

The Chronicles of Narnia (Series) | The Voyage of the Dawn Treader | Summary

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About the Title

The third book of the series is titled *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and tells of an adventure at sea aboard the ship the *Dawn Treader*.

Summary

The Voyage Begins

[Lucy Pevensie](#) and [Edmund Pevensie](#) are sent to spend the summer with their Aunt Alberta, Uncle Harold, and a cousin, Eustace Scrubb, in Cambridge. (His full name is Eustace Clarence Scrubb, and he is sometimes called Eustace Clarence, but mostly just Eustace.) The cousins dislike each other and have little in common. One afternoon Eustace, who secretly likes "bossing and bullying," walks in on his cousins in Lucy's room, where a painting of a Narnian ship hangs on the wall. Lucy and Edmund are discussing Narnia, and logical Eustace, who doesn't believe in such a place, makes fun of them for "playing your old game." His tune soon changes, though, when the picture comes to life and the children find themselves magically swept into the scene and onto the ship, the *Dawn Treader*. Lucy and Edmund are delighted to be reunited with Caspian—who is still King Caspian—for a new adventure in Narnia, but Eustace is shocked and appalled—and seasick. Eustace quickly acquires a reputation on board as a peevish, selfish, ungrateful complainer, and he is only tolerated because he is related to Lucy and Edmund. He also gets off on terrible footing with Reepicheep, the valiant talking mouse, after insulting his dignity by calling him a "horrid thing."

As they tour the ship, Lucy and Edmund catch up on news from [Caspian](#). While one year has passed in England, three have passed in Narnia, and in that time, Caspian has brought peace to the land. His mission now is to fulfill the oath he swore at his coronation: to find the seven missing lords who were loyal to his father, King Caspian the Ninth. Lord Revilian, Lord Bern, Lord Argoz, Lord Mavramorn, Lord Octesian, Lord Restimar, and Lord Rhoop were sent away by the usurper Miraz to explore unknown lands at sea, and never heard from again. The ship is en route to the Lone Islands, the last known territory on the map, after which they will sail into unknown eastern waters in search of the noble lords. Reepicheep, though, longs for even more. "Why should we not," he asks, "come to the very eastern end of the world?" There, he hopes to find [Aslan](#)'s country, a lifelong dream since hearing of it in a nursery rhyme from his childhood:

*Where sky and water meet,
Where the waves grow sweet,
Doubt not, Reepicheep,
To find all you seek,
There is the utter East.*

Meanwhile, Eustace begins keeping a diary, in which he mostly complains and blames the others for his unhappiness. His problems are never his own fault—such as when he pulls Reepicheep's tail and is then somehow surprised when the irate mouse drubs him with the flat of his sword.

As the ship approaches the Lone Islands, a small party decides to visit the outer island of Felimath as a pleasant afternoon outing, while the ship sails to the other side to pick them up. Caspian, Reepicheep, Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace disembark for their ramble, but are immediately captured by a band of slave traders. Caspian is sold on the spot to a noble lord and led away, and the others are taken aboard the slave ship anchored nearby. The nobleman turns out to be the missing Lord Bern, who stayed behind in the Lone Islands to marry. He freely swears his allegiance to King Caspian and advises him on how to approach the Lone Islands. It has been many years since a Narnian king visited the islands, and under the leadership of the corrupt governor Gumpas, the slave trade has flourished. Caspian and Bern return to the *Dawn Treader*, where they devise a plan to

rescue their friends. Bern sends a messenger ahead to the island that evening to put their plans into motion.

Gloriously decked out for war, its impressive crew armed to the hilt, the *Dawn Treader* sails to Narrowhaven the next day. Cheering crowds greet them, thanks to the advance footwork of Lord Bern's messenger. Caspian, ship's captain Lord Drinian, and the rest of the crew march to the castle. They demand an audience with Governor Gumpas, who tries unsuccessfully to dismiss them. Caspian demands to know why the islands are behind in their tribute to Narnia by 150 years, as well as why the slave trade has been permitted there. Gumpas demurs on both points, so Caspian relieves him from office and appoints Lord Bern to govern in his place. The crew then heads to the slave market, where Caspian proclaims the end of the slave trade and frees all the slaves. Lucy, Edmund, Reepicheep, and Eustace are rescued, and a feast is held that night to celebrate. The *Dawn Treader* is also repaired and restocked with provisions, ready to sail again in search of the remaining Lords.

