

The “something” Polychrome intended to do was no little thing.

It was in fact no less than to acquire, as quickly as might be, all the knowledge, experience, and wisdom that in thousands of years of lounging around on a rainbow or dancing madly up and down it she had never felt it worth-while to collect. Perhaps it was because there were no boys in the family and the pretty rain maiden had never learned that to keep a man’s attention you have to do more than know how to arrange your hair in a charming *un*-arranged-looking style or what color to tint your toenails.

Now she had found out. The Shaggy Man, after winning Polychrome’s frantic affection by the use of a magnet, had paid no more attention to her than to any of the others in their travel party. Indeed less, for the Rainbow’s daughter had always felt that the Man had accorded most deference to the young Dorothy.

Jealousy did not bother Polychrome, however—at least in this case. It was naturally quite out of the question that the half-century-old Shaggy Man should have more than a kindly fatherly affection for a girl child just barely into her teens. But herself: a creature eons old, might most properly be adored by a human male at whatever age he could (reasonably) attain. It was just a case of attracting his attention.

How could she do that? She so clearly hadn’t done so, she had freely to admit, the first time around, and not through want of light conversation or unbridled dancing. The things young girls could traditionally do seemed to have no effect on him, at least not when done by her. What else was there, then?

Well, music? The shaggy one did have opinions of that topic. He had agreed with most of the others in deploring the “Musicker’s” cacophonous playing. Perhaps the Shaggy Man was musical? And hadn’t Polychrome herself on one or two occasions noticed him whistling? She made a mental notes “course in musicology.”

And then art? Granted, nothing had been spoken on that score

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during their travels. There's so little occasion for getting out an easel and tubes when you're walking down the hard highway or rushing in a sand-boat over a burning desert. Architecture? They had all been impressed by the towers, steeples, domes, and gables on the Tin Woodman's new castle—and knew the difference between them! But had the Shaggy Man shown any particular interest? Never mind; it couldn't hurt to pick up a little extra knowledge of Art.

And philosophy. Now Polychrome was sure she was on the right track. Ever and anon the Man would come out with some little second-rate aphorism picked up on his travels. A seminar on that subject and Poly was sure she'd be able to keep up with her lover there—nay, be miles ahead of him, on a topic he cared about.

Cookery? The maiden recalled that Shag had had his pockets full of apples. He was not indifferent to food. She herself only subsisted on dewdrops and the odd cloud-cake—and once in a *very* great while a slice of roast turkey—but that was no reason why she couldn't become an expert cuisinière. She'd learn to do apples in a dozen different ways; that would win him! She jotted "cooking class."

And magic! As an immortal Polychrome—and her whole family!—they were natural candidates for becoming adepts of magic, but up until now, Poly realized, she'd neglected that part of her education too and knew no magic at all. Well, it stood to reason: she'd always lived on the rainbow or in the clouds and there Dad took care of everything. She'd never been down to earth but once and 'til then had simply had no need for or interest in magic.

That sojourn had taught her though! She found her traveling companions had been quite unable to cope without magic. Its value, indeed for the first time its *nature*, were made clear to her. Now what an impression she would be able to make on her adored if she reappeared to him as a whiz of a wizardress! The study of magic was going to rank very high in her curriculum.

But now Poly began to wonder where she was going to get all this learning. Formal study seemed to be what was wanted. As

for “experience” and “wisdom,” those only came if you lived vibrantly on earth and among people for a time, which Polychrome had to admit she’d hardly ever done. Nor was there any way of speeding up the acquisition of those commodities, yet they would come of themselves all the while you were getting a book-learning education.

Books! A library. But where was there any library Poly had access to? She could not appear in any earthly library and borrow volumes. Literally: she couldn’t “appear” there. She might *be* there all right but no one could see her. To her perplexity Polychrome had learnt that she had no more palpability than a ghost in the world of men beyond such of those as happened to be under a magic spell.

Except for one place! Oz! and the continent surrounding it. There she had been seen, and accepted, as just another, albeit delightful, person by her enchantment-protected friends. Undoubtedly, to Oz she must go for her education. Indeed, it was the only place she *could* go.

Now let’s see: an Oz library...? *What* Oz library? To Polychrome’s considerable consternation she realized she’d never heard of any such thing in Oz. An Oz denizen reading a book? There was no record of any such phenomenon in Oz history, except for certain persons’ occasional recourse to Sorceress Glinda’s Book of Records and that was not for ordinary people’s consumption. Good heavens, was the rainbow’s daughter going to have to found a library herself simply in order to get to read the books in it?

But Poly didn’t panic for long. Rummaging further in her memory she recalled a certain Mr. Wogglebug who, she was given to understand, taught in a place called the “Royal College of Oz.” A college would have a library! It had to. Furthermore, a college was exactly what Polychrome had most need of at this juncture.

“Dad! Dad!” she cried and starting to her feet dashed up the rainbow to its crest, where she held earnest conference with her parent. “Please make it rain over Oz! More specifically, right on the Munchkin side of the Emerald country!”

“Daughter, daughter,” grumbled the Rainbow right back.

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“Whatever’s this? I can’t make it rain, just like that. The rain evokes *me*, not the other way around.”

“Oh, Daddy darling, don’t be silly. You’re always in existence—since the world began... And isn’t it marvelous that you are!” said the sparkling maiden, and suddenly grew thoughtful. Perhaps already she was starting to adapt to the mode of cerebration that she know would be required of her in days to come. “I mean: it almost makes you think somebody with a sense for charm and beauty had had a hand in the creation. There didn’t *have* to be a brilliant iridescent display every time sunshine strikes through water molecules. Nature could have figured it out some other way...”

“But anyway you’re there,” she went on, getting back to her subject. “And you’ve got pull with the Rain King. He wants to keep in good with you. Make him do his stuff over Oz!” Polychrome was getting *awfully* slangy in her exuberance.

“Oh, all right,” gave up the Rainbow, who could refuse his most charming daughter nothing. “Where did you say? On the east side of the Emerald City?”

“Actually, I think it’s down where the Emerald, Munchkin, and Quadling countries join,” specified the girl. “Anyway it’s where the Royal College of Oz is. You know?”

“I guess we can find it, But,” the Rainbow grew curious, “what do you want to soak the college for?”

“You wait and see! You’re going to be surprised.” And then as she raced away to pack some cloud cakes and pick a few colors for use in her art classes, the girl called back teasingly, “Poly goes to college!”

H.M. Wogglebug sent back word to his sovereign (it wasn't easy!) that he would rush things and return to Oz as soon as he possibly could. The allurements were considerable. Ozma's wire had said she was forthwith establishing an institution of higher learning for Oz and that Wogglebug should have the presidency of it if only he would get back on the double. His Office of Public Instruction needed him badly.

Full of his news, Highly rushed to Professor Allweise, who remained, despite the bug's latter devotion rather to sports than to academic studies, his chief confidant. "Professor!" he pleaded, "can you come up with a crash program for me?! I'm wanted back home—to head a college! and I need a degree to back it up."

Allweise took chin in hand. "Hmm. I take it this isn't to be just a sports college—" It was the first moment the insect had time to think that far ahead and he instantly decided it *would* be a sports college. But he wouldn't divulge that just yet. The professor was going on: "You'll have to drop track and field, to say nothing of football." Highly's feelings smote him; he *had* become the college's star flying tackle. It would hurt to leave the ball on the field and go, but a greater destiny called him. "Can you face that?" The wogglebug nodded mutely. "And it'll only be a B.A.," said Professor Allweise. "But maybe that'll be enough to be going on with. If you're prepared to apply yourself diligently—and that'll be nights as well as weekends—I think I can safely assure you you can have your sheepskin at the end of three months. Maybe even with a little laude."

The wogglebug was ecstatic—as well as anxious. "That's drawing it out. My—er—contact said I was needed immediately. But the degree means everything! I'm enormously grateful, Professor. You'll see you're justified."

The two were as good as their words. At the Christmas break in 1906 H.M. Wogglebug, T.E., A.B., was handed his diploma. Oh, how it had wracked his heart all that autumn to hear the shouts from the stadium as W.K.C. was trouncing Notre Sieur, Sleep For-

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est, and Kansas A. and M., while he pressed his feelers to his earholes and bent lower over Plato, Erasmus, and Descartes.

But the momentous day came when Wogglebug stood in the middle of the carpet in his garret room with his two packed carpet bags beside him and waited for Queen Ozma to find him in the Magic Picture and wish him home.

The return was most warmly welcomed. Ozma herself descended from her throne and grasped some of the bug's feelers in both hands. All his old companions from the flight of the Gump were there and added their congratulations to their sovereign's. Already that first day there was a prompt and thorough-going tour of inspection made at the Department of Public Instruction.

"This is deplorable," declared the new arts bachelor, surveying the heaped circulars, prospectuses, monographs, and bulletins that covered table tops and floors, and the almost as heaped dust that mingled with them. "The place is a shambles." He neglected to remind any on-lockers that it was his own fault it was a shambles: for having gone gadding off to America and staying there for close on three years.

To mollify his conscience he set to now to make up for lost time. He got seven maids with seven mops to sweep it for half a year and at the end of that time the echoing building was neat as a new pin and a competent staff engaged to deal with the heaps of brochures, put a stop to the closing of schools, and face whatever new problems arose from day to day.

Among the impacted prospectuses was an offer from the owners of a disused mansion located near where the blue, red, and green countries joined (a tripartite flag of these colors became the standard of the new-founded college). Could Ozma and/or the Public Educator put the building to some use for the general good? The said owners didn't want it any more.

