

The  
Missing  
Princess

A Chronicle of New Narnia

by

Mark Jenks

## *Dedication*

*This work was written as a Christmas present for my nephews Abraham, Noah and Isaac. Their love of all things Narnia has been contagious and infected me.*

*I have endeavored to write a work as much in the style that C.S. Lewis would have written it as I possibly could. It was his works that my nephews and I love, not mine, and I would never want to write anything that he would not want to see written. This book is lovingly dedicated to my nephews.*

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# THE MISSING PRINCESS

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Chapter 1

Little Girl Lost

This is the story of the lost little girl, who might have been a princess. The tale of Abbie Hodgekiss began long before she was born; but that's a story that has been told elsewhere. Suffice it to be said that her mother had once been a queen: and even though there was no one alive today who would ever remember it, she was indeed the last remaining queen of a long lost land.

By all that is right and holy, the nine year old Abbie should have been raised as a beloved princess, full of wonder and the innocent magic that is the right of all youth: instead her short blonde hair had been cut conservatively but perfectly and she was reared as the daughter of straight thinking academic parents. This is not to say that her parents didn't love her and want for her what they considered the very best, for they most certainly did. Unfortunately they had the misguided notion that it was more important for her to be brought up to be as straight thinking as they were themselves. The notion that children should be carried away in the joys of fancy and whimsy would have seemed, to them, to be the highest form of foolishness.

Consequently, Abbie had been taken to the finest schools, and her time had been filled with a great many structured activities: activities which were designed to mold her into the kind of adult that her parents felt that she should some day become. Even so, between school, music lessons and sporting events, she often felt that she was missing out on something very important.

Along with her mother and father, and her little brother Andrew, she lived in a large country house, which had many rooms and even more forgotten places. Her mother had inherited the place, along with a moderate sized fortune, from a Professor, who had long ago been a family friend. That was in the times before her family had all been killed in a train wreck. (Which is also a tale that has been told elsewhere.) For some reason, there were many places in that house that her mother shied away from and those rooms had become storage places for old and useless junk. These were the rooms that Abbie and Andrew often frequented when they wanted to get away from things.

Now I wouldn't want anyone to get the wrong idea: the children did not frequent these areas in search of adventure, for they were raised to be proper children of a serious mind. It was just that sometimes they needed a place to get away from their studies. Occasionally Abbie just needed a place where she could be alone and feel sorry for herself.

On those days, she would sometimes search through the many old boxes, which were stored those places, in search of things useful or beautiful: for her mother had taught her that it was important to be beautiful. Unfortunately, Abbie took after her father Henry, and she suspected that she would never grow up to become the model that her mother hoped that she would someday become.

Abbie realized that her head was just a little too large to be perfect, (not that anyone but her mother would have noticed) and her hair was of a strawberry blonde, not the deep golden variety of her mom's. Her teeth were indeed straight, but not completely perfect, and one ear was a centimeter lower than the other.

Abbie was definitely above average in all areas including her looks, but that was never enough for her mother. Therefore, as on that particular Saturday, she often retreated to the storerooms to try to feel better about who she was, and not who she should be.

She decided to go through some of the dusty old boxes to see what might be hidden there. She'd had many times before gone through many of these old crates, but on this day, she found something at the bottom of one that she had never before opened, for being at the bottom, it was hard to remove, and previously she had simply been too little to do so.

Written on the top of the box was a label that simply said "Eustice." She wasn't sure what a Eustice was, but she suspected that it was some kind of old time name. Opening the lid she found clothes, toys and magazines that belonged to a boy who looked to be not much older than she. Feeling that this crate had nothing useful she started to close it up, until a golden ring fell from one of the coat's pockets.

She stared at the ring for a minute. It was beautiful, and almost as importantly, it looked like it might be her size. It was the kind of thing, she thought, that could only help to make her more beautiful. Feeling around in the pockets, she saw that the ring was one of four rings, which were identical, except for the stones, which were in the settings, and of those there were two varieties: green and yellow.

She decided that it would be good to bring Andrew back here later, and to split up the rings between them, but she couldn't resist the desire to try one on. Pocketing one of the other ones, she slipped one of the yellow ones on her finger.



As soon as she had placed the ring on her finger, she felt herself to be falling though that was not really what was happening. (But it is as close enough an analogy as I

can describe.) Her training told her that she must be falling, but her senses told her otherwise. She was moving. She was moving sideways, she was moving backwards: she was spinning and she was standing still: she was moving while she was standing still. It wasn't unpleasant and it didn't last terribly long.

When it stopped she found that she was in a very peaceful and pleasant forest. Now this is the same wood that had been written of before in someone else's story, so I won't bother to spend too much time describing the sense of peace that existed there. Suffice it to say that a great sleepiness came upon her and she laid down for a short nap. She knew not how long she lay there: indeed when she awoke, she hardly remembered anything at all, including where she had hailed from or even who she was.

She was roused from her slumbers by a beautiful guinea pig, which was nuzzling her face. The white and gold guinea pig was slightly larger than your typical rabbit and it wore a ring that was a match for hers, hanging from a ribbon around its neck.

She somehow wasn't surprised when the cavy spoke to her. (Her parents would have been scandalized by her even expressing that such a thought was possible; but there it was.)

The guinea pig said. "I have been waiting a long time for you little princess. Have you been lost?"

Blinking her eyes, Abbie gaped at the small creature, and stammered out a reply. "You... you aren't supposed to be able to talk..."

She could almost swear that it smiled, just a hint of a smile before it continued. "Well, there once was a time when I was not able to talk, but Aslan long ago breathed

on me and told me to wait for the day that a daughter of Adam should arrive, and here you are.”

“[...] I don't know any Aslan...”

“I know little princess, but you will.”

## Chapter 2

### The Honey Tree

Fargul Treestumps was not a typical puffball: he was perhaps a little more violet than most, and he was definitely the most graceful floater of his lot. It's all well and good to be a floater, but he refused to take root and that angered the other puffballs greatly. After all, they said, what good is a puffball that refuses to release its seeds.

For his part, Fargul liked to be blown on the wind. After he was released from his parent stem, the feeling of flight seemed much more fun than being rooted to the ground. He also knew that once he released his seeds, his life would come to an end, and he wasn't ready yet to die. He knew that he had a mission to perform before that time came, and he wasn't yet ready for that to happen.

On his world, the wind was all important, and shortly after Fargul had been released from his stem, the great wind whispered to him, telling him that he would some day be called upon to perform some great work: but that day was not today.

He floated past a glade of mocking puff plants, only recently rooted, and then he continued down into the valley of the ancient prairies where he blew by his friends, the long-grasses. He liked the long-grasses, because like himself, they liked to be blown back and forth by the mighty wind.

On this particular day, he was hailed by the voice of his friend, E than Longgrass, who asked F argul to carry a few of his seeds into the far valley for him. Being one of E than's oldest friends, F argul agreed and picked up a few of the seeds and added them to his own cache.

He had never blown as far as the far valley before and F argul looked forward to the new adventure. He had to find an updraft and rise high into the sky so that he could clear the dark forest. From on high he looked down on the green canopy and saw occasionally through the canopy's several openings to the shade that existed below.

He had never really liked the forest very much. It disturbed him that the trees weren't able to blow as freely in the great wind as others were able to: and the idea that the trees blocked the nourishing sunlight from the weak creatures who might live beneath those trees, seemed almost villainous to him. He let out a sigh of relief as he cleared the woods and gasped in delight as he saw, for the first time, the beauty of the far valley.

The air of the valley was alive with the spores and blowing seeds of many species that he had ever known existed: the valley floor below him was alive with more colors than any puffball had ever before seen who had remained in the prairie. Off in the distance stood a golden tree of inconceivable beauty. It was no wonder that E than wanted his seeds to grow up in such an environment: who wouldn't want such beauty for their offspring. F argul himself longed to drop down and take root, but he knew that it was not yet his time. He had not yet completed his life's mission.

He caught the proper breeze and anxiously drifted towards the wondrous sight. The golden tree seemed to call to him. He had never seen a creation of such beauty before and he simply had to see it up close. Although puffballs came in a wide variety of hues, he had never seen anything as golden as that tree.

Below him he could hear the thorn and thistle bushes yelling up to him, but he was too high to be able to tell what they were saying. Having never really trusted such ugly brutes before, he turned up his nose and floated past them as quickly as was possible for him to do.

As he approached the tree, he approvingly noted the sweet smell that rose from the majestic boughs. It was nothing like the nectar of the brilliant flowers, or even the pollens of his sister puffballs; but it was definitely pleasant.

