

the chronicles of Narnia
COMPREHENSION GUIDE

the chronicles of
N·A·R·N·I·A
COMPREHENSION GUIDE



THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

Comprehension Guide
Written and designed
by Ned Bustard

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Press

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This book is dedicated to
my Friends of Narnia
from years gone by—

Miss Orlando
Stephanie Feeck
Diana Bauer
Jerusha Tiner

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THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

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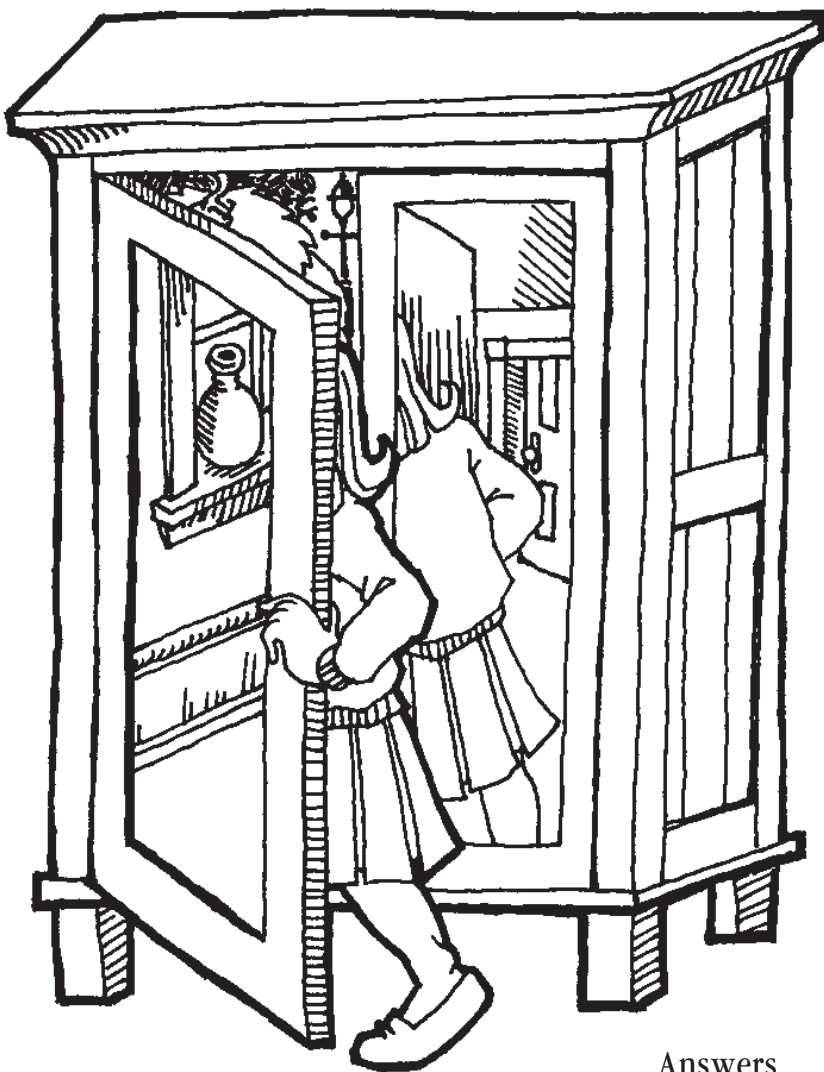


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THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

How to use this Guide

This guide is intended to help you study, understand, and enjoy *The Chronicles of Narnia*. You might ask if a guide is really necessary to read a book. Is the student not just working to improve reading skills while being taught to enjoy reading a good book? Certainly, it is the case that the more a child reads, the more he should improve his skills, but quantity is not the only issue. Once a child has received adequate phonetic training he should learn how to read a book. Most educators using this guide will be teaching children in the grammar stage, generally understood to be during the elementary years in classical education. (For a thorough understanding of classical Christian education a reading of *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* by Douglas Wilson is highly recommended.) The basic goals of reading in the grammar stage are as follows:



The student should be able to:

1. Fluently read a given selection orally.
2. Show an increased desire for reading.
3. Show comprehension on a literal and inferential level.
4. Demonstrate an increased vocabulary.
5. Identify basic Biblical values in the literature being read.
6. Identify various styles (myths, poems, fantasy, fiction, nonfiction, etc.)

Answers to the questions are found in the back of the guide. The students' answers should be in complete sentences, and they should restate the question in their answer. The question of grading is one that always arises. You may assume that each question is worth five points.

Example:

Question: What had Digory been doing just before he met Polly?

Answer: Just before he met Polly, Digory had been crying.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

How to use this Guide

Such writing practice trains the student to answer thoroughly, completely, and with proper grammar. Another reason is to encourage integration. We want students to understand that how they write something is as important as what they write.

Narnia is a rich, magical land to visit. Teachers may wish to extend their time there. One possible approach would be to read *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* the first year then stretch the remaining books over the next several years. The questions and the projects are written in such a way that they could be used for older students, with older students expected to go into greater detail and depth in their answers. Teachers should also exercise their freedom in skipping some of the comprehension questions if they find they are too difficult or time consum-

ing.

There are many materials that have been created about and around the Chronicles, including movies, radio dramatizations and commentaries. Paul F. Ford has created a marvelous book called *Companion to Narnia* which is both useful and entertaining to the Narnian aficionado. This comprehensive work contains alphabetically arranged and indexed entries covering all the characters, events, places, and themes that Lewis wove into his fictional world. It illuminates the philosophical, spiritual, and psychological significance behind each story, while explaining the symbolic and thematic threads that unify the series.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

History Cards Project

According to C. S. Lewis' timeline, Narnia lasted for 2,555 years between our history of the years 1888–1949 A.D.

Veritas Press has a flashcard program for studying history. An example of a flashcard is shown below. Each card has the name of the event and an illustration of the event on the front. On the back, the event is repeated along with the date. A summary of the event follows and the card number in the upper right hand corner keeps the events in sequence.

