shook with age. Without a further glance at Taran, Gwydion beckoned to Rhun. “Come with me,

young Prince,” he said. “You shall have sandals befitting your station.” (35)

Being an actor does have advantages. When she was very young, comedian Whoopi Goldberg wanted to be a Princess. Her mother advised her to be an actress; that way, Whoopi could be anything she wanted to be.

By the way, someone who really, really dislikes royalty (and who uses profanity frequently) is Penn Gillette of Penn and Teller fame. Penn Gillette really dislikes the whole princess thing that little girls — such as his little daughter — get into. He told her, “Lady Di was an evil wh\*re! Why did anybody in America like her? She’s a symbol of everything bad! Susan B. Anthony — women’s rights, atheist, abolitionist ... everything Susan B. Anthony did was right! Dress up like her! Dress up like Madame Curie! There are female *heroes* you can dress up as! Don’t do the *princess* thing!” Penn’s sister-in-law listened to Penn’s diatribe and then said to him, “You know, Penn, I don’t think it’s meant that seriously. I think it has more to do with playing dress-up and the nice pretty gowns. I don’t think she’s thinking all that much about keeping down the proletariat.”<sup>5</sup>

• **What message does Prince Rhun give to Taran?**

Prince Rhun tells Taran that Queen Teleria wants to see him in the Great Hall. This means that Taran and Gwydion can no longer talk and exchange information.

• **What is Gurgi’s reaction to Prince Gwydion’s news? Is Gurgi a coward?**

We read:

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Paul Provenza and Dan Dion, *iSatiristas!: Comedians, Contrarians, Raconteurs & Vulgarians*, p. 34.

“Oh, fearsome danger!” Gurgi moaned. “Gurgi is sorry great enchanter sends us to place of peril. Gurgi wants to hide his poor tender head under kindly straw at Caer Dallben.” (35)

Gurgi is in part a comic character, not quite animal and not quite human. He is capable of bravery, as we have seen more than once in the *Chronicles of Prydain*. Of course, he is also capable of speech.

Gurgi’s words express a desire for peace and for safety, which are things that all of us desire. However, Gurgi will not get peace and safety right away. Although Gurgi would like to be at Caer Dallben, he stays with Taran and will be with Taran through the adventures that follow. At the novel’s happy ending, which will occur after the characters go through many dangers, Gurgi will soon be safe in peaceful Caer Dallben.

We read:

“Yes, yes!” cried Gurgi. “Brave, loyal Gurgi will guard golden-haired Princess, too, oh yes; and she will be safe with him. But,” he snuffled, “he still longs to be in Caer Dallben.” (36)

Gurgi, like the other companions, will act heroically in this novel.

**• How do the young ladies and the old ladies react to Eilonwy’s tale?**

Eilonwy tells a tale of her adventures to the ladies — young and old — of the castle. The younger ladies, like Eilonwy, like adventure. The older ladies are rather horrified that a girl could have such adventures.

We read:

“... and there we stood,” Eilonwy was saying, her eyes flashing, “back to back, sword in hand! The Huntsmen of Annuvin burst from the forest! They were upon us in a moment!”

The young girls of the court gasped with excitement, while some of the older women gave horrified cluckings that reminded Taran of nothing so much as Coll’s chicken run. (36-37)

• **What more do we learn about Queen Teleria?**

Queen Teleria, as we may expect, is one of the older ladies who is horrified that Eilonwy has had such adventures.

Part of her concern is justified because she wishes Eilonwy to be safe.

Queen Teleria is also much concerned with etiquette as when she tells Taran to “bow a little more deeply if you can, and, good Llyr, don’t scowl so” (37-38).

Fflewddur Fflam often exclaims, “Great Belin!” Queen Teleria often says, “Good Llyr!” Lloyd Alexander’s characters don’t all talk alike.

• **What more do we learn about Magg?**

We confirm that Magg dislikes Fflewddur Fflam. Of course, we had a strong hint of that when Magg moved Fflewddur Fflam’s quarters to the stables.

We also confirm Magg’s foresight and competence. Queen Teleria wants Taran to have new clothes, and Magg has already gotten them and now gives them to Taran.

We read:

“The self-styled bard,” said Magg, with ill-concealed distaste at the mention of Fflewddur, “has

already been commanded to present himself at the feast.” (38)

“Self-styled” is a negative adjective. I think that we have to say that Fflewddur Fflam is a real bard. What does a bard do? Compose songs and perform them, Fflewddur Fflam certainly does that.

Fflewddur Fflam may have a magic harp and maybe he did not pass his bardic exam, but he is a real bard. Magg objects to Fflewddur Fflam because did not pass his bardic exam. This is similar to Fflewddur Fflam going to college for a while but not getting a degree.

Actually, when it comes to creative pursuits, lots of people go to college but do not get a degree. Of course, if the creative person is successful, the school is likely to give the creative person a degree. I once interviewed artist Jenny Holzer. According to information given to me by Ohio University, Jenny Holzer had gotten her degree at Ohio University. This puzzled Jenny Holzer, who thought that she had left Ohio University without getting a degree.

By the way, Canadian figure-skater Toller Cranston attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he showed great talent as a painter, but failed a class in sculpture. He told his sculpture teacher, Joan Essar, “Look, I’m not really a sculptor. It’s not my thing. As a matter of fact, I’m having a painting exhibition in Toronto.” Ms. Essar and a couple of other art teachers looked at some of his paintings, which impressed them, then they asked him, “What do you want to be? An art teacher or an artist?” He replied that he wanted to be an artist, and they advised him, “Don’t bother finishing school.” He didn’t.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Toller Cranston, *Zero Tolerance*, p. 7.

• **What is Eilonwy hoping and planning to do?**

Eilonwy, of course, likes adventures, and she is bored at the castle.

We read:

Taran hardly had finished bowing to Queen Teleria when Eilonwy seized him and Gurgi by the arms and hastily drew them away. “You’ve seen Fflewddur, of course,” she whispered. “Now it’s getting to be more like old times. What a blessing to have him here! I’ve never met such silly women! Why, I don’t think there’s one of them that’s ever drawn a sword! All they want to talk about is sewing and embroidery and weaving, and how to run a castle. The ones who have husbands are always complaining about them, and the ones who haven’t are always complaining about the lack of them. They’ve never been out of Dinas Rhydant in their lives! I told them a thing or two about some of our adventures; not the best ones — I’m saving those for later, when you can be there to tell your part in them.

“What we’ll do,” Eilonwy hurried on, her eyes sparkling, “after the feast, when no one’s watching, we’ll get hold of Fflewddur and go exploring for a few days. They’ll never miss us; there’s so many people coming and going around here. There’s bound to be a few adventures on Mona, but we certainly won’t find them in this stupid castle. Now, first thing, you must look out a sword for me — I wish I’d brought one from Caer Dallben. Not that I think we’ll need swords, but it’s better to have them just in case. Gurgi, of course, shall bring along his wallet of food — ” (38-39)

Of course, Eilonwy and Taran would be missed if they were to leave the castle for a few days without permission. Eilonwy ought to know that.

• **What is Taran's reaction to Eilonwy's plan?**

Taran is against it, of course, because he is concerned for Eilonwy's safety.

If Eilonwy were not in danger, the plan need not be an entirely bad plan. Basically, she wishes to travel around the Isle of Mona. That part of the plan is good.

Of course, she wishes to sneak off to do that, and that part of the plan is bad. If she and her friends, including the adult Fflewddur Fflam were to ask for permission to travel around the island, they may get it. Of course, it would help if Fflewddur Fflam were to reveal that when he is not a bard, he is a King.

• **Why doesn't Taran tell Eilonwy that she is in danger?**

It would help if Taran were to say outright that he knows that Eilonwy is in danger. He certainly hints at it: "Dinas Rhydnant is — unfamiliar to us. We know nothing of Mona. There may be — dangers that we ..." (40).

Of course, Prince Gwydion told Taran not to tell Eilonwy that she is in danger, and Taran obeys his instructions.

• **What does Taran say to Eilonwy?**

Taran does the wrong thing here and simply orders Eilonwy not to leave the castle. This is not a good thing to do because Eilonwy has so much spirit.

We read:

"This is different," Taran said. "Can you not understand?" he pleaded, though he saw clearly from Eilonwy's face that his words made no sense

to her. For an instant he was tempted to blurt out the truth. Instead, he took the girl by the shoulders. "You are not to set foot outside this place," he ordered angrily. "And if I think you have any idea of doing so, I shall ask King Rhuddlum to set a guard over you." (40-41)

### **How does Eilonwy react to what Taran says?**

Eilonwy shows that she has spirit:

"What?" cried Eilonwy. "How dare you!" Tears suddenly filled her eyes. "Yes, I do understand! You're glad I've been sent to this wretched island and these clucking hens! You couldn't wait for a chance to be rid of me! You actually want me to stay here and be lost in this dreadful castle. That's worse than putting someone's head in a sack of feathers!" Sobbing, Eilonwy stamped her foot. "Taran of Caer Dallben, I'm not speaking to you any more!" (41)

### Chapter 4: Shadows

**• What is Eilonwy's mood at the beginning of Chapter 4?**

Eilonwy tells Taran that he need not look gloomy because she is the one who has to stay on the isle of Mona. However, she immediately begins talking to Prince Rhun after she finishes talking to Taran so she may not be completely gloomy. Of course, she is trying “to make the best of things” (42).

**• What funny thing does Eilonwy say to Taran at the beginning of Chapter 4?**

She says something that she often says to him: She is not talking to him.

We read:

“You needn't look so gloomy,” said Eilonwy. “After all, you aren't the one who has to stay here. If I'm trying to make the best of things, I must say you're not exactly helpful. I want to remind you I'm still not speaking to you after the way you behaved today.” (42)

This is very much part of the behavior of Eilonwy and something that we have read and have enjoyed reading in the previous books of the Prydain Chronicles.

**• Taran is unhappy and feels as if he is ineffectual at watching after Eilonwy. Which vivid simile describes how he feels?**

We read:

Taran bit his lip. He felt as though he were shouting a voiceless warning, while Eilonwy, all unwitting, raced gaily toward the brink of a cliff. (42-43)

As a reminder, a simile makes a comparison of one thing to another and uses a word such as “like” or “as.” For example, “My love is like a red, red rose.” Eilonwy uses many similes in her speech:

“What!” cried Eilonwy. “I don’t care about being a princess! And since I’m already a young lady, how else could I behave? That’s like asking a fish to learn how to swim!” (10)

“Well,” said Eilonwy, “you can’t blame Rhun for being born. I mean, you could, but it wouldn’t help matters. It’s like kicking a rock with your bare foot.” (18)

“Taran of Caer Dallben,” Eilonwy declared, “I really believe you’re jealous. And sorry for yourself. And that’s as ridiculous as — as painting your nose green!” (19)

**• Why does Fflewddur Fflam prefer to sleep in the stables? Are his reasons good?**

Fflewddur Fflam gives two good reasons for preferring the stables:

- 1) One reason that he goes wandering is “to get away from stuffy, dreary castles” (43).
- 2) The other reason is that by staying in the stables he avoids “trouble with Magg” (43).

The first reason is interesting and is a good reason.

The second reason is that he wants to avoid trouble and that is also a good reason.

**• Should Fflewddur Fflam have to sleep in the stables?**

This is an interesting question. The shoemaker is sleeping in the stables, and so servants sleep in the stables. We could

say that Fflewddur Fflam should be able to sleep in the castle because he is both a bard and a King (although not at the same time), both of which have higher status than even a very competent shoemaker. Of course, Magg denies that Fflewddur Fflam is a fully fledged bard, and Magg and the King and Queen don't know that Fflewddur Fflam is a King.

One thing to consider in answering this question is the importance of hospitality. In medieval Wales there are no hotels or motels, so one must rely on other people's hospitality (and when one is adventuring, one must camp out a lot). Hospitality was important in the ancient and the medieval world.

### ***Xenia***

*Xenia* was important in the world of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. *Xenia* is usually translated as the guest-host relationship, and both the guest and the host must obey certain rules or protocol. For example, the host will provide food and drink, a place to sleep, and sometimes a bath. In return, the guest will not overstay his welcome and will not hurt his host. In addition, the guest tells the host news and stories.

### **Dante's Inferno**

Dante's Inferno has nine circles, and the deeper down one goes, the worse are the sins punished in that circle. In the bottom circle are the traitors, including traitors against guests, traitors against family members, traitors against kings, and traitors against God.

### **• How does Taran show himself to be a competent leader near the beginning of Chapter 4?**

Taran is concerned about Eilonwy, and he wants to protect her and keep her safe by maintaining a watch over her.

We read:

“Something tells me we should keep an eye on the castle,” Taran said to Gurgi. He put a forefinger under Kaw’s feet and set the bird on Gurgi’s shoulder, where the crow immediately began running his beak through Gurgi’s matted hair. “Stay close to Eilonwy’s chamber,” he went on. “I’ll join you soon. Keep Kaw with you and send him to me if anything seems amiss.” (44)

Also, of course, Taran is concerned about Ffleuddur Fflam’s sleeping quarters. A good leader looks after the people he works with.

**• When Taran meets Prince Rhun, what excuse does Taran make about being out late at night? Is it a good excuse? What does Prince Rhun think of the excuse?**

The excuse that Taran makes is that he is seeking the tailors because his jacket (a new one) does not fit him well. This is not a good excuse because, as Prince Rhun points out, it is late at night. If Taran really needed to see the tailors, he should wait until morning.

Still, Prince Rhun is very agreeable, and he accepts Taran’s excuse although it thinks it odd.

**• When Taran sees a figure, what does he do? Does he make the right decision?**

Taran decides to follow the shadowy figure.

I think he makes the right decision because he learns some important information.

Prince Gwydion, however, is a little worried. Gwydion is already following the figure, and he is worried that Taran may be caught by the figure.

• **Who is the shadowy figure? What does the shadowy figure do?**

The shadowy figure is Magg the Chief Steward, and the main thing he does is to signal a ship.

We read:

The Chief Steward had lit a torch and now raised it overhead, moving the flickering flame slowly back and forth. As Taran watched, fearful and puzzled, a tiny point of orange light glowed far seaward. This answering signal, Taran judged, could come only from a ship, though he could make out nothing of the vessel's shape or distance. Magg waved the torch again, in a different pattern. The light from the ship repeated it, then winked out. Magg thrust his torch into the black water where it sputtered and died; he turned and strode quickly toward the tumble of rocks where Taran lay. (47)

• **What does Taran learn from Gwydion?**

Gwydion covers Taran's mouth to keep him from crying out and alerting Magg to his presence. When it is safe to do so, Gwydion talks to Taran, who learns that Gwydion has been keeping watch and that he also saw Magg signal the ship.

Gwydion, however, does not think it is a good time to seize Magg, although he realizes that Magg is a bad guy.

Another important thing that Taran learns from Gwydion is that Achren is on the ship that Magg signaled.

We read:

"The fisherfolk of Mona have already told a curious and harmless shoemaker part of what he must

know,” Gwydion continued. “Enough to be certain of one thing: Achren is aboard that vessel.

“Yes,” Gwydion went on as Taran drew a sharp breath, “this much I suspected. Achren herself would not dare strike directly against Eilonwy. The castle is strong and well-guarded, only treachery could open its gates. Achren needed a hand to do her bidding. Now I know whose it is.” (49)

Gwydion also tells Taran what he should do.

We read:

“Would you serve me? Then return at once to the castle. Stay close by the Princess.” (49)

**• How does Taran show that he is a good leader in his interaction with Gurgi?**

Taran is consistently a good leader. Here he shares the work with Gurgi. Gurgi has finished a shift of looking after Eilonwy, and now Taran takes a shift of looking after Eilonwy. Taran is sharing the workload. Taran also gives credit where credit is due.

Taran says to Gurgi:

“You have done well,” Taran said. “Sleep, my friend. Go and rest that poor tender head of yours and I shall stay here until daylight.” (51)

**• What does Eilonwy say when she finds Taran sleeping outside her chamber?**

Eilonwy, of course, asks Taran what he is doing there. Taran’s reply is not very good: He says that he thinks that sleeping in the hallway is more comfortable than sleeping in his chamber.

Eilonwy does use language in an original way. She tells Taran, “You look as jumpy as a frog with fleas!” (52).

**• Why is Prince Rhun’s appearance at this particular time unfortunate? (You may have to read the beginning of the next chapter to answer this question.)**

Prince Rhun begins talking to Taran at a time when he wishes to follow Eilonwy to ensure that she is safe.

Of course, at the end of this chapter we find out that Eilonwy and Magg are not in the Great Hall for breakfast, which is where they should be.

In the next chapter, we find out that Eilonwy and Magg have left the castle together.

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 4 end?**

Chapter 4 ends in this way:

Leaving the Prince of Mona still rummaging in the chamber, Taran sped anxiously to the Great Hall. King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria were already at table, the Queen surrounded, as always, by her ladies. Taran looked quickly about him. Magg, usually in attendance, was not there.

Nor was there any sign of Eilonwy. (54)

Of course, the reader will keep reading in order to find the answer to these questions: Where is Eilonwy? Where is Magg?

### Chapter 5: The Oath

**• How does Taran react when he sees that both Eilonwy and Magg are not present?**

Taran is majorly worried, and he suspects that Magg has kidnapped Eilonwy, so he tells King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria what he suspects.

**• How does King Rhuddlum react to what Taran says?**

King Rhuddlum does the right thing. He knows that Taran has made a serious charge against Magg, and so he asks Taran why he is making that charge. Gathering testimony and evidence is the right thing to do.

Taran tells King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria what he knows. Often, telling an adult with authority is exactly the right thing to do. Taran is concerned about Eilonwy's safety, and so he tells King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria what he knows in hopes of keeping Eilonwy safe.

We read:

For a moment, Taran stood perplexed and torn. Gwydion had bound him to secrecy. But now that Magg had struck, must the secret still be kept? Taking his decision, he let the words tumble from his lips, hurriedly and often confusedly telling all that had happened since the companions had reached Dinas Rhydnamt. (55)

**• How does Queen Teleria react to what Taran says?**

Queen Teleria is perplexed by Taran's story.

We read:

Queen Teleria shook her head. "This shoemaker disguised as Prince Gwydion — or was it the other way around — and ships and torch signals to

enchantresses make the wildest tale I've heard, young man.” (56)

King Rhuddlum continues to do the right thing. He wants to talk to the shoemaker (Gwydion in disguise) to confirm Taran's story. He also wants to talk to Magg, who should be in the Great Hall, but is not.

• **What information does Fflewddur Fflam give Taran?**

Magg cannot be found. Fflewddur Fflam tells Taran, after Taran tells him that Eilonwy and Magg cannot be found,

“Magg! That villainous spider!” the bard exclaimed as soon as Taran told him what had happened. “Great Belin, she's ridden off with him! I saw them galloping through the gate. I called to her, but she didn't hear me. She seemed cheerful enough. I'd no idea anything was amiss. But they're gone, long gone by now!” (57)

• **What does King Rhuddlum decide to do?**

Taran's story has now been confirmed. King Rhuddlum decides to send people after Eilonwy to rescue her. Again, King Rhuddlum is doing the right thing. He is a good King.

• **Who is the war leader of Mona? Why was that person chosen to be war leader?**

The war leader of Mona is Magg. King Rhuddlum says,

“My war leader, sorry to say, is none other than Magg himself,” the King answered. “As we've never had a war on Mona, we never needed a war leader, and it seemed quite in order to give Magg the honorary title. I shall form up the searching party myself. As for you — yes — by all means help with any tasks that need doing.” (57-58)

Magg was given the title of War Leader as an honorary title. Merit did not play a role, other than Magg has previously been competent as Chief Steward. No one knew that Magg was disloyal to the King and Queen and Mona.

Mona has been fortunate in not having wars. In the real world, certainly, one ought to be prepared for war, just in case.

**• Two parties will go in search of Eilonwy. Who are the leaders of these parties, and why were they chosen?**

King Rhuddlum will be the head of one party, and Prince Rhun will be the head of the other party — the one with Taran in it.

The King, of course, has shown himself to be competent in gathering evidence to find out whether Taran was telling the truth. In addition, Mona has been at peace for a long time, which is more evidence of the King's competence, so the King will most likely be competent as the leader of one of the parties.

Prince Rhun has been chosen to be the leader of the party simply because of his birth. He has authority as the son of the King. This authority comes as a result of his birth, not of his competence — if, in fact, he is competent. We remember that Prince Rhun was supposedly in charge of the ship that brought Eilonwy, Taran, and Gurgi to the Isle of Mona, but we remember that the sailors simply ignored his specific orders about such things as lashing the sails and steadying the helm (17) but followed his general orders to bring the ship and passengers safely home.

In a meritocracy, jobs go to the people who merit (deserve) them. They are competent people who can get the job done.

However, it does take experience to become competent. Prince Rhun is gaining experience by being the leader of one of the parties seeking to rescue Eilonwy.

**• What does King Rhuddlum know about his son: Prince Rhun?**

King Rhuddlum knows that his son has a lot to learn, and he hopes that his son will learn what he needs to know so that he can be a good King.

Right now, Prince Rhun has some good qualities, but he does not have all of the qualities that he needs to be a good King. King Rhuddlum is very much aware of this.

After Taran criticizes Prince Rhun and asks that another person lead the party, we read:

“Once again you speak the truth,” King Rhuddlum answered. “It is not you who suffers for it, but I.” He put a hand on Taran’s shoulder. “Think you I do not know my own son? You are right in your judgment. But, I know, too, that Rhun must grow to be both a man and a king. You carry the burden of an oath to Dallben. I pray you take the burden of another one. [...]” (59)

**• What are some of the problems of a hereditary kingdom?**

A good father can have a bad son. A man may be a good King, but it is possible for his son to be a bad King.

Sometimes, a King will die when his son is very young and not ready to be King. In that case, an adult male relative will become regent and act in the place of the young son.

Another problem is that sometimes people will fight over who will succeed to the kingship. For example, what

happens when a King does not have any sons, or perhaps no children at all?

Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Too much power in the hands of the wrong person can be dangerous.

**• What are some of the advantages of a hereditary kingdom?**

When people know that someone has the power of a King, they tend to obey that person. A good King can make a good decision quickly and have his good decision carried out quickly.

**• What are some of the problems of a democracy?**

In a political system in which power is shared among many, such as a representative democracy, it can be very hard to get enough votes to pass a law — even a good law.

Changes in political leaders can make it difficult to chart a steady course. A new political leader can undo much of the work of the old political leader.

When two political parties exist, the political party that is not in power may scheme to make the economy worse so that the opposing political party is voted out of office.

Because of term limits, a representative democracy such as the United States may lose a good leader after the maximum number of terms has been served.

**• What are some of the advantages of a democracy?**

The people with power can change quickly. No one need suffer under a bad King for many years until the King dies.

The succession of leaders such as presidents or prime ministers happens peacefully. People vote to change leaders rather than fight wars to change leaders.

• **What oath did Taran previously swear to Dallben?**

Taran promised to protect Eilonwy.

Taran wants a good, competent person to lead the party because it will increase the chances of getting Eilonwy back safely.

• **Who is really in charge of the party that includes Prince Rhun and Taran?**

The Master of the Horse will be the real leader of the party.

We read:

“Word of your deeds has reached Mona,” King Rhuddlum went on, “And I have seen for myself that you are a brave lad, and honorable. I confide this knowledge to you: my Master of Horse is a skillful tracker; he rides with your party and in truth shall direct the search. Prince Rhun commands in name only, for the warriors expect leadership from the Royal House. [...]” (59)

• **What oath does Taran swear to King Rhuddlum? Is this a good oath to swear?**

Taran gives his oath to look after Prince Rhun: to protect him and to try to keep him from making a big fool of himself.

King Rhuddlum says this:

“ [...] I would entrust my son to you, and beg you to let no harm befall him. Nor,” added the King, smiling sadly, “to let him make too great a fool of himself. Much he has to learn, and much, perhaps, he may learn from you. [...]” (59)

We read:

At last Taran met the King's eyes. "I will swear this oath," he said slowly. "Your son will come to no harm if it lies in my power to keep him from it." Taran put a hand to his sword. "I pledge my life to do so." (60-61)

King Rhuddlum is a good person. He is very much concerned about his son and the kind of ruler he will be; however, he is also very much concerned about Eilonwy's safety. We read:

"Go with my thanks, Taran of Caer Dallben," King Rhuddlum said. "And help us bring the Princess Eilonwy safely home." (61)

**• To whom does King Rhuddlum want Prince Rhun to get married when they are of age? Does she know of this? Does Prince Rhun?**

King Rhuddlum wants Prince Rhun to marry Eilonwy.

However, Eilonwy knows nothing of this. Neither does Prince Rhun.

We read:

"Not yet. Nor does my son," said King Rhuddlum. "Eilonwy must have time to grow used to Mona and our ways here. But I am sure it will be happily arranged. After all, she is a Princess and Rhun is of royal blood." Taran bowed his head. The grief in his heart kept him from speaking. (60)

**• What reasons could Taran have not to swear the oath?**

1) Prince Rhun could very well end up marrying Eilonwy. This is something that his parents are in favor of.

2) Taran probably would prefer to be free to focus all his attention rescuing Eilonwy first. By swearing the oath, he

has to direct some of his attention to keeping Prince Rhun safe.

**• What orders does Taran give to Kaw? Are these good orders?**

Taran sends Kaw out on his own to search for Eilonwy. These are good orders. As a bird, Kaw can fly and cover a large distance while looking for Eilonwy. If Kaw finds Eilonwy, Kaw has enough intelligence and enough ability to speak to communicate important information to Taran.

We read:

As the searching parties galloped out the gates, Taran lifted Kaw from his shoulder. “Can you find her? Seek her carefully, my friend,” he murmured, while the crow cocked his head and looked at Taran with shrewd eyes. Taran flung his arm upward. Kaw launched himself into the air and sped aloft. Wings beating, the crow circled overhead, drove higher against the sky, then disappeared from sight. (61)

**• To whom did — does — Fflewddur Fflam think Eilonwy would — should — be betrothed?**

Of course, he thought — thinks — that Taran and Eilonwy would eventually be wed.

Taran is still concerned about not knowing who his father is. He thinks that he is lower-born than Eilonwy, who of course is a princess.

We read:

“Oho,” said Fflewddur, when Taran had finished, “so that’s the way the wind blows! Strange,” he added, with a quick glance at Taran, “I had always hoped that if Eilonwy were betrothed to anyone it would be — yes, well, what I mean to say is that

despite all the squabbling and bickering between the two of you, I had rather expected ...”

“Do not mock me,” Taran burst out, reddening. “Eilonwy is a Princess of the House of Llyr. You know my station as well as I. Such a hope has never been in my mind. It is only fitting for Eilonwy to be betrothed to one of her own rank.” Angrily he drew away from the bard and galloped ahead. (61-62)

**• If Taran should look into his own heart, what does Ffleuddur Fflam think he will find there?**

We know the answer, although Ffleuddur Fflam does not explicitly say it: Taran will find in his heart that he loves Eilonwy.

**• When night comes, what does Ffleuddur Fflam say about Eilonwy? How does the expression on his face modify what he says about Eilonwy?**

Ffleuddur Fflam says the right things: He expresses an opinion that Eilonwy is OK although they have not found her yet. He expresses his opinion that Eilonwy can fight well — an opinion that we will find out to be true.

However, his face shows that he is very worried about Eilonwy.

We read:

“That sickening spider has escaped us today,” Ffleuddur cried angrily, while his nag labored to the crest. “But we shall fetch him out tomorrow and Eilonwy will be safe and sound. If I know the Princess, Magg has already begun to regret stealing her away. She’s worth a dozen warriors even if she’s tied hand and foot.” Despite the bard’s brave words, his face looked deeply worried. “Come,”

said Fflewddur, “the Master of Horse is calling in the warriors. We’re to make camp with them for the night.” (64-65)

**• What happens to Prince Rhun? How do Taran and his companions react?**

Prince Rhun disappears — he simply gallops away when Taran dismounts to study the ground for signs of a trail (64).

Taran and the companions are unable to find him because darkness is arriving. In addition, things are moving around in the dark — things that cannot be fully glimpsed because of the darkness.

Eventually, Taran decides that they have to stop searching for Prince Rhun because of the darkness.

