

I don't want to take up much of your time.'

'I suppose you want to know about my nephew's coming home,' said Bee.

'Just that,' replied the young man. 'Which of these young men has just come back from the dead?'

Bee introduced Brat and Simon and they all answered the questions Mr Macallan asked.

'Why is the *Westover Times* interested?' asked Bee. 'When my nephew disappeared eight years ago, there was hardly anything in the paper about it. This is of no possible interest to anyone, except his family.'

'You're wrong there, Miss Ashby,' said the newspaper reporter. 'People disappear every day, people die every day, and the newspapers aren't very interested. But the number of people who come back from the dead, like your nephew, is very small.'

Chapter 8

Battle begins

After Mr Macallan had gone, Bee suggested that they should all go and look at the horses. Brat did not have any proper riding clothes, so Simon said, 'Come up with me, and I'll find you something to wear.'

Brat followed Simon upstairs and into the room that Simon had once shared with his brother. He noticed at once that it was very much Simon's own room; there was no suggestion that he had ever shared it with another person. It was as much a sitting room as a bedroom, with shelves of books and silver cups which Simon had won in riding competitions.

Simon brought a jacket and a pair of trousers out of a cupboard and saw Brat looking at a small silver cup. He smiled

and said, 'I took that from you, if you remember. It was my first cup.'

'From me?' said Brat, unprepared.

'Yes. You would have won on Old Harry, but I jumped a perfect second round on my horse.'

'Oh yes,' Brat said, and looked at all the other cups. 'You seem to have done well for yourself since then.'

'Not badly,' said Simon. 'But I'm going to do a lot better. By the way, do you remember the thing that used to hang at the end of your bed?' he asked casually.

'The little wooden horse?' Brat said. 'Yes, of course. Travesty,' he added, giving its name. 'There was a joke about its imaginary parents, wasn't there? Bog Oak and Irish Peasant.'

Brat looked round and in the mirror he saw the sudden, terrible shock in Simon's face. But Simon recovered quickly and turned round with a shirt in his hand.

'Here you are. I think you'll find that fits all right.'

Brat took the shirt and went off to his own room, feeling rather shocked himself. What did it mean? Ashby hadn't expected him to know that. Ashby had been certain that he would not know about the toy horse called Travesty, and he had been surprised, no, totally shocked, when it was clear that Brat did know about it.

That could mean only one thing.

It meant that Simon had not believed for a moment that he was the real Patrick. But why bother to pretend? Why hadn't he said at once, 'You're not Patrick, and nothing will make me believe that you are!'

From what Lana had said, Simon had intended to say just that. So why had he changed his mind? Was it a trap? Did Simon's friendly welcome simply hide some trap that he had prepared?

But Simon could not have known until they met that he, Brat,