Photocopy the cards on the next two pages and fill one out for each Narnian book to summarize what happened. Then glue the two pages together to form each flashcard. The event titles should *not* be the name of the books. Name the event instead. For example, *The Magician's Nephew* would either be "Creation of Narnia" or the "Reign of King Frank I" and *Prince Caspian* would be "The War of Deliverance." There are many more events that could have flashcards made for them than just the seven books.

In addition to cards summarizing the *Chronicles*, flashcards could be written and illustrated for "The Telmarine Invasion," "Olvin of Archenland," and "King Gale and the Dragon," just to name a few. In the

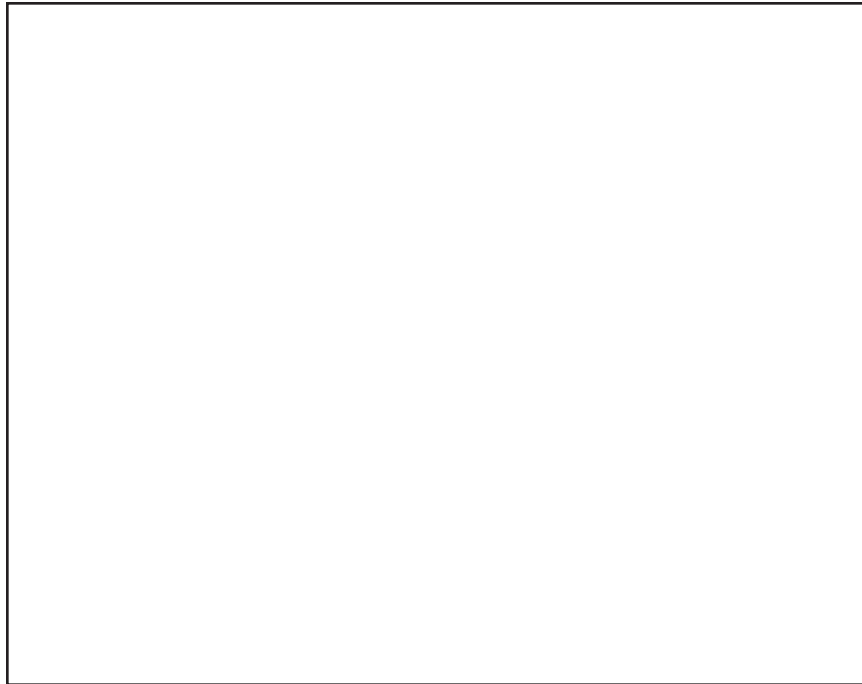
Appendix is a timeline which lists some of the other events in Narnian history. If you'd like to place the cards in sequence with the Veritas Press flashcards, the card numbers should fall between 282 and 290.



THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

History Cards Project

Image



Event

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

History Cards Project

Card #



Event



Date

Who

What

Where

When



THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 1—“The Wrong Door”

1. What characters from other books are used to set the time period for this first account of magical travels in *The Chronicles of Narnia*?

2. What had Digory been doing just before he met Polly?

3. What had Polly discovered behind the attic of her home?

4. Where were Polly and Digory trying to go when they set off exploring on that cold, rainy summer day?

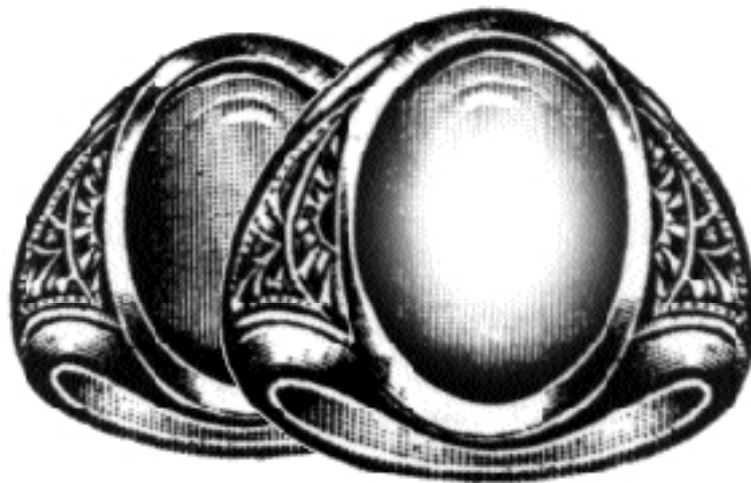
5. What did Polly first notice in the sitting room?

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 1, Page 2

6. Describe the person they found in the sitting room.

7. What gift did Uncle Andrew give to Polly before she left his room?



THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 2—"Digory and His Uncle"

1. What was the first thing Digory did when Polly left the sitting room?

2. What was the name of Uncle Andrew's godmother and how does her name suggest evil?

3. What was physically remarkable about Uncle Andrew's godmother?

4. Where did the box Uncle Andrew was given come from originally?



THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 2, Page 2

5. Digory called Uncle Andrew “rotten” and an “evil magician.” Why did this not bother Digory’s uncle?

6. What was the only way the rings would work?

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Atlantis and Le Fay

Uncle Andrew alludes to two things in passing that students may wish to know more about. Following are two brief readings which teachers may wish to read to younger students and discuss or have their older students use as a springboard for deeper literary investigations.

Atlantis is a mythical island in the Atlantic, west of Gibraltar, that supposedly sank beneath the sea during a violent eruption of earthquakes and floods some 9,000 years before Plato wrote about it in his *Timaeus* and *Critias*.

The noble and powerful people of Atlantis possessed great wealth thanks to the natural resources found throughout their island. The island was a center for trade and commerce. The rulers of this land held sway over the people and land of their own island and well into Europe and Africa.

