

(MRS. BEAVER enters with armloads of food as the OTHERS go into the Beavers' "home.")

MRS. BEAVER (*setting the food on the table*). Welcome.

I have some dinner for you. Fresh from the smoke-house outside.

SUSAN. Umm. It looks delicious.

LUCY. Yes, indeed. I'm famished.

PETER. We're very grateful for your hospitality — (*Gauging the sullen EDMUND.*) — aren't we, Ed.

EDMUND. I prefer Turkish Delight.

MRS. BEAVER. What, dear?

PETER. He said it looks — *perfect*. He's *delighted*. (*He glares at EDMUND.*)

MR. BEAVER. Before we eat, let us each say a word of thanks — and hope — for the coming events. (*ALL except EDMUND bow their heads and pray silently for a moment.*) Good. Now enjoy the meal. (*They begin to eat. EDMUND merely toys with his food.*)

MRS. BEAVER. How very honored we are to have the children of the prophesy.

SUSAN. What do you mean — "children of the prophesy"?

LUCY. I'm not even sure what "prophecy" means.

PETER. It's something that's predicted, Lu. Something that will probably happen.

LUCY. Oh. What exactly is the prophecy, Mr. Beaver?

MR. BEAVER. It is told in the form of a rhyme —

"Wrong will be right when Aslan comes in sight.
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more.
When he bears his teeth, winter will meet its death.
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring
again."

LUCY. Who is Aslan — a man?

MR. BEAVER. Certainly not. He is King of the Wood and Son of the Great Emperor Beyond the Sea. Aslan is a lion — the Great Lion. And we have heard that he may be in Narnia even as we speak. If it is true, we will take you to the Stone Table early in the morning so that you may meet him.

MRS. BEAVER. And help fulfill the prophecy.

PETER. But — how do we fit into all this?

SUSAN. We still don't understand about the prophecy.

MR. BEAVER. But you will. Listen to the rest of the rhyme —

"When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone
Sits at Cair Paravel in throne,
The evil time will be over and done."

LUCY. What does that mean — "Adam's flesh and Adam's bone"?

MR. BEAVER. It means humans.

MRS. BEAVER. You're the first humans ever to come to Narnia.

EDMUND. But what about the Queen — and the Dwarf?
Aren't they human?

MR. BEAVER. You mean the *Witch* and the Dwarf. She'd like you to believe they're human, but they're not. They're evil through and through. Not a drop of human blood in them.

PETER. This Cair Paravel that you mentioned—how many thrones are there?

MR. BEAVER. Four. Two for the Sons of Adam—

MRS. BEAVER. —and two for the Daughters of Eve.

MR. BEAVER. And when they are filled, it will mean the end of the witch's reign—and her life. (*As they ponder the meaning of this, EDMUND slips unnoticed out of the "home" and exits.*)

PETER. Two—and two.

MR. BEAVER. *You* are the four.

SUSAN. It's quite a responsibility.

MR. BEAVER. It's quite a necessity. Can we count on you to help fulfill the prophesy—

MRS. BEAVER. —even though the adventure will be filled with danger? (*A pause.*)

PETER. I, for one, am ready.

LUCY. I, too.

SUSAN. And I.

PETER. What about you, Ed?

SUSAN. Ed?

LUCY. Edmund? (*They see the empty chair.*)

MRS. BEAVER. Where could he have gone?

SUSAN. Perhaps to get some air.

LUCY. Do you think he became ill? He hasn't looked well since we got here.

PETER. Wait a minute. He mentioned the witch—and also a *dwarf*. We knew nothing of a dwarf. Is there such a person?

MR. BEAVER. Yes. He drives the witch's sleigh.

PETER. That means Ed has met them.

MRS. BEAVER. And eaten her food, no doubt. He had that look. He is surely under her spell.

MR. BEAVER. He's probably well on his way to her castle by now.

PETER. Then we must go there and stop him.

MR. BEAVER. No. You mustn't go near the witch.

MRS. BEAVER. She would turn you all to stone with her magic wand.

PETER. But we have to get Ed back. All four of us are needed to fulfill the prophecy.

SUSAN. What shall we do?

MR. BEAVER. If Aslan is indeed in Narnia, we can ask him what to do.

