

Lloyd Alexander's
The Black Cauldron:
A Discussion Guide

David Bruce

Dedicated with Love to Caleb Bruce

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***The Black Cauldron*, by Lloyd Alexander**

A Newbery Honor Book

Preface

The purpose of this book is educational. I enjoy reading Lloyd Alexander's *The Black Cauldron*, 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 Black Cauldron* 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.

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

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Introduction to Lloyd Alexander's *The Black Cauldron*

Who is Lloyd Alexander?

Of course, Lloyd Alexander is the author of *The Black Cauldron* 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, he discovered mythology. Again, Mr. Alexander says, "It was as if all the hero tales, games,

dreams, and imaginings of my childhood had suddenly come back to me” (kidsreads.com). The Chronicles of Prydain are set in a land loosely based on Wales.

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 are the Prydain Chronicles?

The Prydain Chronicles are 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)

Taran 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

Mr. Alexander died on May 17, 2007.

General Comments on *The Black Cauldron*:

- We have the power to change. A good person can become bad. A bad person can become good.
- We see altruism in action.
- We see that a person can dislike war, but the person will not hesitate to fight in a war that is fought for good reasons.
- A person can be too proud. However, proper pride can exist.

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.
- A bad person can become good; a good person can become bad.
- In judging a person, keep in mind the good that they have done. (We learn this lesson from Prince Gwydion.)
- Working together in a group can be more important than going it alone.

Definitions:

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

Here are some definitions of the word “pride” from the World Wide Web:

- a feeling of self-respect and personal worth
- satisfaction with your (or another's) achievements; "he takes pride in his son's success"
- the trait of being spurred on by a dislike of falling below your standards
- be proud of; "He prides himself on making it into law school"

Source: wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

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Here is a definition of the word "pride" as a negative trait:

unreasonable and inordinate self-esteem (personified as one of the deadly sins)

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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.

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>>.

Author's Note

• **What are the author's reasons for the "darker thread" running through this book, the second volume of the Chronicles of Prydain?**

Quite simply, although this is a book for children, it addresses important themes.

Mr. Alexander writes,

Although an imaginary world, Prydain is essentially not too different from our real one, where humor and heartbreak, joy and sadness are closely interwoven. The choices and decisions that face a frequently baffled Assistant Pig-Keeper are no easier than the ones we ourselves must make. Even in a fantasy world, growing up is not accomplished without cost.

Deaths will occur in *The Black Cauldron*, and readers will see evil deeds and evil people. In our real world, we have deaths, evil deeds, and evil people.

However, in *The Black Cauldron*, and in our real world, we also see humor and joy, and heroes, and good deeds and good people.

Good and evil can — and do — exist in the same world.

The genre of the Prydain Chronicles is fantasy novels. Novels are long fictional works of prose that tell a story. Fantasies include fantastic elements such as magic and wizards. Fantasies are not realistic (that is, about the real world), but they can address such themes as honor, courage, love, pride, and good and evil that are concerns of people who live in the real world.

Fantasy novels can teach.

Chapter 1: The Council at Caer Dallben

• What does “caer” mean?

“Caer” is a Welsh term that can be translated as a royal residence. Often, it can be translated as castle, palace, or fort. It can be the home of a king, or it can be a fortification.

The Prydain books can remind the reader of Wales, which inspired Lloyd Alexander; however, Prydain is not Wales.

Caer Dallben is the home of Dallben. It is not fancy. From *The Book of Three*, we know that it is protected by Dallben’s sorcery. It has a room (Dallben’s chamber) big enough for the leaders and warriors and Taran to meet in a council of men. However, Caer Dallben cannot be huge because Eilonwy is the only female there (26). Apparently, Dallben, Coll, Taran, and Eilonwy are the only residents there.

• How has Taran changed since the end of *The Book of Three*?

Taran is older, and he has grown.

He is now old enough to sit in a council of men.

In the Prydain Chronicles, Taran begins as a boy and ends as a young man of an age to be married.

Taran does have pride, and he is still impetuous.

• Write a short character analysis of Ellidyr.

Ellidyr is only a few years older than Taran.

Ellidyr has a horse named Islimach.

Ellidyr’s clothing is old and patched now, but it was once fine clothing. Apparently, his heritage is noble, but he has little wealth.

Ellidyr is proud and arrogant. He calls Taran “pig-boy” (1, etc.) and impolitely orders him around. He judges Taran by his occupation, which is taking care of a pig. True, Taran is an Assistant Pig-Keeper, but those who have read *The Book of Three* know that he is also a hero. Similarly, Coll is stout and bald, but Coll is also a hero. We should be careful not to judge solely by appearances. Taking care of pigs and cultivating a garden are important jobs, and Taran and Coll do these jobs. Growing food is one of the most important jobs in the world. (Of course, taking care of an oracular pig such as Hen Wen is also important.) Without food, would people be able to be teachers and students? And Eilonwy works in the kitchen, although she is a princess.

Ellidyr is mistaken when he says, “A pig is a pig” (2). Hen Wen is an oracular pig that can call forth visions of importance.

Ellidyr’s pride leads him to humiliate Taran in front of Eilonwy. When Taran answers him sharply, Ellidyr seizes the front of Taran’s jacket, carries him to Dallben, then drops him roughly to the ground and says to Dallben, “Are you Dallben? I have brought your pig-boy to be thrashed for his insolence” (3).

Ellidyr is strong. When he has Taran by the front of his jacket, Taran struggles but cannot release himself.

Note that Lloyd Alexander does something that good writers do — he shows us something, rather than merely telling us something. (Of course, it is OK to both show and tell.) Mr. Alexander shows us that Ellidyr is proud through the way that Ellidyr acts and speaks.

• **Compare and contrast Taran and Ellidyr.**

Taran is the hero of the Prydain Chronicles. He is not perfect, but we know and like him.

Ellidyr makes a very bad first impression. We discover that he is proud — and not in a good way. His pride leads him to mistreat Taran.

Both are young. Ellidyr is only a few years older than Taran.

• **Who are these characters whom we have met before?**

Taran

Taran is an Assistant Pig-Keeper who grows up during the course of the Prydain Chronicles.

Hen Wen

Hen Wen is an oracular pig that can cause (or conduit) visions of importance.

Dallben

Dallben is a wise man and a sorcerer who meditates frequently, especially while lying down after meals. He is famous and well respected.

Coll

Coll takes care of Dallben. He grows vegetables and is Pig-Keeper. He is stout and baldheaded, and he is also a warrior and a hero. Bards sing songs about him.

Princess Eilonwy

Princess Eilonwy is charming. She likes Taran, although frequently she will not speak to him. She often uses original similes.

Gurgi

Gurgi is capable of communication, but he seems to be part animal. He is usually — perhaps always — hungry. The major characteristics of Gurgi are his loyalty to Taran and his fondness for food and his habit of using alliteration and

rhymes in his speech. For example, Gurgi is very much concerned with “crunchings and munchings” (rhyme). He also mentions “swimmings and splashings” (alliteration) in *The Book of Three*.

Definitions:

Rhyme: identical end sounds of two words (cat and hat)

Alliteration: identical consonant sounds at the beginning of words (cat and cape, hat and help)

Fflewddur Fflam

Fflewddur Fflam is a bard and a king. He prefers being a wandering bard to being a stationary king. Frequently, he exaggerates — and when he does, the strings of his (enchanted) harp break.

Doli

Doli is a dwarf. He seems bad-tempered, but he is happy to see his friends in Chapter 1. He has the power to turn himself invisible, but being invisible hurts. Being invisible makes his ears ring (it is like he hears the buzzing of bees), and because he is invisible, no one can see him, so people step on his toes. Doli’s ears turn blue when he is invisible for a long time. He is redheaded.

Prince Gwydion

Prince Gwydion is the adult hero-prince of the Chronicles of Prydain. He is brave and intelligent. He is a warrior and a war leader.

• **Write a short character analysis of Adaon.**

Adaon is the son of the Chief Bard Taliesin (9). Taliesin is the bard who gave Fflewddur the harp whose strings break whenever he adds color to facts, as he so frequently does.

Adaon is tall.

Adaon has straight, shoulder-length black hair

Adaon's bearing is noble, but his clothing is that "of an ordinary warrior, with no ornament save a curiously shaped iron brooch at his collar" (10).

Taran gets the impression that Adaon is alert and intelligent, and that his eyes miss little.

Adaon knows who Taran and Doli are. He has heard about them in a song that was composed by Fflewddur Fflam after the events recounted in *The Book of Three*.

Adaon treats Taran much differently from the way that Ellidyr treated him. He treats Taran with respect.

Adaon has not been initiated as a bard, although his father wishes him to do that. Adaon explains that "I choose to wait. There is still much I hope to learn, and in my own heart I do not feel myself ready" (10). We see that Adaon values knowledge.

Fflewddur Fflam admires Adaon: "He is one of the bravest men I know. That and more, for he has the heart of a true bard. Someday he will be one of our greatest, you can mark my words" (11).

• **Write a short character analysis of King Morgant of Madoc.**

King Morgant of Madoc is a war leader, second only to Prince Gwydion, whose life he has saved — on more than one occasion, as we learn from Prince Gwydion himself (224). In Chapter 1, Fflewddur Fflam says that he has heard that King Morgant saved Prince Gwydion's life once (12).

King Morgant is fearless in battle. Fflewddur Fflam says about him, “I’ve seen that fellow in battle. All ice! Absolutely fearless!” (12).

King Morgant also has pride.

King Morgant is dark, has heavy lids, and has a high-bridged nose.

King Morgant is much more reserved than King Smoit. When Smoit claps him on the back and talks about blood-letting, Morgant says, “Have a care [...] that it will not be yours” (13).

King Morgant fights for the right side — the same side that Prince Gwydion fights for.

• **Write a short character analysis of Smoit.**

King Smoit is a huge man with red hair. He is a fearless warrior who laughs a lot and enjoys life and has a big appetite.

King Smoit sees Taran, who after all is still very young, and asks, “What’s this, what’s this?” (14). He answers his own question with a couple of other questions, “A skinned rabbit? A plucked chicken?” (14).

Smoit is loyal to the Sons of Don (the good guys). Fflewddur Fflam says about him:

“What a bear!” said Fflewddur with an affectionate chuckle. “But there’s not a grain of harm in him. When the lords of the southern cantreys rose against the Sons of Don, Smoit was one of the few who stayed loyal. His kingdom is Cantrev Cadiffor.” (13)

• **What is the purpose of the council?**

Prydain is in danger, as it so often is. Prince Gwydion announces, “I ask your help, for I mean to attack Annuvin itself to seize Arawn’s cauldron and destroy it” (16).

The evil lord Arawn has been making heavy use of the Black Cauldron, robbing graves and even murdering warriors so that he can put their bodies in the Black Cauldron and create warrior slaves to serve him.

• **What are the Cauldron-Born?**

The Cauldron-Born are born from the Black Cauldron of the title of this novel.

Dead warriors are placed in the Black Cauldron and are brought back to a kind of life as slave-warriors to Arawn.

Prince Gwydion says of the Cauldron-Born, “Indeed, they are no longer men, but weapons of murder, in thrall to Arawn forever” (15).

From *The Book of Three*, we learn these things about the Cauldron-Born:

- The Cauldron-Born were once living men. However, Arawn steeped their bodies in a cauldron to bring them back to a kind of life.
- The Cauldron-Born are Arawn’s slaves, and they do his bidding.
- The Cauldron-Born lose power the further they go from Annuvin and the longer they stay away from Annuvin.
- Arawn sometimes sends the Cauldron-Born out of Annuvin to perform tasks for him.
- The Cauldron-Born are warriors.

- The Cauldron-Born are silent.
- The Cauldron-Born now have no memory of themselves as living men.
- **Why might the council have been kept secret? (Neither Dallben nor Prince Gwydion have said much about it.)**

Dallben and Prince Gwydion have been right to keep the council secret.

Taran lives in the same home as Dallben, but Taran had no inkling of the council.

Prince Gwydion has slyly been telling kings and leaders about the council, but without telling them much about the reason for the council.

Prince Gwydion told Ffleuddur Fflam that he “might enjoy stopping down at Caer Dallben” (8). Ffleuddur Fflam at first thought that Prince Gwydion had stopped by his kingdom “purely by chance” (8), although now of course he knows that chance had nothing to do with it.

Doli’s leader, King Eiddileg, sent Doli to the council but Doli did not know the reason for the council.

- **One theme of *The Black Cauldron* is pride. In Chapter 1, where do we see pride? When is pride good, and when is it bad?**

Ellidyr has a bad kind of pride. His pride makes him arrogant. His pride makes him treat other people badly.

Proper pride can exist. Proper pride arises from doing one’s work the best one can, not from feeling superior to other people.

Prince Gwydion can take proper pride in his deeds. He has often behaved bravely. He is a leader, but he treats other people with respect rather than simply ordering them to do

what he wants them to do. Of course, as a war leader he must give orders, but at the council, as we will see, he gives the attendees a chance to leave the council without placing themselves under his command. Once they accept his leadership, they have a duty to obey his orders. In a war, someone must be in charge, and here Prince Gwydion is in charge.

• **Define the word “theme.”**

Here is a definition of the word “theme”:

theme (theem): a common thread or repeated idea that is incorporated throughout a literary work. A theme is a thought or idea the author presents to the reader that may be deep, difficult to understand, or even moralistic. Generally, a theme has to be extracted as the reader explores the passages of a work. The author utilizes the characters, plot, and other literary devices to assist the reader in this endeavor. [...] In truly great works of literature, the author intertwines the theme throughout the work and the full impact is slowly realized as the reader processes the text. The ability to recognize a theme is important because it allows the reader to understand part of the author’s purpose in writing the book. See *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*, NTC’s *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, and *Literary Terms: A Dictionary*. — Susan Severson, Student, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Source:

<http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/general/glossary.htm#t>

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Chapter 2: The Naming of the Tasks

• What are Gwydion's goal and plan?

Prince Gwydion's goal is to take the Black Cauldron away from Arawn so that he cannot use it to create more of the slave-warriors who are known as the Cauldron-Born. Because they are already dead, they cannot be killed.

The males at the council of men are brave. Prince Gwydion gives each person a chance to leave and not participate, but all stay.

The council of men is held at Caer Dallben, Prince Gwydion says, because "Dallben is the most powerful enchanter in Prydain, and here we are under his protection. Caer Dallben is the one place Arawn dares not attack, but it is also the most suitable to begin our journey to Annuvin" (19).

The warriors will leave Caer Dallben and go to the kingdom of Smoit, and then some of the warriors will go to the Forest of Idris. From there these warriors will go to Dark Gate, "the twin mountains guarding the southern approach to the Land of Death" (19). From there these warriors will go to the Land of Death and try to seize the Black Cauldron with the help of Doli's ability to turn himself invisible.

• Of whom do the three bands consist, and what are their tasks?

These are the three bands:

Band 1

Doli of the Fair Folk

Coll Son of Collfrewr

Fflewddur Fflam Son of Godo

Prince Gwydion

Six of King Morgant's Best Warriors

Doli will turn himself invisible and scout the locations of the guards, and then all will storm the fortification and seize the Black Cauldron.

Band 2: Two Groups

1. King Morgant and His Remaining Warriors

At Prince Gwydion's signal, King Morgant and his remaining warriors will attack Dark Gate. This will cause confusion. It will also make some of Arawn's warriors go to Dark Gate.

2. King Smoit and His Warriors

They will not attack, but they will be near the Forest of Idris. If necessary, the other bands will take refuge at his stronghold.

Band 3

Adaon Son of Taliesin

Taran of Caer Dallben

Ellidyr Son of Pen-Llarcau

They will, Prince Gwydion says, "guard our pack animals, secure our retreat, and [...] serve as the need demands" (22).

• **Compare and contrast Smoit and Morgant.**

Similarities

Both are good, brave warriors.

Both are kings and leaders.

Differences

Morgant has more control of his emotions than does Smoit. Smoit complains because he will not be participating in the attack, but will instead help in a retreat if necessary. He says about Morgant, “Let Morgant, that black-bearded, cold-blooded, slippery-scaled pike play rear guard” (21). We also read this: “Morgant gave no sign of having heard Smoit’s outburst” (21).

Morgant will attack Dark Gate, while Smoit will not directly attack the enemy.

Definitions

Rear Guard:

According to Wikipedia, “A rearguard is that part of a military force that protects it from rear attack, either during an advance or withdrawal. The term can also be used [to] describe forces protecting lines of communication behind an army.” Wikipedia gives this as its source for this definition: Military and Associated Words, US Department of Defense, 2003.

Pike:

A pike is a freshwater fish.

• **Compare and contrast Taran and Ellidyr.**

Similarities

Both are young boys.

Both have swords.

Because of their youth, the two will not fight in battle, but will instead guard the pack animals.

Both are on the same side and in the same band.

Both dislike the other.

Differences

Ellidyr has a bad kind of pride that makes him disagreeable, while Taran is likeable.

Ellidyr's birth is noble. Taran's heritage is uncertain.

Ellidyr knows who his father is. Taran does not know who his father is.

• **What do we learn about Ellidyr in Chapter 2?**

Ellidyr has troubles in his life. Dallben tells Taran:

“He is the youngest son of old Pen-Llarcau in the northern lands; his elder brothers have inherited what little there was of family fortune, and even that is gone. Ellidyr has only his name and his sword [...]” (24)

• **What are the powers of the sword that Dallben gives to Taran?**

When Dallben gives Taran a sword, Taran asks what are its powers. Because Dallben is a sorcerer, this is a good question. However, Dallben has not given Taran an enchanted sword.

Dallben tells Taran, “My dear boy, this is a bit of metal hammered into a rather unattractive shape; it could better have been a pruning hook or a plow iron. Its powers? Like all weapons, only those held by him who wields it. What yours may be, I can in no wise say” (25).

Peace is preferable to war. Growing crops is preferable to killing human beings. However, at times a war must be fought. Some wars are fought for good reasons. In addition, what Prince Gwydion is planning is not a full-out war, but rather a raid designed to take a source of power away from an evil enemy.

• **Describe the relationship of Taran and Eilonwy.**

Frequently, the relationship of Taran and Eilonwy is a little rocky. Clearly, Eilonwy likes Taran. Clearly, Taran often says the wrong thing to Eilonwy (but he seems to like her, too).

Taran asks Eilonwy to gird him with the sword.

This action is customary. The male warrior asks a female to gird him with his sword before setting out on a quest or journey.

Eilonwy is flattered when Taran asks her to gird him. Taran says to her, “Dallben gave me this! Gird it on me — I mean, if you please. Say you will. I want you to be the one to do it” (26).

Taran has done a lot correctly in his request of Eilonwy. He said, “Please” (26). He also said, “I want you to be the one to do it” (26).

However, Taran messes up a little later when he says that he asked her because “you’re the only girl in Caer Dallben” (26).

This is an insult to Eilonwy, although Taran did not mean it to be an insult, and she girds him only so that she can hear when happened in the council of men.

• What is Eilonwy’s reaction to what Taran tells her about the council of men?

Eilonwy wants to be a part of the plan. She wishes to get ready and go with Taran. She also wishes to get a sword from Dallben.

However, Eilonwy is a young girl, and so none of the adult males is planning on her participating in the attack against Annuvin. Neither is Taran.

• How is the theme of pride developed in Chapter 2?

Ellidyr's birth is noble. He has a noble name. However, his pride makes him unlikeable and disagreeable.

We see that pride can have bad consequences. Because Ellidyr's pride makes him disagreeable, he acts in a way that brings out the worst in other people. For example, his pride makes him and Taran quarrel. This is bad. They are on the same side, and people who are on the same side ought to be able to work together without quarreling. Adaon tells the quarreling boys, "We hold each other's lives in our open hands, not in clenched fists" (23).

Taran also has some bad pride — enough to make him quarrel with Ellidyr. Dallben tells Taran, "You are an excellent pair of hotbloods [...] I have been trying to decide which of you is the more muddled. It is not easy [...] I shall have to meditate on it" (24).

Chapter 3: Adaon

• Which simile does Eilonwy use at the beginning of Chapter 3? Why does she use it?

Eilonwy tells Taran, “I’m not speaking to you! [...] The way you acted. That’s like asking someone to a feast, then making them wash the dishes” (29).

Eilonwy often uses language vividly. Of course, she is especially known for her similes: comparing one thing to another using the words “like” or “as.” In this simile, she expresses disappointment. She was experiencing something good, but it turned into something bad.

The “something,” of course, is Taran asking her to gird his sword on him. At first, Eilonwy experienced pleasure in being asked that, but then she experienced disappointment because Taran says that he asked her to do that because she is the only girl at Caer Dallben.

What are the names of the horses, and to whom do the horses belong?

Taran rides Melynlas.

Ellidyr rides Islimach.

Adaon rides Lluagor.

• Write a short character analysis of Adaon based on what you learn in Chapter 3.

Adaon has an iron clasp, aka brooch, that he wears around his neck.

Adaon has dreams.

Adaon enjoys nature:

Adaon rode easily and skillfully; head high, an open smile on his face, he seemed to be drinking in the sights and sounds of the morning. (31)

Adaon is a good leader. One of the things that he does is to tell stories. This is a way of making the journey easier. His followers are entertained by his stories and so do not think about any rigors of their journey.