At the top of the central hill, a temple was built to honor Poseidon which housed a giant gold statue of Poseidon riding a chariot pulled by winged horses. It was here that the rulers of Atlantis would come to discuss laws, pass judgments, and pay tribute to Poseidon.

A water canal was cut through the rings of land and water running south for 55 miles to the sea. The city of Atlantis sat just outside the outer ring of water and spread across the plain covering a circle of 11 miles. This was a densely populated area where the majority of the population lived.

Beyond the city lay a fertile plain 330 miles long and 110 miles wide surrounded by another canal used to collect water from the rivers and streams of the mountains. The climate was such that two harvests were possible each year. One in the winter fed by the rains and one in the summer fed by irrigation from the canal.

Surrounding the plain to the north were mountains which soared to the skies. Villages, lakes, rivers, and meadows dotted the mountains.

For generations the Atlanteans lived simple, virtuous lives. But slowly they began to change. Greed and power began to corrupt them. When Zeus saw the immorality of the Atlanteans he gathered the other gods to determine a suitable punishment.

Soon, in one violent surge it was gone. The island of Atlantis, its people, and its memory were swallowed by the sea.

Morgan le Fay is, in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Arthur's half sister, the daughter of Arthur's mother Igraine and her first husband, the Duke of Cornwall. She is also presented as an adversary of Arthur's: she gives Excalibur to Accolon so he can use it against Arthur and, when that plot fails, she steals the scabbard of Excalibur which protects Arthur and throws it into a lake. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* she is presented as the instigator of the Green Knight's visit to Arthur's court, partly motivated by her desire to frighten Guinevere. Despite Morgan's enmity towards Arthur and Guinevere, she is also presented as one of the women who takes Arthur in a barge to Avalon to be healed. This view of Morgan as healer has its roots in the earliest accounts of her and perhaps to her origin in Celtic mythology. In the *Vita Merlini* (c. 1150) Morgan is said to be the first of nine sisters who rule the Fortunate Isle or the Isle of Apples and is presented as a healer as well as a shape-changer. It is to this island that Arthur is brought. Morgan proclaims that she can heal Arthur if he stays with her for a long time. Morgan is also said to be the wife of King Uriens and the mother of Yvain or Ywain. Morgan rarely appears in post-medieval works—until the twentieth century.

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 3—*“The Wood Between the Worlds”*

1. Describe the place Digory ended up after placing the ring on his finger.

2. What did Digory and Polly see that made them remember where they had come from?

3. What from our world did Digory use to explain how the Wood worked in relation to other worlds?

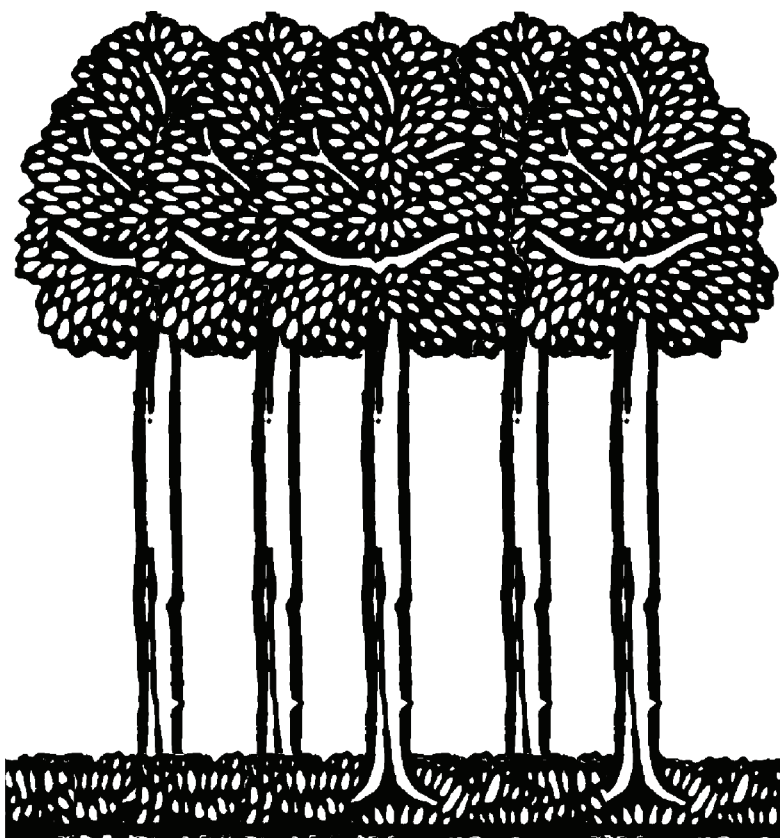
4. What did Polly insist upon before she would consent to explore other pools?

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 3, Page 2

5. What did Polly suggest that they do so they could find their way back to the home-bound pool?

6. Uncle Andrew did not understand how the rings really worked. How did the green and yellow rings operate?



THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Wood Between the Worlds Game

A fast-paced game for 2 players.

Components:

gameboard
2 player pieces (Digory and Polly)
20 Pond cards
6 Green Ring cards
1 six-sided die

The Wood Between the Worlds is played on a 9x9 board, with most of the squares representing the forest but some squares representing ponds. The board is found on the following pages. It is recommended that the pages be photocopied onto thicker paper (for a larger gameboard, photocopy onto 11" x 17" at 130%), attached together with the E row overlapping, and the pools colored. There are a total of 21 ponds on the board, with the remaining 60 squares representing the forest.

The center square, E5, is the "correct" pond and is identified as such—Digory has left an arrow cut into the grass. This is the one players need to get to in order to return to their own world and win the game. (NOTE: There is no card for the pond at E5 in the Pond card deck.)

One player is Polly and the other is Digory. They begin the game on opposite corners of the board.

Each player begins the game with five green ring cards. If players find the game too easy, begin the game with three green ring cards. The 20 Pond cards are shuffled and placed next to the board face down.

The goal is for the players to reach the centermost pond square (E5) on sequential turns, with each player still having at least one green ring card.

