

The Hunting of the Snark: A Study Guide to Carroll's Nonsensical Masterpiece

Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark" is a nonsensical poem that has captivated readers of all ages since its publication in 1876. The poem follows a group of characters on a quest to hunt down the Snark, a creature that may or may not exist. Along the way, they encounter a variety of strange and wonderful creatures, and they learn a great deal about themselves and the world around them.



Study Guide for Lewis Carroll's The Hunting of the Snark by Course Hero

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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This study guide will help you to understand the meaning, context, and cultural impact of "The Hunting of the Snark." We will explore the characters, symbols, and themes of the poem, and we will engage with Carroll's wordplay and nonsense in new ways.

Characters

The characters in "The Hunting of the Snark" are a diverse and memorable group. Each character has their own unique personality and motivations,

and they all play an important role in the story.

- **The Bellman:** The leader of the expedition, the Bellman is a pompous and self-important figure. He is always giving orders and telling the other characters what to do, but he is often wrong.
- **The Baker:** A kind and gentle soul, the Baker is always trying to help others. He is the one who bakes the Snark, and he is also the one who discovers the Snark's true nature.
- **The Butcher:** A ruthless and violent man, the Butcher is always looking for a fight. He is the one who kills the Boojum, and he is also the one who tries to kill the Snark.
- **The Billiard-Marker:** A mysterious and enigmatic figure, the Billiard-Marker is always playing billiards. He is the one who gives the Bellman the idea to hunt the Snark, and he is also the one who helps the Baker to understand the Snark's true nature.
- **The Boots:** The Boots are a pair of talking boots who are always arguing with each other. They are the ones who provide the comic relief in the poem, and they are also the ones who help the other characters to see the absurdity of the situation.

Symbols

"The Hunting of the Snark" is full of symbols that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Some of the most important symbols in the poem include:

- **The Snark:** The Snark is a mysterious and elusive creature that the characters are hunting. It is not clear what the Snark represents, but it is often seen as a symbol of the unknown or the unknowable.

- **The Boojum:** The Boojum is a fearsome creature that the characters encounter on their journey. The Boojum is often seen as a symbol of death or danger.
- **The Bandersnatch:** The Bandersnatch is a strange and wonderful creature that the characters encounter on their journey. The Bandersnatch is often seen as a symbol of nonsense or absurdity.
- **The Jubjub Bird:** The Jubjub Bird is a beautiful and deadly creature that the characters encounter on their journey. The Jubjub Bird is often seen as a symbol of temptation or danger.

Themes

"The Hunting of the Snark" is a poem that explores a variety of themes, including:

- **The nature of reality:** The poem questions what is real and what is not, and it suggests that the world may be more nonsensical than we think.
- **The importance of imagination:** The poem celebrates the power of imagination and creativity, and it suggests that imagination is essential for understanding the world around us.
- **The search for meaning:** The poem explores the human search for meaning and purpose, and it suggests that meaning may be found in the most unexpected places.

Wordplay and Nonsense

One of the most striking things about "The Hunting of the Snark" is Carroll's use of wordplay and nonsense. Carroll was a master of language, and he

uses wordplay to create humor, confusion, and surprise.

Here are some examples of Carroll's wordplay in "The Hunting of the Snark":

- "The Bellman's nose was red and round, / With a bump upon the top."
- "The butcher's eye was blue and bright, / With a wink in it that said, 'I'll cut you up into mincemeat-pie!'"
- "The Billiard-Marker's cap was green, / With a tassel made of string."

Carroll's use of nonsense in "The Hunting of the Snark" is also very effective. Nonsense can be funny, confusing, and frustrating, but it can also be very thought-provoking. Carroll's nonsense poems often explore the nature of language and reality, and they can challenge our assumptions about the world around us.

Here is an example of Carroll's nonsense in "The Hunting of the Snark":

- "He took his vorpal sword in hand: / Long time the manxome foe he sought— / So rested he by the Tumtum tree / And stood a-while in thought."

"The Hunting of the Snark" is a complex and challenging poem, but it is also a very rewarding one. Carroll's use of wordplay and nonsense is masterful, and his characters are unforgettable. The poem explores a variety of important themes, and it can be interpreted in many different ways.

We hope that this study guide has helped you to understand and appreciate "The Hunting of the Snark." We encourage you to read the poem for yourself and to discover its many layers of meaning.



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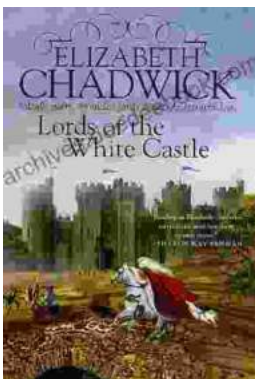
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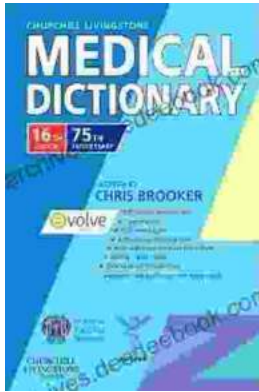
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