H.M. Wogglebug was delighted and flew off at once in propria persona to inspect the site. What he saw was a rambling wooden early Victorian villa standing in spacious, not too hilly grounds. It would be ideal—to start with. Right at first there would not be all that many students and they could all be accommo-

dated in the house, where also formal classes could be held in the ballroom and dining hall and the girls could do their art in the conservatory. The boys had all outdoors for their sports. Right from the start there was no nonsense about diviaic of the sexes in the realm of Oz higher learning.

Wogglebug quickly deserted the Department again; only now it was ticking over functionally under the guidance of a serviceable Vice-Educator recruited from among the disemployed generals of Ozma's ineffectual army. (The vices he dispensed education in were mild ones.) The bug Bachelor himself spent all his time at the College (quickly named the "College of Art and Athletic Perfection" — and as quickly, and lovingly, dubbed C.A.A.P. by its undergraduates).

Within a month the building was adapted for its new educational role. The ugly brown shingles were painted a gleaming cream. Applications, for admission were coming in from all over. So what about staff?

Of course a natural for dean of the faculty was that Professor Nowitall who had so long waged a rivalry (quite unsuspected by the rival) with the Wandering Wogglebug. Highly wrote to him offering the position in most flattering terms and the professor, no dummy, was as quick to reply graciously and affirmatively. Thus was laid to rest forever any possible enmity between the two pedagogues.

By the time of Queen Ozma's royal progress on returning from the Ev Campaign the College was ready to present a smiling and delightful front to the admiring visitors. Improvements were being made constantly. Alas, many of the fine old trees, of the original estate grounds were leveled to make place for sports arenas, a football field, a cricket pitch, even a bowling green.

H.M. Wogglebug in his office found little to do. The duties of college president were largely ceremonial. Where he had longed to be in the thick of active educating he now found himself boringly signing papers at a desk. Already by the following year the prexy had prevailed on Dean Nowitall to trade places with him. The professor was kicked upstairs — to his secret delight! In his new-

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found leisure he could devote himself TOTALLY to research. He taught the outer-office girl to forge his signature and disappeared among the test-tubes.

As dean, Wogglebug could spend all his time on the sidelines, cheering on his teams. They had only themselves to play against, but what the heck. The college could afford to keep two elevens going and the girls cheered for whichever side they had a boy friend or idol on.

Princess Ozma in her progress had been so pleased with her impressions of the new-founded institution that as soon as she returned to her capital she sent down a writ proclaiming the college "Royal." This was an enormous feather in the cap of Mr. Wogglebug. He renamed the school the "Royal College of Athletic Science" and on the strength of it granted himself (well, the college could grant degrees, and if not to the President himself, then who?!) the title of "Professor." Professor Nowitall made no demur (*his* professorship was based on a doctorate), especially when later that same year he himself was named president.

Different was the reaction of the student body. They affected a disdain at being "royal." They complained that the college initials, R.C.A.S., were no longer pronounceable as a *word*. And the coeds were furious that their department, Art, had been elided utterly from the name to the advantage of the snobbish "royal." No one was mollified when the professors in conclave quickly altered the name to "the Royal College of Scientific Athletics." What help was that? R.C.S.A. was even less pronounceable as a word, and who wanted to be going some day to share initials with the Republic of Caucasian South Africa?

The boys were perhaps secretly pleased that their province of higher learning was thus elevated to be the apparent sole concern of the institution. But was it so? What of Art? And was old Nowitall among his Bunsen burners. and retorts the only one who cared about chemistry and physics?

Professor Wogglebug had now seriously to take himself in hand. He saw that he had become an institutional tyrant, switching priorities and professors around to suit his own personal

whims. Baseball and tennis were after all hobbies: fun things to pass time and improve muscle tone. But was that really what education was about?

Wasn't education rather a matter of learning how to cope in life? and then, when you had acquired those basics, of making acquaintance with ideas and pursuits that could enrich that life? A person—or an insect—who might succeed in growing to physical maturity without having learned anything would not be a free unspoiled untrammelled creature. He would be an imbecile and a spiritual basket case, who would have to be helped in every single office of life down to such basics as feeding and keeping reasonably dry.

Learning was something you couldn't live without and a great part of every day in the life of every living moving being was occupied with learning. Most of the time it wasn't called that and a very great deal of learning was by own inexpert trial and error, so that most of most lives on earth was spent in finding out for oneself what others had already found out before.

The great idea behind schools was that they preserved and stored up knowledge so that, acquiring that, one didn't have to relearn from scratch but could shorten, condense the learning process and then have time to go on and learn NEW things to push the frontiers of knowledge ever forward.

The new-hatched professor phrased those thoughts to himself and then rephrased them in addresses to the student body. Of course attention to sports was to go on but henceforward at the college much more attention was going to be paid to Art (the coeds cheered), to Research (Eydoant Nowitall looked up bewilderedly through his spectacles—and then *he* cheered), to the Humanities (all the humans, cheered), and to Philosophy (in the absence of others to do it, the wogglebug himself cheered). The Professor was going, himself, to endow a chair of entomology. Physics and math were going to be much promoted. Basket-weaving, bel canto, and early morning bird calls were entering the curriculum. The Dean intended to take an active part in music instruction and had already accepted a commission from Emperor

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Nicholas of the Winkies to compose a “Shining Emperor Waltz.” Finally, in a gesture of reconciliation to all parties the institution was to be renamed yet again: the “Royal College of Oz.” Take your pick as to whether Sports or Art or either was to reign supreme there now.

The Lord High Chigglewitz was not much help. As mayor (that's what it amounted to) he was too busy trying to ingratiate all sides to take up the claim of any *one* side against another. He refused to have in all the Winkie, Munchkin, and Gillikin helpers to quiz them as to who might have come to the Gnot Garden and seen Mrs Gnit fly to pieces. The implication of that lady and the querying kangaroo was that whoever it was had himself, for whatever reasons, made off with the part of Grandma that controlled her knitting. It was the unspoken but unbroken rule of the Fuddles that they themselves never stole pieces of each other.

"We can't be too strict or demanding," lamented the Lord High. "After all, we're dependent in part on these casual visitors for getting ourselves put back together when we all fly apart at once. We can't afford to alienate them by being openly suspicious—of course they do carry away a piece of one or another of us—from time to time. Witness my own knee—or the town crier's left shoulder-blade or the ruffles off the schoolmarm's dress. But we can't hold any inquisition over such losses."

"But," cried the kangaroo, driven to despair by the thought of never going to get any replacement mittens, "can't we throw ourselves on their mercy? Call everyone in the town together and announce the deplorable disappearance and just plead for the return of the piece and no questions asked?!"

"We—ll," hummed Chigglewitz, "we could do that," he conceded, "I suppose."

So they did, that evening late, when the strangers had completed their puzzle work and were passing out through the town's main wicker gate. The worried party: The Lord High Chigglewitz, Grandmother Gnit, and the concerned kangaroo, were waiting for them there, and the Lord High made a speech and an appeal.

The result was zilch. The guest workers looked at each other and were merely puzzled. They were not unvocal, however, and had a dozen bright ideas.

"It could be anybody," said one.

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"But not *us*," said another.

"Oh, hardly that," agreed a third. "But anyone else."

"I saw a pack rat scurrying away before me as I went into one house," volunteered a Quadling. "You know how they are."

That awakened speculation, even consternation, for a notorious pack of pack rats were known to infest a woods near the village of Ivador not too far distant in the Quadling country. What if they were moving out and planned to take over Fuddlecumjig?! It would be pack-rat heaven, and the Fuddles meat and drink to them.

"That's nothing," said a Winkie. "Didn't any of you notice that flock of jackdaws that passed over early in the afternoon? They could have carried off keepsakes not just to another town but another country—or even continent."

"Oh, heaven," wailed the consternated kangaroo. "I'll bet that's what happened!"

"*Don't* bet on it," warned a Munchkin—or was he an Emerald Countryman? He was dressed in forest green, which, however, rather strongly verged on spruce blue. "It's obvious what's happened. You remember that party from Baroquea that left earlier in the evening?..."

"Baroquea? Where's that?" asked somebody.

"The next country over from us," supplied the native of the Fiddlestick Forest, "—in Munchkinland. I overheard them at afternoon tea. Incidentally, my congratulations—" he put in, turning to a pleased Gnathan, the cook. "Your crumpets were scrumptious.

"Yes," he went on, "I was sitting at the next table and couldn't help but hear them going on about news that had just reached them from home. It seemed their reigning Baron has lost his mind —"

"Good gracious!" cried Mar, struck with awe, "just like Grandmother here."

"That's exactly the point," triumphed the Forester. "Lose a mind, find a mind. These Baroqueans were the first to leave the dining room. I heard them say they had to rush home im-

mediately. They 'had to go to the relief of their ruler'! Now I ask you: how were they going to rescue their ruler unless they had a replacement mind along to install in him?"

"Mrs. Gnit!" exclaimed the confident kangaroo. "It all fits! That must be what happened!"

They conferred no further. All were agreed on placing the blame on the absconding Baroqueans. The marsupial was all fire and flame to be off to Munchkinland on the double to claim her own, that is, Grandmother Gnit's own.

"You can come along of us," offered the Fiddle-stician. "We're finished with our visit in these arts anyway."

"Why, that'll be splendid," agreed Mar. "Thanks ever so."

She left word with the Fuddles, the said word to be relayed to her family: that she'd see them when she saw them. And with new mittens, or she'd know the reason why.

The white cat headed north and east away from the farm. She was just in time. As she reached the first right-angle turn in that flat prairie landscape she took one look back. (The roads all lie checkerboard fashion in that part of the world, following rectangular property-survey section lines.) A small cloud of dust from the direction of Topeka was drawing rapidly nearer. That would be the banker coming to foreclose. Eureka walked on nonchalantly.