Because Adaon has experienced much, he has many stories to tell:

He had sailed far beyond the Isle of Mona, even to the northern sea; he had worked at the potter's wheel, cast nets with the fisherfolk, woven cloth at the looms of the cottagers; and, like Taran, labored over the glowing forge. Of forest lore he had studied deeply, and Taran listened in wonder as Adaon told the ways and natures of woodland creatures, of bold badgers and cautious dormice, and geese winging under the moon. (31)

Adaon and Arianlyn, who is in the northern domains, are engaged to be married.

Adaon has wisdom.

• **What are the characteristics of Adaon's dreams?**

Adaon's dreams are a source of knowledge. We will learn that his dreams come true.

Ellidyr

Adaon dreams that Ellidyr has "a black beast on his shoulders" (30). The black beast is his bad pride — a pride that can make him do or attempt to do evil deeds.

Taran

Adaon dreams that Taran feels grief (30).

• **Describe the relationship of Taran and Ellidyr in Chapter 3.**

The relationship of Taran and Ellidyr is not good; clearly, the two boys dislike each other. Such rivalry is not good. People who will fight the enemy are supposed to get along together.

The rivalry leads to something bad happening. Neither wants to bring up the rear. The two jostle to go first in a narrow trail above a deep gorge. Taran's horse, Melynlas, "slips from the trail to the steep slope" (35). Taran slips from the saddle.

However, Ellidyr does something good here. First, he grabs Taran's hands and lifts him back to the narrow trail. Then he is able to use his strength — he is indeed strong — to raise Melynlas back to the narrow trail.

Taran admits, "I have never seen such a feat of strength" (35).

Taran takes the blame for the incident, although both Ellidyr and himself should share the blame.

Ellidyr disrespects Adaon by calling him a dreamer. Taran does not disrespect Adaon.

• **What is foreshadowing?**

The 6th 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

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>

• What modifications to Prince Gwydion’s plan does Morgant suggest? How does Gwydion reply?

Morgant wants the Black Cauldron to be taken north to his own realm (37). Gwydion wishes to take it to Caer Dallben.

Also, Morgant offers to have some of his own warriors “guard our retreat” (37). He would also allow Taran, Adaon, and Ellidyr to fight with him and his warriors when they attack Dark Gate.

Much later, we discover that Morgant wishes to use the Black Cauldron for his own purposes. Morgant’s wanting the Black Cauldron to be taken north to his own realm is an example of foreshadowing.

Prince Gwydion sticks to his original plan.

• What are the Huntsmen of Annuvin?

Prince Gwydion has Doli turn himself invisible and scout the territory ahead.

Doli brings word that the huntsmen of Annuvin are abroad.

The Huntsmen of Annuvin are ruthless warriors who fight for Arawn:

“They are ruthless as the Cauldron-Born, their strength even greater. They go afoot, yet they are swift, with much endurance. Fatigue, hunger, and thirst mean little to them.” — Prince Gwydion (38-39)

“They are mortal,” Gwydion answered, “though I scorn to call them men. They are the basest of warriors who have betrayed their comrades; murderers who have killed for the joy of it.” (39)

The Huntsmen of Annuvin can be killed, but when one of them dies, the other Huntsmen grow stronger. (39) Prince Gwydion says, “Even as their number dwindles, their strength increases.” (39)

• What praise does Morgant give to Taran?

The very first time that Morgant speaks to Taran, he praises him: “It would have done me honor to count you among my men [...] Gwydion has told me a little of you, and I have seen you myself. I am a warrior and recognize good mettle” (40).

• How does Prince Gwydion react when Taran wishes to go with him?

Taran is happy to be praised by Morgant, but he reacts by wanting to go to into battle. He asks Prince Gwydion to allow him to go with his band, but Prince Gwydion declines to allow him to do that:

“Do you love danger so much?” asked Gwydion. “Before you are a man,” he added gently, “you will learn to hate it. Yes, and fear it, too, even as I do.” He reached down [Gwydion is on horseback] and

clasped Taran's hand. "Keep a bold heart. Your courage will be tested enough." (41)

Prince Gwydion is aware of Taran's youth. It is much better for Taran not to fight in battle. Prince Gwydion is aware that he and his band will have to fight in order to get the Black Cauldron.

• **How old is Taran?**

During the course of the Prydain Chronicles, Taran grows up. At the time of *The High King*, he is a young man of an age to be married.

At the time of *The Black Cauldron*, he is still a boy. However, in stories such as this, a young boy is able to do many of the things that a man does.

Boys (and girls) in Grades 5-8 will read this book. Chances are, they will regard Taran as being their own age, which would be approximately between 10 and 13. Of course, *The Black Cauldron* is a fantasy novel. In real life, we hope that boys will be not fighting with swords.

• **What did Adaon dream of Morgant?**

Adaon dreams an uneasy dream about Morgant:

"He is a brave and powerful man," Adaon agreed, "but I am uneasy for him. In my dream, the night before we left, warriors rode a slow circle around him and Morgant's sword was broken and weeping blood." (42)

Note that Adaon's dream is foreshadowing. Adaon's dreams foretell the future. See Chapter 20.

• What could a child learn from reading Chapter 3?

Adaon is a wise man. One of the things that he has learned is this: “[...] there is greater honor in a field well-plowed than in a field steeped with blood” (31).

Peace is better than war. Growing food is better than killing other people. However, occasionally people must fight in a just war.

Adaon also knows love. He says, “Indeed, the more we find to love, the more we add to the measure of our hearts” (32).

Prince Gwydion is also a wise man. He also knows that peace is preferable to war, but that occasionally one must fight in order to protect the freedom of one’s country and one’s people and oneself.

Chapter 4: In the Shadow of Dark Gate

• Why do Eilonwy and Gurgi appear in this chapter?

Taran (and Adaon) hear a noise, which turns out to have been made by Eilonwy and Gurgi.

Eilonwy and Gurgi both felt bad at having been left behind by Taran and the others. Eilonwy feels strongly about being able to do what Taran does. If Taran goes on an adventure, Eilonwy wants to go, too.

Eilonwy and Gurgi rode on horseback, but their horses ran away from them and headed back to Caer Dallben. Horses can sense danger, and these horses sensed danger and fled from it.

This means that Eilonwy and Gurgi do not have transportation back to Caer Dallben and so they must stay with Taran, Adaon, and Ellidyr. Eilonwy and Gurgi share the band's horses. Eilonwy rides behind Taran on his horse (Melynlas), and Gurgi rides behind Adaon on his horse (Lluagor).

• What is Ellidyr's opinion of Eilonwy and Gurgi?

Ellidyr does not want either Eilonwy or Gurgi around.

Ellidyr regards Eilonwy as a scullery-maid, similar to his regarding Taran as a pig-boy. In his pride, Ellidyr considers himself to be better than Eilonwy or Taran — or Gurgi.

Ellidyr says about Eilonwy, "Send the little fool back to her pots" (45). When Ellidyr refers to Eilonwy as a "scullery maid" (46), Eilonwy is insulted.

Ellidyr says this about Gurgi:

"And this!" Ellidyr laughed bitterly, gesturing at Gurgi. "This — thing!" Is this the black beast that so alarmed you, dreamer?" (46)

• Describe the relationship of Taran and Eilonwy in Chapter 4.

Taran lacks tact in his dealings with Eilonwy. He is upset that she and Gurgi followed him. About Eilonwy, he says, “She must return immediately. She’s a foolish scatterbrained ...” (45).

Of course, he does have reason to be upset. Taran and his band are on a dangerous mission. Eilonwy should be in a place of safety — such as *Caer Dallben*.

However, Taran does defend Eilonwy when Ellidyr criticizes her. When Ellidyr says about Eilonwy, “Send the little fool back to her pots” (45), Taran tells him, “Hold your tongue! I have swallowed your insults to me for the sake of our quest, but you will not speak ill of another” (45).

Eilonwy can be critical of Taran, but clearly she likes him. She makes a critical reference to Taran after *Adaon* offers refreshments to her:

“That’s very kind and thoughtful of you,” said Eilonwy with an admiring glance at *Adaon*. “Much more than you can expect from certain Assistant Pig-Keeper.” (48)

A little later, however, she compliments Taran on the way that he defended her against Ellidyr’s verbal attack:

“It was wonderful the way you were ready to smite him because of me. Not that you needed to. I could have taken good care of him myself. And I didn’t mean you weren’t kind and thoughtful. You really are. It just doesn’t always occur to you. For an Assistant Pig-Keeper you do amazingly well....” (49)

• **How does Adaon treat Eilonwy?**

A wise man, Adaon treats Eilonwy well. He is concerned about her and says to her, “Princess, Princess, you should not have followed us” (45).

He is also a problem-solver. First, he makes sure that Eilonwy and Gurgi have something to eat, and then he makes plans for them to come with his band of heroes. The horses of Eilonwy and Gurgi have run off, and Adaon cannot spare anyone to take Eilonwy and Gurgi back to Caer Dallben.

• **What do we learn from Doli in Chapter 4?**

Doli and Fflewddur Fflam are on horseback. (Actually, Doli rides a pony.)

Doli has done his part in the plan. He turned himself invisible and went to investigate how many guards were stationed around the Black Cauldron. However, he discovered that the Black Cauldron was not where it was supposed to be. (On pp. 19-20, we learned that Coll had seen the Black Cauldron previously. During the council of men, Coll gave information about the Black Cauldron’s location.)

At first Doli thought that Arawn had moved the Black Cauldron to a safer place. However, he overheard guards talking about the Black Cauldron, and he discovered that it had simply vanished, and neither Arawn nor any of his men knew where it had gone.

• **Which weapons does Princess Eilonwy have?**

Fflewddur Fflam gives Princess Eilonwy a bow and a quiver of arrows.

• Now that the Black Cauldron is gone, what must be done next?

At first, Eilonwy thinks that the disappearance of the Black Cauldron is good news. Arawn does not have it, and that is a good thing.

However, Adaon is aware that other evil people want the Black Cauldron. These evil people, like Arawn, will use the Black Cauldron for evil purposes. Therefore, the forces of good must find where the Black Cauldron is. It still must be destroyed so that it cannot be used.

Fflewddur Fflam, who arrived with Doli, says that the plan is to meet at Caer Cadarn unless Gwydion and his warriors catch up with them first. At Caer Cadarn everyone will discuss what to do.

The important thing is to destroy the Black Cauldron. It is not enough to simply get the Black Cauldron out of the hands of Arawn.

Therefore, the band of warriors — along with Eilonwy and Gurgi — set out for Caer Cadarn. Caer Cadarn is the stronghold of King Smoit, whose kingdom is Cantrev Cadiffor.

• What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 4? Is the reader likely to continue reading?

One of the major things that a writer wants is his or her readers to keep on reading. One way for a writer to do that is to be interesting. The author must write in such a way that the reader is so interested in what happens next that the reader turns the page and keeps on reading.

At the end of Chapter 4, Lloyd Alexander uses a cliffhanger to convince the reader to turn the page and keep on reading. Think of a hero hanging on the edge of a cliff. You want to

know what will happen to the hero: Will the hero fall off the cliff, will the hero rescue him- or herself, or will the hero be rescued by another person or people?

In the early days of movies, some movies were serials instead of features. A feature is a long movie that is (usually) complete in itself. Serials, instead, were short episodes that were intended to be viewed, one at a time, week after week. One week's episode would end in a cliffhanger to persuade people to buy a ticket to the movie next week so that they could see what would happen next. In the early days of movies, people would see more than just a feature film. They would often see a cartoon or a Three Stooges short comedy, a newsreel, a serial, and finally a feature film.

At the end of Chapter 4, we read:

Taran ran to Melynlas, leaped astride, and pulled Eilonwy up after him. Doli and the others hastened to mount. But as they did, savage cries burst from either side of them and there was a sudden hiss of arrows. (53)

Most readers will turn the page and keep on reading because they want to know the answers to these questions:

Who is attacking our heroes?

What will happen next?

Many fiction writers such as R.L. Stine, author of the Fear Street and Goosebumps series of books, use cliffhangers. He also used them in his humorous autobiography, which is titled *It Came from Ohio! My Life as a Writer*. One chapter ends this way:

I graduated from Ohio State University in June 1965.

Suddenly, I faced what they call The Real World.

What I wanted to do was to go to New York. That's what I'd dreamed of doing. My bags were already packed. Bill [R.L. Stine's brother] had seen to that. He couldn't wait to get rid of me!

But it takes money. I had a little in the bank. I saved it during college from part of the *Sundial* profits. But I just didn't have enough.

Before I could make my New York dream come true, I needed some money. Some cash.

So I decided to rob a bank.

This is certainly a cliffhanger that will keep readers reading. By the way, R.L. Stine's next chapter begins in this way:

Only kidding.

Forget about robbing banks. I found a much scarier job. I became a substitute teacher.

R.L. Stine is known for his scary books, but he started out as a humor writer. In fact, his nickname was Jovial Bob.

Chapter 5: The Huntsmen of Annuvin

• Describe the Huntsmen of Annuvin.

We have learned much about the Huntsmen of Annuvin before, in Chapter 3. To repeat:

The Huntsmen of Annuvin are ruthless warriors who fight for Arawn:

“They are ruthless as the Cauldron-Born, their strength even greater. They go afoot, yet they are swift, with much endurance. Fatigue, hunger, and thirst mean little to them.” — Prince Gwydion (38-39)

“They are mortal,” Gwydion answered, “though I scorn to call them men. They are the basest of warriors who have betrayed their comrades; murderers who have killed for the joy of it.” (39)

The Huntsmen of Annuvin can be killed, but when one of them dies, the other Huntsmen grow stronger. (39) Prince Gwydion says, “Even as their number dwindles, their strength increases.” (39)

What we read now confirms what we read earlier:

1. They are dangerous. They attack the band of heroes.
2. They are mortal. One of the Huntsmen dies in battle, and as Prince Gwydion said on p. 39, the death makes the other Huntsmen stronger. We read,

In the grove there was a sudden moment of silence. Then a long sigh rippled among the attackers as though each man had drawn breath. Taran’s heart sank as he remembered Gwydion’s warning. With a roar, the Huntsmen renewed their attack with even

greater ferocity, dashing themselves against the struggling companions in a surge of fury. (55)

3. They do not tire easily. Adaon points out that since one of the Huntsmen has died, the death has increased the endurance of the other Huntsmen.

• **How well does Ellidyr fight in the battle?**

Ellidyr is proud, but he has virtues as well as faults. We already know that he is very strong. Here we learn that he can fight well. Indeed, he even saves the life of Taran. A Huntsman knocks Taran to the ground, and the Huntsman places a knee on Taran's chest to keep him from moving. Then the Huntsman raises a dagger with the intention of killing Taran. We read,

The Huntsman's voice froze in the midst of a shout of triumph and he suddenly fell backward. Ellidyr, seeing Taran's plight, had brought down his sword in one powerful blow. Thrusting the lifeless body aside, he heaved Taran to his feet. (55)

Ellidyr saves Taran's life, but one result of the death of this Huntsman is that the other Huntsmen grow stronger.

• **How well does Gurgi fight in the battle?**

Gurgi finds a sword almost as tall as he is and uses it against the Huntsmen:

His eyes shut tightly, he stamped his feet, shouted, and swung his weapon about him like a scythe. Furious as a hornet, he raced back and forth among the Huntsmen, bobbing up and down, his blade never still. (56)

Personally, if I were using a weapon such as a sword, I would keep my eyes open. I would not want to hurt one of my friends.

In real warfare, sometimes soldiers are wounded or killed by soldiers on their own side. In the confusion of a battle, sometimes soldiers make mistakes. When a soldier is wounded or killed by soldiers on their own side, the soldier is said to be a victim of what is known as “friendly fire.”

• **How well does Doli fight in the battle?**

Doli fights well.

Doli is very effective in battle because he has the ability to turn himself invisible:

As the warriors sprang aside, Taran saw one of them clutch the air and spin head over heels. Another Huntsman doubled up and fell, pounded by invisible fists. He rolled across the ground in an attempt to escape the buffeting, but no sooner did he climb to his feet than a shouting, thrashing warrior was flung against him. The Huntsmen lashed out with their weapons, only to have them ripped from their hands and tossed into the scrub. Against this charge they fell back in alarm. (56)

• **Describe the relationship of Taran and Ellidyr in Chapter 5.**

Although Ellidyr saves Taran’s life and Taran thanks him, Ellidyr is still proud.

Taran thanks Ellidyr:

“You fought well, Son of Pen-Llarcau,” he said quietly. “I think that I owe you my life.” (59)

Unfortunately, Ellidyr’s pride keeps the two boys from becoming friends:

Ellidyr turned to him with the same glance of contempt that Taran had seen in the grove. “It is a

small debt,” he replied. “You value it more than I do.” (59-60)

Ellidyr is saying that he little values Taran’s life — a major insult.

• What is Adaon’s plan after the attack by the Huntsmen?

With Doli invisible and fighting well, Adaon is able to lead the band of heroes to safety. They are able to rest briefly, but Adaon knows that they must continue to move so that the Huntsmen do not catch up to them.

Ellidyr is concerned about the acquisition of honor, and so he advocates fighting the Huntsmen, but Adaon wants to keep everyone safe, and so they move on. They go deeper into the forest.

• How does Doli know that Fair Folk are present?

As a Fair Folk himself, Doli simply knows when Fair Folk are present.

As Doli explains,

“How do I know? How do I know?” snapped Doli.
 “How do you know to swallow your dinner?” (60)

• Who is King Eiddileg?

King Eiddileg is the King of the Fair Folk. We will learn that Doli has found a way post of the Fair Folk. The purpose of the way post is to help people in need of help. People are likely to need help in this area because it is close to Arawn’s evil country.

Way posts such as this are important, and Doli is aware that King Eiddileg would not let the way post get run down — or at least that he would not want the way post to get run down.

A way post is an outpost. Here are some definitions of the word “outpost”:

- outstation: a station in a remote or sparsely populated location
- frontier settlement: a settlement on the frontier of civilization
- a military post stationed at a distance from the main body of troops^[1]_[SEP]

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• Which simile does Eilonwy make near the end of Chapter 5?

Eilonwy says about not receiving an answer from whoever lives beneath the enormous hollow oak tree, “They’re impolite, whoever they are. That’s worse than somebody shutting their eyes so you can’t see them!” (61).

• What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 5? Is the reader likely to continue reading?

The ending of Chapter 5 is likely to keep the reader reading.

Doli has found a way post of the Fair Folk. He and the band are in need of help because the Huntsmen are pursuing them. However, when the band (actually, Eilonwy) finally receives an answer after shouting down the hollow trunk of an oak, the answer is this: “A faint but distinct voice rose the tree. ‘Go away,’ it said” (61).

This is a kind of cliffhanger. The band of heroes needs help, they are near help, but the Fair Folk who is supposed to help them tells them, “Go away” (61). The reader will wonder what will happen next.

By the way, in *One Thousand and One Nights*, Queen Scheherazade used cliffhangers to stay alive. King Shahryar used to marry a woman each day and then sentence her to be executed in the morning. He planned to do this to Scheherazade, so she told him part of a story — a part that ended in a cliffhanger. She told the King that she could not finish telling the story at that time, but would finish telling the story later.

In order to find what happened next in the story, King Shahryar was forced to delay Scheherazade's execution. Each night, she would tell King Shahryar the end of the story that she had previously began telling him, and then she would begin telling another story — but she would tell the King only part of the story, ending in a cliffhanger. In this way, she was able to stay alive.

When Scheherazade had told King Shahryar 1,001 stories, she told him that she had no more stories to tell him. By that time, he had fallen in love with her, and he no longer wanted to kill her.

The Thousand and One Nights illustrates the cleverness of Scheherazade.

Chapter 6: Gwystyl

- **Write a short character analysis of Gwystyl.**

Gwystyl is gloomy. He seems very unhappy that Adaon and the rest of the band of heroes are present. He objects to taking care of the heroes, and he objects to taking care of the horses. Fortunately, Doli makes him take care of both.

Gwystyl is stationed at the way post. This is a position that should be filled by a person who is brave and competent because it is so close to Annuin. However, Gwystyl does not seem to be either brave or competent.

Still, Gwystyl does have knowledge. He tells Taran that he already knows that the Black Cauldron is missing. One of the jobs of the person at the way post is to gather intelligence (information). Gwystyl seems to be doing that part of his job, even if he seems reluctant to help Adaon and the rest of the band of heroes.

Part of Gwystyl's job is to help Fair Folk who are in danger. He seems to do this reluctantly. For example, Doli does a lot of shouting into the hollow tree before Gwystyl answers him. Considering that the Huntsmen are pursuing Doli and the other members of the band of heroes, making Doli shout seems very unwise and very dangerous. The shouting could definitely attract the attention of the Huntsmen.

- **Write a short description of Gwystyl.**

Gwystyl is described in a couple of paragraphs:

Taran saw a creature that, at first glance, looked like a bundle of sticks with cobwebs floating at the top. [...] this individual seemed in a woeful state of disrepair.

Unlike Doli, Gwystyl was not of the dwarf kindred. Though taller, he was extremely thin. His hair was

long and stringy; his nose drooped wearily above his upper lip, which in turn drooped toward his chin in a most mournful expression. Wrinkles puckered his forehead; his eyes blinked anxiously; and he seemed on the verge of bursting into tears. Around his bent shoulders was draped a shabby, grimy robe, which he fingered nervously. He sniffed several times, sighed again, and grudgingly beckoned Doli to enter. (63-64)

One thing to note is that Gwystyl is formed in such a way to be a good spy in a wood, which in fact is where his way post is located.