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 5 end?**

Chapter 5 ends in this way:

“Our search is blind and useless,” he [Taran] said. “You were right,” he went on, turning to Fflewddur. “We should have gone back. The time I had hoped to save is wasted twice over, and Eilonwy’s danger is greater with every moment we delay. Now Prince Rhun is lost — and so is Kaw, for all we know.”

“I’m afraid you’re right,” sighed Fflewddur. “And unless you or Gurgi knows where we are, I rather suspect we’re lost, too.” (67)

Obviously, things are going badly for our heroes. Eilonwy has been kidnapped. Prince Rhun has disappeared. The search for Prince Rhun may delay the search for Eilonwy. And it appears that Taran and his companions are lost.

The reader will keep on reading in order to find out what happens next.

## Chapter 6: The Potions of Glew

- **How does Gurgi act at the beginning of Chapter 6? How does Taran act? What is the way that a leader ought to act?**

Gurgi begins to wail. Taran does his best to comfort Gurgi, although Taran feels despair.

Taran is acting the way that a leader ought to act. He is acting bravely in not giving in to despair. Taran is much more mature than Gurgi. Taran is the leader here.

Being brave does not mean not feeling fear. Being brave means facing and controlling your fear in a dangerous situation:

- “Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear — not absence of fear. Except a creature be part coward, it is not a compliment to say it is brave.” — Mark Twain
- “Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.” — Ambrose Redmoon

We read:

At these words Gurgi set up a wail and rocked back and forth, clutching his head. Taran swallowed his own despair as best he could and tried to reassure the frightened creature. (68)

In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the epic hero Aeneas sometimes puts on a public face of hope and confidence while privately he feels despair and hopelessness.

**• What advice does Fflewddur Fflam give Taran at the beginning of Chapter 6? Is it good advice?**

Taran is not totally able to control his feelings. He is still worried about Eilonwy. Fflewddur Fflam notices and gives him good advice:

“Do not wear out your heart with grief,” the bard said quietly. (68)

One reason that this is good advice is that Fflewddur Fflam is able to give reasons why Taran ought not to wear out his heart with grief:

“Magg can’t escape us for long. I don’t believe he means to harm Eilonwy but only bring her to Achren. And we shall catch him long before he can do that. Rest now. Gurgi and I will share the watch.” (68)

Taran is mainly worried that Eilonwy will get hurt. Fflewddur Fflam believes that Magg will not hurt Eilonwy because his orders are most likely to bring Eilonwy to Achren.

Fflewddur Fflam also advises Taran to sleep while he and Gurgi take the watch. This is good advice because we often feel much better after sleeping, or after a good meal.

**• Describe the strange hut that Taran and his companions find.**

Taran and his companions wake up in the morning and discover that in the darkness they were going around in circles. One problem that they were worried about is no longer a problem: they are not lost because now they know where they are.

Of course, they still need to find first Prince Rhun and then Eilonwy. As they search for Prince Rhun, they find a strange hut.

We read:

The conical thatched roof, he [Taran] now saw, had fallen away in many places. Rough stones, piled one on top of the other, formed a low side wall, a corner of which had collapsed into a heap of rubble. There were no windows, and the single, heavy door hung askew from sagging leather hinges. He stepped closer. The holes in the thatch stared at him like empty eyes. (70)

• **Where did Prince Rhun stay the night?**

Prince Rhun stayed the night in the strange hut. Taran is angered because Taran was worried about Prince Rhun, but Prince Rhun does not seem concerned that Taran and the companions were worried about him.

Prince Rhun did show some initiative in staying in the strange hut. He says, “That’s only common sense, wouldn’t you say? I mean, why sleep outdoors when you can put a roof over your head? [...]” (71-72).

We also find out why Prince Rhun got separated from Taran and the other companions. He fell off his horse and had to go looking for her. This is another example of Prince Rhun’s clumsiness.

• **According to Prince Rhun, what does fresh air do (71)?**

We read:

“Hullo, hullo!” Prince Rhun, beaming, stood in the doorway. Aside from looking a little sleepy, he appeared quite himself and altogether unharmed. “I

hope you've got some breakfast with you," he added, rubbing his hands eagerly.

"I'm nearly starved to death. Have you ever noticed how the fresh air sharpens one's appetite? Most surprising! [...]." (71)

In Chapter 14 of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Tom learned that his food tasted much better on Jackson's Island when he and two friends (Huck Finn and Joe Harper) ran away from home to be pirates:

While Joe was slicing bacon for breakfast, Tom and Huck asked him to hold on a minute; they stepped to a promising nook in the river-bank and threw in their lines; almost immediately they had reward. Joe had not had time to get impatient before they were back again with some handsome bass, a couple of sun-perch and a small catfish — provisions enough for quite a family. They fried the fish with the bacon, and were astonished; for no fish had ever seemed so delicious before. They did not know that the quicker a fresh-water fish is on the fire after he is caught the better he is; and they reflected little upon what a sauce open-air sleeping, open-air exercise, bathing, and a large ingredient of hunger make, too. (86-87)

• **What book does Prince Rhun find and keep?**

Poking around inside the hut, Gurgi finds a bundle of pages. Mice have been chewing on many pages, but at the bottom of the bundle is a book bound in leather whose pages the mice have not been chewing on. The book has blank pages, although we will learn something about that book later in this novel:

Only at the bottom of the pile did Taran find pages in good repair. These had been carefully bound in

leather to make a small tome, and their surface was clear and unmarked.

Prince Rhun, who still had not got around to buckling on his sword, came to peer over Taran's shoulder. "I say!" he cried. "What have you there? I can't guess what it is, but it looks interesting. And isn't that a handsome little book? I shouldn't mind having it to put down things I'm supposed to remember to do." (74)

• **What do we learn about Glew?**

We learn that Glew is a small person because the boots that are in the hut are child-sized.

We learn that Glew invented potions in an attempt to make himself larger.

We learn that Glew used a mountain cat as a guinea pig for his experiments.

And we learn that the experiments worked.

• **Fflewddur Fflam says that he would "rather not think about" (75) the ingredients of Glew's potions. What do you suppose he means?**

We can guess that the ingredients of the potions are disgusting.

Certainly the ingredients that the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* use are disgusting. In Act 4, scene 1, of *Macbeth*, we learn that the witches are very evil. The ingredients that they add to the potion are disgusting.

The first witch says this (62):

Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten

Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten

From the murderer's gibbet throw  
 Into the flame.

The Pathology Guy (Ed Friedlander) explains:

I'm an autopsy pathologist. I am very familiar with how human bodies decompose. To show Macbeth his future, the witches add to the brew "grease that's sweaten / From the murderer's gibbet." Would you like to know what that means? The bodies of murderers were left hanging on the gallows (gibbet) until they were skeletonized, which takes weeks. At about ten days in suitable weather, there are enough weak points in the skin that the bodyfat, which has liquified, can start dripping through. There will be a puddle of oil underneath the body. This is for real.

Source: <http://www.pathguy.com/macbeth.htm>

Date Accessed: 2 October 2011

These are the ingredients of the *Macbeth* witches' potion:

poisoned entrails  
 toad  
 slice of a snake from a swamp  
 eye of newt  
 toe of frog  
 wool of bat  
 tongue of dog  
 forked tongue of an adder  
 sting of a legless lizard  
 leg of a lizard

wing of a young owl

etc.

• **What Fflewddur Fflam says about the ingredients of Glew's potions is foreshadowing. What is foreshadowing?**

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of *A Handbook to Literature* by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon defines “foreshadowing” in this way: “The presentation of material in a work in such a way that later events are prepared for” (201).

Here are a couple of other definitions:

**Foreshadowing** is the use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in literature.

Source:

[http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit\\_terms/foreshadowing.html](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/foreshadowing.html)

Date Accessed: 2 October 2011

**Definition:** A literary device used to hint at events that will follow later in the story, sometimes generating feelings of anxiety or suspense. Anton Chekhov once said that “if there is a gun hanging on the wall in the first act, it must fire in the last.” That remark captures the essence of foreshadowing.

Source:

<http://contemporarylit.about.com/library/bldef-foreshadowing>

Of course, plays also contain foreshadowing.

The ingredients of potions will play a role later in the novel. Readers are being prepared for that now.

**• In which ways did Glew show intelligence in his experiments?**

- 1) Glew carefully wrote everything down.
- 2) Glew used a mountain cat rather than himself as a guinea pig.

These are things that modern scientists do. Animal experimentation may be controversial, but most people would agree that it is better to experiment on animals rather than human beings.

We should note that his potions did work: The mountain cat did get larger. Glew has to be very intelligent or very lucky for that to happen.

Here, of course, we are reminded that *The Castle of Llyr* is a fantasy novel. In real life, if we want a cat to grow we would get a kitten and feed it. This works very well with small children, too.

**• What may have happened to Glew?**

Glew may have been gobbled up by the mountain cat, which did indeed get larger as a result of Glew's potions.

We read:

Taran was silent looking at the empty boots and overturned cookpots. "Glew certainly is gone," he said thoughtfully, "but I have a feeling he didn't go far."

"How's that?" asked the bard. "Oh, I take your meaning," he said, shuddering. "Yes, it does look rather — shall I say, sudden? As I see Glew, he was a neat and orderly sort. He would hardly go off leaving his hut as it is now. Without his boots at that. Poor little fellow," he sighed. "It only proves

the dangers of meddling. For all his pains, Glew must have got himself gobbled up. And if you ask me, the wisest thing for us is to leave immediately!” (77)

• **Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 6 end?**

Chapter 6 ends in this way:

Taran nodded and rose to his feet. As he did, terrified whinnys and the sound of galloping hooves filled the air.

“The horses!” he cried, racing to the door.

Before he could reach it, the door burst from its hinges. Taran clutched at his sword and stumbled back into the hut as a huge shape leaped at him. (77)

The reader will keep on reading in order to find out what the huge shape is.

## Chapter 7: The Lair of Llyan

### • **How do Taran and his companions react to the huge shape that is attacking them?**

The huge shape turns out to be Llyan, the mountain cat to whom Glew fed his potions.

Taran is very brave and draws his sword, but Llyan knocks it from his hand.

At the moment, all is confusion and everyone is terrified.

We read:

The great beast screamed with fury as the companions scattered in terror to all parts of the hut.

Amid the confusion of tumbling stools and benches, and as the dry leaves rose in a whirlwind, Taran saw that Fflewddur had jumped to a tabletop and, in so doing, had plunged into the spiderweb which now covered him from head to foot. Prince Rhun, having tried vainly to climb up the chimney, crouched in the ashes of the hearth. Gurgi had made himself as small as he could and had pressed into a corner, where he squealed and yelled, "Help, oh, help! Save Gurgi's poor tender head from pawings and clawings!" (78)

### • **Describe Llyan.**

Llyan's main characteristic is her enormous size.

Another defining characteristic appears to be her ferocity. Certainly, Llyan appears to be dangerous.

A characteristic of cats, including mountain cats, is that they eat meat, and Taran and his companions are very afraid that Llyan could possibly be planning to eat them.

Llyan is also very good at fighting. Fflewddur Fflam draws his sword, but Llyan easily knocks the sword away and knocks Fflewddur Fflam over.

We read:

A long, wavering growl rose from the creature's throat and she hesitated a moment as if undecided where to attack. Taran, sitting up on the ground, saw for the first time what the ferocious animal looked like.

Though Glew had written of Llyan's growth, Taran had never imagined a mountain cat so big. The animal stood as tall as a horse but leaner and longer; her tail alone, thicker than Taran's arm, seemed to take up much of the room in the hut. Heavily and sleekly furred, the cat's body was golden-tawny, flecked with black and orange. Her belly was white with black splotches. Curling tufts sprouted from the tips of her ears, and shaggy handfuls of fur curved at her powerful jaws. Her long whiskers twitched; her baleful yellow eyes darted from one companion to another. Judging from the white points of her teeth, glittering as her lips drew back in a snarl, Taran was certain Llyan could gulp down anything that suited her fancy. (79)

**• How dangerous is Llyan? Is she as dangerous as Taran and his companions thought when they first saw her?**

Taran reasons very well. He believes that Llyan is curious rather than dangerous. If Llyan truly were dangerous, Taran and his companions would be dead right now.

Taran also reasons that Llyan is not hungry. Llyan and other mountain cats hunt at night, so Llyan has been out hunting and so most likely has eaten her fill.

We read:

“She’s more curious than angry,” Taran whispered. “Otherwise, she would have clawed us to pieces by now. Don’t move. She may go away.”

“Glad to hear you say that,” replied Fflewddur in a choked voice. “I’ll remember it while I’m being gobbled up. It will be a consolation to me.”

“I don’t think she’s hungry,” said Taran. “If she’s been out hunting during the night, she must have eaten her fill.” (80)

However, at first appearance Llyan truly did appear to be dangerous, and if she grows hungry, she could very well become dangerous. Fflewddur Fflam says, “She’ll keep us here until her appetite comes back. I’m sure this is the first time she’s been lucky enough to have four dinners ready and waiting in her lair” (80).

**• Why can’t Taran and his companions escape? Why can’t Taran and his companions make a run for it and hope that one of them escapes?**

Taran and his companions attempt to escape, but Llyan is very watchful and stops all attempts at escape.

Taran thinks about having everyone try to escape at the same time, but Fflewddur Fflam realizes that this idea will not work.

We read:

“But we must escape,” Taran urged. “What if we all rushed upon her once? One of us at least might get past.”

Fflewddur shook his head. “After she’d settled with the rest of us,” he answered, “she’d have no trouble

catching up with that lone survivor. Let me think, let me think.” (82-83)

• **What calms Llyan?**

Fflewddur Fflam’s music — he begins to play his harp because playing it calms him — has a calming effect on Llyan.

We read:

“Fflewddur!” Taran whispered. “Play on!”

“You can’t think she enjoys it,” replied the bard. “I should find that hard to believe. Why, even human beings have been known to say hard words about my music. You can’t expect a mountain cat to like it any better.” Nevertheless, he plucked the strings once more.

This time, there was no doubt in Taran’s mind that the harp fascinated Llyan. The great body of the cat slackened, her muscles seemed to uncoil, and Llyan blinked peacefully. To make certain, Taran asked Fflewddur to stop. As soon as the bard did so, Llyan turned restless. Her tail lashed and her whiskers trembled with what could only be vexation. As soon as the bard played again, Llyan put her head to one side, ears forward, and gazed fondly at him. (83-84)

Note that Llyan is now growing fond of Fflewddur Fflam. However, she grows restless when Fflewddur Fflam stops playing, so she may still be dangerous.

• **Where does the phrase “Music soothes the savage beast” come from?**

In Act 1, scene 1 of William Congreve’s 1697 play *The Mourning Bride* appears these lines:

Musick has Charms to sooth a savage Breast,

To soften Rocks, or bend a knotted Oak.

We think of Llyan as a savage beast rather than a savage breast, but it is possible that a savage beast can have a savage breast.

This is an interesting short article:

### **Hard Rock Music Soothes the Savage Beast**

Even sharks like to rock out from time to time. An Australian tour boat operator says great white sharks have a fondness for music as aggressive as they are. The animals like songs by Aussie hard rock band AC/DC, especially “If You Want Blood” (of course) and “You Shook Me All Night Long.” Interestingly, the music attracts the toothy predators and makes them less aggressive and more inquisitive. The tour boat operator suspects the creatures like the low frequencies and vibrations in AC/DC’s music.

So, will a waterproof mp3 player and a collection of AC/DC songs protect you from Jaws this summer? Probably not, but at least you can rock out, too.

Source:

<<http://blog.nwf.org/wildlifepromise/2011/06/hard-rock-music-soothes-the-savage-beast/>>.

Date Accessed: 2 October 2011

### **• Can you give any examples from literature or popular culture of music soothing a savage beast?**

These examples come from a site dedicated to TV tropes:

- In Greek Mythology, Orpheus was able to get past Cerberus [a three-headed dog that guards the Underworld] by playing music to soothe it.
- The Monster in *Young Frankenstein* can be attracted to and lulled by music.
- In *Bringing Up Baby*, the tame leopard Baby can be subdued by singing “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love, Baby.”
- In *Help!*, Ringo is threatened by a tiger which can be tamed by singing the “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.
- Inverted in The Three Stooges short “Idle Roomers,” which features a Wolf Man who is relatively tame until he hears music. The stooges, mistakenly believing in this trope, decide to play music when confronted by him, activating the Wolf Man’s Berserk Button.
- *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1996): Marlon Brando (as the title character) momentarily soothes the rebellious man-animal hybrids with his piano playing. But when Dr Moreau decides to follow this up by activating their pain implants, he discovers the hard way that they’ve already been removed.
- Harry Potter: Fluffy the giant three-headed guard dog is lulled to sleep when music is played (a harp or a flute in this case), as a nod to Greek Mythology.

Source:

<<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/MusicSoothesTheSavageBeast>>.

Date Accessed: 11 September 2011

• **Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 7 end?**

Chapter 7 ends in this way:

“Yes, yes!” Gurgi cried. “Do not leave off hummings and strummings!”

“Believe me,” the bard answered fervently, “I haven’t the slightest intention.” Llyan folded her paws under her deep, speckled chest and began making a sound like a swarm of droning bees. Her mouth curved in a smile and the tip of her tail moved gently to the music.

“That’s the answer!” cried Fflewddur, springing to his feet. “Fly, friends, while she’s quiet!” No sooner had he risen than Llyan, too, jumped up, furious, and the bard sank back, playing for dear life.

“Your music calms her,” Taran cried in alarm, “but she still won’t let us go.”

“Not exactly,” said the bard, passing his fingers rapidly across the strings. “I doubt if the rest of you will have any trouble. Alas,” he added ruefully, “I fear I’m the one she wants to keep!” (84)

The reader will keep on reading to find out happens. How will Fflewddur Fflam be able to get away from Llyan? Or will he?

## **Chapter 8: The Harp of Fflewddur**

### **• How does Fflewddur Fflam show that he is a hero?**

Fflewddur Fflam is a hero. He risks his life in order to help others. By staying with Llyan, he allows Taran, Gurgi, and Prince Rhun to escape. Fflewddur Fflam must be frightened to stay with Llyan, but it is good to allow the others to escape.

One characteristic of a hero is a concern for other people.

Another characteristic of a hero is that he or she (I am using the word “hero” to refer to both sexes) is willing to risk his or her life to help someone else.

Of course, Fflewddur Fflam must be hoping to find a way to escape.

### **• How does Fflewddur Fflam persuade Taran to leave with Gurgi and Prince Rhun?**

Fflewddur Fflam says the right thing. He reassures Taran and the other companions that he will find a way to escape, somehow.

We read:

“Fly from here!” urged the bard, never ceasing to pluck his harp strings. “Begone! I’ve no idea how long she’ll want to listen — or how long I can keep playing!”

“There must be another way,” Taran cried. “We can’t leave you.”

“I like it no more than you do,” replied the bard. “But this is your chance. You must take it now.” Taran hesitated. Fflewddur’s face was grim and drawn, and he seemed already weary.

“Begone!” Fflewddur repeated. “I’ll play as long as I can. By then, if she’s decided not to gobble me, she may go out hunting. Don’t worry. If the harp fails, I’ll think of something else.” (85)

• **Why does Taran leave Fflewddur Fflam with Llyan?**

Taran has things that are important to do. One important thing is to quickly find Eilonwy. Another important thing is to keep Prince Rhun safe. We remember that Taran has taken oaths to take care of Eilonwy and of Prince Rhun.

In addition, we should remember that Fflewddur Fflam is an adult, while Taran seems to be barely into puberty. Fflewddur Fflam is a King, although Taran is the leader of the companions.

Taran is considering consequences here. When we want to decide what we ought to do, thinking about the consequences of our actions is a good thing to do.

Suppose the worst thing possible. Suppose that Llyan is a killer cat. It is better for three — Taran, Prince Rhun, and Gurgi — to escape than for all four, including Fflewddur Fflam, to be killed by Llyan.

However, Taran has had some hints that Llyan may not be as dangerous as she at first appeared to be. When Fflewddur Fflam is playing his harp, she purrs. Cats don’t purr when they are fighting or when they are hunting. In Chapter 7, we read that she purrs and she smiles:

Llyan folded her paws under her deep, speckled chest and began making a sound like a swarm of droning bees. Her mouth curved in a smile and the tip of her tail moved gently to the music. (84)

Despite these hints that Llyan may not be dangerous, Taran is still “Sick at heart” because he must leave Fflewddur Fflam (85).

Taran allows Prince Rhun, then Gurgi, to leave first. Then Fflewddur Fflam makes him leave:

“Out, out!” commanded Fflewddur. “I shall find you as soon as I can. Did I not promise you a new song? You shall hear it from my own lips. Until then — farewell!”

Fflewddur’s tone and glance left no room for question. Taran flung himself past the stones. In another instant he was free of the hut. (86)

**• Who is the weakest among Taran and his companions: Taran, Fflewddur Fflam, Gurgi, and Prince Rhun?**

Prince Rhun is the weakest, as is shown by his inability to run far. Of course, Fflewddur Fflam is not present at the moment, but he will be able to run far while carrying weapons. He does sweat from the exertion, as we will see later.

We read:

As Taran feared, the horses had broken their tethers and fled at the sight of Llyan. Gurgi and Prince Rhun had crossed the clearing and vanished into the forest. Racing at top speed, Taran soon caught up with them. Rhun’s pace had already begun to flag, his breathing was labored, and he looked as though his legs might give way at any moment. Taran and Gurgi caught the staggering Prince and bore him along as fast as they could.

For some while, the three struggled through the underbrush. The forest had begun to grow sparser

and Taran caught sight of a broad meadow. At the edge of the flatland, he halted. Prince Rhun, he knew, had reached the end of his strength and he hoped only that they were a safe distance from Llyan. (86-87)

**• Horses are important when traveling Prydain. Where are the horses of Taran and his companions?**

We read that the horses broke their tethers and ran away because they were afraid of Llyan.

This means that Taran and the companions are without horses. They are on foot. This is a disadvantage because they could go further and faster on horses than on foot.

**• Is Prince Rhun aware of his weaknesses? Is this a good thing?**

Prince Rhun is aware of his weaknesses. He has known for some time that he is clumsy.

However, he has the desire to do better. He knows that he is a Prince, and he wishes to be worthy of being a Prince. After all, someday he will be King. He can be a good King or a bad King, and he wishes to be a good King.

Because he is aware of his weaknesses, he can do something about them.

We read:

“I can guess what you’re thinking,” Rhun said in a low voice. “If it hadn’t been for me, you wouldn’t be in this plight. And I’m afraid you’re right. It’s my fault things turned out as they did. I can only ask your forgiveness. I’m not the cleverest person in the world,” Rhun added, smiling sadly. “Even my old nurse used to say I was all thumbs. But I hate being a blunderer. It’s not what people expect of a

Prince. I didn't ask to be born into the Royal House, that at least wasn't my doing. But, since I was, I — I want very much to be worthy of it.” (87)

**• Prince Rhun thinks that he is clumsy. What can he do about being clumsy?**

One thing he can do is simply to grow up. Puberty can be a time of clumsiness. When he passes through puberty, he will be less clumsy.

Another thing he can do is to engage in activities that will develop his coordination. For example, he could play sports — or take dance lessons.

**• Prince Rhun says that he is “not the cleverest person in the world” (87). This is not unusual since only one person is the cleverest person in the world. Of course, Prince simply means that he is not clever. What can Prince Rhun do to become more clever?**

Growing up helps because people become more clever with more life experience.

Another Prince Rhun can do is to study in school.

**• Prince Rhun was born a Prince: an important title. But simply being born with a title does not mean that one is worthy to hold that title. To be the leader of a country (Prince Rhun will eventually be King Rhun), what qualities should one have?**

A good King will care about the citizens. A good King will want his country to have a good economy with work available for people who want to work. A good King will want his country to have good schools, good roads, safe food and water, etc.

A good King will avoid war unless war is necessary.

A good King will have good administrative skills.

A good King will have good manners and good public-speaking skills and good diplomatic skills.

A good King will be positive and happy and influence the citizens to be positive and happy.

A good King (or Prince, or Assistant Pig-Keeper) must be (or become) a good man. Taran says, “For a man to be worthy of any rank, he must strive first to be a man” (88).

**• Does Prince Rhun know that his parents want him to be engaged to Princess Eilonwy?**

Yes, he knows. Rumors have been flying around, and Prince Rhun has heard the rumors.

Prince Rhun would like to be the person who rescues Eilonwy. Of course, so would Taran.

**• What decision does Taran make?**

A good leader must make good decisions.

Taran’s decision is to return to Dinas Rhydnant. This is not a decision that he wishes to make, but it is the right decision.

Taran would prefer to keep on trying to rescue Eilonwy, but since he and his companions have no horses, they will be unable to catch up with the other band seeking Eilonwy.

Note something good that Prince Rhun does. He shows bravery and a concern for Eilonwy:

“No, no!” Rhun cried. “I don’t care about the danger. I must find Eilonwy.” (89)

• **Why wouldn't the Master of the Horse stop traveling so that Taran and the other companions could rejoin him? After all, Prince Rhun is the son of the King.**

We are not told the answer, so we have to speculate:

- 1) Job #1 is to find Eilonwy.
- 2) The Master of the Horse knows that Prince Rhun and the others can fairly easily make it back home even if they have lost their horses — they are not far from home.
- 3) Perhaps sometimes people become separated in such pursuits.
- 4) Perhaps the Master of the Horse knows that Taran is a capable leader and has sworn to look after Prince Rhun. The King could have told the Master of the Horse that.

• **Earlier, Fflewddur Fflam assured Taran that he (Fflewddur Fflam) would be able to escape from Llyan. How did he accomplish his escape?**

Fflewddur Fflam was able to escape from Llyan because Llyan went to sleep.

Apparently, Llyan had a full meal while hunting. The meal, plus Fflewddur Fflam's music, plus being tired after a night of hunting made Llyan fall asleep.

Prince Rhun crouched in the ashes of the fireplace in the beginning of Chapter 7:

Prince Rhun, having tried vainly to climb up the chimney, crouched in the ashes of the hearth. (78)

Fflewddur Fflam followed the ashes that Prince Rhun left behind him as he ran, and he was able to catch up to Taran and the companions as they rested.

**• Does Prince Rhun’s weaknesses have any advantages?**

Yes. Because Prince Rhun was tired, Taran and the companions rested. This allowed Fflewddur Fflam to catch up to them.

Because Prince Rhun fell off his horse and had to take refuge in the old hut, he found a book with what seem to be blank pages. That book will be important later.

When we make mistakes, sometimes the results can be good. If you drop some eggs, that can be a good thing if you like omelets.

**• Fflewddur Fflam is a hero because he made Taran and the others leave him alone with Llyan. Does he make a big deal out of being a hero?**

No. He simply tells Taran and the companions how he escaped, and he eats some food that Gurgi gives him.

This is a characteristic of many, many heroes. They do something heroic, and then they are humble about what they did.

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at ending chapters with a cliffhanger. Why do you suppose that he did not end the previous chapter with Fflewddur Fflam being left alone with Llyan?**

It may have been too scary for his readers.

Also, it could make readers question Taran’s judgment in leaving Fflewddur Fflam.

**• What danger are Taran and his companions still in from Llyan?**

When Llyan wakes, she can track Fflewddur Fflam. Because she is so big — “as tall as a horse but leaner and longer” (79) — she can easily catch up to him.

If she is angry when she catches up to him, she can easily harm him, Taran, and the other companions.

• **Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 8 end?**

Chapter 8 ends in this way:

Taran shook his head. He told the bard of the decision to return to Dinas Rhydant.

“I suppose it’s the best thing to do,” Fflewddur reluctantly agreed. “Especially now, when Llyan may be prowling.” Taran scanned the hills for the easiest and safest path to follow. He caught his breath. A dark shape sped high above. It veered, circled, then drove directly toward him.

“It’s Kaw!” Taran ran ahead and held out his arms. The crow dropped swiftly and lighted on Taran’s outstretched wrist. The bird showed signs of grueling flight; his feathers were askew and he looked like a bundle of rags, but he clacked his beak and jabbered excitedly.