Good thing she'd chosen that direction to set out in, the cat reflected; otherwise she might have had to pause and spit—and scratch the banker, if she should get a chance—and that would have been a bore. She'd gone north and east because she knew that was the way her mistress Dorothy had started out that first time she up and left her darling kitten behind to go traipsing off to Oz with a tramp. She'd like to meet that tramp, Eureka would! She'd give him a piece of her mind—and still have plenty more left than he had to start with, to judge by what the girl had retailed of him on her return from that adventure. The so-called "Shaggy Man" had apparently had a lot more charm than brilliance. The charm of ragged clothes and a stolen "love magnet," forsooth.

Just about now she ought to be coming to the five-points Dorothy had talked of, where everything started looking unfamiliar and being magic. It looked unfamiliar enough all right but that was only because Eureka had never, on her own, been more than half a mile from the farmhouse; she was not the territorial-exploratory type. However, nothing very magical seemed to be happening at the crossroads.

When the cat got hungry she caught a mouse for her dinner and strolled on. By evening she had reached a town.

This must be Butterfield. So far as she recalled, Eureka had never been here before, but she found the name quite appealing. She rather liked butter and ate it when she couldn't get cream. Fields of it would be cheering to pass the night among.

When she had spent a valuable hour scouring the town and

found no field of butter, her resentment again reached a crescendo. "Downright misrepresentations," she fumed as she gave up the search and looked instead for a likely doorstep to panhandle on. And yet, she reflected, there *was* something "attractive" about the place. She felt it especially when she would pass certain shops and small foundries. Something was attracting the metal bells on her collar, pulling them, and her, to the doorways of the said emporia, from which she had an effort to tear herself away.

"Nuts," said the cat, passing the back stoop of a grey (but pink-trimmed) bungalow, "this is as good a place as any." She leaned against the screen door and meowed.

It was not long before a little girl in a pinafore appeared inside the door, took a look, and said, "Oh, a pooffy cat!" Presently any number of children, a maid of all work, and a pretty and youngish woman were also at the door and Eureka's complaints had changed to engratiating purrs.

"Oh, all right, have it in, dears," said the young woman. "But only for tonight, mind. In the morning we'll try to find her owners."

"Owners"; I like that,' thought Eureka disdainfully. Since the departure of the Gale girl the cat considered herself to be strictly her own property. She flounced through the kitchen, on through the dining room, and into the parlor, where she leapt lightly up on the horsehair sofa and installed herself on the antimacassar.

"She looks right at home, doesn't she?" commented the young wife.

"Darn tootin'," the cat said to herself, "—as long as I care to stay."

To her own slight surprise that turned out to be several days. It was all the fault of a dog—with whom she fell in love!

On her first full day in the bosom of the Carmichaels (such was the family's name) Eureka inspected the house. There wasn't all that much to it but she did think proper to get to know it and its possibilities. She *was* exploratory of particular buildings where she might happen to reside.

One thing Eureka especially desired to ascertain was the

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extent of the presence of any other possible animals on the premises. She couldn't smell any but she meant to be quite sure. To this end she even penetrated the shallow attic when Mrs. Carmichael went up there to fetch down the boiler pans for fruitpreserving. The cat received a shock when she discerned in a far and shadowy corner an animal shape of exactly her own size.

A cat! What a bore—to be going to have to share things with another of the species. But on the other hand it would be somebody to talk to. Eureka felt seriously hampered since her return from Oz at having no confidant. She had always refused to say a word to the wretched Toto.

On the alert but with purr in readiness she approached the figure on tiptoe. Odd that it made no move. And was it deaf? It would certainly turn its head, at least, when it heard Eureka coming. *Cats* can hear cats' tread—if they're not stone deaf.

And yet the creature did look charming to the approaching newcomer. That round head, so typically cat-like. The proud erect bearing. The insouciance. That was the sort of cat Eureka herself aimed to be.

Then dreadful disillusion. The newcomer feline drew level with her rival, passed round in front, and looked it in its impassive face. It was a china pug dog!

Eureka hissed and spat in her disappointment. How despicable to get up an honest cat's expectations, then dash them so cruelly. She wanted to fly at the figure and do it an injury but she sensed instantly her claws would avail nothing against that shiny pottery glaze. Then her quick sight caught a reflex of opaque white at the figure's foot. The image had a broken toe. Eureka felt an unwonted pang of selfless sympathy—and her resentment melted.

In the end she spent all morning with the unspeaking staring-eyed figurine. It was a comfortable shady corner in that unseasonably warm season and she knew of no better place in the house to linger in, between meals. Here too she was mercifully free of the too devoted caresses of the four infant Carmichaels.

The mistress was another matter. In the first place, she never touched Eureka. This the cat found delightful. Cats like to have

caresses when *they* like it. They'll let you know soon enough when they want an ear-scratching. They come to you with erect tail and rub against your calves. That's the *Signal*. Then you may lean down and tickle their ear roots and administer a stroke or two. Not too much! They'll walk off when they've had enough, but will linger longer if you're not too effusive.

But Mrs. Carmichael never responded when Eureka, after a suitably long period of keeping her distance, did deign to approach her at last in the kitchen and lean against her skirt. She *said* nice things: "Pretty puss" and "Cat got your tongue?" (when Eureka didn't meow or purr) "You're a nice quiet animal." And she did nice things, like put down a saucer of milk next to the ice chest. But she didn't touch. Eureka was intrigued.

The attempt to locate the cat's owner produced no result. Mrs. Carmichael phoned here and there and finally to the newspaper office and asked them to run a little personals notice in the next issue of the weekly. Meanwhile the stray was allowed to stay.

Eureka was not witness to those enterprises. She was in the attic, lengthening her residency from day to day. She couldn't seem to tear herself awe from the cool impassive image in her chosen nook. Unspeaking, the china dog was still company for her in the long hours she let pass in half sleep. Its impassivity was a quality she aspired to, herself, and its coolness (physical she enjoyed in the heat of the day, when she would boldly drape herself over the figurine, head upon head and paws hanging down.

The family were not long in discovering her dedication. It must not be denied that the children were disappointed that the cat did not prove more of a companion in their play. Though Eureka still called herself a kitten she had long been, in disposition, a cat, even a staid one. But all of that would come to visit her in the attic. After just a day they always knew where to find her.

"Funny she likes that old china dog, isn't it?" said Mrs. Carmichael to Molly the maid as one scrubbed potatoes and the other peeled them.

"Yes'm."

"The dog is no beauty, I must admit. I'm fond of it myself but

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my husband won't allow it in the sitting room. He says it offends his artist's eye."

"Yes'm." Molly was kind-hearted but no conversationalist. Talking to her was an opportunity for Mrs. Carmichael to talk to herself without appearing odd.

"Of course, it is a little out of date. Victorian isn't popular any more. It was old-fashioned when I got it."

"When was that, ma'am?" Molly *could* say something.

"Oh, for Christmas, when I was a little girl. Dad had found it in a pawn shop in Kansas City. Already then it wouldn't do as an ornament, out in polite society, but he thought it would be fun for me as a toy. And I did love it. I used to make doll clothes for it."

Molly giggled indulgently.

On another afternoon Mrs. Carmichael continued her reminiscences in the presence of the statuette itself and of Eureka and the children. Sitting on the attic floor (Molly always kept that admirably dustfree) she took the image in her lap. For some reason, that made Eureka purr. The lady turned it upside down.

"See there?" she said and gestured. The base of the statue was an irregular flat surface, bisque-white and of about a square half-foot in extent. "See those marks?" There were two long narrow soiled streaks-parallel across the plaster.

"What are they, mother?" said Matthew.

"Adhesive tape. Or what's left from it. It was rather funny."

"What was funny?" said Mark, who liked a joke.

"Oh, I shouldn't say 'funny.' Odd. It was odd that there was a little verse there on a card, attached by adhesive tape."

"'Verse'?" said Lucasta. A new word for her.

"A little poem. 'Poem'? Lines that rhyme and tell a little story."

John couldn't talk yet but he could listen—and knew enough to react to the word "story." He gurgled.

They began over. Matthew said, "Tell us the story!"

"Oh, dear." Mrs. Carmichael realized perhaps she'd bitten off more than she'd bargained for. "The whole thing? I don't know if I can remember it... though I certainly knew it by heart when I was growing up. Well, you see, it was about this dog and almost

as if whoever owned it had a bit of a guilty conscience—”

“What’s that?” asked Mark.

“Feeling bad about something you’ve done. This person felt bad—maybe—because he—I kind of think it was she—got rid of the statue.”

“Why?” said Lucasta. (She should have been Luke but they ran out of boys just then.)

“You mean, how do I know?” The mother knew that children’s “why?” is an all-purpose question asking everything the speaker can’t articulate. “Because whoever it was wrote this verse and ‘sent’ it along with she said goodbye to her pug. A sort of little ‘passport,’ you might say, wishing for the statue that it would come into caring hands.”

This little flight of fancy made the children feel solemn before their mother. Faintly embarrassed, she pressed on: “Anyway, the poem went like this:

“I first knew roundness from your shiny head.
I first knew smoothness from you satin skin.
And when I chipped your toe and went to bed
I first knew sin.

‘You throned before the fender to warn off
A child impetuous—but then you dwelt
Upon the mantelpiece, and did you scoff
At how I felt?

‘Your flattened nose, your frown, your goggle eyes,
Your pink bow, that we called your “sugar cake,”
And those blue-mottled haunches did I prise
For old sake’s sake?

