



## **Chapter 1**

### **HOW SHASTA SET OUT ON HIS TRAVELS**

This is the story of an adventure that happened in Narnia and Calormen and the lands between, in the Golden Age when Peter was High King in Narnia and his brother and his two sisters were King and Queens under him.

In those days, far south in Calormen on a little creek of the sea, there lived a poor fisherman called Arsheesh, and with him there lived a boy who called him Father. The boy's name was Shasta. On most days Arsheesh went out in his boat to fish in the morning, and in the afternoon he harnessed his donkey to a cart and loaded the cart with fish and went a mile or so southward to the village to sell it. If it had sold well he would come home in a moderately good temper and say nothing to Shasta, but if it had sold badly he would find fault with him and perhaps beat him. There was always something to find fault with for Shasta had plenty of work to do, mending and washing the nets, cooking the supper, and cleaning the cottage in which they both lived.

Shasta was not at all interested in anything that lay south of his home because he had once or twice been to the village with Arsheesh and he knew that there was nothing very interesting there. In the village he only met other men who were just like his father — men with long, dirty robes, and wooden shoes turned up at the toe, and



## **Глава 1**

### **ПОБЕГ**

Это повесть о событиях, случившихся в Нарнии и к югу от неё тогда, когда ею правили король Питер и его брат и две сестры. В те дни далеко на юге, у моря, жил бедный рыбак по имени Аршиш, а с ним мальчик по имени Шаста, звавший его отцом. Утром Аршиш выходил в море ловить рыбу, а днём запрягал осла, клал рыбу в повозку и ехал в ближайшую деревню торговать. Если он выручал много, то возвращался в добром духе и Шасту не трогал; если выручал мало, придирался, как только мог, и даже бил мальчика. Придраться было не трудно, потому что Шаста делал всё по дому: стряпал и убирал, а также стирал и чинил сети.

Шаста никогда не думал о том, что лежит от них к югу. С Аршишем в деревне бывал, и ему там не нравилось. Он видел точно таких людей, как его отец, — в неопрятных длинных одеждах, сандалиях и тюрбанах, с грязными длинными бородами, медленно толковавших об очень скучных делах. Зато его

turbans on their heads, and beards, talking to one another very slowly about things that sounded dull. But he was very interested in everything that lay to the North because no one ever went that way and he was never allowed to go there himself. When he was sitting out of doors mending the nets, and all alone, he would often look eagerly to the North. One could see nothing but a grassy slope running up to a level ridge and beyond that the sky with perhaps a few birds in it.

Sometimes if Arsheesh was there Shasta would say, 'O my Father, what is there beyond that hill?' And then if the fisherman was in a bad temper he would box Shasta's ears and tell him to attend to his work. Or if he was in a peaceable mood he would say, 'O my son, do not allow your mind to be distracted by idle questions. For one of the poets has said, "Application to business is the root of prosperity, but those who ask questions that do not concern them are steering the ship of folly towards the rock of indigence."'

Shasta thought that beyond the hill there must be some delightful secret which his father wished to hide from him. In reality, however, the fisherman talked like this because he didn't know what lay to the North. Neither did he care. He had a very practical mind.

One day there came from the South a stranger who was unlike any man that Shasta had seen before. He rode upon a strong dappled horse with flowing mane and tail and his stirrups and bridle were inlaid with silver. The spike of a helmet projected from the middle of his silken turban and he wore a shirt of chain mail. By his side hung a curving scimitar, a round shield studded with bosses of brass hung at his back, and his right hand grasped a lance. His face was dark, but this did not surprise Shasta because all the people of Calormen are like that; what

живо занимало всё, что лежит к северу, но туда его не пускали. Сидя на пороге и занимаясь починкой сети, мальчик с тоской глядел на север, но видел только склон холма, небо и редких птиц.

Когда Аршиш бывал дома, Шаста спрашивал: «Отец, что там, за холмом?» Если Аршиш сердился, то драл его за уши, если же был спокоен, отвечал: «Сын мой, не думай о пустом. Как сказал мудрец, прилежание — корень успеха, а те, кто задаёт пустые вопросы, ведут корабль глупости на рифы неудачи».

Шасте казалось, что за холмом — какая-то дивная тайна, которую отец до поры скрывает от него. На самом же деле рыбак говорил так, ибо не знал, да и знать не хотел, какие земли лежат к северу. У него был практический ум.

Однажды с юга прибыл незнакомец, совсем иной, чем те, кого видел Шаста до сих пор. Он сидел на прекрасном коне, и седло его сверкало серебром. Сверкали и кольчуга, и острие шлема, торчащее над тюрбаном. На боку его висел ятаган, спину прикрывал медный щит, в руке было копьё. Незнакомец был тёмн лицом, но Шаста привык к темнолицым, а удивило его иное: борода, выкрашенная в алый цвет, вилась кольцами и лоснилась от благовоний. Аршиш понял, что это тархан, то есть вельможа, и склонился

did surprise him was the man's beard which was dyed crimson, and curled and gleaming with scented oil. But Arsheesh knew by the gold on the stranger's bare arm that he was a Tarkaan or great lord, and he bowed kneeling before him till his beard touched the earth and made signs to Shasta to kneel also.

