The Magician's Nephew*-The Founding of Narnia*
By C. S. Lewis

In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing. It was very far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to come from all directions at once. Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath them. Its lower notes were deep enough to be the voice of the earth herself. There were no words. There was hardly even a tune. But it was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it. The horse seemed to like it too; he gave the sort of whinny a horse would give if, after years of being a cab horse, it found itself back in the old field where it had played as a foal, and saw someone whom it remembered and loved coming across the field to bring it a lump of sugar.

"Gawd!" said the Cabby. "Ain't it lovely?"

Then two wonders happened at the same moment. One was that the Voice was suddenly joined by other voices, more voices than you could possibly count. They were in harmony with it, but far higher up the scale: cold, tingling, silvery voices. The second wonder was that the blackness overhead, all at once, was blazing with stars. They didn't come out gently, one by one, as they do on a summer evening. One moment there had been nothing but darkness; next moment a thousand, thousand points of light leaped out: single stars, constellations, and planets, brighter and bigger than any in our world. There were no clouds. The new stars and the new voices began at exactly the same time. If you had seen and heard it, as Digory did, you would have felt quite certain that it was the stars themselves who were singing, and that it was the first Voice, the deep one, which had made them appear and made them sing.

"Glory be!" said the Cabby. "I'd ha' been a better man all my life if I'd known there were things like this."

The Voice on the earth was now louder and more triumphant; but the voices in the sky, after singing loudly with it for a time, began to get fainter. And now something else was happening. Far away, and down near the horizon, the sky began to turn gray. A light wind, very fresh, began to stir. The sky, in that one place, grew slowly and steadily paler. You could see shapes of hills standing up dark against it. All the time the Voice went on singing.

There was soon light enough for them to see one another's faces. The Cabby and the two children had open mouths and shining eyes; they were drinking in the sound, and they looked as if it reminded them of something. Uncle Andrew's mouth was open too, but not open with joy. He looked more as if his chin had simply dropped away from the rest of his face. His shoulders were stooped and his knees shook. He was not liking the Voice. If he could have got away from it by creeping into a rat's hole, he would have done so. But the Witch looked as if, in a way, she understood the music better than any of them. Her mouth was shut, her lips were pressed together, and her fists were clenched. Ever since the song began she had felt that this whole world was filled with a magic different from hers, and stronger. She hated it. She would have smashed that whole world, or all worlds, to pieces, if it would only stop the singing. The horse stood with his ears well forward and twitching. Every now and then he snorted and stamped the ground. He no longer looked like a tired old cab horse; you could now well believe that his father had been in battles.

The eastern sky changed from white to pink and from pink to gold. The Voice rose and rose, till

all the air was shaking with it. And just as it swelled to the mightiest and most glorious sound it had yet produced, the sun arose.

Digory had never seen such a sun. The sun above the ruins of Charn had looked older than ours; this looked younger. You could imagine that it laughed for joy as it came up. And as its beams shot across the land, the travelers could see for the first time what sort of place they were in. It was a valley through which a broad, swift river wound its way, flowing eastward toward the sun. Southward there were mountains, northward there were lower hills. But it was a valley of mere earth, rock, and water; there was not a tree, not a bush, not a blade of grass to be seen. The earth was of many colors; they were fresh, hot, and vivid. They made you feel excited, until you saw the singer himself, and then you forgot everything else.

It was a Lion. Huge, shaggy, and bright, it stood facing the risen sun. Its mouth was wide open in song and it was about three hundred yards away.

"This is a terrible world," said the Witch. "We must fly at once. Prepare the magic."

"I quite agree with you, Madam," said Uncle Andrew.

"A most disagreeable place. Completely uncivilized. If only I were a younger man and had a gun—"

"Garn!" said the Cabby. "You don't think you could shoot *'im,* do you?"

"And who *would?"* said Polly.

"Prepare the magic, old fool," said Jadis.

"Certainly, Madam," said Uncle Andrew cunningly. "I must have both the children touching me. Put on your homeward Ring at once, Digory." He wanted to get away without the Witch.

"Oh, it's *Rings,* is it?" cried Jadis, leaping off the horse. She would have had her hands in Digory's pocket before you could say "knife," but Digory grabbed Polly and shouted out,

"Take care. If either of you come half an inch nearer, we two will vanish and you'll be left here for good. Yes: I have a Ring in my pocket that will take Polly and me home. And look! My hand is just ready. So keep your distance. I'm sorry about you" (he looked at the Cabby) "and about the horse, but I can't help that. As for you two" (he looked at Uncle Andrew and the Queen) "you're both Magicians, so you ought to enjoy living together."