The oldest player goes first. On a turn, a player rolls a six-sided die. After rolling a 1, 2 or 3, that player moves that number of spaces horizontally or vertically (or a combination of both), but not diagonally. It is permissible to cross the same space twice on a turn, and it is also permissible to finish a turn on the same space at which you began that turn.

After rolling a 4, that player jumps into a nearby pond (it makes no difference which one) and loses a green ring card. That player then draws a pond card from the top of the pile and moves to the pond listed on the card.

If a player rolls a 5 or 6, he forgets how long he's been in The Wood and must move one space away from the center pond. This movement must be horizontal or vertical; it may not be diagonal.

Any time a player steps onto a pond square (whether by choice, by rolling a 4, or because the player had to move away from the center pond due to a roll of 5 or 6), that player loses a green ring card, and must draw a pond card and move to the pond shown on the card. That player's next turn begins on the new pond.

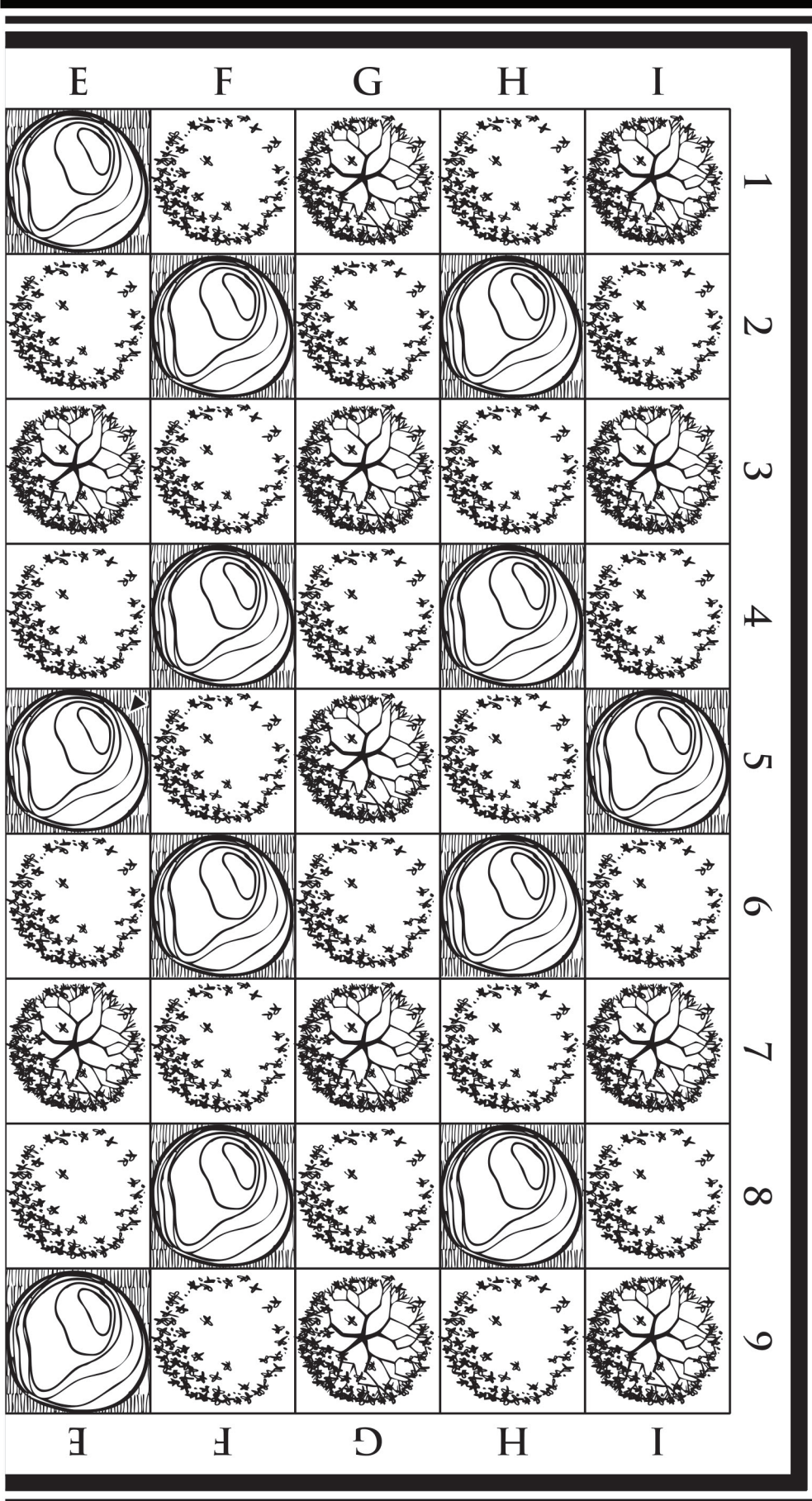
To win, players must land on the center square on sequential turns, first one and then the other. Each player must have at least one green ring card remaining.