Into the Unknown

The ship sails east once more, but is pummeled by a brutal storm that lasts for nearly two weeks. The ship's mast is lost, and the crew is then stuck motionless for several days under the scorching sun with no wind to propel them forward. Water rations grow short, and Eustace is caught red-handed by Reepicheep as he tries to dip into the water supply late one night. The boy is forced to apologize and loathes everyone more than ever. At last they sight land, and the whole crew goes ashore to resupply the ship and make repairs. Eustace, tired of constant work, slips away to spend a lazy afternoon on his own. He hikes far up a mountain, where a thick fog overtakes him. Lost, he stumbles down the wrong path trying to return to the ship and finds himself in a scorched valley. He nearly panics as a listless dragon crawls out of a cave nearby, only to die in front of him. Relieved, Eustace ducks into the cave to escape the rain and finds a glorious stash of treasure. He puts on a golden bracelet and falls asleep atop a pile of coins.

Eustace awakens to the shocking discovery that he has been magically transformed into a dragon. He weeps for the loss of his friends, realizing he is now "a monster cut off from the whole human race." He flies back to the coast, where the crew has been searching for him. Unable to speak, the dragon uses gestures such as nodding and shaking his head to convince the others that it is he, Eustace. He also cries because the bracelet, which fit so nicely over his human arm, is now cutting into his dragon flesh. The crew recognizes that the bracelet bears the insignia of Lord Octesian, one of the missing Lords of their quest, and they realize he has probably died on the island. Lucy uses her cordial to relieve the swelling and pain, but the bracelet will not come off.

In the week that follows, a humbled Eustace is more helpful than he's ever been, using his size and strength to retrieve a new tree for a mast and to hunt for wild goats to restock the ship's provisions. Even so, it is a lonely week, for he cannot easily share space with his companions. To his surprise, it is Reepicheep who offers comfort, keeping him company on lonely nights while others gather by the fire. As Eustace overhears the others wonder aloud what to do about him when the ship must depart, he understands what an "unmitigated nuisance" he has been all along—and now he's causing even more problems for the crew.

On the sixth morning since they arrived at the island, Edmund awakens to find Eustace restored to his old self, thanks to Aslan. Eustace relates how the great lion had led him into the mountains to a bubbling well. Then, like a snake shedding its skin, Aslan had helped Eustace shed his dragon scales and become a boy once more. Upon bathing in the water, his pain vanished, and Eustace was able to return to the ship. Penitent, he apologizes to Edmund for his previous behavior. Edmund accepts his apology and points out that he himself was far worse on his first visit to Narnia. "You were only an ass," Edmund says, "but I was a traitor."

The crew's next adventure takes place under sail, where the ship is attacked by a giant sea serpent that nearly crushes the boat into splinters. After a narrow escape, they sail onward and come upon a rocky, mountainous island with two streams coursing down the slopes. While Lord Drinian oversees the task of refilling the water casks at one stream, the children, Caspian, and Reepicheep hike to the

other stream to investigate. They find a man's rusted sword and armor in a field above a lake, and speculate that the items might have belonged to one of the missing Lords. Unsettled, they continue to the lake. Beneath the waves lies a life-sized gold statue of a man, and the party discovers that the water turns whatever it touches to gold. The statue must surely be one of the missing Lords, they decide. Caspian speaks excitedly about the riches the island could bring to Narnia, but Edmund chafes when Caspian commands their silence. "Who are you talking to?" Edmund demands. "I'm no subject of yours." Even Lucy stoops to name-calling, until they all catch sight of Aslan on the hill nearby. His presence brings them back to themselves, and they hurriedly return to the ship. They name the island Deathwater, revealing only that they've discovered the body of one of the remaining Lords—which one, they do not know.