‘No. When from attic bundles we unrolled you,
My best-beloved cried “Hideous!” and sold you.’”*

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The children clapped at the little performance. Not that they understood it exactly. The mother had to explain how much it meant to her. The little 'gem' had come to be, as she grew older, more precious to her than the statuette itself had been in earlier years. "It's very charming, you see—to me anyway. And I think whoever wrote it must have been a nice person. I'd like to have known her. But by the time I grew to appreciate it fully it was years too late to find out who had written it. The card had fallen off and been lost, and Dad couldn't even remember where it was he bought it."

Nostalgia had been added to nostalgia, incidentally saving the pug from a rougher fate. Mrs. Carmichael would never sell the statue now, even if it was not allowed into polite society.

The pleased and reassured Eureka.

Yes, Poly went to college. Her dad arranged for a shower for her and though she didn't receive any gifts (except those of good nature, charm, and at least the average intelligence that had been granted her thousands of years ago at her birth) she did arrive one morning, as the rising sun sparkled through rain on the doorstep of the administration building of the Royal College of Oz. In her hand was her small bundle of needfuls tied up in a length of gossamer.

She rang the bell. A young man answered and was pleased at what he saw. It was a sophomore in Business Administration, who was picking up practical experience in the college office.

Polychrome laughed to cover her embarrassment, and her laughter always delighted people. "Which is the way to the Philosophy class?" she enquired when she was able to stop her giggles.

"Way? Philosophy?" repeated the boy, puzzled, but was no dummy and quickly twigged: a country maiden, naive about protocol at institutions of higher learning. He invited the rainbow maiden inside and put pencil and paper: a questionnaire and application blank, before her. He smiled encouragingly. "Just fill those out. That's the first thing."

Polychrome took one glance and said, "But I can't read. That's what I'm here for!" and she laughed again engagingly. Then she added cryptically: "The Shaggy Man was so good at reading."

The young man (his name was Fex) blushed. *Such* country unschooledness he had not met before. But, as I say, he was no dummy. Quick as anything he said, "Oh, you'll want Remedial then, to start off with. That's fine. You won't need these then," and he took away the paper and pencil.

"Remedial'?" said the Rainbow's daughter and was duly impressed. Was she going to get to study Remedial as well? How marvelous. She'd heard of the Remedial Ages and would not be averse at all to adding a session of history to her course of studies. Besides, if she was not mistaken, the Shaggy Man had been an

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expert at Remedial, and she was not going to be any less.

"But in such cases," Fex was going on, "the Dean likes to have a word with newly enrolling students."

"I'm very good at enrolling," said Poly and hung her head modestly. "There's nothing about dancing I don't know. And enjumping and enwhirling. I've trained for years." She didn't startle the young man by saying "eons." "But maybe I'm best at enskipping."

"Oh, splendid," said the young man, getting his cues perfectly now. "Anyway, the Dean enjoys every occasion for seeing the student body."

Polychrome stopped short. Don't forget that this was in 1909 and thinking on campuses not nearly so advanced as it is now. "Oh, dear," breathed Poly. "Am I going to have to undress?"

"Oh, no," Fex reassured. "Not at your first meeting." He would have his little joke. Polychrome breathed easier and followed as the youth led the way out of the stately Administration Building and over the lush green-red-blue grass toward the banks of a little river.

"Are we going to the greenhouse?" asked the girl.

Now it was Fex's turn to be brought up short. "Why, no; to the South Gymnasium. The professor spends all his time there."

"'Professor'? I thought you said we were going to see a Bean."

Fex *really* had all he could do not to burst out and spoil all the fun. But still he was puzzled and had to slow down and look at his visitor closely. "'Bean'? You thought the Professor was an overgrown walking plant perhaps? Something like Jack Pumpkinhead? Well, you're not completely out in left field. He *is* an overgrown insect."

Poly didn't know about left field but she did see her mistake and beamed radiantly. "Professor Wogglebug?! Of course! I was expecting to see him right away at the start, actually. We're old friends! I danced to a waltz of his last year. Quite lovely—" and she hummed the tune of "The Shining Emperor," which inevitably brought on a few dance steps over the springing sward, ending in a pirouette.

The young academic was charmed. "You're most accomplished," he praised. "I wouldn't be surprised if Professor Wogglebug should invite you to teach rather than study here."

Polychrome looked disturbed. "Oh, I *must* study," she insisted. "Otherwise there's no way to win the man I love."

Fex was crushed. Polychrome had already demonstrated half a dozen ways to win *his* heart and none of them were academic; rather, the reverse.

The dean-professor received them with courtesy and then with enthusiasm when he realized who Polychrome was. "Of course! We met last year at Princess Ozma's birthday party. And how have you passed the time since then, my dear?"

"Sighing," stated Poly succinctly.

"Good gracious. I didn't realize there was ever anything to sigh about on the rainbow."

"There isn't. Mostly troubles melt like lemon drops. It's on earth that the sighs begin. Then once they start they can follow you everywhere, even over the rainbow."

Poly seemed to be conducting here her own little seminar in philosophy. But gracious, that wasn't why she had come. She wanted to acquire knowledge and wisdom, and that in a hurry. She stated her business.

"My dear Miss Rainbow!" cried the professor when he understood. "We will be enchanted to have you on our rolls."

"And be eaten for breakfast?!" cried the maiden in dismay. She was beginning to get a very queer idea of what went on in colleges.

The two collegians laughed at the sally appreciatively. Wogglebug hastily explained in words of one syllable that Polychrome could certainly be accepted as a student. Did she wish to register for the full four-year course?

"'Years'?! Oh, heavens, does it take that long?" wailed the Rainbow's daughter in yet further dismay. "I thought a few days—well, maybe a few weeks," she amended when she saw the gapes of the other two and realized she was appearing somewhat *too* naive, if not downright moronic. "You see, I have to be on my

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way again quickly. I mean, I have to run and catch up—" She broke off. If Polychrome was ignorant she was not insensitive. She was aware already that young Fex had been cast down by her hint that her affections were already claimed.

The Professor saved the scene for her. "—with the rainbow?" he completed her sentence. "Yes, I'm sure your father can't spare you too long at a time. I should have realized that at once." With a sigh of relief Polychrome allowed the bug to remain with his mistaken conclusion. "Well, of course there *are* the Wizard's School Pills. A dozen of those and you'll know all we have to teach in no time. But we try to keep the use of those to a minimum; really just in hopeless cases, where pupils can't seem to absorb anything by traditional methods. If they can't take in learning through their heads—it's guaranteed by way of their stomachs. But that could never apply to you, Miss Polychrome..."

"Never mind, I'll have some," decided the maiden without more ado. She consulted her memory. "Let's see: I'd like one for Reading—that's a must, of course. And then Writing and Spelling—oh, that reminds me. I have to learn to cast spells. Do you do Magic?"

"Oh, dear, no!" laughed the wogglebug. "That's one branch of learning that's quite out of bounds for us: Queen Ozma and her advisers determined some years back that none but a few Adepts were going to be allowed to practice magic in Oz."

Polychrome looked at him with big eyes. "But I've *got* to learn some magic! I mean—well, *he* was using magic; anyway... a bit of it. I have to be able to do at least as much."

The others looked doubtful. Since Ozma's embargo on the use of magic the subject was virtually taboo in the fairyland: a queer reversal of the natural order of things. Meanwhile, however, wisdom was what Polychrome chiefly wanted to acquire and for that you definitely didn't need to be a magician. They agreed to leave the issue of the study of magic in abeyance for a while.

To distract the girl from her disappointment, Professor Wogglebug, as he accompanied the others to the Ladies' Dormitory, ventured: "Can you help me with a problem that's bothering

me? Every year about this time we change the name of the College. I'm about to run out of inspiration though. There are just so many changes one can ring in so circumscribed a field." He ran over the four varieties of official designation the college had had so far;

Poly pursed her brow. "Let me see... Well, the Registrar—" here she nodded recognitively at the delighted Fex, and preened herself that she had learned at least one word of university terminology, "the Registrar told me you're awfully keen on sports here at the college. What if you were to call it the 'Royal Athletic College of Oz'?"

The others were charmed and adopted the new title by acclaim (subject to review by the College Board of Governors). Certainly the name was as pleasingly bland and misleading as all the others the college had already had in its brief history.

They came to see the Shaggy Man off at the Winkie Gate.

From time immemorial there had been four formal arches, one at each cardinal compass point, as markers of where the Land of Oz began. There was, of course, no fence around Oz; one knew well enough when one passed over the border by the sharp division between colorful grass and nearly hueless sand. But just at these four places a grandiose pedimented arch arose, rather unmotivated-looking in the surrounding flat (except at the mountain-verged Gillikin frontier) landscape. One arch was in Corinthian style, one Doric, one Ionic, and one Tuscan (the "Composite" was being saved for later), and each was carved in a typical stone of the area: purple Purbeck or red sandstone or, as here at the Winkie frontier, yellow soapstone.

Princess Ozma herself was there and, not to be outdone (besides, they needed her magic know-how), Sorceress Glinda. The Shaggy Man's new-won comrade, the Wizard of Oz, took part. But best of all, Shag's first friend in Oz (and earlier), Princess Dorothy, had come to wave farewell.

Each had a gift for the wanderer to assist him on his journey. The Queen had contributed the magnificent suit of clothes the Shaggy Man wore. Indeed, for the period of this venture it was agreed he would be called "the Snazzy Man." Ozma had early on come to the conclusion that for his appearance in the presence of the wronged-but-to-be-righted Miss Penelope Thacker it would cut no ice to be seen as a disreputable old tramp. No, for this time the Man was smartly turned out in a green Emerald City costume on vaguely Alpine lines, with leather panels and knickerbockers, serviceable for both hiking and town wear. He carried (as long as he was in the Princess' presence) a subdued version of the pointed Oz hat, minus bells, and his atrocious old beard was trimmed to a smart Van Dyke.

