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In the Witch's House

Read the passage, then answer the comprehension questions.
Prior to this passage, Edmund snuck away from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, leaving his brother and sisters after hearing their plans to meet Aslan.



He did want Turkish Delight and to be a Prince (and later a King) and to pay Peter back for calling him a beast. As for what the Witch would do with the others, he didn't want her to be particularly nice to them – certainly not to put them on the same level as himself; but he managed to believe, or to pretend he believed, that she wouldn't do anything very bad to them. "Because," he said to himself, "all these people who say nasty things about her are her enemies and probably half of it isn't true. She was jolly nice to me, anyway, much nicer than they are. I expect she is the rightful Queen really. Anyway, she'll be better than that awful Aslan!" At least, that was the excuse he made in his own mind for what he was doing. It wasn't a very good excuse, however, for deep down inside him he really knew that the White Witch was bad and cruel.

The first thing he realised, when he got outside and found the snow falling all round him, was that he had left his coat behind in the Beavers' house. And of course there was no chance of going back to get it now. The next thing he realised was that the daylight was almost gone, for it had been nearly three o'clock when they sat down to dinner and the winter days were short. He hadn't reckoned on this; but he had to make the best of it. So he turned up his collar and shuffled across the top of the dam (luckily it wasn't so slippery since the snow had fallen) to the far side of the river.

It was pretty bad when he reached the far side. It was growing darker every minute and what with that and the snowflakes swirling all round him he could hardly see three feet ahead. And then too there was no road. He kept slipping into deep drifts of snow, and skidding on frozen puddles, and tripping over fallen tree-trunks, and sliding down steep banks, and barking his shins against rocks, till he was wet and cold and bruised all over. The silence and the loneliness were dreadful.

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In fact I really think he might have given up the whole plan and gone back and owned up and made friends with the others, if he hadn't happened to say to himself, "When I'm King of Narnia the first thing I shall do will be to make some decent roads." And of course that set him off thinking about being a King and all the other things he would do and this cheered him up a good deal. He had just settled in his mind what sort of palace he would have and how many cars and all about his private cinema and where the principal railways would run and what laws he would make against beavers and dams and was putting the finishing touches to some schemes for keeping Peter in his place, when the weather changed.



The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by CS Lewis © 1950 CS Lewis Pte Ltd

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Questions

1. Find each word in the passage. Use context clues to write what you think they mean. Then check your definition in a dictionary.

   rightful
   Definition: _____

   barking
   Definition: _____

   reckoned on
   Definition: _____

   owned up
   Definition: _____

2. Describe the internal conflict Edmund experiences in this passage. How do his thoughts about power, revenge, and loyalty illustrate this conflict?

   _____

   _____

3. Explain how Edmund's desire for power and recognition influences the decisions he makes during his journey. Provide examples from the passage.

   _____

   _____

4. What message or lesson about temptation, selfishness, or moral choices is shown through Edmund's actions? Use textual evidence to explain your answer.

   _____

   _____

5. How does the setting (darkness, snow, and dangerous terrain) contribute to the mood of the passage? How does it reflect Edmund's emotions and situation?

   _____

   _____

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Questions

6. Why does the author show Edmund making excuses for the Witch instead of stating directly that Edmund is wrong? How does this point of view help the reader understand Edmund's character?

7. Edmund makes several excuses to justify his actions with the White Witch. What do these excuses reveal about his priorities and values at this point in the story? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

8. Lewis uses words such as "swirling," "dreadful," and "barked his shins." How do these words help the reader visualize the scene and understand Edmund's experience?

9. What impressions does the text give of Edmund?
Give two impressions and use evidence from the text to support each one.

Impression	Evidence

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Answer Key

1. Find each word in the passage. Use context clues to write what you think they mean. Then check your definition in a dictionary.

   rightful
   Definition: **correct, right, or legal**

   barking
   Definition: **rubbing the skin off**

   reckoned on
   Definition: **expected**

   owned up
   Definition: **admitted responsibility**

2. Describe the internal conflict Edmund experiences in this passage. How do his thoughts about power, revenge, and loyalty illustrate this conflict? **Students' responses may vary. Example answer: Edmund's internal conflict is between his selfish desire and his understanding of what is right. He wants power, rewards like Turkish Delight, and revenge, which leads him to betray his siblings, even though he knows deep down that the White Witch is cruel and his actions are wrong.**

3. Explain how Edmund's desire for power and recognition influences the decisions he makes during his journey. Provide examples from the passage. **Students' responses may vary. Example answer: Edmund's desire for power and recognition drives his choices. He continues the dangerous journey alone, imagines ruling Narnia and keeping Peter "in his place" for calling him a beast, and seeks rewards like Turkish Delight, justifying trust in the White Witch despite knowing she is cruel and ignoring the risks and his siblings' feelings.**