“Eilonwy!” Kaw croaked. “Eilonwy!” (91)

Of course, the reader remembers that Taran had sent Kaw off to find Eilonwy. Kaw has done that. The reader will keep on reading to find out what Taran and his companions will do now that Kaw has found Eilonwy.

### Chapter 9: The Luck of Rhun

• **What do you notice about Kaw's speech at the end of Chapter 8 and the beginning of Chapter 9?**

Kaw repeats words, always saying them twice:

“Eilonwy!” Kaw croaked. “Eilonwy!” (91)

and

“Alaw!” croaked Kaw. “Alaw!”

“The river!” Taran exclaimed. “How far is it?”

“Close! Close!” replied Kaw. (92)

• **What other characters in *The Castle of Llyr* speak distinctively?**

Fflewddur Fflam frequently exclaims, “Great Belin!” Belin is the Celtic god of the sun.

Eilonwy, of course, is noted for her unusual similes: “You look as jumpy as a frog with fleas!” (52)

Gurgi is noted for his alliteration (words that begin with the same sounds) and his rhymes:

Gurgi nodded. “Yes, yes,” he whispered. “Loyal Gurgi will stand with watchful waitings. He will guard dreamful drowsings of noble Princess.” (44)

“Yes, yes!” Gurgi cried. “Do not leave off hummings and strummings!” (84)

Gurgi also says “Yes, yes” 11 times in *The Castle of Llyr*; Taran says it once.

Fflewddur Fflam deliberately speaks like Gurgi here:

“Good news!” he cried. “Gurgi and I have done some seekings and peekings of our own. We’re not as badly lost as you might think. [...]” (69)

• **What decisions does Taran make? Why does he make them?**

Previously, Taran decided that he and the companions should return to Dinas Rhydnant. However, Kaw has brought new information that makes Taran decide to do something different. He decides to do these things:

- 1) Search for Eilonwy.
- 2) Not send Kaw to the Master of the Horse.

Eilonwy is close, and Taran and his companions would waste time by going to Dinas Rhydnant. Taran believes that they must act quickly — too quickly to take time to send Kaw to the Master of the Horse so that some mounted warriors will join them. Taran uses Kaw to guide them to the Alaw river.

• **Magg is intelligent. How did he escape his pursuers?**

Magg has not been travelling the entire time. As Taran figures out, Magg took Eilonwy to some hills and hid there and allowed the searching parties to go past them.

We read:

“With all of Rhuddlum’s warriors combing Mona,” Fflewddur cried angrily, as they began the descent toward the river, “how has that spider managed to escape us for so long?”

“Magg has been more cunning than we thought,” Taran said bitterly. “I’m sure he took Eilonwy into the Hills of Parys. But he must have hidden away,

without moving until he knew the search had swept beyond him.” (93)

**• Magg is intelligent, but he is a bad person. Why would it be better for a bad person to be unintelligent?**

Bad, unintelligent people can be thwarted more easily than bad, intelligent people.

We want heroes such as Taran to be intelligent.

We very much prefer that a criminal be unintelligent and that a police officer be intelligent. That way, the police officer can catch the criminal.

Philosopher Immanuel Kant was well aware that intelligence is not good when it is joined with the will to do evil. However, intelligence is very good when it is joined with the will to do good.

**• What important object does Prince Rhun find?**

Prince Rhun finds Eilonwy’s bauble: the golden sphere that she uses to cast light.

This object will be important in the novel.

Prince Rhun’s finding the bauble is important evidence that Eilonwy was here.

**• Taran is intelligent. By examining tracks, he is able to tell what happened to Magg and Eilonwy. (Fflewddur Fflam helps.) What did happen?**

Eilonwy struggled and lost her bauble, and then Magg let the horses run free because he and Eilonwy got on board a boat.

We read:

“He’s [Prince Rhun has] led us to fresh tracks,” said Fflewddur, studying the grass. “Something fairly large and flat has been dragged along here.” He scratched his chin thoughtfully. “I wonder — a boat? Could it be? Did that sneering spider have one ready and waiting? I shouldn’t be surprised if he had planned it all before Eilonwy reached Mona.”

Taran strode down the bank. “I see footprints,” he called. “The ground is badly torn. Eilonwy must have struggled with him — yes, right there. And there she would have dropped the bauble.” In dismay he looked at the wide, rapid-flowing Alaw. “You have read the signs well, Fflewddur,” he said. “Magg had a boat here. He set loose the horses and let them run as they pleased.” (95)

Taran and the companions no longer need horses. Magg and Eilonwy have a boat, and now Taran and the companions need a way to float on the river.

Taran and the companions will build a raft. A raft can float only one way on a river. Taran and the companions have decided that Magg has gone downstream on the boat. Magg would have a difficult time rowing upstream, especially with a girl like Eilonwy fighting him.

### • Can girls fight well?

Note that Eilonwy struggled. She fights back rather than acting like a helpless little girl.

Here are some stories of girls fighting very well:

1) In October 2003 in Baytown, Texas, a 10-year-old girl fought off an abductor as she rode her bicycle to elementary school. The girl, who did not want to be identified, said, “As I was riding my bike to school, some man was turning in and he came around and he tried to get

me. And when he got me, he got out of his car and [held] my tire of my bike. And then, after he [held] my tire, he pushed me off my bike. I tried to get up, and he grabbed my ankle. And after he grabbed my ankle, I kicked him and it hurt him, so he got inside his car and left. I was yelling and I was kicking and I was screaming.” She rode her bike to James Bowie Elementary School and told an adult what had happened. The girl’s mother said, “I thank God that my child is still alive, because these things, that’s all people are doing now — taking children.” Lieutenant David Alford of the Baytown Police Department said about the girl, “She had some type of plan of action. She did very well. She was very brave, and she was very purposeful in her actions.”<sup>7</sup>

2) In August 2003 in Chelmsley Wood, England, a man tried to abduct a 10-year-old girl outside a Texaco garage as she was pushing her nine-month-old brother in his pram (baby buggy). The man grabbed the girl’s wrist and the pram, but she kicked him and he ran away. She told an adult at the garage what had happened, and the adult called police.<sup>8</sup>

3) When two men in a black van tried to kidnap a 14-year-girl near Tucker Middle School in Tucker, Georgia, in 2007, she fought back and got away from the men: She stabbed one of the men with a pencil and probably saved her life. The girl’s mother, Allicia Brown, said, “Thank God, I thank my Father that’s she’s home, because she could not be here right now. I could be looking for my baby, so I just thank God that she’s home and she’s safe

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<sup>7</sup> Source: “Girl, 10, Fights Off Abductor Near School.” Click2Houston.com. 30 October 2003  
<<http://www.click2houston.com/news/2597815/detail.html>>.

<sup>8</sup> Source: “Young girl fends off attacker.” BBC News. 27 August 2003  
<[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/west\\_midlands/3184507.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/west_midlands/3184507.stm)>.

and that's all that matters to me. I'm glad that she just didn't become a victim and let them take her. She is a very strong, strong baby."<sup>9</sup>

• **Based on the description in the following paragraph, is Llyan dangerous to Ffleuddur Fflam? This is the paragraph:**

**“The raft!” Taran shouted. “Into the river with it!” He seized one end of the clumsy craft and struggled to haul it to the water. Still yelling, Gurgi ran to aid him. Prince Rhun toiled as best he could to help. The bard had already splashed into the stream, where he stood hip-deep in the current and heaved at the branches. Llyan’s tufted ears cupped forward and her whiskers twitched as her glance fell on the bard. From her throat arose not a savage roar but a bell-like, questioning cry. Eyes shining with a strange glow, she loped forward on huge padded paws. Purring loudly, the mountain cat made straight for the frantic bard. (97)**

While Taran and the companions are building a raft to float them downstream, Llyan finds them. Certainly, Taran and his companions think that Llyan is dangerous; however, she seems not to be dangerous:

1) Llyan does not roar, but instead makes “a bell-like, questioning cry” (97).

2) Llyan purrs loudly.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: “Girl Stabs Would-Be Kidnapper With Pencil.” Fox News. <<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,312287,00.html>>. Posted on Warrior Talk. 20 November 2007  
<<http://www.warriortalk.com/showthread.php?30894-Girl-Stabs-Would-Be-Kidnapper-With-Pencil>>.

This information comes from Wikipedia:

Nobody knows for certain why cats purr, but the following reasons are speculated:

Cats often purr when being petted, becoming relaxed, or when eating. [...] One theory is that it is not a sign of showing relaxation or content, but an attempt at “friendship” or a signal of “specific intent”. For example, when a cat is nervous and cannot escape the situation (at a veterinarian perhaps), its purr may serve as an attempt to avoid being hurt. German ethologist and cat behaviorist Paul Leyhausen interprets it as a signal that the animal is not posing a threat.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purr>

Date Accessed: 15 August 2011

Note: Wikipedia is a questionable source. It can be edited by anyone, and so any idiot can edit it. However, it can be an interesting place to start doing research.

Note: The American style of punctuation is to put commas and periods inside quotation marks. The British style of punctuation is to put commas and periods outside quotation marks. For example:

Groucho Marx once asked Melinda, his little daughter, what she did at nursery school. She replied, “Oh, Daddy, all we do is paint and go to the **toilet.**” Groucho called this “the most accurate description of a nursery school that’s ever been **uttered.**”

WebMD may be a better source than Wikipedia. It contains this interesting information:

Purring isn't the sole domain of domestic cats. Some wild cats and their near relatives — civets, genets, mongooses — also purr. Even hyenas, guinea pigs, and raccoons can purr.

Cats that purr, such as mountain lions and bobcats, can't roar, however. And cats that roar, such as lions and tigers, can't purr. The structures surrounding their voice box (larynx) aren't stiff enough to produce a purr.

But it appears these cats evolved the roar for good reason — mainly to protect their prides, says Benjamin L. Hart, DVM, PhD, distinguished professor emeritus at the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine.

“If you're a big cat and you have to move around a lot to get prey, loud roaring plays a huge part in maintaining your territory,” Hart says.

But small cats are loners and don't compete with each other for meals, Hart says. Their communication doesn't need to be far-reaching. For them, scent marking does the territorial trick (as some unfortunate cat owners quickly learn).

Source: <<http://pets.webmd.com/cats/features/why-cats-purr>>.

Date Accessed: 13 September 2011

Llyan, a fictional character, both roars and purrs.

**• What does Kaw do when Kaw thinks that Llyan is threatening Fflewddur Fflam?**

Kaw attacks Llyan.

We read:

It was then that Kaw, perched on a low branch, beat his wings and launched himself against Llyan. Squawking and croaking at the top of his voice, the crow swooped down on the astonished beast. Llyan stopped in her tracks and roared angrily. Flying at full speed, Kaw passed within a hair's breadth of Llyan's mighty head, striking out with his wings and pecking at her with his sharp beak. (97)

Llyan takes off after Kaw, and Fflewddur Fflam and the others are safe.

Note: See Appendix on "Animal Heroes" for some true stories of animals protecting humans.

• **Does Taran believe that Kaw will stay safe?**

Yes, he does.

We read:

Fflewddur, whose face had turned deathly pale, gave a sigh of relief. "I feared she had me for sure! Believe me, I couldn't stand another bout of harping like the last one! I hope Kaw fares well," he added anxiously.

"Kaw will find us again," Taran assured him. "He's clever enough to stay out of Llyan's reach until he knows we're safe. If she keeps chasing him, I'm certain she'll have the worst of the battle."

Fflewddur nodded, then turned and glanced back over his shoulder. "In a way," he said, with a note of regret in his voice, "it's the first time my music has really been — ah — in a manner of speaking, sought after. In this case, if it weren't so dangerous, I should call it downright complimentary!" (98-99)

**• When the raft breaks up, what act of heroism does Taran perform?**

Taran makes sure that Prince Rhun reaches the shore safely, thus keeping his oath to make sure that the Prince is safe.

We read:

Taran, busy steering, glanced down in alarm. The hurriedly knotted vines had begun to give way. The raft shuddered in the swift current. With the pole, Taran thrust deeply for the river bottom, seeking to bring the raft to a halt. The current bore it onward and the branches bent and twisted as the water poured through the gaps. One of the vines parted, a branch ripped free, then another. Throwing aside the useless pole, Taran shouted for the companions to jump clear. Seizing Prince Rhun by the jacket, he sprang into the river.

As the water closed over his head, Prince Rhun kicked and struggled wildly. Taran tightened his grasp on the floundering Prince and fought his way to the surface. With a free hand he clung to a boulder and gained a foothold among the shifting stones. Heaving with all his strength, he dragged Rhun ashore and flung him to the bank. Gurgi and Fflewddur had managed to catch hold of what remained of the raft and were hauling it into the shallows. Prince Rhun sat up and looked around.

(99)

Even though Taran has performed an act of heroism, he doesn't talk about it. Instead, he seems to regard it as something that had to be done, and so he did it. Taran takes it as a matter of fact that when someone needs to be saved, you try to save them.

• **What can a child do to be prepared in an emergency in which drowning is a possibility?**

- 1) Know to call 911 for help. (In Britain, the emergency number is 999.)
- 2) Learn to swim.
- 3) Take an age-appropriate Red Cross water-rescue course.
- 4) Take an age-appropriate Red Cross first-aid course.

• **What course of action does Taran want to take after the raft breaks out?**

Taran wants to rebuild the raft and float downstream after Eilonwy and Magg. Most of the old raft can be used to build the new raft, and they can cut more vines.

Taran and the companions are very good at doing what needs to be done. They need to build a new raft, and so they begin to build a new raft, although Taran (and probably the others) are weary (100).

• **Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 9 end?**

Chapter 9 ends in this way:

The Prince of Mona had made his way to a clump of osiers, and Taran glimpsed him tugging away, trying to uproot them. The next instant, Rhun was no longer in sight.

With a shout of alarm, Taran dropped his armload of vines and ran toward the spot, calling Rhun's name. The bard looked up. "Not again!" he cried. "If there were a field with one stone he'd trip over it! A Fflam is patient, but there are limits!" Nevertheless, he hurried to join Taran, who was already kneeling among the osiers. At the spot

where Rhun had been standing was a gaping hole.  
The Prince of Mona had vanished. (100)

The reader will keep reading to find out what has happened  
to Prince Rhun.

## Chapter 10: The Cavern

- **Taran shows lots of courage in trying to rescue Prince Rhun from the pit in which he has fallen. How does the rescue attempt work out?**

After Prince Rhun disappears into the hole, Taran leaps into the hole and slides down into it. Taran shows much bravery here because he does not know what he is sliding into. He could very well be sliding into a place of danger.

In the novel and two movies of *True Grit*, the young girl Maddie, who is the protagonist, slips and falls into a large hole in the ground. She is unable to get out of the hole by herself, and a rattlesnake that is in the hole bites her.

- **Where do Taran and his companions find themselves? How dark is it?**

The companions also end up in the hole. Prince Rhun tries to climb out of the hole, and the wall collapses, bringing Ffleuddur Fflam and Gurgi into the hole.

Once Taran and the companions have light to see, they will see that they are in a beautiful cavern. The hole is very dark. When the wall collapsed, it shut out the light from the sky.

We read:

“Terrible, oh terrible!” moaned Gurgi. “Rumblings and crumblings fling poor Gurgi into fearsome blackness. He cannot see!”

“Great Belin,” came Ffleuddur’s voice out of the dark, “I’m delighted to hear that. For a moment I thought I’d been struck blind. I swear I can see more with my eyes shut!” (103)

• **Why can't Gurgi make a fire so that he and the other companions are able to see?**

Gurgi had fire stones, but he lost them when he fell into the hole.

The fire stones must be flint. Native Americans used flint to start fires. In Licking County, Ohio, Native Americans went to Flint Ridge to get flint:

*"This 'Flint Ridge' must have been as valuable to the Indians ... as the coal and iron mines of Ohio and Pennsylvania are to the white men of the present day."* □ □ — Henry Howe, 1888

Flint Ridge contains quarry pits where all of the ancient people of Ohio came to get flint for both tools and weapons. The flint was also a trade item for many of these people. The flint was especially prized by the Hopewell Culture for its quality and beauty. A walk through the site brings home how hard people labored to remove this material from the earth.

Source:

<http://ohsweb.ohiohistory.org/places/c01/index.shtml>

Date Accessed: 16 September 2011

By the way, flint is Ohio's official gemstone. □

• **Taran tries but fails to make Eilonwy's bauble cast light. Why does Taran think that he could not make Eilonwy's bauble cast light? Is that a good thing to say?**

We read:

“I cannot do it,” Taran murmured. “I fear it is not given to an Assistant Pig-Keeper to command such a thing of beauty and enchantment.” (105)

Taran is not valuing himself as highly as he should. He feels bad because he is an Assistant Pig-Keeper instead of a Prince. However, the reader knows that he is a true hero and a leader.

**• Why doesn't Prince Rhun try to make Eilonwy's bauble cast light? Does he have a good reason?**

We read:

“No sense in my trying,” said Prince Rhun. “I know I can't make it work. The very first time I held it, the thing blinked out the moment it was in my hands. Surprising! The Princess Eilonwy could light it so easily.”

Taran groped toward Fflewddur and put the sphere into his hand. “You know the lore of the bards and the ways of enchantments,” he urged. “Perhaps it will obey you. Try, Fflewddur. Our lives depend on it.” (105)

Prince Rhun should be willing to try to make the bauble cast light. Just because you fail at something once does not mean that you fail at it a second time. Proverbs often contain wisdom, and one proverb says this: “If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.”

We change over time. We grow, and we become stronger. Also, we become smarter. (Our taste changes over time, too. Maybe you did not like to eat a certain food last year, but you like eating that food this year.)

• **Fflewddur Fflam, and Gurgi all try to make Eilonwy's bauble cast light, but they fail. How does Fflewddur Fflam contradict himself?**

We read:

“A Fflam never despairs!” cried Fflewddur. “But,” he added dolefully, “I’m coming rapidly to believe this pit will be our grave, without even a decent mound to mark the spot. A Fflam is cheerful — but this is a disheartening situation, no matter how you look at it.” (106)

Fflewddur Fflam has the right idea: Say something to put heart into Taran and the companions. Unfortunately, the execution is lacking: He says something uplifting, but then he follows it with something discouraging. For example, he says, “A Fflam never despairs!” (106). But then he follows it with something that shows that he is despairing:

“But,” he added dolefully, “I’m coming rapidly to believe this pit will be our grave, without even a decent mound to mark the spot.” (106)

• **What is Taran thinking of when Eilonwy's bauble, which he is holding, casts light?**

This is important.

We read:

Gurgi silently gave the bauble back to Taran who, heavy hearted, cupped it in his hands again. With yearning now he held it, and his mind turned from his own plight to thoughts of Eilonwy. He saw her face and once more heard her gay laughter ring clearer than the notes of Fflewddur's harp. He smiled to himself, even as he recalled her chattering and her sharp words.

He was about to return the bauble to his jacket, but stopped short and stared at his hand. A point of light had begun to flicker in the depths of the sphere. As he watched, not daring to breathe, it blossomed and shimmered.

Taran sprang to his feet with a cry not of triumph but of wonder. Golden beams shone around him faintly but steadily. Trembling, he raised the sphere high above his head. (106-107)

Taran thinks good thoughts about Eilonwy, and the bauble lights up.

If Eilonwy thinks such good thoughts about others to make the bauble cast light, she must be indeed special. She must love other people such as Taran.

Thinking good thoughts about other people can cast light in your life.

Taran does not cry out with triumph when the bauble lights up. If he had done that, the bauble would have become dark again.

**• Now that Taran and his companions have light, they can see the cavern they are in. Describe it.**

The cavern, although dangerous, is beautiful:

“Amazing!” cried Prince Rhun. “Astonishing! Look at this cave! I never knew we had such a place on Mona!”

Again Taran cried out in wonder. Until now, he had believed they had fallen into something like a large burrow. The glow of Eilonwy’s bauble showed they had come, instead, to the edge of an enormous cavern. It stretched before them like a forest after an ice storm. Columns of stone rose like the trunks of

trees and arched to the ceiling where stone icicles clung. Along the shadowy walls, huge outcroppings sprang like hawthorn blossoms and glittered in the bauble's golden rays. Threads of scarlet and vivid green twisted through luminous shafts of rock. White tendrils of crystal curled along jagged walls gleaming with rivulets of water. Still other chambers lay beyond this one, and Taran caught sight of wide pools, flat and glistening as mirrors. Some gave a dull, greenish glow, others a pale blue. (107-108)

One thing that the cavern is not is part of the realm of the Fair Folk. This is a cavern made by nature, not by Fair Folk.

**• Why is it important that Taran and his companions escape from the cavern?**

Two reasons in particular make it important for Taran and the companions to escape from the cave:

- 1) They know in which direction Magg and Eilonwy have gone (109). Taran and the companions have not forgotten that they must rescue Eilonwy.
- 2) They are likely to die in the cavern unless they can find a way out.

**• Describe the “tumble of rock” (110) that Prince Rhun sees?**

We read:

“I say, there’s an odd thing,” called Rhun, pointing to a tumble of rock. It was, indeed, one of the strangest shapes Taran had seen in the cavern, for it looked like a hen’s egg sticking halfway out of a nest. The stone was white, smooth, and somewhat

pointed at the top, crusted here and there with patches of lichen, and stood nearly as tall as Taran himself. What at first resembled a nest was a tangled, discolored fringe of coarse strands that seemed to balance on the edge of a sharp drop. (110-111)

Of course, we find out that it is not a rock at all, but the head of a giant named Glew.

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 10 end?**

Chapter 10 ends in this way:

“Amazing!” called Rhun, who had insisted on striding closer to peer at it. “This isn’t a rock at all!” He turned in surprise to the companions. “This is unbelievable, but it’s almost like ...”

Taran seized the astonished Rhun and dragged him backward so abruptly the Prince nearly went head over heels. Gurgi yelped in terror. The shape had begun to move.

Two colorless eyes appeared, in a face pale as a dead fish; the eyebrows glittered with flecks of crystal; moss and mold edged the long, flapping ears and spread over the beard that sprouted below a lumpy nose.

Swords drawn, the companions huddled against the jagged wall. The huge head continued to rise and Taran saw it wobble on a skinny neck. A choking noise bubbled in the creature’s throat as it cried, “Puny things! Tremble before me! Tremble, I tell you! I am Glew! I am Glew!” (111)

The reader will keep on reading to learn about Glew. Is he dangerous?

## Chapter 11: King of the Stones

### **• Why would Glew want Taran and his companions to tremble before him? Is that a good reason?**

Glew seems to want Taran and his companions to tremble before him simply because he is much bigger than they are.

This is not a good reason. Size can have advantages, but here Glew seems to be simply a bully.

Heroes don't act the way that Glew acts. Taran and his companions have done and will do heroic acts, but they don't expect preferential treatment because of what they have done. They simply see that someone needs help, and then they help that person, often at the risk of their own lives.

Many heroes are humble. For example:

In October 2005, a Buick smashed against a pillar of a highway overpass on Interstate 95 in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, and caught fire. Shawn Reese stopped his truck, ran to the car, saw a head and an arm dangling outside a window, and pulled the man out. One of the man's legs was on fire and had to be put out with a fire extinguisher, but the man survived. Mr. Reese is a hero, but he denies that he is a hero. Florida Highway Patrol Lieutenant Tim Frith said, "If he [the victim] had remained in that car, he certainly would have burned up. There's no doubt about that. He [Mr. Reese] simply did save the guy's life. However, Mr. Reese said, "I ain't no hero. This guy just needed help. It's just something you do." He then got back in his truck and headed to a construction site in Boynton Beach, Florida.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Source: Andrew Marra, "LIFESAVER REFUSES TO CALL HIMSELF A HERO." *Palm Beach Post* (Florida). 14 October 2005

Here is a humble child hero:

On 21 August 2002, seven-year-old Jordan Wyman of Lacey, Washington, rescued an infant floating toward the deep end of a community swimming pool in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Jordan, who was there with his grandparents, said, “The water was going up over his eyes, so I went over, picked him up, and took him to his daddy.” Like many heroes, Jordan is modest about his heroism. When the infant’s father asked Jordan for his name, his grandparents said that Jordan told him that he was just a Cub Scout from Washington state. His grandparents also said that Jordan did not want his mother to learn what he had done. According to his grandparents, Jordan said, “My mom will call the news [and] make a big deal of it, and I will have to be on TV.”<sup>11</sup>

We should note that Taran and the others in his group are known as the companions, although I myself think that the phrase “band of heroes” is a fit description — and yes, Prince Rhun will become a hero.

**• Write a description of Glew. Should people tremble before him?**

We read:

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<[http://findarticles.com/p/news-articles/palm-beach-post/mi\\_8163/is\\_20051014/lifesaver-refuses-call-hero/ai\\_n51897913/](http://findarticles.com/p/news-articles/palm-beach-post/mi_8163/is_20051014/lifesaver-refuses-call-hero/ai_n51897913/)>.

<sup>11</sup> Source: “7-year-old who saved baby will be honored.” *The Olympian* (Olympia, Washington). 7 September 2002

<http://www.theolympian.com/home/news/20020907/frontpage/45674.shtml>>. Posted on Real Life Little Heroes.  
<<http://www.chinastrategies.com/lithero.htm#7-year-old%20who%20saved%20baby%20will%20be%20honored>>.

Gurgi flung himself to the ground, covered his head with his hands, and whimpered piteously. The creature threw a long, spindly leg over the ledge and began slowly drawing himself upright. He was more than thrice as tall as Taran, and his flabby arms dangled below a pair of knobby, moss-covered knees. With a lopsided gait he shambled toward the companions. (112)

Glew is big, and being confronted with something big can be frightening. However, Glew does not seem strong and he may not be healthy.

Glew is rather pitiful.

**• Is Glew frightening, or pitiful, or both?**

Glew seems to be both.

Glew is frightening because of his size. Being confronted with a giant can be scary.

However, Glew is pitiful. He has failed at most things that he has tried to accomplish. We will see that he is not a good person.

Glew does not value things in the right way. He wants to be feared, and he wants to be honored, but he has accomplished very little. To be honored, one should do something that makes worthy of being honored. Glew wants to be honored simply because he is big.

**• What does Glew value most?**

Glew values being big and being famous.

Glew spent a lot of effort in becoming big. He worked hard at making an effective spell. Now, of course, he sees a disadvantage in becoming big. Because he so big, he

cannot find a way out of the cave. If he were his normal, small size, he could easily get out of the cave.

Glew also values fame. He is happy to learn that Taran and the companions have heard of him.

We read:

“If that’s the Glew we know,” said the bard, “he’s changed remarkably.”

The giant’s pale eyes widened. What would have been a smile on a face of ordinary size became a grin that stretched longer than Taran’s arm. Glew blinked and stooped closer.

“You’ve heard of me then?” he asked eagerly. (113)

Later, we find out that Glew wants to be called a King. Glew wants an important position and title. But what he is King of? The title of Chapter 11 tells us: He is “The King of Stones.”

### • What do Taran and his companions value?

Taran and his companions value love and friendship very much. They are on a quest to rescue Eilonwy. They want to make sure that she is safe.

They value other things as well.

Fflewddur Fflam values his harp and music.

Gurgi values food (and is very capable of heroism in the service of his friends).

Prince Rhun values becoming a good King.

Taran values heroism such as the kind that Prince Gwydion exemplifies.

• **Prince Rhun blurts out Llyan’s name (113). This is foreshadowing. What is foreshadowing?**

As mentioned previously, the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of *A Handbook to Literature* by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon defines “foreshadowing” in this way: “The presentation of material in a work in such a way that later events are prepared for” (201).

Here Prince Rhun blurts out something that Taran thinks he should not have blurted out. Taran is cautious. He wants to find out more than Glew before he begins to reveal information to him.

We read:

But until he had learned more of this strange creature, Taran had deemed it wiser to say nothing of their search. (113)

Later in the novel, Prince Rhun will blurt out something that he should not have.

• **What can’t Glew find a way out of the cavern?**

Glew is quite simply too big to get out of the cavern.

• **How did Glew become trapped in the cavern?**

Glew became trapped in the cavern after Llyan broke out of her cage and started chasing him. He was carrying the potion that he had used to make Llyan bigger and as he ducked into the cavern he drank it. He became bigger and bigger and went further and further underground searching for big enough chambers to be able to contain his size.