He should have paid a little more attention, but as was his want, he was always distracted in the presence of beauty. An unexpected gust of wind slammed him onto the side of the golden trunk and he quickly found that he was stuck fast. He tried to pull this way and he tried to pull that way, but he almost ripped out his fethrings, so he was forced to stop.

Looking around himself, he saw the dried out husks of long gone puffballs, who had gotten stuck to the tree in the past times, and he shivered. These poor brothers would never get the chance to take root and release their seeds, and now he was one of them.

He wept.

From somewhere below he heard one of the thorn bushes yelling up to him. This time he listened. "Hey puffer!" The bush said. "Ya shoulda listened to us bud. Now yer inna bind. How ya gonna get offa there?"

In a quiet voice Fargul said, "I really don't know. This tree was so lovely, I was sure that it would be friendly..."

"I guess that you were wrong, huh? I'll bet that ya don't even know what that stuff is that's got ya stuck, do ya?"

"Not really, no."

"It's called honey, puffer: that tree is completely covered by it, and it looks like it'll be the death of ya."

"You might be right, but I really hope not."

Several more thistle bushes took up the mocking tone. "Hey puffer. What're you gonna do with that honey that them other puffers, stuck next to you weren't able to do?"

Proudly, Fargul puffed himself up to his most dignified and proudly proclaimed that he would call upon the great wind to rise up and rescue him.

After a moment of disbelief, the bushes threw their hard seeds and nuts at the puffball, and laughed derisively at the benighted Fargul. Covered in honey as he was, the nuts and hard seeds stuck to him fast.

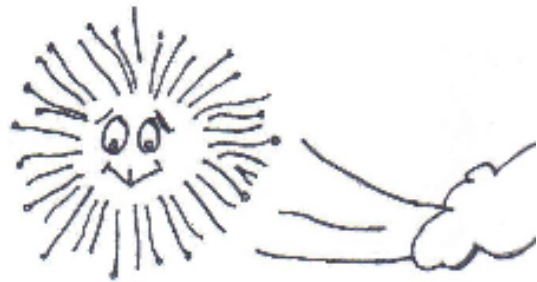
He cried out to the great wind to save him and cried out again. He cried out for hours, until he was horse and then he just cried. He hung there for so long that he no longer knew how long he had been there. He knew that the sun had passed overhead at least twice, but it might have been more than that.

Fargul had heard from the elder puffballs that the drying out process was unpleasant, but nothing ever prepared him for the terrifying dizziness and disorientation, until it came upon him. If he ever got free, he felt that he would have to quickly take root, or he would surely die.

As he dried, he began to think that maybe he would die sooner than that.

Through bleary eyes he looked up and saw a strange creature approach him. The creature trampled through the bushes of thorns, and he felt a bit of satisfaction. The creature soon stood directly in front of him.

Looking directly up at him the creature gently reached up and pulled Fargul free of his entrapment and he felt elated. That beast, which seemed enormous when compared to Fargul smiled sweetly and said. "Hello friend. My name is Abbie Hodgekiss, and I've been sent to rescue you."



## Chapter 3

### Things Great and Small

Abbie stood in a solemn world, talking to her new friend. Looking around her at the quiet woods, and the many small pools of water, which were all around her: the small child spoke again to the remarkable guinea pig. "Tell me please sir: who is this Aslan that you have spoken of?"

"He was once a friend of your mothers."

"I've never heard her talk about him before."

"That little princess is the problem. She has forgotten her best friend. That sometimes happens with people: fortunately for her, he hasn't forgotten her. He has given you and I the job of helping her to remember him."

Considering this with the direct thinking that most children have, Abbie knew that she could trust her new friend. "Please sir, if you just show me the way home, I'll tell her what you have said about this Aslan. Do you have a name, so that I can tell her of you also?"

The rodent frowned and said. "That is my shame. When I was bought at the pet store, my owner never saw fit to give me a name. If a guinea pig isn't given a name,

he isn't a pet at all. He's just an experimental subject. A pet needs to be loved, and my owner never loved me enough to give me a name. I would have loved to have been able to be his devoted pet... if only he would have accepted it."

Abbie felt pity for her small companion. "Why don't I give you a name?"

Brightening up at the idea the guinea pig smiled and said, "If you could do that for me I would so ever much be in your debt."

Sizing him up for a few minutes Abbie came to a decision. "You look like a swift thinker to me. If it pleases you, I think I will give you the name of Swifty."

With tears welling up in his tiny black eyes, Swifty bowed humbly, and said, "Daughter of Adam, you have done me a great honor and a great service today. You will always have my love and devotion for this, which you have done for me today. If it please you I will accompany you on your quest so that I might assist you however I can."

Pushing back her blonde hair, Abbie was moved by the newly named Swifty's adoration. Looking around her, she said, "If you show me the way home, I'll tell my mother what you have said. I'll remind her of this... Aslan."

"Dear child, you would never be able to tell her about Aslan, until you come to know Aslan yourself. It will be my job to take you to him; but first we will have to pick up a few friends along the way. Your mother was helped by Father Christmas: but as there is no snow here for the runners of his sledge, I shall summon another guide that can help us to travel between the worlds."

With that Swifty squeaked as only a guinea pig can, and as his volume grew and grew, the whole woods shook. Out of a hole in the ground, peeked the head of a brilliantly white rabbit, and Swifty called out to her.

“Dear friend, and fellow rodent, come and guide us, and give us of thy wisdom: we thy future friends beseech thee.”

The rabbit bounced out of the hole and hopped over to them. The curious creature stood nearly four feet tall on her hind legs. She carried a basket of brightly colored eggs, and wore a pink ribbon around her neck, tied into a bow of indescribable beauty. Abbie liked her immediately. Her whiskers twitched and although she never said a word, Swifty seemed to understand her completely.

Translating for Abbie’s benefit, Swifty said that they were supposed to follow the bunny.

In her funny little bunny way, the rabbit would hop, hop, hop and stop. Then she would turn and wait for the others to catch up; wiggle her nose and again she would hop, hop, hop and stop. Swifty the Guinea Pig had a hard time keeping up, so Abbie picked him up and carried him lovingly in her arms. For his part, he snuggled comfortably into the folds of her sweater.

This went on for the space of a half of an hour: at the end of which, the egg carrying hare pointed at a shallow, nearly dried up pool. Again she wiggled her nose.

Swifty looked up at the young girl and said, “She says that this pool used to be the way to Narnia, but that it is now a lifeless world. It is there that we will find your mother, but first we must rescue another new friend.”

Pulling two eggs out of her basket, she handed to Abbie first a Golden Egg. She smiled and wiggled her nose.”

“She says that when we arrive in the land that was once Narnia, we are to open the Golden Egg,” said Swifty.

Abbie took the egg and tucked it tenderly into her coat pocket. Then the rabbit held out another egg, that shined like a diamond. With a solemn wiggle she handed it also to Abbie.

“Just as Father Christmas gave a special present to your mother, so too are you now given a special gift. The rabbit says not to open it now. She also says that you will know the time when the right moment arrives,” translated Swifty.

After Abbie had then tucked this new egg gently into a different coat pocket, the bunny turned and resumed her hop, hop, hop and stop. After another ten minutes, the travelers stopped at another, richer and deeper pool. Unlike the Pool that was once Narnia, which reeked with decay and stagnation: this new pool smelled of lavender and roses and radiated a sense of vibrant life.

The rabbit pointed and wiggled her nose. She then hugged Abbie and Swifty and rapidly disappeared down a nearby rabbit hole.

Abbie asked her friend. “What did she say?”

“That there is someone there in that pool that we need to rescue, and then she said that she had to get back to her deliveries.”

They stood there in that silent wood for a long while, trying to decide what to do next. Swifty of course urged her to move onward, but Abbie was scared. It occurred to that she was far away from home, and that she was most certainly lost: but

she also realized that there was something about that place that was comforting, and the thought of leaving it frightened her even more than the fear of being lost.

It also occurred to her that the farther she got away from the point where she entered the wood, the harder the time that she might have in finding her way home: although that was odd. After all, ever since she entered the wood, the idea of home seemed only to be the most distant of memories.

In her arms the Guinea Pig looked up at her and said, "Aren't we going to go in?"

"Where are we supposed to go? I only see another pool of water: I don't see anyone."

"If you put on your green ring and you jump into the pool, we'll be transported into the world that is on the other side of the pool," replied Swifty.

"I won't drown?"

"You won't drown."