The gift of the red witch was a service, not a thing. She was going to lift one corner of the pall of invisibility that lay over Oz and let Shag slip out.

The Wizard's present would then come into play. He had manufactured a marvelous pair of— what would one call them? Clogs? They looked more like wooden shoes than anything but were in fact made of indestructible ozynium painted to resemble leather but in their bulky multi-purpose shape undoubtedly reminiscent of the black wooden work-shoes of Scandinavia.

These were magic shoes, of course. But would the magic work outside, in the great world? That was the question. One just never knew when the magicity of fairyland artifacts was going to go on functioning beyond the confines of such a land. The shoes would undoubtedly do their work as long as Shag was still on the magic continent of Sempernumquam, but afterwards? Would their magic be operative beyond there? As was, for instance, Ozma's enchantment of a road in Kansas just a few months ago, or like the miraculosity of the "Queer-Visitors" who had proven not to lose a whit of their magical viability on their extended tour of the United States. Or would the shoes fall off like Dorothy's silver ones did before they had even accompanied her beyond the limits of the great desert?

No, anyway they were not going to fall off! The Wizard had seen to that. Apart of the bulky construction of the clogs was a strap over the instep that was guaranteed never to come adrift without the conscious manipulation of the wearer. The shoes were slick—and flat-bottomed; in that they were like skis in miniature. A switch conveniently located at the side of each made wheels let down and then you had roller skates! But you didn't have to wear yourself out taking steps and glides; by pressing down the toes inside the clogs the footwear moved by itself. The harder you pressed the faster you went. Then just in case the magic didn't after all work in the outer world the Snazzy Man still had handsome (if clumsy) boots that would never wear out.

Dorothy's gift was not magic but it was appreciated for all that. During the months of their common residence in the Palace of Magic in the Emerald City and in the course of frequent visits to the Shaggy Man's rooms Dorothy had seen that her friend had gone over to fixed-residence living with a vengeance. Where

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formerly he had owned not even a bandanna on a stick, his apartment, just between August and Christmas, had filled up—well, nearly—with every manner of delightful junk he had happened across. The Shaggy Man could at last give way to a life-long-suppressed tendency to be a packrat!

Of course he was not going off to America without a capacious suitcase to hold his finds in. That's what Dorothy gave him: a splendid rectangular case ornamented, both sides, with the design of the flag of Oz (done in shiny leatherette). She also tucked inside the hold-all the address of the bank in Topeka that held the mortgage on Uncle Henry's farm.

Thus equipped the Man was ready to set off—into the unknown; indeed, into the invisible. For just as Oz was now invisible to anyone approaching it from any direction, any direction was now invisible to anyone looking from within Oz. This phenomenon was limited in its practical effects (well, nearly) to people situated, as were our friends, at the Oz frontier. The great surrounding desert appeared, beyond the Winkie Gate, as just so much nothing. It wasn't even a vaguely heaving level area of cloud. It was just emptiness, or perhaps, like a vast colorless opaque curtain let down, close-fitting, on all sides.

Yes; for when Witch Glinda essayed to reverse, just slightly, for the benefit of the traveler, the witchcraft spell that caused the invisibility, it took the form of her stepping through the gate-way, bending down and lifting up a flap of nothing. Underneath, the onlookers could get a glimpse, sure enough, of yellowish sands: with the sun beating down on them.

"Now, Shaggy," said the Sorceress, "be careful as you step through that no part of you but your shoe bottoms touches the sands. This area of the deserts, as you all know, is the deadliest of all. And then, away you go on your ski-shoes. Best of luck!"

The others gave their handshakes and farewells, Glinda drew the curtain of invisibility a little higher, the Snazzy Man ducked and stepped through—and vanished.

It was a golden journey to Baroquee. The calm kangaroo (she *would* be calm) tucked her paws in her armpits and jogged along beside the five Emero-Munchkins' prettily decorated blue-green cart. As they proceeded in a northeasterly direction the aquacostumed people entertained their companion with a detailed description of what made the Baroqueans baroque.

"They seem stuck in the late seventeenth century," explained one.

Mar listened with all ears. This was so new to her.

"Yes," clarified another, "you see, they delight in excessive technical development in a particular form or style within a fixed scope or subject."

"Mmm, interesting," said the marsupial. "How does that work out in practice—?"

"It means they emphasize the elaborate and adore the adorned."

"They worship the weird and the whimsical."

"They go for the garish and gaudy, not to mention the grotesque."

"They flaunt the florid and flamboyant and are fond of whatever is fussy and frilly."

"They delight in decoration."

"I begin to understand," said the kangaroo. "But I can't help wondering what could have attracted them in a rather ordinary piece of a rather ordinary old lady."

"But we've told you: they favor the fantastic."

"They espouse the extravagant."

"They opt for the odd, the ornate, the overdone, the outrageous."

"But really: Grandma Gnit's topknot is neither fantastic, extravagant, or odd," protested the animal.

"Wait 'til you see it on the head of the Baroque Baron!"

With that Mar had to be content.

They spent that night at a charming inn and got away not too

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early or late next day. By *that* night they were at the Garnet City and got invited, as all newcomers were, to a masked ball which went on 'til all hours. By the following evening, as the red was fading from the sky and also from the landscape, the party came to the campus of the Royal Athletic College of Oz.

The college being set off by itself, not near any town, visitors to the institution were put up in the old, original wooden mansion, which was now given over entirely to dormitories. Also for the cultivated kangaroo and her companions that was the arrangement. As a customary courtesy the newcomers were invited to dinner that night at the Dean's table in the refectory.

"Ah, fellows from the Fiddlestick Forest," exclaimed Professor Nowitall when he caught sight of them.

"Will you favor us with music after the repast?" fell in Dean Wogglebug. The foresters were famous violinists, training from an early age on the instruments that grew wild in their native woods.

"Delighted!" agreed the travelers and did duly perform.

"What a pity," sighed the wogglebug, clicking his chelae in the concert hall after a particularly affecting cavatina. "You've just missed the Rainbow's daughter. She'd have loved to perform to your playing."

"Miss Polychrome? Has she been here?" asked the kapelmeister.

"Yes, she's just finished a four-month stay with us. We were able to load her down with degrees by the time she left. She's a fairy, of course, and when such apply themselves they can pick up expertise in no time. How was it, Eydoant?" Wogglebug turned to his colleague. "Wasn't it seven languages Poly acquired during her course of studies here?"

"Mmm," agreed the Iresident. "Including Chinese calligraphy. She majored in Musicology and Choreography but also qualified in Archeology, Botany, Chemistry, Diplomacy, Education, Folklore, Geography, History — and so on, through the alphabet."

"Don't forget her Law degree," warned the Dean. "Outside of Music that was, curiously, the subject she did best in."

"I'm glad she had Musicology," reminisced Professor Nowitall. "Otherwise, we might have had to let her down on the letter M—because she was frightfully keen to get a grounding in Magic, but there we couldn't help her."

"What did she do, then?" asked the curious kangaroo, intrigued. "Just give up on it?"

"Oh, dear me, no," assured both professors. "She's gone off to the Wizard Wam to try to acquire some Magic on the sly. She knows of course that the powers that be have forbidden the use of magic in the fairyland—which seems like a contradiction in terms, doesn't it?—but she's determined to achieve at least a little proficiency in that discipline, even so."

They sat for a long time in silence, and then talked again of Polychrome as they remembered her, girlish and gifted and full of charm, and of the Studies that had altered her, and of so many mysteries of time and age and of the mind, of the little fairy who had been most old and of the strange ultimate dream of blue magic.

"Do you think she will ever find it?" Mar asked. "Blue magic, you say?"

"Yes, we suppose that's what Wam will teach her if he does—away there in Munchkinland... Well, actually, he's right on the blue-purple border."

The direction stuck in the marsupial's mind. For the nonce, however, she had business elsewhere in the blue country. The party slept the next night camped out across the water from haunting Romanti City. There was a little unmanned travelers' lodge there to accommodate the visitors who *would* come to see the enchanting place, if only from a distance. For most, if indeed not quite all, travelers it was next to impossible to get into the fabled city, and then only for the briefest fleeting stay.

A day or two more and the Munchkin party were home in the Fiddlestick Forest. They urged the questing kangaroo to linger among them but she wanted to press on. Next morning they showed her the road to Baroquea and by noon she was there.

As was to be expected, the quaint kangaroo was wildly popular from the moment she set foot in the tiny barony of Baroquea,

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for if there is a more baroque-looking animal than a kangaroo (unless it be a giraffe) I'd like to know what it is. The huge hinder legs and their contrast with the tiny, nearly useless front paws. The vast tail to steer by—or to sit back against as on a built-on deckchair. The pouch slit in the front. Are there animal features more baroque than these? (well, maybe an elephant's trunk!)

The antipodal kangaroo: who can unseat her?: sitting up there plumb-weighted and lifting her beautiful slender face to nibble at a round white peppermint drop which she loves, sensitive mother kangaroo, her full antipodal eyes so dark, so big and quiet and remote, having watched so many empty dawns in silent Australia.[§]

Through the throng of admirers the kangaroo made her way with difficulty to the presence of the Baron. His reception chamber was a spacious hall lined with alternating bands of royal-blue velvet and marshmallow, set at the top of a thin tower eighty feet high which contained only the winding approach stairway.

To make as favorable an initial impression as possible Mar prostrated herself, but at once realized the ruler was not looking at her or at any worldly thing. Suddenly the Lord Vizier raised his staff of office and all murmuring ceased and the Baron began solemnly and slowly to intone:

"A big calm drowsy elephant found great happiness in jungly Kenya, lying most nonchalantly on pink quilted rugs, snugly tucked under veils, while xenophobic yaks zithered."