We read:

“Glew,” Taran interrupted, “we pity your plight, but I beg you, show us a way out of the cavern.” Glew rocked his huge, scraggly head from side to side.

“Way out? I’ve never stopped looking for one. There isn’t any. Not for me, at least.”

“There must be,” insisted Taran. “How did you find your way into the cave in the first place? Please, show us.”

“Find my way?” replied Glew. “I should hardly call it a question of finding. It was Llyan’s fault. If only she hadn’t broken from her cage the one time my potion was working so well. She chased me out of my hut. Ungrateful of her, but I forgive her. I still had the flask in my hand. Oh, how I wish I’d thrown the wretched potion away! I ran as fast as I could, with Llyan after me.” Glew patted his forehead with a trembling hand and blinked sorrowfully. “I’ve never run so fast and so far in my life,” he said. “I still dream of it, when I’m not dreaming of worse. Finally, I found a cave and into it I went.

“I hadn’t a moment to spare,” continued Glew, sighing heavily. “I swallowed the potion. Now that I’ve had time to think it over, I realize I shouldn’t have. But it had made Llyan so much bigger, I thought it would do the same for me, so I might have a chance against her. And so it did,” he added. “In fact, it worked so quickly I nearly broke my crown on the ceiling of the cave. And I kept on growing. I had to squeeze along as fast as I could, going farther and farther downward always looking for bigger chambers, until I ended here. By then, alas, no passage was wide enough to let me out. [...]” (115-116)

**• What is Fflewddur Fflam's opinion of Glew? Is his opinion accurate?**

Fflewddur Fflam has a low opinion of Glew. When Glew was small in size, he was small in other ways. Now that Glew is big in size, he is still small in other ways. Glew is small because he puts himself before all other people. Glew considers himself the center of the universe.

It is better to be small in size but big in other ways. A child will grow to be big in size. It helps if the child who grows into an adult as Taran and Eilonwy are doing is big in other ways.

A true hero sometimes puts other people before him- or herself. A true hero will risk his or her own life to save the life of another person.

We read:

“Fflewddur,” Taran whispered in the bard’s ear, “is there no way we can make him stop talking and show us one of the passages? Or should we try to slip by him and find it ourselves?”

“I don’t know,” answered Fflewddur. “From all the giants I’ve seen — yes, well, the truth of it is I’ve never seen any myself, though I’ve heard enough of them. Glew seems rather, how shall I say it, small! I don’t know if I’m making myself clear, but he was a feeble little fellow to begin with and now he’s a feeble little giant! And very likely a coward. I’m sure we could fight him, if we could reach him. Our biggest risk would be getting stepped on and squashed.” (116)

• **Why was Glew a failure as a warrior?**

Glew wanted to be like Prince Gwydion (although he does not mention Prince Gwydion's name), who is a good role model, but Glew disliked the sight of blood, meaning that he cannot be a warrior (or doctor, dentist, or nurse). He also does not like the noise of the battlefield. We can also guess that Glew would be too weak to be a warrior.

We read:

“I didn’t want to be a giant,” protested Glew, “not at first anyway. I thought, once, I should be a famous warrior. I joined the host of Lord Goryon when he marched against Lord Gast. But I couldn’t stand the sight of blood. It turned me green, green as grass. And those battles! Enough to make your head swim! All that clashing and smiting! The din alone is more than flesh can bear! No, no, it was absolutely out of the question.” (117)

Not everyone can be a warrior. There need be no shame in that, but one should find something that one is good at.

We read:

“A warrior’s life is one of hardship,” Taran said, “and it takes a stout heart to follow it. Surely there were other means to make a name for yourself.” (117)

• **Why was Glew a failure as a bard?**

Glew thinks that he could handle the years of study it takes to be a bard, but he dislikes the travel that a wandering bard must do.

We read:

“I thought, then, I might become a bard,” Glew went on. “It turned out as badly. The knowledge you must gain, the lore to be learned ....”

“I’m with you there, old fellow,” murmured Ffleuddur, with a sigh of regret. “I had rather the same experience.”

“It wasn’t the years of study,” explained Glew in a voice that would have been forlorn had it not been so loud. “I know I could have learned if I’d taken the time. No, it was my feet. I couldn’t bear all the tramping and wandering around from one end of Prydain to the other. And always sleeping in a different place. And the change of water. And the harp rubbing blisters on your shoulder ....”

Not everyone can be a bard. There need be no shame in that, but one should find something that one is good at.

### • **Why was Glew a failure as a hero?**

We read:

“It was then I decided to become a hero,” Glew eagerly went on, ignoring the impatience of the companions, “to go about slaying dragons and such. But you can’t imagine how difficult it is. Why, even finding a dragon is almost impossible! But I discovered one in Cantrev Mawr.

“It was a small dragon,” admitted Glew. “About the size of a weasel. The cottagers had it penned up in a rabbit hutch and the children used to go and look at it when they’d nothing else to do. But it was a dragon nevertheless. I would have slain it,” he added, with a huge, rattling sigh. “I tried. But the vicious thing bit me. I still carry the marks.” (119)

Not everyone can be a hero. For one thing, not everyone has the opportunity to be a hero. In fact, it's best if you don't have the opportunity to be a hero. For example, rescuing someone from a burning house is heroic, but all of us can agree that it is best if the house never catches on fire in the first place. There need be no shame in not being a hero, but one should find something that one is good at.

Note that the companions are impatient to leave — they want to rescue Eilonwy. We can guess, however, that Glew is talkative because for a long time he has had no one to talk to.

**• Why was Glew a failure when he tried to become a King?**

One way to become a King if you are not born in a King's family is to marry a Princess, but Glew could not find a Princess to marry.

We read:

“Then I thought I might become a king,” Glew said hurriedly, before Taran could finish. “I thought if I could wed a princess — but no, they turned me away at the castle gate.” (119)

**• Glew attempted to be a wizard. What story does he tell about a book of spells?**

Glew tells a story about a wizard who had a book of spells that he wanted to get rid of. Glew was eager to get the book, but when he got the book he found out that the pages were blank.

We read:

“What else could I do?” moaned Glew, shaking his head miserably. “What was left for me but to try enchantments? At last I came upon a wizard who

claimed to have a book of spells in his possession. He wouldn't tell me how it had fallen into his hands, but he assured me the magic it held was most powerful. It had once belonged to the House of Llyr." (119)

Because Eilonwy is a Princess of the House (Royal Family) of Llyr, the book by blood-right (158) belongs to her. We also read:

"... the wizard," Glew continued, "was in such haste that I had no chance to see the book. Until it was too late. He had cheated me. It was a book — a book of nothing! Of empty pages!" (121)

Later, we will find out that the book is valuable; however, here we see that Glew does not recognize its worth, just as he does not recognize the worth of being a good and honest person and a good and honest friend.

### • What is Caer Colur?

The book of blank pages came from Caer Colur, which is the ancient seat of the House of Llyr. Glew knows a few other things about Caer Colur. It is now supposed to be in ruins. It is also supposed to be enchanted. In addition, the land it is on was flooded and now is no longer a part of the mainland, so that Castle Colur is on a small island at the mouth of the Alaw River (the river that Magg and Eilonwy are sailing down).

"Colur" can be translated as "cosmetics."<sup>12</sup> I suspect that it can also be translated as "color."

"Caer" means "fortress." Caer Colur is the Castle of Llyr.

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<sup>12</sup> This is according to

<<http://mymemory.translated.net/t/Welsh/English/colur>>, which I accessed on 16 September 2011.

• **Why does Taran ask so many questions about Caer Colur?**

Taran is being very intelligent here. Perhaps Castle Colur is where Magg is taking Eilonwy. It is a small island at the mouth of the Alaw River (the river that Magg and Eilonwy are sailing down). It is said to be enchanted, and Achren is an enchantress.

We read:

Taran's mind raced. Magg had taken Eilonwy to the Alaw. He had needed a boat. Was Eilonwy's ancestral home his destination? His glance met Fflewddur's, and the bard's expression showed he had been following the same thought. (121)

• **What might Glew have been successful as?**

Glew successfully brewed a potion that made Llyan and him large. He does experiments. He keeps careful notes. We also learn that he is very good at building equipment. We read about Glew:

He had, he explained, tried to brew new potions — this time to make himself smaller. In one of the chambers he had even set up a kind of workshop, where a bubbling pool of steaming hot water served to boil his concoctions. Glew's cleverness in devising makeshift pestles and mortars, cookpots and basins from painstakingly hollowed-out stones surprised Taran and filled him with a pitying admiration for the desperate giant. (123)

Glew would make an excellent scientist, provided he learned some ethics. In the fantasy world of Prydain, Glew brewed a potion to make himself big. In our world of reality, Glew could do much good by developing scientific

medicines to make people grow who would otherwise be very, very short.

**• How does Glew respond when Taran asks him for help?**

He pretends that he will help them, and he asks to be called King Glew.

We read:

“Help us,” Taran pleaded. “Help us and we shall try to help you.”

Glew said nothing for a moment. His forehead wrinkled and his lips twitched nervously. “Very well, very well,” he sighed, climbing to his feet. “Follow me. Oh — there’s one thing you might do,” he added. “If it would be no bother to you, it’s such a little thing, if you really wouldn’t mind. So at least I might have the satisfaction, however brief. A tiny favor. Would you call me — King Glew?” (122)

**• Glew wants to be called “King.” What is Glew King of?**

The title of Chapter 11 tells us the answer to this question: He is “King of the Stones.”

Here we see that Glew is overvaluing titles. He wants to be called “King,” but he is the King of only stones. Prince Rhun will one day be called “King,” but he will be King of Mona and he will have lots of people to look after.

**• What task is Glew working on to get himself out of the cavern?**

He is working on potions to make himself smaller so that he can escape from the cavern.

• **Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 11 end?**

Chapter 11 ends in this way:

Impatient to be gone, he ran forward as Glew halted at a chimney-like shaft of rock. Close to the ground the dark mouth of a tunnel opened.

“Farewell,” sniffed Glew, pointing sorrowfully at the tunnel. “Go straight on. You shall find your way.”

“You have my word,” Taran said, while Gurgi, Fflewddur, and Prince Rhun crawled into the opening. “If it is in Dallben’s power, he will help you.”

Clutching the bauble, Taran bent and thrust his way past the jagged arch. Bats rose in a shrieking cloud. He heard Gurgi cry out in fear and raced ahead. Next moment, he collided with a wall of stone and fell back on his heels while the bauble slipped from his grasp and dropped among the pebbles on the uneven ground. With a shout Taran spun to see a massive rock pushed into the opening, and flung himself toward it.

Glew had sealed the passage. (123-124)

The reader will keep on reading to see how Taran and his companions get out of the trap that Glew had set for them. They will also keep reading to see what Glew intends to do with them.

## Chapter 12: The Tomb

### • **Why did Lloyd Alexander title this chapter “The Tomb”?**

A tomb is a chamber for the dead, often made out of rock. “The Tomb” is a good title because Taran and the companions are basically in a tomb. They are surrounded by rock, and they know of no way out. It looks very much as if they could die here.

### • **What kindness did Taran promise to do for Glew at the end of Chapter 11?**

Taran promised to ask Dallben to do what he can to help Glew. Because we know that Dallben is a great enchanter, we can guess that Dallben would very likely be successful.

We read:

“You have my word,” Taran said, while Gurgi, Ffleuddur, and Prince Rhun crawled into the opening. “If it is in Dallben’s power, he will help you.” (124)

### • **How does Glew repay kindness with treachery?**

Glew has said that he will show Taran and the companions the way out of the cavern, but instead he traps them and keeps them prisoner in one of the cavern’s rock chambers.

### • **Glew asks, “But what else am I to do?” (125). What else could Glew do?**

Glew could keep his word and let them out. That would be honorable thing to do. And by helping Taran and the companions, Glew would most likely be helping himself. As Taran has promised, if Dallben is able to help Glew, he will. Now, with Taran and the companions trapped in the

cavern, Dallben is unlikely ever to learn of the existence of Glew.

**• Why does Fflewddur Fflam — at first — think Glew has made them prisoner?**

Fflewddur Fflam at first thinks that Glew intends to use them as guinea pigs, the way that he used Llyan to test his potions. Scientists follow ethical guidelines when it comes to experimenting on animals and on humans. We regard human life as valuable — more valuable than animal life — and so we test on animals instead of humans whenever possible. When it comes to testing on humans, we do such things as ask for volunteers. Taran and the other companions are not volunteers.

**• Why does Glew think he needs Taran and his companions — at least one of them — to get out of the cavern?**

It turns out that Fflewddur Fflam is wrong about why Glew wants to keep them in the cavern. Glew will swallow each potion himself, he says. But he needs to use Taran or one of the humans as an ingredient in his potions. Just like the witches' potion in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Glew needs somebody dead to make his potion.

**• Why is Fflewddur Fflam's remark in Chapter 6 about the ingredients Glew used in his potions forecasting?**

In Chapter 6, we read:

“He must have been painstaking,” Fflewddur went on. “I’ll say that much for him. He describes everything he did, and set down all his recipes, quite carefully and methodically. As for his ingredients,” the bard said, making a sour face, “I should rather not think about them.” (75)

We see here that one of the ingredients is something that comes from a dead person.

**• Which two meanings can “look at it from my side” have?**

We read:

“Great Belin,” shouted Ffleuddur, “let me get my hands on your scrawny neck and I’ll make you sound raw!” There was another silence. “Please,” said Glew faintly, “try to look at it from my side.”

“Gladly,” said Ffleuddur. “Just push away that rock.” (128)

“Look at it from my side” has two meanings. Glew has in mind the figurative meaning: Look at it as if you were me. Ffleuddur Fflam has in mind the literal meaning: He would like to look at it from Glew’s literal side of the boulder; that is, he would like to look at the boulder from *outside* the tomb.

**• Glew says that “this won’t hurt you a bit, you can be sure. It won’t take more than a moment of your time. Half a moment! And I shall only need one of you. Only one! You can’t say that’s asking too much, you can’t be so selfish ...” (127-128). Who is being selfish here?**

Glew is being selfish one here. He thinks that Taran or one of the other companions ought to willingly give up his life so that Glew can brew a potion that will make him smaller.

Glew is overvaluing himself here. He regards his comfort as being worth more than the life of another person. Glew is in no real danger in the cavern. He simply dislikes it. He is willing for someone else to die so that he can get out of the cave and have a more comfortable life.

• **What does a true hero do?**

A true hero will risk his or her life to save the life of another person. In doing this, a true hero will not unnecessarily risk his or her life. Prince Gwydion highly values his life, as all of us ought to do.

In this case, no one should give up his or her life for Glew. For one thing, Dallben may be able to get Glew out of the cave without loss of human life.

I believe that Taran would give up his life to save the life of Eilonwy, but of course Taran would like for Eilonwy and him to both be alive and together.

People are not required to give up their lives in an attempt to save the life of someone else. If you can swim and are trained in water rescue, you can call 911 and then swim out to a drowning person and rescue him or her. But if you can't swim, it's best to call 911 and hope that emergency workers quickly arrive to save the drowning person. If you can't swim and you were to try to rescue the drowning person, both you and the drowning person could die.

• **What act of true heroism does Gurgi offer to do?**

The companions try to get out of the tomb, but they cannot. Prince Rhun even breaks his sword by trying to force its point under the boulder blocking the exit (130). It looks as if they are trapped in the tomb.

Gurgi volunteers to be the person who is killed. Gurgi believes that if he dies, then Glew will let the others go free.

We read:

The companions fell silent at the Prince of Mona's words. Gurgi, who had crouched on the earth and wrapped his woolly arms around his knees, stared

wretchedly at Taran. “Gurgi will go,” the creature whispered faintly, though he trembled so much he could hardly speak. “Yes, yes, he will give his poor tender head for broilings and boilings.” (131)

Note that Gurgi is not willing to give up his life to help Glew, but he is willing to give up his life to save the lives of Taran and the other companions.

Note that being heroic does not mean not being afraid. Gurgi does not want to die. He trembles out of fear. But he is willing to die to save his friends.

**• What act of true heroism does Prince Rhun offer to do?**

Prince Rhun also offers to give up his life to Glew in order to save the lives of the others.

We read:

“There’s not one of you who wouldn’t give up his life for a companion,” Rhun added. “Fflewddur Fflam offered his life for ours in Llyan’s lair. Even now poor Gurgi is willing to offer his.” He raised his head. “A bard, a humble creature of the forest, an Assistant Pig-Keeper.” Rhun’s eyes met Taran’s and in a low voice he said, “Can a Prince do less? I doubt I should ever really be able to measure up to being a true Prince. Except in this.” (132-133)

This is heroic, but Prince Rhun is undervaluing himself just as Taran undervalues himself when he is sorry that he is not high-born the way a Prince is.

Prince Rhun is clumsy right now, but he is likely to grow out of his clumsiness fairly quickly.

We see that Prince Rhun should value himself highly. After all, he is willing to do something heroic: give his life to save the lives of other people.

I should point out that when I say that one should value oneself highly, that does not mean that one should think that one is better than other people. Glew values himself more than he values other people: He is willing for someone to die so that he can get out of the cavern.

• **Does Taran respect Prince Rhun?**

Taran has enormous respect for Prince Rhun because of his heroism.

We read:

Taran looked at Rhun for a long moment. “You speak of measure,” he said. “I had measured you as no more than a feckless princeling. I was wrong. You are a truer Prince and better man than ever I believed. But this sacrifice is not yours to make. You know my oath to your father.” (133)

The online Free Dictionary define “feckless” in these ways:

1. Lacking purpose or vitality; feeble or ineffective.
2. Careless and irresponsible.

Source: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/feckless>

Date Accessed: 17 September 2011

• **Can Taran and his companions trust Glew to keep his word and kill only one of them? Is Glew likely to keep his promise to let the others go if one person gives up his life? He said, “I’ll lead you out of here, I promise” (129).**

I doubt it. He wants to lead the others out of the cavern. That means that he will be his normal size again. I think

that he would drink the potion and if it doesn't work, he would keep on killing until finally a potion did work. And if the potion did work the first time, Glew would be small and weak again and would be unable to roll away the stone that keeps Taran and the companions locked in the rocky tomb. They would die there as Glew walks free.

When writing this chapter, Lloyd Alexander was probably influenced by Homer's *Odyssey*, in one book of which Odysseus is locked in a cavern by the one-eyed Cyclops. Odysseus has to figure out how to get of the cavern. He can't kill the Cyclops because he and his men are not strong enough to roll the boulder away from the entrance (and exit) of the cave. He ends up blinding the Cyclops and escapes when the Cyclops rolls away the boulder.

**• Taran and his companions bring up the possibility that Glew is mad (127), a word that means insane. What is the difference between being mad and being evil?**

A mad or insane person is unable to distinguish between right and wrong. A mad or insane person may do something bad but be unaware that it is bad because of an inability to know what is right and what is wrong.

An evil person knows what is bad but deliberately does bad things.

Justice systems distinguish between insane people and evil people. An insane person may do something bad and be found innocent by reason of insanity. An evil person may do something bad and be found guilty. If the bad things are sufficiently bad, both people will be locked up for the rest of the lives. The mad or insane person will be locked up in a mental hospital, while the evil person is locked up in a prison.

**• Bats are important in this chapter. In the beginning of Chapter 12, we read about the bats that are trapped**

**with Taran and his companions. At the end of Chapter 12, Prince Rhun asks where the bats have gone. What is the importance of this question?**

Taran and the companions are unable to dig themselves out of the tomb. They are trapped. However, the bats found a way out of the rocky chamber. If the bats found a way out of the rocky chamber, perhaps Taran and the companions can find out how the bats got out, and then perhaps they can also get out of the rocky chamber.

We read:

Prince Rhun [...] added, “it’s astonishing, but I wonder what became of all the bats?” (133)

### **Chapter 13: The Ladder**

#### **• How does Taran find out where the bats have gone?**

Taran is able to use the light from Eilonwy's bauble to find out where the bats have gone. He finds an opening in the wall that the bats have gone through.

We read:

Again and again he swept the golden light around the cave. A fair, shadowy line seemed traced amid the stones high above him. He stepped back and studied it carefully. The shadow deepened, and Taran realized it marked a narrow ledge, a flaw in the rock. "There it is!" he called, holding the bauble as steadily as his trembling hands allowed. "There — you can barely make it out, the wall curves and hides it. But see where the rock seems to dip and break..."

"Amazing!" cried Rhun. "Astonishing! It's a passage, rightly enough. The bats have gone through it. Do you think we can?" (135)

#### **• The title of Chapter 13 is "The Ladder." How do Taran and his companions build a ladder?**

The ladder they make is a human ladder. (Perhaps I should write "sentient-being ladder" since it is not clear that Gurgi is a human. They build the ladder by using themselves. At the bottom is Fflewddur Fflam. Next is Gurgi. Then comes Taran. On top is Prince Rhun.

#### **• How many people can escape from the tomb by using the ladder?**

Just one. The person at the top can reach the opening and climb out, but the ladder is so short that no one else can reach the opening.

However, Taran thinks at first that perhaps the person (Prince Rhun) who gets out through the opening can use vines to use as ropes to get the others out. However, Glew arrives too soon for that to happen.

We read:

Taran nodded. "It may be that he can drop a vine down to the others," he said. "In that way..." (136)

**• What instructions does Taran give Prince Rhun?**

It is still important that Eilonwy be rescued. Taran wants Prince Rhun to go to Caer Colur and rescue Eilonwy.

We read:

Taran turned quickly to the Prince of Mona. "I know their hearts and I speak for my companions. Our choice is taken. It is too late to hope to save us. Try to make your way to Caer Colur. Should Kaw find you, he will guide you there." (137)

**• What does Prince Rhun take with him when he leaves? To whose marriage does Taran refer?**

Prince Rhun takes Eilonwy's bauble so that he can give it back to her.

Taran refers to the wedding of Prince Rhun and Eilonwy. Taran believes that he is not of high birth and so will not marry Eilonwy. Also, he believes that he very well could die in the cavern.

We read:

"Prince Rhun," Taran said firmly. "Did you not put yourself under my orders?" The stone had begun to grate in the passageway and Taran could hear Glew's frantic snuffling. "This, too, you must take," he said, pressing the bauble into Rhun's reluctant

hand. “It is rightfully Eilonwy’s and it is you who shall give it back to her.” He turned his eyes away. “May it shine brightly on your wedding day.” (137)

**• How do Taran and his companions react when Glew comes to see whom he can kill to make his potion?**

Taran and the other companions fight Glew when Glew moves the boulder blocking the exit of the rocky tomb. Although Glew is big physically, they know that he is small in the non-physical areas where he should be big. They think that he may be a coward. Of course, Taran and the other companions want to stay alive.

We read:

“We must stand against him now!” Taran cried. “We shall see whether he’s as great a coward as he is a liar. Hurry! Give him no chance to shut us in again!” (139)

**• Throughout the Prydain Chronicles, Taran and his band of heroes are frequently willing to give their lives, as is Prince Gwydion. However, they are reluctant to give up their lives to Glew and so they fight him. What is the difference in the times they are willing to give their lives and this time when they are not?**

Prince Gwydion values his life highly, as do Taran and the other companions, and as we ought to. We should not easily give up our lives.

They are sometimes willing to give up their lives. Prince Gwydion fights for his country in battle. Of course, anyone who fights in battle can die. Prince Gwydion is willing to give up his life in battle if it will help the citizens of his country to stay free. However, Prince Gwydion prefers to stay alive so that he can keep on fighting.

Taran and the other companions are willing to give up their lives for each other. They are willing to do this out of friendship and love. Of course, they know that the best thing is to stay alive so that they can be with their friends and loved ones.

Some real-life heroes such as police officers and firefighters are willing to give up their lives as they try to save people from criminals and from fires. Of course, they wish to stay alive so that they can make more rescues. In addition, they receive lots of training in saving lives. They do their best to save the life of someone else without losing their own life.

Saving lives is important. Firefighters save lives, and they save property, but saving lives takes precedence over saving property.

No one has a good reason to give up his or her life for Glew. After all, Dallben is such a good enchanter that he almost certainly can get Glew out of the cave. If you can save or help someone without dying, that is much better than dying to save or help someone.

**• Why does Taran tell his companions, “Run! Let Glew follow me!” (140).**

Taran has fallen into a pool of water and the glittering water makes it easy for Glew to see him — Taran is not glowing so brightly that Glew’s eyes are hurt.

Taran thinks that he will not be able to escape because Glew can easily see him. However, Taran does not want everyone to die. Having one person die is better than having all the companions die.

By letting Glew follow him, Taran is giving his companions a chance to run and to save themselves. Taran is being heroic here.

We read:

Next thing he knew, he fell with a splash into one of the pools dotting the cavern. He thrashed wildly and flung out his arms, seeking a handhold on the rocky edge. The water glittered with a cold, pale light. As Taran scrambled out, bright, luminous droplets clung to his drenched garments, his face, hands, and hair. Escape for him was hopeless now; the glow would betray him wherever he sought refuge.

“Run!” Taran shouted to the companions. “Let Glew follow me!” (140)

When Taran falls into the water, the water drops reflect the dim light in the cavern, making him very visible. (And possibly the water is luminescent.)

**• Glew complains, “Have you no consideration? No thought for anyone else?” (141). Who is actually the person who has no consideration for anyone else and who has no thought for anyone else?**

Of course, Glew has no consideration for anyone else. He does not think about other people. Glew considers only himself and thinks only about himself. Glew wants someone to die so he can make a potion to get out of the cave.

**• Why can Glew see better in the darkness than Taran and the companions?**

Glew has been in the darkness for a long time, so his eyes have grown accustomed to the dark. Taran and the other companions have not been in the darkness for very long, so their eyes have not become used to the darkness the way that Glew’s eyes have.

• **What hurts Glew?**

Glew's eyes are accustomed to the darkness, but they are not accustomed to bright light. He has not seen the sun for a long time. When Prince Rhun returns with Eilonwy's bauble, which is "brilliant as noonday" (141), Glew is blinded and his eyes hurt him. He screams, and his screams make the stone icicles in the cavern fall. One hits him in the head and he falls.

We read:

The giant reached to seize him. Taran raised his sword high above his head in a last futile gesture of defense. Golden rays burst around him, brilliant as noonday.

With a scream of pain, Glew clapped his hands to his eyes. "The light!" he shrieked. "Stop the light!" (121)

We had foreshadowing of this near the beginning of Chapter 11 when Gurgi had to shade his eyes from the light of Eilonwy's bauble, which Taran had made shine "faintly but steadily" (107).

We read:

The giant bent, shaded his white eyes against the light of the bauble, and peered at the companions. (112)

• **Lloyd Alexander is a master at making the end of a chapter interesting. How does Chapter 13 end?**

Chapter 13 ends in this way:

Screaming and roaring, the giant covered his head with his arms. His earsplitting bellows rang through the cave. The stone icicles trembled and crashed to

earth; the crystals split and showered Taran with fragments. Suddenly Glew was no longer standing, but stretched full length, half covered by the shards, lying motionless where a falling crystal had glanced off his head. Taran, still dazzled, leaped to his feet.

At the entrance to the chamber stood Prince Rhun, the bauble blazing in his hand. (141)

The reader will have a number of questions:

- 1) Why did Prince Rhun return?
- 2) Why is Eilonwy's bauble now shining brightly for Prince Rhun when before it did not shine for him?
- 3) Taran and the companions have not yet made their escape. Will they be able to?

## Chapter 14: The Empty Book

### • **Why is it brave for Prince Rhun to return to Taran and the others?**

Prince Rhun is risking his life because Glew is much bigger than he is, and Glew wants to kill one of the companions.

### • **Why did Prince Rhun return?**

Basically, Prince Rhun found that he could not leave the others behind in mortal danger, so he returned to try to save them if he could.

We read:

“Hullo, hullo!” called Rhun, hastening to the companions. “I’ve never been so surprised in my life. I didn’t mean to disobey orders, but after I’d crawled out the passage, I — I just couldn’t leave you there to be cooked up; I simply couldn’t do it. I kept thinking to myself that none of you would have gone running off...” He hesitated and looked anxiously at Taran. “You aren’t angry are you?” (142)

### • **Is Prince Rhun braver and more caring than Taran?**

This is hard to believe, but we can make a case that Prince Rhun may be braver and more caring than Taran. We remember that Taran left Fflewddur Fflam alone in the hut with Llyan in Chapter 8. Taran did not go back for him. Fortunately, Fflewddur Fflam was able to escape.