Lucy Accepts a Challenge

The ship next journeys to a strange, silent island, where manicured lawns and rows of trees greet them—all empty of inhabitants, or so it seems. As a small group sets forth to investigate a house in the distance, Lucy falls behind to remove a rock from her shoe. Loud thumps fill the air and pass by Lucy, who is concealed behind a tree. Though she can see no one, Lucy hears voices plotting to ambush her friends on their return to the ship. As the voices fade into the distance, Lucy scrambles ahead to warn the others. They decide to face their would-be attackers directly and return to shore at once.

Sure enough, they are confronted on the beach by the invisible people, and their Chief calls on Lucy to complete a dangerous mission on their behalf. The Chief explains that on the island lives a Magician who had cursed them with "ugliness." In fact, they felt so ugly they sneaked into his home and used his spell book to turn themselves invisible so they wouldn't have to look at one another anymore. They are now weary of invisibility, however, and only a girl—Lucy—can break the spell. To do so, she must enter the Magician's home and read the spell to make them visible once more. The voices threaten to slay the entire party if Lucy refuses. Seeing no alternative, and also wanting to help, Lucy agrees to the challenge. Delighted, the invisible people host a feast for their now-guests and invite them to spend the night.

The next morning Lucy returns to the house and, following the Chief's instructions, she finds the Magician's spell book. As she turns each page of the enchanting volume, Lucy becomes more and more enthralled. She is sorely tempted to recite a spell that would make her beautiful "beyond the lot of mortals," but Aslan's snarling face appears in the book, and she quickly turns the page. Further on, though, she recites a spell to learn what her friends truly think of her. The pictures on the page come to life, and Lucy witnesses a conversation between her schoolmates Marjorie and Anne. Lucy is deeply hurt to overhear Marjorie make light of her friendship with Lucy, and decides not to listen in on any of her other friends. Finally, she finds the proper spell and reads it aloud. In that moment Aslan appears, having been in the room all along, invisible. He chastises Lucy for eavesdropping on her friends, but Lucy has had punishment enough. "I don't think I'd ever be able to forget what I heard her say," she laments. "No, you won't," he agrees.

Aslan then introduces her to the Magician, an old man named Coriakin, whom the lion has appointed as the guardian of the island's curious inhabitants. Aslan departs, and the two have lunch while the Magician tells Lucy the whole story behind those inhabitants—the Dufflepuds, or Duffers—who are not very bright. In fact, they are like naïve children in many respects—easily swayed by the silly Chief, and with little common sense or intelligent thought among them. Coriakin relates how the Duffers have previously planted boiled potatoes, washed the dishes *before* dinner, and fetched water from a half mile away even though a stream runs right by the garden. Fed up with their disobedience to his kindly, logical instructions, the Magician had transformed them from dwarfs into monopods, people with one centered leg and one long foot.

Lucy and Coriakin then watch as the Dufflepuds awaken from their afternoon nap to learn they are visible once more, and Lucy goes out to meet them and rejoin her friends. She assures the Duffers that she loves the way they look, and Reepicheep teaches them how to paddle on the water using their long foot as a boat, which they adore. That night, the crew dines with the Magician and learns

that only four of the missing Lords arrived on his island many years ago. The Lord unaccounted for was Restimar, who must have been the man turned to gold in Deathwater. The ship sails away the next day, escorted to open water by the cheering, paddling Dufflepuds.

The End in Sight

Further east, the ship approaches a mysterious Darkness hanging over the water, and spurred on by fearless Reepicheep, they sail into the eerie black mass. A voice cries out to them in the darkness, and they rescue a frazzled, white-haired man, whose wide eyes tell of the terrors he has endured. They have arrived at "the Island where Dreams come true," but not daydreams—real dreams. Immediately, fear takes hold of the crew and they row for daylight with all their might. Just as it seems they are lost in the darkness, Lucy prays to Aslan for help, and a luminous albatross arrives to lead them to the sun once more. The rescued man, crying with joy at escaping the cursed island, reveals himself as the missing Lord Rhoop.