"O.K. I hope you're right." Slipping on the green ring and holding tight to Swifty, she jumped. "Here we go!"



At about the same time, in another world, Queen Susan realized that her daughter was missing. With the terror that any loving parent would feel at such a moment, she began a frantic search of the venerable old house.

## Chapter 4

### A Home For a Puffball

When Abbie and Swifty stopped swirling, they found themselves in a sunlit valley meadow of golden waving grasses and a rainbow of flowers on all sides of them. The woods had been a place of shade and peace, whereas this prairie was a place of brightness and abundant life.

The wind in the meadow seemed to whisper constantly in joyous musical chords, while the grasses and flowers swayed back and forth in the wind as if they were dancing. The whole spectacle was quite hypnotic, and it took all of Abby's concentration, to stop herself from joining in with the vast dance.

Glancing at Swifty, she could see him swaying with the heavenly music.

From somewhere behind her, a voice said, "Havin' trouble keepin' yer pet awake, are ye?"

Spinning around, Abbie looked for the source of the new voice. "Who said that?" She asked.

Behind her again, the voice said, "I did, who wants ta know?"

Now Abbie was really confused. She turned yet again and still didn't see anything. "Where are you? Are you invisible?"

The voice chuckled and said, "I don't think that I'm invisible. I'm up here. Maybe I'd better land and let ye get a better look at me."

Glancing upward, Abbie saw a grizzled old seagull as he maneuvered his way in for a landing: the whispering winds blowing him from side to side as he swooped downward. Of course Abbie had often seen seagulls, so she knew one when she saw one, but she had never seen one that stood almost four feet tall before: neither had she seen one wearing a long scarf and an old seaman's cap like this one had on.

The bird emptied his beat-up old pipe on a nearby rock, looked Abbie in the face and said, "I be Cap'n Flapp: who and what may I ask be ye, and the little beastie in yer arms too, what be he?"

Abbie stared for a minute dumbfounded, but she had been raised better than to long ignore a question from her elders. She shook her head, curtsied and answered the old salt. "I am Abbie Hodgekiss, and," nudging Swifty awake she held him up, "this is my friend Swifty the Guinea Pig. He tells me that I am a daughter of Adam, but I always thought that I was a girl."

Captain Flapp, bent his head in a bewildered bird fashion and said, "Sorry never heard of either of those things. Either way, I'm glad ta meet yer both. We're a long ways off from the sea we are, so we're not likely to find any other form of animal life till we git there."

Blinking the sleep out of his eyes, Swifty, looked meekly at the huge bird, and softly asked, "You're not going to eat me are you?"

“Why? Do ya want me to?”

“Oh no, no. I was just wondering what you ate... that’s all.”

“Fish is all I eat friend: ye got any? Sides, I’d never eat anything that I could talk to. Life at sea teaches ya, ta take yer conversations as ye can. It can git mighty lonely on a long voyage, and there’s nothing more valuable than a friend ta keep ye company. A long land trip is much the same, so I’m pleased ta meet up with ye both. So what are ya doing here, so far away from everthin?”

Still trying to shake off the effects of the wind, Abbie answered him. “We’ve been sent on a mission, sir. We were told that we had to come here. We were told that there was someone that we were supposed to save. That wouldn’t happen to be you, by chance, would it?”

“Sorry lassie, but I’m fine: as long as I don’t spend too much time on the ground here that is,” said the bird.

“Are there dangerous beasties on the ground around here?”

“Heavens no child!” That made Abbie feel better, until the Captain continued. “All a the beasties around here were killed off by the plants, long ago!”

“Killed by...”

“The plants: they were killed by the plants. Ye see, the plants in these parts have minds. Most a them are pretty good old chaps, but some a them ain’t too nice. If ye ain’t really careful, ye might wind up poisoned or some such thing. If yer not gonna fly over these parts, ye better think about getting one a the good plants ta guide ye to the sea. Once ye git there ye’ll be safe enough.”

Noticing that Swifty had dozed off again, Abbie asked the seagull captain, "Can't you be our guide?"

"Well... I can folla ye, but ye'll need a native ta tell ye which plants might be dangerous, and which ones are friendly. I always fly overhead so I really can't tell ye those things."

For a long time, Abbie stood in silence, trying to decide on what to do. Finally she decided that she would follow the bird, and try to find a guide along the way. Maybe that guide will be able to help them to find the person that they are supposed to save.

Just then Swifty shook his head and awoke from his trance. With a few squeaks, he was he was once again speaking. "I have been listening to the Wind: and the Mighty Wind says that we should travel to the sea."

The gull jerked his head up and said, "The sea ye say? The one place that ye can't go to is the sea. The Serpent King, has driven away all of us good folk. It's no place fer the likes of ye to be goin'."

Abbie, who had fought to avoid listening to the wind, wasn't sure that she wanted to follow any instructions, which said to go to any dangerous place: at least not to a destination which was given by a source that she didn't understand. (As a nine year old, she had no problem accepting a talking Guinea Pig, but she couldn't see or understand the idea of a talking wind.) "Swifty: how do you know that you can trust the wind?"

“Ah Abbie, in this world, the Mighty Wind speaks for Aslan. Believe me, it is a source that we can trust. Aslan rarely comes here, so he sends his messages through the Mighty Wind,” said Swifty.

“Aye Lass, everyone knows this, although if truth be told, I’ve never before known anyone that could understand what the Wind was saying,” said the Captain.

The Guinea Pig turned to the gull and said. “My friend, anyone is able to understand the Wind. All that a person has to do is listen, and believe that the Wind really speaks to them. Anyone who really believes that can hear the Wind.”

“If ye says so matey. Which direction does the Wind say that we should a be headin’?”

Swifty pointed his nose towards a dirt path, which wound its way towards where the sun goes down, and he said, “That way.”

“Ah, little friend, that way leads to the sea, and I’ve already told ye that it’s too dangerous to go there,” said the Captain.

Swifty reared up majestically on his hind legs and lectured the doubting seagull. “That my friend is why we need our guide. This Serpent King has no place in the World of the Winds. Although he may have many minions, we will yet prevail. This Serpent who claims to be a king, is a fraud, and he shall be defeated by one who is truly of the royal blood.”

Scratching behind his ear with his left leg, Captain Flapp, continued to doubt. “Then he can’t be defeated. There ain’t no kings or queens in our world. Until this serpent came out of nowhere, we were all equals, and lived in peace. If we need

someone of royal blood to defeat him, we won't be able to find anyone with that quality."

Swiftly stood with his little paws on his hips and said, "We have here with us," pointing at Abbie, he continued, "Her Royal Highness, Princess Abigail of Narnia, daughter of the Warrior Queen Susan, and niece of the High King Peter. It is she who will lead us, it is she who will defeat the great foe of this world and it is she who will work a great wonder in the land where she is destined to rule!"

Abbie looked at Swiftly as if he had just gone insane. "Surely, you don't mean me? My mother is no queen... How can I be a ... Princess?"

"Daughter of Adam, your mother was once a great and powerful queen, and she ruled righteously in Narnia for many years. Sadly though, she has forgotten that part of her life: but if Aslan wills it, surely that which has been forgotten, may be restored. Now, what is your first command as our leader?"

She walked back and forth, for what seemed like hours to her thinking, but it was in reality only about twenty seconds. "Why don't we follow the directions of the wind?" Pointing in the direction that Swiftly had pointed at earlier, she said, "Let's go this way and find our guide?"

And that is just what they did



They walked through the tall grasses for several hours until they heard a weak voice crying for help: they hastened their step, while Captain Flapp did aerial reconnaissance. When they crested a small knoll, they saw that the poor trapped creature, was a puffy little ball, that was stuck to a majestic tree that was almost completely covered with honey. Abbie thought that the whole scene was so silly looking that she almost laughed.

Swifty, said in his squeaky voice, "There is our guide."

They adventurers hurried to the puffball's side and gently lifted him from his predicament. With a broad smile, Abbie smiled sweetly and said. "Hello friend. My name is Abbie Hodgekiss, and I've been sent here to rescue you."

Queen Susan tore the house apart searching for her daughter. After a couple of hours she noticed the little girl's footprints in the dust, which were entering into an old storeroom which; as far as she knew, hadn't been visited for years. Her heart froze when she saw the yellow and green rings laying on the floor. Two of them were missing.

## Chapter 5

### The Angry Plants

As soon as the intrepid puffball had been rescued, it occurred to Abbie that she had no idea of what she was supposed to do next. The bunny in the wood had told her that she had to rescue someone, and now she had. She also knew that eventually, she was supposed to meet up with someone called Aslan, and that she would also help her mother to remember him. But she also know that the Great Wind had told Swifty, that they were supposed to travel to the great sea.

