"When Absalom had once admitted his wicked scheme into his heart, he began slily to prepare for it. He first tried to steal the hearts of the people, flattering them. Then came deceit and backbiting. If anybody came to the king for justice, Absalom would meet them, and say, 'Oh, your cause is right and good, but the king won't hear you. I wish *I* might judge for you, *I* would do every one justice.' At last, when his plot was quite ripe, he told a wicked lie to the king. He pretended he wanted to go and worship God in Hebron, saying, 'He had vowed to serve God, if David ever allowed him to return.'

"David was quite taken in, and said, 'Go in peace.' Then that wicked, ungrateful son sent spies all through the land, telling the people everywhere, as soon as they heard the trumpet blown in Hebron, to say, 'Absalom is king.'

"There was one man on whom David specially relied, and called him his counsellor, his name was *Ahithophel*, and he was so remarkably wise, that men followed his advice as if it had been God's. Absalom thought, 'If only Ahithophel will join me, I shall be sure to succeed.' But would Ahithophel listen to him and betray the king?"

"Oh, no," answered many voices.