4. What message or lesson about temptation, selfishness, or moral choices is shown through Edmund's actions? Use textual evidence to explain your answer. **Students' responses may vary. Example answer: The passage shows that temptation and selfishness can lead people to make poor moral choices. Edmund is tempted by the promise of power, being king, and receiving rewards, so he betrays his brother and sisters. Even though he knows the White Witch is cruel, he makes excuses for her behavior to justify his actions. This demonstrates that when people focus only on their own desires, they may ignore right and wrong and harm others in the process.**

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Answer Key

5. How does the setting (darkness, snow, and dangerous terrain) contribute to the mood of the passage? How does it reflect Edmund's emotions and situation? **Students' responses may vary. Example answer: The setting of darkness, snow, and dangerous terrain creates a tense and uneasy mood. The swirling snow, slippery ground, and falling darkness make Edmund's journey feel frightening and difficult. This reflects Edmund's emotions, showing that he is isolated, uncomfortable, and facing the consequences of his selfish choices. The harsh environment mirrors his inner conflict and the danger of the path he has chosen.**

6. Why does the author show Edmund making excuses for the Witch instead of stating directly that Edmund is wrong? How does this point of view help the reader understand Edmund's character? **Students' responses may vary. Example answer: The author shows Edmund making excuses for the Witch instead of directly stating that he is wrong to help readers understand his internal conflict and perspective. By presenting Edmund's justifications, the reader sees how he rationalizes his selfish desires and struggles with guilt. This point of view allows the reader to understand his character more deeply, showing both his ambition and his moral uncertainty.**

7. Edmund makes several excuses to justify his actions with the White Witch. What do these excuses reveal about his priorities and values at this point in the story? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer. **Students' responses may vary. Example answer: Edmund's excuses reveal that his priorities are focused on self-interest, power, and personal gain rather than loyalty or fairness. He convinces himself that the Witch will not harm his siblings and that she is "much nicer" to him than others, even though he knows she is cruel. This shows that he values his own desires and rewards, like Turkish Delight and becoming a king, more than doing what is right or considering the well-being of others.**

8. Lewis uses words such as "swirling," "dreadful," and "barked his shins." How do these words help the reader visualize the scene and understand Edmund's experience? **Students' responses may vary. Example answer: Lewis's word choices, such as "swirling," "dreadful," and "barked his shins," help the reader visualize the harsh and dangerous environment Edmund faces. "Swirling" shows how snow makes it hard to see and move, "dreadful" emphasizes how frightening and lonely the journey feels, and "barked his shins" conveys the physical pain Edmund experiences. These words allow readers to experience Edmund's struggle and discomfort, making his journey more vivid and realistic.**

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Answer Key

9. What impressions does the text give of Edmund?
   Give two impressions and use evidence from the text to support each one.

Impression	Evidence
1. **Edmund is greedy.**	• **He is focused on getting the Turkish Delight and being a Prince (and later a King).** • **He wants to be the most important with his brother and sisters on a different level.** • **He wants lots of things, such as his own palace, lots of cars, and a private cinema.**
2. **Edmund is quite childish.**	• **He wants to pay Peter back for calling him a beast and schemes about keeping him in his place.** • **He thinks of a time when he will be King, being in control of everything, such as the laws.** • **He calls Aslan awful, even though he doesn't really know him.** • **He won't go back for a coat or to own up.**
3. **Edmund is self-important.**	• **He is happy to be in charge of his elder brother and sister and the whole of Narnia.** • **He doesn't like to admit that he is wrong, so he ignores the thought that the White Witch is bad and cruel.** • **He thinks that he is right about the White Witch and everyone else is wrong, even though he really knows they are right.** • **He plans for his own palace and private cinema.** • **He thinks that he knows what is best for Narnia, such as decent roads and railways.**

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Answer Key

Impression	Evidence
4. Edmund is ungrateful.	• Even though the Beavers have given him dinner, he still wants to make laws against them and against building dams.
5. Edmund is either brave or stubborn.	• He decides to carry on, even though he barks his shin on rocks and is wet, cold, and bruised. • He goes out in the snow and the dark on his own. • He doesn't go back for a coat.
6. Edmund is not a very nice person.	• He is not very loving towards his brother and sisters and doesn't want the Witch to be particularly nice to them. He pretends to believe that she won't be very bad to them. • He thinks particularly unkindly about his brother, Peter, as he wants to pay him back and keep him in his place. • He wants to make laws against the Beavers, even though he had spent time with them in their home earlier and they shared dinner with him. • He makes excuses for the Witch, even though he knows deep down that she is bad and cruel. • He calls Aslan awful, even though he doesn't know him. • He thinks that he is better than the others and doesn't want them to be on the same level as him. • He is negative about Narnia and thinks that he can improve it with roads and railways.

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