Turning to the little puffball, she said, "We're on our way to the great sea, which our friend, Cap'n Flapp here says is dangerous, but what about you, my fluffy little friend? Are you going to join us, or are you going off on some other mission of your own?"

After a few moments of consideration, Fargul said, "Nothing that can't wait. I have an itch to see distant lands and new things and your quest seems like it was made for my needs. If you'll have me, I'd be glad to travel with you."

"Then it be settled mateys. Let me get aloft and I'll lead the way. When we get close I'll alight and we can make sure that the Serpent King is nowhere about." And with those words, Cap'n Flapp took wing and began his circling course toward the ocean.

Queen Susan sat pensively holding the rings in a nearby soap dish. Once she had wiped the dust off of it she scooped the rings into the dish, which provided a handy carrying vessel. Susan had suddenly remembered their old friend Diggory, telling her about the rings and the power that they had to whisk you away to another world. She knew that if she simply touched them, she could be taken away: but these kinds of things didn't fit into the orderly life that she had made for herself.

It had been a long time since she had done anything impulsive, so she sat on a box and deliberated for quite some time as to what course of action she should take. Eventually her concern for her daughter, outweighed her fear of the unknown, and she became determined to take a pair of the rings, and to go after her.

Even though she decided to go, she had over the years become too sensible to simply leave without taking some precautions. Therefore, she put two of the rings in the soap dish, and left a note for her husband explaining what had happened and where she went. If she couldn't find Abbie, maybe Henry would fair better, than she.

With that done she again sat down again on the dusty box, nervously picked up two of the rings with her handkerchief, and put one in her coat pocket. With sweat running down her forehead, she stared at the other ring, which might take her anywhere. She almost put it on four times, but pulled it back each time, just before it went on her finger. She pulled out a picture of Abbie, looked at it for a minute, and put the yellow ring on her finger.

Nothing happened.

Fargul floated along on the wind, while Swifty rode in Abbie's pocket. Cap'n Flapp yelled down from his position high up above, "Thar be the ocean ahead. We should be there tomorrow about noon."

Abbie chatted with Fargul and Swifty as she walked. Generally she found it to be a pleasant time, until she heard two gruff voices from somewhere ahead of them. They seemed to be arguing about something, but she couldn't quite make out who they were or exactly what they were talking about. Either way they sounded angry.

Suddenly the voices stopped.

From a nearby bramble, a gravelly voice shouted. "Halt! Who goes there?"

"The princess answered. "My name is Abbie Hodgekiss, and these are my friends... Where are you? I can't see you anywhere..." Swifty jumped out of Abbie's arms and quickly hid behind her.

The bushes that were partially blocking their way rustled harshly in the wind. "How can you not see us? We're right here in front of you!" The stern sounding voice said.

The hedge of angry bushes then pulled their roots all of the way out of the ground and shambled their way to the middle of the path, where they again dug their roots back into the packed down surface of the path. "There! Do you see us better now?!"

"Well I certainly do now," answered Abbie politely. "How do you do?"

"If people like you would quit bothering us, we'd be doing a lot better I think! Now, what are you doing here?"

Fargul whispered to Abbie. "Let me deal with these folks. I know how to deal with their people: I've had to do so before." With a nod from Abbie, and puffing himself to his fullest degree, he continued. "I am called Fargul, and these are my companions. We have traveled here from the valley of the great grasses. We have been led to you by the Great Wind. It is our intention to travel to the sea, where we will be given greater wisdom, so that our journey may then continue."

The leftmost bush shook with a laugh and said, "We are the Brothers Thorn, and I am the eldest. My name is Sharp, and these are my brothers, Rasp, Hasp and Tare; and we care nothing for your quest, if that be what it be! Our task is to turn you back, and make sure that you can never get to the sea. You may be moved by your Great Wind, but we follow the orders of the Serpent King. He pays us with golden fertilizer and bestows upon us great titles: therefore you shall not pass!"

Fargul answered them. "We cannot turn back, for where ever the Wind blows us, we long ago decided, there we have go. What will it take for you to let us pass?"

The now laughing bushes openly mocked the puffball. "Little puffer, you couldn't pay us enough to ignore an order of the Serpent King. If he got mad at us,

he would send a herd of goats to come and eat us up. What can a puny puffer and a little girl creature do to us? You can't even get close to us."

With that the Brothers Thorn, pelted them with a barrage of thorns and barbed seeds. Fargul blocked Abbie from the worst of the attack by floating between she and them: but that meant that he took the pain of the hurled objects into himself. This was a brave and unique Puffball! With his actions, he showed that he was the best of his kind.

Seeing that they had hurt him, the Brothers Thorn stepped up their attack hurtling wave upon wave of sharp objects at the delicate looking Puffball. Just then, out of nowhere, a gust of wind blew aside the thorns and spiked seeds.

The Brothers hurled another shower of thorns, and again, a gust of wind deflected them, even though not a hair on Abbie's head, and not a frond of Fargul's puffs were touched by the wind in any degree. Fargul shouted to the Brothers. "As you can see, the Great Wind will guide us safely through this! Give way, and let us pass."

With that, Sharp, of the Brothers Thorn shouted simply, "Never!!" And they increased their attack. The wind gusts howled louder and louder, with the winds increasing to gale forces and speeds knocking the dangerous missiles harmlessly away. The Brothers blew back and fourth, shaking wildly as the Wind tried to uproot them and blow them away: but their roots held firmly to the ground.

The Wind continued the defense, but as the Brothers saw that their roots held firm, they began taunting the Wind itself.

Abbie and Fargul began to fear that the Thorn Brothers could never be moved, when suddenly, one by one, the bushes screamed and were blown away. In the heart of the rapidly dieing storm, they both saw that indeed the roots had held. They still held: but there in the middle, still gnawing at what was left of the roots was Swifty the Guinea Pig.

Looking up, the furry Swifty smiled and said, "Sometimes it's the little and forgotten things that can save the day: and there isn't many things smaller and easier forgotten than I am."

Abbie picked up her beaming friend, and with a quick hug and a lot of laughing they continued on their way: always following the Great Wind towards the sea.

## Chapter 6

### Susan's Pursuit

Queen Susan was despondent. She had tried everything to get the rings to work, but she had failed at every attempt. It seemed to her that she had been sitting, still wearing her ring and backpacks full of supplies, on the cold wooden floor weeping for years, when in fact it had been but a few hours. She felt more helpless than she had been at any other point in her life.

Her son Andrew had been at school all day and knew nothing of his mother's activities that day. Somehow Susan had assumed that she could make her daring rescue and return at the same moment that she had left, for that was the way of the land that she dimly recalled as Narnia. She never completely realized that time travels differently in different worlds, so she really had no way of knowing how much time it was that she was going to really need.

Therefore she was still sitting on the floor when Andrew returned home from school. When the sandy haired boy got home, his mom wasn't in any of the places that he normally would have found her after school: and it's terribly important to an eight year old that mom is there when they get home. After an hour of playing games by himself, he went in search of his missing mother: eventually finding her on the floor of one of his and Abbie's special rooms. She was crying.

There are few things more terrifying to a young child than the sight of their mother crying. A youngster sees their parents as their sources of strength and well being: therefore he ran to her and put his arms around her to try to comfort not only her, but himself as well.

Susan put her arms around her son. She had forgotten that she still wore the magic ring, and as it touched her son, they were both whisked away from the face of the Earth that they knew so well. After a brief period of what felt like falling, they found themselves both in the most silent and reverent forest that ever could exist.

Susan had tried and tried to make the ring work, but she had failed. She had never realized that such rings were meant to be used only by the innocent and all who were a child at heart, and it had been a very long time since she had been either. Therefore when the ring touched the young Andrew, however briefly, its power was released, and their adventure had begun.

A great sleepiness washed over them both, so they laid down on the soft forest floor to take, what they thought, would be a brief nap.

Cap'n Flapp had traveled ahead of his friends thinking that he should scout out the lands ahead: therefore he had no idea of what had transpired during the traveler's confrontation with the Brothers Thorn. He had problems of his own.

The intrepid gull had circled his way towards the sea. He had pulled the goggles over his eyes, down from his hat, so that the wind stayed out of his eyes while he searched the ground below him.