"What a baroque thought," muttered Mar.

"Of course," said a bystander. "That's why he does it. Since he lost his mind he's at great pains to turn out these exquisitely lathe-turned sentences—to prove he's still baroque enough to rule over us."

"Lost his mind'?" echoed the kangaroo in sudden alarm. "But I made sure the Baron had got a replacement one—" Only, now that she looked carefully, the marsupial could catch no glimpse of Grandmother Gnit's topknot among the jumble of wig curls,

yarmulke, mantilla, and coronet atop the Baron's head. She turned full to her neighbor in the throng and laid a paw on his arm. "Did not a party of your citizens recently return from the south with a new mind for your ruler?"

The fellow frowned, but only in concentration. "Seems like I did hear of a group who were holidaying at Fuddlecumjig. But I've never heard that they came home with anything more than they took with them." He paused. "If Baron Rococo had had a new mind installed I know we'd all have heard of it."

The kangaroo blanched, then fell into abject apologies to the Baroquean, to his more than somewhat bewilderment. Of course the animal was expressing contrition for the suspicions, nay, utmost certainty, she'd nourished all these days. "Oh, those stupid Fiddlestickians!" she fumed as she stumbled away. "They were sure the people from Baroquea had stolen the piece of Mrs. Gnit. I've a good mind to go back there and thump them into the middle of next week."

But that would be non-productive. She had rather now to give herself furiously to think. Where was she to go? What was she to do? She needed a quiet spot to remuster her scattered forces. 'Just like a Fuddle!' Mar thought ruefully.

As she made her way out through the crowd to the stairs she heard Ruler Rococo making a new pronouncement "After breaking certain delicate electrical fixtures..."

chapter sixteen

But this wasn't getting Eureka to Oz.

She realized she'd found a very snug berth in the Carmichaels' attic—or wherever else she chose to rove in their house and grounds. But she had to face it: it was dull, whereas in the household of Dorothy Gale's family there were much wider horizons. There was the chance to go to Oz now and then—though Eureka had been denied that chance the last two times around. The injustice rankled. It was no good just lying here in the lap of luxury and pretending one could be content, with that.

One morning she was gone. She didn't say goodbye to anybody. That would have been un-cat-like. She just waltzed off without a meow. No! to one creature she did say goodbye—in the form of an extra half-hour's lingering around and lying on top of and purring. Or let's say "one object." (An interesting speculation: how much is an inanimate object impervious to strong feelings that may be directed towards it? There are still plenty of unanswered questions in our cosmos.)

You've guessed who the object was? There, you see: an inanimate object has already become a being with a personality, even a semi-human one, to be designated by a pronoun "who"! —Toby, the Life-Sized Pug.

Eureka really did have pangs on parting with the pug. But there: she couldn't carry it with her, and the silly thing hadn't sense enough to come to life and run off with her. She gave a little bitten-off meow and left.

The outlook did seem hopeless. The only single clue the cat had was that Dorothy, that time with the old tramp, had set out going eastward. This was known because the travelers (so Dorothy afterwards, in great detail, related to her kitten) had continued on in the same general direction and at last fetched up in the Winkie land of Oz, which one and all know to lie (most times) in the west of Oz.

If Eureka kept on going east she too would come to Oz. She had to believe that. What else could she believe? Oh, it might take

years, because this time there was no Ozma magicking the roads to make sure that someone arrived in the magic land. Eureka would believe in the East and following yonder star to at last achieve her goal. To look in any other direction and to doubt: that way lay madness.

The slim white cat with the belled collar stepped out along the slim white road east from Butterfield. The road was white with dust and gravel. It was being a dry season and the stones hurt her feet, so she kept to the grass verge, where there *was* one. By nightfall of her first day she had covered a number of miles. At least she had come so far she didn't fear pursuit.

By the night of the second day, however, Eureka couldn't help wishing there had *been* pursuit, even successful pursuit. She crawled, weary and dejected, into another barn and sought the hay. "I guess it will be mouse again tonight," she said to herself, with disdain bordering on revulsion.

As she lay in her temporary nest and mumbled the bones of an unwary rat-child she could not help but recall evenings when she would lie in Dorothy's lap, with a tempting dish of sour milk and fish-heads conveniently close by, and the young girl would sing her to sleep with cradle songs learned far away in another, better, magical land. Oh, how could she hurt her Eureka so? leaving her behind all alone in an abandoned house? The kitten did not stamp her feet now in fury; she wept inwardly in loss and hurt.

But maybe the morning would be brighter? She looked out. No, it was raining! Oh, well, the farmers needed it, she said to herself ironically. And what was she to do all day? Like every cat she hated the wet. The dust was laid along that pebbly road, but was mud any improvement for a traveling cat?

She lurked in the hay loft the whole day. She didn't even find any further baby rats. Rats have their own intercom system and the local tribe made themselves scarce as long as it was known that a strange cat was ravaging in the neighborhood. Eureka was thus forced by hunger to stalk, all damp (by then) the hundred yards to the farmhouse door and utter winning purrs— that came

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out strangely like distressed howls.

The farm wife opened the door and batted at her with a broom. "Nasty great thing!" she screeched, not realizing that Eureka in her heart was a tender white kitten. "It'll be after the chickens, I'll be bound!"

The cat made off with scant dignity, aware that she had nothing to hope for in the way of a handout by hanging around. She retreated to the barn but they saw her go and came after her with torches and pitchforks and she was constrained to flee outright. She just had presence of mind enough to remember to flee east.

Two days later the white cat, thoroughly bedraggled and chastened, came to the shore of a great river: the longest in North America, the "wide Missouri." (For map buffs, the location was about eleven miles northwest of Kansas City, between there and Leavenworth.) There was nothing to see but water.

Good glory! what was a self-respecting, though abandoned, cat to do now? Eureka, like all cats, could swim. But was she going to give herself to the embrace of that wet monster, whose farther shore, from her vantage point a foot above the ground, she could not even see, though intellectually she might well be aware that it was there?

Lower than low in her spirits she set out to trudge along the river bank. The stream appeared to flow from north to south. Which way to go eventually to reach the east she had no way of knowing. She just went.

When she came to a small pink clapboard house set high on the bank she gave a wail of pure longing. For a start, she'd always liked the color pink. Eureka sat down in the still-wet grass and remembered a time when—oh, only very briefly—she herself had been pink. It had happened during an adventure in middle earth when the light of a rose-colored sun suspended there had caught her just right. She had aroused marvelment among her companions at being seen to be thus in the pink and that too had flattered her ego and increased her liking for the color. But as dear (though ultimately disappointing) Dorothy herself had pointed out: "Eureka isn't pink; she's white. It's this queer light that gives her

that color.”

Yes, she was white: a rather muddy white by this time. The cat sighed and abandoned her little dream of memory. She leapt up with what lightness she could onto the picket fence and then down into the nicely tended little garden. Why, there was catnip there! She could smell it plainly. Anyone who wilfully planted catnip must like cats. She happened to know the shrub was not native to America, so where you found it you might be sure it was there “on purpose.”

The relief of that thought made the cat perk up mightily, so much so that there was something of the old confident and ingratiating kitten about her when she stepped to the Dutch back door of the cottage and meowed most movingly.

Surprisingly suddenly the top of the door moved inward with a slight creak. But that was all, for just a moment. Then Eureka saw what was unmistakably the top of a broomstick in motion, and she made ready to fly. Once broomed, twice shy.

But no: apparently the broom was but doing its normal duty. It switched to and fro, and then in a few moments the bottom of the double door opened and a panful of dust and grit flew over Eureka’s head. Well, almost. Enough of the flying waste fell on her fur to make her sneeze and spit

“Darling!” cried the broomster and when the dust cleared Eureka saw an old hook-nosed woman in black bombazine resting on her knees and staring. “How long have you been there? And has the cat got your tongue? I never heard a thing.”

Eureka made no reply, just stood her ground, ready to advance or to flee. She was receiving very mixed signals.

“Well, aren’t you coming in?” said the old hag and moved aside invitingly. “Your dish of curds is by the fire. I’ve been expecting you,”

Curious and curiouser. Eureka hadn’t been expecting herself; how had this crone known of her approach? Still, a welcome was a welcome and that was just what the cat had had need of at this juncture. Warily she stepped past the old woman’s legs and looked inside the room to check the exits. Reassured, she went to the old-

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fashioned fireplace, where a pot—actually a cauldron—hung from a jack over glowing coals. It was a cooking fire and this was a witch's kitchen.

There were the curds, indeed, and my, they did look tempting. As she took her first exploratory lick Eureka wondered where the old woman got them. She hadn't seen a cow in the garden and she couldn't picture nearby farmers delivering such an old-world comestible. In the fairy-tale countries she'd visited, however, Eureka had found curds (*and* whey) quite the usual thing.

"I wonder where you've come from?" mused the woman, as she leaned on her broomstick and watched the famished cat slurp. "Oh ever mind, you're here. That's the main thing. You want some more? No, you're washing your face; that means you're through."

Eureka lowered her paw and looked at her hostess critically. "When I wash something it means exactly what I intend it to mean, neither more nor less," she said severely.

"Hnh, hnh!" wheezed the crone delightedly. "You don't like people jumping to conclusions, do you? Well, who does? All right then: *Do you want your dish refilled?*"

Eureka stared. The old woman couldn't have understood her! Or could she? Her response had been uncannily apt. Eureka of course (since Oz) still understood every word of spoken English but it was more than was to be expected that any human would grasp her own speech, that, annoyingly, just came out in straight Feline whenever she spoke in the U.S.A.