• **What is the purpose of the way posts of the Fair Folk?**

The person who is charge of a way post is supposed to help Fair Folk who are in trouble.

In addition, we can guess that the person in charge of the way post also gathers intelligence (information) to pass on to King Eiddileg.

Doli tells Gwystyl, “If you’re in charge of a way post, you’re supposed to be ready for emergencies” (69).

• **Describe Gwystyl’s way post.**

The way post is well hidden.

Doli is able to communicate with Gwystyl by shouting into a hollow tree trunk — the way post is underground.

The actual entranceway into the way post is approximately 100 paces away. It is down a bank that is “so steeply inclined and overgrown that the horses could barely keep their footing” (62).

The actual entranceway is well hidden behind “a huge tangle of thorn bushes” (63).

Whoever built the way post knew what he or she was doing. It is well hidden — exactly what is needed.

The entranceway (portal) is not tall. It is “barely high enough for the animals to pass through” (65).

Past the entranceway is “a kind of gallery, long and low-ceilinged. On one side of it was solid earth, the other a dense screen of thorns and branches impossible to see through but with enough cracks and crevices to admit a little air” (66).

Definition: A gallery is a long and narrow room.

Through a passageway Gwystyl and his visitors go to a round chamber (66). On one side of the passageway “an alcove had been hollowed out; it was filled with roots, lichens, and mushrooms — the food stock, [Taran] guessed, of the melancholy inhabitant” (66).

The round chamber has a fire burning, a pallet of straw (apparently to be slept on), a table that is broken, two stools, and herbs hung to dry.

• What would the followers of Arawn think if they were to find Gwystyl’s way post? What would they think if they were to hear about Gwystyl?

Arawn and his followers are the bad guys in the Prydain Chronicles. If the followers of Arawn were to find Gwystyl’s way post, chances are that they would find nothing to worry about. No weapons are noticeable. The followers of Arawn are likely to think that it is simply the home of a forest dweller, not of someone who is spying on them.

If the followers of Arawn were to hear about Gwystyl, chances are that they would find nothing to worry about. The followers of Arawn are likely to think that Gwystyl is an incompetent being who could never be a spy, not a highly

competent spy. Certainly Doli would not have good things to say about Gwystyl.

• **Describe the crow.**

The crow will be an important character later in the Prydain Chronicles. Here we are introduced to the crow, whose name, Gwystyl says, is Caw, because of the sound it makes.

The crow, which is large, is in the round chamber. We read this:

The crow resembled more a humpy ball with straggling tail-feathers, feathers as wispy and disordered as Gwystyl's cobwebby hair. But its eyes were sharp and they peered at Taran critically. With a few dry clicks, the bird polished its beak on the perch and cocked its head. (67-68)

• **How does Adaon treat Gwystyl? How does this compare to how Doli treats Gwystyl?**

Adaon is a model of courtesy. We read that he “went to Gwystyl and bowed” (67). In addition, we read that Adaon says to Gwystyl, “We thank you for your hospitality [...] We have been hard pressed” (67).

In contrast, Doli is discourteous to Gwystyl:

“Hospitality!” snapped Doli. “We’ve seen precious little of that! Get along, Gwystyl, and fetch something to eat and drink.” (67)

We can say that Adaon treats Gwystyl the right way. If not for the way post, Adaon and his band of heroes would still be outside — pursued by the Huntsmen. Here, they are safer.

On the other hand, Doli knows Gwystyl. In addition, Doli seems to dislike him. However, this may just be an additional example of Doli's usual grumpy mood.

• **How does Adaon treat Ellidyr?**

Adaon has many talents, and one of them is the ability to heal people. Adaon examines Ellidyr's wound (on p. 55, Taran sees Ellidyr's face "below a bloodstained mat of tawny hair" during the fight with the Huntsmen), and then Adaon takes some dried herbs and treats the wound.

Ellidyr says that he need not be treated, but Adaon has an interesting response:

"If you do not choose to take it as a kindness," Adaon answered, "take it as a precaution. There is hard and dangerous travel before us. I would not have you fall ill and delay us." (69)

Adaon keeps his eyes on the important thing. The important thing is to fulfill his mission, not to be treated with respect by Ellidyr. Adaon will not let pride prevent him from accomplishing his mission, which — at this time — is to guide the band of heroes to Caer Cadarn.

In contrast, Ellidyr and Taran sometimes let their pride interfere with accomplishing the important thing. Both wanted to go before the other while on horseback in Chapter 3, with the result that one of them came close to being injured — and close to having his horse injured or lost.

• **What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 6? Is the reader likely to continue reading?**

The ending of Chapter 6 is interesting. Taran says that the Black Cauldron is missing, a fact that Gwystyl says he already knows:

"But you don't understand," Taran said. "We aren't mixed up with the cauldron. It isn't in Annuvin anymore. Someone has already stolen it."

“Yes,” said Gwystyl, with a gloomy look at Taran,
“yes, I know.” (72)

The reader is likely to keep reading to find out the questions to these questions:

- How does Gwystyl know that the Black Cauldron is missing? (Perhaps Gwystyl is more competent than he seems.)
- Does Gwystyl perhaps have something to do with the reason why the Black Cauldron is missing?

Chapter 7: Kaw

• What aid does Gwystyl give to the band of heroes?

Gwystyl really does aid the band of heroes. He has made a powder for use in emergencies. When applied to feet or hooves, it will hide one's tracks. By using this powder, the band of heroes is able to escape the Huntsmen. (Of course, after a while, the powder wears off one's feet or hooves.)

By the way, Doli turns himself invisible and discovers that five Huntsmen are camped nearby, so the band of heroes does need the powder to get away from the Huntsmen.

Part of Gwystyl's job is to be ready for emergencies. Here he does his job well.

• Write a brief character analysis of Kaw. Which information does Kaw give the band of heroes?

Kaw is intelligent, as we learn because he can understand human speech.

Kaw is helpful and can communicate with humans. We learn this because he tells the bands of heroes the names of the beings who have the Black Cauldron: Orddu, Orwen, and Orgoch.

As Eilonwy says about Kaw, "He acts as if he wants to tell us something" (77).

• How much does Gwystyl really know about the Black Cauldron?

Gwystyl knows more than at first he lets on to know. In the previous chapter, he revealed that he knows that the Black Cauldron is missing.

Now we learn that he knows who has the Black Cauldron and in which general area it is located.

The beings known as Orddu, Orwen, and Orgoch have the Black Cauldron, and they live in the Marshes of Morva.

• **What do we learn about Orddu, Orwen, and Orgoch?**

Orddu, Orwen, and Orgoch are strange beings:

“Who are they?” murmured Gwystyl. “You had better ask what are they?” (78)

Gwystyl also says that it is better not to meddle with Orddu, Orwen, and Orgoch. He says that it is better simply to leave them alone.

• **What we learn about the Marshes of Morva?**

Fflewddur Fflam has been near the Marshes of Morva. He says about them,

“Unpleasant stretch of country and quite terrifying.”
(79)

“Dreadful, smelly, ugly-looking fens they were.”
(79)

Definition of fens: A marshy area.

• **Is “smelly” the correct adjective to use when describing the marshes?**

Actually, no. A better adjective to use is “stinky.” Human beings and animals are able to smell (and unfortunately, to stink); marshes stink. Human beings smell the stink of the marshes.

By the way, Samuel Johnson wrote the first really good dictionary of the English dictionary, so he knew the meanings of words. Apparently, he occasionally had bad personal hygiene habits, as a woman once told him, “You smell!”

Mr. Johnson replied, “I stink. You smell.”

• After the band of heroes learn who has the Black Cauldron, what are their options? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

They have two main options:

1) They can search for Prince Gwydion, who will decide the next course of action.

Advantage: With the addition of other soldiers, they will have a stronger force to fight, if necessary, the evil forces of Arawn. Also, of course, Prince Gwydion is an excellent leader.

Disadvantage: Finding Prince Gwydion will take time — time that the evil forces of Arawn will use in trying to find the Black Cauldron.

2) They can immediately begin to search for the Black Cauldron.

Advantage: If they don’t spend time in trying to find Prince Gwydion and instead begin to search immediately for the Black Cauldron, they have a better chance of finding the Black Cauldron before the evil forces of Arawn do. Adaon, of course, is a good leader.

Disadvantage: Without the addition of other soldiers, they will have a more difficult time in fighting, if necessary, the evil forces of Arawn.

• After the band of heroes learns who has the Black Cauldron, what at first do they decide is their best option? Why?

At first, it seems that the band of heroes will search for Prince Gwydion for these reasons:

1) Prince Gwydion left orders for the band of heroes to seek him after the attempt to find the Black Cauldron and to take it from the evil forces of Arawn.

2) With the addition of other soldiers, the band of heroes will have a stronger force to fight, if necessary, the evil forces of Arawn.

• Why does Adaon allow Taran to make the important decision of whether to go to find the Black Cauldron or to go and report what they have learned to Prince Gwydion?

This is something we learn about later.

Briefly, Adaon knows that something bad will happen to him if they go to the Marshes of Morva. He does not want his decision to be based on selfish reasons. Instead, he wishes it to be based on the greater good.

Good reasons exist both for seeking Prince Gwydion immediately and for seeking the Black Cauldron immediately. Rather than risking making a decision based on personal benefit to himself (we learn about this later), Adaon (who is the leader of the band of heroes and would ordinarily make the decision) allows Taran to make the decision.

This is a major mark of respect for Taran. After all, Ellidyr is a little older than Taran, and Fflewddur Fflam is a grown-up king.

• What does the term “greater good” mean?

An ethical theory known as Utilitarianism states that an act is good if it results in the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people.

Utilitarianism believes that happiness is good.

Utilitarianism is also opposed to selfishness. When we choose what we ought to do, we ought to consider how our action will affect the happiness of other people.

Adaon believes that the happiness of a great number of people outweighs his own happiness. If the band of heroes can find the Black Cauldron and keep it out of the hands of Arawn, that will bring happiness to a great number of people. After all, if Arawn gets the Black Cauldron, he will make warriors to fight in wars. Arawn is the type of person who would make slaves of the people he conquers.

Even if Adaon is hurt badly, he is willing to be hurt badly if he can accomplish good with his life. Heroes are people who risk much — or everything they have — to help the greater good.

The happiness of an entire society of people is a greater good than the happiness of one individual.

• **What is the definition of the word “altruism”?**

This is a definition of the word “altruism”:

the quality of unselfish concern for the welfare of others^[L]_[SEP]

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Adaon is altruistic.

• **Why does Taran decide to try to find the Black Cauldron?**

Taran makes this important decision for these possible reasons:

1) The evil forces of Arawn are trying to find the Black Cauldron, and it is important that the forces of good find it and take possession of it.

2) When Prince Gwydion gave orders for the band of heroes to rejoin him after the attempt to find the Black Cauldron and take it from the evil forces of Arawn, Prince Gwydion did not realize that the band of heroes would already know the — new — location of the Black Cauldron.

3) Ellidyr would like to win honor by finding the Black Cauldron and delivering it to Prince Gwydion. Ellidyr is likely to leave the band of heroes and attempt to find the Black Cauldron on his own. Taran would like the band of heroes to stick together.

4) Taran would also like to win honor by finding the Black Cauldron and delivering it to Prince Gwydion. This could be in part a selfish reason.

• Did Taran make his decision for the right reasons?

Students' opinions may vary.

• Obviously, honor is a major theme of *The Black Cauldron*. Define the word “honor.”

These definitions of the word “honor” appear on the World Wide Web:

- award: a tangible symbol signifying approval or distinction; “an award for bravery”
- bestow honor or rewards upon; “Today we honor our soldiers”; “The scout was rewarded for courageous action”
- the state of being honored
- respect: show respect towards; “honor your parents!”

- the quality of being honorable and having a good name; “a man of honor”

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<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=honor>

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• **Where are the Huntsmen?**

Five Huntsmen are nearby — “camped over the rise” (84), Doli says.

Gwystyl’s powder helps the band of heroes to avoid the Huntsmen and be on their way.

Chapter 8: A Stone in the Shoe

• **Adaon dreamed about the last night he spent at Caer Dallden (30, 88). What dream did he have about himself?**

Taran is worried about whether he has made a bad decision in going after the Black Cauldron rather than seeking Gwydion — Eilonwy definitely thinks that it would be better to seek Gwydion instead of the Black Cauldron (89).

One thing that troubles Taran is Adaon’s dreams. He asks Adaon what he dreamed about himself. Adaon replies,

“I saw myself in a glade; and though winter lay all around, it was warm and sunlit. Birds called and flowers sprang up from bare stones.” (88)

This dream sounds pleasant, but Eilonwy says that she does not know how to interpret the dream:

“Your dream was beautiful,” said Eilonwy, “but I can’t guess its meaning.” (88)

By the way, earlier Adaon had told Taran that he had dreamed that Taran would feel grief (30).

• **Describe the relationship of Taran and Ellidyr in Chapter 8.**

An important event occurs when Ellidyr’s horse, Islimach, goes lame — that is, begins to limp.

Taran, however, is able to remove the small stone from Islimach’s hoof that is causing the lameness.

We would think that Ellidyr would thank Taran for removing the small stone, but instead he grows angry:

Ellidyr’s face was livid. “You have tried to steal honor from me, pig-boy,” he said through clenched teeth. “Will you now rob me of my horse?” (91)

By saying that Taran has tried to steal honor from him, Ellidyr is referring to Taran's decision to search for the Black Cauldron rather than seeking Gwydion.

Ellidyr has prided himself on his horse's not allowing any other human being but Ellidyr to touch him (90). However, Taran is able to calm Islimach enough that he is able to examine Islimach's hoof and remove the small stone.

Ellidyr would do better to thank Taran for removing the small stone. He ought to put Islimach's welfare above his pride.

• **Why is working together with other people important?**

It is important to work together because people are able to share knowledge. Coll showed Taran the place in a horse's hoof where a small stone could be hidden and could make a horse limp. Because Coll had taught this to Taran, Taran was able to remove the small stone from Islimach's hoof. If Ellidyr had been traveling alone, Taran would not have been present to remove the stone.

By the way, books are an important source of teaching. An author can spend a year or more writing a book, and a reader can benefit from all the work that the author has done simply by spending a few hours or days reading the book.

Books are repositories of knowledge. A person who acquires new knowledge but does not write a book (or essay) is allowing new knowledge to die when he or she dies.

It is also important to realize to realize that a book can be fiction and yet be something that we can learn from. Lloyd Alexander's *The Black Cauldron* teaches us about the nature of excessive pride and about the importance of teamwork. It also teaches us about the nature of heroism.

• **Which gifts does Adaon offer to Taran in the event of Adaon's death?**

Adaon says that he does not value having many possessions, and so he has few of them. However, he does value three possessions, which he offers to Taran in case “any ill befall me” (93).

These are the three possessions:

- 1) Lluagor, his horse.
- 2) His pack of healing herbs.
- 3) The iron clasp around his neck. He says that the clasp is “the brooch I wear, a precious gift from Arianllyn, my betrothed” (93).

• **Which decision does Ellidyr make in Chapter 8?**

Ellidyr decides to seek the Black Cauldron on his own. That way, he can get all the glory of finding the Black Cauldron and delivering it into the hands of Gwydion for himself instead of sharing the glory with the rest of the band of heroes.

Ellidyr and Taran are supposed to take the first and second watches, but Ellidyr simply disappears without waking Taran to take the second watch. Ellidyr leaves the band of heroes so he can search on his own for the Black Cauldron.

• **Does Ellidyr's decision put the band of heroes in danger?**

By not waking Taran to take the second watch, Ellidyr leaves the band of heroes without an alert guard. If the Huntsmen were to find them, the Huntsmen could kill many or most of the band of heroes before they even wake up.

These are now the members of the band of heroes:

Adaon

Taran

Eilonwy

Fflewddur Fflam

Doli

Gurgi

Five Huntsmen are searching for the band of heroes. If the Huntsmen were to find the band of heroes asleep, the Huntsmen could draw their swords, and then at a signal each of the Huntsmen could kill one of the members of the band of heroes. The remaining hero would probably wake up and attempt to flee, but the five Huntsmen are likely to capture and kill the remaining hero.

• How does a major character get wounded in Chapter 8?

The Huntsmen in fact find the band of heroes — after the heroes wake up and begin traveling on horseback.

Adaon decides to fight the Huntsmen — he thinks that Doli's trick of turning himself invisible and drawing the Huntsmen away from the remaining members of the band of heroes may not work this time.

Taran is in danger of being hit by a thrown dagger of one of the Huntsmen, but Adaon intervenes and strikes down the Huntsman. Adaon's sword hits the Huntsman, but the Huntsman's dagger hits Adaon.

• How does Chapter 8 end?

Chapter 8 ends with a cliffhanger. Adaon is wounded, and Taran calls for help:

“Ffleuddur! Doli!” Taran shouted. “To us! Adaon is wounded.” (97)

Chapter 9: The Brooch

• Why did Adaon allow Taran to make an important decision in Chapter 7?

Adaon explains why he allowed Taran to make the important decision in Chapter 7 of whether to try to gain possession of the Black Cauldron or to see Prince Gwydion.

Adaon knew that he would die if the band of heroes tried to gain possession of the Black Cauldron. He wanted to make the right decision for the right reasons. He did not want to decide not to try to gain possession of the Black Cauldron simply because he valued his own life. Instead, he wanted to make the decision about what to do based on the needs of his society, not based on his own desires. Adaon is altruistic.

Adaon knew that Taran was more likely to make the correct decision based on the needs of their society. Taran did not know that Adaon would die if the band of heroes were to try to recover the Black Cauldron. Taran did not have the foreknowledge given to Adaon by the brooch he wears.

Adaon says,

“I have yearned to be again at the side of my beloved Arianllyn, and my thoughts are with her now. But had I chosen to return, I would ever wonder whether my choice was made through wisdom or following the wishes of my own heart. I see this is as it must be, and the destiny laid on me. I am content to die here.” (100)

Taran is likely to have made his decision to try to recover the Black Cauldron based on the needs of his society. Ellidyr, however, is willing to try to gain possession of the Black Cauldron by himself mainly because of his desire for glory.

• **What is the correct interpretation of Adaon’s earlier dream?**

This is the dream that Adaon had earlier:

“I saw myself in a glade; and though winter lay all around, it was warm and sunlit. Birds called and flowers sprang up from bare stones.” (88)

Eilonwy said then that she could not guess its meaning, but now we know that Adaon had a dream of his own death.

• **What foreshadowing have we had of Adaon’s death?**

The main foreshadowing that we have had is Adaon’s dream. However, in addition, Adaon made a kind of will — he told Taran to take for himself the items that Adaon regarded as valuable if anything were to happen to Adaon. In Chapter 8, Adaon said that he does not value having many possessions, and so he has few of them. However, he does value three possessions, which he offered to Taran in case “any ill befall me” (93).

These are the three possessions:

- 1) Lluagor, his horse.
- 2) His pack of healing herbs.
- 3) The iron clasp around his neck. He says that the clasp is “the brooch I wear, a precious gift from Arianllyn, my betrothed” (93).

• **Did Ellidyr’s decision in Chapter 8 result in a death in Chapter 9?**

Possibly, Ellidyr’s decision to strike out on his own to try to gain possession of the Black Cauldron led to Adaon’s death. If Ellidyr had stayed with the band of heroes, he would have increased its strength. Adaon may not have died when he

saved Taran's life by attacking the Huntsman who was trying to kill Taran.

• **Why does Taran decide to continue to seek the Black Cauldron?**

Once Adaon is dead and has been buried, Taran must make a decision. The band of heroes is much weaker now with the loss of Adaon. In addition, Fflewddur Fflam and Doli are not present because they led the Huntsmen away from the other members of the band of heroes after Adaon was mortally wounded. And, of course, Ellidyr is not present.

The only remaining members of the band of heroes are these:

Taran

Eilonwy

Gurgi

The band wait overnight to see if Fflewddur Fflam and Doli return. They do not, and Taran decides to continue to try to gain possession of the Black Cauldron, surprising Eilonwy, who thought that the band of heroes would go to meet Gwydion.

Taran makes this important decision for these possible reasons:

- 1) The evil forces of Arawn are trying to find the Black Cauldron, and it is important that the forces of good find it first and take possession of it.
- 2) When Prince Gwydion gave orders for the band of heroes to rejoin him after the attempt to find the Black Cauldron and take it from the evil forces of Arawn, Prince Gwydion did not realize that the band of heroes would already know the — new — location of the Black Cauldron.

These are good reasons. They are concerned with the good of Taran's society.

• **Which dreams does Taran have that night (the night before he makes the decision to search for the Black Cauldron)?**

Taran has a number of dreams:

1) He sees "Ellidyr seized by a black beast that sank its claws into him and gripped him until Ellidyr cried out in torment" (102). The next morning Eilonwy mentions Ellidyr and Taran tells her about his dream.

2) He sees himself running "through grasses shoulder high, desperately seeking a path he could not find. Overhead, a gray bird fluttered and spread its wings. He followed it and a path opened at his feet" (102).