MRS. BEAVER. Then we shall set out for the Stone Table first thing tomorrow.

MR. BEAVER. I say we set out right now. When Edmund tells the witch where we are, she'll come here and turn us all to stone. (*Harness bells are heard, off.*)

VOICE (*off*). This is the place all right!

MRS. BEAVER. Oh, no.

LUCY. Is that — ?

MRS. BEAVER. I'm afraid so.

MR. BEAVER. It seems the witch has arrived already. There's no time for escape. Be brave, young friends.

(An ELF enters and stands at the door.)

ELF. You in there — make yourselves presentable to an esteemed visitor.

SUSAN. It's the dwarf.

ELF. I resent that insinuation. I'm no dwarf. I'm an *elf*.

PETER. What's the difference? Either way, the witch is going to come in and —

LUCY. Wait a minute, Peter. There *is* a difference. (*To the ELF.*) An elf, you say?

ELF. An elf, I said.

LUCY. Elves aren't bad at all, if I'm not mistaken.

ELF. You're not mistaken. (*Referring to PETER.*) He's mistaken. (*To LUCY.*) You're Lucy.

LUCY. And you're clever—very clever, because you know my name.

ELF. I know.

LUCY. And you could only know my name—*all* of our names—if you travel with the one who knows *everybody's* name —

ELF. Name him.

LUCY. Father Christmas! (*She and the ELF join hands and dance about laughing as the OTHERS cheer.*)

MRS. BEAVER. Do you mean that Father Christmas is actually here?

MR. BEAVER. After all these years?

ELF. In the flesh. Or in the fur, as it were. Tah-dah!

(FATHER CHRISTMAS enters carrying a filled burlap bag over his shoulder. NOTE: FATHER CHRISTMAS is attired in furry, festive, yet somewhat rustic, clothing. He should not appear as a contemporary Santa Claus.)

ALL. Father Christmas!

FATHER CHRISTMAS. I've come at last. The powers of the witch have kept me away for some time. But lately I've felt stronger—more like myself. That's why I'm making my rounds again.

MRS. BEAVER. They say that Aslan is on the move.

FATHER CHRISTMAS. That must be the answer. Well, are you ready for your gifts? First, Mr. Beaver, I have repaired your dam and mended the leak.

MR. BEAVER (*overwhelmed*). Why, I—I—
ELF. A simple "thank you" will suffice.

MR. BEAVER. Thank you.

FATHER CHRISTMAS. And Mrs. Beaver, in the room next to the smokehouse, I've left for you a brand new sewing machine.

MRS. BEAVER (*delighted*). Oh, my—I—I—
ELF (*pointing to MR. BEAVER*). What he said.

MRS. BEAVER. Thank you.

FATHER CHRISTMAS. Peter, Son of Adam.

PETER. Yes, sir.

FATHER CHRISTMAS (*taking items from his bag*).

These are your presents. They are tools, not toys. The time to use them is perhaps near at hand. (*He holds up a shield and a sword.*) The sword and shield are yours. Bear them well. (*PETER receives the gifts solemnly and silently bows to acknowledge his appreciation.*) Susan, Daughter of Eve. (*SUSAN steps forward.*) These are for you. (*He hands her a bow and a quiver of arrows.*) Use the bow only in great need. (*Giving her a hunting horn.*) Blow this horn when you are in trouble, and help of some kind will come to you.

SUSAN. Thank you, sir.

FATHER CHRISTMAS. Lucy, younger Daughter of Eve. (*He holds up a small glass bottle.*) In this bottle is a cordial made from the juice of fire-flowers. If you or your friends are ever hurt, a few drops will restore you. (*He takes out a dagger.*) And this dagger is to defend yourself. But use it only when absolutely necessary. (*He gives the items to LUCY.*)

LUCY. Thank you, Father Christmas.

FATHER CHRISTMAS. Well, we must be on our way. We have many more stops tonight. It's wonderful to be working again. A Merry Christmas to all of you. And long live the true King.

ALL. Long live the true King! (*FATHER CHRISTMAS and the ELF exit.*)

MR. BEAVER. And we, too, must be on *our* way. We must travel quietly and cautiously. The witch's spies are everywhere. The gifts of Father Christmas may well be needed before this journey is over. Come, let us go.