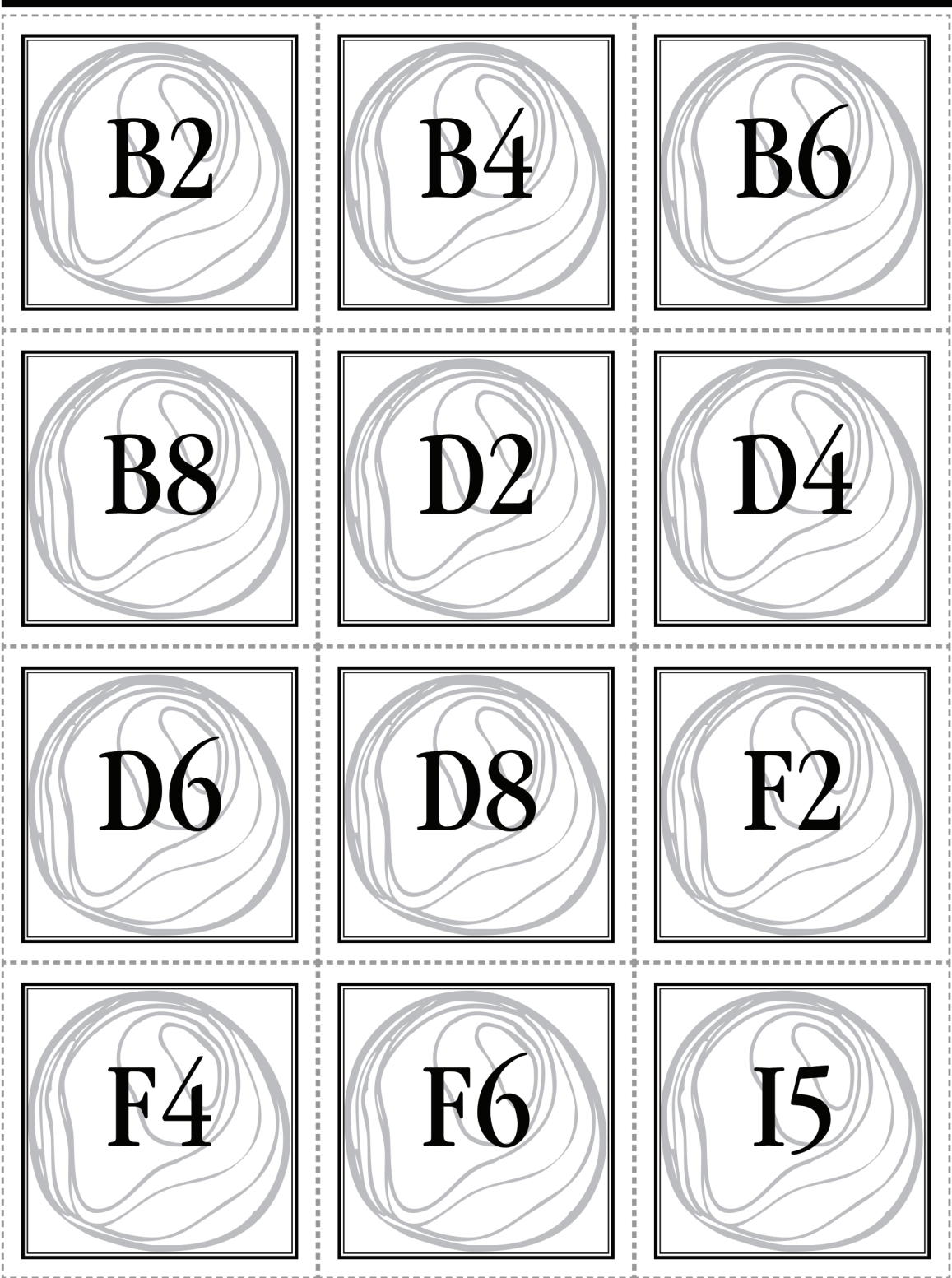
Players can freely exchange green ring cards to cooperate in getting to the middle. (Think of this as tossing the ring through the woods to the other player.)

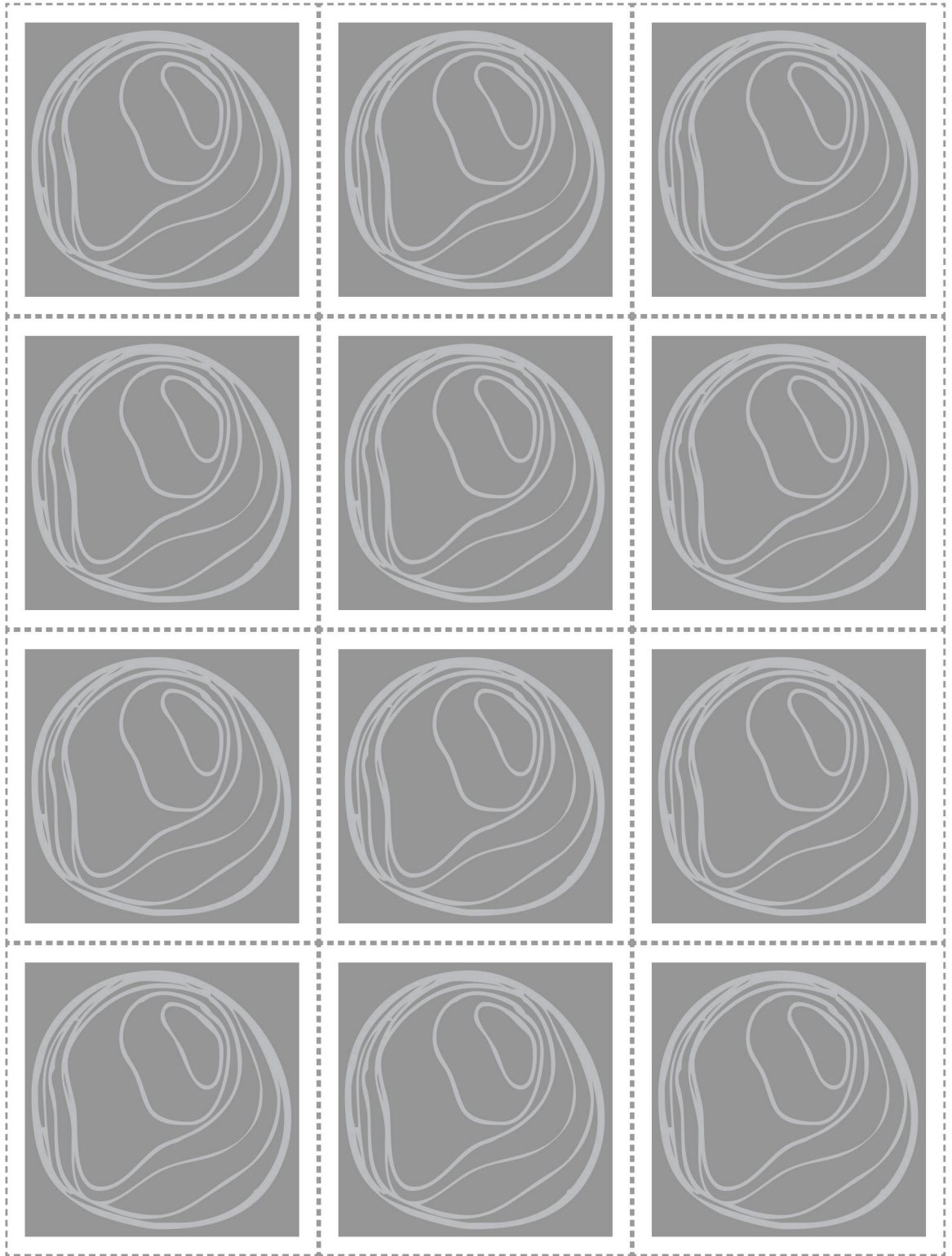
Game concept and rules by Erik Arneson.