3) He sees "a turbulent stream with a great boulder in the midst of it. On the boulder lay Fflewddur's harp, which played of itself as the wind stirred the strings" (102).

4) He sees himself "running [...] through a trackless marsh. A bear and two wolves set upon him and made to rend him with their fangs. Terrified, he sprang into a dark pool, but the water suddenly turned to dry land. The enraged beasts snarled and leaped after him" (102).

• **What has happened to Fflewddur Fflam and Doli?**

The remaining members of the band of heroes find Fflewddur Fflam at a stream. The bard is "cooling his bare feet in the water" (105).

Fflewddur Fflam and Doli had led the Huntsmen on a chase, luring them away from Taran, Eilonwy, and Gurgi — and

the mortally wounded Adaon. Fflewddur Fflam and Doli became separated, and Doli is still missing.

Taran had earlier dreamed about “a turbulent stream with a great boulder in the midst of it. On the boulder lay Fflewddur’s harp, which played of itself as the wind stirred the strings” (102). This dream foretold — but not straightforwardly — the finding of Fflewddur Fflam.

• **Is Taran a good leader in Chapter 9?**

Taran is a good leader in Chapter 9. He is able to find water. In addition, while he and the other members of the band of heroes are in high grass, he sees a marsh bird, and he knows that if they follow it, the bird will lead them to the Marshes of Morva.

Taran had earlier dreamed that he was running “through grasses shoulder high, desperately seeking a path he could not find. Overhead, a gray bird fluttered and spread its wings. He followed it and a path opened at his feet” (102). That dream has come true.

• **What does Taran tell Eilonwy about the brooch?**

Taran explains to Eilonwy that the brooch has given him some foreknowledge of the future. He dreams about the future, and the things he dreams come true.

Eilonwy replies, “Adaon’s clasp is a priceless gift. It gives you a kind of wisdom [...] which, I suppose, is what Assistant Pig-Keepers need more than anything else” (109).

• **What are the powers of the brooch?**

The powers of the brooch are threefold:

- 1) The brooch gives its wearer dreams that foretell the future. However, the dreams are often hints about

the future; they do not necessarily straightforwardly reveal the future.

2) The brooch increases the awareness of its wearer.

3) The brooch increases the intelligence of its wearer.

The wearer already has intuition, awareness, and intelligence, but the brooch increases each of these.

• The brooch is a magical item, and magical items do not exist in our world, although they are “real” in fantasies such as the Prydain Chronicles. What can we do in our real world to acquire such powers as those of the magic brooch?

The brooch increases three things that its wearer already has: intuition, awareness, and knowledge.

Intuition can be regarded as a kind of knowledge that is different from logic. This is a definition of the word “intuition”:

instinctive knowing (without the use of rational processes)

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Perhaps intuition can be developed through artistic pursuits such as drawing, painting, music, theater, and poetry.

Awareness can be increased without magic. Simply taking time to be aware can increase awareness. Simply take note of what is going on around you.

Knowledge can be increased without magic. Study and reading can increase knowledge. A study of marsh birds can

lead to being able to identify them. Logic tells us that marsh birds live in marshes.

Let us consider the rational, the irrational, and the nonrational.

Some things are rational, such as mathematics and logic.

Other things are irrational (completely against reason), such as repeatedly hitting yourself in the head very hard just to see what it feels like.

The realm of the nonrational is the realm of beauty, poetry, laughter, dance, and love. Art connects the world of the rational and the nonrational. A great deal of intelligence goes into producing art, but much art explores the world of the nonrational.

Love is nonrational. Suppose you are confronted with two individuals who are basically alike in beauty, form, character, and personality, but one individual is rich and the other individual is poor. Reason would tell you to fall in love with the rich individual, but you may fall in love with the poor individual.

We need to avoid the irrational; instead, we should seek to increase our understanding of the rational and the nonrational. Adaon's clasp helped Adaon and now helps Taran to do that.

In the next chapter, we discover that the clasp has a bardic symbol that means "knowledge, truth, and love" (112). Apparently, the clasp increases the wearer's knowledge, truth, and love.

As Fflewddur Fflam says in the next chapter, "Put them all together and you have something very powerful indeed" (113).

- **Can we accurately foretell the future?**

We can use our reason to make predictions about the future, but predicting the future accurately is very difficult, unless we predict such things as that the sun will rise in the morning or what we will eat for breakfast.

However, scientists are working to improve their success at predicting such things as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Still, it seems unlikely that we will ever be able to accurately predict the exact day that an earthquake or a volcanic eruption will occur.

In Chapter 1, Fflewddur Fflam said this about Adaon: “He is one of the bravest men I know. That and more, for he has the heart of a true bard. Someday he will be one of our greatest, you can mark my words” (11). Unfortunately, this prediction did not come true.

Chapter 10: The Marshes of Morva

• What do the three lines on the brooch mean?

Taran has already figured out that the brooch gives him a kind of wisdom, and he has told that to Eilonwy.

In this chapter, we have further confirmation of that.

The brooch bears a bardic symbol, which Fflewddur Fflam, who has studied to take the bardic examination, is able to interpret. The three lines, which resemble an arrowhead, stand for “knowledge, truth, and love” (112).

• Are knowledge, truth, and love rare?

They certainly exist, but we would like them to be more prevalent than they are.

The author of this discussion guide has seen nearly every episode of the TV series *The X-Files*. The only episode that scared him is titled “Home.” It is about a family that takes pride in its ignorance and stupidity and lack of morals.

Fflewddur Fflam thinks that knowledge, truth, and love may be rare. He says,

“I sometimes think it’s hard enough to find any one of them, even separately. Put them all together and you have something very powerful indeed.” (113)

However, it is certainly more than probable that the children reading *The Black Cauldron* will know of the love of parents.

• What can a child learn from reading Chapter 10?

Perhaps a child will learn about the importance of knowledge, truth, and love.

Taran's clasp that he inherited from Adaon shows what can happen when one person has all three of these qualities. The result is indeed powerful.

• Is Taran a good leader in Chapter 10?

Yes.

First, Taran recognizes that it will rain, and he leads his band of heroes into a cave — or, at least, a deep recess in a hillside. One reason that he knows the weather will change is because the wind has shifted.

Second, he recognizes that the cave will collapse, and he gets the band of heroes out of the cave before it collapses.

Third, he gets the band of heroes away from the Huntsmen by going into the marshes. Taran is able to lead the band of heroes safely through the marshes, but the Huntsmen are swallowed by the marsh.

• What does Fflewddur Fflam advise Taran about the brooch?

Fflewddur Fflam advises Taran, “Never part with that clasp, my friend. It's a true treasure” (113).

• What new dreams does Taran have? Are these dreams likely to come true?

Taran dreams more dreams again, but he tells Eilonwy, “I can make no sense of them” (114).

He tells Eilonwy what he has dreamed: “I saw Ellidyr in mortal danger. At the same time it was as though my hands were bound and I could not help him” (114).

Fantasies such as *The Black Cauldron* are not set in the real world. Fantasies include elements that are not real. Part of what we are asked to believe in this fantasy is that magical items such as Adaon's clasp exist. Adaon's clasp makes the

wearer dream of things that will occur. Therefore, we know that what Taran dreams will in some way come true.

• **Describe the Marshes of Morva.**

We read this:

[...] huge growths of thorny furze rose up. At the far side, Taran distinguished meager clumps of wasted trees. Under the gray sky, pools of stagnant water flickered among dead grasses and broken reeds. A scent of ancient decay choked his [Taran's] nostrils. A ceaseless thrumming and groaning trembled in the air. (115)

• **How does one of Taran's dreams come true?**

In Chapter 9, Taran had this dream: He saw himself “running [...] through a trackless marsh. A bear and two wolves set upon him and made to rend him with their fangs. Terrified, he sprang into a dark pool, but the water suddenly turned to dry land. The enraged beasts snarled and leaped after him” (102).

Here in Chapter 10, the dream comes true, but the reality is a little different from the dream: The bear and two wolves are actually Huntsmen dressed in the skins of these animals. This means that although the dreams foretell the future, they do not do so in a straightforward way. For a reader, this is good. The reader has hints of what will occur, but the reader does not know exactly what will occur. This allows for suspense in the narrative.

Taran guides the band of heroes safely into the marshes, but the Huntsmen are sucked down into the bog.

• **Describe the cottage and surrounding buildings at the end of Chapter 10.**

We read this:

At the side of the mound, almost a part of the turf itself, rose a low cottage. It was so cleverly concealed with sod and branches that Taran had to look again to see there was a doorway. Circling the hill were tumbledown stables and something resembling a demolished chicken roost. (117)

When Eilonwy and the others look in a window, the cottage seems to be deserted. They see this:

[...] the room was even more heaped up and disorderly than Dallben's. In one corner stood a wide loom with a good many of the threads straggling down. The work on the frame was less than half-finished and so tangled and knotted he [Taran] could imagine no one ever continuing it. Broken crockery covered a small table. Rusted and broken weapons were piled about. (118-119)

• What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 10? Is the reader likely to continue reading?

Very definitely, the reader will continue to read to find out what happens. The chapter ends with the band of heroes in a cottage in the Marshes of Morva when they hear a voice:

“How would you like it,” asked a cheerful voice behind Taran, “if you were turned into a toad? And stepped on?” (119)

What is your opinion of the threat that is made at the end of Chapter 10?

In a way, the threat is funny. In a way, the threat is serious.

The idea of being turned into a toad and stepped on is funny, but if such a thing could occur, the result would be a dead toad/transformed person.

In the fantasy world of *The Black Cauldron*, we must suppose that such a thing could occur; after all, such a thing as Adaon's magic clasp exists in that world.

Chapter 11: The Cottage

- **Write short character analyses of the three enchantresses found in Chapter 11.**

All Three Enchantresses

Obviously, all three enchantresses are female, and all three are enchantresses. In addition, all three seem to be short and plumb. However, Eilonwy will see them in a later chapter (Chapter 13), in which they will appear much different from the way they appear in this chapter.

The three enchantresses seem to want to be left alone. They prefer not to be spied on, and they think that the band of heroes is spying on them. A group of Huntsmen (different from the group of Huntsmen that were pursuing Taran and the rest of the band of heroes) definitely were spying — we know that they are trying to find the Black Cauldron — and so Orddu turned them into something.

At least one of the three enchantresses' powers is the ability to tell when someone is lying, as Taran does when he gives false names for the rest of the band of heroes when he introduces them:

Orwen giggled and gave Orddu an affectionate nudge. "Listen to them," she said. "They're delightful when they lie." (127)

Taran then stops lying and tells the three enchantresses the real names of himself and of the rest of the band of heroes.

In some ways, the three enchantresses are threatening; in some ways, the three enchantresses are comic.

Orddu

Orddu is the enchantress who first sees them and who threatens to turn them into toads and step on them.

We read about Orddu:

Facing him [Taran] was a short and rather plump little woman with a round, lumpy face and a pair of very sharp eyes. Her hair hung like a clump of discolored marsh weeds, bound with vines and ornaments with bejeweled pins that seemed about to lose themselves in the hopeless tangle. She wore a dark, shapeless, ungirt robe covered with patches and stains. Her feet were bare and exceptionally large.

Orddu is definitely an enchantress. She turns Taran's sword into a snake, and back again into a sword.

Orddu seems fixated on toads. Turning people into toads seems to be a specialty of hers.

Orddu is a mixture of threat and non-threat. She threatens to turn the band of heroes into toads and then step on them, but then she tells Taran that "I wouldn't dream of stepping on you. I couldn't stand the squashiness" (122). Still, this is not especially reassuring. Orddu is not so much concerned about the band of heroes' lives as she is about not wanting to feel the squashiness if she were to step on a hero who had been turned into a toad.

Orddu would like to have Eilonwy's hair when she is not using it — as a toad, Eilonwy won't need her hair (121). Orddu is afraid of losing things in her own disorderly hair.

Orddu (and the other enchantresses) have unusual knowledge such as knowing the number of twigs in a bird's nest (121).

Orwen

Orwen wears a necklace. She thinks that Orddu is a little too fixated on toads (124).

Orgoch

Orgoch wears a hood. She defends Orddu's fixation on toads, praising it because is uncomplicated (124). There is no need to think when you find someone spying on the cottage. Simply turn the spy into a toad. Problem solved.

None of the three enchantresses likes being Orgoch because, Orddu says, Orgoch has "such horrible indigestion. If you'd only pay more attention to what you take for your meals" (125).

Orgoch seems to be the hungry one. She often smacks her lips in this and other chapters:

- Orgoch smacks her lips while saying, "I love toads" (124).
- Orgoch smacks her lips while saying, "I love names" (127). She also says, "If they won't give their right names [...] then simply take them" (127). Apparently, they can take away names — and eat them.
- Orgoch smacks her lips while saying, "I love babies" (131, Chapter 12).

We have hints that Orgoch would eat human beings. In Chapter 12, we find out that Orgoch would not have kept little Dallben, Orddu says, "in the usual sense" (132). None of this is explicit; it is only hinted at here and there. Also in Chapter 12, Orgoch did not want little Dallben, who had grown wise by swallowing a few drops of magic potion, to leave. Orddu says,

"Orgoch, by this time, was the one who wanted to keep him. In her own fashion, which I doubt he would have liked."

"He would have been a sweet little thing," murmured Orgoch. (133)

• What is especially unusual about the three enchantresses?

Quite a lot is unusual about the three enchantresses; however, the most unusual thing about them is that they seem to take turns being Orddu, Orwen, and Orgoch. One enchantress will be Orgoch for a while, and then she will be Orddu for a while.

Whoever is Orddu gets to be in charge for as long as she is Orddu. Orddu says,

“I remember very distinctly, my dear,” replied the first enchantress, “but you were Orddu then. And when you’re being Orddu, you can do as you please. But I’m Orddu today, and what I say is ...” (125)

In our world, we are who we are. We don’t become someone else for a while, unless we are acting — and even then, we are just pretending to be someone else. (On the other hand, one way to change yourself for the better is to act as if you were the person you want to be. If you want to be a good musician, do the things a good musician does: rehearse and play music. If you want to be a good student, act the way a good student acts: read, study, and when relevant, take notes.)

The three enchantresses argue over who gets to be Orddu. Orgoch says to Orddu,

“You always want to be Orddu. I’ve had to be Orgoch three times in a row, while you’ve only been Orgoch once.” (125)

Orgoch is also greedy (126) — another reason why none of the three enchantresses wants to be Orgoch.

• What do the three enchantresses think about the Huntsmen?

The three enchantresses do not like the Huntsmen:

“Disgusting creatures, Huntsmen,” muttered Orgoch.
 “Nasty, hairy, vicious things. They turn my stomach.” (125)

They did something to the Huntsmen who were spying on the cottage. Apparently, they turned the Huntsmen into something, but not toads. Whichever enchantress was Orddu that day was not the Orddu who likes to turn enemies into toads (125).

Orwen does praise Taran for his intelligence:

“It was so clever of you,” she added, smiling at Taran, “to have the Huntsmen swallowed up in the bog, really quite well done.” (124)

• **Orgoch says, “Friends, enemies, it all comes to the same in the end” (126). Is this true?**

No. Currently, a battle is going on between good and evil. The forces of Arawn are evil, and Prince Gwydion and the band of heroes are good. We definitely want good to win over evil.

Orgoch (and by extension the other two enchantresses) has a different way of looking at good and evil than we do.

• **What are the advantages and the disadvantages of being toads?**

One advantage, Orddu points out, is that toads do not have to fear the Huntsmen (126).

One disadvantage, Orddu points out, is that toads do have to worry about their natural enemies who would love to eat them: “herons, kingfishers, and serpents” (127).

One disadvantage, of course, is that toads are small creatures that can be stepped on. Fflewddur Fflam — a hero — is

willing to risk being turned into a toad to save his friends, but he does whisper to Taran, “[...] I beg you, do pay attention to where you tread” (124).

• **Are the three enchantresses omniscient (all-knowing)?**

Note that the three enchantresses are not omniscient (all-knowing). They do not know who Taran is until he introduces himself truthfully.

Also, on p. 127 Orwen says that she has heard of a gurgi before, “but I never knew what they were” (127).

• **Why is it odd that only one Gurgi exists?**

Except for such things as single-celled bacteria, and some other such oddities, offspring need two parents: one male and one female. This is certainly true of the children who will be reading *The Black Cauldron*.

By the way, syndicated columnist Connie Schultz remembers when she was in the 5th grade and her mother told her how babies are made. Connie, of course, was a baby once, and she had parents like other babies, and she shrieked at her mother, “WITH DAD?” When her father arrived home later, he noticed that Connie was behaving strangely, and so he asked, “What’s wrong with Connie?” Connie’s mother whispered to him, and he chuckled. Connie says, “[T]hat was the only time I got away with not speaking to my father at the dinner table.”

Source: Connie Schultz, “Parents, Just Ignore the Eye Rolling and Teach Your Kids About Sex.” Creators.com. 28 April 2010 <<http://www.creators.com/liberal/connie-schultz/parents-just-ignore-the-eye-rolling-and-teach-your-kids-about-sex.html>>.

• **What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 11? Is the reader likely to continue reading?**

The reader will definitely want to turn the page and keep on reading. It turns out that the three enchantresses know Dallben. Taran introduces himself as Taran, Assistant Pig-keeper of Caer Dallben, and we read:

“Dallben!” cried Orddu. “You poor lost chicken, why didn’t you say so in the first place? Tell me, how is dear little Dallben?” (128)

Chapter 12: Little Dallben

- **How do the three enchantresses treat the band of heroes after they learn that the heroes know Dallben?**

The three enchantresses treat the band of heroes well after they learn that the band of heroes know Dallben.

The three enchantresses feed the band of heroes and answer most of their questions.

- **What magical knowledge does Eilonwy have in this chapter?**

Taran is cautious. When the three enchantresses give the band of heroes food to eat, he looks questioningly at Eilonwy.

The girl guessed his thought. “Don’t be afraid to eat,” she said behind her hand. It’s perfectly all right, not the least bit poisonous or enchanted. I can tell. I learned how when I was staying with Queen Achren and learning to be a sorceress.” (130)

- **In literature, can food and drink be enchanted?**

In Homer’s *Odyssey*, Odysseus and his men landed on the island of the sorceress Circe. Odysseus divided his men into two groups, and one group visited Circe, who turned them into pigs. First she gave them a drink with a potion in it. After they had drunk the potion, she used her wand to turn them into pigs.

Classics scholar Elizabeth Vandiver jokes that since Homeric society was a sexist and paternalistic society (much more so than our modern society), these were the “original male chauvinist pigs” (*The Odyssey of Homer* 72).

Of course, the hero Odysseus is able to get Circe to turn the pigs back to men.

• **How do the three enchantresses react when they learn that Dallben has a beard?**

We readers, of course, know that Dallben is old and has grown a beard.

The three enchantresses, however, seem to believe that Dallben has acquired a beard by finding it somewhere.

Of course, the three enchantresses knew Dallben when he was very little, so to them it would seem odd that Dallben has grown a beard.

• **How old is Dallben?**

Dallben is 380 years old:

“Elderly?” burst out Fflewddur. “He’s every bit of three hundred and eighty years old! Coll himself told me.” (131)

• **What do we learn about Dallben in this chapter?**

In Chapter 12, we learn quite a lot about Dallben’s early history:

- The three enchantresses found Dallben floating in a wicker basket on the edge of the Marshes of Morva.
- The three enchantresses gave Dallben his name.
- The three enchantresses raised Dallben.
- When Dallben acquired the wisdom of the three enchantresses, they wanted him to leave, but they gave him a choice of three gifts to take with him.

• Do you know of any other heroes who were found floating in a basket?

Moses, one of the Old Testament patriarchs, was found floating in a basket made of bulrushes. The daughter of Pharaoh found him:

And when she [Moses' mother] could hide him no longer she took for him a basket made of bulrushes, and daubed it with bitumen and pitch; and she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds at the river's brink. And his sister stood at a distance, to know what would be done to him. Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked beside the river; she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to fetch it. When she opened it she saw the child; and lo, the babe was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." [...] And the child grew, and she [Moses' wet nurse — the woman who breastfed him for the Pharaoh's daughter] brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son; and she named him Moses, for she said, "Because I drew him out of the water." (Exodus 2:3-6,10 RSV; double quotation marks added)

As an adult, Moses led his people out of slavery in Egypt and to the Holy Land. Moses himself did not make it to the Holy Land.

• How did Dallben acquire his wisdom?

Dallben acquired his wisdom in two ways:

1. A magic potion.

The three enchantresses were making a potion — a recipe for wisdom — and Dallben was stirring the pot. Some of the hot potion splashed on his fingers, and to cool his fingers he

put them in his mouth and swallowed some of the potion, which made him wise.

2. *The Book of Three.*

In Lloyd Alexander's title story in *The Foundling and Other Tales of Prydain*, we learn also that Dallben acquired wisdom by reading *The Book of Three*.

Of course, we can guess the title *The Book of Three* refers to the three enchantresses.

• **How can we acquire wisdom?**

Magic potions do not exist in our real world, although we may think that such medicines as penicillin come close to being magical.

We can acquire wisdom in a number of ways:

1. *Reading and studying.*

One of the pleasures of life is reading, as any teacher will tell you. Sometimes, reading and studying can be hard work, but often they are pleasurable.

