

# *The Magician's Nephew* – Chapters 1-8

## **Chapter 1: The Wrong Door**

*The Magician's Nephew* “is a story about something that happened long ago when your grandfather was a child. It is a very important story because it shows how all the comings and goings between our own world and the land of Narnia first began.” (11) The story starts in London, in front of Polly's house. A boy called Digory scrambles up from the garden next door and puts his face over the wall. Digory lives with his uncle Mr Ketterley and his aunt Miss Ketterley, “a brother and sister, old bachelor and old maid, living together.” (11-12) Polly and Digory come to know each other and Digory tells her about his life and they talk about London. Digory has lived his whole life, so far, in the country and he doesn't really like London. His father is “away in India” and his mother is “ill and [is] going to die.” (13) They go up to the attic of Polly's house. There they find a tunnel and they want to explore it. Polly is a very brave girl she often use the sentence “I'm game if you are.” (17) They go through the tunnel and stop in front of an unknown door. Digory opens the door and they go into a furnished room. In this attic they can see “a bright red wooden tray with a number of rings on it.” (21) Suddenly, they hear a humming sound. The high chair in front of the fire moves suddenly around and Uncle Andrew is sitting there. They have a discussion and finally Uncle Andrew offers Polly a yellow ring as a present. Right after she touches the ring she vanishes. (4d)

In this chapter Polly gets to know Digory. They first meet when Digory climbs over the wall in the garden of the house. So they start talking to each other. Later in this chapter they find a tunnel. This is a passage between their houses and a third, empty house. They walk along the tunnel and get to a door—*The Wrong Door*—it's Uncle Andrew's study. Because Digory is so curious they go into the room. First they talk to each other, but then suddenly an alarm goes on and Uncle Andrew comes in. He's very happy to see the two children there, because he needs them for an experiment. Polly and Digory are very frightened and they want him to let them go, but Andrew says that he has just let them go if Polly puts on one of the yellow rings. She changes her mind and thinks Uncle Andrew is an old gentleman and puts on the ring. Suddenly she disappears! (4c)

## **Chapter 2: Digory and his Uncle**

Polly has disappeared. Digory wants to know where she is. Uncle Andrew tells him that she's in another world now. Uncle Andrew tells Digory about his godmother, Mrs Lefay. She had fairy blood in her. She was in prison long ago. A few days before she dies, she gives Uncle Andrew a box. That box comes from the lost island of Atlantis. He promises that he will burn the box without opening it before, when she dies but. But he opens the box. Inside the box there is only dust. But the dust comes from another world. Uncle Andrew experiments with guinea pigs. But guinea pigs can't come back and tell him about their experiences. So he now experiments with Polly and he has sent her to another world. Digory wants to know why he doesn't go himself to that mysterious world. Andrew says that he's too old and that he isn't fit and healthy enough to do it. At least, Digory sees two rings and Andrew gives him both of them. So they can come back and tell him about their experiences. (4d)

[...] (4c)

### **Chapter 3: The Wood between the Worlds**

Digory's world disappears completely. Suddenly he gets the feeling as if he was under water but at once his head comes out of a mysterious pool. It is quite awkward that his clothes aren't wet at all. He finds himself in a place with high trees and endless numbers of pools. There is green light everywhere and it is very quiet. As he looks around he sees a girl lying at the foot of a tree but he doesn't recognize that it is Polly. She starts to talk to him about his arrival in the wood. Digory thinks he has always been there but Polly disagrees. They start to remember everything and try to go home. The rings seem to work so they decide to jump into another pool and see where they end up. Before they jump into the other pool they mark their own one. (4d)

Everything vanishes instantly. Digory thinks he is under water, but at once he can feel that he is rushing upwards. His clothes are perfectly dry. There are pools everywhere. He is in a wood with trees growing close together. The light is green. It is a warm place and the quietest wood you can possibly imagine. There are no animals, except Uncle Andrew's guinea-pig. Nevertheless, it is full of life. After a long time he recognizes that there is a girl lying on the ground. She is sleeping so he looks at her for a long time. Suddenly, she wakes up and says nothing. Then she speaks in a dreamy, contented sort of voice. She has forgotten everything. She has got the feeling that she has never seen Digory before. They see the rings and try to remember. They want to get back. They also understand that they have to use the ring to get back. But when they try to get back, they recognize that the pool was just a few inches deep. Then they understood the functions of the different rings that have different colours. Then Digory has an idea. He thinks that if they can get back to their world with this pool, they can perhaps get to another world with the other pools. He thinks that there is a world at the bottom of every pool. Uncle Andrew doesn't know that there are dozens of worlds, because he always just talks of one world. Then they understand that the wood is like a "world between" and the pools are like tunnels. They put on the green rings, take hands and jump in the pool where they have come from. There are planets in the tunnel and suddenly they see a city which looks like London. But then they change the rings and quickly go back to the Wood between the Worlds. Before they try another pool they mark the pool that leads to London. Then they jump into a new pool after putting on the green rings again. (4c)

