The Gentle Queen and Her Brother

by Elizabeth Marie Jones

Summary

Susan’s take on Edmund’s betrayal. (Aka that fic in which Susan’s desperately trying to figure out what Edmund’s planning in this lose/lose situation) Spoiler alert: It’s actually a prisoner’s dilemma and Susan and Edmund have read all about that.

Or where Aslan learns that sometimes prophecies can spin out of his control.

You don't need to have read the series to read this.

Notes

I fully intended to write this from Edmund's point of view but Susan was all no it's okay I got this. I'm very confused but I got this. Maybe I still will. But Susan was all I will not be left behind how dare you. So this happened. Enjoy I guess.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Susan knows her brother. She does. He’s quiet like her. They read to each other back in England. Politics and Languages and Current Affairs. While Peter and Lucy played in the sun. Susan is very aware of how smart her little brother is. In the way that he will see things coming the rest of them never expect.

Like how he saw dad leaving for the war. Like how he knew when the rations were going to be low. How he knew three weeks before the rest of them that they were going to be evacuated. Susan knows her brother and he would never betray them without cause.

This is the same boy who set up the neighbor kid to get into trouble after he picked on Lucy. The same boy who ran back into their house when bombs were falling to save a picture of dad. This is the same boy who traded scavenged toys and metal for extra ration cards when he saw one of those shortages coming.

Edmund can be mean and cruel and dark she knows this, but Edmund’s that way to protect them. He always has been. So, Susan thinks. Her brother is never harsh without cause. Yet he’s spent the last few weeks in England picking on Lucy for believing in a magical land he’s been to. So she and Peter yell at him when they fall through the wardrobe. Placating Lucy but she doesn’t forget.

Edmund is not cruel to them without reason. The split second of fear in his eyes when Peter declares they are going to meet Mr. Tumnus is enough. She starts objecting. But Peter is the oldest and that is not something she can fight openly against. So she listens, and she tries so so hard to think like Edmund but there are facts she is missing and she can only silently support him as she always does.

Mr. Tumnus’ house is destroyed. By secret police. And Susan she understands Edmunds fear even if Lucy and Peter though distraught push on. A talking beaver magically in the right place to take them to safety. Susan is concerned but a glance at Edmund only shows thoughtfulness. She knows she is still missing something.

There is a prophecy about them. She can deny it out loud all she wants but she knows. This is a prophecy about them. More of Edmund’s fear makes sense now. There is a Witch out there who wants them dead. She rules this land. She has secret police. A cold thought takes over Susan. The Beavers live oftly close to not be loyal to her. She turns to Edmund but he’s gone. By the looks of things he’s been gone. And then they hear the howling of the wolves.

So she was wrong about the Beavers. Loyal to Aslan. Loyal to a talking magical lion who wants child soldiers to win a war for him. Not much better in her books. And Ed has become persona non grata, traitor, would be sibling killer; and Susan, all she can think is that neither side is truly good.

Edmund would not betray them without cause, and the more time she spends with this Aslan. The more she feels like a convenient tool. Peter and Lucy are charmed though. And Susan, Susan starts learning how to use a bow. She’s beginning to get the faintest taste of her brother’s thoughts.

There is no easy way out of this one. If Edmund is with the Witch it is because she has something they need and if he didn’t take at least her, well there’s something they need here as well. Playing along until Edmund lets her into the plan, she can do. Also, knowing how to use a weapon can only be a boon in a world where they’re slated to be child soldiers. Child monarchs. Goodness knows that was only ever good for tyrants in their world’s history. So Susan watches and learns and makes mental notes of everything her brother may need.

She makes notes of dietary preferences, of guard rotations, of Aslan’s sayings and doings. She makes
note of the army’s layout, of the stories they tell each other. Of the caravans that bring food and the locations and names of suppliers. She walks among them and befriends them learns what they lack, what they need, what they just desire. She learns and she waits.

She doesn’t have to wait long. A week later the wolf attacks. Peter kills him and Aslan rewards him. All Susan can think of is that chapter on positive reinforcement she and Ed read last Autumn. Her siblings are prisoners to this beast and he’s set it up so he’s their hero. Their god. Lucy already worships him and Peter he is falling. Susan straightens up and asks Aslan what now.