One of the great things about books is that they contain so much knowledge and wisdom. An author can spend a year or two writing a good book, and you can gain much of the author's knowledge and wisdom in a few hours simply by reading that good book.

2. *Experiencing.*

We learn from what we experience, including learning from our mistakes — and, of course, learning from the good things we do.

3. *Consulting wise people.*

Some people are wise. It is wise to find out what wise people know, either from talking to them or from reading the books they write. (Wise people often write books. Books are a way of making available to other people one's wisdom after one dies.)

• **Which three gifts did Dallben have his choice of? Which would you choose?**

Dallben has his choice of these three gifts:

1. *A Harp.*

If Dallben had chosen the harp, he could have been a bard — in fact, Orddu says, “he could have been the greatest bard in the world” (133).

Of course, we readers already know of another magic harp — the magic harp of Fflewddur Fflam. The harp's strings break when Fflewddur Fflam exaggerates, as he so often does.

2. *A Sword.*

If Dallben had chosen the sword, he could have been the Ruler of Prydain.

3. *The Book of Three.*

By choosing *The Book of Three*, Dallben chose wisdom. He had learned much wisdom by swallowing the magic potion of the three enchantresses, but he learned more wisdom from reading *The Book of Three*.

• **How is Dallben's choice similar to the Judgment of Paris?**

The Judgment of Paris is part of the mythic background of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The parents of the great Greek warrior Achilles were Peleus, a mortal man, and Thetis, an immortal goddess. Many mortals and immortals were invited to attend the wedding, but Eris, the Goddess of Discord, is not invited. This makes sense — no one wants discord (arguing) at a wedding.

Eris shows up for the wedding anyway, and she tosses on a table a gold apple on which is written “For the Fairest,” which means “For the Most Beautiful Woman.”

No name is on the gold apple, but three goddesses claim it. Each goddess says that she is the fairest and the most beautiful.

These are the three goddesses who claim the gold apple:

Hera

Hera is the wife of Zeus, and she is a jealous wife. Zeus would like to keep on her good side.

Athena

Athena is the goddess of wisdom. She becomes the patron goddess of Athens, Greece. Athena is a favorite of Zeus, her father. Zeus would like to keep on her good side.

Aphrodite

Aphrodite is the goddess of love. She can make Zeus fall in love against his will. Zeus would like to keep on her good side.

The three goddesses want a beauty contest to be held to decide which of the three is the most beautiful, but Zeus is smart enough not to want to be the judge of the beauty contest. Whichever goddess he picks as the winner will be happy with him, but the other goddesses who lost the beauty contest will be angry at him.

(By the way, Athens, Ohio, lawyer Thomas Hodson once judged a beauty contest featuring 25 cute child contestants. He was running in an election to choose the municipal court judge, and he thought that judging the contest would be a good way to win votes. Very quickly, he decided never to judge a children's beauty contest again. He figured out that he had won two votes — the votes of the parents of the child who won the contest. Unfortunately, he also figured out that he had lost 48 votes — the votes of the parents of the children who lost.)

Because Zeus does not want to judge the divine beauty contest, Zeus lets a mortal man pick the winner of the divine beauty contest. That man is Paris, Prince of Troy.

The three goddesses each offer Paris bribes if Paris will pick her as the winner. These are the bribes:

Hera

Hera offers Paris political power: several cities he can rule.

Athena

Athena offers Paris prowess in battle. Paris can become a mighty and feared warrior.

Aphrodite

Aphrodite offers Paris the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife.

Paris chooses Aphrodite, who offered him the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife.

The problem is that the most beautiful woman in the world is Helen, and she is already married. Paris visits Helen and her husband, and he runs away with Helen. (Paris is not an ethically good character in Homer's *Iliad*.) This makes the

husband angry, and he and an army come after Helen to get her back from Paris.

The war to get Helen back is, of course, the famous Trojan War.

• **What is the Black Crochan? How did the three enchantresses acquire it?**

“Crochan” is another name for “cauldron.” The Black Crochan is the Black Cauldron that Taran and the rest of the band of heroes have been searching for.

The three enchantresses have always owned the Black Crochan, and they have it now:

“Of course it’s here,” replied Orddu. “Why not, since it was ours to begin with? And always has been!”
(136)

• **How did Arawn get the Black Cauldron?**

Apparently, Arawn paid for the use of the Black Cauldron. We don’t know what price he paid. Orddu says,

“Besides, Arawn paid dearly for the use of it, very dearly indeed, you can be sure. The details, my duckling, are of a private nature which does not concern you. In any case, the Crochan was not to be his forever.” (136)

• **Are the three enchantresses good?**

The three enchantresses are not entirely good. (We find out that they don’t think the words “good” and “evil” apply to them.) The three enchantresses allowed Arawn to use the Black Cauldron although they knew he would use it for evil purposes. This shocks Eilonwy:

“But you couldn’t have given it to Arawn,” Eilonwy cried, “knowing what he meant to use it for!” (136)

In explanation of why the three enchantresses allowed Arawn to use the Black Cauldron, Orddu refers to destiny. Human beings have destinies, but so do black cauldrons. Arawn was destined to use the Black Cauldron.

Rather than being concerned with good and evil, the three enchantresses seem to be concerned with destiny.

• How could the three enchantresses get the Black Crochan back from Arawn?

Arawn did not buy the Black Cauldron. He merely rented it, and he did not return it when he was supposed to. Therefore, the three enchantresses went looking for it, and they got it back.

Orddu does not say specifically what the three enchantresses did to get the Black Cauldron back, but she gives three different ways that they could have gotten it back:

Orddu smiled. “There are a number of ways, my curious sparrow. We could have flooded Annvin and floated the cauldron out. We could have put all the guards to sleep. Or we could have turned ourselves into — well, no matter — let us say we could have used a variety of methods. In any case, the cauldron is here again.” (137)

• How does Chapter 12 end?

The three enchantresses do not want to give up the Black Cauldron.

They will allow the band of heroes to stay overnight, but the following day the band of heroes is supposed to leave and go home without the Black Cauldron.

Chapter 13: The Plan

• Has Ellidyr been to the Marshes of Morva?

Ellidyr, who is referred to in this and the previous chapter, has not been to the Marshes of Morva.

In the previous chapter, Orddu said, “If he’d come across the Marshes, we’d have been bound to see him” (134).

Of course, this means that Ellidyr does not have the Black Cauldron. Eilonwy is grateful that Ellidyr does not have the Black Cauldron (140).

• Why doesn’t Taran want the three enchantresses to have the Black Cauldron?

We can certainly understand why Taran does not want the three enchantresses to have it. They allowed Arawn to rent it, knowing that he would use it to create Cauldron-Born soldiers to fight for him. The three enchantresses know that Arawn is evil, but nevertheless they allowed him to use the Black Cauldron for the evil purpose for which it exists. If the three enchantresses allowed Arawn to use the Black Cauldron once, it is possible for them to let him use the Black Cauldron again. All he has to do is to offer a suitable reward.

• What is Taran’s plan?

Taran is the leader of the band of heroes. He decides that the band of heroes must find the Black Cauldron and take it.

Taran and the rest of the band of heroes have horses, and they can use the horses to carry away the Black Cauldron.

• Does Taran have a good plan?

The best answer is probably no, but it is difficult to see how he would be able to come up with a better plan.

The three enchantresses have a good view of the Marshes of Morva, as Fflewddur Fflam points out on p. 142. They are likely to see Taran and the rest of the band of heroes the following morning.

In addition, of course, the three enchantresses have a lot of power. They would make dangerous enemies.

• **Does Taran’s plan have an ethical problem?**

Taran’s plan is to find and take the Black Cauldron. Because the three enchantresses own the Black Cauldron, this means stealing the Black Cauldron from them. Ordinarily, stealing is wrong, but Taran can justify the theft by saying that the theft will result in good for many people. If Taran and the rest of the band of heroes can get the Black Cauldron to Gwydion, they will be able to keep Arawn from using the Black Cauldron again. Taran can argue that when the consequences of an act are good, then the act is justified. Certainly, Taran wants the consequences of the theft of the Black Cauldron to be good.

Still, an ethical way to get possession of the Black Cauldron would be to trade something for it.

• **Could Adaon’s brooch help Taran and the rest of the band of heroes find the Black Cauldron?**

One idea is for Taran to go to sleep quickly. That way, the brooch may lead him to dream about the Black Cauldron and thus impart knowledge to him.

However, Taran says that the dreams that he has already had about the Black Cauldron “are without meaning to me” (142). The dreams do not clearly impart knowledge, although they do impart knowledge.

- **Who finds the Black Cauldron?**

Gurgi finds the Black Cauldron. He makes himself useful by getting straw for the band of heroes to use to make beds in the shed where the three enchantresses have told them they can stay. The shed is cold and drafty, and the straw will make warm beds.

- **Describe the Black Cauldron (144).**

Taran recognizes that the cauldron that Gurgi has found is indeed the Black Cauldron.

Lloyd Alexander describes the Black Cauldron in a paragraph on p. 144:

It was squat and black, and half as tall as a man. Its ugly mouth gaped wide enough to hold a human body. The rim of the cauldron was crooked and battered, its sides dented and scarred; on its lips and on the curve of its belly lay dark brown flecks and stains that Taran knew were not rust. A long, thick handle was braced by a heavy bar; two heavy rings, like the links of a great chain, were set in either side. Though of iron, the cauldron seemed alive, grim and brooding with ancient evil. The empty mouth caught the chill breeze and a hushed muttering rose from the cauldron's depths, like the lost voices of the tormented dead.

- **The Black Cauldron has “dark brown flecks and stains that Taran knew were not rust” (144). What are they?**

Most likely, they are dried flecks of blood and bloodstains.

- **What is personification?**

This is a definition of the word “personification”:

treating abstractions or inanimate objects as human, that is, giving them human attributes, powers, or feelings, eg, “nature wept” or “the wind whispered many truths to me.”

Source:

http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/lit_term.html

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• How does Lloyd Alexander use personification in his description of the Black Cauldron?

The “mouth” of the cauldron is personification, but the main use of personification is that “the cauldron seemed alive, grim and brooding with ancient evil” (144).

Things are not evil, although they can be used for evil. For example, a knife is not morally evil, although an evil human being can use a knife to hurt another human being. Of course, a good human being can accidentally hurt another human being with a knife. But also, of course, a knife can be used in a kitchen to prepare dinner, which is a good thing.

We also see personification in this sentence: “The empty mouth caught the chill breeze and a hushed muttering rose from the cauldron’s depths, like the lost voices of the tormented dead” (144)

• What does Eilonwy say about the Black Cauldron (145)?

Eilonwy is aware of the evil of the Black Cauldron. Now that she knows its great evil, she believes that Taran was right to seek it instead of waiting to find Gwydion and seeking his help:

“It is full of death and suffering. I understand why Gwydion wants to destroy it.” She turned to Taran. “You were right to seek it without delay,” Eilonwy added with a shudder. “I’ll take back all the things I said. The Crochan must be destroyed as soon as possible.” (145)

In Chapter 7, Eilonwy had argued that seeking the Black Cauldron was a mistake; she believed that the best thing to do was to find Prince Gwydion (80). Now she says that she was wrong. The Black Cauldron is so evil that it must be destroyed quickly.

• **Where is the Black Cauldron hidden? Why is it hidden there?**

The Black Cauldron is hidden under straw in an empty chicken coop (146).

Two possibilities exist for the Black Cauldron to be hidden there:

1) Fflewddur Fflam thinks that it is a clever hiding place: “They were very clever. They put it in one of the first places anybody would look, knowing quite well it was so easy nobody would ever think of looking there” (146).

2) Taran, however, wonders whether the three enchantresses “meant us to find it” (146).

• **What do we learn about the three enchantresses in Chapter 13?**

Taran and the rest of the band of heroes spy on the three enchantresses that night.

The three enchantresses are busy carding wool, weaving, and spinning. They are also beautiful instead of the ugly hags that they appeared to be earlier.

• **What do we learn about the three enchantresses in Lloyd Alexander’s short story “The Foundling”?**

In Lloyd Alexander’s short story “The Foundling,” Dallben becomes wise in part by swallowing a few drops of a wisdom potion that burnt his fingers. After he swallows the drops of potion, we read:

Now he understood that the leather bellows lying by the hearth commanded the four winds; the pail of water in the corner, the seas and oceans of the world. The earthen floor of the cottage held the roots of all plants and trees. The fire showed him the secrets of its flame, and how all things came to ashes. He gazed awestruck at the enchantresses, for such they were.

“The threads you spin, and measure, and cut off,” Dallben murmured, “these are no threads, but the lives of men. I know who you truly are.” (Foundling 19)

• **In ancient Greek mythology, who were the Fates?**

In ancient Greek mythology, the Fates are three beings who determine the destiny of human beings:

- 1) Clotho spins the thread of life.
- 2) Lachesis measures the thread and determines how long a person’s life will be.
- 3) When Atropos cuts the thread of life, a person dies.

• **In which trap does the band of heroes fall?**

When the three enchantresses seem to be asleep, the band of heroes goes to the empty chicken coop to steal the Black Cauldron. They plan to tie it with rope in between two horses and take it away.

However, when they try to lift the Black Cauldron, they find that their hands are stuck to it — they cannot pull away their hands from the Black Cauldron.

• **How does Chapter 13 end?**

Chapter 13 ends with a cliffhanger.

Orddu arrives at the empty chicken coop, and Fflewddur Fflam cries out, “We’ll be toads for sure!” (150).

The reader is sure to keep on reading.

Chapter 14: The Price

• Are the three enchantresses good or evil?

The words “good” and “evil” do not seem to apply to the three enchantresses. When Taran is angry at the three enchantresses, he tells them, “You are evil creatures!” (152); however, the three enchantresses deny that they are evil.

Orddu says, “Evil? Why, bless your little thumping hearts, we aren’t evil” (153). She explains what she means: “We’re neither good nor evil. We’re simply interested in things as they are” (153).

Certainly, the three enchantresses have shown themselves not to be good; after all, they allowed Arawn to use the Black Cauldron for evil purposes.

However, they have not been especially dangerous to Taran and the rest of the band of heroes, despite some threats to turn them into toads.

By the way, Orgoch, who seems to be the hungry one, seems to think that that they would make a good meal, although that is only hinted at here and there. For example, at the beginning of Chapter 14, we read this after the three enchantresses have captured the band of heroes:

“Don’t you think,” said Orgoch in a crocking whisper, “we should start the fire?”

Orddu turned to her. “Do be silent, Orgoch,” she cried. “What a dreadful thought. It’s much too early for breakfast.”

“Never too early,” muttered Orgoch. (151)

It seems best to call the three enchantresses amoral.

• **What does the word “amoral” mean?**

This is one definition of the word “amoral”:

Lacking moral sensibility; not caring about right and wrong.

Source: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/amoral>

Date Downloaded: 5 July 2010

• **Do the three enchantresses care?**

Eilonwy tells the three enchantresses that they don't care. In addition, she says that not caring is “worse than being evil” (153).

Orwen replies,

“Certainly we care, my dear,” Orwen said soothingly. “It's that we don't care in quite the same way as you, or rather care isn't really a feeling we can have.” (153)

This reply supports the idea that the three enchantresses are amoral.

• **Is Nature concerned with morality?**

Nature seems to be amoral. If a good person accidentally steps off a cliff, the good person will fall to the ground just as fast as a bad person will. If Nature were capable of morality, the good person would float gently to the ground. Of course, Nature is not a person and therefore is not concerned with morality.

The philosopher John Stuart Mill looked at what we can learn from natural theology (what we can learn about God by looking at Nature, which God created). According to Mill, the only justice that we can find in nature is that which Humankind has brought into existence. (To me, one of

Humankind's greatest inventions has been the legislated life — Humankind creates laws.) In Mill's words:

There is no evidence whatever in Nature of divine justice, whatever standard of justice our ethical opinions may lead us to recognize. There is no shadow of justice in the general arrangements of Nature; and what imperfect realization it obtains in any human society (a most imperfect realization as yet) is the work of man himself, struggling upwards against immense natural difficulties, into civilization, and making to himself a second nature, far better and more unselfish than he was created with.

Note: The quotation by John Stuart Mill is from his *Three Essays on Religion* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1875).

• **In what are the three enchantresses interested?**

Orddu says, “We’re neither good nor evil. We’re simply interested in things as they are” (153).

• **Is being interested in things as they are a good thing?**

In itself it is OK, but in many cases it would be better if this interest were combined with morality.

Many academics seek the truth in fields such as history and economics. This is a good thing. But if this interest were combined with wanting to learn about grievous errors so that the grievous errors can be avoided in the future, this can be beneficial to Humankind.

Physicians, of course, are interested in things as they are. For example, they seek the truth about an ill patient: What is making this person ill? This interest in things as they are, however, is combined with an interest in things as they

should be. Once the physician finds out why a patient is ill, the physician wants to cure that patient and make him or her healthy again.

Scientists are interested in things as they are. Scientists often engage in pure research without thoughts of the consequences of that research. Sometimes, the research is used to create terrifying weapons such as nuclear bombs.

Being able to care the way that Taran and Eilonwy and the other members of the band of heroes care is a good thing.

• **Why are the three enchantresses now willing to part with the Black Cauldron?**

Orddu explains why the three enchantresses are now willing to part with the Black Cauldron:

“The cauldron is useless — except for making Cauldron-Born. Arawn has spoiled it for anything else, as you might imagine.” (154)

Perhaps previously the Black Cauldron could have been used for a different — perhaps better — purpose, but no longer.

• **Orddu says, “Only what is worth earning is worth having” (155). Is this true?**

What does Orddu mean? Her sentence means this:

It is worth having only if it is worth earning.

Here are two other ways of stating that:

If it is worth having, it is worth earning.

If it is not worth having, it is not worth earning.

For example:

If you want to have the abilities of a good musician, it is worth earning them by practicing.

If you want to have the knowledge of a good student, it is worth earning it by studying.

Are there any exceptions? Maybe not. Let's consider the example of two boys who see a small object that has fallen through a grate into the area below. They are intrigued by the problem of how to get the small object out again. They work very hard, and eventually they get the small object out. They look over the small object, and then they throw it into a trashcan and go on their way.

Was the small object worth having? No. Did the two boys know that? Yes. What was worth having in this case? The knowledge that they had solved the problem of how to get the small object out again. They wanted to solve the problem, and they did solve the problem. The knowledge they wanted was worth having, and they worked hard to solve the problem.

Orddu's statement seems true (can you think of a counterexample that would show that it is not true?), but also let us be aware that many things worth having are given freely, without our having to earn them. This would be shocking to Orddu, who says, "We never give anything" (155).

The unconditional love a mother has for her child is a good thing, and it is given freely, without being earned.

Believers believe that God has unconditional love for the beings He (or She) has created.

Many freely given gifts are worth having, although they are not earned. Still, love is something worth earning, although love is freely given.

In a way, Orddu sounds like a Ferengi. "Star Trek: The Experience" can be seen at the Las Vegas Hilton. Among other attractions are actors portraying characters from the

various *Star Trek* series. Many of the actors are very good, and they stay in character. For example, a famous Ferengi is Quark. When a fan yelled “Quark!” at an actor in a Ferengi costume, the actor sighed and said, “Billions of Ferengi in the Universe, and they [Hu-Mans] all think we are Quark!” The Ferengi are a notoriously acquisitive species, and *Star Trek* fan Kevin Wagner was shocked that an actor playing a Ferengi agreed to pose for free for a photograph with a fan. Therefore, Kevin quoted the 13th Rule of Acquisition to the Ferengi: “Anything worth doing is worth doing for money.” However, the actor playing the Ferengi knew his stuff: “Don’t quote the Rules of Acquisition to me, Hu-Man. Free publicity!”

Source of Star Trek story: Nikki Stafford, editor, *Trekkers: True Stories by Fans for Fans*, pp. 153-154. This story has been retold in my own words.

• *What are some things that the three enchantresses would like to have in exchange for the Black Cauldron?*

The three enchantresses mention a number of things that they would like to have in exchange for the Black Cauldron:

- 1) The North Wind in a bag.
- 2) The South Wind in a bag.
- 3) Orddu suggests, “Give us — give us the nicest summer day you can remember!” (155).

By the way, in Homer’s *Odyssey*, Odysseus tries to sail home to his island, Ithaca. He lands on the island of Aeolus, God of the Winds, who gives him a gift: a bag containing all the winds that would blow him away from Ithaca. With all the winds tied in a bag, the only other winds are those that will blow his ship straight to Ithaca. Unfortunately, the members of his crew think that treasure is in the bag. They open it, and all the winds rush out and blow the ship away from Ithaca.

• What things does the band of heroes offer in exchange for the Black Crochan?

Taran

Taran offers a number of things that are valuable to him in exchange for the Black Cauldron:

- 1) His sword, which Dallben gave him. Taran says that “it is the first that is truly mine” (156).
- 2) The horse Lluagor, which Adaon gave him. Taran calls her “a noble animal” (156).
- 3) When the witches do not seem interested in Lluagor, Taran offers his own horse: “Melynlas, a colt of Melyngar, Prince Gwydion’s own steed. None is faster or more surefooted. I treasure Melynlas beyond all others” (156).
- 4) Taran is about to offer the brooch Adaon gave to him, when Gurgi intervenes to make his offer for the Black Cauldron.