He had traveled this course many times before, so he didn't really expect trouble, even though he had warned Abbie that the journey might be more dangerous than he had expected it to be. He felt the peace that can only be felt when gliding high above the world. From that vantage point, he felt as safe as he had been when he was still in the egg. Trouble seemed distant, and he was sure that nothing from down below could ever hurt him so high up in the air. He was content.

Unfortunately, what comes up must eventually come down, and things on the ground could definitely hurt him when the ground was where he was.

Soaring overhead, Cap'n Flapp neared the seaside. Seeing a school of fish just off shore, and feeling the grumbling of hunger within him, he dived into the water. He felt the rush of excitement, that all of his people felt when hunting the creatures who lived under the waves. Finally he grabbed a large tasty mandro fish, flew up out the water and lit on a crag of wet rocks at the waters edge.

He feasted on the mandro fish and became just a little too distracted, for after a long contented glide, a happy hunt and a full stomach, he sat down on the rocks to sun himself. He closed his eyes for a long nap.

After about a half hours time, he was awaked from his slumber by a voice that he knew too well. His blood ran cold.

The slithery voice of the Serpent King hissed, "Hello Flapp. Ssssss. What are you doing here hmmm? Ssss."

He found himself wrapped in the coils of the Serpent King, and was surrounded by the king's reptilian henchmen. "Maybe taking a nap wasn't a good idea," he thought to himself.



Young Andrew was likewise awaked from his slumber by an unexpected presence. He felt a tickling around his nose, and when he opened his eyes, he was starring into the eyes of a large white rabbit: its twitching whiskers moving over his face as the bunny chewed on the soft grasses.

The bunny sat up on its haunches and stared directly into Andrew's eyes. He could almost swear that the creature had an amused look on its face. Reaching over with his left hand, he shook his mother gently. "Mom? ... Mom! ... Wake up Mom!"

Susan, feeling the child's nudging, dragged herself out of the soundest sleep that she had ever before experienced. She desperately wanted to go back to sleep, but she knew that she had to see what the child wanted. It was strange, but she couldn't quite remember who the lad was: there was something about the place that seemed to dull the senses. She knew that he was important to her, but that was about all that she could remember.

Looking at the boy it slowly came back to her. It was her son... Andy maybe? "Why was there a rabbit there?" She thought sleepily.

The Rabbit nodded its head in one direction, beckoning them to follow: its paws pulling the boy behind it.

Susan got groggily to her feet and followed, her leaden legs, plodding through a hazy existence, moving one difficult step after another. After what seemed an eternity, they stood in front of the same pool that Abbie and Swifty had stood just days before.

The rabbit beckoned them to jump but they just stood there. It beckoned them again with no better results. With a frown, it went behind them, and used its big feet, like a kangaroo, to kick them into the pool, where they again felt the dropping sensation.

The Serpent King squeezed Cap'n Flapp tighter in its coils. "I assked nicely before ... ssss ... Why have you come here?"

Although the Gull had held out for quite a while, he finally decided that he would be no help to Abbie if he was dead, so he decided to tell the King, at least some of the truth. "I be scoutin' ahead fer a party that be on a quest. I never intended to land in yer territory, and I beg yer pardon, great King. If ye'll be so kind as to let me go I'll be botherin' ye no longer."

This didn't satisfy the King at all, but it piqued its curiosity. "Scouting ahead you ssssay? A party on a quessst you sssay? An invasssion party perhapsss?"

"Oh no, no, no great sir. It's just a little girl creature, and her pet. They be looking for someone that I've never heard of before. They say that the wind tol' them to go to the sea."

Now the serpent was intrigued. An invasion force was certainly a concern to him, but a child was nothing to worry about, though she might make a tasty dinner for him. The snake chuckled a hissing laugh. "All right Flapp ... sss ... I'll let you free. ... sss ... Did the child happen to sssay who ssshe wasss looking for?" The coils loosened, and Flapp was almost able to get free. Almost, but not quite...

"Aye, she did. It was someone she called Aslan."

The snake looked shocked. Turning an evil smile to the seagull, he said, "Assslan you sssay? Sssso ... my ancient enemy sstill livesss! Thiss isss an opportunity that we can't passs up. We will sset up a trap for the lion. We will finally take the day!"

## Chapter 7

### At The Sea

The trail to the sea was rugged, but Abbie managed it in record time. After defeating the Brothers Thorn, they received no challenges to impede their progress. The rocky path wound around the cliffs and outcrops on its way down to the sea. She had to struggle on occasion to keep her balance, for the loose stones slid and gave way beneath her fairly often.

She had smelled the sea long before she had glimpsed it. Abbie's home wasn't so far away from the sea that she couldn't recognize the familiar smell in a minute. The scent of the sea was familiar and it brought a homey feeling to her. It reminded her of the times that her parents used to take her and Andrew to the beach, in the days before her formal education had began. She had often thought that those were the happiest days of her life.

Next she heard the roar of the waves crashing upon the rocky coast, it's power and majesty evident in the thunderous pounding which continued to grow in strength until she turned the final bend and finally saw the wide ocean spread before her. It

could almost be an ocean from back home, except that it sported bright orange crests on its waves, most unlike the usual whitecaps of home.

Stopping short, she also saw her friend, Cap'n Flapp, who was now tied up and held captive among an army of snakes, lizards and other assorted reptiles. The largest snake of them all wore a purple robe and a golden crown. Swaying its head in a beckoning fashion, it bade them to approach. Abbie realized almost immediately that this must be the Serpent King that she had been warned about.

Susan and Andrew regained their memories as soon as they touched down in the unfamiliar world. They had arrived at exactly the same spot that Abbie did when she had arrived there. Andrew's head stood just slightly above the height of the sea of grasses: which seemed to be dancing rhythmically to the motions of the wind. The sweet smell of flowers all about them nearly overwhelmed their senses with pleasant aromas.

Andrew looked up at his mother and said, "I like this place Mom. Is it supposed to be a new place for Abbie and I to play?"

Being reminded of Abbie, Susan choked back a tear and said, "No dear. Abbie's lost and we're here to try to find her."

"How are we going to do that? I don't see her anywhere around here."

"Neither do I dear..." She cast her eyes about the vast prairies in the wild hope of seeing her daughter, but she could not be found that way.

Thinking it out logically, for that she believed was always the best way to do it, she envisioned herself going door to door and questioning every passerby to see if

they had seen a little girl pass that way. Then she started thinking about the horrible things that evil strangers might do to a little girl who was alone in a strange place and she began to panic. Maybe she should have called the police instead of running off so emotional and all. She began to despair of the idea of ever finding her when Andrew spoke up.

Andrew had been doing something at her feet and she had been too lost in her own thoughts to pay as much attention to him as she should have: she daren't let anything happen to him too. "Hey mom, look at these footprints in the mud. You think they might be Abbie's?"

Bending down to take a look, she saw the imprint of the familiar shoemaker's mark. There wasn't much chance of anyone else in this world having such footwear: they must be Abbie's. She had come that way after all. There was only one set of prints, since Abbie had been carrying Swifty, so Susan assumed that her daughter was traveling all alone.

Giving her son a weak smile, she said to him, "Yes. Those are her footprints. Why don't we follow them until we find your sister."

So they picked up their things and they set off in search of the missing princess.

The Serpent King must have been at least forty feet long: His scaly head reared up at least eight feet above the rest of its coiled body: a sly grin extending broadly across its fanged mouth. A wicked looking tongue darted in and out of its mouth while its head swayed hypnotically back and forth.

Swiftly whispered to Abbie, so that the snake wouldn't know that he was intelligent. "Watch out for this one Abbie. Don't let yourself be swayed into sleepiness by its motions, or we'll end up in the beast's belly faster than you can scratch behind my ear. Listen to the Wind Abbie. Trust the Wind."

Seeing Cap'n Flapp gagged, tied up and held by the King's henchmen would have been enough to warn her of this: still, a little reminder never hurt anyone.

"Hsss... Hello child. Why have you come ... ssss ... to my domain? ... sss"

Standing up as impressively as she could, Abbie answered its question with one of her own. "Why do you have my friend over there all tied up?"

"Oh, isss thiss a friend of yoursss. You ssshould choosse your friendsss a little better. Thiss bird isss a known enemy of my kingdom and hasss been arressed. Ssshould I arressst you too... hmmm?"

*"Don't answer the serpent Abbie."* She heard the Wind as plain as day, although it was obvious that the reptiles didn't.

After a few minutes, the snake spoke again. "Well, maybe not yet... should I eat you perhapsss?..."

Silence.