Just in case the surprising woman *did* understand, Eureka walked against her skirt, stuck up her tail, looked up at her with blue eyes, and purred loudly, "No, thank you. I've supped sufficiently." Actually she still felt famished, but she wasn't going to lose her dignity.

"Fine," said the crone. "Come this way then." She led the way upstairs to a little garret. Quickly Eureka darted an eye about. No misleading animal here, constated the cat; worse luck. But otherwise the place was comfortingly like in Butterfield. The woman pointed to a pile of old clothes and bed linen. "That ought to be big enough to make a nest of any size you like—or for a family, if

you get one.”

Eureka put her hands on her hips—figuratively. “A family!” Did the creature think she was going to stay here forever? What presumption. She’d stay as long as she liked but not one moment longer. And she was *certainly* not thinking of courtship and mating at this stage.

She jumped on the pile of stuffs. Nicely soft, but with rough patches, just like she liked it. There was even a length of old Chinese silk: perfect for sharpening her claws in.

“Have a snooze, my dear Grimalkin,” said the woman. “Don’t be disturbed by that family of young bluebirds in the nest just outside the window. And if there’s anything you want just call for it.” She half-curtseyed and with an insinuating grimace turned away.

Eureka still stood with hands on hips. All very nice, but where did the creature get off calling her “Grimalkin?” Did she think Eureka was her familiar or something? The cat remained standing still, with a big question mark in a balloon over her head.

‘Bluebirds, ey?’ she ruminated. She recollected how peckish she still felt. A bit of bluebird now might just hit the spot. She marched to the window, sprang up and peered out. There they were, the little darlings. Unluckily the window was shut. Eureka could do much, but she couldn’t shove up window sashes.

She went on looking, and then she saw the mother bird return to the nest with a juicy long worm. The two females, cat and bird, looked on lovingly while the young consumed their dinner.

A glance through the big tree’s leaves showed Eureka that the sky was clearing at last after those rainy days. There was even a rainbow!

The adult bird flew off again on a further foraging expedition. Eureka stared after her. “If happy little bluebirds fly,” she wondered, “beyond the rainbow, why, oh why can’t I!”

chapter seventeen

“But, Mr. Wam,” exclaimed Polychrome, the rainbow’s daughter, “isn’t this just witchcraft?”

“Yes, indeed, my dear,” assured the genial magician. “Wizardry *is* witchcraft—and ‘wizard’ no more, in common parlance, than the masculine form of ‘witch’.”

“But I have to learn *real* magic,” almost wailed the disillusioned graduate. “I mean—please don’t be wounded—and your tricks are *charming*—but the people at Royal Athletic said that inasmuch as I’m a fairy I’m entitled to know genuine fairy magic, not just—forgive me—light sorcery.”

“Morally, no doubt, Miss Poly,” confirmed the wizard, “but, alas, not legally. Not since the queen’s decree of six years ago. Actually it’s strictly illicit for me to have taught you even the few enchantments I have done. You know, in accordance with the law, I’ve completely given up the public practice of magic and am confining myself to my mechanical tinkering.”

“Oh, yes, surely,” agreed Polychrome, “—and all credit to you for being so law-abiding. But all that doesn’t apply to me. I’m not an Ozite. And I’ll need the magic for later, back in my home in the clouds, and far away from Oz.”

“Oh, I agree implicitly,” confirmed Wam. “I just wonder what we should do. Do you want to give up Incantology? And you were doing so well in Transubstantiation! It seems a shame. Look at the way you turned that pile of base metal into platinum. And then your exercises in Bringing to Life. I’ve never seen better dancing slippers—or flying buttresses—”

“Now, Mr. Wam, you promised! You weren’t going to mention those buttresses again! Oh, how could I have been so stupid?”

“And *you* weren’t going to be so contrite. I told you if Regent Ram shows up we’ll make him some new buttresses. I too am sorry the others flew away. But don’t you see: that just helps his buildings to tumble down the more. He ought to be pleased at that.”

They agreed to say no more of their disastrous field trip to Tumbledown Town. But Polychrome had to return to her theme:

"How *am* I to get some training in fairy magic?" She sat down on a stump at the edge of the clearing and put her chin in her hand. Her toes kept tapping out a tango while she pondered; she couldn't help *that*.

"It's no good going to Ozma," reminded Wam. "She'd hardly give permission for magic study to anyone outside the authorized Adepts—even if you are a fairy. Besides, she's taken up these days with her wars with the Nome King."

"How are those getting on?" enquired the rainbow maiden, half preoccupied.

"Oh, all right, I suppose," dismissed Wam a bit bored. "Ozma *always* wins her wars. It's not very exciting. No suspense, if you take my meaning. One could almost wish she might lose one for a change, just to break up the odds."*

"Okay: no applying to Ozma," resumed Polychrome. "Nor Glinda the Good Sorceress either. Same reasons. Or rather, not quite: she's just a witch, so hers would be all witchcraft, I guess."

"Though the most powerful in the world," submitted Wam.

"Oh, agreed. Just the same, I'll stick with you as far as witchcraft/wizardry/sorcery go."

"Don't forget necromancy," warned the necromancer.

"Do forgive me. Necromancy, of course. But, to get back: you know, when you think about it, there aren't all that many actual fairies *in* this fairyland."

"You're right," said Wam. "Just—let me see—just Azarine the Red and the Mist Nuids—oh, and then Princess Faleero of Follensby Forest—poor thing: she's wiser than she is pretty. That's all I can think of off-hand."

"Yes, and their magic doesn't mount to all that much, does it? I read about them in my course in the Natural History of Magic. They do at least allow you to read *about* magic, if not magic itself, at Royal Athletic."

*Never fear. See *The Gillikins of Oz*. Ed. note.

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"I've noticed you always refer to Profescor Wogglebug's college that way, Lass Poly," said the wizard, digressing a bit. "Why is that? Last I heard it was called just the 'Royal College of Oz'."

"Oh, didn't you know? They have a little tradition going there now. The college isn't very old and they're short on ancient customs. With money now outlawed in Oz, they can't *buy* any tradition, as I understand they do in America. So they have to turn every little accidental happening into a ritualistic habit—"

"And as for the names?"

"Well," pontificated Poly, wearing her antiquarian's hat, "at its founding in 1906 the institution was known as the College of Art and Athletic Perfection.[§] But that was such a mouthful, and besides, Princess Ozma took an interest and made it a royal foundation, so they changed the name to 'the Royal College of Athletic Science'.* That was in 1907. But by 1908 they were calling it the 'Royal College of Scientific Athletics'.** Then last year they dropped the reference to sports and and it was just, tout court, 'the Royal College of Oz'.***"

"Just so," said Wam. "The way I knew it. I like that form."

"I do too," agreed the graduate. "But by now, don't you see, tradition had set in. When I arrived the professors were at wits' ends as to what to call it this year. I noticed that sports were still the main thing there so just off the top of my head I said, 'The Royal Athletic College.'**** To my surprise the two were thrilled. They ended up assigning me as thesis topic 'Public Nomenclature in Oz, with a Projection for Future Denomination'."

"Fascinating," praised the wizard. "What names did you come up with for future use?"

"Extrapolating from previously used elements," pronounced Polychrome, "with elaboration plus introduction of valid new components, I proposed 'Queen's College of Sports' — I think that's

§ See *Ozma of Oz*.

*See *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*.

***ibidem*.

***See *The Road to Oz*.

****See *The Emerald City of Oz*. Editor's notes.

what they actually intend renaming it—at a big formal ceremony next time around. I’m to be guest speaker! if I’m is the country. Then for 1912 I suggested ‘the Athletic Institute of Oz’ and afterwards ‘the Royal College of Athletics’. Later on—oh, I forget in what order— but there’s ‘Queen Ozma College’ coming up and ‘the Royal Sports Institution’ and then ‘the Athletic Foundation of Oz’ and so on. I believe they’re all fixed up for names for the next twenty years. My favorite of the ones I dreamed up is the ‘College of Knowledge.’

“Hm, yes,” mused Wam. “Tripping on the tongue. But you know, in time they’ll surely go over to university status.”

“Of course! and therewith a whole new kettle of names.”

But the topic was exhausted and Poly was no nearer the solution to her dilemma. “What *am* I going to do about acquiring more magic?” she said, and stayed for an answer.

“Let me sleep on it,” requested the genial necromancer.

He did, and by next morning all was clear. Of course! Poly-chrome had but to apply to the Queen of the Fairies herself, renowned Lurline. That near-divinity would soon tell the rain maiden what to do: whether to study with her, Lurline, or completely to give up the idea of further indoctrination into the mysteries of magic. From that tribunal there need be no attempt at recourse.

chapter eighteen

Whee! These skis were marvelous! (Well, yes; literally.)

The Snazzy Man skimmed across the Deadly Desert in what seemed no time, being frightfully careful not to lose his balance. Even a finger-tip placed for support upon the surface of the lethal shining sands would cause the incineration of the whole person. So they said. Later on he wondered.

Was the desert really any deadlier than, for example, eggs to Nomes? This was one of the great revealed truths of Oz legends: the surrounding deserts of Oz would burn to a crisp anyone setting foot on them. However, there was not a single instance in the recorded history of that land of such a thing ever having happened. In his months of enforced idleness at the capital Shag had read up on Oz history, and he knew. Why, Princess Ozma's own transfiguration from boy to girl had taken place in a tent erected upon those very burning Sands, and everyone present at the scene was still alive to tell the tale.

And that about the eggs. His pal Dorothy had personally described to him in detail how eggs of the hen Billina, cast by the Scarecrow, had winged their way into the eyes of the baffled Nome King and produced no effect deadlier than strong annoyance.