Gurgi

Gurgi values food, and his most valuable possession is the magic wallet that always contains food. He says to Orddu, “Take Gurgi’s own great treasure! Take bag of crunchings and munchings!” (157).

Again, the witches are not interested in making a trade.

Eilonwy

Eilonwy first offers the three enchantresses a ring that was carved by the Fair Folk, but again they are not interested in exchanging the Black Cauldron for what is offered to them.

Therefore, Eilonwy offers something of greater value to her:

“I do have something else I treasure,” Eilonwy went on. She reached into the folds of her cloak and brought out the golden sphere. “Here,” she said, turning it in her hands so that it shone with a bright glow. “It’s much better than just a light,” Eilonwy said. “You see things differently in it, clearer, somehow. It’s very useful.” (158)

Fflewddur Fflam

Again, the witches are not interested in making a trade, and so Fflewddur Fflam makes the witches an offer: his harp, which will provide music for the three enchantresses:

“The harp almost plays of itself,” Fflewddur continued. He put the beautifully curved instrument to his shoulder, barely touched the strings, and a long, lovely melody filled the air. “You see?” cried the bard. “Nothing to it!” (158)

Unfortunately, the three enchantresses can call birds to make music for them, so again they are not interested in making a trade.

• What do we learn about the band of heroes from the things that they offer for the Black Cauldron?

We notice that all members of the band of heroes are willing to give up the thing that is most precious to them.

Taran has not explicitly said that he would trade the brooch he got from Adaon for the Black Cauldron, but he was about to make the trade when Gurgi interrupted. Also, of course, something interesting will happen in the next chapter.

Of course, Gurgi did not want Taran to give up the brooch, and neither did Eilonwy and Fflewddur Fflam. All of these people are good people because 1) they do not want Taran to have to give up the brooch, and 2) they are willing to give up their most precious possession so that they can gain

possession of the Black Cauldron and destroy it (and allow Taran to keep the brooch).

All members of the band of heroes are willing to sacrifice the possession of most value to him or her for the greater good. The greater good in this case is the destruction of the Black Cauldron. Another great good is that Taran can keep the brooch — the band of heroes values wisdom.

• **How does Chapter 14 end?**

No trade has been made at the end of Chapter 14:

“I’m terribly sorry, my chicks,” Orddu went on. “It does indeed seem you have nothing to interest us. Very well, we shall keep the Crochan and you shall be on your way.” (159)

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

Chapter 15: The Black Crochan

• What does Taran offer in exchange for the Black Crochan?

Taran offers the three enchantresses the brooch that Adaon gave him.

Eilonwy tries to stop him because she realizes how valuable the brooch is to him, but Taran insists on trading the brooch for the Black Cauldron.

• What does Taran's trading away the brooch tell us about Taran?

Each member of the band of heroes, including Taran, is willing to trade away the possession that he or she values most in order to get the Black Cauldron.

The other members of the team of heroes — Gurgi, Eilonwy, and Fflewddur Fflam — seem to be doing this mostly out of love and friendship for Taran, although they too are most likely concerned with the greater good, which is to gain possession of the Black Cauldron so that they can destroy it. They do not want Taran to have to trade away the brooch that Adaon gave him because of its power to bestow wisdom upon whoever wears it and because Taran values it so highly.

Here, Taran shows definitely that he is concerned for the greater good. Eilonwy does not want him to give up the possession he values most highly, but he insists on making the trade:

Eilonwy, realizing his intent, cried out in protest and caught his arm. Gently, Taran put her aside. (160)

• What do we learn about the brooch?

We learn that the three enchantresses recognized the brooch immediately and knew it for what it was. Basically, the three

enchantresses were toying with the band of heroes to see what they would offer for the Black Cauldron. The three enchantresses knew all along that they wanted the brooch.

We learn that the brooch cannot be stolen without breaking its power. To keep the brooch and its power intact as it passes from one person to another, the brooch must be willingly given.

We learn that the brooch, once it has been willingly given up, will not return again to the person who willingly gave it up.

We learn that Menwy the bard cast a spell on the brooch that gave it its power.

Orddu says,

“Like knowledge, truth, and love themselves, the clasp must be given willingly or its power is broken. And it is, indeed, filled with power. This, too, you must understand. For Menwy the bard cast a mighty spell on it and filled it with dreams, wisdom, and vision. With such a clasp, a duckling could win much glory and honor. Who can tell? He might rival all the heroes of Prydain, even Gwydion Prince of Don.”
(161)

• What happens when the band of heroes tries to destroy the Black Cauldron?

The band of heroes tries to destroy the Black Cauldron with heavy sledgehammers and iron bars, but they are unable to destroy it.

The three enchantresses know that the Black Cauldron cannot be destroyed in this manner, but they allow the band of heroes to try to destroy the Black Cauldron in this manner.

Sometimes, the three enchantresses do not tell all that they know. For example, they did not tell Taran that they recognized immediately the power in the brooch that Adaon gave him.

• **How can the Black Crochan be destroyed?**

One of the three enchantresses tells Taran how the Black Cauldron can be destroyed:

“A living person must climb into it,” Orddu said. “When he does, the Crochan will shatter. But,” she added, “there’s only one disagreeable thing about that, the poor duckling who climbs in will never climb out again alive.” (164)

This, of course, is a heavy price to pay, and many people are unwilling to pay it. We see that in the actions of Gurgi. He was about to climb into the Black Cauldron, but when he hears what will happen to a living person who climbs into it, he immediately “sprang from the cauldron and scuttled to a safe distance, where he furiously brandished his iron bar and shook his fist at the Crochan” (164).

• **What price must be paid to fight evil?**

The price can be light or heavy.

The best way to fight evil is to do no evil. Simply do not bring evil into the world. This can be a very light price. Instead of littering, you simply drop your trash into a trashcan. The price you pay is light: You give up your “freedom” to throw litter on the ground.

At other times, the price can be heavy. Sometimes, people die trying to help other people. On September 11, 2001, aka 9-11, many firefighters and police officers died. For example:

Police captain Kathy Mazza responded on September 11, 2001, to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, going to the burning North Tower and using her service revolver to shoot out glass doors and walls, thereby opening passageways to save lives. She died when the North Tower collapsed. By the way, in her office she displayed a photograph of her heart, which had been taken during open-heart surgery and which was proof, she said, that she had a heart despite her toughness.

Source of Kathy Mazza Story: "A Tribute to the Heroes of 9-11." January. National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. 2010 Calendar. This story has been retold in my own words.

Of course, at times, people risk their lives to help other people, but they do not die. For example:

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York City. Very few survivors were found after the towers fell. However, a former Marine named Dave Karnes and a Marine named Sgt. Thomas (his other name is not known) found two survivors buried in the rubble: Port Authority police officers Will Jimeno and Sgt. John McLoughlin. Mr. Karnes was an accountant working for Deloitte Touche in Wilton, Connecticut. When he heard about the attack on the World Trade Center, he got a military haircut, put on an old uniform, loaded his car with gear, and drove to the site. Police saw his military uniform and his gear and waved him on to the site, where he met Sgt. Thomas and together they started searching the rubble. Rescue workers had been ordered to stay away from the rubble because it was unstable and very dangerous, but the two men kept searching, yelling for survivors to cry out or to tap something to make noise. Finally, they heard a cry and they discovered two survivors. Sgt. Thomas looked for help, and Mr. Karnes called his wife on his cell phone, reasoning that she could

call the New York City police and get help to dig the two survivors out. Soon, help arrived in the form of Chuck Sereika, a former paramedic with an expired license. Like Mr. Karnes, Mr. Sereika had put on his old uniform and come to the site. Scott Strauss and Paddy McGee, officers with the elite Emergency Service Unit of the NYPD, also quickly arrived. Digging Mr. Jimeno out of the rubble took three hours. Sgt. McLoughlin was buried deeper in the rubble, and digging him out took an additional six hours. Both men survived.

Source of Dave Karnes and Sgt. Thomas Story: Rebecca Liss, “An Unlikely Hero.” Slate. 10 Sept 2009 <<http://www.slate.com/id/2227969/pagenum/all/#p2>>. This is a reprint of an article that appeared a year after the terrorist attack. This story has been retold in my own words.

Of course, doing good deeds is often pleasurable in itself:

Comedians Jimmy Durante and Eddie Cantor were very giving of their time to good causes. On New Year’s Day of 1943, Mr. Durante met Mr. Cantor while taking a walk. “Eddie,” Mr. Durante said, “I’m just thinkin’. This must be a tough time for the guys over there in that hospital. Here it’s New Year’s Day, they’re sick, some of ’em have amputations. What do ya say we go over and entertain?” The two comedians rehearsed for a short time, then entertained at the hospital from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Afterward, Mr. Durante said hoarsely to Mr. Cantor, “Eddie, tell me, don’t a t’ing like dis make ya feel good?”

Source of Jimmy Durante and Eddie Cantor Story: Eddie Cantor, *Take My Life*, p. 59. This story has been retold in my own words.

For many more examples of good deeds, go to

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/brucebATohioDOTedu>

<http://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/bruceb>

and check out *The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds* series of books. Most of the volumes can be downloaded free of charge.

• **What is Taran’s plan?**

Taran’s plan is to take the Black Cauldron to Dallben at Caer Dallben. That was Prince Gwydion’s original plan. As Taran says, “He [Dallben] alone has the wisdom to deal with the cauldron” (166).

The band of heroes ties with rope the Black Cauldron between the horses Lluagor and Melynlas. Taran and Ffleuddur Fflam walk and steady the cauldron. One person is in front of the cauldron; the other is behind the cauldron.

• **Why can’t the Black Cauldron be sunk in quicksand?**

Eilonwy makes a good point here: “By the time we found quicksand, we’d be sinking along with the Crochan” (167).

• **In what ways is Eilonwy wise?**

Eilonwy is wise. She certainly shows intelligence in what she says about sinking the Black Cauldron in quicksand.

In addition, she has the ability to feel empathy. She feels what Taran is feeling. She recognizes that he mourns the loss of the brooch that Adaon gave him.

Eilonwy shows wisdom in what she says to Taran when they camp for the night:

“I realize it’s no consolation to you,” she said, “but if you look at it in one way, you didn’t give up a thing to the enchantresses, not really. You did exchange the clasp and everything that went with it. But, don’t you see, all those things came from the clasp itself; they weren’t inside of you.” (168)

Eilonwy also points out that Taran is “a perfectly marvelous” Assistant Pig-Keeper (168). After all, he has done something that he can be very proud of.

Eilonwy also knows when to leave Taran alone, which she does after telling him something he has done that he can be very proud of.

One of my students, Lindsey DeStefano, wrote an autobiographical essay titled “Ten Times,” in which she wrote about some wise things that her parents did during the bedtime ritual of Lindsey and her sister, Erin:

My mother would come up first. She would usually tell us a made-up story or read us a book. However, she would always leave the room with something positive or special that both of us had achieved that day that would make us feel good.

[...]

Erin and I were deathly afraid of monsters, especially under our beds and in our closets. My father, being the loving person that he is, decided to make a “monster spray” to keep away the monsters. The spray consisted of simply water. Of course Erin and I were unaware of this until much later in our lives. Erin and I made sure he sprayed every area of the room and he would, which would make us feel better. I still remember yelling at him to come back in the room because I thought he had missed a spot.

• Of what can Taran be proud?

Taran did a very good deed when he traded the clasp for the Black Cauldron. Eilonwy tells him,

“But don’t forget,” added Eilonwy, “no matter what else happens, you won the cauldron for Gwydion and

Dallben and all of us. That's one thing no one can take away from you. Why, for that reason alone you have every reason to be proud." (169)

• **How does Chapter 15 end?**

Eilonwy has spoken well and wisely to Taran, who recognizes that she is right, but he still mourns the loss of the brooch Adaon gave him. Chapter 15 ends as Taran "buried his face in his hands and wept" (170).

Chapter 16: The River

• What are gwythaints?

Gwythaints are dangerous and carnivorous birds that serve the forces of evil — at least usually. They have been trained by the evil Arawn in Annuvin to be his flying spies and messengers. In *The Book of Three*, Prince Gwydion tells Taran that the gwythaints are called “the Eyes of Annuvin” (45). He adds,

“The errand of the gwythaints is less to kill than to bring information. For generations they have been trained for this. Arawn understands their language and they are in his power from the moment they leave the egg.” (*Book of Three*, 46)

• What danger do gwythaints pose to the band of heroes?

The gwythaints are servants of the evil Arawn, and they are searching for the Black Cauldron. Very likely, Arawn does not realize that the three enchantresses took the Black Cauldron.

Because Taran and the rest of the band of heroes are out in the open in the moors, they are exposed to the sight of the gwythaints should the gwythaints fly over them.

This is a definition of the word “moor”:

a tract of open, peaty, wasteland, often overgrown with heath, common in high latitudes and altitudes where drainage is poor; heath.

Source:

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

Date Downloaded: 8 July 2010

• Because the band of heroes is exposed on the moors, what decision does Taran make?

Taran decides to take another route to Caer Dallben. It is longer, but it is less exposed to the sight of the gwythaints.

The major advantage is that this longer route lessens the chance of being sighted by the gwythaints. Of course, Taran and the rest of the band of heroes do not know what the gwythaints would do if they caught sight of the Black Cauldron. One possibility is that they could attack. Another possibility is that they would fly off to bring the news of the Black Cauldron's location to Arawn.

The major disadvantage, of course, is that the new route is longer.

• What problems do the band of heroes run into in the forest?

One problem is that the horses become exhausted. They have been bearing the weight of the Black Cauldron for a long time. Taran pats Melynlas, whose neck is lathered with sweat.

• Is Taran a good leader in Chapter 16?

In some ways Taran is a good leader in Chapter 16. He has the idea of taking a less open — but longer — route to Caer Dallben.

Later, we will see that he is not a good leader when he talks about his pessimism. Still, in *The Black Cauldron*, overall he is an excellent leader.

Taran also has the idea of “making a sling out of branches and vines” (172). That way, the band of heroes can carry the Black Cauldron and let the horses rest for a while.

• Does Taran need the brooch Adaon gave him in order to come up with good ideas?

No, he does not. Without the brooch, he came up with the idea of the change of route and the idea of making a sling.

Eilonwy tells him, “You’re doing amazingly well without Adaon’s brooch!” (172).

• **Why is Taran pessimistic?**

The band of heroes carries the Black Cauldron, but it is heavy and their progress is slow. In fact, it seems as if the Black Cauldron is intentionally slowing their progress.

A good leader should remain publicly positive at all times, even if privately he is pessimistic, but Taran does not follow that rule of leadership. He is pessimistic, and he expresses his pessimism to the rest of the band of heroes:

“No use,” Taran gasped. “We’ll never get it through the forest. No sense trying.” (174)

After Eilonwy tells Taran that he sounds just like Gwystyl, we read,

“We are too few to carry such a burden,” Taran said hopelessly. “With another horse or another pair of hands there might be a chance. We are only deceiving ourselves if we think we can bring the Crochan to Caer Dallben.” (174)

By the way, in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the hero Aeneas is a good leader. The private Aeneas sometimes despairs, but the public Aeneas (the one his followers see) is confident that things will work out well.

• **How does Eilonwy respond to Taran’s pessimism?**

Eilonwy tells Taran something that I think is wise:

“That may be true,” Eilonwy sighed wearily. “But I don’t know what else we can do, except keep on

deceiving ourselves. And perhaps by that time we'll be home." (174)

People can be overly optimistic, just as they can be overly pessimistic, but it is best, I believe, to err on the side of optimism. Sometimes, just like *The Little Engine That Could*, if you think you can do something, you can do something, as the following true story shows:

Marty Lyons played 11 years as a defensive tackle for the New York Jets, and he started the Marty Lyons Foundation, which grants last wishes to terminally ill children and children who have been diagnosed with a life-threatening condition, but the hero of this story is Rocky, his son, who was five years old when his mother had a bad car accident after her Ford pickup hit a pothole and she lost control and went off the road and down an incline. The pickup rolled over a number of times, and both of her shoulders were hurt, with the result that she could not raise or use her arms. In addition, she had so much blood in her eyes that she thought that she had gone blind. Rocky was OK. His mother says, "I think what kept Rocky safe was that he was asleep. He really didn't fully awaken until the truck had completely stopped." He was also safe because his mother had thrown her body over his. The pickup was upside down when it stopped rolling over, and she told Rocky to run away from the pickup — she did not know whether it would explode. Rocky got out of the pickup, and then he said, "I can see how to get you out of there — if you'll just let me help you." He got back inside the pickup, and he helped push her through the window. Then Rocky said, "We've got to get you up the hill." Getting up the hill was tough for her because she could not use her arms, but Rocky kept pushing her. At one point, she even asked him not to be afraid but to look at her arms and see if she had two of them — she could not feel her left hand and she could not see. He looked and told her, "Yeah, you do." She was in bad shape, and she told Rocky, "I don't

think I can do it.” Fortunately, Rocky’s favorite book when he was younger was *The Little Engine That Could*, and whenever Rocky thought that he couldn’t do something, she would tell him, “Rocky, think about that little train.” Now, it was Rocky telling her, “Mama, think about that train ... I think I can ... I think I can ... I think I can” When they reached the top of the hill, a person in a car saw them and stopped and took them to a hospital. One year later, Rocky’s mother said, “Now, thanks to Rocky pushing me up that hill, I’m alive. They told me I’d never have full use of my arms again, but they were wrong. I’m doing fine.”

Source of Rocky Lyons: Neal Shusterman, *Kid Heroes: True Stories of Rescuers, Survivors, and Achievers*, pp. 14-19. According to Wikipedia,

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marty_Lyons>,

which I accessed on 29 June 2010, Rocky is now a physician in Alabama. This story has been retold in my own words.

Of course, we must be aware of reality. Having a positive attitude does not mean that you can do just anything. When one of my former students was a little girl, she watched the Disney animated movie *Peter Pan* a number of times and learned that in order to fly you need to have pixie dust and to think happy thoughts. She asked her mother if she had any pixie dust. Her mother did not know what her daughter was planning to do, so she said, “Sure,” and sprinkled some glitter on her young daughter. My former student went out to her porch, stood at the top of the stairs, thought happy thoughts, and launched herself into space. She ended up with a black eye and stopped believing in fairies.

• What problems do the band of heroes run into at the river?

The band of heroes must cross the river. Many problems occur when they attempt to do that:

1. Fflewddur Fflam breaks his arm.
2. The Black Cauldron capsizes and is now in the river, firmly wedged between some rocks.

In the next chapter, we will see that another problem arises: Some gwythaints fly overhead, see the Black Cauldron, and fly away to tell Arawn where the Black Cauldron is located.

• How much does Fflewddur Fflam value his harp?

Fflewddur Fflam is more worried about his harp than he is about his broken arm, and so we know how highly he values his harp. He says that “in any case, I have two arms. But only one harp!” (179). We also read that when he learns that the harp is OK, “The bard heaved an immense sigh of relief” and said, “Indeed, I feel better already” (179).

Of course, this shows just how much he valued what he was willing to give to the three enchantresses in Chapter 14 in exchange for the Black Cauldron.

• What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 16? Are the readers likely to continue reading?

Here we have another ending that is calculated to arouse the interest of the readers:

Behind [Taran] the bushes rustled. Taran spun around, his hand on his sword.

A figure stepped from the edge of the forest. (181)

The readers will keep on reading to answer these questions:

1. Who is the mysterious figure?
2. What will happen next?

Chapter 17: The Choice

- **Write a brief character analysis of Ellidyr as he appears at the beginning of Chapter 17.**

Ellidyr is still proud and arrogant. He refers to Taran as “pig-boy” (182 and other pages) and to Eilonwy as a “scullery maid” (182 and other pages). He sarcastically calls the band of heroes a “brave company of scarecrows” (182).

Ellidyr is still very concerned about his honor. He cares more for his honor than he does about the death of “the dreamer” (182), which is how he refers to Adaon.

Ellidyr is as proud as he has ever been, but perhaps he ought not to be so proud.

- **What is verbal irony (sarcasm)?**

When Ellidyr calls the band of heroes a “brave company of scarecrows” (182), he uses the word “brave” in his sentence ironically. Verbal irony is sarcasm.

This information comes from

<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/wheeler/lit_terms_I.html>:

Verbal Irony (also called sarcasm) is a trope [figurative use of language] in which a speaker makes a statement in which its actual meaning differs sharply from the meaning that the words ostensibly express. Often this sort of irony is plainly sarcastic in the eyes of the reader, but the characters listening in the story may not realize the speaker’s sarcasm as quickly as the readers do.

- **Why ought Ellidyr not be so proud?**

Ellidyr left the band of heroes in order to go to the Marshes of Morva, but he has not found them. Before he left the band

of heroes, he ought to have learned the location of the Marshes of Morva. Of course, it is Fflewddur Fflam who had been near the Marshes of Morva, as we learned in Chapter 7. And it was the brooch of Adaon that helped Taran to find them.

Of course, Ellidyr ought not to have left the band of heroes at all. Working together, the band of heroes was able to get possession of the Black Cauldron. Working alone, Ellidyr was unable even to find the Marshes of Morva.

In addition, because Ellidyr had left the band of heroes, he was not present when the Huntsmen attacked the band of heroes and Adaon fell. Taran tells him, “Where were you when the Huntsmen set upon us? When another sword would have turned the balance? The price was Adaon’s life, a better man than you will ever be!” (182).