The snake, though becoming frustrated, wasn't through just yet. "No? Then the ssseagull perhapsss, hmmm?..."

*"Not yet Abbie. For now, Junius Flapp is safe."*

The wind built in speed and ferocity and pelted the snake with flying dirt and pebbles, forcing it to close its eyes willingly. A sharply barbed tumbleweed hit the serpent that was holding Junius Flapp. Pulling its claws up in front of its face for

protection, it was forced to release the intrepid gull: who, seeing his opportunity immediately took wing.

The Serpent King roared in anger. "Who are you to challenge me tiny child!? ... Hsssss ..... What gives you the courage to face me down when you are sssso obviously helplessss!?"

*"Go ahead Abbie. Tell him who you really are."*

With a courage that she never knew that she possessed, Abbie stood straight and faced the beast. Proudly she said, "I am Abbigail Hodgkiss: the last Princess of Narnia!"

At the name of Narnia, the snake froze. It knew of Narnia, and it knew of its great ruler, the Serpent King's eternal enemy. It shouted back, to be heard over the shrieking Wind. "I had long ago been to thiss Narnia, that you speak of: and I was cassst out from there. I have heard that it iss no more, sssso what have I to fear from the likess of thee?!"

"It is not me that you need to fear. It is the one who I seek that you should fear, ugly snake!"

Not wanting to hear the answer, but knowing that it must know, it asked the girl one last question. "Who iss thiss that you ssseek?"

The Wind rose beyond cyclone speeds, as if to hurl her answer across the very seas. She spoke with a voice of thunder, "His name is Aslan. The one that I am seeking is called ASLAN!!"

Her words were indeed blown to distances beyond all imagining, beyond the furthest ocean, beyond the distant sky: and she was answered, by the roar of a Lion: majestic and more powerful than anyone could have imagined.

The snake trembled.

Many miles from the sea, Queen Susan and Prince Andrew heard the Lion's reply. They looked up from the trail that they had been traveling and searched the sky, but he could not be seen.

Susan vaguely recalled hearing that roar before, and her blood raced with excitement.

## Chapter 8

### Meeting Aslan

Over the waves could be seen the daily sunset, but beyond that a greater light was rising, much brighter and warmer than the fading light of the day's spent sun. Accompanying it was the nearing roar of the Great Lion.

Hearing the sound, the Serpent King became panicky. It knew that its time would be short and it desperately needed some kind of an edge. Swinging its tarnished crowned head back toward Abbie, its gaze became the glare of intense scrutiny. It noticed for the first time, the nose of the guinea pig sticking out from underneath her sweater.

Thinking to itself silently about the guinea pig it thought, "That creature could be a nice snack perhaps, but no real help there." The puffball wafting on the wind seemed even less important to the snake than the rodent. It was wrong in both

cases of course, because the Great Wind had spoken to both of them, and their guidance had been invaluable to Abbie.

Then it eyed the bulge of the diamond egg, which had been stuffed into her backpack. It didn't really know what the bag contained, but it was getting desperate.

"Hssss... That'sss all right my dear. ... sss I am not an unreasssonable ruler. I'll tell you what. ... sss ... I will ssspare the livesss of your friendsss if you jusst give me the contentsss of your bag. Sssimply asss a token of friendssship, you undersstand..."

Abbie had almost forgotten about that wondrous gift which the bunny had given her. Pulling it out of her backpack she studied it: for the first time really. It was made of the clearest diamond imaginable. It had been decorated with intricate designs, etched in gold and silver leaf, which had been therein inlaid with the most perfect of rubies, sapphires and emeralds.

As lovely as the exterior was, it was as dirt compared to the intricate weave of the power of pure life, which could be see growing within it. At that moment, Abbie realized for the first time that the egg was alive. This was no gaudy Easter Egg. This was something much much more.

The Serpent King too immediately saw its worth, and coveted it. If it could harness this great power, perhaps it could hobble even the great Lion. If not it must keep Aslan from ever obtaining it. "Hsss ... well my dear, what do you sssay?"

The egg sang to Abbie's soul and the Great Wind sang an intricate harmony. The resulting melody told her that she could not save herself: she must call out to the Lion for help and salvation. She was given a great trust and she must not let her heart fail. She must remain valiant and always choose the right.

Looking the serpent in the eye, she said, "I'm sorry sir, but this egg is not mine to give." Then she turned to the sea and shouted in the stillness within and without her. "Aslan, great Lion of which I have heard: please come to me and save me and my friends. I am but a poor and helpless child and I find that I am barely able to resist this great enemy before me. I can do nothing of myself. Please come to me great king."

The snake hissed in an attempt to act before it was too late. With the whispered word "Fool...", the snake struck at the helpless child: its fangs flashing wide: its venom dripping. The snake leaped at the girl as if to swallow her whole.

From the sea the Great Lion Aslan rocketed, intercepting the strike with a great roar, and in a second the serpent was in his mouth. Shaking his golden maned head, his fangs bit deeply through the scaled creatures neck. Shaking it violently, the Lion spat out the mangled reptile, like a discarded watermelon seed. The once great Serpent King slithered away, looking for a hole to cower in.



Turning to the young girl, Aslan became the picture of love, and Abbie suddenly felt safer than at any time in her life. Without being told, she knew that this was the Aslan that she had traveled so far to meet.

Being raised a proper girl, she curtsied and bowed her head low. While she was doing so, she saw that Swifty had already been doing so, but Fargul and Cap'n Flagg floated in the air nervously: not really sure of what to do. She turned to her friends and said, "This is Aslan, the King. It is he who will lead us to our destiny. Come and show reverence to him."

The two friends lit on the ground just behind her and made obeisance. The deep rumble that was the voice of Aslan said, "Rise my friends and rejoice, for your time is indeed nigh: and just as you arise, it is time for Narnia to once again rise, for a time: and this time the vile Serpent King Tash will be contained here, in this world, for the span of a thousand years. During that time you shall rebuild Narnia, and all there shall live without Tash's evil influences. The New Narnia shall be a place of chances and second chances and a home for all who need to heal their spirits."

"You must travel there and begin your tasks. I will wait here for yet a short while, but you must travel on to that land which has passed away. There you will find friends who will tell you what it is that you must do. When you have completed your tasks, I shall come and stay with you forever. Go now, for I shall see you soon enough."

With another curtsy, Abbie asked the majestic lion, "How sir shall we get there?"

"Dear one, just put on both of your rings at once and walk into the ocean, and there you will find adventures beyond your imaginings." And Aslan turned his attention to the path that they had traveled on their trek to the sea as if listening for something.

With Swifty safely tucked away in her sweater, and Cap'n Flapp and Fargul resting securely on her shoulders, Abbie put on her rings and entered the ocean.

## Chapter 9

### Building the New Narnia

Susan and Andrew had finally reached the golden honey tree, and the young boy couldn't have been happier. It isn't every day after all that a young boy finds an unlimited supply of his favorite treat.

Growing up in a sensible house as he and Abbie had done, they were generally denied sweet treats, so honey was one of the few ways that Andrew had been able to satisfy his sweet tooth: for after all, it is well known that all young boys have a sweet tooth.

He was busy indulging himself when he heard voices behind him. They were weak small voices, that he never would have heard if they hadn't stopped to rest and refresh themselves, for rustling through the undergrowth can be a noisy affair. He perked up his ears and listened more intently.

"Mom," he said, "Do you hear those voices?"

Susan had been leaning up against a rock dozing when suddenly she was wakened by a nudge from her young son. "What is it dear?"

"Shhh. Listen."

Now fully awake, Queen Susan started to pay attention. All about her was the babble of tiny voices, but she saw nothing but the flowers. As she stood, she saw that the flowers moved to follow her movements. "How very odd" she thought.

Speaking up she asked, "Who's there? Is there somebody here?"

The quiet babble became silence

Susan continued. "Please, we mean you no harm. Is there someone there?"

Finally a bright yellow rose stretched up to her direction and hesitantly said, "Who are you? Here we have always been, and we all know each other well. It is you that is the stranger here. Who are you?"

Andrew jumped up with excitement, "It's a talking flower! Mom it's a talking flower! Isn't that wonderful?"

Waving her son back to silence, Susan studied the flower as if there was something that she really should remember. Narrowing her eyes she answered. "I am Susan Hodgekiss, and this is my son Andrew. We're looking for my daughter Abbie, who has gone missing."

"See, I told you that these creatures had something to do with the ones that were here the other day!" Interjected a pink flower with its quiet shout.

Suddenly excited at the possibility of finding her daughter, Susan said, "Abbie? You've seen my Abbie?"

