

LUCY. Who is the White Witch?

FAUN. Shhhhh! Not so loud, Daughter of Eve. She has spies everywhere. You see, Jadis—that's her name—the White Witch has all Narnia in her spell. It's she who makes it always winter. [*Shakes his head, sadly.*] Always winter but never Christmas.

LUCY. I see. But why do you think you're so bad?

FAUN. I'm one of her kidnapers, that's why. Look at me, Daughter of Eve. Do I look like the kind of faun who'd meet a little child in the woods, pretend to be friendly . . . and then lure it to my house for tea? . . .

LUCY. . . . and when it falls asleep you turn the child over to the White Witch? I simply don't believe it!

FAUN. But it's true! It's true! Of course I've never done it before, but you're the first human I've ever met.

LUCY. Are you going to kidnap me?

FAUN [*looking around*]. Shhhhh! No! But let's keep our voices down . . . even some of the trees are her spies. . . . If only Aslan . . . [*He claps his hand over his mouth, with a gasp.*]

LUCY. Aslan? What's . . .

FAUN. Oh, *please!* . . . Not here . . . not anywhere! It just slipped out. . . . Promise me you'll forget I ever said it.

LUCY. All right. It's an easy promise because Aslan is such a peculiar . . .

FAUN. *No!* Please . . . don't you have to go home?

LUCY. Yes, I believe I must. [*Primly.*] I'm very glad I met you, Mr. Tumnus.

FAUN. And I you, Daughter of Eve. Can you find your way from here?

LUCY. I think so, thank you.

FAUN. And can I keep the handkerchief?

LUCY. Of course you may!

FAUN. Did I say "can"? I meant "may." And thank you.

LUCY. You're quite welcome. [*LUCY turns and starts walk-*

WITCH. It is dull to drink without eating. What do you like best to eat?

EDMUND [*considering this a moment*]. Turkish Delight, I think.

WITCH. Very discriminating! I can see you are a boy of taste and culture. [*As EDMUND preens himself, the WITCH reaches out her hand to a nearby bush. A small box is handed to her through the branches. She unwraps and opens it, offering the box to EDMUND. He starts eating pieces of candy greedily. The WITCH observes him closely. A moment's silence as EDMUND eats.*] Do you know anyone else who has ever been in Narnia? [*EDMUND speaks with difficulty, his mouth full of Turkish Delight.*]

EDMUND. Yes, your Majesty. My sister Lucy has been here. [*Stuffs more candy into his mouth.*] My other sister and brother haven't been here yet.

WITCH [*eagerly*]. But you'll bring them? I'd like so much to meet them. You'll bring them to me? [*EDMUND feels around in the candy box, finds it empty, looks at the WITCH, and throws the box away.*]

EDMUND. I'll try. [*Hesitantly.*] Is there . . . is there any more Turkish Delight?

WITCH [*patting his arm*]. Of course there is. All you want. When you bring your darling brother and sisters to me.

EDMUND. I'll try . . . tomorrow.

WITCH. We'll all go to my castle. You'll find it delightful. And another thing. I have no son to carry on the royal line. I might adopt you and make you the Prince of Narnia. [*EDMUND whistles.*]

EDMUND. Wow! . . . Me? A prince?

WITCH. With all the Turkish Delight you can eat. [*She rises from the log and EDMUND rises with her, looking around.*] What's the matter? Have you lost something?

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EDMUND. No . . . but Lucy . . . my sister . . . said she talked to a faun named Mr. Tumnus . . . I thought maybe he . . .

WITCH. Oh . . . Mr. Tumnus . . . the faun. *That one!* I'm sorry to tell you, but he met with an unfortunate . . . er . . . accident, or will, soon.

EDMUND. That's too bad.

WITCH. Isn't it? Until tomorrow, then. . . . Can you find your way back?

PROFESSOR. Good evening (or afternoon). Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Professor. An M.P. Not a Member of Parliament, but a Professor of Mythology. I am also the owner of a very, very old house at the edge of a large forest in a remote part of England. Long before it came into my possession, it was a tourist attraction, because of its great age and a belief that it was . . . er . . . haunted. [*Glances at paper in hand.*] A few days ago, by persuasion of a charitable group in London which provides country vacations for city children, I took in four children as house guests. They appear to be nice youngsters, except maybe for—oh, well. I mustn't prejudge them. [*Checks paper.*] Their names are Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy, in descending order of ages. . . . Oh, yes . . . about this ancient and rambling house. It was, I believe, once listed among the "Stately Homes of England," which is in quotes. It does have some peculiarities, and I will say this: If I should meet a living, breathing dryad or nymph while working in my garden, I would be more pleased than astonished. Now . . . I'd like you to meet my young guests. . . . [*He turns toward stage as curtain rises.*]