Ellidyr is hungry and has to ask the band of heroes for food. Of course, Gurgi’s magic wallet is always filled with food. When you eat someone’s food, you ought to be civil to that person.

Of course, excessive pride of the sort that Ellidyr has ought to be avoided.

• **What are the advantages of teamwork?**

Ellidyr’s concern for his honor is misplaced. He is concerned about being the sole possessor of honor. If he were to work as a member of a team — the band of heroes — he would be able to gain honor. For example, if he had stayed with the band of heroes, perhaps he could have used his sword to save the life of Adaon. And if he had stayed with the band of heroes, he would have had some of the honor of getting the Black Cauldron. Instead, he wanted to get the Black Cauldron all by himself and thus have all of the honor for himself.

We see the advantage of teamwork. Ellidyr tried to get the Black Cauldron all by himself, without help. The result was that he did not even find the Marshes of Morva.

Meanwhile, the band of heroes, working together, not only found the Marshes of Morva, but also got possession of the Black Cauldron.

By the way, Homer's *Iliad* is in part the story of two men who do not cooperate. The leader of the Greeks (Agamemnon) and the Greeks' greatest warrior (Achilles) quarrel in Book 1, and Achilles withdraws from the fighting, with disastrous results for the Greek army. In Book 10 of the *Iliad*, we see the value of cooperation. Two Greek warriors, Diomedes and Odysseus, undertake a night expedition against the Trojans and their allies. Because the two men are working together, they wreak havoc upon some newly arrived Trojan allies.

By the way, Homer was a bard, just like Fflewddur Fflam.

• What is the attitude of the band of heroes toward Ellidyr?

Clearly, the members of the band of heroes, including Taran, their leader, do not like Ellidyr.

Taran is well aware that Ellidyr abandoned the band of heroes and thus was not around to fight the Huntsmen when they attacked (182). The result of the attack was that Adaon died.

Gurgi does not want to give Ellidyr food, but he obeys Taran's orders and gives him food.

Eilonwy clearly does not like Ellidyr:

“And just because we're feeding you,” cried Eilonwy, “don't think you're welcome to it!” (183)

Fflewddur Fflam does not speak badly of Ellidyr, perhaps because Fflewddur Fflam is older than the others. However, when Ellidyr refers to him as “a bird with the wing down” (183) — a reference to his broken arm — he says,

“Birds again,” murmured the bard with a shudder.
 “Shall I never be allowed to forget Orddu?” (183)

Of course, Orddu constantly referred to the band of heroes, both singularly and together, usually in terms of birds:

- “mice” (126)
- “goslings” (126)
- “sparrow” (137)
- “chicks” (137)
- “duck” (156)
- “my owlets” (160)
- “duckling” (161)
- “chicken” (162)
- “chickens” (165)

Orddu also calls the young Dallben “a “little starling” (132).

Definition: Goslings are young geese.

• Is Orddu not recognizing the humanity of the band of heroes?

Calling the band of heroes goslings and ducks and chickens can be regarded as a way of denying their humanity.

In Canto 5 of Dante’s *Inferno*, Francesca da Rimini addresses Dante the Pilgrim as “Oh living creature” (Musa, *Inferno* 5.88). She is guilty of a sin of incontinence, which is about rejecting one’s humanity. We are humans, not pigs,

yet gluttons treat themselves as pigs. Instead of making use of their intellect and will, the incontinent sinners ignore those things. A human being can use intellect to figure out how much he or she should eat and drink, and a continent person uses his or her will to eat and drink that much, but an incontinent person ignores his or her humanity and acts like an animal that is incapable of understanding the difference between right and wrong.

This, of course, applies to the other incontinent sins. Francesca's sin is lust. A human being can use intellect to know that adultery should be avoided and a human being can use will to resist the temptation of adultery, but Francesca has ignored her own humanity and succumbed to the temptation of committing adultery. Reason is not in control of Francesca — sexual desire is.

By committing adultery, Francesca has not recognized her own humanity, and by calling Dante a “living creature” (Musa, *Inferno* V.88) rather than a human being, she is not recognizing his humanity.

Orddu does not understand good and evil. She and the three enchantresses are not able to care the way that human beings care. Because she does not understand something important about human beings, perhaps that is why she calls the band of heroes goslings and chicks and ducks, etc.

• How does the lord of Annuvin find out about the Black Crochan?

Three gwythaints fly overhead and see the Black Cauldron. They circle the Black Cauldron, and one of the gwythaints even lands, briefly, on the cauldron. Then the three gwythaints fly toward the north.

They are returning to Annuvin to let Arawn know the location of the Black Cauldron.

• What does Ellidyr ask for in return for his help? Does he get it?

Ellidyr wants the credit for gaining possession of the Black Cauldron — all the credit. He wants Taran to take an oath that he will tell everyone that Ellidyr alone gained possession of the Black Cauldron.

Ellidyr states the conditions under which he will give his help in getting the Black Cauldron out of the river,

“These are my conditions,” he said. “The Crochan is mine, and you shall be under my command. It is I who found it, not you, pig-boy. It is I who fought for it and won it. So you shall say so to Gwydion and the others. And you shall all swear the most binding oath.”

• Ellidyr wants glory, but is the glory he seeks in this chapter true glory?

Ellidyr’s motivation is his glory, but it is a false glory. Ellidyr did not gain possession of the Black Cauldron — the band of heroes did.

If Ellidyr wanted true glory, he should simply help the band of heroes to get the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben. This act would result in lots of glory for the band of heroes — including Ellidyr.

• Is Taran a good leader in Chapter 17?

As a leader, Taran wants to accomplish the task that needs to be accomplished. If accomplishing the task means that the credit for accomplishing the task goes to Ellidyr, so be it. The important thing is to get the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben, not to get credit for getting the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben.

Of course, Taran's attitude is completely opposite to that of Ellidyr. To Ellidyr, the most important thing is to get credit for getting the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben. That is even more important than getting the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben.

Taran asks the rest of the band of heroes if they will swear an oath to let Ellidyr get the credit for gaining possession of the Black Cauldron. They agree, reluctantly, and they and Taran take the oath that Ellidyr requires.

• **How do they get the Black Cauldron out of the river?**

Here Ellidyr gains true glory. It is largely because of his great strength — strength that we learned about in Chapter 3 when Taran admitted, “I have never seen such a feat of strength” (35) — to get the Black Cauldron out of the river. The addition of the strength of Ellidyr's horse, Islimach, helps.

Of course, the band of heroes is also helping. Even Fflewddur Fflam, whose arm is broken, is able to hold the bridles of the horses with his uninjured hand (191).

• **Write a brief character analysis of Ellidyr as he appears at the end of Chapter 17.**

The black beast that is Ellidyr's thirst for honor — whether gained honorably or not — takes over. Ellidyr has gotten the Black Cauldron out of the river, an act for which he deserves honor and glory, but now he thinks that the band of heroes may have agreed too quickly to his conditions. He thinks that they may not be honorable and may not keep their oaths, thus denying him credit for gaining possession of the Black Cauldron.

Now he thinks that one person — a strong person — can take the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben by himself. That means,

he thinks, that he does not need the band of heroes any more. He attacks Taran.

By again not working with the band of heroes, Ellidyr is placing his pride ahead of the important task of getting the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben. To be better able to get the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben, Ellidyr should welcome help. After all, the gwythaints know the whereabouts of the Black Cauldron and have alerted or will alert Arawn, who will send Huntsmen to regain possession of the Black Cauldron. With the help of the band of heroes, Ellidyr has a much better chance of fighting the Huntsmen successfully and of getting the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben. Also, it took the work of many people (and horses) to get the Black Cauldron out of the river. Ellidyr's strength was very important, and the strength of his horse was very important, but the band of heroes and their horses helped, too. Chances are good that at another time a mishap will happen that will require the help of the band of heroes as well as of Ellidyr and the three horses to get the Black Cauldron to Caer Dallben.

• What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 17? Is the reader likely to continue reading?

The ending of Chapter 17 is very much a cliffhanger. Taran is in the river, and Ellidyr is attacking him with a sword. Taran falls backward, hits his head on a rock, and becomes unconscious: "The sharp edge of a rock loomed up, and he knew no more" (194).

The reader is very likely to keep reading in order to find out what will happen next.

Chapter 18: The Loss

• What has happened since the ending of Chapter 17?

At the end of the last chapter, Taran was knocked unconscious and fell into the river. At the beginning of this chapter, he regains consciousness. With him are the rest of the band of heroes, who have built a fire to keep him warm.

Taran protests against the fire, as it can reveal their presence to the Huntsmen, but Ffleuddur Fflam points out that the Huntsmen are much more likely to be searching for the Black Cauldron than searching for the band of heroes.

The rest of the band of heroes tell Taran what happened after he was knocked unconscious. Basically, Ellidyr tried to kill all of them, but Ffleuddur Fflam, Eilonwy, and Gurgi were able to escape.

Ellidyr's greed for honor made him feel as if he had to kill all the members of the band of heroes in order to keep the band of heroes from telling the truth about gaining the Black Cauldron.

After the band of heroes escaped from Ellidyr, they searched downriver for Taran and found him, alive but having swallowed much water from the river.

• Taran wonders whether Ellidyr was right when he told Taran in Chapter 17 that Taran reproached Ellidyr for seeking glory and yet Taran himself was clinging to glory "with your dirty hands" (190). Was Ellidyr right?

No, I don't think so because Taran gave up the glory of having the credit of gaining possession of the Black Cauldron to Ellidyr. If Taran was clinging to glory with dirty hands, he would not have taken an oath that he would give Ellidyr all the credit for gaining possession of the Black Cauldron.

• **What is the difference between being a pig-boy and an Assistant Pig-Keeper, according to Eilonwy? Is she correct?**

Taran is very discouraged, and he shows his discouragement:

“You all have done more than I could ever ask. Alas, much better than I. Yes, it would be useless now to seek Ellidyr, as useless as our quest has been. We have forfeited all for nothing — Adaon’s brooch, our honor, and now the Crochan itself. We shall return to Caer Dallben empty-handed. Perhaps Ellidyr was right,” he murmured. “It is not fitting for a pig-boy to seek the same honor as a prince.” (199)

Eilonwy tries to comfort him:

“Pig-boy!” Eilonwy cried indignantly. “Don’t ever speak of yourself that way, Taran of Caer Dallben. No matter what has happened, you’re not a pig-boy; you’re an Assistant Pig-Keeper! That’s honor in itself! Not that they don’t mean the same thing, when you come right down to it,” she said, “but one is proud and the other isn’t. Since you have a choice, take the proud one!” (199-200)

Eilonwy’s advice seems good to me: When you have a choice between a proud title and a not-proud title, take the proud title. One example could be the titles of celebrity and of artist. For many people, “celebrity” has a negative connotation. However, many celebrities are actors, comedians, authors, directors, and artists. A wide definition of the word “artist” would include all of these activities. So if you have a choice, choose the proud title of artist rather than the title of celebrity. (But do your best to make your work worthy of the name “art.”)

• **An example of irony occurs when Fflewddur Fflam says, “Put up your weapons! [...] We’re safe at last! These are Morgant’s warriors! They bear the colors of the House of Madoc!” (201). Why is this ironic?**

The irony is that Fflewddur Fflam thinks that the band of heroes will be safe in the hands of King Morgant. He and the rest of the band of heroes do not know that Morgant has turned traitor.

Of course, at this point the reader also does not know that (unless the reader is rereading *The Black Cauldron*).

• **What is King Morgant’s opinion of Gwystyl of the Fair Folk?**

Gwystyl of the Fair Folk did not give a good impression when we saw him in Chapters 6-7, as Eilonwy well remembers:

“Gwystyl?” Eilonwy interrupted. “Not Gwystyl! Why, he wouldn’t have done the least thing for us — until Doli threatened to squeeze him! Gwystyl! All he wanted was to be let alone and hide in his wretched burrow!” (202-203)

However, King Morgant tells the band of heroes that Gwystyl had brought news of them to Prince Gwydion, and that Prince Gwydion and King Morgant had split up to search for the band of heroes.

King Morgant has much respect for Gwystyl, and he defends him to Eilonwy:

Morgant turned to her. “You speak without knowledge, Princess. Among all who hold the way posts, Gwystyl of the Fair Folk is the shrewdest and bravest. Do you believe King Eiddileg would trust a lesser servant so close to Annuvin? But,” he added,

“if you misjudged him, it was his intention that you do so.” (203)

Gwystyl may want to mislead people (and Fair Folk such as Doli) so that news of his “incompetence” reaches Arawn, thus lulling him into not being vigilant.

One theme of *The Black Cauldron* is appearance versus reality. Gwystyl has the appearance of being incompetent but is in reality very competent.

• Who tells King Morgant the truth about gaining possession of the Black Cauldron? Why didn't Taran tell the true story of gaining possession of the Black Caldron?

King Morgant's men came upon Ellidyr, and so King Morgant now has the Black Cauldron.

Eilonwy tells King Morgant the truth about gaining possession of the Black Cauldron. Ellidyr, of course, lies to Morgant, but we find out that Morgant thought that Ellidyr's story “rang false” (204).

Taran took an oath not to tell the story about how the band of heroes gained possession of the Black Cauldron, and so he does not tell the true story to Morgant. In fact, he tries to keep Eilonwy from telling the true story (203), but Eilonwy does not think that the oath she took was binding — after all, she and the band of heroes were forced to take that oath.

• Where might Lloyd Alexander have gotten the name Morgant?

Morgan Le Fay was an evil woman in the myth of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Perhaps the name “Morgant” comes from her name.

Mark Twain makes Morgan Le Fay a character in his satire *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. The

Connecticut Yankee is named Hank Morgan, and his name may have come from her name, as the Connecticut Yankee ends up bringing weapons of mass destruction to Camelot, although his intentions are good.

Here are a few notes on Morgan Le Fay as she appears in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*:

- 1) She is evil through and through. Oddly, the Yankee's name is Hank Morgan. Names are important in novels and in satires, and so there must be a reason why the Yankee shares a name with a thoroughly evil character. It may be that the Yankee is not as innocent as he seems. Certainly, in the final chapters, the Yankee brings a great amount of destruction to Camelot.
- 2) Morgan Le Fay is beautiful, and she speaks beautifully, but she is evil.
- 3) Morgan Le Fay is the head of her household. Her husband the king does not wear the pants in the family.
- 4) When a servant boy — a page — loses his balance and falls — lightly — against her knee, she kills him with a dagger. Apparently, this is a common occurrence in her household, as she keeps on talking gaily. The king lets out an involuntary “O-h” (144), but a look from his wife cuts the cry of compassion short.
- 5) She makes sure that the remaining servants do a good job of cleaning up and of removing the body.
- 6) When the Yankee compliments King Arthur, forgetting that Morgan Le Fay hates the king her brother, she wants to have him and Sandy taken to the dungeon. Fortunately, Sandy lets her know who the Yankee is — the Boss. Immediately, Morgan Le Fay changes her manner, and she says that she was hoping to surprise the Yankee into consuming the guards with fires.

7) Morgan Le Fay is a despot.

In the King Arthur myth, Morgan Le Fay is an enemy of King Arthur and the Kings of the Round Table. Of course, King Arthur and the Kings of the Round Table are the good guys.

In the article at <<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/alexander-lloyd.asp>>, Lloyd Alexander is quoted about reading both works by Mark Twain and works about King Arthur.

• **What has happened to Ellidyr?**

King Morgant has Ellidyr, and it is apparent that he and his men have mistreated Ellidyr. In a tent, Taran and the band of the heroes see Ellidyr:

There, bound hand and foot, lay the still form of Ellidyr. His face was covered with blood and he appeared so grievously battered that Eilonwy could not stifle a cry of pity. (205)

Taran protests this ill treatment of Ellidyr: “Sire [...] your warriors had no right to use him so ill! This is shameful and dishonorable treatment” (205).

However, King Morgant is merciless: “Do you question my conduct? [...] You have much to learn of obedience. My warriors heed my orders and so shall you. Prince Ellidyr dared to resist me. I caution you not to follow his example” (205-206).

• **Write a short character analysis of King Morgant of Madoc based on what we learn in Chapter 18.**

We can guess that King Morgant is evil, although at the beginning of *The Black Cauldron*, he at least seemed to be good.

We do not know many details yet, but we can believe that King Morgant is evil because he allowed his warriors to mistreat Ellidyr and because he orders Taran and the rest of the band of heroes to be disarmed and tied up.

We also learn that he demands obedience from his men, and he also demands obedience from Taran.

• What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 18? Is the reader likely to continue reading?

The ending of Chapter 18 is very much a cliffhanger. King Morgant orders his men to disarm Taran and the rest of the band of heroes and to tie them up: “Disarm them and bind them fast” (206).

The reader is very likely to keep reading in order to find out what will happen next.

Chapter 19: The War Lord

• In Chapter 19, which good character has turned evil? Why?

As we certainly suspected at the end of Chapter 18, King Morgant has turned evil. Possibly, King Morgant could have had a good reason to disarm and tie up the band of heroes — he could have falsely heard that they had turned traitor — but no, it is King Morgant who has turned traitor.

• What motivates King Morgant?

King Morgant is motivated by a desire for power. He wishes to surpass Arawn:

“What,” Taran cried, “will you set yourself to rival Arawn?”

“To rival him?” Morgant asked with a hard smile. “No. To surpass him. I know my worth, though I have chafed in the service of lesser men than I. Now I see the moment is ripe. There are few,” he continued haughtily, “who understand the uses of power. And few who dare use it when it is offered them.” (208)

Here are two definitions of the word “power”:

- 1) possession of controlling influence
- 2) one possessing or exercising power or influence or authority

Source:

<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=power>

Date Downloaded: 12 July 2010

• **What motivates Ellidyr?**

Ellidyr has been motivated by an excessive concern for glory and honor.

This is a definition of the word “glory”:

a state of high honor; “he valued glory above life itself”

Source:

<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=glory>

Date Downloaded: 12 July 2010

This is a definition of the word “honor” (verb):

(bestow honor or rewards upon) “Today we honor our soldiers”; “The scout was rewarded for courageous action”

Source:

<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=honor>

Date Downloaded: 12 July 2010

This is a definition of the word “honor” (noun):

the state of being honored

Source:

<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=honor>

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• What motivates Taran and the rest of the band of heroes?

Taran and the rest of the band of heroes are motivated by good. They want to do the right thing, even if they do not get credit (glory and honor and even power) for doing the right thing.

• Compare and contrast the kinds of pride that King Morgant, Ellidyr, and the band of heroes have.

King Morgant has a kind of pride that makes him think that he is better than other people. On p. 208, he refers to “lesser men” — that is, he refers to men who are “lesser” than he is. Because he thinks that he is better than other people, he thinks that he can kill people and put their corpses in the Black Cauldron so that they will become “Cauldron-Born.” They will be slaves to his will, and he can use them to gain power for himself.

Ellidyr has a kind of pride that makes him desire honor and glory even when he has done nothing to deserve it. He also thinks that he is better than other people. Because he is “better” than the “pig-boy,” he can take the credit for gaining possession of the Black Cauldron away from Taran even though it is actually Taran and the rest of the band of heroes who gained possession of the Black Cauldron — Ellidyr, who could not even find the Marshes of Morva, had nothing to do with getting the Black Cauldron from the three enchantresses.

It is much better to realize that all people deserve a certain amount of respect and dignity. No one should think that they can treat people with less than the respect and dignity that people deserve simply because they are people. Even a criminal should be treated with a certain amount of respect and dignity. For example, we ought not to torture even a proven criminal.

Taran and the rest of the band of heroes have the right kind of pride, I think. They have proper pride. They know what they have accomplished and can take pride in it, even though other people may not know what they have accomplished. They place the greater good above their pride. This is proper pride.

• **What choice does King Morgant offer Taran?**

King Morgant is aware that Taran has many good qualities — Prince Gwydion has spoken highly of Taran.

Therefore, King Morgant offers Taran a kind of bribe: If Taran swears allegiance to King Morgant, eventually Taran will become King Morgant’s war leader and be second only to King Morgant in Prydain (209).

• **How does Taran respond at first?**

Taran responds with defiance:

“Judge me well,” Taran flung back, “and you would know I scorn to serve an evil traitor!” (209-210)

• **How does Taran try to trick King Morgant?**

King Morgant tells Taran that if he refuses his offer to become King Morgant’s war leader, he will become the first person to be killed and put in the Black Cauldron to rise again as Cauldron-Born.

Taran replies with trickery:

“Give me to the cauldron, then!” Taran shouted.
 “Cast me in it now, even as I live!” (210)

Of course, if Taran were cast alive in the Black Cauldron, the Black Cauldron would be destroyed. Taran would be killed, but the Black Cauldron could no longer be used to make Cauldron-Born.

This shows us something good about Taran. He is willing to die in order to prevent something evil from happening. Taran does not want King Morgant to produce Cauldron-Born and rule Prydain.

Taran is placing the greater good of the citizens of Prydain above the power he would have as King Morgant's war leader.