#### **Chapter 4: The Bell and the Hammer**

Polly and Digory arrive in a new world. It is an old city with a dark blue sky. There is a dead silence. The two children want to explore this new world. They find out that everything is in ruin and that nobody is in the world. Polly is terribly afraid of this new world and wants to return. But Digory convinces Polly into staying there and finding out more about this worn-out place. They walk on and find a room of some waxworks. The figures are all robed and have crowns on their head. In the middle of the room, there is a table like an altar and on this table is a golden bell and a little golden hammer to hit the bell with. There seems to be something written there:

*Make your choice, adventurous stranger;  
Strike the bell and bide the danger,  
Or wonder, till it drives you mad,  
What would have followed if you had.*

Digory strikes the bell and suddenly a noise can be heard. The noise grows louder and finally it stops. (4d)

In this chapter Polly and Digory arrive at a strange place. The light is strange, there's a mysterious silence and the sky is dark. There are high walls and they realise that they are in an old city. The city looks like a ruin and it seems that nobody lives there anymore. Polly and Digory are afraid of this queer place. Hand in hand they explore the city. After walking around the destroyed houses and walls, they come into a room. There they see something strange. A lot of people are covering the room. But they are only waxworks. The clothes of the wax figures are beautiful, colourful and their faces are nice. In the middle of the room there is a square pillar. And from a golden arch hangs a golden bell. Beside the wall is a golden hammer. On the bell is something written:

*Make your choice, adventurous stranger;  
Strike the bell and bide the danger,  
Or wonder, till it drives you mad,  
What would have followed if you had.*

Digory wants to strike the bell. But Polly is strictly against his suggestion because she's afraid of the consequences. Polly's hand is moving to her pocket to get hold of the yellow ring. But before her hand reaches the pocket Digory grabs her wrist and leaning across with his back against her chest he hits the golden bell. Suddenly there is a noise which is getting louder and louder. They don't understand what is happening. And there is also thunder and pieces of the roof fall in. Then the terrible noise ends in a comfortable silence. And it is all over.

*"Are you satisfied now?", said Polly.*  
(4c)

### **Chapter 5: The Deplorable Word**

After ringing the bell the witch awakes. Digory likes her: “she’s wonderfully brave and strong. She’s what I call Queen! I do hope she’s going to tell the story at this place.” (70) However, Polly doesn’t like her at all: “this is a terrible woman she’s strong enough to break my arm with one twist.” (68) The three of them must now escape because everything is going to break down. They stop in front of a big black door. In front of the door the Queen raises her arm and says something which Polly and Digory don’t understand and then she makes a move as if she were throwing something towards the door. Then the door disappears. They are now in the open air with a red sun in the sky. Now she starts telling the story about how she comes to be the last living being in this world: [...] (4d)

After the children have rung the bell, they wait for something to happen. Suddenly a woman appears. Digory thinks she is beautiful, but Polly doesn’t think so. The woman and Digory begin to talk: She asks him what has broken the spell, which has let her fall asleep for so many years. Digory tells her, how Polly and he have come to this world, and how he has rung the bell. At first the queen doesn’t believe him, but after a few explanations, she realizes that he has told the truth. The queen then takes the children by their hands. Polly is afraid of her, because she feels that this woman is very strong, and that she could break her arm with one twist. Then the three walk along some dark corridors with black arches, until they come to a great, black door. There, the queen stops and lets go of the children’s hands. She opens the door by means of magic, and behind the door they can see what this world looks like outside the town. The sun is red, not yellow like on the earth. And the landscape is dead, there are no animal, people or plants alive. The Queen begins to tell Digory and Polly the story of this world: Long ago this world is a beautiful world like all the others. The Queen’s sister rules it, but the Queen wants to rule it herself. So she fights against her sister, but she can’t win.  
[...] (4c)