On the final island the crew visits, they find a grand, feast-laden table with three strange men asleep in stone chairs—the missing Lords Revilian, Argoz, and Mavramorn. So long have they slept that their hair nearly covers their entire bodies. Afraid to touch the tempting food, which could be enchanted, most of the crew returns to the ship for the night to escape the ominous, magical atmosphere that surrounds the table. Reepicheep, though, decides to sit at the table until dawn, for "this is a very great adventure." The children and Caspian join Reepicheep, and they watch the unfamiliar stars drift by overhead. After many hours, a beautiful young woman emerges from a door in a hillside and approaches them, carrying a candle. Its light falls upon a stone knife, which no one has noticed before, on the table—it is the knife the White Witch used to slay Aslan, long ago. The woman reveals that the three Lords were enchanted when, during an argument on whether to sail onward, one of them snatched up the knife. She urges the party to eat from Aslan's table, and Reepicheep takes the risk first, raising a glass to the lady and digging into some cold peacock. The others then eat, too, as she explains that the table is a gift from Aslan to all travelers who have come so far. Its food and drink is cleared away and magically renewed each day.

Now the lady's father, Ramandu, appears, and he and his daughter greet the sunrise with song. A flock of white birds arrives from the east, singing the same song, and they pick the table clean and then depart. Ramandu advises the party that to break the spell over the Lords, they must sail to World's End and there leave one of their crew, never to return. It is Reepicheep's dearest wish, and he volunteers readily. All present are resolved to continue onward to break the spell over the Lords. They also learn that Ramandu (and also Coriakin) were once stars shining in the sky, and that one day he will again take his place there.

The ship's crew now approaches, asking about a possible return to Narnia since all the Lords have been found. Enticed by the magical feast, many sailors wish to winter on the island and then sail home in the spring. The sailor Rynelf reminds them of the boasts they made at the outset of the voyage—of their thirst for adventure, and their vow to reach the very end of the world. Caspian then turns the tables on the reluctant crew by declaring that only some of them will be *allowed* to journey forward on this marvelous voyage, and those who do will return heroes, lavished with riches and honors. In the end all but one of the crew is chosen to go onward. Pittencream, who volunteers at the last second to go only because he doesn't want to be left alone, is rejected. He remains on the Island of the Star, lonely, and imagining himself at sea with the crew of the *Dawn Treader*. Lord Rhoop, too, remains on the island, gratefully placed into a deep and dreamless sleep by Ramandu, to sleep alongside his companions of old.

The final leg of the voyage eastward begins, and each day, the light grows stronger and the sun appears larger. The water becomes extraordinarily clear, and on the seafloor, Lucy spies an underwater world and a race of fierce Sea People. As their king shakes a spear threateningly at the boat, Reepicheep dives into the water to accept his challenge. He forgets all about the Sea People, though, when he discovers the water is sweet, fulfilling a line from the childhood nursery rhyme that has drawn him eastward: "Where the waves grow sweet, / Doubt not, Reepicheep, / There is the utter East." He is rescued from the water, and the ship sails onward, leaving the Sea People behind.

The crew begins to drink the water each day and finds they no longer need to eat or to sleep. The water, which Reepicheep calls "drinkable light," also helps their eyes to adjust to the ever-brightening sun. Though there is no wind, the ship is carried by a swift current until they sail into a vast, calm sea of white lilies in bloom, which they name the Silver Sea. The sea becomes shallow, and at last they reach a point where the ship can go no further. Reepicheep, Edmund, Lucy, and Eustace bid farewell to their friends and pile into the rowboat; it is time for the children to return home, and for Reepicheep to fulfill his destiny by reaching the World's End. Caspian reluctantly stays on board, reminded sternly by Aslan of his duty to return to Narnia—and also persuaded by the memory of Ramandu's beautiful daughter (whom he later marries).

The current carries the rowboat out of sight, the *Dawn Treader* turning homeward, and the children and Reepicheep come to a shimmering wall of water—truly, the end of their world—and the rowboat runs aground. Beyond the wave, they view the sun and the mountains of Aslan's country. Reepicheep bids them goodbye and paddles his own small boat over the wave, disappearing from sight. The spell is broken over the sleeping Lords on Ramandu's Island, and they awaken. The children wade through the water along the wave and come to a low, grassy land, where they come upon a white Lamb. They breakfast with the Lamb, who transforms into Aslan. He reveals that there is a way into his own country from the children's world, and that Lucy and Edmund will never return to Narnia. Lucy is sad they shall never meet Aslan again, but he assures them that he is in their world, too, "But there I have another name." He then opens a door in the sky and the children return to Eustace's home in Cambridge.