The pink flower was all too happy to speak to her. "We saw a creature that looked a lot like you. We have never before seen creatures like you, so it's a good guess that the only other one that we've ever seen might be related to you. What kind of a creature are you anyway?"

Andrew was happy to answer the friendly flower. We are people... humans that is, and we come from a place called Earth. My sister's all alone and probably really scared, so we've come to find her. How can you talk without a mouth?"

"We talk directly to each others minds. We don't need mouths. You're sister is just fine: but you are mistaken about one thing. She is not alone. Your sister is traveling with a little mammal, a seagull and a puffball."

Susan froze. "Did they kidnap her? Did they tie her up?"

The yellow flower reassured them, "They were her friends. She rescued the puffball, and they all vowed to help her in her quest. They promised to help her to find someone named Aslan who would be able to help her."

Susan sucked in her breath. "Aslan..." she whispered, as she felt the clouds of her memory begin to part for her.

Abbie and her friends found themselves on a rocky frozen plain. They were surrounded by total blackness, and for the first time since Abbie's adventure began she felt true despair.

Pulling her sweater tighter around her she shivered in the icy cold. She could feel the warmth of Swifty and Cap'n Flapp as they huddled close to her to share their body's heat, while Fargul tickled her ear.

She shouted into the infinite darkness, "Aslan... Aslan, we need you. We need your help."

As soon as the words left her mouth she saw a rectangular light appear: it's brightness shown above that of the sun and they immediately felt a warmth wash over them. It was slightly to her right and about thirty yards away. Standing in the doorway were three personages of incredible glory, who stepped through the door and walked purposefully toward them.

The one in the lead raised up his right hand in a sign of greeting and said, "Little princess, we have long awaited your coming. I am your uncle, the High King Peter, and these with me, are your Uncle, King Edmund and your Aunt, Queen Lucy. We have been sent here by Aslan to help you complete your task."

Queen Lucy opened her arms and said, "Little niece, come to me and let me hug you. When your task is finished I hope to introduce you to your grandparents. Now come."

Abbie had always felt that there was something missing in her family, and seeing these three she instinctively knew that they were what was missing. She ran into the arms of her aunt and felt the real and full love of family for the first time in her life. She wept the first of the many tears of joy that she would now feel from then on.

Peter said, "You have called out to Aslan to save you and your prayers have been answered, and you have been saved. It is now time to bring about the New Narnia. Tell me dear princess, what does New Narnia need most?"

“Light... and heat,” she replied. Peter snapped his fingers, and the sky brightened with an unfocused, diffused light: the land, and all things in it warmed considerably.

“And now?” Peter asked.

“Water and food great King.”

Once spoken, the waters that had been locked up in the soil burst forth, in a matter of minutes, the rivers, lakes and seas had returned to the once wasted land.

King Edmund stepped forward and spoke next, “Beloved niece, let me speak now to your friends.” Turning to Fargul he said, “Noble friend, and faithful companion of my dear niece: you have always known that you had a great mission. If you now know what your fate is, now is the time for you to fulfill your destiny.”

Fargul turned to his friends. His face glowed with fulfillment and incomparable joy. “Farwell my friends. I go to now to achieve a greatness beyond my wildest imaginings. You shall always have my gratitude and my love.”

With that the courageous puffball rose high into the sky and with a blinding flash, he released his seeds, which scattered across the entire face of the world, immediately taking root. Along with his seeds traveled the large variety of seeds that had become attached to him, while he had been stuck on the honey tree, and even the seeds that had been hurled at him by the Brothers Thorn. Within ten minutes, the world was once again green.

With his seeds scattered, if he were still in his old world, Fargul would now be dying, but Aslan was not done with him. The face of Fargul was raised into the high heaven, and became the face of the new sun. Edmund explained that there could be

no one who understood the importance of the sun to a world than one who had once relied on the sun for sustenance.

He shouted down from the sky above, "I'll be watching you all from above my friends. You will always have my love."

Edmund next turned to Cap'n Flapp.

## Chapter 10

### A Task Completed

The flowers had pointed out the path that Abbie had previously taken, so, after bidding the flowers a warm farewell, the once Queen and her son Andrew traveled the same route as had her daughter only days before: a route that led them ever towards the sea.

Those were good days with warm skies and a gentle breeze. The path they walked was neither rocky nor difficult. They actually had a pleasant enough stroll: that is they did until they reached that same place where Abbie and her friends had been accosted by the Brothers Thorn.

Several times along the way, she could swear that she had heard a voice drifting to them on the wind. She tried to see if there were more talking flowers about her, but there were none to be found. Andrew tried to insist that it was the wind itself that she had heard, but she just shushed him and moved on.

Days before, Swifty the guinea pig had chewed away the stems of the Brothers Thorn, which made it possible for them to be blown away by a great wind. This brought salvation to Abbie: unfortunately they hadn't bothered to pull up the roots, so that, by the time Susan and Andrew arrived, the Brothers Thorn had grown back from the surviving roots. They were weeds after all, and their experience made them ornerier than ever.

They didn't even bother to challenge her this time. They simply began their barrage of seeds and thorns and then they simply ordered her to turn around and go away.

Unfortunately for the Brothers, this confrontation had two differences from their fight with Abbie. Firstly, they were not yet the weeds that they once were. They had not yet fully grown back, and therefore were still rather stunted in their size.

Secondly, Susan was not Abbie. While the little girl had been just that, a little girl: Susan still had the instincts of the warrior queen that she once was. She pulled a machete out of her bag, and hewed them down in two shakes of a billy-goats tail. Then she took out a lighter and set fire to them: reducing them, and their roots to ashes. They would not be menacing anyone ever again.

"Come on," she said to Andrew, not looking back. "Let's get to the sea."

King Edmund looked the aging seagull in the eye, since it is well known that birds often have their eyes so placed that they must see from the side, Edmund stood by his side and a little before him.

“Dear friend, “ he said, “you have a task too. Being a seagull, you have intimate knowledge of the types of birds and fishes that inhabited your old world. It will be your task to fly from one end of this place to another, and as you speak the name of a type of bird or fish, by the power of Aslan, it shall come into existence here also. This is to be a place of beauty, so be especially careful to select only those fish and fowls of good dispositions and faithful hearts.”

“Since this is a job that requires so much flying that no normal bird would have the strength to accomplish it, you will be given youth and stamina. Kneel now before me Cap’n Flapp.”

King Edmund took out his sword and placed the point of it, first on the gull’s right shoulder, then on his left, and said solemnly. “I now dub thee, Sir Flapp: first knight in the realm of the New Narnia, defender of the weak and Lord of all things finned and feathered. You are no longer Captain Flapp. Arise Lord Flapp, and fly to your task.”

The once cap’n knelt as a seagull, but rose a young and powerful phoenix. His flaming wings and gentle countenance looked once down on Abbie and said with a smile, “I’ll be seeing you kid.” He rocketed into the air, did a few loops and set about his task, and almost immediately, the songs of birds blossomed around all around them.

After a few minutes, Queen Lucy reached out to Abbie and Swifty crawled out of her sweater and into the queenly embrace. She hugged the little creature and felt the love of his spirit.

Finally she said to the guinea pig. “Your destiny precedes even the foundations of the first Narnia. You will eventually do for the land creatures, both

mammalian and reptilian what Sir Flapp is now doing for the fowls and fishes, but I perceive that you desire no honors such as he received. Tell me dear one, what is your hearts desire?"

"Great Queen, I think that I have already received my reward," answered Swifty. "All that any pet desires is the love of a caring owner, and when all is said and done, I am, and will always be a pet. My first owner was uncaring, but I have been loved and do truly love my new owner, Princess Abbie. Let me continue to be her pet and I'll be more than rewarded."

Lucy smiled and said, "Well spoken dear one, all that you have asked shall be. Now, you have watched the many creatures of the many worlds from your vantage point in the woods. Picture now, in your mind, all of the loving and noble ones, and they shall dwell here with you all."

Almost immediately they were surrounded by the pleasant sounds of the wild. In the distance could be see a herd of Golden horned unicorns, and beyond that lay a herd of silver wooled sheep. At their feet played dancing mice and industrious ants.

With a smile Queen Lucy said, "You have chosen well little friend. Soon the land will be ready for Aslan to return and stay with you for the thousand years to come. But there is one thing missing." Holding Swifty gently up to her face she asked, "Do you know what that is?"

Nodding an affirmative, Swifty answered. "There is no wind here great Queen. No place should exist without the whispering wind."