" 'Old your noise, everyone," said the Cabby. "I want to listen to the moosic."

For the song had now changed.

chapter nine

The Lion was pacing to and fro about that empty land and singing his new song. It was softer and more lilting than the song by which he had called up the stars and the sun: a gentle, rippling music. And as he walked and sang the valley grew green with grass. It spread out from the Lion like a pool. It ran up the sides of the little hills like a wave. In a few minutes it was creeping up the lower slopes of the distant mountains, making that young world every moment softer. The light wind could now be heard ruffling the grass. Soon there were other things besides grass. The higher slopes grew dark with heather. Patches of rougher and more bristling green appeared in the valley. Digory did not know what they were until one began coming up quite close to him. It was a little, spiky thing that grew out dozens of arms and covered these arms with green and grew larger at the rate of about an inch every two seconds. There were dozens of these things all round him now. When they were nearly as tall as himself he saw what they were. "Trees!" he exclaimed.

The nuisance of it, as Polly said afterward, was that you weren't left in peace to watch it all. Just as Digory said, "Trees!" he had to jump because Uncle Andrew had sidled up to him again and was just going to pick his pocket. It wouldn't have done Uncle Andrew much good if he had succeeded, for he was aiming at the right-hand pocket because he still thought the Green Rings were "homeward" Rings. But of course Digory didn't want to lose either.

"Stop!" cried the Witch. "Stand back. No, further back. If anyone goes within ten paces of either of the children, I will knock out his brains." She was poising in her hand the iron bar that she had torn off the lamppost, ready to throw it. Somehow no one doubted that she would be a very good shot.

"So!" she said. "You would steal back to your own world with the boy and leave me here."

Uncle Andrew's temper at last got the better of his fears. "Yes, Ma'am, I would," he said. "Most undoubtedly I would. I should be perfectly in my rights. I have been most shamefully, most abominably treated. I have done my best to show you such civilities as were in my power. And what has been my reward? You have robbed—I must repeat the word—*robbed* a highly respectable jeweler. You have insisted on my entertaining you to an exceedingly expensive, not to say ostentatious, lunch, though I was obliged to pawn my watch and chain in order to do so (and let me tell you, Ma'am, that none of our family have been in the habit of frequenting pawnshops, except my cousin Edward, and he was in the Yeomanry). During that indigestible meal—I'm feeling the worse for it at this very moment—your behavior and conversation attracted the unfavorable attention of everyone present. I feel I have been publicly disgraced. I shall never be able to show my face in the Trocadero again. You have assaulted the police. You have stolen—"

"Oh, stow it, Guv'nor, do stow it," said the Cabby. "Watchin' and listenin' 's the thing at present; not talking."

There was certainly plenty to watch and to listen to. The tree which Digory had noticed first was now a full-grown beech whose branches swayed gently above his head. They stood on cool, green grass, sprinkled with daisies and buttercups. A little way off, along the riv-erbank, willows were growing. On the other side, tangles of flowering currant, lilac, wild rose, and rhododendron closed them in. The horse was tearing up delicious mouthfuls of new grass.

All this time the Lion's song, and his stately prowl, to and fro, backward and forward, was going on. What was rather alarming was that at each turn he came a little nearer. Polly was finding the song more and more interesting because she thought she was beginning to see the connection between the music and the things that were happening. When a line of dark firs sprang up on a ridge about a hundred yards away, she felt that they were connected with a series of deep, prolonged notes which the Lion had sung a second before. And when he burst into a rapid series of lighter notes, she was not surprised to see primroses suddenly appearing in every direction. Thus, with an unspeakable thrill, she felt quite certain that all the things were coming (as she said) "out of the Lion's head." When you listened to his song you heard the things he was making up; when you looked round you, you saw them.

This was so exciting that she had no time to be afraid. But Digory and the Cabby could not help feeling a bit nervous as each turn of the Lion's walk brought him nearer. As for Uncle Andrew, his teeth were chattering, but his knees were shaking so that he could not run away.

Suddenly the Witch stepped boldly out toward the Lion. He was coming on, always singing, with a slow, heavy pace. He was only twelve yards away. She raised her arm and flung the iron bar straight at his head.

Nobody, least of all Jadis, could have missed at that range. The bar struck the Lion fair between the eyes. It glanced off and fell with a thud in the grass. The Lion came on. His walk was neither slower nor faster than before; you could not tell whether he even knew he had been hit. Though his soft pads made no noise, you could feel the earth shake beneath their weight.