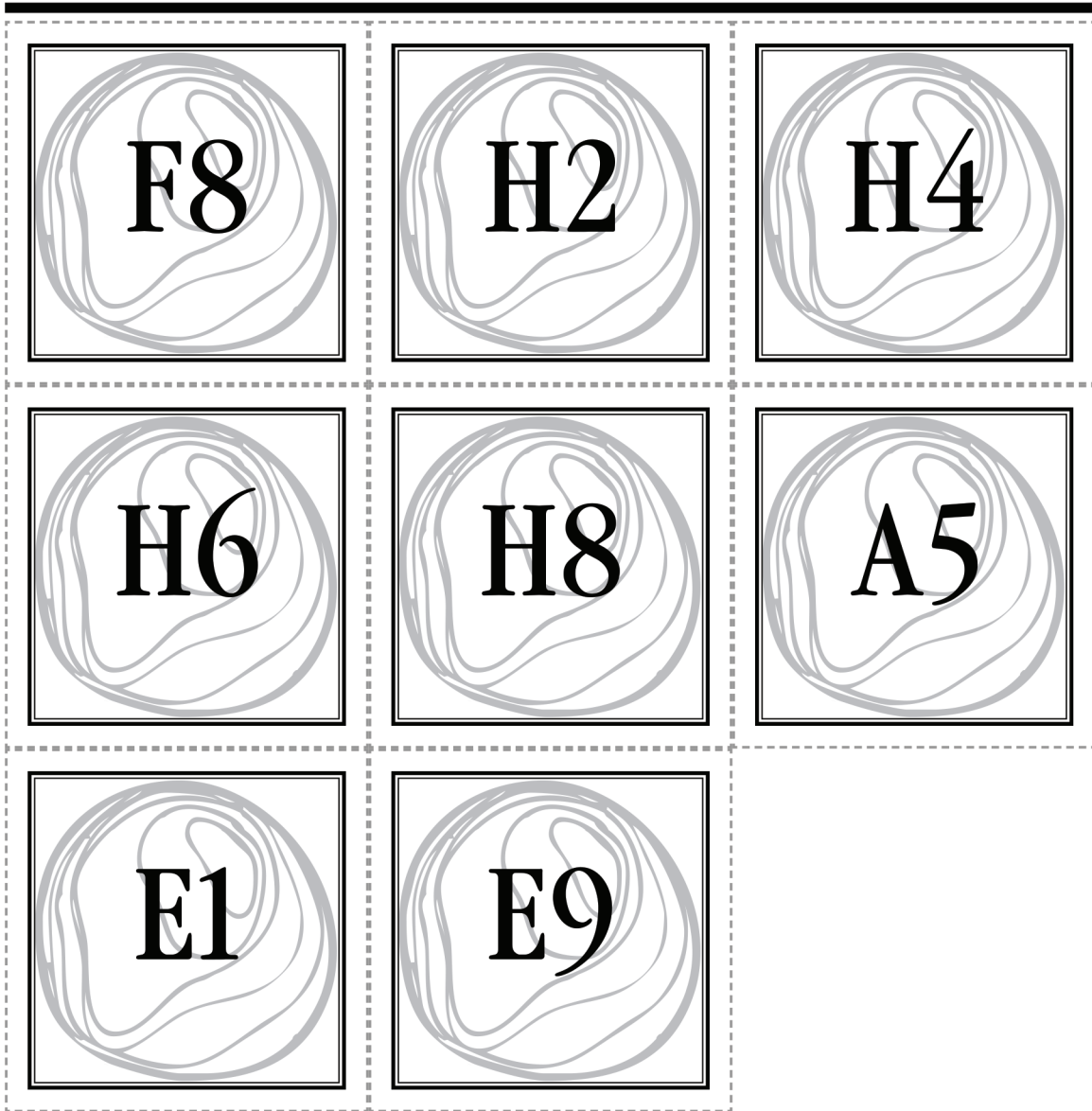


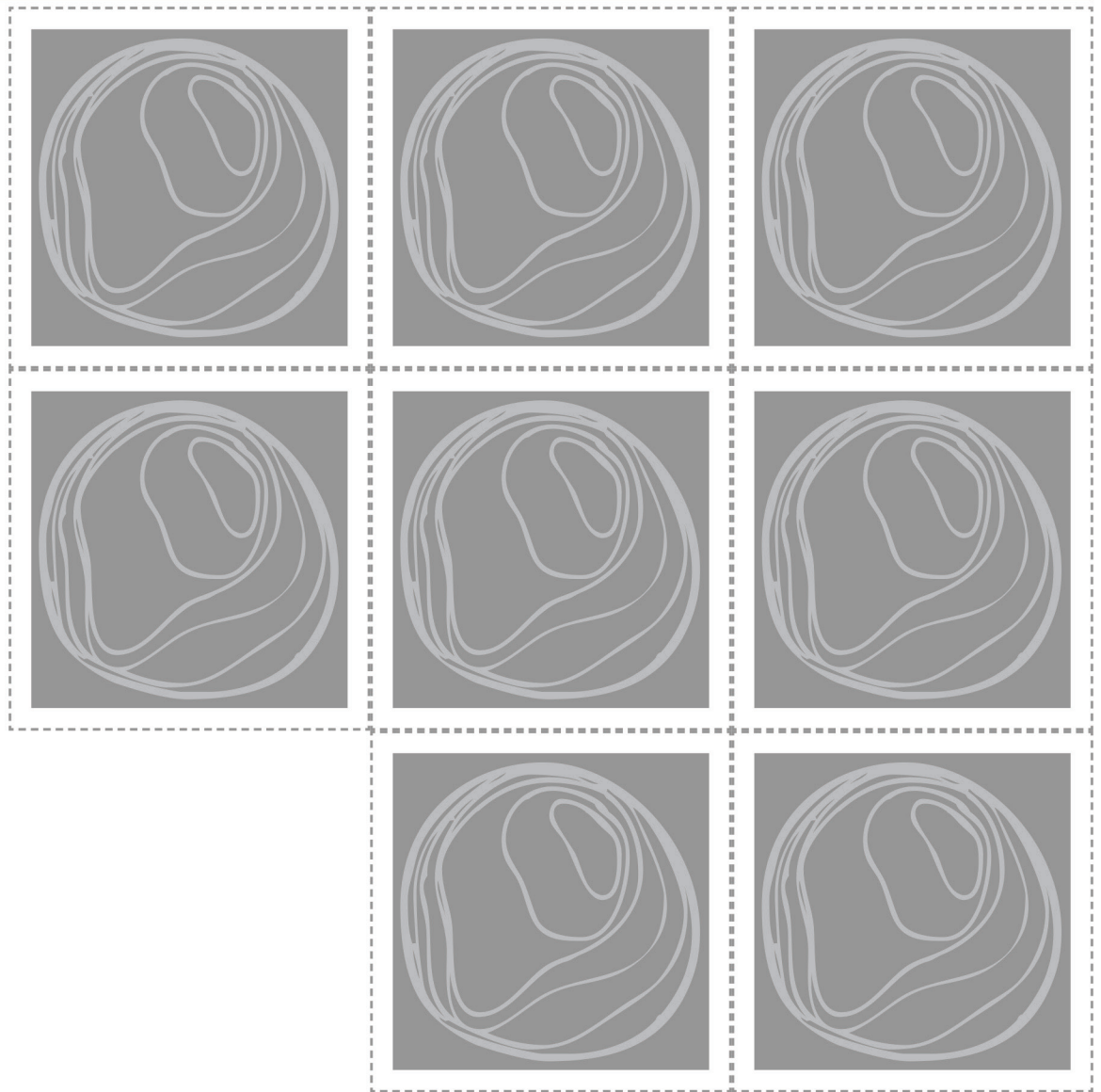
	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
	A	B	C	D	E











THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 4—“The Bell and the Hammer”

1. What was odd about the light in the world that the children visited?