### **Chapter 6: The Beginning of Uncle Andrew's Troubles**

In the Wood between the Worlds, there is not only Polly and Digory but also the witch. She has touched Polly when they put on the rings. In the Wood between the World Queen Jadis is much paler than in Charn. She has now lost her beauty and her power. Now they want to go on to London but they are too slow and the witch touches them again. In London, she is apparently recovering her strength. Both Jadis and Andrew have the look that all wicked magicians have. Andrew thinks that Jadis is a very beautiful woman. Jadis only wants to know if Uncle Andrew is also a magician. Jadis finds out that Andrew isn't a real magician. She always bosses Andrew around and says what he has to do. Jadis ignores the children. Andrew falls in love with Jadis and he needs money because he needs to organise a means of transport for the witch that is suitable for a royal person as she says. He asks his sister Letty to give him some money. (4d)

Digory and Polly flee from Charn to the Wood between the Worlds, but in the last moment the witch can grab Polly's hair and goes with them. In the wood she loses her strength and her beauty. They want to leave her there but when they want to jump in the pool she can grab Digory's ear this time and travels with them to London. They arrive in Uncle Andrew's study. In our world she regains her strength and beauty. She looks even more beautiful and alive than before. Uncle Andrew immediately submits to the witch. She tells him to organize a "royal" vehicle. (86) But he first goes to put on his best clothes and has two glasses of wine. Then he goes to Aunt Letty to ask her for some money. Suddenly the door opens and there the witch is standing in her full size. (4c)

### **Chapter 7: What Happened at the Front Door**

The witch is getting impatient and Aunt Letty provokes her, so she lifts up Aunt Letty and throws her across the room because she can't cast a spell on her in our world. But Aunt Letty falls on a mattress and doesn't hurt herself. Digory suddenly has an idea: he could touch the witch, put on the yellow ring and send her back to the Wood between the Worlds. But Polly can't help him, because she isn't allowed to play with "that Kirke Boy" (99) anymore.

[...]

At once Digory hears the sound of galloping.—It's the witch! She is standing on a hansom. Not on the driver's seat, but on the roof. She causes a huge commotion. Everyone is standing on the street, and watching the spectacle. (4d)

In the beginning of chapter 7 everyone is still in Uncle Andrew and Aunt Letty's house. Aunt Letty is very frosty with the Witch, questioning why in the world she is there at all. The Witch gets furious and wants to make dust out of Letty, but her powers aren't the same in London as in Charn. So she smashes Aunt Letty across the room. Fortunately, Aunt Letty lands on the bed. Then the Witch goes out of the house with Uncle Andrew. Digory is terrified, since his plan is to get the Witch back to the Wood between the Worlds by touching her and putting on his magical yellow ring. So Digory sits down by the window, always watching the front door to be sure to be ready when the Witch returns. While he is sitting there, a woman brings grapes for his mother and Digory overhears the conversation between her and Aunt Letty: Letty says thank you, but doubts the fact that the grapes will help Digory's mother. She says "I'm afraid it would need fruit from the land of youth to help her now" (100) and Digory suddenly thinks of that, maybe, if he brings his mother fruit from another world, to which he has access, it would cure her. Just when he wants to put on his yellow ring, the Witch returns. She's standing on the roof of a stolen chariot and flings around the corner of the house with one wheel in the air. She is followed by a huge crowd of upset people. One of the men hollered that she has stolen his horse, another claimed that those were his jewels around her neck. Many people come out of the houses to see the spectacle—Jadis stops the chariot by smashing it against a lantern pole in front of Uncle Andrew's house. The owner of the poor horse gets permission to go near the stallion and calm it down. Then the Witch speaks to the people for the first time: She says: "Dog, unhand our royal charger. We are the Empress Jadis." (107) (4c)

### **Chapter 8: The Fight at the Lamp-post**

The Witch causes a crash and then Polly comes and says: "Quick, Digory. This must be stopped." (109) Digory catches the Witch's heel and the angry, frightened faces vanishes. Now, Digory, Polly, the Witch, Uncle Andrew, Mister Ketterley and the old horse are all together in the Wood between the Worlds. The old horse (Strawberry) is thirsty and drinks from one of the pools. Digory then puts on his green ring and because everybody is still touching each other they all come into another world. In this world everything is dark, so you can't even see their hands. After a while there's a voice singing. It is getting louder and louder, and the sky begins to turn grey. The voice which's singing comes from a Lion. The Witch and Uncle Andrew will go back, so they try to touch the children, but Digory says that his hand is just ready to touch the ring, so they better have to keep a distance. (4d)