

SCENE ONE

SCENE: *The stage is basically bare except for a few trees and foliage and a lamppost at R. Several different levels may be used for the play's various locales. A backdrop – or a cut-out silhouette – at the rear suggests distant castles. The simple set changes will be done by three (or more) WOOD NYMPHS during the course of the play. No curtain is necessary between scenes. Simple lighting changes may be used to define the various locales as each is used.*

A cold wind blows as snowflakes fall. A WHITE STAG enters quickly, pauses, sniffs the air, then exits hurriedly. A moment later, a UNICORN enters breathlessly. He searches in vain for the WHITE STAG, then gives up.

UNICORN. I'll never catch him. Never.

(MR. AND MRS. BEAVER enter exhaustedly.)

MRS. BEAVER. Hello, Mr. Unicorn.

UNICORN. Oh, good morning, Mrs. Beaver... Mr. Beaver.

MR. BEAVER. What's so good about it?

MRS. BEAVER *(to UNICORN)*. What are you doing out so early?

UNICORN. I was trying to catch the White Stag. But I missed him again.

MRS. BEAVER. Well, don't give up. The White Stag will bring you good fortune if you catch him.

UNICORN. I know.

MR. BEAVER. It will take more than good fortune to help any of us.

MRS. BEAVER. Poor dear. He's in a bad mood. His dam broke last night.

MR. BEAVER. It's more than that. It's this blasted cold weather. I'll never get used to it.

UNICORN. But it's always cold weather in Narnia, Mr. Beaver. There's nothing to be done about it.

(A CENTAUR enters.)

CENTAUR. Maybe there is something to be done about it.

MRS. BEAVER. And what's that, Mr. Centaur?

CENTAUR. We can hope and pray that our King will soon return.

MRS. BEAVER. We keep hoping and praying, but he has not been seen for years. Not in my time—or even in my father's time.

CENTAUR. Then we must all have more faith.

MRS. BEAVER. I think Mr. Centaur is right.

UNICORN. I think so, too.

MR. BEAVER. I think—we should break up this meeting in a hurry.

CENTAUR. Why is that, Mr. Beaver?

MR. BEAVER. Shh. Listen. *(Off, voices are heard.)*

VOICE OF FENRIS ULF *(off)*. Come on, you! No more stalling.

UNICORN. It sounds like Fenris Ulf.

CENTAUR. Not that scoundrel.

VOICE OF TUMNUS *(off)*. I'm terribly sorry, sir.

UNICORN. And Tumnus, the Faun.

AND THE WARDROBE

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MRS. BEAVER. Poor Tumnus. How did he ever get himself mixed up in that bad business.

MR. BEAVER. Whatever the reason, he's in a mess. And we will be, too, if we're seen by that rascal Fenris Ulf.

UNICORN. Mr. Beaver is right. Goodbye, everybody.

CENTAUR. Goodbye. And don't forget to pray diligently for the return of the King.

(ALL agree and exit quickly just as FENRIS ULF, a wolf in military attire, enters holding TUMNUS, a faun, by the scruff of the neck. ULF looks about suspiciously.)