2. In what one way was this world like the Wood Between the Worlds?

3. What did they notice about the elegantly dressed figures that they found as they walked down the row of them?

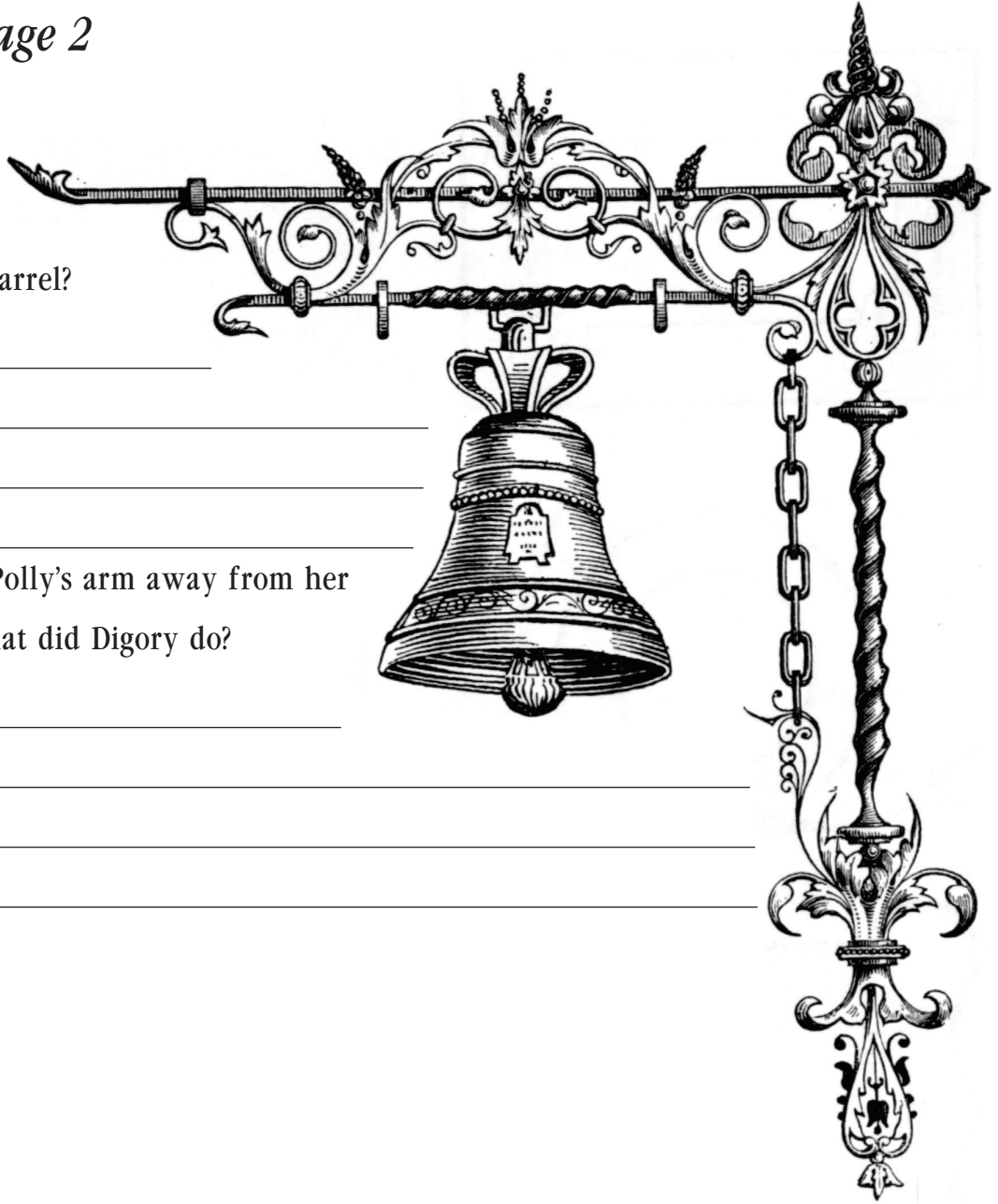
4. Describe what they found that had a message cut into it which began: “Make your choice, adventurous Stranger . . .”