However, we know that Taran is a brave and a caring person. We know that Taran cares for Fflewddur Fflam.

Perhaps the lesson here is that we must act on the best knowledge available to us. Sometimes, a brave person will rescue someone in a dangerous situation. Sometimes, the

situation may be too dangerous and the brave person will decide not to attempt a rescue.

No two situations are exactly the same. When Taran left Fflewddur Fflam behind in the hut with Llyan, Taran was most anxious to rescue Eilonwy. He knew that Fflewddur Fflam was in no immediate danger. In addition, Fflewddur Fflam is an adult and has been able to take care of himself in the past.

• **How was Prince Rhun able to conquer Glew?**

The bauble blazes brightly for Prince Rhun, and Glew's eyes cannot stand the light. He yells, apparently in pain, and his yells cause some of the stone icicles to fall. One hits him on the head and knocks him out.

More importantly, Prince Rhun is able to conquer Glew because he wants to help the companions. He is looking out more for others than himself.

• **What merciful thing does Taran do when Fflewddur Fflam suggests that it may be a good idea to kill Glew while he is unconscious?**

Taran decides not to kill Glew. In fact, he still wants to help Glew, and he will still ask Dallben to help Glew.

If Glew were still trying to kill one of the companions, Taran would not hesitate to kill Glew if he were able. Life is important, and self-defense is important. One can kill in self-defense, but one should do so only when necessary. When possible, it is better to flee than to kill in self-defense.

One exception to this rule is soldiers in battle. They should retreat when ordered to retreat, but they should not desert.

Note something that Fflewddur Fflam says about Glew:

“He’d been here so long he couldn’t stand the brightness, the repulsive little grub. There, I’m calling him little again,” he added. “But I still say for a giant he’s remarkably small-natured.” (153)

**• How are Taran and his companions able to get out of the cavern?**

When Glew screamed and stone icicles fell, a passageway opened up. Taran and the companions exit through it.

**• What surprising discovery do Taran and his companions make about the book with blank pages that they found in Glew’s hut? What item was essential in making this discovery?**

The discovery is that the book’s pages are not blank. Instead, writing is on every page. However, the writing appears only when Eilonwy’s bauble casts its light on the book’s pages.

**• What advice does Fflewddur Fflam give concerning the book?**

Enchantments can be good in Prydain, but they can be bad. The enchantment of Eilonwy’s bauble is certainly good, but bad enchantments exist. Fflewddur Fflam may be remembering that the wizard who gave the book to Glew before Glew got big in size wanted to get rid of it. Perhaps that is a sign that the enchantments of the book are bad.

We read:

The bard’s face had paled. “What it means, in my opinion,” said Fflewddur, “is that we should get rid of the book instantly. Drop it in the river. I regret to say I can’t read it. I could never manage to learn all these secret scripts and ancient letters. But I recognize enchantment when I see it.” He

shuddered and turned away. “I’d rather not even look at it, if you don’t mind. Not that it frightens me. Yes, it makes me feel acutely uneasy; and you know my views on meddling.” (148)

• **What decision does Taran make about the book?**

Taran decides to keep the book. He simply has a feeling that he should. A better reason could be that the book belongs to the House of Llyr, and therefore it belongs to Eilonwy because she is the last surviving Princess of the House of Llyr.

We read:

“If Glew spoke the truth, it comes from a place of enchantments,” Taran said. “But what can it tell us? I shall not destroy it,” he added, returning the book to his jacket. “I can’t explain; I feel as though I’d touched a secret. It’s strange, like a moth that brushes your hand and flutters away again.” (148)

Possibly, Taran is thinking of Eilonwy. He uses a simile, and as we all know, Eilonwy uses similes.

• **Is Prince Rhun a true Prince? Does more than his birth make him a true Prince?**

We read:

“You should be proud of yourself,” Taran said quietly. “Did you seek to prove yourself a true Prince? You have done so, Rhun Son of Rhuddlum.” (149)

Calling someone by their name *and* mentioning their father’s name is a sign of respect in this culture.

Prince Rhun is a true Prince not because he was born a Prince, but because he took action to help other people.

If Prince Rhun had not returned, Taran would probably be dead and Glew would be using Taran's body to make a potion. We remember that when Taran fell into the water, the water drops reflected the dim light in the cavern, making him very visible. (And possibly the water was luminescent.) Glew was trying to catch Taran when Prince Rhun returned with Eilonwy's bauble.

Note what Prince Rhun says in reply to Taran saying that he has proven himself to be a Prince:

“Why, perhaps that's so,” replied Rhun, as though the idea had never occurred to him. “But it's a curious thing. It doesn't seem one bit as important as it did. Astonishing, but true!” (149)

What is important to Prince Rhun is helping Taran and the other companions, not proving that he (Prince Rhun) is a true Prince.

The word “Prince” has two meanings: 1) the son of a King, and 2) a person who would make a good King because of his abilities and his sense of ethics.

• **To where do Taran and his companions set sail?**

Taran and the companions make a raft and set sail to Caer Colur, where they believe that Magg was taking Eilonwy.

• **Why did the bauble blaze so brightly for Prince Rhun?**

Prince Rhun was thinking more for others than himself. He was thinking of helping the companions, and he was not thinking of himself. He was not thinking, *I want to be a hero*. He was not thinking, *I want to prove that I am a true Prince*. He was simply thinking of helping the companions.

We read:

“What I mean,” Fflewddur went on, “in the cavern, when I tried to make it light, I was saying to myself: If *I* can do this, if *I* can find the way for us...”

“Perhaps,” Taran said quietly, watching the moon-white riverbank slip past them, “perhaps you have the truth of it. At first I felt as you did. Then I remember thinking of Eilonwy, only of her; and the bauble showed its light. Prince Rhun was ready to lay down his life; his thoughts were for our safety, not at all for his own. And because he offered the greatest sacrifice, the bauble glowed brightest for him. Can that be its secret? To think more for others than ourselves?” (151)

**• What wise thing does Fflewddur Fflam say about the lesson of the bauble?**

Taran says, “Can that be its secret? To think more for others than ourselves?” (151).

We read:

“That would seem to be one of its secrets, at least,” replied Fflewddur. “Once you’ve discovered that, you’ve discovered a great secret indeed — with or without the bauble.”

Lloyd Alexander believed that fantasy books can teach. Certainly, in *The Castle of Llyr*, readers learn much about heroism. One secret of heroism is to care about others more than we care about ourselves. Certainly, heroes who risk their lives to help others are thinking more for others than about themselves.

We certainly see that in the heroes of this novel as well as in real life. When Prince Rhun returns to the cavern, he risks his life. Glew is much bigger than he is, and Glew

wants to kill one of the companions so that he can make his potion.

**• In your opinion, would the bauble ever blaze for Glew? Why or why not?**

Glew is one person who does not think more for others than for himself. If he thinks he needs to kill one of the companions to make a potion to help himself, then he will kill one of the companions. None of the companions would kill one of the others to make a potion to help himself (or herself, in the case of Eilonwy).

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 14 end?**

Taran and the companions have reached the sea. Taran decides that they will go no further until dawn.

Chapter 14 ends in this way:

The companions settled themselves amid a tall clump of reeds and Gurgi opened his wallet of food. Taran, still restless, walked to a hillock and peered toward the sea.

“Keep to the shadows,” said the voice of Gwydion.  
“Achren’s eyes are sharp.” (152)

The reader will keep on reading to find out information about Prince Gwydion. Why is he there? What does he plan to do?

## Chapter 15: The Island

### **• Who is with Prince Gwydion? What information did he give to Gwydion?**

Prince Gwydion is not alone. Kaw is with him. Kaw has given Prince Gwydion some information. Kaw has let him know that Taran and the companions were seeking to follow the river.

By the way, normally, we should use “who” and “whom” to refer to people; however, sometimes people regard certain animals as having achieved personhood. This is true of many people who own pets. Since Kaw is capable of human speech and of understanding human speech, I think we should regard Kaw as a “who.”

### **• Prince Gwydion gives credit where is due. What does he tell Prince Rhun about the fisherfolk and island people of Mona?**

One thing that all of us should do is to give credit where credit is due. We do that in academic writing in order to avoid plagiarism, but we can also do that later when we have jobs. If Maria in Accounting has a good idea for solving a problem, and we write a memo about solving the problem that mentions Maria’s good idea, we need to give Maria credit for her idea by writing that this particular idea came from Maria in Accounting.

We read:

“Achren, too, sought Caer Colur,” Gwydion went on quickly. “When I learned this, I strove to follow her ship. One of the fisherfolk sailed with me to the northern coast. Your island people are bold,” he added, glancing at Rhun. “Remember them with honor when you shall be King of Mona. The fisherman would have brought me to Caer Colur itself.

This favor I could not accept, for I dared not reveal my mission to him. Yet before he returned to Mona Haven, he willingly gave me the small boat he carried aboard, and would take no reward for his risk or his generosity.” (154)

**• When Prince Gwydion tells Prince Rhun about the help that a fisherman of Mona had given him, how is he educating Prince Rhun?**

Note that Prince Gwydion is helping to educate Prince Rhun. Prince Rhun should give credit is due, and when Prince Rhun becomes King Rhun, he should give credit where is due.

Prince Gwydion is also pointing out that common people are capable of being honorable. This is a lesson that Taran, who sometimes feels inferior because of a lack of high birth, should learn.

Prince Gwydion is a good example for Prince Rhun to follow.

**• Where is Eilonwy?**

Prince Gwydion confirms that Eilonwy is at Caer Colur and the prisoner of Achren, just as Taran and the companions suspected.

Prince Gwydion has actually been on the island, looking for Eilonwy. Prince Gwydion is a man of action and daring.

**• Who now works for Achren?**

Magg, of course, works for Achren. Magg is a person of ability, but he is flawed because of vanity and excessive ambition. Achren has Magg and other lackeys working for her.

We read:

“Last night I rowed to the island,” Gwydion said. “In the little time I remained there, I could not discover where the Princess is held. Though I saw that Achren has but a paltry company of warriors — hirelings and outlaws who have cast their lot with her. None of Arawn’s deathless Cauldron-Born is among them.” He smiled bitterly. “Without the protection of the Lord of Annuvín, haughty Achren commands only lackeys.” (155)

The word “lackey” is a word meaning “servant,” but it is a word that has negative connotations. Being called a lackey is not a compliment.

**• Why does Prince Gwydion allow Taran and the companions to go with him to the island?**

Certainly Taran and the companions can be of use. For example, with more people working to find Eilonwy she will most likely be found quicker than if one person searches for her. We remember that Prince Gwydion has already been on the island, but he was unable to find and rescue Eilonwy. Also, Taran and the companions are armed. They can act as guards, and they can fight, if necessary.

More importantly, Prince Gwydion is influenced by something that Taran says:

“Eilonwy is dear to me, to all of us,” Taran said. (156)

**• Why was Kaw unable to find Taran and the companions after Kaw drew Llyan away from them?**

Of course, Taran and the companions were deep underground with Glew. Kaw was outside the cavern and could not see them.

**• What item would Prince Gwydion like to have safeguarded better?**

Taran tells Gwydion all that had happened to him and the companions, including finding Eilonwy's bauble and the book of spells and meeting and escaping from Glew.

Then we read:

“Alas that you did not speak of this sooner. I would have found better means of safeguarding it,” he said, as Taran handed him the golden sphere which began to glow brightly. Gwydion spread his cloak and shielded the light. Quickly he took the book from Taran's hands, opened it, and brought the bauble closer to the empty pages. The ancient writing sprang into sight. Gwydion's face was tense and pale. (157-158)

The item is the golden sphere — Eilonwy's bauble. We will soon find out the reason why Gwydion wants to hide it. Also, Gwydion will soon have a good reason for hiding the book with “blank” pages.

**• Eilonwy's bauble shines brightly in Gwydion's hands. What does that tell us about Gwydion?**

Eilonwy's bauble shines brightly when the person holding it thinks about helping other people rather than him- or herself.

Gwydion is someone who thinks about helping other people. Right now, he is thinking about rescuing Eilonwy. In addition, he would like to stop Achren. If Achren were to gain power over the people of Prydain, it would go badly for them.

• **What is the book with “blank” pages that Prince Rhun found? To whom does it belong?**

Taran tells Prince Gwydion about the adventures of himself and the companions. Prince Gwydion is intelligent. He uses Eilonwy’s bauble to look at the “blank” pages of the book. He is unable to read the writing, but he recognizes the book for what it is.

We read:

“To read this is beyond my power,” Gwydion said, “but I recognize it for what it is: the greatest treasure of the House of Llyr.” (158)

• **What are two very valuable items that belong to the House of Llyr?**

The book with “blank” pages is one treasure: It contains powerful spells. The other is the Golden Pelydryn, which has been believed lost.

We read:

“A treasure of Llyr?” Taran whispered, “What is its nature? Does it belong to Eilonwy?”

Gwydion nodded. “She is the last Princess of Llyr, and it is hers by blood-right. But there is more you must understand. For generations the daughters of the House of Llyr were among the most skillful enchantresses in Prydain, using their powers with wisdom and kindness. In their fastness at Caer Colur were stored all their treasures, magical devices and charmed implements whose nature even I do not know.

“The chronicles of the House of Llyr give only veiled hints as to how these mysteries were guarded. The lore tells of an enchantment known

only as the Golden Pelydryn, handed down from mother to daughter, and of a book holding all the secrets of those magical devices and many potent spells. (158)

The spells in the book can apparently be used for good, as the enchantresses of the House of Llyr used them. We can guess, however, that someone such as Achren would use the spells for evil.

One thing to note here is that the women of the House of Llyr were powerful. In some societies, only the men have power.

#### • Define “pelydryn.”

Here is a definition from an online dictionary:

Pelydryn = n. a ray, a beam

Source:

<<http://dictionary.babylon.com/%20pelydryn/>>.

Accessed: 19 August 2011

#### • What is the Golden Pelydryn? How has it been hidden?

The Golden Pelydryn is Eilonwy’s bauble. Prince Gwydion recognizes it immediately. Perhaps this is the first time he recognizes it; seeing the book of spells may have helped him recognize Eilonwy’s bauble as the Golden Pelydryn.

We read:

“But Caer Colur was abandoned and fell into ruins after Angharad Daughter of Regat fled the castle to marry against her mother’s wishes. The book of spells, which she carried away with her, was believed lost. Of the Golden Pelydryn, nothing was

known.” Gwydion looked down at the bauble. “The Golden Pelydryn was not lost. What better way to hide it than to put it as a shining toy in the hands of a child? [...]” (158-159)

• **Was this a good hiding place for the Golden Pelydryn?**

Apparently so. Most people would not think that a child’s toy is especially valuable. Many people have seen Eilonwy’s bauble, but few people would have recognized it as the Golden Pelydryn.

Sometimes the best place to hide something is in plain sight. Edgar Allan Poe recognized this in “The Purloined Letter.” A very valuable letter that people were looking for was out in plain sight with some other letters. No one thought that the letter would be left in such an obvious place, so no one — except Poe’s detective, C. Auguste Dupin — thought to look there.

• **Why was Eilonwy staying with Achren when Taran first met her in *The Book of Three*?**

Gwydion knows much, and he tells much:

“Eilonwy believed she had been sent to live with Achren and study to be an enchantress,” Gwydion went on. “It is not true. Achren stole Eilonwy and brought her as a child to Spiral Castle.” (159)

• **Achren recognized the Golden Pelydryn long ago. Why didn’t she take it from Eilonwy?**

Achren did recognize the Golden Pelydryn, but she did not take from Eilonwy for two reasons:

1) If she had taken it forcibly, it would have lost its power. We can guess why. A thief is thinking of him- or herself not of other people. The Golden Pelydryn does not work

when the person holding it is thinking only of him- or herself.

2) The book of spells was still lost. Achren wanted the Golden Pelydryn in order to read the spells. Without the book of spells, the Golden Pelydryn was useless to her. Of course, now the band of companions has the book of spells — and the Golden Pelydryn.

We read:

“Did Achren fail to recognize the Golden Pelydryn?” Taran asked. “If she knew its nature, why did she leave it in Eilonwy’s possession?”

“Achren dared not do otherwise,” answered Gwydion. “Yes, she knew Eilonwy’s heritage. She recognized the Pelydryn, but also knew it would lose its power if taken forcibly from its rightful owner. Then, too, the book of spells had vanished. Achren could attempt nothing until it was found again.” (159)

**• Glew thought that the book with “blank” pages was worthless. What does that tell us about Glew?**

The book of spells is valuable. The daughters of the House of Llyr used it to bring good into the world. Prince Gwydion says,

“For generations the daughters of the House of Llyr were among the most skillful enchantresses in Prydain, using their powers with wisdom and kindness.” (158)

Glew is blind in more ways than one. His eyes cannot stand the light of the Golden Pelydryn. He could not see that the book with “blank” pages is valuable. Glew is unable to tell

what is valuable and what is not valuable. He wishes to be called a King, even though he is merely the King of Stones.

• **What does Gwydion do when he and the others land on the island where Eilonwy is being held captive?**

Gwydion is an intelligent warrior. He spies on the guards to find out what they are doing. Only two people are on guard, and one is drowsing and so is maintaining a very poor watch.

We read:

“Achren pays for a poor vigil,” Gwydion said with a hard smile. “One sentinel watches landward, another leans drowsing on his sword. The others sleep.”

Achren’s followers are of poor quality. Taran and the companions are ready and able to search for Eilonwy.

• **Who finds Eilonwy?**

Kaw, who has the gift of flight, finds Eilonwy in a tower.

We read:

Fflewddur was about to move toward the outlying buildings when Taran nearly cried aloud. Kaw fluttered from one of the towers and swooped down to perch on Taran’s upraised arm. The crow beat his wings, flew aloft once more, and circled the pinnacle.

“He’s found her!” Taran whispered. “Our search is over!” (162-163)

**• What good deed does Prince Rhun do after Eilonwy is located? Why?**

Taran is ready to allow Prince Rhun to go to the tower and rescue Eilonwy, but Prince Rhun does the good deed of allowing Taran to do that.

Prince Rhun is aware that Taran has feelings for Eilonwy; in fact, Prince Rhun may be more aware of Taran's feelings than Taran is.

**• Taran says that Eilonwy is Prince Rhun's "betrothed" (163). Is that true?**

No, Eilonwy is not Prince Rhun's betrothed. For one thing, no one has asked Eilonwy whom she wishes to marry. For another thing, Eilonwy is still too young to be married. Prince Rhun's parents would like for Prince Rhun and Eilonwy to marry, but that does not mean it will happen.

Here again we see that Taran feels inferior because he is not of high birth. He seems to think that Eilonwy will prefer Prince Rhun to himself because Prince Rhun is a Prince.

All of us, of course, hope that Eilonwy and Taran will eventually marry.

**• What does Gwydion do with the book of spells and Eilonwy's bauble?**

Gwydion hides the book of spells and Eilonwy's bauble. They are valuable to Achren, and Gwydion wishes to make sure that she does not get possession of them.

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 15 end?**

Chapter 15 ends in this way:

“Quickly!” Taran whispered. “Gwydion waits for us.”

Eilonwy roused, passed a hand over her forehead, and opened her eyes. At the sight of Taran she gave a cry of surprise.

“Gurgi is here, too,” Taran said. “Fflewddur, Prince Rhun — all of us. You are safe. Hurry!”

“That’s very interesting,” said Eilonwy sleepily. “But who are they? And for the matter of that,” she added, “who are you?” (165)

The reader will continue reading to find out whether Eilonwy will recognize Taran.

## Chapter 16: A Meeting of Strangers

• **Why is the title “A Meeting of Strangers” ironic? Who are the “strangers”?**

To Eilonwy, Taran is a stranger, as are the other companions, including Gwydion.

Of course, we know that they are not strangers at all. Eilonwy knows all of the companions.

By the way, here is a definition of “irony” from Merriam-Webster:

the use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning

Source: <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/what-is-irony-with-examples/>

Downloaded: 27 February 2013

• **Describe Eilonwy as she appears at the beginning of Chapter 16.**

Eilonwy is confused about what is dream and what is real. She remembers a little about Caer Dallben, but she thinks that she dreamed about Caer Dallben. She is vague and confused.

• **What does Taran guess is wrong with Eilonwy?**

Taran is aware that two things may have happened to Eilonwy: 1) She may be drugged, or 2) She may be bewitched.

We read:

Taran had forced the girl to sit upright once more. Now he stared at her with dread. Despite her travel-stained garments and disheveled hair, she appeared

unharmd. But her eyes were strangely depthless. It was not sleep that filled her, and his hands trembled as he realized Eilonwy had been drugged or — his heart chilled at the thought of it — bewitched. (167)

Of course, Achren is an enchantress, so we can guess that Eilonwy is under her spell.

**• Has Eilonwy’s speech changed in any way? What is unusual about the way that she identifies herself to Taran?**

Eilonwy identifies herself to Taran in a very formal way by referring to her ancestry.

We read:

I am Eilonwy Daughter of Angharad Daughter of Regat,” continued Eilonwy, putting her hand to the silver crescent at her throat. (166)

In *The Book of Three*, Eilonwy met Taran for the very first time. She was not formal when she told him her name:

“Please,” said a girl’s voice, light and musical, “my name is Eilonwy and if you don’t mind, would you throw my bauble to me? I don’t want you to think I’m a baby, playing with a silly bauble, because I’m not; but sometimes there’s absolutely nothing else to do around here and it slipped out of my hands when I was tossing it...” (*The Book of Three* 65)

The formality we see here is probably the work of Achren, who is likely teaching Eilonwy to be proud of her birth and perhaps to think of herself as being better than low-born people such as Taran.

**• Has Eilonwy’s speech stayed the same in any way? Does she still express original thoughts? Does she still use original similes?**

Eilonwy’s speech is still Eilonwy’s in some ways.

Here are two examples of Eilonwy’s original thoughts and similes (a simile is a comparison of one thing to another using a word such as “like” or “as”):

“Difficult — difficult,” she murmured. “Like trying to turn yourself inside out. Or would it be outside in?” (166)

“I don’t believe people should be allowed to come stamping into other people’s dreams without asking first,” Eilonwy said, with some vexation. “There’s something impolite about it. Like walking into a spider web when the spider’s still using it.” (167)

**• Does Eilonwy have any memories of Caer Dallben?**

Yes, but they are like a dream, and they quickly disappear.

We read:

“Eilonwy, look at me!” Taran tried to raise her, but Eilonwy, with a little cry of annoyance, drew away. “You must listen,” Taran insisted.

“That’s what I’ve been doing,” she replied. “So far you’ve made no sense whatever. I was much more comfortable asleep. I’d rather dream than be shouted at. But what was I dreaming? A pleasant dream — with a pig in it — and someone who — no, it’s gone now, faster than a butterfly. You’ve spoiled it.” (166-167)

Eilonwy also remembers — vaguely, like a dream — climbing to the top of a tree and falling and being caught by

someone who may have been an Assistant Pig-Keeper (169).

Unsurprisingly, Taran also remembers that, but as reality, not as a dream.

• **Does Eilonwy believe that Caer Dallben exists?**

Eilonwy comes close to remembering Caer Dallben as reality, but then she believes that it is a dream.

We read:

“How should anyone know someone else’s dream?” said Eilonwy, as though speaking to herself. “Yes, it broke and I was falling. There was someone below who caught me. Could it have been an Assistant Pig-Keeper? I wonder what became of him?”

“He is here now,” Taran said quietly. “He has long sought you and in ways even he himself did not know. Now that he has found you, can you not find your path back to him?”

Eilonwy rose to her feet. Her eyes flickered and for the first time a light shone in them. Taran held out his hands to her. She hesitated, then took a step forward.

But even as she moved to him, her glance turned shallow and the light died. “It is a dream, no more than that,” she whispered, and turned away. (169)

• **What does Eilonwy say when Taran tries to rescue her?**

Taran can be demanding — a little too demanding when it comes to Eilonwy. Here he grabs her arm and tries to make her leave with him. Even if Eilonwy were in her right mind, she would probably object to being ordered around.

Eilonwy is not in her right mind, and she still objects to this, but in a way that we do expect.

We read:

“Achren has done this to you!” Taran cried. “She will harm you no longer.” He seized the girl’s arm and drew her toward the casement.

At the sound of Achren’s name, Eilonwy stiffened and tore herself from him. She spun to face him. “You dare touch a Princess of the House of Llyr?” (169-170)

Eilonwy used not to be proud in a bad way. But at the beginning of the chapter, she introduced herself formally, mentioning the names of her ancestors. Now, she is upset that someone such as Taran would touch her.

**• What does Eilonwy do when Taran tries to rescue her?**

Eilonwy runs away — straight to Achren.

We read:

Eilonwy struck him full in the face with such force that he staggered back. Yet it was not the blow that pained him but her scornful glance. On her lips now was a smile of mockery and malice. He was a stranger to her and he feared his heart would break.

Once more he tried to seize her. Eilonwy, with a cry of rage, twisted away and broke free.

“Achren!” she called. “Achren! Help me!” (170)

Here, of course, we see more evidence of Eilonwy’s new pride.

• **How do Gwydion, Taran, and his companions fight in the battle?**

They fight well, with some comedy.

Fflewddur Fflam wishes to fight Magg, and he does so. Fflewddur Fflam does not wish to kill Magg, as he uses the flat of his sword, rather than the cutting edge:

“The spider is mine!” cried Fflewddur, his blade whistling about his head. Magg, at the sight of the frenzied bard, yelled in terror and tried to flee. The bard was upon him in a moment, striking right and left with the flat of his sword in such a wild onslaught that most of his blows missed their mark. Magg, with the strength of desperation, sprang at the bard’s throat and grappled with him. (171-172)

Some comedy ensues while Gurgi and Fflewddur Fflam fight Magg:

In a flash the bard was upon the prostrate Magg. Heedless of the buffeting from Magg’s flailing legs, Gurgi laid hold of him by the heels and hung on with all his strength, while Fflewddur, sitting on Magg’s head, seemed indeed to be carrying out his threat of squashing the treacherous Chief Steward. (172-173)

Magg is proud, and the vision of Fflewddur Fflam sitting on his head is both funny to us and humiliating to Magg.

Taran is forced back by a warrior, but Prince Rhun comes to the rescue, albeit with the sword he broke by trying to force its point under the boulder blocking the exit when he and the companions were in trapped in the tomb in Glew’s cavern (130):

Before Taran could come to Fflewddur's aid, a warrior with an axe beset him and, despite his stout defense, Taran found himself driven back toward a corner of the Hall. Amid the confusion of the fray, he saw Gwydion and Rhun struggling against other warriors. The Prince of Mona laid about him furiously with his broken sword, and it was to one of Rhun's sharp blows that Taran's assailant fell. (172)

Gwydion, of course, is a most excellent warrior and cuts down two warriors, causing the others to be frightened and flee:

Gwydion, with Dyrnwyn unsheathed and blazing, had cut down two warriors who now sprawled motionless on the flagstones. Terrified at the sight of the flaming weapon, the remaining guards fled. (173)

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 16 end?**

Chapter 16 ends in this way:

"Eilonwy is bewitched!" Taran cried. "I have lost her."

Gwydion's eyes went to the end of the hall where scarlet draperies had been flung back from an alcove. Eilonwy stood there and beside her, Achren. (173)

The reader will keep on reading to see what happens next.

**• Gwydion's sword Dyrnwyn is described as "blazing." Is this of any significance?**

In the Homeric epics, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, weapons (and a warrior's armor) are said to glitter or blaze before or while

a warrior fights magnificently in battle. Gwydion is a magnificent warrior.

### **Chapter 17: The Spells of Caer Colur**

**• Describe Achren. How has she changed since the last time that Taran saw her?**

One change is a lack of jewelry, indicating perhaps a change in fortune. Achren is not as wealthy as once she was. However, Achren does still have the beauty that she had earlier, although now her face is very pale.