The Witch shrieked and ran; in a few moments she was out of sight among the trees. Uncle Andrew turned to do likewise, tripped over a root, and fell flat on his face in a little brook that ran down to join the river. The children could not move. They were not even quite sure that they wanted to. The Lion paid no attention to them. His huge red mouth was open, but open in song, not in a snarl. He passed by them so close that they could have touched his mane. They were terribly afraid he would turn and look at them, yet in some queer way they wished he would. But for all the notice he took of them they might just as well have been invisible and unsmellable. When he had passed them and gone a few paces further he turned, passed them again, and continued his march eastward.

Uncle Andrew, coughing and spluttering, picked himself up.

"Now, Digory," he said, "we've got rid of that woman, and the brute of a lion is gone. Give me your hand and put on your Ring at once."

"Keep off," said Digory, backing away from him. "Keep clear of him, Polly. Come over here beside me. Now I warn you, Uncle Andrew, don't come one step nearer; we'll just vanish."

"Do what you're told this minute, Sir," said Uncle Andrew. "You're an extremely disobedient, ill-behaved little boy."

"No fear," said Digory. "We want to stay and see what happens. I thought you wanted to know about other worlds. Don't you like it now you're here?"

"Like it!" exclaimed Uncle Andrew. "Just look at the state I'm in. And it was my best coat and waistcoat too." He certainly was a dreadful sight by now, for of course, the more dressed up you were to begin with, the worse you look after you've crawled out of a smashed hansom cab and fallen into a muddy brook. "I'm not saying," he added, "that this is not a most interesting place. If I were a younger man, now—perhaps I could get some lively young fellow to come here first. One of those big-game hunters. Something might be made of this country. The climate is delightful. I never felt such air. I believe it would have done me good if—if circumstances had been more favorable. If only we'd lad a gun."

"Guns be blowed," said the Cabby. "I think I'll go and see if I can give Strawberry a rubdown. That horse is more sense than some 'umans as I could mention." He walked back to Strawberry and began making the hissing noises that grooms make. "Do you still think *that* Lion could be killed by a gun?" asked Digory. "He didn't mind the iron bar much."

"With all her faults," said Uncle Andrew, "that's a plucky gel, my boy. It was a spirited thing to do." He rubbed his hands and cracked his knuckles, as if he were once more forgetting how the Witch frightened him whenever she was really there. "It was a wicked thing to do," said Polly. "What harm had he done her?"

"Hullo! What's that?" said Digory. He had darted forward to examine something only a few yards away. "I say, Polly," he called back. "Do come and look."

Uncle Andrew came with her, not because he wanted to see but because he wanted to keep close to the children—there might be a chance of stealing their Rings. But when he saw what Digory was looking at, even he began to take an interest. It was a perfect little model of a lamppost, about three feet high but lengthening, and thickening in proportion, as they watched it; in fact, growing just as the trees had grown.

"It's alive too—I mean, it's lit," said Digory. And so it was; though, of course, the brightness of the sun made the little flame in the lantern hard to see unless your shadow fell on it.

"Remarkable, most remarkable," muttered Uncle Andrew. "Even I never dreamed of magic like this. We're in a world where everything, even a lamppost, comes to life and grows. Now, I wonder what sort of seed a lamppost grows from?"

"Don't you see?" said Digory. "This is where the bar fell—the bar she tore off the lamppost at home. It sank into the ground and now it's coming up as a young lamppost." (But not so very young now; it was as tall as Digory while he said this.)

"That's it! Stupendous, stupendous," said Uncle Andrew, rubbing his hands harder than ever. "Ho, ho! They laughed at my magic. That fool of a sister of mine thinks I'm a lunatic. I wonder what they'll say now? I have discovered a world where everything is bursting with life and growth. Columbus, now, they talk about Columbus. But what was America to this? The commercial possibilities of this country are unbounded. Bring a few old bits of scrap iron here, bury 'em, and up they come as brand-new railway engines, battleships, anything you please. They'll cost nothing, and I can sell 'em at full prices in England. I shall be a millionaire. And then, the climate! I feel twenty years younger already. I can run it as a health resort. A good sanatorium here might be worth twenty thousand a year. Of course I shall have to let a few people into the secret. The first thing is to get that brute shot."

"You're just like the Witch," said Polly. "All you think of is killing things."

"And then as regards oneself," Uncle Andrew continued, in a happy dream, "there's no knowing how long I might live if I settled here. And that's a big consideration when a fellow has turned sixty. I shouldn't be surprised if I never grew a day older in this country! Stupendous! The Land of Youth!"

"Oh!" cried Digory. "The Land of Youth! Do you think it really is?" For of course he remembered what Aunt Letty had said to the lady who brought the grapes, and that sweet hope rushed back upon him. "Uncle Andrew," he said, "do you think there's anything here that would cure Mother?"