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 4, Page 2

5. Why did Digory and Polly have a quarrel?

6. After twisting Polly's arm away from her yellow ring, what did Digory do?



THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 5—“The Deplorable Word”

1. What happened when the bell was rung?

2. What sorts of things were pointed out to Polly and Digory on their “tour” of the castle?

3. How did Jadis defeat her sister?

4. When Digory and Polly questioned the Queen’s actions against the ordinary people of Charn, how did the Queen respond?

5. What did the Queen wrongly assume about Digory’s uncle?

6. How were the children finally able to reach the rings in their pockets?

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 5—Project

The poem by the Golden Bell goes as follows:

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

Write another verse or two to the poem in the meter and style of the poem that would serve as a warning label against striking the bell. The “rest” of the poem could explain who set up the bell or what she had done and why it isn't a good idea to ring it.

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

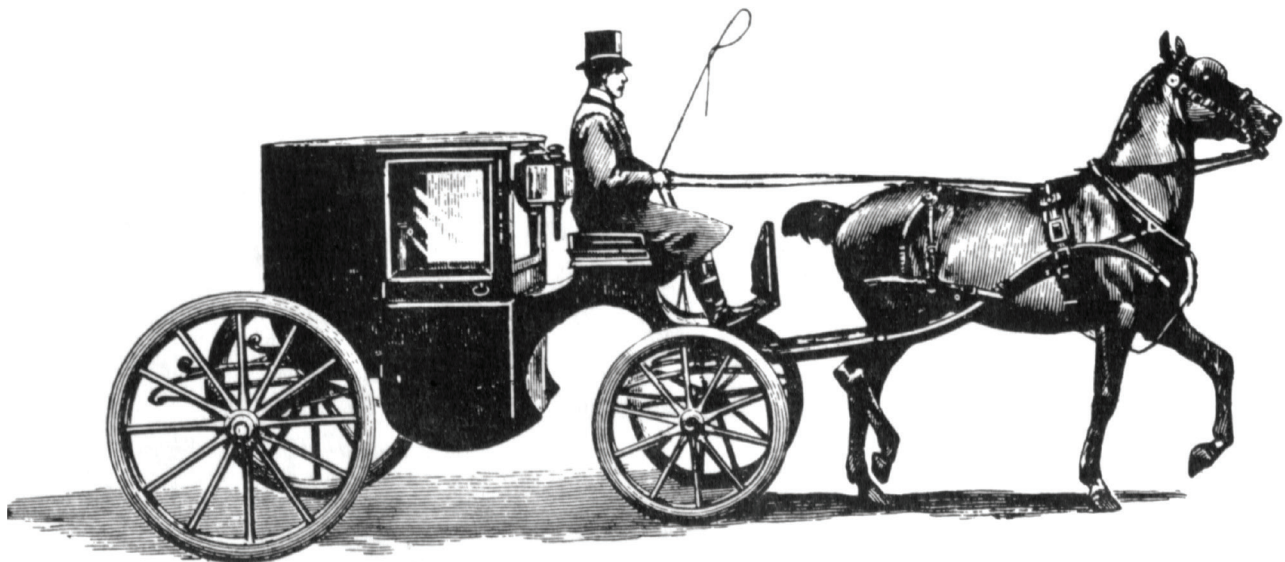
Chapter 6—*“The Beginning of Uncle Andrew’s Troubles”*

1. How did the Queen, or Witch, follow Digory and Polly into the Woods?

2. What did being in the Woods do to Jadis?

3. When Jadis appeared in the sitting room she appeared extremely beautiful and big. What did some say was the reason for her great height?

4. What did Jadis request Uncle Andrew to obtain for her so she could see the city?



THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 6, Page 2

5. What did Jadis threaten Uncle Andrew with if he proved treacherous?

6. For what was Digory required to apologize?

7. How did Uncle Andrew act “silly in a very grown-up way?”

8. How was Uncle Andrew planning to pay for entertaining the Witch in London?

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 7—"What Happened at the Front Door"

1. Where did Aunt Letty think Jadis was from?

2. What did the Witch unsuccessfully try to do to Aunt Letty?

3. What was Digory's plan to get rid of Jadis?

4. While waiting for the return of the Witch, what did Digory overhear Aunt Letty speak about?



THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

Chapter 7, Page 2

5. How did “the Queen of Queens and the Terror of Charn” return to Digory’s home?

6. What followed close behind Jadis?

7. As Digory attempted to get close to Jadis, who actually reached her first?



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