The stranger demanded hospitality for the night which of course the fisherman dared not refuse. All the best they had was set before the Tarkaan for supper (and he didn't think much of it) and Shasta, as always happened when the fisherman had company, was given a hunk of bread and turned out of the cottage. On these occasions he usually slept with the donkey in its little thatched stable. But it was much too early to go to sleep yet, and Shasta, who had never learned that it is wrong to listen behind doors, sat down with his ear to a crack in the wooden wall of the cottage to hear what the grown-ups were talking about. And this is what he heard.

'And now, O my host,' said the Tarkaan, 'I have a mind to buy that boy of yours.'

'O my master,' replied the fisherman (and Shasta knew by the wheedling tone the greedy look that was probably coming into his face as he said it), 'what price could induce your servant, poor though he is, to sell into slavery his only child and his own flesh? Has not one of the poets said, "Natural affection is stronger than soup and offspring more precious than carbuncles?"'

'It is even so,' replied the guest dryly. 'But another poet has likewise said, "He who attempts to deceive the judicious is already baring his own back for the scourge." Do not load your aged mouth with falsehoods. This boy is manifestly no son of yours, for your cheek is as dark as mine but the boy is fair and white like the accursed but beautiful barbarians who inhabit the remote North.'

до земли, незаметно показывая Шасте, чтобы и тот преклонил колени.

Незнакомец попросил ночлега на одну ночь, и Аршиш не посмел отказать ему. Всё лучшее, что было в доме, хозяин поставил перед ним, а мальчику (так всегда бывало, когда приходили гости) дал кусок хлеба и выгнал во двор. В таких случаях Шаста спал с ослом, в стойле. Но поскольку было ещё рано и никто никогда не говорил ему, что подслушивать нельзя, он сел у самой стены.

— О, хозяин! — промолвил тархан. — Мне угодно купить у тебя этого мальчика.

— О, господин мой! — ответил рыбак, и Шаста угадал по его голосу, что глазки у него алчно блеснули. — Как же продам я, твой верный раб, своего собственного сына? Разве не сказал поэт: «Сильна, как смерть, отцовская любовь, а сыновняя дороже, чем алмазы»?

— Возможно, — сухо выговорил тархан, — но другой поэт говорил: «Кто хочет гостя обмануть — подлее, чем гиена». Не оскверняй ложью свои уста. Он тебе не сын, ибо ты тёмён лицом, а он светел и бел, как проклятые, но прекрасные нечестивцы с севера.

‘How well it was said,’ answered the fisherman, ‘that Swords can be kept off with shields but the Eye of Wisdom pierces through every defence! Know then, O my formidable guest, that because of my extreme poverty I have never married and have no child. But in that same year in which the Tisroc (may he live for ever) began his august and beneficent reign, on a night when the moon was at her full, it pleased the gods to deprive me of my sleep. Therefore I arose from my bed in this hovel and went forth to the beach to refresh myself with looking upon the water and the moon and breathing the cool air. And presently I heard a noise as of oars coming to me across the water and then, as it were, a weak cry. And shortly after, the tide brought to the land a little boat in which there was nothing but a man lean with extreme hunger and thirst who seemed to have died but a few moments before (for he was still warm), and an empty water-skin, and a child, still living. ‘Doubtless,’ said I, ‘these unfortunates have escaped from the wreck of a great ship, but by the admirable designs of the gods, the elder has starved himself to keep the child alive and has perished in sight of land.’ Accordingly, remembering how the gods never fail to reward those who befriend the destitute, and being moved by compassion (for your servant is a man of tender heart) — ’

‘Leave out all these idle words in your own praise,’ interrupted the Tarkaan. ‘It is enough to know that you took the child — and have had ten times the worth of his daily bread out of him in labour, as anyone can see. And now tell me at once what price you put on him, for I am wearied with your loquacity.’

‘You yourself have wisely said,’ answered Arsheesh, ‘that the boy’s labour has been to me of inestimable value. This must be taken into account in fixing the price. For

— Дивно сказал кто-то, — парировал рыбак, — что око мудрости острее копья! Знай же, о мой высокородный гость, что я, по бедности своей, никогда не был женат. Но в год, когда Тисрок (да живёт он вечно) начал своё великое и благословенное царствование, в ночь полнолуния, боги лишили меня сна. Я встал с постели и вышел поглядеть на луну. Вдруг послышался плеск воды, словно кто-то грёб вёслами, и слабый крик. Немного позже прилив прибил к берегу маленькую лодку, в которой лежал иссушенный голодом человек. Должно быть, он только что умер, ибо ещё не остыл, а рядом с ним был пустой сосуд и живой младенец. Вспомнив о том, что боги не оставляют без награды доброе дело, я прослезился, ибо раб твой мягкосердечен, и...

— Не хвали себя, — прервал его тархан. — Ты взял младенца, и он отработал тебе вдесятеро твою скудную пищу. Теперь скажи мне цену, ибо я устал от твоего пусторечия.