"What are you talking about?" said Uncle Andrew. "This isn't a chemist's shop. But as I was saying—"

"You don't care twopence about her," said Digory savagely. "I thought you might; after all, she's your sister as well as my mother. Well, no matter. I'm jolly well going to ask the Lion himself if he can help me." And he turned and walked briskly away. Polly waited for a moment and then went after him.

"Here! Stop! Come back! The boy's gone mad," said Uncle Andrew. He followed the children at a cautious distance behind; for he didn't want to get too far away from the Green Rings or too near the Lion.

In a few minutes Digory came to the edge of the wood and there he stopped. The Lion was singing still. But now the song had once more changed. It was more like what we should call a tune, but it was also far wilder. It made you want to run and jump and climb. It made you want to shout. It made you want to rush at other people and either hug them or fight them. It made Digory hot and red in the face. It had some effect even on Uncle Andrew, for Digory could hear him saying, "A spirited gel, sir. It's a pity about her temper, but a dem fine woman all the same, a dem fine woman." But what the song did to the two humans was nothing compared with what it was doing to the country.

Can you imagine a stretch of grassy land bubbling like water in a pot? For that is really the best

description of what was happening. In all directions it was swelling into humps. They were of very different sizes, some no bigger than molehills, some as big as wheelbarrows, two the size of cottages. And the humps moved and swelled till they burst, and the crumbled earth poured out of them, and from each hump there came out an animal. The moles came out just as you might see a mole come out in England. The dogs came out, barking the moment their heads were free, and struggling as you've seen them do when they are getting through a narrow hole in a hedge. The stags were the queerest to watch; for of course the antlers came up a long time before the rest of them, so at first Digory thought they were trees. The frogs, who all came up near the river, went straight into it with a plop-plop and a loud croaking. The panthers, leopards, and things of that sort sat down at once to wash the loose earth off their hind quarters and then stood up against the trees to sharpen their front claws. Showers of birds came out of the trees. Butterflies fluttered. Bees got to work on the flowers as if they hadn't a second to lose. But the greatest moment of all was when the biggest hump broke like a small earthquake and out came the sloping back, the large, wise head, and the four baggy-trousered legs of an elephant. And now you could hardly hear the song of the Lion; there was so much cawing, cooing, crowing, braying, neighing, baying, barking, lowing, bleating, and trumpeting.

But though Digory could no longer hear the Lion, he could see him. He was so big and so bright that Digory could not take his eyes off him. The other animals did not appear to be afraid. Indeed, at that very moment, Digory heard the sound of hoofs from behind; a second later the old cab horse trotted past him and joined the other beasts. (The air had apparently suited him as well as it had suited Uncle Andrew. He no longer looked like the poor, old slave he had been in London; he was picking up his feet and holding his head erect.) And now, for the first time, the Lion was quite silent. He was going to and fro among the animals. And every now and then he would go up to two of them (always two at a time) and touch their noses with his. He would touch two beavers among all the beavers, two leopards among all the leopards, one stag and one deer among all the deer, and leave the rest. Some sorts of animal he passed over altogether. But the pairs which he had touched instantly left their own kinds and followed him. At last he stood still, and all the creatures whom he had touched came and stood in a wide circle around him. The others whom he had not touched began to wander away. Their noises faded gradually into the distance. The chosen beasts who remained were now utterly silent, all with their eyes fixed intently upon the Lion. The catlike ones gave an occasional twitch of the tail, but otherwise all were still. For the first time that day there was complete silence, except for the noise of running water. Digory's heart beat wildly; he knew something very solemn was going to be done. He had not forgotten about his mother; but he knew jolly well that, even for her, he couldn't interrupt a thing like this.

The Lion, whose eyes never blinked, stared at the animals as hard as if he was going to burn them up with his mere stare. And gradually a change came over them. The smaller ones—the rabbits, moles, and suchlike— grew a good deal larger. The very big ones—you noticed it most with the elephants—grew a little smaller. Many animals sat up on their hind legs. Most put their heads on one side as if they were trying very hard to understand. The Lion opened his mouth, but no sound came from it; he was breathing out, a long, warm breath; it seemed to sway all the beasts as the wind sways a line of trees. Far overhead, from beyond the veil of blue sky which hid them, the stars sang again: a pure, cold, difficult music. Then there came a swift flash like fire (but it burned nobody), either from the sky or from the Lion himself, and every drop of blood tingled in the children's bodies, and the deepest, wildest voice they had ever heard was saying,

"Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beasts. Be divine waters."