However, King Morgant is aware that Taran is trying to trick him. King Morgant tells Taran,

“I, too, have been to the Marshes of Morva, long before the cauldron was taken from Annuvin. For I knew that sooner or later Gwydion must make this move against Arawn. And so I prepared myself. Did you pay a price for the Crochan? I, too, paid a price for a knowledge of its workings. I know how to destroy it, and I know how to make it yield a harvest of power.” (210)

This quotation demonstrates that Morgant is intelligent and has foresight and courage. Unfortunately, he is not using his intelligence and foresight and courage for good.

• **What choice does King Morgant give Taran?**

King Morgant tells Taran that he must make a choice. Previously, King Morgant had told Taran that Taran would be the first to be killed and placed in the Black Cauldron, but now he says that the other members of the band of heroes will be killed and placed in the Black Cauldron to become Cauldron-Born, with Taran being the last:

“Yes,” said the war lord, “one by one your companions shall be slain and given to the Crochan. Who will it devour before you cry a halt? Will it be the bard? Or the shabby creature that serves you? Or

the young Princess? They shall go before you, even as you watch. And, at the last, yourself.” (211)

• **What does Taran eventually decide to do?**

Taran would like to find a way to escape, but he and the rest of the band of heroes struggle with their bonds, without result.

Therefore, Taran comes to a decision:

“I shall swear my allegiance to Morgant,” Taran went on. “He shall have my word, but shall not make me keep it. An oath given under threat of death cannot bind me. That way, at least, we may gain a little time.” (213)

Eilonwy does not think that plan will work, so she insists on continuing to try to escape. Eilonwy believes that Morgant will kill her, Fflewddur Fflam, and Gurgi, no matter what Taran says. King Morgant is evil, and he is willing to make a bargain and not keep his end of the bargain.

• **Why did Ellidyr steal the cauldron, according to Ellidyr?**

Ellidyr tells Taran,

“I stole the cauldron out of pride, not evil. I swear to you, on whatever honor remains to me, I would not have used it. Yes, I would have taken your glory for my own. But I, too, would have borne the cauldron to Gwydion and offered it for destruction. Believe this of me.” (216)

Taran replies, “I believe you, Prince of Pen-Llarcaw” (216).

• **Who is more evil: King Morgant or Ellidyr?**

Both are capable of murder. Ellidyr would have killed Taran and the rest of the band of heroes in Chapter 17 in order to get the Black Cauldron. Fortunately, he did not murder anyone.

King Morgant is the more evil man, however. Not only is he capable of murdering people, but he is capable of using the Black Cauldron to create Cauldron-Born in order to gain power. He is as evil as Arawn.

Of course, the way we end our life is important. Do we end our life as a good person or as a bad person?

A good person can become a bad person, and a bad person can become a good person.

• **What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 19? Is the reader likely to continue reading?**

We read this:

A wind had risen, moaning through the trees and shaking the tent. The curtain blew back. Taran saw the warriors forming in ranks behind the cauldron. (216)

Apparently, the time has come for King Morgant to ask Taran what is his decision: to swear allegiance to Morgant or to watch his companions be murdered and placed in the Black Cauldron.

The reader is very likely to keep on reading.

Chapter 20: The Final Price

• How does the band of heroes get free?

In the previous chapter, we read, “The curtain blew back” (216). However, in reading Chapter 20, we know that the curtain moved because Doli, who is invisible, entered the tent.

Doli, who complains because of the buzzing in his ears and whose ears are “tinged bright blue” (218), is able to free the band of heroes and Ellidyr.

Doli had come across Ellidyr before Morgant found him. He learned what had happened, and then he looked for Taran and the rest of the band of heroes.

• How is the Black Cauldron destroyed?

Doli, at the request of Taran, frees Ellidyr.

Freed (from his physical bonds and from the bonds of his excessive pride), Ellidyr sacrifices himself in order to destroy the Black Cauldron. He fights his way to the Black Cauldron, and “with a cry, he flung himself into the Crochan’s gaping mouth” (221).

We read,

The Crochan shuddered like a living thing. In horror and dismay, Taran cried out again to Ellidyr. He fought his way toward the cauldron, but in another instant a sharp clap, louder than thunder, rang above the clearing. The leafless trees trembled to their roots; the branches writhed as if in agony. Then, while echoes ripped the air and a whirlwind screamed overhead, the cauldron split and shattered. The jagged shards fell away from the lifeless form of Ellidyr. (221)

Ellidyr ends his life as a good person and a hero.

• In Chapter 20, which evil character has turned good? Why?

When Ellidyr was trying to murder Taran and the rest of the band of heroes in Chapter 17, he was certainly evil. Now, however, he has redeemed himself by sacrificing himself in order to destroy the Black Cauldron.

One theme of *The Black Cauldron* is a good man becoming bad, and a bad man becoming good. Ellidyr is the bad man who becomes good. King Morgant is the good man who becomes bad.

• What does “redemption” mean?

Here are some definitions of the word “redemption”:

- (theology) the act of delivering from sin or saving from evil
- repayment of the principal amount of a debt or security at or before maturity (as when a corporation repurchases its own stock)
- the act of purchasing back something previously sold^[1]_[SEP]

Source: wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

Date Downloaded: 13 July 2010

Ellidyr has figuratively purchased back something that he had previously sold. He had figuratively sold his true honor (which he had gotten by using his great strength to get the Black Cauldron out of the river) for the false honor he sought by claiming to be the sole person who had gained possession of the Black Cauldron.

By giving up his life in order to destroy the Black Cauldron, Ellidyr has gained the true honor he had previously lost.

• **How does King Morgant die?**

Smoit kills Morgant, who dies while bravely fighting. Morgant is evil, but he is capable of bravery:

Eyes unhooded and blazing, his teeth bared, Morgant fought savagely amid the shattered pieces of the cauldron, as though he sought defiantly to claim them. His sword had broken under the force of Smoit's attack, yet he slashed and thrust again and again with the jagged blade, the grimace of hatred and arrogance frozen upon his features, his hand still clutching the bloodstained weapon even as he fell. (222)

Morgant ends his life as a traitor.

• **What happens to Ellidyr's horse, Islimach?**

Islimach deliberately commits suicide by jumping into a ravine and falling on the rocks below (222-223).

• **The philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote that the only thing that is good without qualification is a good will. What does that mean, and how does that apply to King Morgant?**

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, as translated by Lewis White Beck, 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.”

We can see this in King Morgant. He has qualities such as courage, but he lacks a good will. Taran, however, has both courage and a good will. It is best that qualities such as courage be guided by a good will. We do not want criminals and traitors to be intelligent and brave.

Courage is good if it is used in the service of good; it is not good without that qualification. Intelligence is good if it is used in the service of good; it is not good without that qualification. Foresight is good if it is used in the service of good; it is not good without that qualification.

• **How does Gwydion judge Ellidyr and King Morgant?**

Gwydion is a wise man. He helps build a barrow for King Morgant. He knows that King Morgant used to be good. He also knows that most of us are both good and evil. Therefore, he wishes King Morgant's good qualities and good deeds to be remembered and honored:

“It is easy to judge evil unmixed,” replied Gwydion. “But, alas, in most of us good and bad are closely woven as the threads on a loom; greater wisdom than mine is needed for the judging.

“King Morgant served the Sons of Don long and well,” he went on. “Until the thirst for power parched his throat, he was a fearless and noble lord. In battle he saved my life more than once. These things are part of him and cannot be put aside or forgotten.

“And so I shall honor Morgant,” Gwydion said, “for what he used to be, and Ellidyr Prince of Pen-Llarcaw for what he became.” (224)

• **What gift does Gwystyl give Taran?**

Gwystyl gives Taran Kaw, the crow, as a gift. Gwystyl tells Taran about Kaw, “He’s taken quite a fancy to you. It’s just as well. I’m simply not up to keeping crows any more, not up to it at all” (226-227).

Kaw is in part a reward to Taran for his part in getting rid of the Black Cauldron. Gwystyl tells Taran, “We were uneasy with the Crochan knocking about here and there; one never knew what would happen” (226).

• **What price has Taran paid?**

Taran tells Gwydion, “I see now the price I paid was the least of all, for the brooch was never truly mine. I wore it, but it was no part of me” (228).

Taran did give up the brooch, but he also realizes, as Gwydion says, that his companions in the band of heroes were ready to give up “all they valued; indeed, all they possessed” (228).

• **How can one become a bard and a hero?**

Taran tells Gwydion about the brooch, “I am thankful I kept it as long as I did; at least I knew, for a little while, how a bard must feel and what it must be like to be a hero” (228).

Our real world does not have magic brooches, but it does have bards (of a sort) and heroes. Therefore, there must be another way to become a bard and a hero than wearing a magic brooch.

The way to become a bard is to act like a bard acts. What do bards do? They compose songs, make music, and sing. The ancient bards composed songs about heroes. These days, songs are more likely to be about love, but in some ways modern musicians and singers are like bards.

The way to become a hero is to act like a hero. Doing brave things makes doing brave things easier.

This is good advice: To become something, act as if you are already that thing:

- If you want to be a good student, act the way a good student acts: read and study and when relevant, take notes in class.
- If you want to be a good athlete, act the way a good athlete acts: Practice and compete.
- If you want to be a good musician, act the way a good musician acts: Practice and play music.

Talent is important, but work and practice are also important.

• **Is Taran a hero?**

Yes, and he is a hero because of his own actions, not because of the brooch that Adaon gave him. Gwydion tells Taran, “That is why your sacrifice was all the more important [....]”

You chose to be a hero not through enchantment but through your own manhood” (228).

• **What is the world — both the fantasy world of Prydain and our real world — like?**

It is a mixture of good and evil.

Taran says, “Now I see it [‘the world of men’] filled with sorrow, with cruelty and treachery, with those who would destroy all around them” (228).

This is true enough, but it is only part of the truth. Gwydion says, “True, you have seen these things. But there are equal parts of love and joy. Think of Adaon and believe this” (228).

• **What are the differences among excessive pride, proper pride, and lack of pride?**

The theory of the mean between extremes is a famous part of Aristotle’s thought. He believed in moderation — as most ancient Greeks did. If you have too much or too little of something, you will suffer from an excess or a deficiency of that thing. What you need is exactly the right amount. Thus courage is the mean between the extremes of rashness (excess) and cowardice (deficiency). Applying Aristotle’s ideas (but not always his names for the qualities listed), we can illustrate some means between extremes:

Courage (The Mean Between Extremes)

Rash (Excess Courage)

Coward (Deficient Courage)

Liberal (The Mean Between Extremes)

Prodigal (Excess Liberty)

Miser (Deficient Liberality)

Charitable (The Mean Between Extremes)

Overly Generous (Excess Charity)

Cheap (Deficient Charity)

Normal Weight (The Mean Between Extremes)

Obese (Excess Weight)

Anorexic (Deficient Weight)

Each example represents the excess, mean, and deficiency of a certain activity. The first example shows that courage is the mean between the excess of rashness and the deficiency of cowardice. Let's say that a person is walking down the street and sees a house on fire. A rash person would shout, "Don't worry, I'll save you," and rush inside the burning building without even bothering to find out whether anyone is inside to be rescued! A coward would ignore the fire and not even call the fire department because he (or she) is afraid of getting involved. However, a courageous person would call the fire department, find out whether anyone was trapped inside the burning building, and render whatever assistance he or she rationally can.

The second example shows that liberality is the mean between the excess of prodigality and the deficiency of miserliness. A prodigal person would leave a \$100 tip after eating a \$10 pizza. A miser would not leave any tip at all. However, a person who is liberal with money would leave a 15 percent tip for good service.

The third example shows that being charitable is the mean between the excess of being overly generous and the

deficiency of being cheap. An overly generous person will give away all of his or her money to charity, not saving enough to live on. A cheap person will never give money to charity. However, a charitable person will pay his or her bills, keep enough money to live on (and keep some to save), but also give a portion that he or she can afford to charity.

The fourth example shows that normal weight is the mean between the excess of obesity and the deficiency of anorexia. An obese person pigs out every night (and every morning, and every noon, and two or three other times a day). An anorexic person will do 100 sit-ups after chewing a stick of sugarless gum. However, a person who maintains his or her normal weight will eat three square meals a day, and is willing to eat cake and ice cream at birthday parties (and a healthy salad for lunch the next day).

One point to notice is that not all activities have a mean between extremes. Some activities are already excessive in themselves. Thus, murder is always wrong. You will never be able to commit a murder of the right person at the right time and in the right manner. (You should never say, "I don't want to commit too few murders or too many murders; I just want to commit exactly the right number of murders"!)

Also, the mean can vary among people. In determining how much food to eat, the mean for a 300-pound weightlifter will be much greater than the mean for a 100-pound accountant. Also, a wealthy person such as Microsoft founder Bill Gates can afford to give much more money to charity than a college student can.

The way we acquire moral virtue, according to Aristotle, is through imitation and acquiring good habits. If we act the way a brave person acts, we will become brave. If we act the way a truthful person acts, we will become truthful. If we act the way a noble person acts, we will become noble.

One theme of Lloyd Alexander's *The Black Cauldron* is pride. Where does pride fit in Aristotle's mean between extremes?

Proper Pride (The Mean Between Extremes)

Excessive Pride (Excess Pride)

Lack of Pride (Deficient Pride)

Excessive pride is the kind of pride Ellidyr has during much of the novel. He regards himself as better than most other people — including such people as Assistant Pig Keepers. He also puts his own honor above the honor of other people. He wants to have the honor of finding the Black Cauldron all by himself, but if he had been willing to work as a member of a team (the band of heroes), there would have been enough honor to go around for everybody.

Proper pride is doing good work and taking pride in it. A student who works hard writing a paper and gets a good grade on it should be proud of that paper.

Lack of pride involves low self-esteem. All of us should regard ourselves as being good people, and all of us should do the things that good people do.

Note that the novel shows that people can change — either for the better or for the worst. Morgant changes from a good person to a bad person. Ellidyr changes from a bad person to a good person.

• In Dante's *Purgatory*, what is the punishment given to the repentant sinners who were guilty of the sin of pride?

Many religions regard pride as a sin, although many philosophers regard proper pride as a virtue and excessive pride as a sin.

Dante's great poem *The Divine Comedy* tells about Dante the Pilgrim's imaginative journey through the three parts of the Afterlife:

- 1) The Inferno, where unrepentant souls are punished.
- 2) The Mountain of Purgatory, on which repentant souls purge their sins. The souls climb up the seven-story mountain. Each story purges a different kind of sin.
- 3) Paradise, in which souls who have purged their sins are eternally happy.

Once through the Gates of Purgatory, the souls arrive at the first ledge, which is devoted to purging those who were guilty of pride. In the 21st century, we often think of pride as something positive. Proper pride is, but the sin of excessive pride is thinking of yourself as the center of the universe and the most important thing in the universe. Being forced to carry huge stones on their back purges the proud. This is an appropriate purgation because the heavy stones force the sinners to bow and assume a humble position.

• **What is bad pride, and why is it a sin?**

Good pride and bad pride exist. I want students to work hard on their papers and to take pride in their work. But bad pride can be destructive to oneself — look at everyone in the Inferno as imagined by Dante — as well as to other people.

Bad pride is putting yourself at the center of the universe. You regard yourself as being more important than anyone else.

Pride is the foundation of the other deadly sins. We can see how it works with thievery. Say that someone smashes in your car windshield in order to steal a couple of music CDs.

Getting the windshield replaced may cost \$500; the CDs may cost \$30. The thief is so proud that he or she values \$30 for him- or herself more than \$530 for you (\$500 for replacing the windshield, and \$30 for replacing the CDs).

Let's look at pride and other sins:

1) Pride.

I am the center of the universe, and I am better than other people. Quite simply, I am more important than other people.

2) Envy.

I am the center of the universe, so I ought to have it all, and if you have something I want, I envy you.

3) Wrath

Because I am the center of the universe, everything ought to go my way, and when it does not, I get angry.

4) Sloth.

I am the center of the universe, so I don't have to work at something. Either other people can do my work for me, or they can give me credit for work I have not done because if I had done the work, I would have done it excellently.

5) Avariciousness and Prodigality.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve to have what I want. If I want money, I get money and never spend it, or if I want the things that money can buy, then I spend every dime I can make or borrow to get what I want. Either way, I deserve to have what I want.

6) Gluttony.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve these three extra pieces of pie every night. This is my reward to myself for being so fabulous.

7) Lust.

I am the center of the universe, so my needs take precedence over the needs of everyone else. If I want to get laid, it's OK if I lie to get someone in the sack and never call in the days and weeks afterward. My sexual pleasure is more important than the hurt of someone who realizes that he or she has been used.

Note: Of course, I am relying on the teacher to make this material age-appropriate should the teacher use any of this material.

Appendix A: Bibliography

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Appendix B: Paper Topics (Perhaps for Older Readers)

For these topics, use the MLA format and include a Work(s) Cited List. Your audience is either your teacher for this course, or the readers of a WWW site that discusses and evaluates children's literature.

- Discuss an important theme in *The Black Cauldron*. For example, you can discuss one of these themes: honor, pride, education, friendship, good versus evil, relationships between the sexes, leadership, and death.
- Discuss how Lloyd Alexander handles characterization. For example, how does Mr. Alexander differentiate his characters' use of language? Do any characters develop? Which characters, if any, are stereotypes?
- Discuss what a young reader could learn from this book.
- *The Black Cauldron* contains fantastic elements such as magic and myth. Does that serve a useful purpose, or is it a detriment to the book?
- Discuss the satiric elements of *The Black Cauldron*.
- Discuss the philosophical assumptions of *The Black Cauldron*.

Appendix C: Sample Short Reaction Memo

The questions in this short guide to Lloyd Alexander's *The Book of Three* 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: 271

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.

Appendix D: What are Clichés, and How Can I Cure Them?

What are Clichés?

According to Maxwell Nurberg, clichés “are generally fixed idiomatic phrases, some of which may have originally been valid, fresh, and colorful but through constant use have become about as personal as a rubber stamp or a mimeographed love letter.”

Cliché examples: Right off the bat. As quiet as a mouse. Avoid him (her, or it) like the plague.

Write five clichés:

How Can I Cure Clichés?

1) Simplify the cliché.

For example: “A bolt from the blue” equals a shock.

“Right off the bat” means quickly.

“As quiet as a mouse” means quiet.

Take three of the clichés you have written above and simplify the phrase.

2) Give the cliché a “twist” that changes the meaning of the phrase.

For example:

“Live and let live” can be changed to “Live and let die.”

“Better late than never” can be changed to “Better late than later.”

Can you twist any of your clichés and give it an alteration that changes the meaning of the phrase?

3) Make up an entirely new image or phrase — one you have never heard before, but one expresses the same idea.

For example: Mark Twain could have written, “Miles Hendon was shocked.” Instead, Mark Twain wrote this: Miles Hendon “felt much as a man might who had danced

blithely out to enjoy a rainbow, and got struck by lightning.”
— From Mark Twain’s *The Prince and the Pauper*

Can you make up an entirely new image or phrase, one you have never heard before, but one that expresses the same idea as one of the clichés you wrote down earlier expressed?

Source: This activity is based on a pdf file from
<library.cn.edu/wacn/pdfs/clichfix.pdf>.

Appendix E: Write Your Own Similes and Metaphors

Definitions of Similes and Metaphors

Source of Definitions:

<http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/literacy/PC_met.htm>

A simile is where two things are directly compared because they share a common feature. The word AS or LIKE is used to compare the two words. E.g. As cold AS a dog's nose

A metaphor also compares two things, but it does so more directly WITHOUT using AS or LIKE. E.g. The shop was a little gold mine.

Examples of Metaphors and Similes

- What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset. — Crowfoot, Blackfoot warrior and orator, 1890
- The human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out a tune for a dancing bear, when we hope with our music to move the stars. — Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary
- A book is like a garden carried in the pocket. — Arab Proverb
- A clear conscience is a soft pillow. — German Proverb
- Anger is as a stone cast into a wasp's nest. — Malabar Proverb
- Fortune is a woman; if you neglect her today, do not expect to regain her tomorrow. — French Proverb
- Gray hairs are death's blossoms. — English Proverb

Note: Do not feel that you have to use similes and metaphors in your paper. If they will improve your paper, use them. If they won't improve your paper, don't use them.

Exercise

Example:

(About a baseball player) He was as hitless as _____

(About a baseball player) As hitless as the Ramones.

As bald as _____

As crazy as _____

As cool as _____

Come up with a few other similes and metaphors of your choosing.

Appendix F: One Secret of Writing Well is Writing Vividly

One secret of writing well is writing vividly. For example, you could write, “We had always heard that nuns are mean,” and then stop. Or you can write like this:

We had all heard horror stories about the nuns who taught at the Catholic school, how they used yardsticks like broadswords and dipped the edges in salt so they would hurt more and didn’t care if you bled as long as you didn’t drip on the floor. Whenever I had seen nuns, they always seemed quiet and almost nice, but there were Catholic boys so mean they scared bad dogs, and these boys would cross the street and hide in back of a garbage can in terror when they saw Sister Eunicia walking by. — Gary Paulsen, *How Angel Peterson Got His Name and Other Outrageous Tales About Extreme Sports*, p. 57.

Take one of the following sentences and write vividly about that topic.

- My friend was a daredevil.
- My friend was the best-looking boy in high school.
- My friend was the worst driver in the state.

Appendix G: 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 of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer’s Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare’s Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

Appendix H: Some Books 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

Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings

Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text

Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling

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