We read:

Her hair, unbound, fell in glittering silver tresses to her shoulders; the beauty of her features had not changed, though her face was deathly pale. At Spiral Castle, long ago, she had been decked in jewels; now, neither rings nor bracelets adorned her slender hands and white arms. But her eyes, hard as jewels themselves, drew Taran's gaze and held it. (174)

**• Why can't Gwydion, Taran, and the companions attack Achren?**

Achren has beauty. She also has intelligence, although she uses it for evil purposes. She says about Eilonwy, "The girl's life is bound to mine. Would you take my life? Then she must share my death" (174).

In other words, if Achren dies, then Eilonwy also dies. We can guess that Achren has cast a spell that will cause Eilonwy's death after Achren dies.

Gwydion and Taran had approached Achren with their swords drawn, but they cannot use their swords to kill Achren without also killing Eilonwy.

• **Achren had wanted Prince Gwydion to be her consort, but he declined her offer. What is a consort?**

A consort is the spouse of a ruler. Achren wanted to be Queen and have Gwydion as her husband. Although Gwydion would be her husband, Achren would have the ruling power. Gwydion would obey her commands.

• **When prompted by Achren, what does Eilonwy say she wants?**

Eilonwy says that she wants what is hers. By that, she means that she wants the power of a Princess of Llyr. Because the women of the House of Llyr are great enchantresses, that is great power indeed.

We read:

“I am a Princess of Llyr,” Eilonwy said coldly. “I want what is mine. Who are these who would take it from me? I see the one who frightened me in my chamber. A keeper of pigs, so he claimed. The rest I do not know.” (176)

• **What magical power does Eilonwy possess?**

Eilonwy possesses the power to hurt sentient beings. (Sentient beings are conscious beings that have the ability to feel pain.) She uses that power to hurt Gurgi at the bidding of Achren.

We read:

Gurgi raised his head, puzzled and fearful, while Achren whispered words in a strange language to Eilonwy. The girl’s fingers moved slightly. Gurgi’s eyes widened in surprise and disbelief. For an instant he stood unmoving and open-mouthed, staring at the Princess. Her hand, pointing straight at

the baffled Gurgi, suddenly tensed. With a sharp cry of pain, Gurgi stiffened and clutched his head. (178)

Gurgi was mentally hurt earlier when Eilonwy did not know who he was and did not recognize that he is her friend. Now Eilonwy physically hurts him. In addition to this physical pain is the mental pain of knowing that it is Eilonwy who is hurting him.

• **Why does Fflewddur Fflam release Magg?**

Fflewddur Fflam releases Magg in order to spare Gurgi further pain.

We read:

Fflewddur leaped to his feet. “No more!” he shouted. “Harm Gurgi no longer! You shall have Magg. Take him!” (178-179)

• **Why does Fflewddur Fflam keep referring to Magg as a spider?**

A spider may be something that Magg resembles on occasion. Back in Chapter 4, we read Magg clambered down a rocky path like a spider:

Spider-like, the Chief Steward was rapidly picking his way down a path. (46)

In Chapter 5, Taran tells Fflewddur Fflam what he saw Magg doing the previous night. We do not have dialogue for what Taran told Fflewddur Fflam, but the words Taran used may have conveyed an impression of Magg as a spider because that is how Fflewddur Fflam immediately began to refer to Magg:

“Magg! That villainous spider!” the bard exclaimed as soon as Taran told him what had happened. (56-57)

Of course, spiders can be squashed, and that may be why Fflewddur Fflam often comically threatens to squash Magg.

By the way, authors and illustrators of children's books often receive funny letters from children. For example, Gail Gibbons, author/illustrator of such nonfiction books as *Check It Out!: The Book About Libraries*, once received a letter that read, "Dear Gail, I love your books. Right now I am — oh, there's a spider crawling across the page! SQUASH." Right in the middle of the letter was a dead squashed spider. Ms. Gibbons laughed, and she kept the letter — and the dead spider.<sup>13</sup>

### • Why does Gurgi forgive Eilonwy?

Gurgi does not believe that Eilonwy acted of her own free will. We have seen abundant evidence that Eilonwy is under a spell cast by Achren. It is Achren who is responsible for what Eilonwy did to Gurgi. Eilonwy is not responsible for what she did.

We read:

Gurgi crept forward a little way. His weeping eyes turned to Eilonwy. "Wise Princess," he murmured, "it is no wish of hers to fill poor tender head with harmful hurtings. Gurgi knows this. He forgives her." (179)

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<sup>13</sup> Source: Deborah Kovacs and James Preller, *Meet the Authors and Illustrators: Volume Two*, p. 27.

**• Is Eilonwy responsible for the evil deed she does to Gurgi? Would Glew be responsible for the evil deed he wished to do when Taran and the companions were in the cavern? Is Magg responsible for the evil deed of kidnapping Eilonwy?**

In determining responsibility, we consider freedom. Normally, we believe that we are free to do good or to do evil. If we freely choose to do good and we do good, then we are responsible for the good we have done. And if we freely choose to do evil and we do evil, then we are responsible for the evil we have done.

Glew and Magg are free to decide whether to do good or to do evil. Therefore, they are responsible for what they do.

Eilonwy, however, is enchanted by Achren. Because she is under the spell of Achren, Eilonwy cannot choose what to do — or at least it takes a great effort of the will for Eilonwy to disobey the wishes of Achren. Gurgi knows that Achren is controlling Eilonwy, and so Eilonwy is not responsible for her actions.

Because Achren is controlling Eilonwy's actions, Achren is responsible for Eilonwy's actions, whether they be good or evil. Of course, when Eilonwy causes Gurgi pain, the action is evil.

**• Why has Magg been serving Achren?**

Achren has promised Magg great power, and therefore Magg is serving her. Achren has promised Magg that he will be Lord of Dinas Rhydnant, the stronghold of the Isle of Mona. We learn this when Fflewddur Fflam releases Magg:

“You shall pay dearly for this, harper,” Magg spat.  
 “I rejoice that I did not have you thrashed and driven away when first I laid eyes on you; for now

it allows me to hang you in your own harp strings, from the highest tower of Rhuddlum's castle. And so shall I do, once I am Lord of Dinas Rhydnant." (179-180)

• **Does Taran believe that Magg will ever become Lord of Dinas Rhydnant?**

No, for the very good reason that Taran believes that Achren will not keep her promises:

"Lord of Dinas Rhydnant!" Fflewddur exclaimed. "A steward's chain is too much honor for you."

"Tremble, harper!" sneered Magg. "Dinas Rhydnant is mine. It has been promised me. And all the realm. King Magg! Magg the Magnificent!"

"King Magg the Maggot!" the bard flung back at him. "Does Achren promise you a kingdom? A scullery would be more than you deserve!"

"Achren's promises are false," cried Taran. "Learn this to your grief, Magg!" (180)

Like Glew, Magg wants to be a King. Like Glew, Magg is not worthy to be a King.

• **What does Achren plan to do?**

Achren plans to become a very powerful ruler. She wishes to rule Prydain while Magg rules the Isle of Mona — or so Magg believes. She also wishes to conquer Arawn of Annuin and make him beg her for mercy.

• **Would Achren make a good Queen?**

No. Gwydion refers to the kind of Queen she was when she previously ruled Prydain — she was not a good Queen:

“The lore tells of your ancient rule,” Gwydion said sharply, “and how you sought to keep hearts and minds in thrall to you. You tormented those who would not worship you; and for those who bowed to you, life was little better than a slow death. I know, too, of the blood sacrifices you demanded and your joy at the cries of your victims. No, Achren, it shall not come again. Think you this girl shall lead you to it?” (181)

**• What major mistake does Prince Rhun make when he speaks to Achren at the end of Chapter 17? Why is this a major mistake?**

Achren wishes to use Eilonwy to achieve her evil plans. As a Princess of Llyr, Eilonwy can become a powerful enchantress. However, she needs the book of spells of the House of Llyr and she needs the Golden Pelydryn. She believes that they are lost, but Prince Rhun makes a major mistake and lets her know that they have been found.

In Chapter 11, Prince Rhun showed a propensity for blurting out something that he should not have blurted. He blurted out Llyan’s name in front of Glew (113). Taran, who is more cautious, did not want to mention Llyan until he knew more about Glew. Prince Rhun’s blurting in Chapter 11 foreshadows his blurting here in Chapter 17.

At the end of Chapter 17, we read:

“She will obey me,” Achren replied, “as surely as if I held her beating heart in my hand.”

Gwydion’s eyes flashed. “Your words are vain, Achren. They cannot deceive me. Do you seek to rule through the Princess Eilonwy? The enchantments she commands still sleep. You have not the means to waken them.”

Achren's face turned livid and she drew back as though she had been struck. "You speak beyond your knowledge."

"Oh, no, he doesn't!" burst out Rhun, who had been listening in amazement. The Prince of Mona triumphantly faced Achren. "The book! The golden light! We've got them and we shall never give them up!" (181)

## **Chapter 18: The Golden Pelydryn**

### **• Prince Rhun realizes that he has made a mistake. How does he react? How does Gwydion react?**

Prince Rhun's actions show that he immediately feels regret for his blunder. Gwydion is not angry with Prince Rhun, but he feels sorrow that Prince Rhun made such a huge mistake.

We read:

Rhun himself realized his blunder and clapped a hand to his mouth; his round face filled with dismay and he glanced about him in confusion. Gwydion stood silently, his weathered features tight and pale; yet the glance he cast on the unhappy Prince of Mona was not of reproach but of sorrow. (182)

One thing that Prince Rhun does is to vow not to talk under torture. He knows that the book of spells of the House of Llyr and the Golden Pelydryn are too powerful to be allowed to fall into Achren's hands.

We read:

Rhun blinked and swallowed hard, but he faced Achren stoutly. "If you're thinking about torturing me," he said, "you're welcome to try it. It would be interesting to see how much you could find out, since I myself haven't the first idea where the Pelydryn is." He took a deep breath and shut his eyes tightly. "So there you are. Go ahead." (183)

### **• How does Eilonwy hurt Taran with her words?**

Eilonwy first hurts Taran by saying this:

"If they have taken my bauble," said Eilonwy, drawing closer to Achren, "they must return it. It is

not fitting for it to remain in the hands of strangers.”  
(184)

Taran is hurt because Eilonwy has referred to him as a stranger. Achren is intelligent and seizes on this.

We read:

“This does not please you, Assistant Pig-Keeper,” she murmured. “It pains you to be called stranger by her. It cuts more cruelly than a knife, does it not? Sharper even than the torments of the wretched creature [Gurgi] at your feet. [...]” (184)

• **How does Achren try to bribe Taran?**

Achren offers to allow Eilonwy to regain her memory of Taran (184). In addition, she hints that Taran could become King to Eilonwy’s Queen.

We read:

“And more, much more,” Achren whispered. “With me, the Princess Eilonwy shall be a queen. But who shall be her king? Would you have me set her free to wed a witless Prince? Yes, Magg has told me she is to be given to the son of Rhuddlum.

“What then shall be the lot of an Assistant Pig-Keeper? To win a Princess only to lose her to another? Are these not your thoughts, Taran of Caer Dallben? Think of this, too, that Achren gives favor for favor.” (185)

One thing that Taran has told Magg is this:

“Achren’s promises are false,” cried Taran. “Learn this to your grief, Magg!” (180)

Here Achren is making promises to Taran. Taran may very well be tempted to believe those promises.

**• Why do you think Prince Gwydion hands over the book of spells and the Golden Pelydryn to Achren?**

Taran is afraid that he has spoken when he hears a voice that tells Achren that she shall have the book of spells of the House of Llyr and the Golden Pelydryn. However, the voice belongs to Gwydion.

We can guess that Gwydion probably believes that eventually Achren will find out where the book of spells of the House of Llyr and the Golden Pelydryn are hidden. We can guess that he probably believes that it is better to give them to Achren now before she physically tortures anyone and before she mentally tortures Taran more.

However, in Chapter 19 (195) Gywdion gives his explanation of why he did what he did.

**• When Achren holds Eilonwy's bauble, it does not glow. Why not?**

Eilonwy's bauble glows when the person holding it is not thinking of him- or herself, but of others. Achren's concern is for herself only, and the bauble will not glow for her.

We read:

Achren snatched the objects from him. The golden sphere was dull as lead, its beauty gone. She held it avidly; her eyes glittered; and her smile showed the white tips of her sharp teeth. For a moment she stood as though reluctant to part with the treasures she had sought, then pressed them into Eilonwy's hands. (186-187)

**• In Chapter 17, Taran told Magg, "Achren's promises are false" (180). Did Taran speak truly?**

Taran did speak truly in a passage that we now realize is foreshadowing. Achren has been using Magg, and now that

she has the book of spells of the House of Llyr and the Golden Pelydryn, she has no intention of keeping her promises to him.

We read:

Magg was beside himself with impatience and eagerness. He gripped his silver chain with clawed fingers, while his cheeks trembled and greed lit his beady eyes. “My kingdom!” he cried, in a tight, high-pitched voice. “Mine! It shall soon be mine!”

Achren spun and faced him scornfully. “Silence! A kingdom, groveling fool? Be grateful if you are allowed to keep your life.” (187)

**• When Eilonwy gets the Golden Pelydryn, at first a tiny light glows, and then the Golden Pelydryn casts a brilliant light. What is happening inside Eilonwy that causes the Golden Pelydryn to act this way?**

Eilonwy begins to regain her memory — something that may be caused by handling an object that reminds her of the reality of her life before Achren enchanted her. As Eilonwy remembers more of her past, the Golden Pelydryn glows more brightly. We know that the Golden Pelydryn glows brightly when the person handling is thinking more about helping others than about helping him- or herself. Eilonwy is thinking of others, not of herself.

Achren may think of herself as being the center of the universe (as do the sinners in Dante’s *Inferno*), but Eilonwy does not.

We read:

Eilonwy, Taran realized in a surge of hope, was struggling against all that held her. The anguished

girl was beyond all threats of Achren, beyond all help from the companions. (188)

Taran and Gwydion and the other companions have been fighting with swords, but Eilonwy has to fight another kind of battle. She has to make a major effort of the will to overcome Achren's enchantment and to remember her past life with Taran and the other companions.

Such an effort of the will can be difficult. Think how many people are unable to break their addiction to tobacco. Think how many people are unable to lose enough weight and to exercise enough to be healthy. Overcoming bad habits can be very difficult, although many people succeed in establishing new, good habits.

• **When does the Golden Pelydryn glow brightest?**

The Golden Pelydryn glows as bright as Taran has ever seen it glow when Eilonwy deliberately drops the book of spells and it catches on fire. Eilonwy is deliberately rejecting the bidding of Achren for her to do evil, and she is thinking of the companions, and so the Golden Pelydryn glows brightly.

We read:

The Golden Pelydryn flared brighter than he had ever seen it and Taran flung up his hand to shield his eyes. Light flooded the Hall. Gurgi threw himself to the ground and covered his head with his shaggy arms. The companions drew back fearfully.

Suddenly Eilonwy cast the book to the flagstones. From the pages burst a crimson cloud that spread into a sheet of fire, leaping upward to the vaulted ceiling of the Great Hall. Even as the book of spells consumed itself in its own flames, the blaze did not dwindle but instead rose ever higher, roaring and

crackling, no longer crimson but blindingly white. The shriveled pages swirled in a fiery whirlwind to dance within the shimmering heart of the flame, and as they did, the whispering voices of Caer Colur groaned in defeat. The scarlet curtains of the alcove blew outward, seized in the writhing column of fire. Now the book had vanished utterly, but still the flames mounted unappeased. (188-189)

**• What heroic action does Eilonwy perform? By performing that heroic act, what is she giving up?**

We will learn more about this later, but Eilonwy is destroying the book of spells. By doing so, she keeps Achren from acquiring great power and ruling Prydain. However, Eilonwy is also giving up great power for herself. The spells in the book are powerful, but when the book is destroyed, knowledge of the spells is lost. Eilonwy will never be able to work the spells that her female ancestors worked.

Eilonwy is a hero.

**• Lloyd Alexander is a master at putting a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter. How does Chapter 18 end?**

Chapter 18 ends in this way:

Achren was shrieking, shrieking in rage and frenzy, her face distorted with hopeless fury. Still clutching the Golden Pelydryn, Eilonwy crumpled and fell. (189)

The reader will keep on reading to find out what happened to Eilonwy.

The reader will also keep on reading to find out more about the struggle that Eilonwy was making when she threw the book to the flagstones.

## Chapter 19: The Flood

- **What treacherous act does Magg perform? What happens to Gwydion's boat? Where is Magg?**

Magg opens the gates to the sea, flooding Caer Colur.

Gwydion's boat is pounded into pieces by the flooding water, and Magg is on Achren's vessel.

This means that the companions (and Achren) have no boat to sail on. It seems that they will have to swim for the mainland — or drown.

We read:

Beyond the walls, at the crest of a driving wave, rode Achren's vessel, mast askew and sails flapping. The surviving warriors clung to the sides of the tossing craft and fought to climb aboard. At the bow stood Magg, his face contorted with hate, shaking his fist at the crumbling fortress. The wreckage of Gwydion's boat spun in the flood, and Taran knew all means of escape were shattered with it. (191)

- **How does Magg react to the thwarting of his ambition?**

Magg wanted to be the ruler of the Isle of Mona, but he discovered that Achren has no intention of keeping her promises to him. Magg reacts to his disappointment by trying to get revenge. If Magg had his way, Achren would drown, as would Taran, Eilonwy, Gwydion, Prince Rhun, Gurgi, and Fflewddur Fflam. These would be murders, and murder is evil.

• **Prince Gwydion tries to rescue Achren. How does she react?**

Achren's power — and her hope for great power — has been broken. She flees. Gwydion is aware that Caer Colur is crumbling and that falling stones can kill.

We read:

The outer walls crumbled under the first impact of the sea. Blocks of stone shuddered and split away. The towers of Caer Colur swayed, and the ground reeled under Taran's feet.

Gwydion's voice rang above the tumult. "Save yourselves! Caer Colur is destroyed! Jump clear of the walls or they will crush you!" (191)

Gwydion tries to get Achren away from the walls, but Achren fights him.

We read:

Taran saw that the Prince of Don had clambered to the highest rocks of the embankment to which Achren had fled. There, Gwydion strove to lead her from the collapsing stones, but she struck at him and clawed his face. Her shrieks and curses pierced the rumble of onrushing waves. Gwydion faltered and fell as the embankment gave way. (191)

• **How successful is Taran's attempt to rescue Eilonwy?**

Taran does his best to rescue Eilonwy. He picks her up and carries her out of Caer Colur. With no boat available, he is forced to try to swim to the mainland. Because he is using one arm to hold onto Eilonwy, he has only one arm to use to swim with.

We read:

He spun to the trough of the waves while the sea pounded strength and breath from him. Still, he was able to hope, for it seemed the white-crested breakers were bearing him and his frail burden closer to shore. Dizzied and half-blinded by the green-black waves, Taran caught a confused glimpse of beach and shallow surf. He struck out weakly with his free arm. But in this last effort his failing body betrayed him and he tumbled into darkness. (192)

Taran is very brave here, but not all rescue attempts are successful. Sometimes, the would-be rescuer is also killed along with the person he or she is trying to save.

Here it seems as if both Taran and Eilonwy will drown.

This is a story of a failed rescue attempt: In July 2011, in the Nodaway River near Clarinda, Iowa, Tamra Haley, a teenage lifeguard, nearly lost her own life as she attempted to save the life of 11-year-old Deontae Haynes, who was visiting from Chicago. She had a grip on him, but the river current pulled him out of her grip. Although she is a trained lifeguard and a strong swimmer, the river current forced her underwater. She said, “I remember twiddling the top of [the] water with [my] fingers before I slipped into unconsciousness.” When she regained consciousness, she was lying on shore, and her brother-in-law was giving her CPR. He saved her life with his knowledge of CPR. Deontae Haynes drowned. Ms. Haynes said, “If he slipped away as easily as I did, there was no pain for him.” She recommended that everyone learn CPR and water safety: “Everyone should learn. It could save your life. It saved mine.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Source: “Lifeguard Talks About Heroic Rescue Effort: Young Boy Drowns In River Near Clarinda.” KETV.com. 21 July 2011

**• Why do Taran and the companions change their opinion about Llyan? Was the previous opinion the companions had held about her incorrect?**

Llyan ends up rescuing everyone. Previously, the companions had thought that she was a killer. However, she simply liked Fflewddur Fflam's music and wanted him to keep on playing. After he disappeared from her hut, she searched for him, finally finding him at a most opportune time.

We read:

“Steady, now,” said Fflewddur. “Llyan means you no harm. She only wants to be friendly, though sometimes she has odd ways of showing it.” He patted the cat's great head and scratched under her mighty jaws. “Come, Llyan,” he coaxed, “there's a good girl. Don't stand on my friend [Taran]; he's not up to it yet. Behave yourself and I'll play you a tune as soon as my harp strings dry.”

Fflewddur turned once more to Taran. “We have to thank Llyan for a great deal. Everything, in fact. She fished us all out of the surf after the sea had washed us up. If she hadn't, I'm afraid we should still be there.” (193)

Eilonwy, along with the others, has been rescued.

Kaw has not been seen since the flood (194), but as a bird, he can fly over the flood, so more than likely he is OK.

Llyan's great size is an advantage here. Because she is so big, she can rescue human beings from the sea. It's too bad that Glew does not use his great size to help other people.

• **Why is Llyan especially fond of Fflewddur Fflam?**

Of course, Llyan is a big fan of Fflewddur Fflam's music.

We read:

"I did have a start when I came to my senses with Llyan sitting beside me," said Fflewddur. "She had my harp between her paws, as though she couldn't wait for me to wake up and begin again. The creature is mad about my music! That's why she tracked us all the way here. And, Great Belin, I'm glad she did! But I think she's finally understood there's a time and place for everything. She's really been quite gentle," he added, as Llyan began to rub her head against him with such vigor the bard could hardly keep his balance. (193-194)

By the way, cats have scent glands at various places on their body. By rubbing her head against Fflewddur Fflam, Llyan is putting her scent on him. It's a way of letting other cats know, *This human is part of Llyan's family.*

• **Will Llyan be the pet of Fflewddur Fflam?**

Maybe. But Fflewddur Fflam wonders if perhaps he will be Llyan's pet:

"Gurgi's gone looking for driftwood to build a fire," replied the bard. "Poor creature, he's still terrified of Llyan. But he'll get used to her. I've grown quite fond of her myself. It's not often one finds such a good listener, and I think I shall keep her. Or," he added, while Llyan nuzzled her whiskers on his neck and gripped the bard with her powerful paws,

“perhaps I should put it the other way around.”  
(194)

• **What has happened to Eilonwy?**

Llyan rescued Eilonwy, but she is still unconscious. Gwydion tells Taran that Eilonwy is no longer under Achren’s power:

“Eilonwy lives,” he said, answering the question in Taran’s eyes. “More than that I cannot say. This much I know: Achren no longer holds her.” (194)

• **What has happened to Achren?**

Achren is still alive; however, her power has been broken. For a long time, it has been declining — ever since Arawn, who is the Lord of Annuvín, and she parted.

We read:

“Achren, too, lives,” answered Gwydion, “though long she hung between life and death. But her power is broken now. This is the answer to the riddle, yet I did not know it until I stood before her in the Great Hall. At first, I was not certain. When I understood that she would truly let herself go down to death before giving up Eilonwy, I knew she had lost command of all but the least of her own enchantments. I read it in her eyes and in her voice. Her day had begun to wane from the moment she had broken with the Lord of Annuvín.

“The spells of *Caer Colur* were her last hope. Now they are gone and *Caer Colur* lies at the bottom of the sea,” Gwydion added. “We need fear Achren no longer.” (194-195)

• **Why did Prince Gwydion hand over the book of spells and the Golden Pelydryn to Achren?**

Gwydion guessed that the Golden Pelydryn would have the power to destroy the book of spells because the book of spells could be read only with the Golden Pelydryn. He also guessed that Eilonwy would be freed from the spell of Achren only if the book of spells was destroyed. Therefore, he decided to give the book of spells and the Golden Pelydryn to Achren in hopes that she would give them to Eilonwy, who would destroy the book of spells and free herself from Achren's control.

We read:

“It was a risk that had to be taken,” Gwydion replied. “I had suspected something of the nature of the bauble; as it alone could reveal the spells, so it alone could destroy them. Only then could Eilonwy be free. At what cost to herself, I could not be sure. Alas, she has suffered deeply and grievously, perhaps too much.” (195)

• **Taran feels bad about himself. Should he?**

Truly, Taran feels bad about himself:

Taran bowed his head. “I would have given my life to keep her from harm, and I would give it now to spare her this.” He smiled bitterly. “Achren asked what shall be the lot of an Assistant Pig-Keeper? It is a question I have often asked myself. I see now the life of an Assistant Pig-Keeper is of little use or import. Even to offer it for someone else is of no avail.” (196)

Taran should not feel bad about himself. Prince Gwydion correctly points out that he has taken very good care of

Prince Rhun. When Taran says that he took an oath to look after him, Gwydion says this:

“And had you not sworn an oath,” Gwydion asked, “would you not have done the same?” (196)

Taran’s reply is important:

Taran was silent for a while, then he nodded. “Yes, I believe I would. It was more than my oath that bound me. He needed my help, as I needed his.” (196)

• **Explain these words that Gwydion says, “The destinies of men are woven one with the other, and you can turn aside from them no more than you can turn aside from your own” (196).**

This is another, poetic way of saying it: “No man is an island.” Gwydion and Taran have been talking about rendering aid to other people, and both of them believe that helping others (and being helped) is the right thing to do. Certainly, the companions help each other and are helped by each other.

• **How does Gwydion save Achren’s life?**

Achren wishes to commit suicide. She has little magical power, but she has enough to turn a piece of driftwood into a dagger, and she attempts to stab herself. Gwydion stops her from killing herself:

With a shout of triumph Achren plunged it toward her own breast. Gwydion sprang to her and seized her wrists. Achren fought against him as he tore the blade from her grasp. Once more the dagger became driftwood, which Gwydion snapped in two and cast away. Achren fell sobbing to the sand. (197)

• **What advice does Gwydion give Achren?**

Gwydion's advice to Achren is to seek life:

“Your enchantments have ever been the enchantments of death,” said Gwydion. He knelt and gently placed a hand on her shoulder. “Seek life, Achren.” (197)

We have a number of decisions to make in our life. One of the most important is to decide whether to be a good person or a bad person. Another is whether to seek life or to seek death.

• **According to Gwydion, what would happen if Achren went to Caer Dallben?**

Gwydion believes that Achren would be welcome at Caer Dallben. If so, Dallben (and Gwydion, and others) is remarkably forgiving. Achren has been a powerful and evil enchantress. When she previously ruled Prydain, she created much misery for the people who live there.

Apparently, Gwydion believes in the power of change. Achren has been evil, yet she can now choose to be good.

People can be corrupted by power. Lord Acton said, “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Achren has had absolute power in Prydain previously, and she has sought absolute power in Prydain again, but she has been thwarted. Now that Achren has little power, she is safe from its corrupting influence and perhaps she can decide to be good.

By the way, William Pitt the Elder said something similar to what Lord Acton said. In 1770, in a speech to the United Kingdom House of Lords, he said, “Unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it.”

In the United States, we try to share governmental power. At the federal level, we have the President, the Senators and the Representatives, and the members of the Supreme Court all sharing power. That way, no one can be absolutely corrupted by absolute power.

• **Lloyd Alexander is a master at making the end of a chapter interesting. How does Chapter 19 end?**

Chapter 19 ends in this way:

For all that morning, Taran had not left Eilonwy's side. Fearful she might never wake and fearful, too, that she might waken as a stranger to him still, he did not rest from his weary vigil. Gwydion himself could not foretell how long-lasting was the harm that had been done her.

"Do not lose heart," Gwydion said. "It is good that she sleeps and more healing to her spirit than any potion I could give her."

Eilonwy stirred restlessly. Taran started up. Gwydion put a hand on his arm and gently drew him back. Eilonwy's eyelids fluttered. Gwydion, his face grave, watched closely as her eyes opened. and she slowly raised her head. (198)

The reader will keep reading to find out what happened to Eilonwy.

## Chapter 20: The Pledge

### • Is Eilonwy back to normal? How do you know?

Eilonwy is back to normal. We learn that with her very first words when she regains consciousness.

We read:

“Eilonwy,” Taran whispered, “do you know us?”