Maybe a lot of Oz mythology was tosh, thought Shag as he slid speedily along. Nevertheless, he held himself most upright and never swerved from his straight path by a tittle, lest he overbalance.

This paid off, and he arrived safely in the Rose Kingdom or somewhere; he was going so fast he didn't notice. After that, as he continued to skim along, he felt he needn't be so rigidly careful and he did from time to time make turns when some barrier loomed up. Even so, he never fell down. After a while he grew curious, and took bigger chances. Finally he *tried* to fall down (while going less than sixty) —and couldn't! Another wonder of the magic ski-skates.

This was all very well so long as he remained on the magical continent of Sempernunquam. But afterward? Well, he'd cross that

water when he came to it.

The Snazzy Man thought he was thinking figuratively. His own experience of traveling to Oz had been over dry land exclusively. He always marveled when Dorothy retailed how she once reached the magic continent in a chicken crate tossed on the wide Pacific. It didn't all seem to add up somehow.

Only after the discovery of plate tectonics—a theoretical advance to be announced this very year—did scientists begin to understand what happened. The Sempernunquam plate simply moved much faster than any of the others; with the result that the continent ricocheted around the Nonestic Ocean like a slower billiard ball. (“Nonestic” was simply the Sempernunquam name for whatever ocean surrounded it, be it Pacific or otherwise.) When the land-mass occasionally fetched up briefly against some other coast, whether Australia, Kamchatka—or, in the experience of the Shaggy Man, apparently northern Mexico—a temporary land bridge was established. By such a one had Shag and his friends passed over.

There only remained one mystery that was never resolved. If Dorothy had set off from her Kansas home and walked more or less always in the same direction and presently arrived at the western Winkie country of Oz, then Oz must be east of America (and thus did Dorothy, from this very experience, always feel it to tie). If this strikes you as not altogether obvious, try the experiment: choose a nearby destination known to be in your east, go towards it, and see if you don't arrive at the *western* edge of that destination.

But the Pacific Ocean and whatever continents it may, under another name, or may not contain are known to be to the west of America. I can't explain it. I believe it must have something to do with the long-range magic mixing of the Kansas roads that fairy Ozma performed when she looked at the Magic Pioture and saw her little friend starting out *in the wrong direction!* to walk to Oz.

It turned out, in fact, that Shag was thinking literally. He whizzed over a last ridge and coasted down across a wide sloping sandy beach. Here was water he was going to have to

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cross without more ado! and no bridge over it. No, indeed, for the nearest off-shore land lay on the far (he guessed: western) horizon. What was he going to do? What *was* he going to do?!

His dithering saved him: He hadn't reached any decision about what he was going to do when his swift-flying shoes hurled him at the blue brine and he found his shoes were water-skis as well! He gasped with relief, swallowed a mouthful of foam cast from the top of a billow, and dashed on. Through all vicissitudes on land and sea he held onto the empty suitcase with both hands.

That queer sea change took place again. The Snazzy Man had no clear sense of a changing of direction but presently he could tell by the position of the sun that he was skimming eastward. What had been a distant-looking landfall was now directly upon him. What action should he take?

Again he dithered, and again had the decision taken from him. This time the outcome was not unmixedly what he could have desired. The water grew shallower, he rushed toward the beach, and at the first touch of it flew head over heels and landed on his back in a mass of seaweed. His Alpine touring suit received the first of many usages that would eventually turn it into a set of shags little better than what he supposed he'd left behind forever in Oz.

Of the suitcase one side was a bit scratched where it had skidded over pebbles but otherwise the damage to it was slight. Shag got to his feet, brushed bits of kelp off his sleeves and pant-legs, and moved about a little gingerly. Then he stood still, pressed his toes down on his inner-shoe soles—and stood still.

So. Just as Glinda said might happen. It had been fifty-fifty whether the magic of the shoes would operate in northern California (where he presently learned he was). Now he knew the magic would not work.

What a long way off Kansas still was, and he without a cent in his pockets. That was nothing new, of course. Indeed, it was just like old times. Never mind. Summoning up a whistle, the (slightly less) Snazzy Man started off along and across the beach to look for a road into the interior.

Actually there was no particular rush about the man's quest. The injustice in Butterfield lay some ten years in the past. It was not going to worsen in a week, or a month, or two. As for another and equally (perhaps even more) solemn goal he had set himself: it too would not be any more hopeless if he were still another two weeks in arriving in Kansas.

Shag struck a main road at the town of Eureka. That seemed an encouraging omen. But already he had seen that his customary old slow-poking on foot was not going to avail. He couldn't take *years* to arrive in Kansas and still expect to accomplish those goals. He tried hitch-hiking.

In 1910 that was both easy and hard. People weren't terrified of ostensibly decent strangers and nearly everybody with any spare space in the big roomy automobiles of the epoch would stop to give a neatly clad walker a lift. However, there just weren't very many cars on the road and the way Shag went: obliquely south-east into the high Sierra, almost none at all.

Past Chico he turned up into the highlands and in the lonely Plumas forest had to spend the night camped out in Eureka park. The name was all right but that was all. He froze—and next morning at dawn's crack *ran* (for the sake of nearly congealed blood) along the woodland trail into which the road had devolved. He jogged all day, until at dusk he dropped down exhausted in the Donner Pass at seven thousand feet.

The man's luck changed then. He managed to hop a freight train. Oh, the blessed (comparative) warmth of a cold box-car! He fell in a corner like a poled ox and knew nothing (even during a five-hour layover in Reno) until a guard discovered him and turned him out at Fernley, Nevada.

Anyway it was blissfully mild at eleven o'clock in the morning in the permanent Nevada sun. He swallowed one of the wizard's one-a-day food pills and elected to stand by the nearby desert road until he should see the next eastbound train come along. The Snazzy Man considered that his suit still looked quite fresh, considering. Certainly the colorful suitcase gave a reliable impression. Shag took always special care that one particular side

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of it was protected from scuffing.

And still his new luck held, and better than ever. A wholesale lumber dealer's representative from Arkansas, on a buying trip in the west, came along in a sturdy though battered Reo and took the Man aboard. They made good time and pushed on as far as Eureka that night.

The barren alkali flats of Nevada had no forests of a size to tempt Mr. Mercer to stop and dicker. Over in Utah it was different. They drove on all day and spent another night in Eureka... Utah. After that though, the Arkansas traveler wasted valuable (to his passenger) time in lumber camps up and down the Wasatch. Still, a ride towards Arkansas was not to be underrated and the Shabby Man possessed his soul in patience.

The first time or two Mr. Mercer bought his passenger a meal and Shag was properly appreciative but eventually when he never made any gesture to a return treat he got left out of the café visits. The salesman began to wonder how the other survived. There seemed to be no supply of provisions in the varicolored suitcase, for that he never saw him open. Shag made a point of not taking his nourishment pills in public.

As for lodging of nights, the double beds of the old-fashioned hotels lay as economically under two as one and the easy-going traveler made no demur. It was something to have somebody in the car on the long hauls between gas station stops and the (not too) Shabby Man could relate entertainingly from his peripathetic past.

In Colorado Shag thought his luck might have run out. No amount of searching of Mr. Mercer's road map revealed any place called "Eureka"! Still, he was glad, after so long, to be back in his home state for once.

During the week it took them to lumber-buy across the big rectangular state the (hardly) Shabby Man planned to impress his family (if he still had any) with his (almost) snazziness. One morning when Mr. Mercer's way led just forty miles from that canyon cabin where Shag had grown up he arranged with the salesman to take the day off and to rejoin him that evening.

The spring morning was fresh and invigorating as he hiked away up the long valley. At moments the Man would ask himself how he ever came to leave a place of such pristine beauty: the snow-capped jagged peaks around, the flowers by the unsullied stream, and the gentle trails of homey smoke from cabin chimneys. He begged a lunch at somebody's door and was as blissful as he ever remembered being in his hobo career.

However, the home the forty-niner had founded was no more. Shag found the roof of the old place caved in and when he asked at the next shack a half mile away the old man told him that the family was extinct. Shag's younger brother (whom he remembered an no more than a kid) had gone into the family's claim mine as usual one day about six years past and never been seen since: The blow killed the brothers' ancient mother.

The Shabby Man (all sense of snazziness gone) sat on a moss-covered boulder for along time. He was the prey of strange emotions. He hadn't cared (or really even *known*) enough about the brother (for instance, what ever was his name?!) to send a postcard in thirty years, but now the news that he might have, indeed most surely *had*, died alone and frightened in the dark moved him more than he would ever have dreamed.

Chastened, he made his way quietly back down the valley for his evening rendezvous at the hotel. He feared the news he'd had was going to trouble him for yeas to come. Some day he would have to make certain of his brother's fate.

After the Rockies it was a clear run home for Mr. Mercer. He stepped on the gas and they flew across the state line beyond Sheridan Lake. Kansas at last.

The Shabby Man had now to face a problem often recurring to hitch-hikers: where to descend from a ride that is going only tangentially toward where you want to be. There comes of course a point past which you're no longer getting nearer your destination but start moving away from it. Shag studied the map intently and then made his decision. "Okay if I get out at Eureka?"

"Sure thing." said Mr. Mercer. After a pause to reflect he added: "You sure there's where you want? As far as I remember that's

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not any crossroads.”

“No. that’s all right. I’ll drop off there, if I may.”

And when he did so the salesman, in a last little flare-up of hospitality, said, “If you get down in northwest Arkansas, look us up. The wife’ll give you a meal.”

“Thanks a lot,” said the hiker. “Maybe I’ll do that. Where do you live?”

“Eureka Springs.”

The Shabby Man almost got back in the car but decided that one Eureka (except one) was as good as another.