Now, apparently, they rescue Edmund. Thank goodness. Peter and Lucy can believe that Edmund betrayed them but they cannot betray him themselves. Susan breathes a silent sigh of relief when they bring Edmund into the camp. Edmund. The first thing Edmund does is hug Peter and Lucy. Apologizes. I’m sorry for leaving. I’m sorry.

Susan can read between the lines. Edmund is not sorry for going to the Witch. Whatever they needed to make it out of here. He got it. But that second I’m sorry. He glances at her. Susan closes her eyes. No. He got what they need to survive. But somethings are inescapable. Apparently centuries old prophecies are one of them. She hugs him tight when Peter and Lucy let go. She hugs him tight and she nods.

Edmund would never hurt them. Not if he could help it. Not if it was avoidable. So she steps away again and watches. She steps away again and waits. When Edmund meets Aslan. Aslan forgives him. And She burns. Forgiving Edmund is not something Aslan has a right to. The only thing Edmund has done is left them and gone to the Witch. Driving them into Aslan’s arms. Nothing that’s hurt Aslan himself.

Edmund did not betray Aslan, and Susan knows Edmund did not betray them. As much as it looked like he did. She watches and she waits and she can see a spark of victory in her brother’s eyes and a spark of fury in Aslan’s. Both gone as fast as a flash.

The White Witch, Jadis her brother whispers to her, has come for Edmund. He is a traitor she cries and by the law he is mine. Her brother looks terrified behind Peter but she can see the satisfaction in his eyes. They turn to Aslan and he, he is furious and yet he looks defeated as he turns to towards the command tent with the Witch. Susan already knows she and Edmund are the only ones who saw that flash of hate across Aslan’s face.

Later in the dark Edmund whispers, she promised me a throne if I led you to her. And Susan who is so close to tasting Edmund's plan whispers back, did she give it to you. Edmund snorts softly as to not wake the other two. No he breathes she betrayed me. And Susan, now she’s got enough of the plan to chew.

Edmund slips out of the tent first that night. There’s a crow outside and Edmund is whispering to it. Edmund slips back in before the guard swings by and grins in the dark at her. Lucy wakes up next, in the dead of night and when she slips out of the tent Ed nods after her. So Susan follows.

Aslan dies for a traitor’s sin, to pacify the old magic, and to restore the balance and Susan. Susan knows her brother isn’t the traitor. A raven stays with them at the edge of the wood until Aslan wakes and Susan, Susan knows.

The battle still happens but Susan, Susan can’t help but notice that the Witch’s army is smaller than expected. Even with the reinforcements they gathered from the Witch’s castle. Cowards some of Aslan’s men crow. But Susan doesn’t need to see Edmund’s face to know he’s smirking.

The Witch dies but not before stabbing Ed. Susan and Peter and Lucy they love their brother as dark
as he can be and… he is dying.

How many must die for your brother. Aslan growls. Susan can hear the accusation in his tone. Even if the other two can’t. She glares up at him and he starts. But Aslan’s words were enough to remind Lucy of the potion and Edmund is breathing easy again. Behind her hugging siblings are a line of corvids. Crows and Ravens alike. One of them takes flight back towards the Wild Woods. The rest scatter but for one.

Aslan crowns them. To the Glistening Eastern Sea I give you Queen Lucy the Valiant, to the Great Western Wood King Edmund the Just, to the Radiant Southern Sun Queen Susan the Gentle, and to the Clear Northern Skies I give High King Peter the Magnificent. Long may reign the Kings and Queens of Narnia.

Later that night. After Aslan has left. Susan attends another coronation as a guest. Long may the Night King rule. The Shadow King and the Gentle Queen spend the next day hashing out treaties while their siblings sleep.

End Notes

So, I have ideas about the fact that Aslan never says he gives Edmund and Susan away. Because at least in this fic, he doesn't have the power to.
At some point this series is going to fix the Problem of Susan.
Also can anyone scream to me about the whole omg you know what we need to save us from an evil dictator, child soldiers/child monarchs. Because historically this has gone so well. This is rapidly devolving into a series where Susan and Edmund are going to solve all the issues I have with the series.

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