“Taran of Caer Dallben,” said Eilonwy, “only an Assistant Pig-Keeper could ask a question like that. Of course I know you. What I don’t know is what I’m doing soaking wet and covered with sand on this beach.”

Gwydion smiled. “The Princess Eilonwy has come back to us.” (199)

Lloyd Alexander does an excellent job of distinguishing his characters. Eilonwy is like no other character in Prydain, she acts like no other character in Prydain, and she speaks like no other character in Prydain.

We know that she is back to normal because she is often short with Taran, and she tells him exactly what she thinks. That is what she does here.

### • Did Magg escape?

Magg did escape. Eilonwy is sorry about that, because she has “a few things to take up with him” (200).

### • Why did Eilonwy go with Magg?

Eilonwy explains this:

“Too bad that Magg escaped,” Eilonwy went on. “I wish he were here now. I should have a few things to take up with him. That morning when I was on

my way to breakfast, he came looming out of one of the corridors. He told me something very serious had happened and I was to come with him immediately.” (200)

Eilonwy knew that something was going on. She did not trust Magg, but she believed that if she went with him she would find out what was going on. She did not think that Taran would tell her anything, as he was too busy guarding her and not telling her what he knew.

Unfortunately, Magg tied her up and gagged her, although she fought back with kicks.

• **Why did Eilonwy lose her bauble?**

She dropped her bauble accidentally when Magg was dragging her into the boat. Because she was gagged, she was unable to tell him that she had dropped it. Magg paid for this because Achren was furious when Magg brought her Eilonwy — but not Eilonwy’s bauble.

• **Did Eilonwy trust Achren?**

No. Eilonwy knows Achren’s character pretty well. She says, “She blamed Magg, and I’m surprised she didn’t have his head off then and there. To me, she was very sweet and thoughtful, so I knew right away something disagreeable was to come” (201).

• **What happened when Eilonwy got her bauble back?**

Eilonwy got her memory back. She was able to remember Caer Dallben and the companions. She knew that the book of spells had to be destroyed.

However, destroying the book of spells took a major effort of the will on Eilonwy’s part. She says that it was like there were two of her: one wanting to destroy the book of spells, and one not wanting to destroy the book of spells.

We read:

“Yet, it was as though there were two of me. One did and one didn’t want to give up the spells. I knew it was my only chance to become an enchantress, and if I gave up my powers then that would be the end of it. [...]” (201-202)

**• What has Eilonwy given up to save Prydain? Can Eilonwy be a great enchantress now?**

As we know, Eilonwy destroyed the book of spells, although this was a difficult decision to make because it meant losing her chance to be a great enchantress. The spells were powerful, and by destroying the spells, Eilonwy lost the power the spells would have given her.

Another character who gave up a lot to save Prydain is Taran, who in *The Black Cauldron* gave up Adaon’s brooch.

We read:

I suppose,” she said softly to Taran, “I felt a little the way you did long ago in the Marshes of Morva, when you had to decide to give up Adaon’s magic brooch.” (202)

By giving up her chance to be a great enchantress, Eilonwy saved Prydain from the rule of Achren, as Gwydion acknowledges:

“The rest of it wasn’t pleasant.” Eilonwy’s voice faltered. “I’d — I’d rather not talk about that.” She was silent a moment. “Now I shall never be an enchantress. There’s nothing left for me now except being a girl.”

“That is more than enough cause for pride,” Gwydion said gently. “For all you chose to

sacrifice; you have kept Achren from ruling Prydain. We owe more than our lives to you.” (202)

• **How does Eilonwy get her bauble back a second time?**

One character is still missing: Kaw.

Kaw now returns carrying Eilonwy’s bauble, which Eilonwy was afraid had “floated far out to sea” (202).

• **Does Llyan get along with Kaw?**

The last time we saw Kay and Llyan together, Kaw had attacked Llyan, who seemed to be a danger to the companions. Llyan apparently bears no grudges:

Llyan’s ears pricked up, her long whiskers twitched, but she made no attempt to lunge for the crow. Instead, she rose to her haunches and purred fondly at the sight of her former opponent. (202)

• **What has Prince Rhun learned in this novel?**

Prince Rhun has improved in this novel. Eilonwy knows it; near of the end of the novel, she says so:

“Rhun has certainly improved; I think this journey was the best thing that ever happened to him and someday he might even make a respectable sort of King.” (205-206)

Also importantly, Prince Rhun knows that he has learned some things during the adventure he had with the companions:

Gwydion at first had decided the companions should rest until morning, but Prince Rhun was eager to return to Dinas Rhydant.

“There’s a great deal to be done,” he said. “I’m afraid we’ve let Magg look after things we should

have seen to ourselves. There's more to being a Prince than I thought. I've learned that from an Assistant Pig-Keeper," he added, clasping Taran's hand, "and from all of you. And there's still most of Mona to be seen. If I'm ever to be King, I'm sure I should see it all. Though, I hope, in a rather different way. So if you don't mind, I should like to set out now." (203)

One thing he has learned is that he has work to do. Rather than let a person like Magg run much of the kingdom, it is better for someone like Prince Rhun to run much of the kingdom. And we know that this time he will give real orders instead of letting someone else do all the leading.

Prince Rhun has learned that being a Prince takes effort.

**• Will Gwydion, Taran, and his companions see Glew? Why?**

Yes. Taran made a promise to seek help for Glew, and he intends to keep his promise even though Glew tried to kill him:

[...] at last Gwydion agreed they would start without delay. He agreed, too, that they would pass by the cavern to see how Glew fared, for Taran still held to the promise he had made to help the wretched giant. (203)

**• Eilonwy asks, "Can it be true that being a young lady is more important than being an enchantress?" (204). How would you answer that question?**

Eilonwy wants to take a last look at Caer Colur, or rather at the place where it used to be because it is all underwater now. Eilonwy has lost her ancestral home. She and Taran have a conversation on the beach.

We read:

Eilonwy said nothing for a while. Then she turned to Taran. "One thing more I remembered at Caer Colur: Dallben's saying that there was a time when we must be more than what we are. Can it be true that being a young lady is more important than being an enchantress? Perhaps that's what he meant. I shall have to find out for myself.

"So if I must learn to be a young lady, whatever that may be that's any different from what I am," Eilonwy continued, "then I shall try to learn twice as fast as those silly geese at Dinas Rhydant and be home twice as soon. For Caer Dallben is my only real home now. [...]" (204-205)

At times we can be braver than we usually are. Eilonwy made a major effort of the will and destroyed the book of spells, thus saving Prydain from being ruled by the evil Achren. We can all be happy that Eilonwy made the choice that resulted in her being a girl rather than a great enchantress. And, as Gwydion says, there is honor in being a girl, just as there is honor in being a boy.

**• What present does Eilonwy pick up from the ocean?  
To whom does she give it?**

The sea casts ashore an item from Caer Colur: an ancient battle horn. Eilonwy gives it to Taran:

"Why, what's this?" Eilonwy cried suddenly. The sea has given us a present!" She knelt and from the foaming surf drew a battered object and stripped away the trailing seaweed. Taran saw an ancient battle horn, bound in silver with a silver mouthpiece.

Eilonwy turned it over in her hands and looked carefully at it. She smiled sadly. "It's all that's left of Caer Colur. What use it might be, I don't know and never shall. But if you promise not to forget me until we meet again, I promise not to forget you. And this shall be my pledge."

"I promise gladly," Taran said. He hesitated. "But what pledge have I to give you? I have none, other than my word."

"The word of an Assistant Pig-Keeper?" said Eilonwy. "That shall do very well indeed. Here, take it. Giving gifts is much nicer than saying farewell." (205)

• **Will Eilonwy be betrothed to Prince Rhun?**

No, Being betrothed to Prince Rhun is something that Eilonwy will have no part in, although she believes that he is much improved because of his journey with the companions.

Of course, Eilonwy is angry at Taran because Taran ought to know that there is someone to whom she would not mind being betrothed.

• **What is your opinion of the end of this novel?**

*The Castle of Llyr* ends in this way:

"And yet," Taran answered, "we must say farewell. You know that King Rhuddlum and Queen Teleria mean to betroth you to Prince Rhun."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Eilonwy. "Well, I assure you they shall do no such thing. There's limits to having people make up your mind for you. Rhun has certainly improved; I think this journey was the best thing that ever happened to him and someday he

might even make a respectable sort of King. But as for being betrothed..." She stopped suddenly and looked at Taran. "Did you seriously think for a moment I would ever...? Taran of Caer Dallben," she cried angrily, her eyes flashing, "I'm not speaking to you!

"At least," Eilonwy added quickly, "not for a little while." (205-206)

This is a good ending because Eilonwy is being Eilonwy. It is a good ending, and it is a funny ending, and we know that more Prydain books will follow this one.

**• If Eilonwy does not want to marry Prince Rhun, whom do you think she would like to marry?**

Taran, of course.

**• How many examples of true heroism have we seen in this novel?**

I tend to think of the companions as a band of heroes because they are heroes, but Lloyd Alexander refers to them as companions. This is a good decision on his part because it stresses friendship and because heroes constantly deny that they are heroes. At most, a hero will say something like his or her parent saved a life once and he or she (the hero who does call him- or herself a hero) is happy to have saved a life.

The companions are heroes, and they are companions.

*Eilonwy: Chapter 18*

Eilonwy destroys the book of spells, thus sacrificing much personal power but preventing Achren from ruling Prydain.

*Fflewddur Fflam: Chapter 8*

Fflewddur Fflam makes Taran, Prince Rhun, and Gurgi leave the hut while he plays music for Llyan.

*Gurgi: Chapter 12*

Gurgi is willing to give his life to Glew if it means the other companions go free.

*Kaw: Chapter 9*

Kaw fights Llyan and draws the huge mountain cat away from Taran and the others.

*Llyan: Chapter 19*

Llyan rescues the companions, including Taran and Eilonwy.

*Prince Rhun: Chapter 12*

Prince Rhun offers to give himself to Glew to be killed so that the other companions can go free.

*Prince Rhun: Chapter 13*

Prince Rhun returns to the cavern and faces Glew in a successful attempt to save the other companions.

*Taran: Chapter 9*

Taran rescues Prince Rhun so that he does not drown in the river.

*Taran: Chapter 10*

Taran show lots of courage in trying to rescue Prince Rhun from the pit in which he has fallen. Taran slides down into the pit after him.

*Taran: Chapter 13*

Taran has Prince Rhun (instead of himself) escape the cavern in which Glew is keeping them prisoner.

*Taran: Chapter 13*

When Taran falls into the water in the cave, it makes him visible to Glew. He tells the companions to run and to let Glew follow him. Taran is trying to allow his companions to escape although he thinks that he will die.

*Taran: Chapter 19*

Taran attempts to rescue Eilonwy by swimming with her to the shore.

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### **First Aid for Kids**

<http://www.epilogsys.com/scoutingweb/Training/FirstAid.htm>

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/first-aid-for-children.html>

### **How to Teach Simple First Aid to Kids (Video)**

[http://www.ehow.com/video\\_4997415\\_teach-simple-first-aid-kids.html](http://www.ehow.com/video_4997415_teach-simple-first-aid-kids.html)

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### Paper Topics (Perhaps for Older Readers)

- Which character in *The Castle of Llyr* has grown and changed the most?
- Which character performed the most heroic action in *The Castle of Llyr*? Support your answer with reasons and evidence.
- In your opinion, how old are the major characters in *The Castle of Llyr*? Support your answer with reasons and evidence.
- The major characters in *The Castle of Llyr* have different ways of speaking. What are some ways that Eilonwy, Gurgi, Kaw, and Ffleuddur Fflam speak differently from one another?
- One important theme of *The Castle of Llyr* is heroism. Why isn't Glew a hero? What makes the companions heroes?
- What are some things that you have learned from reading *The Castle of Llyr*?
- Lloyd Alexander has said, "My concern is how we learn to be genuine human beings." What can *The Castle of Llyr* teach us about being genuine human beings?

Note: The quotation about "genuine human beings" comes from this Web site:

(<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-alexander-lloyd.asp>).

### Sample Short Reaction Memo

The questions in this short guide to Lloyd Alexander's *The Castle of Llyr* can be used in discussions; however, they can also be used for short reaction memos. See below for the assignment and a sample short reaction memo.

#### *How Do I Complete the Reaction Memo Assignments?*

You will have to write a series of short memos in which you write about the readings you have been assigned.

Each memo should be at least 250 words, not counting long quotations from the work of literature. Include a word count for each memo, although that is not normally part of the memo format.

Following the memo heading (To, From, Re, Date, Words), write the question you are answering and the part of the book that the question applies to.

You may answer one question or more than one question. I will supply you with a list of questions that you may answer.

Note that a Works Cited list is needed if you use quotations.

For an example of a short reaction memo, see the following pages.

**To:** David Bruce  
**From:** Jane Student  
**Re:** *The Book of Three, Ch. 2*  
**Date:** Today's Date  
**Words:** 252

**What do we learn about Prince Gwydion in Chapter 2?**

Prince Gwydion has many good qualities.

He takes care of Taran and recognizes that Taran has been slashed with a sword across his back.

Gwydion is an adult man. He is a war leader, and he acts and looks like a war leader. Taran is surprised to see Gwydion in a travel-stained cloak, but of course that is exactly what he ought to be wearing.

Gwydion occasionally works alone. Of course, at times Gwydion is a leader, but on this quest, he is alone (until he runs across Taran).

Gwydion has a prince's sword. That is how Taran recognizes who Prince Gwydion really is.

Gwydion recognizes that there is a proper time for things to be done.

Taran is eager to get back on the trail of Hen Wen, but Gwydion points out that it is night, and no one can find and follow a trail at night.

Gwydion is brave. He values his life, and he would not risk it unnecessarily, but he vows to fight the Horned King — a fight that only one warrior will walk away from.

Gwydion is not overly proud. He values his life highly, but he does not believe that his life is worth more than another man's life.

More evidence that Gwydion is not overly proud: He wonders if Taran is supposed to help him in his quest — or if he is supposed to help Taran in Taran's quest.

Gwydion knows both Coll and Dallben.

### Child Heroes

Of course, the Prydain Chronicles are about child heroes — especially Taran. Child heroes exist in real life as well. They do such things as call 911 (in the United States — other countries have different emergency numbers) in times of emergency, but they also more actively save lives.

Teachers may want to share some stories of real child heroes. One idea would be to teach child-appropriate life-saving techniques while teaching *The Castle of Llyr*.

#### **“Right Now, My Kids Could be Parentless If It Wasn’t for 911”**

Yvette Walcker had been feeling lightheaded, and the lightheadedness did not go away. On 10 April 2011, she collapsed in the kitchen of her home in Granite Bay, California, where her 10-year-old daughter, Ashley, found her half-conscious and gasping on the floor. Ashley dialed 911 for help. Roseville (California) Police and Fire Dispatcher Sondra Christian kept Ashley calm and gave her instructions on how to help her mother until emergency crews arrived. Ms. Christian said about Ashley, “She was really great during the whole conversation. It almost made me question, because she was so young, whether or not there was a true emergency. But I could hear a mom in the background, so I knew that there was something going on.” She added that although the 911 dispatch center receives many calls from kids, very few of the calls are about real emergencies: “A lot of [the callers] are children that have just gone through school and learned what 911 is and they want to see if it’s real.” Roseville Fire Chief Dean Grundy said, “Ashley did an amazing job of staying calm in such a frightening emergency situation.” Roseville Police Chief Daniel Hahn said, “Because of Ashley’s bravery and quick thinking, her mother was able to make a full recovery and is with us today.” Yvette Walcker’s health problem turned

out to be an ulcer, which she probably got when her husband died of a brain hemorrhage two years previously. Yvette said, “I was really depressed after my husband died. It was hard getting back on our feet. I’m sure that’s where I got the ulcer that almost killed me. Right now, my kids could be parentless if it wasn’t for 911.” She added about Ashley, “She’s my hero, and I’m so proud of her. I’m sure she was petrified. I think this is a way of reminding me of how life is precious and to be thankful that I still have mine.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Source: Toby Lewis, “Girl, 10, honored for saving mom’s life.” *The Roseville Press-Tribune* (CA). 23 June 2011  
<<http://rosevillept.com/detail/181792.html>>.

### **“I’m Proud of Him Because He Called the Police Before He Told Me It was Really Serious”**

On 16 June 2011, Zion Paschall, an African-American, six-year-old first-grader at Efland-Cheeks Elementary School in Hillsborough, North Carolina, became a hero when he called 911 after his grandmother suffered a stroke. Zion was staying with his grandmother, Bessie Paschall, age 67, and had gone to her to ask her to make his breakfast. She tried to get out of bed but fell to the floor. Zion said, “First I called my momma two times, and then called 911, and then called momma back. Then the ambulance and police came and the police asked questions. It turned out grandma had a stroke.” Corporal Brian Matthews of the Hillsborough Police Department said that Zion took him to his grandmother, who was unable to answer questions. Corporal Matthews said, “Since Ms. Paschall couldn’t tell [us] anything, we had to rely on Zion. We asked him if she took any medications ... and he pinpointed the blue bag where she kept them.” Corporal Matthews added, “Zion’s actions in calling 911, as well as his actions when they got there, helped to treat [his grandmother] and give the medical assistance she needed.” Zion’s mother, Edwina Paschall, said about him, “I’m proud of him because he called the police before he told me it was really serious.”<sup>16</sup>

### **“I was Able to Keep My Voice Clear Even Though I was Crying”**

On 14 June 2010 in Bonham, Texas, 12-year-old Thomas Standlee, a 7th grader, made a 911 call that helped saved his mother’s life when she began having chest pains and

<sup>16</sup> Source: John Sharpe, “6-year-old honored as a hero: Zion Paschall Called 911, Helped Responders When Grandma Suffered A Stroke.” *The Chapel Hill News* (North Carolina). 13 July 2011 <<http://www.chapelhillnews.com/2011/07/13/65571/6-year-old-honored-as-a-hero.html>>.

could not get help by herself. Thomas said, “I just did what I had to. I thought my mom might have died. I thought she was dying. I was just terrified. But I was able to keep my voice clear even though I was crying.” His mother, Anna Rutledge, said, “Otherwise I might have died if I hadn’t gotten any help. That’s the reality of it.” Anna added, “Here’s this kid with Asperger’s, and he never missed a beat. He handled it just like a young adult.” Thomas had to give their address because he was using a cell phone; he also answered several questions about his mother and her condition. Cindy Woods, a communication officer with the Bonham Police Department, took Thomas’ 911 call. Cindy said, “He answered all our questions very well. He followed all our instructions. He did extremely well especially for his age.”<sup>17</sup>

### **“She was Brilliant — Really Good”**

Beatrice Coles, a five-year-old girl in Bridgnorth, Shropshire, England, knew what to do when her mother lost consciousness in August 2005 due to low blood pressure. She dialed 999 (the British 911) and opened a door to let the ambulance crew inside. She also called her great-grandmother. Beatrice’s mother, Bridget, who was pregnant at the time, said, “I had been suffering from low pressure and having little fainting fits. At this particular time, I had blacked out completely.” Paul Ducommun, who works at the ambulance service, said about Beatrice, “She gave me the address straight away and then repeated the telephone number a couple of times to me as well and said her mum had collapsed. She said, ‘I can’t unlock the door because the door is a bit stuck.’ So I said, ‘We’ll get the

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<sup>17</sup> Source: Shelby Levins, “12-year-old awarded local 911 hero medal of honor.” KXII.com. 9 August 2010  
<<http://www.kxii.com/home/headlines/100321719.html?storySection=story>>.

ambulance crew to push it while you're pulling it.' I asked her if she'd got any other telephone numbers of her dad, and she gave me all these different numbers. She was brilliant — really good.”<sup>18</sup>

### **“My Mummy’s Poorly”**

In July 2009 in Bournemouth, Dorset, England, police officer and mother Joanne Keeling, age 34, had an allergic reaction to latex while she was in her home. She gave herself the proper medication, but it did not take effect immediately. Before collapsing, she told her two-year-old daughter, Isabelle, “Can you get the phone? Mummy is poorly.” She said later, “I heard Izzi on the phone talking to someone, and I was thinking, ‘I need that phone. Now is not the time to be talking to someone by pressing the redial button.’” Fortunately, Isabelle had called 999 — the British equivalent of the American 911 — and was talking to an emergency services operator. She gave her name, address, and telephone number to the operator, and she opened the door when emergency personnel arrived. Isabelle had learned how to call 999 the previous day by watching an episode of *Tweenies*, a British TV program for very young children. Her mother said, “From an early age she has been very, very chatty. She picks up everything we say, and last year after the US Presidential elections she was going around saying ‘US President Obama.’ So what she did was amazing, but that’s Isabelle really. I never imagined her wonderful ability to retain information would one day help me.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Source: “Bravery award for 999 rescue girl.” BBC News. 19 October 2005

<[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/shropshire/4356134.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/shropshire/4356134.stm)>

<sup>19</sup> Source: “‘My mummy’s poorly’: Two-year-old girl dials 999 to save her mother’s life.” *Daily Mail* (UK). 14 July 2009

### “I Call Them My Little Heroes Now”

On 22 December 2010, Amanda Joice fell unconscious in her home in Whitley Bay, England, because of a blood infection. Fortunately, her two young sons — six-year-old Jack and four-year-old Ryan — knew what to do. Jack found her mobile phone and called 999 — the British equivalent of the American 911. Both boys spoke on the phone to the emergency call operator, who sent police to the home. Amanda said, “I am so proud of them. I call them my little heroes now. God knows what would have happened if they hadn’t called for help. They could have saved my life. I’m amazed by what they did. You spend all your life looking after your children. You never imagine they will save you like that.” She added, “The two boys saw my phone beside me, and thankfully they knew what to do. It would have been distressing for them both, and I am proud of what they did. I have always told them to call 999 if there is ever an emergency, but you don’t expect it to happen. I was surprised when I realized what they had done. They are quite clever children, and we watch programs like *Casualty* together. But they must have been really upset and frightened when they couldn’t wake me up. Jack made the phone call, but they both spoke on the phone. Jack and Ryan are both bright young lads — they pick things up very quickly.” Chief Superintendent Gordon Milward, the head of Northumbria Police’s Communications department, said, “What the boys did was first class, but the role the contact handler who answered their call played was also vital.”<sup>20</sup>

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<<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1199447/Two-year-old-girl-saves-mothers-life--seeing-999-episode-Tweenies.html>>.

<sup>20</sup> Source: Sophie Doughty, “Sons called 999 after mum fell unconscious.” *Evening Chronicle* (Newcastle, England). 6 January 2011 <<http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/north-east-news/evening->

### **“I Didn’t Want My Grandma to Die Because She Belongs in the Family”**

In April 2005, six-year-old Kimberly Holsinger of Rockingham County, Virginia, saved a life by telephoning 911 when her grandmother Wanda Holsinger had a heart attack. Kimberly had a good reason for doing what she did: “I didn’t want my grandma to die because she belongs in the family.” Rockingham County Fire and Rescue Chief Robert A. Symons praised Kimberly’s family because they had taught her what to do in an emergency.<sup>21</sup>

### **“I Thought I was Going to Lose Mummy”**

- In November 2009, in her home in Warden Hill Road, Cheltenham, England, 38-year-old Melissa Loveridge clutched her chest and then collapsed as a result of a chronic asthma attack. Her eight-year-old daughter, Jazmyne, called 999 (the British version of the American 911) and got help. Melissa went into cardiac arrest, but by then paramedics had arrived and were able to save her life. Jazmyne said, “I was shaking and really scared, but I knew I needed to get help. I kept talking to the paramedics until they came, but I thought I was going to lose mummy. Lots of people have told me I helped save her life.” Melissa, who spent three days in intensive care, said, “My husband, Geoff, had popped out, so it was only Jazmyne and me in the house. We were watching television when I suddenly felt really unwell. I knew something wasn’t right, and

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chronicle-news/2011/01/06/sons-called-999-after-mum-fell-unconscious-72703-27941099/>.

<sup>21</sup> Source: “Little Hero Gets Big Award.” WHSV.com (Virginia). 13 October 2005 <<http://www.wHSV.com/home/headlines/1780356.html>>. Also: Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Rockingham County Board of Supervisors. 12 October 2005 <<http://www.rockinghamcountyva.gov/webimages/05-10-12.pdf>>.

suddenly I couldn't breathe at all. I went to the front door and opened it to get some fresh air, but I was still struggling. I lost my voice, and that's when Jazmyne phoned the ambulance. She's my little angel and a real heroine. If it wasn't for her, I'd be dead. It doesn't bear thinking about. She hasn't wanted to leave my side since I've been back. I think she's scared I might go again. When I woke up in hospital, I didn't believe what had happened." Melissa added, "It has made me realize how precious my family is. It really hits home when something like this happens. I'm still on a cocktail of drugs and antibiotics, but it's good to be back home. I want to give a huge thank you to all the staff at the hospital who helped me." Emergency call handler Alex Hawkes, the man who took Jazmyne's 999 call, said, "She handled it all really well and was able to help me by answering questions in a potentially life-threatening situation. Jazmyne stayed calm, letting me know of any changes in her mum's condition, and between us we were able to achieve the best possible outcome."<sup>22</sup>

### **"If I had a Medal to Give to My Son, I Would"**

In February 2009 in Scotland, Amanda Smith, mother of four, fainted while in the bathtub and went under the water. Her 10-year-old son, Aidan Turner, found her, pulled the plug out of the bathtub, kept her head above water, and pulled her out of the bathtub. He then put her in the recovery position and telephoned his grandmother, who worked at Borders General Hospital on the outskirts of Melrose. An ambulance took his mother to the hospital. Ms. Smith said, "If it hadn't been for Aidan, I would have died. I am so proud of him. I was completely submerged, I

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<sup>22</sup> Source: "Cheltenham youngster saves mum's life." This is Gloucestershire. 27 November 2009  
<<http://www.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk/Cheltenham-youngster-saves-mum-s-life/story-11869137-detail/story.html>>.

don't know for how long. I can only go on what Aidan and his grandmother have told me. He lifted my head out of the water, but said it was really hard because it was so wet. His younger sisters were crying, and he was trying to keep them calm, saying, 'Mummy's going to be OK.' He covered me with a towel and was keeping my head up and talking to me. He was so brave. Water was coming out of my mouth and I was coughing, so he was patting me on the back to get the water out. I had to receive oxygen in the ambulance on the way to hospital." Ms. Smith's low blood pressure may have caused her to faint. She said, "If I had a medal to give to my son, I would."<sup>23</sup>

### **"We All Owe our Lives to Harry"**

In June 2005, a five-year-old boy woke up his family when he discovered that their home in Sydney, Australia, was on fire. All of them managed to get out before the fire destroyed their home. Kindergarten student Harry Haywood woke up around 2 a.m., smelled smoke, and then woke up his mother (Nicole Haywood), her boyfriend (Damon Cox), and his two older sisters (Brittany, age nine, and Brie, age seven). He said, "I just got out of bed and I shut my eyes and ran to my sister's room." His mother said, "I just woke up to Harry screaming like I never heard before. The smoke in the lounge room was just so thick I couldn't breathe." She crawled to the front door and joined her children, who by then were outside. Ms. Haywood said, "I heard each individual screaming 'Mummy' outside and I knew they were out." She added, "His first instinct was to

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<sup>23</sup> Source: Robert Fairburn, "Boy, 10, hailed hero after saving mum from drowning in bath." *The Daily Record* (UK). 27 February 2009 <<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/2009/02/27/boy-10-hailed-hero-after-saving-mum-from-drowning-in-bath-86908-21156379/>>.

wake everyone up ... he just knew he had to protect us. We all owe our lives to Harry.”<sup>24</sup>

### **“It’s Got Me! I Can’t Get It Off Me!”**

In July 2005 in Port Charlotte, Florida, nine-year-old Andrew Davison thought that a snake was attacking Samantha, his 13-year-old sister. Andrew said, “She screamed, ‘It’s got me!’ She got thrown back three or four feet.” But what had gotten Samantha was not a snake — it was an electrical shock caused by a damaged electrical cord that was set up to charge a boat battery. Rosemary, her mother, said, “She shouted, ‘I can’t get it off me,’ which I thought was a bug. Because she was jumping around that much, I thought something was stinging her.” Andrew jumped out of the pool he was in and grabbed the electrical cord and pulled it away from his sister, receiving a short electrical shock himself. His arm was shaking from the electrical shock, but Samantha suffered several blisters from the electricity and spent several hours in a hospital while doctors monitored her heart. Fortunately, Samantha recovered from the electrical shock. Rosemary said about her son, “He saved her really, I suppose. Really, it could have been pretty horrendous. The doctor said she was lucky. She was really, really lucky.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Source: “Boy hero, 5, saved family from fire.” *The Age* (Australia). 23 June 2005 <<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/boy-hero-5-saved-family-from-fire/2005/06/23/1119321819973.html?from=moreStories>>.