— Ты мудро заметил, господин, — сказал рыбак, — что труд его выгоден мне. Если я продам этого отрока, то должен купить или нанять другого.



if I sell the boy I must undoubtedly either buy or hire another to do his work.'

'I'll give you fifteen crescents for him,' said the Tarkaan.

'Fifteen!' cried Arsheesh in a voice that was something between a whine and a scream. 'Fifteen! For the prop of my old age and the delight of my eyes! Do not mock my grey beard, Tarkaan though you be. My price is seventy.'

At this point Shasta got up and tiptoed away. He had heard all he wanted, for he had often listened when men were bargaining in the village and knew how it was done. He was quite certain that Arsheesh would sell him in the end for something much more than fifteen crescents and much less than seventy, but that he and the Tarkaan would take hours in getting to an agreement.

You must not imagine that Shasta felt at all as you and I would feel if we had just overheard our parents talking about selling us for slaves. For one thing, his life was already little better than slavery; for all he knew, the lordly stranger on the great horse might be kinder to him than Arsheesh. For another, the story about his own discovery in the boat had filled him with excitement and with a sense of relief. He had often been uneasy because, try as he might, he had never been able to love the fisherman, and he knew that a boy ought to love his father. And now, apparently, he was no relation to Arsheesh at all. That took a great weight off his mind. 'Why, I might be anyone!' he thought. 'I might be the son of a Tarkaan myself — or the son of the Tisroc (may he live for ever) or of a god!'

He was standing out in the grassy place before the cottage while he thought these things. Twilight was coming on apace and a star or two was already out, but the

— Даю тебе пятнадцать полумесяцев, — сказал тархан.

— Пятнадцать! — взвыл Аршиш. — Пятнадцать монет за усладу моих очей и опору моей старости! Не смейся надо мною, я сед. Моя цена — семьдесят полумесяцев.

Тут Шаства поднялся и тихо ушёл, потому что знал, как люди торгуются, а, стало быть, Аршиш выручит за него больше пятнадцати монет, но меньше семидесяти, и спор протянется не один час.

Не думайте, что Шаства чувствовал то же самое, что почувствовали бы вы, если бы ваши родители решили вас продать. Жизнь его была не лучше рабства, и тархан мог оказаться добрее, чем Аршиш. К тому же он очень обрадовался, узнав свою историю. Он часто сокрушался прежде, что не может любить рыбака, и когда понял, что тот ему чужой, с души его упало тяжкое бремя. «Наверное, я сын какого-нибудь тархана, — подумал мальчик, — или Тисрока (да живёт он вечно), а то и божества!»

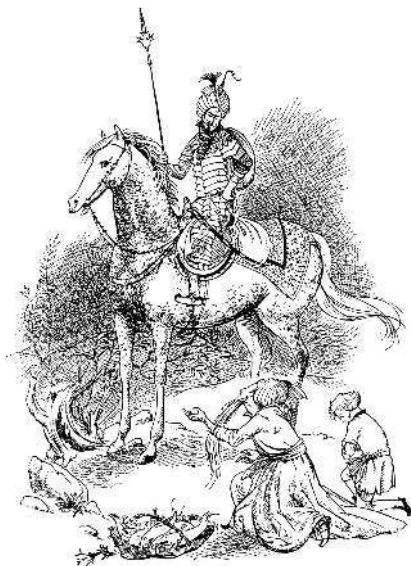
Тем временем сумерки сгущались и редкие звёзды уже сверкали на небе, хотя у заднего края оно отливало багрянцем. Конь пришельца, привязанный



remains of the sunset could still be seen in the west. Not far away the stranger's horse, loosely tied to an iron ring in the wall of the donkey's stable, was grazing. Shasta strolled over to it and patted its neck. It went on tearing up the grass and took no notice of him.

Then another thought came into Shasta's mind. 'I wonder what sort of a man that Tarkaan is,' he said out loud. 'It would be splendid if he was kind. Some of the slaves in a great lord's house have next to nothing to do. They wear lovely clothes and eat meat every day. Perhaps he'd take me to the wars and I'd save his life in a battle and then he'd set me free and adopt me as his son and give me a palace and a chariot and a suit of armour. But then he might be a horrid cruel man. He might send me to work on the fields in chains. I wish I knew. How can I know? I bet this horse knows, if only he could tell me.'

The Horse had lifted its head. Shasta stroked its smooth-as-satin nose and said, 'I wish you could talk, old fellow.'



к столбу, мирно щипал траву. Шаста погладил его по холке, но конь никак не отреагировал на ласку, и мальчик подумал: «Кто его знает, какой он, этот тархан!»

— Хорошо, если добрый, — продолжил Шаста, не заметив, что размышляет вслух. — У некоторых тарханов рабы носят шёлковые одежды и каждый день едят мясо. Может быть, он возьмёт меня в поход, и я спасу ему жизнь, и он освободит меня, и усыновит, и подарит дворец... А вдруг он жестокий? Тогда закуёт меня в цепи. Как бы узнать? Конь-то знает, да не скажет.

Конь поднял голову, и Шаста, погладив его шёлковый нос, воскликнул:

— Ах, умел бы ты говорить!