Lucy's smile grew to a beam. "Well spoken dear one."

As soon as it was said, they all felt the gentle breeze as it entered the New Narnia for the first time.

## Chapter 11

### A Queen No More

The time of Susan's great trial was upon her and she didn't even know it. Great and important events are like that sometimes: they sneak up on you when you least expect it.

After a rather uneventful journey from the place where she had defeated the Brothers Thorn, she came down that winding path which led to the sea. The wind whistled in her ears, and she tried her best to ignore it.

Andrew heard the same wind, and became increasingly alarmed. "Mom? We don't know what we'll find down there: shouldn't we approach it more cautiously?" He said.

"You might be right Andy," she said. He knew that he had been right about her being upset, because she only called him Andy when she was really worried. "Why don't you wait here. I'll call up to you if the coast is clear."

With that Andrew sat down on a rock and apparently waited patiently.

Susan moved forward cautiously. She couldn't believe that her mind had been wandering earlier. She couldn't believe that Andrew seemed wiser at that moment than she had been herself: but she vowed that she would from that time forward be more careful.

As she rounded that last bend, that same strangely orange wide sea opened to her view that Abbie had seen earlier. Somehow she had expected to find her daughter waiting patiently on the seashore, making sand castles, as she used to when she was younger. No one was there that she could see.

She had followed Abbie's tracks, so she knew that she had passed this way, but there was no one to see. The little girl's tracks became mixed in with numerous other tracks: none of them were human. The tracks seemed to be mostly reptilian, along with at least those of one very large cat.

From the rocks where the Serpent King had hidden itself, it watched Queen Susan, as she studied the beach. It recognized her as the once queen of long lost Narnia: Susan by name. Of all of the Kings and Queens of Narnia, only she had listened to the Serpent's silent enticing. Before the King that slithered on its belly stood the Fallen Queen. This was an opportunity that the serpent felt that it simply must exploit. The snake slithered out of its hiding place, to speak to her.

"Hsss. ... Hello again Sssusssan, it hasss been a very long time sssince I've ssssen you. Do you remember your old friend?" He may have looked like a snake to everyone else, but Susan saw it as her old friend Candy King.

It had been Candy who had taught Susan how to apply her make up properly, and it was she who taught her how to attract men. Candy also taught her how to grow

up and put away those foolish games that she had played as a child. It was Candy who convinced her that there never was any Aslan: and that there never was any Narnia. With time Candy became her closest friend and dearest confidant.

Susan ran to Candy and threw her arms around her. The vision clouded her mind's eye, blinding her to the approaching army of reptiles. It was the serpent's plan to capture the once queen and use her to draw the little princess away from Aslan, and from Aslan's protection. If it could do that, perhaps the serpent might be able to prevent the rebuilding of that great kingdom of Narnia.

The wind shrieked around her but her senses had been numbed. The serpent coiled around her and she welcomed its embrace.

Young Prince Andrew got bored with waiting for his mother, but she told him to wait, and he was a good boy and always did what he was told. He was daydreaming, so he didn't notice the wind whispering to him at first, but it howled louder and got his attention. It whistled down the pathway to the beach, with an urgency that he couldn't ignore. He could almost swear that it spoke to him.

*"Hurry lad! Your mother needs you now like she has never needed anyone before! Hurry to her lad!"*

He leaped off of his rock and ran toward his mom. As he rounded that fateful bend he saw her taken prisoner by a huge snake. She looked as if she had been drugged. Her eyes were out of focus and she hung limply. "MOM!!!" he shouted.

That shout attracted the attention of the snake who quickly ordered its underlings to attack the helpless child.

Susan's mind was in a fog, where she imagined that she was winning beauty contests and receiving the adoration of stardom. It was very pleasurable, but there was no joy in it because it was not really happening. Through the haze she saw a young boy running towards her. 'Could that be Andrew?' she thought. 'What's he doing here she wondered?'

His voice cut sharply through the fog. He was calling out in fear to her. She must shake this off somehow, she thought, but the muddling of her mind got stronger. She must help her son.

She was now completely immobile. She saw Andy surrounded by creatures who were about to kill him, but she could do nothing to help him. She was swirling down in a whirlpool of despair, with everything fading into blackness. Was there no one to save her son?

Then from a deeply buried corner of her soul she remembered that there was indeed one who had always been there for her when she needed him. Frantically she tried to drag that name out from that most hidden places within her almost lost memories.

The darkness around her was almost complete when a name broke free of her restrained lips. "ASLAN!!!" she shouted to the skies. "Aslan please save my son. I had deserted you and confess my unfaithfulness. Do what you will with me, just please old friend... save my son." What started as shout, ended in a whisper.

As the words left her mouth, the great Lion was upon the reptiles, claws flashing through scales that offered the cold-blooded beasts no protection. They

scattered to the four corners of the lands, in hope of never having to see the likes of Aslan ever again.

In a gentle voice Aslan said to Andrew. "Stay behind me Son of Eve. We must now free your mother."

Princess Abbigail and her faithful pet stood on the top of the grassy hill, with her aunt and uncles: waiting there and getting to know each other. She told them about her father and her brother and about the life that they lived back home. For their part, they told her the stories about her mother, a Queen in Narnia: and of her great adventures.

They introduced her to her grandparents and to a cousin called Eustace, and to many other great and interesting people. They also explained to her that Aslan would soon come and take up his place there. When that happens they explained, they must all return to the place whence they came. If Aslan allows, they said, they will come and visit her occasionally, but they could not promise.

It was one of the most pleasurable afternoons that she had ever experienced in her life.

The Wind danced around them and Swifty said simply. "Aslan comes."

They heard a roar, and as they turned their heads, they saw Aslan approaching through the tall grasses. When Abbie saw Andrew and her mother alongside him, she ran to them as fast as she could and leaped into her mother's arms. Just when she had thought that an afternoon couldn't get any better, it did. Her joy, as was Susan's was full.

They cried and swapped stories of their adventures. Eventually, Susan looked about and she saw them. There at the top of the hill stood her brothers and sister, and right behind them stood her mother and father. All she knew had died, and she feared that she could never again lay her eyes on them: but there they were.

Several days later, those who had arrived there through the doorway had to return, and it was time for the last living Queen of Narnia to face her fate.

Queen Susan stood before Aslan for judgment.

The embodiment of Narnia spoke softly to her. "Beloved Susan, you had for a while, lost your way, but you have been found, so this is a day of rejoicing. Being lost from me was punishment enough. Still there is a price to be paid for your unfaithfulness. Therefore, as the Old Narnia has passed away, and this is a New Narnia, you shall be a Queen in Narnia, no more: although Abbie and Andrew shall be Prince and Princess of the New Narnia for all time."

"In the morning, you three shall return to your home, where a difficult task awaits you. This New Narnia still lacks people. You will tell your husband of the New Narnia. He will believe you. The two of you will go to the hopeless in your world and give them hope. When you find the best and most noble, for whom life has never given them a chance at happiness, you will put a ring on their finger: and if they are truly worthy, they shall find a home here. When the rings are gone from your world, your penance shall be done."

"Although you will no longer be permitted to return here, while you yet live: the young Prince and Princess will return many times. Please give them of your strength

and encouragement. Be of good cheer. When your time comes, you shall once again be queen and sit with your husband and the other Kings and Queens of Narnia.”

“Now let us spend one more night together beloved daughter, and then we shall all move forward into the future.” And that is what they did.

## About the Author

Mark Jenks is a rather unremarkable guy who has done a few remarkable things (Like, as a teen-ager, creating the CB term 10-100 which is now used worldwide and was used in the movie *Smokey and the Bandit*). His published writings have been mostly for local and statewide magazines on matters relating to Amateur Radio, Genealogy and History, but his love of fantasy and science fiction has been a constant throughout his life.

He started writing Science Fiction as a lark one day in 2002 when he was bored, to see if he could write a whole book. There was a discussion on NPR about how many people start to write books but never finish them, and he wondered if he was one of them: so he sat down and wrote a book called *East of OZ*.

He found that he loved writing science fiction as much as he loved reading it and has written many short stories and several complete books since then. (Including a Star Trek book he called *Lost Yesterdays* and a Doctor Who book which he called *Young Doctor Who*) Some day he might try to get them published. For now he writes for the love of writing. What the heck, it's a cheap hobby.

In 2007, he decided that every year for Christmas he would write a story for his nephews. In that year he wrote this book about the land of New Narnia, and it went over well with them, so there will be further stories of New Narnia each Christmas written for these boys.