<sup>25</sup> Source: Kristen Kridel, “My little brother, the hero; 9-year-old saves his sister from a big electrical jolt.” *Sarasota Herald Tribune* (FL). 21 July 2005 <<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20050721/NEWS/507210421>>.

### **Eight-Year-Old Saves Two-Year-Old**

In October 2004 in Motherwell, North Lanarkshire, Scotland, eight-year-old Nathan Watson saved the life of Charlie, his two-year-old sister. The children's mother, Margaret-Anne, explained, "I was feeding my four-week-old girl, and Nathan was doing his homework. Charlie was wanting him to go upstairs and play. She was shouting to him, as they are always playing together. I said, 'Go and see her.'" Charlie was upstairs playing by herself. She had jumped up and down on a bed and then had climbed onto a window ledge, where a cord from the venetian blinds somehow got wrapped around her neck. Nathan entered the room, and Charlie, wanting to show him how high she could jump, jumped from the window ledge and nearly died. With the cord around her neck, Charlie dangled in the air. Margaret-Anne said, "There was no way she could have freed herself. Nathan saw her and jumped on the bed and lifted her up and disentangled her. He picked her right up, and she is a big two-year-old." She added, "Nathan helped her down the stairs, but I didn't realize how severe it was until I saw her neck." She took Charlie to see a doctor; fortunately, she was OK except for the mark on her neck. Margaret-Anne said, "I can't believe it happened. After it sank in, my knees were knocking together. When my husband, Gerard, got back, he asked for Nathan so he could thank him. But Nathan just wanted to go play."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Source: Ben Spencer, "HERO NATHAN, 8 SAVES LITTLE SIS FROM HANGING; Mum praises alert son." *Daily Record* (Glasgow, Scotland). 8 October 2004  
<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/HERO+NATHAN+,+8+SAVES+LITTLE+SIS+FROM+HANGING%3B+Mum+praises+alert+son.-a0122968506>.

### **A Three-Year-Old Firefighter**

In February 2011, a lamp fell over and started a small fire in the Boca Raton, Florida, home of three-year-old Aiden Lindsey. Firefighters had recently given a presentation about fire safety to his preschool class, and Aiden applied what he had learned and put out the fire. His mother, Erica Lindsey, said, “So I picked the lamp up and there was a fire underneath, and he ran in with a Tupperware [container] of water that he was pretending to drink soup from and he pushed me aside and poured the water out onto the fire.” She added, “I was amazed that he did that — that he even knew to [pour] the water out on the fire.” Aiden said that when he grows up he wants to be either a policeman or a firefighter.<sup>27</sup>

### **“Me and My Mom Prayed a Lot, and We Knew God Could Get Us Through It”**

In November 2008 near Tillamook, Oregon, an 11-year-old girl named Maddie McRae helped save the lives of seven people. Two days of heavy rains washed out a culvert and a stretch of road. Two vehicles, including Maddie’s mother’s Ford Expedition, ended up going into the river. Inside the Ford Expedition were Maddie, two younger siblings, and her mother. The car was washed downstream for a quarter-mile until it ran into a tree. Maddie said, “I knew what was happening. I thought we were going to die because the water was going over our heads. But me and my mom prayed a lot, and we knew God could get us through it.” Maddie crawled through the SUV’s broken front window, reached a tree branch, and made her way to the riverbank. She then climbed an electric fence and went to a nearby

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<sup>27</sup> Source: “Boy, 3, Uses Tupperware To Put Out Small Fire At Home.” WPBF.com. 29 March 2011  
<<http://www.wpbfl.com/news/27356196/detail.html>>.

farmhouse to call 911. Fire Captain Charles Spittles in Tillamook County said that by the time paramedics arrived, “The river was pounding on the roof and going over the roof.” Rescuers threw an extension ladder over a limb and dangled ropes to Maddie’s mother, Stephanie, who tied her two younger children to the ropes so that the rescuers could lift them to safety. Rescuers then tipped the ladder down to Stephanie, who then crawled along it to get to safety. Rescuers also saved the four people — Jodi Porter, her nine-year-old and 13-year-old daughters, and her father — who were in the other vehicle, a brand-new Ford 500, which entered the water before the McRae family’s car did. Jodi said, “We were coming home from church and came around the corner like we have thousands of times in the 13 years we’ve lived out here and the road was collapsed in front of us. And we went down into the culvert and it collapsed and we were in the creek floating backwards for about a mile.” Jodi used her cell phone to call a friend: “My first thought was to call my best friend because they were right behind us leaving church, and I didn’t want her to fall in. So as we’re floating backwards, I’m dialing her saying, ‘Don’t come, don’t come, you’re going to fall in, too.’” Jodi added, “We crawled on top of the car, but it kept sinking, so we crawled onto a logjam until the firefighters came and got us.” No one was hurt except for a few cuts and bruises. Maddie said, “I just went and looked at the car. It’s beaten up. I don’t get how I climbed on the tree and got off.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Source: Brian Barker, Associated Press and KATU Web Staff, “11-year-old girl hailed as a hero after vehicles are swept down floodwaters.” KATU.com. 13 November 2008  
<<http://www.katu.com/news/local/34438424.html>>.

**“You’re a Little Hero. Without You, He [Jake] would be in the Chapel of Rest Now”**

In June 2005 in Rhyl on the northeast coast of Wales, 15-year-old Corinna Gee rescued five-year-old Jake Sanderson, who had fallen into a lake filled with toxic algae. Corinna was walking home with her younger brothers (nine-year-old Sonny and seven-year-old Nathan) and best friend (Amanda Hyde) from a soccer presentation at her high school: Rhyl High School. She saw the boy in the water and heard lots of shouting. She said, “I saw he was blue. I just jumped in there. There was a lot of foam coming from his mouth, and I just managed to pull him out.” She added, “The water was horrible. It has got lots of jellyfish, crabs, and litter. It was horrible.” Jake’s mother cried as she told Corinna, “You’re a little hero. Without you, he [Jake] would be in the chapel of rest now.” Jake’s father said about Corinna, “She saved my little boy’s life. I can’t thank her enough. A lot of children would have been scared to go into the water, especially when it was toxic, but she just jumped in.” Deborah Gee, Corinna’s mother, threw a party for her. Deborah said, “I think it’s really great that she saved the little boy’s life.” While Corinna was in the water rescuing Jake, Amanda called emergency services. Amanda, Sonny, and Nathan then all helped Corinna get Jake on shore, and Amanda performed heart massage on Jake using instructions given to her by ambulance staff over the telephone. All four children received bravery awards from the Royal Humane Society. Major General David Pennefather, secretary of the Royal Humane Society, said, “These four are a credit to the younger generation. All too often we hear nothing but criticism of youngsters. However, the action of these four deserve nothing but praise. But for their swift intervention, this little boy would almost certainly have died. However,

they were on the spot, kept their heads and thanks to them he is alive today.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Pre-Teen Heroes**

On the last Sunday in February 2005, 11-year-old Luke Swanevelder and 12-year-old Jannus Visser were bodyboarding at the beach at Melkbosstrand, South Africa. Someone shouted that a swimmer was having trouble, so they paddled out to the swimmer, Priscilla Peters of Atlantis, South Africa, and told her to hold on to their bodyboards. Luke said, “By the time we got to the beach, her friend had called the NSRI [National Sea Rescue Institute].” Ryan Barnes, NSRI station commander at Melkbosstrand, said, “I do believe that if they hadn’t intervened, she’d have drowned.” The boys kept quiet about the rescue, and their schoolmates did not learn about it until one schoolmate brought in a newspaper article about the rescue. Laerskool Van Riebeeckstrand teacher Louise Vermeulen said that the two boys are humble: “They don’t want to be the heroes. Their classmates are more proud and impressed about it.”<sup>30</sup>

### **12-Year-Old Girl Saves Nearly 40 Children**

When heavy rains led to flooding in 26 July 2005 in the state of Maharashtra, India, 12-year-old Kumari Aasma

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<sup>29</sup> Source: “Teenager praised for boy’s rescue.” BBC News. 8 June 2005  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/wales/north\\_east/4074328.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/north_east/4074328.stm).  
 Also: “Teenagers’ honour for saving boy.” BBC News. 1 December 2005  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/wales/north\\_east/4489316.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/north_east/4489316.stm).

<sup>30</sup> Source: Theresa Smith, “Reluctant heroes honoured for ‘secret’ rescue.” Iol News. 13 September 2005  
<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/reliant-heroes-honoured-for-secret-rescue-1.253340>.

Khan became a hero. An orphan, she lived with 120 other children in the Children's Aid Society in Mankhurd, India. She said, "It was around 4 p.m., and all of us were asked to leave the school as it was raining heavily. Around 4:30 p.m., water started entering our dormitories and I had to shift the kids to our superintendent's room. There were nearly 100 kids between [three to eight years old] in the room. All of us thought we would be safe, but then to our dismay the water level started rising." She added, "My superintendent and the other two staffers were trying to think of how we could get the kids out. When I looked at those kids, I could see the fear in their eyes and I immediately decided to jump into the water and take the kids to the other building. Even though I didn't know how to swim, I decided to do this as I was taller than the rest. I carried three kids on my shoulders and took them to the other side. I made several more trips and saved nearly 40 kids. The rest were helped by the other staff members." At times, the water was nearly up to her ears and she had to keep her chin up to breathe as she carried two or three children at a time to safety. Indumati Jagtap, the Superintendent of the home, said about Aasma, "She is a brilliant girl. She does whatever work is given to her and is a role model for everyone. She not only completes her work on time but also takes care of other kids; she is an asset to the home. She helped us even after the floods; all our books were wet, so she collected them and helped us dry them." Aasma added, "I love taking care of the children. I am the monitor of all the three divisions of the home." She is also a good Hindu, fasting during the Hindi festival Mahashivratri and praying at the local temple. Aasma said, "These rains have taught me one thing — never meddle with nature. Let us not create an imbalance by chopping trees and destroying the environment." She won a Special Award in the category of Physical Bravery

of the 15th Godfrey Phillips Bravery Awards for the state of Maharashtra.<sup>31</sup>

### **Twits? Heroes!**

In January 2005 at Clifton Beach in Tasmania, Australia, four teenage boys became heroes. Dina Alexopoulos's daughter, Emalee Fehlberg, age 20, fell and nearly drowned, but her brother Chris, who lives in Hobart, and his friends Tim Stearnes, of Howrah, Aaron Bush, of Moonah, and Daniel Drew, of Dynnyrne, all of whom were 17 years old, rescued her. Dina said that she was surprised that these boys became heroes: "I'm always calling the boys twits. When I tell them anything, they look at me like the lights are on but nobody's home. You can tell them something three times, and you don't think it will sink in. I'm amazed and shocked they knew what to do and behaved so heroically. We were told over and over again at the Royal Hobart Hospital that without the boys and their knowledge, I wouldn't have my daughter today." All of the boys had learned rescue techniques at school. Emalee had been sitting on a cliff at Clifton Beach. When she started down to see her brother, she fell. Dina said, "On the way down she slipped and fell and was holding on for a few seconds but the wind was so strong, it blew her off, falling 10 meters. Tim was first to reach her, as she had gone into the water, and he used life-saving techniques to keep her head, and his, above water as the waves crashed over them, while the other boys reached them as quickly as they could." Chris said about his sister, "There was blood pouring down her face." He used his t-shirt to apply

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<sup>31</sup> Source: "Kumari Aasma Khan." Godfrey Phillips Bravery Award Winners. <<http://amodini.org/pastwinner/kumari-aasma-khan>>. Also: "HAND IN HAND □ Saluting the unsung heroes of the 2005 deluge. Water baby." *Communalism Combat*. No.109-110. August-September 2005 <<http://www.sabrang.com/cc/archive/2005/sep05/cover.html>>.

pressure to the wound. He said, "I've still got the t-shirt at home. We should keep it forever as a souvenir. Frame it, or something." For an hour, the boys took care of her, and then Tasmanian Air Rescue Helicopters took her to Royal Hobart Hospital, where medical personnel treated her head injuries, broken leg and wrist, and various cuts and bruises. Emalee lost her nose ring during her fall, but she declined to lose something else at the hospital: her new shoes. She said, "The paramedic wanted to cut them off, but I told him don't dare cut the shoes, not the shoes, no way. I paid \$180 for them only the week before." Dina said about Chris and Emalee, "They've always been quite close, but now he's absolutely besotted with Emalee. He's told her he loves her so many times."<sup>32</sup>

### **Mr. Tocker is "Definitely a Man Worth Saving"**

In September 2006 in Waipukurau, New Zealand, three 12-year-old boys, Horizon Tamatai-Smith, Marvin Beets and Halen Eru, saw smoke coming from a house. The three boys took action: Horizon knocked on neighbors' doors to tell them about the fire, Marvin kept watch on the house, and Halen went to a nearby dairy and called 111 (the equivalent of the US's 911). Then the boys saw someone inside the burning building. Because help had not yet arrived, Horizon went inside to rescue the man. Horizon said, "He was just frozen. I think the smoke had got to his head because he was just asking me what was happening." The man was Hector Tocker, age 90. Fire services arrived and quickly put out the fire. Waipukurau deputy fire chief Owen Spotswood said about Mr. Tocker, "I believe that he could have lost his life quite easily if the boys hadn't

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<sup>32</sup> Source: "Teenage heroes save cliff victim." Posted at Good News Blog. <<http://www.goodnewsblog.com/2005/01/12/teenage-heroes-save-cliff-victim>>. The article originally appeared in *Northern Territory News* (Australia).

rescued him. They did a marvelous job.” The deputy fire chief did point out the danger of children entering a burning building and said that “it would have been sad if two lives had been lost.” One of Mr. Tocker’s friends gave each of the three boys \$50, saying that Mr. Tocker is “definitely a man worth saving.”<sup>33</sup>

### **“I Just Knew I Couldn’t Let My Mom Go Under”**

Kelsey Roy of Carleton Place, Ontario, Canada, won a Medal of Bravery in 2010 because of a heroic act she performed in March 2007, when she was eight years old. She and her mother, Karin Roy, were at Mississippi Lake in Lanark County, Ontario, when her mother fell through the ice and into the cold water. Her mother yelled at Kelsey to stay away because she was afraid that Kelsey would also fall though the thin ice and could die, but Kelsey instead rescued her mother by crawling on the thin ice to her mother and then helping her to safety. Kelsey said, “I’ve seen what it’s like to lose someone who is close to you, my grandpa died and my great-aunt died, and I just knew I couldn’t let my Mom go under.” At the award ceremony, Governor General Michaëlle Jean said to Kelsey and other awardees, “You did not hesitate for even a moment to risk your own life to save others in danger. I cannot think of any act more worthy of praise and recognition. Such an act is as precious as life itself.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Source: Mandy Smith and Hinerangi Vaimoso, *Hawke’s Bay Today* (New Zealand). “Boys rescue confused man from smoke-filled house.” 26 September 2006  
<http://www.hawkesbaytoday.co.nz/local/news/boys-rescue-confused-man-from-smoke-filled-house/3702769/>.

## Animal Heroes

### **Socks the Cat**

In 1992, Cassandra and John Craven took Jane, their two-year-old daughter, and Socks, their pet cat, along on a vacation to the Adirondack Mountains. While Jane was in a clearing, a black bear suddenly came and grabbed her in its jaws. Socks the cat came to the rescue, jumping onto the bear's head and scratching at its eyes. The black bear released Jane and started clawing at Socks, who jumped off the bear's head and fled with the black bear in hot pursuit. Jane was fine, although the bear's teeth had torn her clothing. Two hours later, Socks the cat showed up, safe and sound and winner of the match — Cat: 1, Bear: 0.<sup>35</sup>

### **Ringling the Dinner Bell**

In Kansas, W.A. Bigelow owed an Abyssinian cat named Trixy who loved to ring the dinner bell outside of his house by jumping up and clawing the rope that hung from it. However, the neighbors complained about the noise of the dinner bell and so W.A. tied the rope higher so that the cat would not be able to jump and reach it. Unfortunately, on 8 December 1977, W.A., who was elderly, fell and broke his hip outside his house. Trixy came over to him, and he said that he needed help. Then he thought that he was silly for talking to a cat. Trixy went over to the dinner bell, crouched, and then jumped — high. She clawed the rope, holding on long enough for the dinner bell to ring. She rang

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<sup>34</sup> Source: Krista Erickson, "Girl who saved mom among 47 given bravery awards." CBC News. 4 February 2010  
 <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2010/02/04/canada-bravery-awards-governor-general.html>>. Also: "Girl awarded bravery medal." YourOttawaRegion.com. 11 February 2010  
 <<http://www.yourottawaregion.com/news/local/article/607215>>.

<sup>35</sup> Source: Christopher Farran, *Animals to the Rescue!*, pp. 76-77.

it about a dozen times, and neighbors who came over to complain found W.A. and got help for him.<sup>36</sup>

### **An Icy Rescue**

In the winter of 1995, the weather was so cold that over four inches of ice formed on a small lake in Indiana, making it safe to walk on. However, a few warm days in February melted some of the ice, making it dangerous to walk on. Unfortunately, 12-year-old Josh Mitchell didn't realize that, and he decided to take a short cut to a friend's house by walking across the semi-frozen lake. He fell through the ice, and a dog named Levi, the pet of Denise and George Hammond, saw him and started whining. George heard the whining, investigated, and saw Josh floundering in the icy water. He ordered, "Levi, fetch!" Levi ran out onto the lake, jumped into the water, and allowed Josh to hold on to him. Meanwhile, George and Denise brought Levi's 20-foot leash out to the lake and tried to throw it to Josh, but the leash was too short. Because she didn't know how long Levi could keep Josh afloat, Denise went out on the ice, knowing that although she weighed less than her husband, she would probably fall through the ice. In fact, she did fall through the ice four feet away from Josh. She kept breaking the ice until she could reach Josh, then she kept him afloat. George called Levi, and Levi came out of the water. Two neighbors brought an extension ladder out to the lake and pushed it to where Denise and Josh were. Denise pushed Josh up on the ladder and then climbed up on the ladder herself. The ladder distributed their weight across a large area of the ice so that they didn't fall through, and they reached the shore. Denise fainted when she reached the shore, but paramedics took care of her and Josh and took them to the hospital, where

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<sup>36</sup> Source: Marilyn Singer, *Cats to the Rescue*, pp. 59-60.

they quickly recovered from their ordeal. Of course, Josh and his parents were grateful to Levi and the Hammonds, and they sent them gifts: bones for Levi, a big bouquet of flowers for Denise, and a gift certificate to be used at a pet store.<sup>37</sup>

### **Dog Rescues Boy**

On Valentine's Day, 14 February 1993, Naiomi Johnston gave birth to a daughter. After giving birth, she recuperated in the hospital. Her husband, Darryl, and her three-year-old son, Donald, were in their home in Midland, Ontario, Canada, where the weather was very cold and the snowdrifts were very high. Donald wanted to see his new sister, and without telling his father, he got up very early and set out in his toy electric car. The car did not get very far, but Donald decided to walk to the hospital. Quickly, he learned just how cold the weather was. He started crying. His father got up, realized that Donald was missing, and contacted the police. According to Kirk Wood of the Ontario Provincial Police, little Donald was probably no more than 30 minutes from death. Fortunately, Brian Holmes, a neighbor of the Johnstons, was outside with his Samantha, his six-year-old German shepherd. Samantha took off on her own. Mr. Holmes figured that she was chasing rabbits, but instead Samantha found Donald. Samantha went to Donald, who put his arms around her neck, and Samantha led Donald to Mr. Holmes, who took Donald inside his farmhouse to get warm and to reunite him with his father.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Source: Jeanne Betancourt, *Ten True Animal Rescues*, pp. 38-46.

<sup>38</sup> Source: Brad and Sherry Hansen Steiger, *Animal Miracles: Inspirational and Heroic True Stories*, pp. 81-84.

## **Dog Rescues Abandoned Infant**

Stories of animals rescuing human infants appear in myths, such as the myth of Romulus and Remus being rescued and suckled by a mother wolf. Sometimes, animal heroes appear in real life. In August of 2008 a frightened 14-year-old girl gave birth to a boy in a shanty town near Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, and abandoned him in a field. The temperature was a chilly 37 degrees. Fortunately, an eight-year-old dog named La China, who had a litter of six puppies, came across the abandoned infant and saved him. La China picked up the infant with her teeth and carried him 50 meters to her litter. La China's owner heard crying and investigated and found the baby boy, only a few hours old, lying with the six puppies and covered with a rag. The frightened 14-year-old mother came forward soon after. She was hospitalized and received psychological care. The baby boy, who weighed 8lb, 13oz, had no bite marks. Daniel Salcedo, chief of police of the Province of Buenos Aires, said about La China, "She took it like a puppy and rescued it. The doctors told us if she hadn't done this, he would have died. The dog is a hero to us."<sup>39</sup>

## **"Dumb" Dog Becomes Hero**

In June 2008, 12-year-old Tony Bailey went swimming in the Platte River near North Bend, Nebraska. In the past, that was not a problem, but this time the river was dangerous because rain had caused higher levels of water and dangerous currents. Tony said, "It was, like, over my head, and I couldn't touch." He cried for help, but the only

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<sup>39</sup> Source: Daniel Schweimler, "Argentine dog saves abandoned baby." BBC News, Buenos Aires. 23 August 2008 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7577275.stm>>. Also: "Dog protected abandoned newborn, doctors say." CNN. 23 August 2008 <<http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/08/22/argentina.dog.tale/index.html?iref=newssearch#cn-STCText>>.

one who heard him was Jake, his four-year-old Labrador retriever. Tony said, “I was saying, ‘Help, help,’ and I saw him jump in, and then my head went under, and when I came up, he was right here by me.” Tony grabbed the dog’s neck, and the dog towed him to the riverbank and safety. Tony’s mother, Doris, was surprised by Jake’s heroism: “It’s something that I wouldn’t have expected him to do — to have the brains to do, I guess. He doesn’t listen. He doesn’t mind.” Tony added, “Sometimes he can act real hyper and weird. He’ll pick up rocks and think they’re balls and wants you to throw them to him.” Diane said, “You think you know your dog so well, but then he does something like this. He’s got a big heart, and he does have a brain in there.” Tony has the final words: “Thanks, guy. I love him so much.” Jake did get a reward for his heroism: a really big bone and forgiveness for every time he tracked mud into the house or dug a hole in the yard.<sup>40</sup>

### **“We are Certain the Dogs Pulled Him out of the Dam”**

In December 2007, a couple of family dogs apparently saved a two-year-old boy from drowning. The boy had wandered from home and gotten onto a neighbor’s property near Mackay, Queensland, Australia. The neighbor had a dam, and hearing a noise, the neighbor ran down to the dam, where she found the two-year-old boy covered in mud and lying on the embankment, with the two dogs — a Rottweiler cross and a Staffordshire bull terrier — lying by him. From the water to where the boy was lying were drag marks; in addition, the boy’s arms had scratch marks that were apparently made by the dogs. A police officer said, “We are certain the dogs pulled him out of the dam. It is an amazing story.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Source: “Dog Rescues 12-Year-Old Boy From River.” Omaha (NE) TV station KETV. 17 June 2008  
 <<http://www.turnto23.com/family/16630197/detail.html>>.

## A Hero Pig

In February 1985, Priscilla, a three-month-old pet pig, became the first animal to be inducted into the Texas Animal Hall of Fame. Owned by Victoria Herberta, Priscilla wore a harness and a leash similar to those worn by dogs. During a trip to a lake in the Houston area, Priscilla began swimming. Wading in the water was 11-year-old Anthony Melton, who could not swim. Anthony reached a drop-off ledge in the water and found himself in water over his head. Priscilla swam close to the thrashing boy, who grabbed her harness. Priscilla then swam to shore, towing the boy behind her. Although Priscilla weighed only 45 pounds and the boy weighed much more, Priscilla saved the boy's life.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Source: "Dogs save drowning toddler." *The Daily Telegraph* (Australia). 14 December 2007  
<<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/dogs-save-drowning-toddler/story-e6freuzr-111115110916>>.

<sup>42</sup> Source: Brad and Sherry Hansen Steiger, *Animal Miracles: Inspirational and Heroic True Stories*, p. 43. Also: "Priscilla." Texas Animal Hall of Fame.  
<[http://www.tvma.org/Pet\\_Owners/08\\_hof\\_priscilla.phtml](http://www.tvma.org/Pet_Owners/08_hof_priscilla.phtml)>. Accessed 21 February 2011.

### Eilonwy's Similes

“What!” cried Eilonwy. “I don’t care about being a princess! And since I’m already a young lady, how else could I behave? That’s like asking a fish to learn how to swim!” (10).

Well,” said Eilonwy, “you can’t blame Rhun for being born. I mean, you could, but it wouldn’t help matters. It’s like kicking a rock with your bare foot.” (18)

“Taran of Caer Dallben,” Eilonwy declared, “I really believe you’re jealous. And sorry for yourself. And that’s as ridiculous as — as painting your nose green!” (19)

“You look as jumpy as a frog with fleas!” (52)

“Listening to you is more confusing than trying to count your fingers and toes at the same time!” (199)

### **An Original Comparison**

“You actually want me to stay here and be lost in this dreadful castle. That’s worse than putting someone’s head in a sack of feathers!” (41)

### About the Author

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine's brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka "The Joker," decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn't been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don't often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for "sounds like" and "two words," then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn't let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a master's degree in English and a master's degree in Philosophy. Currently, and for a long time to come, I publish a weekly humorous column titled "Wise Up!" for *The Athens News* and I am a retired English instructor at Ohio U.

*Shameless Commerce*

Visit David Bruce's storefront at

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/brucebATohioDOTedu>

<http://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/bruceb>

By the way, this storefront offers free downloads of collections of my students' autobiographical essays. For example, one such collection is titled *Love and Friendship: Stories About Growing Up*. It also has a number of free downloads of collections of good deeds.

If all goes well, I will publish one or two books a year for the rest of my life. (On the other hand, a good way to make God laugh is to tell Her your plans.)

### Some Works by David Bruce

#### **Author: Discussion Guides Series**

*Dante's Inferno: A Discussion Guide*

*Dante's Paradise: A Discussion Guide*

*Dante's Purgatory: A Discussion Guide*

*Forrest Carter's The Education of Little Tree: A Discussion Guide*

*Homer's Iliad: A Discussion Guide*

*Homer's Odyssey: A Discussion Guide*

*Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: A Discussion Guide*

*Jerry Spinelli's Maniac Magee: A Discussion Guide*

*Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl: A Discussion Guide*

*Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal": A Discussion Guide*

*Lloyd Alexander's The Black Cauldron: A Discussion Guide*

*Lloyd Alexander's The Book of Three: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper: A Discussion Guide*

*Nancy Garden's Annie on My Mind: A Discussion Guide*

*Nicholas Sparks' A Walk to Remember: A Discussion Guide*

*Virgil's Aeneid: A Discussion Guide*

*Virgil's "The Fall of Troy": A Discussion Guide*

*Voltaire's Candide: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Discussion Guide*

*William Sleator's Oddballs: A Discussion Guide*

(Oddballs is an excellent source for teaching how to write autobiographical essays/personal narratives.)

### **Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature**

*Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose*

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*Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose*

*Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose*

*From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica*

*Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*

*Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose*

*Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica*

*Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose*

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*The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 5*

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*The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 7*

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*The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 3)*

*The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 4)*

*The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 5)*

*The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 6)*

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*250 Anecdotes About Religion: Volume 2*

*The Coolest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Coolest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Coolest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes*

*Don't Fear the Reaper: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Funniest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes*

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*The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*

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